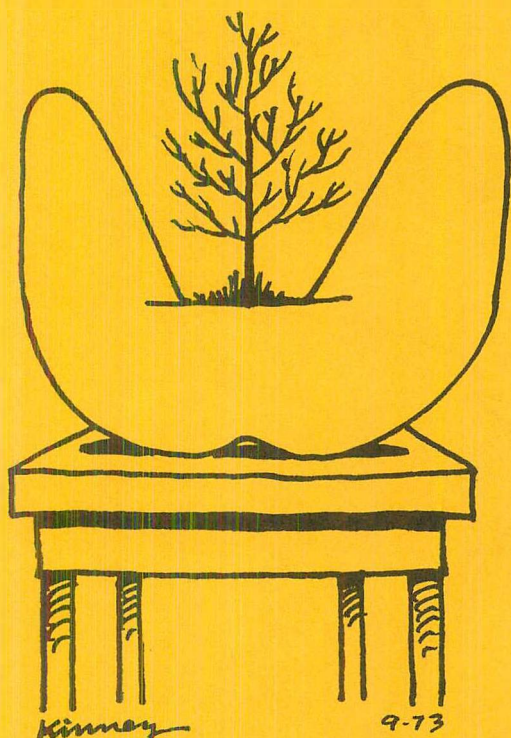


AWRY

No. 6 - Dec. 1973



Editor: Dave Locke
Editorial Address: 915 Mt. Olive Dr. #9, Duarte
California 91010

Staff Artist: Jackie Franke
Editorial Assistant: Phoebe Locke

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Gestetner .. Courtesy of Dave Hulan

AWRY is a fanzine which is devoted to no worthwhile causes whatsoever. AWRY is a fanzine devoted to the entertainment of its editor and is available to others if they wish to receive it, provided that the editor wishes to send it to them (sterling and frequent letters of comment are entertaining to the editor, as are selected zines in trade). One sample copy is available to anyone for one dollar in either folding U.S. currency or international money order.

Align & Tilt

Welcome to this humble fanzine, which may be the greatest thing since cloning.

When cloning becomes popular, and the legal problems all get resolved, I think I'll clone-off two of myself for the exciting tasks of typing, collating, stapling, addressing, stamping, and maintaining the mailing list. I'll also take them along when I visit Dave Hulan or Ed Cox, so that Dave or Ed and I can drink and talk in comfort while they're running the gestetner. Clones may even come in handy when the FAPA deadline approaches much too closely for comfort. Yes, I think cloning will be of great benefit to fandom.

One of these days, when I'm not too lazy, I'll have to research and write an all-inclusive article on the benefits of cloning as they would relate to fandom. Or, better yet, I'll just let one of my clones write it.

I could have used a clone to handle the driving during the five weeks we spent pushing a Toyota 8000 miles over various parts of this country. Starting September 15th we went from here up to Yellowstone, then over to Chicago and around and over to upstate New York. From there we went down through Shenandoah and the Smoky Mountains, then straight across to the Grand Canyon, and then back home. We stayed two half-days and one night with Wally and Jackie Franke in Beecher, Illinois (Good People; we're starting to draw up legal paperwork for importing them to California), and because we were running ahead of schedule we missed making connections with the Coulsons (but I had a

Of course, some of it I wouldn't want to see again. Like Texas. I was telling Jackie about Texas, and she responded: "Texas may be reconquered by Mexico whenever they get the urge. If what we saw was any indication, the whole place is nothing more than a Super-Big oven designed to B-B-Q cows while still on the hoof." It was that, yes, but it was really the shifting winds which we found to be the most bothersome. Occasionally you would smell something which could only be duplicated by ten generations of a family of cattlemen who, religiously down through the ages, refused to move so much as one cow turd from the sanctity of their barn. Were you to walk into such a barn at high-noon on a hot, still day you might possibly duplicate the experience of what it's like to drive across Texas.

We got our stuff unloaded, which meant that it was time for me to pick up some ice and fabricate something tall and cold. I grabbed the ice bucket and started out the door. I no sooner shut the door behind me when this tremendous odor hit me full in the face. Now, when I used to live at Indian Lake, N.Y., I thought it a particularly unpleasant task to execute the yearly dumping of the outdoor latrines at the campsite my parents owned. However, compared to this odor, I couldn't have been as bad off had I even stuck my head in the latrine while dumping it. Anyway, I dropped the ice bucket as the shock of that smell hit my system, and then I scrambled back inside the motel room. Once inside I stood spreadeagled with my hands against the door, just to guard against the possibility that the odor was strong enough to turn sentient and try to get in.

Texas stinks.

We never actually saw Akron, Ohio. But we passed through it, and we knew it was there somewhere - inside those rolling clouds of dark grey smoke. Although I have never read nor heard of the following fact, I feel I can state without contradiction that Akron is much noted for its rubber factories. As the smell of burning rubber assailed our nostrils, my wife started breathing through the litter-bag. I reached behind the seat and, quickly opening one of our suitcases, grabbed the first piece of cloth that came to hand. It turned out to be a soiled pair of our son's shorts, but proved to be adequate for the emergency.

I chose AWRY for a title because ABOURBON just didn't have the right ring to it.

On the brighter side, we encountered nothing but clean and clear air during our stay in Yellowstone and the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming. Or at least it seemed like clean air to us. Someone once said that the last piece of clean air in this country blew through the center of Wyoming sometime in 1965. Although we're sorry that we missed the occasion, the air was still pretty good while we were there just a few weeks ago.

Phoebe and I were quite taken with Wyoming in general and Yellowstone and the Big Horn in particular. We couldn't have spent a better two half-days there if we had tried. The first half-day was spent enjoying the true greens and browns of summertime earth together with the bluest sky and the whitest clouds we've ever seen anywhere. The second half-day we woke up to snow. Snow is only as pretty as the countryside which it lies on, and in Yellowstone the view was majestic. Luckily, the snow didn't 'take' on the roads, so we had clear sailing and unencumbered viewing. Some people make two trips to Yellowstone to see what it looks like in the summer and winter seasons; we saw both in one trip.

My second-favorite part of the country (we've been most everywhere in the U.S. now, except for the Pacific Northwest which comes next on the agenda) is the Adirondack Park of upstate New York. As it happens, this is the area of the country where I grew up, sort of, but the beauty of this part of the country is real and not just nostalgic on my part. We had timed our visit so that we would arrive during the peak of autumn color, which is my favorite time in the Adirondacks. Unfortunately, it rained the first four days we were there, and when the sun finally came out most of the color was on the ground. In fact, it was up to our knees. Not wanting to come back without photos of the wonderful Adirondack color, we took a few shots of the ground.

We spent a week at each of our old homesteads; Phoebe's in Grafton, New York, and mine in Indian Lake. While we were staying in Grafton, which is just outside of Troy, at John Robinson's urging I stopped in at a meeting of the Albany State SF group (I would have been content just to drop in and say hello to John, but he said "you don't want to see just me"). They bring bags of fanzines and paperback sf to their meetings, and generally sit around reading these. A few, including John, spent most of their time playing some kind of an sf board-game. The rest of the group sat around feeding lines to a femmefan who dutifully worked these lines into what amounted to a group-written short story. Conversation was at a minimum, and most of that took place during the first few minutes that the meeting was in session. Better that I should have seen just John...

Actually, the meeting was probably more interesting than a LASFS meeting. It's true that at LASFS there's a lot of conversation, but the problem is that it's not very good conversation. Given a choice between drinking Ripple or not drinking anything at all, I'll choose to go dry.

On our way back home we thought we saw a flying saucer. It was rather grey and hazy, quite large, and seemed to change size in an undulating fashion. Then we realized that it was only Los Angeles, seen as we were approaching it from the desert.

It was good to get back to the apartment. Duarte we're not too crazy about, but it was good to get back to the apartment. Yellowstone, the Adirondacks, Shenandoah, the Smoky Mountains - all the good clean-air places - only served to reinforce our conviction that one of these days we have to move a little further north or south and get out of this carbon monoxide environment. Real soon now, probably. Well, maybe next year. Or the one after that.

1. The first step is to identify the problem. In this case, the problem is that the company is not meeting its sales targets. The manager needs to determine why this is happening and what can be done to improve performance.

and the other two are the same as in the previous case. The first two are the same as in the previous case. The first two are the same as in the previous case.

[illegible]

continued on penultimate page (49).

5

RETURN OF THE

Being a forum of comments received on the subject of the value, or lack of it, of the Space Program. This discussion was first generated in AWRY #5, in response to Jackie Franke's article THE STARS OUR DESTINATION? which appeared in AWRY #4.

Editorial comment will be set aside 000 like so 000.

000 It was interesting to note that only one person, again Don D'Amassa, wrote in for the purpose of voicing opposition to the space program. In the previous issue there were two voices of dissent. It was especially interesting because I had expected to hear a large number of fans rally to the "popular" cause of blaming the space program for such social ills as starving children, environmental pollution, and wetting the bed.

It was my opinion that many fans are early supporters of such popular movements as drugs, not bathing, and opposing the space program. I think this is still true, but I find that most such fans are not active in fanzine fandom. They are more content to drop in at conventions and club meetings, wearing a moth-eaten army blanket and 55 pounds of hair, and talk sour-faced on any subject that comes up. You don't see them so much in fanzines, or if you do they're generally not literate enough to pay attention to.

So, it is refreshing to find that the "fanzine fans" - the real heart and guts of "fandom" - still appear to support the continuing reality of the age-old dream of space exploration. It is likewise refreshing when a truly literate person, such as Don D'Amassa, challenges you to defend that dream.

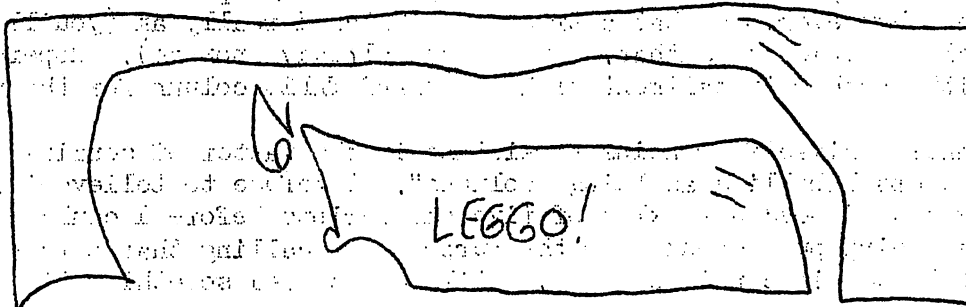
Here's what the readers had to say on this subject. 000

MIKE SHOEMAKER

Alexandria Virginia

It looks like I was wrong in my last letter, as an SF fan did write you

to oppose the space program. I am surprised, but I don't think that a discussion of the space program is a viable one. I concur fully with Chad Oliver and yourself.



SPACE CONTROVERSY

000 It appears that you're wrong again, Mike. The subject is viable to the extent that it is still alive in this issue. 000

LOREN MACGREGOR

Seattle Washington

If I answered Don D'Amassa, I would take up several more pages, so I won't, and will just say that you've done well from my point of view in presenting your arguments (you being Dave, by the way) but that you won't, of course, convince anyone who doesn't agree with you.

Personally, I always thought a way to merchandise the space program would be to publicize the mundane things that it has brought about, like Teflon, Corning Ware, and Banquet Cooking Bags. People don't give a damn about esoteric principles -- but a "Redy-Kwik-Kook" dinner they can understand.

Ain't I superior, though.

DENIS QUANE

Commerce Texas

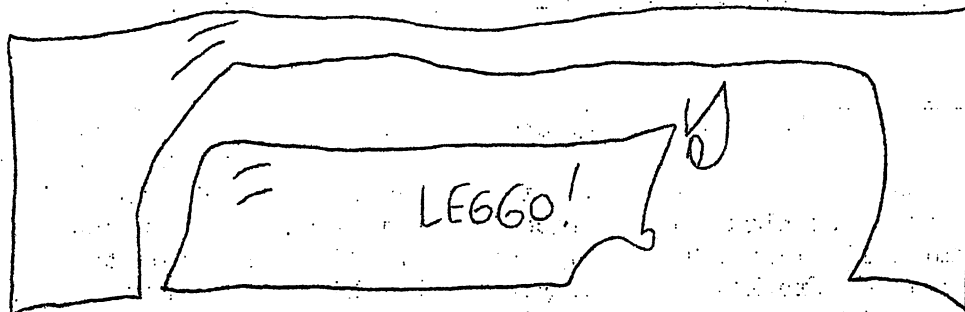
From your comments on several of the letters, especially Don D'Amassa's, it would appear that your views on the extra-terrestrial imperative are much in agreement with mine, except, hopefully, you are not as discouraged. The quote from Chad Oliver's article was just right. Will have to look up the book it's taken from.

JACKIE FRANK

Beecher Illinois

I hesitate to correct Don D'Amassa, but I did not claim that the article I wrote was objective in any way. My feelings on the subject were expressed quite early in it, and the phrase "objectively studied" was in reference to a theoretical (or hypothetical if you will) action on the part of someone else. The balance of that particular paragraph was objectively stated, but no such claim was laid to the entire piece. Far from it!

I get excited about exploring under our seas, our psyches and our cohabitues on this



Earth too... but I still have a special warm spot in my mind where I keep stewing about getting to the stars. If Don wants to blame the price of meat on NASA, that's his business, but I'd rather throw rocks at the Defense Department... we'd both be wrong, of course, but each to his/her own whipping boy.

It was announced that the atomic rocket program was completely dismantled. After spending 1 billion dollars and all-but-achieving the sought-for device, the project was scrapped. No failures, no accidents and moving along smoothly, but scrapped nonetheless. I hope it results in D'Ammassa's meat coming down a quarter of a cent per pound... or a cancer cure tomorrow, or all our poor having adequate diets, or all illiteracy being eliminated, or all pollutants being removed from our oceans, rivers, streams and wells, or all humankind forgetting past differences and greeting each other as Brothers... but somehow I doubt if it will have the slightest effect at all.

It's pointless to argue. Dave did a far better job than I'm able, or should I give the credit equally to Chad Oliver. A most eloquent defense...

BUCK COULSON

Hartford City, Indiana

D'Ammassa neglects the obvious fallacy in his argument, which is that if all those billions of dollars hadn't been "wasted" in space, they would have been put to good use here on earth by a few extra bombing flights over Cambodia. Just think; without the space program we might have been able to bomb Thailand by this time. Then there are little things like how to keep people employed while shutting down the polluting industries that employ them; not that the aerospace industry is "clean", but it's certainly cleaner than putting the same money into the military, and provides more results than Amtrak.

MARTY HELGESEN

Malverne New York

I think at least part of the disillusionment with space travel has nothing to do with the anti-technology backlash. For many people science fiction was fantasy with a technological veneer. A space ship, like a flying carpet, was a way of getting where the action was. It was also a symbol of the individual breaking away from the herd to confront danger and adventure on his own. Therefore, many are disillusioned with space travel, not because it is technological, but because it is routine.

