

e pluribus
MARCH 1959 unum (NEW SERIES)
VOL. 1 NO. 2

	<u>Page</u>
<u>THE BIRTH OF A NOTION</u>	2
Robert Bloch	From a Reprint in <u>PLOY</u>
<u>ODE TO AN SF PERCENTAGE MAN</u>	11
Bruce Pelz	<u>Original</u>
<u>THE RIDGE</u>	12
Joe Gibson	<u>PENDULUM #3</u>
<u>THE EDITOR JAMS</u>	16
Alan Lewis	<u>Editorial</u>
<u>LOVECRAFT IS 86</u>	17
Francis T. Laney	<u>SKYHOOK #9</u>
<u>I REMEMBER COMIC BOOKS</u>	20
Jim Harmon	<u>PEON #38</u>

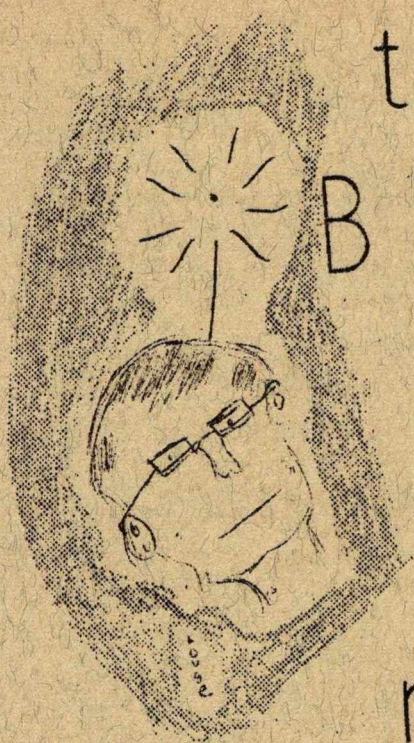
---oOo---

FANTASY ASPECTS is a GPP Publication and comes to you from Box 37, East Aurora, New York. All (Brief Pause) subscriptions are to be sent to the above place.

FANTASY ASPECTS will henceforth have a frequency of publication referred to only as irregular. Next issue will, with luck, be issued sometime in May.

We have a paid circulation of 37 and an actual circulation of 95. Unless these figures are reversed, and soon, this will probably be the reason for another delayed issue. Comprene?

15¢ G. P. P. 3/51



the BIRTH of a NOTION

A tragedy of Hollywood, in one act, written and produced by Robert Bloch with additional dialogue by

moe fink
manny klotz
and
william shakespeare

From PLOY, March 1957 which reprinted from a SARS and Cult mailing.

CAST-OFF CHARACTERS:

George Chum - A Producer

Ray Sadberry - A Science Fiction Writer

Melvin Spelvin - A Brother-in-Law

The scene is, if you'll pardon the expression, laid in the Office of the Producer, a lavish two-washroom unit in the San Fernando Valley.

The time is the present, or a reasonable facsimile of same.

As the curtain rises, those of us who are not already asleep discover George Chum seated at his desk, telephoning.....

CHUM:

Hello, D-Z? This is G.C. I just talked to E.B. and he said O.k. I'll get started P.D.Q., see? ... well, I'm not quite sure what kind of picture I'm going to make, no... I was planning one of those biblical things. Biblical... that means from the Bible. You know, it's a book... whaddya mean, of course I read it... well, anyhow, the Reader's Digest condensation. Sure. Only the trouble is, there ain't nothing in there that

hasn't been made. Except for that one part about the Great Whore of Babylon, and that's too hot to handle. Though it'd be a cinch to cast the lead. Huh? Well, I figured if we can't do a bible yarn we're stuck. No impact, see? What we gonna do for audience appeal if we don't show 'em throwing a lotta Christians to the lions? How we gonna work in the torture scenes? You got any other ideas kicking around, or do I gotta go back to science-fiction again? All right, all right, I'll work it out somehow. After all, it's only a leusy epic.

(CHUM hangs up and begins to pace the floor muttering to himself)

Now I'm stuck. Another science-fiction movie I gotta make yet. Well, that shouldn't be so tough. Actors I got. Technical experts I got. Scenery and Costumes I got. Yeah, yeah, so what more do I need? There must be something... I'm sure there is... now what could it be? Oh --- a plot. Suppose I gotta have a plot, too. So...

(CHUM picks up the phone)

Hello, get me the Story Department... Story Department? This is G.C. I want some information, quick. No, I don't care who won the Fourth at Santa Anita. I already heard. This is business. We're planning another production and I need help. It's science-fiction. Whaddya mean you never heard of it. We already made about a dozen. Science-Fiction --- you know, here there's this old scientist, guy and his daughter in a black sweater 'n then there's this young scientist who wears glasses in the first scene where he talks about atoms and then takes 'em off when he rescues the girl. Now do you remember? I thought so. Well, we got to have a plot like that, only different. Got anybody down there with some ideas?... Yeah... Who?... never heard of him... oh, send him in, maybe we can work out an angle.

(CHUM hangs up and sits down. He picks up a copy of MAD, then hastily shoves it into a drawer as RAY SADBERRY enters. SADBERRY is a stoop shouldered, bespectacled, an incipient manic-depressive type; in other words, a typical author.)

SADBERRY: You sent for me, Mr. Chum?

CHUM: That's right. Sit down.

SADBERRY: Er --- no thanks. I'd rather stand. You see, I've been sitting in your outer office for the past two months, ever since you hired me.

CHUM: It gets monotonous, doesn't it?

SADBERRY: It gets damned sore, if you want to know. So I'll just stand for a while.

CHUM: Two months, eh? Now I remember -- come to think of it. I did hire you, didn't I? Sorry about keeping you waiting, Mr. Badberry.

SADBERRY: Er --- Sadberry's the name.

CHUM: My mistake. Now look here, Mr. Gladberry, you're supposed to be an expert on this science-fiction crud, isn't that so? Editor, or something?

SADBERRY: (stiffly) A writer, Mr. Chum. I hate editors.

CHUM: O.K., you're a writer. Guess that's why I must have hired you, huh? I mean, you're not related to me are you?

SADBERRY: I don't think so. There are no Jukes or Kallikeks in my family tree.

CHUM: Never mind with the Jukes. We ain't making no musical. What I got in mind is one of these science-fiction pictures.

SADBERRY: That's what you said when you put me on the payroll, remember? And I told you that this was your great opportunity to go down in history as the first man to produce a real science-fiction movie. Not one of those phoney yarns about inventing monsters, but a genuine bit of film art -- as an example of modern science-fiction at its best.

CHUM: Now you're talking. That's just what I'm after -- something original, something creative, something that sings. The public is tired of fake Martians and destroying the world. What I want is an entirely new slant; something to make the audience choke on its popcorn.

SADBERRY: (solemnly) Mr. Chum, if that's what you want, I owe you an apology. I'm afraid I've done you a great injustice. Sitting out there all those months, I formed a picture of you as just another typical Hollywood producer; a man who thought only of profits. But if you're interested in the art of the cinema, if you're a disciple of science.....

CHUM: Believe me, Dadberry, I'm as scientific-minded as they come. Why, I was the first producer in town to install those electric seat-sterilizers in the men's.....

SADBERRY: Well, then, maybe we can work together. Is it a plot you're after?

CHUM: Shadberry, you're a genius! That's exactly what I need for this picture --- a plot! You got one?

SADBERRY: As a matter of fact, I have. Do you happen to be familiar with a story of mine called CENTIGRADE 69?

CHUM: No. I'm not what you call a great reader, Fadberry. Don't have the time. Too busy making pictures to read. Is this yarn any good?

SADBERRY: Well, the critics seemed to like it. It won several prizes and.....

CHUM: Never mind with the build up. What's it all about? What's the title mean, anyhow?

SADBERRY: CENTIGRADE 69? Why, that's a temperature reading on a thermometer.

CHUM: (jumping up) Thermometer? Who in hell's gonna make a picture about a thermometer? Where's your sex-appeal?

SADBERRY: Must it have sex-appeal, Mr. Chum? I mean, you asked for something different.

CHUM: Different, yes. But not queer. You think anybody wants to see a picture about a weather-bureau?

SADBERRY: But this isn't about a weather-bureau, sir. The title refers to the temperature at which.....

CHUM: Who cares about the title? That would have to be changed anyhow. CENTIGRADE 69, is that a title, I ask you? For science-fiction movies you want a scientific-type title. Something with CREATURE in it, or THING, or MONSTER.

SADBERRY: There are no monsters in this story, Mr. Chum.

CHUM: No monsters? Then why are you wasting my time? A science-fiction movie without a monster? I never heard of such a thing. Why, it's like an Esther Williams picture without water, a Jane Russell picture where you see only her back! Of all the god-blasted idiots.....

