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## World of Fanzines

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August 5-6, 2023: Fantasy Goes to Hell: Depictions of Hell in Modern Fantasy Texts

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## World of Fanzines

### Additional Keywords

Fanzine; Magazine; Science fiction; Fantasy; Mythlore

# WORLD OF FANZINES

by Bernie Zuber

In the past couple of years fans of science fiction and fantasy have had an opportunity to sample an abundance of amateur publications. The literary quality and graphic aspects of these fanzines, which are either mimeographed or lithographed, may range from atrocious to excellent, but they offer a great variety of content. Surely there must be something nowadays to please almost any fan, from fannish editors' personal anecdotes to serious book reviews. There are fanzines of general interest, while others specialize in certain branches of fantasy or science fiction. MYTHLORE is only one of several new fanzines which are competing for attention but, in addition to that, there are fanzines with a reputation in the past which have been resurrected to join the competition. It's my feeling that the world of fanzines has entered an era full of literary excitement which cannot be ignored. In order to keep our readers up to date on this subject, I hope to report, as often as possible, on the fanzines that I've read. I don't intend to write long criticisms; I just want to convey what these publications are about.

NIEKAS is one of the older fanzines. To the best of my knowledge it never had to be resurrected. Although the publication is somewhat irregular, there was never any hiatus during which it could have been considered "dead". The editor is none other than Ed Meskys, the Thain of the Tolkien Society and also the editor of the TOLKIEN JOURNAL. His collaborators on NIEKAS have been Felice Rolfe and, more recently, Charlie and Marsha Brown. Their subscription list extends from coast to coast (as is the case with most well-known fanzines) and in 1967 NIEKAS won the Hugo for best amateur publication. It is a general interest fanzine containing anything from Tolkien discussions to transcripts of speeches by science fiction writers. The letter column is usually plentiful and well decorated with attractive art. Good illustrations are also on the covers, but if you're looking for the title or the issue number, they're on the back cover (just make believe you're looking at a Japanese magazine). The latest issue, number 20, Fall 1968, contains 108 pages, counting the covers... a nice chunk of reading matter to settle down with. Better wear your glasses for Ed Meskys' microtype, though. The contents, as I said, are varied: book reviews and fanzine reviews, an article on the future of science fiction conventions, a glossary of Middle Earth, a discussion of Edison's The Worm Ouroboros, poems, a 12-page letter column, and a special 16-page critique of Georgette Heyer's historical romances by four fan writers. There's more, but those are the items that attracted me: The art, which illustrates or fills the space around the text, is by 24 fan artists (plug: Tim Kirk and myself are represented). NIEKAS well deserves its subtitle, The Gaudy Fanzine, and although it is mimeographed, it compares favorably with any lithographed fanzine. It is available at 60¢ an issue, or 4 for \$2, by writing to Ed Meskys, Box 233, Center Harbor, NH 03226. Perhaps another issue will be out soon, but not too soon, and back copies are generally available. Written material and letters of comment should be sent to Ed, art to Charlie Brown, 2078 Anthony Ave., Bronx, N.Y. 10457. Try it.