

THE DAMN THING

december 1940

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The Damn Thing

T. BRUCE YERKE
DICTATOR

FJA,
Financier ('Till the Technate)

Edwin Chamberlain,
Mimeographer's Devil.

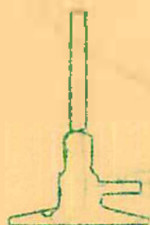
Vol. 1

December, 1940

No. 2

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THE DAMN THING is published between each 6th & 8th week by T.B.Yorke, with the assistance of members of the L.A.S.F.L. You can curse yourself with this THING for a dime a copy, three for two-bits at Box 6475 Metropolitan Station, Los Angeles, California.. Send all letters of comment to T.B.Yorke, 1223 Gordon St., Hollywood, California.



THE EDITOR SITS ON HIS platform

Beautiful Jade, and cut glass;
Budah's sitting on his— platform.

And you may be quite assured that my own particular platform has, in the course of the past few weeks, heated up to quite such an extent, that my perception of any number of items has been almost warped.

For those who are not quite in sympathy with this bombastic little publication, I wish to prolong your misery by stating that, as yet, I have received no time bombs or other projectiles of a definitely harmful nature. I did receive a peculiar package from New Jersey which actually ticks! This is all very peculiar, and I have stored the package in the Shangti-La Photoshop for further investigation.

Before me on the desk, I have a number of little items which I have vowed to take up in this personal corner. A number of changes, for one thing, are in order. Those who were so unfortunate as to receive a copy of the first thing, will recall that in very faint and uncertain letters on the table of contents, there appeared the words: "Every six weeks."

We now have a new policy, propounded to keep up interest towards our jovial endeavour. Ordinary magazines which say "every six weeks" are apt to appear right on the dot. Around the end of every sixth week the subscriber expects, and gets, his dime's worth. The same goes for magazines which come out every eight weeks. THE DAMN THING, to be different, is going to come out SOMETIME BETWEEN every six and eight weeks. Thus, at the end of every sixth week, the reader commences to expect a DAMN THING. The tension mounts from week to week. By the eighth week he is a nervous wreck. When the DAMN THING finally comes, he collapses. In a comma, he reads the mag. and there is a subtle psychological suggestion by Fassbeinder which causes him to take out a life subscription.

During the span of the first issue, we have made many friends. Also a number of enemies. I have been bombarded from all sides by subtle suggestions to dive off the Brooklyn Bridge when the river is frozen over. This too, I can't understand. If I dove off when the river was not frozen, I might have a chance to emerge alive. However, to dive off when the river is icebound would be sheer suicide. What does Mes-cowitz want me to do? Kill myself?

Lost garbled news reach out regarding the absence of the announced Heinlein Satire by Fassbeinder, we shall herewith set it straight, though we remain somewhat biased. After having written, stencilled and run off one hundred sheets on both sides, we received first a note from Lokerman, followed by a note from Mrs. Heinlein to the effect that they did not want it published at all. Well, we admit that the Heinleins are quite within their right in not wishing the matter to be published, and as you can see, the hundred sheets of paper have been physically altered in their form. i.e., they are now a form of crabon. The editor re-

(Continued on page 18.)

Genie Trouble!

by Ray Douglas Bradbury

(Caught in a cross wind when the Heinlein trouble occurred, the editor, as a last resort, and take notice, I say "last resort," turned to that vast reservoir of rejected stories, Ray Bradbury, and said: "Ray, dear, will you please write me a little story for THE DAMN THING, and if you don't hurry, by God— I'll,——, well I'll revive Hollerbochen!" Bradbury gasped in horror, and turned out this little ditty, which I think is damn good. Ed.)

.....

Mr. Tweek had just been to the movies. In fact, he had just seen THE THIEF of BAGHDAD. My, how he had liked that picture!

Mr. Tweek went home and decided to take a bath. He went into the bathroom and took off his clothes and put the plug in the bathtub and turned on the water and waited for it to warm up. He got himself a book and started reading. Finally, when there was enough water in the tub, Mr. Tweek put his toe in and felt of it.

"Ouch," cried Mr. Tweek.

Was the water too hot? No.

"Somebody pinched me," cried Mr. Tweek.

And he looked in the bathtub. And there sat a genie.

Not a BIG genie. That would be silly.

But a little genie.

"What are you doing in my bathtub?" demanded Mr. Tweek.

"I'm a genie," said the genie.

"Stuff and nonsense," objected Mr. Tweek strenuously. "I'm not a drinking man. And you are not really there, are you?"

"The hell I ain't," the genie smirked.

"I'm insane," groaned Mr. Tweek.

"Could be." The genie folded his arms, all four of them, and lolled back, floating on top of the water and sprouting some of it from his puckered lips.

"How am I supposed to bathe with you in my water?" cross-examined Mr. Tweek, who was an impatient individual, especially with genies.

"That's your problem," chuckled the genie.

"When I rented this house," said Mr. Tweek, "I didn't bargain for a genie to come paddling about in my abulutionary liquid. Get out of here, you tramp, I have you got no modesty?"

"What kind of modesty?"

"What if my wife had walked in on you instead of myself?" said Mr. Tweek. And the very thought sent convulsions up his spine. "My wife hates dogs and rats and she would positively throw an epileptic jig if she sat down in the tub and found you."

"I'd pinch her bottom," said the genie, gesticulating, with a dirty grin.

Thus saying, he rolled over and, printed in large letters on his back, could be read:

"Ninety-nine and fourty four hundredths per cent pure. It floats."

Mr. Tweek stood over the tub for several moments, contemplating this message of world collapse. Ingenious genie.

"I see you carry advertising," said Mr. Tweek.

"Oh, that," said the genie. "Yes. Some advertising guy caught me a month ago and tattooed my back. Damn him. He's the first one that ever put something over on me."

"It's not so much over," said Tweek, "but it certainly is 'on' you allright. Pretty, too." Then: "But how about getting out of the tub and going someplace else.

"Youre wife's bedroom?"

"My God, you are licentious, aren't you."

