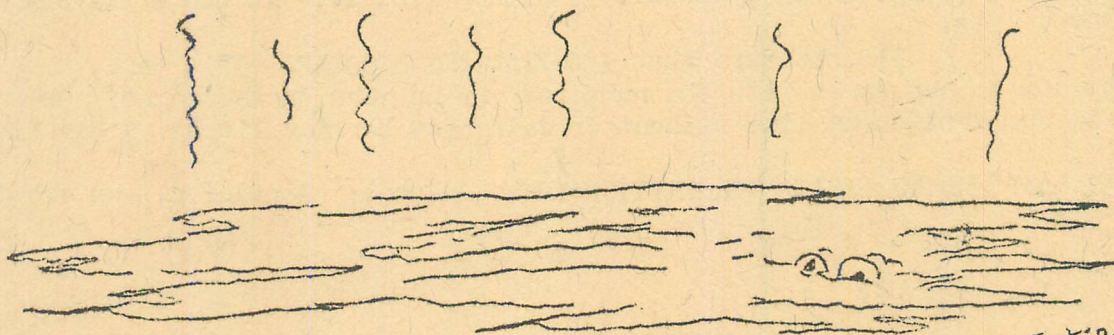


DYNATRON

#3⁴



FOSTER

DEC 67

The thought of a blank page shakes me. What to do? I am not certain at the moment whether STOBCLER has folded or not however herewith some brief comments on the 7th mailing thereof.

SZNIIVTIG 7: Seven alleged zines in the 7th mailing representing the output of only four of the members. Not at all good. Well, not bad either when you consider that is 50% of the membership at present.

CHONIZAR (Edco): The arrival of genuine, certified, gay-ron-tee'd aliens from outer space would, probably, set off panic in the establishment. LBJ would take to the telly to assure us this would not in any way affect our conduct of the war in Vietnam. Congress would hold hearings. The military would mill around. The stock market would crash. France would demand payment of \$100,000,000 in gold. Fundamentalist preachers would denounce the aliens as part of the ecumenical movement. Liberal preachers would lead a street march. The nuts on the left would see it all as a Wall Street plot and the nuts on the right would see it as a red plot. Bobby Kennedy would give a speech in hopes of getting their support and the GOP would try to get one to run for President. But as for the poor old tax-ridden, belabored slob in the streets he would accept it with the same attitude of indifference he has for everything else. Oh, there might be a stir for a few days, no longer than a week, and then John Q would settle back into his rut and accept things as they are.

MASTROND (Dave): There are, of course, certain advantages as well as disadvantages in living alone. As for cooking that is no real problem these days. There are vast numbers of already or easily prepared foods on the market and if you pick up a good standard cook book you should have no problems. I have to do the cooking around here when Chrys is off tramping around the mountains with the Girl Scouts and it really is no large problem. You'll find that it isn't at all necessary to rely on such things as TV Dinners (ugh). I recommend that you (and anyone else who gets involved in the kitchen) invest in and use two or three pressure cookers of assorted sizes (4 quart and 6 quart are pretty useful). These are tremendous time savers. A roast, for instance, that takes a couple of hours in an oven can be pressure cooked in 30 minutes. Vegetables are cooked in just a few minutes. There are a few things--such as peas--that can't be cooked in them but almost anything can. Read the manual that comes with the pot, though.

RIDER'S SHRINE (Bruce): HORT, indeed. I rather like it. It has a flavor, a ring as it were. Yes.

I'm not sure that I follow the SFCOLAF. Is a game, yes? We are supposed to put names with the numbers? Or numbers on the names? Or get from V to P in one continuous line without crossing any barrier lines? I give up.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO MIKITA SERGEIVITCH (Dave & Edco): Gentlefon, you are drunk.

2100110767

FASTHEADING. What? Ah, so. Yes. Indeed. This seems to be the 34th issue of Dynatron. I'm almost sure of it. I just looked at the last one and I said it was number 33 so it would seem to follow that this is number 34. So soon? And number 33 isn't distributed yet and here we go on a new one already? Yes. This is DYNATRON 34 sure enough. DYNATRON is a fanzine. Which is to say that it is an amateur publication--of sorts--devoted, for the most part, to Science Fiction, Fantasy, and miscellaneous material pertaining thereto or associated therewith. (Some day I must query such historians as H. Warner as to when the terminology changed from "fanmag" to "fanzine". I can't remember exactly. I was drunk that day.) DYNATRON is (heh-heh) non-political, non-profitable, non-denominational and non-interchangeable. This issue, like most of the others, is published (I almost wrote "edited" there but those of you who have been reading the fmz for any length of time must realize that doesn't really apply. Why I've never even read the Associated Press Style Book. Harry, have you read the APSB?) by Roy Tackett (called "Horrible Old Roy Tackett" by neos who don't know him--and by old fans that do) at 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107, in the USofA. Takumi Shibano of 1-14-10 O-okayama, Meguro-ku, Tokyo, Japan, is Associate Editor (even if he doesn't associate himself with this publication. Can't blame him for that.). ((Ah, ha, Juffus, I'll bet you thought I'd forget to put the final full stop there.)) Let's get along to the nitty-gritty. This issue is published with the expectation that it will be distributed through NAPA and STOBCLER (if they are still in existence) as well as to our vast list of regular subscribers, irregular coin and stamp senders, and a few, very few, assorted hangers-on and fawning acolytes. Cash price, for those interested is 25¢, two-bits, a quarter-of-a-dollar. (It went up! You betchum, Red Ryder. Stencils are up, ink is up, paper is up and postage is heading there. All part, of course, of the continuing inflationary spiral which is something I don't understand except that everything is going up and the President wants a tax increase so we won't have any money left at all to publish fanmags with. I recall an old Eddie Cantor movie--a fantasy--wherein he was transported back to the days of the Arabian Nights--humm---and came across a wizard trying to get his flying carpet to rise. "In my country," said Eddie, "Congress makes everything go up--by inflation." The carpet rose. Egad! A new variety.)

I digress. Dynatron is published whenever the mood comes over me but, I hope, at least quarterly or more often. Inside this issue you will probably find material by Donald Franson, past and future president of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (we don't fool around--go right to the top), Len Boffatt and maybe some others. Unsigned material can be blamed on HORT. No letter column, of course. How could there be a letter column when the 1st issue hasn't even been sent out yet? ((Fake it. Edco.))

Edco is our TAFF candidate. Hard-working old Edco. Needs an ocean-trip, he does.

007 is Ethel Lindsay for those of you over there in those little-bitty countries.

Did I leave out anything? Thish dated December, 1967, and is, as always, a Harinated Publication.

XXXXX

OL' ROYTAC GOES UNDERGROUND. A few months ago Don Pancho's Art Theater decided to get on the bandwagon, or whatever, and began showing something they called "Underground Cinema 12" each Saturday night. Films from the underground. Whatever that may be. Not too long ago the newspaper advertisement proclaimed "Tonight at midnight Underground Science Fiction."

