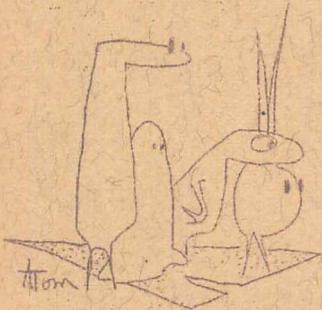




MINAC 13

is edited by Les Gerber (201 Linden Blvd., Brooklyn, N.Y., 11226, Buck Coulson) and Ted White (339 - 49th St., Brooklyn, N.Y., 11220), and is published frequently, if irregularly, by the QWERTYUIOPress. :: Staff Patrons thish: Avram & Grania Davidson. :: Copies may be had for frequent Letters of Comment, trades, or subscription (rates: three 4¢ stamps, one unused legalength 4-hole stencil, or \$1.00 per issue). :: Terry Carr reviews fanzines sent to him at 41 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn, N.Y., 11201. :: This issue was published, after an excrutiating number of delays, on Easter, March 29th, 1964. So what'd your Easter Bunny bring you? :: Atom for TAFF! Ad Astra Per Asp. London in '65 - Cleveland in '66 - New York in '67 - Mordor in '64...

TED WHITE:



UFFISH THOTS

NEW READERS: This issue we have over a dozen new readers, people who've sent in their 4¢ (or, in several cases -- sorry, no discount -- 5¢) stamps for a sample copy of MINAC after Terry Carr's article on fanzines appeared in the April F&SF. I'd like to call these New Readers' attention to the fact that MINAC enjoys a regular column of fanzine reviews by the Very Same Terry Carr Who, and that if you're interested in penetrating yet more deeply into this microcosmic world Terry's reviews make a good guide.

SCIENCE FICTION: Jack Vance, someone (was it Dave Van Arnam?) recently observed, runs to extremes: his stories are usually either

outstanding successes or outstanding failures (among the latter: The Languages of Pao). And his "The Star King" in GALAXY may be his first exception to this rule: it's mediocre.

Essentially the novel is not science fiction at all: it's a very heavily padded detective novelette. Vance writes suspense novels, so I'm not surprised to find him attempting the hybridization. But I am surprised that the result is so just plain dull.

The story line could be compressed into about one fourth the wordage without suffering: the protagonist, one of few survivors of a community wiped out by slavers, trains himself to adulthood to wreak vengeance upon these slavers. As the story opens, he is presented with the opportunity to trace one of them, Grendel the Monster, down. Somewhere along the line the idea filters in that the slavers were Star Kings, and that Grendel is a Star King (the "Star King" of the title, in fact). The plot concerns itself mostly with the protagonist's successful elimination of the Star King from among three possible suspects.

Our protagonist is not only amazingly slow on the uptake (the reader will, if he is reasonable alert, become aware that the Star King on the opening page is the man he seeks, but he ignores that, never making any attempt to trace the Star King through his one clear contact with him, even when he realizes that was the man he wants; later, the obvious suspect from among the three is apparent to the reader long before the protagonist exposes him), but seems to share with the author considerable confusion about just who he is seeking. Supposedly the villian (one of five(-- but don't ask me what happened to the other four; after telling us about them the author ignores them) is Grendel the Monster, and no one is aware that Grendel is a Star King (two thirds of the way through, we finally find out what Star Kings are: they're a humanoid race, but un-human, whose basic motive is to out-compete humanity); but just before the conclusion of the first instalment, the author casually lets the fact slip in, without build-up, referring to Grendel as "the Star King," long before the protagonist had figured it out (maybe Vance was as impatient with his hero as I was).

The novel is padded heavily with digressions, and these take two forms. The most superfluous are whose sections of extraneous action, but the most obvious are the long "quotes" which open each chapter. These serve the function of sketching in the background of the novel, and I must admit that this they do admirably well, if in rather concentrated chunks. Vance has invented a highly original backdrop for the story, and quite often it has the effect of scene-stealing.

"The Star King" then is a curiously mixed work: unsatisfactorily plotted, but filled with individual brilliances. Neither a failure nor a success, but suspended in a peculiar void in between.

Two footnotes on the foregoing: Vance is presently working on the sequel to The Dying Earth, a set of six connected novelettes, for F&SF. We have high hopes for these.

And, when will Fred Pohl begin to read the novels he so casually serializes? The Vance novel showed signs of either bad editing or sloppily writing, which should've been caught. And when "All We Marsmen" was serialized in WORLDS OF TOMORROW, the synopsis was wildly wrong on both occasions.

ACE BOOKS NEWS: Two news items vital to the MINAC axis:

First, Terry Carr is now Don Wollheim's assistant editor at Ace, assuming the position last Monday, the 23rd. This is a move worth cheering for a number of reasons, not the least of them the fact that now that he's no longer burdened with Scott Meredith's extra-curricular work load he'll be able to get back to more writing, both fan and pro.

The second item is that Don has purchased a 45,000 word novel from me, my first solo sf book, The Murder Machine. Members of the local writers' group will be familiar with the early chapters, and some old Towner Hall stalwarts will recall this as the story which broke my fiction-writing block, back in the fall of 1961 when I first began plotting it. The opening situation was developed in a different direction for "I, Executioner," by Terry and me, in IF, a year or so ago.

SIGN OF THE PSYCHEDELICS: The word "psychedelic" has been invented to describe the effects of the "mind-expanding" drugs, mescaline, LSD-25, and psilocybin (found in their natural states in peyote, ergot and the so-called magic mushrooms of Mexico). I've observed an increasing interest in these drugs among sf writers and would-be sf writers, as well as among some fans (remember the Big Hoopla about five years ago?). I have received at least half a dozen submissions at F&SF which dealt in some respect with one of these drugs (curiously, the most interest has come from British writers), and I'd figured it was only a matter of time before someone brought out a published work based upon the psychedelic experience.

To categorize, briefly: the psychedelic drug has two main effects upon the user: the physiological, and the psychological. The latter will vary wildly from user to user, and from experience to experience for the same user, but the physiological tends towards greater consistency.

