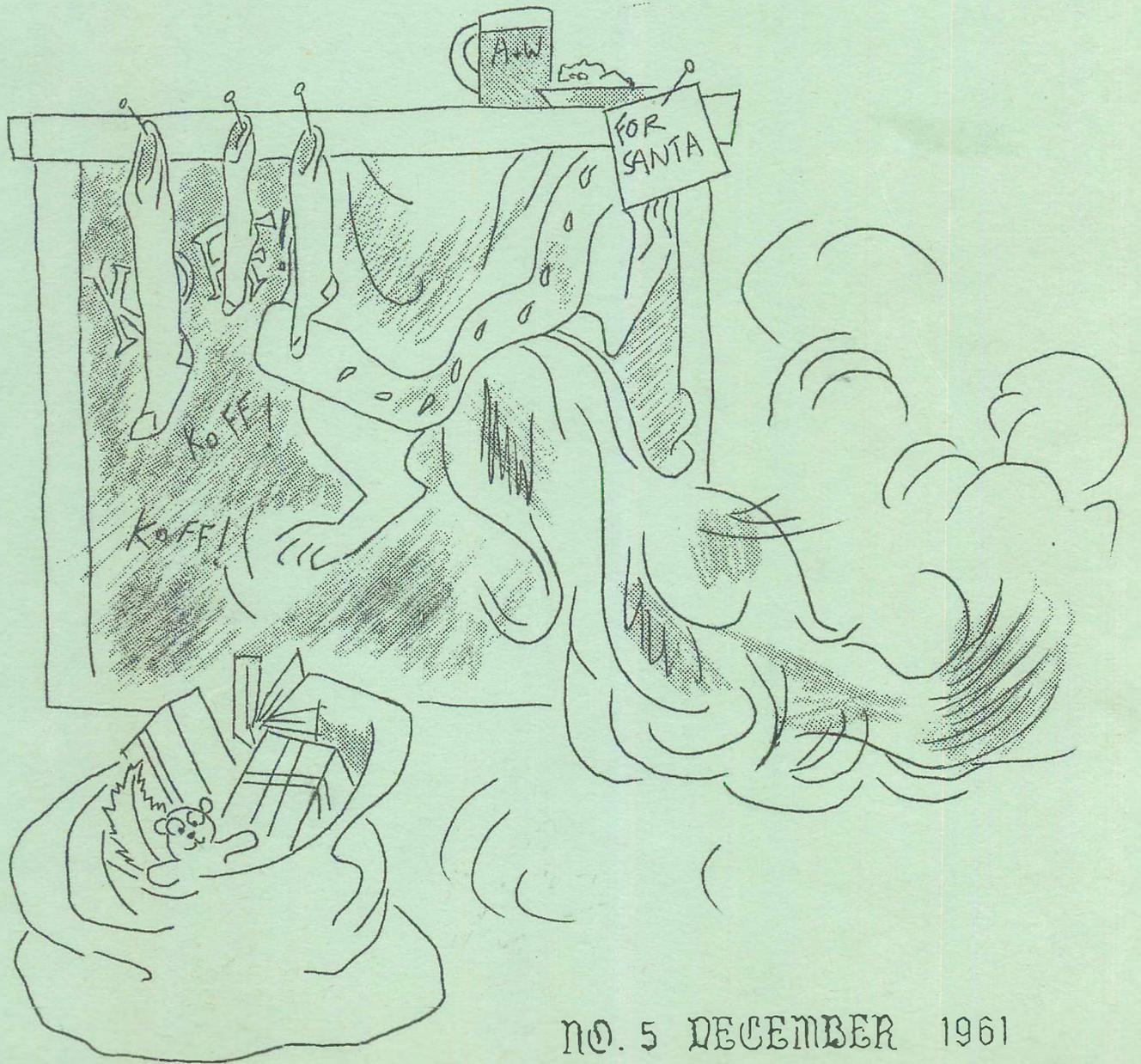


VIPER



NO. 5 DECEMBER 1961

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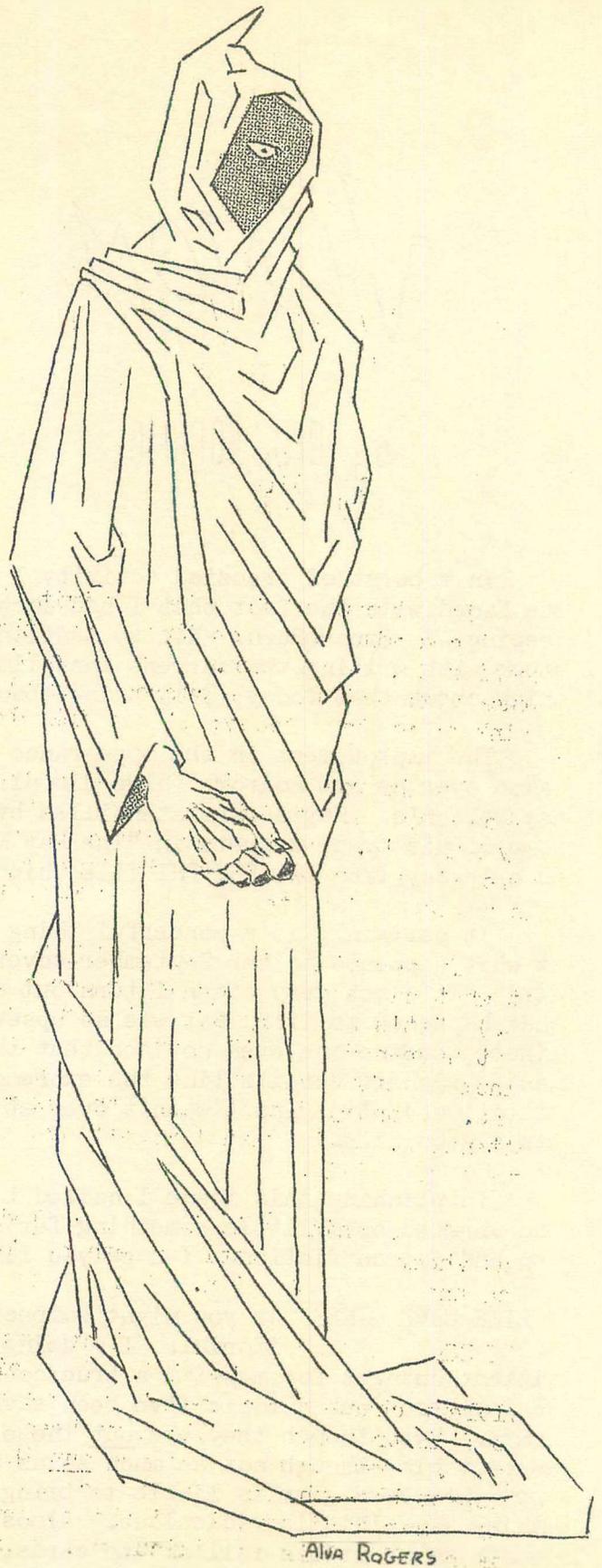
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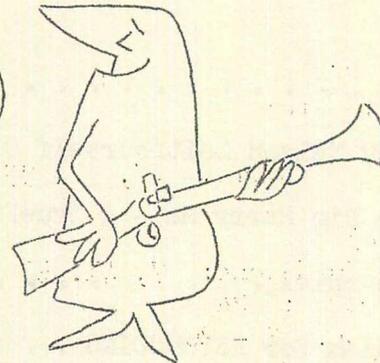
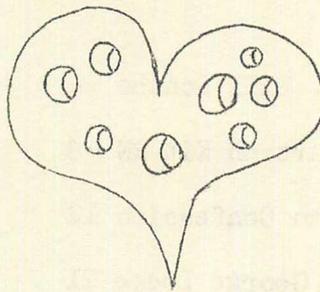
A Hook & Crook Publication

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VENOM

by BILL DONAHO



In a burst of frenzied activity I finished up the September VIPER on October 12; then I was faced with the fact that I had three weeks to get the December VIPER off to ye deadline-keeping AE, Bruce Burn. Not to mention the unfortunate circumstance that this mailing I am stuck with writing the current installment of the OMPA round robin, "The Wall". But I won't think about that today; I'll think about that tomorrow. Or sometime Real Soon Now.

The improvement in the appearance of VIPER is due to the fact that Alva Rogers has taken over as Art Editor. Alva did all the headings and stencilled all the illos except Ray Nelson's. Ray's were stencilled by fandom's #1 cartoonist himself. Ray also reveals some of his trade secrets in "The Ray Nelson Do It Yourself Cartoon Kit." This article is a legacy from the PSI PHI file which I ~~got~~ inherited. Thanks, Bob.

It certainly is a wonderful thing that Alva is taking over now. Pat got quite upset at what happened to her September cover. (I'm entirely innocent; someone else stencilled it.) "It's not very often I turn out an illo that I think is worth publishing, and look what happened to it!" Pat was so upset that she gazed in horror at the cover for some minutes before she even noticed that the "witch's" wand had been left out of her upraised hand. (Sundry details like the extremely oddly shaped crystal ball were occupying her attention.) I'm glad I wasn't over at the Ellington's at the time. Sorry, Pat. It really was a good illo.

In planning this issue I called to mind certain statements and expressed preferences and whomped up a little something for Al Lewis and Bruce Burn, those grrrreat lovers of fan and faaaan fiction. I hope you like it boys; it's all yours.

I LIKE CARD GAMES As you might suspect, nothing much has happened to me since my last editorial. I'm doing much the same things that I was three weeks ago. No violent changes for me--I'm a true conservative. But that leaves me nothing to write about--so I'll trot out a topic I've been saving for just such an emergency: cards. I like card games. Even though they are out these days. Bridge, gin rummy and poker are still fairly respectable--though not as much so as they were ten years ago--but an expressed liking for any other card game is liable to bring you plenty of sneers. It's almost as depraved as liking TV. This is ridiculous. Almost any card game can be a hell of a lot of fun. There's something about the fall of the cards, the strategy of playing, that is endlessly fascinating, whether or not the games are played for money. Many a time I have sat up all night playing cards. If I had been doing anything else I would have konked out before dawn, but with cards I'm still there. Maybe I'm not very fresh, but bhoym am I alert!

Of course some card games are more fascinating than others. I suppose canasta is my favorite. It has all the advantages of a rapid pace and ups and downs of fortune as the cards fall, but at the same time allows ample scope for strategy, ploys and devious plays

in general. It's fun, like. Chance enters into canasta to a large extent, but it's not a game of chance like craps or roulette. Good players win.

'Tis a pity, but canasta has always been O*U*T with the intellectuals--back when it was a national craze the general attitude seemed to be: "Good! Now all the housewives will have canasta clubs instead of bridge clubs and stop degrading the game." But now the housewives are back to bridge and canasta seems out of style with everyone. I wish it were still popular. As it is I can't find anyone to play with me.

But it has always been difficult for me to find canasta players. Back in the early fifties Eunice (HABAKKUK columnist) and I would run a drag-net through the New York streets, looking for a couple of canasta players--any canasta players, no matter how bad or indifferent they might be. We preferred the four-handed game, but would play three-handed if we couldn't find but one player. Six-handed canasta was a remote dream and we wouldn't even consider playing two-handed. Two-handed canasta is a silly game. In fact I find all two-handed card games--except cribbage--duller than hell. And of course Eunice and I never played partners--the opposition would have had a chance.

One reason I like Berry's POT POURRI so much is that John usually has something about canasta in it. John writes like a great canasta player. I'm sorry I didn't know he played when he was over in '59. I would have tried to get up a game. But that's what happens when you can't find players: you eventually give up looking.

After Eunice went to Chicago I couldn't find enough players for a game until 1956 when some of the regular droppers-in at the Dive turned out to be canasta fiends. And even in the couple of years I hadn't been playing some weird changes had taken place: canastas of wild cards even. Horrors! This made a pleasant interlude in the canastaless desert, but after the Dive broke up things became desparate again. I gradually stopped looking. And who knows how many canasta players have passed in the night? Berry, you shoulda told me.

Although hearts is an entirely different game I find it an almost-substitute for canasta. It's not as good a game, but then it's fairly easy to find hearts players. Dick and Pat are addicts too and we frequently manage to locate a fourth. (I know that some people play three-handed and five-handed hearts, but I prefer not to even think about such depravity.) It's one of Danny's major character failings that he doesn't like hearts, but he will play if beaten hard enough.

Do you play hearts in England? All the cards are dealt out. Each player looks at his hand, chooses three cards and passes them to the player on his left. (Some people play that one deal you pass to the left, the next to the right.) After everyone passed their cards the player to the left of the dealer leads. You must follow suit if you can; if you can't you can discard what you want to. The player who plays the highest card in the suit lead takes the trick and leads again. The object of the game is to take as few points as possible and to give as many as possible to the appropriate people. Low score wins. Hearts, played properly, is a very cutthroat game.

We play the variety in which each heart counts one point and the Queen of Spades counts 13. Some people play with an additional wrinkle: the Jack of Diamonds counts 13 for you. I don't like this much. And if you manage to get all the hearts and the Queen of Spades you give everyone else 26 points.

I first learned how to play an entirely different variety: The Queen of Spades counts 10 points and each heart but the ten counts 10. The Ten of Hearts also counts 10 points. You'd be surprised what a tremendous difference in strategy this makes, both in heart management and in avoiding two bad cards instead of one. But anyhow, hearts can be fun. Like so many other card games though, it is no fun unless most of the players know how to play it well. Otherwise it can become a drag.

In this respect poker is different from most card games. Bad players add to the charm. Their cash is always welcome. But even in poker a game with only bad players can be pretty boring unless you are raking in an awful lot of loot. Much of the interest is in locking horns with good players. My approach to poker is just a strengthening of my approach to all the card games that I like: I don't play the cards; I play the players. This is of course somewhat of an exaggeration as a knowledge of the cards and probabilities is necessary, but playing the players is my general approach to the game.

I really don't care much for bridge. As far as I am concerned too much of the game depends upon the bidding and the bidding depends far too much on detailed and minute systems for communicating with your partner. I just never could get much interested in the game, even though as a tad I doted on forty-two which is, loosely speaking an auction-bridge-like game played with dominoes. Nevertheless I play bridge fairly well--probably just about as well as I can play a game I'm basically not interested in. (I get dragged into games to make a fourth too.)

Gin rummy bores me stiff. I haven't played the game in over ten years and I can't think of anything likely to induce me to play it again. I'd even rather go to a baseball game!

As a child I played the standard games like old maid and several varieties of rummy, and when I was in the army I played casino. I liked casino all right, but after I got out of the army I found I wasn't interested enough in the game to hunt for players, so I gave it up. I wasn't exposed to pinochle until in my twenties and have never played it, principally because I do have other interests besides cards and didn't see any point in learning another card game. In defiance of this principle however I began to learn cribbage. I liked the game fine, but drifted away from that too.

I don't consider blackjack (twenty-one) a card game, but there are those who do. Anyhow I dislike it. I consider it mechanical, cut-and-dried and boring. But then I don't like to gamble. (I don't consider poker or any other game of skill gambling.) Of course it takes a certain knowledge of the game to play blackjack, but even tic tac toe has a system.

I think that games of solitaire are worse than cross word puzzles, and you can't hardly get worse than that.

Considering all the games of cards listed in Hoyle, this seems a remarkably small number, but--except for various children's games I didn't bother to mention--I can't even recall having seen any other games played. Maybe I'm lead a sheltered life.

