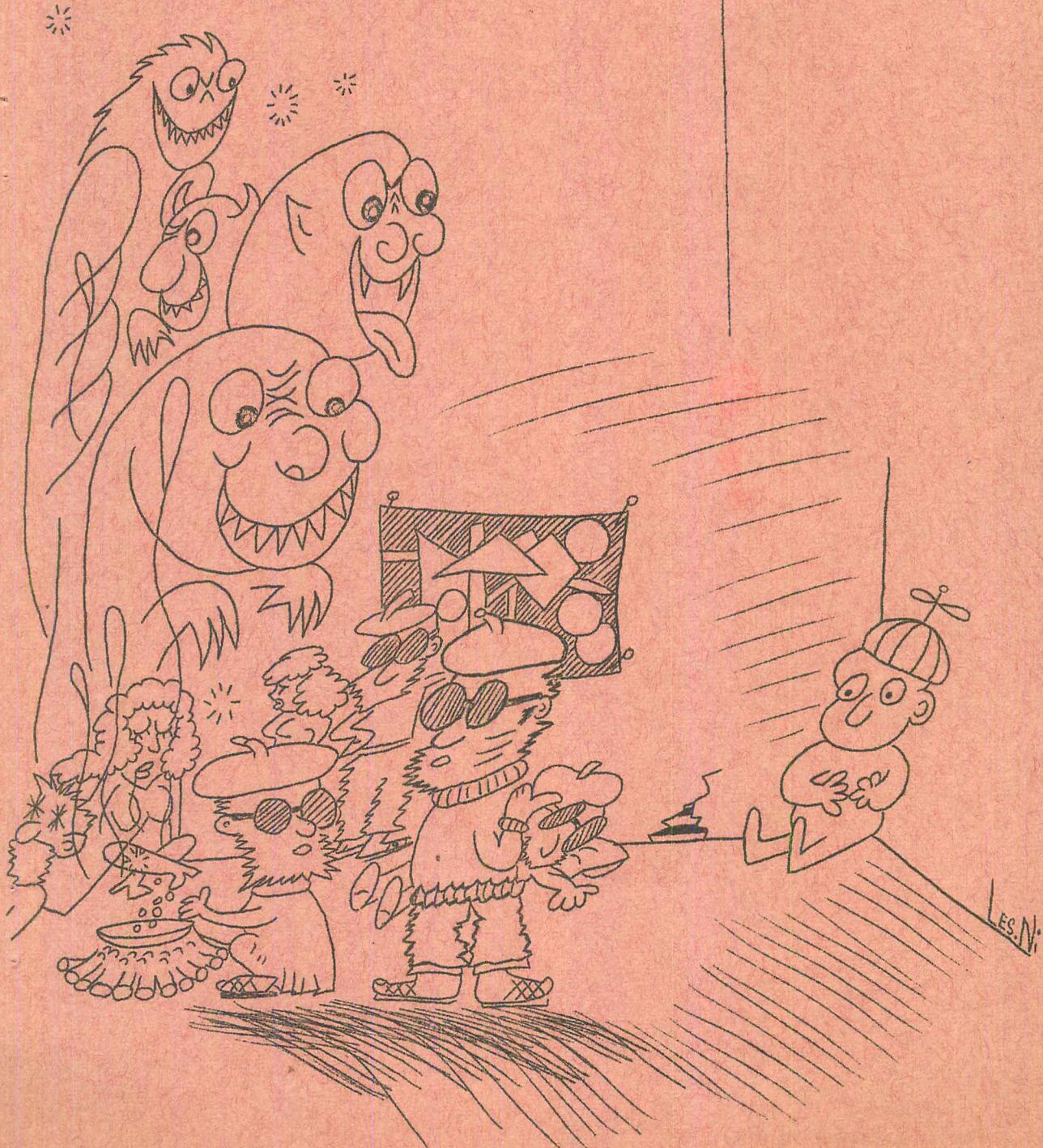


VIPER

NUMBER 2 - MARCH 1961



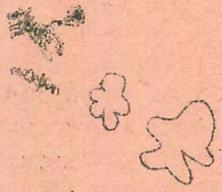
"Well him it isn't fattening."

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- Cover by Les Nirenberg
- ASTOUNDING Covers 19, 22, 25, 27 & 30
- ATOM 3, 5 & 40
- Castillo 15 & 34
- Nelson 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 & 12
- Nirenberg 17
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I must take issue with Nesmuk on the art of skinning a squirrel. He says: "Chop off head, tail and feet with the hatchet; cut the skin on the back crosswise, and inserting the two middle fingers, pull the skin off in two parts (head and tail). Clean and cut the squirrel in halves, leaving two ribs on the hind quarters." The objection is that, in this case, you throw away the best part of the squirrel, the cheek meat and brain being its special tidbits.

A better way is this: Sever the tail from below, holding your left forefinger close in behind it, and cutting through the vertebrae close up to the body, leaving only the hide on the top side. Then turn the squirrel over and cut a slit down along each ham. Put your foot on the tail, hold the rear end of the squirrel in your hand, and pull, stripping the skin off the fore legs. Peel the skin from the hind legs, and cut off the feet. Then cut off the fore feet. Skin to the neck; assist here a little with the knife; then skin to the ears; cut off the butts of the ears; then skin till the blue of the eyeballs shows, and cut; then to the nose till the teeth show, and cut it off. Thus you get no hair on the meat, and the whole thing is done in less than a minute.

—Horace Kephart in Camp Cookery.



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A Hook & Crook Publication

2

AMONG US

VIP

While VIPER is still primarily for OMPA with this issue I am beginning the policy of making it available on a subscription basis also. I am still putting out HABAKKUK of course and expect to have material of a more general nature (contrary to what you may have been thinking HABAKKUK is not designed to be "The Beatnik's Pad Companion"), while VIPER is going to—I hope—be full of science-fictionish and fannish material.

Alva Rogers is helping me live up to this pious intention with his articles on the thirty years of ASTOUNDING. The ASTOUNDING covers used to illustrate this series were photographed, traced and stenciled by Alva. Damned versatile, that man.

Thanks are also due Terry Carr who stenciled the cover.

This issue also begins Elinor Busby's column: "Ho!" Elinor threatens to drop this column as soon as she gets into OMPA, but I hope I can persuade her to keep it up even then. Perhaps I can get her to carry out her original intention and call her OMPazine EASTWARD HO!, while retaining a column "Westward Ho!" in VIPER. In any case I consider myself very fortunate in having her column, even if only for a short time.

While naturally I will pass on to Elinor any comments her column brings, why don't all of you send her copies of your OMPazines? Not only will it save me some work, but also Elinor will enjoy having them. Remember, send ~~a lot of of of~~ your OMPazine to Elinor.

It seems that I have more than my share of bad luck with cars. My Plymouth threw a rod and I had to get a new engine for it. And naturally a few other little details needed attending to, so the repair bill was rather staggering. I almost junked the Plymouth and bought another car, but with a second-hand car you can never tell what is going to go wrong with the thing. At least with the Plymouth all major things that could go wrong had gone wrong (knock on wood) and the projected repair bill was less than I would have to pay for a late model used car in decent condition. So, I had the work done. And so far everything is working out fine; I've been driving the car for about two months since it came out of the garage and it is still behaving very well.

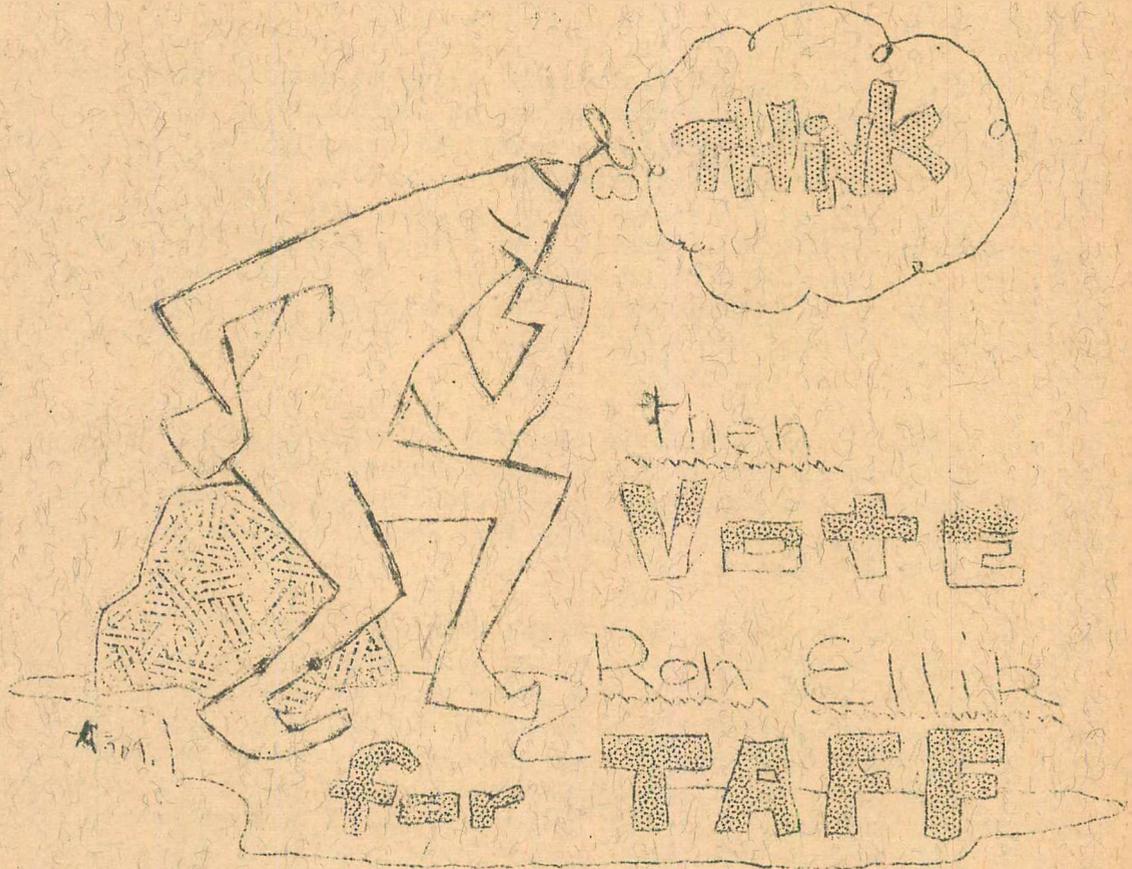
While the work was being done the garage gave me a loaner to drive, a pre-war coupe. Not a club coupe, but an actual one-seat coupe; I hadn't seen one for years. This car was not too easy to drive. The steering was sort of loose. The battery was quite weak and I had to get the neighbors or passing cars to give me a push every morning. One of the headlights had its dimmer burned out, so I had to leave my brights on all the time, to the annoyance of passing motorists. The car also had a tendency to stall at low speed and to be most difficult to get started again after such stalling. Oh, it was a honey of a car.

To complete the picture I lost the ignition key. This did reveal one interesting fact however: there is a very low incidence of juvenile delinquency in Berkeley fandom. No one knew how to jump the ignition—at least on a practical level:

as far as theory was concerned there was all sorts of unhelpful suggestions. Finally Ray Nelson came through. He knew how it was done. Hmmnnnn.

I suppose by now that all of you have heard of Terry's narrow escape from the clutches of the U. S. Army. He was ordered to report for induction Feb 3 and had prospects of a month's deferment, but that was it. He took the easy way out though—you might even call it the pleasant way—Miriam is pregnant. Of course in a couple of years he may very well wish that he had gone into the army instead. In addition to the healthy outdoor life and all the new associates he would have met, which he is now missing, I tend to think that the remedy he adopted is worse than the disease. Children, Bah! Humbug!

But Berkeley really is losing another publishing giant. Ronel (Ron Ellik for TAFF) has received his degree in mathematics and is traipsing off into the wilds of Idaho—the wilds of Idaho Falls with fellow fan Ed Wood—to become a "world-murdering atomic scientist". His killer-type marine training will stand him in good stead here and we may shortly look for some promising results from Idaho. Errrr, Ron, don't blow up another reactor, will you? It's really not the fannish thing to do.



When I was eleven or twelve I began reading Edgar Rice Burroughs' Pellicudar series. I have always liked this series considerably better than the John Carter one and better than all but the first three or four Tarzan books. To me it had the authentic Burroughs magic. In the second book of the series, Pellicudar, first mention is made of The Land of the Awful Shadow. (To the benighted people who don't know, Pellicudar is the land on the inside of the Earth's crust. The Earth is hollow with a crust 500 miles thick; gravity changes direction at 250 miles down and

Pellicudar is the land on the inner shell of the crust. There is a ball of incandescent gases in the center of the Earth and thus Pellicudar has a perpetual noon-day sun. Pellicudar's development has been some centuries behind Earth's and it is still in a Stone Age Culture complete with Saber Teeths, Cave bears and men and other interesting phenomena.) Pellicudar has a moon which remains stationary over one part of it, although the moon does revolve on its axis. Thus the moon has both night and day and the region directly underneath it is always in darkness since the moon is always between it and Pellicudar's "sun". The moon is close enough to see rivers, trees, etc. quite clearly.

This moon always tremendously fascinated me; in later books of the series Burroughs kept mentioning it and I longed for the time when David Innes or one of his friends would actually have an adventure there. (I was young then; I didn't realize it would be just more of the same.) Years went by, but Burroughs didn't see fit to gratify my wish.

Then in the early forties Ray Palmer persuaded Burroughs to write some novels for AMAZING STORIES. But--perish the thought--they weren't called serials, or even novels. They were "stories" and sometimes three or more issues would go by before the next installment appeared. This sometimes left the characters in very cliff-hanging positions.

At last it happened. AMAZING finished a series of John Carter stories (later published as Llana of Gathol) and started one on Pellicudar. The very first story ended with Diane the beautiful adrift in a balloon swinging ever nearer the Land of the Awful Shadow. She was quite alarmed, but I wasn't. I knew nothing would happen to her and that at last the adventure on the moon was about to happen. I waited for the next story in great impatience. I knew that it would be at least two months before the next installment, but I hoped no more. Two months went by and Diane was still adrift. What was Burroughs up to? The next story just had to be the coming month. It wasn't. The next one then. It wasn't. I waited and waited with ever-dwindling hope. I'm still waiting.

I had one other similar traumatic experience. Back in the late thirties my allowance was not large enough to permit me to buy all the prozines, so I used to wait until they were no longer current; then I would get them for a nickle apiece. I disliked having to wait like this, but I just couldn't afford any other way. And I did get to read them all.

Along about this time WEIRD TALES began running a perfectly marvelous serial "King of the World's Edge" by H. Warner Munn about men from Roman Britain in Mexico; the ones who supposedly gave rise to the legends of Quetzalcoatl. It was a stirring serial and the first two parts left me breathless. I eagerly awaited the third. But something went awry. No copy of that issue found its way to the remaindered table. I was aghast. By this time I was quite willing to buy a full-priced issue, could I have only found one. I couldn't. And I didn't know enough to write to the magazine or to letter-hacks and ask for it. I was desolate. I never did finish the serial and this was a minor tragedy for many years. I kept thinking about it and wishfully wondering how it came out.

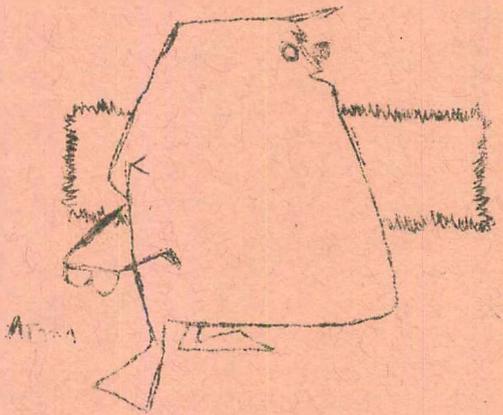
A couple of months ago Lou Goldstone gave Terry tear sheets of various stories which Terry had bound. Imagine my shock when I pawed through them and discovered King of the World's Edge. I snatched it from the pile and took it home. I've had it on my shelves now for many weeks. Every now and then I glance at it guiltily and once went so far as to pick it up and read the first two paragraphs, but I hastily shut it again. I'm afraid to read it; I don't want to disturb my memories.

I have never been able to understand these people who collect every installment of a serial before reading it. I like serials precisely because they have installments. To me a good novel becomes much better when I read it in this way. I think about it much more and perhaps even reread the last installment or two while waiting for the next. Being in the forefront of my mind all the months that it is running the atmosphere of the serial has much more chance to sink in and the events to take on more depth and meaning. And too having a looked-for installment each month provides a ready framework of reference for the present, past and future. Damn it: I like serials.

Alva's fond reminiscences of ASTOUNDING brought back to mind my own attitudes towards the magazine. All through the forties and well into the fifties I was a rabid ASTOUNDING fan. The third Tuesday of each month (yes, yes I know it was some other day for awhile) I would rush down to my favorite newsstand around 1:00 PM. Sometimes the shipment was late and I had to wait around for it to arrive and then prod the newsdealer into unpacking it. And on some horrible occasions the magazine didn't come out on the scheduled day. There was one perfectly dreadful time in 1946 when it was some three weeks late. I don't think I have ever recovered from that one.

