

# fanstuff

**Touching the Elbow of Fandom**

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## **FANAC: A Closer Look At Fan Activity**

I do a lot of fanac. Oh, you noticed? I revel in things I enjoy and I certainly enjoy many varieties of fanac.

I'm bound to think about anything that takes as much of my time, energy and creativity as fanac. Yet I didn't examine fanac systematically until it came up while talking to Brenda Dupont and James Stanley Daugherty.

Both are very nice people and active fans, but much of their activity is done outside Trufandom. Explaining my attitudes about various types of fan-

*Continued on page 2\_*

# fen den

## My Favorite Forms of Fanac

After noticing the above headline, you probably didn't need slan-like paranormal powers to guess that fanwriting and fanpubbing are at or near the top of my list of favorites.

That's true, though their spots on that list depend on the rules for inclusion. I'll soft-pedal "anything two fans do together is fanac" in favor of considering only Primary and Secondary Fanac. Otherwise, Joyce informs me, I'd better put "sex with the High Priestess of Fandom" in first place. Likewise, "hanging out with fan friends" would be right up there if we weren't disqualifying Social and Supportive Fanac.

Here's my list of favorites, though the specific order shifts from day to day:

**Fanwriting.** It doesn't always come easy but I love the struggle. I'm fairly pleased with the results, which enhances the experience.

**Fanzine Publishing.** I've enjoyed it even more since I took my fanzines digital, though I occasionally get a little nostalgic for the olden days of mimeographing, collating and schlepping to the post office.

**Vegrants Co-host.** Maybe I'm cheating a little bit, since part of what I love about co-hosting Vegrants is the opportunity to hang out with my friends. Yet part of it is the group fanac, like publishing *Neon* and putting on Corflu.

**Reading Fanzines.** Hard copy fanzines are difficult-to-impossible for me, but I read as many digital ones as I can.

**Corflu.** I go to every one I can afford and wish I could go to more. A weekend with so many of my dearest fan friends always sends my fannish enthusiasm soaring.

**Favorite piece of 2012 fanac: fanstuff**

**Favorite non-literary 2012 fanac:**

Programming Corflu Glitter

**All-Time favorite piece of fanac:**

*Folly #1*

**All-Time favorite non-literary piece of fanac:** The 1965 Great Trek

How about you?

I'd like to hear about your favorite fanac and I'm sure that others will, too. Tell us all about it in a loc... please? (AK)

ac led to study, re-evaluation and, ultimately, to this article. Please, don't hate Brenda Dupont and James Stanley Daugherty. I'm sure neither meant to cause this article.

After some reflection, I came up with the following axioms regarding fanac:

- **All fanac is not equal.** All Trufans won't react identically, but in a general way, we assign an intrinsic value to each type of activity. Trufans usually esteem intellectual-literary activities more than clerical activities.
- **Each Special Fandom rates fanac differently.** Trufans value writing a fan article higher than running registration at a regional con, while a convention fan would judge them in reversed order.
- **There is a hierarchy of fanac.** If fans attach an intrinsic value to each type of fanac, then some types of fanac have a higher intrinsic value than others.
- **Trufans judge the worth of primary fanac by three measures: quality, quantity and difficulty.**

I'll confine my further inquiry into the nature of the Hierarchy of Fanac to Trufandom. That's what I know best and it's also less likely to offend other fans than any effort I made to probe *their* hierarchy of fanac.

There are four basic kinds of fanac:

- **Primary Fanac.** In our corner of Fandom, primary fanac includes an activity requiring intellectual, artistic and/or literary creativity.
- **Secondary Fanac.** This category includes many types of fanac that don't involve writing, drawing and publishing for Fandom. Creating and running a convention program or constructing and performing a costume at the World SF Convention are secondary fanac for us, but are Primary Fanac for fans in, respectively, con-running and costume fandoms.
- **Supportive Fanac.** Fans do things that aren't creative or even particularly fannish, but which promote primary and secondary fanac. Convention registration is an example of vital, supportive fanac. It's basically volunteer clerical work, but it is important to the convention.
- **Social Fanac.** This is the realm of interpersonal relations. Social Fanac may not have any direct effect on any other type of fanac but friendship is the glue that holds our subculture together.

Besides the sheer joy of illuminating part of Unknown, this analysis may have some practical utility.

Fandom is no longer compact and homogenous. When we interact with fans who have little or no contact with our peculiar subculture, a better understanding of their values ought to come in fairly handy. Greater awareness of Trufandom's hierarchy of fanac and how it differs from those of other Special Fandoms might reduce inadvertent insults and, perhaps, improve communication.

An incident when Joyce and I were Westercon Fan Guests of Honor illustrates this point. In keeping with our FGoH status, we decided to tour the open parties and meet as many of the attendees as possible.

We went to a big party for a St. Louis world SF con bid. I walked up to a small group, waited for a lull in the conversation and introduced myself as the Fan Guest of Honor.

They smiled and seemed glad to meet me. As I stuck out my hand to shake, one of the guys asked, "So, what cons have you done?"

"I mostly do fanzines," I said. Everyone took a step or two back and my hand remained unshaken.

I don't know what incited that reaction. Perhaps it was no more than shock at meeting someone who could read *and* write; I don't know.

What I *do* know is that it would've gone a lot better if I had done all this thinking about the hierarchy of fanac before journeying to El Paso.

If I had, I would've responded in a way that would've been more meaningful to the questioner. I should've mentioned my con-running and con committee experience, mention the club I host and then, maybe tossed in a comment about liking zines.

A better knowledge of the Hierarchy of Fanac might also help local clubs attract new members. I don't know how it is in other fan centers – I hope you'll tell me – but Las Vegas' formal SF group has had a terrible time trying to build membership. SNAFFU's president and the few remaining members have worked extremely hard over several years, but the strenuous effort hasn't gained any significant recruits.

