

DYNATRON

Number 81

A fanzine of sorts concerned mostly with science fiction, fantasy, fandom, or whatever else crosses the editor's mind while he is pondering the imponderable and plausing the implausible.

Published at uncertain intervals on a variable schedule and available through FAPA, FLAP, for a letter of comment or 50¢ from

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A Marinated Publication
dated June, 1984

+++++is to die in your sleep+++++

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SCRIBBLINGS IN THE DUST

The general won the Croix de Guerre, parlee voo.
The general won the Croix de Guerre, parlee voo.
The general won the Croix de Guerre.....

As a retired sergeant of marines I am aware of the importance of medals and decorations in the military scheme of things. These little bits of metal and colored cloth are of particular significance to career personnel for, despite their smallness, they carry great weight when it comes to promotions and important assignments.

The trouble is that in these "peaceful" days they are hard to come by. All sorts of excuses for awarding medals are searched for. Hell, they even give them out for completing basic training these days. I suppose that is something of an accomplishment. At the base where I work some of the airforce personnel manage to collect more ribbons on their first enlistment than I did in 20 years of service. Well, mine were all combat related but I don't know if that makes any difference these days. So it is really no great surprise to learn that the Army passed out 8,612 medals and commendations for the 1983 Grenada operation. That little skirmish took nine days and involved 7,000 troops. 7000 troops. 8612 medals. Well, no, that's not more than one medal per troop. The Army says many of the medals were to support and staff personnel who got nowhere near Grenada. 50 of them went to people who never got outside the Pentagon.

As I said, medals (for combat) are hard to come by and ya gotta grab 'em when ya can. Things don't change much.

.....the son of a bitch was never there.
Hinkey dinkey parlee voo.

World War I Song

Personal affairs recently required a visit to the San Francisco Bay area. Caught a Wien Air Alaska direct flight from Albuquerque to Oakland. ((Oakland!???)) Picked up a car, drove across to the other side of the Bay. In need of things nicotinish I dropped in at the Bay Book and Tobacco Company (a most fortuitous combination) in Belmont. A book caught my eye: TEN YEARS BEYOND BAKER STREET by Cay Van Ash. I dislike paying out \$15 for a book but I could not pass up the chance to read about Sherlock Holmes matching wits with the Diabolical Dr. Fu Manchu. Indeed not.

The narrator of this one is not the good Dr. Watson but rather Dr. Petrie who seeks out Holmes because Nayland Smith is once again in the clutches of Fu Manchu. And Fu Manchu is once again on the verge of destroying the British Empire. A rousing adventure involving two of the great characters of fiction. I think you might enjoy it. I did. Pip Pip and all that rot.

Cay Van Ash is Rohmer's

biographer.

All things considered it was an appropriate book to buy.

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Touching lightly upon some recent issues of the prozines:

ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE, May 1984. Press Enter by John Varley is another of those horror stories about things that lurk in the computers. Varley does a good job with it, the characters are interesting and the story telling keeps you reading. And that is the only yarn worth while in this issue. The rest of it is filler and not good filler at that.

AMAZING SCIENCE FICTION STORIES, July 1984. Combined with FANTASTIC they say and it is probably just as well that they do for most of the stories belong in FANTASTIC and not in AMAZING. Main items are Shaggy Vengeance by Robert Adams, a buffalo fantasy and The Distressing Damsel, an amusing twisted fairy tale by David Langford. The rest of it is easily forgotten. And should be.

ANALOG, June 1984. Part 2 of Vernor Vinge's The Peace War continues an interesting story of a fractured America, a peace enforced by the Peace Authority, and the mysterious Bobbles which are containing all those atomic explosions. Summer Solstice by Charles L. Harness has an alien who resembles the god Horus arriving in Egypt in time to assist Eratosthenes announce that the world is indeed a large sphere. (Elaspheme!) The short stories are, thank ghu, short.

FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, May 1984. The conclusion of Hilbert Schenck's Steam Bird is of major interest to steam buffs and otherwise fair to middling. The rest of the yarns are above average for what is being written these days.

