

CAPTAIN FLASHBACK

A fanzine for the 390th distribution of the Turbo-Charged Party-Animal Amateur Press Association, from the joint membership of Andy Hooper and Carrie Root, residing at 11032 30th Ave. NE Seattle, WA 98125. E-mail Andy at fanmailaph@aol.com, and Carrie at carrieroot49@yahoo.com. This is a Drag Bunt Press Production, completed on 12/27/2018. The impending new year deserves a new title and a new format; **CAPTAIN FLASHBACK** is devoted to old fanzines, monster movies, garage bands and other fascinating phenomena of the 20th Century. Issue #1 features two pieces of fan-writing composed 20 years apart. In the first, astronomer Andy Young provides a taste of some of the excitement of the first week of the space age in October, 1957. Then Tom Perry talks about the special language and values of fandom in "Poetsarcds and Potsherds," an article first published by Ontario fan David Hull in issue #5 of his fanzine **ROTHNIUM**, July, 1978. And the issue finishes with the response to Perry's article in the letter-column of **ROTHNIUM** #6.

I REMEMBER ENTROPY DEPARTMENT

Part I: Editorial, **POO** #8, Andy Young, October, 1957, for **FAPA** mailing #81

(Andy Young became active in fandom as an undergraduate at Oberlin College in Ohio in the early 1950s. He was married to Jean Young; the couple were known communally as "J&Y," pronounced "Jandy." They collaborated in the production of a fanzine titled YOBBER, a reference to archaic "Ghuist" lore of the 1930s; Jean was a cartoonist, and created a character she called "Yobber" to illustrate the fanzine. It was only logical that Andy would follow on with a personal fanzine titled POO; after all, as Jack Speer wrote in FANCYCLOPEIA I, "The POO is far mitier than the yobber." The reader must investigate the mysteries of FooFooism to learn more. After he graduated from Oberlin, Andy Young attended graduate school at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was there when the first artificial satellite was launched in 1957.)

It's here. The age of space travel has overwhelmed the world with terrible swiftness. The idea that Russia would lead the trip into space, serious discussion of travel to the moon, Venus, and Mars, concern over matters of interplanetary law (such as declaring the independence of the moon), the concept of a Cabinet post of science and research – a week ago these would have made fine story ideas for a pulp writer. In the past five days, every one of these has been reported in the news and discussed with as much seriousness as was ever devoted to the activities of Congress or the national budget. More fantastic things may, and probably will, follow. The British Interplanetary Society has become respectable almost overnight. People wonder what the Aeronautical Federation thinks. The President of the United States confers with his "Scientific Advisers" and issues vague, timid, reassuring reports.

We waited eagerly for the first step into space. But who ever thought it would be like this?

It was just after supper. We left Susan with friends and set off for the movie, *St. Joan*, the feature we went for, came second; it had been scheduled first on Thursday. So we sat through the first feature (which wasn't bad) and finally sat through the second. At about midnight we got home, left our bikes, and walked two blocks to pick up Susan. While Jean was getting her put to bed, I turned on the radio for the 1 a.m. news. "The Russians have launched an artificial satellite" said the music-till-dawn announcer with as much inflection as if he were giving the price of bananas in Peru. The voice went on about things like 18,000 miles an hour, and it sank in. . . . "Jeanie!" I shouted, "The Russians have got one up!" We jumped

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Issue #1, December, 2018

She adjusts the tipsy headdress of her spouse

Comments on Turbo-Apa #389:

Cover (Steven Vincent Johnson, partially after Chuck Lorre): I'm also thankful that Dr. Jampolsky was able to improve the focus of your eyes to the extent that you can create such remarkable visual images for our benefit. This is a unique piece of information and without parallel in the 390-month saga of the Turbo-Charged Party-Animal Amateur Press Association.

AFTERWORDS #28, Lisa Freitag: It is singularly appropriate to be moved to question the nature and purpose of war when confronted with the grave of a U.S. Marine killed in the battle for the island of Peleliu. The U.S. decided to attack the island because its airfield would allow Japanese aircraft to strike General MacArthur's fleet during the planned invasion of the Philippines. The airfield was taken on the second day, but the campaign would go on for three grinding months. Combat was incredibly violent and difficult, some of the worst experienced by US forces in the whole war, but the worst part of the experience for both sides was the lack of drinkable water on the island. The Navy was barely able to keep the Marines supplied with enough water to survive, and the Japanese had to make do with whatever they had stored at the beginning of the campaign.

How did any of them endure that horror? Part of the answer is in the situation – there was nowhere to go. One might walk away from a battle in Virginia, and go all the way to Texas; one might desert a fight in Poland and walk all the way to India. But on a rock like Peleliu, there was nowhere to run – and the nearest island was across 16 shark-filled kilometers of ocean. By the time the 1st Marine Division conducted this invasion, optimistically code-named “Operation Stalemate,” its members had been through more than a year of fighting in the Solomon islands. They were highly devoted to each other, and willing to die to help another Marine survive. That experience was wasted in the Peleliu invasion, which had the highest casualty rate of any amphibious landing of the war. The Japanese defenders were nearly annihilated; that their courage and devotion could have been better employed also seems obvious.

That this leads to a large granite monument in Tuscola, Illinois is a form of dark magic; and I too would wonder which were the more “heroic” death, being killed in combat on a dismal Pacific island or facing down pancreatic cancer in rural Illinois? Sign me up for something less heroic, please.

THINGS THAT BEGIN WITH M, Jim Hudson & Diane Martin: Good update, with less flooding. The trip to Charleston sounds like fun, and I was especially glad to read that Jim felt comfortable in both gender personas. You made a comment that you enjoyed reading Harry Andruschak's long list of apas that I published in November...I find that my auctioneering activities have suggested several such lists to me, particularly the fantastic names that people have given to the letter-columns in their fanzines. Apart from the endless puns about bagels and lox, there have been some amazing choices, like “From Silent Tristero's Empire,” “Diced Carrots,” “Messages from Space” and my current favorite, “German Fighter Planes.” I fear more such exhibits are in your future.

