

fanstuff

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Fanzine Reviews: Panacea or Pointless?

Trufandom is a remarkably peaceful place these days. There'll always be a few fuggheads willing to pursue witless arguments, but the testosterone-fueled mega-feuds appear to be safely confined to the pages of fanhistory.

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Reviews and Me?

I'm still weighing the advisability of retuning to doing in-depth fanzine reviews, as I explained in this issue's cover essay.

I haven't decided about that yet, but I definitely do have some definite thoughts about reviews. Given that I've spent a great deal of time in the roles of reviewer and reviewed, I guess it would be amazing if I didn't have some opinions.

I wrote thousands of game reviews and edited many times that number during my 25 years or so as an electronic gaming journalist and editor.

I played it straight and I always kept temptation at arm's length. I earned a satisfying reputation as a fair, honest and perceptive game reviewer.

I also acquired great respect for conscientious reviewers who try to do it the right way and meet the challenge of staying fair to both the creators and the readers.

That respect led to a policy I followed as a professional and which I brought with me when I returned to Fandom in 1989. I always let critics have their say without rebuttal from me.

Apart from a "thank you" if the appropriate occasion arises, I don't reply to writers who critique my writing or editing. I might send a note to a critic friend who made a factual error, like referring to me as a college student or a famous baseball player, but that would be a very rare instance.

I hold my tongue, because everybody is entitled to an opinion and because reviewing is tough enough without adding the burden of heckling from me.

I figure fans can read the review, check out whatever got reviewed and, being fans, decide for themselves.

There hasn't been a devastating fan war since Topic A – and that's three decades ago! According to the theory proclaimed by Redd Boggs shortly after the Boondoggle, Fandom likes to have a huge feud about every 20 years.

Redd Boggs' Theory correctly predicted Topic A. Yet the very same Theory indicates that there should've been a Fandom-wide conflagration around 2004. It fills me to bursting with pride -- and hot air needed for this article – to say that we've gone eight years without the arrival of the mega-feud.

Of course, individual feuds still exist. Some of them are like those underground fires that periodically shoot flames that burn through to the surface. (Note the absence of examples; I don't want to cause flare-ups.)

Yes, despite the rampant friendliness that prevails in Fandom these days, you can still get into trouble. I know two fans who got into a fight over the use of all caps in a message on Facebook!

There are fans who yearn for the feisty, more combative Fandom of remote fanhistory. They crave something to banish boring tranquility in their fan lives.

Maybe you are such a fan. If so, you'll be glad to learn that it is still possible to provoke a fight fairly easily.

In truth, there are many ways to initiate a feud, notwithstanding the overall peacefulness of Fandom. If you can't come up with an original way to feud-monger, you can always do something time-tested like asking Certain BNFs about their favorite "sci fi" or touching the elbow of a borderline pro.

Even if those proven methods fail to spark the desired feud, there's still one strategy that almost never fails. *It does* take more work than some other alternatives, but it requires little or no conscious effort. As a bonus, it potentially can lead to several feuds and produce new commotions at regular intervals.

All you have to do is write a regular column of in-depth fanzine reviews. Just do your best to tell the truth and deliver accurate analysis and you'll soon have virulent enemies you never knew you had.

Writing capsule fanzine reviews isn't at all the same thing. A few fan writers have managed to get into battles over brief reviews. But even the most contentious capsules are more likely to produce a momentary flare of annoyance rather than enduring animosity.

I described a fanzine review column as a strategy that "almost never fails." Apart from hedging my bet, it is true that some fans with high innate lovability can write long, serious fanzine critiques without becoming embroiled in feuds with resentful fanzine editors. But then, if you are one of the truly lovable, it's unlikely that *anything* you do will generate a feud.

The rest of us are wading into deep water when we produce a column of detailed fanzine reviews. I did fanzine critiques for *Odd* and *Quip* when I was young and foolish, but since then I've steered clear of that kind of column, despite the temptation.

Much as I love to read a probing fanzine critique by knowledgeable

fans like Ted White, Andy Hooper and Greg Benford, I've grown increasingly uneasy about the whole idea of that kind of critique.

I guess you could describe me as ambivalent.

The case against in-depth reviews usually begins with the declaration that Fandom Is Just a Goddam Hobby. When someone takes up a hobby, they don't expect their activity to be the subject of a widely circulated critique.

If your hobby is playing the piano, you don't expect a critic to evaluate your technique in an internationally distributed magazine. If your hobby is rebuilding old cars, no critic will parade your inadequacies before your closest friends.

Another argument against in-depth fanzine reviews is the question of objectivity. Our fancestors thought it was a natural step from reviewing professional magazines to critiquing amateur ones.

In reality, that small step is more like a kangaroo leap! Subjective factors may distort a prozine critique if the writer has a personal relationship with the authors (or is doing the piece to curry favor), but subjectivity is much more pronounced in lengthy fanzine reviews.

Fandom is a network of complex relationships. Even the most principled and fair-minded fanzine reviewer is hard-pressed to avoid factors that compromise objectivity.

The arguments in favor of detailed fanzine critiques often hinge on the assertion that Fandom may, or may not, be "just a goddam hobby," but it's certainly quite different from just about all other hobbies.

Fandom is a community that tends to run by its own rules. Trufandom, at least is still reckoned to be a meritocracy. That implies that Fandom will assess the quantity and quality of our fanac.

