



NEOLITHIC

Borogove in orbit No. 15, April, 1961

NeoLithic is a bimonthly mag for people who send articles, write letterofcomments, trade, or subscribe. Subscribers get a number after the name on the address; the number is the number of the last issue the sub is to bring. People who trade (and a few fortunates who are stuck on the mailing-list) get NeoL almost indefinitely. Writers should write once every two issues. Last issue without response , if checked, means you are a writer from whom I have not heard for five or six months. Subscribers who write get subscriptions extended accordingly (and a rather long cord, too; quite long enough to hang oneself), and the subs are two issues for 25¢ or ten issues for \$1. NeoL comes from the basement of Ruth Serman at 5620 Edgewater Boulevard, Minneapolis 17, Minnesota.

Editroolings.....2

Omegas.....5
by Eleanor Arnason

Say Hey, Eaa.....7
by Bruce Pelz

Clay Tablets.....8
by Divers Persons

With the pictorial aid of Ron Whyte (page 4)

And hereafter I think I shall use this space for the name-address-Printed-matter-only bit instead of squeezing that in on the last page.

No Expressive Glances this issue because (a) no time, and (b) I don't think I like working in the form of a review column. It may appear next issue. Either way, Felice Rolfe has kindly and trufannishly offered to review New Worlds and Science Fantasy, and her first set of reviews should appear here next time.

EDITROOLINGS

Rick Sneary's letter reminded me of a topic dear to the fannish heart: spelling reform. It is, of course, also a topic dear to non-fannish hearts, such as the heart of George Bernanrd Shaw, or even, perhaps, the cockles of the heart of GBS. Ever since I first read Pygmalion, I have come across articles on spelling reform, here and there. Naturally, this has forced me into considering my own thoughts on the matter.

Indeed (so saith the lecturer at Lecture I, freshman English, here), when Noah Webster compiled his dictionary, he tried to introduce spelling reform. His method of reforming spelling may still be seen in many dictionaries today, as the pronunciation of the words. Webster had hoped that the spelling which showed how to pronounce each word would take the public fancy and become the spelling of the word. I believe that linguists nowadays say that his method was horrible, much too ambiguous. It seems rather a pity. Good or bad, his spelling reform did not catch public fancy, but in the "Blue-back Spellers," he did manage to get away with a little reform by taking the "u" out of "honour" and similar words. And so on down through the years: Max Beerbohm satirized it in an offhand manner in "Enoch Soames," GBS set forth his forty letter alphabet (can you imagine a keyboard for a forty letter alphabet), in our own microcosm there was 4e Ackerman.

And yet, I think that I am against spelling reform, despite the number of great men who have cried out for it. I am even a little sorry that Noah Webster was able to get Americans to write "honor," and ~~that Theodore~~ Roosevelt was able to shorten our spelling of "programme." Certainly we have a wacky spelling, and probably we all stop at least once during the time of stencil typing to murmur "I before e, except after c," and then to run to the dictionary to check that the given word is not an exception to the rule. But that is the purpose (among others) of dictionaries. Our wacky spelling is nearly impossible to learn, but it is easy to learn to use a dictionary to check.

There are two virtues in our present ridiculous spelling, one positive, one negative. The positive virtue is that the spelling gives a hint to the meaning and etymology of the word. The negative virtue is that, since languages do change, in a few hundred years the reform might well be quite out of date and have to be done all over again.

And, anyway, if spelling reform had to come at all, I should prefer it to come in Rick Sneary's way, which really goes back to a fine old English precedent, (much used by Shakespeare): spelling isn't really particularly important; if the reader can read at all, he'll know what's meant, so spell as you please and let the pedants hang. Anyone care to send me a gallows?

Some year I shall remember the vow made the year before never, ever to work on a play again. This, however, is not the year, and so it is that every night for the past week and the next two weeks to come, I am hefting lamp-posts, holding up walls, running about with chairs, stubbing my toes on the balcony...in short, I am on the shifting crew for the University Theater production of The Visit by Friedrich Durrenmatt, translated by Maurice Valency. Of course, it is possible that all this will be in the past tense when you read it, what with homework, correspondance, and the play. However, I have high hopes (from delirium, not drunkeness) of getting Neol out now.

The Visit is a morbid "tragi-comedy" in which a billionairess returns to her native town after an absence of many years. The town has become very poor, and she offers to give the people a billion marks if they will right the injustice she suffered when she lived in the town. The injustice was that she had an illegitimate child by her lover, Anton Schill, and Schill weasled out of marrying her, leaving her reputation in such poor condition that she had to leave town. The "righting" of this injustice is to be the murder of Schill. When the townspeople have murdered Schill, they will get their billion (half to the town, half to be divided per capita among the citizens).

