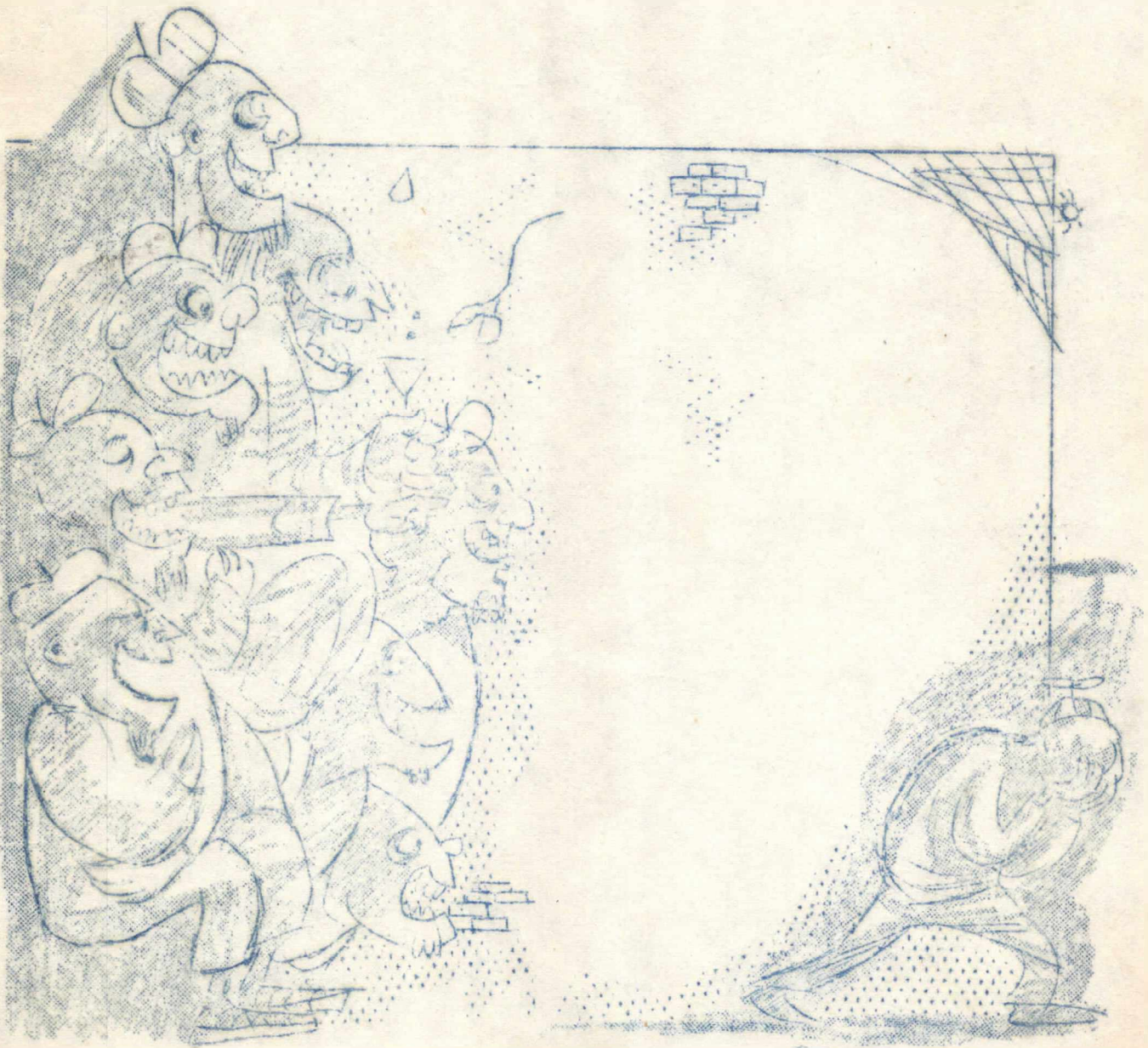


METROFEN

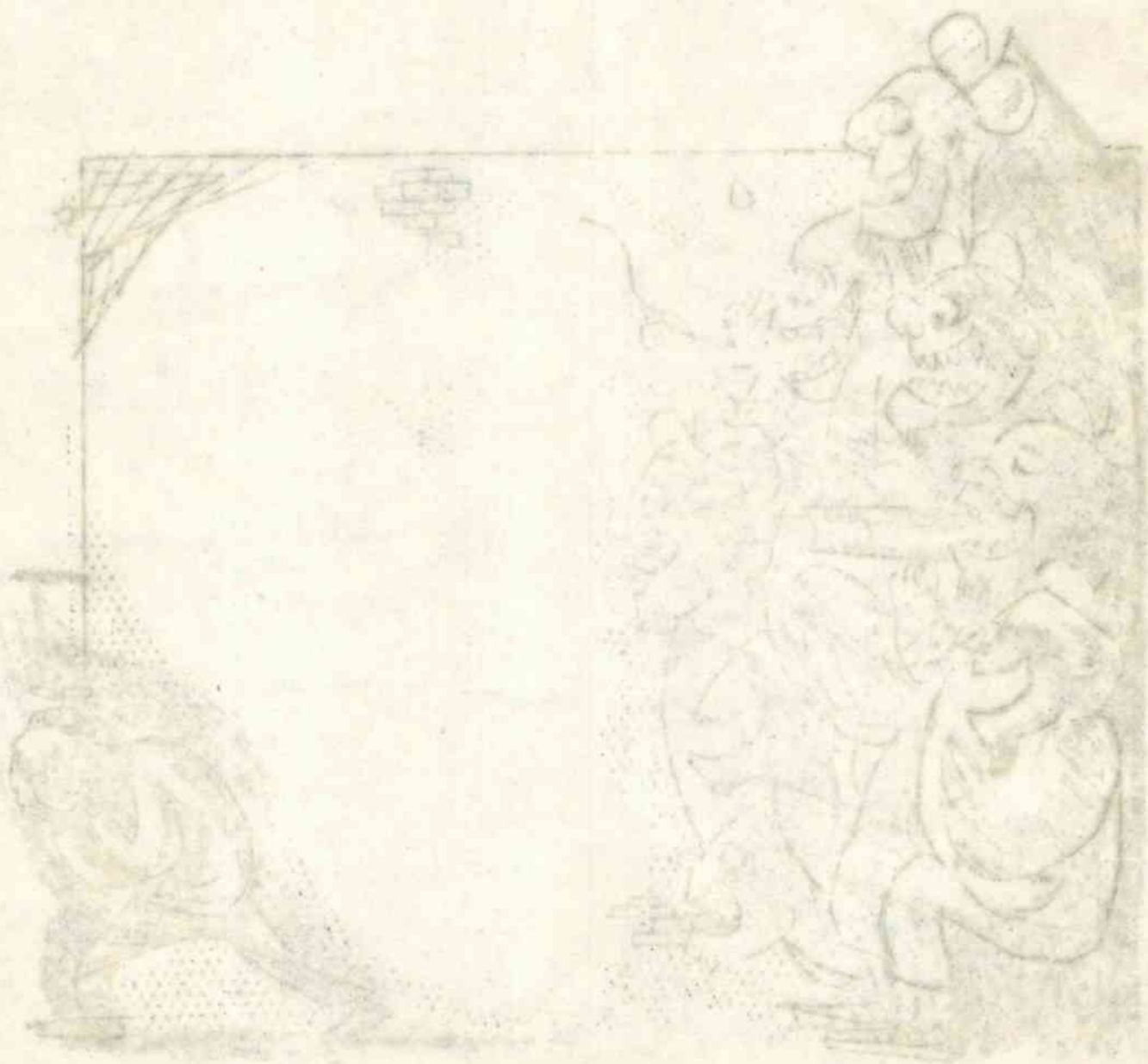
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* METROFEN # 3 *

