THE MAGAZINE OF LITERATURE, SCIENCE, ART, AND POLITICS

Number 7 Redd Boggs, editor Winter 1963-4

"Improve every opportunity to express yourself in writing, as if it were your last." -- Thoreau, Journal, 17 December 1851.

Punsters sometimes make good husbands and fathers.

Trépas

Let the heart die in unfamiliar ways:
on a dreamed sea, an unknown sea, following
the flight of a blown gull through silver haze,
across dark water whirled and deeply hollowing.

Let the heart die of music such as the rose
might build with wind on its green inmost petal --
music the wind might whip from ragged snows
gone coldly into metal.

It must be thus, I think: green petal, gray wing:
somehow the heart must slow before it fall;
else it will be forever too fierce a thing
to die, at all.

-- Edward Weismiller

"Robert Bloch shivered when the sun shone on him." -- A.J.C.

Whiz-Bang 1964

"Thomas Alva Edison invented the electric light and believed in God," I said with a plonk in my tones that only earnest conviction or two quarts of Busch Bavarian can induce. "On Sunday, 3 November 1882, he took time out from inventing the mimeograph to attend divine worship at the Church of the Redeemer in Parsippany, New Jersey...."

If there are any Thomas Alva Edison experts and admirers out there in the great fanzine audience, I hope that they will forgive me. I realize that I was probably talking utter nonsense. Edison was presumably an unwashed atheist, and as for inventing the mimeograph, why, even I know, when I stop to consider the matter, that it was invented by A.B. Dick, a long, slightly bent fellow with a real head on him, who lived in Pleasure Ridge Park, Kentucky. But in retailing this rot about Edison I plead extenuating circumstances.

I was visiting a friend's house, and he had just told me the joke about the two Indians who were out fishing in the Sound when one of them hooked a mermaid. He looked at her in disgust and threw her back into the water. "Why?" said the other Indian. The first Indian said, "How?"

"Very amusing!" I said gravely, not mentioning -- for I am an extraordinarily polite fellow -- that I too had seen the "Tonight" show the previous evening and thus had heard someone tell the very same joke on the entire NBC network. Alas for this programmed age! I thought to myself miserably. All the jokes I hear these days -- aside from the dirty ones and even some of them -- are stolen from last night's TV shows. Or if they're not, they are all jokes that were lifted from the latest issue of The Reader's Digest, which I chuckled over the other day while waiting in the dentist's office. One can be a raconteur nowadays if he reads the Digest and can scratch up a captive audience. Of course it doesn't matter at all whether or not your listeners read the Digest themselves.

My host told another joke. This one was from the Ed Sullivan program last Sunday. I glanced with vacant eye at the wall above my friend's desk and regarded the clutter of printed comic plaques he has thumbtacked to the wall. Lord! Lord! I cried inwardly. When the world is mad for machine-made humor, let me be strong enough to tack to my own walls only moral sayings by Henry Van Dyck and Elbert Hubbard, or perhaps that witty and original epigram I made in April 1948.

My host's voice flowed on smoothly, chucklingly, and I let the sound of it caress my grated nerves. Then a fresh note of animation crept into the salving baritone. I winced and steeled myself instantly. I mentally reviewed all the moral tales from Aesop that I should tell him, for I had made a solemn resolve to counter all elephant jokes with fables from Aesop. But I was spared elephant jokes.

"Hey! I heard," exclaimed my host, "a great new Tom Swiftie at the office today. Ho ho! Get this: 'There's no bathroom in this house,' said Tom uncannily!"

