



THE GAS JET

THROW OFF THE SHACKLES Jacobs' Fapa Newsletter prompts a few comments. As a fellow-conspirator, I would like to say how I view this business as an opinionated member -- in contrast to the official "neutral" approach.

I can see no good reason for increasing the FAPA's membership, to 75 or 68 or any other number. FAPA has always been a select group, although its character has altered vastly in recent years. Once it was a separate interest of the core-members of the unorganized body of actifandom. Today many of its leading members have no interest in outside fan activity. However, the current setup permits mutation toward the former condition as actifans join and contribute. The long waiting-list is a good thing in its way; those who fall away during the waiting period cannot hang on long enough to join and then become deadwood. We need the people who do have the patience to wait.

The waiting list would move faster if the membership were required to produce semiannually, and I feel that this is the most important move at the present time. (An absolute increase in activity requirements might follow more logically from a demand for steady activity, also.) I do not see any good reason for voiding the 45-day state of grace, however; in itself the 45-day deadline has always partially voided the postmailing privilege, in any case.

I suggest that a member who saw listed in the FA a postmailing which he had not received be allowed to submit a complaint to the secytreas. The publisher would then be asked to submit a copy to the complaining member under penalty of loss of activity credit for his publication.

Tenure of office: It would be fine to release the secytreas, but I favor retention of the "once in five years" provision for the egoboo positions. Unless, of course, somebody can convince me that it's not necessary to insure the offices being passed around.

METAMORPHOSIS Especially welcome among other postmailings were Flook and The Revanent. In the latter, although "1934" was quite absorbing, I'd have preferred to read "Seven Arrows Against G M Carr." Perhaps Speer did make a correct decision to put the article aside, however, not so much because McCarthy has palled as because Carr herself has slipped. I see most recently that the saintly lady act has given way to the cute little girl act, which, although it becomes someone like Delcie Austin who handles it fairly delicately and who has a large amount of creative ability as lagni-appé, sits rather ill with such an apostle of soap-box righteousness as our GM. The cute-kid act does not even sit well with Rotsler, although Fitzgerald manages it fairly well. To go over, this act demands chiefly a sense of proportion -- "good taste." Undiscriminating "cuteness" is charming in few enough four-year-olds, let alone grandmothers. # I wouldn't have mentioned the grandmother facet, having little concern for the age of my associates, but I have been given no chance to forget it!

RAPTURES "Ray Palmer -- Personality Plus" is presented herewith with the view in mind of obtaining the FAPA's reaction to it. It was written originally for The Chigger Patch of Random, at the request of Ed Cox in his editorial facet (although it would probably have been born eventually anyway; I've been thinking on the subject since 1943.) I am using it herein at my own indiscretion. I hope its inclusion here will not prejudice its standing in Chigger (if indeed it makes that magazine), and I hope even more fervently that the damn thing actually sees the light of day before some other disaster overtakes it. I felt for awhile there like Dunk did about his "jinx" issue of Fanews.

TEETER The Palmer item unbalances the present issue; too. I have scrounged up a few leavening agents, however, including a guest appearance of Isabel Burbee. # Fact is, editorial "balance" is a pretty ephemeral characteristic. When DQ was a sub-zine, I strived for it mightily, but I usually overlooked some completely obvious facet of "balance" while doing it. The result would be an issue full of reviews, followed by an issue full of sociological speculations. And nobody cared. I think most of you are pretty happy with material that is simply readable. Do we present you this?

SPEAKING OF FANEWS By all means, Dunkelberger, please do become active yourself. I'd rather read current material than the Fanews booklets, by all means. I question also your editorial judgment in leaving out the material you list in your Christmas sheet. So it's not inherently good enough to merit preservation? At least it has the merit of controversiality. Maybe you don't know how much a merit that is. Try, in that case, to decide when FAPA (or any similar activity) has been of highest interest to you. Controversial material, no matter how evanescently topical, is an indispensable leavening to the solider and meatier stuff that we strive to produce in our serious moments; that's why we all miss Laney so heartily even though we may claim we hated his guts. # The first half of that sentence rolled out inadvertently. I'm sorry!

POTPOURRI I can't see the justification for the adulatory comment about Grue. Far as I can see, the best thing about that mag is its beautiful print job -- which seems to me largely wasted on the trivial, chattery crud contained in the magazine. Perhaps I'd find it more meaningful if I were closer to the "inside" of current fanac, to be sure, but my defense on this point is that the non-esoteric reader must also be considered (especially if you sell to general subscribers). The personalia should be confined to special columns or better still to separate publications; as it stands there aren't more than 6 or 8 pages in an issue of the thing that mean anything to me.

DATUM Since we dispense with a contents page this time, let me say here that this is Dream Q uest (jumping carriage no extra charge!) #13, February, 1955; published for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. Editorial work by Don Wilson, 838D 19th St., Santa Monica, Calif.; publishing labors by Howard Miller, 1740 Chestnut Ave., Long Beach, Calif. This venerable periodical now is in its eighth year. Watch for our tenth anniversary issue! Your eyes will weaken, though.

---Don Wilson

NEW YEARS DAY ON SOUTH PIONEER

BY ISABEL BURBEE

New Years' Eve was nothing like this! It was quiet and uneventful, even if we were up half the night.

We thought we were starting the New Year right by having a one-shot session -- Cox, Jacobs, Miller, the Wilsons and us, the Burbees. We ate dinner without Don and Mary because they were late and we were hungry. And then the phone rang!

It was Mary. She and Don were in an accident, no details except: Car smashed, both in the hospital, unhurt, and sending an SOS for clothes and transportation. We're having an unusual California rainstorm today and they're both soaking wet, they and the storm.

Well, the upshot of it all is that I'm left to keep the home fires burning and the coffee hot, and the men folk have gone to rescue our unfortunate friends. It's been an hour and 45 minutes since they left, and I'm wondering if I'll have to go rescue the lot of them. Hope not!

I understand that I'm married to a rather illustrious fannish fan man, and I often wonder just how many of his eccentricities have rubbed off on me. I don't read much science-fiction, but I like a lot of the stories, especially if they don't deal too much with chemistry and higher calculus, of which I know little at all. I don't like housework, but like to cook, enjoy most people and love beer, but I'm not too fond of most homebrew. I guess I should tell you about the Burbee that I know better than you, but I know him better than most people, so you can see that it would be showing poor judgment on my part to indulge myself on such a subject. I guess he couldn't sue me for libel or defamation of character, but I'm sure there are some things he could sue me for, like divorce, for instance.

Did you know that Burbee, Charles E., doesn't like to get his hair cut? And did you know that he likes chocolate ice cream, but won't eat chocolate cake? Funny fellow, isn't he? But man, oh man, in some departments he really shines -- goes to the head of the class -- but you see, I can't tell you about that. You'll have to ask him yourself.

I never wrote anything of this sort before, and I can't think of anything esoteric to say, but I do write letters sometimes, so you can pretend this is a letter.

