

SOUFFLE

SOUFFLE 1 is, like all good souffles, a light, frothy concoction, although I rather fancy this has fallen a bit in the baking. It will be, however, served up to the jaded palates of members of the Off-Trails Magazine Publisher's Association for their 30th Mailing, December 1961, in the hope that such people will have such indigestion after reading WHY IS A FAN? that the added discomfort from this quarter will not be noticed. The editor of SOUFFLE is John M. Baxter, easiest reached at Box 39, King Street Post Office, Sydney, New South Wales, AUSTRALIA. Date published October, 1961. Cartoon on page 3 is by Phil Baxter - all other material, including logos, by the editor.

.....

I believe it is customary, even mandatory, to introduce oneself when entering an organization like OMPA, if only to prove that you are not Bob Tucker in an unusual transatlantic plastic disguise. I have no doubt the quality of this 'zine, or lack thereof, will prove this to the satisfaction of everybody.

To dispose of unattractive personal statistics first, I am 21 years old, and will be 22 on the 14th December next. I weigh anything between 12 and 14 stone (168 to 196 pounds), depending on the weather, the food and the financial conditions obtaining out here. For reasons best known to itself, the N.S.W. Government Railways have had me on its payroll for seven years, give or take a few. They wouldn't let me drive an engine, so I contented myself with a job as clerk/liasion officer/tea maker par excellence, a position to which I am admirably suited. I'd still like to drive an engine though.....

Some of you people will know me through my genzines QUANTUM and later BUNYIP, locs, the occasional article and so on. This is my third year in active fandom, although I rattled around Sydney clubactivity for a few years before discovering the delights of publishing. OMPA is my first venture into the wide world of Apa (pun for film fans only) and, though I am on the FAPA waitlist (who isn't?), I expect to confine myself to this august body for sometime before conquering greener fields.

My interests are the same as those of the average fan - sf in small quantities, preferably well aged and from ASTOUNDING circa 1940-50. I have a fairly keen interest in modern, repeat modern jazz (mouldy fygges need not apply); films of any kind, so long as they be good; food, with the same qualification; and most anything else that can be diverting. Now that I've become engaged, my fiancée Merie has precluded me from adding women to that list, which is probably a good thing anyway. I already like good sf, good films, good jazz and good films - with a trend like this, I would be forced to cultivate a taste for good women, which god forbid.

Cleaning up the fringes of this ego-boo binge, I like Coca Cola, PLAYBOY, French actress Juliette Mayniel, Vivaldi's Concerto for Two Violins and Strings,

the painting of Velasquez, Betty Kujawa's voice, WEST SIDE STORY, Dwight Mac-Donald's film reviews in ESQUIRE, DISCORD, roast pork with apple sauce, books about Egyptology, Tom Lehrer and "sick" humour in general, the writing of Charles Burbee, the word "baroque", THE COON SHOW, religious choir music and the name "Valancy", with which I intend to christen our first daughter, despite spirited resistance from almost everybody.

I dislike the Hugo Awards, flies, radio serials, 50% of American fans, 100% of Australian fans (less say five, just to save my reputation), cauliflower, THE READER'S DIGEST, girls who walk around with their arms folded, long drum solos, war novels, THE SOUND OF MUSIC, film censorship and not being able to get to sleep at night. OK?