(Enter MELVIN SPELVIN)

SPELVIN: Duh.... Youse sent for me, Boss?

CHUM: No. Why should I send for you? I've placed all my bets for the day. Where the devil have you been keeping yourself lately, anyway?

SPELVIN: On the payroll. I been giving dramatic lessons to Alan Ladd.

CHUM: Dramatic lessons?

SPELVIN: You know.... acting like. I got to thinkin', see? About all the dough this here Alan Ladd makes on his pitchers and he alla time only uses one expression, see? So I figgers, suppose maybe he could use two expressions..... That would be even more sensational. Maybe the pitchers would make twice as much dough. So anyways, I kind of sold the studio on the idea, so I been over on location, tryin' to get him to use two expressions. Boy, what a job! Finely I rigged up one of those here electric batteries on a long pole, and when Alan Ladd is in a scene where he sees the heroine, I sort of reach out with this here long pole and stick him in the behind and turn on the old juice.

CHUM (Interested): Does it work?

SPELVIN: Well, so far all that's happened is I burned out three batteries.

CHUM: Too bad.

SPELVIN: Well, I ain't given up yet. We're gonna try the same thing with dynamite. (Notices SADBERRY) Who's the character? You castin' for Forest Lawn or somethin'?

CHUM: This is Ray Gedberry. He's a writer.

SPELVIN (ignoring SADBERRY's extended hand): Well, it takes all kinds, I always say. Fleastameetchasweetheart.

SADBERRY: Are you a writer too?

CHUM: No, this is Melvin Spelvin, my brother-in-law. He's a sort of general all-around ---well, just how would you describe your position at the studio, Melvin?

SPELVIN: Why, you just said it. I'm your brother-in-law.

SADBERRY: Is that a full-time occupation?

SPELVIN: Why not? I been on the payroll at a grand a week for the last eight years. You earned a grand a week for the last eight years, Madberry?

SADBERRY (proudly): I, sir, am a professional author. I am not interested in money!

SPELVIN: And a damned lucky thing it is for you too, I'll bet. (Turning to Chum) Well, what else is new?

CHUM: Melvin, we've got a little problem here. Maybe you can help. We're trying to work out a story for a science-fiction movie.

SPELVIN: But there is a story, isn't there? I mean, you got this old scientist guy and his daughter in a black sweater... and.....

CHUM: That's just it. We don't want to make that one again.

SPELVIN: I see. The old switcheroo, that's what you're after! Well, suppose you put his daughter in a white sweater for a change.

CHUM: White doesn't photograph well in Technicolor, you know that.

SPELVIN: It could be a thin white sweater.

CHUM: Yes.... it could at that. Maybe you have something there. But it's not enough for a whole picture. We've got to have a plot.

SPELVIN: So that's where Cadberry comes in, ain't it?

SADBERRY: I'm afraid Mr. Chum doesn't see eye to eye with me about plotting, Mr. Spelvin. I did suggest a story.

SPELVIN: Like what, for instance?

SADBERRY: Well, it's called CENTIGRADE 69.

SPELVIN: CENTIGRADE 69! Stupendous!

CHUM: You like it?

SPELVIN: Sure I like it. It's different, it's got novelty, class.

SADBERRY: That's what I told Mr. Chum.

SPELVIN: Of course, we gotta change it a little. On account of box-office appeal.

CHUM: Well, what would you suggest?

SPELVIN: Wait a minute... lemme turn on my inspiration.

(SPELVIN sits down at the desk, takes a needle from his pocket and gives himself an injection)

SADBERRY (whispering to CHUM): Am I seeing things or is Mr. Spelvin a narcotics addict?

CHUM (chuckling): Of course not, Mr. Tadberry. It's only a vitamin shot.

SADBERRY: Oh, I see --- hormones.

CHUM (quickly): Watch your language there!

SPELVIN: Don't be scared, it's just a little shot of cannabis indica like. Want a jolt?

SADBERRY: I don't think so.

SPELVIN: Boy, it really stones me! Now where was I?

CHUM: You were going to change the title. CENTIGRADE 69

SPELVIN: Oh, sure, now I remember. CENTIGRADE 69, CENTIGRADE 69..... What's cooking these days? SEVEN BRIDGES FOR SEVEN CENTIGRADES nah.... CENTIGRADE LIFE IF YOU DON'T WEAKEN.... ABBOT AND COSTELLO MEET CENTIGRADE.... nah.... wait.... I'm gettin' it...CENTIGRADE means temerature, like, don't it? And temerature means what makes things boil, ain't so? So how about CENTIGRADE MEETS MA AND PA KETTLE?

SADBERRY: But CENTIGRADE isn't a person.

SPELVIN: Of course not. It's a monster.

SADBERRY: No!

SPELVIN: So awright, who needs it anyhow? Knock out the CENTIGRADE and what have you got left? A real catchy title. MA AND PA KETTLE START BOILING. How's that?

SADBERRY: But Ma and Pa Kettle have nothing to do with this picture.

SPELVIN: That's just the trouble, ain't it? You said there was no plot. Well, put in Ma and Pa Kettle, and you got your plot ready-made.

CHUM: It would cost a fortune to borrow them from Universal.

SPELVIN: So what's a lousy fortune? Think of the angles, sweetheart. Ma and Pa Kettle in a science-fiction movie! How's that for a sensation?

SADBERRY: It gives me one, all right. But I don't like to say just where.

SPELVIN: You just keep out of this, see? When it comes to plots, writers are strictly from hunger. We're gonna do an original, ain't that so, sweetheart?

CHUM: MA AND PA KETTLE START BOILING. Hmmm. I can see possibilities here.

SPELVIN: You ain't just woofin' buster! We open with this here Pa Kettle, see? He's fiddlin' around in the woodshed, get me? Been readin' a lotta this here scientific crud like in them Campbell editorials or whatever and he wants he should be a scientist, understand? So right away he's lettin' his hair grow, he should look like this here Einstein, or whoever.

CHUM: And Ma Kettle...

SPELVIN: She don't go for it at all, see? Allus takin' after him with the broom-handle and stuff. And one night she sneaks out there and finds out he's been cookin' up a whole batch of chemikles and thinks it's moonshine, get it? And so she dumps it all out on the ground, quick, before the scientist sees it.

SADBERRY: What scientist?

SPELVIN: You know. The young scientist, with glasses. He and some old scientist are with the Revenue Agents lookin' for moonshine stills. Only the young scientist kind of falls in love with Pa Kettle's daughter.

CHUM: His daughter? How do you picture her?

SPELVIN: Well, I sort of got an idea about a young chick, maybe 18 or so, who went away to the city to college or such-like and comes back all interested in this here science herself. She maybe wears one of these here tight sweaters along with her blue jeans.

CHUM (eagerly): Now things seem to be shaping up!

SPELVIN: Sure, Pa Kettle makes this stuff, Ma Kettle dumps it, and that's where the science-fiction comes in. The stuff is alive.

CHUM: Alive?

SPELVIN: Yeah, alive. Pa Kettle, he slipped in enough alky and a whole mess of these here ingredients, like. And he creates some kinda photoplasm.....

SADBERRY: You mean protoplasm?

SPELVIN: Photoplasm, like I said. This is a pitcher, ain't it? Anyways this stuff is alive, like and it burns. Everything it touches it burns. That's where the boillin' comes in, get it?

CHUM: So the young scientist and the girl try to stop it and....

SPELVIN: Right. And it keeps on rollin' and growin', see? We have the scene where it kills this here kid, and we have the scene where the army doesn't believe it, and we have the scene where it starts to roll into Los Angeles and everybody's praying, and the walls start cavin' in.....

CHUM: What about your story-line? What about Ma and Pa Kettle?

SPELVIN: Well, Pa Kettle, he's doing a Paul Revere, understand me? He hitches up this here Francis The Talking Mule and he races ahead of the fire and the Mule keeps yelling, "Fire.... Run for your lives!"

SADBERRY (groans): Oh no.... We'll have Abbott and Costello in this thing yet.

SPELVIN: You stole my idea! Abbott and Costello, they're friendly Martians, like, up in this here flying saucer.

CHUM: What here flying saucer?

SPELVIN: The one Ma Kettle contactked on the radio set she built. You see, that's another kicker; she was all a time needlin' Pa for foolin' around with science, but she started goofin' through the books and built herself this here ree-ceiver, and it contactked Mars, and so when the fire starts to spread she sends out an SOS, like, and Abbot and Costello are friendly Martians so they come down in the niche of time and put the fire out.

SADBERRY: How?