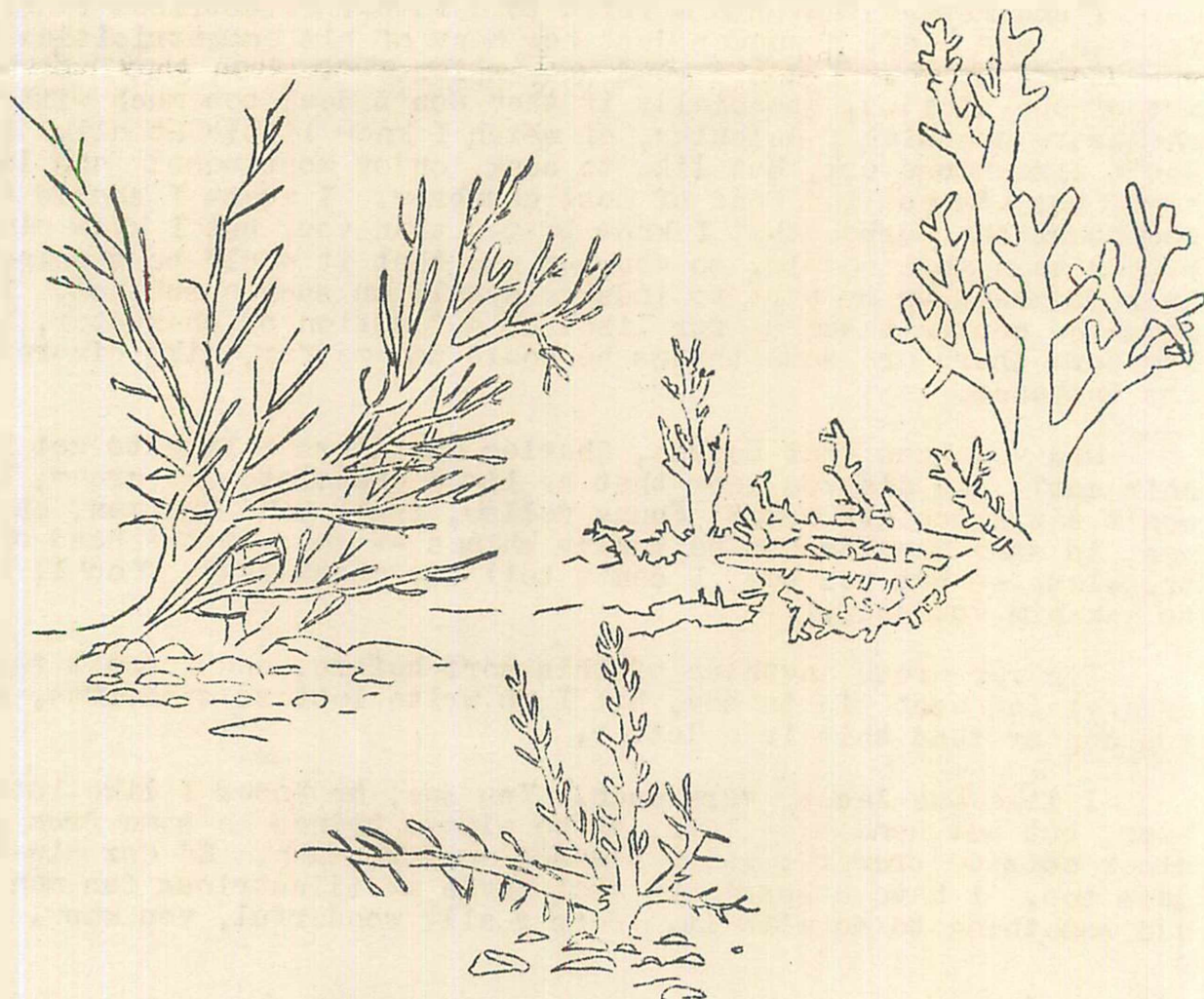
I like Lee Jacobs very much. You see, he knows I like lots of beer, but not home brew type, so he always brings me some from some other outside brewery, which pleases me very much. Ed Cox always does too. I have a suspicion that maybe my illustrious fan man had something to do with it. He's really wonderful, you know.

Now, take Howard Miller. He's a nice fellow too, with a beautiful complexion, the kind we gals wish we had for free. I guess he likes my cooking because he likes to look in the kitchen to see what I'm doing, and sort of smell all the smells. He pleases me too. And besides, he can draw, and he loans out his trousers sometimes. Very generous sort.

Now the Wilsons are real special. They're both smart, which is unusual for married people. And besides all that, Don writes real well, and Mary can draw. And as if that wasn't enough she can sit right down at a typer and whip up an article as fast as the next fan, or the one before. It doesn't matter at all, not to Mary it doesn't.

You know, and might remember, if you haven't bogged down by now, that in the beginning I said the men fen had been gone for an hour and 45 minutes. Well, now it turns out that they have been away for 2½ hours. Men are worrisome things, and it's no wonder I'm rambling on this way.....

((Here endeth this chronicle. The sight of my grey face and the sound of my ululant corpse-rattle asking for a cup of tea was too much for poor Isabel. I trust, however, that by now she has recovered, and that we will hear from her again. --dw))



RAY PALMER: PERSONALITY PLUS ^{BC} Don Wilson

Effective with the issue dated May, 1955, Ray Palmer's science-fiction magazine -- previously called Universe S-F -- will revert to the title Other Worlds. This is the most recent event in an editorial history whose length is almost unrivalled in science-fiction circles, and whose instability and incoherence virtually equals its length. It is, moreover, a career which has commanded more attention from the fan world over the years than any other save Campbell's, and around which have revolved surely more controversy and vociferous comment than any other at all.

I'd like to take a good long look at Ray Palmer's editorial background. As far as I know nobody has done it for years, and surely the present time has brought most of the issues surrounding Palmer closer to resolution and more susceptible to study than they have ever been. I have followed Palmer's career since 1943, watching his "moves from strength to strength" ^{for} Forrest J Ackerman's article on the writers of "Cosmos," in Con Pederson's If with considerable interest. And I have heard enough behind-the-scenes information to add a bit of depth to the overall picture. Not long ago Mary read "Empire of Jegga" -- the novel featured in the first Amazing I ever bought, the issue dated November 1943 -- and commented at some length over the tragic pulpiness of the ending thereof (which Palmer supplied). Consequent meditation has led to the present article.

The article has already died once; its first version perished in our wreck of 1 Jan 55. I hope the second time around will charm it. I hope also that Palmer is still a subject of general interest in fan circles; if not, I plead indulgence for my folly.

I must plead guilty also to a disgusting lack of documentation for this account. The letters from Rog Phillips and Redd Boggs, which should be cited by chapter and verse, have long since hit file 13; and the editorials in old Amazings and other writings by Palmer himself, which would be invaluable, are no longer by me. However, I will try to indicate herein what material has been supplied me from outside and what is conjecture on my part. Much of the history of Palmer's activities is generally well known, of course, and so needs no documentation.

Your comments are solicited (although those of Palmer himself, which would be of greatest interest, probably will not be forthcoming). I'm sure many of you can shed the light of fact or opinion at one point or another herein. So to horse.

In the editorial of Universe #9, the owner thereof voiced some opinions which are of interest.

"Science fiction," said Palmer, "is for just a few of us. Not

More than 2% of the population. You can find out for yourselves by asking 100 people at random what science fiction is; that you'll get the answer that it's 'that crazy kid stuff you see on TV these days'. Those 98% of the population are just unable to comprehend what science fiction is: that it's twenty years of indoctrination, twenty years of experience, twenty years of evolvement through time-honored steps as complicated as a course in science at our most scientific universities. They don't know that it is a tradition, a fraternity, a political and moral revolution in thinking and behavior and the relationship of man toward man. They don't know that it is tomorrow come to today to influence it. And because they don't know these things, they will never be attracted in great numbers to a magazine devoted to them. And there are several magazines today which measure up to the definition we've given.

"One of them is Astounding Science Fiction. It is an editor, and a loyal, Campbell-minded clan. It isn't a magazine, in the mind of the 98%. It's that 'deep bunch of engineer boys with the atoms in their hair.' And there's UNIVERSE. A guy named Palmer and a bunch of readers who wouldn't think of addressing him as anything but 'Rap.' UNIVERSE is a family, as clannish as they are made. The most familiar statement in any letter written to UNIVERSE is: 'I've been following YOU since 1928.' Beyond these two magazines, the rest are just magazines, without the history, the coat of arms, the family pride in past and present and future glory. That's why we've just gone through the 'big delusion' and the 'big disappointment.' . . ."

These ideas bear investigation. What is their source? While they may agree in substance with some ideas held by other people, the mental processes through which they were arrived at are distinctively Palmer's. Let us delve into them.

