

the monthly monthly

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The Monthly Monthly

The Monthly Monthly October, 1980
Volume 1, Number 1, Whole Number 1

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Associate Editors: Dave Vereschagin
Michael Hall
Bob Weir
Robert Runté
Rosanne Charest

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Mailing Address: *The Monthly Monthly*,
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ART CREDITS

Cover by Dave Vereschagin

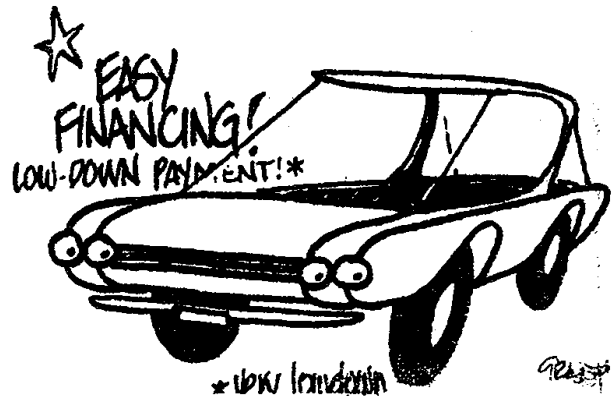
Grant Canfield: p. 1, 4, 7

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20 (logo)

Bill Gibson: p. 11

John Durno: p. 13, 18

Special thanks to Dave Vereschagin for acting as graphic consultant (and typewriter repairman).



Editorial

Editorial

Christine Kulyk

This is a story with a beginning and a middle, but (as yet) no ending. This is a story of: THE NAKED FANZINE. This is the first issue of a monthly--yes, monthly--genzine (hence the title: *The Monthly Monthly*). But perhaps I had better go back to its beginnings before I go any farther.

There have often been complaints by modern fan historians that the present crop of fanzines falls dismally short of the level of quality attained by the glorious zines of the past. In *Drift* #4 (May 1979), Gary Farber points to infrequency of publication as a major fault of fanzines today. Victoria Vayne in a recent issue of *File 770* details the financial horrors of present-day fan publishing, demonstrating that in many cases, the cost of publishing a high-quality genzine with reasonable frequency is just too high to be worth the often-meagre returns of egoboo or reader response.

Knowing all of this, I have been heard to remark, "I don't *want* to do a fanzine. Besides, there are too many crudzines around already." In spite of considerable pressure from certain individuals who shall remain nameless, such as Mike Hall--who is very much bigger than I am--I have held out quite well until now, firm in the belief that I would be better advised to concentrate on improving my fan writing so that I could contribute good material to existing fanzines which desperately need more good material. I have wavered in my resolve a few times, but always managed to resist the temptations, until . . .

One dark night, at a party at the house

of Bob Weir, my barriers were breached insidiously by what started out as a rational discussion of the current state of fanzines. Participating in the discussion were (going clockwise) Roanne Charest, Michael Hall, Robert Runté, Randy Reichardt (off to the side playing his guitar), Dave Vereschagin, and me. Our host, Bob Weir, sat quietly between Robert and Randy and kept a watchful eye on our somewhat erratic behaviour.

Somewhere along the way, someone made the ~~fatal~~ fateful suggestion: "Why don't we do a fanzine, *together*?" Well, yes, that would make it easier for us to afford to publish, if we all shared the expense. Dave Vereschagin immediately grasped the notion with all the vigour of his sometimes-frightening enthusiasm for projects of this nature. In other words, he started bouncing up and down and proclaiming, "We could publish it *monthly!*--I mean, *really* monthly; not like those other zines that are *supposed* to be monthly.--We would need four co-editors, or six, to make it work out even each year. What should we call it?"

And before I knew what was happening, I was drawn into a fevered session of name-calling, as we all began suggesting titles for our monthly genzine. We thought of some good ones, too (I'd list them here, but--who knows?--we might want to use them someday.), but nothing that we all liked, nothing that had that special flair that we felt our zine should possess--until Randy Reichardt looked up from his guitar while we were

making suggestions of "Something-or-Other Monthly's" and "Monthly Something-or-Other's". He grinned and chuckled, and asked, obviously amused by our antics, "Why not call it *The Monthly Monthly*?" Whereupon we decided that this was the title we had been searching for, for lo, these many minutes; and so it came to pass.

After this, there were only the minor details to be worked out, such as which of us actually would join the editorial committee, how much would it cost us, and could we afford it, how many pages should we do per month, how should we handle trades and locs, who should edit which issues, how much freedom should the individual editors have, and how would we divide up the work? As it happened, six of us jumped, more or less eagerly, at the chance of joining the committee--Well, Rosanne sort of had to be talked into it, but Mike is much bigger than her, too.

Anyway, there were six of us, and therefore we would each have to do two issues per year, which sounded quite reasonable. Next, we needed to determine the order in which each of us would take our turn at bat. Randy looked up from his guitar, chuckling once again, and said, "Why don't we draw straws?" (I believe I detected a faint note of sarcasm.) The rest of us said, "O.K.", and Bob Weir jumped up to find some "straws," *i.e.*, toothpicks. However, this method of selection proved to be unsatisfactory, *i.e.*, Randy drew the short ~~straw~~ toothpick. We finally settled on alphabetical order, by first names, which meant that I would be the *prima editoria*, having a name which begins with the lowly letter "C". Thus the order of our folly would become: Christine Kulyk, Dave Vereschagin, Michael Hall, Randy Reichardt, Robert Runté, and Rosanne Charest.

However, Randy soon realized that he would not be able to undertake this new project, because of lack of time and money, and possible conflicts with his other fanac. Bob Weir immediately leapt in to fill the gap, and we were ready to begin work. You see before you the final results.

My first genzine! It seems strange to be beginning my fanpubbing career with a publication such as this--I must say, it does make the use of the "editorial we" seem extraordinarily appropriate. As

editor of the first issue, I have the task of explaining our policy on this, that, and the-other-thing, so I'd better get busy.

Each individual editor will, as I have said above, be responsible for two issues per year, six months apart; and each editor will determine the contents of her/his issue, with a little help from the rest of the committee. We will maintain a file of contributions from which we all will select material, with priority being given to the editor whose issue is coming up soonest. All of us will assist in production of each issue, and we will be sharing the cost equally. Robert Runté is our Treasurer, so all cheques/*etcetera* should be addressed to him. His address will also be used for locs and trade zines.

Trade policy is as follows: we request two copies of your fanzine, to be sent to Robert Runté's address. Naturally, we would rather have six copies of your zine so that we could each have one for our very own, but we realize that this *might* be too much to ask. If you *want* to send us six copies, that would be great! Otherwise, we will accept two copies as a fair trade, and we will share them amongst us. We will trade all-for-all. That is, if we decide to trade for your zine(s), we will send you one copy of each issue of *The Monthly Monthly*, in return for which we would expect to receive two copies of each issue of your zine(s). This seems only fair, since most fanzines are published much less frequently than ours will be. Special arrangements may be made for zines which have unusual trade policies, or which appear more frequently. (NOTE: The foregoing does not preclude any previous trade arrangements which you have made with those of us--such as Mike Hall and Dave Vereschagin--who are already publishing fanzines, or who contribute material to your zines. In other words, you should continue to trade with these people on an individual basis, since they will continue to send you their zines/material separately from *The Monthly Monthly*. Randy Reichardt also wishes me to inform you that he is still alive and well, and will be publishing his own zine again real soon now.)