SPICE IS NICE. Something has happened to me in the past three weeks come to think of it (I've also had four upper front teeth pulled, but let's not go into that), I've discovered a good Mexican restaurant. I've always been fond of Mexican food, but it's pretty difficult to come upon a real good Mexican restaurant. Almost all of them fall into two categories (1) Family-type places that serve plain, hearty "home-cooked" food. These can be good, but they are hardly inspiring. (2) Good restaurants that serve Mexican food that has been despised and highly Americanized to suite the gringo taste. I was amused to note in COLONIAL EXCURSION that Ron Bennett thought that the Mexican restaurant Bjo took us to after the Solacon had food far too spicy for him and that Americans have developed cast-iron stomachs, etc. (I really don't see how anyone that likes English mustard ((and I do)) can complain about the spiciness of any food.) I hate to break it to you, Ron, but that was one of those Mexican restaurants where they have Americanized the food; like, most of the spice has been left out.

I often think wistfully of the Mexican restaurants in Austin, Texas. The best restaurants in town are Mexican and they serve superlative food. Perhaps their food isn't as spicy as the Mexicans eat it, but it's spiced as I like it. And naturally I am not interested in the spice for its "hotness". Spices have taste, flavor and aroma, you know. I also eat and enjoy bland foods, but damnit a spicy food should be spicy.

Anyhow, through the years I have eaten in many Mexican restaurants, always hoping. At last the lightning struck. I wandered into a Mexican restaurant entirely by accident. I ordered. Most of the food was as good as that in the Austin restaurants. Some of it was better. I finished my meal in a glow and ordered another complete dinner. This also came up to expectations. And the place also has good wine at about 10¢ per bottle more than you'd pay for it in a liquor store. (The usual mark-up on wine in decent American restaurants is something like 50% to 100% more than you would have to pay for the same wine at a liquor store, and of course restaurants get it far cheaper than that.)

I went back again a couple of days later with Danny and Vince. Everything we ordered was delicious. Like, drool. It's not only a matter of correct spicing either: it's excellent materials, put together just right, cooked exactly the right amount of time, and served to you piping hot. Drool. Evidently this is also a family-type restaurant--but a family of a somewhat different type--as the menu says that some of the recipes have been in the family for generations.

For those in the area: Casa del Rancho, 917 San Pablo Ave., Albany, Calif.

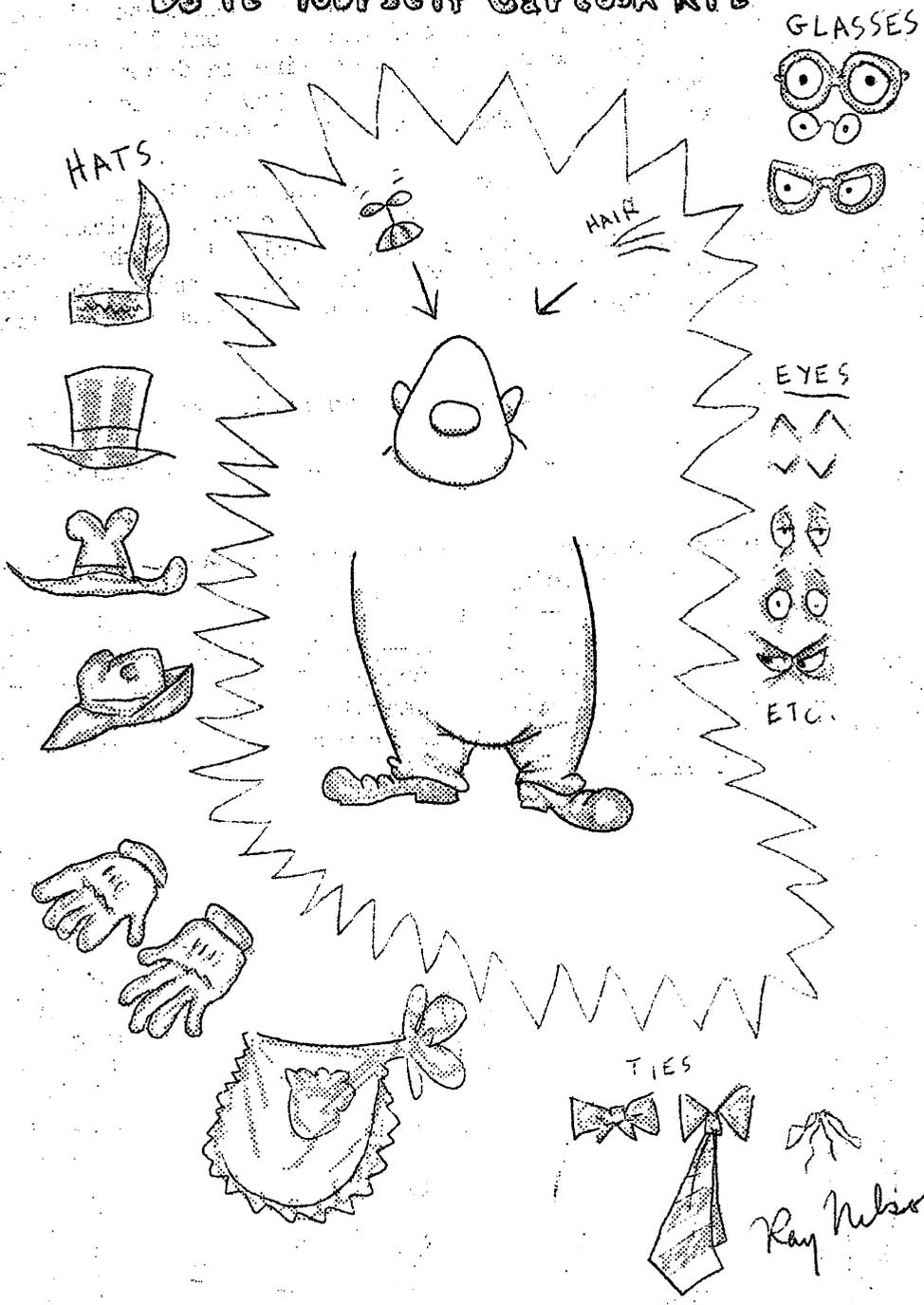
I must warn you however that it is not a Fancy Expensive Restaurant: It is a Fancy Cheap Restaurant.

HOME BREW REVISITED The brew continues to get better and better. The brewers yeast arrived from Buz and is being put to good use. It does make a difference. We have perfected and standardized our ale--and if I do say so myself it's damn good. It makes the best American commercial ale look--and taste--pretty silly. Our beer is pretty good, but there's plenty of room for improvement. I think I'll try making my own malt. But we are still experimenting around with stout. We haven't had too good results here yet. Does any of the Irish contingent know how Guinness is brewed? Like someone who has just made a tour of the brewery, Ian MacAuley?

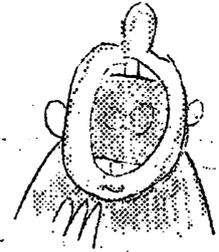
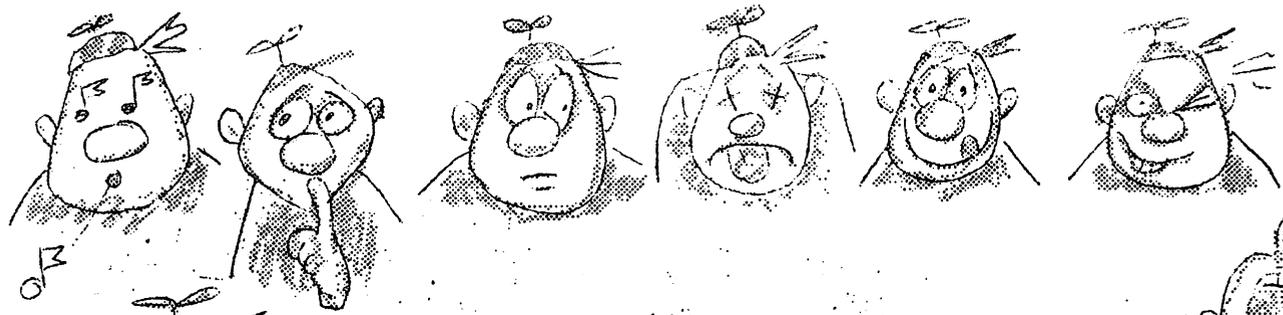


THE RAY NELSON

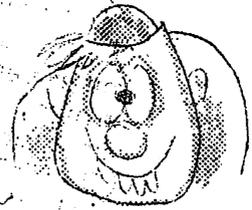
Do It Yourself Cartoon Kit



Ray Nelson



Ry Nelson



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Those cartoons in the border are not a frame or anything. They are indeed a "Draw-your-own-Ray-Nelson-cartoon kit". The body on the first page goes with the heads. As for the arms and hands and props, etc., we trust you. You draw 'um in. The heads can also be used along with reviews to show your opinion of things--a smile for a good review, a frown for a bad one, etc. You can have rubber stamps made of them to illustrate letters or print your own wallpaper (for the guest room, of course) or impress girls with fake tatoos. They can be etched on glasses and glazed on plates, screen-printed on T-shirts and propeller beanies. You can make slides of them to demonstrate psychology lectures or splice them into movie films to subliminally advertize your fanzine, along with those frames you've already spliced in on the films you show girls--the ones that say "Sleep with me" and "Give me presents," etc.

The only thing you now lack for turning out your own Ray Nelson cartoons is jokes. Here is a quick course in joke manufacture. There are only five main types of humor now in popular use. They are (1) The Derailed Train of Thought joke (2) The Running Gag (3) The Too-True Truism (4) The Open Secret and (5) Out of Place Juxtapositions.

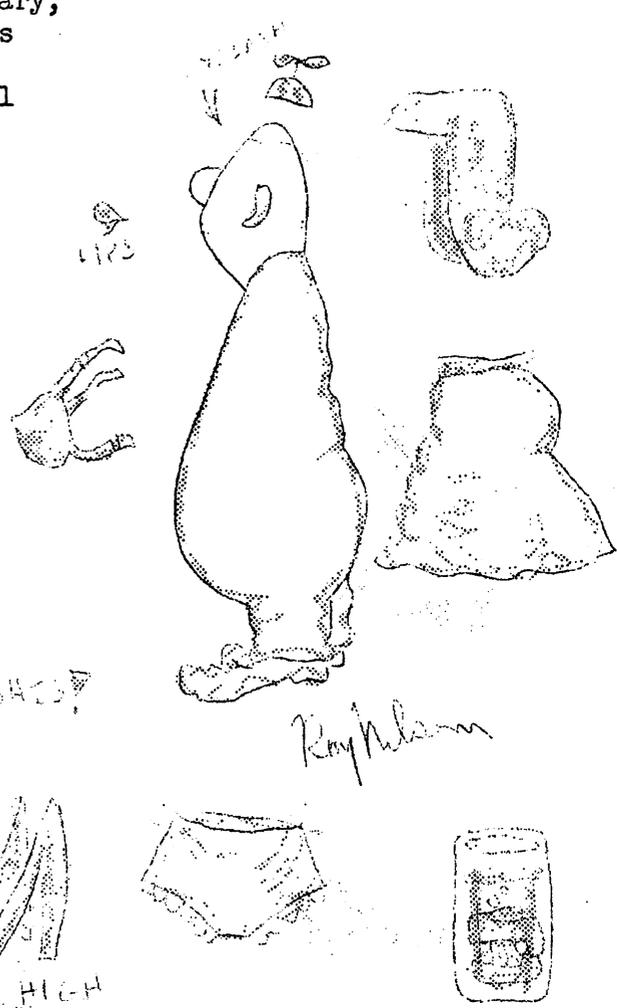
(1) The Derailed Train of Thought. This depends upon building up an expectation, then disappointing that expectation as brutally as possible. Take a certain Chan Day cartoon for instance. A wife says to her husband who is reading the newspaper in an easy chair: "Can I have the car today, Dear? I'm leaving you." The "Can I have the car today, Dear?" builds up an expectation of the ordinary, the everyday. "I'm leaving you" derails this train of thought--explodes it even. Some of the best derailed train of thought jokes deal with idiots and madmen who derail the trains of thought of the normal world and make normality itself seem more idiotic and mad than their wildest fantasies. Puns and plays-on-words are "derailers" too.

(2) The Running Gag. This is nothing more nor less than simple repetition. It doesn't much matter what you repeat, if you repeat it often enough, it will lose all meaning and become absurd and funny.

(The falacy of mass advertising lies in just that. Who actually uses Burma Shave anymore?) It helps if what you repeat is a little funny to start with --or at least stupid, but even a perfectly ordinary name like Alfred E. Newman (the name of a rather good composer of movie background music) can become screamingly funny by means of simple repetition. This is the easiest type of humor to master, since all it requires is a rubber stamp and persistence.

TO DRAW WOMAN
ADD FALSIES,
A SKIRT,
LONG HAIR
AND EYELASHES!

MAYBE HIGH
HEELS!



Ray Nelson

(3) The Too-True Truism. A too-true truism is something like "Candy's dandy, but likker's quicker." It is a truth, perhaps slightly exaggerated, but stated in so pointed a fashion it jabs you right in the ass. My favorite is the bum's answer to a social worker who told him everyone had equal rights in America. "Yeah," he said. "The right to sleep under bridges in the winter is open to rich and poor alike."

(4) The Open Secret. This is where the reader knows something that the characters in the cartoon don't, as in the cartoons Chas. Adams is always drawing where some monster is sneaking up on somebody or eating somebody or something, and the character speaking in the cartoon doesn't know it, but you do. The more disasterous the secret, the funnier the cartoon. Missing pants, open manholes, banana peels, falling safes, unfaithful wives are only a few of the time-honored "open secrets" that go on getting laughs year in and year out. My favorite is the Chas. Addams cartoon of the wife sitting on a veranda in the tropics. She says in exasperation, "Oh, speak up, George. Stop mumbling!" Behind her is an overturned chair and there is a large boa constrictor on the floor with a distended, vaguely human-shaped middle.

(5) Out of Place Juxtapositions. This is actually an extension of the "Derailed Train of Thought" idea, but it is so often used in modern humor, I thought it was worth a separate category. This is the boy-in-girl's-clothes, the dog-who-talks, the child philosopher, the soft-hearted-gangster, etc. gag. These too are fairly easy to produce, particularly if you have a dictionary of opposites. Just mix the opposites or strongly contrasting elements, and there you are.

There you are indeed: the first graduate of the Ray Nelson cartoon school. I wish you lick in the brilliant career that now awaits you!



I MADE HIM
MARRY ME
A TRUE FAN CONFESSION

I hit the police matron with a copy of the FANCYCLOPEDIA. "Let me go! Let me go! It's lies, all lies."

The big beefy woman wrested the pile of fanzines out of my hand. "Save it for the judge Dearie. Come along quiet to your cell now. It's none of my business anyhow, but your sister said you'd been living with those five men. And you only seventeen! And them science-fiction fans or worse. You ought to be ashamed of yourself." She shoved me into the dismal cell and slammed the door.

I fell down on the narrow hard bed and began to cry. So this was what fanac lead to. My wild efforts to be a Big Name Fan had brought me to this. "Dick, Dick, what have I done to you?" What was going to happen to me? What would they do to Dick and the others: Danny, Art, Chuck and Bill? They could be sent up for statutory rape! That wasn't the kind of DETENTION they were looking forward to. And it was all my fault. I had moved into their apartment without asking any of them. I guess I had even taken their minds off fanac, even though I hadn't been sleeping with any of them, but Dick and I loved him so. He and I were going to put out a fanzine together.

My sister. It would have to be Elsie. She hated me. My mother didn't care if I lived or died or what I did so long as I didn't bother her. Elsie used to pick on Fred and me all the time. I don't know what we would have done without each other to love. All we had was each other and science fiction. Science fiction was one thing father had given us anyhow.

My earliest memories were of father and mother fighting. Father was a drunken pro and was always running around with other women and mother didn't approve of his writing science fiction. She wanted him to write nice, refined stuff that would sell.

