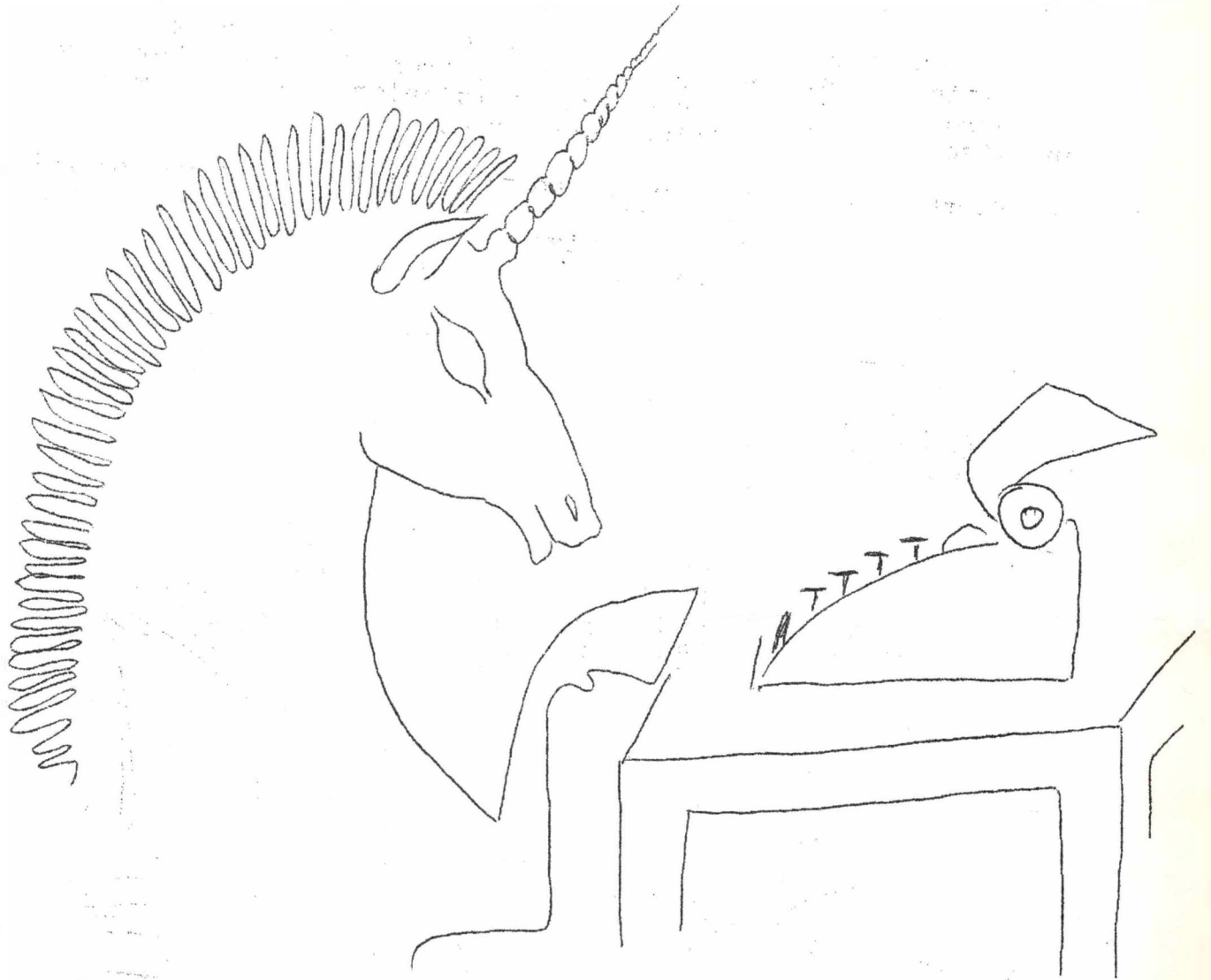


WRITERS' EXCHANGE



The WRITERS' EXCHANGE

of the

NATIONAL FANTASY FAN FEDERATION

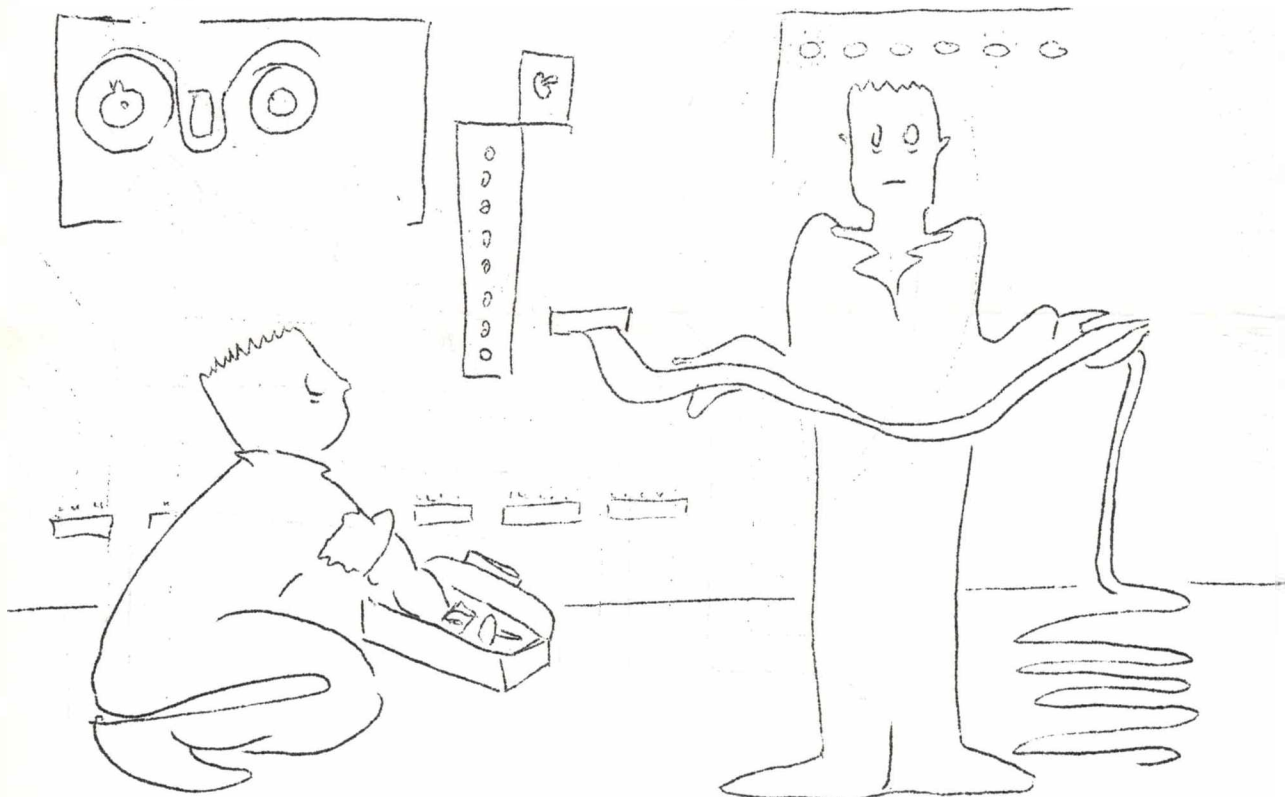
publishes this bulletin for the benefit of its membership and of any other professional or amateur writers who are interested in the field of sci-fantasy fiction.

We have no charges or other obligations, no schedule, no plans other than to see what we can do, and try our best to do that, in terms of whatever seems to be called for.

The Writers' Exchange is a new service department in the NFFF, but does not restrict its services to Neffers. Again, this depends on what is called for and what is possible.

This is our first bulletin. Its purpose is to report the activities of the Writers' Exchange, transmit ideas that come up there, and share information, particularly market news and discussions of writing techniques.

For further information write to the Writers' Exchange Moderator
Alma Hill
463 Park Drive
Boston 15, Mass.U.S.A.



"...Fog Index 37, and then it started this hahe ha hahaha ha haha..."

There is a growing demand for science fiction outside the main field -- that is, the magazines that specialize in this genre.

