

PLEASURE UNITS #5

Like it says up there at the top of the page, this is the 5th issue of PLEASURE UNITS, Vol. 2, #2, I suppose. This one is intended for the 6th mailing of the Spectator Amateur Press Society, July, 1963. The editor is one Gordon S. Eklund, 14612 18th Avenue SW, Seattle 66, Washington.

This issue of Pleasure Units is undoubtedly going to be the most hurriedly composed one I've turned out yet. I'm going to have to type fast and furiously to get it done and mailed to the OE in the week or so that I've allotted myself for the task. There are good reasons for this however.

For instance last Thursday evening--this is the following Tuesday--I graduated from Highline High School with a sweet little diploma clutched in my unwashed hand. The graduation ceremonies gave me somewhat of a thrill, though mostly I was concerned with the fact that it was so damned hot in there. I was happy to get out, of course, and to prove my state of Euphoria I haven't done a constructive thing since I got out. Just sit around and sleep, occasionally listen to the radio and read a good book or two. I went downtown and shot my wad--some money my older brother had given me for a graduation present--on a couple records and a book. But that was about the most effort I've been able to muster up, since that warm Thursday evening.

We, meaning the Class of '63, went on a trip the night before graduation. That was fun, much more so than the Baccalaureate exercises of the previous Sunday. We went to some park, forget the name, located out east of Seattle. There were three swimming pools--I can't swim--a football field (I hate playing football), and a couple basketball courts (I don't like basketball either, of course). I did manage to enjoy myself, though, even if I can't figure out why at the moment.

I'll probably have a new address by the time the mailing comes out, since I plan on entering the Air Force for a four year term in a few days. I don't know what I'll do about SAPS during this period, but suspect I'll think of something or make a publishing deal with someone.

I'm sort of viewing this Air Force deal with alarm, being highly uncertain of myself or of my decision. I think things will manage to work themselves out, however. The Air Force, or some branch of the service, seems to be the only solution I can come up with now to the old problem of what does one do when one graduates from high school. I can't afford to go to college, so that's out of the question for the moment. Good jobs are scarce enough for those without college, especially when one is 17 years old.

Switching from personal problems to the mailing itself for a few lines, I'll hereby inform one and all that the me's start on the next page. I don't know whether I'll manage to make it through the whole mailing or not, but I'll try. This isn't going to be very good, qualitatively speaking, but I suppose a few people will just point out that I'm only following an old SAPS custom here.

MAILING COMMENTS

YIP TIDEE 3 (Girard): I've been trying to learn the intricacies of driving the last few months. I've been driving Wally Gonser Valiant to and from Nameless meetings for quite some time, and I've taken a couple tries at my Dad's Hillman. I haven't had too many problems. I push a bit too firmly on Wally's power brakes one evening, nearly tossing him through the windshield. On another occasion, in my Dad's car, I took a left turn onto a four lane highway and ended up in the incoming lane. Fortunately there were no cars coming. My dad bought a new car, a Chevrolet, the other day, which sort through my driving plans out of kilter. After learning how to drive his Hillman quite well, it's been sort of hard trying to drive a monstrous Detroit station wagon. I get by, though, but just barely--it has power brakes, too.

POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC 15 (Brown): I know Paul Stanbery, too, though not very well. He seems a nice enough guy, even fabulous on occasion and never obnoxious. I can't say whether everything you write about him is true, not having read much by him, but he seems like the sort of person who ought to be talented. Unfortunately, this play of his is not the convincer. I only got through the first act. Wally Weber told me he read the whole thing and even understood it in parts. He's a better man than I. :: The Stanberry article reminds me of Salinger's "Seymour, an Introduction." Was this on purpose or am I merely style deaf?

PLOINK 1 (Brown): Welcome to SAPS. I've been around here a real long time myself, a whole year, and if you need any help getting oriented, just ask me. If you're puzzled by any of the Old SAPS Jokes, like for instance The Angry Young Man of SAPS, I'll even explain these to you. You sound like good SAPS material, which I suppose Toskey has already told you.

I doubt that the Atlantic is "making a mint." Quality publication seldom have very large circulations and, from the figures I've seen, the Atlantic is no exception. Even with its 60¢--er is it seventy-five?--price tag, I doubt that the magazine is particularly rich on a circulation of 200,000 or so.

Every once in a while I get to feeling that I'm a great writer and a great talent. I think I'd like to be one. I've always liked to read, and have always read a lot--most of it pretty varied, too, except for a period of three years when I read nothing but science fiction. I think that most anyone who really reads a lot gets to urge to write, too. If you're a voluminous (yeah, I know that word doesn't fit there) reader, you're quite apt to come across the very bad writers. The obvious reaction is one of, "well, I can do better than that." And in many cases the speaker can. I know this hit me when I was around 12 and had just started reading science fiction. I submitted about twenty stories to various science fiction magazines and it was really with extreme surprise that I saw them hastily rejected. I've since re-read a few--before burning them--and I'm not surprised now that they were rejected. But, getting back to my main premises, and I do have one here, writing did appeal to me as a reader and it still does appeal today. Which is why I'm in fandom and in SAPS. I

may really have what it takes to be a great writer, although re-reading my writings usually convinces me of the opposite. I hope you have good luck, though, since you do seem to have a lot of ambition. Be a poet--the world needs more poets and fewer novelists. :: I told you this could get out of hand. Just think of this fanzine as one long article titled "Why I Write on Stencil."

If you'll check up, I think you'll find that one of the major issues of the evolution hula-baloo, when it was at its peak in the twenties, was over whether evolution was a theory or an hypothesis--just a guess. I think the Theory of Evolution is pretty likely, highly so, to be truth. The only thing that makes it a theory and not a fact is that it cannot be conclusively proven to be true. I see by the papers that someone else in Tennessee, thirty years after John Scopes, is in trouble for teaching evolution in the schools. That's progress for you.

Tch. Tch. Letter writing is considered an art, you know, in most writing circles. Since you yourself link letter writing with mailing comments, I guess we're in agreement that mailing comments can be art. When you start talking about last minute mince being mc's and thereby showing that mc's are bad, I think you're right--partially. You see, I was talking about good mailing comments, not all mailing comments. Bad mailing comments aren't hard to write. Good mailing comments are. Good mailing comments are much harder to write than bad or even run of the mill articles.

You ask why there are so many mailing comments if they're so difficult to compose? Simple: ready made topics. Forgetting for the moment bad and good mc's and just taking the field as a whole, mailing comments are so profuse because they are the type of writing that can be done by responsive people, people who just can't come up with an idea for a topic, but once they get a topic can write extremely well. The only difficulty in writing articles that places it over mc's is in finding a topic to write on. After that, mailing comments are much more difficult because of the variety of subject matter to be handled--and the type as well. Some mc's are deadly serious, other comments must be light hearted and gay, if they, as a whole, are going to be any good at all.

Bad, you were a regular juvenile delinquent compared to me. The only run-in I've ever had with the cops, other than being stopped and told to get off the streets, was when I was picked up for loitering once, when I was 15. The cop drove me and a friend I was with around in his car for a while, then let us go. I'm not saying that that was the only time I've ever done anything illegal, mind you; it was just the only time I got caught. I was questioned about a local murder once, too, the first of this year. But I told them that I didn't know nothin' (I didn't either) and we had no problems.

SPACEWARP 76 (Rapp): When I was in high school I took Spanish for two years. I learned nothing. Hell, I didn't even learn how to say "science fiction" in the language, which, of course, was my major reason for taking the course. I got "B's" and "C's," too, which ought to show you the present state of American education.

FARRAGO 2 (Crilly): Welcome to SAPS, but I think you'll get along much better with this member when you learn that you're supposed to put the title of the zine and your name somewhere where a fellow can find it. I don't like reaching across the table to look in the O-O to find out what I'm reading. Y'hear?

I've had trouble reading Sturgeon, too, except for his short stories. More Than Human was a complete puzzle to me, and so were a number of other things. I put it down to my age at the time I was reading the stuff--about thirteen. I had trouble with van Vogt and Blish, to name a few, at the same time. I'm going to have to re-read some of that stuff some day, so that I can figure out the parts I couldn't understand then. But, I'm sort of afraid that if I do re-read them, I'll discover that my ignorance has increased rather than disappeared--I get frightened that way every once in a while.

I applied, well I wrote to a representative of the N3F in October of 1958, a year and a half before I did enter fandom. I was only just barely 13 at the time, and though a fanatical science fiction reader then, I'm quite happy that I didn't enter fandom then. I was hardly a child prodigy and would probably have found my first few years in the microcosm, once I got outside the N3F, even more traumatic than they were. I can't remember now exactly why I didn't join the group. I got a nice letter from some nut, Seth Johnson I think, telling me why I should join and giving me an application blank. I received my first fanzine then, too, one from Art Hayes. I found it totally incomprehensible--it was all about bureaus and the like and only mentioned science fiction in one spot: an allusion, quite brief, to the Shaver Mystery. Come to think of it, I am beginning to see why I didn't join then.

Dockinger's movie review is terrible. Gad, he's almost as bad as those reviewers that get their stuff published professionally. And that, my friends, is pretty rotten. Don't mind me, I'm just naturally prejudiced towards all movie reviews, unless they appear in some highclass, house organ like Warhoen.

I'm against fanzine review columns in prozines because there are too many fans around already. I want to feel unique and how can I when every Tom, Dick and Harry starts publishing fanzines. It's not that I'm selfish, it's just that I've been reading Ayn Rand.

OUTSIDERS 51 (Ballard): You shouldn't have picked Gordon Eklund up on his statement that the first twenty issues of Galaxy contained better stories than any similar run of a science fiction mag. I say that you shouldn't have, because you would have uncovered his ignorance rather completely, and I'm personally concerned about having that boy's ignorance kept well hidden. Seriously, Galaxy did publish a lot of good stuff during that run: The Demolished Man, The Space Merchants, Time Quarry, The Fireman, just to name a few. You're probably right, though, about the war year issues of ASF topping Galaxy. I don't have the issues themselves, but the reprints I've seen should give Galaxy a good run for its money. But, aha, I do have nearly all of the issues of Fantastic Novels in my possession and most of the FFM's, and I can state that in my opinion the latter doesn't come anywhere near Galaxy's first twenty years, and the

former can't quite equal that later magazine. You're obviously a great Munsey fan, Wrai, and while I dig that sword and space stuff, it isn't completely my meat. A lot of the Munsey stuff in FFM and FN is superb: most of Merritt, Garrett Serviss's "The Second Deluge," and much, much more. But a lot of it, like Guisey's Palos of the Dog Star Pack trilogy and some of the Polaris of the Snows series I found dull, deadly dull. :: And, I have read a few issues of Planet Stories. If you promise not to tell Wally Weber, who shoots people for casting aspersions on the honor of his pet prozine, I'll let you know that I thought they were terrible. But this is just a matter of taste. I haven't read as much science fiction as an old man like you, with a long gray beard, has, so maybe Galaxy wasn't quite as great during the early fifties as I thought it was. It certainly hasn't been much the last few years, though, has it?

My copy of Thuvia, Maid of Mars (the British Methuen edition, now out-of-print) includes an 8 page glossary of terms used in the Mars books. It's pretty complete, I would say, with the definitions running from "Old Ben" (Burroughs' body servant) to "Warhoon" with a lot in between. The glossary only covers the first three books for certain. It appears in the fourth, of course, but the cross references only go to the first three titles. :: By the way, I just finished reading A Fighting Man of Mars a few days ago. This was my first Barsoomian adventure since I read The Masermind of Mars over two years ago. I surprised myself and really enjoyed it. Surprised myself, I say, because I have never quite managed to enjoy the Mars series since I started reading titles in which John Carter had disappeared as the major character. Like, I identified with him.

