

If I Must Say So Myself

The Fanzines of Taral Wayne

Described by Taral Wayne

From the first moment I saw one, I knew I wanted to publish fanzines. Actually, no... I knew I wanted to publish fanzines *long* before that – it’s just that I didn’t know that *what* I wanted to publish *was* a fanzine.

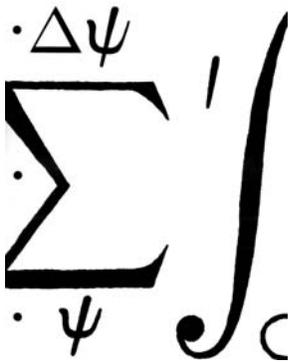
As a little kid, I sometimes made up single copy issues of a “newspaper” for around the home. I think it had ground-breaking scoops such as “Mom makes chocolate cake,” or “Top Cat Goes to New Time Slot on Saturday Morning.” Unfortunately, no copies survive. I remember nothing of the title and little of the contents except for a vague notion that I once illustrated the front page – there *was* only one page – with the anatomy of a cat.

When I was in high school, I began a science fiction club. It was announced over the school PA system and the first meeting brought together about half a dozen people. One was named Scott, who was a devotee of Robert E. Howard. Another was named Ed, and there was a girl named Ann who was into Tolkien. This was in 1971 or 1972.

By an unlikely coincidence, Bob Wilson also went to my high school, and he heard the announcement. But Bob decided that joining a school SF club was too geeky, and he didn’t go to the meeting. Instead, Bob and I met for the first time, a few months later, at the Ontario SF Club. He was one of the core members of the local fan group and eventually made the grade as a professional writer. You might have heard of Robert Charles Wilson, even if you haven’t heard of *me*. Maybe Bob knew something about joining high school clubs that I should have known?

As president of my high school club, my first official act was to propose we publish a club magazine. I *do* have copies of that – even though anyone, who wanted to badly enough, could have gotten rid of them after all this time. It was called *Scicon*, from the initials of our high school. It featured poor science articles and *worse* fan fiction. I did most of the work, including primitive illustrations I had to redraw directly on the wax stencils. It sold for a dollar in 1972, and we actually managed to sell about twenty copies around the school. We didn’t sell a copy to Bob, though... The geek factor was still too high.

I didn’t understand yet that I had published two issues of a fanzine, but I was laying plans for a far more ambitious one called *Analog* – of all things. Then I saw a copy of *Energumen* at OSFiC. My thinking changed completely. Unfortunately, it remained painfully ambitious. When my magnum opus, *Delta Psi*, was finally published in 1977, it was quite pretentious. There were four sections of three-hole punched pages held together by a ring. Each section had its own cover and there was a fifth cover for the *entire* issue. I had the absurd idea that *Delta Psi* would be kept in a binder, you see, and new issues would be added one at a time. There are probably a few rough gems in the fifty-some-odd pages, but unless they are thoroughly revised they are unlikely to sparkle. As a concept, it was a dead end.



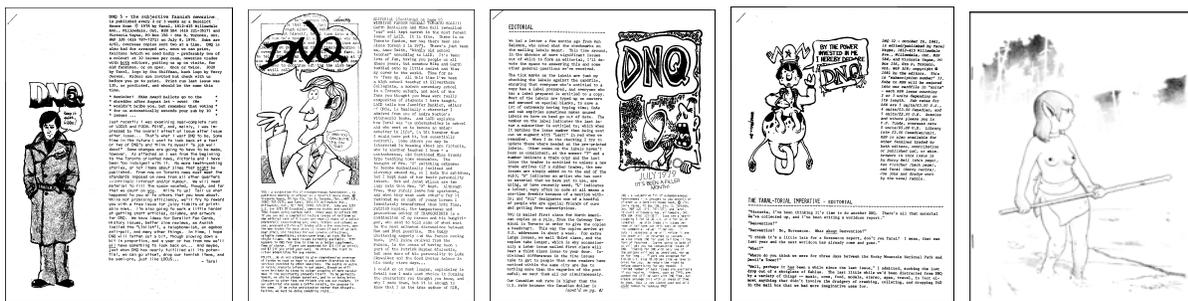
Between my two high school zines and *Delta Psi*, I had the good luck to gain a little *practical* experience. From 1974 to 1975 I published over a dozen issues the OSFiC monthly, edited the progress report for FanFair III, and produced a small number of one-shots as well. It was while publishing *Synapse* for OSFiC that I made my acquaintance with the mimeograph.

