

VIPER

NO. 4 SEPT 1, 61



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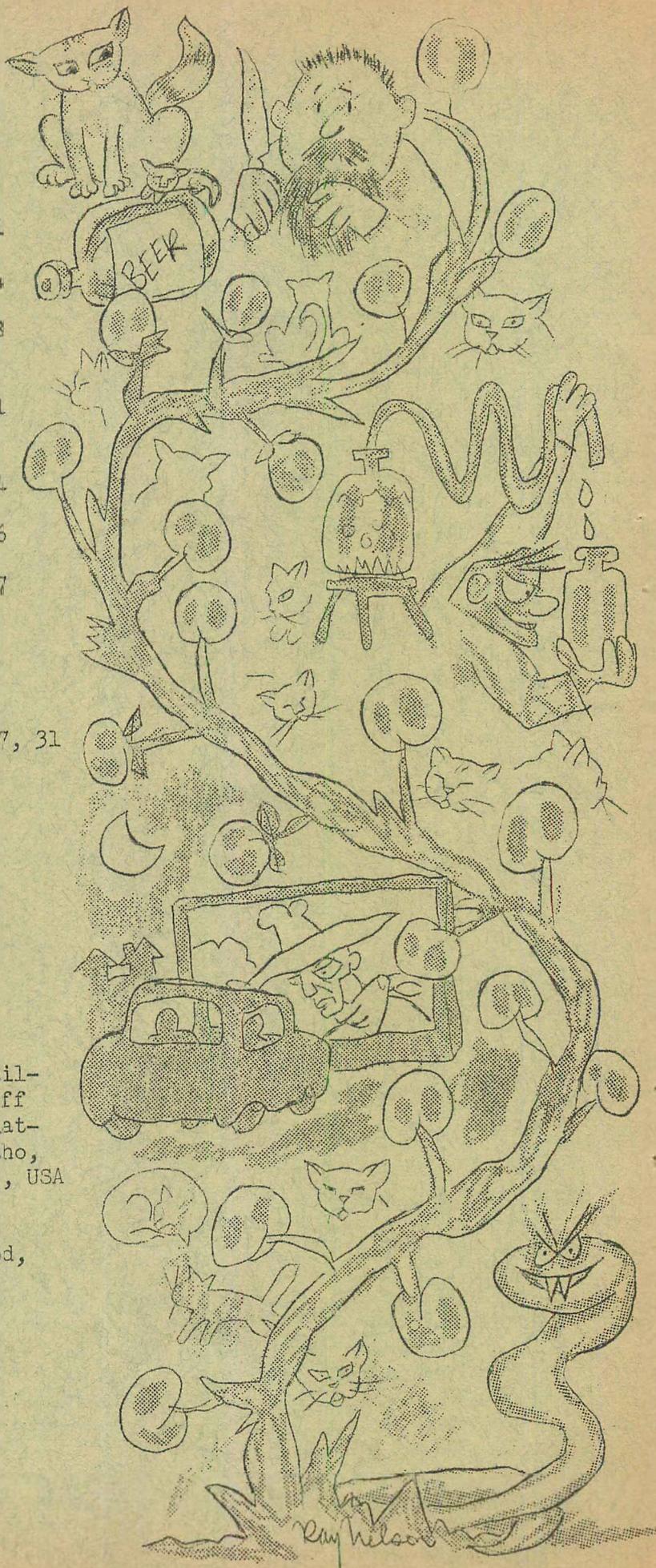
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A Hook & Crrok Publication



VENOM

by Bill Donaho

You will note a change in the title of my editorial. I was never very fond of the title "Amongst us VIPs" and in fact considered using "Venom" as the title in VIPER #1, but figured it was too much like "Vituperations" to use. However, I have become more and more dissatisfied with the title "Amongst Us VIPs" each issue, so I am changing it anyhow. So there.

It is unfortunately only too apparant that I am going to have to post mail this issue of VIPER. I'll try not to make a habit of it. But this has been a busy summer. And putting out an issue of HABAKKUK sort of takes away my enthusiasm for fanning for awhile. As it is I was invited to join SAPS and declined; I doubt whether I join the Cult when my name finally comes up, if I weren't on the suggestion committee I would resign from IPSO. OMPA, FAPA, and HABAKKUK are enough like--not to mention letter-hacking and correspondence. It's a rat race, I tell you, a rat race.

Elinor Busby's column is unfortunately missing this issue--what with the SEACon and all, she just didn't have time to do one. And since she got into OMPA this mailing HO! now becomes her OMPazine. However with this issue George Locke starts his column, Glockenspiel, which I hope will be a regular feature from now on.

Berkeley is rapidly becoming a cluster of OMPans. Terry Carr has moved to New York and Andy Main was only here briefly, but George Spencer is here now and Walter Breen and Alva Rogers are on the waiting list. Even without Walter and Alva we have 5 members here now: George Spencer, Dick and Pat Ellington (counting them as one member), Jim Caughran, Bob Lichtman and myself. Walter will be in very soon and Alva should make it in a year or so. And if I remember correctly Norm Metcalf is due back in Berkeley sometime next year. We're taking over, I tell you.

The cat situation has changed drastically. Muff finally made it and became pregnant. So, the job being done, Dick and Pat tried to take her home. Muff Muff had other ideas; she jumped out of their car before it was a block away and returned to us. We tell Dick and Pat that Muff Muff has made her decision; she is our cat now; they can't have her. (Muff is such a beautiful little calico cat with a thoroughly appealing personality, the most feminine creature I've ever seen.)

Meanwhile back at the ranch Muff settled down to being pregnant. This was her first litter, so she didn't quite know what was coming off--or out. She went about three weeks beyond the normal period of gestation and wandered around being the most pregnant female.... But finally nature took its course and the kittens started to come out. However Muff Muff didn't retire to a closet or to a dark corner, not her. She started having the kittens in the middle of the living room floor. When the first one was half-way out, she became thoroughly alarmed and puzzled. What was this thing? She started rubbing her rear end along the rug, trying to scrape it off. No soap. Once the kitten was out it was still attached to Muff by the after birth and Muff found this thoroughly alarming. She whirled around in a circle with the kitten stretched out behind her like a stone on a string. The after birth pulled out and the kitten plopped away over on the other side of the living room. Fortunately instinct then took over and Muff cleaned the kitten and nursed him.

The same sequence of events happened with the second kitten. However by this time Muff seemed to wake up to what was going on and retired to the hall closet to have the remaining four. She had six kittens--three grey and three orange. The

grey ones are obviously Gideon's. However, the orange ones look suspiciously like the orange tom who rules the neighborhood. Also, the grey kittens have longer hair than the orange ones. (Gideon has quite long hair.) Now Muff is a calico cat and it is possible for any color kittens to come out of her, so perhaps Gideon is the father of the whole litter. (It is possible, but not likely, for different toms to father different kittens in the same litter.) However, it certainly is suspicious.

Muff is a very good mother and the kittens thrive mightily. We kept the darkest orange one, Deuteronomy. Dick and Pat took one of the grey ones, Miriam another, and Alva and Sid the last. The other two orange ones we took to the Humane society for adoption. Lichtman was going to keep the lightest orange one--he called it Andy because it had such a sweet little naive face--but he decided against it.

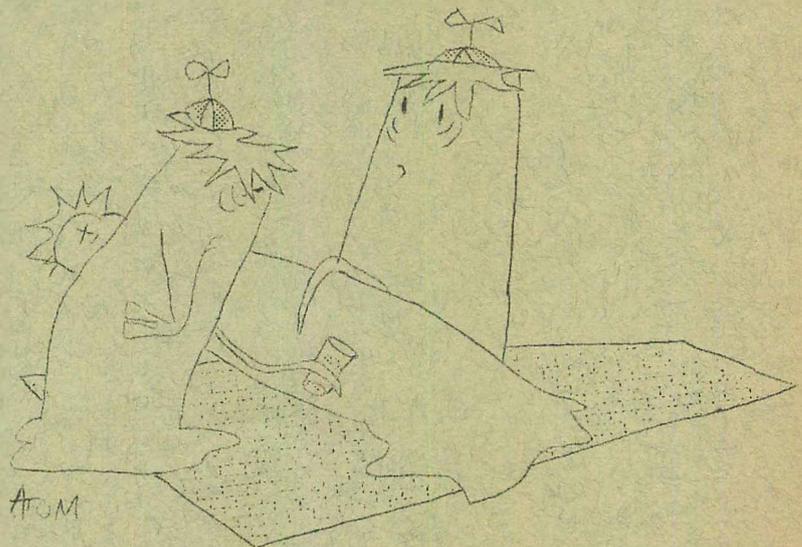
Deuteronomy is now 7 weeks old, but Muff is still nursing him. For that matter, Miriam brings Sandley over to visit occasionally and he nurses also. However Muff is in heat again, and it is proving a difficult task to keep her inside as she is a very determined female. It's fairly easy to keep her separated from Gideon as they don't like each other much.

Gideon earned for himself the title of Grey Evilness during these events through his determined efforts to kill the kittens. This is the normal way of tom cats it seems. One trouble is that Muff seems to lack the normal queen instinct to drive all male cats far far away from her kittens, so she didn't interfere at all. Another trouble was that most of the time Gideon would play with the kittens quite happily. But occasionally the tom-cat impulse would take over and he would try to dispose of them--particularly the ones that look like him. However, while he had the impulse, he didn't quite know how to carry it out, so all was saved.

One thing I noticed while we still had all the kittens was the natural segregation they practiced. The grey kittens and the orange kittens would play together occasionally, but generally I would see a heap of grey fur and a heap of orange fur, each to his own and all that. I asked other cat people if they had ever noticed anything like this. Most cat people had not had such clear separation in the colors of their kittens, so they couldn't say. Cindy Smith though had noticed something similar with one of her litters. So, evidently this voluntary segregation isn't just an individual peculiarity of Muff's litter. It happens all the time. Hmmmnnnn....

I've shaved my beard. I applied for another job, so it was necessary to do so. I was fairly fond of the beard, but \$100.00 more a month is \$100.00 more a month. But I didn't get the job, so it was all wasted. I haven't grown it back, as growing a beard is such a nuisance. The first couple of months is a miserable time. Well, maybe later like....

We have a sort of garden this summer. I guess sometime this spring someone dropped a tomato on our front lawn. Anyhow, tomato vines came up all over the place.



ATOM

6

We didn't do anything to encourage them, but they grew anyway. We have had quite a tomato crop. Very tasty too. I had forgotten how good "home grown" tomatoes tasted. I wonder what would have happened if he had really tried to grow them?

Our biggest project this quarter has been the manufacture of home-brewed beer. Of course Burbee's home brew has long been a fanrish tradition. Buz and Elinor have been making it for years. Ron and Cindy Smith joined in the fanrish swim. Dan and I naturally wanted to emulate Burbee and when we were up in Seattle in February of '60, Buz gave us a recipe and complete directions. About that time Phyllis Economou also published directions in PHLOTSAM. So we bought a 6-gal crocks, a bottle capper, a rubber hose, a gross of bottle caps, a beer tester--a Balling hydrometer, and started saving empty beer bottles.

Fortunately malt syrup is available and has been ever since Prohibition at least. It is advertised and sold as a "wholesome food", but I'm sure I don't know what anyone would do with malt syrup if they didn't make beer out of it. And making home-brew or home-made wine is perfectly legal. Even in "dry" counties or states, the laws are generally against sale or transportation rather than production or drinking.

So, finally in May of '60 we cooked up our first batch, threw in some yeast, and let it ferment. For several days the smells coming from the crock were most enticing. However the beer tester never seemed to sink to the red line marked "bottle". After 6 days we gave up and bottled anyhow, although somewhat apprehensively having heard many tales of exploding beer bottles due to too early bottling. We waited and heaved a sigh of relief as no bottles exploded. Buz tells us that in an emergency home brew may be drunk four days after bottling, but that it improves greatly if you wait a week and improves somewhat if you wait two weeks; after that it hardly improves at all. So we waited a week. The beer was flat. The calibration on our beer tester was slightly wrong and we had waited too long to bottle. Horror! HORROR!! HORROR!!!

Discouraged by this fiasco and being naturally lazy types anyway we put off making another batch. Time passed: much time. Then this summer some friends of ours started making the stuff. Their brew was good and potent and cheap. Our enthusiasm was rekindled. Once more into the fray. We checked out the beer tester and decided just how much it was wrong. All went well. The crock has been in constant use since then. As things stand we can just about make the beer as fast as we can drink it. We bottle the brew about three days after we make it; we get about 5 gallons of beer per batch, and what with guests and parties and all we drink about 10 gallons of beer per week. We are only aging the stuff a week now because consumption lags so closely behind production. We are going to get a bigger crock so that we can gradually build up a reserve and age it at least two weeks, maybe longer.

(As a sort of dividend, when we brought the old batch in from the garage in order to empty out the flat beer and sterilize and reuse the bottles, we discovered that in the 15 months it had been sitting in the garage, it had become drinkable. Not good exactly, but drinkable.)

One trouble we have been having has been due to the yeast. Bakers yeast is the only readily available yeast. Bakers yeast is designed to be fast acting. Because it is fast acting it doesn't settle readily. Because of this the beer tends to taste yeasty. Our first batch was too yeasty, but still good. Since then Buz has told us about adding a small amount of gelatin to the brew which helps the yeast to settle out. This is a great improvement. However we expect even better things as Buz and Elinor have discovered a source of brewers yeast in Seattle. They are sharing the wealth. Burbee already has some. We daily expect the starter for our yeast farm. Buz envisions a chain of yeast farms stretching clear across fandom. An inspiring thought. Ron and Cindy are emigrating to Australia, thus detaching

one link from the chain (fake fans!), but Al haLevy is going to start home brewing and we know several non-fans who are already part of the in-group.

You see, despite lots of propaganda to the contrary, home brew tastes better than commercial beer. You can also vary the brewing to suit your own taste. If you like a heavy brew, put in more malt, if a light one, put in less. If you like a bitter brew, more hops can be added. And the alcoholic content can be increased tremendously; it can be upped to at least 10%. We like a heavy, slightly bitter beer that is strong on alcohol, so we put in about 1 lb. of sugar per gallon of brew. Buz likes to be able to drink beer all evening without falling into his typewriter, so he puts in much less than that. And it's cheap. Our beer costs us about 11¢ a quart. Commercial beer runs about 50¢ per quart. And it's really not much trouble, the yeast does all the work.

Buz has also started something else. He is using honey in place of sugar. He says it makes a smoother drink and that while regular home brew gives less of a hang-over than commercial beer, home brew made with honey gives even less than the regular variety. We haven't tried honey yet, but we will; we will. Also, as soon as we get the other crock for beer, we are going to start making other things in our present one: cider, mead, raisen jack, potato wine, etc. Ah, it's going to be a good winter.

When I was in my middle teens there were three things that I longer for to round out my experience of life: to ride on a roller coaster, to ride in an airplane and to go to a Drive-In movie. Unfortunately none of these things ever came my way when I was in my teens, but shortly after reaching 20 I achieved the roller coaster and the air plane. I could have achieved the Drive-In movie too, but by that time I was somewhat jaded, or old and tired or something, and the lure of the Drive-In had lost its magic. I never went.

(It may sound incredible to some that Drive-In movies were available to me when in my teens, but remember I was a teen-ager in the early forties. Drive-Ins had not yet swept the country. The larger cities of Texas had one each. No small town had one. Now of course most small towns have them--practically every country store even has one. But in those days people read science fiction and things.)

The years passed and I never even thought about Drive-Ins. However when we moved out here Dick and Pat started going regularly. Evidently Drive-Ins are even better for parents than they are for the sex lives of teen agers. Soon I was hearing about how wonderful Drive-Ins are. Being an experimental soul I tried one. I too was hooked. Drive-Ins are cheap, far cheaper than regular movies. They show good films, often getting first run films as soon as neighborhood theatres do; they also show 5 to 10 year-old films that people want to see again. A very good selection. And Drive-Ins are comfortable and convenient. You drive to the movie in your own car and sit in it and comfort and privacy. If you want to talk about the movie, you can do so without disturbing your neighbors. You can take a lunch and coffee and beer, wine, whiskey or what have you. Rest rooms and a snack shop are just a step away. It's a good scene all around.

When I told Dan about how now that I had been to a Drive-In movie I had achieved the last of my childhood ambitions he said, "Gee, Bill, I'm sorry for you--nothing left to live for." Well, maybe....

Grateful thsnks to Jack Harniss, Bob Lichtman and Ray Nelson who stenciled headings and illos all over the place.

Ethel Lindsay for TAFF!

George Locke:

Glockenspiel

If you take your sunglasses off, raise your idle carcass from the beach and take a good look around, you'll see we're being invaded. Apparently, our fandom with its horizons of infinite extent has been running thin lately, and has had to bring in subjects which are related, though remotely, to s.f. One of these is comic fandom, and another is Sherlock Holmes.

I've always been willing to comply with current trends, and as saying a few words on comics and Sherlock requires less mental effort than compiling several crisp sentences for serious discussion, I'll comply with eagerness.

I've quite a vast knowledge of comics. They call Aldershot "The Home of the British Army." The Army, too, provides a home—for comics. I think ninety per cent of soldiers are comic fans. The logical thing to do, bearing in mind Dick Lupoff's mag XERO, and my writer's interest in getting material published in all the top zines, was to run a survey.

So, I ran a survey.

I found a soldier reading a comic. An ordinary soldier. Not a soldier, nor a WO1. An ordinary soldier, enlisted into Her Majesty's Service, and eager, keen to serve his country for two years.

He was reading "The Hotspur", a leading British comic. I asked him, "Are you a collector?" He nodded. "Do you have many issues?"

"Not on your life, mate. I use French letters."

Perceiving that he had misinterpreted my admittedly semantically loose question, I tried again. "Do you have number one?"

He looked at me as though I was strange. "You a foreigner?"

"No, why?"

"Your grammar's all to cock, that's why. You should say, "Do you look after number one?"

Folks, I'm afraid I wasn't with it. However, he obviously had the instincts of a collector at heart, so I decided against fighting through his meaning, took it at its face value, and said, "Well, do you look after number one?"

"I do." He beamed.

"Tell me, what form of preservation do you use? Do you cover it with cellophane or polythen? Do you press it between two heavy pieces of cardboard? Do you keep it in a dark cupboard, away from light?" I was really "on the ball" now. I felt ready to give him a Kemp-type questionnaire.

But he said, "What the hell are you on about? You aiming to go to Netley and work your ticket? You're that mad it should be a cake-walk. "Number one" happens to be I-me-myself."