"Hand me the soap, Tweek."

"Here."

"Thank you."

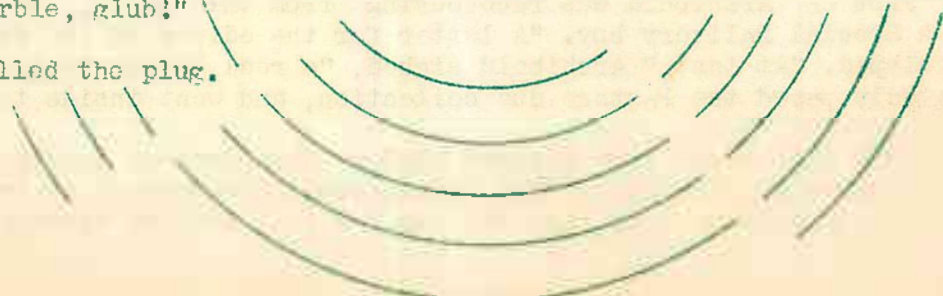
Tweek stood for a while longer. Genies were okay in picture plays, but when they started stomping around the bathroom at all hours of the day—well! And who knows, thought Tweek, maybe this genie would insist on coming to bed withhim at night to warm his feet — and — well, there was no use thinking any more, it was getting pretty bad.

Finally an idea struck Tweek.

"I'm going to get rid of you, genie," he laughed, and his laugh was strange.

"Don't be smart," snapped the genie, "Don't be smart. You can't— HEY! STOP! For God's sake, DON'T DO THAT!" Then, confusion. And the last thing the genie said was: "Burple, burble, glub!"

Mr. Tweek had pulled the plug.



archibald was a *FAN MAG* editor

by Lothar Penguin

a.2

Archibald repressed a desire to SCREAM!!! His emotions were simply swirling madly about. He felt like picking the typewriter up and THROWING IT ON THE FLOOR with shattering force! Then, he would start in on the table. Out the window! This action would be followed by a game of baseball with various household utensils featuring the chair as bat. Oh! He could just blow up! And it was all over these Eastern fans. However, let us go back a bit.

Archibald first became interested in science fiction (Gad! Where have I heard that before?) when his father disappeared in a strange machine which he had been making in the basement. Then he saw a magazine with a covour which looked like the machine. In the back there were a lot of magazines advertised. "Gasways", "Senile", "Futile Fanout", "Shangri-Blah" and a lot of others. (This is as far as we have to go. You know the rest. It's an old story.)

Well, when he got through reading all of these he decided he had better put out his share of the moronity. Thus was born his brainchild, "THE SCIENCE FICTION STINK." This wasn't bad as far as Archie was concerned, but then one day he got a letter, his first one, from Gestünckelheim, who called himself a "Few-turian!" Eagerly he opened it. Here was his first scientifiction comment about his magazine; his first letter from a fellow scientifictionist about science fiction fandom! As he slit the flap, he was suprised to see a Red Hammer and Scyth emblem fall out; also an address to "Illi Sovietska Juanarillachavitchii" by Joseph Stalin. In red ink, the following was inscribed: Dear Mr. Archibald: The CSSoSFF (Committee for Soviet Sacilisation of Science Fiction Fandom wishes to warn you that any further caritalistic propaganda, such as your article called "SCIENCE FICTION and DEMOCRACY", will meet with severe disaproval and possible picketing by the members of the CSSoSFF. Signed: Donald Gestünckelheim.

Archibald was quite preturbed. This was the first time he had heard of any such dissention in fandom. He had always dreamed of fandom as being a group of happy (or slap-happy) people. He attached a clothespin to his nose and carefully deposited the red horror in the ash can. By now the afternoon mail had come, and Archibald hurried out to read the latest, in hopes of some comment about science fiction. This letter, he noted was from Samuel Petrográdovitch. (Catch on pal?) When he opened it, a batch of stickers fell out. "NEWARK IN 1941!" This was quite strange to Archibald, for he had always through that the 1941 convention was to be in Denver. The letter went as follows: Dear Mr. Archibald: I guess that you have not heard of New Fandom. New Fandom is a democratic organization for the ultimate unification of fandom. This democratic organisation put on the first World Science Fiction Convention in New York, which was open to all. (Except those we don't like.) We are now putting on another convention. Don't pay any attention to anyone who says the Convention is going to be put on in Denver. We believe oh, so firmly, in Democracy, and we want to know why in hell we can't hold a convention when we damn please! Heil! Sam Petrográdovitch. (P.S. Gestünckelheim—stinks.) (P.P.S. The Phille Mob stinks.) (P.P.S.S. The Damn Thing stinks.)

Just as Archibald was recouvouring from this shock, the door bell rang. It was a Special Delivery boy. "A letter for the editor of the Science Fiction Stink, he chirped. "At last," Archibald sighed, "a real letter from a SCIENCE FICTION fan. He gladly payed the Postage due collection, and went inside to read it.

This letter was from Raymond Vander Hornblatten. Neatly engraved on the return address was the title "The Intellectual Brotherhood of Pro-Scientists!" Archibald could hardly keep from dancing. A real science fiction comment! He opened

the envelope, and commenced to read the letter:

Dear Mr. Archibald: We, the intellectual Brotherhood of Pro-Scientists, wish to WARN you that, upon reading and analysing the story in your magazine, to wit, "Fishfry on Luna", is anti-science! It is cynical stuff such as this that gives the public erroneous impressions about that GREAT force, SCIENCE! We wish to warn you that further anti-science will cause the Intellectual Brotherhood of Pro-Scientists to BLACKMAIL your magazine! Sincerely Yours, Raymond Vander Hornblatten

That night a bitterly disappointed Archibald had horrible dreams. Marching across his body, he saw Gestumckelheim, hand in hand with Joe Stalin, and a whole host of YCL boys, ripping into his office and burning up his collection. When all this host had passed, a truck, with a large soap box, puted its way across his stomach, and in it was Petrogradovitch yelling at the top of his voice: "The 'Science Fiction Stink' doesn't agree with that great, democratic organisation!. New Fandom, I urge all New Fandom followers to BOYCOTT the SF Stink. This apperation was followed by a black-robed priesthood, lead by Hornblatten, which was posting big posters on all the science fiction fans' houses in the country. "The article 'Fishfry on Luna' in the S. F. Stink is ANTI-SCIENCE. Boycott the S.F. Stink!" Around midnight the inhabitants of the Archibald house heard one long, horrible scream.

