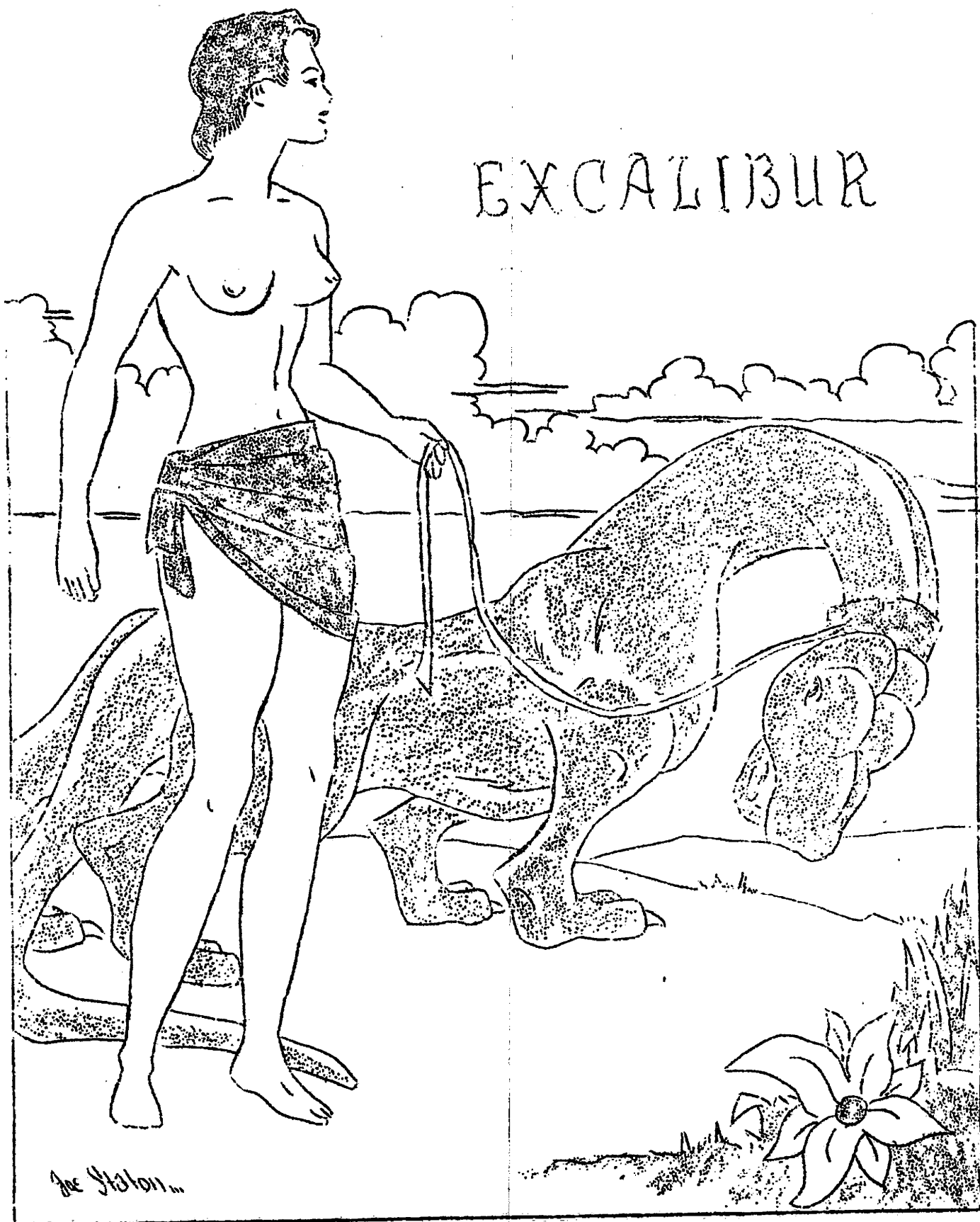


# EXCALIBUR





# EXCALIBUR

## CONTENTS

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| KATZ' KRADLE                   |    |
| Editorial I — AK.....          | 3  |
| EXPOUNDING                     |    |
| Editorial II—LB.....           | 6  |
| DEMONSTRATED ETERNITY          |    |
| Fiction—John Boardman.....     | 11 |
| PAIN IN THE MOUTH              |    |
| Humor—John Berry.....          | 9  |
| ODD JOHN—A SUPERMAN??          |    |
| Stfnal opinion—Len Bailes..... | 16 |
| MR. LANG                       |    |
| Memphis—Arnold Katz.....       | 20 |
| CHEERS AND CURSES              |    |
| Lettercol.....                 | 23 |
| BACON BROTH                    |    |
| Apa Analysis—Arnold Katz.....  | 27 |
| THE BOOK NOOK                  |    |
| Reviews—Len Bailes.....        | 30 |

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Dept. of Creative Apologia

I don't like to apologize because some say that sincere sorrow is neofannish, but I do want to say something about the last issue. To me an issue of so few pages was almost a criminal offense. I hated to even send it out, and I think that fen who didn't think enough of it to respond will get this one anyway. There were supposed to be several additional things in the last issue, but due to the fact that I had to go away in August and also that Len didn't want to rush his article, the rest of the material didn't uh, materialize. We did have two articles by me in the hopper as well as some outside fiction, but we felt that there was already too much Katz and fiction in #8. How did I take these crushing blows? Like a true stalwart fan, that's how. While Len sat in my basement saying over and over again, "Thirty pages is all right." I sat on a bar stool (We have a built in bar) and whirled around and around in a counterclockwise direction meaning about what a 30 page fanzine would do to my fannish reputation. That, however was only the way I started. After a few rides on my stool, I was raving about the joys of stool spinning; counter-clockwise stool spinning, of course. I find that clockwise stool spinning is not much of a thrill.

After an hour or two of this, I calmed down enough so that I was back moaning about the thirty pages. This made Len feel just great. I'm sure. I hope this issue, which marks Sir Gerard's debut as publisher is more to your liking and mine. As that great fannish mind once said, "Our motto is, 'every issue better.'"

Bailes and Katz make the Scene At The Lunarians II Dept.

Just before the last issue, but too late for inclusion therein, I\*E\*N\* B\*A\*I\*L\*E\*S\* came up North with his parents and spent the better part of a week at my house. He called me on the phone the Saturday he came into town and told me that he desperately wanted to go to that night's Lunarian's meeting because "I want to see some real live fen." Remembering our previous adventure with the club, I replied, "Well, how will going to the Lunarians change anything?" Len's pitiable pleadings were able to win me over, and after we had dinner at my house, we set out to Frank Dietz's place. Somewhere, when we got to the right subway station, we left it by the wrong door, and we found ourselves at the top of 20 million steps. One by one we descended the stairs in the twilight of the evening. At last, and none too soon for yours truly, we reached the bottom, and began walking. It was then that we noticed that the road we were walking along was actually elevated over another one. The road did not extend to the huge staircase, and we were able to note, with a lump in our throats, that the top of the stairs was a long, long way from the bottom most road. The criss-cross roads made me think that I was in some kind of futuristic city. A close look at some of the dilapidated buildings in the area convinced me that I wasn't. Finally, after much walking about, we got to Dietz's apartment. At the door was Marsha Brown, who made an ass of herself in reply to Len's query about (whether this was the



Lunarians. Finally, mostly because Judi Sephton was also at the door, we gained entrance. The other (and only) time I had attended a meeting Frank had treated me as if I was a robber surprised in the act, so I was resolved to be a model young man at this meeting. I didn't wisecrack, I was quiet and I tried to be ultra-amiable and avoid all arguments. I was doing fine until Judi, Andy Porter, and I (the only two attendees besides Len with whom I thought I could act normally) got into a discussion of the merits of the CCNY group. I said that I felt that, outside of Judi, none of the neofannish CCNY crowd had developed into a real active fanzine fan to rank with the new New Yorkers who developed in other clubs, particularly, the Fanoclasts. Marsha Brown felt it was her duty to butt in at this point with the remark that Elliot Shorter was one. I replied that although Elliot had been active locally, he hadn't done much in fanzine fandom other than a couple of articles in INGRAM, the CCNYzine, and one or two letters to other zines. Marsha replied with the opinion that he couldn't do more because he was in the army. I pointed out that Scithers was abroad too, and he was active. Then came a classic rejoinder from Marsha, "Yes, Elliot is stationed with Scithers" I stared at her incredulously, "But Marsha," I said, "Doesn't that prove my point?" She gave me a snotty look and said, "You're just ignorant (that's the way she said it)!" and she walked away, secure in the knowledge that she had won that argument, my god!

Later, I was sitting on the floor in a discussion with Len and Andy. Suddenly, I felt a heavy hand on my shoulder. I looked up, and it was Frank Dietz. Already, from the way he was looking at me, I could tell that something was wrong. "Get up!" he snarled. I looked at him, as innocent as the day is long.

"Huh. Frank?" I said, a bit confused. "Get up. Are you sitting on my pile of fanzines?" he replied. It sounded as if he was making a statement rather than asking a question. This gambit took me by surprise.

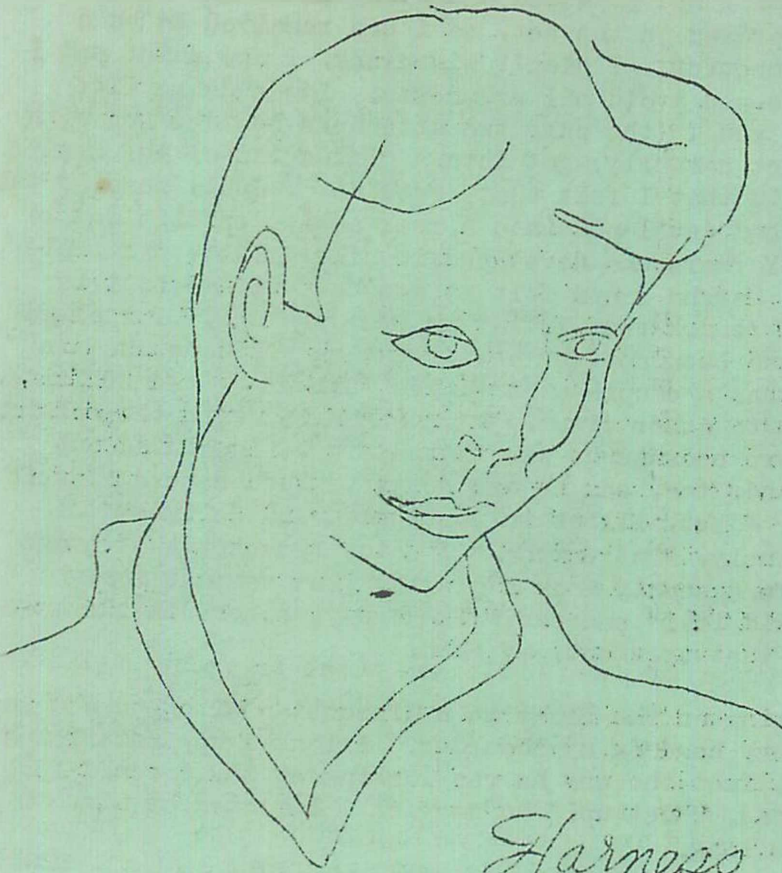
"No, Frank. I'm just sitting on your floor." For some reason Frank felt the need to bodily move me out of the way in case I should happen to have been lying to him. Naturally, I wasn't sitting on his fanzines. He didn't even bother to excuse himself.