As a subculture, Fandom is more familial than competitive. A detailed review can be a great learning device for the editor whose zine comes under such scrutiny. A constructive review dishes out egoboo for successes and points the way to overcome weaknesses.

Another point for lengthy reviews is that fanzines are many and reading time is limited. Long reviews are probably a better guide to what's worthwhile and what's a waste of time than short reviews. In a long review, the writer's biases and preferences are easier to detect, so the reader can make allowances for them.

Trufandom/Fanzine Fandom/Core Fandom is, in many ways, a simulation of a literary salon. Our version takes out some of the lumps, but the basic structure remains. We present our writing, drawing and publishing to the group and the people in the group respond to what we've offered.

Viewed that way, penetrating reviews seem like part of that process. We distribute our fanzines and, in return, we get letters of comment from some, fanzines and special publications from others, and the verdicts of well-informed and perceptive critics.

My internal debate about in-depth fanzine reviews has a practical slant. It seems to me that a weekly – I think we can confirm that schedule after 19 weeks – fanzine devoted to Fandom, like **fanstuff** ought to

A Reformed Reviewer's Confession

It was a time of taking chances and experimentation. All I can say in my defense is that I was young, I only did it once and I didn't enjoy it at all.

I pledge you my solemn oath that I have never done it since that long-ago day when I succumbed to temptation.

No, I will never write another KTF fanzine review. I outgrew my juvenile fascination with this kind of writing. As a magazine and website editor, I always had a "no KTF reviews" policy. The same rule extends to my fanzines. I'm not saying "ban the KTF reviews" or anything like that. Others can write and publish them, but I don't want to do either.

An all-out KTF blast is the easiest review to write. Fairness, balance and human sentiment fly out the window when a KTF rant gets rolling. I concede that high-voltage smack can be amusing at times, like on radio's *Jim Rome Show*, but the relentless battering of a KTF review is likely to have some wince-worthy passages, too.

KTF reviews are quite an ego trip for the writer. It's jolly sadistic fun to obliterate a fanzine and its editor, especially if the reviewer pours out the vitriol with a generous hand.

Maybe there's a (limited) degree of entertainment value, if you don't think too hard about the recipient. KTF reviews don't seem to accomplish a great deal beyond that.

A KTF fanzine review is unlikely to have any positive effect on the editor or potential readers. A more thoughtful and sensitive writer can achieve the same purposes with a lot less heat and a less inflammatory approach.

I think KTF reviews are especially inappropriate for relatively new fanzines. Some fans negotiate the learning curve slower than others. Many faneds have overcome a weak start to eventually emerge as solid fanzine publishers. I'd hate to blow someone like that out of Fandom with a vicious KTF screed. (AK)

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take notice of others' creative fannish efforts.

I don't want to do mere listings or something like that. This is hardly "the fanzine of record" or anything of the kind.

I've thought about capsule reviews and I may end up doing something of the kind. Beside the fact that I don't love the idea, I think Guy Lillian is doing a good job with *Zine Dump* (www.efanzines.com). There's no reason we can't have many sets of capsules, of course, but I'd rather do something different than something that might seem to undercut Guy's review zine.

I'll be looking forward to your comments on the pros and cons of in-depth reviews. Volunteers for the position of fanzine reviewer will also be earnestly considered, though you might want to apply outside your loc (in the same email, but before or after your comments.)

— Arnie

Four-Dimensional Mental Crifanac Pick Your Corflu All-Time Guest List

[Note: As promised last issue, this is a re-launch of a Four-Dimensional Mental Crifanac idea. My original notion was ok, but Robert Lichtman's take was far superior.]

If you could wave one of the Spirit of Trufandom's magic wands to summon great fans of the past to a Corflu, whom would you choose?

Each of us can submit a guest list of up to 20 fans we'd like to have at Corflu. Your hypothetical invitees must have Passed On to the Enchanted Convention. (They're dead.)

List your choices in any order, though alphabetical by last name is appreciated. You can pick as many as you want, up to the 20-fan maximum.

Individual Guest Lists will not be revealed unless you include them within your loc (as Robert Lichtman did in *fanstuff #17*). It's ok to send your Guest List in the same email as your loc, just put it after the end of the letter of comment.

Appearing on a Guest Lit is worth once point when I total them. This will filter out idiosyncratic selections and give us a consensus Guest List for Corflu Imagine.

Here's my list as an example: Bob Bloch, rich brown, Charles Burbee, FM Busby, Terry Carr, Norm Clarke, Vincent Clarke, Calvin Demmon, Ron Ellik, Jack Gaughan, Chuch Harris, Lee Hoffman, Francis Towner Laney, Thom Perry, Boyd Raeburn, Bill Rotsler, Bob Shaw, Bob Tucker, Dave Van Arnam, Walt Willis.

Now, it's *your* turn.

loccer room

Taral Wayne

You haven't heard from me in quite a while. The reason is that the last two or three issues have oddly been somewhat hard going for me. Or, perhaps not so odd. You've been examining the nature and state of fandom under a microscope for the last while, and I had just finished writing an enormous amount on the same subject earlier this year.

The material has finally appeared in the new issue of Askance. But after so many thousands of words, I find that I still don't really think I understand what fandom is, how it works or what it ought to be doing.

