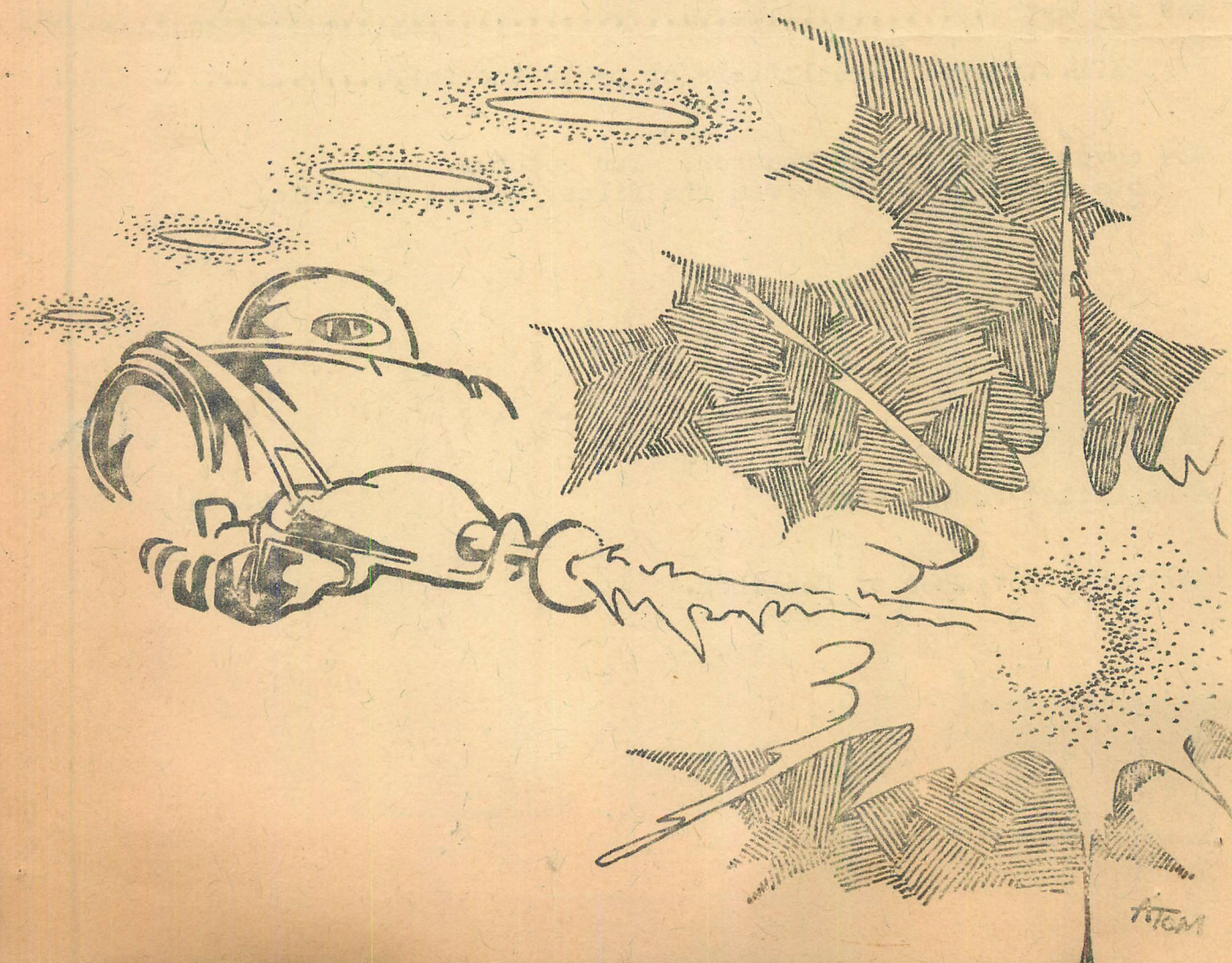


# DYNATRON





This, my old and rare, is the genuine 63rd issue of DYNATRON, the take it or leave it fanzine dedicated to the proposition that anybody who drinks martinis on the rocks has rocks in his head. For those of you who keep track of such things: this is also the 15th annish. Big deal. But, come to think of it, there aren't too many fanzines around that can look back on 15 years of continuous triviality.

PAY ATTENTION NOW...THERE'S A SURPRISE IN THIS PARAGRAPH:

DYNATRON is edited and published by Roy Tackett at 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107, USofA on a generally quarterly basis. (Nothing surprising there, you say?) Old chums, inflation has finally caught up with me. Paper is up, ink is up, stencils are up and, most of all, postage is up and going moreso. So starting with the next issue DYNATRON will cost you 50¢ per issue. Or a fanzine in trade. No freebies. No copies for letters of comment. Sorry about that but...as the used to say in Mitanni, that's the way the chariot wheel turns.

#### CONTENTS

WRITINGS IN THE SAND...wherein Roytac says little about nothing and (sigh) says it poorly this time around.....	3
ONE SHOT, NO BULLSEYE...wherein Dainis Bisenieks looks at a book...	9
ATLANTIS - SCIENCE FICTION OR FACT?...wherein David Ginsburg takes on the old myth.....	12
FEEDBACK...wherein are letters or parts thereof.....	14

The cover is by Arthur Thomson. You betchum.

Note for HWjr: It's from the files, Harry, an oldie.

DYNATRON 63

A Marinated Publication X

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Nextish: November or December.



## WRITINGS IN THE SAND

According to the biographical data in Harry Warner's All Our Yesterdays, Claude Degler was 55 years old in May of this year. That gives one pause to think. It has been more than thirty years since Cosmic Claude made his great missionary journeys around the country trying to spread his utopian gospel throughout fandom. Thirty years. How many generations of fen does that encompass?

Degler had picked up on the idea that sfans are somehow different, more intelligent for one thing, from the ordinary people among whom they live. That thought did not originate with Degler. Its beginnings are hidden far back in the mists of eofandom and I doubt that it can be said to have originated with any single fan; more likely a number of early fen came to that conclusion. Certainly the idea was tentatively put forward by a number of fans before Degler came on the scene. And if you think it is completely dead today - you haven't been reading the fanzines very closely.

The subject of mutation provided the basis for a number of sf stories in the late 30s and early 40s. Degler seized upon the concept that fans were different and concluded they must be a mutation, that the small number of fans were the vanguard of the next step up of the human race. (Fans are slans?) In his view fans were "Cosmic Men" and they, or their descendents, were destined to shake loose the bonds of Earth and spread throughout the universe.

