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. UNEXPECTED EGOBOO

Comments from the 108th, August 1964

SELF-PRESERVATION 5: This was one of the most pleasing to read and memory stirring publications in the mailing. On page eleven you talk about the people who fly in to see the festivities. This brings to mind the Southern California community now in the planning stage for plane owners deluxe. That is, the main street is a runway and each house has a tie-down or hanger area. You gulp down that last cup of coffee, kiss your wife goodbye and run out to the plane and fly off to work. No kidding! I can't find the item, probably long lost in an LATimes Real Estate section, but I've seen mention of it a couple of times including a writeup which intimated, to me, that it is a Sure Thing now.

Gee Whiz, Lee Hoffman, we do have a number of things in common.. I sat for a hour in front of the Great Glass Placenta and watched spellbound the first Las Vegas Air Show (or was it Reno? LIFE had an article on it I can check if I bother...). I saw Stearmans and Great Lakes go through the endless Mobius of the acrobatics competition. There also was an old-fashioned pylon race which to the casual observer might appear monotonous and something of a drag unless he knew the flying it takes to make it around the pylon and keep off the desert... It brought back a thrill that had not entirely died since I was a model-airplane building kid who ate up "Dawn Patrol" and ran outside every time the noise of an airplane filled the sky.

I was really an enthusiast back in Somerville, Mass., in the mid-thirties. In those days, most of the airplanes we saw were the biplane types now so rare. In the warm New England (read "sweltering Boston...") summer, we kids would be engaged in some childish occupation or other and hear the poise of an airplane. We'd immediately halt what we were doing and spot the plane and watch it until it disappeared from view over the housetops etched against the brassy blue sky. Well, there wasn't any smog in Boston in those days (if even now) and it was, bigod, hot, brassy-blue!

We'd especially be awed, excited and thrilled out of our little minds when the summer war-games were in progress. We didn't know a hell of a lot about "war-games" although I remember about the "Red" and the "Blue" armies that, at that time, had no particular ideological significance and were so named. But what we remembered from summer to summer was the fact that every once in a while the world would be filled with an intense droning roar that would send us outside crashing screen-doors and clattering down steps to the nearest open space (a huge vacant lot one house over from ours) where we could SEE!

And there they were, a flock of silvery shapes, more than we could comprehend existed, droning through the sky in the hot afternoon glare, flashing, sparkling could, unbelievably thrilling to behold! We'd watch until the last speck was out of sight, the last buzz faded. I might add that once in a while a thundering clatter would fill the air and way, way down, south, at the end of Newberry Street (on which we lived) there'd be a clankling roar of tanks and we'd run, god how we ran, all the way down to (was it Massachusetts Avenue?) the end to get a close-up look, like standing at the railway crossing at Davis Square and watch and count every car rumble by. But we never got

down to the end of Newberry Street before all the tanks were gone. We'd trudge back up what seemed miles, our hearts thudding, our feet smarting from the unremitting pounding they'd taken in the headlong flight south.

was a lot less strenuous.

Airplane watching

And then there was the day we saw the dirigible. I have not pin-pointed just which one it was and I can't locate the exact whereabouts of Ships In the Sky (see, maybe, review later in this zine, or in ESDACYOS, to try to determine, now, just which it was. I remember the tragedy of the Hindenberg being a Big Thing. I am sure that we heard it on the radio as it happened, possibly because it was one of the first times I'd ever heard a man say "My God!" right on the radio without it being a church service or something. At the age of seven, or eight, that was something! I wish I could locate that damn book so I could remember, better, when it was. I thought it was right there next to The Mozart Handbook (which, sizewise, is a nything but!). However, I'm not too sharp this evening, having had the flu, or something, these last few days. I should be in bed now but I am weary of being in bed, almost as weary as being sick which is the story of our lives this year, so far. But I always remember that if I feel I've had it bad, think of what Rick Sneary goes through!