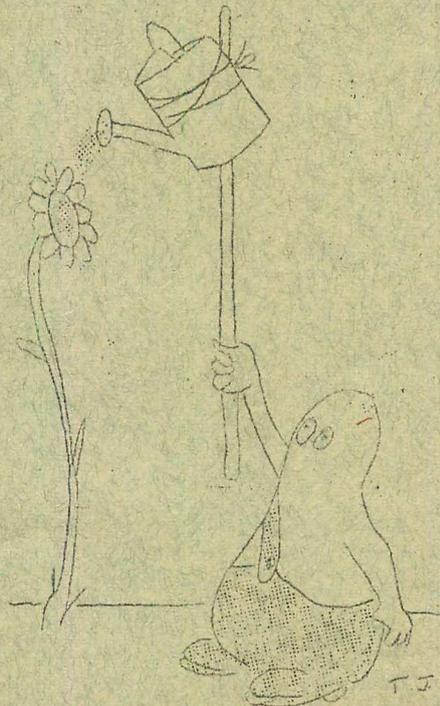
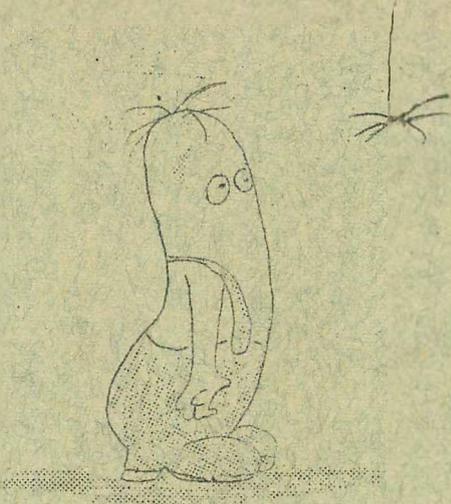
Army slang.... Next day, I found that issue of "The Hotspur" pinned up in one of the latrines.

Could somebody tell me when the first example of comic art appeared? The first comic strip? About the turn of the century, I'd say.

Here's an odd one on which to ponder. It is entitled "Hesheit", and as far as I remember, was published anonymously--in English--in Germany, of all places. The setting is one of those strange mixtures--modern people with modern equipment, dialogue and thought processes in an ancient Egyptian scene. I can't remember the plot, but it is distinctly satirical of Victorian ways. In format it resembles the Jules Feiffer type of strip which isn't sharply divided into little boxes and has plenty of script. It doesn't use speech balloons, and was published, I think, in 1900. The most interesting thing about it though is that it is printed on imitation--or genuine, for all I know--papyrus, and bound in rough sack-cloth with hide thongs. The type-face corresponds to our own ideas of Egyptian script.

Whilst still on the theme of oddities, lets change to the other promised subject: Sherlock Holmes. Books written about Prisoner of War experiences are ten to a penny. Books written by prisoners during their period of enforced idleness are not so common, but definitely exist. Parodies written whilst in jail are rarer--and rarest of all are books satirising English authors by a Frenchman.

Jules Cartier complied with all these requirements when he persuaded Messrs. Herbert Jenkins, later the publishers of quite a number of items of stf interest, from Wright's The Adventures of Wyndham Smith to Robert E. Howard's Gent from Bear Creek, to print his manuscript Rather Like. Published in 1920, it contains parodies on many of the leading writers of the day--Arnold Bennett, Stacy Aumerrier, the author of Elizabeth and her German Garden (satirized as Susan and her German Sausage), H. G. Wells and, of course, Conan Doyle.



The latter two are science fiction, and both, curiously, employ the same theme: antigravity. Wells, of course, popularized the idea of anti-gravity in SF with The First Men in the Moon. He was no inovator however, having developed the theme from several earlier writers. Jules Cartier though is a strong contender for the honor of inventing an antigravity planet, related in The Finding of Laura. Beyond this outline of the theme of the story my memory won't let me go, but I remember it as a good parody on the great Herbert George.

Equally facile is the Doyle parody, entitled The Footprints on the Ceiling. This introduces to us Sherlock Holmes, complete with violin and hanger-on Watson. The detective is asked to find out what has happened this time to Professor Challenger Malone and the rest of his cronies are thoroughly mystified as all that is left of the professor is an impression of his size nines on the ceiling. When he finally turns up again, it transpires he has invented an antigravity machine and been shot into space.

Interesting stories both--and the second could well have been included in Norman Metcalf's recent anthology.

IT'S HELL IN KUWAIT department.

"By God, it's hell out here," said the major.

The lieutenant--an MD of 24 Field Ambulance--nodded. "The troops are suffering. It's so hot, that's the trouble. There's nothing but a blue-grey sky with a blazing sun in it. No trees. Just a few slit trenches. By the way, Private Jones, you can turn that electric fan up a bit. I'm sure the Sheik won't mind the extra amperage."

"Quite a number of the men are down with heat exhaustion. How is your unit doing?"

The lieutenant suddenly looked infinitely proud. You could imagine Old Glory and Rule Britannia rise above the heat in a resounding crescendo which flashed to God in heaven the heroism of the RAMC. "Not a single man has gone down."

"They're tending to the sick?"

"Unfailingly?"

"They're seeing to their every need?"

"Undaunted!"

There was a long pause. Then the Major breathed, "What brave men! Tell me, how did 24 Field Ambulance come to take over this Kuwaitian Military Hospital?"

"Search me," said the Lieutenant. "The Old Man did it. He's probably the biggest scrounger in the British Army. More power to him."

There was a second pause. Then a "heat-stricken" RAMC private in a neat uniform strolled in. "Excuse me, Sir. But the fridge needs fixing. The lads are complaining of the warm beer."

By ghod, it's hell in Kuwait!

CONCERNING mailing comments

By
Bill
Donaho

When letter writing was an art letters had some permanence and literary value. A writer expected his letters to be placed in his collected works and spent time and effort on them. Some literary figures are famous only for their letters. But nowadays letters are very ephemeral. People just dash them off. In many cases the contents of the letter aren't important at all; its purpose is to remind the reader of the writer's personality. Since mailing comments appear in print and are read by many people, more care and forethought is spent upon them. Also mailing comments and editorials are replacing personal correspondence as many writers write virtually identical letters to all their friends. Mailing comments have come to represent that identical material and to be superior to it in quality of writing.

But mailing comments are more than letter substitutes. They are also informal essays in which much entertaining and thought-provoking material is presented. They differ from editorials in that in an editorial a writer talks more about himself and his activities, while in mailing comments he discusses things with other people and uses their remarks as springboards for further remarks of his own—as of course happens in any good discussion. Mailing comments are perhaps best described as discussion in which you talk over points with other members as you might do by letter, but with more emendation and care, better presentation and expansion of material, thus tending towards essays. And of course mixed in with this are direct comments and analysis of material in the previous mailings.

Thus mailing comments are one of the best vehicles for writing and probably the best form of informal writing. The only valid criticism of them that I have ever heard is that it is all too easy to sit down at the typewriter and bang out bad mailing comments. Unfortunately this is true, but it is a fault of the writer, not of the form. Most mailing comments are written on stencil. Few people compose at all well on stencil and very few writers cannot substantially improve their work by re-writing. Unless a writer is the type of person who automatically thinks in a disciplined, organized fashion, or the kind of writer who does a rough draft in his head before putting anything on paper, it seems to me that a rough draft is indicated before writing anything.

I have further strong opinions on mailing comments. I publish any fanzine to:
(1) Think and react to other people's thought and (2) Write and/or publish things for the reactions it brings from people.

I read other people's fanzines for (1) Their thought for me to be stimulated by.
(2) Their reactions to my writing or publishing. (3) A source of enjoyable reading which I react to.

This adds a third reason for my own publishing: (3) An obligation to let other people know of my reaction to their work. This does not necessarily involve analysis --although it can--discussion is often enough.

I think that ideally an apa is an intimate group of friends. Thus while every member should publish good material for the group, this is of secondary importance. Of primary importance is two things: (1) Each member should communicate his own personality to the group (editorials) and (2) Each member should react to the other members and to their material (mailing comments). Of course, many people tuck in their editorials with their mailing comments (and since mailing comments can also involve essays, an all-mailing comment zine can be a damn good apazine), but this does not matter if they still have both. An apa is not just an organization of magazine publishers--it is a social club. Good Material is not enough. In my way of thinking, an apa member who does not contribute fairly full mailing comments to his apa is a social parasite. He digs the group for its socialability, but he doesn't contribute to it. Sometimes however his material may be good enough so that he might be called a sym-biote instead. But I still think an apa member's first duty is to do mailing comments, and then if he has time other material.

I often get the feeling that some people dislike mailing comments so much that they never read any, much less listen to what the defenders of them say. They persist in speaking of mailing comments as if they were comments on the mailings. Maybe they were originally, and bad ones still are today, but good mailing comments are something above and beyond mere comments. Some people repeatedly contrast mailing comments with original material. This doesn't hold water. Even in OMPA people comment and bring up original material within their mailing comments. Informal essays are always appearing. Now people may not like these essays, but they have no right to say that they are not original material.



But there are an awful lot of bad mailing comments and bad mailing comments are among the most boring abominations seen anywhere. I personally would like to see this amount of bad material cut down as far as possible. I think that both the attackers and defenders of mailing comments can do something about this.

The attackers should realize that mailing comments are here to stay and that their attacks may even be helping to keep mailing comments worse than they need be, as these attacks unite the godly against the infidel, and the godly are to concerned with defending mailing comments in general to give aid and comfort to the enemy by criticizing individual mailing comments, no matter how bad. It would help to create good mailing comments if the infidel would ~~write the comment~~ buckle down and actually write good ones themselves, but if they can't bring themselves to do that, they can at least shift their attack from mailing comments to bad mailing comments. God knows there are plenty of targets. And naturally they should also praise good mailing comments, pointing them out as an example to follow.

The defenders of mailing comments should stop pretending that the form is divinely inspired and recognize that good mailing comments take a great deal of work, even when done directly on stencil. It would also help if all the old fans would stop talking about how they compose on stencil. Many of the best writers of mailing comments do write them directly on stencil, but it takes practice to write that way. Most new apans can't do it, and still many old-timers actually encourage them to do so. Shudder. A good many fans should never approach a stencil without a rough draft. The practice of sitting down and reading the mailing, typewriter in hand, is particularly unforgivable. The principal thing wrong with bad mailing comments is that they are written without thought. Think before you write!

I think that the three cardinal rules for mailing comments are:

- (1) Have something to say and think it out before putting it down. Otherwise don't waste your time and everyone else's.
- (2) Write so that your comments are a self-contained whole so that if everyone, including the publisher, has forgotten the entire contents of the zine you are commenting on, your remarks will still make sense. This way, not only can non-apans read and enjoy your comments, they will also be more meaningful to your fellow apans.
- (3) Don't just make little snippets of comment hither and yon. This leaves a very disorganized impression and it is by no stretch of the imagination original material. Use the ideas you comment on to develop ideas of your own.

HAPPY THOUGHT FOR TODAY DEPARTMENT

One psychologist, Dr. David Freides of Detroit, recently pointed out in a professional journal that many of the most important and useful jobs in our society can probably be filled only by people who would be labeled highly abnormal by the mental health enthusiasts. For example, said Dr. Freides, it seems to take an exceptionally vain and narcissistic person to become a great stage or movie star. A "suspicious, mistrusting individual, difficult to get along with, may, because of these very characteristics, be an excellent tax inspector, research scientist or counterintelligent agent."

--Ernest Havemann

"Who's Normal?" - LIFE August 8, 1960

REQUIEM FOR ASTOUNDING

by Alva Rogers

PART THREE

the golden age

By the time 1940 drew to a close with the powerful and unforgettable Slan, the Golden Age of Science fiction was already a reality. This memorable, and to some extent almost legendary, period would last for several years before the inevitable decline would gradually set in. Most fans, for purely personal reasons, have their own "Golden Years" (for me, it is the 1934-35 period); but for the science fiction genre the 1940's (particularly the war years) will always be the "Golden Age". And ASTOUNDING was undoubtedly the most significant element of the Golden Age, providing leadership to the field and giving it the lustre that made it truly golden.

John W. Campbell, Jr. is, without any question, the man largely responsible for ASTOUNDING'S preeminence during this era. He had definite ideas as to the direction he felt science fiction should take, but it wasn't until he became editor of ASTOUNDING that he was in a position whereby he could put some of those ideas into motion, ideas which were to profoundly affect not only ASTOUNDING, but the entire field. He diverted ASTOUNDING from the course it had been pursuing and guided it into relatively new and unexplored channels; discovered and developed new and exciting writers and encouraged the better older writers to update their viewpoints; and generally aimed his magazine at a more adult audience than in the past. Because of ASTOUNDING'S position in the field most of the other magazines were perforce compelled to follow, although at a considerable distance for most of them. Campbell extended the horizons of science fiction, gave it a status in literature it had never enjoyed before, and raised it to a new level of maturity. At the same time he never lost sight of the importance of the story; the primary purpose of a science fiction magazine, after all, is to provide entertainment--not sugar coated science lessons nor exercises in literary brilliancies. Although reasonably sound science and writing skill are essential to a good science fiction story, these elements standing alone do not make a memorable or classic science fiction story--the story is what remains in ones memory long after everything else about it has been forgotten. During the Forties, ASTOUNDING (with Campbell at the helm) was a golden argosy overflowing with great stories, classic stories, stories that will endure in ones memory as long as one retains any shred of a sense of wonder. And because of this deluge of great stories from the pages of Campbell's ASTOUNDING during this era, he deserves to go down in the history of science fiction as one of its greatest single contributors--in spite of his disappointing record during the last few years.

ASTOUNDING

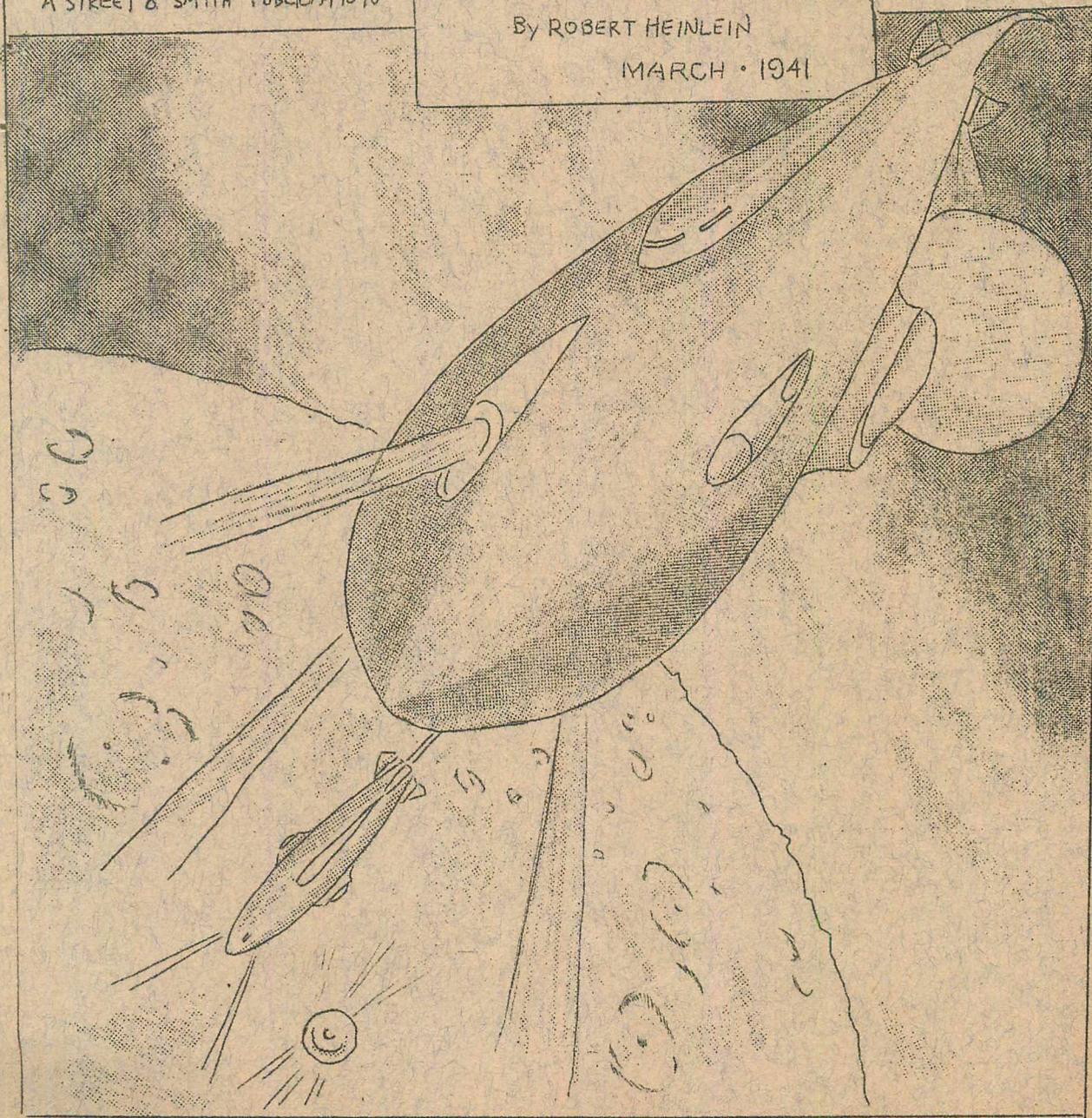
SCIENCE-FICTION
A STREET & SMITH PUBLICATION

LOGIC OF EMPIRE

20¢

By ROBERT HEINLEIN

MARCH • 1941



The Golden Age was, from a fans viewpoint, a time of great and memorable stories; but of more general significance, it was the period of science fiction's greatest growth, its reaching toward a fuller maturity (still not yet achieved), and its growing interest in, and more serious examination of, Man's relationship to Man and to an increasingly more complex, inhumanly technological and hostile Universe.

1941: January

Sixth Column, a three part novel by a new author, Anson MacDonald, started with this issue and laid to rest any fears there may have been as to the quality of the serial that would follow the incomparable Slan. This was an exciting and realistic account of the overthrow of a conquering PanAsian Horde by a small band of dedicated American scientists, led by Major Whitey Ardmore of the regular U.S. Army, and using a phony religious cult as a cover for their "sixth column". The similarity to Robert Heinlein's If This Goes On..., both as to plot and style, was marked and no one was particularly surprised when it became general knowledge that MacDonald was in fact Heinlein. However, there was no apparent reason for using a pseudonym on this story, and just why he did was not to be known until May.

