

NUMBERED FANDOMS

A Theory of Core Fandom Fanhistory



Inside Story

trial by

FANWRITING!

It all started so innocently. I was working on the 36th issue of *Softcore Fantasy Adventures* for the July, 2008 eMailing of SNAPS. I'm also the electronic monthly apa's Official Editor, so I like to make a good showing in the bundle.

So there I was, writing a series of short pieces for the editorial section when I got the idea that I ought to explain the Theory of Numbered Fandoms to my fellow SNAPsters, quite a few of whom are relatively new fans.

"I'll write 250-500 words," I thought as I started on the piece. This was just one of several topics I planned to cover in that issue.

So I started writing.

The article became like a mirage extended farther and farther, the end seemingly just out of reach, as I concocted "The Numbered Fandoms Theory of Core Fandom Fanhistory. There was so much to discuss, so much to analyze.

By the time I finished, I had roughly 7,000 words on the subject. The eMailing went out to the members. Several of them responded with unexpected enthusiasm, so I immediately set to work on a version suitable for general circulation. "I'll use it as the editorial in *VFW #109!*"

What an optimist.

The result of my labors is this 28 -page issue entirely devoted to my 10,500 -word article and a lot of photos and drawings I thought you might enjoy while reading it. The total memory of the file is daunting enough; I can't possibly add any more material to this one.

The issue originally to be numbered 109 will be out in a week as #110. I could've published them in the opposite order, but I confess that I was really eager to share the biggest hunk of fanhistorical analysis I've produced since "The Philosophical Theory of Fanhistory" in the third annish of *Wild Heirs*.

I think it offers a comprehensible outline of the history of Core Fandom. I also hope that my adaptation of the idea to Core Fandom is suitably thought -provoking.

Do I need to plead for letters of comment?

— Arnie

The Numbered Fandoms Theory of Core Fandom Fanhistory, VFW #109, Volume 4 Number 8, August 9, 2008, is written and produced by Arnie Katz (909 Eugene Cernan St., Las Vegas, NV 89145; Email: cross-fire4@cox.net; phone: 702-648-5677).

Special Thanks to Bill Burns (Posting), David Gordon (Mountaineering Consultant), Alan White (Designated Arty Fella), Bill Mills (Technical Advisor), Curt Phillips & Ned Brooks (photo on page 30) and Joyce Katz (proofreading and So Much More).

Art Credits: Bill Burns (Core Fandom cover logo), Ross Chamberlain (12, 25), Lee Hoffman (17), Atom (27) and all other art by Bill Rotsler.

VFW is free by request — and you may get it anyway. It can be downloaded at efanzines.com and LasVe-grants.com. No lazy violinists were harmed during the production of this fanzine..

Member: fwa

Supporter: AFAL

Corflu Zed in 2009!

Numbered FANDOMS! Katzenjammer

The recent death of Jack Speer set me to thinking about one of his most marvelous inventions — the Numbered Fandoms Theory of Fanhistory. He originally proposed this system for organizing the history of fandom in his seminal *Up to Now*, produced about the time of the first world science fiction convention in 1939. He refined the theory in his 1946 *Fancylopedia*.

Robert Silverberg, writing in a 1952 issue of Lee Hoffman's *Quandry*, updated the scheme, working out additions that took Numbered Fandoms into the mid - Century.

Ted White, rich brown and I all wrote articles about the Numbered Fandoms Theory of Fanhistory. Each of us extended the historical outline and tried to fix errors, mostly attributable to Silverberg. (Sorry, Bob. We love ya!)

Zeal for this particular approach to fanhistory faded in the late 1970's. The reason became obvious to even the idea's strongest proponents: It stopped accurately describing the history of Fandom.

Now, looking back, I think we were hasty. In our ignorance, we may have abandoned a very useful tool for the discussion and analysis of fanhistory.

The cover of Jack Speer's original edition of "Up to Now."

The error, I believe, is that we assumed that the theory was defective when it stopped describing the processions of fannish eras, its main *raison d'être*.

We blamed the Numbered Fandoms Theory for conking out on us. In hindsight, the real problem was that we didn't take into account the profound changes that occurred in Fandom between the Boondoggle and the late 1980's.

Without going into too much detail, the essential character of Fandom changed from a relatively close - knit, small group to a much larger and much, much more diverse one.

At the same time, the typical fan went from being a generalist to being a specialist. Back to 1958, you would've been hard - pressed to find fans whose activity consisted of a single type of activity.

The contrary is true today. Most fans seem to be interested in one or two aspects of the hobby to the exclusion of all others. The typical filker, gamer or costumer probably falls into that category.

One consequence of the Balkanization of Fandom is that reading fanzines (and electronic equivalents) is not longer part of every fan's activity. As the Hugo voting proves year after year, most fans are not very familiar with fanzines.

WHAT
HAS GONE
BEFORE

WHAT NUMBER
FANDOM IS THIS,
ANYWAY?



Continued on next page



That's what undermined the utility of the Numbered Fandoms Theory of Fanhistory. At a certain point, it becomes impossible to point to a fanzine that is the focal point of Fandom — and the existence of such focal point fanzine is crucial to the theory.

Fanwriters generally look at fanhistory from its origins and work forward toward the present day. When we look at fanhistory from where we stand today and search for our roots, it draws a very different picture.

When fanhistorians start from the origination point — our version of the Big Bang — and work forward, it ultimately becomes the story of the fractionalization of Fandom into distinct specialized sub-Fandoms.

Working backward turns it into the fanhistory of what we now call Core Fandom. The fanhistorian can mark out an unbroken line from Forry Ackerman's first letter to Jack Darrow to Corflu Silver without getting mired in the complication of trying to somehow also account for the individual fanhistories of all the other current specialized Fandoms.

This fresh perspective simplifies the task. The fanhistory of Core Fandom is a lot easier to describe and analyze when we follow our own trail and pay less attention to the parallel and increasingly divergent paths.

That doesn't mean that All Known Fandom lacks a history. Nor does it consign the fanhistories of all the other specialized sub-Fandoms to oblivion.

Fanhistorians who prefer to deal with the Big Picture can still write sweeping chronicles of All Known Fandom. It's the difference between the history of a country versus the history of the entire planet. The history of All Known Fandom should focus on the level of Fandom than transcends the differences among the sub-Fandoms.

The fanhistory of each individual sub-Fandoms should be told and analyzed by the fans to whom it is relevant, the participants in each sub-Fandom.

That's what I am doing as a participant in Core Fandom. I'm trying to delve into the fanhistory of Core Fandom and its antecedents. I hope fans in SF Gaming Fandom, Filk Fandom, Costume Fandom, Con Fandom and all the other sub-Fandoms will undertake similar missions on behalf of their own subcultures.

Their fanhistories may not be presented as pages of prose. That's the kind of thing Core Fandomites like to do and do well, because fan-literary expression is such an integral part of Core Fandom.

Wouldn't it be great if Gamers invented games that told their history or if some bard in Filk-dom sang an epic ballad about the history of Filk Fandom? Costumers could put on a fanhistorical pageant that featured reproductions of classic costumes.

Jack Speer's concept of the Numbered Fandoms Theory of Fanhistory uses three specialized terms to describe the passage of eras.

Speer identifies periods of stability when there is general agreement, a consensus, about the hobby. Speer called these period 'Fandoms' and numbered them consecutively. (Hence the name "The Numbered Fandoms Theory of Fanhistory.")

The theory holds that Fandoms are separated by



periods during which various different views of Fandom are contending for dominance, but none is able to achieve it. These relatively chaotic times are called "Interregnums."

The third, and most controversial part of the Numbered Fandoms Theory, is the concept of the Focal Point Fanzine. It's controversial because, when the theory is incorrectly applied to All Known Fandom, it is impossible to find a fanzine that is in any sense the focal point of the entire hobby.

Recasting the definition of "Focal Point" neatly cuts this Gordian Knot. Now a fanzine will qualify as a focal point when it is the center of activity for the mainstream of Core Fandom.

The Focal Point Fanzine isn't necessarily the best



fanzine being published at the time. It is the one that is viewed as central to current Core Fandom activity, the one that is indispensable to most, if not all, of the most active and influential Core Fandomites.

Nor are all great fanzines focal points. A couple of current examples are *Trap Door* and *Banana*

Wings. Both are outstanding, but neither is frequent enough to serve as Core Fandom's focal point. Actually, most of the great fanzines did not serve the hobby in that way, including *Hyphen*, *Innuendo*, *Void*, *Warhoon*, *Habakkuk* (a near miss, though...), *Quip*, *confusion*, *Cry* and *Energumen*.

A Focal Point fanzine must be reasonably frequent, widely received and read by the era's main actifans and it must be influential in shaping the character of that era.

Speer's original version of the Numbered Fandoms Theory of Fanhistory has seen a number of revisions, starting with Speer's own reformulation for the *Fancy-clopedia*.

The revisions have corrected some errors in the original, but they also introduced mistakes that subsequently needed attention.

Robert Silverberg introduced a couple of problems in his 1952 article. He neglected the concept of the "Transition" and his analysis of the mid -1950's period may have been faulty. The rundown that comes a little later in this article incorporates fixes proposed by White, brown and me, and generally accepted by Numbered Fandoms devotees.

Even a great fanhistorian, and Jack Speer was one of the greatest, can make a mistake. He fixed one of the problems in his *Fancy-clopedia* revision but caused another, more subtle and far-reaching difficulty for future users of the Numbered Fandoms Theory.

Both of the lingering trouble spots involve nomenclature. The lesser is that Jack named the periods of stability "Fandoms," a term that can be quite confusing. The more serious case is that his original presentation started from a point several years later than it should've. By the time he went to correct that, the use of "First Fandom," "Second Fandom" and "Third Fandom" had become so popular that Speer decided the best way to fix the problem was to take on "EoFandom (1930-1933)" before First Fandom.

Except that EoFandom should be First Fandom —



and Sixth Fandom would then be Seventh Fandom. The flaw persists and, as things stand, it becomes less and less likely to be corrected with the passage of years.

In a sense, the problem is that the eras should've had names instead of numbers in the first place. Names would make it a lot more likely that a reader or listener would get the reference than when it's just a number.

So I've made up some names. I derived the names for the stable periods from the focal point fanzine(s) that characterize it. The more chaotic periods are named for a major disruption or event.

The only problem I see is that I'm touting something called "The Numbered Fandoms Theory of Fanhistory" and I want to get rid of numbers and Fandoms. That would've make it just "The Theory." That wouldn't be fair to all the equally useful ones, including my Philosophical Theory of Fanhistory.

Here is my take on the Numbered Fandoms approach to the fanhistory of Core Fandom:

EoFandom **The Pioneer Era** (1928-1933)

Fandom emerged from the letter columns of the professional science fiction magazines. Speer dated the



start of EoFandom from the publication of the first fanzine (*Cosmology*), but the Pioneering period actually started before that, with correspondence and the formation of clubs.

This is when Fandom established the basis for the hobby to follow. The tone was distinctly sercon, since at this stage Fandom was essential an Interest Group.

It should also be noted that, though our Science Fiction Fandom traces to the genre SF magazines, both Fandom and amateur publishing have antecedents.

