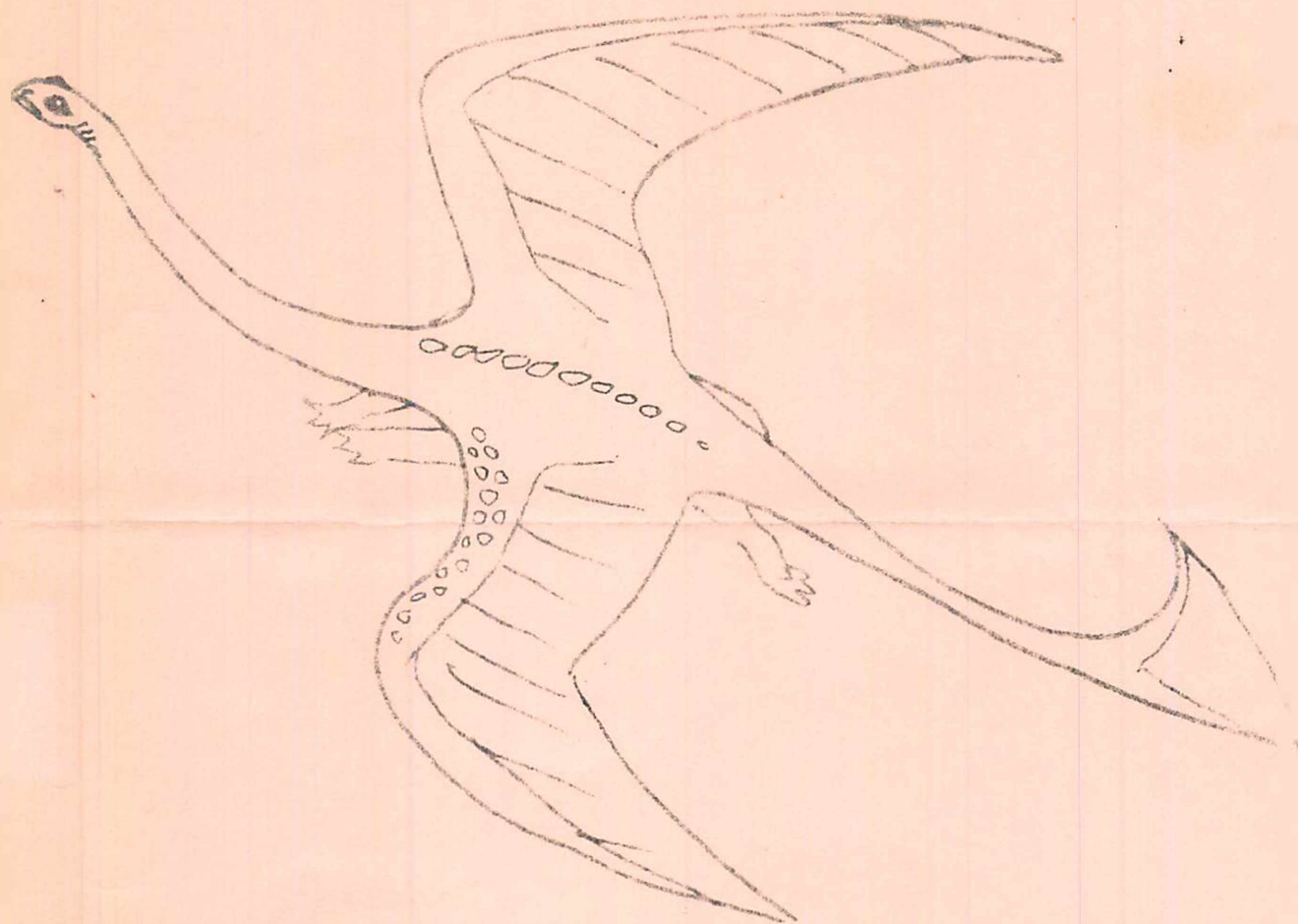


DON - o - SAUR

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Coprolites



January 1974
Number 28

Vol. III
No. 4

If, at the very beginning of my newspaper career (well, not at the very beginning, but after the first couple of years or so of general experience) I had chosen to go into reporting instead of editing, I would have been making my living writing all right. But I looked with some disdain upon that type of writing. I wanted to do stories. And novels. And I persuaded myself that as a copy editor I would have more time to do the kind of writing that I wanted to do. Reporters often have to take their notes home with them; they carry their work around with them, even beyond working hours; a reporter spends the whole day writing crappy stuff that he doesn't care anything about, and when he goes home and tries to knuckle down to the book or story he's working on, he finds he's already written himself out; a copy reader leaves his work in the office; when he's through for the day, he is through--the rest of his time is his. This was the line of reasoning that propelled me into editing.

I was dead wrong, of course, on nearly all points of that line, and I should have known it (maybe I did, but there were other factors: when decision time came I was married, with one child and another on the way, and the editing jobs paid better and seemed to offer more opportunity for advancement).

Maybe some reporters -- maybe most -- do write themselves out during working hours and have no energy left for their own work. But it is also true that many or most reporters do not have quite the same pathological need to write that I have had. I should have known (or did know but ignored the fact) that the more I write, the easier it becomes to write and -- in general-- the better the writing is. I knew this from experience.

When I got my first taste of literary success I was news editor/reporter on a weekly paper in a small town in Wisconsin -- Mauston Star & Juneau County Chronicle, if you want specifics. It was a six-day-a-week job, never less than eight hours a day and quite often more. I wrote both news and feature stories, was the photographer, did the page layouts, wrote all the headlines, read proof, helped in the backshop, and with the mailing ... I did everything except sell ads. It was a pretty sophisticated little weekly operation; we did have a full-time advertising manager. Oh, I also wrote a weekly column and occasional editorials. For reasons that I refuse to go into here because they constitute a separate story, I had to give up the column. It left me with a bitter feeling and a tiny little bit of spare time, and so I started writing a story. Took six weeks or so to finish it, writing just a few paragraphs a day. I then re-typed it and sent it off to Galaxy magazine, then edited by H.L. Gold. Twelve weeks later a check for \$525.00 arrived -- 17,500 words at 3¢ a word.

It was that check that enabled me to leave the job in Mauston and to embark on an editing career.

I have never regretted leaving Mauston.

Even though it is crystal clear to me now, and I probably knew on at least one level even then that it was precisely that heavy work load, that relentless discipline of daily writing for that paper that made writing the story a form of recreation, and that undoubtedly sharpened the skills used in writing the story, I do not regret leaving Mauston.

