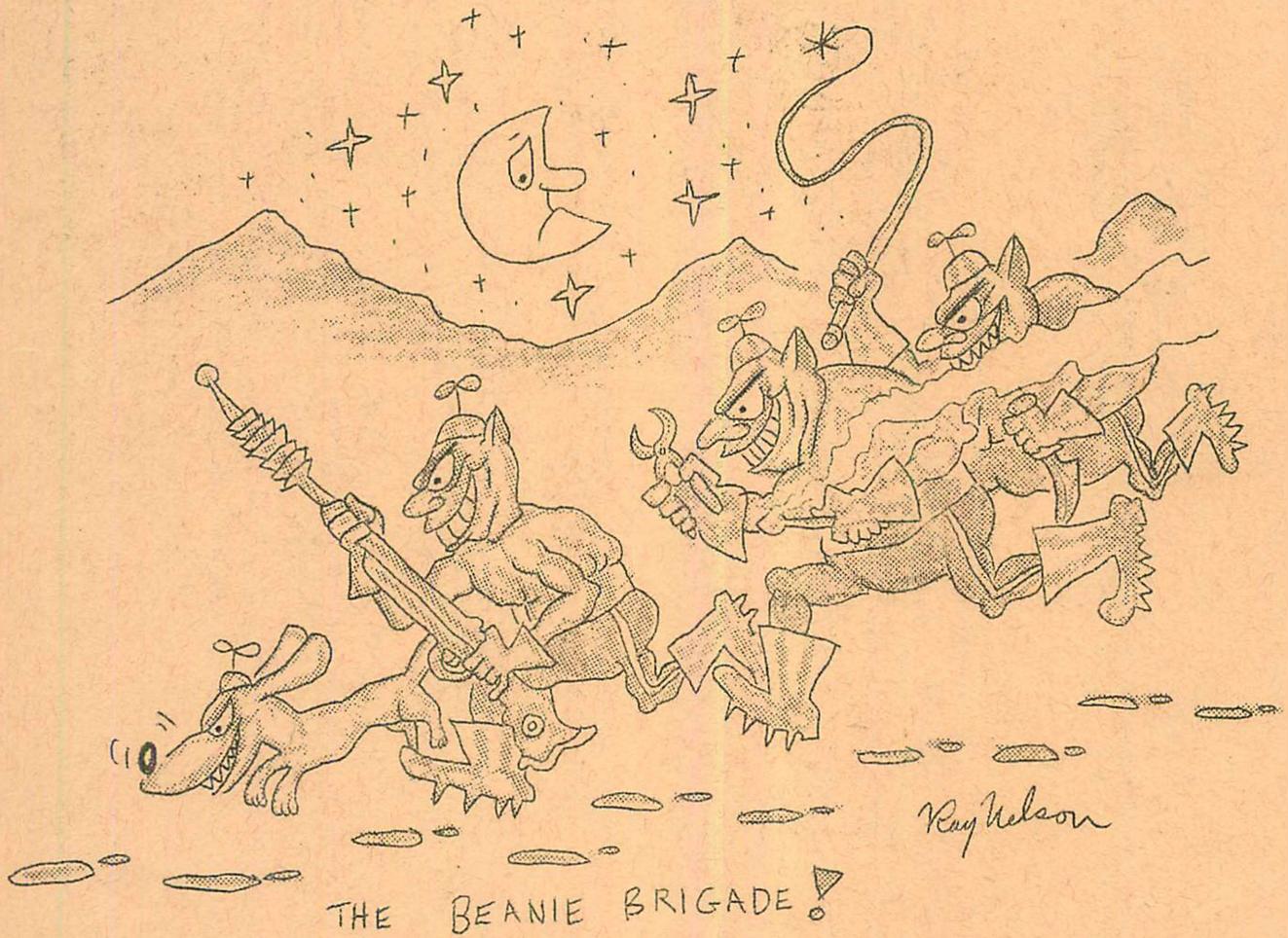


# the WALL

PART IV



THE BEANIE BRIGADE!



# THE WALL

## SYNOPSIS

### PART 1 - George Locke

Things begin to happen to Ron Bennett. First, someone sends him a large ducking stool; then one Ken Plitter informs him that he is being sued for infringement of copyright as Bruce Pelz has copyrighted the term "elephant" and any mention of Cecil is now illegal. Before the shock of this has worn off he receives a post card from his London stamp spotter, Chris Miller, that in the files of the British Museum Chris has discovered a fanzine stamped with a Victorian penny black. Chris warns that he has also notified Norman Shorrocks and "You Know Who" and that the race is on. The post card is blood stained!

Ron is still reeling when Bill Donaho mysteriously appears on the scene. But he recovers from this last blow and Ron, Cecil, and Bill start hitch-hiking to London to see Chris and the Victorian penny black. During the journey Bill behaves in a most suspicious manner and tries to arrange a detour to Archie Mercer's. He manages to lead the expedition off the main track and the travelers encounter a mob milling about another ducking stool. The mob attacks them, but they manage to escape and reach London.