A ZINE OF ONE'S OWN, Catie Pfeifer: Lovely wedding pictures! I'm glad to read that Meera the guinea pig is recovering from her procedure – in my ignorance, I didn't know that guinea pigs could be anesthetized. I was interested to read of Jacob's reaction to your apa-hacking, because historically marriages between fans and non-fans have sometimes been bumpy – it's easy to be jealous of a hobby that explicitly demands that it is “a way of life.” But things have changed over the years, and I don't even know just how faanish Jacob is outside the self-publishing arena. But many fans also regard the arrival of a new spouse or other partner into a friend's life as a priceless opportunity – at least, someone new to tell

our stories to, someone who doesn't know that Bob Tucker invented sex, or what a Cosmic Mind implies, or who sawed Courtney's Boat. All our anecdotes are born again....

GALD TIDINGS, Marilyn Holt and Cliff Wind: I have to admit to being slightly relieved to read that you are planning on cutting back the amount of work you put into the farm. I know that many people find themselves busier than ever on retirement, but I see you two as an extreme case. It sounds like your cousin Paul is also gradually assuming the burden of the farm's future; I hope he will have some luck in finding labor and support, and that his efforts with the soil are productive.

The cast of animal characters in your fanzines is always remarkable. You've always illustrated their personalities for us, so we also miss them when they go. I hope that your current compliment of dogs and cats are living in relative harmony.

OCCAM'S WHISKERS, Georgie Schnobrich: I am once again awestruck by the great pleasure which Halloween at Lytheria brings every year, and the theme of King Arthur and the characters of Camelot was a brilliant choice. We had an unexpectedly nice Halloween evening, with none of the expected rain, and so we had about 30 people, mixed evenly between kids and parents come to our door; and a handful of their costumes were clearly of convention quality. But I think you had more people pass through in a half hour! What custom we receive is attracted by the Halloween light and effigy display mounted by the neighbors three doors south of us – their Christmas lights are equally elaborate.

Doing all my fanzine cataloguery, I've noticed that many, perhaps most conventions have had a short lifespan across fandom's history. There are only a comparative handful of conventions that have persisted for the full 40 years that I have been in fandom, and many of those have missed a year or two or reinvented themselves so profoundly that they are virtually new conventions. Some conventions were expected to be one-shot affairs, but proved so popular that they continued to occur until people got tired of them. I would maintain that the fiscally-responsible and sustainable con is a relatively recent evolutionary advance, and that chocolate fondue parties and offset-printed layout guides have been more common budget items than rainy day funds and annuities.

AN WISCONZINE, Gregory G.H. Rihn: I avidly consumed your review of Benedict Cumberbatch and Jonny Lee Miller in the stage production of *Frankenstein*. It would be a delight to see Cumberhunk play almost anything, a fact of which he seems to be keenly aware. It is a fairly remarkable coincidence that he is currently appearing in the new animated version of "The Grinch," a character originally voiced by Boris Karloff – and now he has found his way to portraying Frankenstein's creation as well. People have suggested that he might one day star as Dr. Who – but surely that would be redundant, because it seems to me that he already is Dr. Who....

Eames Furniture! We saw an extensive exhibit on the work of Charles and Ray Eames at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn in May of this year. Their chairs appeared in visions of the future like Woody Allen's film *Sleeper*; we just didn't understand that they actually represented *vintage* furniture, which is what they are to us now. The fact that they continue to manufacture new versions of some of their most recognizable designs is the coolest.

A TURBULENT APA-RITION, F. J. Bergman: Fun comments. I liked the idea of Alfred Hitchcock as an MC in the Hip-Hop sense – not only did he make people afraid of birds, he made people pee themselves with a little chocolate syrup rolling down a shower drain. Take that, Greg Nicotero.

While hers resembles a haunted house

My Hair is an Eternal Mystery, Never to be Understood.

Comments on Turbo-Apa #389, concluded:

A TURBULENT APA-RITION, continued: You mentioned the genetic genealogy game – I haven't had my test done yet, partly because I'm not as interested in the distant origins of my family as much as the lives and situations of the people I already know about. As with the case of Aunt Hattie and Uncle Dick, I am eager to determine whether they actually went to Pakistan or not, which DNA can't help me decide. I'm sure it will just raise more questions I can't answer, like your 9% Iberian profile.

ALPHABET OBSESSION, Jae Leslie Adams: Enjoyed your omnibus of comments as always. Given that I would like to do both, I wonder which would actually require more work, an allegedly complete index of my own fan-writing, or a catalog of all the fanzines in my collection? I've actually made the first feeble stab at the latter project, by making a list of the fanzines by Redd Boggs, Frank Denton and Gordon Eklund in my collection, so I can tell if I need any copies of their stuff that cross my path. Trying to compile a catalog by starting with the letter Andruschack and pressing straight through to Zdrojewski seems like it would inevitably exhaust me well before I was done. I think you were very clever to give me your fanzines to avoid asking yourself these questions.

You make the point, I think, that WWII dramas (and comedies!) were once rivals to the ubiquitous Western for the title of most significant subgenre. It was interesting to see the J.J. Abrams-branded film *Overlord* make its debut over Halloween, which could be succinctly pitched as “*Saving Private Ryan* meets *The Walking Dead*.” There is a growing subgenre of horror set in the Second World War, most of its examples involving reanimated corpses conscripted into the German army. I'd concede that this ties into capitalist fear of the proletariat masses, but then, so do most things.

You comment that you have felt like you were living in a nascent dystopia since 1972. I believe that was about the time that it became legal to profit from medical services in the United States. Before that, institutions like hospitals were limited in the amount of profit they were allowed to make from medical services, and they were not generally allowed to advertise themselves. Profits were more frequently shared by Doctors, and not as routinely by investors or shareholders. Just a thought.

A Key to Linos published in November in *Hooper's Original Bagatelle #12*:

Page 1: “Of course it's safe. It's alcohol.”

Linda Belcher (John Roberts), from “Speakeasy Rider,” S5, Ep. 9, *Bob's Burgers*

Page 2: “It begins as all good stories do, with a monkey.”

Narration to the opening of the *Robot Chicken* “Look Who's Walking:” *Walking Dead* Special.

Page 3: “Without a bow, a violin is just a really crummy mandolin.”

Bow-maker Ole Kangstrom, interviewed in a short documentary for KCTS Public Television.

Page 4: “Spring has sprung. The grass is Riz. I wonder where the egoboo is?”