The following morning came the crowning point. In riotous green and brown, a letter was received from Hollywood. The front, save for the address, was obscured by stickers. "Denver in 1941!" "ESPERANTO, la universalanguage". "Member—" and about ten of these. When Archibald opened the letter, he found it was from a Weedpatch J Schlacherman. It read: Bro Archy: Red ur mag & thnk's gud. All th artcils vry ntrestn. Have U got latest copy th Voice-Madge? U must hav ths 2 B an up-2-dayt fan. Also hav complete lyn uv old stf.-stuff 4 sayl. Drop me a lyn in ker uv Madj., Bx 6475 Met Sta, Losang. Scientificinematicallyyours, 4e.

So THIS was scientifiotion! Archibald looked mournfully at the plans for the second issue of the S.F.Stink. Was that all his work? A bunch of illiterates, or else a mess of people with grudges on their backs. He tactfully threw his hectograph out the window, praying that if it his someone, it would be a scientifiotion fan.

SHROYER IS BACK

At the Hallowe'en Party on the eve of the same eve, Shangri-La welcomed back its wayward playboy. Dressed in his natural clothes, realist Shroyer walked in on the party quite by supprise.

Quite as cupidic as usual, Freddy, said term being affectionatly applied to the liquid Mr. Shroyer, was greeted with a sigh by the members, much in the same way as a person accepts something placidly which cannot be avoided. As soon as we get used to seeing our "realist" friend back, we'll turn Mr. Fassbeindr loose on him. A very amazing and slightly cock-eyed story should be the result.

In the meantime, we are angelling for the vast amount of litterary tallant which Shroyer is rumoured to possess, and by the fourth DAMN THING, at least, we should have something by the fellow. Remember "God Busters"?

VAN HOUTEN SAYS—

(Here it is, boys and girls, Mr. Houten rushes to the defense, and yo editor includes his own negative refutation, which will close the matter in the DAMN THING, as we don't wish to become a battle ground for pro-scientists and enemies.)

Before we presented our pro-scientific platform to the science-fiction fan field, a lot of time, thought and discussion was spent in making it as concise, and logical as we could. It was our opinion that science-fiction fans had matured to the point where they could carry on a serious discussion. Therefore, we released our ideas upon science-fiction to them, in the hope that such discussion would be stimulated, and the problems confronting the field solved. It was not our desire to set ourselves up as the dictators or Solons of fandom,

However, since you have seen fit to come out with objections to our policies, which are based upon misconceptions, we are forced to issue the following challenge: Hereunder you will find the basic outline of the pro-scientist platform in the most succinct form of which we are capable of putting it. We must ask you to seriously attempt a refutation of these premises, in which case, and if you succeed, we will be happy to abandon them, or to refrain from again writing two pages of genteel abuse, addressed in our direction, but having no bearing on the ideas which we represent.

SINCE, science has been the instrument by means of which mankind has thrown off the shackles of ignorance and superstition which bound him since he arose from the beast, and

SINCE, it is to science that we owe our present level of enlightenment and civilisation, and

SINCE, science points the way to the solution of every problem which faces humanity,

IT APPEARS EVIDENT, that the future of civilization depends upon the further unhampered advance of science.

SINCE, science-fiction has been an attempt to popularise scientific ideas, and to prognosticate the future advancement of science, and,

SINCE, recent trends in science-fiction tend to act as an apology and in extreme cases, a condemnation, of scientific progress, and

SINCE, these trends, if long continued, will bring about a hatred of science in the minds of the lay public, who are adversely affected by the misuse of science by unscrupulous individuals,

IT APPEARS EVIDENT, that science-fiction has deviated from its progressive character, and is assuming a reactionary anti-scientific role, in contradiction to its original purpose.

SINCE, science-fiction fandom arose spontaneously out of the ideals of the original science fiction, and

SINCE, these ideals are being ignored in favour of factionalism, commercialism, careerism, egotism, Tuckerism, and various other childish antics which are opening the field to ridicule, and,

SINCE, these tendencies are leading fandom into obscurity, impotency, and to eventual disintegration,

IT APPEARS EVIDENT, that a serious attempt must be made to return to the original spirit of science fiction.

(continued next pg.)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that fandom concentrate its energies upon clearing away the barriers against scientific progress. Especially those placed in its path by the pernicious propaganda disseminated thru the medium of science-fiction pulps.

In further elucidation of these extremely simple propositions, let us add that there is no objections to science-fiction stories which portray science making a mistake, even though the error be catastrophic. After all, this is merely an attempt at realism. But we DO condemn the story in which science wilfully subjects the human race to horrible dangers, merely for the gratification of its "inhuman, emotionless search for knowledge." We decry the type of story which claims that there are certain fields in which science has no right, believing that the province of science is the entire universe, or such of it as can be reached. We likewise condemn the recent efforts to undermine the neutrality of this country by supporting in the name of science one side or another in the present conflict in Europe. We look upon the necessity for War as the epitome of scientific perversion, and regardless of the personal opinions which might be held by individual fans, we believe that fandom has no relation to them.

The question which we have put to the science fiction fan field, and which eventually we hope to put to the world at large is merely this: "Are you with science or against it. We are with it. How do you stand?"

*Raymond Van Houten, Peter Duncan, Max Bart..

IT IS ONLY NATURAL TO REPLY. (Not a light farce, but a highly scientific, non-Aristotelian reply.)