Yes, I do still read the prozines and actually prefer them to the mass of books that flood the newsstands. On the whole I find the prozines more readable and certainly of greater variety. If you don't subscribe to them, you should. There are yarns by old names and new names, by big names and by names nobody ever heard of before. The stories are refreshing and if I gave some of them short shrift above you have to remember that I've been reading this stuff for half a century. I did enjoy most of them even though I don't wax all that enthusiastic about them. ANALOG is still the best for science fiction. F&SF is still tops for the more literate yarns. AMAZING has its problems but still struggles along and manages an occasional gem. ASIMOV'S seems currently on the bottom with a variety of senseless stories. Yarns like Varley's come often enough to redeem it.

Spread the word to those fans youknow who know how to read -- read the prozines.

THE LEGACY OF SEXISM

by

ARTHUR H. RAPP

Dick Eney's *FANCYCLOPEDIA II* (1959) states, under the topic "Sex": "The great majority of fans are male, and it has been asserted that females cannot be the psychological type of the SF fan, tho there are many femmefans to refute this. In addition there are sweethearts, wives, daughters, sisters, etc., of male fans who tag along at fan gatherings, make some appearance in the fanzines, and assist in dirty work like mimeoing." A decade later (1975) the list of fans whose names appeared on the SAPS roster and waiting list during the period 1968-1974 contains only 17 femmefans out of a total of 123, and of that 17 only three or four had been fans in their own right: the rest became involved with SAPS because their husbands were members or potential members.

One might expect that things have changed in the past decade. After all, since the Sixties and Seventies we've had the rise of Women's Lib, the invasion of the primarily female Trekkies, and the growing respectability of science-fiction as a genre of literature worthy of study by academicians and teachers of English, a large proportion of at least the latter group being female.

Nonetheless (barring the possibility that I'm utterly ignorant of vast areas of the current fan scene), the feminine sex still comprises only a small proportion of the total fan population, and an even smaller proportion of the fans who produce or contribute to fanzines.

My hypothesis, which conforms to Eney's view, is that most boys enter fandom because they find fanactivity more interesting than any other way of spending their time: whereas most girls enter fandom because of interest in or marriage to a male fan. This is not to dispute that there are many past and present exceptions to the generalization: active and enthusiastic femmefans who discovered this hobby independently of male influence. There are also an indefinite number of male "fandom groupies" whose only interest in fandom seems to be the opportunities for socializing that it provides. The fact remains that the proportion of female to male actifen is far less than the female-male sex ratio in the general population.

A pertinent opinion from outside fandom is to be found in "Sex-Role and Parental Identification", a paper by psychologist David B. Lynn in *CHILD DEVELOPMENT*, 1962, 33, pp 555-564. Lynn points out that during infancy and early childhood the majority of children spend more time with their mothers and later with female primary-school teachers than with any adult male. In consequence, Lynn hypothesises, both boys and girls initially identify with the female parent. Later, however:

"Boys, but not girls, must shift from this initial identification with the mother to masculine identification. The girl has the same-sex parental model for identification (the mother) with her more than the boy has the same-sex model (the father) with him. Much incidental learning takes place from the girl's contact with her mother which she can apply directly in her life.

"However, despite the shortage of male models, a somewhat stereotyped and conventional masculine role is nonetheless spelled out for the boys, e.g., by his mother and women teachers in the absence of his father and male teachers."

None of this information is very startling to anyone who possesses even a superficial acquaintance with the problem of sex bias in our society. But Lynn goes on to make a deduction from his hypothesis, one which goes a long way toward explaining the male-dominated nature of fandom as well as many other cultural areas:

"It is postulated that the task of achieving these separate kinds of identification for each sex requires separate methods of learning ... the problem and the lesson.

"With a problem to master the learner must explore the situation and find the goal before his task is fully presented. In the case of a lesson, the problem-solving phase is omitted or at least minimized."

Thus, the psychologist argues, while boys learn to think in terms of problems to be formulated and solved, girls learn to acquire information in the context of a rewarding personal relationship. *"Consequently, females will tend to demonstrate greater need for affiliation than males."*

Of course, the generation of children whose sexist indoctrination in ways of thinking Lynn described in 1962 are the young adult fans of today. Need we be surprised, then, that it is primarily males who are fascinated by science-fiction, the literature of problem solving par excellence? Neither should we wonder at the fact that the girlfriends and wives of those males, in order to share the interests of their men, participate in the social aspects of fandom, but comparatively seldom become involved in the intellectual speculation and communication of viewpoint which, to actifen, is in great measure what fandom is all about.

