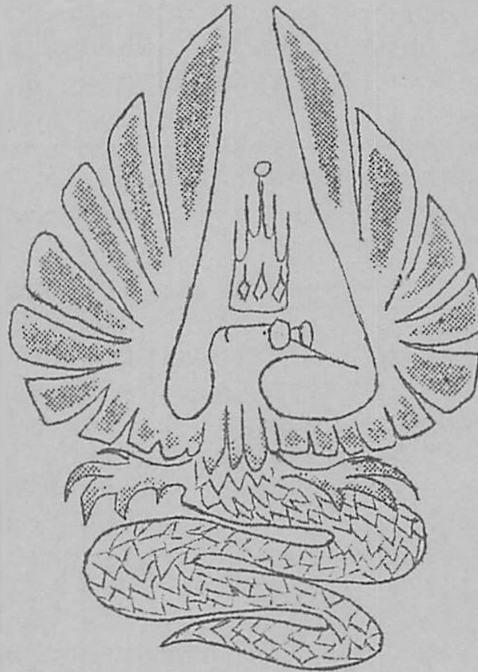


C O C K A T R I C E



SUMMER 1962

NUMBER ONE

"CHICKEN n. ... 6. An excessive show of authority; unnecessary discipline or regimentation, in either military or civilian life.... 7. Cant; boloney, bunk; testiness in discourse or behavior.... adj. ... 2. Underhanded; sneaky; thoughtless or inconsiderate. 3. Strictly conventional in conduct; following...rules too closely; misusing authority; petty, mean." -- Dictionary of American Slang, Crewell, 1960, p. 98.

"Perhaps I should explain the meaning of my campaign platform: Keep the Chicken Out. In the army (remember the army, fellas?) the phrase 'chicken- ----' referred to petty rules and regulations which in general make life miserable to the GI. There's plenty of it in civilian life, but having had my fill of it in the army, I determined that I'd have no more of it whenever I had anything to say about it. So now I'm president of a club....I'm supposed to have some sort of voice in the settling of disputes and general deciding what's to be done. In this regard my policy will be simply to make life as simple as possible. I'll have no pompousness or complex regulations." -- FAPA President's Message, by Milton A. Rothman, The Fantasy Amateur, Vol. X, No. 1, Autumn 1946.

"Ed: In reviewing the 97th FAPA mailing to assign page credit, I reread Grotesque, Winter 1962. And then I had several other fapans in the area read it. And everyone of us recognized every single story/joke in it. So I am not allowing the magazine credit, under section 5.54 of the FAPA constitution....The writing in Grotesque does not, to my judgment, fulfill this provision of the constitution. Nor does it fulfill section 3.1....And further, since you -- as a newly admitted member -- must have had your eight pages renewal requirements in the third quarterly mailing (or earlier) after joining (section 2.4), I hereby notify you that you are no longer a member of FAPA. Sorry, man, but that's the way I read it. I suggest you try section 3.3 or 3.5 of the constitution...." -- Letter from "uss,jt." [sic] to Ed Martin, 11 December 1961.

COCKATRICE number one, summer 1962. Published occasionally for the Fantasy Amateur Press association by Redd Boggs. This issue is intended for circulation with FAPA mailing #100. Goddam what hath DAW wrought. Cockatrice emblem on front cover by Richard Bergeron. The Gafia press.

The proper study of mankind is woman.

The Cicatrized Cockatrice Meets the Sugar Plum Fairy

FAPA has muffed its chance of becoming the first to see the early confident masterpieces of an artist who is sure to be hailed as the New Juanita Coulson. Everybody is going to be very fickle indeed with the Old, or should I say the Original, Juanita once this fresh genius publishes his first portfolio. Everybody but Buck Coulson, that is, and we all know what an old grouch he is. The gauze-draped alien priestesses drawn by this artist are even more stylishly emaciated than Juanita's; their cheekbones are at least 37 percent more hollow. And the glacial disdain on their gaunt sweet faces....! It's enough to make the average coxcomb cringe at 40 paces, and to prompt mousy types like Rotsler and Tucker to slink off to Tecopa to commune with packrats and horned toads.

Not to keep you on the knife-edge of suspense, the artist is me, and the reason I'm sulking over here in the corner is that nobody voted for me as best artist in the 1961 FAPA poll. It's true of course that I contributed no artwork to FAPA in 1961; it's even true, for that matter, that the only artwork I've ever published in FAPA were a few tiny cartoons in 1948-9, and the front cover of Virgins of Outer Space in 1960. But what of that? This circumstance did not prevent me, when I read the poll results, from turning as verdigris as an 11-inch brandy snifter brimming with creme de menthe. (I reeked of mint for two days.)