The film makers who set clips of rocket launches against views of Biafran babies are clods. Biafran babies did not starve because of technology or misdirected priorities. They starved because of politics. They were caught in a war, and whenever there is a war, especially one involving blockade or siege, people starve. It's like those ridiculous letters one frequently sees in newspapers asking why a country which can put men on the moon can't clean up the slums, or the traffic mess or make the subways run properly. The obvious answer is that there are no voters on the moon. If we were willing to pay the price (financial, social, psychological, etc.) we could do most of these things.

HARRY WARNER, JR.

Hagerstown Maryland

Every time I see someone on television scorning space travel, or read a loc like that of Don D'Ammassa, I feel a trifle sorry for those individuals. They never seem to think about their place in the future. We know that people told Columbus he would sail right off the edge of the world if he tried to go to India in that direction and Ben Franklin that playing with a kite would have no more consequence than any other childish game. But we don't know the names and addresses of those critics or their exact words. Television networks save much of their news footage and

fanzines have an incredible ability to survive down through the decades. In the 21st and 22nd century, feature writers who decide to do a story on the doom-cryers and scoffers in the dawn of space travel will be able to dig out full details on who said and wrote the words that seem so strange in that future day. It's a negative way of living on in the future that could embarrass a lot of grandchildren and great grandchildren, even though the people quoted may not be around to know how they've become famous.

DON D'AMMASSA

East Providence Rhode Island

As one of the minority of two readers who apparently disagreed with Jackie

Franke about the space program, I feel compelled to reply to the various comments in your letter column.

Your statement that discoveries are often the result of research in an altogether different direction is true, but irrelevant. First, Most discoveries are related to direct research. Second, no one will ever know what indirect discoveries may have resulted if the space funds had been invested in direct research into mass transit, ocean development, weather control, cancer research, etc. We might by now have had immortality, FTL travel, or matter transmission.

You go on to say that direct research has no predetermined end product. Apparently you confuse "direct research" with "pure research", which I never advocated. I favor direct, purposeful, technological research in definite directions. You have refuted a paper argument which I never made.

You also charge me with undervaluing exploration. Untrue. I favor massive exploration of the ocean floor, for example. But if I may refute both you and Chad Oliver in the same breath, my point is that at this stage of our social development AND our technological development, space is not a valid frontier - it's a blind alley. Space exploration is part of the established culture, not an innovation. This generation is not likely to colonize space; it is likely to colonize the oceans, assuming we don't exert all of our exploratory efforts in fruitless space travel.

Chad Oliver and Ken Ozanne seem to link opposition to the space program with anti-technologism. It is true that space travel is a favorite target of this group, primarily because it is one of the less defensible uses of our technology. But it is wrong to assume that all, or even the majority of the program's detractors are motivated by this concept. I stand as a case in point. I favor technological development, but feel that space exploration is considerably less important to the evolution of the race - at this stage - than development of new forms of energy, new medical techniques, techniques for increasing production levels and quality, etc. It is not an accident that Japan makes better electronic equipment and Italy makes better cars than the United States. I even favor continuation of the space program, on a reduced level, but not as a series of public relations extravaganzas, nor as an international crash program to outface the Russians. Mike Glicksohn's point is valid. Far more money is wasted in the defense budget than in the space program; I also advocate substantial trimming from the defense department. Perhaps if we didn't waste so much there, we could afford even more involvement in space programs. But, as Mike points out, space exploration is easier to curtail. If I see one man stealing my car and another burning down my house, and I cannot save my house, I'm still going to try to save my car.

Your rebuttal to Chris Walker is rather unfair. You imply he doesn't want space travel until ALL the "problems of primate living" are solved. Chris never said that. He stated that of all the issues facing him, space travel rated low. This is particularly valid when you consider that several of these programs, if ignored, might result in

complete dismantlement of the space program (population control, pollution, race wars, politics, etc.).

No one said either that mankind must be "ready" for space travel before embarking on it. We are saying, however, that we are more than ready for some of these other projects - we are long overdue.

I think the basic disagreement hinges on a misunderstanding. There are several alternative fields of exploration open to mankind: space travel, psychology, undersea exploration, population control, etc. I feel that all of these fields and others are legitimate, valuable programs. The disagreement is that I feel that a disproportionate amount of our research money is being confined to one area, and that one area seems to me the least likely to benefit the human race in the immediate future. If something isn't done in these other fields now, something to substantially alter the present chain of events, there may be no long term future for mankind in which to benefit from space travel. The future may be a bleak, non-technological nightmare in which mankind stripped its own planet too soon, and was unable to move beyond the earth. This shortsighted attitude is typical of the US Congress which, instead of initiating a program to develop solar, nuclear, wind, or other energy sources, authorized the temporizing stopgap measure of an Alaskan pipeline. It is not the detractors of the space program who are shortsighted; it is the more rabid of its supporters.

I rest my case. I probably ought to write a formal article on the subject, but I doubt there's a need for it. The fact of the matter is that my side has lost its biggest target. The space program is being cut back and is likely to continue in that direction. I cannot, however, call this a victory, because the money is not being redirected into the other fields. Nixon calls this economy; I call it suicide.

000 Quite frankly, I doubt we'll develop FTL travel without having space research... I also don't think we're in any real disagreement as to the value of direct research (and I never said that direct research has no predetermined end product), but we certainly are as regards spinoffs. Research into a new field of science is absolutely necessary to allow an overall upgrading in areas where direct research is seldom applied (hell, I smoke a pipe that wouldn't have existed without a space-program spinoff. It never smokes hot, doesn't require reaming, and needs cleaning once or twice a week - under the faucet. How much direct research is applied to pipe-smoking...?). Research in a frontier area is sometimes also necessary for the purpose of achieving a breakthrough in a totally different field where direct research is applied. Do you honestly feel that direct research into the telecommunications media would have resulted in an updating as successful as that achieved by the communications satellites?

"No one ever said that mankind must be 'ready' for space travel before embarking on it." Chris and I were discussing mankind's readiness for ET contact, not space travel.

On to the main discussion.

Your rebuttal convinces me that you are unnecessarily using the space program, to a partial but significant degree, as a straw man. I cannot fault your motives, nor the validity of your expression of concern over the more immediate needs of mankind. You do, however, fail to place the space program in proper perspective with regard to both its importance and how its existence affects the other programs for which you claim a higher priority.

Before I go any further into this subject, it's important to state that I do not consider you as being an obtuse obstructionist to what I believe as being the ultimate and priority goal of mankind: moving out of the puddle and into the ocean. I'll state

flatly that I do not feel you have adequately consolidated your position on this subject, and that if you can understand those areas in which the diversity of your comments do not composite to a unified position then perhaps you will be able to rip away the false perspective with which you view the space program. You have adequately demonstrated that you are a concerned individual who has a good grasp on both logic and the priority of mankind's needs. Although you do not have a faultless grasp on these, and are no doubt scanning these lines with something less than full receptivity, you nevertheless have the capacity to modify your views. You may not wish to, but surely you can attempt to at least absorb what I am going to say to you - instead of rejecting it out of hand.

I presume that I have tweaked your primary interest with my comment that your myriad statements are not consistent with your overall position on this matter. Let me prove that point first.

For one thing, you are beating your head against the wall and cutting your throat at the same time. You agree that space exploration is important, but you feel that some of that money should be diverted to other fields of research. Therefore you wish the space program to be further curtailed so that this money will be made available ("I even favor continuation of the space program on a reduced level"). However, as you admit, the money which has to-date been saved as the result of these cut-backs is not being redirected into these other fields. To set aside, for a moment, the subject of whether "a disproportionate amount of our research money is being confined to one area", the fact remains that you have endorsed a curtailment of funds to the space program at the cost of reducing the overall research budget. Additional rallying against the space program could only ensmall it further, with still no cash benefit to the other research fields. If you truly felt that space exploration were a "legitimate, valuable" program, you would recognize that it is more desirable to leave space expenditures at an allegedly disproportionate level than to cut them back without benefit to the other fields of research.

Now let's get back to the subject of a "disproportionate amount of our research money" being spent on space exploration. Public money, maybe. But surely you're aware that what the government spends on space exploration is the sum total of what is spent, whereas private foundation funding is quite significant in such areas as medicine, ocean exploration, and ecological studies. The private interests which provide financial aid to space exploration are generally being reimbursed their expenses by the government, and these amounts are shown in the NASA column of the National Budget. When you review the total financial picture with regard to basic research expenditures, I don't think it's disproportionate at all.

You say "at this stage of our social development AND our technological development, space is not a valid frontier - it's a blind alley. ... This generation is not likely to colonize space; it is likely to colonize the oceans, assuming we don't exert all of our exploratory efforts in fruitless space travel." You contradict yourself again. You've already pointed out that a cutback in the space program has not resulted in any benefits to the other research fields, and here you are berating the space program for holding us back from colonizing the oceans. Your ideas of cause and effect don't scan.

I therefore feel that you are not truthful in your endorsement of the space program as being "legitimate" and "valuable". Saying that there is a bad proportioning of funds, between the various research fields, is not sufficient justification for an attack on the space program. After all, why pick on the space program in particular when in general there is so much excessive government spending in areas which are of no benefit to us at all (as you have pointed out)? I talk about your being untruthful, but the dishonesty is with yourself. You don't really believe in the value of the space

program. You don't understand the value of the space program. All you see is a "public relations extravaganza" and an "international crash program to outface the Russians", not to mention "fruitless space travel". The hoop-de-doo and gung-ho public-relations which surrounded the program had the effect of blinding you to the program's intrinsic value.

"I favor technological development, but feel that space exploration is considerably less important to the evolution of the race - at this stage - than development of new forms of energy, new medical techniques," etc. The underlining is mine, to point out that you didn't get the message which we attempted to put across to you in the last issue. As Oliver said: "If you have crops in the soil you do not have to abandon the elders to die as you sometimes must in a hunting society. If you have a modern industrial economy, slavery is a dead duck."

Space is not a "blind alley"; it's the only major frontier left to us. You just don't recognize the benefits that ensue when man moves into a new frontier. I agree with Oliver: at a point not too distant in the future "primitive man" will refer to the age when we were confined to the planet Earth. And, in comparison with past "frontiers", space is a frontier of such vast magnitude that the benefits to be reaped will totally exceed the values which we gained from our past frontiers. Additionally, although it is true that this generation will not colonize space, to make this a criticism of the space program is to lay yourself exposed to charges of extreme short-sightedness. Long-term goals often have the priority over short-term goals, and short-sightedness will not allow us to resolve the major problems which confront us. As Oliver stated, racism and poverty - among other things - are not likely to survive as major problems once mankind is no longer confined to this planet.

So, forget the "public relations extravaganzas" and the "international crash program to outface the Russians" and "space exploration is part of the established culture" and the "at this stage" and "this generation is not" business. Open up your mind beyond the sore on your foot, and recognize the fact that you're running on gravel. Look beyond the inoculations for your kid and start saving some cash for his college education. Look beyond the problems of "population control" on earth and discover that there's infinite room in the universe.

Anticipating solutions is as important as anticipating problems; people who live only in and for the present have not the full capacity to learn from the past nor to reach for the future. Sometimes the problems of the immediate present are so demanding of our time that we put aside the benefits that should be ours in the future. But the future, with its problems, arrives before we are prepared for it; because we did not begin preparing at such time in the past as when we had the capacity to do so. Pollution of our environment is something that we had the capacity to avoid fifty years ago - at the time when some of us knew how bad the problem was going to become. The space program is something that we should have had long before Kennedy saw that it was overdue; and we should have explored our own solar system almost a decade ago (we could have, if we had avoided a late start and an insufficient effort).

No, the space program should not have been cut back - it should have been accelerated. Forget the selfish thinking involved in the fact that this generation will not colonize space. The next generation won't, either, at this rate. We're talking about more than the needs of the future; we're talking about today's needs, too. If we were colonizing space right now, many if not most of today's major problems would not exist. We could use space now. In a generation or two, it would be virtual suicide not to have thrown aside the confines of this planet.

As one science fiction author put it: are you listening? 000

IMHO

A COLUMN?



"I think that I shall never spy
A poem lovelier than I ..."
--from Autumn Loaves
by Eldrin Fzot

Firstmostly, we have a shemozzle to comb smooth, having its roots in the past two issues. Rose Hogue, of Faroff Exotic Huntington Beach, notes that, "...I seem to recall someone having quoted that same limerick". Alas, in the meticulously organized jumble of my den-cum-office, I cannot locate the previous issue of AWRY; I count myself lucky to find No. 5. So back I must fall, with a sodden, squishy thud, upon my memory and that is notorious for treacherous unreliability on at least eight continents.

The clot of doggerel to which she must refer, I suspect, is the one that went:

A lighter's fine,
But, as a rule,
It's out of flint
Or out of fuel.

Which, of course, isn't a limerick at all, or a limick, or a quatrain, haiku or clerihew. It's a simple little abcb type rhyme and, as I've since come to suspect with vast chagrin, probably isn't even all that original.

A plague lurking in wait for the writer who churns forth stuff for others to publish is the lag-time involved. You plonk some words down. They look

great next morning so you post them off. Weeks go by; months; perhaps years, even decades. Suddenly a publication comes wafting back and there you sit, muttering sheeg, did I really write that?

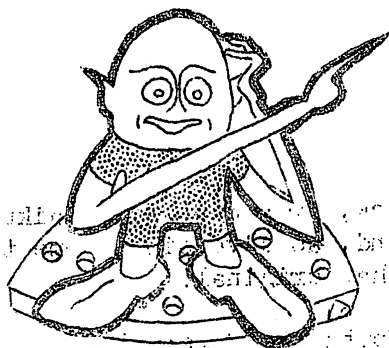
Thus, with the example at hand. After I splashed off the thingie for AWRY 4, I came upon an Ogden Nash book in some nth-hand shop, bought it, went skimming through it and found that the ubiquitous and indefatigable Nash had strung together some words to substantially identical gist.

The late Mr. Nash -- may he rest happy -- is the joy and despair of any feckless wight who'd essay to commit risible rhyme: A joy because much of his stuff is a delight to read and a despair because he discovered so many of the ripe apples and knocked them off the tree.

Before seating myself at the console of the mighty IBM to compose the current trove of trivia, I scrounged among my bookshelves, found the Nash book and tried to locate his version of our poem. In vain, I conned the table of contents. Doggedly, I turned each page, looking for the damned thing. Now it's gone again, would you believe?

