

FANZINES 19

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By Ted White

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SLEIGHT OF HAND #1, Spring/Summer 2002 (John Teehan, 499 Douglas Ave., Providence, RI 02908; "Copies available for \$2 (\$3 outside the US) or The Usual;" e-mail to tumble@ids.net)

John Teehan read SF most of his life, but only recently discovered fandom and fanzines. Last year's Worldcon in Philadelphia was his first convention, which he attended with some hesitation, and "In the weeks that followed MilPhil, I discovered Bill Burns' wonderful efanazines.com website and the Memoryhole, Timebinders and Trufen e-lists." With his discovery of fanzines came his discovery of fandom's history: "I'm mostly just sitting and soaking in the stories. Fandom has such a rich history that's very hard to describe."

And, inevitably, John wanted to do a fanzine of his own. *Sleight of Hand* #1 is the result. Frankly, I wish my first fanzine had been half as good. The fanzine runs 28 letter-sized pages, but is printed on sheets twice as large, folded and saddle-stapled. Like virtually all modern fanzines (except *Twink*) it's produced on a computer. Large, readable Adobe Garamond type is set in a double-columned format. Art is sprinkled nicely through the text.

But the key to any fanzine is its written contents, and here once again *Sleight of Hand* triumphs. John has gotten his main article from Dave Langford, whose groaning bookshelf full of Fan Writer Hugos was well and honestly won. Langford's "Microcon Metamorphoses" is the speech he gave at Microcon in March, 1999. It hasn't dated at all and is a delight to read.

Rich brown's "Why I Only 'Used To' Know That Diana Rigg Was A Natural Red-Head" is a rewrite of an e-list post of rich's in which he explains how he came to see Diana Rigg nude, from a distance of perhaps 20 feet – with several digressions thrown in for good measure.

Mike Resnick's "Tales of the Prozines" is a good demonstration of Resnick's ability as a story-teller, and his willingness to hold actual facts at bay when they get in the way of his stories. Since these purport to be *true* stories, let the reader beware – several are embroidered into fantasy and many incidental facts and details are wrong. But they make an enjoyable read.

The last Big Name in the issue is Janis Ian – the creator, more than 40 years ago, of "Society's Child," an improbable pop hit a year after its release. She too read SF for many years, but only just discovered fandom. Her "Worldcon Diary: How I Spent My

Summer Vacation,” which first appeared on her website, describes the buildup to and her attendance at the same Philadelphia Worldcon at which John got his toes wet. It’s a bit of a gosh-wow piece, but that’s not bad, considering its source.

In addition to a couple of minor items, and a page of “Ten-Second Reviews” by the editor, there’s a letter column – in *Sleight of Hand*’s first issue. It’s made up of a running conversation which first occurred on one of the fannish e-lists after John announced his intention to do a fanzine and asked for advice. Next issue will have actual letters of comment.

All in all, this fanzine is superior to most first issues, especially by those with no prior experience. I feel no hesitation in recommending it, and I’m looking forward to #2.

—Ted White