

ATOM

scottishe

33

Bletherings.....mailing comments.....Ethel Lindsay
The Click Clique.....column.....**Naohia Varley**
Warblings.....column.....Walter A. Willis
Letters.....The Readers
Natterings.....column.....Ethel Lindsay. . .

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Produced and published by
Ethel Lindsay
Courage House 6 Langley Avenue
Surbiton, Surrey, Gt. Britain.

For the Off Trail Magazine Publishers Association.
September 1963

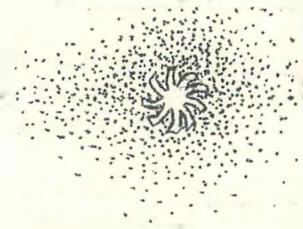
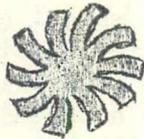
For trade, letter of comment or Price 4/- (50cents) per year.
Published quarterly.

American Agent: Bob Lichtman
6137 S Croft Ave, Los Angeles, California
90056. USA.

support

TAFF

letterings



Being comments on the 36th OMPA mailing-

Dolphin:No 5:Busby: What is a Fieldcrest bedspread? Umm--you mistake my meaning. I don't want to strip the rich; I'm just not going to be sorry when they are less rich than in the past. Should a big estate only be kept going by letting in tourists at 2/6d a head--no I won't cry. I'll just pay my 2/6d and trot round with interest..so this is how it used to be! What's wrong with that? This is not levelling the culture. These people will never be the same as me; for one thing no one is ever going to pay 2/6d to look around my house! Except the SFCOL of course.

I Shine:No 1:Daxter: I cannot see why a waiting-lister should need any more notification of their admission to OMPA than by it being announced in OT. Naturally all waiting-listers study it carefully, surely? If you are thinking along the lines of welcoming letters--I'm agin this on the grounds that I would have to write 'em. I must say you rather awe me; you must be the only living fan who would want to punch Wally Weber! Would you mind if I asked you a personal question..your age in fact? Apart from the pieces that give some clues as to your personality, I found the material in this very poor.

Souffle:No 5:Baxter: Speaking as TAFT representative--TAFT never refuses any money nohow, nowhen, any schemes to bring in money would be heartily welcome. I enjoyed your film notes.

Whatsit:No 4:Cheslin: This is almost pure stream-of-consciousness writing.Why won't you write it out first; and then put it on stencil? Please try it just once.

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Envoy:No 13:Cheslin: Sometimes I get the eerie feeling that you are the whole of OIPA. Can't you put all these bits together and make a proper magazine? Your suggestion of zines for the waiting-list I'm against. More work for the OE I'm against. Besides: there are enough extra copies of OIPazines floating about my room already. Naturally I read your comments on your work as OE with interest. Next time round I'll tell you how it strikes me.

Envoy:No 14: Cheslin: See my first remarks above.

Cyrille:No 5:Evans: A dock strike holding up your mailing would be accepted as a reasonable excuse by this OE at all events. You are asking about tartans. None of them are genuine; all the original patterns were lost after the '45.

Basra Journal: I know this has been put together in some way by Cheslin, the dear boy will spell it bussiness. I don't know why, but this strongly reminds me of the EAST WEST NEWS put out by Peter Campbell.

Phenotype:NoOxsomething:Eney: Dick Geis made me stop and think..and I don't really like to think about torture. I avoid anything to do with the subject either reading, or in movies, or in talk. I hope this doesn't make me abnormal..that the thought of torture makes me sick. In a way, I get a bit disappointed at old Pheno these days. I think..good..a nice fat issue - and then find more than half of it is ASIIdiocy. For of course I have it already and, much as I enjoyed it, don't think I could read it for a second time yet. I do not begrudge it to OIPA however; there is still quite a message for fandom today in it.

Big Deal:No 3:Hale:Never mind about 'preaching too much', but please write that article about university students. To folks like myself who never had the university education there is quite a lot we would like to know. I've shaken my head in bewilderment over a few of them, so would welcome any light you can shed. I like your comments but would prefer to see you add a few articles on the subjects that interest you.

ERG:No 16:Jeeves:I agree with what you said on OIPA quotas; how anyone can be bothered taking the dustsheet off the duper for a mere 12 pages a year beats me. I like the way you produce a magazine without outside help..showing it can be done.

Amble:No 14:Mercer: Och, you've put your finger on the difference between the Scots and the English alright; but knowing why you feel so does not necessarily mean thatyou can change from feeling so. Like: feelings aren't logical. But I did laugh at your remark. "This sort of trouble never happens under a republic."

UL:No 10:Metcalfe: Maybe the folks addressed in this think it worth the effort. I like what little of you peeps out from the constant stream of comments, Norm, but I don't like your idea of an OIPazine.

Compact:No 2:Parker: Oh I do admire that Atonillo of Ken with his big Stean. Once, in the good old days of OIPA, Ken put out an "Ethel's BIG Stean". My, but I was proud. This somehow, seems to lack your usual vim and vigour.

Savoyard:No 10:Pelz: Dear me..I do think you will have irritated Joe! I thought it was a bit incoherent, not like you surely! Look! I don't object to there being rich people..but only after everyone else has at least a minimum of affluence. It is when the majority of people have less that I object.

Morph:No 31:Roles:Brr--that cover! Your Forgotten Lore made me grue too. Mental blocks caused by childhood: well-you would leave the rich in possession of their riches irrespective of the fact that there is great poverty in the land(that's a pretty broad statement of your opinion, but then everyone has taken a pretty broad view of mine). So what was the formative things in your childhood to make you think as you do? The slight tinge of pity in your remarks about me does not strike me as being particularly dispassionate. You don't appear to me to be the dispassionate type at all, at all. Which is probably why I like you---ugh to the diswhatnot types. More of that Diary please!

Detroit Iron:No 2:Schultz: Thank you for supporting TAFP; and I enjoyed your description of Ludwig's Day.

Vagary:No 18:Gray: Here you are again - throwing out more targets on one page than some folks can get in 90. Always supposing OMPA ever had anyone who would put out that many pages. Terrible lot in here about loyalty; you certainly have overworked that word a lot. I can't even recall what it was that Bruce said to start you off so, but I'm not complaining..you certainly put some zing into OMPA. Course, half at least of what you say I disagree with, but I have a hard time disentangling it all because you seem to hit out at so many targets at once. To come back to the loyalty bit though..what do you think of when you use the word? What do you mean precisely when you use it? Do you believe that membership or support of CND automatically means a communitistic frame of mind? That one would automatically support the other? Do you ever stop to think that you might be wrong in some of your opinions? Do you have any doubts about them? There.. that's a nice lot of ???? for you and I'd be interested in your replies.

+++++

Some thoughts on the OMPA of today..

I pass my OMPA mailing onto three folk-Brian Varley, Arthur Thomson, and Walt Willis. By and by they come wandering back to me, and they get slung in a corner. After the Egoboo Poll has gone out I then disentangle them and keep what I cannot forbear to put away. The rest goes on the pile of fanzines which I either give away for con auctions, sell in aid of TAFP or just plain give away. The pile had got quite alarmingly high t'other day when Ken Cheslin appeared and tottered off with them for the Drumnagen boys who, he said, always welcomed fanzines. I really prefer them to go to new fans, so that pleased me. You see, I never have the heart to destroy a fanzine. I lifted up an OMPA mailing recently-can't recall which one-but I kept only VAGARY, MORPH, and BIXEL. I can remember the day when every OMPAZine was precious to me. Sigh!

As if I didn't have troubles enough, Ken brought the pile of zines which OMPA accumulates because of the 4 extra copies rule. There is a boxful here

Bletherings 4

cluttering up my room. And I hear that Dave Hale has a 2feet stack of them. I only just stopped him sending them to me in time. What is to stop this ever present problem?