Physiological intoxication usually begins with symptoms not unlike drunkenness: a going-fuzzy feeling at the extremities which is largely due to reduced capillary circulation (one tends to find his hands and feet getting cold). This gives way to euphoria, and, with the dilation of the pupils of the eye, distortions of vision which can lead to hallucinations. (The character of the hallucinations, however, is largely dependent upon psychological effects.) One gains increased body-awareness akin to a sense-of-wonder in which one no longer censors out the over-familiar stimuli, but, for instance, may become truly aware for the first time of the amount of weight carried upon the knees and ankles. Appetite is usually reduced, but sensitivity to taste is sharpened, and while one may only nibble at food, he may find himself greatly savoring it.

If one has taken a sufficiently large dose, one passes beyond the physical stage altogether, and may lose contact with the body, dwelling instead upon one's inner self. This is a soul-searching state, which can be ecstatic or a vision of hell, and has sometimes led to the so-called Dark Night of the Soul.

Without dwelling on the merits of such an experience (although I think there are many), I must state that once one has undergone it, one will recognize it in another. I have heard more than one tale of two strangers meeting and knowing immediately that each has undergone the experience. And the formerly Harvard-Cambridge-based IFIF is an organization based upon this mutual recognition.

All of which leads me to this. As one who has had some experience with psychedelics, and with others who have done likewise, I feel certain of myself when I say that Margaret St. Clair's Sign of the Labrys is based, in part, on the psychedelic experience.

This is at once the strength and the weakness of the book.

Strength, because it has lent fresh inspiration and led to several highly satisfying flights of imaginative fancy (translations, almost directly and analogously, of the experience itself, as told in the form of a quest), but weakness because it provides no plot or structure, and Miss St. Clair has been unable to provide one on her own.

The book begins as a post-chaos novel -- great yeast-plagues have decimated the world's population, and the remainder have a phobic aversion to personal contact so great that the protagonist has not desired a woman sufficiently to want to get close to her in years; most of the

population lives in the great bomb-shelter caves prepared for the war that never came, coming out onto the surface largely to bulldoze huge graves for the plague victims, or do some sort of made-work in order to occupy themselves. But rather quickly an element of magic and mystery is introduced, and the protagonist finds himself drawn into a quest to descend to the bottom level of the caverns and meet the mysterious Despoina, who is wanted by the FBI and is rumored to be growing new yeast-plagues.

Our hero finds himself infected with some new form of plague himself, which leaves him fevered and semi-delirious, and causes death to those who come into contact with him. But he pursues his odyssey down level by level, through whole worlds which exist in their own sealed-off levels, entering ever more deeply into hallucinatory experience as he descends deeper, until, as he confesses, he no longer knows how much he experiences is real.

This whole section -- the first third of the book -- is psychedelic, and quite graphically and unmistakably so. So thus it is, when he reaches Level I, and Despoina -- or reaches the final depths of the "soul" or self -- the journey, the quest, is completed. From this point on, a psychedelic experience tapers off, and unfortunately a book can't. But without the driving force which sustained that first third, the remaining two thirds of the book meander, wandering disconsolately from one idea to another, from fantasy to science fiction, and so on, ending almost a straight action story, and making such an anti-climactically weak presentation of its final resolution that one almost wonders why the author bothered.

Despite the very basic flaws of the book -- it is a failure, taken as a whole -- I must recommend it as an honest failure: an attempt to transcend and build upon a transforming experience, which failed for the same basic reasons that the plots of one's dreams shift and dissolve if an attempt is made to set them to paper: this is the stuff of another world, a good and valid and beautiful world, but a subjective one and one unlikely to be easily translated into the objective world of story, plot, characterization, plausibility, conflict and action.

Footnote to the above: When we were discussing this book and its relationship to the psychedelic experience the other night, Rich Brown pointed out that the remaining portions of the book may bear a more direct relationship to an actual psychedelic experience. After one normally undergoes such an experience, one spends the next several hours or days assimilating what one has undergone, searching out the meaning and seeking to reconcile one's true identity. To this extent -- the fact that the hero remains unaware of his true identity (for never explained reasons) until the end of the book -- the parallel may follow. Whether there is any greater relevancy I can't tell.

HARLAN ELLISON DEPT.: As I was originally writing the above, the phone rang. For once it was not in the wee small hours of the morning, for it was Harlan Ellison, calling from the West Coast.

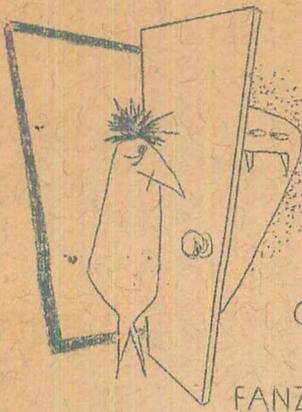
Harlan talked of many things, among them the fact that he will have a story forthcoming in FANTASTIC. While in NYC a couple of months ago, Harlan visited Cele Goldsmith, and she asked him for a story. "I'm too expensive for you," Harlan said. He gets \$5000 per show for his scripts for "Burke's Law". "I'll pay you two cents a word," Cele replied. "I tell you what," Harlan said. "I'll do it for you for free if you'll get the Dillons to illustrate it." Well, he did, and she did, and they did, and Harlan says it'll be out in "The issue of FANTASTIC after next, and you watch for it; those are fantastic illustrations, baby!"

Another thing Harlan mentioned is that he has a story, "All The Sounds of Fear," in Judy Merrill's latest SF collection, published in 1963. He thinks it's pretty good, and so, apparently, do some others. In addition to La Merrill, it's being considered for an O'Henry Writing Award, and Peter Sellers is interested in doing a movie of it. Harlan would appreciate it if all of you who haven't already made up your minds anent the Hugo nomination for Short Story would read it and consider nominating it.

I'd like to do that myself, but having given up my membership in the Pacificon in the Boycott, I've put myself beyond the pale, so passing along the word is the best I can do.

QAR: I'd like to highly recommend a new fanzine published by Bill Blackbeard, 192 Mountain View, Los Angeles, Calif., 90057: QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE. It's available for exchange, LoC, contributions or cash, the latter at the rate of two pages per 1¢, minimum sub 75¢ (which nets you 150 pages). I haven't counted the pages of the first issue, but it's hefty and very nicely produced, packed with goodies. It's the first fanzine which has really excited me in ages, jaded sot that I am. Get it.
-- Ted White

TERRY CARR:

TROLL
CHOWDER

FANZINE REVIEWS

XERO Index Edition, October 1963.
35¢ or 3/- from Pat & Dick Lüpoff,
210 East 73rd St., New York, N.Y.,
10021. 27 pages, mimeoed.

