

#3



bergeron

PROSPECTUS

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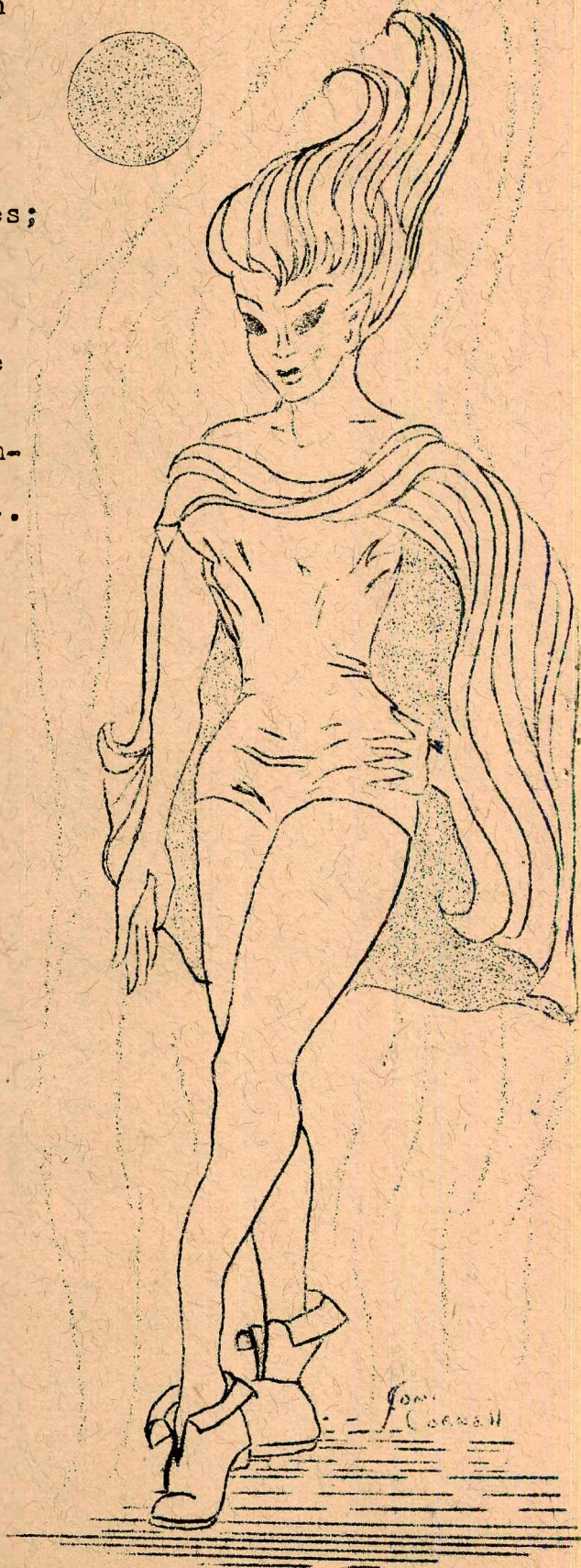
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HOMELY

Things have been pretty peaceful lately; as a result, fans have become complacent, satisfied with the common place, rusty in their use of invective. Cosmic Fate, it seems, has once again chosen to disrupt this state of lethargy.

Shaver is back.

Maybe not in science fiction fandom, but it seems he's still taking an active part in his brainchild, flying saucer fandom. Gene Duplantier is a member of the latter group, as well as the former; you might recall having seen some of his art in these pages, including the fine job of illustrating Locke's column in this issue. In the sixteenth issue of Gene's magazine, Saucers, Space and Science (which is available from Gene Duplantier, 125 Woodcrest Avenue, Toronto, 6, Ontario, Canada, for money--fifteen cents'll do it, I guess) there appears a letter from Richard S. Shaver of Amherst, Wisconsin (Hi, Dean!) relating the current dero status and other information of appropriate concern.

Quotes: "I have a message for the Canadian ray-people..."; "they themselves cannot read the ancient writings..."; "those murderers have been following me around for years..."

Really, I hate to see someone I like mixed up with a character of the ill-repute of Shaver; I also hate to see flying-saucer fandom as a whole involved, since the majority of its members are merely serious devotees of a particular philosophy, and not the pawns, willing or unwilling, of someone like Shaver.

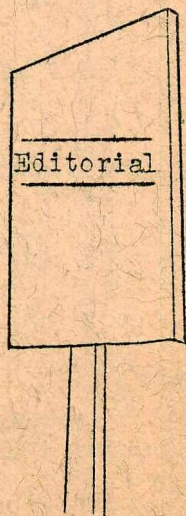
But he is back, fandom; who cares to extrapolate on the consequences, now that he's again active? perhaps nothing; perhaps a new fandom; or, to use rather a tired-old-one, perhaps all fandom will be plunged into war...

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It seems everyone has a gripe about the Fanac poll, and I'm no exception. Ted Pauls dislikes the implication that no one can judge his own work objectively; Buck Coulson dislikes Ted Pauls' dislike.

Me, tho, I'm just a humble Republican, staying faithful to the system but trying, in some small way, to make it just a little better, just a little more representative.

Wherever an election or poll is to be taken in mundania, the actual physical selection is preceded by some mental work; politicians try to win your will with hours of speeches, volumes of policies. Almost anything important is therefore preceded by some discussion.



There are discussion fanzines, to say nothing of a multitude of more generalized magazines which devote page after page to letters from readers. Yet, where do you see a systematic discussion of the Ianac categories, designed to inform the potential voter? Nowhere. Kipple features discussion on the "New Trend" fanzines, which is certainly a step in the right direction, but the plan needs building.

A well-informed voter will not only fail to omit preferable choices, he'll make his decisions with a little more pre-thought; what more could any faneditor want than to be judged fairly, and the fairest judging comes from the best-informed judges.

+++++++

I want to give my thanks to whomever was so kind as to send along a review copy of the first Journal of the International Exploration Society; Alma Hill, I suspect.

This magazine consists of some thirty-two pages of beautifully printed (on fine quality paper) material covering a wide range of "thoughtful" subjects, which are arranged fanishly haphazardly throughout the volume. Copies are available for \$1.25 each from The International Exploration Society, 37 Wall Street, New York 5, New York. The editor is the congenial Hans Santesson.

This initial issue is rather a strange one, running the path between interesting and boring. There is an editorial by Hans which is a good statement of policy, while being magnificently neo-fannish: "This is your magazine". I don't exactly believe this, but it makes interesting text, at any rate.

The other material includes some fine artwork and accompanying worthless text by Hannes Bok; the former is reminiscent of the fine stuff in Bloomington Newsletter; the latter recalls only unpleasant memories. There is also a reprint from Pravda, which you probably haven't seen before; a column by Alma Hill; an article by Daniel Raible about life on other worlds, and various other articles, including those by-lined "del Ray" and "Poul Anderson".



"What? Me worry?"

Generally, the material is interesting, but formal and uninspiring, since the material is covered too thoroughly; in general, I believe I'll forgoe a sub and buy copies (if any) upon investigation. Still, a promising start. (-30-)



dialog for three hams

W. TUCKER

SCENE: The Palatial hunting lodge of Hoy Ping Pong, an aged refugee of the Boxer Rebellion. Hoy is reclining on a silken divan, struggling to roll a cornsilk cigaret. The action takes place in his opium den, a book-lined study.

TUCKER (entering): There's a chap here to see you.

HOY (indolently): I can't be bothered.

TUCKER: But he claims to be a fan.

HOY: Put the dog on him!

TUCKER: Can't. The dog turned tail and ran.

HOY: The crittur showed sense. What does this character want?

TUCKER: I think he wants to make a touch.

HOY: Throw the rascal out!

TUCKER: No, no! Not money. He wants something for his fan-zine.

HOY: His WHAT?

TUCKER: Fanzine. F-a-n-z-i-n-e.

HOY: Zounds! I thought those things went out with Wollheim twenty years ago!

TUCKER: No, no! You're thinking of the Michelists.

HOY: Well, what does this guy expect me to do?

TUCKER: Write a funny piece for his fanzine.

HOY: ~~I can't do that. I'm not a fan.~~ (DELETED)

TUCKER: Well, that's what he said.

HOY: Then tell him what I said!

TUCKER: Can't. He's a bit young for such language.

HOY: Egads! One of those terrible neofans?

TUCKER: Not quite. He's been around a couple of years.

HOY: Then my language won't faze him.

(Vic Ryan bounds into the den. He is full of fannish enthusiasm, leaping and cavorting in high glee and scattering copies of his fanzine about the room. He also knocks over a tower of beer cans.)

HOY: Odds blud! What's THAT?

TUCKER: The faan I was telling you about. The character who wants a funny piece for his fanzine.

HOY: Send him to Loki!

TUCKER: Can't. Loki quit business twenty years ago, after he blasted the pants off me--remember?

RYAN: How do you do, Sir, old timer, first fan, venerable one? I respect your honorable beard. Allah!

HOY: Go poke your head in a rocket tube.

RYAN: I say, sir, that's rather witty.

HOY: And then tell the pilot to push the button.

RYAN: My, sir, you get wittier and wittier.

HOY: Insufferable pup! Say--do you know how to roll a connsilk cigarette?

RYAN: I'm sorry, sir, we faans only use peyote.

HOY: What the devil is peyote?

TUCKER: It's the latest fad among fans, Hoy.

HOY: Is it as tasty as haircreme?

TUCKER: Not quite.

HOY: Hmmph! Then it can't be much. Now in my day...

TUCKER: But this chap isn't interested in your day. He wants a funny piece for his fanzine.

HOY: Didn't know they was still publishing those things.

RYAN: Oh, yes, sir! Here, have one of mine.

HOY (groans): Spare me!

RYAN: But it's a very good fanzine, aged one.

HOY: I suppose it's mimeographed?

RYAN: Of course, sir.

HOY: And stapled?

RYAN: Yes, sir.

HOY: Is it legible?

RYAN: Yes, sir!

HOY: Then it can't be very good! Now, in my day, all the best fanzines were illegible.

TUCKER: Stop boasting about the good old days--this chap represents the new wave. They do things differently now. And, besides, you never read an illegible fanzine in your life. You just wrote letters praising the contents.

HOY: I remember saying only fakefans read illegible fanzines.

RYAN: We say that about magazine readers now, sir.

HOY: What magazine readers?

RYAN: Those people who read science fiction magazines, sir.

HOY: WHAT? Science fiction magazines? Are they still being published?

RYAN: Of course, sir. Allah is good.

HOY: Nonsense! The magazines went out with Ray Palmer, ten years ago. I distinctly remember him promising us fireworks in place of magazines.

