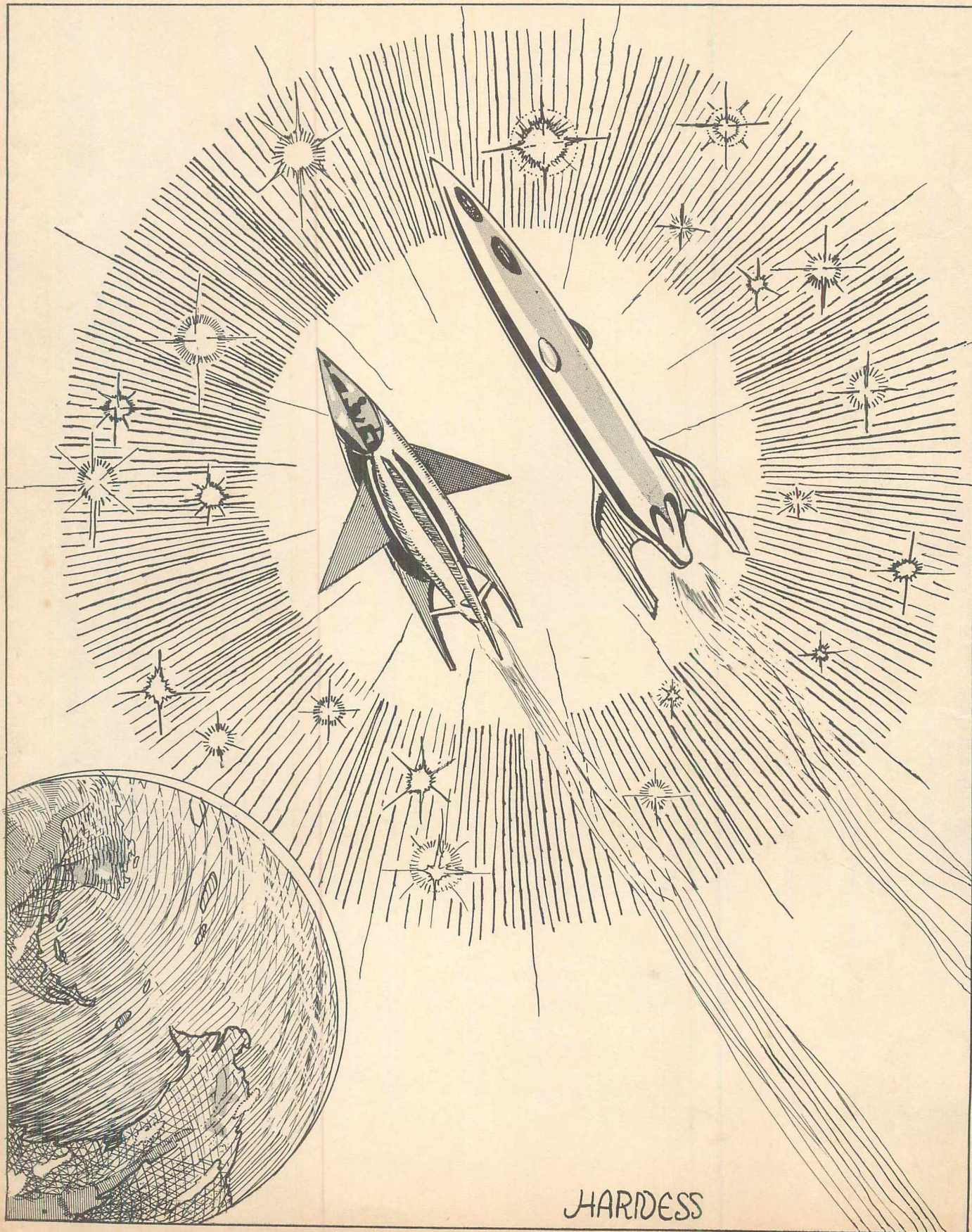


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THE CHIGGER PATCH OF FANDOM

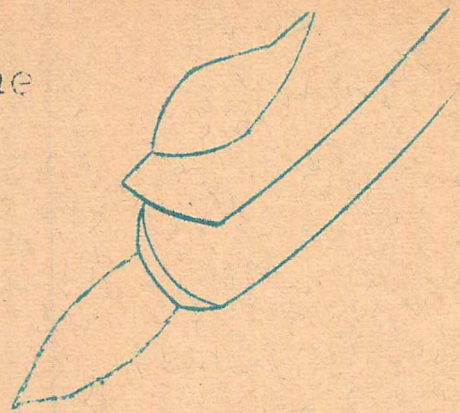
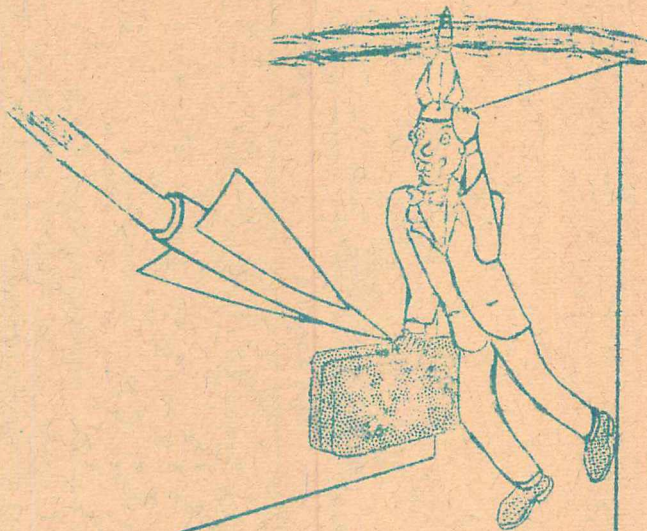
"We irritate some - others ignore us."

NUMBER 4
A 200th Fandom Publication

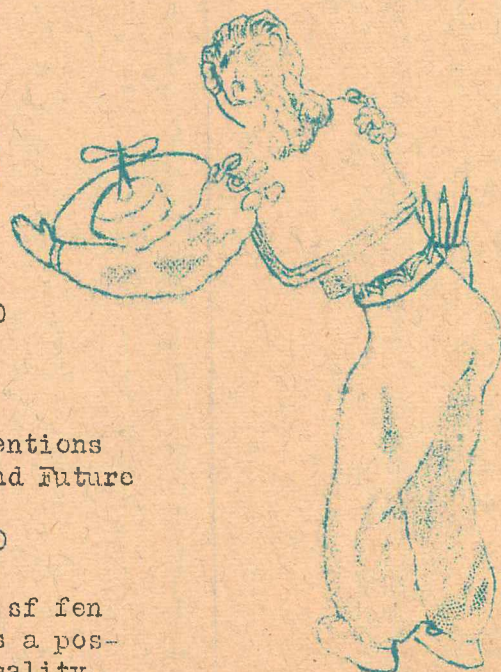
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This Page Is Dedicated To The



FRISCON



AND TO

ALL

World Sf Conventions
Past, Present, and Future

AND TO

The hard-working sf fen
who make the cons a pos-
sibility and a reality.

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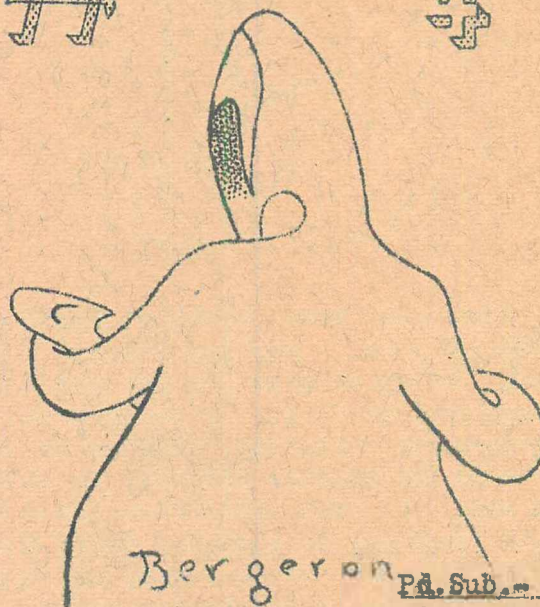
Nance Share, Rich Bergeron, Jack Harness

CHIGGER

1954

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— Contents —

THE POLICY GAME(editorial).....	NanG.....	Page 1
FAN POLITICS ARE HELL(article).....	Joe Gibson.....	3
THE FESTIVAL(factual report).....	Richard Eney.....	7
"untitled"(short, short).....	Stan Woolston.....	6
DUTCH S-F BOOK CENTRE(AD).....	Nic. Oosterbaan.....	9
THE FUGITIVES(poem).....	Garth Bentley.....	10
THE WATCHER (fiction).....	Ed Cox.....	11
OPERATION FANTAST(AD).....	Ken Slater.....	13
CURRENT FANZINES(AD).....	Russell Watkins.....	15
A POT AT GOLD(article).....	Donald Susan.....	17
THE CASTORIAN PRETENDER(article).....	Ron Ellick.....	19
IN THE LIMELIGHT - aSF(article).....	Harlan Ellison.....	21
INVISIBLE WINGS(poem).....	Orma McCormick.....	25
FAN WAMPUM(fandom's debts).....	Fans.....	27
THE SHAKY UNDERTAKER CAPER(fiction).....	Ed Cox.....	29
INSERT: Questionnaire for 2nd Tucker Survey.....		24

The last issue of CHIGGER was dedicated to the Phillycon. This issue is dedicated to the Frisco. Art credits are as follows: Cover, Harness; dedication page, page 12 - Susan; contents page - Bergeron; page 1 - Ward; headings by Susan on pps. 3, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, and 25. CHIGGER is published not less than twice and not more than three times a year, 15¢ per copy, no long range subscriptions. Monies, trades, and letters of comment go to Bob Farnham, 204 Mountain View Drive, in Dalton, Georgia. All manuscripts go to Ed Cox, 15 Avenue 36, Apt. 14, Venice, Cal. All art goes to Don Susan, 706 Grant Street, McKeesport, Pennsylvania. For type material desired, read editorial...title of editorial, by the way, should be credited to Richard Eney, I swiped it from one of his Sapszines. ALL FAN EDITORS NOTE THIS PLEASE -- when listing CHIGGER, please list it under Bob Farnham's name, NOT mine...his name and address are listed above. See you in 4-6 months.....NanG



THE POLICY GAME

By

NanGee

So you have another issue of CHIGGER at hand. Perhaps you are surprised. In which case you are not half as surprised as I am. I never know to any degree of certainty whether or not there will be another CHIGGER. In short up to now, I have lived from issue to issue. From now on though I think that CHIGGER is going to be a more definite enterprise than it has in the past.

First, I have acquired a working staff which it is hoped will prove to be permanent. My position now is merely that of publisher - I do the stenciling and mimeo'ing.

BOB FARNHAM, 204 Mountain View Drive, Dalton, Georgia is the Business Editor. He takes care of all monies, trades, and the mailing. If you're at all interested in receiving this sterling publication, write to Bob for otherwise you won't be getting CHIGGER in your mailbox. All letters of comment are to be addressed to Bob also.....at least if you wish your letters to be published.

ED COX, 15 Avenue 36, Apt. 14, Venice, California is Manuscript Editor. ALL manuscripts whether poetry, fiction, articles, or columns are to be addressed to him. If your contributions are sent to anyone but Ed, they won't be acknowledged in any manner whatsoever.

As for type of material, before I've never made any definite statement. With the acquisition of a manuscript editor, that is going to be changed. Now unless there is a great clamor for

the BUBBETTE type fiction, that will be dropped entirely. Fiction should preferably be in the form of satire, hard-hitting or light. Articles shouldn't be concerned with the state of fandom exclusively or any long dissertation on why Lovecraft was a better science fiction author than the current GALAXY crop will ever be. Especially since HPL wrote no s-f at all. Poetry of all types will be read. Suggestions for a regular column(s) will be welcome. If any C readers feel that they would like to write for C but do not want to go to the trouble of writing it only to find it not fitting, Ed will welcome letters from them prior to actual submission.

If the foregoing sounds at all pretentious ignore it. It's not meant to be that at all. I just don't know how else to state what is wanted in the way of material.

Now then, I mentioned columns up there. One that I consider a must is a fanzine review column. Length is of no consequence as long as it's fairly comprehensive. Bert Hirschhorn has had to discontinue his fanzine review column due to heavy school activity. So anyone interested in such a task, should write to Ed about it. I think I should add here that length is of no consequence no matter what the material. I have never in the past turned anything down just because it was very long. If for instance, Ed received a bit of fiction of 4 or 5,000 words, and the content and quality passed muster, it would

be accepted. I can always devote one issue of C to something like that if it is good enough.

DONALD SUSAN, 706 Grant Street, McKeesport, Pennsylvania is the Art Editor. Any artwork submitted to any of us other than Don, will be lost to posterity forever. That does not apply to the staff artists, however, but just to unsolicited material. Staff artists are Nance Share, Richard Bergeron, and Jack Harness. C's covers will continue to be lithographed and any work submitted as cover material should go to Don. Too bad I can't think of a good bonus for the artist whose pic is chosen for the cover each time. Anyone have any suggestions?

