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Volume I. Number 10

February 13, 1975

LITTLE KNOWN NYUSES FACTS

**Twas almost exactly one year ago that I attended a meeting of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society and witnessed the collation of APA-L. Thus was my mind fertilized and APA-v conceived.

"There is a lot of controversy in fandom these days about "fringe" fandom. The NYU Science Fiction Society seems to be the only fan club entirely consisting of fringefen. It is rumoured that a straight fan came to the meeting last week and walked out because no one discussed SF.

*As of now, NYUSFS has tried nearly every conceivable type of fan vice. It all started with just a "little light reading," which you knew you sould stop at will. Then you started getting hooked, became conscious that the "good stuff" had a labell and the best pushers had their names on the labels...er. covers. After that, it was on to prozines for regular dosage. Then you found it unpleasant to associate with those who were not hooked and looked for those who had the same habit. Finally, you ran across fandom, in the form of NYUSFS. Oh. what depravity! Your taste was gone. You would devour crude mimeo zines which were passed around. You started even writing for them (or pubbing your own). On to an APA! Consi Dipzines! Fan feuding. Only one thing left Ican think of -- a scandal! Now, any volunteers? *NYUSFS/Solarians is the second largest regularly meeting SF club in New York. Now, if only we would try harder...

DRAWING THE FRINGE

Fandom is moving into an interesting period of bigotry, menophobia, or "fringism."

Perhaps it has always been "fringist" but I have only noticed it recently. In fact, what finally motivated me to write this was the alarm communicated by an editorial in a recent Green Egg.

For those of you who aren't aware, besides a political (or anti-political) philosophy, SF also spawned one (or more) religions. Just as we libertarians drew our inspiration from Robert A. Heinlein's Moon Is A Harsh Mistress (expanding and integrating it with other thinkers' contributions), the Neo-Pagans drew their inspiration for the Church of All Worlds from Heinlein's Stranger In A Strange Land.

The editor of CAW's publication, Green Ecc, was worried about the selectivity of the 1976 Worldcon in raising the attendance fee gradually higher until by Labour Day it will cost \$50. (Actually, with run-away inflation this may turn out to be the price of a loaf of bread, but the intent was to ration scarce Con space by the reasonable market method.) Tim Zell has issued the warning to his flock to register early so they can all attend (Heinlein is GoH, so of course).

Needless to say, I intend to issue a similar call in NLN. But now we come to the crux.

Mr. Zell defensively points out that his Church recommends large numbers of SF books as reading for his members. More importantly, his credentials are in order. I certainly remember him (or at least his snake-entwined wife) (continued overleaf)

in attendance at the last couple of Worldcons. All indications are that Tim and Morning Glory are trufen. So why should they feel threatened?

First of all, economics should be considered. Either prices will have to rise to ration scarce Con Space (as Kansas City's committee have wisely chosen), the Cons will have to be remote (à da Aussiecon), or a system of non-market rationing will have to be introduced. Personally, I am not convinced of the validity of this premise. When Worldcons get to the position of renting out the hotel space in a city, and fill up the major arena, I'll start worrying.

But the assumption is taking hold; people are buying it. Worldcons are Too Big and Something Must Be Done. Since no one wants to pay more,... well, some people are content to pay for what they get. But if you are Important, why should you have to pay?

So once again, it's privilege vs. paying. Who should be selected?

Let's go back over a little fan history. In the early days, readers of SF and related fields were few and far between. Many of these people were primarily radio hams and airplane spotters and the ilk, certainly "fringe-fen." In order to get as many people into the local social set as possible, the definition of fandom was made as loose and all-encompassing as possible.

So we acquired Burroughs Bibliophiles, fantasy fans, Fu Manchu fearers, UFO nuts, Futurians, Shaverites, Scientologists, Sword and Soreery buffs, futurists, Harlan Ellison and Pain fandom, Georgette Heyer Tea-sippers, libertarians, pagans, and a partridge-in-a-pear-tree fan or two.

And a few who even like the straight, hard science, blast rockets and Clear Ether, Kimball! stuff.

All this was accepted as long as such a crowd was needed to build up Con attendance and cut individual costs by having it spread amongst as many as possible. Now, "we" don't need "them" anymore. They are expendable.

The final blow probably came with the rise of Trekkies, 2001-movie-fans, Ape fans and Rhafen. A feeling of superiority, long secretly harbored by most fen anyway, finally exhibited itself. The Trekkies were driven into their ghetto and the others quickly followed.

Last year, during Hugo balloting, Linda Basta and Jacqueline Lichtenberg were plaintively trying to rid themselves of the Curse of Being Trekkies. After all, they pleaded, they were also trufen!

Which is true. And it is also true about many other Trekkies—though not all, or even most. And this is true about Tim Zell and Morning Glory and many other Neo-Pagans, but not all or even most. And true about many Tarzan swingers and Conan addicts, and true about all the others. Even libertarians.

for you see (as you probably did all the time, dear reader) that human beings may have more than one interest. They can even have three or four dimensions to their being. As a matter of fact, with differing degrees of commitment. I am myself a hard SF Old Wave fan. a Sword and Somery buff. a Secondary Universe fantasy fan (à la Inklings), a Fu Manchu acolyte, a Modesty Blaise adorer, and even will recommend some mainstream works of the multi-volume epics that I groove on such as the Lanny Budd series of Upton Sinclair and Allen Drury's Advise and Consent series.

And naturally, we are only talking about fiction there. Expanding into non-fiction reading and its subject matter, why, we expand into the Universe. Somewhere on the boundary of that entity like the fringe, beyond which there is naught, and hence finally outside our purview.

Let the trufen select themselves, not some self-appointed Guardians of Fannish Furity. The market provides the mechanism. Let the trufan pay early or high, get reserved seats close in, etc. After all, fandom is not a collective; it's a way of life.