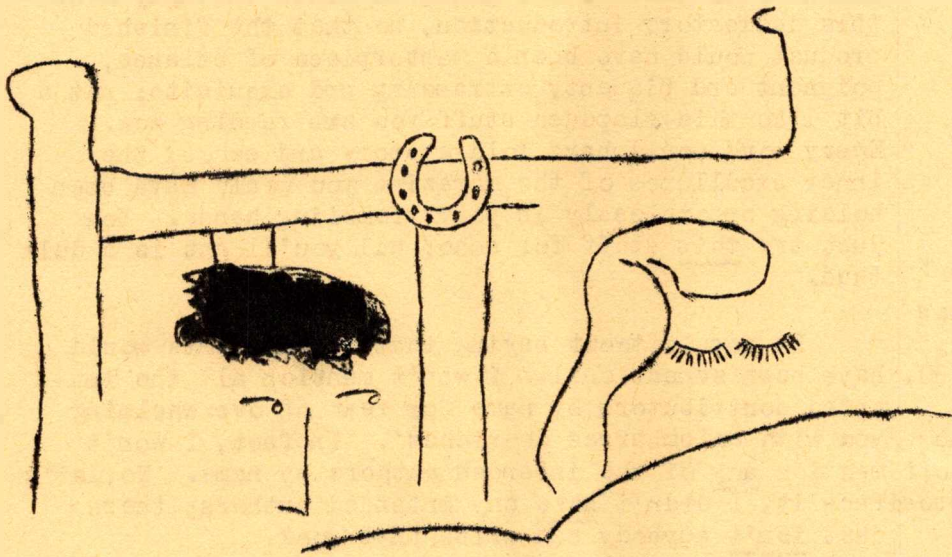


FRINGE



"Cookie, little girl?"

NUMBER
TWO

THIS

FROWSY

FRINGE
NO. 2

flops fadedly from

Mal Ashworth,
40, Makin Street,
Tong Street,
Bradford.4.,England.

for FAPA.
Mailing No. 91
May, 1960.

The cartoon on the cover was drawn by Dave Wood in 1954, and stencilled by me in 1960. (Ten minutes ago, if you really want to know.) The original caption was left off and the caption put on instead was the only one that came to mind.

If you don't like ^{you are} it perfectly at liberty to make up your own.

You can then either write it on a piece of paper and stick it over my poor little caption that is so unwittingly offensive to you, or even scratch and mutilate my defenceless little caption until it is utterly obliterated and annihilated (don't let pity stop you from wiping out this harmless little caption if you feel so insatiably vicious towards it) and then substitute your own caption.

Or you can just make the best of it.

You nearly didn't get this issue of FRINGE.

In the first place, you nearly got something completely different in its place. I had another magazine planned. It was going to be B-I-G; much, much bigger than this little, mouldy old FRINGE that you ended up with. It was going to have a brilliant cover; not brilliant, that is, in the sense of being printed in fluorescent inks on silver foil, but of immense significance and brilliantly executed - you know the sort of thing. Inside of that there was going to be a page devoted to prose by me, presenting, as it were, with a modest bow, this incredible new magazine to you. I was going to slave lovingly over this dedicatory introduction, so that the finished product would have been a masterpiece of balance, poignant and piquant, entrancing and exquisite; not a bit like this slapdash stuff you are reading now. Every word would have told a story and echoed the inner excellence of the magazine you would have been holding breathlessly in your trembling hands. You just try this stuff for echo; all you'll get is a dull thud.

It goes without saying that the contents would have been sensational. I won't mention all the intended contributors by name for fear of overwhelming you with an 'embarras de riches'. In fact, I won't mention any of the intended authors by name. No, let's face it, I didn't have any intended authors; there just isn't anybody can write that good.

You see how fabulous it was going to be ?

The illustrations don't bear mention. They would have been such that Bernard Berenson, had he been privileged to see them, would have spoken of in a hushed whisper. That's all.

But I didn't have time to get the magazine ready for this mailing. It may be along next mailing.

Don't expect too much of it.

The second reason you nearly didn't get this issue of FRINGE is that I nearly didn't have time to do even this much. In fact, to be perfectly truthful, it's not even certain yet that you will get this issue of FRINGE; but if you find yourself reading it, it will be pretty safe to assume that it got done and you got it. I hope you're right.

For one thing there was THE ASCENT OF NEXT TO NOTHING to get out; even that isn't finished yet, but if you find it somewhere in the mailing, you will know that made it too. (And it just occurred to me that while that sports my actual living-type address, '14, Westgate' and whatnot, FRINGE shows my 'bulky post' address of '40, Makin Street' and whatnot. I trust you can ignore little discrepancies like this; wait until I come up with some really worthwhile discrepancies before you take any notice. It will give you an air of inscrutability if nothing else.) Then there was ROT No.4, which is now, happily, published (anyone who hasn't received a copy and would like one (it is not being distributed through FAPA) may have one upon application to the editor of this magazine, enclosing a written assurance that the applicant is over 3½ months old and a Bone Fide student; examples of recent Bona Fides studied should be enclosed).

And to make matters even more difficult, my FAPA mailing didn't arrive until a fortnight later than usual, and then there was....

Well, skip it; you got a skinny little FRINGE and that's all there is to it.

