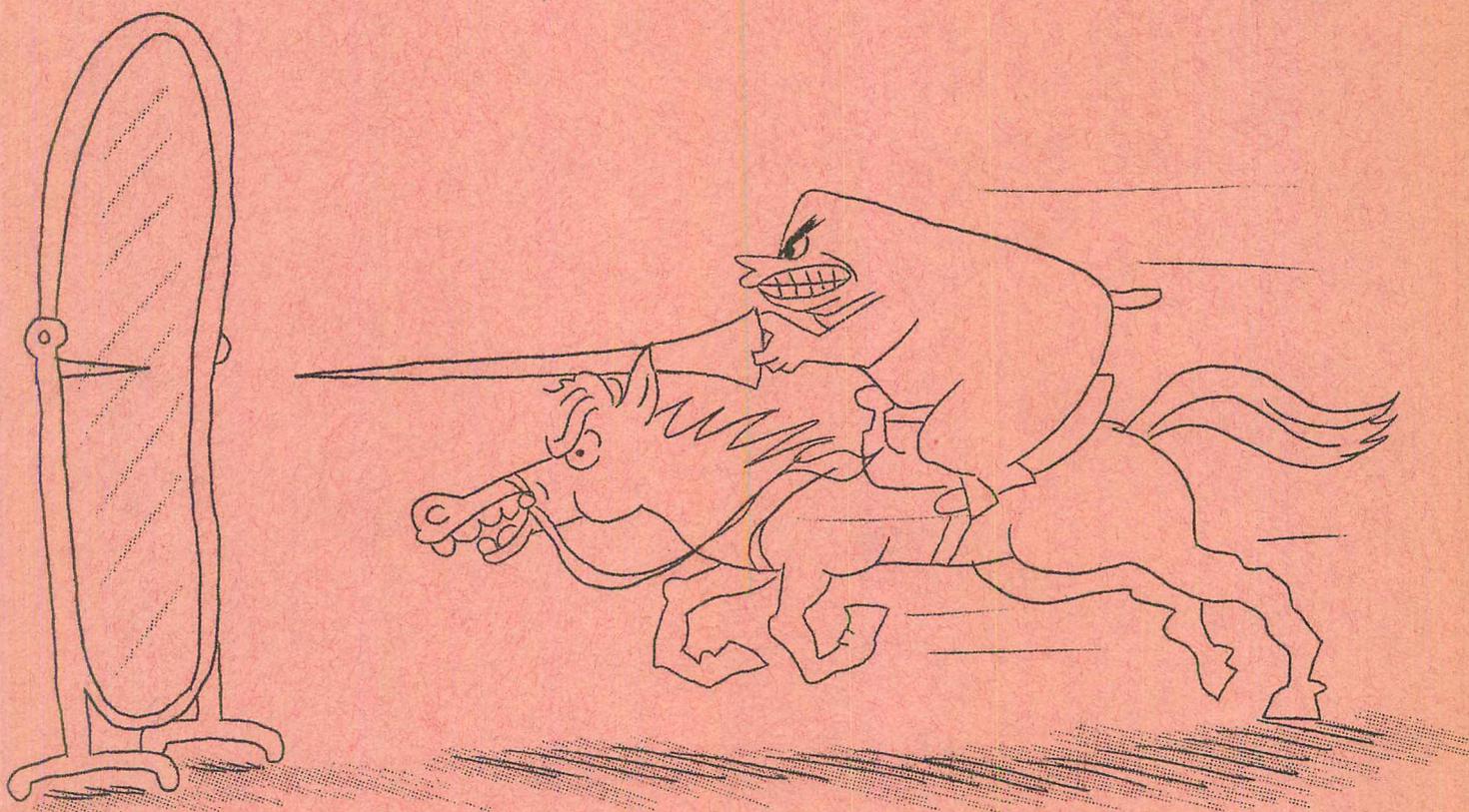


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VIPER

NUMBER 3 : JUNE 1961



Ray Nelson

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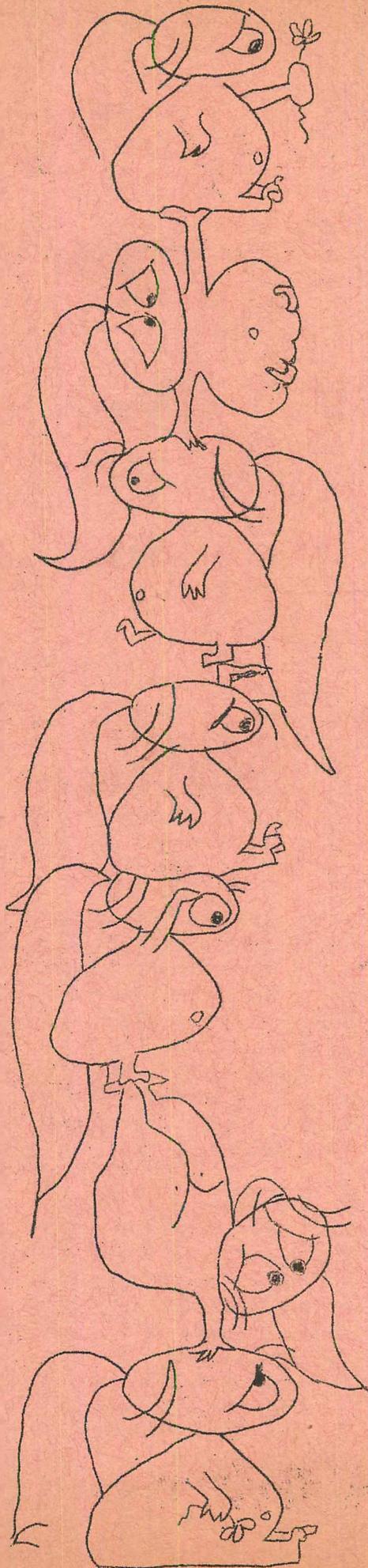
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A Hook and Crook Publication



AMONG US VIPS

Well, Spring is really here. Daylight Saving Time started a couple of weeks ago and we turned our clocks an hour ahead; at least most of us did; in the rural areas they still hold out against that invention of the devil. I rather like Daylight Time myself--it makes not difference in getting up in the morning and there is an extra hour of sunshine in the evening. In fact I wish they wouldn't change back to regular time in the Fall, but keep Daylight Time all year. During World War II that was done. All the clocks were turned an hour ahead and kept that way throughout the war. Even the farmers had to put up with it. I never did figure out why they did it, but I liked it--even in the Winter. When I got up at 7:00 AM it was still black as pitch out and I found it all quite exhilarating for some silly reason or other. It was fun being up before dawn. Of course I've been up before dawn many times since then, but that was because I was still up, not because I got up. There is a difference.

I vaguely remember reading that during WWII in England they had Double Summer Time in which the clocks were turned two hours ahead. I'm inclined to think that that is too much of a good thing.

The past Winter was a most uncomfortable one. On the East Coast they had the lowest temperatures recorded in 40 years. Chesapeake Bay was frozen solid. In New York the Hudson was frozen down to Sing Sing and they had snow snow snow. Very unfortunate weather. Of course in the early Nineteenth Century was frozen right down to its mouth and they built bonfires on the ice and roasted whole oxen. But those were the Bad Old Days. Even in California the past Winter was not exactly pleasant. The Bay Area had the coldest weather in 11 years and there were 3 or 4 days in which Central Heating seemed a necessity. However things never got to the point where I actually had to bring in the rubber plant from the front porch.

With Spring here the season of picnics is upon us once again. We've had two so far and will probably have one at least once a month for the rest of the summer. Picnics is fun. And I'm not sure exactly why. Perhaps they appeal to some atavistic instinct. Maybe it's just because they are a change. But one thing I do know: all that fresh air can be very dangerous if you're not used to it. You take a short drive in the car, sit comfortably out in the open someplace, leisurely consuming food and drink--no exercise at all--yet you come home exhausted. I tell you fresh air is dangerous.

There are two schools of thought on picnics. One holds that everyone should bring his own lunch and trade things around with other people. The other holds that one person should bring the potato salad, another the hot dogs, another the fried chicken, etc. Both points of view have their merits, but the division of labor takes more organization and a fairly accurate knowledge of how many people are coming, so it is rarely practical. Of course with either plan everyone brings beer. After all a successful picnic requires more beer than food.



Picnikers might be divided into two categories: those who want to go out, eat, rest an hour or two and then come home; and those who want to stay all day, eating two or three meals in the process. Most of us are of the later variety. Some of us even take walks and go exploring and all that rot. It hardly seems worth while to go to all that trouble to stay out only a couple of hours. Besides, I don't like to drink that fast.

We haven't yet settled on a regular picnic spot. We might never do that, but just keep shifting around from one pleasant spot to another. In New York we always went to the park under the George Washington Bridge as it was usually semi-deserted. If we ever find a similar spot here we'll probably latch onto it as a permanent location also. There are dozens of nice parks in the area, but unfortunately they all seem to be well-known and are mobbed on week-ends. The world is just cluttered with mundane types.

I finally conquered my reluctance and read King of the World's Edge. It is a very good fantasy adventure, but of course not nearly as good as I had remembered it. But it is an excellent story, much more an UNKNOWN than WEIRD TALES type of thing. I'm even surprised that WEIRD TALES printed it as there is nothing at all gothic in it. Also, I wonder if there was ever a sequel to it; the ending was obviously set up for one. I hope so as H. Warner Munn is a very enjoyable writer. And now that the pulp magazines are gone we don't hardly get stories like this any more. Sigh....

Even John Myers Myers earlier books were written for the pulp magazines. That is the reason the Elizabethan English characters in Out on Any Limb speak in modern American rhythms and intonations and use American slang. This was a convention of the pulps. In their pages modern European characters would have their national flavorings, but historicals were peopled with American types. Not only did they speak American, they were 20th Century Americans through and through. It was a bit disconcerting sometimes to have 12th Century Norman nobles thinking and reacting like mid-20th Century lower-class American males, but you gradually got used to it and accepted it as a convention of the form. In a serious-type historical which is supposed to give you the flavor of the times this would be objectionable, but in something written strictly for fun I think that it is legitimate. And Myers used this fun-and-games form deliberately to say what he wanted to say about human universals. They were glorious fun too as were a lot of pulp stories. But those days are gone forever..... Sigh.....

Dick Lupoff stirred up quite a ruckus by calling attention to the fact that we are in the midst of a new fandom and half-tongue-in-cheekedly stating that one of the characteristics of this new fandom is an interest in comic books. After the dust from that one had settled a bit, Noreen Shaw, Ray Nelson and others pointed out that this characteristic is not so much an interest in old comic books per se, but a general fond remembrance of things past: nostalgia. Perhaps because the world is in such a mess, the international situation is so tense, we all want to look back to the happy golden days--even if golden only in memory--when we were secure and life was simple. So, we happily talk of old comic books, old radio programs, old songs, old movies, old science fiction, and experience once again the sense of wonder of our vanished youth. It's fun.

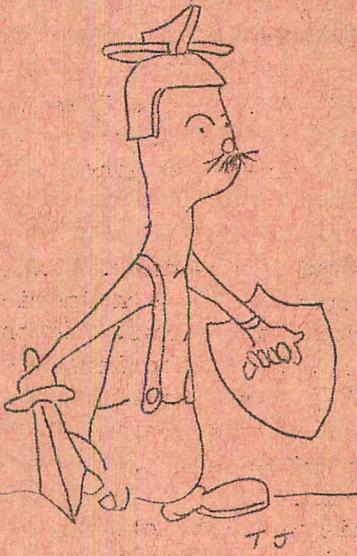
I am delighted with this trend as I have always been a very nostalgic person. In fact some years ago one of my friends accused me of doing things not for themselves, but in order to be nostalgic about them in the future. There's a lot of truth in that. Nostalgia, forever! Unfortunately, however, I was a little too old for comic books during their Golden Age and have few memories of them, fond or otherwise. Now if all this discussion were about Big Little Books.....Come on, gang, let's start on Big Little Books.

I have grown a beard, a bushy red thing. After all, if Ron can have a bushy red tail... It looks all right--maybe even good, but I still haven't gotten used to it. The beard is about 10 weeks old and has long since stopped itching, but still feels vaguely uncomfortable

on occasion and is something of a nuisance. But of course not anywhere near the nuisance that shaving is! That extra 10 or 15 minutes sleep every morning is very invigorating.

People's beard reactions are quite interesting. Most fans seem to approve. Co-workers accept it, but don't like it at all. People on the street studiously ignore it. Adults hold it in aversion; teen-agers think it is wildly amusing. I have always been vaguely aware that people react strongly to beards, but now that I have one for them to react to, it's all much more vivid and real. I find the general attitude towards beards--that they are voluntary disfigurements--quite strange. Conditioning towards conformity is very strong indeed.

Habakkuk was 5 years old in February and we had a birthday party for him. He enjoyed the catfood and catnip--especially the catnip!--and all the rest of us had a good time. The other four-leggers are doing well. Frod is almost a year old now and is a fine beast. Kirsten Nelson keeps after me to bring him over to play with Cosmic Clod so that Clod can learn some manners. (Clod is sort of, well, enthuastic.) But I don't know...You can't be sure who will pick up what from whom.



Gideon met with a most ignominious accident: a wound in the rear. Evidently he couldn't quite run fast enough and one of the bigger neighborhood toms caught him and severely lacerated the base of his tail. As Gideon has quite long hair (every time I vacuum I pick up more Gideon hair than dust) I didn't discover the wound until it was badly infected. And then a hurried trip to the vet. Gideon had to remain in the hospital for two weeks and when he came out the wound still looked like a piece of raw meat. That was weeks ago and it still doesn't look good.

We are also beginning to have doubts about Gideon. The Ellingtons have a beautiful calico cat, Muff Muff (real name Muffet, but Poopsie...) which they brought over for service. We've had Muff Muff for months now and nothing has happened. Gideon is over a year old and should be taking an interest, but the poor unfortunate Muff has been in heat three times and he has paid absolutely no attention to her. We aren't quite sure whether Gideon is distracted by his wound or whether he's queer. But it's very suspicious.

There should be some improvement in stenciling of illos and lettering this issue. Not that I haven't lots more room for improvement, but last issue looked pretty ragged mainly because I didn't know the difference between a drawing plate and a typing plate and used the later throughout. There is a difference! I did all the illos and headings except the cover and the heading for Terry's article which were done by Ghod Man Terry Carr himself. Terry also did the cover for THROUGH THE GORDIAN KNOT.

I am very happy to report that my car situation is exactly as I reported it last time. I am still driving the '52 Plymouth and having not trouble at all.

As a part of the "celeberations" of the anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War station KPFA has a 15 minute program every Tuesday reviewing the past week's news as if it were the corresponding date in 1861. Very interesting and is seems quite convincing and real as "You are There" and "See it Now" never quite were to me.

Another part of the Civil War festivities is the revival of that biggest money-making movie of all time, "Gone With the Wind". I must see it againt. it's been eight years since

I saw it last and I've only seen it six times. Of course, I've read the book 5 times too. Amongst my friends my affection and regard for GWTW have always been regarded as a ~~horrible~~ ~~lack of taste~~ deplorable eccentricity, but that is mostly because they are prejudiced against the South. "It's all about what happend to the poor South. Poor South indeed! It deserved everything that happend to it, and it is a pity it wasn't more." Apart from the merits of that stimulating literary criticism, SWTW is about some people and how they react to the collapse of their values and world. All of the characters are vivid and real and the major ones are three dimensional. Scarlet O'Hara is probably the most fascinating heronine of all time. (She owes a great deal to Becky Sharp, but is a much improved version thereof.) Southern society both before and after the war is presented in much detail and comes very much alive. The war itself is made a moving and surging force and seems realer both in minute detail and in over-all scope that does Tolstoy's French invasion of Russia in War and Peace. Margaret Mitchell obviously owes much to Tolstoy and has again, I think, improved on the original. (But then I find War and Peace a monumentally dull and highly overated book). The main fault that I would find with GWTW is that the two main male characters, Rhett Butler and Ashley Willkes, while three-dimensional and vivid as hell and convincing in the book, seem to be missing something. Female writers often seem to have this trouble with male characters and I suppose vice versa. Rhett Butler seems more real and true to life than does Ashley Willkes who is a trifle misty, but then he is supposed to be misty. Some critics have refused to swallow Melanie Willkes, but they are unfamiliar with the South. Although rarely found the Southern-lady-of-the-old-school type that she represents does exist.

