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WINTER 1950-51

This is CONTOUR neka (four) Winter 1950-51 published by The Hodgepodge Press for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association and anyone else whom I happen to think might be interested in receiving a copy. All material not otherwise identified is the responsibility of the editor, who is reputed to be one Bob Pavlat residing at 6001 43rd Avenue, Hyattsville, Maryland. Outside manuscripts are welcomed if the writer has an opinion to express, or lays on humor in large chunks, or concerns himself with the finer things of life, which ususally, in the editor's opinion, could be associated with Bohemianism. The emphasis on the latter is probably due to the fact that the editor could never be taken for one, except after the consumption of four nuclear fizes. He has also been taken for dead after the consumption of four nuclear fizes.

I WEEP!

Somewhat less than a year ago I sent in my first subscription to SPACE-WARP, Rapp's now-defunct fanzine. It had finally occurred to me--and I said so in my letter to Rapp at the time--that from the issues I'd seen he seemed to have what I was looking for in the fanzine field: Generally high quality, new faces, news about the fan field, as well as the more usual current-day fan articles, fiction, and a fanzine review column and a letter section. It seemed, in short, to be rather a good buy. No sooner had I sent my money in than it was good-bye. The letter column disappeared, fazine reviews were dropped, fiction was taboo, and the many-columnists make-up of the last few issues was adopted.

Just recently Bill Evans lent me his file of the Scienc Fiction Fan, comprising about forty of the fifty-five issues, and I discovered what I consider to be a real subscription fanzine.

The complexion of fandom, as mirrored in fanzines, has certainly changed over the years. First we had the emphasis on professional magazines--lineups of forthcoming issues, pro bibliographies and autobiographies, etc, along with general scientific fol-de-rol.. The fan grouped around his raison d'etre, the prozine. Following a period of transition came the fandom-fandom period, just before the barbarian invasion, with the Science Fiction Fan one of the two leading subscription exponents of the period (the other being the Science Fiction Collector.) The regular and semi-regular columns of "Fan" which generally devoted at least fifty percent of their space to fandom and fans were Bahr's "Between You and Me"--general chit-chat about fandom and fans; JVTaurasi's "Maganews," a fanzine review column, which his column in SSS is becoming more and more like every issue; "Fanfarade," Wollheim's column, a mainstay of SFF for its first couple-three years, covering fanish personalities and doings; "As Others See Us," a column of personality sketches of fans by anyone who wanted to write a personality sketch about their friends; and Leadabrand's "Fantasy Comment" and "The Vagrant's" "Vagabondia STF," both on the general line of Bahr's column--general chit-chat about fandom. Principle interests centered on conventions, fanzines, and Michelism, with the latter two being predominant. There was a great deal of interest, in those days, with the FAPA, even in this subscription fanzine, Wollheim and others quite often listing new magazines in the FAPA, mentioning the increase in size of FAPA and the gradual closing of its waiting list (the last three reports by Wollheim, as I remember, show FAPA lacking 10 members (membership limit 50 at the time,) five members, and finally only two members. Articles and other columns concerned themselves with the pro mags, new books, Speer's "Institute of Private

Opinion" polls, and articles on conventions and the general nature of fandom and science fiction. This was, of course, the days of Michelism, and there were tons of material that could be and were written about the "Political Advancement of Science Fiction" and, concurrently, of science fiction fandom. The feuding was pretty bitter, at times, as feuding is likely to get when either politics or religion is the basis of the feud, so personality differences were much more likely to be exhibited to the public's gaze than they are in the present days of serenity in fandom. It was not at all unusual to find one person calling another a liar, communist, fascist, double-crosser, or just plain stupid. All this intense fanationalism is in direct contrast with the present-day interest of fandom in almost anything except science-fiction, fantasy, or fandom. I am not at all sure just what in hell fandom is interested in right now, and wonder if it is the lack of perspective, insufficient connection with fandom, or the fact that fandom just isn't going anyplace in particular. We even have idiotical gods nowadays: Roscoe, the busy little beaver who helps a fan be a better fan. Hardly fit company for FooFoo and ChuChu. Are the gods of today's fan weak because fans are a different breed, because fandom has no aim, or because there are too damn many idiots mixed up in the pie?

