

An Archive of One's Own

Collecting Fandom as a
Feminist Project through
the Lens of Star
Trek Fanzines

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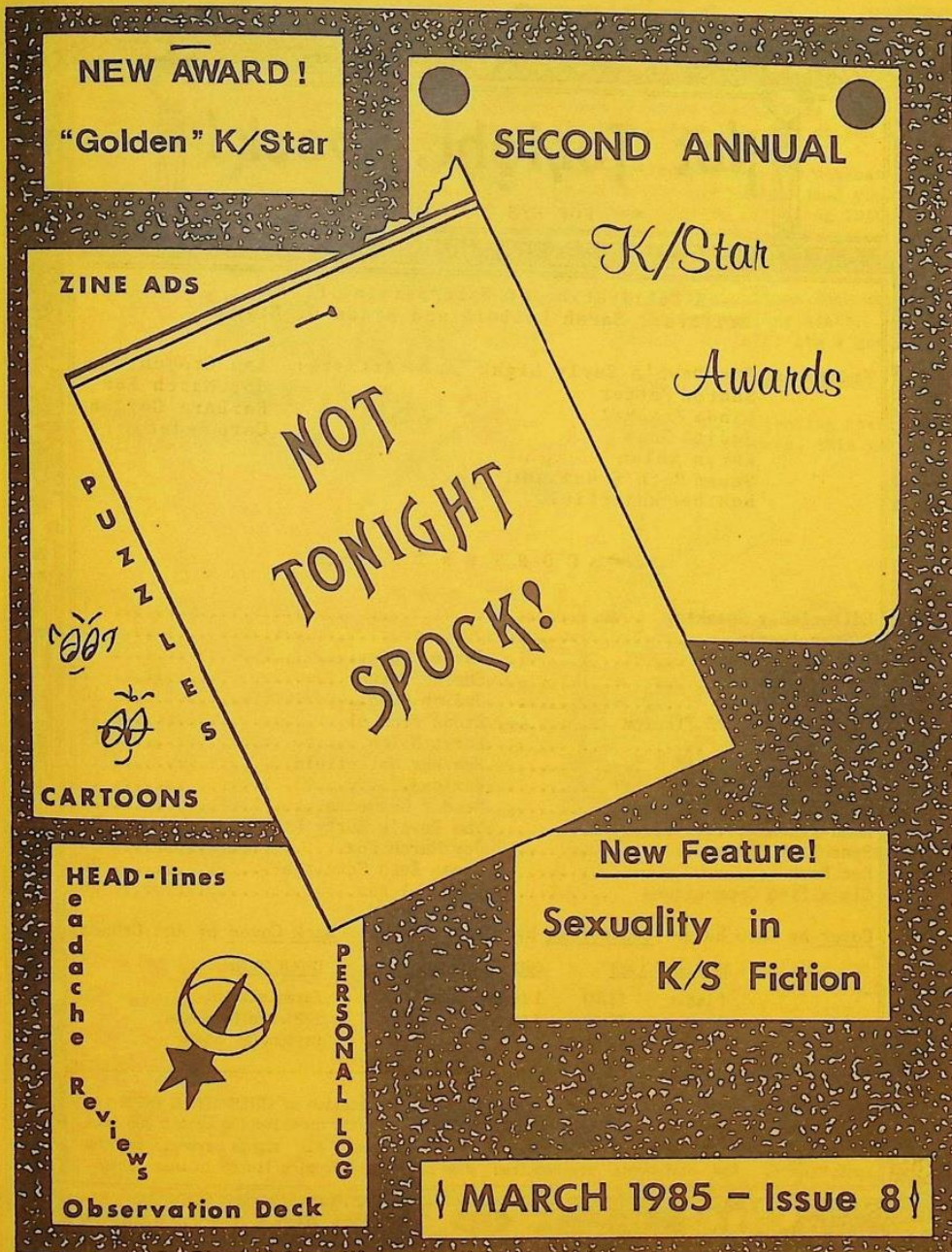
Advised by Dr. Claire Eager and Dr.
Christa Craven



Definitions

- **Star Trek:** Focusing specifically on *The Original Series* (1966-1969) and fandom from circa 1966-1990. Not including *The Next Generation* or subsequent series
- **Fanfiction:** fiction, usually fantasy or science fiction, written by a fan rather than a professional author, esp. that based on already-existing characters from a television series, book, film, etc.; (also) a piece of such writing
- **Fanzine:** Small, non-professional magazines circulated among a relatively small audience of other fans





Why Fanzines?