We shall attack (such an ugly word) this bit of "logic" with the very means which Mr. Van Houten and Co. are so eloquent in their praise of, namely--science. We shall promptly demonstrate the superiority of scientific methods of reasoning, over academic methods, of which the pro-scientists make use of, as well as the vast, vast majority of the world's inhabitants: The scientific, or non-Aristotelian method of reasoning, which has been propounded by the Polish genius, Count Alfred Korzibski, and the English philologist C.H.Ogden; popularised by Stuart Chase, and used by a few of the heralds of the period of non-Aristotelian, non-Newtonian logic, which will eventually replace the so-called Academic system of debates and logic. One last word before continuing. Mr. Van Houten, in his Aristotelian refutation, breaks the first law of academic debate—he does not mention at all, or attempt to break down, the previous arguments of his opponents, but simply restates his platform and ridicules the previous contribution.

The principles of non-Aristotelian reasoning, called Semantics, is to simply approach a problem from the physical facts at hand, or the physical (or scientific) results that can occur or which will effect the operational results of a given problem. However, we converse, write, and think in a language not of relation to the physical world, but rather built upon numberless abstractions from the object from which the abstraction is derived, it is first necessary to define all the terminology and physical items which come under a general heading or noun which we use in our conversation or discussion. The group of human beings which have called themselves the "Pro-Scientists", which is a derivation of the Latin root meaning "for" or "in accordance with", and its somewhat vague application to the highly abstracted term of "Scientists" have failed to define their use of the word "SCIENCE" in a manner acceptable to the physical facts, or, for that matter, have not even given the word an academic definition. They simply use the oral-noise, leaving the mental-neuronic reaction to the individual's particular degree of abstraction. SCIENCE is a very broad abstraction, and it is in all cases very bad language to use the word for purposes of argument. The physical things from which the word is derived are a vast collection of observable data, from which the basic atomic structures of the surface of our globe has been molded into various forms in accordance with this data, by individuals, who cannot

be given any single classification, as their actions vary profusely. In fact, it is very difficult to define SCIENCE in non-Aristotelian terminology, since the terminology itself is simply further abstraction of physical fact. SCIENCE can be applied either to the portion of that field of data collection in accordance with observable phenomenon, or in the field of application of that data, which means any application of the data. If this be the case, the practical application of this data was in use long before the actual data had been collected along academic lines. The fact that a circular or globular object rolls and can be applied as a "wheel" is physical data, and the application of this data was in effect long before the date itself had been collected. THEREFORE, we can see that a definition of SCIENCE as a something quite apart from the earliest development of the human "civilisation" is impossible, and that the oral noises "SCIENCE" and "CIVILISATION" are both based on the same physical data, fact and observation. It is therefore obvious that we cannot continue to debate the subject along academic lines, and that there is no further debate in non-Aristotelian terminology, because we rapidly descend from thinking in abstract terms which are used meaninglessly, into the real and physical world, wherein we find that "SCIENCE" and "CIVILISATION" cannot be separated into faintly distinct physical manifestations.

We now proceed to analyse and attempt to find the physical referent to a bastard combination of academic words, namely SCIENCE and FICTION, i.e., science-fiction, or "scientifiction". This, we see, is quite a part of the physical world, and that it specifically consists of a number of "magazines" and a number of "books" which are scattered in relatively smaller proportion than other types of literature. Towards the conception of the action-patterns in these magazines, etc., we have a number of individuals who spend all or part of their professional time in the conception of these action-patterns. The cause of the ideas behind the conception of the original magazine of this particular type are varied and many, it is impossible, no matter how hard tried, to define either why they were conceived, or the idealistic reasons behind them. To say, or emphasise,-----that such and such a purpose was the reason for scientifiction, is to obliterate all the other contributing causes. The first "science fiction" magazine was put out for various reasons: To incur monetary returns for the publisher, to discover if the literature would be accepted if popularised, and if so, the hopes of building a future financial field of sales. Certain "ideological" persons, in a small attempt to spread this literature for ideological reasons, may, or may not have been the instigators of the "belief" that "science-fiction" was for the purpose of furthering "science."

Let us now apply the "Pro-Scientists" movement to this previous analysis. First, we must find what the "Pro-Scientists" are. Actually, they are physically different than anyone else. They have decided, academically, that "science" is a single-valued term, (their first great break from the physical facts) and have made the common mistake of abstracting the term to be A THING, which has helped "civilisation", a second THING, quite apart from the first. Into this comes another abstraction, a THING, called "science fiction". All of these multi-valued words have been mistaken for single-valued words, whereas only scientific substances can be single-valued, i.e., iron, earth's atmosphere, and etc. We will attempt to reconstruct the false abstractions as the Pro-Scientists see them, to show you where academic reasoning varies from scientific processes.

In the "beginning" the THING called "science fiction" was favorable to its "parent", a THING called "science." In turn, the THING called science has been favourable to another THING called "civilisation". And so, the happy trio skips along, so innocently.

But now, the illegal child, "science fiction" gets bad, and does "things"

which affect a fourth party, called "LAYMEN" in regards to their relation towards the first party "SCIENCE". It is, say the "pro-Scientists", the duty of all "people" who are supporters of "SCIENCE FICTION" (really, this is getting very involved.) to affect the course of "SCIENCE FICTION" so that it will once again be "nice" to "SCIENCE."

Throughout the entire reasoning we find the basic fault of Aristotelian thought: that of setting two or more factors concerning the behavior pattern of the controlled-reflex animals of the globe apart from the rest of the factors and then using these factors as counter-weights to perform some very tricky academic tight-rope walking. (Or, semantically, juggling and distortion of physical fact and its abstractions.) What we really find is that:

- A. SCIENCE, which is, on the actual atomic level inseparable from
- B. CIVILISATION, on the atomic level, the same as "science."
- C. LAYMEN, "human" animals which are seldom concerned in application of the of physical data to constructive purposes.
- D. SCIENCE FICTION, a form of literature. Literature being a conception of men.

The thing which is worrying Van Houten is that "D" will cause hate on the part of "C," towards "A," This would threaten "B."