Realizing that nothing I have said or written about at such great length is likely to affect what the vast majority of fans think or will do, a sense of futility has sunk in.

At best, my thoughts will amplify those of my immediate peers, perhaps alter the perception of one thing or another in one or two minds.

When I open the file of the new Fanstuff, then, I encounter another huge wallop of the same floundering around among vague, indefinable ideas that nobody seems able to fully agree on, and break out into a sweat. Then, while I go prepare a cold compact for my feverish brain, all idea of writing a loc flies out the window.

I suppose all fandom is social fandom to some extent. Even Harry Warner Jr. made friends with his correspondents, entertained occasional visitors to his shrine in Hagerstown and greatly enjoyed his membership in FAPA -- as much for the sake of contact with his fellow fans as for any "serious and constructive" information that was exchanged -- despite having said he only attended one convention in his life. (I think he said that.) The fact is, some fans do not want to base their social life around fandom, and prefer to keep it at a more formal distance. I know for a fact that I'm far more clever, wittier and incisive when I'm "talking" to my keyboard than when talking to a living person across a table from me in a pub. In fact, sometimes I fail to communicate very well at all when having to do it on the fly. It can't be that I'm the only one.

But it is those fans who thrive in company -- who find ceaseless chatter to be infinitely more rewarding than banging on keys -- who run everything, make almost all decisions, and, ultimately, will shape the totality of fandom to their liking. Those in fandom who are more reclusive will be completely dispossessed in time. It is not because our numbers are shrinking, but because it is in the nature of things, just as the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. The groupies get the group and the loners get more alone.

Did classic fandom really end in 1962? That seems pretty extreme to me, like saying traditional Rock ended when Elvis began to sing. There was a hiatus of a few years, before the pace of fandom began to pick up around 1966 or so. That is also the date after which the exponential growth of fandom can be said to begin, and when a number of important changes occurred (as you summarized). But, I'd say that plenty of "classical" type fanac continued to happen all through the 1970s. For that matter, a little of the traditional fandom contin-

The Loccer Room House Rules

Here, in brief, is a list of the rules under which I conduct the letter column.

The "loccer room" is an "equal opportunity" forum. I print all substantial locs; the fans in "WAHF" have sent simple acknowledgements or communications not intended for publication.

Locs appear in approximately the same order as received. It would be unusual for any loc to be printed out of order, though the possibility exists.

Letters are never interrupted by editorial comments. My comments are off to the side, in the narrow columns.

When a writer addresses a topic the full text is always printed. It's like posting to an e-list, except it's easier to read and won't bury your contributions at the end of a seemingly endless thread.

There are no ambushes. Except for my comments in "loccer room" no one will respond to your loc in the issue in which it first appears.

Apologies for disagreeing with me are unnecessary. I don't want to stifle anyone's opinions. I'd like to keep "loccer room" free of personal attacks, but I don't care *what* you write as long as you write intelligently. Fact is, I don't even *have* a firm opinion on many subjects raised in **fanstuff**.

To Taral Wayne The Search for Truth Meets The Uncaring Masses

It really doesn't matter to me if a lot of fans are indifferent to my attempts to explore, explain and understand Fandom and its denizens.

I'm grateful that so many fine fans have shown interest in **fanstuff**. Every loc, every contribution of art or articles, every news item, is a source of joy and satisfaction to me.

Yet if all of you wonderful folks hadn't taken to **fanstuff**, I would continue to think about such pseudo-weighty matters related to Fandom. The questions would still be there and I would still want to delve into them. (I'd be publishing a different fanzine.)

I've tried to offer several major discussion points per issue and to leaven the mix with humor.

**More to Taral Wayne
The Social Side of Fandom**

Fandom has included social contact almost since its inception. Many fans, due to geography or choice, have fanned with little or no in-person contact. It has never been easier to be a fannish recluse, I'd say, thanks in large measure to the Internet. Yet despite many solitary fans, early Fandom flourished most in cities like New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Los Angeles.

The Science Fiction League indirectly promoted fannish socializing. The SFL, which greatly increased the fan population, was based on local chapters. Fandom's oldest local clubs. PSFS and LASFS, started as SFL chapters.

Of course, there's a big difference between fans who socialize and social fans. The former integrate such contact with their creative fanac, while the latter consider socializing an end in itself and don't want to write, draw or edit for Fandom.

**More to Taral Wayne
When Lone Wolves Congregate**

Your comments about talking versus writing hit home for me and I suspect others felt a connection, too. Your situation is pretty typical for people who entered Fandom during the "classic" period.

Most such fans were introverted, bookish and inclined to solitary pursuits when they first came to Fandom. As neofans, most did better on paper than in person, but Fandom provides many opportunities to develop and sharpen social skills.

It certainly worked for me. I'm still a bit shy with strangers at times, but I'm a better public speaker and more deft at handling in-person contact.

A Guide to the Narrow Columns

I write everything in the narrow columns unless otherwise credited.

In the letter column, my responses to each letter of comment are grouped by color and separated into these rounded-corner boxes. The name of the fan whose loc sparked the comment is always in bold on the top line.

ues to this day. I could not draw a line between two moments in any of this long stretch of time in which I would say "things changed here." It may be that the somewhat catastrophic events of 1962 or '63 may simply create an illusion of a sudden, fundamental change, where in fact there more likely was none.