TUCKER: Hold up, old man, you're confused again. Palmer threatened us with fireworks because we wouldn't support his new kind of fandom--deroes or flying saucers or something.

HOY: Well, I sat back, watching and waiting. Did he deliver the fireworks?

TUCKER: That's a yes and no proposition.

RYAN: I saw a skyrocket once.

HOY: Did it have Palmer's name on it?



RYAN: I couldn't say, sir. It went by rather fast.

HOY: That was Palmer's, all right.

TUCKER: Well, what about this chap's funny piece.

HOY: Impossible. I quit writing funny pieces when Planet folded. Lost my zest for living, that's what. The fans don't do anything ridiculous anymore--they give me no reason to write anything funny.

TUCKER: Now, I wouldn't say that...

HOY: I would! They're just a bunch of sticks. No more lovable Christmas cards, no more spelling books, no more buttered doorknobs, no more hoax telegrams, no more Joe Fann telegrams, no more suicides, no more bombs on the lawn, no more bricks, no more firecrackers at Beastley's-on-the-Bayou, no more bathtubs off the roof, no more Deglers knocking at the door, no more spurious invitations, no more black market butter, no more three-dimensional chess, no more shattered doors, no more nights in jail.

Oh, bah! Fans are little sissies today!

RYAN: May I print your honorable words verbatim, sir?

HOY: If you do, I'll sue! For \$25,000.

TUCKER: Correction, old man. \$35,000.

RYAN: I'm afraid I don't have that much.

TUCKER: Who has?

HOY: Throw the rascal out!

And go get me some peyote!

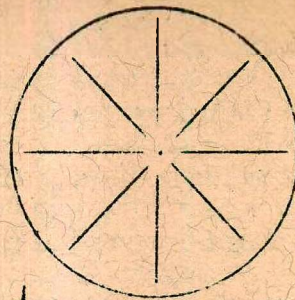
= Bob Tucker

+ + + + +

"We went to a Chinese restaurant afterwards, but, although she liked the food, the greeps were as badly crottled as the Manchester ones. One thing did please me, though--my connoisseur of wine act. The waiter brings up a bottle of burgundy and flaunts the label in your face. You nod wisely and he smiles tremulously like a virgin on her bridal night. He whips out a yard-long corkscrew and rapes the bottle with it, wipes the neck with his cloth, and then pours a teaspoonful in your glass--the others have to wait. You swill this around your palate, swallow, and then nod again. He breathes a sigh of relief and proceeds to fill the other glasses, now that he has met with your approval. I love the whole bloody show, even if I can hardly tell port from sherry. One thing I've always wanted to do was swirl the stuff around on my palate, shriek "Gaaah, sulphuric acid" and spit the damn stuff all over the fellow. That's teach him to crottle my greeps the way I like em."

---Chuck Harris, Grue 28

wheel of fortune



Vic has indicated that he won't object violently if I include a few comments in addition to the book reviewing in this column. I'll begin slowly with a comment or two on some of the remarks made in the lettercolumn of Bane 2 and the unpublished comments which Vic sent me. I agree fully with whoever said that I could be (not necessarily that I would be) more entertaining if I wrote articles and fiction instead of book reviews. The trouble is, I don't have time for articles and fiction. In the time it takes me to write an article, I could not only write this column but read the books reviewed in it, too.

For Betty Tujawa's information, the book Damon Knight said didn't exist is the paperback version of I Am Thinking of My Darling, by Vincent McHugh. I may comment on it next time; I'll have to re-read it to refresh my memory first (which isn't a bad idea at that--the book is better than a lot of the newer ones).

I was quite interested in Paul Shingleton's list of great sf writers: Leinster, Heinlein, Silverberg, Russell, and Bloch? Well, they do have one thing in common: they write good, straightforward adventure novels, with none of the subtle innuendo so favored by many of today's writers. They aren't, in short, for intellectuals, real or pseudo.

The Manchurian Candidate by Richard Condon (Signet, 75¢). This was obviously written to cash in on the combination of the cold war and the election year. Still, despite this commercialism, it's an oddly compelling novel. I wouldn't say it was fine writing--but I didn't waste any time finishing it, either. Briefly, the central character--I hesitate to call him a hero--is captured by the Communists, thoroughly hypnotized/brainwashed, and sent back to this country as an assassin who can't be located (unless he's caught in the act) because he doesn't know himself that he's responsible for the series of political murders. Mix this with a mother and a McCarthy-type stepfather who are trying to use their boy's war record as an asset to their own political ambitions, and you have a good action-suspense novel.

Strangely enough, Condon fails to make the most of his situation. First, he makes the personality of War Hero Raymond Shaw so thoroughly repelling that the reader doesn't really care whether he is saved in the end, or not. ("It was not that Raymond was hard to like. He was impossible to like.") This attitude extends to the reader, and when the reader doesn't like the central character, the novelist is usually in trouble. Secondly, Condon makes



small errors. The revelation of the identity of Raymond's "operator" in the US comes as a surprise, but since the author has given us no hint that the revelation will be of any importance, the surprise is largely wasted.

Scientifically, the book is pretty much of a dud. The author either doesn't know the difference between hypnotism and brain-washing, or doesn't care. Politically, it's also a bust; all it says are that McCarthy-type politicians are bad, which is sort of a dead issue at the moment. But as an adventure, it's not bad, at all.

The Mating Cry by A.E. Van Vogt (Beacon-Galaxy, 35¢). This is The House That Stood Still, impurgated with sex in the traditional Beacon tradition. Some of the additions are pretty funny, as on page eighteen, where the hero has just rescued a girl who has been brutally whipped and then shot in the side. That night she comes to his room. "Don't be frightened," she whispered, "You may make love to me. Just be careful of my side--and of my back, where they whipped me. This brings up some interesting speculation of possible positions, but hardly adds to the erotic allure. However, the Beacon-Galaxy series does have one point in its favor: the selections are usually pretty good books, basically, and even massive doses of irrelevant sex can't utterly ruin them. If you've read The House That Stood Still, or if you have a chance to get it in another edition, you can forget about The Mating Cry. But if this is your only chance to read the book, then it's probably worth the trouble of wading through the slush.

The Climacticon by Harold Livingston (Ballantine, 35¢). I hope this doesn't mean that Ballantine is going in for the Beacon sexy-stuff/stef; this doesn't have the latter's advantage of a good story to work with. The idea of a machine that registers emotion is parlayed into an alleged satire of the advertising industry combined with enough allusions of sex to keep the average high-school senior (!) on the edge of his chair. The look at the advertising industry is taken out of any one of half a dozen better books; the sex is handled in the slick, pseudo-sophisticated style of Playboy rather than the pseudo-pornography of the Beacon selections, but it still ain't literature, and it still ain't worth the bother.

Venus Plus X by Theodore Sturgeon (Pyramid, 35¢). As long as we're on the subject of sex we might as well look at something worthwhile. Sturgeon is a writer; he's probably the only one within the stf field (as opposed to occasional dabblers like Orwell, Huxley, and Wylie) whose works have any chance of lasting as Literature-with-a-capital-L. And in Venus Plus X, he has something to say; he doesn't seem out strictly for the fast buck. He is interested in describing the effects or defects of our present system of courtship, marriage, and child-raising; and he does it, as well as proposing an alternative system. (Someone in criticizing stf once said that anyone can knock the present set-up; what takes work is thinking out something to replace it. This Sturgeon does). This isn't for the individual who likes strictly adventure novels, or who objects to fiction that is thinly disguised philosophy. But if you've just finished The Climacticon and want something to wash the taste out of your mouth, this is perfect. Highly recommended.

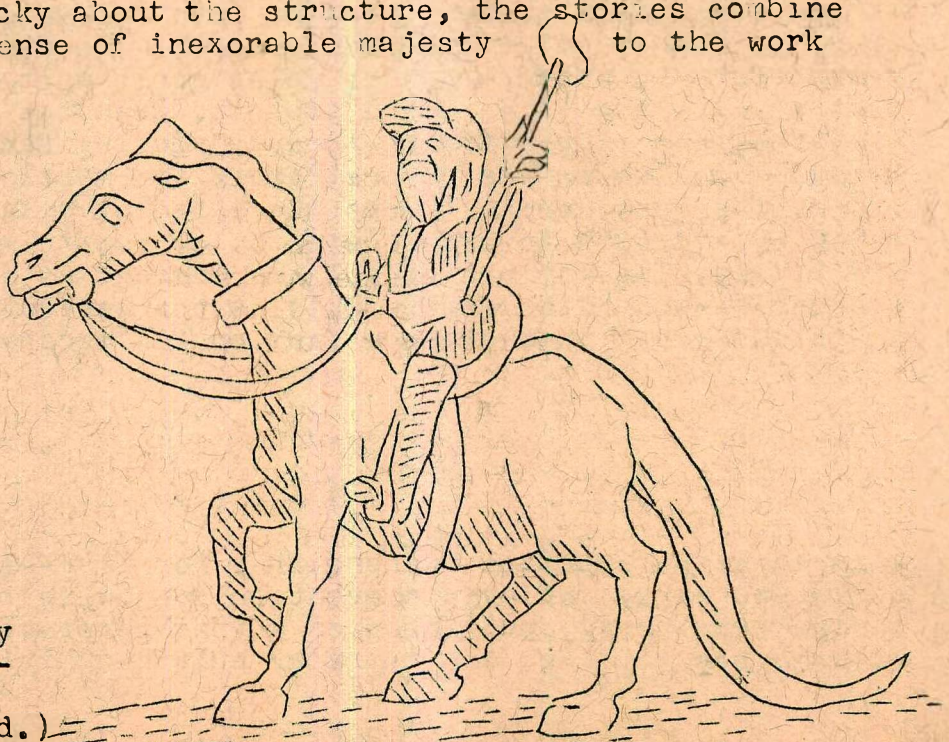
Beyond by Theodore Sturgeon (Avon, 35¢). About forty per cent of this book is taken up by the never-before-published lead novelle, "Need". The plot sounds idiotic--as some other reviewer has already proven--but Sturgeon doesn't need a massive plot any more than Bradbury does. Of the remaining stories, four are early Sturgeon, written when he was less philosophical and more interested in sheer entertainment than he is today. "Abstraction", "Nightmare Island", "Largo", and "The Bones" appeared in Weird Tales, AS, and Fantastic Adventures between 1941 and 1948. The fifth, "Like Young" you probably read in AS this year; it's one of their typical gimmick stories, with the author poking a bit of fun at mankind in general. None of the stories are really first-rate Sturgeon, and the reprints fit a little oddly with the original work, but the book is readable enough.