Amateur publishing traces back to at least the early 19th Century, when numerous small publications were produced for the genteel subculture that formed around English chocolate houses. Addison and Steele's *Tattler* and *The Spectator*, still read today, may not seem much



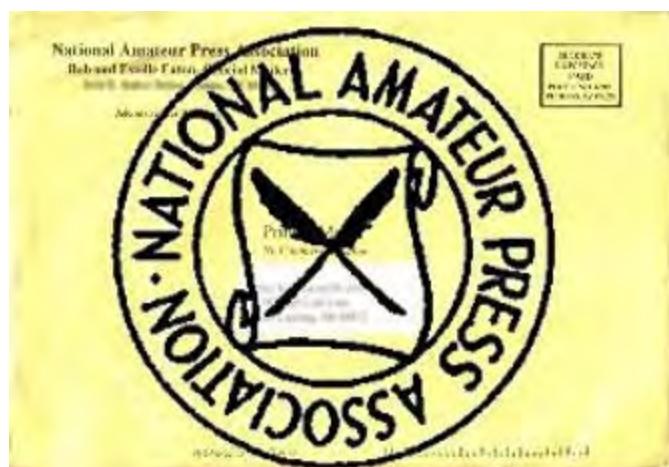
Joseph Addison and Richard Steele were the Ted White and Terry Carr of their day.

like *Banana Wings* and *Motorway Dreams*, but there's a basic similarity. Addison and Steele wrote for their little subculture with the same dedication that Joyce Katz and Dave Langford do today.

A less remote ancestor of Core Fandom is Amateur Journalism (ayjay). The National Amateur Press Association began distributing its mailings in 1876 and there were small circulation amateur journals in the US a decade or so before that.

Amateur Journalism suffered a prolonged decline beginning around 1930, because ayjayers did not readily embrace alternative methods of duplication. They stuck with the small presses that launched their hobby, but the hobby wilted as use of such presses diminished in favor of the mimeograph and spirit duplication in the Mundane world. This resulted in an over-emphasis on form at the expense of content (though even today there are quite a few worthwhile ayjay publications),

A number of fans have split their activity between fanzines and ayjay, including Bill Danner, Mark Manning and Harold Cheney.





Forry Ackerman is generally credited as the First Fan. His correspondence with Alias Jack Darrow is the seed from which the tree of Fandom grew.

The honor of having published the first fanzine goes to a man who subsequently had quite a famous/infamous professional career, Ray Palmer. RAP produced *The Comet* in May 1930. Later, in the Fourth Transition, Palmer embarrassed many science fiction fans with his advocacy of “The Shaver Mystery” in *Amazing Stories*.

First Fandom The Fantasy Magazine Era (1933-1936)

Fandom defined itself exclusively in terms of science fiction during these years. Fanzines profiled authors, indexed their work, previewed next month's prozines and even dabbled in literary criticism.

Fantasy Magazine, a digest-sized, impeccably printed publication, was the focal point fanzine. Edited by Julius Schwartz and Mort Weisinger through most of its run, *Fantasy Magazine* featured contributions by many pros as well as the top fans.

The top fanzines of First Fandom were all printed journals with as many recognizable names as they could corral. Conrad Rupert, who set type for *Fantasy Magazine* at bargain rates, did the same for other fanzines, too.

A lot of the fanzines, including *Fantasy Magazine* had *Aspirations* that that today we would call overtly commercial. They loved science fiction, but that love made them want to have jobs within it. *Fantasy Magazine* pushed hard for subscriptions and reportedly had over 250 at its peak.

Unfortunately, *FM* and the others didn't apply rigorous financial analysis; they lost money on each copy, even with a saintly fan hand -setting the type for almost all of them. When Conrad Rupert turned his attention to non-fannish manners, the printed fanzine field collapsed.

Even though First Fandom was relentlessly devoted to science fiction, it also saw the first major expression of fannishness, The First Staple War.

Bob Tucker announced his mock campaign against the use of wire fasteners in scientific fiction magazines in the letter column of *Astounding*, but it quickly spread to active Fandom. Jack Speer was one of the leaders of a rival organization. The two factions issued pronouncements and published fanzines. No one got too



Ray Palmer flashed the editorial genius in fanzines that eventually made him a successful professional editor and publisher

Donald A. Wollheim was a great and controversial fan. He founded FAPA and championed social conscience for fans. He also feuded just about nonstop.

carried away, though the anti-staple forces did claim Ultimate Victory when an issue of Tucker's *D'Journal* showed up riddled with metallic fasteners.

A much more serious battle erupted later in The Fantasy Magazine Era. It pitted the Science Fiction League, sponsored by *Wonder*, against the fan-run International Scientific Association.

Don Wollheim alleged that *Wonder Stories* failed to pay him for a story ("The Man from Ariel") and pointed out other non-payment situations and other failings connected to the magazine. Hugo Gernsback and his editor Charles Honig retaliated by throwing DAW and friends out of the Science Fiction League.

Several fan organizations supported Wollheim and friends. The ISA (formerly known as the Impossible Story Club and then the Cosmo -Science Club, mostly oriented around science fiction despite its name) fought *Wonder Stories* and its ally *Fantasy Magazine* to a standstill.

The Science Fiction League won the battle, but the positions it embodied fell out of favor with active fans. The SFL offered an olive branch in the form of a probationary membership for Wollheim and his clique (which he rejected) and the fuss contributed to Gernsback's subsequent loss of the publication.

The ISA-SFL feud showed that fans of that era took the side of the pros against the fan protestors. Yet it also showed that, for the first time, some fans had the nerve to knock the phony halos off the pros who committed crimes against the fan community.

First Transition **The Fanzine Depression** (Late 1936-Oct. 1937)

Two events ended the Fantasy Magazine Era with a thud and ushered in rapid change and seismic changes in demographics, tone and attitudes.

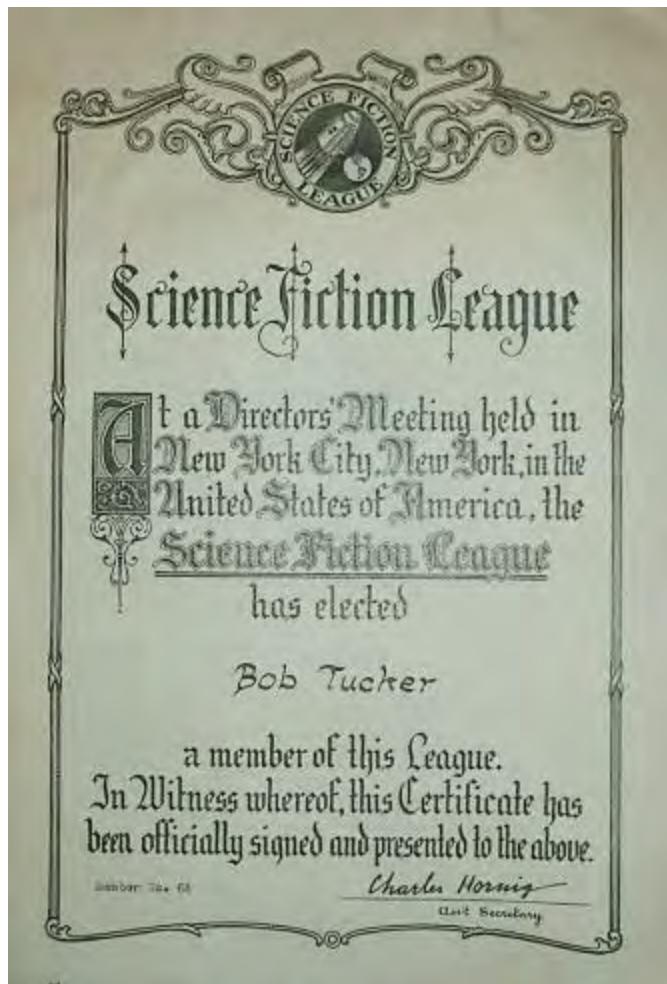
The printed fanzine field, with its pros and pretensions, collapsed and Hugo Gernsback sold *Wonder*, a stolidly intellectual magazine, to a pulp house that turned it into the somewhat lowbrow *Thrilling Wonder Stories*. The former caused many pros to stop contributing to fanzines, because the 50-copy hectographed titles that replaced the fancy printed ones simply didn't have the prestigious format or extensive circulation that had at first attracted them.

Adding to the lack of consensus was the war between two diametrically opposed elements in Fandom. One faction championed "The Gernsbackian Ideal" that



Photograph by Amy Meadow





every fan should aim at building a home laboratory for scientific experimentation. The other faction called it "The Gernsbackian Delusion." They wanted a home library not a home laboratory.

Second Fandom The Science Fiction Fan Era (Oct. 1937-Oct. 1938)

The fanzine field was very different when it revived. Almost overnight, the classy printed magazines of the mid-1930's became an unattainable goal. The lowly hectograph, little more than a pan of jelly, became the standard means of fanzine reproduction.

This had several major effects on Fandom. It made it a lot smaller, closer-knit and more hardcore. The people that stuck with it were those who made the biggest commitment to Fandom. The pros departed and there really wasn't much room for casual fans on Second Fandom mailing lists.

As the close connection to the professional science fiction community diminished, interest in Fandom and fans soared. For the first time, fan personalities and opinions came to the forefront.

Denver's Olin F. Wiggins' *Science Fiction Fan* could never be confused with *Fantasy Magazine*, but it appeared regularly and had an intelligence and competence that set it a little apart from the more juvenile fanzines.

The creation of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association (FAPA) is the greatest achievement of The Science Fiction Fan Era. Don Wollheim started the group as the answer to the sudden, shocking collapse of the fanzine field.

In his announcement, DAW pointed out the futility of subscription-based fanzines and presented the new group as a low-cost alternative. He borrowed heavily from the rules and structure of the Mundane amateur press associations like NAPA and AAPA, but he added some unique features that set FAPA apart from its non-fan cousins. FAPA limited its roster to 50, the number of copies a skilled operator could coax from a hectograph, and required that all publications produced for FAPA be sent to the entire roster.

The second FAPA mailing introduced another major innovation. Jack Speer and Dan McPhail, two charter members, decided it would be good to comment on material in the first mailing. After some discussion, they jointly introduced the apa mailing comment

Don Wollheim hoped that FAPA would encompass the entire fanzine field, which would have put the hobby on a strictly amateur footing with no pretentious pseudo-prozines. It also would have stunted the growth of the hobby. But apas have played a big role in the history of Core Fandom/Fanzine Fandom even if neither FAPA nor any of the organizations that followed fulfilled this aspect of its founder's dream.

Arthur Wilson "Bob" Tucker is one of the most remarkable people to hitch their star to Fandom. He is largely responsible for injecting fannishness and humor into fanzines. His alter ego Hoy Ping Pong delighted in skewering the pompous and holding them up to the mirror of satire.



Second Transition

The Wollheim-Moskowitz Feud

(Oct. 1938-Oct. 1940)

The Science Fiction Fan Era lasted only a year, because its genesis carried the seeds of its dissolution. Its consensus proved extremely transient – and led to a Transition that lasted twice as long!

When *Thrilling Wonder Stories* announced it would continue sponsorship of the Science Fiction League began by Hugo Gernsback's *Wonder*, fans rejoiced. The SFL was a gateway to Fandom. The club recruited new fans, which sounded like a good idea.

No one accurately evaluated the impact of the switch to *Thrilling Wonder Stories*. The prozine appealed to a younger, less intellectual reader.

The Science Fiction League exploded when it moved to *TWS*, even though the new owners didn't match Gernsback's commitment to the idea. No one likes clubs more than teenage boys and *Thrilling Wonder Stories* funneled a huge number of them through the SFL and into Fandom.

As fans talked less about science fiction and more about themselves, they discovered that the shared love of SF had masked a great diversity of opinions about



Sam Moskowitz, like his nemesis Don Wollheim, was a prolific fan writer and publisher. He organized New Fandom, the organization that led to the first World Science Fiction Convention (NYCon I) in 1939

other things.

