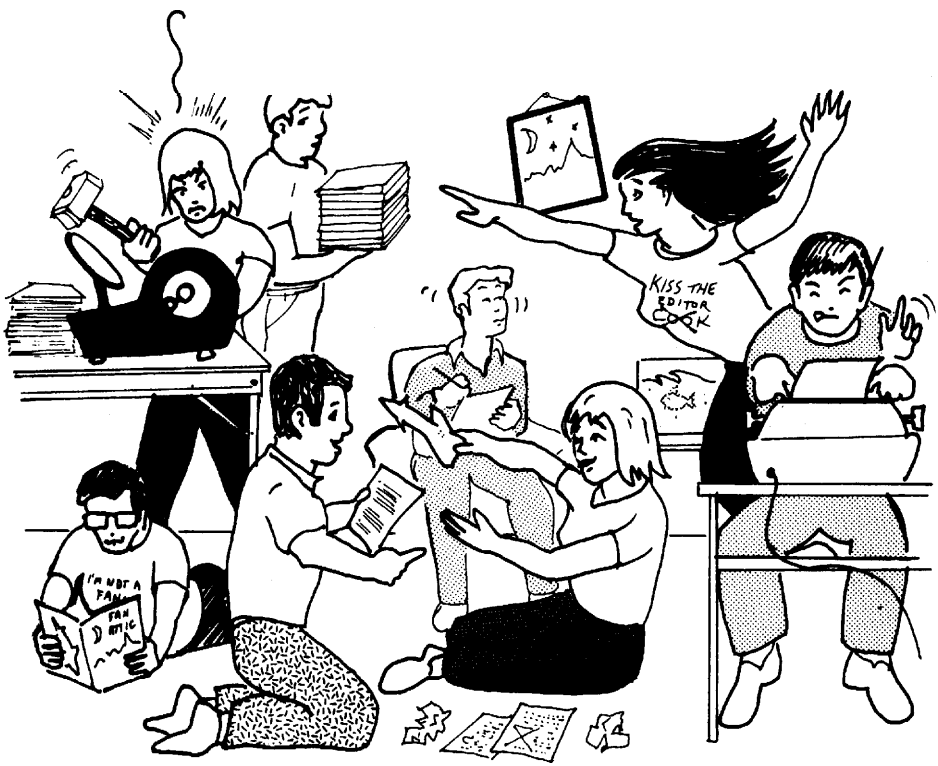
HOW TO PUBLISH A

FANZINE



Mike Gunderloy

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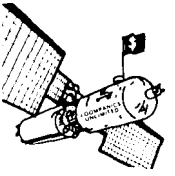
by
Mike Gunderloy



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INTRODUCTION

This book could have come out two years sooner if I didn't love the subject so much. That's not to say that it's late because I went over the manuscript with compulsive care (but don't tell my publisher that!). Rather, I was so busy publishing a little magazine ("fanzine") that I couldn't find time to write about it. Fortunately, during the summer of 1987, I had about 25 hours of plane flights followed by a very boring part-time job (stay away from library circulation!) that provided access to a word processor.

That's the main problem with self-publishing: it's horribly addictive, worse than heroin, alcohol, or voting Republican. You'll know you've got the bug when you get up at 6AM to do some typing before work and end up calling in sick because you can't bear to stop. Or when the dirty dishes are piled halfway to the ceiling because you needed to use the kitchen table to do some layout. Putting out a fanzine is great fun and doing it well is one of the most rewarding things in the world. But it requires a lot of support, and more importantly tolerance, from those around you who might prefer to converse or go to a movie with you now and then. So before trying to pass on this insidious disease to you, I'd like to pause and thank a couple of people:

Mike Hoy, for waiting patiently for this book (not that I gave him a choice) and Carolyn MacDonald, for putting up with my distraction all these years.

• CHAPTER 1 •

WHY PUBLISH?

Maybe you picked this book up because you're already convinced that small-scale publishing is the thing for you, and you just want a few hints on how to get ahead. If so, great! The chapters ahead should hold a lot of useful information to get you started on the road to fanzine success.

On the other hand, maybe you don't even know what a "fanzine" is. (If that's the case, fear not: there's a Glossary of unusual terms in the back of the book.) Or maybe you're firmly convinced that we small publishers are all crazy. In that case, we'd better start from the start.

Why do people spend all their spare time and money publishing something that, in the great majority of cases, will bring them nothing but hate mail and big bills? I think the reasons break down pretty neatly into three classes Fun, Fame and Fortune.

Fun (and its corollary, Friends) is an almost certain outcome of self-publishing. There's very little to match the feeling of pride that comes from actually watching your own creation go out in the mail, just like a "real" magazine. There comes a time, about two weeks before each issue comes out, that I am completely sick of my own fanzine, *Factsheet Five.* But, two weeks later, after the last copy has been

thrown in the mail sack, I start smiling again. The hard work is worth it, just to see the finished product. And a few weeks later, when letters start rolling in, I realize that other people are getting fun out of this project, too. Along with this fun comes the contact with people across the country and around the world — I get more letters than I can answer any more, and I love it.

Fame is a bit more unlikely. If you start small — and I think you should — maybe only ten or fifty or a hundred people will read your first effort at publishing. If you keep at it for a couple of years, this might get up to a thousand or two. Let's face it, even 2,000 happy readers are not going to get you the Nobel Prize for literature or a mention in the *New York Post* (although the *Village Voice* or *Rolling Stone* is not out of the question). In some areas of the zine field, there are less grandiose awards. Science fiction has the Hugo and FAAN awards. Poets have a number of competitions to enter their work in (although as far as I can tell, many of these competitions exist only to separate the budding poet from an entry fee). But newcomers don't win the Hugo award. In fact, to aspire to that level of fame you probably have to know exactly what you're doing right from the start, and concentrate on getting your zine into the hands of the People Who Count, pumping up your circulation to reach more potential award voters, and so on. That's not my idea of fun.

On the other hand, perseverance and hard work will bring you at least a bit of fame in limited circles. Just about everyone who publishes poetry probably

recognizes Merritt Clifton's name, thanks to his long-running review-zine *Samisdat*. Many punk rockers would be able to tell you that *Flipside* is published by Al and Hudley. In my own case, after five years of writing reviews I seem to be turning into an authority on the underground and alternative press. I've done interviews for newspapers and radio (though alas, the story for *The Wall Street Journal* got killed), written invited articles for other magazines, and given a few lectures. But I don't expect to make the front cover of *Time* at this rate.

Fortune is nearly impossible. There are indeed fanzines out there that support their editors, though not in style. But the vast majority lose money. If you can steal your copying at the office and your stamps from your father, you can avoid this. But that's no way to get rich. To take a concrete example, *Factsheet Five* just about broke even in 1986. In 1985, on about half the circulation, it lost about $800. (The current circulation is hovering around the 2000 mark: large enough to be a hell of a lot of work, too small to make a lot of money.) In the first half of 1987, though, I lost another $800 or so, mainly due to stocking up on supplies and more careful accounting. I'm sure not laughing all the way to the bank. I expect to be making some minuscule amount of money off of *Factsheet Five* some time over the next few years, but I have no intention of dropping out of school and letting the zine support me. Well, I have the intention, but so far the zine doesn't have the funds.

But who cares? I'm firmly convinced that fanzines are for fun, not for profit. (I'm not as rabid about

this as the hardcore SF fans, who refuse to admit that anything available for money could ever be a "real" fanzine.) I could get out of this hobby and take up skiing – and spend a lot more money for less fun. For something that keeps me off the streets, helps me meet new friends, and brings me hundreds of interesting things to read, fanzine publishing is dirt cheap.

I have one word of warning to offer budding publishers, despite my devotion to the hobby, and that is Time. You won't have any left if you get seriously involved in putting out a fanzine. I have missed the deadline on term papers, taken incompletes in graduate courses, and done my Christmas shopping on December 24th, all because of the time that *Factsheet Five* soaks up from my everyday schedule. The temptation to do just a bit better, to write just one more page, to send out just ten more sample copies, is irresistible – even after one has already spent hours collating and folding and stapling. In fact, this manuscript is over a year late getting to the publisher, in large part because of my fanzine commitments.

CHAPTER 2

TYPES OF FANZINES

Now that you've decided to publish (I hope), the next step is to decide precisely what to publish. No one has a complete idea of what is already available in fanzines (that is, in small magazines with limited circulation), but with something like 3,000 titles in my collection, I have a better idea than most people. In this chapter I hope to give you some small feeling for the sheer numbers and breadth of the field.

As the publisher of *Factsheet Five*, I am, perhaps uniquely qualified to do this. There are other review zines, but none that (to my knowledge) attempt to cover the whole small press field. The others concentrate on fairly narrow segments – for example, *Small Press Review* is mainly interested in paying markets for writers, while the *Utne Reader* concentrates on the established alternatives rather than the fringe underground. The most recent issue of *Factsheet Five* reviewed over 600 zines from all genres, which in itself is only a drop in the bucket. My best guess is that there are on the order of 5,000 to 10,000 zines being published in the United States at any given time. But the turnover in the field is so rapid as to make any accurate census impossible. The half-life of a fanzine is only about a year – next year only half of the zines I got this month will still be publishing.

One useful classification is provided by the Science Fiction Fans, or SFen for short. They divide zines within science fiction fandom, into about four basic types. A Genzine is sort of the small-press analog of a "real" magazine. The typical genzine contains an editorial, a letter column, articles on various subjects, perhaps some interior art, and a variety of other contents. It may or may not be written entirely by the editor. A Perzine is generally more relaxed, often functioning as a sort of letter-substitute. Lacking the formal characteristics of a magazine, it becomes more of a personal record of the editor's life and thoughts, and often contains no writing by anyone else. Clearly Perzines are easier to produce than Genzines, although they can be unremittingly boring in the wrong hands. A Clubzine is a zine produced jointly by the members of an SF club. The best of these are very, very good while the worst are awful. In general, the good Clubzines tend to be those where a single strong personality arises to drive the project, and the worst are those produced by committees.

Finally there's the Apazine. An APA is an Amateur Press Association, an institution originally invented by early letterpress owners, but developed to its fullest flower by the SFen. Each member of an APA is responsible for preparing copies of his own contribution, or Apazine. Typically, the member has full latitude for what to put in his own apazine, although some APAs have general topics that are nominally the basis for discussion (for example, Tarot Cards, or sex, or Libertarianism). The member produces an agreed-upon number of copies and sends them to the Central Mailer (CM) or Official Edi-

tor (OE), who collates together one copy of each member's stuff and sends it back. Thus, for a small number of pages one gets a large number back. A few APAS operate by photocopying material provided by members, freeing the individual member of the chore of arranging for copying in return for paying the printing bill. Because of their form, APAs tend to develop into multi-participant conversations, and have been likened to a "cocktail party in print." Writing an Apazine can be a cheap means of getting acquainted with writing and printing while having a bit of fun on the side, but it won't get you directly into the mainstream of Fanzine publishing. Most Fanzines will not trade for individual Apazines, and most APAs have no circulation outside of the members. Today's computer bulletin boards have much of the chatty nature of APAs, but operate at a less sedate pace. They may or may not be a good thing, depending on how rapidly you think.

Turning away from the classification of the SFen, let's consider a few of the genres of zines available today. This list is by no means exhaustive, but it does touch upon the most numerous types:

Political or Anti-Political zines are one major type. Anarchists have a long history of using the power of the press for propaganda or education, and they're still at it in force. On a more organized level, one finds the Libertarians and their allies, with slicker stuff and a trendier vocabulary — these are for "outreach," not education. Also belonging in this category is the majority of small-scale hate literature being produced today — the technology of

publishing, like any other, can have nasty side-effects. Any society which allows Yippies access to the press will allow Nazis the same (the converse is not necessarily true), but it's generally a healthy enough society to deal with this problem. I'm not impressed by the attempts, in locales as diverse as Canada and Minneapolis, to prevent the Bad Guys from publishing.

Within the political genre lies a sub-group I call the Constitutionalists. These people have just as much interest in changing the system as do the anarchists and libertarians, but they take a slightly different view of things (although some of them sound very much like conservative libertarians at times). Calling for the preservation or the restoration of the original ideas of the US Constitution, they generally speak out against the Income Tax, call for a return to the Gold Standard, denounce the Federal Reserve, and so on. Emphasizing work within the system, the Constitutionalists put forth a variety of complex legal theories to explain and defend themselves.

Perhaps the most numerous category today are the Punk and other Musical Zines. The punks of today are discovering the cheap photocopy as the SFen of yesteryear discovered the mimeograph, and their zines appear all over the place. A lot of these things display more enthusiasm than graphic sense, but there are some notable exceptions at the top of the heap. It's not just the punks who belong here, but devotees of all sorts of music – although generally major recording companies are not represented in the Pfanzines, as it seems to be beneath their dignity to deal directly with the grassroots.

The underground music press is as diverse as you could ever imagine. Besides hundreds of zines dealing with punk music in its many guises, there are such gems as *Option* and *Sound Choice* that review any independent music they can find, and other zines which concentrate on music from one city or region. There are even stranger things like *Galactic Crossroads,* which is devoted entirely to mandolin music.

Still within the "media" side of things are the poetry zines. I suspect that there are hundreds of these – certainly there are thousands of budding poets in the country. These zines seem to have a relatively short lifespan, which they make up for by issuing lots of little chapbooks. A Chapbook is usually a collection of poetry, either all by the same person or revolving around a single theme, intended to highlight the work involved and bring it to the attention of the public. Chapbooks range in price from pennies on up, depending on how unknown and desperate for publicity the poet involved us.