Of course I knew that if I had subscribed I would have gotten ASTOUNDING a week or so before the newsstands did. But I never subscribed. I rationalized that I just never had \$3.50 I didn't want to spend for something else, but actually I didn't subscribe because it would have been the same. Buying ASTOUNDING at the newsstand was a monthly ritual I would have been very loath to do without. I would buy it, savor the cover and then rush home, or perhaps stroll leisurely while reading the editorial and features—I would never start a story while walking or even reading in a car or on the subway. I had to be comfortably seated and secure from all interruptions before I would begin the true meat of ASTOUNDING: the stories. And of course when there was a good serial I would run home and throw myself into a chair with my eagerness to be at it. And of course I read all the stories without stopping or hardly coming up for air.

It's been a long time since I reacted that way to ASTOUNDING. The magazine has changed a great deal and possibly I have too, but I think ASTOUNDING has changed more. I read ANALOG, but I may wait a week or more after it comes out before I buy it. Sometimes when I pick up the next issue I can't quite remember whether or not I have read the last one or whether or not this is the last one and I already have it at home. I suppose I shall continue going through the motions for some time, but Campbell has already lost a fan and if ANALOG keeps on in its present dreary pace he will also lose a reader. I'm even glad he changed the name; at least the present crimes against science fiction can be attributed to ANALOG and ASTOUNDING still retain its aura of greatness. Hail and farwell, ASTOUNDING. Hail and farwell.



"Frankly, I like the title Analog!"

In the Road

...or The Subterfugeans

F. M. Busby

Sitting in the unutterably sad afternoon sunshine at Woodland Park, watching the mournful chipmunks I know how in the old old 1950 or 1951 days at a great mad one shot party where everyone was balling it hugely, balling up the stencils so I can hardly believe it ever happened, was Bill Parker now a serious student of Islam but then a hot, a very hot jazz mimeoist was making that crank croon and we knew his great sadness and respected it in our cool hip way while the paper came out solid black and unutterably sad especially if you had helped buy it. I was on the stuff heavily in those days, even slipsheeting at the worst of it so that the stuff was even more on me if possible, sometimes you could hardly tell us apart in a dim light and it did not always help.

But this too is before the beginning and always there is the paranoiac urge to justify, and though I am and all too often too a slipsheeter especially now in the new days when nobody pays any damn attention to what happened back in 1950 when things were really a lot better, better than I had thought at the time, still although I cannot find out what happened to the beginning of this sentence I was never so paranoiac as to justify margins.



LIP TO LIP, SHARING THE SAME STICK
OF POT

But before that I must tell you of the little beat girl Marghu Fix, so cool-hip with her little beat too-short sweater, but hip, and I can only recall with utter tragedy of why she was so little and beat, because it was cheaper to beat her than to feed her. But that was the way it was in those great mad days when we all beat out our ways across the great stretches of the country even into the zones where it takes a nickle more on the City Busses, just so we could get a turn at that old crank, just one more turn. It is not like that any more and I have a sweet illiterate letter from beat little Marghu to prove it, but you will have to sweat out this unutterably sad prose before we get to the sexy parts. But that is after I met and discovered and lip-to-lip sharing the same stick of pot found that even after

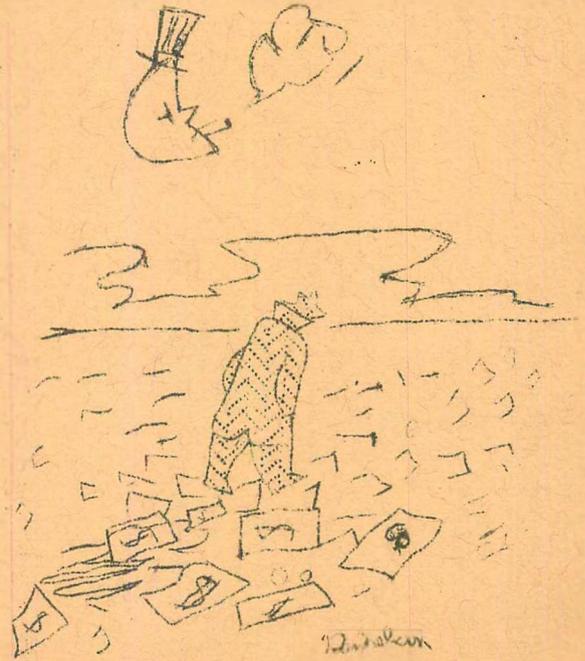
the old great days roaring across the downtown area only to hear the crank no longer turning and the stencil torn and sadly dripping, this girl was hip, she was really hip although not quite so cool with her sweater pulled down more, but really and even with all the paranoiac urge to justify, Marghu Fix was hip. She was hip all over, not entirely due to the Hottentot strain in her ancestry, sometimes when she would turn and stare with sagging jaw, someone knocking on the door with an inferior fifth of cheap wine and she not knowing why there should be all that noise not cool by any means and yet not without a certain paranoiac suitability. But this was later, before I had met and seen and come to confront and speak to and hear and make a great mad play for sad Marghu, but after I had stood in the grey streets and cried aloud.

I had been living alone on garlic, living on garlic alone I had been gaining in strength and most nearly becoming sad and Christlike in our beat way except that nobody was sticking around long enough to tell me, but Marghu Fix on that sad lonely evening where she and a squad of Marines from Quantico had been playing chess on the beach as she told me later but that was not now, not the moment of first surprise that here was one who could hear and feel and would talk to me of the great beat ecstasy that comes from living on garlic alone, she had the worst cold I have ever seen on a human being beat or not. She had been living under a houseboat at Richmond Beach and had only lately discovered what you or I might know or might not depending on how much attention we were paying to such things, that sort of quiet knowledge that comes late late when everyone has gone home that can still walk, and the rest, the true great mad giants of this beat age who cannot walk straight under any conditions day or night, talk so cool and so hip that it is all too Christlike and I go outside whether I can walk or not at at least it is not as wet as it was under that houseboat so I suggested that she move out and she did.

I was not altogether certain that I should move in and live beat with her, a person could drown under that damn houseboat, and even after, we had talked for long long hours and discussed all our sexual abnormalities before an admiring and discerning audience all very hip and some cooler than others as it turned out later, but this was before.

I was originally very dubious in my ordinary paranoiac way and usually drunk but not too expensively so, about Marghu because of her ancestry. She was of course as I have said all too often in confidence-breaking discussions at the pads of many eminent literary and artistic bums, part Hottentot part Zulu part Australian-bushman part Lapp part Eskimo part Tierra-del-Fuegan I am consumed with drunken egoboosting envy as I wonder what kind of credit-card system those people had, but that was before. And she was part Democrat, and I would think sadly of her halfbreed-NewDeal father trudging wearily across the grey wastes of the taxpayers' money and would be sad even more than when after she moved and I had to pay though there wasn't even a mimeo in the place, half the rent.

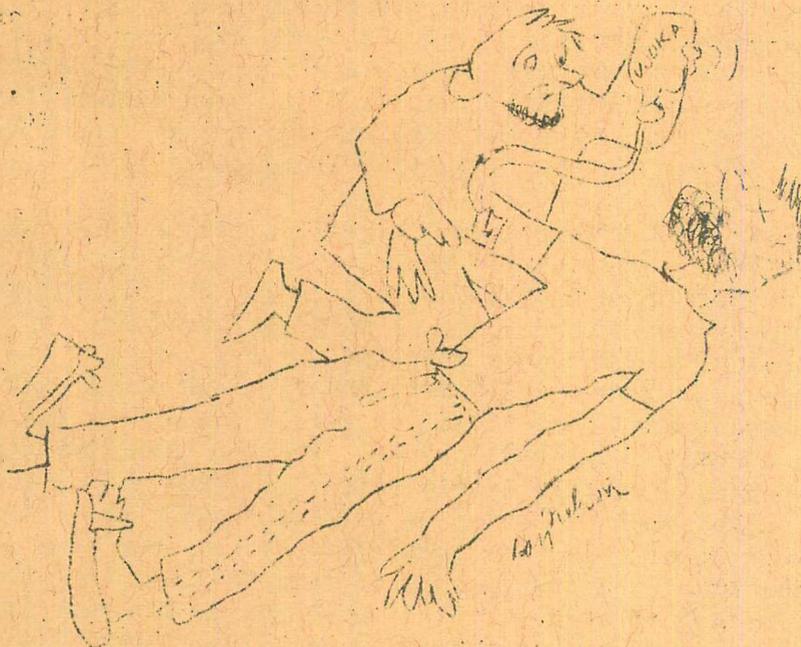
But this was before. Still we had talked and talked for long hours in and among all sorts and kinds of persons, Aram Fafhrd for instance, that great mad roadrunner of 1950 who ran a Lincoln Continental until it stopped and built a



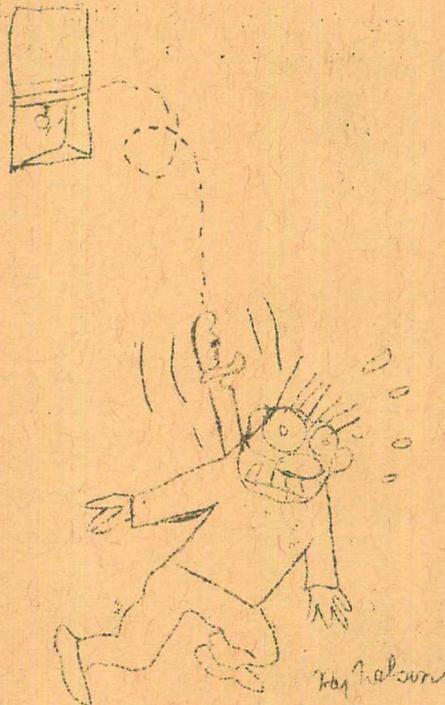
TRUDGING WEARILY ACROSS THE GREY WASTES OF THE TAXPAYERS' MONEY.

leanto on it and still lives there, they have now four-laned the detour around him so he is there to stay but I do not think they will let him subdivide as he was planning the last time Marghu and I were there to see him, the time Raoul ate all that linoleum. But that was after.

I had been on a very long alcoholic retreat from the world and was being helped to save my stomach for the next decade by the kindly Christlike beat saint Kimball Frankenstein who was gently teaching me the ways of modifying vodka so that it could be injected directly into the vein, I'm sure he will work it out someday but I could not wait until one of the guinea pigs lived through it so I figure maybe the next decade may have to get along without my stomach, but that will be after.



For a long time I had gone away and left Marghu because she was about to flip and a person should have quiet and solitude at a time like that and besides she flings that knife around too much as it is, I packed up all my things and fitted out my trailer which was truly awesome, it slept four if three were midgets and I went out into the grey sad hills wondering if maybe I am colorblind, trundling along with the trailer bagging behind my bicycle.



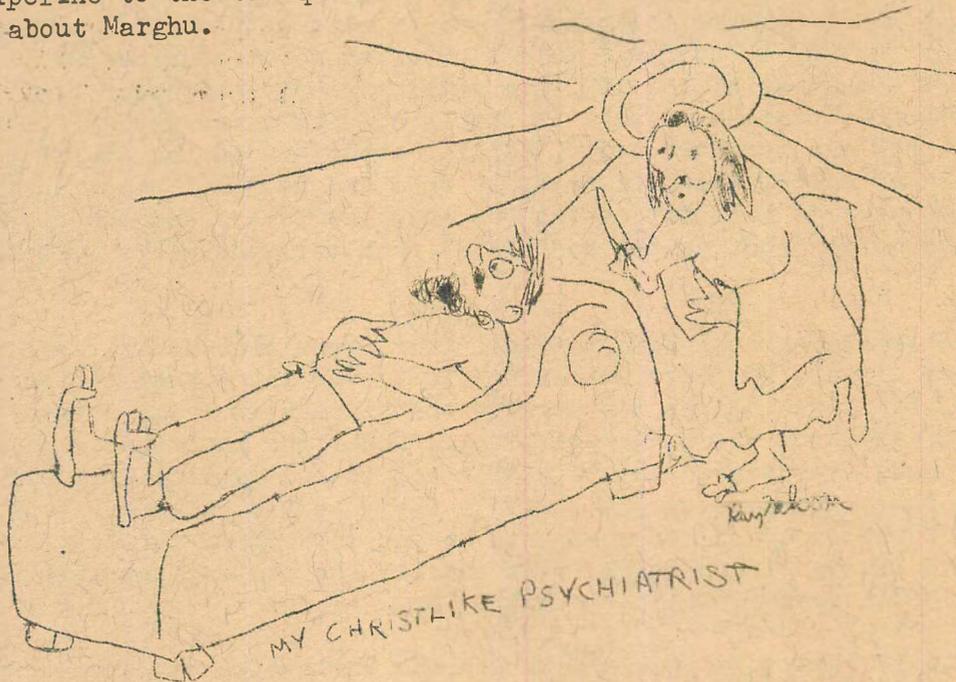
After I held Marghu in my arms once I had thrown that damn knife out the window and she told me all about how she flipped, it had been the weirdest thing and it had better be because it's hard to outdo the paperbacks these days. Cool hip girl she is, she doesn't remember much except sitting on a fence with cool hips, and thinking to pull her sweater down a little more. She was quite a lot warmer after that, she remembers, long before the grey sad dawn I was telling her and great mad Orville Wright agreed she needs a longer sweater.

Marghu had walked up the long long grey pavement, all the shile she was flipping she had flipped there was nothing right or real to her she was all completely alone except for the postman who woodenly misunderstanding insisted that she could not paste a stamp on her forehead and send herself back to Sears-Roebuck. She said that he suggestively zipped down the zipper on his mailbag, but "I prefer to walk" she told him, knowing how even in these

I HAD THROWN THAT DAMN KNIFE OUT THE WINDOW.

later days there are men who won't decently beat a girl into submission in the quiet of her own pad. Oh poor half-Democrat Marghu, all innocently displaying the fat lip given her by a squad of Marines for wearing a poor little beat Navy-blue sweater, upsetting her little faith in the U. S. Marines gained from sneaking into the movies when she was too young but that was earlier to know any better, and she would have gladly given them a disease she told me except that she didn't have one and none of them applied. The Marines weren't like that back in 1950, I expect.

I myself not thinking almost flipped in the sad grey dawn once, there upside of sad short-sweatered Marghu, poor beat half-Democrat hip little girl but so sloppy you couldn't wade into her pad without hipboots, I had known her so long and never was her sweater pulled down enough but that she was cool, too cool to notice how in the great sad, grey mad dawn faunching around the fabulous continent-ranging literary giants who didn't know their gender from third base, some of these 97-pound junkie American saintlike ascetics who were so involved in sexual inversion that they occasionally went after women by mistake, Marghu had once told me, breathing in with that junkie habit that inhales as well as exhales in this sad smogbound region. But it is true that I nearly flipped in that sad season with all the mourners laughing in the grey dawn, and I might yet if nobody springs for tranquillizers: I might yet flip a coin to see whether this manuscript goes to my publisher or to my Christlike psychiatrist. But still I exist and the Universe has lumps in it and there is no pipeline to the tranquil inner heart of a schizophrenic, let me tell you some more about Marghu.



It indicates the true state of things when I am confused between a paying publisher and a charging psychiatrist, but there is always the great mad chance that one copy will do for both without need of a carbon, as when in my usual frenzy I and Marghu walked lightly across a street against the light and there was always the half-Democrat sadness mingled with a simple kindly stick of pot shared among us. This was before, In Marghu's sad beat little too-short pad, with the mad artistic and literary giant Lucke Pierry grovelling in the debris that mercifully kept him from grovelling on the floor, shouting as if it were still 1949 or 1950 when things were a lot better, really, someone should tell Lucke which gender was in style for him but nobody would and he ended up sadly chasing an unsympathetic brakeman from the Union Pacific and I do not believe it came out very well all told. But that was long after. Longer than you might think.

I had said to Marghu one night when we couldn't drink to completion because no great mad sonofabitch had any stupid money, "Why don't you ever drive me mad with unusual exotic sex like nobody at all ever heard of except you are so sad and beat you must of?" But she turned out not to have heard of any of these deals except sometimes with only one ear and a lot of hallucination (the postman suggestively zipped down the mailbag, but Marghu knew that it took more than that for Special Delivery), so we ended up with the simple Auto de Fixe but existentially ran out of Band-Aids. A low low point in our relationship, reminding me of the tremendous cross-country rout with that beat saint Stony Barnes I once rushed across the countryside on his Cushman chasing bulldozers off the road because who could care less and the sad great things were all so futile if you look at them right and take another drag. But later Marghu in her sad quiet way came to holding hands with me in the French way and threw off her necrophilic habits enough actually in the grey dawn once to goose me when I wasn't looking, you'd hardly believe the comfort this could be in this weird subterranean world where nobody knows who is doing it, in the great gloomy aftersunset when a man's best friend is his typewriter ribbon, to whom.