Bob Wilson and Phil Paine had found an antique Model 66 Gestetner somewhere. Phil wanted to hide it in an abandoned apartment building called the Bayview Ghost. He explained to me that the 66 would be ready for fandom to lead the way to enlightenment again, after civilization fell in a few years' time. Bob's more pragmatic suggestion – leave it at my place – carried the day, thank goodness. Having learned most of the skills of a Master Mimeographer, I was able to print my masterpiece, *Delta Psi*, on the cheap. Otherwise I don't know how I would have been able to afford the five offset covers and the 250 chromed rings from Office Depot.

Over the next three or four years, I produced a far more pragmatic and modest range of zines. I was no longer the editor of the OSFiC newsletter, but I published another half-dozen issues of *Synapse* anyway. I joined Oasis (the Phoenix apa) and produced a few small one-shots. Then I was "in" with the club again and publishing a new OSFiC monthly.

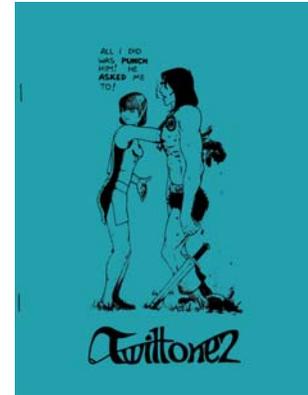
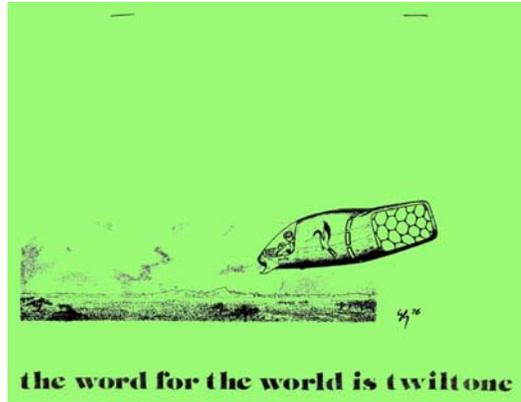
If *Delta Psi* was a rough gem, I'm afraid most of the rest was dross.

In 1978, though, Victoria Vayne and I put our heads and mimeo skills together to start *DNQ*.

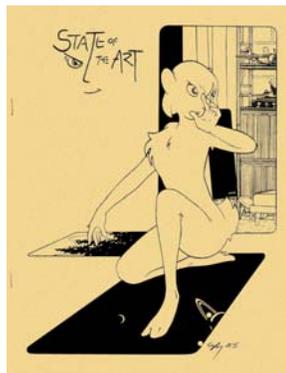
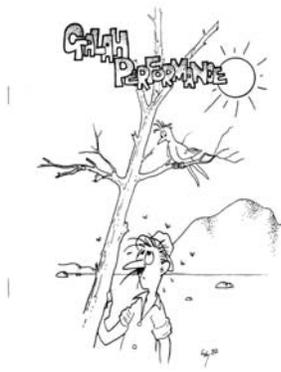


It ran 34 issues altogether, and was never meant as a serious newszine. It was no competition for *Locus*, *Ansible* or *File 770*. Nor was it meant to be, though we made jokes. We even had buttons made up that said, "Wouldn't You Rather be Reading DNQ?" We openly flouted the need to pay any heed to science fiction, and ran news of conventions only with reluctance. Possibly we ran as many as 200 copies of one or two of the special issues, but I don't think our usual circulation ever rose much higher than 150.

Victoria and I played with DNQ and tried to make it fun for the readers as well. There were sometimes more colours of ink used in one issue than found in many a far more pretentious fanzine. We included fake 45 rpm “singles” – a recording of a speech delivered by Hoy Ping Pong, for example. We added *Typographic Oceans* as a semi-regular letter supplement. Issue 40-base-8 was a spoof number and not part of the regular run. Accordingly, all the news was made up. Issues 10 and 25 were longer than usual and included some fine fanwriting by Bob and Janet Wilson, as well as other local fans. Gradually, the issues grew larger and the wait between them longer. Victoria grew tired of the game sooner than I did, and it fell to me to complete the 96-page final issue in 1984. More colour, more articles, more art, more of everything, including a terrible pun in the closing words on the back cover. “Good Nydahl.”