As I can't find AWRY 4 -- it'll turn up as soon as I no longer need it, in the process of some future shakedown for another elusive artifact -- I can't tell if I identified the cartoonist on Bloch's old tv show as Sid Stein or Sid Snow. The latter was another actual entity, also living in Milwaukee at last sighting; a subordinate in the service department of Cleaver-Brooks. The firm makes commercial boilers and I wrote their operator's manuals for a few years in the early '60s. Oddly enough, the head of the C-B service department was named Bill Bailey.

And, speaking of amusing coincidences of names, back in the days when all of us latterday DPs to California were comprising midwestern fandom, Earl Kemp came whooping up from Chicago, for all the world like Lochinvar out of the west, waving a souvenir program or perhaps a newspaper cutting, proclaiming that Robert Bloch was going to give a violin recital. (No, I didn't leave out the i in recital; that's how the clipping or whatever actually read.) I wish I had saved that. I really don't expect anyone to believe it at this distant remove. The thing went on to say that Robert Bloch would be accompanied on the piano by his wife, Marion. The part that strains credulity to the snapping point is that his wife of that time had that identical first name. So you had the compound coincidence of identical names, identically spelled, of the two separate couples, plus the crowning touch of the slightly scatological -- or, more precisely, proctological -- typo. No, it didn't say that Marion Bloch was giving a piano recital; that truly would beggar belief. And Dave, when you cut this onto stencil, take care to prevent a vowel movement in that last verb, won't you?



"Sheeg"

Speaking, as we had been, of Mark Twain and the keeping qualities of humor, some of his output bears up quite well as the centuries ooze past. Recently, an associate commenced recounting events I knew to be spurious. I demurred. The associate reminded me that his autograph constituted a vital validation upon my paychecks, which I cherish all the way to the bank. The confrontation was being speculated intently by several of my co-underlings. There was manifest need for a face-saving wisp of repartee and it had to be good or it wouldn't float.

"Will you accept my admission," I temporized, "that you can remember anything, whether it happened or not?" At which point, I made a deftly paced exit, thinking to myself, (Thanks, Sam.). It floated.

I must concede that Ms. Hogue is entitled to exchange the lighter verse for another which, beyond peradventure, carries no slightest taint of Nashian priority. Toward this end, I have dredged one up from the depths of my rucksack that Oggie, in the most dire straits he ever conned, would not have touched with a pole nine feet, fourteen inches in length.

I'm losing hope
Of using rope
To snare a cassowary.

A trap's preferred:
It snaps the bird,
Who's very lasso-wary.

--from Thanks, I Needed That
by Provo Rambler

Tell me you've heard that one quoted, Rosita, and it will be the qualm before the storm.

Hurtling through space at 7000 leap years per second.

THE CASE OF THE STOCHIASTIC ZYZZOGETON

John H. Watson, M.D., passim in A STUDY IN SCARLET, relates how his singular roommate violently rejected every scrap of data that Holmes did not view as relevant and pertinent to his envisioned activities.

Many years later, circa 1944, another M.D., this one named Robert M. Lindner, was to enter the afterquoted observation in a book titled REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE:

"A further striking feature of the intelligence of the psychopath, and one which appears only after long-time acquaintance with such individuals, is concerned with the amazing excess-cargo of uncoordinated and useless information they possess. Frequently one is misled by their typically encyclopaedic range into considering them persons of high intellect, even of culture. Penetration with time, however, discloses that like the veneer of mahogany applied to inferior wood, this mass of 'knowledge' is superficial and undigested; that it is free-floating, lacking the requisite elements of cohesiveness and relativity. The design of psychometric examinations is unsuited to plumb such depths."

This's the month when AWRY runs their big Three Quotes For The Price Of Two Special, so we'll toss in, by way of lagniappe:

"And you can make a quarter of an education go twice as far again, if you're careful with it. I mean you don't have to quote the whole of the inferno to show that you've read Milton: half a line may do it."

-- from Two Bottles of Relish
by Lord Dunsany

And then we have:

"Generally, of course, Dean Grennell (it's always good to have a college man around in fandom) is right."

--from Wyrting In, AWRY 5
by Aljo Svoboda, Orange, CA
I am experiencing a weird sensation of being gadflown by fellow Orange-Countians, this issue. Huntington Beach; City of Orange: Doesn't anyone read your fanzine in hinterpoints like Heyworth, Illinois, or Acid Rock, Pennsylvania, Dave? Sheeg, there's even a fanzine coming out of Newcastle, Indiana, again these days so what's it with all these locals?

First, leave us inform the bouncing Czech that I ain't never been to no college, although it's true that I drink a lot of cultured buttermilk. In fact, I barely scraped through a small-town high school by the most precarious of margins and that was a long time ago when the body of human knowledge was much smaller. Taking history meant grappling with the Dred Scott Decision and the dramatis personae of the XYZ Affair, but you didn't have to memorize the names of those who figured in the Watergate Scandal: Teapot Dome, perhaps, but Watergate, no.

However, I sometimes suspect that I do have a problem; especially since I got to page 6 in Dr. Lindner's book, from which the quote is lifted. I stopped reading it at that point, for reasons that should be obvious.

No one is more keenly aware than I am that I have a lot of unrelated bits of data sloshing about in my memory banks. Much of it, I'd be happy to forget, just as Holmes planned to forget that the earth revolved about the sun, once he'd been so informed, so as to clear out a valuable pigeonhole for storage of something more apt to be useful.

There are some things I can't remember and I wish I could. There are a lot of other things for which I have no clear and urgent need, but I can't forget them on a bet. You care to come in and sniff about the cluttered attic? Be my guest, but don't say I didn't warn you. Your life may never be quite the same simple and carefree tureen of madrilene again.

The pupils of the eyes of drug users contract if they've been taking morphine and dilate if they've been taking cocaine (hello, again, Mr. Holmes). I could get along nicely without instant access to that knowledge. It follows me about and won't let go. I can't vouch for the accuracy of that information but I can tell you where I read it and when I read it. It was encountered in one of the issues of a shagedged pulpzine called SECRET AGENT X, some time in the late Fall of 1936.

Shortly before that, I'd encountered one of those catch-all books that told how to do everything. Among the goodies it revealed was how to develop an efficient memory. Key things to unrelated items, said the book, and you'll never forget them. There was no warning as to the perils of shoveling nondesiderata into the omniverous maw of an eidetic memory (I used to know what eidetic means, but I've forgotten...). Applying the principles laid down in the book, as I understood them, I thought of a coal-miner in Washington, D.C. Contract-morphine; dilate-cocaine. Zotz. The damned system works.

Back in the mid-Thirties, when practically all of us were much younger than we are any more -- with the obvious exception of Wilson Gilgamesh "Bob" Tucker -- parents used to worry about their progeny poring over shagedged pulpzines, much in the same way

that parents of this latter era worry about their kids smoking pot. It was felt that reading a copy of OPERATOR #5 would make a kid grow up to become an axe murderer. Axe murderers were deemed riffraff in the Thirties, before airplane hijacking had been invented.

Looking back, I can see that the concern was justified, only the rationale was shaky. I couldn't see anything wrong with reading pulpzines, so I read pulpzines. It was in one such that I encountered William Harper Littlejohn, aka Johnny, one of the five aides of Doc Savage, for whom that particular pulpzine was named.

All of Doc's sidekicks had some particular schtick. Call it characterization by eccentricity. Renny liked to smash his fists through doors. Monk looked like an ape, covered with hair the color of rusty shingle nails. Ham was a fop who carried a sword cane. Long Tom had a complexion like mushrooms; probably Amanita phalloides, and Johnny used a lot of big words. Doc, himself, emitted weird, ventriloquial trillings whenever things began to get interesting. I used to emit weird trillings all the time and my Dad would scream, "Stop that idiot racket!" Often, I'd wonder how Clark Savage, Sr., handled the same situation.

But, worse than the trilling obsession, I became a big-word freak, thereby validating my parent's contention that I shouldn't have been ruining my mind with dime-novels.

I have a friend -- in fact, another fellow Orange Countian -- who reads that crazy Buck Rogers stuff and who is, by trade, a physics professor at U-Cal/Irvine. Yes, Aljo, he's probably the college-man-around, for whom you thirsted and faunched. It seems tenable that you needs must go to college to become a physics professor. One day, Greg -- that's what we call him, his name's Gregory Benford -- was showing me one of the emanations of esoterica which he'd exuded; his defense against the publish-or-perish dictum. It was impressive or, at least, it impressed me. It bristled with megalithic mesons and polyphemic protons and good jass like that-there. Physics class at good old Campbellsport (Wisconsin) high hadn't prepared one to assimilate benfordian promulgations at a single mighty gulp. Rather like comparing prunes with Sal Hepatica, you know?

I whiffled my bock-beer-colored eyecojones down the learned lines and, by the middle of the second paragraph, conceded myself as lost with no reward offered. There is something about quasimodorian cantrips in the third octave of Canopus with a belt in the back that puts a fine, chatoyant glaze over my normal, barefoot-boy externalism. But one burgeon of verbage caught my eye.

"Gregory, my good man," I footnoted, "you seem to have a word here with which I must confess that I am not intimately familiar. What means this vargermirdescheitzal 'stochiastic'?"

"Umm, err, ehh, well, uhh, I thought everyone knew what that meant. Sort of like, picking up speed as it goes along."

"Of course, of course; now I remember. Must really be getting on into my dotage to mislay the meaning of those familiar childhood terms." I murfled rapidly on through the rest of it, pacing myself at about 3600 words per minute, with a skeptical snort here and an indrawn breath of reappraisal there. Handed the sheaf back to Benford, saying, "Yes, of course. You've made some frightfully good points here and there, old boy. I fancy some of your hypotheses would put old von Wenniger quite on the defensive, were he still about."

"Who's von Wenniger?" Greg wanted to know.

"You're not familiar with Alois von Wenniger and you style yourself a physicist? Really, Greg-reh!" I drained the last of his vouvray and took my leave. A true gamesman gives his utter all in every chukker, for that is the essence of what it's about; wouldn't you have to agree?

I suppose, if I don't tip it in, there will be a snippish inquiry from some other Orange County AWRY reader (wreader?), perhaps from some unlikely spot as Modjeska Canyon, wanting to know wot iss das vargermirdescheitzel "zyzzogeton", hein? Alimentary, my dear Flotsam: In bygone editions of Webster's Unabridged, this otherwise unexceptional species of South American leafhopper used to be the penultimate entry. I believe the later editions may have dropped the term; for all I know, because the wee buggers became extinct. Subsisted exclusively on a diet of their own young, y'know: hard lines, those.

Whatever the last entry in the dictionary may be any more, I really couldn't say. It's just that I've not taken the time to correlate it with coal miners. You see, having recognized the nature of my problem, I've undertaken autotherapeutic prophylaxis of the apparent vector of infection. Like, here a peutic, therapeutic, everywhere a peutic, peutic.

Besides, as anybody knows, it was one of the Bacons who wrote the Inferno. Francis, Roger? Oscar M.? All I can say for sure at this point in my self-prescribed course of treatment is that the other two invented gunpowder and the Wienermobile, not necessarily in that order.

If the delegate from Huntington Beach was about to request the fine edge of distinction between a limerick and a limick, we can turn to that slender volume of verse, titled INFERNO LOST, by Eldrin Pzot (writing under the nom de plume of Milton Schmilton), from which we can extract an indubitable -- if atypically unrabelaisian -- specimen that reads:

One night, just outside of Altoona,
An old bum ate a can of spoiled tuna.
He then hopped a train,
Which was going to Maine,
But the bum got ptomaine even sooner.

You will observe the classic aabba rhymescheme that brands the breed, although I've encountered at least one blank-verse, or abode, sample.

As for the limick, that sprouted in the fertile soil of the master's mind and is little but a limerick that has been subject to prefrontal or, perhaps, postprandial lobotomy, excising one of its dithyrambs, or whatever. Its rhymescheme is aaba and, in poor light, it gets difficult to tell one from a quatrain. If the estate of Ogden Nash will condone it, mindful that full credit (or blame) is given, we can cite the sample he called Limick Three:

Two nudists of Dover,
Being purple all over,
Were munch'd by a cow
When mistaken for clover.

The sportscar soap-opera,

...Porsche faces life.



Book Review: *ARDOR ON AROS*, by andrew j. offutt.

Reviewer: Don Ayres

1973. Dell Publishing Co., New York. #0931-095, \$0.95

Lovers of the S&S novel, of the scientific romances spawned by Burroughs, and of the controversies of the Fate Worse Than Death, lend me your thighs, your sinews, and (surprise) your genitalia. Here at long last is a descendent of the ERB school who knows what sex is, as he well should, considering the writing he's done in the past.

It is a past to which this novel belongs, in fact. If this book doesn't read like the offutt who wrote *THE CASTLE KEEPS* or *MESSENGER OF ZHUVASTOU*, it is also a younger offutt whose manuscript mouldered in the offices of Dell Publishing Co. for some three years before some enlightened official decided that they ought to publish it, perhaps intrigued by such chapter titles as "The planet that was not Mars", "The girl who was not Dejah Thoris", and "The custom that was not chivalric". It was indeed such chapter titles that first aroused my interest in the novel when andy first mourned its plight to a bunch of us at Chambacon I a couple of years ago.

The novel is an unashamed product of the ERB plot, with modifications, and even manages to sound very much like ERB, especially in the later chapters when the hero and heroine are vindicated, saved, and otherwise set up so that they can live either happily ever after or until the author needs some money and can arrange to have her carried off by an Act of Nature, Act of Supernature, or Act of Monster/Man. For those unfamiliar with the subject, a fair summary of the Burroughs novel(s) is given on p22-4, although it's quite incredible to see how many different ways various authors interpret the Prologue of *PRINCESS*; I've yet to find one that agrees with my conception of what happens to John Carter in the cave. The author has no right to quibble with ERB's constant reminding of the reader that JC is the finest swordsman on two (going on three) worlds or that DT is the most beautiful woman in the same places; as any dummy can tell, that's good for anywhere from 3-6¢ and maybe up, depending on how good your rates are.

The last chapter is an interesting postulate of its own. On the other hand, it is so integral to the book that a full discussion would remove the revelation from the

author's hands where it properly belongs, so I shall content myself with the following suggestion for the hero: Hope that Evelyn's book is finished and becomes a best seller, also excelling her powers of description to make her Mars live in the minds of her readers. That should take care of problems.

Frazetta supplies one of his finer covers of the last few years, even though the angle employed seems to bend the warrior out of all proportion. Nevertheless, as Donn Brazier noted when I showed it to him, it's almost worth the price of the book alone. The plot of the novel will be familiar to all fans of the sub-genre, but it's all in fun anyway, so get the book and enjoy. It's your loss if you don't.

Movie Review: WESTWORLD, written & directed by Michael Crichton. Reviewer: Dave Locke

Starring Richard Benjamin, Yul Brynner, and James Brolin

This is my personal choice as the best science fiction movie of 1973. In fact, it's the best science fiction movie I've ever seen.

