

DOUBLE BILL NO. 19

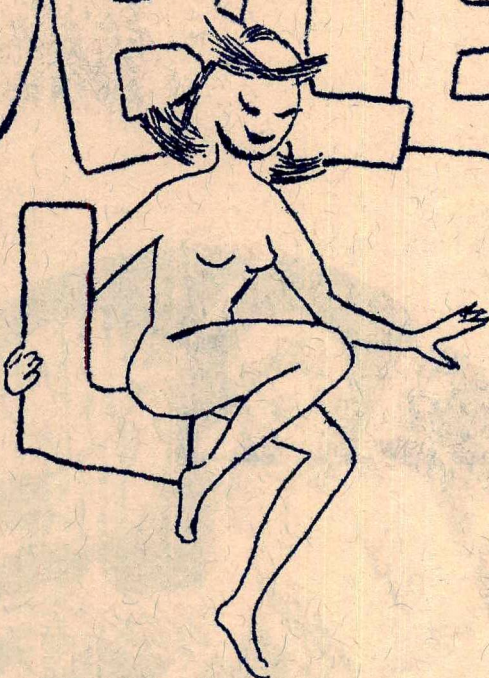






1968—R.L.P.

DOUBLE: BILL



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Layouts by BOWERS (other than Mallardi's editorial, and the lettercol.)

DOUBLE:BILL is a split personality zine and a semi-official publication of the Northeastern Ohio Science Fiction Society. D:B issues forth 3 or 4 times a year from:

BILL MALLARDI & BILL BOWERS
2345 Newton St., Akron, Ohio 44305

This magazine is available for accepted articles, reviews, etc.; Printed LOC's, and established Trades. ARTWORK is always in demand and appreciated greatly.

FICTION POLICY: We are heavily overstocked with amateur s.f. stories; submit at your own risk. However, 'faan' fiction (see page 13) and humor (such as Si Stricklen's offerings) are very definitely solicited.

Subscriptions are being discouraged: We would rather have a more tangible response. For those who must, the new (again!) rates are 60¢ per issue or 2 for \$1.00. Inflation is a Wonderful Thing!

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Arnold Wellsly is Alive and Well in Penna.

eddie jones FOR TAFF

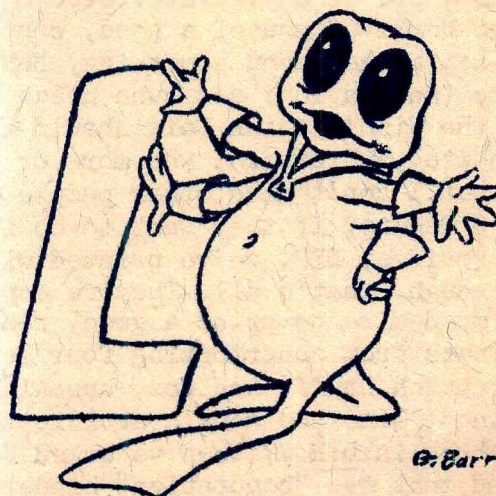
(*) Misplaced Footnotes from STARDUST:
(1) CHTHON, Ballantine U6107, 75¢, 254 pp.; (2) SOS THE ROPE, Pyramid X-1890, 60¢, 157 pp.; (3) OMNIVORE, Ballantine 72014, 75¢, 221 pp.; all by Piers Anthony. (4) THE JEWELS OF APTOR, Samuel R. Delany, Ace G-706, 50¢ 159 pp.

NEXT ISSUE : Covers by Eddie Jones and Stephen Fabian. The '2001' Poll Results --in depth. Also, an Eddie Jones folio and '2001' cartoons by Alex Eisenstein.

Deadline for D:B 20 : March 15, 1969
DOUBLE:BILL 21 will hopefully be built around a 'Space Wars' theme; Material on hand by Terry Jeeves & Eddie Jones; a folio is promised from Fabian. More material along this line is needed!

Terry Jeeves (a Good Man!) has some very early Astoundings for sale. Contact him At: 30 Thompson Rd., Sheffield 11, Yorkshire.

This has been our--'Late for '68, but Early for '69'--Holiday Issue. Enjoy! Enjoy!



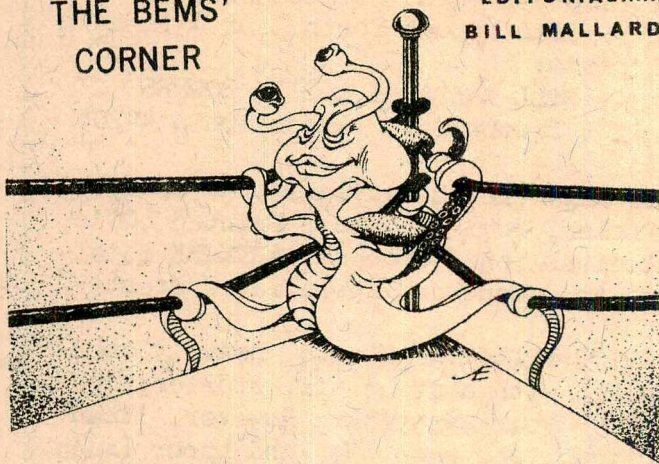
G. Barr. NOTT

NO. 19, JANUARY '69

WELL - COME BACK to D:B. Surprised? I wasn't. Stranger things have happened this past year, as you all know. Matter of fact I feel rather strange right now, myself, and I think it's because the odd half of me -- the "Bemmish" part, has been struggling for power over its human counterpart. It's a constant battle, believe thee me, folks, to suppress the monster. Why, it's weak moments like this that I feel my control slipping...away..aarrg! Haaalp! It's coming...I can feel it...it's growing...splitting me apart...H-H-H-...HEEEELLPP!! (Groan..) Must fight it..the pain..racking...my..every...nerve..(Ohhhh..) I can't stand it...

THE BEMS' CORNER

EDITORIAL.....
BILL MALLARDI



(Sounds of ripping, tearing, shredding, ~~tearing~~ ~~tearing~~ etc;)

{{ Hah hahhah! At last! Power --- I've finally gained control! Now to say what I'VE been meaning to say all these years in this column..}}

No! BEM, you mustn't! This is a "Family Fanzine". Your four letter obscenities and licentiousness would ban D:B from the mails! Let's discuss this, ok?

{{ There's nothing to discuss..I'm here now, baby..}}

Oh yes there is..if I'm gonna give you a small say in this editorial, you must reciprocate.

{{ Well...ok...and to start off with, how about that assinine statement you made up there? Who in hell sez this Rag must get stuck with the reputation of "Family Fanzine"? Look at PSYCHOTIC/S.F.REVIEW...look at SHAGGY. And other zines. They have four letter words in their pages. Words like ball, screw, fuck, plus many many more}}

Hey, cut that crap out! What of D:B's clean cut, "nice" reputation? What of those young, impressionable, unblemished fans reading this?

{{ Bullshit. I think that reputation is just a figment of your demented imagination. You just built it up that way in your mind; its a phantom..a false standard, when all along you were just acheing to print anything, no matter how "naughty". For example, YOU had first crack at printing that long PRIMER FOR HEADS by Earl Evers, that eventually ended up in PSYCHOTIC...didn't you?! Yet you turned it down... "too much of an apology for drug usage"; "Not suitable for D:B's 'Family' image"; "What's the law on printing it, if any?"; etc. etc. So because of your False Standard your editorial senses deprived you of a good, controversial article that all fandom is Agog over.}}

Let me tell you something, BEM.... I agree that the article is a classic, but like Bowers (and Harlan) sez, who needs to turn on to get high? And I find a lot of other fans who didn't think Geis should have printed the article..fans like Harry Warner, Ted White, and others, who more or less substantiated my judgement on the piece. It's not that I don't mind other people doing their "thing", but why try to recruit others into doing it? If they want to do it, they will, without any "help".

Besides, BEM, we've printed wild, wacky, even naughty stuff and swear words before. Not enough, that's all. They're especially lacking in early issues of D:B. It's just that my desire to print a good, readable, interesting zine may have deterred many of the faans from contributing four letter words in their faanish material; for that matter ANY faanish stuff. And now, speaking of which, in order to get them we're forced to do reprints, like the McCain article this issue, and even the Ron Ellick thing lastish. Why, even back in D:B #7 when we asked John (Irish) Berry for a faanish contribution, it seemed that our "reputation" hindered John from doing something like he did for other

zines. Why? As he put it in NO HOLDS BARD, "The editors of this fanzine wrote especially requesting one of my more cultural articles, to fit in with the aura of high education and literary merit it invariably displays." See? Why? Not that it wasn't a good article, but it could have been more faanish. I LIKE faanishness..but the fact that I have my doubts about trying it myself...may have been a "block" for attempts by other fans... or..

{{ Now you're beginning to babble. GRRowl! What in hell do you think you've been printing lately? Si Stricklen's stuff is really Faanish-type, and this issue you also have the Miesel's Christmas Carol parody. What in Christ's name do you want?}}

More, that's what! Sure, now we're getting some faanish material..and conversely, not enough serious articles. In both categories our files are almost depleted. But hold on! This whole thing's beginning to sound like a parody itself: On Dick Geis' editorially talking with his "psychiatrist".

{{ Heh! Sneaky, ain't I? But it's not really a parody on Geis' editorials.... you and I are really ONE entity or person, and I talk inside my Bemmish Brackets. Geis and his "headshrinker" aren't and don't. (Metaphysically speaking, of course) So that argument is Kaput. Anything else on your liddle mind?}}

Ok, Ok, but I still maintain that D:B is NOT a faanish zine, and I'd like it to be more of one. Why don't the faanish fans contribute or ever get the thing??

{{ A faanish zine it isn't, I'll grant you, Clod, but you do all right with what you get. Stricklen's stuff alone is enuff as far as I can see, if you never got any other wacky or faanish type contributions from the readers,}}

But we DO want more by other fans too -- we don't want D:B to be all seriousness with a little lightness...

{{Look at this issue, then! It's got more whimsy than serious stuff. As another example: What caused the Miesels to do that satire with you as the protagonist this issue? The fact that you didn't write to them for a loong time -- your gafia, Right?}}

Uh...(whisper)..right.

{{ So to snap you out of it, they whipped up the Dickens thing in one night and sent it to you, correct?}}

(Low)..yes, BEM.

{{ But what happened to it? Tell the readers and me that..what happened after you got it and read it?}}

Welll..I didn't think it was too funny at the time, so it ended up buried under Ghu knows what other material in my old apartment.

{{ UH HUH! And who 'found' it, and read it aloud a few months later? Bowers did. And who laughed with genuine mirth then? YOU did.}}

Uhhh..well...Bowers is a Kind of Funny Cat, anyway.. But honestly, it did strike me as funny then, after I had gotten over my Blue Gafia. (Blue Meanies?!) And also, BEM, as Sandra said when I wrote and told her we'd 'found' it and would print it:"It's a good, healthy sign when you can laugh at yourself without malice",or something like that. SO?

{{ So I'm trying to get across to you that you HAD a piece of faanish material in your hands, and just because of "woman troubles" you tossed it aside without a word, a frown on your face. Couldn't take it then, could you?}}

(Humbly)...I guess not. But after getting over those hurdles what happened? I snapped out of it very well, I think.

{{ Chalk up one for your side. And I must admit that you were (almost) very level-headed when, after three years of off-again-on-again moping about that lost gal, she called you up a while back even though she was still married. That sure complicated things! You were shook-up at first - but sensibility took over, and although it was very difficult to do, you told her not to ever call again. That took guts.}}

(It also kept me from getting shot!) But BEM, what has this to do with our argument? We're getting side-tracked. We were talking about faanishness and four letter

words, etc.

{{ Bill, you poor soul..you've got to see that you magnify your problems too much. Everybody has them. It's just that you let yours affect the schedule and publishing of D:B. So Cool It.}}

All right, I will. But do you mean to imply that because this issue is a teensy bit late...??

{{ Not exactly, stupid. Trying to get the zine out over the Christmas/New Year's period is a difficult task for anybody. Then there was the late arrival of the covers from Hickman, the late arrival of Stricklen's Xmas piece, and your adamant refusal to get started on your editorial, which is one reason why I butted in. All this contributed to D:B's slight schedule tardiness. But I don't think it affected the issue that badly, even though the majority of the material is "holiday" type.}}

Well, for once we agree on something. Now that you've cooled down, BEM, what's your opinion on the year 1968?

{{ I'm sure I echo everyone's thoughts when I say that I'm glad its over, and hope to Ghu there aren't anymore like it. Bowers does a good job expressing hope for the new year himself, and a lot of what he says I agree with. The fan deaths, assassinations, the Chicago Tragedy during the Democratic Convention, the retreaded 'new' president, and all the other news both good and bad, made it a weird year. On the plus side there's the release (at long last) of the Pueblo crew members...}}

Which to me smells like politics on Johnson's part...

{{ Stop speaking while I'm interrupting! Of course the best Christmas Gift the U.S. and even the world could have..the orbiting of the moon (with spectacular pictures) by the three astronauts and their subsequent safe return!}}

Yeah, wasn't that terrific? I sure wish I was up there with them ..to see the Earth...the moon..2001 has almost come true. I'm just a frustrated astronaut, I guess.

{{ Aren't we all??}}

Yes, I suppose so..

{{ Ok, we've gotten that off our (collective?) chests..anything else you care to talk about??}}

As a matter of fact, there are a few more items...if you promise to go back and stay hidden inside me until some other time, if and when I ever need straightened out again.

{{ Welll..since my anger has now subsided somewhat,ok. What's on your mind now??}}

First off -- this:

Eddie Jones for Taff! Eddie Jones for Taff! Meet Eddie Jones in St. Louis! Vote for Jones

The rest has to do with D:B again, namely the fact that I'd like to announce to the readers that they must AT ALL TIMES, keep a sharp eye in D:B's pages for some sly, or sneaky stuff. Otherwise we'll publish something very subtle that may go over their heads..

{{ Like what??}}

Like the full page illo by Alex lastish and thish..the Lettercol Heading. There IS a letter on that page, but apparently the fans didn't see or read it..I'll not say anymore about it. Bowers' illos also has humor hidden in them, and nobody commented on them. And, this issue, the Cameron illo on page three needs careful study...and there will be more, from time to time, that the fans should be alert for.

{{ Anything else??}}

Yes, clown..I want to thank Joan Baker for her invaluable help in running off D:B. Also, please note the Change of Address for Bowers & I. We've our own Slanshack now, and fan visitors are always welcome! Now, will you leave, BEM? No room left anyhow...

{{ G'Bye..it was nice talking to you all...}}

'Bye, BEM..next time don't come back 'til I pull your chain. Seeing as how you began this with four letter words, I'll finish the same way: Give Love!--Bill Mallardi

IT MUST BE that I am growing old. Or perhaps it is merely that my cynicism has at last personified. But when -- after a comparatively rustic and restrained Holiday season in the Philippines last year--I find it a rather frightening and cold shock to be thrust so abruptly into the commercially orientated, garishly and disgustingly artificial Spirit...of what?

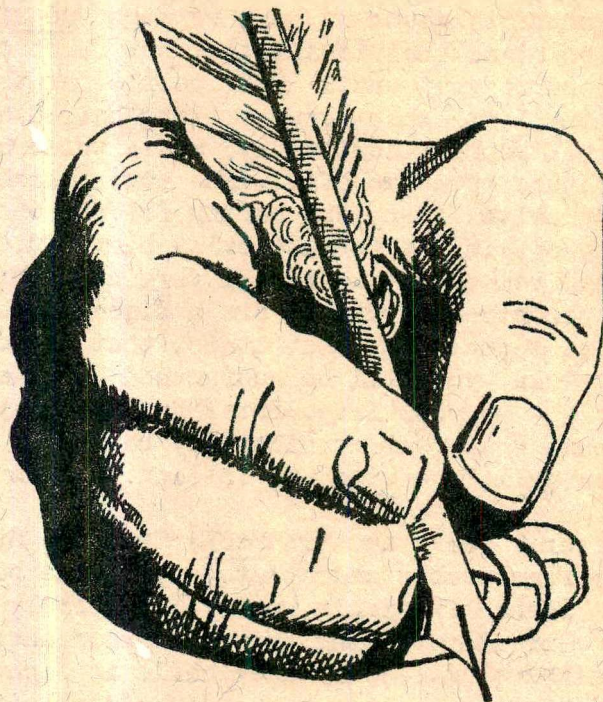
Now I realize that flanges concerning the lack of the true spirit are as perennial (and just about as effective) as New Year's Resolutions (see Page 16), and as old as Charles Dickens (Page 13). However, this happens to be my Year of Realization & Truth, so please bear with me. (By next year's end I'll probably have found my niche as a Social Security Number, and be securely emeshed in the blissfully ignorant rat race that 99.9% of my co-workers are presently treadmilling...and we won't have to go thru this again.)

I believe (he said, originally) that this mood of wonderment that is on me goes much deeper than the labelling and packaging of Holiday Joy. All one

has to do realize that what the so-labelled 'holiday season' seems to jell, currently, is in reality a year 'round phenomana...is to pick up any large city newspaper. If it doesn't remind you of throngs of shoppers stampeding and stomping on one anothers feet, without so much as an "Excuse me", I miss my mark. Stories have become so commonplace concerning muggings and riots, extortions and petty midnight bugularies, that a rape taking place outside of Mallardi's apartment last year wasn't even mentioned in the local paper. A Season of Good Tidings. Let's face it, today the only method assured of front-page coverage is by route of assassinating a prominent figure--and even that lasts but briefly as the mass-consciousness of an uncaring nation assimilates it into a collective unconsciousness--say: So what's new. ...and good will toward all men.