The Mechanical Mice by Maurice G. Hugi (in this case, Eric Frank Russell) was an intriguing tale of time paradoxes, an invention that had no apparent function and tiny metal robots that sucrried around pilfering watches. Kurt von Rachen was back with another of his Kilkenny Cats stories--The Traitor. In this one, ex-colonel Steve Gailbraith in his continuing struggle to maintain a reasonable degree of cooperation between his two antagonistic groups (and to save the entire colony from certain death from the green fever) seemingly turns traitor and arranges with the Dictator of Earth, Fagar, to destroy the colony on Sereon, the planet of Sirius they had been exiled to. In the end his "traitorous" act brings the two groups closer together, and in addition he single-handedly captures a warship of the Earth's space fleet and the Kilkenny cats are on their roud about way back to Earth.

Nelson S. Bond, E. A. Grosser and Harry Walton rounded out the issue with short stories of no great significance and Rogers had a beautiful cover illustrating Sixth Column.

February

Nelson S. Bond's Magic City--the cover story--related how, in 3485 A.D., a primitive, matriarchial American society took the first hesitant steps on the long climb back to civilization. The magic city of the title was Loalnyawk, the feared city known as the City of Death to which the Priestess Meg, Mother of the Clan of Jinnia, and her mate Daiv journey in an effort to placate the God Death; but where instead they find the knowledge which will eventually enable man to regain the greatness he once had, many long centuries before.

"--And He Built A Crooked House--" by Heinlein was a satirically amusing tale of an eager beaver architect in Los Angeles who designs and builds a house in the form of an unfolded tesseract. The whole thing becomes quite confusing and demoralizing when the architect, Quintus Teal, and his clients discover the house has been jarred by an earth quake into its normal four dimensional folded up form. Although the story was told for laughs, still, Heinlein's logical arguments defending the feasibility of his tesseract house were quite formidable.

The second instalment of Sixth Column unfolded the details of the new religion of the God Mota and its use as a cover for the organization of a military underground. The tempo of the story increased considerably, and I for one found it a most satisfying novel, so far.

De Camp contributed a slight, and mildly amusing tale of time paradoxes in The Best Laid Schemes; P. Schuyler Miller had a disappointing novelette of thud and blunder and monsters in Trouble on Tantalus, and Theodore Sturgeon examined the anomaly of crewmen on completely automated spaceships in a short story, Completely Automatic. This was a mildly disappointing issue--saved by the two pieces of Heinlein and the quietly colorful cover by Rogers.

March

ASTOUNDING got back in stride with this issue. To begin with, it had an absolutely stunning cover by Rogers illustrating Heinlein's Logic of Empire. This cover (along with the ones for The Stars Look Down, Grey Lensman, and one or two others) is one I always point to in support of my contention that Rogers was one of the greatest cover artists ASTOUNDING ever had.

In Logic of Empire Heinlein presented a grim picture of the development and exploitation of Venus, using human slavery in the form of contract labor. This was one of Heinlein's better novelettes. Although not as spectacular as some of his others, still it was an intriguing story with plenty of action from the time Wingate and Jones land on Venus as virtual slaves until they leave the planet as free men. In the course of the story mention was made in a couple of instances to an obscure backwoods rabble rouser back on Earth who was beginning to make a name for himself: Nehemiah Scudder. If you remember, Nehemiah Scudder was the First Prophet of If This Goes On..., the founder of the theocratic dictatorship in America. At the end of the story Campbell appended a footnote pointing out to those who hadn't discerned it yet, that there was a relationship between all of Heinlein's stories so far printed in ASTOUNDING, and mentioned for the first time the Future History that Heinlein had devised.

Except for the concluding instalment of Sixth Column which brought this excellent novel to a satisfying end, the only other story of merit was Theodore Sturgeon's Poker Face. A member of a poker party demonstrates some remarkable and alarming abilities in his handling of the cards, and then proceeds to explain his talents by announcing that he is from thirty-five thousand years in the future and explains why he is here and now working as an obscure accountant. It ends with a neat--if maybe a little too pot--o. Henry twist, and was in every respect an excellent story.

April

I've just about used up all the superlatives in mentioning Rogers' covers during this period, but the cover for this issue was a beauty! It was wonderfully composed and colorfully depicted two men duelling with duelling sticks, illustrating L. Sprague de Camp's two part serial, The Stolen Dormouse.

De Camp had more or less slighted ASTOUNDING during the past several months, devoting his best efforts to UNKNOWN. His contributions to ASTOUNDING in the recent past had all been short stories obviously composed off the top of his head; but The Stolen Dormouse was a more serious and well thought out piece, even if it was generously spiced with de Camp's own brand of logical insanity. It was also his longest ASTOUNDING story as yet and for several years to come.

According to de Camp, America a few hundred years from now has developed a rigid feudal system based on the great industrial houses and with an immutably stratified society of a pseudo-nobility with titles drawn from the business world. Duelling between rival houses is the order of the day with individuals wielding their duelling sticks in defense of the honor of their house. The Dormice of the title are people who are tired of it all and subject themselves to suspended animation for

a couple of centuries or so--and when one of them becomes a kidnap victim in the course of a feud between the rival houses of Crosley and Stromberg, well....

This issue contained one of the genuine short classics of science fiction--Microcosmic God, by Theodore Sturgeon. Since his first published story, Ether Breather, in 1939 Sturgeon had become an author of the first rank in both ASTOUNDING and UNKNOWN: Ether Breather and Butyle and the Breather; Completely Automatic, and Microcosmic God--all in ASTOUNDING. And for UNKNOWN he had authored that classic of horror, It. In addition there was also the delightful Shuttle Bop, Cargo, He Shuttles, Derm Fool and A God in a Garden. Each and everyone a fine story, with It and Microcosmic God undoubted classics. Microcosmic God, with its believable and human scientist, Kidder, and his artificially created race of microscopic Neoterics, was Sturgeon's most ambitious work to this date; mature, with good characterization, superb plot, and a fine picture of the effect of intolerable outside pressures on a closely integrated society, where the society (the Neoterics) is forced to meet unexpected racial annihilation with inventiveness and ingenuity.

Asimov's positronic robots debuted in this issue with Reason, a satirical short story showing how a rigid adherence to the laws of logic can, against all logic, still bring about a desired end. And Malcolm Jameson, in Slacker's Paradise (another in the Bullard of the Space Patrol series) took a true incident in U. S. Naval annals from World War I and transferred it to space. A very junior officer commanding a small space patrol boat, and disgusted because his command is not in the war zone, is suddenly jolted with the problem of a gigantic enemy battleship approaching his tiny craft and offering voluntary surrender without a shot being fired by either side.

A. E. Van Vogt was back, marking time with a short story, Not the First; this concerned the first interstellar flight at greater than light speeds and showed the consequences of violating the Lorenz-Fitzgerald contraction theory. As the title indicates, this was not the first trip this ship had taken, nor was it to be the last, as the story ends by segueing into the opening paragraph.

Harry Walton had a space tale featuring a VanVogtian type alien in The Scrambler, and P. Schuyler Miller was present with Bird Walk, neither of which quite came off.

May

When all the controversies concerning Heinlein's social and political philosophies have been finally exhausted; when all the probings into the hidden significances of his stories have been made; one inescapable fact will emerge from all this and remain constant: Heinlein is a master story teller and almost without peer in the science fiction genre. This issue is one of the prime witnesses to that fact.

Universe is one of the great milestones along the road science fiction has travelled since its modern beginnings; as significant to the field as was The Skylark of Space or Twilight. Heinlein's story of the giant star ship--the first to be launched from Earth--bound for Centaurus, which is racked by mutiny and continues unguided for generation after generation through space, becoming in time a total and complete universe to its inhabitants, was a breathtaking concept when it first saw print. The character (or characters?) of Joe-Jim Gregory, the two-headed Mutie who opens the way to the discovery and understanding of the greater universe surrounding the Ship, is one of the unforgettable characters in science fiction, a truly inspired creation. And the teleology supporting the concept the Ship's inhabitants had of their universe is beautifully and logically presented. This was in every respect a magnificent story, and one that has grown in stature over the years.

Heinlein (in the guise of Anson MacDonald) appeared in a more immediately prophetic vein with his second novelette in this issue, the highly publicised Solution Unsatisfactory. This story of the use of a poisonous dust, a byproduct of atomic energy (with a remarkable similarity to modern fallout) in a future war--and against which there was no satisfactory defense--was a chillingly accurate forecast of Things to Come. In addition to which it was an excellent story, although not to be compared with Universe for sheer story value.

Again Heinlein: One of the notable features of the year was the publication in this issue of ASTOUNDING of Heinlein's outline of his Future History. The reason for Heinlein's use of the MacDonald byline was finally disclosed; that is, that all the stories tied into the Future History are by Heinlein; those outside the framework of the History are bylined with one or another of his pseudonyms. The idea of a working outline of background events to be used from story to story was not, of course, entirely new (Manly Wade Wellman, for one, used a recurring background in many of his stories), but all of these were mere skeletal outlines compared to Heinlein's comprehensive future.

Eric Frank Russell had been a very infrequent contributor to ASTOUNDING since his first story, The Saga of Pelican West (an excellent story in the Weinbaum manner) was printed in February 1937. His next important story had been Seeker of Tomorrow, a time travel story written in collaboration with Leslie T. Johnson which was good enough to rate one of Brown's most impressive covers of 1937--this was in July. Except for three short stories in 1937 and 1938, his next story printed in America was the sensational Sinister Barrier featured in the first UNKNOWN in March 1939. His last published story was a short appearing in CAPTAIN FUTURE in 1940. All this is by way of leading up to the fact that his excellent Jay Score was presented in this issue. Who or what is Jay Score, someone asks? Jay Score was a story--also a character, a huge and immensely powerful spaceman, with muscles and nerves of steel, who dramatically stakes his claim to membership in the human race during a searing crisis in space. J.20 is a robot. This was the first in a quite good series of stories which included the better known Mechanistra and Symbiotica, which we will come to a little later.

Liar!, the second in Amimov's robot series concerned a robot with the accidental and disturbing ability to read minds. Inasmuch as robots are prohibited from knowingly inflicting hurt to a human, this led to an insoluble dilemma--how could the robot answer a direct question when he could see in the questioner's subconscious that a truthful answer would hurt or damage the human's ego or feelings? Dr. Susan Calvin, the robopsychologist who figures in so many of the stories, made her first appearance in this one, as did the fundamental laws of robotics in a passing reference

June

Ross Rocklynn led off a rather mediocre issue with a time travel puzzle involving six people, a skeleton with a gold ring on its finger and a million years of time, in Time Wants A Skeleton. And Nat Schachner was back after a short absence with a novelette, the first of his space lawyer series, Old Fireball. Suppose two men each own an asteroid rich in minerals and suppose these two asteroids eventually collide and end up as one, which of the two men would be the owner of the new, larger asteroid?

Artnan Process by Theodore Sturgeon told of a couple of Earthmen's efforts to learn the secret of the Artnan process of extracting U-235 from U-237. Artna, a planet of Procyon, had established a plant on Mars for extracting U-235 and because of their cheap and secret process of providing power, controlled the economies of both Mars and Earth. Also figuring in the story were a bunch of drunken Martians, Martians who get beautifully drunk on Coke.

ASTOUNDING

SCIENCE-FICTION

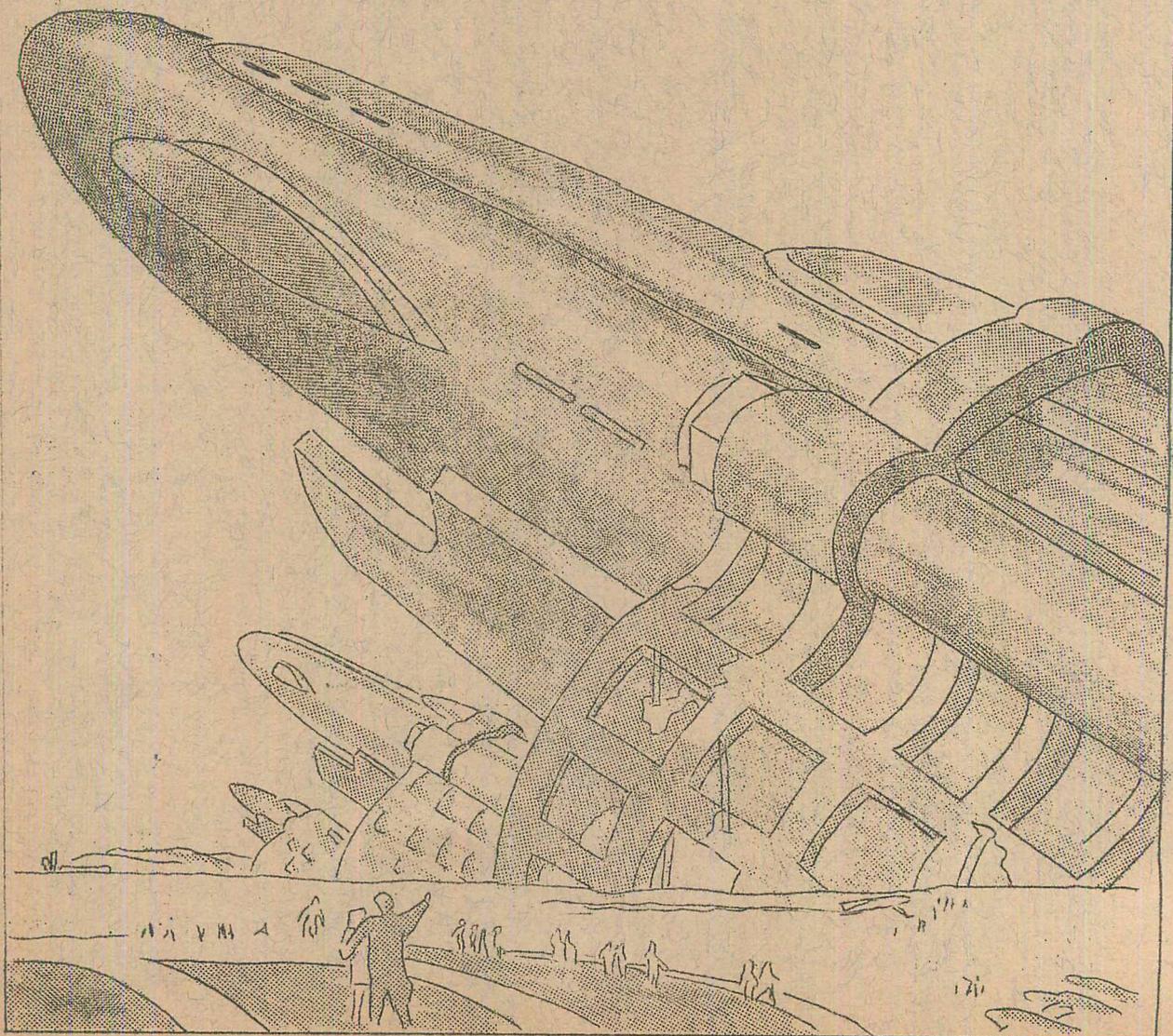
A STREET & SMITH PUBLICATION

JURISDICTION

by NAT SCHACHNER

AUGUST • 1941

20¢



Harry Bates finally ended his association with ASTOUNDING in this issue with his novelette, A Matter of Speed. Editor of ASTOUNDING from its first issue until its demise under the Clayton banner; co-author of the immortal Hawk Carse adventures; and for the Street & Smith ASTOUNDING, author of three of its early classics, A Matter of Size, Alas, All Thinking and Farewell to the Master--it would be nice to be able to say that his last story (for ASTOUNDING) was also his best. But that, unfortunately, is just not possible. This story of dictatorship, invisibility and rebellion was a pale shadow of its three illustrious predecessors and a great disappointment--to me at any rate.

July

July, that magic month for ASTOUNDING, again present us with a memorable issue. The history of the Howard families as recorded in Methuselah's Children by that eminent historian of the future, Robert Heinlein, would probably be on any list of all time favorites I might compile, and would more than likely be in the first ten. In this superb novel we meet Zack Barstow, the nominal leader of the beleaguered Families, the remarkable Lazarus Long who figures so decisively in their ultimate survival, Andrew Jackson "Slipstick" Libby who was labeled a Misfit by his contemporaries in the space CCC of an earlier generation, and all the other members of the all but immortal Families who are forced by the fear, jealousy and hatred of man to flee Earth for an uncertain future in the unknown vastness of interstellar space. Not only was this an enthralling story, full of ideas, adventure, conflict and romance; but on another level it was a story that explored (as did Van Vogt's Slan) the problem of man's frailty when confronted with the inexplicable and different in his fellows. In Slan, it was basically the fear engendered in normal humanity by the ability of the Slan to read minds which would (unless the Slans were ruthlessly extirpated) eventually lead to a Slan dominated world. Methuselah's Children was different in kind, but the same by degree. The Families possessed the secret of artificially induced immortality, and selfishly kept the secret within the Howard Families, refusing to share it with those who were not blood-members of the Families. So ran the thinking of mortal man. This misconception brought about violent jealousy and mass fear for racial survival--and in the more intelligent and sensitive, a debilitating inferiority complex. This novel more clearly than any that preceded it expressed Heinlein's adherence to liberal-democracy and his concern for the rights of minorities and unpopular beliefs in an advanced society. If his solution to the problem confronting the Howard Families (read: Negroes) is unacceptable to many, i. e., if you can't integrate, emigrate, at least he argued the problem and then presented a solution. With all its flaws, both literary and conceptual, this is still a great and classic science fiction novel, the like of which one would search in vain in the pages of science fiction magazines a mere handful of years before.

Alfred Bester's first story for ASTOUNDING, The Probable Man, appeared in this issue. This also was one of a rash of stories dealing with the paradoxes inherent in time travel that were popular during this period (and like psi today, seem to have been a bit overdone), but it was quite good--particularly in the brief glimpse Bester gave us of a future America where nazism reigned as Swasts and were opposed by an underground (literally) of the descendants of native Americans known as Readers, so-called because of their devotion to books.

"The Right to Buy Weapons is the Right to be Free". This imperishable slogan of The Weapon Shops first saw print in Van Vogt's short story The Seesaw in this issue. The first glimpse of the war between the Weapon Shops and the Isher Empire was briefly given us in this story. The seesaw referred to the pendulum swings through time made by the energy charged hero who eventually built up such a charge of energy that in the inconceivably distant past his body reached the critical stage and thus was instrumental in the formation of the universe. Nothing picayune about Van Vogt!

