

# DEFORMAZIONE SPAZIALE

Better known to its loyal readers, perhaps, as:

## SPACEWARP

ISSUE \*76

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SAPS MLG. 63

As I rec-ll, it has been some 16 years and 74 issues since the last hand-lettered edition of SPACEWARP. But with our household goods (i.e., typer) not yet here, and dire threats of expulsion staring us in the face unless we have six pages in the 63rd mailing, this seems to be the only feasible method of satisfying the implacable OE. Besides, now that I've reminded myself that this is SPACEWARP's 16th Ann-isa, it seems the fannish thing to do. (I hope it is another 16 years before you try it again...BEP)

Neither Nancy nor I have ever used ditto masters before; if you get this zine and IGNATZ in the bundles, it sort of proves that we are following the correct procedure. If we aren't, of course, you'll probably never know. I'd ask the advice of the NFFF Fanzine Advisor, who ought to know, but that's sort of impractical mainly because he's me.

Memory is slowly returning - for example, at this point I recalled the reason the early hand-lettered SW's used a narrow-column format is because it's much easier on the eyeballs than trying to track these wavering lines across the page.

The Italian word for science fiction, my dictionary assures me, is FANTASCIENZA, but as yet I don't know if Italy has a fandom, or potential fandom. Casual scanning of the magazines displayed on newsstands hasn't shown any that are obviously sfines (as you know, it's not as easy to tell by the cover illo these days as it was back in the '40's), and I will have to improve my Italian vocabulary somewhat before I'm competent to make inquiries.

Well, to make a short story long (six pages long, at least) we piled into the ole chevy on the 14th of December, a day or two after being visited by Bruce Pelz, not to mention getting a phone call from Betty Kujawa, who was at the El Paso airport but who decided not to drop in when she learned that we were in the midst of packing for the movers.

Most of our fannish files, including the mimeos, went into storage to await our return to the U.S. With a 2,000-Lb. limit on what we could take along, we figured we could get along without even such essentials as FANCYCLOPEDIA II.

Proceeding through Texas and Oklahoma we were accompanied by Nancy's mention of each time we passed a place offering for sale her favorite food, "Arkansas fried chicken." She subsided into baffled silence, however, when we crossed the border into Arkansas, to find that there the drive-ins all advertised "Georgia fried chicken."

The weather was sunny and warm all the way to the Mississippi, and we did not begin to encounter traces of snow until Northern Indiana. Up into Michigan the skies were gloomy and the winds icy, but on the whole road conditions weren't nearly as bad as we anticipated. We stayed a couple of days with my aunt in Saginaw, but decided not to attempt the trip to Petoskey to visit my sister, since they were having snowstorms in that part of the state.

It was about the twentieth of December when we set out once more, headed East to spend Christmas with Nancy's folks in Daville. By this time snow was obvi-

ously in the offing, so we reluctantly passed Detroit without stopping to visit Howard. Sure enough, we ran into snow in Ohio, not a great deal of it falling, but plenty of it already on the ground, and altogether adding up to slow and nerve-wracking driving conditions.

Things were a bit better when we got to the Pennsylvania border next day, and we took the mountain road to Portage, to give ol' Al Toth a chance to meet Stevie. By the time we got there, mid-afternoon, it was beginning to snow in earnest, so we cut our visit short and left around 4:00 P.M., daylight almost gone, amid the horrified protests of Al and his sister that we should stay overnight rather than drive over the mountains in that sort of weather. We weren't very happy about it ourselves, but figured if we stayed we might get snowbound in Portage and not make Danville in time for Christmas Eve.

It was a pretty rugged trip. We didn't have either chains or snow-treads, and we were following a route through the backwoods Alleghenies where getting stuck might have meant a long walk for help. The snowplows were out, keeping the roads fairly clean, however, and the main difficulty was that the snow was falling so thickly that it was impossible to see more than a few feet ahead.

By 10:00 P.M. we were within about 30 miles of Danville, but when we finally saw a motel we decided to stop until morning rather than battle the elements any longer. It would have taken us another two or three hours at the rate we were going, anyhow.

By next morning (the 23rd) the snow had stopped falling, though the skies were overcast, and we had no difficulty getting to our destination, where of course Stevie's grandparents immediately took up the task of spoiling him where my aunt had left off a few days before.

Winter weather really cracked down on that part of the country a few days after Christmas, with -10° temperatures producing stalled cars all over town. On one occasion, while we were staying with Nancy's brother whose house is at the top of a four-block hill, I managed to get up three blocks of the icy street only to ingloriously run out of gas, spinning my wheels in an attempt to make the last hundred yards.

On the other hand, on days when the weather was good we enjoyed driving around the scenic countryside, quite a change from the desert surroundings of El Paso.