The Hunt Saboteurs Strike Again Dept.

Man, as we have been told, is a creature of infinite resource. A prime example, which I discussed several issues back is the Hunt Saboteurs. For you newer readers, the Saboteurs are a group of Englishmen unalterably opposed to the fox hunt. Last year, their efforts so enraged the hunters that the patricians ran down the Saboteurs with their horses. This year, however, was a

IK A T Z





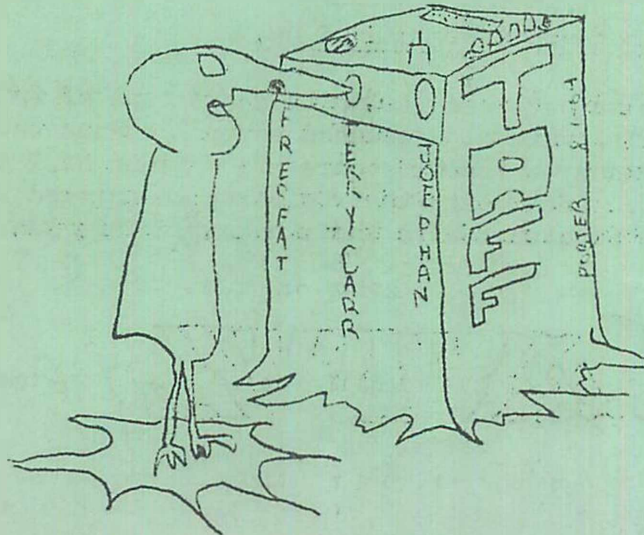
*Harness*

horse of a different color. Showing the persistence and fight expected of Britons in desperate times, the Saboteurs are going to fight again. "This time," announces their president, "the anti-Hunt gang is going to ride motorcycles. In the words of the leader of these dedicated fighters, "This will enable us to keep up with the fox hunters and will also create absolute chaos on the hunting field." We salute you Hunt Saboteurs, and watch out for stampeding horses.

A Dept. for Fred Patten and Bruce Pelz

As I'm sure you all know, besides their jobs as O.E.'s of apas, Bruce and Fred are librarians in their spare time. Word has come to me of a little library in a little Southwestern town.

The library began in a shack and used materials of an outhouse to set up the shelving. Although some people might say that that is normal, since all libraries are full of -er, ah fecal matter, I think that it may be the first time it was literally true. Books were the castoffs of other libraries and junkyards. Today, through the dilligent efforts of its founder, the little library is a little library struggling for existance in an abandoned train station in a rich community. Just goes to show you what kind of brains that Horation Alger person had, eh Fred?





DOWN WITH THE POST OFFICE

I gritted my teeth. Slowly, I dismounted my bicycle and warily approached the building. Posted on an adjoining brick wall was a sign which cheerily proclaimed that it was the UNITED STATES POST OFFICE- SHAMROCK BRANCH. Mailing things at the Charlotte Post office is a fascinating adventure, you never know what's going to happen.

As I entered with my suitcase full of packages of apazines I rehearsed a familiar speech under my breath. "Yes, you see, I am a member of an amateur press association, similar in operation to the National Amateur Press Association. The magazines enclosed in this package contain book reviews and literary criticism, it really IS educational material." This speech works about 50% of the time, and the other half I can always try a different branch office. Putting on my most friendly and innocent expression I presented the parcels for weighing. My heart leaped as I saw her begin to mark down the fourth class rate, but then I made my mistake.

"How long do you think it will take these to reach England," I asked. The color slowly drained out of the sweet little old lady's (even onto Bruce Pelz's sweet little old lady) face.

"England! Oh dear." She looked at me suspiciously. "I'm not really sure she had ever heard of England before. "I'm afraid that Educational Rates apply only to domestic postage," she continued. I sighed, you can't win them all.

"All right, then send it third class."

"I'm afraid I'll have to consult the manual for this." I felt a lump of panic rise in my throat. Slowly she leafed through a book as big as Webster's unabridged. "First Class rates to England are 90¢ for the first two pounds and 30¢ for each additional pound, that'll run to \$2."

"Urk! But ma'am," I said pleadingly, "I don't want to send this third class, it's a parcel."

"These are the only rates I have listed," She began to glare closely at me. "Say, what's in that package?" From her look, I knew she had come to the conclusion that I was a Communist subversive. I resolved to try again slowly.

"These are educational magazines. I get similar bundles from England on many occasions. There is never more than a one or two shilling stamp on them; that is forty cents American money."

"We-ell, that's different," They run their post office differently you know."

"We are the richest nation in the world. Why can't we send parcels third class like they do. I can't see why our post office

has to charge three times as much as theirs does." I was beginning to get slightly hysterical at this point.

"Maybe that's why we're the richest nation on Earth. Here," she said as she tossed me the 25 pound manual, "if you can find a cheaper rate than show me." I decided that it wasn't worth thumbing through a few thousand pages for, so I gave in, but this was only the beginning.

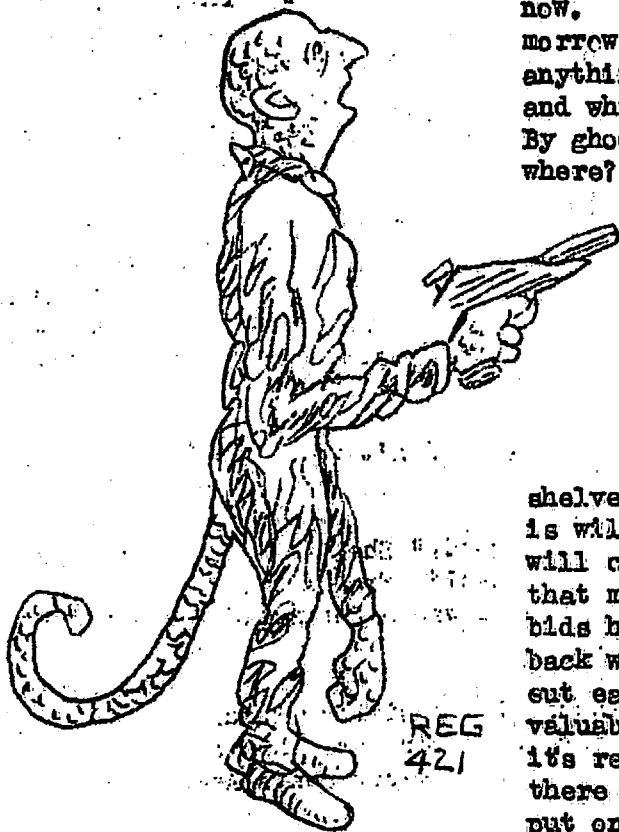
"Now," she said, you have to make out a customs declaration." She produced four forms to be filled out in triplicate. When I had finished she stamped them to the envelope and tied a tag around it. Several of the questions gave me pause. For example, what was I going to declare as the value of the thing. Thinking fast, and knowing that OMPA's AE wouldn't enjoy paying import taxes I said nothing, which was probably the truth, if it must be said. You must realize that I can be very thick headed if I want to. I hadn't had enough, so I continued.

"How is it that none of the packages I get from England ever have these whatchamacallits on them." This produced an extremely frosty look.

"For all I know," she said, "this package could be a bomb. We've had some trouble recently with people sending bombs to Cuba." She glared at me again. The more she looked at the package the more suspicious she got. I guess Charlotteans aren't used to mail going any place but Hog Creek.

"I've finished with the triplicate forms," I said, ready to leave.

"Oh, I'm sorry, but the post office is closing now. You'll have to bring your parcel back tomorrow." Fortunately, before I had time to say anything one of the other clerks took pity on me and whisked my package into the mail hopper. By god, next time, I will send a bomb, and guess where?



#### WORLDCON, WORLDCON, WHO'S GOT THE WORLDCON?

I'd really like an answer to that question. The latest information I possess indicates that Cleveland is absolutely and positively out of the running. This would seem to leave Detroit only, but from what I've gathered, they too, have shelved their bid. I hope that if no one else is willing to bid for the '66 con that Detroit will come out again with enthusiasm. I think that most of the apathy of late over the worldcon bids has been caused by the rotation plan. Maybe back when all those rival cities were willing to cut each other's throats over the thing it was a valuable restraint, but today, I don't see why it's really necessary. It seems a shame that when there are three Eastern cities ready and eager to put on conventions that only one will be allowed, and the next opportunity won't be until 1970.



As far as the convention in 1967 goes, I'm solidly behind New York. Some of you may have a few qualms about N.Y. because of what happened in 1956, but of course, this is impossible for the next Nycon. The thing which caused the turmoil was that all the rival groups in NY tried to stage a con ensemble last time. This time the con will be put on by one group only, The Fanoclasts. Other NYfen are welcome to attend, but the concommittee will be all-Fanoclast (and FISTFA, which is merely the Fanoclasts on alternate Fridays) The Fanoclasts are fanzine fan, and, in my opinion, trufen. Give them a chance and they'll put on a much more fanzine-orient-ed. For further info on New York in '67, contact Dave Van Arman.

Back to the original question though, why should the other two Eastern groups be denied, if nobody else wants to. I'm sure that Syracuse and Baltimore are also capable of putting on acceptable conventions. If Detroit really doesn't want the '66 con why shouldn't Syracuse, which does want it, get it. And why not give Baltimore a crack in '69. (Of course, Los Angeles will get the bid in '68. If one of the midwestern cities wants the bid in '69, let's make them work to get it. No city will put on as good a Convention knowing that it HAS to, as one which wants to and has fought for the privilege. Who knows, Chicago or Seattle may want to give Los Angeles and New York respectively a run for their money during the appropriate years.

The argument that the local fringe fans who show up could sway the vote is a lot of bolony. No city in its right mind would bid for the con two years in a row, and at the next con there'll be a new set of localites. If the idea still bothers some people, then why not allow non-attending members to vote, in the manner being discussed currently in re choosing the cite at Loncon, only permanently. Something had better be done, or in 1966 we may find that we have no Worldcon at all, but just a series of non-cons scattered across the country. A set back like that could wreck the Worldcon tradition, and would probably result in mass confusion for at least a year or two. We are already approaching dangerously near to the point where regional cons replace the Worldcons. There will be more during 1965 than ever before. We're lucky for '66, in that if Detroit doesn't bid, Syracuse is willing, and there is authority to break the rotation plan in emergencies. But next time, there may be no such luck. Suppose London had pulled out of the bidding at Pacificon. While the WSFS is empowered to break the rotation in such case, there would have been nobody ready to fill the gap. We'd better do something anyway, or the large fangroups may eventually decide that they just don't want to go to all the trouble of a worldcon.

#### RETURN OF THE NATIVE

As Arnie mentioned in his editorial, I had the honor to be his houseguest for a week in August. Actually it was a very interesting week. When Arnie wasn't moaning or spinning around on barstools more likely than not we were in the subway. I think we spent more time on the subway than we did any place else. The reason was a mixup with the Page Paper Company, which sells that ridiculously cheap paper that most NYfen use. First, we got so involved in bookstall haunting in the Village that the thing closed down before we could get there, and then we got some paper which was unusable because of the showthrough. Fortunately Arnie managed to return most of it, but we were both stuck with a ream. The highlight of the whole trip for me was a night in Ted White's basement reading through old fanzines which were being filed by Rich Brown and Mike McInerney. To be honest, I still have trouble conceiving that there are that many fanzines in existence, and when you think that there are people who have read them all..... Well, that's just too much. Now that my sense of wonder has been aroused I think we had better move on to the rest of the issue, as there's no telling what I'd say if there was any space left on this page.