Since you asked it of us, I won't tell you that the line "Stop the World, I Want to Get Off" did not originate with Dick Schultz. I won't even tell you that those words are the title of a musical that started off in England but is now on Broadway. Aren't I a nice guy?

I think the start of the Lone Ranger was later than you've placed it. I do believe that 1937 or, perhaps, 1938 was the date of the first radio show. I used to spend many evenings listening to the Ranger while he was on radio and many more while he was on tv. I'm almost sorry that it's no longer on television. I didn't watch it during its final few years, but I'd like to know that it was still there, so that other youngsters could enjoy it much as I did when I was four or five. The same with "Howdy Doody," though I'm sure the latter was much after your time, Wrai. The Lone Ranger, though, I heard ran into financial troubles about two years ago. They, the producers, ran out of money. I understand they had to melt down Silver in order to make a profit, which was a very bad joke. Yes?

Tch. I've seen a bunch of older kids ogging on smaller ones to fight each other. It was a lot of fun, too. I don't know whether kids are more civilized now as a whole or not. I don't have the old days in my memory in order to compare the current scene with. I don't think kids are particularly civilized even today, though I will gladly admit that newspaper accounts sort of exaggerate. There's a lot of teen-age drinking, but I've never seen or heard of an example of kids using dope within my own sphere nor are pregnancies particularly common. Maybe I live in a sheltered neighborhood, but things aren't as bad as some people might think.

SAPTERRANEAN 8 (Breen): I think most major literature today is still written around the common man. However, most of today's common men are rather "uncommon" common men, and rather than being celebrated the common man is more often criticized for his shallowness. I don't consider your citing of Stapledon, Ayn Rand, Poul Anderson or van Vogt to be valid. None, with the possible exception of Stapledon, could be considered major writers, nor are any in much touch with the mainstream of literary ideas.

You, of all people, should realize that the mere non-existence of anti-porn laws prior to the late 19th century (I presume this refers to the USA) has little or nothing to do with censorship. Before the existence of such laws, censorship was even more prevalent than today; it was so strong that it need not have been legalized. I think the press is freer now than in the past, if one can afford to make use of the freedom. Supreme Court decisions since about 1957 have done wonders in cutting down legalized censorship on the national and state wide scale. : A person can still run away to Alaska or somewhere like that if he wants out. I think he could live as undisturbed there as he could anywhere in the US prior to World War I. Why would he want to pick up and leave, though? Doesn't it take a bigger man to stick around and try to change the laws and customs with which he finds himself in opposition?

POT POURRI (Berry): The detective novelet is great fun as is most of issue #28. Unfortunately, your material is as un-commentable as it is excellent.

WATLING STREET 16 (Lichtman): I've never thought of myself as one who treats books with particular care, but I've never had any real trouble with the spines splitting on my paperbacks. Looking around at the shelves, I can only spot two or three paperbacks with the spines badly out of shape, and I'm pretty certain those few were that way when I bought them--second hand, of course. Most of my hardbounds still have their dustwrappers intact and I've only had a couple magazines fall apart on me--those being Real Old ones, back when I was a Collector. I lose a front cover off an issue of Newsweek or some slick mag like that occasionally, but mostly I don't sweat that 'cause who cares about last week's news when its a year later. : You sound Old and Tired.

GASEOUS VERTEBRATE 3 (Deindorfer): The only record shop I frequent very often these days is a Big One downtown. The clerks there are clods, mostly, and do little but take my hardearned money away from me in return for a record that probably has a monstrous scratch running through it. I used to go to this spot out here in the suburbs, back when I bought Rock n' Roll records, where the clerks had some personality. But I've forgot all about that, except that none of them liked me. They were all women, though, and all mostly old women. None of them were called Hal, or even Irving. One was called Herman, I remember that, but there was pretty good reason for this quirk. Ask me some time, when I'm not so near the end of the stencil, and I'll tell you all about it.

FLABBERGASTING 26 (Toskey): For a long time I, too, would always wait until I had a serial intact before I'd read it. Once I did attempt to read serial installments as they came out. I gave this up after a few months, though, when it became obvious that this wasn't my particular scene. Either I'd read the first installment of a story and then forget to buy the second one, or, more often, I'd completely forget what happened in the earlier parts of a story when it came time to read on. Now I read serials all at once, though since I never read science fiction magazines these days, this doesn't present much of a problem. I read serialized articles in sections, but this seems to be somewhat of a different story.

Congrats on the upcoming marriage. Hope things go smoothly for you from here on.

THE DINKY BIRD 6 (Berman): There was an article in one of the local newspapers recently which tried to show how Washingtonians had accents. Personally, I didn't buy it. Most of the examples consisted of showing how, say, Easterners would pronounce some word correctly, and then showing how the Washingtonian accent compared with this. I can't find any difference between the sound of "aw" and "ah" in a word, supposing that both sounds come out pretty much the same. Washingtonians were supposed to use "aw" in words where "ah" should have been used. I don't see how this makes any difference in the pronunciation. In other words, I ain't got no accent, sho nuf.

COLLECTOR 33 (Devore): The tale of the store robbery is fantastic and I wouldn't have believed it if it hadn't said that such was so in Axe. Most fans seem to write well when they get robbed-- which will serve as the philosophical note for this issue.

GASEOUS VERTEBRATE ANNEX (Deindorfer): I don't know why your pal Curtis S. Kaighn, III wanted people to think he was William S. Hart. I've seen William S. Hart on tv, on Silents Please, and I think he's a creep, a Billy Graham in chaps. Can you imagine a cowboy that rode a horse all over the place like he did and shot guns that smoked and everything? Course you can't. And that proves that William S. Hart is a creep. I watched his movies closely, bighod, and the guy couldn't even talk. Me? I always thought I was John Carter, a much more worthy ambition. I'll probably grow up and marry a duck, so she can lay eggs, but that's better than founding a can company, don't you think? No, I suppose you don't.

SEVEN EYES OF NINGAUBLE 9 (L. Anderson): You ought to publish more often; I keep thinking that you've dropped out, until some new issue of 7 eyes shows up. This one is a good one, by the way. Fans seem to write well when they've been operated on. (Which is positively the final philosophical note in this issue).

MEANINGLESS PILLAR POLL RESULTS (Wetcalf): I thought it was to be accepted that all fan poll results, of any kind, are meaningless as hell. :: I'm gratified at my showig in the mailing comments category. And surprised, too.

I was going to complement you on a fine job of compiling the Poll, Norm, until all sorts of diverous characters explaimed to me that you'd really botshed things up grandly. Checking the Poll over, I see that these people were correct. You did botch it up, just grandly. Congrats on that. Can't be too careful when, after all, the results are meaningless. Lucky for you that the guy whose points you fouled up the worst was a mild mannered gentleman like Wally Weber, rather than a nasty, black hearted soul like myself.

I did not and will not fill out and return your speacil post-poll. Filling out one poll, even a meaningless one, is hard enough work for me without doing it again, with the added drudgery of having to cite page numbers for my choices. Your poll is okay, one supposes, but not this time. Try again next year.

PSILO 7 (Ellern): I'm in such a happy mood tonight that I really hate to have to turn all sour now in order to comment on this publication. Thanks goes to one Norman C. Metcalf and his meaningless Pillar Poll for sort of getting me set in the right mood.

Gee, thanks, Jane, for letting me know that I'm "trying to make a big impression in fandom." I hadn't realized this myself, though I will readily admit that I'd like to be Someone in fandom. But don't you think (no, I don't suppose you do think, but we'll ignore this for the moment) that if I wanted to make this real big impression, I could come up with a more original thought than calling you a fugghead. I'm hardly the first in this regard and probably will not be the last. Give me some credit, won't you?

The fact that I occasionally contradict myself, without saying that I have changed my mind, only means that I don't have a photographic memory like maybe you do. I occasionally forget that I've said something somewhere. Gee, I thought this happened to a lot of people, but maybe I was wrong. Most, if not all, if the instances you cite in which I have supposedly contradicted myself are merely that: forgetfulness on my part. If this fogetfulness is an indication that I have "the worst case of galloping pipsqueakery that (you've) ever had to misfortune to see" I certainly apologize to you and eagerly admit my illness.

I was somewhat taken aback by your quoting me as having referred to "beatnick" writers placing high on the FANAC Poll. I couldn't recall ever having made such a statement and thought it was another case of forgetfulness on my part. However, checking back I did find such a statement coming from me. It appeared in the last paragraph on page 26 of Pleasure Units #2. Actually the word used was not "beatnick" but "beatnickl" but I shan't accuse you of quoting me unjustly. But, you see, Jane, that particular word was part of an article titled "Why I Write on Stencil." The article was satire, Jane. It was supposed to be grotesque and everything and maybe even funny--a couple people thought it was, too. You don't seem to understand satire very well, Jane, which doesn't surprise me. There's a lot you don't seem to quite be able to dig completely. I might accuse you of creeping serconism with regard to your quote, but my present kind mood prevents me from doing so.

One thing I noted throughout your little attack on me was your complete lack of commentary on the subject we were supposedly discussing: the reasons for the founding of SAPS and the reasons for putting "creative material" through it. I note once more that despite your earlier cry for the rest of the members to put "creative" articles and fiction through the mailings, you do nothing much except mailing comments. I guess lines such as, "Gordon Eklund is OUT" are about the limits of your debating talents.

Speaking of contradictions, by the way, are you the same Jane Ellern who "loved" Pleasure Units #2? Or do you "love" my fanzine and hate me?

THE PINK PLATYPUS 3 (Armistead): The actions of the little boy, Jimmy, in your story "Elegy" hit a little too close to home for me to get the bang out of the story I should have received. I, too, once thought that since I was good, and Right, and a True Believer, I should conquer over all the Big Kids. I learned, though, that being on the side of Right didn't help me a bit, except to get beat up every month or so. Like, as I said, I learned. After two or three such lessons, I decided it was much easier to become a dedicated cynic, rather than expecting to conquer because of the purity of my heart.

I usually have some sort of tune running in my mind like you. More often than not it's just the last piece of music I happened to have listened closely to, usually something from my own record collection, since I'm not familiar enough with the things I hear on the radio for them to find themselves a place in my mind. I don't like it, most of the time, since it irritates me somethin' fierce. I'm extremely pleased, by the way, to announce that I'm not currently bothered by a tune in the mind. I expect I will be soon, however, as I plan to listen to the first part of the Jazz program on KZAM, the local all-Negro FM station, and can be fairly certain I'll hear something that I'm pretty familiar with.

I have a hard time trying to listen to music while I'm writing. Usually the noise of the typewriter drowns out most of the music and what little does manage to sift through the racket just irritates me and keeps my mind off what I'm composing. I never read and listen to music at the same time either, though for awhile I did try to study and listen to music. The latter I found to be partially successful, though on more difficult math problems the constant blare of a phonograph didn't help me much.

Have you ever noticed that Rock n' Roll bands, when you see them in person, make so much noise. I know you're supposed to be either listening or dancing, but I prefer to do neither to R n' R. If they (the bands) weren't so convinced that the louder they are, the better they are, I might not really mind them. I never listen to popular, Rock n' Roll type music myself anymore, though I do catch enforced snatches of it occasionally. It is an accepted thing that if you're a teenager, you must like Rock n' Roll, so you gotta listen to it. I used to like Rock n' Roll very much. When I was 12 or 13. As I think I've said somewhere else before this, the Golden Age of Rock n' Roll seems to be between the ages of 9 and 14.