Even if you could give me irrefutable proof that, had I stayed in Mauston I would have been a world famous author of multiple best sellers by now,



I would still not regret leaving Mauston. I can almost be apologetic for feeling that way about it. I met some awfully nice people in Mauston and formed a few long-lasting friendships. The newspapers there were an ideal training ground. The owner and publisher was a man who really cared about newspapering as a profession, not just as a source of income, and he cared about good writing, too. He had little talent for it himself (and was the first to admit it) but he recognized and appreciated and did all he could to encourage mine. I learned one whole hell of a lot in the 13 months on those papers -- far more, I still believe, than do most young J-school graduates who go to work immediately as a reporter (or copy reader) on a larger daily publication.

But 13 months was enough! I had served my apprenticeship and was ready to hit the big time. So I became night editor of the Dubuque, Ia., Telegraph-Herald and later moved up to be dayside slot man. In my spare time, at home, I wrote stories, and a novel. None of them sold.

After three years in Dubuque my wife and I and two small kids moved to Denver because I had landed a job on the copy desk of the Rocky Mountain News. I kept on writing stories. After about a year in Denver another story sold, and I was thinking NOW, surely, I'm on my way!

Such was not the case. I kept on writing (and rewriting, and rewriting, with too many of the stories, as I now realize), but nothing else sold. (But of course I didn't keep the stories on the market; a story would be rejected twice and I'd file it away -- or rewrite it down to nothing). For a long time I tried to maintain a daily discipline of writing at least something each day, no matter what. It became more and more difficult, not just to write every day, but to write anything. So I slacked off and became miserable at not writing. Several times I decided, firmly and no back talk, that I was not a writer, that I never would be, never had been, and why would anyone want to be a writer anyway? It was a ludicrous aspiration!

I wrote another novel. And I gave up writing again.

I turned to other things -- to drinking, for instance. While drunk night after night for a year or thereabouts, I wrote another novel. Wasn't too bad, actually (better by far than the previous ones I had written sober), but I don't think I would even want it published now and I didn't try very hard to get it published then.

Seven years ago I quit drinking because it had taken me perilously close to the edge of disaster -- two drunk driving citations in four years, and the usual domestic difficulties (though to my credit I never beat or abused my wife and children-- just had trouble communicating with them, and at that, far less trouble than I deserved. And to the RMN's discredit, I never had the slightest trouble at work because of my drinking; one of the proud traditions of journalism is--or was; it's changing--a look-the-other-way attitude toward alcoholism. I forgot to mention that I spent a night in jail in the second of those drunk driving cases. That's part of what scared me enough to make me stop.

Along with drinking, I gave up writing, and I looked for a way out of the newspaper racket and turned to teaching. It agreed with me, but after about a year I found that I had so much spare time on weekends and in the summer that I could easily handle a part time job on the copy desk of the Denver Post. More than a year ago now I was lured back to the Rocky Mountain News by the offer of two days work a week (for several months now it's been three) instead of just one. And two years and four months ago (about), Paul Angel, a young DASFA member, decided to form a club apazine and asked me to join. I did, and got back into the habit of writing for a deadline. And a year and two months ago (about), Ed Bryant became the nucleus of the DASFA Writers Workshop. Ted Peak and Judith Brownlee cajoled me into joining that, which got me thinking along fiction writing lines again.

This brings us almost up to date. I wrote a few stories at longish inter-

vals and I've attended nearly all the meetings. And I think I've learned quite a bit, both from doing my own stories and hearing the criticisms of them and from hearing and criticizing other people's stories. But at the same time I tried not to take the Workshop very seriously, because I had abandoned, completely and sincerely, all aspirations of ever becoming a "writer." Well...maybe not completely; maybe not with absolute sincerity; maybe not all aspirations.

Because last month I read Robert Heinlein's editorial in Analog, and in the process of thinking about it I've been forced to conclude that I am a writer -- simply because I do write; because I cannot refrain from writing. Success is incidental. It may come this year, or it may wait another ten years, or twenty, or it may never happen at all. That's irrelevant.

What is important to me is that I have finally accepted my condition, and at least one of my internal struggles has come to an end. Peace reigns. I have given up trying to give up writing.

FOOTNOTE to last month's discussion of the Heinlein editorial:

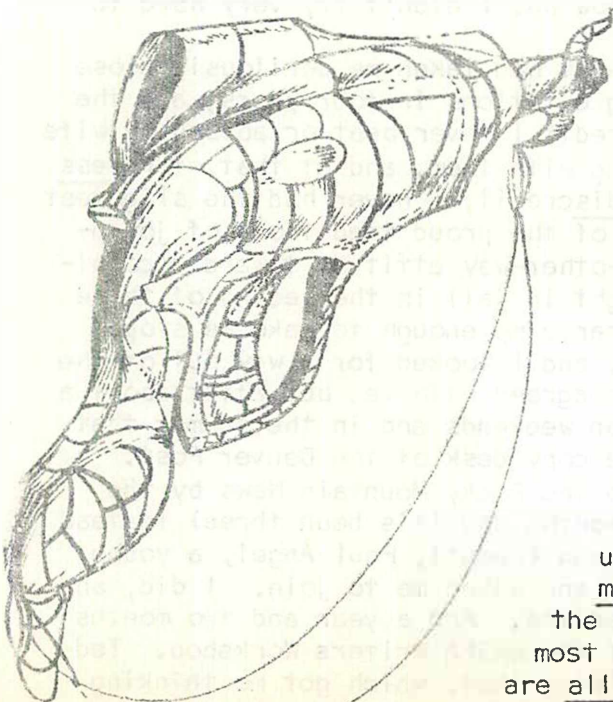
I find that I simply cannot agree with Heinlein's Point 3--refrain from rewriting except to editorial order. When I decided to get as many of my stories as possible onto the market (and to keep them there, to test Point 5) it was necessary to retype several of them. I found it absolutely impossible not to do some rewriting. When I see flaws in the story and also see an opportunity to correct the flaw, I'm supposed to simply ignore it and wait for some editor to point it out? Nonsense! Rubbish! The editor probably will not even consciously notice the flaw; he'll simply reject the story because of his feeling that something is wrong with it.

Still, Heinlein's point is good if he means the writer should develop the habit of getting it right the first time. The habit of a sloppy first draft in anticipation of multiple rewrites does lead to intellectual laziness.

Anyway, I now have eight stories out on the market. Among them is "Softness, as in a Sensuous Fantasy," the story that was printed in DC #22 in a first-draft version that was not widely acclaimed. The rewrite was read at the Workshop two sessions ago and aroused a much warmer response than it had the first time. Penthouse has it. When it comes back I'll send it to Playboy, where I should have started it anyway.

That's enough about myself. Revelation should probably have some limits. I am not yet ready to emulate Richard E. Geis and give you all the intimate details of my sex problems.

The rest of this issue will be taken up with letters, of which I have received many. I don't know whose to start with -- the latest? the earliest? the most famous? the most obscure? The most interesting? (But they are all interesting!) I have also received fan-zines, of which I hope to be able to review at least some. Well, let's take one thing at a time . . .