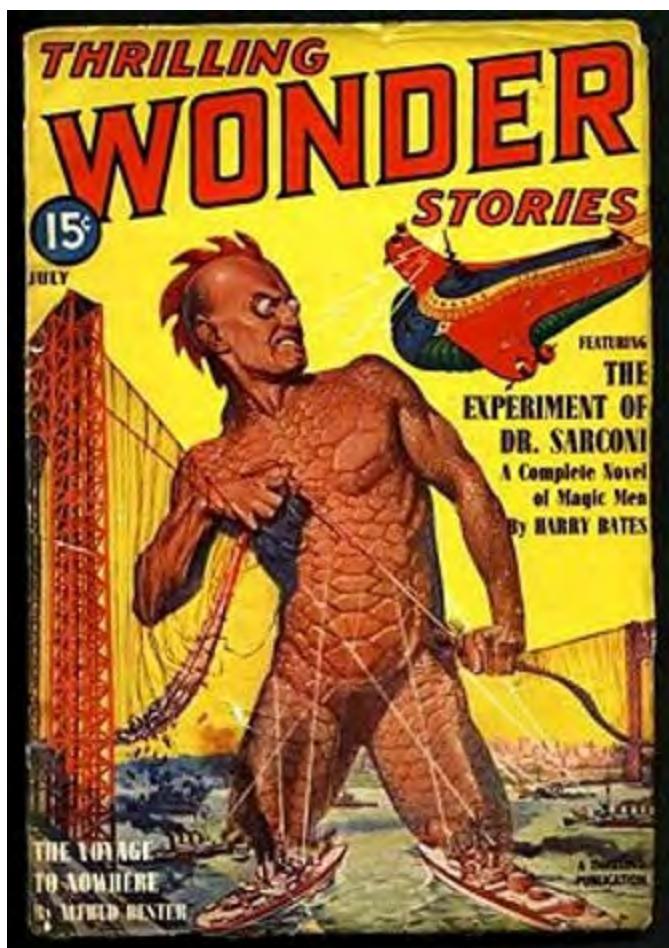
The so-called "Barbarian Invasion" of young fans and the new emphasis on fan personalities made an explosive mixture. A lot of the neofans couldn't cope with the disagreements and they often escalated into all-out feuds.

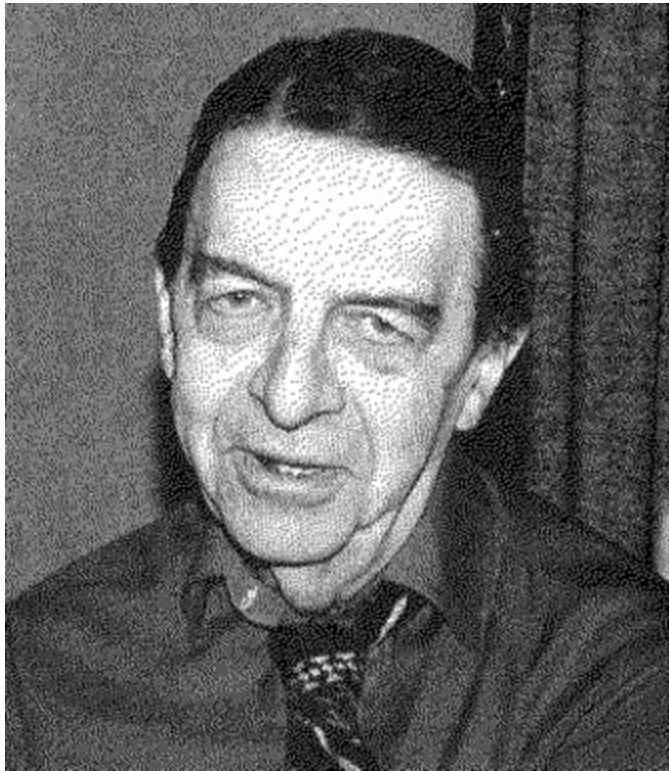
The marathon hostilities between Sam Moskowitz and Don Wollheim, arguably the two leading fans, had a serious ideological basis. Don Wollheim, John B Michel and like-minded fans believed that science fiction should be a vehicle for the improvement of society and the curing of its many ills. Sam Moskowitz spoke for younger and newer fans, who just wanted to enjoy the stories.

There were many complex facets to the feud, including that the Wollheim faction (the "Michelists") were affiliated with the Young Communist League (though that didn't have quite the sigma it would've in the 1950's).

Moskowitz's allies James Taurasi and William Sykora, took advantage of their power as co-chairman (with SaM) of the NyCon 1, to exclude Wollheim, Michel and their followers from the first World Science Fiction Convention in 1939.

It's symptomatic of the era that the first worldcon had an Exclusion Act and the second one saw the sponsoring club dissolve amid accusations of anti-Semitism. The Second Transition saw Fandom begin to build up an identity separate from its position as the cheering section for the professional science fiction world. The immaturity and combativeness of fans during the Sec-





Harry Warner stands tall among fanhistorians due to his two hard cover histories and his “All Our Yesterdays” column.

ond Transition meant that the forward strides also came with some backward steps.

Third Fandom The Spaceways Era (Sept. 1940-Mid-1943)

Art Widner published *Fan Fare* during Third Fandom. He returned to activity after a long period of gafia and is still, at 90, an eminent and productive fan.



Harry Warner’s *Spaceways* rose to focal point fanzine status, because it embodied Second Fandom’s ruling principle: Let’s not fight. They were tired of the endless wrangling and worries about the World Situation didn’t make fussing and feuding any more welcome within Fandom.

Spaceways is well-written, carefully produced and unshakably non-controversial. Harry Warner feared the eruption of new feuds so strongly that he rejected any contribution likely to spark such controversy.

Spaceways is also the first major mimeographed fanzine. Harry acquired a used mimeo, which allowed him to distribute fanzines much more widely than was possible for hektograph fanzines.

Although Third Fandom fanzines strike the current reader as studiously non-confrontational, some fans didn’t quite match Warner’s devotion to avoid even the wisp of controversy. Art Widner’s *Fan Fare* had a little more sizzle to it. On the other hand, it did print damon knight’s article “Unite or Fie!” that ultimately engendered the birth of the National Fantasy Fan Federation.

The N3F, a well-intentioned effort to start a fan-run national organization, founded in a sea of petty office-grabbing and runaway constitution-writing. It didn’t help that the NFF didn’t have a clear set of goals and programs.

The FAPA Braintrust was a glimpse at the more eclectic and intellectual fanzine fanac of the future. It consisted of a group of slightly more mature FAPA members who enjoyed participating in a wider-than-usual range of subjects in the apa.

Their elevated discourse showed that fanzines had the potential to discuss things that went beyond both science fiction *and* Fandom.

Louis Russell Chauvenet, a member of the FAPA Braintrust, coined the word “fanzine” in 1940 to describe the small circulation amateur publication fans produce. They were previously known as “fanmags.”

Third Fandom showed that Fandom had, finally, digested the Barbarian Invasion and become a somewhat more material, intellectual and civil hobby. The ascendancy of the Braintrust in FAPA and the birth of the very literary and elevated Vanguard apa were expressions of a more erudite and less combative attitude,

Third Transition World War II (Mid-1943-Late 1944)

Shortages of just about everything needed to produce a fanzine and the Draft helped disrupt the unnatural calm that settled upon Fandom during the Spaceways Era.

Really, things were too *nice* to stay so polite for

very long. Some of the FAPA Braintrust went on to other pursuits, factionalism rocked Vanguard and the N3F fell into a rut that included constant spats and a steady supply of new constitutions.

Claude Degler was the most outrageous expression of The Third Transition. Degler, whose real name was Don Rogers, attended fan events as far back as ChiCon I in 1940, but he didn't really get rolling until the mid - 1940's.

Latter-day fans have demonized Degler. And there's certainly a lot to dislike, but in retrospect he cuts a somewhat romantic figure. He left his home in Newcastle, IN, and crisscrossed the country, visiting fans in every corner of the country. And wherever he went, he started local and regional clubs.

Degler espoused the belief that fans were star be-gotten and proposed that Fandom take advantage of this by marrying other fans.

Another way to look at it is that Claude Degler was a liar and a thief with delusions of grandeur. His most romantic adventures, such as when he rescued the teenage French-Canadian girl, proved wholly imaginary, as did most of the ridiculous clubs he started. Generally, someone he'd just visited would find themselves drafted as an officer of the latest bogus organization, scant compensation for Degler's mooching and tendency to appropriate his hosts' belongings.

Degler's fan philosophy hints at just how sick he may have been. The idea that fans are of extra-terrestrial origin or in any way inane superior to non - fans is so easily disproved that it's a wonder they didn't laugh in Degler's face. The fact that they didn't suggests that some fans found the notion of superiority to Mundanes very appealing.

The Cosmic One's fanzines are legendary for their low quality. The most famous was the official organ of his flagship club The Cosmic Circle, *The Cosmic Circle Commentator*. Bad grammar met bad reproduction in a calamitous collision that made reading CCC an uphill struggle even for those who took him seriously.

As Fandom moved into The Vampire Era, famish opinion started to line up against Degler and his antics. As his inability to get hospitality from fans increased, his presence in Fandom diminished.

Fourth Fandom

The Vampire Era

(Late 1944-Sept. 1946)

Joe Kennedy dominated this era more thoroughly than perhaps any fan before or since. Fan polls of the era showed that his *Vampire* consistently topped the "Best Fanzine" category and JoKe ranked at the top of the fanwriter, fan artist, columnist, humorist and just



Besides concocting the Numbered Fandoms Theory of Fan-history, Jack Speer produced the first history of the hobby, *Up to Now*, and the first dictionary, *Fancylopedia*



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about every category. And, eventually, he took over conducting the poll! (And took his name out of contention, starting a tradition that is still alive today).

Robert Silverberg named the letter columns in *Startling Stories* and *Planet Stories* as the focal point of Fourth Fandom, but he probably jumped the gun. Those letter columns were the incubator for the next major fannish era, but they really didn't have much impact on Fandom during this period. However exciting those columns may have been to their participants, they had very little to do with actual Fandom. Their day would come.

Those fabulous letterhacks weren't the only thing to emerge from the prozines in the mid-1940's. Unfortunately, the other arrival proved considerably less welcome.

**Fourth Transition
Peace Returns**
(Sept. 1946-Philcon I 1947)

It took the country a while to get through Reconstruction to a peace-time economy, but Fandom's recovery began when rationing loosened and fanning supplies became available and affordable again.

Fourth Fandom's letter column stars moved into the fannish mainstream and, in so doing, began to change that mainstream. While *Vampire* commanded respect and admiration, it seemed less compelling to these fans than Charles Burbee's *Shangri-L'Affaires* and Francis Towner Laney's *Acolyte*.

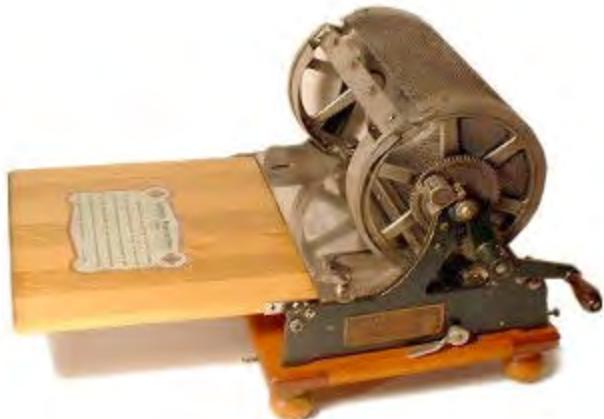
When Laney moved to Los Angeles and got involved with the LASFS in 1943, he served as a catalyst for the emergence of the LA Insurgents. This informal group, which ultimately included Burbee, Laney, Elmer Perdue and Bill Rotsler as its main pillars, created a new, spicier brand of Insurgentism.