Degler came out of Indiana as a messiah. He wanted to organize fandom into the Cosmic Circle, to encourage the CosMen to assume leadership in the world so they could fulfill their destiny. Certainly he had thoughts about building a new race of men using fans as seed. For a couple of years Degler traveled about North America, hitchhiking mostly and subsisting on very little, trying to bring his word to fans and to establish chapters of the Cosmic Circle as rallying points. He met with hostility and ridicule for the most part. World War II was raging and perhaps Degler's thoughts on Cosmic Men were too close to the Nazi concept of the Master Race although Degler was ardently anti-Nazi. He eventually gave up, it seems, and faded into fannish legend. Fandom rejected the idea of a cosmic connection and became a sort of postal version of Miss Pym's Thursday afternoon literary society.

I never had any direct contact with Degler. While he was city-hopping, I was island hopping. My souvenir copy of the program for the First Fanquet contains the scrawled signature of "Claude Degler" so I probably met him although I have no recollection of it.

In any event Degler is, for better or worse, gone from the fannish scene but the impact of this shadowy figure is still felt and his name still comes up when fans get together. And sometimes there is speculation about an alternative world of if...

Be realistic - demand the impossible.



As you have surely observed this issue of DYNATRON is somewhat late. I seriously considered simply killing the zine off or else cutting back to distribution simply through FAPA. Inflation is hurting my pocketbook and DYNATRON is something of a luxury item. The costs of stencils, paper and, above all, postage are all up and climbing higher. Still I really didn't want to break a 15 year old string and I've still got a few things to say.

I don't ordinarily discuss mundane things in these pages but a few examples of some of the recent increases in cost of living might prove instructive. Compare them to what is happening in your area.

Automobile insurance premiums jumped by more than 30%. Now automobile insurance is one of the biggest rackets in the world and if I had my druthers I'd druther not mess with it. However, I work for the federal government and must take my vehicle onto the local military reservation. The insurance companies have a good thing going--one cannot drive on federal property without insurance. An excellent example of how the government indirectly subsidizes the money business.

The Public Service Company--an inappropriate name--has for some time added a "cost of fuel adjustment" to our electric bills. One can find some justification for that because the price of the gas and coal used to fire their generators has gone up. The company recently approached the state Public Service Commission (the similarity in names would appear to be more than coincidental) with a request that they be allowed to add an "Indexing" charge to their bills. Despite protests from the public the Public Service Commission granted the request of the Public Service Company. (All that public service is beginning to get to me.) PubServCo immediately added a charge of 9½% to their bills for "Indexing" and took out large newspaper advertisements and sent out brochures to explain "Indexing" to the public. When all of the double-talk and gobbeltygook is swept away it turns out that "Indexing" is simply a scheme to guarantee the company a 9½% return over whatever profit they normally make.

An executive of PubServCo I talked to off the record admitted as much but, he said, it's necessary if we are to continue to have an electric company. It's either that or have the government take over, he said. I told him that I would opt for that alternative without a qualm. You'd still be paying for it, he said. Ah, I said, but not as much.

I think it is obvious that even after all these years of so-called government control and regulation, business still pulls the strings and our "public servants" serve only that part of the public involved in big business. "Write to your congressmen," our community leaders tell us. But I have difficulty deciding--should I write to the senator from oil or the senator from food and liquor or to the representative from insurance?

With an national election coming up next year I can think of only one bit of advice: throw out all incumbents. Do it in the primary or in the general but throw them out. And keep throwing them out. Support recalls--any recall. Impeach the bastards. Keep them off balance.

Of course, one could organize mass protests if one is not afraid of getting gassed by the National Guard.



I have on hand a letter from some outfit calling itself "Science Fiction Services and offering to sell me, for only one dollar, information on something called "SF EXPO 76" which will be the "greatest event in SF fandom." Sure.

I really can't imagine any fan, even the veriest neo, being taken in by this particular effort. The odor of fish is extremely high.

Let me say, though, that if any of Dynatron's readers are interested in such a deal, let me know. I can fix you up with some real bargains in southwestern land and some snake oil.

As those of you who get the various Albuquerque fanzines know we kid a lot about Plague and even call our local conference the Bubonicon. Plague is endemic around here and there are a few cases every year. Most are quickly diagnosed and cured. However the number of cases this year is up sharply and a couple of deaths have occurred. The latest death was from Plague in the pneumonic form rather than the bubonic form. The Public Health people are understandably concerned because pneumonic plague is, so to speak, nothing to be sneezed at. Sal diMaria works in a local biological lab and reports that chipmunks and the like suffering from the pneumonic form are being picked up in the local mountains. In New Mexico at least, old chums, the Black Death is marching.

Science fictional conversation overheard at Bubonicon 7

He (I think): Uh, like, you know.

She (I think): Oh, wow.

So much for the counter-culture.

With Bubonicon 7 out of the way the Albuquerque SF Society decided it was time for elections. Jack Speer was continued in office as Moderator by acclamation. Roy Tackett siezed the Secretary's post in a fine demonstration of democracy in action--nobody got to vote. Jeff Slaten volunteered for the Charimanship of Bubonicon 8 and we'll have more about that as plans develop.

We did manage to get to Westercon 28 although I am still of the opinion that anybody who would spend the Independence Day weekend in downtown Oakland is a little strange. Come to think of it one has to be a little strange to go into downtown Oakland at any time. Westercon 28 was...comme ci, comme ca. There were far too many small children running around loose, particularly on the elevators. There were far too many hard-looking "guards" in evidence. I suppose that in these days when all sorts of strange people are attracted to SF cons they are necessary but they are a pain in the ass. One is led to suggest that those convention functions which require the presence of guards be eliminated from the programming.

The Hugo winners, just in case you hadn't heard: The Dispossessed by LeGuin, A Song for Lya by Martin, Adrift Just Off the Islets of Langerhans by Ellison, The Hole Man by Niven. Editor: Ben Bova, Artist: Kelly Freas, Dramatic: Young Frankenstein. Fanzine: The Alien Critic (and hello to you, sponsors of the FAAAAAAAAN awards), Best fanwriter: Geis, Best fanartist: Rotsler.



"When it comes to justice we have traditionally put our faith in the ballot box and the jury box and, if they fail, the cartridge box.".....Anonymous caller on a radio program.

I have, as you know, made various remarks about the low state of science fiction in these modern days. At Westercon someone asked me if I had been reading the magazines lately. I confessed that I read ANALOG each month but hadn't looked at any of the others for quite a while. Ah, ha, I was told. You're missing the good stuff. It's in the magazines. Really?