This is the third issue of METROFEN, the unofficial organ of Metropolitan Fandom, if such exists still. (Don't laugh; as I type this, I don't know.) Like the other two, it is produced by one Leslie Gerber of 201 Linden Boulevard, Brooklyn 26, New York. Subscriptions go for something like 3 for 25¢, or 10¢ for single copies. This is an obvious outrage, but there's nothing anyone can do about it. I'm too lazy to make the issues any larger, especially since I have two other fanzines to worry about. Free copies may be obtained for legible letters of comment or as trade for fanzines I receive and review.

Other than the editor's space-filling babblings, there is other material in this fanzine. It is referred to as the CONTENTS

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Last issue, I forgot to include the reasons why each reader was being cursed with his copy. I could put it on the back cover, but I understand that the p. o. frowns on any written matter in stuff which goes under the printed matter rate, except for the address. I will therefore stick it here where, when the mag is folded, Summerfield's snoopy minions won't be able to see the check marks. (But Ghod help me if they open it up and read this...)

Anyway, YOU GOT THIS BECAUSE:

- () You're a member of Metrofen, or were, if there still is such a thing.
- () You paid good cash money for it.
- () Your fanzine is reviewed herein.
- () You supplied or wrote a contribution for this issue, for which thanks again.
- () I would like for you to review this, please.
- () I think you could help supply some good reprints.
- () You might be interested in joining our group, whatever the hell it's called. Try calling me (at IN2-3532) or Larry Ivie (SU 7-0315) for information.
- () We're interested in what your club is doing, and thought you might be interested in what we're doing.
- () Don't ask me why; I don't know myself.
- () This is a sample copy; sub rates above.
- () You are going to receive the next issue no matter what you do. You're stuck.
- () You will not receive the next issue unless I get some response out of you.

The future of this, as you can probably tell by now, is rather uncertain. I have (or anyway, was given) enough money to publish two more issues after this, but after that I dunno. I hope this group which Metrofen has become will supply funds for continuation of the magazine. If ~~the/let's/def/it~~ they don't feel like paying for it, I'll either pay myself or incorporate METROFEN in UMGlick and make it not just a combined title but combined magazines; that is, the combination will come out bi-monthly or quarterly and will contain original and reprint material. Actually, the problem isn't so great; after this summer, I won't be in New York (I hope; I'm trying to get into an out-of-town college.) But we'll see about that later, and worry when the time comes (or goes--ulki)

To fill up the rest of this space, I'd like to make a plug for TAFF. Not the current TAFF, which will be over by the time you read this and which already has enough money, but for the next TAFF campaign, which has been advanced a year and will, we hope, bring a European fan to the Pittcon.

From January 3 (the first Sunday in 1960) to the Pittcon, there are 33 weeks. Let's say that the TAFF collection must end three weeks before. This leaves 30 more weeks. Now let's say that 200 fans contribute to TAFF. If each saves 25¢ a week for TAFF, the contributions will total \$1500, or enough to pay for three TAFF delegates and leave quite a bit left over. I trust you'll take the hint. Start saving now. Man, can you imagine that happening? Even a dime a week would be enough for two. C'mon, fen, it's a dime a week for TAFF! - Leo

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE GAFIATE

By John Berry

Reprinted by permission of the author

The worst thing that can happen to a faaan is to revert to "gafia." (An abbreviation meaning "get away from it all"...I've given this primary neofannish explanation just in case a neofan happens to read this.) This chronic malady is liable to happen at any time, notwithstanding a theory that one's stay in fandom averages around three years. Such stalwarts as Bob Tucker, with more than 25 years' ad-fanning behind him, are an absolute rarity. My own theory is that if, say, you take a specimen group of neofen blundering into fandom today, one will probably last five years or more, two will perchance reach the three year standard, and the remainder will gafiate if and when the urge strikes them, most probably within a year. This has been proved many times, and to give an instance, whilst scanning a 1953 American s-f prozine the other day, I read the fanzine reviews, and I didn't recognize one name nor had I heard of any of the fanzines...and I entered fandom in 1954.

However, the purpose of this treatise is not to discuss the whys and wherefores of gafia, but to give my theories as to how particular cases of this state can be remedied. I have carried out quite a number of experiments, some on myself (in some cases, without an anesthetic) and I feel that I have made a little progress in this direction.

My case histories are many and varied, and, I am pleased to say, my assistance has been sought on many occasions. Just the other week, I rec'd a very sorrowful letter from a faned in the Antipodes. His worry was not unusual in my experience, and it gives me much pleasure to give a brief resume of the case, and to publish for all to see my clear and lucid directions to him.

His letter began:

Dear Mr. Berry,

A member of the local s-f club has gone gafia. His name is Randolph Spiluggett. He was a most promising neofan, and purchased a considerable number of my prozines without too much coercion. He attended club meetings regularly, and again, without over-excessive prodding, he paid his share towards the cost of publishing the club fanzine CROCHETT. Recently, he gave me a contribution for our fanzine. It was a sercon piece, about the effects of cosmic radiation on three-inch-thick liblumin. I pointed out to him that although it was undoubtedly a wonderful work, it didn't quite suit the magazine's editorial policy. I have a suspicion he didn't like this, because he hasn't been back to a club meeting since, and...

