

Speer's

SUSTAINING PROGRAM

SPRING F/41

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[Faint, mostly illegible text from a document, possibly a letter or report, with some lines highlighted in yellow.]

COMMENTARY: ALPHA AND BETA I. THE FOURTEENTH MAILING

If it made any difference to you, we'd remark that the above heading is the first stencil cutting we've done with this machine. Anyway, the new machine will probably make a difference to you in reading this rag.

The Fourteenth Mailing was notable for the number of post-mailings that followed it: Chauvenet's Sardonyx, my Ramblings and Electron, and finally Forry & Morojo's Novacious. However, we don't think this is especially significant of anything, so will let it pass with a mention.

Milty's Mag, for all its brevity, we enjoyed. If we were like VoM's editors, we'd take his "Everybody took pictures, especially of the three very pretty Chauvenet sisters, and most of them were underexposed" and ask "Who, the girls?" but we aren't like VoM's editors. Blitzkrieg was a fairly good setting forth of the three accounts, tho we think the parallel columns mite have been made more parallel, and noticed some places where the typist didn't translate my hen-scratching accurately (It's second only to Elmer's chirography). Incidentally, there were formerly three different titles for the three accounts, Milty's being the one retained for the whole.... In the FA, for once we did not care for the Critic's Report. Elmer's typing of the magazine, and his interlineations like "bottomofpagebottomofpage" appealed to us. We will be charitable to ourself and not remark on the Laureate Report page. As for the amendment, we don't object to the substance, but regret the inclusion of the statement "This shall not be construed to apply to current memberships; but shall apply henceforth at the time said current memberships are renewed", which could have been included in the resolving clause, but must now, presumably, become part of the constitution. It is reminiscent of various passages in the American Constitution such as "and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to chuse three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations one," etc.... Muchly enjoyed were Elmer's fotos enclosed in the Mailing; our preference goes to that of Fohl.

For all Groveman's ghastly hektoing (or maybe Thompson cut the stencils?) we don't outright object to the S-F Miscellany. His account of the Conference was better than most. We wonder distantly what "The S-F Goldwyn" signifies.... We bid the Lovecraftian welcome. There is nothing in particular to comment on.... Koenig's Notes and Queries rate best in his latest, English as She is wrote second. Incidentally, we can rationalize the grammar of that quote from Golden Atom by calling attention to the fact that the relative "that" meaning "which" is sometimes elided. Not that I think the writer actually had it in mind. HK's commendations on my stuff are appreciated, but why did he choose to mention Ramblings the one time that it wasn't in the Mailing?... Markey's pub is likewise welcome; the article good.... Herberger's poem pub'd by the Lycanthropy Press has all the vices of Michel's "Monday Morning Over the World" without its virtues. In Grotosque, the only material that wasn't published before is of little value.

Ah, and here is the Futurians' sole contrib, whereon we say: In the first place, the title of the pamphlet stinks. In the second place, the cover stinks. In the third place, the contents stink. In the fourth place, Rubinson stinks. I will give him credit for telling in some detail what happened at the Futurian conference, which had not been told connectedly before, but said conference seems notable chiefly for the things it projected and failed to follow up.

Novacious we liked better than usual. Witchcraft Works and Satan as a Man sound best to us. Since we can't read all these books, these reviews are valuable in enabling us to talk glibly about such matters.

That brings us to our own publications. *Über die Schönheit in Sr* and *Unrecounted Incident in R's* were two of the few things we didn't compose "in the stick", and of these the latter didn't turn out as well as I felt it should, mainly because it was ~~stencil~~ in small pieces on several nites, and I had difficulty remembering what I'd said and what I hadn't and what I wanted to say. The *Electron* was put out because we forgot to put that item about Hiske in *Ramblings*.

Glad to see the Check-List back; don't let that baby keep you from publishing it, Swishers. And so to *Horizons*, which we liked very much, partly because it reminded us of our beloved Sustaining Program, and partly because anything Harry writes is good, especially when he comes out from behind that barricade of dummy copies and com-roses as he stencils, like us good Christian people. We'll mention *A Year of Unknown*, alpha, and *Glancing Behind Us*, beta, and then (now) add some remarks on the latter: I think it's a good idea to use the "Mr" in referring to fellow-members in official writings, as it definitely indicates that you are being serious, and no double-talk involved. Of course, there's always the possibility of using "Mr" in a double inversion (ask Ferdue what that is!), but such isn't likely to be found in the FA where it can do any harm. The tune of *Ode to Omniscience* is generally the same as the Cornell song, but the first and third lines flip the final syllable upward instead of continuing down with it, and the second line ~~is~~ ultimate is up, final down, all of which gives the tune an appropriate corny effect. We try to keep from putting too much stuff on the front cover of *Sr* because that's the one place in the mag that isn't crowded, and we'd like to keep it that way for relief or something. And we're sorry, Harry, but we can't give our grammar rules in big bunches because we can't figure them out that fast. We've been going along for a year or more using a fairly set grammar all our own, but it's some trouble to analyze it.... Oh, yes, and *Sardonix*. Firstly we're curious as to how that cover was produced. Then we'll proceed to the difficult matter of rating *Listening Post* best and the *Pome* next over the other excellent material like *Wintury City*, *Impressions*, *Poem*, et al.