Harry Warner Jr. RIP FAN WINKLE #24, April, 1990

Page 6: “Are you always drawn to the loveless and unfriended?”

Spoken by Orson Welles in the role of Mr. Rochester, *Jane Eyre* (1943).

Page 7: “Do you think because I'm poor and obscure and plain that I'm soulless and heartless?”

Spoken by Joan Fontaine in the role of Jane, *Jane Eyre* (1943).

Page 8: “Humbug!! Most free-born people would submit to anything for a salary.”

Spoken by Edward Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. The line continues; “therefore keep to yourself and don't venture on generalities of which you are intensely ignorant.” I'm sorry, but Rochester is a jerk. He should go blind or something.

Page 9: “Only through our love and friendship can we create the illusion for the moment that we're not alone.”

Attributed to the actor and director Orson Welles (1915-1985) a native of Kenosha, Wisconsin.

I Remember Entropy, Part I:
POO #8, October, 1957

[Continued from Page One]

up and down while the rest of the news went on. "Have you considered a trip to the West Coast?" said the gentle voice, working through the commercial. I pulled on my coat and roared off to the observatory.

Have you heard the newsyesofcourseyou've heardthe news." I said to Carlos, my officemate. "It was a madhouse," he said in his clear Argentine accent. He remarked that this should be a lesson to some of those boastful people in Washington, and I ran off to Building D, where some of the Smithsonian offices are. Only one person was there, taking phone calls; everyone had gone off to Kittredge (the base of the tracking program). I went there. It was a madhouse. I stood around for a while; a Moonwatch station phoned in and I could hear Dr. Hynek saying to them that they couldn't have seen it in the same place two successive times around. After a while I asked him if I could be of any help; he thought for a minute and said he couldn't think of anything, unless I could find someone to relieve. I looked around, couldn't find anyone, and came home.

Saturday, October 5: First thing after breakfast, I went over to ask about the perigee, assuming that during the night an optical orbit would have been worked out. No orbit; the satellite was judged to be unobservable, and Moonwatch was temporarily called off. I decided it would be a good idea to tape newscasts to keep a record of the history of the satellite. We got a NY Times and clipped the appropriate passages.

Sunday. The tape is beginning to accumulate. I pick up Radio Moscow on the radio and tape their news of the satellite. Everyone is delighted with the altitude, but everything depends on the perigee distance. Radio Moscow predicts passages over Washington DC and NY City a few hours hence; I copy these times and go over to the Smithsonian again. It is raining; no hope of a visual sighting here. Mac tells me that the

times I got from Moscow match the predications he has. I decide to stay around and listen to the radio passage. The radio room is fuming: Some bastard is sitting on the satellite frequency, intermittently muttering "Hello Stars. This is Stripes." Another has a VFO and is sweeping across 20.005 mc. The FCO Field Monitoring office has been alerted, but with no results. Some of the people present are hams: they call all the other hams in the Boston area, asking for triangulation fixes on these beetle-brains. A call to the police gets a large map of the Boston region, with street details. The hams are worried; if the jamming is coming from licensed hams (which is almost certain) this will give amateur radio a bad name. The satellite beeps clearly through, but the interference makes it impossible to determine the time of closest approach. There is a phone call from the press asking about the jamming; the decision is to try to keep the matter out of the news and catch the villains before amateur radio loses its reputation: "We don't know anything about it." I go home.

Monday: A check to Kittredge; no fixes on the jamming. On the news, the Navy reports a perigee altitude of 400 miles. Good; it should stay up for years.

Tuesday. A 7-inch reel of tape is filled. Clandestine plans are made at HCO to try to observe the satellite next morning at the 6:30 passage from a secret location. Reason for all the hush-hush: the scientists are being bothered by the press so much they can't work. Still no reliable visual sightings and no accurate orbit.

The BBC reports that the satellite is coming down rapidly. I am convinced that this is impossible.

Wednesday: Up at 4 a.m. Rain. Back to bed. Off to classes, et al. The evening news reports the jamming of the radio signals. I hear at the Observatory that the latest visual sightings give

I can conceive of gravies that would boggle your tiny mind!

And as we all know, figure skating is the gateway to sexuality.

an orbit that goes 100 miles below the surface of the Earth.

Thursday: It is now 12:30 am. Up in 31/2 hours to try again. The sky is clear, *** It is now exactly 24 hours later. We had fog instead of satellite. During the afternoon, I went to the warehouse where the precision clocks are stored. These will be used to time the photographic positions of the satellite to 1/10,000th of a second. Later in the afternoon, Dr. Whipple gave a short summery of the progress on tracking the satellite so far: the visual observations are almost all of the third stage rocket, not the "Real" satellite. There is some confusion as to whether the rocket is leading or trailing the satellite; the Russians say the rocket is behind, but since air friction should produce more effective drag on the rocket, it should be ahead. The satellite has been photographed by Super-Schmidt meteor cameras in Canada, last night, Several reliable Moonwatch positions are now on hand, and a preliminary orbit has been calculated: Whipple declined to give any orbital elements until a few more observations had been used. This evening I went over to Kittredge, since Whipple had said they needed help computing. I spent about 2 hours copying numbers out of a table and then came home. The

best visual orbit at that time gave an eccentricity of 0.056.

Let's close this report up.

Getting back down to Earth and mundane things like FAPA, this is POO #8, the FAPazine of A. Young – 11 Buena Vista Park, Cambridge 40, Mass, There are going to be a lot of complaints about this issue because I devoted lots of space to the theory of relativity. You don't have to read that part, you know. The reason I spent so much room on it is that I wanted to stop the interminable foolish questions on the subject which have cluttered up many a mailing for some time. I hope that this rather complete treatment of the fundamental ideas of relativity will answer most of your questions. Of course, I'm still willing to explain anything that isn't clear.

This issue of POO is due chiefly to Jack Speer.

The satellite is still killing off SF ideas. The latest to fall is the idea of using satellites for advertising purposes, I see.

(BLASTOFF!!!)

"I'll be back in a jiff. I gotta go check this comet for anarchists."