Some zines exist to promote Religion. There are a lot of staid Church Bulletins out there, about which I know practically nothing. The evangelical Christians produce much more fanzine-like pamphlets, which range from seriously thoughtful to downright prejudiced and frightening. But the most interesting religious stuff comes from a couple of playful religions, which may or may not be jokes. The Discordians worship the ancient Greek goddess of Discord, while the Church of the SubGenius is a modern-day religion of sales and slack. Each of these groups adopts the religious tract form to deliver a

message of hilarity, and both are encouraging networking with other publishers. Unfortunately, the SubGenii have been perhaps too successful, and have been so buried under the weight of mail, that they're currently going years between publications. Maintaining a publishing empire can be much more work than one bargains for. On the other hand, SubGenius honcho Ivan Stang does have a book coming out from Simon and Schuster in late 1987 which will be a goldmine of addresses for aficionados of the bizarre. There are, after all, advantages to being buried in mail.

With a previous weight of numbers and force of history on their side, the SFen tend to view themselves as the sole producers of fanzines — anything not connected with the SFan community is viewed as insufficiently "fannish" to qualify as a fanzine. Despite this insular attitude, there are a lot of good zines in SFandom today. Unfortunately, if you're not willing to become a part of this community, you're unlikely to see very much of them, since SFen are very picky about who they trade with. However, SFanzines can be very cheap to get, thanks to the common sfannish practice of "The Usual." The refers to selling copies for artwork, trades, a dollar, or a letter of comment (loc) on the previous issue. If you have time to write letters, this is sometimes even a bargain.

Mail Art is a phenomenon on the edges of zinedom. Mail Art originally started out as a very democratic movement, with artists sending works to one another on an unorganized basis for appreciation and critiquing. Then came the Mail Art Show,

with a number of contributions being sent to some central point for display and documentation. With the publication of a book or two on the subject, some of the original participants are now saying that Mail Art is dead. Despite this, there are hundreds of artists out there still producing original drawings and collages and foisting them on an unsuspecting world. One of the now-traditional dicta of Mail Art is that "Money and mail art don't mix." Sending out mail art of your own is the one sure way to get on other mail artists' mailing lists.

Another active zining community is the Neopagan one. Neopagans, or just Pagans as they're sometimes called, are followers of any number of nature religions. Though the various Neopagan faiths differ in detail, they generally share a search for alternatives to established, hierarchal religions and tend to be pantheistic or polytheistic. One concern shared by many Pagans is the founding of international polytheistic. One concern shared by many Pagans is the founding of intentional communities, and some of the larger zines come from groups that have done or are doing this.

Also interested in alternate living are the Vonuists, BackTo-The-Landers (BTTLers), and Homesteaders. There are a lot of people interested in simpler lifestyles, and these zines can provide the resources and encouragement they need to get on with their plans.

Another niche is filled by the Role-Playing zines. Role-Playing Games (or RPGs) are the descendants of the infamous Dungeons and Dragons games. The people who play them are constantly writing one

another with ideas on rules changes and scenarios, or generally chatting with one another. The greatest part of this chit-chat goes on in the Role-Playing APAs, but there are also fanzines in the field.

Finally, a great many zines simply fit into no easy pigeonholes. By its nature, this group resists further description, so I'll just mention a few examples. *The Rubber Fanzine* is for rubber-stamp fans. *Holistic Animal News* is for veterinarians and others who want to care for their pets the natural way. *Yellow Silk* is attempting to produce erotica without degenerating into pornography. *2600* is for phone phreaks and computer hackers. And *Synthesis* is trying to explain the ideas of Deep Ecology to the world.

It's difficult to be specific when discussing existing fanzines. New ones come into business every day, and old ones drop out of sight, often without warning. In the first draft of this book, I attempted to provide a list of some influential fanzines, and when I was doing the final revisions, I noted that almost half of them had vanished without a trace. With the field being so volatile, any such list is a waste of my time and your postage money. Instead, I suggest you buy a current copy of *Factsheet Five* and see for yourself what's being published today. Using that as a starting point into the zine network, you can find all the zines that you ever want to.

By now you should have the impression that the small press field is richer than you ever dreamed. (If not, you're probably a regular reader of *Factsheet Five*. The natural question is: where do YOU fit in? Don't be scared off by the sheer number of other

small publishers out there. With a little luck and perseverance, anyone can find a market niche and fill it well.

The folks from Light Living Library (see Bibliography) have a few suggestions about picking a topic in their pamphlet "How Do You Do a How to Do." The two most important are "Tap your experience" and "Be specialized." By sticking close to these ideas, you should be able to find a topic that will attract readers while still allowing you to have fun.

TAP YOUR EXPERIENCE. If you're a punker, stick to music (that's probably what you planned anyhow, right?). If you've developed a lot of cheap home workshop methods, there are people waiting to hear about those. If you're active in the local alternative politics scene, maybe you can pass on tips to others. In any case, trying to publish a zine on surfing from the Black Hills of South Dakota is probably a bad idea.

Of course, there's no point in carrying this rule to extremes. We all have some experience with laughing, so humor magazines are open to us all — and the same remarks go for literary or poetry zines. And remember that you can sometimes develop experience and expertise on the job, so to speak; I couldn't have written this book five years ago when *FF* was just starting out.

BE SPECIALIZED. No matter how good your music zine is, if you try to compete head-on with *Rolling Stone* the first week, you're dead meat. Similarly, a conservative political zine shouldn't try to emulate *National Review* immediately. It's OK to have goals, but you've got to work up to them. The way to do

this is to start doing one thing better than anyone else and expand from there.

The easiest way to specialize is by geography. There are hundreds of PFanzines out there, but if you're the first one in Left Flank, Minnesota, you're all set (assuming there are any bands or clubs in your area!). While I cover fanzines as exhaustively as I can, no one (as far as I know) is doing so for zines published outside the US. If you can combine a strong subject with a local emphasis, people will buy your words who wouldn't be interested in the same zine from across the continent.

You can also specialize by subject, providing you remember to stay close to your experience. If there are already too many punk zines out there in your city, look at the subject matters. Is there room for one discussing industrial music in depth? Or how about ska? Or even Patsy Cline, given the recent revival of interest in her music. Similarly, you can compete with the *Coevolution* people by concentrating on hydroelectric power, or mixed-row gardening.

Finally, consider specializing by audience. A PFanzine directed to lesbians and concentrating on music by womyn might be a hit — provided that you're not a male bricklayer from the Bronx. A zine about genealogy could pitch itself to those of Norwegian descent with good results.

The important thing to remember about specialization is not to carry it too far, not to paint yourself into a corner from which there's no escape. A zine for Norwegian apple-corers in southern New Hampshire just isn't going to make it, no matter

how scintillating your writing. You have to have some audience to get started, and just as importantly, you have to leave yourself room to grow.

Ready now? Got your subject all picked out? Great. Let's talk about getting it down on paper.

CHAPTER 3

HOW TO PUBLISH - PRODUCTION

Now that you've got some idea what's out there, and hopefully have some idea of what you want to add to it, it's time to consider the nitty-gritty details of fanzine production. We'll defer the discussion of printing until the next chapter, even though this is what most people think of as publishing. Long before you can make copies of your immortal words, there are a lot of other things that must be done.

For starters, the words have to be written. This seems simple, but it's the first major hurdle to get by if you want a successful fanzine. People want a fanzine that is easy to read. Even if they can't spell themselves, they'll be upset by misspelled words. Even if they can't write anything more than a grocery list, they'll notice a bad style. So the aspiring writer should draft and correct, draft and correct again, until he's got the best he can write. With enough practice, you can get away with a single draft, particularly if you're working on a computer and can correct mistakes as you go. But the only substitute for experience is painstaking care. After your first million words or so, your style should be well-established, but before that it deserves some attention.

Even tougher than getting your own writing under control can be editing others' writing. Many people write their own fanzines cover to cover.

Others of us, though, aren't so lucky, and rely on outside writers or columnists to do part of the work. There are two tough points to working with other writers: finding them and taming them.

The best way to find writers is to get something out on the market and let them find you. If you're prepared to pay for work, get yourself listed in the International Directory Of Small Presses And Little Magazines and they'll beat a path to your door, carrying some of the worst writing you've ever seen. Remember, if you get unsolicited material that you don't like or can't use, there's nothing wrong with returning it – or trashing it, if there's no postage included. If, like most of us, you're asking for free work, you'll have to trust the grapevine. Get your zine reviewed and ask the reviewer to mention that you're looking for writers. Ask your friends. Badger your relatives. It's amazing how many people nurse a secret desire to write something.

Taming writers depends on getting everything spelled out before they write anything. Make sure they understand the terms of payment (if any), or how many free copies of the finished work they'll be getting. Equally important is the deadline. I like to send postcards to my columnists about two weeks before the deadline if their columns aren't in yet. Elementary, but sometimes overlooked, is the fact that you should agree on a topic or guidelines – surprises can be nasty, especially if they come in at the last minute when it's too late to find a replacement. Finally, writers should understand that "to edit" is an active verb. If they're going to be heartbroken or raving mad if you touch a single word of their deathless prose, to edit for style or for size – you're better off without them. Believe me.

Assuming that you have all the material written for your zine, and that all your writers have coughed up their articles on time (unlikely, but possible), the next problem you face is that of getting it all transferred to a master copy of the zine. Now, some zines are handwritten cover-to-cover, and a few of these are even pretty good. But most of us don't have a printing or handwriting style that lends itself to reading without eyestrain, and must resort to some sort of mechanical aid. (This may not be true in the PFanzine world, where illegibility sometimes seems to be prized.)

The cheapest way to get everything looking good is to type it all. Even if you have to buy a used manual typewriter (getting rare, by the way) and learn to hunt-and-peck from scratch, it's worth it for the finished product (but allow a lot of time for your first issue if this is the case!). If you can afford a bit more, go shopping for a new typewriter (if you don't already have one). Some points to consider:

- How does it feel to type on? You're going to be turning out a lot of words on this, so pay attention and get one you like,
- What type of ribbon does it use? Carbon film ribbons produce much better looking zines than nylon or cotton. The Smith-Coronamatic cartridge system is incredibly convenient, allowing quick corrections by swapping ribbons. There are also self-correcting typers on the market. On the other hand, you can buy a lot of correction fluid for the price of one of these machines.
- How hard does it type? You'll probably want at least a carbon copy of your work. If you're using ditto or mimeo printing (see Chapter 4, the

ability to type hard is a necessity – take some masters along and test as you shop.

- How many typefaces can you get? If you get daisy-wheel or golf-ball typer, you can change typefaces without buying a new typewriter.

Go out and look at everything, and then buy whatever you like best but can still afford. It's possible to spend thousands of dollars on an electric typewriter that has a computerized memory, spelling checker and who knows what else; but for most fanzines, a portable electric model can be found for under $200 if you take your time and shop the sales. Used typewriters can be much cheaper than this, but are often in horrible condition – and repair shops typically charge a minimum of $35 to do anything. If money is tight, check the classifieds, flea markets, and garage sales, but always dicker and remember: once you buy it, you're stuck with it.

If you can afford it, the next step up is to buy yourself a computer. Word processing is much more efficient for most people than typing, primarily because it is much easier to correct errors on-screen than on-paper. I probably wouldn't have even started this book without having a computer to work on. Depending on what type of system you get, a computer can also maintain your mailing list, keep track of the fanzine's budget, print form letters, and do many other things. A good word processing program will allow you to justify your text, count the words you have written, or move text from one file to another – this last can be used to insert a standard subscription notice in each issue, for example.

The computer market changes so fast that it would be senseless to try to tell you what model to

purchase. In general, the longer you can wait and the more money you can spend, the better deal you can get. The only way to know just how good a deal is, is to shop around. Here are a few points of interest to the ziner when computer shopping:

- What kind of printer can you get? Letter-quality printers produce type that is impossible to distinguish from typewriters, but do not handle graphics. Dot-matrix printers can reproduce computer graphics but the text is low-quality. A compromise is the "near letter quality" dot-matrix printer, which can produce very good text, particularly if the original is to be reduced. Beware: many printers will not work for ditto or mimeo masters. If this is what you want one for, be sure to test it before buying.
- What operating system does the computer use? Check your friends' system and buy something compatible with them if you can. You will benefit from their knowledge and program base.
- What type of mass storage device is available? A "hard disk" would be nice to hold everything, but the average fanzine will fit on a "floppy disk" with only a slight inconvenience.

Some people will tell you that it is difficult to get used to working on a computer, while others will tell you that it is the greatest thing since sliced white bread. The only way to find out is to try it for yourself. If you're not familiar with computers, try to get some time to play with one before buying. Good dealers don't object to customers playing around (although it might be out of line to try to produce an entire zine in their office) — you can get more time from friends, or find a computer at colleges or

libraries in some towns. Used computers are almost without exception obsolete and not worth spending money on. But exceptions to this rule do exist, especially for those technically-minded enough to keep an obsolete machine running.

Moving even further towards high-tech one comes to typesetting. Typesetting is the process used to produce "real" books and magazines, and is much more flexible than typewriters or home computers (although the home computers are catching up). You can either take your manuscript to a printer and have him typeset it, or do it yourself. A typesetting machine is beyond consideration for fanzine publishing in most cases (we're talking thousands of bucks), but there are a number of places now that take manuscripts over the phone from computers and produce typeset copies. This requires you to have a home computer already, but it also gives you complete control over your own format (and mistakes). In larger cities, you can also take computer disks in to places that will run your words off on a laser printer for around a buck a page. If well done, this can be indistinguishable from "real" typesetting. I used this process on *Factsheet Five*'s first venture into the chapbook field and was quite happy with the results. One thing to note is that if you use typesetting or similar methods you'll pay each time you write something, instead of paying only once for a typewriter or computer (paper and ribbons are of negligible cost compared to typesetting).