Ummm. Have to see that. Yes. So about 2330 I climbed into the wagon and made the journey from Los Ranchos de Albuquerque into the city. Don Pancho's is located on east Central across the street from the University of New Mexico as is to be expected. Most of the rest of the city's population prefers tv.

A crowd of 100 or so paid their way in. Most of them college types with a wee scattering of olders. The fee was a buck and a half but if you were a member of

2112110767

the Underground Film Group you got two bits knocked off. Anyone who bought a ticket automatically became a member of the Underground Film Group.

The flic was supposed to start at midnight but was somewhat late. I relaxed in my seat and listened to the students discuss the important topics of the day: the party they went to last night, the party they had been at tonight, the party they were going to after the movie, whether or not there was too much butter on the popcorn.

Finally someone went upstairs and woke up the projectionist and he started the first film which turned out to be a segment of Tarzan of the Apes starring Elmo Lincoln. It was rather amusing or "carpy" as they say. I'll hazard a guess that I was the only one in the audience who recognized the film; the rest, unless they are ERB devotees, which is unlikely, were far too young. As was the custom of the silents there was much bad acting but to the credit of the long-forgotten producer this was ERB's Tarzan and not the one who later appeared on the scene.

The Tarzan segment had been running for about five minutes when some clown staggered down the aisle and about two-thirds of the way down fell on his face. Much buzz from the audience: Hey, did you see that. Yeah, he passed out. Haw. Hey, that guy passed out. Et cetera.

The usher hurried down the aisle and helped the fallen drunk to his feet. Some unheard conversation ensued. The usher attempted to usher him. No. He wanted to make a speech. Ah. Consultation with the hastily-summoned manager. Tarzan, meanwhile, has pushed a log over a canyon that is 3 feet wide. Tremendous. He, Tarzan, that is, is on his way to Opar. (Ol' Jawn Weismuller never went to Opar. He didn't know where it was. He couldn't even pronounce it.) Manager says let him talk.

Drunk: This kid is MROTC.

Audience: Shaddup. Siddown. Hooo.

Drunk: You know what MROTC is? It's SICK!

Audience: Ha-ha-ha.

Drunk: But they pay my tuition and buy my books and pay me fifty dollars a month and once a week I go out and go hut-two-three-four. (Marches.)

Voice: He's MROTC all right. (Meantime Tarzan has entered the caves of Opar. He finds La. He throws his hands to his face. I don't blame him. Eecogad.)

Drunk: Why are they training me?

Audience: Shaddup. Siddown.

Drunk: To make war. To send me to Viet Nam to be killed. (Tarzan continues to charge around the Opar caves. The images flicker across the face of the Drunk and the Manager and Usher.) Let me tell you. You want me to siddown so you can hear the movie, right? Wouldn't you rather hear me? Let me tell you. I met a fellow tonight. He's just back from Viet Nam. He was a part of a combat squad. 12 of them went out on a patrol and only 4 of them came back. Think of that. 8 of them killed. What did they die for? I ask you, what did they die for?

Voice: For fifty dollars a month.

Drunk: Why are we in Viet Nam?

Voice: To protect our freedom.

Drunk: Bullshit! We're in Viet Nam to fight Johnson's war. And people are dying. Do you want to die? I don't want to die.

Voice: Why not? What else are you good for? (The Tarzan flic has meantime ended and the projectionist is alternately playing red and white lights on the speaker.)

Drunk: You came to hear the movie right? Would you rather hear me? Let's take a vote. All those who want to hear the movie applaud.

Audience: (Wild applause).

Drunk: All those who want to hear me applaud. (Two or three hand claps.) OK. I lose. (Staggered up aisle and out.)

1942110867

After some apparent fumbling the projectionist managed to get the next film threaded onto the projector. It was an epic titled Sins of the Fleshapoids. This seems to have been written, produced, directed, photographed, and narrated by some chap whose name escapes me. He also starred in the picture. In glorious color yet. Briefly the story, set "a million years in the future", concerned two robots, called fleshapoids because they have a fleshlike outer covering and appear human-like, who fall in love and kill their master. There is this BIG scene at the end where the female robot writhes around on the floor and gives birth to a little robot. End. Pause while the projectionist finds the second feature. Ah, he has it. This is called The Lurker and is blurbed as "a variation on the Frankenstein there which is quite well done." The story concerns the usual nut professor who plants a new brain in one of the local yokels. Ah, well.

Well done? Ha! I have been reading in the cinema columns of the various national magazines about underground movies. Fresh, they say. Exciting, they say. Brilliant, they say.

Blah.

Crude, I say. Amateurish in all respects, I say. Dull, I say. Underground science fiction is worse than Hollywood's usual brand of science fiction movies which have, at least, the polish of professionalism.

The Underground is nowhere.

PSYCHOTIC #21 comes from Richard E. Geis, 5 Westminister Ave., Venice, Calif 90291. Geis was, I believe, one of the leading lights of Sixth Fandom who gaffed more than a decade ago. He has returned to the fold with this issue of PSYCHOTIC because, he says, "I needed a hobby". He promises to issue his zine monthly. This contains editorial ramblings mostly about Star Trek which he finds juvenile. I agree about that. This current season's efforts are definitely aimed for the alleged 12-year-old mass mind of the television viewer. Arnie Katz (no relation to David Katz) takes a verbal swing at Dannie Plachta and Harry Warner reminisces about the beginnings of SPACEWAYS. A seemingly welcome addition to the dwindling pile of gezines. 25¢ or the usual fannish barter.

SANDWORM #2 was left on the doorstep by Bob Vardeman who lives in P. O. Box 11352, Albuquerque, N.Mex., 87112. That's no mean trick either because Bob is over six feet long. SANDWORM gets distributed through various apas and is available to gen-fandom for the usual fannish barter. Mostly reviews of one sort or another broken up with a bit of fiction, a poem and Vardeman's interlinos which amuse. Worth getting. Vardeman is one of the most promising new faces in fandom. (Don't everybody write, though. I have to run the damned thing off for him.)

THE RIGGER DIGGER #1 was put out by Richard Schultz, 19159 Helen, Detroit, Mich 48231 and concerns itself with the now defunct tv program "The Avengers". Which is OK if you care for that sort of thing. "The Avengers" had its moments but as with all--or almost all--television drama it wasn't very good. A few cuts above the usual tv fare but still nothing to really get excited over. Television drama has a whole lot of lack. However, if you enjoyed the Avengers you'll want this and you can get it for 40¢ or TUB. Dick has photos of Diana Rigg and Patrick Macnee for sale.

Election day in New Mexico was rather dull. There were no offices up for grabs and the only statewide issues on the ballot were eight proposed constitutional amendments. Some areas also had a bond issue or two. The vote was light, only about 10% of the registered voters turned out. One precinct in the southern part of the state reported that none of its 180 registered voters showed up. No burning issues, not much to get excited about. They didn't even bother to close the bars.