The billionairess, Claire Zachanassion, is a very interesting person, a combination of Miss Havisham and Salome. Throughout the play she has a tender, affectionate manner towards Schill, but it becomes clear that this is partly a love for the past that might have been and partly a necrophiliac passion for Schill (she speaks rapturously of the beautiful tomb she will build him by the shores of the blue Mediterranean). However, she is not the center of the story. The main interest is in the degradation of the townsfolk from the emphatic "Never!" to "Let's spread a mantle of silence over the whole matter" to "That was pretty mean, the way he treated Madame Zachanassion," to the town-meeting where they vote unanimously to accept the offer.

For a long time, it seemed to me that the degradation of the townsfolk was not quite convincing. The arguments they used were all right. I can believe that they would rationalize the murder to each other with such arguments as "If he goes around saying she tried to have him killed, which anyway she never meant, we'll have to do something—and not for the Money." What bothered me was the things they didn't say to each other. They didn't say "Shame piled on shame: it settles nothing"; they didn't say "Pity is the highest justice."

In fact, those words were spoken, but they were spoken by one of the townsfolk, the teacher, to Madame Claire. I think I see, now, what brought about the downfall of the town: they

appealed always to outside help. They did not want to kill Schill. So instead of saying to each other "This is wrong," (a) the Pastor begged Schill to get out of town, (b) the doctor and the teacher tried to convince the lady that she was doing wrong, (c) the teacher threatened to tell the newspapers what was going on. All through the play, they tried to get some outside force to stop them from killing Schill; not once did one of them try to stop himself.

This inner weakness of the townsfolk is nicely foreshadowed in the first act, when they are discussing why they are so poor, and what should be done to get them going again. Why are they poor? They don't know; they have factories—the factories are idle. What should they do? Get Madame Claire to re-open the factories and set them going, the foundry, the wagon-works, "And the Golden Eagle Pencil Factory. Once that starts rolling, everything will move," says one. They are convinced that they can do nothing by themselves.

The Visit has its bad points. If one thing symbolizes a second, then a statement about the thing should be superficially as well as symbolically true. In this respect, as when the teacher apologizes for the death of the lady's pet panther ("The panther was savage, a beast; to him our human laws could not apply." That is a fine rationalization for Schill's murder, but it is silly as an excuse for killing a wild beast) the play often misses. Still, now I am convinced that it is a good, perhaps great play...and I'm never going to get any studying done between shifts if I insist on standing in the wings, gazing awe-struck at the marvelous acting.



Holmes disguised as
Reginald Bunthorne

OMEGAS
by Eleanor Arnason

Omega I:

What a lovely eon it is this time, all dark and sweet. I like that kind best.

I listened to the suns for a while. The white ones sing about joy and strength, the yellow ones about beauty and wisdom, but I like the red ones the best, they sing about life and death and love. Their voices are slow and quiet and all gentle.

Omega II:

I didn't like the universe this eon so I tore it down and built a new one. It's got blue suns and pink dragons.

I sometimes wonder why only one universe and only one me. I'm kind of lonely this way. I've tried to make friends with the planet things, but they don't understand. They think I'm something that I'm not. Something like them.

I like the pink dragons. I think I'll keep them for a couple of eons.

Omega III:

It's a bad eon now. All white. I hate that kind. If it doesn't change I'll have to tear the universe down again. White, white, everywhere, how I hate white. My pink dragons are dying. I forgot to give them insides. I wish I'd never made them.

Omega IV:

I watched the planet things. There are all kinds, some are sort of smart. They kill each other too. I don't understand that. If I had others like me, I'd love them.

They die too, for no reason at all, they just die.

All the pink dragons are dead and my favorite sun is dying.

Omega V:

I got tired of blue suns and since the pink dragons are dead I built a new universe. After I was finished, I made some planet things and played with them, but I got bored and left them.

I made a sun blow up just a little time ago. It was so pretty very red, and it sang a war-song. I think some of the planet things were killed, but I can't be sure because I didn't notice.

I've got some green suns now. They sing about peace and quiet and togetherness. They made me sad so I'm going to destroy them.

Omega VI:

I sppeared to a planet thing this eon. But he couldn't really see me, because he had only a finite mind. So he got me mixed up with some god of his people. He called me some strange name, Anyway, I had fun pretending I was his god and I did a few things to help him. But at last he died and I left.

Omega VII:

I'm so lonely. Everything has someone else, but I'm just me. I can do almost anything so I'm going to try to make mate. It's a nice blue eon. All full of suns and fire birds. This universe is nice. I like it.