SPELVIN: You oughtta know. You write the stuff! Hell, even I know it's real cold up on Mars. So they bring down some super-frozen dry ice and bicozy! All the fire goes out. And Pa Kettle, his britches are on fire, so he just squats down in this here dry ice and wallows around.....

CHUM: And the heroine.....

SPELVIN: They get her just as her sweater is burnin' off and the scientist here, he takes the ice and starts rubbin' her.....

CHUM: Carefully, now!

SPELVIN: So, shoot it and let 'em cut it out in the preview.

CHUM: And the Talking Mule?

SPELVIN: Ma Kettle takes him and goes into business. You see, she finds out how good this here special ice is that Abbott and Costello bring down from Mars. So after the fire is out, she has Abbott and Costello bring her a whole lot more, and then she goes out to peddle it in a wagon, and wherever he pulls it, he hollers out "Ice for Sale!" to the customer.

SADBERRY: Now I've heard everything.

SPELVIN: Well, thank you. Course, it's still kinda rough, but we can polish it up a little.

CHUM: I'll put a coupla writers on it.

SPELVIN: You'll hafta make a deal with Universal. That'll cost. And all that Technicolor.....

CHUM: Technicolor, drecknicolor! This is colossal! MA AND PA
KETTLE START BOILING!

SADBERRY: Er..... wait a minute.

CHUM: Now what?

SADBERRY: Couldn't you manage to keep CENTIGRADE in the title somewhere?

CHUM: We just told you, it has no appeal.

SADBERRY: But I've been thinking. Suppose you want to make a sequel?
Then you could call it SON OF CENTIGRADE. Or CENTIGRADE
RETURNS. Or CENTIGRADE MEETS THE WOLF MAN.

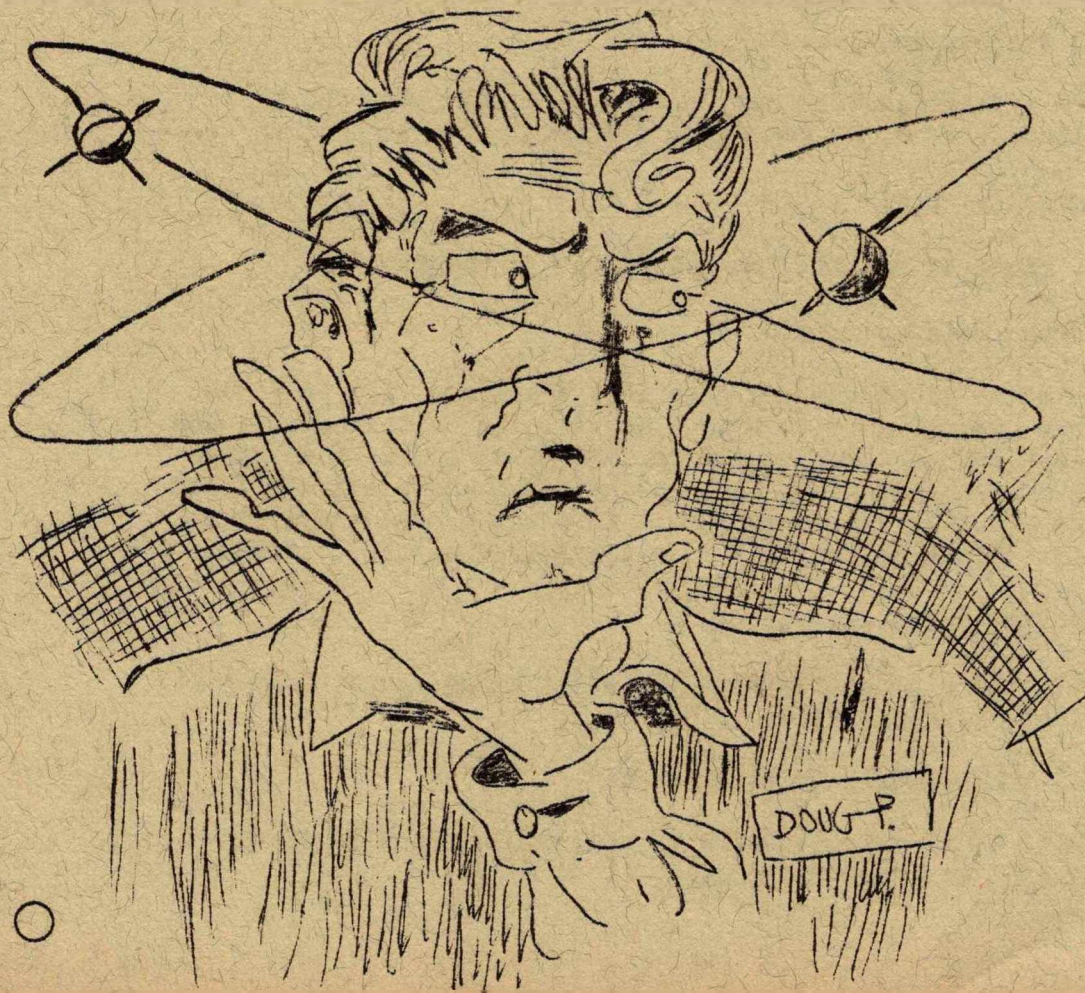
CHUM: Se-ay! That's not a bad gimmick! Sadberry, there's hope
for you yet. Stick around and watch us shoot this picture
and maybe you'll pick up our technique here.

SADBERRY: I'll try sir, I really will. If Mr. Spelvin will help me.

SPELVIN: Sure, glad to give you a couple pointers..... which reminds
me, how about a jolt? (brings out needle)

SADBERRY: well..... yes. Don't mind if I do! Looks like I'm stuck anyway!

CURTAIN



Ode To An S-F Percentage Man

SF is the true embodiment
Of everything that's excellent.
It has no kind of fault or slough,
And I, my friends, embody SF.
The foremost prominent agent, I,
For marvelous tales of wizardry
By very ingenious authors who
Are very well known by all of you.

▲ pleasant occupation, this
Vicarious literature success.
(▲ pleasant occupation, his -
Vicarious literature success!)

But though the vantage that I've got
Has won me fandom's number one spot,
And columns I write will, like as not,
Be found in zines all over the lot --
Yet it sometimes seems that this niche I've found
Is consider'bly less than my proper ground.
And though I've tried to write my way higher,
I just can't reach up to where I aspire.

A good deal aggravating, this
Completely vicarious type success.
(What seems to aggravate him is -
Success that's completely vicarious!)

And everyone who'd purchase a tale
Must come to me, for I make the sale.
So from my office, every day,
Dozens of stories must go their way.
There's some by M., and some by G.,
And some by U., and some by E.,
And some by A., and some by B.,
But seldom, so seldom, a one by me.

But someday I'll get out of this
Vicarious kind of success (I guess).

(Would we be happy with a mess
Of only vicarious type success?
OH YES!!)

Bruce E. Pelz

THE

joe
gibson

RIDGE

PENDULUM

Number 3

'Way back in the dear, dead days of science fiction -- the 1930's that is, and ASTOUNDING, -- a guy named Nat Schachner was writing his Space Lawyer series, concerning various legal problems before the bar (NAME YOUR CHOICE) in a galactic civilization.

Now, there are galactic stories and there are galactic stories. But in these galactic tales, Schachner continually referred to a certain little item which no galactic tale should be without -- but which they are! It usually cropped up whenever his lawyer was on a starship bound for Terra, or away from Terra to somewhere else far, far away.

I don't have the series on hand, so I haven't his descriptions of this little item. But I do remember he called it "The Ridge."

In any age of galactic junkets, it would probably be the most important item in any galactic pilot-astrogator's repertoire. Yet so far as I know, not a single other SF writer has ever mentioned it. Instead, we've had star-roaming tales galore wherein the Bold Hero is aboard a super-duper spaceship lost somewhere in interstellar space, unable to find his way back to Earth because he is unable to distinguish Sol from the rest of the stars. Inevitably, he must find someone with a "star-chart" which will show him the way.

In short, what Nat Schachner called "The Ridge" is simply the constellation of stars in which you find Sol. That any pilot-astrogator would take on a galactic cruise without knowing this particular constellation by heart is stretching probability pretty far -- even in an interplanetary age, they're likely to have positions of major stars in this constellation memorized, as "fixed stars" to be used in astrogation.

And I've often wondered what "The Ridge" looked like. Did it look like a ridge?

