

FANZINES 31

By Ted White

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ZOO NATION #3 (Pete Young, editor & publisher, 62 Walmer Road, Woodley, Berkshire, RG5 4PN, England; email to zoo-nation@macunlimited.net; probably available for The Usual – letters, contributions both written and artistic, and trades – no mention of price)

Zoo Nation is one of the best of a new breed in fanzines. By its third issue it has achieved a weight and solidity of content which works well with its presentation. Physically, the fanzine is half-A4-sized (A4 being the British paper size which most closely approximates the American “lettersize” sheet, measuring approximately 8.25 x 11.75 inches), being folded and saddle-stapled, and has, including covers, 28 pages. The cover is color printed; the interior is black & white. Most of the pages are double-columned with computer-set type (as is the standard for fanzines these days). Young is a former commercial artist and the design and layout of *Zoo Nation* profits from his experience.

Fanzines have been evolving over the past decade as personal computers have become ubiquitous. At first the computer-generated fanzines aped older models – those fanzines which had been produced on mimeographs from typewriter-typed stencils. And the older model of fanzine had itself evolved over the previous 60 years. With rare exceptions, few fanzines ever looked like professional magazines, and in time this became one of their virtues: they did not attempt to poorly copy professional publications but established their own traditions and standards.

This made sense in an era when professional publishing required machines and technology which was largely beyond the (financial) capabilities of an ordinary person, and amateur publishers (most of whom were students with little money to spare) had to rely on the means available to them.

When computers allowed fans to virtually typeset their fanzines, at first faneditors simply substituted columns of typesetting in layouts originally designed for typewriter type. Many still do, either because they prefer that approach or because they lack the sophistication to do more.

Pete Young is not inhibited either by outmoded traditions or from lack of experience and consequently his fanzine *looks* like a modern magazine. Indeed, he riffs on this appearance, mocking professional magazines with a page or two of what he calls “ClipArt,” in which ads and magazine features are spoofed.

Zoo Nation #3 lacks the themes of the first two issues, and is identified as a “Jam – a loosely associated collection of all things fannish & jammish.” The issue opens with a brief introductory editorial and then offers over 4 pages of letters. These are followed by Pete’s article on Yahoo! Groups’ SF and fan-oriented lists (he describes 12); “Online Fandom: Why the Iraq

crisis is on-topic for SF lists” by Farah Mendelsohn; “The Ups & Downs of Being Sci-Fi & Fantasy Nut’s Mum” by Jan Trotter; two pages of that rarity, *fannish* poetry; two pieces under the heading of “Habitable Zone:” “Fandom Roots” by Gareth Jelley and “SF, Me and Fandom” by Nick Honeywell; four pages of intelligent book reviews by Young; a page devoted to a “Table of Condiments That Periodically Go Bad,” which is a clever take on the Periodic Table of Elements; a closing editorial; and a page of credits, including the typefaces used.

There’s quite a lot in this issue, despite its small size. Pete’s produced three regular issues and two single-sheet fractional issues in the course of one year, which bodes well for his future schedule. This is a fanzine I want to see more issues of.

—Ted White