They can't find Chris Miller, but a guard at the British Museum takes Ron and Bill down to the fanzine room in the vaults. They find a fanzine, NIRVANA, which has the stamp torn off. "The Victorian penny black must have come from here!" They find Chris's body tied tightly to another ducking stool and covered with severe lacerations from large claws. Ron decides that the claw marks were made by toe nails--and probably a woman's toe nails as he finds evidence of sheer silk stockings. During his investigation of the crime Bill mysteriously disappears. Ron is just about to make another discovery when his flashlight goes out. The door clangs shut. A fusillade of shots rings out. Riddled with 45 slugs Ron crumples to the floor. Grabbing hold of the ducking stool he tries to pull himself upright. Sinking slowly to the floor he loses consciousness muttering, "Toe nails...sexy...toe nails." And the dust around him glows.

### PART 2 - Ron Bennett

Ron dies and is reproduced in another body. Chris appears--also reproduced in another body--and reveals that he is the one who fired the shots. Dying and being reproduced had been rather unsettling and he had been nervous. They leave their former bodies in Eney's vault--as the fanzine vault is now called--and move on to Kilburn to the Penitentiary. Present are Ella Parker, Archie Mercer, Pat Kearney, Ted Forsyth, Joe Patrizio, Jimmy Groves and Bruce Burn. Bill Donaho mysteriously reappears--this time with Ken and Irene Potter. Ken tells of the new play he is writing, about a group of people in a room where the walls start closing in on them.

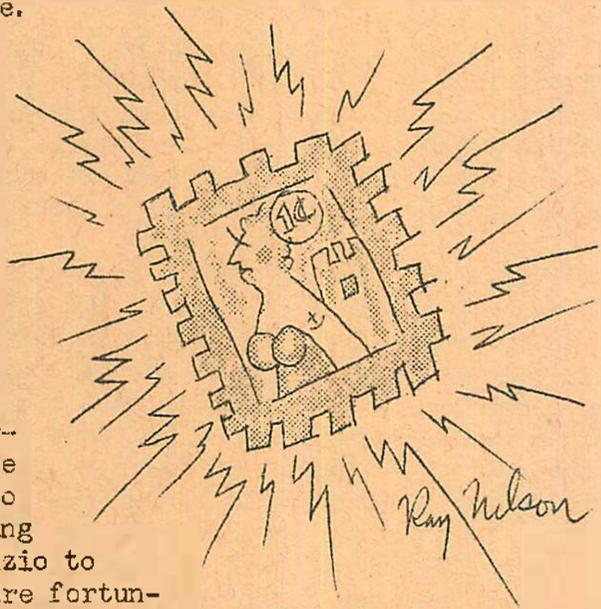
THE WALL, Part A, is written and published by Bill Donaho, 1441-8th St., Berkeley 10, Calif., USA for the 30th Mailing of the Off Trails Magazine Publishers' Association. Illus by Ray Nelson

Ella decides it's time to have soup and sends Jimmy Groves to the kitchen to heat up some tins. In the kitchen Jimmy finds a Victorian penny black stamp stuck to the bottom of a

saucepan. He goes to the door to shout to Ron about this, but finds that someone has shut it. He tries to open the door, but it won't open. The walls begin to close in on him and as he tries frantically to escape the stove dissolves into a pool of water and the doorknob turns to ice and comes off in his hand. Jimmy shouts for help and a voice on the other side of the locked door shouts back at him, "Fire, fire! Run quickly; the lorries are here." A white staring face appears at the window, upside down and leering. "It's the scopy f'er he wrote about," it explains. Then it yells, "The lorries have lost their sirens." The walls move in.

PART 3 - Jimmy Groves

Using his keen scientific ingenuity Jimmy deduces that the walls aren't closing in. They look like they are closing in because when the stove and the door were turned to ice, as a side reaction quartz particles were deposited on the brickwork, thus creating the optical illusion that the walls were closing in. Further using his keen scientific ingenuity Jimmy drinks half a bottle of vodka and melts the ice of the door with his breath. He staggers downstairs. At the foot of the stairs he stumbles over the body of Ron Bennett. Ron is not quite dead yet and manages to gasp, "They got the Atom illos....and Ella." As Ron dies Jimmy accidently drops the penny black into the blood seeping out of his side. At once the stamp begins to glow and the glow spreads until Ron's entire body is glowing all over. Ron-3 then materializes and looks at Ron-2's lifeless body. Bill Donaho appears again and after him all the rest of the party except the kidnapped Ella and Kin and Irene. The group decides to consult the SoFa (The Society for Fan-nish Research--prop. George Locke) before things begin to get complicated.



Ron-3 and Chris go to get Ron-2 stuffed as a wall ornament for Ella--a nice surprise when she is rescued--and Archie, Bruce and Pat Kearney go to Warrington Crescent to take care of the latest OMPA mailing, leaving only Jimmy, Bill, Ted Forsyth and Joe Patrizio to go consult the SoFa. Arriving there they are fortunate in finding Messrs. Bentcliffe, Jones and Shorrock of PSYCHO LTD (Psionic and Electrical Engineering Company Ltd.) just completing a land line connection to Africa so the Master himself may be consulted.