It's a little late to be reviewing this final manifestation of XERO, but it had become misplaced among a batch of other fanzines. At any rate, since XERO now belongs to the ages, presumably a late review isn't as inappropos as it might otherwise be.

This swansong consists of a full 19 pages of letters of comment on the final full issue

of XERO, and on the entire run of XERO in general in several cases. This wordage is pruned down from 75 or 100 (I forget) pages of letters, by Pat. She's done an excellent job on the whole, though there's still some stuff here I'd have cut out. That's quibbling, however, because overall it's another example of the fine XERO lettercol which was one of the highlights of the zine during its regular run. XERO's lettercol has usually been good enough to serve as an object lesson to CRYhack types who think that the ne plus ultra of fanzine lettercols is 20 pages or so of stream-of-not-much-consciousness blather. XERO's letter writers all have something interesting or amusing or pertinent to say, and though I can only gape in horrified astonishment at such things as Jim Blish labelling John Berry's Fingerman "the only thoroughly professional science-fiction short story I've ever seen in a fan magazine" (it was a distinctly amateurish--as opposed to amateur--story), you have to admit that a comment like that's interesting.

There is also, of course, a full index of all contributions to all issues of XERO, including this one. Not only articles, columns and stories are listed, but also all artwork and all printed letters.

Even if the letters are the only reading matter in the issue, it still beats the hell out of most fanzines.

RATING: 7

LOG #5. Free for comment, from Tom Perry, 4018 Laurel Avenue, Omaha, Nebraska, 68111. 22 pages, mimeoed.

This fanzine used to be called LOGORRHEA, but since nobody liked that title Tom's shortened it, as listed above. The former title was, if perhaps a bit unesthetic, at least distinctive; the new title strikes me as pretty blah. Better it should be something like SCIENCE FICTION HOOPLA or THE OMAHA REVIEW or something inspirational like that.

Anyway, as usual the best stuff in the issue is that by Tom himself, and of course the letters. LOG's lettercol, while just as good, differs from XERO's in that its letter writers generally display a lot more wit and punnery. LOG ain't hardly a serious fanzine. (It was in the last issue of this zine that Tom tossed off a pun about "not inaugurating a precedent, merely promoting a vice" which ought to live in fannish memory as long as Willis' "My father was a printer and I have merely reverted to type" and Bob Shaw's "The salt, dear Brutus, lies not in our jars, but on our shelves." Tom seems a bit regretful about the pun, in retrospect after the events in Dallas November 22, but he shouldn't be: it was a stroke of pure genius.)

Joe Pilati has another installment of his column Persistence of Memory herein, and again I'm afraid I find it disappointing, at least considering Joe's talent. His section telling about a 1942 issue of the fanzine SUN SPOTS, published before Joe was born, is interesting and even a bit sense-of-wonderish, but when he essays Burbeeisms at fourth remove (Burbee through Carr-Ellik-Rike through Benford-White-Graham-Carr through White-Demmon through Pilati) he just seems to be groping for a gagline, any gagline, and his section putting down jazz record liner notes is too brief to do the job as it should be done, though what's there is good enough. (I'm reminded of the notes for Big Bill Broonzy's The Blues, EmArcy MG 36137: "...he insists on keeping green the memory and song of his friends no longer here. 'Leroy Carr, he's gone. Big Maceo, he's gone. Jim Jackson, Richard M. Jones, ol' Lead, they're gone. If I don't sing their blues, who will?'" One's eye then skips to the list of songs on the album: all twelve of them were written by Broonzy.)

Tom has an article in the back of the issue taking to task

5
both Willis and Ted Pauls for their denunciations of Heinlein's politics. Tom is apparently a conservative of one sort or another (I know his father's active in the Republican party, for what that's worth, because I met him when he and his family came to San Francisco for the Republican convention in 1956), and in this article he shows a rather remarkable obtuseness concerning smear tactics and guilt-by-association. He also seems to regard President Kennedy as the epitome of liberalism, which may be a gauge of Tom's own political position. Oh well.

I've been a bit more critical on these last two items than is warranted, perhaps, because both Pilati and Perry write quite well and are interesting. But it's a bit distressing to see Pilati writing half an article when he could write a full one, and also to see Perry, who unquestionably has a sharp mind, letting it go fuzzy. Still, LOG by any name is an enjoyable zine, one of the brightest of the current bunch.

RATING: 7

DOUBLE-BILL #7, October 1963. 25¢, 5/\$1.00 from Bill Bowers, 3271 Shelhart Rd., Barberton, Ohio, 44203. Trades and letters to Bill Mallardi, 214 Mackinaw Ave., Akron, Ohio, 44313. 99 pages, mimeoed with offset cover.

This First Anniversary Issue of D-B is easily the best one to date. It's still far from perfect, but there are a number of good items in it, and one major one: Part I of a symposium on s-f writing in which seventeen pro writers, from Bester to Zelazny, answer a questionnaire made up by the co-editors. It's the first major sounding-board for the pros in fandom since WHO KILLED SCIENCE FICTION?, and the results are interesting throughout. One of the most interesting things, by the way, is the way in which the writers' personalities come through: Bradbury is terribly earnest, Damon Knight is sardonically laconic, Andre Norton treats s-f as simply a form of escape literature, John W. Campbell is still talking about breakthroughs in s-f, etc.

Other good items include Bob Tucker's satire on newspaper morals-advice columns (unsubtle, but deliberately so: Tucker's one of the very few fan writers who can play with slapstick and make it come off); Lewis Grant's article The Future of Clothes, which brings in a lot of information that was new and interesting to me despite the fact that I'm not incredibly interested in the subject; John Foster's short story The Reunion (Foster is a non-fan correspondent of Bowers', and apparently a writer who's serious about the craft: his story's not s-f, but it's a remarkably effective mood-and-character piece); and a pretty good 8-page lettercol. There's also a 13-page art folio, but most of the art is crude and unimaginative. Honors go to Eddie Jones, Jim Cawthorn and Dave Prosser. (Prosser pulls a change of pace by doing a straight science fiction illo rather than his familiar gruesome fantasy things; however, amusingly enough he still manages to get a coffin into it.) Buck Coulson reviews fanzines in his usual what-the-hell-archie style.

