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SUN SPOTS

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By TOM WISE

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By RODERICK GAETZ

EDITORIAL

War Affects Fandom

With the price of paper, inks, and the other essentials of printing a magazine, going up steadily, many of today's publications have been forced to raise their subscription rates. The editors of SUN SPOTS have talked the situation over and have decided to keep our fanzine at its present size and cost, despite the world conflagration.

This issue is about a month late in its appearance, but as the saying goes, better late than never. We have been noticing the

influx of fanzines has slowed down to a mere crawl since the United States was forced into the war. Naturally many of the fans and authors will be inducted into the armed forces before another year has passed. This will mean the decrease of fanzines and of active fans. If the paper shortage becomes too acute several of the pro magazines which aren't doing so good right now will fall by the wayside.

It is doubtful however if the war can entirely kill fandom, at least if we can judge by the standards set in the first three years of the conflict by the fans of the besieged British Isles. Those fans who are not yet of military age must continue the growing work of fandom so that when the war is over the older fans may return to a thriving fandom in which they may continue where they left off, rather than being forced to rebuild that once great brotherhood of readers and writers of Science Fiction. The older fans leave it to you, the younger ones to keep the banners of science fiction flying. Don't let them down.

A Quatrain From Nostradamus

The year that Saturn and Mars are conjunct and combust

The air will be very dry and there will be a long trajectory (comet), Through incendiarism a great locality will be consumed by fire,

There will be little rain, with wind, heat, wars and incursions.

This configuration occurs in April, 1998. It is the year that Nostradamus predicts the great invasion of France.

THE .007 REVIEW

By

L. R. CHAUVENET

"A very low form of life, intelligence .007, unworthy of our attention."—from a story by A. E. van Vogt.

Like all columnists allergic to heavy thinking, I shall not hesitate to use the bright thoughts of other people to aid me in my columnar task. If, therefore, from this bright flower, the .007 Review, you pluck the nettle, quotations, say no that no warning was given, or that innocent readers were lured to a doom worse than death. On the other hand, I refuse to promise that I may not indulge in the luxury of a few original thoughts once in a while, if only for the joke. I will promise, however, to try to get many things in here with only the most tenuous connection to fantasy and science fiction, unless the editors move in force against this hopeful campaign.

For some while I have been wondering about the frequently heard comment "...but it doesn't belong in a fanzine." Is there, in fact, any reason for drawing a line between topics which are suitable and not suitable for discussion in fanzines? If so, where should the line be drawn? Let us start by taking a look at what is actually being published, in recent issues of VOM, LE ZOMBIE, SUN SPOTS, FANFARE, NOVA, SPACEWAYS, SOUTHERN STAR, ECLIPSE, ZENITH, FANTAST and a characteristic mailing of the Fantasy Amateur Press Asso-

ciation. The art work in general shows easily recognizable fantastic trends; on the other hand, many nudes appear, often without even a pretense at including fantasy elements. Publication of fan photos is also becoming quite popular. Passing on to the fiction, it is quickly found to consist almost exclusively of imitative attempts obviously inspired by the type of stories printed in the pro sf, magazines. The exceptions are of two kinds—first, such strictly fan serials as SPACEWAYS' "Werewolf" and FANTAST'S "Road to Fame", depending for their interest on the reader's previous knowledge of sf. or sf. fandom or both, and, second, parodies and other efforts at the achievement of humor.

Articles Interesting

The articles offer a wide range of topics. The faithful fanzine reader can learn the technique of sound recording, discover whether or not the sense impressions of different individuals are apt to be similar, read about the adventures of several fans on a trip to a convention, peruse a handwriting analysis by an expert graphologist, be told how to criticize the pro mags, learn that he is ineffectual and living in a dream world, discover that fans are crazy, or are not crazy, come across attempts at character analysis of prominent fans by their friends, encounter discourses upon devil worship, metaphysics, pacifism, the world of the future—and

so on, indefinitely. In addition, most fanzines are quite willing to publish poetry for its own sake, and much of the poetry in fanzines neither has nor is intended to have a fantasy element.