Firsht--a glash-- t'make y'--frishky; Thenna--barrel--filled wish--wiskey

It is not generally known, but *Foosland* already exists. Sully Hoberds has been so kind as to send us a clipping from the *Daily Pantagraph* (I never can look at that name without remembering *The Cosmic Pantagraph*), which starts out:

"FOOSLAND. -- Driving through the Foos estate of 3,250 acres around *Foosland*..."

Lesh have nother Shuper Schiench Fiction Shpecial

For no sufficient reason, we have preserved this clipping from the *G# University Hatchet* last fall: "The *Waka Forest Deacons* went to work like *Martian automatons* in pushing over their three touchdowns."

There! That's in the wastebasket at last

The lady passenger took down the binoculars thru which she'd been looking out across the waves and asked, "Is that just a cloud bank out there on the horizon?" "No'm," answered the sailor. "'Slan'."

Cuch!

Well, here we are with too much space at the bottom of the page to leave blank and not enuf to put anything in and still be able to close the page off with another interlineation. Xandulu!

PACIFYING KOENIG

The versatile Mr Heinlein's "And He Built a Crooked House" (to digress, we doubt that the line Heinlein quotes in his title occurs anywhere in English poetry) we think one of the most enjoyable stories we've ever read, tho being so lite, it doesn't count as "best". But anyway, if Campbell had not taken the term "mutant" off and buried it somewhere in the dead of nite, it should have been applied to this story if it ever applied to any.

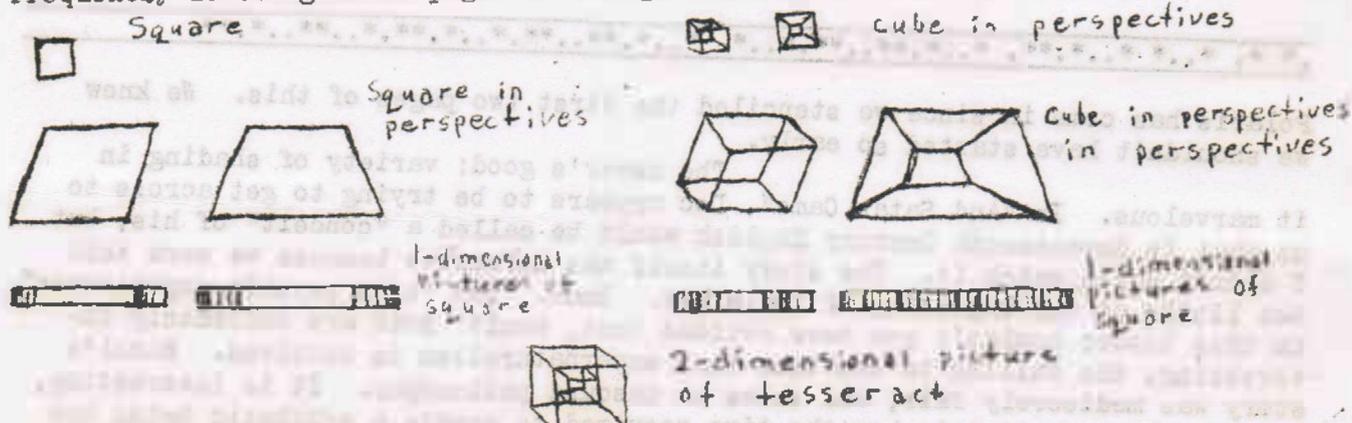
Heinlein had apparently done some pretty thoro thinking about the fourth dimension, and doubtless had models of tesseracts before him as he wrote. To be sure, in the latter part of the story, the reasoning is a little loose in spots, as Heinlein came up against the unavoidable objection that if there is a fourth dimension that is not simply a featureless extension of our own universe, it should be constantly manifesting itself in our everyday experiences. The stuff about "subconscious orientation" determining which turn the hero took in going out the window is boloney, as reduction of the proposition to a flatlander and a cube will show. But in general Heinlein's treatment is very logical.

You can spend some very interesting time on the street car, driving, or in similar places, working out details of the four-dimensional concept. It all ties in together so beautifully.

To be sure, Hainlein is not the first stf author to deal with a fourth spatial dimension and demonstrate its characteristics. There were Bob Olsen's stories, and another, I believe it was The Time Accelerator, that went into considerable detail to make it clear. But Heinlein's seems to be the most lucid yet, or maybe I'm now better equipped for it.

Nor are tesseracts new to random. See that excarpt from a Wilson letter that I published some time back. But first chance we get, we intend to build probably the first hyper-tetrahedron the world has ever known. Yep, some three-dimensional drawings of the simplest possible hyper-solid. We're already saving up chewing gum to make the joints. The illustrations by Schneeman were generally commendable, tho he left off four tooth-picks. It is particularly interesting as a two-dimension representation of three-dimensional drawings of a four-dimensional object. See our effort below to draw a three-dimensional object in one dimension. For an out-and-out two dimensional drawing of a tesseract, tho, we think our own is superior, because the whole can't be held in one perspective at once, thus getting across the idea of the paradoxes you can get out of a tesseract. (Incidentally, a rough note of the drawings below has been in our folder for years, and we're taking this opportunity of getting rid of it.)