I don't like to memorize much either. I despise being forced to memorize something so well that it can be given in front of a group. I had this happen a number of times last year during my Junior year of high school. Let's see -- I had to memorize a section of the Declaration of Independence, Lincoln's Gettysburg address (for the second time), and a pot lach of poetry. All this crap had to be given before the class, with thirty other people all staring at you and hoping that you'll slip. A most frightening experience. I had to memorize a couple of other things during English in order to give them before the class. Both were from my own writing, though, which isn't so bad. This year my only memorization was to place over 300 lines of English poetry in my mind. This wasn't so hard--I ended up with well over 380 lines, done well before the deadline--since all I had to do was memorize it to myself. We were supposed to say it to our parents and get them to certify this event, but my mother backed down after my first effort--Byron's "Sonnet on Chilon"--and she just took my word for the rest of the stuff. I think memorization is sort of silly, if it's memorization for the pure sake of same. I didn't really mind memorizing the stuff I did this year--I thought it added to my enjoyment and understanding of the poetry to some degree. However, by now, a little over a week after the closing of the school doors, I've forgotten all but a few lines from the 380 odd I put to memory. I still recall, and can say, most of the Gettysburg Address and the portion of the Declaration of Independence I learned last year. Maybe I'm just politically centered or something.

I've read Salinger's Raise High the Roof Beam, too. I've also read the other "story" in the volume Seymour an Introduction. I suppose you have, too, and were only saving space by putting down half the title of the book. I didn't think it was dull, by the way, not really. Raise High the Roof Beam was a good Salinger type short story, despite its length. The latter section, the part I presume you thought was dull, wasn't to me. I like to look into the thoughts and ideas of another person's mind, particularly when I find that person interesting as I do JD Salinger/Buddy Glass. :: I'm sort of proud of having read the book, by the way. It was the first time I've bought a brand new hardbound book at full price in something like six years. The last one I bought, which was also the first time ever, came out in pocketbook a few weeks after I had placed down my four dollars for the hardbound edition. This sort of soured me on brand new hardbound books at full price.

I'm glad you were pleased with your letter in Pleasure Units #3. Having been the one who extensively edited the letter, I sort of consider it to have been at least partially my own work. Ahaha.

RETRO 28 (Busby): I'm going to back out too--on this telling all about Hardwick idea. Like, I haven't been listening to him much lately either. I did try to catch either him, or his sidekick in the afternoon, Buddy Webber, whenever I could, but I sort of gave up the ghost a few months ago. The only snatches of Hardwick I managed to catch during the last part of the school year occurred during the period of time between the moment my clock radio flicked on and the time I crawled out of the sack and turned it off--which could range anywhere between a few seconds and an hour. Now that school's out, I haven't gotten out of bed any earlier than ten a. m., and have been trying to keep my record around noon. Get up at five o'clock to listen to the radio--no, thanks. :: Oh, yes,

I did see Hardwick (and Wobber) just recently. They appeared, complete with the horse one or the other of them drives, at a senior class party we hold last week. I found out that they are as competent as stand up gagmen as they are as disk jockey type funny men. Great with the punchline, like.

I think the major trouble with theoretical utopias, as well as your note that the purveyors of such societies never bother to explain how we're going to get from here to there, is that these utopias must be stocked with real type people. People tend to be somewhat imperfect and would no doubt have some trouble trying to function in a supposedly perfect society. I'm not overly concerned with building Utopias--my Utopia would be one where I'd be absolute ruler, since if I'm smart enough to think up a perfect place to live in, I figure I'm, therefore, perfect enough to run the thing--being more concerned with trying to make our current, imperfect society into as nearly perfect a place as possible.

UTGARD 1 (Hulan): Actually there are six not four books in Burroughs' Pellucidar series. Besides At the Earth's Core, Pellucidar, Tanar of Pellucidar, and Tarzan at the Earth's Core, there exist, though not in print, two others: Back to the Stone Age (around 1940), and Land of Terror (about 1944). The latter is, I think, composed of a series of Pellucidar novelets that appeared in Amazing and Fantastic Adventures during the war years. Both these last titles are extremely rare, perhaps the rarest of all Burroughs, drawing up to \$30 in mint editions. Neither has appeared in print since their original first editions. Ballantine lists Back to the Stone Age in their compilation of ERE titles, but they miss Land of Terror. Since they also miss Escape on Venus and Tarzan and the Foreign Legion, we'll be magnanimous and forgive them their error. In case you were wondering, I have not read either of those books, not even having read Tanar of Pellucidar. The Mars series--and the first four or five Tarzan books--has always been my pet favorite, probably because I encountered them first. :: You do a good job of dissecting the Earth's Core, by the way.

POR QUE 17 (Doroon): You did have a good start here on a big issue. The problem being that your start was also your finish.

HOBGOBLIN 10 (Carr): These comments all go to Ted White, even though I enjoy Terry Carr's pages more. I've only played Hearts once. That was in 1958, when I played for something like 12 hours straight with my older brother. He was home on leave from the Army at the time. We played with one of those kiddie card sets that you see in the dime stores: the cards are very tiny (about 3" x 2") and they're "stars" and "anchors" and such like, rather than the usual suits. This deck was made specially for Hearts and had all sorts of cute pictures on the face sides of the cards. I enjoyed the game, but have never played since, and have by now, forgotten everything about it. My brother has refused to re-teach me whenever I've asked him. I think I must have beat him when we played. I beat him at Poker all the time, which bugs him I am sure, since I play Poker about once every two years.

Perhaps mathematical ability runs in my line, too. At least I can certify that my older brother's best subject in school was math. He isn't a mathematician now, of course; neither is anyone else in the family. My own grades in math have always been extremely varied. I found second year Algebra to be my most difficult subject this year and, although I did get an A during my first semester, I had a B the second time out. My scores on tests, supposedly designed to show either one's knowledge in various subjects or one's potential, usually rate me lower in math than in other fields. Since, in one field, my scores on two such tests ranged from the 44th to the 96th percentile--the tests taken about a year apart--I don't put too much stock in such results.

MISTILY MEANDERING L (Patten): I'm surprised at your revelation that Coventry is a "project." I thought it was a fantasy world. Perhaps I'm wrong to bring this up, but I am curious as to whether the Bronte family, who are used as an example in defense of Coventry, spoke of their fantasy world as a "project."

I occasionally enjoy reading stories set around a giant character. Occasionally but not too often. I realize that I'm not a giant, that people are not giants, and that I, and the rest of the human race, have little chance of becoming giants. I prefer to read for means not entirely of escape, and giantism in literature has always been based about escape, particularly so today. By the way, just out of curiosity, what do you use as a definition of a giant in literature? I'm not trying to be snide here, but a few of your comments tend to convince me that you equate giantism with fanaticism, and I want you to prove this false. I have one favorite book that deals with giants. Or perhaps that should be Giants. It's called My Greatest Day in Baseball and has chapters about such Giants as Christy Mathewson and Willy Mays.

From here on in these mailing comments are being second drafted. I goofed I guess in re-reading what I had done before while composing on stencil. Notice any differences, people?

I was never in the Boy Scouts. In fact, I was never in the Cub Scouts. This used to present quite a problem for me, because, in school, all those boys who were members of some scouting group got to salute the flag by placing their fingers to their brows. The rest of us non-Scouts had to salute the stars and stripes by the old mundane method of placing the hand over the heart. I always felt that this was a most unfair form of discrimination, but could never quite succeed in convincing the Powers That Be of this fact.

But as I was about to say up there, before I got off on another track, despite my lack of BSA membership, I, too, can agree that camping can be fun. Our family, before my father got too much work, used to go camping throughout the state, and occasionally down into Oregon, two or three times each summer. Thrice I spent up to a week in most expensive summer camps, singing songs about conservation, and supposedly camping out. These experiences, along with my camp counselor, a fat guy, now living in California, whom Wally Weber and Steve Tolliver have met, did not appreciably add to my enthusiasm for camping out. It was during one of these weeks that I first began work on what I now call Eklund's first Law of Rain: If one is attending Summer Camp, and is planning on getting out in the woods and living it up, and one is attending said summer camp in the state of Washington, one had best take an umbrella along with one. Like, it gets wet up there amongst the tall saplings. The "Rain Forest" they call it.

This page is hereby dedicated to the most immoral Wallace W. Weber in honor of his favorite number's appearance at the top of the stencil.

I hope you do manage, by some devious means, to preserve "The Musquite Kid" film. I sort of saw it at the Seacon. Saw it, I reiterate, since the sound track at the time was so horrible --or else I was sending near a loud-mouth, memory fails me somewhat--that I could hear little or nothing. I wouldn't have caught the references anyway, so perhaps that was just as well. I'd like to see it again someday, and do plan on attending another science fiction convention sometime within the next two or three decades. I'd like to her it for the first time, too.

I was pleased to note your passing reference to the Salton Sea. Throughout my youth, I could never quite convince myself that it was at all possible for any sort of "sea" to exist in sunny California. "Don't put me on," I used to say to all my teachers, "such things cannot possibly be." I became half convinced of the existence of this legendary body of water when, around 1955 or so, at the age of ten, I saw a science fiction thriller, a movie that is, that told all about this here giant slug that roamed in and around the Salton Sea and ate cops and a few other people. The film was terrible, though I thought it superb at the time, but I did most particularly dig the Salton Sea references. Now that I discover that a real live science fiction fan has actually set eyes on this hidden bit of wetness, I am just about fully convinced. And, by the way, did you see that old slug. I can't remember what they did to him in the movie, probably shot salt at him, but he may still be around.

If you dig destroyed USA type stories, or even destroyed-Earth ones, you ought to look up a file of Famous Fantastic Mysteries, particularly those published between 1943 and, oh, around 1950. The destroyed US theme was most profuse. Things got so bad in fact, as I read my own file, that, if the magazine had been contemporary rather than long dead, I would have surely written in asking the editor to please change his title to something more appropriate--like Famous Fantastic Miseries. Most of the stories are, in my opinion, very bad and extremely dull, but maybe you'll like them. Hell, I'd even sell you my file--most willingly.

Stephen Vincent Benet's "By the Waters of Babylon" is a great story, isn't it? I will most postively state that it is far, far better than anything FFM ever published. I read it in my Sophomore year of high school, when the story, along with one of Kurt Vonnegut's, was included in my English text, under the heading of science fiction. I recall that my teacher impressed my with his lack of imagination when, while discussing the story, he continually referred to the story as one telling of the aftermath of an Atomic War. I pointed out to him, a couple of times in fact, that the story wasn't even written by the time of the splitting of the atom, so how could a non-scientist like Benet ever have the slightest concept of nuclear war. But he, the old fugghead--he was one of my favorite teachers--still persisted. I think people have become so brainwashed with the idea of nuclear destruction that they cannot even comprehend the possibility of other ways of destroying civilization as we know it.

Bob Lichtman handles the fanzins and the newszin could handily. Gee, I even agree with him once or twice.

MEST 13 (Wehnstone): The ~~latter~~ written Eliot's "The Hollow Men" sounds sounds fascinating, although in all probability, judging from my experience with college tv shows, it isn't. I can never keep Eliot's "The Hollow Men" and his other similar poem "The Wasteland" (?) straight in my mind. The one that impressed me the most was the one with the well-known "This is the way the world ends...not with a bang, but a whimper" conclusion. This is, I think, from the latter of the two poems--the one you group didn't do.

