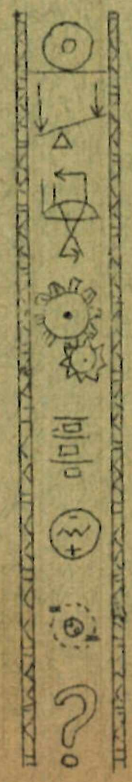


$$\begin{array}{l} \text{II} \cdot \text{II} = \text{IV} \quad a = g \cdot \frac{1}{2} \quad \sqrt{-1} = \text{!!!} \quad \infty \\ e = mc^2 \quad X = 10 \quad 3.141592 \end{array}$$

SHANGRI LA
NO. 13
AUG. '49



SHANGRI-LA

AUGUST

1949

CONTENTS

1st Page	Contents	This is it, Buddy
2nd Page	Editorial, which it really isn't	By the Editor
3rd Page	Collectors	Alan U Hershey
5th Page	Service for Mroona	E Everett Evans
7th Page	Plato, Aristotle and Gernsbach	Eph Königsberg
9th Page	Semantics and "The World of Null A"	Jack Catherin
11th Page	I Dismember Lemuria	Report on L Sprague deCamp Talk
12th Page	(Some continuations)	Hershey and Evans
13th Page	Just A Minute (LASFS Club Notes)	Arthur Jean Coox
15th Page	Something Old; Something New	Rick Strauss
16th Page	Bandits, a poem	????
17th Page	Behind The Ate-Ball, a story?	Karbonate DeSoda
19th Page	A Review of a Review	A E vanVogt
21st Page	"...And This Goes On"	Bryce Walton
24th Page	The LASFS Glees	Filler
25th Page	"Jest A Minute"	By the Seccity
27th Page	Wimmin!	L. Major Reynolds
29th Page	(More continuations)	Catherin; vanVogt; Seccity
30th Page	(What, more continuations?)	Seccity; Reynolds
	Splitting The Infinitive	Anonymous

Cover Design by EK; Speedoscope by WD; Stencilling by EE; Editor in Chief LL

"Cushlamachree, but I've got a lot of space to fill' up here!"



This issue is Number 13 of SHANGRI-LA, the official publication of the LOS ANGELES SCIENCE FANTASY SOCIETY. All correspondence regarding the issue should be addressed to the editor, at 1305 Ingraham Street, Los Angeles 13, Calif. All subscriptions should be sent to 4E Ackerman at 236½ North New Hampshire, Hollywood, California. The price of the magazine is now 15¢ per issue. Our policy is to issue every six weeks.

EDITORIAL

If anyone had told me a year ago that I would be editing a fanzine, I'd have sent them to the nearest doctor to have their heads examined. But the best laid plans o' mice and men SHANGRI LA has had a flock of editors, through the years, but never a greener one.

Confidentially, I think Forry ducked this one on account of the Number Thirteen. Of course, I could be wrong.

At this writing I'm waiting with bated breath for contributions. So and so has gone East on vacation; somebody else is in Arizona. Another one's gone where the woodbine twineth and the whangdoodle mourneth for its mate.

Any accidental, unshucked corn in this issue begs for your forgiveness as I'm not infallible, especially where FJA is concerned. Some of that **** bird's gags sneak up on you after the stencils are cut. Then, it's too late to do anything about it.

But, all in all, I'm having a good time, thanks to others of the club members for their assistance. As far as I'm concerned, I'm more at home over a cookstove than a typewriter.

Originally, this edition was coming out on time, but due to unforeseen circumstances it's going to be slightly behind the date-line. With the new Fannymag coming out at the same time, it will be a case of look out for possible singed edges. The mimeo is apt to be red hot.

Said mimeo is due for a face-lifting. It spits and sputters, throws sheets to the four winds (that's a nice switch) and otherwise misbehaves. Of course, somewhere in this happy southern land is a guy who could make it sit up and purr, but the intellectual level of the club cannot raise itself far enough to tempt him into its sacred confines.

Trying to think of something to write with the gentle murmur of the poker game coming from the rear of the house is really sump'n'. I think I'll start charging a house percentage.

Just made a few frantic telephone calls, and received the welcome word that several stories and articles are being "worked on", a statement that leaves me cold. I may wind up with several pages containing only the name of the author. At that, it might be better than to take a chance. The only reason I can get by with the latter statement is the fact that I'm in the habit of feeding the gang. Nobody is nuts enough to shoot the cook.

All kidding aside, try to attend the Cinvention. From all the advance publicity it is going to be quite an affair. I only wish there was some way I could make it, but due to certain financial difficulties....In other words like so many of my fellow fans, I'm flatter than a Martian sand worm.

Physically, I'm just the reverse.

Well, gentle reader, I hope you like the members' efforts. At least, give us credit for trying.

LL

COLLECTORS

by Alan U. Hershey

After living thirty-two tempestuous years in my beloved armchair, I have come to the conclusion that people will collect almost anything. This is not a rash statement. I have examined the facts of the matter from many angles. At one time I built up a small espionage service whose sole duty was to find out what people collected. I have pried and probed; investigated and instigated; snooped and sneaked. And all the prying, probing, investigating, instigating, snooping and sneaking added up to one thing and one thing only.

People are nothing but a bunch of lousy pack rats!

Obviously, this does not please the corpulent lady in the twelfth row. She is bridling with indignation. I can almost hear her mumble: "Well .. I declare! Some people just don't CARE what they say about people."

That lady, my friends, collects reasons to bridle with indignation. My agents have been watching her for months, and she has bridled with indignation about everything from the price of butter to the filthy, dirty, unreconstructed Communists who are infiltrating us like mad.

While we are on the subject of Communists, I might as well dispose of that topic by stating unequivocally that all communists (yes, communists are people too) are collectors. These creatures collect people by filling them full of dialectical immaterialism which they collect in order to be able to collect people.

By this time you ought to be able to see that you can't win. And if I had not promised Louise to grind out about a thousand words, I would stop right here.

But since the average reader of this sort of tripe is a fan, and my agents have led me to believe that fans like nothing better than to be ever flagellated with words, I will struggle onward.

Fans.

Where did this queer word come from? I have a hunch that a long time ago some radio announcer didn't have time to say fanatics, and so a new word was born. To become more specific, we will pass over the sports fan, the music fan, and the horse opera fan and get right down to the science fantasy fan.

Outside of stamp collectors, here we have the largest den of really organized vice in the world. Every fan is a vice, holding on to his beloved magazines, books and manuscripts as if the fate of twenty-six worlds depended on it. Maybe it does. Who am I to quibble about mere twenty-six worlds? I can find that many in one science fiction anthology.

When you enter the average fan's home, the wrongness about it is not usually obvious. Mostly, they own at least one chair, sometimes a table and

I have even known a rare few who have sofas. Almost invariably there are floors, ceilings and walls, and it is here, on the walls, that the first wailing note intrudes upon your consciousness.

Usually there is a picture. This picture may be one of two things. It may be a rocketship of some sort, but it is much more likely to be a woman with or without breastplates. There may be a man or two floating around in the background of the picture, but it is the woman who is the center of the action and imagination. The jarring note grows louder if the woman has wings or has huge spikes growing out of her knee joints.

Before you have been in the fan's home more than a few minutes, you notice that he is beginning to become restless. This is very understandable if you know the facts of the case, for he hasn't fondled his collection in at least two hours. As far as I know from my records, the longest any fan has been known to survive without fondling his collection is about a week; and, generally speaking, if the condition lasts more than three days, they have to be confined in a straight-jacket.

To get back to our average fan ... he is growing restless. Finally, he clears his throat and mumbles: "have I ever shown you my collection?" And before you can say "Henry Kuttner" you are in the bedroom confronting a closet door studded with locks of every description. On the panelling you will usually find a simple inscription, printed in large golden letters:

"John W. Campbell is God, and Astounding is his Prophet."

The fan will bow down three times, whip out his trusty key ring, and a moment later you will be confronted by piles of paper pulp extending far into the unseeable distances of the closet, which is much larger than the rest of the house, of course. Usually, the closet will be air conditioned, with special filters to remove the sulfur dioxide from the air. Very often, each issue has its own separate slipcase*, lined with velour. It is termite-proof and fire-proof, and before you are allowed to enter, you are very carefully searched for stray matches and termites. The walls of the closet are made of neutronium, a material impervious to any type of ray gun or atom bomb.

If you are of the chosen, the fan may allow you to enter the closet. If you are a bosom buddy he may confide to you as you stroll between the unending rows of magazines, that he has impregnated every page of every magazine with a formula of his own. Said formula is a virulent and subtle poison. Unless the borrower of the magazine is injected with the antidote within six hours, he is a dead duck. If you are a fan, he doesn't bother to add that each magazine has its own robotic control which will bring it back to him after its time-setting has run out.** These controls are usually worn from disuse because rare is the fan who can bear to see an item of his collection leave his house.