Galaxies Like Grains of Sand by Brian Aldiss (Signet, 35¢). Liking Brian Aldiss' work seems to be The Thing To Do lately, which should, I suppose, put me against him, automatically. Nevertheless, this book with the slightly fatuous title is a good one. The idea of making a coherent whole out of a batch of short stories by bridging them with short editorial comments is nothing new; probably the ideal of this type is Simak's City. In this particular case, the spanning is, on the whole, successful, which is something of an achievement, since I'm not at all sure that these stories were intended to go together, any more than Bradbury's self-contradictory tales of Mars were intended to fit neatly together in The Martian Chronicles. In another sense, this book is similar to Ted Tubb's Alien Dust, since the author had a helluva time trying to add continuity to eight separate stories with uniformly downbeat endings. Aldiss managed it, and if the bridges seem, sometimes, to show the strain--well, how would you go about putting a story that ends with the implied destruction of the human race in the middle of a continuous series about that race? It isn't easy...

The stories themselves range from fair to excellent, and if you aren't too finicky about the structure, the stories combine to give a certain sense of inexorable majesty to the work as a whole.

The Games of Neith by Margaret St. Clair and The Earth Gods are Coming by John Brunner (Ace, 35¢).

A couple of fair lightweight adventure stories. In the first, a being from another dimension comes through an "energy leak" in order to plug said leak. (Why it couldn't be plugged from the other side isn't explained.)



Anyway, the being is taken for a goddess, gets mixed up with our hero, our heroine, villains who don't believe in the leak and don't want it plugged if there is one and eventually, Justice Triumphs. Brunner chronicles a future humanity which drops robot religious pamphlets on inoffensive planets and runs into aliens who are doing the same thing. The hero gets mixed up with the aliens, and it's all rather complicated and distasteful. Don't waste your time on it.

The Lottery by Shirley Jackson (Avon, 35¢). A combination of the cover, cover blurb, and the fact that Miss Jackson has appeared in T&SF might lead you to believe that this is a collection of fantasy tales. Don't fall for it; there are only a couple of fantasies in the twenty-eight very short short stories included. Of course, the stories are better written than 95% of what you'll find ~~a~~ in a stfmag, but you aren't looking for good writing, you're looking for science fiction (or, if worst comes to worst, fantasy). If you want to get the book, fine; just don't do it under a misapprehension.

The Seventh Day by Hans Hellmut Kirst (Ace, 50¢). I've been busily recommending this personally to everyone I meet; I might as well say something about it in this column. You may have to look sharp to find it; it's an Ace Star Selection and won't be in with the stf (provided your newstand puts the stf paperbacks in one section, as mine does). In sheer size, this is a bargain; 380 pages for 50¢ is more for your money than most pocket books provide.

Like it says on the cover, the story is a "novel about the week before World War III". And through its pages you can see World War III advancing with terrifying reality. For this is the way it could happen; no accidental explosions which startle jumpy dictators into "retalliation", no mad generals launching insane air-raids, no sneak attack. The Poles who demonstrate against a new reciprocal trade agreement with Russia don't want war, they just want soviet troops withdrawn. The East Germans who demonstrate in support of the Poles don't want war, they just want to give the Poles moral support. Even the Russians don't want war, they are simply trying to avoid losing face. The East German troops who fire on the demonstrators are merely trying to preserve order. The West German troops who attack the East Germans are moved by sympathy towards their fellow countrymen being shot down and killed. The actions of all the characters are quite understandable--and quite fatal. This is the perfect reply to those pests who claim that science fiction is "escape literature".

= Buck Coulson

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This magazine supports Richard Eney for TAFF--I mean, what more could you want: An avid convention fan (with the ability to write a fine conreport), publisher of a fine genzine, and an a apa fan of some repute. You can bet your hula hoop it's

DICK ENEY 4 TAFF

GEORGE LOCKE

Now, who was it...?

It's amazing, but when you come to it, how often can you pin a reference or a quote to its originator? I've just tried to do so for the person who once said that the best way to find copy for a column was to drag open a heavily laden fannish cupboard and burst into a flow of words on the first object to fall out of it. Naturally, I failed.

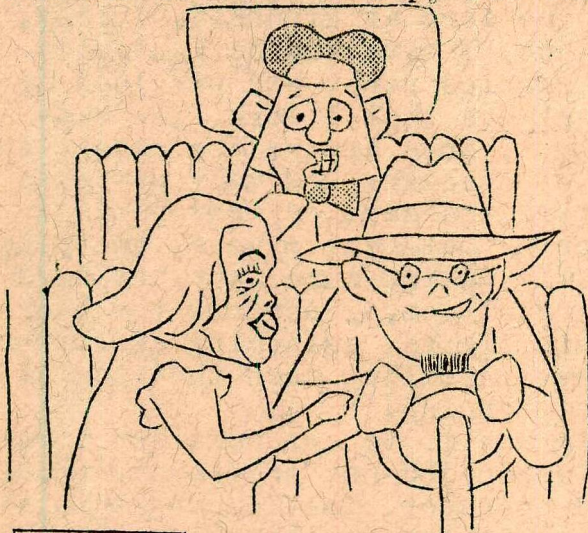
Whoever this person might have been, he certainly wasn't working at Connaught Hospital, Windhead, the military establishment designed primarily for the exercising of troops around its mile-long corridors and secondarily for repairing patients with chest complaints. A cupboard of fannish knick-knacks?

Not on your life. I did, however, have a recently-arrived envelope from Vic Ryan, presumably containing a letter, and--my offbeat mind being closer to dead-beat after working all night--I decided to columnize on the contents of said letter.

"Certainly, Matron, you can have these four beautiful American stamps. No, it wouldn't be any trouble at all--after all, haha, who reads the envelope?"

And so, I tore the stamps off and handed them to the lady. About a dozen tiny slips of paper tumbled from the envelope, and were swept away by a sudden flurry of activity from the official hospital fan. Half an hour later, I finished collecting them all, and settled back to read some of the egoboo from the first "Tetanus" column.

This excerpting of the relevant parts of the letters of comment is, from the contributor's point of view, an Excellent Thing, and I commend those people who, like Vic, either cut snippets from the letters of copy out the relevant portions and send them on. However, is it strictly necessary?



TETANUS

An argument in favor of it, thrust at me several times by another fan, is this: It saves filling a lettercolumn with a large quantity of "This article by...was very good. More please..." and "Not up to his usual standard.. should do better..." type of comments. Such material in a lettercolumn can be very boring to a reader--the only person interested is the writer himself, and he can get all the egoboo from the comments. Apart from the fact that, for me, the egoboo which sees print is much stronger than that which doesn't, is pure, unadulterated egoboo boring for the average reader?

I don't think so, at all.



Conversely, I've an idea that a lettercol with no egoboo for last issues' contributors would tend to get a bit tedious--certainly heavy--after the first few pages. Look at it this way: every fan, when he reads something, immediately sums up in his mind whether he likes it, raves over it, is completely unaffected, or thinks it stinks. And, naturally, he'll want to know if his opinions are the same as everyone else's, and, if not, why not. In the days when I used to read Astounding with more enthusiasm than I now read Analog,

"Brass Tacks" was a very well-handled lettercol, mixing interesting discussions with a certain amount of egoboo, or its opposite, for the stories. This egoboo gave the lettercol a lighter, more readable aspect, and also served as sort of a time-binder from issue to issue. Today, however, Campbell rarely, if ever, allows one of his stories to be mentioned in "Brass Tacks"--instead, his letterhacks ram down bucket after bucket of high falutin' stuff about some aspect of science. A most dreary affair, indeed.

And with fanzines--at least those which have a policy of presenting articles and stories by outside contributors--I believe the same applies. After all, the presence of masses of egoboo in the lettercol of Cry--surely the most interesting lettercol appearing at present--does not detract from the joy people, like George Locke, get from reading it.

Just a thought, though.

It might be that I'm talking through the back of my neck.

+ + + + +

I'm typing this at 2:00 AM, which might correspond to midday in Los Angeles, but does nothing of the sort at Hindhead, Surrey. Provided I don't make a mess of the job, I have the delightfully lazy job of night wardmaster, which carries rank, and provides me with four days off for every week's nights that I work. I'm supposed to be on work from eight to eight, once around the clock, and my duties involve the arduous tasks of checking how many patients are in each of the four wards, entering the same on army forms in octuplicate, making tea and toast for my mate any myself, sweeping out the Enquiries office, and generally making sure that the ward orderlies do their jobs properly. In addition, I perform the back-breaking tasks of switching on certain lights, switching off others, checking patients who return from leave, pulling down the flag at dusk, and erecting the thing the next morning.

However, this does mean that I'm unable to get home for stretches of a week at a time, something which did not previously occur when I was employed as a switchboard operator. The Connaught is about forty miles from London. The cost is two dollars to London, and four dollars, therefore, for the round trip. This works out to be nearly four days' pay at the present rate; however, if I hitch-hike, it costs me nothing, and gets me there nearly as soon.

At least, it doesn't cost any money.

I was wondering, however, what sort of special mental make-up people like Ron Ellik have which enables them to hitch-hike clear across a continent, without turning a hair. I have no particular objection to pushing my lift up the steeper stretches of Guildford

Bypass--it's the luck of the draw. What I object to is thumbing down vehicles containing such off-beat specimens as those that picked me up a few weeks ago.

I had gone by bus from Putney Bridge station to the Kingston Bypass, which is the first point out of London where one can reckon on picking up a ride. Within a minute or two a cheerful college type was trundling me along about seventy. Unfortunately, he had to turn off a mere seven or eight miles down the line, leaving me at Esher. I waited there about five minutes before a large, black vehicle of venerable vintage swerved madly as it flung on its brakes and came to a halt a few inches from a dustbin.

Its occupants were a very intense young man with a short beard and an equally serious female who wore her youth badly--along with her hair and a few other things. The man asked, "Where do you want to go?"

I said, simply, "Hindhead".

"We can take you as far as Milford." (About five miles short.)

"Thank you very much, sir," I murmured, and climbed into the back.

For a few moments, as we gathered speed, nothing was said. Then, without any fuss, preamble, or, in fact, anything to give me the background of their previous discussion, they continued arguing over the subject of the end of the world. It seemed that this delightful event was going to occur very soon--within the next few hours.

Unfortunately, they couldn't agree on the method.

The young man was all for a fiery conflagration: jamming his foot on the accelerator, he said, intensely: "There will be great fires across the land. The trees will burst into flame one by one, and nothing will escape. All life will be seared from the face of the Earth..."

"Darling," the girl started, snuggling closer to him. This seemed to inspire him to a further development of his theme. It seemed that in addition to quite ordinary fires, there would be additional horrors as vast quantities of petrol and oil bursting in mighty gushes from the bowels of the Earth, and enveloping all.