There are several other items, all minor and one of them, George Fergus' one-page-s-f short story, absolutely terrible. (It's about this world, see, where people got into an atomic war and destroyed the planet, which turns out to have been the moon!!)

Despite the juvenilia which still remains, DOUBLE-BILL is clearly a fanzine on the way up. Next issue will continue the s-f symposium with 26 more s-f writers' answers, and that will obviously make it an issue worth reading.

RATING: 7

INTERIM #1. 20¢, from Mark Irwin, 1747 Elmwood Drive, Highland Park, Illinois, 60035. 19 pages, mimeoed.

The title is INTERIM because Irwin hasn't yet decided what to name it, and he's running a giant contest to select the title. The prize for the person suggesting the best title will be three British prozines, but he doesn't specify their names either.

This is definitely a lightweight fanzine, its only item of any importance being Hugo Gernsback's The Prophets of Doom, the text of a speech he gave last year for the MIT SF Society. It's all about how s-f writers today are pretty poor because they don't know anything about science and its incredible potentials. That's a thesis with a good deal of validity, I must selfconsciously admit, but Unca Hugo as usual writes in such a selfrighteous and selfpraising manner that one is strongly tempted to shrug off everything he says as simply crank stuff. He reminds me of John Campbell without Campbell's intellectual couth -- Campbell, for instance, would never be caught speaking of a "renaissance of the Jules Verne, H. G. Wells

type of technological science fiction so badly needed in our present idea-impooverished world," a line which necessarily includes the concept that man's only ideas worth the name are scientific ones. (It occurs to me that I'd give a lot to see a debate, in person or on paper, between Gernsback and Campbell. The subject of the debate wouldn't be important: the two men's ideas are at the same time sufficiently similar and sufficiently diverse that a fascinating discussion would be inevitable in any case.)

The rest of the issue is mostly reviews of s-f books, movies and fanzines by the editor. The most outstanding fault of these is Irwin's almost total lack of taste. In a long paragraph on s-f on television, for instance, he runs through not only Twilight Zone, The Outer Limits, and Thriller, which are bad enough, but keeps on with notes on Flash Gordon serials, Superman reruns, and the like, and says, "Saturday morning gets interesting, since there are 3 childrens shows..." The distinct impression comes across that Irwin considers anything remotely connected with s-f necessarily of interest, no matter how bad. Elsewhere, he recommends the slightly abominable movie The Mouse on the Moon and, in lieu of a review, quotes an insipid Walt Disney publicity release on The Sword in the Stone. ("These are only two of the highlights of a picture which any youngster can be proud to take his parents to see.")

There is also a short and uninteresting lettercol, a few notes on s-f subjects by E. E. Evers (in unfavorably comparing De Camp's The Bronze God of Rhodes with Mary Renault's historicals, he misspells Renault's name every time), and a dismally bad cover for which Irwin went to the unfortunate expense of having a photostencil made.

It isn't my policy to pan fanzines as a rule in this column, but there just isn't much in this one to praise, I'm afraid.

RATING: 3

MIRAGE #6, Winter 1963-64. 4 for \$1.00 from Jack L. Chalker, 5111 Liberty Heights Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland, 21207. 40 pgs, mimeoed.

This is a terribly serious fanzine devoted to the field of weird-fantasy. It picked up a Hugo nomination last year, but I'm given to understand that that was just because a bunch of Baltimore and environs fans plumped for it and, since remarkably few fans cast nominations ballots, it doesn't take many nominations to get a fanzine into the final voting. Having met and been unimpressed by Chalker when we appeared together on a convention panel awhile back, and having heard bad things about his fanzine, I was thoroughly prepared to yawn my way through it.

I was pleasantly surprised, though: it has its faults, but by and large it does a remarkably good job of presenting interesting and worthwhile material in its field. This issue features hitherto unpublished stories by Seabury Quinn and David H. Keller, M.D., for instance. The Quinn has all the graceful turgidity of style of the best Weird Tales writers, and though it's completely predictable I'm sure it would have appeared in WT had the magazine lasted longer. Admittedly, this is no recommendation in itself, but I did find the story enjoyable even if a large part of my enjoyment was akin to reminiscence. Keller's story isn't as good: he has an idea, but he hasn't managed to give it more than a thin veil of dramatic effectiveness. (In a way, reading Keller these days is a saddening experience: the man was well ahead of his time in the '30's, but he's badly out of date now.)

There's a newly discovered Clark Ashton Smith article about his relationship with George Sterling, and a not very penetrating article, Klarkash-Ton and E'ch-Pi-El, by Donald Fryer "on the alleged influence of H. P. Lovecraft on Clark Ashton Smith". Fryer limits his inquiry to the specific mentions in Smith's stories of gods borrowed from HPL's Cthulhu mythos, but he'd have done much better to consider possible influences on Smith's style and concepts. (Incidentally, serious s-f and fantasy fans who look down their noses at faaanish cuteisms might ruminate a bit on the nicknames their idols gave to each other.)

The best thing in the issue, though, is Lovecraft's own History and Chronology of the Necronomicon, reprinted from the Winter 1948 Arkham Sampler. This is scholarly playfulness at its best.

Aside from a few book reviews and a short lettercol, the only other substantial item in the issue is Chalker's editorial, which goes on for almost six pages about how everyone's entitled to his own religious beliefs. I cheerfully conceded the point the moment he brought it up, but somehow he felt constrained to go on and on about it, with a whole lot of exclamation points and underlinings

and sentences all in capitals. Chalker's a pretty good editor, but he's a very bad writer.

The cover, by Dave Prosser, is well drawn, but it's just another of Prosser's bad sick jokes. I like sick jokes, but Prosser doesn't have much of a sense of humor.

RATING: 7

EXCALIBUR #5. 25¢, 5/1.00 from Arnold Katz, 98 Patten Blvd., New Hyde Park, N. Y., 11043. 28 pages, mimeoed. Len Bailes is co-editor.

This is, I'm sorry to say, one of the worst fanzines I've seen in a long time. Though its contents page proudly notes that it is "Mimeoed, on a Gestetner," the reproduction throughout is terrible. The layout and stencilling of artwork shows no talent whatsoever (and as far as I can tell, the artwork wasn't any good anyway).