Usually, just about this time, the fan will snap a glance at his watch. And the odds are heavy that he will grow pale and a cold sweat will break out on his brow. "Hurry," he will whisper hoarsely and ship you out of the closet, lock the locks, and disappear in a burst of smoke and dust. When he returns in a few moments he will have a magazine under his arm. This he will carefully lock in the closet without opening or reading. Then he'll grin at you and say, "Boy, I almost missed that issue. When I looked at my watch it

(Continued on page 12)

SERVICE FOR MROONA

by E. Everett Evans

Aagaraa pulled himself, slow inch by painful inch, away from the wrecked and battered voidcraft. Once free of the wreckage, he clamped on a nerve-block, and the excruciating agony was eased. But he recognized instantly that this atmosphere contained something poisonous he could not long endure, nor the gravity, which was almost double that of his native planet.

His arm flickered fitfully, and he knew soon came the ascent to Mroona. After all this tremendous journey from far, far Kosh, was it now to end like this? Aagaraa had felt so sure his selection for this trip meant some great service had been assigned him on this distant world. Surely, that was why Koshians had been given knowledge of void-travel. How explain to Mroona his failure to have served, if he died now?

Slowly amid these gloomy thoughts, Aagaraa became aware of observation. Gathering his web of thoughts together, he extended his sense of perception through the sphere. Above was the observer, a small quadratenta but, hold! It did not have tentacles, but four hands. It was clinging, its head downward, on the bole of that huge vegetable growth at the roots of which the body of Aagaraa lay. Beady eyes stared curiously at the alien being on the ground, while its grey fur-covered skin rippled with quivers of excitement, and that bushily-furred nether appendage raised and lowered.

Carefully Aagaraa's mind reached out and touched that of the first living entity he had percepted on this new planet. There was not much mind in that small body, certainly not of reasoning grade. An awareness of life, of hunger and the means of appeasing it, of methods of safe-guarding its body from many dangers. Truly low in evolution's scale. Was this the supreme, ultimate life here?

Aagaraa's arm flickered more slowly. Life was almost gone. And he must not die now! There was so much to observe and learn here, even though he would never be able to return to far-away Kosh and report. Nor had he yet served.

"Mroona forgive me for taking a life," he prayed, "but I feel that mine is the more important."

Calling up every reserve of strength, Aagaraa extended his arm to the little creature above. Before the squirrel could move, poised for instant flight though it was, its life-force was transferred to the alien, and its lifeless body fell to the ground.

More alert now, though still wounded unto death and knowing something must be done to sustain and retain life, Aagaraa percepted to an ever-increasing distance.

Why, how filled with life this planet? How it teemed with an infinite size and variety of mobile creatures that bored, ran, crawled, flew or swam under, on and above it. Not to mention the uncountable types of stationary

vegetable life. Yet none of these had minds of power.

Strange, strange world. Was there no life extant here that could be classed as reasoning, as sentient?

Suddenly Aagaraa perceived a new creature, one that ran about on four legs, was fur covered and had one of those strange rather appendages so common to this planet's life. Mind touched mind, and Aagaraa thrilled. Here was the highest type of mind yet found, although even it was not capable of constructive thought.

There was in that mind, though, a hazy conception of an upright, quadrupedal animal called "boss". Perhaps this "boss" was the one Aagaraa was seeking. He sent his mind searching further and further, yet could not find one.

Now Aagaraa's aim dwindled swiftly. Not longer could he wait to locate one of those "boss" entities. Nor would he tempt Kroona's justice by further killing. This creature would have to do.

Fitting mind carefully to mind, slowly and meticulously Aagaraa imposed his total consciousness, his very ego, onto that of the host, who stood quiescent, immobile, during the transference. The intrusion complete, and full mastery of the life-forces of the "dog" -- as he now knew it to be called -- in his possession, Aagaraa let go his former carcass with a sigh of satisfaction.

"My life in service to others for this boon of renewed life, Kroona," the Koshian said reverently.

He made his new dog-body lie down, and for several hours examined its every thought-pattern and knowledge, and made them intrinsically his own. Finally, sensing that his new body was weakening from hunger and thirst, he rose and trotted off in a remembered direction.

"Patsy, you beggar, where you been all afternoon?" the upright "boss" entity scolded. "Boy's been waiting for you. Get for the house."

Again mind touched mind, and Aagaraa knew that here was the one sought ... but found too late. For he could not transfer again. Tragic, possibly, for while this brain was not full-extended, there were infinite possibilities inherent in it for new learning, growth and usage.

His host knew no fear here, as these upright creatures, which Aagaraa now knew were "man", were friendly to dogdom. Thus he went, curious but not hesitant, into the dwelling place. Two smaller, younger men were there, and another dog-form, this one wearing a strange harness with an upright handle.

Quickly Aagaraa reached out and touched first one mind and then another. The dog's was about the same as that of his host, but the two man-minds were a delight to read.

Yet Aagaraa was shocked at first touch to discover that both of them
(Continued on page 12)

PLATO, ARISTOTLE AND GERNSBACH

or
Why The Hell Did Hugo Start All This In 1926?

If there is anything more irritating than one's wife having poor circulation in her pedal extremities, it is the occasional snob who thinks ~~hat~~ nothing good has been written since Grecian days (with the exception of that upstart W. Shakespeare), and why in the hell do you read this crud science fiction?

In the days before Gernsbach put science fiction on a permanent periodical basis there had been science fiction, of course. See J.O. Bailey if you don't believe me. However, with the exception of occasional crud in the pulps and yellow journals of the day, and a few misbegotten items in hard covers, most of the work being put out in this genre was of fairly high caliber. I am one of those few who believe that Jules Verne and H.G. Wells, for example, outclass the majority of pulp science fiction, not on the time-hallowed grounds of literary style, but in the field of extrapolated science. We'll argue that out later, perhaps. In the meantime

We are being subjected to a series of published volumes from the fantasy publishing companies which certainly give the snobs more than enough material to work with. I can understand the publication of "The Legion of Space" by Williamson--sentiment. "Planets of Adventure" by Basil Wells is more difficult to explain, but the latest epic to hit the fantasy fan--"Seven Out of Time" -- is incomprehensible. In its time, and in the medium for which it was written--the old Argosy--it was a fine story. But in book form at three bucks a throw, its curiosity value cannot possibly overcome its juvenile, inept writing, its two-dimensional characterization and its jejune plot. It was the first fantasy volume in a long time that took me three days to read; a feat, incidentally, that should earn me the Croix de Guerre, with palms yet.

This practice of robbing the grave in the cradle of its infancy, should cease now and forthwith. Many stories of the past deserve reprinting, true. Many recent novels and short stories are worthy of exhumation. But a decent regard for the fantasy fans who, after all, form a loyal corps which practically guarantees a great bulk of the fantasy publishers' sales, should be exhibited.

Turning to more pleasant topics, let's look over some of the recent crop of fantasy, quasi-fantasy, and allied volumes which have appeared in print. Of George Orwell's "1984" little should be said; it has, if possible, been over-reviewed. It is not, strictly speaking, a fantasy, although it uses the form as a vehicle for Mr. Orwell's political philosophy. It is a vital book, and should be read. For those who want to gain a deeper insight into 1) Mr. Orwell and 2) 1984, we recommend his previous book "Animal Farm", now being remaindered at all the better Drug stores, and Arthur Koestler's "Darkness at Noon", now in a twenty-five cent edition.

Those of you who have always wished you were one of the four men in the world who could understand the theory of relativity can, in part, fulfill your desires. Anyone who understands English can buy a copy of Lincoln Barnett's "The Universe and Dr. Einstein" and be amply rewarded. It is one of

the clearest expositions of Dr. Einstein's contributions to scientific thought ever done. (I have this on good authority).. No messy equations to bother my "low middlebrow" mind, and some pretty vivid examples. Admission is \$2.75, and no federal tax, either.

Our British cousins have come up with an intriguing book called, of all things, "Bleeding from the Roman". Eric Romilly wrote it. After reading the book, as before, the title didn't mean a damn thing to me. However, it is a sort of "Connecticut Yankee in" sort of tome, except that our hero goes back to Queen Boadicea's time. The book is noteworthy true to life in that our hero doesn't accomplish much of anything. One reason may be that he's in love. Always fatal, they tell me. The author spoils it all in the last page or so by setting forth that it was, apparently, all a dream. Unless you want to resell the book at an exorbitant rate someday (as I hope to) cut the last couple of pages out. The book costs three dollars when purchased from Weaver Wright. Elsewhere, you probably can't get it. P.S. If this were sold in Boston, it would probably be banned for licentiousness. (Do I get my cut, Forry?)