There were five of us kids. Elsie, Ruth and Tom were much older than Fred and me and would gang up against us. They would pinch us and kick us and trip us just for fun. They even tore the prozines right out of our hands! "Yah! Yah! You're reading that crazy Buck Rogers stuff again." Many a night Fred and I would get a flashlight and read our beloved science fiction magazines under the covers and then cry ourselves to sleep in each other's arms. Oh, those beloved happy days. We thought we were miserably unhappy, but we little knew how well off we were.

When Fred was twelve and I was ten Father sold a story to GALAXY and ran away to Florida with some woman who Mother said was a Big Name Fan. Fred and I didn't know what that was, but the way Mother said it, it sounded dirty.

Tom and Ruth left home as soon as they could and that didn't leave Elsie much to do but to torment Fred and I. Fred was big enough now to stand up to her, so she didn't actually snatch the prozines out of our hands any more, but she used to jeer at us all the time. She had me convinced that I was ugly and no-account and would never amount to anything, that I would just sit around and read science fiction all the time.

So I began to hang around Fred and his gang: Big Dave, Eddie and Richie. They had a thing they called a science fiction fan club. They sat around and talked about science fiction and wrote letters to the prozines and bragged about who was the biggest letterhack. Of course they never let me write a letter myself, but they let me type theirs, and hang around and fetch and carry for them. They were real good to me.

Forawhile all the guys in the club tried to write science fiction. Even I could tell it was mostly pretty bad, but Fred's was the best. It was good enough that when he was eighteen he left home to try to be a dirty pro. He lived in the basement of a condemned building and wrote all the time. I didn't see much of him any more. I missed him like crazy.

I was seventeen by then and had filled out and looked much older. Big Dave started to date me, even though he was a science fiction fan and wasn't much interested in girls. Mother used to warn me against him. "You stay away from that boy. Anybody that would read that stuff has something the matter with him. Science fiction will be the ruination of you yet. You mark my words."



One evening Big Dave came over all excited and began to tell me about fandom. How boys and girls too were putting out magazines of their very own and calling them fanzines. How they all read science fiction, but since that's what brought them together, naturally they didn't talk about it. They talked about everything else and wrote stories and articles and some of them even illustrated them. It all sounded so grand and exciting. Big Dave went on about how they got together in conventions and had a grand time. It all sounded so wonderful I wanted to jump up and down and clap my hands.

And then he told me about how all those fans who were most famous and best liked and did the best work were called Big Name Fans. "Oh, Dave! It all sounds so tremendous! Do you suppose I could be a Big Name Fan too?"

Mother heard me and rushed into the room. "You tramp!" she yelled. "Out of my house. I didn't raise you to talk this way. I've tried and tried, but it's just no use. You're as bad as your father. Science fiction! Fan clubs! And now you're talking about being a Big Name Fan! Get out! I don't want that kind of people around here." She grabbed a broom and began to beat me. Dave took it away from her. "And as for you—you poolroom loafer, drugstore cowboy, science fiction fan...I'll have the Law on you!"

I packed a suitcase and left. That was the last time I saw my mother. I can't say that I miss her. She had never been a mother to me. If she had only warned me of the dangers that threaten someone who wants to be a Big Name Fan and talked to me seriously about it, things might have been different. I don't hate her though. She meant well. She just didn't know any better.

I didn't know where to go or what to do. Fred was away hitchhiking on a trip to Berkeley. I had no money at all. Big Dave said that he knew some friends in New York who had a slum shack where I could stay for awhile. I was afraid of the idea at first—five real fans and all—but Big Dave said that they were nice fellows who would break me in right. I didn't know what else to do, so he took me there.

They called the place The Dive. It was a large nine-room apartment overlooking the Hudson and could have been nice, but it was only half furnished with broken-down furniture and looked very messy. I slept on a small day bed in the dining room which doubled as a couch during the day. All of the fans were nice and seemed to like me. Danny and Dick made advances, but I discouraged them easily. Chuck, Art and Bill seemed to think I was too young and treated me like a kid sister. I began working like mad, trying to keep the place clean, but it was a big problem. I was afraid of the cockroaches.

I got to know the boys real well. I liked Dick the best. He was as cute as a bug's ear and a lot of fun to have around. He had been in the Army in the Far East and been around quite a bit, a sort of traveling giant. His stories were so interesting. Danny was the black Irish heartbreaker type. He drank too much, but it just made him seem more loveable. Bill was fat and jolly. He didn't take anything seriously but food and drink. Chuck was the mad scientist type. He was going to night

school to try to be an engineer and was always performing some sort of weird experiment. Art was the oldest and felt sort of responsible for the whole place. He tried to keep everything in line and be serious and constructive, but ever now and then he would lose his temper as none of us paid any attention to all that.

I know now that it was wrong to stay there, but I didn't think of that at the time. I was used to palling around with boys and felt right at home. I began reading their fanzines and found what I had been missing all my life. I determined then and there that come what may I was going to be a Big Name Fan. Nothing would stand in my way. Nothing.

The Dive was a sort of social center. The boys were all members of a Big Name Fan club and all of the club made the Dive their hangout. Even some Big Name Fans from out of town and some dirty pros used to drop in too. It was exciting to be there. I began to plot and plan how I too could be a Big Name Fan. I didn't read anything but fanzines and even thought about putting out one. Dick taught me to run the mimeos. They had two at the Dive: the Iron Virgin and the Chrome Plated Virgin, but neither one of them had any chrome on it.

One of the dirty pros, Larry, used to give me lots of encouragement. "I'm sure you'll be a Big Name Fan, Pat. I'm sure of it. I just hope you don't make up your mind that you want to rule the world."

I didn't think about Roscoe and whether what I was doing was right or wrong. I had vaguely heard about Roscoe and Ghu, but I really didn't know the first thing about right and wrong ways of fanning, about fanzine fans and convention fans. All I could think about was becoming a Big Name Fan.

I was liking Dick more and more all the time. He had the most interesting letters in fanzines. Dick seemed to go for me too, but one time at one of the week-end brawls we were sitting on the couch reading FANAC and he said, "I like you a lot, Pat, but I might as well tell you now. I'm not the marrying kind."

"Silly," I laughed. "I don't want to get married. That's for old folks. I want to have fun! I want to do lots of fanac and get lots of egoboo and become a Big Name Fan." I could cry now when I think of the naive little neofan I was. I was playing with fire and I didn't know it. All I was aware of was the fanzine-strewn couch and Dick's strong fannish arms around me. I even forgot about becoming a Big Name Fan.

"Darling." He kissed me. I was tingling with fire from head to foot. Married or not I wanted to belong to Dick wholly and completely, and I knew he felt the same way about me. We would be co-editors and put out wonderful fanzines together. We would be publishing Jiants! Big Name Fans!

"Dick, I love you." I was only vaguely aware that we were getting up. I stumbled over Chuck who had passed out in the chair next to us and stepped over Danny who was lying on the floor, necking with some girl or other. I could hear Art and Bill drunkenly arguing about psychology in the kitchen. We slipped down the hall to Dick's room. I knew what to do as I had read the Midwest's P. A. P. A. zine.

After that I moved into Dick's room. Everything was changed. Dick and I were closer together and yet further apart. We discussed fanzines, but we didn't talk any more about putting out our own. We lived only for the moment. Even I knew this Way of Life was wrong, but I tried not to think about it. I was seeing more and more fans and pros, even Big Name Fans. Surely I would become a Big Name Fan soon. It was only a matter of time. It didn't bother Dick. He wasn't at all religious. None of the boys were.

Things weren't the same at the Dive anymore. I got tired of keeping the place clean all by myself and I said so. I had fights with Art and Bill. Danny wouldn't fight and Chuck kept changing the subject. Things went from bad to worse. About that time Fred came back from Berkeley. "I'm surprised to see you here, Pat. This is no life for a nice girl. This isn't the way to become a Big Name Fan. Give it up, Pat. Come live with me and help me be a dirty pro. We can get an apartment together and lead a respectable life.

"No, Fred. I'll help you become a dirty pro, of course, but first I want to be a Big Name Fan on my own." We argued for some time, but didn't get anywhere. Fred finally moved into the Dive too and Big Dave joined him. They began to read fanzines and Fred stopped even trying to write.

More and more fans were spending more and more time at the Dive. It was a real mad house. I grew nervous and irritable. I yelled like a fishwife at every opportunity. I couldn't stand the mess the Dive was in and went back to cleaning it. This was probably my worst time. I was rebellious and miserable and blamed everything and everybody except myself. No one had told me how to be a True Fan when I was a neo, and now that I thought I was no longer a neo, I refused to listen when anybody tried.

The life of the Dive became even more hectic as half the Village moved in. I began to long for peace and quiet, for the leisure to put out my own fanzine. Was this really the way to become a Big Name Fan? I talked to Dick. "Dick, this is no



kind of life. We're getting nowhere fast. We don't even have time to write for fanzines. We should get married and settled down and produce our own issue. If we don't, I'm going to have to move out. I can't take it any more. Why, I'm behind four issues on CRY."

Dick tormentedly lit a cigarette. "I love you, Pat, and I know you love me. But I really can't afford to get married now. I can't support us and a fanzine too. Maybe it will be best for you to move out. I'll miss you like the dickens, but if it'll be best for you—I don't want to hurt you, to spoil your chances of becoming a Big Name Fan. I love you."

I began to cry. "I'm sorry. I can't help it. I love you, but I can't go on like this. I'll have to leave. I'm not up to it yet, but Real Soon Now....just as soon as I can find the strength." Oh, I was lost, lost. I should have made a clean break then and there. It would have made everything much easier and Dick and I would have still gotten together. I could have gotten on the FAPA waiting list and in five years he would have married me for my membership.

Dick's face was haunted. "If I were only a few years older. I've always wanted to get married and put out a fanzine. I'd planned to call it FIAWOL or FIJAGH or something. But I won't be making any kind of money for awhile and even on our combined salaries...." He went back to reading the Rotsler Extension Course.

All during the next month I avoided thinking. I read fanzines all the time. The Dive was getting wilder and wilder. All sorts of things were going on which I couldn't approve, but of which I had no right to disapprove. Fred was still drinking too much and he would do all sorts of horrible things while he was drunk. He joined the NFFF. He read an entire SAPS mailing and got violent indigestion. I was even more worried about him than about myself.

I even began to half-heartedly look for an apartment with him, but it was difficult to find anything that we could afford. We found one or two places, but they didn't have space for a mimeo, so I couldn't stand the thought of taking them, of abandoning all hope of becoming a Big Name Fan. Fred was willing to take anything. He said, "We've got to get out of the Dive, Pat. It's destroying us. Let's go back to reading science fiction. We can do it. We're not too far gone."

But I wouldn't listen. I can never forgive myself for that. It was all my fault. Oh, Fred, Fred, I didn't mean to do it to you. I didn't know. I want to be a Big Name Fan, but not this way, not this way.

The next week-end there was a big fannish party. There were beanies and zap guns all over the place. We had some sort of a punch made out of gin and fruit juice. It was potent stuff and everybody got pretty drunk. People began acting wild and talked about putting out a one shot. I was all for it and was overjoyed to see that even Fred was interested. We hauled out a typewriter and some stencils and started to work.

Suddenly it was my turn. But when I sat down at the typewriter, I couldn't think of anything to say. The life I had been leading had not prepared me for fanzine writing. I had never done anything fannish. I was the lowest of the low and it was all too far above me.....I became defiant. I began typing. I wrote about The Dive. Fred read over my shoulder. He began to shudder. "Pat, how can you? It's all about drinking on. What if some innocent young fan left it lying around and his mother found it? Why can't you write about science fiction?"

"Oh, come on, Fred. Do you want to be a neo all your life? This is the Way of Life. Come on, be a True Fan."

"I guess I was wrong. It is too late for us to change now. We've gone too far. We've lived too fast, had too much too soon.... We're just a couple of old, tired fans." Fred lurched off with his glass in his hand. He was pretty drunk, but no one else seemed to notice him much. I gave up my place at the typewriter and talked with Dick and some of the others, but tried to keep an eye on him.

Suddenly there was a loud crash. Fred had thrown his glass through the window. Art and Bill ran over to grab him and hold him down, but he slipped away and ran out of the apartment. They ran after him. I heard them thundering up the stairs to the roof. I burst into tears.

Sounds of cursing and scuffling drifted down. Big Dave held me and tried to comfort me, but I was sliding rapidly into hysterics. Fred was shouting the most obscene things I have ever heard. Then silence. And then Fred's voice sounding crazy. "Don't come any nearer. I've got to do it. I might as well. My life is ruined. No decent girl would even speak to me. My Sense of Wonder is gone. Pat's just as bad; and that's my fault too. If I had stayed at home and not tried to become a dirty pro, maybe I could have kept her away from fandom." His voice faltered. "We lover science fiction so much and we tried so hard."

Art yelled, "Fred, don't! Don't! Come back!" Fred didn't answer. There wasn't a sound. I screamed and broke away from Dave. I started up to the roof, but met Art and Bill coming down. I turned around and we all ran downstairs and out into the street. Fred lay there. His head was split open. His neck was at a funny angle. Blood was all over everything. I grabbed onto the lamp post and threw up violently. Bill said faintly, "He's dead."

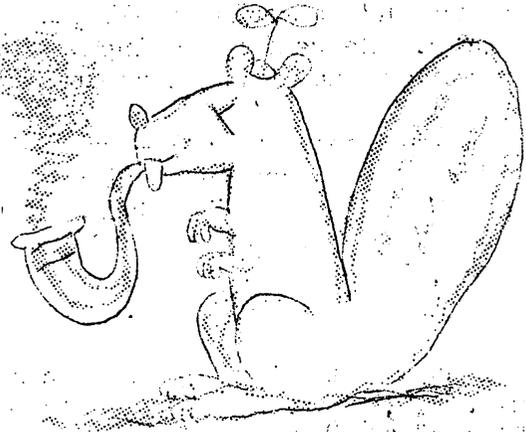
I clutched the lamppost tighter and moaned, "Roscoe." That was the first prayer I had ever uttered.