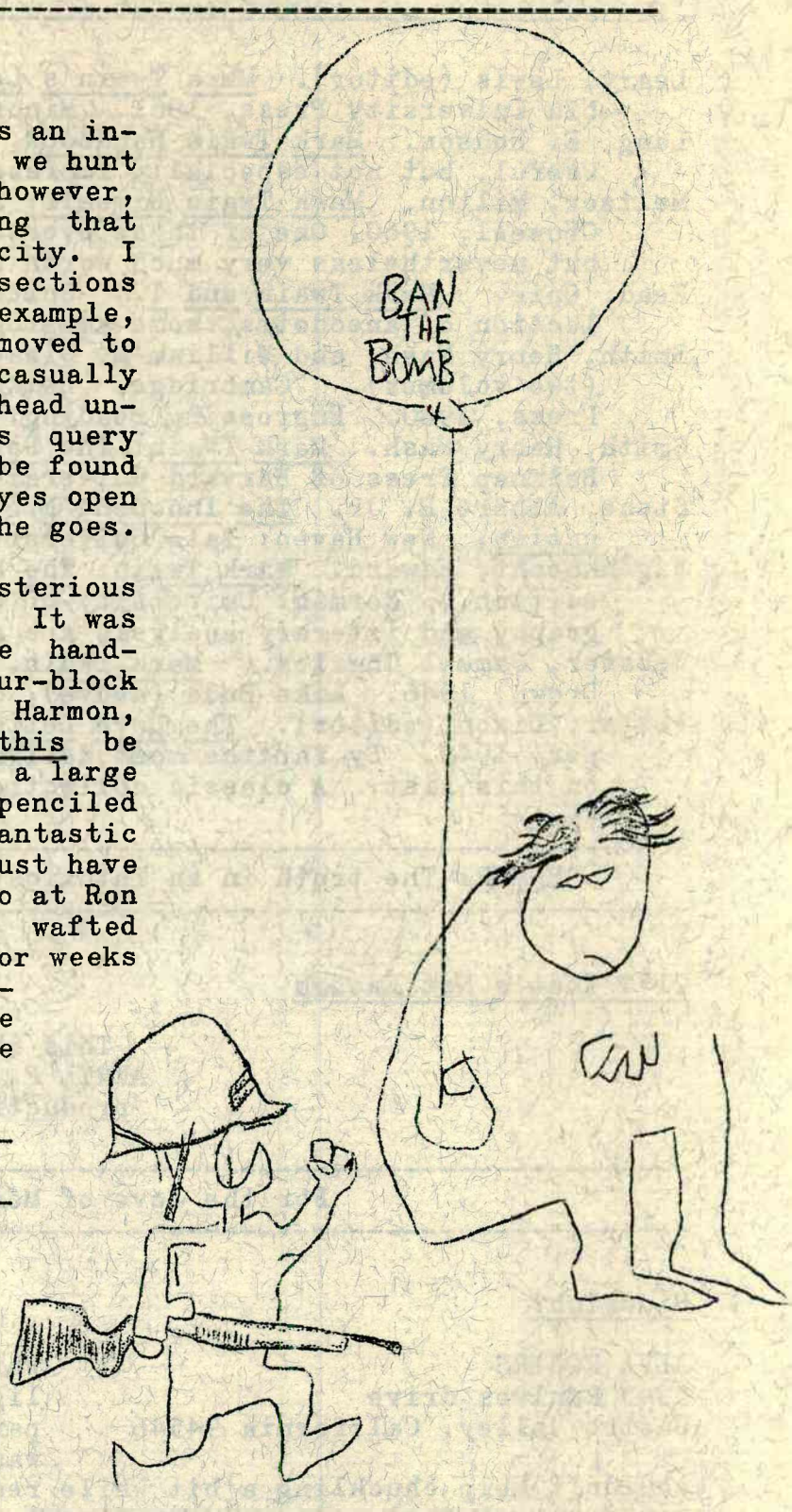
This was the moment. I cleared my throat loudly. "Your little story serves to recall to my mind an illustrative anecdote about another and even greater inventor than Tom Swift. I refer to Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931). Thomas Alva Edison invented the electric light and believed in God. On Sunday, 3 November 1882, he took time out from inventing the mimeograph to attend divine worship at the Church of the Redeemer in Parsippany, New Jersey...."

"Real Irish Linen -- made in U.S.A."

Gutter Gold

Like myself, Bill Blackbeard is an inveterate snipe-hunter. The snipes we hunt are not discarded cigaret butts, however, but the pages of writing and printing that blow about the streets of a big city. I have acquired parts of letters and sections of magazines and newspapers, for example, in 63 different languages since I moved to Los Angeles. Like Thoreau, who casually reached down and picked up an arrowhead underfoot in response to someone's query whether such Indian relics could be found in Concord, the man who keeps his eyes open will discover treasures everywhere he goes.

The other morning I found a mysterious sheet of paper tacked to my door. It was endorsed in Blackbeard's distinctive hand-lettering: "Where else but in a four-block area bounded by Boggs, Blackbeard, Harmon, and Haydock could a thing like this be found in the gutter?" The page was a large sheet from a drawing pad full of penciled doodles and scribbles, including "Fantastic Monsters" and "Jiro Tomiyama." It must have escaped from Jiro's temporary studio at Ron Haydock's some time ago and been wafted around the neighborhood for days or weeks before Bill picked it up. I reproduce one of the doodles on this page as a bit of artwork that ought to be published for posterity.



He never kissed but told.

Clemensy Recommended (Part 2)

Herewith is concluded the listing of books about Mark Twain that I began in Bete Noire #5, pp 15-16. As I said before, this listing is intended for the use of its compiler only. Don't peek.

Harnsberger, Caroline Thomas. Mark Twain: Family Man. New York: Citadel Press, 1960. Sentimental, but likable. Photographs.

Lawton, Mary. A Lifetime with Mark Twain. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1925. Another disappointment; adds little to the portrait.