Probably through the use of hypnosis, our hero's gastric inabilities have been rectified, and the flow of those vital digestive juices has been resumed. The book is now named "Triton", although the author is still named L. Ron Hubbard. Published by our local Fantasy Publishing Company Inc. FPCI, it's a pretty nice job. Most of you probably have read it. Swash-buckling fantasy, some wonderful laughs, and a pleasant, if not too satisfying story bringing up the rear end of the book. Very good reading of the Unknown sort, But I have another gripe.

I paid three bucks for Triton. I wanted it. I might have paid (come on, be honest with yourself, Konisberg, you know damn well you would have paid) more. But why the three bucks? Is it a sort of sacred figure? Do the Deros go for you if you publish a book at two-fifty or--perish the thought, two bucks? I wanted to read, and own Triton. I would not give two whoops in Hell for "The Battle of the Magicians" (the other story) between hard covers although it is passable magazine stuff. Those pages must have cost money to print. Paper, ink, typesetting, mailing, etc. Why do we have this stuff foisted off on us? It's like buying a car with a removable dishwasher and electrically-operated carrillons as accessories. I sympathise with FPCI's and Crawford's position. But, damn it, I buy their books and support them in part at least. So do you readers.

As a matter of fact, I'd rather pay three bucks for Triton alone, and at least feel that the publishing company is making a couple of extra bucks, and thus getting in better financial shape to give us more worthwhile titles in the future.

By now, everyone must be mad at me. I'd better scam.

=====

Again we say:

JOIN THE CINVENTION TODAY,

It's only a buck to pay.

O K ?

SEMANTICS AND "THE WORLD OF A

by Jack Gatherin

As a student of semantics, I was deeply disappointed in Mr van Vogt's "The World of Null A". My criticism is not concerned with literary style, but rather with the author's conception of the world of the future, when government is carried out by a gigantic machine. This machine, man-made originally, is literally an electro-mechanical brain, and by virtue of its design is capable of self-maintenance and adjustment, to cope with the limitless changes implicit in any dynamic environment. As Norbert Weiner has pointed out in his Cybernetics, such electro-mechanical brains are in use today, but not so highly developed at present. So far, so good.

However, the sanely conditioned world of 2650 A.D. as portrayed in "The World of Null A" is manifest absurdity. Let us examine the very first line of the first page of the book, taken in its context---" ... The occupants of each floor of the hotel must as usual during the games form their own protective groups..." A sanely conditioned world, governed by an unemotional, almost infallible machine, would never require protection against man. This statement is not made lightly. Today, in 1949, our Federal Bureau of Investigation has issued the thought-provoking information that 96% of ALL crimes committed in the US are "crimes of passion". That is to say, offenses against society, involving psychological disturbance. It appears most probable that an environment in which the physical wants of man have been well taken care of, will have eliminated 96% of its crime, and furthermore, any society governed by a machine like the one in this novel, will have the necessary psychological conditions prevailing, to prevent the other 4% of "crimes of passion".

Elaborating on this theme, may I point out, somewhat unnecessarily, of course, that our present civilization is in dire need of training in Semantics. This painful fact becomes increasingly obvious. It is sufficiently difficult to find people who feel the need to inquire, to listen and to unlearn the vast amount of misinformation they have stored in their nervous systems, without having a book misrepresent a vitally important subject to the potential listener. The reader of Science Fiction is perhaps a more likely listener than any other, by virtue of his conditioning toward matters dubbed "impossible" by so-called realistic people. Yet here we have a book purporting to describe a sane world, and we find ourselves in the same old environment, surrounded by the same unsane people, who are impelled by the same dreary motives of want and insecurity, and as part of this mess, we find the same tawdry spirit of competition, as exemplified in the "Games".

Lest the reader make claim that the above-described pattern of behavior is to be found only among invaders from outside the solar system, I hasten to point out that the various agencies of law enforcement, to say nothing of "Law" itself, are mentioned in the book as part and parcel of this "sane" world. Even the subject of differential income, with its attendant differential advantage is brought into the story, what with hotel bell hops receiving tips, and later in the book, the author's description of the gem encrusted interior of the Semantics building, and his own note that this architectural embellishment was part of a not-too-successful campaign to educate the people to the belief that the gems were no more valuable than

other scarce items. All this is a negation of what is well known today regarding the conditioning of the human mechanism. Man is the product of his environment. Change the environment and you change man. Today, we are taught that we must outdo our neighbor, we must compete, and the best man will win out. Today we live in a dark dismal jungle. Quite distinctly, we are the product of this jungle. We must behave in accordance with the laws of this jungle in order to survive. If ever we behave differently, due to exposure to some different environmental factor, we become vulnerable to the attacks of the other predatory beasts with which our jungle is so heavily populated. If ever we survive these attacks (due to fortuitous circumstance) we may attempt to talk some of the beasts into changing their behavior. The odds against any measurable success are overwhelming. The beasts have been conditioned to be predatory by their environment, and if through some means it were possible to make them desire to change, they couldn't anyway--the jungle they live in does not permit it. Clearly, the appropriate thing to do is to eliminate the jungle, since living things alldo whatever their environment permits of them.

"The World of Null A" is claimed to be a world, the operation of which is based on the methods of Science. Unlike all other methods, the methods, of Science depend on a system of evaluation which requires that facts be used instead of opinions. A fact is a report which can be verified by any observed who utilizes the same method--an opinion is merely a manifestation of the possible prejudices and aberrations existing in the nervous system of the individual in question. Despite the claims, the sanely-conditioned people in "The World of Null A" behave as though they have been conditioned in our own rank jungle of 1949 and then transplanted to 2650 A.D.

As for the invaders, it is conceivable that a society on some remote system may be so strongly conditioned by physical scarcity, as to be insufferably predatory and vicious even by the standards of 1949. However, when such a society has learned enough about the structure of the atom to be able regularly to conduct interplanetary travel, it will most probably have learned enough to be able to synthesize its food and all other necessities of life. Briefly, scarcity will have ceased to exist. Without scarcity, the basic character of the jungle undergoes a drastic change. Insecurity in all its forms disappears, because everyone is not only well fed, clothed, and housed, but he knows he will be so tomorrow and for the rest of his life. Man is no longer impelled to compete, to "get ahead", to worry about his neighbor, or about saving for some sort of a "rainy day". His entire attitude towards his environment, towards his fellow man changes -- and changes for the better, it may be added. Once more I must point out a glaring fallacy in "The World of Null A". Even without training in Semantics, the invaders, bu virtue of their knowledge of physical science, would be incapable of the predatory behavior ascribed to them.

The laboratory methods employed in physical science have produced Semantics--these methods provide far more accurate results than any other. We can build with these methods. When we fall into habits of incantation, prayer, and other mumbo-jumbo we are really asking for trouble. We cannot build with the unmeasurable.

There are a few individuals who are potentially the teachers of sanity, because they have at least learned to question. All they require is training in a scientific workable method of evaluation, Semantics.

(Cont'd on page 29)

I DISMEMBER LEMURIA

by Eph Konigsberg

L. Sprague deCamp, noted fantasy and science-fiction writer, regaled members and guests of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society on a recent Thursday, with a most interesting speech on the fourth dimension. DeCamp, a self-styled debunker, tore into the various theories about this favorite sfictional concept with great gusto; managed to convince most of us that there is no such animal and thus wound up in the anomalous position of talking about a non-existent subject.

Briefly, De Camp's main point was that the fourth dimension, as used scientifically, was merely a method of measurement, of reference, and, at times, of convenience, and that the reference to time as a fourth dimension was as prosaic, although used abtrusely at times, as the use of time in railway scheduling.

However, it was the question period that really produced some interesting results, to which the title refers. One of De Camp's pet peeves, as was apparent from his replies to questions, is the persistent belief in the myth of lost continents. Relying on such unexciting details as the rate of the rise and fall of continents, investigations into original sources of myths, and other data, De Camp De Bunked Atlantis, Mu, etc.

Again, in discussing theories of time travel, alternate time tracks and all the vexing paradoxes involved, De Camp clearly indicated that he did not believe in any of them, although he granted that they were entirely acceptable devices for the construction of fantasy plots.

How refreshing this was in contrast to another wide-discussed series of stories purporting to be based on facts, but leaning heavily on the well-established hunger of people to believe in the mysterious and the arcane in fantastic and outré explanations for the ills of the world. DeCamp clearly believes in keeping fantasy in its place; entertaining, and (sometimes) satirically instructive, nothing more.

To go back to DeCamp's main topic, the fourth dimension, he discoursed with evident glee on some of the frail evidence and logic which has gone into the erection of pseudo-scientific superstructures based on the ancient belief in the "other world". The attempted investigations into fourth dimensional psychic phenomena, the georgeous thinking that went into the formulation of such quadri-dementional shapes as the tesseract, the mistique of Dunne's time theories and the attendant cults that have blossomed forth, all provided ample material for Mr DeCamp, and he loves it.