After all, I haven't written any mailing comments, either, since February 1955, but I received five points as best mailing commentator in the 1961 poll. I haven't published any poetry since Ugly Bird #1 in 1956, but I was among the 16 persons cited for excellence in that category. I haven't written any fiction since Ugly Bird #2 in 1959, but some stubbornly loyal friend voted for me in the "best fiction" section. As Marion Z. Bradley will gladly testify, I haven't written so much as a line of humor in 21 years of fan activity and yet I was voted eighteenth best humorist in FAPA for 1961, beating out even such glorious zanies as Sam Moskowitz and James V. Taurasi. (Two more points and I'd have tied Christine J. Haycock, M.D.)

No, you can threaten me with hired assassins up dark alleys or smuggle platinum blonds into my bedroom, but you won't sway me out of plumb by a single degree. Till somebody votes me best artist of the year, I refuse to contribute any tentacled wenches to FAPA, scrawly doodles on ancient stencils to Void, or even a splashy, luminous 40x52 oil depicting the wedding ceremony of Dick Seaton and Dorothy to the art show. Till I gain FAPA recognition my only artwork will consist of the brilliant frescoes I keep in my private gallery and give away to anyone who mooches them of me. (I lose more walls that way.) This has been an essay on Mocher Louvre.

The Theory and Practice of Chicken

Is the crooked prodigy pictured by Dick Bergeron on the front cover perhaps a wyvern or a fire-drake? I confess that I have an illiterate eye for fabulous monsters, even though my subscription fanzine Discord depicts another teratoid shape in its logo emblem (where in the guise of a serpent "Satan exalted sits, by merit raised to that mad eminence"). Wyvern and fire-drake are resplendent names and I'd like to title my fapazine after one or the other. But looking at the picture I observe the coronet sketched above the creature's head and his vaguely roosterish features, and turning to Bulfinch I am able to identify this mild-looking dragon as the deadly cockatrice. "This animal," says Bulfinch, "was called the king of the serpents" and "was supposed to be produced from the egg of a cock hatched under toads or serpents."

The genesis of our serpent is the point that clinches it. According to my inside information, here we have a critter that came into existence as the result of a very large and stale egg laid in FAPA last December. In other words, this Cockatrice was born out of chicken.

A year ago, I was inconsiderate enough to drop a couple depth-charges in FAPA that predictably dented nobody's armor but at least stirred up the silt a little. In Open Season on Monsters (spring 1961) I pointed out that FAPA has become a "chicken run" and that "The first issues of fapazines are not greeted with cries of joy, but only the sound of the constitution being riffled rapidly. All newcomers are at fault somewhere...." A follow-up Wasserbombe, The Nehwon Review (summer 1961), fulminated that FAPA has degenerated into "a social organization full of busy-bodies" and that "Denunciation and backbiting are the norm." Loyal fapans hopped to FAPA's defense instantly, howling that there was no truth at all in my ill-bred jeremiads. Had I wished to do so I could have busied myself all winter in hot debate on the issue. Did I not exaggerate slightly? Was I not a little mistaken? Wasn't it obvious that I lied in my teeth? Go to!

I hardly needed to exert my slannish prescience to know that I could safely ignore the opportunities for debate and allow time to vindicate my views. Thus I shut the door, disconnected the doorbell and the telephone, and spent the past year in recondite studies in preparation for the writing of my forthcoming monograph, "Joan the Wad: A Gynecological Dissertation." From time to time I skimmed through FAPA mailings and postmailings hurled through the transom and smiled smugly, like Newton about to shake the apple tree. Almost at the very moment I was fuzing my charges last summer (as I learned later), a conclave of Upper California busy-bodies was learnedly discussing a proposal to blackball waiting-lister Walter Breen. When this development came to light shortly after the Seacon, one of FAPA's most vociferous defenders -- a leading member, indeed one of the Top Ten -- was shaken enough to vow loudly (if privately), "Damn! I swear if they blackball Breen, I'll be tempted to resign!" I cleared my throat meditatively. A few months later, John Trimble, FAPA secretary-treasurer, solemnly parked himself on his seatbein and composed a solemn letter to FAPA member Ed Martin. At this point, I allowed myself a grim chuckle.

A brief clatter of Trimble's typewriter, the slurp of his tongue on a Freedom of the Press commemorative stamp, and I was vindicated so resoundingly that a framed portrait of F. Towner Laney crashed from the wall. The Ed Martin affair which developed as a result of Trimble's letter stands -- to put it bluntly -- as the meanest case of chicken I have encountered in this chicken run during 15 years of FAPA membership. What! The Ed Martin affair? The case our vice-president gently pettified in the spring Fantasy Amateur and sanctimoniously consigned to oblivion? Even so.

Chicken (as defined on the front cover of this publication) is an unsavory state of affairs. I am as eager as any of you not to kick about on these putrid grounds or snuffle the tainted air; unfortunately, however, important principles are involved in this matter, as well as the good name of FAPA. Alas, then, for fastidiousness and sanitation. Permit me to fling aside the dreadful heaps of dung and feathers and try to make some sense out of this appallingly mishandled affair.