Leary, Lewis (editor). A Casebook on Mark Twain's Wound. New York: Crowell, 1962. Good collection of works discussing Brooks' theory.

Leary, Lewis (editor). Mark Twain's Letters to Mary. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961. Minor stuff.

Long, E. Hudson. Mark Twain Handbook. New York: Hendricks House, 1957. Useful, but not especially impressive in itself.

Meltzer, Milton. Mark Twain Himself: A Pictorial Biography. New York: Crowell, 1960. One of those oversized, overpriced "prestige" books, but nevertheless very much worth owning or perusing.

Read, Opie. Mark Twain and I. Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1940. A collection of anecdotes, some amusing, nearly all fictional.

Smith, Henry Nash, and William M. Gibson. Mark Twain-Howells Letters (two volumes). Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960. Engrossing reading. Well-edited and comprehensive.

Smith, Henry Nash. Mark Twain: The Development of a Writer. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1962. A key work.

Stone, Albert E. Jr. The Innocent Eye: Childhood in Mark Twain's Imagination. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961. A good job.

Wagenknecht, Edward. Mark Twain: The Man and His Work. (New and Revised edition.) Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961. Both biography and literary analysis are adequate, if not penetrating.

Webster, Samuel Charles. Mark Twain, Business Man. Boston: Little, Brown, 1946. Like Budd (above), disturbing revelation, well done.

Wecter, Dixon (editor). The Love Letters of Mark Twain. New York: Harper, 1949. By far the most delightful and most illuminating book on this list. A classic collection of letters.

"HUMOR: The truth in an intoxicated condition." -- G. J. N.

21"? That's Not Enough

This is a
ARRYL F. ZANU
production

For the love of Montresor, God!

Hindsight

ALVA ROGERS
5243 Rahlves drive
Castro Valley, California 94546

While the whole issue /#5/ was delightful and a credit to you, of particular interest to me, of course, was the item on Tendril Towers. I couldn't help chuckling a bit while reading it, while at the same time I could almost feel a lump in my throat at the sad image you evoked of what a once proud fannish institution has come to in these latter days.

If I remember rightly the first floor apartment at the foot of the stairs was to the left as you entered the building. Right? Well, this once was mine. It was a fine large room with a Murphy bed, a decrepit sofa, a tired overstuffed armchair, and a bricked-up fireplace with a heater in front of it. At the front of the room, overlooking Bixel street, was a glassed-in extension of the room with a floor about three

or four inches higher than the main floor and separated from the apartment by draw drapes -- this I used as my studio for drawing and painting. Before I had this room it was occupied by Jimmy Kepner and it was considered one of the most desirable rooms in the house. I got the room after Jimmy and Mel Brown moved in together in the other downstairs front apartment, the one with the kitchen, which was subsequently taken over by Niesen Himmel and Gus Willmorth.

The room held down by Everett Evans and his daughter was the first room I had in Tendril Towers, and before me it was Mel Brown's. This room was a tiny hole-in-the-wall, no more than 9x12, with a built-on sleeping porch attached to it. This one room is overflowing with fannish lore. During Mel Brown's tenure he published his Fan-Slants there, the Knanves put out an issue or two of The Knanve, Phil Bronson ran off the last issue of The Fantasite, and I believe Degler may have used the mimeo there to run off some Cosmic Circle crud.

When I lived in that room I had as guests at one time or another Rosco Wright, Joe Gibson, and George Ebey, to name a few. One of the most memorable drinking bouts that I ever indulged in was held in that room between Fran Laney and myself. And, of course, it was the abode of E. Everett Evans, the sanctuary to which he retreated to compose the profundities that went to make up The Timebinder.

The second room I occupied in the house was the upstairs front, the one with the corner dormer windows. This was a lovely, large, well-lighted room -- perfect for an artist. But what made it the mecca for many of the local fans during the night-time hours was the fact that it looked directly into an apartment in the adjoining apartment house which was occupied by a pair of lesbians who apparently didn't know what a windowshade was for. I coulda gotten rich if I'd charged admission. Later on this room was taken over by Lou Goldstone.

Arthur Louis Joquel II also lived in Tendril Towers for a time. My sister Marjorie lived there for several years and eventually married another (male) Towers tenant, Mark Blank. They were both still living in the old place when Sid and I went up from San Diego for their wedding. Actually I believe my sister Marjorie can lay claim to having lived in Tendril Towers longer than any other fan or fringe fan during its heyday -- from about 1944 to 1950 or 1951, when she and Mark got married and finally moved out.