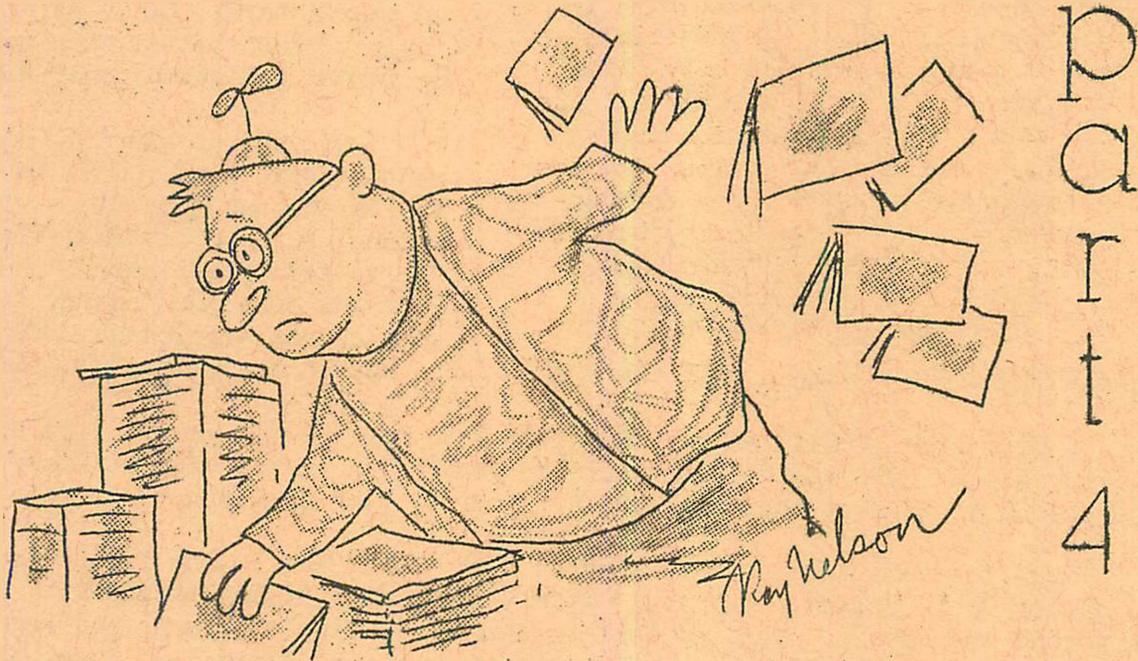
George decides that the anti-fandom deduced by Willis has at last appeared and that all the indications point to a parallel time line which broke away during the last century. Irene wrote in ABSTRACT about pre-fan amateur publishers in our time line. In the other time line probably some of these groups survived and infiltrated fandom as it emerged, turning it into a deadly menace. And having conquered their world, they now intend to conquer ours. The destruction of fandom in our time line is a necessary prelude to that conquest.

As George declares that all of the incidents so far seem to center around the other time analog of the Potters, and that Royden is probably a weak spot in the continia, the group determines to go there to investigate. George wants to get in on the fun and since Art Wilson is flying to London to see the AE about his membership, arrangements are made to have him pick up George in Nariobi. In the meantime the others go on to Roydon, picking up more penny blacks on the way.

Using the penny blacks they locate the Wall--the barrier and the gateway between this time line and that of anti-fandom. (It occupies the same space as the shed where the Potters keep their inessentials like pots and pans.) Bill kicks a large hole in the Wall and they all go through. Apart from a notice stating "THE TIME IS NEARLY HERE" their surroundings seem quite normal. As they move forward the Wall behind them dissolves into a mass of flame. There is a cry of "FANAC" and a baying sound. Our heroes run, but Ted, Joe and Jimmy are soon captured. Bill gets away. A tall dark figure comes up to the captives. "Ha, fans," he said. "We'll soon cure you. O. R. G. A. (the Off t'Rails Gafiating Association) hasn't failed yet."

Bill, winded and closely pursued by hounds, seeks sanctuary in a low concrete bunker labeled: DANGER - POISON. DO NOT ENTER. The hounds and hunters rush on by. Bill tries to leave but he is locked in. He looks around and discovers that this is where the anti-fans store their loot before destroying it. The bunker is packed with complete collections of prozines and fanzines. These were all he had to help him out. And he had to hurry--any moment now the hunters would discover their mistake and come back. "Eureka!" he shouted. "I have it." And he set to work.

AND NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY...



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Bill hastily pawed through the mounds of fanzines, pulling out every copy of NIRVANA he could find. At last he came to one with another penny black stamp. He carefully ripped it off. "Even if this doesn't work, I'm safe," he mused. "All knowledge is contained in fanzines and I can easily do some research and find another way out. But this should work."

He held the penny black in front of him and slowly walked around the bunker. "In running away from the hounds I'm sure I doubled back on my tracks several times. I must be fairly close to the spot where we came in. I don't know how long the Wall is, but I'm sure the anti-fans wouldn't have their collection depot too far from it--it would even be sensible for them to build the bunker with the Wall running through it." The stamp began to glow and the Wall snapped into focus. "Good! But this kicking

down walls is hard on the toes—and besides it probably burst into flames last time because I disrupted some lines of force. I'll try another way." He walked up to the Wall and touched it with the glowing stamp. The Wall began to glow in turn. The glow formed a large rectangular pattern. The pattern became an opening.

