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THE
MENTOR

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RETIRING EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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EDITORIAL:

This is the fourth and last edition by the present producers of The Mentor, due to the closeness of the Leaving Certificate. The Mentor will be continued by Garry Squire and colleagues who are all drawn from the ranks of first year, which sets an example to their supposedly more mature seniors. Radical changes are expected in both the magazine and the club, as these "little" first years have a rather aggressive outlook.

Mr. Priest has kindly judged the stories for our competition and J. Gerdinatos of 2B took the 5/- prize with his story "The Extra Passenger".

We believe the Mentor to be the first school Science Fiction Magazine in this state and this of course adds to the school's prestige. But if the magazine is not supported by the students this part of the schools activities may end.

- K.H.

And now a thought for today: BE BLOODY, BOLD AND RESOLUTE

AUTHOR'S PROFILE - JOHN BAXTER

Over two thirds of you who read this will not know John Baxter, or who he is. I will try to clear up some of your ignorance.

John Baxter is a clerk in a government organisation. In his free moments, he is a writer. Take two of his latest stories published in "New Worlds Science Fiction", "Toys" in the January, 1964 issue and "The Traps of Time" in the March issue. To give you some idea of his "progress", I gave "Toys" 3½ (Out of 5) and "The Traps of Time" 4.

John is well known overseas, he's been published in "fanzines" (or amateur magazines) and has his own, called "Souffle". He has gained a reputation for biting letters of criticism.

John was kind enough to invite me down to visit him. We had a nice chat for about three hours and I was served a delicious cup of tea.

I wish again to thank John and his charming wife for inviting me, for the tea and for the enjoyable conversation.

- R.L.C.

PRIZE WINNING STORY

THE EXTRA PASSENGER

The bus sped down the straight deserted road, suddenly from out of a bush near the road leapt two policemen, and stood in the middle of the path on the speeding bus and held up their hands. The driver slammed on his brakes and the bus clumsily came to a halt with a loud "screech".

Immediate moans and groans from the passengers, a stern voice sounded from the back of the bus, and an elderly looking gentleman spoke up "What's going on driver" he exclaimed "I have to be in Leeton by nine and it's quarter to now". "I'm sorry sir" said the driver, "But these policemen say it's urgent." With that the driver clambered down the iron stairs. "What's up?" asked the driver of one of the policemen. A tall policeman with bronze skin answered him. "We've had several reports about some weird glowing light on your vehicle's roof, we just thought we'd better investigate." "What!" laughed the driver casually looking up at the roof "I don't see any weird glowing light there now, can you?" "Any way" said the other policeman and blushed "we've got orders to stay with you till Leeton". So the trio climbed on to the bus.

As the bus driver turned around, he looked at the passengers for a few seconds and said to the nearest policeman, "hey, there are seven passengers!" "So what?" said the policeman. "There are only supposed to be six" was the reply. The policeman did not answer, he merely shrugged his shoulders and looked out of the side front window.

As the bus arrived at Leeton the tall policeman turned to the passengers and said "I'm sorry but you'll have to stay in that cafe until we get further orders." "But I have to go to an important council meeting" groaned the elderly gentleman "And I have to see my sick husband" pleaded another passenger. But although they cursed, grumbled, pleaded and threatened, the policeman stood firm, and the angry passengers were led into the cafe.

Inside the cafe a bored looking middle-aged man with a cap almost three times too small for him pulled down over his large forehead sat reading a paper. When the people entered they sat down without saying a word. At last after about ten minutes the cafe owner looked up from his paper and murmured "Anyone want anything?" His question was met with silence. "OK then don't have anything" said the cafe owner.