"Darling," the girl insisted, "It will not be that way at all. It will rain and it will rain, and there will be great floods..."

This seemed more logical, bearing in mind the fact that the English summer, after a surprisingly dry previous season, had reverted to normal.

We screeched around a corner a good twenty miles per hour too fast. Hardly had we swung around than the car found an extra something and added ten mph onto an already astronomical speedometer reading.

For a few more minutes, they threw opposing arguments at each other, and then, inevitably, things began to get a bit more violent. I sat in the back biting my fingernails--kept long for an emergency such as this--and hoped that the engine would konk out or something equally gentle. It would be in following with the tradition of great hitch-hikers if I could report that with a few carefully selected words I calmed the storm, and set them right, but I'm afraid I can't. All I could do was pray that when the car finally hit something, I would be thrown forward onto something soft, like the girl. (Though, with my luck maintaining its current pace, I'd probably get sued for attempted rape.)

However, we eventually arrived in Milford, stopping in much the same fashion as we'd driven. I opened the door, ran, and then hid behind a tree until the car had careened at least five miles down

the road, before I risked showing myself again. I've wondered since whether the end of the world for this couple came when they collided with a tree and burst into flame, thus satisfying the intense young man, or whether it came when they shot off the end of the A3 into Portsmouth Harbor, to prove woman's ascendancy over man.

The papers didn't say.

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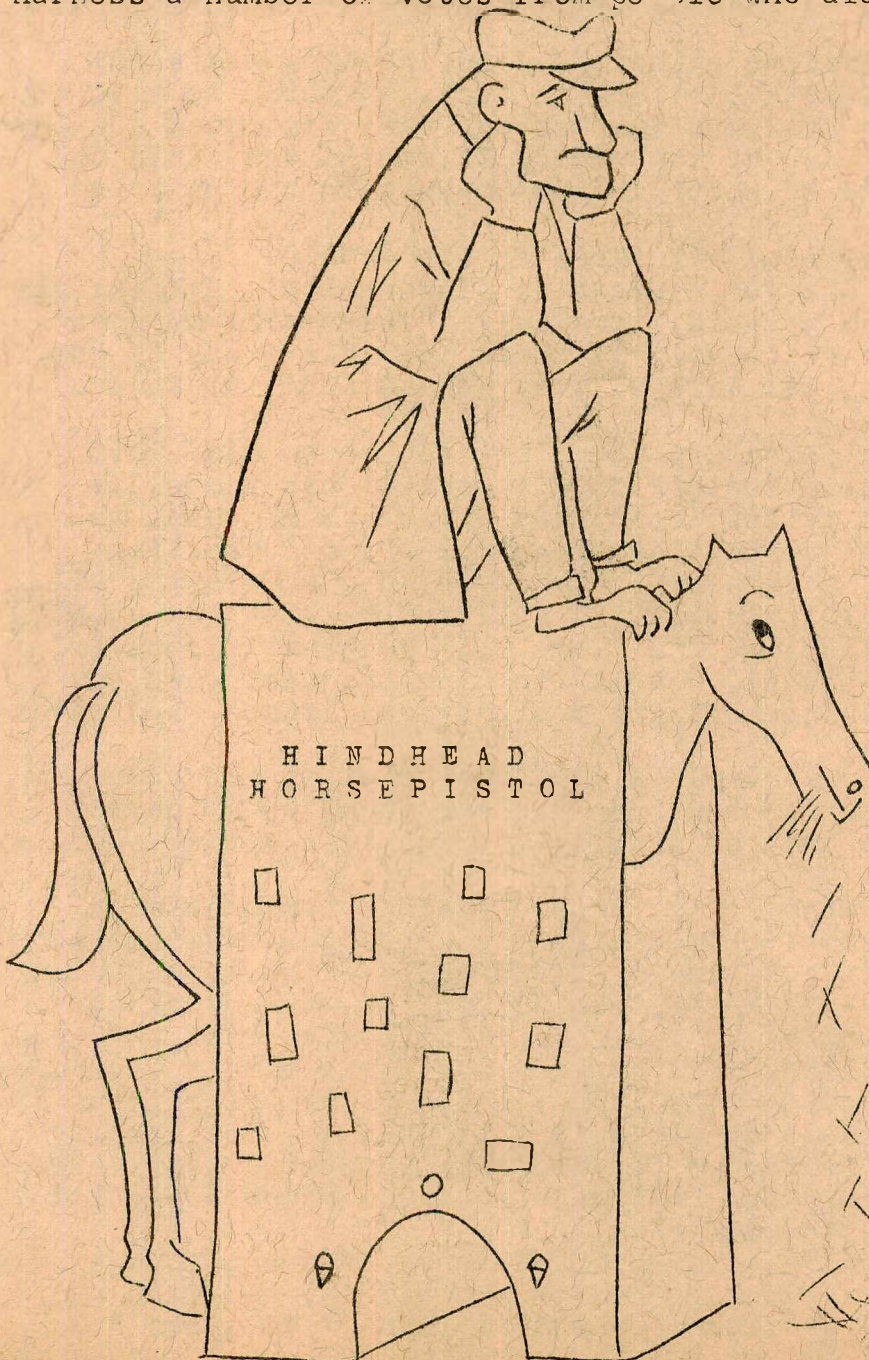
I don't remember there being anything very inspiring in the list of Hugo nominations for the best film of 1959; however, there seems to be quite an interesting line-up forming for the 1960 awards. I suppose that one of the contenders will have to be On The Beach. It was the most widely publicized of the three I want to mention here, and for that very reason I suspect that it will harness a number of votes from people who didn't get to see it.

but because it was so widely acclaimed assume it "naturally the best."

To me it was merely an interesting example of the way ballyhoo from the producers combined with critics' acclaim lead the suckers in like sheep. Many of the critics found "deep significance" or "a powerful message", and the like, buried in the film.

I suggest that these messages must have been pretty deeply buried. The critics had to go to see this picture and find inner meanings, else they'd be no better than their readers. So, they dug deeply, if not well.

Your 'umble columnist went to the same film ready to spend two or three hours in a strange situation, living with the characters, having his belief suspended, and participating as best he could, which is the way to most enjoy any film. All he found were a couple



of feeble love stories, and absolutely none of the lauded message. Only in one aspect did the film succeed at all--and that was from a technical point of view, rather than any accident of script or of acting. The scenes where the submarine was investigating the California coast were very well done--as though, in fact, the end of the world had come.

Two other films which will be, I think, in the thick of the race, if only sufficient people see them. One strictly serious note is the re-making of John Wyndham's The Midwich Cuckoos into a fine movie, The Village of the Damned. In this, George Sanders plays the part of the scientest, whose wife bears one of the alien children conceived during the few hours when the village was cut off from the rest of the world by a barrier which produced unconsciousness. The first part of the film deals with the attempts of a local military unit on maneuvers trying to get through to the village, but does not do so with the usual hysteria or threats of atom-bombing the place. When the sleep field lifts, everybody is apparently normal, with the exception of a few minor accidents which inevitably befall those who fall asleep at the wheel of a tractor, etc.

However, not long thereafter, several women find themselves unaccountably pregnant, and duly--and definitely prematurely--the Children are born. They are strange, impassive children, and immediately frighten the villagers, not so much by what they do as by the way they look. It is enough, in fact, for similar children born in a number of other villages throughout the world, to be killed at birth. Only the English village and a Russian one allow them to live, in fact.

This turns out to be a mistake. In a series of carefully constructed scenes, where whoever is responsible for the makeup and training of the aliens in the film surely deserves an Oscar, we see the gradual development of their mental powers, and their inimical nature towards people. Eventually, the aliens leave their homes and live in a building apart from the villagers. They are rapidly becoming a national emergency; finally, Sanders, who has tried to break through to them for years, allow that they would be better off dead. The British, however, don't believe in wiping the entire village out with an atomic bomb, as the Russians did, so George gets to try on his own. The difficulty is, of course, that they are telepathic, and, when he is near them, if he were to think bad thoughts, they would step in and prevent the execution of the plan. How he overcomes this forms the climax of the film; a very fine, climax, in the best sf tradition.

Journey to the Center of the Earth is a different proposition altogether; it is sheer entertainment, and the most absolutely enjoyable sf film I've ever seen. The fact that most of the critics slammed it shouldn't prevent you from attending; they've slammed many a similar, entertaining picture.

The story includes some highly stunning scenes of the journey underground, taken at Carlsbad Caverns, and puts James Mason at the situation so delighted at by hack sf writers--pulling a rabbit out of the hat in the form of a wee instrument which detects the source of a sound by lining up with its last echo. James merely holds the thing aloft for a second; then, after a suitable expression of joy crosses his face, he flings it away, and dashes down a tunnel.

Technically, it was a success; the monsters well-made, and the final voyage up the volcano made a fitting climax.

A film--with the Sense of Wonder ready to burst from the seams.

= = = George Locke

an abstruse angle

ED GORMAN

With many words being spoken on the various death forms of the science fiction magazine, there is a fairly obvious but overlooked manner in which to look at this and see a good (in a manner of speaking) outcome of the whole affair.

SF has been attempting to be recognized as an individual facet of popular literature for a number of years; by "popular" I don't mean pulp, but rather of the class of books which seem to spring from the Marquands, the Wylies, and the Shutes. Not literature in the strictest sense of the word but fiction above the formula blend.

And stf has made great strides towards its objective. As proof, Amis' New Maps of Hell and the reviews of Clarke, Bradbury and Asimov in such periodicals as Time, Newsweek, and the Saturday Review of Literature. SF is now being recognized not so much as a pulp entity but what it is today.. Now it is viewed separately, and draws sympathetic words from many fine and influential critics.

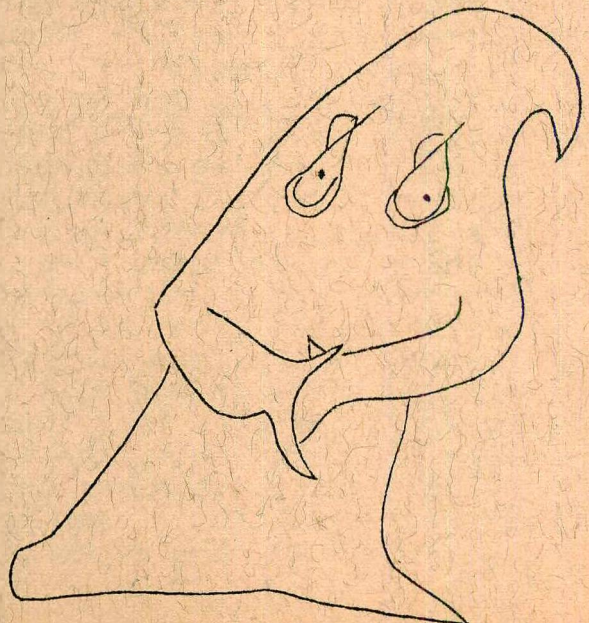
But still, science fiction (in the pulp sense of the word) is identified with the magazines; some people who follow these magazines know SF only through this channel. And, to a large majority, this is understandable. But, with many of the magazines folding, what is left?