Bill stepped through the Wall and found himself near Ken and Irene's caravan. As he approached it, he saw that the door was open. He yelled, "Ken! Irene! and receiving no reply, stepped inside. The caravan was deserted. Clothes were strewn around and there were traces of hurried packing and a hasty departure. Highly alarmed Bill decided to hurry back to London for reinforcements. "Maybe the O. R. G. A. kidnapped Ken and Irene long ago and put their analogs from the other time line in their places. After all, playwriting is a mundane occupation, and it was Ken's story that started that incident at the Penitentiary. Besides the O. R. G. A. would hardly leave the Wall unguarded... But why should the false Ken and Irene leave now? Perhaps they think that now that fans know about the O. R. G. A. and the Wall that we will suspect them...."



He started hitchhiking back to London, but as he didn't remember too clearly the way back to the Penitentiary he missed his way several times and it was quite late when he got there. He found Ron-3 and Chris proudly hanging, the stuffed Ron-2 onto the wall. "You do look natural, Ron," said Bill admiringly. "Much better than you do now." He turned and gazed critically at Ron-3.

"Oh shut up and tell us what happened," said Ron. Chris interrupted Bill's account many times with exclamations, but Ron listened tight lipped. "We've got to get Berry," he said when Bill was through. "Berry is familiar with counter-espionage work. And I don't believe for a moment that the O. R. G. A. can hold a candle to the I. R. A."

"You're right," Bill said. "But it's late now. Let's grab a bite to eat and get some sleep. Art and George should be getting in at the airport early tomorrow. We can go down to meet them and send Art over to pick up Berry."

Early the next morning they started out. Chris was in the lead. As they neared the corner Chris yelled, "Hey you! Stop!" and made a flying tackle at a figure darting around the corner. The two fell together in a tangle of arms and legs. "Oh, I'm sorry, Bruce. I didn't recognize you without your beard.... I saw this figure skulking, and...."

Bruce glared, but didn't say anything. "Come on," said Ron. "We're going to the airport. We'll tell you all about what happened on the way."

But when they got to the airport George and Art weren't there. Chris looked worried. "They should be here by now. I wonder if anything's happened to them." He looked up. "Ethel! What are you doing here?" Ethel Lindsay strode up and everyone gazed at her open-mouthed.

"Pat Kearney called me up and told me all about what happened at the Penitentiary, that Ella had been kidnapped. I took some time off and came to London immediately. I went over to the SoFa, but you had already left. I talked to George and he told me what he thought. And fortunately PSYCHO had laid down some more land lines. One

of them was to Bloomington. I talked to Tucker and he called up Betty Kujawa for me. She decided to fly over in her plane to help us out. She should be here any minute. But has anything else happened?" When she had been brought up to date Ethel was speechless for a moment. "It all sounds incredible of course, but granting that there is another time line and that anti-fandom has taken over there, there is still too much that doesn't make sense. The incredible power of those penny blacks! And all these loose ends floating around: ducking stools and sexy toenails. We can't go rushing around like chickens with our heads cut off—we've got to sit down and figure things out."

Everybody sat down. No one said a word for ten minutes. Then Ethel said, "Those ducking stools—it sounds like an anti-Scotch movement to me. Everybody knows that more ducking stools were used in Scotland than in any other place in the world, that ducking stools are for all practical purposes identified with Scotland. Some anti-Scotch forces enter into this somehow."

Bruce objected, "I don't see how. Or why. After all Scotland is only a minor province of England." Ethel hit him over the head with her handbag. He fell back into his seat, half stunned.

"That's what we need around here: efficiency," said Ron.

"Ah, the same old Ethel I see," said George as he and Art came up. "What did you find out at Roydon, Bill?"

"You were right, George," said Bill. "When we got to Roydon...."

When Bill finished George rubbed his hands with satisfaction. "At last a real problem for the SoPa. However things aren't as bad as they look. Obviously the strength of anti-fandom is limited. Otherwise they would take us by force, instead of using cunning. Maybe only a few anti-fans can come through the Wall at once.... We've got to get some fans through the Wall to find out a few things. And we've got to find out the extent of the Wall and if anything else but the penny blacks will work on it—other objects associated with the last century. As for the mysterious powers of the penny blacks—"

"Why Andy Main, what are you doing here?" interrupted Bill.

"Hi, Everybody," said Betty as she and Andy joined the group. "I stopped over in New York, but Andy was the only fan I could locate. I was going to drop down and pick up Eney too, but I figured we didn't have time."

"Maybe it's a good thing you didn't," said George. "I think it was more than a good pun when we called the scene of the first violent disturbances Eney's vault. I believe that subconscious creativity was called into play. We must assume that all fandom is being attacked, not just English fandom. If so, there will be other centers of anti-fandom, some in the U.S. And what more likely center of anti-fandom focus than an omni-apaiian, particularly one as well-known and well-liked as Eney? And isn't it an odd coincidence that Eney's been goofing up a lot recently?"

Everyone nodded sagely, but Bill spluttered, "I'm an omni-apaiian too."