Perhaps, a decade or two further down the timestream, femlib efforts to erase sexist bias in childhood education may have paid off in the form of a science-fiction fandom more wqually balanced between male and female actifen. Such would probably be a vastly different fandom than we have today.

Viva le difference!

ART RAPP

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MORE WRITINGS IN THE SAND:

I tell you I am glad that I am not a writer. Oh, they lead horrible lives. I read all these sad stories in Dick Geis' SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW and Andy Porter SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE about how all of these writers are having such a tough time of it, getting their writings published and all that sort of thing. Nothing quite as sad, though, as the UPI story concerning one Stephen Astor, described as "a Los Altos, Calif., physician" who wrote this sci-fi (yes!) novel titled "Babies". It was about comatose women being artificially seminated. (Indeed.) Poor Doctor Astor had his book rejected by 20 publishers. He finally paid \$4,000 (a day's pay for the average medico) to have 3,000 copies done by a vanity press. And then he couldn't even give it away. He offered 500 copies to television station KOED to be auctioned off as part of that PBS station's quarterly begging drive. KOED turned him down. Doctor Astor made comments about censorship and declared that he would burn those 500 copies to "demonstrate that 1984 has arrived." So he dumped 50 copies on the ground, soaked them with lighter fluid and set fire to them. He failed to reckon on the wind and damn near burned down a house. Once he got the fire out Doctor Astor packed up his remaining 450 copies and left.

Well, it is part of our modern mythology that nobody can read a doctor's writing anyway....

L. Ron Hubbard's BATTLEFIELD EARTH

a review by

MICHAEL K. KRING

Blood and thunder along the spaceways like the good ol' days! Chest thumping adventure like "Doc" Smith used to write! And non-fattening, too! All these and more are yours when you buy BATTLEFIELD EARTH by L. Ron Hubbard. Forget all that garbage about Scientology -- we're talking about two-fisted, he-man, mindless entertainment here. Nothing fancy but filled with over 500,000 words of action, action, and even more action!

And just what do you get for your money? Well, glad you asked, friend. You get Jonnie "Goodboy" Tyler, a blond-haired, blue-eyed, neo-Aryan with the mind of a steel trap and the reflexes to match! You get Terl the Psychlo, that ugly, huge race of aliens who conquered the earth thousands of years ago. Terl's as mean a villain as you'll every want -- he even hits little girls! Plus you get a whole lot of Scots, Russians, and even a Frenchman or three. And you get battles. Does good ol' L. Ron give just "a" battle? Nooooo! Does he give you 3 or 4 measly battles? Nooooo! L. Ron gives you not 1, not 2, not even 5, but more than a dozen life-threatening, impossible, implausible (but all of them fun) battles in the first half of the book! And that doesn't include all the so-called political intrigue of the rousing (though hare-brained) climax!

Of course, there are a few non-essentials that you don't get: characterizations, descriptions, real-science, and a realistic view of women. But who cares? Is it really necessary? Nyah, not when you get a red-blooded American hero who saves the day every time, who becomes the leader of the last few remaining tribes of earth, and who intimidates and out-finesses seasoned, glactic diplomats with a bit of razzle-dazzle diplomacy he hears for the first time just hours before he has to attend a meeting that will decide the fate of the earth!

What we're talking about here, friend, is something that doesn't come along too often, a book that's bound to be labeled retrograde, stupid and archaic, but that doesn't bother us, does it? Of course not! We both know that rip-snorting space opera doesn't grow on trees, what with those stupid fantasy authors just cranking out that dopey trash every day of the blasted week! Hell, just where does a guy go when he wants something new, something that he hasn't read but retains the musty, dusty, old Pulpy flavor of writing that he knows and loves? Why, look no further, friend: BATTLEFIELD EARTH is your answer.

So don't delay, buy it today! And you'll be sure to say: Hey, that L. Ron is okay!

Mike Kring

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No fanzine, they say, is complete without a letter from

HARRY WARNER, JP

423 SUMMIT AVENUE

HAGERSTOWN, MD 21740

Apparently the new Dynatron is not meant as a FAPA postmailing but as an independent, individualistic, self-reliant, non-Organization, free and liberated issue. But it's immaterial from my

standpoint, because I never remember to write mailing comments in Horizons on post-mailings so I must acknowledge this with a loc or cause it to suffer unwarranted neglect.