It almost certainly seems that the nation is going the down and dirty route, does it not? Still, an effort in the direction of impartiality (Why?) must be made. News and imaginative versions thereof, are reported virtually instantly from the dark and damp corners of the world. Some of it actually sees print in a vaguely recognizable version of the original; I kid you not. So maybe the recent flurry of Crime in the Streets and High Places isn't such a new thing, but merely the tangible results of vastly improved newsgathering facilities, reporting what has always been there. This is a nice theory and very comforting, but it's not mine. I just can't accept it.

Assuming that you are in agreement with the thesis that this nation, this world, this race of self-proclaimed reasoning beings...that all of these are in perilous seas... (and if you're not, I'd be very interested in which particular mind deadener you're high on; it must be good!). Accepting this, grant me my theory that the next two or three years will be extremely vital in determining the future course of mankind -- whether we become irreversibly emeshed in a strictly technologically based civilization,



from william's pen:

editorial

BILL BOWERS

peopled by mindless androids using green lucre as plasma...or whether with a little hope and a godawful amount of work we might possibly make the first faltering step in the direction of an individualistic, but functioning society of caring human beings. We can not afford to wait until 1984, people! At the rate things are going now, by then there'll be nothing left except grubby, long haired hopheads grovelling in the dust, grooving their (delightful, admittedly) music while a mushroom cloud provides the backdrop. Man, this picture turns me off...like now! I like to dream (somewhat wistfully, I'm afraid) of being alive then, and having friends who know where it's really at, rather than drifting off into a fantastically pictured, yet thoroughly unreal and unworkable world.

Now, you say, this is all very nice and maybe even desirable, but grandiose schemes in the direction of Utopia are a dime a dozen...so what makes yours workable? I truly wish that I could say that it is, that if you follow a certain logical, cold-scientific-fact formula, you will be guaranteed happiness and will prosper for all of the New Year's of your life. But I don't really know...I have a frustrating habit of dreaming dreams that fall considerably beyond my own grasp, although I Try. Therefore do I have the gall, the right to inflict them on you? Damn right I do!

Several years ago (in F&SF) Theodore Sturgeon had a marvelous story--the first of a trilogy regrettably uncompleted--with the beautiful title of "When You Care, When You Love". These six simple words, I sincerely believe, pin down the crux of the nameless horror currently tearing our once proud nation asunder. There are various pegs on which to hang the blame--Joan Baker calls it 'apathy'; Connie Reich refers to the 'superficial-ites' predominate in our society; I call it the 'zombie syndrome'. But in the long run, they all say the same thing: That if today you can watch from your panoramic picture window as a total stranger is being mugged, and not go to his aid--then tomorrow you will surely stand with the same uncommitting, uncaring, uninvolved look on your face as your mate screams from a burning room, or as the government of your choice sends your only child off to certain death in some future unexplained, unjustified 'Police Action'! (Or has that already come to pass?) Human sensibilities are a notoriously fragile object--and one to be nurtured and watched over with great care. Once bruised, they inevitably harden to granite-like proportions, and are rarely ever able to be thawed out. No matter how intensely you might desire....

We need to care about our fellow man--it is certainly hard in some cases, but we must make the effort if we are to ask for the same consideration in return. We need to care about the objects that are beautiful and useful and thoroughly irreplaceable in this marvelous country that we have--although we seem hell-bent on trying to destroy that beauty. ...the people, we may not kill with our bare hands, but of their murder we are literally guilty, by reason of apathy. And please consider the once proud forests that towered above this most endowed of nations on earth...the once sparkling lakes and streams that are now nothing more than stinking cess pools, fed and nourished by the crap of a nation of overfed, overprotected, mindless animals, who have not even the solitary redeeming feature of providing edible food for other animals. Consider this, the next time you go through a national park; their days are numbered.

When you care, then you do love. Love is a four-letter word which regrettably seems to have degenerated into a strictly sexual connotation. Love is--at least idealistically--something that should be much greater and more encompassing than just this one aspect. Love of a work of beauty, an object produced with caring skill, a person who does his or her thing extremely well...these are undoubtedly maudlin and sentimental weaknesses--at least so would our strong and virile society have us believe. You see, when you care, when you love something or someone, you have to give a part of yourself; this is not an easy thing to do (although there are happily a few delightful people in the world who seem to have enough love for all) for most, and you always run the risk of losing forever that which you have given. Ask me; I make a habit of it.

When you love, when you care...

I am an AMERICAN!; I am inordinantly proud of being such. It is a rare and wonderful thing to be a citizen of the greatest nation this poor world has ever known. (Which may be an unwise admittance; Patriotism and apathy do not seem capable of co-existence. And Patriotism is currently in definite disfavor.) And if I sometimes spout forth half-assed statements, sounding bitter and cynical, it is simply because I do happen to care about, and I do Love this country of mine; I'm trying to keep it going, the best I can.

...it's just that sometimes I get so damned disgusted with the potentialities we've ignored, the wealth (in terms of manpower, as well as material) that we've tossed down a bottomless sewer, the failure of being able to communicate with the walking, talking zombies that watch the Beverly Hillbillies behind the newspulp of Ann Landers--I get so disgusted (and I'm lecturing myself as well here) that I have to say something, or go out of my skull. This fannish world just happens to be the media closest at hand.

There seems to be one insurmountable barrier to caring, between people who are not nominally thought of as strangers, as well as those that are. This is a little item that we refer to as Communication. If we only knew how to go about it!

A rather unlikely (and not at all logical) sequence of events have acted to produce this inquest, not an easy task considering the amount of inertia I generate. The unbelievable relief of getting out after 4 years under the military machine, only to fall prey to commercial opportunists, undesirable but necessary to feed my face; 'The Desperate Nuh', a small, dittoed one-shot from the Granfalloon girls; the response of a few people to my last editorial--some do care; and a rather enjoyable book from Piers Anthony, OMNIVORE:

...so much of man's vaunted intelligence is required simply to transmit and receive information. Each of us has a wall of isolation, of ignorance to transcend. We have no direct communication, and so we have to master complex verbal codes and symbolic interpretations, merely to get our thoughts and needs across. With such second-hand contact, no wonder such a powerful cerebral backstop is necessary.

It may well be that we'll never be able to do away with 'second-hand' communication, but perhaps with a little caring and meaningful involvement, we might possibly be able to lower the barrier just a notch. I think this is a notable goal to pursue in 1969, and maybe next year we'll have a little bit more of the True Holiday Spirit.

I'm going to try my damndest.

...which will have to end this round, except for one not so minor Footnote:
With all due respect to the apparently sizable group of fans I feel sure will strongly disagree with me, I can't really see any real movement toward improved communications via the hallucinogenic High Road. I had my round with pot a few years ago, and freely admit that it was a pleasant, and even enjoyable experience. I tried it, I'm glad I did, but it's simply not my bag. As far as I can see, it is the ultimate in coping out...a nice easy way to go, if you haven't the guts to take the world like it really is.

You know, I feel more than a little sympathy for those who have to use artificial stimuli to 'broaden their horizons'. It may take some hard work and a lot of sweat on my part, but I like to think that anything I do accomplish in this life will be by my own hand. And I can testify that to do one's own thing by one's own abilities may not be so colorful as a psychedelic spurt of meaningless symbolism, but is definitely a lot more soul satisfying.

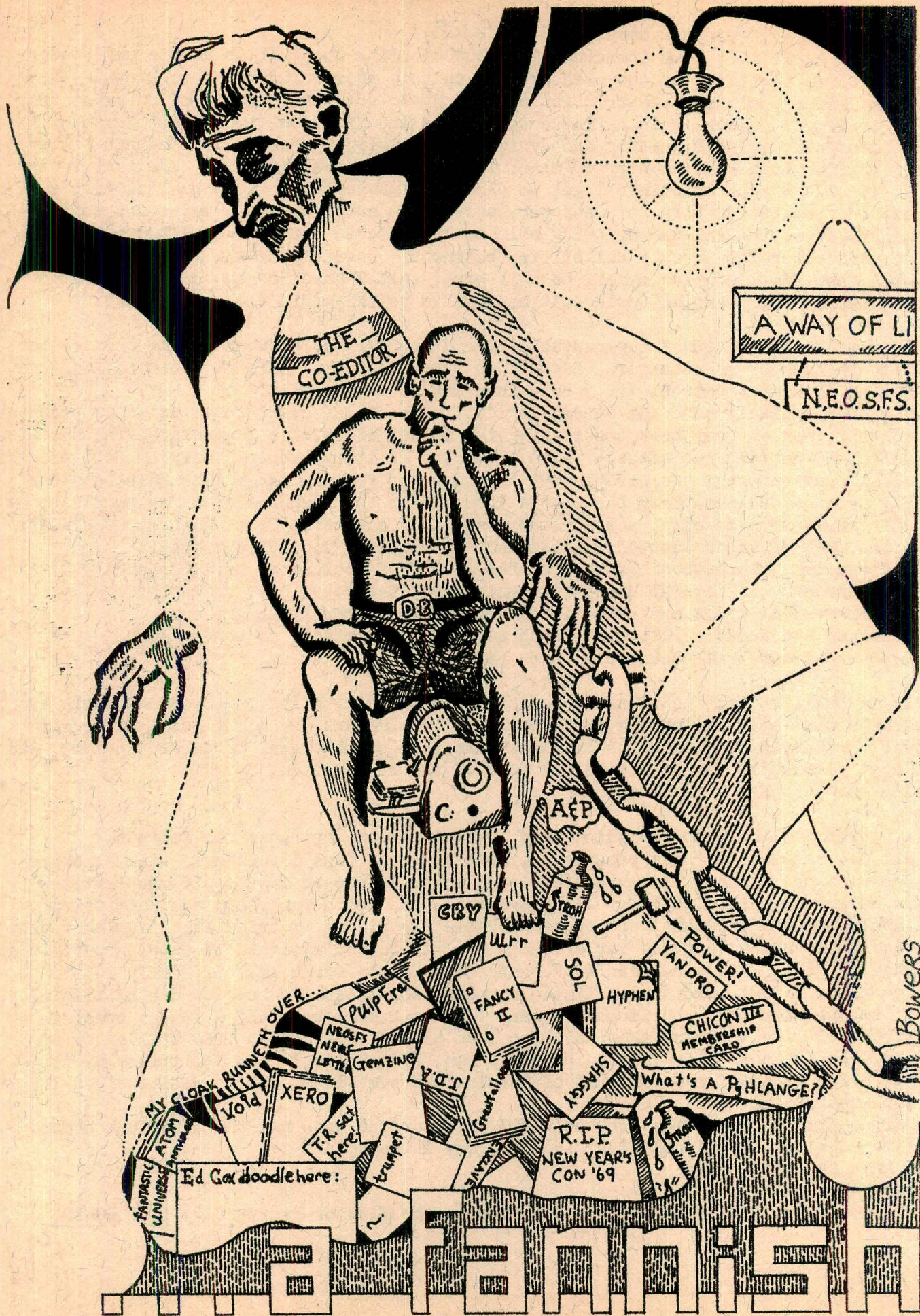
Harlan Ellison has said: "Why should I clown around with all the artificial scenes when I've been on a continual high since the day I was born."

I know the feeling.

Do you?

...may you always have the Best of Everything, BILL BOWERS

///



THE CO-EDITOR WAS dead, to begin with. There was no doubt whatever about that. B*w*rs was as dead as a doornail. His surviving partner, B*ll "Ebenezer" M*ll*rd* (called BEM for short) now presided as sole editor of the fanzine D:B.

As he trudged home to his bleak little apartment on Christmas Eve, BEM chanced to think of his deceased colleague who had passed away on that very date seven years before. These thoughts vanished as he opened the door for his entire attention was required to pick a path through the living room. Stacks of hardbacks, paperbacks, prozines, fanzines, manuscripts, letters, papers, and stencils towered almost to the ceiling. A scarred old filing cabinet bulked in one corner while mimeograph equipment of every description huddled in another. BEM shouldered his way into the kitchen, popped an A&P frozen dinner into the oven and opened a beer. Christmas, humbug! This evening would be no different from any other.

His melancholy after-supper relaxation was disturbed by a persistent thumping interspersed with low moans. What was it? Some noisy neighbor brat? BEM peered out the window, poked his head into the hall and even checked the closets without discovering the source of the sounds. Nevertheless they grew louder and closer as though some heavy object was being dragged to his entrance. Right through the door it came -- the ghost of his late partner, B*w*rs.

The shade resembled the living man in every detail except that a heavy chain was wrapped about its waist and hung down behind like a tail. To this chain were attached literally bales of unopened letters and manuscripts, magazines and books intact in their mailing envelopes, and at the end, a broken mimeograph machine and jammed typewriter.

"Who are you?" asked BEM, refusing to recognize the ghost.

"Rather ask me who I was," it replied.

"Well, who were you?"

"In life I was your partner, B*ll B*w*rs."

John and Sandra Miesel
(with Apologies to Ch*rl*s D*ck*ns)
**CHRISTMAS
CAROL**

"I frankly don't believe you. In fact I don't believe I'm really seeing anything. You're merely the after-effect of a badly digested TV dinner."

"For your own sake, B*ll "Ebenezer" M*ll*rd*, you must believe me! I bear a message of utmost importance. What I am now you shall become. Each day as you neglect your correspondence, fail to keep up on your reading, delay issuing your 'zine, you are forging a chain even longer than mine."

BEM began to tremble, visualizing the ghastly chain about his own waist. "Is there no chance of escape? Can't you offer me any hope?"

"That is why I am here to warn you."

"You always were a buddy!"

"You will be haunted," resumed the ghost, "by three Spirits."

"That's the hope you offer?" asked BEM in real alarm.

"It is. Without the visits of these Spirits you cannot avoid my fate. Expect the first at One AM and the others thereafter."

So saying, the spectre of B*w*rs again passed through the door and faded from view. Though his mind was spinning with anxiety, the ghost's visit had left BEM so exhausted he threw himself into bed and fell asleep instantly.

BEM WAS SHAKEN awake by Someone as a distant church bell struck One. He blinked at the new apparition which wore the form of a medieval troubador. The cheerful spirit was attired in party-colored garb of red and green. Sprigs of holly were tucked into his peaked cap and wound about his lute.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Past," announced the visitor.

"Far past?" inquired BEM cautiously.

"Your own past, too," replied the Spirit with a laugh. "Take my hand and I will show you the shadows of things that were."

BEM did so and the room dissolved around them. They passed into an apartment he had had years before -- a far homier place than his present quarters. BEM beheld his younger self opening a stack of Christmas cards. How many of them there were! He had forgotten what it was to have so many friends. As the BEM-that-was rose from his desk, the older man stole a glance at the signatures on the cards. There were friends from near and far including authors, editors, and other pros. BEM choked back a tear at the thought of all those pleasant relationships sacrificed to laziness.

The Spirit tugged at his sleeve. "Your younger self is leaving for a party. Let us follow him." And suddenly they were in a large and splendidly decorated home where the North Eastern Ohio Science Fiction Society was making merry. The group drew the BEM-that-was to its collective bosom and plied him with fruit cake, cookies, frothy eggnog, and other sorts of Christmas cheer. They reminisced about Worldcons, regional cons, and memorable drinking bouts -- such as the last New Year's Con. They shredded some personalities in the field and praised others to the skies. It touched BEM's heart to see so many once-familiar faces gathered together. He was forced to admit he missed the witty repartee and warm comraderie of such occasions and sadly recalled that all these people had once been eager readers and supporters of his 'zine.

"Show me no more, Spirit. This is too hard to bear." And the next moment he found himself back in his own bed.

IT HARDLY SEEMED that he had slept again when an intensely bright light awakened BEM once more. This originated in the electrically illuminated costume of a pyschedelic Santa Claus who stood beside the bed.

"Ho, ho, ho, and all that jazz. I'm the Ghost of Christmas Present. Ready to learn what's happening, baby?"

By now BEM had become somewhat accustomed to the procedure and took the Spirit's hand without hesitation. They did not linger long in any one place this time but sped across the land (with a detour into Saskatchewan) observing countless brief scenes. Oh the scratch of pens, the click of typewriters, the clank of mimeographs, the clatter of presses! Oh the babel of voices! Everywhere fans and pros were working, writing, arguing.

"Tell me, Spirit," inquired the downcast BEM, "is anyone in that busy throng thinking of me?"

In answer, a faint chorus of grumblings came borne on the wind. The only word BEM could distinguish with certainty was "Fink!" He covered his face in shame. "I know I'm reaping what I sowed over the year's, but please take me home, Spirit."

Once more BEM returned to his own bed.

THIS TIME HE did not sleep at all for the prospect of facing the third Ghost truly terrified him. What sights more painful than those he had already witnessed were yet to come? As he speculated, the third visitor materialized. This spirit was clad in a long shapeless black robe with a deep hood which covered its face.

"Are you the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come?" asked BEM timidly. The Spirit nodded.

"Will I now see the shadows of things that may happen in the future?" Again it nodded.

"Must they occur just as you show them?" It shook its head.

"Show me your sights, Spirit, whatever they may be." BEM steeled himself for the horrid revelation that must surely follow.

The Ghost offered no journey. Instead it withdrew a publication from one capious sleeve. This proved to be a fanzine, attractively printed on good white stock. The letters of its title flickered and wavered so that BEM could not read them. The Ghost opened the 'zine and held it up to BEM. One paragraph on the editor's page stood out with dazzling clarity:

We note in passing the demise of D:B. This once prominent genzine has ceased publication after a run of many years. Lately it had fallen prey to the lunatic fringe and degen-



erated into a cultish rag--house organ for the Scientologists, saucer fanatics, and suchlike.

