

# HURKLE

Boggs, 2215 Benjamin Street N. E., Minneapolis 18, Minnesota. This issue, volume I, number 7, is intended for the autumn 1951 mailing. "The prettiest of the hurkle are blue." — Theodore Sturgeon.

A Gafia Press publication.

## CONTRIBUTOR'S CORNER

### WHERE THE SAPS CAME FROM

THE SPECTATOR AMATEUR PRESS SOCIETY had a speedy conception but a long gestation. Though the organization was announced in February 1947, the first mailing did not appear until September of that year. But perhaps this leisurely birth was all to the good. For when the infant finally saw the light, it came with a full set of teeth.

Let's begin at the beginning. One Sunday in February 1947, several fans came over to my house to chaw the blubber. There was Lloyd Alpaugh and Ron Christensen and Ron Maddox and George Fox and Lee Budoff and also me. Lee Budoff was a girl; in fact I understand she still is. She is a very nice girl, too, and I hear that in more recent times she has sold several paintings to Seventeen magazine, and got hundreds of dollars for them. I think I shall take up art. Anyhow, the bunch of us were sitting around my living room, discussing the amateur press associations that bloom in the spring, tra la, when somebody said, Well, why don't we form an amateur press association? And everybody else said, Yeah! Let's!

I believe it was Maddox who suggested that the club be called the Spectator Amateur Press Association. But then Budoff had an inspiration. Instead of Association, let's call it Society, she said, so the initials of the club would spell -- you know what. This name was chosen instantly, by acclamation.

I ought to say a word, maybe, about where the Spectator part of the name came from. Around the time that the SAPS was joyously conceived in my living room, Maddox and Christensen were carrying on a big series of fannish projects, every one of them named Spectator something-or-other. There was the Fan Spectator, a biweekly news organ (the only fan news organ to my knowledge that printed funnies). There was the Spectators, an informal club which is existing yet, a kind of New Jersey version of the Futurian Society, only without social consciousness. But best of all was the Spectator Press.

I doubt if many people have heard of the Spectator Press, though come to think of it, it had glorious letterheads printed up, which its founders used on correspondence far and wide. The Spectator Press consisted of Froeder, Alpaugh, Maddox, Fox, Christensen. It was conceived during the days when fan-backed book publishing houses were leaping up everywhere like mushrooms. The Press was formed in about ten minutes, while its founders were plodding along the steamy streets of Newark after an ESFA meeting. I got an invite to join, only I didn't want to risk my money.

According to Christensen, the Spectator Press would be able to wallop the pants off Auggie Derleth by publishing s-f and fantasy books at really cutrate prices. This they would be able to do by varityping the books and printing them foto-offset. The members were to contribute around 25 dollars apiece to get things started, and Christensen actually went so far as to buy a varityper. Word-of-mouth assent was obtained from Campbell for the reprinting of stories from Astounding's files, and

Julius Unger agreed to handle a large number of copies of any title the group cared to produce. The Spectator Press then contracted with Norman L. Knight to reprint an old Astounding serial of his, "Crisis in Utopia." However, after a whooping organizational meeting, the directors of the Spectator Press mutually lost interest in the whole idea and Fox took back his 25 dollars and went out and bought phonograph records. About two years later Froeder got a letter from Norman L. Knight, inquiring about the progress of his book and trusting that the delay was only temporary.

Gee. That turned out to be a long word, didn't it? Anyhow, at the historic meeting at my house at which the SAPS was founded, two general principles of the club were agreed upon. First, that the SAPS should be small. This would insure the official editor's not having to work very hard. Second, that all members should be forced to be as constantly active as jumping beans, or else be promptly given the heave-ho. Thus activity requirements were staked, not at eight pages a year as in FAPA, but at four every six months, to prevent blokes from grinding out eight pages and then coasting the rest of the annum. It was probably because of this rule that sapszines tended to be slim and frequent, rather than fat and rare. Ron Maddox was delegated official editor until the club should get going and an honest election should be held.