2113110867

A few years back Don Franson sent me a one line con report on the Seacon. His latest on Westercon XX is somewhat longer. Like, I have to serialize it and it may become a continuing feature of the zine. So herewith Part I and Ghu knows when the last part will be printed. The thing seems to go on forever. HORT

WIND-UP AT THE SHERATON-WEST
The Twentieth Westercon, June 30 - July 4, 1967
Reported by
DONALD FRANSON

On Vermont Avenue in Los Angeles there is a billboard which says, "Unwind at the Sheraton-Wilshire", and depicts a businessman with a big key in his back. I wondered if at the Sheraton-West, the convention hotel, there would be more chance of the guests running down and having to be wend up...

The Sheraton-West is the old Town House, at the edge of Lafayette Park, and is a comfortable old hotel in a quiet neighborhood, with modern rooms and features. I got a good impression of the hotel right away by finding a free parking place in the lot in back, when I arrived about 5:30 Friday afternoon. Coming into the lobby I felt like a tourist, especially when a Greyhound bus unloaded and a lot of non-fan types gathered and gawked. I found the room prices as advertised (\$8 for a single, special rate), and that good impression was never reversed. I prefer a hotel to a motel for a convention anyway, and this one also has motel features, pool and all.

The mundane atmosphere in the lobby was so complete that I had the feeling I was in the wrong hotel, until I met Jean Bogert by the elevator. I went up to my room on the fourth floor (convenient for walking up, if necessary) and unpacked, then went down to look for more fans. This didn't take long--I saw one at once in the fourth floor corridor. At least he looked like one, with long hair, wild beard, and shorts. When he called me by name, I recognized Walter Breen, whom I hadn't seen since the Pacificon incident.

This friendly meeting cheered me, as I had thought Walter might be aloof toward those who had tried to be neutral in the feud, or fan-war as it really was for a while. He said he is 90% mafia now, mundane work and family taking his time. (I forgot to ask him about the next issue of FANAC.) I said there must be a lot of fans here already, I had heard the name of F.W. Busby being paged. This was the wrong name to mention, I suddenly realized, but Breen said merely that avoidance was best (which is about the same thing Buz said to me later). I went out to my car and came back to find taxis unloading with more non-fans, just as if this were a mundane hotel. Which it wasn't for the next four days at least.

The lobby was on various levels, and in the entrance hall, which I might call the foyer, fans began to collect. The first group, hard by the fancy-expensive restaurant (I never went in there and maybe they didn't either) included Poul and Karen Anderson, talking with Charlie and Marsha Brown. Jerry Pour-nelle, in his normal loud complaining voice, discussed some deep technical subject beyond me, and then Marion Zimmer Bradley Breen came up, with Walter and the kids, and there were greeting noises. As the group seemed to be voting to go somewhere to eat or drink or something, I wandered away, and bumped into more fans.

I managed to greet Roy Squires and Torry Ackerman coming in the entrance, saying "Welcome to Los Angeles", and Felice Rolfe rushing out "looking for a husband" I thought she said but it may have been "my husband." I shook the hand of Andy Pain who said he had already been tossed out of the bar because Barbara (not Andy?) seemed under age. Torry had FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND under his arm as usual and said he had at least one other fan here. Dwain Kaiser said there would be a party in room something or other. "You're invited," he said, "but it's really an open party in my room." I said "All the fans are here now, start the convention." "I'm not the convention chairman,"

1325111067

he protested. "Well, you're the vice-chairman." "Chairman of vice maybe, but the convention starts tomorrow," he said, bounding up the stairs to the lobby (registration desk and elevators on an upper level).

Charlie Brown told me what I hadn't known, that Ted Johnstone and Dwain were off the committee. "Since when?" I asked. "Since a couple days ago." Seems that things hadn't been going smoothly and there was a last-minute coup, with Brandon Lamont (known to fandom chiefly as brother of Gil Lamont and husband of Jane) taking over the chairmanship, and Earl Thompson, the secretary, doing the legwork. This sounded like a disaster, but judging by the results, this formula should be followed always to insure a successful Westercon.

Ron Ellick was wandering around, saying he couldn't get into the bar without coat and tie. Later he appeared with coat, tie and lederhosen, so this must have been his solution.

There were no signs in the lobby directing anybody to any Westercon, so I just went up to the second floor, and found some activity, as expected. Generally the Friday night before the con someone is setting up something. There was Earl Thompson (not bearded, just unshaven) who had been here since early morning arranging things, talking to Cynthia Goldstone in the art room, or rather an annex to the art room containing a complete Cynthia Goldstone exhibit. This hotel was generous with space, apparently--there were three art rooms and two huckster rooms, on both sides of the second floor corridor. Earl showed me around, and promised an NSF table (though I never did pay for one--I sort of sub-let from Ben Stark). No immediate help seemed to be needed so I drifted around vaguely wondering about the location of the con hall but decided that fans would more likely show up here.

There was Forry Ackerman again, sitting at the round table in the art show room (almost the only piece of furniture there at the moment), sorting through some drawings and sketches. Some others of us asked him what he was doing, drew up chairs, and thus began the Round Table Conference, which lasted several hours, and was as enjoyable as it was impromptu.

There were to start, besides Forry and myself, Fred Whitledge, Roy Squires, and William Clark. It was almost like a First Fandom meeting. Forry was methodically going through the sketches, while others merely shuffled them curiously. It took on the aspect of an odd-ball poker game. I asked Forry if he was really buying anything and he showed a bunch of drawings in his lap. Roy Squires, with pipe, talked about planning to go to Mexico. Fred Whitledge discussed old pulps. He is now collecting boy's books, those that come in hardcover series. Some asked me about BLACK CAT magazine and all agreed that it is extremely rare nowadays. Forry was asked the size of his collection. He said he has orders with dealers and agents to get him everything new, and search out everything rare. Walt Daugherty had recently estimated the number of items at one hundred thousand but this includes movie stills. Bill Clark had a briefcase with some choice items and a button that read "I Grock Mr. Spock", which caused much merriment.

More people came in as the evening progressed and the light faded: Elmer Perdue, Walt Liebscher, Kris and Lil Neville, and Bill Rotsler, who was responsible for many of the sketches on the table. The commented on the "poker game" and disappeared again.

Two pretty girls came in and we made room for them at the table (First Fandom is not dead). They seemed to be new to fandom although they understood the "I Grock Mr. Spock" button. Christine Hensel wanted to know about registration, which was not until tomorrow, and where the convention hall was, but no one knew. Forry had been talking about Stephen Pickering, boy connoisseur, and Christine said, wasn't that a character in one of Shaw's plays? Squires identified that Pickering as the friend of Higgins in "Pygmalion."

1411111067

Forry told about the sunflower seeds. He had a part in a movie, and was supposed to be reading, and to create action they had supplied him with a bowl of sunflower seeds, which he was to keep on absently popping into his mouth while reading. This went on for several takes. Forry said he had never eaten a sunflower seed in his life and no one told him he was not supposed to swallow them, but to crack them in his teeth and spit out the shells, until after he had emptied the bowl.