The remaining story of any note was Anson Macdonald's We Also Walk Dogs, a delightful title referring to General Services Co. which would do anything, short of murder, for a price.

August

August was distinguished by one of Rogers' finest covers, a beautiful painting of steel blue space ships nestling in their launching pads, which illustrated Jurisdiction by Nat Schackner. This was another of the Space Lawyer series, and as in Old Fireball, was concerned with legal flummery involving mining claims in the asteroid Belt.

In the second installment of Methuselah's Children we find the Howard Families launched on their hegira into space in The New Frontiers, the sister ship to the vessel that figured so prominently in the earlier Universe--the Vanguard. Lazarus Long--with the assistance of Slayton Ford, the head of the government who throws in his lot with the Families--commandeers the New Frontiers; And in a scene reminiscent of When Worlds Collide the Families embark on the ship and depart this solar system.

Theodore Sturgeon's Biddiver was about an automobile that was also a spaceship; a harmless drunk who gets into it by mistake and ends up in space, and after passing unprotected through the Heaviside layer becomes strangely transformed; a space pirate called The Fang; and two of the most unsavory and unloving brothers in science fiction. Sturgeon was rapidly building himself an enviable reputation of almost never turning out a bad story.

Backlash, a short story by Jack Williamson told of the efforts of an expatriated Russian scientist and his American assistant to alter the present Eurasian dominated world by effecting the death of Levin (L), the mustachioed dictator of a crucial point in the past.

September

This is one of the best all around issues of the year, with almost every item in it a gem. A single issue is usually notable for one story or serial installment, or at best two or three stories--the issue wherein every story rates high is a rarity. This is one of those rarities.

To begin with, Rogers' cover is one of the best of the year. One of the strongest characteristics of Rogers was his ability to compose a highly dramatic and colorful picture soundly without being crudely sensational. The cover illustrated beautifully Isaac Asimov's memorable classic, Nightfall. This story, which was inspired by Emerson's lines: "If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore, and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God!", was to me one of the most thoughtful and meaningful stories I had read in science fiction up to that time. (It was a story I used in an effort to refute my mother's opinion of science fiction as trash--with a notable lack of success. She still regards me as an amiable idiot whenever the subject of science fiction comes up.) Lagash circles the sun Alpha, one of a complex of six suns shining on the planet. Every two thousand and fifty years the suns are so positioned that only the weakest, Beta, remains in the heavens. At this time Lagash's hitherto invisible planetary companion eclipses Beta and total darkness descends on Lagash for a period of four hours. How would Man, conditioned since the beginning of time to perpetual and intense light, react to sudden total darkness--and the accompanying myriads of stars, never before seen, or even known to exist?

Alfred Bester was back with his second story, the justly famous Adam and No Eve. the story of Stephen Crane who destroys all life on Earth in a tragic accident, and the discovers, as he lies dying on the edge of the sea--the last living thing on Earth, that he will be the First Cause of a new cycle of life on Earth. Bester did a beautiful job on this story, developing it mostly through the ravings and hallucinations of a dying man.

Raymond F. Jones, who was to write many fine stories during the Golden Age, made his debut in this issue with one of his best short stories, The Test of the Gods. Three men crash-land in the Venusian swamps where they are rescued by Igoroes, a race of intelligent, but primitive reptiles. As insurance for good treatment they pass themselves off as gods, which seems like a good idea for a while until the Igoroes, not unreasonably, ask them to prove their godhood by passing The Test of The Gods. This seems fair enough...until the nature of the Test is disclosed.

I am not nor ever have been sold on articles in science fiction magazines--serious science type articles, that is. One of the major exceptions to this prejudice is L. Sprague de Camp who's articles are always scholarly, generally offbeat, and engrossingly written. One of his best during this period was The Sea Kings Armored Division, a two part article beginning this month. This article examined a subject and a period of history that de Camp has always had an abiding interest in--the science of the Hellenistic Age.

Heinlein, in the guise of Caleb Saunders, contributed a time travel story of better than average quality called Elsewhere--not too original, but well written at any rate. Norman L. Knight examined another facet of time in Short Circuited Probability. M. Krulfeld had an excellent short succinctly titled Mission which told of a Eurasian invasion of the western hemisphere and the immediate need to sabotage the latest development in computers made by the Eurasians, which computer gave them a split second advantage over the Americans. It's interesting to note in passing, I think, the number of times "Eurasian"--American wars form the basis for stories at a time when the principle enemy of western civilization was supposed to be nazi barbarism. And Campbell gave us an article under his byline called We're Not all Human! which examined the possibility of mutated humans already existing amongst us, and made a good brief for the development of a Slan type superman here and now.

And finally, Methuselah's Children came home. I always hate to see a serial like this come to an end, dammit!

October

Another great issue! By His Bootstraps by Anson MacDonald; Common Sense by Robert Heinlein; Not Final! by Isaac Asimov; Two Percent Inspiration by Theodore Sturgeon; and the concluding instalment of L. Sprague de Camp's article The Sea Kings Armored Division. Plus another fine cover by Hubert Rogers.

Time travel has been one of the standards of science fiction from the time of Wells' great classic The Time Machine which introduced most of the basic elements of the theme. There have been a number of great (if not classic) time travel stories written in the intervening years--and countless potboilers. MacDonald, with his story in this issue, wrote what many consider to be the ultimate in paradoxical time travel stories. By His Bootstraps is one big outrageous paradox so logically presented by Heinlein that the reader is left dedazzled, bewildered and almost convinced. Me, I was pretty confused by it all, but nevertheless delighted.

Common Sense, the sequel to Universe, has never (to my knowledge) been reprinted. This is a pity. Although lacking the tremendous impact that Universe had, it is a

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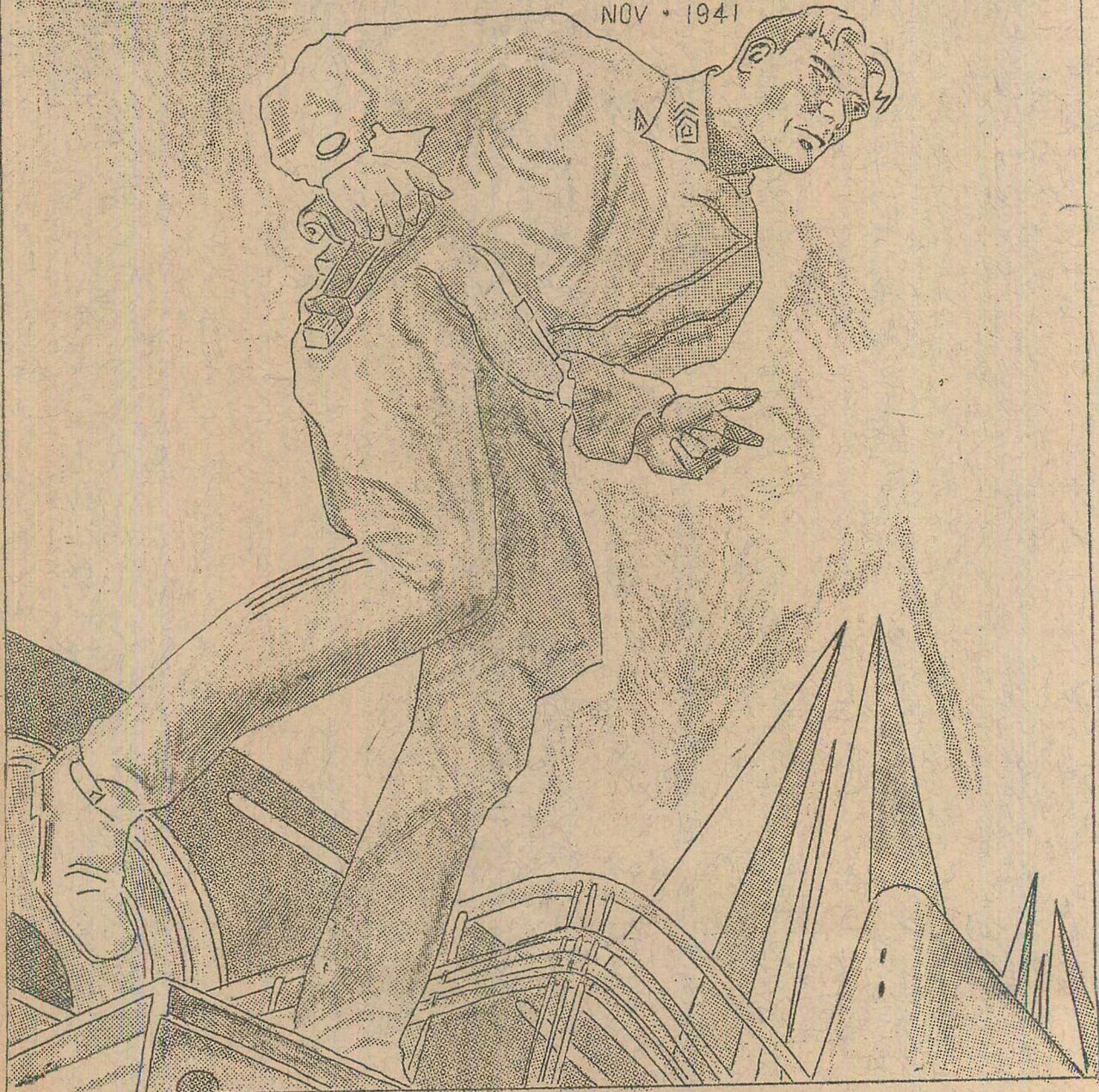
A STREET & SMITH PUBLICATION

SECOND STAGE LENSMEN

BY E. E. SMITH, PH. D.

NOV • 1941

20¢



great story in its own right--and when it is combined with Universe the two read as a short novel, it becomes a fine modern parable of man's emergence from the dark ages and his burning desire for knowledge. In Common Sense the events leading up to and the results of the mutiny are given greater scrutiny, and the characters rounded out more fully. And Joe-Jim Gregory has his moment of Glory, going down fighting for something he really doesn't quite understand--and endures as one of the greatest characters in science fiction.

Two Percent Inspiration was about a brilliant Earth scientist who wasn't all he appeared to be; an eccentric millionaire inventor-scientist who read the pulp adventures of Satan Strong, the evil scourge of the spaceways (for a particular reason!); and the problem confronting Martians on the planet Mercury...Martians don't sweat, you know.

Not Final; by Asimov was about a Jovian-Earth war, the effect of Jupiter's gravity on steel hulled space ships and the development of a force field substitute for steel. Winston K. Marks took a look at the unexpected results obtained from artificially induced immortality given to man with the added mental block against self destruction, in Manic Perverse. And de Camp concluded his examination of the almost-Age of Science during the Hellenistic Age to round out a very satisfying issue.

November

The penultimate chapter of the Lensman saga commenced in this issue with the first of four installments of Second Stage Lensmen. Kinnison, convinced that the Boskonian War has been successfully concluded with his destruction of the home planet of the Eich, Jarnevon, in the second Galaxy (as related in the concluding chapters of Grey Lensman) doffs his Lensman's Burden and lays plans for marrying Clarissa MacDougall; but he is suddenly forced to reexamine his thinking by a direct intercession on the part of Mentor, his Arisian sponsor. And so off we go again in the seemingly endless search for the true nature of Boskone.

Because of the total length of Second Stage Lensmen (118,000 words), nearly half of this issue was taken up by the first installment which dominated the whole issue. The only other story in the magazine worth mentioning was Nat Schachner's swan song in ASTOUNDING--Beyond All Weapons. Of course, I didn't know this was his last, and so didn't read the story with that fact in mind. Schachner told of a ruthless world dictatorship and its eventual overthrow by a strange being called the Master who had arrived --messiah like--purportedly to help mankind regain its lost freedoms. I subsequently Schachner--he had for years been such an integral part of ASTOUNDING that his presences were almost taken for granted. One of the amazing things about Schachner is that during all the time he was turning out science fiction with one hand (and being derided as a hack by many fans), with the other he was producing his highly acclaimed biography of Aaron Burr--and later, Jefferson and Hamilton. A most remarkable man, Nathan Schachner--and one the science fiction field can be proud of.

Rogers' cover illustrating Second Stage Lensmen was a disappointment after the superb cover for Grey Lensman. Again, it was a portrait of Kimball Kinnison, clad in grey and stepping forth from a space ship. But the face looked like a cross between Jack Dempsey and de Camp's Gnarly Man--or as one fan said in sorrow, it brought to mind the title of a classic fantasy by Max Brand, That Receding Brow. Except for the face, however, it was a fine composition with drama and tension in every line.

December

This issue was not only the last of the year, it was the last (apparently) of the standard pulp size, and the last with a cover price of twenty cents. Campbell

announced on the Editor's Page that with the January 1942 issue the magazine was going large size with a drop in page count to 128. This would still, Campbell assured us, allow for half again as many words as currently appeared in the 160 page ASTOUNDING. This was supposed to be an improvement, give added dignity to the magazine, and force its removal from the despised pulp sections of the newstands to the hal-
lowed area of the slicks. The change was also supposed to be in response to the plea of many fans over the years for ASTOUNDING to go large size. The large size format had traditionally been considered the ne plus ultra for science fiction magazines--since the days, of course, of the early AMAZING and WONDER.

But to get back to the issue at hand. As far as I was concerned the only thing in that issue was the second installment of Second Stage Lensmen. Clarissa MacDougall gets special training making her a second stage Lensman; Kinnison masquerades as Cartiff the jeweller and fence in a campaign to infiltrate the Boskonians; Clarissa embarks upon her first assignment as a Lensman to the matriarchy dominated planet of Lyrane II and unearths a pocket of Delgonian Overlords on a neighboring planet; and we meet for the first time the dread Tyrant of Thrale and the Onlonians--the ultimate "Council of Boskone" and the superiors to the late and unlamented Eich.

1941 was the year that set the standards against which all the following years of the Golden Age were measured. Never again would ASTOUNDING run such a high concentration of classical or memorable stories over a sustained period of time as during this handful of years. Just a quick reprise of 1941 will give a partial example of what I mean, and also helpt to bring the year into sharper focus.

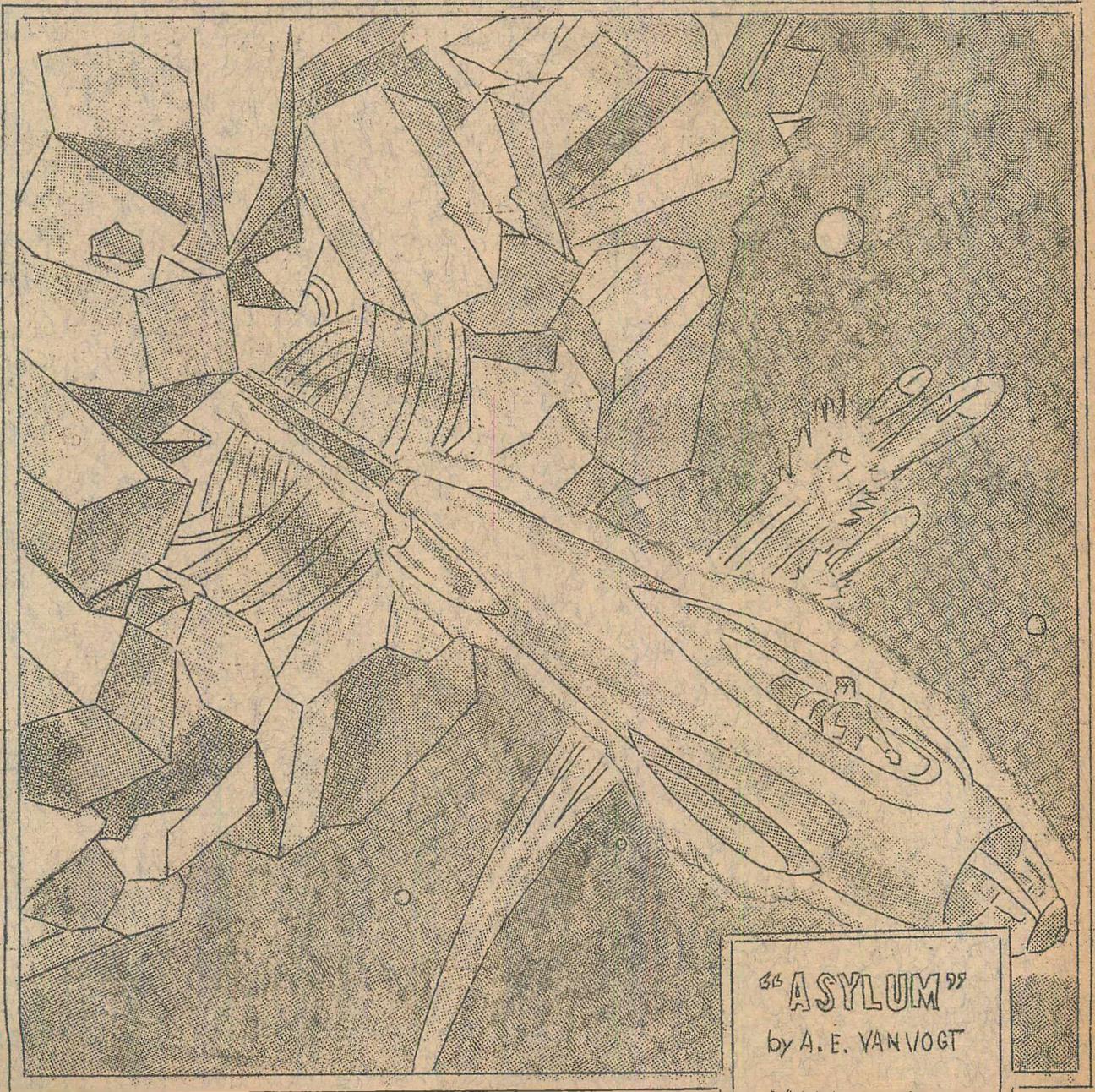
First, let's take the serials published during the year: Sixth Column, The Stolen Doremouse, Methuselah's Children and Second Stage Lensmen. Secondly, the better novelettes: Magic City, Logic of Empire, Microcosmic God, Universe, Solution Unsatisfactory, The Probable Man, Jurisdiction, Biddiver, Nightfall, By His Bootstraps, Common Sense, Beyond All Weapons, and We also Walk Dogs. And thirdly, just a few of the many short stories: And He Built a Crooked House, Poker Face, The Seesaw, Reason, Liar, Not the First, Slackers Paradise, Jay Score, Artnan Process, Adam and No Eve, Backlash, The Test of the Gods, Not Final!, Elsewhere, Mirrion, and Two Percent Inspiration.