From the first, I must confess that I felt a tweak of conscience for helping to launch a club which conceivably might drain some of the lifeblood away from FAPA, which at the time was pretty anemic. I wondered if maybe I hadn't let my enthusiasm for a new apa run away with me. But on the other hand, I reflected, mightn't this smaller club fill the function of the "FAPA Jr" which Walter Dunkelberger had suggested sometime before? Possibly the SAPS could serve as a field for fledgling fan editors to flutter their wings -- a field where criticism of their first flights might be more kind.

But as the announced date for the first mailing drew near, was reached, and then receded into the past, it looked as though the club was just another grand idea which never would come off. A few people like Tom Jewett and John Cockroft and Rick Sneary quickly rallied to the SAPS' banner, but it seemed as though Maddox just couldn't get around to getting the mailing out. At the Philcon, thumbscrews were applied and his enthusiasm abruptly got rekindled. At the Philcon, too, Benson Perry and Andy Lyon were won over to the cause. Not long afterward, the first mailing hit the mails, a bright envelopeful of airy little nothings. Then Maddox went off to Ethiopia with his father, who had got a fat job as minister of finance or something for Haile Selassie (hero of the well known dog story, Selassie Come - Home). Lloyd Alpaugh took over the job of official editor.

Despite the mild reproofs of FAPA's braintrust, the SAPS quickly gained strength. Amused by the brashness of the new organization, Sam Merwin Jr came to its support in Startling Stories, once devoting two columns to comment on the club and its output. Sam Moskowitz, apparently sensing that the new apa was historically important enough to be worth scrutinizing, joined the SAPS and eked out his activity requirements by furnishing old writings from his own teens for Alpaugh to publish in Sun Shine. Said Sam: "I am making my contribution to the SAPS reprints of old articles, for the following reasons....They were written when I was 17 years old, and therefore put me on a fairer competitive basis with the average-age of SAPS....I can supply 16-year-old material if average-age is too high; 18-year-old if too low."

I surveyed in detail the SAPS mailings of the club's first year in the Fantasy Annual, 1948, which interested people are referred to, but mention might be made of a couple or three outstanding early productions. One was Harold Cheney's carefully bound little book, The Hands and Others, a collection of unusually good amateur fic-

tion, which Cheney said he never would've published if he'd had to make 68 copies of it as in FAPA. A glorious item of humor which unfortunately few saps seemed to appreciate was Ron Christensen's Sapling, with its cover illustration of St. George slaying the horse, and its marvelously deadpan guide to Martian etiquette. Within a year, Alpaugh's Sun Shine developed from a lightweight throw-together into a thick, neat mag easily comparable with FAPA's best -- featuring fine New Yorkerish humor and book reviews opinionated but good.

The decline of the old guard's power in the SAPS was, in a sense, a voluntary abdication. Before long Fox and Christensen dropped out from lack of interest. Joe Schaumburger joined the army. When the second elections came round, there was no one who wanted the job of official editor. Finally Phil Froeder was persuaded to run, so the club could carry on, but after Froeder announced his candidacy (with a campaign slogan, "I'm not too keen about the job, but the mailings won't come out too late") Henry Spelman the Third up and decided to run for the post too. Seeing an opportunity to avoid the work and responsibility for the SAPS' further maintenance, the Jersey old guard shifted their votes to Spelman, who was astonished to find himself elected.

Around this time Kennedy found himself the editor of a college paper and had to drop out of the club, and Alpaugh, finding himself the last lonely member of the old guard left in the SAPS, eventually dropped out, too. (Gee, lookit all the people that found themselves.)

Thus from a narrow, provincial little apa, conceived partially as a gag in my living room, the Spectator Amateur Press Society developed into a grand and glorious medium of crifanac, as national in spirit as the American Legion or the WCTU. The original founders of the SAPS have viewed the progress of the club with awe. Today, utterly free of its creators, the SAPS, like a Frankenstein monster, goes marching on.

— Joe Kennedy.