Friends, this letter hurt me deeply. The tender innocent mind of a neofan is something fine and wonderful, and should be nurtured with fondness and devotion. I felt for his sensitive fannish spirit. I immediately gave the situation the full assistance of my mental capabilities, and solved the problem for our impetuous faned. Below is printed my letter to him, showing him the way to retrieve this unfortunate lost soul in the most expedient way:

Dear Worried Faned,

I have given your little trouble much consideration, and especially for you, have evolved the following three techniques. Of course, you have a more personal contact with Randolph Spiluggett and you will be in a better position to know which ploy to bring into action. You may require to carry out all three in the order given, but I will guarantee complete satisfaction. Follow the instructions carefully, and I promise a more social atmosphere in your s-f club...

THE BERRY GAMBIT NUMBER ONE

THE INTELLECTUAL PLOY

A neofan who has gafiated as a direct result of your failure to publish a sercon item of his on the grounds that no one will be interested, poses a difficult situation. He has an inferiority complex.

PSYCHOLOGY OF THE GAFIATE (contd.)

He thinks he is an outcast. No one likes a rejection. Spluggett may be beyond redemption, and has possibly diverted his attention to ornithology.

Your first move is to call and see Spluggett at his home. Proffer him a gift, such as a surplus NEBULA. Tell him you normally sell it for two shillings, but he can have it for free. Then cough, pat him on the shoulder, and whisper confidentially, "Would you like to be club Sercon Expert?" He'll probably look coy and say, "Weeeell, I'd love to, but I had arranged to see a lesser spotted tit-warbler tonight." You sneer. You take a step backwards and turn to go. "And to think I sent your liblumin article to Woomera," you say between clenched teeth. He'll rush after you, breathing hard. "Oh, well, I didn't know. In that case..." Give him a noble look and shake him firmly by the hand. "You'll come back to the club again?" you ask. He'll nod excitedly. Tell him he owes you two shillings for club funds, and retire before he discovers you sold him the same NEBULA last month.

* * * * *

If, by some unforeseen mischance, Gambit One doesn't work, don't give in. But don't be complacent. You've got to get rid of your surplus prozines, remember. Move now to:

THE BERRY GAMBIT NUMBER TWOTHE EGBOOC PLOY

Go to his house again and give him two prozines. Say to him, "Look, about your liblumin article...it's...it's" (roll your eyes and gently sink down on to the left knee, timorously clutching the lapels of his jacket,) "it's superb, honestly...the only reason I daren't publish it in GROCHET is because I don't want to get sued by Lancelot Hogben. Man, that calculus...Mmmmm mmmmm!"

Then, as he basks in this newly discovered egoboo, press home your advantage. "By the way, we're putting out another issue of the club fanzine next week, but we haven't quite got enough money to pay for a ream of our special puce duplicating¹ paper for the covers."

Click your fingers meaningly, and give him a knowing wink.

* * * * *

Your shrewd comparison between his work and Hogben's should have succeeded. If not, the neo has developed advanced gafia, which is really a frightful complaint. The only answer is my:

THE BERRY GAMBIT NUMBER THREE (never before used)THE INTERESTED BNF PLOY

Call at his house again (if necessary, go the back way this time.) Take your trilby off, hold it sheepishly in front of you and knock at the door. When he opens it, give a slight bow, and say with reverence, "What message shall I give to Bloch?"

He will surely stagger back, and wipe his brow.

"Oh, er, tell Bloch...?"

Be vague. "You know. That permission he wants you to give him for a plot correction!"

Get ready in case he faints.

"You mean Bloch wants me to...to..."

Walk away up the path, shaking your head and saying, "I told him you probably wouldn't agree..."

He'll land on your shoulders.

"I agree! I agree!" he'll scream, "but what do I have to agree about?"

At this stage, flash your surplus prozines.

"Well, he wants to rewrite one of his s-f stories, and have the space ship built of liblumin, but I told him you wouldn't..."

Watch the way he prances round the garden like a fawn. (to page 5)

¹A duplicator is British for a mimeograph.—ed.

HOW THEY COMPARE

By Harry Warner, Jr.

Reprinted by permission of the author and the publisher, Robert Silverberg, from SPACESHIP #12, April 1951.

The arrival of 1951 means that I've been interested in fandom for 13 years. That's an unlaudy number, because it has caused me to write a bit on how the fans of 1951 compare with those of 1938, when I first stumbled into the field.

I'm not going to give a lengthy song and dance on the good old days, or bewail the disintegration of youth as exemplified in fandom. Several things in the field today seem to me quite superior to the situation prevailing just before World War Two. Nor is there any enormous difference between fandom of 13 years ago and fandom today. Joe Fann from either era who suddenly found himself able to move 13 years in time would still be comfortable in his new surroundings.

But there are differences, some of them caused by changes in the outer world, maybe a few resulting from changes in the attitude of fan themselves. Here are the most obvious:

The lone ranger type of fan no longer seems as prominent as he was back in 1938. This may be due partly to the increase in the number of fellows who are interested in writing about s-f, publishing fanzines, and attending crifanac sessions. If there were 250 of these crafters in 1938 and 500 of them today, it naturally would be more likely for two to exist in any given medium-large city. That may account for the absence of spectacular one-man fanzines these days, and the comparative rarity with which a fan becomes famous before he has ever met another fan. Back in 1938, some of the best fanzines were the product of a single person's time and efforts. With the example of Walter E. Macconette's SCIENTIF-SNAPS or Glen Wiggin's SCIENCE FICTION MAN before me, I don't think my lone-wolf determination to put out a 24-page magazine every six weeks was anything remarkable. Nowadays, it seems that every city large enough to spawn a fanzine contains at least two fans to put it out; the exceptions to this rule are mostly covered by situations in which two fans work in close harmony on a publication via correspondence.

The switch in emphasis from science fiction in magazines to science fiction in books is obvious. Back in 1938, there were no semi-pro publishing houses. Arkham House was a couple of years in the future, the anthologists hadn't gotten busy, and an author who sold a novel to a pro never dreamed that it might someday end up between hard covers. I suppose that it's really more a case of reader interest extending to books, rather than moving away from magazines. But the passing of years has also produced a significant change regarding magazines; the collector today doesn't try to amass a complete set of the prozines, as a rule, the way he did more than a decade ago. It's easy to see why—the number of prozines produced has more than doubled in the last ten years, and the difficulty of getting the old ones has increased a hundredfold.