Yeah, it is I, Gordon Eklund, who has been complaining about your writing about yourself and your radio-TV work all the time. But, bighod, I read this issue of Mest all the way through, from cover to cover, and rather enjoyed it. Even IF. PDYDCOMZ. However, back to the topic at hand, I've got to teach myself that I should not get so perturbed with writing such as yours. When something--like radio-TV studies--invades a person's life, to the exclusion of most other things, he can't help but let some of that enthusiasm run over into his fan writing. Hell, I talk about myself all the time, too, although I am apparently more varied in my activities than you have been of late. Go ahead and write about yourself and your studies. I won't say anything more about it in print. I'll just sit here and mutter to myself. I might not even mutter if you'd take time out to comment on my zines, along with your own activities.

SPELEOBEM 19 (Pelz): You missed the point of those religious poems. You said that out stencils are sacred; I didn't. So, I said that I'd send you that batch of 75 ten-year old stencils full of religious verse for you to publish. Like, I'm lazy. If you're lucky, though, you may find a few of them in here, transcribed over to more contemporary stencils--those old things had just about fallen apart. I hope you dig them, if they are indeed within this magazine.

I was thinking of a fan, a real live fan, someone like Harry Warner, when I spoke of placing colophons on fanzines for the sake of future fan historians. I was also thinking of myself, as I may have said, since I get highly perturbed when reading some old fanzine and finding that the editor, whomever he may be, has failed to list his name anywhere in the zine. I don't think this has much, if anything, to do with the UCLA library. It has been my impression, perhaps erroneous, that publications sent there will never again see the light of day, with the possible exception of some stuffy sociologist doing reserach for a thesis on fandom--a person about whom I could hardly care less. The collection isn't, I believe, open to the general public--meaning fans. Nor is anyone going to be reading the zines stored there, unless the rare cases I've mentioned above. I see no relation between sending a fanzine to a library to be forever hidden from view and sending one to a fan, who will read it and enjoy it maybe, and perhaps later use it for research in a fan history type project. I admit that I do contradict myself quite often, usually, I like to think, from mere mind changing, but I don't think this is one of those cases. You reading this, Don Fitch? It's meant your your edification too.

Is a boot-knife a regular type knife that you hide in the sole of a boot, or is it some ingenious mechanical device? Whatever do you want one for, by the way? My younger brother, age ten, goes down to the Army Surplus all the time and buys himself helmets and canteens and suchlike, but I think he's just about ready to outgrow this stage. He's a mature little bastard as, I see, are a lot of other people. If you really want weapons

such for Fun And Games, I know a spot where you can really get a lot--and all for free. See this cat called the Local Army Recruiter and he'll Tell You All About It.

On the other hand, I liked your poem on "reality." It pleased me quite a bit for its apparent attitude and seemed pretty good as a poem--take that last remark as you may; I really don't know a damn thing about poetry.

I like mystery-detective type stories, too, even though I have not, unfortunately, read a great deal of stuff in this particular field. For instance, I'm not at all familiar with Manning Coles, and Richard Prather, it has been my impression, is sort of a poor man's Mickey Spillane.

But I do have my personal favorites, from among those writers I'm familiar with. I dig Dashiell Hammett very much, which sort of surprises me, since I don't usually consider myself the sort of person who likes hard-boiled type heroes. Hammett's The Maltese Falcon is a superb book, one that I would very much like to re-read someday. The ending has stuck in my mind to a point that I doubt that I shall ever forget it. Usually I forget everything plot-wise about a book, an average book, within a year or so of reading. I see the film version of The Maltese Falcon on television and it really surprised me. Almost always a movie version of a book that one has read will appear to be vastly inferior to the prose creation. Not so with the Hammett story. It wasn't better, not quite, than the book, but was superb in its own fashion.

I like what little I've read of Raymond Chandler, too, although I don't think he is quite as proficient in his medium as is Hammett. I read Chandler's The Lady in the Lake earlier this year and enjoyed it quite a bit. Chandler's Phillip Marlowe seems to much like Hammett's Sam Spade for comfort, but perhaps the passage of time between my last contact with Spade makes him less clear in my memory.

Ellery Queen is another personal favorite of mine, though quite unlike either Chandler or Hammett. I wrote up my enthusiasm for Queen, just after finishing the last of six of his novels which I had gone through in a few days. I rather botched the piece up--it appeared somewhere, probably in the first issue of my now defunct publication, Bramble--and is best forgotten now. Anyway, I do like Queen, particularly the first few novels in the series. The authors seemed to take a more personal interest in the stories in the early days, complete with "Challenges to the Reader" appearing about 4/5 of the way through a number of stories. Perhaps the then as yet uncovered anonymity of the actual writers had something to do with this. No matter why, though, the Ellery Queen of today--detective, magazine, and writer--does not.

Recently I've been reading a lot of the Ian Fleming James Bond stories. These aren't detective novels and only mysteries by chance but I've grown rather fond of some of the stories. The more Fleming I read the more enjoyable the stories become--the first one I read, Thunderball, I thought a bit dull, the latest From Russia, With Love I found highly enjoyable.

I've read a lot of detective stories besides those I've already mentioned, of course. I sampled The Complete Sherlock Holmes a couple years ago, enjoyed A Study in Scarlet and The Sign of Four and getting bogged down in the short stories that followed. Anyway, as I said at the time, the book was overdue at the library. I've read a couple of the early Poe short stories--with his French policeman Monsieur Whatzisname (no, not you, Weber)--and found them dull as hell. Like about 95% of Edgar Allan Poe, I'm afraid. The guy was not only un-American--notice his constant settings in Europe--but also overly infatuated with his own vocabulary. I've sampled a couple mystery magazines, too, and think I'll stick with novels. The stories are, like, for the most part, extremely bad.

The mystery field is very close to that of science fiction in many ways. By taste, perhaps. I chose to become a science fiction fan in my youth and because of this, and because I read mostly Serious Books today, I haven't read too much in the detective field. As a whole, though, I would say that I now prefer detective stories to science fiction--by a thin margin. The primary reason for this change in taste is, I suspect, mostly due to reading just too much science fiction in too few years. I became sort of saturated with spacemen.

The Smith-Foyster reprint of some satirical type piece is, from your description, probably from the British magazine Private Eye. The publication has received quite a bit of mention in the American press recently due to the antics of the editorial staff. Randolph Churchill was threatening to sue Private Eye because of a satirical attack on his proposed biography Biography of his father--some cigar salesman, I think. The suit didn't come off when the magazine apologized, but it made interesting reading at the time. Private Eye isn't, so far as I know, available in this country. It seems to be sort of a combination of Mad and The Realist, if you can quite imagine that.

A similar American title would appear to be something called Monacle which I have not seen except in a few hilarious excerpts appearing in advertisements. It sells for a dollar a copy, which is no doubt a major reason for my not having seen it. Some of the excerpts I've seen--including a tale of John F. Kennedy in school, written in JD Salinger's Catcher in the Rye style, called "A Perfect Day for HoneyFitz"--have appeared to be Very Worthwhile.

Madeleine Willis's "Distawf Side" continues to be enjoyed. I didn't read your chapter of "The Fellowship of Nothing." Sorry, but I lost interest in this about six or seven mailings ago.

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The mailing was a good one, containing more formal type material of worth than some previous ones--which will no doubt please Jane Ellern, even if she didn't bother to add to this count. Gee, only fifteen pages of mc's this time. The mailing was shorter last time and I had a full sixteen pages. I must be getting Old and Tired. Now I got to go wrack my brain and try to think up enough stuff to keep me busy filling stencils till the end of the week when I try to Enlist. Good-bye.

OVATIONS

The above title was originally used in my genzine Bramble to set off the letter section from the rest of the material. As some of you smart type SAPS members may recall the title appeared briefly in Pleasure Units #3 when I ran some letter originally intended for Bramble in there. I

I sent out ten or so copies of that issue, PL 3, to various people who either had letters in it or whom I thought were good people. Lo and behold, long after I had Pleasure Units 4 done and mailed, I got a letter of comment--from Harry Warner of all people. Since I need to fill up space--all SAPSazines are padded, you remember--and because I thought it was a good letter, Harry's note is going to appear right here in this one man letter-column. Gee, I even sent him a late copy of Pleasure Units #4 to which he has not yet responded--probably because I mailed it about a week ago.

HARRY WARNER, JR.

I am more than a month late with comments on the issue of Pleasure Units which you so kindly sent. When this situation arrives involving an ayjay publication, I get all mixed up in meta-physical considerations because it is wrong to maintain silence so long and yet the comments will still reach the editor weeks before he hears reactions from most members of the apa in which the magazine circulated. Physical problems are adulterating the metaphysics on this particular occasion, because Pleasure Units arrived at a time when I was just completing my recovery from a banged-up body and an enormous backlog came into existence while I was in the hospital and convalescent home. What's more, a thousand-logger took advantage of my absence to take up residence in my desk and I keep taking my mind off what I'm writing to make furtive glances in that direction to see whether there's an eavesdropper inches away from me.

You would be horrified by my book-reading methods. I usually am in the middle of at least three of the things and I have no difficulty in leaving off one to start in on another or to do something that does not involve reading. Probably this is conditioning rather than instinct. My work cuts up my day so badly that I have trouble finding large chunks of free time and I've had to teach myself to fit almost all things not concerned with work--conversations, meals, reading, music-listening, and so on--into whatever time chunks are available. Then when a day off comes, I'm not comfortable in the rare opportunity to do just one thing for hours at a time. ((I know what you mean. While I was in school, my time was somewhat cramped and every moment of every schoolday I was on the go--always doing something. Now that I'm Out, I find that I spend large portions of each day doing absolutely nothing. I may say that I'm resting, but mostly I'm either not or hardly need to do so. I spend a great deal of time reading the newspapers or news magazines, when I really should be doing something more worthwhile than re-reading old news. I think I'm just lazy, to tell the truth...))

Patriotism may be a sentimental mistake of the older generation. But isn't it probable that the older generation has had the time to experience things conducive to patriotism that the younger generation hasn't yet encountered? I'm between two worlds just now, at the age of 40 but I find that my respect for the nation is increasing rapidly as I begin to reach the verge of advanced age simply because I've had quite a few years to observe the good things that the nation can be to its citizens, to talk with individuals who fled to this country from less favored lands, and to discover that the whole of the people can be greater than weak-kneed individuals who constitute it. This might be nothing more than evidence that I'm getting soft mentally but I can't conscientiously find any other evidence of declining mental powers as yet: I did quite well in a recent IQ test, I think I can type faster and more accurately than I did a few years back, and other tests are quite encouraging. Of course this doesn't settle that problem of what we do about the world in which there are many nations and a large proportion of each nation's residents has the same opinions about that particular country. But there is no reason why some nations shouldn't be superior to others as places to live, with more justification for patriots in those lands. ((Patriotism, unfortunately, most often takes the form of senseless and senseless love of country, ignoring the nation's mistakes and exaggerating her finer points. My own "patriotism," and by your definition I do have some, does not take the form of foolish flag waving and parading, but is instead a quiet emotion, built more out of respect than blind love. I think this country is a fine place to live. It's people are relatively intelligent and worth associating with to some degree. The nation has many faults, though, as do its citizens. These I do not choose to ignore, basing this ignorance on the grounds that to notice problems is to display lack of "patriotism." I do not feel, as do self-proclaimed patriots of the American-Legion variety, that this country's finer points prove her to be the Biggest and Best, with a divine right to take what she wants from whomever she wants. If this displays a lack of patriotism on my part and if my belief that national anthems and Memorial Day parades (in memory of senseless killing) does the same, then you are free to make the most of it...))