Most people like to spruce up their text with some illustrations. If you can draw, you're in the perfect position – just do your own illos. Most of us aren't so lucky, but fortunately there are a couple of other alternatives. The first is to use "clip-art" – public

domain images that are published specifically for this purpose. You can buy clip-art books at a good stationer's. These tend to have the disadvantage of resembling nothing so much as the ads in a telephone book — the art style is 30 years behind the times in most cases. Dover Books carries a wide range of clip art, some of which does not have this problem, although their prices may be a bit on the high side.

The other alternative is to find a real live artist, or preferably several of them. Artists have to be treated with care, just like writers, although my experience has been that they are less fussy. Again, you must make sure you communicate. Let the artist know what size stuff you need. It's also important that they know what printing method you're going to use — for example, most offset printing won't pick up blue lines, in art or anywhere else. It also makes a difference whether you're going to reduce things prior to printing or not. Finally, in addition to a copy of the final work, many artists want their originals back. If this is the case with your artists, by all means humor them. Good artists that will work for the wages we pay (that is, for free) are hard to find, and deserve to be humored. If you treat them well, other artists will appear and offer you stuff, and you're off and running.

Now that you've got everything together you've got to get it down on the page. This means it's time to consider layout. (Actually, you should consider layout as you're working on the contents, but it's easier to write about it sequentially.) Let's talk about tools first, then principles.

To a certain extent the tools you'll need are specific to the printing process. In this discussion I'll

assume that you're using photocopying or offset to reproduce your work. Ditto and mimeo considerations will be discussed later when I talk about those printing methods. Full-color work is well beyond my scope. If you can afford full-color work, chances are that you can afford to have someone else do all the scutwork that we more impecunious publishers have to tackle ourselves anyhow.

All you absolutely need is some way to attach little pieces of paper to big ones. In a pinch this can be small bits of tape, applied to the back of the originals (tape on the front will show up when printing). Most of us, though, use rubber cement, a gooey substance which dries without wrinkling paper. Buy yourself one small jar with a brush in the cap. After you have the jar, you'll find it much cheaper to buy rubber cement and rubber cement thinner in larger cans and pour them into the applicator jar. If you can find one, get a pastepot. This is like the little jar but it allows you to adjust the brush height so as to avoid dripping rubber cement all over the place. Finally, the professionals use a waxer for their layout, avoiding most of the mess entirely. A waxer is a device that melts wax and applies it to the back of your original — hand models start around $50, and I've never used one myself. People who do a lot of pasteup swear by them.

Other useful tools include a blue pencil, a transparent plastic ruler, an X-acto knife, scissors, and typing correction tape (the adhesive kind that comes in narrow strips) for covering errors. Make sure that your pencil is "non-repro" blue — if you can't find one that says that, go for a sky blue. You can also spend money on an eraser designed to pick up rubber cement. However, if you just pour out a glob of rubber cement on your desk and let it

harden, it will do just as well and not cost near as much.

By visiting a stationer or drafting house you can pick up a lot of other useful stuff, basically as much as you can afford. One thing to get is a few sheets of "transfer letters." These are sheets of plastic with headline-size lettering on the back, which you can transfer to your copy by rubbing the front with a small stick or ballpoint-pen cap. Buy one sheet of any brand to check the quality before making any substantial investment — some of the cheaper ones simply do not work properly. I've always liked C-THRU myself. You can also find uses for a few rolls of edging tape — these make nifty borders, if you like that sort of thing.

The basic thing to remember is that the camera (which makes the plate that your work will be printed from) sees a bit differently from you, and that your reader will see whatever the camera sees. The camera sees in black and white only, not color. Blue pencil is invisible to it, while red is indistinguishable from black. I don't use any other color on my stuff — it's too much of a gamble as to how it will turn out. Another thing the camera will see is smudges and fingerprints — which will print out on the final copy in dark, ugly black. So be careful around your master copy. Excess rubber cement can be removed with a rubber cement pickup. Small mistakes can be taped over with typewriter correction tape. "White-out" correction fluid has an unfortunate tendency to smudge things and build up little peaks that leave shadows on the final copy, so I don't use it often. If you need it, though, it can be a lifesaver. Nowadays there are special formulations of correction fluid for copies and for ink, which are much less prone than the original to making nasty blotches.

Before starting the actual layout you should think about what you're doing. The idea is to have a page that's pleasing to the eye. Don't clutter it up with too much stuff, and don't make the stuff that's there, too much to follow. (One classic mistake is to run text around both sides of a drawing.) There are lots of graphic design books that will guide you in the layout process. Unfortunately, it seems to be a difficult talent to learn, but keep at it. Commercial designers are far too expensive for the fanzine publisher.

The first step in layout is to plan what goes on which page (if you're printing more than a single page). If you don't do this, I can guarantee a lot of frustration when you have to rip things off the page because they didn't quite fit and glue them down somewhere else. Start by making up a "dummy book" of your fanzine (this is particularly important if you're using folded pages). Take smaller sheets of paper (full sheets cut into quarters will do) and put them together the same as you plan to assemble the finished zine – collate, fold and staple them. Now go through and number the pages. Then take apart the sheets and you can tell what goes on the back of what. For example, in one of *Factsheet Five's* formats, page 16 and 47 went on one side of a large sheet, and pages 17 and 46 on the other. Next "dummy up" the individual sheets. This means that you should make a rough sketch of each page, showing which articles are going where, what headlines are to be lettered in, where advertisements go, and so on. One way to make this process easier is to buy a bunch of acetate page protectors, put a single sheet of blank paper in each one, and do your dummies with grease pencil on the front. This allows you to make easy changes. With these dum-

mies available, you're ready to go on to the actual layout and pasteup of each page.

The idea is to get everything glued down on one sheet so that the printer doesn't have to deal with a lot of little scraps of paper. Many big printing houses will do the layout and pasteup work for their customers. We underground types can't afford this, and the cheap printers we deal with won't do it anyhow. First, set up your one sheet. I like to start with a sheet the exact size of the one I want printed. If you want (and your printer can be made to understand), you can start with a larger sheet, using a blue-pencil outline to indicate the working space. In the latter case, put a small black mark just outside the boundary at each of the four corners, so the platemaker will know what part of the sheet to photograph. Now take your blue pencil and lightly rough in the contents. Don't worry about being neat — none of this will show up in the end. It's only meant to guide you. Using your ruler, draw in the locations of any folds. Indicate your margins, making sure to leave room for stapling if you're doing that to the finished sheet. Draw rough blocks to indicate text, art and headlines.

Take the first piece of stuff to go on this page and cut it out of the larger sheet that it's probably on. Get as close to the letters or drawing as you can — you're much better off with spaces between things on the final copy than with overlaps. Round off the corners — sharp corners have a tendency to stick up and make shadows. Now put this clipped-out section face down on a sheet of scrap paper and coat it evenly with rubber cement. Only a light coat is needed, so wipe the brush before doing anything. Then take the cement-coated piece and position it on your master page. You don't have to get it

exactly perfect the first time, since you can move it around while the rubber cement is drying. Theoretically, you can even peel pieces up after the rubber cement is dry and reposition them. Practically, this results in curled, shredded, smudged and destroyed originals and a nasty temper. Better to do it carefully the first time. Check the straightness with your ruler or T-square. When it's OK, press the piece down firmly, smoothing from the center to the edges. Dab up any excess rubber cement with a tissue or wait for it to dry and use a pickup. Be careful! Wet rubber cement attracts fingerprints.

Put all the pieces down similarly. If you're a gambler, you can use transfer letters to make headlines directly on your final page, but I like to do them separately and glue them down, the same as everything else. When everything is glued down, it's time to do borders if you're using them. Make sure all the cement is dry and the excess removed first. You can use border tape, or do what I do, which is use a fine red pen (remember, red looks black to the camera) and the ruler. (This is where a transparent ruler comes in handy, since you can put it over the copy and still see where you want the line to go.) A red pen is also handy for filling in holes in transfer letters or making minor corrections to art or text.

Now you just have to repeat this process on every page. When you've done them all, go back once more with a rubber cement pickup and clean up any remaining smudges. Then place the whole pile reverently into a clean file folder.

You're all done. Great! Now you're ready to have it printed.

CHAPTER 4

PRINTING & BINDERY

Now that your words are down on paper, you have to get them reproduced. Fanzines could not exist in the Middle Ages when trained monks were the only way to copy something. Fortunately, modern technology has made things a good deal easier. (Indeed, the current fanzine boom is in large part attributable to the invention of the photocopier.) In this chapter I'm going to run down the available means for getting a finished product, starting with the oldest and moving on to the most high-tech.

The historically first means of amateur production was the letterpress. A letterpress is basically the thing that Gutenberg invented, using movable metal type to set up each page, inking the type, and impressing them directly on to paper. The first APAs were set up by letterpress owners to display their skills. There are probably still some out there. I wouldn't know how to find one of them, or how to use their press if I did. But I think it would be a classy idea for someone with money and time to burn to do, say, a PFanzine via letterpress.

Science fiction Sfen started out their fanzine boom with the hectograph. A hectograph is basically a pan of gelatin. One prepares a specially-inked master sheet and lays it down on the gelatin so that the ink soaks in to the gelatin layer. Then individual

sheets of paper are smoothed on to the gelatin until they pick up the ink. From time to time I see a hectograph kit in a large stationery store, but from what I've heard about the time and tedium of the process, I'm not anxious to try it. However, if your great-uncle Fred stashed one in the attic, dig it out – you might like the idea and it will save you money over buying something.

(This is the place to mention another relic of early SF fandom, the carbon-paper zine. Some people crammed carbon sets into their typewriters and produced all the copies directly, but as this limits you to a circulation of at most twenty, it's not a very attractive option.)

Getting serious, let's turn to the spirit duplicator, or ditto machine as it is more commonly known (Ditto is actually a Bell and Howell trademark, but they haven't been exactly vigorous about protecting it). You've all seen ditto at school – it's that purple stuff that smells funny. The process starts with the preparation of a master sheet. A ditto master consists of three parts – a white front sheet, a tissue interleaf, and a purple (usually) backing sheet. To use one, take out the tissue paper and type or draw directly on the front sheet. The back of this sheet will pick up ink from the backing sheet, and it's this ink image (which is, of course, reversed) that is used to print the final material.

A ditto machine vaguely resembles a real press. There is always some way to attach a can of ditto fluid to it, or a reservoir to fill. Ditto fluid is basically denatured alcohol, and in a pinch regular rubbing alcohol can be used (though it will cost you a lot

more). Fannish lore even maintains that some ditto zines have been printed using vodka as their solvent. Anyhow, either with a hand crank or electrically, the guts are turned round and round, paper goes in one end, and copies come out the other. In between, the master is lightly coated with solvent and then the paper run by to pick up a little of the dissolved ink.

Ditto is a fairly cheap process (you can get a used machine for $50; paper is $5 or less a ream, masters about 8 for a buck, and fluid $6 a gallon) and there are still those of us who use it today. After a little practice it's easy to master. The basic thing to watch is the fluid flow — too much fluid and you get a runny mess rather than a good copy, too little and it's too dim to read. There is usually a lever or dial for controlling this sort of thing. One major disadvantage of the process is that everything must be produced directly on the master. Stuff you're going to type anyhow is no problem, but you have to get your artists to do their stuff on a specific medium. One way to handle this is to mail masters to your artists with the spot you want the illo marked. Leave the tissue paper in when you do the marking — this will prevent extra marks from cluttering up the rear of the master — but make sure your artist knows to take out the tissue before drawing. You can also get masters in several colors Wed, blue and green are the most common, but I've seen yellow, brown and black as well) and these can be used to produce multi-colored art by slipping them behind the front sheet at the right time. (Remember, it's only the ink that gets transferred to the front sheet that prints.) There is also a

process called Thermofax that takes camera-ready copy (just as you would make for offset or Xerox) and claims to make it into a ditto master, but it generally doesn't work worth a damn and you can't afford the machine to do this anyhow.

The other major disadvantage of the ditto process is that, since the ink is part of the master, one can only print so many copies. Many people say that 100 copies is the upper limit for ditto, but this isn't true. I've done runs of up to 500 copies in a pinch. The secret is to get a lot of ink on the master and then use it sparingly. Use purple masters only (for some reason they are inked most heavily) and an electric typewriter with the copy control set to the maximum. If you keep the fluid flow light, masters made this way will give you hundreds of readable (though dim) copies. For a larger circulation, one must examine other printing methods.

The next step up in complexity, but still one that can be done by the average ziner at home, is the use of a mimeograph. You've surely seen mimeographed things relatively crisp black print, often with a ghost impression of other stuff on the front. The classic church bulletin is a mimeographed production. The basic process is again fairly simple: One makes ("cuts") a master from a wax covered stencil. Typing or drawing on this stencil pushes the wax aside, revealing the porous paper beneath. The master is then placed on the mimeograph, which forces ink through the areas that are not covered with wax. Turn the crank or push the button and the paper is run past the now-inky stencil, emerging with printing on the other side.

There are lots of mimeographs available on the second-hand market, of a variety of types and manufacturers. Again, the way to get one is to hunt around until you find what seems to be a bargain. If at all possible, see the machine in action before buying it – otherwise you may discover just how complex mimeo innards are and how expensive service is for them. There are also new ones available, but I personally have never been willing to spend the money.