At any rate, we did see this dirigible. They became one of my childhood Wonders and remained so for a long time. I remember its silvery cigar-shape droning quietly, awesomely, through the hot, Boston-summer sky. It was unreal and not too silvery in that damn heat. It is perhaps this vivid recollection, over the years, that immediately made the opening sentences of Three Go Back by J. Leslie Mitchell so effective when I first read it in FFM and, later, out here when I obtained a copy of the book.

Gee Whiz, Lee Hoffman, how you do cause me to run on! And we've still got model airplanes, flying and the air-museums out here to go. Shall I?

I hope the answer was in the affirmative. What with this interest in airplanes, it was only logical that model airplanes would become a hobby of mine. And my younger brother's. And my Dad's. It was my Dad who helped us get started. Let's face it, he had the money to buy the kits whereas my brother and I didn't! And he also did the hardest work, cutting out the templates from the flat, thin sheets of balsa wood. I guess I did some of that later, but it was a lot of fun and we spent hours working on them. I remember the Miles Magister, a British trainer, I think, that we were building in duplicate. Dad got some blank sheets of balsa and duplicated each template, every part, that we cut out. The long thin pieces, of course, were easy. And as soon as we had one frame glued and dried, off the plans it would come and we'd start another one, the pins going in and the pieces being fitted, glued, bent ever so slightly, glued. It unfortunately never got completed. The frames for both were finished but not covered and one day my brother and I were rough-housing, just for the hell of it (a concept we didn't know by name in those days) or settling an argument about something, and one of us stepped on one of the twin Magisters, which somehow was down on the floor where it shouldn't have been.

So we had one Miles Magister. Then there was the Piper Cub. On the way home from school, I'd walk up (hell, what street?) to the fire-station at the north end of Newberry Street (one corner of Teale Square) and thence down Newberry. On the way to Newberry, I'd pass the Clariden Hill Hardware Store with its big plate glass windows, especially the plate-glass window corner in which there'd be all sorts of things. Like every Thanksgiving they'd have real

live Turkeys in there in an autumnal scene until just before Thanksgiving at which time the lucky winners of the drawing would get them. I guess the lucky winners also had to kill and clean them, too, but back to the topic.

One day on the way home, I saw a Big Contest! notice. Since this hardware store was also the hobby center and where we got all our models, I was most intrigued to notice that the Contest was for model plane builders. First prize was a gas model with gas engine; 2nd was gas model Piper with no engine, etc. So my Dad and I entered. We slaved over the standard rubber-band Model Piper Cub which, when it was finished, was indeed a beaut! And was thus entered.

Let me tell you that it was eons, even worse than waiting for summer vacation, before the contest ended and the judging period was over. But one day on the way home from school, I took my routine look in the window, did a long, and astounded double-take, and ran to beat hell all the way home. "Edward Cox" had won 2nd prize! We moved from Newberry Street before the huge Piper was finished. The fuselage and wings were altogether huge compared to what we'd built before but none of the frame or wings were covered. And then we moved to Maine before anything else ever got done. By then interests had changed and the last time I saw it, the skeletal Piper was floating at the end of some cord in the workshop upper floor of the barn/garage at 4 Spring Street, Lubec, Maine, dust enshrouded, a nostalgic remnant of a happy, long-ago time.

But the move to Maine did open up other avenues of airplane appreciation. For ever since I could remember, my Dad was actively interested in guns and the care and firing thereof. In Somerville, he was always an officer of a rifle and pistol club, affiliate of the NRA, and we had a rifle range in the basement of our home. While all this could make another story, let it suffice that in Maine we belonged to numerous Rod and Pistol Clubs (there also being an indoor range beneath my Dad's bakery).

The various Clubs would have Field Days at which various and many people from all over would go to the hosting Club's Field Day site and engage in various competition shooting, picnic or barbecue eating, watch canoe and water sports, listen to the band and like that. A wholly American, New England wholesome activity all the way around. These often, by necessity, took place by a lake, which abound in Maine. This allowed for the canoes and other water activities. It also helped in the landing of float-planes, for without a lake...