I bought a copy of the July issue of GALAXY. The lead story is Syncope & Fugue "A Neo-Menippean Rhodomontade" by Robert Sheckley. Hmmm. I know what a syncope is and I know what a fugue is but the combination as a title is meaningless as is "a Neo-Menippean Rhodomontade." If anyone has any idea what a "Neo-Menippean Rhodomontade" is...keep it to yourself, I don't want to know. Overall Sheckley is a pretty good writer although he has a tendency towards cutesiness. That can be quite distressing. There really isn't much of a story here although there is a message that direct action is sometimes better than argument and I'll go along with that. I suppose this was bought simply to put Sheckley's name on the cover of the magazine. I can't imagine any other reason.

Then there is "A Robert Sheckley Selection" titled Eyes I Dare Not Meet In Dreams by William Chait. This one starts off: "Stately, plump Bartleby Scrip comes from the stairhead, mortally, morbidly, bored and depressed." Yes. And so am I.

Jerry Pournelle has Tinker and, hey now!, here is a fine, exciting science fiction story. Great. This one concerns a tramp freighter knocking about the asteroids. Enjoyable.

The Thinker of Tryllmynrein by Joh Des Cles concerning politics, etc., in the future is also quite readable and damned good extrapolation.

I skimmed part 3 of Helium by Arsen Darnay because it isn't easy to pick up a story two-thirds of the way through. What I did read here didn't really make we want to search out parts 1 and 2.

Finally there is Magna Wave by Sam Nicholson which is a filler. It isn't bad but it isn't anything to brag about either.

So the good stuff is in the magazines? The July GALAXY had two stories of better than average quality, one average short, and two not worth bothering with. No judgement on the serial but I wasn't impressed with what little I read of it.

But, yes, I'm going to get the next issue. Two better than average stories is more than one can find in the host of original anthologies on the stands.

And then there is Mandrill by Richard Gardner (Pocket Books #80047, \$1.25) which is an absolutely infuriating book. Gardner sketches in an extremely plausible and realistic background of a time some 25 years hence (or a little less) and then produces an utterly stupid story. This is blurbed "The compulsive fascination of Chariots of the Gods" and "A chilling novel of man's space-born origins". One must admit that Gardner was determined to touch all bases and get as broad an audience as possible. He gives us a touch of Planet of the Apes (one of the movie versions) where we find apes and monkeys pro-



grammed to do the monotonous and menial chores that men aren't fond of, although it would seem that in the examples he cites straight automation would be simpler and cheaper. He gives us big doses of Von Danniken. (Do you find Charlots of the Gods compulsively fascinating? I find it full of superstition and ignorance.)

On page 11 Gardner introduces us to one of the main characters of his story, a mandrill which weighs in at 300 pounds. THREE HUNDRED POUNDS? A big male may go to 60 pounds but 300? Oi. This 300 pound mandrill is the repository of all the world's knowledge, indeed back to the days of the dinosaurs and beyond and was one of the chief gods of the Egyptians which allows Gardner to drag in a lot of Egyptology. He, the mandrill, remembers when all the creatures were present, except man who is, apparently the result of the unnatural union between godlike spacemen and jungle apes which is why we are what we are and the mark of the beast is on us and if we could only purify the race and breed back to the spacemen and... ecch.

As is common with von Dannikenecchs and religious fundamentalists, Gardner takes all sorts of whacks at evolutionary theory, particularly as it applies to man. He tells us that evolution isn't so that, for instance, equus and eohippus existed side by side (eohippus got et?) and homo saps is no relation to any of the fossil men (ah, but to the jungle apes???).

Mandrill by Richard Gardner. Mostly garbage. Not recommended.

One has to admit that the conventional anthropological picture of the development of man is getting a bit ragged and anthropologists are tearing their hair in the light of recent discoveries. Such as the positive dating of a homo sap skull from California to 50,000 B.P. Such as homo erectus fossils from Australia dated to only 30,000 B.P. Such as some of the younger Leakey's recent finds in east Africa which seem to have "homo" existing prior to australopithecus.

There's going to be some mighty re-writing of textbooks in the near future if it gets all sorted out.

"Behold the giant anthropoid. Beware his crooked thumbs."  
--Roger Zelazny, Doorways In The Sand

If you have not read Zelazny's Doorways In The Sand you have missed a good one. Highly recommended.

And in case you haven't heard, all you Dune fans, Herbert's third Dune novel starts in the January issue of ANALOG.

Another observation in our continuing observations of possible changes in the climate: we stopped at Lake Tahoe to check on extended trail rides in the High Sierra. The guide who would take the horses out shook his head. Not this summer, he said. The snow in the upper passes was still too deep and he really didn't think it would melt enough to open the trails. In fact, he said, it snowed up there last week. That was on the 10th of July. It does, I tell you, give one pause to think.



I mentioned a couple of pages back that there was some talk of Albuquerque bidding for the 1977 Westerncon but I really do not expect to see any such bid materialize. Unless some new life is breathed into the club, Bubonicon 7 may well be the last hurrah of the Albuquerque Science Fiction Society. There seems little interest, even among the solid core of regulars, in keeping the club functioning.

I have been sitting around for weeks knowing that I should really get on with publishing this issue. I had originally intended to get it out in late July but here it is late August and all the stencils are not yet cut. Must be the summer doldrums for I note a lack of fanzines in the mailbox which indicates that fan pubbing is in a slack season. Nothing to supply the spark....

At the August meeting of the ASFS, which was held, very briefly, outside the regular meeting hall because our enthusiasm was such that no one got the key...(Mike Kring usually makes the arrangements but he made a trip to El Paso and asked Sal diMaria to get the key. Sal got sick and didn't get in touch with anyone else.)...Kring asked Vardeman if that girl reporter had gotten in touch with him. "Girl reporter?", Bob asked. "Yeah," Mike said, "she wanted to know about the club so I told her to get in touch with you."

About 10 days later I had just gotten in from work and had my head in the fridge looking for olives.

There's a Dorothy Houck wants you to call her, Chrys said.

Whoshe? I asked. Are we out of olives?

She's a reporter for the Tribune. Use those little green tomatoes.

Little green tomatoes in a martini? I poured the gin out of the makhamulkas into the glasses. Did she say what she wanted?

Something about the science fiction club. Dorothy Houck. That sounds familiar.

Houck, Arizona. Little green tomatoes?

So I called Dorothy Houck (no "c").