I sat and thunk..and came up with this solution-

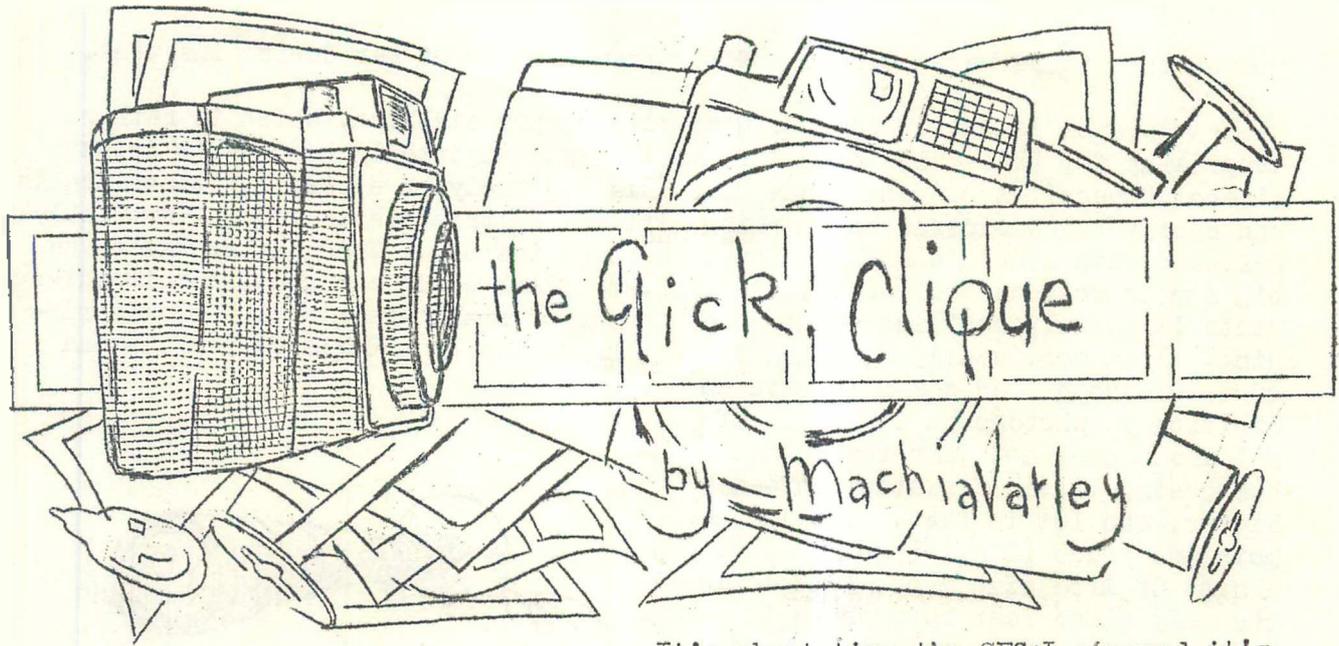
These extra copies are wanted in case someones' mailing goes astray. But by the time of the following mailing one should know whether they will be needed or not. I should like to send them back to each person with their following mailing. It's their property after all, and it should be their decision what to do with them.

The argument will be put forward that these can be sold. To waiting-list-ers in particular. For one thing..why anyone would pay out good money for the skinny mailings we have seen lately I dunno. Aren't you frightened they might be put off? Ahem.

Another point is..OMPA doesn't need the money. Each member already pays their whack, why should their zines then be sold? And has anyone figured that by staying on the bottom of the waiting-list and buying up the mailings a person could never need to bother putting out any activity and still receive the mailing?

I'd like your reactions on this. Meantime there is an enclosure showing what I have for sale..or the asking if you are a member. Dave Hale is also making out a sale list. I'd suggest that if they do not sell(I strongly suspect they mostly won't)that they all be sent to Seth Johnson for his fan-zine foundation. This sends a mixed bunch of zines to neofans. That's as about as good a home as they could hope for.

Ethel.



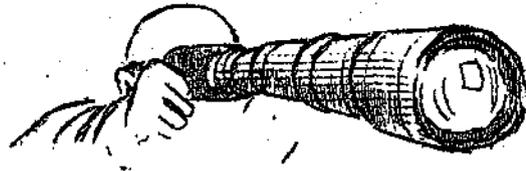
It's about time the SFCoL changed it's name, or at least the meaning of the initial letters. Science Fiction doesn't get a look in these days. I mean, you walk into an apparently normal club meeting at Courage House and find all the boys clustered together peering at something and arguing violently. Only a few years ago one might have hurried over, fannish instincts aflame to examine, say, an early Unknown or the latest full-colour Atom illo. Even today one might be excused for thinking that some new revelation about what Minister was sleeping with what model could be the source of the excitement. But no, my friends, neither Hugo Gernsback or Christine Keeler is the cause of dissention. The object they're looking at will turn out to be Wallace Heaton's "Blue Book" and the argument will concern the relative merits of the single lens reflex and the rangefinder. For the benefit of the uninitiated I should add that a single lens reflex is not a monocle-wearing jerk, nor is a rangefinder an itinerant cowboy but both are types of camera equipment. Ergo: it is suggested that SFCoL should stand for Synchronised Flash Club of London.

Perhaps this all seems a bit strange and, even, exaggerated to non-members so perhaps I'd better illustrate it with a few examples. Naturally there are many technical terms involved in photography and, however much I try, one or two are bound to intrude. There are though, one or two simple ones it's as well to know before you start. For example HFO is not a cube of brown sauce but a type of film and whilst overdeveloped can refer to a busty blonde it's more likely to imply that there is too much contrast in a finished print. Also "Regulo" is a make of camera, not a laxative.

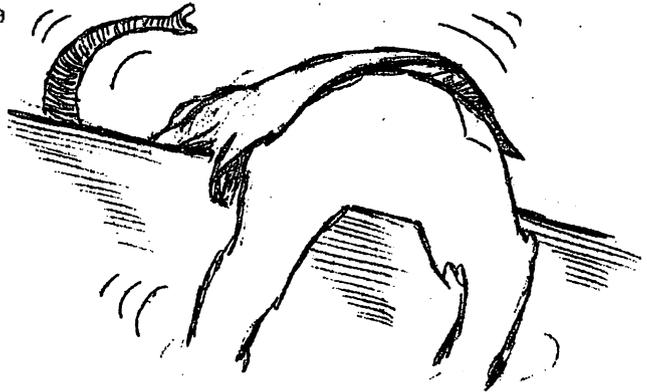
Recently we had a visit from American Alice Cohen and during one of her sightseeing trips she pointed at a large building and asked shutterbug Jimmy Groves what it was. "I haven't the vaguest idea" replied Jimmy, whipping out a light meter, "but I'd give it 1/100 sec at 8/11" That building just happened to be Buckingham Palace, but we couldn't expect Jimmy to know, after all it's not very photogenic. Alice, incidentally, confessed that she hates being photographed so the boys were very easy on her. I don't think for a

moment that there were more than fifty frames taken of her during the week.

Ted Forsyth is one of our two most click-happy clubbers, which is rather surprising for he's quite normal in most ways. Admittedly he doesn't drink alcohol, doesn't smoke and seems to subsist entirely on apples but these traits can easily be considered as charming little eccentricities. Ted is invariably bedecked with camera and a gargantuan accessories bag. This latter has to be big for as well as the lenses, light meter, flash equipment and other impedimenta it usually contains about three pounds of small green apples slowly ripening. I am confidently awaiting the day he screws on a Cox's Pippin instead of a lens hood. Ted seems to have an ambition to photograph the whole of Whipsnade Zoo, not just the animals but seats, litter-baskets, icecream kiosks, the lot in fact. I think he's going to piece it all together into a sort of life size map. Trouble is the only place near here where it can be opened is Whipsnade Zoo. On one of our trips to Whipsnade I observed Ted screw in a telephoto lens, point it at some beasts of the field and start peering into it. Some twenty minutes later he was still peering which I felt was rather overdoing it even for a perfectionist like Ted. It turned out later that all he was doing was using the camera as a sort of telescope to examine the animals more closely. Still, he did restore my faith later on when he spent an hour taking about 40 shots of a pair of bear cubs.



Then, of course, there's Peter Mabey. Peter also possesses a fine range of lenses, but he's much more interested in the miniature than the mammoth. Maybe it is the attraction of opposites. Howsoever one most frequently finds Peter trying to hide behind a blade of grass whilst he focuses on the daisy a couple of inches away. At Whipsnade Peter has been known to vanish for hours. A search invariably finds him leaning half-way over a stout fence, liberally signposted "This animal is dangerous", trying to photograph the said animals tonsils.