The only way to find out was to dig in a few astronomical tomes. In doing so, I found out that Earthbound astronomers have absolutely no use for this particular constellation -- for good reason: they can't see it. Instead the "constellations" they use aren't constellations at all! For example, take the familiar example of finding Polaris, the Pole Star, by extending a straight line through the edge of Ursa Major, or the Big Dipper. The astronomers call Ursa Major a "constellation" and seen from Earth, it looks like one. Actually, though, the stars "in" the Big Dipper are widely scattered across space, far from each other. We merely see them close together, in the same general direction from Earth, forming a pattern roughly similar to a dipper.

This is true of all constellations as we see them -- and as astronomers use them for reference. They aren't actual groups of stars at all.

In plotting "The Ridge" on even a crude scale -- enough to give an idea of its shape -- I had to use the Pole Star/Ursa Major reference to plot the angle in which the stars are seen from Earth. Then I had to consult a table giving the distances of the stars. And, of course, the stars' magnitudes were important. Barreling in from Betelgeuse, 300 light years away, you're going to spot a constellation by its brightest, 1st magnitude stars and then pick out any dimmer stars among them. The 1st magnitude stars would be the reference-points, giving "shape" to the constellation.

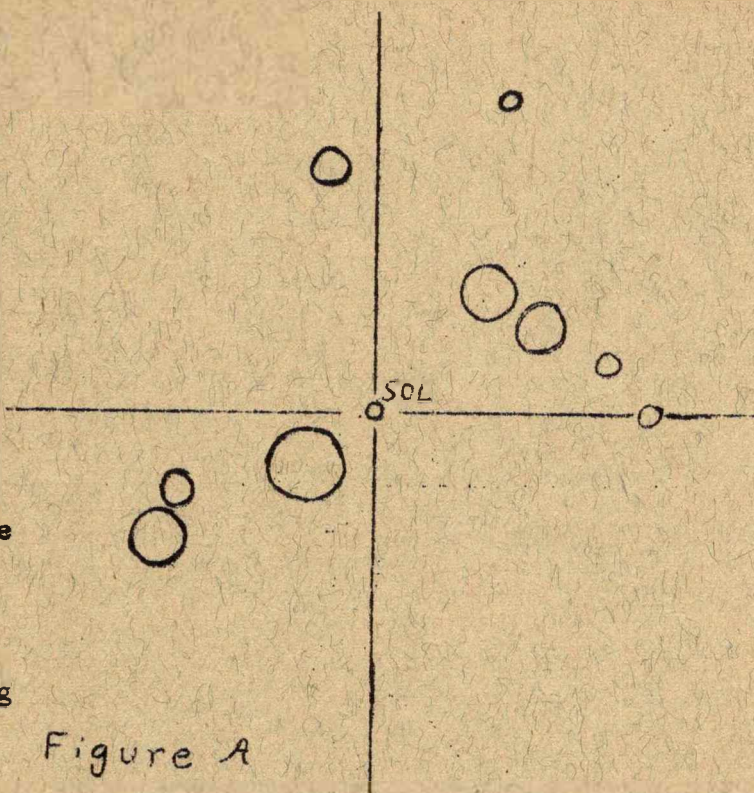


Figure A

I found that there are nine 1st magnitude stars near Earth (and, of course, Sol), from 4.4 to 67 light years distant, and strung out roughly on a line running from Sol to Polaris -- both of which are 2nd magnitude stars. The next nearest (1st magnitude) is Achernor, some 70 light years away, but it's beyond the nearest star, Alpha Centauri, with a considerable gap in between. There is quite probably a thin stream of dimmer stars connecting Achernor with the rest of "The Ridge" and if so it would form a "dim slope" out on the end of "The Ridge."

Finally, there was one other problem: paper is flat, and "The Ridge" isn't -- it's three-dimensional. Thus, "The Ridge" would have one shape when seen from one angle, and another shape from another angle. And seen head-on, from a starship out beyond Alpha Centauri, it would appear as a loose cluster of stars. (Figure A)

Therefore, in diagramming the Ridge, I had to draw the stars in sizes denoting their relative distances: near ones big and distant ones small. And to get the various "shapes" of the Ridge, I had to diagram it from one angle (Using the Polaris/Ursa Major reference) and then -- roll it over a half turn! (Note positions of Pollux in Figures I, II, III, IV, and V.) ((Pollux is also 2nd magnitude.))

Any way you look at it, it does resemble a ridge -- in fact, it doesn't resemble much of anything else!

It's a definite group of stars. It would be visible -- and the brightest of its bright stars would be the large-sized ones in the diagrams -- to a starship approaching from any great distance; say, Deneb, 400 light-years away. And with the Ridge to start from, finding Sol would be easy, so there's absolutely no basis for all those Bold Haros getting themselves lost out there. About the only way they could get lost would be to go halfway across the galaxy, where the Ridge would be hidden behind intervening constellations and star-clusters.