Last year a partial list of these potential markets was published in Art Hayes' fanzine, THRU THE HAZE. We have been working on a second list of publications for young people, but are swamped by the task. The increasing welcome for this kind of writing today is a challenge we could meet better if we knew in better detail how to focus our efforts.

Lloyd Biggle comments:

"Market listings... one might, I suppose, point out as a reminder that a certain issue of The Writer contains a certain market listing (May, I think, always has sf, mystery, men's magazines, etc.).

"But what I had in mind was information more along the line that magazine X, not a sf magazine, is running a sf story this month, the second this year, the other one being -- and so on. The thing is, many editors will say that they are interested in, and eager to use sf -- but they never buy any. Under these conditions it is rather difficult to determine what sort of sf would interest these guys. And where magazine X is concerned, a writer might see from a market listing that the editor says he wants sf, and conclude that the editor is talking through his hat, or something. So a market study that dealt with what a magazine is actually using, rather than what the editor says he thinks he would like (which presumes that the editor knows what he likes) could have a definite value...

"The job would have to be split up, I suppose ... people who would produce reports on their own little groups of magazines. Whether the project would be worth the effort is decidedly moot...

"Supposing Editor X does buy a couple of sf stories a year. You could still look at ten issues without seeing any, and conclude that he doesn't use sf. The project I suggest would direct attention to the two issues the stories appear in..."

///So okay. Why not try that?

Maybe it would be a lot of w--k, but on the other hand, it would be interesting, and perhaps it could be broken down to manageable size. Anyone for a Watch on the Newsstands? The following titles, from last year's annotated list, are easy to obtain and might be part of your regular reading already:

ACTION FOR MEN

ADAM

ADVENTURE

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY

ARGOSY

ATLANTIC

COSMOPOLITAN

DUDE

ELLERY QUEEN'S MAGAZINE

ESCAPADE

GAMMA

GENT

HARPER'S MAGAZINE

KNIGHT

McCALL'S

MEN'S DIGEST

MODERN MAN MAGAZINE

MR. MAGAZINE

PLAYBOY

RASCAL

REAL

ROGUE

SATURDAY EVENING POST *

SCIENCE FANTASY

SIR KNIGHT

TOPPER

VENTURE

* SATEVEPOST will not consider unsolicited mss., has no slushpile, works with agents.

Please make a point of studying only the magazines which print non-sf that interests you; those are the ones you are likeliest to hit with sales in the long run.