The conclusion to which study of this broad panorama leads me is that in actual practice there are, and in theory there need be, extremely few taboos. Increasingly, the criterion of an article or other feature in a fanzine has come to be, not, "Is it fantasy?" but "Is it interesting?" Though it may be the common interest in sf. and fantasy which holds fandom together, fans are in general interested in many other and different topics; that they should talk about there, as well as about sf. and fantasy, in their fanzines seems to me both natural and proper. As I have remarked elsewhere, the thesis advanced by Palmer and others (notably E. E. Smith in the first issue of NOVA) that because sf. fandom owes its existence to the pro magazines, sf. fandom would become aimless and purposeless without them (i.e., without fantasy), is not a thesis with which I am in more than partial agreement. For, while our interest in fantasy adds enjoyment to our lives, it is understandable that the development of sf. fandom may result in the evolution of ideals not wholly compatible with the interests of the professional sf. magazines.

With the trained dexterity of the practiced columnist, I'll now chance the subject. Future shifts may not be prefaced by even this brief notice—fair warning to all. I have just dug up out of my files a newspaper clipping: "Colorado tourist travel in 1941", is says, "was 23 per cent greater than

it was during 1940." Of course! Every true fan can explain that one.

The recent reports (by Ackerman, Yerke, Widner, Rothman and so on) regarding the sideline activities at Denverlast summer, which appear to have consisted largely in attempts to see who could swizzle the most beers, lend point to the following quotation from J. R. Guilford's "General Psychology": "The desire for prestige may express itself in the struggle to amass wealth, gain political power, excel in athletic prowess, in dramatics, the arts, science or learning. It may show itself in less worthy ways, such as in trying to "keep up with the Joneses," in social climbing, or in beer drinking contests and the like." So now you know why...

Perhaps one of the most delightfully candid admissions I've noticed in some time was the remark of the "Fact Finder" in the last SUN SPOTS that "many S-F writers and authors ...are in who's who." That accounts quite neatly for all the stories I don't like—they must be the ones by the writers. Similarly, if I like a tale, then the man who wrote it is an author. I am thrilled by this discovery, since I had never been able to tell a writer from an author before. And now we have an infallible system.

Milty Rothman's discussion of "The Hampdenshire Wonder" in a recent MILTY'S MAG was good and stimulating. To me, however, the most significant remark in the book was the observation, "Subtract the endeavor to demonstrate a preconceived hypothesis from any known philosophy, and the remainder, the only valuable material, is found to be distorted." When I read that, I felt compelled to stop reading and try to

apply it to my own philosophy, such as it was. The results were most humbling and enlightening to me. How much there is which I believe only because I want to—and how little which has been thought out rationally and dispassionately! Ah, yes, I suppose I will go on clinging to my cherished little beliefs—but it is to be hoped I will do so less dogmatically, and with less arrogant self-assurance. Else my case will indeed be pitiful, for he who can no longer learn has died the final death.

Discourse On Death

And speaking of death, Ackerman's article in the last SUN SPOTS seemed to me not merely entertaining, but also encouraging. J. B. S. Haldane, the great British biologist, writing on the same subject, remarked upon the curious inconsistency of orthodox Christians in placing such a high value on the body in what is supposedly a spiritual religion. If there is truth in spiritual dogma, why place emphasis on reverent treatment of the discarded and useless shell? Haldane goes on to observe that it is the living human for whom we feel affection—or other emotions. Once dead, there is only the corpse. He believes that in the future people should be as willing to turn their bodies over to hospitals for medical research as they are now to turn their money over to their heirs. In fact, he says that both he and his wife have made such a provision in their wills. The suggested custom seems reasonable and right to me. Maybe as a biological student I am prejudiced, but during my life I intend to try to accomplish something useful, and I would be glad to be able to feel my usefulness would not entirely come to an end with my

death.