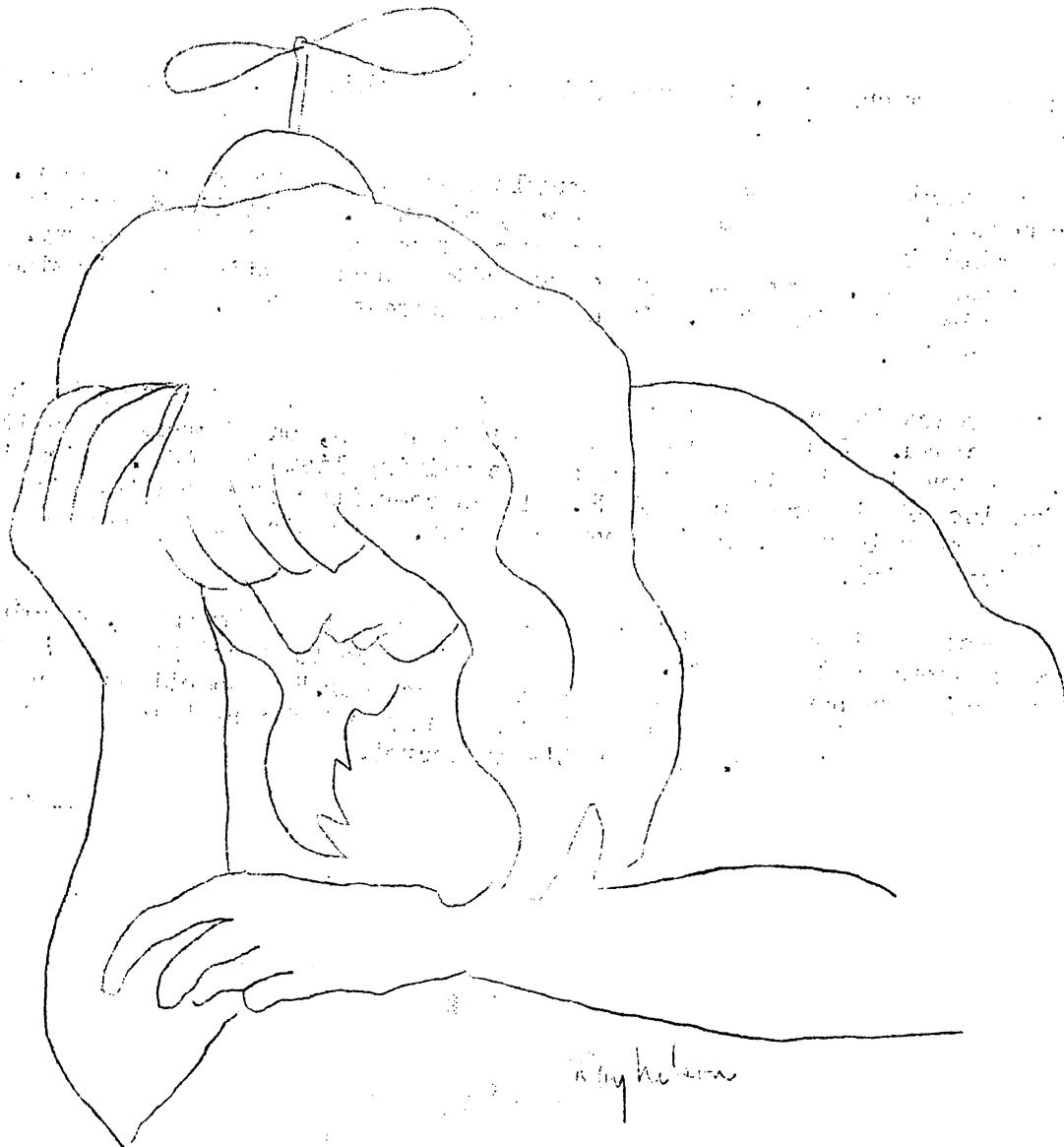
I don't remember the rest of the evening very clearly. Dick called an ambulance and Art called the police. Bill went upstairs and broke up the party. Everyone melted away. Danny looked pretty sick, but then we all did. Big Dave couldn't seem to believe it. I couldn't either.

The funeral was a couple of days later. All of the fans were there. Mother wouldn't come, but Elsie showed up. I talked to her in a kind of daze. I was glad when the whole business was over. Back at the Dive I was numb. No one could reach me. I kept saying over and over to myself, "Fred's dead and it's all your fault. Fred's dead and it's all your fault." I couldn't even cry. I didn't feel I had the right.

Big Dave helped a lot. He told me that Fred was really a trufan at heart and that all trufans went to the purple pastures when they died. I began to think that maybe Fred was better off up there. I could even picture him up there, turning the crank. I determined to live the Right Way from now on. I wouldn't put out a fanzine until I was worthy. I subscribed to a sports car journal and began reading up on peyote. I even bought some folk song records.

I began looking around for a place of my own and meanwhile moved out of Dick's room and again slept on the day bed in the living room. It was hard. Dick and I had meant so much to each other. I wouldn't have been able to do it all if Dick hadn't been so kind and understanding. He didn't press me at all. "I want to do what's best





for you, Pat," he said. "It's hard doing without you, but if that's what you think you want—we can still be co-editors, can't we?"

"Yes, Dick. I'd like that. When we're ready."

I found a place and started to pack my things. The day before I moved the police raided the Dive and took us all to jail. Elsie had found out all about me at Fred's funeral and had tipped them off. I was terrified. I could see myself being sent to the home for wayward girls and all of the boys serving long prison sentences.

When we were taken into court I told my story in a low voice. The judge was very stern. "This life you have been leading, 'fannish' as you call it!!! I cannot condemn it too strongly. It undoubtedly stems from the pernicious influence of that degraded form of literature, science fiction. Nevertheless, you are likewise responsible. You chose this Way of Life and these activities which have put you beyond the pale of normal human contact. There are, unfortunately, no laws against this sort of thing. You tell me that you only had relations with this one man, but that is a minor point. It is the entire Way of Life which is at fault." He cleared his throat. "You two can get married or go to jail. All of you will have to give up fandom. You will be put on probation for two years, during which time you will not see nor correspond with another fan. Fanzines will be burned before reading. I hope this brings you to your senses."

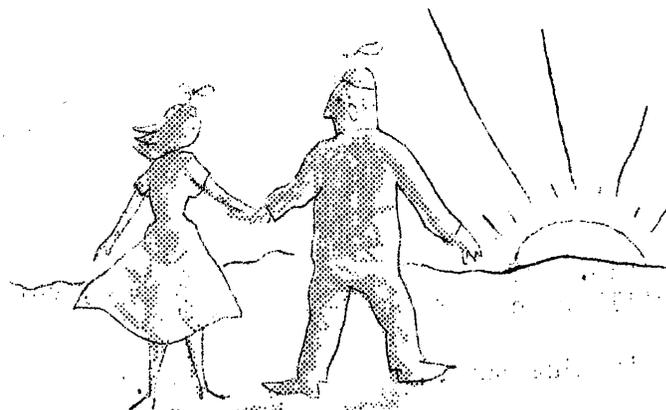
I wanted to marry Dick, but not this way, not this way. And no fanac! What were we to do with our time?

We were married and managed to struggle through the two years somehow. I had time to repent of my sins and think over my mistakes. I realized that it was not only my overwhelming desire to be a Big Name Fan which had lead me astray. I had got off on the wrong foot. Even though we had talked about putting out fanzines, we hadn't really been fanzine fans. We had been convention fans. Life had been just one long convention.

The two years is over now and we are doing fanac and seeing fans again, even the old Dive crowd. I still want to be a Big Name Fan, but I want to do it the right, hard way. We are in OMPA now and are on the waiting list for FAPA. Dick is putting out the fanzine of his dreams: FIJAGH. I was co-editor of a fanzine with Noreen, but she had a baby instead, so it never came out. And Dick and I have a child too, a darling little girl.

Dick sometimes teases me and says that I told Elsie on purpose, knowing that she would turn us over to the police. "You knew I'd have to marry you then! I'm going to tell the children how their mother mademe marry her." Sometimes I even think he believes it and sometimes Larry and Bill and Danny and the rest look at me strangely as if they thought I did too. But that's my secret.

--Bill Donaho.



While some of the characters in the above story are based on real ~~people~~ fans, any resemblance in characterization and events to Truth, is at best, coincidental, accidental and all that. It didn't happen like.

The main characters concerned gave their permission to publish. (I threatened to sit on them.)

GEORGE LOCKE

Glockenspiel

Meeting deadlines seems to be the lot of the active fan--meeting them or arriving several days too late. It's an agonising state of affairs--and when you have several deadlines to meet all at once, things get decidedly difficult.

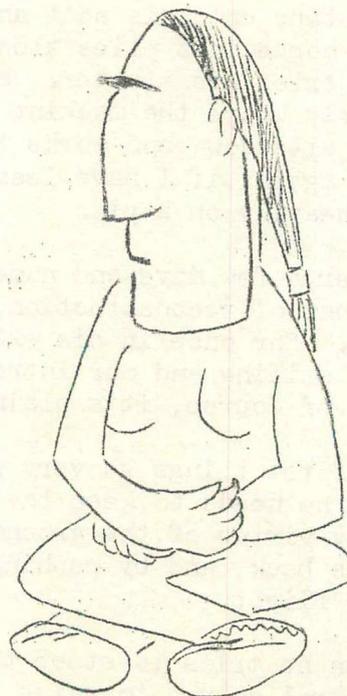
This column for Bill has been slapped in the face twice by them. Being of a placid nature (placid for the purposes of this sentence can be regarded as synonymous with lazy) I left the first installment to the last minute. When the last minute arrived, it turned out that other things were planned for me--my unit was moved to protect some English Oil interests in Kuwait.

By the time the flap had sorted itself out, I had a very few days to turn out the column, and nothing in the way of typewriters to produce it with. Since that first disastrous attempt to produce something worth reading, three months passed. I had just got mentally attuned to the frightening thought of inflicting another plague of spider-tracks on Bill, when we moved back to Kenya.

A very few days to the deadline. I hope I make it.

Paradoxically, it's very nice to know that here is a deadline that if you miss, you wait until the next issue. At least you know that when you produce your fabulous prose, it will get published within your lifetime.

Continuing along this paradoxical line of reasoning--the advantages of irregular publication--I'd like to toss in this secret method of gafiating for a year without anybody noticing save maybe a couple of correspondents. Though reflecting on your backlog of letters extending back to First Fandom you'd have them fooled too.



The secret method? Write a dozen articles. Don't spread them over your fanzine career. Write them within the space of a week. Really flog yourself. Put your "all" into them. Send them out to the various fanzines which have requested material, and to the better of the long string of those which haven't recognized your kinship to William Shakespeare. Then sit back, put your feet up on the mantle piece, or, as I did, clear off to some outlandish place like Kenya. After a year your prose will still be appearing, and maybe in the second year you'll get the Best Writer award without having typed even the letter "I".

HAVING BEEN THWARTED FROM KILLING HORDES OF SAVAGE ARABS I have to look back to science fiction to find a chopping block. It's really a bit unfair to specify science fiction, as this time I'm kicking the shins of modern technology in. However, since science fiction has a lot to do with it, I'll let that stand.

I wrote an article for John Berry a few months ago for RETRIBUTION. It may have appeared; it may not. But I was very enthusiastic about it at the time. It dealt with an air-show held in Kenya which was much like air rallies of before the war. It immediately brought back for me a yearning for those pioneering days, when the first fliers stepped gingerly onto their framework of struts and fabric swiped from their grandmother's closets. The days when it was odds on that the aircraft would never get off the deck and if it did, it would return promptly. When problems were sorted out when they were met. And when research costs were regarded as prohibitive when they rose above five pounds.

Picture a pilot who takes his flimsy aircraft into the air. Assume that by some miracle it is aerodynamically sound. It's a bleak November day. Anybody in a later, more enlightened age would have taken one look at the glowering clouds, declared the weather unsuitable and gone back to bed. Not our hero. He'd just spent the last six months constructing his machine. He'd finally tied the last, last knot in the stays, and was eager to take off. Visions of glory, of feats never before dreamed of by man swam before his eyes. He would, for a start, break that fifty-foot height record. He would set up a duration of more than four minutes. Why, if the gods were on his side, he might even make that elusive five minutes.

He steps onto his seat and ties himself in with a length of tow cable purloined from the horse that plies along the canal dragging barges to their destination. Hopefully he tries his starter. Much to his surprise, it works. It works with a vengeance --he nearly wraps the machine around a tree. Obviously there's one bug to be ironed out. He sits down and works it out. Perhaps if I start it out of gear...he muses. And then again, if I have less revs on, it won't try to imitate a Guy Fawkes rocket sitting heavily on a pin.

After a few days and numerous hair-raising experiences necessitating a considerable amount of reconstruction, he sorts out the taxiing business. Then he tries the take-off. For once in his extremely short life the gods' livers aren't acting up: they are smiling and our intrepid hero gets the contraption off the ground. Once in the air, of course, it's plain sailing. At first...

At first things go very well. He has enough common sense to realise that to keep climbing he needs to keep the engine not only going, but going very strongly. Eventually, by virtue of the ground disappearing, he reckons he has gone high enough. He throttles back, and by pushing the stick forward, changes the attitude of the aircraft to level flight.

Then he tries to steer the thing. He hasn't the faintest idea how. He's built in a control column to raise and lower the nose. This it does efficiently. And that is all he does. Whatever he does with the damned thing, the machine won't turn a corner. He begins to sweat. Surely there must be some way....

It's impossible to describe what happens next. ***#%& When he gets out of the hospital, he's worked out a solution. He will have a rudder at the back, on the end of a long fuselage to give it plenty of leverage. He'll work it like you work a boat. He's learned from his previous experiences, and makes an excellent job of taxiing and taking off. After flying straight and level for five minutes he tries a turn. He's forced into this decision by the fact that if he didn't turn he'd hit the side of a mountain in his path. So--he jams full rudder on.

Gentle reader--don't ask me to describe what happened next. I'm only getting it from him, and he admits that all he observed was a violent blast of air into his right ear, of the horizon spinning round like the scene at a fairground after your roundabout has got to full velocity.

A third thing he should have observed then was that he rapidly lost height. He found that out soon enough, but too late to do anything about avoiding crashing.

In hospital, he was undaunted. He shook off the repeated advances from the nurses--his injuries were such that there was no alternative--and began to work out why the aircraft went out of control. He played with paper airplanes, and gradually got the idea. It seemed that a better method of turning was to attach some ailerons to the wings, and by using them in combination with his rudder, turn the machine that way. And it worked like a dream!

Meanwhile, he'd been off track with another aspect of flying: climbing. Wasn't there a better method of climbing than by increasing the engine revs? Suppose he fitted a small aerofoil where the rudder was instead of the flat bit of fabric there only because all the best paper airplanes--his main inspiration--had them. Then, by suitable controls (elevators, in case you've lost me) he could increase the lift on the tail section or decrease it at will. Increasing it would have the effect of pushing the front end down, and decreasing that lift would cause it to point heavenwards. He wouldn't therefore have to use the engine for climbing or sinking, but could use a simple control which could easily be combined with his aileron control.

It was simple, all right. The first time he tried it out was when he'd reached a height of a hundred feet above the solid earth. He yanked the elevator control into the climb position and grinned. For a time of exactly one second. The nose shot up; everything went absolutely silent. Then the nose dropped like a stone with a heavy weight attached to it. It kept on dropping until it hit the ground.

This time he didn't go to the hospital, and he would never tell his family that he was the first man on Earth to experience a stall.

SUCH WAS THE EQUIVALENT OF SPACE RESEARCH FIFTY YEARS AGO. A little exaggerated perhaps--but I wager the truth wasn't so far off.

Space research is a little different. You've all read articles on how finely adjusted and physically perfect humans like Gagarin and Shepherd and Titov go through the preliminaries to their flight. The word "human" seems to be wrong. I would say our space pioneers are nothing more than machines which are unfortunate enough to be made of flesh and blood.

I don't pretend to be an astronomical expert, but I'd like to say that I'd stake my reputation as, say, a fan artist, that a spaceship could be sent up and returned with a pilot sitting at the controls, guiding it the whole way through. Sure, he'd be subject to human errors, and may prang the rocket a few times, but will someone answer me this question?

Is it for man that the moon waits? Or is it for a machine which condescends to carry a passenger?

And don't give me the excuse that it would be physically impossible for man to control a space-craft through an atmosphere, either up or down. Man has sufficient command of his own technology for him to figure a way to keep his hand firmly on the control column. It's just that science is turning the wrong way. And this dehumanisation of research and development is partly why science fiction is so flat these days. Yes, it's dehumanized. SF writers may not be conscious of it, but as the conquering of the frontiers of space (and time? Remember the time-traveling neutrino?) is left to our machines, so the same attitude has entered science fiction.



STORIES don't come along as often as they used to.

VENOM revisited, like Several people have read "I Made Him Marry Me" in manuscript and are taking it much too seriously like. People, it's all in fun. It never happened. It all springs from my over-active brain, not from real events. It's for funzies, dig? FUNZIES!

I sat myself down, saying, "Given these people, what actions and motivations can I attribute to them to form a plot fitting into the confession formula?" A good part of the action and dialogue is imitation of scenes in confession stories. I threw in a real incident or two just to give people chuckles when they recognized them. So, O.K. That was the first draft. A straight confession story.

On the second draft I rewrote it to make it a satire of confession stories themselves: exposing the shallowness of the whole formula, etc. Naturally this painted the characters in even stronger shades and made them even more UNREAL.