He talked about non-fan/fan Harold Piser and his penchant for indexing everything, even thousands of poems. Then a man came in whom Forry introduced as Louis Drake, an artist, who was sort of a discovery of his. He asked if he could bring his paintings in. They were brought in and leaned against the walls around the room: big, colorful space and science-fictional themes--the sort of thing that might be done by Paul and Wesso in collaboration with Dold. Perdue said they were primitive, whatever that means.

The time passed swiftly, it was getting party-time, and the round table conference broke up. Another reason may have been that workers were appearing with frames and stands, the art show was being set up, and paintings would soon crowd us out. It's wonderful how a gathering gets started at a convention. This had happened to me at past conventions, but mostly in bars. I don't remember ever entering a bar at this Westercon--most of the time I was tieless, anyway. I went out to get something to eat. I think it was now eleven o'clock or maybe midnight. About a block from the hotel was an all-nitery where I had a really good hamburger and lots of coffee. Back to the con and Dwain Kaiser's party--I forgot the room number but remembered the floor and that is all you need--as you step from the elevator you can hear where the party is.

These crowded parties--they're not too enjoyable to me. I don't drink, but I enjoy a party as much as anyone for the talk. At a noisy party I can't hear any talk, even the person who is talking to me, and this soon discourages conversation. The party spilled out into the hall and jammed the doorway, so it was a problem to get in or out. I remember meeting Ed Clinton in the vestibule. He has a Lincoln-esque beard. Strange how many fans still have beards though it has now become a symbol of orthodox non-conformity. Maybe fans are really so independent they are indifferent to classification.

I found a small vacant place on a bed and listened to Ron Ellick explaining something to Roy Squires who was within two feet of me, but I could hear a word most of the time. One of the girls who had been at the round table was there too (I never did catch her name) and she was annoyed at something Ron had said. "You're not a nice young man," she said, which isn't true, but he talks rough to girls sometimes. I moved around, but there was no quiet spot in this small room, one of the smallest in the hotel. I have a sharp ear (no, not like Mr. Spock) and can catch interesting conversations, but here I could only see mouths moving, except during infrequent lulls. Introduced to Ken Bonnell, I said, "Yes, you're an old time fan." He said, "You're the first to recognize me as an old-time fan! Do you know Dale Hart?" "Sure, I recognized him by his Texas accent." Dale said: "Since taking up method acting, Ah've lost mah Texas accent." I can't recall all the others I met in that madhouse, and I soon escaped to the relative peace and quiet of the corridor, though there were fans there, too.

(To be continued in our next issue)

DONALD FRANSON

THE PROPER BOSKONIAN #0 (Number zero? She read ARNIEKATZ?) arrived from Cory Scidman, 20 Ware St., Apt 4, Cambridge, Mass 02138 and concerns itself mostly with the organization of the New England SF Society aka Eddore. Also some musing about Nycon by Cory and some NITSFS history by Tony Lewis. Cory, who along with Leslie Turc# edits TZ, is one of the hangers-on that NITSFS has doing all the work these days. She writes with a light touch that produces giggles and chuckles in appropriate places. Quite good. Dr. Lewis is also good. Send for a copy. Two bits I think.

Long has it been, overly long, since old buddy Len Haffatt graced these pages. These days he spends most of his fannish time on the JDM Bibliophile, a fanz concerned with the works of John D. MacDonald, and what little is left over goes into SPIANE which is his contribution to FAPA. It is a real pleasure to have him back in Dynatron.

KEEP SMILING!

A Column

by

LEN HOFFATT

It has been many moons since I last wrote a column for Dynatron. As our green-penned editor knows, I have been busy with other forms of crifanac, as well as mundane activities. But a promise is a Promise when made to a friend of Roy's vintage, and today I feel inspired...

First of all I am inspired to tell you how columns do get written. For some time now I have also owed an article or column or something-or-other to Ed Cox (for TAFF!). He asked me to write something for AUSLANDER, and I said I would at Westercon XX we were discussing the changes in S-F cons over the years, and I promised to write something along those lines.

The other night I caught a mild case of insomnia and came up with a lovely title. "We Here Convened..." I even got out of bed and looked up the exact definition of "convention" in the dictionary. I should have sat down at the typer and knocked out the article then and there. But, there was Morning and Going to Work to face, so I returned to bed, wrote the article in my head, and went to sleep.

A few days later, I finally found time to sit down and work on the piece. I wrote three pages, knowing that what I was writing was not in any way similar to the article I had written in my head. (No Naval puns here, please.) The title--"We Here Convened..." remained with me, but it bore little relationship to the 3 pages I had just written. So I changed the title to "Look, Papa Gernsback, I'm Dancing!" I let it sit for a couple of hours, looked at it again, thought of changing the title to "Look, Papa Hugo, I'm Dancing!", and then decided that I really didn't dig the 3 pages at all. I would rewrite the whole thing.

The next day I got on it again, and came up with what may or may not be a regular column in AUSLANDER. I said what I had to say (about changes in the Westercos over the years) in verse, and decided to dub the column "Verse Things Can Happen". So now I am committed to write fannish verse for Edco's genzine. Writing it helped, though, because I then decided that I had better get cracking on this column for Roy's mag.

I do want to say something about the Hugos for fans vs. Pongs for fans situation. I should have written this to John Trimble months ago, but...see first paragraph.

Of course, the hassle is over by now, one hopes. The nycon committee has dropped the use of the name "Pong", and presumably most of the objectors are happy. As someone suggested, if they wanted to honor Bob Tucker in this manner, they could have called the awards "Tuckers" rather than "Pongs". At the time the hassle was going on, I mentioned to some friends that if they wanted to call the fan awards something in honor of Tucker they could just as easily have used one of his other nicknames--"Boob". Fan winners would have received Boobs, instead of Pongs... Instead of the usual rocket-shape, the awards themselves could be in the form of a bust, I suppose.

I can understand why younger fan editors didn't dig "pongs" as a name for their awards. The older fans know and loved (platonically, of course) old Hoy Ping Pong, the Chinese Buck Rogers, but the younger fans had only the name itself to react to--and of course some of them did.

I can also understand why Hugos are not considered appropriate awards for fans or fan-produced material. Uncle Hugo is considered the father of modern s-f and all that jass, but he didn't create fandom. It would be more appropriate for the fan awards to be named after an old-time fan who has contributed much to

the hobby. Tucker is as good a choice as any. Ackerman, too, except that newer fans might object to using his name as much as they objected to "Pong" because of Ferry's association with Monsters. (As a matter of fact, there is a Ferry Award, given by LASFS to outstanding people in the s-f field, similar to the Little Men's Invisible Man Award.)

What I am wondering is what Gramps Tucker himself thought of all this hassle. I can see him sitting back in his rocker, stroking his long grey beard, and smiling sadly to himself. And mentally writing a satiric Pong essay, lightly lambasting both sides of the fuss. As I recall, Pong--like Puck--had a penchant for pointing up "What fools these mortals be"...