I REMEMBER ENTROPY DEPARTMENT

Part II: "Poetsarcds and Potsherds"

by Tom Perry, published in **ROTHNIUM** #5,
Edited by David Hull, July, 1978

One of the brighter spots in the misnamed Suncon last year was the fan history exhibit that Gary Farber put together. It centers largely around Lee Hoffman, who – Joe Siclari tells me – would have been the fan guest of honor except that Don and Grace Lundry had never heard of her. LeeH let Gary display such treasures as her collection of her fanzine QUANDRY, her photos from the 1952 Chicon, and even a genuine poetsarcd.

To me, the poetsarcd epitomizes fanhistory. I first learned about it from a Walt Willis letter that Dick Geis published in PSYCHOTIC back in the mid-fifties. Willis explained that when he and Lee were corresponding heavily, they had resorted to postcards, and one day when he had received none for several days, Willis added a quick postscript to a letter, asking "What, no poetsarcds?" Lee replied mournfully that she had searched the town but had been quite unable to find any poetsarcds. Tickled, Willis had "POCTSARCD" printed on a stack of cards, which he and Hoffman then used in correspondence. "The ordinary, old-fashioned postcard has a space for writing on one side and the address on the other," Willis explained to

Geis, “while with the poctarsed it is just the other way around.”

A trufan will understand why this typographical error has been remembered for over a quarter of a century. Its nine letters recapitulate one of fandom’s best-known friendships, as well as our own fresh enthusiasm. In a way, that extra ‘c’ is the best part – without it, you have nothing more than a common transposition; the extra letter shows just how fast Willis’ fingers were tripping over the keys. Why, you might call it the perfect typo.

And yet, I have seen some careless writers render it “poctarsd.”

Another sort of fan resents the whole silly business. A current example is Tom Jones of the British Science Fiction Association. An example contemporary with Sixth Fandom was Don Fabun, the editor of RHODOMAGNETIC DIGEST, who once editorialized:

“There is a gap widening between the more ‘mature’ element among sf readers and the vociferous, but usually adolescent, ‘true fans’ who seldom, it seems to me, even read science fiction and even less comment intelligently on it.”

“In many respects, the “true fan” groups represent a cult.... They have invented an esoteric vocabulary that prevents “outsiders” from knowing what they are talking about and helps to conceal the fact that the “fans” frequently don’t know what they are talking about either. ...the “true” fan appears as a rather glorified bobby sox type.”

At the time this was published – 1952 – Lee Hoffman was literally an adolescent and may even have worn bobby sox for all I know. (In fact, she may wear them now for all I know.) Fabun’s accusation of adolescence was not a metaphor such as you might find pro authors in SFR hurtling at each other; it was a personal slur, like observing that someone is grossly overweight, and just as far beside the point of any reasonable argument.

And what about that term “tru-fan” that I have used? It continues to raise hackles. Jessica Amanda Salmonson can be found in JANUS #9 with her hackles raised so far by Lesleigh



Fans at the party in Room 770 at Nolcon I in 1951. Lee Hoffman is in the foreground, reading a fanzine. Lynn Hickman and Roger Sims are visible in the back. Photo from Curt Phillips’ Collection.

Luttrell’s use of it in a previous issue that she commits the word “elitistly,” which in terms of euphony if not grammar seems a far worse offense than “trufan.” Lesleigh had used the term, apparently, to distinguish between con fans and fanzine fans. As such the term seems to have the same historical if not logical justification that has resulted in a Christian sect headquartered near Rome, Italy calling itself the Catholic Church.

That is, fan magazines preceded fan conventions. And for a long time, fan conventions were places where, for the most part, fanzine fans came to meet one another. That changed in 1952, when the group putting on the convention in Chicago announced that as professionals they intended to put on a respectable, dignified convention, the kind you might bring your family to. (Or that pros might bring reporters to.) To be respectable and dignified, the convention had to have an official name, rather than a fannish neologism like NYCon, Denvention, or Chicon I. It was to be

We shall not be dependent on your lumbering and uncontrollable moon!

When you do a thing with your whole soul and with everything that is noble within you, you always find your counterpart.

called the Tenth Annual Science Fiction Convention. If you please, and not Chicon 2. Would you believe that such an issue occupied page after page of fanzine debate that year? In the course of the debate, however, Tenth Annual Science Fiction Convention got shortened to TASFIC. Nowadays we call the '52 WorldCon Chicon 2. So it goes.

But back before Chicon 2, fandom revolved around fanzines, not cons. At that time the term “trufan” meant something else. Willis enunciated its meaning in the mock mea culpa that Fabun’s editorial inspired:

“We were juvenile, immature, irresponsible. We should have been discussing science fiction, reading and writing reviews – making with the literary criticism – perhaps even analyzing the odd Trend. In our childish ignorance we thought the reason we didn’t do this was that most of us knew enough about sf to choose our own reading. We didn’t think we needed to be spoon-fed by reviews and literary criticism telling us what we should like and why we should like it. We might even have thought it was better to use our own creative imagination than to discuss that of other people.” (QUANDRY #21)

So being a true fan involved emulation not adoration Which is why contributors tended to become writers --like LeeH and that other adolescent of 1952, Bob Silverberg – rather than



Fanzine Panel, Suncon, 1977. From L to R: Ted White, Terry Carr and Lee Hoffman

the middlemen of science fiction – editors, agents, publishers and dealers – as the sercon fans tend to if they become pros at all. (I offer Bob Madle, Sam Moskowitz and Ed Wood as off-hand examples.)

The other parallel between Trufannish writing and science fiction itself lies in those esoteric terms that Fabun had so much trouble understanding. SF tends to agglutinate concepts into brief phrases such as hyperspace, psi, parallel universe, etc. This has allowed writers in the field to build on one another’s concepts just as scientists do, rather than reinventing the rocket ship or the matter transmitter anew for each story.

In similar fashion, words like “pocketsarc” pack a fanhistorical memory into a couple of syllables. These words are the true fancyclopedias, the true repositories of the fannish folk memory. Their function is connotation, rather than denotation; a pocketsarc is hardly different functionally from a postcard – it is the attitude that term conveys that is different. Just as “Chicon 2” conveys a far different attitude than “Tenth Annual Science Fiction Convention” does.