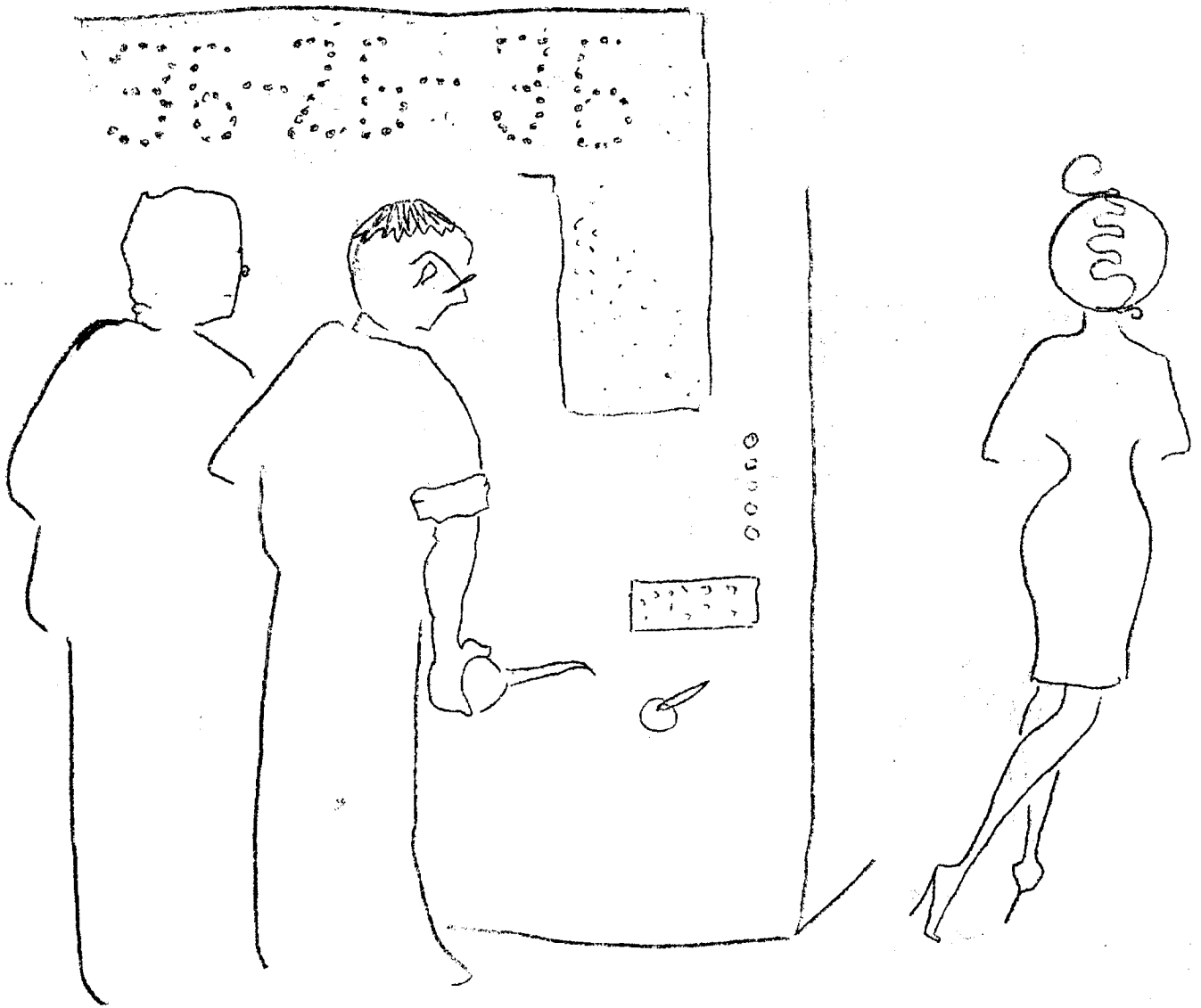
There is no substitute for much personal study of all the magazines in the main field, and any others one wishes to write for.

But we could share sketched information that would eliminate some and indicate others that we might not have noticed otherwise.

There are several ways to do this, and since Satevepost is out of reach, we'll use it for an example:

1. ADVERTISING -- study the ads and you know what any magazine is aiming at -- its readership, its basic policy, its tabus and the kinds of entertainment it wants to offer. Advertisers provide an important source of revenue. No editor in his right mind is going to do anything likely to injure an advertiser's business, is he?
Flip through this magazine, any recent issue, and notice the categories. Then take a pencil and notebook and tabulate them: Transportation and Farm Machinery: Insurance: Big Businesses. The reader they are after is the purchaser of big equipment. He looks from here to be a well-heeled executive type, very likely a home-owning married man, not likely to be very young.
2. NON SF MATERIALS--This magazine has several articles to one story -- the readers like factual material, then. Look all of it over and see whether there is a pattern of ideas, of treatments. See what sort of non-sf fiction is used, what styles of writing. How does anything as way-out as sf fit in this league? Yet they do use a lot, so examine that too.
3. SUBLIMINAL APPEALS -- Look through all fiction, sf and mundane, to see whether they have any similarity of philosophy. The last time yr. edr. looked, one thing struck the eye; most of the fiction consisted of love stories. What has become of the success story of yesteryear, or did we see the wrong issues? Furthermore, these love stories always made one particular point; Women shouldn't be so dagburned hard to manage. How about that? This is what the Tired Business man wants his wife to read? But it must be very smoothly done; the formula story isn't showing its arithmetic; Big Name Writers, highly skilled people, probably sincerely convinced that women really shouldn't and so forth. If you feel the same way and it's part of the workings in a stf story you have ready for market, and if you have a Big Name Agent -- hmp, we should make sure that Carnell & Ackerman get a free copy of this. Somebody tell them to read it? We probably aren't telling them anything they don't know, but they might loosen up and tell us stuff and we could tell you. ((The readership of this crudzine consists of writers -- full and part-time writers -- agents please note.))
4. Have you a system of your own for such an operation?