This is all pretty incoherent, but it helps ease our conscience for frequently devoting these pages to things far away from science-fiction.



Hum. My tesseract doesn't look as hot to me as when I first thot it up.

Dere editer,

I wood like yor book a lot if it wasnt a dam yankee mag.

Escuse me just a minite. Them Bennings acrost the river is shooting in hear agian, and they have just busted a picher full of watter.

My cussin Kincaid is coming up form Merphy north carlina this weak end and we are going to go clene out them Bennings. I ast him to by a ray gun doun their if he cood, and he looket at me just as funny.

Thangs around hear aint like they uset to be. They is big airplains flies over all the time, and that big Goodyear blomp flieing around I swon I keep thanking its a space ship.

I cot a funny annimle are sumthing when I was over trapping in Rok Creak Park tother day. I wood sind yo a picher onley the Bennings has driled a hold plum thru my codack. Enyway, I got this thang loked up in the next rume, and he is rasing a aufful rou. He has got grate big ears and big old round feat and a big hed and he is big aul over esept his tale witch is amaul. He has a aufful long noce wich has a sort of a fonger on the end (but not a thumb) and he is pink. Can yo tel me wat he is. Iwood ast the zou peple onley I am afrade they wood tri to take him away form me without paing me a sent. He has 2 grate big teeth that stick out like my ant whigs.

I was a lot entersted in yor thang about the cair and feding of vampirs. I havnt bin abel to stay in the houce I was brang up in sense 1933 becos the vampirs taken it over. Could perfesser Willson help me eny.

I am sory if yo haf to pay too git this out of the Po, as I am perty pure finanttialely these days becos I haf to pay a old woman not to putt a hex on me. But she is 999 yeres old nou and she is supozed to dy won she gits to be a 1,000.

That was my unckel Arther and his famailley on the pone, they are in toun. I told thim about the Bennings and he sed they wood be wright out so I gess I had better cloce this leter.

/The following was added at the end:/

F.S.: I know this isn't as good as "Injun Joe's" letter was, but don't look at it that way!

/s/

Yours,

John A. Bristol

Polaris has come in since we stenciled the first two pages of this. We knew we shouldn't have started so early.

The cover's good; variety of shading in it marvelous. In "And Satan Came", Doc appears to be trying to get across to us what in Seventeenth Century English would be called a "conceit" of his, but I didn't quite catch it. The story itself was defective because we were told too little at the beginning of the story. Hmmm. Two "true psychic experiences" in this issue: couldn't you have avoided that, Paul? Both are moderately interesting, tho failing to convince that supernaturalism is involved. Rimel's story was mediocrelly fair, and shows an unsound philosophy. It is interesting, by the w.k. way, to note how the time required to create a synthetic being has decreased. Pygmalion of the Lemurian Documents gave the best part of his life to one; in World Without Women it required a year, and Mal Zorn does it in days. Harry's is better of the poems; both good. Alpha to Harry, Beta Eijay.

"Ich, Art, bin nicht ein Teknokrat"

We begin this page of short remarks and interlineations with this paragraf devoted to nothing.

"...several filatelists among the fans rote in & wanted to noe if..."

Milt phoned this evening and in the course of the confab mentioned that a guy in his office claimed to have written Darker Than You Think. Reminding us (now) that we have a Jack Williamson in our own office, 1 th white messengers. He knows distantly of his great co-nomporteur (we coin a word when we feel like it!) but holdeth no great opinion of him. We also have a Jurgens in the office, but he never heard of Elmer's hero.

"Correct is Reader O'Keaffe."

Elmer notes Miske's abandonment of fandom, and wonders "Migawd, chum, you don't suppose that your Electron drove him out of fandom?"

"Students in beginning courses in accounting may be divided into two groups"

In case you've ever wondered, we have given a new meaning to the word "interlineation". It originally meant something inserted between two lines of writing, rather than underlines. We discovered the expression on a photostat of the Constitution, where we also discovered what "Attest: William Jackson, Secretary" had been doing down at the end of the Constitution as printed in civics books and the like.

"And I am liable to suspect, that these ideas do resemble nothing material"

It is being forced uninstakably to our attention that the set-up in which this page is typed is going to make it unpleasant to read. A line should be left blank before and after each interlineation. But it's too late to change now, on this page, at least.

"What is't o'clock?"

We have been trying to decide which we like better as an epitaph for Miske, "He refused an objective perspective", or "He lacked the balance wheel that a sense of humor should have given him".

"Where, brothers death to wreak, Sansjoy Doth challeng him to fight."

You know, Rothman is a handy person to have around. We are hazy on a great many scientific points that we'd like to know more on, but are too lazy or ignorant to try and look them up. So we just ask Milton, and if he doesn't know the answer, he'll go to one of his faithful psychology or physics texts, and nine times out of ten dig out at least approximately the answer we want.

"The Cristene folk that thugh the strete wente In coomen for to wondre..."