I think the reason is that the fans doing the outreach are primarily Social Fans. They try to lure new members with things like meet-ups in bars and group dinners at local restaurants.

Those are fine Social Fanac. In other words, they are not intrinsically fannish activity, but can be considered fanac when done in the context of Fandom.

What SNAFFU probably needs to do is use different bait, things that would appeal to someone who might become a fan.

You don't have to be a fan, or even a "fannish type," to go to a bar or a restaurant. So the curious come to the meet-ups, scope out the woman and generally are never seen again.

If a club wants potential fans, events need to incorporate primary and secondary fanac. That may repel some visitors, but they aren't going to stick if they don't like club fanac. Including such elements, on the other hand, might encourage a potential fan to make the leap and come to the event. — Arnie

## What Is 'Fanac'?

A definition of "fanac" may prove unexpectedly elusive. Most of "us" know it when we see it, but that's not very helpful. Fans in other Special Fandoms are likely to have different opinions on the subject.

Fanac is less about what you do than the context in which you are doing it.

If four co-workers go to dinner, that isn't fanac. If four fans go to the same restaurant and order the same food as the work friends, many fans would say that the quartet of fans is engaging in Social Fanac.

Some fans say, "Anything that two fans do together is fanac." There's a kernel of truth there. If something is done within a context of the fan subculture, it is fanac for those people.

It's possible for two people, one a fan and the other a non-fan, to do the same activity simultaneously and yet have it mean the same thing in both cases.

For example, the fan and the non-fan both might go to see the same science fiction blockbuster, possibly even in the very same theater.

Despite the similarities, attending a movie could be fanac for the fan, but would not be fanac for the non-fan. The non-fan can attend a science fiction movie every day and it still won't make him a fan (as opposed to an enthusiast).

What makes someone a fan, *in the fanspeak meaning*, is interaction with fans and Fandom. If the hypothetical fan goes to the movie with some fan friends, the outing suddenly transforms something that isn't intrinsically fannish into fan activity.

Stretching my movie example to the outer limits of absurdity, imagine that the non-fan buys a ticket for *Avatar II*, but the group of fans picks a revival of the classic cinema landmark, *Deep Throat*. It would still be non-fanac for the non-fan and fanac for the fan (and his fan friends)

Therefore, a reasonable definition of "fanac" could be activity that interacts with fans and Fandom. (AK)

### Now It's Your Turn!

Let's talk about the lifeblood of Fandom — fan activity. Which types of fanac do you like most — and least? Got a very good, or very bad fanac experience? You write 'em and I'll have those comments in the next issue.

# Mass Fandom And the Decline Of Egoboo

By  
David B.  
Williams

As members of the species *Homo sapiens*, we are social animals. We want to be noticed. We may not aspire to become the troop's Alpha male (or his mate). But we yearn for recognition and approval. We don't want to be overlooked or ignored.

In sf fandom, this interest in gaining notice and approval is symbolized by the mysterious, invisible force called egoboo. But egoboo is a sensitive subject. Whenever a fan asserts, "It's all about the 'boo," others immediately raise objection. No! No! It's *not* all about seeking egoboo.

Fanac has its own rewards; gaining egoboo, if that happens, is just a pleasant bonus.

I happen to be one of those tough-minded fans who is willing to risk opprobrium and acknowledge the power and value of egoboo. Do you think I would spend hours writing, revising, and polishing this uncompensated composition if my name wasn't attached as author? Sure, I want to make my opinions known. But I am also motivated by the more basic desire for recognition and approval – egoboo.

Come on, admit it. Don't you loccers feel just a little thrill when you see your name up there in the left-hand panel on page one? Our esteemed editor also recognizes the value of egoboo and dishes it out generously.

Egoboo is acquired, or can be granted, in a variety of ways. Originally, fanzines provided most of the egoboo that powered sf fandom. Publishing a focal-point fanzine was Egoboo Central, with letters of comment and subscriptions arriving with each mail delivery. Writing for the leading fanzines was almost as good, especially if you were designated as a regular columnist.

Clubs also provided a source of egoboo, though more localized. Apas combined the attributes of fanzines and clubs, but again, the glory of leadership was largely confined within the apa membership. Turning pro provided the most powerful jolt of egoboo possible.

Then conventions grew into a major alternate source of egoboo. Chairing a successful convention, being recognized in the program and from the podium as a member of the convention team, just walking around wearing a host-committee badge, earned egoboo. Conventions also offered opportunities to serve on program panels, make speeches, or even (yes!) be named the Guest of Honor.

Conventions naturally led to the creation of awards, honoring fanac beginning with the fanzine Hugos in 1955. Awards allow others to grant egoboo to the chosen recipients (and just being nominated is egoboo enough, right?)

But receiving an award is not like egoboo earned directly through fanac. Sure, the award is justified by the recipient's previous fanac achievements. But he's already received the egoboo for that. An award is like a free gift of extra egoboo, and it might seem kind of greedy to want that extra helping.

This is why it's considered very bad form to indicate in any way that you actually desire an award. It's acceptable for massive doses of egoboo to be awarded by others while the recipient blushes modestly.

But all fandom will recoil in disgust if an award candidate seems to acknowledge, “Yes! Yes! I *want* all that extra egoboo.”

Admitting a desire for egoboo, or that an act of fanac might be motivated by such a desire, makes fans uncomfortable. I assume this must stem from the fact that the root “ego” is common to both egoboo and egotist. Vanity and self-admiration are not attractive qualities.

But are we talking about excessive self-regard here? The fanspeak term egoboo was constructed by melding the two words “ego” and “boost.” Ego refers to the self (Latin for “I am”) and boost in this context means to enhance. So egoboo simply enhances the sense of self.

That's the basic form of egoboo in fandom, achieving recognition of one's existence, one's membership in the troop, as a result of fanac. It's not a question of vanity. It's an expression of a basic human need: “Hey, other people are noticing me, they know I exist!”

