fantastic worlds

25¢

fall-winter 1952

THE ACKERMAN STORY by Sam Sackett

· Tucker · Browne · Neville ·

EVERY DAY the Postman passeth, and envelopes tumble upon your editor's desk. Some are like gentle rain, a few like hailstones; and occasionally there is a king-sized thunderbolt.

Most numerous are the gentle-rain type, the simple communications: "Enclosed find 25¢ for a sample copy of your magazine," or "That first issue of yours was great," or "Here is a short yarn I want you to consider." All of which are well and good.

But then come those hailstones. A 50,000-word manuscript, dog-eared and wrinkled, bearing cigarette burns and coffee stains of every editorial office from Curtis to Standard, and with this note: "If you don't like this, just throw it away. It's too beat up, and I don't like it much anyway." By an odd coincidence, we didn't like it much either.

Or manuscripts with notes like this: "Just don't have enough dough for return postage, so the return trip--if any--is on you." Remembering the days when we used to sacrifice lunch in order to solve a similar problem, we weren't too impressed by such subtle humor.

Then there was the lady in Maine who naively thunderbolted, "I red your first ishue and spechully liked the stories by Trueman Capote and Anthony Butcher. I hope you kan offord to pay more than 3 dollers a storie soon." At which, we hastened to explain that our magazine was Fantastic Worlds and that our name was not Howard Browne.

BUT THERE were great moments, too. Four times we received manuscripts from a new writer, James McKimmey, Jr. Four times those manuscripts were rejected, either because of a weakness or because they weren't what we wanted. Then came a fifth script. We read breathlessly. The first page was good, and the second. We bit our lip. If only the ending would hold up! We reached the final page, and the last paragraph nearly knocked us into our coffee cup. We realized we'd just read one of the best stories we'd ever read anywhere. That boy, dear readers, is going to be a writer!

And we received a thrill -- comparable to that of getting a Kris Neville or Bob Tucker manuscript -- when we received a very acceptable yarn from Don Howard Zimmerman, a promising new writer who at the time had appeared not even in the lowliest fanzine.

Although we had not previously been impressed by the philanthropic tendencies of the human species, we were joyously amazed by the help and encouragement extended by fans and writers everywhere. Special orchids should go to Forrest Ackerman and Bob Tucker, without whose aid this magazine would not been possible.

We hate to end this epistle on a dischordant note; but though we've worked as hard as seventeen monkies, it's taken us over four months to turn out this issue. The label of quarterly publication is now inappropriate, and so in the future FW will be published irregularly -- which means just as often as possible.

Be seein' ya.

fantastic worlds

Editor,
EDWARD W. LUDWIG
Associate Editor,
SAM SACKETT

Drawings by BELL, BERGERON, BRADLEY, BRINEY, BULLOCK, HOFFMAN, NAAMAN, PHILLIPS, POWLESLAND, and WARD

FALL-WINTER, 1952

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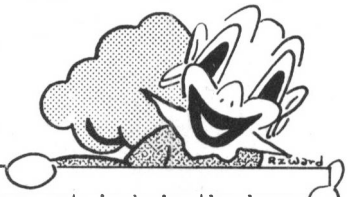
FANTASTIC WORLDS is published, allegedly, at intervals approximating three months, at 1942 Telegraph Avenue, Stockton, California. Subscription $1.00 (four issues); 25¢ the copy. All stories appearing in this magazine are fiction. Any similarity to actual beings--with the exception of demons and extra-terrestrials--is coincidental.

FORREST J. ACKERMAN

LIFE Photo by Allan Grant, summer, '51,
just before sailing for Europe.

THE ACKERMAN STORY

By Sam Sackett



Like a perennial and omnipresent jack-in-the-box, the hero of this true-life adventure has created a niche for himself in the world of fantastic and science fiction which, we think, is truly unique.