As is well known, Palmer began his career as a fan. His first large splash on the science-fiction scene was in 1930, when he and fellow-members of the "International Scientific Association" founded The Comet -- which, practically speaking, was the world's first fan-zine. Palmer's real fannish prominence began slightly later, however, when he, Ackerman, Schwartz, Unger and other "bnf's" of the day commenced publication of Fantasy Magazine. FM was a printed journal whose closest recent counterpart in terms of format was Gillings' Fantasy Review. Palmer's gossip column, "Spilling the Atoms with Rap," was featured in every issue. Palmer was instrumental also in the writing and publication of "Cosmos," the granddaddy of all round-robin stories -- in which some twenty of the leading professional s-f writers of the day contributed chapters. Palmer formulated the general plot, wrote a chapter himself ("Conference at Copernicus"), and guided the others -- including Edmond Hamilton, David H. Keller, and John W. Campbell, Jr. Considered as a story "Cosmos" was rather dismal /cf. my review in Con Pederson's If7/, but its stature as a fan project is almost without compare.

Palmer's private life at the time, however, is neither so well known nor so successful. It is fairly well known that Palmer is a hunchback 4'8" tall; not so well known is his history during the days when that condition had its roots. Palmer's family life was unhappy, to say the least, and his early life was characterized by much fending for himself -- punctuated by the tangles with trucks, falls, etc., which broke his back several times. Eventually nature despaired of repairing the spinal column and built a spheroidal shell of bone. This is of course pertinent here only in the light of its

results, which, generally speaking, were that Palmer's relations with the people he contacted from day to day were probably similarly defensively shelled-off; and that he communicated in his own terms only with the fans with whom he corresponded. His "paper personality" commenced its outre growth at this time.

He says himself, in an editorial autobiography inside the back cover of Other Worlds, December 1951: "At 7 he suffered a broken back in an auto accident. Those years were years of reading Edgar Rice Burroughs, every book as it came off the press; Jules Verne, Penty, H. Rider Haggard, H. G. Wells, Jack London, Serviss.

"At 13, two more years in bed. At 20, the back again. More hospital. Falls off roofs, off ladders.

"But at 16, the great event of his life -- the discovery of his first copy of Amazing Stories on the newsstand. Within six months he grew impatient with the magazine, as he saw so much that he wanted it to be. Decided then and there, at 17, to become editor of the magazine. In 1937, quit his job as a sheet metal worker to wait. Nobody understood. But in February 1938 came a fateful telegram. February 14, 1938 he became managing editor of Amazing Stories."

The "fateful telegram" was the handiwork of Roger Sherman Hoar, fairly well-known as a political figure and a liberal-baiter under his own name, and better known in Stefan circles as Ralph Milne Farley. Hoar visited B. G. Davis just after the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company had purchased Amazing from Teck Publications. Under the Teck imprint, Amazing had been run almost to extinction under the editorship of a doddering octagenarian named T. O'Connor Sloane, Ph.D., whose literary tastes were petrified somewhere in the last decade of the nineteenth century and whose cosmology and views of progress dated from the days of Herschel (or perhaps Tycho Brahe). Davis wanted someone to edit the magazine for him, and Hoar recommended the fan whom he considered the day's aptest.

"At Ziff-Davis," continues Palmer autobiographically, ". . . his self-training in writing since 17 (first story sold to Hugo Gernsback in 1928) which counted sales to Amazing Stories, Astounding Stories, Wonder Stories and many other magazines including murder, gangster, sex, western, mystery and flying -- proved of inestimable value. Over 3,000,000 published words backed up his story sense. Amazing Stories rose from lowest in sales to highest. Founded Fantastic Adventures and also became editor of five other magazines."

And thereby hangs the next part of the tale.

The fans of the day were fairly jubilant when they heard that one of their number, who had shared their opinions and been part of their thought-fraternity during those early years when there were only three prozines, was about to become the editor of one of them. Their joy, however, died aborning. Palmer's first moves aggravated them, and his subsequent activities provoked them to screaming frenzy.

To begin with, Palmer aimed for a pulp-magazine newsstand readership, rather than for his old fan associates. Those fans, who had not yet seen Campbell's Astounding and were still seeking for the "big change" that would revolutionize the field, idealized the situation. The new Amazing was therefore a terrific letdown to them. They voiced their disappointment bitterly, and Palmer defended himself with equal vehemence. And the war was on.

At the beginning Amazing reflected Palmer's sex-gangster-western-flying background as well as his early preference for the Burroughs-Henry school of literature: at first glance it was a carbon copy of Planet Stories, although Palmer aimed for a certain slickness of

handling that Planet never achieved until much later. Fantastic Adventures began as an attempt to revive the desirable characteristics of s-f's earliest magazines -- the large size, Paul illustrations, trimmed edges, and to some extent thought-variant stories; it failed in this guise after a few issues, but was continued as a fairly successful pulp until 1953. Occasionally an attempt was made to type it as a "fantasy companion" a la Strange Tales and Unknown, but the science-fiction and fantasy contents of the two magazines were never clearly separated.

Amazing continued in the Planet vein roughly until the end of 1941, when its thickness doubled and new influences began to become apparent. This is what the culprit himself said about it:

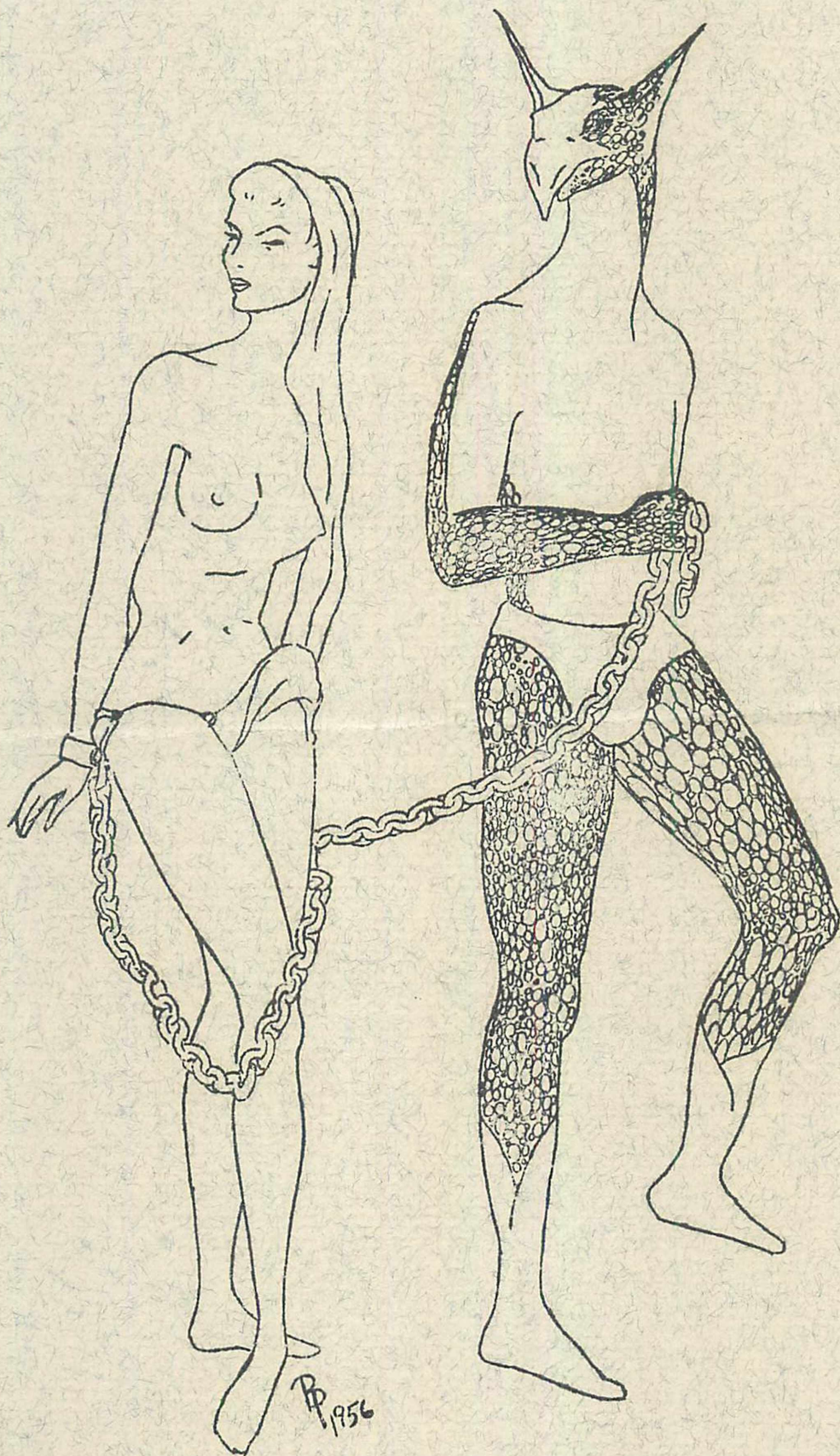
"I succeeded in deluding him /Davis/ into committing the magazine into my tender care. . . . You can imagine how I felt. Here at last I had it in my power to do to my old hobby what I had always had the driving desire to do . . . the power to destroy, to create, to remake at my own discretion." He called the prevalent material in the field "half-baked ideas, screwy science, and pedantic, unprofessional writing. Not one professional author's touch glittered from the . . . dunghap of gadgets, theories and interplanetary travelogues. There wasn't a living, breathing character, emotion (or) adventure in the whole lot."