In the autumn 1961 mailing Ed Martin circulated Grotesque, unnumbered, dated winter 1962, his first fapazine since he became a member again in May 1961. (He had been a member several times in the past, going back to 1938.) Grotesque consisted of five sexy short stories without byline but presumably written by Martin himself. A group of three, collectively titled "Three Feathers," were brief anecdotes whose effect depended on the punchline; the other two stories were longer, and one of them, a three-pager titled "Shifting Sand," made some attempt at characterization and delineation of psychology. Though these yarns were similar to others Martin published in FAPA during his earlier incarnations, they were all completely new to naive sheltered old me. The skill with which they were written was minimal, but as fiction they were at least as competent as most sex fiction sold at leading newsstands across the country in Adam and Nightstand Library paperbacks. From what I have so far seen of it, I think Martin's yarns were far more interesting and far better written than most of the Coventry crud.

Grotesque received a mixed response in mailing comments; Harry Warner and Arthur Rapp were perhaps most generous in their praise. Warner said Grotesque was "the best thing that Ed has done for FAPA in all his years as a member" and compared his handling of dialog in the stories with that of David H. Keller in the old Amazing. Rapp remarked on the "skillful retelling of familiar anecdotes" and told Martin that he ought to sell "this sort of thing to the 'men's magazine' market; they'd probably pay you for it." On the other hand, Jack Speer counseled Martin to "go back to mundane where you belong," and at least two fapans considered Grotesque in bad taste. Jim Caughran called it "fifth rate pornography" (!), and Phyllis Economou went even further. She found it "salacious and generally ugh," "tripe," "obscene," and even "unmailable" (!). Hers was the strongest and most surprising response to Grotesque itself till John Trimble wrote his letter to Ed Martin. This letter is quoted, in part, on the front cover of this publication. Please reread this astonishing document at this point.

Entirely on emotional grounds, Trimble's action gained a few adherents even outside the small California group that allows Bjo to do their

not-thinking for them. Boyd Raeburn thought "the secretary-treasurer's ruling seems quite fair, and I scoff at Martin's illogical howls," but then Raeburn admitted that he had not received Grotesque in his FAPA bundle. Phyllis Economou regarded Martin's ouster as "welcome news" and as "constitutionally valid." She swallowed Trimble's ludicrous reasoning whole, and counseled "worried waiting-listers" not to worry because Martin's contribution had been "eight pages of obscene stories which, it now develops, were not even original." Gregg Calkins told Ed Martin that he was not being "booted out on the whims of an inner clique" and was at fault largely because he waited till the last minute "to submit a batch of reprinted material." Robert Coulson in Vandy #15 was happy to note that Martin was dropped and reported that he had written him to tell him so. This was a kindly gesture indeed. However, Coulson was doubtful about the legality of the ouster. "You're supposed to give the man a fair trial before you hang him, John -- did you?"

Most of the members who were articulate on the matter were critical of Trimble's action. These people included Norm Clarke, Ted White, the Busbys, Rusty Hevelin, and Les Croutch. Terry Carr found Trimble's action "absolutely indefensible" and "highhandedness of the first degree." Harry Warner said: "Something definite and specific should appear in the Fantasy Amateur on the Ed Martin situation. I think he was FAPA's most useless member, but I want to know if he was dropped because he rehashed old anecdotes. If the grounds were actual plagiarism, chapter and verse should be cited; if not, there is nothing to do but reinstate him or ignore the constitution altogether from now on." Both Lee Hoffman and Marion Z. Bradley thought Ed Martin may have been wrongly treated but that he should have protested or at least denied the charge. Well, of course he did. What do you call his circulation of the Trimble letter?

The most amazing comment on the affair appeared in The Ambivalent Amoeba, wherein Jack Harness wrote, commenting on Salud: "The proper response to the dropping of Ed Martin was not, 'Is it legal?' but 'Good riddance!' There were five or more FAPA members present racking their brains to find loopholes to evict Martin through. One idea after another was dreamed up and discarded. For example, Pelz claimed the cover was a reprint (Pelz or someone had seen that cover used elsewhere before) and so I pointed out that Martin only had 7 and a half pages of credit therefore because he didn't fill the final, ninth, page to the bottom. If we contrast this case with that of Pete Graham, and throw in Carr and Myers for good measure, we see that officialdom will lean over thirty degrees out of plumb to help a valuable or active or halfway-presentable member and takes a firm stand on the deadwood that slacks off. Contrast the treatment of Johnstone and Higgs -- learned opinion on one hand and Economou's brilliant comparison-analysis on the other hand. If any kind of action can be done toward a true undesirable like Martin, FAPA is well ahead." (*Italics mine.*)