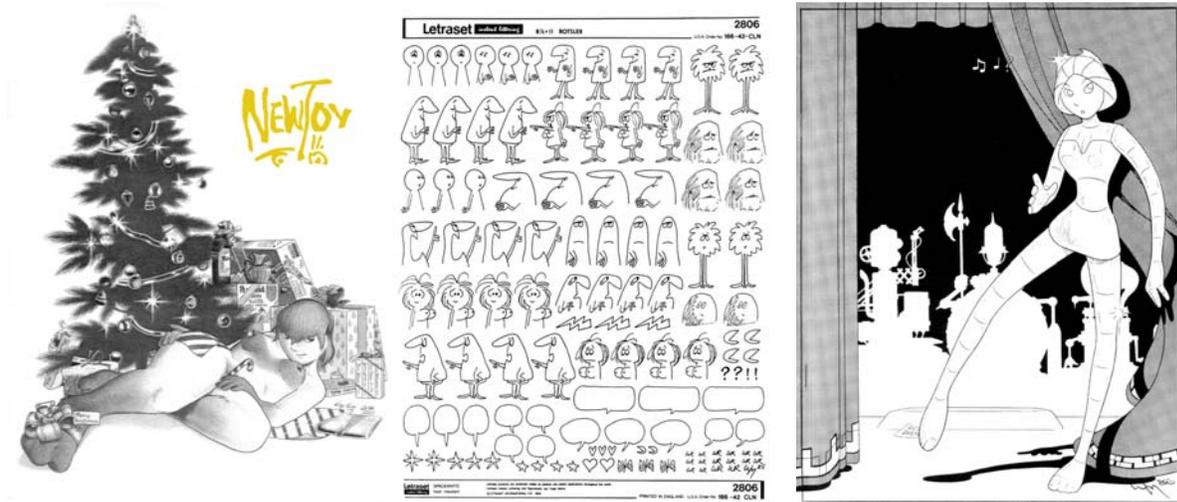


All through the years of DNQ and through the ‘80s that followed, I published a stream of one-shots, apazines, con pubs and anything else that gave me an excuse to take the handle of the Model 66 in hand. My zine for Marc Schirmeister’s funny animal apa (*Rowrbrazzle*) was called *State of the Art*. It was more noteworthy for lasting 24 issues than anything else, but it had its merits. For a while I attempted to publish a sizable zine for FAPA, but *The Word For the World is Twiltone* lasted only two issues before I began to feel the pressure of deadlines and I scaled down to minac. One of my other apazines also grew to genzine size... for *one* issue. *Red Shift 7* included at least one piece of faan fiction I still think is first rate.



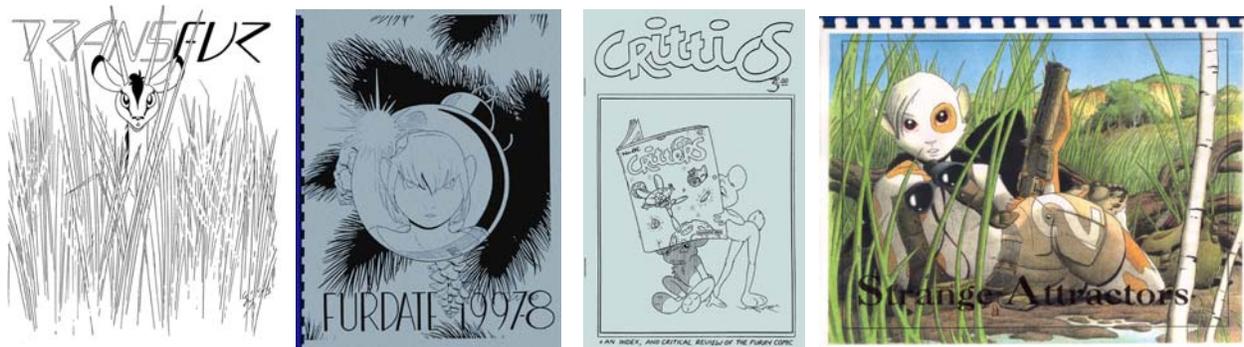
One of my more atypical zines was the 1982 publication of John Berry’s Australian trip report, *Galah Performance*. I volunteered because it was something I hadn’t done before. John sent me his material along with a handful of illos done for him by Arthur Thompson. This inspired me to draw matching illos and a front cover in ATom’s style.

The 80s dragged on, seemingly interminable, and I began to think about putting my house in order. I wanted to end my scattergun approach and concentrate on one “halo” zine. The first issue of *New Toy* came out in 1986 and was exactly what I wanted to do. It was almost entirely my own work, with a little extra art by Schirm and ATom. The main articles were “The Ghost on My Bed,” a piece I can’t reread without being somewhat moved even now; “A Bout Faces,” on wrestling and the American psyche; and a long piece of faanish fiction called “Fan Loon’s Lives, or Mything Persons” that brought imaginary fans such as Goon Bleary and Jophan to life. The first issue also included the infamous “Rotsler Letraset Sheet.”