The third time I rewrote it I left the confession satire element intact and concentrated in changing all the mundane elements into fannish ones, making it faaan fiction. The last rewrite I tried to make it a satire of faaan fiction also.

Naturally with each rewrite the characters, particularly Pat, become more and more stereotyped symbols--even though all sorts of convincing (I hope) detail is thrown in to disguise this. Nevertheless otherwise sane and intelligent people have read "I Made Him Marry Me" and taken it for an only slightly exaggerated true account. Damn it, it is a work of fiction! FICTION! FICTION! The Pat of the story bears about as much resemblance to the real Pat Ellington as I bear to Harlan Ellison.

A REQUIEM FOR ASTOUNDING

by ALVA ROGERS

PART FOUR:

THE GOLDEN AGE CONTINUES

The Golden Age of ASTOUNDING is frequently thought of as having embraced the entire decade of the forties by those fans to whom this era of science fiction is but legend. Those fans who were reading ASTOUNDING at this time, or who have acquired collections dating back to this period more often narrow it down to the war years—1940 through 1945. I've always been with those in the latter group. However, in researching this little history I came to the inescapable conclusion that most of the stories that come to mind when the associational trigger "Golden Age of ASTOUNDING" is uttered are stories that appeared in a three-and-a-half year span—July 1939 through December 1943. This really isn't as heretical or arbitrary as it appears at first glance. There were of course dozens of excellent stories that saw print in the remaining years of the 1940's, many of which are today considered classics. But the true Golden Age was that brief period following Campbell's editorial apprenticeship when he seemed to have the greatest enthusiasms for his job and his greatest rapport with his writers; when the impression transmitted through the magazine from Campbell to the readers was one of excitement and keen enjoyment of science fiction.

To protect myself against flank attacks for the above statement I will qualify to some extent its finality and say that I consider the following two years, 1944 and 1945, as being part of the Golden Age, but of lesser carat. But from this point on ASTOUNDING, while maintaining a generally high qualitative level, never again seems to be able to come up with the right combination—it's like a chess master who, while playing one hell of a good game, just never can seem to get his combinations working for him the way he wants them to; he ends up with a good game, but one that falls just short of brilliant on latter annotation.

But enough for now. After I've covered 1943, and before continuing with the following years, I'm going to summarize the Golden Age to this point briefly and try to justify my ascribing the limits of the Golden Age that I do—and also explain why I think a Roman numeral I should follow it.

1943

Will Hart (Jack Williamson) led off the new year with the first installment of a two part novel, Opposites - React, the third in his series about settee matter. The problems

developed in Collision Orbit and Mine Saw are brought to a head in this story along with Drake, McGee, Asterite engineers and discoverers of ~~antimatter~~ matter in the asteroid belt, attempting to perfect a means of harnessing the incalculable power locked in setee matter. Forming a counterpoint to the engineering problems involved in the story is a political problem that is as explosive as the finicky matter the trio of engineers are attempting to control. The solar system is governed by the Space Mandate made up of Earth, The Martian Reich and the Jovian Soviet--a mutually jealous alliance. Exerting peripheral pressure on the Mandate and in many ways as powerful, is Interplanet, an Earth owned corporation with big ideas. Opposed to both these forces in their desire for independence are the Asterites--settlers on the asteroids who have nationalistic yearnings. Obviously, whichever of this trio of powers achieves workable control of setee matter has the other two at a distinct disadvantage.

This was a very good story, in which Williamson combined the socialological theme with high space adventure and more or less down to earth engineering problems. Although it was good, and modern, and within the realm of fairly immediate probability, I couldn't help feeling that science fiction had lost something irrevocable when Jack Williamson abandoned the space opera field in which he wrote with such imagination, so colorfully, and with such elan.

There were three novelettes in this issues, The Search, by Van Vogt, which was an involved time travel story--good, but not tremendously memorable; Barrius, Imp., by Malcolm Jameson, a sequel to Anachron, Inc., which involves the time spanning trading company with--among other things--ancient Roman politics; and finally Anthony Boucher's Elsewhen, a beautiful title for an excellent time travel-cum-mystery story featuring Fergus O'Brien, an Irish detective who had earlier been involved in the case of The Compleat Werewolf (UNKNOWN, April 1942), who solves the case of the suspect who claims to have not only benn elsewhere than at the scene of the crime--but also elsewhen.

Of the four short stories in this issue, there were two which I considered excellent the first time I read them, and still regard them fondly: Nothing But Gingerbread Left, by Henry Kuttner; and Time Locker by Lewis Padgett. The first story is dated now, but at the time it was written it had considerable impact. It concerned a brainstorm an American professor of semantics had which could possibly shorten (or end) the war. Devise a perfect semantic formula--one with a catchy rhythm, which when once heard can never be forgotten--and beam it to the Germans where, in theory, it would so obtrude on the consciousness of key men as to cause chaos in the Third Reich. It worked too.

In the second story Kuttner introduces that unpredictable, wacky and almost always drunken genius of an inventor, Galloway. Galloway was infinitely inventive, but unfortunately he did most of his inventing while completely stoned and usually had difficulty remembering the purpose of his invention once he sobered up. In Time Locker Galloway invents a safe in which anything of any size could be placed and it would sink into invisibility--including even a human body. The other two short stories were authored by Ross Rocklynne and P. Schuyler Miller and were not particularly notable.

Timmins' cover--a murky and busy painting illustrating Opposites - React!--was not too bad, but made me wish longingly for the clean precise cover paintings of Rogers.

February

In any discussion of the Golden Age there is always one story that will figure prominently--The Weapon Makers by A. E. Van Vogt. Not as universally praised as the author's Slan, it is still regarded by many as one of his very best stories. Van Vogt had no axes to grind in this ambitious novel--no general semantics, no Bates discipline; nothing but the desire to tell a story; and this he did most admirably. This was the third in the Weapon Shop series which began with See-Saw, and unquestionably

ASTOUNDING

Science-fiction



**GATHER,
DARKNESS!**

BY FRITZ LEIBER, JR.
MAY • 1943
25 CENTS

A STREET AND SMITH PUBLICATION

the best. The world of the Isher Empire with all its color and contrasts, its medieval court ritual and its scientific sophistication is brought out in much greater detail than in the preceding novelette, The Weapon Shops. The two central characters--the Empress Innelda and Robert Hedrock--are two of Van Vogt's best drawn characters. Innelda, proud and beautiful; intelligent and capable--but fatally doomed as a result of generations of inbreeding within the Isher strain. And Robert Hedrock, the immortal man, with a long range plan for the human race, who thousands of years earlier had been the founder and first emperor of the Isher empire, and who also conceived of and founded the Weapon Shops as a permanent opposition and counterbalance to the absolute power of the empire.

The philosophy of the Weapon Shops and their role in the scheme of things is presented with greater detail than before also; and also the possibility of the powers residing in the Weapon Shops being misused. To add verisimilitude to the basic story of the Isher-Weapon Shop conflict there was introduced briefly in the third installment an incomprehensibly alien race of beings who, after a close and dispassionate observation of Man, reached the profound conclusion that: "This much we have learned; here is the race that shall rule the Sevagram." A great and memorable last line in the great Van Vogt tradition. Never mind what it means--it was still a hell of a great last line.

This issue also contained another enduring memento of the Golden Age. I doubt if anyone having read it will ever quite forget the cumulative horror of Lewis Padgett's Mimsy Were the Borogroves. This story of two boxes of toys sent back in time from the remote future to land in 19th century England and 20th century America, and their remarkable effect on three children, was a true tour de force on the part of Kuttner. For he took the meaningless gibberish of Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" and transformed it into most meaningful and startling logic. Meaningful and logical, that is, to a three-year-old girl and a seven-year-old boy--but tragically incomprehensible and illogical to their parents. This story really rocked me when I first read it, and I'm sure that if I had had any children at that time I'd have been tempted to listen more closely to their chatter and observe more carefully their childish play---at least until the spell cast by Kuttner wore off.

Opposites - React! concluded this month--a very fine story as I said earlier, and with the way left open for an obvious sequel.

March

The Kuttner-Moore team was back again this month with the cover story and a short story. Clash by Night by Lawrence O'Donnell was a tremendous story that told of the Keeps--underseas cities on Venus peopled by Man who had fled a devastated and uninhabitable Earth--and, above all, it told of the Free Companions. The Companions were mercenaries with a proud tradition, organized into companies of a few thousand each, and each with its colorful and devotedly followed leader. At the time of the story the Free Companions are entering the twilight of their existence, as is the whole concept of warfare, but they are still a significant factor in the world of the Keeps.

The second Kuttner yarn was Shock by Lewis Padgett, a grim little tale of a man from the future who comes looking for someone in the present, and the man from the present who goes to the future expecting to find a race of supermen--only to find that even a race of supermen can't all be perfect.

Shadow of Life by Clifford Simak, the second novelette in this issue, failed to impress me too much although it was readable and well written. The story revolved around the proposition of a lurking evil existing among the stars which eventually would engulf Earth if Man didn't (as the Martians had ages earlier) run and hide. The Martians had taken refuge in the fourth dimension and reduced themselves to subatomic size. At the same time they left behind a ghost, one "Elmer" who contained

the racial memories of the departed Martians; he was to guard their hiding place and at the same time try to convince the Earthmen of the desirability of emulating the Martians. Needless to say, the doughty Earthmen refuse to take such a cowardly course, preferring to stand and fight. One drawback to the story, I think, was the strong similarity between Elmer, the Martian ghost, and Archie the sentient gas creature of Venus, in the same author's fine story Tools in the July 1942 ASTOUNDING.

What would science fiction be without robots? This is a rhetorical question prompted by the next story under discussion. There have been many fine robot stories written in the past, and there will undoubtedly be many more written in the future. This story is one that seems to be frequently overlooked whenever the subject of the better robot stories arises. I speak of Anthony Boucher's Q. U. R., written under the other pseudonym of H. H. Holmes, which marked a radical departure from the usual concept of robots. Q. U. R. stood for Quinby's Usuform Robots. Boucher claims to have coined the word usuform to describe robots designed for optimum use regardless of final form, in contrast to robots built in an impracticable human form. This is the first story that I know of in which the classical science fictional concept of "robot", i. e., a thinking, independently-willed entity created by Man, is conceived of in a form other than one miming the human. The idea was beginning to gain acceptance by this time that the science fictionist was largely overlooking the fact that robots existed in the world around him in many forms, and had for some time. But writers continued to follow the pattern established by the legend of the Golem, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and Kapek's R. U. R. that robots or manufactured creatures with the capacity of thinking and independent action must have a humanoid shape. This long standing and revered cliché was given quite a jolt by Boucher's fine tale which had the added advantage of containing some fine sophisticated humor which enhances its re-readability.

The second installment of The Weapon Makers, of course, completely dominated everything in this generally fine issue.

April

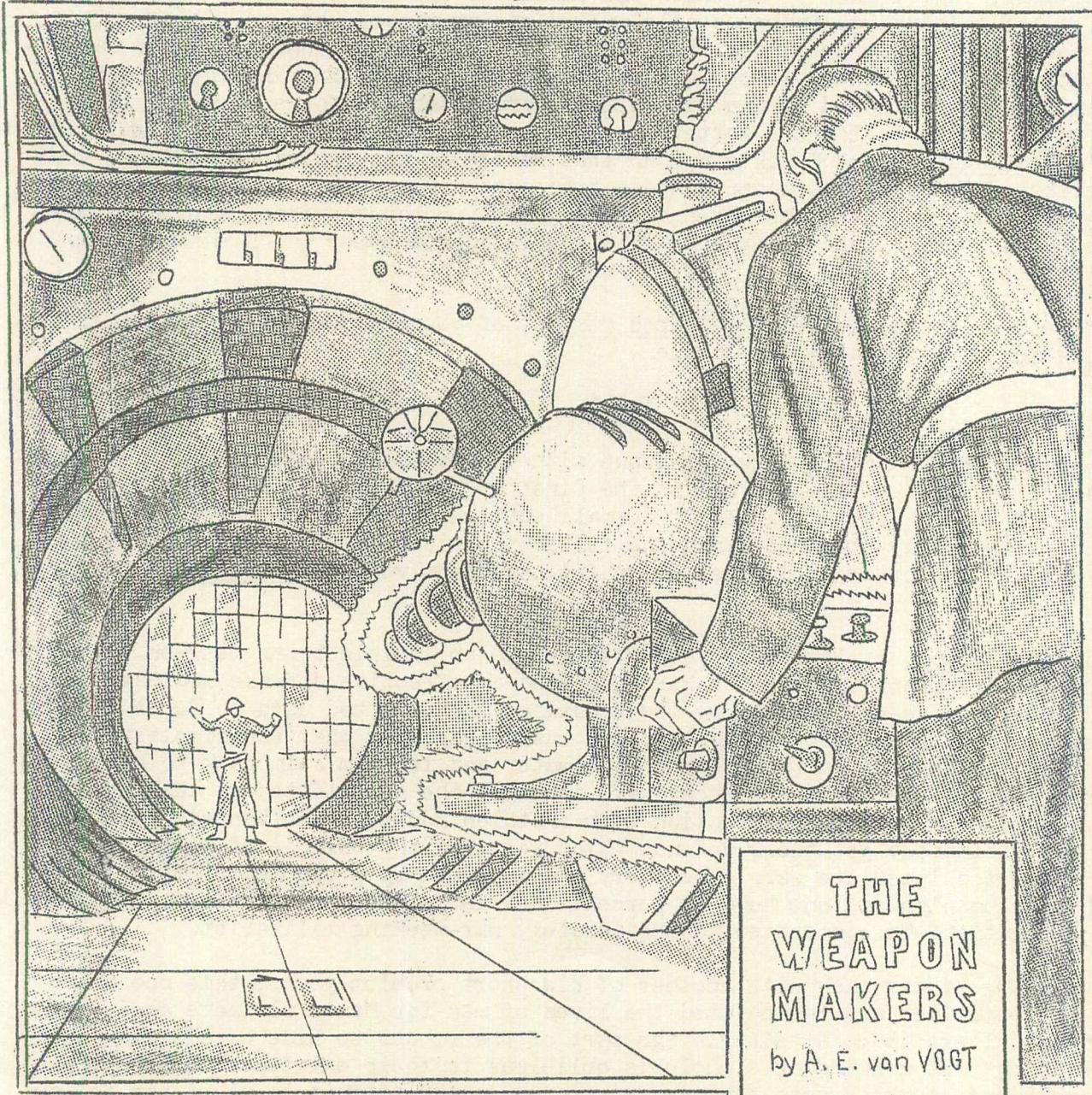
Again The Weapon Makers took the issue with its tremendous climax and its bewildering last line. Later this was one of the first of Van Vogt's novels to be brought out in hard covers. It was printed in a small edition, went out of print very rapidly and almost immediately started commanding fantastic prices on the fan-market, comparable almost, to the prices being asked for the Lovecraft volume The Outsider, and Others.

Swimming Lesson, by Raymond F. Jones concerned an incipient war between Earth and Venus and the desperate urgency for Earth to find an effective defense against the seemingly ultimate weapon devised by the Venusians. The method used to force the key scientists to find a solution to the problem was a pragmatic one; the simplest way to teach a child to swim is to throw him in the water and let him swim back to shore. In this case the military started a phony war, isolated the scientists and threatened them with seemingly certain destruction with a stolen model of the Venusian weapon; and thereby ultimately got their defense which restored the balance of power with Venus and averted immediate war. The story was weakened by a too melodramatic ending in which the humanism and one hundred percent idealism of science—as personified by the hero-scientist—is contrasted to the insatiable war-weakening militarist.