It's filled with a variety of stuff, bits and pieces, mostly all just bad. There are four s-f stories, all bad (Jim Harkness' Discovery, for instance, is about this friendly alien who comes to Earth to make contact, and it ends with, "WHAP! 'Stinkin' mosquitoes,' said the earthman, walking back up his driveway."). Two of them are satires, and I can give you some idea of the penetrating subtlety of them by mentioning that the one on The Skylark of Space is called The Mudlark of Space and the one on Laumer's Retief stories features a character named Jim Ratteeth.

There are book and fanzine reviews; a science fiction crossword (why is it that these always appear in crudzines? are they an innately bad idea?), a couple of bad Discon reports, and so on. The only sparks of talent shown are in the dual editorials, in which Katz and Bailes at least try to be amusing, and even make it, for a few lines each, and in Bailes' filk song, which at least rhymes and scans even though it isn't particularly funny.

As I said earlier, I don't much like panning fanzines, and particularly not when the lack of quality is due simply to youth and/or inexperience on the part of the editor(s). The glimmerings of talent shown by Bailes and Katz are hopeful signs that they may develop into good writers in time, but they still have a long way to go, I'm afraid.

RATING: 2

FRAP #3, January-February 1964. 25¢, 5/1.00 from Bob Lichtman, 6137 South Croft Ave., Los Angeles, Calif., 90056. 23 pgs, mimeoed, with a couple of offset illos.

With this third issue, FRAP is finally beginning to hit its stride. It's still not a fine fannish fanzine on a par with HYPHEN, GRUE or OOPSLA!, but there's good stuff here, and if Lichtman can continue the improvement FRAP could be one of the top fanzines before the year's out.

This issue has a funny cover by Ray Nelson, and also a funny Ray Nelson article on Zen and the Art of Cooking, which tells how to attain satori with an Open Face Peanut Butter Sandwich. (Your existence will remain essentially mundane, though, Ray, until you've experienced the agonizing pleasures of a gee-oh-cee-oh-pee-bee-ess, or Good Old Co-Op Peanut Butter Sandwich, the semi-divine food which answers the question, "What secret powers did the ancient Berkeley fans possess?")

There's also a story or article, I'm not sure which, by Len Moffatt titled Her Sensitive Fannish Face, which is the best thing in the issue (and a welcome piece indeed after Len's poor article in FRAP #2). In it Len tells of a forgotten, or maybe nonexistent, femmefan of the early '40's, with fine casual irony.

Elmer Perdue and Greg Benford have pieces in the issue too, but they're not particularly noteworthy. Ray Nelson has a not-poem which isn't good enough to stand in company with his other contributions to the issue. And Lichtman writes a pretty good fannish editorial, and edits the letter column quite well. There is also an interlineation which I consider classic: "God invented the orgasm so we would know when to stop."

RATING: 7

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I recently received, addressed to "Carl J. Brandon (hah!)," the third issue of BEBE, an all-German-language fanzine published by Burkhard Blum. It contains a piece bylined "Carl J. Brandon," but since I'm unable to read it I'm not sure if it's a reprint of one of the fine fannish pieces done by the historical Carl J. Brandon or whether this is the work of some upstart.

-- Terry Carr



((This column will be made up entirely of material culled from letters sent me by Harry Warner, starting near the beginning of our correspondence, in 1960. I have long thought that these letters contained material which would go well in fanzines, an opinion which was corroborated by the enthusiastic response a column of them drew in SAPS several years ago. The column will be a regular MINAC feature from now on. The letters are presented with a minimum of explanation or other intrusions; the circumstances prompting most remarks are easy enough to figure out from context. —lg))

May 11, 1960

I may have given you a slightly misleading impression with those newspaper pages I sent you. I don't write almost all of the local news on the front page every day. It happens that way a couple of times a week, another couple of times a week I may fill up the whole back page with comparatively little for the front, and then there are days when I do little news writing but have all the local pictures. It just depends on how the news runs, how busy I am, how busy the others are, who answers the telephone, and so on. I didn't mean to seem like the only reporter on the staff when I picked that issue to send you, but chose it because it happened to have a good bit of stuff concentrated in one area, saving me from doing a lot of clipping or paying a large postage fee. As for the amount of work I spend on my job a week, that's pretty hard to say. I go into work most days around 3 p.m., and stay until midnight or a trifle later, taking slightly less than an hour off for lunch. On a six-day week, that amounts to nearly fifty hours. But you must discount from that total the time that I spend writing letters in the office or making tape recordings in the dark room or running personal errands in the downtown section. These activities that look as if they're on company time really are my way for keeping my work down close to the forty hours that I'm supposed to put in. And yet on the other hand there are the horrible stretches of unavoidable work in the mornings or early afternoons when someone calls me at the house to give me a story or something is happening which must be covered just at that time, and the nights when midnight comes and I still have an hour's typing ahead of me. Such nights make it certain that I'm working more than the forty-hour total in a week, and the management knows it, so I can pretty well come and go as I please during the hours when I'm theoretically on the job, if there's nothing going on in town that makes it necessary for me to be coming when I'd rather be going.

But you're right about the basic reason that I can get a good bit covered and written per day: practice. About 98% of my writing involves the kind of story that I've written so often before I could almost do it in my sleep. In fact, I can carry on a conversation while doing certain kinds of routine stories.

May 21, 1960

I keep getting amazed all over again every time I discover that someone in New York doesn't know how to drive. I suppose the answer is the good public transportation system in New York—good in comparison with that in most large cities, at least, through the existence of the subways. In most large cities it's almost impossible to hold a job and maintain any kind of social life without a car and the ability to drive it, simply because there aren't enough buses to the right areas and you'd go broke riding cabs several times daily. Hagerstown is rapidly falling into the same category. When I was a kid, no matter where you lived in town and no matter where you had your job in town, you could walk back and forth in good weather; now the town has grown so much and most of its newer industries are located so far from the center of town that a worker and his place of employment may be six or seven miles apart. As recently as ten years ago, there was no spot in Hagerstown more than two blocks from a bus stop. Now persons in some suburbs may have to walk a half-mile and find buses running only every hour or every two hours when they reach the route.