I don't recall that recent article on proposed synonyms for fan, either, and I don't think that I ever seriously proposed one. From my notes on fan history, I find that suggested new terms for us critturs have included imaginist, which Art Widner favored, temp, an Al Ashley idea (derived from tempus, in reference to the time-binding thinking habits of fans, and this may be what you're thinking about, and I might have mentioned it in my article about Ashley for Void) ((You did, and I was...)), stefnist, Speer's pet, futurian, which Jim Kepner plumped for, and im, Jay Chidsey's idea (using imme for females and imm for a group of male and female fans). Of course, the overpowering objection to adoption of a new term is that it would cause the outside world to consider fans as something really cut off from the rest of the world and it would be harder for young fans to convince parents that they're no different essentially from baseball fans or stamp collectors. Despite what Frank Wilimczyk says, I do know some stamp collectors who were caught hiding their latest acquisitions under their jacket and ended up before a magistrate as a result, and I know some amateur photographers who got into trouble even though they kept their prints in the attic, because the girls complained. ((I had a thought similar to your stamp collecting friends when I was Young and Penniless, but took the issue of Amazing out of my jacket pocket at the last moment, walking from the store an unsoiled, as yet, personage...))

The post office seems to have suddenly begun a nationwide crackdown on checks on fanzines' back covers. I suggested to someone else who had hard time with checkmarks that fandom might adopt a code in which each letter of the alphabet would represent a piece of information normally provided by checkmarks, and the letters would then be sneaked into the address labels as fake middle initials of the recipients. If we settled on a universal language of this sort, it would not be necessary to put the decoder into each fanzine, mailmen are hardly likely to think anything of a slight variance in the middle initial of their clients, and it would be almost impossible for the post office department to discover what was going on.

I don't think this issue was a chaotice as you lamented. Much of it reminds me of Outsiders, quite a compliment for any SAPS publication. Now I'm going to resume the activity that I interrupted to write this letter. It consists of wondering how I'd react if someone called me the best new fan since Sam Moskowitz. ##423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland.##

A STATESMAN'S DIARY

A most amazing book has just recently come into my possession. The manner in which I obtained it would make a story in itself. To make a very long story as brief as possible, I obtained a certain slim volume, parts of which are to be reprinted below, at a second-hand book-shop down on First Avenue, in the skip-road section of Seattle.

I first picked up this innocuous looking volume mainly out of curiosity. Upon thumbing through it I became more puzzled than before. It's contents were not printed. They weren't even typewritten. Instead, the whole book, about forty thousand words, was hand written in black ink.

I didn't have the slightest idea how such a book might end up in a secluded second hand bookshop, but I was by then curious enough to pay the five cents it took for the book to become mine.

When I arrived home, I quickly read the book, becoming more amazed at each page. It was a diary. A journal of some to me unknown character who had, apparently, achieved some distinction in the world of politics. Either the names have been changed to protect both innocent and guilty or this story takes place in some parallel universe. Either possibility seems likely.

The story apparently either takes places after the Korean or the Second World War. No dates, other than day and month, are mentioned and certain places are well hidden. I've cut out a lot of the book, that dealing with the author's boyhood and his war experiences. What is left, and what I've decided to let you read, is a complete story in itself, I think. I feel that I am relatively safe from legal action despite my printing such personal writings. The author is not, I feel, a member of SAPS. Anyway, I'll now let you judge the book for yourself. It will begin on the next page. If you're set up this way, I might even let you have a brief glance at the original text. ..Gordon Eklund

-0-

May 9: Got my discharge today. Sure feels great to be out of the army after what seems like ages. My plans are uncertain as yet. Must talk it over with Diane (his wife...ge). The kids have certainly grown a lot since I've left. But when it was indeed a long war.

May 22: I finally got an offer to join a firm (a law firm. The man is a lawyer...ge). A good one, too. Fitzroy, Jackson, and McCarthey. Right near our new home, too. I start on Monday. It will be good to be working again and making good--I hope--money.

June 3: (A year later. The author has been relatively successful as an attorney. Nothing spectacular, but he's well-fed.) I got the greatest shock of my life today. Mr. Fitzroy came up out of literally no where and asked me if I was interested in politics. I told them that I was, slightly so. He then said that his party needed a candidate for the 6th district, my district, seat in the House of Representatives. He asked me whether I'd consider taking it. I was so shocked that I think I erred in my reply. I asked him which party he was referring to. He sort of stared hard back at me and then told me that he was a Republican. I told him that was good, since I was one, too. I explained that I had voted for both Winters and Darby in the last two elections and that I was against most, if not all, of Tidsby's proposals. This seemed to make Mr. Fitzroy feel better. He said he'd be sure to mention my name to the Party chiefs as soon as possible. I talked to Diane about it just a few minutes ago. She seemed happy enough, even though she is a life long Democrat. We'll overcome that, though, I think.

June 8: I am officially the party's candidate. I have three Republican opponents in the primary, but Mr. Bill Bishop (county GOP leader) has assured me that victory should come without too much difficulty over these win. Representative Dobson (the Democratic incumbent) will give me 79% of my battle. The men at the meeting said they liked me a lot. I assured them of my opposition to the policies of not only President Tidsby but also President Franklinvelt when the latter was in office. I read up a lot on the subject at the library. I plan to check a whole bunch more books out which should nearly clinch my victory.

July 8: Those campaign posters make me look far more handsome than I actually am. Diane and the kids are thrilled to death. I feel like a real celebrity.

September 3: I won the primary today by a wide, wide margin. Dobson picked up a lot more votes than I did, but Mr. Bishop says we'll be able to catch him by November if we wage a tough campaign. I'm working real hard in thinking up campaign issues, but Mr. Bishop says I shouldn't bother myself.

September 9: I called Dobson soft on communism today at a Kiwanis luncheon. My speech went over real well. I cited a number of instances to prove my point, thanks to Mr. Bishop for the information. They've even given me a long list of things I'm in favor of and things I'm against. This has been a great help. My jokes went over well at the luncheon, too. Mr. Bishop sure has some fine writers in his camp.

November 1: The campaign is nearly over. It's been a long and tough road. The polls have me slightly ahead of Dobson--our polls that is; his have him slightly ahead. Dobson's dirty politics have certainly been a shock to me. He called me a "rabble-rouser" in a speech last week. I really told him off the next days when I stated that rabble rouser or not, I would certainly be a more desirable congressman than one who has had a long and disgusting record of kowtowing to the wishes and demands of a vast international conspiracy, a conspiracy that has as its objective the violent overthrow of the liberties and freedoms which we Americans cherish so dearly. Such a man, my fellow Americans, is our soon to be erstwhile Congressman, James K. Dobson. Mr. Bishop can sure write grand speeches. It went over real well. I can't stand Dobson's smear tactics and will be real glad when this election is over--win or lose.

November 5: I won! And by a goddam landslide. I'm in a state of sheer ecstasy.

January 2: We're in Washington now. Diane has made a lot of the wives of the other congressmen and she says that they're nice people. This makes me happy. The kids have liked their new home, too. Tomorrow I take my oath of office. The Party has a good sized majority and I've been told that I ought to get some good committee positions. I've been reading up on congress and was kind of surprised to learn that committees are so important. I want to get on the Judiciary Committee if possible because I think judges are interesting and because I know the chairman pretty well. Other Republicans on the state think I would do better on a committee more in line with my political knowledge--like the District of Columbia Committee. Maybe so, but Appropriations and Ways and Means sound interesting, too. I used to get good grades in high school Civics and did okay in Political Science in college. I know a good deal about economics.

January 30: Committee positions announced today. I got just what I wanted. A slot on the District of Columbia Committee, which is real important I hear, and one on the Un-American Activities Committee. The latter seems pretty insecure because there's a movement afoot to dispense with it soon. I'm against that because my friends tell me it is a move sponsored and financially supported by the American Communist Party in order to give that Godless body of spies and saboteurs a strong hold on the political machinery of this great nation. It sure is fun here in Washington. I've even met the President; he seems like a real nice guy. The Speaker of the House, Mr. Moore of Iowa, says I look like real fine congressional timber and that I ought to go a long way in politics. I'm thinking--dreaming I should say--of the Senate or ever the Governorship.

March 6: I've been so damned busy lately that I hardly have a moment of my own. Diane says she's getting lonely and if it wasn't for all the money I got, she'd ask my to resign for a few weeks. I went back home last week to speak against the move to abolish the Un-American Activities thing. Mr. Jefferson (a representative from the author's home state) gave me this real great speech that he had originally planned to give on the House floor. That was awful nice of him. I read it before a meeting of the Young Republicans or something like that. They cheered me lustily when I pointed out that there is a movement afoot by the Godless

sympathizers of an international conspiracy to rob the great citizens of the great nation of their essential liberties and freedoms. The Un-American Activities Committee is a last bastion of defense against the great red tide. When the committee falls, the nation will fall never again to rise from under the yoke of a foreign imposed tyranny. I've received a lot of letters about the speech. It was pretty well publicized in all the papers. All the telegrams and notes that I've read have agreed with me stand. I think I was right to have the nerve to stand up and speak on a controversial issue as I did. I was kind of afraid that the Communists might try to get me for it or maybe get the kids or Diane. Mr. Jefferson says not to worry, though, so I won't. My picture was on the front page of the New York Times. I hear that's a pretty big deal.

January 6 (the following year) A new term. I'm back in Washington again. Hated to leave home. I met so many people back there that I hadn't realized were my friends before. I made a lot of speeches while I was home. I attacked the President real well in about three of them. Those went over the best in the newspapers. Committee work hasn't begun yet. I've introduced a couple of pretty important bills, though. At least I think they're pretty important. One deals with strengthening of our internal security to guard against the attempted usurpation of power by a conspiracy getting their orders direct from Moscow. The other one deals with getting a pension for an old friend of mine, I forget his name, who lives in my hometown of Wardell. I think they have a good chance of passing, if I make enough speeches in favor of them.

February 9: The Un-American Committee has been keeping me pretty busy. We're trying to convince people that a man named Haroldson, a defense department guy, is guilty of being a spy or something like that. Not too many people can remember evidence against him, but we're trying to get them to recall enough to find Haroldson guilty. Representative Franklin (Chairman of the Committee) says that if we can get this guy and prove him guilty the committee won't be destroyed. He also says that Haroldson is proof that the international Communist conspiracy is striving to enter important positions in our great and free government, striving to undermine our very vital liberties, destroyed our attempts to remain a free and independent nation. He's right, I think. Anyway, I've been working real hard on this, helping investigators who are listening in on Haroldson's phone conversations. Nothing has developed yet, but we know for certain, by evidence given before the committee, that Haroldson has little chance of proving his innocence.

February 11: Stayed home from the office today. Only major bill was something up for vote about wire-tapping. Some of the fellows told me I had better stay home and watch television rather than be counted. The bill seems to be an attempt to smear the great and sacred Republican Party, founded in 1856 by the great emancipator, Abraham Lincoln. Some good shows today, too.

June 6. Our investigations have proved successful. We've got Haroldson for certain now, I'm told. He is a Communist, as I've suspected all along. Representative Franklin and a lot of other guys congratulated me on a job well done, in rooting out this foul spy before he could give even more vital defense information to the enemies of our republic. I told the reporters

that this ought to prove to the people of this great and free nation once and for all that a dangerous situation is indeed developing, in which enemies of democracy and home rule are capable of infiltrating the very highest echelons of government. The papers at home are cheering me on I hear. I ought to be a cinch for the Senate this fall. Tomorrow I have to check in at a secret conference with Chairman Franklin to be sure of the facts against whatever Haroldson did. He sure walked right into our trap. I thought I was just a minor cog in the machine that caught Haroldson, but I guess not. Mr. Franklin said that I single handedly captured this spy, this enemy of the people.