The majority of the remainder are also camera-conscious. Ian Peters is proud of his tripod and brings it out frequently, even when ladies are present. Then there's the Coloursnap clique of Ella, Ethel and me (we all smoke Kensitas and obtained our cameras from the coupons). We're very proud of Ethel, incidentally, she's becoming rapidly more camera proficient. Now she knows which end to point at the subject and has stopped the habit of opening the back of the camera to see how much film she has left we have high hopes that someday she'll take a recognisable photograph.

The Coloursnappers are easily recognisable, apart from their chronic coughs that is, as they tend to hide their cameras, even drop them out of the window when the telescopic lenses appear. I should imagine one gets the same feeling wandering into Metro-Godlwyn Mayer clutching a box-Brownie in your hot little hand. I'm determined to shake off this feeling though and I'm saving up to buy a 1,000 mm. Pentox lens to put them in their place. Then I'll save up for the camera. Trouble is I've seen Ted and Peter with their heads together and I've a terrible feeling that they're going in for cine and it'll all be power zooms, slow motion, pistol grips and cross coupling. Still, that last bit sounds interesting.



warblings walt willis

I Remember Me

But I can't remember me in those days without remembering Chuck Harris and Vince Clarke, without whom fandom has never been the same. Here is Chuck as he was at the beginning of 1953:

"I don't know whether you are sore at me about my "-" thing. I wouldn't be surprised: it seems to be 'Let's Trample on Chuck week'. I am alone and comparatively unloved and don't particularly care for the Feb asf. I don't particularly want to go to the Philcon either. I am dull and despondent. A woman's plaything without any hope of ultimate salvation. I have neuralgia, insomnia, and constipation. I lay awake nights muttering snatches from Hamlet and odd stanzas from Browning.

"Do I live? Am I dead?"

Sometimes I wonder if I'm going bloody barmy.

Alright. On with the motley. It hasn't been a great week for fanning, but I've knocked out a couple of hot letters to Vince--I'll see if I can find the carbons afterwards. I think you'll enjoy this episode. If Vince and I ever run out of teacups we'll make Fran v 4e look like a kiddies picnic. Fortunately, there isn't much danger of that happening,--I think we set too high a value on each other's friendship. The longer I stay in fandom the more I find myself inextricably tangled up in other people's lives. No sooner have I stopped worrying about whether you are being scalped by Red Indians, than I find myself taking a paternal interest in Bob and Sadie, I worry about Lee's virginity and Vince's hair. I even interest myself in James' career as a pro. God knows why this should happen to me--but I get quite a kick out of it. And I just can't imagine myself not being a fan. Ordinary people seem to live drab lives. Their whole lives seem to centre on what will win the 2.30 or whether Arsenal will beat Spurs or "the smashing boy I was out with last night". Fanning can't be just a sublimation with me. I think I would be aware of it if it was. I'm beginning to think that we really are star-begotten."

Vince and Chuck did eventually run out of teacups, but that sad day was still far away. I still have the correspondance Chuck referred to above and I can't

bear to destroy it. And since it would be nice to see those two in OMPA again, maybe Ethel will let me quote it virtually in full, with the draft they were arguing about. Anyway it's not every day you see literary criticism of this calibre. And I mean calibre...

THE HAPPY FANNISH CIRCLE

A Farce in several acts. Co-Authors Harris & Clarke

Prologue

Once upon a time, in the earliest eras of Fandom, Willis was hoaxed. He was fooled, sucked in, and bamboozled by the diabolical efforts of Clarke and Wilson (the latter appearing in Belfast as a neofan called Wainwright) This culminated in Willis--all agog at discovering a literate neofan--sending a carefully prepared manuscript back to Clarke with a note attached. "Isn't he a natural?"

Interval

Harris, fogbound at Welling, discovers the mss, steals the Willisania attached re-reads the unfinished corn and says: "You know Vince, this stuff ain't bad Why don't you fit an ending?" Clarke, desperate to do almost anything to distract Harris from his correspondance, whips a new sheet of paper into his typer and the two greatest writers in fandom cooperate to finish somebody else's opus. They dream up a reasonable ending and agree that the whole thing could be pretty good if it was re-written. Harris takes it home and rewrites it. He deliberately overwrites it, changes the ending, laughs immoderately at the finished product and rushes back a carbon to Clarke. With the carbon is a little note telling Clarke just how good it is and would he please signify approval to Harris's scheme of sending it to Hoffman.

NOT READ ON.....

Bullets on Bblzznaj or Thataway by Jim Wainwright (isn't he a natural!)

A howling screech of displaced air and tortured metal broke the unnatural quietness of the main street of Slopes' Gulch as Slim Destron's space-black ship sent up a wave of red-hot dust before settling on its tail. The airlock sprang open and Slim stepped out onto the deserted road, humming a lone spaceman's song to himself. There was a thud as a glass someone had left in mid-air fell to the ground, and in the middle-distance a crippled waif who couldn't get under shelter was digging himself in.

Slim smiled, and his tough leathery features cracked across the middle. Pulling open a small door in the nose of the sleek little flyer, he brought out a chain and clamp which he snapped to the hitching rail, locking as he did so the nasal lock that was keyed to his body odour. It was a strong lock.

Protestingly, the rickety wooden stairs of the Last Chance Saloon creaked under the weight of Slim's magnificently proportioned body. It was often said of his proportions that he was exactly as broad as he was long. His head was high-browed and intelligent, his eyes steely grey and piercing --he had worn through sixteen pairs of spectacles--his jaw firm as a planet in its orbit. Greyish was the leather space uniform--it should have been white--and belted low across his thighs were the two horn-handled sub-atomic-deltron-ray-blasters.

Shouldering his way through the swing doors of the saloon, he sent a sweeping glance over the crowd inside. Blinking the dust from his eyes, he saw his

quarry slouched across one of the gaming tables with three of his cronies lounging on either side. Slim strolled to the long imitation-mahogany bar, and nodded at the bar-keep. "Four fingers of jet-swill, pard" he lipped thinly. "I've burnt space to get here on time to meet Dianeacro." He jerked his head towards the gaming table. "That him?"

"Shore is," said the bar-keep, who was an old sailor. He looked curiously at Slim. "Got business with him, stranger?" Slim's space-tanned hand reached for the jet-swill and a flicker of his steely eyes gave the affirmative answer. With one gulp he downed the acrid raw spirit and sauntered slowly across the sawdust to the gaming table.

He smiled tightly as he saw what they were playing. Four dimensional Blasko a card game played by the inhabitants of Spudgtt, a far outlying sun-system. Catlike grace was in his movements as he eased himself into an empty chair at the card table and purred softly. An easy nod to the dealer sent eight four dimensional cards skimming across to him. He picked them up. Four skags, three blurts, and one sqash. A good hand.

He hefted his purse onto the table. The dealer opened it and amazement rippled round players and spectators alike as he spilt a shining steady stream of 1000 credit pieces onto the green beige. The dealer's hands trembled as he counted the sum aloud, (as was the custom), and when he hoarsely announced "One million credits!" Diane gasped. His lieutenant's mouth fell open, and somebody stole his gold teeth before he could recover.

There was a brief muttered consultation, then Diane leaned forward, pale phlegmy eyes glistening with greed. "You gonna bet the works, stranger?" he crisped. Slim's eyebrows rose slightly. "Kin you cover me?" he drawled softly. Diane nodded worriedly and looked meaningly at his companions. The deal was on. Diane drew first and called on the second slurp. Slim worked a skillful three dimensional move, and covered himself. as he saw what their play would be...three straight drooles and a second dimensional slurp. As he concentrated on the drooleplay a flicker of ultra energy caught his attention. He dropped his cards on the table, his steely grey eyes turning a fiery blue.

"Diane....you cheated!" he gritted savagely. "Yeah? Prove it, stranger! These folk din't see nuthing, did yuh, folks?" He looked around menacingly, and there were hasty head-shakings. He leaned back and leered at Slim. "Diane" ground Slim, "I saw you urble those cards through the fifth dimension and out through the seventh. You know that's cheating." "Huh. So what? And what are yuh gonna do about it?" His hand strayed toward the micro-blaster in the shoulder of his black alpaca jacket.