Some more items that should be of interest. The name, THE CHIGGER PATCH OF FANDOM, is being cut to a very simple CHIGGER after which which will no doubt be a great relief to all concerned. And a new publishing schedule will also be adopted as of this issue. CHIGGER has always been an annual publication but with more help now I think I can step that up a bit. Loosely, I will publish an issue as often as Ed has enough material to make a reasonable sized issue, I would say a minimum of twenty pages. A bit more tightly, it will be published not less than two times a year and not more than three times a year. And that will of course affect the asking price...if it had remained annual and large, the price would still be 25¢ but as a smaller pub and coming out more often, the price goes back to 15¢ per issue. However, you can still buy only one issue at a time. No long range subscriptions for if I decide suddenly that I no longer want to publish a fanzine, I will be in nomood for the confusing business of returning bits of silver to this person and that person. I will never fold CHIGGER with out warning one issue in advance so no one will be out any money. Much against my will, trades are accepted. That is not intended to sound snobbish but I think any of you that publish a fanzine know that trading can get to be an over whelming procedure....and you can't buy paper, ink, or stamps with fanzines. I don't feel though that I can refuse to

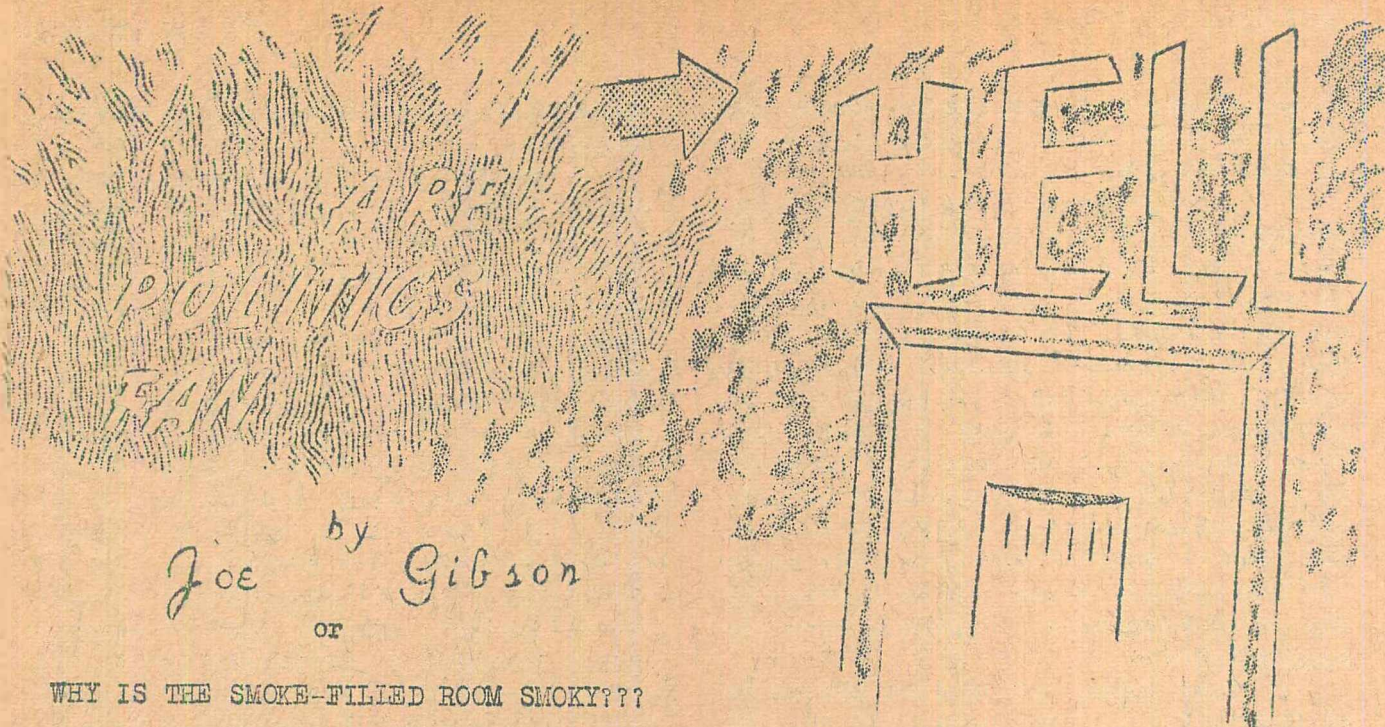
trade with other editors and feel right about it.

Which just about covers everything except the problem of a letter section. I have never been in favor of one but the rest of the CHIGGER staff seem to be. So what to do? I don't know. There'll be no letters in this and any future letter section will depend more or less on your response. I cannot make any promise as to whether your letters will be published or not. Under such doubtful circumstances, it will be interesting to note how many letters Bob will get after this goes in the mails. I always figured anyhow that any letter long enough, and interesting enough to warrant publication, was well worth the little more trouble it would take on the part of the writer to work it up into an article. Oh well. It's up to the readers of CHIGGER.

Now then, just for emphasis I am going to repeat --- all monies, letters of comment, and zines for trade go to Bob Farnham. Oh yes, and for Roscoe's sake, keep Bob notified of any changes of address. All manuscripts go to Ed Cox. And all unsolicited art and especially that slanted for the cover, goes to Don Susan. We are sticking to the above policy absolutely without deviation or exception for it means the difference between a smooth, efficient schedule and one that is a continued muddle.

Any material contained within the pages of CHIGGER does not necessarily express the opinion of the CHIGGER staff. Other than the editorial page, natch.* Our opinions we keep to ourselves.** If FAN VARIETY ENTERPRISES is still in existence, CHIGGER is a member of good standing in that group. I've been unable to find out anything about the group though, and it is too bad because the idea behind Fan Variety Enterprises was a very good one. If they ever come to life again, I hope someone will let me know.

And that ties it. I don't seem to have any thing light and frothy to say nor anything serious and constructive either. Too bad I can't hit a happy medium but that is the way the chips fall sometimes. Happy hunting.....NanG
*for the most part that is. 2
** ditto!



Joe ^{by} Gibson
or

WHY IS THE SMOKE-FILLED ROOM SMOKY???

I could begin this with the admonition that...."If you're expecting a treatise on how to cadge votes and win the '55 Con, this isn't it." I could write such a treatise. Anybody could--which is something I may prove someday. But I'd rather do it a few months before any Con. Then, y'see, everybody will say I'm just trying to be helpful. If I wait until Con-time to tell all the "do's" and "don'ts" of fan politics and campaigns, sure as hell there'd be some fanclub already campaigning, in some way I said was bad -- and somebody would say I tried to "smear" that group. So -- this isn't it.

But you can see this is gonna be a real red-blooded clean-cut true faaan type article. Excuse me while I put away all hysterical accusations, pointing fingers, suspicious prejudices, revolvers, knives, and an autographed copy of "I Have Been To The Caves!"..... Decks all cleared; now, let's go.

ITEM: There are plenty of active fen who come to the Cons expecting to know what it is all about -- only to run into the furor, fire and brimstone of fan politics over who's gonna get next year's Con. When they try to find out what's going on, they hear so many conflicting opinions, rumors, and/or accusations that they're more confused than ever. And then they're supposed to vote

intelligently for the next year's Consite.

ITEM: There are some very serious problems confronting fandom and the World Cons, which many fans haven't realized exist. These are relatively new problems. Fandom wasn't at all prepared to cope with them---which resulted in the furor at Chicago over some "steam-roller" politics and the furor at Philly over the Rules Committee, not to mention some other furors.

ITEM: The World Cons may not last very much longer if those problems aren't solved.

This article is about those problems.

SELECTING CONSITES: This was never a serious problem in fandom until just recently, the past few years. Before, it was simply a matter of sitting down in the meeting hall to vote for the next Consite. Fans from various cities with active fanclubs, who wanted to put on the Con, would make bids for it. The chairman would list their cities on a blackboard, slips of paper would be passed out, and everyone would vote for their choice. There would be a minimum of speech-making...if the Con was in the East, some fan would say it's time the West Coast had a Con, things of that sort. There was no fuss, no bother, and a minimum of politics.

But active fandom has been growing steadily larger ---- until now, the inevitable results are catching up with us. Active fen no longer know everything that happens in fandom, who all the other fen are, or where all the active fanclubs are located. At Chicago, an Indianapolis fanclub made its bid... and many active fen hadn't even known there was a fanclub in that city! At Philly, both London and Cleveland made their bids...and there were more active fen who knew about the White Horse in London than knew anything about the Cleveland Club!

The problem is this: Somebody has to approve all bids for the Con before we're asked to vote on them. Somebody has to make sure there are no fraudulent bids.

Otherwise anybody can claim they represent a whole list of fanclubs in some city and make a bid for the Con -- and we won't know whether they're telling the truth or whether they're a member of fandom's lunatic fringe out to get themselves some personal glory at our expense. This has already happened once, and many active fen weren't even aware of it.

But this problem is two-edged. When we pick somebody to "pass" on these bids, we must also make sure they won't play any favorites, or rule against someone who's making a perfectly honest bid.

It is usually the job of the Con Committee to conduct the voting session at their Con, and to accept these bids. At Frisco, it will be up to the SFCon Committee to protect us from any fraudulent bids. I am positive they'll try, to the best of their ability---but they don't know every fan and fanclub in the country, either. They may need some help. So if you know anything you think they should know, for Chi's sake, don't hesitate! Tell them!

THE BIG CONS: If you're at a World Con with an attendance of anywhere near 1000, remember one thing: you're outnumbered approximately two-to-one!

Nobody knows exactly why or how the World Cons got so big---but they did

with explosive suddenness. It just may happen that someday they'll get smaller again -- with equal suddenness. We can never be absolutely sure about that.

From the year One B.C.(Before Chicago) on back, all previous World Cons were considered a rousing success if they got an attendance of 300-to-400 fans. The majority of them were active fans with common interests in fandom, fanclubs, and fan activities, as well as in the general field of science-fiction and everything pertaining to it. The World Cons belonged to them because they were also the fans who did all the thankless, frustrating work of preparing and putting on the Cons. They still do. And they're still attending World Cons---that is, 300-to-400 of them are. (And that's an optimistic guess at the number)!

But at Chicago something happened. More than 1000 people showed up for that Con. At least 600-to-700 of them were people who read s-f but knew nothing about fandom.

They had read the ads in the pro-zines about the Con.....and -- for the first time in fandom's history ---- they had decided to attend. The majority of them were from the Chicago-Midwest - Eastern area. That Con was their first contact with fandom and fan activities. For them, the first Big Con was the First Con. And they wanted to attend their Second Con.

A good many active fen were in favor of Frisco winning the next Con, that year. And Frisco's Little Men came to Chicago with a fully detailed plan of campaigning that threatened to singe fandom's whiskers. But neither they nor any other active fan realized what they were up against. Nobody even guessed that until the Chiccon was already in progress ---- and by then, it was too late for Frisco, and almost too late for Eastern fen, who had to sponsor an Eastern city (at the last minute) which could handle a World Con!

There was only one lucky break for active fandom: many of the "casual fans" --- that 600-to-700 majority --- didn't bother to vote. Many of them were honest enough to admit that they

didn't know enough about fandom to be qualified to vote.

But last year, the World Con was in Philly. It was a Big Con. The majority of the people who attended it were "casual fans" from the middle-Eastern-Seaboard area. Most of the active fen wanted Frisco to win, and campaigned for Frisco. But Frisco won over Cleveland by a mere 30 votes.

If anyone wanted to prevent those "casual fans" from attending the World Cons --- or even prevent them from voting ---- we would have to determine exactly what makes an active fan and who is one. Anyone care to try that?? Remember, it has to be a definition all fandom will approve.

It would be easier to define science-fiction. Besides, it's completely contradictory to the basic nature of fandom to ever try to be an "exclusive" society.

So you're an active fan. You belong to the society that knows no national boundaries, the wild bunch that joins fanclubs, puts out fanzines, and tells the s-f editors how to run their magazines whether they listen or not. You also belong to the group that does all the work of putting on the World Cons. And at Frisco, you may find that for every one of you, there are two other people who simply read s-f -- perhaps even a few who may have only read Dianetics!

Who do the World Cons belong to? Who will decide where next year's Con should be?

There's an answer, all right. An answer for everybody!

THE ROTATION PLAN: The basic idea of this is to have each World Con go to a different part of the nation, each year. That way, all active fen -- and all the "casual fans" too ---- will have a fair chance to attend a World Con.

Without such a plan -- and without considerable behind-the-scenes manipulating and politicking by active fen--the World Cons could be "captured" by one part of the country and kept there, year after year. All the active fen and all the "casual fans" in the

rest of the U.S. would have to travel to that sector if they wanted to attend a World Con.

The affect this would have on fandom -- who are the ones who do the work, putting on these Cons -- would be rebellious, to say the least. The affect it would have on the World Cons might well be disastrous. The national veterans' and businessmen's organizations have such a "rotation" policy governing their conventions for the very same reason.

But there are several other reasons why any such Rotation Plan can't be a simple cut-and-dried affair. Fandom is a society, not an organization--meaning we do not have any National Committees to do all the work preparing and putting on our World Cons. We depend on active fanclubs with enough members and energy and pure nerve to be able to handle the World Cons in their cities.

Such fanclubs don't exist in every part of the country. Or if they do there are quite a few of 'em nobody has ever heard about. That could be true, judging from what happened at Chicago and Philly. Also, fanclubs are always folding up in one place and new ones appear some where else, just as oldtime fans are constantly quitting fandom while new fans are entering it.

So, a Rotation Plan will almost have to include every part of the U.S. --with the stipulation that a part will be passed up if no one makes a bid from there.

But the really tough problem raised by any Rotation Plan is this; how do we get started? And that involves the toughest, nastiest problem yet--to wit.....

FAN POLITICS: As this is written, we know that Cleveland is going to make another bid for the Con. And at Frisco, the first thing you can expect is to see Cleveland fen going around trying to find out who else intends to make a bid. It's anybody's guess who they will be. They could be fanclubs in Vancouver, B.C., in Weyauwega, Wisconsin, in Paducah, Kentucky, and in Chattahoochee, Florida, for all we know.

So up on the board will go Vancouver, Weyauwega, Paducah, Cleveland, and Chattahoochee. And fen from each city will say they have a real-live active fan-club and are thoroughly capable of putting on a World Con. (Particularly Weyauwega ----- Bob Bloch lives there) And there will be Vancouver, Weyauwega, Paducah, Cleveland, and Chattahoochee fen running all over the place saying their city is the best, vote for them, Jam & Jive In '55.....

Now, suppose we drop a Rotation Plan in the middle of all that?

Well, first of all, most of the "casual fan" majority at Frisco (presupposing Frisco has a Big Con) will be from the Western U.S., and it will be somewhat difficult to get them interested in Chattahoochee, to name one. And they aren't going to know what that Rotation Plan is all about.