I don't know about the fans who lived there in the '50s, but I do know that those of us who lived in Tendril Towers during the early and mid '40s have a bond between us that nothing can ever sever. Get two or more former Tower tenants together and in no time at all we're wallowing in nostalgia. To be perfectly honest, I believe that house was just as shabby and rundown then as it is today, but in my mind's eye I can see it in no other way than as a great, lovely house, full of happy memories of friends and adventures of a bygone existence. # # #

ARTHUR JEAN COX
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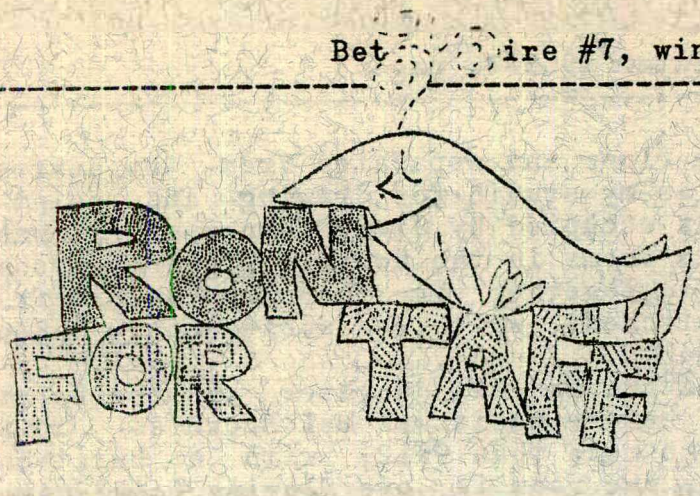
Los Angeles, California 90017

I was interested in your description /issue #5/ of the visit you and Bill Blackbeard paid to 628 South Bixel street, especially as I lived there, immured in a single shabby room, for more years than I much care to think about. Of course, only a Victorian three-volume novel, with a Dickensian profuseness of incident and character, could possibly do justice to the house, every one of whose inhabitants was distinctly an Original -- and I don't have only the science fiction fans in mind....



But about Aunt Dee. You write that she "charged minimum rent ($6 per week)" and "never pestered about overdue payments," which is true, but you go on to add that she "habitually made up the deficit, if any, out of her OAB checks," which is untrue. Aunt Dee never received nor applied for any sort of pension until shortly before her death at the age of 72 and quite some time after she had given up (not "lost") the place sentimentally known as Tendril Towers.

She once told me, and showed me her books to prove it, that she had lived the past year on a dollar and a half a day. This income had to cover everything: food, clothes, cleaning, medicines, the telephone, and the "necessary" gifts for her numerous nephews and nieces. So I'm afraid that the thought of someone not paying, or being overdue, with his rent suggests something somewhat more sobering and more pathetic than making up "the deficit, if any, out of her OAB checks." I mention this because otherwise her forbearance in this matter is not properly understood and appreciated.

There is something curious, by the way, in Blackbeard's letter in the same issue. Writing about Treasure Island, he says that when Jim Hawkins "goes tale-bearing about the planned mutiny," he "earns himself the stigma of nambypambyism in the eyes of the reader identifying with the enterprising, picaresque underdog, L. J. Silver." This sounds as though the mutiny were some sort of mischievous lark; but you will recall that what Jim overhears in the barrel is Silver's cold-blooded plan to cut the throats of every honest man aboard — including Jim's friends and Jim himself. Even if motives of self-interest didn't dictate that he should immediately alarm the doctor, the Squire, and Captain Smollet, I think most readers would consider his failure to do so an act of almost inconceivable treachery or cowardice. I doubt that many boyish readers could so mistake the tone of the story, which, though not very serious, is still more serious than such remarks would indicate.

Blackbeard's piratical sympathies are understandable (considering his name), but I think that, in the present case, he should be advised, genteely, to stow that bilge. # # #

EC: Jean adds that Aunt Dee was Miss Delta D. Wenrich (not Wenrick). Jean supplies a more or less complete list of the fans or quasifans who resided at Tendril Towers at one time or another: Bill Blackbeard, Mark Blank, Kenneth Bonnell, Mel Brown, Eddie Chamberlain, Bill Cox, Jean Cox, E. Everett Evans, Jo-Anne Evans, Lou Goldstone, Roy Hackworth, Niesen Himmel, Arthur Louis Joquel II, Jimmy Kepner, Dave Lesperance, Betty Perdue, Alva Rogers, Ira Rosen, Leland Sapiro, Dick Timmer, and Norman (Gus) Willmorth.

BILL BLACKBEARD
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Los Angeles, California 90057

Dear Rhett Boggler --

As to content, issue #5 is certainly the equal of Gary Deindorfer's Lyddite or akm bem's Jesus Bug, and considerably better than Rotsler's Kayak or Gerber's Baby Food, if I may mention these non-apa-tizing titles in a fapazine. Certainly

it stands up to anything in the eleventh mailing, although if Spaceways had been included --

Nothing by Bloch. Nothing by Willis. Nothing by Demmon. I don't know why I'm bothering with these 16 pages of Nothing -- it must be the Halloween jellybean colors attract me. Anyway, I guess I liked it.