Our orders finally arrived, directing us to report to the TWA ticket counter at Idlewild Airport on the nineteenth of January. Stopping overnight to visit one of Nancy's sisters near Philadelphia, we headed up through New Jersey on the 18th in fog so thick that we saw absolutely nothing of the state. Of course, judging from what I've seen of New Jersey on previous trips, that was probably no great misfortune. (A foul canard, Sir, which can only be excused by the fact that you are from Michigan and Texas. . . .) Brooklyn is, if anything, even more depressing. We had to drive fifteen miles past the airport to find a place to stop for the night.

The 19th presented a problem in logistics, since I had to turn the car in at Brooklyn Army Terminal which, as you might expect, is on the far side of town from Idlewild.

I drove to the TWA terminal, deposited our mountain of baggage, Nancy and Stevie, and then went to turn the car in, and finally returned expensively via taxi since the clods at Brooklyn Army Terminal could suggest no way of getting from there to Idlewild via public transportation except by a roundabout route involving half a dozen bus and subway transfers, over which they were haggling among themselves when I left in disgust.

The only favorable thing I can say about Brooklyn is that driving through it was good practice for facing the hazards of European traffic.

Our 707 jet left at 18:30, with overcast skies and light snow whipping across the runways in 10° temperature. My one objection to jets is they fly so high you seldom see any of the country you're travelling above; this flight was no exception. At daybreak we touched down at Shannon, Ireland. 10° Temperature, overcast skies, light snow whipping across the runways. Need I describe the conditions at Orly Airport, Paris?

The weather cleared as we crossed the Alps, however, affording a stunning view of the jagged granite peaks below, and the sun was shining brightly when we landed at Milan at 1400. This was the 20th, a Sunday. Total flight time, 13½ hours. Now that's what I call travelling!

There were half a dozen family groups disembarked at Milan, and there we sat for three hours, waiting for someone to show up to tell us where to go next. By the time all the mothers were getting hysterical about what to feed their babies, a bus finally arrived, and we made the final 5-hour trip to Vicenza (with a stop at the PK delicatessen in Verona so we could lay in a supply of milk and baby food for that night at least.)

Things looked considerably brighter when we finally got to Vicenza and were met by my section chief, who had our hotel reservations all arranged and who spent most of the next week chauffeuring us around while we got all the paperwork done and so on.

Unfortunately, the enlisted men's quarters at this post are two-story houses with the bedrooms and bath on the second floor, but until we can locate suitable housing off-post, we are living in the transit billets, a government-leased apartment house, where we have a spacious two-bedroom flat. The most striking thing about it is that it is completely floored with marble, that material being as common in Italy as coal is in Pennsylvania.

Stevie is now ten months old, and just about ready to start walking; he has already reached the stage of hauling himself to his feet on anything handy, which is moderately disastrous when it happens to be a curtain or tablecloth. In self-defense we bought him a playpen yesterday, and though he walks round and round in it, holding the bars and wanting out, it at least makes it possible for us to take our eyes off him momentarily without wondering what mischief he'll get into next.

He now has four teeth and a complicated vocabulary which Nancy claims to understand, but which as yet bears little relation to any known language.

Last week I finally got the long-awaited word that the car had arrived at Livorno (Leghorn). So Friday I went down there to pick it up, preceded, of course, by a great deal of paperwork, since I had to have a SETAF Driver's License, insurance, gas ration authorization, etc. Luckily I found that I still remembered most of the International Road Signs from my tour in Germany, so the driver's license test was a cinch.

The car survived its voyage pretty well, the major damage being a smashed stop-light and a bent tailpipe. I also found that one of the front parking light bulbs was burned out. Consequently I was anxious to get back to Vicenza the same day to get the damage repaired. It was nearly noon, however, before all the necessary paperwork was done - not that there was a lot of it, but it took me a couple hours to locate the place where incoming vehicles were stored awaiting pickup.

After six weeks of not driving, plus being on the road in a foreign country for the first time, I felt like a beginner at driving all over again. Also, the Hallweg map of Italy I was using is one that unfolds to a meter square or so, with any attempt to use it only partially opened invariably resulting in the portion wanted being buried somewhere in the inner folds. At all times while wrestling

this vast expanse of roadmap with one hand and the steering wheel with the other, I was simultaneously converting kilometers to miles in my head to avoid exceeding the speed limits, which varied.

Also, in Italy the main variation from stateside driving is that the car on the right always has the right-of-way, meaning he can shoot out of a side street or alley, or even a driveway, into your path, and don't think the motor-scooter or Fiat drivers hesitate just because there's two tons of Detroit iron bearing down on them.

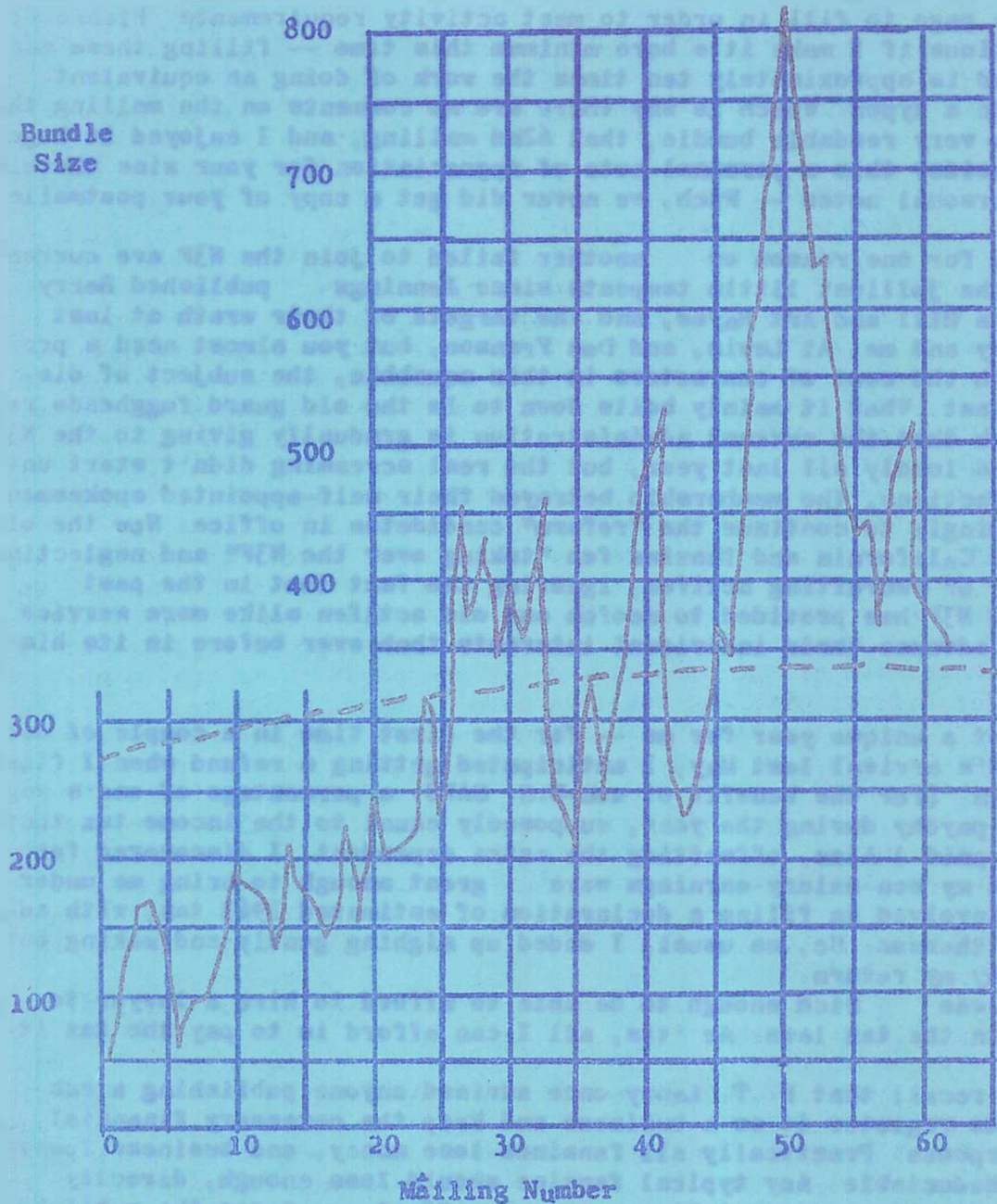
Anyhow, what with all these matters demanding my attention I managed to miss the turnoff to the autostrada (limited-access toll road) and several miles beyond it found myself instead on the outskirts of Pisa. So I said the hell with it, I'll use the regular highways instead. So I proceeded up the ~~Variante Road~~ (oops, that would be quite a trick -- I mean the Ligurian Coast!) to La Spezia, then cut inland across the mountains to Parma. This was fabulous scenery, rugged mountains with tiny villages clinging to their sides, and the only drawback was that the road was still covered with snow and ice in spots. It wasn't too bad going up, but as I neared Parma and began descending towards the lowlands again I often had to proceed at 10 or 15 MPH because of the icy curves.

Stopping to gas up at a tiny mountain village, I had the good fortune to encounter a gas station attendant who spoke German, of which I'm not a fluent speaker, but am several hundred times more competent than in Italian, so far. Anyway, he assured me that the direct route from Parma to Mantova was excellent, so that my planned roundabout route by way of Cremona was unnecessary. This I found to be true -- at Mantova the road became a limited-access (though only two-lane) highway that by-passed most of the small towns. It was about in as good a shape as a county road in the Midwest USA, and for this country that is praise.