We can't abide people that claim there's no good writing in present-day science fiction. We are constantly coming across passages like this from Heinlein that we think are really good: "You refuse treatment--therefore we withdraw our society from you, we cast you out, we divorce you. To Coventry with you." He turned to the bailiff. "Take him away." Campbell's magazines, of course, carry the weight in this, as in other things. From our rather limited knowledge of it since a twelvemonth and more ago, stf in the other pulps has little of lasting value; the authors seem to write their stories and then throw in whatever strange beasts and pseudo-scientific devices are necessary to the action. Of course, that to some extent is what any s-f author does, but in the better Street and Smith stories, the important thing seems to be an idea, a concept, which has all sorts of possibilities, and the story is just the author following out one set of possibilities. As a result, when the plot of the story fades from memory --which is all that the lower pulp stf stories have-- the ideas remain, for you to juggle around as you wish. The cop-and-robber plot of "The Roads Must Roll" was quite inferior, and gave us a rather poor first impression of the tale; but as memory of it grows dim, I more and more when I think of the story think of the idea of the roadways, the ideal of "The roads must roll!", and incidental pieces like the Road Song, and that superb Rogers cover, and I rate the tale higher and higher. The last worthwhile idea I remember from a lower stf pulp was "Zones of Space", but Astounding and Unknown are replete with them: The spells in The Roaring Trumpet, Hubbard's psychological fantasy, Coventry, the world of Final Blackout, and many many others.

"An hendy hap ichabbe yhent"

SCIENTIFICOMICS

Superman is so sorry, we oughta give it credit when we can; and we want to hand it to Siegel and Schuster for not sending their hero out on the chases after spies and saboteurs that 99% of the comic adventurers are now engaged in, one way or another. It is truly refreshing to see one funny paper hero still devoting his talents against the hackneyed super-criminals and lost tribes. To be sure, we believe a couple of pages of Superman were done for Look, in which Superman solved the world's problems by dragging Adolf, Joe, and Benito before the bar of justice of the League of Nations, but we'd not judge anybody by what he does for the picture magazines.

FAIR-HAIRED BOY OF SCIENCE FICTION

Brick Bradford is phenomenal in that he has been to almost all the adventurous places of science-fiction, never being tied down to any one or two like most of the fantastic adventurers of the funny pages.

We have followed Bradford's career but fragmentarily (we thot about inserting here a quotation from Evangeline, but decided against it). As far as we can tell, the first of his adventures of which we have any knowledge, very possibly his first, related to a lost tribe in Peru or Mexico, in the daily strips. The first Sunday pages we know of were Brick Bradford in the City Beneath the Sea, i e, Mu. Followed that Brick Bradford in the Middle of the Earth, with swashbuckling adventures, strange creatures, and Aztecs (or Mayas) again; I believe he made his exit thru some tunnel terminating in Aztec (or Maya) land. Meanwhile the daily strip had been following the slower-developing, cop-and-robbers course characteristic of daily comic strips, but had involved a number of scientific inventions and stuff in the modern world, and presently came out with a machine whereby BB & Co descended into the world of an atom in a one-cent piece. The Sunday page took a great turn with the introduction of the time top. (Incidentally, the Time Top was a top-panel strip accompanying the Sunday page for a while, concerning itself with the adventures of another couple.) They went into the far future, and Bradford's present service in the fleet of Admiral Kung, fighting for the pretender Whatchamacallit Khan, is the result of a trip into the past.

About the only places Brick hasn't been yet are in other dimensions or across interplanetary space, and he may have been there in the comics I have not seen. If not, they're in the cards. Hamlin, Raymond, Calkins, and others must envy the peculiar mobility of William Ritt's breadwinner.

You walk on slow and we'll catch up with you.

We suppose it is necessary to explain to our dear dumb readers that the point, such as it is, of the series of interlineations on the preceding page is that if the English language follows the future course picked out for it by Forry the J, it's gonna be very nearly right back where it started from. And since there is probably a law somewhere requiring that we give source of any quotations, we'll name 'em here: First is 4sJ, second Mirta Forsto, third a Time for 1936, fourth our accounting text, fifth either Locke or Berekeley or Hume probably Locke, sixth Shakespeare, seventh Spenser, eighth the Prioresses Tale from Chaucer, and ninth the early Middle English lyric Alysoun. There are many other peculiarities of these writers that are to the point, but we couldn't find short quotes exhibiting all of them.

I'll try anything twice if I survive it the first time.

While we're quoting sources, we should mention that the line about frishky and wishkey on page 2 is from "Satan's Man" in the Epworth Highroad of years back, really a quite fantastic bit of fiction in a Faustian sort of way.

They had been walking along the New England coast all afternoon, looking over the work of Sykora's Indians, and toward sundown partook of a native supper around an open fire. Now, however, with the shore breeze blowing, they had retreated inside the well-built stone house Sykora had designed for himself. Wollheim was slumped down in a creaky wooden rocker, with Sleeping Giant Wilson wall-leaning behind and a little to the right of his chair. McPhail had reversed an armless chair and sat straddling the seat with his chin resting on the chair back, causing his speech to be indistinct. Speer alternately sat on the bed and stood leaning against the foot of it. Taurasi was in and out of the room constantly, raiding the larder, much to the distress of Oily Hill, who was trying to look dignified in a chair of a large piece of rawhide slung within a frame.

