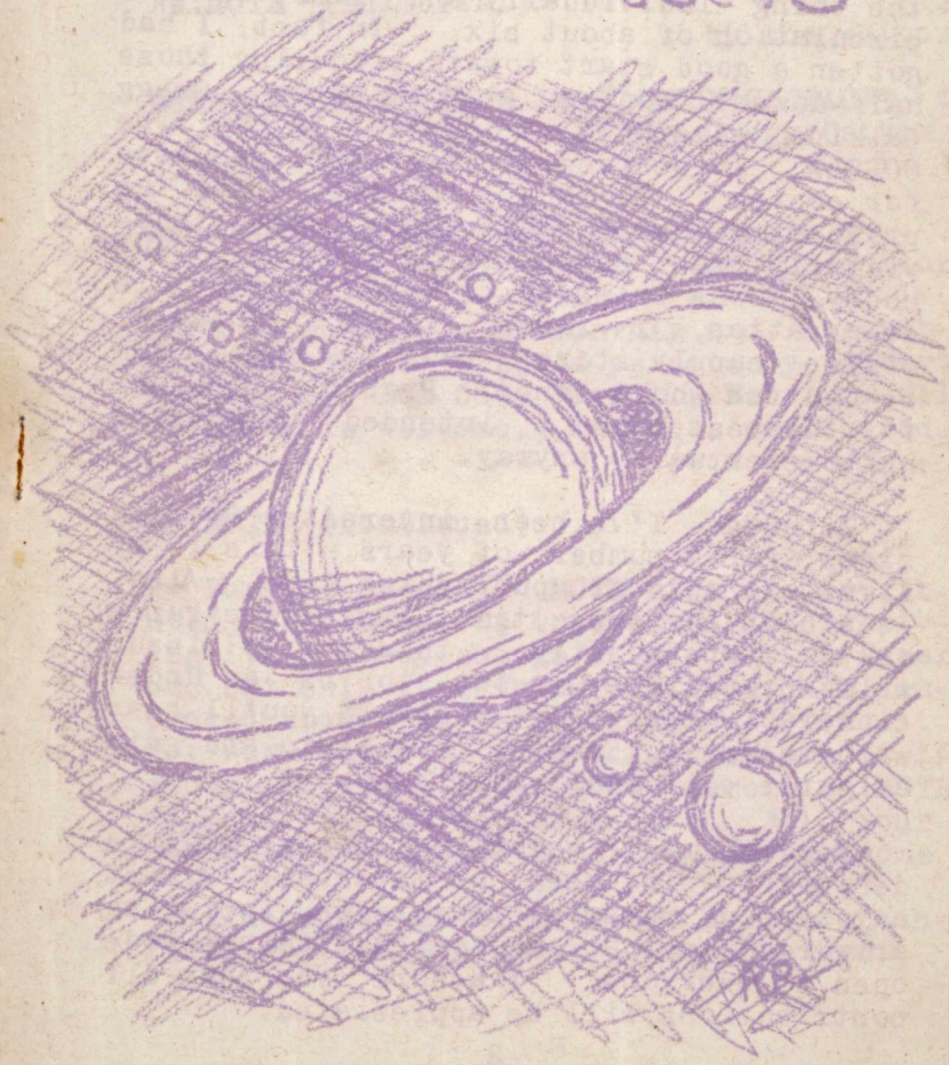
# MOTE

No. 1



# Re:MOTE (EDITORIAL)

by the editor

MOTE is finally getting launched. I've promised (or threatened) to have this first issue out for the past several weeks now. Originally, I had intended to type the thing individually and limit it to a circulation of about six. In fact, I had gotten a good start toward producing those half-dozen copies. But, after Gregg Calkins gave MOTE a mention in his zine OOPSLA, I received a number of requests for copies. So many, in fact, that the prospect of doing that many copies individually was more like a job than the hobby it was intended to be. Finally, in desperation, I rushed to the nearest office supply store, bought a hekto, and re-did the whole zine. Probably it's all for the best, as I intended to get the hekto eventually anyway.

Although I've been interested in fanzines for a number of years, this is my first attempt at publishing one. Also, it's been a long time since I've run a hekto. Consequently, this first issue will probably turn out to be an undecipherable mess. But possibly you'll bear with me until I master this hekto and gain a little editorial experience.