The change there was might have been more like the subtle change as you walk down a street, pass a couple of empty storefronts and realize after a moment that you're in a different neighborhood than the one you were in before. Of course, now that 50 years has passed since the Breendoggle and all that, you can safely say we're on the other side of the city... or perhaps downtown, wondering just when it was that we left the semi-pastoral suburbs.

Jonathan McCalmont

You ask in Fanstuff 17 who killed fandom and write with considerable wisdom about the historical changes that fandom underwent in the mid-20th Century. As someone who was born in 1976 and who has existed on the margins of British fandom for close to ten years, I must say that nothing has turned me off fandom more violently than the attitudes displayed in your columns and editorials.

You speak of death, but what of rebirth? If social institutions are to survive then it is vital that these institutions be remade in the image of each new generation. Culture is not a fixed thing and each new generation of fans is the product of a very particular set of times and places. Forged by different experiences and different worlds, it is unavoidable that each new generation of fans should have their own unique set of cultural and social requirements. My experience of fandom is of a set of institutions that has little interest in renewal or rebirth. Trapped by the delusion that their way is the only way, established fans have allowed their institutions to decline at a time when enthusiasm for science fiction, fantasy and horror have come to dominate the mainstream cultural landscape. Genre films, games, TV series and books generate billions of dollars as young people the entire world over fall over themselves in their quest for sensawunda. Sadly, rather than seizing the cultural moment and expanding to meet the demands of millions of new fans, SF fandom turned inwards and began constructing the sort of self-aggrandizing myths that you regularly spit in the face of people like Nalini Haynes.

Faced by a community of old, straight, white, middle class people who bleat about education when they should be thinking about inclusivity and multiculturalism, today's young (and at 36 I do not include myself in that demographic) seek shelter in the fandoms of anime, video games, media and comics. Institutions that are only too happy to respond to the changing needs of younger fans. Institutions that emerged at a time when thousands of younger fans were turned away from an insular and dysfunctional fandom that seems to be perpetually drunk on old glories and obsessed with events at conventions so buried in the distant past that they might as well be bemoaning the French revolution

You write of wanting to return to the fandom that your fancestors left you. That is all very well, but what do you think your fancestors would say about the fact that your generation drove fannish institutions into the ground lest the young and the different tainted their sacred clubhouse? Your fannish ancestors built these institutions and people of your generation allowed them to decline into eerie temples to your own spite and vanity. Your fancestors gave you the gift of a way of life and a sense of place and when younger fans came to you in search of something similar, you told them that they needed schooling.

The question is not that of who is responsible for the death of fandom but of how that death was engineered. As someone whose parents would not have been old enough to attend the 1962 Worldcon as adults I am not in a position to judge but I strongly suspect that the murder weapon was a slew of science fiction fanzines that preferred spitting venom at younger fans to the onerous task of actually discussing science fiction.

Eric Mayer

I haven't written for several issues simply because I felt I had nothing useful to contribute about the topics under discussion, however interesting. Trying to define fandom is, to me, a fascinating exercise -- up to a point, like problems of metaphysics. Really, there is no "solution." Ultimately, you can only define it to the extent that people know what you are talking about when you use the term.

Whether Classic Fandom ended in 1962 is beyond me since I didn't show up until 1972. But the fanzine fandom I participated in during the seventies sure felt like what you describe as Classic Fandom except demographically. (Older and with more femmefen.) As you say of Classic Fandom: "Fanzines dominated activity....It was the glue that held everything together."

The difference between Classic Fandom and seventies fandom may be mainly that by the seventies there were trekkies and more conventions and media fans in general. But why try to redefine fandom to include media fen or Star Trek enthusiasts or any of the rest? During the seventies a vibrant fanzine publishing community still existed. It was, in fact, Classic Fandom. All the rest were not part of that fandom. They did not participate in ongoing Classic Fandom. Why would they be included?

The reason, it seems, is that at some point people began to define fandom more by conventions rather than fanzines. If fandom's main activity involves fanzines produced for and circulating amongst a particular audience then clearly those who don't bother with this activity or this group are not fans from the point of view of Classic Fandom. The fact that so many media fen and so on now attend Worldcon would mean nothing.

However, once the defining activity of fandom is conventions then, of course, you have to expand your definition of fandom to include everyone who shows up at conventions.

Early on, conventions were an opportunity for those in a fanzine driven community to meet. Now fanzines are mostly produced, to keep in touch, by a community of those who attend sf cons. Or at least that's how it seems to me.

Classic Fandom was not overrun by the "barbarians." Only conventions were overrun by the barbarians. The reason Classic Fandom is dead is because many fans abandoned it in favor of conventions which are not surprisingly dominated by other interest groups.

Well, I guess I am in a gloomy mood today. However, I brightened up a bit at your mention of Revenant, thanks. I have been experimenting with breaking my publishing up into discrete titles with different purposes/style (to my eyes) rather than trying to publish the same zine until it wears out. The idea was largely inspired by your multiplicity of titles over the years.

David B. Williams

My thanks to all who admitted to reading my featured contribution in Fanstuff 15, "Us and Them." I require egoboo, but just the mention of my name is all I need to keep me going. Any more and I tend to get light-headed. Arnie's right, it's not about the egoboo, but every engine needs fuel.

To Jonathan McCalmont If You Can't be Accurate At Least be Emphatic

It's exciting whenever someone connects to **fanstuff** for the first time. I'm especially flattered that the fanzine could arouse a self-identified British fringe fan to such a high pitch of emotion.