She had been talking to Vardeman and he referred her to me. She was, it seems, doing a feature about the local science fiction scene and the upcoming Bubonicon. Vardeman had filled her in on most of the details and had referred her to me as I "was one of the ancients and had founded the Albuquerque SF club." I pled guilty to the latter but allowed that I was just a neo compared to some others knocking about the field but she seemed to think that 40 years of interest in sf made me ancient enough to quote. She wanted to know what kept me interested in the field after all that time. "Habit," I said.

We chatted for about a half-hour about science fiction and what it was and what it wasn't and how the ASFS came to be and all that. Very pleasant although I shuddered at the thought of what her story would be when it appeared.

Which it did about a week later in the JOURNAL, not the TRIBUNE. On the whole the story wasn't bad. A few errors slipped in, more the result of the interviews being conducted by telephone than anything else, I suspect. She got some of her quotes mixed up, too, but all things considered the article came out better than I expected. Ms Houck treated her subject seriously rather than with the usual condescending tone one usually expects from the newspapers. And it was good for a half-page, too..

I wonder if little green tomatoes are what little green men put in their martinis?

R



## ONE SHOT, NO BULLSEYE

by

DAVIDS BISENIEKS

I have just read The New Atlantis, edited by Silberberg (Hawthorne Books, \$7.95). Half its content I am not likely to read again. Wow, I thought, three novellas--by Tiptree! Wolfe!! LeGuin!!! No, it's not a total loss, but a category of story defined itself in my mind, a typically disappointing feature of science fiction, the story which cannot be read more than once.

This is not quite identical with the 90% residue left by Sturgeon's Law, nor with the story (usually blessedly short) which exists only for the sake of the last line. The short ones with an idea only, one dim bulb, we can dismiss at once. But the fault is one that SF suffers from to the extent that it is a literature of ideas.

Now we wouldn't read (or write) SF if we weren't interested in ideas. Yet it's not a road on which every milestone is only to be left behind. There are stories and novels we remember with pleasure and like to return to. What makes them re-readable? A scene vividly realized; a mood; the characters; the trouble they get into and usually get out of; humor. Certainly we have to have characters, whether flat-eyed or bug-eyed.

Let me distinguish two kinds of these. One is known and remembered for the qualities of mind and character he has throughout. He does not become, he is: Sherlock Holmes, Bertie Wooster and Jeeves, Mr. Pickwick. Any of them could be imagined in many other, yet unwritten stories. In SF, Nicolas van Rijn; R. Daneel Olivaw; perhaps Barlennan. The test is whether we want new stories. Of course, we are interested also in the setting and the ideas an author can bring into the stories--especially in SF.

The other kind is revealed as a personality in the story, and if another story were called for, he would have to change, to develop further. (How many do we have in SF?) But I don't think characterization is an end in itself. A story should, first, say something about a particular person (homo sapiens or not) confronting such opposition and finding such help as the universe can be imagined to offer. And in so doing it should (I am risking being sententious) say something about Man; and any creature we can sympathetically imagine will be human.

To say something about Man; I don't mean the old pot of message, now. I mean only that the story should work on the reader, engage his feeling. He should say: That was somebody, that was; and so I cared about the victory or the defeat that came to him. It was his particular character and fate that shaped events, but they showed something about what all people desire or fear. Now that's aiming quite high, and in SF we are often satisfied with ideas and deeds even if we don't get really good characters of either kind. Action is a staple of popular fiction; well, at least it does not face us with images of the Futility of It All.

But science fiction, as a literature of ideas, can imagine a universe in which man is not the free and independent creature he fancies himself. We have had stories by Heinlein and McConnell in which he is no more than a laboratory culture. We have had various novels by Vonnegut--so it goes--distinguished at least by wit and invention. I can re-read Vonnegut's books, but my pleasure is mixed with vexation; for surely the idea of the futility of human effort cannot be contemplated with pleasure.



Whatever interest the works of, say, Kafka or Greene hold, they do not give the kind of literary pleasure I look for. I felt sick at heart for two days after reading Orient Express--and that was one of Greene's "entertainments". Almost all modern novels I have tried reading disappointed me more profoundly than did the commonplace failures of commonplace SF. The SF was merely bad: some of the mainstream fiction was evil.

I come at last to Tiptree's "A Momentary Taste of Being", taking up half the book--ninety pages of unsightly sans-serif type. It is the story of an interstellar expedition on an urgent quest of a newhome for humanity. A planet has been found, and the exploration teams don't seem to be twlling the whole truth. A life-form has been brought back, again under disturbing circumstances, and when it is brought forth for examination all the crew (except the narrator) fall prey to an irresistible attraction. The narrator at the end offers his explanation. Will I spoil the story if I tell you the secret? Yes, probably. Well, then, I won't. But then it's a one-shot story? Yes, probably.

The story does have characterization: its persons are individualized; the relations among them (including sexual) have variety. One can contemplate the increasing departures from the norm under the influence, as is revealed bit by bit, of the alien life form. Call it a typical modern SF puzzle story. But I cannot name any kind of literary pleasure that I got from it. The characters all got "wasted", but I did not find their fate tragic because they never attained the needed stature. Nor did the story offer me the fascination of strangeness that we look for in SF. I felt let down. I cannot imagine anyone reading it for the pleasure of its total effect.

Ursula Le Guin's "The New Atlantis", 26 pages (a novella???) could be called an eco-doom story, with symbolic or at least enigmatic overtones. Its this-worldly thread takes place in America, in a despoiled world like that alluded to in several stories of the Hainish cycle. Everyone's lives are regimented by a bureaucracy; meretricious things have fancy names. A woman is returning from an obligatory sort of vacation, "Wilderness Week", and finds her husband, a mathematical physicist, back from Rehabilitation Camp. He has found a cheap way to get power, much power, from sunlight, but the Authorities wish to suppress it. He meets with some colleagues, and they joyously-sadly talk of what could be done for the world.

And here is where the two threads of the story join up. For the oceans have been rising, new continents about to appear in their centers while the old lands, earthquake-shaken, subside. In italicized inset passages, mysterious beings tell of the return of time and light to their world and anticipate how "the water will break and stream white down the white sides of the towers, and run down the steep streets into the sea." The physicists seem in a mysterious way to know of this. So the old ruined continents are doomed, for all the optimism purveyed by the Authorities, and the narrator thinks of leaving her story in a bottle on the hillside where it will float away...

What kind of pleasure do I get from this story? What does it tell me about the human spirit?

The attraction of the puzzle, seeing how the parts fit together.

The characters have dignity in their suffering. It has been the author's forte to show this. It's one strong reason I can re-read her work. The style is another.