All this, however, merely reinforces this reviewer's belief that, to enjoy the weird and the fantastic, the extrapolations of present-day science and bygone myths, one need not believe in the various crackpot theories designed, perhaps unintentionally, to ensnare the gullible reader.

De Camp's speaking style, incidentally, is excellent. Confronted by an awkward situation (he was entirely surrounded by his audience and had to keep pivoting, much like a fashion model) he managed to keep in close contact with all, and delivered the material in a resonant, easy-carrying tone. Added spice to the lecture was his rapid-fire delivery of a long and, I presume, difficult French phrase. This was the largest LASFS meeting -- 66.

(Continued from page 4)

COLLECTING - Hershey

had been on the news stand for twenty-three seconds, and there are six other fans living in this neighborhood."

This, then, is a typical collector. His field is rather specialized --- he is oblivious of such other collecting fields as the bridling with indignation field, the this man is a homosexual field, the I don't know what I am going to do with Johnny field, or ever the nice weather we're having today field.

And yet, is he any the worse for all that?

Anyway, I have paid off my agents and become a science fantasy fan myself. Have you ever seen my closet?

END

* Editor's note: If anybody knows about slip-covers it ought to be Alan.

** If anyone knows the whereabouts of one of those robotic controls, he can contact me at once. I'm sadly in need of one.

=====

(Continued from page 6)

SERVICE FOR IROONA - Evans

had neither a sense of sight nor one of perception; that they both lived in a world of constant night. Why had Iroona thus crippled them?

"Bill's been telling me about his new Seeing-eye Dog," one of them said. "D'ya 'spose I could get me one, Boss?"

"You know we ain't got no money to buy such a valuable dog, Boy." Aagarac sensed how the man winced at the crestfallen look in his son's sightless eyes. "But, say, maybe we could teach Patsy, here, how to guide you. Never thought of that before."

The boy went to his knees and held out his arms. Aagarac, letting the dog's mind take charge, felt a strange welling-up of love, worship and tenderness, and watched curiously how the dog ran across to the youth and thrust its cold muzzle into the boy's hands. He, as did the dog, found delight in this being's delectable effluvium. He thrilled as those soft hands fondled the furry coat, and as the arms went about his neck in a hug of love.

"You will lead me, won't you, Patsy? Then I won't be afraid to go out no more."

A strange, wonderful ecstasy of ego-warmth and fulfillment such as he'd never before known crept through Aagarac's consciousness.

He knew, without any shadow of doubt, that here was "home" ... here his great task to perform. Gracious Iroona had accepted his offer of service. With his powerful mind and aid, what could not this boy-without-sight accomplish and become!

Aagarac put out his moist tongue and licked Boy's face.

END

JUST A MINUTE

May 12th; 494th Consecutive Meeting:

Forrest had a sensational announcement: He had just received a telegram from Robert Sair, a Canadian publisher, that his two, new, monthly magazines--Supernatural Stories and Amazing Adventures--are getting ready to roll. And that Sair had purchased several stories from him, including two by E. Everett Evans and one by Kenneth Bonnell.

The meeting was rounded off by extra-ordinary Walt Daugherty who told of his cloistered life behind the walls at Warners, Paramount and Bellvue. It was a good talk despite his jokes. (Walt is an extra and bit player in the movies.)

May 19th; 615th Consecutive Meeting:

(Don't search too hard for the minutes from the 494th meeting to the 615th; you won't find them. Now, this may be rather confusing, but there are excellent reasons for it. If you've read science-fiction, you've probably heard of the theory of alternate time tracks. Well, this has nothing at all to do with that. Read on and see.)

Walt has had some extra time lately and he's been spending it by going through the minutes of the club from its very inception. The results were rather startling. For example: Walt showed that the numbering of our meetings didn't begin until long after the club had been in operation under its new charter. By actual count, he estimated that the club had had some 615 meetings.

The first meeting of this society was upon October 27th, 1934. Everett looked at his pocket calendar and discovered that October 27th this year falls upon Thursday--our meeting day and our fifteenth anniversary! That'll be quite a meeting. It was suggested that we hold the Westercon on the same day and have a double celebration. But after mucho discussion--that's Spanish for much discussion--it was decided that that was too close to the Cinvention.

May 26th; 623rd Consecutive Meeting:

The first talk this meeting was delivered by Rog Phillips, via Ackerman. Via Ackerman and for Ackerman. I can't recall very well just what Phillips said, but that may be because he didn't say very much. The gist of the matter was that Forrest J Ackerman was batty, although Phillips admitted that Forrest was "saner than most of us." A very subtle point. After Forrest J Ackerman, one-time-prominent-fan, had finished reading the letter we all bowed our heads in silent prayer--for Forrest J Ackerman, poor fellow!, was saner than most of us!

Forrest announced that Con Pederson had just sold a story. Con was so consterned about this that he fell over backward in a dead faint; it turned out, however, that he was merely acting out in charade form the title of his story, Autopsy; he had done the first part, it was up to us to do the rest. Con said that he hadn't worked on the story hard at all-- Autopsy just grew.

Louise was absent this meeting and it was discovered that she was operating a booth at the Shrine Auditorium, where the LASFS was presenting a display of science-fiction as a hobby: this booth was gifted to the club by Secretary Price of the Southern California Amateur Press Association. Forrest got up and gave a little talk on the various species he had encountered while enjoying his shift at that shrine of all s-f lovers. He told us not only of the various people he encountered, but also about the slide designs by Bill Rotsler for a projected science-fiction television series which A. E. van Vogt and E. Rayne Hull are currently trying to promote. He also told us about a fellow from Switzerland who is currently engaged in translating Howard M. Sherman's The Green Man into German, with what he considers appropriate changes.

There was some discussion about who would engineer the Westercon. Alan Hershey called for volunteers and hands were raised right and left...left...some people left. Finally, we had to draw straws and it was discovered that Walt Daugherty was the lucky man. Exhausted by all this, tired to the bone, Director Hershey gasped out that he was conferring on Walt the power to appoint anyone to help him. Walt chortled in his joy and immediately appointed Alan Hershey to help him (sic.).

June 2nd; 624th Consecutive Meeting:

In the announcements, Jean Cox revealed that the lead article in June 4th issue of the Saturday Review of Literature was on "The S-F Phenomenon in Literature" by Claire Holcomb. Forrest told us that Simon & Schuster would publish Jack Williamson's C-T Shock, which was quite a shock.

For the benefit of our man visitors, some unfamiliar with science-fiction, Forrest J Ackerman gave a talk on Ray Bradbury. He told the story of Bradbury's spectacular fame. In the course of his talk he mentioned that two of Ray's stories had recently been translated into Swedish.

June 9th; 625th Consecutive Meeting:

Walt discussed a date for the Westercon, disagreeing with the assumption that it would be best to hold it on one day of a three-day holiday, pointing out that people quite often went out of town on week-ends and also that there would be quite a few people who wouldn't be able to be present in July. It was decided to hold it either on the last week of September or the first week of October.

Eph Koenigsberg gave a review of "Watch the Northwind Rise" by Robert Graves. Rick Strauss gave a talk on Arnold J. Toynbee's "challenge and response" theories.

The End.

SOMETHING OLD : SOMETHING NEW

by Rick Strauss

In days gone by, when gods, demi-gods, and demons walked the earth, they must have been a nuisance and a pest. Consider Jupiter. Descending from Olympus, and away from the watchful eye of Juno, he could never make up his mind whether to travel in style, or incognito. One minute he'd demand the free and easy treatment of an ordinary citizen, the next he'd insist on the rights and privileges of a god, especially when a well-turned ankle stepped into the picture.

To foil him, and the likes of him, men always surrounded all important events, such as a marriage for instance, with a lot of complicated ceremony and ritual. Some of these rites, dating from the days of the glory of Babylon, have been handed down to us, slightly disguised.

One of the earliest records of a demonic lover -- or incubus as they were usually called -- may be found in the book Tobit, one of the apocryphal books of the Bible. A demon named Asmodeus gained possession of Sara, the wife of Tobias, and proceeded to make a thorough pest of himself, until the Archangel Raphael decided to intervene. Raphael went to the river Tigris and caught himself a fish, which at first glance seems to have little bearing on the matter. However, Raphael removed and dried the heart and liver of this fish and caused them to be burned as incense, the smell of which so incensed the demon that he quit on the spot. Thus Raphael may be credited with being the first to recognize fumigation as an effective pest-control.

But unfortunately, or some would say, fortunately, incense and its cousin, perfume, soon lost their effectiveness because the girls, bless their little hearts, converted it from a weapon of defense against demons into a weapon of offense against men in general. They started to imitate the rose instead of the skunk. Bless 'em again! Deceit and misrepresentation on the other hand, proved of more lasting value, for gods, demons and devils, being materially unreal themselves, find it hard to distinguish between material reality and unreality, between actuality and appearance. Even Boelzebub is fobbed by appearances, as who isn't?