Since the ink is supplied from tubes, in practice the number of copies from a mimeograph master is nearly unlimited – it may take hundreds of thousands of copies for the master to fall apart if it's treated well. On the other hand, the separate ink can also be something of a curse – it is said that the only way to avoid getting it on your clothes is to mimeograph in the nude. Mechanic's cream hand soap will take it off your body – I don't know of anything that will take mimeo ink off of your clothing. I wear old clothes myself. Most mimeo inks are also somewhat slow to dry – this tends to lead to ghost copies of one page offsetting to the ones above and below when the copies are stacked. To combat this, you can run the machine slower, buy more expensive fast-drying inks, or "slipsheet;" insert a piece of card stock between each pair of copies as they come off the machine.

Once again, art and typing must be combined on a single master directly. However, for mimeography there is a process known as electro-stencilling that transfers camera-ready copy to a stencil, and wonder of wonders, it works fairly well, although

large black areas tend to print abysmally even if the stencil looks good. Of course, an electro-stencilling machine is fearsomely expensive (to me, "fearsomely expensive" means anything that costs more than my '71 VW Bug) and not often found on the used market. Perhaps you can find one available for your use at a school or other organization, or buy one in concert with other publishers.

This was pretty much where zine publishing stood for many years. People used the ditto machine or the mimeograph. A few experimented with carbon paper or letterpress. Then came the photocopier explosion — and, shortly thereafter, the fanzine explosion. True, long before the photocopier a few brave (or well-heeled) souls used offset to produce beautiful zines. But it's easier to start with commercial photocopy these days and work your way up to offset if you're successful.

We're all familiar with the photocopy process and pretty much take it for granted these days, but even yet, we've not come to grips as a society with the changes it is causing — witness the copyright and counterfeiting fusses the government is making. Now one can buy a home copier if one wants, new, for under $600. Or you can haunt the used markets and maybe pick up a bargain. My Savin 770 makes streaky copies very slowly, but it only cost me $75. Also older copiers are being refurbished by their manufacturers and sold cheaply. If you're going to buy your own copier, one thing to consider is the cost of the supplies it uses, in addition to the paper cost. Service is also ruinously expensive, starting at $50 an hour with a one-hour minimum,

plus parts, in this area. Make sure you understand what your true costs will be before you buy. Also, most desk copiers are only capable of, say, 30 copies a minute, if that. Think about how long it can take to put out 200 copies of 40 pages, double-sided, on one of those machines.

For most people, the way to get things photocopied will be to use a commercial shop. This market is one in which it pays to shop around. The first thing to look at, particularly if your job is relatively small, is self-service machines. These can cost less than 3 cents a copy in larger cities. Unfortunately, many of them are there solely to draw you into a particular shop, and produce truly crummy copies. If you're intending to go the self-serve route, make sure you test out the machine well before you actually need it.

The more usual way to get photocopies is to go to a shop and let them do it. Prices can range from under 4 cents a side (overnight, bulk rate, big city) to 15 cents or more (boondocks). Double-sided copying, demands for immediate service as opposed to overnight, and bound originals can run up your cost. Of course, so can using special papers.

Master copy for the photocopy process is prepared the same as one would do it for offset — the camera is just as unforgiving and the master must be just as clean. Ask to see a sample copy if you've any doubt as to what it will look like — many big places will give you a sample for free, or advise on problems. When you drop a job off to be done, make sure you specify everything: paper, number of copies, single- or double-sided, whether to collate,

and anything else they ask. You can complain later if they do it wrong, but only if you can prove you told them to do it right. I've had overnight photocopy places put page 2 on the back of page 17 and then complain that I never told them the pages were numbered. It also pays to count your copies, particularly if the price is the lowest in town. Some shops routinely short large jobs by 5-10% of the total copies.

One last thing that must be mentioned here is the relatively new color photocopy process. This takes substantially longer and costs substantially more (single-copy prices are around 50 cents or more), but it can indeed produce full-color copies (there's no such thing as invisible blue pencil for the color process!). The copies tend to be a bit shiny and use relatively heavy paper. I wouldn't put out a whole zine this way, but it can have striking results as a cover. One way to save money here is to plan on using 1/4 of a single color sheet as an inset on each cover — this lowers your effective cover price to around 15 cents. On the other hand, it means you must do hand assembly of the cover on each and every copy you send out.

Before I get to "real" printing methods, we must make one more detour into modern technology. Now that computers are cheap and printers are. speeding up, some people are choosing to print as many originals as they need to send out. Every subscriber gets a copy straight off of the computer printer. I don't think a whole lot of this myself — the copies tend to be poor quality since this eats up ribbons in a hurry, the paper is usually flimsy — but

if you already own the equipment, it may be your cheapest route to getting something ready to mail. Then again, think about how long and how noisy the printing process will be before you start.

The next step up the ladder is to offset printing – the type that was used to make this book, and the type I use on my own *Factsheet Five.* In offset printing, a "plate" is made photographically from the original master copy (this is why it's called "camera-ready copy"). The plate is then attached to an offset press, where it goes through a water bath that wets down all the areas that aren't supposed to print. Then it goes through an ink bath, and the ink sticks to the rest of the area. The inked plate is pressed against a rubber cylinder, leaving a reverse-inked copy of itself. Then a piece of paper is pressed against the rubber cylinder, and, wonder of wonders, a copy emerges. The whole process goes on at high speed. The original offset presses were huge affairs (and some still are – this same basic process prints newspapers), but over the years they have shrunk. It still takes thousands of dollars to buy the whole setup new. Only a few dedicated ziners ever get their own, but those few get good results for a few hundred dollars in equipment and much time and sweat. If you want to do your own offset printing, get a copy of Merritt Clifton's book on the subject, listed in the Bibliography. On the other hand, it's cheap enough that lots of entrepreneurs can get into the business – hence the rise of the "instant-printing house."

Instant printers often combine a photocopy operation with a small offset operation, or vice

versa. You can use the same master to get quotes for each, and make your decision of which method to use at the last possible moment. Generally, offset pricing starts off with a certain price per plate ($2.50 at the place I used) and adds a price per page that is less than photocopying (one and a half cents for me). At some point the page savings pay for the plate, and it becomes economical to switch to offset. (Actually, since more of the finishing work costs extra for offset, the decision is not this simple, so make sure you get firm quotes for the entire job both ways if the price is close.) Apart from the cost, there really isn't that much difference between good photocopy and offset these days.

Beyond small offset presses lie various pieces of machinery of more interest to the really serious person, the one who is trying to turn a fanzine into a magazine. At some point offset on large newsprint sheets becomes more economical than regular offset. The machine used is basically just a bigger piece of equipment, capable of printing multiple pages at one time. This puts some constraints on the editor — for example, with the process I'm now using for *Factsheet Five*, I must lay out pages in multiples of eight — but it means less handling and lower costs per page. This is balanced out by, once again, higher setup costs. I'm currently paying setup charges a bit over $500 per issue, but copies then cost me only $87 per thousand — and that's for 64 pages, or a bit over a tenth of a cent per page. At that price I can print many more than I can afford to mail — but that's a topic for Chapter 5. I don't know any underground publishers with their own large offset press.

Printing the pages is not by any means the end of making a fanzine (unless, of course, you intend to post single sheets on telephone poles and be done with it). Next comes finishing work: trimming, collating, folding and stapling.

You shouldn't have to worry about trimming unless the circumstances are exceptional — the finished sheet from the press will be the size you want, presuming you wanted a standard letter or legal size. If you want a smaller piece of paper, though, it will probably cost you extra, as this means extra hand work by the printer. Unfortunately, there isn't any easy way to do this at home. For very small press runs you can use a pair of scissors, but the fascination of this quickly pales. If you need to cut down one sheet into two identical smaller sheets, you might be able to use a paper cutter at your school or office to do it — but if you want to trim multiple sides, this is going to take a long time too. Even the office paper cutter probably won't cut more than a few sheets at one time — professional printers use a "guillotine" type machine that cuts straight down instead of at an angle. My advice is to stick with standard paper sizes.

Collating is some of the worst grunt work in the world as far as printers are concerned, and consequently can be very expensive. The newest copiers will automatically collate their output, which means you can usually get collated sets at no extra charge when you're using photocopy. Offset presses, though, don't do this, so someone has to put the sheets together. And, of course, if you're doing your own ditto or mimeo printing, you're stuck with the job.

My advice is to do it yourself, even if someone else is doing the printing, as it's not all that tough and you can save a hell of a lot of money. For up to about six or eight sheets you can collate from stacks on the table, picking up one copy from each and stacking them off to the side. A better idea is to use collating racks, which hold the sheets up at an angle to allow you to quickly grab one of each. A good collator with a rack can run through thousands of sheets an hour with little effort, and watch MTV at the same time. If you can't find real collating racks, a cheap alternative is a metal correspondence rack with eight or more slots. Bend the slots down at an angle and you're all set. Two of these next to each other on the table will let you collate sixteen sheets easily.

Other aids to collators include stuff to make your fingers sticky or little rubber tips to wear over them, which have the same effect and are less messy.

Folding is another (possibly expensive) hassle. The easy way out, of course, is not to fold anything. But if you want to put out a digest-sized (8 1/2" by 5 1/2") zine, this isn't a solution, and you must take the bull by the horns. Everyone knows how to fold things, but what you don't know is how to prevent your hands from turning red and raw in the process. One way out is to pick up a "folding bone," a little plastic thing you use instead of your fingers to press down the fold. The other solution is to wear a cheap glove on your hand, or to pad the exposed surfaces with band-aids. I find that the latter method works surprisingly well, and doesn't require me to learn new movements to fold things.

Finally, you'll probably want to staple things. (Again, printers seem to feel that their stapling crew needs to be able to afford filet mignon.) A regular office stapler is sufficient for some jobs, but there are two other varieties that you ought to know about. First, there's the long-arm stapler, which takes long staples and allows you to apply a fantastic leverage to them. This is the way to staple up to 100 or so sheets at a time without having them fall off the back of the book. For folded mags, the solution is the saddle stapler, which takes a prefolded zine and puts staples neatly in the spine. Either of these special staplers will cost you about $55, and the investment is worth it. One caution: even though they may look the same to you, saddle staplers don't take the same staples as office staplers. Buy the right staples and you'll save a lot of time on clearing jams. There are also electric staplers that don't require the use of muscle power, but in my experience, they jam about once every third staple, so I don't use them.

If, like most of us, you end up taking the do-it-yourself route to bindery success, you'll find that the work increases in proportion to the size of the zine. *Factsheet Five*, for example, started as 25 copies of two sheets, stapled together in one corner. By the time it grew to a thousand copies of 16 sheets, folded over and saddle-stapled, the bindery work went from about ten man-minutes to 25 man-hours. Somewhere in that range things get to be pretty boring for one person to do along. The traditional solution is to hold a "collating party." This simply consists of inviting your friends over and making them help out with the work. (It's one way

to find out just how much your friends will put up with!) For the expense of beer and pizza, plus giving out free copies of the zine to those who helped with it, you can get things done a lot more quickly, and have someone to talk to during this most boring of fanzine jobs.

However, if your operation gets big enough, the work drops off once again. That's because once you get to a large-sheet offset process, the printer pretty much has to do the bindery work for you as a part of the price. Nowadays, I don't do any bindery work - I just pick up stacks of *Factsheet Five*, ready to be mailed. The "only" work I have to do is to prepare them for mailing, which is the next subject I want to talk about.

CHAPTER 5

HOW TO PUBLISH - MAILING

Now that your magnum opiate is ready, the next problem lies in getting copies to the thousands of eagerly waiting customers out there. Some people — I call them posterists — dispose of this problem very simply. Armed with thumbtacks, masking tape and a staplegun, they descend on the sleeping city with their single-sided words of wisdom. By dawn, copies are attached to telephone poles, newspaper vending machines, and bulletin boards. I've even heard of tucking copies in church pamphlet boxes. Posterists tend to be either lunatics or revolutionaries; in either case, they're less concerned with a specific audience than with getting their words to the widest possible population of unsuspecting normals. But apparently posterists don't get the feedback that they crave this way. I can think of three who have republished their works in book form.

But the rest of us have to deal with the US Post Office or one of its competitors. For us the problem is a bit more complicated. Let's start by running down your options in dealing with the US postal service. Remember that these prices are correct as of early 1988; they'll probably be the most-quickly outdated section of this whole book.

The fastest and gentlest class of mail that you'll have to consider is First Class (called Priority Mail for

packages over 12 ounces). (I presume no one is crazy enough to send their zine Express Mail or Special Delivery.) The basic charge, of course is 25 cents plus 20 cents for each additional ounce, with the over12 ounce rates starting out at $2.40 to anywhere in the country. If you can afford this, great. First Class mail gets beat up sometimes, and lost sometimes, but it's been my experience that this doesn't happen all that often. In addition, if you mail First Class, it is perfectly legal to include personal letters or scribbled notes in with the zine, which is not true of the lesser classes of mail.

As with all classes of mail, you must pay attention to the weight of what you're sending. A postal scale is almost a must if you're not going to be using the same number of sheets of the same stock each issue. In any case, it's wise to check a sample copy or two at your local post office on their allegedly more-accurate scale; this can help save costly mistakes like having the whole stack come back to you marked, "Insufficient Postage." If this happens to you, you'll be sorry, since the stamps you originally applied will be cancelled and won't count towards remailing it all. Also, be aware that there are surcharges for "non-standard pieces? that's anything less than an ounce which is over 11 1/2 inches long, 6 1/8 inches high, or 1/4 inch thick. This is good for an extra ten cents. Also, anything less than 1/4 inch thick that is not at least 3 1/2 by 5 inches is prohibited from the mails, as are most non-rectangular packages. Check with your postmaster for details if you're worried.