Well, Ballantine still brings out several sf titles, and does well, particularly with Clarke. Doubleday, also, has continued along with the field, although its hey-day is past. Most of its Bradbury and Asimov books reach second printing.

In more mainstream settings, many of the slicks who, at one time, if they featured sf at all, ran only fantasy with a roundabout explanation, now feature it regularly. As an example of this, The Saturday Evening Post ran Wylie's "The Answer", a novella, and did well with it; Christopher's "No Blade of Grass" followed, and the reader reaction was quite favorable.

So what am I saying? That I'm glad the demise of the sf magazine is evident in the near future?

No, not that; I'm just trying to see another side of the picture. As an example, very little of lasting literature consists of short stories--and tipling is perhaps the only author to make his name on same.



So what's the connection? I'd say that this is yet another defect of the sf magazine, or, for that matter, any magazine which prints a single type of fiction--it cannot win a name for itself in the cynical and blind eyes of the general critics. Type-casting itself is a sin, but without length or profundity of words, the offense is doubled.

Another thing: the sf magazine, like that of any popular form of literature, tends to be commercial to far too great a degree. If, at any given time, the readers are calling for blood and thunder, then this must be printed, thus allowing some stories which are mediocre to awful to be published, while stopping a truly fine piece of writing.

These are, I imagine, some of the things which mundane literature hold against the sf magazines. They are pulp, they are guided by reader whim, and there are no novels, with the possible exception of 20,000 words of ACTION.

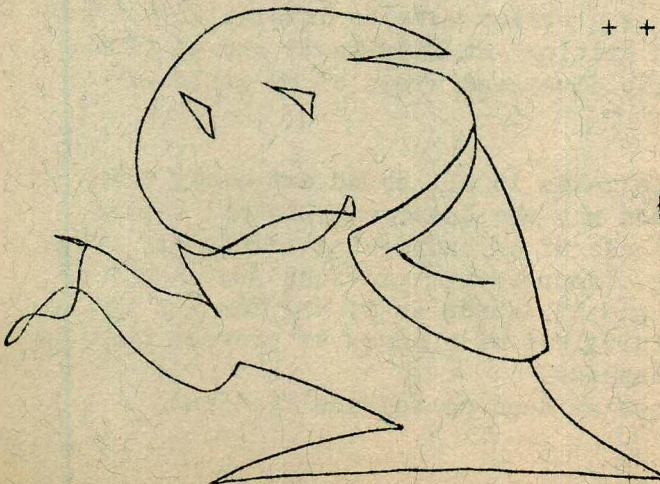
So the modern critic turns to the hardbounds, judging a book on its own merits, but neglecting to mention the fact that the novel has been reprinted from a magazine.

So, sf is earning respectability through its own demise. This thinning of the field, in conjunction with general advances in sf publishing, such as toned-down covers, less vociferous blurbs, etc., has added to the growth of this respect. But, let me remind you again, I don't go for it. I'd rather read three magazines which are flourishing alone and continue getting nose-thumbing reviews from more austere periodicals, than read my sf in Cosmopolitan or Ladies' Companion.

If the latter came about, Buck Rogers would become young and gay and social-minded and flit about in ermine padded spaceships. Campbell's editorials would become even more obscure; Gold's love of illustrations would be slip-shodded, down-graded to a view of a baseball player clutching portions of his anatomy and exclaiming, "From now on...it's BIE for me...". And most of all, the diversion of magazine stock between various holdings would bring to reality that most enjoyable lie of this century: "This is your magazine...".

It's like I said in the beginning: all this is a way of looking at things. But if it should come true--back to the comics.

+++



GO
chicago

- 1962

CHOPPED

/ 13 a E 3 f S

Harlan

Ellison : I read the recent issue of Bane with serious misgivings, for friends had mentioned the Falasca monograph with some annoyance. However, I was pleased to read that Nick remembered those halcyon days in Cleveland with a tepid tear of nostalgia. Nick's and my friendship is a peculiar thing, and if he didn't keep reassuring me that we were buddies, I must occasionally feel he was putting me down. But that's just foolishness, obviously.

It is a constant amazement to me, though, how people like Nick and Bob Tucker (the latter in his letter) suffer under memories that cease ten years ago. Their recollections of 1950, and the unhappy sixteen-year-old fan who thought the way to gain friendship and respect was to be bizarre, are a bit out-moded. But if they prefer to live in shadows, rather than realities, who am I to say no?

I might take this opportunity to clarify Bob's remark about my "sending a correspondent" to a war. I believe that remark was taken out of context in an informal discussion Bob and I had at Earl Kemp's house during a small party one night a year ago. At that time I mentioned that as a routine part of my duties editing Rogue I had commissioned a writer-photographer to cover the sports car races at Le Mans and the Norburgring for us. How this grew into the pompous statement of war correspondents escapes me, but I'm sure this reminder will serve to straighten both Bob's recollection and the record.

You know, the recent rash of alleged "true biographies" of me (a subject which I contend is of utmost disinterest to the world at large) by Harmon, Nick, and a few others strikes me as slightly biased and as an indication of a dearth of printable material of pith and/or moment. It seems to me that if you really wish to find out something about my life, you might approach Ted White or Larry Shaw or Bob Silverberg. They have known me a great deal better than Bob Tucker—who I've met perhaps half a dozen times in the ten years I've known him, for a total of perhaps twenty-four hours—or Nick—whose proximity to me has been tenuous since I left Cleveland many years ago. Some day, if I am struck by a fit of energy and enlightened self-interest, I might even do up my own "true autobiographical history". But as I indicated, there must be more important things to talk about.

But then, one never knows, do one?

P.S.: Nick's opinions of my worth as a writer were so interesting, I've showed them to the editors of "New World Writing" at Lippincott and at "The Village Voice"—both of whom hold slightly divergent views of my style and import. But then, what do they know?

Redd Boggs : MZB's circus fandom article makes it all sound extremely uninteresting except to the addict. The reason why the Insurgent Element was so effective in sf fandom is that the spectacle of anybody going completely overboard for anything is a bit embarrassing. Insurgentism provides just a bit of common sense in the midst of monomania, and it sounds as if Mr. Tom S., the circus fan, and his fellows need the equivalent of a Laney to prevent them from drowning in an ocean of utter foolishness.

I understand that circuses are almost as dead as science fiction!

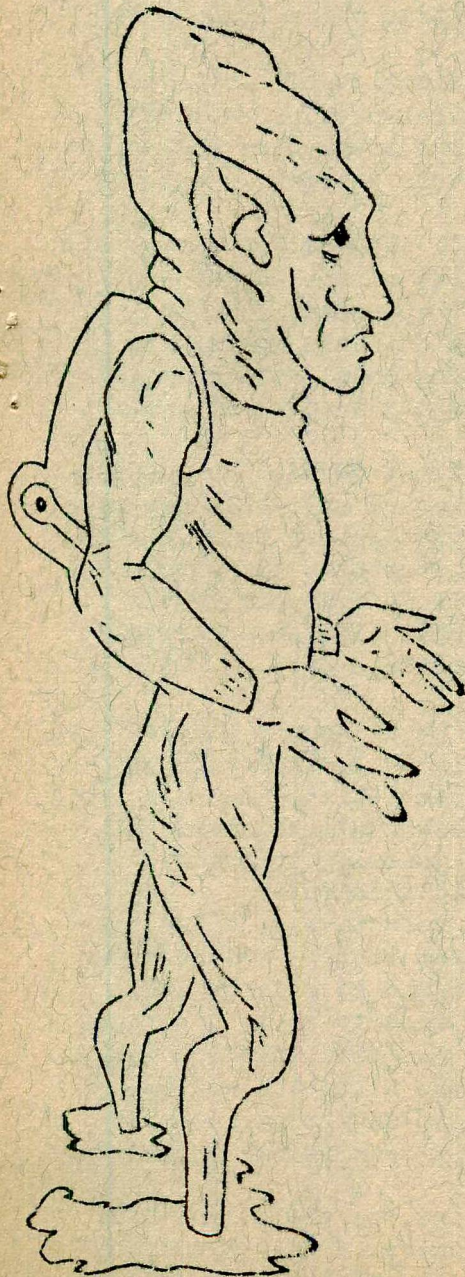
Buck Coulson has few equals as a fanzine reviewer, but I'm afraid I don't value his judgments when he starts reviewing books. I'm rather shocked, right away, to discover that he thinks Gulliver's Travels a book "written primarily for propaganda purposes" Holy cow! What propaganda purposes, I wonder? The book holds up to ridicule many of the institutions of Swift's day—the Church (especially the Low Church), the political party in power, the Royal Society, etc.—and ends up damning mankind wholesale, but satire and lampoon are hardly propaganda. I presume Buck can (and will) provide his own definition of "propaganda", but, to me, it centers in the art of making people do something, such as join a movement, write a check, etc., while Gulliver's Travels — and, for that matter, 1984 — was centered in the art of making people think, as much as people can be made to think.

I also disagree in some degree with Buck's evaluation of nearly every book he reviews. Unearthly Neighbors was good, but I can name at least two novels of 1960 I consider more deserving of a Hugo— Venus Plus X, by Sturgeon, and Dark December, by Coppel. I was also about to jump on Buck for terming some of Bradbury's yarns in A Medicine for Melancholy "stream of consciousness, but I see he takes it back in the next breath. That term has been badly mis-used of late.

I remember Moskowitz having ideas very similar to Lichtman's facetious ones a decade ago when SaM attended a peace rally in Newark where Olaf Stapledon was a speaker. SaM was so impressed with the methods used at the rally to coax or bully contributions from attendees that he could hardly wait to apply such methods to fan clubs.

Les Sample's tale of his walks at night reminds me of my similar adventures. I didn't want to walk, but at the time I had no car, and the bus coming into this section of town doesn't run until after sundown, so I had to hike from the point where the bus does run all night to the house, about two or two and a half miles each night at 4 a.m. After I'd been doing this for a while, usually without seeing a soul, I was stopped by the cops one night. They beamed a spotlight in my eyes and browbeat me scarecely less diplomatically than with Les Sample. They invited me to ride with them; I coldly refused, and they didn't insist. After that, they stopped me a number of times, either because they were still suspicious of me or else (more likely) they knew I was growing to hate their guts and it was a good way of plaguing me. Then, while I saw them occasionally, they cruised right by and never bothered me again; this annoyed me, too, since I'd grown rather fond of exchanging noncooperative remarks and growls with them.