LETTERS

William L. Bowers
P.O. Box 148
Wadsworth, Ohio
44281

Dear Don---

A hurried note to acknowledge D-O-S Cop #27 recently arrived (as well as #26. I enjoyed it muchly, despite your regrettable lapse of taste in permitting the likes of one Michael Glicksohn -- that snake-lovin' cat hatin' former faned--space in your lettercol. Still, I imagine it provides something to compare the quality of the rest of your zine.

Outworlds #18 is run off and will be on the way in a week or so. Hope you'll enjoy it. Best,
Bill

[I haven't yet received the new Outworlds, but if it's up to the fantastic standards of previous issues I have seen, there is no doubt that I'll enjoy it. I will review it. Promise.]

Fred B. Goldstein
1428 Winona Ct.
Denver, CO 80204

Dear Don,

...So you've split. Well--I'm not sure I approve of that. For two reasons--you have compromised yourself by giving in to the demands of a minority number of D'APAns, something I would not have done. And, most importantly (and don't tell me you won't; I know better!) you are short changing your APAzine. My god, just two pages! We constantly hear about your lack of time in which to do anything -- we heard it when all you had was your APAzine, and now you have two zines plus (probably) DASFax [that's the club newzine, which I am about to be elected editor of, for those who don't know]. Something just has to be slighted; and we know, don't we, that it'll be your APAzine? [Oh, I suppose so. But in an effort to blunt such criticism I did do Don-o-Saur COPROLITES first this month, and it came to my usual (my former usual) 4 pages.

Okay; you've read all of the above. Now I'm going to do what amounts to an about-face, and say that I'm gonna do it too! Yes, I've just about decided to join the throng and split GVP [Goldstein's Vanity Press is the title of Fred's D'APAZine]. It will be a complete split. GVP will move entirely out of D'APA to become a personalzine, and I will think up something with a new title to put into D'APA. I'll probably call it TOKENZINE, because that's what it'll primarily be. I still might put some porno in it from time to time, just to freak out Rose. [That's Rose Beetem, daughter of the fabled Elder Ghoddess]. As for the content of the new GVP, I'll just keep going along in the same groove, minus D'APA mcs. In case you print this, I am now soliciting art work; most anything that's not in a Star Trek vein (everyone'll learn how I feel about that piece of ~~shit~~ excrescence in GVP, more than likely). Send whatever you can to me.

I guess I'll get back to DON-o-SAUR; I've just reminded myself that this, after all, is supposed to be a loc.

I, too, have read Heinlein's guest editorial in Analog, and I must say that I am in complete agreement with you on his "patriotism" comments. He began to sound like an old John W. Campbell editorial -- sick, sick. About his remarks concerning writing-- I don't know. Those rules just sound too simple. You'll have to tell me of any success you have by following them.

Let me leave you, and anyone else who might read this, with the following...
GVP IS COMING!!!

Fred

[I've told Fred he could use my mailing list, which means that you will be among the first to know when the non-apa GVP is produced].

Karen Burgett
2952 Hallmark Lane
St. Louis, Mo. 63125

Dear Don,

...Even though I missed the Analog editorial by Heinlein, I found your analysis of it most interesting, and I agree with much of your views. It seems strange to me that so many do regard pacifism as being somehow against patriotism. Patriotism, as the present generally accepted idea of "country, right or wrong," is actually an important factor in the continuation or even cause of a war; oft are the times in war when the original reason for fighting is lost in a welter of patriotism. Quite sad. Perhaps this is why so many so called "patriots" or advocates of patriotism so poorly regard pacifism and the mere idea of worldwide cooperation and peace. I've never really given the idea much thought till now. It is a complicated and at times inexplicable subject. You shouldn't apologize for being "sercon." After all, isn't the idea of fandom to be able to freely express yourself on whatever issue? Of course, I am merely a humble neofan [me too!], but that is the general impression I perceived. [me too!]. And besides, it's your zine, ain't it?!

As far as the writing aspect of the editorial is concerned, I'm afraid that I must agree. In my own feeble strivings towards authorship, I admit to neglecting a few of those 5 points, particularly 4 & 5, and occasionally number 2, although recently I've been disciplining myself on this last point. Hopefully, I can get up some initiative or absolutely nothing is going to come of my writing; I fear it may become a mere hobby. I really would like to be a writer, but that rather precarious ambition all depends on whether I can achieve some sort of self-discipline. (I wish I would stop talking about it and do something! Oh well).

I liked your story, "Christmas Candle" very much. I hope you can really stick with it and maybe really go pro. I know how frustrating it is to want something that is somehow unattainable. Bye, Karen

[I edited out the first paragraph of Karen's letter, in which she identifies herself as a H-S senior; I shouldn't have done that. Sorry, Karen. Has anyone ever offered you this advice about writing: "Be patient; live first; gain experience and wisdom so that when you do write you will have something important to say"? My advice is to ignore that advice -- even though it may be perfectly good advice. (And as a matter of fact I don't think it is; patience is not something that can be turned on and off; living is something that happens with the passage of time; wisdom may never happen). The only useful thing you can do as a high school student to prepare yourself to become a writer is to write. (Now, that doesn't sound quite right, either; learning and living and gaining experience are important). Old codgers like me are always very generous with our advice, but it's a perfectly harmless pastime. I've never known of any high school student to take such advice].

Bill Breiding
2240 Bush St.
San Francisco, CA
94115

Oh, Don;

Yaboi your zine -- DON-o-SAUR Coprolites #26 was an utter delight to consume! Ah, but to publish something like this someday!

Where-in-hole did you pick up my obscure name? But I thank ye muchly. DON-o-SAUR was read in a zap of a moment. And I was baffled not one too many times by the references to your past issues...but still! I wonder if I've ever seen better. Your fiction was even enjoyable. I wish you the best of luck. You've created something in me that I can't explain but only compare to one other: Frank Denton. To get you two together?!

[We're thinking about it].

My Star-Fire #3/4 should be sent out about the same time as this loc... No, don't be too harsh. I never said I could ramble like Thompson or Cagle or Denton, etc . . . But I needed to get it out. I only hope #1 is enjoyable.

[Star Fire #3/4 is interesting: a page and a half introduction to a fanzine--a sort of progress report, apologies, explanations, and some comments on the viewing of Star Trek cassettes, and a couple of quatrains, not in that order. I'm eager to see a complete edition].

By the way--the above paragraph about you creating something in me is both warm and positive and sense of wonderish -- keep it up.

I must write Brett Cox someday. He seems a charming chap. He and Ken Gammage do seem to fit together as co-editors after all... Well, I'll be!

"...have the tickles pinked the morning or am I thinking?"

Your reaction to Heinlein was intriguing and well felt, though I've not read the ed in actual form -- I guess I'll blow a few bucks and pick up some of the pro mags (never read them . . . poor fool, you react. What does he read-- surely not anthologies? No. I don't. I read the past. Think about it. Have you?)