That there has been a real change in fandom is evident. "Fan" was an exceptional magazine, but fandom, on the whole, did feel that intense interest-in-self known as nationalism. It was, of course, that same preoccupation which later made some fans fall hook, line, and stinker, for Deglarism. For a while I felt that it might be because, in going thru piles of old fanzines one is inclined to pass over the crud, selecting only the zines you know to be worthwhile, while at present you can't ignore the abundance of crud suitable only for slip sheets and horrible examples to hold up to a new fan, but lately I've even read some of the old crud, and the same fanationalism sticks its microcephalic head into view. (In the crud, fanationalism is idiocy; in the worthwhile zines, it's healthy.)

How many fanzines today carry a good fanzine review column? Hardly any. It is really something when AMAZING, SUPER SCIENCE STORIES, and STARBLING STORIES place more emphasis on the fanzines than do the fanzines themselves. Laney's column, "Fanzine Scope," I've heard, is looking for a home. I wonder just how many offers he's had since reporting that it could be had for the asking by a reliable publisher? Probably not enough to encourage him to make a mimeographed "Sorry but _____ asked for it first" reply letter.

What I'm asking for, or bleating about the loss of, is the fanzine which specializes in fandom. Is fandom something to be ashamed of that we must not talk about it, even among ourselves? Is it not worth talking about? Or is there no longer any unity of feeling among the fans with the exception of insurgent elements? At least the better FAPA and SAPS material does still show an interest in its own field--FAPA and/or SAPS. Or maybe that is merely what makes the zines I refer to as "better FAPA and SAPS material" "better FAPA and SAPS material." A fanzine wherein fandom had a home, a mouthpiece, so to speak, of the mob and the leaders thereof, would be many times more worthwhile than a hundred National Fantasy Fan Federations, Universal Musketeers, and Fantasy Veteran's Associations all rolled together into an even greater conglomeration than they have yet managed to attain.

ALTRES' ANSWER

Thus saith Cerian: "I understand that it is the fashion of fans to don faces for which they have not the bodies, and to act as though they were men of a kind they are not."

"Yeah, verily" Altres made reply.

"Why should these men do thus?" questioned Cerian.

"It is unfortunate indeed that fans are not better actors, Cerian, and that you should have noticed that they are not the great men they sometimes seem to be--and even more often believe themselves to be. Fans, Cerian, are the same as other men, although perhaps possessed of too much vanity and tender sensibilities.

"I know not whether you have paid heed to the methods members of this race use to protect their individuality, tho I doubt that you have had the time, being but newly returned from the inner systems. When a human feels his personality assailed he will either counter-attack or retreat. Counter-attack seems to be the natural reaction, with retreat being a development of those whose counter-attack has often failed. The person who retreats; he who is continually beaten, or once was--for a personality pattern can exist long after the reason for its original development has passed--has no choice but to sublimate his own personality, either by living within an inner world (schizophrenia, in extreme cases), or can adopt a role, protecting his personality by the simple expedient of not showing it.

"Fans are unusual only in the superfluity of their camouflage. They often adopt this type of defense--or perhaps being a fan is even a part of the camouflage--but they have proven to be somewhat poor role players. Why this should be, none of we watchers have yet discovered, but it is so. Be that as it may, so long as their personality is not shown, it cannot be attacked. Yet, should they manage to live their role without discovery, they can feel an inner satisfaction in success. After all, their personality is intact. Not even the ego realises that it has been changed by the role-playing, and so is not really intact after all.

"Should someone discover that they are but posers, they have the perfect excuse of 'mental exercise' and intellectual curiosity."

"Now I see" spake Cerian. "It is a good defense, for their personality cannot be hurt, even if they are exposed for not being what they pretend to be. A personality can be hurt only wien it is criticised for being what it is."

+++++

Which one of your fannish friends are their real selves, in print and otherwise? A hint or two: Burbee and Laney, are usually their own selves in print, tho it is not unusual to find them acting. Boggs and Warner are almost always their own selves. Some of the guys--Eney, for example--are extremely hard to find under their printer's ink exterior. Who are the thirteen undiluted FAPans?

(Incidentally, no slights intended. People who live in glass houses and all that.)