"And we'll keep our eyes on you too," said George. "But we're wasting time. I agree with Ron that Art should go pick up John." Art had been restless for some time and now he waved goodbye and left. "But in the meantime we should still try to do some spying, find out where the fans are being held prisoner, what the O. R. G. A. plans are and all that." He called after Art, "BRING BERRY TO THE PENITENTIARY!"

"Hey!" said Andy. "I've got an idea. Chris is almost as young and innocent looking as I am, and believe me that's a distinct asset--"

"We're talking about spying now--not sex," said Bruce, glaring jealously at Andy.

"I believe you're right," said George. "It should work in spying too. Anyhow, it's worth trying. And too, you kids are younger, more resilient, and have more Sense of Wonder. If you are captured, you'll be better able to resist the O. R. G. A. brain-washing. Give them the penny black, Bill. They go on down to Roydon. I'll pick up some more of the stamps and some other Victorian things and follow them down to make tests. Ron, you'd better get out a special issue of SKYRACK to alert fandom. And Bruce, you locate all the London fans--see if Archie's still around. And be sure to get the beat crowd: Jhim Linwood, Alan Rispin, Ivor Mayne. We can use their low cunning. I'll stop at SoFa and use its Belfast line. I'll tell Berry to be ready and see if Willis has deduced any more about the nature of anti-fandom. And I'll warn all the fans that I can reach by land line. We'll meet at the Penitentiary later."

Andy and Chris had already left. Ron and Bruce followed after George arguing about the tests he was going to make. Bill looked at Ethel and Betty. "Let's tackle this from a different angle. I don't think all these things fit into one pattern. I believe there is another cast of characters in here someplace. Let's go back to the British Museum."

"Why?" said Ethel as they started towards the museum.

"There are a lot of little things, but principally everything seems to have started there: the first penny black showed up there, the first attacks were made there, and the penny blacks first showed there extraordinary powers there--"

"What about the postcard to Ron and the ducking stools?" said Betty.

"Well they appeared about the same time the first penny black showed up at the Museum. I think it must be a focus of some kind and we should be able to find out something....But we'll have to get a light bulb to replace the one that's burned out."

Bill screwed in the new bulb and snapped on the light. Nothing had been disturbed. The bodies had crumbled into nothingness, but everything else was the same. "What a pity," said Ethel. "Ella's new wall ornament will probably be gone too. She'll be so disappointed." She walked around examining the fanzines which were stacked in towering piles.

"This reminds me of that bunker," said Bill. "Maybe there'll be some more penny blacks here. And then again, maybe George is right--maybe other things besides penny blacks will work." He laughed. "Maybe all we need to do is to shout 'FANAC' or something." Hardly had the word left his mouth when a glow shone from the corner of the room. The glow spread and a gateway appeared. Another Ethel stepped into the room.

Ethel-2 wore a green uniform covered with gold braid and she walked with an erect military carriage. "It's about time," she said. "We've been waiting for weeks." She grinned at her analog. "Hello, Ethel."

Ethel-1 spluttered, "Who are you? Where did you come from?"

"I'm Captain Lindsay of the Space Marines. I'm from the same time line as the anti-fans, but we're on your side. In my world the fans have been driven from Earth, but we still have our bases throughout the Solar System since the anti-fans haven't been able to achieve space travel. But come on through to our headquarters. We can make plans there."

Betty looked at Ethel-1. "Should we trust her?" Ethel-1 bit her lip. "I think so. Looks like we have to."

They followed Ethel-2 through the gateway. There was a momentary sensation of vertigo and then they were in a large room ablaze with fluorescent light. There were no windows, but large screens flickered ghostily with various views. Complicated-looking machines were scattered here and there and thick cables wove a pattern on the floor. A few people were watching the screens or working with various controls. They nodded as the group came in.

"Gosh!" said Betty. "Where are we?"

"Fannish GHQ. On the other side of the moon. But I know you must be hungry. Let's have a nice cup of tea and I'll tell you what's going on."

As they walked through the room Bill glanced at the flickering screens. "Aren't those Earth scenes? And what's the matter with the screens?"