That's why it pains me so much to have to refrain from commenting on so much of what you wrote. Sadly, a couple of things about your loc make it impossible for me to enter any kind of meaningful dialog.

Your extensive misreading of my essay about causes of long-term changes in Fandom renders all your comments on the subject irrelevant. It seems that you neither got the fannish allusion in the cover essay headline nor read the essays itself with sufficient care. Otherwise, you might have noticed my comments about the hyperbolic nature of the headline or my assertion that no one killed Classic Fandom.

Your other comments, based on your ignorance about US Fandom and me are unintentionally funny in several places.

I really can't reply, because I would have to recount my professional, personal and fannish history — and I have no wish to play, "Do you know who I am?"

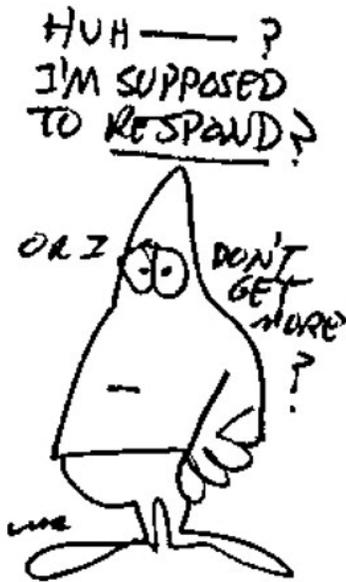
Perhaps some of the fans who *do* know me will write in to "locer room" to correct you, assuming they can stop laughing long enough to send a loc.

More to Jonathan McCalmont Let's Keep Age-ism Out of Fandom!

There's one thing I *can* discuss in your loc. It's shot through with the most virulent age-ism I've ever encountered in Fandom.

Trufans don't like people dragging this kind of Mundane crap into Fandom. We judge each other as individuals without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, religion, income or age.

I've always had older and younger fan friends. BNFs helped me so much that I hate the thought of age-ism like yours denying today's new fans the same benefit.



**To Eric Mayer
The Topic Is Topics**

When two of my favorite participants in **famstuff** like you and Taral, voice similar complaints, you've definitely got my attention. You and he also have my gratitude for speaking up.

In exchange for my attention and gratitude, I think I may need some of your and Taral's patience.

I agree with you that epistemology is only good up to a point. In fact, I thought I was already moving **famstuff** away from defining terms and categorization. I thought the last few cover essays got away from heavy discussions of nomenclature. Yet those were the issues that you both had trouble locating. So, I need some help from you, Taral and, indeed, all **famstuff**'s readers.

Specifically, I'd like suggestions for topics you'd like me to tackle. If it's a fannish discussion topic, I'll do my best. Of course I'd also like to have some of *you* send me a piece on a fannish topic.

Your comments about the change from a fanzine-centered Fandom to a con-centered one reminded me of an article with a similar premise I wrote before the turn of the century.

I may well dust off the idea and write it up with the benefit of a couple of decades to observe and analyze.

I have been overcome by a fanwriting frenzy this summer. I don't know what is happening to me. I went six years without contributing a single word to any fanzine. Now I find that I have conceived and delivered six fanzine features in the past seven weeks.

"Us and Them" and the subsequent "How It All Began" in *Fanstuff* 17 were just the first of these fanwriting effusions to see print, followed by "Fancy 3 and Me" in the latest *Drink Tank* 324. You may be seeing more from me here (Arnie says "Yes"), and the remainder of my inventory will no doubt be snatched from my hands by a howling pack of ravenous faneds. If this keeps up, I will be in danger of losing my hard-won reputation as a disengaged slacker.

I suspect that *Fanstuff* is responsible. It seems to have stirred up my formerly sluggish fannish juices. As Don Michael Corleone lamented in the last *Godfather* movie, "Every time I think I'm out, they pull me back in."

Each time I finished one of these pieces, I thought I had exhausted my Muse and could relapse into sloth and lethargy. Then another appealing topic would pop into my head, and I would be back at the keyboard until 4 a.m. My last composition dressed out at just over 3,000 words. I hope that's the end of this manic phase.

Regarding *Fanstuff* 17, if you want to find out when Old Fandom became Mass Fandom, I can only echo Deep Throat's advice: "Follow the money." In olden times, the huckster rooms were packed with book and magazine dealers. When I attended my first modern convention, I was dismayed to find that these had become an endangered species.

At *InConJunction* in Indianapolis, limited space permits only about 20 dealers to be accommodated, so book dealers are restricted to one for new books and one for used. All the other booths are hawking T-shirts, swords, costumes, DVDs and other media products, doodads and bling.

I have a key observation about *Fanstuff*'s hectic publishing schedule. The short cycle time is ideal for inducing a conditioned reflex. I feel like one of Dr. Pavlov's dogs; every Saturday I start drooling and checking my e-mail at shorter and shorter intervals. A more sedate schedule would have a much weaker effect.

I would like to add some supplementary notes to my recapitulation of Genesis, "How It All Began," in the last issue.

I should have said, "Gernsback himself began *regularly* referring to his magazine's content as science fiction in 1929." Apparently, he used the term once in 1927.

Gernsback was such a shady operator that when, as I mentioned, he lost control of *Amazing* in a 1929 bankruptcy, some later observers suggested that it was just a scam to avoid paying his printing and paper bills.