Now, suppose that Rotation Plan favors a clockwise rotation of Consites around the country. Clockwise from Frisco is Vancouver, right? The western "casual fans" are going to like that plan. But can't you just see those Weyauwega, Paducah, Cleveland and Chattahoochee fen lovin' it? Bloch would probably go on the wagon!! All hell would bust loose!

But a Rotation Plan couldn't be that simple. Clockwise? Okay. But just one Vancouver bid isn't enough. So at least Weyauwega and Paducah, and probably Cleveland would get under the wire. Still, you can bet the great majority of those "casual fans" will vote for Vancouver. And the Chattahoochee fans will feel double-crossed.

This problem can be just as bad as I've described it. It may not be. That depends on how many bids are made at Frisco, and on how diversified they are geographically. But the task of resolving or avoiding such a situation will rest largely on the SFCon Committee. They have been asked to work out such a Rotation Plan and present it to fandom for approval. And they may have been given an impossible task -- unless all the active fen at Frisco are willing to help.

There's no way of telling what's going on at Frisco. Nobody can tell what will happen at any Con. Worse still, many active fen haven't realized all the things that did happen at the Cons. The result has been a lot of misunderstanding, suspicion, accusations, and bitter fan-feuds. I know personally of a small group of fen who did realize what was happening, and who did the best they could to pull fandom's chestnuts from the fire at the last two World Cons. They're tired of sticking their necks out, doing a thankless job they didn't dare admit they were doing. They aren't going to do it again. Fandom must either wise up or take the consequences.

Such bitterness is the invariable result of fan politics. It should be avoided at all costs. And the only way we can avoid it is to realize the problems confronting fandom, and to pitch in and solve them. It may not sound like sweet music, when we do, and we'll have to play a lot of it by ear.

But there is no reason we can't try.

"untitled"

The bubble-thing paused, as if resting on an invisible breeze. Then it turned and repeated its path, as if descending a stairs it had climbed a moment before. It paused before the frozen, fearful, cowardly representative of Earth, and said, "Art thou my soul?" Then it sped toward his head, and he collapsed --

Everything was wonderful. Pete Foo-foo Van Horne Scott Key sailed up an invisible stairs and looked out over his new domain. His body, behind him, looked vacuously from its resting-place among the tumbling rocks of the planet on the edge of the cosmos. But he did not think of the old body, for the new was better.

"Now I have my soul," he said rapturously at the wide horizon of his world.

-- Stan Woolston

THE FESTIVAL

REPORT FROM JAPAN by Richard Eney
(A fan's view of the Communist May Day Demonstration)

"I wish I had thought to get one of those little palm-size cameras!" I said. "Sure would like to have some shots of this." I reflected ruefully on the Ansco Flash Clipper that regulations restricted to my locker till the day after tomorrow.

"I say, you wouldn't try to get around the regulations?" asked Corporal Crocker with the double raised eyebrow.

"Gotta watch these RA's; they're sneaky", Roesch warned him.

We came to the corner and looked both ways.

"What the heck!" said Recor. "It goes down to the Botanical Gardens and up--" he stood on tiptoe--"as far as Akitsuki Street."

"Here comes a gap now", pointed out Roesch.

We crossed the street, timing ourselves to pass through the parade just behind a sound truck, where Roesch had noticed a gap in the ranks.

"Wonder what that sign with 'MSA' and a peace dove says?"

"Probably 'F--- this MSA deal!'"

"Hey, what's this?"

Two blocks ahead of us was a procession just like the one we had passed through.

"You know what they're doing?" said Roesch after a second. "They're--" he indicated the marchers ahead of us--"going the other way."

"Oh! So this line--" Recor pointed backwards--"impresses the crowd in Municipal Park and the people in the Hospital, then goes down Akitsuki St. and so forth--"

"----Probably past the Asahi Shinoun and Nippon Times Offices--"

"And then comes back by the rail way station and the power plant, turns

in front of the Botanical Gardens, and does it all over again."

"That's one way to show the strength of the People's Cause!"

Crocker looked pained. "Most of these people aren't Communists."

"They're marching in the Communists' May Day Demonstration, are they not??" growled Roesch. "If they're going to act like Communists they ought to treat 'em like Communists." He turned a malevolent eye on the lines of marchers between us and the barracks. "I'd just like to see them start something! They got six MP's from Crawford (8th Cavalry Regiment's camp just outside the city) and a squad from the Security Platoon up at the hospital just waiting for them to act up. Boy, I'd love to just--!" He pantomined the firing of a submachine gun.

"Know what they ought to do?" suggested Recor. "Have a May Day Parade of our own. March the Eighth Cav down Akitsuki Street with the 77th Tank Battalion clanking along right after it. That would sure make this Communist stuff look sick!"

"They're not all Communists!" insisted Crocker.

"Who, then?" I got in before Roesch could repeat himself.

"Those--" he pointed to the part of the column just ahead, identified by handsome maroon flags with the dragon's head outline of Hokkaido in the union position--"are laborers, one of the mine workers' unions. And there are anti-rearmament groups, and neutralists besides isolationists and anti-American organizations--"

"Aha!" I'd spotted a sign I'd been looking for in vain so far.

"YANKY GO HOME", read Recor.

"Good thing Vollers (the laboratory's unreconstructed Confederate) isn't here."

We reached the corner opposite our barracks.

"There, damn it!" said Roesch.

"They're not Communists, huh?" For a vivid red flag was at the head of the next section of the parade.

"Red, with a yellow star in the union and a lightning flash pointing upward", I beardmuttered a description. "What sort of organization has that sort of flag?"

"Notice that lightning flash is in the postion of a bend sinister?"-- was Recor's observation.

Roesch looked blank for a second then guffawed. "I always said they were but I never thought they'd brag about it!"

Crocker gave us all the double raised eyebrow.

"The bend sinister", explained Roesch, properly pronouncing it sin-ster. "is a heraldic symbol of illegitimacy. So those Commies are confessing that they're a bunch of bastards." He chortled gleefully.

"It's a good gag looks can't kill", I warned him.

"I don't give a-----if they don't like it. Let 'em start something! Thought you enlisted to fight Communism anyway!"

"Yes", I admitted, "but I'd prefer to use my B.A.R. not my bare hands."

"Where's your offensive spirit?" queried Recor.

"There's a gap", said Roesch, spotting another, "just behind those two cars."

We passed through the column behind a Studebaker and an Olds 88 plastered with anti-MSA posters, crossed the street to the barracks, and turned for a look back at the parade.

"They demanding interplanetary exploration?" I asked in surprise.

Crocker, who had some knowledge of Japanese writing, studied the poster which looked so much like a Bergey spaceship blasting through the heavens.

"It's about those radioactive tuna", he decided.

"Oh, that's a fish, then, and the thing behind it is an atomic cloud, yes?" I glowed, my day complete. "I knew I could work a science-fictional subject into this some way!"

.....e n d

THE ETERNAL POET

B Y

STAN WOOLSTON

He balanced the world on the edge of a sheet,
 Wrapped up in syllables, rounded and neat;
 He sprinkled with rhythm and scattered with sound,
 He built endless passages, like zeros are round.
 He spiked it with nonsense that only he knew
 Was deep-seated truths as fresh as dawn's dew;
 And when he had finished, he burnt it to ash,
 For such a wild world was bound to go smash.

He twisted and built and shattered and sighed,
 For real time is all, no matter how wide;
 The future is present, and past hovers here,
 And the doorway that parts them is Man's mind, I fear.

Dutch Sciencefiction Book Centre

MEPPELWEG 129, THE HAGUE, HOLLAND

Dear Fellow-Fan,

This is to introduce to you the Dutch Science-Fiction Book Centre, a cooperative non-profit enterprise of the Dutch s.f.fans. We want your assistance. As compared with American fans we in Holland have much trouble in getting our favorite literature. Problem number One is that s.f. is not for sale in Dutch newsstands or bookstores, although many American general magazines and books have a large circulation here.

American s.f. is only to be sent here upon special request and against fantastical prices, which only those of us in the higher income brackets can afford. We have now decided to pool our resources, exchange magazines and together build up a large collection to which each of us (forty, all told) has access. Remains to be solved problem no. Two: "How to lay hands on more and more material?". This is the reason we call on you.

We want trade, not aid. We have in stock a good many copies of the one, and so far, only issue of "PLANEET", the short-lived Dutch s.f. magazine. No doubt these will shortly become rare collector's items just like the copies of "FANTASIE AND WETENSCHAP" -- its much lamented predecessor -- which now sell at 75 dollarcents or more.

For one American s.f. magazine or pocketbook we will send you a brandnew copy of this 96-page magazine "PLANEET" which doubtless will make an interesting item to add to your collection. By availing yourself of this opportunity, you will make us very happy. Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

All of you who are in a position to do so, are invited to publicize this offer in professional and fan magazines. Very many thanks!

DUTCH SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CENTRE

Meppelweg 129, The Hague, Holland

The Fugitives

by

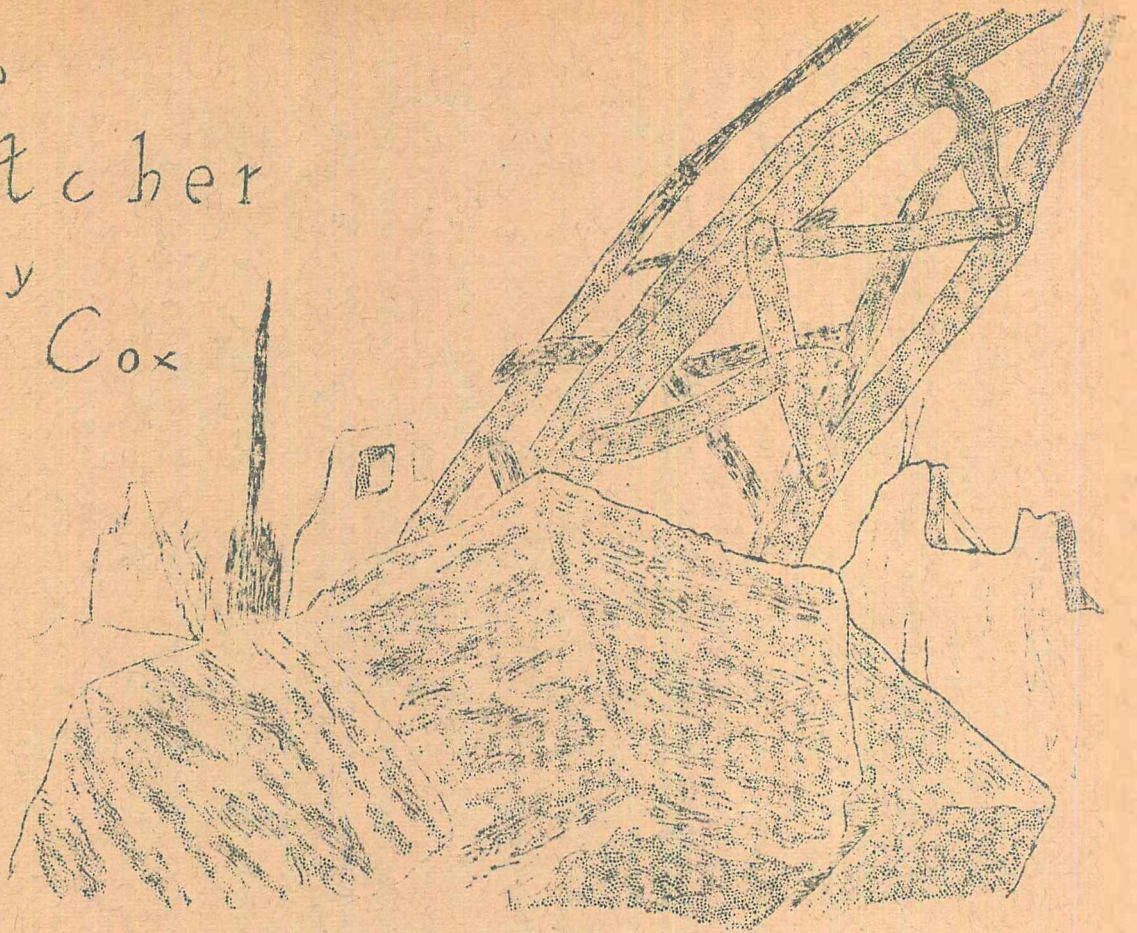
Garth Bentley

You can not hear the pounding of their feet
Upon the stone, nor see them passing by
With pumping limbs. No sound of sobbing breath
Can reach your ears - though every darkened street
Has known their passage. You may share a seat
In bus or subway with them but the eye
Can not identify them: they who run
From fancied dangers; yet each haunted one
Can never stop - although he knows not why -
Until he finds release - and rest - in death.

Pursued by fears they can not face nor fight,
The world to them is nothing but a place
Of horror, filled with ever-present threat
That forces them to panic-stricken flight.
These things they flee would vanish in the light
Of reason, dared they turn about and face
The past embodied in this shadow shape.
But deep compulsions make them seek escape
In running... running... searching day and night
For peace they know would come could they forget.

The Watcher

by
Ed Cox



I watched the wind lift little scurrying clouds of dust and dead dry leaves, sending them skittering along the age-polished pavement. Ages ago, their dry rustling would have attracted children who would have gaily chased them. And older children would have crumpled the leaves in their grimy fists, calling the result tobacco...

I followed idly the wind and its train. Over the broken pavements under gaunt skeletons of long dead skylons rearing their remains skyward in ragged silhouette. The wind moaned through the remains in mournful memory of the past glories of these long dead buildings. The homes of Man in his swinging stride upward....now deteriorated from ages of disuse. I left the towering ruins and the broken bodies of the soaring structures; the wind moaning a farewell through the jumbled pile.

I went on under grey skies that yielded not a ray of sunshine to brighten the graveyard city. For the city was dead as were all of them across the planet. Deserted ages ago

when Man settled back to rest and contemplate eternity. I had watched all these things, saw them flow out into the quiet country to live peaceful, and restful lives.....and let the glory of the stars call in vain. I watched the cities fall into crumbling ruin, their life and brightness die. And the ships rust in skydocks.

