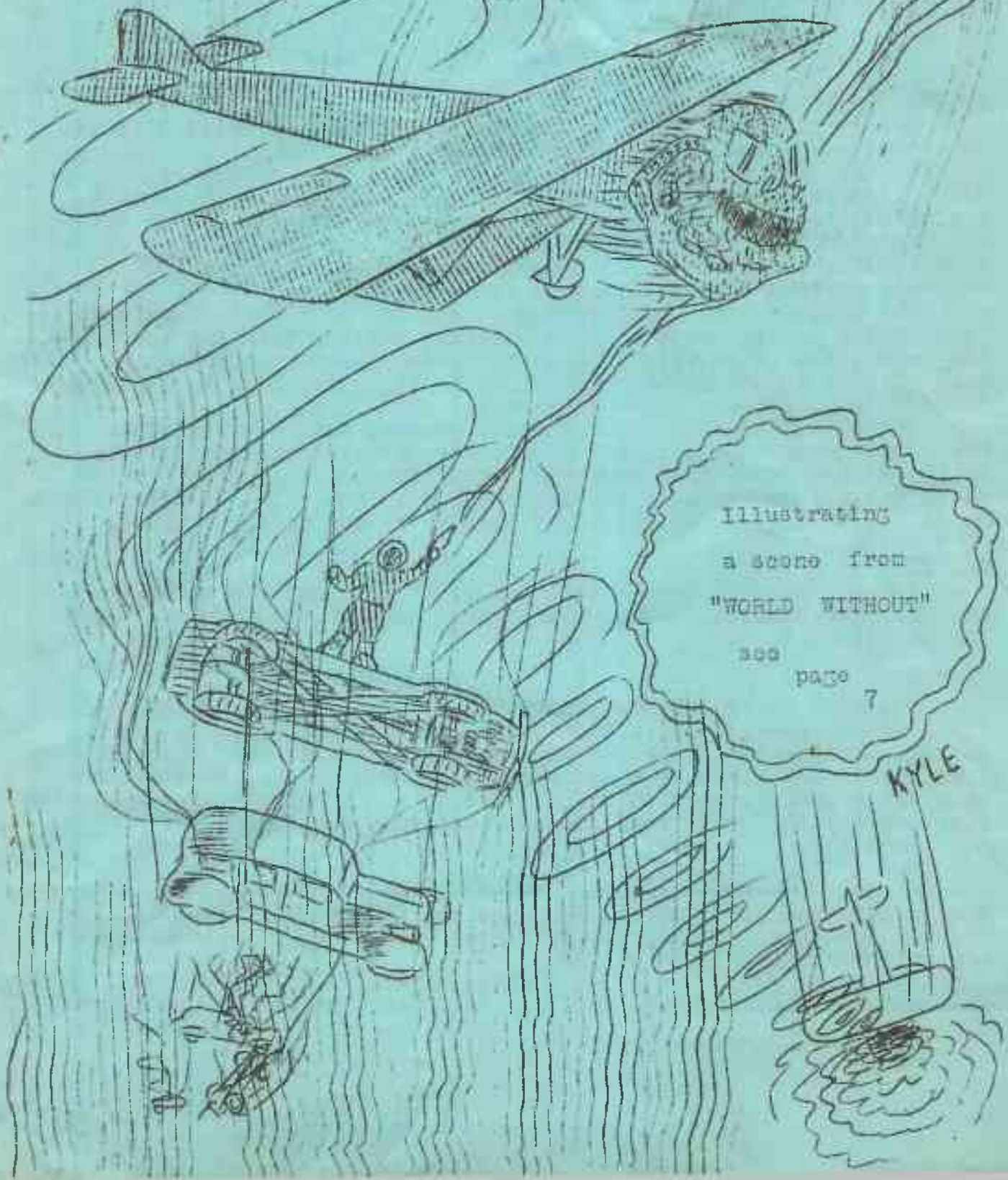
ESCAPE

VOL.1 NO.2 AUG. 1939



Illustrating a scene from "WORLD WITHOUT" see page 7

ESCAPE

Volume 1
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FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED

Escape will be strict as all blazes and very hardboiled in its editorial requirments. Rejection of submitted material will not imply (as the pros say:) lack of merit--it will mean merely that it is not suited for use in the magazine. This, the first representative issue, may be used as a model for future submissions. Escape will use articles, fiction, poetry & fillers, but all must be short. The impertinent, tongue-in-cheek type of writing is sought, tho well-written, serious mss. will not be frowned upon.