For nearly a quarter of a century -- almost since the time when fandom was a distant gleam in one Hugo Gernsback's eyes -- he has played an important and often vital role in virtually every phase and undertaking in the fantasy and science fiction fields. To quote a typical if obscure example, he was not only the first subscriber to a magazine called FANTASTIC WORLDS, but also the first contributor.

He is now a successful literary agent, handling such fantasy notables as A. E. Van Vogt and Kris Neville -- but he is still the world's No. 1 fan. He is still Mr. Science Fiction.

A FRAIL nine-year-old boy stopped at the newsstand, attracted by the cover of the October, 1926, issue of Amazing Stories. It portrayed a horrible insect-like monster, painted by Frank R. Paul to illustrate A. Hyatt Verrill's "Beyond the Pole." "What in the world," he asked himself, not having attained a wider vocabulary at that tender age, "is that thing?" He lacked the quarter the magazine cost; but there were parents and grandparents to be badgered, and soon the publication was his, to be read eagerly if without much understanding.

Forrest J. Ackerman had just acquired his first science fiction magazine. He loved it. He has been acquiring them ever since.

At first his parents and grandparents paid for Amazing and Ghost Stories for him. They found that they had to, or he would behave like any other nine-year-old kid -- and his parents also discovered that if they wouldn't buy Ghost Stories on the grounds that Forry might get scared, his grandmother would not only buy them but also read them to him.

Soon there were forty magazines in his grandmother's basement. "Forry," said his parents, "you never read those magazines down there. What's the sense of saving them? Why don't you sell them to the boy next door?"

Under duress, Forry disposed of his collection. Immediately

he began to look like a Medieval lover: he didn't eat, he couldn't sleep, he grew pale and listless. "Oh, all right," the Ackermans said. "Go and buy your magazines back. But what are you going to do with all of them if you keep on? Think how many you'll have in twenty years from now." The twenty years are up, and Forry's collection is still a problem. Like the chambered nautilus, he has to keep building more stately mansions for the inevitable impedimenta which the true science-fiction aficionado accumulates. Recently, when a seven-room apartment and three garages got too small, he had to buy himself a big house to shelter himself, his wife, her son, and a collection so big that numbers no longer have much force in describing it.

And Forry is still collecting all the current magazines, receiving them by air-mail special delivery. (This is not a courtesy to him from publishers; he foots the bill for it himself.) And people are still asking him a question his parents asked him twenty-odd years ago: "Forry, do you read all those?" The answer is no, Forry replies happily: he's read most of the stories already, under different titles, by different writers, with different names for the same stock characters. He hardly ever reads a story in Planet any more; he almost always reads those in Galaxy.

HAVING WON his second battle with his parents, and having been allowed to keep his collection, there was yet a third one to be fought. At first there were only two magazines to buy. Then Air Wonder came out, and then Scientific Detective, and then a number of others. What had begun with twenty-five cents a month had run up to a dollar and a half. The Ackermans paraphrased the psalmist: "Of making many magazines," they moaned, "there is no end. Forry, we'll keep on buying you the magazines that there are already; but if any more new ones come out, we just can't get them for you."

This was a blow. But anybody who knows a young boy knows also that parents are only minor obstacles, easily circumvented. Forry decided that if he only could get letters published in the magazines his parents would have to buy them for him because he had letters in them. He began writing a series of letters to the editors, on a pattern which has since become famous:

> "Dear Mr. Gernsback:
> "I am only twelve years old, but I read every issue of your magazine, and I think it's wonderful. If you multiply the stars in the universe by the words in the dictionary, that will give you only a faint idea of how enthusiastic I am about your magazine."