I confess to an impatience with eco-doom stories, though, whether they can be treated as prophecy, warning, or symbol. I detested The Sheep Look Up. I was deeply unhappy with the chemical salvation offered in Stand on Zanzibar. Yet why shouldn't



fiction contemplate a bad future? Surely many evils are possible, and acquaintance with their nature would be all to the good? And, for that matter, SF doesn't have to treat of probable worlds only, does it?

Maybe someone else can explain why those objections are valid. I'm not reconciled to doom; I'm tired, by now, of having my nose rubbed in the dirt that humanity can produce. So what we'll come to if we don't watch out! Dare I say the picture is exaggerated, that America could not convincingly become the bureaucratic state shown here? I do. The dignity shown in the central characters is diminished by the lack of it in those who made their world: men of straw for all that I can see. Or mere symbols, like the characters of Kafka? I don't know when I've been in the mood for Kafka...

Gene Wolfe's "Silhouette", some 50 pages, is far-out-science fiction, a story of an exploration ship beset by factions that believe in occult powers. I cannot say I understood it after one reading, nor might I be able to do it justice in a summary even after several. Those who liked "The Fifth Head of Cerberus" and "The Death of Dr. Island" may like this one: Wolfe is good at creating a mood of strangeness by the portrayal of settings and types of people that are really different. Several readings might be needed before the puzzle clicks satisfyingly into shape; do we have here the new van Vogt? But I have the feeling the story is slightly overpopulated: no character stood out after my reading as did those of "The New Atlantis".

I don't want to make a law, to define what a writer may not surprise and please me with. But what does it take then to redeem a story about the defeat of humanity? How are we touched by the fates of the people in such a story? What if the N.I.C.E. had won? Or Sauron? Or Boskone?

XXXXX

DAINIS BISENIEKS



# ATLANTIS - SCIENCE FICTION OR FACT?

by

DAVID D. GINSBURG

Mankind has long been fascinated by the myth of Atlantis. 1700 items written about Atlantis were accounted for in 1926. Today it's been estimated that the number is 5000. The first mention of Atlantis, and the source for all subsequent descriptions, is the Timaeus and Critias of Plato (c. 350 B.C.). Some have considered this to be the first science fiction story. On the other hand, there does appear to be some basis of fact in Plato's account. In this paper I will examine Plato's account of Atlantis in view of the knowledge possessed by classical Greece, and attempt to separate his fictionalizing from the facts. A reading of the Timaeus and the Critias would be helpful.

There is strong evidence that the origins of the myth lie in the volcanic explosion of Thera and the consequent destruction of Minoan Crete in 1470 B.C. Minoan civilization was advanced and a sea power. Crete is in some respects physically similar to Plato's description. Also it has been shown that Thera could have resembled Plato's concentric description of Atlantis. Bulls seem to be of some significance in both Plato's account and Cretan portrayals. It is possible, however, that the above details were merely grafted to an already existent deluge myth because of their similarities. The ultimate origin of the myth may lie buried far back in the history of man.

But what happened to the story between then and the time Plato told it? There is no trace of the story before Plato. There is no evidence to prove Plato's assertion that there was a written record in the Egyptian temple. There is no reason to necessarily believe that the story came from Egypt and the Greek world was unaware (or had forgotten) the Thera explosion. Perhaps Plato introduced this pedigree of the myth to add credence to his story, for the classical Greeks revered the ancient wisdom of the Egyptians.

It is my opinion that the Atlantis story was a rather obscure folktale (whether or not it did in fact come from Egypt), and in any case was transmitted by word of mouth, not by writing. This would account for the garbled and exaggerated nature we find it in, and for the apparent introduction of "foreign" elements (e.g. suggestions of America, Tartessos, etc.). Plato continually emphasizes the oral nature of the story. In the Timaeus Critias explains that the story was handed down in his family, and in the Critias he states that the story was told to him as a child and hopes that he can remember it.

The displacement of the island from the Mediterranean to the west could be attributed to the unwillingness of the Greeks to accept such an advanced civilization in their own backyard, and the Pillars of Hercules marked the limit of their geographical knowledge. Carthage, an imperialistic sea power in classical times, was to the west of the Greek world and could have also been incorporated into the Atlantis story. The Carthaginian warships blocked Greek access to the western Mediterranean, thus accounting for the Greeks' hazy knowledge of, and semi-fabulous opinion of this area. In Plato's account, it should be remembered, Atlantis had become a vicious state and tried to conquer the entire Mediterranean. The explanation that Crete was west of Egypt where the story is said to have originated, is possible, but not necessary.



I don't think that Plato made up the story himself and is writing science fiction as deCamp asserts. Rather, it is my opinion that Plato recognized that the myth represented a factual basis, and attempted to synthesize the truth from the garbled story he heard. In other words, Plato is not the originator of the myth, but he is the first of many hundreds to attempt to extract the truth from the myth. I think this accounts for the manner in which Plato presents his dialog. Plato presents Atlantis as "logos" (logos being a true account), not "myth", because he is trying to present the truth behind the myth. This is important. Usually Plato lets us know when he is relating a myth. Atlantis he presents as truth.

We know that Plato believed it proper to lie in certain cases (i.e. "the noble lie"). And this is just what he is doing in the Critias. For some reason (possibly to add credence to his account) he felt it necessary to give details of this great Atlantean civilization, and none, of course, being available, he made them up himself. For this reason I don't think we should give much credence to the fantastic description of Atlantis presented in the Critias, and should rely only on the brief account presented in the Timaeus. In any case, whatever Plato's actual reasons were for giving up, the mere fact that he did leave the Critias incomplete should warn us not to rely too heavily upon it.

So what do we have left now? We have an island, larger than Libya and Africa, outside the Pillars of Hercules, and a brief account of the war between Athens and Atlantis and their subsequent destruction as allegedly reported by the Egyptian priests. Nothing very improbable about that. We have a fanciful description of Atlantis, which should be treated with skepticism. And we have hundreds of even more fanciful descriptions, explanations, meanings, etc., of Atlantis from the enthusiasts and nuts that have followed.