Obviously the only change that can be installed to eliminate the "undesirable" things that Van Houten objects to, is an actual operational change. What must be done is to get a manner of coercion against the editors of various science fiction magazines, so that it will cause them monetary loss to continue to publish what they do now. With not more than ten persons interested in the Houten movement, we fail to see how sufficient coercion can be brought to bear against even one editor to stop his publishing of "anti-science" stories. ("Hack" to you.)

And, as to affecting the layman with "anti-science?" (And academically, anti-science is Anarchy) We will wager that the combined readers of all the science fiction magazines on the market do not exceed 500,000. This is less than one half of one percent of the total population of this continent. So, Ray, old chap, I feel that you have become a victim of the wide-spread fear of 5th columnism, and decided to jump when you saw an imaginary ghost in the closet. And, I must confess, I believe that the majority of fans are enjoying a good laugh up their sleeves. It is really very humorous, especially if you don't take science fiction and above all, YOURSELF, seriously.

Of course, in taking time to write this, I am fully aware that I have played into your hands in one respect. I'll bet you never got so much pure free publicity in your life in one magazine. You may be assured that there will be no more in the DAMN THING, and, if you should see fit to reply to this personally, I should like a bit more mature rebuttal than merely being called a damn fool. I can call the pro-scientists, and probably would like to, a lot of vulgar names, but such exchanges of verbal bombast arrive at no conclusion.

Next time you have another fear, you must let me hear about it, because I really got a laugh out of this one. I suggest a campaign for the Intellectual Brotherhood of Anti-Silly Fan Movements-ists. This might be initiated by the disbanding of the Pro-Scientists, which would mean less perturbations from three, at least, persons in Joisy.

T.Yerke.

(EDITORIAL NOTE: It is a more normal endeavour of the editor to present in his quite poignant magazine at least one bit of better literary talent. No other person, in the editor's opinion, can fulfill his particular needs as his good friend Fywert Kinge, a master of free verse. Someday the world will read his book.

A F T E R A R M A G E D D O N

The fogs around the wastelands never lift.
The eternal stillness is seldom broken.
Here, it is always cloudy;
The sun never caring to lift the greyish pall.
It is only on occasion that life may be seen,
Pulling its way through the muck of the ground,
The slimy waters and the festering earth—
Travelling towards the Final Monument.
Here in the Wastelands lies Man.
In the hills and canyons to the North
A few tribes hold out.
But Man is dead.
The Race of Man that once filled the globe,
The Race of Man that built empire,
And the Race of Man that looked to the stars,
And even, we know, made a few pitiful grabs for them—
He is dead.
And on his grave, even those stars refuse to shine;
The mist always hides them from view.
Here are the remnants and the remains.
Here lie the cities and towns.
Here lies his Science.
Here are his ideals.
Here is his religion.
Here is his everything.
Twisted gun and canon writh in all positions.
The machines are gutted, and stare with unseeing eyes.
The bodies—
They have gone.
They have merged with the Earth.

The Wastelands are great and vast.
They covour half a continent,
But there is still a center
Marked by an unknown builder,
And it is here that occasional tribesmen venture
To gaze in awe through the mist
At this final Valedictory,
Even though they have long lost the key
To read the letters of which it is composed—
For the Valedictory is ten massive letters of
Imperishable granite.
They spell:
A R M A G E D D O N.
They are Gargantuan letters,
Thick and stocky and heavy and must reach
Far higher than five hundred feet.

AFTER ARMAGEDDON, continued.

And somewhere within, a hollow drum
 Booms out its mournfull death call irregularly.
 And the sign rises from the Chaos—
 The very center of the battleground;
 For all around it are the remains
 Of implements of destruction of the highest order,
 Abandoned with hopeless haste;
 Quite as hastily as Man abandoned his own position
 For the seedlings of a greater race to come.
 Now he lies in decaying rust at the feet of the letters.