WE NEED CONTRIBUTIONS:

Please send us material, whether art or writing, which would be appropriate for a



genzine--we want both humourous and serious material; however, we will *not* be publishing fiction, except for occasional short humourous pieces. Contributions should be typed; those which we use in any issue will, of course, entitle you to receive a copy of the issue in which they appear. With a monthly publication schedule, your contributions could see print much more quickly than would otherwise be the case. If we like what you send us, but can't use it right away, we will keep it in our file for use in a future issue. We plan to publish each issue close to the middle of each month, therefore we would like to have submissions for any particular month sent to us by the middle of the preceding month, at the latest, in order to meet our deadlines.

WE NEED LOCS:

Reader response is of prime importance to us ("It's a proud and lonely thing" to be a faned.), so please drop us a note to let us know your reactions to our efforts.

We can hardly wait to hear from you!

WE SELL SUBSCRIPTIONS:

To make things easier for you and us, why not send us a whole bunch of money at once, instead of letting it trickle out bit by bit? Subscriptions to *The Monthly Monthly* are convenient and healthful ways of making sure that you won't miss a single issue. And they're a real bargain as well! Just \$9.00 per year, as opposed to the 75¢ per-copy price. How can you resist?

But for now, all you have to do is enjoy this first issue. We thought that it would be nice to start the ball rolling by having each of us do an editorial for the first issue, in addition to my "Editorial Editorial". This should help you to get to know us all. I'm sure that this co-editorship is going to be an exciting and enjoyable experience--for us, and I hope, for you the readers, as well.

I-talics

Rosanne Charest

Since few people outside of Edmonton have ever heard of me, I suppose I could get away with a short autobiography. I was born about thirty miles south of Edmonton on December second, 1949. My parents were extremely poor and barely managed to scratch out an existence on the quarter section of land that I grew up on. In spite of the poverty, and because they were Catholic, my Mom and Dad not only managed to raise a few crops and some farm animals, but six more siblings as well. I'm the second in line, and I would say that the two of us had things a little more difficult than the ones who followed us. After all, how many people my age today could say they grew up having to use an outhouse instead of a flush toilet, or had to carry all of the water for household use from a well outside that had to be pumped by hand? Or who can remember when electricity was installed in their home?

We did manage, though. None of us got to university, but four out of the five girls made it through high school (the other one got married). My father sold the farm a few years ago for ninety thousand dollars, so my parents aren't really poor any more. The two youngest are still living at home, since they're only nine and sixteen, and they probably think I'm old fashioned.

The people who bought the farm do not farm. They use it as a weekend "resort", which means that on any given weekend, you will find five or ten campers and trailers parked there, and probably a whole lot of beer. The owner is building a new house there, which is about three times the size of the barn that we used to have and looks like it will probably be worth about five hundred thousand dollars

by the time he has it finished. Considering that we never made more than two or three thousand dollars a year off that property, I question the practicality of this endeavour. But I heard the guy is a welder, so maybe he can afford that kind of ostentation.

As for myself, I've been working steadily since I left home ten years ago, and I'm now employed in the payroll department for Alberta Government Telephones. It's a challenging job. We've had nearly 100% turnover in staff since I started there eight months ago, and have been short staffed by as many as five people at a time during the summer. The combination of new people and a doubled work load has been bad for both the people working there and all the other people who expect their paycheques to be correct and on time. At least they only *suspect* that we don't know what we're doing!

At the moment I'm also the club treasurer for ESFCAS, NonCon 2, and the University of Alberta Science Fiction Club. I say at the moment because my sentence is almost up. Real soon now, I'm going to be paroled and my life will be my own again. Mostly. I'd say the experience has been, uh, interesting. I won't want to repeat it. I agreed to take on the three clubs when my predecessor asked me to, because he said I was the only one around who could be trusted with the funds. I'm not sure whether I'm just dumb or easily swayed, but I did not foresee how confusing it would be to deal with three separate sets of accounts involving the same group of people.

The only way I can measure my performance as club treasurer is to count the crises that have been averted or dealt with successfully as they have arisen.

According to those standards, I haven't been spectacular, but I've done ok. I've had the average amount of flack from people in regard to my capabilities, but then the same people said the same things about Robert when he had the job last year. And he was able to work at it full time, which he did. Since I have, in addition, a full-time job and a full-time marriage to deal with, it complicates things a little. One interesting aspect to this is that I've been checking around, and nobody else around here wants this job either. The response is usually, "No way, do you think I'm crazy?" I suspect that, in spite of the complaints, *etc.*, I would probably be re-elected for the position if I ran again this year. No (bleep) way. Do you think I'm crazy?

As I just mentioned, I have a full-time marriage to devote myself to. This happened several weeks ago when I married Mike Hall, of Decadent Winnipeg Fandom. We first met at V-con VI, when we sat and spoke together for a few moments. Then during the following summer he would show up in Edmonton from time to time, usually at some ungodly hour, like eight o'clock in the morning. He eventually moved to Edmonton and into Frog Manor, which is where I was residing at the time. Time, circumstance, and long heart-to-heart talks combined to lead us on to other things. We eventually moved out of Frog Manor and found a place of our own, and on the 18th of August, we were married. (Did I say a short autobiography? Sorry.)

I've been in fandom about two years now, and I've built some conceptions about it as a whole during the time I've been involved with it. I've attended a total of two conventions outside of Edmonton. The first was V-con VI, which was small enough for me not to feel lost in. The other was Minicon, which I attended with Mike Hall and Mary-Karen Reid. While Mike was able to get together with a lot of old friends, and M-K, after some initial restraint, was quickly able to make new ones, I was so intimidated by the size of the whole thing that at times I was actually afraid to leave my room. And there were only 1200 people there. For me it just isn't the kind of situation where I can really get to know people well enough to want to know them better.

As a matter of fact, I just wasn't sure I wanted to get to know any of them at all.



Which might be in part why I am attempting this co-venture of editing *The Monthly Monthly*. I find it easier and more rewarding to deal with people on a one-to-one basis or in very small groups. I will never be the life of any party, but I feel I have something of value to contribute when people are willing to drop their pretenses for a while.

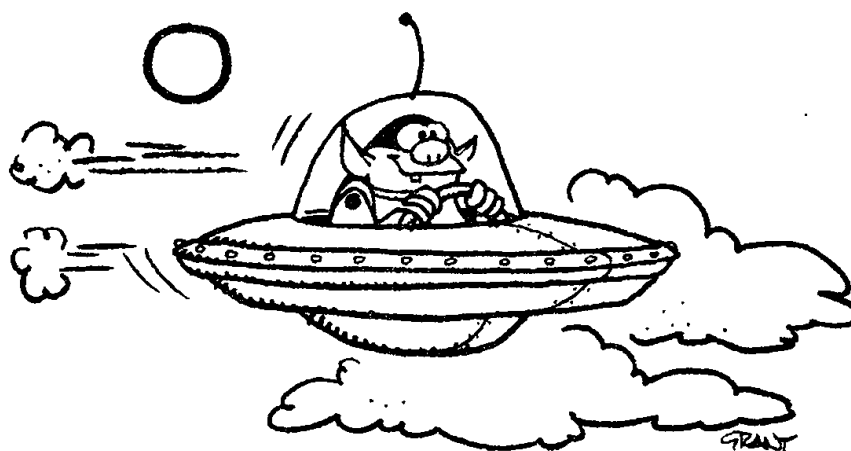
One aspect of fandom that I find both good and bad is the feeling of belonging that you get, after being a loner most of your life. When I first joined fandom, I was thrilled to find a group of people that I could talk to and who could actually understand the way I felt about a lot of things. While this was good for me in one sense, it was bad in another, because it reached the point where I felt so alienated from the world at large that I could not feel comfortable with the people I worked with. I even felt estranged from my own family, whom I always have been close to. This past year has been in part a return to existence with the rest of humanity, and has caused some tension with the people who have been my friends for the past two years.