Next up is Second Class mail. Second Class is intended for magazines, and requires you to publish yearly statements of mailing in which you break

down your distribution scheme and list your owners. The big catch with Second Class mail is that it's for "legitimate" periodicals. You have to be sending out at least 200 copies at least twice a year, and half of everything you mail has to go to bona fide subscribers. The local postmaster is entitled to demand records from your bookkeeper to back this up, and if you can't satisfy him, you're out of luck. On the plus side, Second Class costs around as much as bulk rate (although the form for mailing is considerably more complex), is forwarded at no charge, and gets treated fairly well while its on its way. But most of us, who swap large numbers of our zines for other stuff, simply can't qualify. I have heard of local postmasters who count arranged trades as subscriptions, so if you have your heart set on being Second Class, you can always propose this to yours. It didn't work in Albany; everything hinges on the local postmaster's interpretation of "requested copies.")

Third Class mail is for flyers, circulars, books, and merchandise under 16 ounces. In other words, most zines can be mailed at this rate. It costs the same as First Class up to 4 ounces, but after that there are price breaks, so it's something to consider for large fanzines. For example, a ten-ounce zine would cost $1.75 First Class but only $1.18 sent Third Class. Third Class pieces under an ounce are also subject to the non-standard price surcharge, but I don't know why anyone would send something weighing under an ounce by this rate.

Fourth Class is in general a Parcel Post rate, but in our case the important thing is the Special Fourth-

Class Rate (also known as Book Rate). To qualify as a book your zine must be at least 24 pages long, have printing on at least 22 of them, contain no advertisements except for announcements of other books from the same publisher (most postal employees don't know this), and be permanently bound (staples are OK). Videotapes, records, and computer diskettes, among other things, may also be sent at this rate. The prices are good, starting at 65 cents for the first full pound and going up 25 cents for each additional pound to something like seven pounds. The drawback is that Book Rate material is likely to be drop-kicked across the mail-sorting facility, so be sure to wrap it well. (Late note: rumor has it that the minimum number of pages for book rate is now eight.)

There's an even cheaper Library Rate that can be used only on materials sent to or from libraries — if you can get a librarian to mail your stuff at work, you can get away with murder on the postage. If you have any such contracts, I'm sure they know the story better than I do.

If even Third Class seems like a lot of money (and it will if your circulation reaches any appreciable figure), it's time to look into Bulk Mail. Most fanzines don't, I suspect because Bulk Mail involves planning and up-front costs that you have to stay in business to recover. There is a First-Class presort rate, which saves you a few pennies, but it requires mailings of 500 or more pieces and is probably out of reach for most ziners. Third Class bulk, though, can be used any time you're sending out 200 or more pieces, be they fanzines or Christmas Cards (as long as there's

no personal writing inside!). To use it, you first have to get a permit. This means going to the major postal facility in the area (call your local PO and ask them where to go), filling out forms, and putting up the front money. The fees go like this:

$50 *application fee:* this is one-time only, and it may not be charged if you're lucky. It depends on how well your local post office knows the ropes. I've batted one out of two on this.

$50 *yearly fee:* this must be paid every year in January (and whenever you first sign up also).

$50 *permit imprint fee:* this is one-time and isn't strictly necessary, but if you pay it you can stop licking stamps and just put one of those cute little bulk-mail notices on the envelope.

$100 or $150 may seem like a lot, but it isn't considering the price breaks. The basic rate for Bulk Mail is 12.5 cents for each piece up to 3.9 ounces (roughly 50 cents a pound for larger pieces). Let's say you're sending out 200 zines at three ounces each 4 times a year. First Class, that would cost you $448 a year. Bulk Mail, the first year would cost you $250, and the following years would be only $150 — a substantial savings, to say the least, and it gets better as your circulation and weight rise.

Of course, there are drawbacks. Bulk Mail has to be sorted by zip code, rubber-banded into packages, labelled and sacked by you before it goes to the post office. Although there are printed regulations covering all of this, be prepared for your local postal workers to tell you something completely different — the post office is really a lot of little companies wearing the same uniform, not one big corporation.

Humor the local guys — they're the ones you have to deal with. You have to deposit money to your Bulk-Mail account a few days in advance of the mailing itself to cover postage. And it gets treated like garbage by the postal workers, sending up your rate of loss in transit and the rate of arrival of damaged copies (this can be minimized by proper packaging: I had to start using heavier stock for the cover of *Factsheet Five*). Another thing that can ease the handling is to check out where bulk mail in your area is sorted. All bulk mail in the Albany area, for example, goes to the Albany main post office to be sent to the rest of the country. By having my Bulk Mailing account there rather than at Rensselaer Post Office, I can save the zines one trip in a postal truck and at least a bit of rough handling. I think Bulk Mail is worth the hassles, especially if the alternative is to go out of business.

When you start mailing out of the country, the trade-off between price and speed becomes even more excruciating. Canada and Mexico aren't too bad; although you can't bulk mail to these countries, First and Third Class are only marginally higher than to the US. But Europe and countries farther afield can be murderous to mail to. First Class will run you 45 cents for every half ounce, but at least it will get there in a reasonable length of time. Sea Mail costs no more than First Class to the US would, but can take months (literally) to reach its destination. I suspect that we don't see more fanzines from foreign countries — and vice versa — simply because of the crushing postal costs. Some effort has been made by various distributorships to ease this problem, but so far no solution is in sight.

I can't emphasize enough the importance of keeping a good relationship with the folks behind the counter of your local post office. These are the people who can keep your zine from getting anywhere, or who can come up with a way for you to save money on the mailing – it depends on how you treat them. Get to know them, ask for copies of the applicable rate charts so you know what you're talking about, and your mailings will go a lot smoother.

Mail preparation can be a tricky thing. The basic idea is to make sure your mail can survive the trip – one useful test is to fling it across the room, at the wall, as hard as you can. If the package bursts open, you didn't pack it well enough. (You think I'm joking? Go to your nearest large mail-sorting facility.) Basically, the PO's only requirements are that it not destroy their machines or be so oddball as to require hand-sorting. Thus packages must be rectangular, within certain weight limits and so on. This should pose no problem for the average fanzine publisher. One major question is whether or not to use an envelope on your zine. (A precautionary note: you ***must*** use envelopes on all mail leaving the country). On the one hand, it is cheaper to just fold your zine in half, staple or tape it shut, and write the address on the cover. On the other, zines in envelopes tend to arrive in better shape, and the recipient doesn't have to shred his fingernails removing staples to read your zine. But the cost of envelopes can be prohibitive. If you're going to use envelopes, check into buying them by the box – or by the case, you'll be surprised at how much money you can save.

There are some alternatives to the post office, though not that many, UPS, while legally prohibited from carrying First Class matter, can be an economical alternative for large (around a pound) fanzines, as compared to First Class mail. But UPS can't deliver to PO Boxes or some other addresses, and this will pose a large problem for the typical fanzine. The only thing I use UPS for is shipping bundles of zines off to distributors — they're fairly quick and a lot cheaper than First Class mail for ten pound parcels.

The wave of the future is probably Electronic Mail, or EMail. There are already companies that will let you call your computer, feed in a letter, and deliver it electronically to the recipient's computer. The sticking point is that everyone involved has to have computers, and this just isn't true yet. I don't know of any electronic zines yet, but I expect to see some within the next ten years at the outside. The already-existing Computer Bulletin Board Services (CBBS) come close to zinedom in spirit, but are the subject of another book entirely.

• CHAPTER 6 •

HOW TO PUBLISH - PROMOTION AND FINANCING

In this chapter we'll deal with the twin questions of how to keep your baby alive and how to get it out to people. Many ziners fall down on the promotion and financing end of things, and even though they're providing a great project, no one knows about it or buys it. This is bad news for all concerned, the uniformed public and the bankrupt ziner.

Advertising is the first thing to think about. For the ziner the most powerful advertising method is probably word of mouth, but he can help this along by selective efforts of his own. The first thing to do is get your zine reviewed in other zines, the larger and more respected the better. (Even a bad review will draw some readers, and is thus better than no review at all). *Flipside* is a good place for music zines to start - *Factsheet Five* is good for anyone. What you're looking for is a place with a large readership and a commitment to publicizing other zines. Drop me a line and perhaps I can suggest a good forum to send your own zine to.

The beginning ziner should also consider doing some advertising. I wouldn't pay for any – I don't think it's worth it – but many zines will trade advertising space: you run their ad, they run yours. Contact individual publishers for details – a good

size is around 2" by 3". Of course you have to follow through on publishing their ads as well. At the minimum, your ad MUST contain your name and address, price, and a description of the zine written so as to interest people. It doesn't hurt to get your ads typeset and include some graphics even if your zine itself if mimeographed on newsprint. You don't have to write sleazy Madison Avenue ad copy, just something that will catch the eye of those you're aiming the zine at.

Another thing to think about is subscriptions and "the usual." By selling subscriptions, you commit yourself to publishing a certain number of issues (even though the subscriber doesn't have much legal recourse and a lot of zines have folded and walked away with the money) and you increase your paperwork. But you also increase the number of sales of each copy that you can count on before you publish. "The usual" refers to the SFannish practice of giving zines away for other reasons trade, contributions and locs being the most common. If your are willing to swap for other zines you'll find a lot of publishers willing to swap for you – but you'll have to cover the costs of printing and mailing those copies somehow. You might get thousands of dollars worth of zines in every month (I do), but you can't buy groceries with zines and it will be decades before a major library is interested in accepting your collection so that you can take a tax write off.

Before you can think about subscriptions, you have to set a single-copy price. This can be a difficult task. The beginning ziner should probably not try to

recover all costs, if this is at all feasible. If you set the price of your zine high enough to cover printing and postage, even with no payment for your time or profit, you'll very likely price yourself out of the market. This is because you're competing with other zines that have higher press runs, more readers, and lower unit costs. They can afford to go for a buck apiece — you almost are forced to go along, or no one will pay for yours. In some cases, of course, it is possible to recover costs — for example, if you're getting your printing for free or if your audience can't find the information anywhere else. But these situations are few and far between. Prices for other zines on the market range from about 10 cents to $10, and I'm sure the former sell a lot faster than the latter. For moderately-sized zines with decent printing, $1 to $3 is the usual range.

I think the best bet is to consider what your price should be to recover costs - ALL costs - and then pick an even dollar amount not too much less as your cover price. In figuring costs, be sure to factor in free copies. For example, if you spend 72 cents printing each copy and 37 cents mailing, then 400 copies will cost you $436, or $1.09 each. But if 150 of these copies go out free, to reviewers or as trades, then you must recover $1.74 from each of the other issues to break even. In this case, I might choose to set my price at $1.50, depending on how many pages I was publishing and what the other zines in the market were charging.

Having picked a price, you have to consider a discount structure — samples, subscriptions and other discounts. Traditionally, a sample copy costs less

than the full cover price, so that people can see what you're doing cheaply. The theory is that they'll like it and subscribe and you'll make your money back. For years, I sold sample copies of *Factsheet Five* for $1 - a substantial loss, particularly when the cover price got up to $2 and that didn't even cover costs, But I just didn't get that many subscriptions out of the deal, and finally said the heck with it. Now a sample costs the full cover price. (This means I still lose money on samples, because they go out first class rather than bulk rate, but the loss isn't as bad.) It hasn't seemed to make much difference to my cash flow. Another thing to realize is that any sort of sample discount will haunt you for years. I still get the occasional $1 check for a sample, from someone who's been reading three-year old zines, and all I can do is honor it.

Another thing I used to do was offer discounts for payment in stamps. Small amounts of cash, and particularly small checks, can be a hassle to deal with. In order to encourage people to send stamps — which I can always use — I gave a slight (about 12%) discount for such payment. I finally discontinued this when I started thinking about second-class mail, where discounted subscriptions become a major record-keeping hassle. Many other ziners, particularly those whose banks are now charging a nominal fee for excessive check-cashing, offer a cash discount and charge a higher price for payment by check. (A hint to those plagued by small checks made out to funny names: get yourself an automatic teller card and use it to deposit your checks. If there's no clerk to argue with, you can get a bank to take most anything. I endorse checks to

Factsheet Five to indicate that I'm doing business under that name: "Factsheet Five, Michael A. Gunderloy d/b/a Factsheet Five" or "Factsheet Five, Michael A. Gunderloy, Publisher," depending on which of my banks I'm dealing with. Then I just toss them in the teller machine. It works.)

Finally, there is the question of subscription price. Real magazines give a substantial discount to people who subscribe to a lot of issues. My advice to fanzine publishers is to let people subscribe at a multiple of the cover price for a relatively small number of issues. For example, *Factsheet Five* is currently $2 an issue and I take subscriptions at $8 for 4 issues. This doesn't look like much of a deal — until you realize that the price of *FF* has been going steadily up, and subscribing protects one against price increases for a year. People who subscribe really do end up saving money. I think most fanzines tend to rise in price as the editors get better at them and want to improve their content and format, so this is a subscription option to consider. If you feel that you must offer a discount, keep it reasonable — that is, keep it to an amount you can afford to lose if everyone on your mailing list suddenly subscribed. And try to be up front about what happens, if you fold. You can probably get away with not returning subscription money if you go out of business — but you'd better not try to get back into publishing later. People have long memories. Better to guarantee refunds, or to announce in advance when you'll be folding and stop taking subscriptions.