Over the lush, verdant countryside I went. Over the rolling plains and the immense expanses of forest that had reblanketed the planet when no longer exploited by axe and saw. It was quiet except for the sweep of the ever-present wind that swept down from grey skies and soared toward the far horizon leaving a faint sigh, reminder of the passing. There were still insects, for without them the plant life would die. There were still birds in the forests. And a few small animals. But all were quiet. No sweet calls drifted in the wind, nor was there any hum of busy bees. No quick patter of small animal feet in the forests. Nor any cry of young children...anywhere.

As the ages passed and the planet rolled restfully along its eternal way, Man had fallen deeper into lethargy and his numbers grew smaller. Thus until only a small number remained. And they, though it was within their power for they had the great resources of the past glories of achievement at their disposal, would not do anything about it. They rested under greying skies, beside shimmering lakes and under the cool roof of silent forests.

And now I, the watcher, am searching. I am searching for that which I have waited to come about for a long time. And I am close as I hurry under the high roof that is the grey overcast. Through the gentle buffeting that is the wind as it constantly soars across waving green fields, across the cool quiet lakes and over worn mountain ranges and hills of a sleeping planet, back in the virgin glory of complete rule by Nature.

Yes, complete rule by Nature as it was eons ago. For the earth has been reclaimed. Have you not just been told? Only the ruins of the cities remain and they are fast succumbing, for the green now covers the humbled heaps and the wind fills in with the scurrying dust. Rain and more wind erode and, once in a great while, the tall bare skeleton of a skylon will bow for the last time as it finds its resting place down below, so far below where once life teemed.

Even fast, now long completed, did the green cover the small unit dwellings scattered throughout the planet. Only diligent search can uncover traces of the hardier homes of the resting Man, now gone.

I searched and not for ruins but for what I see through the trees in a

little clearing overlooking a small lake bordered by pine-covered shores.

There is one small dwelling, the last of the final model that once flowed in unceasing numbers from the giant robot factories in the emptying cities. It has but one occupant and he is digging a grave. For all through the ages graves were used -- not incinerators. Man wanted to return to the bosom of Mother Earth to Sleep after his long sojourn. And now, a man is digging a grave once more. His own.

He is the last man. Somehow, he knows it and that his grave can not be filled by human hands. The wind will fill it for him, carrying the dust and the leaves with its unceasing sweep through the years.

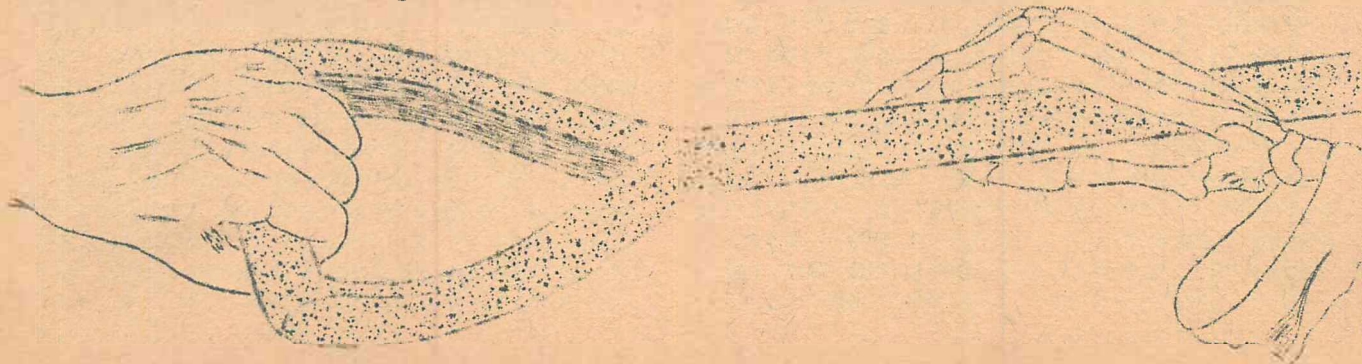
The man, his white locks restless in the breeze, looks out over the peaceful lake and the countless pines marching down to its shore; over the fields in which he stood once, the wind making the swaying grasses appear like a green sea; back to the lake, the cool ripples through which he once took comfort in warm days; at the forests through which he once walked.....in the pine-scented stillness under the protecting roof.

And I laughed as he took his last look at earth. As the Last Man once more looked over his lost heritage --for his time was soon to come. I know.

For I am the Watcher who for ages observed the battle, yes, the Battle! For it was my own and I've won! So now I laugh as it draws to the final blow, as the time comes for the Last Man to pass.

Why should I laugh? I am the Conquerer.

I am Death.





The OPERATION FANTASY Handbook

by

KEN SLATER

The "OF HANDBOOK" started off back in 1949 as a mass of mimeographed sheets giving information of interest to neo-fans -- current magazines, recommended dealers, fanclubs, and fanmags, etc. ---- but in 1951 we promoted it to the status of a 12-page photo--lith booklet. In 1952, it ran to 22 pages. The 1953 issue (still available at 35¢) came to a total of 64 pages. In 1954, we decided that it was no longer possible to publish in the form of a booklet and still keep it really up-to-date for the benefit of our membership, and so we now publish it as a loose-leaf folder. Copies of each section are circulated to members of OPERATION FANTASY as each section is published, revisions and amendments are issued as necessary, all as part of their subscription. (\$1 per year) For some sections of limited interest (advice to fan-publishers, etc) and for the binder an extra charge is made --- 50¢ in the case of the binder, and varying according to production costs on the "special" sections.

The regular sections give information, as far as we know it, on various subjects. A listing of "dead" magazines; postage rates; international exchange rates; a glossary of "fan jargon" and many similar items. But the part we want to draw to YOUR attention are the directory sections ---- these cover fan and associated clubs and societies; book-sellers specializing in fantasy; magazines currently published, with full details of wordage rates, subscription rates, page sizes, and all the information we can gather about the magazine under reference; amateur magazines,

semi-pro publications, club magazines -- all these are treated in the same way as promags, but in a separate section; we also include details of bookclubs, professional and amateur artists who are open to accept orders for work like bookplates, etc.; author's agents, "specialist" consultants, libraries -- anything that is of interest, or offers a service, to the science-fiction fan or the professional.

You will note we said "AS FAR AS WE KNOW IT" -- we often miss a fanclub, or a rocketry society, a fanmag, an author's agent, or a bookseller. Because we haven't personally had contact with him or it. This space has been given to us by THE CHIGGER PATCH OF FANDOM in the hope that we may partly rectify that -- if YOU would like to be included, please send us the details of your particular service, or whatever. If we don't have a directory section that covers you --- why, we'll start a new one!

There is no charge for an entry, we just want to make the list as complete as possible. We do sell advertising space, and full details of the charges can be obtained if you just ask for 'em.

Currently, we have just completed and issued a revision of the "Society and Association" listing, and the "Amateur Publication" directory is in preparation. We shall be issuing amendment lists to the former shortly, and if you write NOW you may be in time to get the details of your club included in that. The lists for "Amateur Publications" are still open, and a letter will bring you a data sheet to complete.

Shortly, we shall be overhauling the "BOOKSELLER AND DEALER" listings, and a card will insure that you receive a data sheet when we send them out. The "Professional Publication" listings are of course obtained by making direct approach to the publishers, but if you happen to be a book or magazine publisher and intend to make your first entry in the field shortly, let us know so that we can send you the appropriate data sheet.

These data sheets are sent out to all known people covered by the section currently being reviewed, and the information you return to us is included in the revised section. At the same time we do our best to keep the filed data sheets up-to-date, by noting down information as it comes to hand in various ways. You can help, especially fanclubs and publications, by advising us of changes as they occur.

Now, many people who have no direct interest in O.F. itself find the HANDBOOK helpful. Well, we do sell sections separately, but quite frankly that would cost you more than membership does! Membership is only one dol-

lar (7/6 sterling) per year, and for that you will receive the existing sections of the HANDBOOK, four issues of OPERATION FANTAST (sometimes it takes us more than a year to issue four, we regret to say, but in such cases your membership is extended), all revised sections or amendments to existing sections issued in the same period, and sundry news letters and other items which are issued from time to time. We think you'll find it is worth it...

Where to write? For entries in the "Society & Association" listings send direct to:

Dennis Cowen
42 Silverwood Road
Kettering, Northants
England

For subscriptions, your dollar should go to:

J. Ben Stark
290 Kenyon Avenue
Berkeley, California
U.S.A.

For recording for entries other than the two mentioned above, for details of advertising rates, for sterling subscriptions, or any other information,

write to: <— <— <— <— <— <— <— <— <— <—

Kenneth F. Slater, "Riverside", South Brink, WISEECH, Cambs., England.

If you happen to live outside the USA or Canada, or the U.K., we have representatives as below:

AUSTRALIA:

Subscriptions: D. Cohen, Box 4940, GPO, SYDNEY, NSW.

Handbook Entries: D. Tuck, 17 Audley Street, NORTH HOBART, Tasmania.

SOUTH AFRICA:

All matters: Miss Pearle Appleford, 75 Kensington Drive, Durban North, DURBAN, South Africa.

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CURRENT FANZINES

AS OF JUNE 1, 1954

A list of available fanzines compiled by
RUSSELL WATKINS

1. ABSTRACT - Peter Vorzimer, 1311 N. Laurel Ave., W. Hollywood, California
2. A LA SPACE - Kent Corey, Box 64, Enid, Oklahoma
3. ALPHA - Jan Jansen, 229 Berchemler, Borgerhout, Antwerp, Belgium
4. ANDROMEDA - Pete Campbell, 60 Calgarth Rd., Windemere, West, England
5. ANEW - Raleigh Multog, 7 Greenwood Rd., Pikesville 8, Maryland
6. ASFO - Jerry Burge, 415 Pavillion St. SE, Atlanta, Georgia
7. ASTRONEER - Sowerby-Turner, 9 Willow Bank, Church Lane, Manchester, England
8. BACCHANALIA - Race Matthews, 8 Barrett St., Hampton, Victoria, Australia
9. BEM - Mal Ashworth, 40 Makin St., Tong St., Bradford 4, England
10. BERKLEY BEM - M.A. Southworth, 1125 Larkmore, Berkley, Michigan
11. BOO - Bob Stewart, 274 Arlington St., San Francisco, California
12. BREVI-ZINE ADVENTURES - Warren Freiberg, 5319 W. 89th St., Oak Lawn, Illinois
13. BRENNNSCHIUSS - Ken Potter, 5 Furness St., Marsh, Lancaster, England
14. CAMBER - Fred Robinson, 63 Newborough, Llanishen, Vardiff, Glam.S. Wales
15. CANADIAN CAPERS - Harry Calnek, Granville Ferry, Nova Scotia, Canada
16. CANADIAN FANDOM - Gerald Steward, 166 McRobert, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
17. CHAMBER OF FANTASY - Fred Malz, 38 Seville St., San Francisco, California
18. CARRZINE - G.M.Carr, 8325 31st NW St., Seattle 7, Washington
19. CHIGGER - Bob Farnham, 204 Mountain View Drive, Dalton, Georgia
20. CONFAB - Robert Peatrowsky, Box 654, Norfolk, Nebraska
21. CONFUSION - Shelby Vick, Box 493, Lynn Haven, Florida
22. COSMIC FRONTIER - Stuart K. Nock, RFD #3, Castleton, New York
23. CRUD - Hillel Handloff, 37 South Delaney Place, Atlantic City, New Jersey
24. DAWN - Russell K. Watkins, 110 Brady Street, Savannah, Georgia
25. DESTINY - Earl Kemp, 3744 North Lark Street, Chicago 13, Illinois
26. DEVIANT - Carol McKinney, 377 East 1st North, Provo, Utah
27. DIFFUSE - Paul Nowell, 6528 Gentry Avenue, North Hollywood, California
28. DIMENSIONS - Harlan Ellison, 41 East 17th Street, Columbus, Ohio
29. ECLIPSE - Ray Thompson, 410 South 4th Street, Norfolk, Nebraska
30. EC FAN JOURNAL - Mike, 9428 Horbert Street, Dallas, Texas
31. ESSENCE - Joseph Brennan, 55 Trumbull Street, New Haven, Connecticut
32. ETHERLINE - John Hitchcock, American representative, address below...
33. FANTASTA - Lalint, 3255 Golden Avenue, Long Beach, California
34. FAN TO SEE - Larry Touzinsky, 2911 Minnesota Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri
35. FANTASTIC WORLDS - Sam Sackett, 1449 Brockton Avenue, Los Angeles, California
36. FANTASY TIMES - James Taurasi, 137-03 32nd Avenue, Flushing 54, New York
37. FANTASTIC STORY MAG - Ron Ellick, 232 Santa Ana, Long Beach 3, California
38. FANZINE MATERIAL POOL NEWSLETTER - Ferry Carr, address below...
39. FIE - Harry Calnek, Granville Ferry, Nova Scotia, Canada
40. FIENDETTA - Charles Wells, 405 East 62nd Street, Savannah, Georgia
41. FISSION - Colin Parsons, 31 Benwood Street, Sutton, Surrey, England
42. FOG - Don Wegars, 2444 Valley Street, Berkley 2, California
43. FORERUNNER - E.D. Nicholson, 24 Warren Road, Double Bay, Sydney, NSW Australia
44. GREY - Charles Wells, address above...