....Bill

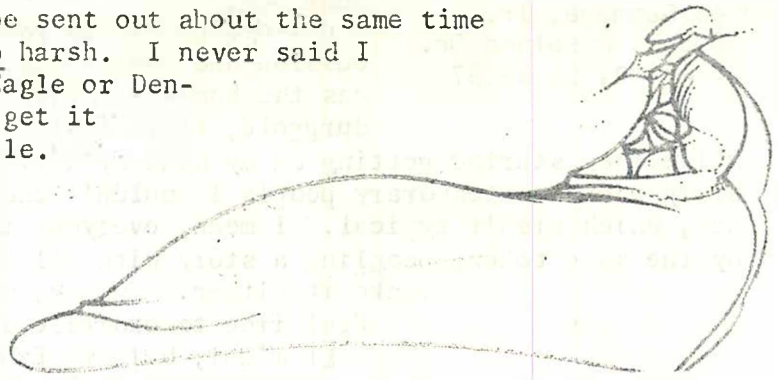
[I guess I'm not sure what that last question really means, but I have such a glow on from the rest of Bill's comments that I'm sure as hell not going to try to pick a quarrel with him].

Ed Cagle
Route #1
Leon, KS 67074

Don: Thanks for "Don-o-Saur." Kwalhioqua 9 and 10 injected into the U.S. Mails in your direction. Good luck. Re your remark concerning those of certain inadequacy who would seek to unfairly criticize those of certified adequacy in the art of composition-in-an-accepted-mode, I suggest the catchy remark: 'It is criticism of this type up with which I will not put!' (Churchill said that, not Cagle). Enjoyed D-o-S, Don. Am short on time or I would write. Will do so soon, perhaps. I'm not a pacifist, but your remarks re Heinlein's modus O are irresistible to a 'baiter.' But readable stuff. Regards.

Ed

[I guess I'm not sure what that last statement means, but never mind. I want everyone to notice that not only is Ed Cagle contemptuous of prepositions, he also dares to brazenly split his infinitives! Received KWAL 9 and 10. They're indescribable, and I wasn't planning to do any fanzine reviews this issue. However, I will say this much: KWALHIOQUA is a highly individualistic fanzine with the stamp of an editor whose sense of humor runs strongly to the bawdy and ribald. Some might say dirty, but the prudes we have always with us. Good article by Jodie Offut in #10 on Sex and Science Fiction, which is not to imply that the other material by such contributors as John Bangsund, Eric Mayer, Donn Brazier, John Alderson (I'm lumping both issues together) and Ophelia Swanshit are not also good. The remarkable thing is to find so many different writers creating such a unified tone for a zine. Anyone not familiar with this one should be.]



Ken Gammage, Jr.
7865 E. Roseland Dr.
La Jolla, CA 92037

Dear Don,

DON-o-SAUR 27 was great. I really enjoyed the discussion and your story was great. (The one drawback was the names -- Jerry Merrinac, George Turnbull, Burggold, etc. Just personal prejudice, but after a while they started getting on my mind by intruding. I mean, if I wrote a story about contemporary people I wouldn't choose names like Gammage or Merrinac, which aren't typical. I mean, everyone isn't a Clarke or Anderson, but by the same token, peopling a story with all Vonneguts or Zelaznys doesn't make it either. My, my, what a lot of worthless bullshit. Feel free to exorcise it).

[I might, but the Exorcist is sold out at every showing here in Denver. I could expunge it, perhaps, or excise it, or even excoriate it, but it is a good point -- and so I think I have to exonerate it, and you].

DIEHARD 4 from Bill Rupp, huh? Your error or Brett's? (Need I ask, already being familiar with the Coxian intellect, or lack of same?)

[It was Brett's error, but if I had let one like that slip by me in a story I was copyreading for the RMN, I would have deservedly caught hell-- and it does happen, as any reader can testify. I should have known better myself].

As for your favorite authors--congratulations! You almost name for name hit mine. I'm glad to see another Voyage to Arcturus friend. I have read it five times, and I am not yet 17. This last time I almost got what Lindsay was saying in toto. Per-

haps next time . . . I have made up a list of about 80 books that have touched me deeply, and/or changed my life. Perhaps I shall include a copy for your personal edification. Altogether, I think that DON-o-SAUR is a great zine, rapidly becoming a favorite of mine (big deal) [Well, it is to ME!]. Please keep 'em coming. Ken.

[Ken did send his list of books, and our tastes are remarkably similar. He is heavier on Ray Bradbury than I am, perhaps-- I even forgot to list Bradbury, along with several others that have come to mind since: Harold Lamb, Robert Penn Warren--for All the King's Men, if nothing else--Ursula LeGuin, Fredric Brown. . .]

Tony Cvetko
29415 Parkwood Drive
Wickliffe, Ohio
44092

Dear Don,

Well. Nice cover you got there. Surprisingly, there's not too much I can think of to write about this issue, but since I'm not doing anything else and since DON-o-SAUR is rapidly becoming one of my "can't-wait-till-next-issue-comes" zines, I feel compelled to write a loc, no matter how short it may turn out to be. And maybe as I reread the zine I may find some more to talk about. We shall see.

Don't worry about your zine growing so much that you'd have to split it again. Why would it have to be a genzine or a perszine? Keep it a combination of the two and I don't think you'll get too many complaints. Some faneds try to manufacture a zine, instead of letting it come naturally and easily. They think that they have to put a superhuman effort into the zine and all they end up with is an artificial thingum that everybody recognizes as such and nobody really appreciates. Don't let it happen to you un-

less it feels natural to you. Some people have the knack of making a big fancy zine seem natural, and some people don't (even though they try). Keep your zine on its present track (a combo pers-genzine) and I'll be happy.

I have nothing to say about your Heinlein comments except that I tend to agree with you.

Your story was, um, well, it was, uh, what I mean to say is it was, um, well...It wasn't too bad. It could very well sell, because it's written good enough, but I really didn't care for it all that much, to tell the truth. I don't know why, but I didn't. And, perhaps I'm dense or something, but I didn't understand the ending at all.

I should point out that William Rupp (Brett mentions him in his loc) publishes DREADNAUGHT, not DIEHARD. DIEHARD is published by some demented and deranged fan whose name I forget who is out in the wilds of northeast Ohio somewhere.

Tell Brett that Bug Jack Barron sucked.

You're very well read. I read sf, astronomy books and magazines, and occasionally something like National Geographic or U.S. News and World Report. But mostly the former two. And people like Ken Gammage and Brett Cox tend to think that I hate New Wave and fantasy. Not so. I like some of it. Not a lot, admittedly, but some. I'm interested in astronomy, which is probably why I like the more traditional sf: space travel and time travel. I love to read about that, and a lot of new wave doesn't contain it, so I don't read it. Some people condemn me for it, but I don't see how they can because I can't help liking what I like. One of DIEHARD's readers said that the New Wave can shit all over the Old, but don't shit on them. I'm beginning to think it's true in some cases. Some people condemn the Old, but when I say that I don't like much of the New, they condemn me. It's ridiculous.