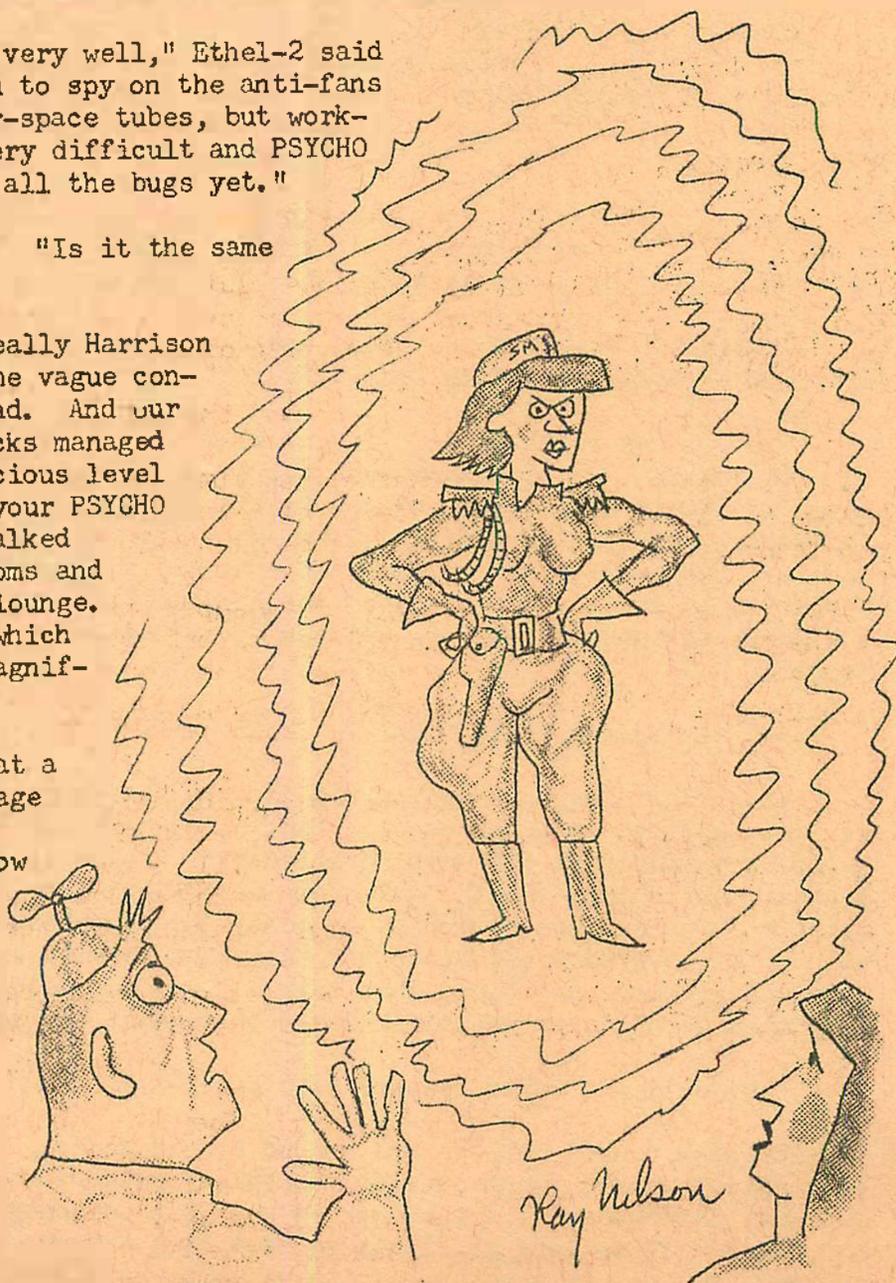
"The screens never work very well," Ethel-2 said apologetically. "We use them to spy on the anti-fans and as pointers for our hyper-space tubes, but working through hyper-space is very difficult and PSYCHO hasn't been able to work out all the bugs yet."

"PSYCHO?" asked Ethel-1. "Is it the same as our PSYCHO?"

"Yes. In fact it was really Harrison who figured out how to get the vague contact with you that we have had. And our Bentcliffe, Jones and Shorrocks managed to communicate--on a subconscious level--with your lads and so got your PSYCHO started." By now they had walked through several confusing rooms and passages and entered a cosy lounge. It had large quartz windows which looked out on the dead but magnificent landscape of the moon.

"Wow!" said Betty. "What a view. How did you folks manage to get up here anyhow? And why can't the anti-fans follow you?"

Ethel-2 began to make tea. "I'll have to give you the whole picture, but first tell me what you know so I won't repeat myself." Hurriedly, interrupting each other, they told her. "George is right. Our time line did split off from yours in the late 19th Century. We haven't been able





to find out what caused the split—if we knew that we might be able to find other Walls and gateways between our world and yours. We only know of the one Wall now and it is only 144 feet long—"

"Only one Wall and it only 144 feet long!" interrupted Bill. "But the British museum is miles from Roydon!"

"We are sometimes able to focus our hyperspace tubes through the Wall. Our one advantage over the anti-fans is that we are able to use hyper-space and they are not. Evidently their minds are incapable of making the twists necessary to hold the focus. But the minds of fans—they can twist all over the place... That's how we got here and to our other bases in the solar system. We don't have rocket ships and so far we have been able to prevent the anti-fans from developing them. And the anti-fans can't even use the hyper-space tubes we establish—the minute they try to go through, the tube collapses on them."

"Boyoboy!" said Betty. "Fans are slans! But if you don't know what caused the split, what makes your time line different from ours?"

"George was right again. In our time line amateur publishing grew much stronger than in yours. And as fandom rose all sorts of mundane publishers—people not interested in fannishness or in science fiction—formed a part of it. Then—" Ethel-2 shuddered, but went on bravely, "Then when Ray Nelson discovered the power in propeller beanies, the awful power to warp men's minds, to hypnotise them—this fannish gift was perverted to evil, mundane ends. The mundane fans, the anti fans, rose and took over the world with their beanies. Walter Breen made himself the dictator of Earth, the Fanarch.

"Walter Breen!" said Ethel-1. "But he'll be in OMPA next mailing."