In a more philosophic vein, but on a similar subject, I might mention here that I believe awareness of his own mortality is one of the greatest tests an individual is asked to meet. While the leaping sense of youth and power still remains with me, it is quite impossible to feel, emotionally, that I, too, am mortal; I cannot even form a clear conception of myself, of ME, the Louis Russell Chauvenet I have always known, as an old man of 60 in 1980. It is impossible. It simply can't be done; the mind won't work that way. You see, experience has always told me that I am young, and all that I know has been learned by experience, and I have come to rely heavily on experience. Thus it is that my knowledge of my mortality is still an intellectual, not an emotional conviction.

Indeed, I found it difficult, some years ago when I was about 13 or 14, to reach that mental conviction; I was helped immeasurably, I remember, by Mary Twain's greatest book, "The Mysterious Stranger," which has influenced me more than any other book, if only because I read it at a time when I was prepared to be influenced. Some people, of course, are never able to reach even this mental conviction of their mortality, and advance serious claims that they will survive death, that their bodies will be resurrected, etc. If such feel happier while thinking in that way, I should feel reluctant to blame them, though I might criticize their logic.

This discussion has served to remind me of an argument I once had with a friend about W. B. Yeats'

(Continued on page 11)

THE TRASH BASKET

By N. E. BODY

FLASHES:

L. Ron Hubbard, famous science fiction writer is reported to be back in the United States recovering from a wound received in action. Hubbard it a Lt. Commander in the United States Navy... Otto Binder is the man who we said was rumored for that job with Fawcett Publications after Eddy Herron was inducted into the army. Otto is now editor of several Fawcett Comic magazines... Manly Wade Wellman has just sold an 18,000 word short novel to PLANET STORIES, entitled, "Venus Enslaved." Wellman, incidently is still awaiting action on his commission in the army... Author J. J. Millard and Co-Editor of SUN SPOTS, Roddy Gaetz are both air raid wardens here in Westwood... FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES has joined the other stf mags in raising their prices to 25c a copy, with an increase in the number of pages... Do you know who author N. J. Westwood is? He has a series of stories appearing in THRILLING WONDER. We know who it is...

Harry Schmarje and Morten S. Handler are printing a new fanzine to be called STARLIT FANTASY... Correction: The Windy City Wampires and the Frontier Society are two different organizations but they are planning to jointly use the fanzine FRONTIER for their club organ. In view of the present National Emergency, however, it is not definite what steps are to be taken... Well, till next issue, Keep 'Em Flying, and re-

member those letters of comment on this issue.

—SP—

Last Minute Man

Roundup of late items...

Second issue of *Scientifun* received. A great improvement over the first numbr. Mimeoing and material is better. Good luck Raym... Reason for no "Sun Squawks" this issue is (1) Not enough room, (2) Not enough letters. Thanks to those faithfuls who wrote in on the last issue. Come on, all of you drop us a line... An article by Raymond Washington, Jr., has been crowded out of this ish, but will be with us on the next trip... The super-duper anniversary issue of *FANTASITE* arrived too late for review. It is best fanzine to appear in 1942 so far according to the opinion of ye eds. It is 70 pages, all neatly mimeoed in black ink with red ink used on the titles of articles and departments. Their is a complete page of pictures of the Minnesota fans. There is also a swell cover by Morris S. Dollens. Ye Eds give it a 5-Star Rating!

—:—

Take The Train

Save Your Tires

—:—

Memoirs Of An Stf Fan

OR

How To Convince Your Old Man

By DAVE MILLER

The summer I was eight years old, I met a man; a very fascinating character to me because he had a large collection of Detective mags. It was the largest one I had ever seen and I have yet to see one that is larger. I used to hang around his house and look at them wistfully until one day he said I could borrow some of them.

Well, I started home dragging a whole mess of those magazines. My parents cast dubious eyes in my direction when they saw me reading them, but other than, said nothing. One night they went away and left me in the house alone. I immediately procured one of the most horrible mags I could find and settled down to read. Before the night was over I succeeded in throwing myself into such a fright that...well, I never expect to be that frightened again.