Omega VIII:

It's awful! The thing I made is so evil, so black, I must destroy it. It thinks killing, and the part of universe where it is is covered by death. Oh my poor, poor universe.

Omega IX:

I killed it. Half the suns are dead, and I'm weak. After it was created, the thing bled the suns for energy. It was strong, almost too strong. But I used the mental powers of the planet things. I told them that unless they thought hate at the evil' they'd be killed.

I'll have to rebuild the universe. It's so ill, the suns all sing death songs. All the planet things are dying, and the fire birds are shriveling up.

Omega X:

I've fixed the universe up. All the suns are singing. I think the planet things are nicer now, they don't kill each other much. I made new pink dragons, this time with insides.

This is the best of all possible universes. And this eon is all dark and sweet, so soft, all is love.

I can't make a mate like myself, but I have my planet things and my dragons and all the singing suns to love. I guess they're just as good. I think the planet things may at last become like me, but it will take time, but I can wait.

SAY HEY, EAA !

What can one say of the genus, Fan,
That draws its recruits from the ranks of man,
Then refers to H. Sap. as "Mundanian Boor'
And says they should all be deported to Ploor?

What can one say of the publishing Jiant,
Who comes on like Gangbusters, angry, defiant,
Determined to prove he's most fannish and rugged,
And branding his critics as 'Neo' or 'Fugghead'?

What can one say of the feuding-type APAn—
The SAP who down-grades every 'typical FAPAn,'
Or the one who lets fly at the slightest excuse
And for years will refuse to consider a truce?

What can one say of the hypocrite types
Who will tear down a fan to his innermost pipes
When the victim is absent, and then turn around
And greet the same victim as Long-Lost Friend found?

Wille, one can still say, as a general rule,
That though tempers heat quick, even quicker they cool.
For a fan can forget, at the drop of a pur,
That he used to be made—and the feuding is done.

And then one can say fans are usually fun—
Which is why, in the first place, was Fandom begun—
For they like what you like, and enjoyment is squared
When there's others about you with whom it is shared.

One can say, in good sooth, there's much value in fans.
They have intellect (whether or not they be slans),
They have much sense of humor, appreciative viewpoints,
And great love for fantasy, to just name a few points.

They have both good and bad points; there's no need to spike them.
So what can one say? Say what I do: "I like them!"

---Bruce Pelz

EXPLORATION
RICK SNEARY

from RICK SNEARY, February 14, 1961
2962 Santa Ana Street, South Gate, California

Enjoyed the Hibbit's view of the Pittcon, and the Hibbit Out West. I spent 8 months in Los Vegas, back in 1954, which is just about as long as the average person could stand it. But still it is an interesting place, and much more to it than the tourist sees. It would actually be a cheep place to spend a vacation—if you could keep yourself from gambling, and didn't drink too much. I can—because I can't afford to. But if you like to watch glitter and people and excitement, it is a great place. You become starved for good music, intelligent conversation, and green grass (the grass freezes in winter, and is burnt dry by the Sun in summer). But as places make money from gambling and drink, room and board are not as high as many places. And the quiet person can wander in and out of the best hotels and clubs at will. I remember one night I desided to have some fun. I took my pellet pistol (with an 8 inch barrel) and sliped it into a hip pocket, and then wandered around one of the big clubs. My coat covered it, but it was interested to think on what might have happened.

You may tell ea that her picture of what a national purpose looks like is very close to my own. Not that I had given much thought to what a national purpose looked like before this. After all, the other side was in the saddle, and riding rough-shod over us to get to the brink and back. It began to seem that the national purpose was to get control of the White House. In fact it had gotten so cloudy that I thought the only way to see what our national purpose was like was to go to Marineland and watch it leap through hoops. It is good to think that our national purpose is rather fierce and found of red meat.

There seemed something special about "Triclet: July 13, 1960". It must mean something. I remembered a poem of Foe, that you read sideways or something. So I tried every first word "My it for my and to my it." Then, words in desenting order: "My burns better in greeting, to hope a truer," which seemed to come close to saying something, but not quite. Then I thought, maybe it was first letters. This came out "Mifmatmi." Which might be a swing-ing name for some cat. Maybe the old desending sequence here, i.e. "Mtroihra." Or, maybe "Mr. Roihra," which sounds great, if you can speek Japanieese. [You make me feel much less like a clod; I had to ask ea the significance of the date when I first read it. Stevenson lost the nomination on July 13, 1960—RB]

from REDD BOGGS, 21 February 1961
2209 Highland Place N. E., Minneapolis 21, Minnesota

The Morleyan bibliomaniacal musings were fun, though I seldom

enjoy eating while reading—partly, as you say, because of the danger of soiling the book, but mostly because any book worth reading deserves undivided attention. A person who would divide his attention between a book and a bun would make love with one eye on the Ed Sullivan show.[But I don't like Ed Sullivan—HB] One may also color the illustrations in a prozine; I've run onto second-hand copies with the pix colored with crayon once or twice, but I never dared to desecrate magazines that way.