Then, beyond that basic need, egoboo increases status. No primate wants to be the troop member of lowest status. Low-status primates are more susceptible to disease, get ignored and bullied, and don't get to breed with the most desirable females. So gaining a little egoboo is good for your health and may even get you laid.

Mundane society recognizes the value of egoboo. In our enlightened times, low self-esteem is considered a major threat to a child's healthy psychological development. So every kid gets a certificate for participating, even those who don't win a prize.

Indeed, it's poor form to celebrate a personal victory after a competition. Whooping in exultation, brandishing the trophy over your head, soaks up the egoboo that should be shared among all the competitors. That's why victory celebrations in team sports are so much more acceptable; everyone's sharing the egoboo.

Egoboo is hard to quantify. Seeing one's name in print could be considered the minimum standard dose of egoboo. But the dosage is greatly increased when the name is attached to a letter of comment. When the loccer sees his comments in print, he can assume that others will also see them. Even when readers don't actually read a loc, they do notice who wrote it.

Being mentioned as a WAHF provides less than a therapeutic dose, but it's better than nothing. The loccer does get to see his name in print. His existence isn't being entirely ignored.

Things have changed in this new Age of Cyberfandom. Many faneds complain their e-fanzines receive fewer locs than they used to get when they pubbed on paper (the pain of having one's existence ignored).

Receiving a fanzine in the mail is a form of personal recognition. The recipient thinks, “This faned stuffed his fanzine in an envelope, or at least applied the address label and postage, and mailed it to me; the faned is recognizing my existence, so I ought to return the gesture.” But the reader who clicks on a link to an e-fanzine has received no personal recognition, so he feels no reciprocal obligation to recognize the faned's existence.

Being mentioned by someone else in print always conveys an energizing dose of egoboo. When I was reviewing prozines for *Science Fic-*

**Egoboo  
Is the  
Currency  
Of  
Fandom,  
But Is It  
Becoming  
Devalued?**

# CORFLU XXX

May 3-5, 2013  
Portland, Oregon.

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[www.corflu.org](http://www.corflu.org)

*tion Review* back in the early 1970s, one of my columns received a curt, negative notice from Charlie Brown in *Locus* (I'll call him that now that he's no longer able to object; revenge is a dish best served cold).

A derogatory review might be considered negative egoboo. But, while I wasn't pleased that Charlie didn't like my stuff and told the whole world about it, I could also console myself: "Hey, I got mentioned in *Locus*!"

A by-lined feature article in a fanzine earns even more egoboo than a mere mention or a loc. The author's name is more prominent up front than back in the loc column. Then there's the additional thought that the editor must have believed the article was good enough to publish, or at least wasn't too awful to use as a filler to pad out that issue to the fanzine's expected page count.

But all these considerations applied in old-time sfandom. In those simpler times, when fandom was a small and therefore a more intimate community, earning some egoboo was a much easier undertaking.

A neofan could introduce himself to fandom by writing good locs. Everyone read the focal-point fanzines, so a loc chosen for print by a fanned also provided a nice dose of egoboo (in those days, every printed loc meant more stencil typing and more paper to crank through the mimeo, so letter columns in popular fanzines were sometimes selective; not every loc was printed).

Anyone could enter the fanzine competition. Talent was what counted, not age or BNF status. A high-school senior out in remote Oregon named Damon Knight could produce two issues of *Snide*, attract the approving attention of the Futurians, and be invited to meet them at the Denvention and return with them to New York City.

Even 14-year-old boys could succeed, as demonstrated by Joel Nydahl, whose fanzine *Vega* was highly regarded from its first issue and grew rapidly in quality and circulation.

Nydahl's spectacular annish, more than 100 pages with content from many of the biggest pro and fan names, even earned him fannish immortality. When he fapiated after producing that grand issue, he lent his name to Nydahl's Syndrome, a condition afflicting faneds who flame out after a prodigious effort.

Forry Ackerman almost absorbed all of old-time fandom's egoboo reserves when he was formally recognized as Number One Fan Personality (Hugo 1953). If anyone actually deserved such recognition, Forry was the best choice available.

Aside from being a founding father of sfandom, Forry published influential early fanzines and established the costume tradition at SF cons. He was a convention fan before there were enough conventions to make that a valid calling. He raised a generation of media fans as editor of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*.

Forry also amassed fabulous collections of SF books, magazines, and movie memorabilia. He didn't acquire these collections just to earn egoboo. Collectors have their own demons to appease. But he did welcome countless visitors to the Ackermansion to admire his collections, and their oohs and ahs provided egoboo aplenty. But in Mass Fandom, it's no longer possible to achieve the status of Number One Fan.

Arnie spelled it out in *Fanstuff* 4: “The prerequisites for Mass Fandom are pretty low. If you’re breathing and have the price of admission to a convention or club, you’re no worse off than most of the other 250,000 Mass Fandomites. To rise above the throng requires activity in one or more of the Special Fandoms that exist within Mass Fandom.”

And that only gets you egoboo in one Special Fandom. The rest of Mass Fandom won't notice. Hugo Award? Who's Hugo?

Fan Hugos remain important because they are awarded by the World SF Convention. Historically, they have recognized achievement in writing, art, or fanzine pubbing. These fan activities now compete within one sub-section of Mass Fandom. The majority of comics, media, and gaming fans don't notice who wins the traditional fan Hugos each year.