Chappell's "The Fevered Child" is oddly reminiscent of the brief and forgotten work of Robert Nelson that appeared in Weird Tales circa 1935. But where the whole of Nelson's published work dealt with such temperature-tossed images, Chappell has brought his selectivity to bear on a specific and appropriate object; as a result, and because Chappell has first-rate talent, this single poem is a finer and more memorable accomplishment than all of Nelson's nightmare-ript fantasies. I think, however, that Chappell could have dwelt more evocatively on the homely images familiar to a child -- such as the "horrifying picket fence" -- and gone further in eschewing unlikely visual concepts: unlikely for a child, such as "continents" and "carbonation." As a disquieting summary of the poem, the line, "His naps / Have grown hotter, more polychrome" is excellent. The final two lines, however, "make" and bind up the whole. For the repeated word "beats" would have been flat and banal; "taps" is superb.

Jim Harmon's review of the Lancer Weinbaum is interesting and engaging, and a number of True Things are said, but I'm not sure if any central point is reached. I feel Jim has observations to make about Weinbaum and his relation to science fiction that he has, for some reason, seen fit to tone down here, or only hint at. Your own review of Budrys' Rogue Moon seems to build an unassailable case; as I have said in conversation, it is considerably at variance with my initial reaction in 1960, and I will refrain from comment until I can reread the book.

Dale Hart's "One Voice Among Many" is a very personal piece which one dislikes to mar with comment, inasmuch as it seems to mean much more to the poet than it is likely to the reader. The lines proferred as the beginnings of poems are striking, and one -- the third -- holds potent potential if the powerful "as from great heights falls stone and steel" can be allied with some other context: "Backward turn" seems maladroit, although perhaps the succeeding (unwritten) lines would have clarified this. All beast, Barbenoire. # # #

OUT OF CONTEXT: Dick Schultz: "Your own dry humor and that slapstick about the Circe who tried to seduce you was quite chuckleworthy. But the scene-stealer of the whole thing was that poem by Bill Blackbeard. And the gem of that beauty was the very last line. You owe it to fandom to preserve that line for posterity. Surely a Great Mind like yours should be able to discover some method of keeping that last line in the eyes of fandom till it becomes a line worthy of 'Yngvi is a louse,' now can't you?" # Fritz Leiber: "Thanks for Bete Noire; BB's poetry especially choice. (One more BB to go with Bob Bloch, Betty Ballantine, Brigitte Bardot, Bob Bailey, Bureau of the Budget, Blue Book, Bände and Beati -- I'm getting dizzy!)" # Rob Williams: "I like the Bjologoillo. Who is the babe in the arms of the Heap? Bete Davis? (This is what you call reaching for the stars)."

"I'd offer you a dollar, honey, but I know you ain't got no change."

Night Beat

The police car, like a restless beast of prey,
Prowls up and down the quiet urban street.
The shawl of sleep is hard to hold at bay;
The officers half hope that they will meet

A small diversion to dispel their trance:
A mugging, or a woman's startled call.
Only a cat engaged in ghostly dance
With moonbeams sheds a shadow on a wall.

A front door opens; from his friendly room
A man emerges for a draft of air.
His steps are firm, and fearless of the gloom.
He waves the stars a greeting, unaware

Each move is watched by hunters who surmise
Nocturnal strolls are tantamount to sin.
His eyebrows leap with innocent surprise
When suddenly the cops have hemmed him in.

The strange ordeal drags on for half an hour,
His lips protest the catalogs of crime.
The game revives the policemen's ebbing power,
They free their victim, and serenely climb

Back in the purring belly of the beast
That pounces from the curb at their command.
The threat has passed, their minds have been released
To do their duty: keeping crime in hand.

-- Edith Ogutsch

"I like man, but not men." -- Emerson, Journal

Birdlings in Their Nest

(from a Grosset & Dunlap advertisement, circa 1931)

THE RIDDLE CLUB BOOKS

by Alice Dale Hardy

Here is as ingenious a series of books for little folk as ever appeared since "Alice in Wonderland." The idea of the Riddle Books is this, three girls and three boys decide to form a riddle club....

Riddle me this: What do they DO in that club?

I like women, but not woman.

A Wanderer in Cockayne

(1) The Scent of One Million A.D.

On the road to Bjohn's in Garden Grove one encounters a lone dairy farm surrounded by the exploding suburbs. As we drove past we opened the car windows and, for a moment, expelled smog and gasoline fumes from our lungs and filled them with the dark rich aroma of cattle, manure, and hoof-plowed earth. How perverse of us to drink gratefully of the pungent odor that must be the abomination of property owners in a wide area. I expect the farm will not last long against the increasing outrage of the dwellers in the encircling subsections. Yet the place breathes purpose and sufficiency even in its outworn aspect. It assumes a watching attitude, as if it waited for us to pass on. In the plodding course of eternity all that encroaches upon it now shall rot and crumble and the farm alone shall prevail, pouring out its heavy incense of earth and the things of earth upon the miles of west wind.