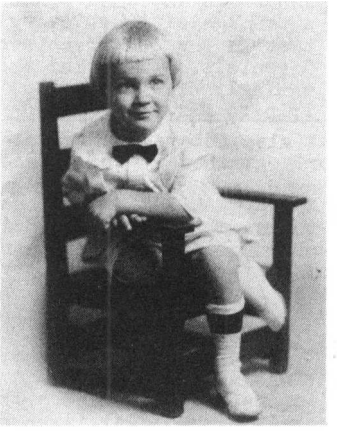
Naturally the letters were printed. And when the new Science Wonder came out, Forrest J. Ackerman had a letter published in it, the very first letter in the very first issue. What could the Ackermans do? Forry won his point, and nobody ever seriously got in

his way as a science-fiction collector again.

By this time he was in San Francisco, where Mr. Ackerman had taken the family from Forry's native Los Angeles, and going to high school. High school was no problem to Forry; he got A's in all the subjects that interested him, chiefly English, and he was bright enough to be able to get C's in the rest of them without working. He had also begun to gravitate toward writing as a chosen career.

It was at this point that a whole new world was opened up to Forry. One day while he was home sick from school a letter was delivered to him from Lymus Hoganmiller, a boy about his own age, in a small Missouri town. Lymus had seen Forry's name in one of the magazines and wanted to correspond with him. Forry suddenly discovered that he could write to people and talk about his enthusiasm. He bounded out of his sickbed and composed a long letter to Lymus. Then, when that was mailed, he thought of more that he wanted to say and wrote him another long letter. He sent out about half a dozen bulky epistles in three or four days. And then the letters started coming back--and Forry hasn't stopped writing to people and getting answers yet.

IN ABOUT 1930 Forry proposed to Lymus that they start a Boys' Science Fiction Club, to be composed of fans from twelve to eighteen years of age. "I'll be President," Forry modestly offered, "and you can be Vice-President." The offer was immediately accepted. Members sent in books and magazines and Forry ran a rental library, mailing out the publications that the other members requested. He also began a little news magazine, retailing the information he had received from personal contacts (by letter) with the writers. Sometimes he would list all the stories they had published. "You could do that in 1930," he recalls now with a wistful sigh.

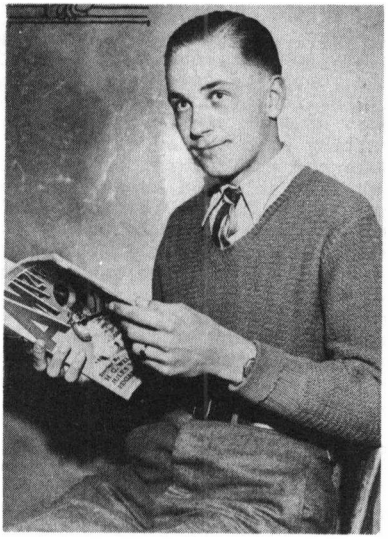


With an eye to the future, specially posed at about age 3.5 for publication in Fantastic Worlds.

Two boys in New York, Julie Schwartz and Mort Weisinger, volunteered to save Forry the trouble of typing up these news letters in original and eight carbons; they had a mimeograph, and they would publish them periodically when enough information was got together. That was the start of Time Traveler, which is generally conceded to be the first pure science-fiction fanzine.

Even then fanzines came and went. After a while Time Traveler went, and Science-Fiction Digest, which Forry worked on by mail with Ray Palmer, took its place. The next development was Fantasy Magazine, which was printed and contained a number of features and stories by the famous names of the early 1930's.

At about this time Forry graduated from high school, and his parents decided that he should begin to take steps toward being something other than "just a science-fiction fan" all his life. They suggested that he tackle the University of California. Forry said no. "Instead of sending me to college," he suggested, "why don't you give me a year to see what I can do? Let me write and enter con-



Forrest "Clark" Ackerman, as he was originally known, at about age 13, when winner of a teenagers' short story contest in the San Francisco Chronicle. (Tale had the amazingly original title, "A Trip to Mars.")

tests and sell second-hand books and see whether I can't support myself that way."