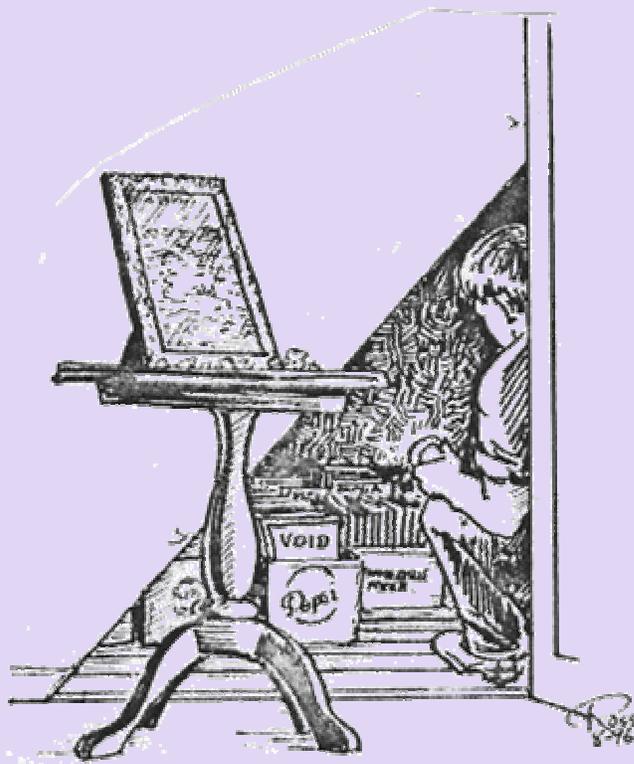
The new Hugo for Web-based fanac expands the possibilities. If podcast content is broad enough to appeal to the other Special Fandoms, then winning this Hugo could earn egoboo more broadly across Mass Fandom. Still, the Hugos are firmly attached to the SF Worldcon (if you don't join, you don't vote) and may make little impression on fans who really consider their annual world conventions to be ComicCon or GenCon.

Even the growth within our little section of Mass Fandom has made it more difficult to achieve fannish prominence, and here I have an embarrassing confession to make. As I write this, it's early September and the Hugo winners at Chicon have just been announced. I see the Hugo for Best Fan Writer went to Jim Hines.

I know I don't get out much, but I have to ask, Who is Jim Hines? The name is vaguely familiar, and I'm sure he is very deserving, but I personally haven't seen anything by him in the past year. I couldn't vote for him, because I was completely unaware of his existence.

That's the fandom we live in today, a crowded fandom of individual anonymity. In Mass Fandom, even within the confining ranks of our traditional sfandom, it is superlatively difficult to gain wide recognition.

We used to inhabit a fandom in which egoboo was plentiful and available to all. No more. The advent of Mass Fandom marked the beginning of the end for egoboo. — David B. Williams



## Pick Your Corflu All-Time Guest List

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. (In other words, they're dead.)

List your choices in any order, though alphabetical by last name is appreciated. You can pick 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 List 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: Bob Bloch, rich brown, Burbee, FM Busby, TCarr, 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. Make a list of up to 20 fans and send it here.



### The Loccer Room House Rules

"Loccer room" aspires to be a fair, open and unfettered discussion forum.

Here in brief are the rules.

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.

**No ambushes.** No one will 'respond' to your loc in the same issue, except me.

**Apologies for disagreeing with me are unnecessary.** 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 Dick Lupoff 'Why a Fan?' Sequel

My reasons for publishing fanzines aren't the same as my reasons for being a fan, though there's considerable overlap. It's not exactly the same, because publishing fanzines isn't the totality of the fannish experience.

A sequel to *Why a Fan?* sounds like a great idea! I think I'll do it a year or so ago (with Earl Kemp's permission, of course).

How's *that* for responsiveness? (I'll dig up the file and send you a copy.)

### Back Issues?

I've publishing digitally for some time, so you'll find archives of **fanstuff**, *Glitter*, *VFW*, *Neon*, *Home Kookin'* and other titles at Bill Burn's free online digital newsstand.

Also available there are Andy Hooper's *How Green Was My Vagrant* anthology of *Wild Heirs*, and my Joyce Katz collection, *The Sweetheart of Fanac Falls*.

# loccer room

## Dick Lupoff

If you're running a symposium of "Why I published a fanzine," I expect you'll get some terrific answers. Sort of a mini-version of Earl Kemp's classic *Why is a Fan?* In fact, you might consider compiling *Why is a Fan II -- Fifty Years Later*. If you could get enough participants -- and the right ones! -- you would have a terrific project there.

Oh, I know, I know, it's always easy to tell the other fellow what he ought to be doing. A lot harder to do it. I plead guilty. But I think you're the guy who could bring this off. You've got the energy. Thanks to Bill Burns you've got the technology. And thanks to e-publishing, you don't need to invest a lot of money in order to make it happen.

Waddaya think?

In any case, I'll tell you why I published my first fanzine, *SF52*. As the title indicates, the year was 1952. Due to a tragic series of family events, I found myself stuck in a horrendous boarding school. Any of those horror movies that you've ever seen about poor kids stuck in military academies are probably accurate. And probably understated.

It wasn't just that I was miles away from my childhood home and family. That was only the beginning. The whole lifestyle and the values of military school were oppressive and all but intolerable to me. Regimentation, conformity, strict discipline and harsh punishment for any infraction, obedience, an academic philosophy based on rote learning....

The irony was that the US had recently fought World War Two against the Nazis whose very philosophy was based on exactly those values. And by 1952 we were engaged in the Cold War against the Stalinist system which also embraced those values, to a large extent.

But I had already discovered science fiction. Each new issue of *Galaxy*, *F&SF*, or *Thrilling Wonder Stories* would free my mind for a few hours from those harsh surroundings and carry me off into a glorious world of fresh ideas, free thought, endlessly unfolding vistas of wonder.

And then my friend Gerald Bregman loaned me a copy of *Amazing Stories*. The fiction content did not particularly impress me. Certainly Alexander Blade was no match for my regular diet of Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, Judith Merrill, Frederik Pohl, Cyril Kornbluth, Clifford Simak, and Edgar Pangborn. But there was a column called "The Club House" conducted by Rog Phillips. There were reviews of some odd periodicals called fanzines. I sent away for a few of them. Among the first fanzines I ever saw were Lee Hoffman's *Quandry* and Walt Willis's *Hyphen*. There was also an intriguing double fanzine called *Cosmag / SF Digest*. Soon *Oops!* came along.