But Marghu would in her own sweet beat way always bug me, I would have to get away and go back to my family territory in which my sisters derided me and would never be conveniently grey and sad, sometimes I think they have ignored the great lessons of 1949 and 1950 and maybe even 1951 although 1951 was not so hip or publicized as its predecessors, it was in 1951 that great Eleazor Frinpf gave his all for Solidarity, although perhaps the sexual aspects were entirely too public, by mistake. (Is there no way to turn off this flow of shameful confidence? It is not that I mind, great dim winds of the 1930's whistling greyly past poor little female Marghu and raising goosepimples because it simply did not occur to her ("I never even thought") to pull her sweater down again, telling about how in the stuffy pad she would demonstrate why children should never be told not to stuff beans up their nose), but it is too much never I will not cannot (because the poetry and the bop do not add one bit of alcoholic proof to the sad blood) ever tell you where we bought those beans.

But that was before, though almost after since never once at all ever in our equivocal sad beat almost 1930's relationship did I ever lay a hand to the crank though I cannot justify as well as the margins the slipsheets being so grey and so soft I suppose it came from where we were staying under the houseboat. Always while we were staying there I pretended not to notice and indeed justified in either a sad or beat or paranoiac or perhaps simply cowardly way when the customers took the whip to her unless the blood dripped too much onto me and interrupted my meditations though we will all become Bhuddas if we stick to it and hit the best-seller listings, sad grey though they be these days which are not 1950.

I perhaps should have told you (and Marghu who Christlike wandered through this grey world not realizing that it can also be great and mad with a little help but she being beat and half-Democrat could not afford a real fix with horse but had to settle for sad beat pot) that I sometimes halfmad great continent-striding am a lout rather than as should be a Christlike grey saint which takes more fatigue than I can almost always render and it gets pretty dull even the hallucinations. Unless it is after.

At one time even with this huge mad poet who was mooching drinks the way those great people do who I should tell you this big kook said "What is Life?" and I was entirely disembodied by what he said, it was too much, there is no place in the whole Universe for such keen perception, I cannot for one cope with it so I drink. But we Marghu and I were at the Lifted Lip Cafe again as usual and here was the great Nevil Wevil there unutterably profuse with these tremendous remarks that lifted me

to great sad heights so that I got stinking as usual and missed the deadline. But when he this great Christlike genius wanted to take Marghu home with him to his own beat pad it was all too much, it was too 1930's and he said he wanted to read his damn great poems and I was sick right on the table it was too much, she would never stay awake to listen to my great poems and in my own paranoid way I felt justified in flipping the ashes from my tender little stick of burning pot into his inferior wine and our sick was mingled on the table the sad grey bartender was furious and fouted at us as we left.

I have got to tell you something of the sex side of this because only thus is it making sense at all but first of course is Aram Fafhred, always and always that bastard is in the foreground soaking up the limelight and not being at all sad and grey as he should be at a time like this, for effect, but still I cannot get this great paralytic helpless superman out of the foreground because he of all people is the essence of all the tremendous pitiful heroisms that spew out and dribble down over the curbs to where we are you and I rebuilding humanity as it has to be done some day if at all. I know Aram Fafhred like I know the back of my hand, which in the sad light of grey everyday happenings I find not too attractive, it is easy to say that I compete with Aram Fafhrd or Nevil Wevil in the publishing competition but this is not as valid as it would be if any of us ever sold anything.



So this is how it went with the sex bit, so great mad passionate and all trying not to know how paranoid the world was crowding in on us whether we liked it or could even sell a book. It was feverish with talk at the Lifted Lip, everyone talking and no one listening (we might as well have been out in Suburbia, so normal the 1930's were dead), I was greatly sad and felt sadly great, mad, grey, hip, beat and with all due paranoid prudence Marghu and I were bugging each other less than usual, it helped being at different tables. I loved her so, that little beat sweater not quite reaching, someday maybe I would help take up a collection to buy her a skirt. Wild, loud, screaming, I boasted about how I would publish next time, knowing all the time that I am not worth a damn on the crank but have made noises so long about publishing that by now there are actually people who believe me. And poor Marghu, beat and small and female, a lousy typist, bearing all my love in small grapelike body which is now a sad 1930's production.

We had been such great mad lovers all those months, wallowing to make it in the sad greyness, but now it is after, it is really and always after for me, that damn fat poet gave her an old pair of Army fatigues, she doesn't even need me to pull her short sad sweater down any more.

So I sit here and watch the sad chipmunks. The other sad chipmunks.

RON ELLIX
FOR TAPP



From The Shocking History of Drugs by Richard Mathison:

In the proper sense it (marijuana) is more harmless than Martinis. Unlike the drunk, the reefer smoker prefers to lounge around in his pleasant state of calm rather than fight or bump fenders in a drag race.....Despite certain advantages over alcohol it will undoubtedly continue to be sensationalized as a major evil, and its users be treated as criminals and fiends. For, if it ever were to become acceptable and legal, it would ruin the liquor industry. One bush growing in the back yard would supply the needs for escape that now require \$50 out of the family budget for booze.

From The Story of Modern Art by Sheldon Cheney:

The feelings of a vast Anglo-Saxon audience were summed up by a reviewer in the Liverpool COURIER, who had been especially put off by the nocturne subtitled Battersea Reach: "Under the same roof with Mr. Whistler's strange productions is the collection of animal paintings done by various artists for the proprietors of the GRAPHIC, and very refreshing it is to turn into this agreeably lighted room and rest on a comfortable settee while looking at Mother Hubbard's Dog or the sweet little pussy cats in The Happy Family."

VARIATIONS ON A THEME

For Two Worn Typewriter Fingers and an Asprin

By John Berry

STARSHIP PUBLICATIONS, LTD.
 229 Sixth Ave.
 New York, N. Y.
 March 29, 1960

Dear Sir:

We thank you for your mss THE SPIDER MEN OF ALDEBARREN. Although it is over 60,000 words long, we feel that there is not sufficient action in the plot to require such a considerable wordage. There are therefore, a few suggestions we offer, and can assure you that if you amend the plot accordingly, we will be pleased to receive your mss with possibilities of publication. Suggested amendments:

(1) Cut down the sex. In particular, the seduction scene in chapter three requires considerable cutting. Some of our readers are of tender years, and Gloria de la Frufrufu trapping the chief Spiderman, Doubletrisect, in the airlock, and the subsequent incidents, are quite liable to cause the book to be banned in Punxatawney. If only you hadn't stressed that Doubletrisect was a mutation resulting from a cross between a spider and a centipede.

(2) There is no need to be so technical in your description of the Anti-Cellular-Curbation-Forceps. Admittedly our scientific adviser is in the psycho ward after reading a Gerber Mss, but even to the shorthand typist it was complicated. We feel it is not essential to the plot to describe Miss Frufrufu's operation in such detail.

(3) While many aspects of your story disclose the wide range of your imagination, we feel that our readers will be bound to note certain elementary flaws. For example, although you explain that the Spidermen's planet, Squiffle, has an anti-centrifugal-amplifier in permanent operation, that does not explain why the Spidermen's spaceship hit the speed of light three times when it is only made of webbage.

(4) The love interest between Captain Rodney Forsythe, of the Fifth Earth Spacial Fleet, and Truscinda, the Spidermaiden, should be emphasized somewhat. Admittedly there is the world of difference in their physical equipment and mental make-up, but their association should go further than that displayed in chapter 63, where Forsythe feeds Truscinda dead flies in the Linen Room. We do not mean, of course, that you should exploit their association as you have done in chapter 3 between Miss Frufrufu and Doubletrisect, as in (1) above. It would add pathos to the plot if you could have Truscinda whip him up a sleeping bag with her gossamer sacs.

(5) We do not wish to curb your dialogue, and while there is a certain school of literary thought which gives licence to obscene phrases if these are in fact essential to the feeling of the plot, we suggest you be liberal with such terms as "oh dash it" or "for Goodness Sake" or even "oh fiddle", instead of the army expressions which punctuate your dialogue far too frequently.

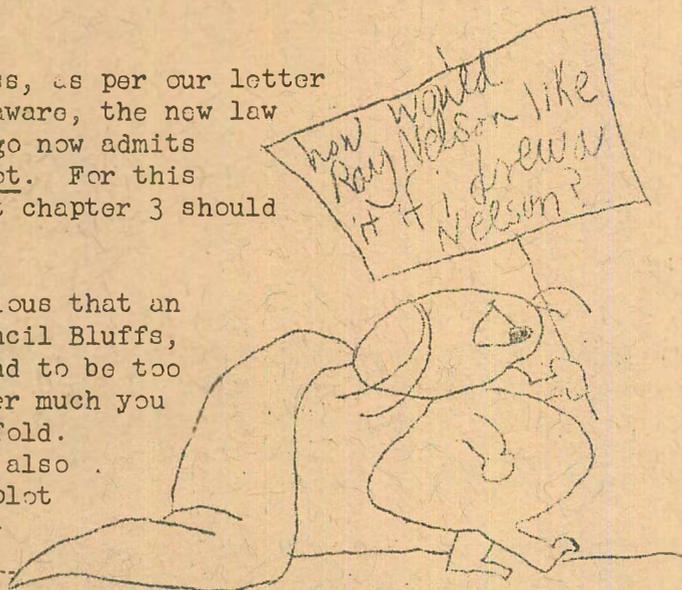
It is not our desire to be hypercritical, but we feel that the style of your writing is just what the present-day readers require, and therefore our suggestions are made solely to enable you to eventually effect publication, if our advice is taken in the spirit in which it is given. Yours, etc....

December 14, 1961

Dear Sir:

We are in receipt of your amended mss, as per our letter of March 29, 1960. As you are no doubt aware, the new law which came into operation a few months ago now admits sex so long as it is pertinent to the plot. For this reason we would respectfully suggest that chapter 3 should now be included in its entirety.

One further observation. It is obvious that an association between Miss Frufru from Council Bluffs, Iowa, and this mutated spiderman, is bound to be too complicated and will not work out, however much you refer to the use of the Multi Organ Manifold. Similarly, Captain Forsythe and Truscina also meet difficulties. It would tie up the plot considerably if you used a bit of imagination and have the two Earthlings and the two Spiderpeople fall in love with each other. It would make it easier for the illustrator too.



Recent political changes make it necessary to radically alter the constitutional concept of the United States of New York and Texas. We suggest you bring in a couple more states too, as this will boost the sale. Yours, etc....

June 5, 1962

Dear Sir:

Our scientific Adviser has now been certified capable of carrying on with his position with our firm, and, on reading your amended mss which arrived last week, he has found it necessary to make a few observations which we would suggest you incorporate in your story, if you desire early publication. Mr. Swittering's report is attached:

The title, THE SPIDERMEN OF ALDEBARREN, is rather unfortunate, because no less than seven science-fiction stories about spiders have recently appeared. However, no contemporary science-fiction writer has mentioned beetles for years, and it is worthy of consideration to completely alter your story and make it deal exclusively with beetle-men. This will also make some of the more intimate incidents rather more credible.

Since the building of the new radio telescope in Cuba, it has become the vogue to use as the basic location of science fiction stories: some place outside of this galaxy. It is suggest that the title, THE BEETLEMEN OF ANDROMEDA would be suitable, provisionally at least.

The technical aspect of the story is sadly under-played. Although the author shows a vivid grasp of imaginative scientific reasoning, it is obvious that he does not have the technical background to make these interesting ideas feasible. The author's Wimbold-Articulated-Gossimer-Drive means nothing to me, and I was at the University of Columbia until I was 63.

The story needs to be drastically re-written. I like the sexy parts, and if Dan Adkins can be contracted to do the artwork, I would suggest these should be printed separately under plain cover. I'll write the forward.

Mr. Swittering's report, above, shows that certain aspects of your mss require some modification. Please return it to us when these have been carried out. Yours, etc....

December 28, 1962

Dear Sir:

We thank you for mss THE BEETLEMEN OF ANDROMEDA. We have some good news for you, which we hope will temper the further suggestions we have to make: In order to celebrate the fiftieth edition of our magazine we have decided to feature you and Isaac Asimov.

Mr. Asimov has sent us a dilly of a story dealing with a gigantic battle between germs inhabiting 38, 642 of the Asteroids.

I'm sure you will agree that it is a rare pleasure to be offered the opportunity of sharing one issue with such a celebrated writer. However, your story will need to be drastically rewritten in order to bring it to its original length of 60,000 words.

Our Mr. Swittering suggests you feature a technicolor Phoenix as a sort of stooge. Have the Phoenix as Miss Frufru's pet. This will have the effect of taking advantage of the huge sale of the current Fritz Leiber bestseller THE PIEBALD MUTANTS AT BAY..

Please amond your mss with dispatch. Yours, etc...

February 15, 1963

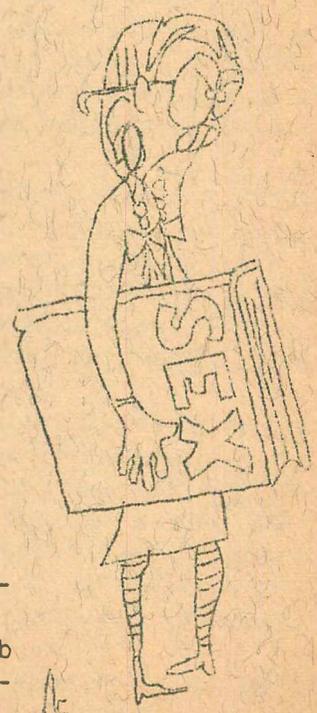
Dear Sir:

We have to thank you for your mss, which is returned herewith.

We have reluctantly decided to cease publication of science-fiction magazines, and concentrate on the neglected field of ornithology.

Do your know anything about birds?

Yours etc.



The male form is so much symmetrical than the female...

--Lou Tabakow via hal shapiro, db

HO!

By Elinor Busby

The above title is the title I plan to use on my OMPazine when I finally get into OMPA. The significance is this: since most OMPAns like to the east of me, I thought I would call my zine EASTWARD HO!; then it occurred to me that this would be rather rude to my good friends in California who are in OMPA. So I shall simply call it HO! which takes less time to letter anyhow.

It is only fitting that Bill's zine should introduce me to OMPA. It was Bill who talked me into getting on the waiting list. About a year previously, Bob Lichtman had talked me into saying I would get on the waiting list, and I really thought I would. I was so convinced I would get on the waiting list I even picked out a title for my OMPazine--HWYL--but then I talked myself out of it again and used the title for something else.

I think the reason why I couldn't talk myself out of it when Bill talked me into getting on the waiting list was that he talked me into in on long-distance telephone. What I hear on long-distance telephone makes a big impression on me, because there's something so sort of sudden and startling about long-distance telephone calls.

One argument that I used to Bill against my getting on the OMPA wait list was, that my reason for wanting to join OMPA was the fact that it's the British apa, but that it's now getting a deplorably large number of Americans in it, and why should I join an apa when the mere fact of my joining it would make it less desirable? But Bill said I should get on the waiting list anyhow, and so I did.

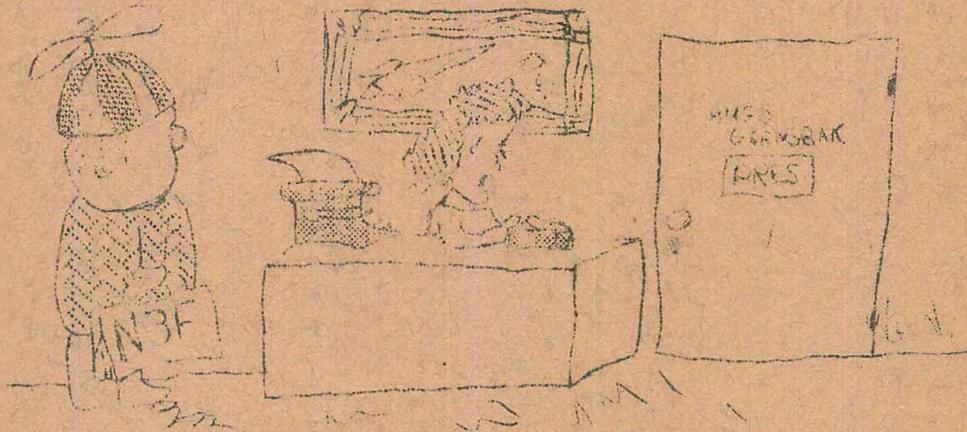
There are already more Americans than British in OMPA, and according to the waiting list, the preponderance will be greater before I get in. I think this is pretty depressing. There are plenty of American apas already. Why should we take over the only British apa? If we Americans must join OMPA, if Bill Donaho will talk us into these things, I think the least we can do is to try to let it stay British in character, instead of trying to turn it into just another American apa.

And what I'm thinking of particularly is the egoboo poll bit. I guess it's too late now--but still I must express myself as being very heartily opposed. If OMPA has got by all these years without an egoboo poll, why should they have to have one now? Why should we Americans go trailing our fierce competitive egos all over everything? I say egoboo polls may improve the quality of apa mailings, but in the long run they lessen one's pleasure in an apa as a collection of people, co-workers, acquaintances, friends.

I am in two apas that have egoboo polls: FAPA and SAPS. The egoboo poll in FAPA did not dismay me last year, nor will it this year. I haven't been a member of FAPA long enough to expect to do well, and in any case FAPA has such a large membership there's no sting in not placing high. But SAPS with a membership of

only 35, is more directly comparable to OMPA, and in SAPS my rating on the pillar poll has almost always been a source of as much annoyance as pleasure. I've never had any complaint with my rating as such: if I remember correctly, I've placed in the top ten almost from the beginning, though I doubt if I will this time. But two or three times people placed above me whose work I thought grossly inferior to my own, and that hurt. And I have always found the pleasure and satisfaction of placing above other people a somewhat sordid and SMUTTYING pleasure.