Of course, it could be that I'm paranoid.

I enjoyed Kevin's "Looky Thar" episode immensely in TAT! . . .

Sincerely, Tony

[Well, moving right along, since I refuse to get embroiled in the New Wave-Old Wave controversy (because I like 'em both!) . . .]

Kevin Williams
2331 S. 6th
Springfield, IL
62703

Dear Don,

Number 27 is the first issue of DON-o-SAUR Coprolites which I have "paid for" with a loc, and as such belongs on the small list of zines to which I have attached the label, "Zines to which I belong." (Ha! You won't catch me ending sentences with prepositions. "That's something I've never been accused of.") When I say I "belong to" a zine, I mean that I am known to its readers, at least to the extent of being called "That nut masochist who wanted Don to rip his guts out." Even when I'm banished to the WAHF list, I still feel that I'm part of the Versammlunggeist that is present in all the better fanzines. Don't let the German scare you. All us philosophers use German words, partly because German compresses whole phrases into a single word, and partly to confuse people and give them the impression that we know about which we are talking about. Which about we are talking. What around we are talking. Which what . . . now I know why you don't mind prepositional endings.

Your analysis of Heinlein's speech was superb, and I have nothing to add to it. You reproached him far more ably than I was able to, as I stood reading that nonsense in the bookstore. (Yes, I know I'm cheap, but . . .) Reading while standing does not lend itself to careful analysis of the reading matter, so all I was able to do was mutter and sputter and groan and moan at the sheer idiocy and incongruity of Heinlein's "moral philosophy." My performance perhaps lightened the day for the other people in the bookstore, but

it did not allow me to form such reproving images as that of the baboon traveling 5,000 miles to spew napalm on leopard cubs. I congratulate you, sir, both for your viewpoint and the apt way you upheld it.

This is going to sound dumb, since you probably know more about such things than I, but haven't you killed your chances of selling "A Christmas Candle" by publishing it in an uncopyrighted fanzine? Isn't it now in the public domain? And doesn't that mean that anybody can reprint it without your permission and without paying you anything?

[You should never apologize for seemingly dumb questions. You have raised a point that I blushinglly admit simply didn't occur to me, and if it had I would probably have argued that printing it in a very small-circulation fanzine like this, if it has any legal effect at all, would simply serve to reinforce my claim to prior authorship if anyone did try to use it without payment or credit. But I fear you may actually be right, at least in a strict legal sense. Harry Warner discusses the same point in his letter, which immediately follows this one].

I have properly cleansed my soul and am now ready to join my ancestors, following in the esteemed footsteps of the late Mike Glicksohn. Not through any dislike of cats or dogs (though I have, need, and want neither, I can appreciate how other, lesser humans could develop emotional ties to such animals) but because of my dislike of fantasy. I don't disapprove of or put down other people who read fantasy, you understand. Different stroxe for different foxe, and all. But, for myself, I consider fantasy a waste of time. It has no bearing on reality or probable reality.

[If I had the time, I would not at all mind taking up the cudgels in this controversy. But even if I had time I would want to know more about your point of view before I tried an attack on it. What I suspect is that you could find yourself in a self-contradictory position. Here's what I invite you to do: make a list of your favorite science fiction stories and novels; go through it carefully and on each item ask yourself the question--"does this have a bearing on reality or probable reality?" I might also ask you to provide definitions of those terms, as well as your definition of "fantasy. Then we'll see if we can't get an argument going].

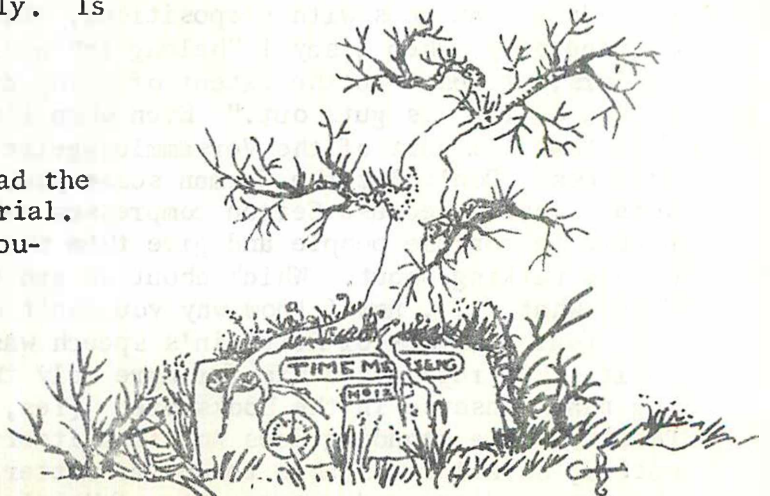
Oh, by the way, Brett Cox stole that idea of writing HONK! in big letters on the back of his loc from me. Only in my letter to him, I filled just about every available space with that expletive/message/whatever. Hear that, Brett? You can't even steal properly. Is there no hope for you?

Sincerely, Kevin

Harry Warner, Jr
423 Summit Ave.
Hagerstown, MD
21740

Dear Don:
...I didn't read the
Heinlein editorial.
But several thou-
ghts occurred

to me while reading your discussion. One immediate reaction was surprise that Heinlein should have been putting on this pitch for old-time patriotism at the Naval Academy where the graduates hardly fit the classical examples of



patriotism which he cites. I realize that they could get killed in a future war but so could the lowliest drafted sailor and meanwhile they're the modern equivalent of the paid mercenaries of old: men who will be making their living from war and constant preparation for it, rewarded by excellent financial rewards, job security and retirement options which are excelled only by those offered to major league baseball players. Then there's Heinlein's failure to realize that the next level of patriotism is being forced on the planet by firepower, the complexity of modern civilization, and other factors: loyalty first to the family group, then to the city-state or petty principality, then to the nation, and now it's essential to be loyal to the entire world because nations are too interdependent nowadays to risk war: they depend on one another not to press the button that would start a planet-destroying global conflict, they need raw materials they lack in sufficient quantities, and they can kill the planet gradually if they don't cooperate on such matters as pollution and conservation of scarce substances.

On Heinlein's writing advice: I tried for several years to sell to the pro-zines, then in the late 1950's I got an agent and sold about half of what I wrote for the next year or two before I got tired of writing mediocre science fiction for low word-rates and I haven't tried since. It might have been a coincidence but it might also be a hint about the best way to put a story on the market and keep it there until it sells. Of course, the big problem is finding an agent to handle the work of someone who hasn't sold much and won't be producing vast quantities of fiction. Mine wasn't one of the big, important agents; maybe there are still some around like him who could help you. I'm too far out of touch to know, but you might ask any pro or semi-pro you might have on your mailing list for advice. You probably know already that the agent who demands a reading fee is the one to be suspicious of.