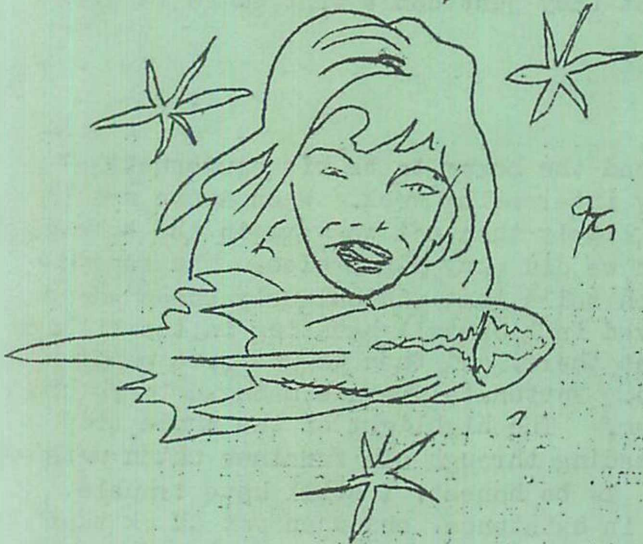
# PAIN IN THE MOUTH

by JOHN BERRY

I think in this modern world, with so much pace in life, that I should have some sort of trophy to celebrate the fact that with forty years of age a matter of months away I still have most of my teeth. Although I must modestly point out, if it hasn't struck you already, that this is a sure sign that I've always been clean-living, it is, I feel, a further indication that if you slow time down and let it be your servant, a dashing set of tombstone-like molars is only an outwards indication of the utter serenity of mind and body.

Just one tooth was giving me hell, a ~~rusty~~ little blighter top left. One day, whilst masticating a piece of treacle toffee I had seized off my daughter on her way to Sunday School, it became a hard gooeey mess in the corner of my mouth. I stopped, and pried a questing finger into my mouth and pulled violently. The lump of hard-setting toffee cracked away, and I held it in my hand, surprised indeed to see half a wisdom tooth embedded in it. It took me just five minutes to get the blasted toffee off my fingers, and I stood there, shocked at this sudden permanent damage to my highly-prized gnashers. True, the damage couldn't be seen, but my tongue carried out a quick survey and I knew the worst. The remains of that tooth would have to go. I put off the terrible day, and eventually forgot all about it, until just the other day a sudden terrible shaft of pain nearly blew my ear off. My left ear. The pain also spread down my jaw, and the centre of gravity of this horrible anguish was the broken tooth.

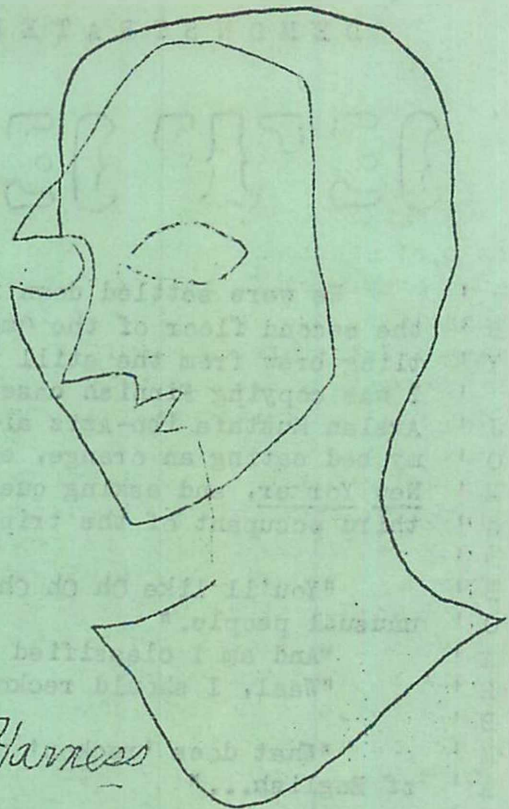
I'm not really a man of action, but I do have my moments. In between aspirins, I decided I'd have to take the fatal ~~step~~ a trip to the dentist for an extraction. I wouldn't go so far as to say I am scared of the dentist, and I wouldn't want you to think I'm easily led by atmosphere, but the moment I pressed the buzzer on his front door, the pain miraculously abated. It's probably happened to all of you at some time or another. Usually before you've pressed the bell. I'm just that little bit tougher, and I'd actually depressed the bell before the pain stopped. I swivelled on my heels, but I wasn't fast enough. The iron grip on my lapels wasn't relaxed until I'd been introduced to the receptionist. I explained volubly that the toothache had gone, but this frustrated virgin-type was probably on a commission. I was ejected from the house with a little printed docket which reminded me that in five days time I was going to get the offending tooth whipped out.





Five days away, when it's five days away, always seems a long time. Of course, immediately I'd left the dentist's house, the pain crept back. I knew that if I'd gone back the dentist would have pulled the tooth immediately, but I felt that I'd been officially given five days grace, and it was up to me to take advantage of it.

For four nights I soothed myself to sleep with a whiskey rinse. It was supposed to be an 'old wives tale'...one of those things which everyone says works but which no one has ever tried, and which, secretly, everyone knows doesn't work. This did, although it could have been my refinement of technique. I took a mouthful of raw whiskey, tipped my head on one side and let it lie in the right corner of my mouth. After about three minutes it was warm, and I tipped my head over to the left, and let the alcohol worm its way towards the pain-wracked nerves of this ruined tooth. After five moments, the tooth became numb. In fact, to be truthful, my whole mouth became numb. My teeth felt as though they were loose in their gums, and my nostrils started to twitch like a jack rabbit's. Finally, I swallowed the whole mess of salivated whiskey. A warm glow enveloped my whole body, and as I snuggled down into the sheets I felt like singing. In fact, the neighbours complained twice that I actually did sing several choruses of 'Nellie Dean' in the early hours of the morning...



I don't want to dwell too much over the actual extraction. It was only costing me \$3 (the National Health Service, you know) and the man knew his job. I felt he shouldn't have tested the cocaine injection apparatus in front of my eyes, and the needle did look and feel a mite blunt. There was no need, I thought, for him to wipe his forehead on my clean white pocket handkerchief, but as he had both knees on my chest at the time and I was hanging on to the chandelier perhaps he had no reasonable alternative. I admired his professional stance, as he stood in front of his tool chest, feet braced wide apart, carefully selecting yet another pair of pincers, and the cool way he dusted his final selection, as though he hadn't used it for years. Yes, he said my tooth troubled him. He said it was stubborn. Yet finally he triumphed. He took his head out of my mouth and waved this gory red thing in front of me, triumphant.

I discovered that the dull black hole where the tooth was, still ached, and that warmed raw whiskey is a wonderful tonic for easing the pain. All that is left is a scar, and yet I still suffer sympathetic pains...surprising how just a little tot eases that too....yeah....yeah...."There's an old mill by the, er, Streetammmmmmm"

-John Berry

1984



DEMONSTRATED

13 'I' 13 11 11 11 11 11 11

I We were settled down for a quiet evening in the big triple room on  
B the second floor of the Omega Omega Omega house. Elkaner Hawkins was bet-  
Y tling brew from the still in his closet and whistling "Sourwood Mountain."  
I I was copying Finnish case endings from my grammar to a three-by-five card.  
J Arslan Mustafa ibn-Aziz al-Su'ati, our new Arabic pledge, was sprawled on  
O my bed eating an orange, eyeing our pin-ups, leafing through the current  
H New Yorker, and asking questions about the traditions of the frat. The  
N third occupant of the triple, Anatole Chung, was out on a date.

B "You'll like Oh Oh Oh," I said. "We make a special effort to collect  
O unusual people."

A "And am I classified as unusual?" Arslan asked.

R "Waal, I should reckon so," said Elky. "As the oldest son of a sultan..."

M "What does 'reckon' mean?" Arslan asked. "I am afraid that my knowledge  
A of English..."

N "It's a colloquial term," I explained in Arabic. "'Reckon' means  
'suppose' or 'estimate'."

"How is it that you know Arabic?" he asked, surprised.

"Foreign languages is my field of study," I replied. "This year I'm taking  
Finnish, Dutch, and Japanese."

"Hey, let me in on the conversation," Elky protested.

"Oh Oh Oh is the liveliest frat on campus," I went on in English. "Last year  
we went serenading with a steam calliope-" brief pause while I explained what a  
steam calliope is - and the next spring we left an ostrich on the roof of the Hall  
of Languages. Year before that we put a harmless green dye into the town water  
supply."

"Tell him about the time Sullivan hanged himself," Elky suggested.

"A fake suicide," I explained. "Kamehameha Sullivan rooms across the hall.  
He's from Hawaii."

"So you see that Oh Oh Oh is a lively bunch," said Elky. "Too bad Anatole is  
out now. I don't believe you've met him. His father is a Chinese druggist in San  
Francisco, and his mother is a Breton fortune teller. We think his grandfather was  
a leprechaun." Another pause while I explained what a leprechaun is supposed to be.

"Where is he now?" Arslan asked.

EXCALIBUR 11

"Out on a date," I answered, "But he should..."  
MOOO-AWP!!! The bleat of a foghorn shook the house.  
"What in Allah's name..." Arslan exclaimed in Arabic.  
"Must be Anatole," I said.

MOOO-AWP!!!

"Good for him!" Elky said.

MOOO-AWP!!!

Well, I'll be damned!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, you probably will be," said Elky.

"What was that noise?" Arslan asked.

"There's a foghorn down in the entry," I explained. "It works from a button in the wall. Whenever a fellow comes back from a date, he pushes the button if he was able to..."

"Aha!" exclaimed Arslan. "Now there is an ingenious idea. I see that you Americans have well earned the reputation you have in Arabia for being both clever and- abd- how do you say it in English?"

I took an Arabic-English dictionary from my bookshelf and flung it into his lap. After a brief search he came up with 'concupiscent'.

"Us concupiscent!" Elky protested. "How many wives do you Ay-rabs usually have?"

"I have none," Arslan replied. "I had five concubines, but I sold them when I left for America."

"Does your father have a harem?" asked Elky.

"Naturally," he said. "His four legal wives, and thirty or forty concubines."

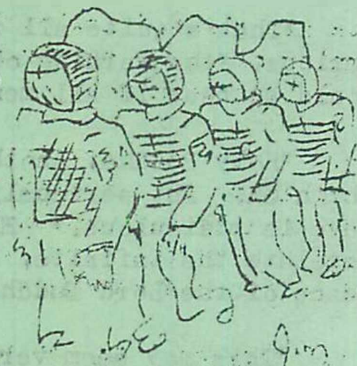
"And you call Americans concupiscent," Elky complained indignantly.

"That is different," Arslan replied. "In Arabia..."

The door opened, and Anatole came in. His face glowed slightly, but he looked a little weak in the knees. He flung off his coat and shirt, and sprawled on his bed. A livid set of fingernail marks were imprinted upon his back.

"Evening, everybody," he greeted us.