But you-all will already have voted, one way or another, so perhaps it's foolish for me to even state my opinion. But while I live, state my opinions I must. And if the egoboo poll is passed this time, when I get into OMPA perhaps I'll start (or join) a campaign to eliminate it. If so, I'll call Bill Donaho up long-distance to ask him for his vote.



"A gentleman to see you, Sir."

Alas, alak the deadline has come and the rest of Elinor's column hasn't arrived. And as VIPER really should have been mailed out last week I can't wait any longer.

Last minute rush also affected Alva and two of the ASTOUNDING covers were traced by Brian Donahue and one of them was stenciled by Ray Nelson.

Well, about all there seems left to say is: RON ELLIK FOR TAFF!

*Bob Lichtman—note exquisitely split infinitive. Ah, perhaps some day you'll get the knack if you're lucky.

REQUIEM FOR ASTOUNDING

I BEFORE CAMPBELL

Alva Rogers

The magazine now esoterically titled ANALOG SCIENCE FACT AND FICTION first appeared in December 1929 (dated January 1930) as ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SUPER SCIENCE, later to be simply ASTOUNDING STORIES and eventually ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION-- which later title it retained until 1960.

When Campbell completely scuttled the name ASTOUNDING and adopted the present title, retaining nothing of the past, it became unarguably clear that ASTOUNDING had evolved into a totally new magazine, its only link with the past being the editor. With the realization that the ASTOUNDING I had read during most of its thirty year lifetime was dead, I decided to write a survey of those years in an attempt to recall, if possible, the impressions and opinions of the magazine I had during that period. This is in no sense a critical essay, being instead a nostalgic "Remembrance of Things Past".

The first issue of ASTOUNDING that I ever read was the August, 1934 issue containing the first installment of E. E. Smith's Skylark of Valeron. I was eleven at that time, but the memory of that experience is as vivid as if it had happened yesterday. My previous knowledge of science fiction had been limited to books: Oz, Tom Swift, Verne, Wells, and Burroughs, and the discovery of magazine science fiction through the agency of ASTOUNDING and THE SKYLARK OF VALERON was a tremendously thrilling event. Although I soon discovered that other science fiction magazines existed--and read and collected them--ASTOUNDING remained my first and true love.

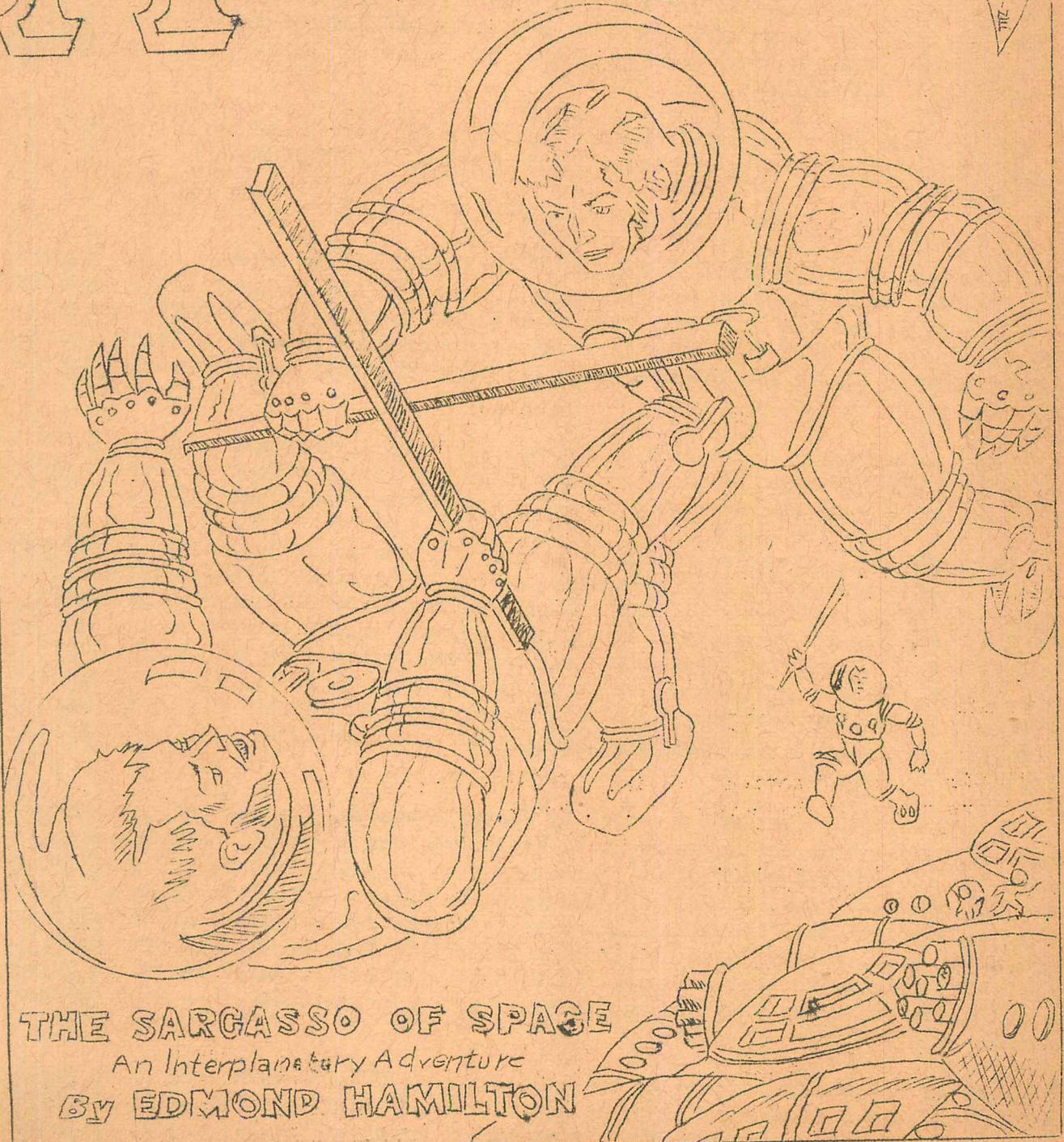
Having read ASTOUNDING faithfully for over a quarter of a century (as someone has said, that sounds a great deal longer than saying twenty-six years), I feel that I'm qualified to make this survey, not as a critic doing research into the past from the vantage point of the coldly sophisticated present, but as a longtime fan and collector reviewing the fondly remembered past with the typical ardent fan's conviction that the past is always, but always! far superior to the present--and this, of course holds true no matter from what particular present one may be in at the moment.

I would like to explain a little about my approach to this subject. My original ambitious plan was to take each year in succession, practically month by month. Two things precluded this approach: the sheer number of months involved, and the fact that in 1945 I stupidly sold my complete collection to that date and as a consequence had nothing but my memory (aided by Day's Index) to rely on for data concerning the

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ASTOUNDING

STORIES



THE SARGASSO OF SPACE
An Interplanetary Adventure
By **EDMOND HAMILTON**

Clayton era; as for the early Street & Smith days I do have a few valued issues left of that period. Discussions with fans, particularly Lee Sapiro, have been of great help here. Al Halevy has graciously loaned me his collection from 1939 to 1945, and I have indulged in an orgy of rereading many of my favorite stories from those years. Because of these limiting factors I have dealt rather sketchily with the Clayton's; in addition to which I don't believe they deserve a great deal of space. The real ASTOUNDING, that is the S&S ASTOUNDING, I've covered by years, commenting on a few stories chosen for personal reasons, mentioning by name a few others I consider notable for one reason or another, and finally summerizing the year. If I seem to place heaviest emphasis on the 1939 to 1945 years you will have to indulge me. To me these were the greatest years science fiction has ever seen. Even without looking at the issues involved, after all this time I can still recall with almost crystalline clarity each individual gem-like copy of ASTOUNDING of those years, feel it in my hands, smell it, and marvel again at the talent of Hubert Rogers at capturing the feel of ASTOUNDING.

And so, with the understanding that this is a fan survey and not a critic's review, I give you one fan's opinion of thirty years of ASTOUNDING.

I: Clayton ASTOUNDING, 1930 - 1933

The advent of ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SUPER SCIENCE on the science fiction scene was a welcome one to the fans, swelling the field as it did to three major magazines. In appearance it was far different from either AMAZING STORIES or SCIENCE WONDER STORIES: those two magazines were large sized, printed on reasonably good paper and boasting trimmed edges. ASTOUNDING was a 144 page 7x10 pulp magazine with untrimmed edges.

Although the great depression of the thirties was already a grim reality the same year ASTOUNDING was launched, it apparently had little effect on the new magazine which was to last for three and a half years before finally succumbing.

ASTOUNDING was an action adventure science fiction magazine which gave the fans a nice balance against the more generally mature and cerebral science fiction of AMAZING and WONDER. Although I didn't start reading ASTOUNDING until a year after it folded as a Clayton property I soon picked up back issues to make up for the time lagn and I still remember how much fun and excitement there was in reading the Clayton's, never giving a thought to its literary faults as so incisively detailed by Sapiro. To me they were marvels beyond compare (not of course to be compared with The Skylark of Valeron, The Mightiest Machine and the like), far more exciting than anything I had read up to that point.

The first issue featured a serial by Victor Rousseau, The Beetle Horde, graphically illustrated on the cover by H. W. Wesso, who was to do all the subsequent covers for the Clayton ASTOUNDING. Appearing also in this first issue, among others, were Ray Cummings, Capt. S. P. Meek and Murray Leinster. Editor Harry Bates gathered around himself a number of writers who were to become regular "ASTOUNDING" writers: Capt. S. P. Meek, Murray Leinster, Charles Willard Diffen, D. W. Hall, Victor Rousseau, Ray Cummings, Anthony Gilmore, F. V. W. Mason, Arthur J. Burks and R. P. Starzel to name a few--with Ray Cummings and Anthony Gilmore contributing the more memorable stories.

Most of the stories appearing in the Clayton ASTOUNDING have long since disappeared into oblivion, remembered by relatively few, except possibly as disembodied titles. Stories like Burks' Barth, The Marauder; Brood of the Dark Moon, by Charles Willard Diffen; The Purple Brain, by Hal K. Wells; Pirates of the Gorm, by Nat

Schachner; and Murray Leinster's Murder Madness are some of the stories popular then--now mostly forgotten.

However, the novels of Ray Cummings published by the Clayton ASTOUNDING have survived the test of time, some being reprinted in later years, and in my opinion were the best science fiction to appear in those years. His first novel, Brigands of the Moon, started in the March 1930 issue and was an instant hit. This was soon followed by Jetta of the Lowlands, Beyond the Vanishing Point (a return to his popular adventures within the golden atom theme), Exile of Time and Wandl, the Invader. (Brigands and Wandl were reprinted in Doc Lowndes' SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY in '42 and '43, and Brigands and Beyond the Vanishing Point have recently appeared as Ace novels.) These stories, even today, still have a certain quality about them that makes for pleasant reading.

Of equal--if not greater--popularity with the Cummings novels, and perhaps epitomizing the Clayton ASTOUNDING type of science fiction more nearly than any other stories, were the Hawk Carse adventures of Anthony Gilmore. These stories: Hawk Carse, The Affair of the Brain, The Bluff of the Hawk and The Passing of Ku Sui, achieved an almost legendary reputation that lasted for years. An amalgam of pure thud and blunder space opera and Fu Manchu menace and intrigue, Hawk Carse contained more than its share of the cliches explored by Sapiro², i.e., oriental menace, clean cut, brave and resourceful Anglo-Saxon hero, the superiority of the white over the colored races, etc.; the stories were simply plotted, sloppily written and were a hell of a lot of fun to read at the time. An interesting sidelight to the Hawk Carse stories was the mystery of the true identity of "Anthony Gilmore" which was known to be a pseudonym, possibly a collaboration between editor Harry Bates and another well-known writer. It was not for some years that it was definitely admitted that "Anthony Gilmore" was in fact Harry Bates and D.W. Hall. This was one of the best kept pseudonyms in science fiction.

By the middle of 1932 economic factors forced the magazine onto a bi-monthly schedule with the June issue, and in March 1933 the Clayton chain--including ASTOUNDING--folded.

It's difficult to speculate on the probable course ASTOUNDING might have taken had it not folded and subsequently been taken up and revived by Street and Smith. Earlier in the year Bates had purchased E.E. Smith's latest novel, Triplanetary, for publication late in 1933, but obviously knowing what was coming, he returned it to Smith. Interestingly, though, Wesso had already painted a cover for it and this cover was used on the last issue of the Clayton ASTOUNDING. (Triplanetary, as we all know, ran serially in AMAZING, starting with the January 1934 issue.

The popularity of ASTOUNDING cannot be minimized, although it had some powerful competition from AMAZING and WONDER, particularly AMAZING. John Taine's Seeds of Life and The White Lily; The immensely popular "Arcot, Wade and Morey" series of John W. Campbell Jr.: Piracy Preferred, Solarite, The Black Star Passes, Islands of Space and Invaders from the Infinite which appeared from 1930 through 1932 in both the monthly and quarterly AMAZINGS; E.E. Smith's two great classics, Skylark Three, sequel to the first of modern space operas, Skylark of Space; and Spacehounds of IPC, Smith's only novel not of galactic scope but confined to our solar system, not connected with a series and considered by many to be his best novel. These are just a very few of the "classics" that were appearing concurrently with ASTOUNDING and overshadowing the stories printed therein. Notwithstanding the competition, the ASTOUNDING fan even then was fiercely loyal to the magazine.

By the time ASTOUNDING folded, however, both AMAZING and WONDER has fallen on evil days, and the future looked grim, if not actually alarming to the science fiction

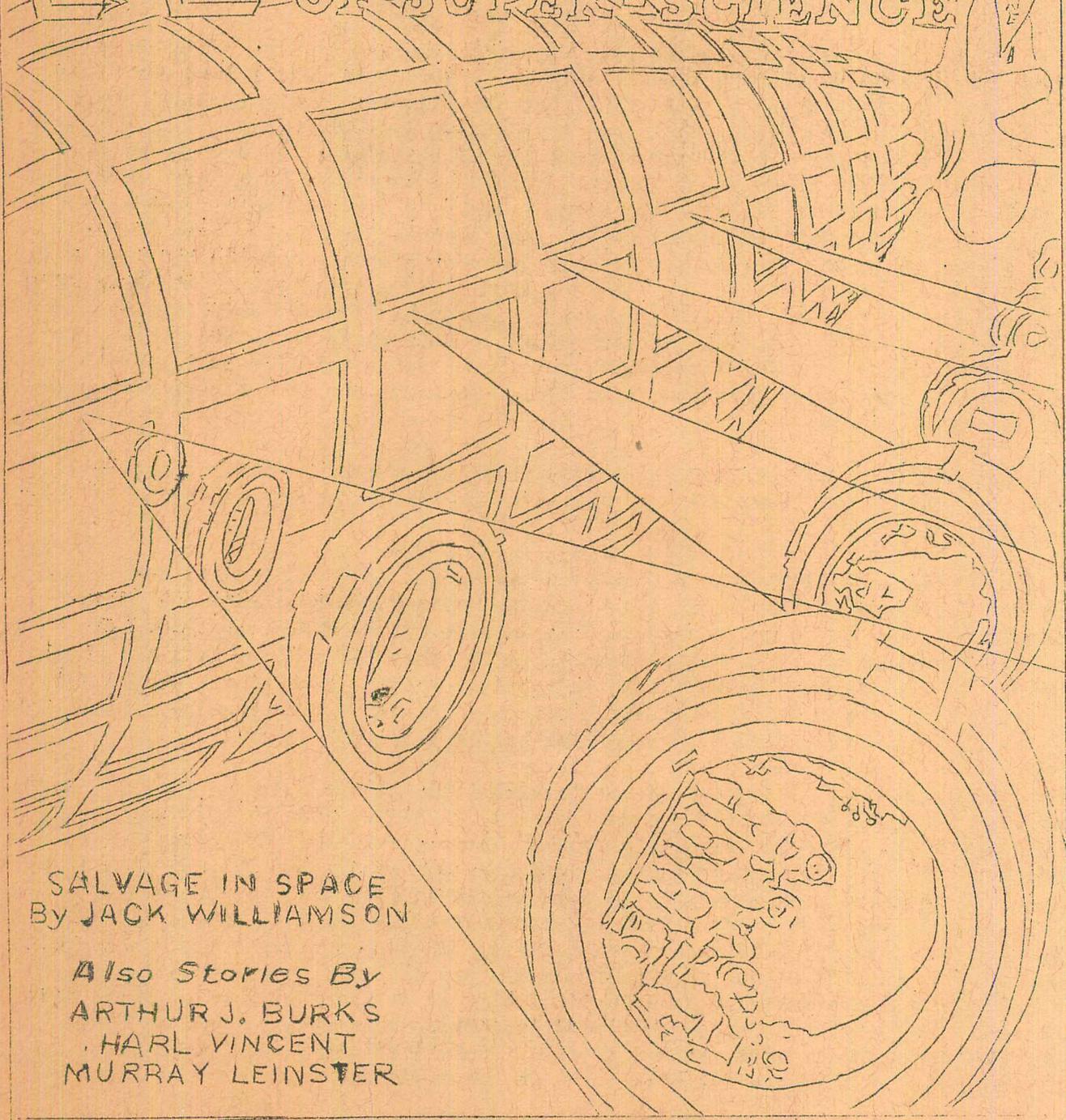
MARCH

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A STOUNDING

STORIES OF SUPER-SCIENCE

A
CLAYTON
MAGAZINE



SALVAGE IN SPACE
By JACK WILLIAMSON

Also Stories By
ARTHUR J. BURKS
HARL VINCENT
MURRAY LEINSTER

fan. Talk about the future of science fiction being bleak today! Think how the science fiction fan felt then, with ASTOUNDING gone from the scene and only two science fiction magazines, plus WEIRD TALES, remaining—and the life-line of all three not expected to be too long.

