



The Fifty-third issue of a sort-of letter substitute, kinda thing. Maybe weekly, maybe not. Available from:

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Available via the World Wide Web, or as an email attachment. I recommend the Portable Document Format (pdf) or, if you insist, a word or Rich Text Format (rtf) can also be emailed. Get in touch and we'll sort something out. You are going to [TorCon III](#), aren't you? Dated, already, 22/07/02.

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## Quasiquote 4

### Edited by Sandra Bond

Another chunky fanzine thuds through the door: 48 pages, A4 and stapled at the sides in the traditional fashion. My copy suffered from presentation problems, with photo copier streaks and paper wrinkling on some of the pages, which Sandra later apologised for.

The layout and design reminded me of a Ken Cheslin zine (whose humour will be sorely missed,) hand written page numbers and page layout somewhat askew. Having been guilty of much worse in my not so distant past I choose to ignore these and read on – hoping the faneds hope that the quality of the writing would make up for any perceived short-comings in presentation.

Arthur Thompson once told me, at great length, how to put together a fanzine and one of his pieces of advice was to ahev your strongest piece up front – something I think Robert Lichtman does with every issue of Trapdoor. I honestly don't think that Gail's piece on purging your collections wasn't the right one to lead off the zine – it was too self knowing for my liking. Lot so multiple exclamation marks (yes I know, I did that as well...) use of BOLD type and italics to make points. I really wanted to like this piece as it is an excellent subject, close to my heart.

The illustrations to the article by Sue Mason was wonderful but other illos, including the cover and 'gatefold,' are not to my taste. This, it should be noted, hasn't helped my overall impression of the zine. The outstanding illustration for me is the header for Ron Bennett's article To The Custom House Borne (or rather footer – which threw me for a bit) but which is never the less an excellent piece of work. Where is a D West critical art analysis, or even a Dave Hicks, when you need 'em?

The article itself is hilarious – a wonderful take on all that is good, and bad about modern Europe. I've never really known much about vile hucksters – being one of those strange fanzine fans who does not have a real book or comic collecting bug. To see this from the other side of the table though is a fascinating read and will make me haggle even more in future given what he can afford to pay out in fines etc... More please.

Whilst I found Laura's recounting of her life in fandom interesting, to say the least, I could not share the reactions and beliefs about fandom – coming from Australia Lit fandom may be something different that what it is over here. Laura does note, however:

"I collapsed emotionally at the convention, but that is just par for me. I came to realise that it wasn't just SF conventions that do this to me- that it's my being unable to cope with prolonged contact [with] any large groups of people..." and later:

"My experience as such is probably not yours, and relates as much to my own inner landscape as to fandom on a whole."

However it did highlight what can be an extremely daunting experience for some people to attend their first convention and dip their toes into fandom for the first time. This is something that used to be addressed at EasterCons; in fact Ian Sorenson hosted an introduction to fandom session at Albacon 3 in Glasgow that first got me into fandom (yes, it's Ian's fault.) By using conventions, instead of spec copies, it may be that some of the potential that is out there is coaxed into fanzine fandom. There is no way the average Joe Bloggs con attendee is going to want to get involved in fanzine (or media, RPG, filk or anything else) fandom if he or she knows didley squat about what it is... In Laura's case I'm not too sure if even this would have helped her time in fandom.

Ted's Corflu report seemed somehow, well dull to be honest. I know that he can write much better than this and only hope that the con itself proved fruitless for material – though that has never stopped a writer of Ted's capability... It seemed somehow to contain a lot of getting there, going out to eat and then not doing much. The most exciting thing seemed to be the weather – never an auspicious factor in a Con Report.

Harry Warner's article on the start of radio news broadcasting was, like all his stuff, interesting in a nostalgic sort of way. Not the rosy tinted glasses sort of nostalgia but just the wistful memories of a by gone era – which all sounds terribly cruel as Harry is still very much an actifan, but there was sepia tone to his article. Well written as always, if a little terse – to be expected of a newsman though.

The letters page was interesting in that I found myself agreeing with a lot of what was being said and cursing myself as damn fool that I did not loc QQ3 myself, as there was a lot of stuff that I wanted to bring up – notably Claire Brialeys' piece of zine reviewing. As for Cheryl Morgan... However the whole thing seemed stifled somewhat; it really could have done with a bit of serious editing – I think 14 pages is a bit long.

On a personal note I also like to see the editor appear a lot more in the loccol as I think this gives a greater impression of a conversation, or debate as the case may be and makes for an interesting read. Especially when you get someone like Joseph Nichols with his usual high standard of locs (why is he never nominated for faan awards letter hack? It isn't just the quantity of letters but the quality...) and you can get some interesting replies going.

Perhaps it would have been better had Sandra toned down the zine and produced a short, snappier read it does feel as if there is some padding going on in the zine.

Overall I thought the zine was somewhat stifled. I don't mean this to sound bad, but there just wasn't a flow to the zine, the articles seemed to sit on their own with no linking from Sandra. This may be because of the longer and detailed introduction which possibly could be broken up into small fillers and distributed more evenly throughout the zine to give a greater editorial presence and make the zine fill up more. Where Sandra has done this it comes across as obvious space filling and brings the quality of the zine down a bit. As Sandra says: it may just be a hobby but it is worth doing well – and I hope that is what I help to do.

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