Forry went to college. His parents compromised and said that if he tried a year and didn't like it, he could quit. He tried a year and didn't like it; and then, back in Los Angeles, his parents gave him a year and more than a year to try doing things his way. That didn't work either. Not only did he fail to sell any of his stories, but he came to a very serious realization: he had no stories to tell. Contests and second-hand books didn't work out any better.

He thought that he had better try something else, and he made a frontal assault on the movie industry, hoping for public relations work. Nobody seemed interested. Finally his father got him a job with the Associated Oil Company--as Forry describes it, "adding up a long column of figures one month and subtracting them again the next month to make sure they came out to zero." This was no life for a science-fiction fan, so he looked around for something else. By chance he ran across an employee of the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences who was also interested in science fiction and offered to get him a job. Forry grabbed at the chance.

IN THE MEANTIME he had become involved with the founding of the Los Angles chapter of the Science-Fiction League, which has, under a number of name-changes and revised constitutions, continued on to this day. Ackerman has never missed one of the Thursday night meetings, unless he was sick or too far out of town to make it. Even when he was in the army he drove in from Fort MacArthur every Thursday night.

Also, in the meantime, he had collaborated with Francis Flagg, who was in a dry spot and could not think of story ideas, on a few science-fiction yarns. The first of them, "Earth's Lucky Day," appeared in the final issue of Wonder Stories. The rest of them Flagg all placed, except the last one, called "Time Twister." That story Ackerman kept after Flagg's death.

The Academy job, Forry had discovered, was also no life for a science-fiction fan. Although his immediate superior was considerate and understanding, the boss next removed was a petty tyrant who rode roughshod over everybody. Somebody started a movement: everybody in the section was going to quit en masse, in protest. Forry got sucked in on it. On the stated day, Forry and one other guy quit. The rest didn't.

From there Forry went on to operate a varityper for the Fluor Drafting Company. The war was on now, and Forry's job was essential to the war effort, because the machine he ran saved draftsmen's

valuable time, and Forry was the only man in the country who knew how to run it. It had been developed especially for the company, and nobody else had ever worked it. Then, when somebody thought of replacing him with a girl who could be taught how to use the machine, he was released for service in the army.

He was frankly terrified. He had led a relatively sheltered life up to that point, and the idea of going into the army frightened him. He was six-foot-one and weighed a hundred and thirty pounds, and the Navy had refused him. Feeling a little apprehensive, he made a will leaving all his books and a thousand dollars of his insurance money to endow a Fantasy Foundation, a public-private institution along the lines of the Huntington Library, but devoted entirely to science-fiction. He keeps the idea up to date by revising this will every year.

Fortunately, Forry's fears were not realized, and he lived through the army at Fort MacArthur, publishing the camp newspaper, the Alert, with the assistance of Cartoonist Virgil Partch. The way Forry tells it, the Alert was a government-subsidized fanzine and was full of news about science-fiction fandom. "In a camp that big," he says, "who was to know that there was anything phoney about news concerning Corporal Van Vogt or Sergeant Heinlein?" If you let him, Forry would lead you to believe that all the stories were faked in this way.

But Ackerman is too modest. If put to the test, he can leaf through the bound volumes of the paper without being able to point out a single random example of this sort of thing. The Alert was a good post paper and took second prize in a national contest among over two thousand publications like it.

While he was in the army, he began to sell books by mail. He discovered that he could buy a $3 for $1.80 from the publisher and have $1.20 all to himself -- except for postage and other expenses and the guy who disappeared owing him $80. After too many years of not making any money on the books he handled, he has just about given up his bookselling business.

WHEN HE got out of the army, he decided to take the bull by the horns and try to make a living out of a science-fiction career. For one thing, he decided, he would write stories; for another, he would use the experience of years of reading science-fiction to advise other writers -- in short, he would become an agent.

It was fortunate that the government was subsidizing him under the G. I. Bill for the first year, because he fell flat on his face in both capacities. He wrote six stories on atomic themes in a flash of inspiration and sent them off, confident that nothing that the author had poured so much of himself into could possibly be rejected. He was wrong. All six came back with the usual rejection slips. Nobody seemed to care if he lived or died.