This suspicion arose because *Amazing* had reported a healthy circulation and, after being forced into receivership, Gernsback was back in business within months. But Gernsback published several other magazines, not just the profitable *Amazing*. And he also owned one of NYC's early radio stations, where he tested new technology and conducted expensive experiments in TV broadcasting.

He may have deserved the sobriquet bestowed by H. P. Lovecraft and others, "Hugo the Rat." But to be charitable, perhaps Gernsback was simply a poor business manager. Or both.

I should also have acknowledged the role of Charles D. Hornig, who is reported to have suggested the idea of the Science Fiction League to Gernsback. Hornig was the 17-year-old faned hired by Gernsback as the managing

editor of *Wonder Stories* at little more than one third the salary of the previous editor.

But the idea of organizing a magazine's readers into a supportive association wasn't new to Gernsback. He had done something similar in 1909 when he used his magazine *Modern Electrics* to create the Wireless Association of America for radio amateurs.

And regardless of where the idea came from, it was Gernsback who used his name and editorial bullhorn to launch the SFL.

I only mentioned SFL chapters, but apparently it was also possible to obtain individual memberships. Numbered certificates were issued, and a low number bestowed seniority in local chapters.

I speculated on how much influence the amateur journalism movement may have had on early fanzines and the creation of FAPA. Wollheim was definitely familiar with the practices of amateur journalism. He seems to have distributed *The Phantagraph* through two ajay apas.

Finally, I noted that the annual SF Achievement Awards were nicknamed for Hugo Gernsback. This choice wasn't universally popular. According to Juanita Coulson, "That designation was still unofficial in 1953. A number of fans had already begun agitating in favor of other nicknames for the miniature rocket ships – 'Vernes', for one. But 'Hugo' eventually won out."

Damn! I wrote a first draft of this loc this morning, and as I sat down later in the afternoon to review, revise, and transmit it, I suddenly got another great idea for a fanzine article. It's so good that I am compelled to write it. Looks like I'm not done yet.

Terry Kemp

FREE WILL or DETERMINISM...

Play the Arnie Katz Precognition Game!

Brought to you by the makers of the Propeller Beanie Cap and the famous Zap Zap Ray Gun.

How to play the AKPG:

First, dust off your Ouija Board, polish off your Murky Crystal Ball, pull out your Amber Tarot Cards, or whatever you use for your daily rounds of precognition, fortune telling, and predicting the future.

Second, what is the game?

Easy: Guessing when the next issue of *Fanstuff* will be distributed. And the issue after that, and so on.

Right now, go ahead and guess when *Fanstuff* #24, or *Fanstuff* # 48, or even *Fanstuff* #18 will be distributed.

Say I guess that *Fanstuff* #24 will be distributed on Sunday night at 8:00. All I need to do to finish my play is to send Arnie my guess, along with \$5 Razzbuckniks, to seal my guess.

With some 300 readers, we can easily fill up every hour of every week until someone has picked every hourly slot.

Correct winner wins all the Razzbuckniks for that week!

And then the fun begins.

There's Arnie, sitting at his computer, a finished copy of the latest *Fanstuff* in his hot hands, ready to press the send key. But wait, now Arnie is consulting the betting list.

Gee, says Arnie to himself, *it's Sunday night at 8:00. If I send it now, Terry will win all the Razzbuckniks bet this week. He'll say he predicted it. Can't have that. So, what'll I do?*

More to Eric Mayer What Happens When Fanhistorical Eras Collide

Fanhistory, just like its Mundane cousin, examines and analyzes the broad sweep of events and the evolution of societal trends.

Inherently, therefore, it's to some degree a simplification of the procession of events. (This is sometimes called "big picture thinking," probably because it sounds so much more impressive.)

The Renaissance followed the Middle Ages. Historians draw the line between those eras in various years, depending on their interpretations.

Similarly, we can draw the boundaries of Classic Fandom in various years. David B. Williams used 1962 as a point of comparison with today's Mass Fandom, so I followed suit. I'm fairly sure that neither of us would call 1962 the *end* of Classic Fandom. I'd put the division at the 1976 Mid-Americon, but some might peg it as early as 1969. Fanzine fans knew Fandom's history, literature and customs, so Fanzine Fandom had more of the flavor of Classic Fandom.

The contemporary version of Fanzine Fandom, Trufandom, is still more closely linked to Classic Fandom than any of the Other Special Fandoms.

The difference was that fanzines and fanzine fans were no longer the center of fan activity. Things continued more or less as normal in Fanzine Fandom, but we became a progressively smaller percentage of the total fan population.

Got News? Send It to fanstuff!

There are few better ways to spread news of your new issue, Big Project or other fannish happenings than in the pages of **fanstuff**.

Still, the "fanews" column on the last page of every issue demands a full serving of scoops every seven days.

I can't fill that empty space on the final page if you don't send them.

Only *you* can prevent 'fanews' from degenerating into a litany of sorrowful deaths and catastrophic injuries.

**To David B. Williams
OK... Sometimes It Is
About the Egoboo**

If this lust for egoboo really does produce a fanwriting frenzy, I'll be glad to add my praise for "Us and Them." I'm also ready and willing to mention your name — David B. Williams! David B. Williams! — if that'll help.