In speaking of Sykora's success in civilizing his Indians, Wollheim brot up the oft-discussed question of whether it was a mistake to work toward a reestablishment of Twentieth Century civilization here. "I just don't think the Indians--mine, at least--are capable of living in that kind of a world, much less running it."

"You mean" challenged McPhail "that the Indians are inferior to the white people?"

"No, it's not that--" Wollheim protested, and Taurasi supplied: "They're just different, that's all. They aren't our kind of people."

"You get discouraged and tired, sometimes, working with them, tho they do their best to obey your instructions," Wilson noted.

"Well, what do you propose, then?" asked Sykora. "If you'd seen those dirty savages over in Europe now, that are to be our ancestors, you'd be mighty glad to have these Indians to work with."

"The necessity of working with anything wearies one at times," Speer commented. "Sometimes I'd give half of Patagonia for one sight of Pennsylvania Avenue at nite, or the junction of US 77 and 81 any time of day."

"The thing that gets me," one of the others said, "is the eagerness of these people to do our bidding. It puts all the responsibility on you."

"Yeah," Taurasi said. "If they'd just talk back or form a labor union and strike or something like that, I'd feel a lot better. But they wouldn't think of questioning us."

"Gods," Wollheim grunted. At this point McPhail's precariously teetering chair slipped out from under him and it was some seconds before order was restored.

"No, guys, I think you're barking up the wrong sycamore," Speer resumed. "I think that anyone's conditions at various times can be divided--in this frame of reference--into two states. There's the active state, when you get things done, when you feel like grabbing the world by the tail, when you've got an energy that'll sustain you in pursuit of some object against the greatest difficulties, when you're creating things --well, when you're just set to do things. But at other times you're tired, psychically. You want to take things easy, to drift; all you want to do is be comfortable and not have to put out too much mental effort. Maybe you're melancholy,... anyhow you're a conservative. And the thing you want to lean back on can't be of your own making, for some reason. I don't think I ever felt fully rested in this way after I came to Washington. That's why we feel so tired nowadays. It's not that this culture is on so unsubstantial a foundation; it's just that it's been built by us, and coming out of us is nothing to rest on." He had that essay note in his voice now. "What you need is security that someone else has provided for you. Maybe the State could do that for you, but I doubt it. Since the need is primitive, the gratification ought to be primitive, something that has always been yours, entirely naturally, --just by right of birth!

"Oh, lord," he cried, dropping back on the bed. "I'm homesick!"

THUMBING THROUGH M' SCRAPBOOKS

A blotter having on one side an ad for Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, showing at such and such a theater on such and such dates....

An article from the Country Gentleman, "The Sugar Crick School of Art", on Saunders (of Saunders & Woggon), Bandel Linn, Dave Gerard, Frank Beaven, and the First Prophet of FooFoo, Bill Holman....

Sheet from the Dille people, with colored picture of spaceship fleet on one side and drawings for making a model spaceship on the reverse; I got one at the Chicon, and not till later found that I already had one, which I got long ago....

A little passage torn from a home magazine: "Because in the first place your eye and mine and your Aunt Susan's each is a chemical works all by itself, and in the second place it's a chemical works operating under such protection that it makes the French border fortifications look like a simple picket fence, and by such remote control that it seems like something out of Buck Rogers."...
T

Bruce Yerke's calling card....

Wilsonian clippings re Snow White's long run in Oklahoma City, clippings from movie reviewers....

"He--he--he went out for a lit-tle waaalk --Ah hahahahaha!"

I think this little gem is supposed to come from Plato: "Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other; therefore, it is evident that philosophers must rule the world. You do not understand? It is very simple. Come, let us go over it again..."

"Who hath sinned, that this man should be blind?"

Having learned a little bit about heraldry, we have decided that the juffus coat of arms on our cover a few seasons back won't do. For one thing, the italic f is placed bend sinisterwise. For another thing, the motto should not appear on the escutcheon but on a scroll below it. And we doubt that putting even a monogram on the field is the very best practice. Ofcourse, we could forget about the motto, make the f quarterly quartered as it was originally shown in our guest News-Letter, and put the whole in a circle to use simply as a seal, which was the way we first designed it, but that doesn't give me a coat of arms. The thing will require a considerable jelling period, particularly in the matter of a motto, for what seemed liked an excellent motto a few months ago may be just another quoteworthy quote now. We think heraldry, and especially blazonry, is fun, tho.

ig

In a page of thumbnail biographies on writers in that issue, a recent American Speech cautiously notes that L Sprague DeCamp is now a free-lance writer.

Present-day literature is suffering from the philosophical blind staggers.--Tupper

One of the few causes for joy in the new year is that at last we can all agree that we're in a different decade from 1939.

Ma Joad is a "noble savage". H G Wells bounces. Naive faith in human perfectibility.