The one sore spot for me in these changes of the last 13 years has been the growth of the commercial attitude among many fans. It's risky to generalize, because there are exceptions now and then. But as a rule, back in 1936 the fan who sold a prozine or a fantasy book did so only after great prodding, and had a sneaking sense of guilt to be capitalizing on his hobby. Today many of our most prominent fans are openly out to get as much as they can out of dealing, agenting, writing, or publishing in the fantasy field. It was inevitable, I suppose, but it has led to a number of excesses. New s-f books from the semi-pro publishers cost more than they should, when allowance is made for the fact that nearly all are reprints and that the physical properties of these volumes seldom compare with the average good book. The price of second-hand magazines and books has soared to ridiculous levels, mostly because of the ignorance of buyers who pay big sums for back issues that are still available from the publishers, or dirty copies of books which are still in print at the original publisher's price.

I think that the manners of fans have improved considerably over the span that I'm talking about. Ideas of hospitality seem to have reached a safer stage.

The author was one of these fabulous lone wolves: "the hermit of Hagerstown."

 THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE RAFIATE (contd.)

* * * * *

So, my friends, that is one of the many cases I have personally taken a hand in. I feel it is the least I can do. I am kept so busy with these problems, and I consider it egotistic enough that I am considered by many fen to have such a profound understanding of the unfamiliar mentality, as one of my critics pointed out just the other day. In fact, even as I type this, the afternoon mail has brought another little problem. Let me see. Ah yes...it's from R. Spluggett, of New Zealand. He says the club fancod has gone gafia. He says, "Secretly, Mr. Berry, I think it's because he is jealous about the success of a sercon article of mine about the effects of comic radiation on three-inch-thick lib..."

 HOW THEY COMPARE (contd.)

Maybe I'm just out of touch with things, and don't hear the worst these days. But I get the impression that nowadays, a fan usually informs another fan when he's coming for a visit. I recall ruefully the evening back in 1939 when a carload of six fans from Texas, only one of whom I'd ever had any dealings with, arrived unheralded at Bryan Place and announced that they were spending the night. We found beds for them all, but it was a struggle for a while. (One of the six insisted on sleeping on the floor, as it turned out. He claimed that he had never slept in a bed most of his life and saw no reason to start now.)

Fans are also lazier these days. They aren't willing to battle the hectograph, now that spirit duplicators are available. I don't blame them. Me, I haven't touched a pan of hecto jelly for the last ten years. It shows that I'm still young enough to change with the changing times.

MetroMinutes

By Larry Ivie

Reprinted without permission from the latest meeting notice

12:30--arrival of president and secretary.

1:00--arrival of additional member, who paused only long enough to perceive the presence of mr. president and mr. secretary surrounded by the presence of 48 vacant chairs before bursting into extremely unparliamentary laughter.

2:00--arrival of several more members, who joined the previous three in arriving at the obvious conclusion that metrofen, as was, had HAD it. Conversation ensued over the relative merits of metrofen's purpose as opposed to those of other similar organizations, interspersed with laments as to the lack of actual achievements thereof.

2:15--one or two members left; one or two additional members arrived, leaving a total of six.

2:30--a plan for reorganization was laid forth, which fell into immediate effect without recourse to debate, parliamentary procedure, or the sloghtest everlovin' blue-eyed hint of comment. THE MEETING, by constitution, an election meeting, was brought officially to order; the president and all officers ran FROM office, and the CONSTITUTION took command--being read point by point, and acted upon accordingly--resulting in a meeting which will undoubtedly remain as a fannish classic, and probably one of the most successful in metrofen history.

THE FOLLOWING parody of fan meetings reflected most vividly the shortcomings of not only previous metrofen meetings, but all constitutions and fan-gatherings in general. The meeting, from this point on, moved rapidly and light-heartedly along, accomplishing all necessary details of business with utmost facility, dispatch, and sense of humor to the whole furshlugginer situation.

AND METROFEN faded merrily from view. The party of six, after a brief meal, meandered by a roundabout way, and with little haste (they got lost) towards a similar fan gathering, not far away. The two members who actually entered sat in almost gleeful incredulity as the conversation (a little more boisterous, due to the presence of john clossen, at whose pad the meeting was held) duplicated almost verbatim the general content and viewpoints of the earlier portion of (to next page)

MetroMinutes (contd.)

the metrofen meeting, without the resolutions and content of the latter portion. (In fact, it was most amazing to witness the amount of time consumed in attempting to avoid "time-wasting-formality.") As THIS meeting adjourned into the streets in search of food and DRINK, the metrofen delegation slipped quietly away into the night in mutual agreement over first place honors of the day going to the memory of metrofen, whose last moment had been a most enviable nova.

((This all leaves me in a rather uncertain position. I'm going to publish this issue, all right, and at least one more; I still have money given to me by the Metrofen. After that, I dunno. Like, watch this space, maan. Who knows.))

Meskys
Mutterings

At the Futurian meeting, following their line of attempting anarchy, no one thing was discussed for more than three minutes. Some of the topics so considered were: Khrushchev's war with Disneyland, the ease of stealing books from Barnes & Noble (one person bragged that most of his quite large library was "donated" by various bookdealers, and it includes such things as Van Nostrand's Scientific Encyclopedia, the Handbook of Chemistry and Physics, and the Bible. He offered to procure books for one-third the cover price, and was "even taking pre-publication orders on some books at a further reduced rate." He had been down to the previous month's Metrofen meeting and said essentially the same thing. Of course, he was not invited back.), cracks about the Dietzes, cryptoanalyzing the cuneiform writings on the end-papers of Tolkien's books, etc., etc., etc.

Every so often, the officers succeeded in interrupting the shouting to conduct some 25 seconds' business. The business at hand was finally accomplished over a number of such intermissions. This business included the decision on whether to stay in existence or not: Ted White succeeded in convincing them that they should, "because there must be a club to fight the Faircon!" He was quite emphatic about it. A resolution was then passed to the effect that should witho be hold, none of the members would support either the Fair or the Faircon. (Thank ghod! That's one con that won't be ruined.) Officers were elected, including three quorums to take the place of Bill Donaho.