(2) The Invisible Barrier

This afternoon on Alvarado street I saw an old woman weeping. She stumbled unseeingly through the throng, dabbing futilely with a bit of kleenex at the tears rolling profusely down her fat grey cheeks. At once I felt the impulse of all men of good will to neglect my own business and stop and help her if I could. But almost of its own volition my hand withdrew before it touched her sleeve. After all, I thought, how could I be sure that those silent tears were not caused by the irritation of smog? Yet my real reason for refraining from accosting the woman was the same reason that prevents me from stopping a beautiful girl on the street who has charmed my eye with swaying hips or lustrous blond hair flowing in the sunshine, infusing the moment with pleasure I shall remember long afterward but am forbidden to express. And so I passed on my way, hearing fists pounding futilely at the door of some locked chamber deep inside me and a voice calling desperately. Bjo says her cat perches atop the garden wall at midnight and cries, "I love you, whoever you are!" The voice I heard is never answered, but it said the same thing.

(3) Sonata for Unaccompanied Ocarina

Picture Forry peering out through fringes of glittering icicles and festoons of popcorn and tinsel and swaying boughs of evergreen, like an Abominable Snowman brought to quarter by Willy Ley. The assembled company at Bjohn's cornered Forry behind the Christmas tree and demanded that he defend himself against those two-bit con men and entrepreneurs who take advantage of his good nature and childlike naivete. "Forry," they sang in chorus, "be strong -- be brutal! just for once!" And a friend defended Forry against the mild attack on him which I had pointed out in the pages of Screen Facts by saying that Forry must at last be enlightened to the verity that "To be successful, one must become a bit of a bastard." Ah, then, Forry is doomed. He will always live where he lives: an endless half-block from Beverly Hills. He may succeed, but as soon as he becomes "a bit of a bastard" he will no longer be Forry.

"Try to live as if there were a God." -- Muriel Rukeyser

Marine

after Rimbaud

The silver and the leather chariots --
The steel prows and the silver --
Burst the foam, --
Heaving up the bows of thorn-wood.
The currents in the earth,
And the immense ditches of the tide,
Streak circularly toward the east,
Toward the columns of the forest,
Toward the pilings of the jetty where its angle
Is fractured in the vortices of light.

-- Fred Chappell

I'm writing the Great American Fanzine

Mine Enemy Grows Snapping Turtles

I take a grisly pleasure in the sight of the bearded, sandaled beatnik on parade in Hollywood with his half-defiant half-hunted air. Our money may be invested with General Motors and our hopes may cling to Senator Goldwater, yet we love freedom enough not to stand wholly unswayed by this man who so pitifully and ridiculously rebels against the System. His protest is a gesture only, but invigorating in its very outlandishness and obscenity. The man with the whip-lacerated back and the branded cheeks bows grandly to his judges and puts his thumb to his nose as he is led to the gallows. As long as that spirit lives, there is hope for mankind.

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and need all the Gestencils I can lay my hands on.

Figs and Thistles

All the loyal fans of "Lives and Times of a Schmugian Guk" will be glad to learn that a plan to reprint that work is under consideration. # The stars symbolize to mankind distance, remoteness, aloofness; yet among the stars are set most of the current science fiction stories. Must we search elsewhere for the major reason why today's science fiction, despite its analogies and parables, seems to hold no relevance to the world we know? # Name a story in which the Heroine is a Hero. # Karen Anderson is one of the few fans I know who pronounce the title of E. R. Eddison's story in what must surely be the correct way: The Worm Ou-ROB-oros, trilling the r's. # If we had kings serving until death, King Herbert I would be in the thirty-fifth year of his reign. Can you think of a more inspiriting thought to keep in mind at the start of this year of presidential elections? # And in this year of 1964, because it is an election year, we may expect to hear much blather about the move-

ment to extend suffrage to persons who have reached the age of 18. The common argument for this change runs, "If they're old enough to die for their country, they're old enough to vote for its leaders." But this is a preposterous notion. It is just as logical to require those who do not have the vote to serve their country as it is to require those who do not have children to pay taxes to support the schools. # It should not be necessary to assassinate the president to eradicate (even for a few days) the incessant blah of commercials from TV and radio.