In any marriage, from the very day of the wedding onward, the woman is naturally the center and object of attention. In order to prevent, therefore, that some demon-about-town become unduly attracted, the Babylonians decided to start right at the beginning. They performed a mock marriage, now a-days called engagement, which might fool the demon into thinking that he'd already lost the opportunity to exercise his droit de seigneur, so that he'd turn his attention elsewhere. And in case he should not be fooled by that, well, bride and groom hide their identities by not seeing each other, at least on the morning before the wedding.

Now, one would think they'd be safe once inside the church. But it so happens that the devil is no respecter of holy places, and so bride and groom enter the church separately, each camouflaged among a covey of decoys, the bridesmaids and ushers. Furthermore, the bride herself goes veiled and in case the devil should say to himself, "Aha, this was clearly a case of may

the best man win ...". Well, the "best man" isn't the groom.

Poor Devil! The ringing of the bells scares the devil out of him; Mendelsohn is meddlesome, and the incense gives him hay fever. By the time he has finally discovered who's who and which is which, the groom has slipped a ring over the finger of the bride. The ring, symbol of eternity, having neither beginning nor end, is an obstacle insurmountable to the devil's by now thoroughly addled wits.

But, says the wily Babylonian, it might be wise not to antagonise the devil too much, otherwise he might want to revenge himself at some future date, which would be unpleasant. So, sort of as a bribe, if the devil behaves himself, he can stand in line with the rest of the audience and get to kiss the bride. That ought to keep him happy. And since gods and devils are notoriously jealous of human happiness and a wedding is supposedly the happiest event in a woman's life, all assembled mamas and aunts burst forth into copious tears to make sure everybody knows the occasion is not so very joyful after all.

So the ceremony is over at last and the so-far frustrated devil sits on the roof of the church, chewing his finger nails and waiting to pounce on the newly-weds as they come out. He wants to feed on their souls, no less. The audience files out, lines up flanking the exit. The organ sets up a jocular trumpeting. The devil crouches and tenses himself for the spring. There they come, the bride on the arm of the groom. Down jumps the devil, pop go the flashbulbs, up goes a shower of rice. The stupid oaf, greedy as usual, starts to eat the nutritious grains and flowers as fast as he can gobble them up. By the time he's combed the last grains out of his beard, the happy couple are safely in their car.

Off they go, and the devil after them. But, curses, foiled again! Now somebody has tied a couple of tin cans to the rear bumper and their rattle-ty-bang is just as offensive to his ears as it is to mortal ones. Thus, by due foresight and malice afore-thought, another pair of love-birds have safely reached the haven of matrimony. And the devil, being the hindmost, has to be content to take himself.

=====

BANDITS

A million miles or so off course
The tiny planets lie,
They're very small, they're just a dot
In the vast depths of sky.
Those tiny worlds we've got to have
And ever try to hold,
For most of them have man's desire --
Great veins of yellow gold!
And man will rob where e'er he goes
Those whistle-stops of space.
He thinks the universe was made
For his two-legged race.
He sees no beauty in the stars,
No glory in the sky --
The vast infinity of space
Means other worlds to try.

BEHIND THE ATE BALL

or A MARTIAN ODDITY

by Karbonate DeSoda

The wife of the Mayor of Eastern Canalcopolis, Mars, was very nervous. She hopped about like a sand flea with fleas. It was all because of that man who was coming to dinner.

It was not every nite that the Mayor's wife entertained an Earthman for supper; in fact, to be historically accurate, this was the first time in Zumbarian (Martian) history that a Karterian (Earthman) would dine on Mars. Ray Bradford was the first rocketeer to reach our neighbor planet.

Mrs Aardvark (whose name purely by cosmic coincidence coincided with that of a popular terrestrial cross-word puzzle pet) was quite upset at the progress of her preparations. Her ten tentacles twitched and she wished she had as many hands as she tried to manage her pots and pans with only three pairs. Mrs Aardvark was world famous (Mars-world, that is) for the excellence of her cuisine (a French word which did not exist on Mars) and her husband had impressed upon her that on this historic occasion she must reach a culinary pinnacle.

By divine providence, Bradford had landed on the left bank of Canalcopolis, ancient home of the green Martians, who were traditional enemies of the purple Martians on the right bank, who were now green with envy. Mayor Aardvark was extremely anxious to make a resounding hit with the hero from Earth by having prepared for him a meal that would be, as the Earthmen were fond of saying, "melt in his mouth". Aardvark--in fact all Martians--were fairly familiar with Earthian sayings, for interplanetary radio had been operating on Mars for several years now. Every cultured green Martian was acquainted with Karterian (or English) in addition to vest Zumbarian (high Martian) as opposed to the dantizinferno or low Martian mumbled on the wrong side of the Grand Canal.

Mayor Aardvark had often heard it said, on the Camel Soup Hour, that the "way to a man's heart is thru his stomach". Of course, certain physiologists having never seen an Earthman, argued that this meant Earthmen's hearts were located behind the umbilical sac, but Mayor Aardvark interpreted this saying on a poetical plane rather than a biological basis.

At last Phobos and Deimos, the double moons of Mars, rose in the evening sky, and Mr Bradford, the man from the planet with only one satellite, sat at the dinner table of Mrs Aardvark. Mrs Aardvark, as women will, mentally appraised Mr Bradford, and while she found him wanting in certain aesthetical qualities, she liked him at once because he looked her straight in the eye. Let us be charitable to Mrs Aardvark's mentality and agree that she was unusually upset, otherwise she would have realized Mr Bradford had no choice. It was rather disconcerting that he should have two eyes rather than the normal one.

Then, too, Mrs Aardvark noticed, the Earthman suffered a lack of a full

set of arms, and had no tentacles at all, which paucity of charms made Mrs Aardvark feel very sorry for Mr Bradford's wife. (This was a sympathy she might well have spared the rocketeer as he was in fact a misogynistic bachelor who had fled Earth to escape the tentacles--purely figurative, of course -- of a neurotic nymphomaniac.

Finally, Mr Bradford was so small (only 6'3") that he had to be accommodated in the baby's high chair. But aside from his miniscule stature, lack of certain appendages, and amazing white skin, he looked almost Martian.

The household pets--all 17 of them--were fed first, of course, according to Zumbarian custom; and then the guest was invited to eat. As an appetiser Mrs Aardvark served baloney and applesauce a la banana oil, a combination she had often heard of. As Mr Bradford consumed her gastronomic delicacy, Mrs Aardvark noted with satisfaction that he lost some of his unhealthily pallor and began to turn a healthy green.

Then came the entrée. With a knowing triumph Mrs Aardvark nudged Mr Aardvark underneath the table with her third leg as she served the roast Horse. That is to say, not strictly roast horse, but the Zumbarian equivalent, an animal famous for its tough meat. Mrs Aardvark was familiar with the Earth saying, "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse," and she felt certain Mr Bradford had not had a satisfying meal since he left Earth.

After the meal was over the Mayor, excusing himself, rose from the table and hopped on his polite leg to the potted yuccactus plant. Amidst the leaves he emitted a belch of what could only have been described as Brobdingnagian proportions, had the saga of Gulliver's travels been laid on Mars. Mrs Aardvark, however, raised one of her six hands to her mouth and coughed ostentatiously. Perhaps radio reception from Earth was not all that it could be, but she had plainly heard on several occasions that, among Earthmen, a burp in the hand was considered to be worth two in the bush.

The last sensation Mr Bradford had before he died was one of consuming thirst. While the food he had been served had been edible, if weird, oddly no beverage had accompanied the meal. His hosts, themselves, were parched for thirst, but in deference to their guest had refrained from drinking, for the Aardvarks were acquainted with the etiquette of Earth that prohibited the imbibing of liquids with food. A Katterian author by the name of Rudder Coupling had summed it up thus: "Eats is eats and wets is wets, and never the twain shall meet." The Aardvarks had heard it on a broadcast from Earth one nite; they remembered it particularly well because the static had been atrocious.

Mrs Aardvark, as the behest of her husband, had done her best to make an impression on Mr Bradford, and had succeeded to the extent of her fondest expectations. Mrs Aardvark's dinner made an undying impression on Mr Bradford when he dropped dead. You see, Mrs Aardvark had put into practice an old Earthian proverb: One man's meat is another man's poison.

=====

The L A S F S
wishes to extend Best Wishes
to the CONVENTION!
Wish we could all be there

A REVIEW OF A REVIEW

by A E vanVogt

When I was asked to write a review of Jack Catherin's review of "The World of A", I was reluctant to do so. I believe in a critic having the right to his own opinion of a book without being heckled by the author in the same issue.

Then I read Mr Catherin's review.

I noticed immediately that he had merely used it as a medium for giving further expression to ideas of his own which he had developed on in the course of two talks at the LASFS.