About this time, Dave MacDonald arrived with a can of what he claimed was "tainted cranberry sauce." Each member then performed the ritual of eating one spoonful; one was heard to remark, "I don't like cranberries, but anything to break the law." Another remarked, "Now they'll be able to call us 'those communist bohemian dope-taking drunken cranberry-crazed fiends!'" The ritual over, they placed the half-empty can in the refrigerator, and left looking for a restaurant to infest.

The December ESFA meeting was again a success as far as attendance is concerned. During Osheroff's reign, each meeting had been a small convention with some five speakers, sometimes as many as ten, almost all of them good. However, attendance had run about fifteen, except at the annual March open meeting when it was around thirty. Came the October election meeting, and we found ourselves locked out--the hall decided to close on Sundays and didn't notify us. Retreating to Osheroff's apartment, after everyone in sight was nominated and refused, officers were finally elected. We decided to meet there again the next month, and to choose a new site then.

The next meeting, with no program, drew twenty people. After lively chatter, the meeting was called to order. A new hall was chosen, and plans for future meetings were discussed.

The place chosen was Academy Hall at 103 Jackson Street. It is about a 15 minute walk from Penn Station, in the opposite direction from Slovak Sokol Hall, and is between Jackson and Market Streets, closer to the former. (It's about 1½ blocks from Market.) The hall was very large, but it looked a little poorer than S. S.

(continued on page 12)

MetroMags

Being a column of magazine reviews, all fanzines this time, being written on stencil (TGFC)* by the editor of this mangy rag. For lack of a better system, zines reviewed are in alphabetical order. Ratings are 1 to 10, 10 being best.

EXCONN #5, Bob Lambeck, 868 Helston Road, Birmingham, Michigan, 16 pages, mimeographed, no schedule listed but monthly to bi-monthly, 10¢, 10/\$1.

Cover is an undistinguished but inoffensive werewolf drawing by Chuck Owston. The contents page is very pleasant, featuring two or three lines of chatter about each item. Bart Milroad's column is probably designed to draw lots of comments; it might, at that. It's a complaint about our legal system, which I'm not too much in favor of myself, but Milroad's examples are bad and one of his suggestions (that bail is unnecessary since a man is presumed innocent until proven guilty) is quite ludicrous. (For those interested in the subject, I strongly recommend Curtis Bok's "Star Wormwood", Alfred A. Knopf, 1959.) The best item in the issue is Art Rapp's short article "Y'All Come," about fan clubs. The poetry, by Mike Barnes, Peggy Cook and Don Anderson, is mediocre, although Peggy's limerick is cute. Don's poem is not as good. John Roth's short story is bad. The letter column is interesting, especially for some utterly fuggheaded comments on my satire in the previous issue by GM Carr. She seems to be the only one who took it as a serious article, although I don't see how that was possible.

This is an interesting issue, well reproduced, but a few poor items and lack of anything really outstanding keep it from rating better than 3.

FANFIEN #9, 10, 11 (one combined issue,) Johnny Bowles, 802 S. 33rd Street, Louisville 11, Kentucky, 6 pages, mimeographed, monthly, 4 for 25¢ (this issue counts as two.)

This is a newszine, falling somewhere between FANAC and SCIENCE-FICTION TIMES. It contains, this time around, movie news, out of date and pretty poor semi-humorous reviews, (by the way, fellows, I'm not 14 any more; I'm 16) numerous more-or-less accurate news items about relatively unimportant pro news, and Stenafaxed illos by Gilbert and somebody. There are also Stenafaxed steals from MAD and some newspaper ad; if MAD ever gets a copy of this, Bowles might be in trouble. While this seems to have some small use, much of it is rather fuggheaded, especially the ads in the back suggesting that you buy back issues of ALTISSIMO CATAMOUNT at 25¢ a shot and that you sell them for a commission to your friends and neighbors. The full-page cover illo is rather poor. And I might be over-sensitive, but a sentence like, "If someone asked me to pick out the article in CRY that was produced by a 14-year-old child, I'd pick out Les Gerber's High Cryteria." gets my goat, especially since the writers of this aren't much older. I don't like this fanzine much, and I can't rate it any better than 2. Anyway, the mimeo job is good.

HOCUS #11, Mike Dedinger, 85 Locust Avenue, Millburn, New Jersey, 28 pages, mimeographed, irregular, 10¢ or 3/25¢.

This one, at long last, seems to be improving. The cover, by Prosser, is very good, and I only wish the mimeo had been better. (Mimeo throughout HOCUS is not very good.) Other art, besides Prosser's, is pretty poor and badly stencilled. Not all the material is good, either, and Bill Durkom's "A Reply to Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Durham" sounds as though the writer is seriously in need of psychiatric treatment. But there's also a pretty good short piece by Robert Bloch, the first part of a pretty good De-tention report by Bob Lambeck, an interesting article on Australian fandom by Graham B. Stone, and a good humor piece by Alan Dodd. Vic Ryan's book reviews aren't very perceptive, but his other writing has been getting better and better, and these might do the same. With items by Sneary and Rapp scheduled for the next issue, this shows promise of developing into a really good fanzine. Meanwhile, Deckinger should keep asking good writers for material, get better art (except for Prosser, who is very good) and someone to stencil it, and concentrate on improving his reproduction, which is spotty. Rating is 4 and likely to improve.

*Thank God For Conflu

MetroMags (contd.)

HYPHEN #23, Walt Willis, 27 Clonlee Drive, Belfast 4, Northern Ireland, 24 pages, mimeographed, irregular, no price listed but I remember 15¢.

This is a perennial best in fandom, of course. This issue, The Bob Shaw Festival, celebrates Shaw's return to Belfast, and 14 pages are by him. Shaw is, of course, a very funny writer, and his two items sparkle. The only other piece of material, Vinç Clarke's column, is equally fine stuff. Vinç makes a fine plea for the saving of all old fanzines; if you don't want them, send them to Inchmery, 236 Queens Road, New Cross, London SE 14, England. This is a worthy project. Walt's editorial should be classified as a piece of material, and METROFEN readers and all of fandom know how well Walt writes. Lettercol is as good as usual, and so are the cartoons. But somehow, lack of variety seems to hurt the issue a little, and I thought that Walt's enclosure proclaiming that Terry Carr is the only choice for TAFF of "fanzine fandom" and that you ~~should~~ must vote for Terry or change your vote to him was in rather questionable taste. This issue I rate only 8. But get it.

D-ARGASSY #49 & 50, Lynn Hickman, 304 North 11th, Mount Vernon, Illinois, 22 + 4 pages, multilithed, monthly, 10¢, 12/31.