An a cappella decision, even one at the behest of one's wife, can be forgiven as momentary stupidity, but instead we discover that John Trimble's action was the result of a stealthy conspiracy among at least five FAPA members in the Los Angeles area. Reading the well-honed prose of Harness D.D. (who once raised his IQ three points by Scientology) we can well imagine the solemn convocation, from the opening prayer to the

final eloquent charge to Trimble to use "any kind of action" to remove "a true undesirable" from FAPA. In Second of a Series Trimble admitted that he was probably mistaken in his action against Martin, but protested that there is nothing in the FAPA constitution to require a FAPA official to be right at all times. According to the Harness account, however, the Trimble action was not a mistake, but a deliberate attempt on the part of a few minor members to dictate to FAPA by fair means or foul. I think it particularly interesting that Bruce Pelz, a new member himself, presumed himself qualified to pass judgment on the qualifications of another member.

Official action to rectify Trimble's misuse of his office has been notoriously ineffectual and short-sighted. In an addendum to the February 1962 vice-president's report Bill Evans deprecated Martin's charge that the ouster was rigged by "an inner clique" -- Evans of course had not seen Harness' revelation as yet -- and declared that Martin "did not exhaust the remedies available to him." In the secretary treasurer's report signed by John and Bjo Trimble, Martin was listed as having "departed" because he was delinquent in dues and activity (!). Then came the postmailing Second of a Series in which John Trimble admitted he had made an error but evinced no interest in setting his error right. In the May 1962 Amateur Bill Evans delivered a vice-presidential decision which in effect whitewashed Trimble and consigned Martin to outer darkness because Martin had failed to protest formally to Trimble's illegal act.

Whatever became of the apologists for the FAPA constitution? When I attacked the constitution in Open Season on Monsters, many protested that FAPA must be governed by law, even law of a ponderous, top-heavy sort, lest it sink into anarchy. Yet a FAPA official can pull an illegal and manifestly unfair piece of hanky-panky and there is no redress. The vice-president has not read enough of the vast and quaggy document which we call the FAPA constitution to notice that when an official makes an error -- as John Trimble admits he did -- the member affected is given an extra mailing to make up his activity.

The Trimbles proved themselves the most incompetent officials of FAPA in nearly 15 years, but FAPA has survived incompetence. I am not sure whether it can survive the Ed Martin affair and the other unsavory business indulged in by the Los Angeles "caucus." (See Sercon's Bane #10, page 5.) I myself verged upon resigning over the Martin affair for several months and thought better of it only after hearing some tart advice from Marion Z. Bradley. The Martin matter should not be allowed to drop yet, and even if nothing more can be done to reinstate Ed Martin, FAPA must not forget this affair. John Trimble would do us a favor if he would resign. If he remains, I will undertake a motion to censure him for his official actions during his term of office.

I trust that the Los Angeles cheese merchants will not seek FAPA office again. Keep the rascals out! I, for one, will never again vote any of the boojums of the Bjo clique into any FAPA office.

"Honey, last night Ah dreamed you was a wattahmelon."

Our Re-Examination Round "The Rover Boys on the River"

The time has come -- as I decided the other day after discovering, with vast becrogglements, various scholarly exegeses (Christ!) of various high-toned tomes in recent mailings -- to turn back to an old obsession of mine. In my uncurried nonage I spent more time pouring over this volume, and others like it, than Bob Leman spent studying the first two pages of Finnegans Wake. The book is obviously ripe for critical dissection, and you can imagine the fun we'll have analyzing and clarifying the text. Furthermore, this literary triumph helped shape the intellectual development of two or three generations of clean-limbed young Americans (among them, yt), and a study of it may shed some light on the perennial problem of "Where are we at all? and whenabouts in the name of space?"

The book, ninth in a whole wondrous series, is titled The Rover Boys on the River; or, The Search for the Missing Houseboat. It was written by Arthur M. Winfield, pen name of Edward Stratemeyer (1863-1930) and his brilliant stable of scribes, the Stratemeyer Literary syndicate, producer also of the Tom Swift and the Motor Boys series. The book is copyrighted 1905 by the Stitt (no stit!) Publishing company. My copy, a reprint by Grosset and Dunlap, is inscribed on the flyleaf, "To Gordon -- A happy birthday, with much love from Aunt Lillie, Aug. 1, 1927," so you can see the volume was in print at least two decades and probably somewhat longer.

The book, and the others in the first Rover Boys series, describes the life and times of three brothers, Dick, Tom, and Sam Rover, who attend prep school and later college somewhere in New York or New England, and frequently go gallivanting off to Africa, the Adirondacks, the Great West (sic), Brooklyn, and other exotic places in search of adventure. In this particular book the Rover boys travel by houseboat along the river route taken earlier by Squire Hawkins and his brood in Mark Twain's The Gilded Age (1874) and have all sorts of double-peachy fun.