A RAINY DAY IN THE ATTIC

OR

THRU BARBARIAN COUNTRY
WITH GUN AND
CRAYOLA

by Bob Briggs

Having recently managed to borrow some fanzines Bill Evans was lending to another member, I decided to paw over them today, together with some old and new ones of my own, and see what I could see.

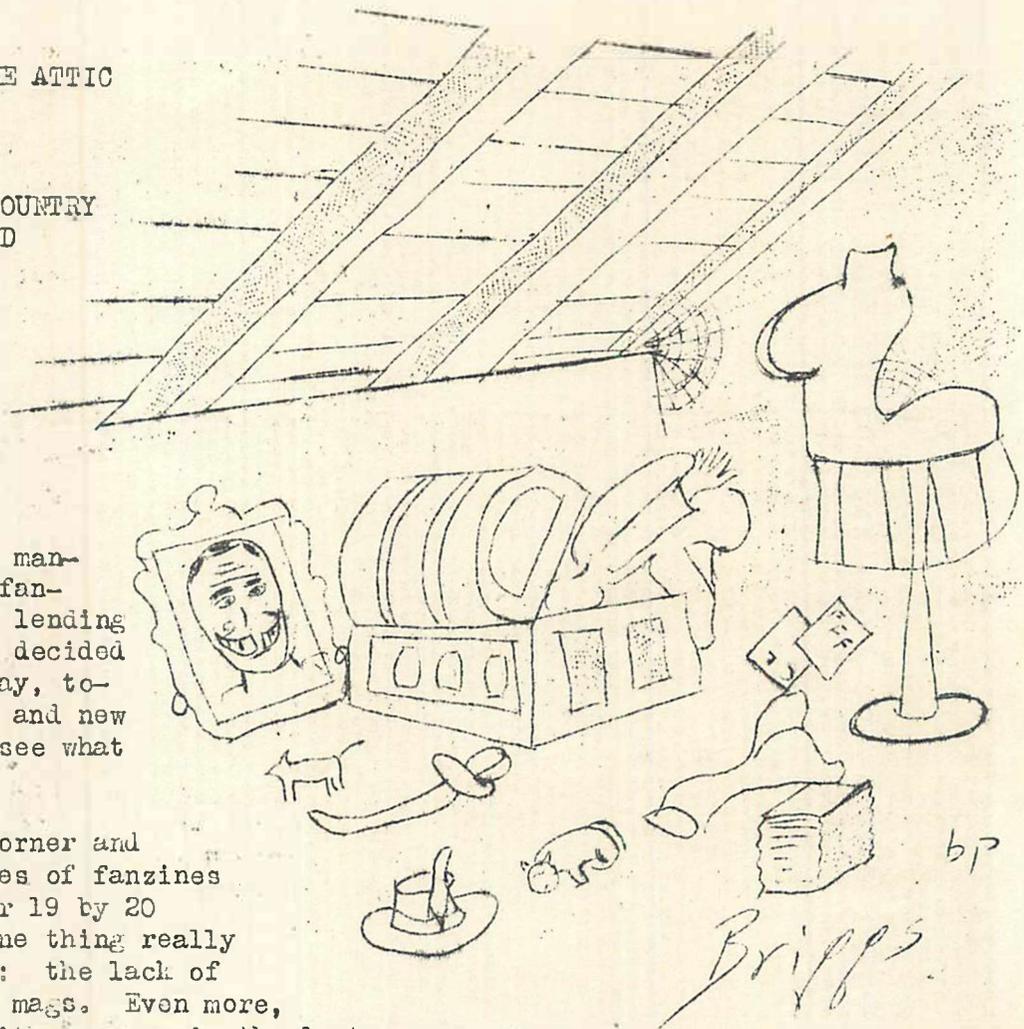
Standing in a corner and looking over the piles of fanzines now spread out on our 19 by 20 living-room floor, one thing really strikes my attention: the lack of color in present day mags. Even more, I count only three litno covers in the last three FAPA mailings. Only ten faps have bothered with covers at all in this period, and five of these have been by Rotsler. Outside of FAPA, Etaoin Shrdlu and the exceptional Nekromantikon have used color, while Odd has its one-color printed covers. Only Orb and Rhodomagnetic Digest have had colorful interiors.