Of course, subscription money is meant to pay for future issues. If you're like most other publishers,

you'll use it to pay for the current issue. (In fact, if you're like most of us, it'll end up intermixed with the money used to buy groceries and pay the rent.) This is fine, but be sure to keep track of your position. If you sell a whole lot of heavily discounted subscriptions today, your next issue is financially secure — but the one after that may be a big problem.

Any fanzine should consider trading with other zines if the publisher can possibly afford it. Eventually, you may have to get selective to get your trade costs under control, but putting out your own zine can be the cheapest way to get dozens or even hundreds of others in return. When setting up trades, you should establish whether you're trading all-for-all or one-for-one. All-for-all (each sends the other every issue) is more common. In one-for-one trades, a quarterly trading with a monthly, for example, would only receive four issues a year in return. With any trade, you'll have to be willing to trust the other guy; unless you publish on identical schedules, someone is bound to get ahead now and then.

We've already discussed contributors' copies; with most fanzines, the practice is to give one or two copies to everyone who contributed artwork or articles. In some cases, copies are given to those who have provided production assistance — for example, collating — as well.

"Loc" is a SFannish acronym for Letter Of Comment. It is a time-honored SFannish practice that anyone with enough gumption to write a letter commenting on a fanzine should get a copy of the

next issue. When this tradition grew up, postage and printing costs were substantially lower, and there was less impetus to put things on a break-even or profitable basis (indeed, many traditional SFanzines do not take subscriptions at all). In the modern world, if you open yourself up this way, you'll never get any subscriptions at all. In most zine circles, not giving away copies for letters won't bother anyone, but if you're trying to deal with SFans, they'll be encouraged to think of your product as inferior. Still, if the choice is between bankruptcy or living on the wrong side of the tracks, I know which I'll take.

Whatever methods you finally settle on to allow people to receive your zine, you should make sure that they (along with subscription rates, if you take subscriptions) are listed prominently in the first page or two of the zine, along with your address. You can't get orders if people don't know how to find you. Also, it helps to put the single-copy price right on the cover, particularly if you're trying to sell any copies via distributors.

You can't afford to neglect your own listkeeping either. Maintaining the mailing list on odd scraps of paper is a sure way to lose track of people and ruin your credibility — it only takes a few letters of complaint to other fanzines to make yours seem like a bad risk. At the absolute minimum, I would suggest maintaining a card file of your mailing list. Each card should contain one subscriber, together with his mailing address, the date his subscription expires, some note of why you're sending it to this person, and any other useful info you can think of. At the

far end of the mailing-list scale, computer owners should investigate the possibility of a mailing-list program. If you can't find one specifically tailored for mailing labels in your price range, think about using a database manager or even a text editor to keep track. I'm using PC-FILE now. It allows me to insert, delete and edit names and to print out lists in various orders — alphabetical for me and zip code for the post office, as well as special lists of, for example, all record companies in my mailing list. If you do computerize, check out adhesive mailing labels designed for computer printers — they'll save you a lot of work and only run about $7 per thousand in small lots, less if you buy five or ten thousand at a time. For 25,000 labels, I only paid $2 per thousand.

I wish I could tell you how to make sure your subscribers resubscribe when their time runs out, but I haven't much of a clue on the subject. The most elementary thing to note is that you have to tell them: rubber-stamp TIME TO RENEW by the mailing label, or send them a black-bordered postcard halfway between their last issue and the next one. Even with this reminder, you'll probably lose more people than come back.

As your fanzine grows, you'll want to consider selling some copies through distributors as well as directly. Distributor copies will make you less money, but since you can mail a bunch to one address there is some offsetting saving in postage. Typical arrangements are to allow a 60-40 split (that is, you take 60% of the cover price and the distributor takes 40%) on ten or more copies for consign-

ment sale (that is, you don't get a penny until and unless they are sold). Make sure you settle a return policy with the distributor how long do you want to allow for the copies to sell, do you want just covers or the whole issues back of unsold copies, and who pays the postage on any returns? There aren't that many distributors willing to carry small-scale zines (you'll never get into Waldenbooks even if you do produce something better than *Soldier of Fortune*), but even selling fifty copies this way can vastly improve your bottom line. And people who pick up a few copies at the newsstand often turn into subscribers.

Tax questions are being dealt with here because I don't know where else to put them. Now that you've earned all that money, your government is going to want a cut. I AM NOT A TAX ATTORNEY. I'm not responsible for any misinterpretations below, and you would be well advised to check with a professional in these matters to find out about your particular case. All I intend to do is outline a few areas to look into.

Sales taxes can be trying for a small zine, especially the tax on your printing. Even that few percent can add up to a major sum. Many states have laws exempting a magazine from sales tax on its supplies on the grounds that the magazine itself is intended for resale. You may be liable for the tax yourself, in which case getting a resale number is hardly worth the bother. Or the permit may be too expensive to be worthwhile. But it's worth checking with the State Tax Board to see what the details are in your particular jurisdiction. In New York, as a publisher I'm

exempt from sales tax, and getting a resale number just required filling out a few forms and waiting ten minutes. I have to file quarterly informational returns, but don't owe any tax. In California, things are even easier — publishers of periodicals can file an affidavit of exemption with their suppliers without dragging the state in at all. In Massachusetts, on the other hand, it's almost impossible to get an exemption unless you're widely sold on newsstands. Under Massachusetts law, magazines apparently have to be "widely available" in the state to qualify for an exemption.

Then, of course, there is the income tax. This is really only a problem if you're making money, as the Feds are hardly going to go after you for failing to take a deduction. By far the majority of fanzines are not mentioned on income taxes — instead, they're a part of the growing underground economy. In general this should be safe — unless you get so big as to feel that you MUST file. Then you may have to explain how this huge business sprang up in the course of a single year. The alternative is to file as a small business every year. I believe in this case you can actually use business losses as a tax deduction, but you must show a profit at least two years out of five to show that this really is a business. The IRS puts out a TAX GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES (Publication 334) which you ought to investigate if this more legal means of dealing with your profits appeals to you. My personal feeling is that you ought to bother with the income tax only if you think you'll be in the business for at least a decade and making money by the end of it. But it doesn't hurt to keep decent financial records now in case

you decide later that you want to file. For example, if you do strike it rich suddenly, it might prove to your advantage to file amended returns for the earlier years showing a business loss – but you can only do that if you can prove it. Also remember that the more screwball your return, the more likely you are to be audited – and that goes double for Constitutionalist publishers.

As a final note, trading zines is a sticky point for taxes. It's awful close to barter, which as the IRS has been telling us for years, is taxable income. As far as I can determine, magazine sent for review are not taxable income – but I've never gotten a sure ruling on this.

CHAPTER 7
A SAMPLE FANZINE

While I was writing this book, I kept some notes on an issue of my own zine, *Factsheet Five*. While I don't think there's such a thing as a typical zine (and if there is, I'm sure *FF* isn't one), these diary entries might give you some idea of the scope of problems that a small publisher has to deal with. You won't have the same problems, but this chapter should at least give you hope that all sorts of problems are surmountable.

December 1, 1986: Got up early to deliver 1200 bulk mailed copies of *Factsheet Five* #20 to the post office before my first class.

December 3, 1986: Picked up the last 500 copies of #20 from the printers, after various and sundry delays. Paid my bill, after finding out that it was $150 higher than the estimate. I've never had a bill come in for less than the estimate.

December 5, 1986: Drove out to UPS with 15 packages full of copies going off to various distributors. Sent off 14 of them — the last had a Post Office box for an address so I had to spring for First Class US Mail. (I've tried Book Rate for distribution copies and had them get lost. Now I'm leery of it.)

December 9, 1986: Got the 42 copies going to Canada into the mail. Since they need to be put in envelopes and stamped, they take a lot longer. One

hundred and twenty five pieces of mail have come in since the bulk mailing. Lord only knows how many of them are requests for samples.

December 15, 1986: Letters of comment are starting to trickle in. So far the response is overwhelmingly favorable. I begin to remember why I do this thing.

December 20, 1986: Mailed off another 52 copies to foreign countries. That's the last of the commitments that existed when I came off the presses. It's too bad that another 50 requests have come in by now. I figure that with the time lag between my issues, I'd better send off samples at normal postage rates, rather than wait for the next bulk mailing.

December 23, 1986: Sent a $50 check to the Post Office to renew my bulk mail permit.

December 28, 1986: By now I've settled into my normal inter-issue routine. Every day I open the mail and record what's in it. Incoming trade copies are noted on the master mailing list file. Incoming requests for subscriptions are noted on the *FF* ledger (and later transferred to the main budget) and set aside to be sent. Incoming albums and tapes are added to the music file where they will await assignment to a reviewer. Usually I spend about 45 minutes before breakfast processing my mail.

January 1, 1987: It appears that *FF* broke even last year. Amazing.

January 2, 1987: Trying to plan out my schedule for the coming months, taking into account both *Factsheet Five* and schoolwork. The goal is to have January 20 as the deadline for submissions, finish layout and get to the printer by January 27, and hit

the mails around February 3. Even as I write this down I know it's too optimistic.

January 3, 1987: Sent off four more tapes of review music to my main music reviewer, who is doing time in Leavenworth. With luck, our smuggler will get them to him in time for the next issue to carry the reviews.

January 4, 1987: The pile of zines to be reviewed for the next issue is now up nearly to my shoulders, literally. I sorted it alphabetically and into miscellaneous categories (books, poetry, music, etc.). Started reading and reviewing with the Books pile.

January 6, 1987: My wife went off to Boston to work for a week, making this a good time to do some music reviews. Took a day off of work, rolled up my sleeves, and started doing some serious writing.

January 10, 1987: By now, despite working full time this week, I have reviewed 30 albums and tapes and about 20 books. Will be starting on fanzine reviews any moment.

January 11, 1987: Power outage. Threw off my whole schedule (I can't write reviews on the computer with no electricity).

January 12, 1987: Took a stack of fanzines to school and read them on my lunch hour. With luck, I'll find the time to review them tomorrow.

January 13, 1987: Reviewed a few things after getting home from school, but knocked off to get a bit of sleep.

January 14, 1987: Still carrying a huge stack of fanzines around on my back. Now writing reviews

on the computer in my wife's office. Thank god we've got a compatible at home. I can work on this anywhere I can find the necessary silicon chips.

January 17, 1987: Have reviewed about 200 zines by now. Time to take a break and file some of them lest the clutter take over my office. Besides, I need a break after all this reading. I figure I'm about 1/3 of the way through. Clearly, I won't be done with these reviews by my deadline of January 20th — but then, I haven't been on schedule for over a year. This is typical of the small press. All I can do is drink more coffee and try to keep working.

January 23, 1987: Woke up in a cold sweat after a nightmare about having to review a cassette tape index in French that was a vital part of the next *Factsheet*.

January 24, 1987: A friend calls with some late news, worried that I'm almost done and it won't get in. Don't worry, I tell him — I'll be at least a week late.

January 25, 1987: I now have about $1000 set aside to print and mail this issue, mostly money that has come in for copies of the last one and money that I have budgeted out of my own pocket. An accountant would no doubt be horrified. My records exist on a mix of ledger sheets, computer files, and scraps of paper.

January 29, 1987: At last, the fanzine reviews are done, about 600 of them. Now it only remains to type the odds and ends that go around them. That's good, because at the end of the third week of the school term, I am now a week behind on homework.

January 30,1987: I play around with a spreadsheet for a while, deciding that 5000 subscriptions would be enough to make *Factsheet Five* pay a decent salary to me. Too bad I only have about 500 now.

January 31, 1987: At last, finished typing, by dinnertime. A quick check of the size of the computer files suggests that I have about 80 pages of stuff. This isn't good, since my budget calls for 64. After dinner, I start proofreading and printing out. Four hours of work is enough to get about the first quarter of the printed columns out.

February 1, 1987: It's a good thing that this is Sunday, because it takes me from 7AM to 8PM to get the rest of the copy printed out. It will be 80 pages. I guess it's only money.

February 2, 1987: Layout. I spend the whole morning fighting with a reducing Xerox machine that keeps jamming, and the whole afternoon rubber-cementing things in place on the page. But at least the finished product is looking pretty good to me. I get in touch with my printer and he estimates $850. Later on he call back, explains that he made a mistake, and it will really be $1000. Oh well.

February 3, 1987: I get a few minutes in the middle of the day to put page numbers on the final copy. Unfortunately, I skip page 25 and don't discover this until page 62. I finally get time to white out the wrong numbers and put on the right ones around midnight, and otherwise clean up the copy.

February 4, 1987: I finally deliver 80 pages of camera-ready copy to my printer. He looks it over and sees no problems for the press. We talk about

delivery schedules, and he promises it by the end of next week, which will be the 13th. Now I can rest for a while and catch up on my homework.

February 9, 1987: I talk to the printers on the phone. They haven't started yet.

February 11, 1987: Another phone call. This time I talk to the production manager instead of the salesman. They still haven't started.

February 12, 1987: A full day of filing away the fanzines that have been reviewed to clear the decks for the next issue. I don't finish, but by the end of the day I only have two boxes full left to file. About the same amount has already piled up to be reviewed for next time.

February 13, 1987: Another call to the printers. At least now they've started the job, and are busy stripping the negatives, though the press run hasn't started yet. I am assured that they will be done by Monday afternoon.