I guess it happens in most small, closely knit groups. You come together because you have common interests, and share the same viewpoints about a lot of things that the rest of the world isn't prepared to accept just yet. You have others around you to bounce your ideas against. You're experiencing a period of growth. . . You can feel it, and it's exciting. But unless there is a constant influx of new ideas, things become static. Change is not welcomed, because everyone has already decided that the best way for things

to be is the way they are right now, right? It's taken a lot of effort and soul-searching and emotional suffering for us to reach this state, so why leave it now that we've paid such a high price to achieve it? One day you wake up and find you have traded one set of rules to conform to for another that isn't necessarily any better--just different. And there is no standard to measure by except your own to tell you whether or not it's been worth it. And when you take your own path there will always be those around

you who will feel that you're making a mistake.

The preceding is not to say that I am leaving fandom. Definitely not. But I am trying to approach it from a different angle. Maybe I'll get a different kind of response. I am somewhat curious, as the only other zine I've contributed to is the local *Dadapa*, and only at intervals since I have trouble being witty and funny without really saying anything. I hope that *The Monthly Monthly* will be a genzine that will provide some provocative, as well as enjoyable, reading.



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From the marquée of an Edmonton movie theatre:
 "IN SPACE NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM IN DOLBY STEREO"

The Proselytizing Spirit

Robert Runté

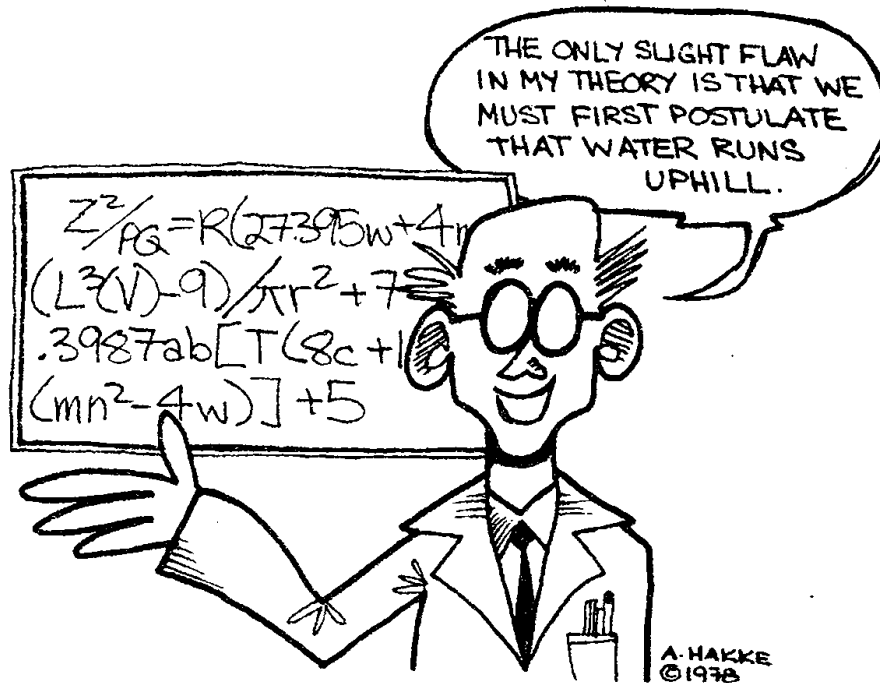
Every fall for the past three years, members of the University of Alberta Science Fiction and Comic Arts Society have operated a booth to recruit new members during Freshman Introduction Week. This requires a fair amount of work, for not only does someone have to be sitting behind the table ready to give the sales pitch for eight hours, we also have to put together some kind of display. This year, for example, we had a six-foot square collage of SF and fantasy bookcovers, a huge sign reading "U of A Science Fiction Society" (We were careful to print the "and Comic Arts" part in *very* tiny type.), the ESFCAS dragon logo poster, and a continuous slide show of various SF and fantasy movies. It was, if we do say so ourselves, rather spiffy.

So, there I was once again sitting in the middle of a terrific display watching hordes of university students streaming by ignoring our table. Occasionally one would pause long enough to sneer something about "sci-fi nuts", but the majority were too busy lining up for the ski club or arguing with the Marxists at the Communist Party table, or praising God at the Varsity Christian Fellowship booth, to pay us much attention. It is a proud and lonely thing to be a fan.

Occasionally, after sitting for hours at a time without a single potential recruit stopping at our table, I would question the usefulness of the whole exercise. Why did we bother constructing elaborate displays which were ignored, while the fraternity table next to ours attracted hundreds with a hand-scrawled sign saying "Are you getting yours?" under a girly pin-up? Why were we bothering trying to reach these Philistines at all? Who needs them?

Well, we do, actually. As soon as a club stops recruiting, its membership falls, the treasury runs low, and the number of people available to help organize the club activities (such as running the convention) declines to the point where the whole thing just folds up and dies. A club needs a constant infusion of new blood to renew enthusiasm (It is amazing how fast one becomes an old fan and tired after running a con or club for a couple of years.), to replace those members who move away or gafiate, to balance fan feuds with their neutrality, to contribute new skills and ideas, and to provide new permutations for the ~~oxtails~~, er, dating-go-rounds. However futile it may seem at the time to spend hours behind a recruiting desk in order to sign up one or two new members, it is absolutely necessary if the club is to continue to thrive, and can be seen to pay off in the long run when the new member turns out to be next year's con chair, or a new fanned, or somebody's fiancé(e).

Furthermore, out there somewhere in the midst of all those mundanes are a handful of potential fan who need the club as much as the club needs them. I don't know about you, but I didn't have any close friends before I discovered fandom, and now I have five "best" friends, and another thirty good friends, thanks to the club. There have been five marriages in ESFCAS in the last 18 months, and more affairs than I can keep track of, if that can be taken as any indication of how much fans need other fans. Tempting as it may be for us to say that now that I've discovered fandom, why bother recruiting anybody else, we must recognize this attitude for the short-sighted selfishness



that it is. The next recruit may get even more out of fandom than we have, and may prove to be yet another "best" friend.

Still, it's a little hard to remember all this when you're into your second day of recruiting and the only person who came over so far (a beautiful woman with long red hair cascading down her shoulders and a smile that lights up the whole building) turned out to be only asking directions to the Circle K Dance Club. It can get very discouraging.

Not that we didn't get *any* recruits. In fact, there are some occasions when I question the whole process for the opposite reason, that is, we are *too* successful in attracting dozmos. [Dozmo: a noun, masculine or feminine, signifying (without even being a racial slur): one who behaves in an obnoxious, irritating, and/or boring manner; adjectival form: dozmoid.] For example, last year a fellow came up to our table and introduced himself with, "Hi, my name is L**** H*****. Ever heard of me?"

"Ah, no. Should I have?"

"Oh, well, I thought you might know something about science fiction," he says indicating the display with a disdainful

wave of his hand. "I'm a science fiction writer. Perhaps you've heard of my book, *The Necromicon*?"

"Who published it?" I ask, suitably impressed.

"Berkley."