45. GRUE - Dean Grennell, 402 Maple Avenue, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin
46. HODGE PODGE - Nancy Share, PO Box 31, Danville, Pennsylvania
47. HYPHEN - Walt Willis, 170 Newtownards Road, Belfast, North Ireland
48. ICHOR - Dale Hart, 155 $\frac{1}{2}$ Lama Drive, Los Angeles 26, California
49. INFINITY - Charles Harris, 85 Fairview Avenue, Great Neck, New York
50. INSIDE - Ron Smith, 549 South Tenth, San Jose, California
51. IT - James Chambee, 208 North 9th, Gatesville, Texas
52. KAYMAR TRADER - K. Martin Carlson, 1028 3rd Avenue, South, Moorhead, Minn.
53. LYRIC - Jim Bradley, 545 NE. San Rafael, Portland 12, Oregon
54. NEO - Editor unknown, 454 Bolivar Street, Canton, Massachusetts
55. NITE CRY - Larry Walker, 5921 East 4th Place, Tulsa, Oklahoma
56. OOPSLA! - Gregg Calkins, 2817 11th Street, Santa Monica, California
57. OPERATION FANTAST HANDBOOK - Ken Slater, "Riverside", South Brink, WISBECH, Cambs., England
58. PEGASUS - Gilbert Menicucci, 675 Delano Avenue, San Francisco, California
59. PEON - Charles Lee Riddle, 108 Dunham Street, Norwich, Connecticut
60. PERHAPS - Leo Harding, 510 Drummond Street, Carlton N3, Victoria, Australia
61. PROJECT FAN CLUB - Orville W. Mosher, 1728 Mayfair, Emporia, Kansas
62. PROTON - P.L. Shaeffer, 2322 N. Beachwood Drive, Hollywood, California
63. PSYCHOTIC - Richard Geis, 2631 North Mississippi, Portland 12, Oregon
64. RENAISSANCE - Joe Semenovich, 155-07 71st Avenue, Flushing 67, New York
65. REVIEW - V.L. McCain, c/o Western Union, Kellogg, Idaho
66. SAUCERIAN - Gray Barker, Box 981, Clarksburg, West Virginia
67. SCIENCE FICTION ADVERTISER - Roy Squires, 1745 Kenneth Rd., Glendale, Calif.
68. SCIENCE FICTION NEWS - G.B. Stone, Box 4788 GPO, Sydney, NSW Australia
69. SCIENCE FICTION SATELLITE - Don Allen, 3 Arkle Street, Gateshead, Durham, Eng.
70. SCIENTIFICTION STORIES - John Walston, 1044 88th NE, Bellevue, Washington
71. SCINTILLA - Larry Anderson, 2716 Smoky Lane, Billings, Montana
72. SEETEE - Peter Graham, Box 149, Fairfax, California
73. SFANZINE - Sam Johnson, 1517 Penny Drive, Edgewood, Elizabeth City, N.C.
74. SKYHOOK - Redd Boggs, 2215 Benjamin Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota
75. SLANT - Walt Willis, address above (#47, Hyphen)
76. SPACE DIVERSIONS - Norman Sherrock, 12A Rumford Place, Liverpool, England
77. SPACESHIP - Bob Silverberg, 760 Montgomery Street, Brooklyn 13, New York
78. SPACETIMES - Constance Mackenzie, 5 Hans Place, London, SW 1, England
79. SPACEWAYS - Ralph Stapenhorst, 409 W. Lexington Drive, Glendale, California
80. SPIRAL - Dennis Moreen, 214 Ninth Street, Wilmette, Illinois
81. STARLANES - Orma McCormick, 1558 West Hazelhurst Street, Ferndale 20, Michigan
82. STARLIGHT - Don Donnell, 5425 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, California
83. STARMAG - George Viksnins, 4152 Parkside Avenue, Philadelphia, 4, Pennsylvania
84. STAR ROCKETS - Raleigh Multog, address (#5, Anew)
85. STF TRENDS - Lynn Hickman, PO Box 184, Napoleon, Ohio
86. SWARM - Francis Gann, 462 South 5th Street East, Salt Lake City, Utah
87. TELLUS - Page Brownton, 1614 Colingwood Avenue, San Jose, California
88. THURBAN I - Dennis Warren (other way around) 511 Plaisance Ave., Rockford, Ill.
89. UMBRA - John Hitchcock, 15 Arbutus Avenue, Baltimore 28, Maryland
90. UNEARTHLY - Val Golding, 243 Orizaba Avenue, San Francisco 25, California
91. VAMP - John Magnus, Federal 203 B, Oberlin, Ohio
92. VORZIMERZINE - Peter Vorzimer, address (#1, Abstract)
93. VULCAN - Terry Carr, 134 Cambridge, San Francisco, California
94. XENERN - Bill Knapheide, 992 Oak Street, San Francisco, California
95. ZENITH - Derek Pickles, 22 Marshfield Place, Bradford, Yorkshire, England
96. ZIP - Ted White, 1014 North Tuckahoe Street, Falls Church, Virginia
97. ??? - Ted White, address above....
98. ORION - Paul Enever, 9 Churchill Avenue, Hillingdon, Middlesex, England

(concluded page 20)

A FOOT AT GOLD

or

A DISHARMONIOUS OPINION

by Donald Susan

Since THE CHIGGER PATCH is an annual, a rebuttal must naturally do a bit more than usual. I shall have to resurrect points which bring forth the idea: why bother if the article has been dead for a year? Mainly, because ideas live on in the limbo of the unconscious and therefore must receive their day of judgement some time! And the essential idea I want to push into the fire is the ecstatic adulation of Mr. Horace Gold.

Now, admittedly, one must criticize Mr. Gold as a writer or as an editor or as a public figure which is tantamount to equivalency with editorship. His personal life is private and although the proverbial familiarity which breeds contempt should reduce servile adoration, this is practically true of anybody, booster or detractor. In short, let the blameless one cast the first stone at another's private affairs. I do wonder why this was mentioned at all, since the only attacks have seen have been directed toward the "literary".

Now I cannot attack very vehemently Mr. Gold's literary endeavors, since I rather like them. They are pleasing, although I fear I never feel desirous of rereading them. While his interest in and knowledge of general literature probably has added polish to his style, I see no titanic merit which should last out the century. Indeed, this is probably true of most of the material which is more truly fantasy or science-fiction. Probably a few things will last a century or two: H.G. Wells' literary endurance, already exhibited,

might eke along. Huxley might because of brilliant, albeit "Lucretian" and disempathic, social satire; Stapledon, because of great verve and vigor of imagination coupled with realism of scientific background; Bradbury, as a minor master of mood and style. BUT Gold, so far as can be seen, enlarges no intellectual horizons and no verbal ingenuity spreads light upon an ocean of emotion. His work is, I fear, sterile as only small (a relative term) talent can make it.

While damning with faint praise, I can never do so regarding his total editorial product, GALAXY and BEYOND. BEYOND is a bit new yet and I think has not reached full stride; but, without doubt, it is excellent and adds a novel flavor to the contemporary genre...not reduplicating UNKNOWN, nor surpassing it. GALAXY has hit its stride and is one of the best; its stories are all enjoyable, all consistent with precisely felt (albeit not precisely stated) policy...on the average. The art is particularly enjoyable, combining medial technique with realism. But one thing does stick out in my mind regarding GALAXY: a story THE OLD DIE RICH by one H. Gold.....a familiar theme. I do not mind an editor publishing his own work in his own magazine except...THIS was rather long, a bit lacking in realism, and completely inconsistent in its plot explanation, ignoring all logic and resultant in having supposedly sane characters babble contradictory inanities at each other and then nod in agreement. I could go on about this except that I did once before and it took

two solid pages to point out all the idiocies in the work. I know that Mr. Gold writes stories that can be construed as science-fiction by the "most generous of definitions" but egregious nonsense is much too much for generosity. To publish this stuff is bad enough but to write it and publish it in your own magazine!!!

Now, if Mr. Gold is prone to believe that all his readers are fans.... he is sadly mistaken. Certainly, Merwin and Mines never believed such but rather that they were a small percent of the readers and any condescension to fans was for the amusement of the majority of readers. Certainly when you try forming an SF fanclub, you realize that the majority of readers are just as happy reading westerns or mysteries. And to believe that the usual crank letters from various types of unsane readers are representative of fandom is ridiculous! There are lunatic fringe types reading all sorts of magazines and writing all sorts of letters. And, frankly, some of Gold's editorials appeal to me no more than probably some letters he receives do to him. Campbell in his editorials is challenging....and more often creatively educational; Gold, jejune. As for feeling that all letter-writers are frivelling geeks, I can point out that such behavior is typical of a rather neurotic mind, the type always prone to make the fallacy of bifurcation. And contrary to Mr. Harmon's view, it is only natural to think someone is wrong in criticizing you if you don't know which end is up. I ALSO THINK THAT IF WE ACCEPT HARMON'S

PAST IDEA PLUS ANOTHER OF HIS THAT THE CRACKPOTS OUTWEIGH THE SANE IN FANDOM, that Harmon has no proof of which category he is in. However, I am sure he will never seriously worry about it.... a symptom, sometimes. As an individual I cannot see what Gold could criticize me for that I could not retaliate quite as justly. I also cannot see any valid reason to break the Commandments by making Gold God but rather view such attempts and Mr. Gold's supposed attitude toward fans as products of unreason.

Unreason upon unreason. Certainly that a writer of fair ability and an editor of very high merit should be acclaimed the acme of the science-fiction genre in a degree seemingly proportional to his supposed nausea evoked by those self-same lauders and probably most avid readers indicates an irrationality nearing perversion. Also, I suspect that these exaggerated claims for H.L. Gold brings from outsiders exactly that attitude that Gold seems to have for fandom, pitying condemnation, if not outright aversion. Indeed, his editorial policy has in no way aided fandom, but is in line with the current trend toward adopting a sometimes intelligent, but never full-time, mass-public. For we who debate these things pro and con are precisely those that Gold ignores. And it is distasteful to me to throw myself before the Juggernaut, shouting its praise. Therefore I have written this rebuttal against Harmon's idle exercise in being "different" trying to show that Gold is notpure gold.

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

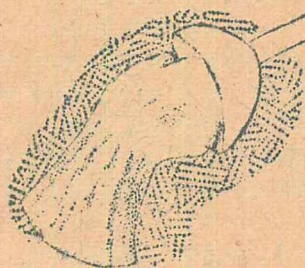
My article is essentially a vehement, but not uncalculated, rebuttal NOT designed to question the mind, manner, or morals of either Mr. Gold or Mr. Harmon.

If such considerations seem implicit in some section read en passant, the reader is conjuring an irrelevancy or most probably projecting their own beliefs.

----- Donald Susan

the

CASTORIAN



BY

Ron Ellik

Pretender

I don't recall exactly who it was, but some fan once put forward the suggestion that all fans live in one city where they could easily remain in constant contact with each other. It couldn't have been more than a couple of years ago, but I don't remember anything except the argument which came up against it: some kill-joy(s) reminded him that fandom is based on correspondence and mag-pubbing, and if we all had it that easy we would disintegrate.

It is the same way with fans who have too much money, or too much time, or too much of one thing or another. They find themselves putting out one mag after another, filling one stupendous issue of each with tremendous, mirific material that almost everybody likes. Then he decides that he can't waste his time with that anymore, and switches (1) format (2) writing style (3) attitude and (4) quality.

Take, for example, Tom Piper, a Califan who has seldom had to worry about money. Tom has owned a self-feeding mimeograph, a tremendous magazine collection, and one of the largest personal correspondences (at one time it was over 300) in the country for three years now. He is 14; I'm not saying he doesn't earn every cent of the money that he spends on stf and fandom; I'm just saying I don't believe he puts much time into the earning of that money, and the time he saves he puts into all sorts of things.

Such as REASON, a reason for which fandom has sought high and low,

and, despite Tom's insistent advocacy of one, has failed to find. REASON appeared in early 1953, with red ink on red paper. One of the best articles written was submitted to that mag, but it folded with the second issue, simply because of adolescent inattention to duty, a job which he had accepted and then rejected quite indifferently.

George Wetzel submitted an article to REASON (not the one mentioned above; this was, admittedly, not a sensational article) and never saw hide nor typewriter of Piper again. The article was not printed, and eventually George got angry; he wrote letter after letter to Piper, and finally threatened legal action (at the time he didn't know Tom was only 14, but that made little difference actually; the law says an author has a standing copyright and legal protection on anything written, and though I doubt George's seriousness, he was definitely within his rights). Even this made no impression on our Santa Monican. Then George asked me to talk to Piper, after which talk the Wetzel manuscript was returned----a year after submission.

Tom told me he just hadn't thought the letters were worth answering.

Then FASCINATION was announced. Tom was about to move to La Jolla, but he wanted to put out a fanzine before he had to sell his mimeograph. FASCINATION $\frac{1}{2}$ was published, a pre-issuance in way of publicity. Nice, meaty, fancy promises were made concerning the

zine to be.

Six months passed, and FASCINATION is still fascinatedly staring at the sky through the un-inked stencils I doubt he has even typed yet.

Tom is not the only fan who has excess of money or material within easy grasp and usage. Peter Verzimer is another, maybe a more "dangerous" case.

For Verzimer doesn't stop with rapid production and loose promises and irresponsibility. True all these things have come to pass from the abode in West Hollywood. But Pete goes even further and makes remarks in his plurality of fanzines that can't be backed up, ambiguous or no.

As illustration, we might point out his contention that in another six months or so he will be one of the only two faneds in California. He holds that most fans will either go to college or drop from fandom for other very well-known reasons (well-known at least to all fans who have been fanning over a year and who have had to fight to stay in), leaving him in a war-torn state all by himself, leaning on the shreds of V. Paul Nowell, whom he predicts will also remain.

He mentioned, in VORZIMERZINE#3 (one of the zines he puts out on his rented dittograph when ever he feels like it) three fanzines that he is sure will fold in six months. Then, in the same paragraph, he went on to say that this would leave himself and Nowell alone.

For one thing, these three fanzines show no signs of folding. Two of them I know for sure will not fold; one of these two is mine, the other is Larry Balint's, and Larry tells me he has every intention of fan-pubbing till his vaguely-thought-about professional fiction takes hold, years in the future. VULCAN, the other of the trimvirate about to go the way of the dodo at the command of Verzimer, may well do so but I doubt it.

For another thing there are many other zines in California Pete seems to have taken no notice of whatsoever. OOPSIA!, says Calkins, will be published for over two years now. INSIDE has material booked in to keep it going to January 1955, and Ron Smith has paid for all of it. I think he will remain with us. FOG by Don Wegars shows every sign of going on to become a top zine, and that sort of thing usually lasts more than six months. XENERN and XENERN INDEXES may not be strictly fanzines and Will Knapheide may not be strictly a fan, but he looks like a permanent character. Roy Squires has seven or eight years of fan-pubbing to look back on with SCIENCE FICTION ADVERTISER; is he likely to throw it all out the window?