A Christmas Candle is a pretty good story, and I hope you can find a market for it in this day of declining fiction markets in general. Just be careful not to submit it anywhere that your fanzine might also go. Technically, it's lost its copyrightability now that you've published it in a fanzine without copyrighting it; as a practical matter, I doubt if this form of publication would prevent it from selling as long as you didn't brag about the fact that it has seen print...

The letter section was quite interesting. Amen to your fear that science fiction criticism will become as serious a malady as literary criticism in the mundane field. You might have added one or two more points to your explanation of how you feel about it. One is the fact that this all-out academic school of literary criticism eventually defeats its own purpose because after a while the critics switch from discussing the stories and instead spend all their time criticizing one another's criticism, and I'd hate to see such a thing take over in science fiction because it would mean an end to the good criticism being written by people like Blish and Knight. There's also the fact that the critics can become so wrapped up in their occupation that they fall prey to the same misapprehension that seems to have harmed some young people who took too seriously *Stranger in a Strange Land* and began to practice water brotherhood and built flimsy nests and did much worse things: both groups forget that it's only a story, after all, not a guide for thinking and living. Of course a story often has a propaganda aspect but it's wrong to mistake that propaganda for a gospel-true eternal verity.

I seem to differ from most fans in my attitude toward science fiction itself. I read lots of it for periods ranging from two to six months. Then I react and can't bear the thought of reading any science fiction for the next few months. This has been going on for several decades. The main fault involved in this cyclic attitude to science fiction is the way it prevents a collection from growing. I have a good-sized accumulation of prozines and

books, but not a collection, and just think what kind of collection I'd have by now if I'd bought stuff off the newsstands consistently since I discovered my first copy of Amazing Stories in 1933.

The only time you need to worry about a preposition ending a sentence is when you hear a judge say: "Well, you've stolen one horse too many, so I sentence you to death, and if you'll look through that window you'll see the gallows I'm going to hang you from."

Yrs., &c., Harry Warner Jr.

[Well, I don't seem to have anything to add to what Harry has said-- I've noticed that he usually manages to say just about everything there is to say on a subject (oh, that's not true either, of course! what I do mean is that he always has something to say, and he expresses his thoughts fully -- leaving me nothing to add)].

[I think I will have to argue a bit with this next letter, so let's move along]].

Don D'Amassa
19 Angell Drive
E. Providence, RI
02914

Don:

I'm still not sure that I understand what your criticism of sercon activity is. If I interpret correctly, your fear is that there will suddenly be volumes of interpretive criticism published dissecting SF and that this will inevitably

make SF authors more self-conscious. I don't see that as at all likely. First, most SF is not worthy of any extensive criticism. Second, fans wouldn't read the criticism in any case. Third, SF authors tend to be part time writers rather than full time, therefore are more independent minded about what they write.

[I have to interrupt here because I think I am being misinterpreted, if for no other reason--though there are others as well. In the first place, I have nothing against sercon activity -- I engage in it myself, and if I apologize for it it's in a somewhat facetious tone. What I was talking about in my response to your letter was SF scholarship, and in re-reading my comments I can't for the life of me see where you got the idea that I was worried about the effect criticism might have on writers. (I have come across that argument before, though I can't recall where; but it certainly wasn't my argument). What I'm concerned with is the effect of pedantry on students. I'm tempted to argue on your other points: percentagewise, SF is probably as "worthy" of extensive criticism as is any other kind of writing (Sturgeon's law: 90--or is it 95?--per cent of everything is crud); fans most certainly do read criticism; and despite their independent-mindedness, SF writers are much more responsive (or have been historically; and I think this can be documented by a study of the pulp SF magazines) to the criticism and suggestions of their readers than any other group of writers I can think of. But all that is irrelevant to my point about pedantry and student boredom. Now back to you]].

Let me give you an example of useful critical discussion. The Brown SF Society meets approximately every two weeks. At each meeting, members are supposed to have read a predetermined book. This book is discussed at the meeting, criticized, praised or panned as appropriate. But the important point is that the members are required to express the reasons behind their opinions. It is not enough to say that Michael Coney is a bigot, you have to justify it from his works. We had an extremely interesting discussion of Silverberg's DYING INSIDE. If this sort of thing wasn't fun, it would long since have been discontinued.

[Sure. Okay. That's great. These are fans. People who already love science fiction, and who have chosen to impose this sort of discipline on

themselves. But to inflict that same procedure on students (and it is the basic method used in most introductory lit courses, not just in SF classes) is the surest way I know of to dampen their enthusiasm]].

There is little use to refuting Heinlein, except to blow off one's own steam. I was reminded in that article of William Buckley. They are both prone to cheating, but they cheat in full knowledge that everyone knows that they cheat. I suspect they do it just to put liberals into a rage, just as leftists often do to them.

On your favorite authors: They don't coincide with my own, but the only real bummers in my view on your list would be Wibberly, Howard, and Viereck/Eldridge. I would have added Eddison, Pangborn, Walter Miller, Bunch, Ballard, and a few others, but otherwise am mostly in agreement. No one has ever been the equal of Sturgeon.

I'm not as down on mainstream as you, though I do find it rather disappointing. I like much of Mailer, Barth, Barthelme, Baldwin, Salinger, and a few others. Bestsellers, as a rule, I find worthless. Some of this may be my hearkening back to when I taught high school English, but I still have yet to see a SF writer excel Hemingway's THE SUN ALSO RISES.

... peace,
Don

[I won't after all plunge into the argument that I had in mind for this point; I intended to advance the proposition that several SF writers have turned out works superior to Hemingway's--Theodore Sturgeon, Arthur C. Clarke, Aldous Huxley (wonder how come I left Huxley off my list of favorites!?), Olaf Stapledon (there's another one!), and Ray Bradbury (??)(well...) came to mind as possible examples. And my clincher was going to be the assertion that in 50 years more people would still be reading those authors than would be reading Hemingway. But it's kind of pointless. Fifty years is too long to wait to see if I'm right on the latter point, and the argument over which writer is superior always boils down to a matter of subjective likes and dislikes. Such arguments are fun, and I seldom duck them, but I'm again running out of time]].

Chris Sherman
700 Parkview Ter.
Minneapolis, MN
55416

Don:
Thanks for DON-o-SAUR,
but why in R'yleh did
you send it? [why not?]
Because you read a re-

view of ANT[ithesis] somewhere and decided to give it a try? [Noooo] ...or because you had read a letter I had written to someone and thought I might answer your zine (sure as hell wouldn't want to let something like this slip by unnoticed, no sir) [by George, I think he's got it!]

