

B. T.

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Ill

TRUTH IS STRANGER, ETC.

Some years ago in that once-sterling fanzine Le Zombie there appeared a humorous (?) article by that once-number-one fan, yours truly, purporting to recount the hectic adventures of a single piece of brown wrapping paper as it wended its weary way from one fan to another, wrapped about this or that book. That piece of paper, you may remember, began its journey in Chicago, traveled back and forth across the country, thence to Australia, thence to England, and finally to America again, where I pretended it fell into my hands and I made an analysis of all the places it had been by the odors and discolorations attached thereto. The basic humor of the article was supposed to be based on the fan habit of using old wrappers again and again, shipping it on to other fans to save finding new paper or whatever.

One day some months ago I received in the mails a long envelope from Art Sehnert, in Tennessee. The envelope contained a copy of a round-robin fanzine, Psycho II, began by Phil Schumann. And the envelope told a story that caused me to hunt up the original LeZ article for a re-reading. Briefly, it journeyed thusly:

Phil Schumann typed the magazine and presumably handed it to Donn Brazier, brother Milwaukee fan. In passing it on, Brazier mailed it to Harry Warner in a large brown envelope. Warner turned the same envelope upside-down, blacked out his own name and address, and forwarded the fanzine to Art Sehnert. Sehnert, in passing it along to me, pasted a large white label over the entire face of the envelope and addressed it to me. I stuck a smaller label atop of previous label----neatly covering up my address, and sent it along to Jack Speer. Presumably Speer carried on in the indicated tradition. Well, did you???

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ON MOVIES AND SPEER

After fourteen years in a projection booth, Juffus, I've come to the remarkable conclusion that movies aren't worth the film they're printed on. As an enjoyable interlude for children, morons and neckers in the balcony, they serve a purpose. As adult entertainment, they are washouts, mainly because they pervert their own subject matter to fit whatever cycle of "adult entertainment" is popular at the moment, and because through the ignorance of their producers they present matter which is untrue, distorted, imbalanced and generally false. The claim that "the public demands it" does not justify distortions of history, distortions of your beloved "facts," and general insulting the intelligence of the public. (And I never tried to sell 'em a story!)

THE CONVENTION DISEASE

For some odd reason noted in these United States, national fan conventions are invariably attended by unpleasantness in one form or another. The form most noticeable (and producing the greatest amount of disgust) is senseless, prolonged bickering between the parties who are sponsoring the convention, and any individual in fandom who so much as breathes the word 'convention' crookedly.

If you've been around a few years you know all about the 1939 affair; the Moskowitz-Sykora-Taurasi faction were deathly afraid the Wollheim-Michel mob were out to wreck the jamboree even if it called for tossing a few bombs into the convention hall. Individuals in both parties proceeded to embroil nearly all of fandom in the turmoil, much to fandom's unease. The final result is history that cost nearly every "top fan" concerned his throne. And, it may be added by a distant, embroiled observer, that final result was poetic justice.

The 1940 convention in Chicago was no different except that this time I found myself not the distant observer, but one-fourth of the convention committee which found itself following the traditional way. The two major figures in this fight were Mark Reinsberg, a person of Jewish faith, and W. Lawrence Hamling, a person not entirely in sympathy (shall we say) with persons of Jewish faith. The fight, which began over something else entirely, rapidly degenerated into just what the above statements imply. Caught in the middle was myself.

Reinsberg had a habit of becoming almost hysterical with excitement over things that might or might not arouse ordinary emotions in any other person; consequently, he was difficult to manage. He would come to me with the most absurd charges and imaginary fears, all of which were whipped up by Hamling's charges and/or unpredictable moves. (I have since thought that sometimes Hamling deliberately teased him, just to watch him jump around.) And naturally, being the helpless bystanders, a good many fans were embroiled in their private feud. I've kept inflammatory letters from both parties for years, intending to publish them some day when sufficient time had passed to prevent a renewing of the unpleasantness; I'm still not convinced that time has arrived. I may never publish them because of their baiting nature.

The final result of that business was that the convention came off as scheduled, Hamling did not sponsor a rump convention nor steal the Chicon, nor did any of the other imaginary things happen which the semi-hysterical Reinsberg expected. It was just the disease.