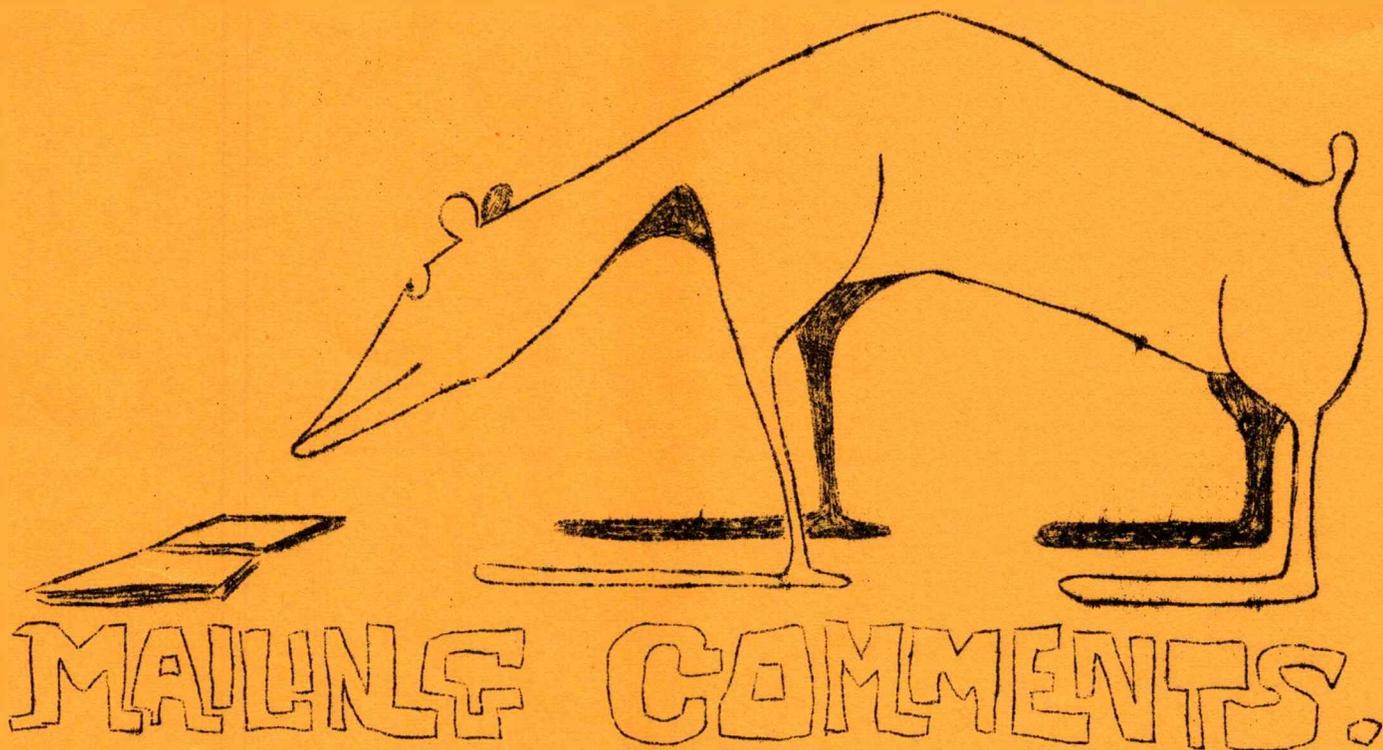
DEPARTMENT OF RED-FACED REALISATION. or ULP!

Not being content with failing to write a loc on Archie Mercer's AMBLE 7 when he sent it a few weeks ago, I have also (inadvertently, I assure you) missed it from my naught-type mailing comments overleaf. Perhaps I could ignore this oversight with only a momentary qualm but for the fact that Archie kindly sent me £1 sterling some months ago to cover any future issues of BUNYIP which I might produce. Since then, I haven't done another BUNYIP, and it maybe a few months before the fifth issue appears. To make up this unavoidable lapse, I joined OMPA, the only apa of which Archie is a member. Oh, I've made a right mess of this. Anyway, to make up to M. Mercer in some way, here are comments on:-

AMBLE. (Mercer). About photos and such, Ken Cheslin sent me a snap of you a few letters back. You were sitting in one of those poky take-your-own-photo booths, chin on fist, staring fixedly at the lens as if it were the stationary navel of an otherwise violently active belly-dancer. It was, to say the least, a startling portrait. I said to Ken that you looked like "Crowley", but, not being a keen student of the black arts like you and I, he didn't quite follow. So help me, you did look like Alister Crowley, The Wickedest Man In The World, and so on. It was that stare that did it. I don't suppose.....no, you couldn't be. He died of sexual exhaustion some years back, I believe. Half his luck.

Of course, I don't know about you ~~with these~~ traditional jazz fans, but in modern jazz it is possible to have a favourite tune, though rather difficult. In performance, most melody lines get so inverted, perverted and generally stood on their ear that it is practically impossible to pick up the original melody or follow it for any length of time without unnatural concentration. I have quite a few "favourite tunes" - I'LL REMEMBER APRIL is one, also Ellington's IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD, an adapted Swedish folk-tune called DEAR OLD STOCKHOLM which Miles Davis interprets beautifully on his ROUND MIDNIGHT album.