- Women-led, community-based, non-commercial form of writing and publishing
- Kate Ozment, "Rationale for Feminist Bibliography": "the history of the book is still largely defined as a male homosocial environment where female figures are briefly mentioned on the margins of textual production or invisible altogether."
- Rejecting the "amateur/professional divide"
- Shelley Ingram, "Fanfiction and the Amateur/Professional Divide": Fan groups "nurture artistic craft, provide a sense of belonging and identity, and facilitate an engagement with culture so deep that it might make the most ardent literature scholars blanche."



Why Archives?

- Archives are not neutral
 - Studying not only the zines themselves, but also their collection, organization, and the social forces surrounding the creation and upkeep of archival collections.
 - Derrick Spires, "On Liberation Bibliography": Liberation bibliography as "a conscious and intentional practice of identifying and repairing the harms of systemic racism, settler colonialism, hetero-patriarchy, and other oppressive structures in and through bibliography and bibliographical study"

Where I Went:

Bowling Green State University Browne Popular Culture Library

- Established in 1969 by Ray Browne, who would later go on to found the first academic Department of Popular Culture in the United States, also at Bowling Green State University
- "We support critical inquiry, creative scholarship and engaged learning by providing access to rare and meaningful resources that document the shifts in American society."
- Alice J. Mills Kirk/Spock Fanzine Collection

University of Iowa Special Collections and Archives

- Committed to “documenting the history and development of fandom and fannish communities” and houses more than 20 dedicated fandom-related collections in its libraries
- Debbie Hoover Fanzine Collection, Linda Melnick Collection of Slash Zines, Vee Stade Star Trek Fanzines Collection, Joan Marie Verba Star Trek Collection

Fans as a Source of Knowledge

01

Collecting more than just "officially published" works—specifically seeking out fanworks


02

Naming collections after fans

03

Keeping fans' organization of collections

Reflecting Fan Community

answered 8504.25
Today is the
third day 
of the rest of your life.

Dear Alice,

Thanks for your letter. I really appreciate hearing from you. As you can see from this ish it's time already for the 2nd Annual K/Star Awards - hard to believe. I like your suggestions for topics & will add them to the list. Thanks.

T.D.#2 is at the printers as far as I know. That was the latest report from Linda as it is her zone this time around. It should be out by the end of April I think.

Do hope you had a good

Easter - so nice to know
spring is almost here. Take
care - hope you enjoy issue #8
I think we have some good
features this time around.