"Really?" I ask, confused. I thought I knew Berkley's line. A mental shrug.

"How much did you get for it, if you don't mind my asking?"

"Oh, well, they haven't actually paid me for it yet."

"But I always thought writers got advances."

"Oh, well, they haven't actually bought it yet. I mean, they've agreed to publish it, it's just that the deal isn't finalized yet."

"Um hum."

"Well, anyway, see I sent them the first two chapters and they've agreed to read the rest of the manuscript. If I make a few changes."

"Tell me, how was I supposed to have heard of you if you haven't even submitted the completed manuscript to the publisher?"

"Uh, well, I, er--how much did you say membership cost again?"

The next day he returned and explained

that he was also an artist and a BNF in fandom (once I had explained what fandom was) and that some editor named Vereschagin had *begged* him to do a cover for his next zine, and had offered to pay him big money for it. Since David, who was helping me man the booth that day, collapsed into silent hysterics, I chose not to believe him.

But I still encouraged him to join the club.

Why, you may ask. David certainly did. "Are you sure all this recruiting is such a good idea, Robert? H***** is a dozmo! Half the people you recruited are dozmos! Does this club really *want* more dozmos?" When H***** arrived at his first meeting in his black leather jacket and stuck his thumbs in his gigantic Harley Davidson belt buckle and announced that his amateurish drawings were Hugo quality and worth thousands, I wasn't so sure I didn't agree with David. Who needs this idiot? This blowhard braggart, this incompetent imbecile?

You guessed it--we do. Admittedly, it's a little hard to see at first, but if you think about it, you will realize that pushing the L**** H*****s of the world out of fandom would do the club more harm than his loudmouthed presence ever could. First of all, as mentioned above, no recruits equals no money in the treasury, and H*****'s eight dollars are as good as anybody else's. But that's a minor consideration. The real reason is that once you start excluding the idiots, where do you draw the line? There is always somebody who is going to consider the new recruit a loser, even if he seems ok to you. Hell, lots of the club's current regulars, including some of the most active and prominent members strike me, personally, as assholes. I'm sure there are those who feel the same way about me, and about you. So, *you* wanna throw the first stone?

Last year for a while I turned my recruiting duties over to others in the club who seemed as dedicated proselytizers as I, but they were selective in their recruiting. This one had to go because he was a satanist and a bad influence on the younger members. This other one was just hanging around because he thought it was some kind of singles club. (I can't imagine where he could have gotten such an idea.) This next one is a Trekkie, the one after that is too stupid, this other one is

useless, and this last one is really right out of it. I have to admit that I agreed with every diagnosis; they *were* all losers. But the result of this selectiveness was that only ONE new member was accepted into the central group in six months. This is not sufficient to keep the club going in the long run.

Still, it could be argued that a slow death by strangulation is preferable to encouraging a bunch of dozmos to join who will kill the club outright with their obnoxious behaviour. Perhaps. But I tend to the belief that the losers don't really hurt anybody by their presence. Take H***** for example. He gives me a pain, but while I was trying not to throw up on his "art", two 12 year-old club members rushed over and went gosh golly gee and sat around H*****'s knee endlessly entertained by his stories. The moral of that story for me was not only that people who are losers to me may be heroes to somebody else, but that the dummies will tend to go away into their own little corner of the meetings and leave us regular folks alone. Even the dumbest people can figure out who their friends are, and if you don't want to associate with that trekker or this satanist--well chances are they are just as anxious not to associate with a snob like you.

So what's the harm? Let "them" come to the meetings and be loud and boring and boorish over in their own corner and they'll contribute to the club's activities and treasury and we'll all benefit. Fans are supposed to be more tolerant than most social groups, but that should apply to recruits, not just those already admitted after careful screening.

Furthermore, I feel that we have a sacred duty (well, almost) to take the dozmos under our wing. If there is any truth in the stereotype of the fan as a social misfit (High IQ, glasses, shy with the opposite sex, bookish, non-athletic, *etc.* [who, me?]), then we all know how it feels to be the outsider, the last to be picked for the football team (or cheerleaders), the despised loser. Where do we get off turning around and doing that whole trip on someone *we* feel superior to? Having been there ourselves, we should be able to feel sympathetic towards the socially incompetent, no matter how inconvenient they may prove to our current enjoyment of the club/parties/fandom.



Which is not to say we must greet each stupidity with approving understanding. It is quite ok to call them down occasionally for their more outrageous *faux pas*. Behaviour modification, fandom as therapy, and all that.

In fact, it is widely believed that ESFCAS has been able to "knock some of the rough edges off" a few of our less housebroken members. I certainly have benefited from my exposure to fandom (though I am admittedly still nonathletic, bookish, wearing glasses and shy with the opposite sex) and I don't feel it would be right to say that now that I am saved, let's get super selective and purge anyone who doesn't fit in.

Here I come up against the oft-heard argument that while we should allow anyone in who wants to become part of the club/fandom, we shouldn't go around actively seeking converts. Well, I'd be the first to admit that I occasionally go overboard, accosting innocent bystanders in bookstores if they happen to wander into the SF section, but on the other hand, Rosanne was recruited in precisely this manner by Marianne Nielsen, and who among us would claim *that* was a bad thing? No one is

going to get into fandom or join a club if they are not interested, and short of kidnapping the victim like some sort of Moonie religious cult, what's the harm in telling someone about fandom?

My proselytizing urge stems from the bad old days before there was a local club. When I first joined fandom there were only four fans in Edmonton, and I didn't know any of them, or they each other. Instead of moaning over the lack of a local fandom, David and I (when we finally met) went out and *created* one. By converting every neo we could get our hands on, we changed Edmonton from a fannish wasteland to one of the most active fanncentres, complete with annual convention, an apa, 10 fan editors, and 45 active local club members. If you want to convince me that recruiting is a dumb idea, you will first have to convince me that I would be happier living in a city 800 miles from the nearest convention, with only one fanned, and three other fans to talk to (assuming I could meet them). Sorry, but I don't think that you could do it.

So, when L**** H***** came up to the recruiting table again this year and told me that his book will be out by Christmas (Hohoho), I stopped snickering long enough to invite him down to a meeting, and sincerely encouraged him to rejoin. And I sat there for another 30 hours hoping to be able to recruit the four or five good members who would make up for H*****. I got ten.

In Winnipeg, the local club is dying partly because none of the remaining DWF-ers are willing to try to recruit new members--partly as a result of their disillusionment over the high percentage of trekkers, kids, and doozies who joined as a result of Uncon, their last PR effort. WSFS is going down the tubes, and they can't understand why Winnipeg is becoming a wasteland (after outpubbing every city in Canada) while Edmonton prospers. I cannot understand their attitude of narrow selectivity in accepting new members; but perhaps *you* will explain it to me, if you oppose active recruitment. I would also be interested to learn how you, the cream of fandom, came to join; whether you were recruited by a fan, a club, or whether you found fandom on your own? Tell me, so that we can do whatever it was that recruited you again, and bring in someone as neat as you.



There were a lot of things that attracted me to fandom, and many of these are the reasons I'm still here. As time rolls by, I find more and more things that I really don't want to have anything to do with. (Now, I just have to figure out a way of telling this without offending *too* many people.)

Rocky Horror Fandom, for one thing. In the local club here, a few of the members have discovered it for the first time, and are busily into constructing the costumes, throwing rice, toast, *etc.* during the film, dancing the "time warp" and going on and on and on about this or that. Now, I admit, I've seen the film oh, 14 times or so, and memorized not only the song lyrics, but the dialogue to the entire thing. But, when I look back on my entire Rocky Horror fan career, well, I may be a little too harsh on them. Let me put it another way.