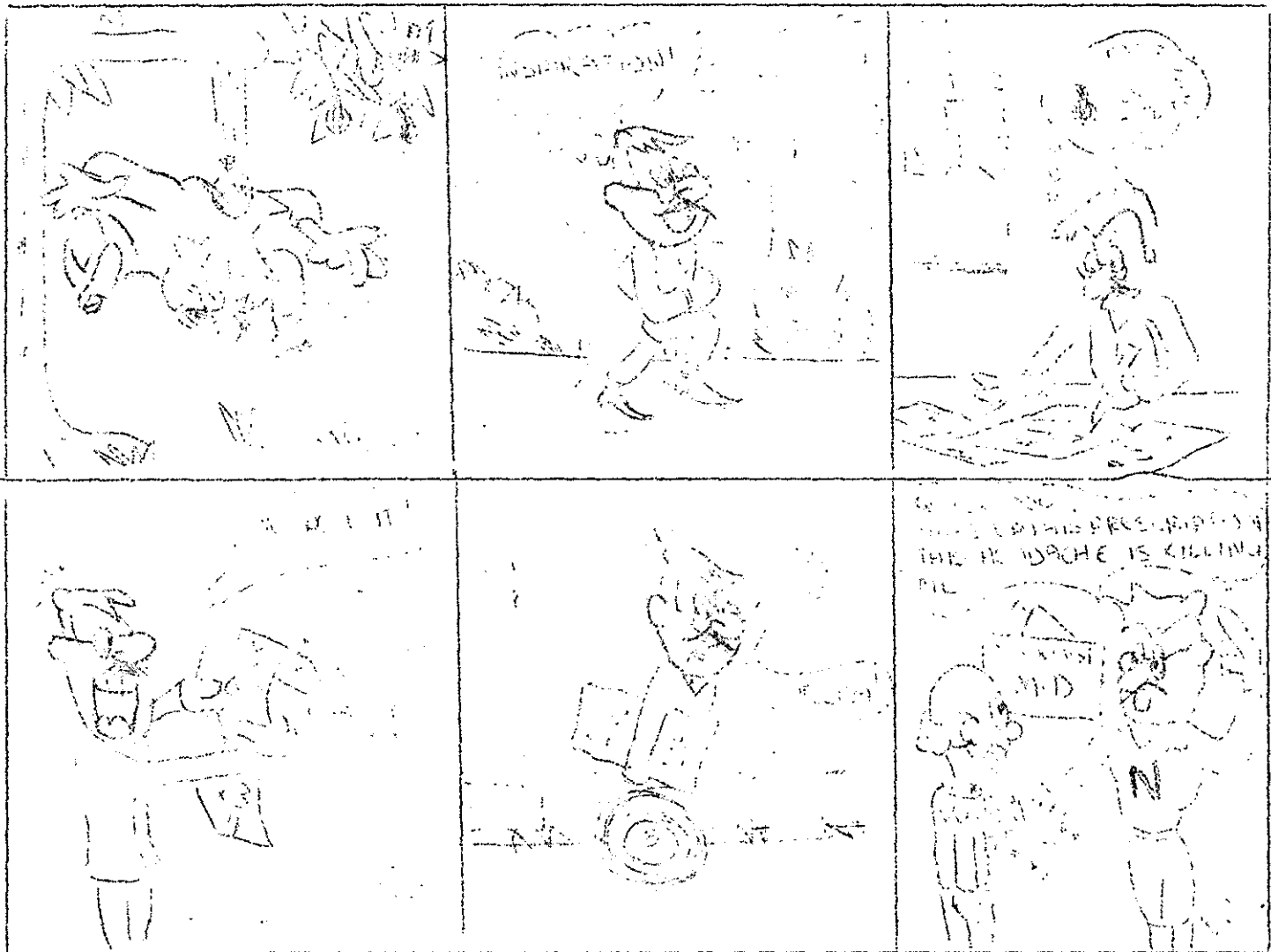
The cafe was very quiet for the next five minutes until the silence was interrupted by the wall telephone. The cafe owner slowly put down his paper on the counter and walked stiffly to the phone. "It's for one of you cops" he announced. The tall policeman stood up, stretched himself, and then walked quite slowly to the phone, picked up and answered it slowly.

When he had finished speaking he turned to the people and said "I'm very sorry, but we have to escort you to the police station two miles down the road." This was met by a chorus of groans. But the passengers were soon on the bus. "Before you go" said the cafe owner to the driver "be careful as you cross the old bridge." "Thanks" was the reply.

The cafe owner watched the bus until it disappeared around the bend. An hour later the elderly gentleman entered the cafe. "Did the police let you go?" said the bored looking man from behind the counter. "No, the bus broke through the wooden barrier on the bridge and crashed into the river below - it was very deep and they were all drowned," he said, quite unperturbed. "But" said the startled man "If the bus crashed into the river, and you escaped, why aren't you wet?" "Wet?" said the old man, "What's 'wet'?" The old man looked into the eyes of the cafe owner. "Before I dispose of you I shall tell you a short story, but before I do I shall change back into my true form."

Before the amazed eyes of the cafe owner, a black cloud enveloped the old man and in a few seconds a completely new figure stood in front of him. It was all black - it was armless, its skin was slimy and scaly, and in its forehead glowed one hideous looking eye. "Now" it said "I was sent here by the beings of the planet which you earthmen call Alfa Moxa. It took me over one thousand of your years travelling at half the speed of light to reach here. It was important to reach here because the planet nearest to ours intended to reach earth first, and from there conquer all the outer galaxies and then perhaps the universe. If even one of their beings got to earth first they could withstand all attacks made by us."