The foregoing is from "Palmer Tears his Hair," in Stardust, November 1940; it was discussed in an interesting article called "The Palmer Hoax," by Geoffrey Giles, in Fantasy Review, Winter 1949-50.

The segment of s-f's readership which soon afterward flocked with hosannas to the new Cambell Astounding can testify to the truth of Palmer's statements, but at that point their agreement with him stopped. Palmer's solution to the difficulty was pulp-typed fiction, wherein "human interest" and "emotional treatment" were rendered out into slickly-written potboilers with no word longer than two syllables, no sentence longer than one line of double-columned type, and situations involving conflict stereotyped into unreal cardboard images. Palmer perhaps realized himself the fallacy of mistaking such productions for good writing, but unfortunately his "story-sense" coupled with his own personal reading background prevented him from passing his knowledge along to his readers. And, of course, there are many who vociferously assert that Palmer simply did not have the ability to recognize good fiction when he saw it, at that time at least.

Naturally, Palmer did not edit in a vacuum, nor did he enter another world shut off from all his former associations when he took over Amazing. The opinions of his old fan associates, who as we have seen were his only meaningful contacts during the earlier thirties, meant a lot to Palmer. Perhaps if tendered more gently, in a spirit of advice rather than of violent chastisement, they would have been heeded or placated. Certainly the friend's approach paid off in later years; note, for example, the success of "The Club House" in the 1948 Amazing. But fire was fought with fire, and a fight whose viciousness occasionally reached overpowering heights was begun in earnest.

The fans told Palmer his "new Amazing" stank, and he retorted by pointing toward his circulation figures. Fandom heaped fuel by telling him he sold to drooling morons, and he called fans gadget-loving crackpots. The point of the whole fracas was soon lost in the welter of cross-accusations. And it was a shame, too, for it was a good point.



Amazing continued in this pulp vein until roughly 1941, when another influence began to become apparent. As far as I can tell, that influence was supplied by a mysterious Brooklynite named David Vern -- whose stories under various names attracted some favorable comment from fans, incidentally. As "David V. Reed" he began his writing career with "Where is Roger Davis?" in 1940, and in 1941 he went to work for Palmer as "Literary Editor."

It is also rumored that Vern is or was a part-owner of the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, but that rumor does not concern us here. Vern's stories certainly revolve very much around characters and situations involving the block-long-swimming-pool set in which Ziff moved, but many writers project situations out of their imaginations.

And a fertile imagination Vern had, too. Under the name of "Clyde Woodruff" he contributed "The Man with Five Lives" to Fantastic Adventures for January 1942 -- one of the two or three best stories that magazine printed during its long and usually undistinguished career -- and his chief contribution to Amazing was "Empire of Jegga," a suspenseful spy-thriller set on Mars (Jegga) in which the intruding Earthman was about to defeat the Martian rulers at their own game of outsmarting him and through him taking over Earth, when Vern gave up the story. Palmer supplied the ending, and he mistook the Jeggan ruse for Vern's major premise, thus spoiling a potentially very powerful conclusion.

Vern's major effect, however, was entirely apart from his own writings. It was in the effect he had on Palmer's editorial judgment. The extent of his personal relationship with Palmer probably was great, and more intense than the beer-buddy friendship Palmer had with his pet writers O'Brien and McGivern. Much later, Palmer confessed that Vern had tried mightily to get him to edit a more "slick" (Palmer's words) magazine. "But," said Palmer, "the world was not then ready for a 'slick' s-f magazine." /OW, Other Worlds, April 1953, which featured Vern's "Myshkin." The truth is undoubtedly much more like this: that Palmer just wasn't yet ready for a "slick" magazine, or, more accurately, a magazine containing more than a small minority of well-written, thoughtful stories.

But even the Old Man of the Mountain is susceptible to suggestion, and a bit of Vern did rub off on Palmer. It rubbed off erratically, of course, but without it the Planet-like Amazing of the early years would have continued without mutation.

The fruits of Vern's influence were the writers of the later years -- Phillips/Graham, Byrne, Hauser, Shaver, the later Wilcox and Livingston, Geier. Vern, in short, taught Palmer to look for other qualities than the traditional "pulp" values he had learned from Burroughs and Henty and from his 3,000,000 words of sales to the sex-gangster markets. The unpopularity of some of the writers named here reflects the erratic quality referred to; and the fact that he continually mistook the presence of a single unusual quality in a writer's work for an overall writing skill.

Palmer has spoken publicly on those qualities and on his methods of discovering writers who have them, and his words bear quotation here. At the risk of being called an egomaniac, I shall quote also from my letters to Other Worlds which provoked him.

In OW for February, 1953, I said, " . . . it is, generally speaking, a weak magazine. Take the constant atmosphere of desperately trying to convince the readers that the stories are good. Why bother?

Insecure does he push his product down his listener's throat.

. . . "I must regretfully confess that I suspect the editor is more concerned with convincing himself that his favorite babies write good stories than he is with convincing the readers. After all, he has edited magazines long enough to realize the magnitude of strong stories in making a magazine strong.

. . . "I most sincerely hope that OW is not going to turn into an organ for Shaver and Byrne manuscripts that no other editor would buy! If 'in OW, the story's the thing,' as a recent editorial states, then stop buying authors' names and start buying stories. Write 'em yourself if there are none to be had. . . .

" . . . let's not waste time on ape-men who never will learn how to write out of their element. Let's let Shaver write shorter stories . . . Let's get Byrne off the one-way blind alley of the Germain series. And let's abandon charity! The story's the thing; not the friendship of an inept writer!"

Palmer replied: "you say this editor (Rap) is trying to convince himself that his favorite babies write good stories. This isn't the first time this has been said. Even Rea says the same thing at times, and adds that we are 'soft-hearted' as well. Don, if you were editor, would you sit behind your desk and with a wave of your hand crush the hopes and ambitions of a writer who crosses your desk with a 'first-timer' by acidly saying: 'Go dig ditches, you can't write!' Maybe I'm soft-hearted. But maybe, too, I've learned something about people. None of us are born with any abilities at all. With talents, yes, but not with ability, which must be acquired. All of us have God-given talents, and these talents urge us toward certain efforts. And if those efforts are coldly rejected, we turn inward on ourselves, develop frustrations, wind up 'digging ditches' or anything else for which we have no 'talent.'"

Perhaps this statement is autobiographical. Palmer continues, "Is an editor God, that he can decide on the basis of 'ability' which has not yet been acquired, that the 'talent' does not exist? . . . how DO we see talent in anyone? Let's take Shaver as our 'horrible' example. Yes, we know he can't write. He can't even type. . . . He cannot spell. . . . He can't plot. He winds up stories where he gets 'stuck' and fires in the lousiest ending, knowing it is lousy, but despairing of his ability to 'fix' it. . . .