It was at the second one of these that an ambition which had sprung into full-blown white heat at the first, was realized. A RIDE IN AN AIRPLANE! Yes, sir. I was in my teens and had never been airborne despite my still pulsing fascination for airplanes, etc. (Maybe at some other time I can recount my wartime airplane activities if anybody is interested). So it was on a warm Maine summer afternoon that I went up, as we said then, for the First Time. It was a silver and blue Taylorcraft and I remembered feeling uneasy about stepping on the floats getting into the cabin. I was also startled to realize that they were metal (although I'd long since known they weren't wooden as I'd imagined for years by simply looking at cartoon strips... Smilin' Jack....Tailspin Tommy...in which they appeared to be non-metallic).

The great thrill fraught with some suspense, came as the pilot taxied away from the beach (an un-nerving hollow, metallly grating as the floats scraped off the pebbly shore of the lake) and came around for the run down the lake into the wind. The pilot opened the throttle and for a single engine plane, the roar was satisfyingly loud and spine-rattling. There was a great deal of spray and the ship planed down the lake on the floats, something I found conflicting with my image of airplanes

(although the China Clipper was a Big Thing in those days). Then, with a gentle rocking motion, as the pilot pushed and pulled on the wheel (not a "stick", another adjusting of image), the floats broke away from the lake surface and we were airborne. A fact whose thrill was somewhat tempered by the proximity of the opposite hills full of fir-trees alarmingly large and green. I took a great number of pictures that day in the two flights I made; I must recover them from their dusty repose back in Maine in my desk. My Mother and brother also "went up" that day and during other Field Days in those summers. I had, for a while, lofty visions of taking lessons (that pilot, whose name I forget, owned a flying service and offered a cut-rate course, earn and learn or something, I also forget), but that never came to pass, either, as I was soon to join the army and alter the whole course of my life.

This sure sounds autobiographical, doesn't it. Well, I guess it is. Gee, maybe I will publish "Troopship" someday if this keeps up. I'll mention the Paul Mantz, Frank Tallman, Museum of the Air later; I haven't been there yet (although LEE JACOBS has). And, I haven't even talked about Old Movies, teevee programs or other stuff like that, yet. Well, later. Lee Hoffman, you publish a memorable mag in more ways than one!

GODOT #3: I might mention that instead of the check-marks system, I jot notes on a piece of 3x5 paper and leave it in the zine; then I refer to these when I start my comments. Unfortunately, my notes are sometimes cryptic, the more so the more time has passed. However, in reference to TW3 in Britain, the Guvva-mint bashed it daid when it got too daring and Mentioned Things concerning the Royal Family and/or Other Institutions too ~~vll~~ venerable for words. Also there were elections coming up and it was feared people would be Influenced or something. At any rate, the UStyle TWS has had some memorable evenings. I remember one night when they did a CONSUMER REPORTS type survey on religions! Complete with the CU logo from the magazine in the background. I wonder if they heard about that from CU? But other than the format, the content was uproariously funny...it's a wonder a network even considered this, let alone air it, what with Religion being so touchy about things like that; nearly as bad as the AMA or the ~~Under~~ Morticians. This season, what with the show in color and the format changed somewhat (fewer people doing more, rather than the extremely piecemeal effect the previous slather of people presented), has been more solid and often as good and humorous as last season. But the piece de resistance (if you'll pardon the term) has been Nancy Ames (Aimes?) and her LOW CUT GOWNS! Wow, man, and in color there's more...uh...depth and dimension than in black and white! I've seen women notice that their gown is a little low and adjust it upward! But one night as Nan-baby came on for the first bit, the gown was at a disgustingly high altitude (like, man, you couldn't see anything!) and after the commercial bits, she comes back on for the first long number, and, like wow, she had adjusted it alright. DOWNWARDS!

Other than that, it is also a fine show.