Briefly, his notion is this: We human beings in the United States and elsewhere are living in a jungle. We are like beasts fighting each other for the goods which are manufactured or produced, and placed on the market. We are beasts because the distribution system under which we live does not distribute. However, modern technology can "tomorrow morning" start producing for us an endless totality of goods which, if we followed his system of distribution--whatever it is. I didn't get a clear picture of it, but it seemed to be related to Technocracy, though he was clearly a deviant in that he accepted some of Technocracy and rejected other facets of it.

In order to realize Mr Catherin's Utopia, it seemed that it would be necessary to disregard the widely-held concept that people shall elect their own government.

Right then and there, to my mind, Mr Catherin and the great majority of Americans part company. The people I have met want more democracy, not less. Some of them have odd notions of how they can get it, but that is the idea behind their dissatisfaction with things as they are. That is, they feel that they as individuals are too far from their government.

Here, then, we have Mr Catherin moving against the main stream of human aspiration. Having listened to him talk, I would feel at this point that the foregoing example would merely irritate him. He is against all this nonsense of people heading in a hundred and forty million directions. What we want--if Mr Catherin's ideal is to be realized--is a means of hitching them together so that they will all move in the same direction. Because this had not happened by 2650 A.D. in "The World of A", he dismissed the era as merely an extension of 1949 A.D. The same beasts were operating in a slightly different environment.

Actually, the crux of Mr Catherin's system is his belief that there is but one basic cause for all our problems, and therefore one solution to it. I wish I had room to list here the number of similar notions that I have come across, each one with a different stated cause, and each with a different solution. What is more, each had a vociferous following whose main characteristic was that they were intolerant of the solutions of other similar groups. In the United States, thousands of such groups vie with each other, for the collective ear of the people, and in their separate fashions exert pressure on the government.

Since this picture does not lead even by easy stages to the realization of Mr Catherin's "one way world", his solution is that his group shall have the power to suppress them. How they will gain this power is one of those mysteries of life.

I am going to take the pressure off Mr Catherin briefly, and admit very frankly that I also am in favor of a better distribution system. But I also think we have a better method of distributing goods today than we had in '32. This method involved manipulation of the economy and high taxation, an intricate solution. Most people who benefit from it don't realize that the taxation is an integral part of it, so they accept the benefits but resent having to turn back part of the money--which they would never have received if that system had not been put into operation.

I am confident that a less complex system of distribution is possible. I am equally certain that it will be arrived at by stages, not in one jump. One of the stages, as I see it, must be to educate people to accept the non-Aristotelian system of logic, as opposed to the two-valued logic by which they now largely direct their efforts. Once non-Aristotelianism is a widely used system of reasoning, people will realize that the problems of the world do not admit of one--and one only--solution. They will realize that life is immensely intricate, and that only a balancing of many things, both physical and psychological, will bring about an environment in which human beings can live with a minimum of insecurity and tension. Food and shelter seem important until you have them. The reason for this is that remarkable organism, the human body and mind as a whole.

Alas, it doesn't seem to care about ideals and single solutions to intricate problems. It has rebelled against all the one-sided approaches ever conceived. At its most inflexible, unfortunately, it dreams up simple solutions effortlessly.

Let us in one paragraph -- a woefully limited space -- examine just why things may go wrong in any Utopia. We start with baby, who has no convictions. He is easily frustrated by busy parents. The growing child suffers a thousand shocks of which his parents are not aware. There is next, the interaction with other boys and girls, and with adults. And above all there is the fact that until about the age of sixteen, the young person's cortex is not physically fully grown. He is incapable of understanding emotionally what is happening to him. Unsatisfactory patterns are established. And this is just the beginning. Without proper training, even the fully grown cortex becomes easily "tangled". It is hard to believe that two billion parents will successfully prevent such development towards neurosis until General Semantics has been spread to the furthest possible degree.

I had better cut this short. "The World of A" is full of symbols. The Games Machine symbolizes man's dependence on and faith in machines. The use of duplicate bodies points up a major premise of General Semantics, that no two objects can ever be exactly alike. The policeless period was a sort of purgatory; on Venus there were no police in the accepted sense. Once again I could go on, but I don't think Mr Catherin would know what I was talking about.

I say this deliberately. He uses the date 2650 A.D., the one mentioned in the blurb on the jacket. In reading the story, he apparently didn't notice.
(Cont'd on page 20)

//

//

..... AND THIS GOES ON

by Bryce Walton

New controversies arise regarding van Vogt's "World of Null A". Few would criticize it as a good story, or even an excellent one. However, to be a critic today, one must utilize standards of evaluation other than a merely aesthetic one, i.e., evaluation based on artistic merits alone, the abandoned idea that art exists in a separate sphere entirely from the real world.

To criticize van Vogt's novel on these idealistic grounds is another matter and it depends in such case on the critic's point of view--his social position, his philosophy, etc. Socially conscious minds--those worried on the state of the world and about social revolutions and the threats of a few annihilating wars -- are sensitive about any product that influences public opinion, as van Vogt's work certainly must.

Mr Catherin's objection rises from his belief that General Semantics should be considered as at least one attitude of thinking that will help in bringing about a saner world. And he believes that van Vogt has been injurious to society by presenting a possible semantic world of the future that does semantics an injustice. He believes General Semantics is great stuff--but that Van is guilty of sacrilege.

On the other hand, van Vogt objects to Catherin's criticism on grounds that Catherin is a muddled thinker, that he hasn't read The World of A carefully and is therefore not a qualified critic; that he has been victimized by "monism"--monism being a so-called trap for the unwary, in which they are sold a bill of goods which is supposed to represent one simple answer to a broad and complex problem, or to all problems.

Here we have a confusing point of difference. Let us examine it, trying meanwhile to be as objective as possible, and not be too confused by semantics ourselves. Two semanticists argue about semantics-- this always happens when two disciples are not being controlled by a master. When Korzybski gets too far away, the disciples fall into contradictions. Neither seem to agree on General Semantics itself--but both do agree that it is necessary to save the world.

Van Vogt would seem to be tinged with a monistic faith in General Semantics, while Catherin's faith is apparently based on righting economic maladjustments, with General Semantics coming along for the ride.

Van says we can't jump into Utopia and change the economic structure overnight, implying however that we can, but General Semantics, jump into a kind of alternate Utopia overnight by changing the entire logical structure of society by kicking Aristotle's ghost back where it came from.

Catherin says that if we brought about a greater degree of economic, social security, sanity would appear in direct ratio--and that in a genuinely semantically trained society, such economic adjustment would be inevitable. He's right there. The trouble here is in assuming that General Semantics has very much to do with our problems at all.

It sounds very confusing, doesn't it?

Here's the point: confusion is the whole idea propping up the movement. General Semantics, particularly the Korzybski school -- succeeds only in confusing those who are influenced by it as being a way out of our present-day difficulties. Perhaps not consciously are they seeking to confuse, but some of them perhaps are. Actually, General Semantics is a manifestation of a social situation resulting in an attempt at a solution resulting in even more confusion and subsequent maladjustment.

The man who is responsible for the survival of his family, his wife and children, and who ends up without a job in a world of threatening wars, hunger, growing unemployment and tyrannies of every sort--he is a dangerous man to the status quo.

Regardless of the emotional or semantic meanings of words like "Hunger", no vacancy, strike, lay-offs, foreclosure, war, death, insecurity, etc., the man facing these problems finds that the words have pretty definite and universal meanings. No amount of intellectual beating around the semantic bush can alter these words' meanings for those people experiencing what these few words label.

However if intellectuals with volumes of pedantic verbiage can convince him, somehow, that his problems are merely VERBAL, he isn't dangerous anymore, theoretically. Actually, those seeking to confuse this victim of social injustice, don't realize that most people, faced with these problems are going right ahead solving them in very efficient and thoroughly realistic and material ways. These people are still dangerous.

Why?

One reason is that so few people have anything to do with General Semantics because they don't have time to fool around with it, and even if they did, they wouldn't understand Korzybski, anyway. Stuart Chase, one of Korzybski's most slavish worshipers, says he read Science and Sanity "completely through three times, and portions of it up to a dozen times...large sections are still blank in my mind. A book on the clarification of meaning should not be so difficult to understand."

Fortunately, the doctrine that our troubles are merely verbal isn't widely accepted. If enough people did become sold on this doctrine, continued survival would probably be even more doubtful than it is now.

To survive, the people of the world who are faced with very real and material problems must face them squarely and by a constant fight solve them somehow. To adjust the economic system would certainly help a lot. A certain amount of semantic logic would also be of benefit.

But one thing is certain--our problems are pretty obvious, and they're certainly much, much more than merely verbal.

In "The World of A", developing a world based on Semantics via Korzybski square was to be the prime consideration. Actually, semantics is one minor problem in today's highly complex and struggling world society.