By the way, near bottom of Page 3, read "1-dimensional pictures of cube" where I have "of cubes" before next to last diagram.

THEY DID NOT BE

When we have notepaper handy, we're very likely to jot down some idle idea that five minutes' thought would veto. Such a one was that now before me: To take some ordinary sentence and print each word in the type face characteristic of the language of its derivation. Thus "meander" would be in Greek, "he" in gothic, "waltz" in German black letter, and so on. We will not insult your intelligence by pointing out what all's wrong with the idea.

Nor do I know what led me to put down in cold print, in a draft of one of my Cosmic Tales columns, the following: "What would you think of an Alumni Association of Science Fiction Fans? A purely honorary group: membership limited, say, to those who were reading stf ten years or more ago; show knowledge of early s-f by answering a questionnaire; and perhaps some requirements re fandom, too." There are echoes in it of the grand plan for ascending orders of merit beginning with the B Stf, in the SFL, tho, and the NFFF membership test may point in that direction.

Blank spot: Life, liberty, and the pursuit of collar buttons

CALL IT WHAT YOU WISH

Projectionist Sully Roberds has long been able to look at the soundtrack of a movie film and tell what the characters are saying and even give creditable imitations of the way they say it. He has now extended this ability to phonograph records. He figures it will save needles, and wear and tear on these records the guys & gals are circulating about American fandom.

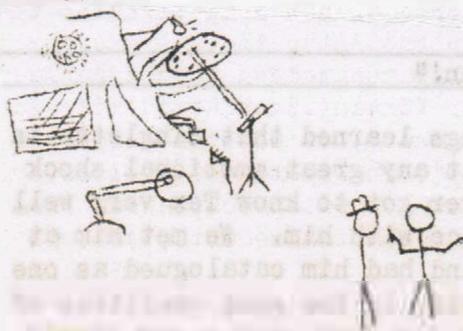
The man acted a little like a bum as I came toward him on the sidewalk, so I navigated to swing wide of him, but he intercepted me, only to ask, in odd accents, "Hold, mister; what is the date of today?" "Saturday, March 8," I replied. "I mean the year," he said. "Oh," I answered, at the same time noting his strange manner of dress; "1941." "Thank you," he said, and we went our separate ways.

The Poetess Laureate of FooFoo stoutly denies that her current production, "Fooniculi, Foonicula", is a parody, plagiarism, or takeoff on any other composition.

...Ulp! Those LA recordings received yesterday just slid off the desk and broke!...

Elmer Ferdue is understood to have challenged the anonymous author of Murder at the Chicon, in SFFan, to swords or pistols on the field of honor. No statement has been issued authoritatively indicating the particular passage in the story which obligated him to this action.

Despite his exclamatory "Thoo" in the recent Spaceways, Chauvenet denies all rumors that he is trying to start a third-party movement called "ThooThooism". "Because," he explains, "it wouldn't have a chance. Potential converts would spend all their time worrying about whether to pronounce it 'ThooThooism' or 'thoothooism', so that I wouldn't be able to teach dem any Geology."



It's a gadget H.K. fixed up. A photoelectric beam scans the magazines he puts before it, and the machine marks the line and flags the page wherever the word "hiss" occurs.

ELECTRICAL TESTING LABORATORY

MY PRIVATE GRAMMAR RULES

WHAT WORDS MAY BE USED?

It goes almost without saying that slang is permissible, except where it definitely violates orthodox grammar rules; the same goes for the colloquial language, and there you may find me at times using things contrary to "best" usage: for special effects I may use "they" for "heech" (singular distributive or indefinite), where "he" is the proper word. "You all" and "your all's" I accept as perfectly good as a distinctive plural for "you". "Ain't" I will admit for one exigency, which exigency I avoid whenever I can: Questions like "Ain't I going?" "Aren't I?" I reject with horror, tho I can see where someday I mite accept it. "Ain't" is obviously incorrect when used for "isn't" or "aren't", tho I am guilty of it in speech at times; "an't", tho approved by some dictionaries, has never caught on. In affirmative sentences where you need a contraction, "I'm not" offers a good avoidance for "I ain't". "Ain't I?" as a sentence by itself is quite unnecessary. "Check?" suffices in some cases; for most uses I employ "N'est-ce pas?", "Nicht wahr?", or "¿Verdad?", whichever one pops to mind (Ce n'est egal; mais "N'est-ce pas?" serait probablement le plus populairement acceptable. Ist mein Französisch nicht schrecklich?)

Before I leave the subject of colloquialism, notice should be made of the tendency to duplicate, so far as practicable, the spoken language in the typewritten. My letters are horrible messes of "Idno", "as'd've", "gimme", and the like, which often go quite beyond my ordinary slurriness.

With regard to foreign languages, I see nothing incorrect in bringing in a *clausule* in one of them when it states something better than the English would, or gives a desired effect. As for lone foreign words stuck into English, I insist that the rules regarding aliens, naturalized words, and various other classes, be strictly observed. In general, when the word still retains the connotation of its foreignness, it should be pronounced and (what's the word meaning decline, conjugate, etc; inflect?) in accordance with its native practice (thus "I'm going to blitzkrieg thru here", "Listen, señores," &c); and when it no longer seems foreign, it should be thoroly naturalized in usage (hence "radiuses", "to waltz", ktp).

In principle I will hold to the idea that any word or usage that was ever good in the language is still not incorrect. You will find a liberal sprinkling of second person singulars and familiar plurals in my writings since I took German, and the tendency to archaisms is quite noticeable in many fan writers. But the handling of the old forms must be correct; no "You art"s, or "to thou"s or "Whither goeth thou"s. And as a matter of fact you may find me calling you down if you say "an hundred", which is no longer approved practice. (Out of showiness I carefully watch to say "an hypothesis" and "an historical document" but not "an history", tho the distinction is very pedantic.) Incidentally, "to hight" deserves revival.

As for individual word taboos, aside from vulgarisms the only word I shun is "fact", and you will find me using that in stereotyped phrases like "smatter fact".

Approval of fancy new words like scientific combinations, and abbreviations used as full-fledged words, which have been mentioned before, might be mentioned here.

"Stand from between me and the sun!"

We were by Rothman's last nite and among other things learned that Singleton is a suicide. It would not be true to say that we felt any great emotional shock at the news,--tho we regret it very much,--for we never got to know Tex very well personally, having but one exchange of correspondence with him. We met him at the Chicon, tho, and know his published writings, and had him catalogued as one of the most promising personalities in fandom, lacking in the good qualities of neither the extrovert nor the introvert. It is too bad that such a one should have taken action on an unwillingness to see it through.

"What did you bring that book that I don't want to be read to out of up for?"

Unanswerable proof of the superiority of the American language to the British we consider this line from the Encyclopedia Britannica's article on Psychoanalysis: "...if they had not got to be accounted for."

"Warum haben Sie das Buch, aus welchem mir nicht lesen will, heraufgebracht?"

One of the minor irritations of life in Washington is the local usage, "Do you want to do this work?" when it's obvious that you have no desire at all to do it, and what they mean is "Will you do this work?" Historically, of course, the two forms are identical, but in modern usage, "Will you?" asks for acquiescence, and "Do you want to?" asks for a positive urge on your part.

"For what did you bring up that book out of which it is not wanted to be read to me?"

We came across an interesting journal while poking around in the school library. It is titled in French, "Le Maitre Phonétique" (with appropriate diacritical markings that I'm too lazy to try to duplicate with this keyboard), but the contents are all English--English, however, spelled in the international phonetic alphabet. Just what is the purpose of it is not made clear; the contents in general relate to philology, but I judge that the real reason for the magazine is to give practice in the use of the phonetic alphabet, or perhaps to help foreigners in learning English pronunciation. It isn't especially hard to read; we learned some of the phonetic alphabet when we took French, and have picked up a little more of it since, but you could probably read it without knowing it at all, provided you had some grounding in phonetics, knowing what are diphthongs, etc.

"The blab men, living and dead, who struggled here, have blabbed it blab blab our blab blab to h or b"

As you may know, various other phonetic alphabets have been put forward, apparently with the hope that they may be accepted for everyday usage. Such is the alternative spelling, used alongside Webster's horrible system of diacritical markings, in the latest Funk & Wagnalls dictionary. It represents a compromise between true phonetic spelling and the popular usage, and our own opinion is that it has about as much chance as a snowball in Sheol, and deserves no better.

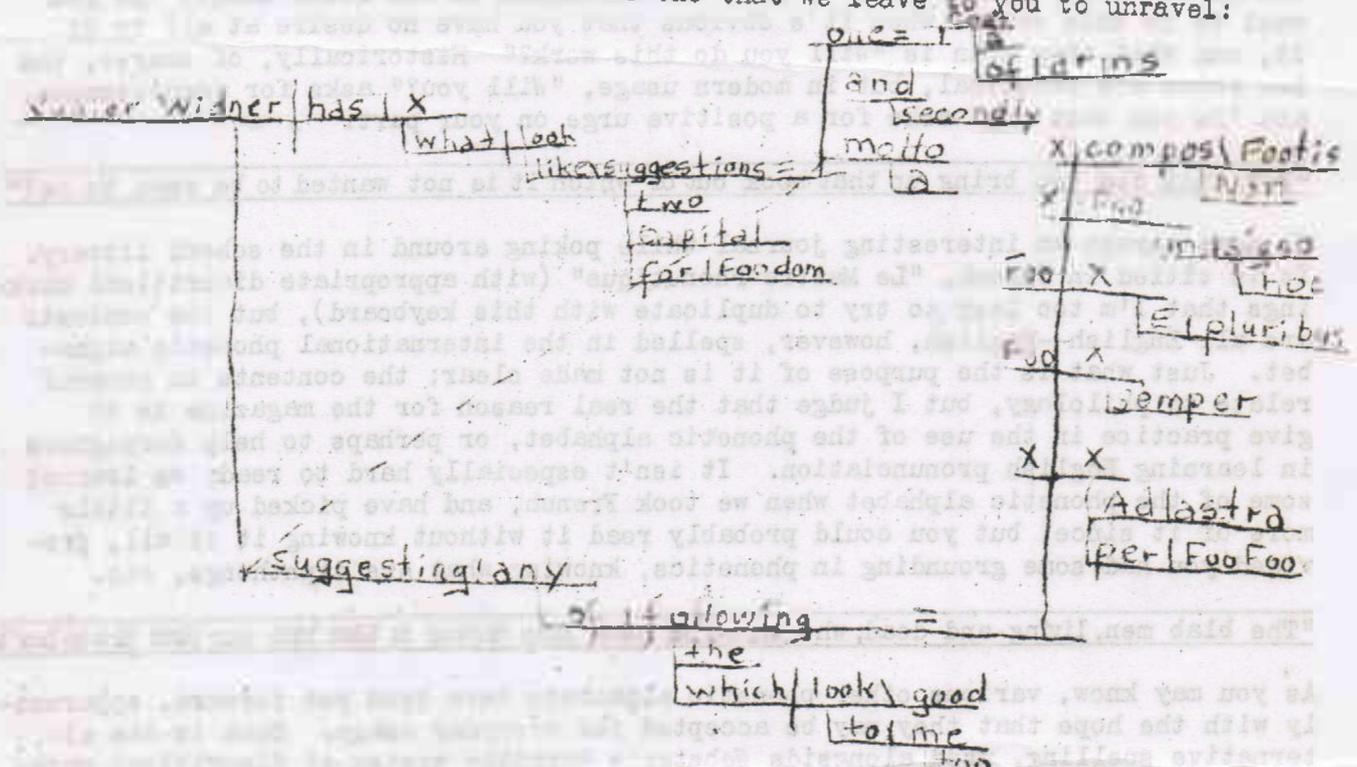
"There stands Jackson like a stone wall. Rally behind the Virginians!"