I lay there with the light burning, afraid to move for fear of what might happen or what I might see. When the folks came home they found me still there, in the same position I had been two hours before. My father said then that I couldn't read another pulp magazine until I had the brains not to take them so seriously. I sorrowfully took the mags back to the man, and read nothing but the best of literature until I was twelve. That summer a friend gave me the first stf mag that I had ever seen. I was completel yovercome by it and so inducted under the banners

of science fiction.

Were Burned Up

From then on I began bringing the magazines that I read out into the open. At first when I was caught with reading them the mags were burned up, to my great distress. But after the folks saw that I couldn't be "cured" they left me alone to read what I liked, except for a caustic comment or so. Sometimes when I was slow to obey orders or rake the yard they would say, "It's that darned old trash that he reads that's clogging his mind." Well, I guess that was at least partly true because for almost a year all I had seen, said, dreamed, or thought had been rocket ships flying around or time machines or some such thing.

Then, joy of all joys, a "corry" in North Carolina sent me a shipment of that master of all stf mags, that maestro among mags, ASTOUNDING. They had Cosmic Engineers in them, and from then on I spent all my money on stf mags. I took to showing my father the best science articles I could find and all the logical editorials in favor of and expounding the merits of science fiction. I remember an editorial by a famous author, I forget who it was by or in what magazine it was, but I showed it to Dad. He said that was all very well that stf was escape literature, but I was just a kid and needed no escape literature.

We argued back and forth for a couple of hours and finally he made me a proposition. He said to me, "All right, granting that stf is different than any other pulp literature, I have been a newspaper man for 10 years and I ought to be able to tell whether it is good literature. You pick out a

story that you consider good and I will read it and give you my honest opinion." I did. The story that I chose was "The Blind Spot," because I thought that anyone reading that would have to admit that it was not so bad after all. He read it, or at any rate a large part of it, and when he had finished he said, "It's as good as any fiction in a big magazine, but so utterly fantastic!"

Einstein Said...

Well, then I gave him the old boloney about how the human race was so stubborn that it would not accept anything that wasn't a proven fact. I told him what Einstein said: "One of the most beautiful things that man can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true science and art. He who can no longer pause to wonder is as good as dead." He didn't say much more and I counted it a victory for stf, thought if he sees this he'll probably have much more to say.

That's about all I have to say, except that I should tell you this little incident that happened at a small summer camp that I went to. I had taken a good supply of mags along for company, and one day while I was laying on my bunk persuing one of these, another boy came up and asked if he could look at one. I assented rapidly, thinking to win another convert for the legions of scientification. His name happened to be Campbell and the mag he picked up was ASTOUNDING. He read it for a while and he didn't seem to approve of it much. When he happened to come across his name (he thought) in Brass Tacks, he loosed a stream of, invective and taking a pencil marked it out. He said that he would-

n't have his name in such a trashy mag. Naturally he had gotten his name mixed up with that of John Campbell, editor of the mag.

This began a discussion that made me a marked man in that camp for a long time. It was fun while it lasted though. I was astounded to find out how many people didn't believe in evolution of the species. It finally got all over the camp that I didn't believe in the Bible, that I had a religion of my own. I noticed everyone staring at me queerly but I couldn't figure out why until someone finally told me that someone had told that someone that I was a heretic. I hastily reassured them and launched into a tirade about evolution.

Evolution-Ala-Miller

I didn't notice how many people gathered and I guess I pretty well made a fool of myself, but fools are born and not made. I was asked whether I believed in life on other planets and I said emphatically, yes. I said why shouldn't there be? Out of all the millions of planets in the thousands of island universes there are, do you think that our small bit of earth should be the only one to have life on it? If we were meant to be the only people in the universes

(Continued on next page)

A Quatrain From Nostradamus

Saturn in Taurus sporting with revolution,
Mars in Sagittarius,
The sixth of February will be a day
of mortality,
Those of the north of Italy will make
a great breach in the walls of Brussels
While at Pontoroso the Barbarian
leader dies.