My position is with neither Catherin's nor van Vogt's, a statement that

I'm sure will cause neither of them sleepless nights. Economics alone will not solve the problems of the world, but neither will an obsession about the meaning of meaning.

Let us look at the background of General Semantics for a minute.

In '38 in Germany, there was a philosophical school, based on the works of Ernst Mach, called the Wienerkreis. It was concerned mainly with logic, and scientific method. It believed that most of the major problems of philosophy were a result of inaccurate use of language. This was the beginning of Logical Positivism.

It was a good idea, this one of removing from philosophy all ambiguities of syntax and definition.

Since then this movement has taken a tangent its founders would hardly recognize nor approve of, I'm sure.

Now -- via General Semantics -- this movement treats social problems as though they were merely verbal.

Social problems are not verbal. They're very real. A man staring at the face of his starving child knows that Hunger is a real problem. He can date it, he can philosophize about it untill hell freezes over, but it's still there, a little different than it was a minute ago, maybe, but it's still hunger. It's a real problem. If he can get a job, or if he can get more money for the job he's doing, or if he can plant a bomb somewhere, or kill somebody, or go out of his mind, he can do something to solve the problem. One thing it's hard to convince him of--that hunger is merely verbal.

Wars cause all kinds of unpleasant things, even horrible things, as a result. It is a problem composed of many smaller problems, but these problems are measurable and remedial. But to maintain that the cure is to be found in changing overnight "the logical structure of the world" and that these problems are only verbal, is to court certain disaster.

If people can get wrapped up in the idea that all problems are merely verbal, they are blind to the real material problems. That is the point.

It sounds attractive, it looks wonderful, like a magician's act seems to the observer. The massive bulk of Korzybski's tome is almost enough to stun one into submission unless he is a rabid iconoclast. And it's a kind of opiate to the troubled and confused man who, somehow, has been conditioned to ignore the real nature of his problems. As Dunham says in his book "Man Against Myth" -- "Every devout semanticist regards himself as an island of sense in an ocean of absurdity. He frames his sentences correctly and establishes the meaning of each word. If violence engulfs him, well, he can't help that. His abstention from the conflict is not only permitted, it is enjoined, by his philosophy. He is commanded to escape...men, it seems, must be mad to kill one another over mistaken syntax and cloudy definitions....." Unquote.

When the Spanish Civil war was in progress, and Hitler and Mussolini were gearing their war machine in Spain for a subsequent attack on the rest of the world, Stuart Chase, one of our popularizing semanticists said these words about a proposal to fight Hitler and Mussolini in Spain: "I am not...

prepared to go to war to defend Russia. I am one of the greatest idle and contented sitters-by you ever saw." Unquote. Italics mine.

A year later, Hitler attacks Russia. Six months later, Pearl Harbor is attacked. Americans began to die--because semantic reasoning enabled Chase to sit by. There are other rationalizations for idly sitting-by. General Semantics is one of them.

Witch doctors believe that disease is caused by an error in words...incantation. By correcting his incantation, the disease might be cured. In any case, witch doctors prevent development of genuine medical treatment.

Once, two semanticians were arguing the real meaning of the words "Fascism" and "Communism". When the hazes and opiate mists of discussion cleared away they found themselves in a concentration camp being given a shower in preparation for being slid into a furnace.

A semantician is moved not to take sides. The various sides are only words and therefore contain multiple meanings--the word is not the thing. By not taking sides, however vague the word meanings are, one exposes himself to attack. One is blinded to real, material problems.

Actually, a discussion like this has little to do with the novel "The World of A". Here, as in all other stf stories, General Semantics is only a gimmick upon which to swing a plot. It's one of stf's finest stories and as such establishes A.E. van Vogt as one of the all-time greats of stf.

To criticize it from the standpoint of the merits of General Semantics is to criticize any number of other stf stories because of the merit or lack of merit of such ideas as the fourth dimension, inter-galactic travel, life on Mars, etc.

This is a criticism of the preceding articles by van Vogt and Catherin, not a criticism of the novel.

But on the subject of General Semantics I am ready to give battle. I stand on the statement that it is primarily an opiate into which unwary intellectuals leap in order to avoid the real problems of society.

=====

And the stencil cutter asks: "Hey, is this a private fight, or can anyone--including me--get in on it?"

=====

DEPARTMENT OF THE "THE LASFS GLEES!"

Due to one thing or another, there was, apparently, a special something about the All Fiction issue, or Number 11 SHANGRI LA. Except for vanVogt, of course, the seven authors went into publication as rank amateurs. But they are amateurs no longer. All but one of those daring souls have made a sale. True, there was nothing spectacular about any of the checks. Nobody is going to retire on the strength of them, but it brings closer the immortal day when some adoring fan will rush up, push a copy of one of his stories under one's nose, and in a breathless rush, say: "Please can I have your autograph?" Heaven by any other name could never be as sweet! The LASFS glees, that our members who are trying so hard to write, are beginning to make the grade.

JEST A MINUTE by The Seccitry.

MERCURY:

Meeting called off on account of heat wave.

VENUS:

We had a very distinguished visitor last meeting, The Right Reverend Dr wan Whoops, who gave us a talk on his latest exploits. Seems he claims that he went outside the cloud layer in some kind of a machine and saw a bunch of lights that (he says) are other worlds and suns. Several of the members took offense at his statements and said so in no uncertain terms. By the time the excitement died down the joint was in a mess, and the dear Doctor was defunct. The remains will be on display in the parlors of the Happy Land Mortuary-- or nearly all of them. The crossed tendrils on the club wall are very effective.

MARS:

We celebrated our ten thousandth meeting and a gay time was had by all. Only one thing marred the event. Our landlord notified us that the rent was going up, or we were going out. A committee was appointed to look for a new location.

Tim-Dic has arranged for an outing to the surface next meeting. With the aid of a new telescope, we are going to attempt to find out if life can possibly exist on the third world. It has long been the contention that the planet is so close to the sun that the seas are boiling, as the immensely dense clouds of vapor resemble masses of steam. If life does occur on the surface, it would have to be covered with a hard shell to withstand the tremendous pressure of all that hot air.

On the trip, air helmets will be issued to all members on the payment of a small fee. We hope for a record attendance.

JUPITER:

The high spot of the evening was when Eli Bi caught his tail in the door. Everybody present learned at least six new words.

Our guest, a fan from Callisto, was slightly inconvenienced on arrival. He had been notified that if he paid us the promised visit, the gravity-set nullifier would be turned on full force. Due to a lapse of memory this was not done. We now have a two-sided furred rug for the club room, very flat, and with the most surprised look on its face.

Our treasurer, Ack For, reported nothing in the treasury. He asked for donations and dues, but nobody responded. He thereupon locked the door and

started to collect. After the meeting we decided to elect a smaller entity to that honored office.

The speaker of the evening was Bra-Rae, who spoke of the possibility of life on Saturn. He retired in disorder when somebody threw a chair at him. It was discovered later that Sne-Ric was the assailant who thru the chare.

All in all, it was one of the most satisfactory meetings we have held for some time.

SATURN:

Only a few at this meeting, so most of this report will be about the outing held last week when the entire club went to Titan on a picnic. We had a wonderful time that was marred only by meeting a herd of Brauls. We were attacked by them, and several bad casualties resulted. Ev Ev lost three of his arms, but they are already beginning to grow out again. Wal Dar had one of his heads bitten off and the specialists are afraid he's dying of loneliness. Hurry up and get well, Wal.

We recovered one leg and part of the head frill of our Director, Heral, and brought them back with us, but owing to an unfortunate accident, we were compelled to bury them on arrival. They were badly frozen, due to the fact that one of the Brauls took a bite out of the ship, and we had to make the trip back in space suits.

Then rental company is threatening to sue us for damages, but, as Konef remarked, they can't get serum out of a gaffis.

Next meeting we are having an address by El Bron Skubard on the early possibilities of interstellar flight. He has several models and films that should be of interest. We hope more of our members are able to attend.

URANUS:

All of the time this evebing was taken up with the preparations for the Convention to be held on Neptune. This will be the first three-planet get-together we have had, as the Pluto Chapter was just started. We're renting a ship and all of us are going. We finally talked an orginal manuscript out of Hul-Mae for the auction. Everybody is digging up all the crud they can lay hands on, because the Pluto gang are a bunch of Johnny-come-latelys. We ought to be able to unload everything. Nothing like a gang of Eager Beavers.

Fre-Her is in charge of refreshments, and all the gals are cooking like crazy. They say they're not going to bother about it on the trip, so it's a cinch we can live on cold food. If anybody gets any sleep, it'll be an accident.

NEPTUNE:

Well, the convention is a thing of the past. Everybody had a wonderful time. The location for the next one was decided after a bitter fight. It

(Cont'd Page 29)

Wimmin!

by L. Major Reynolds

I'll never be able to figure 'em out!