Words only "constrict" the music onto which they're hung if the tune and lyrics are basically incompatible and the arrangement does not do justice to both aspects of the song. Look at the song "Laura" for instance. This is possibly the finest example of blending in the history of popular music. David Raksin's lyrics (and they are lyrics, too - not just jingly words but real poetry) fit Johnny Mercer's music perfectly. Without one, the other is lost. The writing of popular music has slipped considerably of late - perhaps you've noticed this, hurrn? For this reason, you may have forgotten some of the fine popular tunes that were written in the 30s. Some of them had words as good as most poetry, and music which did those words justice.



OFF TRAILS. (Burn) Perusal of the membership list reveals the startling information that I am the only member of OMPA resident in the southern hemisphere. Just think - half a world all to myself. Maybe you had better come back home, Bruce - things are starting to overbalance.

I hope the 29th Mailing isn't indicative of all those to come. 15 contributors out of 45 members is pretty weak, I think. What exactly is the problem here? A quarterly schedule is loose enough to permit the publication of at least a six-page effort without it interfering with fanac and mundane affairs. Hell, out here, I have a six to eight week mailing delay on second-class material, yet it wasn't difficult for me to make the 30th Mailing, and I already have my 'zine for the 31st. stencilled and ready to be duplicated. True, I do have a little more time than most to spend on pubbing - the joys of a bachelor existence - and various fans, Bruce Burn most of all, have helped me out by running off stencils and so on. But at the most, putting out an apazine takes a week, or maybe two. Are OMPAs so cramped for time that they can't take even seven days off to fulfil apa requirements?

Isn't Joe Patrizio's name spelt with a "z"? You have it "Patrisio" in the membership list. No, I'm not quibbling with your spelling - it's just that I have it with a "z" in my mailing list, and you know how finicky some fans are about their names..... Why, I remember how het up a young New Zealand fan became when the OMPA president spelt his name "Burns".

WALDO. (Bentcliffe). One of the worst features of Australia is its isolation from other countries. Oh sure, it's very handy when the A-bombs start to fall, but I'd gladly trade my security for a chance to visit the kind of places which to British fans are more-or-less next door. Nice, St. Tropez, Mentone..... and all for about £100 at the very most. Alan Dodd had a day in Paris for only £8! It's enough to make one cry. Sometimes, when I mention my yen for a Riviera holiday to some Britfan, he will say "But look at the beautiful beaches you have in Australia. They're much better than

anything you can see in Europe". And they're right, I suppose. None of the films I've seen have ever shown a beach quite as large, as white, as clean as Bondi, Coogee, Freshwater and the other Sydney-side swimming spots. I wonder why it is that the French resorts sound so much more alluring. Maybe it's the atmosphere - no exiled artists, ex-Grand Dukes of Russia, slumming stars or Paris models on Bondi, nor any outdoor cafes. No bikinis either - they're banned, at least in theory. For any girl with her fair share of charms to display, going to the beach in Australia is a battle of wits. According to the law, everybody is supposed to wear costumes with three-inch legs and shoulder straps, but in most cases, this particular piece of idiocy is ignored. The beach inspectors generally approve all two-piece costumes providing the trunks measure three inches from belt to thigh. Anything showing a surreptitious half-inch of exposed hip is out. So perhaps you can understand why inveterate girl-watchers, of which happy band I happen to be a leading member, would dearly love to make the same kind of trip as you did, Eric.

About ALIEN IN THE ACADEMY..... Conditions in re science fiction and the academic world must be very different in England compared with Australia. The "evil image" on which Doherty speaks certainly isn't present out here, at least not to the same extent as it is in British schools. On the contrary, I find most teachers out here, even those in the higher echelons, are very interested in the better type of science fiction, and do all they can to encourage children to read and appreciate it. In fact, when a book of modern short stories was published last year for use by secondary school children as part of their English Lit. course, two sf stories were included. One was Arthur Porges' THE RUUM from R&Sf, the other an associational piece by Murray Leinster, the name of which I can't recall right now. In the introduction to this anthology, the director of English Literature in the Education Department devoted two paragraphs to sf, and pointed out that, as a means of expressing new ideas and encouraging imaginative writing, it was invaluable to all persons interested in literature. I don't feel that this view is especially unique out here - I've seen the same idea expressed quite often by teachers I know socially. When I was at school, I regularly wrote fantasy and weird stories for class assignments and, while I often got slammed for poor writing and worse construction, no teacher ever questioned my choice of subject.