We also stand ready to report issues of any magazine that carries sf, and to include the address and price of back numbers, for it isn't likely that our desultory schedule, to call it that, can hope to give you such news while it is news. But if we want to study a magazine, recency is not that important -- a good overview is what we need. If you do one, and I do one, and a few other people do a few, it might amount to some useful information. How about that?



"And when Miss O'Reilly goes by, it rings all the bells too."

-- A few more words on the topic of ideas in the public domain, and developed ideas. Here is a simplified example: in this issue we have four cartoons. They are all the same computer joke. See for yourself. The main theme is in the public domain, but we credit the joke to the last version we saw: a drawing in the Boston Blue Pencil (Society of Technical Writers and Publishers) which shows the technicians in front of a computer, looking at some tickertape and saying, "She's splitting infinitives again." Back in the late 90's and early 1900's, somebody started up a worry about such expressions as: "We ought to really try hard," and figuring out arrangements such as, "We really ought to try," or "We ought really to try," or "We ought to try," until the air gets thick, because all the while, if you change the arrangement something has happened to the emphases. We deplore the continued existence of that particular bit of foolishness and therefore put in some of our own foolishness instead. Essentially, that is what anyone does with any theme; you put in what you like, leave out what you don't like, and then wish you'd done it better.

NOTICE OF POLICY

WITH REGARD TO ANY CONFLICT

BETWEEN SERCON + CLOWNDOM

OUR INTENTIONS ARE AT ALL TIMES

HALF SERIOUS.



FRIENDS OF THE MANUSCRIPT BUREAU

Stan Woolston, Neffer President for 1965, has suggestions, to wit:

"I've mentioned in a few places an idea for a FRIENDS OF THE MSS BU, with ideal to have a pub for 'em, or at least a RR to discuss ideas, ways to improve writing for fanzines (or even improving artwork) while writing regularly for Mss Bu. Jack Chalker has a newly-restarted bureau on his hands and needs help and sympathy. For too long it has NOT been working.

Seth Johnson in a letter to me said he'd be willing to write a column of reviews, and if the Bureau head lined up someone he'd "contract" to do the column. In other words, the zine would have a column of reviews, with a line crediting the Bureau -- and as such the Bu would be a sort of placement agency for columns. I like the idea...

The "Friends" could discuss ideas for things to write: how to do a review or criticism above-average (or to improve it); ways to research an article rather than just do frothy stuff without thought"

--where would fandom be without froth, (or beer, either)? Or the leaven in a loaf? ___ Ch, all right. Yep, we do need ~~more~~ abh /_ed.note:
interpolation is an example of frothy stuff without thought.abh /_ this yere

"or story ideas...Jack says he'd be happy to help writers improve ability and I like his approach here... I HOPE YOU WILL MENTION IN PERSONAL LETTERS THAT THE MSS BU IS NOW FUNCTIONING AGAIN AND IT NEEDS CONTRIBUTIONS REGULARLY... if newcomers and maybe a few older fans would write maybe weekly, it would help immensely -- both the Bu, and also make the individual fan more widely known, with fanzines coming in as a reward."