((Not perzactly. The last issue did go through FAPA but I sent you a copy because I cribbed your mailing comments in order to fill up some space. RT))

Of course, it's too early to brag about it, but so far the most awful thing about 1984 seems to be the plague of stupid articles and interviews and other things which purport to examine Orwell's novel in the light of the title year's arrival. That's one horror of the future Orwell forgot about. But I seem to remember reading somewhere that he chose his title because he was writing the book in 1948: he just reversed the last two digits to symbolize that he was extrapolating from the present rather than creating a future out of the whole cloth. I don't feel this nation's government is as bad as you do. The bulk of the things that bother me about life in the current year is the result of the way the little man behaves in the nation, not the actions of its leaders. I don't mind the taxes and the cuts in government spending as much as I hate the rudeness and ignorance of the bulk of the population, the near-total dependence of so many people on drugs and alcohol, the cheating and crime in all degrees from petty to major that have become standard behavior for most people today.

And I'm better off than I was three years ago in most ways: financially, in possessions, and in freedom at last from a hated job. I can't be sure about the comparison in health between then and now, unfortunately, but I don't think radiation from a nuclear meltdown has contributed to any health problems I may have acquired in that span of years. *((I congratulate you, of course, for being free of the job. Unfortunately I am not and it sometimes appears questionable that I ever will be. Also unfortunately, I am not better off financially than I was three years ago. Both my take home pay and what it buys are less than they were then. I keep hearing these reports out of DC that inflation is under control and that things have more or less stabalized but apparently I shop at different stores than those people do. It still seems to me that whenever I buy groceries I get less for my money. RT))*

I haven't bought a computer because of the things Art Papp writs about. For one thing, I can't think of anything I could accomplish faster or better with a computer than in non-computer ways. Most fanzines published with the help of a computer are lesss legible than those published by other means because the computers that can turn out first-rate reproduction are beyond the financial reach of most fans. I don't want Horizons to consist of lots of tiny dots instead of solid lines in ints typography. I don't budget my financial matters so there's no point in buying a computer to handle budget matters. I don't think I need a computer to teach me how to spell properly, I have no interest in computer games, I don't want to catalog my books or records, and so it goes. Until a month ago I didn't even own one of those little calculators that everyone else in the nation possesses. But I had a terrible time with my income tax returns this spring, finding that old age had finally affected my ability to add long columns of figures quickly and accurately and suffering eyestrain from checking and rechecking results. So I finally bought a calculator, which I suspect I'll be using only for tax purposes. I've observed that these little calculators are just as wasteful of time and energy as computers for most purposes. I go to thissor that office, a clerk wants to add or subtract just two figures, so he pulls out the calculator from whatever drawer it's stored in, turns it on, copies onto it the two amounts, copies off the sum or difference, turns it off, and puts it back into its drawer. Even with my math faculties on the wane, I could accomplish such a simple operation with a pencil in half the time. *((Ah, but that is the point. Many of them cannot. I have noted that many clerks are unable to figure out change, for example, without the help of the calculating cash register.*

I purchased a calculator some years back because it had a square root function on it and extracting square roots is something I have always had difficulty with. ((Or more properly, I suppose, something with which I have always had difficulty.)) Now I just enter the number and punch the square root key. Marvelous. But I agree mostly about computers. At the moment I can think of no real reason for having one. Other than the thought that since the computer age is upon us it might be well to know and understand them. Which I do since I have taken several computer courses and work with one on the job. I may get a home computer one of these days but it is pretty far down the list of priorities.

There have been several articles in the science magazines expressing some doubts at the rush to "computer literacy" in the schools but the hurricane of change blows and the world daily grows vastly more different. Ah, Harry, I tell you, strange things are happening. I don't worry about them, though. There's not enough time left for that. RT))

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NOPE WRITINGS IN THE SAND

For those of you who have interest in such, and I know there are a few fen who try to keep track of climate trends--they are probably constant watchers of the weather channel--I can report that 1984 has so far been rather peculiar in the Albuquerque area. The winter was not especially cold but it lingered. The spring winds which normally blow from March through May were concentrated mostly in April; a shorter period than usual but they blew with an intensity that I haven't seen in a while. On two occasions the dust storms which accompanied the winds caused brownouts the like of which I have not seen since the dust bowl days of the 1930s. April temperatures reached highs in the upper 60s and low 70s. The lows dipped to freezing or a bit below. The last frost occurred on 30 April. Three days later the highs hit the 90s and have been there ever since. Summer is about a month early and all the local weather people are thoroughly confused. What does it all mean?