February 6, 1971.

DID YOU KNOW

By "Fact Finder"

Did you know that the October, 1938 issue of AMAZING STORIES, which as was stated last month is in the Time Capsule, contains two stories by Ralph Milne Farley, neither of which bears his name?

* * *

Did you know that the last 24 consecutive front covers of ASTOUNDING, dating from April 1940 to the present have been drawn by artist Hubert Rogers?

* * *

Did you know that Frank R. Paul holds the following record: Starting with the first issue of FANTASTIC ADVENTURES he continued his string of back cover paintings unbroken on that magazine and AMAZING STORIES for 32 consecutive months up till the current number of AMAZING which was done by another artist!

* * *

Did you know that Editor Ray Palmer of AMAZING printed a full page autobiography of A. R. Steber, his own pen name in the July, 1940 issue of his magazine—and it wasn't his biography?

* * *

Did you know that all front covers on the magazine SCIENCE FICTION, eleven in all were done by Frank Paul?

MEMOIRS OF AN STF FAN,

(Continued from Page 8)

why don't we have a physical covering better than the one we have now? Why are we subject to those fears and mortal weaknesses that the hu-

man race is subject to? I went on like this for quite a spell and finally they murmured among themselves and dispersed. I left victorious.

Well, they called Copernicus and Darwin crazy, too, but they kept their theories. I hope I can keep tiradin' and cussin' until the other people of the Earth aren't so skeptical. Some day they will call today's fans prophets, like they are now calling Leo daVinci. And I hope I shall live to see that day.

A Quatrain From Nostradamus

When Saturn and Mars are (conjoined) in Leo, Spain will be captured,

The African Leader will be trapped in the conflict.

Near Malta there will be an engagement. Herod will be taken alive, The scepter of Rome will be struck down by the Cock.

This conjunction will take place on November 12, 1947.



A Quatrain From Nostradamus

Everyone will desire to head the great empire,

One shall obtain the power over the others.

But there is little time for his power or life,

Two years his navy will sustain him.

Fanzine

Reviews

By The Editors

5 Stars—Tops; 4 Stars—Excellent;
3 Stars—Good; 2 Stars—Fair; 1 Star
—Poor; 0 Stars—Very Poor

FANFARE—Published bi-monthly (when possible) by Art Widner, Jr. Box 122, Bryantville, Mass. 10c a copy, three for 25c. February issue mimeographed neatly in several colors. The cover is a swell one by Roy Hunt, and is lithographed in green. The material is headed by a flock of good columns, namely "Slan!der", "Detours," and "Their Own Petard." One piece of humor and several poems one by Damon the demon Knight. Rates 4 Stars.

FANTASCIENCE DIGEST—Published annually by Madle, Agnew, and Barron, at 333 E. Belgrade street, Philly, Pa. Latest issue, dated Nov.-Dec. '41, is some 30 mimeoed pages featuring four articles and several good departments. "The Frolic Apace" which started two years ago, again heads the issue. Rates 3 Stars.

THE FANTASITE—Published bi-monthly by Phil Bronson and Company, 224 West 6th street, Hastings, Minn. Price 10c a copy, three for 25c. Nov.-Dec. issue is 25 mimeoed pages, with covers done in red. The back cover is another ace attraction by Roy Hunt. The material could be better, but you still get your money's worth. The lack of articles and fiction are overcome by an abundance of departments and columns. Rates 3 Stars.

FUTURIAN WAR DIGEST—Published monthly by J. Michael Rosenblum and other English fans at 4 Grange Terrace, Leeds 7. Chapletown, England. Of all the fanzines that are published, it goes without saying that this one is the most regular in appearance, despite its long journey across the seas. The material isn't of too much interest to the American reader, but occasional articles of importance are found. Rates 3 Stars.