This suffers a little by being quite late; Lynn says he'll have to start coming out weekly for awhile to get back on schedule. In fact, #49 is dated September 13. The dated material, mainly my news column, suffers from being late. But the other stuff is good. The letters are interesting, Lynn's chatter and reviews are all interesting, and the artwork is good to superb. Reproduction, as usual, is the best anywhere, and while the green illo experiment didn't come out very well, the red illos are beautiful. Walt Cole's two-page photosheet of the Detention is definitely worth having, although not all the photos are very good. Still, the shots of Berry and a few others are fine. J D-A is definitely recommended reading, and I might rate this even higher than 6 if it weren't slightly out of date.

THE SICK ELEPHANT Vol. 2 No. 5, George Wells, Box 486, Riverhead, New York, 8 pages, dittoed, irregular, 10¢ or comment.

I wish I could recommend this, but I can't. I know and like George, and I know he has the ability to produce better stuff than this, but he just doesn't care. The best thing in SE is an intelligent letter—that's how bad it gets sometimes. Short fiction by Billy Joe Flott is poor. Some puzzle verse by Ethop Looney might turn out to be decent, but I'll have to see the answers. (They're famish puzzles.) A column by John Butterworth has nothing. An article by Martin Overland on the quantum theory (called, appropriately, "The Quantum Theory") doesn't belong in a fanzine. Not that science is out of place in fanzines, but this is just dry encyclopedia stuff. In a letter, Martin says, "if he keeps reading my pieces, he may in time (about ten years) become a good writer." He means me. I dunno, Martin; might be, but I'm not interested in writing for scientific encyclopedias. Mike Deckinger's movie review is only fair, and George's editorial contains only occasional spots of humor. Art is terrible. I wish George would take an interest in publishing a good fanzine; he could do it. But this rates 2, with charity.

ORION #23, Ella A. Parker, 151, Canterbury Road, West Kilburn, London NW 6, England, 46 pages, mimeographed, monthly (?), no price listed but I think 15¢. Try sending 25¢ for two, or a dollar for a sub.

Trouble with this issue is that Ella is battling a new mimeograph, and the tops of many pages are illegible. Material is good, though; good to excellent, I mean. Best are ATOM's Fan Bems, George Locke's "A Goon Tale" and H. K. Bulmer's "TAFF Tales," but the other stuff is also good. By next issue, repro should be back to par and ORION will be even more worth getting. Despite the repro, call this a 6.

PSI-PHI #4, Bob Lichtman, 6137 S. Croft Avenue and Arv Underman, 5304 Sherbourne Drive, both Los Angeles 56, California, dittoed, irregular, 15¢, 4/50¢.

There seems to be an editorial squabble going on between the editors for egoboo and credit. I don't like this in a fanzine; it hurts my enjoyment of it to think

MetroMags (contd.)

that the editors are unhappy about something like that. The material this time isn't as outstanding as it was last issue, but there's nothing poor except Ted Pauls' dull article on what makes humor. Included are a good Westcon report by Otto Pfeifer and Wally Weber, a third article on Ted Johnstone's project of making a super-spectacular movie out of "The Lord of the Rings," a good take-out on well-known fanzine reviewers' styles, by Len Moffatt, fair book reviews by Rog Egbert, an amusing article on fandom beating the armed forces to the moon by Lewis Baker, a cute but undistinguished parody by Leslie Nirenberg, a good faan poem by Art H. Rapp (does he write any other kind?), and a good letter column. The next issue will be a monster (Lichtman says in a letter that it'll be 70 to 80 pages,) so it'll definitely be worth getting. So is this issue, but it's not as good as #3 and it gets a 5. Art is good.

QUOTIC #3, Don Durward, 6033 Garth Avenue, Los Angeles 56, California, 40 pages, dittoed, irregular, 30¢, 4/51.

Don types as badly as I do, but since he works with ditto he doesn't have the benefit of corflu and he doesn't correct nearly enough of his mistakes. You stop taking typos for granted when there are so many of them, and I think Don should switch to mimeo or get someone else to type his masters. Don's editorial is interesting. A short, serious article by Robert Bloch (wondering about Edson McCann, who he is and why his novel won the GALAXY Novel contest) is interesting also, but not much more. Rog Egbert's short fiction is funny. Harry Warner's article is only fair. My short story is...well...fair (?). Miriam Carr's article strikes me as being in questionable taste and I didn't enjoy it. Jim Caughran's article is good, interesting (see how snort of good words I am?) and worth reading. Ted Pauls' piece is the only decent thing I've seen him write; it's quite funny. Bob Lichtman's fanzine reviews are better than these, anyway. The lettercol is interesting enough, but it's not very stimulating. The repro is uneven, but there are some pretty poor pages. Art varies, but most of it is at least acceptable. This is very highly over-priced at 30¢, unless Don intends to make future issues quite a bit bigger. (The 30¢ price starts next issue; none is listed for this.) I'd feel funny rating this equally with PSI-PHI, but I'd feel funnier rating it lower than 5. Call it 4.9.

SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES #46, 980 1/2 White Knoll Drive, Los Angeles 12, California, 52 pages, mimeographed, six-weekly or more frequent, 20¢, 6/51.

SHAGGY has, within the last few months, become one of the really top fanzines, and this is a particularly good issue. As the official organ of the LASFS, whose members have many interests, it carries a variety of material to appeal to every taste, although nothing is so sercon or fannish that anyone can't enjoy it. The occasionally-criticized haphazard nature of this fanzine seems to me one of the most appealing things about it. The art, much of it by Bjo, is outstanding, and the two-color cover is very impressive. This issue contains an open letter by John W. Campbell, Jr. defending his policies, a fanzine review column by John Trimble, a selection from the club's minutes by Ted Johnstone which is quite funny, a poem by Bjo, an article on Robert E. Howard by Bernard M. Cook, an ad for Bjo for TAFF by Al Lewis, a column by Ron Elliot, book and magazine reviews by Jock Root and Bruce Pelz, the first part of a Detention report by five LASFS members, a letter column and Al Lewis's editorial, in which he gives some fair and unprejudiced speculations on the Faircon. All of it is good. Don't miss SHAGGY. It's great. I can't rate it lower than 9.

THE SKYRACK NEWSLETTER #10, Ron Bennett, 7 Southway, Arthurs Avenue, Harrogate, Yorkshire, England. American agent Bob Pavlat, 6001-43rd Avenue, Hyattsville, Maryland, 4 pages, mimeographed, monthly, 6 for 2/6 or 35¢.