The title of the magazine may or may not be self-explanatory. Represented in its pages will be material dealing with the fantastic, the weird, the scientifictional, the Fortean, supernatural and kindred fields: in short, anything which is today consider by the Great Unwashed (as J. Speer says) impossible.

The title was chosen for another reason, too. We find that there has never been a fanmag who name began with the letter E. The Swishers' S F Check-List mentions three (Embryo, Enigmatic & Enigmatic Tales), but none of these has yet seen the light of day. And we do dearly desire to fill the E section of our filing cabinet.

OH, YES

Escape regrets that it will not be able to pay for submitted & accepted material other than with a free copy of the issue in which the ms. appears.

NOTION

Odd what ideas out-of-towners have about New York. Both Claire Beck, of Lakeport, Cal., and Julius Pohl, of Houston, Tex., had thought that Gotham's subways were circular tunnels thru which streamlined cars were blown by compressed air. They're not, really. The cars are squarish, have wheels and are driven by electricity. They're not terribly different from humdrum, everyday railroad cars.

Honestly.

Escape is a monthly, Empress Publication, published at 86-10 117th Street, Richmond Hill, N. Y. Priced at 5¢ the copy, 12-issue subscriptions are available at 50¢.

Dick Wilson,
Editor

BIRTHDAY PRESENT

July 2, the day Cyril Kornbluth was denied admittance to the World Science Fiction Convention, was that gentleman's birthday.

SOME AFTERTHOUGHTS ON THE CONVENTION

We'd have enjoyed "Metropolis" a lot more if I. Asimov hadn't insisted upon propping his chin on our shoulder and giving vent to wisecrax at 20-second intervals...

William S. Sykora introducing "the beloved, the well-known Frank A. Paul."!

Editors, authors, artists and fans all agreeing with the thoroly indignant Perri that the Exclusion was a very low, unfair sort of business. And none being able to convince the Unholy 3 of same.

J. Harry Dockweiler, who carried his pint of liquid refreshment in a zippered briefcase.

Ackerman, the Unabashed, walking nonchalantly thru the crowded Automat on 59th St. in his loud, futurian costume. Morojo partially camouflaging hers with a furpiece.

David A. Kyle, who, when it became evident that there would be no official discussion re the Excluded, gave a short speech on sf, switching abruptly into a plea for decency. He drew prolonged applause, but an attempt at a vote was squelched by Chairman Sykora.

Juffus, who was burned up because no one noticed that he used his real name (John Bristol Speer) on his identification tag, which blasted the "John A. Bristol" myth.

Pity that Kyle & Ray Bradbury, inveterate punsters, didn't have a chance to get together and play around with the double-ententes. (D.-entendres, we found, is a misuse--almost as bad as saying "...shades of Jules Verne".)

OTHER THINGS

Jack Gillespie is having his typewriter repaired. The missing 'z'--lack of which gave him so much trouble when he wrote hysterically about S. Moskowitz in Just Things--will be replaced, and he will again be able to dash off long, nastly articles, beginning on Jas. V. Taurasi.

"God," he said to us, "how I hate Taurasi!"

Thru chance or design 4e Ackerman and Ray Douglas Bradbury chose the William Sloane House on 34th St. at which to stay during their New York visit. The House's founder's namesake, to be longwinded about it, is well-known among fantasy collectors for his novels, "To Walk the Night" and "The Edge of Running Water".

COMING ATTRACTION

In the September issue of Escape we proudly present "The End of Bob & Koso"--the complete, unauthorized version. Don't miss it!

See! them meet a terrible end. Hear! their screams.

AUTOMAT EATS FAN
as eyewitnest by Meahan Miselph

Because of Bob Tucker's inordinate interest in "eats", fandom has lost a first-rat fan. I mean first-rate.

It all came about because the Yellow Menace, Hoy Ping Pong, engaged 4SJ to keep track for him of what was consumed in the way of food at the Whirl Science Fiction Convention; where, by whom & how much. Pong--or Tucker, a pseudonym this Asiatic ofttimes employs--had intended to publish a complete set of statistics on all automat-ic participations on the part of the conventioneers, his interest having been arouses by previously pitifully inadequate accounts, fanned to feverish intensity by the (then) approaching World Science Fiction Fracas. What an unparalleled opportunity to study the individual & composite stfan diet; to uncover the Coca Cola fiends, the catsup addicts, the finnicky & picayunish food-partakers...