Agenting was no better. Having heard that

Pre-&-Post Pearl Harbor, c. 1941 & 1944. At time of the former, 4e was in the prime of his publishing Vom; in khaki was known as S/Sgt "Ack-Ack", editor of top Army newspaper.

agents made a racket out of charging reading fees, he decided to charge none. The result was that he was flooded with worthless manuscripts. None of them enclosed return postage, so he had to pay that, too. The stories he submitted he provided postage for as well. The financial loss that first year was serious.

The agenting problem could be fixed up. He began to charge a reading fee -- 50¢ a thousand words for a yes-or-no answer, and $1 a thousand words for a full-length critique. Also, he requested that his clients pay postage; all of them thought the demand was reasonable and contributed the postage cheerfully.

The loss on the writing side of the ledger was more serious and could not be reclaimed. As a sort of grim joke, he began to collect the six which had been so unceremoniously returned and enough other stories, including the old Flagg collaboration, "Time Twister," to make a collection of thirteen to be entitled The Bust of Science-Fiction and to be dedicated to the editors whose rejections had made the book possible. About eight pages of this were actually set up in type when an amazing thing happened. The editors began to buy up his stories, and finally most of them sold. The project had to be scrapped -- regrettably, because Partch had designed a dust-jacket for the book which showed a half-clad maiden chasing a terrified bug-eyed monster.

"Time Twister" was one of the stories to sell at that time, and "Atomic Error" was another. If I may step into this article in my own person for a moment, I'd like to tell a story about "Atomic Error."

During my first year of college teaching, I had a student in my class who was obviously spending his first year at any great distance from home. Although he was bright, his grades were poor, from a variety of reasons. One of them was the friends he made, and a second was that he was sick. Another was that this poor, meek, little freshman got engaged to a redhead who was bigger and somewhat older than he was, and enough more experienced in regard to the wide world to make life miserable for him. (The engagement lasted only a couple of months, fortunately.)

For part of my final examination in freshman English I had my students write a paper in class. This boy turned out a gem -- obviously an A. After I had graded my papers, I relaxed with a copy of OTHER WORLDS, which I had bought for Ackerman's story, "Atomic Error." And there, for the second time, I read my student's freshman English final theme.

The occurrence was reported by Matt Weinstock in the Los Angeles Daily News, and the facts were supplied him by Forry, allegedly quoting a letter from me. What was quoted was a good deal more clever than what I actually had written him. The truth of the thing is that I phoned for the kid to come over, which he did, and receive a dressing-down, which he also did.

The amazing thing about his paper was the way in which, in a paper written under my supervision and without anything to copy from, whole sentences and paragraphs were given word-for-word from Forry's story. Finally I discovered that this was what had happen-

ed. A student fan from Wyoming had read OTHER WORLDS and suggested to my student that the story would make a good subject for an essay in class. My student, knowing such a theme was about to be required, asked to see the story; but the magazine was mislaid. The Wyoming student sat down and painstakingly reconstructed the story from memory -- and did an amazingly good job. Then my student sat down and memorized the reconstruction, writing it and rewriting it several times before he came to the classroom. I failed him in the final and gave a D for the course; then I gave Forry Ackerman an A.

The Ackerwoman, Wendayne of Alsace-Lorraine.

FROM THAT POINT things have gone well for Forry; I like to think that my grade had something to do with it. His agent business has expanded to where he has a good nucleus of seventy clients. As a writer, he is dabbling in television and has opportunities for lucrative script jobs.