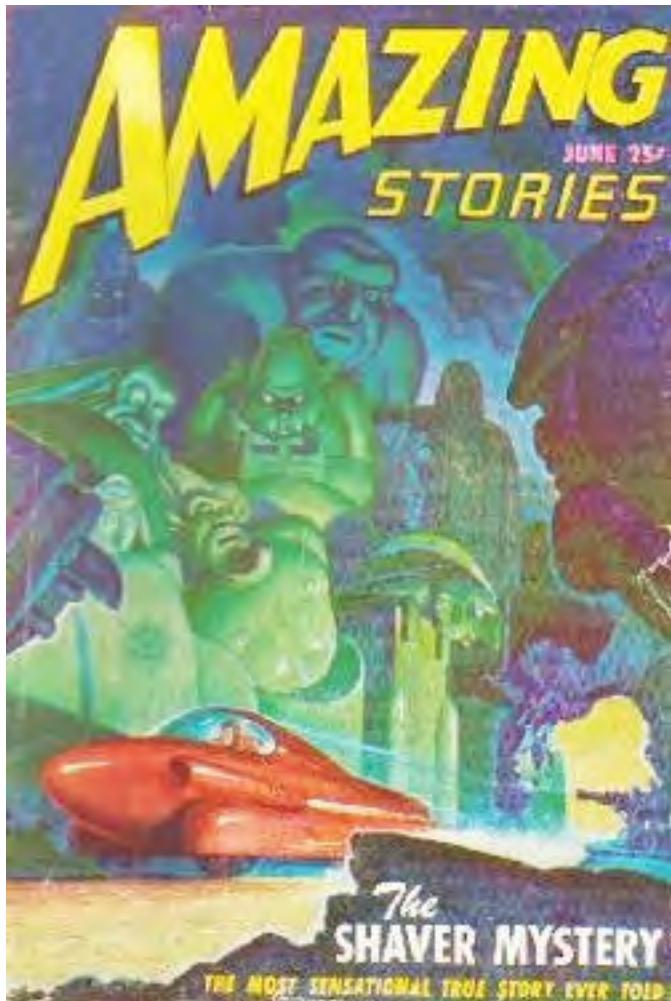
Laney and Burbee led a revolution in fan writing, approaching the subject with a realism and candor that contrasted with the Pollyanna prose of most earlier fans. Through acid-tongued polemic and brutal satire, the Insurgents tried to hold up the mirror of truth to Fandom. They sought to make fans live up to their professed standards — and the had very little tolerance for fuggheads.

The Shaver Mystery spanned several fannish eras. It began to fulminate during The Vampire Era, grew in notoriety through the Fourth Transition and flamed out at the peak of its popularity during the early days of The Spacewarp Era.

The phenomenon began with the arrival of a lengthy letter from Richard S. Shaver at the offices of *Amazing*. Legend has it that Howard Browne looked at it, decided the author was a loon and chucked it into the wastebasket. Raymond A. Palmer, the editor, reputedly heard the sound of the crumpled paper hitting the basket, went into Browne's office and retrieved it.

The letter presented information that the author deemed vital about a subterranean culture that controls and bedevils ours. Palmer turned it into a story, "I Re-





member Lemuria" and the farce began!

Shaver's mythos involved a previously unknown prehistory in which the sun had begun to emit destructive radiation. One group, the Atlans, escaped into space. The second-best folks burrowed deep into the earth to escape the detrimental (or "De") radiation. The rest — and that means your ancestors and mine — were the Abandonero, relegated to the surface of the Earth. Unfortunately for the favored ones who got to hide in the caves, underground life also cut them off from the beneficial (or "Te") radiation and they devolved into Deros, semi-demonic bogeymen who control the surface dwellers with their dreaded Stim machines.

There was more, so *much* more, but the bottom line is that Shaver, backed by Palmer, presented this nonsense as "disguised fact" rather than fiction.

When *Amazing* published this drivel, the response was instantaneous and overwhelming. Shaver's paranoid worldview struck a chord with the more disturbed

segment of *Amazing*'s readership. It seemed that a lot of people heard voices out of thin air and felt that something was trying to undermine their mental and physical health.

Though Palmer had published the very first fanzine, Fandom's frosty reception to these absurd revelations caused RAP to lash out bitterly and ferociously. He castigated the fans for their unwillingness to accept the truth of The Shaver Mystery and tried to foster a new, Shaver-oriented Fandom.

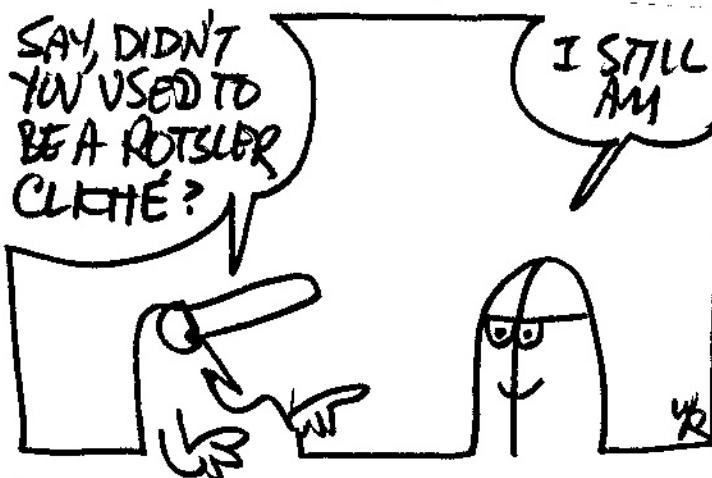
With a very few exceptions, fans united in their opposition to the Shaver Mystery. The campaign mounted and, as The Spacewarp Era got rolling, they convinced one person who could do something about it -- Mr. Ziff, whose company owned *Amazing*. The argument that won the battle was that Shaver's flying saucers, which traveled by "light pressure," violated Einstein's laws of physics.

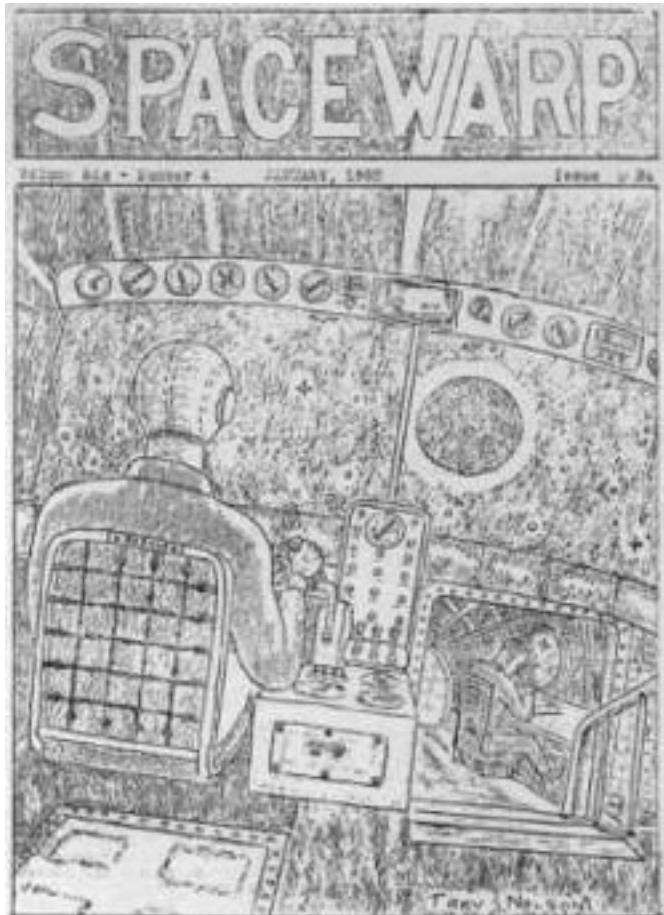
Why that point struck home amid all the other objections fans raised to the patently ludicrous Shaverian claptrap is unknown, but the result gladdened the hearts of most fans. Ziff-Davis banned The Shaver Mystery from the pages of *Amazing*.

Shaver and Palmer tried to continue The Shaver Mystery in a variety of ways, but it never again reached the heights. It still persists today, however, both in its original form and adapted to the needs of contemporary pseudo-science writers.

This is the first time the Roll of Numbered Fandoms has included a Fourth Transition. That includes all of my own previous attempts.

Until now, we've treated Transitions like Mundi-danes do the weather: We talked about them, but we didn't do anything about their omission from Silverberg's extension of Speer's Numbered Fandoms Theory.





Rick Sneary quickly became one of Fifth Fandom's most popular actifans.



There's plentiful evidence that the Pacificon signaled the end of The Vampire Era. It was the first World Science Fiction Convention since the 1941 Denvention due to travel restrictions and it became the intense focus of fan interest.

Fourth Fandomites planned to introduce a new fandom-wide organization called the Foundation. It was intended to be everything the Third Transition's The National Fantasy Fan Federation was not, and had the backing of major Fourth Fandomites including Laney and Ackerman.

It never got proposed. The reasons were unclear, but it may've come down to the fact that a lot of the fans who'd kept the hobby alive during the war went on to other aspects of life once the war ended.

Fifth Fandom

The Spacewarp Era

(1947 PhilCon I-Early 1950)

The letterhacks who came into Fandom didn't help either *Acolyte* or *Shaggy*, both very much Fourth Fandom-style fanzines, ascend to the level of Focal Point. Instead, they clustered around Art Rapp's *Spacewarp*. It had a decided stfnal emphasis and an earnestness that the insurgent writers.

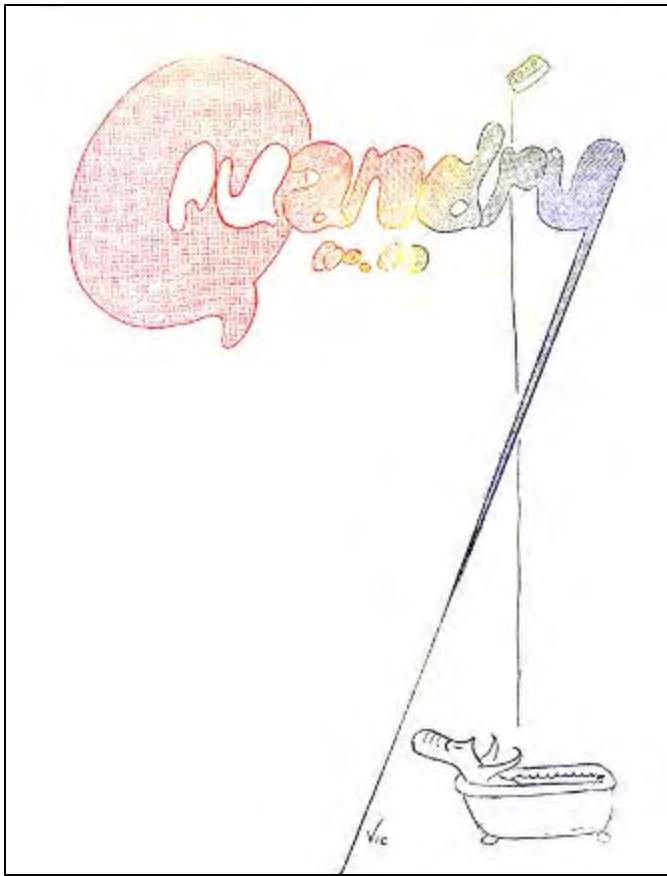
Francis Towner Laney stopped publishing the sercon *Acolyte* to become Charles Burbee's sidekick in the LA Insurgents. They and their cohorts turned out some memorable stuff in *Wild Hair*, *Masque* and other insurgent fanzines, but a lot of the material stayed in FAPA or went to a restricted readership.