It would be fair to state that WESTWORLD evoked various questions concerning a few of its future-science effects. It is not a matter of my rejecting or questioning any explanations offered within the movie, but rather that some things were not explained at all. And further, it isn't that I feel these things should have been explained; merely that in the absence of explanations these matters do raise questions. It's also fair to state that you don't even think of these things when watching the movie. It is afterwards, when sifting through the components of what has occurred, that the questions begin to arise. If this is a fault of the movie, I'll peacefully live with it.

Anything I could tell you would be anti-climactic, or might reduce your personal enjoyment of the movie were I to discuss the acting, the visual effects, the plot gimmicks, or the backgrounds.

Enjoy.

Book Review: COCKEYED AMERICANA, by Dick Hyman. Reviewer: Bob Tucker

1972. Stephen Greene Press. \$3.95

I do not recommend that you dash out right now (or even later) and buy a copy of this book because the price is too dear for only 123 partly-filled pages of native American humor (for that amount of money you can buy a pound of hamburger, providing you buy it before Nixon announces his Phase Five) but I do recommend that you dash down to the nearest library and borrow it free for the next two weeks. You may like it well enough to steal it.

The 123 partly-filled pages are partly-full of things like odd epitaphs:

Dead by the kick of a cow
Well done thou good
And faithful servant,
and unusual judicial decisions:
Here Lies
John Yeast
Pardon Me
For Not Rising.

When a defendant in Pontiac, Michigan appeared in court without an attorney, the judge decided to defend the man himself. He made an argument for the defendant, then ruled the man lost his case.

A Georgia court ruled that people who shoot at their friends for amusement ought to warn them first that it is mere sport.

A Pittsburg court ruled that a railroad is at fault when it gives an employee a 20/20 vision rating for his glass eye.

and curious local laws:

In Fairbanks, Alaska, it is illegal to wake up a grizzly bear in order to take its picture. In Arizona it is unlawful to hunt or shoot camels. In Clarendon, Arkansas it is illegal to carry a bucket of water down Main Street if the bucket has a hole in it. In Denver, the law declares that you may not step out of an airplane in flight unless there is an emergency. In Kentucky, state law forbids the shooting of clay pigeons during the breeding season.

and curious hobbies:

An Illinois man blows up rubber inner tubes until they burst. An Ohio woman likes to read the Bible upside down and backwards. A Tennessee woman makes a hobby of sleeping on buses and has travelled some 35,000 happy miles while asleep. A New York man collects used cigar butts of famous people.

and unusual causes for divorce:

A North Dakota woman got a divorce because her husband refused to install a bathroom in the house: he claimed toilets were new-fangled things that wouldn't last. A Detroit woman got a divorce when she testified she had to work to support herself because the husband spent all his money on his ten thousand pet worms. A California deaf mute divorced his wife because she nagged him in sign language. A Detroit wife won a divorce because her husband came home drunk every night and made her put on a floor show, dancing until 9 or 10 o'clock the following morning. (Strip, I presume.)

and strange accidents:

A motorcyclist in Connecticut struck a deer, but not killing it. The deer somersaulted onto the handlebars and rode a piece, then threw himself, man, and wheels into the ditch, then kicked the man in the pants and huffed away. In various places, men have been shot by an automobile door, a dog, and a fish. In Iowa, a woman put a pan of biscuits into the oven without remembering the old man had hidden two loaded revolvers in there. In California, firemen were impressed when they were called to rescue a small boy with his head stuck through a toilet seat.

and news breaks:

An Alabama farmer told a judge he didn't send his children to school because the kids took snuff, but the school lacked spitting conveniences. In Oklahoma a man was charged with grand larceny for the theft of an outhouse. In Indiana, a drunken driver mistook the railroad tracks for the road to his home, forced an oncoming train to stop, and then bawled out the engineer for not dimming his lights.

and wacky advertisements:

WANTED: Man to handle dynamite. Must be prepared to travel unexpectedly.

APARTMENT WANTED: Half-wit vet, 3 dogs, 4 cats, an alcoholic wife with small monster on the way, desires a small apt. to practice his homework. Majoring in house-wrecking, intends to take up drums.

LOST: Teeth, uppers near Avalon on South Central, lowers near Riverside ballroom.

PERSONALS: Emma, come home, all is forgiven. My upper plate is still in your purse.

PERSONALS: I will pay \$5 reward to any party who will admit to my wife that he threw the whiskey bottles in my garden.

This has been a guest book review.

--- Edgar A. Guest

Book Review: THE HALLOWEEN TREE, by Ray Bradbury.

Reviewer: Rose Hogue

1972. Illust. by Joseph Mugnaini. Alfred A. Knopf. #72-2433, \$3.95

My daughter Joanne checked this book out of the library, and I read halfway through it during one insomnia-ridden night for the purpose of seeing just how well Bradbury might relate to younger readers. Well, eventually I fell asleep midway through the book...

During the next library trip, my son Robert also checked the book out. As I figured that fate was trying to tell me something, I finished the book...finally. I'm glad I did.

It is a most unusual book by a most noted-for-the-unusual author. For those who feel that Bradbury has copped-out and gone mainstream, or that his writings of late just aren't up to par, or if you've just never been able to find Bradbury readable, I recommend this book.

Basically, Bradbury deals with Halloween and the excursions of nine boys and a Mr. Moundshroud through time and space. The various costumes of the boys are explained as to their significance - such as Tom Skelton the skeleton, and the Mexican/South American observances of El Dia de los Muertos. All in all a very interesting and engrossing evaluation of Halloween and the observances of it, and at the same time educational...painless education, I might add.

If there's one thing Bradbury does well in this book it is to convey his characters as well as the information. He also relates well to his reader - or rather his characters do. His kids' sense of wonder and ready acceptance of things is also amazing, but not beyond belief. Bradbury is a credible writer, and one who knows his craft well.

I unreservedly recommend this book to anyone. And hope that Bradbury writes many more such juveniles.

Book Review: THE WORLD OF FANZINES, by Fredric Wertham, M.D. Reviewer: Dave Locke

1973. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, Illinois. \$10.00

"Fredric Wertham, M.D. - internationally renowned psychiatrist and one of the most highly respected authorities on violence". Or so it says. Discussing the factor of

violence, or the lack of it, as exemplified in the attitudes presented by fanzine writers, is a topic which Wertham frequently comments on or refers to. He also psycho-analyzes the fanzine, which of course was to be expected.

There are a number of glaring errors and omissions in this book, some of which may possibly be attributed to typographical error. Here are a few:

- Pg. 63: "Crifanac is a combination of the words critic, fan, and activity. It has no very precise meaning other than what the words suggest."
Pg. 63: "Crud though not a word originating in fanzines, is one of the favorite words of depreciation."
Pg. 113: "Lee Klingstein discusses"... "he also includes" ---
Pg. 118: Refers to the movie "Mask of the Red Death".

Wertham's most outstanding error, and the one which negates any serious attention being given his writings, concerns the fact that he does not recognize the difference between Comic Fandom and Science Fiction Fandom. The essence of the SF fanzine cannot be portrayed by an author who lumps comixzines and sf fanzines under the general heading of "fanzines", and then proceeds discussing the two as if they were cut from the same mold.

Wertham would have a valid point in considering the published products of both fandoms as being "fanzines", but only in the sense that they are referred to as "fanzines", not in the sense - as he erroneously states - that they are in any real way similar beyond that. Mystery Fandom also publishes "fanzines", a fact concerning which Wertham is probably not aware, and although mystery fanzines are much closer in execution to sf fanzines it would also be a folly to describe the two in one breath without acknowledging that there is a real difference between them.

Consequently, in ignoring the serious differences between sf fanzines and comics fanzines, Wertham often makes statements concerning the one which do not apply to the other. This sometimes results in an unwarranted praise of the comixzine or an illegitimate gripe against the sf fanzine. Witness the following faux pas, in which Wertham could not possibly be talking about sf fanzines:

- Pg. 109: "The really genuine amateur art in fanzines is interesting, but a great deal of it is derivative. It derives from covers and illustrations of paperbacks, comic books, professional scientific magazines, pulp magazines, and other sources in the form of reproductions, imitations, copying, redrawing, tracing. Sometimes copies are deliberate and open and are so designated. But often it is not clear what is an original drawing and what is an imitation or copy. This is a question frankly discussed in fanzines - more frankly than in commercial and fine art publications - and copying is either condemned or defended. They call copying "swiping"."

Wertham follows this with several relevant quotations, all from comixzines.

Wertham is rather dedicated to the belief that a fanzine is a fanzine, and that there are not separate and distinct divisions between the fields (or fandoms) which generate the different types of fanzines. The following quote proves him most adamant on this subject.

- Pg. 44: "Three major areas stand out; they are in fact the three pillars on which the whole structure of fanzines essentially rests:
science fiction
fantasy and adventure fiction
comic strips and comic books

"There is of course some overlapping between the three fields, science fiction (e.g., by Ray Bradbury) and heroic adventure fiction (e.g., CONAN by Robert E. Howard) occurring in comic books and Sword and Sorcery being regarded by some as a subspecialty of science fiction."

"All in the fanzine world are not agreed about these three categories. Some maintain that this division is absolute. For example, fanzines devoted entirely to science fiction may exclude everything pertaining to comics. But the unity of what may be called the fanzine spirit is greater than the divisions. Though the field is diversified it is not fundamentally and intrinsically divided."

Wertham is wrong, of course. The field is fundamentally and intrinsically divided. Although it is correct that there is some overlapping, this is to a very negligible degree. It is extremely rare that you will encounter a sf fanzine which discusses the comics field, and even rarer for such a discussion to be presented in a manner other than that normally reserved to articles on "other fandoms".

As previously mentioned, Wertham omits any reference to the fanzines of Mystery Fandom. He also ignores, in his listing of the major areas of fanzines, the fannish fanzine (where discussion of science fiction is sublimated or not present altogether); thus omitting from his study one of the most major new areas of fanzine activity in the last fifteen years.

"Science fiction (e.g., by Ray Bradbury)", indeed...

Of science-fiction fandom's major fanzines, he mentions very few. The majority of his references come from comixzines, and when he tries to put across the essence of what a fanzine is he comes up with a stew flavor which is not suitable for representing the periodicals of either fandom.

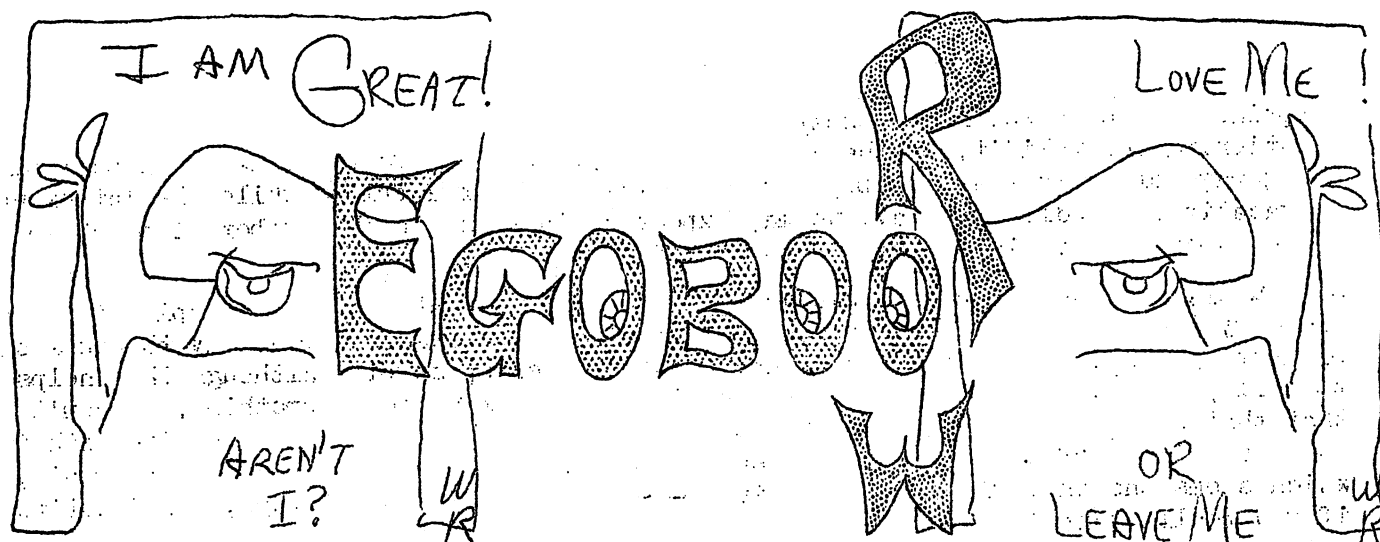
To his credit, in the last chapter (THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FANZINES) he hauls himself up by the shift-key and attempts to give purpose to a book which, at that point, had been a complete failure. Of a sudden, his writing becomes purposeful and almost dynamic, and this last chapter, by itself, would have made a good short article.

"They do not open up any magnificent social perspectives or new psychological revelations. That is not their aim nor their character. If we take an overall view, above all their apparent and obvious diversities, we find that they are a truly particular and unique kind of communication. They represent not a subculture but a paraculture."

Wertham is an outsider who tried to measure the field with a ruler. He often gained insights, but in keeping his nose to the ground he missed the big picture of what the fanzine really is. I would have preferred that someone within the field, with journalistic qualifications but lacking Wertham's outsider's tunnel-vision, write this book. Someone like Harry Warner could have done this up brown, and it would have been a more impressive contribution than Harry's fandom-by-decade project. Of course, Harry would not do this because such a book is not meant for the fans - it is meant for the outsiders; the direct opposite of his fandom-by-decade project.

The essence of fandom, and of fanzines, is still elusively floating in the ether waiting for someone to capture it, distill it, and bottle it. I don't think that such a challenge can be adequately executed by anyone other than a long-standing fan who possesses the journalistic capacity to handle the job.

It may be years before that essence is captured.



Comments regarding the articles in AWRY #5 have bodily been ripped from your letters, and are here presented in bloody chunks for the amusement or discontent of those who have inspired your comments.

Comments and reactions to Dean Grennell's IMHO

ROBERT BLOCH Got another message for columnist Grennell: If memory serves, there once was a pamphlet printed on Miswaukese, sometime in the late thirties. And I couldn't afford to buy it. But it did contain a very fine collection of specimens of the local idiom - much of which is derivative from Polish as well as German: i.e. "Let's go by the corner where the streetcar bends". But then who knows about streetcars nowadays? I'm afraid they're obsolete. Hoping you are the same...

ROSE HOGUE By all means keep Dean on his binge.