Ten years ago Fanfare came out with a cover lithoed in green ink, inside pages in red and blue. About then we had Dawn, Nova, Diablerie, Beyond, En Garde, Chanticleer, Fan Slants, Snide, Venus, and others. Recently we've seen Fantasy Advertiser, Fanscient, and Scienti-Fantasy. And who can forget Gorgon with its fine format?

With the exception of the few offset fanzines, however, what do we have? Nothing like Weidenbeck's department headings in Nova, or En Garde's airbrush covers. Volume I number 3 of Nova is a good all-around example. Front cover--air brush. Back cover--litho by Clyne. Inside--2 more litho pages plus 18 illos and headings, many in red, green and blue. Not even Boggs takes the trouble Widner took with his headings for Fanfare. Diablerie once used 7 colors in one issue; I doubt if anyone would try that now.

Of course, we do have Rotsler. The solitary splendor of Masque, however, only heightens the surrounding drabness.

The old artists are gone, and there are no new ones. As unlikely a place for art as Fantasy Commentator once published five full-page pictures by Krucher



in as many issues. Its nearest rival, The Talisman, has yet to print a picture or even a fancy heading.

In the last few mailings of FAPA there has been no work by Jack Weidenbeck, Art Widner, Roy Hunt, Ronald Clyne, Hannes Bok, Damon Knight, Joe Krucher, or Howard Miller. Even Bill Kroll and John Crossman are absent.

Looking over some of the 1946-48 fanzines, I find some worth commenting upon individually--either because they offer something worth copying, or something to avoid.

Kennedy gives some good advice on producing a "fanzine worth preserving" in Green Thoughts #1. Kennedy hasn't always followed his own advice, but his Green Thoughts are still worth reading two and four years later. The Kennedy personality, no doubt, is the reason that it and Gruzak survive while others perish.

Along with the Kennedy personality, the little cartoons liberally scattered throughout the pages are of vast importance. His interesting and clear-cut headings could be profitably copied by many fan editors. (Are you listening Eney? And you too Pavlat?) ((Me? bp)) The little quotes and comments tucked into odd corners deserve much more than a "filler" rating, and are one of the reasons these pubs will be read with joy five years from now.

Surprisingly, Charles Burbee is rather dated--at least from the Burlings around 1947-1948. The reason is that most of his stuff, unlike Kennedy's, is narrow. For anyone who doesn't share Burb's infatuation with Al Ashley, his variations on a single theme pale at the third repetition. Methinks Burlings lacks the gaiety of the Burbee who edited Shaggy and wrote the Oxnard Himmel sagas.

I eagerly looked forward to reading my two issues of ATOTE. On the first page of one of them was: "hoping I haven't been a'missed while twas too darned lazy to get out one of these here now 'zines." Interest waned.

I weep bitter tears at missing FAPA when R. P. Graham published. Just think: I was almost in a club with God Almighty!

A Neophyte and a stack of Masques brightened up the pile. Although the art in Neophyte was poor Rotsler, he did print some of the "morbedetsa" of the very Germanic Heinrich Kley, whose work is reminiscent of the dances of death ((and whose women remind some of Rubens')). Rotsler's work in Masque, however, was an improvement. He should use his air brush more often.

In Primal and Morpheus we find an analysis of Laney and his reply. I thot Wilson did a very competant job, maybe because he came to the same conclusions I did. Laney takes evasive action behind an Old Uncle Goodheart facade, proving, with the aid of some straw men and some very doubtful statistics, that the lamp-post ran into him. Uncle Goodheart Laney caucks his praise to everyone and anyone else who has somehow managed to dodge speeding lampposts.

Returning to generalizations, perhaps the desire to publish is gone. No one but Orb and Stefantasy seem to consider their magazine as a magazine, rather than merely a way to meet requirements or keep subscribers semi-content. FAPA is not so much an Amateur Press Association as a Debating Club.

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HYPODERMIC

Reviews of the 53rd FAPA mailing

SLOTHFUL THING 2. I still enjoy fanzines which you can relax with, and this is certainly one.

SNAKE PIT I 3 3. Noted.