Who built the sign, it is hard to say,
 But of this it is quite certain—
 He is human, or was,
 And as a human, quite futile—
 As was all Man futile.
 For now there is no one left
 Who can read or appreciate
 The dying gasp that built it.
 It is left alone with its Chaos
 To lift its stocky shape forlornly
 Save for the booming of the drum
 And the sterile and declining tribesmen.
 ****Truly and ignominious finalé.

~~~~~Fywert Kinge.

## DR. FASSBEINDER'S CORN-OR

The cornor for the Neurotic

It recently dawned upon myself that perhaps, in this period of our National Hystery, when all persons are liable to name-calling, if science-fiction fans would be interested in a sure-fire test to determine if their friends or morons or not. This is a psychologicle joke used to test neurotics and others as to their degree of degeneration. Crack this one as follows:

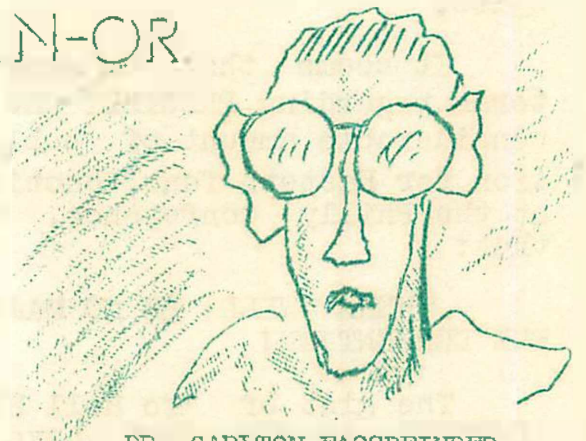
FIRST MORON: (Holding up bag.) Guess what I've got in this bag of apples?

SECOND MORON: Pears?

FIRST MORON: No! Pears are this colour. (And draw hands apart in horizontle motion, as if you were stretching a rubber band.)

If your friend "doesn't catch on," he's sane. The louder he laughs, the higher is moronic quotient is. If he goes into hysteria, he is a hopeless moron.

Carlton Fassbeinder, D.Ps.



DR. CARLTON FASSBEINDER

## THIS NEWARK AFFAIR

This Newark Convention idea has been one of the most mysterious things ~~that~~ fandom has ever had to contend with. It rappidly appears to be a "now you see it, now you don't" affair which kept a lot of people, including your editor, in a state of breathless apprehension. At last we are happy to say that the whole thing has been called off. This leaves only a few hurt feelings.

"To Hell With You" in the last issue left quite a stink. That was just what it was calculated to do. It was aimed at ANYONE who would B such a rat as to cause an Eastern Convention in opposition to the Denver affair.

However, it seems to have been aimed at the wrong person, and quite a bit premature. It served its purpose. It helped can the whole affair.

First we wish to apologise to Mr. Moscovitz. Sam, maybe we don't like everything, or most of the things, you do, but, the way you answered "To Hell With You" in you letter to Ackerman was, well, damn-ed white. You could have caught our misfire and started a riot, but asit wasn't aimed your way, you chose to pass it up. Please accept our apologies.

It seems that so many fans expressed themselves in no uncertain terms regarding PRECISLY WHO EVER IT WAS that was responsible for the considerable amount of publicity that went out about a Newark Convention for Eastern fans, quoting from our own "To Hell With You", that at the Philly Conference, the motion couldn't pass. The last word is that:

THERE WILL BE NO MAJOR CONFERENCE OF ANY SORT IN THE EAST BEFORE THE DENVENTION!

The gist of "To Hell With You" stands yet. It is my opinion, and from the results that have all ready ocured, the opinion of the rest of the fans, of any person who EVER AGAIN tries to start a rebel convention on opposition of the "World Science Fiction Convention" of just preceding.

THE DAMN THING is glad to have been dated at just such a time that it came out sufficiently soon to deal a hell of a whallop to the idea. We are sorry we hit the wrong person, but we have seen that he has been man enough to let it bounce off, and for this, we thank him sincerely.

Let us all turn again, and get this DENVENTION thing going. As out part, we sent a page of the DAMN (denventioneer) THING out two weeks ago. Our next one, which won't be on such short order, will be sent out shortly.

SEE YOU AT THE DENVENTION!



# THE SUCKER BITES

STEP RIGHT UP FOLKS. WATCH THE GUIDING GENIUSES OF SCIENCE FICTION PERFORM FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT. BELOW, WE HAVE HEAPED TOGETHER THE PRIZE EXAMPLES OF OUR CORRESPONDENCE, FEATURING BOTH LEETERS IN A FRIENDLY VEIN, AND ALSO SOME NOT QUITE SO ENTHUSIASTIC. WE HAVE COPIED (WITH PERMISSION) THE VOICE OF THE IMAGINATION IN COMMENTING EDITORIALY DIRECTLY AFTER THE ITEM IN PARANTHESIS, THIS BEING CALCULATED TO NOT GIVE OUR OPPONENTS A CHANCE.

FROM RAYMOND VAN HOUTEN:

Enclosed find a short note, addressed to Mr. Damon Knight, but meant for every fan, which I hope you have the fairness and decency to publish in "THE DAMN THING" (We have. We publish only the most hostile of our criticisms.) (Ed.)

However, realising that your magazine is meant to foster bad feeling among fans, (this is a gross mischarge) and having read therein that you support Mr. Knight's statements, I have taken the precaution of keeping a carbon copy of the letter, (he doesn't trust us, which I don't blame him.) which will be released to some other source, with certain addenda and explanations, in case you do not care to publish it.

It seems that Mr. Knight and yourself, not able to catch the full implication of science fiction, are using it as a playground in which to vent your infantility. (Oh goodness!) Please do not waste the time of more serious fans with discussion of issues which are beyond your depth. (Yes, teacher!) You are only making a damn fool of yourself. (From the foregoing it appears that anyone who dares to criticise the Pro-Scientists is making a fool of himself.)

You may be convinced that you are sincere in your hatred of fan feuds, but if that is so, the fact that you are also editor of THE DAMN THING is an incongruity which cannot be rationalised. (See editorial.) For the true purpose of the journal is only thinly veiled by the coat of "humour" which you have laid on it. Its demise will be better than its inception.

(We omit a paragraph about the "Newark Con." which is taken up elsewhere.)

WITH THIS FRIENDLY SEND OFF, WE TURN TO OUR CONTRIBUTOR OF LAST ISSUE, DAMON KNIGHT:

Thanx oodles for displaying my frothings so prominently in your first issue. It was, I may say, a pleasant surprise to find them displayed anywhere. I thought Forrie had given them to the Ashman as being what is politely termed "too controversial." (Nothing is too controversial for the DAMN THING.)