The following year presented us with the same old problem. Olon Wiggins and Lew Martin, in Denver, were positive that fans in the eastern states would stage a rump convention and steal the show from them. Hasty, mad letters were written, propaganda circulated in the fanzines, and professional editors contacted and sworn to support the Denver convention only. It was all so futile, so senseless.

Is this year any different? It is not. Four convention-less yrs have not served to stamp out the disease.

The disease this year broke out in the normal way: from very small, unrecognized beginnings: someone in Los Angeles passed along a publicity story to a news-sheet and the news-sheet printed the story, thereby destroying a possibly carefully-planned publicity campaign. It could have stopped there by simple explanations all around, and an admission that the news-break was mishandled. No harm was done, despite whatever advertising campaign may have been planned; the campaign could have been re-arranged, losing only the particular punch this one news-break destroyed.

But it did not stop there. For apparently once again we have a man handling this convention who is apt to give way to hysterics on small provocation. Please don't misinterpret me, and now is the time to use that old bromide: 'Some of my best friends are.... etc.' Walt Daugherty and I get along fine; I'm handling the fanzine-advertising program for him (altho this is not part of it.) But I deplore his tendency to let fly (in the name of the sacred convention) over an imagined slight. Read his letter to Speer in the Spring issue of Sustaining Program; the letter he claims represents "facts". Small wonder Speer casts a slight aspersion upon that often misused term.

I think my readers will agree with me that Speer did not "hurt the convention" in any way by printing the cartoon in question. I'll gladly send a brand new dollar bill to any person who can truthfully claim that cartoon caused him to avoid attending the Pacificon or otherwise contributed to the Pacificon's possible failure. And I completely disagree with Daugherty in his labeling it a "smear cartoon." Walt Daugherty's published letter is an unhealthy reminder of the hysterical missives I used to receive from Reinsberg, and written in almost the same vein. The charges are ridiculous. Those of us who can attend the Pacificon will do so, and those of us who cannot, will not do so, no matter what Speer, or Dunkleberger, or Daugherty or Joe Fann do or say. But sooner or later fandom as a whole will grow mighty damn tired of this periodical 'convention disease'. When that happens, an unwritten law demanding the ouster of any official bitten by the disease will be in order.

I suggest members of the convention committee desist from all further wild, semi-hysterical outbursts of this nature and carry on the commendable work of sponsoring and staging a convention. No amount of possible "smear cartoons" will keep people away; constant bickering on the part of convention officials may keep people away.

iwonderifallthiswilldoanygood?iwonderifallthiswilldoanygood?iwonderif?

SNOWS OF YESTERYEAR

In passing, it might be noted that the big figures closely connected with yesterday's national conventions have practically vanished from the scene, or at best (with but two exceptions) relegated to the role of lesser lights in the fandom we know (and love) today.

1939: Sykora and Taurasi are mere names encountered here and there. 1940: Reinsberg, Korshak and Meyer are less than that. 1941: Wiggins and Martin have vanished. What causes it?

WHAT'S ALL THE FURSE ABOUT, MAC?

The gabbling back and forth over the Le Zombie lithograph someone ordered Bok to prepare has been proceeding apace for some months, and as yet no one seems to have grasped the singular point of the affair. A point that slightly refutes Bok's letter of defense, and a point which leads one to believe the litho was deliberately intended as an "obscene" work. (I provide no interpretations, please. Let's use the postoffice viewpoint for the moment.)

It is this: someone furnished Bok with a supposed description of me and an account of my supposedly heated sex life. Bok does not know me by first-hand. I've never corresponded with him; he is not on the mailing lists of either LeZ or Rosebud. Yet, in this lithograph, he comes up with enough symbolism to account for all of my supposed activities for the past ten years. And passes it off as subconscious. I can't help being slightly sceptical. I suspect the person who ordered and paid for the lithograph had a discolored finger in the pie.

And too, I can't help being amused by the fuss over this litho, when less than a year ago Chan Davis pulled a deliberate string of obscenities, several words that would definitely cancel our mailing rights if they fell under the eye of a postmaster. And what happened? About sixty members leaned over backwards to avoid even mentioning it. But they don't hesitate to jump on Dunkleberger and Bok.

ohgeewhyamisuchalecher?ohgeewhyamisuchalecher?ohgeewhyamisuchalecher??