For example, I went to Suncon in 1977 (even if it did rain for the first few days), but I imagine that Ed Wood attended the “Thirty-Fifth World Science Fiction Convention. Somehow though, Ed wandered into the tiny room where the fan panels were held – it was right next to the fan museum of Gary Farber’s that I mentioned in the first paragraph -- and there Ed found Ted White and Terry Carr holding forth on fandom past. Ted and Terry were supposed to discuss fandom in the sixties, but at the end of the hour assigned to them they discovered that the panel after theirs, which was intended to cover fandom in the fifties, had been cancelled; so they had cheerfully incorporated the one remaining member of that panel, Lee Hoffman herself, and continued for a second hour.

It was during that second hour that Ed Wood, sitting in the front row, started chiming in with his own recollections and opinions of the fifties. Lee, Ted and Terry endured this politely; it was

a small room and audience participation had been the rule throughout the fan programming.

About two-thirds of the way through that second hour the fanhistory panel began to die out. Questions were encouraged. In the back of my mind stirred a vague memory that Ed Wood had once gone out of his way to praise the Fabun editorial that had condemned Lee as an adolescent bobby soxer. (To be specific, in Kris Cary's MACH in 1964 Ed described it as a "Brilliant editorial by Don Fabun on the difference between "quality" fan magazines and "true fan magazines.") The whole conflict had always puzzled me and this seemed like a good time to get it settled. So I raised my hand and addressed a question to Lee: "Could you tell me why there was the hostility against Quandry and other trufanzines that I remember seeing in the serconzines of the time?"

"Weeealll --" said Lee, thinking back.

She got no further. Ed Wood was on his feet, sputtering and roaring. "I'll tell you why," he said angrily. "Because there were lots of important things to do -- indexing and reviewing and cataloging all the science fiction stories and books -- so there was no time to waste kidding around and joking and all that. Who needs all that? Do you know what I used to do? When I would get a copy of HYPHEN in the mail, I'd just drop it in the junk without even bothering to open it. I knew there was nothing in it that would interest me."

There was an instant of stunned silence.

...and then a deluge of noise. Everyone seemed to be talking at once. Ted White was telling Ed he was a Fugghead, and I think Ed was telling Ted pretty much the same thing, only of course in serconese. LeeH and I were voicing, I think, roughly identical questions about Ed's powers of second sight. So were a half dozen other people in the audience. Terry Carr was staring at Ed, his lip curling in disgust. Yes, Terry Carr, who gets along with First Fandom and all the other factions of fandom and prodom, was offended.

After the tumult had gone on for a couple of minutes, Terry ended the exchange by saying, in a voice that silenced everyone and made them listen: "Oh, Goddamnit, Ed, shut up. You don't know what you're talking about. Do you know what you were missing by throwing away those copies of HYPHEN? Just Damon Knight's book reviews, some of the best critical writing in science fiction -- that's all."

Ed Wood slowly sat down, staring at Terry. Slowly absorbing the implications of his words. Knight's reviews had been collected to form the book *In Search of Wonder*, which had been published by Advent, which Ed was associated with. Somehow his visionary powers had failed to warn him.

A few minutes later, Ted White wound up the panel. Without looking at anyone in particular, especially Ed Wood, Ted commented that any members of the audience who wanted to know more about fanhistory do well to buy Harry Warner's book on fandom in the fifties, *A Wealth of Fable*, which they could find on sale in the huckster room.

The panel members stood up and the audience shattered into a roomful of people. Ed Wood struggled to his feet again and announced in a loud voice. "I can tell you the truth about that, too, if anyone wants to hear the truth." The last seven words were pronounced with dying resignation, as Ed saw how perfect Ted's timing had been. The audience dissolved before he could stand up. When he saw that it would not reconstitute itself to hear him, Ed moved out of the room, convinced I'm sure that no one wanted to listen to "the truth."

I was tempted, for one fleeting moment, to follow Ed and see what he had to say. But then I remembered Ed's article in SWOON on the subject, and let the moment pass. I just knew it would be more of the same.

Ed's article had appeared in SWOON #4 (V. 2, N. 3), the June, 1976 issue, in reply to one by Harry Warner in #3 (May) about the difficulties Harry had encountered in getting his fifties fanhistory published by Advent, and why he had

People tend to do desperate things when they learn about their other.



Ed Wood in 1988.

finally withdrawn the book. The titles of the two articles reflect their tone; Harry's is called "1950 will be a little late this year," while Ed entitled his: "There IS Another Side, Harry."

Usually, there is another side. Ed's article is remarkable in that it is the most effective refutation possible of its own title. Wood seems to have failed to even understand Warner's most important points, let alone answer them.

Harry's article touched on the basic disagreement between him and Wood over the focus of the book, extending even to Harry's title, "A Wealth of Fable." Harry says that "Ed thought I had given too much space to Quandry..." He tells how Ed wanted changes in the book that Harry not only felt were wrong, but might imperil his health – poor at the time – through the amount of work involved. And he mentions that Advent made him rush to finish up the book during the summer of 1975 and then sat on it until April, 1976, when Harry finally managed to pry it loose. (This in itself may account for many of the faults that got the book a low grade from

Susan Wood in her recent review in ALGOL.) The changes that Ed Wood wanted, Harry observes, all involved "Areas of fandom in which Ed had been active."

Wood's reply totally ignores the plight of a man who has completed a labor of love and hopes, despite poor health, to see it get into print. Ed confirms Harry's statement about the changes he wanted and says blithely, "Advent's paying for the paper. What's the problem?"

Ted White has already dissected this article of Wood's in Dan Steffan's BOONFARK. I can't add anything to that fact-filled demolition job; what I want to zoom in on here is the view of fanhistory that Ed Wood expounds:

"Harry Warner Jr. was not writing a novel. He was writing a history and while every historian has the right to select and to order his material, he is still constrained to write of important things as opposed to trivial things. ...Harry loves to detail who won what tea drinking contest at obscure English regional conventions but is reluctant to discuss some of the important features of fandom here in the USA. If it is not mentioned in a fan magazine it does not exist and if it is, it must assuredly be Gospel."

That paragraph, to me, represents the quintessential Ed Wood. In 1952 he wrote to QUANDRY to explain that if fans would only be more dignified they could get better press coverage at the upcoming Tenth Annual Science Fiction Convention; he says he threw away his copies of HYPHEN; in 1964, he was still remembering the early fifties as the golden age of fan publishing when the top magazines were – not SLANT and QUANDRY – but RHODOMAGNETIC DIGEST, and Ed's own JOURNAL OF SCIENCE FICTION; and here in 1976 he cannot unbend sufficiently to use the word "fanzine" even though the word is now in

modern dictionaries and Ed's words were to appear in a fanzine. How exactly Willis caught him in chapter 11 of THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR where he appears, in the thin disguise of Deadwood, trying to impress a reporter from the mundane world with his street of false fronts!