In the exegesis that follows, the roman numerals refer to chapter, and the arabic numerals to page. Open the book on your knee and attend.

- I 1 "Zip, boom, ah! Rockets!" Refers to rochet, a close-fitting linen vestment resembling a surplice, worn by bishops and privileged prelates in certain religious ceremonies.
- I 3 Pittsburg. A town (pop. 19,341) in southeastern Kansas. Less likely, it may mean Pittsburgh, located in western Pennsylvania at the confluence of the Monongahela and the Assiniboine rivers. The Farmers Bank building in Pittsburgh is 20 stories, or 322 feet, high.
- I 4 The Thousand Islands. A salad dressing "popularly used over just wedges of lettuce." For six servings, mix together $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mayonnaise; 1 tbsp. chili sauce; 1 tbsp. chopped stuffed olives; 1 tsp. minced chives; 1 hardboiled egg, chopped; $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. paprika; and salt and pepper to taste.

- II 11 William Philander Tubbs. First name derives from William of Malmesbury (between 1090-?1143), English historian. Middle name refers to the lover of Phillis in an old English ballad, or to the lover of Erota in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Laws of Candy." His surname may suggest a set of drums: cf. "I even beat the tubs a little" -- Nelson Algren, The Man With the Golden Arm (1949).
- II 13 Village of Bramley. A reference to (Patrick) Bramwell Bronte, dissolute brother of Charlotte and Emily, or to Donato d'Agnolo Bramante (1444-1514), Italian architect.
- II 14 Lew Flapp. Lew is an emendation found in modern printings of Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress": "...the youthful hue / Sits on thy skin like morning lew." It is explained to mean "warmth." Originally the word was probably glew (= glow). A flap is an encounter between rival street gangs; a rumble. Thus the name Lew Flapp means literally "hot war."
- II 18 Burnt cork. A city in County Cork in southwest Eire, at the mouth of the Lee river. Pop. 80,765. In 1873 fire destroyed a chemist's shop, a harness barn, and nine pubs.
- III 19 n-----. A dark screen used for decreasing light on a stage or movie set.
- III 21 Captain Putnam. From Richard Puttenham (15207-1601?), author of "The Arte of English Poesie" (1589).
- III 26 huckleberry bush. Refers to Huckleberry Finn (1884), a novel by Mark Twain, in which Huck Finn and Jim, the runaway slave, traveled on a raft down the Mississippi. Bush refers to the burning bush on Horeb where the angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire (Exodus 3:2). It may also have Freudian implications.
- IV 29 hoodwinked. Derives from hoodoo (= one who or that which brings bad luck) or from hoodlum (= a young ruffian or thug). Lurking behind the reference also is Little Red Riding Hood, in the popular fairy tale translated from Perrault by Robert Samber (1729?), wherein a little girl is deceived by a wolf.
- IV 33 "...a putty considerable stock of goods..." Probably short for putty powder, an oxide of tin, or of tin and lead, used for polishing glass, metal, etc.
- IV 34 memorandum. Obviously a sotto voce reference to the membrum virile, with associations, also, with Robert Browning's poem, "Memorabilia," and thus with Shelley (1792-1822), who drowned while sailing near Spezzia, Italy.
- IV 36 "I am Richard /Rover/, commonly called Dick..." The original MS was apparently expurgated at this point. After Dick Rover introduced himself in that fashion, his brothers probably did

likewise. As follows: "'And I,' added his brother, 'am Thomas, commonly called Tom.' 'And I,' chimed in the third Rover, 'am Samuel, commonly called S--t for Brains.'"

To be continued. Everybody is invited to assist in this exegesis. I need help in identifying such references as Ohio river, hullabaloo, "Du meine Zeit!", dancing pumps, and Sabbath day. Sources used so far include the following:

1. The Little Blue Book of Yiddish Proverbs. Haldeman-Julius, n/d.
2. Index Librorum Prohibitorium. London, 1877.
3. A Night in a Moorish Harem. Erotica Biblion society, n/d.

"I would like to know what gave God the idea for Charles Burbee." -- D.G.

Nicht Diese Töne?

(The Frances Miller Brown memorial bells
strike high noon over the U of M campus)

O Freunde! men shall be as brothers, drunk
with fire of joy, at lectern, desk, and chair:
a Millionen from scholarly blue funk
spun by a quiver on the air;

O Tochter aus Elysium and all
the world embraced, the Bosen overthrown:
Millennium struck in lab and lecture hall,
set right by noonday's timely tone;

O listen! Brüder, can you spare a din
at noon, to hear the tame bells carillon down
Freude, Schöner Götterfunken in
esteem of Frances Miller Brown?

-- Theophilus Bongflap Jr

"The more I see of the saved, the better I like sinners." -- J.B.

Come On In, The Print's Fine!