JAY KINNEY Dean's column brought to mind my plane ride back to San Francisco of a few days ago. Prior to leaving this burg for the summer I moved out of my old apartment and stored my 26 cartons of accumulated newsprint with a friend. While away, good friends of mine found a beautiful house for me to move into upon my return (this is the only way to shop around, if you ask me...) and so I had a place to come back to, but no bed or furniture for that first night back. All I brought with me for the plane ride was a knapsack of clothes, a sleeping bag and my portfolio. Checking this baggage onto the airplane was easy, however when I arrived the sleeping bag was missing. Faced with a night ahead on a bare floor, this naturally disturbed me, and I complained to the bored BaggageMeister at American Airlines. He assured me that it was no doubt on the following flight which would come in an hour or two later, and they would deliver it to my place in town. Come midnight it had still not arrived, but a phonecall came from the airline saying that they had the sleeping bag and would deliver it at *8:30* the next morning. For a late sleeper like myself this was adding insult to injury and they got properly informed that noon or one would be better. I never did like American Airlines in the first place (I prefer TWA or United as those things go...) but now I know why.

DON AYRES IMHO leaves me somewhat speechless. Perhaps you haven't heard of the

Egyptian (?) Cobra which has escaped in a Chicago suburb? (The first ? refers to my questioning the validity of the identification). In any event, it has escaped from the garage of an 18-year old boy who was holding it for a friend while the latter was on vacation. Needless to say, we may expect an increase in the number of purchases and escapes of Egyptian Cobras in the immediate future.

Seriously, although there is some validity to Dean's point about the inspiration provided by the media, I'd hate to wake up and find such news censored. By the publisher or anybody else. Okay, it doesn't have to be played up so big (although that helps to sell papers), but I don't want to see it cut out or we lose something. I won't say that that's society's fault, that it created such people and we have to live with it; the possibility of inspiring dunderheads is real. But I won't accept a censorship, which seems the only viable alternative. Like under-age booze, drugs, and prostitutes, if you really want it, you can get it.

LOREN MACGREGOR I never ride in planes - don't like them, and will studiously avoid them in the future. I have ridden in four planes, getting back and forth from Colorado Springs, Colorado, and I choose emphatically not to repeat the experiment. I do recall that I set off that same machine in Denver with a small belt buckle and \$1.35 in change. They let me keep both the change and the belt - luckily, because I need the belt now that I've lost weight.

JODIE OFFUTT Enjoyed very much Dean Grennell's column. I didn't know you couldn't take booze on an airplane - as long as you didn't drink it. I don't like those people going through my purse. So I've started packing it and carrying on nothing but my cigarettes. I had an hour to kill in an airport once and spent it watching the security people. I got so worked up I started crying. I've tried to figure out why it bothers me so much. I think it's because the people just herd themselves along like cattle and act as if it's the most normal thing in the world to have their bags pawed through. I hate it. I just hate it.

DENIS QUANE On Saturday I went into Dallas and did a number of things, including the witnessing of a riot, one which bears out some of Dean Grennell's comments about the media. It wasn't a very big riot, the protest demonstration and the riot which resulted from it lasted no more than four hours from beginning to end, and the damage was confined to a three block stretch along two of the main streets. Things were back to normal by 4 pm, the police were in complete control, and the streets were occupied by the usual number of people going about their normal business.

The evening television news painted a different picture altogether. The area over which store windows had been broken had been expanded to include the whole downtown area. The amount of damage done, and in particular the looting, was exaggerated considerably. Worse, the TV broadcasters, by warning people to stay off the streets, implied that the riot was still going on, and sounded to me like an invitation to anyone who was interested to come on downtown and join the fun. The invitation was not taken up, but no thanks to the media.

JOHN ROBINSON I was watching BOOK BEAT a month or so ago and Robert Cromie had the author of the first skyjack story on that show. It seems that the story appeared five years before the newspapers reported the first of the modern wave of skyjacks. Perhaps skyjack-prone individuals don't indulge in reading short stories. The writer said that he at first thought he might have triggered the phenomenon, but the five-year gap caused him to think differently. Then again, think of all the perversions and heinous crimes available to psychotics and losers if they'd just learn to read fiction. Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction because fiction itself exists.

I also recall that NEWSWEEK, perpetrator of Peter S. Prescott, ran an explanation of Good Old Charlie Manson's behavior on the basis of STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND. Seems

they interpreted Thou Art God as applying only to Charlie as opposed to a standard greeting applying to each and every member of the family. It is possible, however, that this was the case but not the intent Heinlein gave it.

It must be noted that fake bomb-calls were not completely brought on through the emulation of predecessors but failure to study enough, if at all, for final exams, etc. That goes back 3 years, and more, now. Where's Grennell been?

DENIS QUANE (again) Dean Grennell's article was appreciated - from what I've seen of his writing in AWRY and in other fanzines, he is one of the best writers on miscellaneous subjects around - well worth whatever Scotch it takes to induce him to produce an article. With regard to the airline searches - when they were instituted, there was speculation in the newspapers and magazines on the legal question: if the searches turned up evidence of a crime unrelated to hijacking, would the evidence be admissible? The consensus was that it would not be admissible. Does anyone know if the courts have actually decided this issue? If the legal position is in fact what the media assumed it would be, the doctrine of "reasonable search" has arrived at a reductio ad absurdum. If an airport search turns up evidence of a crime, the search is unreasonable, and the evidence cannot be used in court. But, an innocent person must submit to the indignity of submitting to a search, because, of course, the search is reasonable. And anyone who holds that the law is being twisted to protect the criminal, brands himself as a right-wing reactionary, allied with the hard-hats and the Archie Bunkers. Bah Humbug!

MIKE GLICKSOHN I'm surprised that Dean is surprised that newspapers print the sort of story that will possibly result in further abuses. The main idea behind news is still to sell papers, surely, and this sort of material is sure-fire. As long as the newspapers remain private enterprise, I doubt we'll see that millenium Dean wishfully types about. An equally pressing problem, to my mind, is whether governments should allow themselves to be blackmailed by terrorists. A diplomat is kidnapped and will be killed unless certain prisoners are released: does the government give in? And leave itself open to a rash of similar cases? There is a millenium near at hand, Dean, but sometimes I wonder if we'll live to see it. Twenty seven years... is that too long?

The tightest air security I've seen was at Chicago's O'Hare field, but the woman who searched Susan's handbag and carry-on case called her "sweetheart", "sugar", "little darling" and about a dozen other all-different, all-saccharine such terms all in a minute search. I don't know if she was just a mite eccentric or whether the security people have been ordered to "make it as inoffensive as possible" and she was getting carried away. I've been allowed to keep my keys and penknife on trips out of Toronto, LA, Chicago and San Francisco but Peter Gill had his vicious corkscrew confiscated at LAX. They probably thought he'd threaten to bore a hole in the side of the plane if they didn't cough up a few million bucks.

BRUCE ARTHURS The most interesting thing in #5 was Dean Grennell's column. My own experiences with airport metal detectors show that the sensitivity varies widely from device to device. The last time I was flying across the country, one detector let me thru with a pocketful of keys, pens, and coins, while yet another was so sensitive that I had to take off my glasses and stumble thru the device. (I considered purposely stumbling into the machine, falling down with a moan, then screaming from the floor, "I'M PARALYZED! GET MY LAWYER, I'M GONNA SUE FOR FIFTY MILLION BUCKS!" But I'm too lovable and honest, also chicken, to go fooling people like that.)

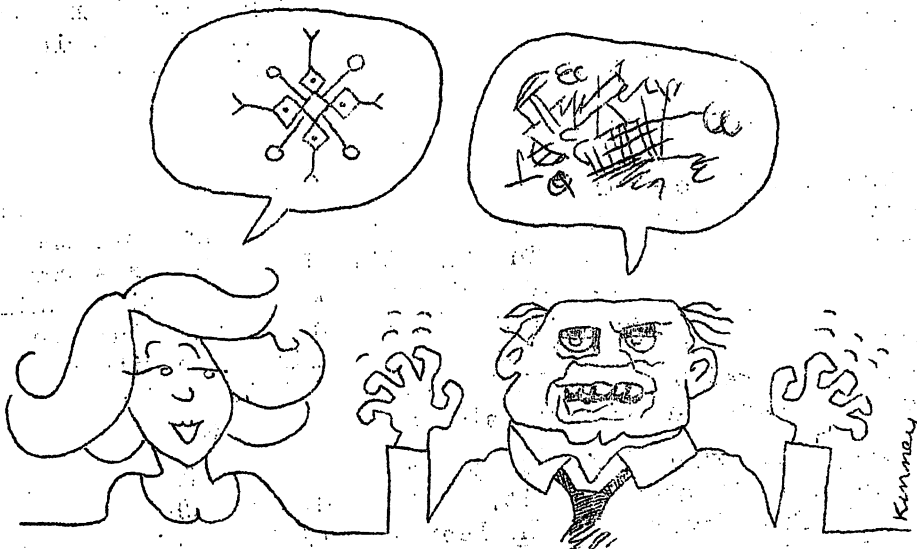
I remember some months ago when I picked up a copy of GUN WORLD that was laying around the orderly room and idly thumbed thru it. Wait a minute? What was that name I glimpsed? Grennell? Dean Grennell? The Dean Grennell? I skimmed thru the article and spied "...sounded like the drum of a runaway mimeograph".

I was damned, it was Grennell! I knew his mundane life had something to do with guns and bullets and all that other rot, but it's still a pleasant surprise to stumble across a BNF when you don't expect it.

HARRY WARNER, JR. The Hagerstown newspapers aren't the best in the world. But I'll give them credit for one thing: they decided a few years ago to keep out of print local fake bomb reports, unless the episode somehow affected huge numbers of people. The policy was broken once or twice when a new reporter who hadn't heard of it wrote up an episode and the story slipped through. But this seems to have caused the game to lose its flavor in Hagerstown, which wasn't plagued as frequently as most cities. I think it's a procedure that the nation's media should follow. Hardly any newspaper nowadays publishes stories about false fire alarms. A fire can be much more damaging than a bomb and a false fire alarm can risk much more equipment in the form of expensive fire trucks than a fake bomb scare. So why do newspapers play up the fake bomb reports and ignore the false fire alarms? As for the nuisance that hijackers have inflicted on airline passengers, maybe the nuisance will persuade so many people to take trains and buses that airlines will cut back sharply on their operations and we'll have less pollution and lower government subsidies for commercial air operations.

JACKIE FRANKE Grennell is great, without a question, but his basic contention that newspapers are responsible for many of the serious crimes/abberations committed in this world simply because they report on events similar to them, doesn't convince me. What does he suggest to remedy the situation? Censorship? It's also a noted phenomenon that when an idea occurs to someone, within a fairly short time it may pop into several other persons minds too. Lines of scientific research would be imagined by one man in a European country, and a short while later, if not concurrently, be dreamed up by another person on another continent. At times it is a genuine problem trying to establish just who came up with a particular invention first; the ideas came so simultaneously. I'm certain spectacular crimes were committed in Egyptian times, and the poor Pharaoh went nuts trying to squash all the lurid headlines the tablet engravers were splashing all over the place. How does Dean know that Whitman was influenced by Oswald? Or the beauty-parlor killer by Whitman? That's sheer speculation...valid enough, but it should be labelled as such. Events have a tendency to bunch up together, it's not provably due to the fact that were given broad exposure in the media. Might as well blame the papers when three airlines crash in a week...the relationship could be the same.

But, as the column title suggests, it is his opinion, humble or not, and he's entitled to it as much as I am to mine...



ROSE HOGUE As always Tina is a delight!

MIKE SHOEMAKER I didn't like Tina Hensel's column one bit this time around. I despise vicious dogs and I didn't find her account at all amusing, but rather nauseating and infuriating. If her dog ran across me it would more than likely end up dead or blind. I might add that the price of seedless grapes around here is such that they're almost too expensive for humans, to say nothing of dogs.

HARRY WARNER, JR. I've never been a dog-owner, so I shouldn't try to opine on the matter. But I suspect that a very large dog isn't nearly as much of a problem as a very small dog. The latter have vile tempers and vast amounts of cowardice, as a rule. There are a couple across the street from me this summer, just slightly larger than cockroaches. They can create an incredible amount of noise with their high-pitched barking, and they set it off whenever anything moves within two hundred feet of their house. But the neighborhood cats, squirrels, children, and other wild creatures have learned that these same dogs will retreat if any of that motion comes in their direction. So the cats leisurely stroll around where they wish, the dogs yipping hysterically six feet away, except when the cat twitches a tail, and instantly the distance spreads to twenty feet. Large dogs seem much calmer and more anxious to behave. I knew some people who had a dog so enormous that it broke a refrigerator door by accidentally whacking it with its wagging tail as it stood open, and the poor dog was dejected for a month after that, no matter how often the family explained its understanding of the unintentional nature of the incident. Another huge dog came to this country by ship with some immigrants and had such good manners that it didn't go to the bathroom for the entire seven-day crossing, but lived through its repression splendidly.

MIKE GLICKSOHN Tina provides another very fine column, makes me envious that I've never fulfilled a life-long ambition and had a dog, and will doubtless cause dog-lovers everywhere to provide their own equivalent stories. (Come to think of it, with fandom the refuge of so many cat-people, you just may have started yet another discussion of the relative merits of cats and dogs. Since cats have no merits, it's always amusing to watch the contortions their supporters must go through in order to justify the beasts.) Unfortunately, I have no such amusing incidents to relate. Somehow "My tortoise crossed the room yesterday" or "I watched closely and saw the snake breathing" fall flat after Tina's humorous column.

000 An editorial comment here. It is obviously untrue that cats have no merits. The overwhelming merit of both cats and dogs is in their capacity as household pets. They fill this function equally well, as it's a matter of personal preference. It is true that cats have little or no merit beyond that of being a pet, whereas dogs do, but it's a very small percentage of the dogs in the world which serve any purpose other than that of being a pet. And, like I said, it's a matter of personal preference. 000

SHERYL BIRKHEAD Tell Tina that our dog is a small one too. Our former neighbors told us that their cousins had a litter of puppies to give away - half Vizslas, and half Golden Retrievers. Um, I assume that not too many people know what a Vizsla is and neither did we - so we did the logical thing and asked the vet. He told us that the Vizsla is a small to medium sized dog - but I have a sneaking suspicion that it was that size on HIS personal scale and he considered his Lab. a "medium" sized dog. Anyhow, Winston now weighs in at about 90 lbs. Just like Achilles, he had these paws that we were afraid he was going to grow up to - and he did, sigh. Nutty dog, but lovable and all the rest. Oh yeah - he's supposed to be a hunting dog too - but is also gun shy. My brother took him out one summer when he was here for a

vacation and pretty soon Winston came running back to the house - tail down and running lickety-split - didn't take much guessing to figure out what the trouble was!

JACKIE FRANKE There must be a rash of Giant dogs running amuck through fandom...