September 3: Only four days till the Senate primary. We voted today on whether or not to extend the life of the Un-American Committee indefinitely. I voted in favor, of course. I feel, as I said in a speech, that the Committee is doing a tremendously successful job at the patriotic task of informing the people of this great nation of the conspiracy, internal and external, which seeks the overthrow of the very nation which we, the people, hold so dearly in our hearts. Oh, yeah, the vote was in the Committee's favor. A good thing happened, too. The guy I'll probably oppose for the Senate said he thought the House made a poor choice. An instant campaign issue. Or, at least that's what Congressman Jefferson told me. He's promised to help me with my campaign when it really gets moving.

September 8: Victory in the primary last night. I was hardly worried. I left the House to come home to campaign. Lot of good tv showing, too. I will oppose Senator John Curry Davis this November. He has an extremely poor voting record, I hear. His only claim to fame was a brief whirl as an intellectual piano player in various nightspots throughout the state. This, I fail to see, hardly merits the public trust of thousands of his fellow citizens. What this state needs is a man in the Senate with knowledge and experience in government and politics and, most importantly, in law. At least that's what Mr. Jefferson told me to say at a Kiwanis luncheon engagement tomorrow. We're planning to fight a tough campaign. Mr. Bishop says that if we didn't Davis would surely start to sling mud and try to smear me at a point in the campaign where I'd have no chance to reply. So, I hit him first. Anyway, it's for the good of the people.

October 31: The campaign is not much different from the last one, but even tougher. I'm hitting Davis hard and often, bringing up his poor voting and attendance record in the Senate. Mr. Bishop says that the fact that I'm on the offensive ought to win for me. I think we're going to control the Senate this year and I want to be in on it.

November 1: I debated with Davis today over the radio--and on tv in a few spots. He tried to attack my Un-American Committee activities, which really shocked me. I pointed out, from some speeches I'd had prepared just in case Davis tried dirty politics, that the only reason this man could have had for attacking me was some form of favoritism on his part towards the sympathizers of the Communist cause. I then pointed out Davis's known friendship with another man known to have been associated with Communistic causes. I did some ab-libbing on the show but I had most of the points written down for me before hand. Mr. Bishop and Mr. Jefferson wrote most of my stuff for me. Not only are they nice guys,

not staying excellent writers, too. The polls say I have a fine chance of winning the Senate position. Davis tried to smear me once on the radio debate, by trying to show that I sympathized with the reds because of our party platform dealing with war. He said with should stay in Korea or something like that. Maybe it was Japan. I merely pointed out, strictly ad-lib too, that if were true, and I was soft on communism, I wouldn't have single handedly captured the notorious spy, William H. Haroldson. I lectured him on the fact that his own favoritism towards Haroldson showed him to be soft on communism. I said that if he wasn't a red himself, he showed unmistakable signs of sympathy towards this Godless cause. I then, to prove my point, displayed a record which showed that Davis's church attendance had been poor. I finished by saying that I was completely disgusted at the act of this foreign agent desecrating the once sacred halls of that great deliberative body, the Senate of these forty-eight great and free United States of America. Mr. Jefferson wrote that for me, too. He sure is a good writer.

November 4: I slaughtered Davis at the polls yesterday. Victory will never bore me in an election. It is surely the greatest thrill in any statesman's career. Davis went on tv and conceded the election about midnight last night. He said that he didn't think I could do the country much more harm in the Senate than I had done it in the House. He's wrong. I mean about the whole thing he's wrong. I thought he was being nice and fair and congratulating me and so did Diane, but Mr. Bishop pointed out the obvious smear tactics behind his supposedly conciliatory gesture. It was an act totally lacking in the supposed dignity befitting a member of the United States Senate. I'm sure glad to be a winner again, though.

January 30: The Senate isn't much different from the House. I'm on a whole slew of committees, even though the Democrats have a slight majority. Senator Carter, a Democrat, is the other guy from our state. We've agreed to co-sponsor a lot of bills for the good of the state. He seems to be a real nice guy for a Democrat; Diane thinks so, too.

February 28: I just made my first speech in the Senate. I was real surprised that there were only seven other Senators present, none of whom seemed to be listening. I guess they'd rather wait and read the transcript in the Congressional Record. Diane was there in the seats and she heard me make the speech. But, God, there were usually a lot more people listening in the House. The speech was a good one, though. It was in favor of a proposal to raise tariffs on radishes by a nickel. I wrote the speech myself. I was sort of angry when none of the Washington papers even mentioned the speech. I was about to call up the Post, which has never liked me, and demand an account of this management of the news. Mr. Jefferson, who was visiting at the time, told me that I'd better not, because the paper would no doubt use the call as a means to smear me and destroy my fine congressional record. It could, he said, lead to my defeat in the next election. I was going to tell him that that was five years away, but I held myself in check. God, do you think that he might have been sort of hinting that I might run for something else. Governor maybe, or even the Presidency. I can hardly believe it, but what else could he have meant. I can hardly imagine what I'd do if I were President. It's unbelievable.

March 31: The lobbyists are certainly bothering me more now that I'm in the Senate. The unions, and the AFA, and all the big businesses have been to my office asking me to support bills for them. They have so many they want introduced and so on that I've had a lot of trouble deciding which ones to support and which ones not to touch. I've had to talk to the Party leaders a lot more than before, in order to get their judgments of the problems. I was going to introduce this one bill along with some Democrat from Michigan that would have forbid states' outlawing of union shops. I didn't understand it too well, not being any sort of expert on the everpresent difficulties surrounding labor-management relations, but I was sure it would bring me a lot of labor votes in the next election. I mentioned this to Senator Simpson (Senate minority leader at the time) talked me out of it. He was nice about it and said I had some real fine ideas, but that this just wasn't the time for such a bill. He's right and I've decided to vote against the bill when it gets to the Committee if it does. I'm on the Labor and Public Welfare Committee now. It's a real interesting and well publicized one. We've had a lot of hearings on labor rackets, which have been attempting to place a stranglehold on the very backbone of our great nation--its working men. I'm on the District of Columbia Committee in the Senate now. I guess all the leaders decided that my superb work in the House demanded my appointment into the same field in the upper chamber. I'm trying to cut down crime and everything. Senator Harris, our chairman on DC, says I'm almost his right-hand man. And he's a strong Democrat, too.

October 3: Congress is about to adjourn. We got done early this time. I talked to a bunch of Republicans today about introducing a bunch of anti-Communist legislation, designed to halt, once and for all, this insidious international conspiracy in its dangerous plot to overthrow the American government by treacherous means. The other guys backed down, though. I was really shocked. But they point out that President Tidsby, in his fear of alienating his Communist buddies overseas, would veto anything anyway. And it was too late in the session to pass anything over his veto. They were right, of course. But I still think we could have at least introduced the bills. It would really help me in the next election.

March 5: (the following year) I'm sure getting excited about the Presidential election and the big convention and everything. I think I'm going to support Colonel Watersbury for the nomination. But Senator Tree and Governor Norton have personally asked me for their support, but most of the men I've discussed this with think the Colonel has the best chance of getting the nomination.

June 9: Colonel Watersbury thanked me personally today for backing him. He even hinted that if he made it all the way, I might be in line for a cabinet post. Boy, was I ever shocked. I may make President vet. Diane was thrilled when I told her. I explained that the old guy might not make it, but if he did, I'd really be well off. I'm going to campaign all over the place for the Colonel, if he makes the grade in Chicago.

July 18: The convention is in full swing. I've hardly got a moment to do anything but talk for the Colonel and drink and swim. I think he'll

make it. All the signs look good to this political observer. That's what I told the reporters a few minutes ago at least. Senator Tree is kind of mad at me. He attacked me today in person, but I put him in his place quickly. I lectured him on the fact that I thought he'd make the better President and was more in line with the party traditions, but that Colonel Watersbury had the best chance of gaining victory in November. Anyway, he did offer me that cabinet position. He's an awfully nice guy. The Colonel I mean. So is Senator Tree but he seems to be mixed up with laws and stuff.

July 20: It's been a long night. Colonel Watersbury won, of course, I knew he would. Senator Tree was second and Governor Norton was third. God, I even got my states' votes as a "favorite son." That really thrilled me. Senator Tree and Governor Norton both went on tv to announce their support for the Colonel. I think I'll go back to Washington for a while and talk over some bills and then go to the old home state and talk up the Colonel and the party.

October 1: The election is fast approaching. The Colonel is well ahead of Senator Turner in all the polls. President Tidsby seems pretty shook up over it all. I can hardly blame him. He's going to look funny walking the streets again. As are all the Democrats. The Colonel has an excellent staff of writers and thinkers and this has really helped him. I've willingly given whatever aid to him I could. I've made some of my best speeches of my life. The Colonel has sent me a whole bunch of speeches he had prepared for me. I get to choose the ones I want to say. The Colonel is certainly willing to give me a lot of responsibility. I really should go back to Washington, but I'm having too much fun here. I think I'll take a trip to Europe after the election. All the other guys are going and I know Diane would enjoy the trip.

November 6: Colonel Watersbury won today. I voted for him, of course. The results didn't take much time. Turner only captured a bunch of Southern states and his home state of Ohio. The Colonel swept through the rest. He sure is a popular guy. A nice guy, too. I sure hope he remembers that cabinet position he promised me. I wish he'd tell me which one I get--I'd like either Labor or Defense--because I'd like to read up on the subject, whatever it may be.

January 20: Inauguration Day. I went to hear the Colonel give his speech. He's talked to me a couple times since I got back from Europe and I should get some position in the administration. Maybe on the Supreme Court. After all, I am a lawyer. Everyone cheered the Colonel as he became the President. President Watersbury. That's kind of hard to get used to. President Tidsby looked sort of sad. I kind of felt sorry for him. Too bad we couldn't have given him a cabinet post or a Supreme Court thing or something. I mentioned this to Bob, but he said it would look like we were buying votes. I bet the Colonel would have liked it, though.

January 31: Goddam it. I'm sure mad at the Colonel. I got some little spot in the State Department. The Senate was much more important, but I didn't see how I could refuse him. He said my tremendous experience in dealing with those masters of internal deceit should do me well in battling against those foreign powers who seek to bury our nation under their heathen ideologies. I guess he's right, but it was sort of a letdown.

March 8: (apparently a year or two later) I found this book today when I was going through a lot of old things of the family. I'd forgotten all about it amidst my many foreign travels. It would be impossible to summarize the things I've done and the places I've seen since my last notation in this book. I've been to all sorts of foreign places, of course, through the State Department. I've been to Russia, and Hawaii, and Germany, and Korea and Bolivia and many, many more. I've talked to a lot of leaders of course and read them statements from President Watersbury and Secretary Blackburn. I think I'm going to run for the Senate again next year, but I'm not sure yet. There's so much to write that I must quit. I'll just say that everyone liked me everywhere I've been and I've liked everyone. Except the Communists, of course, but they weren't much like I expected. It sure is great to know that I'm a leader of my country. One of those chosen few who have the natural ability to lead men and represent their fellow citizens in the world. It sure is great being a statesman and everything. The world wouldn't have been the same without me. At least that's what Mr. Cole told me.

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Here the diary ends. I'm not sure, but it looks as though certain pages may have been removed before and after the last notation which I have reprinted above. I've corrected the author's spelling and polished up much of his grammar, neither of which were, apparently, his strong points. I can only add further that this story is complete, as to essential points in the political career of the author, and, as far as I know, completely true.

END

SOME POETRY FOR BRUCE PELZ

The following few poems are taken from the lengthy work I mentioned some mailings back: a batch of 70-odd stencils, all full of religious poetry written by my second grade Sunday school class. Most of these were written by me, although there may be one or two from other students. Bruce Pelz, you remember him, said that our stencils were sacred. The publication of the following may be blamed solely upon him. The stencils themselves, as I said in my Speleobem mc's, were too old to use--they wouldn't have fit my machine anyway. Those poems by other kids I'll try to note, if I can.