Looking back over his career, Forry is vaguely dissatisfied. For one thing, he feels that so many projects of his failed because of a lack of faith and enthusiasm, such as he has himself, in other people. For one fan convention, he wanted to bring over E. J. Carnell from England as a guest. It would have cost $500 to do this, and Ackerman thought that if five hundred fans each contributed a dollar, the goal would easily be accomplished. His first call for contributions failed. Deciding that perhaps an appeal to altruism was a little out-dated, he got various publishers to offer prizes of books, original illustrations, subscriptions, etc., and conducted a lottery, the proceeds to go to bringing Carnell over. He contributed $27 himself to the fund and talked Wendayne, who was to become his wife, out of another $5. A few other fans gave as much as $5 and $10 each. Total receipts were $127.

And then there was the time when about twenty Los Angeles fen alarmed Forry by saying, "Ackerman, we're tired of waiting for you to die." They calmed him by explaining that they thought that the Fantasy Foundation should be begun at once. Ackerman was skeptical but allowed himself to be persuaded. All he had to do was provide the magazines and books, and the other twenty promised to rent the building and do the work. They talked him into making a public announcement of his intention. Then, when the time came, there were only nineteen, then eighteen, then seventeen, and soon Ackerman was left without any support at all. He couldn't do all the work himself, in person. Acrimony ran high at the way he had backed out of his promise.

On another occasion Forry suggested to Philip Wylie, who at that time was working for a publishing house, that there were only two science-fiction anthologies in the field and the time was ripe for a third. Wylie said no: Three science-fiction anthologies would glut the market.

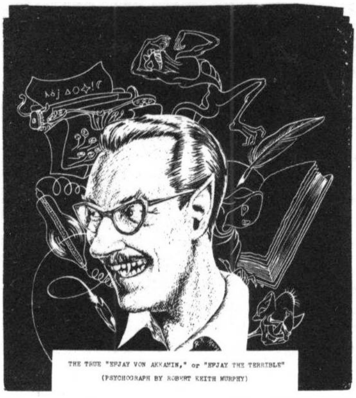
Similar was the Ackerman campaign for simplified spelling; he still signs his letters "4e," for "Forry." The tangled maze of English orthography has been a target for reformers since Orrm in the 13th Century; and Ackerman, in the Twentieth, had no better luck.

About the only one of his ideas that caught on in fan circles was what he calls "nonstoparagraphing," beginning a new paragraph where the old leaves off, as here.
The reason for these failures, as Forry regards them, probably lies in his personality. He is a very enthusiastic individual, and when one of his pet projects stimulates him he is willing to put all of himself into working for it. Very few people believe that strongly in anything.

ANOTHER REASON for Ackerman's unhappiness as he looks back over his life is the number of personal attacks that have been made on him by other fans. "I can't understand it," he says. "Maybe I'm naive, but all I've tried to do all my life is be friendly to every other fan I could find. What do I get out of it? Somebody I don't even know writes in to a fanzine and jumps all over me."

Ackerman is probably too sensitive for his own good in letting these attacks hurt him as much as they do. He is open, guileless, and unsecretive in the way he goes about meeting the rest of the world, and he is still surprised when he finds out that people do not always react to him in the same way.

What probably is behind the attacks is that Ackerman is undisputably the nation's -- probably the world's -- number one science fiction fan. Ackerman himself cheerfully concedes that there are other fans -- and he can count them off on his fingers and name them -- who are five times as active as he is right now. All he asks is that you consider who has given more time and energy to the science fiction movement taken all together over the past quarter century. Time after time he shakes his head and says, "I feel like an immortal man. Every once in a while I think of so-and-so and wonder whatever became of him. Ten years ago he was the most active fan in the country. Now--" He shrugs. The implication is obvious: fans may come and fans may go, but Ackerman goes on forever.


THE TRUE "EFJAY VON AKKAMIN," or "EFJAY THE TERRIBLE"
(PSYCHOGRAPH BY ROBERT KEITH MURPHY)

As the nation's number one fan, he immediately becomes the target for show-offs who covet the honor for themselves. If you want to make a name for yourself in fandom, gun for Ackerman. In the first place, he's on the top of the heap, so he's obviously the guy to try to knock off. And in the second place, he's the best-known fan in the country, so if you get your name associated with his -- in an argument if there is no better way -- you may become well-known, too.