August 3, 1960

I've just finished the biggest task involved in the fan history project. Some persons probably won't believe I've done it, because it consists of reading The Immortal Storm from start to finish, in consecutive order. I'd never done that, although I'd probably read every word in the book at one time or another, by browsing in that volume or by reading it in its regular form. I thought that I'd better include a consecutive-order reading in my preparatory exercises. The results are somewhat alarming. I've just realized for the first time how skimpy the treatment really was for certain phases of early fandom. I'll probably have to do some flashback sections in my history to cover areas that Sam missed or just brushed over lightly. For instance, he doesn't mention Australian fandom except in passing in one sentence, even though it was in existence from 1935 onward in organized form and by 1939 had all sorts of feuds and publications and adventures. The Immortal Storm also gives too little attention to the Lovecraft circle that antedates fandom as we know it. The weird fans didn't produce regular issue-after-issue fanzines but there was an occasional all-fantasy issue interspersed in the succession of mundane ayjay publications by men who are totally forgotten today like W. Paul Cook and those we think of in other connections like Lloyd Eshbach.

—Harry Warner, Jr.

LES GERBER:



MORE GERBER

NIGHTS IN THE GARDENS OF FANDOM.—THE 1962 COULSON PICNIC: Actually, it was two nights, and they were both interesting, but only the second counts as a high point of my existence. It was in the summer of 1962, the third and last summer I spent in Bloomington, Indiana. The second summer, after my expulsion from Franklin and Marshall College, I had spent just relaxing—writing letters through the warm nights, out on the porch—but this third summer I was back attending Indiana University summer school, and carrying a full load of eight credits. I had gone through a very miserable emotional mess just before the summer started, but things had been fine and relaxed since then. I was sharing a room with an old friend of mine who had come out from New York

with me; I had good courses and was doing good work; and I was out from under all the pressure of the past school year.

Lee Anne Tremper and I had been on friendly terms since the time, during my first week in Indiana two years ago, when I'd driven into Indianapolis, called her from a phone booth, announced my presence and told her I'd called because she was the only fan in Indianapolis whose name I knew. During the time before the weekend in question, I had spent innumerable weekends in Indianapolis visiting Lee Anne and Jim Lavell, to whom she is now married; and we had gone together to two Midwescons, a meeting of the Cincinnati Fantasy Group, and two previous Coulson picnics. So I knew what to expect when I called her from the Greyhound terminal and told her I had arrived.

Lee Anne's arrival was announced slightly before she arrived by a horrendous screeching of brakes. They weren't hers, because her car came a moment later, but when I heard the screech I figured I could expect her momentarily. She had, Jim explained in only slightly shattered tones, gone through a red light, and the noise had been other cars avoiding her. Oh, I said. I was hardly surprised. Lee Anne and Jim share a very human sort of driving philosophy. Driving is mostly to have fun, and also to get places. Having fun includes burning the driver with a lit cigarette, tickling the driver, trying to take the wheel away from the driver, or—if you happen to be the driver—swerving across the road, burning the passenger in the front seat with a lit cigarette, and so on. So I was hardly surprised to hear Lee Anne had only gone through a light. It couldn't have been Jim who drove through the light, at least; his license had been revoked a couple of years before, when he went off a road and a few hundred feet of the way through a field.

The drive back to Lee Anne's house, as I remember it, was largely uneventful. Of course, the dirt roads near Lee Anne's house (an apartment in a housing development then so new that the roads nearby weren't finished yet) were full of large holes, which made for a delightful game of Bounce the Car, but that was all. The real fun didn't start until we got to Lee Anne's apartment. I was quite thirsty by then, and she invited me to raid the refrigerator. I noticed a solitary container of Borden's chocolate malted milk and asked if I could have it. The answer was a resounding yes. Still unsuspecting, I opened the container, raised it to my mouth, and drank as much as only I can in one swallow before I bellowed, turned, and sputtered the rest into the sink. My anguished noises brought sounds of amusement from the other room. My drink had, Lee Anne confessed, been left out of the refrigerator by accident for three days, and had been sitting there since waiting for some unsuspecting jackass to drink it.

Our supper—tv dinners—was interrupted only once, when I got up to play the "Eagle Rock Rag" on Lee Anne's untuned old spinet. Then we sat around looking at each other, without even any dishes to do, before we surrendered to the inevitable and started to look through Lee Anne's pile of table games for something we weren't already sick of.

I am hardly a whiz at such things, but when I was a kid of ten I had a Clue game and got to be quite good at it. I figured I'd be a bit ahead with that, since I didn't know any of the other games, so I pushed for Clue. "Oh, there's no skill in that," Lee Anne protested. I said there was and received a chance to prove my point. I won the first two games decisively. Then, at the beginning of the third game, on my very first chance I guessed correctly the identity of the murderer, the room in which the murder had been committed, and the weapon. I made my Accusation, watched the sneering looks on the others' faces, and opened the packet to confirm my luck. It was about equivalent to drawing four aces, and the others were so stunned that we decided to quit playing

games and pack up early for the night. Lee Anne drove Jim and me over to his house, then went back home. I had a bit of trouble falling asleep on Jim's couch—maybe the way his mother was prowling around the house helped—but we had to be off early, and I finally drifted off around midnight.

The next morning we were up before nine. Jim's mother made us an excellent breakfast, and we were collected by Lee Anne and on our way to Wabash before eleven, which must have been some sort of record for us. We stopped off on the way to pick up our contributions to the picnic, which included, by a startling coincidence, five pounds of peaches. The trip from Indianapolis to Wabash was marked by the usual antics, although I managed to head off cigarette burning by sitting on the edge of the back seat and reaching over to flick cigarettes away whenever things got dangerous. It was the third Coulson picnic we had attended together, but we still managed to drive past their house on Route 13 and had to turn around and drive back.

Most of the people were already there. Most surprising of them all was Marion Zimmer Bradley, whom I'd never met before and certainly never expected to meet in Wabash, Indiana. She'd been driving to New York, and was stopping with the Coulsons for several days. Marion turned out to be much younger than I had expected, also less stiff and much warmer. It was a pleasure to meet her and hear from her various news from areas of fandom I'd been out of contact with since the beginning of the summer. The whole group from Chicago had already arrived, including the whole Kemp family, the Prices, Jon Stopa, and—gasp!—Lewis Grant, who spent most of the time telling two-thirds of a pun. I'd heard that Joe Lee Sanders might not be coming, but he was there and I was glad to see him, (Little did I know how glad I'd be, at that point.) The DeWeeses were there, Don and Maggie Thompson were there...well, it was quite a crowd. Of those I'd hoped to see, only Dean Grennell and his entourage were missing.