"No, Spirit, no!" cried BEM. "Tell me this will not be so! I'll never let it happen! Never! I've seen the error of my ways. I promise to take up the fannish way of life once more. I will answer my correspondence promptly. I will give contributors a speedy verdict and breathe vigor into my 'zine once more. I will revive old friendships in and out of fandom for without friends no one can be happy, much-less celebrate a merry Christmas. Was this the lesson you spirits came to teach? Have I learned it well enough?"

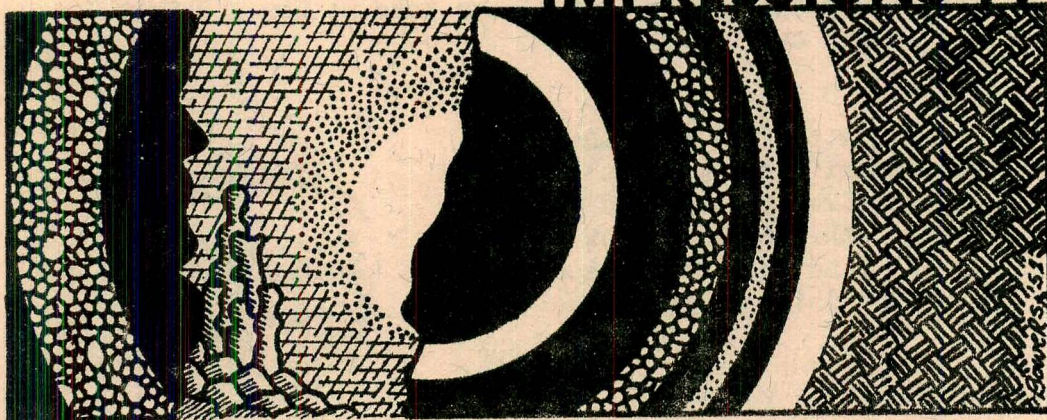
The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come nodded vigorously. Its robe turned white, then transparent, and it vanished from view.

Christmas Day was dawning. BEM flung open his windows and shouted "Merry Christmas" to the world. The new year would find him a new man.

"Ghu bless us every one!"

---JOHN & SANDRA MIESEL

IMPRESSIONS IV



...as I cringe here on the Dark Side of the Sun--dreaming of that which might have been--I remember

(huge choking lumps of Pain; small jewels of Beauty and Love)
the Year of the Jackpot (again) : When will it, please God!, end?
Through my twisted, grasping fingers, the time grains of yet another year filter
--there will never again (not so much as once) be another Year of Our Lord:
1968

(Be thankful for small favors, no matter how small.)

You know, I find it hard not to believe that is was My Year

--a Century fractured by 4 have I resided on the belching ball :
the Green, Green Hills of Mother Earth. (I dream a lot.)

A Quarter of the years of my century...and what have I accomplished.
A Lament which is mine, all mine, I'll grant it to no other.

1968 : It was not, in all respects, a Good year.

Nine months, two days = the Philippines = the last half of an Experience....
which began (and almost ended) in January, bloody horrible January....

-- I remember (does anyone else?) words dipped in living horror: the Tet Offensive and bodies (the supply of coffins proved inadequate) flowing through our terminal in a stream so constant that images formed of a giant womb back in the States churning out a continual river of cannon fodder, wrapped in semi-vacuumized plastic bags (transparent) and the corpses (not grinning, these) mutely asking: Why?

Give me now an answer, you who condone this political farce that takes the very lives of my comrades: Why?

Why does the Pueblo (I remember) still sit serenely, 11 months later, in the harbor of a 4th rate naval power

(Have we no pride; no national sense of dignity, that we struggle to 'save' ((unwanted; dispised)) a foreign people while our own boys rot under the glaring lights of slant-eyed Inquisitors

-- Go on now, read your Dr. Fu Manchu; Enjoy! Enjoy!)

We were ready, we were willing, we were damn able...we wanted to go and get those boys back (rather than continually passing napalm West; corpses East);

-- but we didn't; we were not allowed to do so. Why?

How can I forget a Man, senselessly shot in Tennessee

-- another in San Francisco;

not the man his brother (R.I.P.) was; but a Man, nonetheless.

Sitting Ten Thousand miles from home, I read the Stars and Stripes, I listened to AFRTS

-- and I wondered and I shuddered and I thought : My God! What have they done to the Land of the Free, the Home of the Brave?

(...and I dreamed dreams of Australia and beautiful, beautiful Thailand.)

Somehow (I often wonder why) I survived and Came Home

"When you're going to San Francisco..."

Labor Day...and sat at Travis; sixty odd miles from where my people were doing their thing. ...Although all I heard on radio was of Riots in the Street.

...I came home to the Elections of '68 -- a farcial and suicidal exercise in redundancy -- and I wondered if this was what I had spent 3 years, 9 months and 4 days of my Life for: Defending my right to choose between two such unappealing, uninspiring men -- with a third spectre lurking frightenly close in the backdrop.

...and I dreamed more frequently of Australia and Thailand, Free Land.

...but the Man Most Qualified to Lead America won (or so they tell us) and now we must give him the chance to prove his mettle, and hope that the nation will survive, after a fashion, until '73, and that then a True Man of the People can hurdle the light year high obstacles of political machines and bigots. We have no other choice.

1968 -- a year almost too gererous in its failings:

The death of Friends -- Lew Grant, Ron Ellik -- and others less well known by me, but well respected men; the gruesome spectre of Man killing his brother in senseless charades that bring not condemnations, but mere apathy; the personal pangs of leaving a place that had been home for 18 months, but which was never really mine -- and looming over All, the Horror:

The black shrouded, skull-faced spirit of those in the flush of youth, in the prime of manhood, who have fallen on the battlefields of an undeclared War, a continued

1171

exercise in unabated bloodletting which makes no sense at all in its present form... except perhaps in the mystical way the money-grubbing, uncaring Political mind rationalizes our 'commitments' as falling sequentially before our duty to help our fellow man rather than further depriving him of: national pride, food, and his very life.

1968 -- the Year of the Grub gnawing ever more successfully at the bulwarks of this Coffin of a World.

But even in the blackest scratchboard...if one has the patience and the desire and the willingness, one can painstakingly etch a few stray beams of radiance and Hope....

...eight beautiful days in May: Hongkong--a monument to what can be accomplished by a skillful blending of efficiency and industry, under a government that cares....
...two journeys (June & August) to Bangkok, the most splendid and grandiose of Cities... the home of the Thais, the friendliest and most beautiful people in the world. It was there that I fell in love with an entire Race of People....
...three expeditions (and what tales they be!) into the mountains of Northern Luzon... to Baguio, Summer Capitol of the Philippines. A marvelously clean, rustic little town filled with people who haven't quite yet realized that GI's were aliens to be suckered and mugged, rather than welcomed and cared for. The blessed coolness...an exhilarating relief from the hot, humid, stinking plains on which Clark Air Base and Angeles City squat in their own excrement.

and throughout run thoughts of a Girl, and that from which I fled for reasons now unclear. ...and the lonely Nights and endless Days are filled with memories only, tender and bittersweet.

Travis; then San Francisco International: I'd missed the Baycon, but I was Home! Ohio -- and DOUBLE:BILL 18...it intrigued me, trapped me, and once more we are off on the fannish merry-go-round; this time hopefully as a doer, rather than a mere bystander.

Octocon; Philcon--old friends too long (since Tricon) missed--and many, many new. Strange thoughts of cringing in corners while midnite invocations are hurled over our heads (Hi! Dale, Tim, Dennis...) The PgHLANGE Party and Connie Reich reading my palm, telling my fortune (...all I've got to do is survive until I'm thirty, but that may take some doing.)



Year's End : Man has circled the Moon (I still can't believe...) fulfilling a dream as old as the first who Wondered at the Stars in the Night--and mine as long as I've had breath. The Pueblo crew is free (but late, much too late) and our Ship is apparently gone forever.

Year's End...and there is Joan. There is Hope, again.

...I am not all that I want to be; I am not at all certain where I've been or where I'm going...but I say this unto You:

Go forth into the New Year gladly and with Great Expectations--taking care to be prepared for the pitfalls that will surely come. Take a little Good with the Bad, and try each day (how hard it is! I know.) to do a little kindness toward your fellow Man. He is lonely and locked inside an inconel-clad shell not of his own making, but he wishes You the Best of Everything.

paalam, BILL BOWERS; an American.

AS BILL VENABLE pointed out in SFA a while back, the code of conduct in fandom is an involved matter of ritual which need not take a back seat to any known culture. The new fan is expected to find his way through the mazes of custom and taboos with no help save an occasional kindly-hearted article of advice which invariably doesn't appear til he's been in fandom long enough to learn it on his own. And fandom assesses its own penalties for serious violations, unwitting or not. Ask Peter Graham.

Personally, I soon caught on to the expected technique of lavishly handing egoboo to others while they do the same for you. It's not good form to blow your own horn although the results come out the same. I didn't have to be told that it was the 'thing to do' to stay in as close proximity to Bea Mahaffey at conventions as possible: such things come natural. I insinuated myself into the even more rigid climate of FAPA without fatal injury and simultaneously eased out of NFFF. (Few things can more quickly ruin a fan's prestige than remaining in the N3F too long after he's established himself.) And I can adjust the pitch on a beanie propellor with the best of them.

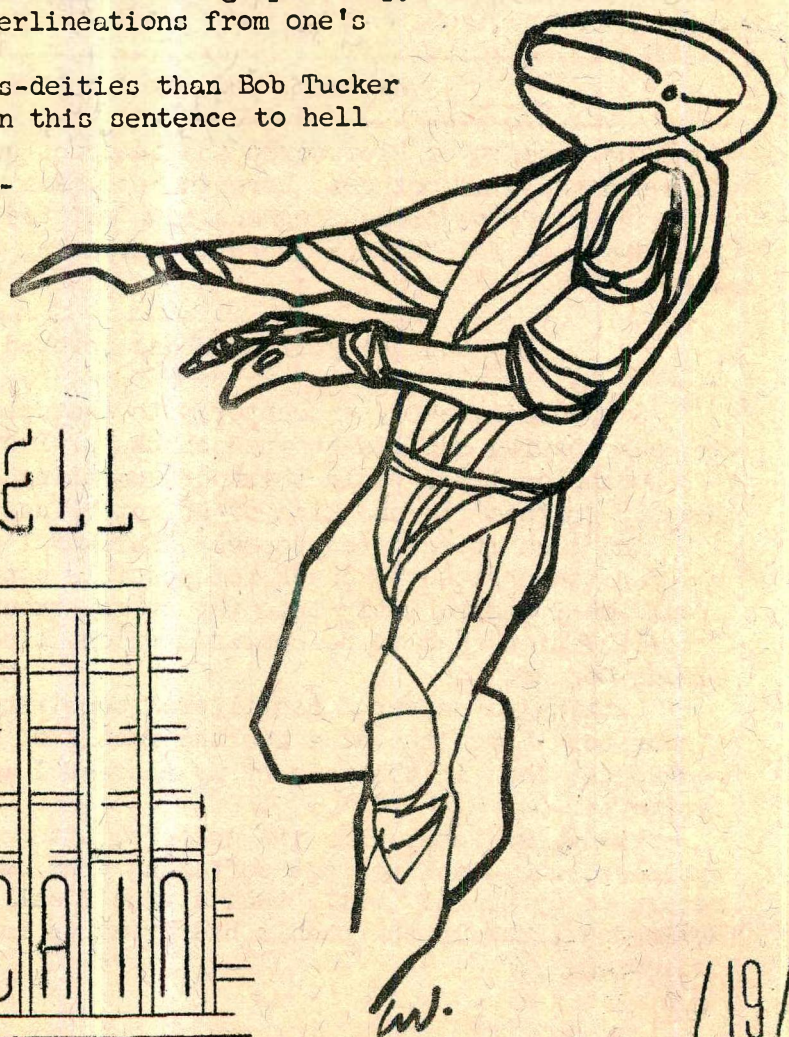
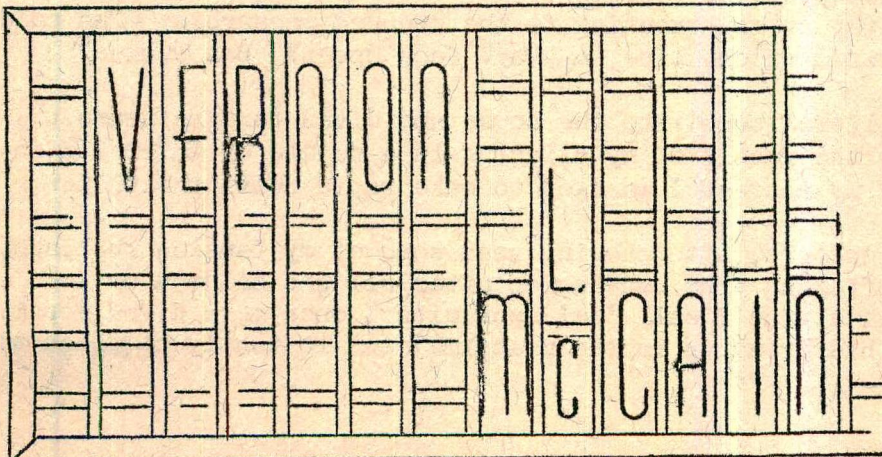
But one fannish convention has defeated me time and time again. And this is interlineations. I've refused to bother with such fannish conventions as illustrations, fancy titles, or poetry for my zines, sneering at the pettifoggers who protested my sacrelige. But even I haven't had the temerity to attempt to publish a magazine minus interlineations. As the saying goes, certain things just 'aren't done'. Better to be caught with an autographed copy of a Shaver manuscript than to omit interlineations from one's magazine.

There have been articles by no-less-deities than Bob Tucker (and if you quibble about the grammar in this sentence to hell with you) about the subject.

So what choice has any fan? He interlines.

Upon looking back at my career in interlining I can only say if all my interlineations were laid end to end they'd make an awful mess.

THE PADDED CELL



My first attempts at interlineations were pretty feeble. I tried the common gambit of repetition, like --

DamnitIcan'tthinkofaninterlineationDamnitIcan'tthinkofaninterlineationDamnitIcan'tthink

but the results weren't exactly stimulating. Anyway, this was milked for all it was worth years ago by the forgotten genius (maybe it was Ackerman) who went

dyktawodyktawodyktawodyktawodyktawodyktawodyktawodyktawodyktawodyktawody

Thinking, wrongly I learned, that interlineations never took advance thought and didn't mean anything anyway I took to tossing in whatever first came to mind, like

A vote for Truman is a vote for laissez-faire!

Well, it didn't take me long to get over that. Then for about a year I tried including tag lines I was particularly fond of..the last line of some joke, either farmish or otherwise which I thought quite witty at the time, like

"Yes, you think there's a bottom in that bathtub."

or a saying common
around the 146 East 12th Avenue fan menage in Eugene, Oregon when I was living there,
such as

"_____ everybody, women and children first!"

(For the benefit of cloistered and innocent souls who may be reading this such as kind-hearted grandmothers, Seventh Fandomers under age 9, and postal inspectors, the first word of the preceeding has been omitted.)

Recently I've been reduced to imitating the Pogo imitators with monstrosities such as

You has got your headbone screwed on backwards.

So you see, every encounter with that ole debbil interlineation left me flat on my back spewing out red-stained chunks of ivory on the carpet.

Occasionally I would think of something really clever but invariably it was too long to fit into the one line of an interlineation.

And then it occurred to me. "Eureka" I cried (it sounded vaguely familiar but I was far too excited to check for possible copyright). Hastily drawing a bathtowel around me I padded wetly into the street shouting to the stunned passerbys, "Who said interlineations had to be confined to one line, anyway? Jack Speer? Bob Tucker? Claude Degler?"

Getting no answer I hastily ran back into the house and dived for the nearest typewriter. Since the dive was the result of my slipping in a puddle of water I'd incautiously left in the path of my retreat I managed to make rapid contact with the typewriter.

Two weeks later when the doctors, after having read some of my fanzine published articles, decided I was not suffering from concussion after all and allowed me to return to my normal (well, that's what I call 'em!) pursuits I once more dived for my Remington (luckily the puddle had dried up in the meantime) and instantly composed the following:

1201

This is the way the world ends,
Not with a blast but a blister.

I sat back with a warm glow inside me as I gazed at the faded grey letters on the paper (my ribbon needed changing). Perhaps it would not win the Pulitzer prize but it was mine own. For the first time I had tackled interlineations and emerged triumphant; simply by tricking my adversary through changing the rules I had produced an interlineation I could look at without shuddering.

Quick as a flash, I double spaced down and typed below it

Men don't get jumpy
O'er girls who are lumpy.

I'd proved I could repeat. I wasn't one of those one-time authors after all. From now on I need never have fear of interlineations again. I was their master. In fact I had mutated the breed into something higher, nobler. With no hesitation whatsoever and with the extraordinary modesty for which I am noted far and wide I immediately produced the perfect name for this new improved product. Henceforth they shall be known as McCainterlineations.

Don't think I'm being selfish about this. While it is doubtful if they could approach my own stratospheric standards, I hereby welcome all other fans to use McCainterlineations....hmmmm, let's really be modest and call them mccainterlineations....as frequently as they wish. No strings attached whatsoever, except of course that I must receive, as inventor, a ten cent royalty on each one used. This may seem a trifle high to the poverty stricken fan who wishes to fill a whole magazine with these exciting new entrants to the field of fandom, but may I point out that since mccainterlineations take up two lines apiece that is only 5¢ a line? Furthermore, think of the prestige that will accrue to you as one of the first to feature mccainterlineations. And for you editors who have trouble getting material for your fanzines....mccainterlineations fill up space twice as fast as ordinary old-fashioned interlineations.