Dave Vereschagin and I went to see Devo. I am somewhat of a fan of New Wave and punk, and having heard them and seen their act on TV, I was fairly curious to see exactly how they perpetrated this hoax on the unwitting record-buying public. While several of my friends have waxed enthusiastic over them, something about the sound and forced syncopation just doesn't jibe with me. Still, as I said, I was curious. There were long lines, and several in the crowd were already decked out in mock Devo costumes. The band came onstage, and for an hour or so had quite a bit of fun with the audience--at the audience's expense, it seemed to me. Yes, the boys in Devo

have quite a few cute tricks up their sleeves, but by the end of the show, with no prompting on the band's part, the audience got up, stood to attention and *saluted* while a film was played of the "Devo corporate anthem". At one point David leaned over to me and said something like, "New Wave isn't so much fun now that everyone seems to be getting into it." And he's right. It isn't. I can't even go into the closet to play my Tom Robinson records. Until the group's break-up, they were actually getting popular! Even Patti Smith has "top 40" hits! . . . Or, how about my putting it another way!

Before I became involved in sf fandom, I was the only kid on the block who read sf as a vocation. Most of my friends frowned on it a bit, but didn't think too little of me (I think) for reading it. It was quite a shock to find a whole bunch of people who not only had read the same things I did, but many who've read so much more--or those who have read the *good* stuff while I've been cramming my way through Doc Savage. But I got over that, and I found that it was fun to be able to talk sf with my friends.

Then there's the trekkies. After a group of us in DWF went to see *Star Wars* for the first time, we went back to Randy's place, and proceeded to have a long argument about the effect the film would have on sf. Yes, we all liked the film, it was a piece of fluff, and it was fun, but the thing I (and I think a few of the others) feared was that either the trekkies would

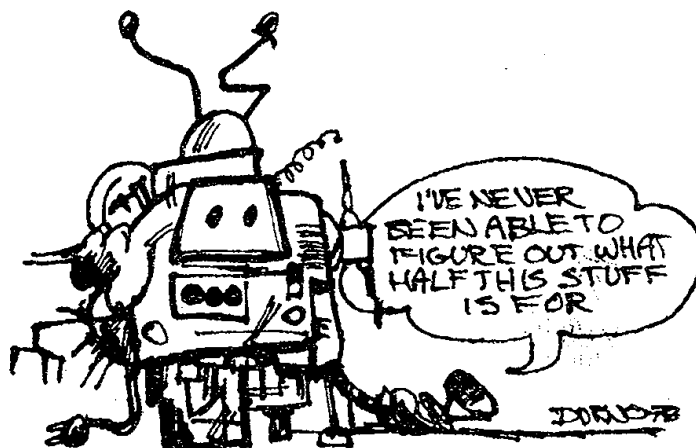
turn their attention to *Star Wars*, or that another group would form, chock full of 13 year-old girls, all wanting a piece of Luke Skywalker's ass. They would have conventions, and the whole thing would get to the point that. . .well, I think you know what I'm getting at. But, yet another example:

Have you noticed that over the last couple of years a certain type of fan has become prevalent at conventions? You see them walking around with flashing jewelry, playing games in the corridors, "shooting" their friends, and anyone else that happens to come into range, with their "ray" guns. Or they carry big sticks around with them, and pretend that they're shepherds. (This last one really has me mystified.) Mostly, the people seem to be playing out some sort

of fantasy, by dressing up in one sort of costume or another (I've noticed a plethora of pseudo-punks, too.) because they can be accepted in the whole convention atmosphere by everyone else. Am I complaining? I don't know. I think that all of these things are related, though. You may interpret this as some sort of growing intolerance on my part, but I can't agree. I may even be mellowing in my old age.

I don't usually do things that are popular, but just because something becomes popular, I don't abandon it. I just shake my head and wonder about the people who now are engaged in something that they put down a while ago, just *because it's the thing to do*.

Several local fans, although they have



derided terms like "fannish", now appear to be more involved in con fandom at this point that I am. This Is A Good Thing, but I can't help wondering whether they will burn themselves out in a short while.

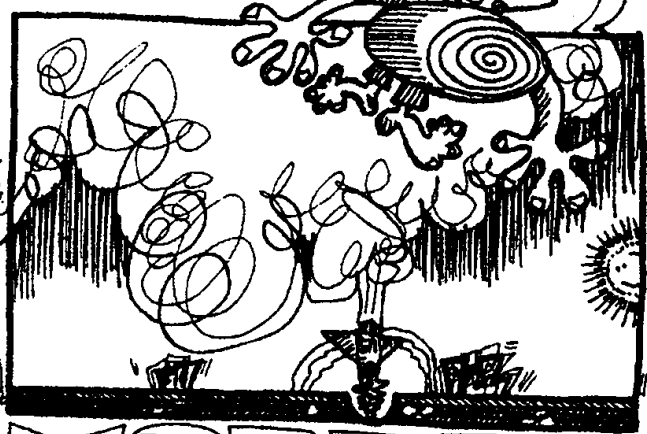
Have you ever dreamed about holding an invitation-only convention, with only goh's programming, all your *own* choice? I have. I'd hold a very stripped-down framework, with little programming, if any, no films, or very few, and maybe *one* fannish panel. Conventions are supposed to be a fun time for all, but the amount of work that currently goes into NonCon, for example, is not really worth it. There are other fans who probably thrive on these tasks--but in Edmonton, all I hear from both NonCon executives (last year's and this year's) is: "Never again!" One soon runs out of competent people in a club, no matter how large it

is. The convention suffers as a result. The people running it also suffer. I know that someone has to run it, but I don't really want it to be me.