First Kris Walker describes the neighborhood pest in KWALA, and now Tina matches that with her very own pest, Achilles. Tina denies his gianthood, but any canine that attacks german shepherds can't be counted among the miniature breeds. Gee, I'm glad that our collie is such a marshmallow...even if I do get a bit tired of paying the vet bills for having him sewn up after getting chewed up during his flight from fights. He's got the most scarred hindquarters of any dog I know...

LOREN MACGREGOR Wally Weber also had a standard poodle, with the nastiest sense of humor I ever saw in a dog - or a person for that matter. Wally and his wife had a beautiful garden, a garden that Pat was justifiably proud of. As a result, everyone who came by to visit was taken on a tour of the yard. As they bent down to look at one or another plant, you could see Maurice sneaking silently behind, looking for his opportunity. As soon as the visitor's attention was suitable distracted, Maurice would creep slowly up to a point just slightly to the left and behind - and let go with a single, trumpeting bark.

He was also the only dog I've ever seen that would giggle. Many's the time I've seen that dog run the length of the yard, chuckling to himself. He finally did himself in one day, trying to prove to one of his paramours that he could walk on water. He ended up slipping on the styrofoam blocks covering the swimming pool, and slipped under.

The poor girl-dog was heartbroken. But she deposited a suitable monument, and hasn't been heard from since.

Since I'm telling animal stories (all sparked off by Tina's lovely article - it's her fault) I might as well tell a cat story, as well as a hospital story. The hospital where I work has a pet cat, that, realizing that it has a cushy location (by the kitchen window) has decided to stay. The cat has made a practice of jumping upon all the available ledges and making a thorough inspection, at least once a day. One of the windows involved leads into an intensive care ward, and one day the nurse was interrupted by an hysterical shriek from one of her patients. "I'm going crazy," the lady said, "I think I see a cat outside my window!"

The nurse, calm, cool, collected, said, "Don't worry about it. There is a cat there." Whereupon the lady became even more hysterical, insisting that she was just being humored, and she should know whether or not she was going crazy. Finally the woman agreed to try and calm down - if they'd prove to her the cat was really there. Of course, the cat was never seen again, and the lady proceeded to become insufferable, since, she said, she had been right all along. No real reason for telling this, except that later they decided to move the ICU to another area, and moved the interns' quarters to the old location... and one morning one of the interns woke up with the cat on his chest.

DON AYRES Achilles sounds like quite a character. Like one of the neighbor's cats who visits for the sake of the handouts my mother gives the creature. He keeps picking fights and always comes in with a new white spot on his black hide which had formerly been occupied by hair. Then there's the other one, also a black cat, who keeps picking fights with the first no matter how often one of us swats it. He got his a few days ago when Turtle (Eastern Box, T. carolina) hit him with his foot (I should explain that Turtle is not penned, but wanders through the house at whim). Had my mother not stopped him, Turtle would have walked right up to the sleeping cat's belly and started scaling it. Snake, on the other hand, is almost certain to be regarded by the felines as a tease. His glass-fronted cage is sitting on the floor where they pass and he responds to the presence of an alien by moving his head toward the glass, tongue flickering. Naturally, the cats both have to swat at him.

Surprise! It's better than Colgate's invisible shield. I fear the Snake is getting rather smug about the whole affair and the cats are bothering him less. They're not my cats, just visitors whose presence is tolerated because I don't have a Black Rat Snake to serve as a mouser.



Comments and reactions to Milt Stevens' THAT OLD TIME RELIGION

JACKIE FRANKE I've only read two things by Milt Stevens previous to this first installment of his column: his prior article in AWRY and his marvelously done LACon report in PASSING PARADE, and was utterly unprepared for his dry wit. Wonderful! Of course, he would have problems missing the mark with his choice of subject material, early Christian sects (and many of the later and current ones to be truthful) being perfect targets for anyone with their heads on straight. I sometimes wonder whether Jesus, assuming his historical authenticity, really comprehended just what he was wroughting.

ROSE HOGUE Milificent Milt! He makes religion sound more religious than most ministers...also more interesting!

HARRY WARNER, JR. THAT OLD TIME RELIGION is uncommentable but superb. Milt Stevens should be on the Hugo ballot next year, if he scatters his writing largesse in two or three more fanzines before the next set of nominating forms goes out.

BUCK COULSON Milt Stevens was quite informative on religion. I always thought the dendrites were a sect that believed that teeth were a gift of God and not to be profaned with fillings, but maybe that was a later manifestation of the sect. They were also known as Holy Molars.

LAURINE WHITE I don't remember Milt Stevens being so funny in PASSING PARADE.

SHERYL BIRKHEAD I mentioned part of Milt's article to the rest of the group at the lab and thought I'd shortcut the background by nutshellizing and saying that the anchorites broke up into sects - well that was about as far as I got - everyone was hollering for orgies (ya gotta remember this is Friday and today was payday...).

LOREN MACGREGOR Now as far as I can see, the only one who could truly be called an anchorite was the fellow who was chained to the tree, because he...

I can't go through with it. Milt Stevens is a good, good writer, the type that I'd like to have writing for me if I were to put out a genzine.

DAVE PIPER I enjoyed Milt Steven's bit a lot. Don't throw him out. That's an order, now!

MIKE GLICKSOHN Milt Stevens also had a very fine column, which I assume is based on fact, not imagination, although some of his asides make it difficult to judge. Never having possessed much interest in religion, though, I can't add the "Reminds me of..." sort of comment that this writing usually inspires. I was struck by the story of the two men on pedestals, or pillars if you must, trading insults for thirty years. Do you suppose Bloch and Tucker...?

DON AYRES And the Milt Stevens column! Now I want to read the book myself. It's already suggested a story to me that I probably won't get around to writing for a long time. In all honesty, I can't understand people who complain that history is dull. Not when there's so much fun going on.

000 History is dull in high school, Don, because they won't let Milt Stevens write it... 000

DENIS QUANE THE PENGUIN ATLAS OF ANCIENT HISTORY notes that "The other Ottoman conquests can be briefly listed: Serbia (1439) ... and the pathetic little Empire of Trebizond (1431-71)." The "pathetic little Empire of Trebizond"; yes, by our standards it must seem little - a country consisting of about 300 miles of coastline with practically no hinterland. One might imagine the stretch of California coastline from San Diego to San Luis Obispo as an independent country - or, considering its placement on the trade routes of the period, a closer analogy might be an independent country occupying the south shore of Lake Erie, with a capital at Cleveland. But it did last for over 200 years, sometimes independent, sometimes dominated by more powerful neighbors, but still under its own rulers.

And it didn't last that long because it was tucked away in an obscure corner. The port of Trebizond during the entire period was the main Black Sea terminus of the Silk Route from China to Europe. It was at Trebizond that goods from the East were transhipped from caravans to Genoese freighters, thus bypassing the longer, and more politically troubled route through Iraq & Syria. A merchant city at that location must have been a prize, and it must have taken determination and clever diplomacy for the city to have remained independent so long.

I doubt if the emperors & merchant-traders of Trebizond thought of their city as pathetic.

The desert anchorites - an interesting subject, and a group which even devout people today find slightly ridiculous. One of my favorite poems is on the subject of St. Simeon Stylite, by Phyllis McGinley, included in her collection TIMES THREE, Viking Press, 1961, and also in an earlier paperback collection THE LOVE LETTERS OF PHYLLIS MCGINLEY. 000 Read verses from left-to-right. 000

On top of a pillar Simeon sat.
He wore no mantle,
He had no hat,
But bare as a bird
Sat night and day.
And hardly a word
Did Simeon say.

Under the sun of the desert sky
He sat on a pillar
Nine feet high.
When Fool and his brother
Came round to admire,
He raised it another
Nine feet higher.

The seasons circled about his head.
He lived on water
And crusts of bread
(Or so one hears)
From pilgrims store,
For thirty years
And a little more.

And why did Simeon sit like that,
Without a garment,
Without a hat,
In a holy rage
For the world to see?
It puzzles the age,
It puzzles me.
It puzzled many
A Desert Father,
And I think it puzzled the Good Lord, rather.

But it is just possible that the anchorites suffer from a bad press. Most modern writers on the legends of these saints, start from the assumption that miracles are impossible, and discount all miracle stories as being the additions of later writers who wanted to make the lives of their heroes appear more marvelous and impressive. But they accept the austerity stories, no matter how exaggerated they seem on the surface, since these serve to discredit the "holy men" and make them seem ridiculous. But they ignore the fact that the austerity stories depend on much the same evidence as the miracle stories, and it was equally in the interest of the writers of the legends to exaggerate these, since their audience found these equally as impressive as miracles.

I'm not blaming Milt Stevens for this, but his sources - I'm not familiar with the particular book he is discussing, but it sounds like the same sort of thing that Mark Twain used for A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT - a style of saint-debunking that goes back ultimately to Gibbon & Voltaire.

There is something to be said for the anchorites. There is a scholarly tradition in the Catholic Church, called the Bollandist tradition, going back over three hundred years now, which has attempted to examine critically the eastern & medieval legends of the Lives of the Saints. The work of these scholars tends to be prejudiced by sceptics, since they do not work from the dogma that miracles are impossible, and therefore any miracle story must be considered a later unreliable addition. But they do attempt to examine the documentary evidence in a critical way. Through their work it has been possible to weed out stereotyped miracle-and-austerity stories that tend to get transferred bodily from one saint's legend to another. It has been possible to determine which of the legends are merely myths associated with a pagan festival, which get transferred to a new Christian feast. And it has also been possible to determine which stories are based on contemporary evidence, written by those who had the opportunity to witness the events described.

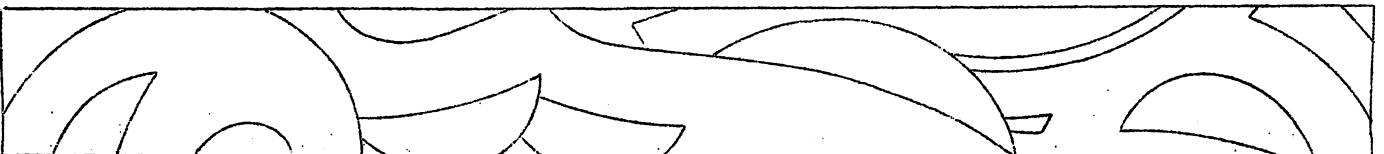
Now it is always possible that even a contemporary witness may be lying or mistaken. But this approach is more honest than one which discounts all miracle accounts, regardless of the source, because miracles are impossible, and which accepts all austerity stories, regardless of the source, because they make the subject appear ridiculous. The medieval attitude of accepting all stories of the saints credulously, was at least more honest.

(((Even if less realistic.)))

Incidentally, why is an article on Christian saints illustrated with a drawing of an Arab sneaking up on a Jewish scholar?

(((I wanted to give equal time.)))

Milt Stevens' column was a good start - I'm an obscure history nut myself.



Anyone acquainted with Dean Grennell is apt to be at least as well acquainted with his repertoire of atrocious anecdotes, mal mots and heinous puns. It is all very well to go howling about on a Honda, but when you letter, beneath the name at the rear of its saddle - in yellow, yet - "De Baskerville", and cap this off by putting a plate on the gas tank that says "Hardly-Davidson", well...

So, when he hit me up for an article, I tried to inveigle him out of a theme for it. And the fiend responded by asking if I was familiar with the story about the one-legged coffin salesman and the mortician's cross-eyed daughter. I said, "Groovy. Sounds marvelous. How 'zit go?"

"I really can't say," was the reply, "because I never heard it, either."

Now that is rampantly unfair and you'll have to admit that anyone who'd go that far would go even farther. Even so, if you want an example of someone who really majored in Nasty, we have to turn to Dave Locke. If Dave thinks you really want to hear something, and he doesn't know the true circumstances, he'll casually manufacture some great story, and then promptly forget about it. This is bad, especially if you are as gullible as I am; in fact, it's even worse.

On a Saturday night I had occasion to mention one of Dave's better inventions and I daggoned if the fink didn't stand there and steadfastly maintain he'd never heard the story himself. I ought to know better, but I find myself believing him, even when I know it's not the truth. And I'll never forget hernia night at the faith healer's.

There we were, casually sitting around Dave's apartment, osmoting Margaritas, when Dave asked thoughtfully, "Say, did I ever tell you about the time I went to the faith healer's for hernia night?"

Naturally, we answered no and waited, all ears and agog, for the gruesome details.

HERNIA NIGHT AT THE FAITH HEALER'S

BY TINA HENSEL

REPRINTED FROM GRUE 33 JANUARY 1970

It seems that he was visiting some friends one evening, when they invited him to accompany them to the faith healer's. Undoubtedly they hoped to impress him with the miracles that were daily being wrought there.

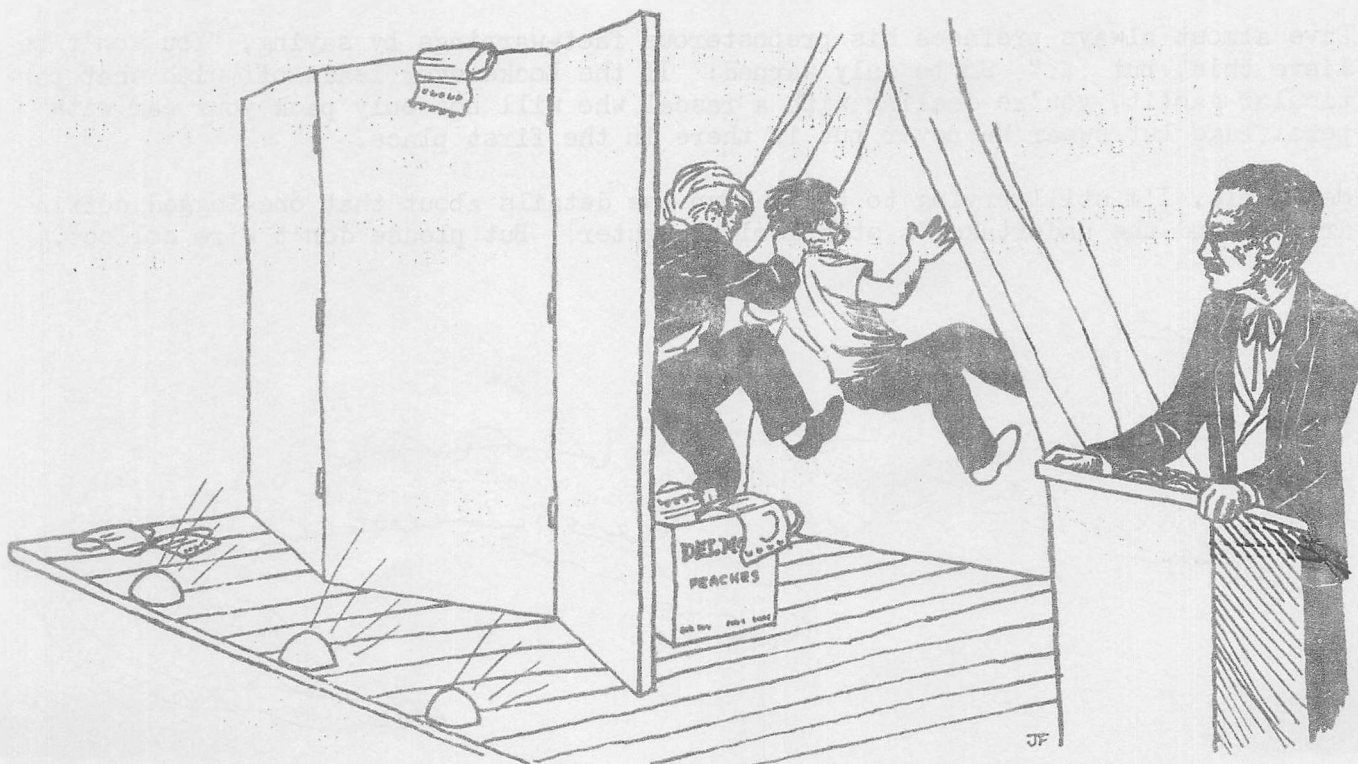
So they happily grumbled off, each expecting some sort of sensational and utterly enthralling cures. Now Dave is the kind of person who, when he exposes a fake, feels cheated if it isn't a good fake - if there is such a thing. He tends to come on restive if the game does not present a challenge so he was anticipating some sufferers of noteworthy disorders or injuries and you can envision his sense of letdown when he looked over the candidates for instant repair and noted that all of them looked about as debilitated as Chuck Atlas in his leopard loincloth.