Ackerman's life has not been so unsuccessful as he sometimes thinks. Although he has never been the popular author that he has always wished he was, he is at least on the verge of financial success in television. He is married to one of the most charming women in fandom -- whom he met when she was a saleslady and he a customer in a bookstore. And he has, after all, achieved the principal goal of his life.

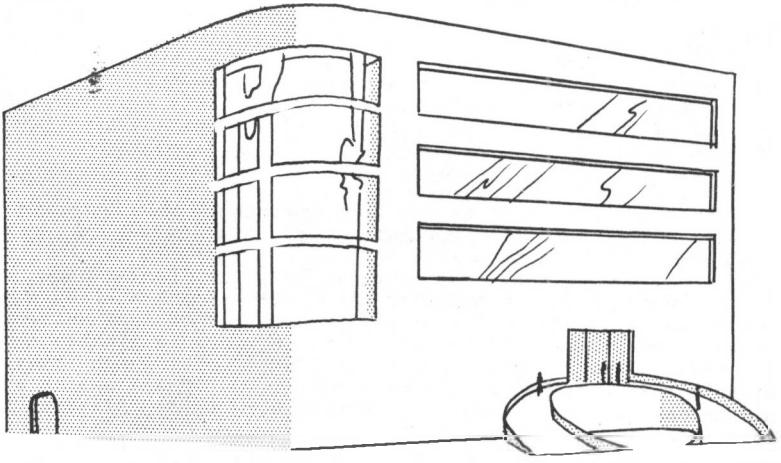
What Ackerman has always wanted to do, ahead of any other ambition, was to devote his full time to being a science-fiction fan. And that is actually what he has done. Maybe he indulges in other

pursuits, which are all related to science-fiction somehow, only to the extent that he can earn enough money to engage in his life work -- being Mr. Science-Fiction. It is only with the goal in mind of supporting his fan activities that he has been an agent, sold books, and sold his stories for money. If he were financially independent, capable of doing whatever he wanted to, right now he would junk all his gainful activities and start this Fantasy Foundation that he has always hankered after; he would be perfectly content to mail out books to borrowers and answer questions and guide visitors on tours and mail out information and do all the other things that the curator of such a foundation would have to do.

As a matter of fact, if some of his TV deals work out, he has big plans. He hopes to be able to contribute enough money to start the Foundation by himself, without any outside financial assistance, rent a building to house the institution, and hire a curator to take care of it. He also hopes to become the first agent in history who refuses to take money for marketing material; if he ever achieves the financial success that it now appears may be his, he hopes to be able to help a few of his fan friends -- not the seventy customers he has now, by any means -- without taking any remuneration for it.

And that, after all, is Ackerman. Not this: "If I get rich, think of all I can buy for myself." But this: "If I get rich, think of all the help I can be to science-fiction and my friends." Anybody who can live for any length of time on the planet Earth and still look on life that way has <u>not</u> been unsuccessful.

FANTASY FOUNDATION • ESTABLISHED 1972 • BY FORREST J. ACKERMAN



THE LAST WOBBLY

Time, with equal nonchalance, may dull the sheen of a hero's wings and the glint of a villain's knife. We are proud to present this story by Kris Neville -- a story of men and machines and hands that have forgotten how to work -- which, in our opinion, is comparable to his classic "Old Man Henderson."

by Kris Neville

Illustrated by Jerri Bullock

THE TWO OLD MEN sat in the yard of the old folks' home. They sat under the trees in comfortable, reclining chairs on the green grass. Sometimes, for they knew each other well, they said only a word or two in the space of an hour; other times, the words came out in a flood only to stop suddenly, clogged by the wind, by a drifting leaf, by the speckle of sun shadows on the smooth lawn, by things that pass unnoticed before the most of us but that send old thoughts swirling away down unknown and silent corridors. The two old men looked toward the mountains and breathed the clear air and adjusted their bright, heavy blankets over their laps.