About that magazine I mentioned back there; you remember, the one that was going to make ESQUIRE look like a hectored hash by some horrendous hack - it wasn't a complete pipe-dream. (As a matter of fact it was very incomplete, as you may have gathered, but that isn't what I mean). I do intend to put out a new magazine; the idea is that it will circulate through both FAPA and OMPA. The general part of the magazine - articles and so on - will be common (though not too common, I hope) to both editions, but the magazine will then do a sort of syzygy or whatever that idea is that makes Ted Sturgeon so happy, splitting into separate OMPA and FAPA editions. These last will contain mailing comments and other matter pertinent to the one APA only. This way, it seems to me, a more ambitious magazine might be produced, as the combined circulation of FAPA and OMPA should make it worthwhile for outside contributors to - er - erm - contribute; yes, that's the word I was looking for.

I know the idea isn't exactly revolutionary, but once these notions take a hold of me I go around shaking my head, in a happy daze, for some time. Will you dig this crazy happy dazed head-shaker!

Don't think I can't see you sitting there, biting your nails (Household Tip: Cut them off before biting them; they are easier to get at that way.) wondering feverishly, 'Is he going to do any mailing comments? Is he going to mention my magazine?' Don't think I can't see you, sitting there on the edge of your chair, in a very dither of anticipation, twisting your fingers in your hair and croaking, 'Where are his mailing comments?' Because I can't. If you really want to know, I can see you lounging there, deep in an old armchair, sipping a sour Bourbon, and saying 'So what do I care?' Oh, well.

As I may have said - I intended to do mailing comments; oodles and oodles of mailing comments. I intended to have this issue chonk full of mailing comments; there was hardly going to be anything else in these pages but mailing comments. (Of course I would probably have cut the magazine down to two pages, but you can't have it all ways, can you?) But the sad fact is that due to the late arrival of the mailing, I haven't had time to read a half of it yet, let alone write mailing

comments. I have merely skimmed the surface of the mailing. This leaves several alternatives:

- 1) I could just review the few, the pitifully few, magazines that I have read yet, and leave all the others to an undeserved oblivion. Somebody might easily take umbrage at this and write to the President (of FAPA or of the U.S and A, you can take your pick. There is nothing like catering for everybody) saying "Aren't all men created equal, huh? Aren't they? Huh? Well if all men are equal, aren't all men's FAPazines equal huh? Aren't they? Huh? Well, if they are, is it right that Joe Higgins FAPazine should get reviewed by this rabid revolutionary Ashworth, and not mine? Huh? Is it? Huh? That makes me and Joe Higgins unequal doesn't it huh?. Doesn't it? Huh? That's contrary to the basic laws of nature, and what's more it's against the Constitution, isn't it huh? Isn't it? Huh? What is this Ashworth trying to do, undermine the Constitution huh? Huh?" I wouldn't want to undermine the Constitution.
- 2) I could review all the magazines whether I have read them or not. I feel that this suggestion, which, on the face of it, possesses great merits, may be found on closer inspection to harbour certain minor deficiencies. Like:
"HORIZONS: This messily hectored first FAPazine from some new member in Hagerstown isn't so hot really, consisting mainly of pictures of busty nude women, beatnik poetry and spelling errors. Your trouble, sonny, seems to be that you just haven't enough fan-publishing experience behind you and also you are being led astray through gallivanting off too much with the wilder members of that big club you have in Hagerstown. I'm afraid this is going to rate pretty low in the FAPA poll."
No, I guess that way's out.
- 3) I could not review any - sob - of the - burble - mailing - choke, gulp - at all. (I don't want you to think that I had decided on this course all along and have just been putting on a heart-searching act for your benefit. What can I do to convince you? Signed: WORRIED LIAR.)

So that's it, I guess; no mailing reviews this time around; but I wanted you to know I wanted to do some and if it hadn't been for a few minor hitches and obstacles, like the Post Office ganging up on me, having no time to read the mailing, the Whole Universe being against me, and so on, I would have done too.

As far as what I have read or glanced through goes, I want to snort with glee at John Trimble's SHIPSIDE No. 2 (About this girl who complained to you that she was 'too sexy'; what does 'too sexy' mean? Is this another wild invention of you Crazy Americans? We have no such thing as 'too sexy' over here. Alas.), Bill Danner's ever-delightful STEEFANTASY, which was up to 98.4% as good as ever, PLEIADES PIMPLES by some young fellow who seems to have broken into the pro market, which was worth a whole decade of WRITERS AND ARTISTS YEAR BOOKS, and Jean Linard's surrealistic stories; not to mention many happy minutes (I had to be brief) spent with the results of the FAPA poll. I realise that all this is as nothing, and that I've still got such goodies as BURBLINGS, KLEIN BOTTLE, BLEEN, LE MOINDRE, PHANTASY PRESS, HORIZONS, etc., etc., etc., to come. Aren't I just the lucky little fellow? And I wouldn't for the world miss out the two brilliant Rotsler items, QUOTEBOOK and ROBIN HOOD, which I have glanced at and can hardly wait to settle down with (and the latter item brings to mind my four-year old nephew's definition of war: "The soldiers kill each other to make the people laugh". He is a genuine, Grade A philosopher, this boy; during a lull in a conversation on the subject of Women, he interjected thoughtfully, through a mouthful of jolly, the one word: "Elephants!" He has an understanding beyond his years).