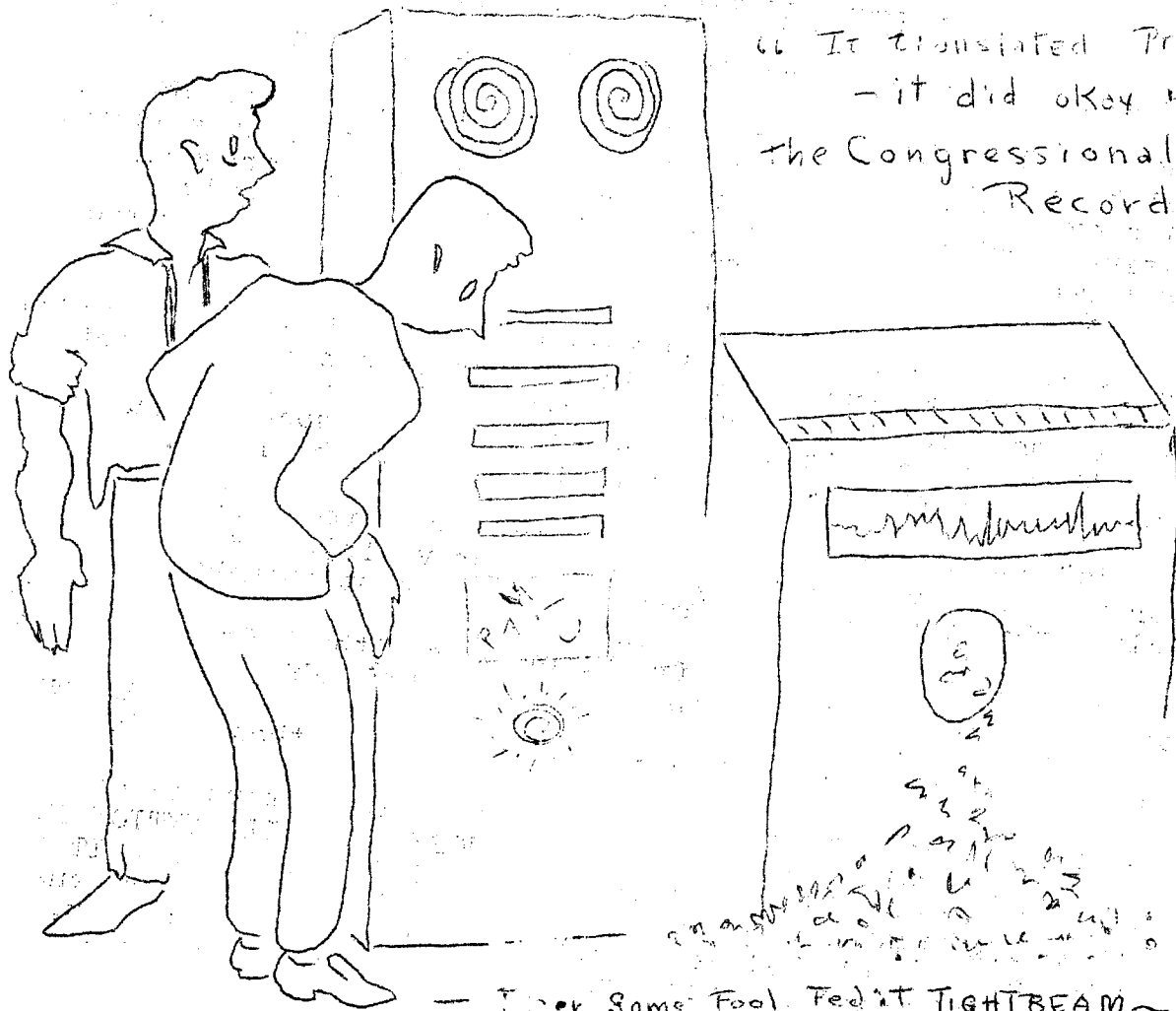
Would it help any if Jack makes an award every so often for the best single story/article/letter/cartoon to go thru his hands????

This fmz and the services of the Writer's Bureau in general are wide open to any use the MSS Bureau wants to make of it, in reason. I can feel safe in offering a regular page here, more or less, if Jack says he has stuff he wants run here.

Speaking for myself personally, I've always noticed that amateur journalism of any kind is great stuff for improving writing ability, so whatever Manuscript Bureau can accomplish would certainly be of benefit to the individuals concerned, who would get a kind of practice -- that is, a look at their own words published within a comparatively understanding readership -- provides new and informative angles of view. Thus it would have a good strong favorable influence on the stf field in the long run. So count on the X for a friendly attitude and whatever we can do.

STORY CONTEST

Time to start thinking up a new story for the Neffer annual contest. Prizes are usually small but nice. Remember that there is nothing in the rules against getting friends to proofread and advise -- in fact, Clayton Hamlin has always favored that for the sake of better entries. Final artistic decisions are always up to the writer anyway.