In spite of your admirable indifference to the opinions of your readers, or because of it, THE DAMN THING is positively the first mag I'd subscribe to, if I had any money. As it is, I am enclosing a little something for your next issue, hoping thereby to get the same for nothing. (Fresh, isn't he?)

Best in #1 was, of course, ASSAILING THE PRO-SCIENTISTS, by Damon Knight, (Mr. Van Houten differs with you.) Next, The Editor Sits on His Platform!, & after that, Bedlam on 9th St., Over Hill & Dale to Pomona, "To Hell With You", Bradbury, The Critique, Boosting the Editor, and the rest more or less lousy, especially that alledged poem. (We delate the remaining two paragraphs.) Moscowitz is a louse.

-Damon.

THE DISTINGUISHED EDITOR OF "SCIENCE FICTION" AND "SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY", SENDS US HIS OPINIONS, AND NOT A FEW CORRECTIONS. Hello, Charlie.

".....What I like about THE DAMN THING is that you show yourself to be on an even plane with your victims....." (Charlie has the right ideas, re tdt's spirit. Ed.)

"....I appreciate your criticisms of the 'pro-scientists' and fully agree with it. I fail to see the O. Henry ending to Bradbury's (God Bless Him) "The Last Man". What else could interest the last man, but the last woman?

"...But to get on, seeing as how you like to write up what an awful contraption that Nash was, don't forget the trip to Santa Monica that afternoon, one Saturday. Remember how she shook from stem to stern everytime I put on the brakes? And you could hear every nut and bolt complain for blocks around. (How could I forget? I never thought we would get off Wilshire Blvd. alive.)

I particularly liked your Scientifictionurserymes. More please! You should use ~~more~~ stuff by Bradbury, and try to get Shroyer and Kuttner to send you some masterpieces. Shroyer should be out there now anyway. (He is. Ed.) (Hic! Shroyer.)

I correction, re articles in which I am so favourably mentioned: I got my office, at 628 W. 9th in mid-February, not late March. The Nash was 1926, not 1929. (This should make a better impression.) The radio in the print shop wasn't mine, it was Jerry's. (Jerry never touched the radio after you moved in. Ed.) Thanks for calling my machine a 39 dollar one. I only paid \$25 for the typewriter. Yours. Charlie. (Best of luck, Karolo, and after you get your C.O. papers, hitchhike back over the LOST HORIZON to Shangri-La. We all miss you. Ed.)

JOE GILBERT, deep soused scientifictioneer, sends us our first subscription, and so is rewarded in having his name in the first "Sucker Bites."

I really like the mag. It's just what fandom needs— a fan mag devoted exclusively to mud-slinging, with no holds barred..... The editorial was hot stuff. I like your editorial policy, or have you got one? "Assailing the pro-scientists. Ah! That was the prize of the issue. I've been waiting for some time for this pro-scientists damn foolishness to die out.

"The Last Man" was posolutly neuseating. Take it away and bury it deep. (The editor suggests that you also take Bradbury away with it. Ed.) ....."Price System Justice" was quite correct. Something should be done about this lousy system.

The rhymes are a swell idea. Don't overwork 'em though. "To Hell With You" was good because I agreed with it.

Your spelling stinks. Your grammar stinks. So does mine. Everything stinks. Fan Feuds stink. New Fandom Stinks. Technocracy stinks. I stink, and will continue to do so until Saturday night. This letter stinks. (And how. Ed.) THE DAMN THING stinks, too. But, I like it. Sincerely, Joe.

BILL CRAWFORD SURPRISES THE EDITOR WITH A MISSIVE FULL OF DAMNS AND HELLS:

...First, of course: The damned spelling stinks, but then everybody knows that, so why should I bring it up? Of course, I enjoyed the article by Lothar Penguin. Why shouldn't I? Everybody is a victim of an insufferable ego that literally laps up anything that's published about themselves, even though they may, at the same time, be victim of an unholy desire to wring the person's neck,



NUMEROUS LOCALEAUGENTITIES express their opinion of our first issue, said opinions being asked for in lieu of sufficient friendly letters to fill up the gap caused by the sudden HEINLEIN withdrawal.

WALTER J DAUGHERTY: "Oh, God!"

RUSS HODGKINS: "Repulsive, isn't it?"

PGO: The Damn Thing? A damn thing.

DR. ACULA: (Franklyn Brady)

Give it to all sides, Yerke. You're doing fine, and I'm all for you.

JIMMY LANEY:

Good thing, Yerke. Here's more power to your next edition.

JACK WILLIAMSON: (Famous author-fan)

I seem to have got the impression from listening to the comments of all concerned, that the name is remarkably apt. Here's to more and dammed things.

FORREST JA ACKERMAN:

"Am I really responsible for this?"

MOROJO:

Better not say anything.

EDWIN CHAMBERLAIN:

As one of my first fan magazines, I found it quite enjoyable. As I become more educated in this "fan world," I probably will send you a package that ticks!

WHAT OUR ENGLISH FANS PROBABLY WOULD HAVE SAID IF THEIR LETTERS HADN'T BEEN SUNK ON THE WAY OVER:

"I think CENSORED and also CENSORED that if CENSORED the Damn Thing is CENSORED.

HITLER GIVING ORDER TO U-BOAT COMMANDER:--  
"Sinken die Boot mit der DAMN THING oder--  
Ich will sinken Sie.

THERE IS A MAGAZINE WHICH IS CALLED---  
SPACEWAYS.  
Says its Editor:

If you're looking around for another mag to insult, you'd better not try SPACEWAYS. You might have trouble finding insultable things in-- the mag, except for Miske 's column, EVERYONE INSULTS--- THAT!

Our magazine has polled first in every fan poll in the past year.

You could do no worse than send a dime to:

Harry Warner, Jr.,  
303 Bryan Place,  
Hagerston, Md.  
-----

JOE GILBERT,  
Deep souses Scientif-  
ictioneer,  
had got the bug. He  
wants an add, and---  
here it is:

THE SOUTHERN STAR,  
First issue out Jan.  
15, 1941.  
A MUST for your col-  
lection.

Joe Gilbert,  
3911 Park St.,  
Colombia,  
Soused Carolina.  
-----

A quatrain is a 4 line  
rim, that's never out  
of place. It can be  
used at any time, to  
fill an empty space.

EDITORIAL, continued.