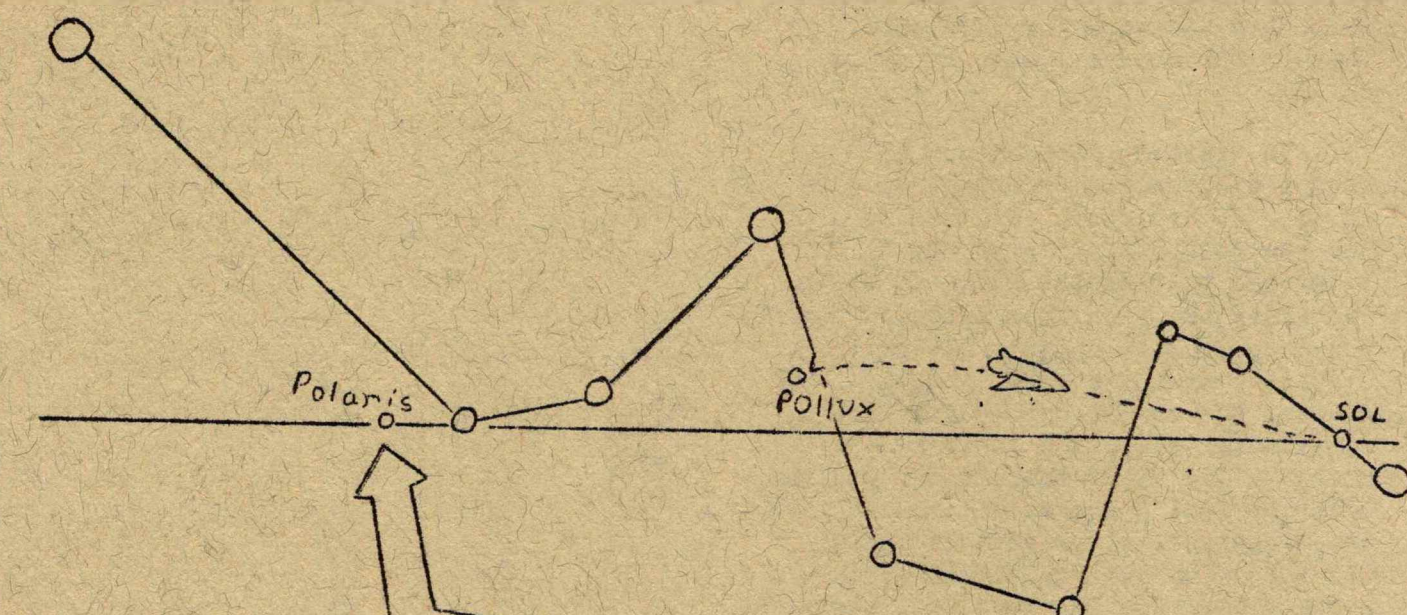


Figure I

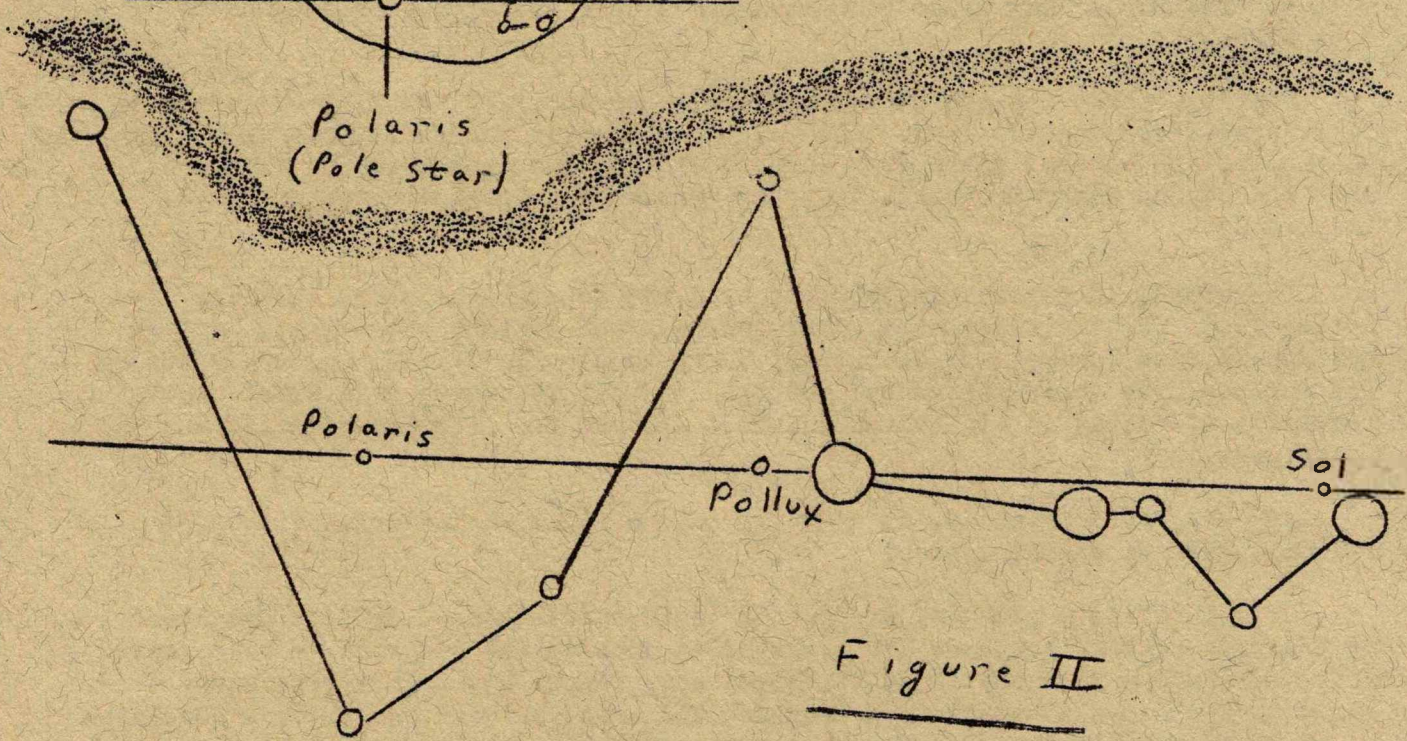
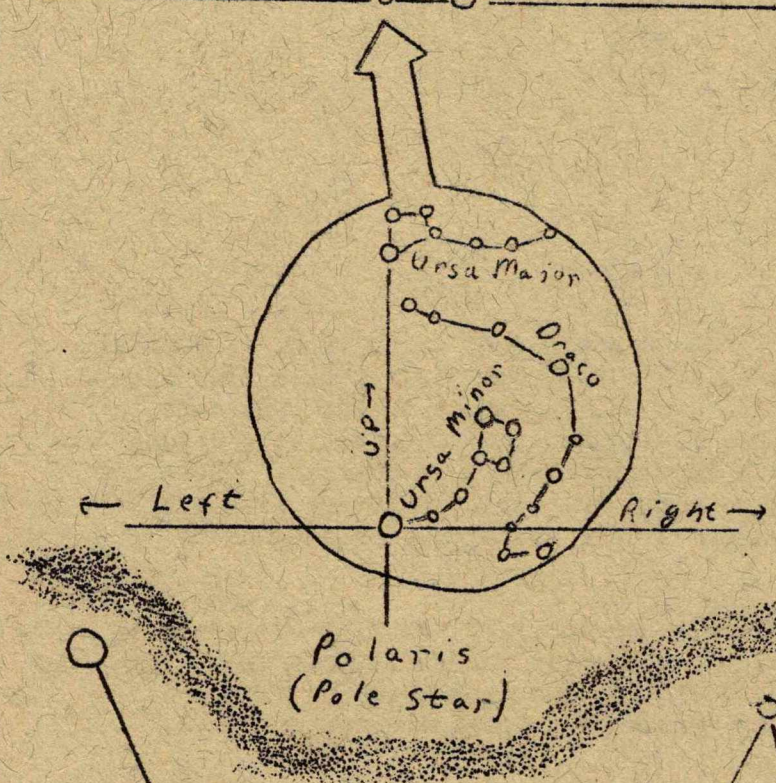


Figure II

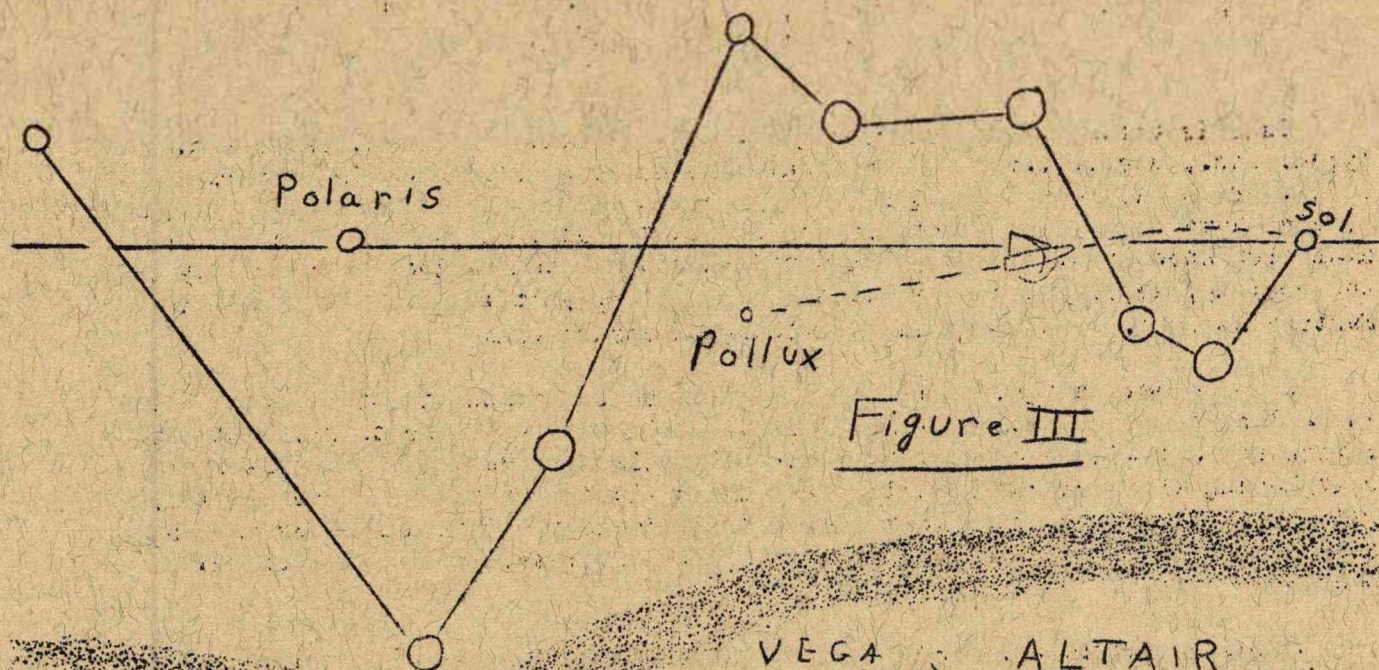


Figure III

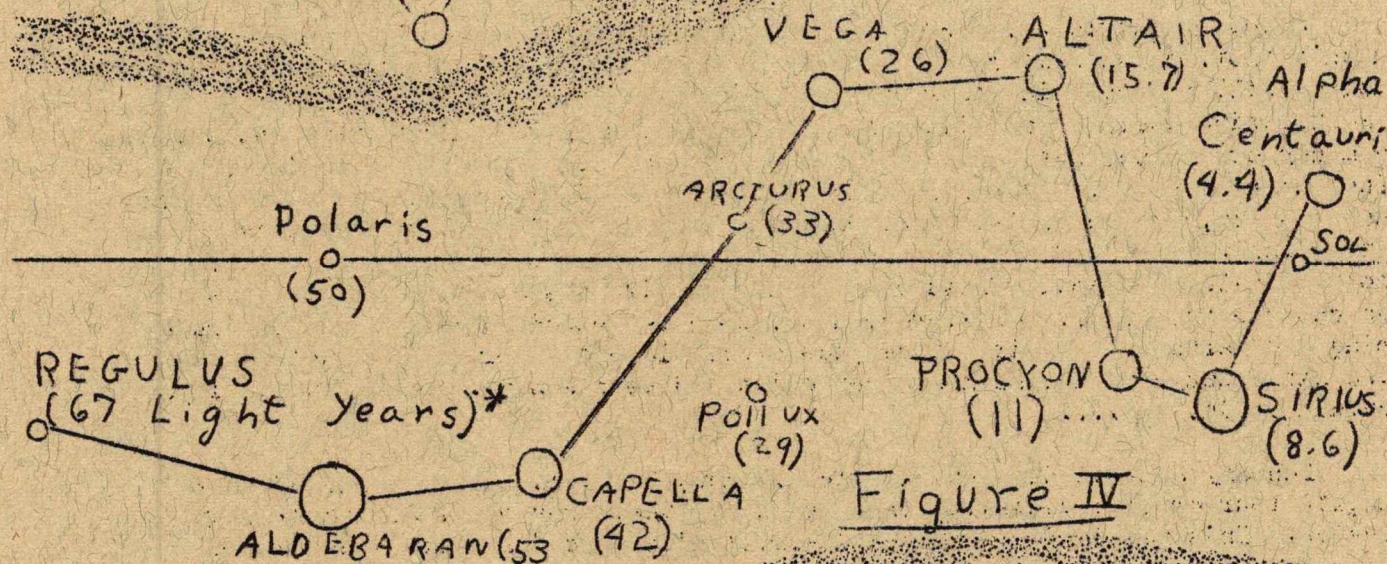


Figure IV

* (Distance from Sol)