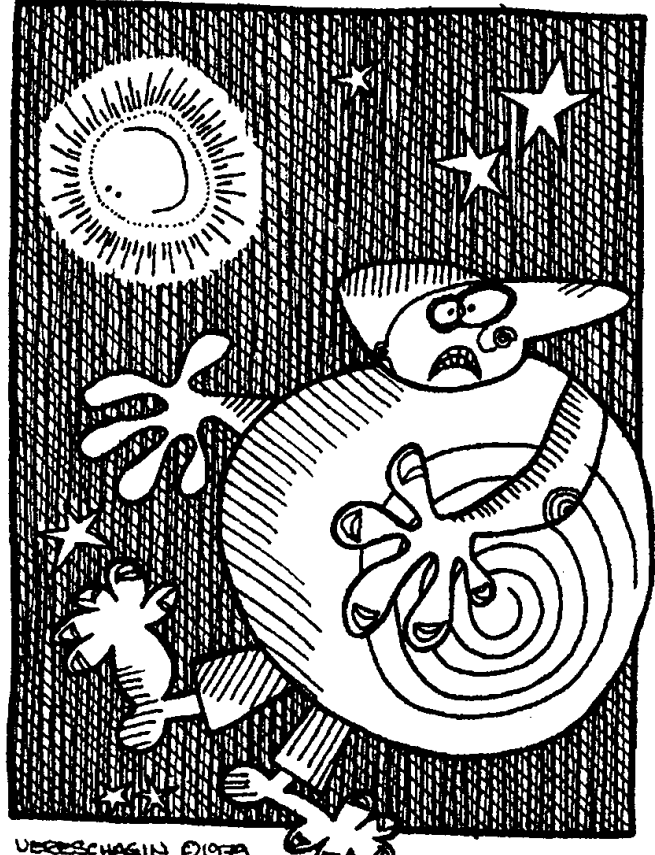
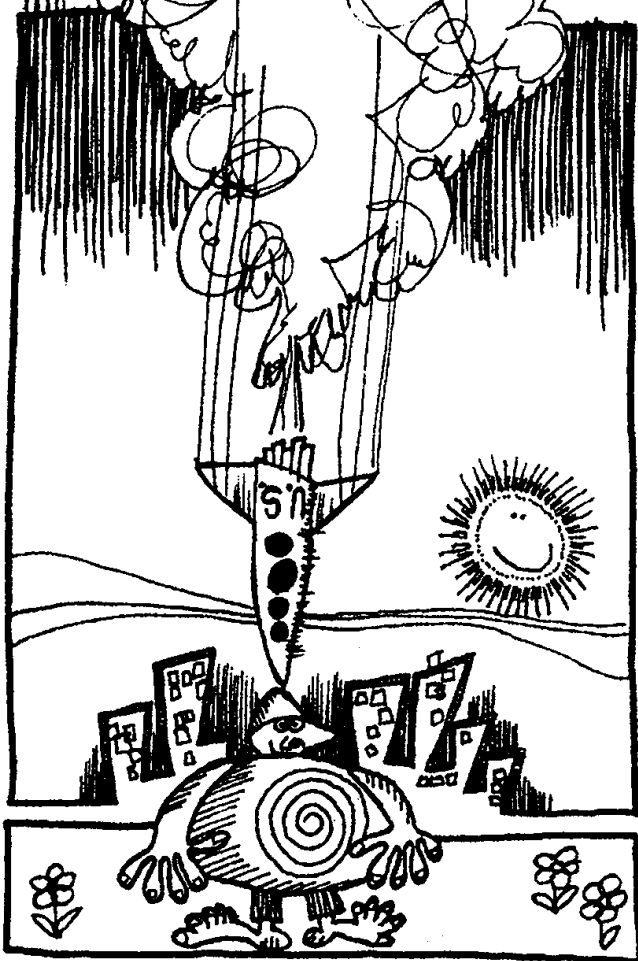
Fandom has advertised the fact that it is diverse, but there comes a point. I'm keeping my eyes and ears open--the whole sf boom has to bust sometime, and I'm very interested to see how this will affect the ever-expanding number of cons and people entering our sub-culture. Everywhere I look in the sf field, things are getting larger--publishers' advances, con attendance, prices paid for art, budgets in *sci-fi* movies; but this is part and parcel of the economy right now. One of the signs that this won't last long is right in your hands. The costs are so high in putting out something like TMM that six of us are financing it. Many of the large genzines of the past are no longer with us.--I'll probably have more on this subject next ish.



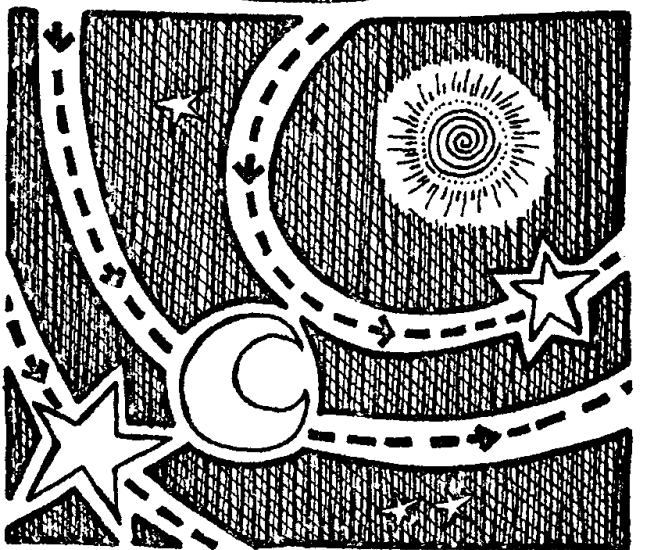
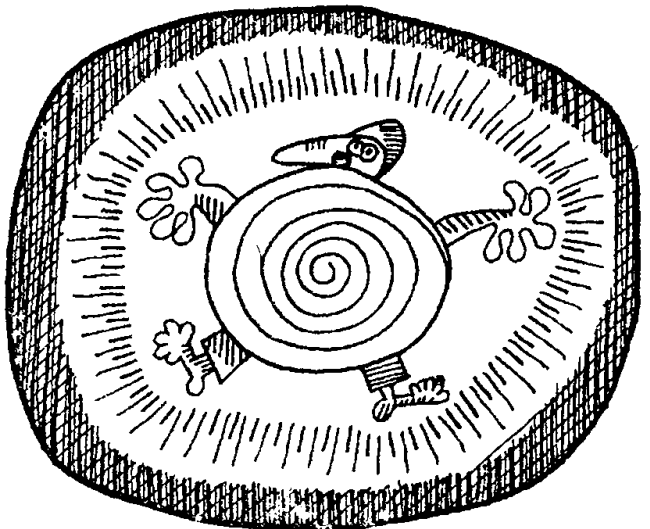
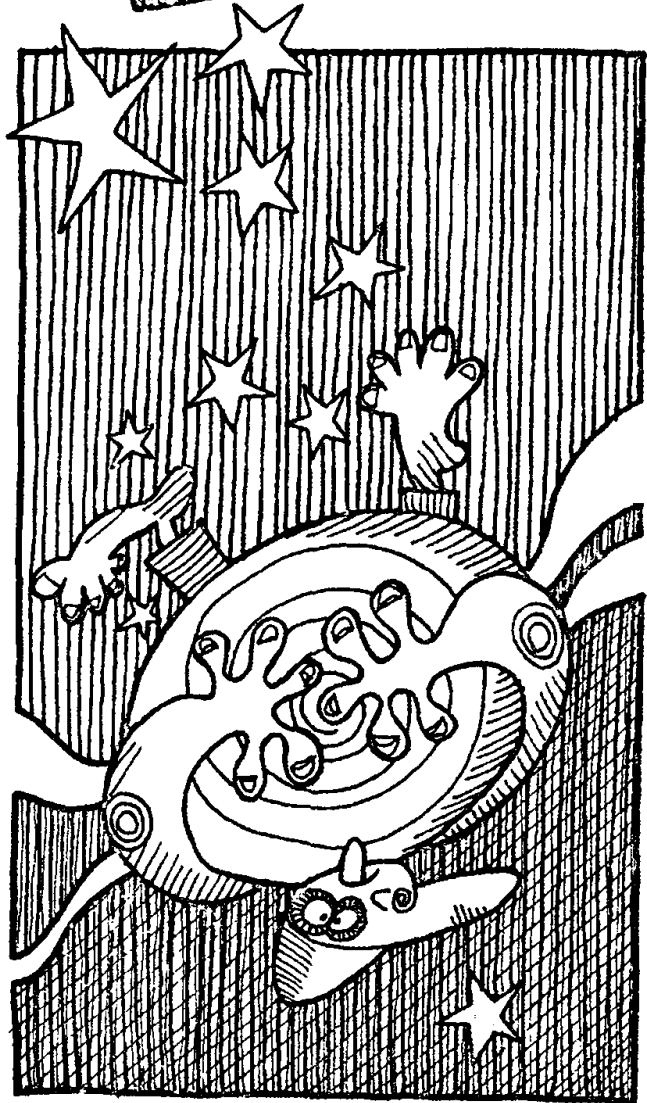
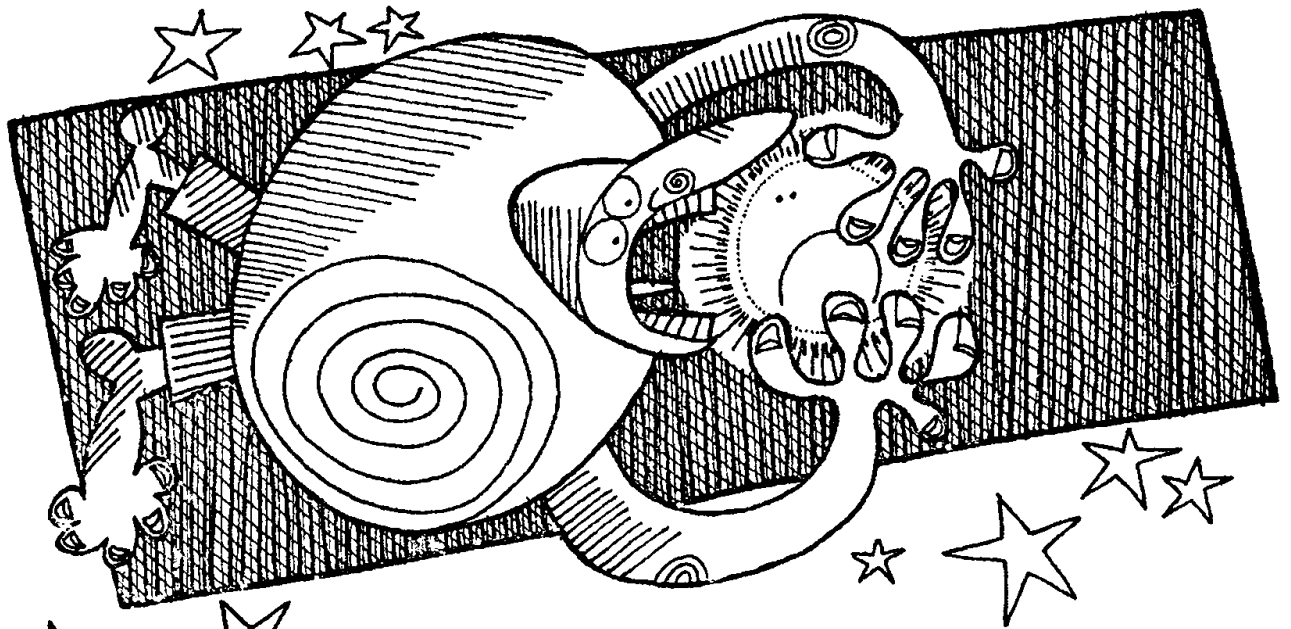
sans serif
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MORRO