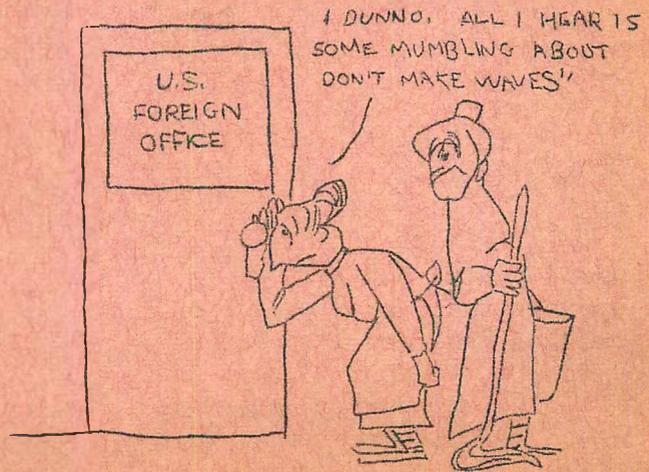
Apart from the characters the two main criticisms levelled at GWTW seem to be (1) It was a sensational popular success and therefore couldn't possibly be any good and (2) It presents a highly romantic picture of the South. I won't even both discussing #1. As for #2, in intellectual circles in the U.S.--over 90% left wing--it is impossible to say a good word about the South. Russia, yes. The South, no. So, any literary picture of the South that doesn't damn the South is damned itself. Margaret Mitchell does give you glimpses of the seamy side of the society and she hides nothing; it is all there. But there were (and still are) good things about the South. And she was not writing about Simon Legree, but about the conservative aristocracy. And she does not try to gloss over the fact that slavery was an evil. She presents many slaves happy with their lot, but many of them were, Perhaps she dwells more on the pleasanter things, but everything is there. And again, Margaret Mitchell is a Southerner and this naturally influences her view of things. Nevertheless her view is an honest one and she flinches from nothing.

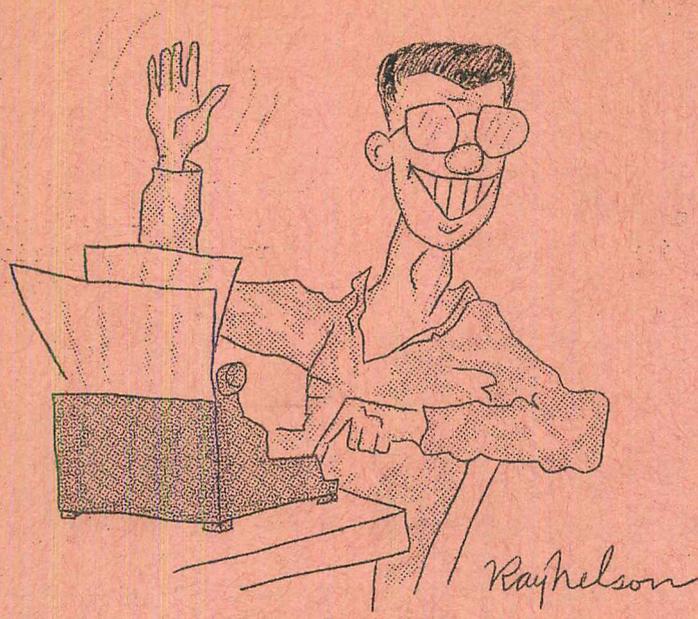
The movie version follows the book with absolutely fidelity. Much had to be cut of course, but the cutting was done with care and the essential bones of the book are there. Nothing has been added; nothing changed except as necessary in translating it to a different medium. Like, it's a great movie too.

A Berkeley project which is going great guns is a Writers' Workshop organized by Ray Nelson and Perry Carr. It meets at Ray's every Friday night. Besides, Ray, Kirsten and Walter Trigive Nelson, usual attendess are Terry, Karen Anderson, Walter Breen, Dick, Pat and Marie Louise Ellington, and myself. The high point of the festivities so far was the first meeting when Walter Trigvie (aged 20 1/2) took Marie Louise (age 3) by the hand and lead her to his room. "Girl, there's my bed," he said. Like father, like son.

 "Gee, I'm glad to meet Ray Nelson at last-- I know so many of his ex-wives and mistresses..."

 --Dan Curran.





THE FAN APTITUDE TEST

BY TERRY CARR

When new fans come into fandom, the fan populace is naturally interested in their potential for the future...for no matter what manner of first issue you publish, you may be a BNF within a year; it's hard to tell.

To aid us in prognosticating your fannish future, please answer the following questions. Write your answers immediately, as soon as you read the questions; your first reaction is the important one. At the end will be a guide to how to evaluate yourself.

WHICH WOULD YOU RATHER DO?--

- Clean the ink out of a mimeo drum, or run for Director of the N3F? A _____ B _____
- Be a house detective at an s-f con, or put out a one-shot when you have a hangover? A _____ B _____
- Stencil a George Barr drawing, or be insulted by Harlan Ellison? A _____ B _____
- Lick stamps for a con committee, or hitchhike to a convention in Australia? A _____ B _____
- Read a Wansborough fanzine, or run for TAFF against Bob Tucker? A _____ B _____
- Have a plonker battle with Bruce Pelz, or stand within five feet of Sam Moskowitz when he's talking? A _____ B _____
- Be slandered by George Wetzel, or be written up in Wally Weber's NAMELESS ONES Minutes? A _____ B _____
- Try to sleep during a convention party in your room, or foot the bill for HABAKKUK? A _____ B _____

Listen to a Hugo Gernsback speech, or try to convince a Tolkien fan that Lovecraft was the greatest fantasy writer of all time?

A _____ B _____

Publish THE COMPLEAT MIKE DECKINGER, or be Program Director of the All-Kansas Junior Science-Fictioneers?

A _____ B _____

Find your dog lifting his leg on your Unknown collection, or get your tie caught in an electric mimeo while it's running full-speed?

A _____ B _____

Marry the girl or have it published in FANAC?

A _____ B _____

Try to explain to your maiden aunt about Philip Jose Farmer, or try to explain to John W. Campbell Jr. about science fiction?

A _____ B _____

Go to work at 8:00 a.m. the morning after a convention, or pay \$5.00 for a collection of all the Ferdinand Feghoot stories so far published?

A _____ B _____

Try to get a security clearance when your application form says you're a member of the Cult, or type stencils for an annish when you've got a backache?

A _____ B _____

Be caught reading Dostoevsky at a LASFS meeting, or go to a convention and find that the person you've been feuding with so furiously is a gorgeous little blonde?

A _____ B _____

Spend all night mimeographing someone else's fanzine, or discover a dark, dingy little bookstore on a sidestreet where the owner has just sold 35 early issues of Weird Tales at a nickle apiece the day before?

A _____ B _____

Sell your first story to a prozine and then have it fold before the story is published, or drive 200 miles to a convention and find you've come on the wrong weekend?

A _____ B _____

Accidentally hand in your latest fan-article, "Ninth Fandom Kneed My Dog In The Groin," in place of your term paper in Psychology, or try to wash mimeo ink out of your underwear?

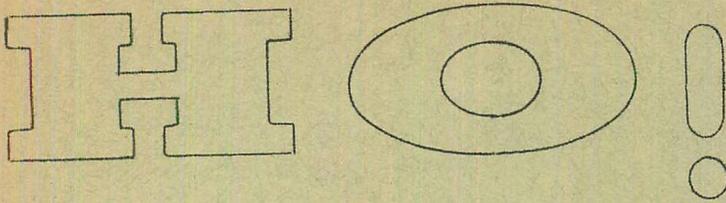
A _____ B _____

Attend an N3F meeting at ten o'clock Sunday morning at a worldcon, or finish assembling a 14-page OMPazine at the last minute and find you need 16 pages' credit to retain your membership?

A _____ B _____

HOW TO EVALUATE YOUR FANNISH FUTURE: If you have bothered to answer the above questions, you're patently insane and will go a long way in fandom. Good luck!

--Terry Carr



(not unlike mailing comments)

By Elinor Busby

ARCHIE MERCER: Friendly Al Lewis isn't North Coast. No, no, he's from the middle west somewhere. I doubt if Friendly Al Lewis is nearly so friendly as Tyrannical Al Lewis. Tyrannical Al Lewis is a fine fellow. But I've never met Friendly Al Lewis. I wasn't at Detention, and he wasn't at Pittcon.

Harlan Ellison was flabbergasted at the globe of Mesklin and so forth selling so well. He came up to the party in Boyd Raeburn's room and told us about it, mentioning the Mesklin globe and the price it brought with particular awe. "They were throwing money in the air!" he cried, showing us people throwing money in the air. Harlan is vivid, and we all saw people throwing money in the air.

"I liked your zine, but can't think of anything to say about it," is, as you say, pleasanter to the editor than no comment at all. But what if you didn't like it? If one says one likes what one doesn't like, what can one do for what one does like? I liked all the OMPAZines I received (thanks, all), but in doing Full Comments in other apas have found a non-committal sentence or two on a zine I didn't like more of a drag than a page on a zine I did like.

How can one have a favorite jazz tune? Isn't the how of it far more important than the what? (My favorite jazz tune is "My Funny Favourite".)

DAPHNE BUCKMASTER: In general I thought all your comments about women in relation to men and to other women extraordinarily complete and good, and all I can say is, like, hooray. Will say that housewives get a certain amount of egoboo (at least in U. S.) from good performance at housewifely skills such as cooking and sewing.

I much appreciated your distinction between "intelligent" and "serious", and thought it an excellent point that fifty years ago women had little time to spare for intellectual pursuits which were, in fact, contra survival. It reminds me of The Peaceable Kingdom by Ardyth Kennelly, a very good novel about Moroms in Salt Lake City just after polygamy was forbidden. A woman in that book was extremely fond of reading, and her family lived in squalor until her daughters were old enough to take over. They were passionately housewifely, and scorned reading as they would any other vice. On the other hand, my maternal grandmother was a great reader, and I believe she was also a goodhousekeeper. She had only two children, perhaps she had help (I don't know), and in any case there are always a few women who seem able to carve more hours out of the day than properly belong there.

I for one approve highly of the lessening of the difference in outlook between men and women. The more interests and attitudes men and women have in common the more they will enjoy each other's company. I think more husbands and wives like each other today than did a generation or two ago, because they have more interests in common.

Your red-bearded anarchist sounds wonderful. Anarchists should have red beards, shouldn't they? (Bill, you are an anarchist, are you not? Will you wear a red beard to the Seacon masquerade?) ((I can't very well not since I've just grown one; even though my hair is blond, my beard is red.))

Some people have mathematical minds and other people do not have mathematical minds. People who have mathematical minds not only find math easy, they love it-- they eat it up. People who do not have mathematical minds may, with great difficulty, force themselves to learn and understand some math if they are men. If they are women, they won't bother. I didn't. I regard math with outraged horror.

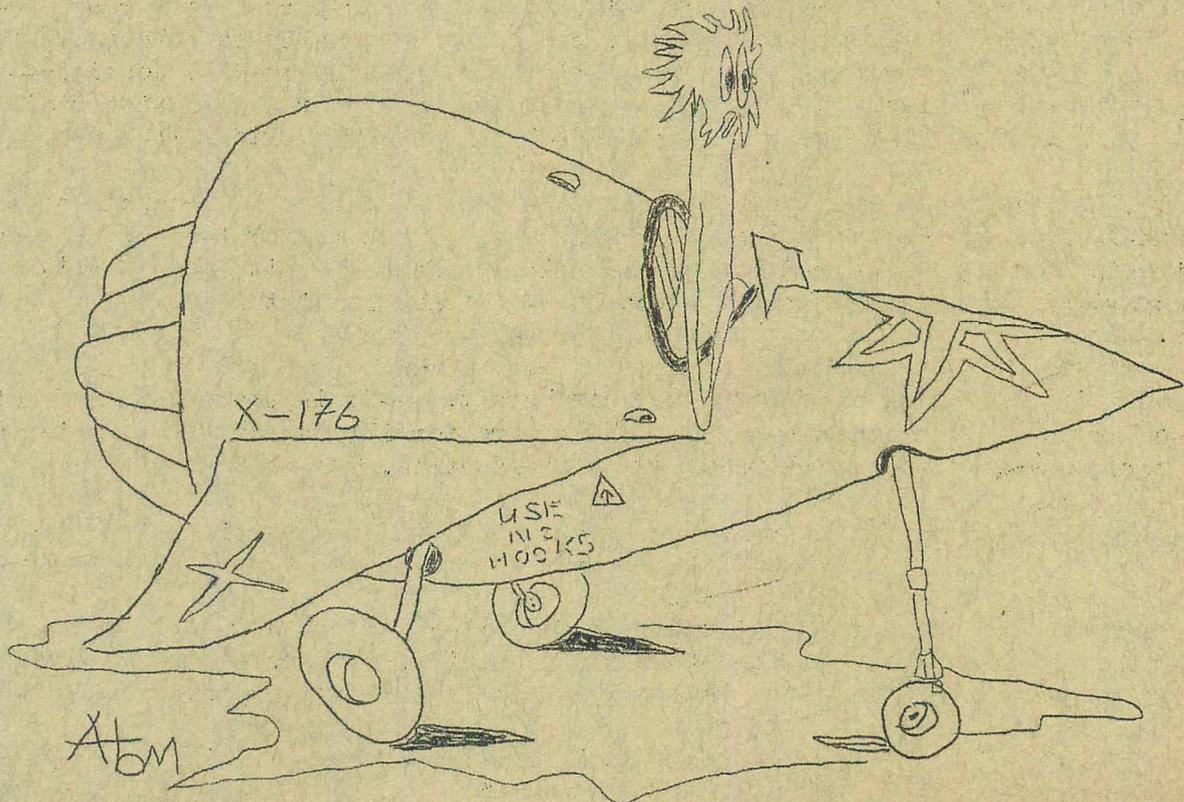
NOEM METCALF: I liked John D. MacDonald's Wine of the Dreamers too, and have reread it many times. I probably like it particularly well because I read it during my first flush of stiffish enthusiasts, because it's actually not quite all that good.

Who is the woman you know who believes women are inferior to men? You say she certainly isn't. If she believes it, she is. She probably doesn't believe it. She probably says it just to be different.

ETHEL LINDSAY: If John Roles stays away for good I shall feel very sad. I have read some of his zines, and he is one of my reasons for wanting to join OMPA.

Why do people leave OMPA? I too wonder. It would be interesting to send out a questionnaire and ask the people who have left why. However, it's possible that most of them don't know, or if they do know, would not care to say.

Ethel, I think your writing has improved steadily during the past couple years. Your personality seems to be coming through in greater depth all the time, and this I like very much. By the way, I have lately been reading Ellen Terry's The Story of My Life and also her and Bernard Shaw's letters, and her writing style, her personality, reminds me a little of yours. Have you ever read her letters or memoirs, and if so, does she remind you of you at all?



I like Willis' fan memories very much, and hope the series will be reprinted as a single fanzine when he is done if ever. I hope it goes on for a long, long time.

I like your memories of nursing, just as I like Walt's memories of fandom, and am glad they will be continued. I liked what your authoritative Sister said, about dealing with children. "It is all right to look angry, as long as you never feel it. One keeps a child in check, the other frightens him into submission." That sounds very sensitive and clever, and I think every child knows and appreciates the distinction.