And I know I'm not alone when I say that I'm eagerly looking forward to your next piece.

**More to David B. Williams
Courting the Fannish Muse**

You are invited, even encouraged to write more and, especially, more for **fanstuff**.

For some people, the more they write, the more they *can* write. I've always been prolific, both professionally and in Fandom. I don't think this was some sort of innate ability, but one that developed as I wrote more and more. Between Fandom and magazines, I got in a lot more practice than most writers.

I'm lazier than I was, so I mostly avoid marathon writing sessions, but I still can write almost nonstop. A day may arrive when I lose that ability, but so far I can still tap into it.

Writer's Block has never struck me, but my low-activity periods in Fandom are often preceded by "over-revving." That's what I call the state where I get too many ideas, jump from piece to piece and complete nothing.

**Still More to David B. Williams
Money Is the Root
Of Fakefandom**

Trufans have many skills, but few possess the skill, much less the ability, to make a lot of money. They'd enjoy a multi-million-dollar windfall, but they seldom arrange their lives around the accumulation of wealth.

I agree with you that when money becomes the decisive feature of Fandom, it is apt to lead to unfannish results.

I know, I'll send it out at 9:00, that'll teach that smartass Terry.

Wait, Lenny Bailes, has 9:00 locked in. What'll I do?

I'll try 10:00. Yeah, that's it, 10:00 will work. But wait, Ted White has 10:00 locked in. Who knows what Ted will say if he wins. Can't have that. So, what'll I do?

So, let's all play the AKPG. If we all play, someone has to win. But will it be Free Will or Determinism?

Is the future so locked in that even if Arnie knows when the next issue, and the issue after that, is meant to be released, that even Arnie, Head Honcho of all things *Fanstuff*, can't help being locked into a pre-determined world? Or, is there Free Will?

Play the game, and maybe Fandom can figure out for once and for all if there is Free Will.

So, the other day I had to do some work outside in between the monsoon winds. It was very hot. And then a streak of green light broke through the darkening clouds. I realized that I had a Green Lantern story.

It's short.

It takes place during the 1962 Chicon. I was seven. Pop, chair of the event, introduced me to Howard Devore in the Hucksters Room in order to have some place to put me out from under tow. Howard was Great (of course) and took me in hand and in stride. In minutes I was the proud owner of a stack of some 20 to 30 pocketbooks that he rapidly plucked from his table. He'd hold up a cover, and ask if I'd read it. When I just shrugged, unsure of his point, he put it in the gift pile filled to overflowing with Doc Smith, John Carter and others.

I was charmed by him, and spent everyday of the convention in the Hucksters Room helping him as he continued to add to my pile each day.

Sometime during the second day, Harlan Ellison came into the room in rare form.

I had been wandering around, looking at all the neat stuff when he entered the room, spotted me and spotted Sturgeon's son, Robin, a few tables away. HE made his decision and descended on Robin like a dark cloud.

In short order he was loudly and ruthlessly quizzing Robin over his knowledge of science fiction. Robin, at age 12, was a newly published author, having a story in the special *F&SF* issue that was a run-up to the con. I suspect that HE took umbrage at this, considering himself the youngest prodigy. And damned if he wasn't trying to prove it to the room full of Hucksters that afternoon. I heard HE accuse Robin of being a Fake Fan.

I took pity on Robin immediately. I'd already seen several of HE's harangues, and he could get quite ugly, and did and was. I was busy trying desperately to memorize book titles should HE decide to verbally assault me next.

But he didn't, to my immense relief.

Fast forward to later that night.

Left to my own devices during the convention as Pop was too busy to keep track of my whereabouts, I had found the movie room. Back in those days there was always some well-off fan who had some kind of movie set-up, the old reel-to-reel kind.

This Island Earth had just begun when I arrived. The room was nearly empty. There were a couple of fans in the back going over their acquisitions, chortling amongst themselves. And there was a couple in one corner doing what usually requires the privacy of a bedroom.

I had the place to myself, sitting in the front row, when HE walked in, spotted me and sat down beside me. Of course we knew each other well. With a nod, HE

began to narrate and comment on the film. Telling me that it was his favorite. Such confidences shared.

At the beginning of the film, Cal Meacham's plane is mysteriously rescued by a, you guessed it, blinding green light that guides it to safety. When the beam starts HE leans close to me and tells me that it is his favorite part of all time because it reminds him of Green Lantern's light.

I'm impressed. HE is right. It does look like the real thing.

We watched the movie together, HE commenting on this or that. When it is over I don't know it yet but I've had not just a good time, but a great time with HE.

When no one was watching HE could be a real person.

So, that's why HE is my HEro.

Arnie, if I were forced to select one primary reason for the explosion of fandom at the end of 1962, I would pick the increase of commercialism which, as you so aptly put it, taints fandom. 1962 also brought the first sweeping wave of cheap pocketbooks, like the Signet reprints, so it wasn't just inside fandom, but throughout and into the real world.

Part of this must have been exhilarating to experience. In just a few short years (seemingly) the boom from busted magazines over-saturating the marketplace had stretched to the first wave of general public acceptance of science fiction as a form of Literature (although not yet accepted as Art, as James Blish might've wished).

Yes, *Star Trek*, etc. followed.

The same thing happened in Comic Fandom. Over commercialization. Fans running the con found a way to make Big Time Money, and pursued it as the end. Fans no more.