Citing part of C.L. Moore's SHAMBLEAU as the kind of literature which should not be read by "a young virgin of sweet sixteen" (are you serious, Mr. Doherty? Girls of sixteen who devour this kind of stuff are....oh, never mind) is unfair, biased and just plain fuggheaded. First of all, the extract used in the article was taken from a story written nearly 30 years ago (Black God's Kiss, isn't it? About '33 or '34 in WEIRD TALES, if my memory is still working alright). To say that it is representative of the sort of sf available these days is absurd - I haven't seen a comparable yarn since UNKNOWN folded. True, SHAMBLEAU and other stories was reprinted recently by the WDL/Consul people in Britain, but this is the first printing of the Northwest Smith/Jirel of Joiry stories outside America, and their first appearance in paperback ever. Hardly the kind of stories which are likely to be available to every "Young virgin etc etc".

I don't deny that sf has its pornography, its junky action-for-action's-sake stories, it's yarns of dubious philosophical and scientific reasoning, but these objections are equally applicable to contemporary literature in general. When you get down to it, it has to be admitted that children shouldn't be reading things like SHAMBLEAU, if only because they wouldn't understand it very well, but by the same token, they shouldn't be reading, say, THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GREY or

THE MOON AND SIXPENCE either.

Personally, I don't see the point of introducing science fiction into the English Lit. syllabus if doing so is going to cause dissension and argument, as it has apparently done in Mr. Doherty's case. Perhaps it is important in the development of a mature appreciation of literature - I don't know. The idea smacks of the sf-is-the-only-literature movement which has quite a few members still, and which I dislike intensely. If one feels it necessary to inculcate such basics into the children as moral and philosophical appreciation, wouldn't the end be better served by having them read something less remote than science fiction? Anyway, Mr. Doherty is apparently making his presence felt - I notice that one of the London publishers has recently put out an anthology of sf stories in hard-back which is tailored for use in schools. The title is OUT OF THIS WORLD, as I recall. Seems a fair little anthology of the more conservative type of sf, mainly from British authors. I'd be interested to see what reaction the average English teacher has to it. Ron Bennett - care to make a statement?

THE WALL. (Groves) How much will you guys take to kill this serial with the next episode?

JETSTREAM.. (Linwood). Looks like OMPA is chock-full of jazzfans. Dentcliffe, Linwood, Archie Mercer (though he likes trad. stuff, poor mutt) and yrs. truly; Pressure group, anybody?

I don't share your enthusiasm for the Peter Gunn background themes. Certainly, Mancini managed to pick some fine men to work with, and this in itself puts the music on a higher plane than some of the other junk one hears, like the execrable Rugolo music for THRILLER. However, Mancini is essentially a formula writer, with only one beat, one idea, one emotion. Even the mood pieces on Peter Gunn are only swingers slowed down. My vote for the best tv jazz goes to Bernstein's STACCATO, but I guess the quality of the show influenced me quite a bit here. One of the early programmes in the series - it was called FAITH - was a masterpiece. Remember it? It was just as improbable as the other episodes, but there was a spark of genius to it. I hope the popular acclaim for SHADOWS doesn't encourage Cassavetes to drop acting. He isn't anything very special as a director - in fact, when compared with even minor American men like Frankenheimer, he is overshadowed - but he could be a very fine actor if he worked at it a little longer.

MORPH. (Roles) Very little one can say about this zinc, based as it is on mailing comments about a bundle I haven't seen. The answer EYETRACK's attack on booksellers was quite entertaining, as was the book review piece. Hope you can manage to fit more of this kind of material into future issues. One thing I will comment on, though, is your remarks on Christianity. You cite the refusal of the Roman church to accept science and rational philosophy in general as a sign of stupidity. Personally, I think you're right - they have taken the line a little too far, and this has robbed the church of what little meaning it once possessed. But you must remember that the Roman Catholic hierarchy has a very good argument to support their attitude, and it is one which accepted by most devout Catholics. To the church, the current trend towards scientific rather than religious thinking is just another change in public opinion, and not important enough to worry about. They feel, with some justification I think, that eventually the world will revert to a more superstitious attitude to life, and the church will once again become the potent force it was in the Middle Ages. This is why they continue to celebrate the old ceremonies and preach the same

ideas as five hundred years ago. The Anglican and other Protestant churches are racing round the merry-go-round, intent on keeping up with the horsethey want to ride, while the Roman church is calmly waiting for it to come round again to where they are. I find both activities singularly unattractive, but there is no accounting for taste.