"Unless you class Tennyson..." as a minor Victorian poet? Yes, definitely! There weren't any major Victorian poets except perhaps Hopkins. I mean in England. In America, of course, we had Whitman, Dickinson, Emerson, and James Whitcomb Riley. If Betty Kujawa doesn't get NeOL, you can safely omit the last name there. In fact, I'd advise it. My comparison of the sea poems with William Morris et al was not meant as a put-down; I'm quite fond of the minor Victorians like Morris, Dobson, and Dowson. Also Henley, whom you quasi-quote in the amusing account of your pre-andom fannishness just above.

I haven't seen the Poul Anderson book, Twilight World, but from what you say I'd venture to guess that it's a book based on at least two of his earliest stories in Astounding: "Tomorrow's Children" and "Logic," both from circa 1947. I'm groggled that you liked "Occasion for Disaster"; I didn't. On paperback prices: A Canticle for Leibowitz costs 50¢, not 35¢; and you waited too long to buy the paperback edition of Fancies and Goodnights. I bought mine in April 1953, the Bantam Giant edition; it cost 35¢—which was steep in them days, when most paperbacks cost 25¢. Now it costs 75¢? I'm croggled green.

I have a good enough imagination—good enough to be able to read Doc Smith without getting lost in the second galaxy—but somehow I find myself unable to picture a demure young student at Swarthmore eagerly scanning back issues of Imagination and getting the horrible urge to Publish A Fanzine. Something tells me that the administration would be interested in this evidence of delinquency on the part of one of their demure young ladies.

Then of course—speaking of literary Ruths in children's books—there was Ruth Fielding, heroine of 30 or 40 books for girls which, let us devoutly hope, have long since been allowed to go out of print. And come to think of it, the inamorata of Jack Rover in the second Rover Boys series was Ruth Stevenson. I just read, or rather reread, The Rover Boys on Snowshoe Island, copyright 1918, and to show you that this came out of another world I will quote a passage from it: "'Just the same'[says Jack] we can put it up to the folks at home and let them know all about what a nice place Clearwater Hall is—and what awfull, nice girls there are here.' And at this latter remark Ruth and May blushed."

"Just the same [says Jack] we can put it up to the folks at home and let them know all about what a nice place Swarthmore College is—and what awfully nice girls there are here.' And at this latter remark eaa...???"

from Bill Dohmge, February 28, 1961
1441 8th Street, Berkeley 10, California

Unless my powers have deserted me as I approach middle age, I would have sneered out of contenance "That hideous female at the Library" that Ron White writes about. I majored in English and American Literature, and while I didn't quite get my MA, I do know all the tricks. The things I have done with eyebrows and a few well chosen words—well maybe not a few—to various fuggheaded librarians who put down the OZ books...but I digress. I would disagree with Ron slightly in his estimate of Burroughs. Burroughs' great gifts as far as I am concerned are a marvelously fertile imagination—ghad in one novel The Land that Time Forgot he throws away enough plots to supply most writers with 20 novels—and an unrivaled ability of giving exactly the right names to things. Unfortunately though his writing style is just this side of unreadable, And I think his work is usually all of a piece and that not too much can be done by editing and cutting. All that can be done is to pick out the better novels. But I find them all worthy for keeping and rereading every five years or so.

Ah so you are about to tackle Elinor [sic. the Edsbands for Edith--RB] Nesbit and Arthur Ransome? But what do you mean by "E. Nesbit's minro books"? Did she write major ones? If so I never heard of them. [Yes, in the field of children's books. The Five Children and It series and the Bastable books are her "major" books--RB] Upon urgent recommendation from Dave Mason I read E. Nesbit some three years ago. To my delight I recognized one as a childhood favorite whose name I had forgotten. Unfortunately, however, the magic had departed and I was barely able to finish all three of the books. Two or thrae months ago on Elinor Busby's recommendation I picked up one of Arthur Ransome's books, but found it unreadable. If you do read him, perhaps you can recommend some specific titles that may appeal to my jaded taste.

from BARBARA BERMAN, March 1, 1961
3926 Woodruff Avenue, Oakland 2, California

Speaking of "reading while doing"—an addition for married femmes: I always read while sticking a bottle in the baby's face. Said infant does not like this arrangement. She feels I should gaze soulfully at her as she fills her tummy, but since she's not agile enough as yet to grab the reading matter and shred it (much as she'd like to), she puts up with the situation.