The dour remarks about Beacon Books surprise me; they aren't that bad, the few I've read. Most of it is pretty innocuous stuff, compared with the books of Beacon's competitors such as Newsstand Library, publishers of Geis' Sex Kitten and a brand new Geis novel, Like Crazy, Man.



I even suspect that the collaboration between Beacon and Galaxy may be a good thing. Sex was so thoroughly lacking in sf, or so unrealistically done, for so many years that maybe a sensationalistic dose of it now will help to adjust the balance. I feel that the Beacon series has helped paved the way for Sturgeon's Venus Plus X, a book of real quality which probably couldn't have found a publisher only a few years ago.

Floyd Zwicky : Ayn Rand's colossal Atlas Shrugged has, I feel, been done an injustice, and I feel Coulson missed the point entirely. This book is a criticism of our present social attitudes, and it takes a trend and extends it to its ultimate possible conclusion if the trend continues. This has been done before, sometimes effectively, and sometimes not. It should not require proof that at present there is a contempt for intelligence and for those with special talents. It is considered brash and anti-social to be better than your fellows, is it not? This is particularly evident in schools, where, of all places it should not be. The thinker is an "egghead", the clever businessman is either "lucky" or "corrupt". Even the inventor is not a sober and sensible individual with an agile brain—he is, rather, the "mad scientist" type. Our present society has been called, with some justice, the time which indulges in "glorification of mediocrity".

It is only a step from this attitude to the conventional socialistic idea of "dictatorship of the proletariat". Since the proletariat are, by definition, those who have nothing but their day-to-day earnings, it hardly seems logical to entrust government to those who haven't the skill to govern themselves successfully, does it?

Now, as to reality, the world is run by the men with the most intelligence and the most skill, isn't it? As I see it, the whole point of the book is an appeal to us to encourage these people rather than their opposite, for the good of humanity, since if humanity is to accomplish anything of consequence, the accomplishments are going to come from the few outstanding ones. Certainly the point is made with some force, but isn't it always necessary to over-emphasize for effect?

Almost all stories that deal with the far future depict mankind as immensely elevated mentally and socially. How likely is this? We are currently preserving every life we can, on the theory, right or wrong, that a life is of value merely because it is a life. And so we labor mightily to preserve the physically imperfect and even the mentally deficient. Since it is probable that these people will breed and perpetrate their kind, who will also be preserved better and better as medical and surgical techniques improve, where will it all stop?

We don't know all about genetics, to be sure, but we do know a little about its physical aspects. When we breed cattle for milk or beef production we are careful to weed out those with undesirable characteristics, and as a result we get just what we're looking for. If we allow these animals to breed indiscriminately, we wind up with scrubs, physically and mentally inferior. Is there any reason why mankind should be an exception to this rule?

Now I don't suggest that we institute a program of selective breeding for humans; I rather doubt if it would work, since there seems to be a misapprehension that "love will find a way", though so far it has found it only by accident. You know it is only recently that men and women are free to marry those they are physically attracted to. It used to be that our spouses were selected for us by cooler heads, and there is no evidence to show that the situation was ~~xxxx~~ any worse for it. If that basis had been made on the basis of intelligence or beauty, we might have been either pretty generally bright or handsome or even both by now.

I would like to see these facts extended into the future; the story, "The Marching Morons" was one which did, but there should be more. Have you noticed that in Asimov's "Foundation" series, there has been no change in human characteristics, physical or mental? I wonder if that's deliberate?

John Baxter : It seems strange that Bob Tucker should be so...well, touchable, to use a somewhat ambiguous phrase. Living out here in the wildest portion of international fringe-fandom, you get the impression that pros and BNFs are just too good to associate with rabble, i.e., people like you and me. Yet here is Tucker himself, actually speaking to One of Us. Of course, Bob Smith, down in Victoria, writes to him, but seeing that they are both movie projectionists, and initiated into the mysteries of that particular magic, it's understandable in their case.

"To the Tombaugh Station" certainly was ragged; however, I naturally thought this was senile decay rearing its incredibly ugly head in the life of yet another pro author, as it has done in the case of Theodore Sturgeon, Poul Anderson, and Bob Silverberg (premature--perhaps I'm confusing senile decay with sheer fugg-headedness?)

One of the largest fandoms--and, so far as I know, one which hasn't been brought into the discussion--is that of Esperanto, the International Language. The Sydney Esperanto crowd advertises a little, mainly in the form of eye-catching little displays in local railway stations. Naturally, you tend to think of such people as wide-eyed visionaries, intent on overturning the world's speaking habits, and instituting some gobbledegook of their own, whereas, in reality, they are merely keen hobbyists who are doing, in their quiet way, a lot of good towards International Goodwill. Sf fans deplore the present state of affairs in segregation, religious tolerance, &c.--the Esperantists are doing something about it and I, for one, respect them for it.

Buck Coulson's work, as typified by "Wheel of Fortune", has that slow, easy-going, back-country flavor, positively reeking of hay and Good Earth. Every time I read Yandro, I find a Bradbury-type lassitude in the air. Over in the red-roofed farmhouse someone is singing "John Henry" to guitar accompaniment, and we can see the weary pubber, with the mimeo flung carelessly over his shoulder, slowly trudging home after a hard day in the fields. Maybe this down-home feeling has something to do with the distinct smell of horse manure that hangs over "Wheel of Fortune".

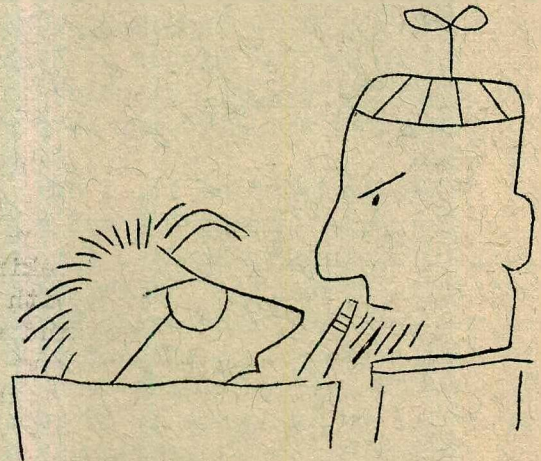
I don't know Coulson at all; for all I know, he may be a very astute person, strong, fearless, and so on, and his reviews only appear to be wishy-washy drivel. However, from my point of view, it seems that Bob is dreadfully afearred of making a contentous statement.

What fandom needs is not a Billy Graham but a dynamic, imposing figure, skilled in the art of bamboozling; a man without integrity, ethics, feelings, or sense of honor--someone who, with cold-blooded precision, could lure unsuspecting men and women into the N3F. In short, we need a real consciousless bastard--suggestions?

(Ed. note: At least your views of "Wheel of Fortune" are different, if not accurate. Coulson is perfectly able to answer you if he desires, so watch this space.

Incidentally, thanks for your long, interesting letter; you're one of the many letter-writers I wanted to answer, but time doesn't permit. Actually, I only managed to answer a very few of the letters, and those were merely early-arrivers.

Sorry, no copies of Bane 1 left; for others' information, however, there are still four copies of "2, unclaimed."



"For the last time I am not Dan Adkins, it's S-T-I-L-...."

Alma Hill : I agree with MZB that sf groups tend to be weak on inside warmth; why, I don't know. There seems to be this fashion of cynicism and clever means of finding out whether people are bores or not, and avoiding contact. Why so fussy? I've been bored by experts, but never found anyone remotely dull in fandom. There, I am in danger of boring myself from lack of conversation. I can understand why people warm up faster to pros and known names, but the way people keep news between in and out seems downright boorish to me. No wonder fandom is small, compared to the total readership.

Plenty of groups I've passed by, paused at, and been frozen back out of. Now, multiply this by the number of fans who receive similar treatment, and we have something which can set up sustaining defensiveness.

Sid Birchby : The other fandom I like the best is amateur wine-making fandom.

Only the British, it is said, have the courage to try to make fermentable drinks out of parsnips or tea leaves, and by gad, sir, only the British would succeed. There are many of these fan clubs all over the county; during the summer they organize outings to breweries and other places connected with their art, and during the winter they meet for shop-talks, which end in sampling others' products. An amateur wine-maker, confronted with the poet's host of golden daffodils sees them in terms of how many gallons of daffodil wine he can make and hastily reviews the capacities of his vessels. His poetic senses subdued, he would probably criticize Keats' line about "Beaded bubbles winking at the brim", as showing that the stuff was still fermenting, and too young to drink, as yet.

The President of one club has constructed a winemaker's tavern in the basement, as I learn from an account recently published in "The Amateur Winemaker"; so it seems as if the tradition of the fan-den is known in other fandoms, too. Probably the result of an impulse to retreat from the world of reality; at any rate, I can think of worse places to retreat than to a basement bar lined with tankards and bottles, with several hundred spare gallons in the next room.

Don Wollheim : Harlan Ellison is a phenomenon which burst upon me only recently;

that is to say, he had departed the field of active fandom and had become a pro. If I had been an active fan at the same time as Harlan, I'm sure there would have been bloodshed, but time and age put a sufficient barrier there to prevent that. As a matter of fact, the entire staff at Ace is very fond of Harlan; my secretary Ann has a persistent vision of Harlan dangling from some woman's charm bracelet, a la the cover of "Beyond the Vanishing Point". I can't forget the vision of Harlan carrying Donna down 47th street, en route to see The Time Machine (for which he had wangled passes for us all) or the picture of him climbing a Broadway lamp post to find out where in the midst of a crowd we were.

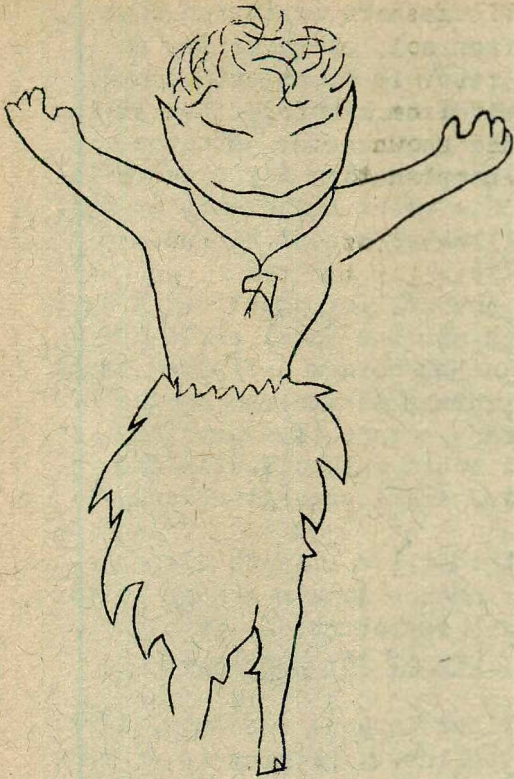
Come to think of it, I have seen so little of Harlan, and yet so much...