The vast array of conflicting, yet apparently equally valid, theories derived from the myth may be confusing. Yet, one cannot expect a folktale to be consistent. Actual recent occurrences are commonly added to an old folktale if it fits. What results is a tale based on facts from diverse times and places. Such contradictions should not lessen one's evaluation of the individual elements of the story, or the story as a whole. Atlantologists have discovered many diverse locations for Atlantis based on such evidence. For this reason it is irrelevant to actually come out and say "Atlantis was here." All one can do is evaluate and trace back the various elements in the story. I personally believe that Minoan Crete is a major element in the story. There are many supporting facts, and few inconsistencies. But it is impossible to determine the original story. Perhaps the Minoan Crete element is just the latest imprint on an ancient deluge legend. Among those trying to "find" Atlantis, either everyone is wrong, or everyone is right.

What does all this have to do with "belief" in Atlantis? Not very much. There exists a rational explanation for every element of the myth - some of which we have already discovered; some of which we will discover; and some of which will always remain in the realm of conjecture. So what? After all is explained we are left with Minoan Crete (or something else), not Atlantis. It is impossible to prove the existence of Atlantis. Atlantis never existed except in the minds of men.

DAVID D. GINSBURG

XXXX



## FEEDBACK

Wherein you get to have your say--and so do I ((like this))

IAN R. BUTTERWORTH  
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CHEADLE HULIE,  
CHEADLE, CHESHIRE SK8 5JW  
UNITED KINGDOM

First off, thanks again for Dynatron, and secondly may I say how disappointed I am, I can usually find something to disagree with in any zine, but, I am sad to say you have let me down. I am stuck for words!

There was nothing in the least objectionable in the whole issue, not a single outlandish idea or suggestion. I am most disappointed. May, I am heartbroken, I thought I could depend on you to find something to run away with but it seems I was badly mistaken.

You have conformed.

Exactly what to I am not sure, but whatever it is I am sure of one thing. I don't like it. Get back to being outrageous. I enjoyed that. ((maybe I am just getting mellow in my old age. RT))

PETER ROBERTS  
6 WESTBOURNE PARK VILLAS  
LONDON W2, U.K.

I must applaud your attempt to revive the ancient verb "to waint"; however, you messed it up, sirrah! "I look forward to Jeff Kipper's much wainted cover for DYNATRON 62"

- that's the correct usage, and if anyone disagrees they will get the Oxford Dictionary rammed down their throats. One volume at a time...

Speaking of which, I have to disagree with you on the "clarity and success" of Jackie Franke's comments on science fiction. For example, her statement that "it does not stand to reason that, ipso facto, because a person can write, he will write good SF" is undeniably true, but hardly worth printing. After all, my grandmother could write but...

And although we in Britain have long sighed over the degeneracy of American English, Jackie Franke's line about "persons with aspirations toward literateness" still takes some stomaching, even if it's possible to deduce the meaning from the context as "people with aspirations to literariness."

So, I'm afraid Jackie Franke would fail an English course; but she might well pass a science fiction one, judging by Pat McCraw's letter. (See how neatly I'm tying together this loc? I'll beat you yet, Glicksohn!) This is one point on which I firmly agree with you, Roy - from what I've seen, sf courses in schools are easy options for those who are likely to fail standard English. Pat McCraw says this isn't true and that she for one failed students in an sf course she taught. Why? Because they "refused to open a book". Yes, they actually had to read a book to pass. Gosh, what high standards!

Find you, I have to admit that I'm envious. After all, I had to wade through Piers Plowman and that wasn't exactly fascinating. Good for you, though - like cold showers and ten mile runs...

As for your concluding remarks on the spread of fanzines outside fandom itself, surely you're missing the main point? Namely that collectors, dealers, librarians, and other mercenary beings will move in and buy up aged (and even recent) fanzines thereby depriving fandom of its old fanzines and its personal heritage. I know that's one of the major fears that Harry Warner has voiced, and I also know that's already happening: there are several elderly fanzines which are now priced by mundane standards (limited first editions) because they happen to contain some oddment by a newly respectable or cult author. These fanzines are virtually unobtainable now - they've left fandom and disappeared into some collector's attic or library vault. And they've gone for hard cash too - I was recently offered £3.00 (\$10 or so) each for some old, but not particularly rare fanzines, and it's hard to refuse that. Fanzines can be worth a lot of money - and not to fans, but outsiders. So it's not a fear of censorship, Roy, nor any concern over the dubious contents of fanzines, but rather the



increasing possibility of a Big Discovery of fanzine that's worrying me. It's a ready-made field for bird-brained collectors who've amassed all the stamps, beer mats, and matchbox labels that they can.

←(That is a distinct possibility. We are getting more and more of that type around the fringes of fandom. The programming for Don Markstein's "World Fan Convention" makes it appear to be more of a "pop culture" event than one related to science fiction. // I expect that English English and American English will diverge rather rapidly due to the de-emphasis of literacy in this country. We even have university professors declaring that reading isn't necessary any more. Many secondary schools no longer teach; they have become a kind of institutionalized social club where young people go to be amused. The student who genuinely wants to learn has a hard time of it and must do most of it outside the regularly scheduled classes. Far too many universities, particularly the state-supported schools, have gone along with the idea that everybody should have a degree, earned or not. A few are belatedly attempting to increase entrance requirements which has brought a protest from the people in charge of the secondary schools. When one talks to school administrators about the uneducated mobs they are turning out the usual reply is, "what are we to do with them? We have to keep them in school until they are 18 and you can't force them to learn. At least it keeps them off the streets." It is rather frightening.)→

DOHN BRAZIER  
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ST. LOUIS, MO. 63131

Someday there may be a FANZINE REGISTRY BUREAU to which all faneds must:

1. Buy a permit.
2. Submit a copy of the current issue.
3. Wait for mailing approval and the appropriate number to add to the mailing side of the zine, no closer than 1/8 inch to or no further than 1/2 inch from the postage stamp.
4. And a list of subscribers/readers sent to the bureau after the mailing.

DAINIS BISEWIEKS  
413 HAWTHORNE AVE.  
AMES, IOWA 50010

3 days from date of postmark (6th day) ain't bad. But I recall the LOCUS which arrived before the postmarked date.

Hey, I remember "Old Man Atom"! 1949, you say? That was my first year in the states - I was reading Buck Rogers in borrowed Sunday funnies. You recall the football game where Buck (I believe) leaped from the head of the old automaton onto the ball...but no SF yet: budgetary difficulties.

Still, I was destined to be a fan. I recall a radio program I heard in 1944 in German-occupied Latvia, about a rocket trip to the moon. (At the end, it turned out a dream, as the rocket was about to crash). A few years later, in Germany, there was a marionette play about a rocket to Mars. So at length Heinlein and the early Conklin anthologies...

Speaking of flood-gates of memory, didn't Snowball At Perihelion in the June ANALOG remind you of various George O. Smith stories, vintage 1945? (I read them in 1955.)