IRUSABEN 1. Relaxed with Silverberg. Saul Diskin, tho, asks what I do read since I seem so off on prozines. General fiction such as Esquire and Blue Book; detective and other novels; stf in books; certain of the prozines such as aSF, Galaxy, MF&SF; and sometimes magazines such as the New American Mercury and such items as The Psychology of Eco-Involvements by Sherif and Cantril, A Study of Interpersonal Relations edited by Mullahy, and so on. I much prefer, also, the average issue or three of an unread issue of Science Fiction Critic, Fantasy Correspondent, or Fantasy Commentator to an average issue of Future, SS, or SSS. And I have lots of unread issues, tho not all of that high a caliber.

STEFANTASY VI. 3 20. Out of FAPA entirely too long. 19 issues too long, in fact. Quite nice to have a printed zine in among all the rest, and darn nice to see things like that Norm Stanley article. I could practically see Norm giving it, just as he gave the first at the Torcon: brief case, paper shuffling and discarding, poker face and all.

HORIZONS XII 1 44. Agree largely with you on that libel article, Harry, but think you're a little too worried over the dangers of "poetry in no known language and ciphers" for, after all, before we get investigated, we have to be known to exist. I, for one, greatly doubt that the FBI is keeping tabs on us, and wonder if we appear in even their fabulous files. Operating openly in a restricted field, as we do, we can get away with murder. In fact, I might try running a cipher next time out, if I can figure out a way to amend it so it's typeable. Think I see glimmerings....

NUDITY 1. I rather surprised myself by getting quite a few chuckles out of this issue. Your humor improves either with writing (yours) or reading (mine). Hope it stays that way. "A quickie in Islandian grammar: The word fanzine, if it existed in Islandian (and it certainly wouldn't), would be neuter, as would a word for "contour." Conny is the continuing family name of all the little (female) offspring of the Con family, with "ny" rather than "na" (which is normally added to family names to indicate the bearer is a woman) added for euphonic reasons. Children in Islandia are numbered rather than being given proper names. One, two, three, four, five in Islandian is ek, atta, etteri, nek, natta. Since we're dealing with females, the names are appropriately modified to eka, attana, etteriana, neka, and, next issue, nattana. Surely anyone who has ever traveled on the Marsh Duck with Hytha Nattana Solvadia should remember that!

ASTRONAUT I 2. Re: "The Station in Space": We have a revolving outer circle and a stationary inner circle. Wonder if it's necessary to have the inner circle stationary? It is going to foul things up without end if it is stationary, both with regard to the drive mechanism necessary, and the problem of going from the inner chamber to the arms leading to the "homelike" outer ring. (Come to think of it, maybe it wouldn't be so hard after all--rather

simple, in fact). " This second reason for slow acceleration from earth, i.e., to provide that the passengers are not squashed into a jelly, is a hunk of unadulterated poor logic, insofar as assuming that the station in space will cure it. Is it any easier to provide the "casual" acceleration to 5mps required to reach the 500-mile-high station, than it would be to accelerate at an identical rate with the proviso that once you reach 5mps you're going to keep right on accelerating to 7mps? A little, perhaps, in that a person could take a slightly higher strain for the shorter period of time. But really, it doesn't take long to accelerate from 5mps to 7mps. " The main benefit of a station in space, from the standpoint of interplanetary travel, is that it is much easier to build a rocket to reach 5mps thru an atmosphere, and another to reach 2mps in a vacuum, than it is to build one rocket--or even a two- or three-stage rocket--to reach 7mps. One practicable method of interplanetary flight is that given in Clark's Prelude to Space, tho' that lacks the other benefits of a station in space. " Wish there were a few more bibliographical works like Michel's analysis of Stapledon and Scott's of Haggard's Quartermain series (in The Fantasy Collector) around in fandom. " Didn't read much of Elsner's article, having been stopped by the usual propagandistic phrases: "For countless ages men have struggled...." "...system which is irrevocably headed toward collapse." "...causes of the mounting confusion we daily observe around us...." etc.

PHANTEUR Nov 50. Wish you had gone into that ten-page mailing review you spoke of so wistfully. Expect to see more of you now that you've moved, and if I don't, why shucks, I, for one, am perfectly willing to settle for ten pages of material like this a year.

TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY 1. Missed the mark.