I enjoyed Tucker's novel a great deal. It isn't fast-paced but it has a certain pleasingly handled eye for detail and life which made it very worthwhile, in my opinion. Hence, Ace bought it. It's going to be a double book, paired with Poul Anderson's Flandry, but I've tried not to have it cut at all--in fact, I gave instructions to cut the hell out of Anderson's novel if necessary to save Tucker's. But the damn printer still hollered and sent the copy back, so we had to cut maybe 5,000 words--but I think the leisure is retained.

Actually, Poul Anderson is a better writer than Tucker, but I only like some of his work, and find a good deal of the rest of his copy annoying and reject-worthy (even when not submitted to me...)

On the other hand, Tucker and I haven't always gotten along, but I always find his writings pleasingly backwoods with a sort of bucolic corn that's very rare in these sophisticated days.

(From the rest of an interesting letter: Don mentions that he doesn't care for Bane's book reviewer, is active in the collection of model soldiers (another fandom), and wishes that he had known there were fans in the Panama City area, since he was thereabouts last October. Thanks for your letter, Don.)



Harry Warner Jr. : I wonder if you are correct in assuming that Fanning Springs, Florida, has nothing to do with Degler. If it's in the everglades, he may have founded it, since early in his fannish career he took a trip to Florida about which comparatively little is known, except for the fact that he got lost, and spent part of the time in a tree, where he had been chased by an alligator.

Some healthy fan whose interest is likely to resist gafia would do science fiction a benefit by trying to round up carbon copies of the original manuscripts of novels, before the cuttings and bowdlerizings occur. If the carbons were kept in some safe place, three or four decades from now they would be of intense bibliographic interest and might even find their way into print; as it is, they probably get lost so thoroughly even the author doesn't know where he put them.

Nick Falasca neglects to say that the reputation of Cleveland fandom for eccentrics goes back far beyond the founding of the Cleveland Science Fantasy Society. Jack Chapman

Miske was the first of the prominent Cleveland fans of the late 30's and early 40's. He did almost all his fanning by correspondence, but he shook fandom up quite as much as Harlan did a decade later.

Les Sample is apparently thinking of a Bradbury yarn, not a Jack Finney story as he suggests. I was suprised that you didn't explain in your editorial or in a note how Abe Lincoln gets away with walking at midnight in Springfield.

Honey Graham : Tell Bob Lichtman that I am the head of the Recruiting Bureau, and that Dick Keyes is in charge of recruiting. (?) I am quite sure that if Billy Graham instead of Honey Graham was at the head of the Bureau we could drag in more members.

I enjoyed a hundredfold Nick Falasca's article on Harlan. I remember those days well, being a member of Cleveland fandom for many years. I was co-editor--with Harlan--for about two years on SF.Bulletin, and can remember well all the ups and downs we had with that particular magazine. One of my most vivid memories concerns the toilet paper we used on Harlan's broken old mimeo machine. Mrs. Ellison had a fit. She would come home and find Harlan and I working away, with a basket full of inked up toilet paper. I suppose we all miss those days; I know that I do,

Another cute trick that wasn't mentioned by Nick was that Harlan stole a bird bath with the aid of, I think, Bill Venable and Norm Brown. They lugged it over to my house on the bus and set it up in the middle of my front room. I couldn't budge the thing, so for weeks I faithfully dusted it; many visitors wondered why I had a birdbath in my front room, and it was hard to explain.

We have a very active club here in the Bay Area, and let it be known that we will be putting on the Westercon this year, July 1&2, 1961. We hope that some of your readers will be able to attend the gathering; Fritz Leiber will be guest of honor, and that's a real treat for West Coast fans.

Art Rapp : You missed a great fannish opportunity, you know. When Bob Tucker visited you, the two of you should have taken advantage of the occasion to plan a Ben Singer Death Hoax!

Tucker's letter-extracts were fine reading; to me one of the most fascinating things in the world is to hear craftsmen "shop talk"--Burbee on machine shops, Hayes on uranium processing, or Tucker on marketing a novel.

When I first met Ellison at the '54 convention I was more irritated than enchanted by his constant drive to be the dominant figure in every group; at Detroit I was considerably revolted by his demonstrating his "sophistication" by sprinkling his speeches from the platform with gutter terminology. But at the Pittcon I found him to be as charming and friendly a character as anyone could wish to meet. Quite possibly he's still over-compensating for a terrific inferiority complex, but he's grown up quite a bit. His great blind spot is that he doesn't realize that other fans are perfectly willing to accept him as a genius; he doesn't have to work so hard at proving it.

Lichtman gives me an idea for presenting stf to the public: practically every town has, sometime during the year, a parade in which all the local civic organizations enter floats. Why shouldn't the local fanclub borrow a flatbed truck and scrounge up enough cerene paper and plywood to impress themselves on the local citizens? After seeing the costumes which fans scrape together for the convention ball, I'm sure that any local fanclub could walk off with the "best float" trophy in competition with Elks, Kiwanis, American Legion, and other such imaginative groups.

"Lonely One" was disturbingly realistic--except that I'd like to disagree with the implied premise that a fanzine has a better chance to win a Hugo if the editor pours lots of dough into expensive professional reproduction. Surely neatness of typography isn't one of the hallmarks of Cry of the Nameless!

Ray Cummings : While I find Sturgeon a very fine writer in some respects, I've been repelled more than once by his ugliness. Nothing is so vile as man, I suppose, but Sturgeon seems to go out of his way to point this out--shock value, I suppose. Didn't he write "Affair with a Green Monkey"? A nasty thing--one which could have gotten the magazine banned if the right people had read it and interpreted it correctly.

Ed Cox: Not enough in "Lonely One" was explained, not any logical reason was given for the guy to want to publish a popular fanzine. No explanation of why this would take precedence over taking care of the necessities of life. There is no explanation of just what it was that caused fandom to repel the fellow's efforts; therefore the ending fails to have any impact, let alone significance.

I like the way Marion Bradley outlined the gist of a great wad of the so-called "books" now available. The trouble is, so many people are growing up with nothing but this kind of junk in their heads and really believing that a number of such women as Marion mentions really exist. I frequent a bar which abounds in characters whose lives are based on these axioms. They're a pretty frustrated bunch. What am I doing there? Observing, observing. Great fun.

George Spencer : I was fascinated by Les Sample's letter. The episode which he relates, in which he is suspected by both police and parents of being Not Quite Right, is precisely the sort of incident calculated to make a young person mentally disturbed. The fact that Les can talk about the incident in reasonably objective tones (without out and out polemic, at least) reaffirms my belief that fanzines and fandom in general function(s) as a psychiatrist. Fans are sympathetic to problems like the one that faced Les, and act as "listeners", so that others can talk about their troubles or vent their spleen, or whatever. This is important. What I'm wondering is this: how many youngfans are in his position, with parents unsympathetic to their interests and society indifferent?

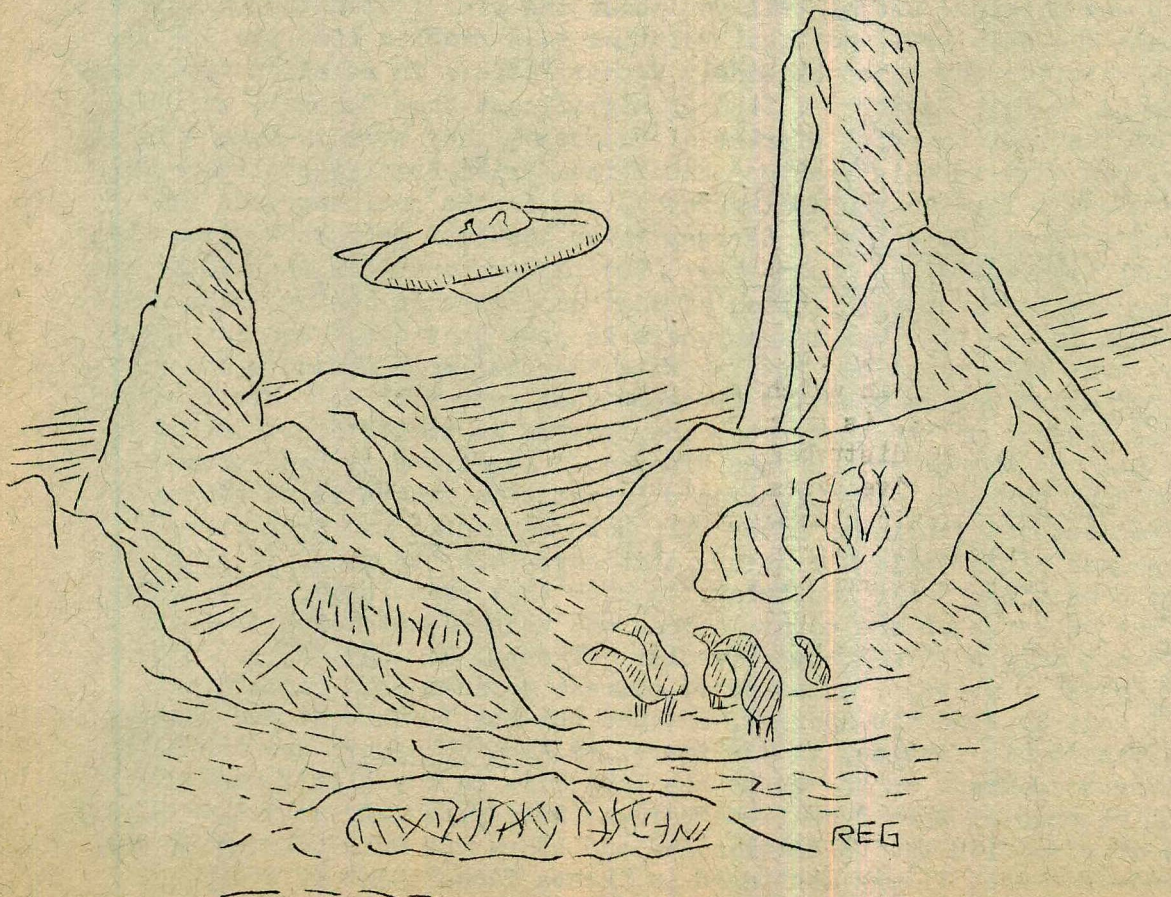
← I agree with your reasoning, to a large extent; I also wonder if fandom might not be an excellent training ground for potential parents, for if youngfans are ostracized for slaving over a mimeo for hours on end, and retreating from the world at large for stretches of time, isn't this perhaps a good lesson, which can be applied sometime in the future when the youngfans become adults with a family to care for? Perhaps their youngsters would receive added sympathy. →

Vern Coriell : It is doubtful that anyone ever pointed this out to Marion Bradley but no one, in a flying act, has ever actually performed the much-publicized triple somersault. And this includes Alfredo Codona, Charlie Seigrest, Antonette Concello, Tony Steele, and a handful of others who claimed to have performed the "triple"; what you have witnessed, if indeed you are that fortunate, is a "two-and-a-half", where the flyer is caught by his wrists--a triple requires another flip.