And he's wrong.

Ed was wrong in saying that Warner was constrained to write about what Ed considered important. Harry withdrew his book from Advent and offered it for reproduction by mimeograph, with the result that Volume I was on sale at MidAmerican and volumes 2 and 3 were ready by the summer of 1977. I've heard a lot of complaints about delays (many of them from fans who are no better than I am at keeping a genzine on schedule) but I still don't know how Joe and Karina Siclari managed to publish this book, get married, move to Florida, build a house and put on Suncon too. (You can still get a copy for \$8.75 from Joe and Karina at 2315 NW 98th Lane, Coral Springs, FL 33065.)

And Ed was wrong, too, in saying that trivial things don't belong in a history. History, like good fiction, concerns changes, not dull, plodding sameness. And change records its presence – who was there and what they said are remembered, if not as official written-down history then as legend and fable.

As Susan Wood says, “trivial details which matter to fans are what *A Wealth of Fable* is all about.”

Thus the first World Convention and the Exclusion Act retain their fascination for fanhistory buffs. They were something new. The politicking that took the 1953 convention from San Francisco's Little Men is still interesting because Chicon 2 was a different kind of convention. But the politicking by which Pittsburgh won their 1960 bid over Washington (DC) Science Fiction Association

was pretty much the same story. Ed Wood says, “It was a stunning political victory of convention fandom over fanzine fandom.” Or: YANKEES LICK LITTLE LEAGUE. Or, DOG BITES MAN. (Yawn.)

I believe that the change in fandom in the fifties was this simple: We learned to like ourselves.

As I understand the fandom of the nineteen-forties – going by Warner's history of that decade, *All Our Yesterdays*, and such documents as Speer's *Fancylopedia*, Laney's *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!* And old fanzines – it was a time of defeat and despair. Fandom's best mind had denounced it; Claude Degler and others had disgraced it; prozine editors like Palmer had denounced it and disgraced it. The rocket and the bomb had come into being, but somehow they did not delight.

With the fifties came a fandom that Willis described as “intelligent but not stolid, wacky but mature, lively but not feud ridden, and sophisticated without being decadent.” It brought a fan across the ocean in 1952, a feat the pros had failed at; it fulfilled Rick Sneary's ambition of South Gate in '58; it created traditions worth remembering, fanzines worth collecting, writing worth preserving.

And I think it did it in the main by not worrying what the outside world, as represented by newspaper reporters and magazine hacks, thought or said about it. They don't like us? Too bad for them. And when the fifties finished, fandom never again had to worry about being respectable. We have self-respect.

We can have that and poctsarcds too.



Yankee Stadium was the only thing we had in the Bronx. It was an institution.

All literary men are Red Sox fans - to be a Yankee fan in a literate society is to endanger your life.

I REMEMBER ENTROPY DEPARTMENT

Part III: Comments on “Poetsarcds and Potsherds,” published in ROTHNIUM #6, Edited by David Hull, October, 1978

Terry Carr (1937-1987):

Thanks much for sending ROTHNIUM. I seldom write locs, as you know – in fact, since I’m an eofan, I seldom even use the word locs – so I’ll confine my comments to that which concerns me most in this issue, Tom Perry’s article.

It’s excellent, but you don’t need me to tell you that; I can’t remember Tom ever writing anything that wasn’t excellent. But it does have a few misconceptions, errant assumptions and/or examples of less than 100% recall in it.

For instance: When Ed Wood did his loud number about how he used to throw away each issue of HYPHEN unread, I didn’t curl my lip in disgust, and I wasn’t “offended.” I might have curled my lip etc. if that action were within my repertoire of expressions, but it just isn’t – usually, I turn my gaze accusingly to the ceiling instead. And why would I have been offended by what Ed did with HYPHEN? – my involvement with that finest of all fanzines was limited to one mediocre humorous article, a few quotations on the mailing wrapper and a letter or two. I think the mot juste for my reaction to Ed’s remarks would not be “offended” or even “disgusted,” but rather, simply appalled. My feeling at the time, which I remember quite clearly, was “How can I possibly convey to Ed how goddamn dumb he’s being?”

Tom has my spoken comment pretty accurately reported, except that I actually said, “Do you know what you were missing by throwing away those copies of HYPHEN? Just Damon Knight’s book reviews, among other things...” italics added after the fact, The other things were trenchant comments from Vince Clarke and others, and delightfully illuminating article on fan-and-pro history by Eric Frank Russell,

William F. Temple and others. John Killian Houston Brunner was a regular contributor, and “Ermangarde Fiske” (who was Evelyn E. Smith, as I recall) wrote a column about doings in the NYC pro world.

See. The early fifties fanzines were more concerned with SF than mythology has it. The sercon fanzines weren’t totally humorless, either – RHODOMAGNETIC DIGEST had articles by both Willis and Hoffman, for example, and once reprinted Bob Shaw’s Fanmanship Lecures complete. Many of those serconzines were among the best of the period – and yes, I’d include RHODO and Ed’s own JOURNAL OF SCIENCE FICTION.

I suspect Tom misread Ed’s reaction to my comment, because of course Ed knew that many of Damon Knight’s reviews had originally appeared in HYPHEN. He was probably chagrined about having stuck his neck out as he had, but I suspect what really took him back what that it was I who chopped him. Ed and I have known each other for many years and have always gotten along quite well; that particular occasion at Suncon was probably the first time I’d ever said anything nasty to him (or to anyone, over a microphone), so naturally he’d have been startled.

He didn’t exactly shut up immediately, either; a minute or two later he again began to harangue from the audience. I glared at him and said, “Ed, stop.” He did, and I believe it was because he realized he was being rude.

In the ensuing silence, I remarked, “Well, gang, you’ve just seen an example of fanhistory in action – what happened here was exactly the kind of thing that was happening in fandom twenty-five years ago.” This comment, indeed, may have been what started Tom thinking about the article he wrote for you.