"Evening," I returned. "We were just discussing concupiscence."





"A quality I have very little of right now," Anatole said. He got up, took a cone of incense from a box on his dresser, set it before his small bronze Buddha, and lit it. He then sat cross-legged on the carpet and began to stare fixedly at his navel.

"Not that again!" Elky and I groaned.

"You materialistic Westerners!" he complained, looking up. "If you refuse to admit the values of moderation and contemplation..."

"Who's materialistic?" Elky asked. "My whole family are members in good standing of the Hog River Hardshell Baptist Church of Hog River, Tennessee, and I..."

"That doesn't keep your folks from feuding and moonshining does it?" I retorted. "If you'd wake up and look at the matter reasonably, you'd soon see that this thing you call God does not exist."

"You need to meditate on these matters," said Anatole. "Only by the mystic process of revelation..."

"You don't need any mystic process," said Elky. "The existence of God is as plain as the nose on your face."

"Excuse us, will you, Arslan?" I said. "This sort of thing goes on here all the time. Anatole is a mystic, mostly Buddhist; Elky is a Christian Fundamentalist, and I am an Atheist."

"That's quite all right," Arslan laughed. "However," and his voice grew more serious, "the warning of Allah as given in the Holy Koran is quite clear, and it would be best if all men took note of it."

"Holy Buddha, another one!" exclaimed Anatole. "You'll fit quite well into Oh Oh Oh. But seriously, this belief in holy books that Christians and Moslems have is ridiculous." Elky and Arslan bristled; I beamed. "One only needs to contemplate the infinite, and the truth will be revealed. Only through the peace of the Lord Buddha can one know the truth of his teachings." I also bristled.

"This may seem very well to you now," said Elky. "But there is no place for contemplation in Hell, and Hell is your certain destination unless you accept Jesus Christ as your saviour and follow his teachings."

Arslan and I both attempted loud protests.

"Eventually," Elky went on, "you will know the truth of what I'm talking about. If you continue to live sinfully. After you die, you'll be..."

"Devoting eternity to peace and meditation," interrupted Anatole.

"Enjoying the pleasures of paradise," Arslan countered.

"We'll simply be dead," I finished. "Dead without any knowledge of being dead. Just dead."

We sat and glared at one another. Then suddenly, we all broke into laughter.



"Would you be interested in testing your beliefs?" Anatole asked.

Now how would you test something like that?" I retorted.

"I happen to have in my dresser drawer a small quantity of a very interesting drug," he replied. "I got it in dad's ship. When burned and inhaled, it is supposed to give one the sensation of being dead. You see what life after death is really like. It's very rare, and I've never used it, but it should be interesting to try. At least you'll all see that eternity is to be devoted to contemplation, and not to your hedonistic heavens, horrible hells, and hopeless darknesses."

"I've heard of this drug," said Arslan. "It's called 'the hashish of the lesser death'. It is said to show men a foretaste of the delights of paradise."

"Let me get this straight," I said. "If you sniff this stuff, you are supposed to pass out and live whatever kind of afterlife you are going to have. Then you come back to life."

"Correct," said Arslan. "And you unbelievers should be warned that in Hell there is the crushing fire, and nothing to drink but boiling water and-" he thumbed through the dictionary again "-pus".

"Better take a cake of ice with you, then," said Elky. Arslan's nostrils dilated slightly, and he glared at Elky.

"Well, let's try it," said Anatole, searching through a drawer. "This method smacks too much of scientific materialism, but it looks like the only way by which you will see the truth. Ah, here it is."

He took out a small, unlabeled envelope, and opened it. Removing the cone of incense from the Buddha's lap, he shook a black powder out of the envelope on to the burner and lit it.

"Now you'll see," Arslan said.

A shimmering haze filled the room, and a heavy sweet odor rose from the powder. Gradually the room went dark, and we all passed out.

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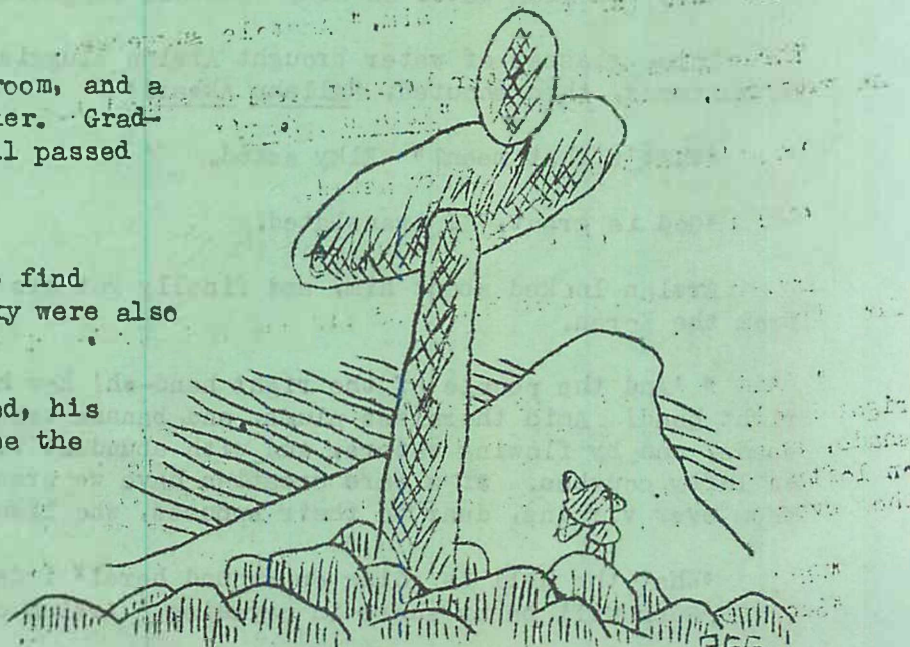
I returned to consciousness to find Anatole shaking me. Arslan and Elky were also stirring slowly.

"Do you see now?" Anatole asked, his voice echoing hollowly. "Do you see the wonder of it?"

"Wonder of what?" I muttered.  
"How long have I been out?"

"All eternity spread out

EXCALIBUR 14



REG  
428

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like a carpet," he exulted breathlessly. "To know mystic union with all things, to meditate, to see the face of—" his voice sank "the Lord Buddha."

"Are you kidding?" I demanded. "All I know is that I've been unconscious about forty-five minutes by my watch."

By now, Elky was sitting up and groaning. He pressed both hands to his head, then tore off his shirt, leaped to the window, and breathed heavily of the cold night air.

"What's the matter with everyone?" I asked.

"Day in the morning!" Elky exclaimed. "Am I glad that's over!"

"What happened to you?" I asked.

"I was standing in a long line," he gasped. "Finally I get to a fellow dressed in white, who has a big book and a pair of scales. He reads out of the book, and tosses things into the scales. He put in the time I shot Caleb Slean; a feudin'. He put in that New Year's Eve party back home, four years ago. He put in a few bundlin' parties, and that time I walked up the mount'n with Peggy Gentry, and the crib notes I used on last year's econ final. He put in a few other things, on both sides, and the beam pointed way down. Then he picked me up and threw me. Then—"

Elky blanched, and sank into a chair. I fortified him with a snort of moonshine from the bottle under his bed.

"I don't want to talk about it," he finally moaned. "I just don't want to talk about it."

"Hey, what's happened to Arslan?" I asked. "He's still under."

"Try throwing water on him," Anatole suggested.

Three glasses of water brought Arslan sluggishly to his senses. "Allahu Akbar," he muttered, then shouted, "Allahu Akbar!"

"What's that mean?" Elky asked.

"God is great," I translated.

Arslan looked about him, and finally got his bearings. He then began quoting from the Koran.

"And the people of the right hand—oh! how happy shall be the people of the right hand! Amid the endless plains, and banana trees clad with fruit, and in extending shade, and by flowing waters, and with abundant fruits, unfailing, unforbidden, and on lofty couches. Of a rare creation have we created the Houris, and we have made them ever virgins, dear to their spouses, who like them, shall not grow old."

"What the hell is going on around here?" I demanded.

"Such will be my share in paradise," Arslan concluded in English.

"But didn't you see it?" Anatole implored. "Didn't you all experience the



# W A S O D D J O H N A SUPERMAN?

A Defense of Homo Sapiens By Len Bailes

The novel Odd John written by Olaf Stapledon was first published by E.P. Dutton in 1936 in Great Britain. It is considered by many to be the definitive novel illustrating "The Supermen who walk among us." I will attempt to show that while a great degree of imagination and skill were put into the book, the author's point is questionable. In the novel, John is never proved to be a "superman" in the way Stapledon assumes and therefore, some of the philosophy and the general overtone of pessimism which pervade in relation to the fate of Homo Sapiens are not valid.

We are told at the novel's beginning that John has a delicate physique, and that he is extremely fragile. He has great difficulty learning how to walk, and does so finally at the age of six. The mental state of this so called superbeing is extremely unbalanced. John experiences great frustration and is driven to steal and kill. Does an intelligent man feel the need to strike out against animals? Stapledon asserts that John is related to a human being as a human being is to a monkey. Assuming that John is a normal representative of this race of "new supermen" he should feel no need to retaliate against humans. Later in the novel we find that the "supermen" John collects can't even adjust to a society which they themselves design. Washingtonia Jong becomes mad and kills herself because of jealousy. Stapledon asserts that the downfall of the little colony of Homo Superior is due solely to the corruption of the normal race, yet we find within the colony the seeds of its own decay.

The author places a good deal of store in intuitive proof. One of his major plot gimmicks is the distinguishing characteristic he gives the supermen which enables them to look at events from an eternal point of view...to view proceedings on Earth as God might view them, and to see them as part of a pattern. Stapledon describes this quality in great detail, whereas he refuses to describe some of the aspects of communication among the Superman. He refuses because supposedly, a normal human is incapable of comprehending. But Stapledon is capable of comprehending the eternal viewpoint, this is supported by his vivid picture of it. But if Stapledon can comprehend it then obviously other members of Homo Sapiens are also. What's more many great writers and philosophers have derived the amusement Stapledon describes by watching the Human comedy. The eternal viewpoint possessed by John and his fellows therefore is not the exclusive property of the super race. It's possession does not qualify one as a member of such a race. John states that this is the one factor which does enable him to determine telepathically whether there are others of his kind present, so we have a contradiction. The invalidation of this control is a serious blow to Stapledon's attempted proof of John's supermanhood.



The author uses several other hoary tricks in trying to establish John's superiority. Possessing the ability to control the narration he plays at the reader's unconscious thoughts. The supposedly normal narrator of the story, to whom John confides his plans is nicknamed Fido, and the examples of Homo Sapiens which Stapledon uses are deliberately portrayed as straw men. John's insight, of course, has no difficulty demolishing them, but neither would that of most fans. (Draw whatever conclusion you want here) John is a foil for many of Stapledon's own opinions. In one place in the book John delivers the following diatribe against human philosophy.

"Philosophy is an amazing tissue of really fine thinking and incredible puerile mistakes. It's like one of those rubber bones--they give dogs to chew, damned good for the mind's teeth, but as food, no bloody good at all...I have no religious experience yet. Maybe I shall have it some day. Maybe there's really no such thing, but I can see quite well that religious experience (properly defined) is no evidence that the sun goes round the Earth and no evidence that the universe has a purpose, such as fulfillment of personality. The howlers of philosophers are mostly less obvious than these, but of the same kind."