There was a whole community of people like me. What a discovery! I wanted desperately to become part of that community. These were people who valued creativity, individualism, the free exchange of ideas, the soaring exploits of the human imagination. There was no way I could join this community in person. I was stuck in a dreadful school, little better than a prison, in a small town in New Jersey. But I could participate nonetheless. We were at least permitted to send and receive mail. I could publish a fanzine.

Well, *SF52* wasn't much of a fanzine. I wrote the whole thing myself. I didn't have access to any duplicating equipment but I did own a Smith Corona portable typewriter that I'd got as a Christmas gift. I was able to lay my hands on some carbon paper, and by hammering the keys on my typewriter I could make four copies at a time of each page. By typing the whole fanzine twice I was able to produce eight copies. And that was my first entree into the world of fanpublishing.

*Xero* came eight years later.

I've said this before, Arnie, and I'll repeat it now. Science fiction saved my mind. Fandom saved my soul.

### Taral Wayne

Just a short note, to record for posterity a thought I've had about the issue of Worldcons being smaller than Dragoncons or San Diego Comics Con.

That the Worldcon ought to be the largest SF convention is a sort of semantic creation. We think that something with the word "World" in it *ought* to be the largest, most impressive and all-encompassing of all possible conventions. This isn't so. The Worldcon is a *science fiction convention*.

Realizing that the important thing about the Worldcon, that it *is* a science fiction convention, removes it from competition from multi-media monsters like SDCC. Why should it be compared to an event that consciously tries to amalgamate everything under the sun? Comics conventions don't give in the towel because they are smaller than SDCC. Trek cons still dot the calendar. Somewhere in the world, every minute, people are starting a new Anime or Gaming con. They don't feel the existence of SDCC implies they are obsolete, or must grow to the same size by the same means as Dragoncon, or go under. *They* are allowed to be conventions on a single note.

Why must the Worldcon, a *science fiction* convention, be the sole event that cannot just be itself and leave to others the role of being the universal institution? Why is science fiction the *only* fandom that cannot survive unless it broadens its scope?

Obviously, SF fandom *can* survive as well as any other fandom, and there is no reason its conventions alone have to go to the wall just because of huge, commercial, multi-media cons. We create the sense of emergency within ourselves, because we chose a rather grandiloquent name for the Worldcon in the early days. Until Torcon I, a better name for it might have been the National Convention, but that just doesn't have the same ring to it, of self-importance. We presumed a global

### More to Dick Lupoff Bad Luck in Military School

Your description of your time at the boarding school struck home with me, someone who avoided summer camp as too regimented. The authoritarian 24/7 control you describe is horrific, indeed.

Doesn't it seem, sometimes, that the victor in a war absorbs some of the attitudes and behavior of the losing country — and vice versa? For instance, our response to 21st Century terrorists has weakened, suspended and eliminated freedoms Americans want to protect.

### Still More to Dick Lupoff The Magic of Amazing Stories

I first encountered *Amazing Stories* in the backdate magazine stores that once dotted New York's Sixth Avenue. While I was sidelined with a cataract operation, Lenny Bailes not only mastered the New York subway, but also located the used book and magazine stores.

We began visiting these establishments. Of course, countless fans had gone through these same stores, sweeping them clean of old pulps and more recent choice items. We also learned that the proprietors would not be handing out any bargains if we did stumble onto something worthwhile.

What was there, that I could afford on my allowance, were mid 1950's digest-size prozines. Though the Lowndes titles had better stories (and editorials, come to that), I fastened onto *Amazing* and *Fantastic*. The stories in both were as you described and compared most unfavorable with the stories in the Conklin anthologies I borrowed from the library.

What the Ziff-Davis magazines *did* have were the Rog Phillips fan columns. Lenny and I pored over these columns like a pair of old rabbis studying the Talmud.

If Phillips had known the intense, word-by-word scrutiny his columns would get from two amateur teenage detectives, Rog might not have had the willpower to hit the keys.

And thinking of all the fans who found Fandom through him, it would've been a great loss.

## Just saying

### The Quote of the Week

**Science fiction saved  
my mind. Fandom saved  
my soul.**

— Dick Lupoff  
Fanstuff #24

### To Taral Wayne Sizing Up the Situation Of Convention Size

In the name of Fairness, as the WWE's Vince McMahon sometimes says, I must admit that I disagree with what I think is your underlining premise: the bigger the convention, the better. My favorite convention draws 80-110 fans and I think world science fiction conventions were more fun when they were smaller.

Comparing the world science fiction convention, DragonCon and ComiCon is difficult, because each differs markedly from the other two.

ComiCon is not a fan-run convention and it has never been perceived as being part of the Science Fiction world. It is a commercially oriented event that revolves around the licensing and exploitation of intellectual properties.

Superficially, DragonCon is more like the world sf convention than is ComiCon, but there are plenty of important differences. DragonCon is a money-making business with a full-time staff. It takes place in the same city every year and it spotlights primarily names from television and the movies.

However much we may criticize the unfannishness of the world sf convention, it does honor some fanhistorical commitments that DragonCon can (and should) ignore.

Instead of seeing how much the world sf convention can do to become bigger like ComicCon and DragonCon, I'd rather see it try to be more like the Worldcon.

reach and created a “problem” that exists only in a word.

“The Eternal Quadrangle” seemed to have all the makings of a McCarthyian witch hunt until it resolved as merely a lover’s quadrangle and scam.

I currently labour on something called “The Nametag” for John Purcell.