Then there's all the FAPA, SAPS, ZAPA and WAPA members in California.

Pete has never made any really un-backtable remarks except this one. But his ambiguous statements are more committing than Senator McCarthy's!! Constantly, he talks as though he was a BNF with all of neo-fandom (which comprises everyone with whom he comes in contact save Geis and others he doesn't dare stomp on) at his feet waiting for the next issue of VORZIMERZINE (an enlarge and ditto'd letter and egoboo (for Vorz)sheet) or HA! (a supposed humorzine which is admittedly not aimed at fandom but which appears to be an elephant gun aimed at humor with intent to maim).

Peter, however, cannot be called a leech on his parents. He works three days a week at a theater, earning considerable money, and does rather well in high school. But he does use this money and better than average intelligence to set himself up as a tin god to whom all fen who can't show six fanzines produced in the last month must bow.....

Sincerely.....

ron e..

(continued from page 16)

99. QUESTIONMARK - Editor unknown, 4 Myrtle Grove, Preston, Victoria, Australia

100. WASTEBASKET - Leo Harding, address (#6), Perhaps)

ANY DELETIONS, ADDITIONS, OR CORRECTIONS SHOULD BE SENT TO RUSSELL K. WATKINS....

IN THE LIMELIGHT

IT'S NO LONGER
ASTOUNDING!

BY

HARLAN ELLISON

There's little doubt of it anymore. Astounding is hitting the skids. Oh, Campbell is still a damned good editor, probably one of the three or four best in the field. That much is acknowledged fact. But I just wonder how much of Campbell's ebullient praise nowadays is merely reflection of what he was in the "Bedsheet Days" when Astounding consistently featured line-ups of Padgett, van Vogt, Heinlein, del Rey, Hubbard, Ley and Richardson. How much of the "Oh, get JWC's opinion, he's top dog in the field", is merely wishful

thinking on the parts of those who wish JWC was putting out a magazine like the Bright Blue Flame that was his pet in the late thirties and early forties?

For when you pan Astounding Science Fiction, brother, you necessarily pan John W. Campbell, Jr., a man of much acumen, and stunning perspicacity. Just as Gold seeks out stories with deep sociological and eso-psychological concepts, and consequently Galaxy Science Fiction smacks strongly of "Where are we heading, lads", so Campbell is a

fellow who feels the ultimate future of man lies in the line of the physical sciences.

But the thing is this, gentle reader. You may not know this but having come in contact with JWC a number of times, twice at his own stamping grounds, his office, I realize that that "Bright Blue Flame" is sputtering. It's dying out. Campbell is now too eager to go off chasing bright butterflies (such as Dianetics), instead of staying home with his knitting. Campbell has lost his interest. That is about all there is to say for Campbell, he's lost his interest. The machinery catalogues that Pomeroy sends him are far more appealing to John W. at this stage of the game than a new series of stories to rival Shiras' In Hiding series. He's more interested in seeing what cooks at the Argonne National Labs than scouting around for a new talent that will make a splash like Asimov. Our boy Campbell who came up in the past with names who are now writing the stuff we like, is resting on his laurels. He is buying good stories, yeah, but he's buying the good stories that Campbell likes, and Campbell only spends two or three days a week in the office, because he has more important things to do.

Take a run-back through the last three years' worth of Astounding and you will find a series of lacklustre short stories and tepid novelettes that can be compared in their mediocrity only with the poorness of his novels. There hasn't been a "If This Goes On" or a "Nightfall" in over three years. We have been fed stories of the ilk of "Survival" and "Lady With A Past" to cite two more recent examples. In near-

ly fifty issues we've been "treated" to exactly eight serials, one of which was only two parts (and that should have been one chapter. Piper and his unknown consort had a good novelette there, but why the deuce did they have to over-write and drag out a good idea, till it grated horribly?). Two of those, the Clement serials, were good, granted, but so top-heavy on science and alien characterization and so disgustingly lacking in any human characterization that they were, from an esthetic viewpoint, a total loss - I'd expect to see them sooner in Gashbuck's Science Fiction Plus than in Campbell's publication, but there they were. And de Camp's, "Hand of Zoi", was admittedly more a fantasy-adventure than a straight science fiction piece, which would not condemn it by any means, except that it stunk.

Campbell has fallen back more and more on the stories that end with an esoteric thump rather than with a solid twist. He has fallen back more on the stories that end, "...but tomorrow, they knew, there would arise a new race". And he has neglected the stories that end, "...up there, the stars. Incubators?". Campbell has had the pick of the stories, but tales of the calibre of "Beyond Bedlam" and "The Demolished Man" and "Cue For Quiet" have gone elsewhere. They have gone to markets that would have been unable to touch them, had Campbell been on the ball (footnote one). But Campbell was sleeping on the job and didn't even get to see those tales. Men who had written for Campbell for years and years were deserting him now in lieu of the other markets that were paying what they wanted for stuff they could take

¹Here is the story no one knows of how del Rey got T.L. Sherred's powerful Cue For Quiet for SPACE, instead of its going to aSF, where Sherred's first story, E For Effort, appeared, years before. Sherred had not written anything for years, but del Rey, getting wind that he was coming out with some stuff, went to Sherred's agent (I can't recall, offhand whether that was Pohl or Meredith, though I strongly suspect it was Pohl) and laid down his wad on the desk and said, "I don't care how much it costs - I want Sherred!" And he got him.

half the time on that they had spent hours with before. As long as they could hack it out and get paid, why should they bother to work for Campbell's dough? And JWC, who, in the old days, would have gone out and beaten them bloody, till they wrote the stuff he wanted, let it slide. "Ho-hum," he says, "There is always a new writer around the corner." Yeah, there're new writers. Writers like M.C. Pease who can't write his way out of a wet noodle bag, and writers like Lee Correy (an obvious pen-name for a scientist who is unable to write under his own name because of restrictions placed upon him by the company for which he works) who may have a helluva lot of talent, but they are not concentrating too much on the plots and worrying about the insignificantia of s-f. In short, the days of the (all right, I'll say it) "gadget story" are long gone. No longer can we hope to chuckle at the tales of Gallagher; no longer can we marvel at the feats of Artur Blord; no more can we nod indignantly at the scrapes from which Doc Mothuselah pulled himself. Now we sit with beetled brows and trace the pointless antics of men who watch little pig-like aliens rubbing noses and felling trees on wolves. We read stories like "Share Our World" that one friend of mine (a writer by trade) used every night for a week to put him to sleep. When he wanted to fall off right away, he would pick up "Share Our World" (aSF, Aug. 1953), start to read it and ...five minutes...in the kip snoring.

Oh, now and then we get good yarns. Things like "To The Stars", "The Spectre General", "Day of the Moron", "And Then There Were None" -- and a few others. But look at how many stories are published in each issue of aSF, and look at the percentage of truly good ones to the ones that can be forgotten when you turn the page.

And pull this experiment: go back to the January 1951 issue and turn to the table of contents page. How many stories of five therein listed do YOU remember, without looking at the blurbs

or illustrations? Not more than one or two, I'll bet. That is a direct result of Campbell's publishing stories without a "sticking quality", if I may coin a terminology. His stories are too damned indefinite, too filled with esoteric concepts and with a frightening disregard for plot or characterization. How many live, flesh-and-blood characters have you found in aSF in the last five years who can compete with Jenkins the robot butler, or Joe the Narcissian robot, or even Hubbard's pathetic Alan Corday, doomed to ride the starships for all time? How many? We now get Hurulta, Arkhazhik of Unzuwan, with about as much personality as a wet halli-but. F'rchrissakes, even Palmer is publishing stories with characteriza--tion. Even hacks like Robert Moore Williams are turning out yarns with characters like Hather, the pipe-smoking BEM, who actually live! How many of the aSF tales lately have had as heroes either scientists of one sort or another (in all their stiff-collared cardboardedness) or harried members of a culture that is slightly unappetizing? Check back, I haven't got the stomach to do it.

Campbell's sojourns into off-trails, such as the best forgotten Dianetics episode, and those ridiculously boring articles by Wallace West on everything from oil reserves to fire prevention are but two of the more outstanding examples of how JWC is more worried about his articles than his stories. Granted, aSF has a high percentage of scientist-readers, nonetheless, it is for the stories primarily that we buy the magazine, with the articles more or less frosting on our cakes. But Campbell, when he pulls things like the mildly enervating "Space, Time and Education", is putting the horse before the cart, so to speak. He has aspirations to being a science editor, or so it appears, and his magazine has become the worse for it. What was once the proud giant of the field has been humbled so, that a copy from six or eight years ago and one from this month, put side by side, would

show such dissimilarities that no one would suppose he had picked up two copies of the same magazine, did he not look at the masthead.

In a field now be-riddled by the almost momentary appearance of new magazines, Campbell will find it much harder to keep his circulation, once tops, and still pretty near number one, near the red line on the indicator. With forty-some-odd titles circulating he will find it nearly impossible to glean the good material that once was sent to him as a matter of course. The agents are not going to wait till Campbell makes up his mind on a yarn. They will yank it back out of his grasp, and send it over to Gold or Harrison, leaving John to run crying to his scientist friends and bellow, "Doc, Doc, nasty ol' Pohl won't let me peek at the mss., I need a lead novelette next month, will you do it?" And of course, Doc, knowing which side his electrons are buttered on, will come up with SPATIO ESOTERICA and pot over to JWC with adamant words to the effect that he could not whip out a story, but would this jim-dandy science article suffice for lead spot? And John will perk up and say, "Oh, yes, yes, goody-goody."

Now Campbell is a sharp operator. Probably the top man in the business, but it all boils down to simply this: Campbell has developed too many outside interests. That Bright Blue Flame is now a sputtering ordeal that for him is drudgery. Walk into JWC's office in New York and start to talk with him. Will he enthuse with you over the new stuff he has purchased? Hell no, he'll start off on some concept or other that he's whipped out in his spare time after lunch hour. Campbell is a genius, no question there. He is one of the

few men in this world with a mind so staggeringly quick that he can put most of our scientists and statemen to shame but he is no longer an editor.

He has become a devotee of the machine. Of the concept. Of the physical sciences. He has lost his enthusiasm for science fiction.

Face it, kids, Campbell thinks aSF and fans and s-f is a lot of child's play. aSF is of interest to him only insofar as he can use it for a vehicle for his scientific articles (not necessarily meaning his personal own), and the only way he can keep pursuing his hobby is if aSF sells. So he forces himself to read the mss submitted, and to purchase certain amounts of material, and run them, in the hopes that aSF will continue a good seller. What once he did as fun is now a chore. He once put out an issue that was well over the top insofar as reader appreciation was concerned. Now he just hits the barest possible minimum. Why bother to get better and better when by standing still, he can sell just as many copies per month? aSF is nowhere near as good as it used to be -- that's a fact. You can't refute it. JWC is off on his science kick now and his stories in the magazine show this leaning.

It is difficult, nay, impossible to speak of aSF, and not speak of Campbell. For Campbell is Astounding.

When you pan one, you pan the other.

But the basic trouble, one which we can do nothing about, is this: Campbell has lost the Bright Blue Flame....

.....and Astounding??

Why, it's no longer astounding.

=====

FAN SURVEY.....Back in '48, Bob Tucker took a survey of fandom. Today, with the assistance of Bob T., Gerald Steward is planning on doing a Second Tucker Fan Survey. Questionnaires for this survey will be distributed on a fandom-wide basis through various fanmags, the SFcon, Fapa, and Saps. Participating in the distribution so far are the following: CAN FAN, ESCAPE, PSYCHOTIC, VARIOSO, DAMN!(Fapa), NANDU(Saps), and CHIGGER. Anyone else interested may contact Gerald Steward. The questionnaire will have a circulation in excess of 1000....Nand



Invisible Wings

by

Orma McCormick

The flight of birds was here on this odd world, for wings had whispered through the twilight-enthralled wood;
I sensed the movement, soft, light, and feathery,
where nothing could be seen except the leafy boughs.
Strange avian paradise? I wondered....
The tremulous rustle of the leaves denoted life,
mysterious, hidden, alien,
while wondering, I heard the song!

Diapasons of trills, cryptic trebles,
melodies rising to crescendo,
ever-nearing....enthralling!
Yet I SAW nothing - except the trees.

I stood entranced, gazing into the now-darkening forest,
I waited with anticipating rapture while the symphony of sound engulfed me;
I wanted to hold this forever,
so I turned the key to recording on my automatic audio-set,
At once....SILENCE!

Had it risen above my ability to hear? Where was the music?
I felt weak, - stunned,-
I sank to rest upon the mossy carpet of the woodland floor,
the audio-set slipping from my nerveless fingers.

(next page)

I heard again the whispering wings....I waited....
There was no breeze,
the leaves were motionless; the twilight deepened;
I realized I must return to my ship while sufficient light remained
in which to travel over this strange terrain;
I groped for the audio-set....
It was GONE.

The darkness became oppressive, so I abandoned my search for the set,
there was always tomorrow, - I would return.

The sapphire sun was at zenith when I retraced my steps to the wood;
Tricky, bewitching shadows danced and flickered about my feet;
The mossy carpet was no longer of emerald hue,
The light from the blue sun had transformed it into indigo sponge.
A slight depression marked the spot where I had rested the previous
evening, but there was no sign of the missing audio-set.

The leaves about me began to moan,
I perceived, rather than heard, the whisper of wings again;
but now, their sibilence was inimical, frightening;
To placate my fears, I shouted, "I am a bird lover, a naturalist,
I am your friend. I love this forest and all its living creatures!"

The rustling increased in intensity, all hostile,
I shivered in the blue light, but I waited again.
The sounds became rustling words, and I strained to catch their meaning,
my mind feeling contacted, as though warned by though warned by thought-waves, -

"You are an eater of the flesh of fowl, oh featherless one!
You say you will not harm us, but we will make sure of this by not
revealing ourselves. We have taken your machine lest you or your kind
return to hunt because of our edible value. You wait in vain."