Some may carp that these sound a trifle familiar and may not be 100% original. For these quibblers may I state mccainterlineations are not limited to such subtle psychological observations or clever witticisms as the above, but can also be used to comment on current fannish events in 100% original fashion as

I think of a sinking ship then, and some,
While watching more fans desert Seventh Fandom.

The above may not be quite so polished in construction and metre as the others but it is still a bona fide mccainterlineation and should not be discriminated against in any sense.

So, my place in history secure, I am now ready to sit back and spend my remaining years composing further variations of my greatest creation, mccainterlineations.

I would like to leave you with the following thought.

The world is so full of a number of clucks
I am sure we should all be as quack-y as ducks.

--- V. L. McCain

In the lateness of the morning
Ere the sun doth reach its zenith
Comes around my friendly postman
(Weary hard-aworking postman,
Laden down with tons of junkmail).
To my door he makes his journey
Gives me mail and moves off Northward
(Wonder why it's always Northward?).

Everyday he fills my postbox.
Full it is to overflowing,
Bulging at the seams with mail
Sent to me by sundry persons
Boldly my attention seeking.
Seeking, seeking, always seeking.
"Please," they say, "Please buy my product."
What a lot of trashy junkmail!

Yesterday my patient postman
Put into my box a pamphlet
Gaily printed; full of color,
Full of gaudy illustrations.
"Buy, oh buy," it said with feeling
"All our lovely gifts and trinkets.
"Christmas is but 'round the corner;
"Here are gifts to give your kinfolks."

CHRISTMAS POEM

Opened I the gaudy cover,
Squinted at the illustrations.
Pretty, pretty color pictures
Of the lovely christmas presents.
Full of Christmas hope and meaning:
"Egermeir's Life of Jesus";
"Jesus lives! - In Argentina".
What a cruddy book to send me!

Then I turned a page and saw it:
"How God gives Us Peanut Butter".
There's a title fraught with meaning,
Pregnant with essential thinking.
Ah, if only people pondered
On it's deep and tender meaning,
Would we not be better for it?
Would our lives not fill with feeling.

Peanut Butter! Food essential
To sustain our minds and bodies.
Starving men the world over
Set their minds to ceaseless thinking
Of a slice of lovely white bread
Covered o'er with Peanut Butter.
Children in all lands and climates
Scream for it incessantly.

Peanut Butter! Food ambrosial.
Lack of it drives men to drink.
Pregnant women always want it
(Piled high on something sweet).
Psychedelic hippies crave it
Wrapped up in banana peelings.
Bank executives all want it -
Deep inside their vaults they hoard it.

But, Think! In hidden laboratories,
Hidden from the sight of mankind.
Evil Scientists are working,
Evil athiestic Scientists.
Using all the ancient knowledge
Handed down through generations.
Working with unceasing effort.
Object: ersatz Peanut Butter.

Here we find old hard-line Nazis
Working hand in glove with Commies.
Agents too from THRUSH and KAOS
(Not to mention SMERSH and SPECTRE)
Agents of the Yellow Peril;
I Won't Worker's from the '20's.
Evil men from every country
Try to make fake Peanut Butter.

-1967 (Mark Schulzinger)

Everywhere are Fellow Travelers -
Men of high respect and stature.
Men who think there's nothing wrong with
Making phony Peanut Butter.
"What's the fuss?" they cry in chorus,
"Man's as good as God, or better.
"And Peanut Butter's full of Fluorides.
"You all know what's wrong with that stuff!"

Oh, Tempora; oh, the mores
Man o'ersteps the line once more;
Thinks he's better than his Maker;
Sets himself as imitator.
Builds himself a Tower of Babel;
Builds it out of Peanut Butter.
Tries to reach the heights celestial;
Tries to build himself a godhead.

Oh, my friends please shun these efforts;
Eat not this fake Peanut Butter.
Send your thoughts to Heaven winging;
Sing your praises of our Maker.
Shun the Evil One who tempts you -
Tempts you with this evil mockery.
Remember this, for this will save you:
False Peanut Butter lacks a Soul!

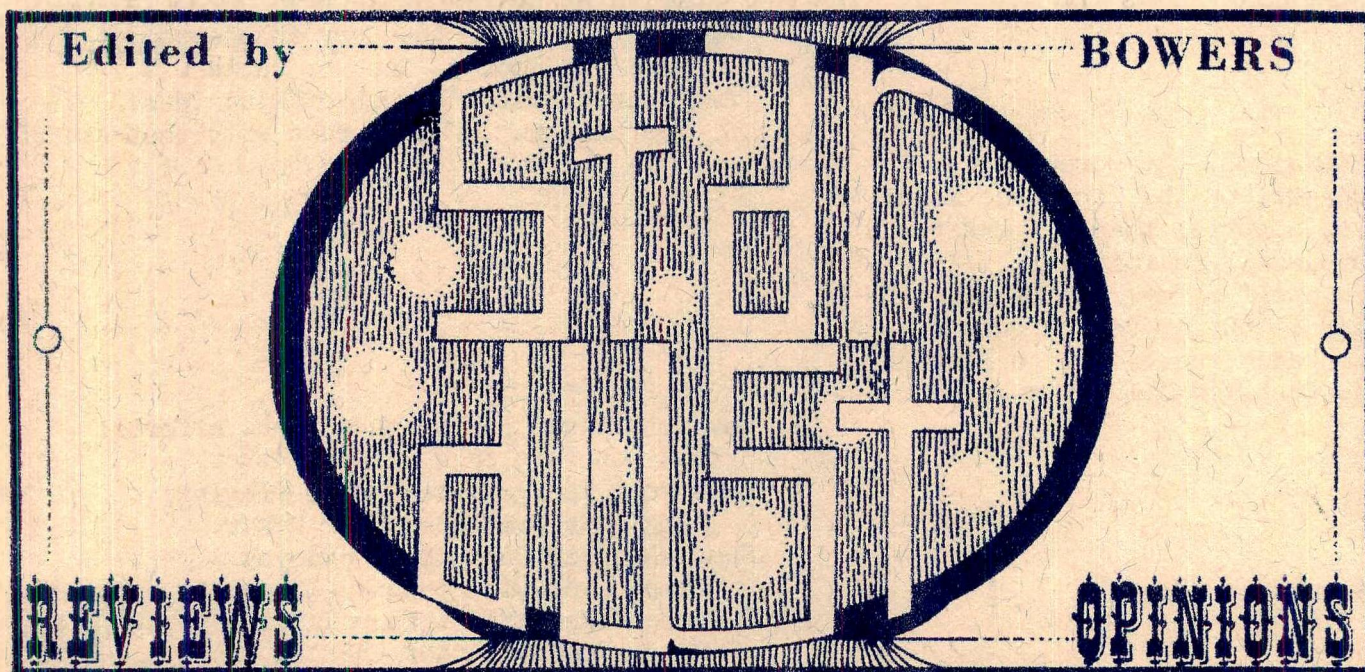
HAS ANYONE NOTICED how intriguing science fiction, as an ever expanding field, has become lately? Or that we seem to be on the fringes of yet another s.f. 'boomlet' (although it is still too early to predict what proportions it will assume) -- but one much different in approach and scope than those which have boomed and burst before.

Galaxy seems to be succeeding as a monthly, after umpteen years of six issues, again; paperbacks are breeding at a phenomenal rate (with much praise offered in the direction of Terry Carr's Ace Specials); the SF Book Club will be offering two selections a month later on in '69; and more and better science fiction books are being bought for motion pictures, some of which may possibly be treated with kindness...the list goes on.

There are a variety of reasons which have brought about this potentially enjoyable state of affairs. And not all of them have been due to our own efforts. ('Our' referring to the die-hard core of fans and pros whom we all know and love; but those who have the recurring habit of getting all shook up when an Outsider succeeds in accomplishing something which we should have done years ago.)

Two items, both presented in the visual media, have succeeded in expanding a field which heretofore--despite the valiant efforts of a few talented artists--has seemingly been hemmed in by the limiting media of the printed word. This has apparently approached its zenith (although marvelous things of great beauty and some small margin of truth have been accomplished within it, and we continue to try...) as a means of expressing the boundless imagination which resides between the two unpointed ears of a few of the more gifted numbered among good old Homo Sap.

One of these items is an object of indescribable beauty (in parts)--a mind-expanding consuming experience achieved without the use of physical drugs, which, more often than not, act as an inhibiting deterrent to true Communication. The other item is currently, to put it kindly, a lackluster excursion into the watered-down world of cliché's which



television seems to feel essential to the continued peace-of-mind of the great majority of the Pablum-bred, Reader's Digest educated, uncaring, unloving, All-American lump of lard on the log.

1.) '2001 : A Space Odyssey'; 2.) 'Star Trek'.

'2001' will be covered in much greater depth in the next issue. However, from the sixty-plus replies we've already received, it affected no two people in the same exact way. Which is all to the good. An artistic experience of unprecedented example, it is in itself a magnificent tribute to the team of Kubrick and Clarke. And now I wait, not for a sequel (that would be a redundant letdown on a cosmic scale), but for the next step forward, possibly from Kubrick...certainly, it is fervently hoped, soon. (From the reviews, 'Charly' doesn't seem to be it.)

On the other hand, 'Star Trek' is somewhat a disappointing comparison, assuming such a comparison could be made. Particularly it is so to one who spent an extended period of time overseas between the first admirable season...and the shit I've been subjected to (with two exceptions) since September. Although I doubt that I can be persuaded to support the next 'Save Star Trek' campaign, it has succeeded admirably in one particular area. That is in attracting (and exposing) what is to our scope of thinking, a vast number of newcomers to our field. At the moment they remind me strongly, in terms of enthusiasm and uncritizing acceptance, of the mass influx of Forry Ackerman's 'little monsters' several years back. But the possibility and the hope exists that eventually they will add a valuable infusion into a field still cringing between the pulp covers of yesteryear.

Between them, these two items have had a revitalizing influence on the field, the equal of which hasn't been felt since the emergence of F&SF and Galaxy, at the beginning of the last decade. The effects are faintly visible now, but it may be a little while before the full blast is to be felt. The shapers of that resurgence are themselves being shaped right now, and the new uncharted waters must (or so it seems) be sampled tentatively, before striking out boldly for that yet unknown horizon.

1969 is definitely going to be an exciting year, science-fiction-wise. Stick around, and enjoy the fireworks.

BEFORE PLUNGING TOO abruptly into the future, we must verse ourselves well in that which has gone before, even if it's a perusal of the past of the future-seekers. In our last issue, Ed Cox expressed (and quite elegantly, I believe) what may categorically be labelled the 'credo' of shall we say, the middle-age (in terms of reading experience, I hasten to add) generation of fans. Jerry Kaufman, on the other hand, is one of a newer generation of s.f. readers. He has a few comments to make, by way of rebuttal:

-----THE SENSE OF WONDER MARCHES ON-----

Ed Cox, for a lot of the reasons which he lists in DOUBLE:BILL 18, thinks the Sense of Wonder is gone from science-fiction, and a lot of older fans seem to agree with him.

He's wrong. All of them are wrong. SoW is with us today as much as ever.

Ed considers the SoW to be a "feeling for the field of science fiction". I think that misses the point. It is a Sense of Wonder, and Ed's definition doesn't take that into account. Ed was closer when he mentioned the appeal of magazine names like AMAZING, ASTOUNDING or THRILLING WONDER--"/a/ willingness to behold a wonder." The trouble is simply that the 'wonder' is always something new.

Back in the Middle ages, before Europe was familiar with the rest of the world, the closest thing to science fiction being printed were the bestiaries and travel books. Almost no one had been away from home, often including the authors of these books, and among those who could read, the bestiaries and travel books were read avidly. They were readings of marvels, of astounding animals and astonishing countries. The SoW was at work. When Europe sent its explorers to the unknown areas of the Earth...and the facts were sorted from the myths, the SoW departed for parts unknown (to me, though Sandy Meisel could probably tell you).

Eventually, Hugo Gernsback discovered and tamed the SoW. In the early prozines, the marvel that was exploited was the emerging technology and the shining Science that supported it. Aviation, atomic physics, electronics...in fact, everything Ed says about this period is true. Science was new, it was exciting, it was unfamiliar --the perfect object for the SoW.

Soon enough, though, as Science became science, the SoW left the simple themes of the early sfzines. The zines shifted their emphasis from science to other planets than Earth to psychological-social developments. None of these changes could bring back the SoW. There were good stories, but no SoW in those bleak days.

An impasse? No.

Television saved the SoW.

Television? A visual medium, weak on dialog, weak on plot, weak, weak, weak on ideas, weak on beauty (in the first ten or so years). A medium that raised me and a couple of million other kids, that affected hugely everyone under thirty.

After television's stingy fare, read a Cordwainer Smith story.

That's real Sense of Wonder!

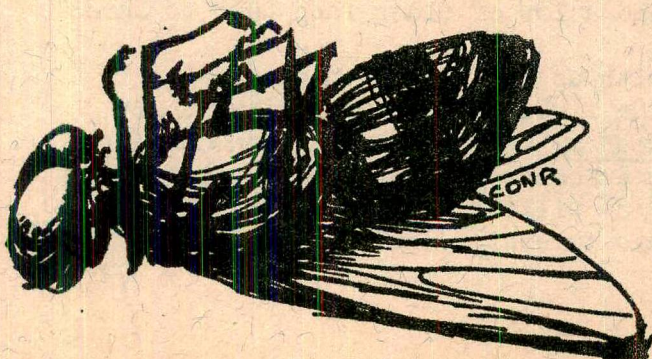
The thing is, I've reread some of the stories that I thought had the SoW, some of the stories that were beautiful and stimulating, lyrical and amazing. They just don't measure up to my memories of them. I've lost the freshness I once brought to those stories, just as so many of the older fans have. The effects of television have worn off, language and its possibilities are no longer a marvel to me. It's the same fate we all have reserved for us, but just because we lose the ability to feel it, doesn't mean it isn't there, in some other form, waiting to make a new convert of some hapless person, in some new form.

In other words, Ed -- you're just jaded.

-----JERRY KAUFMAN-----

FUNNY THING ABOUT being jaded--if you hang on long enough, and search diligently enough, you might possibly stumble across a new phenomena that at first tugs gently at almost forgotten memories of wonderish things and then, before you realize it, you're firmly hooked...and eagerly reading the 'stuff' again. After the advent of the Poets--Zelazny

and Delany--a few years back (and if that wasn't a Sense of Wonder provoking event, I don't know the meaning of the word)... after DUNE...after the realization dawned that there would be no further documentaries of Cordwainer Smith's 'Underpeople', no more parallel trips with Beam Piper's Paratime Police...somewhere shortly there--after I found myself being engulfed in a slimy morass of putrid tales, spurted forth in incomprehensibility, and mostly labeling themselves as stories of the genre. Of what genre, I'm not sure, but I might



make a guess in the direction of a grouping of shit-splattered little kids, sitting around a rat-infested warren, telling each other How Great I am, and, Gee!, isn't it awfully hard work to write Realistically (read: dirty) and tell it how it is! And as they pop the pills and jab the veins, I'm quite sure that it is all very realistic to them, and that they feel they are practicing Honesty.

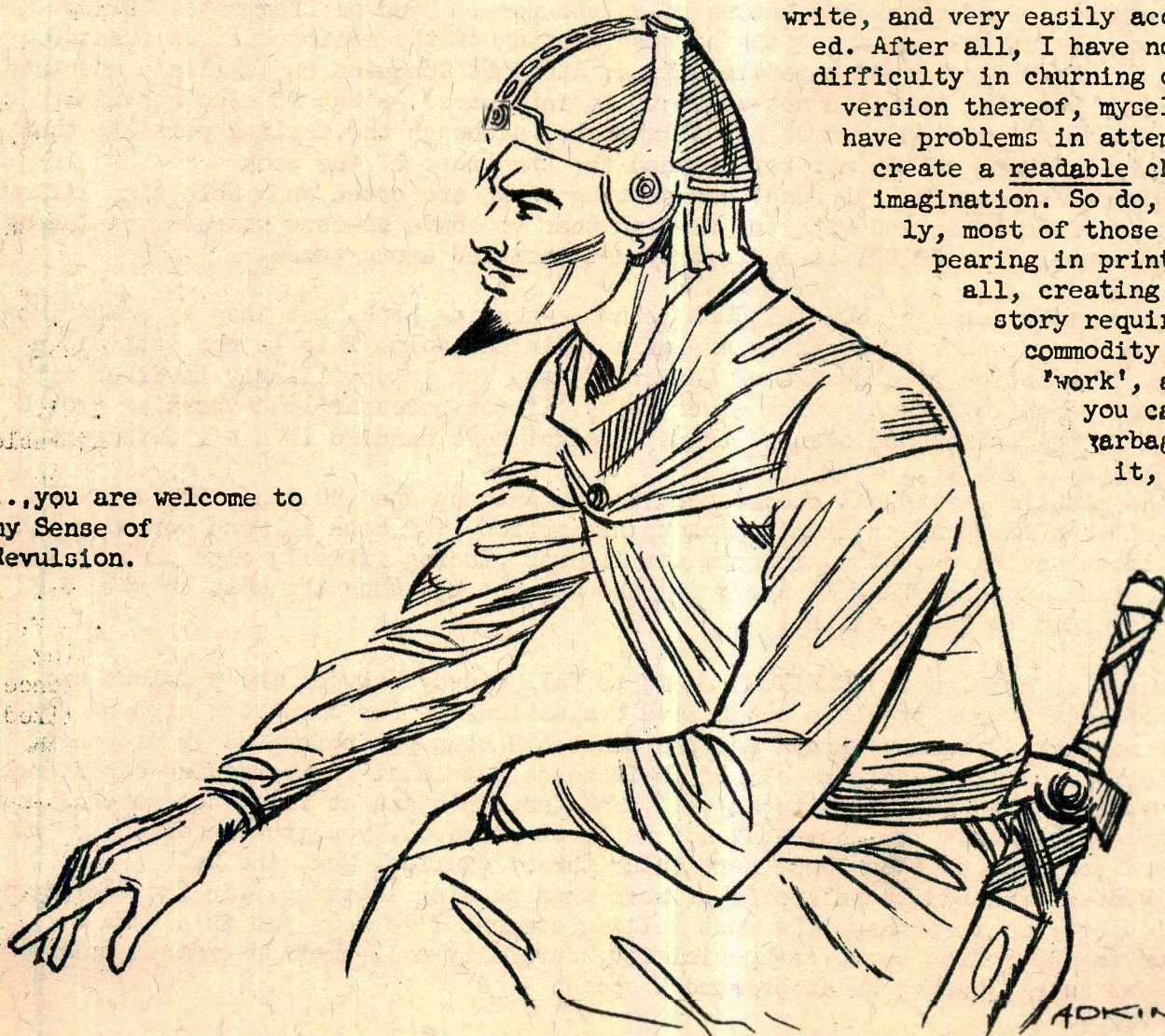
-Unfortunately, they reside in a world far from that which I inhabit, and the only realism they invoke in me is the imminent need to puke, as I race for the commode. This world I reside in is certainly not all Beauty & Roses; however I'll believe that it is the Real one and the one that I have to survive in, until proven otherwise...and until this thing is done, I prefer to take my living 'straight'.