What John (or Stapledon) neglects to mention is that the Ptolemaic theory wasn't stupid or ridiculous per se. Based on the data available at that time it was a logical assumption. John sees it as a philosophical howler merely because he has a better technology and more data available. Nor was the theory created for religious reasons. Psychological subjectivization (new word?) of data cancels itself out. One might argue that the theory proposed by Copernicus was motivated by dislike of the Catholic Church on that score. It's true that once the technology had advanced people did oppose the Copernican theory on the grounds which John mentions, but the original philosophy involved in the Ptolemaic theory isn't inferior as to the thought processes involved. As for John's second point, there isn't any reason why fulfillment of personality could not be considered a logical subjective purpose for the Universe. And when the purpose of the Universe is discussed, by definition it has to be presented in subjective terms.

Stapledon had pronounced leanings toward socialism, and extreme cynicism for the men of his day; but rather than attempt to explode by use of reason the philosophies he opposed, he has John echo his views and tacitly assumes that because John is of the race of Homo Superior this gives the views a greater validity. For example, Stapledon considers psychiatric theory to be so much slush. So he has John take off in a diatribe against psychiatrists. He has John describe a psychiatrist as one whose wings won't carry his big fleshy pedestrian mind.

"When a really winged case comes along, with all sorts of trouble due to not giving his wings exercise, our friend [the psychiatrist] hasn't the slightest perception what's the matter. He says in effect, 'Wings, what's wings? Just flapdoodle. Look at mine. Get 'em atrophied as quick as possible and bury your head in the sand to make sure.' In fact he puts the patient into a sort of coma of the spirit, and if it lasts he's permanently cured, poor man...and utterly worthless."

What the author is trying to say is that the theories advanced by the psychiatrist do not apply to the subject save to convince him to ignore his problems. I feel this is an erroneous assumption. Psychiatrists tend to be more tolerant of deviations from the norm than most people, and their theories are developed through observation and deductive logic. They provide a fairly good measurement of reality as honestly as it can currently be assessed. It must be remembered, however, that at the time of Odd John's writing there were numerous dissenting and rather trivial arguments going on in the field. Theory hadn't developed to the extent it is today. Some of the author's criticism is therefore valid. What I object to is trying to give it a false air of validity by projecting it out of the mouth of a super-parrot. This technique can be used to promulgate any idea, however worthless. Later I'll touch on some of the other attempts of the author to give his philosophy this hollow support.

"A nation, after all, is just a society for hating foreigners, a sort of super-hate club."

This statement is typical of Stapledon's broad sweeping generalizations. Shades of John W. Child. He appeals strictly to the sense of novelty as does Campbell, and also to vague instincts and emotions. When in the narrative, John is pressed for proofs of his statements he resorts to the excuse that the poor pitiful normal species of man is incapable of understanding. The points in question are continually overstated to drive across the idea that man is just a noble beast...only a trifle above the others. Only John's type can be considered to be truly human. His arguments feed on each other and reinforce each other in a vicious circle. Stapledon uses damning generalizations against the human race to prove John's superiority, and he uses John's superiority to validate the generalizations.

One of the more controversial points brought up in the book is John's license to kill ordinary human beings if they stand in the way of his accomplishments. When John is caught robbing a house, he has no choice but to kill the arresting officer. Later, when John and his cohorts are spotted sailing on the high seas, they mercilessly kill every seaman aboard the vessel which spotted them. When John finds his island paradise for the site of his colony he exterminates the natives. Speaking in a manner which would have made old Fred Nietzsche glow with pride, John explains why he is entitled to kill all those people.

"As for the wickedness of the act, Fido, it naturally revolts you, but you are leaving something out of the account. Had we been members of your species, concerned only with the dreamlike purposes of the normal mind, what we did would have been a crime. For today the chief lesson which your species has to learn is that it is far better to die, far better to sacrifice even the left-iest of all 'sapient' purposes, than to kill beings of one's own mental order. But just as you kill wolves and tigers so that the far brighter spirits of men may flourish, so we killed these unfortunate creatures that we had rescued. Innocent as they were, they were dangerous. Unwittingly they threatened the noblest practical venture that has yet occurred on this planet."

When John finishes this speech he looks at the narrator "Almost pleadingly," in a manner which reminds me of something Ayn Rand once said about "the sanction of the victim!" The narrator goes on to say that John only wanted approval of his actions because of his love for his "faithful hound". Sure, and I suppose farmers have long heated discourses with their hogs and sheep to console them before they kill the animals for food.

The question is whether the "Superman has the right to destroy the ape." But in actuality John and his following are self acknowledged supermen only. Stapledon's proof of their superiority is insufficient for the reader to accept. The purposes of the sailors who were killed might have been equally valid. What, I wonder, would the author have said if the seamen were a group of pirates, and they machinegunned John's boat, so that the superior mission of highjacking wouldn't be thwarted by that little group of freaks. Surely Stapledon isn't proposing that John is of a superior race merely because he had the ability to commit unprovoked murder.

John's following does possess the usual gadgetry that a good super race should; telepathy, psychokinesis et al., but nowhere in the book is it established that the super race is any more fit for ruling the Earth than the normal one. The author speaks of the tremendous accomplishments of which the race is capable, but the story as written portrays nothing but a group of badly distorted freak mutations, who supposedly possess super-intelligence. This intelligence is never exhibited, however, and John makes the same mistakes which he condemns in the "lesser species." The apparent theme of Odd John is summed up by John in the following paragraph.

"Homo Sapiens is a spider trying to crawl out of a basin. The higher he crawls, the steeper the hill. Sooner or later, down he goes. So long as he's on the bottom he can get along quite nicely, but as soon as he starts climbing he begins to slip. And the higher he climbs, the farther he falls. It doesn't matter which direction he tries; he can make civilization after civilization, but every time long before he begins to be really civilized—skid!"

John sees man as quite capable of performing tasks like sailing and hunting, but incapable of maintaining himself on a high intellectual plain. John admits that he cannot see the human interest in finance, and that he finds capitalism absurd, thus again serving as a foil for Stapledon the socialist. John sympathizes with communism to the extent that he believes dialecticalism is an accurate representation of the evolution of human history. He asserts that a high degree of individualism can be found in communal living if performed by a superior race, but he does not attempt to criticize capitalism or show how his system operates. He lampoons the former and refuses to speak of the latter. He paints a picture of an island paradise set up by the "Superiors" which is far from paradise. It is torn by conflict, and many of the company are severely disturbed even by the "superior" standards.

I offer the thesis that man is capable of maintaining a mechanical civilization and that the spider will eventually crawl out of his basin. Whereas Stapledon considers that man has reached his peak, I feel we've just barely begun the climb. Sure there'll always be Fundamentalists, and John Birchers in one form or another, but the 10% of humanity with brains is going to keep moving, hauling the rest of the world along with them. They always have... I see no evidence now which would indicate that the load is too great. What's more, they aren't representatives of a different species. They're just people who have a little bit of stuff in their skulls, and Mr. Stapledon to the contrary, they're going to use it. —LB



# MR. LANG

By ARNOLD KATZ

Everyone, I'm sure, has had experience that might be described as traumatic. However, I doubt that many have had one that lasted five years. The name of my trauma was Hebrew School. For five long years I wasted three afternoons a week wrestling with the vagaries of Hebrew as a written and spoken language. Actually, the first year was Sunday school which I suppose doesn't really count. That still leaves 4 fun filled years.

The Hebrew school I attended boasted about 8 classrooms which were built right into the synagogue. I have also thought of the classrooms as being built in the style which might be called "late sweat shop". The rooms were built below ground level, but since the ceiling was two stories high, it also had one story above ground. This upper portion had huge windows which, by a technique no doubt lost to the ages, never seemed to admit any light. It was always twilight in the rooms; the feeble lights just counter acting the darkness of late afternoon in the middle of winter.

Right here I must admit that you have to give the school a little credit. They put their most presentable teachers in for the two Aleph classes (four really, there was a late session). Except for the fact that my teacher was named Miss Elephant and fitted that name to a tee, nothing much happened to me personally that year. I guess I should mention the clique. All the kids on my block were the same age, and with a lot of finagling by our parents, we all landed in the same class, except Bailes, who though he lived on the block, was not a member of the clique and so did not have the same class as we did. It was an interesting cast of characters to say the least. There was me, a big fat kid; Harvey Seskind, a very bright handsome kid; Gene Cohan, a handsome not so bright kid; Gil Cohen (Not related) who was Harvey's best friend; Bruce Verdrager, my next door neighbor; and Lois Dugow, a cute little girl whom we were all madly in love with. We always sat together, and provided a united front against the hard times to come.

Next came Base (baze) and my meeting with the "star" of this chapter of my memoirs, Mr. Lang. He was a short thin man, and somehow I always picture him in an SS uniform. Though he was, of course, Jewish, I think he would have fitted in well with Adolf and the boys. The first day he walked into class and said in a cheery voice, "Shut up you f---king bastards." I had a feeling that it was not going to be a good year. Since I was but a kid of eleven or ten, Mr. Lang's English vocabulary was a little advanced for me at first, but I soon learned all the nice new words he was willing to lavish on our tender minds.

Bruce was always a troublesome kid, and it was he who first ran afoul of Mr. Lang. I will never forget the confused look on Bruce's face as Mr. Lang threw him on the floor, and methodically began to kick his ribs in. I personally thought this was a little stiff for talking in class, but Mr. Lang just kept kicking him. Bruce tried to get away, but to no avail. Mr. Lang kicked him clear across the

room, and threw the chair at him just for good measure.

It was a peculiarity of that particular class room that it was rectangular, but with an extra 2x2 space in the back. Bruce was consigned to this purgatory, and Mr. Lang proceeded to act as though Bruce were no longer in the class. Bruce would jump up and down, clank his desk, or heckle the teacher, but it was to no avail. To Mr. Lang, the only time Bruce existed was when he was beating the kid.

Another interesting thing about Mr. Lang was that he never even made an attempt to teach us anything. We would file in in the afternoon and he would glare at us and bark, "Sit down you lousey bastards and start copying page 186 in your siddler (prayer book to you goyim)." We didn't learn much Hebrew that way, but he surely developed the youngest batch of Hebrew scribes in captivity. It was an added insult that we even had to pay a fine for about a 10 sheet notebook that was supposed to be paid for by the ridiculously high tuition fee in order to copy the damn siddler. We used up about a notebook every week or so, and I now wonder if Mr. Lang didn't have some money in that company.

Let me not paint the picture of Hebrew School all black. There was at least one bright spot: a great candy store down the street. Before class every day, the whole school at mass, would fall upon the little store like a ravaging army. The favorite candy was called buttons. They were colored bits of candy attached to a long paper ribbon. Sometimes the only noise you could hear in a class was the sound of 20 kids pulling the buttons of candy off the ribbon. Another favorite was pretzels. I know some Hebrew School students who got so used to getting pretzels that they find it impossible, all these years later to pass a stone with pretzels without buying.