THAR'S GOLD IN THEM THAR HILLS!

I have a problem, Mr. Anthony, and I'm inviting all sixty-four of you to lend an ear and mayhap a kind word. It is possible that some of you may become directly involved in it after awhile, always providing the parent structure doesn't collapse first.

Tom Hadley, he of the Providence book-publishing Hadleys, has commissioned me to edit an anthology of fanzine material. Go ahead and titter behind your lace handkerchiefs; at this early date I am saying it is neither possible nor impossible. Proposed material for this anthology will be the fiction and non-fiction, poetry and humor found in fanzines from the beginning of fan-time, to date. I calculate between twenty-five and fifty fans will be represented in the anthology. The actual digging-up of material is no problem--hell no.

But paying for it is.

Hadley promises a press run of 2000 copies, at about \$2 a copy. With such a book, he can expect to sell 500 copies in the next five years. My royalties will amount to ten or fifteen percent of each \$2. To be generous, let us assume I'll make \$150 from the book within the first couple of years. A piddling sum, but worthwhile when you realize what the volume may do for fanzine writings. The problem is this: how to split up that \$150 among possibly 50 authors, and still leave snuff for me? I dislike the thought of reading hundreds of fanzines, culling

twenty-five to fifty items, and typing the entire manuscript for the printer --- in return for peanuts.

If I had nothing else to do with my time, there'd be little objections. But such isn't the case; I, too, work for a living, and I'm doing a great amount of fiction writing after hours. (See another item in this issue.) I refuse to drop this other writing which offers a greater promise of paying off handsomely, for an anthology which may net me only a few dollars. And yet, the contributors should be paid. What's to be done about it?

we'regonnaberichfen!we'regonnaberichfen!we'regonnaberichfen!rich!rich!

SMILE WHEN YOU APOSTROPHIZE THAT WORD, STRANGER!

I have apostrophe trouble, too. (No, Liebscher, t'ain't what you are thinking.) Dick Wilson attempted valorously, years ago, to cure me of the illness but only partially succeeded. In later years both Speer and Koenig have gotten in below-the-belt lessons, but I'm still at it. Regardless of rules, there are some words I insist should not be apostrophized. (I hope there is such a word.)

Wont is one of them. I've considered it silly to write: "I won't do it," when it is simpler to say: "I wont do it." Another favorite of mine is the contraction thru in place of through. I use the latter version only when it will nicely fill out a line to make an even right hand margin. In this, the Chicago Tribune agrees with me; they have officially dropped through and use the new word, thru, consistently. Carrying over this fanzine habit into professional writing, I tried my luck. Knowing that I certainly couldn't get away with it in magazines, but believing that I might in a book (because in a book, almost anything goes), I accordingly filled a detective novel chock-full of wont and thru and shipped it off to Farrar & Rinehart.

Ah yes, I paid for my ignorance/liberties.

Miss Elizabeth Bullock, mystery editor of that publishing house, dutifully checked each (to her) misspelling and returned the manuscript to me, indicating that I was to use the correct spelling when I revised the novel. (There were included several pages of suggested revisions.) Me and the Tribune are radicals, I guess.

richerthanhell,thatis!richerthanhell,thatis!richerthanhell,thatis!rich

LOOKIT THE WOIM TOIN, MOITLE!

It was funny to see EE Evans objecting to raising the dues to \$2 in his fanzine, and then turn to the back page of FA and find his name listed as one of the sponsors of the amendment to raise dues to \$2.

QUESTION DEPT: Please, Lancy, can I jettison Liebscher, too? Can I, huh? I'm a first class jetty officer. Oh, goody, goody, gumdrops! Everybody line up, we're gonna jettison Liebscher. Ensigns and second lieutenants not allowed in line!

THE OLD GRAY MARE . . .

In regards Gardner's article on the decline of FFM: I've stopped reading it altogether either because the novels it now prints are no damned good, or I've already read the good ones in book form. I began buying the magazine in the first place to get those wonderful Argosy reprints. I can however shed some light on FFM's sad case that apparently Gardner overlooked.