### Robert Lichtman

You’re certainly a hard taskmaster in your efforts to remain weekly! An issue is received on Wednesday and you offer only through Saturday for response to be in time for the following issue. If ever there was a built-in occasion to skip a week, this would have been one.

I’ve already suggested reasons for why I publish fanzines in a previous letter, so I won’t regurgitate them here. Pretty much all the reasons you cite for yourself are also mine to varying degrees, but I’m perhaps more set in my ways when it comes to the details in your section on “editorial challenge.” I long ago settled on a basic format for *Trap Door*, modified only when I switched from the half-legal page size of the first twenty issues to the half-letter page size of the eight since then. That change was dictated not by “editorial challenge” but by the new possibilities afforded me when I got a new computer and a copy of Adobe Acrobat—and by the economics of cheaper printing for half-letter and cheaper envelopes for mailing a fanzine of that size. The basic format of custom headings, very little white space, and almost no page numbering carried forward. My zines for FAPA and SAPS have always been half-letter size and, with very few exceptions, have carried artwork by Bill Rotsler exclusively.

Due to the time crunch, I’ve once again skipped reading the further adventures of Jeff Foster.

Dick Lupoff mentions Larry and Noreen Shaw’s son Steve in his letter, and says that he and Pat see Steve when they go down to Southern California—presumably for the paperback show that happens every year in March or thereabouts. I only met Steve once. It was back in 2002 when I went to Los Angeles to pick up Noreen’s fanzine collection, which I auctioned off for her benefit, keeping a portion of the zines as my “commission” for doing so. It took 31 rounds between early August and mid-December of that year, which were done in a wave of e-mails following the “Bowers rules” for doing such things. In the end I sent Noreen a check for nearly \$2,200 and very few items remained unsold (and were returned to her).

(Going even further back to pre-internet days, I conducted a similar auction for Pat Ellington, widow of Dick, in the same fashion, for the same commission, and with the same approximate net result. Before that I auctioned fanzines to benefit TAFF when I was administrator, and after the Shaw auction I conducted the Bring Bruce Bayside auction—which, of course, you will recall.)

I loved Dick’s short but sweet Blish/Wollheim/Fascist anecdote.

I must have missed your sidebar about “which of your own fanzines is your favorite?” but John Purcell’s answering the question led me to considering the question. Looking at the 28 issues of *Trap Door*, one that stands out for me is the 16th, published in August 1996. In May of that year, both Redd Boggs and Charles Burbee passed away several weeks apart. I began working on an editorial memorializing Redd and then expanded it considerably to also include Charlie. It has a sidebar from Jim Harmon on Redd and another from Charlie’s son Ed, the latter a transcript of the short speech he gave at the spreading of his father’s ashes in the Mojave Desert (an event that you and Joyce, Ken Forman, Ben Wilson, Bill Rotsler and I attended).

In that issue I published a long concluding installment of Redd’s ongoing occasional column, “Penseroso,” which had consisted entirely of the best material from his SAPSzine of the same name. I also published Charlie’s “Memories of Elmer,” a series of Elmer Perdue anecdotes that Charlie had sent to me some years earlier. It had needed refinement that he had hoped to do, but never got around to. I smoothed it out, put it in a suitable “playing order,” and was glad that it was finally seeing print. That issue also saw publication of a “lost” Al Ashley article of Burbee’s, “Al Ashley, Atomic Survivor,” which was an unpublished *Shaggy* editorial that was in some papers he sent to me.

There was other memorable not-Burbee and -Boggs stuff in the issue: Gary Hubbard’s long account of the first Vegas Corflu, one of my favorite Corflu reports of all time; Paul Williams’ “Ask Me About My Brain Injury” (about the aftermath of his bicycle accident in which he went flying over the handlebars and landed on his head with no helmet); and Bill Rotsler’s “That Green Sequined Tie,” a short but sweet memory of Elmer Perdue.

And the cover by Harry Bell had a trapdoor through which one could see some of the words of Burbee’s famous “Watermelon Story.”

Other favorite issues would be #21, the first in the new size, with Joel Nydahl’s “Revisiting Nydahl’s Disease,” and #22, *Astonishing Trap Door Stories*, comprised almost entirely of Gordon Eklund’s fannish novella, “Sense of Wonder,” with all illustration in the issue by Dan Steffan. The only other item in the issue besides my editorial was a short story by Burbee, “Invasion 1949,” reprinted from *The Acolyte* #13, and which I billed—in the spirit of the issue and Gordon’s story—as a “Gernsback-Style Classic Reprint.”

And there were others—there are no issues of *Trap Door* I’d go back and withdraw—but I digress....

I liked Terry Kemp’s linking a new age in fandom to the coming of Rog Phillips’s “Club House” column in *Amazing* in March 1948. Of it he writes: “Before then all was in confusion. Palmer had foisted Shaverism on fandom. The fanzines were all abuzz. There were riots in the streets. Ackerman was seen burning an effigy of RAP during a LASFS meeting. Chaos everywhere. Then, well, just like Green Lantern’s light, there was Rog, boosting fanzines, fandom, conventioning, all while making a damn good living at it. Sweet! More properly

#### To Robert Lichtman The Weekly Frequency

I’m more aware than anyone that the release date for **fanstuff** has slipped a little in the last few weeks. Most of that slippage occurred during the production of **fanstuff** #23 for the litany of reasons mentioned in the cover letter for that issue.

I thought I could move the release of **fanstuff** #24 from Wednesday back to the weekend. That plan looked good up to Saturday morning, when I began to feel sick.

As mentioned in last week’s “fanews,” illness has rampaged through the Vegrants, including serious cases of pneumonia for Don Miller and Harry Simon, and I guess it was just my turn to come down with something.

I guess it would be better for my brand if I had something fannish and exotic like Twonk’s Disease, but it was more like a mild virus. Lots of body aches and nose-blowing. The worst symptom, though, was extreme tiredness that has had me sleeping more than twice as much as usual.