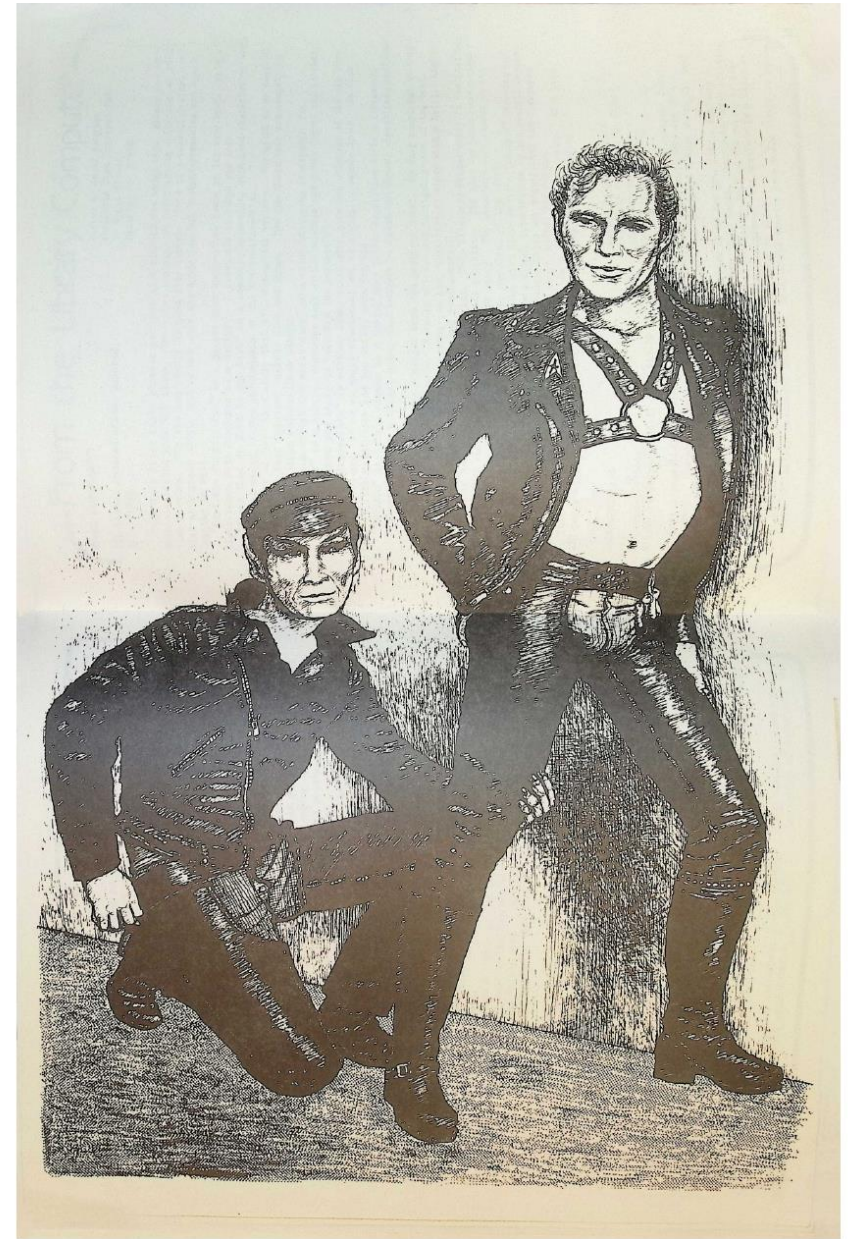
Peace,
Sarah

125 Notre Dame Ave.
Nashua, NH 05840

- Fanzines are more than just fanfiction (though there's a lot of that, too!)
- Writing in Community
 - "Using well-known communal patterns, the craftsperson creates a work like a quilt top, unique in the way it combines the familiar elements with the distinctly personal statement she makes through her selection of elements" (Bacon-Smith 56)
- Activism and community reflected in fanzines and finding aids

Challenging Hegemonic Ideas of Gender & Sexuality

- Speaking openly and positively about sex, kink, and queer relationships in a public forum
- Women as sexual beings, not simply the objects of sexual desires
- "Calling out" and challenging hegemonic or problematic statements about sex and sexuality



Barriers to Creating a Better Collection

- Time, Space, Budget
 - How do they get items for their collections? How does this impact who is represented?
- Physical and Financial Accessibility
 - Who gets to travel to research at these archives?
- Reputation of Inaccessibility and Exclusion
 - How do you use an archive?
 - BGSU vs. Iowa—Where do I feel more comfortable?

Conclusions

- Archival collections of fandom-related materials work to preserve and share valuable literary, cultural, and community knowledge that comes from a women-dominated form of writing and art.
- BGSU and Ulowa specifically work to honor the labor and knowledge of the women who were involved in *Star Trek* fan communities in the 1960s-1990s and share that knowledge with a new generation of fans and researchers.
- Like many archives, limitations on budget, time, space, and personnel mean that these are imperfect records, and we must acknowledge where even these progressive communities falter.
- Future directions for research:
 - Different fandoms
 - Fandom's move from women-dominated to queer-dominated
 - Virtual archives like Archive of Our Own

Thank You!

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