Once upon a time not so very many years ago there was a minor war among magazine publishers in New York over the matter of reprints. Some magazines, chiefly those published by the Frank Munsey company, specialized in reprints of earlier magazine stories; FFM was one of them, and also some western and detective titles. They published nothing but reprints, and as a result their production costs were much lower than the competitors who purchased new stories.

Wollheim or Lowndes could probably give a much more accurate account of the matter, but my knowledge of the affair is roughly this: With the aid of various writers' organizations, the new-story publishers declared war on the reprint men and somehow or other succeeded in practically killing them off, the reprint magazines, that is. As a result, there exists a 'code' today among magazine men not to print a story that has previously been published in a magazine; altho it is okay to reprint a book.

Squarely in the middle of this fight against the reprint magazines was the company who now owns FFM: Popular Publications. Why they purchased the magazine I could not say, but they suddenly found themselves in the position of owning one of the foremost publications they were previously damning. Obviously, they had to give up the best bet of the magazine, the Argosy stories. Their only other out was to turn to books, which they did.

Here, too, were restrictions in the form of copyrights, reprint rights, and matter of payment. Also, the postoffice insists that more than one story appear in a magazine if it wishes to be regarded as a magazine. Otherwise it is a book, no matter what the format. All this probably explains why novels are cut to make room for a short story.

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REVEALING THAT WE'UNS READ LITERATURE.

All quotes from Philip Wylie's "Generation of Vipers" (Farrar & Rinehart; 1942).

"You bought the war. Were you an interventionist? Then you bot it because you knew it was the price of freedom. Were you an isolationist? Then you bought it because you wouldn't pay the lesser price of stopping the first agressions. You."

"One thing is sure. The pulpit cannot beat prophylaxis. It failed to beat even golf. The age of innocence is done for."

"...all advertisers are enamored by this slogan: Madam, are you a good lay?" ((Creams, deodorants, salves, soaps, arrestors, etc.))

MIRACLE & ROMANCE

A Tender Love Story
by Lynn Bridges

The bright green sun of Bheer shone down when I first met Ooga, and the bright green of her six waving tentacles outshone Bheer itself. Ooga was quite the loveliest thing I had ever seen, and I knew at that I was madly in love.

"Aghsavashijn tdjalgui" I said, and then I knew that she loved me also, for she replied "Grsquaghk" in the most beautiful voice I've ever heard. The sharp blue of Ooga's clicking mandibles was as the blue of Bhrandhee, loveliest of the five suns which cast their light on the planet Ouiskhee.

But with her next words, "Althsga msruldw prtuvigj," I knew my love was hopeless; for Ooga already had five husbands, and according to law a female twrdl can have but five mates, one for each of the suns that swim in the heavens. Depair hung heavy on my heart, for Ooga was large with that rare beauty only attained by size, and I needed someone of her strength on whom to depend. The yellow sun of sadness, old Rhumm, seemed to mock me as it hung low over the horizon.

But there must be some way, I thought. "Wrquestrskug," I sighed longingly, but Ooga pulsated negatively. There was no way. She exposed her violet tooth in sympathy. Never had I seen so powerfully pretty a tooth, colored as was Jhinn, brightest of all the suns.

Our romance couldn't end this way, I thought, almost before it had started. I gazed longingly at the six powerful tentacles which my Ooga was waving. Each of those tentacles was sufficient to satisfy a male twrdl, and I cursed the stupid law which prohibited a female from having more than five mates, thus leaving one tentacle which did not fulfil its natural mission in life. Instinctively I turned my gaze upward in silent supplication to the suns of Ouishkee, and my eyes fastened upon the orange globe or bourbon, farthest of the five suns. It was then that the miracle happened, for even as I watched, Bhurbhon split into two flaming sections!

I yelled excitedly to Ooga, my heart filled with joy. "Unghrstd-trew!" she exclaimed happily. ((Purists among us will censor me for splitting that word "Unghrstdtrew" other than by syllables. -BT)) She saw what had occurred. Now Ouishkee had another sun, and Ooga was free to take another husband!

So it is that I now have my Ooga, and Ouishkee has a new sun named Skhotch, and we are happily married beneath the six suns that ride high above in the heavens.

ohweshouldhavedummiedthatforlookwhathappenedtotherighthandmarginyoicks

WHAT GIVES, MEN?