"Then why did we ever fool with Shaver? ONE THING ONLY, his UNUSUAL IMAGINATION. His strange sense of the unusual, his feeling for emotion, his sense of the beautiful and his sense of the outre.

. . . "Shaver is hard work. He irks, he vexes, he infuriates. And we encouraged him as we do anyone who shows his HONEST talents, and not his FRUSTRATED misdirections. He is not alone. Rog Phillips could not write when he first wrote us a threatening letter in Amazing Stories' Discussions. Yeah, believe it or not, he threatened to kill us if we did not stop the Shaver Mystery! We sent him a check for \$500.00 to come and do it! Actually we detected an UNUSUAL mental slant on fiction, and we thought maybe we could make a writer out of still another man with a talent."

Obviously Phillips/Graham said other things in his letter than simply that he would kill Palmer if the Shaver Mystery did not end, for there must have been thousands of readers who said similar things -- none of whom, I take it, had an "unusual mental slant on fiction."

"Don't you think I KNOW the faults in Byrne's writing? In Shaver's? In Phillips? They haven't yet begun to touch on the vast store of experience possible to them. But I say that at least ONE of these

three men will make a mark on the world that won't easily be forgotten. Shaver has made a mark (aside from science fiction of course) that will live centuries. He has made a lot of people think. Maybe they abandoned his concepts after awhile, but they never forgot where they got their NEW ones. They never forgot that it was Shaver who made them think in the first place. Phillips has been a nine-day wonder, alternating with a horrible flop. He has EXPERIMENTED. Some of the results weren't good, some were sensational. But the EXPERIENCE he has gained!"

The first sentence in the foregoing paragraph, incidentally, points up perhaps Palmer's most consistent difficulty over the years. Rog Phillips once wrote to me, "Why blast the magazine when the editor is tearing his hair over the quality of the stories?" The answer, of course, is that when the editor speaks of his stories as the best in the field, they can only be judged against that standard. And so considered, they were fairly miserable except for very rare exceptions. But Palmer consistently spoke of Amazing as the #1 magazine, and he thought of it in those terms. (His protégé, Hamling, has stated editorially that it is inconceivable for an editor to think of his magazine in any other terms. Obviously this is a foolish idea, and equally obviously it came from Palmer.) And when a reader thought of the magazine say as #7 or #8 in order of quality and offered constructive criticisms which he thought might help the editor raise the mag to the #5 spot, Palmer reacted furiously because he was not receiving the adulation that the #1 magazine obviously deserved. It was not that he consciously wanted adulation, just that he subconsciously assumed it should be forthcoming.

It must be admitted, of course, that few critics, particularly fan critics, did offer much constructive criticism, but the point is not altered by that fact -- except to be tempered a bit by the knowledge that the slings and arrows of the fan press had something to do with the establishment of Palmer's attitudes at the beginning. As time went on, at any rate, Palmer became increasingly impatient with his science-fiction audience, and by 1945 he turned elsewhere for attention.

The next installment of the exchange came in the July 1953 issue of OW, which turned out incidentally to be the last until the current title-change. I said, "Your claim that I would be 'surprised' to hear that authors aren't born, is rather strange, made to one who's been following Campbell's magazines for years. As you might realize if you'd stop to think a minute, Campbell has been developing new authors since he first took over ASF six months before you took over AS. His new developments were seen as soon as he'd run through Tremaine's backlog. He was NOT content to stick by the standbys. . . . He went out and dug up some new ones. . . .

"Ask H. L. Gold, or even Bill Hamling, how they go about encouraging new authors. Not by buying their products sight unseen. . . . They do it by making authors rewrite parts of stories. They do it by working with new writers they think promising, helping them along, directing them in the use of the vast body of technique which is available in the production of good fiction. . . . If a story's not good enough to click, but shows that if its author were guided properly he would click, these editors give the man the guidance. They don't do him the disfavor of buying and printing his trash. . . .

"It's all the more reprehensible, Rap, when you're the guy responsible for MISguiding a writer -- like you did Byrne, encouraging him to write those Shaveristic stories. . . . "

Palmer replied: "Regarding Mr. Campbell and how he discovers new writers, what are you saying that we didn't? You are describing his tactics, exactly what we did when we first became editor of Amazing. Neither were we satisfied with the backlog. But we had to use it up. You know, funny thing, Bea Mahaffey is faced with the same problem! . . . No, I don't look for /talent/ in the unlikeliest places. Just what is a 'likely' place, Don? Would it be the mailbag? The lobby to your office? The street outside? An engineering concern; the gas works; a steel mill; a furniture store; a school for writers? Or does Campbell have a source labelled 'writers to be'? . . . As for all those other things he does /editorials and articles to stimulate the imagination of writers, the idea-forum of Brass Tacks, the periodic editorials begging for new writers -- these I mentioned/, I have done the same, and a FEW MORE. My few more are the strange things. Yes, I've even gone to the 'caves.' I've listened for 'voices.' I never overlook a bet!

. . . "Vern cut his teeth on Amazing. Byrne cut his teeth on Amazing. HUNDREDS of others, all good, cut their teeth on Amazing. And some of the writers you have with awe /I name Miller, Oliver, Heinlein, Hubbard, van Vogt, Asimov and Wallace in various connections/ are, in my opinion, just ordinary. Some are even miscast. They may be scientists, but not writers, and, more, unimaginative. Sometimes there is such a thing as TOO MUCH direction. Who's BRAYING against science? We are braying against DOGMATIC PH.D.'S who make a sacred cow of science. I admit as much as you do, that the real scientist is the man who questions even his own research."

Here, of course, Palmer makes a point that Campbell has made also -- remember JWC's line, "one whose imagination has not been destroyed by four years or more of textbooking"? Yet it is rather curious that Palmer lumps the writers named here to balance against Shaver, Byrne, Graham, Geier, Hauser, Yerxa, Browne, Vern, Hamling, O'Brien, McGivern and Wilcox, who were the Palmer-identified writers I mentioned. I suspect he has simply not read many of their stories, but is idealizing his "dogmatic Ph.D.'s" view and pinpointing it on their writings. The best of the Palmer-sponsored men, Vern, was able to abandon a plausibly science-grounded background and write a convincing story. Others could write an entertaining story based on thoroughly unextrapolated gimmicks; Geier wrote "Environment," for example, Graham wrote "The Despoilers." So too could most of the Astounding writers; it is fairly well known that Unknown was a rather entertaining magazine. Palmer is basing his reasoning on thoroughly false premises.

Why does he do it? If we can answer this, the present article has a valid point.

We remarked above that when Palmer failed to gain the adulation he craved from the science-fiction audience, he turned elsewhere. You have raced ahead of me by now and guessed the nature of the "elsewhere": the mystics. Or, more accurately, the people whose disenchantment with the cosmos as defined by commonly accepted social and scientific standards has led them to become dabblers in disreputable theories. Fortean, flying-saucer fanatics, theosophists, Rosicrucians, vegetarians, Hamish and others have been doing it for years, and around each such body of belief there is an organized body of believers. All of them have an axe to grind against the world as most people claim she is made, and all of them have a total explanation for its ills. They advance their peculiar beliefs as panaceas for them.

Considered as a body, with all the fringe of dilettantes who flock around them and who are the first to cry "You persecuted Galileo too" when anyone so much as questions their orientation, these people are the audience Palmer endeavored to capture with the Shaver Mystery. The Shaveristic body of thought was entirely separate from Shaver as a writer of fiction; the latter Shaver was considered in much the same light as any of the other writers who "cut their teeth on Amazing." It has far outlived Shaver as a writer, and is currently expressed in Palmer's Mystic Magazine.