As with most beginning zines, MOTE is definitely in need of material. Almost any type of material is welcome, including artword, so that should leave things wide open to everyone. I assure you that all contributions will be appreciated.



# MOTE

Issue No. 1 July - 1952

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MOTE is published bi-monthly and distributed free to interested persons by Robert Peatrowsky, Box 634, Norfolk, Nebr. All material is welcome, in fact, solicited.

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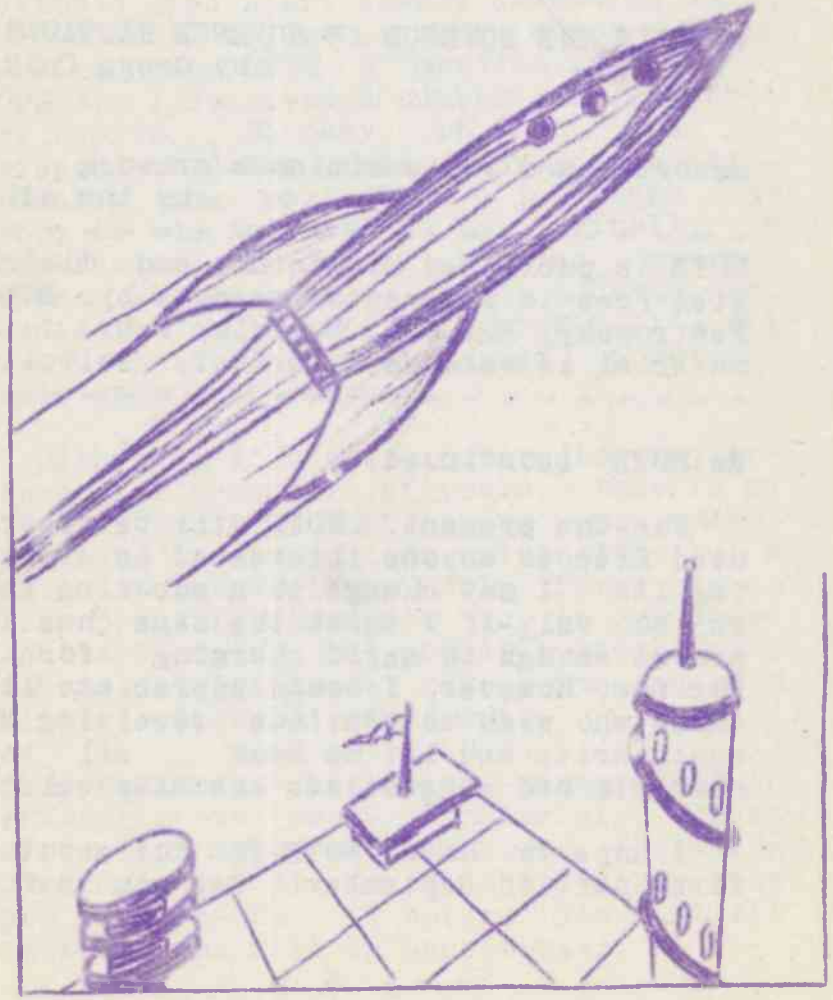
Re:MOTE (continued)

For the present, MOTE will be distributed free to anyone interested in receiving it. I may change to a sub-zine later on, but only if I think the zine has improved enough to merit charging for it. For now, however, I would appreciate it if those who wish to continue receiving MOTE would write and let me know. All your comments and suggestions are also welcome.

I hope to have MOTE #2 out about the first part of September. See you then.

# Where's the Science in Science Fiction?

by Gregg Calkins



HOW OFTEN HAVE you been misled by science fiction? Do you believe all the scientific facts you see in aSF or GALAXY? Does OW present more actual scientific facts than either of them? It's all a matter for deepest speculation. But, let's look at your own experiences.

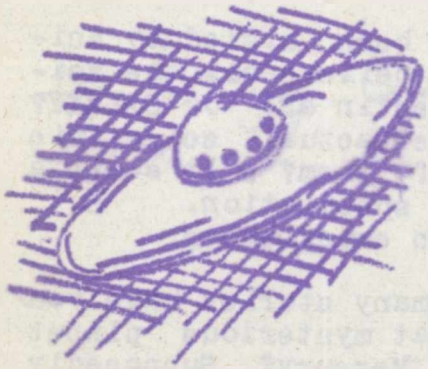
For instance, how many stories have you read about Vulcan, that mysterious planet inside the orbit of Mercury? Supposedly proven by the eccentricity of Mercury's orbit, it was long regarded as a ninth planet and one Frenchman even received a medal for discovering it. Unfortunately, however, the eccentricity of Mercury's orbit has been satisfactorally explained by other methods, and Vulcan is left with only a withered shell of a theory.