For the benefit of those who ask the question occasionally, I would like to state that I am not Andrew Offut. I wouldn't know Andy Offut if he ran up and bit me on the leg. Unless he introduced himself first. Which is difficult to do from a running distance. And of course he wouldn't have much of an opportunity to introduce himself after biting me on the leg. However, I'm sure that the whole matter is rather academic. I am reasonably sure that Andy Offut does not go around (running or otherwise) biting persons on the leg. To the best of my knowledge there is no evidence to support the idea that he might even consider such ungentlemanly behavior. The fact that he does not use caps (ala Damon Knight) is something else again, a thing of personal preference, and not necessarily an effort to disguise his identity. As far as I know (the distance at this point being undetermined) he really is a fan writer who's called Andy Offut.

Now if Sam Umbrage ran up and bit me on the leg I would recognize him immediately--or I like to think I would. I haven't seen Sam in years, and it might be well to add that to the best of my knowledge Sam wasn't (and presumably isn't) inclined to leg-biting. I have been pleased to see some of Sam's fanish works reprinted in this fanzine. He never became a really famous fanish writer like Willis or Demund, possibly because of the small circulation of the fanzines in which he appeared.

I remember when he showed up at the LASFS in the late forties. He seemed a shy, quiet type--the kind who helped quietly with club projects (publishing Shaggy, etc.) but never made any effort to run things or even become a Junior Committeeman. He was constantly being teased--even razzed--about his name, which of course lent itself well (or badly, if you prefer) to puns. Actually, it was only 2 or 3 of the members who seemed to have a running contest going, the purpose of which was to create the most puns on his name.

The name Umbrage was a natural of course, but more points could be gained by combining both Sam and Umbrage in a pun-infused phrase or remark.

Sam himself mentioned quietly one evening that he had this problem with would-be humorists all of his life. He said that his real, legal name was Umbrage and he was not going to change it. His parents, he said, had emigrated from the "old country" (I don't recall which one) and that Umbrage was a shortened version--an Americanization--of his original family name. When he left the club--in 1949 or 50--it was rumored that he had grown fed up with the kidding, that he still lived in the Los Angeles area but was no longer interested in associating with local fans. However, I have reason to believe that he left L.A. for points east, a new job, marriage, and so on. He continued to write for fanzines, but apparently gave up the social side of fandom. It sure would be fun to see him at a convention sometime. His quiet sense of humor (which included puns but not nasty ones) and general knowledge of things both fanish and mundanish made him a very interesting conversationalist. And after a couple of beers, he could recite limericks by the score.

Keep Smiling!

LEN MOFFATT

XXXXX

This fanmag is filled with ancients. Franson, Moffatt, yhos, all go back to fandom's earlier days. Herewith another voice from the past, or, more properly, pen from the past. Art Rapp seldom ventures beyond the Spectator Amateur Press Association these days so this is something of a special for us all.

RT

KNOCK ON ANY HEAD

by

ART RAPP

He sat opposite me, savage, sullen, defiant and contemptuous. He came out of the city jungle swaggering, vicious, and ready to swing out...

"Look, Feghoot," said the Chief, "you don't HAVE to do this, you know. It's not going to reflect on you if you refuse. I know I wouldn't want to take the risk of associating with a gang like that, not unless I had a squad of submachineguns to cover me if things went wrong." He shuddered.

I was full of the confidence of youth and inexperience. "Hell, Chief," I replied, "I was with the Marines at Con Thien, remember?"

"True," he said. "That's why we thought you might be able to handle a deal like this. Don't mistake me, though," he pounded his fist on a folder of mug shots to emphasize his words, "What you'll be going into here is every bit as tough and deadly as Viet Nam. The Department has lost many a good man trying to keep these gangs in line."

"I can take care of myself, Chief."

"Of course you can," he smiled. "And more important, you've got all that there egghead book-learning from going to college. I can remember when all it took to be a cop was a steady hand on the nightstick and enough brains to memorize the Precinct Captain's payola list. But times have changed, times have changed."

"And our normal methods can't cope with this juvenile gang menace. That's why we're taking bright young men like you, and assigning them to hang around with these punks, get their confidence, try to talk them out of their evil ways and turn them into normal, healthy, sex-crazed, TV-watching citizens."

The audacity of the method and the magnitude of the task fired my imagination. I leaped to my feet and cried, "Chief, I'll succeed at this task or turn in my blue suspenders!"

"That's the sort of gung-ho spirit I like to see around here," approved the Chief, squirting a stream of tobacco juice almost into the cuspidor. "Now for the details. We've heard disturbing reports lately of a new gang trying to carve itself a turf in areas that traditionally belong to others."

He shuffled through a mess of Gold Bond stamp books and old FBI posters that littered his desk until he found the document he was looking for. "This bunch calls itself, uh, the Futurians. (Where these kids pick up such weird names for their gangs is beyond me!) Anyway, here's a list of suspected members. You'll notice, Feghoot, that the addresses are widely dispersed about the city. I shudder to think of the consequences if we allow such a trend to take root. Why, every time there was a rumble it'd tie up every precinct on the Force in jurisdictional disputes!" His hands trembled slightly.

"Go find these Futurians, Feghoot. Ingratiate yourself with them. Learn what they're up to, and put a stop to it! By the way, don't forget to give the desk sergeant your monthly contribution for the Alderman's Flower Fund as you leave."

"Aye, aye, sir!" I said, saluting smartly. I rushed from the office, my brain whirling with plans for subverting this evil menace growing at the very roots of society.

Success! Lucky I was, to be hanging around that dingy candy store on 23rd street when the punk came in. Sidling up to the proprietor he mumbled, "Ya got any Mastersets, mac?"

"Ballpoints we got," said the owner with an expressive shrug. "Notebook filler, 2-ring and 3-ring we got. Even Big Chief 5¢ pencil tablets we got. But you think maybe this is the Manhattan branch of A.B. Dick that Mastersets we got yet?"

"Awww, fout!" muttered the punk, turning away. Instantly I was alert. "Fout" was one of the esoteric Futurian slang terms which had been mentioned at my briefing for this mission. Hastily I sidled up to the punk, noting meanwhile that instead of the usual black leather jackets or T-shirt-and-Levis, this Futurian gang used a green felt beanie topped by a propellor as its insignia of membership. It's fantastic, the lengths to which these pathetic creatures will go to give themselves a sense of identity.

"You really in a bind for Mastersets?" I asked. I had no idea what form of evil contraband a Masterset might be, but realized that playing upon this youth's desperate craving for them could open for me a way to the heart of the Futurian conspiracy.

"Faunching like Bradbury wants Mars," he answered cryptically. "You mean you can skron me a source, slanboy?"

My superbly-honed brain skidded its gears for a moment or two; then I decided this utterance as an inquiry whether I knew where he could get some Mastersets. I wished I knew what a Masterset was.

"Maybe," I replied guardedly. "How do I know I can trust you?" (Psychology 303-A: seem suspicious of others to keep them from suspecting you.)

"Great nibblin' Roscoe!" he exclaimed. "Do I look like a WSFan? You must be either a neo or a passifan not to recognize a SAP when you meet one!"