The A&W root beer flowed freely all afternoon, and so did the conversation. Juanita, of course, had her guitar out most of the time, and I had someone else's. I was still in practice then, and it was a pleasure to play along with Juanita and sing a few folk songs myself. That fabulous Coulson spaghetti was available in abundance, and so were other objects of interest. One never becomes tired of looking through the Coulsons' huge and fascinating house. This time, in the record collection, I discovered some favorite rock-and-roll records I hadn't heard in years and some Stan Freeberg records I'd never heard at all. Buck showed me something which proved to be a stunning sample of inborn good taste—a record he had and liked of twelve-tone orchestral music, about which he knew nothing. It was pieces by Webern, Schönberg, and Stravinsky conducted by the late Hans Rosbaud, a recording now considered classic by critics and which still strikes me as the finest twelve-tone music performances I have heard. (It was just reissued last month in the Westminster Collectors' Series.) There were also a few old acoustic 78s which Buck asked me to appraise. Most of them turned out to be fairly standard Carusos, Kreislers, and such. But one was the legendary 1914 Brunswick recording of the Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 played by Josef Hofmann, a record I'd never even seen before. It was as fabulous as I would have expected.

Anyway, as you can guess, it was a fabulous gathering, and when Lee Anne told me at five o'clock that she and Jim were going home to watch some science-fiction program on television, I told her she was crazy; I wasn't leaving. But how was I going to get back to Bloomington? she asked. It was a good question. I had a bus ticket from Indianapolis to Bloomington, but no way of getting to Indianapolis, and nobody else at the party was driving there. "Oh, the Hell with it," I said. "I'm not going. Good-bye." She and Jim left.

Attendance dwindled gradually during the next five hours, but a hard core was sticking it out as long as possible. Marion was staying overnight, and as long as she was there I was in no hurry to leave. By ten, Joe, Marion, the Thompsons, the DeWeeses, Dale Brandon, the Coulsons and I were still left, and we somehow got onto a discussion of science-fiction which led to Ace Books which led to Robert Moore Williams which led to bad writing which led to vanity presses which led to connoisseurs of bad literature which led, finally, to the mention of Mrs. Violette Peaches Watkins.

Buck was first careful to explain that his mother had received this book by accident in a mail order from a book store, and then he brought out the book and read:

The significant, magnificent King Edward VIII of England
 Was the wonderful and handsome gentleman who was single;
 Just like a true and beautiful story in song,
 He respectfully and sincerely abdicated his throne.

We all fell apart. And then the truly memorable part began. For over an hour, the book circulated about the room, from one hand to another. Each person would open to a page, burst into frantic laughter, and read the poem he had encountered. Joe gave a truly magnificent reading of the complete "King Edward the VIII of England." Marion also read beautifully. I believe I had the privilege of reading "Charles J. Johnson (My Dad)," which begins:

Mr. C. J. Johnson
Is my father's name;
And you will find that my dad
Is always the same.

It must have been at this point that I laughed so hard I literally fell off my chair.

When we were all too tired from laughing to read, we decided to send a letter of appreciation to Mrs. Watkins—who, we discovered from the jacket, was a religious-music disc jockey in Chicago. I composed the letter, reading aloud as I wrote, but the body of it was a magnificent poem of tribute by Marion:

Dear Lady who is sincere and kind and true,
All beautiful thoughts come from you....

We all signed the letter with fake names (Marion headed the list as "Mrs. Miriam G. Olds") and Buck mailed it off later.

It was truly a magic hour. Buck immortalized it with a souvenir booklet, which he sent to those who had been there. That is how I remember everyone's names, our letter, and the poems.

Then we ate the last remnants of the spaghetti, and it was midnight. I had classes on Monday and homework to do Sunday, and I had to leave. There seemed to be nothing to do but hitchhike down Route 13 to Indianapolis, a risky and uncertain proposition at best. But Joe said he would drive me as far down as he could before he turned off for Roachdale, which meant at least two-thirds of the distance. I accepted the offer gratefully. With sincere and regretful leave-takings, Joe and I made our exit. I have no idea how late the others stayed, but if they felt as I did it was probably all night.

Joe and I were both operating at full voltage, and we continued on the same level in his car. I don't believe I've ever become closer to anyone else in so little time as we became during that ride. I only wish I'd been able to follow up; we haven't met since, although I still hope we will. Joe decided to put off his own bed-time by at least two hours by driving me to the bus terminal in Indianapolis, an act I still feel just as grateful for now as I did then. It was a real wrench when I had to hop out of the car and run for the bus terminal to see if I had caught the 1:35 bus or not.

I hadn't. It was 1:45, and the bus had left exactly on schedule. I was tempted to call Lee Anne and ask her how the movie had been. The next bus didn't leave until 4:35, and I had nothing to read and no money to buy anything with. The benches in the waiting room were so constructed that it was impossible for me to fall asleep sitting in one, and I was unwilling to lie down across several seats even if there had been room, which there wasn't. I sat, tried to think, tried to sleep, tried just to sit comfortably. None of them worked. Finally I struck up a bit of a conversation with a girl who was sitting next to me. She was dressed rather casually, but wore a cross prominently displayed, as though it were protection against molesters just for the trip. She told me she was a waitress in some small Indiana town. She had quit her job and gone travelling, and now that the money was gone she was going home to get another job, which she would keep only until she had enough money to go travelling again. I told her I was a college student, told her about my ambitions to teach writing in a college and have my time free for music and writing, and contrasted her free life envyingly with my relatively rigid schedule. We compared our present lives, each preferring the other's. Then she had to sleep, because she was so tired (she'd been up for about two days), but she promised to wake me for my bus if she were awake then and I were asleep.

I kept waiting and waiting for my bus to be announced, planning to board it at my first opportunity and go to sleep. At 4:30, the bus still hadn't been announced, and I figured it was going to be late. Then, against my will, I finally drifted off.