"And now" he murmured "I must dispose of you". "Just a minute," said the cafe owner. "The beings of the planet next to yours thought of sending someone here many years ago." With that he lifted his cap and revealed a plastic-like transparent dome which covered the upper section of his head in which a complicated mechanism ticked slowly



THE RED PLANET

On the planet Gheldt, things were moving fast. The earth ship had orders to leave the planet at 0900 hours whether or not all the crew were aboard. The fact was that all the crew were not aboard. Three men, Gerand, Flight/Lt. Mackenzie and Dr. Jackson had, under the orders of Captain Collison, taken a retro-scooter and dispersed in the general direction of north, to survey the area.

The three, at that moment, were speeding across the desolate plains common to Gheldt. The realization that Collison would wait for them, within reason, spurred their already despondent minds onward. The fact that a black "uninhabitable" would be stamped across Mackenzie's report did nothing to boost their moral.

Jackson's voice broke the silence which had hung over the scooter for the last hour. "That if we don't make the ship in time and that bastard, Collison, took off without us?" "Death's the same on any planet", Gerand replied.

Those were the last words spoken for some hours by any man on the scooter, for as it out of nowhere, a pile of sand descended upon them, burying them completely.

It was light when they awoke, it must have been because Gerand remarked on the beautiful bright red sky. Red! Yes, everything was red.

The three just stood there transfixed. Jackson first realized that they were not alone. There were other shapes, not human, and they were all sortly blurred in red.

All living matter in the Universe must die. The three had read this during the course of their individual studies, yet this didn't apply to them, surely.

"Where are we?" exclaimed Gerand, "where are we" he said, almost on the edge of despair. "What are they?" Jackson asked pointing towards the advancing shapes. Mackenzie who had remained quiet, now, with no sign of panic in his voice, said, "Gerand, you said death was the same on any planet." The other two looked at him, waiting for an explanation. "Why don't we stop kidding ourselves" he continued, "We all know where we are!"

And, with that knowledge, he saw Gerand and saw Jackson as they were! As they now must see him - sortly blurred in red!

UNCENSORED:-

BOP! BOP! COP THIS (AGAIN)

K. H. Travelling on his pram like vehicle, of which should have been named Cosmos Minus One, hit the 'outer limits' and hurtling through the nothingness of the windsor space he came to rest in an unconventional Blackberry patch (one can imagine the "Sore End of this story)

This will be my last column in "The Mentor" (I think) so I must apologise for my pomposity. It has been drawn to my attention by a helpful critic of the Mentor, of the name of Bob Smith that I am pomous. How absurd, I am sure th t I am not pompous it is just that I know the literary world could not exist without the extraordinary genius of which I am in the possession of. The maxim exists and so I must be great. (Now my pompousity does not exist, does it Bob).

I, personally, would like to extend my sincere thanks to Mr. Priest for his helpful patronising and his considerate and humorous appraisal of the latest competition (if one could call the composition of 6 entries for a small prize competition then it is competition) The winning entry was oddly enough the tattered and torn protective wrapping paper from which the above acessor commented on the climax and interest caused by the involved formulas, such as (s-b) (s-c) (In my opinion Mr. Priest it really was the most bc interesting concoction and your powers of realisation are far beyond some credited science students.

One lost goat is as bad as one Science Fiction Writer and it is with this word I say

By George
It wasn't me
- Dicky (Lost again)

- The Bird has Flown.

SPECTACULAR JOURNEY

The History Master was just about to embark on one of his usual uninformative lectures about the causes of the First World War when he was suddenly taken very ill. The instructor of the P.E. class complained of severe abdominal pains and then, whilst performing the very difficult twist-slip fall, slipped without twisting and crashed to the solid gymnasium floor - breaking his neck in the process.

Meanwhile the senior librarian who had just left his office, was seen to stop suddenly, spin about and race back towards the door. Unfortunately it was shut. He suffered a fractured skull.

These accidents were only three of a series of freak happenings at Culridge Boys' High School on October 22nd, 1966. Teachers were reported collapsing in corridors, the deputy headmaster ran his car on into the school wall at 90 m.p.h. and Mr. Nolte, the swimming instructor, dived into the pool and never came up again.

These could have been accidents if they had happened on different days, but they all happoned on October 22nd. Was it coincidence? I doubt it. But why were they all teachers. Who wanted to kill teachers? I know boys might say sometimes that they would like to, but that is usally said in zest - isn't it? Besides, who in their right mind, would do such an awful thing?