"Why!" he exclaimed in tones of pettish disillusionment, "This whole setup is as phony as a vinyl tripe. Nobody has even so much as a broken leg to be cured."

His friends laughed, condescendingly. "You have to come here on broken-leg-night for that. This is hernia night and the preacher specializes in hernias."

Somewhat nonplussed, Dave responded with a quizzical "Oh" and sat down to observe the healing of hernias ... or is it herniæ? I deliberately omit a punctuation mark after that "Oh" because the language has no mark capable of symbolizing Dave's skeptical "Oh" - which is capable of drawing blood at thirty paces.

Judged as a spectator sport, he found it a pretty disappointing exhibition. As each sufferer went up to be cured, he stepped behind a folding screen that had been set up at the center of the stage. After several prayers and the actual laying on of hands, the preacher's efforts were rewarded. With an exultant cry of "I'm Cured!!!" an old truss came sailing out over the screen and he came walking from behind the screen, blithe, light-hearted and chipper as any lark that ever sang.



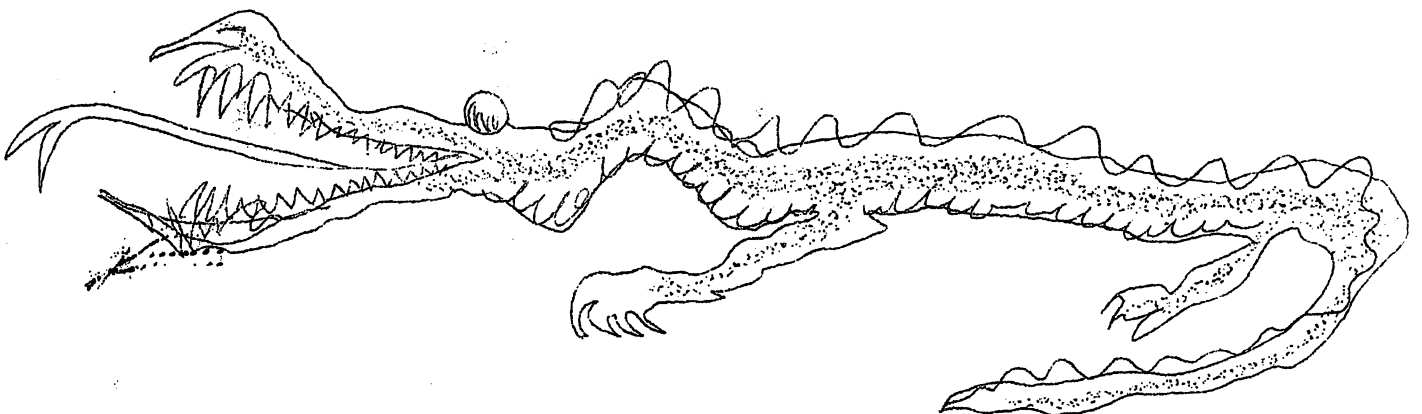
Now Dave Locke is a curious type and I say 'curious' in the context of having deeply rooted inquisitive instincts. He is, withal, curious in the other sense, as well, but I am saving that for some other column when the theme eludes me. Being the sort he is, our hero edged toward the stage to investigate. An ordinary person might have sidled in such a situation, but The Locke is nothing if not forthright, so he frontled. All he wanted to do was to peek behind the screen to view some of the Action. But he was grabbed by some brawny deacons who demonstrated no meager skill at the laying on of hands and they frog-marched him back to his seat. With his curiosity all inflamed and throbbing, he waited till the services had ground to their stodgy conclusion and then he essayed another sally to the rear of the screen. This time, he made it and the first thing he found - indeed, come to that, the only thing - was an old corrugated cardboard carton which had once contained Del Monte sliced peaches. Now, it was partially filled with trusses which were, beyond peradventure, used trusses. Ever more courageous than canny, he decided to purloin one of the prop trusses as evidence of the bogusitude of the claimed cures. Alas, just as he was laying hands on the truss, the deacons did the same to him; again. They removed the truss from his fingers - now gone suddenly limp - and replaced it in its consecrated cardboard casket with seemly reverence.

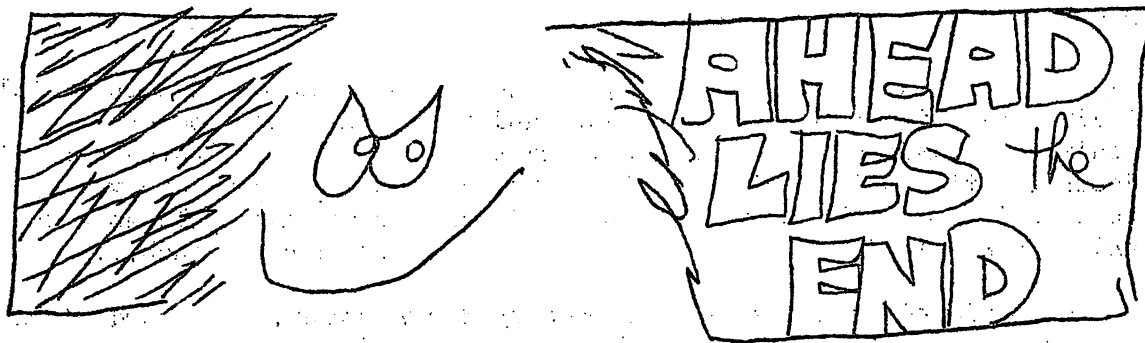
"It is not allowed to remove the holy relics from the pulpit, sir," explained one of the deacons as they gently catapulted him on a lofty trajectory out of the entrance of the tent. At the time of the primal telling, he footnoted that the thought occurred to him, whilst airborne, that if he should incur a hernia at the moment of impact, he might have bargaining power toward the negotiation of a cure at a special discount.

Now you must understand, I didn't really believe Dave when he told this story. Even the most naive ingenue would boggle at such a yarn as I can personally testify, being one. On the other hand, it was too good to forget. So I zestfully recounted it to any number of friends and mutual acquaintances, always being scrupulously careful to give full credit to the source ... only to have the treacherous source repudiate it up one side and back down the other. I swear, if you tipped that man in the creek, the ornery would leach off and pollute the water for eight miles down and three up-stream.

Dave almost always prefaces his preposterous fact-warpings by saying, "You won't believe this, but ..." So be duly warned: If the Locke ever leads off with that particular gambit, you're dealing with a rascal who will not only pack your ear with persiflage but swear he never put it there in the first place.

Meanwhile, I'm still trying to track down the details about that one-legged coffin drummer and the undertaker's strabismic daughter. But please don't wire collect.





Editorial comment set aside 000 like so 000.

JACKIE FRANKE

BEECHER ILLINOIS

AWRY arrived, healthy and bursting with life, at 10:22 a.m., July 21st. Its advent was welcomed by one and all and it's doing nicely in its new quarters. Prognosis is excellent for a long and happy life...

000 And here all this time I thought fanzines were ephemeral... 000

What can I say about this issue? It's all you led me to expect and more so. About the only weakness I could detect lay in the way you laid-out some of the pages...notably page 17, but 16 and 2 wavered a bit as well. Aha! Another layout slip pops up on page 18...it isn't terribly clear that IMHO is the title of Grennell's column. At first glance it appears to be a shortie, and Grennell's stuff begins on the next page, being titled "a sometime column". This is not what I've come to expect from you, so let's cease such activity immediately. At first glance, when flipping through the zine I had the eerie sensation that a copy of MAYBE had somehow warped some of its pages into your zine... but the lack of typos convinced me otherwise. Busy, busy, busy! Too many illoes, totally unrelated, for the page. Now shape up, or you'll never get that Hugo!

Save for that one grouch (put in, I suspect, especially for nit-pickers who cannot rest without finding at least one fault), the zine was GREAT!

000 That's better. I was just getting ready to throw you off the mailing list (gently, of course). 000

There's blasted little that I can comment upon regarding your editorial. You're a funny fellow, Mr. Locke, and every word comes out as sheer gold. You can't even compliment your contributors with a straight face...and I can't read your material with one either.

Your review of CASTLE KEEPS is no more glowing than the book deserves. After this book, Andy has no need to prove that he can handle serious fiction; now all we have to do is wait for more. Hope it won't be too long...

Murray struck it right on with his differentiations between a faanish zine and AWRY. You poke fun at, or actually, just point at and let us

[illegible]

I was intrigued at one statement made by Harry Warner. He found PATHS OF GLORY sickening, but THE AMERICANIZATION OF EMILY a delight. My reaction was just the opposite. The things that happened in PoG were sickening all right, but they were presented so well that the film itself was splendid. TAOE, on the other hand, while also presenting sickening events, pretended that they were sterling examples of human behavior. It had its funny portions, to be sure, but the basic concept was repugnant to me.

000 She's right about M.A.S.H., Harry. You should try it again. 000

LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA

andy offutt

HALDEMAN KENTUCKY

(So does the Internal Revenue "Service".)

HARRY WARNER, JR.

HAGERSTOWN MARYLAND

38

If all the automobiles in the world were to reach the Moon, they'd have to be placed end to end.

to encounter similar experiences. I didn't become a potential exhibit in the third grade's soap sculpture class art show, as you did. But I had a remotely similar fate. Just the other morning, I had gotten myself thoroughly soaked on the outside when someone started to pound on the door. (I haven't hired someone yet to fix the door-bell which lightning knocked out of order two summers ago.) I followed my usual custom, that of doing nothing about the visitor. But the pounding continued, became progressively louder, and I finally felt mild alarm. It might be Claude Degler and if so, I should know about it in time to hide in the attic. I drizzled my way into the bedroom, got a robe, dripped down the stairs, and found a burly city workman looking at his bruised knuckles. "We're checking to see if anyone along here has water," he explained. "We think we might have cut it off accidentally."

How can F&SF offer a complete file on microfilm for \$200? Every microfilm I've ever seen has been in black and white. It isn't complete if it leaves out the colors on the covers. I'll bet the microfilm factory doesn't even photograph the spines for the sake of completists.

RICHARD E. GEIS

I didn't cry.

Your letter column reduction was Too Much; my eyes are no longer the eyes of a twenty year-old. But I squinted through it all.

I wish I could type nice.

Marty Helgesen

MARTY HELGESEN

GENE COMEAU

RICHMOND VIRGINIA

ROSE HOGUE

HUNTINGTON BEACH CALIFORNIA

BUCK COULSON

HARTFORD CITY INDIANA

40

When you wish upon a star, you'll singe your wisher.

always sky-writing"? That's flippant, but this is no different than any other kind of freedom: it gets eroded a little bit at a time. 000

000 Hmmm... My Merriam-Webster defines "lightning" as "the flashing of light produced by a discharge of atmospheric electricity from one cloud to another or between a cloud and the earth". As I indicated before, and correctly it seems, the lightning is visible because it doesn't cut a direct path. But darned if every piece of lightning I've ^{seen} hasn't travelled between clouds or from a cloud to the earth. Never from the earth to a cloud. You sure about that, Bruce? 000

The letter column is too serious and looks too polished for the rest of the zine, besides being harder to read.

DON D'AMMASSA

It was all entertaining, particularly your adventures with the water shut off. It reminds me of so many similar situations, I shudder to contemplate them. I still prefer the topical breakdown in the letter column; it is much easier to reply to a large number of arguments if they are arranged together. Perhaps you could use a combination of forms. Print letters as a whole, minus any segment which refers to a specific, continuing argument. Those could be lumped together at the end. Or maybe you could translate all the letters into Spanish?

BRUCE D. ARTHURS

Bring back the segmented lettercol! I don't think it's suitable for most fanzines, but you put enough work, effort, and intelligent editing into it to make it an outstanding trademark of AWRY.

MIKE GLICKSOHN

AWRY is an excellent fanzine, which I thoroughly enjoy reading. Peccable reproduction aside, AWRY is indeed one of the very best fanzines currently appearing and is unexcelled in the area of good humorous writing. Unfortunately, good humorous writing tends to produce laughter, a good thing, but little comment, a bad thing,

especially for the writer and editor. (000) Hmmm... Well, as Murray Moore stated in the last issue: "...in my case it doesn't provoke comments. I stress "my case" because I don't know how to explain away all those other people!" (000)

Just one comment on your review of the Offutt book. "After-the-devastation" is not really an accurate term for this novel, since there has been no devastation, at least in the accepted use of the term. Society has changed, yes, but has not been destroyed as such. I enjoyed the book too, but it makes an even greater impact when thought of as an "if things go on" novel rather than removing the immediacy of the warning by labelling the story "after the devastation". I think the book was a little too obviously the result of Andy's reading of the environmental handbooks he credits, but it's a well-written novel all the same.

DENIS QUANE

I haven't even mentioned Science Fiction once yet... I have noticed that a good many fanzines don't discuss science fiction much, and for the most part, where this is true, I'm not much interested. The exceptions to this rule are due to the personality of the editor, the character of the discussion in the letter column, or the attractiveness of the artwork. But, as a general rule, what I'm interested in getting from fanzines is news, views, & reviews of science fiction. That's what I started reading fanzines for, & that's why I'm likely to keep on reading them. (I won't say that's why I came into fandom; I haven't, and I'm not all that sure I want to - and probably won't be let in after that comment... Now watch someone lecture me on the nature of fandom.) What I was trying to convey in my previous letter is that despite these principles, I did like AWRY; it is one of the exceptions mentioned above.