CELEPHAIS (4). Like you, Bill, I like to take the whole evening off and devote it to the perusal of the mailing when the FAPA bundle arrives. " I've really got a plan for handling postmailings now. Anything I receive is filed away on a shelf until I get around to reading it. At the time I read it, I usually have several others around to catch up on, so I can read, index, and comment upon the whole bunch at the same time. Sort of makes a second mailing, tho' usually the second is smaller and not so much FAPA. Anyhow, once I've completed the bunch, the FAPA items go in the FAPA envelope, and the remainder go either in the alphabetical crud pile, the "this is worth showing to my friends" stack, or its own folder, if it is one of the few that rates one. Simple--if it only works. Worked this time, anyhow. " I've finally decided Bill. Fandom is in a state of transition. (And aren't all of you happy that I'm not feeling Burbeeish tonight and am not going to go into a Burbeeish exposition on how startling that is and how I arrived at that conclusion and how I reduced it to the irreducible minimum of shocking, semantically selected words, and--well, aren't you glad?) Never before have I seen so many reprints from old fanzines. Definately indicative of something--maybe laziness, or maybe fandom is just getting old. Anyhow, that McIlwain article you picked to reprint, "How to Write Wirrd Poetry," was a dilly. Almost fell off the seat when I read: "Little star, twinkel, twinkle, Like a blasted peri-winkle."

SOMNAMBULISM 1. Was once told by Ford or Earley or someone in the Cincy. crowd that the "error" on the cover of the C invention Memory Book was, as you suggested, a "correction by an over-ambitious printer. " Had been thinking myself of finding a clearer title for the CL. Will broach the subject to Bill. Bill, consider the subject broached.

P. E O P L E
W I T H
W I N D M I L L S

I

In a recent (December 1950) issue of the New American Mercury I found a fascinating article by Robert Lowry: "Don Quixotes Without Windmills."

Lowry, in this article, insists that man today is a pretty average creature despite all the individual's high-flown ideas that he is, deep down inside, a pretty rare sort of bird, and that only he is the unusual kind of a guy that he really--deep down inside--is. Lowry calls him the Underground Man.

Mainly, Lowry seems to believe that the Underground Man wants to be an individual, have ideas of his own, beliefs of his own, and even sins of his own, but that he can't find anything to be individualistic about. We -- the 25-35 year old guys and gals in this generation -- aren't anything in particular. In 1925, he says, we had the lost generation; in 1930 the bathtub generation; in 35 the Commie generation; and in 42 the bitter generation. In 1950 (there wasn't any generation in 1945) we have the underground generation.

The Underground Man is discontent, but doesn't know why. He has dough, a wife, a job. He can't gripe about the bomb, having sold out on that subject in 45, nor about the "Horrors and Cruelties of Mass Cultural Mediums" since everyone is down on the "H & C of MCM" nor the futility of war since he isn't too likely to be carrying a gun again ((it says here)) nor are his children. Anti-Commies are about as unpopular as are the apologetic 1955 Commies themselves, and so on down the line. Either he has surrendered the things he could be individualistic about, or everyone feels the same way he does. Ask an Underground Man for one of his underground opinions some day. He'll floor you with the same thing that you, your friends, and even many of your enemies believe. How can you be an Underground man and hold a majority opinion? Underground? There isn't any, not in the USA.

Only the twenties and the thirties could support the myth that a man had to be either dangerous or different to be worth a damn. We're a new generation, so let's see if we can't grow up and quit being ashamed of the fact that we hold a popular opinion.

II

Lowry hit the spot in some ways, and missed it in some others. He hit it in that most of the individuals, the average tho rather well-to-do characters he's talking about, do seem to be exactly that kind of person. So are many of the no-place-near-so-well-to-do individuals most of us are more familiar with, and so, finally, are the poor and the bohemians of whatever income. But some few aren't, if you can only find them.

The few you do find are exactly the same Underground Men--with one exception. They've burrowed deeper, and found a couple of real, honest-to-God windmills down there.

One of the main windmills these people have found is sanity. That's the big windmill, and almost the only windmill left in this abysmally normal world of ours. Remember what Burbee once said? "Rotsler, you lucky dog. You don't know any normal people."