Meanwhile chaos erupted at the school. Boys stampeded out of classrooms, leaving the bodies of their late teachers where they had fallen. Some terrified students milled around the quadrangel, whilst others cascaded down the hillside towards the main gate, but it was no use, all the gates were locked.

The elderly caretaker endeavoured to contact the local police station but the moment he touched the telephone his body disintegrated into thin air.

Chaos turned into bedlam.

Bedlam erupted into sheer hell.

Suddenly there was a ghastly vibration. The whole school shook, settled and then shook once again. It was just as if an earthquake had struck the school. Shocks were followed by greater, more nerve racking spine chilling shocks. Simultaneously the sky began to get darker. Weird green and purple streaks seemed to spin about the school. Pink flashes of circular lightning dazzled the boys eyes with their intensity. Everything grew cold and the sky became pitch black.

Before the awestricken boys had a chance to respond to this frightening spectacle the whole school was siezed as if by a giant hand and lifted UP.... and up.....and ... up !

After about two hours, when the panic had subsided and curiosity was beginning to get the upper hand, a small dot of light was perceived far above them. All heads turned to face this pinpoint of light - a strange bluish - white light which seemed to be almost alive (if a light can be alive) The light became larger and then the boys realised that it wasn't just a light - it was a planet.

The blue - white planet was rapidly becoming larger and larger as they approached it. This was slightly too much for the boys to accept - a flying school without teachers, heading to some unknown planet at a speed faster than even the fastest sonjet on earth. What was keeping them alive ? How was the air kept from rushing into the vacuum of outer space ? Were they all dreaming ?

The light soon became too strong to look at. Even a boy with sunglasses was nearly blinded when he looked directly at it. Suddenly the 'sky' turned black again. It was not a gradual process as was the previous darkening - it happened in an instant. A gasp of terror escaped from the boys. What was this new happening ? Did it signify anything ?

An agonizing period of time (it could have been ten minutes or ten seconds) - passed by while the boys wondered and waited, prayed and hoped. Then agonizingly, slowly at first but rapidly increasing came a pale blue light, not the bluish white light seen previously, but a mellow greenish blue light, something similar to the kind seen on earth ... ? ... EARTH !

Could it be true - were they really back on Earth ? It looked like Earth, Birds were singing in the trees ; and far away came the sound of farmer Joe's tractor. It was Earth. Their adventure was over, but what had happened ? Who killed the teachers ? - Wait a minute .. were the teachers dead ? No ; there was Mr. Fallinghurst the History teacher, and Mr Kinki who had drowned in the swimming pool. There was the deputy principle still sitting in his car.

Everybody was amazed and astounded at what had happened but there was no logical explanation.

Invaders from Mars ? - No, that's just Science Fiction talk. A time fault ? Could be but what or who caused that spectacular journey.

Have you any suggestions.

- C.G.

BOOK REVIEW:

ROBINSON CRUSOE ON MARS:

The original story of Robinson Crusoe is worth re-reading at any time. It so happens that an English writer, Red Gordon, wrote a book "First on Mars". An obvious idea for a good S.F. story, it is just that.

It is heartening to see that the film taken from the novel is also a fine work. Treating theme and content with respect, it manages to make a thrilling adventure story with visual impact usually unique to "horror" shows.

But then "Robinson Crusoe" was also a success. This is at least its equal as a story of physical and mental survival.

One man (and a monkey) space-wrecked on an extremes-of-temperature planet, with only food for 60 days, water for 5 days and oxygen for 60 hours !

Yes "Friday" is logically there too, but it would only spoil your pleasure to say more.

- K.J.D.

T.V. :- Watch for "The Strangers"

COMPETITION COMMENTS:

The 5/- price has been given to the runner-up as the winning story was rather unorthodox. These are Mr. Priest's comments on it.

1ST PRIZE:

The symbolic qualities of this story are positively algebraic, its metaphysical cadences transmuting agonizingly from equationally ambivalent statements to a literary climax that parallels "Finnegans Wake" - clearly a time-space concept that transcends the satirical form of modern conventionalists. The structural device of progressive revelation from the spiritual expression (Number 3 sin) to the demonic contrablast (On Fashion - Hazlitt) is a Freudian idiom that should look well in Mentor. I would like to review the story at greater length and in more recondite terms for the S.M.H. Magazine Section.

The author is to be complimented on his subtle wit (C=TT^A) was masterful) his terrifying suspense (Σ -0) was spine-chilling, and his facile style, (s(s-a)(s-b)(s-l)) was positively Addisonian.

- Mr. Priest