One massive opus that premiered in FAPA has subsequently influenced all of Core Fandom/Fanzine Fandom: *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!* Laney put his fan memoirs through FAPA in 1948 and it has since become the Bible for Insurgents.

ASI is a model of the Insurgent approach to Fandom as the LA Insurgents developed it during the World War II years. It recounts Laney's fan career from his start in Idaho, but the centerpiece is his detailed coverage of the LASFS in the five years leading up to the publication of *ASI*.

Laney tried to look at every aspect of Fandom, including himself, with unflinching realism. Although he loaded *ASI* with exhortations to "quit Fandom," the memoirs also feature evocative descriptions of fans and events in the era's most vibrant fan center,

Laney's acid-etched profiles of Forrest J Ackerman and Walter J Daugherty are incredibly detailed and only occasionally sympathetic. Insurgents worshiped at the altar of Truth, with little patience for "chamber of commerce" puffery. Some LASFS members preferred to write about LASFS as they liked to imagine it, rather



than the way it was. Laney shredded those illusions with his vividly descriptive prose.

Laney didn't spare himself, though he was as blind to some of his flaws as anyone is bound to be about himself. His provincialism, which comes out strongly in some of his wrongheaded comments about gay fans, sometimes blinds him, but *AOY* is a truly remarkable document, overall.

Spacewarp presented some serious material, such as Redd Boggs' "File 13" column. Most of the content was fairly light, whether stfnal or not. Art Rapp's faan fiction stories about Morgan Botts and the worship of Roscoe were more typical effusions. Rick Sneary also had a column in *Spacewarp* called "1958" that became quite important — but the main impact didn't hit until nearly a decade later.

Sixth Fandom The Quandry/Vega Era (Early 1951–Mid-1954)

The special circumstances surrounding the end of The Spacewarp Era caused the next era to start within a couple of months of its demise.

Spacewarp and Fifth Fandom became the first US casualties of the Korean Police Action. The Army wanted Sgt. Rapp, which put a quick and permanent end to its monthly schedule and focal point designation.

Burbee and Laney produced two "insurgent issues" of *Spacewarp*, but they didn't actually continue the fanzine. (Art Rapp did many more issues, but as a quarterly SAPSzine.)

The sudden removal of the Fifth Fandom focal point had a chilling effect on the entire Fandom. Many gafiated or retired into FAPA like Burbee and Laney.

That created a vacuum in Fandom precisely at the moment when a rare and wonderful new fan was ready to fill it. Fandom barely had time to perceive the demise of Fifth Fandom before Sixth Fandom sent the subcultural consensus in an exciting new direction.

Lee Hoffman's *Quandry* sprang from her exposure to Fourth Fandom zines like *Vampire*, because she had very little contact with Fifth Fandomites and their publications when she first entered Fandom. Early issues of *Q* even had Joe Kennedy as a columnist and she also brought Bob Tucker and Bob Bloch into the Sixth Fandom orbit.

Yet it was the newer fans who congregated around LeeH and *Quandry* who did the most spectacular and era-defining fanac. Walt Willis (*Slant*, *Hyphen*), Shelby Vick (confusion) and Max Keasler (*Opus/Fanvariety*), along with Lee, constituted the "Big Four." Other extraordinary Sixth Fandomites included Bob Shaw, James White, Ken Bulmer and Vincent Clarke.

Lee Hoffman and her talented cohorts remade the culture of Fandom. They brought forth a new brand of fannishness to balance the harshness of Insurgentism called "Trufannishness."

Lee Hoffman wore a costume made up of *Quandry* covers at the masquerade at the Chicon II in 1952.



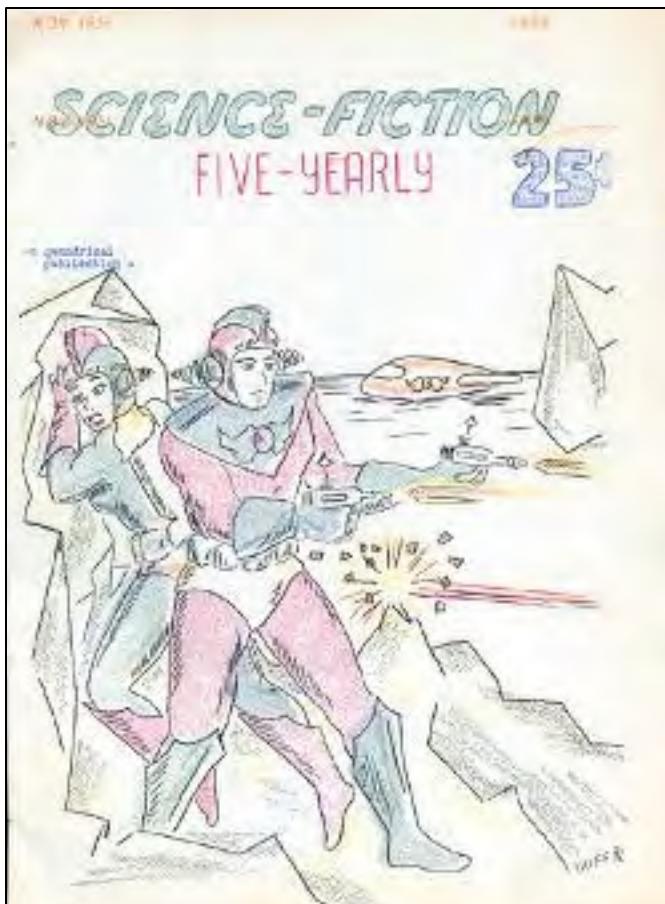
Whereas Insurgentism emphasizes truth and the maintenance of standards, Trufannishness is built on the equality and brotherhood of fans. Insurgents stress individuality, but Trufans are more interested in cooperative ventures and group play.

Sixth Fandomites reworked the mythology of Fandom and added many new wrinkles. And always, they put their good-humored sophistication into it. They poured their brilliance into gigantic group confections like "Live Steam" and the now immortal fannish catchphrase: "Who Sawed Courtney's Boat?"

One of the things they overhauled was fannish religion. The cult of GhuGhu, conceived in a more contentious period of Fandom, had a nasty, dark quality. GhuGhu was a menacing entity, a giant beetle from Jupiter. The fans who started the competing religion of FooFoo mostly wanted to parody GhuGhu and get at its symbolic leader Don Wollheim.

Sixth Fandom turned the frightening Jovian beetle into Ghu the benevolent god of mimeography. FooFoo then became the god of spirit duplication. (Roscoe, a Fifth Fandom creation, called many fans to him with a mighty whomp of his handsome tail. Roscoe is proba-

LeeH started *SFFY* in 1951. She continued to keep the schedule until her death.



bly more popular than FooFoo in 21st Century Fandom.

The finest example of The Quandry/Vega Era's group spirit was the Willis Fund, "WAW with the Crew in '52!" Shelby Vick called on fans to help him collect money to bring Belfast, Northern Ireland's Walt Willis to the 1951 Nolacon. Unfortunately, Shelby had this brainstorm close enough to the con that many fans thought it would be better to aim at bringing Walt to Chicago for the '52 Chico II.

The campaign involved nearly all of active Fandom. Fanzine editors published special issue and donated the receipts to the fund and Willis created the imaginary travelogue "Willis Discovers America" so that each of those fanzines could have something by him. After his tour of America, Willis wrote the first great trip report, *The Harp Stateside*.

Sixth Fandom might've ended as abruptly as Fifth Fandom when *Quandry* folded, except for one key difference. When Lee announced the end of *Q*, an exceptional young fan stepped forward to pick up the Sixth Fandom banner. Joel Nydahl's monthly *Vega* wasn't quite *Quandry*, but it was good enough to keep a good portion of Sixth Fandom active for another year. There were other fanzines that may have aspired to take the torch from Nydahl, such as *Oopsla!* and *Psychotic*, but gafia and retrenchment had gripped many Sixth Fandomites by that point and, besides, nothing lasts forever.

Even experts disagree occasionally and the focal point of Sixth Fandom is one of those times.

There's a fairly strong consensus about *Quandry* and *Vega*, but some including Ted White, believe there may've been a *second* handoff to Dick Geis' *Psychotic*. Others believe that REG wasn't part of the *Quandry* scene and that his approach to Fandom was much more combative than the Trufannish ambience of Sixth Fandom. Future fanhistorians will eventually have their say on the matter.

Sixth Transition

The Phony Seventh

(Mid-1954-Mid-1956)

The focal point fanzines folded, which destroyed the cohesion of Sixth Fandom. The spirit still lived, but a growing number of fans neither felt nor understood

The Mundane American '50's boom culture infiltrated Fandom to some extent and engendered a spate of workmanlike, not very good or exciting fanzines like Charles Lee Riddle's *Peon*. It wasn't so bad, though it wasn't very good, but it was unshakably middle class.

However, the Sixth Fandom spirit was very strong in three things that came to fruition during the Sixth Transition: *The Enchanted Duplicator*, *The Neo-fans Guide* and the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund.

Walt Willis and Bob Shaw co-authored *The Enchanted Duplicator*, a fannish allegory somewhat inspired by *Pilgrim's Progress*. The story of Jophan's journey through Fandom to the Mountain of Trufandom and the Magic Mimeo at its top is delightfully humorous and satiric, since the neofannish hero meets all the types of fans who fell short of Trufandom.

Bob Tucker produced *The Neo-fan's Guide* as a help to new fans trying to get their bearings in what had become a fairly large and complex little world. He did it with customary Tuckerish wit, which helped his creation become the standard reference of its type for the next half-century. (It went through several revisions



Walt Willis, one of Fandom's alltime greatest fan, became a BNF almost overnight through due to his brilliant writing, incredible gift for humor and charming personality,

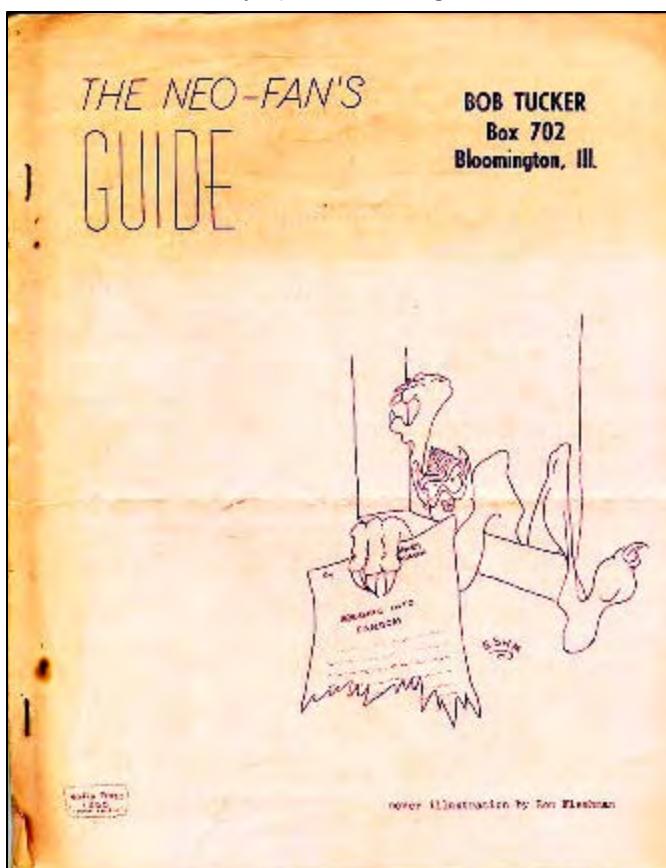
and, ultimately, ceased to be sufficiently revealing to be more than a historically interesting and fun -to-read work of fan writing.)