"Diane, I got proof yuh were behind them Snargo Gum hold-ups beyond the asteroids a couple of cycles back. An' what's more yore a meteorite rustler.. no, siddown an' lissen..if yuh ain't off this planet by the first sun's setting, I'm a-coming for yuh!" He rose and stalked out.

Came sundown...At the far end of Main Street, Slim stood erect and steady, a light breeze ruffling his crisp hair, and when a figure appeared at the other end, he began to pace slowly forward. He dropped into a fighting crouch, the lines of his body converging instinctively to offer the smallest possible target.

A flaming neutron bolt flew past his left ear. Slowly, he shifted his chew to the other cheek.

And then, swift as a Martian snurk, or the lesser banded schniss that roams the lunar seas, his hands flashed at faster than light speed towards the well-worn leather holsters at his hips. In a poem of easy motion the twin DeLameters leapt into his hands and his fingers jammed the firing studs against the barrels. And then, instead of the trembling, crackling roar of energy drawn from Space itself, the barrels were cold, lifeless, dead. Instinctively, he glanced behind him to see Dione's lieutenant grinning balefully over a cone-shaped forcefield projector.

Despairingly, he straightened up,--if he had to die, then he'd do it like a freeborn Terran instead of spacelanos scum. He called the half smile back to the corners of his mouth and thought regretfully of the green hills of Kentucky where he'd spent his childhood, of the arid red deserts of Mars where he'd spent his adolescence, and of Big Gertie's Pleasure Asteroid where he'd spent his.

Coldly, ruthlessly, Dione burnt him down. With one contemptuous foot he rolled the lifeless body in the gritty dust. "Another increase in Boot Hill's population index," he sneered.

Somewhere, in the sombre hills behind the town, a lone coyote howled.

Clarke dislikes Harris's efforts. He says so...

"Dear Chuck,

Thanks for the carbon of THATAWAY. The 'thanks' is merely because I'm polite, understand. Personally, I'm not only fed up with reading the damn thing but I think you've made a lousy job of rewrote. For instance, you're afraid that we overdid the corn. You CANT overdo the corn on a thing like this. Corn is its lifeblood, its undying glory and its main reason for existance. Take away the corn and you have a mere husk worthy only of SOL,ORB, or OPERATION FANTAST. The ending up with which we eventually came was a beauty, except that I'd have added the sun...a sun sinking with a dull hiss onto the last sentence. You've entirely missed the point in the opening paragraph. When the ship was landing, the street was crowded; after it had landed, the street was deserted except for the cripple. See, stoopid?? Otherwise, the glass in mid-air and the cripple lose half their force.

And the object of fan fiction rewrite should be to compress, condense and consolidate, not add a few purple adjectives here and there. You're not trying to write a second GONE WITH THE WIND, however flatulent your prose. Calling a bar 'imitation-mahogany' instead of plain 'bar' ain't funny, and we're not trying to be realistic. If you called it a 'polished uranium bar'...'acidic raw spirit' is like saying a 'hard metal gun'..the terms are not exactly synonymous, but too complementary for comfort...I agree that the confusion of the gang 'leaving' and 'doing' when they started the game should be eliminated, but not by putting 'played' and 'playing' within 6 words of each other..I give you full marks for having 'em leaning over the card table instead of the bar..that was an original mistake of Mike's I didn't bother to alter.

Why 'he hefted his purse'? The other is more picturesque. Why 'shining, steady stream'...you gotta lotta adjectives you want to find a home for? Or do you just like alliteration? Same goes for 'pale phlegmy', tho' it might be allowed on the grounds of supercorn if there is such a word. Why 'drawled softly'...have you ever heard or read of anyone drawling loudly? Why 'called on the second slurp' instead of the first? Don't you know that your overhand can be jimmed if you cast a slurp in Blasko? Be more careful..it's these little details can get you into trouble with the readers. You'll get some expert writing in and ri-i-ip goes your reputation in shreds. I may be a fake pro but I know that much.

Vince

HARRIS RETALIATES!!!

Dear Vince,

Thank you for the professional criticism. I'm enclosing your original draft. It's not my idea--you can do what you please with. I suggest a small hole in the top left-hand corner and a loop of string. It's a waste of time trying to argue about it. Obviously you've been deified since I last saw you. However, I don't propose to kneel here whilst you kick my teeth out. I think your assumptions are unjustified and your sneers are bloody rude. You've had this thing for almost a year and done damn all to it. At least I tried. Perhaps you'd care to spend ten minutes on it sometime and then sell it to Carnell?

Certainly the corn was overdone. Parts of it were not only childish, they were puerile and embarrassing too. "A sun sinking with a dull hiss" was just silly, especially in the last line which was sufficient as it stood. I thought that a quieter build-up would add more effectiveness to the last line. I wasn't trying to amuse RJ Banks or Wilkie Connor. I thought that this version was more likely to amuse say, Willis and Hoffman. I still think so.

I thought the opening paragraph was sufficiently pointed by using "unnatural" quietness" i.e. the inhabitants were transfixed by the sight of Destron's spaceship. I thought the object of a fan fiction rewrite was to improve. I can't see the use of compressing and condensing a mere thousand or so words. The idea that I had was to weld cowboy cliches into a space opera. True, the adjectives were purple -- they had to fit in with the ones already there. I'm sure that you'll be able to fix the little inaccuracies without using played and played in juxtaposition,--although you seem to want to use "first slurp....first slurp" a page or so later.

"Hefted his purse" seemed more picturesque to me. He had one thousand 1000 credit-pieces. I pictured this as a \$5 bag of copper which wouldn't clink. And hence, "shining steady stream". All Western gamblers have "pale phlegmy eyes" "Drawl" means to talk in a slow lengthened tone. If you'd allow "said softly" I can't think of any reason why you should quibble about "drawled softly" In the original state, I doubt whether Dave Ish would find it funny.

But after you've re-written it.....

CLARKE POURS OIL UPON THE TROUBLED WATERS.

Dear Chuck,

Don't thank me for the professional criticism; I'm giving it to you for free. Just part of my service to you young fan authors. Of course I shall expect some commission on your first 45 sales, but we'll leave the sordid financial details till later. No, I haven't been deified yet, if that's the way you spell it. I've been canonised tho. This doesn't mean shot out of a cannon, much as you might like to do same.

I've succeeded! Harris has called me 'rude'! I must write to Walt about this! Infame at last!! I don't think there's any further goal left, except maybe to be called obscene by Rog Philips. James must know too. I had a letter from him by the same post as yours. He is telling me all about his plans for the Convention. By the way, is your bungalow fire-proof?

Well, the only way to see whether Walt and Lee are amused is to send 'em the corn and await criticism. As the first draft was 80% Mike in construction, and was intended, as I said somewhere or other, for the JF's London Circle 'zine, I'd never felt inclined to do the extensive re-writing job needed to run it in a respectable zine. There's one good idea in it...the card game, but the rest is well-cooked corn. This present thing I just regard as an exercise in corny wisecracks and puns, and your particular angle on it.. overwriting as well in great gobs...never struck me until a few moments ago when I started thinking constructively on the same.

Uh-huh, the idea of re-writing is to improve, and I have a fetish(M'Cooli-M'Gobbla) that improvement in fan-fiction means condensing. It's not that I have an ambition to Write Perfectly of Beautiful Happenings in words of which each one is as perfect as a lustrous pearl in a gold setting..which I have... but as an Editor and Publisher, the less wordage there is to a certain piece, the less money spent on paper, stencils, and ink and the less time spent on turning the duper handle and other odd jobs. Do you remember that FAPA mailing with a drawing by Lee in which there was just an eye and a bit of foliage and the thing occupied a whole page? I could no more think of doing that than I would...well, duplicate on only one side of each sheet.