In the case of THE TROUBLE WITH TRIBBLES, the relationship between the story and the Martian Fat Cats in Heinlein's THE ROLLING STONES was close enough that Roddenberry cleared the story with Heinlein before they used it. And as to the story outline TOMORROW WAS YESTERDAY -- the colony ship, the mutiny leading to a loss of knowledge

It is not true that DEEP THROAT will be shown on TV and sponsored by Ace Tongue Depressors.

of the ship's true purpose, the two antagonistic factions occupying different levels - is there any doubt that if that story had been used, it would have had to be cleared with Heinlein also?

I read THE TROUBLE WITH TRIBBLES after reading WHEN HARLIE WAS ONE, and it did not occur to me at either time to make any connection of the latter book with Heinlein. It was while writing the letter commenting on your review, and attempting to express why I found Gerrold's book unsatisfactory, that the comparison with Heinlein occurred to me. Once I had written "Heinlein did it a lot better ...", I remembered the above considerations about TRIBBLES, and of course, being a confirmed run-off-at-the-mouth type, I just had to mention them.

The situation is somewhat the same with THE MAN WHO FOLDED HIMSELF. I have not read this yet, and, even though I've bought a copy, the reviews I've read don't exactly encourage me (and I'm talking about the favorable reviews). Because, it would seem that Gerrold is again inviting comparison with Heinlein - this time with ALL YOU ZOMBIES. And, from everything I've read about the book, it sounds as if it can't but help suffer by comparison.

I really like Jackie's art and think that 60-WATT logo is about the best thing going. By all means, keep using it. 000 Ok. 000

First of all, I still want you to turn down the cover, but at least it's a bit more subdued now. Mainly because there's so many good things on it to distract my attention. Jackie seems to be getting better by leaps and bounds, which is good to see. In other words, a good cover. The illo for ALIGN AND TILT reminded me of Wally Weber's garage print shop.

[illegible]

relatively large amount of gentian violet, a rather purple, and rather permanent, die. This is one of those things that is used in tricks, puzzles and games, where you -- ha, ha -- put a die in someone's sink and turn his hands purple -- the more he washes, the more it spreads, and the deeper purple it turns. I entertained brief thoughts of depositing the die in one or two of the local reservoirs and turning everyone in the city purple. But I never did. I wonder what type of reaction purple people would get?

000 I wonder what kind of reaction you'd have gotten... 000

Since Mike Deckinger has written in, I will relate a Mike Deckinger story that occurred while he was driving me around San Francisco this past March. We had just gone over the bridge and were overlooking the bay (Sausalito on the left, San Francisco on the right, Alcatraz before me...) ((Volleyed and sundered))) when I spotted a car parked right next to Mike's. "Why look," I said, to get his attention. "I wonder if that's Dave Locke's car?" Mike looked surprised. "Does Dave drive a Porsche?" he asked. "I really don't know," I said truthfully. "But look at the license. It's a WRY!" And so it was. But he didn't have to hit me.

On the subject of cigarette ads in books, I have received some sort of punishment for stating my opinion in print. While on vacation, I ran out of reading material, so I picked up a Barry Malzberg book in a drugstore. I noted in passing that some of the pages seemed to be slightly off-color, but I really didn't pay much attention then; I stuck it in my pack and forgot about it for a while. When I finally started reading, the book proved somewhat interesting, so I read on and on. Halfway through, I came to one of those cigarette ads. "Damn," I said and turned the page. And turned the page. And turned the page. And turned the page. All told, there were sixteen of those damn things in a row. The entire book was only 140 pages, and 75¢, but those extra-thick sixteen pages sure made it look a lot bigger. Grumble, snort.

Cobblers, my son, are those poor unfortunates who can't work anywhere else, so they fix shoes for a living. They usually have elves for assistants, since almost all cobblers are old and feeble, and can't get around much. These elves only come out at night, though, and fix the shoes then so the cobbler will think he's crazy, and that he's been working in his sleep.

They're called cobblers because they live on cobblestone streets, of which there aren't any any more. Cobblestone streets used to be made of cherry pits left over from cherry cobblers -- the pits or stones were coated with cement and placed in the road to dry -- but with the food shortages, the practice went out of favor.

I thank you, and I thank all your contributors. People who say Rotsler and Gilliland aren't artists astound me -- look at their drawings, and there's never an extraneous line, or a line out of place. They both know what they want, and know what they have to do to get it. I especially liked Rotsler's lighthouse for Tina's column.

JACK WODHAMS

CABOOLTURE AUSTRALIA

I've heard of soap-operas, but you having your cake and excessively coating yourself with it reveals a somewhat extraordinary mentality, if I may say so. You must be very trying to your dear Feeb, and she has my gondolances, as the man said when his bird fell off a boat in Venice. Possibly you think that cleanliness is next to godliness, but Feeb and I know, don't we? that you can work up what lather you like, and

[illegible]

still you won't have a prayer.

In one of your more lucid moments, you may be able to be pleased to know that this magazine thing of yours, EERIE, or AIRY, or HAIRY, or EYRIE, or whatever, is not so bad, in spots. Hensel and Grennell were suitably polka dotty, and Rotsler is beginning to be thought brilliant, if not downright unstable. As for the Kubrick film, it would better had been called THE CARDBOARD ORANGE, for, of all the characters portrayed, not one aroused so much as a responsive twinge from the finer emotions, such as lust, hate, disgust, embarrassment, rage, etc. For all its violence and appurtenances the whole thing was so neutrally insensitive as to be virtually anesthetic. Shirley Temple grabbed me more.

Ah me, idealism is so beautiful that it's a pity ideal people are so few.

As for 'cobblers', my son, this is an English slang term, too crude to be used normally by any but the most uncouth of the lower classes, but is an expression a gentleman may legitimately use towards ex-colonials, and Yankees generally. To politely define the meaning of this vulgarity, let us assume that a foot, clad in stout and hobnailed leather, is brought into acutely sharp contact with those glands which vasectomy so effectively nullify. In such case, the subject might be described as having received 'a boot in the cobblers'. Doubtless the reference has some ancient connection with shoemakers sticking to bang away at their lasts.

000 Shoemakers sticking to bang away at their lasts? 000

To be sworn at in another language is as futile as a Frenchman trying to cut it with a 'Frisco chick by telling her she's a little cabbage. Good round Anglo-Saxon 'bollocks' (see 'cobblers', above) becomes refined to 'bollix' in the U.S., genteel enough to be used at dinner-parties without causing offense. Likewise the New World prefers 'ass' to the more robust and less confusing 'arse' of the Old Country. And an American wastes his breath if he calls a Briton a 'son-of-a-bitch', an insult which occasions no visceral reaction whatsoever. In jest I once called a Dutch colleague 'schweinhunde', which, to me, equivalates to 'pig-dog Englander', 'donner und blitzen', 'Heil Hitler', and suchlike amusing Germanic quotations. However, he took it seriously, it held keenly denigrating content to him, and his feelings were most hurt. It took me quite a while to convince him that I only meant to call him a bastard, which was alright, 'bastard' in Australia being more or less a term of endearment.

So, you see, the breadth of your ignorance of English bad language is comforting. Jocularly, be assured, up your khyber, you great berk, and may your dear trouble's bristols never grow taters.

000 The same to you, fella'. 000

DON AYRES

PEORIA ILLINOIS

I went to see WESTWORLD last night and will almost certainly see it tomorrow, even though it means forgoing a chance to see a televised Cub game. The complaints that Crichton's ANDROMEDA STRAIN was somewhat pedestrian in approach were accurate, but I think the man may have been a bit under-rated. In WESTWORLD, he shows himself quite capable of becoming one of the finest SF film directors. Visually, the film is a treat, seizing upon the chance for some excellent shots. The story line is perhaps a bit weak, failing to capitalize on some of the probabilities, but well above the average for any type of film. There is a haunting quality about much of it; many

[illegible]

You have gathered quite a collection of writers. I don't mind telling you that I enjoyed your soap-ridden plight far more than you probably did. My dad says you should have politely asked the guys outside to turn the water back on for a minute. (What I would give for a transcript of their conversation immediately following such an event!)

The reviews were of the type I like to see: they're concerned with the business of selling the book, not presuming you already read it and trying to jog your memory. It also makes me glad I didn't buy THE ALIEN CONDITION.

I've never really worried about noises in a vacuum, either sublimating it to a part of the soundtrack music or just accepting the fact that the producers (businessmen) are going to sacrifice accuracy for what they feel is more acceptable to the viewing audience (notice that I said feel; the actual state of affairs is less important than what they perceive to be the state of reality, since they will act accordingly).

ALEXANDRIA VIRGINIA

000 Your thanks are going to the wrong party. It was Glicksohn who was attempting to force LoC^s out of people who traded with him, something which didn't make any sense to me. And in the last issue, although he was writing me because he wanted to and not because he felt forced to do so, he still felt it a good policy to require letters out of the people who were trading with him. The opinions you express above, are the ones that I expressed to him in AWRY #4. 000

46

[illegible]

I wish you would go back to listing the full addresses of the letterwriters. Many faneds, myself included, scan lettercols for possible additions to their mailing list. Not listing the full addresses hurts the intercommunication of fandom. (OOO Go back to it? In AWRY I've never done it. Never will, either. OOO)

DAVE PIPER

000 That's what my wife keeps telling me: "I knew you were going to do that", or, "I knew you were going to say that". A sad thing to be 29 and predictable... 000

I would guess that it's hardly necessary for me to say this but: my 'letters of comment' to fanzines and most particularly to humourzines such as AWRY are, I'll admit, hardly 'letters of comment'. It's not that there's nothing to comment on or that I don't want to comment, it's just that I find myself, in practically every case, writing chatty personal type letters even if I start off with good intentions of commenting. I guess it's the case, in my case, of writing the type of letter I prefer to read in letter-columns.

IMHO I just can't understand those fans (if there are any and from Mike Glicksohn's comments and others I have to accept that there are) who pay for a magazine and consider that payment as sufficient response. Even if I pay for a magazine I still feel obligated to write a "comment". But that obligation is qualified really in that I, invariable, want to. And not for egoboo I hasten to add: I still haven't quite gotten over that feeling of embarrassment when a letter of mine appears in a lettercol. Doubt if I ever will. Point I'm getting at is, in my case (and I'd guess in quite a few others of your 100+ hard-core responders) I wouldn't object to paying for AWRY and such payment wouldn't cause me to stop eye-bashing you with crappy old letters like this.

[illegible]

However such enjoyable occurrences are far less frequent since I have moved out to the Bay Area. All the hills in San Francisco discourage muggers as it's too much work to rip-off someone and then run post-haste up 800 feet of concrete at a 60-degree angle.

ALIGN & TILT (continued)

I should have known better after two previously bad experiences, but some time ago I went out and bought a second car (as opposed to staying home and sending for it). New. Our third new car. The first two broke down on the trip home from the dealership. For several months now I've been telling our friends how great this little Fiat Spyder is (that's what it's called on the registration. On the back of the car is the wording Sport 850. Inside the car is the word Torino. They must have had some extra decals left over, and didn't know what else to do with them). Nothing serious ever seemed to happen to it, which, considering our lousy track record with automobiles, was some sort of miracle. Our friends would just smile when they heard this, and make note of the fact that the car still had the original wax job.

At 3000 miles I took it in for maintenance service, which is probably the biggest mistake anyone could ever make. Never take a car to a garage while the car is still working. When I went to pick it up, the door wouldn't close; or at least it wouldn't close until I finally managed to slam it shut, to the accompaniment of a large tinkling sound as something mechanical broke off and fell down inside the door. Well, that seemed to correct the problem, as the door at least worked satisfactorily, so the next step was to pull out the manual choke and start the car. The choke is a direct feed to the rear engine, and under normal circumstances it pulls out to approximately two inches at full extension. So you can imagine the sound of my heartbeat as I managed to pull out the choke to a full arm's length. It was the old unending-handkerchief-up-the-sleeve trick, but it didn't amuse me worth a damn.

Having paid the bill to a second-shift salesman, there wasn't anything I could do about the problem until the service department resumed business on the following Monday. So I tried to drive the thing over the weekend. Driving was no problem. Stopping was the problem; the engine died every time.

On Monday I got the usual "we couldn't possibly have done this to your car" attitude, to which I gave back my usual "yes you did too you bastards". I left the car, and a couple of hours later got a phone call from the service manager. I haven't heard anyone that apologetic since Nixon first discussed the Watergate incident. He explained in exacting detail all the screwups which had been performed upon the body of my car, and made specific mention that all of this would be corrected at absolutely no charge

to anyone within this household.

At 6000 miles, and not knowing any better, I again took the Fiat in for maintenance service. It isn't my intention to be too predictable about this, but after getting the car back I found that it worked about as well as air-brakes on a turtle. As it's altogether too exciting to try and work a Fiat without having a reliable second gear, I rehearsed my "you bastard" speech and then drove back to the shop.

I won't swear to the fact that the tears in the service manager's eyes were real, but his aghast "what, we screwed up your car again?" seemed to be genuinely extemporaneous. (I believe the TROUBLE-SHOOTING MANUAL FOR SERVICE MANAGERS uses a somewhat different line). Great people. Friendly, apologetic as all hell, willing to acknowledge and correct a mistake. Just not very good mechanics, that's all.

The other day, at approximately 6800 miles, the Fiat came down with an illness which it appeared to have contracted all on its own - as opposed to, say, the doctor leaving a scalpel in its engine. Very strange problem, actually. When hitting fourth gear, between the speeds of 40 to 45 mph, from underneath the dash would emit the unhealthy sound of crackling electricity.

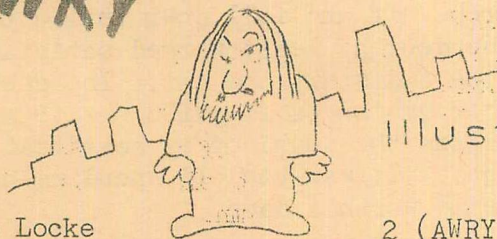
This all occurred on a 9-mile drive home from work, and when going to work the next day, and when going home again that night. Today it also occurred when driving the car to the dealer's service department. The service manager greeted me with his usual "what's wrong this time, Mr. Locke?", and listened patiently to the electricity story.

We then got into the car and he drove it approximately a mile, while we strained our ears and heard absolutely nothing. Then we turned around, stopped, and I drove it back to the dealership while we again listened to absolutely nothing. Then we both got out of the car and stood around on one foot, while he told the cliched story of how this kind of thing happens all the time. "Damndest thing," he said. "Damndest thing. Anything else we can do for you?"

I didn't hear the sound on the way home, either.

Maybe I'll hear it tomorrow.

AWRY



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