Burbee

#### ONCE OVER LIGHTLY

Many thanks to those who nominated me as a candidate for official editor. If I hadn't set my mind on running for FAPA OE, I would have been glad to run for the SAPS' job. Maybe I'll try for it next year. There's no need to say that Coslet is a good man for the job. # I've no other notes on this issue of Spectator, so I'll pass along to

Just Plain Dill Pickle, with a rather crude cover but with generally fine editorial ramblings inside. # No, Paul, I don't believe I ever said I'd "never belong to SAPS"; in case I did, please quote to yourself Emerson's remarks about a "foolish consistency." I did make some uncomplimentary remarks about the SAPS of 1948, because I thought it was pretty dull and puerile in those days. I think it's much better in 1951. If I didn't think so, I wouldn't be a member. # When my brother came home on furlough after being stationed in South Carolina, he told me the juke boxes down there play stuff very seldom heard up here. That's clearly evident from looking over your list of favorite hillbilly entertainers. The only one I'd ever heard of was Eddy Arnold, although my brother introduced me to a record or two by Hank Snow. Good god! # It's true that James Kepner's remarks about the south "might not be entirely free and unbiased," considering his one-time connection with

the Daily Worker, but your own intimate connection with the south itself is an indication that your remarks may not be quite fair or unbiased, either. I deplore your tendency to dismiss any adverse criticism of the south and any attempts to improve conditions there as "Marxist." # No wonder there's "not much that can be done" about improving things in Dixie! # I agree that a sales tax is undesirable, but I observe you groan that Georgia "spends almost half its income on schools," and I wonder if you'd be willing to accept the obvious remedy for that situation: a single school system for all Georgia residents?

The Washington contingent fell rather short this time. Zap contained nothing I feel well enough to comment on, and the long-delayed Bilgewarp was hardly worth waiting for, although I liked Briggs' cover maiden and Eney's "Mathematical Approach," which was just zany enough to be amusing. # Spy Ray of SAPS was considerably better than the other magazines, although I still think your typer is the most annoying one to hit fandom since the out-of-whack machine Andy Anderson used to cut Centauri.

Fine work, Coswal, in your Backtrack reviews of mailings #14 and #15. Now I hope you carry out your vow of including other material besides mailing comments. # I wonder why everybody wants to meet Meg Johns personally? # No, the logical propositions on Hurkle #5's cover were not syllogisms in the technical sense. A syllogism, as I understand it, involves propositions of one of the four general forms that classical logicians designated by the letters A,E,I, and O, and certain other conditions too technical to go into at this time.

"New Foundations" in Pipsqueak didn't click at all, for some reason, funny as it was. I guess I'm apathetic toward bigger and better fandoms, real or satirical. # Carrie Fisher's three poems pleased me, especially "Thought," which was both pointed and bladed. # Since the SAPS official editor is dictator, I see no reason why he can't give himself activity credit for publishing the Spectator.

About the only thing I have to say about "So Shall You Die" in Outsiders is that almost the only Poesque part of it was the buried-alive idea, so implicit in Poe's description of Usher's painting ("...the interior of an immensely long and rectangular vault or tunnel, with low walls, smooth, white, and without interruption or device. Certain accessory points of the design served well to convey the idea that this excavation lay at an exceeding depth below the surface of the earth....") # Howard Hughes must have spent millions to make her name familiar to everyone, but you call her Faith Domerique? Speaking of misspellings, I trust you'll learn how to spell Argosy or else starting collecting Life or some other magazine you can spell! # Jimmie Allen was my favorite kid's program next to Buck Rogers, and looking back at it now, I've a hunch it was a bit above average in writing, but not in production.

It's nice to see Namleps again, but unfortunately I have no particular comment on it. Boffin and Gem Tones are two other much-appreciated magazines that inspire, this time, no lengthy or detailed comments. In Boffin I liked "Future Famous Fans" and the beautiful mimeography, and in Gem Tones I liked Manly Banister's "Notes to a Neophyte," but I have already written a fan letter to Banister about it and don't feel like reiterating its obvious worth. I also applaud your format experimentation -- although I'm afraid that cover was too frilly for my taste.

With all due respect to Outsiders, I think the best artwork I've seen in the SAPS was that cover pic for Revoltin' Development.

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The good old days when auditing was an accounting term.  
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