There were four of us in the control room on Ceres when Julie Storm set out on the last test of what we hoped would be an interstellar drive. We'd all tried to talk her out of it, but nothing we said would change her mind.

"Listen, you lugs," she said just before she took off. "Mike was the only brother I had, and now that he's gone it's up to me to finish his job for him. I know more about this haywire carbon drive than any of you, and I am not going to let anybody else risk his neck in my place. I've planned every part of this ship along with Mike, and I'm going to test it!"

We watched the lights of the craft shrink to a dot in the blackness, and I dug my heart out of the toe of my boot. I guess I've loved Julie since we were in the first grade. She was without a doubt the cussedest little devil in the class, and she hasn't changed a bit since then. She, Mike and I were the terrible three. Of course, being twins they were a lot closer than most brothers and sisters, but what got my goat was the way they could almost read each other's minds. When Mike crashed on that 'roid, she knew it before we ever got the news flash.

It was the way she worked out the code Mike had sent at the last minute that enabled us to get rid of the bugs in the motor. That is, we hoped we had.

I was carping on the audio when she came in for the first time.

"She's running like a charm, Buzz," she reported. "I'm past Saturn's orbit, and if she keeps up like this we're in the bag. The controls are perfect so far, so hold everything. I'm going to try a swing around Neptune."

I'll bet my finger-prints are still on the handle of that audio, I held it so tight. "Julie!" I yelled, "stay away from there! You know how terrific the magnetic gravity is. Come on back!"

"Keep your shirt on, Buzz. I'm not going close enough to get caught. Well, here goes!"

She left the audio on and I could hear the purring of the drive as ~~she~~ swung the ship around. And then it wasn't purring any more. I could catch short staccato blasts ... with ominous silences between them.

"Julie!" I howled, "what's the matter? Julie, come in!"

Her voice was so low I could hardly hear it. "Something's gone bust on me, Buzz. It's all I can do to hold her. This looks like curtains." Her voice faded out, and I went noisily nuts.

They tell me they had to pry me away from the audio by main force. Any

way, when I came to I was flat on the floor and two of the gang were sitting on me. Just then the audio came to life again.

"Buzz, this is Julie again. I'm out from behind Neptune and I think I can form an orbit. I don't know if you can find me as every light in the ship is blown out, but please try. I'm setting for circle now, so hold everything."

I think I forgot to breathe in the next few minutes. The only sound I could hear was the stuttering of her engines. She threw in a word now and then to let us know how she was making out. Finally:

"Sorry, Buzz, I don't have enough power. I've got the orbit, but each time I go around I get closer. I'm throttled down as close as I can get but it won't work. I'll be on the surface in about five revolutions!"

One of the gang came in and said the rescue rig was in place, and I took off like a cat with a singed tail. I didn't waste time looking for a lane through the Belt. I hopped over it and headed on a line for Neptune. I could hear an occasional word about Julie, but I couldn't answer. ~~direct~~ No broadcast from ship to station or from station to ship, but nobody has ever figured out a ship to ship radio.

One of the boys spoke up after a bit and said she had reported two of the circuits completed and she was starting on the third. I tromped on my pedal and laid a jet trail fifty miles long. Ahead, Neptune was looking now more and more like a disk. I know it sounds silly, but even at that distance I was trying to see the tiny dot that would be Julie's ship, but all I did was strain my eyes till the tears ran down my cheeks. At least, I'll call it eye strain.

When I finally arrived I was stumped. Neptune is such a hell of a big world, and Julie's ship was so small. If she could only show a light! Contacting the bunch back on Ceres I told them to tell her to try to rig something, and they said they would.

It seemed like hours passed before they came in and gave me the direction she was heading, and told me to hold steady on that line. She was between me and the planet someplace, but it was nightside and darker than the inside of a black cat. I was blubbing like a six year old, and fighting back the tears that had me half blinded, when out of the corner of my eye I caught a glimpse of a flare. With something to aim at, I lit out until I could feel the pull of Neptune trying to take my buggy away from me. Then, just at the edge of lightside, I saw her! She must have been less than ten thousand miles from the surface, and as I watched I saw her ship give a dip that lost her almost another thousand miles.

I dove after her and finally managed to get my craft between her and the planet. It was touch and go for a few minutes and then I slid under her. It's a good thing space is empty of air 'cause at the speed we were making, we'd both have been burned to a cinder. But we made connection and she rode me piggy-back, back to the station.

Of course I'm just a simple-minded man, but when we landed, and I tore
(Continued on page 30)

(Continued from page 10) SEMANTICS AND "NULL A" - Catherin

When I first saw "The World of Null A", I was encouraged to hope that here was a popularization of the most important subject of our time. Unfortunately, it is nothing of the kind. "The World of Null A" has done a great disservice to the cause of sanity.

=====

(Continued from page 20) A REVIEW OF A REVIEW - vanVogt

tice that the actual date in the story was 2560 A.D. This is a small point, but actually it is only one of many indications that prove to me he read the novel sketchily. This is his privilege. I wouldn't think of denying it to him. But honestly, Mr Catherin, don't you think that it is this very sketchy approach to a subject that is one of our great problems in changing a world for the better? Each individual rushes through life, glancing briefly at this, momentarily at that, never quite grasping what the other fellow means, never clearly understanding what he himself wants, so obsessed with his surface wants that he scarcely notices that they are rooted in a much deeper, more intricate process than anything he has time to dream about.

I maintain that Mr Catherin used the space for his review of "The World of A" to put forward his own ideas, and that accordingly it is not a review of the book at all. It is propaganda.

=====

(Continued from page 26) JEST A MINUTE

will be held on Uranus. The bunch from Pluto got pretty sore about it; they thought they should have it. But they were outvoted, and retired in disorder.

There were some choice items at the auction, but nobody could get a bid in. The Pluto gang bought everything that was offered. They even tried to buy the club mascot, but the police wouldn't let us open the cage.

Tuc Bo gave an illustrated speech that brought down the house, but due to the lack of asbestos-treated paper, we cannot record any part of it.

The masked ball was a huge success. There are a few divorce cases pending, but most of it was innocent fun.

For once, thanks to Pluto, the convention made money. Of course, after we get through fixing up the club room, there won't be much left.

But everyone enjoyed themselves, and we are eagerly looking ahead to the next one.

=====

PLUTO:

The articles of war have been signed, and all we are waiting for is the period of the next conjunction. If we had lost the next convention fair and square, this wouldn't have happened. The ballot box was stuffed against us, and that can only result in grave repercussions that can only result in plunging all fandom into war. Also, we now realize the value of the stuff!?

that was foisted off on us at the auction. Knowing we were new at the game, both Uranus and Neptune gave out with all the junk they've had stored away for years.

The entire planet is with us in our fight for justice, and if things go our way, we'll have a couple of new suns to keep us warm.

PLUTO UBER ALLES! SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS!

=====

(Continued from page 28)

WIMMIN! - Reynolds

her door open, she was sitting there bawling her eyes out. I tried to comfort her and told her she was safe, but that wasn't what was wrong.

Seems like the only thing she had to throw into the converter to make a flare I could see, was the diamond from the engagement ring I'd given her.

She was scared I'd be mad at her!

Wimmin!

=====

SPLITTING THE INFINITIVE (Author unknown; original source unknown.)

One of the most closely guarded secrets of the era can now be told: how an anonymous group of grammarians, working in secrecy in a remote section of the country, have finally succeeded in splitting the infinitive.

The so-called "Bronx project" got under way in '43 with the installation of a huge infinotron specially constructed for the job by Cal Tech language philologists. Though the exact details are still withheld for reasons of security, it is possible to describe the general process:

From a stockpile of fissionable gerunds, encased in lead cliches to prevent radioactivity, a suitable subject is withdrawn and placed in the infinotron together with a small amount of syntax. All this material must, naturally, be handled with great care, as the slightest slip may lead to a painful solecism. Once inside the apparatus, the gerund is whirled about at a great speed, meanwhile being bombarded by small articles. A man with a Gender counter stands always ready to warn the others if the Alpha-Betical rays are released in such high quantities as to render the scientists neuter.

The effect of bombardment is to dissociate the whirling parts of speech from one another until at length an infinitive splits off from its gerund and is ejected from the machine. It's picked up gingerly with a pair of hanging clauses, plunged into a bath of pleonasm. When cool, it's ready for use.

The question is often asked: Can other countries likewise split the infinitive? I think we can safely answer "No". Though it is true that Russia for one, is known to have large supplies of thesaurus hidden away behind the Plural Mountains, it is doubtful if the Russians possess the scientific technique. They have the infinitive but not the know how.

And that is something on which to congratulate our own brave pioneers in the field of grammatical research. Once it was thought the infinitive could never be split...at least not without terrible repercussions. We have shown it is quite possible, given necessary skill and courage, to unquestionably, and without the slightest shadow of a doubt accomplish this modern miracle.

See how easy, once you know how, to indubitably do it?