If the ability to stay awake all night is the sign of a true fan, I am not one. I tried it at my first few conventions: it took me a week to recover from the Detention. At Minicon 10 last month, I turned in between one and two a.m. sober No fighting heredity: I am just naturally for the temperate life.

←(In my case it isn't heredity - it is age. I'm getting too old for all night sessions. RT)→



JODIE OFFUTT  
FUNKY FARM  
WALDEMAN, KENTUCKY  
40329

Every now and then I write poetry. It's usually real moody stuff, the result of some sort of trauma. Fortunately, I don't suffer much trauma. Or, it's very clever, and funny, inspired. But writing poetry is hard work. I find it extremely mentally taxing. No, I'm not putting you on - I'm glad I don't have to make my living writing poetry. I'd rather turn tricks.

Did you see David McCallum as the invisible man? - Neither did I.

The thing that gets me about Castonada is that after all that time (years!) and all those books, he's not willing to say what's what. You'd think he'd be prepared to be positive about some of that stuff!

You know, you're right. ((Naturally.)) I'm 99% middle class and my "dabble in the offbeat and glamour" consisted recently of teaching a weekly Yoga class at the public library for ten weeks. My youngest daughter went with me most of the time; Missy says I was a "cool yogini."

((Yes. Well. Whatever that may be. Certainly good poetry is hard work--which is why there is so little of it around these days. Far too many "poets" (fan-nish or otherwise) think "poetry" consists of putting words on paper in a non-linear fashion and if the meaning is obscure so much the better. Nope.))

BEN P. IIDICK  
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TEANECK, NEW JERSEY  
07666

Don't you realize, if you get that free trip you'll have to:

- (1) pay to take along your wife and her pet chihuahua
- (2) buy a new suit (finally!) (and her a new suit, coat, hat, galoshes and a bumbershoot)
- (3) take many pictures which must be subsequently paid for
- (4) get smallpox shots

Dainis writes nobly, but, in truth,

- (1) it took writers a long time to escape sugar-coated science writing
  - (2) writers of sincerity must mirror their age and even its writing-vogue styles.
- Hopefully, a genuine science (or fantasy in straight fantasy) will permeate their work, but this is an age which tends to drown humanism in psychology. I suspect most writers, including SF writers, are pro-humanism. ((But the search for knowledge is a human characteristic.))

SAMUEL LONG  
BOX 4946  
PATRICK AFB, FLA.  
32925

Page 3: shouldn't that be "brekkkkkkkkk OX, OX"? Aristophanes has a more antique authority than K. Kinnison. ((That's for the birds.)) And 'pasm my word, I'd-a thought we've got enough ad hoc committees without ABQfndm adding to them and committing the heinous sin of mixing hock beer with hock wine, even if only metaphorically. I got a zine from the Ontario SFC, a clubzine, called SYMBASE, not long ago. I guess fanzine names follow the old heraldic rule that it's not permissible for more than one person in the same country to bear the same arms, but it is permissible for people in different countries to bear the same arms, which is why the Hay Earls of Errol and the Hay Earls of Carlisle in Scotland and England respectively, can bear the same arms, namely Argent, three escutcheons gules.

Dainis Bisenicks' article was right good - so thoro, in fact, that I find it hard to make any penetrating remarks about it. But I share his dislike for authors who are too lazy to make their characters any but 20th century Euro-Americans, no matter that the novel is set in the past (historical novels) or the future (SF, typically) or in a distant present (exotic settings). It takes a very good author to make his writing and his characters fit the times they are supposed to be in. Robert Graves is quite successful at this. For example, in his novels set in C17 England and C18 America, he was careful to use words only of those periods.



Hmm, I see by my records that I've already discussed the Atlantis question with you at length. But your sunken land in the Atlantic is a false lead, I'm afraid, since the continental shelf around Africa is narrow, and the continents of North America and Europe and Africa have been thousands of miles apart for millions of years now, and the Cape Verde and the Canaries and the Madieras were never considered Atlantean even by the Ancients. So your Atlantis theory isn't "as good as any other."

Denny Lien: I suppose VERTEX is printed on a flatbed press...and POEBIUS TRIP is printed on both sides of its pages...and RANDOM is highly organized...and the Os-teen University Press is not located in Osteen...

{{The narrowness of the continental shelf is a relative matter. What is narrow? I did not imply any connection between American civilizations and Atlantis, merely that the Meso-American civilizations were examples of a high stone age culture.}}

Norm HOCHBERG  
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NEW YORK, N.Y. 10003

I've been trying to figure out a few things: 1 - why it's taken me two months to get and loc DYNATRON 61, and 2 - what HORT stands for.

The answer to the first dawns on me - I've been working FULL time on a film for General Electric as well as involved in a lengthy set of preparations for my wedding to a non-fan (fortunately, or unfortunately, depending upon your view of things).

The solution to puzzle #2 is more elusive. Honorable Old Roy Tackett? Horrible Old Roy Tackett? Hoary Old Roy Tackett? His 'Onor Roy Tackett? Heavenly Old Roy Tackett? {{Right the second time: Horrible Old Roy Tackett, an appellation I acquired from an Elephant.}}

The question is: are you old? {{Yup.}} And, if so, why? {{Because of the miles.}} I thought fans were all young. {{Well, most fen have never progressed beyond adolescence mentally.}}

As to whether fans eventually settle down to a safe job - I'm not sure that that isn't true of almost anyone. True, lots of people settle down to safe jobs almost immediately. And some fans perennially seem to drift between jobs (Andy Porter just lost his job in N.Y. - which is not perennially but..., many fans are also pro writers with less than secure jobs.).

I do think that most people eventually secure themselves in a relatively safe position. Very few people (fans included) can take the up-and-down insecurities in jobs without such security.

Jackie Franke sure does get excited about this SF business (and I am putting those two capital letters in bigger caps), doesn't she. I agree with some of what she says ("SF is a gestalt, after all.") but I find that statement interesting in the light that she spells PLOT with all upper case letters. I read and enjoyed The Dispossessed without really find it sf. I can read The Mote in God's Eye, an sf work - no doubt, or Ringworld, without enjoying it. I've made these same points to Hank Davis and others, but I don't feel that one gets enjoyment from purely one sources - plot, theme, style, characterization, etc. Especially for me, enjoyment comes from watching the writer capably juggle all of these diverse elements. Good writers do it better than poor writers.