crets that Bob preferred to not have this delightful satire on himself published. Bob contended that he did not wish to have his name attached to a piece of fiction which was not in accordance with the facts. He would much rather have his opinions examined in a serious vein, and only those opinions which have been published. The editor admits that the article is just sheer fictitious satire, having no basis in truth, and concedes to the Heinleins' request. We hope to have some factual, really factual, material at hand soon, at which time we shall let it rip. I am sorry that that the fans are missing this highly entertaining piece.

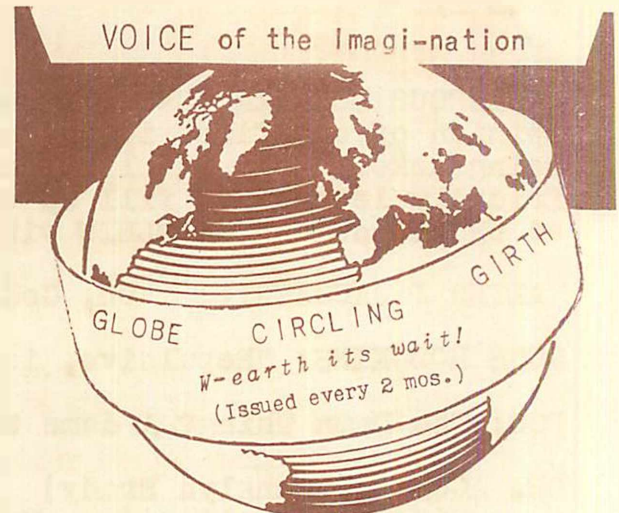
We plan in the future, when more time for THE DAMN THING can be found, to increase the art (ahem) contained in our pages, and to grace the entire magazine with more care. Six weeks, in lieu of the editor's other interests, are far too few to put out the DAMN THING. We apologise for the numerous faults in this issue.

This does not imply any slackening in the vigilance of the DAMN THING. We cause titanic upheavals on all occasions, nor does it mean that the readers are going to excoriate my hand in this affair. We plan to continue to give our readers and others (quite a few others as a matter of fact.) the best of lighter vein scientific material. Due to the high rate at which lawsuits spring up, we may all be thrown into the can.

Our staff is lining up. Fassbeinder: personal satires, lawsuits, psychological information. Lothar Ponguin: Satires and burlesques of fan activities. Fywert Kinge: blank verse. Ben Dover Farr: Further explorations into mad throwing. Prof. Stinkywitz: Scientific fantasies. Bradbury: Stories. And the rest is up to those others who are not mentioned just above. This includes some two hundred fans. We are always welcoming material of a nature which we can use.

The Pro-Scientists and Yo Ed are at it again in this issue, cluttering up the pages for the count of four. This will be all, we assure you. Ray wrote the sweet letter which was published, and the latter with editor one on a more friendly basis. We trust that Van Houten and Yorke will reach a mutual understanding.

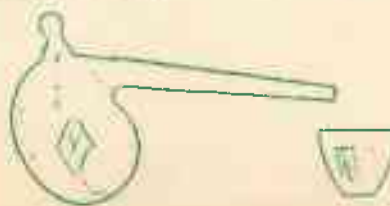
Six to eight weeks hence, you can expect a second DAMN THING which will be a higher literary quality than this one. (Unless that funny package that ticks should up and go off.) I have a faint suspicion that Walter J. Dougherty and his recorded are interesting Fassbeinder, who will take care of this latest edition to life around Hyar. Ed.



Box 6475 Met Sta

10¢

Los Angeles Cal





# TUBBY, WE LOVE YOU!

by Bradbury

I feel that it is my duty to speak to all my friends following that horrible article Bruce Yerke printed last issue about Bradbury and his powder-blue sport coat. My Kleenex has just come back from the laundry and I am prepared to attack Bruce with a swift flank movement instigated by raising my right foot parallel to Mr. Yerke's gluteus maximus and suddenly veering toward him as a wolf might attack a side of beef. Mr. Yerke, I feel, is inclined to exaggerate.

He suggests to me an epileptic beer-barrel doing a jig in a delicate old Chinese print.

But still, all those who know Bruce have grown to love him. Even Bobsy Heinlein loves Bruce. Even after that article which Bobsy made Brucey toss out of THE DAMNED THING. You should have read it, peoples, it was wunnerful.

Heinlein studies the relationship and usage of words in relation to the actual physical object from which they are abstracted. His theme song is: "I'M SO AFRAID OF NIGHT, CAUSE I'M SO SEMANTIC."

AAAARRRRRRRRGGGGGH!

And Brucey wanted to print an article in this issue telling all about Bobsy and his strange reasonings on Technocracy, only Bobsy dint have no sense of humor an he threatened to sue. Tsk. Tsk.

And, following a meeting at Heinlein's house, in which he and Bruce exchanged verbal blows, ushers came down the aisles, saying:

"Choking in the outer lobby only, please, shoking in the outer lobby only!"

-----  
PLUTO PLUTO PLUTO PLUTO!

Would you offer a dime for a fan mag-- if that mag had this to offer you:

SHAME! SHAME! PERRI KNOWS WHO IS TO BLAME!

"The Expanding Universe! by Prof Orrin Gonipuss, 32 F.

Rajocz's Science Column!

Also Dale Tarr, Ron Holmes, Joe Gilbert, and many others.

Beautiful fantasy cover on the November issue by "demon knight"

All this in FIVE (5) colours!

Published by the Litterature, Science, and Hobbies Club, Decker, Ind.

Ten Cents per copy! Three for 25¢.

.....  
Ye Ed bows in humble awe at this colourific magazine. He just got four of them in the mail. I wish I knew how much they loose an issue, or, for that matter, how days an hour they work on it.

pluto is worth 10¢



# local league life

Director Walt has availed himself of quite a few luxuries of late. The airplane business is booming, and with it, Walter's standard of living. Within a week apart, he purchased an expensive recording outfit and a '36 Ford Sport Coupé. Some stuff!

With the recorder, he has given Bradbury & Yerke a long desired source of cheap recordings for their never-ending flow of plays, satires, and dramatisation

At the club, on the meeting night of Thursday, November 14, 1940, voices of all members present were recorded. The best of these records will be sent out to the fans as a sort of circulating road show.

Monday nights for the past few weeks, we have been gathering at Ackerman's home to do recording. Most interesting has been the recording of the blank verse in this issue: "After Armageddon," read by the marvelous voice of Richard Welles, who, we understand, is a cousin of Orson. Some dramatising of Lovecraft's "The Outsider" and "The Music of Erich Zann" are being written by Ye Ed, and will be recorded by Welles, in a voice which is a perfect for this type of work.

Newest and most enthusiastic member of our club is Edwin N. Chamberlain, who joined on the 28th. Perhaps we are going to get a dues-paying member after all,

Technocrat friend of local Science Fictionists to be called in Draft in early Jan or Feb of 1941.

.....Secretary..Yerksa.....

SUPPORT THE DENVENTION!

"The place in the sun,  
In '41."

(Clever, heh?)

This is a little magazine which its dry and sundry readers know as:

T H E D A M N T H I N G

Box 6475 Metro Sta.,  
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

RETURN POSTAGE GTD.

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