And so it went. The February issue finally went in the mails on Monday the 23rd and the whole process started all over again. It's a nuisance, it takes a lot of time, and I wouldn't miss it for the world.

AFTERWORD

That's about all that I can tell you, in general terms, about running your own zine. But I'd be delighted to help with any specific questions. The first help I can offer is, of course, that given in the pages of *Factsheet Five*. In all honesty, I can say that I know of no other place that guarantees a review to every new zine that come down the pike, and is happy to trade with everyone from solar energy freaks to punk rockers. If you get anything in print, send me a copy:

Mike Gunderloy
FACTSHEET FIVE
6 Arizona Ave.
Rensselaer, NY 12144-4502

You can get a sample copy of *FF* for $2 (bulk rate) or $2.75 (First Class).

Even more, though, I'd be happy to answer any specific questions you might have, or just to discuss the state of the small press. Drop me a line if something is bothering you. Or you can have your computer call my computer at 518-479-3879 (300 baud, 24 hours a day).

Good luck!

• APPENDIX 1 •

LIFE DURING WARTIME

Fanzines are, for most of us, just a hobby. But somewhere in the back of our minds, at least for those of us who occasionally give vent to mildly "subversive" words, there's always one little worry: what if THEY don't let me publish?

For most of us, human beings that we are, the choice is inevitable: to submit to suppression in the hope that things will shortly get better. After all, the government knows what it's doing, right? But some few will find themselves pushed to the edge by censorship and resolve to fight back. In particular, during times of intense repression, whether by a domestic government or a foreign occupying force, some individuals will continue publishing, and form the REAL underground press.

The power of the press is multiplied when the competition is lessened. Major H. von Dach Bern, author of the guerilla-warfare guide *T0TAL RESISTANCE* says, "Keep in mind that a typewriter is often more important than a pistol, a reproduction machine is worth as much as a light machine gun." On the other hand, he also says, "lf, during a search of private homes, supplies or paper and reproduction machines are found, the inhabitants will face imprisonment or execution," so this is not a subject to approach lightly by any means.

To a large extent it's arrogant of me to try and discuss this real underground press, as I've never had to be terribly clandestine about my activities. But on the other hand, there are people publishing even today, even in the United States, who need to make use of security measures in order to get their words out. For example, zines devoted to pedophilia are increasingly the target of police activity, often in blatant violation of their civil rights. Anarchists preaching "direct action" have had similar problems. If you're thinking about publishing matter that could get you arrested, perhaps I can pass along a few hints from others in similar circumstances.

There are two basic rules to remember. The first is that you can't trust anyone. The second is that you can't afford to leave any evidence behind you. These are not graven in stone, and the first, especially, will have to be violated by, say, a resistance movement in wartime. But I'm not concerned with getting ten thousand copies of a leaflet scattered across occupied territory as much as with putting out 100 copies of something that personally and graphically insults El Presidente. With this in mind, let's look at how the two basic rules affect putting out a zine, from initial conception through final distribution.

Assuming that you can't trust anyone, you'll end up writing the whole thing yourself. This shouldn't be any problem, as no one is going to get into this situation who doesn't feel he has a lot to say. Of course, you'll have to do your own illustrations, if any, or do without. You never know who that artist might be talking to in his spare time.

For getting final copy ready, typesetting is of course out of the question. One is reduced to more primitive methods. In our current society, it is difficult to imagine any sort of effective control over typewriters and computers being undertaken by any oppressor. But it could happen. If your typewriter is registered with the local police, you can't use it for typing subversive literature. There are two alternatives. One is to go even more low tech, and handwrite everything – this only requires procuring paper or pens and pencils. The other is to find a typewriter, perhaps in an office, to which you have access for other, more legitimate reasons, and use it on the sly. In any case, as soon as the copy goes from manuscript to typescript, the original should be destroyed. This does not, of course, mean pitching it in the garbage can for someone else to find. It means burning it, and stirring the ashes thoroughly so that they cannot be pieced back together into some bit of the original. Police procedures get more inventive all the time, so destroy things as thoroughly as you possibly can. (See the book by Background GMBH for more information on the battle of evidence.)

Comes time to print this stuff, once again you must remember that you can't trust anyone. This, at once, rules out all methods of printing that require a printshop. It probably also rules out home copiers, as someone is bound to notice that you're buying toner and other chemicals in large quantities. Ditto machines and mimeographs are the way to go, and my preference would be for the former, as it is smaller and requires less supplies to operate. A ditto machine can be run on grain or wood alcohol

if only you have had the foresight to lay in a stock of master sheets before the crunch. A mimeo requires ink, which is potentially subject to much tighter controls, although making your own ink is possible. In either case, the master should be destroyed as soon as the press run is finished. If you need to reprint, you can always make another master. The destruction must include the backing sheet of the mimeo stencil or the carbon sheet of the ditto master, as either of these will easily reveal what has been typed.

A problem with these machines is that the ka-chunka-kachunka noises which they make are quite distinctive and thus easily recognized by anyone who has heard them in the past. If you are in close proximity to other people, some sort of noise cover may be needed. Run your radio full blast in the next room; arrange for a large truck idling in front of your house; or get a confederate to do some noisy wood or metal work as you print. The problem with these latter two methods is that they bring other people into the big picture. An alternative, if you have a closed vehicle such as a van available, is to drive the press out to a remote area and print where you can't be overheard. Of course, this again becomes very difficult if the machine you're using requires electricity, or if gasoline is tightly rationed.

Mailing is right out under these circumstances — it's too dangerous for you and for the recipient. Some sort of hand distribution system is essential. The basic method to use is to pass the zine along to people you trust directly, while intimating that you yourself got it from someone else. At the end of the

zine, there should be a request for the reader to pass it on to someone else trusted – this will maximize your circulation, although it, of course, also increases the chance of a copy falling into the wrong hands. But the latter outcome can scarcely be avoided, which is why you must be very careful to be untraceable.

For wider, random distribution, several subterfuges are available. The boldest move is to put on a postal uniform and stuff copies in mailboxes as you go down the street. Another possibility is to buy a newspaper from a vending machine and leave fifty copies of your own paper behind in the box. A third means of distribution is to leave a stack atop a tall building, letting the wind distribute them as you leave.

Finally, if you're seriously thinking of dangerous propaganda in an occupation situation, you should consider posters instead of newspaper. Posters can be seen by people who don't care to carry subversive literature, and thus garner a wider audience. Perhaps the cleverest idea is to make mini-posters modifying the official one. These can range from a simple "ALL LIES" to long diatribes against the Glorious Leader or whoever. Self-adhesive stock is readily available today, and can be printed on by any of the methods we have discussed. Failing this, there's always plain paper and flour paste. Just make sure that you're not noticed as you sidle up to the Big Brother poster with the sticker that says "Sisterhood is powerful."

APPENDIX 2

THE HIGH SCHOOL "UNDERGROUND" PAPER

Most of you, on seeing that title, probably conjured up a vision of a group of young, dope-smoking revolutionaries, publishing a sheet that was equal parts rhetoric, obscenity and direct challenge to the administration, and getting frisked, suspended, and expelled for their efforts. I'm afraid that I'm going to disappoint you. While there may still be a few HS undergrounds in the grand tradition of the early '70s (and I'd love to see examples if anyone knows of them), I'm going to talk of my own experiences on the staff of the *Underground Pony Express.* We were a product of the late '70s, satirical rather than radical, and we had a lot of fun and a few years' success. I think this experience did a lot to get me started on the road to self-publishing, and it might be instructive for those of you wondering what makes a self-publisher.

Like most other schools, Simi Valley High School had an "official" paper, the *Pony Express.* It was a training ground for the sort of journalists who write the sports news in towns with populations under 20,000, and of course it was excruciatingly dull. They regularly printed 2500 copies — about one for every student — and burned 90% of them the next week because no one had bothered to pick them up. If no news is good news, their content was excellent.

On the other hand, life at SVHS wasn't all that bad. It was an open campus, so we could get away for lunch or to cut classes. The rules, such as they were, weren't strictly enforced on the students. A couple of the administrators maintained close and friendly ties with the campus community, and some of the teachers were on a first-name basis with the students (practically unheard-of at the time). Even the smokers did their thing across the street without being harassed.

But this didn't stop some of us from wanting to have fun. Born as a four-page dittoed effort, the *Underground Pony Express (UPE)* came into existence. The first issue set the tone for what was to come, dusting off a few hoary old jokes (like the Round Tuit), and printing "news" that was a mixture of satire and surrealism, with made-up quotes from campus figures and bizarre stories, such as one of the classics about the Killer Rabbits lurking in the shrubbery.

I got involved around issue #3, when we went to offset printing and the *UPE* took off in popularity. Someone hunted up a printer who would give us a good price on a four-page full-size paper (translation a bunch of students could come up with the money to front the first issue), we all went over to somebody's house and shot the breeze, and somehow an issue emerged. Over the next couple of years we got our act together, and although it never became routine (mostly because the editors were always getting into vicious arguments with one another, and quitting on a rotating basis), the broad outlines of the operation stabilized pretty well.

Most of the content of the paper was in the form of columns, each written by a different person. Some of them were just plain bizarre, as for example "Colonel Fonsby," the adventures of our man in deepest Africa. Others had a vaguely philosophical bent, like "The Seaside Wanderer," who walked along the sands and came up with ideas on how life and the universe and all that worked. My own major contribution was simply inexplicable, a loving discussion of pay phones and all the uses they could be put to for shaking people up, together with a listing of choice phone numbers.

Besides the personalized columns, there were features all of us worked on. Chief among these was the first-page section devoted to invented quotations from student leaders, faculty and administrators. These were designed to point up people's typical concerns and way of speaking in a friendly (mostly) manner. There were a few people we got vicious towards, but they were the butt of general campus disapproval in the first place. Then there were the classified ads, the "Believe it or Don't" section (DID YOU KNOW THAT: Simi High was originally built as a Holiday Inn? BELIEVE IT OR DON'T), and various filler, like "The Marines are looking for a few Good Men.... But They'll Take What They Can Get".

We usually ran three or four actual articles on issue, ranging from the absurd to the mildly subversive. The closest we got to the Sixties stereotype of an underground paper was "How To Steal Books From the Library," an article that very nearly got us all suspended — who would have believed that 200 fanatic readers would follow instructions? The next issue we published instructions on making a bomb

from a can of chicken soup, but apparently no one planted any of those around campus. Too bad. Other favorites include one on a rash of UFOs kidnapping teachers, students and homework and, of course, the Killer Rabbits story.

Occasionally, when the funds ran low or we felt like a change, a special issue would appear. One of these was a dittoed program book for "Parents' Night," which we handed out in addition to the more usual one prepared by the administration. There was a series of calendars, featuring famous dates and the occasional illustration, like "Invention of the Frog." Our senior year, the Other Paper decided not to print any "Senior Wills," for the first time in years, and the *UPE* stepped into the gap.

One major advantage of our lighthearted approach was that we were at least tolerated, if not loved, by the administration. (It also helped that we had checked out the applicable laws — which in California at the time basically stated that you could distribute a paper any place and time you wanted so long as you did not interfere with the orderly running of the school.) In fact, we made a special point of giving copies to teachers, walking even into the Sacred Teacher's Lounge on the morning of publication day to hand them out.

The only problem with student distribution was that we always ran out. Our press runs hovered around 500, which meant that they tended to be all gone within hours of hitting the campus. But they were passed from hand to hand for weeks, and we were satisfied that our actual circulation was much greater than that of The Other Paper.

Financing was solved by simply begging for the most part, although we did manage to sell a few ads (but, by far, the majority of the ads were fakes). When we were ready to print an issue, the staff would begin systematically harassing everyone on campus who we were in the slightest acquainted with. If someone didn't want to contribute, fine, but we were popular enough that the stash of dollars, quarters and dimes would accumulate enough to pay for the issue after a hard day or two of soliciting funds. On occasion, one of the more student-oriented teachers would kick in a twenty, but even this didn't keep us from making fun of them as well as everyone else.

Alas, all good things must come to an end. After my class graduated, we left the *UPE* in what we thought were capable hands in the next class. Unfortunately, they stepped over the fine line dividing satire from libel, and after a single issue that disgusted even former supporters and staffers, they wisely shut up. Too bad.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This is not meant to be an exhaustive listing of everything that might help you in your publishing plans. For one thing, the best resource for ideas is other periodicals in your field (remember, if you steal from multiple sources, it's research, not plagiarism). But these books and pamphlets should help you get started on publishing. Most of them provide at least a bit of information that I've left out. If you have suggestions for additions to this list, I'd like to know about them for the second edition.

Elliott Anderson and Mary Kinzie, *THE LITTLE MAGAZINE IN AMERICA: A MODERN DOCUMENTARY HISTORY* (Pushcart Press, 1978). Don't let the title fool you – this massive tome is about the little literary magazines, a clique that ignores all the rest of us. Still, the musings here from a couple of dozen editors make sometimes-interesting reading, and cast light on the reasons that people publish and the financial peril involved, even if the production advice is nonexistent.

Background GMBH, WITHOUT A TRACE (Partisan Press, 1980). First published anonymously by a Swiss terrorist group, this is the best book I know of on how the police catch criminals, and thus on how to avoid getting caught if you're doing something unpopular, like printing a truly underground paper. Contains some advice specifically for the printer but

much more on the various technological tools available to the police today.

Nancy Brighton, HOW TO DO LEAFLETS, NEWSLETTERS AND NEWSPAPERS (New England Free Press, 1976). This one assumes that you're going to be doing a professional job, with typesetting, proofreading, and halftoned photographs. Within that limit, it's a good condensed source of information, but it lacks any tips on saving money for those of us on a shoestring.