Palmer never learned what most editors know when they start, that a good magazine is built of small stories, each of which must be selected with equal care. He screamed about the attention-gathering qualities of a few items which he considered the ready solutions to all his editing difficulties, and ignored the rest of the material which filled the magazine. Here is the reason why his many years of editorial experience paid off in such a meager return of quality; he spent most of those years dashing about in search of some new fictional gimmick to provide the next Total Answer for science-fiction. Naturally he never found it. He did know the secret of careful selection of artwork and features -- but not of stories. And here lay his most tragic failing.

In brief, the fans did not rate Amazing the #1 magazine, and the voiceless vote of the myriad readers who made it the #1 magazine in terms of sales was a cold comfort indeed to a man whose early associations had been with fellow-fans, and who found the "98%" rather clodlike even if they did buy his science-fiction. So Palmer went out and found an audience which was as vocal as the fans, and whose members did rate Amazing #1 when it began to cater to them.

Fans hated Shaverism even more vociferously than they had hated the original 2-D Amazing, of course, and out of this newer hatred came in reply the "Who the hell do you bastards think you are?" of "In Caverns Below" and the "Nuts to them." of the Amazing editorial for March 1947. "In Caverns Below," if you do not remember, was a letter Palmer addressed to me but intended for all fandom, in reply to a letter I wrote him in 1946 sharply criticising his anti-science writings. In it, he said: "Science? A cult. Scientists? Priests. 'Fen'? Stupid, unthinking, blind stupid worshippers." and, "Who the hell do you bastards think you are? 192 or less crackpots who walk out in the street to see if a bus is coming, Yes, I saw a 'lady' fan do that at the Chicon." The quotations are as accurate as memory can make them. It was in that same letter, printed in Vampire #7 under the "Caverns" title, where Palmer called Astounding a stupid magazine full of gadget stories which nobody but a technician or a worshipping fan could possibly be stupid enough to enjoy. This, of course, was a far cry from the current view of ASF held by the editor of Mystic. The explanation for the latter is that Palmer now rationalizes his activities differently than he did in 1946.

The history of the intervening years was marked chiefly by Palmer's separation from Ziff-Lewis at the end of 1949, and the launching of his career as an independent publisher -- with Fate, wherein he tried to document Fortean material; with Other Worlds and its successors; and with Mystic, minus the documentation and really much more Palmerlike than Fate ever was.

Palmer founded Other Worlds (and of course Fate) before his final break with Amazing, and consequently Amazing received very little attention during his final months as its editor. He would have resigned eventually in any case, but perhaps the break came unexpectedly for him. One account has it that the deCourcys (who successfully teased Palmer by claiming they believed in a series of Shaveristic stories they were writing) and Ackerman alerted Davis to the disreputable condition of Amazing, and Davis fired Palmer in the ensuing exchange. Another account, furnished me by Phillips/Graham, has it that their parting was peaceful. (Palmer, by the way, called Z-D "a publisher too sedate for this kind of publicity" -- Shaverism -- in Mystic #8.) In any case, Other Worlds began without the Shaverism and the subsequent Palmer s-f magazines have so continued, featuring Shaver only as a fiction-writer. OW itself died in mid-1953, when the s-f slump of the time forced Palmer to cease his dealings with the printer who then worked on the magazine. His contract with that printer prevented him from using the title again until now. (I have also heard a rumor that Palmer had a spat with Curtis Fuller, his backer and co-owner of the two magazines. Fuller continues as publisher of Fate, and Palmer's connection with it is problematical or non-existent.) Science Stories, which died after four issues, and Universe, which was founded by "George Bell" (who Palmer insists was not another of his editorial pseudonyms), carried on in kind, except that since the swelling of Mystic the s-f aspect of Palmer Publications has been entirely edited by Mahaffey, with Palmer contributing only editorials. Bea picks the stories, handles the writer contacts, and does all the work.

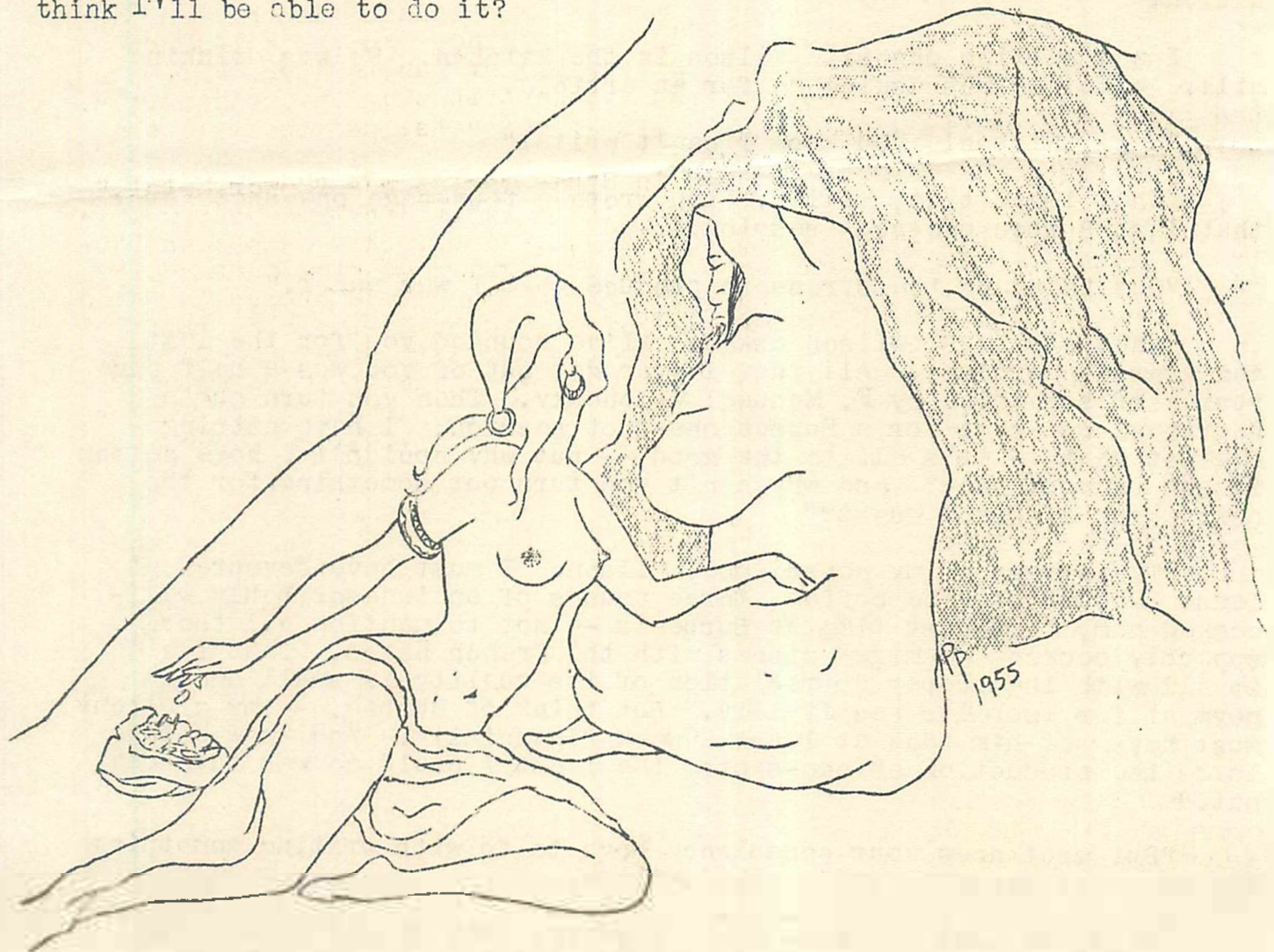
The last major story featured in Other Worlds was "Power Metal," a large novel by S. J. Byrne. It was the first major Byrne story which was not Shaveristic in content, and it pointed toward a much less limited development of that writer's talents. Other stories during 1953-54 by James McConnell, Frank Robinson, Alan Nourse and others, pointed a trend toward better fiction on a generally prevalent scale, reinforced by the outpourings of the "Palmer boys." My biggest complaint about Amazing even when I first discovered it was that those "big stories" by people like Vern and, later, Graham, Wilcox, etc., were backed up by a magazine consistently filled with trash. Perhaps the pickup during 1953 and later was due to Mahaffey, but whatever its cause, it pointed a way toward a solution of the difficulties. A readable magazine in which to play around with off-trail "discoveries" would certainly have been more acceptable than the traditional Palmer product. In the later years, the fans were beginning to give Palmer a nod in any case (witness their voting him "the son of science-fiction" at Chicon II), and such a condition would eventually have led to his acceptance in stefnal circles as an editor of stature..