"Exiled from home / By woman's whim / We'll ever roam / And run the Rim"

But 'Twas a Famous Victory

I have just been reading Barbara W. Tuchman's The Guns of August, a fat volume chronicling the events of the first month of world war 1. It was fascinating reading, but proved very little to me except that the author decided that one month was the handiest segment of the war she could manage to cover in a single book. She claims that the whole course of the war was determined by the events of August 1914, but if they were they didn't have to be. Largely the book shows that every general on both sides was a complete idiot and acted stupidly on every occasion. How lucky we are that nowadays the high command on our side is of much bigger caliber. Isn't it. Aheeheehee.

I confess that the chief revelation of the book was that of the speed and thoroughness of the jungle growth that creeps up in half a century and obscures the mightiest scars from the inquiring eye. Fifty years ago men fought and died for ideals that already have been lost to view from this vantage point of time and space. The book raised at least two puzzling questions I could not answer, and I put it down to mull them over. I made some offhand guesses, but the answers weren't important enough that I felt required to look them up. Instead I picked up the Times to read the racing results. Back to reality and sanity.

1. Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo by a Serbian terrorist. This event was the culmination of a long conflict between Austria and Serbia over Serbian nationality. What in the world is Serbia, and whatever happened in its struggle for national sovereignty? (Offhand guess: Serbia is now known as Yugoslavia.)

2. A prominent bone of contention between France and Germany was possession of the frontier territory known as Alsace-Lorraine. It was ceded to Germany in 1871. One presumes that it was given back to France after world war 1, but who has it today? (Offhand guess: France.)

"There is a poem to be made on the bird that has but one wing."

ARTWORK CREDITS. The Bete Noire heading was drawn and stenciled by Bjo Trimble. Page 3 is presumably by Jiro Tomiyama. Page 6 is by William Rotsler. Page 12 is by ATom (for TAFF).

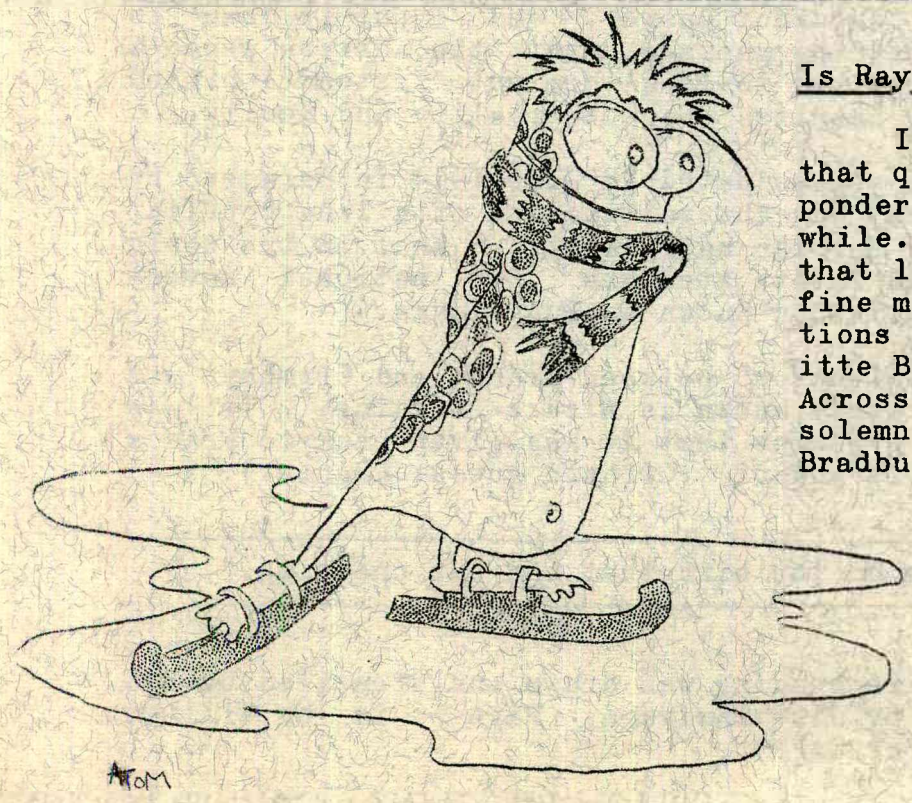
Frost on the Moon

In the Clearing, Robert Frost's last book, contains a total of 39 poems, all of them minor, but perhaps science fiction fans ought to buy the book as one of the "Any Three for $1 each" recently offered in an ad for the Book of the Month club. The book contains a poem of some 32 lines, plus a four-line "Envoi," titled "Some Science Fiction." In it Robert Frost whimsically voices a fear that because he isn't "keeping pace / With the headlong human race," and because he mistrusts "the gospel of modern science," he will be banished

> To the penal colony
> They are thinking of pretty soon
> Establishing on the moon.
>
> With a can of condensed air
> I could go almost anywhere,
> Or rather submit to be sent
> As a noble experiment.
>
> They should try one wastrel first
> On a landscape so accursed
> To see how long they should wait
> Before they make it a state.