...You cut yourself off too abruptly on occasion and then come out and say you have written too much, or to have patience but to tell ye the truth I picked up the thing about 10 last night, and vowed that I would only read a few pages or so so that I could



write some sort of intelligent loc the next day. I didn't put the beast down until I had finished it. I like it. I even showed it to Roger Sween today, and he didn't read it, but I think he is going to ask for it, or send you his for a possible trade. He liked it too and he didn't even read it....

I wish you well on your aspirations to be a pro. I'd like to be one sometime myself, but lack the ability and discipline as yet. I have a lot of time to work on those things, though.

[I'm butting in here to do a quick, superficial review of ANTITHESIS, Chris' zine. The covers are impressive as hell--an elaborate, semi-abstract or impressionistic design in blue on the front, with the title at the bottom in dignified lower-case printed letters; a cartoon on the back cover; both front and back on heavy, expensive-looking cover stock. Then I opened the zine and experienced a sense of extreme disorientation, sort of like opening the door to a palace and stepping into a slum tenement apartment. Sorry if that sounds insulting--it isn't meant as an insult, but it was a little disconcerting to find the interior pages dittoed. It's an attractive job of dittoing, using different colors, printed on both sides of the page, with very little of the soaked-through effect so common with ditto. Only in a few places is it a slight strain on the eyes. In terms of writing ability, the entire zine is readable and interesting. Contents include some editorial musings, an intelligent and provocative article by Loren MacGregor and Roger D. Sween, a story by C.C. Clingan, a review column by Cy Chauvin, and a letter column including a section called "Overheard in the Barracks"--brief excerpts from a number of letters--a brilliant idea that I intend to make use of myself. Buried on page 20 of this 26-page production is a parenthetical statement containing the startling information that the editor of ANT is 15 years old. That's what Chris meant when he said he has lots of time to develop his writing ability. He's well on his way. If he can just learn to form the plural of words without using an apostrophe, I think he'll be all right. My sincere best wishes, Chris!]

Oh ho, we seem to have more than a few things in common when it comes to authors. Farmer is at the top of my list for SF; Lovecraft for weird fiction; Zelazny for fantasy. I loved Lord of the Rings, but just couldn't seem to get into any other of Tolkien's works--such as the Ballentine editions of Farmer Giles of Ham and one other that I can't remember.....

Yours, Chris

[I guess I've made all the comments to and about Chris that I wanted to, so let's keep going]

Roger D. Sween
465 Division St.
Platteville, Wis.
53818

Dear Don,

What explains why DON-o-SAUR has never come to my attention before? Did you never send it around for reviews and distribute it only through D'APA? [Yes. Until issue 22; that's when I started going public]

It's funny because I was visiting Chris Sherman on the 28th in Mpls and he showed me DC 27; I was so impressed with it that I took down the address to send off for it, but before I could act, I received one myself.

Not only do you know how to write (you should) and get good repro (I would hope so), but the use of more than one type face so grabs me that I may copy it myself someday.

Heinlein's five rules for getting published I have read somewhere else. What troubles me about them is rule 3, "You must refrain from rewriting except to editorial order." It's this kind of pulp oriented dictum that gives sf a bad name. I believe that to the extent that an author is an artist he must

please himself above all others. Nothing should leave his hand until he is satisfied with it, and once completed, he should not change anything even if such compromise will bet him published. ...

In regards to Heinlein on patriotism, suffice it to say that ethical pacifism makes as much sense as anarchism. The problem for society is to protect the rights of individuals; a problem that exists as long as there are persons and states opposed to recognizing individual rights. I do agree with you that patriotism is too often an emotional not an intellectual matter, one that puts faith ahead of alertness--my country right or wrong. You were right to jump on Heinlein for his evasive use of metaphor.

Your story, "A Christmas Candle," except for too little character differentiation in the dialogue, is competent. I found it reminiscent of O. Henry in style, tone, character, and theme. The device of thrusting a character suddenly forward as the omniscient third is second rate, however, compared to O. Henry's magic of surprising us with the freshness of life. And of course the realization Merrinac comes to is not brought home to the reader; we discover no miracle, just a platitude. Nevertheless I think that if you keep passing this around to the middle market women's magazines--especially those sold in grocery stores --you would eventually get it published. ...

Best,
Roger

[Thank you, Roger, both for your warm words of appreciation and for your very incisive criticisms of the story. I'm in basic agreement with them; I've been almost painfully aware of its defects, and never really satisfied with it, one reason I put it away instead of trying very hard to sell it. I'm putting it back on the market now because I still can't find a way to improve it]

Tom Jackson

Dear Don,

4023 E. 53rd St.
Tulsa, OK 74135

....I have always been amazed by Robert Heinlein's ability to justify horrible acts with fine-sounding "reasons." A good example of this is one of the Lazarus Long quotes in the June 1973 Analog: "The highest achievements of the human mind are the twin concepts of 'loyalty' and duty."

Nonsense. A real high achievement of the human mind is when a person has a moral sense, a sense of responsibility. Willingness to go out and kill other people just because the government thinks it is a good idea is hardly an achievement. The people of World War II Germany who opposed Hitler are vastly more admirable to my mind than the people who supported him. Hitler's opposition was made up of people who possessed a conscience. On the other hand, there were the thousands of people who supported the Nazi party and fought in the German armies. These people, who supported Hitler's goals of conquering the world and exterminating the Jews, acted out of a sense of patriotism. They believed in doing their duty to the Fatherland. They believed in loyalty and duty, just as Heinlein believes in loyalty and duty.

...Allow me to quote something else from the "Notebooks of Lazarus Long."

"Those who refuse to support and defend a state have no claim to protection by that state. Killing an anarchist or a pacifist should not be defined as 'murder' in a legalistic sense. The offense against the state, if any, should be 'using deadly weapons inside city limits,' or 'creating a traffic hazard,' or 'endangering bystanders,' or some other misdemeanor."

In other words, Don, Mr. Heinlein would appreciate it if Congress would pass a law making it legal for him to shoot your son. ...

...Quit hiding, Don. Tell me where you've had those two stories of yours published, so I can look them up....

Tom

[Aw, shucks! Do I have to? But I suppose if I don't, someone will look them up in one of the indexes, so I might as well save you the trouble. The stories are "The Telenizer," in the March 1954 Galaxy, and "High Dragon Bump" was in the June 1958 lf]

* * * * *

Those asterisks represent a time lapse, not just of minutes or even of hours, but in fact of two days, during which I have been (in between teaching and working) running off the first 15 pages of D-o-S and evaluating my position in terms of remaining time and material. I still have about a dozen letters; it would take an additional 20 pages or so to print all of them, and another four or five days' work at least. The time is now 1:15 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 19. My absolute deadline for this issue is the DASFA meeting, which starts at 7:30 this evening. I need to be finished typing this at least a couple of hours in advance, so I can have time to collate enough copies to distribute at the meeting. I still have to do some work on D'APA (not Coprolites, because I did that first this time!).