All went well til the 4th Day ...the 4th of Julhi (if U know your Weird Tales, this will have Moore significance.) 4TH J (migawd! where'd I catch that lithp?) had an alphabetical as well as arithmetical score: B - Bradbury: 44 hamburgers, 12 dishes tomato soup, 24 pieces peach pie, 36 glasses iced choc'lit. & so on down the line. He listed what Marcon-etto, recorded the case of the science fiction salesman, Julius, who almost died of Unger. Under S, Speer, one read: "I want Sea Foo, mama!" Not to neglect Zu-lu, the delegate from Zanzibar, who was allergic to white meat.

Suddenly, I see that tragiclimax again: 4e, un4-warnd, innocently inserting a slug for a mug o' java. "No cream" he mumbles into the mike. "Sorry, sir," replies the Vox Automat, "We're out of cream." "Well, then I'll take it without milk" answers the Efjay. The steaming liquid spurts forth! scalds his hand! he clutches his wrist! staggers back! weaves 4ward again! inserts a 2d nickel for ice!

Having caused such a commotion gets the authorities of the automat-on his neck...get it? They roast him plenty, & chew the fact. After that...but I can't go on.

Penniless, they put him out on the sidewalks of New York. But then, times is hard for everbody, I guess; why, I heard just t'other day that even Santa Claus is Nicholas!

FOOTLOOSE

Dale Hart, Walter Sullivan, Julius Pohl, Jr., Allen Charpentier and a non-fan known as Egghead motored to New York from Oklahoma and Texas, sleeping under the stars. It is told that the troupe rode without shoes, for comfort's sake, and how, often, J. Pohl would trip stockingfootedly into a very high class hotel and request a box of matches for some mystical purpose (: possibly to give the driver --the only one who did wear footgear--a hot foot).

THE ROCKET OF 1955

The scheme was all Fein's, but the trimmings that made it more than a pipe-dream, and its actual operation depended on me. How long the plan had been in incubation I do not know, but Fein, one day in the spring of 1954, broke it to me in a rather crude form. I pointed out some errors, corrected and amplified on the thing in general, and told him that I'd have no part of it--and changed my mind when he threatened to reveal certain indiscretions committed by me some years ago.

It was necessary that I spend some months in Europe, conducting research work incidental to the scheme. I returned with recorded statements, old newspapers, and photostatic copies of certain documents. There was a brief, quiet interview with that old, bushy-haired Jew worshipped incontinently by the mob; he was convinced by the evidence I had compiled that it would be wise to assist us.

You all know what happened next--it was the professor's historic radio broadcast. Fein had drafted the thing, I had rewritten it, and told the mathematician to assume a German accent while reading. Some of the phrases were beautiful: "American dominion over the very planets!---veil at last ripped aside---man defies gravity ---travel thru space---plant the glorious red-white-and-blue banner into the soil of Mars!"

The requested contributions poured in. Newspapers and magazines ostentatiously donated yard-long checks of a few thousand dollars; the government gave a welcome half-million; heavy sugar came from the "Rocket-Contribution Week" held in the nation's public schools; but independent contributions were the largest. We cleared seven million dollars, and then started to build the spaceship.

The virginium that took up most of the money was tin-plate; the monoatomic fluorine that gave us our terrific speed was hydrogen. The take-off was a party for the newsreels: the big, gleaming bullet, extravagant with vanes and projections; speeches by the professor; Farley, who was to fly it to Mars, grinning into the cameras. He climbed an outside ladder to the nose of the thing, then dropped into the steering compartment. I screwed down the soundproof door, smiling as he hammered to be let out. Rather to his surprise, there was no duplicate of the elaborate dummy controls he had been practicing on for the past few weeks.

I cautioned the pressmen to stand back under the shelter, and gave the professor the knife-switch that would send the rocket on its way. He hesitated too long--Fein hissed into his ear: "Anna Pareloff of Cracow, Herr Professor..."

The triple blade clicked into the sockets. The vaned projectile roared a hundred yards into the air, with a wabbling curve

--then exploded.