Tom’s addition of Marie Antoinette’s alleged joke, “Let them eat cake,” was a bit more appropriate than he probably realized – because she never really said that – what she really said was “Let them eat caking.” “Caking” was the residue that stuck to bread-ovens after a loaf was

removed; the caking was customarily scraped off and thrown away. So what she actually meant was more on the order of, “They should be careful not to waste any food,” which was a much more reasonable remark. The “cruel joke” that is so often attributed to her therefore represents the triumph of myth over reality – because the mythical remark does indeed sum up the causes of the French Revolution better than the real one.

A lot of “history “ is like that. (Khrushchev did indeed say, in translation, “we will bury you,” for instance, but what he was repeating was merely an old Russian saying that translates more accurately as “we shall outlive you.”) As you can see, fanhistory is subject to the same distortions and misconceptions.

Harry Warner Jr. (1922-2003):

I appreciate immensely the publicity for A WEALTH OF FABLE in Tom Perry’s article. It should go without saying that I’m on Tom’s side in matters not involving the book which (or that) are discussed in his article. Best of all, the article provided me with Joe Siclari’s current address. Only one thing worries me a trifle. There have been several articles before this one on the dispute between Ed Wood and me over the manuscript. I’m afraid they may be causing fandom to assume there is a continuing feud between the two of us. There isn’t. We disagreed over the manuscript, each of us published his version of events in SWOON, and that was it. We’ve been corresponding, we are on good terms, we recognize we differ radically on certain aspects of fan history, and neither of us has tried to browbeat the other into his way of thinking on fandom’s past. I hope eventually someone writes a book or a lot of long articles on the sercon aspects of fandom in the 1940s and 50s, in order to put together in one place a lot of stuff which I didn’t put in my writings and to make happy the fans like Ed who prefer this sort of fanac.

Terry Hughes (1950-2001):

For my tastes the piece that made this issue was



Tom Perry’s superlative “Poetsarcds and Potsherds.” Tom was a good writer during his first term of action in fandom (good enough to get into HYPHEN, for example), but his return shows that if anything his writing skills have grown stronger during his period of gaffiation. Since his return to fandom I would have to say that 90% of his writing has been of blockbuster quality. The man is impressive! Take for example the piece that he wrote for you. It is seven pages long, yet it did not seem lengthy as I read it – if anything it stopped long before I would have grown tired of reading his thoughts. The content of the article is wide-ranging, from trying to put a finger on trufannishness to pointing a finger at Ed Wood, from writing about a bit of fun involving postcards (poetsarcds) to discussing background factors in publishing a 3 volume history of fandom in the 1950s, from talking about a variety of fanzines to mentioning those who produce and publish science fiction. Yet Tom’s skill is such that he was able to weave these diverse factors together and make a strong and interesting whole. Tom Perry is the sort of writer that fandom should cherish and reward. People of his ability don’t come along very often, which is a shame, but a fact of life. Yet people like Tom and Tom himself give fandom that special quality that creates and sustains the fascination fandom

Even before Sputnik scientists and policy makers worried that not enough Americans were studying science.

Don't help a good fan go bad – loc your fanzine.

holds for me. I hope you can convince Tom to write more for your fanzine, for he is a great plus to ROTHNIUM.

Mike Glicksohn (1946-2011):

I was surprised to see a major Tom Perry article in ROTHNIUM but its presence bears out what I said about the magazine in my opening compliments. Tom's one of the best fannish commentators around and he clearly agrees with me that ROTHNIUM is a good place to be.

There isn't much to add to what Tom says here, although one can express admiration for the way he put the pieces together, I'm on his side since Tom's view of fandom is very close to my own so of course I find him insightful but in a way it's almost sad the piece had to be written. Ed Wood isn't a bad person, and there's nothing really wrong with the narrowness of Ed's approach to fandom. What's unfortunate is Ed's seeming inability to accept that other fans can want other things from fandom than he does but he's been that way for thirty years and I doubt he'll change now. Some people are born fannish, others achieve fannishness, but you really can't thrust fannishness on anyone. Surely there's room for Ed to pursue his serious, respectable hobby while some of us have fun amidst the trivia of our pocsarcds? Even if he is wrongheaded? Oh well, I always was too tolerant to be really fannish...

Jerry Kaufman (b. 1948)

Tom Perry's is a good article; Tom Perry is a good writer. He captures events well, with just the right amount of detail to carry them, and uses events to point up his articulate ideas and thoughts on whatever his subject is.

Random observations and thoughts as I go back through the article: In the first paragraph, Tom mentions that the Suncon Committee had considered Lee Hoffman as Fan Guest of Honor. I hadn't thought that this sort of thing ought to be in print. It might embarrass Lee, to be passed over for someone else, (especially for someone whose accomplishment do not match hers,

though presumably a nice man and all), and it ought to embarrass Don Lundry and Ben Yalow, the committee members who supported him as our choice.

I was associated with the committee, and let me tell you: when we were asking for suggestions from people, only Lee was mentioned seriously (except when we asked some devotees of TITLE, who suggested Ben Indick and Donn Brazier). How Bob Madle's name was arrived at by Don and Ben is a mystery to the rest of the committee. (And while I'm mentioning embarrassments, Tom probably got Bob pretty good: how'd you like to find out that you were asked to be GoH as the choice of a con chairman, in dissent from his own con committee?)

“Further on, Tom outlines the case for the preeminence of fanzines over cons. Though I enjoy conventions, and at times have attended ten or more in a year, and explain fandom in forms of conventions to those who don't know about it, I too think of fandom in terms of fanzines. Fandom is a network of fanzines, essentially. What happens at conventions is temporary, momentary, and if not preserved somehow (occasionally in photos, or love affairs) is forgotten. The best stories about conventions, the minor legends and the longest-standing traditions are the ones that have been written up and expanded upon in fanzines. By contrast, look at the “traditions” of fans who attend conventions but rarely read, and never write/produce/draw for fanzines: their “traditions” are rituals of drinking that have been repeated at least two conventions in a row, and that are forgotten after three conventions (the typical life of a fan “generation”).