VERESCHAGIN ©1977



for personal power by subverting the activities of other concom members have succeeded to a certain extent, mainly because most of the other concom members find it difficult, if not impossible, to credit the notion of *anyone* gaining any significant personal power through participation in the organization of a small local convention.

Those of you who have worked on concons for other conventions will be able to bring to mind readily examples of similar personalities and incidents within your own groups. Part of the problem may be that even "small" local cons are not so small anymore, with several hundred attendees, and many of them non-fannish members of the general public. Concons are forced to design their programming and facilities to cater to the "mundanes" who are mainly interested in discussions of space science applications, films, SF "weirdoes" in costume, and hucksters' merchandise, rather than the "fannish" activities such as meeting other fans, renewing old acquaintances, partying, trading fanzines and egoboo, and generally having fun with other fans in a friendly atmosphere.

The letters section in Mike Glycer's *File 770* #14 is almost totally composed of reports of, and comments on, difficulties and conflicts encountered by concons, such as the Northamericon committee and the Seattle Worldcon bidding committee. The news that Seattle has lost the Worldcon bid (largely attributable to the publicizing of these conflicts and problems with facilities) gives added poignancy to this detail. (While I wish the Denver committee the best of luck, I must pause to wonder whether they will find that the incredible amount of work they will have to do to host a Worldcon in its present form will be worth the scant rewards. Do I hear a reply from the Iguanacon committee? How about Suncon? Westercon?)

In the same issue of *File 770* we read that Autoclave has been cancelled for this year, and Mike Glycer reports on how Westercon 32 ran afoul of the Workman's Compensation Board. He notes that "this year's Westercon had to labor under the burden of record attendance, roving bands of fans dressed in stfnal paramilitary gear, and the hotel's active effort to annihilate all parties" (p.4). This, in addition to 2 and one-half pages of con listings, and a report on the infamous Doug Wright cons --all leading one to ask, "What's it all

leading to? Surely, if we fans did not have considerable faith in the value of having cons, we would not continue to host so many each year, at such great costs in time, labour, and personal conflicts.

As I recall, when the Edmonton fans decided to have our first con, our reasons were as follows: We wanted the chance to meet and have fun with other fans without having to travel hundreds of miles; we hoped to recruit more members for ESFCAS by the publicity from the con, and to awaken the enthusiasm of some of the inactive members; we hoped to break even with regard to the expense of holding the con, or at best to make a modest profit, to be used for future club activities including holding a relaxicon; we wanted to make ourselves better known to fans in other cities; and we wanted to have a good time. Early on, it became evident that some persons on the concom saw the event as a chance for personal aggrandizement, and some club members would have preferred that we undertake a grand money-making scheme rather than risk losing funds on a con.

Even after the con had succeeded in making a fair-sized profit, sufficient for the purpose of holding a relaxicon, the new executive committee members for NonCon 2 refused to allocate funds for this purpose, saying that they felt that a relaxicon would be for "fans" only, and not for the general club membership. I was shocked that, after complaining about all the work they had to do for NonCon 1 just so the mundanes could enjoy themselves, the new concom were unwilling to let us have a relaxicon which would be purely for fun, without the mundanes and without most of the work.

Which brings me to a consideration of the second insidious negative force mentioned above--the "pro" cons, the commercial SF cons such as the huge Star Trek cons and the Doug Wright cons. I came as close to these beasties as I care to, when a "con" group called "Space: the Final Frontier" visited Edmonton, and some of the ESFCAS members (including myself) agreed to work as gofers at their one-day "convention" in return for a free recruiting table, free admission for the gofers, and a free dinner--yes, I know, "TANSTAAFL", it's so true. I have seldom felt so disgusted with anything I have done as when I was forced, without warning, to help these con-men sell their cheap merchandise

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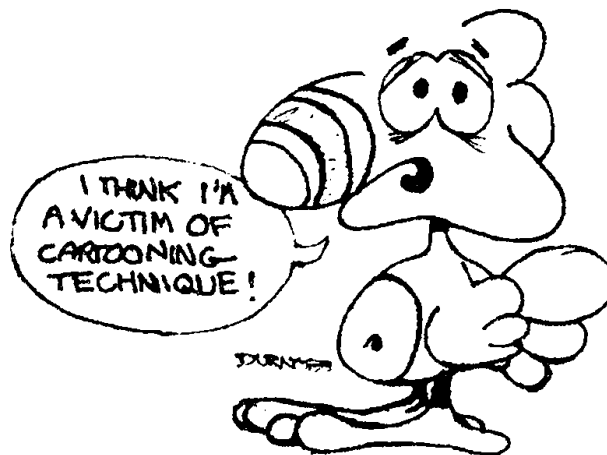
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to a bunch of eager-to-be-ripped-off kids, at outrageous prices. These guys had the nerve to charge \$5.00 admission (for adults) to a "convention" which consisted of the showing of a few ST episodes and bloopers, the film "Universe", a speech by George Takei, and the sale of a bunch of rip-off ST and SW merchandise. I wonder how they can sleep at night.