Clifford Burke, PRINTING IT (Wingbow Press, 1972). Probably the best guide to nuts-and-bolts production on this list. Scour the libraries for a copy. Burke presents a no-nonsense guide to doing your own typing on a proportional typewriter, preparing photographs for printing, folding the finished copies, and other chores. Not aimed particularly at the fanzine crowd but an excellent technical manual for anyone who aspires to produce clean looking finished products.

Merritt Clifton, THE SAMISDAT METHOD: A DO-IT-YOURSELF GUIDE TO PRINTING ($5 from PO Box 129, Richford, VT 05476). Merritt has been doing his own offset printing for years and has learned how to do it cheaply with used equipment, scrounged supplies, and home repairs. This is an indispensable guide to anyone thinking of doing the same. It starts out with advice on buying a used press and goes right on through the entire small offset process. Fun to read even if you're farming the job out.

Cory Greenberg, "How to Start a High School Underground Newspaper." This pamphlet was published by Youth Liberation Press of Ann Arbor in

1978. You might be able to find a copy in some of the larger libraries around. There's some basic information on printing and layout, but the interesting part is the series of stories about high schoolers getting hounded out of business by their administrations. Also full of legal advice, but I wouldn't depend on this to be true after a decade.

"Yank" Burt Levy, GUERILLA WARFARE (Paladin Press, 1964). Levy wrote this book to transmit his war experience to the British in 1940, just in case the Nazis invaded. There's a chapter on "The City Guerilla" which gives some advice on how to conduct propaganda during a guerilla action.

Dan Poynter, THE SELF-PUBLISHING MANUAL (Para Publishing, 1984). This one is aimed at the person who aspires to vanity book publishing. As one might expect, it assumes what I would consider to be a substantial bankroll. A good first source for ideas if you're interested in doing a book instead of a magazine; otherwise, don't bother looking for a copy.

The Printer's Devil (Mother of Ashes Press, PO Box 135, Harrison, ID 83833-0135). This is a periodical for the small printer or publisher. It's basically a place for people to pass on low-cost tips to others in the field. Sample copies are available on request to other publishers. Well worth your while to check out, particularly if you want to do your own offset work.

Quill Corporation, HOW TO SAVE MONEY ON OFFICE SUPPLIES (Quill Corporation, 100 S. Schelter Rd., Lincolnshire, IL 60069). Quill is one of the big discount mail-order supply houses, but despite this obvious

interest on their parts, this is a pretty good introduction to the subject. They discuss things like different grades of paper, hidden shipping charges, and sensible ordering policies. I've bought from them and I'm happy.

Nicholas Raeder and Regina B. Longyear, THE SHOESTRING PUBLISHER'S GUIDE (Sol Ill Publications, 1974). One of the first books to advise doing some of the work at home to save a lot of the money. Unfortunately, their shoestring is my future dream, involving electric staplers, collating racks, professional paper cutters and so on. Read this only if you run across a copy by accident.

Hank Schultz, "How Do You Do a How to Do" ($1 from LLL, PO Box 190, Philomath, OR 97370). Hank is one of the publishers of *MESSAGE POST*, a portable living journal that has survived on a shoestring. This is his advice on finding a market niche and putting a successful publication into it. A capsule bit of experience for the beginner who doesn't quite know what he wants to publish.

Jan Sutter, SLINGING INK "A Practical Guide to Producing Booklets, Newspapers, and Ephemeral Publications," (William Kaufmann, 1982). There's a lot of good how-to-stuff in this one on researching and writing news stories, but their production methods assume you can afford the usual typesetting, halftones, and commercial bindery work that we can't.

GLOSSARY

These terms are used in, or are useful in talking about, fanzines. Some of the definitions are idiosyncratic, but in most cases I have tried to tease out the consensus usage among the various zines I get. If you run across obscure terms that you think belong here, I'd like to know about them.

Alternative Press: **I think of this as sort of the "grown-up" underground press. The alternative press is often leftist, often concerned with building a better world, and usually deadly serious. *Whole Earth*, the Boston *Phoenix*, and *Mother Jones* are the sorts of things that fall in this classification. I don't deal with the alternative press too often.**

Anarchist: **One who believes that we would all be better off without government. Most anarchists know what the ideal true anarchist society would look like in detail. They all disagree about it. That's why the anarchists spend more time badmouthing each other than smashing the state.**

APA: **Amateur Press Association. A magazine jointly written by the subscribers. Generally each subscriber (or "member") is responsible for printing his own pages and mailing them to a central point, whence he gets copies of everyone else's pages. Each member pays his own printing and postage expenses, for the reward of participating in numerous conversations at the same time, something like**

a cocktail party in print. Some APAs are general, with no purpose other than to have fun, while others deal with a specific subject like sex or Tarot cards.

BTTL: **An acronym for "Back to the land," used by those who dream about doing so. BTTLers are usually interested in self-sufficiency and living lightly — you can go BTTL in the suburbs, or even in an apartment, if you wish, although most practitioners want something closer to 40 acres and a mule.**

Chapbook: **A pamphlet of poetry or prose from a small publisher. Typically, chapbooks are produced with loving care, available in small quantities, and either overpriced or unprofitable.**

Church of the SubGenius: **A manic faith based on the teachings of the late J.R. "Bob" Dobbs, supersalesman, and dedicated to helping people reclaim the Slack that has been stolen from them. This bogus religion has caught on so well in certain sectors that the founders are always far, far behind on answering their mail and otherwise publishing, but when they do, it's worth the wait. More details for $1 from PO Box 140306, Dallas, TX 75214.**

Constitutionalist: **One generally of a conservative bent who feels that the government in this country is trampling wholesale over individual rights by ignoring the letter and spirit of the Constitution. Major areas of concern often include the IRS, monetary reform schemes, and novel strategies for legal defense. Some Constitutionalists branch out into areas like Tesla weaponry or anti-fluoridation. If you go far enough out to the fringes of the Constitu-**

tionalist movement, you'll come to white supremacists and other unsavory types, but the folks at the heart of the movement are OK.

Discordian: **A believer in the idea that God is a crazy woman. As evidence the Discordian points to all the chaos in the world. May be a religion disguised as a joke or vice versa. See Robert Shea & Robert Anton Wilson's ILLUMINATUS! trilogy for more details. Also called Erisians.**

Dungeons & Dragons: **More usually known as just D&D, this is a game played with pencil and paper, in which one player (the Gamemaster, or GM) tells a story in which the others participate, often in a Tolkienesque fantasy universe. As far as I know, there is no truth to the various rumors linking D&D with suicides or satanic cults. I got my start in the underground writing for D&D zines.**

Erisian: **See Discordian.**

Factsheet Five: **Title of a short story by John Brunner.**

Fan: **Normally short for "science fiction fan." Fen are people who like to hang around with people who like to hang around with people... who read SF. Many are active in publishing something. Many remain aloof from the rest of the small press world and dream of writing professionally some day. Those who don't write (and most of those who do) are fen primarily to give them an excuse to party.**

Fanzine: **Anything published on a non-commercial scale. Often shorted to simply Zine. To some people, "fanzine" only means the sort of thing put out by the David Cassidy Fan Club, but they are Wrong.**

Fen: **The plural of fan.**

Fortean: **Relating to the interests of Charles Fort, a very strange gentleman who published several books early in this century. Fort collected newspaper clippings on all sorts of strange phenomena: rains of frogs, planets sighted where they shouldn't be, ridiculous weather, earthquakes, objects in the sky, and lots more. Forteans today are still doing the same, and seem to consider themselves more respectable than those newfangled UFO researchers.**

Gemstone File: **The real Gemstone. File was a list of contributors to** *CREEP*. **The various versions that circulate these days in poor photocopies are conspiratorial mishmashes linking together all the major political figures of the Watergate era (and sometimes the Kennedy era as well) into one gargantuan plot.**

Hugo Awards: **Named after Hugo Gernsback, the "father of modern science fiction," these are given at the World Science Fiction Convention every year to notable professional and amateur works, including fanzines.**

Illo: **Illustration. A "spot illo" is a random piece of art that's thrown in wherever the publisher finds room.**

Libertarian: **It has been said that a libertarian is just a Republican who does drugs. Most libertarians are in favor of free enterprise and a minimal (but nonzero) amount of government. There are some libertarians who are anarchists, and just to confuse things, anarchists used to call themselves libertarians. To confuse things further, there are the civil libertarians, who worry more about rights than about profits. Anyhow, the libertarian movement in**

America seems to have peaked, so you might not have to worry about this kettle of fish for much longer.

LOC: Letter of Comment on a fanzine.

Mail-Art Network (MAN): Similar to an APA but usually involving more artwork, less words, and a greater variety of media. Mail art comes in everything from music to slides, but is concentrated in drawings and collages. With no history, no memory and no hierarchy, Mail Art started as a supremely democratic medium, but it seems to be developing professionals and losing its roots as time goes on. Some people take this evolution to mean that mail art is dead.

Minicomic: Like a comic book but much smaller and usually printed in black and white instead of color. Typical size is about 3" by 4", 8 or 12 pages, and the typical price is around a quarter.

Naturists: This is what nudists call themselves when they want to avoid unsavory connotations.

Neopagan: Member of any number of loosely related religions that are involved in nature- or Goddess-worship, or in the resurrection of old gods. Bonded together by a search for alternatives to established, hierarchal religions. Often pantheistic or polytheistic, not to mention fun-loving. Sometimes called Pagans.

Networking: What you're doing when you read *Factsheet Five* and then write to someone listed in it. Trendy synonym for "communication." Oh, some people claim that there is a difference, in that networking tries to weave people together into

some larger structure. Well, just talking at parties does that too, only less self-consciously.

OE: **Official Editor. The person who coordinates the activities of an APA. Sometimes called a CM, for Central Mailer.**

Pagan: **See Neopagan.**

PFanzine: **A fanzine dealing with music of any type, derived form the words "punk fanzine." The silent "p" serves to distinguish them from SFanzines. By no means do all pfanzines only deal with punk music; you can find any genre from bluegrass and folk to experimental electronic music in the right pfanzine. The fastest-growing part of zinedom. Many punk PFanzines have overtones of politics, animal rights, anarchy, or similar social movements.**

Posterist: **A producer of single-page posters, usually illustrating some obscure political or social point or designed to confuse the normal people. Various posterists use Mail Art Networks, telephone poles, or direct mailing to distribute their works. Propaganda by the masses. The archetypical art of the Sixties and beyond.**

Prozine: **A term used mainly by those who write SFanzines, to distinguish themselves from professional magazines that publish science fiction, not that anyone would be likely to confuse the two these days.**

RPG: **Role-playing game. Dungeons & Dragons is the most notorious example, but there are lots of others.**

SASE: Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope. Should be legal sized with 25 cents postage unless otherwise specified.

Semiprozine: A SFanzine that isn't big enough to be making scads of money, but too big for its editor to answer all mail personally. A SFanzine that is seeking to leave the underground to become a part of the alternative press.

SFanzine: A fanzine dealing with science fiction, or at least produced by a fan. The silent "s" is to distinguish them from PFanzines. Actually, most sfanzines don't talk about science fiction at all, being a forum for discussion of lawnmowing, auto repairs, everyday life, and the space program. Traditionally, sfanzines are more important than eating or sleeping to the "fanzine fans."

Situationism: Theory of the now-defunct Situationist International, the avant-garde turned mean. The Sits lambasted the "society of the spectacle," indicting the system and its spurious oppositions for organizing experiences and fragmenting reality. Economically, they were for workers councils; politically, they rejected everyone else, especially radicals, as betrayers of liberatory ideals. And they used too many big words in their writings.

Underground Press: The real thing, before it gets slick, co-opted, and profitable. The underground press comes out in small quantities, is often illegible, treads on the thin ice of unmentionable subjects, and never carries ads for designer jeans. The most vibrant source of writing in the country today.

The Usual: Traditional method of obtaining SFanzines without sullying oneself with cash. Generally

includes trading other zines, writing locs, contributing articles or art, or being recipient of a whim.

Vonu: **A pseudoacronym from Voluntary and Not Vulnerable. A method of obtaining individual liberty by escaping from society into the wilderness and only coming back for cheeseburgers and other necessary supplies. More preached than practiced, but for a while it was an important part of apocalyptic libertarian thought.**

YOU WILL ALSO WANT TO READ:

☐ ***88025*** PRINCIPIA DISCORDIA, ***by Malaclypse the Younger.*** Is it a joke disguised as a religion, or a religion disguised as a joke? This is the official bible of the Discordian religion, which worships Eris, the Goddess of Chaos. A classic of guerrilla ontology. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, ***100 pp, illustrated, soft cover. $5.95.***

☐ ***99014*** THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTIONS, ***by Erwin S.(Filthy Pierre) Strauss.*** This well-written book is the only comprehensive guide to what actually happens at SF conventions. Whether you're new to the world of Science Fiction or a seasoned veteran, you'll enjoy Filthy Pierre's humorous and educational look at science fiction conventions. 1983, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, ***62 pp, soft cover.*** $4.95.

☐ 64080 FREELANCE WRITER'S HANDBOOK, ***by James Wilson.*** This new book takes a realistic look at the writing for a living, written by a pro who does just that. It will give you a basic understanding of the practical tactics you need to be a professional writer. It includes a lot of nuts-and-bolts information that isn't usually available in one volume. 1988, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, ***180 pp, illustrated, soft cover. $10.95***

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