A photographer, eager for an angle-shot, was killed: so were some boys of the neighborhood. The steel roof protected the rest of us. Fein and I shook hands, while the pressmen screamed into the telephones which we had provided.

But the professor got drunk, and, disgusted with the part he had played in the affair, told all and poisoned himself. Fein and I left the cash behind, and hopped a freight. We were picked off it by a vigilance committee (headed by a man who had lost fifty cents in our rocket). Fein was too frightened to talk or write, so they hanged him first, and gave me paper and pencil to tell the story as best I could.

Here they come, with an insulting thick rope.

---Cyril Kornbluth

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ACCEPTANCE

The editors of Sweetness & Light have an absolutely ducky form which is sent to those whose manuscripts have been accepted for publication in that FAPA fanmag. It reads:

"Dear Contributor: All material sent to us for publication in SWEETNESS and LIGHT must, if it meets our published requirements, pass still another test....We have gone to no little expense in order that we might obtain the equipment necessary for testing submissions. From a wrecked home in the Dust Bowl we have possessed ourselves of an outside privy, one that had served its family faithfully for generations. It now stands behind the editorial offices of SWEETNESS and LIGHT.... All contributions are placed inside this privy for five days. At the end of that time they are taken out. Now, if the contribution smells of the outhouse it is rejected, BUT if the outhouse smells of the contribution----it is accepted!...Dear friend, your contribution has been accepted. Piously, The Editors."

Modesty prevents our mentioning the fact that the ms. we had accepted is a one-act play called "Interregnum".

AUTOLOGY

One of Goodfellow Wollheim's admonishments to us while driving our gas-gobbler is: "Be careful, or a dozen policemen'll leap out of the bushes and club you to death." We always ignore him, fully believing that cops are not all demons--some, in fact, being almost human.

Which bring us to Perri, Leslie, whom it is nice to have in your front seat if you insist on dashing madly in the wrong direction down one-way streets. We committed this dreadful blunder once, attracting the attention of John Law, who intimated that the car was "hot" (stolen, you know), and that a trip to the police station might be advisable, since we were without our registration.

All this, however, before Perri turned on the charm, saying

"Officer--please--we're from Richmond Hill and aren't at all familiar with Brooklyn," asking where Flatbush Avenue had got to and smiling sweetly. Whereupon Officer decided that we looked like nice, clean-cut American kids and said Beat it. We did, quickly.

Have you a little Perri in your car? They come in awfully handy.

UNFORTUNATELY,

the story of which the cover is an illustration cannot appear. It so happened that the author, who had it quite finished, but in mind only, spent a night at the home of Reginald Clarke, and, when he departed, the work had vanished completely from the channels of his mind.

Which brings us--rather neatly, we think--to

"THE HOUSE OF THE VAMPIRE",

by George Sylvester Viereck. Published in 1912 by Moffat, Yard & Co., N. Y., it tells the story of Reginald Clake, a 20th Century vampire who preyed, not on blood, but on the mind, who would invite talented acquaintances to his home for a week-end, and, while they were there, would invade their subconscious and rob it of its latest artistic creation. Whereupon Clarke would publish his loot as his own and the original author, seeing his work in print before he had written it, and under another name, gibbered and went mad....Our copy of the book, bought second hand, has a bookplate of The Lotus Club, New York, showing an ancient Egyptian scene, with the words "In the afternoon they came unto a land in which it seemed always afternoon."

THE TRULY TREMENDOUS THINKER

It was dark inside the theater--naturally. And inside, with some hundreds of other people, were two couples.

Neither couple was paying much attention to the performance. Percy Wilkinson was very thoroly kissing his fair companion. Dale Hart was doing nothing (that is, he was thinking). His guileless gray eyes were closed, his face was wrinkled in rapt concentration, and he was totally oblivious to the world mundane--this in spite of his fair lady, who, all unnoticed by him, had an arm about his neck.

Presently Dale's lips began to move and whispered words issued from the aperture produced. She leaned even closer, giving a little gurgle as she prepared to hear sweet nothings. But this, only, is what she heard muttered abstractedly:

"It's a good thing I'm not Einstein. The temptation would be too great to utter a piece of arrant nonsense and then step back while the world gasped its admiration."