If ever there was a roll call of fabulous stories, this is it--and all from one year. In addition to the stories we also had the bulk of the best covers painted by Hubert Rogers. It was also the last year in which Rogers' covers appeared on every issue. The weakest feature of ASTOUNDING during the year was in the department of interior illustrations. There was not enough Schneeman and Rogers, and far too much Kramer--the most abysmal artist (and I use the title advisedly) ever to appear in a science fiction magazine.

Two things are very evident in this summery: Robert Heinlein dominated the year to an overwhelming extent, and Van Vogt was startlingly conspicuous by his absence--The Seesaw and Not the First notwithstanding. Never before or since has the field seen such a phenomenon as Heinlein who in two shortyears and with a relatively small number of stories, changed the face of science fiction for all time. Other authors have exerted profound influences on science fiction in the past in one way or another. E. E. Smith freed us from the confining limitations of the solar system and gave us the entire universe to play around in; Campbell expanded on Smith with stories dealing with vast concepts and inconveivable power, and, as Don A. Staurt, combined science fictional ideas with elements of mood, poetry and imagery found more often in the siter field of fantasy. And finally, Stanley G. Weinbaum endowed us with alien entities that were truly alien. These were all significant contributions to the genre, and certainly contributed to the development of science fiction by their influence on succeeding writers. But Heinlein's influence was manifold and revolutionary. He

ASTOUNDING

Science-fiction 25c



“ASYLUM”

by A. E. VAN VOGT

MAY • 1942

A STREET AND SMITH PUBLICATION

might almost be regarded as a "Renaissance Man" in the narrow sense of the talents and diversified knowledge that he brought to bear on his chosen field of science fiction. Heinlein combined a firm knowledge of practical politics, sociology, psychology (both individual and mob), the military, semantics, the various applied sciences (and used all of them as themes or key ideas in his stories), with a liberal humanitarian outlook and the skill and discipline of a fine writer. At no time did Heinlein let any of the structural elements in his stories obtrude on his main purpose--the telling of a story in the best manner possible. Heinlein had his faults, naturally, but they were so niggling in comparison to his virtues as a writer that I don't consider them germane to this article--I'm not inclined to be hypercritical, anyway. Any man who can tell a story the way Heinlein can is entitled to any number of faults, as far as I'm concerned.

The failure of Van Vogt to follow up Slan with something a little more powerful than Not the First and Seesaw was one of the mysteries of the year. There have, of course, been instances of authors who have shown great promise with a few stories and then ceased to exist as far as science fiction was concerned; but Van Vogt from his first published story (Black Destroyer) which was enthusiastically received by the fans, to the tremendously sensational Slan, not only showed promise--he had already arrived. It could only be hoped that something better would come from him in the next year.

By the time the January 1942 issue of the new large ASTOUNDING would appear, the United States would be at war--and things would never be quite the same again.

1942: January

The brief era of the "bedsheet ASTOUNDING" began with this issue, to the joy of many and despair of others. I was one who didn't particularly welcome the change. I've always thought (and I still do) that the--roughly--seven by eleven pulp size was the ideal dimension for science fiction magazines. I cut my teeth, and was raised, on pulp magazines (of all kinds) and I've never been one who held to the faith that the large size was the ideal one for science fiction magazines. Besides that, it broke up the wonderful rank of yellow and black spines that made ones collection of S & S ASTOUNDING'S so distinctive on the shelf.

To be honest, the new format was impressive. The cover painting (a fine Rogers!) was the same size as on earlier issues with the addition of a grey border surrounding it on all four sides with the logo superimposed on the upper portion of this border. Impressed as I was, I still felt the book size to be preferable.

The feature story of the month was Jack Williamson's Breakdown which dealt with the disintegration of a static society and had as its leading character a strong arm labor boss. This was an entirely different Williamson from the Williamson of Legion of Space or The Legion of Time fame. Without denigrating his earlier classics in any way, this still was a much more mature and sophisticated story than his space and time epics.

That indomitable champion of civilization, The Grey Lensman, one of the entities collectively known as Star-A-Star, the nemesis of Boskone, Kimball Kinnison, becomes a wheel in the Thralian system, eventually to become the Tyrant of Thrals--the top dog of Boskone (or so he thought)! And thus in the third instalment of Second Stage Lensmen everything seemed to be coming to a head, and the conclusion of the long, drawn-out Boskonian War appeared to be nearly here.

February

The greatest of all feminine writers in the science fiction field, C. L. Moore, was back after a much too long absence with a cover story (her first for ASTOUNDING), There Shall be Darkness. This story, which told of the departure of the Earth legions from Venus was an extremely evocative and moody piece in the great Moore tradition. A marvelous story.

Second Stage Lensmen came to a climax with a denouement that rocked me right out of my chair--as it must have many others at the time. Kinnison, in his masquerade as a Thralian, had chisled and killed his way to what he thought was the top of the Boskone hierarchy, becoming in fact the Tyrant of Thrale--only to discover that his Prime Minister, Fossten, had been his predecessor's superior. In the climactic scene, Kinnison and Fossten, whose true identity is concealed by a zone of hypnosis, wage a motionless and silent battle of minds as the Grey Lensman implacably bores into the zone and through the mind shields in all or nothing attempt to unmask and kill the true evil genius behind Boskone. At last Fossten's shield gives way to Kinnison's greater mind, and he stands revealed in his true form--an Arisian! Kinnison is understandably shaken by this, but goes on to kill him. He is assured by Mentor that the being known as Fossten is a renegade Arisian, really quite demented.

This seems to settle once and for all the Boskonians and Kinnison settles down on Klovia in the Second Galaxy, becomes Galactic Co-ordinator and marries his Clarrissa. The disclosure that an Arisian was the guiding genius behind Boskone seemed to be a logical and neat gimmick for winding up the Lensman Saga, and I rather imagine that was the way Doc Smith originally intended it. I still feel that the introduction of the Eddorians into his epic was so cosmic in concept as to flaw the whole work. But more about this a few years hence.

Other stories in this issue were Sorcerer of Rhiannon by Leigh Brackett, an unimportant story; Medusa by Theodore Sturgeon, a story that just missed, about a being of planetary size; The Rebels by Von Rachen--the Kilkenny Cats are still at each others throats and Col. Gailbraith was still pulling them apart; and Raymond F. Jones had some pertinent things to say about transportation in Starting Point, his second story in ASTOUNDING.

March

A. E. Van Vogt, who had produced but two short stories in 1941, was back this month with the cover novelette, Recruiting Station. This story was by a new Van Vogt, intricately plotted and somewhat vast in scope dealing as it did with time and interplanetary war, but still far below the quality of Slan. It did, however, have an intriguing character in the person of Dr. Lell--a man of superior talents; and one of the most memorable last lines in science fiction, "Poor, unsuspecting superman!"

Goldfish Bowl by Anson MacDonald was a near perfect story concerning the mystery of two water spouts in the south Pacific--one rising from the ocean into the stratosphere and the other descending--and the warning tattooed on the body of a dead man, "Beware! Creation took eight days". And Runaround by Asimov was another in the Robot series (the third) that examined the problem of an aberrated robot and his redemption. All the robot stories so far presented by Asimov followed the same pattern and had predictable outcomes. Take a situation into which a highly specialized or experimental robot is introduced to perform a specific function; then have it develop a malfunction, usually of a bizarre nature, and then work desperately to discover the cause and cure before all hell breaks loose. These stories were saved from being formula nothings by Asimov's writing skill, his sense of humor and his truly remarkable concept of the positronic robot and its impact on human society.

April

A rather startling cover by Rogers of a rocket ship landing in an open glade in a giant redwood forest served to announce the appearance of one of the most important novels of the year, Anson MacDonald's Beyond This Horizon. In this novel Heinlein probed the ramifications of state imposed, controlled, and manipulated eugenics; the civilizing influence of ritualized handgun duelling; the laws of probability as they apply to games of chance; and the problems of a "mongrel" man transported from the twentieth century to the eugenically stabilized future. A thoroughly readable and thought provoking novel, enhanced by marvelous illustrations by Rogers.

Van Vogt was again present with a novelette, and an excellent one it was, too, Co-operate--or Else. For the sake of simple survival Professor Jamieson must convince the fearsome Ezwal of the necessity for co-operation after they crash land on the primitive planet of Eristan II; and of the greater urgency for the Ezwal inhabitants of Carson's Planet to co-operate with Earth in their showdown war with the slug-like Rull. The Ezwal, singly and collectively, are disinclined towards co-operation with the puny Earthman. Ultimately Jamieson's Ezwal does co-operate--but not because of the professor's philosophical arguments.

May

For the third month in a row Van Vogt was present with a novelette, this month with the cover story--Asylum. This is one of Van Vogt's finest stories, a taut, well drawn picture of vampirism with interstellar ramifications. Coupled with this is the idea, somewhat akin to the thesis presented by Russell in Sinister Barrier (i.e. that we are property), that we are on a reservation, isolated from the rest of interstellar civilization and guarded by lower grade mentalities of the Watchers to see that we don't come in contact with the rest of the universe until such time as we are ready.

Alfred Bester's excellent novelette, Push of a Finger, demonstrated the inability of a static society to change enough variables to avoid complete destruction in the far future, even when such destruction is proven to be certain and final unless radical action is taken. And Isaac Asimov launches his galaxy embracing series with the publication of Foundation in this issue. Hari Seldon, the psychohistorian, establishes the two Foundations at opposite ends of the galaxy--one at Terminus, and one at Star's End--in order to guarantee the survival of Man's accumulated knowledge following the breakdown of galactic civilization which is imminent; and the encyclopedists of Terminus (the First Foundation) are confronted with their first major crisis as predicted by Seldon.

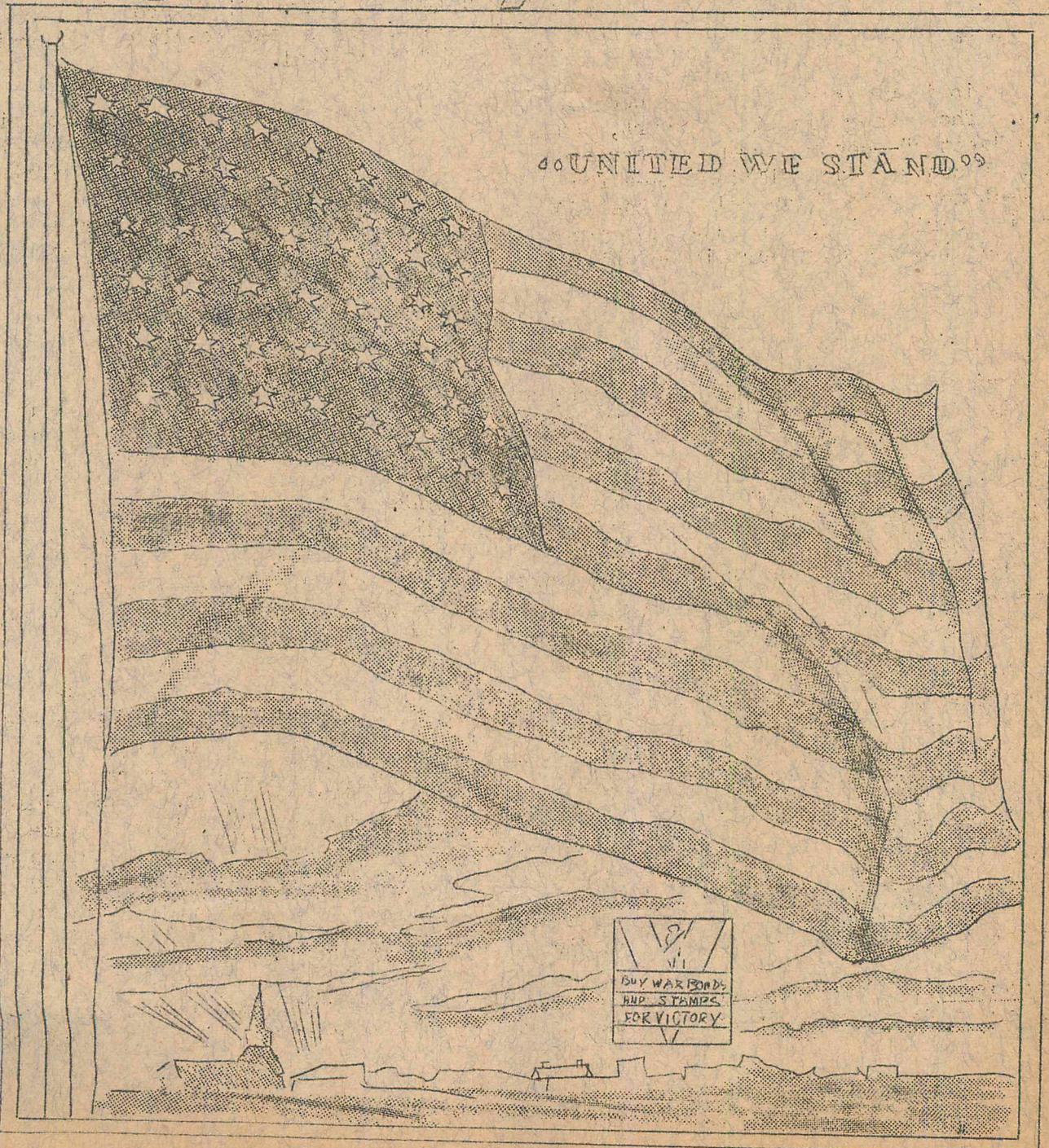
I'll have more to say about the Foundation stories later on; at the moment I'd just like to say that I consider them to be some of the greatest science fiction ever written, with a pervading sense of wonder in the underlying concept that it truly out of this world.

June

The cover story for this issue was Bridle and Saddle by Asimov, the sequel to last month's Foundation. Thirty years after the first crisis descends on the Foundation, the second arises and is resolved by the astute and pragmatic Mayor of Terminus, Salvor Hardin. Where the first crisis was met by a shrewd manipulation of balance of power tactics as applied to the menacing powers surrounding Terminus on their particular segment of the rim of the galaxy, the second threat from these powers is met with "spiritual" force as apposed to "Temporal" force.

ASTOUNDING

Science-fiction 25c



There were in all nine stories in this issue, none of which (except for Bridle and Saddle) made any lasting impression on me. Not even Hal Clement's first story, Proof.

July

July sported a rather unusual cover--for ASTOUNDING. A large American flag was the subject, and the same painting appeared on all Street & Smith magazines for the month.

A. E. Van Vogt led off with Secret Unattainable which was about one of Hitler's secret weapons which was so boobytrapped by one of its inventors that any application of its powers by Hitler would bring about rather catastrophic results. A gimmicky and disappointing story after his three earlier stories this year.

The best story in the issue was by all odds Clifford Simak's Tools which was about a highly intelligent gas found hovering over radium deposits on Venus, and its need for physical tools before it could act on its thinking. Simak presented at the same time a rather grim--if perhaps exaggerated--glimpse of the result of commercial atomic power being under absolute control of private capital.

This issue served to introduce both a new author and a new theme to science fiction. The author was Will Stewart, and the theme was the problems to be encountered with "seetee"--contraterrene matter, and how to control and use it. Will Stewart was, of course, Jack Williamson--a fact not then known. Collision Orbit was an excellent novelette which related the efforts of old Jim Drake and his partner in spatial engineering, Rob McGee to harness the incalculable power of the seetee asteroids despite the bureaucratic opposition of the government.

August

This issue brought forcefully home to the fan the realities of the war, insofar as it directly affected science fiction, and ASTOUNDING, in particular. Many authors by this time were either in war work or one of the services. Hubbard was off to the wars and wouldn't be heard from again until 1947; Schneeman was in the Air Force; (Although he was blissfully unaware of it, Schneeman and I were both stationed at Lowry Field in Denver during the latter half of 1942. While he was there he did a series of pencil portraits of officers for the Field paper that were masterpieces of technique.) And this issue saw the last appearance for several years of two of the men, who in their separate fields, were outstanding contributors to the Golden Age--Robert Heinlein (as MacDonald) with his long novella, Waldo, and Hubert Rogers with his brilliant cover illustrating it.

Heinlein's novella was about air cars that wouldn't work, and Pennsylvania Dutch hexes that apparently did; an immensely brilliant, physically weak, obese and unpleasant character named Waldo F. Jones who set out to solve the puzzle; and a gadget invented by Waldo when he was ten years old which would allow for remote manipulation by mechanical arms and hands of the most delicate nature. Waldo himself bore a striking similarity--at least as to physical characteristics, intelligence and personality--to Rex Stout's famous detective, Nero Wolfe. However, as the novel progressed the resemblance lessened until Waldo emerged as one of the more unique characters in science fiction. Everyone knows, of course that "waldo" was almost immediately seized upon by the nascent science of remote manipulation as an ideal nickname for their gadgets and is now firmly in the vocabulary.

Jackdaw by Ross Rocklynn, e told of the discovery of Earth (completely depopulated except for one man in an airplane) by a star roving race of beings whose culture

was incredibly old, and whose major pursuit was to search throughout the galaxy for problems that would occupy their intellects to the limit. The problem posed by Earth proved to be insoluble in the end because the Emonsos were a logical and kindly race, and the recent inhabitants of Earth indisputably were not. This story was on the same general theme as the author's shorter and much better Quietus written in 1940; that is, the obstacles one culture meets in an attempt to understand another culture which has hitherto not been known to exist, and which is completely and totally alien to anything previously encountered, and where a minimum of data is obtainable. Rocklyne did an excellent job in presenting the problem in this story, but he did do it better, and with a greater economy of words, in Quietus.

Hal Clement's second story, Impediment, was a carefully thought out account of the landing of a space ship near the Arctic Circle and its discovery by one man. The occupants of the ship are large moth-like creatures possessing the ability of telepathic communication. Their discovery by the man, Kirk, gives them the opportunity of studying his mind patterns and eventually communicating with him, and with his mind as a key, other men as well. This is fine, and everything goes along swimmingly until Kirk discovers the true purpose of their visit to Earth, and the moth creatures discover to their dismay that there is an impediment to their plans, that the mind patterns of man are as distinct and various as are his fingerprints. The story was interesting on an intellectual level, as are all of Clement's later works, but left me cold emotionally.

There appeared with this issue a new author, one who was to be one of the leading masters of the ASTOUNDING "style" during the middle years of the Golden Age, Lewis Padgett, the greatest of Henry Kuttner's many alter egos, with a short story, Deadlock. This first Padgett story was a deftly and humorously told tale of robots who were indestructable and with brains designed to solve any problem. But, what happens when the indestructable robot eventually approaches the problem of how they themselves could be destroyed? They go crazy, of course.