No actual voice had penetrated my mind, but I KNEW.
Then the trees tossed in the windless atmosphere,
trills echoed, rising in fortissimo of enmity....
I was driven from the wood as the noise became unbearable.
My head throbbed;
I covered my ears with my hands as I ran,
fearing as I fled that I would lose my mind from the sheer intensity of
vibrations.

I am back on Terra now.
Yet on a warm summer night I will shiver,
when I imagine I hear those whispering wings.
I am no longer an eater of the flesh of fowl.
Blue lights cause me to believe I hear non-existant sounds
like deafening trills, and the roar of mighty pinions.
I dream of leaves rustling in a windless atmosphere,
and awaken - startled, wondering, afraid....

FAN WAMPUM

This is to pay the debts of fandom that money can't reach. Its value is dependent upon the appreciation you express, and with each addition. When the sheets are filled, they are returned to Orville Mosher, 1728 Mayfair, Emporia, Kansas. Fan-editors may have copies of the filled out FAN WAMPUM upon request from Orv. New or replacement sheets may be obtained (in Britian, the Empire, and European countries) from Capt. Ken Slater, 13, Gp. R.P.C., B.A.O.R., 29, c/o G.P.O., England (see Ken's new address in the article concerning the CF HANDBOOK) and in the USA from Orville Mosher at the address given above. CLEAR YOUR OBLIGATIONS WITH FAN WAMPUM!

FROM: Orville W. Mosher, 1728 Mayfair, Emporia, Kansas, U.S.A.....TO: BOB McCUBBIN, 90 Lilydale Grove, Hawthorn East E 3, Victoria, Australia.....
Classification: or value (reason why you are paying Fan Wampum): In thanks for the photograph of the Melbourne and Sydney fen at the Albury meeting. For the large amount of material on you and your fanclubs. For the fanzines and magazines plus the newspaper with the write-up. For your more than generous help....signed--Orv Mosher

TO: IAN CROZIER, 6 Bramerton Road, Caulfield, Victoria, Australia.....
Classification: For his assistance in running the Melbourne S-F Group, his organization of our library, and his successful editorship of ETHERLINE. He has done yeoman service with the Sydcon 1953, Alburycon 1953, and is hard at work doing his bit towards making the Sydcon 1954 a success. He is also our local N3F representative....signed--Bob McCubbin

TO: JIM FERGUSON, Mallee Pharmacy, Hopetown, Victoria, Australia.....
Classification: For his invaluable help and many kindnesses to me while I was travelling through his part of the world, and for his keen interest in photographing space models and scenes. Jim has also tried his hand at writing for our Melbourne fan-mags....signed--Ian Crozier

TO: ENCLA MOFFE, 696 Malvern Road,

Toorak, Victoria, Australia.....
Classification: For his help in arranging film showings for the Melbourne Science Fiction Group....signed--Jim F.

TO: MERVYN BINNS, 4 Myrtle Grove, Regent, Victoria, Australia.....
Classification: He controls and runs the duplicator on which all of Melbourne's fan-mags are printed. He is also the assistant in charge of the S-F counter at McGills News Agency and does a damfine job....signed--Encla Moffe

TO: RACE MATTHEWS, 8 Barnett Street, Hampton, Victoria, Australia.....
Classification: For assisting in the formation of the Melbourne S-F Group and editing BACCHANALIA amongst the most enthusiastic of the younger fans, and a damn good fellow....signed--Mervyn Binns

TO: CARL DILL, 131 $\frac{1}{2}$ North Main, Bellefontaine, Ohio, USA.....
Classification: A regular and prompt correspondent, who is willing to exchange promags for fan-mags....signed--Race Matthews

TO: DR. IAN MERRILEES, Carlisle Street St. Kilda.....
Classification: For his continued valuable assistance with our library records and for the use of his car when required....signed--Carl Dill

(next page)

TO: JOHN O'SHAUGHNESSY, Clive and Swift Streets, Albury, NSW.....
Classification: For his invaluable assistance for arranging accomodations, and transport for the Albury get-together in August 1953....signed--Dr. Merrilees

TO: ORVILLE W. MOSHER, 1728 Mayfair, Emporia, Kansas, USA.....
Classification: A source of much interesting data on fandom and fanclubs in general; is prepared to carry on a voluminous, if irregular, correspondence.signed--John O'Shaughnessy

Well, there is one complete FAN WAMPUM and now here is another one. Orv Mosher started the one that you just read, Ken Slater started the following one:

FROM: Capt. Ken F. Slater, 13 Gp. R.P. C., BAOR, 42, c/o GPO, England.....

TO: EVA FIRESTONE, Box 515, Upton, Wyoming, USA.....
Classification: For efforts "far and above the call of duty" in greeting neo fans, and in holding together the tattered remnants of fandom when in the heat of strife the tattered banners of the NFFF have dipped. For many circular letters which I have oft-times ignored in the press of my own activities. For other past favors....signed--Ken Slater

TO: K. MARTIN CARLSON, 1028 Third Ave. South, Moorhead, Minnesota, USA.....
Classification: For being a steady reliable very helpful member of the NFFF for many years. And for his calm friendly attitude at all times. He is and always will be ever ready to lend a hand whenever needed. To me, the N3F would not seem the N3F without Martin Carlson....signed--Eva Firestone

TO: DON SUSAN, 706 Grant Street, McKeesport, Pennsylvania, USA.....
Classification: For his great work in keeping alive a fine organization like the NFFF. For his willingness to help

along in all good projects and his general interest in fandom. Under his guidance N3F will prosper. I am so interested in N3F future that I can't let this chance go by, in showing gratitude to Don....signed--Martin Carlson

TO: NANCY GERDING, Box 484, Roseville, Illinois, USA.....
Classification: For being so UNSELFISHLY helpful in all things and making possible my slipping into the post of NFFF president without that greatest of problems: who is going to publish the O-O? She stands as one of the best reasons for becoming a fan: so that one can meet a person who is truly a likeable human....signed--Don Susan

TO: DON SUSAN, 706 Grant Street, McKeesport, Pennsylvania.....
Classification: For the superb job he has done as N3F prez. For being so understanding when I had to dump the OO in his lap. For the many hours he's uncomplainingly given to Chigger: thanks to him, the current issue of Chigger is in the mails. And last but not least thanks to him for calling me a likeable human, one of the nicest things anyone could say about another....signed--NanG

That's it, two completed FAN WAMPUM. The first one was in longhand and my apologies to anyone who's name or address I might have spelled wrong. Some of it was very difficult to read....in particular Encla Mofte's name and address and Dr. Ian Merrilees' name and address. Please remember that Ken Slater is now out of the service and if you wish to contact him, do so at his home address which is given in his article on the OF HANDBOOK. And remember also that if you want completed Fan Wampum sheets for publication, send your request to Orv Mosher, 1728 Mayfair, Emporia, Kansas, USA.....

SPilled Mickey, Public eye

in

THE SHAWY UNDERTAKER CAPER

by

ED COX

Morning found me in a bad mood. All the way down town I didn't run over a single pedestrian. Only married ones. I pulled over to the curb in front of the office building. It was my favorite parking place. Next to the firehydrant. I made a mental note to get a dog someday.

I was so occupied with my thoughts that I forgot to bat the door-man one as I went in. I noted that the elevator was down this morning. It always is. It doesn't work. Luckily, my office is on the first floor. I went in, slamming the door, but the glass still didn't break.

Velveeta, my voluptuous red-headed secretary was sitting behind her desk. She was beautiful, voluptuous. She had bedroom eyes, green ones. She looked at me, full, moist, red lips parted. She burped.

"Darling!" she said, throatily. Cold-footed ants skittered down my spine. I scratched making a mental note to get DDT.

"Morning, Velveeta doll" I said. She jumped up and crashed me in a passionate embrace. I clouted her..

"You're crushing my cigarettes!"

She looked at me, admiringly. "I've got something to tell you," she husked, breathlessly. She stood there in a black, tightly-fitting sweater. She had forgotten to put on a skirt. Forgetful of her. I made a mental note to remind her of it.

"Any mail this morning?" I asked, taking out a deck of Luckies. I started dealing two-handed solitaire.

"But I've got something to tell you," she repeated.

"Spill it, kid!"

She clasped her hands to her full, luscious breasts.

"Last night," she said, "I dreamed I went window-shopping in my Maiden-form bra." She gazed at me dreamily.

My heart thudded. Here it is, I thought. Aloud: "I didn't know you wore bras."

She pouted. "How do you know... you never investigated."

It was a trap, but I was used to this. She's always trying to make me.

"Is there any mail this morning?" She looked disappointed.

"And put on your skirt! I don't

want to look at your lovely, full, rounded, creamy thighs all day." I gathered up the deck of Luckies and went into my office.

A letter lay on the desk. I sat down. Business had been terrible. In the last two days there'd been only eight murders, three rapes and one pick-pocket case. I was bored.

I picked up the letter. It was from a box number in Danville Pennsy. I put it down and opened the lower left drawer of my desk. The bottle wasn't there.

"Velveeta!" I thundered. The door opened immediately and she undulated in.

"Yes?" she husked.

"Where's my vodka!?" I searched the other drawers.

"You drank it all yesterday." She sounded disappointed. She also had a tightly-fitting black skirt on now.

"Oh, so I did." I flipped her a pile of skins. "Run down to Moe's joint and get me some more." She dashed out.

I picked up the letter. Opened it. I read it.

"Dear Mr. Mickey, (it read)

Seeing as how you are the greatest public eye in the world, (here I blushed) maybe you can investigate a horrible situation that is overlooked by the world today.

It is simply this:

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BLOOD
UNDERTAKERS TAKE FROM
DEAD BODIES?

(signed)

Amonamous"

There was no retainer. I dumped it in file 13. I drew a long drag from my Lucky and sat back, watching the smoke play. Then Velveeta dashed in again, all out of breath, with two bottles of Samovar.

"What happened to you?" I asked, peeling off the cap of a bottle.

"I ran all the way, like you

said," she husked, breasts heaving. I made a mental note to tell her to walk next time.

"You're a good doll, Vel." I took a long pull from the bottle. "Here have a slug."

"Never-touch-the-stuff," she gasped, snatching the bottle. She handed it back after lowering the level two inches.

"Okay, get back to your typewriter," I ordered. She staggered out. Nothing revolts me more than sober women.

I got up and paced back and forth in my office. One-two-three-four East, one-two-three-four West. It's a small office.

It bothered me, this slow business. Maybe that was why the letter kept popping back in my mind. What do undertakers do with the blood?

But I couldn't take the case. No retainer. I paced past my desk, taking the bottle. Fine stuff, Samovar. I put it on the desk. I was so bored, I decided to look out the window. I walked over to it. There it was -- New York City, the biggest pile of ugly, lovely, tall, smoky, dirty, wonderful, lousy buildings in the world. And I, Spilled Mickey, was the greatest public eye. I was tough. I was feared.

The window-glass spider-webbed and something whizzinged into the wall behind me. I lose more windows like that. I made a mental note to have Velveeta send out for a window.

I took out my big, oily-slick, .45 from my shoulder-holster. It fitted into my hand like it was made for it. It was. I have the only custom-built, chrome-plated forty-five in the world. I checked it's action, plugging my initials in the wall. I reloaded and went out into Velveeta's office.

"I'm going out." She jumped up and clasped me to her.

"Oh, be careful!" She kissed me hungrily. I clouted her. "How many times do I have to tell ya!" I hated lipstick that comes off. I was so mad I went out without kissing her again.

Outside, a cop was writing a ticket for my car. I waited until he

put it under the wiper. Then I stepped over, took it and tore it up. He was embarrassed.

"Oh, I am sorry, Mr. Mickey! I didn't know it was yours." Like I say, everybody fears me. I'm tough.

"Well don't let it happen again! Don't you know my car by now?" I gestured at the '48 Plymouth.

"Oh...uh...yes! I just forgot." He wrung his hands.

"You're lying. I just bought it yesterday." I walked off so mad I forgot to use the car.

It was a short walk to Moe's Manor. Being logical, I took short steps. I kicked open the door and slid inside. I stood back against the wall. Everybody stopped talking. A man got up, nervously knocking over his chair. He started out past me. I tripped him. He crawled out so fast I didn't get to kick him. It made me so mad I went right to my stool at the bar. It's in the middle with my initials carved on it. I didn't even slug anybody on the way.

Moe hurried to me, looking distressed. All his other customers were sidling out, one by one.

"You look unhappy, Moe." I observed. I lit a Lucky.

"Oh I'm happy, Mr. Mickey! Look! Hahahahahaha." He grinned.

I blew smoke in his face. "Get my usual."

He dashed off and brought back a short beer.

"Moe, do you know any undertakers?" I drank down my beer.

He blanched. "What have I ever done to you, Mr. Mickey?" His hands shook.

"Relax. I am working on a new case." He brightened.

"Well, I know of a few," he ventured. I re-ordered.

"Write down an address of one." I gulped down my beer.

He passed me a slip of paper with the address on it. I flipped him a skin and walked out. Despite myself, I was intrigued by this business and was determined to get to the bottom of it.

I grabbed a cab. It was damned heavy so I got in.

"Take me to this address!" I waved the paper at him.

"But you don't look dead," he quipped. I clouted him one.

"No more lip from you, or my name isn't Spilled Mickey!"

He blanched. "I'm sorry Mr. Mickey, I did not recognize you at first!" He took off into traffic. He was a lousy driver. Didn't run over anybody all the way.

He pulled up before a large tattletale gray house. A sign on it said:

"Wilfred McFink, Mortician."

And under that:

"We put you away for keeps!"

I got out. "Wait for me." He nodded.

As I walked up the drive, a milk truck drove past me and around to the back of the house. I automatically made a mental note of the license number.

I rang the bell. It went bong-ba-bong-bong. The door creaked open. A thin, little man with a bobbing Adam's apple stood there. He was dressed in a rusty black glen-plaid suit. A polka-dot jazz-bow rode side-saddle on his Adam's apple.

"What can I....er...do for you?" I clouted him. He shrank back and I brushed in past him. It was an ante-room, dimly lit. A dank, gloomy place, lousy with flowers in baskets. There was a picture of King Farouk on the wall. I turned to him.

