

## FANZINES 24

By Ted White

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BANANA WINGS #18 (Clair Brialey, 26 Northampton Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 7HA, UK, and Mark Plummer, 14 Northway Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 6JE, UK, editors; e-mail to [banana@fishlifter.demon.co.uk](mailto:banana@fishlifter.demon.co.uk); apparently available by editorial whim since no requirements or price is listed – but send at least a couple of dollars to cover the postage)

It's been a while – more than a year – since the last issue of *Banana Wings* appeared, but this issue is well worth the wait. Indeed, *BW* #18 is one of the best fanzines to appear this year.

Physically, *BW* is handsomely produced, using double-columned computer typesetting – as most fanzines do now – printed by photo-offset or a similar means of copying, on sheets of paper measuring a bit over 11 inches by 16 inches, folded and stapled, resulting in 48 pages of material. The covers are on green paper, the interior pages on white.

There is relatively little art and most of that is decorative Egyptian-styled work apparently copied from a Dover book, but it is attractively placed in stylish but functional layouts. The sole exception is Steve Stiles' two-page comic strip, "Steve Stiles, Martyr," which engagingly tells an embarrassing story from his elementary school days. Stiles is unquestionably the best artist contributing to fanzines these days and his strip is a coup for *BW*.

But the star of the issue is Michael Abbott's "Fifty-Seven Fanzines and Nothing On," a "review of fanzines given out at Plokta Con v2.0, with digressions." Using the conceit of a "Fandom Channel," Abbott spends the better part of seven pages discussing eleven fanzines in knowledgeable detail. This is the kind of in-depth fanzine-reviewing which I love to read and have occasionally written, but which is far beyond my purview here.

*Banana Wings* is doing with this piece and several others this issue what is called "fanzines talking to/about other fanzines" – the kind of cross-commentary which links fanzines into an overall community. Another word for this is "feedback" – intelligent, thoughtful commentary which rewards both the casual reader and those whose works are being discussed. As Max points out in "Greying Fandom," "SF isn't special any more. It's everywhere. Not everyone gets it. Some people want a nice romance movie or a charming nature documentary. But those who do? They're not fandom. To be part of fandom you have to choose to be in it." And in "*The Enchanted Duplicator and Other Fables of Fandom*" Andy Sawyer remarks on the "distinction between being a *fan of science fiction* and a *science fiction fan*."

There are seven main pieces in this issue of *BW*; besides those mentioned are pieces by Cardinal Cox, Ron Bennett and Tanya Brown, as well as a thoughtful exchange between Gregory Pickersgill and John-Henri Holmberg which first appeared on a private e-list. In addition there are editorials and editorial bits (short bits scattered through the issue) by Claire and Mark and six pages of letters.

I recommend *Banana Wings* highly and hope to see it regaining a more frequent schedule.

—Ted White