The same summer that I was chewing my way through all 30 books in the Rover Boys series #1 and #2 like a berserk beaver, I was also trying my fangs on some of the Zane Grey western classics. I confess that I found them a bit too tough for milk teeth, but I was impressed with Wildfire and Riders of the Purple Sage, and with one scene in another of the Zane Grey novels -- I've forgotten which. In this yarn Grey's stalwart young hero, whose name I persist in remembering as "Two-gun" Avram Sigafos, is forced to hide out from a posse in a shack down at the bottom of a canyon due west of Old Glory, Texas. Two-gun finds life in the

boondocks mighty tedious, and all that keeps him from going meshuggah are a box of cartridges and a can of tomatoes. You see, there's no other reading material within 150 miles of the place, and our hero kills time all those weeks by reading the fine print on the labels.

Or maybe, instead of cartridges and tomatoes, it was mustache wax and tobacco. I don't trust my eidetic memory on anything that happened longer ago than 23 years, six months, and four days. Anyway, if it was a can of Prince Albert smoking tobacco I hope old Two-gun had fun altering the fine print on the back of the tin. As I remember from my boyhood, anybody with a febrile imagination and a sharp instrument to scratch out a few words and phrases can change the meaning of this vital message into something shockingly scatological.

If I knew his exact space-time coordinates, I would teleport a compact little library to Two-gun: War and Peace, say, and The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Batrachomyomachia, and Cooper's "Littlepage" trilogy. That would hold him for a weekend or so. But he probably made out all right with the fine print on his tins and cartons. Somewhere in all that 6-point type he must have run onto a term like irradiated 7-dehydrocholesterol, monosodium glutamate, or butylated hydroxytoluene, which could preoccupy him for a good 48 hours right there. I have found that fine print inevitably offers the richest reading entertainment in the world — Lady Chatterley's Lover notwithstanding — to anybody who can focus his eyes that nicely, whether or not it contains a dash of butylated hydroxytoluene as flavoring.

As for me, I've been a fine print buff since the age of 12, when I finally tumbled to the fact that, by a curious law of life, the lies are always told in large glaring type, and the small truths are always admitted in the fine print. This is the case with all insurance policies, claim checks, admittance tickets, sales contracts, and of course food labels. The wrapper on a loaf of bread has the slogan "Stays Fresh Longer" splashed across it in red letters, but a glom of the fine print reveals that the bread is composed largely of calcium propionate and certain poisons that permit the bread to appear fresh for a full week after it has actually become as stale as Bumpnik wit. My instinct therefore is always to believe the small print and to dismiss anything in large clear type as obvious claptrap if not pure balderdash.

Many's the streetcar exit I've blocked in my day while I've read and considered the pyramiding disclaimers printed on the back of the transfer. Many's the supermarket aisle I've obstructed while I scrutinized the label on every bag of potato chips on the shelves. And speaking of revelations in fine print, I'll never forget my encounter with one of the fornicati infesting the Lord High Admiral pub in London during world war 2. Miss Greer Sigafos, her name was, or so she said. Among the sisterhood in that place she was unique in possessing a tattoo on her left wrist depicting a crimson love-lies-bleeding in full bloom. Over a gin-and-orange I discovered that her gimmick was to coyly reveal that she boasted other, more exciting illustrations in certain strategic places of her ample body.

As she chitterchattered, I felt myself becoming interested in her carnal picture-gallery in spite of myself. This woman claimed to have turned 28 last Candlemas; nevertheless she remembered the Boer war (and maybe the Crimean war) as clearly as if she took a leading role in it. She claimed to be a Frenchwoman born and bred (probably countless times); her "I am sure I don't know" pealed out in the very intonations of the great bell at Bow. Thus I began to imagine, obscurely, down in one invaginated lobe of my fine-print mind, that if I should investigate, I might find a revelatory tattoo just below her navel, reading in 6-point Kennerley: "Hortense Wadman, born in Cheapside, 3 June 1882." Thus by the nature of things, fine print would contradict everything I was hearing in that booming St Mary-le-Bow voice.

But when pressed (verbally) she revealed (verbally) that all her tattoos were strictly pictorial except for a small heart enclosing the single word "Mother," which appeared on her right buttock. The rest of it consisted, I learned, of a large-scale depiction of the Victory under full canvas engaging two French frigates at Trafalgar (100 guns erupting as one), the flags of the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance, all in full color, and 17 varieties of posies, all in full bloom. I was disappointed, and admitted as much. The last I saw of Miss Sigafos, or Miss Wadman, she was accosting a Greek sailor, who (I hope) had a keener interest in strictly pictorial artwork than I.