RON BENNETT: I got your zine, appreciated it very much, and lost it. Sorry.

ART WILSON: When you were in Bremerton why didn't you get on the ferry and come across to Seattle and look us up? Don't you know we make very good home brew and like to meet fans? You goofed, boy. Better luck three years from now, hey.

ROBERTA GRAY: I liked your talk of house-remodelling and so forth.

You have convinced me that Bertrand Russell is a wooly-minded idealist. I think unilateral disarmament is for the birds--probably buzzards. As for getting tests banned, though, while there's reason to believe the Russians are continuing to test, the West must test too or fall behind. I don't like it, but I don't see how we can get off the tiger.

You distinguish very firmly between the invert and pervert, but I don't understand your distinction and the dictionary doesn't help me out. The dictionary seems to think that the two words mean the same thing except that invert sometimes has something to do with sugar. The Plains Indians once made a distinction between homosexuals in their culture. In the old days, sometimes a boy at puberty would assume women's clothes and duties. The transvestite himself would be regarded with respect--he would be considered a satisfactory individual, perhaps an unusually capable and even magical person. But the man who took the transvestite for a wife would be despised--he would be considered a slob too lazy to support a family. Is your distinction similar to that? If so, would you want the poor sugar-boys to go thru life all lonely and forlorn?

I liked Lady Chatterly's Lover (although I don't think the unusual words added anything) and feel that Lawrence got across what he was trying to say. The gamekeeper's talking in dialect at one point and correctly at another isn't a goof, it's a point of characterization. Mellors was an educated man of humble birth, upbringing and occupation.

Much interested in the article on witchcraft. --It is loathesome to want power over other people. I suppose people who do were terribly at other people's mercy when very young. I can think of no other explanation.

DICK & PAT ELLINGTON: I really enjoyed your zine, and was particularly pleased to see Pat taking part.

BILL DONAHO: Two of your quotations from Silverlock are things I had planned to quote some day: the one about time, passion, friends and money (gad, that sums up a lot) and the bit "Who would willingly forfeit any experience that is not shameful or crippling?" --I think the latter quote explains some of the difference between fan-types and mundane-types. I think mundanes more willingly forego adventure.

I have read three books by John Myers Myers, and like The Wild Yazoo much more than Out on Any Limb. I think The Wild Yazoo a perfect picaresque novel, and particularly like the ending. The hero has lost his inheritance, and carved out a new

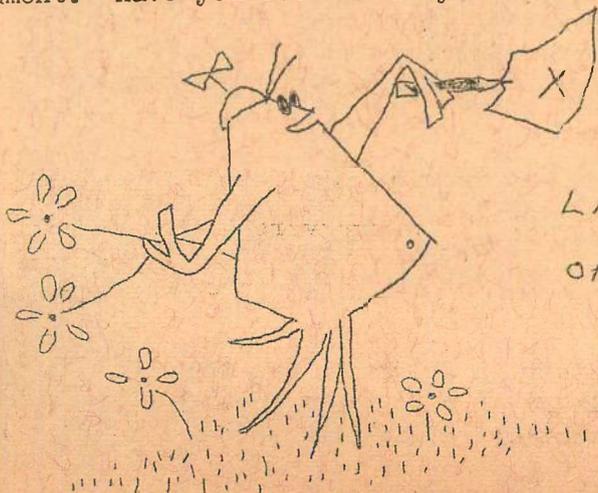
estate for himself. He is informed that some day he will want to build a more imposing house for his son to inherit, and answers "Let him build his own house. He will, anyway." Sums up the book. I liked Out on Any Limb but will agree that it was a juvenile—apart from one mildly ripe incident. One thing I disliked about it was the characters speaking American rather than English. I don't care for what Norah Lofts calls "Godwottery", but feel that if the speech in a novel set in Elizabethan times is to be flavored at all, it should not be flavored with American slang and idioms. But I liked the hero, who reminded me very much of Rich Brown. I visualized him as Rich Brown all the way thru, and it added a lot to the story.

Who was it that said of Dickens that "Anybody who thinks Dickens created exaggerated types or caricatures either hasn't been around very much or has no powers of observation." I guess he's right. I guess there are people like that. A couple of times men have come around looking for odd jobs, and I've put 'em to work in the garden, and both men were kooks! Good workers, but weirdos. From Dickens. It occurs to me that they lived in circumstances much more like those of Dickens' characters than most of us do, who are securely anchored in our circumstances and hence in reality. Many of Dickens' more exotic characters lived lives of great insecurity; however, it appears to me that it's only within the past couple generations that the climate in England has been unfavorable to the development of eccentricity.

"It is a strong infringement of personal liberty to protect a person against himself." Yes—very good. Well—what about a person who refuses to learn any trades or skills and who goofs off when not under constant supervision? Such a person is often unemployed. Is it not an infringement of his personal liberty to refuse to allow him to starve to death?

Haven't seen Madonna of the Seven Moons but it sounds great. My own personal favorite tear-jerker is Letter from an Unknown Woman with Joan Fontaine and Louis Jourdan. Starts out: pianist has agreed to fight duel, but plans to bug out instead. Gets letter and reads it. "By the time you read this letter, I will be dead..." Reading the letter, he was still there when his seconds came in the morning, and it was clear that he was going off to get killed, because in the first place he was a lousy shot and in the second, the unknown woman (who had loved him for years) had finally made an impact on his hard heart. It was a lovely movie. I sobbed. The story was by Stefan Zweig. An Argentine I used to know told me that the novels of Stefan Zweig had a tremendous vogue there when he was young, and his sisters used to read them and weep buckets of tears. He said that Argentine women are very sentimental.

Bill, I've read The Charioteer by Mary Renault and liked it immensely. I will agree that it is a very good novel. Soon after I read it I read Lord Byron's letters, and felt that Lord Byron and Ralph Lanyon were very similar in personality and temperament. Have you ever read Byron's letters, and if so, do you agree?



IN THE SPRING
A YOUNG FAN'S FANCY
LIGHTLY TURNS TO THOUGHTS
OF... VOTING RON ELLIK
FOR TAFF!

II

DAWN

OF THE

GOLDEN AGE

—Alva Rogers

The appointment of Campbell as editor of ASTOUNDING brought to an end the second, or Tremaine, era of the magazine and marked the beginning of the third and greatest—the legendary "Golden Age" of ASTOUNDING. In this installment I hope to cover at least the first two or three years of Campbell's reign, the first years of the greatest five or six years in ASTOUNDING's history. This opinion I know is not held by everyone; even by many who were reading ASTOUNDING in those far-off years. But for me and many others this was in fact the "Golden Age" of ASTOUNDING and also for science fiction in general. I hope in the course of this article to make it reasonably clear why I feel this way.

1938

The Tremaine to Campbell changeover in October 1937 brought no immediate policy or format changes; in fact, as Campbell later admitted, he regarded the February 1938 issue as his first legitimate issue with substantially all stories purchased by him. The following month Campbell made the first of his many changes in the format of the magazine. In changing the name from ASTOUNDING STORIES to ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION Campbell had the idea in mind of eventually changing the name to simply SCIENCE-FICTION. However, Charles Hornig beat him to it when he came out with SCIENCE FICTION in March 1939.

There were no discernable literary changes at this time. Most of the regular names continued to appear; Galactic Patrol concluded in February in a satisfying blaze of pyrotechnics; in March Arthur J. Burks started a two-part serial, Jason Sows Again, and in April Thomas Calvert McClary began a three parter, Three Thousand Years—an enjoyable tale, but obviously a variation on the theme of his classic Rebirth of 1934. Schachner was present with one of the "Past, Present and Future" series, Island of the Individualists in May, as well as a couple of other novelettes and a two-part serial in November, Simultaneous Worlds. Not as much as in previous years, but still in there pitching.

The highlight of the first half of the year was undoubtedly Stuart's excellent novelette Dead Knowledge. This story of a highly-civilized planet whose people had to the last man committed suicide, and the search by three men from earth for the reason, appeared in January and again confirmed Stuart's reputation as the greatest stylist writing science fiction at the time.

A new author made his debut with a short story in July: L. Ron Hubbard. In September he appeared again with the first installment of a three-part serial, The Tramp. It told of a derelict who as the result of an accident discovers that he has a third

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BLACK DESTROYER by A. E. Van Vogt

"eye" which has remarkable healing powers when directed at someone in need of aid. Eventually the healing rays are turned to death rays and the beneficent eye becomes an "evil eye". A good, but not great story--the great one was still over a year away. This story was, however, one of the forerunners of the present-day psi story, and was definitely a departure from the general type of science fiction then popular.

Another gem from this first year of the Campbell era was Lester del Rey's tender tear jerker of the female robot, Helen O'Loy, which appeared in December. Featured in this same December issue was a story by "a name new to science fiction" to quote Campbell--H. L. Gold. Technically this was true. Although Gold had had several stories published in ASTOUNDING in 1934-35 they had been under the byline of Clyde Crane Campbell, so this was the first appearance of H. L. Gold. The story was A Matter of Form and was about this fellow who suddenly found his mind switched with that of a Collie and his desperate efforts to communicate his plight to noncomprehending his plight to noncomprehending humans. An excellent yarn.

Robert Moore Williams has never been one of my favorite writers, but his Robot's Return, a short story in the September ASTOUNDING, has always been one of my favorite robot stories--Asimov notwithstanding. It tells of the endless search throughout space for the legendary home of their creators by a ship "manned" by robots, their brief landing on a devastated planet and the discovery that their creator had not been a machine, but "Man the weakling, eater of grass and flesh," but nevertheless godlike in his vision and power.

Arthur J. Burks was back again in August with the first story in what was to be a very popular series, the "Josh McNab" tales. Hell Ship, and the subsequent stories, concerned the adventures of a spacegoing counterpart of every Scotch engineer that in popular fiction sailed the earthly oceans in battered tramp steamers.

L. Sprague de Camp's article, Language for Time Travelers in the July issue, which was a fascinating and scholarly examination of the changes in languages one might find in the future, was one of the most highly acclaimed features published during the year. It was also de Camp's first article for ASTOUNDING. Another popular article was Catastrophe by E. E. Smith in the May issue. The article expounded the galactic collision theory of the formation of the planets and was in the order of an explanation to some of his critics who had questioned the vast number of planets that customarily figured in his stories.

In October de Camp introduced his educated black bear, Johnny Black, in The Command. In April he had his satirical story of Hyperilosity wherein man suddenly started growing his own luxurious coats of hair. De Camp, from his first story The Isolinguals in 1937, was a consistently popular author and figured significantly in the Golden Age, not only with excellent fiction, but also with superb articles. Another excellent story by de Camp appear in the December issue with a fine cover by Schneeman, The Merman.

The bulk of the stories published during 1938 seem to me from this distance and without the benefit of too much rereading to be somewhat better in terms of writing than those of the year or so preceding. There is an obvious Campbell influence in much of it, particularly in the latter half of the year. There were of course at the same time stories that fell into familiar patterns established years earlier. However it was apparant that gradual changes were being made in the atmosphere of the magazine; it seemed to be getting away from the brashness, the exuberant disregard of logic, particularly in the field of human relations that had typified ASTOUNDING in earlier years; the type of story wherein the hero, a youth barely out of his teens, but possessing the brain of an Einstein or Fermi, solves all problems at a moments notice.

The super science, thought-varient type was also gradually slipping; there were exceptions of course. The Sun World of Soldus by Schachner was reminiscent of Williamson's Islands of the Sun, a thought-varient type of 1935. Campbell also began sneaking an occasional humorous story in now and then: Nelson Bond's The Einstein Inshoot, Simak's Reunion on Ganymede, the de Camp stories all had a light touch.

The three stories that were my favorites of the year were in this order: Who Goes There? by Stuart, Seeds of Dusk by Gallun, and Williamson's Legion of Time. Who Goes There? appeared in August and easily walked away with all honors for the year. There's no need to go into detail on this story of antarctic horror; it should be thoroughly familiar to all science fiction fans. Seeds of Dusk in the June issue has always ranked high on my list of favorite stories of all time. A short story, it tells of the final end of the Children of Men--the Itorloc--in the inconceivably distant future as they are invaded and ultimately destroyed by sentient spores that have floated across space from Mars, a la Arrhenius. I liked this story so much that one night at a session with Van Vogt, Healy, McComas, Saha and Francis T. Laney back in 1945 I suggested it for possible inclusion in Healy and McComas's projected Random House Anthology. Neither of them had read it, but they promised to do so. It's eventual presence in that greatest of all anthologies, Adventures in Time and Space, has always been very pleasing to me. I think this story epitomizes the best of the remote future, dead-or-dying-earth theme that was so popular in the thirties. It's impact is dependent upon the mood established by Gallun's poetic images and human compassion, his genuine feeling for the characters involved in this final tragedy.

My choice of The Legion of Time can be explained on no other grounds than, by ghod! I just plain liked it. This is a roaring, bloody adventure on two alternate time streams, with two beautiful women--one good and one evil and both highly desirable--a brawny hero and a most satisfying villain. Stock ingredients transformed into a memorable story by Williamson's capable craftsmanship.

1938 was Campbell's year to start the shift from the old science fiction to the new as he envisioned it; the type pioneered by him since 1934 when he presented us with the incomparable Twilight and all the rest of his Don A. Stuart stories that followed. As I said there were and would still be holdovers from the past. That was to be expected. But, the strong editorial influence of Campbell on his writers was beginning to take effect and giving the magazine those characteristics that were to make the ASTOUNDING-type of science fiction so distinctive in the field.

The December ASTOUNDING came out all dolled up in a brand-new cover with a more streamlined and modern logo than the one that had identified the magazine since its inception. Although I hated to see the old cover go, I had to admit that the new was very distinguished and certainly set it apart from other pulps on the newstands.

And thus the "old" ASTOUNDING was laid to rest with the first glimmerings of the Golden Age appearing over the horizon of the new year.

1939

We now come to the beginning of what is generally known as the Golden Age. As I indicated earlier I consider these next few years to be the highwater mark of ASTOUNDING and of magazine science fiction. It's true that today we have men and women of great talent writing for the field; people who write sophisticated and mature science fiction. The general level of ability is undoubtedly higher in most instances today than yesterday. However the magic, the sense of wonder if you will, that surrounded ASTOUNDING in those days, and in fact the entire field (which, starting in 1939, broke out with a flock of new magazines) seems to be sadly lacking these days--and has for some years past, at least to this devoted fan. No longer is there that unbearable

and interminable wait between issues; the thrill of a beautiful Rogers cover standing out like a diamond surrounded by paste as you approach the newstand; the rush home and the hungry devouring of the entire contents at one sitting; the promise to yourself not to start the latest Heinlein or Van Vogt or Smith serial until all the parts are at hand, and then the immediate breaking of that promise, and once again the interminable wait.....

Because I consider this period in the history of ASTOUNDING to be of such importance, both for personal as well as historical reasons, I'm going to depart from the method I employed for the earlier years where I just sort of rambled back and forth through the year, and cover it largely in monthly order.

January

The January issue is notable for one fact, if for no other—it contained the last, and without a doubt, the worst Warner Van Lorne story to be published in the pages of ASTOUNDING. It was called The Blue-men of Yrano, and Campbell apologized for months afterwards for publishing it. The rest of the issue was not particularly distinguished. Manly Wade Wellman brought his serial Nuisance Value to a conclusion, de Camp continued the adventures of Johnny Black in The Incorrigible and Norman L. Knight had what I considered the best story in this issue, Salurian Valedictory, which told of a slab of tourmaline found in the Ozark hills which acted as a mirror into the past of fifty million years ago. Josh McNab was back in The First Shall be Last, and Vic Phillips had the cover story, Maiden Voyage.