Issue 2 of *New Toy* followed a year later. Again, it was all my writing, but I squeezed in a larger number of other artists. Aside from myself and Schirm, there were illos by Rotsler in the letter column and a great piece by Steve Stiles to go with my Corflu 3 report. The other major pieces in the issue were “Last Rights” (described as “a delightful brush with death”) and an “Interview With Rocky the Flying Squirrel.”

It’s almost ironic that I published the “interview” just as I was began to think I had hit my stride as a fanzine editor. At the same time the “interview” appeared in *New Toy 2*, I also published it as a mail-order booklet. The booklet sold well. I planned more, and they sold too. I didn’t realize it, but I was closing a door on one kind of fanzine even as I opened the door to a different sort. I produced one last *real* fanzine in 1988. Having found a representative article by each of the major Toronto fanwriters going back to the 1930s, I published them for Ditto 1 under the title of *Toronto the Ghood*. It was a worthy swan song.



At the time, I didn't realize that I wouldn't publish another real fanzine for *18 years!* Not that I stopped publishing altogether. I produced another handful of mail-order booklets, around a dozen portfolios – one on a floppy disk – and did the illustrations for a primitive computer game. I made and sold prints at conventions. I even had t-shirts printed. But no *fannish* publications in all that time.

Then, in 2006, I re-edited *Toronto the Ghoo* as a CD ROM for Corflu 23. It must have been a turning point, but perhaps it was inevitable that I would return to fanzines eventually. Playing dealer and mail-order publisher had been profitable for quite a while. But, gradually, the business played out. There was less and less incentive – less profit and *no* egoboo, that is – to spend time and effort in new productions. By 2002 I had stopped traveling to furry cons altogether and there were no orders in the mailbox anymore. Even though I didn't know it yet, I had begun marking time until Corflu came to Toronto.



After 18 years of fannish abstinence, I was became rededicated by the production of a CD ROM. The new format allowed me to add a considerable number of features to the original collection. I added a photo slide show, special articles by Robert Charles Wilson and Robert J. Sawyer, my report on Ditto 15's 2002 return to Toronto, Steve Stile's Corflu 23 t-shirt art, a short story called "Dissenting" (written by Mike Glicksohn as *Gardner R. Dubious*), and a number of other odds 'n' end,s including a coloured version of the original zine's black and white cover.

I set to work on a second CD. It was a complete collection of Mike Glicksohn's *Energumen*, *Xenium*, and major one-shots. I called it *Strange Voyages*, and followed the pattern I had set with the earlier disk by including every possible special feature I could imagine.

As another perq of the con, Catherine Crockett and Colin Hinz edited a collection of *my* old fanwriting for Corflu. I suggested the title *Old Toys* as an obvious reference back to my last genzines. While I had only a little to do with the actual production, I "almost" count it as one of mine.

I began my next CD project very soon after *Strange Voyages*. But although I have scanned the entire *Ah, Sweet Idiocy*, I have unfortunately made relatively little progress with it. The glow from the Glicksohn disk had begun to wear off, for one thing. For another, I had become far more interested in fan writing. At some point I still want to finish the Laney CD. There is not a *great* deal that needs to be done before I can put it together – I need to do jewel case art, write an introduction and make a final choice of extra features to include. I doubt I would press many

copies of *The Louche Knight*, as I call it. Fifty. Maybe only twenty-five. I don't think there can be very many *serious* fan historians.

But another project beguiles me. I want to pub my ish again!

I've written literally hundreds of thousands of words for fandom in the last three or four years. It's no laughing matter when I say that I have trouble finding the right zine to contribute to when I write something new. Some zines are too sercon, some zines are too British, and some zines are too Canadian (by which I mean I'm afraid nobody will read them). Then there are zines that are just right... and everyone of *them* has a backlog of my articles that should last them through 2010 or even 2011. Where shall I turn for someone to publish the next piece, or the one after that? I've been told there is only *one* sensible answer. Publish the excess myself.

It begins to seem that I have always been fated to publish New Toy again some day.

FILES ON-LINE

New Toy 1
New Toy 2
Old Toys
TransFur 1 & 2
Incomplete Taral Wayne Cover Gallery

COMING RSN?

Toronto the Good (1988 edition)
Twiltone 1
Twiltone 2
Red Shift 7