Lewis Padgett was back with another of his short problem yarns, this one about robots who controlled and manipulated the lives of men for Man's ultimate good—it was assumed. There is no attempt on the part of the robots to hide or disguise what they are doing, yet mankind as a whole is oblivious to their existence and the occasional person who stumbles onto them is frustrated in any attempt to alert his fellows by a gimmick the robots have concealed—a la The Purloined Letter—which effectively hamstringed the would be alarmist. It was called, appropriately enough, Open Secret.

ASTOUNDING

Science-fiction 25¢



THE WEAPON MAKERS

by A. E. van VOGT

FEBRUARY · 1943

A STREET AND SMITH PUBLICATION

E. Mayne Hull (Mrs. Van Vogt) started her "Arthur Blood" series in this issue with Abdication, a story which left no impression in my memory at all. I have to confess that the writings of the distaff side of the Van Vogt family have never impressed me --I merely note the story for any historical significance it may have.

May

This month marked the return to the small size, or rather, the conventional pulp size, as announced by JWC on the Editorial page of the preceding issue. The reason given, of course, was The War, paper shortages, the scarcity of essential metals used in printing, etc. Whatever the reason, I for one was glad to see the change. The large size was initially attractive and impressive, but it didn't really pan out the way Campbell had hoped it would. The news stands continued to display it along with the pulps as it had been in the past and consequently it didn't come to the attention of those news stand browsers who shunned the pulps. In addition to which, it was very insubstantially bound (one staple) and had a tendency to fall apart, even with the careful handling of a collector. And finally, it was harder than hell to file with the rest of the standard pulp ASTOUNDING'S. The bedsheet ASTOUNDING lasted for one year (all of 1942) and four months, and was a noble, but misguided experiment as far as I was concerned.

The new smaller magazine retained the logo and general appearance of the bedsheet, but without the border surrounding the cover illo that distinguished the larger size; the price remained at twenty-five cents and the page count went to 162--with a reduction in the size of the type-face.

The lead-off story this issue was the first of three installments of one of the genuine classics of The Golden Age, my personal favorite of the year, and one of my top ten, or at least, twenty, favorites of all time...Gather, Darkness! by Fritz Leiber. This was a superb story of a phony religion which dominated the masses through its control of science, and the underground which opposed it which was made up of "witches", "warlocks", and their "familiar". This, I think, is one of the greatest things Leiber has ever done. It is swift paced, full of action and color, has many of the elements of what Leiber refers to as "sword and sorcery" fantasy, and yet is indubitably serious science fiction. The novel is overflowing with memorable characters: Mother Juju, the Archpriest Secival, the archpriest Goniface and his hatchetman, Cousin Deth; Goniface's sister Geryl--a secret member of the Witchcraft under the name of Charlson Naurya; Brother Jarles, a young priest who flees for sanctuary to the Witchcraft; and the Black Man, the shadowy and elusive leader of the Witchcraft. But above all, the evidence of Leiber's genius for creating memorable characters lies in those wonderful creations of his, the familiars--Dickon, the Black Man's familiar, and all the others who play such an important role in the overthrow of the fake religion of The Great God, and the priest-scientists of the Hierarchy.

Let's Disappear by Cleve Cartmill was a long novelette and another of his Hunt Club stories which involved it in a search for a vanished man who held a secret so inimical to humanity that its possession by one man constituted a clear and present danger to survival.

The rest of the issue was made up of short stories: Ghost by Kutter, which was about a calculator that was haunted by a maniac-depressive ghost; Pacer by Raymond F. Jones, which concerned a space convoy forced to hold its pace down to the speed of the slowest, damaged ship in the convoy and the dangers this presented. This could just as well have been written about the convoy runs to Murmansk; and Fifth Freedom by John Alvarez, which probed the problems besetting a conscientious objector when confronted with an all out atomic war in which America is the object of nuclear attack. A remarkably prophetic story, and suprisingly accurate in its descriptions of a probably atomic attack on this country.

The cover by Timmins, illustrating Gather, Darkness!, was one of his better covers, but still too busy in composition and painted with too muddy a palette.

June

That wacky, drink-inspired inventor, Galloway, was back this month in the cover story, The World is Mine, as Gallegher--the name by which he would be known in the balance of the stories in this delightful series. In this one Gallegher wakes up from a monumental binge to find the Earth invaded by small rabbit-like creatures from Mars who plantively bleat, "This world is mine." It seems that Gallegher, while stinking drunk, had invented a time machine--one of the products of the machine being the Lyb-blas, the rabbitty creatures from Mars. A very funny story built on a firm science fictional foundation.

The second story of the "Venus Equilateral" series, Calling the Empress by George O. Smith, was a problem yarn. The problem: send a tight communication beam to a spaceship lost somewhere in uncountable millions of cubic miles of space. This novel-ette, like all the others in this series, suffered from one major flaw--Smith's absorption with the technical details of his problems, with the concomitant lack of attention to characterization.

Anthony Boucher, who had written an article on the prophecies of Nostradamus in UNKNOWN (On a Limb, October 1941), and had been carrying on a friendly running feud with the great debunker, L. Sprague de Camp on the merits and demerits of the Frenchman's predictions, presented in his short story, Pelagic Spark, a pretty good argument as to just how any prediction, if obscurely worded enough will in good time come to pass. Starting in A.D. 1942 he has Lieutenant L. Sprague de Camp, USNR, resolving to settle Boucher and the rest of the Nostradamians once and for all by making up out of whole cloth a prediction of his own and having it published. This he does in the form of a limerick--the great verse form of American folk rhyme:

Pelagic young spark of the East
Shall plot to subvert the Blue Beast,
But he'll dangle on high
When the Ram's in the sky,
And the Cat shall throw dice at the feast!

The de Camp article was published in the December issue of ESQUIRE (actually!), comes to the attention of a Marine Sergeant in the South Pacific, and from there Boucher follows the progression of events until in A.D. 2045 de Camp's make-believe prophecy actually comes to pass. A lovely, lovely yarn, and one I imagine Boucher got a great kick out of writing.

Boucher (as H. H. Holmes) was less successful in his second story in this issue, Sanctuary. A story of the war, it involves commandos and time travel, and was not up to Boucher's usual high standards.

Lester del Rey, on the other hand, had a gem of a story about the war, Whom the Gods Love, about a fighter pilot who is shot down by the Japs with a bullet dead center in his forehead which miraculously enough doesn't kill him, but instead endows him with superhuman powers which for a brief time creates consternation and wreaks havoc amongst the Japanese flyers.

E. M. Hull brings back Artur Blord in Competition, another in her stories of high finance and economic skullduggery among the Ridge Stars. And Willy Ley had an interesting article on the Sargasso Sea Called The Sea of Mystery which together with the second installment of Gather, Darkness! rounded out an exceptionally good issue, considering the number of stories competing for the reader's attention.

July

Hunch, the cover story by Clifford Simak--as was Tools and, to a lesser extent, Shadow of Life--an excellent example of the new Simak who could combine fine characterization, plot and idea into an exceptionally fine modern story. Sanctuary, Inc. is a haven for the man who is showing an increasing tendency to break down mentally under the stresses of a complex society and the problems of space development. Sanctuary is the product of the Asterites, remnants of the Fifth planet destroyed ages before by the extinct Martians. But the Martians are not totally extinct--to the eventual dismay of the Asterites. At the conclusion of the story we find that man has discovered that the phenomena of hunches under certain conditions can be a reliable guide to action, and is actually the ability to foresee a short way into the future.

The Great Engine by Van Vogt was a fine tale of how atomic power, in the form of an engine, was secretly developed during the war, and how the scientists involved in its development, fearing its misuse on Earth, slip away and settle on Venus, there to organize a society on the pattern of the United States and based on atomic power. In the years following this event the Venusians clandestinely recruit additional scientists and their families on Earth and transport them to Venus. One of their atomic-powered ships is wrecked by a meteorite as it approaches Earth and falls unnoticed to earth to be demolished except for its indestructible engine. The engine is subsequently discovered by Pendrake, an inventor who, in his efforts to discover the genesis of the engine, gets wind of the Venusians and naturally assumed that they are inimical to Earth. A typical Van Vogt problem, involved and deceptive, but well written and believable.

Gather, Darkness! concluded in this issue with the big showdown between the Hierarchy and the Witchcraft, with the Witchcraft winning out over the forces of perverted science. One of the gimmicks Leiber used in this marvelous novel was one that has been occasionally popular with one or two of ASTOUNDING authors during this period. This is the "Symbol," the "Champion," the "Rallying Point" for oppressed peoples that Campbell pioneered with his Aesir, and that Heinlein also used in Sixth Column; a giant, manlike manifestation designed to throw fear and confusion into the ranks of the enemy. In Gather, Darkness! it was a huge flying black creature called Sathanas who symbolized the Witchcraft and inspired its followers to destroy the Great God and its priest-scientists.

August

C. L. Moore, always a welcome but unfortunately infrequent contributor to ASTOUNDING, returned to its pages with the first installment of a two-part novel, Judgment Night, her first novel. This fine story was typical of Moore at her best; exotically colorful, rich in characterization, and carefully detailed. The theme of the story was one which Moore had dealt with before--the imminent fall of empire. The Lyonese Dynasty which held the world called Ericon--which controlled the Galaxy--was threatened with extinction by the approaching hoard of invading barbarians in the form of the Hivani which was moving inexorably inward toward Ericon, conquering all planets in its way. The story revolves around the personal problems of Juille, the daughter of the Lyonese emperor, warrior reared and contemptuous of what she believes to be her father's weakness; and Egide, a charming young man who turns out to be the ruler of the Hivani. The fate of empires hangs upon their personal conflicts. The conflicts are romantically resolved, but in the interim Moore fills the pages of her story with action, intrigue and color. Miss Moore is a master at combining exotic romanticism with slashing action and coming up with a fine fusion of fantasy and science fiction.

Boucher's novelette, One Way Trip, was another story of revolt--revolt against universal peace. The world, following the disastrous war of the Twentieth Century, had embraced the philosophy of Devarupa, an obscure Indian leader who preached passive

resistance and the sanctity of human life. Several generations after the world became Devarupian, restlessness and discontent over mending peace began to emerge in certain elements of society, and world peace was in danger. Boucher came up with something new in the way of science fictional villains in this story: a Hollywood (or Sollywood, as it came to be called after the invention of solid pictures) producer of spectaculars who had megalomaniacal delusions of grandeur, and had found a weaponless world which could back him up.

Van Vogt returned with the Space Beagle and its crew of scientists in a short story, M33 in Andromeda, which presented the scientists with their most fearsome monster and their greatest challenge—a galaxy spanning creature composed of gas that lived and grew on the ebbing life forces of other creatures, the more primitive and savage the better. This, I thought, was the least successful of the Space Beagle stories. The "monster", the Anabis, was not nearly so colorful or memorable as the two previous monsters, Couerl and Xtl, and seemed to be much less menacing than those two more anthropomorphic creations of Van Vogt's—although it was supposed to be the greatest of them all.

Lewis Padgett had an inconsequential story in Endowment Policy, and Malcolm Jameson had another Anachron, Inc. story in When is When? In a short story, Mutants Brother, Fritz Leiber tells of two brothers—twins—who have telepathic powers which enable them to not only read, but control other minds, either singly or in mass. The only trouble was, one of them was bent on controlling and manipulating the minds of others with the eventual goal of world power—and the only one who stood a chance of frustrating this ambition was his brother, and in order to do so he would have to kill his "evil" brother who was the only other one of his kind. And, finally, Willy Ley started a two-part article on a fascinating subject: The End of the Rocket Society—the Rocket Society, of course, being the German Rocket Society to which Ley belonged, and which he elaborated on further in his book Rockets published in 1944.

September

Hal Clement took the cover this issue with a fine novelette, Attitude, a fairly long story of the capture of a spaceship and its crew and the unorthodox behavior of the captors. And Ray Bradbury appeared for the first and last time in ASTOUNDING with a short formula yarn called Doodad which was one of Bradbury's least memorable stories. Tony Boucher continued to explore the monopoly of Robots, Inc. in a short story, Robinc, and A.E. Van Vogt's short story, Concealment told of the elaborate measures taken by the Delian system to conceal the location of the Fifty Suns from chance discovery by Earth ships, and also of the importance of constantly watching and mapping galactic storms.

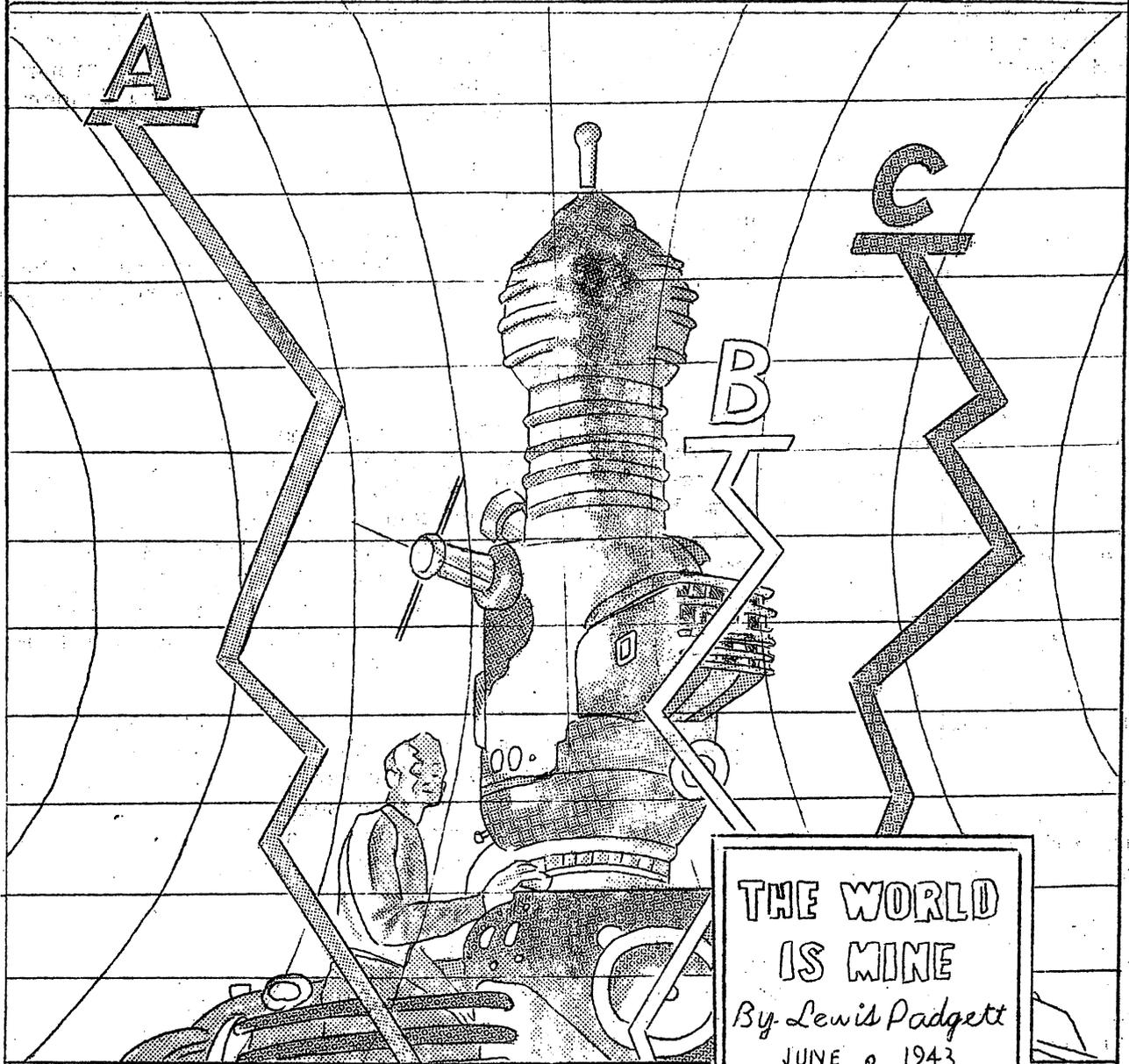
C. L. Moore brought her excellent novel, Judgment Night, to a satisfying romantic conclusion; and Willy Ley wound up his account of the last days of the German Rocket Society—The End of the Rocket Society—by showing how the Nazis stepped in and took over, at which point Mr. Ley packed up and left for the United States. This was a fascinating article when it was first written, and is doubly so when read at the present time.