Well, it means joy for the utilities (except the gas company) as consumption of water and electricity took a big jump early. The electric company immediately asked for a rate increase. (That's standard with them anyway. The electric company asks for--and gets--a rate increase once a quarter. Remember, though, that inflation is under control.) I had to put the swamp cooler into operation somewhat earlier than usual. (By damn, it is HOT on that roof!) The garden plants wanted to know what the hell was going on and hollered for more water. (I sometimes think it silly to grow a garden and a green lawn here in an area where the total precipitation is only seven inches per year. But..."old people like to water a lot" (Kotch's daughter-in-law).) Stay in touch. It may snow next month.

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Somebody out there is selling fannish mailing lists to all sorts of peculiar businesses. (Should I refrain from pointing out that most businesses are peculiar? ((You should but you won't.))) All sorts of junk mail shows up in the box addressed to

DYNATRON

915 GREEN VAL RD NW

ALBUQUERQUE NM 87107

Note that the street address is too much for the computer to handle and must be abbreviated. (Some of the stuff Chryst gets is addressed "915 GRN VAL RD NW".) I don't know who is doing it, although I have my suspicions, and if I ever find out I shall be happy to smash his goddam tape drive.

One of the latest to arrive is from R. J. Ernst Enterprises of San Marcos, California. This is a three page letter telling me all about the joys of collecting plates and pointing out that Ernst is now issuing a series of plates based on STAR TREK and I can buy these collectible wonders, complete with a certificate of authenticity (This is a plate.??) for only \$29.50 each. The first one is (thrill) Mr. Spock. The artist is one Susie Morton who did the Marilyn and Elvis plates. By Foo! Can I pass up such an opportunity?

Easily.

At the end of his book review column in the July issue of IASFM, Baird Searles mentions an article from THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE of some months back. The article, by Kathleen Avena, concerns the recent massive increase in the popularity of fantasy and science fiction (in both written and visual form) and Avena's thesis is (according to Searles) "that this popularity is just short of being asymptom of the decline and fall of Western civilization."

I haven't read the Avena article. I don't subscribe to the New York Times Magazine. If any of the readership of this li'l rag has the article I'd be happy to see a copy.

I wonder, though, if this is not similar to something that has been kicked around at various conventions and in some of the fanzines: that the increasing popularity of fantasy (as opposed to science fiction and let us not, at the moment, get involved in a discussion of the meaning of terms) indicates something of a flight from reality on the part of a large number of people.

Science fiction represents a realistic attempt to paint a word picture of a possible tomorrow. (Or a visual picture, if you will, in the case of films.) The writer takes a sociological trend or a technological development and carries it forward to see what develops. (Granted that ten different writers can take the same idea and get ten different possibilities from it. That is what makes stf interesting.) In many cases the tomorrow described is not a pleasant one.

But it isn't just science fiction which is painting an unpleasant picture of tomorrow. Gloom and doom (you remember them...Harry Doom and Charlie Gloom, played the Palace in 1925....) are constantly on view in the daily newspaper, the weekly newsmagazines, and the monthly whatevers. (Actually, I think Gloom and Doom were on the Orpheum Circuit.) The pundits of the boobtube are constantly predicting this and that disaster. We're all going to end up as motes of radioactive dust if some gigantic environmental or ecological catastrophe doesn't get us first. (Gloom used to tap dance. Doom told funny stories.)

But in the good old days before modern technology and communication the people didn't have to worry about such things. All they had to worry about was good and evil (as defined by their local priest) and witches and magic and demons and dragons (none of whom appeared on the Orpheum Circuit) and things of that nature--or supernature as the case may be.

That sort of thing is easy to handle. Give the priest a piece of silver, he'll mutter a couple of prayers to whichever god is handy and all is taken care of.