Upon hearing this, she flounced back a trifle angrily. Resolutely she turned her eyes to the screen. (At this point, Percy was

telling his pair of shell-pink ears that he most certainly believed in love at first sight. Tho he discreetly crossed two fingers on his free hand.)

Came the voice of a character from the screen: "No, no! You can't go in there! Miss Smith is in bed with a doctor!"

The audience snickered appreciatively. And the young lady turned once more to the lump of clay. Thinking the quip had passed unnoticed by Dale, she nudged him playfully. But he did not even move. Once more she retreated.

Looking enviously at the other two, she began to be actually piqued. "Is this his line? Or is he just stringing me? Anyway, I'm about to conclude that he's been dead for years and doesn't know it!" Thus thought the gal of The Thinker.

Again the muted words of the fellow who was thinking aloud. Again he was uttering a weighty thought. Again did the fair one lean closer to listen: "I'd like to see the faces ofthe grandchildren of the future when told grandma hooked on false eyelashes and granddad was a jitterbug."

This was the final straw that broke her vertebrae-embossed back. A white arm gleamed, a heavy purse descended upon the head of the unresponsive one, and Mr Hart went into a deeper coma.

He had never noticed her eyelashes.

--Duclair Champagne

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IN THE NAME OF THE LAW

Frederik Pohl and Jack Gillespie took a trip to Washington, via Philadelphia, soon after the convention from which they were barred. They stopped off at Hagerstown, Md., to visit Harry Warner, Jr., Spaceways' proxy. Here, in one-horse Hagerstown, the Ø, who is accustomed to dashing diagonally thru the teeming traffic of Times Sq., was chased back to the sidewalk when attempting to cross against a red light. ("The red light," says Gillespie.)

Freddie feels that his sense of values has been irreparably warped ever since.

DEP'T OF WANTON CRUELTY

"Let some brave author be the first to burst the blue-nosed blonds." --John B. Michel in "Sex in Science Fiction", SFFan, June, '39

First you find your blue-nosed blond, author--then you burst her--if you feel that way about it.

MEMO

Don't--by any means--miss "The End of Bob & Koso" in the September issue of Escape. Read the complete, unauthorized version!

ENCOUNTER

Dale Hart, the Texan Terror, and Cyril Kornbluth, city sophisticate, found each other somewhat strange. On one occasion Dale, with some quip or other, gave C. a resounding thump on the back in his bluff, southwestern way.

"He slapped me on the back," said Cyril happily, "so I punched him in the stomach."

BUSINESS of the 5FFF

DAVID A. KYLE: "Metropolis", "Things to Come", "The Invisible Man", "Man Who Could Work Miracles" & "The Mysterious Island".

RAY PAULEY: "Things to Come", "King Kong", "Just Imagine", "Son of Frankenstein" & "Dracula".

THE READER WRITES (and the singular is quite correct)

R. D. Swisher of Winchester, Mass., writes: "We can forego the SFNL if you can get us an Escape every month or so--the first is very pleasing. And the prize goes to the article "Michelism is Not Enough". Will you please break down and give us the inside dope on the identity of this Allen Zweig (no relation to Stefan and Arnold, I hope), and I hope it's by someone I approve of, for I thought it great. Next most interesting was your page 3. While we still agree with the sentiments expressed in our article, I'm sorry I can't praise myself on the profuse verbiage disclosed therein. Gad! did we write that, I thought. But we did!"

(No relation to Stefan or Arnold, our Allen--no relation to any person, living or dead, as a matter of fact. Allen Zweig was a traveling salesman and science fiction fan--so it is told. He was alphabetically last on the SFL list. One day he was badly killed in an automobile collision in Pennsylvania. As a result, an SFL memorial chapter was almost named after him. Almost everyone nowadays, however, knows that "the late Allen Zweig, M. Stf., Gh. D., &c.", is Donald Allen Wollheim, who is very much alive and kicking--particularly in the directions of Long Island City, Newark and Flushing.)

(PS: As long as we're making revelations, we might as well whisper to Mr Swisher that the perpetrators of ...scientificinemagazinextraordinary... were not J. Bolin & P. O. Graves, as he contends in Section 3 of the S F Check-List, but j. bolin & p. c. graves--fuller names john & percy something, being taken out of an old Gernsy pub. bolin was Wilson, graves Jack Gillespie and we wuz on'y kiddin', Mr Ackerman, honist we wuz!)