ENEMY FROM SPACE and to a lesser degree, THE CREEPING UNKNOWN, are shown regularly on the LA dream-screen. Luckily, they are a few cuts above the usual fare which is pretty awful.

T*E*R*R*Y C*A*R*R I*N A*S*P*I*C: Just had to mention this because it was such a gas.

CADENZA 9: I somehow wonder if comments such as the following need be made at this late date as opposed to those made re Lee Hoffman's zine, which

are more or less undatable. However, I will go on record that David H. Keller may be considered a Fan, but he is not a fan, probably never had been and won't ever be. I classify lower case "fan" as most all of us in this microworld and in whose lives it to one degree or another has some influence. I would not say that D. H. Keller would fall into it anymore than Bradbury does now.

MOONSHINE 32: Gee, no "Monster" illustrations! ** Rick's comments on government in Britain were most interesting. It's probably the most I've read or heard about a subject about which I know very little since long ago in THE REPORTER. I tend to discount what I read in the newspapers. *** I agree about card-games at parties. That is, at a non-cardgame party. Parties that are gathered together for the express purpose of playing cards are quite another matter. But I've been grotched at the card-playing activities at some of the one-shots I've sponsored and wassomewhat disgraunched at all the cardplaying at the Pelz' AfterWedding Party. I was happy to join those who flocked to the Heinleins to talk at them. I fear that I like Heinlein much better than I do any of his most recent books.

A PROPOS DE RIEN 13: See last comment above. During this current illness, I read Farnham's Freehold (procured in a Pelz-affle at L.A.S.F.S. IN BEHALF of the Building Fund or the Andy Capp Fund). Only when RAH was describing the world they found themselves in and the future society, did he at all read like the Heinlein of Old. The rest was blatant Preaching and Propaganda and the dialog was almost as cardboard as EESmith's. *** Oh, I forgot to mention, above, that Len Moffatt's story was probably the longest I've read that lead up to a predetermined punchline. But the Preaching in it was all too obvious, rather in a granite-like lump all at once, for it to read smoothly and be a Good Story.

SAMBO 13: Good to hear from you again, Sam. When are you going to come out to the coast again? Come see our new house! *** Oog and oog again, but those grape jokes, et al, were so horrible they were funny. Excruciating is the word, I guess. I remember that Jack Harness subjected me to a number of them when they were the vogue. *** What did Charles do that first night after he found out they were not still in rehearsal? (This may be answered in a subsequent mailing; one good thing about reading three mailings in a row; the references in the mailing comments are fresh!)

KTEIC 117: Some of the best reading in the mailing. You lead an oftentimes exciting and interesting existance and, luckily for us, are able to picture it in words as well as you capture stuff on film. A fine, fine recounting of things with a Sense of Wonder-ish strain all through it. Much the way I felt during certain parts of my travels in and out of the army. *** I have a flock of pictures I took when the troopship I was on refueled at sea. What made it somewhat exciting was the fact that it was during a typhoon in the Yellow Sea when one would assume everything would normally be battened down and all personnel below decks (as it was in mid-Pacific during another typhoon). However, it was so bad that they had to give up at dusk and start all over again the next morning. I shot a slather (didn't you ever?) of film and have a few good shots; the rest, while not stupendous, show the ships and the sheets of water and the lines and all that. All with a little Argus A-II, too. *** Did you see the planes in the Smithsonian? I remember that I expected to see, and did, the Wright Brothers' plane and The Spirit of St. Louis suspended from the ceiling, but was also amazed

and pleased to see several WWI type warplanes also. Maybe they take these down from time to time. One could spend a few small eternities poring over all the stuff they display there. *** I noted with some annoyance that pictures were forbidden in the Capitol building. And such a lot to shoot, too. In color or black&white. *** I also was surprised when my buddy and I decided to leave the bar and sit at a table and a waitress came sailing up under full steam to carry our drinks for us! Tsk, strange ways these outlanders have. *** Damn, but I wish I'd known about "The Block" when I was a young Serviceman passing through there! *** Anybody know how it is in Tampa anymore? Things the same, better or Cleaned Up? (This comment inspired by Bill's recounting of "The Block".) *** Finally, now I know why the Beard came off. Tsk, and I thought a ship would be the last place they'd discourage beards.