But who can understand or cope with "HIGH TECHNOLOGY". (High technology is the new catch phrase for the 1980s as determined by the pundits of the boob tube and copied slavishly by the nudniks of the newspapers. Anything with a transistor in it is now High Technology. I think the phrase was coined by the Reagan administration. It sounds like something out of Hollywood.) (Doom and Gloom never made it to Hollywood, by the way. They were getting pretty old by the time the movies began drafting vau-devillians.)

So what we do, you see, is just get away from all those nasty science fiction stories which are about reality or possible realities and settle down with some nice story about heroes and princesses and dragons with magic swords and the like. That way we don't have to worry about it.

And if the world does go to hell and we end up back in the Dark Ages...well, hell, we'll be ready for it, won't we? Who says we're ignoring reality? (Actually, I think I saw Gloom and Doom on the Spanish Information Network a couple of nights ago. Or two guys who looked like them.)

And what has this been all about? Well, according to the count at the side of the stencil it is about 54 lines long. Enough to fill a page.

I suppose I should get a plug in here for Bubonicon. Yes. The 16th Annual New Mexico Science Fiction Conference as Juffus would put it. Speer has never looked with approval on our calling the thing "Bubonicon". He prefers "NewMexiCon." Whatever. I mentioned it lastime, of course but anyway:

Bubonicon 16 will again be held under the watchful eye of Perry Rodent on August 24, 25, and 26, 1984. The con hotel will once again be the very interesting Mountain View Inn located at the corner of Central and Tramway NE on Albuquerque's eastern outskirts. The GoH are Spider & Jeanne Robinson. Toastmaster, as usual, will be Gordon Garb (with, no doubt, an all new collection of barf bags plus all the late statistics on the number of Plague cases in New Mexico). We are promised speeches, films, readings, an art show, and even a costume day.

Memberships are \$10 until 20 July (Space Day), \$12.50 after that, and \$15 at the door. For information write to:

New Mexico Science Fiction Conference
P.O. Box 37257,
Albuquerque, N.M. 87176

Make checks payable to them, too.

This particular Bubonicon is mostly being managed by the people from Alpha Centura (sic), the Albuquerque Trek Club but the usual gang of idiots from the ASFS will surely be lurking about the place somewhere: Vardeman, Kring, Patten, diMaria, and who knows who else? You'll find me around somewhere sipping on gin and vermouth. I'm not sure about the scheduling of the two a.m. Nessie dunk.

Y'all come.

X

In my opinion there is no greater group of fools, frauds, and fakers (Ghu, don't you just love sophomoric alliteration?) anywhere in the country than those associated with the health business. I don't mean just the obvious phonies such as chiropractors who discovered there was more money in "nutrition" than in cracking bones or the "psychic healers" or the assorted other crackpots who have found health to be an excellent means of separating fools and their money. Indeed not. There are also thousands of fools, frauds, and fakers knocking about with that "M.D." appended after their names.

There are, to be sure, a great many people who are dedicated to their job of saving lives or helping to keep others healthy. Probably the greatest group in the country are the emergency paramedics who are first on the scene and do their damndest. Wonderful folks. But once they have done their job and turned the patient over to the "professionals" the whole situation changes.

Some man or woman goes to school, gets an M.D., calls himself/herself "Doctor" and the bulk of the public immediately puts "Doctor" up there next to the gods and takes "Doctor's" word as a pronouncement from above. Nine times out of ten "Doctor" doesn't know what he/she is talking about anyway and is interested primarily in how much money can be extracted from the patient.

And isn't it nice that I am old enough and cantakerous enough to tell "Doctor?" that I don't believe him and to demand definitions and explanations and generally be horrible about it all. I suggest you do the same. It is time these people were mad to account for themselves. And don't forget "Doctor's" receptionist/secretary. Those pompous egos need to be sent into tears at regular intervals. Weeping helps them see the reality of life.

You are paying. You don't have to put up with that nonsense.

Sigh. I note by the calendar that this supposed June issue of Dynatron which will not be published in June but in August. So it goes. There may even be an August issue. I don't know about these things. It all has to do with the problem of time, which does not exist, of course, and I never seem to have enough of it. By August we will know who all the candidates are for all the offices...if we care. If we don't care we'll know anyway.

I predict...that by August I still won't be able to see the surface of my desk. At the rate things are going I may not even be able to see the floor.

PT

FROM:

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL

TO: