

# SPINNAKER REACH

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Vol. 2 No. 1 was mailed to the FAPA membership plus only those on the waiting list who struck me as being possibly interested. This procedure left a few extra copies on hand. Since V2N2 will actually be sent to Les Gerber for the SM, it will reach some who didn't get V2N1; any who would like to repair the omission have only to drop me a pc.

Having thoughtfully left this page to the last, I am aware of the incompleteness of my year's commentary on DISCORD on pp 9-10. I shall therefore continue it here. As mentioned, #14 never reached me, and so we are come to #15, November 1961.

Redd Boggs has a delightful talent for striking an utterly fey and outré note to lead off each issue. The quote from the archives of the Haskell Co. was a revelation and of course an hilarity as well..

Masters of Space was such a dreadful story that three pages of review seems disproportionate. Replacement of all body C by Si, if possible, would completely ruin the body chemistry in so many ways that it is absurd to list them all (just try excreting SiO<sub>2</sub> as a gas instead of CO<sub>2</sub>). The vague pretense that exposure to a flood of radiation can supply energy to keep the siliconized beings going is beyond all reason. Mercifully I saw only part 2 of this mess.

Now here's a letter from the admirable poet, Jean Young, with warm praise for A. J. Budrys which I beam to see but (as embarrassedly explained on p. 10) in which I have distressingly been barred from joining. Still more appealing, Jean Young is one of the few alert and sensitive enough to respond to "those moments when life ... seems imbued with a reality or significance beyond itself." Thus, I'll long remember 'Thaw' from Discord #10, even beyond the time when all Discord dies. JY may be that rare soul, the 'idle poet' in Coventry Patmore's 'The Revelation', which runs as follows:

An idle poet, here and there  
Looks round him, but, for all the rest,  
The world, unfathomably fair,  
Is duller than a witting's jest.

Love wakes men, once a lifetime each;  
They lift their heavy lids and look;  
And, lo, what one sweet page can teach  
They read with joy, then shut the book.

And some give thanks, and some blaspheme,  
And most forget; but either way,  
That, and the child's unheeded dream,  
Is all the light of all their day.

THE PAPERS OF ANDREW MELMOTH  
by Hugh Sykes Davies; William Morrow & Co. NY 1961

Reviewed by Arthur L. Widner

If you have a rather conservative friend who likes Henry James or Victorian literature in general, and you've been wondering how you might ever possibly introduce him to science-fiction without getting looked at askance, this book, possibly could do the job. The style is painfully slow-moving and restrained, and at the end, one wonders what all the ponderous build up was for. Unlike Drury or Marquand, who start slowly but sweep you along quietly, powerfully and remorselessly toward the end, like the Mississippi, Davies leaves you circling idly in an eddy with no sense of the cumulative force of all that went before.

The impression probably comes from the fact that there just isn't enough material here for a novel. Andrew Melmoth, an altruistic scientist who is abnormally detached from mankind, discovers that fallout is causing rats to mutate and evolve very rapidly, and that they are on the point of establishing a sort of caveman culture with rudimentary communication, ceremonials, etc., and that's about all there is to it. Melmoth's character, which leads him to desert humanity and try to help the rats, is mildly interesting, but not nearly as powerfully done as, say, Dorothy Johnson's picture of a white man becoming an Amerindian, in one of her jeweled short stories, "War Shirt." Perhaps Davies meant this theme to dominate, but if so, he never allows us to get close enough to Andrew to really care whether he goes to the dogs--pardon; the rats--or not.

The dispassionate narrator, thru whose eyes we see what little action there is, is a pretty detached fellow himself, telling us things second and third hand, or digging it up by dint of a tedious bit of research. Even Melmoth's boyhood traumatic experience, which contributes much to making him what he was, and which could have been very moving at close quarters, has the effect of Joe Suburbia's vacation slides seen from the third balcony of a very large theatre. One starts gawking around at the gilt cherubs and the missing bulbs in the chandelier, wondering when its going to be over and if he sneaks out early, could he make it home in time to catch most of Dave Brinkley's Journal on TV?

Curiously, in contrast to the impression that there isn't much content, I found myself wishing that the author had developed more fully certain points which he left hanging. One of these is early in the book when the behavior of laboratory rats is compared to the weary anomy of most of mankind, doomed to infinite variations of the treadmill. Another unintegrated but interesting bit is the thought that perhaps the cessation and resumption of nuclear testing may

be becoming a sort of symbolic replacement for war and a concealment of the effects simultaneously.

The supporting characters are even more shadowy than Melmoth, especially the females. Andrew's "girl friend" eventually becomes mentally ill, but we never find out why, nor does it seem particularly surprising since she seems to be a little "kooky" from the start, anyway. This "love-interest" (and I can't see any other reason for her presence) is so low-keyed as to be almost non-existent, and just gets in the way of the rest of what little story there is.

On the positive side, I find that I can't quite bring myself to say 'don't bother reading it.' Perhaps there are subtle literary overtones that my pragmatic mind didn't catch. I'm thinking especially of a little short story "found among Melmoth's papers" called "The Quiet Cove," which I find myself at a total loss to explain or explicate. The writing is quite different from the rest of the book, and quite gripping; Kafkaesque, in fact. Perhaps it only hints of some incestuous relationship between Melmoth and the aunt who raised him; perhaps it is a central link that would make all the other seemingly disjointed links come together with a sharp snap. Perhaps....but you read it and tell me if your perception is much different from mine.

ALWAWLLWALAWWLAWALALWALWALWALWALWALWALWALWALWALWAWLLWALAWWLAWL

EARTHLIGHT by Arthur C. Clarke

This novel of adventure on the moon is in many respects interesting, plausible and enjoyable, but it ends in a fiasco beyond all belief in a supposedly scientific age of science fiction. Since I have a limited acquaintance with all that is published in prozines and fanzines, I may have missed a review or several, but those that I saw studiously avoided any discussion of Clarke's atrocity. Clarke may well have intended it as a trial to see what he could get away with, and if so, the answer is plainly "Almost anything."

I now rise to denounce the fantastic scene where Clarke "rescues" the crew of a derelict spaceship & its hold full of passengers by having them pass thru space to the rescuing craft without benefit of spacesuits. To give this rubbish an air of plausibility, Clarke points out that a period of rapid breathing with deep inhalation can temporarily inhibit the need to breathe, for a period of several minutes., and if I remember rightly, he also mentions that the structure of the body can easily withstand pressure differentials of more than one atmosphere between internal and external environments.

All this, while true in itself, is mere camouflage, just as Weinbaum's justifiable observation that 'space' as such does not have a temperature 'cold' or otherwise, served as a pretext for his introduction of humans skipping nimbly through an absolute vacuum in one of his stories of some 30 years ago.

Both Weinbaum and Clarke conveniently ignore the elementary fact that the human body is not constructed to maintain an internal pressure different from that of the surrounding environment; the adjustment from 1 atmosphere to 2 or 3, and the reverse adjustment back to 1, takes place fairly rapidly and in general is not particularly harmful. But the adjustment from 1 to 0 atmospheres is different in nature, for as the pressure approaches zero the blood and other body liquids at body heat will begin to boil, and this effect will be inevitably fatal.

Considering that the episode in question is extraneous to the main plot line of EARTHLIGHT (and not the main story gimmick as in Weinbaum's older tale), it seems doubly regrettable that Clarke threw this strange deal in. To be sure, in the old days we calmly swallowed things equally incredible, but in my view the rise of science fiction is closely tied in with increased emphasis on plausibility. This may only mean that as I grow older I feel less inclined to put up with fantasy in my science fiction reading, though at the same time I am willing enough to be amused by fantasy itself. In any case, I feel Clarke spoiled an otherwise coherent and unified story which contains some impressive scenes and good writing.

misterclarkemeetmrvacuummrvacuumeetmrc ClarkeIknowyoulllike

### My Life as a Martian

Time was when Mars seemed closer to me than it does now, and in those days, if not completely gullible, I was at any rate more inclined to be tolerant of errors in my sf. reading. John Carter's method of reaching Mars (teleportation in effect) did not impress me, and the discovery that Dejah Thoris laid eggs (literally) vastly tickled my sense of the ridiculous, especially the Carter-Thoris union was still more wildly represented as fertile. The atmosphere was less of a strain to accept, especially as Burroughs kept throwing in remarks about its thin-ness, and eventually revealed that only a plant (factory) manufacturing air kept the Martians going. The vast extent of the dead sea bottoms and the comparative scarcity of water were helpful features of the background. So in spite of his more obvious errors, Burroughs made it possible for me to live on Mars for a considerable number of years.

Although it would have been easy to list inconsistencies and contradictions which would have ended my stay prematurely, I cannot seriously regret the time spent on Barsoom. It is not the nominal story line and corpse producing activities that made this experience worthwhile. It is simply the atmosphere of the stories, the chance to wander through a deserted seaport on the fringe of a long vanished sea, or see the twin towers of Helium rise improbably tall and fine against the Martian sky. The various characters are mostly stock figures, the Thuvia's way with a bath was ever striking, and even so, were I to be greeted with a "Kaor", I'm sure I should recognize the Martian greeting with the ease of long familiarity. Despite all the lamentable defects, there is still a certain persistent power behind Burroughs' depiction of a Martian world that could never be.

My next voyage to Mars was in Lawrence Manning's "Wreck of the Asteroid," where our lifeboat landed in one of the lowest depressions on the surface, and found the remnants of Martian life in this small pocket of denser air. No broad picture of planetary life could emerge: only the decadence and essential ruin of the last few survivors and the hawk-moth which somewhat implausibly survived to prey on them and provide drama by attacking the human landing party. We were thankful to repair our wrecked craft and make it back to Deimos (or was it Phobos?) where the mother ship was sensibly parked waiting our return.

You would think that this contact somewhat more realistic Martian conditions, and the narrow escape, would have dimmed my enthusiasm for living on Mars. Yet I have been back on many a subsequent occasion. The disconnected episodes of Bradbury's "Martian Chronicles" seem to have left but the vaguest of impressions on my mind. But I think it was in Marsport that I learned Kornbluth's famous drinking song, which begins, "X is for the ecstasy she gave me, E is for her eyes, one two and three, T is for the teeth with which she'd shave me, S is for her scales of ivory...etc." And it might have been in another Martian city that the sound of "The piebald pony and the gaunt gray cat, Sliding down to Venus on a comet's tail..." came to me from the city jail. Then there are the echoes of Rhysling's rhymes, tho I can't remember the once-lovely words to 'The Grand Canal'.

My most profitable stay was doubtless in Heinlein's "Red Planet," for here we touch on a Martian race which retains dignity, power, and formidable, unexplained secrets: exactly the ingredients to keep them firmly in mind. How much nobler this concept than the pathetic if more plausible herbivores passed off on us as Martians in "Sands of Mars"! In Lewis' 'Perelandia' however, I quickly became confused and lost, which shows that there are some notions I don't seem equipped to understand. Yet on the whole, I've enjoyed being a Martian, at least as a part time job!



## Sixth Shadow Mailing

Even if regrettably limited to 3 participants, there were still 40 pp. (hurrah for Chuck Hansen!).

PANTOPON There's something to your plaint that getting one FAPA mailing from surplus stock and then not being able to get the next one is bound to be aggravating. It happened to me. Not that I regret what I was able to obtain. I'm not a completist in anything where the odds are stacked against me before I start. I've got all the Sports Illustrateds ever printed, tho. They only began in 1954. And I had a complete file of Galaxy once, but my wife -- ah, sob, I can't bear to go on.

Heaven as a nebulous concept, thought of as a reality not explained or defined, could well be more satisfactory than any attempt to put down details. "Capt. Stormfield's visit to Heaven" is the only good try I've come across and needless to say it wasn't intended too seriously.

I don't see how anyone who remembers Galadriel should be in doubt about 'Ring' or 'Rings', since she wore one of the Elf-rings which would remind us that the One Ring wasn't the whole show.

I don't think that production of over 100 should be required for contributors to Shadow Mlgs; we have already lost Norm Metcalf, who publicly exults in the decrease in his press run.

Would the stories you tell yourself be private, or could we see one in some future PANTOPON?

You'd improve your little 'zine if you took a vow to abstain from use of those utterly useless words "have no comments.." After all, if you don't print any its obvious you didn't, and "Enjoyed it." is certainly more satisfactory all around than "Enjoyed it, but have no comments."

THE LURKING SHADOW As usual with any detailed conreport, ample evidence is provided to make old antisocial me appreciate the home fires more than ever. But as long as I don't have to travel afar and get mixed up in all sorts of activities that would ill-suit my aging physique, it is reasonably entertaining to read about affairs such as this. Especially since Chuck's complete lack of sophistication and his unaffectedly goshwow approach to it all is rather touching on the whole. You couldn't mistake him for a good writer, but his joy in it all spills over effectively into his conreport, and makes his account more pleasant reading than lots of more technically polished English could ever be. I will even forgive him for the barbarian reference to (ugh) "a phenomena" on p. 5.

I'm well aware of the fact that Elmer Perdue is a pleasant and entertaining fellow, but I still think retention of non-active members in FAPA is hard to justify. I don't expect to change my mind later; I would not petition to be retained if I

failed to meet the activity requirements (which are after all rather modest.)

You need not trouble about Ellis Mills and his choice of the floor for slumber. In many respects a floor or other hard surface makes a sleeping place much superior to a modern Western style bed. I've slept on stone in comfort, on a wooden platform high in an oak tree (supreme luxury) and on ordinary floors (quite comfortable). Ellis probably got more and better rest than most of the conattendees.

Rather enjoyed the auction story. Hope that Bjo has been reading about the price of "Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer" and has thus been brought back to reality concerning the probable value of her paintings. (Even if it means you'll have to bid higher each year!)

fap #3 These confident boasts about minimum lateness ought in my view to be softpedalled. I think you predicted lateness of 1 week and came up 4 weeks late; if I had realized it I could have made the 6th shadow after all with a bit of extra effort.

You are absolutely right that I care not a fig for WL #36 (after all, he may prefer apples or grapes). So I'm shipping 105 according to your request. But don't think I'm fooled, 65 plus 35 I can add as well as anyone. Looks as tho we go down to WL #40 before reaching end of line.

I had to get my Dean Drive plans from the Patent Office; the tip about Campbell Soup Labels failed. You misleading your public at such a tender age? I couldn't understand the Dean patent, anyhow. Campbell's Mag is not much better off than his soup labels; dianetics! psi! divining rods! Dean Drive! What a singularly poor batting avg. Yet the man has a restless, inquisitive mind. He just might come up with something valuable some day. I am not unwilling to keep reading Analog just to see.

Publication in a language other than English is never likely to become the hallmark of a lazy FAPA member; therefore rest easy and fret not over the AILLEURS precedent. But how about translation from a foreign language into English? This offers a certain scope for originality without being technically original work. Again, it requires a good bit of effort and is hardly the dream of a lazy FAPAFan.

When you say that respect can be shown in better ways than by dressing up, I notice that you don't mention these ways. The requirements most colleges have as to students' dress and behavior have not struck me as unreasonable, and I don't believe that the students who flout these rules are especially noted for showing respect in other ways!

IQ cannot properly be measured at the adult level; the whole set up was devised to compare the relative development of growing children.

## Under the Sun . . .

**IDLE HANDS #6** This liberation from the Land of Awful Shadow is perhaps a just reward for time loyally served with the rest of us shades.....Don't tempt me with rash remarks about printing presses. Alvin Fick accomplishes such marvels in the way of printing that I had already been debating the matter. Tell us more, quickly, about how hard the work is and how long it all takes, before its too late... If it were true that drivers in any particular place were worse than the national average, I should think that the prevailing insurance rates would be a convincing guide to the phenomenon. Much more convincing than anyone's personal experience.....You missed your chance; you had the theme for a sf. story in your solitary confinement speculations, but someone beat you to it in (I can't find the issue) maybe the Dec. 1961 Analog (cover story?)....I marvel that more of us don't write sf. instead of leaving it to some more energetic parties. Unfortunately, publishing fanzines is too easy since the material produced on the first careless try is all too apt to be sent out into the world by the happy author; ie, success is assured in advance, a chilling inhibition on difficult, original, and good work that must run the critical gauntlet of other eyes. I fear too many of us prefer the easy small success of producing a fanzine to the more challenging and difficult work of producing saleable science fiction. Gosh, I'd better stop before getting to the point where I prove that Bob Tucker is an impossible phenomenon.....

There you go again mentioning Cloud Nine. Could someone please tell me how this reference to Cloud Nine started? None of my immediate friends seem to have any idea, tho most have heard the expression used. ....Sally Kidd should be braver and throw out all fanzines after reading them. In this way, any checkmarks made in them wouldn't come back to bother her.

There's a good deal in what you say about casting Idle Hands into the non-responsive shadows & I can see why you prefer to limit the circulation to those who show at least some interest.

**ETWAS #6** Radiation sickness appears to be caused by the production of 'free radicals' by direct hits of the radiation on molecules in the cells. The 'free radicals' are abnormally reactive, unstable chemical groupings, and their existence and products tend to short circuit the normal metabolism of the affected cell. Some experimental success has been reported with drugs designed to take the free-radicals out of action before they lead the cell chemistry irretrievably astray. It seems likely that the degree of resistance to the free radical effect, and therefore to radiation sickness, does in fact vary from one person to another; whatever our other qualities, some of us are doubtless more 'fit' to survive in a radioactive environment than others.

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**ERROR CORRECTION:** Since writing the commentary on Idle Hands (p.8) I have discovered that Worm in the Woodwork in Jan. 1962 ANALOG is the tale featuring solitary confinement which struck my fancy. It isn't a cover story but the illo struck my fancy and made more of an impression than any recent cover.

And here I am suddenly with an extra page.

**BOBOLINGS 7** Sort of a visit from a small miracle; I would never have believed that a rundown of mechanical contraptions could be thus entertaining. The banshee 120 mph speedometer, and Ted White's demonstration that the car was narrower than Bob thought, were the highlights.

After all this action, the chapter on girl-watching seems a bit of a come-down. Spectator sports? Thing thing to do is not idly watch, but find out if there's more than meets the eye. As it is written, 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.'

**DISCORD #9-10-11-12-13-15** I didn't even realize how much I appreciated this abundant fanzine until #14 failed to appear. Alas! After Donald Wollheim made the predictable ass of himself by equating the USA's partial support of the Cuban freedom fighters with Nazi Germany's ruthless extinction of innocent people, in #13, I was looking forward to seeing him properly rebuked in #14. On the other hand I never wrote my own loc, and Redd Boggs could be excused for wondering just why I am on his mailing list at all.

"Ten minutes at the drugstore newstand and my day was ruined." (#9) Could well serve as the epitaph for '61.

As far as I know S&S are interested in publishing for profit & would drop any money-loser. Where is the Wild West Weekly (price 10¢) now?

In answer to RB's request for women who have written good novels, other than Jane Austen: JA wrote books which all run together shapelessly in my mind; I couldn't hope to tell you the difference if any between Sense & Sensibility and Pride & Prejudice; so I'm not a JA fan. But you could try Margery Sharp (example, 'Brittania Mews') for stuff that reads as well as JA's books, and shares with them the trait of being momentarily enjoyable but quickly fading from mind. (My mind). In a way it must be a mental deficiency which causes one to forget so completely all the details of a book which has received one's full attention for an hour or two, but when a defect is universally present in all but a minute fraction of the human race, the possessors of this defect can become unbelievably complacent about it. There's a plot for a sf. story somewhere behind this observation.

On into #10 It seems Juffus has not accepted your appointment as chairman, or otherwise I am sure the minor matters would have been cleared up during 1961, allowing us to proceed in '62 with the indicated 8 States instead of the present unwieldy 50. Think what 16 Senators could

accomplish which will forever be beyond the grasp of the unwieldy 100-member group.....Your review of 'Occasion for Disaster' is a pleasant reminder that for once I quit reading a serial after Part I and never wanted to know, and thankfully never did know, anything more about it....On to #11 and a pleasant conreport (8 fans move from 200 seat auditorium to the 'ermans'). The review of Search the Dark Stars reminds me now that I meant to get a copy; anyone willing to sell, trade or lend?....I'm with you at the thought that tons of woodpulp cringed when it became clear that they must bear the burden of John Carter & the Giant of Mars. In my opinion 'Thuvia, Maid of Mars' is much superior to JC & GoM; there is good reason for believing that ERB wrote very little of his later works, which were probably hacked out by writers in his employ....The Castillo Perpetual Peace Plan seems almost entertaining enough to take halfway seriously....

Reaching 12. Went right on thru and voted for Farmer's letter as most interesting bit in the issue. Not just because I agree on the merits of Ring of Bright Water, either. I hope PJ Farmer and MZ Bradley are correct in their assessment of sf. trends; I'm well in the mood for deep space myself and if Farmer can throw in real characters, reasonable explanations of the Good and Bad tags applied to the guys, and even a plot that makes some kind of sense, I'll be indeed a contented customer. But I make such trips on curiosity, not wonder.

.... And now Discord 13 The clever pastiche 'A stir of hugos' is thoroughly amusing...Algis Budrys is a fellow for whom I have a genuine liking and respect, coupled with a distressing inability to remember anything whatever about any of his science fiction that I may have read. I can't understand this, since I seem able to remember quite a bit about the stories of, say, Hal Clement, James Blish, Philip Farmer, Edgar Pangborn, McIntosh, Asimov, and even G.O. Smith, as well as those who flourished in older days. And more that I haven't happened to name. Well, Budrys' 3 page article is more of the same; he makes a number of excellent points, I agree with much of his analysis, yet 5 minutes after re-reading the whole thing I am hard put to recall anything about it. I publish these remarks not with any idea of annoying the un-offending Budrys, but out of genuine puzzlement. I should like to know if anyone can report a similar mental block (or whatever it is) towards the writings of another (not necessarily AJB of course).....When Avram Davidson remarks that the four Greats of Science Fantasy (illustrators) are Paul, Dold, Finlay and Bok, another window in my mind opens on all but empty landscape. I asked myself to recall at least one illo by each of these 4 and I couldn't do it. Paul was indeed my only success. I think one of the issues in which 'Skylark of Space' appeared had on its cover a scene on Ganymede, the local flora being represented as something like that of Hawaii but the whole scene dominated by the weird grandeur of Jupiter on the horizon. Then some years later there was an Astounding cover showing men outside on the hull of a spaceship while the drive is on (!). All else fades...