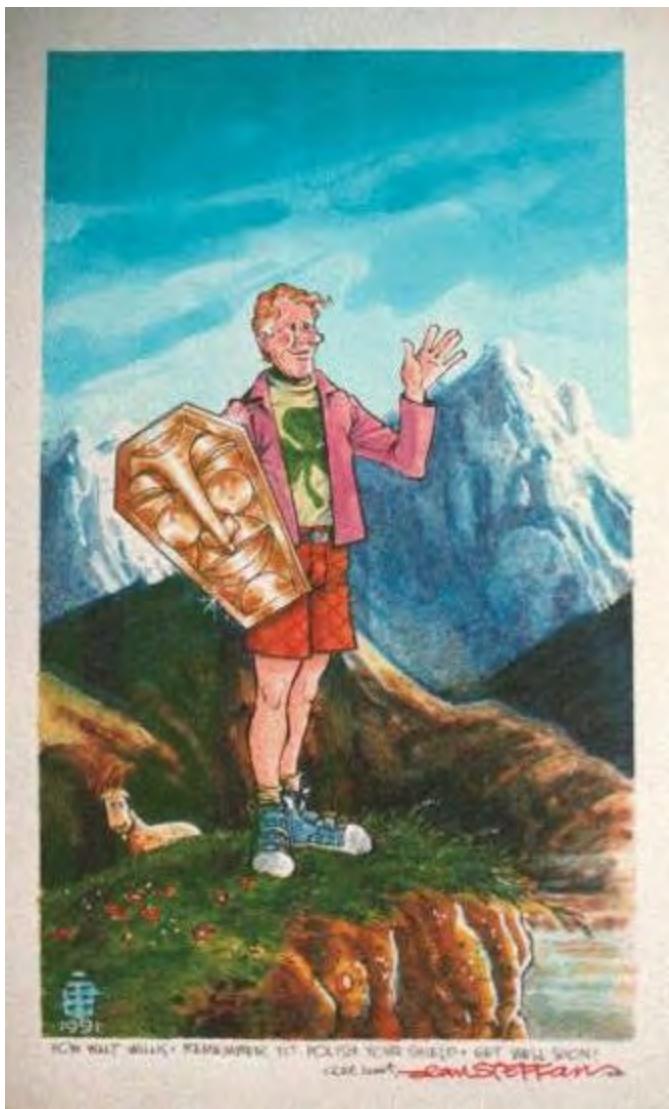
The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund (TAFF) was a direct outgrowth of the success of the 1952 Will Fund. Chuch Harris and Don Ford helped create an on -going fund that alternated trips from the US to the UK with ones coming back the other way. The idea was to send a representative to the Fandom on the opposite edge of the Atlantic to both represent their home country and to report back about the host country.

One of the most interesting, and subsequently confusing, developments of this period was Peter J Vorzimmer's premature proclamation of Seventh Fandom. When Robert Silverberg extended Speer's Numbered Fandom's scheme in *Quandry*, he ended with the observation that other Fandoms would succeed the already fading Sixth Fandom.

Vorzimmer misunderstood the concept of a "fandom." Pete confused a "fandom" with a clique and assumed that he and other enthusiastic teenaged neofan would advance to dominance. Once he drew that mental picture, I guess he figured there was no time like the present.

So Peter Vorzimmer took matters into his own hands and announced the arrival of Seventh Fandom to reactions that ranged from ennui to consternation. The only lasting remnant of this attempt to warp fanhistory





The indominably trufannish Jophan is shown holding his Shield of Umor, as depicted by Dan Steffan in a later edition of Core Fandom's prose epic.

is Harlan Ellison's immortal line: "The mad dogs of Seventh Fandom have kneed me in the groin."

Seventh Fandom

The Fanac Era

(Mid-1956-ChiCon III, Sept. 1962)

This unusually long era may well boast Fandom's epitome of literary excellence. The roll call of Seventh Fandom fanzines is long and distinguished. Mentioning *Innuendo*, *Void*, *Grue*, *Oopsla!*, *Xero*, *Warhoon*, *Triode*, *Retribution*, *Apporheta*, *Hyphen*, *Flying Frog* and *Dafoe* doesn't begin to hint at the awesome depth of Fanzine Fandom's roster during this period.

Among all those sterling fanzines, Terry Carr and Ron Ellik's *Fanac* was the one fans called "indispensable." The frequent newszine became the glue that held Fandom together and kept it in touch with itself. Its news-filled pages, written in a breezy style, simply became must reading for anyone seriously interested in Fandom.

Seventh Fandom swung back toward fannishness, probably because the professional field seemed a little dull and because there were so many Sixth Fandomites ready for another dance.

The Fanac Era achieved a synthesis between the Insurgentism of the Fourth Transition with the Trufannishness of Sixth Fandom. Writers like Ted White embraced the Insurgent principles of Laney and Burbee, yet they also delighted in Sixth Fandom-style Trufannishness.

Seventh Fandom came into being as the convergence of several positive trends. ("Like the perfect storm, but in a good way," as Hulk Hogan might put it.)

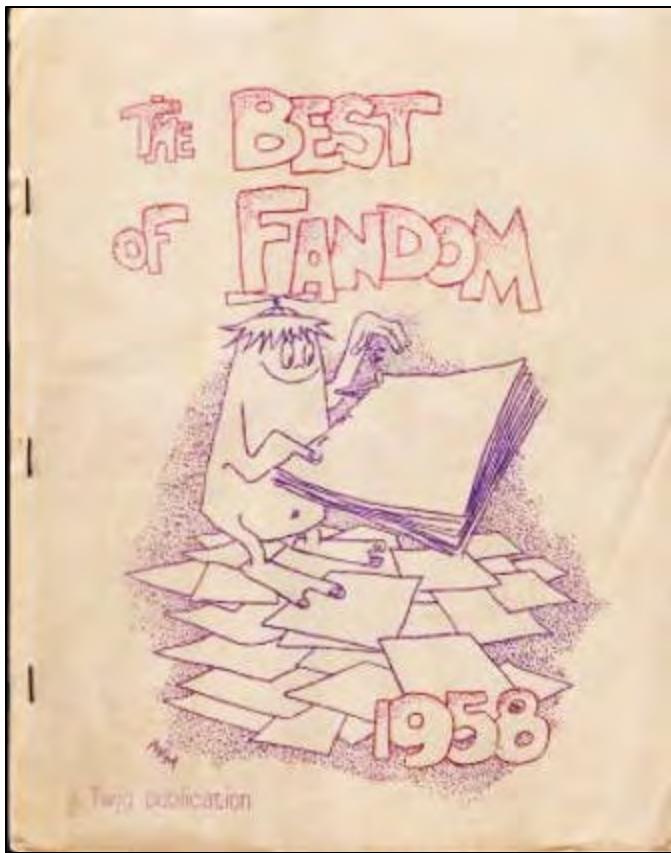
America in the 1950's was a bad time and place for inner-directed nonconformists. The mainstream culture's oppressiveness drove a new generation of talented pariahs to the refuge of Fandom.

Some of Seventh Fandom's BNFs actually entered Fandom at the end of the Quandry/Vega Era. A few made an immediate splash despite the down-cycle, like Dean Grennell and Gregg Calkins. Others, like Terry Carr and Ted White, had learned to fan as young teens and assumed more important roles in Fandom.

A significant number of Sixth Fandomites discovered that, no, they weren't done with fanac just yet.



Some fans considered the Gestetner silk screen mimeos that began to penetrate the US market as the embodiment of the Magic Mimeograph.



This “best of the year” collection tried to have a representative piece from almost every regular fanzine of the day.

Richard Bergeron, Gregg Calkins, Chuch Harris and Walt Willis led a fairly large back -to-Fandom migration that added further luster to Seventh Fandom.

Dick Eney's 1956 publication of *Fancyclopedia II* began to restore the interest in fanhistory that waned with the passing of Sixth Fandom. Fans quickly became re-interested in their own history and in the productions of Fandom's past greats like Charles Burbee.

One thing that energized and unified Seventh Fandom was the “South Gate in '58” movement. It started during The Spacewarp Era when then-neofan Rick Sneary began lobbying for a world science fiction convention for his hometown of South Gate, CA.

Rick's popularity continued to rise through the late 1940's and 1950's and he never abandoned the cause. When Fandom started to revive after the Seventh Transition, fans noted his dedication and, since Sneary had become one of the hobby's most beloved characters, decided that it might be fun to make his dream come true.

At the 1956 NewYorkCon II, fans voted for the first overseas site for '57 (LonCon), partly so that the 1958 edition would fall into the Western US region.

Reality intruded when it turned out that South Gate didn't have a large enough hotel to host the event.

Undaunted, fans rallied behind the chairmanship of Anna Sinclair Moffat to stage Solacon in Los Angeles. On the first day of the event, Los Angeles' mayor ceded the land around the hotel to South Gate for the weekend, fulfilling Rick Sneary's crazy fannish dream.

Perhaps the greatest hoax in the history of Fandom reached its shocking climax at Solacon, too. Terry Carr, Dave Rike, Peter Graham and Ron Ellik revealed that Carl Joshua Brandon was a figment of their Fine Fannish Minds.

Carl had become a Big Name Fan, some say eclipsing the fans who pulled the puppet strings. He was renowned for his fannish parodies of mainstream fiction, a type of faan fiction that is still called a “Brandonization.”

Dick Eney did something that no one has done successfully before or since; he produced an updated and expanded version of Jack Speer's *Fancyclopedia*. Dikini's volume, *Fancyclopedia II*, was much larger than the original, because so much had happened during the intervening 12 years.

“WAW & the Crew in '62,” the 10th Anniversary Willis Fund, again mobilized all elements of Fandom to bring Walt and Madeline Willis to the Chicon III in 1962.

Nick and Noreen Falasca (Shaw) produced the small, frequent fanzine *Axe* to push the fund and monitor its progress. Had they aspired to supplant *Fanac*, grown less frequent and larger under new editor Walter Breen, *Axe* could've donned the mantle of the Carr - Ellik *Fanac* to become the focal point coming out of





Terry Carr was co-editor of two of Seventh Fandom's finest fanzines, *Fanac* and *Innuendo*

Chicon III. That wasn't in the cards, though, because *Axe* never wavered from its original mission.

Fanzine Fandom saved some of its best for right near the end of the era. Besides such great zines as *Void*, *Xero* and *Lighthouse*, a trio of special publications also appeared in the early 1960's: *Who Killed Science Fiction?*, *Why a Fan?* and *A Sense of FAPA*. All belong on that hypothetical "five-foot shelf" of Classic Fannish Literature.

The first two were annishes of Earl Kemp's SAPSzine *Safari*. For each, Earl sent the title question to a wide cross section of Fandom and Prodrom and then published the responses. He got great cooperation and the resulting zines still are interesting reading.

Dick Eney compiled *A Sense of FAPA*, an anthology of some of the best of the first 100 mailings of FAPA. It's quite a collection, too, with such attractions as *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!*, *Up to Now*, *Alice in Blunderland*, *I Was Captain of a Spaceship* and Burbee's unexpurgated account of a Blitzkrieg to save the FAPA mailing from a tardy Official Editor.

Seventh Transition

The Boondoggle

(Sept. 1962-Sept. 1967)

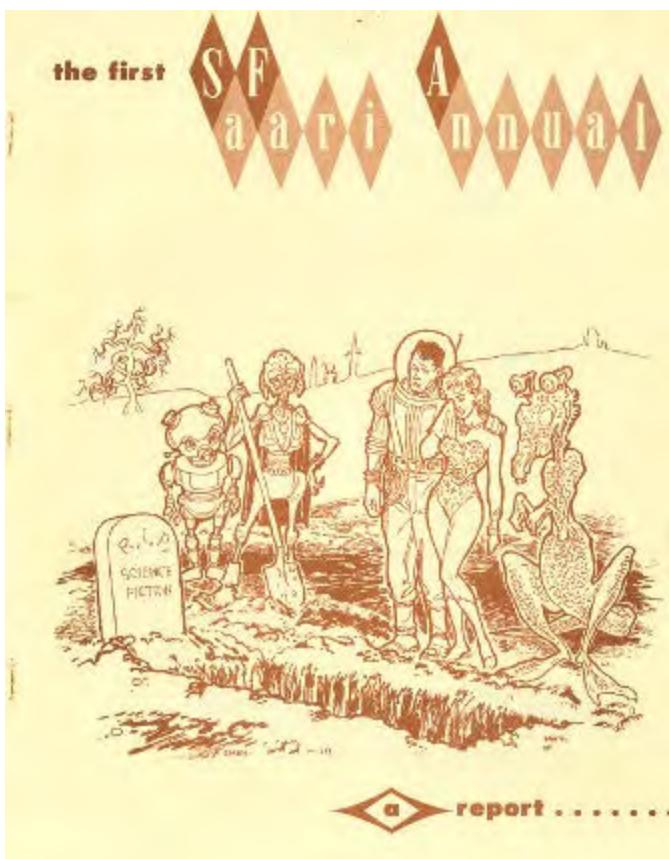
The Breen Boondoggle didn't cause the Seventh Transition, but it probably doubled its duration.

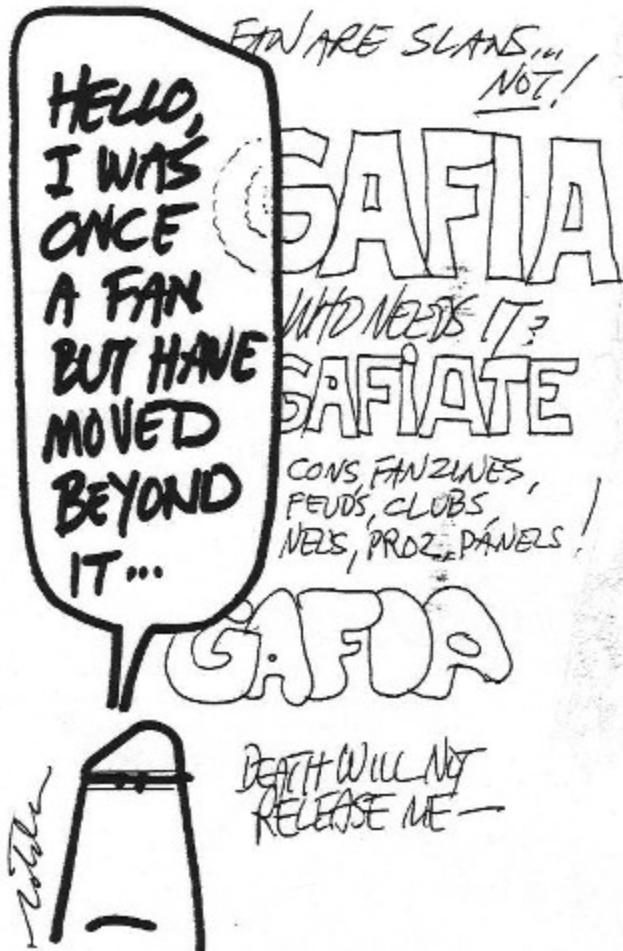
So, what *did* cause the end of Seventh Fandom? There didn't seem to be a crisis or cataclysm to account for it. Maybe fans just needed a breather after such a sustained period of high quantity and quality fanac. The successful completion of the 10th Anniversary Willis Fund may have seemed like the right point to ease out of heavy duty activity. (It should also be mentioned that, at this time, surprisingly few fans stayed active for a decade.)

Whatever the reason, Seventh Fandom began to dissolve after Chicon III. Not only did *Fanac* slip from its focal point status with no replacement in sight, but such big-time fanzines as *Grue*, *Oopsla!*, *Warhoon*, *Xero*, *Hyphen* and *Void* all stopped cold or slowed to a crawl.

Had the Boondoggle not blazed through Fandom starting in mid-1964, Fanzine Fandom might well have recovered and launched into a new era several years sooner. Instead, fans gafiated or hid in the apas and the Seventh Transition ground onward.

Bill Donaho wrote and distributed *The Great Breen Boondoggle* on behalf of the Pacificon II world SF convention committee. It attacked Walter Breen on a number of different levels, but the most damaging allega-





tions concerned molestation of pre-teen children of fans.

The purpose of this shocking publication was to explain the committee's decision to bar Walter Breen from the con! In a coordinated move, a group of FAPAns sympathetic to the Pacificon II committee exercised the blackball provision to expel Walter from the waitlist.

Fans flocked to Breen's defense for many reasons. The parents of the children cited in the report asserted that the incidents did not occur, others objected to excluding anyone and still others protested in the name of friendship.

The anti-Breen faction tended to be a somewhat older fans who felt that the committee should have complete freedom to do as it wished. Some also felt Walter Breen would endanger young fans and believed that excluding him from the convention would prevent an unfortunate incident.

Despite all the protests, the Pacificon II stuck to its decision and barred Walter Breen from the convention. The campaign to rescind the FAPA Blackball succeeded and Walter Breen gained membership.

Discussion of the Breen Boondoggle still packs incendiary power in today's Core Fandom. You can imagine how explosive it must've been at the time. The Boondoggle touched off a war that estranged friends and split Fanzine Fandom along very acrimonious lines.

The Boondoggle devastated much of active Fandom, sundering friendship and inciting lasting enmity. By the time the dust settled, general Fanzine Fandom lay in ruins.

The amateur press associations prospered. Not only did the number of apas soar, but specialty apas appeared for the first time. FAPA, Vanguard Apa, SAPS, the Cult and OMPA, the groups already in existence when the apa boom started, were all general-interest groups. While many of the new groups, such as TAPS, were in the same mold, there were also apas for women, gay fans, porn, parenting, rock music and many others.

Eighth Fandom The Psychotic/SFR Era (Sept. 1967-1970)

The quality genzines of Seventh Fandom were gone and the few remaining genzines mostly reflected their editors' inexperience and scant knowledge of classic fanzines.

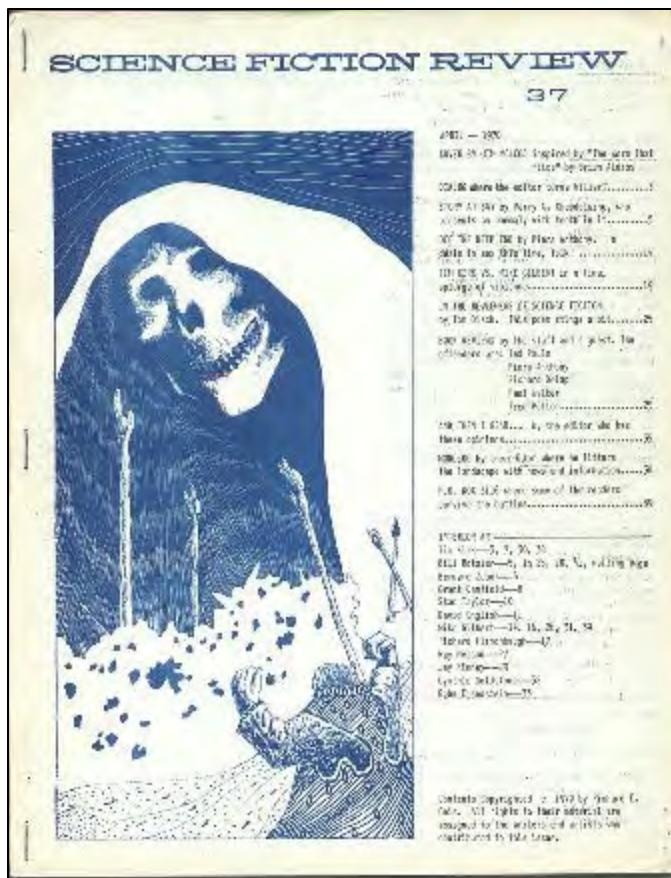
The counterculture exerted a strong influence on Fanzine Fandom. A lot of the new genzines owed as much to underground newspapers as to any fanzines of the past.

Dick Geis returned to Fanzine Fandom with a revival of his 1950's fanzine *Psychotic*. Geis is a masterful editor of the "let's-you-and-him-fight" school and he soon had everyone buzzing over the unfettered arguments among some of science fiction's biggest names that blazed through the zine.

The New Wave movement invigorated science fiction. *SFR* translated literary ferment into things that the Burroughs, Tolkein, Sword & Sorcery and *Star Trek* fans who flooded Fandom in the 1960's could understand: caustic comments, personal antagonism and bombastic debate.

The Seventh Fandom ethos didn't dissipate, though some of its exponents did. It diminished somewhat during the Seventh Transition, but *Lighthouse*, *Warhoon* and *Quip* served up the kind of fannishness that dominated The Fanac Era. What changed is that the many fans who swelled the fan population in the 1960's established a consensus that differed radically from the one the veteran Fanzine fans wanted.

The new consensus stressed science fiction, reverence for the professional SF writers and their utter-



ances, feuding and an image of Fandom as a cheering section. It had little room for humor, fannishness, fan-history or the doings of fans.

Science Fiction Review captured the attention of all of Fanzine Fandom at first, but that didn't last forever.

Eighth Transition

The Trufannish Rebellion (Sept. 1969-Late 1970)

Science Fiction Review remained compelling reading for many science fiction fans into the early 1970's. Geis continued to evolve the fanzine, eventually changing the name again, this time to *Richard E Geis*.

The changes Geis instituted kept the pot boiling, but the concentration on shrill rhetoric and stfnal discussion soon began to weigh heavily on Seventh Fandomites and their young disciples.

Without appreciably denting *SFR* popularity, a rival school of fanzines started to find a significant audience among fanzine fans. *Lighthouse*, *Warhoon* and *Quip* had no pretensions to focal point status, but they did set up an alternative to the approach Geis favored. Some of the fans who'd ridden high in the late '50's and early 1960's began to edge back into activity — and they generally preferred fannishness to sercon discussion.

Ninth Fandom

The Focal Point/Egoboo Era

(Late 1970-1976)

Fanzine fans didn't fully realize it at the time, but Fandom began to segment during the Eighth Transition. *Science Fiction Review* kept a large audience, but it was mostly the more volatile professionals and lots of fans who weren't too involved in the hobby's subculture.

The mass influx of new fans in the 1960's — some called it "Barbarian Invasion II" — outstripped existing Fandom's ability to inculcate neofan with the subculture's tenets.

The increased acceptability of SF to mainstream America, the boom in stfnal movies and TV shows and the emergence of con-going as a way of fanac brought in many people who didn't sympathize with Fandom's alternative social contract.