As a science fiction fan I read all the fine print on the mastheads of all the sf magazines and memorize much fascinating data. CRestview 4-0265 is the phone number of Ziff-Davis' Beverly Hills office, in case you want to know. Mary E. Campbell (any relation?) is secretary of Conde Nast Publications, Inc. Perry L. Ruston was president of Street & Smith and nobody grieved more than I when he was replaced on the Analog masthead, beginning with the February 1962 issue, by I.S.V.-Patcevitch, president of Conde Nast. (Like, who he?)

If anybody asks me (and you'd be surprised at the people who don't) I'm quite willing to inform them that changes of address for Analog are to be sent to Boulder, Colo., of all places, and those for Amazing are to be sent to 434 South Wabash avenue, Chicago. F&SF, as I am wont to inform people when I've had one Pepsi too many, is published at 10 Ferry street, Concord, N. H., and Analog is published at Greenwich, Conn. The publishers cannily refuse to reveal where If is published, if you could call it that, but second class mailing privileges for Galaxy have been obtained at Holyoke, Mass. A hydrogen bomb laid at Quinapoxet, Mass., would undoubtedly destroy the reproductive apparatus of at least three sf magazines at one stroke, besides being too bad for the citizens of Quinapoxet and Environs. Let us piously hope that the Soviet high command harbors no critics who read Analog, F&SF, and Galaxy.

I keep close tabs on the copyright notices in the front of all the sf magazines, and have noticed an anomalous notice in Galaxy for several years. It says "Copyright New York 1962." How New York comes in there, I don't know. This notice seems to assign rights to all Galaxy material broadly to the citizenry of New York (city and state), up to and including the innocent hinterlanders living quietly in East Schodack, N. Y. In fact, I am of the opinion that this listing invalidates the copyright

("Publication...with an inadequate notice results in the loss of the right to secure copyright which, once lost, cannot be regained"). I intend to test my theory by reprinting a yarn from Galaxy in booklet form without asking anybody's permission -- just as soon as Galaxy prints something worth stealing.

I even scan all the fine print of the statement of ownership notices that are printed each autumn in all the magazines, just to guard against the possibility that the publishers are putting something over on us. Conde Nast ought to be warned that I, for one, am perfectly aware that the Patriot-News company of Harrisburg, Pa., owns an unspecified hunk of stock in the company that publishes Analog. And Mercury Press, Inc., should be alerted to the fact that I have taken notice that their statement of ownership in 1961 was signed and sealed by a notary calling himself Melvin Flamm. The fact is, I am taking a survey concerning these matters, and candidly I have yet to find anybody who is certain that the Patriot-News company can be trusted with their piece of John Campbell, or that there is anybody named Melvin Flamm within 10,000 miles of Avram Davidson. This name is as patently false as John Doe or Theophilus Bongflap Jr.

Hell, sometimes I even read the fine print in the classified ads. In case you don't know, you can buy eight cards featuring "Beautiful Chinese Girls" for only a buck. How can you lose? But in case you are not interested in Chinese girls (who, frankly, are built the same way as American girls, as Art Wilson will probably tell you), you may be interested to know that you can get free information on "subliminal conditioning, hypnotic gray sound," from the Audio-Sonic [sic] Laboratories of Amarillo, Texas. Or if you want to squander \$2 on hypnosis, you can always try the method that has satisfied thousands, offered by a fellow named Timner of Cedarburg, Wis. By the Timner method you can actually hypnotize "unnoticed, quickly, effortlessly."

If I read about this method in the large type in which Campbell's Analog editorials are set, I would holler "Humbug! Pishposh!" and certain even more pungent terms. After all, hypnotizing somebody unnoticed! But when I see such a preposterous claim made in fine print of course I am conditioned to believe it utterly. In fact, the next time you find yourself dashing around on your hands and knees, telling everybody you are a wire-haired fox terrier and proving it by taking nips at convenient ankles and sniffs at nearby fire hydrants, you can be pretty sure that, shortly before, I was standing right behind you, making mysterious passes with my hands. One could do worse than be a reader of fine print.

"Hello, Central! Give me Doctor Jazz! ... Hello? Ted?"

That'll Do It Department

(Barbara Steedman in Fan-Damn, Vol. 1, No. 1, FAPA mailing #20, summer 1942)

Pogo (Mrs Rus Wood) suggested that the HFL [Harbor Fantasy League] admit only married couples to membership, thus keeping out twerps and nitwits with only a passing interest in fandom.

Et in Arcadia Egoboo

Dear "Neglected" Marion:

At least Schuyler Miller calls you "neglected" in his review of The Door Through Space in the May Analog — a well-deserved plug that tickled me vastly; have you read it yet? And I believe that you damn well have been neglected, not only by editors, publishers, and critics, but by your readers, including me. I myself have read The Door Through Space twice, and so far I haven't even gotten round to knocking out two lines of comment about it. God knows I could easily have written a letter to you acknowledging the autographed copy you sent that would out-dazzle Emerson's to Whitman, and could even echo some of his appreciative compliments: "I am not blind to the worth of the wonderful gift....I give you joy of your free and brave thought. I have great joy in it. I find incomparable things said incomparably well, as they must be" -- u.s.w.