GOODNESS

If you are good and true,
And partake not of brew,
God will take you up
To heaven, which is swell,
And such finer, it is true,
Than going straight to Hell.

I BELIEVE

I believe that war is bad,
That death is sad,
That the devil's mad,
But I must admit I'm glad
That I'm alive not dead.

Continued overside, like...

There were some fascinating subjects.....

WHEN THOSE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN

When those saints go marching in,
Headed God only knows where,
driving out the men of sin,
This sight I hardly can bear.

These saints of tin work by day
Or by night. Their war is trite.
For what does it prove, I say?
Nothing. But that might makes fright.

THE REPUBLICAN HYMN

God bless our leader, our President,
Our Mister Dwight D. E.
For he will surely a resident
Of heaven someday will be.

He may not be Billy Graham,
The greatest man in the land.
But one thing you can say, ma'm,
He's the leader of our band.

(Remember these were written in 1953 or
so. And, no, I think the work of the
above had best be credited to some un-
named Other Student...ge)

THE CHRISTIAN FIGHT SONG

We hate the dirty atheist,
The filthy agnostic, too.
Up, up, hooray for the theist,
For God, for Jesus, for brew.

A BAD POEM

God built our little world
In seven not one hurried day,
Before our flag was unfurled,
Before the month of May.
Which must all mean something,
I hope, to someone. Let's sing.

THE FUNDAMENTAL BLUES

We come from a rib not an ape.
This is a logical thought.
Darwin hath come from from 'neath
Satan's cape,
And is driving mankind to pot.

A MODERN LAMENT

I shake, I quake, I nod,
For I am afraid of the Bomb.
I look in the sky for my God.
He's not there; could He be gone?

(I still have 69 stencils full
of this tuff left. But I quit
here, for the nonce.)

THE GREAT DEBATE

How many angels on the head of a pin?
One, two or three thou?
This argument is on not of gods but
of men.
Let's forget it right about now.

THE COIN SONG

In God We Trust this day
and pick our best friend's pocket.
But the judge is a friend, we say,
and stay clear of the foul, foul docket.

JUDGMENT DAY

Judgment day is near.
By tomorrow it may be here.
Then we learn who's good and who's bad.
Some will be glad; others sad.

But I have faith, I hath,
For each day I take my bath,
To my friends I hath been true,
Both the old ones and the new.

So, when that day doth come,
I will not be 'fraid or numb.
I'll look in the eye God's pawn,
Yawn, then say, "Don't put me on."

BOOKISH THOUGHTS

I have recently been reading a lot more than I had been doing for the past few months. Not surprising since, during school, I read only a handful of books, if that. Almost simultaneous with this spate of reading, I suddenly realized that I had written few book reviews for fandom. In fact I can only recall one such review, written for a N'APazine of mine with the sole objective of filling up the remainder of an unfinished page. I did do four sets of magazine reviews for a fanzine about two years ago, but these were very bad and best left forgotten, like the fanzine they appeared in. But, all fans do book reviews, I told myself--though not in quotemarks because I despise the things-- and I must do some myself. So, the following few pages will be full of short reviews of a number of the more reviewable titles I have recently digested. We'll start off with some recent books by Edgar Rice Burroughs--not recent in writing, but recent in my reading. If I still have any room left, I'll try my hand at something less stfish. And, gee, if you're really good, gang, I've got all sorts of book reports around here from the fifth grade on dealing with everything from The Bobbsey Twins at the Seashore to A Stranger in a Strange Land that I'd just love to share with you. On second thought, that review of SIASL got a C-, so I'd best withhold it.

PIRATES OF VENUS by Edgar Rice Burroughs: (Ace F-179--40¢)

Edgar Rice Burroughs, as I have often hinted in my mailing comments, has long been a favorite author of mine. I discovered Burroughs at the age of twelve through the pages of the third of his Martian series: The Warlord of Mars. I had heard much of Burroughs before reading that particular volume and, after discovering the title available for a mere \$2.00 on a mailorder booklist, it wasn't long until I had scraped up the necessary cash and had added the title to my collection. I enjoyed the Warlord greatly; you might say it fascinated me. This sort of surprises me now, since, when I re-read the book a few years later, I found it deadly dull and very inferior ERB fare. However, at age twelve, I considered it a great book. I promptly began saving my money and it wasn't too long until The Gods of Mars had been added to my collection. These books all then availbe in the British Methuen editions--most, if not all, are now out of print, I believe. I continued to purchase Burroughs books at a fairly rapid pace. I discovered Tarzan through the pages of the first volume of that series: the famous (or, perhaps, infamous) Tarzan of the Apes. I added a few other Mars volumes. I discovered the Tarzan titles available in a Seattle second hand bookshop at what I considered ridiculously cheap prices--sixty, seventy, eighty cents each, depending upon condition and edition. I occasionally saved my money to such an extent that I was able to add some of the more scare Burroughs titles to my collection. Without exception I found his work highly enjoyable and totally fascinating. After about two years and nearly twenty Burroughs titles I rather promptly, almost sub-consciously, gave the man up. I did re-read some of the Mars books, but bought no new titles. Perhaps I was growing up too quickly; perhaps it was my discovery of fandom, though I'm not sure what that incident could have upon my further lack of interest in ERB. Nonetheless I quite reading Burroughs and didn't read a word by him for about three years. Just recently Ace, Ballantine and a few more costly paperback houses have been issuing Burroughs titles in softcovers for the first time in this country. I bought a number of the books I didn't have

in my collection already and even a few that I did. Pirates of Venus is my most recent acquisition.

Pirates of Venus is, of course, the first book in the Venus series. Apparently Burroughs became bored with Mars during the thirties and decided to explore greener fields. Perhaps he decided to challenge Otis Adelbert Kline on his home ground, Kline having already made a few sporadic excursions into Burroughs' home planet of Mars. Having read too much of Kline's work, I doubt that Burroughs could have felt the challenge too greatly. Nonetheless and whatever the reason, Pirates of Venus was to be the first of four stories of the planet Venus. The story was published in hardcovers in 1934 and originally appeared in Argosy, in six serial installments, in September and October of 1932, according to the invaluable Edgar Rice Burroughs Biblio.

My only contact with Burroughs' version of Venus prior to my reading of Pirates, had come through the volume Escape on Venus, fourth and final book in the series, published in 1946, and originally appearing in novelet form in the wartime Ziff-Davis twins. I didn't care much for Escape on Venus when I first read it about three years ago. I thought it was okay, of course, but it didn't seem to pack the punch found in the Martian stories. I searched for the other three books in the series anyway, never finding them for a price that I could halfway afford. Now that Ace has been kind enough to reprint the first work in the series, I've had a chance to see whether my original impression of Venus was incorrect. Generally, I found that it was not. Pirates of Venus, like much Burroughs, is okay, but I'll never re-read it sort of stuff. It does have its finer points. But then, too, it has its very bad points.

The plot line is less complicated than most Burroughs, a usual occurrence in the openers of a series where he had to set an atmosphere. Carson Napier, a young and apparently wealthy man, bored with his life on Earth, single handedly finances and designs a space ship capable of carrying him to the planets. He decides to aim for Mars, on the condition that Venus is incapable of supporting life. He takes off successfully enough but is pulled off course by the gravitational pull of the Moon--he, believe it or not, failed to consider this in his calculations. However, all is not as bad as it might be, for Carson, expecting to fall into the Sun, lands on Venus. He lights in the upper branches of a fantastically high tree, discovering a bit later that these giant trees are inhabited by a group of Venusians known as Vepajans. They have been driven out of their homeland but a revolution of the workers, calling themselves Thorists. The Vepajans were the rulers and scientists and scholars of the old land. Carson promptly falls in love with the king's daughter, although at the time of the fall, he doesn't realize her high position. He is kidnapped, after a few escapades, by the Thorists and is being taken back to Thora to help their leaders. He leads a mutiny aboard the prison ship, taking it over and rescuing his princess Duare, who is also a captive. He plans on keeping his ship and using it to pirate the Thorists, firstly returning Duare to Vepaja since she does not then return his love. However, all does not work out well. Duare is once more kidnapped from the ship, Carson chasing after her. He finds her battling off a bunch of heathens, saves her and, as he is trying to return to his ship, is set upon by the kidnapers of Duare. He gets her away safely, but is, himself, captured and placed in prison. The book

ends here, on the perfect note for a sequel. The story has been supposedly transferred to Burroughs by Carson by means of telepathy while the latter was in prison. Carson picked up his powers of telepathy in India while a boy and this sort of helps the story quite a bit.

The story, as you can readily see, is typical Burroughs. The kidnapped princess, who, by the way, does end up falling in love with Carson by the end, is so much of a Burroughs cliché that I would be extremely disappointed to find it absent from a book of his. The book does have its exciting moments to be sure, but I can't quite get myself to be too worried about Carson's fate. As a result, the book was somewhat of a failure for me.

But this book is not completely typical Burroughs. Unlike 95% of the man's work the story is not all. There is some Social Commentary in this one, very obvious and very poorly handled, of course, but it is there.

The revolutionists I mentioned back there a bit, the Thorists, are rather obvious counterparts of our homegrown Communists, although Burroughs probably thought of them as the Bolsheviks. Most of Burroughs Social Commentary is spent pointing out the stupidity of the obviously inferior Thorists in overthrowing their leaders, the Vepajans. Things don't work out to well for the Thorists, you see. The Vepajans all run away, and the Thorists, with their 99% of the population can't get things to run very well with their Natural Leaders absent. They must spend their time capturing male Vepajans to work for them and female Vepajans to breed with them in order to put some of the superiority back in the race. I find it a bit fantastic to comprehend the whole body of creative people having all risen to the top so that they might all flee the revolution together. Only the marching morons are left. Things are just a little too simple here, but then you must realize that Burroughs was somewhat of a neophyte at this Social Commentary game and had to stack the cards just a bit in his favor. Things are brought to a boil when, at a point in the book, Carson asks a Thorist, an ex-slave, to join him. The ex-slave says that he doesn't care much for the Thorist society but that he cares not to join Carson's pirate band. Carson pushes the issue a bit only to have the former slave throw up his hands in horror, explaining to Carson that all he wants is to be made a slave again so that he may be happy once more in his correct position of inferiority.

Burroughs social philosophy, and this is found in all of his work not just this particular one is that of an almost extinct species today: the aristocratic conservative. Burroughs not only believes that there are superior and inferior races but that there are superior and inferior beings within these races. Not so bad and quite true, yes. But Burroughs says that these superiors and inferiors are based completely on whether the people are noblemen, freemen, and slaves. In more than one Burroughs book, a slave does something heroic, surprising the hero of the book greatly. Soon, however, in all cases, the Burroughs hero is reassured as he finds out that this slave is not a slave at all, but born of noble blood. Just for once, I'd like to see a worthwhile slave in a Burroughs volume who is really and truly a slave.

But Burroughs' views were those of the times. They were accepted; they were even expected in pulp fiction. All of the Munsey horde of Burroughs imitators during the twenties and thirties had pretty much the same ideas in their stories. There is also, of course, a lot of racial crap in Burroughs particularly in his Tarzan novels and other stories set in Africa. Burroughs was very race conscious. Race meant a lot to him, although in most of his interplanetary epics people of all races had their good points.

Despite all these things which, of course, I completely missed when I was first cutting my teeth on Edgar Rice Burroughs, I still admire the man very much as a born story teller. As such I consider him second to few. The story overcomes the philosophy. I hardly even get irritated by the latter, because I am now growing accustomed to it and come to expect it. I am not so stilted that I don't realize that Burroughs racial and other ideas were not out of the ordinary when written. If the man were alive and writing today, I doubt that I could stomach his works. But I can overcome period prejudices enough to be able to enjoy the work of a good story-teller which, when all is considered in the end, is all Edgar Rice Burroughs hoped to be.