This, incidentally, raises a basic problem of the conduct of human affairs, which goes quite beyond the field of language. Shall we work toward the ideal by making improvement in the tools of the common man as rapidly as possible, or shall we leave his language, his weights and measures, his calendar, and so on to work out their own destinies and seek perfection in the specialized sciences? A gradual evolution seems quite out of the question in the case of language, tho certain purifications may be made to render the common tongue a more facile vehicle for those purposes to which a more perfect language is unsuited (for example, poetry --page Doc Smith), and it seems to me that fence-straddling compromises like Esperanto are basically incapable of supplanting the natural languages (yes, I know Esperantists admit no such hopes for Esperanto). But consider another field than language: Most enlightened people doubtless would favor the adoption into general usage of the metric system of weights & measures. And yet--people who have given it thought will probably also say that it would be advantageous to

adopt the duodecimal system of numbers (based on 12 rather than 10, you ignoramuses). But wouldn't the existence of a nearly-perfect metric system, based on 10, render less likely or postpone the adoption of a duodecimal system of counting? The problem is very complex. Systems are so interrelated, it is essential that the key ones be changed first. Suppose science should adopt an artificial language before semantics have been thoroly studied out? Better stick to Latin for the time being, I guess.

Et es un adverbio; no concierto nunca a nadie.

One of the things we like much to do is to diagram sentences. Almost as much fun is to take a diagram of a sentence and try to figure out the word order of the original. Following is a fantastic one that we leave to you to unravel:



You are at liberty to disagree with parts of my diagramming, but I'll defend it mightily.

This interlineation marks the end of the remarks on language.

Reading in the school library a while back, we noticed a girl at the same table reading a book entitled "Democratic Governments in Europe". The volume appeared to be several years old.

"Well, howdy, folks; y'know, folks, you're just folks t'me, folks."--P.A.

Staring disgustedly at the passport-like photograph on his Munitions Building admittance badge, one of our fellow employes remarked that he looked like a Martian or something. The picture looked more like a goon to me.

WE WERE THERE WITH AN ARGUS

Some selections from the collection Duquesne II (our 35mm camera) brot back from the Chicon. - - - - -



The serious looking one is Miske. Happy half-wit at the right is Skylark Smith, and the smoothie on your left is Ralph Milne Farley - I think I wouldn't commit myself on trying to identify the one in the middle looking at you. It mite be G. Tullis.



Smith's conversation drew them like flies at the masquerade. Despite the poor photography several fans can be identified, but I leave that to you.



This shot of Widner at the masque is not so good. It doesn't show the bottle of mortal wine in Giles' outstretched right hand.



capitalism at the Chicon. The auction.



Fans at intellectual relaxation.



The grand finale. Shot from atop the Skylark of Woolwo (a corner of which you can see in the lth corner) as we gathered ourselves for the Snake dance to Penn Station.

In the foreground is Dick Wilson atop Cyril Kornbluth. Gentleman with the hair is Chet Cohen. We refuse to identify the disrespectful fellow at the right. Handsome guy in the center of the mob is Earl Singleton, I believe. To your right below him is Tedibly, and southwest thereof Donn Brazier's cheek is in evidence. To your left of Singleton are, among others, Mark Reinsberg and Donald Wellheim (that thing near the left edge). So we formed a line of sorts and started off, the tail of the line singing the Road Song of the Transport Cadets, the middle bellowing Silent Night, and the van, Foo knows what.