If I may keep on with this business of the Roman church and its apparent inconsistency with everyday life, have you ever asked a well-read Catholic the old question "How does the Roman church reconcile birth-control with the 'population explosion'?" ? I did, and the answer came as quite a shock. As far as I can tell, the attitude of Rome is that, if God wants to control the population, He will do so in His own good time and in His way. A plague, perhaps - maybe a war if things need cleaning up drastically. To us, this is illogical, inhuman and unscientific - space travel is, to us, the only answer. We forget that the devout Roman Catholic has a deep personal belief in a God that is interested in him. If God wants him to get cancer, ok - no doubt God has his reasons. If God wants a war, fine - again, God is supposed to know what he is about. In the face of an attitude like this, how can you apply the criticism that church dogma is "unscientific"? To these people, there is no science that is not part of god's plan, and consequently there is no clash.

CONVERSATION 13. (Hickman). Nice art - is this an example of the stuff you have in JD-A? What were those sub rates again?

Coulson's reply to your request for review copies of YANDRO is typical of the man. Of all the illmannered boors in American fandom -- and there are quite a few, as you know - he is a leading contender for a Fughead of the Year Award.

SOUNDS. (Lichtman). I have dropped out of genzine publishing because the response was too small to justify the time and expense put into it. During the last three years, I've published 12 issues of a genzine, and while it climbed steadily in quality during that time, the response (by this I mean trades and locs, rather than comments in personal letters and from friends) stayed extremely low. The most popular issue I ever put out drew a 40% response, i.e. about 40 people out of the 100 who received copies sent me a letter, a trade or some material. As my mailing list was drawn up almost exclusively from the ranks of active publishers and writers, I think this is a lousy return for my work, and what enthusiasm I had soon evaporated. I've never bothered to explore the possible reasons for this ^{low} popularity. It could have been the quality of material (though this was no lower than that of B-class US 'zines). It could have been the editorial policy, or the fact that I'm an Australian, and so have no personal contacts in other countries except through letters. There are many alternatives - if any of you OMPANs have read BUNYIP or QUANTUM, I'd like an opinion.

Now that you have fafiated, Bob, I don't know if you still want the answers to this poll thing, but just in case somebody should want to tabulate the answers..... Yes, I would accept 1000 dollars a month, tax-free, if it were offered to me. I don't quite follow what you mean by "activity to benefit soccety", but if you mean would I give to charity, help my fellow man, or even work, the answer is no. The oldest law of nature is that everybody takes care of himself. Strip away the trappings of "civilization", and you get down to raw self-preservation, the only instinct which remains despite the most intensive kind of treatment to break the will. Society is just a means of banding together to preserve one another's life, so if one has the means of doing so without recourse to society, eg. 1000 dollars per month, what reason is there to continue

supporting it? It's like an immortal paying health insurance. The second question.....I don't think I would have any choice one way or the other as to whether I would want to survive or not. Everybody wants to survive, despite logic, disease or discomfort. I would survive as long as I could, and I would only die when it was absolutely impossible to avoid it. As I said before, self-preservation is a vital force - don't underestimate its power.

I'm not a book-collector either. At least not in the sense that I go out looking for books that I will never read, but which are "items". I buy a lot of reading matter, and I seldom sell it again or throw it out. Sometimes I buy a book purely on appearance, but not very often. While most of my library consists of sf, I've never confined my buying exclusively to this field, and at present, I'd say by buying was split 50/50 between sf/fantasy and mundane. Counting prozines, files of FILMS AND FILMING, ESQUIRE and reference books, I have about 2000 to 2500 items. How does this compare with other members' shelves? I know it's pretty small beer, but the book field out here in the boondocks is pretty barren.

Your library of "non-sf" consists mostly of stuff I would call "associational" rather than out-and-out mundane. Children's fantasy, parody, cartoons etc etc are all put on my sf shelves, while the non-sf spots are reserved for mainstream novels, reference material and suchlike. One of these days, I'd like to follow your example and run through my own shelves, or at least part of them. There are few things more fascinating than talking about one's books. Humana, I was not surprised to see THE CATCHER IN THE RYE sticking out like the proverbial sore thumb from your other stuff. This novel is one which seems to have a readership drawn mainly from the age-group 16 - 25. It isn't juvenile - certainly not - but one identifies very easily with Holden Caulfield, and the affection which you feel for him adds a kind of warmth to the book which one seldom sees in the modern novel. I don't know what Salinger's new novel, FRANNY AND ZOOEY, is like, but I doubt if it could be as good as CATCHER.

paraFANalia. (Burn). So this is the report which was supposed to run in BUNYIP. Chagrin forbids that I should comment on it, except to say that it was nicely written, and probably too good for BUNYIP anyway.