Now, however, the magazine is too small to permit the publication of these novels, and Palmer is too wrapped up in Mystic to be interested in them anyway.

Reading Mystic is an interesting experience. In it, all of the years of frustration bear fruit in the coddling of every personage who thinks the world has cruelly rejected him, every character who thinks he has seen a ghost or communicated with another world whose denizens all have white skins, and every upset religious fanatic who is afraid of the atom. The investigation of parapsychic and otherwise unclassifiable phenomena is, of course, a highly praiseworthy study. But it is not praiseworthy when it revolves around the premise

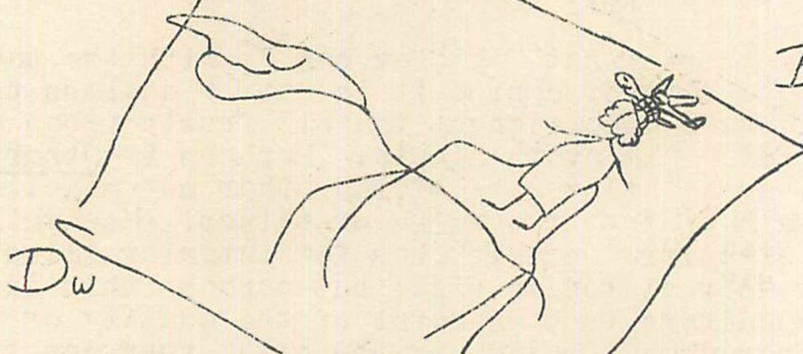
that all scientific thought must be rejected because one occurrence does not jibe with an accepted theory, or because the validity of an off-trail explanation of such an occurrence is questioned by a scientifically oriented commentator.

It will be good to see what Whaffev can do with the new Other Worlds. At this late date of course it is fairly useless to meditate on what Palmer could have done without the old frustrations engendered by his background riding him every minute. Perhaps if Other Worlds hangs on and grows, supplanting some of the other s-f magazines, he will eventually come back into the swing of things. Meanwhile, the magazine is devoid of colored covers, has few interior illustrations, and is considerably abbreviated in size; but perhaps this is all the more reason for its editors to be careful of the quality of what they print (which is tempered, naturally, by the price they can afford to pay for it). We can hope! In the meantime, the fact that there are three or four high-quality magazines in the field at present, instead of only one as of yore, means that the body of the science-fiction-reading fan public ignores Palmer, which is a good thing. There are no more goads poking him. A decade from now I would like to do a followup on this article; perhaps by then, he will actually be "playing the devil's role in the opera," as he claims he does now. Do you think I'll be able to do it?



BEANES, COX, AND KATI RANGOSA

By HOWARD
MILLER



This is a Work of Fan Fiction. Any similarity between characters living or dead and the people mentioned below is purely coincidental.

I dropped in on Wilson. As usual, he wanted me to write an article. I looked around but could only find one bottle of home-brew. Ed Cox had been there the night before. It was a flusterating situation.

I was sitting opposite Wilson in the kitchen. He was drinking milk. Also, he was asking me for an article.

"Hell, Wilson! You know I can't write."

"That isn't true, Miller. You wrote a four-page one-shot for that last Burbee one-shot session."

"But think of the stress to produce that I was under."

"What stress?" Wilson asked. "I've hounded you for the last ten years to produce. All that I ever got out of you was a half page review of something by F. Manuel Velonosky. Then you turn out a four-page one-shot for a Burbee one-shot session. I have nothing against that -- it's all to the good -- but why couldn't I have gotten it out of you? Why? And why can't you turn out something for the next issue of Dream Quest?"

"The stress of my conscience, Wilson. I must have devoured at least 27 cups of fine coffee, three pounds of an indescribably well-cooked ham, that last time at Burbee's -- not to mention all those superbly cooked and mixed dishes with the French names. That I ate it all with the proper appreciation of its quality is small enough payment for Isobel's hospitality. But think of Burbee, -- my gluttony must have set him back at least a week financially. You know how he loves the production of one-shots; the least I could do was turn one out."

"But what does your conscience have to do with writing something for the next Dream Quest?" asked Wilson.

"Hell, Wilson! You know I can't write. Why should I turn out some nonsensical fun-type material and inflict it on the members of

Fapa in the name of activity?"

Wilson pondered for a moment, lifted a lettuce and peanut butter sandwich off the table with one hand, put his other hand under the elbow of the arm holding the sandwich and lifted it to the level of his mouth. He took a bite, then turned around to hear his wife in the living room wearily retelling the story of their car-wreck on New Years. "You're just rationalizing," he said. "You can write on anything for Fapa; it doesn't have to be interesting; you can even write about lettuce and peanut butter sandwiches. You've been covering up for your laziness for so long now you're beginning to believe it yourself when you say, 'I can't write.' I know you can think of something."

"Well, there's your auto accident. I think I could write a page or two about that," I said.

"Oh no you don't! That's out. I've heard it so many times that I can't recognize it myself anymore."

"Didn't anybody figure out just how hard you hit that pavement on the top of Kellogg Hill?" I asked.

"No."

"Well, I have," I said proudly. "You were going at 54 miles an hour. You were knocked out of your car . . ."

"My ex-car you mean," said Wilson sadly.

"You were knocked out of your car, traveled 38 feet through the air and then hit the solid concrete -- like a true gentleman you allowed your wife to land on top of you, thereby breaking her fall and saving her life -- after all, it would take a fall from a sixth story window to equal your flight. Why man, in two pages I could make you out as a combination of superman and a death-defying, life-saving hero."

"I don't like the idea," said Wilson. "Too darned much has been written about that wreck already. Why don't you write something up about the navy? Those letters of yours that I published were interesting."

"Maybe so, but look at what you did with them. Those letters were supposed to be private," I said.

"Remember tho, that night you were drunk in Santa Monica? You gave me permission to publish any and all of your letters."

"Just what night was that? I was always drunk in Santa Monica."

"The year before last, before the May mailing. You were in the navy and needed activity credits to continue in the sterling organization of Fapa."

"Oh!"

"You drink too much, Miller. That's what's wrong with you. It interferes with your creative ability, interferes with your critical judgment. You do things that you shouldn't," said Wilson.

"Like that night we decided to rejoin Fapa?" I asked.

"Uh -- what night was that? I don't remember."

"That night I visited you at the University of Redlands -- it was several months before you were suspended for your alcoholic activities at that fine religious institution of higher learning."

Wilson seemed puzzled for a moment.

I continued, "It was right after you had finished the gin, swore that you'd never drink any of 'that perfumed piss' again, and started to read Lovecraft's 'The Rats in the Walls' at the top of your voice. You'd reached that part that goes, ' . . . found me crouching in the blackness over the plump, half-eaten body of Captain Norrrys,' then you lowered your voice and innocently said, 'Let's join Fapa again, Miller.' I remember thinking at the time that it was a grand idea."

"All I can remember of that night is the housemother knocking on the door of my room and giving us a half gallon of root-beer, and you drinking it all and puking over the rug," said Wilson. "I think you're making the rest up."

"Who is making what up? Anyway, even if I gave you permission or not you shouldn't have published those letters. Look at what they did to Mrs. Carr. They completely broke that kindly old lady's belief in servicemen being some kind of cross between Saint George and Joan of Arc. You broke her attention-seeking little soul -- called her bad names as well. Besides, look at what you did to me. You gave me a reputation for wenching and drinking that I'll never be able to live up to."