LIGHTHOUSE 10: Overall, this zine certainly comes closer, in my opinion, than JESUS BUG, to being "...one of the best of the present crop, in or out of FAPA..." as Redd Boggs put it, in JESUS BUG. It's not that I dislike JB, or WARHOON for that matter, but LIGHTHOUSE swings! *** I read Metzger's stuff with what seemed a feeling of dedja vu (tho I'd rather Dedja Thoris). Apparently being In the Service is very much the Same. One does get a feeling of having been Cut Out of The World for a long, long time, then being dropped back in, disoriented and with a sense of having missed Something, or Things, irrevocably. I did, three years worth. *** Carol Carr's article was hilarious. It immediately made clear to me that writers fall into two classes with a very sharp delineation. Those who are selling and those who can't write worth a damn. I had always thought there was a great gradual curve, at the top of which were people like John D. MacDonald, et al, and at the bottom of which might be me should I really try. I hadn't considered that the utter clods would be trying, too. Maybe that is unfair, but I've gotten crank letters that were better written than some of this hilarious stuff. (And a lot that were abysmally worse!) Really illuminating and entertaining.

At this late date, it is as difficult to make comments on comments as it is for the recipient to read them, but I will say that Pete Graham's were among the best I've read and that his summing up of his attitude toward the Breen Trouble was about the best yet; it took little space, was succinct, sensible and to the point. This is not to infer that I agree with all aspects of his opinions/sentiments, but they were well put and devoid of screaming emotionalism, something that there is/was a lot of elsewhere.

Terry Carr also comes in in the Top Forty MC writers. MCs which require little or no straining of memory or scrabbling to the previous mailing to find out what's being discussed are the best kind. (I realize that I'm not exempt from making this sort that I deplore, but I Try.) ((Not to.))

I like Bach in the original. I love to hear organ, harpsichord, strings (large orchestra or small), but in the intended manner. Yet, I do believe he would be a swinger. I doubt if I've heard the lps under discussion here but I did glee at the 18th Century Jazz album.

"Tailgate Ramble", which is early 20th century jazz, was as illuminating if not as hilarious as Carol Carr's article. It was even more enlightening as to the workings of an actual agency. I see that there are potentially good writers getting a start but that the actual line between those who might sell and those who simply can't write is still fairly sharp. This, that is, until I am corrected by somebody who knows better. While I'm at it, Terry, maybe you can answer a

question. Did you have anything to do with my having received, some time ago now, a brochure all about the Meredith Agency and a note from Scott Meredith indicating interest in seeing some of my stuff? If so, what did he read? I'm curious.

WHY NOT 6: "From the Pens of Babes" caused more out-loud laughing than any other single item in the mailing, even Carol Carr's item, which ran a close second. *** It's a good thing Anne didn't see that golden Owl's head.

MINIMAC 2: When did you ever see me reading a copy of ANALOG? I always sneak-read it, you know that.

ANKUS 12: You err when you included our (ex) phone number in the list which was "all available" from Information. Ours was, and is, unlisted.

APOLOGIA: This seems to be a gracious and sincere effort, on the face of it. The fact that Walter Breen is a living, breathing person with feelings like any of the rest of us, made it difficult for me to argue in print as many others did, as if he weren't real and present!

So concludes unexpected egoboo; that from three mailings ago you never that you'd see. Those of the 109th won't be quite so unexpected and will rate another title. Those of the 110th will get the regular title; but I imagine that among a number of you, any mailing reviews at all, from me, is Unexpected.