February

February had three outstanding features; an eye-catching cover by a new artist, Hubert Rogers, illustrating Jack Williamson's novelette Crucible of Power; and the beginning of a magnificent new serial by Clifford D. Simak, Cosmic Engineers. Rogers will always remain my favorite ASTOUNDING cover artist. Wesso was fine, sometimes great; Brown was nearly always great; But Rogers—he was nearly always stupendous. This cover was predominantly red, the red of a Martian desert, with the silver hulk of a crashed rocketship diagonally across the cover and a man staggering away from it appearing in the foreground. A beautiful cover!

Williamson's story told of one man's ruthless drive for power on Mars—a drive for cheap power for the industries of earth and the accompanying drive for personal power. This was a theme that Williamson was to explore from different angles in the years to come with varying degrees of success. In this case he was moderately successful thematically and quite successful storywise.

Cosmic Engineers, which ran for three installments, very nearly outdoes E. E. Smith in the scope of its action. It starts with the discovery by two newspapermen of a beautiful woman in an unpowered space shell floating near the orbit of Pluto. This girl, who has existed in a state of suspended animation for one thousand years but with her mind still conscious and active, turns out to have been a famous scientist. The two newsmen revive her and from there the story takes them to the rim of the universe, where—with the help of the "cosmic engineers" who reside in the next galaxy—they strive to avert the impending destruction of the macrocosmic universe by forces from without the galaxy. There was nothing particularly new or startling in this plot, but Simak handled his vast canvas with its ultra-cosmic concepts so deftly that it couldn't help being a tremendous story in the great Smith-Campbell tradition.

March

March saw the last appearance of the Don A. Stuart byline in ASTOUNDING. This was the classic Cloak of Aesir, sequel to the equally classic Out of Night of 1937.

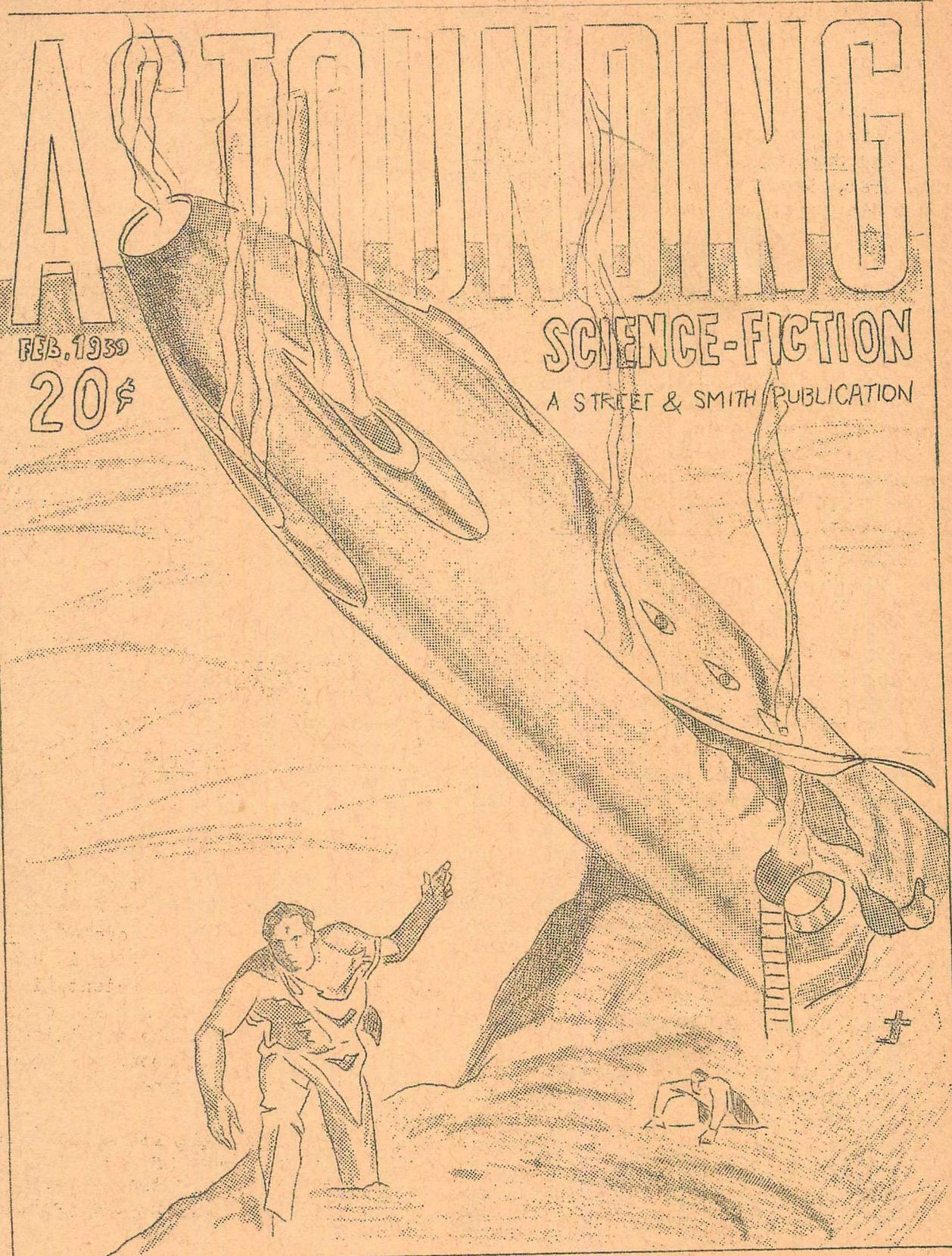
A T A U N D I N G

FEB. 1939

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SCIENCE-FICTION

A STREET & SMITH PUBLICATION



CRUCIBLE OF POWER

By Jack Williamson

Man's revolt, with the aid of the chilling Aesir, against the benevolent but firm rule of the Sarn-Mother and her sisters who had ruled unopposed for four thousand years, is finally brought to a triumphant conclusion. The final scene, where the immortal Sarn-Mother relinquishes her ages-old control over man and departs for her home world, is as moving a bit of writing as has ever appeared in science fiction.

Other stories in this issue were Burk's Follow the Bouncing Ball, another Josh McNab yarn; Children of the Betsy B by Malcolm Jameson, A Problem in Murder by H. L. Gold and the second installment of Cosmic Engineers.

By March the science fiction field had been expanded to eight magazines, not counting WEIRD TALES. MARVEL TALES was the first new one to appear--in August 1938. This magazine showed great promise at first with such featured novels as Burk's Exodus and Survival, John Taine's Tomorrow and Williamson's After Worlds End. It soon, however, devolved into a sex and sadism form of science fiction so beautifully parodied some months ago in PLAYBOY magazine.

The second new magazine was STARTLING STORIES, a companion to THRILLING WONDER. The first issue featured the great posthumous novel The Black Flame by Stanley G. Weinbaum. The third was DYNAMIC STORIES, which lasted only two issues; the fourth was Hornig's SCIENCE FICTION, and the fifth was the incomparable UNKNOWN, companion to ASTOUNDING. Within the next year and a half there would appear FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, AMAZINE STORIES's companion magazine (which now gave all three of the senior magazines sturdy siblings), PLANET STORIES, ASTONISHING STORIES and SUPER SCIENCE STORIES; FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES and FANTASTIC NOVELS, which were composed entirely of reprints of the great Munsey fantasy classics; FUTURE FICTION, which later combined with SCIENCE FICTION to become FUTURE COMBINED WITH SCIENCE FICTION and still later to be known as FUTURE FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION; COMET STORIES, edited by F. Orlin Tremaine, and COSMIC STORIES which lasted for three issues. I almost forgot SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY, which seemed to consist mainly of reprints of old classic Ray Cummings novels and STIRRING SCIENCE STORIES which saw four issues. And lastly, there was that unique phenomena, CAPTAIN FUTURE, also a companion to THRILLING WONDER.

This then was the roster of science fiction magazines that composed the field during the Golden Age of the forties. The competition given to ASTOUNDING for leadership in the field by some of them was at times quite considerable; however, ASTOUNDING continued to maintain its envied position despite this increased competition. The duo of ASTOUNDING and UNKNOWN (which got off to a phenomenal start in March with Eric Frank Russell's never to be forgotten Fortean novel Sinister Barrier) was an unbeatable combination and one that has never since been equalled.

April

The April ASTOUNDING was distinguished by one of the best of the many astronomical covers presented over the years. A view of Saturn as seen from Japetus, it was painted by Charles Schneeman and illustrated Nat Schachner's feature novelette Worlds Don't Care. This was in the more modern vein for Schachner, dealing as it does primarily with problems in human relations, rather than with startling scientific concepts. Cosmic Engineers was concluded in this issue and prompted Campbell to ask in the Analytical Lab for comments from the general reader as to their opinions respecting this type of heavy-science yarn for the future. My own response was one of unqualified approval, but then I've always had a partiality for this type of story.

The big news this issue was the beginning of One Against the Legion, Williamson's windup of the Legion of Space saga. This has always been my favorite of the three novels, although generally it is regarded as the lesser of the three. The character of the Basilisk appealed to me mightily on first reading, and the problems confronting

the Legion in this adventure seemed to me to be considerably more human and believable than in the previous novels. Another aspect of the story that increased its enjoyment for me was the fuller disclosure of the shadowy past of Giles Habibula that had only been hinted at before. And to top it off, I thought the illustrations by Orban were perfect for this story. Orban incidently is another artist who did yeoman work through the years and has been consistently underrated.

May

P. Schylur Miller's Coils of Time was the subject of an uninspired cover by Graves Gladney this issue. This was a sequel to his far superior Sands of Time which appeared in April 1937. L. Sprague de Camp contributed another of his superlative articles to this issue. In this case, a two-part article entitled Design for Life which was a closely-reasoned analysis of earth's life forms and a detailed building of probably extra-terrestrial intelligent life forms. De Camp also had an interesting short story under the byline Lyman R. Lyon, Employment, about the reconstruction and resurection of a woolly mammoth by reconstituting its atom structure.

Lester del Rey's Day is Done was a nicely told, emotion-laden picture of the passing of the last Neanderthal man and the emergence of Cro-Magnon. John Berryman, a new author, in his novelette Special Flight presented one of the most realistic and detailed pictures of the routines of space flight yet to appear in science fiction. An exciting and engrossing story. One Against the Legion continued to develop the increasing menace of The Basilisk, and the remarkable talents of Giles Habibula were reluctantly revealed by the old tosspot.

This was a good, but not outstanding issue marred only by the lacklustre cover and distinguished by the de Camp article.

June

June brought the year to its halfway point with still no sign of the Golden Age as yet. Another of Graves Gladney's depressing covers graced this issue purportedly illustrating Simak's Hermit of Mars. Josh McNab, the good ship Arachne and Arthur J. Burks all made their final appearance in ASTOUNDING with the novelette Done in Oil. Burks had been a steady contributor to ASTOUNDING since his Monsters of Moven and Earth, the Marauder back in 1930, generally regarded as minor classics of the Clayton era. Design for Life concluded in this issue with de Camp's proving to nearly everyone's satisfaction that if intelligent life did develop on another planet it would look not so much like a chrysanthemum or starfish, but would probably look somewhat like a man.

Ghan, Derron, the disgraced and hunted Legion officer-hero of One Against the Legion, and wiley old Giles Habibula solved the mystery of The Basilisk, upheld the honor of the Legion, saved the world from possible destruction and brought the saga of the Legion of Space to a satisfying conclusion. This trilogy of The Legion of Space, The Cometeers and One Against the Legion, remains one of the enduring classic adventures of early science fiction and should have a place alongside the Skylark of Space trilogy and the Arcot, Wade and Morey novels of Campbell on any true fan's library shelf as examples of early space opera.

July

This issue as far as I'm concerned was the harbinger of of ASTOUNDING's Golden Age. Starting with the cover, a surprisingly effective job by Gladney, straight through the table of contents, it was an outstanding number. The cover was done in black and red and illustrated Black Destroyer by a new author, A. E. Van Vogt. Van Vogt's introductory effort in the science fiction field was an auspicious one. The

death struggle between Coeurl, the cunning catlike remnant of a once mighty race, and the scientists of the spaceship Beagle who discover Coeurl prowling the wastes of his dead planet, was told with great sympathy for the foredoomed Coeurl. Van Vogt's prose was crisp and believable and the story moved at an almost breathless pace. This one story rocketed Van Vogt to the top level of ASTOUNDING writers--a position he was to hold for many years to come.

C. L. Moore made one of her infrequent contributions to ASTOUNDING with her excellent novelette Greater than Gods, a suspenseful and haunting story of alternate futures. This story was illustrated by Schneeman with some of the finest drawings ever executed by him. "Past, Present and Future" were back again, this time in the City of Cosmic Rays. Good old Schachner had just about milked this series dry, but still managed to provide a bit of light divertissement in this formula tale.

A fan, and regular fixture in Brass Tacks, made his debut in ASTOUNDING with his second published story, Trends. With this story Isaac Asimov began a writing career that is still going strong. Trends was a sociological story of mass hysteria and religious fanaticism in conflict with man's first attempt at space flight. Although time has nullified Asimov's basic premise, this remains a singularly perceptive and powerful story and is in every sense a classic. The remaining stories: Lightship, Ho! by Nelson Bond, The Moth by Ross Rocklynne and When the Half Gods Go by Amelia R. Long were interesting but not otherwise notable. And Willy Ley had another of his informative articles, this one a sort of companion to de Camp's Language for Time Travelers, called Geography for Time Travelers.

August

Robert Heinlein, who probably did more than any single writer in the forties to make the Golden Age a reality, appeared for the first time in this issue of ASTOUNDING with a short story, Life-Line. This first-printed story of Heinlein's was also interestingly enough the first story chronologically to figure in his famous "Future History". The story of Dr. Pinero and his chronovitameter, the gadget he used for predicting individual lifelines, told with Heinlein's deft touches that enhanced its believability, was an excellent story; but the great stories that were soon to come certainly were not intimidated by this one effort.

Life-Line and Van Vogt's Black Destroyer the preceding month combined to introduce to a receptive fandom an altogether new type of science fiction. Perhaps we weren't really aware of it at the time--I'm quite sure that in my case I was unaware that any significant event had occurred--but at any rate most of the readers recognized the quality of both stories, placing Black Destroyer in first place for July and Life-Line second for August. One of the elements that set these stories apart, that helped contribute to their greatness was that of approach. Van Vogt's classic was essentially a BEM horror tale. In the hands of a less talented writer, this is exactly all it would have been. But Van Vogt endowed Coeurl with intelligence, an intrinsic moral code and motivation that made him, in spite of his alienness and ferocity, a believable and sympathetic creature, a far cry from the typical BEM of the recent past. And Heinlein took what was after all only a gadget story, albeit an intriguing one, and through skillful characterization and an eye for subtle detail transformed it into a rather biting bit of social commentary.

The Luck of Ignatz by Lester del Rey was the feature novelette this issue and copped a disappointing and unrecognizable as such Finlay cover. Ignatz was an armadillo-like creature from the swamps of Venus, with a high level of intelligence and the ability to understand languages, but not to speak them. Ignatz was the inseparable mascot of the unfortunate spaceman who was his "master"--unfortunate because Venusian Zloah't's are universally known to be Jonah's.

De Camp had an interesting and slightly cock-eyed story of uncontrolled animal mutations on an African game preserve called The Blue Giraffe, and P. Schuyler Miller was moderately successful with Pleasure Trove which dealt with the search on another system for a narcotic pleasure dust. The best feature of this story was the loving care Miller lavished on his picaresque characters. General Swamp, C.I.C., a two-part serial beginning this month authored by Frederick Englehardt concerned the rebellion of the Venusian colonies against mother earth.

September

The only things of note in this issue as far as I was concerned were the lovely Rogers cover for Manly Wade Wellman's Forces Must Balance, the outstanding illustrations by Schneeman for the same story, and one of the funniest science fiction stories ever written, Theodore Sturgeon's hilarious Ether Breather. The story related the chaotic effect on normal television broadcasts by "ethereal" creatures inhabiting the "ether". Incidentally, this story, written in 1939, presented a remarkably accurate picture of commercial television as we know it today.