"It was necessary; I had to save you for Fapa," said Wilson righteously. "But to go back to you writing something for the next issue of Dreamquest, how about writing something about the navy, a narrative of some of the highlights of your naval experience, say?"

"I've been out too long. All that's left is a sense of disgust and the memory of a few unimportant incidents. Like the time the Captain's mind started to go -- or what was done by a lunkhead to a girl with some barbed wire -- or getting accused of stealing thirteen crates of bananas out of the cold storage locker. It isn't enough to write about."

"Why not write a serious article on some aspect of naval life?" Wilson said. "For the benefit of any young member of Fapa who might possibly be careless enough to join. An informative article on rank and privilege would be okay -- I know you have some ideas on the subject."

"That would be too simple," I said. "Too easy to explain. All that I'd have to say is that an enlisted man has no privileges at all. That a junior officer is allowed to keep civilian clothes

aboard ship and that a Captain can keep his own private stock of liquor. An Admiral? He can keep a woman aboard in his quarters. Any prospective naval recruits would get the idea."

"Bless my missing thyroid," said Wilson. "You are a hard guy to get an article out of."

"Maybe after ten years of trying, you should give up."

"No, not until I've tried knocking on your tombstone. I may even start considering putting you under one." There was a dangerous look in Wilson's eyes, and I'm sure his radioactivity went up several points.

He continued sarcastically: "Why don't you issue a clarion call to eliminate the deadwood in Fapa? You could present yourself as the deadeast of all dead limbs, say that you are reforming and ask all who will to fall in line behind you."

"It would only make most of the members uncomfortable," I said.

Wilson reflected for awhile -- then agreed, "I guess it would at that. Lee Jacobs would love you for it tho; it would fall right in line with his 'reform Fapa' campaign. Say, that's an idea -- why not write an article on Lee Jacobs?"

"Why?"

"Well, he wouldn't mind the ego-boo, and as the first active president Fapa's had in the last fifteen years he deserves to be better known to the membership. All he'll probably get in return for his good efforts is the usual four listings of himself as Fapa President in some obscure corner of each of the year's Fantasy Amateurs."

"But I know very little about Lee Jacobs," said I.

"Hell, you know enough," Wilson said. "Picture him as a grave hero, a brave and resplendent figure all shining in brass armor on his way to fight a chimera in a faraway sunset."

"He does drink sloe gin -- and he plays the alto sax. I don't know tho. The last time I saw him he didn't look very grave. He was sitting in an old wicker chair at Burbee's place, dressed in a purple-colored sport shirt and staring rather lopsidedly into a goblet of home-brew. He had a beanie on his head too, a thing which I think no self-respecting heroic slayer of chimeras would let himself be caught dead in."

"What's wrong with a beanie? All fans wear them nowadays," Wilson said.

"This particular beanie was a little different from the usual propeller-driven type," I replied.

"In what way?"

"It had a green and red turtle on top of it," I said. "And a

red airplane on top of the turtle. Besides, the cap itself was a horrible combination of red and green and black. You can imagine what it looked like on Jacobs' short-cropped head."

"Funny, I don't remember seeing it that last session at Burbee's," said Wilson.

"Your glasses were broken in the accident, remember."

"Oh!"

"I think you know the thing tho; you were wearing it yourself when you left Burbee's," I told him.

"Why, that's the cap that Ed Cox was looking for yesterday," Wilson said. "He claimed that it was his and wanted to know if Jacobs had given me his switchblade too."

"What did you tell him?" I asked.

"That I'd stuck the cap on the top shelf in the closet and that I didn't have his switchblade."

"What did he do?" I asked.

"Got his cap and left mumbling something about 'That goddamn bastard Lee.' He was back later in the night -- he'd had a date with Marilyn."

"Ohh . . . " said I. "Did he propose to her again?"

"No. He wasn't that drunk this time, but he'd given her the -- say, didn't you propose to Marilyn too that night?"

"Er -- let's not go into that."

Wilson continued, "As I was saying, Cox gave her the beanie."

"The WHAT?"

"The beanie with the turtle and the airplane that you were talking about," Wilson said.

"What is she going to do with the thing?"

"Take it with her when she goes to Arabia next month to marry that native boyfriend of hers," said Wilson.

"What is she going to do with a turtled beanie in Arabia?"

"Wear it while she's riding a camel, I guess," Wilson said. "Can you imagine Marilyn perched on top of a camel wearing a beanie with a red and green turtle and a little red airplane? She'll be the talk of the oasis."

"They'll probably kick her out of the country," I said. "Along with the U.S. ambassador."

Wilson bent close over the table, and tried to extend his arms far enough to get at the bottle of milk at the table. He failed. I reached over, poured him a glass and put it into his hand.

He settled back in his chair. "You're just going to have to turn out an article for this Dream Quest, Miller. I'm rewriting that fourteen-page article on Ray Palmer that I lost in the car wreck and it just wouldn't look right publishing just one article -- it needs at least one other item to go along."

"It would look lonely," I agreed.

"So why don't you turn out something, after all these years of unproductive silence? Just a little article about Lee Jacobs, or the navy -- or any serious constructive subject. I'd correct the grammar and the spelling for you if you'd do it -- and I wouldn't even put in a single interlineation of my own. I promise."

I frowned and pondered for a moment.

"There is one subject that I've given a little thought to lately," I said.

"What is it?" asked Wilson.

"The problem of survival in the post atomic era -- the problem of obtaining food in an atomically desolated wilderness."

"That sounds interesting," said Wilson. "I remember Burbee writing an article on the subject some years ago."

"My approach would be somewhat different from his -- more practical in nature," I said.

"Well, considering that a person lives through the attack, getting food is going to be something of a problem," said Wilson. "If your ideas are sound, I'm sure that the general fan public will be glad to hear about them."

"Oh, they're sound enough, and tho I don't think anybody will think much of them right now -- they may change their minds sometime in the future. In fact, they may even consider them as the most important things they ever read about in Fapa."

"Indeed?" Wilson sounded dubious.

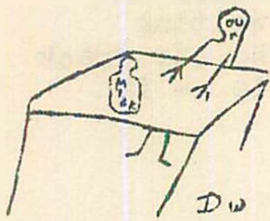
"Just what do you have in mind anyway?" he asked.

"Did you ever hear of a guy named Keti Rangosa?"

"No, I don't think I have," said Wilson.

"I met him when I was a kid, in a church, and never forgot him. He was from the South Pacific -- a reformed cannibal -- gave a talk on his life before he became a missionary. He said the best way to butcher a human for eating was to knock them over the head first. This, he maintained, not only conserves the blood but makes the

brains easier to get at. He said that the brains were very tasty indeed and could be cooked quickly or eaten raw in case one was real hungry."



Wilson gagged on his milk.

I went on. "The real delicacy, tho, according to Rangosa, were the thumbs -- very nice to chew on and generally reserved for the chiefs of his people. The best way to cook human flesh, he said, was not to boil it but bake it. That way the flavor is hardly distinguishable from that of young pork. His people had never cooked an entire carcass at a time, usually an arm or a leg at a time -- they'd chop them off as needed, and take good care of what was left until they'd have a great feast; then they'd cook the torso and the head."

Wilson shuddered.

"You'd write an article on cannibalism," Wilson said, "and publish it in *Esquire*, under the guise of advice for survival in a post atomic world?"

"Just how much of civilization or culture do you think is going to be left?" I asked.

"Well, not much, but to revert to cannibalism. Good God!"

"Look at the logic of it," I said. "What's the easiest means of survival in an area with a surplus of animals -- hunting. What animal will be the most plentiful -- it will be humans. Even if the destruction is very bad they'll still outnumber the deer, or whatever domestic animals are left. And they'll be accessible, just right next door to you, so to speak. If you're lucky enough to survive the atomic bombs. Let's face it, in most parts of the United States, humans are going to be the only things around to eat. And the people that start early will be the ones that survive."

I finished the homebrew and left. Wilson was still staring at his half empty glass of milk when I went out the door. He seemed to be repeating something over and over again but I couldn't quite make out what he was saying.