"Yes, the danger to your world is very real and very near. At first the fans were overwhelmed by what the anti-fans had done. And fans as well as anti-fans are relatively immune to the warping effects of the beanies—as is anyone interested in amateur publishing. So the anti-fans were willing to share their conquest with us. Quite a few fans were corrupted by money and power and other unfannish things. Even when we discovered hyper-space the anti-fans weren't alarmed. But they began to become uneasy when they found that only a true fan could work with hyper-space. And then when we began to establish bases throughout the solar system—"

"Why only the solar system? said Ethel-1.

Ethel-2 poured out tea and handed around scones. "Sugar? Milk? We've never been able to get a focus outside the solar system. Basically our use of hyper-space is a psi phenomena. The machines we use just concentrate and amplify the powers of our minds. It is very difficult to establish a focus unless you know the spot well or there is another mind there with which to establish contact. And for some reason

the atmosphere interferes a great deal. We have no trouble out in the solar system, but as you could see from our screens, working on Earth is very difficult.

Bill took another cup of tea and another handful of scones. "But isn't it dangerous to use the gateways then? If it works so inefficiently I'd think it might give trouble...."

Ethel-2 looked grave. "It is dangerous. Ever now and then a hyper-space tube col-lapses. Most often it's just a viewing screen, but sometimes it's a gateway. We've lost about 30 fans in hyper-space that way. Not one of them has ever returned. I was working with the Bulmers and the Buckmasters when a gateway collapsed on them. I can still hear Daphne scream." She shuddered. "We've made studies of hyper-space itself, establishing gateways into it, rather than through it, but haven't been able to find out much about it. It's just a grey nothingness in which psi will not work at all. We lost a couple of researchers who went in to investigate. You're allright as long as you just stick an arm or a leg in, but once you're all the way in—you vanish—even if you have a line attached to anchor you to our space. It doesn't. PSYCHO thinks that time doesn't even exist there."

Ethel-2 continued. "Fans slowly began to realize that hyper-space is ours and we began using it to fight the Fanarch and the forces of anti-fandom. It's more or less a standoff now—they outnumber us and we have hyper-space. We still hope to restore freedom to Earth and to abolish the tyranny of the Beanie Brigade." She tossed down the rest of her cup.

"The Beanie Brigade?" asked Ethel-1.

"The Beanie Brigade is the strongarm branch of the O. R. G. A., their elite troops. And as you might suspect the fans that have been captured, brainwashed, gafiated and converted to anti-fandom are our bitterest and most dangerous enemies—they know the fannish mind. Walt Willis is the implacable head of the O. R. G. A. and Dick Ellington is the dread leader of the Beanie Brigade. But fortunately upon their gafiation fans lose their ability to work with hyper-space. We live in fear that someday, somehow, some fan may become an anti-fan, but still be able to use hyper-space."

"But what has the Wall got to do with all this? How did you discover it?" impatiently demanded Betty.

"George Locke discovered it by accident. Ellington's cats had him cornered and—"

"Cats!" said Ethel-1.

Ethel-2 turned pale. "The Beanie Brigade cats are much more dangerous than their hounds. I hope you never have to learn why. Anyhow in his haste



George made a mistake and his hyper-space tube went through the Wall. But unfortunately this made the Wall visible so the O. R. G. A. found out about it at the same time we did. And naturally the Fanarch and the anti-fans want to rule your world too. We want to prevent that and to secure your help in overthrowing them in our world."

"But why haven't you contacted us, warned us?" spluttered Betty.

"It's easy enough to go through the Wall physically, but getting a hyper-space tube through it is more than twice as difficult as ordinary hyper-space transmission on Earth. Things get garbled. Usually all we can do is to plant vague suggestions and seeds of ideas in the minds of our analogs."

"But what about those penny blacks? And the weird doings at the Penitentiary?" demanded Ethel-1.

"The anti-fans made a raid in force on the Penitentiary and those things that Jimmy thought he saw are an example of the mind-warping powers of the beanies. He must have been having un-fannish thoughts or they couldn't have got to him. The anti-fans obviously believe Ella to be very important. She is a focal point and London fandom might collapse without her. We must not allow that to happen. As for the penny blacks, we don't quite understand that ourselves. We believe though that with so many of our mind concentrating machines being used to try to focus on your world, your own minds are making use of these rays using the penny blacks as a focus. But why the penny blacks we don't know."

Bill said, "Dying and creating a new body must take an awful lot of concentration.

"Some of us believe that all fans have multiple bodies--like Gilbert Gosseyn--and it's just a matter of bringing them through hyper-space."

"Maybe," said Bill skeptically. "And the ducking stools, what about them?"

"I don't know about the ones in your world. I don't understand it. In our world they are used to root out signs of fannishness in the general population. We try to contact all fannish types as soon as possible of course, but we miss a great many. And many non-fans have a few fannish traits, so it isn't worth while for local authorities to turn over every suspected fan to the CoFa (The Committee on Fannish Activities) the O. R. G. A.'s investigation branch. The local authorities deal with these suspected fans themselves. Anyone displaying the least sign of fannishness is given a prolonged ducking. One or two or three of these duckings will condition the fannishness out of all except the real true fan types. And a fourth offense means they are handed over to the O. R. G. A.--unless we can rescue them first."