The infamous Doug Wright cons not only attract thousands of people each year, but they require their attendees to sign a membership agreement stating such things as: "I have a positive attitude to fandom, the Science Fiction, Horror and Fantasy Association, it's convention, it's chairman Douglas Wright, and staff", and "I will not distribute literature of any kind in the building, parking lot or surrounding area where an Association event is being held." ["it's chairman"? "surrounding area"?--does that include Edmonton? outer space? Well, so much for trading fanzines.]

These large commercial cons present a very real danger to the future of the *real* SF cons that are hosted by and for fans, on a non-profit basis. It is largely because of the bad reputation gained by the rip-off cons that the real conventions are subjected to public scorn by people who often have never attended a real SF con, or who go with mistaken preconceptions about its nature, and refuse to see what is actually there. It is also an effect of the rip-off cons that large numbers of mundanes, Trekkies, Warriies, and Runners, Dorsai, *etc.* are attracted to the real conventions, where we are forced to tolerate their childish and annoying behaviour.

The whole concept of SF fan conventions is in real danger, as these cons become larger and tend more and more to cater to the tastes of non-fans and to become riddled with internal conflicts among concom members, and as the commercial cons become steadily more popular. We must stand back and consider whether it has all gotten out of hand--we must reevaluate our reasons for having conventions, and decide whether we should continue to let them grow larger. As a concom member, I donate hundreds of hours of my life, and a considerable amount of my money and anxiety, towards producing a successful convention. Is it any wonder that I become discouraged when I see other concom members engaging in petty conflicts and power-struggles, or slanting the con activities towards the tastes of non-fans in order to "Impress the Public?"



At Norwescon 2, Denys Howard told me and other members of CRAPA about a suggestion made by Phil Paine. The idea was that there are now enough true fans for us to hold conventions in fannish style, without the non-fannish trappings such as dealers' rooms, organized masquerades, expensive film programs, and extensive programming. Such things as feature films, unusual items of merchandise for sale, elaborate costumes, publishers' promotional parties, and intelligent panel discussions can all be great fun, it's true. But these things are secondary to the true purpose of the SF convention, and as such they must not be allowed to interfere with the less expensive, and more valuable, aspects of fannish gatherings. It is quite probable that, unless many of the unfortunate circumstances and attitudes described above change in the future, it will be necessary for us to stop holding large, public conventions with all their attendant problems and expense, and begin having only small relaxicons which are designed strictly for the pleasure and benefit of *us*, the fans who organize them, and donate our labour to them, so that we will be able to start to enjoy attending them again. Thus fannish history will come full circle, and that might not be such a bad thing, after all.

is canadian fandom an american BRANCH PLANT ? Bob Weir

One of the most important issues facing Canadian fandom today has to be the problem of trying to be a science fiction fan and a Canadian at the same time. As all Canadians know, our culture is inundated by foreign--primarily American--influences. The books and magazines we read, the movies we see, even the television we watch, are overwhelmingly American. In the field of science fiction this cultural wave assumes tidal wave proportions. With the notable exception of fanzines, all major sf publications in this country are American. Even among fanzines, I think most fans would admit that the majority of the ones they receive are American. An even more depressing fact from the standpoint of Canadian culture is that there is not a single Canadian science fiction writer of international stature. Although I believe that this situation may change in this generation, as there are several Canadian writers with a lot of potential, Canadians will continue for some time to be a very small runt in the literary litter of science fiction.

If the Canadian fan makes a list of his favourite authors, the problem becomes clear. A partial list of my own includes: Roger Zelazny, Ray Bradbury, Harlan Ellison, Ursula LeGuin, Robert Heinlein, Robert Silverberg, C.J. Cherryh, and Isaac Asimov. Alas, I look at my list and to the best of my knowledge, all of these excellent writers are American. Of course, I could add H.G. Wells, Anthony Burgess and John Wyndham and get some British content, but that hardly solves the problem.

In the Canadian cinema, the picture is, if anything, even more dismal. Although

several Canadian actors have starred in some excellent sf films and television programs (Leslie Nielsen in *Forbidden Planet*, Keir Dullea in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and William Shatner in "Star Trek"), the fledgling Canadian film industry has largely ignored the genre. When I recall the one science fiction film I have seen that was produced in Canada, I tend to think that Canadian film-makers have made a wise decision. Although I realize there is a tremendous amount of competition for this dubious distinction, *The Shape Of Things To Come* just might be the worst science fiction film ever made. The script bears no resemblance to H. G. Wells' book or to the classic 1936 film and is incredibly stupid. The spaceships look like they were made from various Star Trek model kits and the acting is atrocious, especially from such normally-decent actors as Jack Palance and Barry Morse. Needless to say, this film does nothing to promote Canadian culture or inspire Canadian fandom.

Many would (and will, I am sure) argue that the problem I outline here is not a problem. They can justifiably make the contention that the appreciation of any kind of art or literature should know no borders. Science fiction fandom should be above any narrow nationalistic chauvinism.

In answering this, I must confess to a feeling of both emotional and intellectual schizophrenia on this issue. Although I am greatly concerned about Canada's cultural survival and feel that something should be done about it, all the possible remedies I can think of are totally unacceptable. I would be one of the first to

protest if attempts were made to limit the importation of American or other foreign books, magazines and films. I would consider this a violation of my individual rights, as I am sure most Canadians would. Also, any attempts by the government to *coerce* me into reading Canadian literature or seeing Canadian films would be very distasteful to me. I am as much a part of the problem as anyone else.

Finally, I think the problem can be boiled down to a few simple questions: Can a nation without its own culture hope to survive? If Canadians read the same books

as Americans, see the same movies as Americans, wear the same clothes as Americans and in every way live like Americans, how long will it be before they *are* Americans? And as a science fiction fan, am I contributing to my country's cultural assimilation? I believe these questions must be asked and will continue to concern any Canadian fan who believes in a separate future for our country. Personally, I have no ready answers or solutions. Does anyone else?

MONTHEND UPDATE

OBITUARY

We regret to announce the untimely demise of WSFS (The Winnipeg SF Society). As of September 1, WSFS has ceased to exist (at least for a while), since none of the members have renewed their memberships.

ARTIST BECOMES ARTIST

Jeanne Gomoll informs us that she is now "an OFFICIAL *artist*". She has become a "Graphic Artist 2", "for the state of Wisconsin, Department of Natural Resources --Bureau of Parks & Recreation." She says, "I do maps and illustrate environmental impact statements and layout a newsletter

for the bureau: it's *great!*"

ARTIST BECOMES ARCHITECT

Grant Canfield writes that he has received some good news: "I've been notified that I passed all my architectural exams, oral and otherwise, and am now an 'official architect' (state registered)."

COA's

Mike Bracken P.O. Box 387, O'Fallon, IL 62269

James a. hall #2 - 325 Wardlaw Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba

WHY YOU GOT THIS

you paid for it
 you trade for it
 you asked for it (you got it)
 you're not one of *them*
 you contributed
 we're hoping you will contribute
 (or else)

Andy Porter doesn't trade any more
 you support the Gang of Four
 you are mentioned
 'cause Mike says so
 'cause Dave says so
 'cause Robert says so
 why not?