October

Anyone who read the first installment of this history will not be too greatly surprised at my comments on this issue. For this was the issue that brought back the mighty Kimball Kinnison and the Galactic Patrol in Gray Lensman. To begin with the cover (by Rogers--who else?) is perhaps the most famous and remembered cover of all time to the majority of older fans. It showed Kinnison, arms akimbo, his Lens gleaming on his right wrist and clad entirely in grey leather, standing with legs apart before the open port of a space ship. The background was done in steelblue and green and black, and the whole was a tremendously effective work.

In this installment Kinnison, having gotten a partial line on what he believes to be the true base of the forces of Boskone, somewhere in Lyndmark's Nebula, embarks on his implacable pursuit of the being he believes Boskone to be by ferreting out the underling Zwiwniks (drug peddlers) operating in our galaxy as agents of Boskone. During a scouting expedition into the second galaxy in his superdreadnaught, the Dauntless, Kinnison comes across for the first time a member of the Eich--"speaking for Boskone"--and the problem of the true identity of Boskone is intensified and further complicated.

The effect that Smith had on the average fan during these years is hard to explain today, and it's not within the intentions of this article to attempt an explanation. The simplest explanation I think is the one advanced by Alfred Bester in his book review column in FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. In his review of Smith's The Vortex Blaster, a novel based on short stories from COMET and ASTONISHING and related to the Lensman saga, he stated that "For years this department has wondered why the space-operas of E. E. Smith have never failed to enchant us and we read his latest, The Vortex Blaster, with great attention.... we know now the secret of Mr. Smith's hypnotic effect on us. We found the clue in a passage describing the hero on his way to a posh reception..." He goes on to quote the passage and then concludes, "By God! It's none other than the legendary John Carter of Mars," we exclaimed, looking around for Thuvia, Maid of Mars, and good old Tars Tarkus. Mr. Smith never fails to transport us back into our childhood, and we're properly grateful." (F&SF, Dec. 1960). An oversimplification, but probably as good as any explanation, I guess.

November

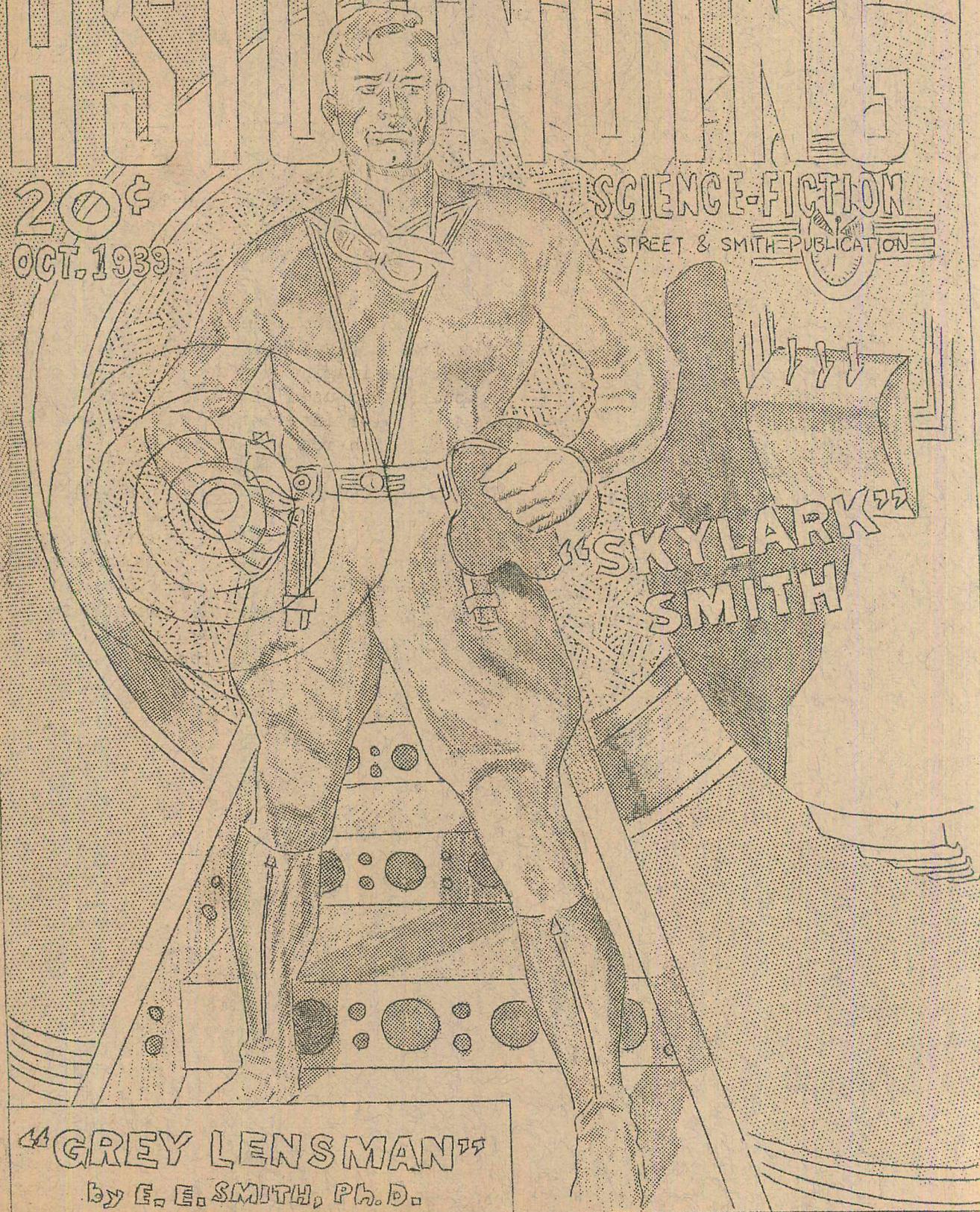
Gray Lensman was again featured on the cover this issue with a superlative painting by Rogers. In this installment Kinnison settles down to the job of laboriously digging for a new line on Boskone by worming his way into the confidence of lower echelon zwiwniks. And the action continues breathlessly apace.

ASTOUNDING

20¢
OCT. 1939

SCIENCE-FICTION

A STREET & SMITH PUBLICATION



"SKYLARK"
SMITH

"GREY LENS MAN"

by E. E. SMITH, Ph.D.

Heinlein's second story appeared in this issue--another in the future history Misfit. In this story Heinlein took the New Deal CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps), which was at the peak of its life at the time, and extrapolated it to the future as the Cosmic Construction Corps "--for the purpose of conserving and improving our interplanetary resources, and providing useful, healthful occupations for the youth of this planet." The hero of this short story was Slipstick Libby, the human calculator, who was to appear again in Methuselah's Children as a member of the Families. Although this was not one of Heinlein's better stories, still it was an interesting example of extrapolation on a socio-political theme and demonstrated the material to be found in the contemporary scene for the science fictionist to draw from.

December

With this issue the dawn year of the Golden Age ended. It had been a memorable year with several outstanding single issues and December indubitably was one of them. Van Vogt was back with his second novelette, and for the second time copped the cover. Discord in Scarlet was another monster story, this time involving the scientists aboard the Beagle with Xtl, a frightening creature with extraordinary powers. Again, as in Black Destroyer, the pooled brains and teamwork of the Beagle crew ultimately prevailed over the awesome intellect and superhuman powers of the alien entity. Despite the basic similarity between this and his first story, Van Vogt infused it with imagination and detail enough to make of it a distinct work of classic calibre. Campbell also used this story as the vehicle for an abortive printing experiment--that of using two-color interior illustrations, in this case accenting the regular black pen and ink drawings with red ink during the printing stage.

Kimball Kinnison continued his pursuit of Boskone in the third installment of Gray Lensman, and Nat Schachner finally concluded the adventures of the three men from different eras, "Past, Present and Future" with City of the Corporate Mind. Schachner henceforth in the handful of stories yet to appear would concern himself more with stories of sociological themes than he had in the past. Wallace West's Sculptors of Life presented a future wherein life could be indefinitely prolonged through the medium of new-bodies "sculpted" by artists trained in the art of life sculptoring. It was a better than average story and interesting in that it is one of the few science fiction stories that I can recall that has used one of the arts as the springboard for its science fictional idea.

1940: The Golden Age Begins

January

Although the last half of the year just concluded contained many of the stories generally associated with the Golden Age., i.e., Black Destroyer, Life Line, Trends, Gray Lensman and Discord in Scarlet to name a few, it wasn't until 1940 that the Golden Age came into full being and set the pace that was to be maintained for the next four or five years. At first glance the January cover by Schneeman was disappointing, but closer examination led one to the inescapable conclusion that Charles Schneeman was unquestionably one of the finest artist illustrating for science fiction magazines, if not technically the best. However the majority of Schneeman's covers have always vaguely disappointed me as science fiction covers--his artistic ability notwithstanding.

Discounting the concluding installment of Gray Lensman--which, like all of Smith's novels is considered in a class by itself--the best single story in the issue was Heinlein's Requiem, one of the finest stories Heinlein ever wrote in any length. I doubt if there's a fan worthy of the name who on first reading this story didn't completely identify with Har- riman, feel with him the yearning to just once--even at the risk of death--experience the ecstasy of space flight and to set foot on the moon. I've never tired of reading this story and on each reading I still get the same lump in my throat I got the first time.

Lester del Rey had a nice story in this issue, The Smallest God, the story of a small rubber doll, the mascot of a scientist experimenting with radioactive elements. Hermes, the doll, gets stuffed with a strange tar the scientist has kicking around the lab and eventually comes to life, falls in love with the daughter of his creator's enemy, loses her, eventually achieves a full-sized body and settles down to work in the university lab with Dr. Hodges, the scientist who accidentally brought him to life. This story, told with insight and humor, was another in del Rey's increasing string of excellent stories that were establishing him as one of the consistently good writers of ASTOUNDING stories.

February

With this issue Heinlein presented us with the first of his powerful novels that contributed so much to the legendary status of the early forties: If This Goes On.... Appearing as it did a few short months after the outbreak of WWII in Europe, and dealing with the details of revolt against an absolute dictatorship the story probably had a greater impact on first reading at that time than a first reading several years later would have. The authority Heinlein displayed concerning the science of propaganda and the techniques of underground rebellion--two subjects with which the average fan of that time was relatively ignorant--played a large part in making this a significant novel in the field. Although the first Prophet, Nehemiah Scudder, and the story were obviously inspired by Sinclair Lewis's 1935 novel of an American dictator, It Can't Happen Here, still Heinlein's novel was in every sense an original and distinct contribution to the maturing science fiction of the day.

L. Ron Hubbard, who had been since its inception the year before an almost monthly fixture of UNKNOWN, returned to ASTOUNDING after better than a year's absence with The Professor was a Thief. This story concerned a screwball professor who stole such things as the Empire State building for his model railroad.

March

Heinlein concluded If This Goes On... in this issue and left this fan, at least, limp after the sustained tempo of this action-crammed installment. This novel truly deserved the Nova designation it received, much more so than did H. L. Gold's A Matter of Form a year earlier, the first of the Nova stories.

April

Final Blackout by L. Ron Hubbard, a novel in three parts, began with this issue. This novel (still one of my favorites) precipitated one of the bitterest name-calling controversies ever to arise over a story appearing in a science fiction magazine at any time. The story was essentially a simple one of survival in a Europe almost totally devastated after generations of war. The hero--if one could call him that--was a man born during a bombardment and raised in the environment of total war and identified throughout the story as The Lieutenant. Leading a brigade of "unkillables", The Lieutenant fights his way to military dictatorship of England and ensures his greatest triumph, the preservation of English independence from the U.S., by arranging his own death. Hubbard assumed two key premises on which he based the development of events in his story: that the war in Europe would grind on to the point where existing governments and national entities disintegrated, communications broke down and the war devolved into localized skirmishes between roving bands of armed and uniformed brigands; and that the United States would continue to maintain its neutrality and remain uninvolved in the conflict.

To more fully understand the controversy this novel aroused it might be interesting to look briefly at the world as it was at the time this story was printed. First, the war in Europe had just begun with tragic consequences to Poland. The systematic destruction of

that state in a matter of two weeks by the German Blitzkrieg opened the eyes of the world to a brutal new form of warfare where all the niceties and conventions of the past were thrown out the window. The prophets of doom for years had been predicting that the next war would be total in its effect and would be Armageddon for world civilization. The United Front Against Fascism which had been spearheaded by the Communists and supported by liberals of every complexion collapsed and did a flipflop with the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact a couple of days before the outbreak of war, and the anti-war, neutralist movement in this country was at its peak.

The point at issue with Final Blackout was simply this: was it communist propaganda, or was it fascist propaganda? Was it pro-war or anti-war? It was none of these, basically, but depending upon ones political leanings, which in those days, and in certain circles, tended to the extremes, the battle lines were drawn and charges of "communist" and "fascist" flew back and forth for months. Despite the political significance read into it by partisans of the Left or Right, I'm reasonably convinced after discussions with Hubbard about it that it was apolitical in intent, and merely an attempt on his part to anticipate a future--grim as it might be--based on the evidence at hand and on the best experts of the day. The fact that his future failed to materialize doesn't at all lessen the merits of Final Blackout as an outstanding work of science fiction--and who knows? The future he predicted for World War II looks like a fair bet for a possible future to World War III.

Two other stories in this issue deserve some mention--Admirals Inspection by Malcolm Jameson, and Reincarnate by Lester del Rey. The Jameson bit was the first of the Bullard of the Space Patrol series and introduces that worthy as a young Lieutenant, newly arrived on the star-class cruiser Pollux, confronted with the problems of an Admirals Inspection which would result in him being upranked to Commander by the end of the story. I've always liked the Bullard stories; they were generally well written and some of them were quite ingenious, but I've always had the sneaky suspicion that they were inspired by Forester's Hornblower novels.

Reincarnate was an engrossing tale about the victim of an atomic pile explosion who is "saved" by having his brain and spinal cord incorporated into a metal contraption which turns him into a human-robot. It certainly was not an original plot, but del Rey's detailed accounting of the problems involved in what amounted to learning to live all over again elevated it above the average.

May

The featured attraction this issue, other than the second part of Final Blackout, was Phil Nowlan's last story, Space Guards. Phil Nowlan, as most fans know, was the creator of Buck Rogers, who (as Anthony Rogers) appeared in two novelettes in AMAZING in 1928 and 29: Armageddon 2419 and The Airlords of Han. Unfortunately the story didn't rise to its advance notices, being a less than inspired bit of space opera and quite disappointing to one who remembered his first two stories as superlative entertainment.

The best complete story of the issue was Jack Williamson's Hindsight. A study in character, it told of the redemption of a renegade earth scientist who had renounced his allegiance to earth and joined forces with its enemies, achieving a degree of fame and fortune in the process only to realize at the moment of truth that he could not ignore his earth heritage. Pushing Williamson for top honors in my opinion was Simak's Rim of the Deep, a suspense story taking place almost entirely beneath the surface of the Venusian seas.