Somehow this reply just didn't sound right, but I had no time to analyze just what seemed odd about it. "You--you don't look like a sap to me," I ventured tentatively.

The punk flew into a rage. "Fugghead!" he snarled. "I ought zap you where you stand!" He reached under his jacket, where too late I noticed the ominous bulge of a holstered weapon. All the bloodcurdling legends of zipgun attacks I'd ever heard of flashed through my mind. Somehow I had to allay the murderous rage of this hyper-thalamic creature.

"Gesh, pal, don't get me wrong!" I said hastily. I counterfeited a yawn. It was just a slip of the tongue. I'm not wide awake yet because I just finished a nap. Uh--"

He relaxed visibly. "N'APA? Why didn't you say so in the first place? Say, the boys will want to meet you; they're all anxious to find out what's going on in there. By the way, where did you say you came from?"

I decided it best to pose as an out-of-towner. "West Coast, just got into town," I said.

"That so? You been in with the Westercon 20 gang? Or up in Berkeley with Big Bill and his mob?"

I could hardly repress a start of surprise. Until now, no one on the Force had even imagined that there was anything more than a neighborhood group involved in this--but clearly, this Futurian gang was aware of, and possibly linked with, similar gangs in other metropolitan centers!

"Big Bill and me are just like that," I said, holding up two twined fingers. I figured my neck would be safer in case of a subsequent blunder if I could convince the mob I was under the protection of a powerful gangster.

"You are?" said the Futurian, impressed. "In that case you must know the Bay Area gang pretty well. Tell me," he said, leaning close with a fiendish leer, "Give me the real lowdown: Are Marian's goojies really golden?"

Seated in the cluttered room where my Futurian acquaintance had brought me, I contemplated the other members of the gang and my squalid surroundings and tried to plan ways of turning these outcasts of humanity into decent taxpaying citizens. All around me lay the evidence of their depravity: pictures and drawings one glance at which would cause the average citizen to recoil in shuddering revulsion; magazines whose very titles were unspeakable and almost unprintable.

The conversation of my companions was equally horrifying, concerning as it did former pals of theirs who had been apparently wiped from the face of the earth by the dread GAFIA (a subsidiary of the notorious Italian syndicate, I presume; "it is an ominous sign of the potential which this Futurian gang possesses, that such an elaborate measure to counteract its struggle for power should have been taken by the masters of organized crime).

There was some talk of a forthcoming rumble with a rival gang in Newark known as the Esfa, and to distract the Futurians from such plans I began telling them about my combat experience with the Marines. At first they seemed bored, but as I described how we went into to reinforce Con Thien their interest quickened.

did you say you were equipped?" one asked.

"How

"Well, I didn't know what to expect, so I had really loaded myself down. The 160 was slung across my back, but I had a couple one pound cans of mince ink taped to my shoulder straps and plenty of correction fluid and stencil cement in my belt pockets. Of course I had to carry the typewriter at high port..."

"What was your job in the Marines, anyway?" interrupted the Futurian I'd met in the candy store.

"Why, I was the third squad PIO representative," I explained modestly. "The photographers went in early, of course, so they could snap pictures as the rest of us came in, but it was up to us guys to write the captions and get the press releases mimeographed to send back to Headquarters and..."

"Chief," said Feghoot, "I am a man of honor. I said that if I failed in this assignment I'd turn in my blue suspenders."

"That reminds me of a good one I heard at the Policeman's Ball last week," said the Chief. "Why do policemen wear blue suspenders?"

Feghoot tossed his suspenders on the Chief's desk. "If it wasn't for these red ones I borrowed at the Firehouse you'd find out", he observed. "I'm resigning from the Force, Chief."

"What? You can't do that, Feghoot. The Force needs you. At least stick around until the next graft scandal and let me fire you in a clean-up of the organization."

"Sorry, Chief," said Feghoot, "but I'm leaving. I'm going to become a full-fledged member of the Futurians. Besides, I've got a job with A. B. Dick selling Mastersets to candy stores."

"What's a Masterset?" asked the Chief.

"You wouldn't believe me if I told you. Anyway, the real reason I'm leaving is that," Feghoot blushed slightly, "the Futurians have female members, you see. And there are some things even stronger than the call of duty, Chief."

"What in the world are you blathering about, Feghoot?" snapped the Chief.

"Well, you see, there's this voluptuous female Futurian, Chief, and when she found out I could type 60 wpm and cut stencils and get free mince supplies--well, Chief, she wants to marry me!"

ART RAPP

WRITINGS IN THE SAND

Well, I have to fill with something, you see. I can't very well send out a ten page zine. Never mind what I did last time. Oh, I could have, I suppose, included a few more pages of Don's Westercon XX report--but that would take the fun out of it. There is a Steven Muir story in the files but I don't think I've enough pages left to do it. Maybe next time. Ordinarily I fill with letters but, alas, we have no letters at the moment. Well, there are a couple. I made mention of Psychotic #21 earlier; here are a couple items sent in by Art Rapp, the first from Lyle Kessler's column "How Are You Fixed For Blood?" in Psychotic #10, April 1954:

"Now we come to a subject which is very touchy and will have to be treated with kid gloves. It is the practice of one individual in fandom to make out-of-town phone calls to various fen in the middle of the night. THIS PRACTICE HAS GOT TO GO!! He called at 3 A.M. in the morning and scared the daylights out of my parents. My sister was on a honeymoon in Florida and they thought something had happened to her. Both he and the operator received a proper tongue lashing from my infuriated folks. The person I am referring to resides in Cleveland, Ohio, and I would like to state here and now that if Mr. Ellison can not call at a decent respectable time like any normal human being he had damn better not phone this particular party..."

Art thought, correctly, that inasmuch as I had been the recipient of one of Harlan's midnight calls a while back, I'd appreciate it.

Another gem, sent along by Art, comes from Bill Reynolds' "After Hours Visit" in Psychotic #9, March 1954:

"Anthropologists and poets have speculated over man's greatest invention and discovery. Fire, the wheel, electricity, steam, or nuclear fusion; all have found champions.

"My vote goes to the humble orange box. Not because it protects a succulent fruit, but because it best shows off books and stf magazines. Not only that, but orange crates can substitute for furniture for destitute fen. And if the fan has courted death to enlarge his collection, the faithful orange box can substitute for a coffin.

"Imagine a fan's life. His crib was an orange box. And his education soon began...On the ends of these ubiquitous crates he found beautifully illustrated scenes from the Salton Sea, from them he learned what Indians looked like, he saw such animals as a rhinoceros on Strength Valencias, he found pansies on the Mariposa boxes. Why send the child to school? There are plenty of words to belabor at spelling. No need for toys; just break up the boxes into toy houses or carve into figures. The Depression holds no fear for this stf-bred child; the boxes can be broken up to be sold as kindling to destitute neighbors. And you have wood for your own hearth, too.

"Above all, these humble crates shelter many stf collections. Paint 'em up a bit and they make darn nice bookcases and cupboards. And best of all, the fan doesn't have to divert funds to acquire these gadgets.

"So, a salute to the lowly orange box."