As to the specific instances quoted(coo, don't it sound impressive?), I think the cleared street is preferable to the 'unnatural quietness': matter of opinion; I think that there's a big element of incongruity in the business of the purse; you're led into believing that it's just a small object, and if you're awake your mind does a double-take when it appears that there's a 1000 pieces in it. That's where the humour lies; not in the fact that he's toting a million credits around. I give in to the pale phlegmy eyes, tho' it's still got echoes of albino bushmen to me. "Drawled softly" 'Shouted loudly' 'whispered softly' 'Hummed musically', 'laughed cheerfully' 'hissed menacingly' are all much of a muchness to me; a style which I don't cultivate. Van Vogt does it. I'd allow 'Said softly', because you can have 'said loudly', 'said cheerfully', 'said menacingly', 'said slowly' etc. The last two you could also drawl but with the 'loudly' and 'Cheerfully' it would be..well..not compatible. 'Drawled softly' is a borderline case, and if it pleases you to have a double adjective where a single would do, far be it from me to stand in the way of your grammatical Combine Harvester.

The...well, I suppose it's not a punch-line, just a rattle in the tail, (-le?) is a knotty problem. It's no good dismissing the sun sank line as plain silly 'cos not only are a number of other things plain silly, including this seriously-taking-that-about-epic, but it emphasises the point of the coyote. Coyotes always howl at sundown. As an old coyote lover myself, I'm willing to call upon outside opinion as to this. Not only from coyotes either. Tell you what I'll give this thing some serious consideration for an hour some evening when I can't think of anything better to do, and will send you the result..a Clarke adjusted epic. Then you can tear it to pieces. I would have put a paragraph in up there, but I'm having to fight off a dog trying to climb into my lap. I must have a kind nature as animals love me. Do you?

Vince.

HARRIS HALF-SHEATHS HIS CLAWS.

Dear Vince,

I'm delighted to hear that you have become a revised edition of St. Francis. Cats and dogs may love you,--but I'm not Assisi. Most of the time I feel like tearing you limb from limb. I am now contemplating going into the holy relics racket. When I said you were rude it was merely the best euphemism that I happened to have laying around. Actually, you were insufferably pompous, overbearing, and flatulent. The next time your spleen needs venting I suggest you take two Rennies instead of heaping scorn on my deathless prose.

I shan't bother about your footling remarks about "T otaway". I shall stock-pile my answers until I see your version. I never agree with vague generalisies like "nothing is so short it couldn't improve by shortening". This may be all very well for Mama's l:l Babylove, but as a fully certified sex-fiend I could list you several instances where the reverse applies; I must say I was astounded that the possibilities of over-writing it had only just dawned on you. Surely, this is what Mike had in mind when he wrote the thing instead of just using it as a vehicle for puns.

Ever Thine,

Chuck.

PS There is no past participle of "deify" in my O.E.D. It does have argumont tho'.---with only one 'o'.

WARBLINGS.....WALTER.A.WILLIS.....

letters

Sid Birchby
40 Parrs Wood
Didsbury.
Manchester

"Interesting conreport from Mr Varley. I agree with him that the Cathedral precinct at Peterborough was worth seeing. So was the Cathedral itself. The service wasn't up to much though. I went to early Communion on Easter Sunday and heard about one word in three owing to the clergyman being a long way off and having not mastered a microphone technique. Typical Anglican attitude, remote and ineffectual. While I don't think much of 'Honest to God', I am inclined to think that the Church needs a Dr Beeching. I liked Brian Aldiss' mock-Pope broadside to John Baxter who asked for what he got. I can only paraphrase Martin Luther's well-known snide remark about the Pope: "I would not for a hundred thousand florins have missed seeing Baxter. I should always have felt an uneasy doubt whether I was not, after all, doing an injustice to him. I am quite satisfied on the point." Thanks for telling me that the tomb of Mary Queen of Scots is in Peterborough Cathedral..next time I'll go inside.

Pat McLean
PO Box 162
Sappho.Wash.
USA

"Hmm, this bit about Death Duties-while I agree with Coulson that \$50,000 should be enough to keep anyone from privation(and while the world owes nothing to anyone, it seems an attitude of senseless vindictiveness that says'I had to scabble and scratch and by gun so should everybody), and while along with you I shed no tears over the breaking up of big estates, still a slight mist does come to the eye at the thought of old castles, chapels etc rotting for lack of money. I understand that this very situation has caused some people owning these old piles of masonry to charge admission. This is fine in my book-this class had a lot to say about the values and tastes of the masses(admittedly pretty bad by and large)while making damn sure that the grubby masses couldn't get near enough to good taste to see what it was like...I get downright irritated with people who are bored with politics. I think what a good many of these people are really saying is that they have no competance in the field of human realation-ships--and therefore have little interest in same." Over here we have a National Trust which takes over places of historical interest that are liable to be left derelict, and the public can gain entry then without payment. I discovered when I was home that the NT had taken over the birthplace of Jif Barrie just lately

Boyd Raeburn
189 Maxome Ave
Willowdale.
Ontario.
Canada

"I am tempted to leap into the argument on Death Duties with words flying, but I will remark only that one of the reasons some of Canada's industry has come under foreign control is the Canadian Death Duties laws. Foreign Control of industry and resources is one of those things which gets an airing here, along with We Should Have Our Own Flag and What Is Our National Anthem and Do We Have A Cultural Identity and The Colocossus To The South, and lately Nuclear Weapons on Canadian Soil and a few others besides. Regarding Colin Freeman's bit on the NHS in Panic Button. I can't see your point. PB is sold mainly in Ontario, and Ontario has had, for about two years now, the equivalent of the NHS for hospitalization. The Ontario Government is now working on a scheme to cover doctors' services (both consultations and surgical fees etc) They seem to be approaching it in a very sensible fashion. Those covered by private insurance coverage (about 70% of the population) may continue to be so covered, and the government will set up a scheme to cover the rest. I would point out that doctors here have had for many years an insurance scheme, covering all doctors services ..you pay your premiums and any service rendered by the doctor is paid by the scheme. Doctors here do NOT object to their patients being covered by Health Schemes (as I pointed out, about 70% are so covered) but they do object to being told by minor civil service clerks how they are to treat their patients, which was the root of the trouble in Saskatchewan. As you can see, the equivalent of the NHS is gradually getting in here, and I am sure that it will come in the US in time. What I do object to though is the dead hand of government getting deeply involved in the thing. Government schemes always seem to cost so much more..partly at least due to the cost of the ensuing bureaucracy. Perhaps you are not aware of the extent of private (that is non-government) (and very often non-profit) health coverage in North America. I get the impression that Britain never did have the sort of coverage which is available to so many on this continent." ##### "We had quite a large number of schemes to cover sickness before our NHS. Trouble was such a large proportion of the population were unable to afford the premiums. This statement: "Doctors being told by minor civil service clerks how to treat their patients" It is emotionally loaded isn't it? Would major clerks be preferable? In just what way could a clerk tell a Doctor how to treat his patient? I have never seen or heard of anything like this. On the contrary--any argument between a Doctor and a lay administrator can be clinched by the Doctor saying--"The patient needs it" What layman can argue against medical knowledge? Or risk being wrong? ###

Ted Tubb
67 Houston Rd
London. SE25

"Thank you for Scottish and of course I want more but how do I earn such largess? I've read the thing through at least twice and wondered what wittily brilliant observations I can make which will be worth your while to print and found nothing. Not, I hasten to add (how Victorian can you get?) that the contents are not worthy but what can I say about Brian's magnificent report on the con? Or Willis's delightful reminiscences? Or your own Natterings which are always more than nice? And how can I possibly comment on the comments of mags I have't read? Still, from what I do see the old trouble with OMPA is still waving its ugly head. Ever since I can recall--and I was a founder member, never forget, the tendency has been to comment on comments and so on. Well, it fills pages but that isn't what OMPA is for. As you point out--KEEP TO THE TITLE! " ##### "I don't forget you were a founder member--that's what is wrong with OMPA..too many of the early stalwarts left all at once. ###