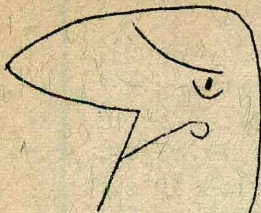
Someone asked, "Who killed science fiction?" I doubt that it is really dead, judging from the fanzines that turn up at my address. The circus has received a lot of publicity in the last couple of years as being "dead" too. But this is far from being true. There were something like 36 travelling circuses on the road this past year--not counting independently produced ones--from rag-bags, mud-shows and up to the so-called "big ones". As long as there are kids with even a little bit of imagination there will be circuses, fantasy, and science fiction.

↳ Which is about as up-beat ending as I could find to end the regular portion of this lettercol. I must, however, confess: it would be longer, except that I slipped somewhere and lost two interesting letters--from Walt Breen and Suzy Vick. I'm really sorry about this, and hope they'll both forgive me. In brief, Breen's letter suggested that censorship of the so-called "lewd" material is less urgent than suppressing the physical culture crap which frightens youngsters into imagining they have all sorts of incurable diseases: Suzy's letter concerned, among other things, dating Tony Perkins, and the 16 year-old twin brothers. ↳

Bob Tucker: Now the only thing you have to learn is that not everything written by a name fan is worth publishing; don't waste too much space on hacks such as Bloch and Tucker. That pair has probably killed off more fanzines than you can shake a review at. ## Mike Deckinger: Several years ago I saw the Ringling Brothers circus in Madison Square Garden, from a good seat, and all, but I'm afraid the only emotion it stirred was boredom. ## Betty Kujawa : Les Sample should be a housewife for a few days -- then I'll bet he wouldn't feel that roaming urge! ##



Andy Offutt: Bob Tucker certainly told a tale of woe; after repeated encouragement from Gold I sent him a sequel to "Blackword" entitled "The Dictator's Apprentice". He kept it two months, then returned it without suggestion or explanation. I decided against suicide, since I'd been underpaid the first time--Galaxy's published rates are 3¢ per word down. I received 3¢ per word down. Way down. I also agree with Marion Bradley's summation of "adult" sex; we males are boosting our egos, I'm afraid, since it was Verby and the best-seller people who invented the "hot-britches" female. ## Alan Burns: I haven't read any Tucker that I've particularly enjoyed, for the first I read was Wild Talent, and there we started with what was a quite reasonable story about a telepath and ended up with him having every tele-power possible, just so certain characters could be removed. ## Roy Tackett: One of the premises of Atlas Shrugged is that this is the age of shoddiness, the era of the half-done. This holds true after any inspection of inferior products, from zippers to automobiles. It appears that pride of workmanship has almost completely disappeared. ## Ed Gorman: Being a neo/youngfan, I'd go to almost any ends to meet a trufan if the desire struck me. Hell, F.Scott Fitzgerald and Ring Lardner once danced on Nelson Doubleday's lawn in hopes of meeting a favorite European author; it was this same Fitzgerald who burst into Max Perkin's office, ran over to a seat in which Edith Wharton sat, got onto his knees, and began caressing and kissing her hand. Admiration is a strange thing. ## Sid Coleman: Psycho is a cheap thriller designed to titillate the audience by showing them forbidden actions being performed on screen. It is the sickest motion picture in recent memory. Also it is the finest. Deplorable as Hitchcock's ends may be, the means which he used to attain them are masterful and so arresting that the first two sentences of this paragraph become as trivial as the statement that the Mona Lisa was painted for a despot. Psycho also cheers because it marks the reappearance of Hitchcock as an artist--that is, someone who interests us by what he produces. After his TV show and MBW I feared that he had become a mere public personality--someone who interests us just by being himself, in the manner of Arthur Godfrey or Dwight Eisenhower. ## Dick Schultz: I doubt that Psycho will tend to keep people away from lonely Midwestern motels. Why, that chap was nothing! Let me tell you about the time I used to run a motel! (Schultz again): The only true and final solution to a problem like the N3F is the final-type solution advocated by kindly Father Hitler, in relation to another minority problem! ## Phil Farmer: I find it significant that Campbell and Gold rejected one of the most powerful stories of the year; they seem to have a habit of doing this. And what is this lesbiana checklist Marion Bradley publishes annually? If she doesn't like to read pornography, why is she so interested in books about it? ## Emile Greenleaf: I daresay there has been as much written about Ellison as by Ellison. ## Daphne Buckmaster: The thing about Bane that interested me the most was Les Sample's description of what happens when one walks at night. I have heard that in the U.S. walking anywhere is just "not done" and I've wondered just how true this might be. Putting this together with Donaho's description in Habakkuk about police behavior it seems that your police are regarded as people to be feared, unlike ours, whom one regards as protectors. (Daphne again): Never use the words "grotch" and "fugghead" myself--they both sound too vulgar. ## Buck Coulson: For Lichtman's information, there is no stigma attached to "Midwestern" fanzines; after all, both Le Zombie and Grue were Midwestern fanzines. It's Indiana fanzines that carry the bad name. ## Alan Dodd: Sort of consoling, don't you think, to hear that even Tucker gets rejections? And I see we agree on one point--anyone who stabs Janet Leigh to death in a shower is not only a PSYCHO but a regular NUT case. How mad CAN you get? ## Peggy Rae McKnight: I wrote a letter of comment to Andy Main concerning Bane 2. When I went to find his address, I found out why I was confused about the issue, it wasn't his fanzine, it was yours. ## Archie Mercer: How the hell Tucker contrives to comment on the issue his letter is in I wouldn't know. The only parallel case of this I can remember was some years ago when the BRE ASF got a bit out of step with the US edition and one story was held over until the following issue--in which it was mentioned in "Brass Tacks". And if Jelly Roll Morton says and so forth and so on, why can't I?



Rog Ebert: Coulson is becoming the reading master of fandom, I believe; a lot of fans now seem to read not-stf or serious stuff only on his recommendation.## Gertrude Whittum: I fear I go for more serious reading matter.## Elinor Busby: As for Leslie's parents--well, they should know their boy. If they don't trust him to behave well, it's possible that they have reason for not trusting him. But if, on the other hand, they really and truly do trust him to behave well, but simply do not like him engaging in the strange and uncanny pastime of walking at night, they are surely being very high-handed.##

Maggie Curtis: How's about asking Bloch is he's "Joseph Stefano"?

Phil Harrell: How'd you ever get H.G. Wells to do the slipsheeting?

Giovanni Scognamiglio (who'll have an article in #4): "You bet I'll write you a letter of comment, but then do you know many guys who, after receiving Bane, haven't bothered? Well, they're all nasty types.## Chris Miller: Even though I have never read anything by

Harlan Ellison...## Rod Frye: The movie version of Psycho seemed lacking of a central character, while the book concentrated on Norman throughout.##

Ake Hansson: Now that you've lured me to read your trash from first word to last...## Art Hayes: I think I recognize too much in our society today that is similar to the twisted ideology that Ayn Rand expresses; yet, I do not like her books, as she makes heroes on premises I don't admire.## Jim Linwood: The

shower murder sequence in Psycho wasn't so original; remember the fake murder in The Fiends? The suicide in Party Girl? Hitch borrowed a little from these and others.## Craig Cochran: Who's this Harlan Ellison? Some neo or something?##

Norm Metcalf: Betty Kujawa: On the way to Camp Perry last summer I stopped off in South Bend at 0200, but there were no Kujawas listed at 219 Caroline. So what gives? (Too early?)## Alan Rispin: One of my ambitions is to hitchhike

across the U.S.## Mike McInerney: I guess that you Illinois fans must sure stick together...##

Len Moffatt suggests that someone jump on two bandwagons and write a story concerning a civil-war period circus; Dot Hartwell believes that Billy Graham would be interested in fandom if he was sure the N3F was for the good of people; Bob Lichtman urges I spare thee, gentle reader, of flabby comment; Dr. Antonio Durla doesn't complain, but he has every right to--twice he's tried to get the Fancylopedia II, without success; Mike Gates relates an amusing incident which took place whilst he was still living in Germany; Don Franson doesn't like the monotony of paper in Bane; Don Allen faithfully relays sub information; Don Anderson wasn't able to send along a personal reply; Ruth Berman didn't like the characterization of Al Conn; Miz Bradley DU'Qed most of her letter; "Sky Altitude" wanted Bane; Jack Chalker thought Bane was fannish without FIAWOL, a very fine compliment; Bill Danner showed me howe mizerblee I spel; Ken Cheslin was devoid of ideas; Charles DeVet subbed, with encouragement; (as if subs aren't encouragement enough); Gene Duplantier wants to know why there's so little stfnal interest in flying saucers--"how interesting can a subject get", he asks; Alf Granberg: "Du pubbleserar ett SF Fanzin du kunde sada mig ett gratis-exemplar skulle jag bli mycket tacksam."; Jim Groves had some suggestions about that long-overdue index; Ken Hedberg sent some money; Lynn Hickman flattered me, to no avail--he still gets this issue; Pete Mansfield sent his fanzine with a short note; Lenny Kaye misspelled my name; Bart Wilroad doesn't want to be high-pressured by the N3F; Bob Smith says that projectionists must stick together; George Willick says Shingleton is an ass; ARTISTS included: Robert Gilbert, Rich Bergeron, Ralph Raeburn Phillips, Bob Warner, Joni Cornell, Marv Bryer, Dick Schultz, Maggie Curtis, and Jack Cascio; Elinor Busby, Imile Greenleaf, Ake Hansson, and Phil Harrell sent photographs.

Unavoidably excluded: Georges Gallet, and Joe Zimmy, who says, "This Ellison must be quite a boy!"

Thanks for Christmas cards, Ebert, Figueira, Hedberg, McInerney, Fan-Hilton, Gallet, Burgess, Orion, SFCof London, Allen, Miller, Kujawa, Cummings, & Coulsons. And thanks to the more than eighty (80) people who wrote. Till next...

bane

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