In May we got a letter from C.A. Brandt, asking how to get some of my own Yearbooks, and still hinting about his promag. Is this an eternal game of button, button, who's got the button?

FREE !

FREE GUIDE TO THE MUGGS IN THE GALLERY

Reading from left to right, one row after another, as you always should do unless you happen to be Chinese.

The group massed on the porch is Slan Shack as it used to be. Seated in the foreground we see Ken Krueger, Milton Ashley and Frank Robinson. Directly behind those three are Walt Liebscher with his arm around Mari Beth Wheeler, Al Ashley, EE Evans, and Jack Wiedenbeck wishing he had his arm around somebody. Finally, standing on the porch in the rear we have Ollie Saari with his ditto around Thelma Morgan, Elsie Janda, Abby Lu Ashley, Ed Counts, and Sgt. Lynn Bridges.

On the far right we again see Mari Beth Wheeler, and friends.

Now for the smaller photographs below. The two bashful gentlemen standing before somebody's garage are Sam Moskowitz and Don Wollheim. The small, pensive puss pasted above their heads is Art Sehnert.

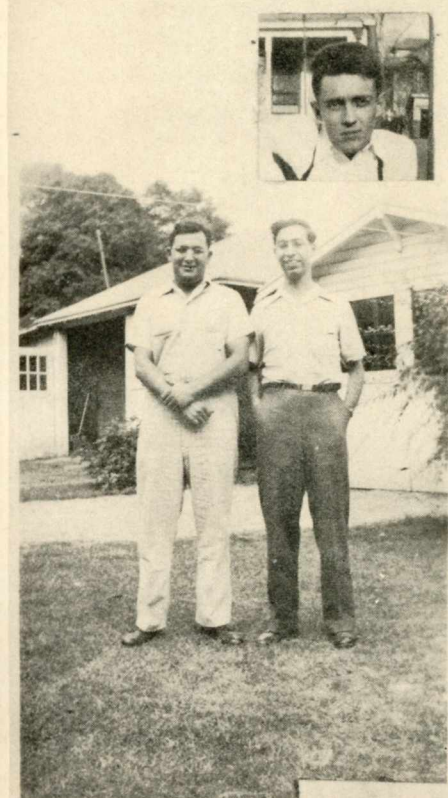
Lookit the leggy girl with the soldier! We are told he is Bob Hoffman and she is Phil Bronson's sister, Beverly. Immediately blow this charming couple we see a charming trio: Walt Daugherty, Joe Fortier, and Tom Wright. That's a weeping willow, maybe, behind them.

Lift your eyes up and to the near-right. Ah---a studious fellow reading a five-year-old copy of Astounding (the pic is that old, too), must be---yes, it is D.B. Thompson. Below DBT we again chance across a charming couple: C.L. Moore and Russ Hodgkins. Wonder what her spouse thinks of this? The villainous-looking husky below C.L. Moore is that scrouge of the Canadian wastelands, Les Croutch. Up we go again. See that handsome, homey visage smiling mysteriously at you? That's the pride of Hartshorne, Oklahoma, James Russell Gray. And look--that face and that drooping cigaret beneath Gray! That's old hotfoot Cyril Kornbluth himself, sneering at us no doubt.

Next row. A pretty WAC: she's Dorothy Les Tina Pohl. The bicorn staring at her isn't so dumb. The small upright picture of the fellow with the striped tie is Fred Pohl, husband of the pretty WAC. He isn't so dumb, either; the army made him take his intelligence test twice because his score was so high the first time they wouldn't believe it. Next to him in a black tie and a Mona Lisa smile is Elmer Perdue with his hair combed.

Which brings us to the bottom row. The three gents on the sofa all wrapped up in Fantasite and each other are Dr. C.L. Barrett, Cliff Simak, and John Chapman. And aha! We have a girl in a hole: she's now known as Myrtle Douglas and she has a swim suit on all right. But just look at those two homely beezers snarling at us from the last picture! Ugh, how awful to have faces like that! "The Look" is Frankie Robinson once more, and the smirking soldier is Ecco Connor.

All of these photographs are from two to six years old. May we suggest you tack up the sheet on a convenient wall?



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the ghoul's gazette
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