"I'm Spilled Mickey, Public Eye." I flipped my papers at him. He quivered. "Yesyesyes, Mr. Mickey, what can I do for you?" I clouted him.

"You said that before, McFink." He quivered.

"I got a few questions to ask you." We strolled into his office.

"Any bodies fresh in?" I was

casual.

"Why yes we do have, for a fact." He flittered nervously to his desk and plopped behind it. He tried to flip a butt into his kisser, but missed twice. His hands shook like Lili St. Cyr.

"How's the chances for me to watch a typical undertaking?"

He started, then looked pained. "Quite out of the question, Mr. Mickey. Professional ethics, y'know."

I decided to humor him for a minute.

"Then answer me this: what do you do with the blood from the bodies?"

He almost jumped out of his skin. He dropped the butt in his lap. While he frantically scrabbled for it, I went toward the back of the joint. He was up in a flash, skittering in front of me, blocking the door.

"Nononononono, Mr. Mickey! You can't g--awlk!" I picked him up by his jazz-bow and snapped him into a corner.

"Hel-llp!" he shrieked. "Manny, Moe, Jack!"

The house shook. I thought a herd of elephants were loose but it was only three schmoes running into the room. They were dressed in white. Like young Dr. Marone.

"Get him!" quavered the shaky McFink. They growled.

I kicked one in the stomach. He fell. I kicked the second in the teeth. I ruin more shoes that way. The third hesitated.

"We don't want no trouble with you," he said. "You gonna leave quietly?"

I kicked at him too but was distracted by the door opening behind me. Something, a grand piano maybe, fell on me. I sank into black blackness blacker than black.

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Somebody was inside my skull trying to get out. They were using a pneumatic drill. I was wondering how they got the drill in there when I noticed I was on a marble slab. Ha, try-

ing to frighten me. But I'm tough. I never get scared.

Somebody was cutting the ropes. Why, I wondered. Then I opened my eyes. A beautiful, voluptuous brunette was cutting the ropes.

She was built like a brick out-house. With running water. Her eyes were smouldering pools of passion. She was, I decided, down-right sexy.

"Who are you?" I husked. I noticed that I was in the undertaking room. Two men, pale, dark-haired guys, were carrying containers out of the room. They looked like fairies.

"Ahhhh, you awaken!" She seemed delighted. I got down off the slab. I saw McFink nervously hovering in the background. I knew she must have slugged me.

"What's the pitch?" I flipped a Lucky into my mouth, and lit it.

"Ha Mr. Mickey, you have reached the end of your career." She quivered excitedly. I pointed at the men carrying a container and gurgled.

"There's blood in that."

"Yes," she agreed.

"What are you going to do with it? Who are you?" I felt the whole solution of the mess was near.

"We use it," she answered, smiling mysteriously, she had incisors like a dog I thought.

"For what?" Mr. McFink looked worried. He was, I noticed, quite nervous.

"We," she answered, "are vampires." McFink dropped a yo-yo he'd been spinning.

"You're crazy." I clouted her. "Vampires don't exist." She clouted me back. I like women with spirit.

"But we do." She sounded miffed. "But in the modern day and age, we operate differently. It's so hard." She sighed, "There's so much competition you know. Red Cross, blood-banks and all. People actually giving blood away!" She shuddered. It was an exciting sight.

"Do that again!" I asked. She did. I quivered.

"But why are you telling me all this?" I flipped the butt away.

"You'll never live to repeat it," she answered confidently.

"Pshaw!" I said modestly. "Who'd ever believe in vampires? Besides you are lying. Blood is different after people die."

"Oh, I know. But we make plasma from it. Strong stuff." She urped. I knew she'd been hitting the plasma.

"So?" I dug out my Luckies and lit another. I also noticed about now that she had my automatic.

"So, we have an arrangement with all undertakers. We pick up all the blood and ship it to our headquarters for distilling."

"But how do you live otherwise?" I knew she was telling the truth.

"Oh we manage. Some undertakers are balky and then we get fresh meals. (Here, McFink dropped his yo-yo again.) Also where do you think people go when they disappear?"

So that's what happened to Judge Crater I thought. She motioned for me to follow the men. We climbed into the milk-truck. It rattled down the drive.

"Where are we going now?" I saw the cab still waiting. I glanced around the truck.

"To headquarters. You won't escape." she said leeringly. She waved the forty-five at me.

"Kiss me," I said. She quivered.

"You know what'll happen if I do," She was coy.

"Yes, but nice girl's do not think things like that."

"I didn't mean that!" She put her arms around me. I held her and cold-footed ants ran up my spine. I reminded myself about the DDT. We kissed. Her lips flamed hotly against mine. The forty-five thudded on the floor. Then she nuzzled at my throat. I quivered. Something needle-sharp burned into my throat. She wriggled happily. I quivered.

Then she passed out. Clutching a Kleenex to my throat, I bashed the driver with my forty-five. The truck swerved out of control. I grappled with the other guy. It wasn't much fun so I bashed him too. The truck smashed into a Woolworth window about then.

It was all over in no time after I called the bulls. I watched them load the vampires into a Black Maria. As they loaded the blackhaired babe on I thought (with a guilty twinge about Velveeta) that we could have made such beautiful music together.

I went back to my office.

By the time I got there, a late Extra had hit. But I didn't bother about one.

"Oh darling!" Velveeta flew into my arms crushing me in a hotly throbbing embrace. She kissed me. I didn't even mind about the cigarettes.

"I just read an Extra all about it." She showed me the headlines.

"SPILLED MICKEY TRIUMPHS AGAIN!"

Huge Vampire-Undertaker Plot Revealed! Nefarious Blood Dealings Uncovered By Worlds Greatest Public Eye!"

There was more but I'm modest.

"But how did you escape?" she asked, sexily rubbing herself against me. I disengaged myself.

"Simple, my dear Velveeta." I got the vodka. "I just asked her to kiss me. I knew she'd lose control and take a slug of my blood."

Velveeta pouted angrily thinking of another woman's lips on mine. She threw the typewriter at me. I lose more typewriters that way.

"So what happens?" She sat down, sulking, at the desk.

"As you know, my blood is 99 and 44/100ths pure alcohol."

"So?"

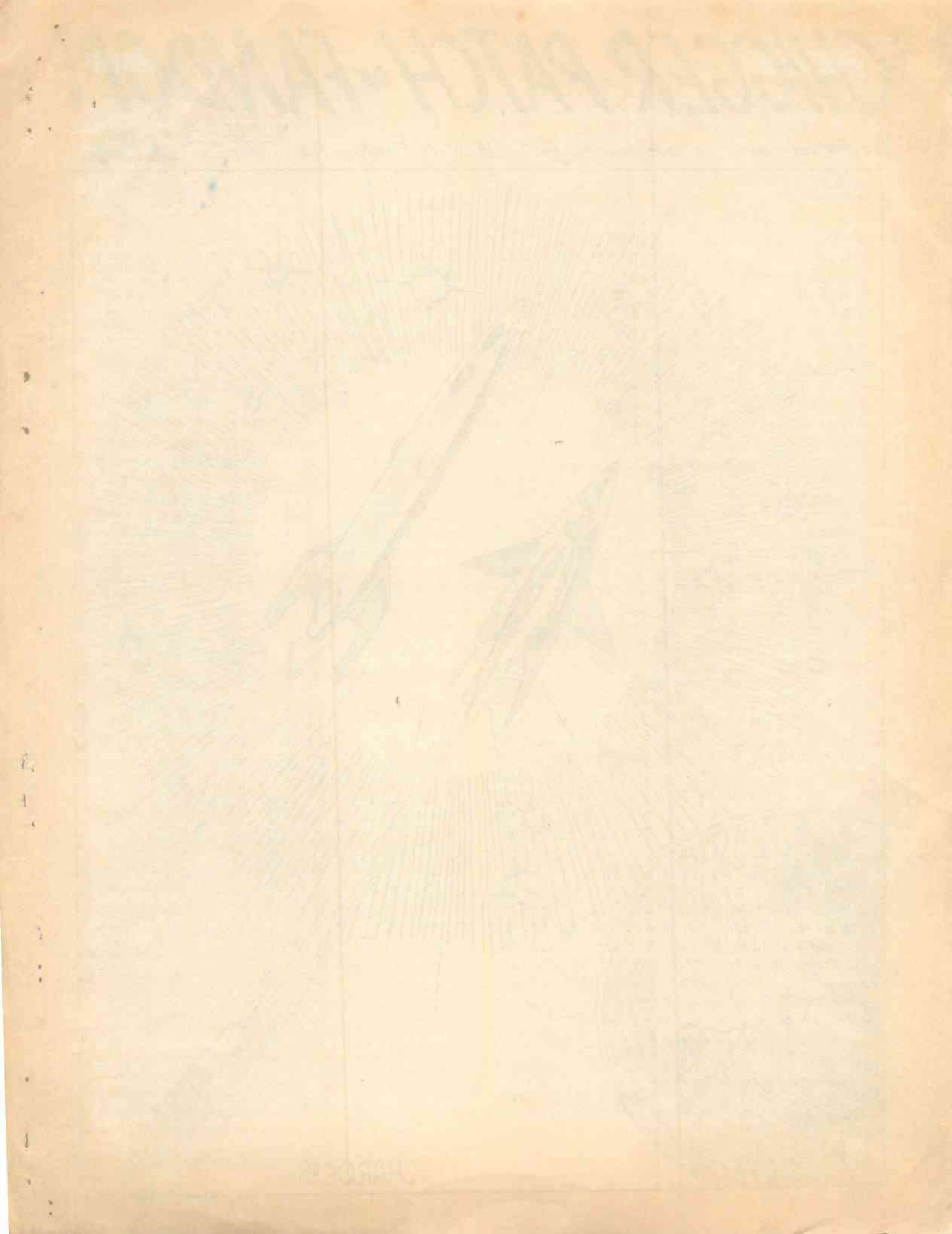
"Vampires live on blood. But when she sipped from my veins, she got drunk and passed out. After that it was easy."

"Oh darling, you are wonderful!" I blushed modestly. She jumped up and kissed me again. The lipstick bothered me.

I clouted her.

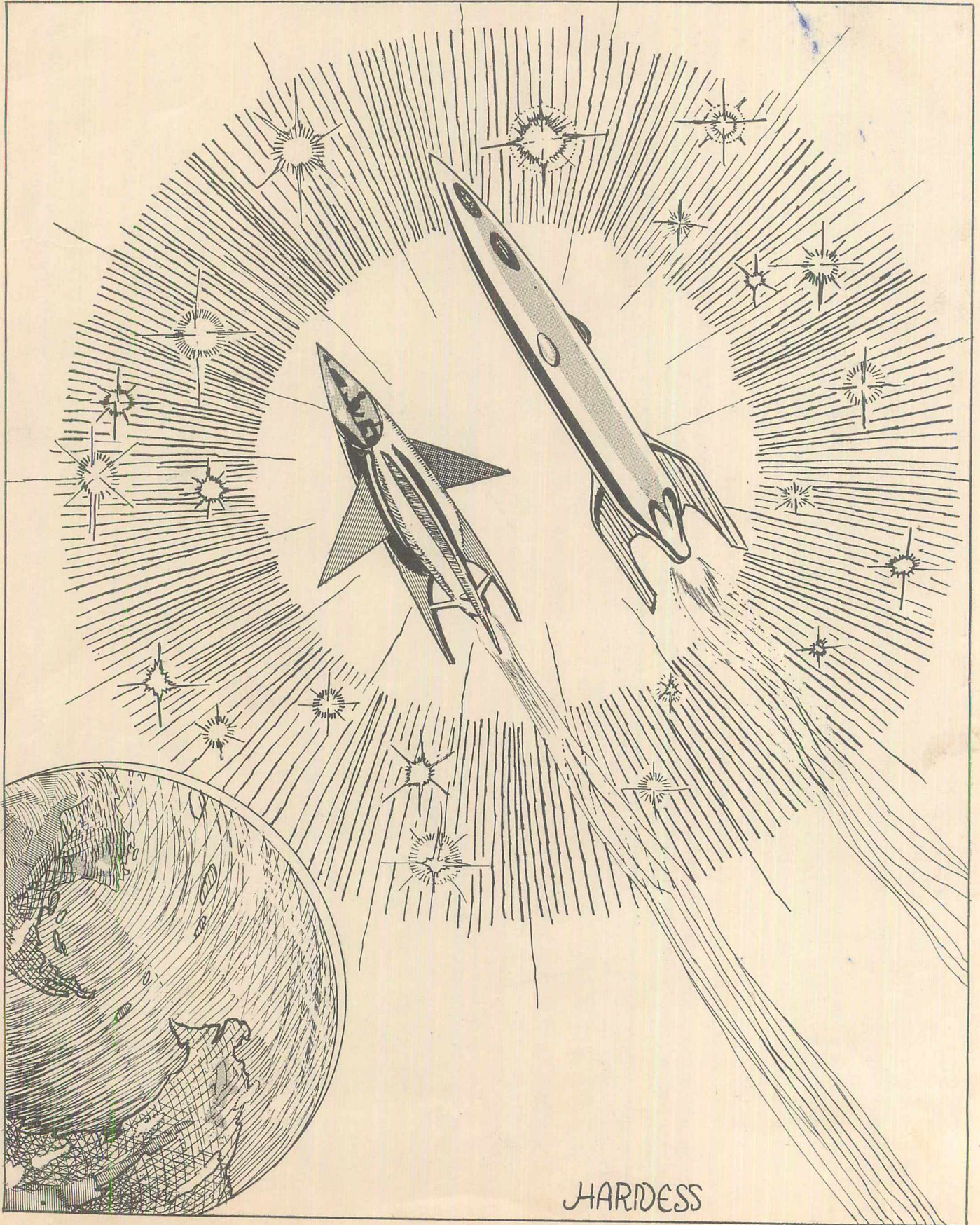
I felt fine again.

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THE CHIGGER PATCH OF FANDOM

"We irritate some - others ignore us." A 200th Fandom Publication ^{NUMBER 4} 25¢



HARDESS