I liked Tom's paragraph on the power of fan jargon to pack a lot of meaning and association into a few queer words, just as sf itself does. Of course, most jargon does that if it's at all good jargon (or can that be a contradiction in terms?). (I seem to recall Harry Warner pointing out that CB jargon is an example of “bad” jargon: a bunch of words that carry no connotation

beyond their non-jargon equivalents, that are simple to learn because they have no wider meanings, and that let anyone with a CB radio feel like they are part of a wider group, carrying on esoteric exchanges about the locations of police cars, slow drivers and women whose skirts are riding up. Ptui!)

I'm very glad that Tom has given Joe and Karina Siclari's address. I've just used it to write and ask them where my #2 and #3 of A WEALTH OF FABLE are. After all, I was one of the collators of #1 two years ago. (Wonderful session it was, in hottest Brooklyn. The tall man across the table from me turned out to be Dave Rowe.) (He did not have on one black shoe.)

Harry J. Andruschack (b. 1944)

The most impressive thing in ROTH is Tom Perry's contribution. I do enjoy reading this sort of thing and wish there was more of it around. I sometimes wonder what Ed Wood thinks about the paper airplane contest at IGUANACON. I was the originator of the concept, way back at Leprecon II. At the TUSCON IV room party, there was lots of beer, and lots of flyers for the convention. This was in 1976, by the way. I started making paper airplanes, and noticed Curt Stubbs across the room, quaffing from a mug.

I aimed, I launched and the plane flew straight and true. SPLASH and an enraged Curt got up yelling "SACRILEGE" and soon the room was filled with 500 paper airplanes going back and forth, plus one balloon kept aloft for the hell of it. And that is why, on Sunday at Iguanacon, another paper airplane war was held in the fanzine room after the collation of WOOF. A fannish tradition has been born.

Joseph Nicholas (b. 1953):

Poetsarcds? Just who does Tom Perry think he's trying to kid? He says: "...the extra letter showed just how fast Willis's fingers were tripping over the keys. Why, you might call it the perfect typo." Right on, because I don't think it's anything else but; Willis's fingers were obviously tripping over the keys so fast that typos were inevitable... And all it took to



perpetuate the whole damn dismal charade was some young Neofan so caught up in the myth of Willis as Ghod that she couldn't see it was a typo. And yet I have seen some careless writers render it as "poetsard" continues Tom Perry, and that's probably what Willis meant, always assuming that he meant to louse up the spelling in the first place.

Boy, Trufandom has sure improved since those dead days. No more of this "everything in the garden is lovely" shit, or "let's all be friends together" nonsense; the Greg Pickersgill-led revolution of the early seventies has changed the face of British fandom and put those times behind us. Most of us now take for granted a kind of casual brutality that I daresay Perry finds quite unforgivable; and would probably shock Willis to his core as well. And so what? Things have moved on his day, and his failure to keep up with the changes is too damn bad.

Most of us post-revolution fans wouldn't give a bent pin for Willis these days; whatever thoughts might have occurred to him while sitting on the toilet in 1952 are just irrelevant. But every word he ever wrote continues to be worshipped with a fervor that I find at best ridiculous and at worst distasteful. Just because he happened to be the

If you are a fugghead, you will have a better magazine if you suppress your fuggheadedness, but this is pretty hard to do.

Setting aside the moot point of whether the world needs another fanzine...

archetypal trufan of the fifties doesn't mean we should continue to regard him as such; certainly, to set him up as the archetypal trufan of the seventies is ludicrous because doing so will act as a retardant to our advance. And evolution is what really matters, not endless bloody replays of the past. Time-binding is all very well as long as we confine it to remembering where we've been, and not trying to put it all back in practice.

Mind you, there are occasional parallels between the past and the present – like, for instance, the fannish versus sercon “war” that went on in the fifties and is also back out in the open in Modern British fandom. But because the two happen to parallel each other doesn't mean that the latter is a repeat of the former. In the case of Wood versus Hoffman, it was due to the former's desire to get some respect for the genre and its adherents, while the latter merely desired to have a good time with her friends; in Britain today, it's due to the sudden influx of new fans which fandom has experienced over the past few years, the majority of whom have found Trufandom incestuous and irrelevant and have returned to the discussion of science fiction as a means to retain meaningful contact with each other. There's no repetition there, is there? So why this ludicrous insistence on some tawdry little circular theory of fanhistory, everybody trudging around a ten or twenty year cycle in a microcosmic imitation of Oswald Spengler's turgid and implausible thesis? Even Perry admits (obliquely) that cycles and ages and numbers are all just so much dross; “History, like good fiction, concerns changes, not dull, plodding sameness.”

So all this holding up of Willis as the guiding light of Trufandom is just ridiculous. His era has come and gone; the fifties are no more and the climate is different. The kind of unbridled reverence for Willis displayed by Perry (and doubtless, other of his fannish contemporaries) can only be taken as an unvoiced wish to return

to those times; perhaps even a refusal to admit that times have changed at all.

Which all sounds suitably revisionist. And might provoke a few fannish old timers to counterblast (with my luck). The only problem is the tone of the argument taken by pre-seventies fans sounds rather too restrained to modern ears; it's just not committed enough. Their carefully-reasoned ripostes and juvenile sounding puns resemble the sort of inane comments you'd expect to hear at a vicarage tea party, and cut no ice with we post-Pickersgill fans; berserk screams of rage and a few stiff-armed clouts with a length of bicycle chain are the forms of argument more likely to provoke us into a worthwhile response. Still, we'll see, we'll see.

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[Some closing notes: Dave Hull published ROTHNIUM out of Owen Sound Ontario. The first issue appeared in early 1977, and the last, issue #6, in October of 1978.

Tom Perry (1940-1997) became active in fandom in the 1950s. His most notable fanzine first appeared in 1956 under the title **LOGORRHEA**; it was re-named **QUARK** after 1964, and under that title it was well-regarded and featured columns by Walter A. Willis, Gina Clarke, John Boardman, Steve Stiles, and Robert Bloch. There was a gap of about 8 years between issue #11 and #12, during which time Perry left fandom, and became more active in politics; he was present at the protests outside the Democratic Party's National Convention in 1968, and avoided being gassed by police, only to be stabbed by a mugger later that evening. After moving to England in the 1970s, he resumed fan activity, and published several issues of **QUARK** there. He later returned to the United States and resided in Boulder, Colorado, before his early death due to cancer in 1997.]

Art Credits: Cartoons on Page 13 and 15 by Bill Rotsler. Ed Wood photo by Mike Resnick.