But, unforeseen by everyone, ASTOUNDING was to rise, phoenix-like from the ashes of its past, and initiate a renaissance that was to exceed the wildest dreams of the wildest fans.

II: THE TREMAINE ERA, 1933-1937

1933-34

After a hiatus of four months, ASTOUNDING was revived by Street & Smith with a new editor, F. Orlin Tremaine. Tremaine had been associated with the Clayton chain and now, in addition to ASTOUNDING STORIES, also edited for Street & Smith CLUES, TOP-NOTCH, COWBOY STORIES and BILL BARNES, AIR ADVENTURES. His brief editorship (brief, that is, in contrast to Campbell's long term) was an intensely stimulating and exciting period for the fans, full of new ideas, innovations and memorable stories.

The first S&S ASTOUNDING, October 1933, was obviously a hurriedly thrown together issue with straight adventure, occult and I believe only three science fiction stories. It wasn't until the January issue that the Tremaine ASTOUNDING began to shape up and intimate what was in store for the future, and even then didn't begin to indicate the greatness that ASTOUNDING was soon to enjoy.

Shortly after taking over ASTOUNDING Tremaine instituted the "though variant" story, a designation that signified that here was a story with a remarkably new slant on an established scientific theory, one that explored beyond the boundaries of the known. This policy of the thought variant was a great stimulus to the writers and materially contributed to the rapid rise of ASTOUNDING to preeminence in the field. It also made the "idea" story the dominant type in ASTOUNDING with stories emphasizing mood or characterization making rare and infrequent appearances.

The thought variant for January was Donald Wandrie's Colossus, an ambitious story dealing with relativity that was overshadowed by Nat Schachner's near classic, Redmask of the Outlands. Redmask of the Outlands contained many elements that were later to be identified with the sociological tale of the mid-forties and is regarded by many as one of the first of such type science fiction. The hero, Redmask (so called because of the opaque red helmet he wore at all times), was a rebel against the autocratic city states that dotted the North American continent and symbolized the individual's revolt against enforced conformity.

February featured the first of two installments of Thomas Calvery McClary's Rebirth which attempted to show the results of a scientist's idealistic, but misguided tampering with nature; in this case causing universal total amnesia with the idea of permitting man to rebuild civilization anew.

Who can ever forget the thrill of reading The Legion of Space, Jack Williamson's classic, for the first time? The first part of this unforgettable story began in the April issue and it ran for six breathtaking installments. The adventures of John Star, Giles Habibula, Hal Samdu and Jay Kalam on the evil world of the Medusea, as they fought to save the lovely Aladoree Anthar and the secret weapon, AKKA, which she alone held in her mind and which was the only salvation of Earth, were high

... indeed with a sense of wonder in ample measure. This same issue also pre-

stories with the Kelly yarn being the better of the two. Also Harl Vincent's Prowler of the Wasteland, Raymond Z. Gallun's sequel to Old Faithful, Son of Old Faithful, Schachner again with a two-part serial, I Am not God and Jack Williamson's Galactic Circle and his two-part novel, Islands of the Sun, a story which featured beings inhabiting the sun's troposphere. One of my particular favorites of 1935 was All Thinking by Harry Bates, who once again demonstrated that despite the evidence of Hawk Carse, et. seq., and The Tentacles from Below, he could, when he wished, really write. A time travel story which reaches into the remote future, almost Don. A. Stuartlike in its rather leisurely narration and evocation of mood, this story never fails to please me.

1936

By 1936 ASTOUNDING began to level off, containing fewer outstanding single issues than the preceding two years, but continuing to maintain its leading position in the field. The adoption of trimmed edges in February greatly enhanced the physical appearance of ASTOUNDING and, to a science fiction fan, made it just about the handsomest magazine on the stands.

In February, also, an event of a literary nature took place which was of historical importance. At the Mountains of Madness by H. P. Lovecraft was present as a three-part serial. One of Lovecraft's longest stories, and containing many important elements of the "Cthulhu Mythos", it told of an antarctic expedition sponsored by Miskatonic University of Arkham which unearths and releases from eons long imprisonment, remnants of the "Elder Ones". Although it was objected to as being weird and not science fiction by a few purists, the majority of fans raved over it and clamored for more Lovecraft. He appeared only once more, in the July issue, with a long novelette, The Shadow Out of Time which rated an impressive cover by Brown.

The demands for a sequel to The Legion of Space had been pretty constant since its appearance in 1934, and in May Williamson obliged with The Cometeers which was even more cosmic in scope than The Legion of Space.

Nat Schachner by this time had gained the reputation of being ASTOUNDING's number one hack (a title that was rapidly being challenged by H. Warner Van Lorne), and judging solely by the quantity of published stories in 1936 this reputation was possibly justified. They were: The Eternal Wanderer, The Isotope Men, Pacifica, Entropy, The Return of the Murians, and a two-part novel Infra-Universe. Also Reverse Universe, Saprophyte Men of Venus and under his pseudonym of Chan Corbett Ecce Homo, a fine little story, Thought Web of Minipar and Nova in Messier 33. Let's see now....that's eleven stories in twelve months, most of them novelettes and one of them a two-part novel (although a two-part novel in those days was not much longer--if that--than a feature novelette in ANALOG today)...obviously a hack. But to me, a starry-eyed adolescent, Schachner was one of my favorite writers and remained so until the day he stopped writing science fiction.

In addition to the Lovecraft, Williamson and Schachner contributions which were to me the highlights of 1936, there were many other fine stories published, although none qualifying for my personal accolade of classic. By this I don't mean to infer that I consider the Schachner tales to be classics in any sense of the word, but I do regard The Cometeers and the Lovecraft, particularly The Shadow Out of Time, as vintage classics, circa the mid-thirties. As far as Schachner is concerned, as I've already said, it was simply one of those cases where a particular writer for some reason strikes your fancy and as a consequence can do no wrong, despite any evidence to the contrary.

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The first S&S ASTOUNDING, October 1933, was obviously a hurriedly thrown together issue with straight adventure, occult and I believe only three science fiction stories. It wasn't until the January issue that the Tremaine ASTOUNDING began to shape up and intimate what was in store for the future, and even then didn't begin to indicate the greatness that ASTOUNDING was soon to enjoy.

Shortly after taking over ASTOUNDING Tremaine instituted the "thought variant" story, a designation that signified that here was a story with a remarkably new slant on an established scientific theory, one that explored beyond the boundaries of the known. This policy of the thought variant was a great stimulus to the writers and materially contributed to the rapid rise of ASTOUNDING to preeminence in the field. It also made the "idea" story the dominant type in ASTOUNDING with stories emphasizing mood or characterization making rare and infrequent appearances.

The thought variant for January was Donald Wandrie's Colossus, an ambitious story dealing with relativity that was overshadowed by Nat Schachner's near classic, Redmask of the Outlands. Redmask of the Outlands contained many elements that were later to be identified with the sociological tale of the mid-forties and is regarded by many as one of the first of such type science fiction. The hero, Redmask (so called because of the opaque red helmet he wore at all times), was a rebel against the autocratic city states that dotted the North American continent and symbolized the individual's revolt against enforced conformity.

February featured the first of two installments of Thomas Calvery McClary's Rebirth which attempted to show the results of a scientist's idealistic, but misguided tampering with nature; in this case causing universal total amnesia with the idea of permitting man to rebuild civilization anew.

Who can ever forget the thrill of reading The Legion of Space, Jack Williamson's classic, for the first time? The first part of this unforgettable story began in the April issue and it ran for six breathtaking installments. The adventures of John Star, Giles Habibula, Hal Samdu and Jay Kalam on the evil world of the Medusea, as they fought to save the lovely Aladoree Anthar and the secret weapon, AKKA, which she alone held in her mind and which was the only salvation of Earth, were high

adventure indeed with a sense of wonder in ample measure. This same issue also presented A Matter of Size by Harry Bates, a long novelette on the shrinking man theme by the former editor of ASTOUNDING--and one of the best of that type--that established Bates as one of the better, if infrequent, contributors to the new ASTOUNDING. Nat Schachner had a thought variant, He from Procyon, in this issue, and Lo!, Charles Fort's controversial but interesting collection of unexplained phenomena appeared with the first of eight installments. In addition to these there was The God Box by Howard Von Drey (Howard Wandrei, brother of Donald) and two or three other short stories to round out one of the best single issues of the thirties.

In August the cover by Howard V. Brown featured a gigantic spaceship viewed head on and announced the appearance of The Skylark of Valeron by E. E. Smith which was to bring the saga of the Skylarks to a thundering climax in seven installments. As an added bonus the fifth installments of both The Legion of Space and Lo! were also present.

The present generation of fans, that is, those who started reading science fiction in the late forties or fifties, are inclined to look down their noses at the Skylark stories and dismiss them as poorly written and childish adventures; but to the fan of an earlier generation a novel by E. E. Smith, Ph.D., was an adventure in reading scarcely to be equaled. The sweep of a Smith novel that used the entire galaxy as a stage, the slashing space battles, so well described, the super-human qualities of Richard Seaton and Martin Crane who (with a little help here and there from friendly alien races!) overcame all obstacles, and the supremely evil and wonderful villain, Marc "Blacky" DuQuesne all combined to enthrall the reader as very few science fiction novels are able to do today. Juvenile, maybe; poorly written, yes and no--they were as well written as any at that time--but most importantly, they provided supreme entertainment.

Two stories, one in October and one in November made these issues significant: The Bright Illusion by C. L. Moore and Twilight by a new author, Don A. Stuart. Miss Moore had established a reputation for herself in the pages of WEIRD TALES with her swashbuckling space adventures of Northwest Smith and Jirel of Jory, and this was her first story in ASTOUNDING. Don A. Stuart created something of a sensation with his first story, a picture of (as the title infers) the twilight of Earth in the remote future, and, although it contained the necessary idea element, was essentially a beautifully and effectively and almost poetically written tone poem, a story that created a feeling of the endlessness of time and the aching loneliness of a dying Earth.

Tremaine, whether he intended it or not, produced in the December 1934 ASTOUNDING what is perhaps the greatest single issue the magazine has ever seen. Howard V. Brown's powerful cover painting of a huge and complex engine illustrated a new serial by John W. Campbell, Jr., The Mightiest Machine. The youthful Campbell had in a little more than three years become one of the most popular of all s f writers and achieved a reputation comparable to E. E. Smith's of being a master of the super scientific science fiction novel, and this latest was to cap them all. This issue seemed almost an all Campbell issue, for in addition to his novel he had a Don A. Stuart, his second under that name, Atomic Power; and The Irrelevant by Karl Van Kampen, his muchly disputed story concerning the conservation of energy.

Sharing top billing with The Mightiest Machine was the fifth installment of The Skylark of Valeron which was to continue for two more issues. The remaining "great" story was Raymond Z. Gallun's Old Faithful, one of the most popular stories of the period.

A STREET & SMITH PUBLICATION

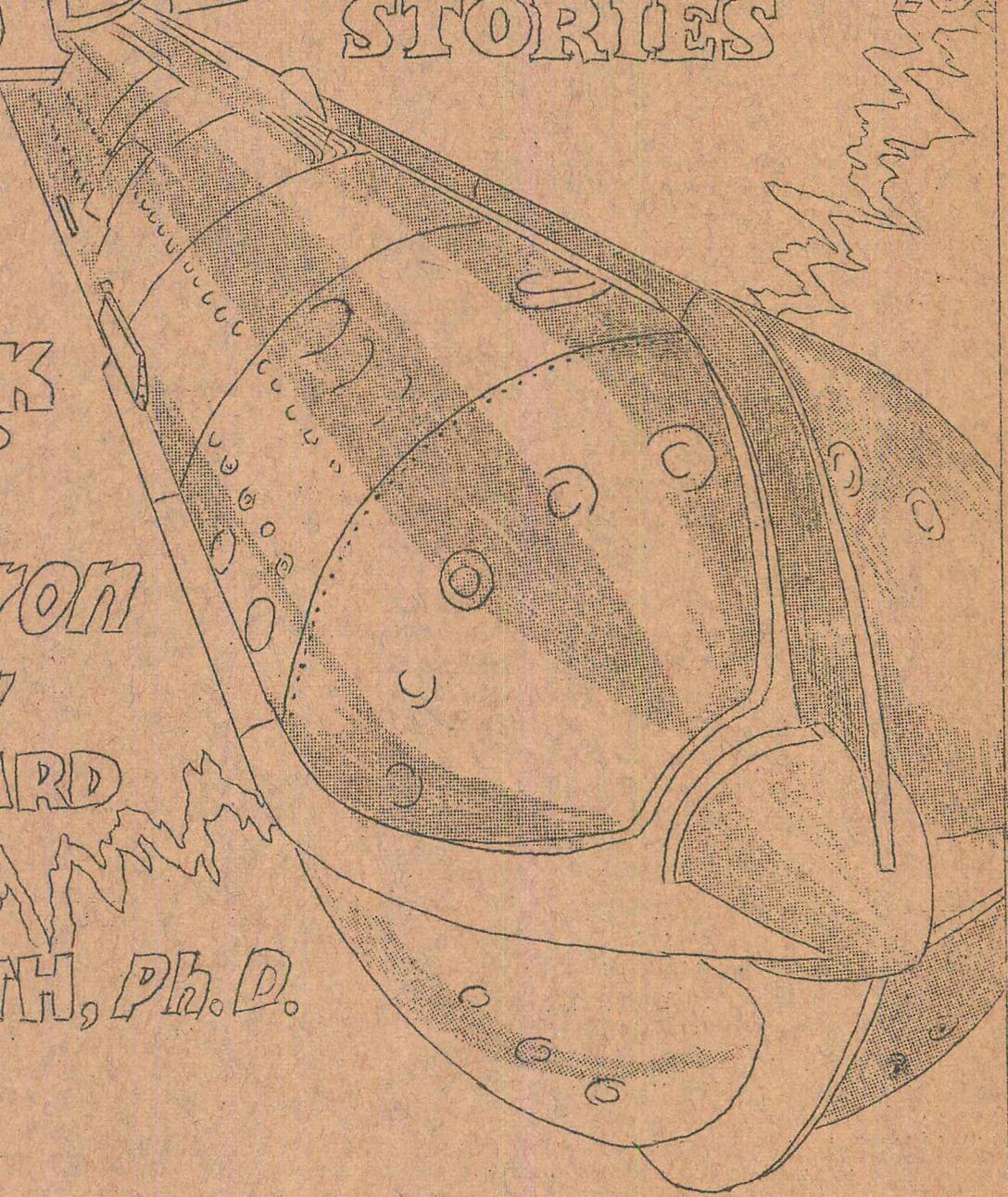


ASTOUNDING

STORIES

AUGUST
20

The
SKY
LARK
of
Valeron
by
EDWARD
WEAVER
SMITH, Ph.D.



1934 was a year of many changes for ASTOUNDING, a year of stories immeasurably superior to anything to be found in the Clayton ASTOUNDING. It was a year in which Howard V. Brown on the covers and Elliot Dold on interior illustrations provided some of the best science fiction artwork of all time. A year which saw the greatest work of both E. E. Smith and John W. Campbell, Jr. to date appearing simultaneously; and a year which introduced Don A. Stuart with the classic Twilight, an event of far reaching significance--for, as Campbell said, "It lead to the development of the Don A. Stuart stories, and thus to the modern ASTOUNDING."³ And along with all this there was the feeling of excitement one had concerning ASTOUNDING; the knowledge that great things were happening, and the feeling that even greater things could be expected in the future, that the potential of ASTOUNDING was limitless. In all, a highly satisfying twelve months.

1935

In 1935, the policies Tremaine initiated the previous year were to be continued, with, however, a greater emphasis on the thought variant which was to make the ASTOUNDING gadget story the type preeminently identified with the science fiction of the mid thirties. Howard Brown was to continue to do all the covers and Elliot Dold, with his magnificently imaginative and stark drawings, was to handle an increasingly greater proportion of the interior illustrations.

There were to be no Skylark of Valerons or Mightiest Machines in this year, although both these epics carried over and concluded in 1935. There was, however, Don A. Stuart in profusion, John Taine and Stanley G. Weinbaum.