Norman L. Knight, in a suprisingly humours vein, for him, told of Kilgallen's Lunar Legacy, which turned out to be an incredible collection in bulk of every known intoxicating potable in the solar system cached in a hidden cave on the far side of the moon. And Cleve Cartmill, hitherto noted for a couple of fine novels and a brace or so of short stories in UNKNOW, drew an excellent picture of a young Neanderthaler's first stumbling realization of his differentness from other animals, in a short story called The Link.

September

For the first time in better than two years a cover by an artist other than Hubert Rogers appeared on ASTOUNDING. William Timmins was to be ASTOUNDING's solde cover artist from the coming December issue until late in 1946, except for one cover in 1944. Initially, Timmins covers bore a close resemblance to Rogers', without Rogers' exquisite draftsmanship, color sense and compositional talent, and at a first cursory glance they appeared to be rather careless paintings by Rogers. But eventually Timmins broke away from the influence of his illustrious predecessor and became himself, with sometimes pleasing results. Timmins' main fault, as far as I was concerned, was a lack of precision in his drawing and a generally muddy palette.

The cover story was by an author making his first appearance in ASTOUNDING, Anthony Boucher. Boucher was a well known mystery writer and Sherlock Holmes buff who had contributed several pieces to UNKNOW, the best being The Compleat Werewolf. Barrier, Boucher's novelette, was an excellent story involving time travel and a beautifully developed future civilization based on philology. One of the characters in the story, the man who developed the machine taking the hero to the future, was

one Dr. Derringer. This was the same Dr. Derringer who was the fictional creation of the fictional Fowler Foulkes of Boucher's book, Rocket to the Morgue, published in 1942.

One of the outstanding stories of the year (or of the decade, for that matter) was Lester del Rey's perceptive Nerves, a remarkable story dealing with an atomic explosion at a plant. Cleve Cartmill's novelette, With Flaming Swords was a variation on the theme of theocratic dictatorships, told with Cartmill's usual competence. And Lewis Padgett was back with his second story, the well known Twonky, which concerned, among other things, radios with exceptional attributes.

October

Lester del Rey returned again this month, this time with the cover story, Lunar Landing which explored the possibilities of the first landing on the Moon not being the first, by a long shot. The cover, incidently, was a lovely painting of the Earth and sun viewed from a lunar landscape, and was painted by A. von Munchausen, never since heard from.

Malcolm Jameson abandoned Bullard and the Space Patrol for the nonce, to tell a tale of intertemporal trading posts in Anachron, Inc. A. E. Van Vogt presented a Second Solution to the problem of the strong minded Ezwal's. And Murray Leinster had a fine short story in The Wobbler, which was a remarkable sort of submarine mine--almost human.

George O. Smith's first science fiction story was printed in this issue. It was also the first of his very popular Venus Equilateral series. QRM-Interplanetary it was titled, and concerned, as did all of the series, problems relating to interplanetary communications.

L. Ron Hubbard's last story for ASTOUNDING until 1947, a short story called The Beast, rounded out the issue. This was an account of a white hunter's compulsive hunt for a strange, illusive man killing beast in the forests of Venus. It could just as easily have appeared in a general fiction magazine with an African locale as in ASTOUNDING with its Venus setting, and was really unworthy of the man who wrote Final Blackout, Fear, and other fine novels.

November

Cleve Cartmill's cover story, Overthrow, was a smoothly written, fast moving account of the overthrow of military dictatorships, autonomous city-states (each devoted to a single function--Power Center, Textile Center, etc.), and the power and influence of business executives in an ostensibly military dominated society.

Will Stewart continued in Minus Sign the careers of Drake and McGee, Spatial Engineers, in their development and control of setee matter; and expanded on the growing rift between the miners and pioneers of the asteroids and the Mandate governing the planets.

Not Only Dead Men by Van Vogt told of an American whaleship's unexpected involvement in an interstellar war, how the Americans inadvertantly helped one side, and how they were subsequently rewarded. A very nice switch by Van Vogt on his monster theme.

The cover, illustrating Cleve Cartmill's Overthrow, is of passing interest. A pleasing, but not outstanding watercolor, it was the work of Modest Stein, an artist who did many covers for the Munsey magazines over the years, how many I don't know--

I have a copy of THE CAVALIER for June 1913 with a cover by him, and I'm sure he was painting before this date.

December

An eye catching cover--one of Timmins' all time best--beautifully illustrated A. E. Van Vogt's sensational The Weapon Shop, the featured novelette this issue. The concept of the Weapon Shops, and the conflict between them and the Isher Empire which ranges through all time, was only touched upon with a tantalizing glimpse in last year's short, The Seesaw.

Cleve Cartmill was back for the third month in a row with another novelette, Someday We'll Find You, about Hunt Club, Inc., a sort of interplanetary private eye outfit specializing in commercial and industrial cases. The story was not too much, but Cartmill wrote with an easy and colloquial fluidity that made his stories eminently readable. Frank Belknap Long's short story, To Follow Knowledge, was a strangely beautiful story of time travel and plural worlds. Piggy Bank by Padgett was a rather grim and ironic tale of blind greed and a diamond studded robot that didn't know its true value. A new author appeared in this issue with a short story, The Flight that Failed, another story dealing in probable futures, but laid in the present, i.e., the Second World War, and which showed how a Hitlerian future was aborted during an airplane flight. The author was E. M. Hull, the wife of the year's outstanding author, A. E. Van Vogt.

And so the first year of the "bedsheet" size ASTOUNDING--and the third full year of the Golden Age--ends. This year was Van Vogt's year, as 1941 had been Heinlein's. Asylum, Co-operate, or Else, Recruiting Station, Not Only Dead Men, Secret Unattainable and The Weapon Shop were stories that ranged from outstanding to competent, with Asylum as perhaps the best story of the year, although MacDonald's Beyond This Horizon, or Del Rey's Nerves are also top contenders for that title.

This year was a little more erratic in quality than the preceding year, with fewer classic stories--fewer issues containing more than one or two outstanding stories per issue. The artwork took a nosedive with the departure of Schneeman and Rogers, and never again would ASTOUNDING really have an outstanding position in terms of the consistent quality of cover and interior artwork. One of the most promising events of the year was the beginning of Asimov's brilliant Foundation series, which would continue for several years, and would also produce several outstanding stories related to--but outside the mainstream of--the Foundation stories. Another augury for a bright future was the advent of Lewis Padgett who would produce some brilliant stories during the next few years, as well as the yet to be encountered Lawrence O'Donnell, another of Kuttner's alter egos which is further complicated by being a fusion of Kuttner and his wife--C. L. Moore.

I think it is quite apparant after covering this year, that 1942 failed to reach the heights attained in 1941, despite many outstanding individual stories--the quality was there, but it lacked the sheer quantity of excellence that was the notable fact about 1941. Also, the absence of Heinlein, except for Beyond This Horizon and Waldo, was keenly felt.

To sum up, I think my reaction to this year could best be described as similar to that of my reaction to 1936, that is, that while there had been some fine stories published during the year, it was still below the quality of the preceding couple of years; but that the chances of an upswing in the coming year was a thing to be hoped for, and quite probable, considering Campbell's record so far.

vituperations

Fans - WHY IS A FAN? Perhaps it is because I am an only child that I can clearly see why only children become fans; there is a tendency towards introversion which I think is important in this process, but I can't see any reason why older children should be any less introverted than their siblings. I noticed no particular differences in the families of my friends. It seems to me that the important point is whether or not a child feels identification with his siblings, feels part of a group, not whether he is older or younger. I would wager that in each case of a non-only child who became a fan that there are factors that set him apart.

Then too fandom is predominately a middle-class group. By-and-large the middle class practices more birth control than either the upper or lower classes do. Probably any group of middle-class people would contain a fairly large majority of older or only children. I had this reaction, and when I showed WIAF to a psychologist friend of mine, he independently had the same idea. He also said that even if it is true that fans were predominately only or older children, it doesn't necessarily mean anything. It could be just a coincidence.

Well, anyway, I liked WHY IS A FAN? more than Earl seemed to. I think it very significant of the mental processes of many fans and the fact that there is so much agreement and repetition seems to establish some trends. My major quarrel with the survey is the absence of many fans--particularly British ones. This seems mostly Earl's fault as he seems to have gotten answers from nearly everyone polled. He undoubtedly tried to pick a representative sample, but I think he should have tried for broader coverage and sent questionnaires to at least twice as many people.

Earl mentions that there is a lot of repetition. True, but this establishes trends, and besides I don't mind repetition, if it is repetition from a slightly different point of view or slant. I like to listen to a number of people talking about a subject, all approaching it from their own viewpoints--even if they are only slightly different viewpoints. Two slightly different viewpoints give you a better picture than one, three better than two, and so on. I love this sort of thing about a subject I'm interested in, and it is the best way to interest me in a subject I'm interested in and this is the best way to interest me in a subject I am unfamiliar with.

I also don't object to stating the obvious. Most always it is useful and sometimes it's necessary. The obvious often has to be stated and cleared out of the way before you can go on from there.

Harness



I object strenuously though to Earl's feeling that people were dishonest and evasive in answering the questions. This was a survey on WHY IS A FAN? e.g., Why are you a fan? Not, what's wrong with fandom? Evidently Earl intended the survey to be more along the lines of What is Fandom? But if this is the case, he should have had a different title and/or questions in his survey. (This brings up another point; it would have been helpful, particularly to those not receiving the questionnaire if the questions themselves had been listed someplace in WIAF.) If Earl had asked questions along the lines of "What's wrong with fandom?" I don't think that he would have had any reason to complain about evasiveness. But I for one think such answers were out of place on the present survey, and certainly did not answer the questions asked.

Of course much speculation has gone on about the identity of Anonymous #1. My original idea was that it was Sid Coleman and Terry's was that it was Gregg Calkins. After some conversation we each convinced the other and Terry thought it was Sid Coleman and I thought it was Gregg Calkins. But I confronted Sid at the BAYCon and he denied it rather convincingly. Maybe it is Gregg...unless it's Earl. Of course, if Earl changed some of the internal clues around and switched a few names, it could be anybody. But I wonder why it was anonymous; nothing that strong was said.

This business of being an only child is a fairly lonely one. But that has the wrong connotation; it's a matter of being alone, but not necessarily lonely. And according to Texas stereotypes at least, an only child is spoiled, not used to give and take, thinks he is the big cheese. Perhaps. Certainly he is very conscious of his uniqueness; he belongs neither to the world of children nor of adults. He thinks and acts different from other children and may prefer the society of adults, but at the same time know that he is not an adult and adults are not to be trusted. They will treat him as an equal one moment and as a child in swaddling clothes the next.

I recall reading in Lincoln Steffens autobiography that he thought one of the most fortunate things that had ever happened to him was that he was given a horse as a boy. He rode the horse all over the countryside and played all sorts of imaginative games on horseback. He thought that having the horse put him more on his own and kept him from being absorbed into the herd. Fans don't need horses. They have achieved the isolation anyhow. Perhaps because of intelligence; certainly a certain amount of intelligence is necessary.

Children are a conservative lot and the games, attitudes of children get handed down from generation to generation of children, hardly changing through the centuries. It seems that while the games might have changed somewhat the attitudes of children have scarcely changed since neolithic times. Perhaps childhood used to prepare men for adulthood, but such seems no longer to be the case. The traits that children admire, that childhood games seem to nurture do not seem to be the ones that make for success in life or even for civilization. Perhaps the reason that so many people are hypocrites about society's standards is that they lived by childhood's code and only accepted society's as they grew up. Thus society's code is something grafted on, and not a deep commitment. So, if one escapes the tyranny of one's childhood contemporaries, he is many steps forward in thinking for himself.

Even though I was an only child and much given to reading I had a fairly social childhood up to the time I was ten and even reasonably social thereafter. I had lots of playmates--though only two friends--up through late adolescence. I had one of my friends when I was 6; we moved in about a year and when I saw him again when I was 10, he bored me. The other was when I was 8 and 9. We used to play all sorts of imaginative games together. We moved again when I was 9, but we managed to keep in touch and see each other once or twice a year. By the time we were 14 though, he

found playing any kind of imaginative game "kid stuff". By the time we were 17 we bored the bjesus out of each other. I also had an uncle some six weeks younger than myself with whom much the same sequence appeared, but as we were relatives we were in our twenties before we admitted to ourselves (at least I was; I don't know about him) that we didn't care for each other's company. This boredom with my contemporaries became more and more a characteristic reaction on my part as I grew up and I became more and more withdrawn until I went to college and suddenly became highly gregarious --although very shy--and have remained so.

One important thing in my development of course has been my size. I have always been large, and although varying from plump to fat, have always been given the respect due to physical powess even though I was poor at sports. (I was interested in football at one time, but all other sports and talk about same have always bored me, and football has joined the others now.) So I never had to be worried about aggression or being thought afraid or any of that rot.

Another important thing is that my family has a good social position, so that even though not too personally popular due to my fat and indifference I was always one of the people who mattered and was invited to parties and all the "in" affairs whether people liked me or not. These two things account for the fact that although shy I have large amounts of brass and self confidence. And probably also account for the fact that I have an almost total lack of ambition.

Unlike A.J. I never played imaginative games when alone--although I did with any other kids who were capable of it. I told myself stories. From the age of 5 at least--and probably earlier--I would tell myself stories. At first of course I would merely retell the stories I had been told, but then I started varying them, making them come out like I wanted them to. Then I started taking off from ideas and characters, making entirely new stories. Or even inventing them from scratch. I was hooked. Until I was quite old indeed I never had day dreams; instead I told myself stories about characters whom I identified with. That was one very odd thing about all this. I always held a figure in my hand, most often cut from paper. At first no doubt I was telling the story to this figure just as stories had been told to me, but I can't remember this; as far back as I can remember the figure was the main character in the story, the one the story revolved around. And I was so dependent upon a figure--any figure--that I couldn't tell a story unless I held one in my hand.

This may have been the start of my writer's block. When typing I just don't seem to have a spare hand to hold a figure with. For years it was a major operation for me to even write letters, and I didn't even began to get over this until I started writing regularly for fanzines.

I very much regret that I didn't come into contact with fandom sooner and this writer's block probably accounts for it. If I had only written to the prozines! I did write a letter to DOC SAVAGE (in '43 I think) and when it was published three people wrote me. I fully intended to answer them all, but I never did. Pity. Who knows what it might have lead to?

Well, in any event, WHY IS A FAN? made damn good reading and I am eagerly looking forward to discussions based on it. It seems worthy of much more thought and speculation.

For after all, Fandom IS a Way of Life.....

Archie Mercer - AMBLE One of the main reasons that Silverlock is a damn fine book is that all the references have little or nothing to do with the plot. It's a real swinging story and can be thoroughly enjoyed by someone who didn't recognize a single reference. The references are the names of characters and places and the types of adventure that Shandon gets into. And they are not obvious; if you recognize them there is an added pleasure, but if you don't recognize them, you just don't realize they are supposed to mean anything. After all, everything has a name. As for your associations with the name "Widsith", it's just a variant name which is only used once or twice.

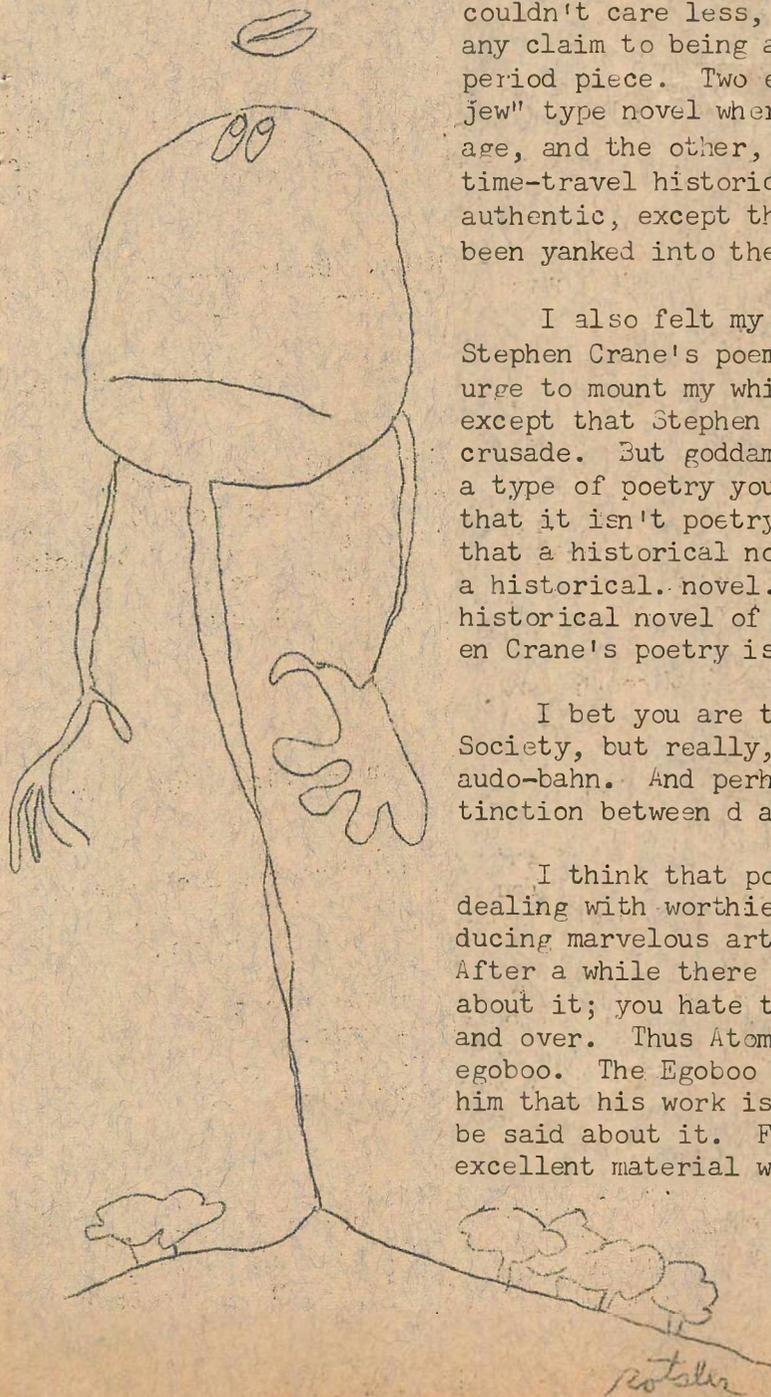
We think very differently on the subject of historical novels. You say that "The ideal historical novel of course would have a 'timeless' hero who could belong to virtually any age." As far as I am concerned this is not an ideal to aim at, but a fault to be avoided. Oh, if it's just an adventure story, strictly for fun and games, I couldn't care less, but I think a historical novel with any claim to being a good novel has to be a genuine period piece. Two exceptions: one, the "wandering jew" type novel where the hero belongs to an earlier age, and the other, the very similiar John Dickson Carr time-travel historical where everything is absolutely authentic, except the hero is from our times and has been yanked into the past.