I awoke at 4:40. I waited ten minutes for my bus to be announced, panicked, and ran to the information desk. The bus had left on schedule. The next one left at 10:10.

not begun to happen. That much, at least, is to be expected of any science fiction gathering. We sat down in some seats and waited for things to happen. Mike McInerney pointed out that Seth Johnson, popular scapegoat for the "sophisticated," was sitting directly in front of us. Seth gave an Edgar Rice Burroughs "John Carter of Mars" comic book to the Boardman child, who proceeded to give it a thorough wringing out before sitting on it. Some girl said, "Breen was a boyfriend of mine." "Whaat?!" was the response. It should be noted, Convention Committee, that a girl said this, although probably in jest.

The first item on the program was a slide talk on the works of Frank R. Paul. The talk was narrated by Sam Moskowitz, introduced as "The Memory Bank of Fandom." The talk was fairly interesting, particularly because the slides were. According to Sam, Paul was originally a mechanical draftsman working in Austria. Arriving in the States after brief stays in France and England, Paul found employment as a political cartoonist. Soon after that his work began appearing in Gernsbach's ELECTRICAL EXPERIMENTER, SCIENCE AND INVENTION, and later AMAZING STORIES, for which he did the first cover. As was expected, there were a few digressions on AMAZING itself, but unlike one of Moskowitz's talks on the cover art on ASTOUNDING, the talk stuck to essentials, i.e., science fiction art, not the science fiction that art was illustrating.

About this time the slide projector broke down. Science came to our rescue, though, and the problem was remedied by the simple solution of having an ESFA member stand on the extension cord.

I've never been a fan of Frank R. Paul, but a lot of the work projected on the screen struck me as being handsome. It is difficult to be objective, because projecting art on a screen always makes anything look a bit better because of the illumination. Then too, projected art is difficult to get close to for examining the details. At any rate, Paul, although dependent upon gimmicks like weird alien creatures, strange machinery, and alien landscapes—all three of these were almost inevitably in every cover I saw—which are always interesting to look at, but no prerequisite of good art, made use of intense blacks and gaudy colors which added up to a bizarre and unique total. With the current "pop art" trend in modern art, I almost feel that it would be perfectly valid to exhibit Paul's work in a fine arts gallery. What this would touch off, God only knows.

After the slides, a plaque honoring Paul's memory was presented to one of his daughters.

The next item on the program was "Science Fiction After the Bomb," a panel consisting of L. Sprague de Camp; Lester del Rey, Fred Pohl, and Judith Merrill. Hans Stefan Santesson, known to some as "The ---- of Fandom," was the moderator.

As everybody who has been a convention attendee for some years would have expected, the panelists were not exactly going into raptures of ecstasy over the present state of s.f. As I've heard this ever since I first got into fandom, seven years ago, I can only derive several negative implications. "Everybody talks about the weather..."

Del Rey opened the panel, his line being basically that s.f. has been hurt tremendously by following the newspapers. Authors should forget about giving any attention to the atomic and rocket ages, because those ages are already here. The future that many s.f. writers have been concerning themselves with is already history; to quote Lester, "We're the tail that follows the dog...and the dog is miles away!"

De Camp: Any artform, including science fiction, can be described as an obstacle race in which the new generation tries to outdo its predecessors. I lost the rest of the train of de Camp's talk at that point because somebody was snoring loudly behind me.

Pohl stated that science fiction is not as dynamic today because many of the great writers, some of them on the panel, had stopped writing. Del Rey violently shook his head. And, continued Pohl, the s.f. writer often forgets that the man of the future will not be the kind of person we know today. He will have different horizons, viewpoints, motives. And if anything happens with DNA, he may not be human by our present standards. Characters in s.f. should be a part of change, not just a witness. Pohl cited Jack Vance as an indication of future writers in the field.

Merrill felt that a definition of science fiction was that which looks at something familiar in a new light, or at a different angle.

At the end of the talk, del Rey commented that he hasn't stopped writing science fiction, but has merely changed his audience. This audience is the younger generation, to whom the future is still part of their heritage. This is, he says, the same kind of audience of the "good old days" of science fiction.

His definition of good science fiction is that which deals with the

total environment (past, present, and future), and man's love for his environment, the challenges it offers, and what he can do with it. This, in his opinion, is what sets science fiction apart from the main-stream of fiction. As an aside, this is what I realized while contemplating the modern philosophical trend to regard nature as untouchable, something superior to man, to give in or adjust to. I was gratified when Pohl stated that man is his own environment; that, in fact, environment is man.

There was the usual open question period, which was concerned with some weird theory of the weakening of gravity. John Boardman effectively quashed it.

The last program item was another slide talk, this time on Virgil Finlay. Finlay, a rather nervous but intelligent man (as was evidenced in his participation in the slide talk), was present to receive a plaque bearing the exaggeration, "The New Dean of Science Fiction Art."

Once again the slides were more impressive than the opinion I had formed about the quality of the artist's work. In addition to the factors I've already mentioned on the slides of Paul's work, it occurs to me that the best periods of both artists can only be seen in old prozines in which the art is faded, the paper yellow and crumbling.

Some sexy nudes were shown, and some exquisitely detailed work. In his best work Finlay spends as long as a week on one illustration, putting in eight-hour days. It was obvious, to hear him talk, that Virgil Finlay put in a lot of thought on technique and materials, and intelligent thought at that.

An age-old question was answered (and instigated by Hal Lynch). "I've noticed, Mr. Finlay, that in some of your work you used to throw in a lot of bubbles and stars. Why was that?" It seems that Finlay had one editor who used to demand a lot of nudes. Unfortunately, censorship reared its ugly head; Canadian officials objected and plates had to be altered too often.

The pleasant surprise of the day was some abstractions that Finlay is doing these days. A lot of them seem high-schoolish, but some, in inks, oils, and transparent paints, were strikingly pleasant to look at. Looseness would be the last thing I'd expect from an artist like Finlay.

The convention came to its end, and as I headed for the door Hal Lynch asked me to pick up some stencils for the MINAC editors which were lying on the registration table. I went over, discovering that Chris Moskowitz was in charge. "Hey there, Chris, I'm here to take these stencils to" (magic words!) "...aha... Ted White." "Take 'em. I'd be the last to deliver 'em," said Chris. Reflecting on this, I went home.

People who have read my other con reports may note that this one is not witty and sarcastic, and that I haven't cheerfully tread on anyone's toes. This is because there were no swine or friends of mine at this gathering. People, I'm sorry from the bottom of my heart, but you can't be a funny son of a bitch without any material. -- Steve Stiles

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