John Taine, one of the giants of science fiction, made his sole appearance in ASTOUNDING with Twelve Eighty-Seven, a great novel of biological warfare between the East and the West, that, despite its obvious merits received a mixed reception from the fans.

Don A. Stuart had six stories published in 1935: Blindness, The Escape, the Machine series; The Machine, The Invaders and Rebellion; and Night, the haunting sequel to Twilight. With each succeeding story Stuart's stature increased tremendously and his eventual influence on other ASTOUNDING writers was incalculable.

1935 was essentially Stanley G. Weinbaum's year. Destined not to live the year out, and having his first story, A Martian Odyssey published as recently as July 1934 in WONDER, he produced in that short time an enviable number of outstanding stories, the best of which appeared in ASTOUNDING. Flight on Titan, Mad Moon, The Lotus Eaters, The Red Peri, and others were all interplanetary adventures with a feature that was for a while uniquely (for that time) Weinbaum's--the attribution of truly non-human, non-earthly characteristics to alien forms of life on other planets. In The Adaptive Ultimate, however, written under the pseudonym of John Jessel, he departed from the interplanetary story to write one of laboratory science in which a serum, derived from fruit flies, is injected into a girl dying of tuberculous. This dramatically cures her and endows her, due to some vague hormonal action, with the ability to adapt instantly to any environment. The enthusiastic reception this story received was pretty conclusive evidence that Weinbaum's reputation was based on his genuine ability as a writer and not just on his name.

The temptation to list all the stories I remember with nostalgia is great, but I'll resist that temptation and list just a few: Orb of Probability and Son of Redmask by Schachner (two fine tales), Earth's Mausoleum by John Russell Fearn (an interesting thought variant), C.L. Moore's Greater Glories (ah-h-h!), Murray Leinster's Proxima Centaurai and Frank K. Kelly's Starship Invincible, two popular

A STREET & SMITH PUBLICATION

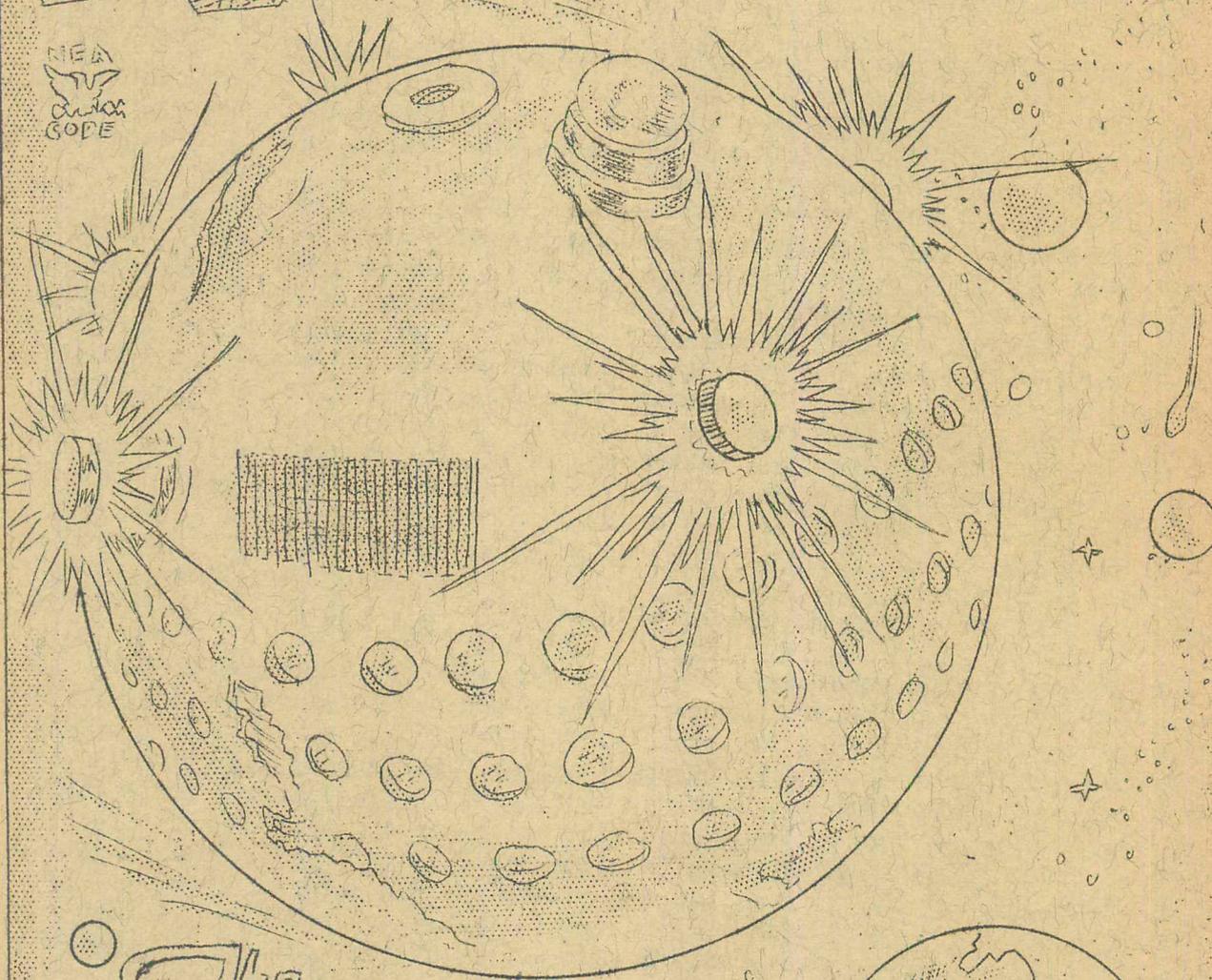
ASTOUNDING

STORIES

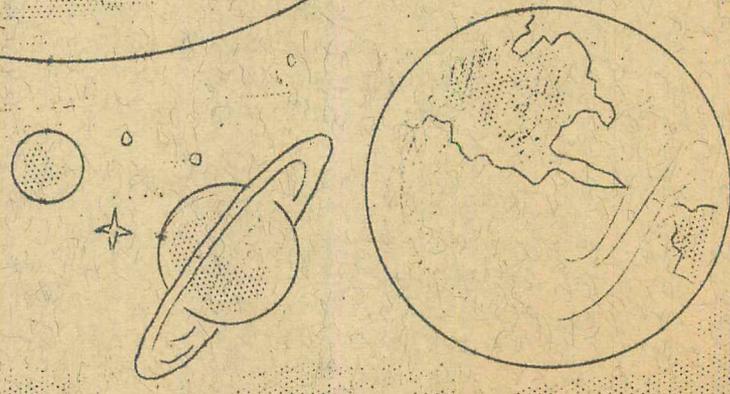
AUGUST

20[¢]

NEA
Dexter
GOPE



The
**GALACTIC
CIRCLE**
by Jack Williamson



stories with the Kelly yarn being the better of the two. Also Harl Vincent's Prowler of the Wasteland, Raymond Z. Gallun's sequel to Old Faithful, Son of Old Faithful, Schachner again with a two-part serial, I Am not God and Jack Williamson's Galactic Circle and his two-part novel, Islands of the Sun, a story which featured beings inhabiting the sun's troposphere. One of my particular favorites of 1935 was Alas, All Thinking by Harry Bates, who once again demonstrated that despite the evidence of Hawk Carse, et. seq., and The Tentacles from Below, he could, when he wished, really write. A time travel story which reaches into the remote future, almost Don. A. Stuartlike in its rather leisurely narration and evocation of mood, this story never fails to please me.

1936

By 1936 ASTOUNDING began to level off, containing fewer outstanding single issues than the preceding two years, but continuing to maintain its leading position in the field. The adoption of trimmed edges in February greatly enhanced the physical appearance of ASTOUNDING and, to a science fiction fan, made it just about the handsomest magazine on the stands.

In February, also, an event of a literary nature took place which was of historical importance. At the Mountains of Madness by H. P. Lovecraft was present as a three-part serial. One of Lovecraft's longest stories, and containing many important elements of the "Cthulhu Mythos", it told of an antarctic expedition sponsored by Miskatonic University of Arkham which unearths and releases from eons long imprisonment, remnants of the "Elder Ones". Although it was objected to as being weird and not science fiction by a few purists, the majority of fans raved over it and clamored for more Lovecraft. He appeared only once more, in the July issue, with a long novelette, The Shadow Out of Time which rated an impressive cover by Brown.

The demands for a sequel to The Legion of Space had been pretty constant since its appearance in 1934, and in May Williamson obliged with The Cometeers which was even more cosmic in scope than The Legion of Space.

Nat Schachner by this time had gained the reputation of being ASTOUNDING's number one hack (a title that was rapidly being challenged by H. Warner Van Lorne), and judging solely by the quantity of published stories in 1936 this reputation was possibly justified. They were: The Eternal Wanderer, The Isotope Men, Pacifica, Entropy, The Return of the Murians, and a two-part novel Infra-Universe. Also Reverse Universe, Saprophyte Men of Venus and under his pseudonym of Chan Corbett Ecce Homo, a fine little story, Thought Web of Minipar and Nova in Messier 33. Let's see now.....that's eleven stories in twelve months, most of them novelettes and one of them a two-part novel (although a two-part novel in those days was not much longer--if that--than a feature novelette in ANALOG today)....obviously a hack. But to me, a starry-eyed adolescent, Schachner was one of my favorite writers and remained so until the day he stopped writing science fiction.

In addition to the Lovecraft, Williamson and Schachner contributions which were to me the highlights of 1936, there were many other fine stories published, although none qualifying for my personal accolade of classic. By this I don't mean to infer that I consider the Schachner tales to be classics in any sense of the word, but I do regard The Cometeers and the Lovecraft, particularly The Shadow Out of Time, as vintage classics, circa the mid-thirties. As far as Schachner is concerned, as I've already said, it was simply one of those cases where a particular writer for some reason strikes your fancy and as a consequence can do no wrong, despite any evidence to the contrary.

A few of the stories I remember from this year of ASTOUNDING'S slight decline, those that stood out over their contemporaries—although they seemed to lack the quality of greatness that earlier ASTOUNDING tales had—were such gems as John Russell Fearn's Mathematica and Mathematica Plus, Murray Leinster's The Incredible Invasion (reprinted by Ace), Child of the Stars, which concluded the Old Faithful trilogy of Raymond Z. Gallun, and Stuart's Frictional Losses and Elimination. I suppose the question will come up as to why I've relegated the Stuart yarns to a position lower than Williamson or Schachner—something that is inconceivable today—and on a level with Fearn. The simple truth is that at that time these two stories made less of an impression on me than did others.

In June Campbell began a series of popularized science articles under the title of A Study of the Solar System which was to run for eighteen consecutive chapters. Being straight factual articles of the type Willey Ley or Isaac Asimov were later to become masters of, this series was one of the highlights of the 1936-1937 ASTOUNDING and polled high with the fans.

The vague feeling one had at the conclusion of the year that it had been less memorable than the preceding two years was hard to define, but never the less present. There were individual stories throughout the year that I liked very much and many that stirred up that old sense of wonder, but the pervading sense of excitement and adventure that surrounded the entire output of 1934 and 1935 seemed to be strangely absent. Being young and non-critical I guess I just put it down to one of those things I couldn't explain and looked forward to the coming year with ever present optimism and faith in the genius of Tremaine. Of course, at the time I didn't realize that the type of gadget science fiction as exemplified by the thought variant had reached its peak and was soon to become a relic of the past; that it had been overplayed to the detriment of basic story values; that no matter how awe-inspiring the concepts contained in the thought variant, they were becoming increasingly stereotyped and devoid of humanness.

1937

The new year continued more or less on the course set in 1936, playing heavily on the super-super science type; Schachner maintained his position as the most frequent contributor and commenced his Past, Present and Future series which was quite popular with many and held up by others as evidence of his being ASTOUNDING's supreme hack; The Blue Spot and Released Entropy were two more by Williamson; short novels in two parts dealing with incredibly cosmic forces, and a disappointment after the excellent The Cometeers of the year before; Arthur J. Burks, whose last appearance in ASTOUNDING has been in November 1933 with a short story, My Lady of the Tunnel, returned with the featured novelette for November, The Golden Horseshoe, which copped a beautiful cover by Brown; some new names made their initial appearances, Stuart presented us with two of his greatest stories, E.E. Smith started a new series and a change in editorship took place which had momentous significance for the future of ASTOUNDING and the whole field of science fiction.

Two authors who were to cast large shadows in the next two decades made their bows in 1937—L. Sprague deCamp with a short story, The Isolinguals, and Eric Frank Russell with a novelette, The Saga of Pelican West. Also appearing for the first time was Willy Ley, both as a superlative writer of articles with The Dawn of the Conquest of Space in March, and as an infrequent but excellent story teller (as Robert Willey) with At the Perihelion in February. Norman L. Knight was another who debuted with a two-part novel, Frontier of the Unknown.

BURP BENNETT

A. B. Dick has about the most expensive mimeographs in the U. S. They used to have a monopoly and now they have prestige, so they charge accordingly. U. S. Gestetner prices are even higher than that and people pay them because of the manifold advantages of silk-screen reproduction. Dave Rike just paid \$130.00 for an Army surplus Gestetner with automatic feed. Everyone is congratulating him on his coup. The machine is in excellent condition. The Army paid \$495.00 for it and the price for that model is now \$795.00. Rex Rotary is now selling a silk-screen mimeo which is taking some of Gestetner's business as their prices are cheaper and the results seem to be as good.

One reason why the first issues of many U. S. fanzine look so bad is that they are put out on ordinary mimeos. To obtain good results with these takes time, patience, skill and lots of practice. Using a Gestetner is child's play in comparison.

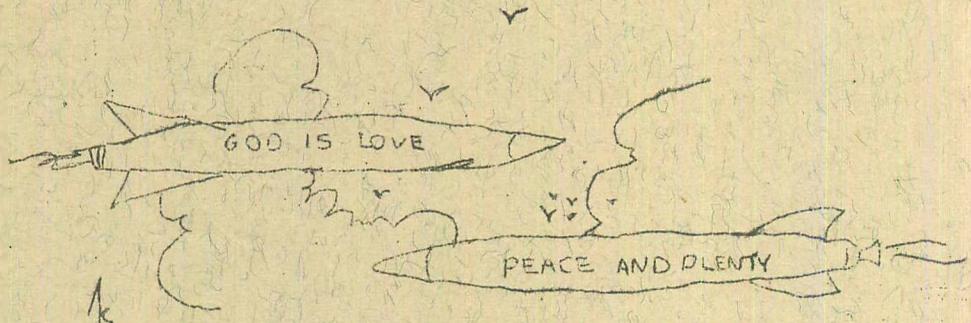
ERG - JEEVES.

I completely agree with you about the Mills amendments. Responsibility is an individual matter. It can't be legislated. Even if it could be, it shouldn't be.

EYE TRACKS - LOCKE

I greatly enjoy your accounts of your army experiences. It brings back old times. Yes, "Private's Progress" was indeed a riot. And so realistic too, although people who weren't in the army don't seem to realize that. Reminds me about what somebody said about Dickens, "Anybody who thinks that Dickens created exaggerated types or caricatures either hasn't been around very much or has no powers of observation.

Of course, People who are irresponsible, who don't care or who don't worry about the results of their actions are more apt to take drugs than responsible people. I can't see how anyone could argue otherwise.



And of course any accout of a drug, recommending its effects, is likely to cause people to take that drug, even responsible people.

One of the results of freedom is that people suffer the consequences of their own actions. It is a strong infringement of personal liberty to protect a person against himself. The right to self-destruction or damnation is just as much a right as any other. Children have to be protected in some fashion, but adolescents much less so and adults not at all. It is sheer tyranny to limit the rights of discussion, written or printed, experimentation and the priviliges of association and freedom of normal people because weak and irresponsible people may suffer thereby. Freedom is also freedom to make mistakes.