Rah rah rah Jodie offutt. More booksheIf space! Someone should make/edit/publish/write a book like THE WHOLE FANNISH CATALOG which would list manufacturers, ideas, and building plans for all fannish needs, including(expandable) bookshelves.

And I'd like to say hello to Jake, Chester, Darrell, Bill, Gil, Sheryl, Neal, Ross, Ben and the others in the WAHF. Be assured that though no one (save HORT - whoever that is) can read your letters, someone is reading your names.



HARRY WARNER, JR.  
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Your reading list flabbergasts me. It contains as much historical writing as I've read in the last eight or ten years, perhaps, unless you should somehow count biographies and books about movies and such thing as history. Matter of fact, I don't remember reading anything on your list except for The Wheels of If many years ago, and I don't think any of the books are in the stacks of unread stuff.

You may be losing some of the surface noise on the taped versions of those old records through a slight loss of extremely high frequencies. Much of the steady hissing and spasmodic clicking that comes from worn old 78's is rich in very high frequencies, and the record companies that transfer them to lp's usually utilize a filter which electronically removes the sound where it hertz the most. Since 78 rpm records didn't capture the highest audible portions of the reproduced music, there's no great change in the musical content. Your little essay on Old Man Atom shows how things are changing, though. The last time that a local radio station caused a fuss by banning a record in Hagerstown was the time about a year ago when one station refused to program that Canadian writer's spoken paean of praise to the United States. I think this is known technically as a 180 degree turn in national attitudes to stuff.

Incidentally, I was playing some old recently acquired 78's myself last week and I encountered a wonderful mystery. An old Pathe disc containing Vernon Dalhart sounds to my ears as if there's a drum beating time for his country music, and everything I've read about country music indicates that drums are a modern heresy that was decades in the future when this was recorded. But I'm not sure; it could be a foot tapping the time or even a double bass being plucked on notes too low to be audible as specified frequencies.

It's curiously hard to comment on Dainis Bisenicks' article. He sounds so authoritative on every topic he brings up, and my knowledge of the totality of mundane fiction contains so many enormous gaps that I would probably make even more of a fool of myself than normally if I tried to expound on his points.

John Carl's defense of the postal service overlooks the fact that first class postage, which he says would rise 400% to finance improvements, will have advanced 400%, in all probability, by the end of this year: reports indicate a 12 cents minimum fee for first class mail, compared with three cents a while back. I don't think anyone contends first class mail handling has improved along with the higher rate. It's the same old argument that was used when the big energy crisis struck: if the price of gasoline goes high enough, consumption will go down, we were assured, so it's almost doubled in a few years and it has begun to climb again and the last I heard, consumption was greater than ever. Raising the postage rates opens the door to enormous pressure for higher salaries for postal workers, negating most of the increased income, just as the higher gasoline rates affected the cost of living which is a major factor in determining wages and union contracts, and therefore people had more money to spend on the more expensive gas.

If melting glaciers caused Atlantis to go under, wouldn't this process have been quite tedious and stretched-out? Unless you consider it an island whose inhabitants somehow hadn't developed the knack of sailing long distances, there should have been plenty of time for the more timid inhabitants to flee to safety on some other land mass, as they saw their homeland vanishing under the water over the years. If some of them did escape, then there should have been some survival of their knowledge, language, crafts, and such things in the area where geographical considerations forced them to go.

Jeffrey Kipper is either a new name or an old one whom my leaking memory has let loose. I liked his cover, anyway, more at third and fourth glance than at first glance. It looks stiff and awkward at first, and then if looked at a few more times it begins to look more effective that way, something like the details of a section of a freize or a frieze



or whatever they spell the things that run along the big building at the point where the wall says to the ceiling, "I'll meet you at the corner."

((Yes. Whatever. Had a few problems with Jeff Kipper's cover. It was somewhat oversize to begin with and Albq Duplicator Supply, being a Gestetner house, seems to have problems getting things high up on the 4 hole electrostencils. Dunno if this is a flaw in their technique on in their machines. Whichever, I invariably lose the bottom on full-page electrostencils. I should, I suppose, look for a new place to have my electrostencils made.

I note that some official has recommended that first class postage be cut to 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ and the cost of 2d, 3d and 4th class raised. First class is overpriced, he says, because it is used to subsidize the others. The system is strange. You noted that #62 took 16 days to reach you but it reached Peoria and other exotic points in the middle-west in only 3 days. I suppose that the basic problem is the sheer volume of the mail these days. The direct-mail advertising comes out of the area around Chicago by the trainload. And the proud boast of the USPS is that its new business-like operation has managed to reduce the number of postal employees by many thousands. Less people attempting to handle more mail equals decreased efficiency.

The idea that increased cost of gasoline results in less consumption might work if we had a decent system of public transportation in this country. Which we don't and there is, seemingly, little being done to establish one. It represents only a financial hardship for most of us, particularly here in the west where the distances between where we are and where we want to go are relatively far. I have attempted to cut back on driving as much as possible but that really hasn't amounted to much. The result is that money budgeted for other things has had to be diverted to gasoline. The oil companies are getting richer at the expense of other industries and that may have had some bearing on the "recession".

Chamber of Commerce types around here are beginning to show some concern. A large percentage of New Mexico's income is from tourism and the higher costs of gasoline (plus the 55mph speedlimit) is having a marked effect on the number of tourists. And that hurts. As an example, one large motel chain which has/had two motels in Albuquerque had plans, about three years ago, to build a third on the west side of the city. Those plans have been abandoned and the chain has sold one of the two others. All of that has quite an effect--a cutback in planned construction means that construction workers are out of a job...it spreads.

If we postulate that Atlantis was located in the Mediterranean basin then the inundation could have been rather sudden. There is a ridge between the Pillars of Hercules which could have served to block a lowered Atlantic Ocean. When sea level rose it would have spilled over this natural dam. I doubt that there were any advanced sailing techniques around the end of the last glaciation. And as for the survival of language and culture--perhaps it did...at least until the Aryans migrated into western Europe.

Egad! All that is left of this page is a few lines for Ed Cox to doodle in.))



In case some keenly observant reader is wondering what happened to pages 18 and 19--they were printed in the 37th Chrop Dimension. Complete with a typo there.

Since completing page 2 we have had some second thoughts on the price of future issues. 50¢ is a bit high at the moment. Starting with the next issue Dynatron will cost 35¢ each or three for one dollar. Or a trade. And considering some of the stuff that has come in of late I want to point out that I have no interest in comix fanzines and will not trade for them.

RT

FROM

Roy Tackett  
915 Green Valley Road NW  
Albuquerque, N.M. 87107



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