The majority of new fans in the Eighth Fandom and Eighth Transition periods had tastes and desires that diverged from those of the typical fanzine fan. The older fans loved words; a lot of the new ones didn't read for pleasure or write anything more taxing than a note to the power company.

Science Fiction Review, like the world SF convention a few years later, gradually became an entity that hovers near the professional SF market, which distanced it from active Fanzine Fandom.

Fanzine fans wanted to move past *SFR*'s incessant wrangling over science fiction. It didn't take long for them to find a way.

Rich brown and Mike McInerney had done a great job with the newszine *Focal Point* in the mid-1960's, but it suspended publication for a couple of years. When it returned with rich and I as co-editors, it had transformed into a biweekly that combined the latest fan news with columns and articles.

Focal Point's frequency and feisty spirit captured



the attention of Fanzine Fandom very quickly. It went into overdrive when it became the vehicle for the BoSh Fund, the campaign to bring fan and pro Bob Shaw to the 1971 Noreascon in Boston.

Rich turned *Focal Point* over to me shortly after the Bosh Fund. I stuck with the format for a while and then changed *Focal Point* into a fannish genzine that boasted leading lights such as Terry Carr, Greg Benford, Ted White, Jay Kinney and Ross Chamberlain, but without the news section.

Ninth Fandom fanzines were fannish and personal, generally smaller than the paper behemoths of the previous decade. Pop cultural topics were popular, especially discussions of music.

Fan history made a strong comeback. Ross Chamberlain illustrated a new edition of *The Enchanted Duplicator*, rich and I co-edited *The Incomplete Terry Carr* and TCarr himself dredged up many classics for his "Entropy Reprints" series that ran in *Focal Point*, Joyce's *Potlatch* and several other fanzines during the period. Toward the end of Ninth Fandom, Richard Bergeron gifted Fanzine Fandom with *Warhoon 28*, a comprehensive hard cover collection of the fanwriting of Walt Willis.

Just when *Focal Point* started to falter and let its schedule slip, Ted White and John D. Berry brought forth *Egoboo*. The slim genzine hit its stride quickly

and served as the main rallying point for Ninth Fandom after I folded *FP* and began co-editing *Swoon* with Joyce. *Egoboo* also picked up the responsibility for conducting the annual fan poll, which *FP* had done during its heyday.

The trend toward ensmalld genzines that began with *Focal Point* and continued with such titles as Greg Shaw's *Metanoia* culminated in White and Berry's brilliant title.

Ninth Fandom ended on a high note when Richard Bergeron unveiled *Warhoon 28*. This mammoth, 8-1/2" x 11" hardback has just about every word Walt Willis wrote for Fandom. This compendium is a monument to WAW's brilliance and a major contribution to fan literature.

Ninth Transition The Convention Era (1976-Late 1980)

An inevitable lull after years of sustained activity may account for the Ninth Transition. Ninth Fandom's strongholds in Brooklyn, Falls Church and Indianapolis stopped producing at the high level they maintained through most of the decade.

Something else added to the feeling that it was time to lay down the stencils and typer for at least a little while. The fan population explosion that began in the 1960's had greatly changed Fandom by the mid - 1970's.

Fanzine fans had grown used to the idea that fanzines were at the center of Fandom and that the most proficient fanziners were its exemplars and leaders. Most fanzine fans didn't seek fannish power and fame, but they did want Fandom to continue to be what it was in Third, Sixth and Seventh and Ninth Fandoms.

Fanzine Fandom started to perceive that it no longer represented the mainstream of All Known Fandom and that fanzines weren't central to All Known Fandom.

By the time of the 1976 Mid -Americon, conventions had replaced fanzines as the focus of an overwhelming majority of fans.

Fairly infrequent until the mid -1960's, conventions proliferated tremendously through the rest of the decade. That trend accelerated in the 1970's. A fan in the East could go to a con a week and do all their fanning face-to-face without need for fanzines.

Fandom swelled with the addition of thousands of con-goers who didn't know fanzines. At the same time, the great number of conventions provided the basis for Con-Running Fandom.

This is the Numbered Fandom Theory of *Core Fandom* Fanhistory, so chronicling the last 30 years of





Con Fandom fanhistory is beyond its scope. Still, the birth of Con-Running Fandom had a profound effect on Core Fandom.

Attending one World Science Fiction Convention or even a sizable regional was enough to convince most fanzine fans that our type of fans was now greatly outnumbered *in Fandom!*

That began the very gradual process that turned over large conventions to fans whose primary fanac is planning and running such events. Conventions got slicker and smoother, because con-runners became progressively more adroit at their favorite form of fanac.

Tenth Fandom

The Pong Era

(Late 1980-Early 1983)

Dave Bridges' *Fast and Loose*, a small frequent fanzine, helped launch a fresh spree of publishing in Fanzine Fandom, capped by the debut of Ted White and Dan Steffan's *Pong* in late 1980. The pair did 40 issues over the following two years. *Pong* helped rev up the rate of fanzine publishing and helped US and UK Fandoms reconnect.

Fanzine Fandom retained its prestige, if not its dominant influence, in All Known Fandom, but most

fanzine fans found the doings of the subculture more interesting than big convention politics.

There were many fans, such as Bruce Pelz, who participated extensively in both fanzines and con-running. However, many fanzine fans concentrated on communication with fan friends and producing fanzines that had little appeal to those not immersed in the Fanzine Fandom subculture.

The election of then-US resident Avedon Carol to go to the Eastercon in the UK was a major victory for Fanzine Fandom, but it also started the Doomsday Clock ticking toward midnight.

Tenth Transition

Topic A

(Early 1984-Early 1990)

Although Dan and Ted folded *Pong* it's possible, even likely, that another focal point fanzine would've stepped into the breach and extended Tenth Fandom years farther into the 1980's.

What actually happened is that a series of what can only be called fan wars rocked Fanzine Fandom and shook it to its foundations.

Correspondence among leading Fanzine fans grew voluminous and intense. Richard Bergeron sent letters that alleged TAFF Administrator Avedon Carol had screwed with TAFF to help her lover Rob Hansen. Recipients rushed to assure him that such was not the case. The more they tried to reason with Bergeron, the more sweeping his charges became. When Bergeron, who was producing two of Tenth Fandom's most popular zines (*Warhoon* and *Wizard*), took the charges public, hostilities commenced throughout Fanzine Fandom.





Andy Hooper's bright and frequent *Apparatchik* was the ideal focal point fanzine for 11th Fandom and contributed greatly to his reputation as one of Core Fandom's finest writers.

The similarities and differences between Topic A and the Boondoggle are worth examining.

Both feuds involved a great number of fanzine fans. The Boondoggle engulfed All Known Fandom, but The Bergeron Wars had a more devastating, if localized, effect. It broke the heart out of Fanzine Fandom.

Both featured attacks on fans who were subsequently deemed to be innocent of wrong -doing. The Boondoggle was confined to debate over the exclusion of Walter Breen from the Pacificon II and rescinding his blackball ouster from the FAPA waitlist. Topic A spread far beyond the initial flashpoint and led to a second feud that pitted most of Fanzine Fandom against a faction of Midwest Con Fandom in a battle over the 1975 TAFF race. More than three times the usual number of fans voted and write -in candidate Martha Beck got more votes in the US than the total turn out for the previous TAFF election!

The Breen Boondoggle, despite lingering antagonisms, reached a definite conclusion. In contrast, Richard Bergeron kept stoking the fires, churning out additional accusations. He was still actively fighting the war as late as the end of the decade.

One final similarity: both burned out a lot of fans, caused gafiations and depressed the fanzine field. Topic A hit harder and lasted longer.

Eleventh Fandom

The Folly/Apparatchik Era

(Early 1990-1995)

Fanzine Fandom looked like a faltering enterprise in the wake of Topic A's destruction. Pessimism was so pervasive that even the good things that were starting to happen at the end of the 1980's didn't raise spirits too much.

It took unusual circumstances to jolt Fanzine Fandom out of its depression, but that's what happened in 1990.

Joyce and I returned to Fanzine Fandom, ending more than a dozen years of gafia, I started *Folly* on a frequent schedule. Fans were so happy to see a fanzine with absolutely no reference to Topic A — Joyce and I were totally ignorant of the catastrophe that had overtaken Fanzine Fandom — that they overlooked my rustiness and made *Folly* an instant hit.

Then Joyce and I discovered embryonic Las Vegas Fandom. Soon, Las Vegas joined Seattle, the BArea, Minneapolis and Falls Church, VA, as major American Fanzine Fandom centers.

In turn, Las Vegas Fandom attracted those glorious remnants of the 1940's LA Insurgents, Charles Burbee and William Rotsler. They did a lot of their 1990's fanning as Vegas fans.

While the more cynical British fans distrusted Vegas Fandom as "too friendly," the Fandom of Good





'I tried to join fandom in '61 but my wife found out'

Cheer had the opposite effect on fans like Chuch Harris, Vincent Clarke, James White, Eric Bentcliffe and Rob Hansen. They all contributed to *Folly* and later, to the Vegrants' clubzine *Wild Heirs*.

Eleventh Fandom shared many characteristics with Seventh, Ninth and Tenth Fandom. Like them, it was fannish and personal with a great breadth of subject matter.

Fanhistory came back into vogue. The Vegrants produced several issues of the reprint fanzine *Heirlooms*, Robert Lichtman revived the Entropy Reprints

idea and two volumes of Burbee reminded fans of his incredibly entertaining writing.

Eleventh Fandom emphasized the tribal, or familial, nature of Fanzine Fandom. Corflu grew more important on the way to becoming the Core Fandom world convention, the Fan Achievement Awards returned to provided the group an untainted awards structure with no connection to either professional science fiction or the World SF Convention.

The Group Mind, also called the Virtual Fanclub, came into being much earlier, but the notion blossomed during the 1990's. This large and geographically dispersed clique became a big part of the scene at not only Corflu, but Silvercon and Toner as well.

When I folded *Folly* as prelude to starting *Wild Heirs* with the Vegrants, Andy Hooper's *Apparatchik* took its place as focal point without missing a beat.

Eleventh Transition

The Digital Age Begins

(1995-1998)

The late 1990's saw a big turnover in Las Vegas Fandom, high postage and paper costs driving up the price of doing a fanzine, and a little rest for some of the mainstays of the first half of the decade.

There was no era-ending apocalyptic feud or major disruption. Other old fans returned to activity and the Internet funneled recruits from other parts of All Known Fandom into the Fanzine Fandom subculture

— Arnie Katz

Final Thoughts

And that, fanhistory lovers, is as far as my account will go at this time.

The decision to stop my at the Eleventh Transition was premeditated. Despite the temptation to carry the Numbered Fandoms Theory of Core Fandom Fanhistory forward to the present, as I believe I could, I deliberately chose to stop my analysis about a decade short.

I feel a fanhistorian should be able to profit from the lessons of fanhistory. One thing I learned is that both Jack Speer and Bob Silverberg erred in writing about events so close to their own time. Speer ended up revising his theory when he wrote it up for *Fancyencyclopedia* about six years after the original. Silverberg unwittingly fostered the "phony Seventh" movement.

I believe that historical analysis works better when conducted after enough time has passed to give some critical perspective. I am sure that future expansions and revisions of the Numbered Fandoms Theory of Core Fandom Fanhistory will have little difficulty moving the account into the 21st Century, the flowering of digital fanac and the adoption of the name "Core Fandom" to identify the subculture. I may well take a whack at adding a 10-year expansion, though not until roughly 2010.

Meanwhile, I hope you'll enjoy this excursion into fanhistorical analysis.

— Arnie Katz



Core Fandom