A FIGHTING MAN OF MARS by Edgar Rice Burroughs: (Ace F-190--40¢)

This story is a much better book than the one reviewed above. Its story is more enjoyable and more interesting and the idiotic attempts at saying something are gone. Unlike most of the Martian series following the first three John Carter books, this one does not repeat too many of the cliches of the earlier ones. I do believe there is indeed a kidnapped princess in the story but we'll ignore that this once.

Hadron of Hastor, a red Martian soldier, is the major protagonist in the book. Hadron, despite his Martian ancestry shows little difference in personality from John Carter, Ulysses Paxton or Carson Napier--all good full blooded American interplanetary heroes.

I'm not going to retell the plot of this book even in very shortened form. Re-telling plots bores me stiff most of the time and, anyway, I've forgotten most of this one even though I read it only a couple weeks ago. For that matter, I finished Pirates of Venus about six days back and I've forgotten 80% of it. But this, you must note, is typical of ERB.

A Fighting Man of Mars is the seventh of the Martian series. It is a bit obvious that Burroughs is running out of ideas by this time. He invents, by proxy, a couple death rays and an invisibility potion, all of which will result in revolutionizing Martian warfare. As a consequence, the book doesn't seem quite so, how should I put it, Martian as others. There's still a lot of sword and dagger play, of course, but all this crazy deadly ray stuff seems to take a lot out of the fun and games. As if realizing his mistake, Burroughs, at the end, promptly kills off the inventor of the weapons and with him the secret to their production. Quite nice work, I thought.

This book does, however, represent Burroughs at his enjoyable best. It is very fine work, without the shackles of trying to Say Something that destroyed Pirates of Venus to such an extent. It is good fun and good and bloody. I may even re-read it in a few years.

A PRINCESS OF MARS by Edgar Rice Burroughs: (Ballantine F-701--50¢)

This title is the first novel, in fact the first anything, that Edgar Rice Burroughs ever succeeded in getting published. It is, also, of course, the first of the ten Mars books. A Princess of Mars is a very fine book and a highly enjoyable one. It is not quite so good as The Gods of Mars. But, after all, it is a first novel. In this book you meet many of Burroughs' most memorable characters--Tars Tarkas, most notably--for the first time. Somehow, they seem much more alive much fresher than in other Martian titles. The first meeting is always the best with a Burroughs' creation.

The plot, like in Pirates of Venus but even more so, is not complicated like too much of the man's writings. The book has a basic beginning and a basic, though inconclusive--to leave run for the sequel--ending. Most of the incidents in the story add something to the plot. The book does not read like an apparently endless stream of adventures, piled one upon another, until the author finally decides to end it all when, at some opportune moment, he gets all the characters together at one place.

This reading marked my third run through the book and I found it as enjoyable as ever, if not more so. I consider A Princess of Mars to be one hell of a fine piece of story telling, one worth the time spent in many re-readings. Try it. You might like it.

IN DUBIOUS BATTLE by John Steinbeck: (Bantam H2279, 60¢)

I started reading a number of the works of John Steinbeck last September or October in order to improve my mind. I read three or four novels and one collection of mostly interrelated short stories. I liked them when I read them. And I still think that, by and large, they were pretty good books.

But they were sentimental. Very sentimental. And, believe it or not, deep down inside, I am a very sentimental person. But Steinbeck is more than sentimental. Many very fine writers are sentimentalists. Steinbeck writes escape fiction, pure and simply.

Science fiction is often put down as pure escape literature. But in all the body of science fiction you would have to dig deep to find writing as escapist in theme as that of John Steinbeck. Even in such writings as The Pearl and The Red Pony where often brutal conflict is presented, the theme is still escapism. Steinbeck's characters are nice, lovable hard working types. They then come upon either something romantic or something that tugs at your heartstrings. In works such as Cannery Row, the theme is even more blatant. Here we find the lovable bums. They don't work; they just live a life of luxurious ease, free from the trials of daily living. They are doing what the man saddled with a 9-5 job of drudgery wishes so much that he could do. Or, more aptly, the woman saddled with four or five screaming little kids.

But John Steinbeck should be more than a writer of sentimental escapist crap, enjoyable on the surface as it may be. He should be more than a seedy old sentimentalist crying over the hardships of his beloved workers. He has won the Nobel Prize for Literature, an award usually given to a person at least somewhat deserving of the honor. Steinbeck should, somehow, be deserving of the honor.

And, he is.

Beneath Steinbeck's facade of a harsh old man loving the sentimental little things in life beats the heart of an angry man. When John Steinbeck is angry, truly angry, his writing is among the best in the world. In much of his work you can sort of feel that down underneath those tears of his, he is angry. Angry that his characters, his beloved simple people must live the lives they do. He is angry at the forces that make men live their lives so uselessly, whether this uselessness comes in diving for pearls in Mexico, working on a ranch, or operating a back country biology lab. Steinbeck's heroes are too much like he himself for him not to be a bit angry at their plights. He doesn't say this aloud of course in most of his work. The little old ladies wouldn't care for that. But when he does say it, he says it loud and clear.

In Dubious Battle, written in 1936, is such an angry book. While angry, Steinbeck writes not a great book, but a very good one. A few years later he did decide to write a great book, I understand, and that book, more than his thousands of words of maudlin crap, won him his many honors. In Dubious Battle is the prelude to The Grapes of Wrath. After these two volumes--and to some degree Of Mice and Men--Steinbeck settled back into the pattern he had cut in Tortilla Flat and watched the dollars pour in.

In Dubious Battle is a harsh book. It says things that people would prefer to forget ever existed or, if they lived at the time of the writing of the book, would prefer to ignore. It is not a nice book. But, more than anything else, it is real. It says something and it says it well. I'm not going to tell you exactly what it says, because if I knew for certain, the book would not be great.

Briefly the story deals with a strike during the depression among some fruitpickers in California. The protagonists are two radicals, sent to the valley to build the strike up and to get it organized. One is a hardened red, the other a neophyte in the ranks. In description of the story, I can only parrot what the New Republic of that day had to say about it: "Dramatically intense, beautifully written, sweeping power!" It is this, to be sure, but it is even more, much more.

It is the picture of an angry John Steinbeck. A Steinbeck sick to the core of his being with the conditions and the men who force others to live in filth and in constant hunger just to make a few cents an hour. It is a John Steinbeck angry at the society which makes intelligent men, like his protagonists, work so hard to destroy it that they destroy any bit of human sensitivity in themselves in the process.

In Dubious Battle is not nearly so enjoyable as Of Mice and Men. It won't warm your heart. If it affects your emotions in any way, it will probably

make you sick to your stomach. It isn't as warm a book as The Red Pony either, nor is it as well written as Of Mice and Men. But it is a far greater book, because it was written by a far greater man. The Saturday Review says that In Dubious Battle is "noble and tragic, a book one respects." I can only, once more, nod in assent. It is a noble book. It is a tragic book. It is not a book one loves, or a book one sheds giant tears of unhappiness over. It is a book one respects. For it is written by a man one respects. And, after all, what more can a writer wish for than for respect.

oOo

I wanted to review a couple of historical novels here and maybe a couple books by J. D. Salinger and maybe a couple of other items, but I seem to have just about run out of inspiration, interest, and room. I'll just quickly mention that Howard Fast's Citizen Tom Paine is an excellent and harsh portrait. The harshness is not directed towards Paine, but towards those around him. Irvin Stone's Clarence Darrow For the Defense presents a lot of the factual background that was fictionalized in the Steinbeck novel reviewed above. The Stone work is highly recommended as not only being interesting and enjoyable, but also a tad bit educational in parts. It, like, pads in a lot of historical stuff, much more than most historical novels or biographical novels. And, finally, let it be known that J. D. Salinger's Franny and Zooey is an exceptionally well done and very moving piece of work. It is better, by some degree, than the same author's more recent Raise High the Roof Beam Carpenters and Seymour an Introduction. The latter presents a most clear picture into the mind of an author. I dug the book somewhat, but would rather see Salinger write fiction than spend his time talking about himself. He does the latter much better than most, but he happens to be a much better writer of pure fiction. I've read a couple things by Edgar Rice Burroughs that I haven't mentioned, two, three books, mostly of the type that I care not to review--politics and such, not sex--and two short stories in an issue of Amazing. The latter were digested at Wally Weber's during a lull in a Nameless meeting. Now, as some as I finish this lousy SAPSzine, I'm going to have to read Burroughs' Tarzan, the Invincible. The blurb says: "The Ape Man battles the Reds in Africa." Sounds fascinating, doesn't it, gang? Oh, yeah, I really ought to read To Kill A Mockingbird, which I've been told is quite good. But I've had it around here, unread, for about six months now, having kept away from it for various reasons. I'm now so used to seeing it on my shelves that I'm rapidly forgetting that I haven't read it. Perhaps this will remind me. Now for the arduous and deadly boring task of going back and underlining all the titles I've dropped in this overlong paragraph.

END

"Before any progress can be made in dealing with crime, the world must fully realize that. . . all punishment for the purpose of causing suffering or growing out of hatred is cruel and antisocial; that, however much society may feel the need of confining the criminal, it must first of all understand the act had an all-sufficient cause for which the individual was in no way responsible and must find the cause of his conduct and, so far as possible, remove that cause." --Clarence Darrow in Crime, Its Cause and Treatment.

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ALL MATERIAL, UNLESS OTHERWISE CREDITED, IS BY THE EDITOR

IT'S QUALITY NOT QUANTITY THAT COUNTS: But, gee, gang, this issue is actually the largest I have ever done for SAPS. Larger by ten pages already and I may add another stencil after this one. I have discovered that the best way to do a large zine for SAPS is to think you've got little time to do one in. In that case, you'll rush to get something ready for the mailing, then suddenly discover that you still have all sorts of time left over in which to prepare other goodies. Of course, it helps too to be planning on entering the armed services of this here country in a few weeks. Putting out a large zine is a fine way to keep from enlisting. I mean, as long as I can convince myself that I've just got to finish that SAPSzine of mine, I won't force myself to take that long walk to the nearest recruiting station. I was originally planning to try to enlist some two weeks ago, so you see how well things have worked out. This has irritated my father more than a little, but if you'll forget him, maybe I can, too.

WALLY WEBER I see is running for TAFF this year, and I do hope you all realize that not only am I supporting the man, but also that I've already cast my vote for him. Can you say the same? Seriously, I've known Wally for nearly three years now and have found him to be one of the finer men it has been my pleasure to come into contact with. I think that if you'd join me in casting a vote for this fine young man, you'd be making a very wise choice. I can't think of anyone, including those many fans not running for TAFF, who could represent American fandom quite as well as I know Wally could. Wally Weber for TAFF. Huh, folks?

"The problem of the scab and non-union worker presented one of America's most nearly insoluble dilemmas: what were the millions of workingmen who were willing to suffer the privations of a strike and risk of black list, to deny their families the necessities of life in order to better their lot for the future, to do about their neighbors who were too timid or too frightened or too brutalized to care about bettering the lot of their families, particularly since these men who continued to work would share equally in the advantages gained by the sacrifices of their fellows? America was a free country; it was as bad for a union to use force to make a man join their ranks and their strike as it was for the operators to use force to keep men from joining a union or a strike. Yet Darrow felt impelled to agree with John Mitchell that 'a man who works during a strike has no moral right to work if his work destroys the hopes of his fellow men.'"