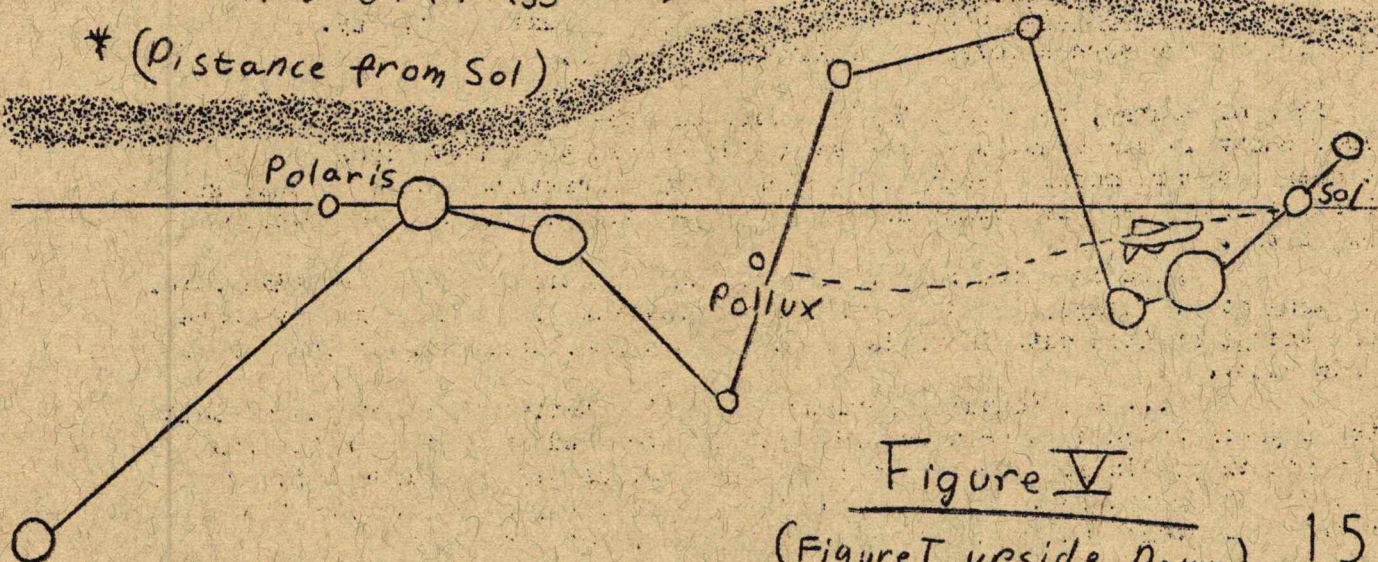


Figure V

(Figure I upside Down) 15

THE EDITOR JAWS

This is actually very discouraging. I've typed, and typed, and typed, and typed, etc., etc.,....for so many hours and now I still have this last page and a quarter to fill out. The quarter page comes after the Harmon thing. Oh yes,

I also have some space after Laney's brilliant masterpiece. So, with all this nMAD (You know what, spelled backwards) this editorial is liable to be very dull and boring, so if you have something else to do, just rip this page out of Fantasy Aspects. You won't miss anything, I assure you.

Among other things, there was a widespread resentment to the artwork used in FA last issue. I was suprised. I personally thought, and think, that Doug Payson and Art Wilson are pretty good. Ah well. Incidentally...the reason for only having the back cover filled with illos (2) is not because I needed these requests, but for the very lazy reason that I'm so tired ~~stupid~~ this morning that I just don't want to make any extra work for myself. Ja. Comprene? Good!

A lot of people were very unkind about Fantasy Aspects, incidently. They didn't trot, or in some cases, waddle, down to their local postoffice with a dollar bill clenched in their ~~fat~~ ~~fat~~ cute, plump hand and snort at the clerk, which would be a switch, as the clerk usually snorts at them, and demand a money order made out to Al Lewis, Box 37, Bla Bla, Bla Bla... No indeed. They didn't do that. Unfortunately, because if this issue some of these slobs don't do it, or send a letter of comment, or even review Fantasy Aspects, some other fan will henceforth have the privilege, the honor of wrapping a real, honest-to-Ghod Galactic Press Publication in with his garbage. Better yet, he can use this real, good-for-nothing, honest-to-Ghod, GPP fanzine FOR wrapping the garbage. Yessir, these people will lose this privilege, unless they are kind enough to let me know they exist and earn money...which I admit is a cardinal sin, but....

Fantasy Aspects did get one nice review, however. Yessir, out of it's mighty four or so reviews...I only saw four, there was one real goody-goody review. This was in Twig. Ghaa, I almost died when I saw it. Guy was so overwhelming enthusiastic about the whole thing. Thanks a lot, Guy. It was wonderful to see such a review. Really was. Yessir.

Then of course, to offset Guy's review was the one in CRY of the NAMELESS. Elinor Busby in her usual somewhat sarcastic manner toward fanzines for which she does not care much. Really I shouldn't say sarcastic. It seems that sercon material, which was what comprised FA is a drag to Elinor. She let everyone know it too.

which is quite right. I wrote Buz and Elinor Busby sometime later and among other things, asked the why of the review. It seems I have to have these things spelled out. Here is how it is spelled, according to the Gospel of Buz Busby.

"...FA#1 featured serious, factual material, much of which dealt with subjects which have been chewed over and over and over both in the fan press and in prozines. Sercon material has to be damned good indeed in order to stand up for reprinting; it dates and/or becomes trite, rapidly, except possibly for items of Great Fannish Historical Significance or etc....."

Buz goes on a little ways and tells me that it would seem to him that I would do better to have

LOVECRAFT is "86"

BY francis t. laney

"86". -- waitress slang for sold out, no more left, out of stock, finished, all done, passe.

-- McGivern, Dictionary of Modern Slang

HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT is dead. It would be a good idea to leave him that way, to call a halt to this shameless stirring amongst his bones which has gone far to raise him to the status of a modern myth among fantasites.

Let us try to observe Lovecraft objectively for a moment and see what basis there may be for this quasi-worship of him and his works which has built several fanzines and a small publishing house, and has enabled a number of nonentities to glean a certain amount of vicarious fame by riding on the mouldering coat-tails of a dead man.

Was Lovecraft a success as a commercial writer? The answer is definitely no. He eked out a bare starvation existence doing rewrite work for other writers and through selling perhaps half of a very meager output of his own to one of the lower paying pulp magazines. Lovecraft himself would agree heartily that he was not a commercial success; in many instances in his letters he has stated emphatically that he wanted no part of commercial success anyway, that he considered it beneath his dignity to strive therefor.

Was Lovecraft a success as an artistic writer? Here again the answer seems to be no, although there is more room for doubt than in the previous instance. To determine Lovecraft's artistic stature, we would have first to decide what constitutes artistic success. If realism be any criterion, Lovecraft, a man who knew life only forth or fifth hand, was a thundering failure. However, subjective horror need not necessarily be realistic, provided that it is presented in such manner as to convey to the reader the same sense of terror felt by the author. Did Lovecraft do this, other than imperfectly and partially? No. He has asserted that his technique was to maintain "a careful realism in every phase of the story except that touching on the one given marvel." (Margin-alia, p. 138). Here his utter maladjustment to society has made him incapable of visualising or expressing an even remotely believable locale or action; his best effort is no more than a subjective caricature of reality. Other than through the temporary suspension of belief on the part of the reader, are the mundane settings of Lovecraft's tales even remotely plausible, particularly in the matter of logical motivation and characterization? Did Lovecraft play other than fumbling on the strings of terror? No indeed. He had a horror of the sea and of fish, a horror not shared by most of his readers. It made no difference to Lovecraft -- a fish-being was the quintessence of horror, so he'd say "fish" in a hollow sepulchral voice and wonder why the readers didn't all faint. And he had a most annoying trick of applying totally subjective definitions to different words -- especially ones dealing with age, time, cold, horror -- and he would then pour these words on. The net effect was less one of horrific atmosphere than of overdone hamminess.