So anyway, I have concluded that I can easily extend this for another two pages -- but no more.

So I'm gonna do it -- and here's where I incorporate Chris Sherman's cunning idea of quoting brief excerpts from the letters instead of trying to run the entire thing. Wish I could think of a clever title for this section.

CONDENSATIONS

Warren Johnson ...I sent my genzine, PERCEPTIONS, in trade a while back,
131 Harrison St. and I trust you got it. I'm interested (of course) in
Geneva, IL 60134 hearing your comments on it. ...If you have all those
 letters sitting around, who not print a few more? I know
you'll always get some unprintable duds like this one, but there must be some
others that would be of interest. C'mon, Don, it's not that I don't like your
writing, it's that I want to read more of theirs.

[See above for my dilemma on the letters. But listen, Warren -- everyone: When I said back at the beginning that I had many letters, I didn't really mean that, and I certainly didn't mean too many; there's just no such thing! I love letters. I have become dependent upon them--they are like a narcotic. Every faned knows what I mean. Don't stop! Don't stop! I did indeed receive PERCEPTIONS, and here are a few comments about it, but not a full review: It's an impressive looking zine--41 pages, including cover (Sheryl Birkhead). (This is issue #3 I'm talking about, Nov. 1973). Contents include an editorial and a review by the editor, and other articles and reviews by Frank Balazs, Brett Cox, and Roger Sween, a story by Janet Fox, verse by Bill Breiding and Warren Johnson... There are also fanzine reviews and letters. Oh, yes; there's a very short story by Roger Sween--in French, with the English translation in an adjoining column. Something a little different. Overall, the zine is readable, interesting, provocative, with nice variety. I like it.]

Rose Hogue ...your pan of CTHULHU CALLS -- please be kinder next
16331 Golden Gate Lane time. Bob [Barthell] had a whole multitude of trouble
Huntington Beach, CA putting #2 out, like the flu & teaching duties &
92449 dearth of material--why not send in some of your
 fiction?? Or suggest others in DASFA do likewise?
He really pleads for material & does a good job. ... Bob really is a great
guy & hope you two can get to know one another!

[Rose's letter runs seven pages, on legal size note paper, and I'm sorry I can't print more of it and comment more extensively on it. And I'm sorry, too, that Rose is having serious medical problems, both personal and family; I do hope things turn out all right. About B.B. and CC, I do know what a great person Bob is: he is dynamic, energetic, intelligent, resourceful, imaginative and dedicated, and he is dragging Wyoming into the Science Fiction Age practically single-handed. I'd like very much to get to WyoCon I in Powell, Wyo., Feb. 9 and 10, but I can't get away. I urge anyone else who can possibly make it to do so. Bob Barthell is behind it, of course. Also in front of it, and on all sides of it!]

Bill Marsh
1119 Cedar St.
Carson City, Nev.
89701

...I liked your "A Christmas Candle." It was a very effective story, I thought, and it even managed to effect a few wrenches in my calloused, cynical and Scroogish heart. It seems to me it should be easily saleable. ...It's always reassuring to learn of other over-fortyish fans who are neophytes to the fannish business. My first con attendance predated yours by but a single year. It was the '70 Westercon at Santa Barbara. It is nice to know that I'm not entirely unique in my retarded fannish development...

Jodie Offutt
Funny Farm
Haldeman, KY 40329

...Surely there are more than three people in fandom who don't like cats. I don't. I imagine a lot of people just can't be bothered to talk about it. When I was about 10 years old, I dropped a cat out of my second-floor bedroom window to see if he would land on his feet. He did and took off and we never saw him again. We all have out little quirks, and the rest of us should attempt to be tolerant of the cat-lovers among us. I know a fan in Canada who has a pet boa constrictor whose name is Boa Wonder. (I keep a yo-yo in my desk drawer which serves to calm my nerves in times of stress). ...

Jennifer Stevenson
1036 Stanley Hall
Iowa City, Iowa
52242

...I gather that Heinlein was addressing an assembly of cadets on patriotism. I humbly submit...that you're right--his audience wanted reassurance, not a lesson in semantics. Also, his audience stood for a much bigger bloc of thought, that of the whole military system. But Heinlein was supposedly hired by that system to speak to the cadets, and he'd be serving his employers pretty poorly if he spoke against the kind of patriotism which keeps that system going --"your country right or wrong." That would be as patently, criminally rude as the college professor who teaches his students to hate the administration which is his bread and butter. I don't say he didn't play falsely with the idealism he propounded, by not taking the time, as you suggest, to brush off the self-styled patriots who've given the word its bad reputation. That, had he been completely at liberty to speak, would have been the least he could say in answer to the two conflicting definitions of 'patriot.' But as he wasn't free of his obligation to the people who hired him, he refrained, and topped it off in his usual, never-leave-a-stern-unstoned style, with fatuous insults to pacifists. ...

Sheryl Birkhead
23629 Woodfield Road
Gaithersburg, MD
20760

...About prepositions and ends of sentences-- when I was in high school etc., that was a definite no-no, but I've recently (at least more recently than I've been to school) heard from an English prof (Ph.D.) that she considers them to be mild no-nos only if they are written -- if you use them in speech (and therefore they aren't thought out ahead of time, I assume) they are "okay."

...I liked your story, but you know, I liked Bonnie's style so much more...but then--maybe that's supposed to be the way it works? (Or maybe I'm just syrupy gooey?)

Mike Glicksohn
141 High Park Ave.
Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3

...The overall tone of DC is one of calm rationality. You make mistakes, and openly admit them. You dis-
miss Important Ideas as well as trivialities with a
sensible and reasoned approach. Even when the ques-
tions under consideration do not provoke me to comment, I enjoy reading your re-
marks. A faned cannot do more than that for his readers.

...I must protest your editorial comment in my letter! Judith did not give "the Glicksohns a ride from Albuquerque to L.A." She gave John Douglas and me such a ride, and I am not now, nor ever have been, either married or engaged to John Douglas.... Another disproof of the "fans are slans" theory, in addition to their mindless devotion to the utterly valueless feline, is their tendency to type one address in the lettercolumn and then send the fanzine to that person at an old address. You'd be surprised at how many intelligent, sensitive people don't notice correlations like that and update their mailing lists accordingly.

[ME?? Make MISTAKES? What a laughable notion!]

And that, I'm afraid, is going to have to be IT!

I also heard from: Doug Leingang, Claire Beck, Gary Mattingly, Joe Hensley, and Frank Balazs.

Keep those cards and letters coming, friends!

Next issue I will, for sure, I promise, review some fanzines (including ALGOL), and I also hope I can do some book reviews, before the stack on my desk topples over.

ART CREDITS: Cover: Gail Barton (last month's cover was by BILL Kaiser, of California); Pages 2, 12 and 13 also Barton. Russell Parkhurst: Pages 4, 7 and 8.

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