But all that's mere rhetoric, though perhaps dulcet gabble to shout down your ear trumpet after a decade of howling silence. I'd really like to bang out about 30,000 words analyzing the novel down to the last shrewdly-chosen word and misused semicolon; the book seems to me in many ways the best thing you've ever done, and it would delight me to discover -- for my own information if not yours -- how you have accomplished the job. You will remember that I was not much pleased with the novelet version, "Bird of Prey," in the May 1957 Venture, and you will remember why -- inasmuch as the novelet was one occasion among many which caused me to hop up on my apple-crate and pontificate to you interminably about the proper role of the hero in a work like this.

As I intoned it then, as I recall, I insisted that a hero worthy of the name ought to (1) take an active part in the shaping of his personal destiny and any other destinies involved, and (2) triumph over adversity at the end by means of his own strength and daring. Alas, too many of your heroes have been mere pawns shoved around by circumstances -- men who do not act but are merely acted upon. In the classical MZB example of this tendency (i.e., "The Climbing Wave") your hero even decides at last that the goal he has been striving to achieve isn't worthwhile anyway and the hell with it.

This situation doesn't occur in "Bird of Prey," of course, but your hero in that yarn was still a passive rather than an active agent, and partly as a result of this, your story, instead of moving, merely lay there and pulsed waves of color and emotion like a fat lazy chameleon. The thing that startles me about the novel-length version of the same yarn, which DAW trimmed up with the misleading title of The Door Through Space /Ace F-117/, is that the story here is strong exactly where the novelet was weak. You have retained the color and emotion but also managed to make the piece get up and travel. As James Blish would describe it, the yarn has impetus. It reads like a shot.

While you have improved very nearly 100 percent in your ability to handle fast action and suspense, I think you still exhibit a certain deficiency in your depiction of physical, violent action, particularly hand to hand combat. You have, of course, come a long way from the time

you described a fist-fight (in one or another of your early unpublished writings) in such a way that it sounded like nothing so much as a hair-pulling tiff in kindergarten, but you still turn a bit squeamish at the sight of blood. Most women writers do -- even the other good ones. For some psychological reason women come a cropper when trying to describe brutal action. I remember Hemingway's charge that Willa Cather in desperation "Catherized" the battle scenes in the movie "The Birth of a Nation" for the scene at the front in her novel One of Ours. I'm not complaining about this shortcoming, for it is only relative: you do it much better than most women writers. It's simply that you handle straight headlong "slambang" better than scenes where heads get split and booboes ruptured. I agree with you when you point out that if you ever do write blood-and-guts accurately it will probably mean that "something inside (you), which should be tenderer, had hardened out of knowledge." Compassion, after all, is a worthier quality in a woman qua woman or in a woman qua writer than a secret insight into the psychology of violence.

Of course, like many novels with heavy emphasis on suspense, The Door Through Space falls down at the end. "Incidents and people," as E. M. Forster expressed it, "that occurred at first for their own sake now have to contribute to the denouement." It's disappointing to discover that the "toys" whose deadly menace built up much tension, turn out to be almost as dangerous as balsa-wood airplanes powered with rubber bands. And it's also disappointing to note that, after all his purposeful activity, Race Cargill, your hero, finally has little to do with the windup. Your message seems to be that a mere man can dash around, flexing his biceps and glowering beetle-browed at every villain within miles, but in the end a woman and, here, a child, possess the ultimate Power and are in control of things. (The classic example of this tendency is your unpublished circus novel, completely masculine-dominated till the last scenes in which you introduced that wonderful woman Cleo to unravel things and create the ending.) In any event Race Cargill is a prime mover, not merely a pawn, and he is one of your most satisfactory heroes: tougher, more active and resourceful than most.

Well, as soon as I write my 30,000 word critique on The Door Through Space, I will mention these things and possibly even others. I will show how skilfully you've made this yarn move, develop, and come to a climax. I will praise your delineation of character, and your handling of background and setting. You're a damn good sf writer.

I'll write that critique someday, too, if you'll promise to stop selling novels at such a mad pace so I can catch up. Scott Meredith in his role of MZB's apostle to the Laodiceans is doing too good a job. Seriously, I'm looking forward to the back-to-back Ace printing of Sword of Aldones and The Planet Savers -- or whatever DAW has retitled them. I piously hope he has retitled the latter novel anyway. From what you say about the Sword yarn, I will read it with particular pleasure. I look forward to meeting your hero Lew Alton. Here's to Meredith and Wollheim but mostly to you. I just uncapped a cold flagon of vintage Pepsi and will quaff it in your honor.

Ever thine,

Redd

Next issue: "The Terrible Smell" by Bob Silverberg and Virginia Mushkin