Incidentally, the next poem in In the Clearing after "Some Science Fiction" is called "Quandary." Now if he'd only titled it "Quandry"....

Adult Population of the United Kingdom Broken Down by Age and Sex



Is Ray Bradbury a Black Republican?

It is strange that you ask me that question because I have been pondering the matter for a long long while. Five minutes, at least. Yes, that long ago I dismissed from my fine mind such important considerations as delectable Jewesses, Brigitte Bardot, and The Girl Who Lives Across the Hall and began to dwell solemnly on the problem, Is Ray Bradbury a Black Republican?

The upshot of the cogitation that went on for such a length of time deep in my bubbling consciousness is that I do not know. I am not acquainted with Mr Bradbury, and have no information as to his political preferences if any. As a matter of fact,

---

I really do not give a damn what the color and the tendency of Mr Bradbury's political opinion is. That is, after all, his own business -- heaven save him! Why do you ask me such silly questions? Now can I get back to matters of greater significance? Helen Twelvetrees....Hmmm.

Get thee hence, and when you sidle back to inquire whether Philip Jose Farmer is a member of the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness church be sure you bring along a chilly can of Busch Bavarian fresh from the refrigerator to propitiate me.

"Everything will be hunky dory when we get to Gumbo-Gumbo"

The Good Old Days

(from an ad in Roy Squires' Science Fiction Advertiser, summer 1954)

"SUPERMAN COMICS FOR SALE
"I have No's 2 to 43, No's 2 to 5 are in very good condition, and No's 6 to 43 in mint cond. The set is: $9.00 postpaid, or single copies 25¢ each. Also: ALL-FLASH COMICS, No's 1-13, and No. 14. A mint set @ $3.00 or 25¢ each. BATMAN COMICS: No's 12 to 37 in mint cond. 25¢ each. WORLD'S FINEST COMICS No's 4-9 & No. 10, mint, 35¢ each...."

"yes I said yes I will Yes."

You Asked for It

Bill Blackbeard suggested the other day that I should revive the "....." department from Skyhook. Perhaps he was suggesting it for Shangri-L'Affaires rather than Bete Noire, but in any case nothing's easier than publishing another "....." The instalment overpage is printed from a stencil originally cut for Skhk #26 in the autumn of 1957.

"To the Latin, sex is an hors d'oeuvre;

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to the Anglo-Saxon, sex is a barbecue." -- G. J. N.

I have been one acquainted with the night.
I have walked out in rain -- and back in rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.
I have looked down the saddest city lane.
I have passed by the watchman on his beat
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.
I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry
Came over houses from another street,
But not to call me back or say goodbye;
And further still at an unearthly height,
One luminary clock against the sky
Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.
I have been one acquainted with the night.

-- Robert Frost,
"Acquainted With the Night"

"After a still winter night I awoke with the impression that some question had been put to me, which I had been endeavoring in vain to answer in my sleep, as what -- how -- when -- where? But there was dawning Nature, in whom all creatures live, looking in at my windows with serene and satisfied face, and no questions on her lips. I awoke to an answered question, to Nature and daylight. The snow lying deep on the earth dotted with young pines, and the very slope of the hill on which my house is placed, seemed to say "Forward!" Nature puts no question and answers none which we mortals ask. She has long ago taken her resolution. 'O Prince, our eyes contemplate with admiration and transmit to the soul the wonderful and varied spectacle of this universe. The night veils without doubt a part of this glorious creation; but day comes to reveal to us this great work, which extends from earth even into the plains of the ether.'"

-- Henry David Thoreau,
Walden

"Just from having heard, at Darius Milhaud's, Mlle X dash off with extraordinary assurance and charm, to perfection, a number of compositions by Chabrier and Debussy (particularly the Etudes) and (very poorly these) by Chopin -- I remained discouraged, not daring to open my piano for twelve days. Small wonder after that that I don't like pianists! All the pleasure they give me is nothing compared to the pleasure I give myself when I play; but when I hear them I become ashamed of my playing -- and certainly quite wrongly. But it is just the same when I read Proust; I hate virtuosity, but it always impresses me, and in order to scorn it I should first like to be capable of it; I should like to be sure of not being the fox in the fable."

-- Andre Gide,
Journals (14 May 1921)

"There are things in my stories which I might like to change or leave out altogether. To do this may look simple, but if you try, you find you cannot do it at all. You will only destroy what is good without having any noticeable effect on what is bad. You cannot recapture the mood, the state of innocence, much less the animal gusto you had when you had very little else. Everything a writer learns about the art or craft of fiction takes just a little away from his need or desire to write at all. In the end he knows all the tricks and has nothing to say."

-- Raymond Chandler, Introduction to
The Simple Art of Murder