Since the mss of the above ran to six pages even, and somehow came out a bit longer than that on stencil, I must needs finish this page and then write an 8th so as to avoid the blinding horror of a Blank Page. So I'll use that book review I mentioned earlier. It was written in July of 1959 and, I find, refers to some of the things discussed earlier in this zine, but let's run it anyhow.

GALA BOOK REVIEW NO. (somethingoruther)

SHIPS IN THE SKY by John Toland; Henry Holt & Co., New York 1957; 346 pps with photo section and index.

This book was remaindered in Los Angeles by the Broadway book department but by July of 1959 was listed in "Wants" in the Antiquarian Bookman. I guess the original price tag of \$3.95 was too much but for a buck, it sure was a bargain!

It is the story of the airships from the obscure American Dr. Solomon Andrews, spectacular Santos-Dumont in Paris, on through the development of the rigid lighter than air craft in England, Germany, France, Italy and this country.

A vivid, non-fiction story of the men and the airships, the hopes, successes and tragic disasters, this is of conceivable interest to somebody else in FAPA besides me, so I'll rave about it a minute or so.

I remember when I was a little runt in Boston back in the mid-thirties. It was a sunny summer day, hotter than hell which is typical Boston summer, and up in the azure sky, a long silvery cigar-shape hummed by. It was a sight even more amazing and thrilling than the biplanes seen once in a while or the flock of silvery planes

that roared by during the "war games". This was quiet, a faint hum of engines droned when it was quiet a moment, and it moved slowly, enigmatically through the world over my head.

I'll never forget it and now, after reading Ships in the Sky, I know a hell of a lot more about it, although I'm not sure whether it was the Los Angeles, Akron, Macon or Shenandoah. Probably one of the first two. This book tells the story of these airships and the intrepid airshipmen who flew them. Also, all of this more or less chronologically, the development of this type ship in other countries. The disastrous R-101 in England, the brief French attempt which ended in disaster for the Dixmunde. The fabulous success of the German Zeppelins which, after the war, flew millions of passenger miles in perfect safety despite the fact that all they could use was hydrogen.

This book tells exactly what happened and who the men were and what they said and did in those years when the airships were being built, decisions made, the danger of the storms (which brought down the most of them), the terror of the hydrogen explosion, etc.

Toland, after months of interviews with scores of people and extensive correspondence with as many others, plus research through a vast mound of published material, is able to tell us graphically of the "Norge" and "Italia" North Polar expeditions and the fate of them; the disasters in the early days of European airships, all giving up in tragedy except the Zeppelins which became the only successes.

And the stories of the Shenandoah and its disaster; the utter tragedy of the Akron which went down at sea, losing 73 of 76 hands; the happier fate of the Macon, the most successful Navy ship, which went down at sea losing only two out of 81. These all went down due to storms or man-determined choices of action which were ill-decided or a combination of the two. The use of helium abrogated the prime danger, hydrogen and fire in the air, leaving only storms and man to contend with. These could've been but weren't overcome, and killed the airship fever in this country.

The disaster of the Hindenburg, told in equal detail, finished the worldwide existence of the dirigible. Blimps carried on and were a great success but the airshipman's great dream is dimmed and there is no longer a bright future ahead.

All in all, a fascinating book about an equally fascinating, often tragic, part of man's adventure in the air, a phase that is rapidly fading from men's memories. I highly recommend it and am going to dig out of the library several similar books mentioned in the Acknowledgements.

Maybe I'll start airship fandom!

And thus we have another issue of BU8798b under our belt. The fourth in how many years?

Elsewhere in the mailing there should be ESDACYOS 11, the first issue of whom appeared in 1948. How is that for blazing publishing activity? But I never had my own publishing equipment and for a long time didn't have access to same with any ease. Which all adds up to the fact that there is more likelihood at this late date that there will be gross amounts pouring out of the San Inferno Valley! Which somehow brings me to ask: did the Pavlat-Evans Fanzine Index ever get published in one hunk? When was the last FAPA Index? I think a yearly one ought to be in order. Makes it easier later. **This has been sized Pub #105.