Bill continued. "How about that thing that attacked Chris and Ron in the British museum? It seemed quite horrible."

Ethel-2 looked sad. "We're afraid it was Lee Hoffman. She's gafia, you know. And she's taken up a new hobby: hawking. You know how Lee throws herself into her hobbies."

Ethel-1 said, "But if things are all that difficult, how did you get to us in the museum?"

"Your minds were open and seeking contact. It is very fortunate, as you are the first fans in your world that we have been able to directly contact. The O. R. G. A. guards the Wall very closely. And the danger is grave. The Fanarch would already have taken over your world except that for some reason the beanies don't mind warp very well there. They think that minds in your world work on a slightly different

wave length. They have a crash research program going--trying to find out just which one. In the meantime they are trying to destroy fandom so hyper-space can't be used against them in your world too."

Ethel-1 looked grim. "We'll stop that. Just what are they doing?"

"They are trying to destroy the basis of fandom. They destroy all the prozines and all the fanzines they can obtain. They make prozines fold. They cooperate closely with the post office is lousing up the mail. And not satisfied with that, they are boring from within. Your Walter Breen of course is the primary source of evil, but where ever they can they are replacing true fans in your world with their gafiated an-alongs from ours."

"Well, they won't get away with it," Ethel-1 said. "We'll stop them somehow. How can we fit in with your organization?"

Ethel-2 looked apologetic. "Well, you know fans, how disorganized and anarchistic they are. We've never been able to achieve any organization or any clear-cut lines of authority. But we all cooperate and help each other out and things get done somehow. Even in the Space Marines the discipline isn't very strong. I'm more or less the head of them, but--"

"How in the world did you get to be head of the Space Marines?" asked Ethel-1.

"Well, I was--as I suppose you are--a secret Scotch terrorist," said Ethel-2. "It just seemed to follow naturally that I become the head of the marines." Ethel-1 choked on her scone. Ethel-2 got up and put away the tea things. "Any questions?"

"What about Ella and the rest of our friends that the O.R.G.A. captured?" asked Betty. "Can we do anything for them?"

"I'll teach you how to use hyper-space. Then you can try to rescue them yourselves. You'll have a better chance of focusing on them since they are your friends and from your world. But I must warn you that the O.R.G.A. is accustomed to attempted rescues from hyper-space and the guards will be heavily armed. Come on, I'll take you to Bentcliffe's Lab--he keeps trying to reach other stars via hyper-space--that'll probably be the best place to train you."

Learning to use hyper-space was easy and only took half an hour. Getting the focus was the only difficult thing and that always remained difficult. Betty managed to focus a viewing screen on Ella. She was talking. The O.R.G.A. technicians trying to gafiate her wore a harried look. Ella was telling them all about her trip to the U.S. As she was still talking about her stay in L.A., she seemed safe from brain-washing for some time. Betty, with the others helping, tried to establish a gateway through which they could pull Ella, but there was too much interference; they couldn't get through.

No one was able to get a focus on Ted, Joe and Jimmy and they abandoned the attempt for the time being. Then everyone working together managed to get a hyperspace beam through the Wall and they began trying to locate various fans. First they tried to get Mal Ashworth. They focused a gateway on his home, but neither he nor Shelia were there. A half-eaten breakfast was on the kitchen table. Drawers were half-opened and chairs were overturned. "Hey!" said Bill. "That's the pipe Ken Potter was smoking when I was at Roydon. The Potters have been here. The Ashworths must be anti-fans too!"

Then they shifted the tube to Bobbie Gray's. She was sitting with her back to the gateway. Bill and Betty rushed through and started excitedly jabbering at her. They were both talking at once and not a word could be understood. Bobbie whirled around. She shrieked, "I haven't seen such foul demons since Camp Crazy!" Bill and Betty tumbled back through the gateway. Bobbie picked up an inkbottle and hurled it after them. The bottle went through the gateway and hit Ethel-2 on the forehead, spilling ink on her green uniform. Everyone's attention was distracted and the hyper-space tube collapsed.

"Well," said Ethel-2 disgustedly. "I'm going to clean up. I'll be back soon and take you to dinner and show you your quarters."

After she had gone Ethel-1 decided to try to contact Ted, Joe and Jimmy again. This time she got through. The three were locked in a cell of some kind and there were no guards in sight. After some manouvering Ethel-1 managed to establish a gateway. But before anyone could attract the prisoners' attention, their conversation drifted through. Jimmy said, "And Scotch is just an English dialect--"

Ethel-1 leaped into the gateway with the light of battle in her eyes. In her fury she forgot that she was the once focusing the tube and it collapsed upon her. She was surrounded with an all-prevading grayness in which no form or shape whatever could be perceived. Slithering sounds crept into her ears. Her mind tried to reach out, but it could not. Psi does not work in hyper-space. The slithering grew louder and Ethel thought she heard squeaks like those of rats. She nearly screamed as she felt insects crawling on her legs, and as the bitter cold began to seep in she lost all hope. "No one ever returns from hyper-space," she thought dully as her brain slowed to a halt as the timelessness of hyper-space acted upon her and she froze into a stasis of eternal now.