June

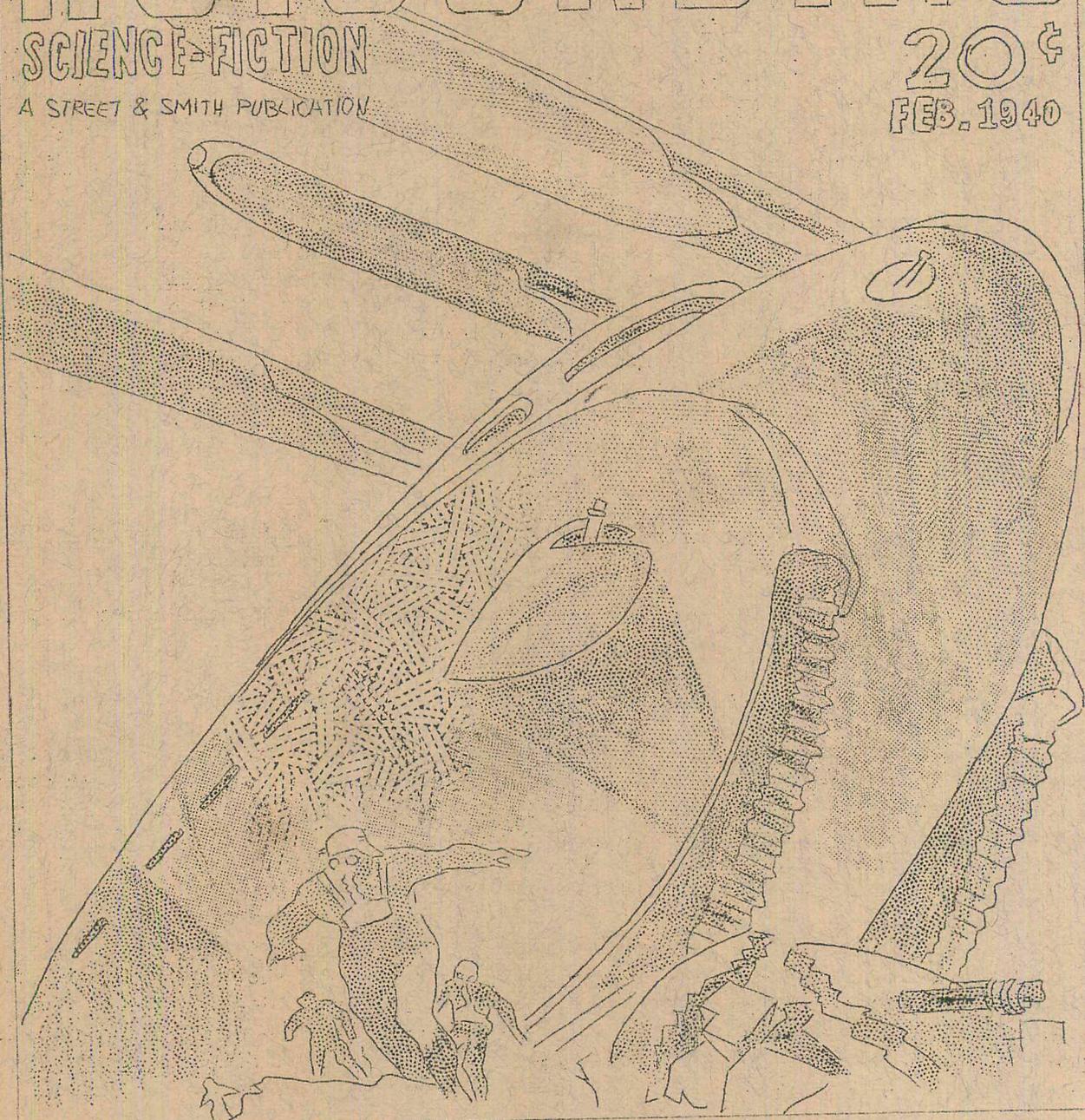
The Roads Must Roll, Heinlein's first novelette, and only his fifth story to see print was the subject of a fine Rogers cover and marked the midpoint of the year. Heinlein's picture of rolling roadways in the last quarter of this century seemed so real that one

ASTOUNDING

SCIENCE-FICTION

A STREET & SMITH PUBLICATION

20¢
FEB. 1940



"If This Goes On...." by Robert Heinlein

Rogers

almost expected them to appear within the next two years. With a high degree of realism, Heinlein related the attempted seizure of control over the roadways by the Functionalists (i.e., the operating engineers, the one who ostensibly kept the roads running smoothly) from the authorized agencies managing the intricately interlocked and mutually dependent roads; and the chaos and economic disruption not to mention the inconvenience to individuals who had become dependent on the roads for their transportation--that resulted when the rolling roads ceased to roll.

The Testament of Akubii by Norman L. Knight was a short story of considerable merit and worthy of recognition as such, I believe. It told of the suicide of Akubii, A Martian, in order to extend a dwindling oxygen supply for his friend Greenbough, an Earthling and his sole companion on the cruiser Perigrine. The story was told quietly, without fuss--but with a bitterly ironic ending.

Final Blackout concluded with this issue and took its place in the list of science fiction classics.

July

As someone pointed out many years ago July seems to be a month of particular significance to ASTOUNDING because it is almost always a better than average month. July 1940 was no exception. This issue contained the first installment of Norman L. Knight's two-part serial Crisis in Utopia, Heinlein's Coventry, and the first of the Kilkenny cat series of Kurt von Rachen (Hubbard), The Idealist.

Crisis in Utopia is laid in the same milieu as Knight's novel of 1937, Frontiers of the Unknown; for some reason it never seemed to achieve the prominence it deserved. It was a carefully worked picture of the future development of the underseas resources of the earth, with a lovely problem involved in the creation of artificial sub-sea men and their effect on humans.

In The Idealist Hubbard set up an explosive situation by confining two mutually antagonistic groups of revolutionaries--condemned by the provisional revolutionary government of Earth as counterrevolutionaries--to a spaceship en route to the Sirrian system. Detached from the two groups, but still a part of them by virtue of his revolutionary actions, is former Air Force Colonel Steve Gailbraith--the idealist of the title.

Coventry takes place about twenty-five years after the concluding events of If This Goes On... and tells of the peaceful post-Prophet era where everyone respects the rights of his brethren. And for the few asocial, individualistic types who defy the existing social contract, there is Coventry--the land beyond the Barrier--where the individualist is strictly on his own and the accepted philosophy is one of dog eat dog, and the devil take the hindmost.

Lester del Rey had a nice little story in this issue, Dark Mission, about a man from Mars who makes the first journey to Earth in an effort to seek medical aid for his dying race. But in the end he destroys himself and Earth's first rocketship when he realizes that Earth's medical knowledge is not advanced enough to save Mars, and that contact between the inhabitants of the two planets would lead to the death of man on Earth as well as on the already dying Mars.

August

One of Rogers' most beautiful rocketship covers graced this issue illustrating Lester del Rey's The Stars Look Down. Del Rey's novelette was another in his series of stories concerned with the development of space travel by individuals of private capital, but primarily concerned with the responses of his characters to the problems involved.

A. E. Van Vogt's Vault of the Beast was--you guessed it!--another monster story. But this time it did not involve the Beagle, nor was the monster really a monster, but was instead a robot. The robot had been designed by its makers--supremely evil beings inhabiting another universe with a time matrix different from ours--to assume the shape and character of anything, organic or inorganic, it came in contact with or proximate to. Its mission was to make its way to Earth and there find the greatest mathematician in the solar system. Upon finding this individual it was to get him somehow, somehow, to Mars where it was to force him to solve the time lock set in the vault of ultimate metal which the Martians eons before had devised to imprison the "Beast" who had inadvertently dropped in on the Martians from his own universe. The Tower of the Beast--as the vault was called--was fifteen hundred feet in diameter and one mile high; the entire top was a door which was geared to a time lock which was integrated along a line of ieis to the ultimate prime number. I thought it was a tremendous story despite the issue taken by many fans with Van Vogt's math--which was way over my head anyway, right or wrong.

September

I know I've said it before, but damnit! I've got to say it again: this is one of the best single issues in the history of ASTOUNDING. Witness: the first installment of that classic of classics, Slan; Blowups Happen by Heinlein; Isaac Asimov's second story for ASTOUNDING, Homo Sol; The Kilkenny Cats by Kurt von Rachen, and Quietus by Ross Rocklynne.

The Superman story is one of the hardest to write convincingly and the number of such can be counted on the fingers of one hand: Odd John by Stapleton, But Without Horns by Norvell W. Page, Phillip Wylie's The Gladiator to name three that come to mind...and Slan. Of all of them, Slan has been and always will be my favorite. There are very few times that I can remember when the first installment of a serial (or any story for that matter) has made such an impression on me as did Slan. Although Campbell's advance blurbs in the August issue had been intriguing, and one naturally expected great things from Van Vogt, still the first installment alone was such a stunning experience and so different from quite anything I had read before that I have the distinct impression that I walked around school in a daze for the month before the next installment appeared.

Blowups Happen was another of Heinlein's beautifully realistic and remarkably accurate --in the main--forecasts of the fairly immediate future. This one concerned the adverse psychological effect on the men tending the most dangerous machine in the world--an atomic power plant. The Kilkenny Cats was the second in this series (The Idealist in the July issue being the first) which when completed would form what would be essentially one long single story of book length. In this episode Colonel Steve Gailbraith maneuvers his two antagonistic groups into a wary truce after they reach their colonial planet circling Sirius.

Ross Rocklynne's Quietus is another story that I like to believe I was instrumental in getting included in Adventures in Time and Space; at any rate I championed it vigorously enough. It is a rare gem of a story that never fails to move me as it progresses inexorably from its quiet opening to its logically tragic ending. Briefly it relates how two gentle birdlike creatures from another planet bring their ship to a nearly dead Earth and there discover the last remaining bits of life still existing there. After a series of observations they descry two creatures in what appears to be a death struggle--one a slightly repellent, hairless, bifurcated beast and the other a fellow bird creature--and they are in a dilemma as to which one to aid. Which one is the intelligent being deserving of their lethal assistance, and which one the animal? Needless to say, the one is a man and the other his pet--but pestiferous--talking crow; and this evidence of apparent intelligence on the part of the crow--not to mention the striking physical resemblance to themselves--determines their tragic decesion.

ASTOUNDING

SCIENCE-FICTION

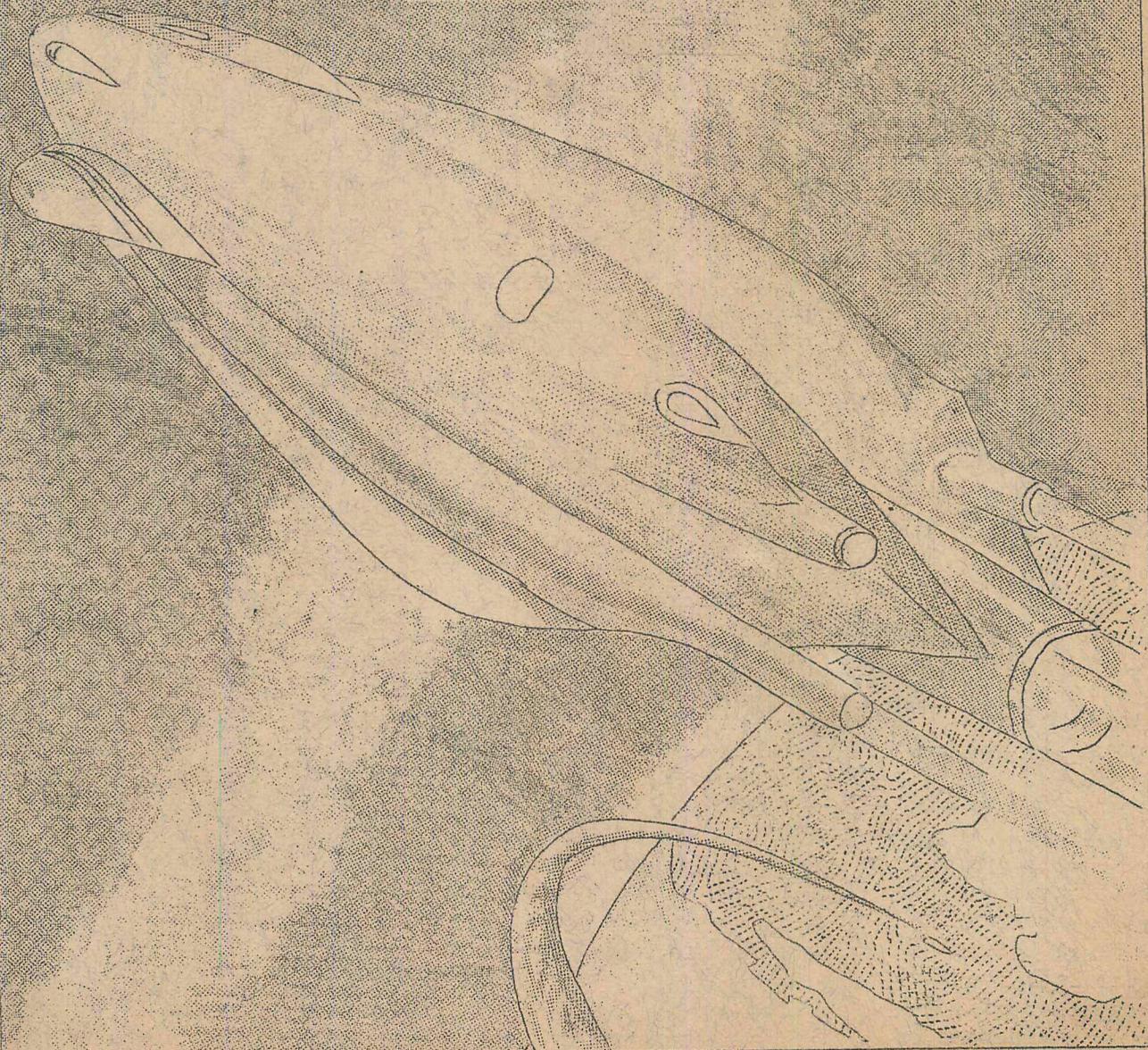
A STREET & SMITH PUBLICATION

The STARS LOOK DOWN

By LESTER DEL REY

AUGUST • 1940

20¢



Homo Sol concerned the problems confronting the Galactic Federation relating to the admission thereto of the planet Earth of Sol which had just developed interstellar travel. The problem was that Homo Sol would have nothing to do with the federation and gave disturbing evidence of such inventiveness that they would in all likelihood be the dominant species in a couple of hundred years. How to outwit the Earthmen and maneuver them into the Federation as peaceful and cooperative members of galactic civilization? Asimov provides the answer in a mature and witty story which remains one of his best short works.

October

Slan again created a problem between me and my schoolwork and had me convinced that I was reading the greatest science fiction story I had ever read--an opinion I get quite often of stories that delight me. In addition to Slan there were this month two stories of an outstanding quality: Harry Bates' tremendously effective Farwell to the Master, and Theodore Sturgeon's hilarious Butyl and the Ether Breather. Bates' story of the huge unmoving robot and his "master" Klaatu was another masterpiece from the former editor of ASTOUNDING, and by all odds the best of his sparse output.

I said earlier that The Ether Breather was one of the funniest stories to appear in science fiction and I still think so. But its sequel, Butyl and the Ether Breather, was even funnier. Perhaps this statement deserves some amplification. I've laughed myself silly over the antics of Kuttner's assortment of freaks: the Hogbens, and enjoyed the slapstick misadventures of Pete Manx; Poul Anderson's and Gordon Dickson's Hokus are classics of comic inventiveness, and de Camp is no slouch when it comes to humor either. But...most of these stories (and others I've neglected to name) seem to be to be peripheral science fiction; i.e., the humor is the primary element of the story, the science fictional content secondary. The Breather stories, on the other hand, seem to me to be basically science fiction stories with an underlying serious idea out of which the humor naturally arises and develops logically.

But back to the story. In Butyl and the Ether Breather the harrassed TV network, in an effort to combat the disastrous effect the Ether Breather has had on normal transmission, enlists the aid of an inventor who has developed a means whereby he is able to translate odors into radio frequencies and thereby transmit them through the ether. The assortment of noxious smells thus directed at the Breather will, they hope, have a salutary effect in driving the Breather from their particular segment of the ether. I repeat: an immensely funny story.

November

November seemed to me to be somewhat of a letdown after the high level maintained over the last few months. Of course Slan continued without any letup in tension, but other than that the rest of the contents were just so-so....not a real classic in the lot!