And there is of course his worse writing fault, his almost consistent telegraphing of the punch line. Writing up to a twist ending, he would usually give himself away by the time he was halfway through his story. There was none of the skill manifested by James, for example, or Bierce, or Chambers. These men would write up to the very denouement and then, BAM, they would hit the reader in the teeth with a punch line that would rock him on his heels. But they didn't achieve this spectacular result by tipping their hand halfway through the story. It is not entirely possible to determine if Lovecraft considered himself an artistic success, but the weight of evidence seems to be to the contrary. Certainly it is a well-established fact (viz., W. Paul Cook's appreciation of Lovecraft in Beyond the Wall of Sleep) that HPL was forever dissatisfied with his work and constantly wished to disavow all his stories but the most recent one. While of course much of this was perhaps modesty, it scarcely points to any strong feeling of satisfaction with his achievements in his chosen profession.

Was Lovecraft a success as a man? Here we tread on shaky ground. But Dr. David H. Keller's recent psychoanalysis of Lovecraft in Fantasy Commentator (Summer, 1948) at least casts a modicum of doubt on Lovecraft's integration and psychological stability. From all accounts, even his own, Lovecraft seems to have been a profoundly maladjusted person, out of step with the world on nearly every phase of life.

There is of course no sense in being worshippers of success. But on the other hand, does it make sense to deify a man who was so completely unsuccessful? Is there any valid reason to use him as the basis on which to establish a cult?

Certainly Lovecraft was a likable fellow, a staunch and loyal friend who gave far too generously of himself to his associates. There can be no question but that unselfish help and his encouragement made it possible for several members of the Lovecraft circle to become moderately successful writers. They indubitably felt keen grief at his passing and most certainly are to be commended for feeling gratitude towards him for his help and encouragement.

But is there any valid reason why a man such as August Derleth, a first class writer in his own right, should attempt to keep the torch burning for Lovecraft when he could take the time and energy and intelligence which has made Arkham House such a successful publishing venture, and write material of his own which is likely to be of far greater importance than anything Lovecraft ever produced?

Is there any valid reason why a character like Francis T. Laney, who never even heard of Lovecraft until three years after his death, should be enabled to build The Acolyte into fame and success in its own little microcosmos, simply by loading the early issues with mouldy scrapings out of HPL's literary bread-box? Certainly it was easier than to build up a top fanzine with genuinely amateur efforts.

Why should any fanzine ever again publish anything by Lovecraft, or even about him? If fanzines more or less drop HPL from consideration and if Derleth and one or two other pros stop beating the drums for Lovecraft for even as little as one year, HPL will drop back to his proper status in American literature -- almost completely unknown and forgotten.

Of course, Derleth can do as he will, and he will no doubt continue to publish vastly of Lovecraftiana. A man of his prodigious energy and endless contacts can keep the Lovecraft myth alive for many years to come by what might

I REMEMBER COMIC BOOKS

BY JIM HARMON

I remember comic books.

I don't suppose they will ever completely disappear but the Comics Code censorship has maimed the entire industry, if not killed it. I've noticed a number of slick magazines gloating over the number of comic publishers going out of business. Of course, we can hardly expect sympathy for the writers, artists, and editors put out of work but one might expect some sympathy for the unemployed printers and pressmen from the national publications.

There's been a lot said about comics censorship -- mostly by people, with their eagle eye on the First Amendment, but never on the colorful comics page. I've said part of it. The difficulty is the same one they are trying to impose on the television industry. Ding Dong School is a very good program -- I saw it once -- but they are holding this up as the standard for all children's TV programs. They used to do this with the late Nile Mack's fairy tale radio show "Let's Pretend." The social workers overlook the fact that these programs are of absolutely no interest to any child over seven. To a healthy, active twelve year old, they are as intolerably babyish as a game of petty-cake.

Anthromorphism has become the by-word of the present comic books. Gorillas are grateful to lions for saving them from the wicket hunters. (Evidently these writers have never read the original story of what happened to the thorn-pulling mouse) There is growing propaganda for racial inferiority complex -- the human race is not ready for Space, for the Secret Weapon, to know the Truth. The war comics have become dangerously jingcistic. I suspect letting children read of wars that are exciting and where literally no one is killed or even injured is far more dangerous than having them read the War-is-Hell E. C. books. Damn it, I know it is!

But there was another day of lurid adventure, naked heros and heroines, and lusty violence. This was a day before the era of the juvenile delinquent, the crazy mixed-up kid. This was the era of Jungle Comics, Planet Comics, Green Lantern, Captain Marvel, Tom Mix Comics, and of Superman -- who alone, remains in faded fashion.

Jungle Comics, with its variations on the Tarzan (or Mowgli) theme had the standard ape man, Kaanga; the ape boy, Wambi; the voodoo ape man, Tabu. It also had an ape girl, but I can't remember her name. The same publisher (Fiction House) had another ape girl, Sheena, in Jumbo Comics. She survives on television. The stories in this one were tight action, but it was the pictures that were of main interest.

Nearly every page and nearly every frame contained a gorgeous woman dressed in nearly nothing, and that skin tight. It's too bad such an educational magazine no longer exists. It was a pleasant way to study human anatomy -- a subject that today's kids are learning in a distorted manner since comic book women no longer have legs or breasts.

Doubtless some of you remember the similar situation in Planet Comics. Here the standard of story was somewhat higher. A few years ago, The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction ran the text version of a Star Pirate adventure that had been used in the Fiction House sports pub, Fight Stories. Besides the Raffles-Saint of Space, there were Flint Barker and Reef Ryan, Space Rangers. Then -- Lost World. This was undoubtedly the dullest of the Planet Comics stories -- Hunt Bowman (who was an archer) and his girl, Lisa, fought intermanably against the lizard-faced Voltamen, ravagers of terrestrial civilization, who spoke English sentences with Germanic construction. That is: With construction Germanic, spoke they sentences English. On the other hand, a short-lived series, Futura, was not much better plot-wise but it had some of the most beautiful science fiction artwork I've ever seen anywhere -- the artist was similar to Wallace Woods of E.C. and some Planet Stories illustrations, but his style was looser which gave an ethereal quality to the scenes.

In those lusty days, Superman D-C National gave out with something more than, with all respect to Julius Schartz, the wishy-washy pabulum they now offer. All-Star Comics brought all of their super-heroes together into one long story -- rather like the monsters in a Universal horror picture of the forties. For a long time, the rule of the Justice Society was that a member could not remain in a more than a honorary fashion if he appeared in a comic-book all his own. With all that extra income, obviously Superman, Batman, Flash, and Green Lantern did not have to work so hard for justice. But various members dropped out of the society when their regular comic book slots were dropped -- Hour-Man, Starman, etc., and the honorary members trooped back in; Superman and Batman for one issue, Flash, Green Lantern and Wonder Woman for good. As a matter of fact, long after the day of the masked crimefighter had passed, All-Star remained (like FAPA) the last home of the tired warriors, unwanted and unloved. Over the years, some of the members were:

HAWKMAN, masked with a hawk-head helmet, adorned with giant wings, companion of the similarly garbed Hawkgirl (also in Flash Comics.)

DR. MID-NITE, able to see in the dark, blind in daylight without dark glasses, posed as blind Dr. Midnight (All-American Comics).

THE ATOM, originally so-called for his small size, but after 1945, because he tapped atomic energy for his strength (Adventure Comics).

HOURL MAN, a very early comic character. He obtained one hour of super strength by taking a powder (non-habit forming, I presume); this drug user suggestively appeared in More Fun Comics.

STARMAN tapped stellar power with a Starwand (Adventure Comics).

JOHNNY THUNDER, comedy relief, could call on a Geni-like Thunderbolt by saying the ancient Celenese magic words Cei-U (Say You) which he only did by accident, i.e., "Say you guys can't do this to me!" (Flash Comics)

THE SPECTRE -- now, here was a character! He was not just a demi-god; he was God! He could do anything -- bring the dead to life, visit hell and heaven, change size, be everywhere, do everything. His only trouble was that he was in love with a girl called Clarence and since he was a ghost (of a policeman whose identity he still maintained) he couldn't hope to marry her. I don't know why -- I bet this boy could do anything. However, finally, he talked to God in person (a memorable comic-strip sequence) and God decided to bring his body back to life for The Spectre who nevertheless retained his supernatural powers. But he never did marry that girl.