ENVOY. (Schultz). Huh????

OPHIDIAN. (Hansen). I wish I could have handled my own introduction to OMPA as well as you did, Chuck. Hope you have something comment-worthy in the next issue, especially if it as well-written as this.

HUNGRY. (Rispin). To think I wrote a loc on this only a week ago! To sum up that particular effort, I thought (a) that the parallels between jazz and sf certainly exist, especially when a comparison is widened to include modern as well as (if you'll pardon the expression) traditional jazz. (b) it is bad form to pirate professional material for a fanzine, as Alan has in A DAY WITH THE BEATS. Most of the gags in this are from a Tony Hancock radio show. (c) Archie Mercer's report on the Bruce Burn ~~thing~~ welcome was one of the most amusing things I have read in some considerable time.

SCOTTISHE. (Lindsay) You have apparently read Josephine Toy's THE SINGING SANDS, so maybe you can tell me where that title comes from. I haven't been able to buy a copy of the Pan pb out here, and the title is driving me even crazier than

I am already. From the dim and distant past, I remember a poem about "the stones that speak, the streams that stand" and then, later "the singing sands/ that guard the way to paradise". It sounds suspiciously like something that James Elroy Flecker might have written, yet I can't find it in any of his collections. Can you rescue my sanity?

ERG. (Jeeves). Here's another fanzine on which I've already written a loc. Oh well.....as I said in my letter, I admire the industry which resulted in this neat and excellently produced satellite listing. Would that I had the enthusiasm and persistence necessary to produce anything so elegant. I don't think the rumours about Gagarin not being the first man into space are exactly "unsubstantiated", although admittedly the Russians have not made any official announcement on the subject. The Russians aren't wizards - I'm sure they have their failures, and it is quite reasonable to assume that some of these could have caused the death of earlier astronauts, especially since they were pushing their man-into-space programme to the limit in order to forestall Project Mercury. It is known that Russian missiles have blown up on the pad in the past, and some have malfunctioned and been destroyed. There are some other facts around too, all of which prove nothing, but add up, with a little imagination.

Fact 1. Sergei Ilyushin, son of a leading Russian industrialist, was known to be on the short list for first man into space. He underwent training for the job along with other candidates. Fact 2. Some months before the Gagarin launching, it was announced that such and such a day would be a momentous occasion for Russia. Fact 3. On that day, garbled sounds resembling a Russian voice were picked up coming from space. No announcement was made by Russian news sources. Fact 4. Since that day, Ilyushin has not been heard of nor mentioned in the press, although there are reports that a man answering his description is in a mental hospital outside Moscow. Maybe I'm imagining things, but this is very very suspicious.

VAGARY. (Gray). This Wray guy got in touch with me too. Apparently he has wangled some fanzine addresses from Pete Campbell, editor of EAST AND WEST. I didn't bother to answer his request for a complimentary sub to BUNYIP, but after seeing the change you got out of him, I'm wondering if I made a mistake. It certainly was a mistake to send a copy of BUNYIP to EAST AND WEST. Ever since then, I've had nothing but trouble. Somebody sent me a copy of THE OCCULT GAZETTE, nuts from all over the world pester me with letters and circulars...one Indian (Eastern variety) asked me to contribute all my spare books to his project. There was no mention of distributing them afterwards. Sounds like a dandy way to build up a collection,

.....

Sorry my first ONPA effort didn't consist of anything more than mailing comments and a brief introduction. You can blame this on John Foyster, the foul Melbourne fan who has thus far failed to come across with the material I sent to him for duplicating three weeks ago. With any kind of luck, that 'zine should be ready for the March '62 mailing, and I promise you it will be infinitely more interesting than this bitsy effort. There are a couple of articles, some cartoons, controversial-type editorial topics and, wonder of wonders, a cover! Was there ever such luxury? Until next time, cheers.

jb.

THIS HAS BEEN A VANITY PUBLICATION.