SKYRACK does for British fandom what FANAC does for American. It's not as good—not yet, anyway—but if you're interested in British fan doings it's as indispensable as FANAC. This issue contains the news that TAFF has enough money for this year and will try to send someone from Britain to the U. S. for the Pittcon. Good news! Also a review of RETRIBUTION—and I don't have RET yet. Recommended. Rating is 6.

MetroFags (contd.)

SMOKE #2, George Locke, 85, Chelsea Gardens, London SW1, England, 50 pages, mimeographed, irregular, 15¢, 1/-, 20,000 Galactical credits or ½ pound of flesh.

George is a British neo who came out with the best first issue I've ever seen. This second issue is no disappointment. Reproduction is a bit better than last issue (that is, quite easily readable.) After an interesting editorial, there's a report on the Symposium by Archie Mercer; an article on fannish pseudonyms by Harry Warner, Jr.; a column by Vic Ryan; a good Berry story which, after the first issue and this, looks like a series; a good poem by Andy Young; an interesting reprint of an old newspaper hoax; some fairly good fanzine reviews by Ivor Mayne; a silly comic by Roge Rogers; a short-short by Sid Birchby which I didn't enjoy; a good column by Vinç Clarke; a funny advice column with answers supplied by the editor; a complete and entertaining Detention report by our own Belle Dietz, dirty pro; and finally a good letter column with some very good editorial touches. I enjoy SMOKE quite a bit, and the next issue should be just as good despite a story of mine. Rating is 7.

TWIG #17, Guy Terwilliger, 1412 Albright Street, Boise, Idaho, 60 pages, dittoed, irregular but fairly frequent, 20¢, 5/\$1.

This is quite a bargain at 20¢. Highlights of this issue for me are Guy's fine and long Western report, George Barr's wonderful cover and artwork, and a piece of serious s-f by Rod Frye which I think is the best I've seen in a fanzine. The theme is one which probably would never get into a prozine, which is a pity, but it makes me feel glad we have fanzines which will publish a piece of good straight s-f. Also in this issue are serious articles by Gregg Callins and Jim Caughran, both of which are very good; a good Berry story; a mediocre piece of fiction by John Karing; an example by the editor of Bertrand Russell's art of conjugating irregular verbs which isn't too good but will probably bring good ones from the readers; average fanzine reviews by the editor; and a good letter column. The art in TWIG is well above average, and the editor knows how to put color to good use. Try it. Rating is 7.

YANDRO #82, Robert and Juanita Coulson, RR #3, Wabash, Indiana, 19 pages, mimeod, monthly, 15¢, 12/\$1.50.

YANDRO is fandom's longest-running monthly; the GRY has published more issues, but it hasn't always been monthly. This issue isn't especially good, though, with 12 of 19 pages devoted to letters. They're good letters, but I like more material. It's not that Y can't get the material, though, just that Bob has a lot of letters he wanted to print. Material in this issue, after the usually good editorials by Bob and Juanita, consists of a crazy poem by Bill Pearson, an article on s-f by Ben Gordon, and various filler items. Y is usually larger, too; this issue was produced in haste. And although there's less art than usual in this issue, there are still 9 illos and the cover. The next issue should be out by the time you read this. YANDRO is a good, steady fanzine. Rating for this one is only 5; it'll be better next month.

I don't want to forget FANAC (Ron Ellik and Terry Carr, 1909 Francisco Street, Berkeley 9, California, 4/25¢, 9/50¢) but I can't review any individual issue since they come out twice a month. Besides, the contents of FANAC don't vary too much from issue to issue; it's always interesting news and interesting chatter and all sorts of interesting stuff. And although FANAC only runs 4 to 6 pages per issue, there are usually all sorts of riders which boost the pages you get for your money. I've personally thought that the "10" rating FANAC usually gets (from Coulson, anyway,) is too high, but it's still worth getting. The address, by the way, is Ellik's; Carr's is 70 Liberty Street, San Francisco 10, California.

In case anybody's interested, the reason for the length of these reviews is that I'm trying to get non-fanzine-readers to try a few, and I think the more info I give, the better they'll know what's in store for them. The opinions are all mine.

MetroMail

423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown, Maryland

Dear Les:

METROFEN arrived today, and there is just time this evening to write a letter of thanks that will be positively unique in your experience: a prompt one from me. It isn't likely to occur again within the knowledge of men. ((Your contribution to the Berry typer fund came quickly enough!))

The paper was indeed impressive for its opacity and luxurious feel. But you've probably fouled up some collectors who file their fanzines in normal-sized envelopes or file folders. As long as you were going to waste the bottom part of most of the pages, wouldn't it have been simpler to print all the pages letter-size, then cut the whole works to normal dimensions? ((No--it would have been a pain in the neck, but I should have done it anyway.)) Filing is no problem to me--I just toss read fanzines into a pile in the attic which periodically spawns new piles by toppling over as it grows too high--but it's pretty hard to turn the pages in this format. ((The paper was obtained in that size because it was the only paper I could get which I could print on both sides of. It was so heavy, though, that it cost me more to mail, so I'm printing this on one side of cheap 16 lb. stuff. This is all done so the rag won't cost the Metrofen too much.))

You couldn't have done more propagandizing for the Willis anthology in any conceivable way that would have been more effective than this reprint. It was new to me, and it is as excellent an example of true fan fiction as I've ever encountered. No reliance on mundane-type fiction translated into fanish activities, no name-dropping simply to make happy the individuals who get mentioned. ((But it did depend on mundane fiction; it's a parody of a Hercule Poirot story!)) Everything is done for a purpose, and the events could occur in no medium other than fandom. I wonder how much influence this particular item had on John Berry's fanzine writing career. It must have had something to do with the related type of material he started to turn out shortly after its original publication. ((John?)) The footnotes are a very good idea, and should be included in all fanzine reprints that are old enough to contain outdated references that would puzzle the youngsters. ((METROFEN policy--it's published for a group of youngsters.))