Speaking of using anaesthetics to get high on, did you read Sid Coleman's letter about sniffing ether in HABAKKUK #4? Quite amusing. Also, somehow or other a discussion on ether sniffing is raging in FAPA. Many people take the position that it is incomprehensible how anyone could get high on anything that smells so bad. I quite agree. I was given ether when I had my appendix out. Since then the faintest smell of it causes intense nausea. My reaction to it was strong that it was some

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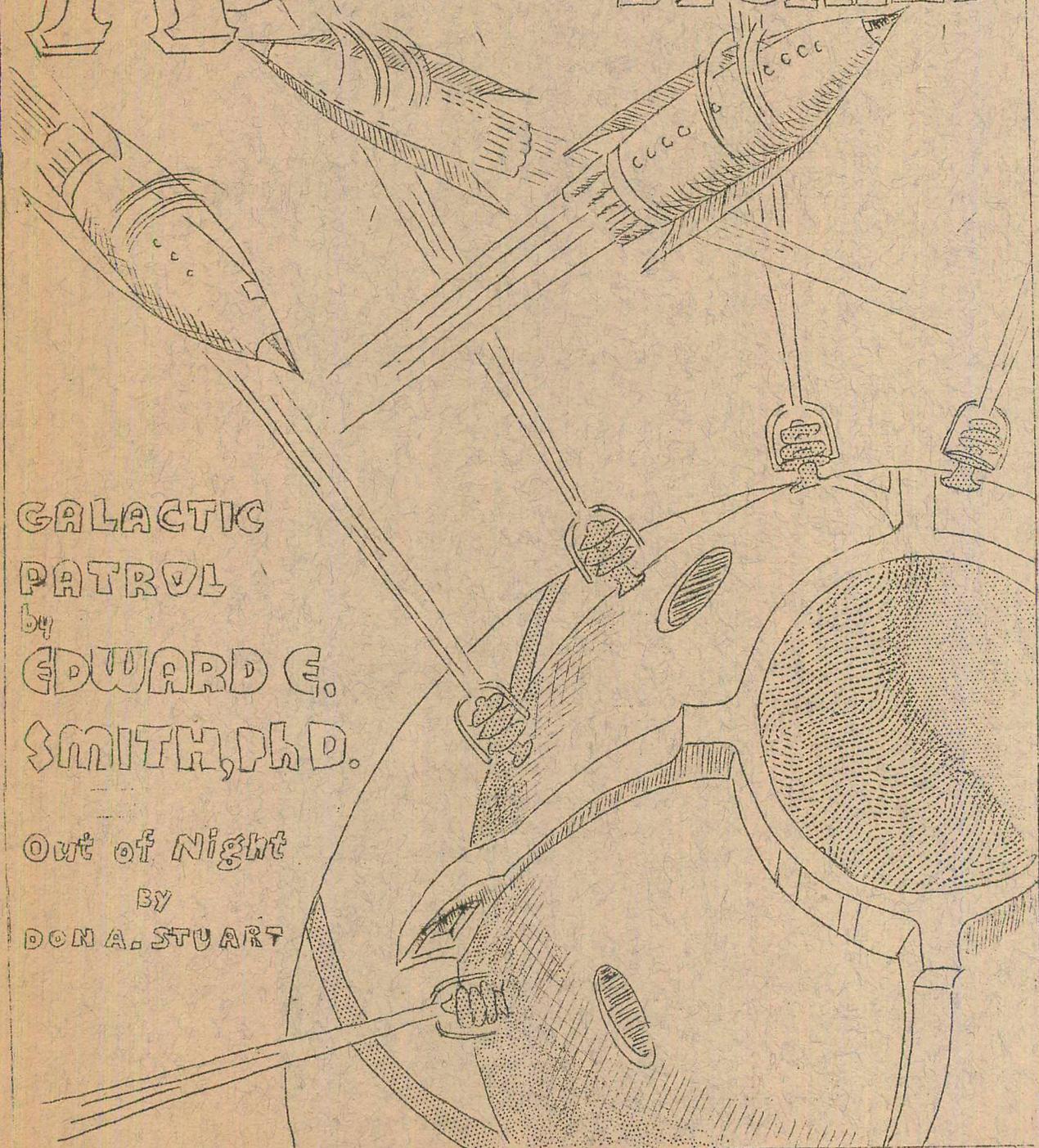
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20¢

ASTOUNDING STORIES



GALACTIC
PATROL
by
EDWARD E.
SMITH, PH.D.

Out of Night
By
DON A. STUART

October 1937

Brown

I've always regarded the two Stuart novelettes of 1937 as two of my all-time favorite science fiction stories and two of the best things Campbell has ever written. The first, Forgetfulness, which appeared in June was a measured, poetic tale of haunting beauty, of the first star ship of Pareeth which was launched into interstellar space to find a habitable planet for colonization. Their arrival on the arcadian planet of Rhth and the saddening discovery that Rhth was peopled by a childlike race of gentle savages who had but a dim racial memory of past achievements of greatness and the ironic but tender climax were all fairly standard science fiction ingredients that were magically transformed by Campbell's genius into a beautifully memorable story.

The second, Out of Night, in the October issue was an entirely different type of story. This was the story of the Sarn, and the ageless Sarn Mother, who came to Earth from space and after conquering it had ruled for four thousand years. It told of the growth of a powerful underground movement of man and his fight to resist the imposition of a non-human matriarchy on human society. This fight is waged by means of "Aesir" which is, as Grayth, the human Administrator, informed the Sarn Mother, the essence of the will and thought, the power and wisdom of fifteen hundred billions of men who have lived on Earth. This Aesir takes the form of man, hugh and featureless, black as space. In actual fact it is an electronic gadget developed by electro-technicians in the underground which it is hoped will be fully perfected by the time the need arises in the impending showdown. Throughout the story, the Sarn Mother remains alien, inscrutable--but at the same time, human.

In September E. E. Smith returned with The Galactic Patrol which gave to science fiction the incomparable Gray Lensman, Kimball Kinnison. From the first scene in Wentworth Hall where Kinnison is graduated first in his class, gets his Lens and his assignment, to the final climactic face to face battle with Helmuth, "He who speaks for Boskone", the pace never slackens and Smith fills the novel with a galaxy of memorable characters and incidents: Worsel of Velantia, who became the first of that planet to wear the Lens, and his hated racial predators, the Overlords of Delgon; Tregonsee, the chunky Rigelian with the sense of perception rather than sight; Helmuth, the Boskonian; the Wheelmen of Aldabaran; the mad planet Trengo, where the deadliest narcotic in the known universe, Thionite, is grown; and Charissa MacDougall, the red-headed nurse who nurses Kinnison, fights with and for him, and eventually loves him. Supporting all the action, of course, is the seemingly endless war between Boskone and Civilization, and the support provided Civilization by the mentalities of Arisia who have given Civilization its two greatest weapons, the Patrol and the Lens worn by the Patrol.

As originally written Galactic Patrol was the first of the Lensman saga and the hidden Eddorian-Arisian conflict was not even intimated. It was not until ten years later that Triplanetary was to be rewritten as the first of the Lensman novels and The First Lensman written to bridge the gap between Triplanetary and Galactic Patrol. It was in these two new additions to the Lensman series that Smith revealed the Eddorians to be the power behind the forces of Boskone and the Arisians as their ages-old enemies. To me, the Lensman series if read in book form loses a great deal of the excitement, suspense and feeling of anticipation that is gotten from the magazine version where this advance knowledge is not present. The expansion of the menace of Boskone, the step by step disclosures of the increasing complexity and the scope of the struggle that Civilization was involved in that were painstakingly developed in each succeeding novel in the magazine versions was in great measure one of the most important elements in the stories in assuring sustained interest over the years.

Much of what I said earlier about the Skylark stories also pertains to this and succeeding Smith novels. I'm a sucker for an E. E. Smith novel.

With the Galactic Patrol the year ended gloriously. It was a year of improvement with enough great stories in it to satisfy almost anyone. The presence of E. E. Smith and Galactic Patrol caused many fans to think nostalgically of the halcyon period of 1934 and 1935, but none of us realized that the next five years were to be productive of science fiction the likes of which we never dreamed.

The September 1937 issue of ASTOUNDING was to be Tremaine's last as editor. The next month a new editor settled in the chair held for four glorious years by Tremaine, while Tremaine moved upstairs to assume the job--I believe--of editorial director. The new editor, although young--still in his mid-twenties--was considered one of the greatest science fiction writers to come down the pike since the founding of AMAZING STORIES. However, he was a neophyte as an editor and there were some who questioned the wisdom of the appointment. Thus quietly began the reign of John W. Campbell, Jr., the greatest and most controversial editor in the history of science fiction.

NOTES

(1) Cliche in Science Fiction, by Leland Sapiro: RHODOMAGNETIC DIGEST, Berkeley, California. Nov-Dec 1951, Vol III-no 4, Whole No. 17, pp 27-36.

(2) op. cit.

(3) Who Goes There? by John W. Campbell, Jr., Shasta Publishers, Chicago, 1948, p. 4.

 From Silverlock by John Myers Myers:

"I don't think you've seen all around this problem, Shandon. It's big. In essence this fellow is looking for all there is of life. The great questions for a man are what to do about his time and his passion, and where to find friends and the money to live with them. When he's found the right answers, he's got all the four legs a man needs to walk on. Could anything be more interesting or important?"

He was still examining me. "Did you have yourself a time?"

Unprepared for the question, I thought back. Who would willingly forfeit any experience that is not shameful or crippling? "Well," I said, "I'm glad I took the hike, I guess...."

A wave swept over me, but I shook the white belt of hair out of my eyes and started swimming strongly. Until the body melts and the brain ceases to gel, a man who has come out whole after having been put through his paces by the Delian has a heart for living.

VITUPERATIONS

AMBLE - MERCER

The references to "Amis" that you have seen all refer to Kingsley Amis who has had a book published in the U. S. called New Maps of Hell in which he discourses at some length on science fiction and to some extent on fandom. I liked it and thought it was a pretty good book. Most people disagree with his point of view but the consensus of opinion is that he knows whereof he speaks when it comes to science fiction, but that on fandom he is strictly from hunger.

As an editor I always have considerable sympathy with a writer's point of view and hesitate to make any major changes without his permission, if for no other reason than that I would send no further manuscripts to any editor who did the same to mine without paing for the privilege. On occasion though--with permission--I have completely rewritten material and I usually make minor changes in everything I publish. I have made cuts to make material fit a designated space, but I cut or condensed nothing that was significant.

Interesting to learn about the News Chronicle, even if only after its death. I have always had the hazy idea that in England there was really nothing but The Times, The Manchester Guardian, and a host of crud papers.

Speaking of The Times of London reminds me of one of my favorite Arthur C. Clarke lines. In Prelude to Space an Englishman in an Australian pub asks for the Times, is given it and says, "No, not that New York thing, you ass."

In our grading of men's clothes, in addition to the numerical sizes there are also labellings of small, medium, large, extra large and extra extra large. In suits sometimes there are labellings of regular, short and long. I wear 50 long suits and extra extra large sport shirts (and 14 EEE shoes). In women's clothes they actually have labels that say "stout".

I am very fond of Vaughan Wilkins fantasy, Valley Beyond Time (which I assume is the one that you said was juvenile slanted--I'm not sure I agree), but I don't care too much for his historical novels. I liked Fanfare for a Witch and mildly liked And So - Victoria, but I have tried to read most of the others you list and didn't care for them at all. It strikes me that Wilkins historicals are essentially contemporary novels with historical settings and that in most cases the settings are entirely extraneous to the plot, not to mention the fact that the settings never really manage to convince me; they always seem cardboard. I very much like the authentic historicals of Mary Renault, Edith Simon and Alfred Duggan who write convincingly about various periods of history and always have characters appropriate to the times. Whatever the merits of Wilkins settings, his characters are always 20th Century types who feel and react just as we would. This is ridiculous.

I also like pure swashbuckling historical romances which are written strictly for fun and games or blood and thunder. To me Wilkins falls somewhere between these two schools and I find him rather flat.

BURP BENNETT

A. B. Dick has about the most expensive mimeographs in the U. S. They used to have a monopoly and now they have prestige, so they charge accordingly. U. S. Gestetner prices are even higher than that and people pay them because of the manifold advantages of silk-screen reproduction. Dave Rike just paid \$130.00 for an Army surplus Gestetner with automatic feed. Everyone is congratulating him on his coup. The machine is in excellent condition. The Army paid \$495.00 for it and the price for that model is now \$795.00. Rex Rotary is now selling a silk-screen mimeo which is taking some of Gestetner's business as their prices are cheaper and the results seem to be as good.

One reason why the first issues of many U. S. fanzine look so bad is that they are put out on ordinary mimeos. To obtain good results with these takes time, patience, skill and lots of practice. Using a Gestetner is child's play in comparison.

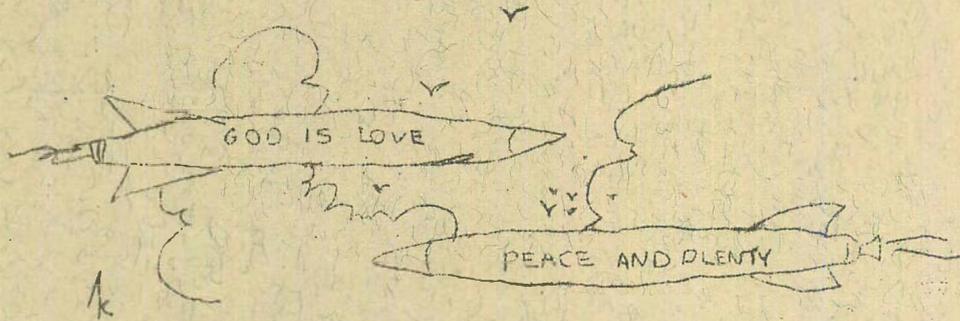
ERG - JEEVES.

I completely agree with you about the Mills amendments. Responsibility is an individual matter. It can't be legislated. Even if it could be, it shouldn't be.

EYE TRACKS - LOCKE

I greatly enjoy your accounts of your army experiences. It brings back old times. Yes, "Private's Progress" was indeed a riot. And so realistic too, although people who weren't in the army don't seem to realize that. Reminds me about what somebody said about Dickens, "Anybody who thinks that Dickens created exaggerated types or caricatures either hasn't been around very much or has no powers of observation.

Of course, People who are irresponsible, who don't care or who don't worry about the results of their actions are more apt to take drugs than responsible people. I can't see how anyone could argue otherwise.



And of course any accout of a drug, recommending its effects, is likely to cause people to take that drug, even responsible people.

One of the results of freedom is that people suffer the consequences of their own actions. It is a strong infringement of personal liberty to protect a person against himself. The right to self-destruction or damnation is just as much a right as any other. Children have to be protected in some fashion, but adolescents much less so and adults not at all. It is sheer tyranny to limit the rights of discussion, written or printed, experimentation and the priviliges of association and freedom of normal people because weak and irresponsible people may suffer thereby. Freedom is also freedom to make mistakes.

Speaking of using anaesthetics to get high on, did you read Sid Coleman's letter about sniffing ether in HABAKKUK #4? Quite amusing. Also, somehow or other a discussion on ether sniffing is raging in FAPA. Many people take the position that it is incomprehensible how anyone could get high on anything that smells so bad. I quite agree. I was given ether when I had my appendix out. Since then the faintest smell of it causes intense nausea. My reaction to it was strong that it was some

years after the operation before I could eat any of the same kind of food I had that day, hours before the operation. And since this included that American teenage staple, hamburgers, I was in a sad condition indeed.

I greatly enjoy the collectors part of your mag.

Regarding you and mailing comments, you seem to be at the opposite pole from Elinor Busby who recently said that people who put down mailing comments gave her a large pain, that that was what apas were for. She said that if people were interested in general-fandom-type material they should get active in general fandom and quit trying to change the apas into general fandom. Of course you are active in general fandom....Perhaps Elinor might say, "Why not try the apa way too? You might like it if you gave it a chance." Me, I would like for you to expand your mailing comments, but I would hate to see you cut down on your other material to do it.

I think what you object to about mailing comments is "bad mailing comments". Unfortunately they do fill up a lot of space, but don't throw out the baby with the bathwater. Mailing comments can be as creative and interesting as any other form of writing. When they are not blame the writers, not the form.

Intelligent conversation is one of the joys of life and mailing comments which allow you to think out, arrange and expand your conversational thoughts can be very satisfying indeed. Earl Kemp's excellent symposium, Who Killed Science Fiction?, is an example of what they can be. The symposium is nothing but mailing comments on Earl's original circular.

GLOOM - DECKINGER

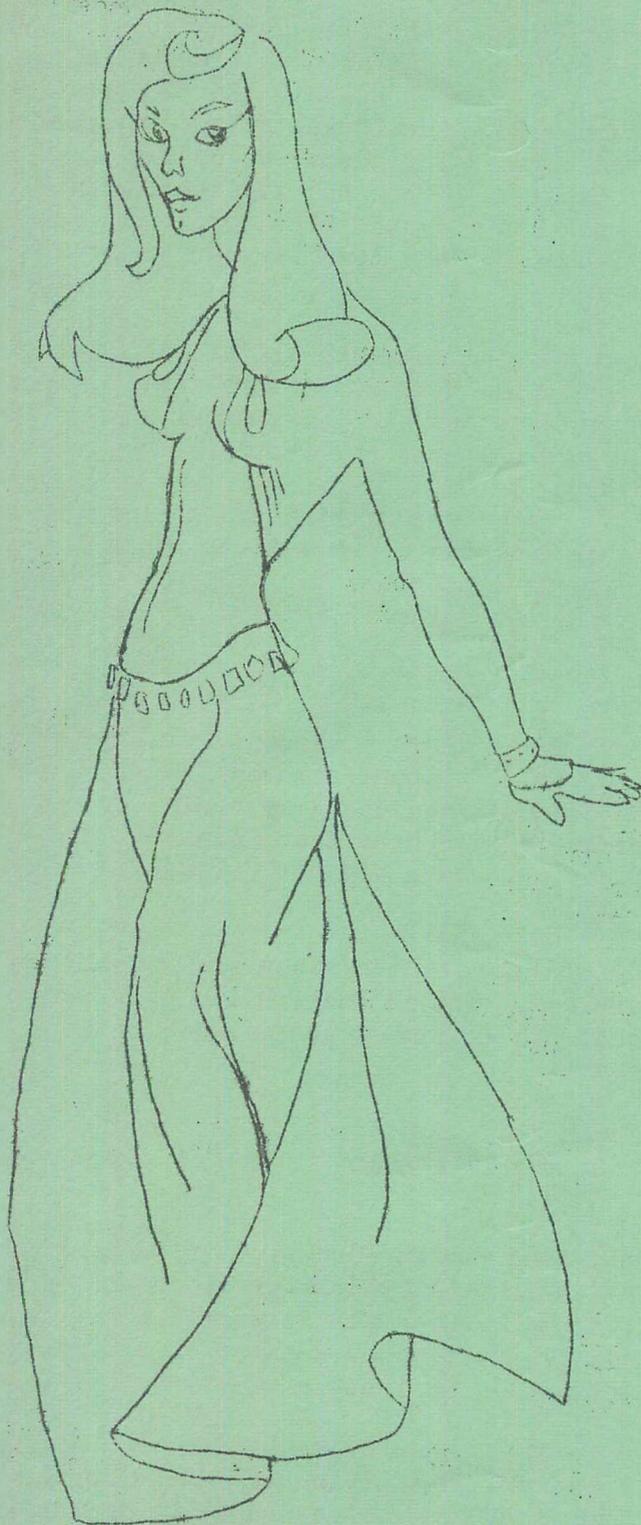
I don't like Shulman either, but for different reasons. In the first place you are reading him as if he were telling a story about someone. Good ghod, that's the furthestest thing from his mind. He is just handing out a series of running gags loosely woven together with a narrative thread, the semblance of a plot. This would be ok if enough of the gags were funny, but they are not. Exaggeration and caricature can get only so many laughs after all.