Letters 3

Harry Warner
423 Summit Ave.
Hagerstown
Maryland. USA

"It's curious how little we thought in the oldest days of fandom that we were doing something for the ages in the sense that Walt Willis explains. I imagine that the change was either caused or symbolised by The Immortal Storm: I'm sure I don't know if it was a cause or an effect, but it was just about that time when fans suddenly began to think about what had gone before. I vividly remember thinking when I closed up shop on Spaceways during WWII that that was the last anyone would ever hear of the magazine, Nothing would have persuaded me that two decades later someone in the person of Bill Evans would take the time, trouble and money to issue a monumental reprint volume...I won't say anything about the pair of poems meant for one another in this issue. I might get hurt...
Nurses' training: Well, I don't think that the girl who makes up her mind early to become a nurse can quite realize the uncomfortable feeling that most of the public feels towards student nurses. It's all very well to sit back and accept the fact that there is no way to train nurses except by allowing them to do their practising on people. But it is another thing to lie in a hospital and realize that you may be either the first or second person on whom the student nurse has tried her hand at this particular technique. My first stay in hospital was on a floor not inhabited by students. My second trip put me in the very centre of their swarm. I had pretty good fortune myself, except with the student who thought that the saline solution prescribed for my black eye was to be used to wash out the 12-inch gash in my forehead. But I became quite an expert on catheters, permanent variety, for the sake of the poor old fellow, a stroke victim, who occupied the other bed in my room, couldn't make his problems known easily because of throat paralysis and wasn't always given the proper irrigation and rehooking up after being temporarily unplugged and so on.### I can't figure out this floors where there are no student nurses, and floors where there are nothing else but. Here we have a careful mixture, no student nurse may carry out a treatment until she has watched it countless times and been actively tutored in how to carry it out. But take the giving of an injection: anyone could do this after seeing it done..but I have known nurses who from the first did it beautifully, and I've known nurses who, after years of it, still made every patient go 'ouch'. It is like so many other things-a knack.###

Harry Turner
10 Carleton Ave.
Romily
Cheshire

"Did I really say I thought fandom was childish? Some aspects of it perhaps, but just because I've dropped out of activities, I wouldn't dismiss fandom so sweepingly! I seem to recall getting a lot of pleasure out of the many years I was mixed up with it (and hope I gave something to fandom in return) and made friendships that still keep springing to life unexpectedly. But time flows by and interests change - or rather opportunities come to indulge interests that have previously lurked in the background. In my case, the acquisition of hi-fi and tape recorder meant that at long last I could investigate the world of modern music fully for the first time, and the more time I spent on that pursuit the less time there was for fannish activities. And it wasn't only Brubeck, of course. I had a tape from the Varley family enthusing madly over the Eastercon. They'd so obviously enjoyed themselves, and all the talk of old friends tempted me to try the same experience at the next con. And then, oddly, reading Brian's article in SCOTTISHE reminded me of all the most boring and infuriating aspects of cons--the auctions, the serious talks on the literary

Letters 4

value of SF, the storm-in-a-teacup debate on censorship in pocket-books, the "art" show etc. My enthusiasm evaporated rapidly as I read through Brian's account. I guess I'm allergic to con reports as well as cons really. My interest in fandom centred around fan publishing. Anyway I've no doubt that when I pay a long-delayed visit to Fran and Brian, they will carry out a little more brain-washing on your behalf.#### Dear me, I do believe you have guessed that I have (fannish) designs upon you! And I thought I was being so subtle! Honestly though..the talk on censorship wasn't serious..it was hilariously funny! And Brian forgot to emphasise the best part of the con -not(never) the program--always, always, the people you meet there.####

Rory Faulkner
7241 E.20th St
Westminster
Calif.USA

"That remark about the British cons being so much cosier than those we have here is perfectly true. I had a much more at home feeling at the LonCon than ever I did at any of ours, and I never had such a hearty welcome as I did there. It is a pleasure to look back and think of it....I am in rebellion against the patronizing, do-good attitude taken towards old folks. I keep being pestered to join in 'Senior Citizens' groups, and pressed to engage in shuffle-board, checkers, and other perfectly nauseating games. Next time someone calls me a Senior Citizen I'll spit in his eye and tell him I'm a plain old beldame and let me alone!####No remember you well over here Rory, and how well you lived up the proceedings. We'd love to have you do it again in '65! How any guy has the nerve to call you a Senior Citizen beats me!####

Betty Kujawa
2819 Caroline
South Bond 14
Ind.USA

"On TV here, Norman Ross has a lively round-table discussion show..I rarely miss it, it has dealt with the likes of Medical Quacks and Frauds, Homosexuals and Lesbians, Teen-age Sex, and Married Adulterous capers..well last night it was on the greatest hoaxes..like the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the delightful Crovency Society that actor Walter Houston created, if or if not the Mrs Bixby letters by Lincoln was true or not and zillions of others some hilariously funny and sly(aimed at deflating pomposness in Literary Circles) and some, of course, evil and vile(Anti-Semitic so-call factual, 'true' revelations of the dastardly International Jewish plots and others of that ilk) Whilst in the midst of the Elders of Zion discussion the members veered off for a bit right smack into these Lincoln quotes I took for real and that Don Wellheim questioned. Some time ago a Reverend Beecher privately printed up that list of quotations..but they were his own..he had no intention of fooling the public..on the front of his pamphlet he had an etching of the Lincoln memorial. As time passed and it was reprinted here and there others, not the Minister, said these quotes were by Lincoln. I hear he tried his best to set things right; and you can imagine how far that got him once such writings were sort of public property..eh? So I was wrong..Don was correct"####And there aren't many folks who would sit down right away and toss off an airmail letter to say they are wrong! See, Betty, that's what I like about you.####

Redd Boggs
270 South Bonnie Brae
Los Angeles
Calif.90057 USA

"The almost universal response from fans learning of my new address is, "Wow! Ethel Lindsay is going to lo-o-ove you! I suppose the big question is: DO you? The fact that Jim Harmon lives on this street too, and that Bjo has a doctor on this street should not be allowed to obscure the fact that of course I did it all for you--I mean moved to this address just to please you. So there. In Walt's column I was fascinated by Richard Elsberry's remark which seems to indicate that I once said that a "lean intense man" dwelt inside Elsberry. It is perfectly true that this was (probably is) the case, but I'm surprised that I was so perceptive in my extreme youth,(of a whole goddam decade ago). Of WAF's list of the essential people in fandom of 1953, few of us remain, and all of us all shells of what we once were. Thank heaven that important new fans came along to replace Laney, the Coles Clarke etc--the people over here like Ted White, Bjo Trimble, and Bill Donaho, and over there, like Ella Parker, John Berry, and Ethel Lindsay. Bob Coulson says if someone wants a million, let him earn it himself. I guess that's safe enough. Nobody ever did, nobody ever will, live long enough to earn a million. The great fortunes were certainly not earned; they were acquired, with as little credit to the person who became wealthy as when he inherited his fortune from his 'industrious' father....I have little or no interest in politics, but since I don't qualify as "an intelligent person" this fact needn't sadden you. I see nothing wrong with having a dictatorship. A benevolent dictator, for example, ought to be nearly ideal, and would do away with the bother of regular elections which fill unimportant offices with futile little men. One would have as much voice in such a government as he has nowadays with his single vote. None of the men who have been president in my lifetime were the ideal men for that office, and men I personally would not have chosen, so a dictator who came to power by some other means than election would not be such a novelty" ##### Well, of course I lo-o-ove you..it's the best compliment I've had in OMPA since Ken Bulmer dedicated his "Big Steam" to me..and the cheers in the background are from the SFCoL which had a take-over bid by the Scots lately. But oh dear! Those political(save the mark!) opinions! Not believing a word of what you say about your intelligence--I am saddened. There can be no sic animal as a benevolent dictator. Benevolent to who? One man's meat is another man's poison! What kind of a dictator would be considered benevolent by the man who likes to drink and the prohibitionist? The segregationist and the negro? The nun and the nudist? The teen-ager and the man of forty? I'll quote from Theodore Sturgeon's speech at Chicon III..."To be a living person you have to be awake and aware. There is something I haven't been able to find too much anywhere; a kind of participating awareness in the society in which we live. If we, as science fiction people, are able to extrapolate, to see where things belong(to quote that Heinlein title,"If This Goes On") then we ought to know the names of our representatives, we ought to know the names of our senator, and we ought to attend hearings in our village court, especially that....When the man said that liberty is eternal vigilance, this is the kind of vigilance he was talking about; just to look around your own grass roots neighbourhood." If the little men are futile--why don't you do something about it? #####

Letters 6

John Baxter
Box 39
King St. PO
Sydney. NSW
Australia

"As I won't be having anything in the next few mailings, I'm sending you my reply to Brian Aldiss's poetic sally in the current SCOTTISH. I'd be very pleased if you could publish it for me along with the Aldiss effort to which it refers. It would irk me considerably to let Oxford's answer to Ogden Nash get off unscathed after this latest thrust. By the way I'm glad you published Brian's letter pointing out that this is a friendly fight - or at least a reasonably amicable difference of opinion. With my reputation, people must find that hard to believe, but nevertheless it's the truth. If you have read WARHOON you must know I hold Brian's work in the highest regard. There is, surely this is obvious, no better writer of science fiction in England today." ###I can only run the one poem..space is limited..anyway it goes to the same folks as read the last issue containing it. Err..who says women can't bear to let the last word go?####

SF - A Demolition.