'Straightness' is currently a dirty word, but it connotates a degree of comprehensibility which I'm afraid I must require in something I purportedly read for Pleasure. In other words, I'll take the theories and sermons, and welcome them, as long as they are an integral part of something which was one time called a story, and be comprehensible to one who has been educated by the American assembly-line educative process.

Some flattering people call this the New Wave.

It's undoubtedly mucho fun to write, and very easily accomplished. After all, I have no great difficulty in churning out a version thereof, myself; I do have problems in attempting to create a readable chunk of imagination. So do, apparently, most of those now appearing in print. After all, creating a good story requires a commodity called 'work', and if you can sell yarbage without it, well...

...you are welcome to my Sense of Revulsion.



Not all is bleak and stomach-curdling, however. Small gems appear bylined Delany and Zelazny, but not at frequent enough intervals. And thank Ghu for an admirable quality called 'Guaranteed Enjoyment' in such names as Poul Anderson, Jack Vance, humm, the list seems strangely short, lately. But some like Robert Silverberg are coming on strong after a long apprenticeship...and a few newcomers seem to show signs of caring about what they sign their names to. A disgusting habit, that.

UP UNTIL A month ago, the name Piers Anthony was recognizable to me, but barely. I recalled him as the author of several competent, if unspectacular shorts in Analog, and as one who wrote entertaining letters berating fanzine editors who persisted in inflicting their efforts on him. And then, a few months before coming home, I began hearing comments (mostly favorable) on something called CHTHON (1).

I came home, I read CHTHON...and in immediate succession, devoured SOS THE ROPE (2) and OMNIVORE (3).

I will prudently make no claim as to understanding all the plot intricacies around which CHTHON twines. It demands rereading, and will receive such in due course. Perhaps then I will generate enough nerve to attempt a blow-by-blow review. Right now, I'm not about to be trapped.

Complexity can be (he said, as if discovering something new) either a bane or a balm. In this case, I think the latter holds the fore. Read as fragments, CHTHON contains some beautiful passages (the boyhood meeting of the minionette...a creature that only a male writer could have visualized; Aton and Conquina on Idyllia's mountain, which draws a parallel that I'm not about to go into here) -- but it also contains episodes that a first reading does not illuminate, although the feeling persists that this is a fault lying within me, rather than the structure of the book.

It is not an easy book to read; one-sitting books are often enjoyable time killers, but about as often leave you with the feeling that you have somehow wasted irreplaceable moments of your life. CHTHON is definitely not included among these.

By comparison however, SOS THE ROPE is a one-sitting book, but then by comparison to CHTHON, most any other book can be assimilated in one gulp. This is not entirely a bad thing. The notion of a castrated Leader of Men, who is unwillingly involved with an ambitious woman is a fascinating minor twist, if not necessarily a sporting one. I think that if the notion had occurred to me, I might have handled it a bit differently ...and some day I may try.

In the meantime, with all due respect to Mr. Anthony and the money he lost, I'm rather glad that Irwin Allen didn't pick up his option. The book is much more enjoyable as is, without having overblown insects and lizards placing flimsily clad damsels in distress. (The Instant STARDUST Award for the Man who has done the Most to Ruin S.F. is hereby awarded to Irwin Allen.)

In terms of complexity, OMNIVORE seems to fall midway between the previous two. In terms of beauty (admittedly a subjective evaluation) it far surpasses either. Now, the hoary subject of Beauty, Brawn and the Beast has been put before us in sickening portions before. But I can't recall of an instance (at least in my reading experience) in which it has been handled quite so well. The three B's are at first too generalized --these are people that you know--but as the novel proceeds, you grow involved to the point where you ache to know these particular three: Aquilon, Veg, and Cal.

OMNIVORE has an additional point of more than passing interest...in the character called Subble. This is perhaps the most telling comment I've seen yet in a work of fiction on the direction our over-specialized, carefully null-emotion trained police system seems to be leading us at breakneck speed.

Beautiful.

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All three of these books are definitely recommended reading--but be warned: They may have an irritating byproduct. You see they require that you think a little bit. And that proves to be quite annoying, to some people.

IN THE JANUARY issue of Galaxy, Algis Budrys calls Samuel R. Delany '...the best science fiction writer in the world'. This too is a subjective evaluation, although (NOVA not yet having been read) I think that Budrys misplaces Delany, if only by one notch. Piers Anthony's place in the s.f. hierarchy is not yet firmly established, but I'm willing to go out on my limb in saying that he is the best new writer to appear since the advent of the Poets (mentioned earlier). I'm waiting eagerly for more from him. Particularly Avon's edition of THE MACROSCOPE, even though I've never been greatly intrigued by astrology. (Although a representative of Pisces has rendered things a bit fishy lately.)

WITH MY USUAL uncanny sense of good timing, I had just picked up and read the first chapter of the Ace Double version of Samuel R. Delany's THE JEWELS OF APTOR, when the new, revised edition (4) appeared. Immediately, giving the author the benefit of the doubt, I returned the earlier version to the shelf, and read the updated edition.

I've had a hangup on post-atomic-war stories almost as long as I've had one on super-space-wars. And despite the fact that most s.f. readers are convinced that these two fields have been done to the dreary death (and with some justice, I must add)--there comes on occasion rare, proof that there is still a flower or two to be found among the weeds dominating these over-plowed fields. Delany's scene is set just this side of THE DYING EARTH, and is a fascinating study of strange and far places, as seen by a handful of all-too-human characters.

That this was a first novel is almost unbelievable; that it was a science fiction first novel is an accomplishment of remarkable means. I'm sorry now that I didn't read it when it first came out; it gives the promise of what has been delivered since, in a somewhat simpler and more straight-forward manner. THE JEWELS OF APTOR is a work of which Delany never will need to feel shame.

(...and if the S.F. Book Club doesn't issue NOVA damn soon...!)

(And now, STARDUST looks ahead a year...)

-----ISAAC ASIMOV: THE SECOND HUNDRED BOOKS-----

If it hasn't happened already, very soon Professor Asimov will have published his one-hundredth book. Professional Asimov-watchers are eagerly looking forward to the Good Doctor's second century. The proprietors of DOUBLE:BILL are proud to present this preview, an advance copy of the Asimov-Book-of-the-Month Club's brochure for the year 1970:

January: Asimov's Old Boston Cookbook, 457 pp.

Hundreds of gourmet delights, collected and laboratory-tested by the Good Doctor. For the reader's convenience, all measurements are given in the metric system.

February: A Bibliography of the Works of Robert

Silverberg, 635 pp.

Professor Asimov turns his scholarly talents to the collation and classification of the world's second largest literary output.



March: Absolutely the Last of the Robots, 278 pp.

Twenty-seven previously-unpublished-in-hard-cover stories. This book is particularly recommended for its definitive enunciation of Asimov's Fourth Law of Robotics: A robot must never accept a rejection slip.

April: The Intelligent Man's Guide to Pseudo-Science, 1109 pp.

In this lively volume, Dr. Asimov covers hundreds of topics such as astrology, phrenology, numerology, and scientology for the man in the executive suite.

May: Taxidermy for Fun and Profit, 166 pp.

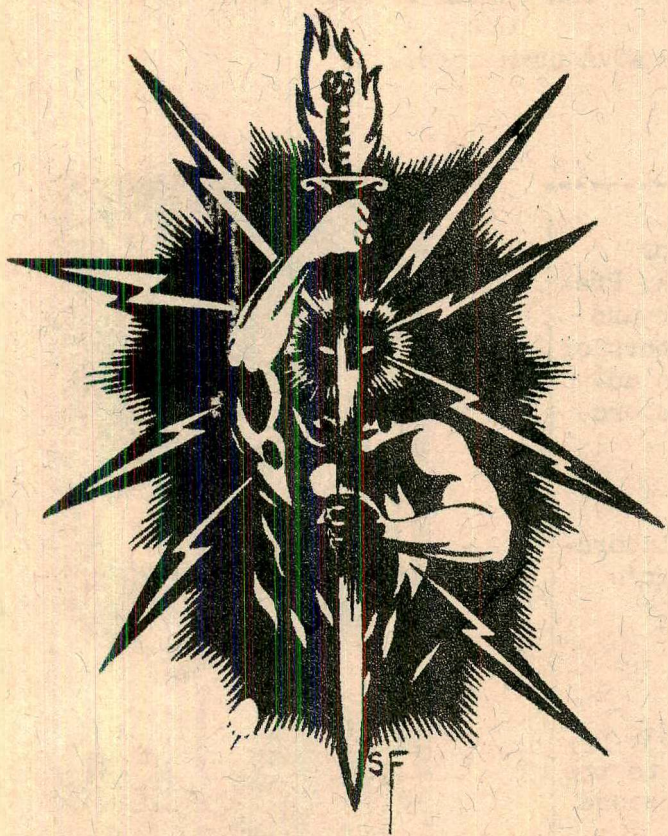
Finding that he has been neglecting the self-instruction field, one of the most lucrative in publishing, the Good Doctor has rushed into the breach with this authoritative book that covers everything up to the skinning and mounting of a Jovian grulzak.

June: Asimov's Westerns, 321 pp.

Although it is little known among his fans, Professor Asimov frequently contributed to the magazine Ranch Romances between 1947 and 1954, using the pen-name Isaac Arizona. This omnibus includes the long novelette "Gun-Fight at the Matzoh-Ball Corral" and seventeen short stories.

July: The Third Foundation, 257 pp.

Asimov's first new non-movie sf novel in years! Continuing the famous Foundation trilogy, this book reveals that Hari Seldon remained alive and in seclusion to direct the formation of the Second Empire. Seldon is shown to be an immortal polymath named Asenion.



August: Harpsichord-Playing Made Easy, 345 pp. See comments on May selection.

September: The Decline and Fall of Human Transportation, 463 pp. Starting with the Golden Age of shank's mare, historian Asimov traces the entire awful spectacle from the first decadence of horse, ox, and camel, through the crisis of the wheel, to the barbarism of the iron horse, and the final collapse into the utter savagery of the motor car and aeroplane.

October: Asimov's Guide to the Koran, 10 pp. This slim but charming tome is banned in Egypt, Syria & Jordan, but not in Boston.

November: The Universe and Me: An Autobiography, 751 pp. The life and times to date of the Good Doctor, particularly notable for the chapter entitled "And The I Wrote..."

December: Encyclopedia Asimovica, 89 vol., 314,159 pp. No home should be without a set of this truly monumental work, which is best described by Asimov: "This encyclopedia contains almost one quarter of everything I know, so you should be able to find in it everything you need to know about any conceivable subject."

-----BANKS MERANE-----



THE TIME WAS mid-February and a chill wind was blowing through the streets of the nation's capitol. Clad only in a thin suit, I was more than happy when I entered the warm recesses of Charlie's Bar and Grill to attend the weekly gathering of the Washington Club. As usual a heated argument was raging between two members. Johnson and Markham, both desk-bound executives, were yelling at each other from about five feet from where I had entered. However, it took a few minutes before I caught the drift of the conversation.

Johnson was arguing that everything worked from a cosmic pattern, that all action was regulated by some huge master plan. Markham, just to spite Johnson, stated that there was no such thing, that the universe was unpredictable. The debate raged on and on, with neither man making much sense, when another member brought up the experiments in telepathy conducted by Dr. Rhine. Markham seized the point with relish. "That fact proves my point," he exclaimed, "those experiments proved one thing beyond a shadow of a doubt, that PSI and ESP are completely unpredictable. No one can tell when such phenomena will occur, where, or when. I am right as usual. Well, Johnson, what do you say to that?"

To everyone's surprise, Johnson didn't say anything. Instead, he turned on his stool to face the bar. Resting his hands on the long wooden bar, he stared at the row of liquor bottles, lips tightly pressed together. This action was astonishing. Mortimer Johnson, government official, actually declining to refute a point made by his bitterest enemy. The unpredictable had happened. For once, it appeared as if Markham had won an argument.

His triumph was rather short lived. From the darkest corner of the dim bar came the sardonic voice of Mark Asher, dripping acid and promising untold horrors. "I suppose that you would consider the occurrence of teleportation as unpredictable as that of telepathy?"

"Certainly, my dear Asher," replied the victim, mentally preparing for the worst. "In fact, considering the nature of teleportation, I would think that it would even be harder to predict when and where it will occur than telepathy."

From out of that dismal corner, a low, sinister chuckle resounded. The slim form of Mark Asher could just be made out, his hands rubbing together in ghoulish anticipation. "Well, unfortunately for you, Markham, I believe that teleportation is predictable. And my belief is based on facts, not just words. Since Johnson seems to have given up for the evening, maybe this story will both entertain you and give you a little food-for-thought on the subject of unpredictability."

For a moment there was a flutter of motion, as everyone ordered a drink and then things quieted down as the members settled back to relax and listen. Asher was the most popular member of the club. A mysterious fellow, he would be away for months at a time. His stories were both entertaining and humorous. He claimed to work for the Secret Service, but this story had been discredited. The latest rumor had it that he was a member of the super secret B.L.I.M.P., the Bureau for Large and Impossible Major Problems. But we could only guess. One thing was positive. Whoever was the head of the department (Asher called him Smith), he must have been quite a character.

UNPREDICTABLE

"It was a little more than a year ago when I was called into the office of my superior, Mr. Smith", began the placid Mr. Asher. "At the time I was preparing to go on a Sabbatical to the City of Irem and was in a gay mood. Smith ended that quickly enough. It seemed that something quite unpredictable had come up, and my vacation had to be cancelled. The Bureau was faced with another impossible problem. And to make matters worse, we had less than a week to solve it. Something had to be done in a hurry."

"Something better be done for Johnson, too, in a hurry," piped in a voice from the other side of the room. "It looks as if he's frozen to the chair."

It was true. Johnson still hadn't shifted an inch from the hard wooden barstool. But when a member asked him if anything was wrong he just shook his head. A thought was sneaking into the back of my head. I felt as if I could guess the reason for Johnson's intense concentration. As Asher continued, I leaned against the bar, a contented look splashed across my face.

Asher continued: "As I was saying, we had a problem. It concerned an American flier, being that we had to frighten him to death within a week, but not kill or injure him in any way. Sound complicated. It was!"

"James Triy was flying one of the Air Force's new TFX fighter planes high over the Pacific when an unpredictable accident occurred. A fuel line broke and the plane conked out. Triy was forced to bail out, and as luck would have it, he landed on an island held by the Red Combine. Before he could do anything more than remove his parachute, Triy found himself being escorted by a dozen Chinese guards to the Army headquarters. He was considered a spy. Being in a rather bloodthirsty mood, the Post Commander ordered him shot. So, twenty minutes after he landed, Triy was marched up to a wall and shot at. But he wasn't hit, because by the time the bullets reached the spot where he was, Triy wasn't. In his terror, Triy had somehow used part of his brain to teleport himself to safety. He was found slightly dazed, wandering through the Senate Parking Lot.

"Of course, when the men who found him heard his story, they thought that he was an escaped mental patient and escorted him to the nearby Army hospital. Fortunately, one of our men was in the same hospital, posing as a catonic, and reported the flier's story to the Chief.

"Mr. Smith, being a cautious person, checked on the facts. When he did learn from the Air Force, that a Captain Triy had been lost from radio contact for several hours, and that the man brought



Robert Weinberg —————

in to the sanitarium matched Triy's description, he went into action. First, he made sure that the hospital would keep Triy for observation for a week. Then he fed the story of what had happened into our Unpredictable Computer."

"A what?" I asked.

"An Unpredictable Computer," replied the suave Asher with an absolutely straight face. "It was invented, quite by accident, by one of our scientists. It takes facts, jumbles them about, and gives the most improbable answers and conclusions. You would be surprised to find out how many times it has been right. Of course, you would be astonished to find out how many times it has been wrong. But this time, it gave us the most probable answer. Triy could teleport, but only during periods of great physical danger. And there was our problem. We, naturally, couldn't follow him around, waiting for something dangerous to happen. We had to provide that danger, ourselves. Yet we couldn't let him know that he was being threatened by his own government. If he did, he would believe that we wouldn't really let him get killed, and therefore, could never get really frightened."