Mr. Lang said that we couldn't eat food in the class room before class (though he never stopped us from eating in class, being a scribe thirsty work), so we all used to wait down food right outside the classroom door and then run in when we heard the bell. I remember that, in the spring of that year, ice pops were the thing to be eating. They came in all sorts of unlikely flavors and colors, and needless to say, the entire clique could not do without their daily ice pops. One day, as we were standing outside eating the ice pops, Mr. Lang came out and said, "Get the hell in here you bastards." We protested that it wasn't time for school yet and that he didn't want us to eat in the classroom. He gave me a push and I stumbled into the room. The rest of the clique followed. Lois brought up the rear, and as she passed Lang, the livable one gave her a judo chop to the back of the neck that sent her sprawling. When we were all in, he sneered at us and said, "Get out of here with those ice pops." So he gave me a push through the door and all the clique followed me out. Lois brought up the rear, and Lang obligingly tripped her and kicked her in the back as she passed him. Just good clean student-teacher fun.



The thing that was really bad about that year was that the parents would not believe what was going on in that class. They were all first or second generation Mid-European Jews, and they automatically equated teacher with "good" and "always right". Mr. Lang was ~~never~~ not in their minds or reference. Gradually, due mainly to the incontrovertible evidence of the prints all over Bruce Verdrager, they began to believe. Right away, there was a parents committee on Mr. Lang, and we rejoiced in the knowledge that Lang would not be around next year. Of course, at the rate he was going, there were serious doubts about whether we would last that long.

Our finest hour came at the end of that year, when, almost on the last day of school, Lang Got His. We were copying page 186 as usual, when a kid named Jeff Berliant went up to Lang to ask him something. I didn't know what he said, but Lang sent him back to his seat. A minute or so later, he was back again, asking his question. Again Lang sent him back to his seat. After a little while, Jeff went up to him and said in a trembling voice: "Mr. Lang, I-I bllllaaaaahhh!" he cried as he vomited in his face. It did my heart good to see Lang stand there with a sick look on his face and a huge pool of vomit at his feet.

Mr. Lang was, of course dismissed after the school year, but news of him came back to me a year or so later. It seems he had become a camp counselor, and his big thrill was pushing non-swimmers off the deep end of the camp pool. Good old Lang, he never changed from his lovable self.

I must admit that that year established a phobia towards Hebrew School for me. As soon as I finished my four year course, I set about forgetting what little I had been taught. Since, as I said, there was little if anything, worth remembering, I have forgotten all the Hebrew I learned except my name which is- is wait, I'll think of it.....

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DEMONSTRATED ETERNITY (continued from page 15)

vast peace of all eternity and infinity?"

"I'm going to ment my ways," vowed Elky. "Right now! God be praised that I saw what might happen otherwise."

"What a woman!" said Arslan. "What a place!"

"Now just a minute!" I expostulated. "Are you all trying to tell me that you saw shings while you were unconscious?"

"I've never been more conscious in my life," said Anatole.

"Me neither," said Elky.

"Didn't you unbelievers all experience the crushing fire?" asked Arslan.

"Now hold on here. Let's get this straight once and for all..."

Our argument continued until dawn.

# CHEERS

AND

# CURSES

LETTERCOL

DAVE

Well, here's the ghost of a once mighty lettercol. Arnie and I were in such a hurry to put out the last issue that we forgot to put our addresses in the contents page. As a result, there aren't very many letters this time. For the record, I'll state again, Send letters or comment to Arnie. Send fiction, articles, columns artwork and bombs to me (Len)

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Earl wants everyone to bring their own weather.

E.E. EVERS Fort Gordon, Georgia

I think it was pretty ethnic for the Oklahoma World's fair pavillion to bring their own tornadoe. Maybe next year all the states will pick this up.- Florida can provide a hurricane, Alaska a blizzard, Nevada a sand storm, California swog, etc.. "Visit the Fair, sample the World's Weather!"

"The Road to Shadowland" is less of a Tolkien imitation than its predecessors, and a much better story. The dialogue sounds a lot more natural when you're not trying so hard to make it sound ringish; in fact a lot of it suffers from the "me Tarzan, you Jane" syndrome so much sword and sorcery dialogue falls into. The action is good and the story hangs together pretty well. Let's see more.

John wants reviews of books he's never heard of

JOHN BOSTON 816 South First Street, Mayfield, Kentucky 42066

Even better than your Mercurian Diplomacy would be an After-Atomigeddon Diplomacy, with dozens of feudal states and freeholds, mutants distributed more or less at random (High man gets the telepath, no doubt), mysterious pools of radiation to be avoided and the like...

Nice book reviews, but slanted a little too heavily toward sword-and-sorcery. What I would like to see is more reviews of non-sf books of interest to fans, if that isn't a contradiction in terms; things that I might never hear of if some obliging reviewer didn't call them to my attention. And then there are some science fiction books which for some reason have been completely forgotten, apparently, although they surpass much of the more famous science fiction.... For instance, Edgar Pangborn's West of the Sun... It turned out to be excellent; it's one of the best novels I've ever read in the sf field. But...no paperback edition, no nothing after the hardcover publication and SF Book Club edition in 1953. (Meanwhile, back at the paperbacks, three truckloads of Burroughs have just come off the press)

It does seem like the best sf never gets into the paperbacks, but slowly this trend is breaking down. Formerly, mainly the magazine serials and originals especially written for the purpose had a monopoly on the pbs, but now, Ace, Pyramid and a few others are beginning to reprint some good hardback sf. -LB-}

EXCALIBUR 25



since Bob Taft wasn't given a chance, they gave him the old runaround. we probably have to settle for Barry. Strictly a second rater of course...

..There is something peculiar about this fanzine of yours. I'm not sure I can put it into words (not even sure that I can figure it out to my own satisfaction). It has something to do with two editors, and BOTH of them coming across vividly, as interesting personalities. This is unlike so many fanzines with more than one editor, where only one personality shows. Just call you the Schizo Kids, I guess.

It has something to do with not being afraid to use different types of material, not a slavish imitation of a Yandro, like so many seem to consider the very epitome of fanediting. (( Er..You all realize that the color of the paper this time is just a coincidence,--honest--LB)) At times you are neolish, on a considerably higher level of neolism of course, but since when is that bad? More enthusiasm for one thing. You get the impression that this whole thing is done for motives of having fun, rather than those of literary excellence. Not that the best of them have a great deal of excellence, whatever the editors may so fondly consider them. Simple fun is a much better motive to try for.

Maybe it's because you put some effort into editing. That certainly is refreshing after being plagued by the vast majority of the newcomers to the fannish prints. Most of them either don't know what the word means, or can't do it if they don't know. No matter what, you got something a bit different going for you here..

#### Harry dives into his native tongue

HARRY WARNER 423 Summit Ave, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740

Apologies for the slow response to Excalibur. I am becoming an adopted son of German fandom, as one of the few English-speaking fans capable of reading their language, and my efforts to keep up with the German fanzines are pitiful and entirely too hectic to recount. So I read German fanzines until the pile of English-language publications grows tall and yellowish, then I dive into my native tongue again and try not to notice how the German publications are accumulating. The German fans tend to put out large fanzines with few illustrations to speed the process of getting from first to last page.

One of those United Presbyterian commercials strikes me as quite effective, up to the moment when the music starts. It's the one in which A is trying to persuade B to start going to church on Sundays, A finally tries to set a firm appointment to go the Sunday after next, B laughs and says he never plans that far ahead and points out that the world might end by then, and A says, "Yep, it could." The only way I can bear religion on the radio is stripped to its essentials like this: if you're a non-believer, it's over and done with quickly, and if you're doubtful or a religious person, I feel that such a message is more effective than a learned discourse on the various meanings of a Greek term in a hotly disputed verse of Corinthians.

I'm glad that you took a moderately tolerant viewpoint on the CBS purchase of the Yanks. I'm not altogether happy about it, but I fail to see why the baseball press has been so violent in its attitude on the event. The Pirates belong to the owner of a stable of race horses, the Orioles and the Cardinals are controlled by breweries, and the Tigers have been closely linked with a radio-television chain owner.



President Berry doesn't seek egoboo

JOHN BERRY 31. Campbell Park Ave, Belmont, BELFAST 4, No. Ireland

...I like the latest issue, of course, but I do feel that in your SAPS article you could have mentioned that I am President of SAPS...I am not a seeker of egoboo, as you know, but first of all it is necessary I feel to give a complete picture of the organization, and secondly I am so proud of the honour that I think it a slight in SAPS not to mention it. You mentioned Bruce Lee's twenty seven times. Seriously, though, Arnold, you did a good job in giving an overall picture of SAPS, and lets hope it brings some fresh spirits to the waitinglist. It apparently, the fresh spirits don't need any encouragement. At last count I think there were 21 of them, and some of us waitinglisters can be pretty fresh, too.

Clay thinks there's something peculiar about Ex

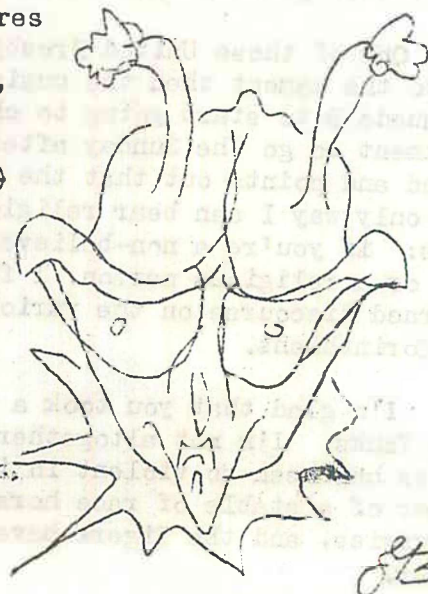
CLAY HAMLIN Southwest Harbor, Maine, 04679

Ex, number 8 on hand. Thanks.

Will a few complaints do as a legitimate LoC? Not that you can do anything about it, Len, my boy, you were too little and too late. That bit about the Old Ball Game, Associated Press beat you to it, saying the same thing in much more detail. (( Associated Press doesn't have to wait until the fifteenth of September before distributing to N'APA LB)) So too, I assume, did UPI. Reuters did the same thing, in their "oh so British" manner. And, heaven help us, even Tass took note, and came up with a nicely done bit about "imperialists" or whatever. You are way behind the times, Len boy.

But there was an angle to this, or so it seems, that everyone seems to have overlooked. It doesn't seem conceivable that I'm the only one to have thought of it, but it certainly hasn't been mentioned. CBS actually had the nerve to admit that they bought this club as an investment, just for filthy money. Not for the sake of sport, but lucra. After all this time, when the leagues have gone out of their way to say this is sport, and as such not subject to the rules of monopoly, these guys went and let the cat out of the bag. In public. Wait till the Senate gets hold of that!