It translated Prova
 - it did okay with
 the Congressional
 Record -

- There Some Fool Fed it TIGHTBEAM ~ 35

CONTEST

F&SF is running a contest; for details, see the current issue. First prize offered is \$100.00; if they want to publish the winner they'll pay standard rates extra. This is for amateurs, classified as in Meffer Story Contest -- no more than two published previously. For a starting point, they require a story that contains one Unicorn and one Univac. /Publisher's note: Alma wants you to know the contest will be

over by the time you see this. But write the story anyway. -www/
 Ideas being in the public domain, here are some sure to be used, so don't rely on those alone; the "rhinocerine pony" who travelled with Jim Schmitz' Granny Wannatell was by definition a unicorn -- one horn growing from the forehead. Some mythologists claim that the African rhinoceros is actually the source of the Unicorn legend. Second of the standard gimmicks would come from Freudians, who read the legendary specifications and snicker. Third is the traditional interest of the Unicorn in pure-minded virgins, and what so pure-minded as a Univac? There are other ploys equally obvious, and nothing wrong with any, just so you do more about it and do it well. Should the Unicorn and Univac be major or minor characters? If minor, the universe is the limit; if major, which is the viewpoint character and how do they meet? -- Is the Univac a stationary installation, a mobile robot, an ISSBM, a living doll, a little lost robot, a time traveller, a mythologist?

ORGANIZATION

Classic author Van Vogt and Agent Ackerman are working on a Science Fiction Writers' Protective Association to do something about use of sfinal ideas without payment or permission in "original" screen plays.

Last Word --- until next time.

Wally Weber, the Official Editor of the National Fantasy Fan Federation is doing the mimeography for this bulletin in order to help out the Writers' Exchange for the club.

However, blame the stencilling and any other errors on Alma Hill, who has always felt that a crudzine is better than no circulation of information. Anyone who wants to see a better job done is cordially invited to help us do better, to the great joy of all concerned.

Besides sending this to the members of the Writers' Exchange, we plan to furnish copies to all the Neffer officers, the Neffer apa, and any other persons likely to be interested, including the roster of Project Semi-Pro, and some non-affiliated writers and editors who might feel like contributing information to our mutual purposes.

If you feel we should send a copy to some writer who would show any interest, please let us know; if this issue runs out of print we are likely to have some more coming along and are willing to expand our mailing list for awhile yet, in reason & bounds, finding out what can be accomplished as we go along.

-- wellwellwell, leftover space. We had one thing in mind to say further about development of basic ideas. Let's see if it has room here.

Some time ago, Robert Mills remarked (to Avram Davidson, who later put it into an editorial in F&SF), "What I would like -- I think -- is a story about a space ship three miles long. It goes into the Coal Sack and comes out dirty."

In this condensed version, it's an anecdote.

Now suppose you put in characters, scenery, chit-chat, verisimilitude, so that the reader can imagine how it felt, and for your snapper you have the space ship arriving dirty on account of going through the Coal Sack -- now what you have is typical fanzine fiction, thin stuff that no pro editor wants to buy or even see.

But now supposing you have characters with various purposes, some conflicting, some cooperating, working out to a human solution during, and because of, the journey. This will get you closer to a sale, though it won't strictly be stf. Sometimes there is a deadline to meet or something, so if your main character comes across to the reader and you sustain the tension well, it might sell.

But turn this over in your mind. Coal Sack, as we all know, is actually a hard vacuum by terrestrial standards. The "gas cloud" particles are very sparsely-scattered. Also, these particles are said to be of a sort that is loose and noncohesive even within planetary gravity's influence -- so let's consider what "dirt" this ship picks up. Inside that dense darkness, what might there not be? And what effects would they lead to? Wealth, disaster, danger or benefit, threat or promise?

Now we are beginning to think in terms of hard-core stf. The demands of the genre require that the physical conditions, newly-discovered, act as the catalyst upon the human elements (as so often does happen with the new inventions and discoveries in our times) thus resolving the story. It is this feature of the field which keeps it so full of fresh interest and, in my opinion, artistic and philosophic integrity. No? Yes? ah

WRITERS.

EXCHANGE

