

CRANSTON

published irregularly by Joe Pilati, whose address until the end of August is c/o Perry, 4018 Laurel Avenue, Omaha 11, Nebraska. Cranston is intended to supplement Enclave; in the interest of publicizing my CoA, this issue is being sent to the entire Enclave mailing list. The Cranston referred to in the title is Lamont -- this was supposed to be a Shadow Fapazine, see? -- and therefore I am not changing the name to Salinger, in spite of the expressed preference of the Democratic voters of California. Mimeography by the QWERTYUIOPress.

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OFF TO THE MIDLANDS

These words are some of the last I will write in my Pearl River Period. I will probably leave for Omaha two days after I wash my hands of high school -- and God, what a damned spot high school was! -- there to go to work for The Omaha World Herald as some sort of minor cog; Tom Perry, publisher of Log/Quark and Good Man, and already in The World Herald's employ; conspired with me to line up the job. (I might note parenthetically, mostly for the edification of John Boardman, that The World Herald is Pretty Right Wing, but if they don't mind my politics, I surely don't mind theirs.) As the colophon above indicates, I will be living with Tom Perry and Family -- that's his wife and kids, Donaho, and I wouldn't go to your slimy convention anyway -- and correspondents and Enclave letterhacks should take note and address accordingly.

Come September, I'm off to "higher learning" (Boston University), but I don't want to think about that now. Just call me the Cassandra of the Corn Belt (special allusion for Anglofandom!).

THEIR TOWN

Ah'm the Stage Manager, but you can call me Sam. Our town is called Pearl River; New York. It's a pretty ord'nary town, right next to the Jersey line, in Rockland County. We like it here; it's real quiet-like, simple, homey...nobody famous ever came outa Pearl River, 'ceptin' ol' Julius Braunsdorf.* Some folks say Julius invented the birth control pill years before this feller Gregory Pincus from up New England way. We don't know for sure; we jes' know ol' Julius got run out of town. Anyway, it's a peaceful place, never no fightin' nor trouble, no outside agitators, no damn minority groups, no beatniks, no Supreme Court Justices. We like it, yep, we like it real fine.

Let me show you 'round a bit. Over there in that big white house is where the Witherspoon family lives. They been here...lessee...seven or eight generations now. They been busy as beavers lately, organizin' the local John Birch cell, but they're havin' some trouble 'cause the Legion thinks they're socialists.

That big farm over yonder is owned by the Van Frumps. They raise

* The real Julius Braunsdorf, founder of Pearl River, is supposed to have invented electric street lamps. However, the Edison estate stoutly denies this. -- jp

crabgrass, weeds, praying mantii, poison sumac, venus flytraps and fungi. Old Ma Van Frump is the oldest woman 'roun these parts. She's a hunnert 'n thirty-five, maybe more, I reckon. Got more lines on her face than one o' them Esso road maps.

That's the editorial office of our weekly paper there, The Pearl River Pastepot. Jed Hawgwash owns it and edits it. The Republicans been pressin' and pressurin' him to publish news about them lately, but ol' Jed, he don't budge. He's a Prohibitionist from way back an' he'll never forgive Alf Landon for goin' wet. The Pastepot, a'cuss, is the only paper for miles and miles around. Last year there was a tee-vee program, "CBS Reports," on one-paper towns, and how it's tyranny an' all, an' ol' Jed, he wouldn't stand for that. He got Art Cranshaw down at the 'lectronics shop to black out CBS 'round here for two solid weeks. That's what I call private enterprise.

Well, it's gettin' to be mornin' here, an' everybody's gettin' up an' goin' to work. There's the newsboy, Bobby Waddanabee. Hi Bobby, anything important happenin'?

Oh. Well. Bobby says there's been baby twins just delivered over in Scandanavian Town by Doc Weltschmerz. Now I gotta 'splain somethin'. See, we all live here in the Anglo-Saxon part of town, so we don't pay much attention to them folks over in Scandanavian Town. That's the slum part of Pearl River, y'know. We don't bother them, they don't bother us; it's better that way. Say....there's Jed Hawgwash....

BUT NOT REALLY....

Thornton Wilder's abominable paeon to philistines, Our Town, does happen to be required reading in the Pearl River High Schools; however, Pearl River itself isn't quite as crustic (that's my Luce language for this issue, gang!) as I painted it in the foregoing paragraphs. Pearl River is actually pretty typical of the Crabgrass Jungle, the land of lawnmowers and lunacy, called with the ritual shudder "Suburbia." It's not a bad place to live -- I'm sure it must be preferable to Grosse Point, Michigan or Hanoi, North Vietnam -- but I can't conceive of any Right-Thinking Individual spending one-third to one-fourth of his mature life in it, as I've probably spent some like fraction of my immature life. Pearl River is rather like Lichtenstein; Roy Lichtenstein.

The people who live in Pearl River, and who want to keep living in Pearl River, consider the whole dreary scene, the entire dull-grey pastiche, as a family heirloom. All of it, you understand: it can be taken apart and pieced together, jigsaw fashion, and the interlocking parts can be held up at leisure for complacent inspection. Pearl River is a merry-go-round: it makes some noise (always the same kind) and moves about energetically albeit mechanically, but it never really gets anywhere. But if I may shift images now....