Again, Len (boy, am I picking on you), what scares you so much about our amusing Mr. Goldwater? The country usually manages to survive just about anyone, or so it seems. Even a Truman. You might even say that the job made a man out of him, it has happened before, it can again. (( Who's behind the times?)) As for the idea of the civil rights bill not being enforced, do you really expect any different? I recall another law, an amendment yet, that the same thing happened. They called it Prohibition. Laws are not going to change anyone's behavior after all. (( When was the last time you stuck up a bank)) Personally, I am all in favor of the Conservative viewpoint, federal (and state) government is too darn big for their britches these days....Not that I expect anyone could become wildly enthusiastic about the spokesman that is being offered for the Conservative viewpoint. But





The Road To Shadowland has its moments, but it also has some grave faults. The biggest problem is the dialogue. It's neither the sort of mighty rhetoric that heroes speak in some stories about mighty deeds nor ordinary conversation that would occur between husband and wife or during an argument between a man and his enemies, but it sways uneasily in both directions, never quite acquiring the virtues of either extreme and losing all consistency in the process. The narration of action is pretty well done, except for some superfluous detail. The reader might be trusted to assume that Calea would lift the bow with the left hand and choose an arrow with the right hand, unless lefthandedness had some place in the story. Not even a hero like Muron would normally mount his horse without putting one hand on the saddle to make the ascent easier. I assume that Arnold didn't want to do more than write a series of clashes between a hero-heroine pair and enemies, so I won't say that there should have been some general aim stated at the beginning and attained at the end. But I think that two fights is the wrong number of a short story: either just one fight or three fights or increasing violence seem more suitable. In any event, with a little polishing and perhaps inclusion of some additional "business" in the form of novel magic or specially distinctive characteristics of the enemies, this would be no worse than some sword and sorcery fiction that is being sold these days...

I haven't read any of the books in your view column, but I'll probably include the Vance volume in a batch that I plan to order as a result of the strongest urge to read science fiction that has afflicted me in quite a few years. It sounds as if the Burroughs boom has already produced the same situation that had afflicted Lovecraft fandom for many years, that of dredging into print stories that wouldn't have found their way into that status under normal circumstances. The Burroughs fans really ought to try to determine for sure, before it's too late, what ERB really did write and what is mostly or totally by someone else under his name. There seems no doubt that there is little genuine ERB in many of the stories that the Ziff-Davis magazines published for instance. To complicate matters, another publisher has come out with two books about Tarzan which are admittedly written by another author. I understand Burroughs' estate is suing. Somehow, I can't imagine Burroughs writing the kind of book that you describe Beyond the Farthest Star to be: the whole point of his literary career was that of escape from Earth's specific problems into jungles or other planets where only the general, basic problems of mankind remained. I'm almost tempted to read this Ace volume, incidentally, so I can take a crack at determining the target at which the precocious kids were aimed. There was a radio program during World War Two called the Quiz Kids that annoyed some adults very much, because the kids were smarter than most adults and were very vain of this fact, but I can't think of anything in the political or military situation of the world that could account for this part of the Burroughs satire.

The satire consisted of having the hero of the book followed around by a sniveling brat. This brat, by use of his cleverness and by being rotten in general manages to work his way into the top echelons of the secret police. However, the hero outsmarts the brat and as he escapes he has the pleasure of noting the brat being beaten out of the kid. Burroughs has satirized aspects of World War II before. Carson of Venus was such a satire. I think that BEYOND THE FARTHEST STAR was written by ERB. Of course, I'm not an expert, but the book sounds like Burroughs in his later period of writing. The sentence structure jibes with the late Venus series. I think that the reason for the plot was that he really couldn't think of anything better. Remember, this was to be the start of a whole new series. Evidently, the bad guys were eventually to have been defeated, and the hero would have gone on to greater things--LB}}

Which brings the lettercol to a close. Arnie didn't comment this time because nobody sent letters his way. As I mentioned, this was our fault. So make up for it and write to this ish...



# IBIR( )T H

Last issue I analyzed SAPS, so this month, it seems only right that I explore N'APA. Of all the apas, these two seem to me to have the most in common.

Before getting into the analysis, a quick rundown of the group would seem to be in order. N'APA has a limit of 40 members who must also be members of the N3F. Members must pay N'APA dues also which are nominally \$2 a year, but which the present OE, Fearless Fred Patten, has cut in half. Activity requirements are six pages of the member's own original material in 46 copies every six months. There used to be an

## APA ANALYSIS by ARNOLD KATZ

escape for those missing 2 mailings, a 50¢ fine with another mailing to get the pages in, but the membership recently voted to tighten up the rules. The sole officer of N'APA is the Official Editor who serves a one year term and may succeed himself. The government of N'APA is a democracy, since the OE cannot arbitrarily set aside the constitution. The fact that it has been done, is being done, and will be done again shouldn't unduly trouble you. It just seems that N'APAns are a bit lazy about amending the constitution. When necessity clearly calls for an abridgement of the Constitution the OE usually polls the members. Kidding aside, the only serious violation is the collection of half dues. Members have not been heard to complain.

N'APA is the fastest rising apa in fandom. Since Patten was elected for his first term back in Winter of 62-63 N'APA has come from near extinction to a state of vibrant health. Quantity of material has about doubled, quality has probably improved even more. From being about 3/4 full, N'APA has come to have a wl of 10 or so.

Patten's role in this is well known among N'APAns and cannot be stressed enough in any analysis of the group. One thing he did was to try to counteract the tremendous downhill slide, triggered by his predecessor, Bob Lichtman. Gradually, the image of N'APA has been made over to conform with reality. Fred's zine, Foofaraw sets the kind of example new apans, who usually begin their careers in N'APA, need. Its impeccable reproduction, neat layout and interesting material of both mc and non mc nature, sets a standard of excellence for apazines that is hard to beat. Foof sets the pace for the rest of the apa. I think the goal of all N'APAns who publish a zine meant exclusively for N'APA is to put one out "as good as Fred's!" Foofaraw is the N'APazine. The idea of never missing a mailing, for instance, is hammered home when the newcomer sees that Fred always has a zine in the mailing. It is more than just the zines he sends through N'APA that make Fred so important. He is one hell of a nice guy. Neofen seem to instantly recognize this, and Fred Patten worship is not an uncommon thing among fans who have come on the scene in



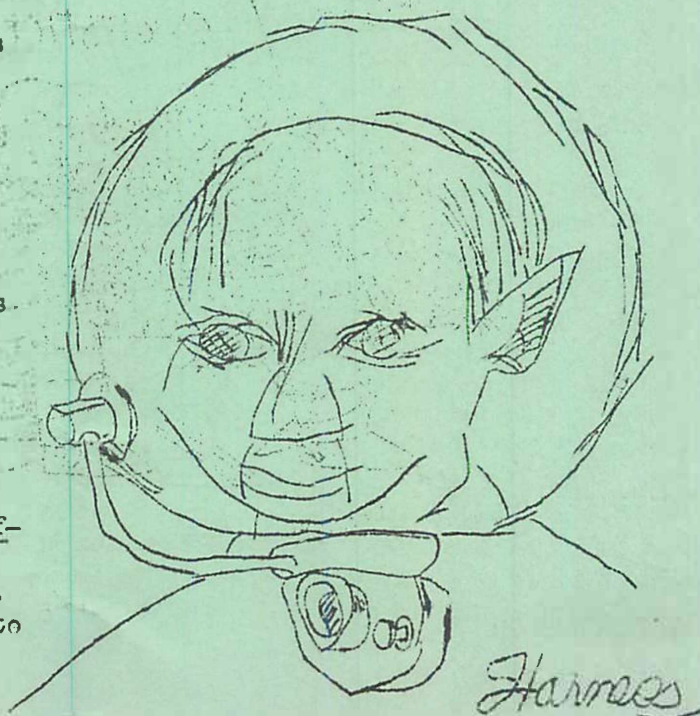
the last year or so. He helps the newcomers to fanzine fandom develop as faneds by answering their questions and giving advice. I don't know how many times I've heard (all right! and said) things like "I wouldn't want to disappoint Fred" from the younger circle of N'APAns. Fred is one from whom the younger fen desire approval. It gives them (all right, "us") an incentive to work above and beyond such things as egoboo.

If Fred is the Saviour of N'APA, Bruce Pelz, apan extraordinaire, has often been viewed as the Evil Villain. It's hard to say exactly why, but somehow, that's the way it is. I think Bruce's contribution to N'APA has been vastly underrated. There is no one who will gainsay the fact that his Rache is nearly as good, and sometimes better than Foofaraw. His other contributions, as in the case of Patten are as important if less obvious. I think Bruce's contribution to N'APA has been vastly underrated. When N'APA reached its nadir around the 16th mailing I sometimes feel that only Bruce's Disbandment Resolution stood between N'APA and death by lack of care. Bruce's resolution opened the eyes of the members to the sorry state N'APA was in at the time. Since then his barbed tongue has kept N'APA stepping right along. Bruce is another hero, though in a slightly different way, of the younger fen. When Bruce says something about the quality of a N'APAZine he gets listened to as the Voice of Authority. Bruce also began the single most important trend in N'APA today when he published his Faasan fiction serial, Masters of the Microcosm. Although he decided to give it up after two chapters, there are now three such thrillers running in N'APA.

N'APA has, as I've said, much in common with SAPS. For one thing, there is a great overlap in membership between the two groups. N'APA at times has seemed to be a training ground for future SAPSites with the better newcomers going on to become members of both groups. The tone of the apas is about the same also, allowing for the greater experience of SAPS members. N'APA has a lively crew of humorists led by Wally Weber, and including such as Pelz, Tackett, and Your Servants To Command, Len Bailes et moi.

As in SAPS, fiction is popular in N'APA, though it is not confined to the Sword and Sorcery type. The pun serials in fact, are all of the Super Science type.

N'APA has its serious side too, of course. Science Fiction, believe it or not is one of the more important topics. Reviews of books and articles on SF and Fantasy abound, and there are always discussions on the field in the mailing comments. The best zine in N'APA, Niekas is a pleasing blend of fannish natterings and serious articles. Meskys, Rolfe, and Chatland, the three editors, provide a good source for many of the better SF-centered pieces. Foofaraw usually contains an article on science fiction every issue, as does EX. Other topics of interest have been Aid to Education, Monogamy, the Hugos, Gilbert and Sullivan, and Diplomacy.



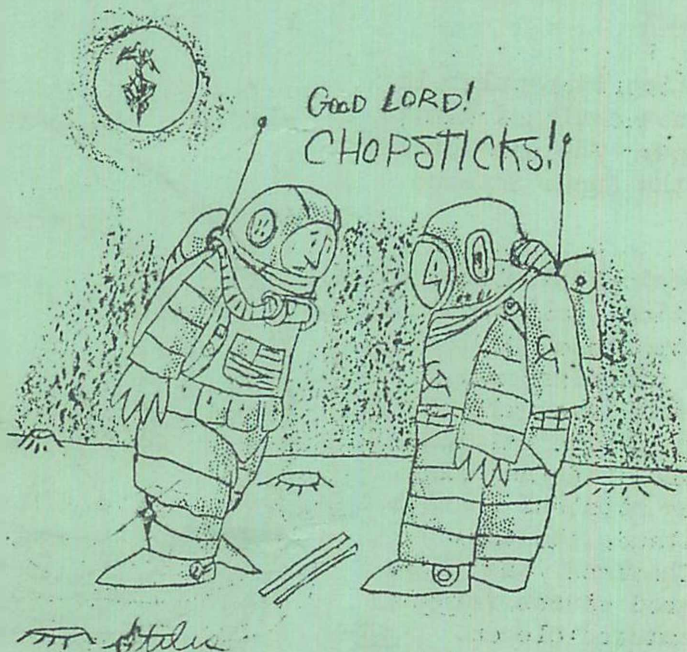


You can usually find at least one or two N'APAns willing to discuss any pet subject.

Along with the pun serials and science fiction, the other trend, though still a minor one, is comic book heroes and amateur movies, about same. Johnstone, Patten and Castera have all recently had major sections on the subject, but EX's own L\*E\*N\* B\*A\*I\*L\*E\*S probably started the trend 'way back with his interview with Julius Schwartz in Cursed circa September '63. Most of the subsequent material has dealt with a planned but never filmed comic hero movie the LASFS thought up once.