I quite agree with Art. That is a delightful piece. Ah, what memories. It appears that the orange crate has gone the way of most good things. The oranges I see these days are packed in cardboard boxes which cannot be used for much of anything. There was a time though when many fen--and mundanes, too, for that matter--practically furnished their apartments with orange crates. Besides being bookshelves and cabinets and cupboards they made excellent nightstands alongside the studio couches we used for beds--just right for holding cigarettes, ashtray, a bottle and a couple of glasses. The orange crate--a reminder of departed youth. Ah, yes. The Flower Children and their predecessors, the Beats, thought they had something going. Nothing, man.

Vardeman has asked me what I find good in today's pop music and that isn't easy to answer. I can tell you what I don't like quickly enough: I don't like unintelligible shouting. We caught Paul Revere and the Raiders on some teevee show or other a while back. Nothing. These chaps made no attempt to play the instruments they were holding but simply stood there and hit the strings and/or the soundbox with their hands. They didn't sing, simply made loud noises. They were, I think, putting us on. I don't like the Righteous Brothers. I do like the Mamas and the Papas. I don't like groups or singers who, like FR&Raiders, make no attempt at music. It goes without saying (so I'll say it anyway) that I like the Monkees (but the difference here is that these boys are real professionals). I have a fondness for Flower People music. But I prefer Gershwin. Or Cole Porter.

But I digress. I was supposed to be doing a nostalgic bit about my youth....heh....did you really expect me to? Someday maybe.

Here's Vardeman:

SNEAKING BACK FROM THE THIRTIES
by Bob Vardeman

What foul necromantic skills have resurrected the dead? Who dares disturb the sleep of eternal of forgotten shades? Well, practically everybody today. It is a little hard to pinpoint who started the camp revival of all the old heroes and villains but the fact remains that everyone is getting into the act. Corinth Publications leads the pack with almost half a dozen "nostalgia" series and has brought back such old timers as Dr. Death, Secret Agent X and Operator 5. But let's not forget Bantam with the Doc Savage reprints or even Belmont and the New Shadow books. And then there is...but why go on? There are so many!

Just how well do these stories hold up under the burden of three decades or more? I had never read any of these stories before (not being around to see the original magazines) so I'll endeavour to give an unbiased opinion without too many preconceptions about how wonderful these stories were. And I'll probably alienate all the old timers who gobble this sort of stuff up (and the noos as well).

"Legions of the Death Master" by Curtis Steele: This is one of the Corinth titles "bounding out of the thirties..." bringing Operator 5 to live once again. Corinth shouldn't have bothered. A nice, mild mannered super spy, Operator 5 is assigned by his boss, Z-7, to stop a diabolical scheme to prevent the U.S. from building up its armament against foreign invaders. Working with good ole Operator 5 is K-2 (no, not K-9), R-9, X-99, D-4, T-6, Q-6 who lives at Address Y, a girl friend named Di, and a poor young slob who isn't good enough to merit a number. A great book for people who have a way with numbers.

Someone has tried to rewrite the book and has done an extremely poor job of it. I can stand still for a secret nerve gas used to protect the coast line (smog?), I can tolerate a giant battle in Congress to step up US defenses but I cannot stomach such disparities as "...broadcasting to millions of television viewers" being followed on the next page by..."ladies and gentlemen of the radio audience" and talk about finding "...ourselves cut off from foreign sources of war materials defeated by our own short-sightedness and concentration on only nuclear protection!" and yet leaving in references to the Secretaries of War and Navy. All in all Operator 5 strikes me as being a bumbling idiot who can't remember anyone's name (but who has everyone's number). I wish he could have rested in peace.

"12 Must Die" by Zorro: This is the first of the Dr. Death stories "stalking out of the thirties..." (originally in Feb 1935 Dr. Death Magazine) and is slightly better than Operator 5 because no one has tried to rewrite any of it. Yes, Dr. Death remains in his pristine, unsullied, original form. Aren't you glad? I'm not certain if I am or not. Dr. Death is a fine upstanding religious fanatic who has decided to destroy every machine and return the world to a simpler existence. To do this he uses machine

Do I detect the stirrings of a renaissance in the magazine sf field? 1965 was a moderate peak of sorts with several good stories appearing in the various zines. 1966 was a down year and the first half of 1967 was nothing to shout about. WORLDS OF TOMORROW disappeared, ASF, IF and GALAXY drifted along with nothing memorable. AMAZING and FANTASTIC struggled for survival and the issue seemed in doubt. F&SF... I dunno, is it still around?

However things do seem to be improving. Harry Harrison has taken the helm of AMZ and FANTASTIC and promises improvements. I don't know how Harrison will be as an editor but almost any change in AMZ and FANTASTIC has to be for the better. (I remember the glee that greeted Avram Davidson's appointment as editor of F&SF a few years ago and the even greater glee that went with his departure. Avram Davidson was a fine fannish fellow but an editor he wasn't. One hopes that there won't be a repeat with AMAZING and FANTASTIC.) Anne McCaffrey seems to have the spark in her Dragonrider series. It is odd but a couple of good stories can bring in a number of them and the whole field benefits. INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FICTION has appeared on the scene, the first new magazine in quite some time. OK, so it is a reprint zine but at least it is reprinting stories that are new to us. I'm happy to see it. The stories in the first issue leave something to be desired but this is probably due to personal taste rather than anything else. Most of them seemed rather inconsequential. The yarn by Presslie (I think it is) had promise but didn't carry through. Of primary interest, of course, are the stories by Soviet writers. (Why of primary interest? Because the Soviet is the other ranking power in the world and the other country making serious efforts at space flight.) Like most everything else from the USSR these stories seemed about 40 years behind their American counterparts. They remind me of the sort of thing Papa Hugo used to publish.

I don't intend to go into any lengthy reviews on ISF at this time. I am happy to see the zine on the stands and hope it is a success.

Anyway, as they say, things seem to be looking up a bit and there is hope that 1968 will be a good year. Science-fiction-wise that is. 1968 looks to be a miserable year in most other respects.

The University of Albuquerque, formerly called the College of St. Joseph on the Rio Grande, has announced plans for a new auditorium one of the features of which will be seems to be a front projector. See Applied Science Fiction by W. F. Jenkins, ASF, Vol LXXX, No 3, Nov67.

Ah, shall we be nostalgic? There is a Glenn Miller album on the HiFi at the moment and the old familiar sounds of such tunes as String of Pearls, Tuxedo Junction, and Little Brown Jug makes me want to misspend my misspent youth all over again. Ah, yes.

The big bands were always playing somewhere in the nation and late night radio consisted of live broadcasts picked up in such exotic far away places as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia (Philadelphia???) or San Francisco and fed over the networks to the hinterlands. Miller, Goodman, The Dorseys, Shaw, Herman, and a vast number of others. Ted Fio Rito, Wayne King, Lopez, Cugat, Ben Bernie and all the lads.