This issue won’t *lose* any additional ground, despite my illness. I’ll try to get it back to the weekend for **fanstuff** #25.

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#### If Fandom is a Way of Life Does that mean we all need To Find a Hobby?

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#### A Brief Guide To the Narrow Columns

The basic layout of a **fanstuff** page has two columns. The wide one has articles, letters of comment and the news. Sometimes, there’s “Poesy Corner,” but you’ve already survived that.

The narrow columns present shorter pieces and, in “locer room,” my responses to letters of comment. I write everything in the narrow column, unless otherwise credited. Text in an outlined box is always complete.

My responses to each loc-writer are grouped by color. The name of the fan whose loc sparked my comment is always in bold at the top line. A bold headline identifies the subject of my remarks.

**More to Robert Lichtman  
The Continuing Question  
Of Editorial Challenge**

I must apologize if there was any implication that the way I do it is the only way. I believe that everyone should use the approach that's comfortable for them.

In fact, as your observations on the subject suggest, each fanzine editor must find his or her own methodology. My approach wouldn't work very well for you, just as yours wouldn't be suitable for me.

**Still More to Robert Lichtman  
The Uncanny Collator**

You wrote that time pressure forced you to skip the conclusion of the Collator story. I understand, though I mourn the necessity. I hope that "skip" meant "postpone" rather than "ignore."

**Yet Still More to Robert Lichtman  
A Farewell to Burb**

The trip to scatter Burbee's ashes remains a touchstone day in my personal fanhistory. It was so hard to say "good-bye", but the company of close friends and true fans also provided some compensating familial warmth.

**Yet Again More to Robert Lichtman  
FTL Versus Elron**

Laney's debunking article made a strong impression on me when I read it many years ago. I was hoping you could help me locate it, but your comments make it more likely that a third fan will have to perform this mission.

**A Bit More to Robert Lichtman  
Another Round of 'Us' and 'Them'**

If referring to nonfans as "mundane" strikes you as too negative, wouldn't the use of "us" and "them" make an article sound unpleasantly paranoid?

I'd say that, with folks like Jonathan McCalmont and Nalini Haynes, Fandom is already over-supplied with paranoid ravings. I believe I'll stick with the bland, but descriptive, "nonfan."

this was the Second Coming of Age of Fandom."

And, of course, after a couple years this obsession with Shaver was supplanted rather solidly by indignation over L. Ron Hubbard and Dianetics. Just look at the articles in *Spacewarp* #42, the giant Insurgent Issue put out by Laney and Burbee after Art Rapp was drafted:

<http://www.fanac.org/fanzines/Spacewarp/Spacewarp42-00.html>

Both Rick Sneary in his "1958" column and Redd Boggs in his "File 13" column carry on about Dianetics at some length. And they weren't isolated instance. I can't think of the fanzine in question at the moment, but Laney had a long debunking article somewhere around the same time.

That issue is remarkable in many other ways, of course: for Laney's "Syllabus for a Fanzine" and "Who Was Howard Davison?" (and also his "Fanzine Scope," in which he gets into Dianetics in reviewing a fanzine with an article on the subject by Bill Blackbeard); for Joe Kennedy's "After the Atom" (with one of my favorite SaM anecdotes *ever*); for G. Gordon Dewey's lovely "No Moving Parts"; and—bringing the subject back around to Terry and his love for all things Rog Phillips—R. P. Graham's "Christ: An Autobiography."

In his letter Taral writes, "Robert shows a little unexpected cunning in claiming to have guessed the ending of 'Why They Race Horses' before reading the end. Actually, he was sent a copy to read a week before it was published. That may help his precognitive abilities." Well, not actually, because although Taral is correct that he sent me the story prior to publication, I hadn't found time to read it before it turned up in *Fanstuff*.

Your sidebars to me:

Regarding my creeb about the long-time fan use of "mundane" to refer to people who aren't fans, you write, "I've been trying to use 'non-fan' to refer to people who are not part of Fandom." That's a good thing, and I both applaud and encourage you on this point. As for it as shorthand to avoid "repetition of 'mainstream society' in articles in which the discussion touches on differences between fans and non fans," I get your point. Tongue in cheek, I suggest that since I refer to fans as "Us," perhaps reference to nonfans could be "Them." No? Well, I thought not.

You ask, "Don't you think that mention of 'science fiction' could have a negative or positive effect on a potential fan, depending on factors like demographics?" Truthfully, I haven't considered it at all. Although I wrote in my letter that there have been occasions where I've talked about SF to non-fans, I used the adjective "rare" to characterize those times. Fleshing that out, I would say that 99.99% of the time the subject doesn't arise at all—and, frankly, never since I retired. It just doesn't come up when I'm in the check-out line, collecting a package from the mail carrier, or even when I'm talking fruit and vegetables with the vendors at the farmers market. What occasions do you have?

Although I waffled about it for quite a while when Laurraine Tutihasi announced the revival of SNAPS, in the end I whomped out five pages with my usual colorful graphics (covers of various issues of Don Wollheim's *The Phantagraph* this time) and sent them off. In her note acknowledging their receipt, she said that the mailing would be late because she was going to be out of town on deadline day but that it should be out by the end of the month.

In my short reply, I wrote, "Late would be entirely in keeping with SNAPS's 'traditions.'" Right, Arnie?!

### David B. Williams

Whew! At long last, the latest *Fanstuff*. Another excellent issue.

Why publish a fanzine? I can think of one excellent reason that no one else has mentioned: to provide David B. Williams with a place to publish his muddled musings and delusions of grandeur.

The Gafiator: Shouldn't that be Fafiator? Your fictional character Jeff Foster is not departing fandom voluntarily, he is being forced away.

Terry Kemp suggests that the beginning of at least one Age of Fandom might be defined by changes in the prozines. I have to admit, as I wrote my Ages of Fandom articles, I did consider how changes in pro publishing might have affected fandom. I'm sure they did, but I couldn't convince myself that the influences were controlling.