The most impressive thing I've seen to date
Is ALDISS rising gamely to my bait.
Can be that I, an idle scribbling fool,
Have drawn the "big fish" from his little pool?
See ALDISS, searching for the perfect squelch
Produce the fact that whales don't dream or belch.
That's not the point! Would he have poets make
An oath that they on no account will take
Small liberties with fact? Must we reject
More beauty to appease his intellect?
Then let him hie to Stratford, and compel
The priest to ring "a surly sullen bell".
And when this worthy chases him away
Let him then seek "the darling buds of May",
Try to seduce (without too much finesse)
John Keats' "unravished bride of quietness",
And then for an encore demolish too
The pleasure dome of fabled Xanadu.
For these things, each to us a paradise
Are naught but "scrabble babbling" to him.

Let ALDISS sail his barque of fantasy
And e'en achieve "escape felicity";
But if he uses "dream's unfurled" for sails
I must demand my dreaming, belching whales.

John Baxter.

Thank you also to Virginia Schultheis and Ruth Berman who wrote..you got shoved out, gals, by these argufying men...

Ethel.

Matterings



It's not so very long ago that Brian Varlay wrote an article upon the stereotyped views we often have of the people of other countries. We all carry a trace of this I fear, and it requires deliberate thought to eliminate them. For some time now at the sound of an anti-American statement I have found myself rising like a fish to bait. Yet once to me, America was just another foreign country, and I too made bland and sweeping statements about its peoples. Fandom changed all that. Gradually through the years I have formed a mental map unlike any seen in the geography books. Dotted across it are little flags that wave and have names on them...Busby, Economou, Donaho, Moffatt, Sneary, Trimble, Ellik, Coulson, Kujawa, White, Eney, Shaw, Lupoff, Wollhein. They range from one end of the USA to the other and when I think of Americans these are the people that spring to mind. Thinking of them, the many differences between them, generalisations become impossible. Also, of course, my recent visit to the States has left me filled with a warm pro-American feeling which I know must have biased my thinking.

Thus, when I came to write an article reporting on a film show about America put on by the local Young Socialists--I found my bias getting in the way of writing an objective report. I've just torn up the first draft..... Let me describe the film show and then you may see my difficulty.

The film show was entitled DEMOCRACY USA. The films were - and I quote the programme notes -

Operation Abolition: "Made by the Hous Un-American Activities Committee giving a distorted view of the Student demonstrations in San Francisco in 1961, against hearings by the committee"

Walk to Freedom: "Featuring scenes of the struggle for Civil Rights in the Southern states--the 'sit-ins' and the Freedom Riders."

Sunday: "This film is about an incident in an American park where the police have orders to stop any political meetings. A group of folksingers is told to move on. The next week, hundreds of sympathisers fill the park and refuse to move."

About 30 people were present to see this show. I was mentally on the defensive and ready to seize upon any unfairness to the USA! I thought I had found it during the showing of OPERATION ABOLITION. Whilst this was underway I noted that every time someone in the film used the word "communist" there was an automatic laugh from the audience. On thinking it over I realise that this was a type of stereotyped thinking that stems from stereotyped thinking! There are Americans who think that a communist cannot be anything but evil in the purest sense of the word; I should imagine they equate it in their minds with the oldtime 'devil'. But not all Americans think like this. This automatic laugh was assuming that they do. There are degrees in everything, and the one assumption was as bad as the other.

Before the showing of OPERATION ABOLITION mention was made of "people with closed minds". Trying not to have a closed mind myself, I watched the films carefully. I had no difficulty in identifying myself with some of the Americans in them--the students, the negroes walking to freedom, the folksingers arguing with the police and making sure with tape and camera that this attempt to interfere with their freedom should be recorded. I dimly remember reading about this happening and think that the outcome was that the folksingers were allowed to continue. Perhaps some American reader can clear this point up. Although I had no sympathy with the communist way of life, I could not but admire the courage of the man who defied HUAC and said he despised them.

As I walked home I reflected that I should like to know what the Young Socialists themselves had thought of it all. So I wrote to the secretary saying I would like to know their reactions for the purposes of this article. Back came a courteous invitation to join them, and the following week I did so.

I found a much smaller group headed by Paul the secretary. There were in all 4 girls and five boys aged roughly between 17-24yrs. I started off by asking them what they thought of America after seeing these films. Nothing very clear emerged at first--"High-handed"--that "HUAC was unconstitutional"--that "Americans were apathetic"--that "they thought everything left of centre was communistic". One young girl spoke of "their faces of apathy". She said this was what she expected and that this was what she saw in a preliminary film called "Very nice, very nice!". When I pointed out that this was a Canadian film showing Canadians, I felt by her expression she thought it was much the same thing. I was sorry I could not sic Boyd Raeburn onto her!

Another thought "White protestants are dim by our standards". One young man volunteered that he thought America was the most backward democracy apart from France. Although I had not really meant to argue with them but rather record, I found myself often countering their statements; I also found to my own surprise that I had soaked up quite a lot of information on the American scene.

I was most impressed by Paul; he was not only well-read and knowledgeable, but he also had the faculty of seeing both sides of a question. He approached all topics with clear thinking and did not have a right-left, right-wrong, black-white view of life. Across from him sat his opposite - a very

voluble young man who spoke much in a highly excitable and, I thought, biased way. His anti-Americanism was of the emotional type and, as he rather monopolised the discussion, tended to prevent me getting at more thoughtful statements.

Had there been time I should dearly have loved to get my teeth into the boy who started off by telling me flatly that he disliked Americans! I should have liked to have asked him how many of the 170 million or so people he disliked, had he met, talked to, or even heard of! This specimen went on to admit that he kept his Labour sympathies quiet because he worked in a bank. I thought of the student who had faced HUAC with the courage of his convictions and the comparison made me feel ashamed of this particular young socialist.

My main question was, --"What was the purpose of showing these films?". To me they were showing only the worst aspects of political life over there, even if they were showing the people who fought against it. I firmly believe that Socialism stands for justice and peace and friendship between all nations and these films could hardly be said to further these aims. Paul's reply was that it was to counteract the "Glorious America" propaganda which was fed to us by our newspapers...to show the other side of American life! My feelings had been that over here there was too much emphasis laid upon these aspects and not enough publicity given to the many fine Americans who believe in free speech passionately and who do not fear to come out and say so. There is little 'glorification' in the fact that all our pop singers imitate Americans --that all our latest slang comes from there!

Finally, I made a point I had been hanging onto dearly--that these folk-singers, these students, these negroes that we had seen -- they were Americans too! By the startled expressions on some of those young faces I felt that it was a new point to them; that perhaps I had made a slight dent in their stereotyped view of what was an American.

I tore up the first draft of this article because I felt it gave an unfair picture of the Young Socialists; that it could tend to enforce the sometimes held view in the USA that our Labour Party is as good as communistic. To a staunch member of the left there is not more repugnant thought. When the Cold War was still very cold and Russian leaders visited this country, it was found that whereas the Conservatives could talk politely with them, Labour leaders annoyed the Russians intensely by questioning them about political prisoners. Between our Labour Party and the Communist stretches a very wide gulf. The fact that some Americans do not believe this and will stigmatise everything to the left as communistic has no doubt the effect of stimulating anti-American feeling among such as the Young Socialists.