I was not impressed by Mike Deckinger's story. Perhaps I do

not dig the current idiom and style in writing, but the story seemed pointless to me.

from DON FITCH, 12 March 1961
3908 Frijo, Covina, California

It wasn't your fault; the post office was probably to blame, since Dear got his the weeks before, but this copy didn't arrive until a couple of days after Purim, so I danced twice that week.

Your "On the art of Reading While Doing Something Else" deserves to go into Holbrook Jackson's Anatomy of Bibliomania (are you familiar with it? Like Saki, Lamb, The Importance of Living, and the Holmesian Canon, it is one of those works which can be read almost anywhere, not requiring, like Milton, "a solemn service of music before taking it up," but beware! it may hold you for hours). Somewhere in part XII, though it doesn't quite fit either in section 1 (the proper time for reading), section 2 (of reading places), section 3 (the association of book and place), or section 4 (various readers and their reading places) (did you know that, at the Bagni di Lucca, Shelley used to "...sit on the rocks, reading Herodotus, until the perspiration had subsided, and then to leap from the edge of the rock into this fountain—a practice in the hot weather excessively refreshing."? Or that there was a learned German who was "supposed to have a Homer printed on indiarubber, to read during his bath"?). But there is a whole chapter on reading at mealtimes, and another on reading in bed; a practice in which I rarely dare indulge, since it sometimes results in my passing the entire night without a wink of sleep.

Deckinger has, apparently, been pulling a Tom Wolfe on us—sitting down and writing and writing and writing—though Wolfe had the good sense to leave most of his outpourings in trunks and boxes, while Mike must keep very little of his in those filing drawers of his. It isn't really revision that this little piece needs; it should have a rather long short story written around it, although, as it stands, it has an unusual evocative power.

Chalk up another "But I was sure it was Borogrove".

Oh! the Ransome books—those I devoured and even re-read several times, something rarely done at that age. Was Morley influenced by them in writing Pandora Lifts the Lid? Or vice versa? Must re-read the whole batch sometime, and Dr. Doolittle, too; these are two series I did hit at the right age. Were I the sort of person who regretted things, I'd regret most not having discovered Grahame, or Milne, or Carroll until highschool. It wasn't too late then, but it was different. Do you remember Dr. Dogbody's Leg? The pegleg which opens at the touch of a hidden spring to display carved ivory figures moving to the tune of "Rule Britannia" played by a music box.

from FRED GALVIN, April 1, 1961
840 Algonquin Avenue, St. Paul 19, Minnesota

I would like to get a copy of Neolithic #10. I am willing to pay 25¢ cash, or will trade Amazing Stories (Dec. 1960) or F&SF (Fall, 1949, V1N1). I have other things to trade, but those are the two that I can think of off-hand. Not that I think Neolithic #10 is that good, but I have all the other issues, and we completists abhor gaps. Reading IN the tub is too tricky--some dilation quotient of the infinitesimal ellipse is uniformly bounded

publisher should come out with special waterproof books for this purpose. I don't know about reading while eating, but drinking while reading is fine: that's what I'm doing now. Pages 5 and 6 were a waste of paper. High standard forsooth!

from RON ELLIK, 13 March, 1961
127 Bennett Avenue, Long Beach 3, California

I have tried reading while doing several things. When I was a mere child--oh, eight or so--I received a half-dozen Oz books and sat down and bolted through them. From time to time I received more, and I recall reading long evenings with a radio going. In those days it was all we had you know, this was before they invented the cyclops familiarus. But I also recall that when, in 1949 or 1950, we bought a televid, I had perforce to leave the front room and take up reading in bed or in the kitched or something like that. Fortunately we had had a large house.

During my later years I used to try reading while virtually straining on my head. You've seen cartoons of teenagers on the phone, sprawled into and over and through an armchair? At the time, I considered it part of the rites of passage, however, and could not be convinced that reading in a standard sitting position was comfortable.

I am certain that Wally Weber, someone named Fred, and I, are all insulted by Mr. Cheslin's remark that changing your name to one of ours would be harmless. Rest assured that while Wally Weber, someone named Fred, and I, may display to fandom and the world at large the most innocent of minds, we are in reality vicious, vitriolic, barely-checked rampaging beasts, especially Wally Weber and I. This Fred: I shall have to ask him to write to you with a brief statement of policy, as I scarcely know him.

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