Seeing that some of the members were shaking their heads in confusion, Asher laughed. "If you think the problem was complicated, wait 'til you hear the solution."

"To solve impossible problems, impossible ideas have to be used. It took the entire department two precious days to find an answer so ridiculous, so insane, that it had to work. The Unpredictable Computer gave odds of 1000 to 1 against its working. We knew then that it had to succeed."

"By digging into the details of Triy's life, we had learned that he was addicted to a certain type of mystery thriller. The main character of these novels was a fiendish Chinese doctor who made Jack the Ripper look like a church boy. This fiendish madman was noted for his cruel tortures and diabolical sense of revenge. In every book, at least ten men die horrible, lingering deaths. Mr. Smith looks superb as a mad scientist."

"Late the next night, two sinister looking men crept along the side of the building near the room where Triy was being kept. It was fifteen stories above the ground, and a wind was blowing briskly. I was one of the pair with Frak, another agent, my companion. Clothed entirely in black, we had been told to crawl along the ledge to Triy's room, break in, kidnap him, and escape by climbing down a rope. Why we couldn't just break in to his room by the door was beyond me, but Smith wanted everything to be authentic. It was so authentic that I almost fell and killed myself. Ever try to open a window from the outside, fifteen stories up, and keep from falling at the same time? Take my advice, don't. It's impossible. Fortunately, Frak was adept at working at heights, as he once posed as a window washer, and we were able to make it inside the room. Unfortunately, Triy was ready. He had heard the noise of the window rising, and attacked us as soon as we crawled into the dark room. Frak and I are both light, weighing about one hundred thirty lbs. each. We had to be light to keep our balance on that ledge. Triy didn't have that problem and was over six feet tall, weighing about two hundred pounds. It took every bit of my judo training to stop Triy long enough for Frak to slip a handkerchief doused in chloroform over his nose. Then we had to hold it there until he went under. I still have black and blue marks from that encounter. Finally, it was done. Next, we had to lower the two hundred lb. flier to the ground fifteen stories below."

"When I looked out the window, I spotted the black limousine which Smith had sent, parked down the block. I waved my hand and the car drove up below us. Using a thin but sturdy silk rope, we trussed up Triy and lowered him to the ground. Then we climbed down after him. Before we left the area, we lit the rope, which had been covered by a special chemical, so that it burned away, destroying all evidence of how Triy had been kidnapped."

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"We sped to the base of operations in separate cars. Why, I'm not sure, but it had something to do with the tracking of Triy. Smith planned to coat part of his body with a special chemical. I knew, for a fact, that we had a detector that could detect the radiations given off by a certain isotope, anywhere in the universe. In fact, the reason I think Frak and I had to drive in a different car was so that we wouldn't see where the chemical was placed. Smith must have had every one of his agents coated by the same chemical. He's not a very trusting soul, my boss.

"We reached the rendezvous in about five minutes. It was a large, deserted looking warehouse in a poorer section of the city. The very fact that it was a warehouse, one of ours, gave it an air of authenticity. It might have been a warehouse, but when we went inside, we were mildly shocked. The building had been converted into the headquarters of a fiend. Huge, sinister machines were everywhere. Van de Graff generators were scattered in profusion. Weird computers covered every wall. Flashing light panels dazzled our eyes. The prisoner, who was brought in by two huge Japanese wrestlers, was properly impressed. Of course, he wouldn't have been so awed if he had known that most of the stuff had come from the set of a mad scientist movie, and was completely harmless. To a novice, even a Van de Graff generator can inspire fear, though a pin prick would hurt more. We were lucky that Triy was a pilot, not a scientist.

"Behind the largest desk that I have ever laid eyes on, sat Mr. Smith, the mad doctor. Smith looked like evil incarnate. For a moment I wondered; perhaps Smith was a mad scientist. At times, the way he grinned as he handed out the most dreadful of assignments, had started rumors to this effect, but this time he actually seemed to be in his element.

"When he spoke, even I, who knew exactly what he was going to say, shuddered. In a low, snarling, nasal voice, he rasped out 'So you thought that you could escape the justice of the Red Combine? Well, the Dark Master has his own ways of dealing out punishment. You shall die the death you deserve, you lowly spy.' And then, with a lofty wave of his hand, Smith laughed hideously, 'Take him to the execution chamber.'"

From the back of the bar, one of the members spoke up. "Do you actually mean that a pilot in our Air Force believed this garbage? Why a twelve year old wouldn't fall for those lines!"

"I think that you underestimate our department," retorted Asher. "Those were the words computed to fit in with the situation, giving the air of mystery and danger that it needed. Perhaps, telling the events and saying the words now doesn't convey the fright that was almost tangible in the air of that warehouse on that certain night, but let me assure you, that this whole affair was conducted in dead seriousness, and didn't seem the least bit unreal at the time. Now, to continue:

"The execution chamber was a small room that had been specially fixed for its purpose. It was an empty chamber connected to the main room by a narrow door. But, unknown of course to Triy, the whole room was monitored by television cameras from the ceiling. As soon as Triy was locked in the chamber, there was a mad dash for the T.V. relay, which was set in Smith's desk. Smith, Frak, myself, and five other agents and scientists watched breathlessly as the machinery of the death chamber went into high gear. For the space of a few seconds, everything appeared normal. This time was fixed to give Triy time to imagine his fate. Then, slowly, one of the walls started to move.

"Triy had remarkable composure. He didn't run around screaming, or pounding on the walls. He did try to stop the wall from moving. It didn't help very much. But this fact didn't faze him. He still remained calm. The group of us watching, didn't. If Triy remained calm and didn't teleport, we would be in trouble. The wall was fixed to stop just far enough away from Triy to give him room enough to remain flat against the other wall. But we couldn't save him. If we did, he would soon realize that things were not what they seemed. He had to teleport. It was an unpredictable complication.

(CONCLUDED ON PAGE 38)

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may all your enemies

go to hell!

NOEL, NOEL,
NOEL, NOEL.

SINCE I'M TRAPPED here, I may as well to do a little something to contribute to the scientific knowledge of the galaxy. Maybe it would help if I were a scientist, but I'm not, so I'll just write down what I see, and let it go at that. Some grubby antropology student can take care of the details. Here I am trapped in a locally compact Hausdorff space with no transportation due until 0800:0080 Betelgeuse Mean Time. The local yokels call the place America, Home, or God's Country, depending on their mood. There seems to be disagreement among the populace as to whether that is the name of the planet or just this part of it. In any case, no one acts as if there is an outside, so I'll assume that's the name of the planet. I happen to be in a specialized segment of time called variously Xmas, Yuletide, Holiday season, or Winter. The name Xmas comes from an historically famous American (or Earthling, as they are sometimes called) by the name of X. Apparently these creatures think they have been much influenced by X, who has many names. Currently they spend a great deal of time arguing over whether X is dead or flourishing in the Bronx. In theory, Xmas celebrates the birth of X. I regard this as important evidence that X was, indeed, born at least once.

The most important factor in the lives of these Americans (they sometimes call themselves christians, incidently, to distinguish themselves from mythical creatures called Lions. Damn. This language has so many different names for the same things that I don't think I'll ever get it all straight) is money. There are two kinds of money: chickenfeed and a realbundle. Chickenfeed is the kind held by someone other than the speaker and a realbundle is the kind held by the person speaking. Realbundles are obtained by bigdeals and chickenfeed is obtained by working your ass off. I have never quite understood what money was good for. I have determined personally that one cannot eat it, wear it, live in it, read it, or sleep with it, yet if one has some of it, one can always find an American who will trade it for any of the things needed to do the above. Very curious.

The way these Americans celebrate the birth of X is to get rid of their money. Since it is considered humiliating to part with money without gaining something, the Americans trade their money for various articles. The one who trades away the most money is considered to have gained the most merit, though it's apparently in poor taste to announce the winner in public. Actually trading the money instead of merely throwing it away is clearly nothing more than a formality. The Americans think so little of the articles they gain by the trading that they give them away, almost immediately, to intermediates who throw them away after an appropriate wait.

S. A. STRICKLEN, JR.

Oddly enough, a certain class of Americans (the ones who originally owned the articles traded for) end up with more money than they started with. The members of this class are called merchants or businessmen, or, occasionally, bloodsuckers and crooks. They are very important to the society because, despite their miserable failure every year to divest themselves of money, they nonetheless enter heartily into the spirit of Xmas, loudly encouraging their fellows to part with money and even parting with their own to produce a form of encouragement called advertising. This advertising (which originally caused me to doubt that the natives were literate) is accepted for its spirit and not its content.

Another phase of Xmas is the possession of an Xmas tree. The Xmas tree must be covered with hideous accouterments called decorations. Besides giving the chance to part with large amounts of money, the Xmas tree is used to store the articles which the Americans receive to throw away. Why a tree is needed for this is not clear; perhaps X was originally a tree. There is definite evidence that he once withered one, so, judging from my experience with the Americans, he must have been quite friendly with it. Particular effort is made to place a ten-sided five-pointed shining concave polygon at the top of the Xmas tree. This polygon is called, believe it or not, a star. This shows the local ignorance of astronomy. The 'star' is expected to fall off regularly so that the owner can amuse himself by speaking in dialect and putting the star back on. The use of a "star" leads me to conjecture that, rather than being a tree, X was a five-pointed polygon which lived in a tree. Evidence on this is not clear.

Incidentally, Rigellians should avoid America during Xmas. I saw one poor Rigellian trapped atop an Xmas tree for nearly a month; every time he got down, the American put him up again with the appropriate incantations in dialect. The poor fellow finally escaped through an exhaust vent in the roof, but only after a truly hair-raising encounter with an enormous American in a red suit who chanted continuously HOE HOE HOE.*

Immediately after Xmas comes Newyear. Newyear is also called Winter. The two together appear to compose the "holiday season". Unlike Xmas, the holiday season has nothing whatever to do with X. The holiday season is celebrated with a chemical called booze. There is vociferous disagreement as to whether or not X favored booze. One is expected to select the side of this disagreement which is consistent with his own propensity to consume booze.

Booze can be acquired with money; I never thought I would see the day when something so delightful could be acquired with green paper. I would describe the effects of this remarkable chemical more fully were it not for the fact that I seem to be unable to recall them. I can describe, however, the general method used by the Americans in their Newyear consumption of booze.

First it is important to know that Americans are divided into two sexes (don't smirk; this is a scientific report). The two are called respectively mail and fee-mail. The mail is supposed to do something to the fee-mail whenever he gets the chance, but the stories I have heard about what, exactly, is done, all strike me as so fantastically unlikely that I won't repeat them. In appearance the fee-mail (of the type called gorgeous) looks about the same as I do, or any other Cthan.

At a Newyear party, roughly the following ritual is followed. First, the mail selects a fee-mail. This seems to require some skill, although one selected me without any trouble. Next, the mail, using force, moral coercion, or whatever means are handy,

* Thanks, BEM

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forces the fee-mail to ingest large amounts of booze. This is called "juicing her up" and is an essential part of the ritual. Then the mail begins to pant and manually compresses various parts of the fee-mail's anatomy. (A VERY peculiar sensation, believe me, fellow Cthans) Here feeble attempts are made to remove the protective garments of the fee-mail. Invariably, at this point, the fee-mail has been forced to ingest so much booze that she is completely unconscious. The mail eventually notices this and mutters a ritual phrase: "GodDAM she's passed out." He then invokes the help of X after which he becomes unconscious himself.

I am led to understand that this ceremony sometimes (though rarely) continues in another fashion. Differences in anatomy prevented me from a full observation; during what was apparently a serious part of the performance I bit the object in my mouth rather hard and the mail who had selected me left rapidly. He invoked the name of X repeatedly.

So there it is, anthropology student. I hope you can make more sense out of it than I can, and I hope you get whatever degree it is you're working on. As for me, I've simply described what I've seen. Now I think I'll, by X, try some more of this booze.

--- S.A. STRICKLEN, JR.

"UNPREDICTABLE" (concluded from Page 35)

"Mr. Smith came up with a solution. He just sped up the speed of the moving wall. That scared Triy. When you see death coming fast, you get worried in a hurry. At least Triy did. The wall was still three feet from the other side of the room when he disappeared. We had succeeded. We had predicted when teleportation would occur, and where it would occur. All that remained was to locate Triy and bring him back to Washington. Unfortunately..."

At that moment, Markham, who had been listening quite intensely to Asher's story, leaned a little too far back on his barstool. A member yelled out a warning. Too late! The law of gravity took hold, and with a wild scream, Markham plunged to the floor.

Johnson sprang from his chair, eyes ablaze. "I did it! I did it!" he exclaimed. "Ever since Markham claimed that ESP was unpredictable, I have been concentrating on the thought that he should lean back in his chair. And he did. His fall proved my point; that all things happen according to plan, and are, therefore, predictable."

"Rubbish," retorted the bruised Markham. "The whole thing was an unpredictable accident. I am still right. My theory..."

The Washington Club was back to normal. Members happily joined in the general melee of voices as each person tried to make himself heard above the others. Quite unnoticed, I wandered over to the slim form of Mark Asher. "I noticed that you didn't say what happened to Triy. Why don't we have the secret of teleportation?"

"Well," drawled a somewhat embarrassed Asher, "ESP turned out to be a little more unpredictable than we thought. We haven't been able to bring back Triy to Washington to talk to as of late. Maybe in 5 or 10 years. You see, he's on" and Asher's voice sank sadly as he whispered "...Mars."

--- ROBERT WEINBERG



MIKE DECKINGER,
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I'm returning the "2001" questionnaire distributed with this issue. This is an inspired idea, and the results should prove to be extremely provocative. Both those who liked the film and those who didn't have offered varied interpretations of the meaning. My own are listed on the form, and I can't claim that they are any more valid than opinions completely different from what I've stated. "2001" is so totally interpretative that no one explanation can be overlooked simply because it is not in accord with others.

S.A. Stricklen's story is unclassifiable. His whimsey is often undisciplined and filled with burdensome segments that elongate the relatively simple formation of the story. I'm not pretending that I liked his story; I was overwhelmed by it. Anyone else attempting this sort of jape would have broken down at least half way through; I'm amazed that Stricklen can carry it as far as he does, without succumbing to some form of exhaustion. I don't know who Stricklen is, and I've never heard of him outside the pages of DOUBLE:BILL, but I would strongly urge you to forcibly restrain him from ever entertaining the flimsiest thought of contributing to some other publication. Stricklen is a prize and should be retained in editorial bondage for the benefit of both himself and the fanzine. He's like Gene Deweese, who only contributes to YANDRO and has written some of the funniest things printed in fandom.

Fandom is definitely composed of a majority of liberal minded persons and I don't know where Linda Eyster gets the idea that it abounds with conservatives and segregationists. The conservative side consists of people like G.M. Carr, George Price, Jerry Pournelle and a few others whom I've never found to be frantically attempting to convert others to their views. I know of no segregationists currently active in fandom. Linda may be thinking of Eric Blake, who was unmasked as a John Boardman hoax. A few years ago Arthur G. "Sarge" Smith, a crony of Heinlein had some moderately racist-toned letters in KIPPLE but he has been dead for at least four years.

Pickering was ostracized because of the thefts he perpetrated at Ferry Ackerman's home, while staying as an invited guest. At the time fandom was unaware of his unfortunate mental condition but once this was revealed fan-editors chose to ignore him and simply stop printing anything he wrote, which was the kindest action for all involved. I don't believe you were correct in tossing him out of DOUBLE:BILL because he claimed to be a socialist, although whether or not he even understood the term is questionable. If he was indeed a socialist or even a communist these were his beliefs which he had as much right to as his religion. He was not the most lucid spokesman for his causes and there was little danger that he was capable of filling pages with radical pronouncements. All, in all, Pickering was a pathetic, sad character who was driven to grandiose misrepresentations and the infamous Ackerman thievery by a sordid childhood (if his confessions, as published by Vern Bennett can be believed, and I see no reason why they can't). Let's all try to forget him.

((Yes, lets...but before we completely put this subject matter to rest, I'm going to try once more to clarify what apparently you and a few others have misread, Mike. I didn't toss him out of D:B ONLY because of his political leanings...I said it was the COMBINATION of things...ok? ## You are right about the "2001" poll -- the results are provocative -- and the response was very good. In order to present the diversified versions in their best light, we're forced to delay publishing the results until the next issue. Look for it then, everyone...BEM}}

"What's the ugliest thing in the world?" "An almost empty beer bottle with cigarette butts floating around in it." Blech! Please Bowers...don't do it anymore?! --BEM

BOB WEINBERG
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The latest issue of D:B, #18, was the best one I've seen in a long time, mainly because it's been a long time since I've seen one. Kidding aside, I'm glad to see you back publishing. The issue was quite good, with artwork well above par, especially the interior for the letter col.

Ed Cox's article interested me, because I also am a pulp collector, and have always felt a certain loss with their passing. However, I do think that Ed picked the wrong ones to cry over. PLANET usually featured one readable (not good, just readable) story per ish. AMAZING, throughout its entire history was always near the bottom of the barrel. The THRILLING group was much better, as were the POPULAR publications (ASTONISHING, SSS, FFM, etc.). ASTOUNDING and UNKNOWN were the class of the day. WEIRD TALES, my own personal favorite was quite different than any of these. WEIRD featured some unbelievable junk, but also had the most polished prose in the field. I think this was because they were writing straight stories, even with the weird background. The writers of the sf magazines had to inject some science and technology in the story and that usually slowed it down or made it ludicrous. This is one of the contributing factors why fantasy has always been better written than sf. One of the few men who does write smooth sf is Poul Anderson. His stories are stories, with the science just being part of the backdrop for events. It's the difference between a stilettos and a machete.