And, then, there's Mercury itself. How much have you read about its habitable "twilight" belt, where the conditions are intermediate between the burning hell of one side--hot enough to melt lead--and the freezing cold of the other? Or did you stop to consider the terrific storms of this "habitable" area, if there even is one?

Or Venus. The stereotyped "green hell" of jungle and marshland. The swamps and the fish-men living there. The lush jungles and forests. How many stories have you read of it as it is, though, with its constant storms of wind-blown sand--like a sand-blaster--or, even worse, its storms

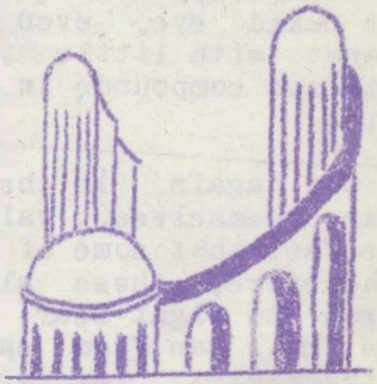
of formaldehyde crystals?

And Mars. This ancient planet of an age much older than earth, with its long-dead cultures and mysterious markings and "canals". How many science-fiction stories have you read that explained how poor old Schiaperalli's Italian word "canali" meaning channel, was misinterpretted by our sterling English language into canal. Or, that according to the accepted theories, no planet is older than any other, all being formed at the same time. Or did they ever tell you that Mars was always just as it is now, neither better nor worse, just as Terra will never become the "dying" planet stfictioneers like to portray it in its "age". The balance after six billion years has not changed it appreciably, so why should it suddenly become dead in the short span of man's life. But back to Mars with its almost nil oxygen supply and very little water vapor. True to form along these lines, the intrepid hero is usually a strong man who has lived on top of earth mountains where the oxygen is also scarce. But, consider that while earth has about 20% oxygen, Mars has less than .01 of 1%. Quite a difference for any lungs.





Or, away from the planets, you've surely read of the stranded explorer in space who slowly freezes, while inside the orbit of Earth or Mars. I'm afraid, however, that he would find things uncomfortably hot rather than cold. Oh, certainly, beyond a certain point solar radiation would be so small that he would lose heat faster than he gained it and therefore freeze, but how often is this explained?



Now back to the most elementary of all s-f points--the vacuum of space. Nothing there, they say. True, but they don't add the necessary words "for all practical purposes". For there surely is something there. What? Well, for one thing, an atom of hydrogen for every cubic centimeter. And, more than that, clouds of dust light-years thick, in places. Space is literally chock-full of radiation. But even on the physical aspects of space alone, there is as much solid matter between the stars as is the stars, altogether.

Let us blast in to our colony on Callisto. The one of a few satellites with an atmosphere, stfictioneers have pounced upon it as a likely spot for a colony, ruggedly overlooking its Jupiter-like atmosphere. A smaller Jupe, but that's never mentioned.

And then back to Mars with its two brilliant moons, under which our heros

walk at night, madly circling in their orbits about the red planet of iron. But, alas, the moons are only five or ten miles in diameter, and quite hard to see with the naked eye, even from Mars, our red planet with little iron on it, but only oxidized compounds in the surface of the soil.

Out again, in the big journey to the stars themselves, valliantly overlooking the fact that some of the best known stars (therefore, those always chosen for our heros to fight near) are deadly lethal to the frail man from earth. Way up in the ultra-violet, far surpassing puny x-rays, destroying flesh and tissue in an infinitesimal instant, but not disturbing our stfictioneers in the least bit.

Oh, there are many inaccuracies presented every day in the guise of good science fiction, even though they portray things that aren't and never could be possible, as we know them. No wonder some people consider it all trash.

But, the biggest mistake is that of that unbelievable planet with the highly corrosive atmosphere producing intelligent life. Our analysis of it clearly shows the water and oxygen content much too high for life to ever evolve, beyond the most rudimentary forms. The thought of an intelligent race on the third planet out from Sol is the biggest fantasy ever to be printed. Preposterous!

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