October

This was the last standard size ASTOUNDING—starting with the next issue the magazine would initiate the trend to pocket size science fiction magazines. This was a move I always deplored, but I, like most fans of the day, was willing to accept it in the sweet name of patriotism; however, when the war was over and ASTOUNDING stayed small I felt in some vague way that Campbell had betrayed us.

ASTOUNDING

Science Fiction



THE WORLD
IS MINE

By Lewis Padgett

JUNE 6 1943

25 CENTS

A STREET AND SMITH PUBLICATION

A.E. Van Vogt copped the cover with The Storm, a sequel to Concealment in the issue. The Earth ship that had inadvertently come upon a Dellian weather station, but had been unable to find the Fifty Suns that comprised the Dellian complex, finally stumbled on one of the planets inhabited by the descendents of the Dellian robots who had been driven from Earth fifteen thousand years earlier. The head official of this planet enlists the aid of Captain Maltby, a Mixed-Man, to guide the Earth ship to the central planet of the cluster...with additional orders to see that the ship is steered into a mammoth nuclear storm that is raging in the Lesser Magellanic Cloud. This was the second of a three-story series about the Dellian Robots--a series which I always enjoyed.

Raymond F. Jones' Fifty Million Monkeys explored the possibility of accelerating scientific development, and surmounting the Randomness Principle, by pooling human brains into teams to attack a problem with what would be in essence one stupendous brain. This was a beautifully developed story and one of Jones' finest.

Gallegher, the inebriated inventor, was at his hilarious best in Proud Robot, by --of course--Lewis Padgett. As Kuttner says in the first line, "Originally the robot was intended to be a can opener." However the robot did nothing but stand around narcissistically admiring itself while Gallegher, hung over as usual, tried desperately to remember, or find out, what its true function was. A lovely yarn.

Symbiotica by Eric Frank Russell was the third of the Jay Score stories to appear (Jay Score ((ASF May '41)), Mechanistra ((ASF Jan '42))), which had as their central character, Jay Score, Robot. This adventure takes Jay Score and his companions to a remote planet which on first sight seems to be harmless, but turns out to be peculiarly dangerous as the unique nature of its symbiotic system becomes frighteningly clear.

November

There was a great deal of fruitless speculation around the LASFS in the weeks preceding the appearance of the new small ASTOUNDING on October 8 as to just what it would be like. When it finally did appear the initial reaction was in the main favorable. The magazine was thickly compact, boasted a sixteen page rotogravure section for articles, and contained none of the type of advertising commonly associated with pulp magazines--in fact it contained no adds, period. The cover by Timmins, illustrating George O. Smith's novelette Recoil was pretty poor, but that was to be expected. One touch that I particularly liked was the use of a cut of a rocket ship by Elliot Dold to illustrate the contents page--a nice reminder of the past.

Smith was back with Don Channing and the rest of the personnel of "Venus Equilateral" in the afore mentioned Recoil, which was something about an electron gun, a super development of the kinescope tube, used for destroying meteors and--later--spaceships. The only trouble with their use as weapons on spaceships was the recoil effect from the discharge of a stream of highpowered neutrons. As I said earlier, I never could work up any great enthusiasm for the Venus Equilateral stories, although I found them entertaining enough.

The Beast by Van Vogt was a sequel to The Great Engine printed in the July issue. In this story Pendrake, the man who had discovered the strange engine on a hillside and subsequently discovered the Venusians--former Allied scientists who had developed atomic power and taken it to Venus, becomes the victim of a torturous plot by neo-nazis who are hoping to revive Hitlerism with the aid of atomic power.

For my money, the best story in the issue was Padgett's Gallegher Plus, a long novelette in which Galloway Gallegher is again confronted with the consequences of his

inability to remember any of the events occurring during one of his periodic drunks. As usual he returns to sobriety to find in his living room an inexplicable contraption in full operation, the product of his subconscious inventive genius. This one was an undistinguished looking boxlike affair with thin filaments running from it through the window and into the back yard, where it was diligently reducing his back yard to a huge hole in the ground. The Gallegher stories of Kuttner appealed to me on two levels, the science fictional and detectival. The construction of the stories was detectival with the problem clearly presented at the beginning and with the detective (Gallegher) pursuing the truth down the trail of clues left by the author. At the same time they were legitimately science fiction with the problem—as presented—being one that could only be answered science fictionally.

December

This issue rounded out the tenth full year of ASTOUNDING under the Street and Smith label and also marked the end of the most notable years of the so-called Golden Age. The issue, as such, contained nothing outstanding with the possible exception of a long novelette by Anthony Boucher which was apparently originally intended for the recently deceased and universally mourned UNKNOWN WORLDS—We Print the Truth. This concerned a newspaper that printed nothing but the truth because everything it printed came true. Other stories were The Debt by E. M. Hull, another in the Artur Blord adventures and the cover story: Lost Art, by George OL Smith, which was about a strange tube and an instruction manual left behind by the vanished race of Martians. The problem was that, although the manual was completely detailed as to the operation of the tube, it gave no indication as to its function in an obviously more complex operation. The Iron Standard by Padgett dealt with the difficulties confronting a group of Earthmen stranded on Venus for a year and forced to make a living for that time by the only means at their disposal—a means that is not only illegal, but culturally taboo. Fricasee in Four Dimensions by P. Schuyler Miller, an amusing tale of a tramp with remarkable culinary skills, rounded out the lacklustre issue.

After Ten Years

Tradition and nostalgia have ineridicably fixed upon the years currently under discussion the designation of the golden age, but I believe, and I know that many others agree with me, that if we must chop the time-line of ASTOUNDING into eras, or ages, or whatever, that for the sake of accuracy this period should rightfully be labelled the second golden age. To mark the demarcation line between the preceeding and following years is an extremely difficult job—actually, almost impossible. A magazine doesn't change radically from one month to the next in the ordinary course of events. One exception to this is where one publisher or editor takes over from another. When Street and Smith took over ASTOUNDING from the defunct Clayton chain and installed F. Orlin Tremaine as editor the policy and appearance of the magazine was completely changed from the Clayton ASTOUNDING, and the ensuing three or four years constitute what I believe is essentially the first Golden Age of ASTOUNDING. Where it ended and the interregnum commenced is hard for me to say. I always felt that the last year (1937) of Tremaine's tenure fell off from the high level at which he had held the magazine during the first three years of his editorship, and that John W. Campbell, Jr. took roughly a year and a half to really get a solid grip on things when he became editor. When he finally did get things going the way he wanted them to, the second Golden Age came into being.

It's easy enough to ascribe the beginning of this second Golden Age to the July 1939 issue, as I did; the hazard sets in when you attempt to pinpoint the ending. I'm going to meet this problem head on—and then sidestep it. I haven't the courage or desire to say that on such-and-such a month the second Golden Age of ASTOUNDING came to a firm and final end.

What actually happened I believe (and I hope it will become evident in the following pages), is that the Golden Age didn't end---it just settled on a rather high plateau of excellence, from which the outstanding and classic stories reared like isolated mountain peaks.

The feature that distinguished the years 1939-1943 was one of exciting new ideas, talented new authors, refurbished old authors, and a deluge of exceptional stories from their typewriters. This phenomenon was the unique property of these few short years, but the momentum begun then carried the main aspects of the Golden Age onward for a few more years.

There is another aspect of science fiction, particularly the science fiction purveyed by ASTOUNDING from 1934 through the middle forties, that I would like to discuss here; an aspect that materially contributed to both the Golden Ages and the years between. This is the much maligned sense of wonder which is regarded with such contempt in some quarters. It is true that most of the stories of this period lack the literary polish and sophistication of the contemporary output; but, oh! the sense of wonder, the breathless adventure and the boundless imagination they had instead. This was what made so much of the older science fiction so intensely memorable and classic. My only regret is that today I find it virtually impossible to generate the same enthusiasm for a story that I could ten, fifteen or twenty years ago.

In the final analysis a sense of wonder is the priceless possession of the youthful discovered of science fiction; it may last but for a short fleeting instant, or it may stay with him for a number of years. At any rate it is sooner or later lost, seldom to be recovered.

From Reproductive and Social Behavior of the Northern Elephant Seal by George A. Bartholomew, Jr. University of California Press, 1952:

On the hauling ground at West Anchorage, at low tide in the middle of the afternoon, a small, apparently nulliparous female not more than 6-1/2 feet long left the other females and headed down the beach towards the sea. As usual, the female's departure caused no response from the male dominant over the part of the herd in which she had been lying. When the small female had crawled about 30 feet, she passed one of the subordinate males; the male remained motionless until she had passed, then roused himself, turned, overtook her before she had gone another 8 feet, pinned her to the ground with the weight of his body, and after not more than five seconds began to copulate. Copulation had been under way less than fifteen seconds when the male dominant over the part of the herd from which the female had departed discovered the pair's activities. This particular dominant male had so far during the day shown no sign of sexual interest in any of the many females available to him, but now, after rearing up and vocalizing once with great force, he moved at top speed towards the copulating pair. The subordinate male, apparently unaware that the dominant male's vocal challenge had been directed at him, did not perceive the dominant male's approach until the latter was only five or six feet away. The realization that he was being charged by the dominant male so disturbed the copulating male that he instantly headed for the water as fast as he could go, without even bothering to disengage himself from the female. The female, whose back had been bent almost double by the subordinate male's hasty departure, did not move away after the male pulled free. As the dominant male came abreast of her he stopped abruptly, paused a few seconds watching the flight of the displaced male, and then promptly pinned the female down and began to copulate with her.....

Bill Donaho's

Vituperations

Lynn Hickman - CONVERSATION 13 & 16. So this was what all the fuss was about! The British P.O. really must be fuggheaded. *** Nice artwork as usual in a Hickman zine. The layout in CONVERSATION #16 is much improved. The whole issue makes a much better impression, even though you don't have some of the top-notch art that you usually do.

Although I too am extremely fond of the Old ARGOSY I have never cared much for Donald Barr Chidsey. I've liked a few of his yarns, but find most of them rather thin.

You're right that some of the propaganda put out by the "liberal" newspapers can be pretty far away from the facts. However my opinion on Southern attitudes towards segregation were not derived from these sources--in fact in many cases they differ materially from the liberal line and have caused liberals to froth at the mouth. As you know, I was born and brought up in the South, and my opinions on these matters are from my own personal experience. And for that matter Fred Norwood--far from a liberal--whose letter was in VIPER #4 was also born and brought up in the South. He didn't seem to find my ideas so far off.

I don't expect you to agree with me about segregation, Lynn, but while you disagree with me, I'd also like you to see that my ideas are my own and not swallowed from some propaganda machine.

Alan Rispin - HUNGRY Nice to see such a hefty issue from you, Alan. But how about more from you next time? *** Flatbed mimeos seem an instrument of torture that it is well to avoid. I've never even seen one myself.

I think Sandfield strains a point--several of them in fact. For one thing I don't think that stf has become respectable at all--thank god! For, the times when it has approached respectability it has also deteriorated in those qualities that I read it for: sheer entertainment in strange ideas and adventures.

"A Day With the Beats" reads as though it might very well be true, although of course the "truth" has been embellished a trifle. If so, I think Bruce Kidd should have used his imagination more. His selection of incident makes the whole scene seem all too stereotyped.

Archie's "A Weekend to Burn" is in welcome contrast on that score. Archie has an eye for appropriate detail and this is quite an enjoyable account even though Archie's style here is--I think--too narrative to bring out the maximum effects. More dray-ma is needed, like.

Jhim Linwood writes neat fanzine reviews. He manages to do a short review and also give his own personal reactions. I agree with Jhim that stf has no literary value to speak of (praise god!), but the picture of all "young fans" have uniform tastes in stf is one which I find most depressing. And while I yield to no one in my admiration of Pohl and Kornbluth (particularly Kornbluth--a great loss. Amis is simply wrong there.) both as writer and individuals--I was fired from one job because of complications following a drunk with them--I don't think they have the steffish stature of the giants of yesteryear.

Eric Bentcliffe - WALDO I agree with you in that I find Alva's high estimation of Sturgeon's "Ether Breather" and "Butyl and the Breather" rather strange. I didn't remember them very clearly when I was stencilling Alva's article, but I recently reread them and found them most prosaic. Mostly though I agree with Alva's estimates of stories. He seems to have the same reactions I did/do.

Damn good layout this issue.

Jhim Linwood - JETSTREAM KPFA has been having a Bertol Brecht festival, presenting many of his plays both in English and in German, as well as his musical collaborations with Weill and discussions about Brecht the writer and philosopher. It's been very interesting.

You don't begin to realize just how many tear-jerker tricks the movie "Gone With the Wind" passed up (although it certainly had it's share!) until you see something like "Madonna of the Seven Moons."

You must remember that Left Wing means different things in England and in the U.S. Our politics is much more conservative than yours. Many people, for instance, consider that Vance Packard is quite pink. Most intellectuals in the U.S. belong to and support the Left Wing of the Democratic Party which is considered pretty far-out, but which is, I believe--by most standards--somewhat more conservative than the British Conservative party.

Your summary of Texas history is mostly accurate. However, the Texas Republic was proclaimed before the battle of the Alamo. Also you leave out a few important things: President Andrew Jackson's role for one thing. "Old Hickory" pushed the settlement of Texas from the beginning, using every resource of the U. S. government, both because he was an ardent imperialist and a southerner who wanted the South's influence--and Senate votes--extended.

The Mexican government was either amazingly naive or heavily bribed as the settlers--with the possible exception of Stephen F. Austin--never had any intention but that of breaking away from Mexico as soon as they were strong enough. I think you also over estimate Austin's power. He had some control over the men he took out, but he was far from being a dictator--although they certainly complained about what authority he had!--but none at all over the ones that followed, particularly as the early Texas settlements had an astounding number of men of substance: Southerners interested in spreading the South's Way of Life and/or getting in on a Sure Thing. Most frontiers were settled by men anxious to make their piles or to attain security, not by those who already had it. Of course, Texas had plenty of these too.

The battle cry at San Jacinto was "Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!" Of course Goliad is not mentioned as often as the Alamo as it was not quite so glorious. Santa Ana's advancing army, fresh from the Alamo, attacked the garrison at Goliad, a garrison several times that of the Alamo--some 1700 men I believe. Being the pride of Southern Chivalry and all they naturally surrendered immediately. Santa Ana shot them all. This annoyed people.

Sam Houston was Jackson's protege and had been hand-picked by him to bring Texas into the U.S. It took some doing as the Northern states didn't want another slave state in the union, so Texas was an independent Republic for about ten years. It finally got admitted--on its own terms--by entering into negotiations with England to come under the British crown (also with France, but no one took that seriously). The prospect of seeing Texas becoming a British possession was too much for the opposition, so it got in, keeping title to all its public lands--the only state ever to do so I believe. It was also given the right to divide into five smaller states anytime it

wished (10 senators instead of 2) without asking the permission of Congress. These extra senators would have come in handy later, but by that time Texas were so proud of Texas history, traditions and folklore--particularly the folklore!--that they wouldn't split the state up (Who would get the Alamo?)

Houston was governor again in 1861 when the question of succession came up. He was again' it. They had to get rid of him before Texas could succede. Ah, they were giants in those days.