Johnny Black made his final appearance in The Exalted--a moderately funny story wherein Professor Ira Methuen, Johnny Black's mentor, develops a peculiar form of insanity which leads to some most unexpected happenings..... L. Ron Hubbard, writing under the name of Rene La Fayette, was present with One Was Stubborn which dealt with the deceptive nature of the universe--cogito, ergo sum. And Vic Phillips had the cover story (a beautiful Rogers cover!), Salvage, a fairly routine yarn about salvaging wrecked spaceships on various planets.

December

Slan came to its astounding conclusion with this issue, and with the first example of what was to become almost a trademark of future Van Vogt epics--the one sentence, or at the most one paragraph, ending of a totally unexpected nature which usually required the

reader to completely revise his concept of the story. Reading Slan serially had been a tremendous adventure for me, and for this adventure in reading I'll be forever indebted to Van Vogt for having written Slan, and to Campbell for having first published it.

Robert Willey (Willy Ley), in his novelette Fog painted a picture of a communist revolution in the United States of the 50's, a United States that had ridden out the war as a neutral and then suffered a major depression at the end of the fighting in the 50's. His thesis was that the average innocent bystander during a revolution observes the events transpiring as though through a fog, inadequately informed as to what's going on; and that, in order for the revolution to succeed, tight communication must be maintained between all points of revolt. As a story, it wasn't bad---as prophecy.....well!

P. Schuyler Miller copped the cover with his Old Man Mulligan, one of his best stories and perhaps his most unusual character. Old Man Mulligan was a roistering, bragging space bum hanging around cheap dives in the Venusian slums, forever singing his theme song in which he claims to be one hundred thousand years old.

And so the tenth anniversary year of ASTOUNDING ends, finishing strong at the wire. By any standards this had been a notable year. If This Goes On..., Final Blackout and Slan alone would have made it so. But the year was memorable not only for its serials, but for its many fine novelettes and the abundance of excellent short stories as well.

There were naturally some doubts as to whether or not Campbell and ASTOUNDING could continue the pace set during the past year. But more immediately, what sort of serial would follow the fabulous Slan, just concluded? Well, the novel scheduled for the January 1941 number looked promising.....something by a new author, Anson MacDonald, and called Sixth Column.....

 From The Harp and the Blade by John Myers Myers:

I'm older than God, but gay and frisky.
 I'll never die,
 Which may seem odd
 Till I tell you why:
 I drained off my blood and put in whisky.
 Yes, by damn!
 Dram by dram
 And likewise bottle by bottle,
 I poured it in
 To fill my skin
 Through an ever-ready throttle.

I had a young wife, both fair and frisky;
 But what the hell!
 A wedded life,
 As you know right well,
 Can play the devil with drinking whisky.
 I was strong:
 Wrong is wrong,
 And surely duty is duty.
 I ditched the hen,
 For I scorn men
 Who'll scamp ideals for a beauty.

Intuitions

By Bill Donaho

AMBLE - MERCER I quite agree (as must be painfully obvious) that quibbling is often necessary. If a rule is bad and the effects of it are bad, the only way you can ever get it changed is to quibble about it. It is possible to get along without rules in some situations or--nearly the same--to ignore the rules you have. But as long as you have rules which are enforced, you have to quibble until these rules are good rules.

No, I distinguish between things I like and things which I think are good, between things which don't appeal to me, but are good nevertheless. For that matter I even distinguish between things which are bad and things which are pretentious crud. There are few things that bad! In Moondog it's the pretentiousness that I find which I object to really. I think that his tunes and arrangements are banal, but I wouldn't really mind this if I didn't find them pretentious also. But I am quite prepared to admit this is a personal reaction on my part, not a part of the music.

As for Cole Porter I submit that unless you have heard his songs as he wrote them, not as they have been marred and ruined for dance band, you haven't really heard him. I'll agree that those dance arrangements are so banal and slick as to cause almost instant forgetfulness. But perhaps we have just another fundamental disagreement here; the words that you call "slick, sophisticated", well--I guess they are sophisticated, but they are also biting as hell and excellent satire most of the time. But underlaid with a smooth, devitalized, dancable arrangement maybe this wouldn't be so apparant.

But perhaps our disagreement is real fundamental as you refer to "tunes" and not "songs" (our is just a Britishism?). I suspect so from looking over the list of your favorite jazz. As far as I am concerned the function of the tune, the melody of a song is to back up, reinforce and bring out the words. Or to say the same thing in musical terms that the words are saying. If the tune is important and memorable in itself that is sheer gravy, an extra dividend. There are very few songs whose tunes I am interested in and not the words, although of course there are quite a few whose music is far stronger than the words when they are both saying the same thing.

In your discussion of mailing comments you leave out one possibility for a reason for not saying anything about a zine: (g) I can't think of a damn thing to say about it, and I'll be damned if I sit here staring at the typewriter for an hour; if the zine were really bad I'd say so, as tactfully as possible, but if it's O.K. really--maybe even good--and just doesn't happen to appeal to me, there's not one comment hook, I'll be damned if I look for one.

Also, I submit that mailing comments should be designed to be read by the entire membership, not just by the member whose zine you are commenting on; they should be written so all 45 members can enjoy reading the comments on all 45 zines, not just your comments on their own.

Also, in OMPA at the moment it is possible to comment on every zine, but when they get back to their normal size few people will have the perseverance to do so, unless they cut their comments to only two or three lines per zine. Some of the best

writers of m.c.'s only write on the first ten or so zines they pick up--or the 10 ones they like the most. If you only comment on 1/4 to 1/2 of the mailing those you leave out may be disappointed, but they have no reason to feel slighted. And you can comment on them next time. But you are right; if you are going to comment on most of the mailing, you can't leave out two or three zines; you have to comment on every one.

I firmly feel: (1) Mailing comments should be interesting. (2) It is extremely difficult--if not impossible--to be interesting about several zines, taking only a few lines to each. All you can do is to repeat variations of "I liked this and I didn't like that and let's get on to the next zine." If you are very lucky each individual editor may be interested in the two or three lines about him or his zine--but not in the others. Therefore (3) If you only intend to do, or only have time to do, two or three pages of m.c.'s, you should cover three or four or five zines fairly thoroughly. Don't waste your and everyone else's time in trying to cover the entire mailing. I don't think that even you and Ethel can do it although of course I haven't been talking about your mailing comments in particular--yours are always interesting--but mailing comments in general.

Well, at last we agree about an author. I agree with everything you say about S. Fowler Wright. Maybe both of us had better reexamine our positions!

When I quoted my friend as saying that he liked women, while everyone else he knew liked girls, it was the most elementary meanings of the words that were meant. Like, "I like adult females; everyone else I know likes adolescent females." It really does seem that a large part of American men react this way, so many girls are encouraged not to grow up, but to remain adolescents all their lives. So if you like girls and not women, it's easy to find girls of 25, 30, 40....but if you like adult women, they may not be so easy to find.

BURP - BENNETT Your American agent, Sir, is being very lax, Sir. Where in hell is COLONIAL EXCURSION, Pavlat?

Someone once said that the reason Picasso was so enormously popular and highly regarded was that he had lived so long and painted so much that he had had dozens of different periods. And almost everyone could always find one Picasso period, one Picasso style that he admired. I must confess to be basely conventional in admiring one Picasso period and being bored by the others, and to being particularly conventional in that I pick the blue and pink period to admire.

But according to the American stereotype of the British, the British are always more reluctant than anyone else to do an unconventional thing! I think the American social sense boils down to the idea that social gatherings are individual responsibilities and everyone has to make an effort and to try to make the party go. And no one should rock the boat. Although not every one actually lives up to this of course and many Americans don't have it at all. But it's a general attitude held by most.

This social attitude is particularly strong in the South. When I was attending the University of Chicago the summer sessions had students from all regions of the country in about equal proportions. One of the university activities was Regional States Parties. Each week they had a party primarily for members of one particular section. One





summer I attended all of them. Most of the parties were poorly attended. The Southern States Party was crowded--and there were relatively few southerners at the U. of C. The Southern party was also the one in which people felt at ease and seemed to be having a better time.

ERG - JEEVES. No, a majority of the white people in the South are strongly for segregation. It is primarily for two reasons: (1) As long as the Negro is held down the poorer whites feel more secure about their jobs and status. (2) Everyone feels that if school integration, job integration, etc. is practiced that the children of both races will learn to accept each other and grow up and intermarry. This is undoubtedly true by the way and I understand the same sort of reaction is historically the reason for the elaborate Indian caste system which didn't work either. It is difficult to understand why this extreme repugnance against the blending of the races exists, but it is there. Most Southern whites would rather have no children than see them grow up and marry negroes and quite a large minority feel so strongly about it that they would want to kill their children if they suspected them of any such ideas.

It is rather wryly amusing to reflect that this strong feeling is of rather recent development. Jim Crow originated in the 1890's; it was an invention of Southern conservatives to ward off a wave of radical reform (Populism). It worked quite successfully. It split the negro farmer from the white farmer and the southern farmer from the western farmer and was the main reason the Republican party was the dominant party in this country from 1892 to 1932.

Yes, THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR is a damn good paper. One of the four or five best in the world--or at least in the English language.

PARAFANALIA - BURN. I enjoyed your travelogue very much, Bruce. Quite interesting. One slight criticism though; you introduced so many people it was difficult to absorb them all and they tended to remain names and not to become individual personalities.

RANDOM - BUCKMASTER A woman recently had an article in ESQUIRE in which she ruefully admitted that operationally she did dislike other women. One example she gave was that as a writer she could honestly applaud her male competitors success, but that of her female ones made her writhe. She then brought up one point you mentioned, but she had a different conclusion. "Men frequently are rivals of and dislike other men. True. But men don't dislike other men just because they're men. I'm afraid we women dislike other women just because they're women."

But apart from this one point I found myself agreeing with what you said on women vs women and men vs women and applauding like mad. Very well done.

I didn't mean that British fans are seeing each other all the time but that British fans know each other from personal contact, not just through fanzines. An extremely high percentage of them also seem to make the cons. Thus in British fanzines writers take for granted knowledge of things in British fandom that have happened outside fanzine pages. Now, undoubtedly American fans would do this too if they had the chance. But that many of them haven't met each other. There are some American group zines, but one of their functions is to broadcast their private jokes to the fanzine world. American fanzines are highly ingroupish and esoteric about other fanzines. There are many cross references and cross jokes. Probably many of the things that in reading fanzines you thought were based on personal acquaintance were actually based on references in other fanzines that you hadn't read.

Maybe certain types of squabbles should be suppressed in fanzines. You have a point. On the other hand Ted White has one also in his blasts against the so-called "Don't Risk Offending" code. But Ted does take this too far I think.

I never learned to speak any language, but I learned to read Latin and French. I never made the slightest effort to keep either of these languages up, but ever now and then I will pick up something written in one or the other. I can still read either as well as I ever could.

SCOTTISHE - LINDSAY O.K., O.K. Top of this mailing and of most others. Really an ideal OMPazine--except for your mailing comments. We seem to have a fundamental disagreement here. I see mailing comments as primarily (1) Discussions plus (2) Short informal essays taking off from points mentioned by the other person with (3) Analysis and criticism of a zine making a poor third--mostly because there is seldom anything useful that can be said. I will admit that I have probably been remiss in saying I liked this and I liked that. For instance I don't recall whether I've ever said so, but I dig your movie reviews immensely.

Maybe I'm peculiar, but I get egoboo and pleasure if someone comments on a topic I have brought up, or discusses something with me. Of course I like people to say "I liked this because..."--particularly the because--but I don't feel it's necessary. People don't always feel like analyzing and criticizing; I know I don't. And I'm in OMPA for fun and I'll be damned if I sit at my typewriter for half an hour trying to analyze something I don't feel like analyzing.

Your mailing comments are almost good enough to make me modify my blast against "a few lines to every zine". But they aren't always as interesting as they were last time. I think that if you did write discussion-type comments with your fine analysis tucked in hither and yon that the analysis would be appreciated when it was there and the mailings that you didn't feel like analyzing it's absence wouldn't be noticed.

I strongly feel that Basic Rule #1 in writing mailing comments is: mailing comments on any one zine are still written primarily for reading by the entire membership, not just by the editor of the zine you are talking about. You can make remarks

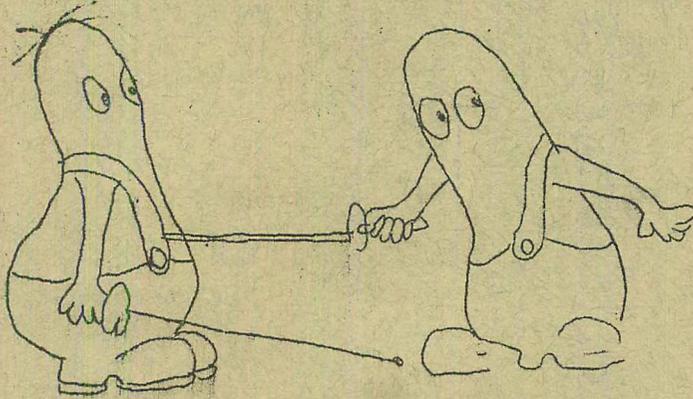
to an individual editor that will not be of interest to everyone, but these remarks have to be a very small part of the total. And of course analysis can be interesting to everyone; yours usually is—but not all the time I think. And you could write such good mailing comments if you would only expand them. You can discuss things; why don't you?

Why do you think that THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN is better than THE TIMES. I haven't done more than glance at either for years, but ten years ago I used to read both regularly. Both are superb papers, but then it seemed to me that the TIMES was superior in every way with one exception. Both are stuffy, but the TIMES is slightly more stuffy.

Willis' account of his own history in fandom is very well done. But each installment is too short! It seems as if one had hardly started it and --bingo--it's over. Willis should write more. Lots more.

I do like your layout. You use space. As far as I am concerned layout is the organization of space and to be good a lot of blank space has to be used. It is impossible to be crowded and have good layout. One qualification to that. Good layout can make a crowded page seem non-crowded, but it can't make it seem artistically pleasing. This is a mistake all too many editors make I think—every available micro-inch is filled with either illos or text. But I suppose that many editors feel that because of printing costs it is necessary to crowd like this.

I do have one layout quarrel with you though. I think non-stop paragraphing is an artistic horror, that it never looks good and is not too much help in separation. And I don't care how sanctioned by fannish tradition it is. And I don't care if Ted White does use it. I think this is one place—but the only one—where Ted's impeccably impeccable sense of layout goes astray, probably because he's so used to non-stop paragraphing that he doesn't really see it.



UL - METCALF And on to the same wars! T*H*E*R*E I*S N*O S*U*C*H T*H*I*N*G A*S R*E*A*D-A*B*L*E M*I*C*R*O*E*L*I*T*E! Ted

White's looks good for a layout or artistic standpoint, but is still not readable without an effort of will. ~~Sandersen's doesn't even look good~~; he doesn't have a good typesetter. Of course microelite can be read, but not without strain or annoyance—at least to me. And while I dislike being influenced by these things I will like material considerably less when it is presented in microelite rather than in readable type. Evidently there are many people—possibly a majority of fans even—who don't react in this way to microelite, but everyone who uses microelite or who contemplates same should realize that there are many of us who do react in this way. And thus the potential response and audience is cut considerably.

WESTERN STAR is the title of a book of poems by Stephen Vincent Benet, but there is nothing in same which could remotely be connected with Silverlock; at least in the allusion Bruce was referring to.

I like your mailing comments, but wish that you would develop some points at length, rather than having a few short comments on many points. This tends to become a series of isolated remarks. But your isolated remarks are interesting.

VERT - MAYNE Rexwroth does not have an original mind, but he certainly has an instinct for the right ideas to latch onto. He usually is very interesting. He has several radio programs each week on KPFA here in Berkeley--taped without rehearsal. On one program he had a bad cough and at least one third of the air time was coughing. Another program I remember with particular affection. Rexwroth was talking about old wobblies and anarchists he had known. One old wob in Vancouver had a fullgrown pet lion and would take the beast with him where ever he went. At his favorite Chinese restaurant he would say to the waiter, "Hey, fellow worker, Charlie, give me some egg foo-young and put a couple of raw steaks on the floor for the fellow worker here." He even took the lion with him to the whore house and the poor beast caught a dose of the clap. (!!!)