LEPRECHAUN—Published bi-monthly by Larry Shaw, 1301 State street, Schenectady, N. Y. Price 5c a copy, six for 25c. The first issue of this magazine finds 14 pages, mimeographed. The front cover, while not scientific is good, but the rest of the art work is very poor. "The Unusual Fan", by Steven Randall, supposedly a space filler is one of the best pieces in the issue as far as material goes. Articles by Schmarje and de la Ree, and fiction by Phil Schumann. Rates 2 Stars.

NEBULA—Published weekly by Rusty Barron and Bob Madle at 333 E. Belgrade street, Philly, Pa. 5c a copy, 6 for 25c. This four to six page news sheet is pretty good and at least has appeared regularly so far. Mostly Philly and LASFL news. Rates 2 Stars.

SCIENTIFUN—Published once so far by Raymond Washington, Jr., of Live Oak, Fla. The December first issue of this magazine is very sloppily mimeographed on what must be 16 lb. paper. Cover is very poor, but the rest is fairly readable. Material tries hard to be humorous, but fails most of the time. Rates 1 Star.

SOUTHERN STAR—Published occasionally by Gilbert and Jenkins at 908 Lloyd Court, Columbia, S. C.

Price 10c a copy, 3 for 25c. The Dec. issue is a 44-page giant well mimoed and featuring a page of Denvention photos lithographed by Forry Ackerman. The material is monopolized by Southerners, most of which are departments. Issue is very good despite this fact. Rates 3 Stars.

SPACEWAYS—Published every six weeks by Harry Warner, Jr., at 303 Bryan place, Hagerstown, Md. Price 10c a copy, 3 for 25c. March issue is the neatly turned out 25 pages with two fairly good covers for a change. Material is good, and improved by illustrations on every other page. Rates 4 Stars.

UNIVERSE STORIES—Published by Tom Ludowitz at 2310 Virginia, Everett, Wash. 10c an issue, 40c a half year. The first number of this magazine is 12 hecktographed pages which contain all fiction, mostly reprints from other fanzines. "Heathen" by J. Edward Davis and "Tworps Super X-Ray Gas" by James Thomas are the best of the worst. The idea of the mag is good, but issue itself is poor. Rates 2 Stars.

FUTURIAN OBSERVER—Published 10a Sully street, Randwick, Sydney, NSW, Australia. This club organ is usually two pages mimeographed telling all about Aussie affairs. Of little interest to American fandom. Rates 2 Stars.

THE .007 REVIEW

(Continued from page 5)

poem "Death," beginning

"Nor dread nor hope attend
A dying animal;
A man awaits his end
Dreading and hoping all..."

I ventured to remark that the case was precisely the opposite since a sensible man resigns himself to his

fate, which he has anticipated, while an animal is terrified, plainly, though whether it has any hope we cannot of course know. As my friend was not convinced, I gave him an example which I still think holds good. I asked him how to account for the behavior of a crow when hunted with a shotgun. It is well known that crows will ignore an unarmed man, but take flight at the sight of a man with a gun. Men have hunted crows with guns for a few hundred years; it is impossible to say that crows are equipped with instincts for avoiding men carrying guns. The crow has learned from experience. He has perhaps been wounded by a gun and learned caution, but it is silly to claim that all crows which are wary of a gun have been wounded by one. There must be many which have learned their caution from seeing other crows killed or wounded by guns. In avoiding the man with the gun, therefore, the crow shows behavior which can only be described as an intelligent dread of death. (If it can be described differently, I'd like to see it done!)

Well, gentlemen, the time has come for us to part (for how long, your reception of the .007 will determine!). To conclude the column on a proper note, I'll quote a poem of Lindley Hubbard's, describing bats in a belfry (I trust the application will be clear):

"These moles of upper air, the ghosted tenants

Of this thin place
Hear nothing of the silver scattered
On Rat's warren, spider's lace.
Theair shakes, uninvaded.

They curl their paws
Closer for warmth; the wave ebbs,
Withdraws . . .

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