Terry Jeeves - ERG A beautiful issue and I shudder to think of the work you must have put in. This is of course ye compleat satellite reference work (well maybe not complete, but sufficiently so to have all the information on satellites likely to be needed by anyone except a specialist) and such impeccable layout and color work and flawless repro, ghad sir, what have you Wrought?

Bob Lichtman - ZOUNDS I most definitely disagree with you about the respective merits of The City and the Stars and Against the Fall of Night. The first version, Against the Fall of Night, is a mood piece and has a haunting poetic quality similar to Campbell's "Twilight". When he rewrote it Clarke managed to remove all the atmosphere and mood even though he did give a much fuller picture of the culture of the city and made the whole thing more scientific. It's a good book, but not when compared with Against the Fall of Night. However I seem to be in a definite minority position here. Every review I read of TC&TS thought it better than ATFON. And if I remember correctly TC&TS is Terry Carr's favorite stf book.

I disagree about The Catcher in the Rye too. I think it is a stylistic triumph, but not much else. It conclusively demonstrates the dead end to which attention to mere writing--without saying much of anything--can bring someone. I've thought this for years, so I was rather pleased when the literary director of KPFA recently gave a talk on Salinger, and said much the same thing, that Salinger had enormous skill, but didn't say anything, that everything he attacked was a cardboard sham, nothing that really existed, and that his ideas about people and the world were adolescent ("He never seems to have developed beyond a prep school mentality."), and, while Salinger had much more writing skill, writers like Nelson Algren and Vance Bourjlay were much better novelists and of more significance because they had something to say.

Along similar lines Karl Shapiro in his introduction to Tropic of Cancer said that he thought Henry Miller was perhaps the greatest living author, and that he had said author, not writer because he thought that a concern for mere writing had just about ruined modern literautre. What you say is still of more importance than how you say it.



And your finding Slan dull! Gorblimey. Not that Slan is the greatest of all possible books, but from the opening sentence it's written with such razzle dazzle that I don't see how it can fail to hold your attention and interest, at least while you're actually reading it. Oh well, de gustibus and all that. It seems obvious that we have completely different tastes in reading matter.

But while I'm disagreeing with you, I think that Oscar Williams is the best anthologizer of poetry that I have come across. Like, the man--albeit a lousy poet himself--has impeccable taste. And all that.

Archie Mercer - AMBLE Well, that's what comes of having colonials write the constitution. I had heard vaguely of the "kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland", but was not really fully aware that the term "Great Britain" was so restrictive as to include only the main island. Oh well...

Ghad. I didn't realize that the practice of referring to people by their surnames was such a matter of class in England. It's not that way here. Probably most people do it, at least as far as males are concerned. Females are practically never called by their surname alone and mostly don't refer to males that way either. But come to think of it, most people--male and female--call me "Donaho", not "Bill", or some more exotic nickname. But usually--even with the same person--it's a very inconsistent thing. Some friends I always call by their surnames, some always by their first name or nickname, and some I'll call by either one or the other.

The first Michael Innes I read was The Case of the Journeying Boy and I still think it is the best one.

Bobbie Gray - VAGARY "Camp Crazy" was a great deal more interesting to read about than it was to experience I'll bet. You convinced me that something weird and far beyond the ordinary did take place, but I must confess I did long for a confrontation and an explanation. Alas, Life is seldom so tidy as fiction.

Speaking of verbal taboos and what one would say before members of one's own family, I come from a fairly strait-laced upper-middle-class family. Amongst males of all ages absolute freedom of language prevails. Even the males who may not use strong language think nothing of other males doing so. As far as the female members of the family is concerned, it depends upon the generation. I would never even think of using anything resembling strong language in front of my grandmother. I don't use four letter words pertaining to fornication in front of my mother, but fairly frequently slip and use ones involving defecation (which in the U.S. anyhow aren't nearly so taboo) usually receiving a mild reprimand for so doing. But even she doesn't take it seriously, it's just what she's "supposed to say" in the circumstances. I don't have a sister, but never even think of watching my language around my female cousins of my age--at least as far as the words I use; I watch the content somewhat. Also while they don't use strong language nearly so often as a male, most of them will say "F----" and "S----" on occasion.



As for girls in general I automatically assume that if a girl is capable of holding an intelligent conversation, there is no need to watch my language. However girls which I treat like "dolls" I do observe all the properties. This seems to work out pretty well.

For instance last night the GGFS program was a symposium of limericks lead by Tony Boucher and Poul Anderson. Limericks--full, unexpurgated limericks--were traded right and left by all present, male and female. No one even thought anything of it. But I gather that verbal taboos are far stronger in England.

I'm still not sure your distinction between pervert and invert. You say that inverts are born "sexually wrong" and perverts are just trying it for the thrills, but how do you distinguish this in practice? For that matter I understand that most modern psychological theory has it that few or no homosexuals are born that way, that homosexuality is caused by psychological warping at an early age. Many--if not most--also hold that the normal person is completely bisexual and that only cultural conditioning makes people exclusive heterosexual.

In voting in Egoboo Polls people really don't vote for the material the members have had during the past year, they vote for the total impression the members have left with them through the years. Last year Terry Carr finished 2nd or 3rd in SAPS and was grumbling that this was ridiculous as his SAPS work had been much better the year before when he had finished 9th or 10th. He then came up with this theory. It sounds reasonable to me. I wonder how many people actually do through the mailings before voting? Very few I'm sure. But on the other hand it may be assumed that the things someone remembers are the things he thinks of as best.

I'm very glad that VAGARY is appearing regularly now.

Dick Schultz - ENVOY Welcome to OMPA, Dick.

Chuck Hansen - OPHIDIAN And you too, Chuck. Although I already knew some of them, I'm glad you told us all those facts about yourself; it helps me to picture you better, although I believe I've met you. Weren't you in New York in the summer of '59? And didn't you come up to the Nunnery looking for Chuck Freudenthal?

The intent of the "original material" clause was not to make any material illegal, or to prevent bi- or tri- or multi-apers from sending their other apa material through OMPA, but to make sure that each member did produce at least 12 pages of material each year which was meant for OMPA. So your plan of sending the same zine through both FAPA and OMPA--with the appropriate mailing comments to each apa--is just fine.

John Roles - MORPH I thought we'd lost you. I'm very glad we didn't as you were one of the reasons I wanted to join OMPA in the first place.

I found your article on old books and book dealers very interesting. While I have a large library and go to much trouble to get certain books I want, I'm not a "collector". All I want is a reading text and thus am not interested in first or special editions. I'm not much of a "completist" either. I have the complete works of some authors, but that's because a bookstore was selling the complete set for a low price. I have a "complete" (missing a couple of volumes) set of Balzac which I once picked up for around \$3.00. I don't like Balzac, but I couldn't resist the price. Somehow though I feel that this was a mistake. I've owned the set 10 years, shipped it across country twice, and never opened even one of the volumes.

While I know a great many nominal Christians I can't say that I know very many whose beliefs actually influence their way of life. There are a few, but not many. Most seem to keep their religion in a separate compartment from their "real" life, or more often, treat "belief" as a form of ritual. But their "belief" is a matter of words, not a living doctrine. There is a lovely passage in Thorne Smith's The

Stray Lamb about how Mrs. Lamb is convinced she wouldn't have any trouble handling anyone who "believed in God and took him seriously." It seems to me that quite a few people "believe" in God, but very few take him seriously.

Jimmy Groves - THE WALL So, I get saddled with the round robin this time. You cur! Deadline is almost upon me and I don't have an idea in my head. I'll think of a fitting revenge.

Ethel Lindsay - SCOTTISHE Well I must admit, Ethel that I enjoyed your mailing comments much more this time than usual. You are headed in the right direction. As for my way being easier, I don't find it easy. I spend something over two hours a page on my mailing comments--and that doesn't include running them off, collating, etc. Of course, most of this is "thinking time" not writing time, but it doesn't include reading time either. I read the mailing the day it comes and usually reread most of it--the parts I like best--making check marks, a day or so later. Then sometime before deadline I sit down with the mailing and a typewriter and have at it. I skim through the mailing again, paying particular attention to the check marks, writing up each zine as I finish it. I try to plan out what I want to say, but nevertheless find it useful to rough draft as I always think of numerous changes I want to make--changes in the thought, not the style. I really don't think that mailing comments are deathless prose so I'm not very concerned about the style. However since I am rewriting it anyhow I do make many changes in the style also, principally in the direction of sounding more informal and spontaneous, as my off the cuff writing tends to be formal and stilted.

As for our discussion about criticism, Poul Anderson says it better than I can, so I'll quote from his column, "Beermutterings" in VORPAL GLASS:

"Lit'ry criticism is an occasionally amusing game, but I cannot for the life of me understand why so many otherwise intelligent people take it seriously. Cross-word puzzles make more demands on the intellect, and poker has more significance."

"Of course, I say nothing against the reviewer, who is a different and very useful breed of cat."

"Orwell is more formidable. Unlike many critics, he was very much a man; he was intelligent and honest, and he often dealt with reality... Almost everything Orwell said, whether right or wrong, was worth your respectful attention... So what did I actually get out of these essays? First off, some insight into the mind of George Orwell, a considerably more interesting place to visit than the mind of Irving Howe or Edmund Wilson. Second, some damned good asides. For example, while I think he vastly overestimates Miller's dreary Tropic books, he deals brilliantly en passant with the parlor revolutionist syndrome; and while he makes the great mistake of patronizing Kipling (never patronize your superiors) he conjures up the old British Army almost as well as the master. Third, I was pleased to have various favorite passages quoted at me. Quotation-bandyng is a fine indoor sport.

"But as for the nominal subject of these inquiries--the Truth about these writers, their Significance, and the rest--Orwell had nothing to say that any halfway intelligent reader couldn't see for himself..."

"I (do deny criticism's) importance, either to the writer or the reader... All the critics in the world don't add up to one decent writer; and if the writer has anything whatsoever to say in his work, he'll hammer out his own standards and to hell with what you or I think. He can learn--from his peers, talking shop, as Orwell or Proust or Jim Gunn have done. But shop talk, even in print, is a horse of another ass than "criticism".

The advantage of an electric typewriter is that you don't have to "bang the keys", just barely touch them, thus typing can be much faster and is much less tiring. Most typists can type from 50% to 100% faster on an electric than on a standard machine. Also, since the keys hit the page with a uniform pressure--and don't hit depending upon the force with which they are banged--copy gives a much more uniform impression.

"Camp Dazy" was very amusing. I enjoyed it more than anything else I've seen from "MachiaVarly".

Is that quote from The Singing Sands you give supposed to be supporting the Scottish side?

I for one don't care whether you break up a word at the end of a line or print the whole word on one line and thus have somewhat more uneven right-hand margins. I never notice. In fact, I was reading the third or fourth issue of Boggs zine before I even noticed that Redd justified his right hand margins (honest!) --a lot of wasted work as far as I am concerned.



Another quote--Jack Woodford in Writing and Selling: "'STYLE IS THE MAN!' That is the way all chapters on style begin. How exquisitely collegiate! As indelibly so as a college yell.

"'Style is the man.' Why not: 'Haircut is the man. B.O. is the man. Urinary-sis is the man.' It sounds impressive to those with Chatauqua minds, and it doesn't mean anything.

"After you have been writing for awhile you will write in a manner more or less peculiar to yourself; that will be your 'style'...And that's all there is to style; the less attention you give to building it and the less you notice the matter the better it will be for you; if you become hypersensitive about it, through reading overmuch on the subject, you'll get so tangled up in it you won't be able to write at all. In short, you'll set up a woeful conditioned reflex against writing because of such hypersensitiveness."

I hope that the postmailed BLEATHERINGS #26 doesn't mean that there won't be a SCOTTISHE this mailing. That would indeed be a tragedy. That whole post mailing was a good counter ploy. Of course Berkeley's idea of having a postmailing larger than the regular mailing was born long before we saw how large the regular mailing was. Then the mailing arrived and we gave up.

Bruce Burn - PARAFANALIA & SIZAR Your travel report continues interestingly. And "The kilts of Tralee" reads as if it had been great fun to put on--and see. Much of this fun even comes across.

Mailing comments are what you make of them, just as conversation is. Naturally if you aren't interested in talking to people or don't take any trouble with your own conversation, then your conversation is not going to be any different in quality than back fence gossip and you probably won't be able to distinguish between stimulating conversating and gossip of any type. (Hypothetical you, naturally.)

However I suspect that the crux of our difference can be found in your phrase "mailing comments are on a literary par". I feel that (1) Mailing comments can be creative--or don't you recognize the essay as a literary form? (2) I feel that your own fondness for fiction has led you to judge all writing by the literary standards applicable to fiction. This is just an inappropriate as condemning a cat because it isn't a dog. (3) You do enjoy talking to people; what's the matter with written conversation?

As for your experience in IPSO--writing a story around a idea for the first mailing and having someone in the second mailing write an article around this idea as "no one else seems to have thought of it"--I would say that this proves that your story was a success. Almost always if you notice the ideas in a novel or story, insofar as you notice the ideas, that story is a failure as a work of art. (Naturally we notice the ideas in stf, but no one claims that stf has much literary value.) When reading fiction--good fiction--the characters and action hold your attention and the ideas slip by your conscious mind to be greedily seized upon by the subconscious. (That's why fiction is the best mechanism for propaganda.) Later on these ideas seep into your conscious mind and you don't know where they come from; you may even think you thought of them yourself.

Brian Jordan - ROPE OF SAND I feel that you are interpreting the new constitution far too rigidly. For instance, if an emergency arises there is nothing to prevent the President--or AE if the President is part of the emergency--from bringing an amendment up for vote at any mailing. Otherwise this procedure will keep amendments and hasseling at a minimum. Also the number of copies of member's zines sent to the AE has already been increased by one, and since the general sentiment of OMPA seems to favor it, there is nothing to prevent the officers now--without a vote--donating a copy of each mailing to the British Science Fiction Foundation. Possibly your addition on appeals might be useful, but the idea of bothering further with the constitution sort of gives me the whim-whams. Let's wait until an actual concret situation necessitates a change before we tinker around any more.

George Spencer - UNICORN You make one positively despair of history books. For years I've been reading that Jim Crow was started by Southern conservatives, and now you tell me it was the Liberals all along. Of course these days most history books are written by liberals these days. Hmnnn.

One of my ex-girl friends went to an exclusive finishing school. They taught the girls never to talk about nasty old sweat: "Horses sweat; men perspire; women glow." Honest, cross my heart.

Jim Groves again - PACK RAT My reason for growing a beard was mostly a combination of not liking to shave and just to see what I would look like with one. It looked fine, but actually was too much of a hassle. I would add another reason for growing a beard to your list: (5) To demonstrate one's virility, a beard being a very obvious secondary sexual characteristic and all that. Along these lines, in Texas one of the most devastating things you can say about a man is: "If he ever did grow any hair on his chest, he'd shave it off." This statement doesn't necessarily imply homosexuality--just a general lacking in the approved of masculine qualities.

Your account of the fule expert who accepts some of Velikovsky's ideas because he finds things wrong with the current theories about coal formation reminds me of a blind spot of my own. I just can't accept the current theories about oil formation. I really know nothing at all about the subject and have no reason at all to disbelieve them, but I just find it too much to swallow--all those animals decaying and being perserved in so convenient a fashion. God god, the billions upon billions of barrels of oil we have already pumped out of the ground. It's just not reasonable.

A few parting salvos: KEN POTTER. Sniff. Sniff. Sorry you are leaving, Ken. I wish you wouldn't. But good luck on the playwrighting and come back soon. ANDY MAIN. You can do a damn sight better than this SUWAYYA I know. But even with this material you make that ditto machine sit up and say, "Uncle." TERRY CARR. Showoff!

ETHEL LINDSAY FOR T. A. F. F.