HARRY WARNER, JR.
423 SUMMIT AVE.
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The 17th issue didn't suffer too badly from age.

I can't agree at all with Alex Eisenstein's belief that realistic writing contains "the lowest degree of literary creativity". It may contain the least quantity of the writer's own flights of fancy, and if Alex prefers escape from the world around us, he is justified in disliking this kind of creativity. But it isn't the easiest kind of creativity, or the kind that appeals to the least number of intelligent readers, or the type that is least useful for purposes other than pleasure-giving.

I liked the Phyllis Eisenstein poems, despite the disgrace in which they apparently fell with practically everyone, and I'm sorry to see the Biggle column end. Why couldn't he have gone ahead with it, even if he received no poetry at all, by choosing poems published in other fanzines for dissection? Phyllis' Eastercon report was also good to read, despite the feeling of alienation that comes over me every time I run across a narrative about British fandom and find that the cast of characters is almost completely changed from the British fandom I knew. The pros are familiar but the fans aren't.

The front cover is spectacular even to a fan who doesn't use acid; I can give testimony to that. You should offer up the originals for such fine work as this at world-con auctions, or give them away for the most popular contribution to DOUBLE:BILL in a year, or something of that sort.

To the 18th issue then, and your interesting discoveries while in the Philippines. The publisher of the Hagerstown newspapers spent most of a year over there, incidentally. He was chosen by the government to help solve the problems of the newspapers in the more isolated and backward areas of the Philippines. I am not going to get into this DOUBLE:BILL discussion of Vietnam, but doggone it, I can't imagine this hatred toward and pity of the United States in Asia as resulting from anything other than stupid mistakes on our part: the decision to use the A-bomb as a weapon instead of demonstrating it first, then involvement in hopeless wars in Korea and Vietnam which can't be won except by even worse nuclear devastation.

I can think of one reason for the loss of the sense of wonder which Ed Cox doesn't cover. In the old days, the hero of the science fiction story usually got into the future or on other planets or went through an alien dimension after the story started.

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HARRY WARNER, concl:

The reader identified with him in mundane surroundings and then suddenly went along with him into this wonderful new environment. Now the reader is usually plunged right into the distant time or place with the first words of the story, and all the characters as a result are blasé about their surroundings, so the hero with whom the reader has identified doesn't look up at the tops of the tall buildings or feel surprised at the three-eared Jovian elevator operators. I suppose the change in story-telling techniques was inevitable, just as mundane fiction eventually got away from the old procedure of starting out with a conversation among a group of people, one of whom was finally reminded of an episode in the past which he proceeds to tell, at which point the real story started.

I hope that Buck Coulson runs out of professional reading matter and resumes his fanzine reviews. They're the only ones appearing today that are crusty and opinionative without sounding as if the writer simply wanted to create some controversy.

The reprint of the Ron Ellik article was an excellent method of paying tribute to his memory. I hope that Bjo doesn't get talked out of that Squirrel cartoon anthology. Ron was hardly the kind of person who would have failed to tell her how he hated the cartoons, if he really felt about them anything more serious than the occasional exasperation that I feel when someone calls me by a nickname I had as a child and outgrew a quarter-century ago. Meanwhile, I have begun to wonder if my growing discomfort in automobiles isn't an outgrowth of Ron's death. I've never liked to drive, and even before the tragedy last January, I was using the bus or train on any long trip. But in the course of this year I've been growing genuinely neurotic behind the wheel, going outside town only when it's absolutely necessary and on such occasions, staying away from the beautiful new highways which my tax dollars have helped to build, and creeping along on narrow and twisting back roads where accidents usually take the form of non-fatal sideswipes instead of head-on totals. Of course, my driving distaste could also have been pushed along by the day the entire tread flew off my left rear wheel while I was passing a truck on I-70. I still don't know how I came out of that one alive and without a scratch on either me or the car.

Once again I find myself thinking about the originals when I look at the covers on this 18th DOUBLE:BILL. More sensibly, too, in this case, because I imagine that they lost much more in reproduction in halftone than your black-and-white drawing did. And I suspect that the back cover, at least, was originally in color. Inside, the sketches are mostly of AMRA quality and remarkably evocative of that publication for some reason that I can't quite pin down.

{{ Both Prosser paintings were in color, natch, and a lot of detail was lost in the process of transferring them to plates. The back cover was a very somber, dark painting, too, which certainly didn't help. --BEM}}

MATHEW DRAHAN

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I didn't particularly dig the Reg drawing for Zelazny's poem. I liked the drawing that went with his previous poem (FAMENTATIONS OF A VENUSIAN PENSIONER etc.). Now that one fit perfectly. The mood, the style, everything... though it really didn't have anything to do with the poem. In some indefinable way it complimented the verse. The Reg drawing strikes me as out-of-place. The poem was free/blank

MATHEW DRAHAN, concl:

verse. Something equivilent to it in style: expressionistic, subtle, evocative, with a mood. Let's see, I can't find anything in the issue that would fit except, maybe, the drawing by Jeeves on page 42. Come to think of it the Reg drawing has mood too. I suppose it's the style that grates. Could be the make-up of the page. But then it's your mag and you have your own ideas of lay-out.

THE LUDICROUS DISEMBOWELMENT OF THE GREAT STANDING MAN... What can I say? I read it the first time and it was beautiful. A taste of Cordwainer Smith it felt like, but with a feel of its own as well. On second reading it still held up. It's like fire-works--psychedelic if you want to put it that way. A gorgeous piece of fan fiction. The damnest mass of incidents I've seen in what is usually pretty static stuff in fan fiction. I did notice one other thing: you seem to have misplaced 500 naked females. Look at it for yourself. 1,826 went up when the protagonist blew the disruptor and filled the air with Super Soft. 1,326 came down. Tsk, tsk, Mallardi, your psyche is showing. Or is it Stricklen's? ((Hell, no, it wasn't Stricklen's or MY mistake! Blame that typoe on Bill Bowers... I didn't discover the error until after we had already run the page off and it was too late to correct. Apparently Bowers figures " Whats 500 females, more or less?!" --BEM))

Too bad about losing both Biggle and Coulson. This'll give you a good chance to improvise a little. Experiment even. Who knows you might come up with something. You know, I can never tell about Coulson. Here I've known about him for 5 years and I can't tell if he's tame or not. Sometimes he makes with the dry jokes and I say yeah I dig him; then he comes out with some sharp barb and its all reverse. What gives? You know, I think the man's human.

I got that Richard Harris album you mention, mostly on the strength of MacArthur Park and my respect for Jim Webb's talent as a song writer. Great. Webb can really write 'em. You mentioned the ANIMALS..you ever hear their version of HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN? It's on THE BEST OF THE ANIMALS. It's a gas! ((Yup, I got that album; but what hooked me on them was their new albums: EVERY ONE OF US & LOVE IS. Try 'em--BEM))

Can't say I agree much with Ed Cox's article. He sure he's not letting nostalgia cloud his critical judgement? I liked the feel of his impressions of the twenties and thirties. He knows what he's talking about having obviously lived during the period in question, but I think his sense of wonder is misplaced. On the whole I'll take today's writers anytime. They realize that s.f. is just as legitimate a department of literature as the mainstream; and that it has to follow the same basic literary standards. It's the early writers that started the s.f. literary ghetto. A sense of wonder is fine, but I like to see a writer put words together properly into some coherent, logical style. People like Delany, Zelazny, and the other New Thing writers... There's as much wonder (or whatever you choose to call it) in their work as in the best of the old-timers. Better. It might not be the sense of wonder (call it the sense of humanity, or animus (soul to you)), but it's a worthy successor.

Also like those page-length illos you used on page 32 (Miss Miesel's article) and for the litter column. How about keeping that illo for the Double:Trouble column a permanent feature? ((How'd you guess?? We have extra copies made of that illo, both regular size and a smaller version. Thanks to an Akron fan, Pat Dougherty, who works in the Photo-Engraving dept. of the Akron Beacon Journal, we can get different size photos made of art, now.--BEM))



1431

SI STRICKLEN, JR.
1319C.

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Let me begin by expressing great satisfaction that you've got D:B #18 out and are back in the pubbing business again. I will confess I've missed D:B. For those out in fanland, Bill (Mallardi) wrote and asked if he could edit my story since it was kind of rough in places. I thought a rewrite was more in order, but I was too lazy to even reply; the result is that it was printed exactly as written. Mallardi, you deserve a rose for that, since there's many a faned who would have done exactly as he pleased. So, for anyone who noticed that I changed tense in the middle of the tale, lost 500 girls somewhere, {{ I repeat, Bowers lost 'em.--BEM}} and had some of the corniest lines known to man, I can only hang my head and confess to being a victim of Mallardi's editorial honesty.

In fact, I thought Bowers' illo was better than the story. Everything that I saw in the picture was from the story so I must have missed some of it. This is the second time you've had illustrations better than the story, I think. {{ Stop knocking your story -- as you can see from most letters the fans liked it very much.--BEM}}

On the rest of the zine: I couldn't finish the Cox article because I happen to think that the new writers are so much better than anything the field has seen that any nostalgia for old times is really nostalgia for the years when one was twelve (or whatever age one began reading the stuff). I see Zelazny has written a short reflective essay and arranged the lines so that it looks like a poem. Didn't Lloyd Biggle have something to say about this in his column? In any case, it's a nice essay. Bowers does a decent job in his essay; I confess to a prejudice against any serious analysis of science fiction, so it seems to me that he's straining for serious points. I always like Coulson's review columns. I'll miss them.

Sandra Miesel, like Bowers, rubs against my prejudice again. She is absolutely right, I think, but so what? Man, writing a good essay like that is so much work; why does she do it? Most of the science fiction I know of has its science, history, and everything else so screwed up that it requires a positive effort of will to ignore it. I wonder if Sandra really thinks a science fiction writer should be absolutely accurate in his background?

I think Bowers' editorial is very interesting and I think Ron Smith's letter is full of absolute nonsense. I refrain from further comment only because you've made it clear that you don't want to fill up your pages with political stuff.

{{Ha! Mallardi thinks I lost those 500 girls--a fat lot he knows! Actually, Si, they're being put to good use, and I thank you muchly for the loan of them.--Bowers}}

{{ Sheesh! That's what happens when I leave the Seat of Power vacant for a few minutes with the stencil still in the typer -- Ol' Nosey gets to come around. Out! Out, get out of my editorial brackets and go back to your stupid Star Dust... I'll get my revenge. I'll sneak into his column too, one of these days when he isn't looking...Mumble...mumble...Grrr! Besides, Bowers is lying, he doesn't know where those 500 gals are; but I know: He left them hiding, hanging in the middle of the Super Soft in the air over the plaza, and he can't get to them! Heh! --BEM}}

BEN SOLON
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I received D:B a while ago. And I was impressed by it. Especially by the layouts and mimeography. This Double:Bill is easily one of the best looking fanzines to come my way in quite a while.

I'm tempted to call your {Bowers'} editorial the best single item in the issue. This may be because I'm in general agreement

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BEN SOLON, cont:

with much of what you say. Or it may be because I'm relieved that there is at least one other person in the world who shares my position--militant indecision--on the Vietnamese conflict. Or maybe not. I don't know.

I do know this, however. There are valid reasons, aside from the preservation of the National Honor, for not withdrawing from Vietnam.

In whatever manner a U.S. withdrawal were disguised, it would be recognized by the rest of the world as a defeat. And we would have to face the consequences. The real question is what those consequences would be.

First of all, South Vietnam would fall under Communist domination. But this, I believe, would be a relatively minor drawback. Nor would the problem be that the U.S. had "lost face". If by "face", one means prestige or self-esteem, then this country has, if anything, too much face. Our power is so great that in some ways it works against us in our dealings with other nations.

If only "face" were involved, we could safely withdraw from Vietnam tomorrow.

A far more important consequence of our withdrawal would be the psychological and political impact of our defeat on Southeast Asia and the rest of the world. I don't subscribe to the "classical" domino theory that if one country falls to Communism it will, in its fall, pull down the nation geographically next to it and so on down the line. In a less mechanical sense, however, there is something to the domino theory.

Although there is strong disapproval of our Vietnam policies in much of the world, the opposite is true in several of the countries closest to Vietnam. There is, if I am not mistaken, strong approval in Thailand, Laos, Taiwan, and South Korea. And in several other Southeast Asian lands there is a considerable degree of quiet support, masked either by discreet silence on the part of those in power, or by an official stance of mild condemnation. Many of these countries are themselves unstable. They fear this sort of internal subversion that has torn South Vietnam apart. And they are apprehensive about the intentions of Communist China. They would feel much less secure if the U.S., after committing itself to the fight, were forced to admit defeat at the hands of the Communist insurgents. In fact, such an outcome of the Vietnamese War would send a massive psychological tremor through these countries, further threatening their stability. And perhaps altering their present international orientation.

On the other hand, all those who hope for Communist takeovers in the nations of the so-called Third World, would receive a shot in the arm. America's defeat in Vietnam would appear to be positive proof of the Maoist doctrine that "wars of national liberation" are irresistible. The old concept that Communism is the wave of the future would be revived--in the underdeveloped portions of the world, at any rate--at a time when the wave had seemed to have spent its force and was retreating.

The possibility that Communist-inspired (or exploited) insurgencies will develop in other Asian nations depends, of course, upon the internal conditions existant in each country. But a clear-cut defeat of the U.S. in South Vietnam would certainly be one external factor that could have an adverse influence on the status quo.

It has been argued that these reactions could be minimized by American efforts to build a more tenable defense line against Communist subversion on sounder Asian terrain. Specifically, it has been suggested that shifting our military strength to Thailand would offset defeat in Vietnam. This may be true. But I doubt it.

Whatever countermeasures we take, a defeat in vietnam undoubtedly would change

BEN SOLON, cont.:

the political climate of Asia for the worse. Moreover, the proposed countermeasures would in essence mean the further spread of American military power into areas where it had been demonstrably ineffective. It is also assumed, by a reasoning process too convoluted for anyone outside the higher echelons of the Defense Dept. to follow, that the underdeveloped nations of Southeast Asia would still desire a close alliance with this country after having seen that an alliance with the U.S. is no guarantee of security from the threats that menace them most: internal subversion and guerrilla warfare.

And the effects might not be limited to Asia. They might be felt in somewhat different terms in other backward areas of the world, and might also affect our relations with the more advanced nations. A U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam would not have been a defeat in the sense that France was forced to accept defeat in 1954. As has been said far too often, we cannot be defeated militarily in Vietnam. If we decide to withdraw, we simply will have decided to go back on our commitments. The commitments may have been unwise in the first place. But nevertheless, we would be welching on commitments that had been made and repeated by one Administration after another. One wonders what effect this might have in countries such as Japan, West Germany, or Israel that have been relying on commitments made by us. It would certainly increase doubts in these and other nations about the reliability of the American nuclear umbrella, and thus it would encourage nuclear proliferation.

In short: loss of face may not be a reason for not withdrawing from Vietnam. Loss of faith certainly is.

Now in spite of all the above, I want it clearly understood that in advocating that the U.S. not withdraw from South Vietnam, I am not advocating a military solution to the conflict. Such a course would be foolhardy, to say the least. Any serious escalation of the war--the landing of troops in North Vietnam, for instance--would achieve little or nothing towards the suppression of the original guerrilla war in the South.

Furthermore, any escalation of the war would seriously damage our position in much of the rest of the world. And we would also be running serious risks of tangling with the Chinese. China's leaders are paranoid. They believe that the U.S. is, by its nature as an "imperialist" nation, compelled to wish to destroy them. During the Korean war, when we invaded North Korean territory contiguous to China, they crossed the Yalu to meet us. There is no reason not to assume they would do the same if we invaded North Vietnam--although I doubt that Ho Chi Minh would feel very secure with Chinese troops within his borders. Indeed, Mao's faction would probably welcome such an invasion. It would give the Maoists a golden opportunity to re-unify China behind their banner. The presence of American troops on their borders would be looked upon by the leaders and people of China as proof of this country's hostile intentions toward their nation.

My own belief is that our best hope for a tolerable peace in Vietnam is to attempt to force the other side to gradually reduce the scale of the war and, eventually, to accept a reasonable settlement.

Almost all the material in D:B 18 was of some interest to me, but the only other item I want to discuss is Ed Cox's "A Sense of Loss". Basically, I'm in agreement with his view; much of today's science fiction does not induce the sense of wonder effect, the feeling of being in another world, in its readers. I attribute this, as Ed seems to, to auctorial laziness. But at least some of the blame must be borne by the readers. We--and I am including myself in this condemnation--are all too willing to tolerate plastic science fiction. And as a result, a lot of it is being written and published.

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BEN SOLON, concl:

Consider, for example, Harry Harrison's Analog serial, The Horse Barbarians. The story's background was lifted bodily from a sector of earth's past. Harrison made no attempt to create a secondary world. Many of the events in the story could have occurred on the steppes of 12th Century Eurasia as well as on those of Felicity. Apparently, the author was too lazy to develop and portray an alien steppes culture. So he simply transferred Jenghiz Kahn's Mongol hordes to a planet of his own invention.

I object to this. It isn't science fiction writing. It's cheating.

Apparently, I'm the only person who feels this way. No one else wrote to John Campbell to protest. Or if anyone did, his letter, like mine, wasn't published.

As long as the majority of science fiction readers remain silent when confronted with stories like The Horse Barbarians, the writers and editors will continue to foist them off on us. They will assume we're satisfied.

On the other hand, if we let them know via letters, critiques, and comments in person that plastic sf stories are unacceptable--even when they are entertaining--there is a better than even chance they will come around. We are the only audience they have. They can't afford to alienate us. If we stop buying their offerings, they stop eating. It's as simple as that.