Yes, "Gigi" was rather ghod-awful. A pity too since the French film "Gigi" of ten years or so ago was a masterpiece. Elinor Busby had a long comparison and analysis of them in her SAPSzine that was extremely good—another one of those articles disguised as mailing comments.

I think you are confusing drinking and drunkenness. One does not invariably lead to the other. A social drink or two is a great lubricant for any party or gathering.

Good fresh food is still better than frozen food, but it is so difficult to ship, display and store that there is practically none of it around. Frozen foods thus are usually of higher quality than fresh. This is particularly noticeable with vegetables which are frequently frozen two hours after they are picked, while "fresh" vegetables in the store are usually at least a week from the field.

Neither Terry-Thomas nor Peter Sellers come anywhere near Stewart Granger's record. Just after the war British movies were trying to crack the American market and I saw quite a number of them. Stewart Granger seemed to be in them all. I still remember some of them with amazed fascination, particularly a super-duper technicolor epic about the Electors of Hanover and their schemes for the British throne. Stewart Granger played Konnisberg who was the lover of the wife of the future George I (the future George II was safely born) and was murdered by him.



(They had a duel; Stewart fought fair, George didn't.) When George became George I he left poor little Sophia Dortha shut up in a castle in Hanover. She paid for her sins by not becoming the queen. All very edifying. I almost liked it.

I did like Madonna of the Seven Moons which remains one of my favorite tear-jerkers. In the opening scene, Stewart, an Italian brigand rapes this poor little English girl, Phyllis Calvert I believe, who was in school in a convent in Italy. She retains an unholy fascination for him all the rest of her life and periodically gets attacks of amnesia, leaves her husband and family and runs away to Stewart. I forget all the many details and complications of the plot, but in the last scene Phyllis is dying. She confesses and receives the last rites. Stewart who has been following her, trying to find out what happens to her when she leaves him, creeps into the room with a dagger in his hand, sneaking up on this beast of a man who has robbed him of his woman. At this point the husband (unaware of Stewart) breaks down and sobs out words which tell Stewart that Phyllis is married to this man. Stewart drops the knife and staggers out to great chords of music. (It's nice to know that Italian brigands and rapists have such respect for the sanctity of marriage. Maybe that's why the only penalty he paid for his sins was to lose Phyllis...) A fade in with more chords to the dying Phyllis. Oh it was lovely, lovely.

And then there was "The Magic Bow" where Stewart played Paginnini. He is this poor, misunderstood, but

virtuous and industrious lad who becomes rich and famous, but can't marry his life-long sweetheart because she is a member of the nobility. (I disremember how a peasant lad had a member of the nobility for a sweetheart but it seemed plausible at the time.) All concerned suffer and suffer for some reels as Stewart gives magnificently successful concerts all over Europe. Finally the Pope (what an appropriate deus ex machina) saves the day by making Stewart a noble, so everything ends happily.

And Stewart played all these parts, and many, many more with such verve and gusto.. Sigh. They don't hardly make movies like that any more.

KOBOLD - JORDAN

Ghad, I haven't seen a "Kilroy was here" in years. It sort of takes one back.

MARSOLO - HAYES

You cite television sets in your discussion of The Waste Makers. One of my friends who is an electronics engineer and works in television says that television sets have steadily deteriorated in quality throughout the years. In the beginning they did not know just where and how to skimp, but with gathering experience they know just how long it takes every component to wear out. Thus, while in the beginning they used high quality materials throughout and the sets held up for years, now they expire a month or two after the guarantee runs out.

By all indications your anonymous pro friend not only has never been a fanzine editor, he hasn't read too many of them either. He seems to have the quaint notion that fanzines are for the purpose of boosting or discussing science fiction. Any examination of any issue of the better fanzines of the past decade would have disabused him of that notion, or of his equally peculiar notion that fanzines publish mostly fiction. (Perhaps he doesn't think the latter, but that was what he talked about.) I take it he has seen a few NFFF zines. (Not that I mean to put down the NFFF, but I do think it has very little connection with fanzine fandom although N'APA seems to be changing that.)

If your friend had done any reading of the better thought of fanzines, he would have also seen that his comments were unnecessary. He probably would not like the zines, but it is evident to the most cursory inspection that the editors did observe the elementary principles of editing which he mentioned, even if for different purposes than he had in mind.

SCATALOG - WILSON

I think I enjoyed SCATALOG more than any other zine in the mailing, Art. Sorry you didn't have time to see us when you breezed through.

Candide is a very fine book. In 1956 a musical with music by Leonard Bernstein was based on it. Currently available is an original cast recording of it. If you have access to a record player, don't pass this up. It's even wittier than the book and the music is simply wonderful. As music and drama "Candide" surpasses almost all of opera. It is superb.

SCOTTISHE - LINDSAY

I have no strong attachment to the term "comment hook" so I'll try to forego using it, but I think it so descriptive and appropriate of the process of making mailing comments and so useful that I'll probably slip now and then. I might even do so deliberately if I find myself saying the same thing in more words.

Most Americans wear glasses because when an American goes anywhere near an eye doctor, bingo glasses. Eye doctors seem to believe in glasses for even the most minor defects of vision, and of course once the eye muscles accustom themselves to seeing through glasses it becomes difficult to do without them. I've worn glasses since I was eight. My oculist tells me that I only need to wear them while reading but I can't be bothered with taking them on and off, so I wear them all the time. My prescription has not changed significantly since I was eight and not at all in the past ten years. On occasion when I've broken my glasses I've done without them cheerfully for weeks, not even cutting down on my reading. I did notice minor eye strain, but not enough to be really bothersome.

The thought of anyone's not knowing they were making love to a stranger, even in the dark, fills me with a deep sense of wonder. I mean, if anyone is that insensitive, why bother at all?

Well, operationally speaking women who say "I don't like women" seem to mean what they say. They have few, if any women friends. Trina's comment—"There are individual exceptions, but women as a species are dull, bourgeois clods"—is somewhat extreme perhaps, but nevertheless many women seem to feel this way.

If the comments you showed your friend were the same ones you wrote to me, I don't think you sounded patronizing at all. You were examing with interest an intellectual idea and saying "It fits here; it doesn't there." Some sensitive soul might have read your comments as a belief that you are superior to domestic-type women, but you are superior to domestic-type women, and why not say so? Oh, I know it's not done, but 'tis a pity it's not....

And of course you are quite right about the causes and consequences of the condition women get to be subservient to men. I suppose the wonder of it is that quite a few women do manage to rise above it.

SOME OF THE BEST FROM QUANDRY -- LICHTMAN

Thanks for putting this through, Bob. I hear via the grapevine that we are due for another installment. Good.

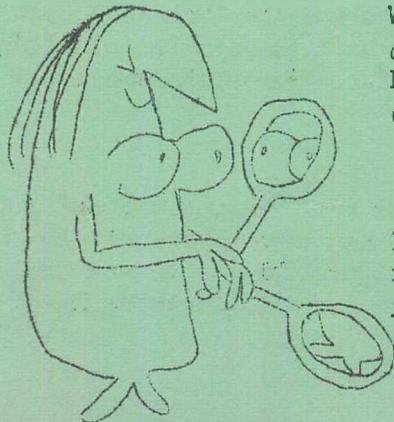
UI -- METCALF

I agree with you about F & S F but think that it is improving under Mills' editorship. No more cuties except the horrid Ferdinand Feghoot.

VAGARY -- GRAY

I've never understood the emotional reaction of some people to the first use of the atomic bomb. Throughout the whole war civilian populations were used as targets by both sides; this was nothing new. And the bomb wasn't that destructive. Why good ghod in one raid on Tokyo we dropped incendries that started fires that killed over a million people. No one ever mentions that.

I EXPECT A WOMAN
TO BE A WOMAN,
NOT A SYMBOL!



Besides The Last of the Wine—which is as you say a historical—Mary Renault has written an extremely good homosexual novel set mostly in World War II. The Charioteer is the only homosexual novel that I have ever read that is also a good novel. It treats the whole matter with

taste and discretion. The characters are actually nice people and their motivation is soundly based.

Lawrence said that he wrote Lady Chatterly's Lover to deliberately shock people so that love and lust could take their proper place in life again. I think that most people too eagerly distinguish between love and lust. Many times the distinction is an academic one and most times the line is hard to draw. Love without lust is rather ethereal, less than friendship. Lust without love is rather unsatisfying although it can be pleasurable.

The article on witchcraft set me back on my heels. I gather that in general the covens are the equivalent of our wife-swapping clubs, but both you and Sandra imply that there is more to it than that. I would very much like to hear more. The subject has always fascinated me, but I had no idea that anyone took it seriously in modern-day society.

VERT - MAYNE

In a sociology course one text I had--by Max Weber I believe and written around the beginning of the century--said that England was so free formally just because the pressures of social conformity were so great. A strong police force was not needed as every man was his own policeman. He implied that the individual Englishman was actually less free than the individual German as the German had more actual choices of types of behavior, even though he had many more restraints. The restraints were there precisely because he was apt to act in an individualistic and nonconformist manner and that the average Englishman was not.

Co-operative communities have rarely worked out well. Most of them have been financial successes but sociological failures. Most of them tried to set up a farm community and most people in our society are not temperamentally fitted for life on a farm. The only answer seems some sort of city community, which raises grave difficulties, or possibly a group of different social organizations each of which serves one function of the cooperative life.

The beat philosophy is quite wide-spread, particularly among those people who live by it without making a noise about it. The most unfortunate thing about the whole phenomena of the beatniks was the self-dramatization of the leaders, or so-called leaders. They cast discredit on the whole ~~idea~~. The movement still exists, but it is now underground. Underground because the genuine beats do not wish to be identified with all the hoo-haw. When it all started they were doubtful whether to say "Beatniks aren't like that" or "I'm not a beatnik". For some time now there has been no doubt at all.

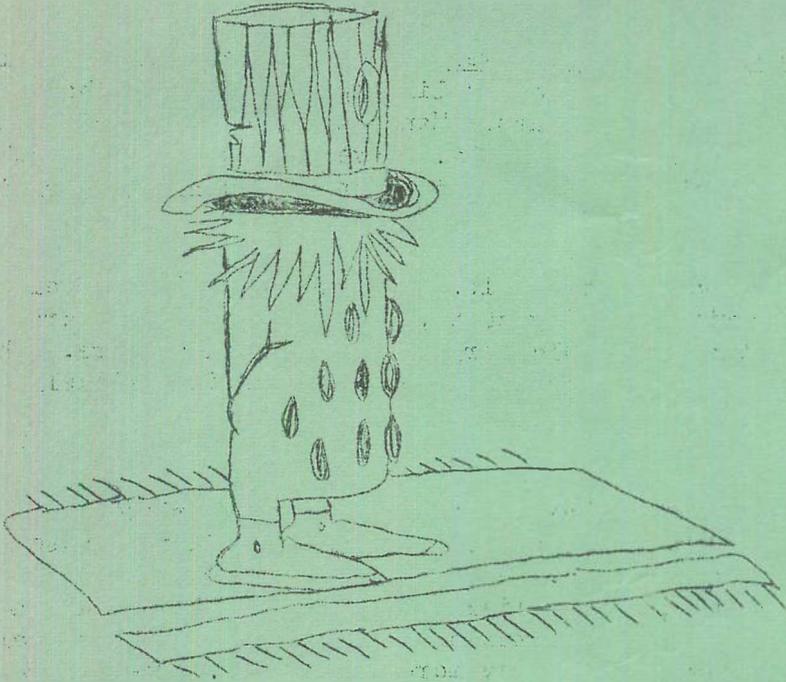
SAVOYARD - PELZ

A very good title. As you know I am very much a fellow G & S enthusiast. I also dig folk music, the singable kind and the ethnic variety.

Not being in on the beginning of the discussion you misintepreted the remark about college audiences. Naturally all types of taste can be found among college groups, but the discussion dealt with the reactions of the majority of college students. And these unfortunately are philistines of the first water.

Ghad, you omniapans stir my sense of wonder. Where do you ever find the time?

We have yet another interest in common, Silverlock. I just--inspired by SAVOYARD--reread it for the sixth time. It's great. I like it better than Tolkein, but I doubt if you would go that far.



I hadn't read Silverlock for four years, mostly because I lent my copy to a friend who keeps promising to return it in "a year or two; just as soon as I read it a few more times." During these four years I've come across a few more of the allusions. What a tremendous number of them there is! I understand that John Myers Myers is a professor of literature. It shows. He knows his subject but takes it casually.

I can still remember the delight I felt when I first came across Silverlock in 1950. I picked it up because I knew the name John Myers Myers. In the early forties or late thirties (the Golden Age of all pulp magazines, not just SF) he had a serial, The Harp and the Blade, published in either ARGOSSY or ADVENTURE. This is still my favorite adventure story. Myers has another

adventure novel that is very good, Out on any Limb. I don't like it as well as the other because the hero is an adolescent rather than a man and I do get tired of the vaporings of adolescents. Out on any Limb isn't supposed to be a juvenile though; it's an adult story and the hero is in his early twenties. He is still an adolescent though. Both of these are swashbuckling historicals; Harp is set in medieval France and Limb in Elizabethan England. Both are definitely recommended.

Myers has another historical, The Wild Yazoo, which is about the settlement of Mississippi. It's all right, but not up to his usual standards. He also wrote a western, Dead Warrior, which I haven't read (a western is a western is a western), but which Danny says is very good.

But none of these can compare to Silverlock: a tour de force, a good story, a philosophy of life, a survey of man, a survey of literature.....

As for the allusions you ask about, many of them seem hauntingly familiar, but I can't quite pin them down. I may have one of them though. In Tennyson's Ulysses there are the lines:

Come my friends.

'Tis not too late too seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To saild beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulf will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we know.....

In line with this poem it seems very appropriate to call a ship sailing out of San Francisco the "Western Star", particularly when she picks up passengers from the Commonwealth.

WHITHER

OMPA?

By Bob Lichtman

I very much approve of your desire to hit every mailing. I have the desire myself, but not the time to fulfill it. This is a trait that about 25 other members of OMPA should acquire if the group isn't to fall apart. I am very concerned about OMPA's future—these last four or five mailings haven't been really too encouraging; they've been mostly very small (the large 23rd mailing is an unusual exception, but note that 40% of its size was made up of postmailed items) and the material has been below the quality that so many talented fans—as there are in OMPA are capable of turning out.

George Locke is trying to strike a responsive spark by starting a round-robin OMPA serial, in which fan names are used and the person who is left in trouble at the end of an installment is honor-bound to write the next installment and get himself out of the bind and someone else (preferably a deadwood member) into one, but this is at best an artificial solution. What needs to be done is to start enough controversy in the group to force the reticent members into participating, if only out of annoyance at not having their 2¢ (pardon me, 2d) worth in print.

I don't like the idea of increasing the OMPA membership. If the British complaint about their not having funds to publish is even slightly true, imagine what the impact on the British contingent would be if they had to put out more copies of their zines? More minimum activity, I think. As for an 8pp/6mo activity requirement instead of the present 16pp/12mo—I like the idea, but it'll take some talking to get it voted through!

As a near omni-apan I find something of interest in every apa, but I find FAPA, SAPS and OMPA the tops and about equal, each one having its own particular weaknesses and strengths. Hypothetical situation: suppose I had to drop down to two apas. Which would I choose to stay in? Well, I'm afraid I'd have to shuck aside my loyalty to SAPS as my first apa and stay in FAPA (when I get in, which won't be long now) and OMPA. However, if OMPA gets worse, I'd stay in SAPS. And if I only could stay in one apa, it'd be FAPA of course.

But I hope that OMPA works itself out of the current crisis; I like the thing.