The kids of 30 years ago weren't much different than the kids of today. But the music was. Better, yes. Much better than now. More complicated. More sophisticated. But it was something we listened to or danced to and not many of us played it ourselves. And this, I think, is the main difference between today's pop music and yesterday's. When we were kids we were content to listen and dance but today's kids want to make their own music. But playing the music of yesteryear is work. It takes years to be good on a trumpet or sax or trombone. Conversely almost anyone can learn to chord a guitar or beat out a basic rhythm on the drums. So the pop music of today is simple when compared to the music of the big bands. Some of the groups work at it and go beyond simple chords and by and by they get to sounding pretty good, too.

controlled zombies, machine controlled elementals, machine controlled torture devices and all sorts of other diabolical machines. But then he is a religious fanatic and doesn't have to be consistent.

Dr. Death isn't as sympathetic or honorable a villain as Fu Manchu but he more than makes up for it in nastiness. There is a basement garden where Dr. Death grows his toadstools, a dank dark cellar where the freshly dug up bodies are stored and a nice musty old house where Dr. Death stores all his diabolical machines. Zorro, whoever he was, presumably never could tell the difference between black magic and science--to him they're both the same kettle of fish and used interchangeably. In spite of this, Dr. Death holds up pretty well and is a good example of the "fainting heroine" school of horror.

"The House of Living Dead" edited by Jon Hanlon: This is the first of Corinth's revived TERROR TALES and has four short stories; the title story being written by Arthur Lee Zagat. "The House of Living Dead" is a typical "trapped in the insane asylum by Evil Design" plot. The hero tries to get what's coming to him from his father's estate (he never does make it though) and the sneaky lawyer (what other kind of lawyer is there?) gets him tossed in an insane asylum that makes Bedlam sound like an amusement park (uh, for the inmates, that is). There is the microcephalic ape-like creature running around carrying the fainting heroine under one smelly arm and taking swipes at the hero with the other smelly arm, a nymphomaniac who is thrown in for the sole purpose of adding atmosphere and a little perversion, a giggling head doctor, an intern with a bullwhip for the patients and all the common, workaday people you'd find in the suburbs. In an incredible turn of events the ape is killed, the doctor is killed, the intern is killed, the nympho is killed, the lawyer is punched in the nose, the father is not really dead, the hero is not really insane, the heroine is not really insane, and the hero and heroine live happily ever after. Isn't that a sentimental story? The remaining three are even worse. And that is really taking the old sense of wonder. Perhaps I'm injured to horror stories and things that go bump in the night but I didn't find these stories to be too horrifying.

"Torture Trust" by Brant House: The Secret Agent X story "striding back from the thirties..." holds up the best of the lot. The torture trust was formed by three prominent pillars of the community for the purpose of extortion. Pay up or get acid tossed in your face. A nice simple plot--and for a refreshing change, a plausible one as well. X is a combination Shadow and Doc Savage but is more human than either of these two worthies. Perhaps it is the occasional pain from the bullet wound or the stupid mistakes he makes which have to be rectified, but in any case X is not omnipotent--merely a master of disguise.

I find it slightly incredible that X can change clothes and disguises in a phone booth but since this doesn't bother Clark Kent I guess it doesn't bother X either.* Outwitting both police (who think he's a baddie) and torture trusters, X comes through the adventure in fine form and leaves with a highly indignant British financier who has been relieved of his clothes to aid X's escape. Without a doubt, Secret Agent X is the best of the Corinth reprints and has very few dating features in it.

(*Editor's note: In those days phone booths were not the all glass boxes of today but fully enclosed with only a small window or two in the door. When the interior light was out they were quite dark and quite suitable for the purposes of Agent X or that other fellow. RT))

"Sargasso Ogre" by Kenneth Robeson: The Bantam reprints of the Doc Savage yarns have reached the exalted number of 18 now, this being reprinted from the October 1933 issue of DOC SAVAGE MAGAZINE. Road back in 1933, I imagine this had some really exciting things in it like Doc bringing Ham and Monk back to life after they had been gassed to death. Nowadays we read about a patient dying three or four times on the operating table and living to recover fully and think nothing of it, but in 1933 this was probably a revolutionary idea and one classed as being "impossible."

Chronologically this episode follows book #6 (The Lost Oasis) in which Doc and

crew recover a fabulous trove of diamonds. The current book starts in Cairo with the intention of shipping the diamonds back to America on a tramp steamer. The Sargasso Ogre traps whole ships in the Sargasso Sea and then loots them, but Doc Savage gives him a hard time and the villain's demise is (as usual for these books) brought about by his own Evil Deeds. There is nothing remarkable about these stories, they can't be classed as all time greats by any means, but they provide a bit of enjoyable reading.

"Destination Moon" by Maxwell Grant: The Shadow has been around since 1931 but this series is entirely new and isn't a reprint of the old magazines. Unfortunately for the series as a whole, we have picked up a standard Vile Organization dedicated to rottenness called CYPHER. It seems that every secret (and not so secret) agent has to oppose a diabolical, power-mad organization. Let me think, there's THRUSH, SPECTRE, KAOS (shudder!), EMPIRE and now CYPHER. I'm not certain CYPHER stands for anything but it generally has periods after each letter. Big deal.

The plot is nothing less than absurd. Granted, the government might have another moon project hidden away in the wilds of Utah but sabotage would not ever in a gigayear require a police commissioner from New York or his wealthy socialite friend, Jament Cranston, to investigate it. But the Shadow has to find what evil lurks in the hearts of men some way so Cranston is invited to investigate the sabotage of the moon rockets. To make a long story short, the Shadow goes around clouding men's minds and finds that CYPHER has a moon rocket of its own--which he destroys.

He also destroys the commander of CYPHER, a mad genius inventor (is there any other kind?), a cobra-like Soviet Secret Service Agent and my confidence in the Shadow. How is it that a monstrous moon rocket can be built inside the US without anyone knowing? That calls for nothing less than a fantastically well organized group--which CYPHER is supposed to be. My loyalties changed about two-thirds of the way through and I ended up cheering CYPHER and booing the Shadow. Let's revive the discussion of whether or not it is possible to build a rocket in your backyard. Maxwell Grant has given us a good start again. In spite of being recently written, the Shadow didn't cloud my mind enough to make me believe that this book is better than Secret Agent X..let's hear it for Secret Agent X! Anyone forming Secret Agent X fanclubs? Where can I get a real genuine imitation Secret Agent X disguise kit?

I had better end this review in a hurry. The men in white coats and bullwhips are breaking down my door. But first howabout bringing back The Octopus? Or The Scorpion? Or Captain Hazard? Or...

BOB VARDEMAN

XXXXX
Would you settle for Amazon Ace? My personal preference would be The Spider; now that was a series....That's it for this time. Send material: humorous and stinck. Send letters. Send Ed Eox overseas--Edco for TAFF. Be devious.

HORT

FROM:

Roy Tackett
915 Green Valley Road NW,
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

ALBUQUERQUE



TO:

DICK SCHULTZ
19159 HELEN
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

48239

PRINTED MATTER ONLY
THIRD CLASS
RETURN REQUESTED