I remember, as a little boy, standing before what was (and still is) known as a model train set-up, my chin barely reaching the table-top, where I could see a little village: houses, shops, foliage, flora and fauna, even little people going about their tasks, smiling paint-and-plastic smiles. And then there was the train: it sped around the tiny

community on a course that was basically circular, with perhaps some variation if there were enough curved tracks or "switchtracks"; but the beginning always led to the end, so conspicuously that neither beginning nor end would exist, and there would be only an immediate, a known past, and a known future. I would watch. Had I understood a word like "quaint," I would have thought it quaint, and so awesomely, absurdly simple to witness....

I would not have thought, then, that inside the little window at the head of the train, looking out, there must have been an engineer: when you're six or seven, you assume that such is the case, and the assumption comes so naturally and so spontaneously that you never think about it. But, mein gott, that engineer must have been so fatigued, bored, confused in his boredom -- he, more even than the other paint-and-plastic people, for his same-happening was intensified with such brutality, such cosmic contempt -- what must he have thought? Moving pictures that flickered were nerve-grating enough; what of pictures that flicker but do not move?

Now; for some reason, the image of the train set-up returns to me briefly, first in Lionel or H-O scale, and then it springs in full scale before me. I need only take a walk to the real-world town, to the quiet that is deafening, to the smoothness that is abrasive, to the odorlessness that is stifling. I see it again and again and still again, but it does not move, as we are all shoved around once more on cold metallic track.

"It's Back To The Store in '64!" -- Goldwater slogan in The New Republic.

LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS DEPARTMENT

According to Chicago disc jockey Dan Sorkin, Vassar College is located on Hooker Street. (This item relayed by Jay Lynch.)

LONG-LOST CIGAR DEPARTMENT

"Wally Weber does a good job of telling what went on during the ((Discon)) program (instead of the usual fan chatter of what he ate for breakfast and who with -- or vice versa)." -- Robert Coulson in his Yandro fanzine review column, which is entitled "Strange Fruit."

"God made Death so we'd know when to stop." -- Steve Stiles

CINQUAIN DEPARTMENT

I read
An ancient book; the tale
Of one poor tent-show preacher.
A man whose product, scorned and smashed,
Was love.

WHO KNOWS WHAT EVIL...

or, Who Says A Four-Page Fanzine Published
At Six-Month Intervals Can't Publish Letters?

BOB TUCKER

I was laughing and smirking my way through Cranston #1 this evening when I came to the short piece on Harlan X. Ellison and his \$u\$\$\$ story. Jolly good fun. But I paused there a moment, racking my poor brain, and then I remembered where else I had read his name recently.

/At this point it should be noted that Mr. Tucker enclosed a clipping headed "AIP SETS \$25 MILLION FOR PRODUCTION; PLANS 25 RELEASES FOR NEW YEAR." The story beneath detailed the, er, wondrous works of American International Pictures, soon to present such cinema delights as "Muscle Beach Party," "Bikini Beach," "The Comedy of Terrors" and "The Graveside Story." Writers under contract to AIP, according to the story, include Richard Matheson, Jerry Sohl, Ray Russell and Harlan Ellison. /

See the enclosed clipping, taken from Boxoffice, a trade magazine. All the underlined names should be familiar to you, and here they are, all gathered together in the AIP stable.

I had a note from Jerry Sohl only a few weeks ago, telling me he was now at work on "City In The Sea." Not my book of that title, but one by a certain Mr. E.A. Poe. And he had just finished writing the script for Lovecraft's "Color Out of Space," and before that he had written (hold your hat!) "Godzilla vs. Frankenstein."

Hot damn, I can hardly wait for the picture!

BILL BLACKBEARD

Cranston was a pleasant find in the mailbox. Nice of you to remember the late Lamonted in your title. However, I lift eyebrows to skyline level (I am as bald as TEW's effrontery) at your designation of Of Human Bondage as lousy. How about a review explaining your reaction, either for my fanzine or Enclave? /I don't feel up to it. I did read an abridged paperback version, and the main gripe I had was with what seemed to be a stilted narrative, but Maugham did approve the abridgement. /

"Bigotsville" swung, man, like weighted tar and feathers on hemp. The finale amused me with its deft irony; I knew there was a twist coming (had to be, unless you're a 100% non-Feiffer-lampoon-printing-New Republic-Kennedy-democrat) and yours was just Fine.

I grieve with you over AJLiebling; his was another of those demises (like Ray Van Houten's) that nothing had prepared you for. Hmm -- how about an all-purpose composite headline that would sear the souls of Hearstlings & most picked wits of the conservative press, yet which they would have no choice but to run in the biggest possible type on the front page? Like reversing yours to: "J. EDGAR HOOVER & CARDINAL SPELLMAN FOUND IN LUSH GREENWICH VILLAGE BROTHEL RUN BY COMMIE SPY RING." Unbelieving city editors, in early editions, might insert the word ALLEGEDLY but if there were wire photos, even this couldn't be done.

JOHN BOARDMAN

The first thing I thought of when I saw the title Cranston was the sometime World Federalist leader and present Controller of the State of California, Alan Cranston. The next thought was the Poochish lyric, "Cottleston, cottleston, cottleston pie..." /Skatekey! And that's "Who Knows What Evil" for this issue. /