So it goes.

Here are a couple of thoughts in regards to DB Williams article: You are correct that Ackerman is attributed with coining the public usage word "sci-fi" in 1954. However...

The drift to a newer phrase was already in the works for years prior. Rog Phillips began conducting his "The Club House" column inside *Amazing Stories* in 1948. He carefully followed the Gernsback line by using "scientifiction" alternately with "stf." By 1950, "scientifiction" had fallen into disuse, with rare displays of "stf."

Rog was reflecting both the editorial policy of editors Hamling, Palmer, and Browne, but also what he was reading in the fanzines he was reviewing. By 1951 "science fiction" was in full use by Rog, paving the way for Ackerman to simplify the usage further.

I'd like to idly speculate that had Rog continued his column past mid-1953 that he would've coined a more apt word. Rog coined many phrases, he was very creative. Given more time Rog would certainly have tried his hand, or words, at several choice possibilities. We will never know. However, probably as part of the lingering Ackerman-Graham Feud, Rog never used "sci-fi" inside his column, even when he continued it in 1954 through 1956.

So, David, you have now experienced Mystiboo, that unsought and most unexpected form of egoboo. Degler, High Priest of the Cosmic Circle, has got to be a character worth writing about. And you did. And you did it well. Not only did you answer the primary question of any fan historian: Who was this person? You also wrote a very entertaining article, full of sleuthing, pitfalls, and cliffhangers. What's not to like?

To Terry Kemp The Fanstuff Schedule: Ready for the Weekend

I'm a victim of circumstances. (Woo-woo! Woo-woo! Woo-woo!).

I had little trouble maintaining *Glitter's* Friday release schedule, despite the usual assortment of crises. *Glitter* was generally four pages and I could create most of the content Thursday evening and Friday morning.

This fanzine is three-to-five times larger and puts much heavier demands on me as its main writer. I have to start work on the next issue the day after I finish the last one. I have to do a little each day until I put it into high gear on Wednesday afternoon.

Consequently, just about any problem on any day, not just Friday, can cause a delay. Delays accumulate and sometimes lead to other delays. Friday may become Saturday or even Sunday.

I hope no one will be disillusioned to learn that **fanstuff** isn't the only thing in my life or the only claim on my time. I want to reduce stress by being less compulsive. (I may crack up completely the first time I don't get out an issue before the end of the weekend.) Meanwhile, I hope everyone understands; I needed to unwind a bit

More to Terry Kemp Another Change-Promoting Factor

Commercialism is the enemy of the Spirit of Trufandom. It has, as you observe, distorted some aspects of Fandom to its detriment.

However, Commercialism isn't the only fan philosophy that has increased. Trufandom's primary philosophies were Trufannishness and Insurgentism from 1940 to about 2000.

Since then, the Internet and the new electronic social media have caused a great increase in the importance of Communicationism. There are now plenty of fans who do the bulk of their writing in the form of Facebook and e-list posts.

As always, our group's prevailing philosophy is a consensus and incorporates all our philosophic schools, but Communicationism is currently king.

Fanzine Reviews”
Panacea or Pointless
Arnie/1

Fen Den
Fanzine Reviews
And Me
Arnie/2

A Reformed Fanzine
Reviewer’s
Confession
Arnie/3

Four-Dimensional
Mental Crifanac:
Pick Your
All-Time
Guest List
Arnie/4

loccer room
YOU & me/5

fanews
Arnie/12



So, I'll end here. But first "Kreskin" Kemp makes a prediction. Having no Crystal Ball I have to wipe my Murky computer screen, rubbing it until the Genie of the Future gifts me with foresight. Ah, there it is, I see it now, the next *Fanstuff*, #18, will be distributed on Monday at 3:00.

I'll send my \$5 Razzbuckniks via the usual carrier pigeons.

WAHF: Taral Wayne, Robert Lichtman, R-Laurraine Tutihasi, Mike Glycer

fanews

SNAPS Headed for ReLaunch

SNAPS, the electronic apa founded by JoHn Hardin, Joyce and me, may not be dead after all. A couple of over-enthusiastic members who over-burdened the eMailings with mammoth contributions led to SNAPS' apparent dissolution.

Hoping to ride to the rescue is returning SNAPster Laurraine Tutihasi. The incumbent OEs, JoHn Hardin and Jacq Monahan have given Laurraine their approval to take over as SNAPS' Official Editor.

There are no dues and the activity requirement is minimal. If you'd like more information about SNAPS, write to Laurraine (Laurraine@mac.com).

Woody Bernardi Sighted in Michigan!

Fandom's Happy Traveling Giant, Woody Bernardi made a pre-Chicon 7 trip to visit Laurie Kunkel in northern Michigan. Laurie is still battling back from some serious illnesses and Woody was able to help his old friend by running some errands, cleaning the house and helping Laurie make one of her so-far rare excursions into the warm summer air.

Woody went from there to the world science fiction convention in Chicago. After that, he'll be coming to Las Vegas for a reunion with his many fan friends.

The Vegrants will fete Woody on Saturday, September 8 at a big open party. If you'd like to attend, contact Joyce Katz (joyceworley1@cox.net)

It's NonCon Weekend in Las Vegas!

Time to celebrate, but look for a new **fanstuff** next weekend. Meanwhile — keep fanning!

— Arnie

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Member: fwa

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