DR. FATE, somewhat similar to The Spectre, (More Fun Comics)

GREEN LANTERN was one of my favorites because he used "will power." I suppose this strip appealed to the future Rosicrucians and psionics-experimenters. Alan Scott was an engineer (incredibly he switched from a railroad engineer to a radio broadcasting engineer, as if the writer of the book thought any kind of engineer was essentially the same as any other one.) He found an ancient green lantern and fashioned a ring from it. The lamp had been made from a meteorite in ancient China that had the ability to materially project his will with beams of green light. This mounted up to letting GL walk through walls, set up a force screen to protect himself from bullets or knives -- but not anything organic in nature like human flesh or wooden clubs. He could also fly and shoot out rays from his ring to burn, lift, attract, repel. Scott had to charge his ring against the lantern every 24 hours by chanting, "In brightest day, in darkest night/ No evil shall escape my sight/ Let those who worship evil night/ Beware my power -- Green Lantern's Light." Frankly, the whole thing smacked of superstition.

In later (and declining years) GL traded in a derby-hatted cabbie named Dorby Dickles for a red-haired wench called Harlequin with glasses to match -- she was a criminal whose whole career was devoted to pulling crimes so fiendish that the Lantern would "marry" her to save the world from them -- her price. But GL never did give this broad what she was itching for. I am tempted to suggest that the relationship between Dickles and Scott may not have been all it appeared to be. But then again, now that both GL and the Harlequin are retired, they may be snogging together and recalling that happily monstrous past.

THE FLASH was a play on only one of Superman's qualities -- superspeed. Flash could run through solid objects because "they didn't have time to stop him," spin fast enough to make him invisible (but, never dizzy) and generally move like a jackrabbit after a jillrabbit. I particularly remember the involved time-travel stories this series spawned, especially in book-long stories in All Flash Quarterly.

WONDER WOMAN was -- and still is -- patently feminist propaganda. Diana Prince sprang from a race of Amazons who lives on an island and raised their generations of girl children without ever seeing a man. (Brief Pause). But Diana saw an aviator -- Steve something or other -- and decided there was no future in the Amazon Princess business -- a dead-end job, and joined the army to be near her man. In her Wonder Woman costume, she was as strong as an ox, able to catch bullets on her bracelets, spin a magic lasso that compelled

obedience from the captured -- including herself, operate a Mental Radio (with a TV screen) and fly an invisible airplane. In spite of her "love" for Steve (which she hid very well) I still think those Amazons were a bunch of Lesbians.

Superman and Batman are still around. DC has smoothed out some rough spots in the Superman character (like explaining his costume is made from super-cloth -- I remember when Seigel and Schuster showed him fastening his cloak on with a safety pin) but Superman has lost all touch with reality. Today, Superman appears from first panel to the end performing a never ending series of miracles. In the old days, he kept his feet on the ground as Clark Kent to believable scenes of newspaper life to back his appearances as Superman, giving them meaning and verisimilitude.

Tom Mix Comics were given away for Halston box-tops via radio, comic books and newspapers. They were half the size of the regular dime comics. They were 32 pages or the size of today's comics. What was probably a one shot lasted 12 issues. Like the Tom Mix radio program, they dealt with life on a modern ranch -- The TM Bar -- as it hasn't really been in 50 years. To the old west was added science fictional super weapons, airplanes, spies and gangsters. They had a certain charm, these comics, though never the quality the radio program obtained as written by George Lawther.

Probably the greatest comic-book character of all appeared chiefly in newspapers -- THE SPIRIT by Will Eisner. He created what might be called the E.C. style in comics -- both the science fiction horror story type and the MAD satire. Eisner's drawing and narrative techniques undoubtedly revolutionized the whole industry. I firmly believe that The Spirit was vastly superior to Pogo, Li'l Abner, Mad, Steve Canyon, Peanuts, or any other comic with an ardent clique of supporters. To my mind, it had absolutely everything you could ask of the comic-strip media. Naturally, it is no longer published.

The Spirit was good.

But as for the others, I suppose they seem better than today's efforts only because they are seen down the long funnel to my childhood. They were brighter and gaudier. But that's probably all.

It must be a year since I've sat down and read a comic book. These days when I reach for a copy of Superman, it's the third word in the title of a play by G. B. Shaw.

I must be growing up, and I'm not at all sure it's a good thing.

[illegible]

23 THE EDITOR JABBERS ON, AND ON, AND ON, AND ON, FOR ABOUT 5 MORE LINES

TAPA. Also letters from John Honing, Chick Derry.... The comon consensus seems to be that I should proofread, which I should have done, and which this issue I am trying to do, and that I need different material.

Toward this end I can promise this material. Harry Warner Jr. gave me permission to reprint from Horizons. So, next issue will begin a series on operas slightly sfetical, which ran in the first issues of Horizons. Yes. Feel free, also, anyone, to send fanzines. I need them. Yes. I do. Muchly. ##In ending let me than everyone who wrote or gave me a review...Busby's...everybody whosent money too! Yes. Next issue sometime about last of May or so. Yes..pretty much for sure this time. *Adam John Lewis, Esq.*

Fantasy Aspects

TO:

Ed Meskeys
723 a 45 St.
Brooklyn 20,
N.Y.



FROM:

6 issues left

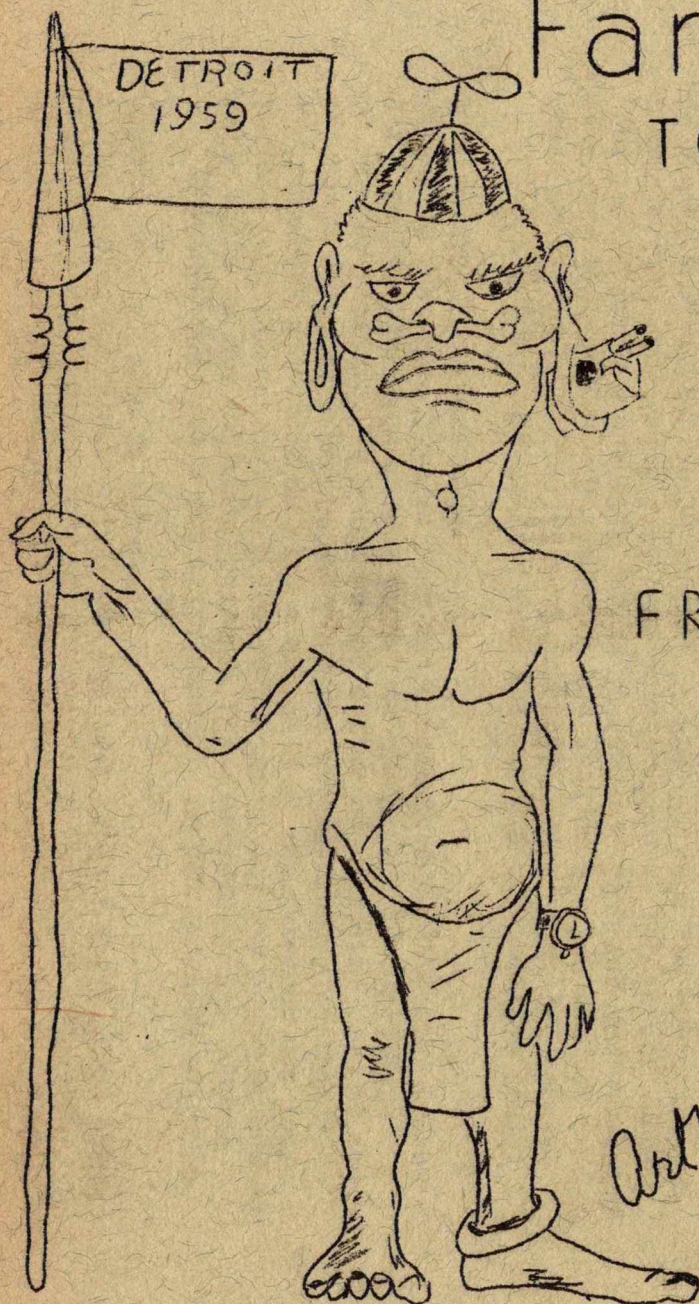
ALAN LEWIS

~~BOX 37~~ 129 Jewett-Holmwood

EAST AURORA
NEW YORK, USA.

Artw

RET. POST. GU A'TED.



A GALACTIC PRESS PUBLICATION