I also felt my hackles rise when you said that Stephen Crane's poems weren't poems. I feel a strong urge to mount my white horse and charge off on a crusade, except that Stephen Crane's poetry is hardly worth a crusade. But goddamnit, it is poetry. It may not be a type of poetry you like, but you have no right to say that it isn't poetry, even as I have no right to say that a historical novel with a "timeless" hero isn't a historical novel. But I can say that it's a bad historical novel of course, and you can say that Stephen Crane's poetry is bad poetry.

I bet you are tired of hearing about the Audubon Society, but really, Americans pronounce Audubon, audio-bahn. And perhaps we don't make as strong a distinction between d and t as you do.

I think that polls are particularly useful when dealing with worthies like Atom. Atom keeps on producing marvelous art work for OMPA year after year. After a while there just isn't anything more to say about it; you hate to keep saying the same things over and over. Thus Atom gets deprived of much praise and egoboo. The Egoboo Poll is a fine method of showing him that his work is appreciated, although little may be said about it. For that matter there is always much excellent material which is uncommendable upon. The Poll fixes this up.

You know it simply never occurred to me that the bits from Oliver Anderson's In for a Penny that I quoted in HABAKKUK were



rotster

satire. I suppose it's because I think of satire as bitter and Anderson isn't bitter at all. But of course you are right and it is satire. And I think I found these parts the funniest because I don't find "glorious extravaganzas" too funny unless they have some reference to something, no matter how exaggerated or caricatured, or unless the extravaganzas are contrasted to something else and the incongruity is funny.

Lynn Hickman - BULLFROG BUGLE & CONVERSATION I liked CONVERSATION #15 the best of all of these Lynn and CONVERSATION #12 the least. (CONVERSATION #13 sounds as if it had possibilities, and I guess you got your argument with Daphne after all.) I like your artwork and also your mailing comments and natterings. I don't care much for your layout and organization of material. It gives the impression that you have everything in a big basket and casually reach in and pick up something to master without regard to what it is. Then when you finish that, you reach in and drag out something else, etc. In general I would rather have one fairly large zine than several small ones. Although of course if you don't organize the material, it doesn't make much difference.

I would be very interested in articles on the old pulps. Don't forget DOC SAVAGE. I'm not too interested in old cars, but if the articles are good, fine.

I agree with you that the chief charm of OMPA is the British fans, the British zines, the British flavor.

I also quite agree that Earl Kemp did a magnificent job on his symposiums. I said that WHO KILLED SCIENCE FICTION? was really mailing comments, not to put it down, but because I happened to have a high opinion of mailing comments and wanted to point out what the form is capable of. Of course it would have been more accurate to say that it is a collection of mailing comments, as each individual's contribution to it is his comments on the questionnaire that Earl sent around.

Many thanks for sending WHY IS A FAN? through OMPA.

Ron Bennett - BURP Glad to see that you are keeping up the round-robin. But your installment was far too short.

Belle Dietz - THE COMPLETE STORY OF HOW NOT TO MOVE This really brought back memories. You did have a time of it. I hope you are more settled in now and that everything is working out all right.

Terry Jeeves - ERG I don't really feel there is too much I can say about ERG except that I like it, especially your illos and layout. I also like your natterings and mailing comments--which I wish were longer. But I don't think that apazines should have fanzine reviews, particularly when they take space away from mailing comments.

Brian Jordan - KOBOLD I like KOBOLD, particularly your reviews and to a somewhat lesser extent your editorials where I think your style tends to me too impersonal. I think your mailing comments are too sketchy (too short too, but that's not what I mean by sketchy) and I think KOBOLD would leave an even better impression if you had some interior illos to break up the space.

Jimmy Groves - PACK RAT I'm glad you quoted that Scottish bit from The Singing Sands. Josephine Tey seems to have had the right idea about the Scots and I've been meaning to quote it to Ethel for some time myself. There's also a fine bit in Tey's The Daughter of Time about how, far from conquering and oppressing Scotland, England's

protection had kept it from being a Spanish province and that Scotland had gotten much the better deal from the Act of Union. Isn't that right, Ethel?

I guess I am a hardened bachelor. I think sex and women are just great, but like, what has that got to do with marriage?

I definitely think you are going to be an asset. Welcome and all that.

Dick Eney - PHENOTYPE Down, Dick, down. I didn't say you loused up the FAPA egoboo poll. You must be confusing me with FANAC or something. I said FAPAns were highly annoyed at you for substituting the SAPS-type Poll. Judging from the mailing comments, they were. And I didn't object to the SAPS poll because it had point distribution, but because every category had the same number of points. I think the weighed point system used this last time is the best idea. But anyhow, I gather you're not still mad, which is good. Ron Ellik for TAFF, of course, but Eney is a ghod man. Even if he does run rabbits.

And also just for the record, I'm glad that you run your SAPS and FAPA stuff through OMPA. Most of the members wouldn't see it otherwise. As long as your renewal requirements are produced directly for OMPA, the reprints are an asset to the mailings.

In reading the current SAPS mailing I ran across Larry Anderson's microelite for the first time. Readable????? Good ghod. After three paragraphs I had to look away to rest my eyes. I didn't finish reading his zine even though it looked like it contained some quite good stuff. Since I do have fairly good eyesight, I am puzzled that I have this reaction to microelite and so many of you don't (although I am far from the only one that has it.)

Your Detention trip was really harrowing. It sound like some of my horrible experiences. But leave us not compete; it could grow painful.

Daphne Buckmaster - RANDOM I hate to deal in stereotypes, but I was sort of croggled at Brian Aldiss's letter in which he referred to a well-read Nice Girl (Wordsworth, Gene Stratton Porter, Dornford Yates). Is that a usual combination, even for suburbia? Come to think of it, this might have been an American pattern of 30 or 40 years ago (if Yates were writing then of course). I've often thought that the patterns of British suburbia are like the patterns of American suburbia of 30 years ago. Has anyone else noticed this?



It's true that big men are usually unaggressive. But perhaps we are used to getting our own way without having to be aggressive. I know that I always plough through crowds with the greatest of ease and without being particularly aggressive about it. I find being big very convenient. Quite apart from getting through rush hour crowds and all that, it's amazing how few people try to browbeat me. I have never had to worry about whether I'm brave or not. I can be as unaggressive as I choose and no one is about to call me a sissy. And I can wander around where ever I choose at night without being afraid.

I would disagree somewhat with Harry Warner. I think that men react differently to women under strain; not that their natural reaction comes out, but that they react differently. But perhaps it is an intensification of their natural reaction. I wonder whether most men--of whatever class--really trust women. However much you may like them, they are a different species; not superior or inferior: just different. Vie la difference. But this difference, this strangeness, this unpredictability, can cause a certain amount of unease, even with loved ones--particularly when one is helpless. Most men of all classes seem to find it relaxing to be in all male company. This is even more noticable among the lower classes where the differences between the sexes in training and outlook are much greater.

I think you misunderstood Les Gerber. He didn't mean that he took pride in shocking people or deliberately did so, but that he sees no point in living his life in conformity with other's standards. If Les's behavior is OK by his standards he doesn't think anyone else has any right to be shocked at it, and if they are, he doesn't much care. He won't try to shock them, but he won't try not to either. While this is unimpeachable from a moral point of view, it means that you have to be damn careful what your standards are. And we do have to live with other people, and sometimes their disapproval or shock can affect us in practical ways, so that sometimes a little hypocrisy seems in order.

Mal Ashworth - THE RUNNING & ETC Ghad, you British are conservative. Here Dick Ellington has been in OMPA for four of its seven years and longer than more than half of the membership and you refer to him as a newcomer! I guess there'll always be an England or somethin'.

I was much amused at Ken Potter's remark to Shelia: "I've never trusted your judgment since you said you liked William Saroyan better than rice pudding." Ken is a great literary critic. After all stick rice pudding is somewhat to be expected when one is contemplating rice pudding. Sticky rice pudding in literature is something else again.

You make a great deal of sense on the subject of "women". I particularly like your distinction between "dominant" and "superior". Certainly amongst mammals the male of the species is dominant. Even amongst humans it seems to be expected. Even among the "advanced" bohemians I note that most women--even those that will dominate if you let them--prefer to be dominated. Few sights arouse as much contempt as a henpecked husband. And those relationships that seem more like real partnerships consist mostly of more freedom than usual for the woman, not loss of prerogative by the male. Also, I believe that most current psychological theory believes that a male cannot be potent unless he is sexually dominant, which of course means that unless the male is sexually dominant the woman is not going to enjoy sex much either.

One hears a lot about 50-50 relationships in marriage, but I can't say as I've ever seen one. One party or the other always dominates. Of course there are differences of degree, and also many men will let their wives completely run the home and raise the children, as they themselves are not interested in such things.

Ethel Lindsay - SCOTTISHE Maybe I am cynical, but it seems to me that even men who want their women to be intelligent still want them to be less intelligent than themselves. Very few men are willing to marry a woman they think is more intelligent than they are.

What work it must have been to hand-color that cover! But it does look fine. Did you color all the copies of SCOTTISHE, or just the OMPA ones?

One thing I have noticed about your style is that while not quite as smooth as it might be, it is limpid and crystal clear. It also reflects your personality to a great extent. When I read your natterings I always get the impression that I am looking at things through your eyes. And, while with most other writers I am interested in their writing if I'm interested in the subject, you can generally interest me in whatever you write about. You're not as good as Harry Warner in this respect, but then, who is? (Harry Warner can make me interested in anything.)

I agree with your high estimation of Agent of Vega. *** Joe Patrizio did have a real cool con report, and Willis was of course Willis.

- SCOTTISHE and AMBLE are the backbone of OMPA, you know.

Bruce Burn - SIZAR #3 Glad to see you doing mailing comments and hope that you will make it a habit from now on. It's encouraging that you liked doing them, and as you point out, it's more fun when you're in the swim of things.

You mean you like to read fiction even when it's bad? Goshes. I offer for your consideration Donaho's First Law: "The only thing worse than bad mailing comments is bad fan fiction."

To which I would add Donaho's Second Law: "There is very little good fan fiction."

However, you seem to react much as does Terry Carr. He says that the first thing he thinks of when he gets a new idea is to write a story around it. He then publishes a story and gets no comments beyond "I liked it." No one mentions the ideas behind the story. I must admit that while I do write fiction occasionally, my first thought on getting an idea is to write an article where I know that I'll get comments on the ideas rather than the writing.

But as Elinor Busby pointed out to Terry. "We never get the comments we want or expect, even on mailing comments." (It may be hard to believe, but in other apas quite a number of people actually comment on mailing comments and discuss things.)

Me - THROUGH THE GORDIAN KNOT Ray Nelson forgot to sign his cover for this and I forgot to give him credit. And I want him to receive his due credit as I think it was a damn good cover.

Norm Metcalf - UL But Norm, what's the matter with chasing (and catching) girls? It's a fine healthy hobby and fun too. After all, there is no substitute for sex.

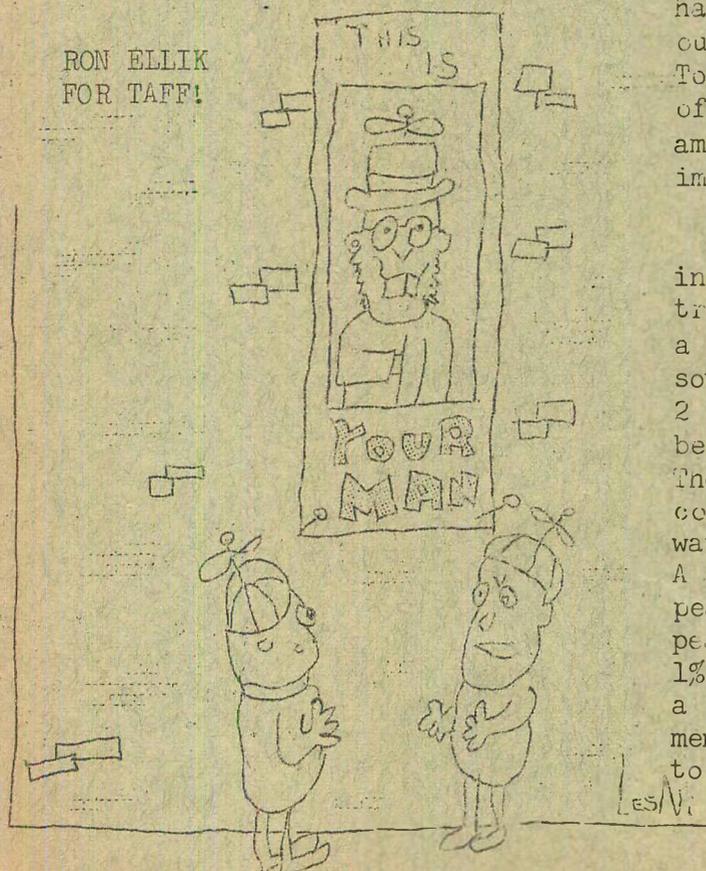
While of course it is impossible to tell just what you mean by "music being played at an abnormal level" without physical comparison, since for every person who plays music too loudly there are at least 99 who play it too softly, I'm afraid that you have a lullably complex. There actually is literally a lullably complex. Many, if not most people, have been so conditioned by hearing lullabies that they actually think music is supposed to be soft and soothing.

I don't mean to say that there is not a point when the ear will start distorting music into noise. And of course most so-called high fidelity equipment will start distorting sound long before the ear does. However given good high fidelity equipment music should be played at a volume so that it will approximate the dynamic level which you would hear it at in a live performance in a concert hall. This dynamic level is of course dependent upon the size of the room as it takes more sound to fill a large room than it does a small one. As the room grows smaller the volume has to be turned down until finally you reach a point that even though the room is full of sound the ear starts distorting because the actual physical volume is so low. (The ear distorts at low volumes as well as at high. At low volumes it tunes out the low sounds (bass) and the high sounds (treble) which is why some systems have a loudness control rather than a volume control. The loudness control adds extra bass and treble as it cuts down the volume; but this is an unsatisfactory compromise at best) For this reason a good high fidelity system is wasted in a medium or small room.

Unfortunately most of us have neighbors, so that even if we have large rooms we cannot play music at the correct dynamic level. However, ideally speaking, music should be played at such a volume that it is physically impossible to talk without shouting whenever a full symphony orchestra is playing. That's the way it sounds live. Of course if you want music on records to sound differently from the way it does live, I have nothing to say.

And you quote "Too many manufacturers are implying that the higher the power of the amplifier, the higher the fidelity becomes." From the rest of your discussion I think that you are confusing two things: "power" and "gain". The gain of an amplifier is the volume it will put out and this has no correlation whatsoever with the power of the amplifier. A 2-watt amplifier--which is about as low as they make--can put out as much volume as a 100-watt amplifier--which is about as high as they make. In fact since power and gain depend on different circuits, designs and components it frequently happens that a 10-watt amplifier will put out more volume than a 50-watt one will. To simplify somewhat power is the measure of how many watts of electrical sound an amplifier can put out with a specified minimum amount of distortion.

Any musical composition will have varying sound levels, even when the volume control remains at the same setting. Say that a system is set at a normal level and the sound is coming out at about an average of 2 - 3 watts of electrical sound. There will be occasional peaks of 10 watts or more. The amplifier will deliver these at the correct volume, but if it isn't a rated 10 watt amplifier, there will be distortion. A 10 watt amplifier will take care of most peaks of sound, but there are occasional peaks that are higher. Less than 1/10th of 1% will ever go above 25 watts however, so a 25 watt amplifier will satisfy most requirements and will usually deliver better sound to the speaker than the speaker can handle.



"He's running of a 'Free ~~Abbe~~ Bheer' Ticket."

However for ultra high fidelity systems, amplifiers of 50 watts or so are necessary, and even 100 watts isn't too ridiculous if you have the money. (Generally speaking the more difference between rated capacity and average carrying load, the better.) So you see it's really true that the higher the power of the amplifier, the higher the fidelity becomes. It's all a question of use, need and proportion.

I still recall with great pleasure an experience I had one week-end. I heard the N. Y. Philharmonic play Sibelius' Second Symphony at Carnegie Hall on Thursday evening. On Sunday they played it again on a live radio concert. The violins sounded just as shrill over my system as they had in Carnegie Hall--almost intolerably shrill, but that's the way they're supposed to sound. I bet you would have turned the volume down.

Ghad, the idea of reading Edgar Rice Burroughs for the "science" really stones me. I couldn't care less how many mistakes there are in his books; I don't read them for the science, I read them for the adventure.

I've never had any difficulty remembering the details of a serial between installments; in fact I'll tend to remember it better in hunks than all at once, since I'll think about it between installments and if I read it all at once there may be little to bring it to my attention after it has been absorbed. I think the term cliff-hangers is somewhat inaccurate as there aren't many real cliff-hangers in stf serials, just breaks.

Bobbie Gray - VAGARY I suppose it is somewhat ridiculous of me, but the idea of corporal punishment fills me with much more horror than does the idea of capital punishment. Capital punishment may not be necessary, but it can still be dignified, solemn, all that crap. Corporal punishment seems to me a blow at the dignity of man, it degrades the one doing the flogging as well as the one being flogged--just as slaveowners were said to degrade man by admitting that men could be slaves. So I feel that even if corporal punishment works, it is immoral.

The idea that baths, especially hot baths, were enervating and sinful was an early Christian one. The early Christians were mostly a downtrodden lot: slaves, freedmen, peasants, etc. They passionately hated the upper classes and the Roman Empire. They rejected everything that they thought part of Roman civilization. This included baths as the Romans had taken great delight in them.

If there are any practicing witches in the U.S. they keep awfully quiet about it. I get around and I know some pretty far-out people. I think that if there were witches I'd at least have heard rumors, and I've never heard even a shred of one. Things like that Los Angeles witch shop cater mostly to the joke trade. It's all considered so remote that people joke about it and distribute witch kits as door prizes and all that.

There is quite a bit of voodoo in the U.S. though, brought in by West Indians. I've even come across the remains of ritual sacrifices on the Columbia campus.