As I propounded in "How It All Began" (*Fanstuff* 17), fandom wouldn't exist without the prozines and their letter columns. But beyond that moment of genesis, fandom has controlled its own destiny. There has certainly been a lot of rich cross-fertilization between pros and fans, but in the 1980s the prozines essentially disappeared and fandom continued to grow and prosper.

Taral Wayne may have a point about a weekly schedule being too much of a good thing. When *Fanstuff* arrives as late as Monday morning, I do sometimes feel pressed to neglect other pursuits in order to provide a response by the nominal Wednesday deadline. If I have to delay mowing the lawn, I'm not too unhappy, but I doubt my dentist would understand if I canceled an appointment because I had to finish my letter of comment to *Fanstuff*. Those obtuse mundanes!

That's right, I refuse to abandon "mundane" as a descriptive term for non-fans. Mundane means ordinary, as in ordinary people rather than SF fans. I don't see any pejorative implication in the term. Indeed, mundanes might be pleased to be considered ordinary people in contrast to the freaks who comprise SF fandom.

OK, I will now weigh in on the ongoing debate regarding Rog Philip's relentlessly positive fanzine reviews in The Club House. There's nothing wrong with publishing only positive reviews, so long as you are selective in what you choose to review. The problem seems to be that The Club House was not selective.

It's very possible to remain positive and still make distinctions. A neofan's crudzine could be described as "a good beginner's effort," for example. Without discouraging the fanned, that lets the reader know that this fanzine is not on a par with the best in the field. Really bad stuff

### To David B. Williams

#### A Salient Point about Fanpubbing

I know you were kidding, but actually, you've mentioned one of the things that gives me a great deal of pleasure as a fanziner.

Truly, I love the opportunity to share fine fanwriting through publication in my fanzines. I've always been especially fond of columns, perhaps the influence of Gregg Calkins' *Oopsla!* I'm afraid to list them off the top of my head, because I would hate to slight any of those great fans through a sin of omission.

If I had to pick one favorite, I guess it would be "Charrisma," Chuch Harris' long-running column. I "drafted" Chuch for the slot, but the idea tickled him and he really liked the name I'd concocted for the column, so he got so enthusiastic that we made him the European Editor of *Wild Heirs*.

Presenting outstanding writing and art is one of the chief joys of publishing **fanstuff**.

### More to David B. Williams

#### Fandom: Genesis and Future

I liked your summary of the connection between SF and Fandom.

The role of science fiction and the prozines in launching Fandom is undeniable. The fannish pioneers came together because of their love of science fiction, and SF helped Fandom establish the intellectual freedom that has moved our fanzines well beyond the science fiction community.

### Still More to David B. Williams

#### Is 'SF' Pejorative?

"Science Fiction" is certainly *not* a pejorative term to you, me or most of the fine folks who read **fanstuff**.

My point is that times change and the rebellion of yesterday becomes the pro-saic mainstream of today.

Science fiction has fulfilled all the hopes fans and pros had for it. It has become so embedded in our popular culture that *everybody* likes it.

If we want to attract neos who are as inner-directed and alienated as we are, we need to find more exciting bait.

## **Cover Essay**

### **Fanac: A Closer Look At Fan Activity**

Arnie/1

## **fen den:**

### **My Favorite Forms Of Fanac**

Arnie/2

### **What Is ‘Fanac’?**

Arnie/3

### **Mass Fandom And the Decline of Egoboo**

David B. Williams/4

### **Pick Your All-Time Corflu Guest List**

Arnie/7

## **locer room**

YOU & me/8

## **fanews**

Arnie/14

could be acknowledged in “we also received” listings without critical comment, providing a little recognition without making a value judgment.

But to review the good, the bad, and the ugly in consistently glowing terms is simply dishonest and a disservice to readers – and to other faneds, since the reader may send away for a crudzine, think “if this is considered a good fanzine, then I don’t want to see any others” and miss the whole parade.

The role of SF in fandom must be the oldest debate in fan history. It was vitally important at the very beginning, but then fandom itself soon became a subject of interest.

But I am a little distressed that you are trying to recruit new citizens of fandom by assuring likely candidates that science fiction is not important. That’s true, to a degree, but do we really want to encourage new fans to join so they can write about their interests in bird watching or fossil collecting? I see no future for SF fandom in that direction.

“Some otherwise fine fans have made themselves look very bad in the last few years by discriminating against digital fanzines and denigrating their editors.” For shame. The battle is over, the future is digital.

Costs alone make that inevitable. When Bruce Gillespie announced that *SF Commentary* will now be mostly digital, he noted that it cost him something like \$1,200 dollars (Australian, I presume) to print and mail a recent paper issue.

I don’t like to read fanzines on-screen, but to shun digital is to resign from active fandom. I find this attitude particularly offensive because virtually all of my recent fan writing has appeared in digital venues. Refusing to read digital fanzines means that these lost souls are missing all the wit and wisdom to be found in my aforementioned muddled musings and delusions of grandeur, an intolerable situation.

# **fanews**

## **SF Commentary Goes Digital**

Bruce Gillespie has announced that future issues of *SF Commentary*, will be produced in electronic form. *SFC* has been one of Fandom’s most lavishly produced hard copy fanzines for many years, but I’m sure most of us would rather have a digital version than none at all.

## **Our of My Sickbed**

Deadline for #25 is Saturday night. I’ll email on Monday.  
Meanwhile — keep fanning! — Arnie

**fanstuff #24, October 14, 2012**, is a frequent fanzine from Arnie Katz ([crossfire4@cox.net](mailto:crossfire4@cox.net)).

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**Cover illustration: Bill Rotsler**

**Reporters this issue: Me**

Member: fwa

Supporter: AFAL