Lest this analysis read like a recruitment campaign I will wind up with the problems of N'APA. Reproduction was N'APA's long term problem, as one would expect in an apa with many inexperienced friends. By and large, this problem no longer exists, but a few zines are still having a rough time getting really good duplication. The inexperience of members has also been a problem. N'APA sees more 1st fanzines than any other apa. Although the neos rapidly improve if they have any talent. The first issues usually aren't too prepossessing. As the tremendous turnover in membership, another long time N'APA problem, has begun to slow down, the influx of neos has been brought down to a bearable level. A couple of neoish zines a mailing is enough. The ten or twelve N'A $\frac{1}{4}$ A used to get were Hell. Most of the other problems are those of the nature of growing pains.

N'APA is growing. You can see the improvement every mailing. It isn't as good as SAPS, but I do feel that it is worth joining.





INVASION FROM 2500 Norman Edwards  
Monarch Books 40¢ 126pp

This book, I believe, is the last to be published by Monarch. I think that the company is now bankrupt or something. It's probably one of the best they've published.

The plot is simple enough. It's the story of an Invasion of Earth from the future, as the title might lead you to believe. I'm not sure however, how the year 2500 was arrived at, as in the book, the exact temporal homeland of the invaders is never established.

An Electronics firm owner, Jack Eskridge is minding his own business, driving around in North Dakota, when suddenly, blammo, a time gate appears out of thin air and hoards of invaders pour forth. Eskridge flees and tries to make it to one of the big cities, stopping to pick up a Negro with the unlikely name of Carl Brandon. Unfortunately for them, the Invaders pick the city in question (Minnesota) for a bombing raid and Jack and Carl are gassed, captured and placed in a slave labor camp. Dissatisfied with this state of affairs, Eskridge makes a break for freedom, and escapes, leaving Carl behind. He returns to his home city, Chicago, and finds it under occupation by the enemy. In the course of trying to locate some of his old friends, he is captured again, this time by the Earth Underground, of which his friends are members. When Jack tells all he knows the scientists decide that the time gate is something like a forcefield. They figure that if somebody takes a contraterrene forcefield and inserts it therein the Gate will be destroyed. Eskridge and several others are delegated for this task. They manage to bluff their way through to the heart of enemy headquarters, but are then discovered. Eskridge knocks out the guard and has one of the others change clothes with him. Unfortunately they are not successful. An Invader with the catchy name of Ellik catches them, and explains to them that their mission was doomed before it started. The Invaders are following a programmed course written AFTER the invasion had been successful. The idea is that there have been an endless chain of invaders coming, conquering the 20th century, recording it for posterity, then coming back again. It isn't clear how the first invaders managed, or even if there ever were any first invaders. The rebels are permitted to leave the Enemy base, and steal a tank on their way out. Learning of the Invasion plan discourages Eskridge, as he now feels that his every move has been predestined. It turns out that the tank they clipped was a ringer. It had a radio in it which broadcasted the position of the Underground when they returned. The aliens then mop it up and Eskridge is on the run again. He is recaptured and set free by Brandon, who in the meantime has managed to work himself



up to an important position among the slaves of the Invaders. In the process of escaping this time he manages to rip a few pages out of the Book of Days. These pages happen to be concerned with the manufacture of the time gate. Und zo, after his scientist friends construct it for him Eskridge goes through and back to an hour before the aliens first emerged. He sets up an anti-force field on the spot, and when the appointed time arrives Poof, the Time gate is destroyed and the alternate world becomes non existent. Eskridge continues minding his own business in North Dakota, as we found him when the book opened. Obviously the author is familiar with Isaac Asimov's End of Eternity.

The novel's (although it's barely long enough to be called a novel) chief virtue is in its attempt to make this hoary plot seem realistic. Descriptive passages are excellent, and it is evident that the author has been to the midwestern areas of which he speaks. Based on this novel, I'd say that the writer has had very little contact with fandom altogether. He probably wasn't writing for a fannish audience.

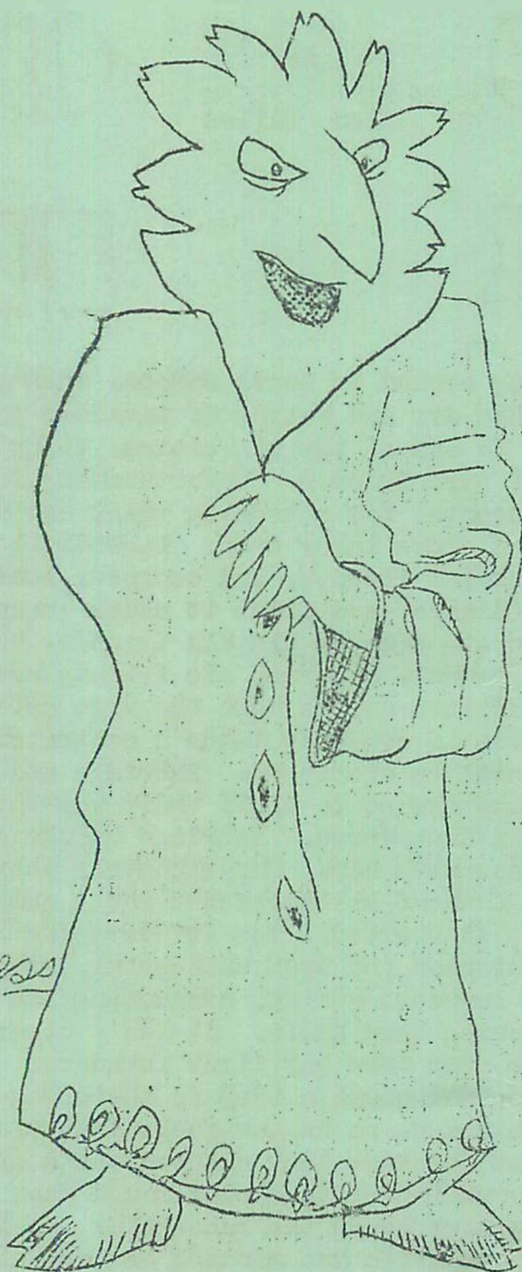
Oh yes, I think it might be helpful to mention that Norman Edwards is really a pseudonym for two dirty pros, Ted White and Terry Carr.

Kidding aside, I think the book is reasonably competent. It doesn't attempt much, but as a typical sf story of the type it is readable. The inscription on the title page, which reads "To Ted White and Terry Carr who made this book possible" assumes extremely funny connotations to those in the know. Ditto Brandon and Ellik, so this may be one of the reasons I happened to like it. You better go out and buy it. After all, if you don't just what kind of trufan are you, anyway?

TRANSIT Edmund Cooper, Lancer, 50¢, 159pp

Lancer seems to have abandoned its 75¢ quality editions and settled down into the usual 50¢ rut. Actually, this novel is rather funny, although it wasn't meant to be.

Theoretically this is supposed to be a Great Realistic Study of The Character of Ordinary Human Beings During Stress. It seems that four people are mysteriously spirited away





from Earth and cast away on a strange planet, wherein they have to learn to cope with Nature, and themselves. They are transported by omniscient aliens, who not having access to any fan's collection of science fiction think that their idea is terribly original. As you might have guessed, these thoughtful God-beings have also transplanted a set of people from another planet to this primal paradise and eventually, the two groups have a showdown fight for survival. As a matter of fact, the book reads amazingly like a cruddy episode of the Outer Limits I saw last year, and I wonder who stole what from whom. The author attempts to give us a Deep Psychological insight into his characters, and prove that they behave exactly like real people. To effect this portrayal, he has the earthpeople discover that one of their number has a huge collection of pornography with him. (I forgot to mention, each one of them was given a trunk full of whatever they liked best to take with them. Later, this same man admits to psychic impotency. He can't bring himself to make it with his chic like all good castaways on strange planets should.

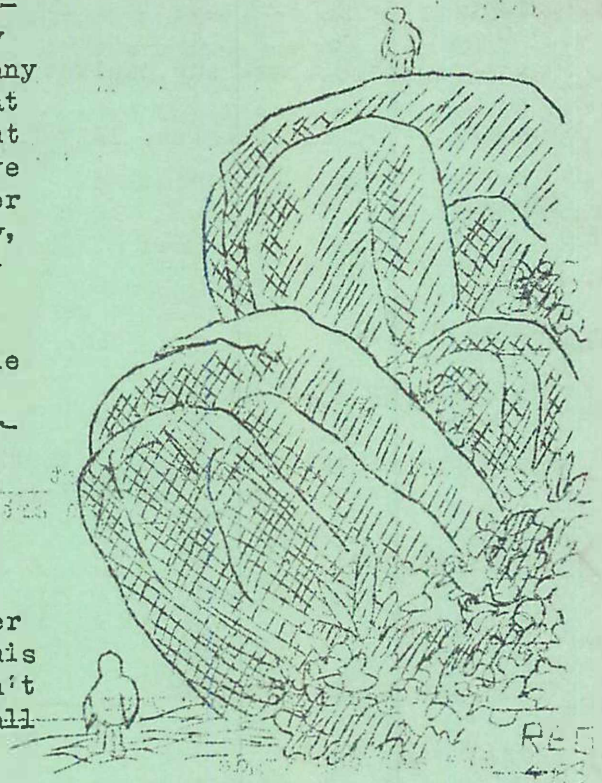
This problem had to be resolved in order to portray the traditional painful Birth scene later on. In this version of it, the mother almost dies, and the kid comes out a mess. Honestly, I wonder how some of these sf writers think the first generation of mankind managed to survive. Most of them depict birth without hospitals as a trip through hell. Of course, I wouldn't be qualified to judge personally, but evidently mankind did manage to muddle along somehow or other.

The style of writing really isn't too bad. This seems to be the work of a semi-decent writer who just isn't aware of how trite his plotline is. Man, wins the struggle over the other peoples, thus the aliens let him live and annihilate everyone else. The author's point is that despite how lowly, neurotic etc man is as an individual, as a species, Homo Saps is ok. The attempt at realism does place it above several similar attempts, but personally, I didn't care for it. The reason I dislike mainstream fiction is because the idealism has gone out of it. No heroes anymore, just protagonists. A hero doesn't have to be brave, or super this, or that, he just has to have characteristics which by necessity have to be exaggerated to contrast him with his surroundings. Otherwise the result is deathly dull.

MENACE FROM EARTH Robert Heinlein, Signet, 50¢, 189 pages.

Al, a breath of fresh air. How could the Heinlein who wrote these stories become the Heinlein we all know ~~and love~~ today. This is a reprint of the hardbound collection of 1957 and has a good many of Heinlein's classically great short stories. The tone of the collection is light, it contains BY HIS BOOTSTRAPS, MENACE FROM EARTH, YEAR OF THE JACKPOT, PROJECT NIGHTMARE, COLUMBUS WAS A DOPE, GOLDFISH BOWL, and WATER IS FOR WASHING, all of them thoroughly enjoyable. If you didn't catch this first time around, get it now. ...Which ends another short column; someday I'm going to have to ~~read~~ ~~write~~ ~~write~~ ~~write~~ catch up on my backlog—LB

EXCALIBUR 32





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