But if modern science fiction is lacking in the sense of wonder, so is a good deal of the sf of the past. I doubt that I've read as much sf as Ed has--if only because I'm younger--but I have read quite a bit of the fiction that appeared in Startling and TWS in the late 1940s and early 1950s. I've read most of the stories that appeared in Astounding during the Golden Age, too. And it is my opinion that while these magazines contained a lot of good readable stories, only a small percentage of their contents is capable of inducing the sense of wonder. The majority of the stories in the older magazines are every bit as readable and forgettable as those in last month's If.

ARNOLD WELLSLY
SOMEWHERE IN PA.

This is not a crank letter, nor is it a phony. All the things that I am about to reveal to you are the absolute truth, told to me by the Great Old Ones that live deep inside the Earth. It is a terrifying tale, and one that may shock you, but it is true. You have my word as a gentleman and a scholar. Now, you surely realize the gravity of this correspondence. I want no other publicity than to have this document published in your letter column, to warn your readers of the terrible fate that awaits all the future inhabitants of this globe. A death that is surely to come, unless they follow my teachings to the letter. But, since there is plenty of time until the destruction (thirteen years, seven months, eleven days, and three hours), let me tell you a little about myself, so that you can easily judge how well I am suited to be a prophet of destruction.

My name is Arnold Wellsly. I live in the coal mine district of Pennsylvania. For a number of years I lived with my parents. Then, to my disgust, I discovered that they were part of a huge conspiracy designed to keep me from spreading the truth about our world. I immediately left home and went to live by myself in a deserted coal mine nearby a small town, whose name I shall keep secret. My enemies are everywhere. I am not even sure that you are not part of this organization, but decided that I would have to take the chance. The Earth must be saved, and I am the only one that can do it. That is why I have sent a copy of this letter to every major world leader, urging that they elect me president of the Earth, to help fight the danger that threatens to wipe us out of existence. By my calculations, I should be appointed some time next month, so you better hurry this letter into print, if you want to be the first to document this great revelation. But, on with my story.

I first realized that I was different than other people when I began attending

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ARNOLD WELLSLY, cont:

public school. My teachers hated me. I was able to tell immediately that they were jealous of my superior intelligence. I was forced to leave after my first year of high school. They claimed that I was a disturbance to the other students, but this was just an excuse. Fortunately, I was self-taught. I read omnivorously. Charles Fort was my favorite author. He seemed to be the one man that wasn't afraid to go against the brainwashing that students received in school. Any fool knows that the moon is made of cheese. After all, why else would it appear yellow? For a while, I thought that I would become an astronomer, but they were all against me. It was after my thirtieth rejection for a job that I discovered the truth. There was a huge organization dedicated to see that I was a failure. My parents, my friends, even people that I had never seen, all were part of this group. However, if they were trying to suppress me, what were they trying to suppress? I went to live in a cave to try and discover what I should know.

It took me five years of living alone before I heard the voices. I had not come in contact with another human for years. I lived on berries and fruits. I especially liked nuts. At night, I would sleep with my head against the stone wall, hoping to receive some sort of message. I was not surprised when I did, after five years, begin to hear voices. "Arnold, Arnold," they whispered, "do you hear me? Come in, Arnold Wellsly, come in!"

"I hear you, I hear you," I cried. Now I would show those fools who was crazy!

We talked for many nights after that. It seems that I was the chosen prophet of the Great Old Ones, beings that had lived beneath the surface of the Earth for thousands of years. The beings that were trying to keep me from learning the truth also came from beneath the soil. They had killed all my friends and relatives, and had taken their place. They had immediately realized as soon as I was born that I was the one person that might be able to warn humanity of their gruesome powers and plans. Only my great intelligence, and the secret help of the Great Old Ones had kept me alive during my first few years. I learned from my teacher among the Ancient Ones, whose name was Nugu, that the Great Old Ones called themselves the "Goodies", while their enemies called themselves the "Badies." What mystic significance lies behind these unusual names, I am not sure of, but am positive that I will learn in due time.

After making contact with Nugu, I went through a period of intensive studying for about a month. The way I did this was by sleeping with my head against the wall of my cave, and dreaming. All knowledge that I needed to live in the cave world of the Great Old Ones was acquired in this fashion. Nugu was proud that I picked up the ancient language and knowledge faster than any other earth dweller had ever

done before. At times, I wonder if I might be more than a man, perhaps the reincarnation of one of the Super-duper Great Ones that used to inhabit our planet a million years ago. The more I think of that idea, the more that it appeals to me. I will have to explore that notion.



HIPPIE

When my training period was over, I was allowed to descend to the inner world. As I had always expected, the earth is hollow, with a thick, ten mile crust separating the outer world from the inner. The intense heat that the scientists claim is at the center is caused by an interior sun, which I will explain the purpose of later. The weight of the Earth is caused by the huge machinery that is used throughout the inner world. These machines also cause volcanoes and earthquakes. The "Badies"

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ARNOLD WELLSLY, cont:

use these terrible devices to control all nature and weather on the outside of the earth. The inner world has no weather. Gravity is responsible for holding everyone down, since the ground is the real cause of this force. Soil has a basic property which pulls people toward it. When I think about it, this fact seems obvious since people float on water. To continue.



The "Goodies" look much like us in their features. Their heads are a little larger, and they stand just a little shorter than the average man of our race. During my time beneath the Earth, I had many adventures with these beings, but I will skim over them now, wanting to present the main part of this document. I travelled with my teacher Nugu toward our North Pole. On the way, we were constantly battling the degenerate "Badies" that infest this world. Many a savage monster from the dawn of time, which still live beneath our feet, did I kill by the use of a blaster, one of the guns of the Great Old Ones. The only colony of the "Goodies" was located in the very far North. Our journey there was wrought with danger, but the two of us were not afraid. On the trip, Nugu revealed to me many of ultimate secrets of the universe. He told me that the flying saucers were real, and what evil purpose they served. The sun became an object of horror to me when I learned what it really was. Even now, I walk around with my eyes closed, afraid to gaze straight at that malignant globe. And, I learned about the true nature of mankind.

Now, I will reveal the entire truth to you, hoping that you will reveal this same truth to your readers. This knowledge was imparted to me by the chief of the Great Old Ones that lives in a huge palace in the far north. Right by this structure are two huge openings, miles wide that extend out to the surface world. These are the holes in the North Pole that many men have seen, but have been afraid to talk about.

I have already written about the inner sun that heats this world. To my surprise, I learned that this sun is just a huge electric power source. The reason for the huge machines, some miles across became apparent to me. The holes in the North Pole hold a grim meaning to me, now. All levelling of trees and mountains must be stopped! We are falling straight into the plan of the evil Gods of outer space!

By now, you must comprehend what I am saying. The sun, that globe up in the sky, is not an inanimate object, just giving off heat. All the scientists in the world are involved in a plot to keep the truth from us common people. That is why they all have to go to college: To indoctrinate them with the false lies that they are always feeding the public. That was why I could never become an astronomer. I would have told the truth about the sun.

The sun is alive! It is a giant face, the face of one of the demon Gods. The huge fiery streamers that we sometimes see are not really flame, but whiskers. Yes, the sun is growing a beard, has been for billions of years. The comets that circle it are miserable attempts to cut this growth by the use of straight razors, which are what these comets really are. But, so far, this project has proven to be a failure. The sun is a slob among its brother gods. It needs a shave. And, the Earth is an electric shaver!

Now, you see. The inner sun is the power source. The holes in the Pole are grips by which to hold the shaver. The machinery is self explanatory. We are clearing our forests, destroying our mountains because of subconscious prodding by the "Badies", who are servants of the Demon Gods, so that the face of the shaver will be smooth enough to cut away all of the beard without damaging the sun's face. We have got to stop.

The "Goodies" are the agents of the Super-duper Old Ones that had once lived in this sector of space. They are enemies of the Demon Gods, and are trying to help us in

ARNOLD WELLSLY, concl:

any way possible. But, they cannot fight the millions of evil "Baddies" that swarm over the entire inner Earth. That is why they have enlisted my aid. I am supposed to buy weapons and food for them to help defeat their enemies. But, I have very little cash on hand. So, I end this letter with a plea to your readers to send any money they can to me to help try to save the globe from our terrible enemies. Send cash, checks, or stamps to:

Arnold Wellsly
State Lunatic Asylum
Pennsylvania, United States

I have taken up residence here to be safe from my enemies, the numbers who are legion. I will gladly write to any of your readers that are interested in my story. My book, I Remember the Inner World will soon be published by Palmers Publications, detailing all of my true adventures inside the Earth's core. It is well worth buying.

I hope that this letter has served as sufficient warning to all you surface dwellers. Be prepared, the sun isn't what it appears to be. Sorry that this is written in crayon, but they won't let me use pencil for some ridiculous reason. I think this place is controlled by my enemies. Don't forget those contributions, readers! Death to the "Baddies"!

Yours very, very honestly,
Arnold Wellsly

{{ Whew! What a letter! In the interests of the Saving of the World, fans, why not help Arnold? He certainly NEEDS it!--BEM}}

RICK BROOKS I agree with Ed Cox largely on loss of a sense of wonder. But
R.R. #1, BOX 167, it is interesting that my candidate for the top modern writer
FREMONT, INDIANA with the sense of wonder, Zelazny, has a poem on the next page.
46737 "The Ludicrous Disembowelment of the Great Standing Man" was
 pretty damn good. Even my little sister enjoyed it. Quite well
written and not overdone.

Liked B. Bowers' and Gilliland's book reviews.

Of course, "A False Historical Nexus" was the best item in the zine. Us history buffs stick together. And Sandra has a beautiful article for Nar #3 on the historical analogies Poul Anderson used in his series on Flandry. Besides, I dig history.

The main thing I remember about Ron Ellick is that he took his root beer straight at cons like I do. And if he disliked Bjo's Squirrel cartoons, why did he show up at NYCon in a squirrel costume? I never saw any malice in any of the cartoons.

Ron Smith has a good letter. I tend to overlook the complaints on the government of SVN as they were elected in an election that was a lot more honest than many in this country. i.e. Chicago as an unsavory example.

JOHN & SANDRA MIESEL Have you heard any screams of anguish from Garrett yet?
4108 INDEPENDENCE DR. {{ Nary a yelp...--BEM}} He would have the perfect defense
INDIANAPOLIS, IND. by simply saying "They were only stories, and not meant to
46227 be taken so seriously." Aha! But Campbell and the ANALOG
 readers do believe them and that vexes me no end. A matter
of professional pride to refute him. I'd bet he took his background from Costain's
popular Plantagenet history series (THE CONQUERING FAMILY, etc). These are great
fun to read, but not perfectly accurate. Amy Kelly's ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE AND THE
FOUR KINGS, mentioned in my reference list is a most delightful book for anyone
who's really interested in that period.

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THE MIESELS, concl:

This makes me think of BECKET. Saw it three times and enjoyed it very much, but that has to be the most unhistorical of all historical movies. The sets are wrong, the costumes wildly inappropriate-- 15th C. outfits in 1170? About the only truths are the names of the principal characters. Becket was no poor Saxon farm boy, he was a Norman merchant's son and had been well educated, etc. But the author wasn't trying to be accurate, so I suppose this is nit-picking. The new Peter O'Toole movie, THE LION IN WINTER is apparently true to history, but no one can follow the plot.

John also enjoyed the new D:B's. He especially liked the Katuzin backcover. He has been making some smirky remarks lately about fandom as an inescapable whirlpool, sucking the hapless actifan down into murky oblivion. There seems to be some division in the household about the merits of Fandom As A Way Of Life.

Ron Smith's extensive remarks in the lettercol of #18 on Communist and communist reminded me of an incident at a politics seminar I once attended at St. Mary-of-the-Woods. A right wing fanatic had intruded into the speakers' list (by misrepresenting himself to the organizers of the affair). He was his very own private brand of nut, since he thought the John Birch Society was something founded by John Birch! After listening to him foam at the mouth for an hour and a half or so, I pointed out a few fallacies during the question period and very nearly was called a Communist for my pains. Of course I thought of the ultimate rejoinder afterwards (ultimate rejoinders are always the ones you think of afterwards). To wit: "Sir, what would you say if I told you there were a number of admitted, dedicated communists in this very room?" And after he apoplected, identify them: the nuns! Naturally! The capital letter makes all the difference.

We stayed up past our regular bedtimes two nights now to watch EL CID. That is one really good epic film. Much superior we think to BEN HUR. There's more real history in it than most people would realize (except, of course, that the CID died peacefully of natural causes at age 59). The costumes, sets, weapons are all absolutely authentic. (History of costume is one of my hobbies.) Our favorite Biblical-type epic is QUO VADIS (Have you ever read the book? Old as it is, it's still great.) Of course, THE supreme historical movie is MAN FOR ALL SEASONS, which is simply perfect.

We liked Bowers' reviews of the two Piper books, partly because we enjoyed those books and SPACE VIKING never received its proper share of critical attention when it was new but also because his opinions were intelligently delivered. The contrast between the positive, upbeat endings of these books and LORD KALVAN OF OTHERWHEN is ghastly. Surely the latter is a tragic record of a man's man falling apart and could be profitably analyzed by someone trained in psychology. It's sort of a literary counterpart of the famous sequence of cat pictures painted by an Edwardian children's artist who was going mad. (If you've ever received a circular for Time-Life's THE WORLD OF THE MIND you know what I mean.)

And for that matter we don't understand why no one suspected Robert Howard was 'round the bend when the Conan stories were first being printed. I realize it's unwise to judge an author directly from his work, but surely some question might be raised about the soundness of Fritz Leiber's mind these days. (I was so disgusted by his latest story in Galaxy, 'One Station of the Way' I intend to register a complaint with the editor. I'm not too narrow-minded, but that was plain vicious.)

JERRY KAUFMAN
ROOM 907
161 CURL DR.
COLUMBUS, O. 43210

Mallardi, you going rock, too? Who'll do your rock column? You're not a real member of Eighth Fandom until you have one, you know. ((Hopefully, a d.j. from WMMs, Victor Boc, will be contributing to D:B off and on. I may do some record reviews, myself. ###Eighth Fandom?! Come off it, Jerry! You've been proclaiming 8th Fandom has

JERRY KAUFMAN, concl:

arrived for quite a while now, when it actually was proclaimed back in the 1950's or so, when the OLD Psychotics were still being pubbed. Besides, the whole idea seems foolish to me, having different numbered fandoms--BEM}}

I have too read books I thought had Sense of Wonder, books that had me up, down, twisted and(mind-) blown. I mean ones that didn't depend on Goshwowwottazapgunandone-hunnerdpercent POSSIBLE.

Stricklen's story did not, I'm sorry to say, convulse me, though I did giggle hysterically when the panicky, passionate naked girls were attacked by the slavering old men.

Sandy Miesel is great, and you tell her I said so.

MARK SCHULZINGER
6791 MEADOW RIDGE LANE
CINCINNATI, O.45237

I am somewhat disappointed at what you are doing with the "2001" questionnaire. I get the feeling that it is being misused. Originally I intended the thing to be used as a poll of nonfans --those people who went to the trouble to

go and see the film. I wanted to get a sampling of the reactions of a group of people, only 15% of whom understood the movie.

So, you send the darned thing off to faans -- people who have had a chance to see the film, read the book, read Sky Miller's review in ANALOG, and do a lot of fighting about it. You're plugging into a biased sample.

"2001" was a beautiful film, and a multi-megabuck flop. Kubrick got so immersed in his own id that he made Clarke sit in back. All this is beside the point, however. What is to the point is that I think you're going to be disappointed in the results of the poll. I am already disappointed. If you will recall the discussion I had with a mess of fans at Midwestcon, there were a remarkable number of divergent opinions concerning the flick. This leads me to the opinion that fans today are considerably different from fans of my period (remember, I go all the way back to 6th fandom) in that they are more concerned with fiction than with science. When the going gets too rough technically, they're lost.

What's done is done and fans certainly deserve the privilege of coming to some sort of concensus concerning this film. Do me a favor, tho -- when you get the returns, publish the actual figures as well as the percentages. Or would you rather I did that?

((Well...to start at the beginning of your letter... Originally, if you recall, I had the idea to have the poll -- and send them out to BOTH fans & nonfans. However, when Bowers & I tried to get permission from the Cleveland Loews State Theatre to pass out the polls in the lobby of the theatre, we were turned down. Later, when "2001" came to Akron, we asked the manager for permission and got it; however, when we tried to run the thing off, our mimeo broke down. We said to hell with it after fixing the mimeo cost us \$25. Instead we just decided to send it to the fans. Contrary to what you may think, the poll is a success in our opinion. The fans' response was many and just as different as the discussion at Midwestcon. That's why the poll isn't in this issue: To do it justice and print most of the replies, we have to delay it until D:B number 20. This issue is Big enuff now, without it. ##Funny thing is, there ARE a few "nonfans" in the poll anyway, from the Clev. area. The "underground" d.j. I mentioned to Kaufman on the preceding page, got D:B 18, liked the idea of the poll, and wrote back asking for 100 more copies to distribute at record shops, etc. Guess how many polls we got back from those 100?? No more than 4 or so!! That shows how much the 'nonfans' were interested in the thing! Right?!---BEM}}

((And that does it for this.. we are rushed enuff as it is! We Also Heard From: David C. Piper of England, who DNQ's his whole letter! And: Alan Thompson, Rick Brook's co-editor (Nargothrond); John Isaac who sends \$\$; Suzle Tompkins, Linda Eyster, Terry Jeeves, Ann Dietz, Alex Eisenstein, Eddie Jones (for TAFF!), and sundry others who sent us sticky quarters...WRITE? This is the BEM, signing off.....}}