I've read Dugan's Devil's Brood and thought it quite good. In general however I like his historical novels better than his straight histories. Many people write good history, but very few write absolutely authentic historical novels.

Camp Crazy sure sounds like a place to avoid. This was most interesting. I eagerly await the explanation.

If the British Army is anything like the American, it's easier to get away with a major crime (I know of cases where murder of fellow soldiers was winked at) than it is

16.

with minor infractions of the rules--even when caught. This has often puzzled me, but I've seen it happen under circumstances where I was sure that those getting off lightly couldn't possibly know anything on anybody.

Re Lady Chatterly's Lover. I don't think that Lawrence was trying to be "modern and daring" in using the language that he did, but that there was nothing actually shocking about the words themselves. The shock takes place in individual people's reaction to them. And many people are not shocked at them at all and use them quite naturally themselves. This varies from class to class and even from region to region in the same country, not to mention from group to group. I gather that England has stronger verbal taboos than does the U.S., but I imagine that even in England many people, even whole groups of people use the words quite naturally and not from the same motives that cause little boys to write "dirty" words on lavatory walls.

It's happened quite frequently that people have been shocked by certain words or even concepts in HABAKKUK (or the famous issue of A L'AEANDON) and have assumed that my intent, or the writer's intent was to shock. This is simply not true. I suppose that I deliberately shocked people when I was in my teens, but I am 34 now and have long outgrown all that nonsense. I'll even try to avoid shocking people, if it can be done without too much trouble.

I also gather than the British regard adultery far more seriously than do Americans. Here, it's something you shouldn't do of course and it'll probably break up the marriage, but there's no particular stigma attached to it. That too varies from group to group. But amongst fans say...In fact there's no stigma at all attached to a guy's making it with a married woman. She shouldn't be committing adultery of course, but he's not married. Our attitude seems to be more that adultery is disloyalty to one's mate rather than a social crime, so if a guy's unmarried there's no difference as far as he's concerned with making it with a married or an unmarried woman. And most Americans regard a young man without a sex life with a great deal of contempt. And of course one shouldn't make love to the wives of one's friends, but that again is a question of disloyalty, not a social crime.

Bob Lichtman - ZOUNDS I generally enjoy ZOUNDS, Bob. I did this time, short as it was. Maybe I'm just getting used to your ditto, but I think your writing style is getting better all the time. It's smoother and less self conscious.

Alan Lewis - SPACE CHARGE Bloch was superb. I don't see how anyone can be so right as often as Bob is. And he says it so well too.

I don't know of anyone that wants big mailings just to have big mailings or who wants mailings full of bad mailing comments. There is no law that says mailing comments have to be bad. You don't have to compose them on stencil you know. You obviously could write good mailing comments; you see the faults in your present ones, which is the first step. But your comments aren't as bad as you say they are. They have a certain vigor and your personality comes through. They are certainly much better than OMPALOG was.

And the reasons people have been viewing OMPA with alarm is not that it still doesn't have goodies like Ethel and Archie and Georges Spencer and Locke and Mal and Daphne and Atom and Terry Jeeves and Bobbie Gray and Dick Ellington and many, many more, but because valued old members have been quitting in droves and other like Ethel, have been talking about quitting even if they have loyally remained on. The objection wasn't to small mailings, but to loss of interest on the part of the members and to the fact that for a long time each mailing was smaller than the last.

we also get letters...

AVRAM DAVIDSON Aaahh, Pellucidar (it IS that, isn't it, not, as your text has
410 W. 110th St. it, Pellicudar?), aaahh... So let me tell you. I think I got
New York 25, N.Y. the first of these books when I was in the 4th grade, which was
probably about the same time that you were in the 4th grade.

There was a preface sort of thing, and it referred to one of the characters in the book as "so and so" (I forget the name), of Tarzana. And went on to say, "Pellucidar, as every school boy knows, etc." Now I had no idea that this was a cliché. I took it literally. I was disturbed that there was one school boy, namely me, who didn't know that Pellucidar, etc. So I asked my father if he had learned anything about Pellucidar when he was in school. My poor father, who had left school for good and all when he was in the 4th grade, and hadn't had time to read a book since, knit his brows and after a moment said he thought he'd heard it mentioned. Not long after that I learned that there was a place called Tarzana (eventually I was to beat the Tarzana Branch of the Bank of America out of \$1.75--no mean feat). Ergo, there was a place called Pellucidar. And right after that, boy, the old American Weekly, then edited by A. Merritt, who, after a hard day's work cooking up Horrors ("NAILED HER FATHER'S HEAD TO FRONT DOOR" went one headline) for the Yahoos, went home and tenderly tended his garden on Long Island: it consisted entirely of poisonous plants; the American Weekly, I say, ran a piece on the Hollow Earth Theory, with illustrations. How, after that, could there be any doubt? There were P*I*C*T*U*R*E*S, weren't there? So I fully believed in the hollow earth, in Pellucidar, in its tiny sun--whose rays, popping out occasionally through the holes at the poles, constituted the auroras borealis and australis--and in its endless and upcurving horizons. Did I, then, it may be asked, believe the stories Burroughs wrote about Pellucidar? Not for a single moment. I believed in Africa, but I didn't have to believe in Tarzan, did I?

Busby's IN THE ROAD...or, The Subterfugeans, is--if one may coin a phrase, "Too much." Both in the hip (hep?) (bob?) (bip?) sense and otherwise. It is very funny, but too much sugar for a penny. I seriously suggest he shorten it, try it on the pro magazines, starting with PLAYBOY, then the NYer, then ROGUE, etc. Seriously, Buz.

John Berry is BITTER.

Alva Rogers's REQUIEM FOR ASTOUNDING is a fine piece. I will repeat it, so the reverent tones may be clearly audible all the way to Berkeley: Alva Rogers's is a fine article. It is, in large measure, also an article on my own life in the 30's. The part ASTOUNDING played in my development I won't attempt to assess, but between the time my mother quietly hid the teddy bear and the time I went off to war, without any crap, the magazine was a prime influence on me, and I can't think a bad one.

I dunno, maybe Rogers' piece isn't a fine one, maybe it's a rotten one, maybe any similar recherche de temps perdu would have gotten me as this one did; I dunno... Stop crying, for crissake, willya?

In particular, though I don't want to smother you in I Remember details of how it was to be a growing boy reading ASTOUNDING during the 30's, let me say that I'm glad Alva singled out Elliot Dold, whose "interior illustrations provided some of the best science fiction artwork of all times." Indeed, yes! Really, a classic illustrator, and, in my opinion, too little remembered and appreciated. One can no more mistake a Dold than one can a Paul, a Finlay (Old Style), or a Bok.

They don't draw them like that any more.

Which brings us to VITUPERATIONS, the section headed cryptically AMBLE-MERCER, and Vaughn Wilkins. If Valley Beyond Time is the one about the Lost Welsh Colony, I didn't much relish it, maybe because it was a juvenile and I wasn't, but generally there is always something for me to enjoy in a V.W. novel. I won't comment on your comment on his characterization, but had you noticed that there are always

(in the adult ones, anyway) the same staple features, but always, viz: There is a Young Boy, whose Parentage is Often Mysterious. There is a Beautiful Girl. There is a Gentleman of Advanced Years, who always gets the Beautiful Girl to be his Wedded Wife, though a Cad may have had a nibble at her beforehand. There are invariably Loathesome Foreign Royalties, generally of the House of Hanover and/or Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, really s---t-heels; but they Get Their Lumps, don't you worry. There is usually, too, at least one and sometimes more than one Very Old Lady who sucks comfits and Shows Spunk when you least expect it. And I should not and will not neglect that somebody in the story runs An Elaboratory, where he experiments with Things in Bottles, or Makes Engines for which the world is Not Yet Ready... also, scenes of Early Social Unrest and the Dreadful Life of the Lower Classes...

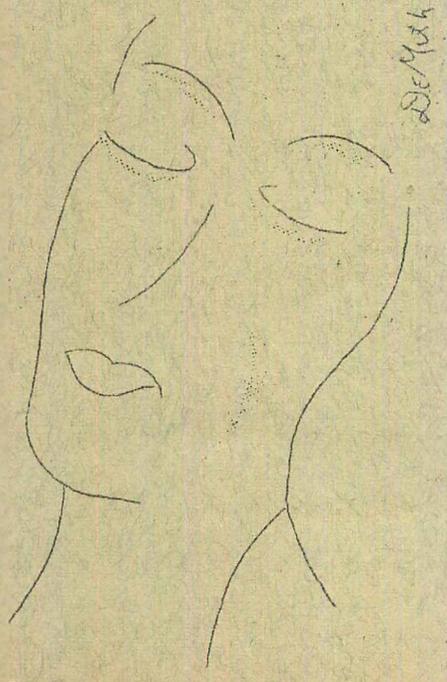
Now: am I right or am I right? His books must almost write themselves; but still, I like'em. And since we are some'at on the subject of the smarmy House of Hanover, leave me say, re DECKINGER-GLOOM, that it was not neither "Konnigsberg" who put horns on George I to-be. Guy's name was if I'm not mistook, Phillipp Christoph, Graf von Konigsmark. Yes?

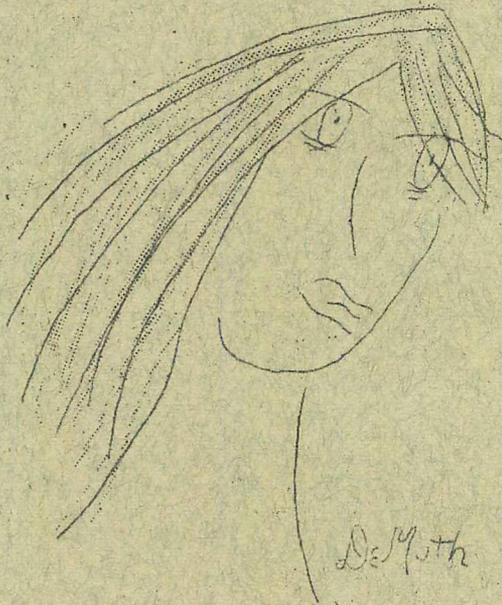
In the sura MARSOLO-HAYES, you refer to TV equipment. I will now tell you about the Magick TV gadget. My mother has an Admiral, I think it's c. 10 yrs old by now.. About four years ago she suddenly started to get ham operator calls on it. I asked the cops what to do, they said call the FCC (I think); the Feds said to communicate with the Admiral people. They said a certain type of shield would cut out those loud CQs during Stop The Music, that only about one set in one thousand had this trouble so the mfgers didn't bother putting in shields in the factory, but would send them--absolutely free--to CQ Sufferers, AND--if set was less than a year old--would install them, free, too. So I wrote Admiral. Admiral asked for about 16 different sets of numbers, to get which I had to crawl inside and out, & all the while the TV dialogue was drowned out by loud shouts of CQ, CQ, CQ, etc. I sent in the numbers, they sent the shield. Well, sir, it works like a charm. I never even unpacked it, I just put it on top of the set, and do you know, from that day to this there has never been any interference or CQ again? This is a True story.

I have no TV myself, I have a Granco FM radio. Your comments on Bernstein's Candide ("superb...simply superb"), SCATALOG-WILSON, remind me of the night I had turned into the sack at six in the afternoon, feeling tired, ill, queer, but kept flipping the radio dial. I got the Bernstein Candide. I didn't like it. The music was very odd. And I got the weirdest damned feeling while she was singing, that I could see her; and I didn't like the way she moved her arms, and her nose was flat and hideous, and her voice... anyway, I flipper to something soother. That was c. six weeks ago. I haven't been able to get the music out of my mind. It haunts me. omeday I'll have to hear it all the way through.

As for comments on DHL, Love vs Lust (VAGARY-GREY), may I quote Robert Sheckley? Thank you. "Love is for animals. Only human beings can appreciate lust."

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Someone in the
issue remarks on
Bertrand Russell's
anti-bomb activit-
ies. I am led to realize that by heaven I
admire Bertie more wholeheartedly than any
other living man, though I admire very few
men hardly wholeheartedly at all. I think
his current activities are damfoolish but





I wish my own damnfoolishness were as insignificant in ratio to my wisdom as his own. John Berry made some deprecating remark in WARHOON about this old man, who is nearly 90, making a spectacle of himself squatting on the pavement in the anti-bomb demonstrations. All I can say is, I hope that when I am as old as Russell my mind and conscience are in as good health as his.

Why do you think Double British Summer Time was a bad thing, or at least "too much of a good thing"? With the clock advanced two hours in that latitude, during high summer the twilight lingered till near midnight. One of my chief recollections of summer in England during the war, the summer of 1944, is of the long long summer evenings, ball games and other past-times continuing in natural light till past ten o'clock. I was on Charge of Quarters at the 857th bomb squadron operations office during most of the summer, and I used to spend the evenings reading those little Armed Services paperback editions

at the desk, where I could look out across a little meadow and a grove of big trees--a bit of rural England right in the middle of all this business of war--and watch the light mellow and fade on the slope of grass. A few hundred miles away they were fighting on the beaches, but it was a lovely summer in England.

I croggled at your remark that Margaret Mitchell has improved on Tolstoy, but I'll be all right after I get my eyes tucked back into their sockets again so I can wear glasses again. I own that I have never read the book nor seen the movie, but very recently I read a page or two of the paperback version at the drugstore. I thought it was very bad. Ghastly. I may have picked a passage written on a bad day or something, but it was chosen at random and how much of an omlet do you gotta eat to know the egg was bad? I strongly suspect that your admiration for Gone With the Wind is of a piece with Dick Lupoff's love for Captain Marvel or mine for WILD WEST WEEKLY: born of a preposterous nostalgia--you have, you admit on the previous page, "always been a very nostalgic person"--for the wonderful days when you were young and innocent and didn't know any better than to adore dreadful nonsense. And now you wallow in it as mindlessly as your cat in a bed of catnip. ((Undoubtedly this enters into it. However, I warned you that it is not that I think Margaret Mitchell a great writer--actually I would rank her slightly above the Bronte sisters--but that I think Tolstoy is a bad one. Also, in reading only a couple of pages at random in a novel, the only thing you can form an estimate of is the writer's style. I gather that style is very important to you--to me it is secondary.))

"Ho!" Elinor Busby always strikes me as such a lovely, keen, loveable, limited woman. ((???.!!!)) Such wonderful perceptions wasted on such minor and conventional fare. It rather brightened my day to see Elinor refer to those words in Lady Chatterley as "unusual." Anybody who spent any time in the army would be astounded; I remember Burbee's remark that if one of those four-letter words were stricken from the language the war effort would immediately grind to a halt.

Alva Rogers' series on ASTOUNDING is quite good, but it gripes me a little--partly because I wanted someday to write something like this myself, and partly because his article is hardly more than a listing of the stories in those old issues. It wakens old memories, but a scan of the tables of contents of those old issues would do the job as well--or better. For Alva of course neglects to mention some of

TED WHITE
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I saw this letter in your lettercol from Dick Schultz and I was croggled. Really croggled. A Mysterious Force picked me up off of the couch and propelled me to the typer, and here I am, writing a letter of comment on an apazine, which I never do.

I dunno where Schultz got this impression me (that I'm "very, very down on life in general and optimism in particular"), but it's quite possible that this is merely because of the fact that outside of a couple of fairly small groups I haven't said a great deal about Life and Optimism, at all. I mean, it never occurred to me to write, for instance, a thirty-page article copiously annotated with 140 references about my impressions and opinions of Life and Optimism.

I'm not really a cynic; certainly not the sort Schultz envisions me. I lack Schultz's "faith," I imagine, but I know what I believe in, and I hold that fairly passionately. My stand on optimism is a cautious one. I've been promised things, or led to expect things and been inevitably disappointed by their non-appearance far too often to expect a great deal of anything; but on the other hand, my pessimism is only enough so that most of what does happen comes as a pleasant surprise--I'm not blinded to its pleasantness by such pessimism.

Mostly I'm just the guy who doesn't fight things, who refuses to ally himself with Groups and Schools and Parties. When I say I don't "fight" things, I mean I've learned a bit about how to roll with the punches so that events do not become horrific Win Everything Or Die propositions, and whatever happens I'm always cheerful about tomorrow's prospects. I dunno how much this has to do with it, but I've managed to enjoy life pretty hugely in the past several years, and I get quite a kick out of the thought of another forty or sixty years of living.

Part of life is contests in restricted arenas, and I dig that sort of thing as much as anyone. In other words, I enjoy picking on fuggheads--or people I think are fuggheads--in fandom. I suppose the "feuding articles" (as Warner terms them) or "blasts" (as you call 'em) are what gave this impression to Schultz that I'm some sort of Angry Young Man (well, Eney decries me in the Cult for "parroting the current Beat or Angry Young Man line"), but really, In The Flesh, as you know, Bill, I'm a very ordinary and pleasant--if occasionally somewhat earnest--guy.

I don't think I've blown up a church this year.

It's very easy to have a favorite jazz tune, Elinor Busby. It could be such in at least two different ways. The first is the most obvious: a particular version (jazz) of a standard melody which one digs to the exclusion of other recorded versions. Or it might be a tune written by a jazz musician--original to jazz--which one likes. (A famous one would be "Lullaby of Birdland," or "Night in Tunisia," or many of Duke Ellington's or Count Basie's pieces...) Or, to name a third way, it could be any tune which you dig as done by jazz musicians. I particularly like Jimmy Giuffre's beautiful version of "My Funny Valentine," for instance, and I often like jazz versions of "Summertime," since it offers a lot to any sensitive musician.

I found Lady Chatterly's Lover an overrated, moralistic bore.

The ASTOUNDING review continues nicely. I had thought myself too jaded to enjoy this, but I was wrong. Gad, there were giants in those days...!

Alva mistakes the two-color illos in the December 1939 ASF for a Campbellian experiment, but he's wrong. This was a chain-wide Street & Smith experiment which also appeared in THE SHADOW, DOC SAVAGE, and others for several issues. The results were no worse than the two-color work which appeared in FANTASTIC and AMAZING in the mid-fifties, and IMAGINATION later. Another layout/illo device in ASF of the same time: using a full-page illo and title on a right-hand page and then on the next page (after one turns the page) printing the title and by-line again before beginning the story; was also common to most of the S&S pulps. I should imagine they all had one art editor; I know Graves Gladney and, later, Modest Stein, did covers for THE SHADOW and DOC SAVAGE as well as ASF, and Hubert Rogers did covers for THE WHISPERER and THE WIZARD/CASH GORMAN. (Orban also did a lot of interiors for the detective, adventure mags, and Edd Cartier got his start on THE SHADOW in 1937 or so.)

