

FANZINES 17

May 2002

By Ted White

::

SFFF #3, Winter 2001 (Mike McInerney, 83 Shakespeare St., Daly City, CA 94014-1053; available “by all the usual methods” – “but especially welcome are trades [of other fanzines] and L[etters]O[f]C[omment]” – no price listed, but send a buck or two for postage; e-mail to elandem@worldnet.att.net)

If you ever wondered what fanzines were like 30 or 40 years ago, here’s an excellent example, somehow time-machined into the present. Mike McInerney wandered into my Greenwich Village mimeo shop one day in 1961 and asked me to help him put out the first issue of his first fanzine. We’ve been friends ever since. And in that time Mike has published a number of fanzines, but often with long gaps between the issues. The last issue of *SFFF*, for example, came out in 1997.

Little has changed in the way Mike puts out fanzines except for their mode of duplication. Once he cut mimeograph stencils with a typewriter; now he uses a Macintosh Performa 631CD and a copying machine. But the layouts remain simple and functional, and most of the art is either old or timeless. *SFFF* is good example of what I call the “journeyman fanzine.” It’s not spectacular, but it’s solid. Mike isn’t a much of a stylist and keeps his own writing to a minimum, but he’s put together an interesting fanzine.

The lead article is a gently caustic review of the movie *Dances With Wolves* by Lee Hoffman. (I’m guessing the movie was a lot more current when she wrote the piece.) Lee is one of the Biggest Name Fans in fandom, but she’s also the author of a number of award-winning western novels (as well as several SF novels), including *The Valdez Horses*, which was made into a movie. In “Dances With Wolves In Sheep’s Clothing” she concludes that “switching around the Good-Guy and Bad-Guy labels hardly seems like such a wonderful development in social progress.”

The letter column, running six pages, comes next and supplies the fanzine’s centerpiece.

It is followed by Steve Stiles’ report on the 1962 Chicago Worldcon, reprinted (complete with Steve’s contemporary illustrations) from Mike’s *HKLPLD* #4 (summer, 1963). Here, most of all, the sense of Fanzines Past is palpable because this is a xeroxed copy of the original 1963 fanzine piece and in it Stiles captures very well the feeling of fandom and the Worldcons of that era. Both the piece and the art are youthful Stiles; in the ensuing 40 years Steve has developed a unique style and has been published in *Heavy Metal*, *Stardate* and a number of comics and is one of the best artists in fandom.

The piece gave McInerney a good excuse to run a page of photos from the 1962 Worldcon as the fanzine’s back cover. Stiles can be seen in three of the six photos.

SFFF runs only 22 pages – two articles, letters and some editorial nattering – and is pleasantly unpretentious. Check it out.

—Ted White