The sun was setting as I passed through Mantova, and I poured on the gas to get as far as possible before dark. By the time I got to Verona it was pretty dark, but since that is only about 30 miles from Vicenza, it seemed silly to stop there. The trouble is, you see, that in Italy you don't use your headlights in night driving, unless you're out in the country away from all streetlights. Otherwise, all you can use are your parking lights, and as I mentioned, I had one of these out in front, and of course the one included in the smashed tail light was missing in back.

This meant that every second or third driver who passed either flicked his headlights or tooted his horn at me to warn me that one of my lights was out. I drove on grimly, and much to my surprise managed to get home without being stopped by either an M.P. or a civilian cop.

All in all, European driving is not something to be done for pleasure, compared to American driving, at least. There are simply too many traffic hazards, plus inadequate and poorly-maintained roads, so that the driver sees little of the countryside through which he is passing. The famous swarms of motor scooters in Italy are passe, incidently; the current craze is for Fiats and Volkswagens, probably an encouraging sign that the standard of living is still improving here, but certainly doing nothing to help traffic conditions. Of course, with autos here just now becoming something the average man can afford, Italy (and the rest of Europe) is about in the automotive equivalent of the USA <sup>1920</sup>, and it is unfair to sneer at their inadequate highway system. Once they get the housing shortage taken care of, no doubt they'll embark on a road construction program that will catch up to the U.S. in a few years. Up until now there has been no mass need for multi-lane expressways in this part of the world.



As you can see, my statistics predict a bundle of 340 pages for the 63rd mailing. Let's make that "at least" 340 — you can see for yourself that we've run over the predicted curve for four years now. Let's keep it that way!

Excuse the somewhat crudded-up chart. I'll be glad to get back to good ole mimeo stencils next time! (You and me both. My tracing probably didn't improve things any with the chart, but at least I kept the accuracy...BEP)

Well, one more page to fill in order to meet activity requirements. Please do not call me unambitious if I make it a bare minimum this time -- filling these vast blank sheets by hand is approximately ten times the work of doing an equivalent amount of wordage on a typer. Which is why there are no comments on the mailing this time, too. It was a very readable bundle, that 62nd mailing, and I enjoyed it hugely, and you can consider this a personal note of appreciation for your zine therein. Speaking of personal notes -- Rich, we never did get a copy of your postmailed WARHOON.

You people who for one reason or another failed to join the N3F are currently missing one of the jolliest little tempests since Jennings published Berry. On one side are Alma Hill and Art Hayes, and the targets of their wrath at last count included Nancy and me, Al Lewis, and Don Franson, but you almost need a program to keep up with the cast of characters in this squabble, the subject of dispute changes so fast. What it mainly boils down to is the old guard fuggheads resenting the new look that the current administration is gradually giving to the N3F. They protested loudly all last year, but the real screaming didn't start until, in the fall elections, the membership betrayed their self-appointed spokesmen by voting overwhelmingly to continue the "reform" candidates in office. Now the old guard mutters about California and fanzine fen "taking over the N3F" and neglecting the neofen in favor of recruiting actifen, ignoring the fact that in the past couple of years the N3F has provided to neofen and old actifen alike more service and opportunity to advance their individual interests than ever before in its history.

This was almost a unique year for me -- for the first time in a couple of decades, due to Steven's arrival last May, I anticipated getting a refund when I filed my income tax return. (For the benefit of non-U.S. SAPS: a percentage of one's wages is withheld each payday during the year, supposedly equal to the income tax that must eventually be paid.) Alas, offsetting the extra dependent, I discovered for the first time that my non-salary earnings were great enough to bring me under the complications involved in filing a declaration of estimated 1963 tax, with advance payments due thereon. So, as usual, I ended up sighing gently and making out a check to accompany my return.

Gee, I wish I was rich enough to be able to afford to hire a lawyer to find me loopholes in the tax laws. As 'tis, all I can afford is to pay the tax itself.

Incidentally, I recall that F. T. Laney once advised anyone publishing a subscription fanzine to register it as a business and keep the necessary financial records for tax purposes. Practically all fansines lose money, and business losses are eminently tax-deductable. Any typical fanzine should lose enough, directly and in the form of equipment depreciation, etc., to offset any taxes the publisher might have due on his ordinary mundane job wages. How about it, Howard, do you take advantage of tax loopholes in the second-hand mimeo and magazine business? Al-ec, how about you Nameless Ones who maybe keep up CRY in order, at tax time, to laugh?

See ya next mailing. Arrivederci.

Art.