Rexwroth then went on to tell about the Free Speech riots in Southern California 60 or 70 years ago. "There was this doctor. He wasn't really a radical. He was just a mean s.o.b. who said nasty things about everybody, but during the riots they rode him out of town on a rail and tarred and feathered him and shoved a broomstick up his ass and he died. They still make speeches about him. The anarchists and wobblies always remember their martyrs--even when they're martyrs by mistake."

In case you're wondering KPFA is non-commercial, completely independent and supported entirely by listeners' subscriptions. Yes, they are trying to close it down. Like, it's UnAmerican. A very swinging type station indeed. Every shade of political opinion is heard from "Roosevelt was antichrist" through "Nixon is it" on to "Castro is God". They play the most far-out music on records and the complete cycle of The Ring. Among their regular programs--besides Kenneth Rexwroth--are Tony Boucher with "Golden Voices"--old opera recordings--and Alan Watts, the American authority on Zen. KPFA also has numerous BBC plays and "The Goon Show". I don't know how this compares with BBC fare, but it is a damn sight better than anything else in the U.S. KPFA has two sister stations, KPFK in L.A. and W.B.A.I. in New York, which have the same type programming.

Burroughs really went down hill. One of the most unpleasant things about his career was The Naked Lunch. I am told that as originally written N.L. had a certain amount of continuity. So he took the manuscript pages and shuffled them together. (So help me god, literally and actually.) Perhaps someday someone will reconstruct the original book for a thesis or something. But I must admit that N.L. does have some awfully quotable bits in it.

VIPER - ME Elinor, I don't think that Out on Any Limb is a juvenile, but that it's hero is a juvenile. But even though he is a juvenile he has attitudes, not to mention adventures and experiences, which are just not permitted in childrens' or even boys' books.

No, I haven't read Lord Bryon's letters, but I have read other material on him and do see resemblances between him and Ralph Lanyon. However, probably the strongest thing in Ralph's character seems to be this business in taking on any and all responsibility for any and everyone. This does not seem a part of Bryon's character.

Unfortunately there is no practical method for distinguishing between those who won't work and those who can't work or who can't find work. But sure, the right to goof off necessarily implies that you bear the consequences of your goofing off. There is an old Spanish proverb which says, "'Take what you want and pay for it' says God." If you find that you didn't really want it after all or didn't know the price, you goofed. And the apparatus necessary to stop people from goofing is the apparatus of tyranny, of regulation and control, of 1984 (when extended). You can't protect anyone from himself without dominating or controlling his life. And while some people may

fall into special classifications which make this control necessary: children, idiots, psychotics, etc., if you begin to set up special protection for people who are weak, or tend to be weak, or may be weak, soon everyone's freedom is sharply limited. More damage and misery is caused by excessive regulation and by government busy-bodyness than is caused by giving people the right to destroy themselves or to blunder into destruction.

BACK YOUR FANCY - MERCER Ron Ellik for T A F F !

TOPEE OR NOT TOPEE - THOMSON Highly enjoyable; much fun and games.

THE WALL - LOCKE Very entertaining, and not just because of the egoboo either. George is rapidly turning into a first class writer and one of the best fan wits of all time. He set a very high standard for the rest of the round-robin to try to live up to.

BJOTTINGS - BJO Glad to hear that it was all a vicious rumor and that you are still with us, even though your semi-gafia is very sad, but of course much better than the more virulent variety. I'm glad that John's accident wasn't any more serious and that everything is going along nicely.

You do write excellent natterings, you know.

ROMP - GERBER As one English major to another, Les: Sure you can classify and define novels and short stories every which way, but after you are done, you will always find novels--at least everyone calls them novels--which have the plot structure you have assigned to novels, and vice versa. I think that attempting to separate a short story from a novel on any other basis than length is patently artificial. Classification by length leaves you with the problem of the novelette of course, but I don't see any ~~way~~ way out of it.

I liked the Crane poetry. I had never run across any of it before.

MAILING COMMENTS - ELLINGTONS As you say it seems a trifle silly to say it, but nevertheless, Welcome to OMPA, Pat. Glad to have your and your artwork. I was going to comment further, but can't find my copy of MAILING COMMENTS which is pretty ridiculous considering that I mailed all of them out. Oh well....

DEFILADE - ME As I seem to have been mounting a soapbox rather frequently of late both here and elsewhere it may be in order to quote the following from Alan Watt's The Supreme Identity (also quoted by Walter Breen in IPSO): "I am not one who believes it any necessary virtue in the philosopher..to be unwilling to let a thesis appear in print until..prepared to defend it to the death. Philosophy, like science, is a social function, for a man cannot think rightly alone, and the philosopher must publish..as much to learn from criticism as to contribute to the sum of wisdom. If, then, I sometimes make statements in an authoritative and dogmatic manner, it is for the sake of clarity rather than from the desire to pose as an oracle."

Well, that just about winds up another mailing. And, remember:

VOTE FOR THE NEW CONSTITUTION!

RON ELLIK FOR TAFF!

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RICHARD BERGERON Earlier this afternoon I was browsing through the December 1960 issue of New York 14, N. Y. of SCOTTISHE and ran across Ethel's comment on Eney's PHENOTYPE to the effect that it was "Top of the mailing." It probably was a fine issue since it contained among other things Laney's "Syllabus for a Fanzine" and a reprint from SAPS of Eney's Detention pre-ambly, but Ethel's remark served as an underline for me to what seems a curious and unfortunate condition of the OMPA mailings. Judging from what I've seen of them and heard about them, with the exception of the Willis column in SCOTTISHE which is wonderful, the most important and best parts of them appear to be reprints or items that have circulated through other apas. And I seem to detect a lack of interest in mailing comments in the club; at least none of the publications I've seen have as interesting elaborations in their comments as these comments of yours in VIPER and I've noted a couple of out-

right expressions of disinterest in them (why belong to an apa in that case?). I wonder at this apparent lack of commitment on the part of OMPA members: (1) a general reluctance to contribute or do their best work for the organization and (2) the brevity of what mailing comments I've noted indicating a seeming lack of interest in the other members. But doubtless these are mis-conceptions based on not having seen enough of the OMPazines. ((Are they?))

HARRY WARNER In the first issue of VIPER I was really startled by Len Moffatt's 423 Summit Ave. story. He's a good, dependable writer, but I wasn't quite prepared Hagerstown, Md. for anything in this particular style and showing quite as much perception about people with whom I don't believe Len has much to do. "Village Interlude" presents the Ted White writing facet that I like the best, his descriptive stuff about things that he has experienced or thought. It's original and sticks in the mind, in sharp contrast with the fuzzy impression that I get from his feuding articles and jazz writings. In #2 Alva Rogers' article came very close to causing me to make a second trip to the attic that day to dig out those old Astoundings and re-read them. I didn't read the Clayton issues as they appeared and never obtained many as back issues, but the first few years of the Street & Smith Astounding were my science fiction Bibles for many years, and every line in this article brought forth another pleasant memory. I never liked Schachner's stories, but otherwise the opinions in this summary are very close to my own, and I hope that you get the rest of the review printed soon.

John Myers Myers had several science fiction novels published in Argosy around the very late 1930's or early 1940's. Each of them had Minions as part of the title. They were funny, but not particularly memorable. ((Are you sure you're not confusing John Myers Myers with William Gray Beyer? Beyer wrote Minions of the Moon, Minions of Mercury, etc.)) I've not read Silverlock, but I have the strangest feeling that Western Star is the name of a vessel in some great piece of literature. I've worried about this for several days without remembering anything more definite, but I doubt that there's any way to look it up anywhere. I might be thinking of a Meyerbeer opera, "The Star of the North," but I don't think so.

CHRIS MILLER ASF was the first SF mag that I ever read, so my loyalties have 44 Wheatclose Rd. always been for it. I dislike the new title as the word ANALOG Barrow-in-Furness means something else to me as a scientist. I still have not yet Lancs, England learned to criticise SF the way other fen do, so that I am really unable to say whether I like the "new" ASF or not. I happen to LIKE psi stories, and I have not read enough of them yet to become disillusioned the way some fen appear to have become. I really can't comment on Alva's article except

to say GOSHWOWBOYOBOY! This musta taken ages, and it is a pity that it will not be seen by a larger audience. I am even more happy, as I reach the end, to see that the war years, which are supposed to be where he has written the most, are not even included, so I take it that we can hope for lots more of this series.

In your comment on SCOTTISHE I think that Ethel's query about the strange woman in the bed proves that she hasn't experienced this herself--sleeping with a man, I mean. Strange how you learn about fen, isn't it??

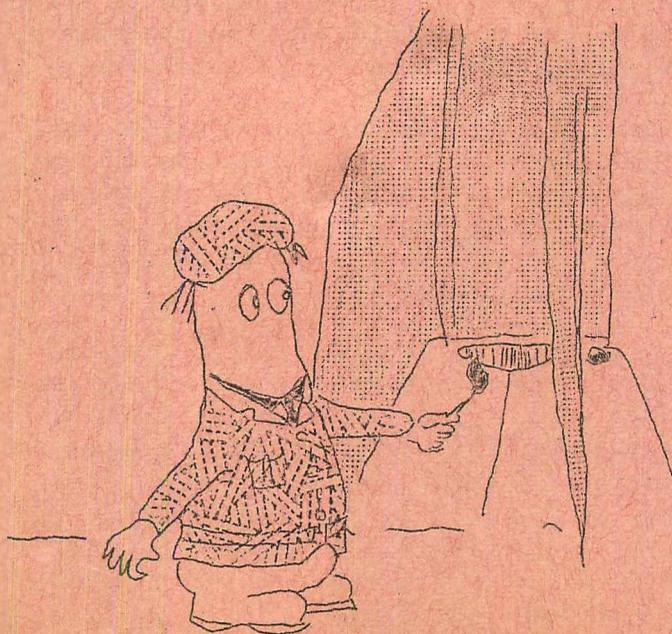
DICK SCHULTZ "Village Interlude" was nice, coming from TEW. Ted always seems so very, very down on life in general and optimism in particular that 19159 Helen it is doubly surprising to find such a casual contribution reading Detroit 34, Mich. so well and interestingly. People without faith depress me at times. Oh, I know you have no faith in God, or the one I know, at least. But you do have a faith in yourself, a faith in man, and what he can do. But the most sterile beings I know of in this world are the godless cynics who continue to degrade all matter and thought to their own unappetising level. Surely you've met such types. They have no faith in God, even though they may attend Church, and have neither fear of Hell nor love inside the precepts of any religion. Or outside either for that matter. They sit on the sidelines of life, neither joining in the joy of creation and achievement nor having enough courage to strike out for their own brand of evilness or sin.

Someone once said that there is something beautiful in both pure Goodness and pure Evil. They remain neither, a grey blotch on the face of the earth. Unable to love nor to accept love from anyone else, they call love a condition of the glands, an invitation to copulation, a nonsensical feeling which is neither permanent nor measurable. They sneer at humanity--they who are afraid to join it in its joys and sorrows, its achievements and degradations sublime. They sneer at God, saying he does not exist--with their own ability to think being one of his finer achievements. They sneer at love, and instead practice a blind, sterile animal heat, which gives them no joy. They pretend shock at evil, when they have no comprehension of Good. They sneer at man when he has faith in himself, for they have no faith in themselves and cannot understand how anyone can have faith in a species which spawned them.

How afraid of Life they are! They would be better off dead, with all the other non-moving corpses in the earth.

BOB JENNINGS The meat of the issue 3819 Chambers Dr. is of course the review Nashville, Tenn. of Astounding. This I enjoyed most heartily

on almost every count though I have not read any of the stories. For some reason of late I find myself horribly nostalgic for a time I never knew, for magazines I've never seen, for stories I've never read. And much more so for the ones that I have! For some strange reason the history of science fiction makes a remarkable impression on me. No doubt it sounds foolish, but the whole series of Moskowitz articles dealing with the old magazines and to a certain extent the more modern articles struck me as being one of the most marvelous sagas I've ever read. Perhaps I'm just One of Those Types or something. So you see I am very much looking forward to the future installments of Alva's review.



BETTY KUJAWA Me too, honey--on page five where you are talking 'bout how you
 2819 Caroline St. used to grab and read Astounding in the old days and your attitude
 South Bend, Ind. towards it now--much as mine, much as mine. I, too, hope and hope
 you can get Elinor Busby to keep writing a column for you in VIPER.
 Yuk..yuk..that quote from Sheldon Cheney from the book on modern art--chuckle! Let's
 face it, though, nine times out of ten I'd rather enjoy looking at some salon photo-
 graph of some pyssy-cats or doggies or appealing critters than most modern art of to-
 day. If I'm gonna live with something on my wall I'll take a siamese or a hassle of
 kittens in a good photograph to much of what passes for "art" right now. So call me
 a boob--I can get enjoyment and some pleasure from an animal photo.

Ah, that Berry letter to the editor thing was amusing!

I should keep my big fat mouth shut on OMPA and mailing comments and the like
 (though I've sounded off on this to Ethel Lindsay of late)--not being a member and
 all--but you and I seem to see this alike I note.

Why you doll! Here you are in commenting to Deckinger bringing up britifilms
 and Grangers in particular!! This is MY field, baby! Yeh--he was in a mess of them
 back then--you knew he had to change his name, didn't you??? His real name happens to
 be James Stewart--you can see that wouldn't go so well.

Now it was "Saraband" that you were talking 'bout here--about Hanover and Konnis-
 berg and all--Joan Greenwood (Tony Glynn's favorite) took the role of Sophia Dorothea
 --darling cute lil gal with one of those sexy Glynnis Johns voices. And then you go
 on to chat about "Madonna of the Seven Moons"--whoop boy, will never forget that!
 Caught it first during the War--must have been at just the right impressionable, rom-
 antic age--it really "got" me then--recently it returned on TV, heh, heh...Ah me. I
 always admired that lass who played the daughter of Phyllis Calvert--Pat Roc--a stun-
 ning female I always thought. Man, wasn't that the soap-opera tearjerker to top 'em
 all, though?? Lovely, lovely, indeed!

((While on the subject of the "Madonna of the Seven Moons", I recently called
 New York and talked to the Shaws. Noreen said that it was her favorite movie and she
 had seen it 15 times. And that I had got the plot wrong. While I certainly must bow
 to Noreen's superior experience--I only saw it 3 times--I was very surprised at her
 statement and asked, "How?" Noreen said that in the opening scene it wasn't Stewart
 Granger who raped the heroine. Well, like and all, possibly Noreen is right. But it
 certainly looked like Stewart Granger, and if it wasn't him I don't see any point to
 it at all. The rape takes place years before the rest of the movie, has absolutely
 no connection with the plot and is never alluded to at all. I had thought of it as
 the movie's explanation for Phyllis Calvert's strange fixation on Stewart Granger
 and her recurring amnesia. Any ideas about this, Noreen? Betty? Anyone?))

JHIM LINWOOD Enjoyed VIPER...Agree about Analog, and only a few years ago I was
 10 Meadow Cotts. hailing JWC as a "scientific rebel". I still maintain that he's
 Netherfield done more for stf than any one man. ((Agreed.)) Loved Busby's
 Notts., England piece...in fact it made me read The Subterraneans again. Alva's
 history of Astounding looks like becoming a fan classic. It cer-
 tainly deserves reprinting as a separate item when complete.

ART CASTILLO I got VIPER. It is probably the best example of carefully-
 507-1/2 Greenwich St. studied mediocrity that I have ever seen. I hope that you
 San Francisco, Calif. take this in the right way. ((As a matter of fact I did. This
 was the first comment on VIPER that I received and I was enor-
 mously pleased. "VIPER's going to be a success!" I said.