"Meskys Mutterings" suffer from the same fault as generally afflicts real mutterings. They don't have the clarity and importance that clear statements possess. The column is a fairly entertaining collection of miscellany, but it could be so much better. Some of the vague references should be explained in more detail; I'm sure that not many people outside New York know about this mysterious trouble that Taurasi had with Random House, for instance. ((Well, anyone who read S-F TIMES at the time knew that R. H. forced Taurasi to change the name of Fandom House because of "possible competition" or some such nonsense.)) And a couple of hours in a public library would have made it possible to give information about the exact fantasy content of all those items which are mentioned as possible fantasies. ((Not necessarily--some of them were too recent to be in the library--but I'll try to check in the future.)) I should also point out that the time travel inadvertently disclosed in Physical Review Letters is not really new. I understand that the latest research puts the date of Christ's birth at 3 B. C. ((But there it might be time itself which is travelling.))

An entertaining issue, and I'm glad for the existence of whatever impulse caused me to be on the mailing list. ((I wanted a good letter of comment.))

Yrs., &c.,
Harry Warner, Jr.

((I'm glad I sent you that copy of METROFEN: I like good letters. #Why do you use National Fantasy Fan Federation envelopes?))

MetroMail (contd.)

6543 1/2 Babcock Avenue
North Hollywood, California

Dear Les,

Blue on blue? I had to rest my eyes by reading FANCYCLOPEDIA, which is yellow (but not yellow on yellow.) ((It's not blue on yellow either.))

I found the long size hard to handle, so I restapled it at the top. ((I'm glad there was room at the top.))

METROFEN is a nice magazine, dignified but not stuffy. Is the circulation entirely or almost entirely in the club, or is it like SHAGGY, which the club produces but has a large outside circulation? Strange to say, I have had stuff in a lot of fanzines, but nothing in SPAGGY yet. But Bjo has asked me for material, and how can I ignore Bjo? ((Impossible, I agree.)) I may end up giving up the GRX. ((No! No! You can't! #METROFEN has an outside circulation, but it's not very large. I only print 50 to 75 copies, depending on how much paper is available. This one will circulate about 60.))

Walt/Willis's story was truly funny. Any reprints before 1957-8 will be new to me, too. I was slightly startled when I read in your article, "today is October 23," as I thought it was nearly Christmas. Oh, well, different time zones, or something. ((You must use the Gregorian calendar.)) When I was in Germany during the war we had some German typewriters, main feature of them being the placing of the "Y" and "Z" keys, and we had some changed back to more familiar spots for "Y" and "Z," so it wouldn't slow down the typists. I must confess I did some mimeo work in the army, too, and what a black mess it was! Haven't touched one of the things since. Ed Meskys' various items are interesting, especially on the search for see-tee. It would be something to prove its existence anywhere in the universe. Book and prozine reviews good.

Yours,
Donald Franson

((The reprints are designed for people who came into fandom after they were printed, like most of the Metrofen--when there were any. Well, the people who were in Metrofen, then. #It's letters like this that keep me going. Thanks, Don.))

27 Clonlee Drive
Belfast, N. Ireland

Dear Les,

As far as I know, nobody has any plans for reprinting Willis Discovers America, and you're welcome to do it as you wish.

Thanks for METROFEN, and the fine job you did of reprinting The Case of the Disappearing Fan. I'd be interested to know how it went over with the readership. The rest of the magazine was a good job, just the thing for its purpose.

All the best,
Walt.

((I really shouldn't print all this egoboo, but I can't resist; after all, it's from Walt. I'm very flattered, Walt, and I'll try to give WDA the presentation it deserves. It won't be in METROFEN but as a one-shot pub. Actually, I'm printing this to give notice that I've got WDA in my sights. #Those Metrofen who talked to me about last issue said they enjoyed your story very much. I loved it.))

Mesky's Mutterings (contd.)

There were again 20 people present. The program for the Jan. meeting was set up, and a tentative one for the annual March open meeting. The latter was to center around the end of a decade of s-f. It was decided to get an editor, author, reviewer and reader to form a panel, and the persons to be contacted were chosen.

Before showing the films, the director announced that Mr. Dietz had gotten a letter telling him to ship "The Genie" back to California air mail for a special meeting, and that only "Born of Man and Woman" would be shown. They then proceeded to show, to Frank's embarrassment, "The Genie." Sumbodi guft. ((Frank sent back the wrong film.))

London (don't know name)

... the restaurant ...

I arrived at Harry's place at 12:30 to find him sitting at the table ... As I was only one hour early, I decided to sit down ... I bought the other ... but the great was ...

After lunch ... and not overly ... we pushed down ... the play of the ... both were things ...

On the way home, I heard ... the new ... the ...

In all, the ... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

... the ... the ...

HENRY SANDERSON FOR TATFI

Meslgs Mutterings (contd.)

After this, Chris Moskowitz's Detention films were shown, and all retired to the restaurant.

I arrived at Larry Ivie's houst at 12:30, to find him still editing a tape to be played at the gathering. As I was only one hour early, I decided to do some work until the others arrived. I borrowed Larry's antique typer and first tried to write something for POLHODE and then for this column, but the typer won the battle for supremacy. At 1 P.M. Carlton Frederick arrived, and at 1:30 three artist friends of Larry's. I forgot their names, but he said one had some stuff pubbed in GALAXY. Eventually Dan Blackburn and Pacho Alfonseca, Len Kassvan, Dorothy Diehl and Joe Casey came.

After much amiable and not overly noisy chatter, we quieted down as Larry played the tape and showed the movies. Both were things he'd done when he was in high school and they were competently done. The tape was a dramatization of one of the s-f yarns in some EC comic; he said it was the first of many such tapes he made. He will play others at future gatherings in the order they were made so that they will improve as the gatherings progress.

Refreshments were served (soda, crackers and cupcakes) and Ken Beale arrived. For his benefit, some of the films were reshown.

On the way home, I heard the news that Ted White reneged with \$10.00 of FAPA's. It seems that he was supposed to send out a mailing, but never did. When the new officer ((Andy Young)) did, TW was asked to return the money. Despite several requests since then, he still hasn't. ((I heard that Ted's FAPA mailing was being withheld until he paid up. Don't know whether he has yet or not.))

In all, the informal get-together was much more enjoyable than any Metrofen meeting except the one attended by he. If these gatherings survive, they should prove quite popular, except among the bohemian set whose presence is not welcome anyway. I have a few doubts about survival, for complete anarchy has its disadvantages too. For instance, since there is no longer a treasurer ((or dues,)) no one thought of collecting money from the attendees, and Ivie's out the cost of the refreshments unless the next gathering makes good for the amount. ((So there, Dick Ellington!))

METROFEN, from
Leslie Gerber
201 Linden Boulevard
Brooklyn 26, New York
U. S. A.

TO:

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SANDY SANDERSON FOR TAFF!