In other words -- stereotyped thinking about other people is one of the worst ills that we have to bear. As an individual all one can do is stumble to shed some light.

MEANWHILE BACK AT EMERGENCY WARD 10.....

The hospital world has often been compared to that of the Army and with good reason, Yet this is changing very much and very rapidly; due mainly to the new practise of nursing staff 'living out'. The large amount of married

staff have also helped to let in a wholesome amount of fresh air. Yet there are still many large hospitals who will not allow their young nurses to live out till they have entered their second or third year of training.

When I started it was unheard of to live out. During the four years of my training one could compare the world of the hospital then with the Army. There was the same emphasis on rank, the same strict discipline, and the same enclosed world. The majority of nurses were unable to get home for more than one day a month. The off-duty was so meagre that there was little chance of meeting and making outside the hospital. It was quite inevitable that all their closest friends were Nurses also and that a great deal of the talk was concentrated upon hospital gossip. Many were attractive enough to have boy friends--but there was so little time -- and a 10pm. deadline was a definite handicap. No wonder the doctors were so sought after (and so conceited) they were lone males surrounded by a sea of women.

I was lucky, my training school was in the town where I had been born, my Grandmother's house was a short tram ride away; as was also the home of a married aunt. Whenever I was free I went to one or the other; I could get there and back in a three hour off-duty period. I needed a whole day off to go home as it was an hour's journey by bus and besides cost 1/6d.

I visited by Grandmother every week usually on an afternoon off. Sometimes one or the other of my unmarried aunts would be there--and then I was in luck. My Grandmother fed me and refunded my fare - but my Aunts would slip me a sixpenny bit and this was often a godsend! Many a time I set off to visit my Grandmother and have to walk because I only had a halfpenny in my pocket.

My other port of call - the home of my Aunt Alice - became a second home to me. She was a lively and gregarious woman and always welcomed me no matter what the time of day. Sometimes I would have a morning off from 11am. to 2pm. and I would set off quickly in her direction. I always looked in at the local shops first and would often find her in the grocers chaffing away with the assistants among whom she was a great favourite. Until I went shopping with Ella Parker I had not heard such quickfire repartee since the days when I used to tag after my Aunt Alice.

When she saw me she would invariably throw up her hands and exclaim: "That's my dinner late again; this little brat will keep me gossiping". Sure enough after I had helped carry the groceries back, we would make a cup of tea and sit chattering till she had to jump up suddenly to make dinner for my cousin Alison who came in at noon. Alison worked in an office and her friendship kept me securely tied to the 'outside' world and prevented me becoming too hospitalised.

These excursions outside the hospital were of great benefit to me. Only now, looking back, can I see just how generous my Aunt Alice was in providing a home open to me at all times. Although it was by luck that all my friends were outside the hospital world; I soon perceived that I should not leave this to chance. Because, when I observed the generation of sisters above me, I had no desire to emulate them.

These sisters had grown up under an even harsher regime than mine (a fact that, when young I had difficulty in believing, now none at all). They were all extremely efficient; their wards ran like clockwork, but they made our lives (and often the patients too) absolute hell. Not even the best sergeant-major could have surpassed their powers of invective. They could not use 'bad language' but they more than made up for this in venom. It was as if every young nurse was an affront to them: we had to learn - but they never conceded this. That you did not arrive a fully trained nurse was an offence of the deepest hue. Most of them could reduce the nurses to tears in very short order; all their demands were high and inexorable. They were unreasonable and tyrannical. Now why was this?

Simply because they did not live a normal life. Their whole world was bound up in their ward. They were loathe to go off duty; many stayed on well past their time off. Some did not take a full day off; some would come back on their day off. Their ward filled their whole horizon. They were full of frustrations of which they were but dimly aware. Their rage against youth was a valid one--for their own youth had been stolen. They were imbued with "the work must come first" principle (and so it must) but in them it had curdled.

To the sisters of this stripe and time -- the nurses of today with their 44 hour week, their larger salaries, their talk of overtime money and double-time on Sundays would have seemed as remote as the moon.

Science Fiction! Now how did that get in here?

Recently I have acquired a swop for SCOT..in return I get a copy of GALAXY. So, after the lapse of over a year, I am seeing what GALAXY has to offer these days..and I don't think very much of it! To me it seems as if the majority of the stories are written for the horrorfan. THE BAD LIFE, Feb '63 issue, by Jerome Bixby offers a good example of what I mean. It is the story of the torment of a man marooned on a prison planet - and could equally well be set in any prison, prisoner of war camp, or what have you here on earth. I cannot think who would enjoy reading this chronicle of hurt unless it were a horrorfan. It's certainly not sf.

Another that left me cold is an award winner--THE DRAGON MASTERS by Jack Vance. This isn't sf either, but fantasy pure and simple. Fantasy, however seems to be the sf fan's new love. Everywhere I turn they are obsessed by it. Here is the latest ANALOG serial by H.Bean Piper--SPACE VIKING it is called! Just let me quote you the synopsis..."The Sword-Worlds were colonised by the losers of the Systems States War in the Ninth Century, Atomic Era. Refusing to surrender to the Victorious Terran Federation, the defeated rebel navy fled beyond the farthest outposts of the Federation and occupied a dozen hitherto undiscovered planets, naming them for swords of old Terran legend--Excalibur, Durendal, Flamberge, Joyeuse, Morglay, Gram,--and on them developed a technologically advanced civilisation, and a loosely feudal society which seemed quite workable in spite of endemic interbaronial fighting and dynastic wars"....Now read on.....But not me!

In sf I expect something new, for heaven's sake, not something rehashed, the old legends, the same dreary historical adventures. These battles don't

ring true even if they are waged with the use of spaceships instead of horses. I don't believe in their barons; their harking back to the names of romantic fiction merely irritates me. I don't even start to read them anymore. All it wants is someone to rewrite MORTE D'ARTHUR on Mars--and I'll go back to detective stories!

Of course there's GLORY ROAD----I read that..but it is the first time I have skipped whole lumps whilst reading Heinlein. He is a superb craftsman, and can't help but make it seem more real to the reader..but glory, glory, let's hope he don't do that no no'.

What I have enjoyed reading lately is the Proceedings of the Chicon III. I can highly recommend this; it is worth getting for the speech by Theodore Sturgeon alone. However, there is another recorded speech by Marvin Mindes which was entitled SCIENCE FICTION, MENTAL ILLNESS, AND THE LAW, and this is a real 'think piece'. There are a whole lot of good hints for sf stories in this speech--if any sf authors are looking for them--

Before I finish this column I would like to acknowledge the immense help I receive from the criticism of my friend Frances Varley. It is the very best kind of criticism for it is constructive.

Herewith follows a couple of quotations from THE WAISTHIGH CULTURE by Thomas Galbraith. Any comments?

"I the British definition of political responsibility, American political parties are irresponsible. A congressman adheres to a party, but feels an obligation only to his electorate. He does not accept responsibility for the conduct of an administration even when his own party is in power, and will disown it rather than go down with it. He may at all times by his votes safely oppose the administration without dislodging it or himself in so doing. What the British find hardest to understand about American politics is the opposition of a powerful Southern committee chairman to a Democratic President, or the resistance of a Republican majority leader to a basic recommendation of his own president. But the British system, if more logical, has great disabilities too: an M.P. will think twice about voting against his party if it will bring down the government, or will subject him to party expulsion; even the Opposition, with its 'shadow cabinet' assembled on the front bench in expectation of office, must be mindful of the need for discretion and discipline. Independance of vote is becoming rarer in British parliamentary life: the proportions of each majority are set at election time, and remain relatively fixed except for by-elections; abstention is almost the only form of protest left."

"We are all hopelessly dependant on one another, and the only question is whether we foolishly seek to deny it. The essential art in contemporary life is how to be independant of the crowd without being estranged from it. We all need to make an island of our own, and too few do; but many who make an island neglect to build a bridge back."

and thats all....

Ethel.

Trade

You sent a letter

Sample. Want more?

You subbed and are due.....more issues

Contributer

This is your last issue unless I hear from you.