At two o'clock the attendant came by. His eyes were boyish, and his hands were soft and gentle. "Is there anything you wanted?" he asked.

"No," said Jimmie Higgins.

"No," said Ed Smith.

"Be sure to call me if you want anything," the attendant said.

"We will," said Jimmie Higgins.

"We will," said Ed Smith.

The attendant went away. Jimmie Higgins looked down at his hands, which had been crinkled like balls of ink-stained paper by the press of desiccating years. They writhed against enforced idleness, searching a hammer to grasp, a pick, a sickle, a drill, any physical symbol of man's independence with which they might assault the frustrating solidness of time. "There was no work in his hands; did you notice?" Jimmie Higgins said. "Is that important; does it matter anymore?"

"I don't know. Sometimes I think....," Ed Smith said; he let his voice trail away. After a moment he said, "I don't know."

Sometimes they said only a word or two in the course of an hour.

"I was...," Jimmie Higgins began. But he paused to listen to the leaves rustling in the soft perfumed wind: 'If it had not been for this thing, I might have lived out my life talking on street corners to scorning men. I might have died unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life could we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice. Our word -- our pains -- nothing! The taking of our lives -- lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish-peddler -- -- all! The last moment belongs to us. That agony is our triumph!'

"Why," Jimmie Higgins said aloud, "that's the very speech Vanzetti made: I memorized it. I'd recognize it anywhere."

"Eh?" said the other.

"Nothing, Ed, nothing," Jimmie Higgins said.

THEY FELL silent. A transcontinental rocket hissed past overhead.

"I was a Wobbly," Jimmie Higgins said at length.

"Eh? Eh?"

"I was a Wobbly," Jimmie Higgins said. "You and I know. We are left. We know. We remember."

Ed Smith sighed. "Ah, yes," he said.

Jimmie Higgins bent forward, thrusting his jaw defiantly toward his companion. "We know, you and I."

Ed Smith cleared his throat and coughed twice, the spasms shaking his withered body. "Yes," he gasped. "Yes, we remember."

"I saw him," Jimmie Higgins said, suddenly excited. "Joe Hill. I wasn't more than twelve. I was with my old man. He was crying. He said, 'They'll never kill Joe.' Only time my old man ever cried. He was a miner. They don't cry. 'By God!' he said. 'They can't kill Joe!' I was a Wobbly then, and I couldn't have been more than twelve. One big union!" His eyes were bright.

"Joe Hill," Ed Smith said sadly. "Joe Hill is dead, and they don't even remember his name now, not even his name."

"We remember!" Jimmie Higgins cried in triumph. "You see? We know. 'Don't mourn for me, organize;' that's the last thing he said to the workingstiffs. He gave the orders to the firing squad. They buried him in Chicago, like a hero, that's where they buried Joe. One big union; we remember."

"What's happened to his songs?" Ed Smith said. "No one knows his songs anymore."

"They were good songs," Jimmie Higgins said. "It made you feel good to sing them. We used to sing them at meetings. It made you feel proud."

"Yes, yes," Ed Smith said.

"I saw Big Bill," Jimmie Higgins said, waving his heavy

knuckled hands excitedly. "I saw him, too. I heard him speak, by God, I did!"

"Big Bill Haywood died in Moscow," Ed Smith said dully. "They buried him in Red Square. They broke his heart. They killed him just the same as they would have with a bullet. They broke his heart, and he died."

THE TWO OLD MEN fell silent again. A thin stream of smoke floated and vanished slowly into the bright air from an automatic factory in the valley.

"They killed Trotzky in Mexico," Jimmie Higgins said slowly. "For a long time," he said, and then he hesitated, searching for the right words. "I thought the... they were destroying the rest of us. I thought it was their fault for killing the working movement everywhere; but now... now, I don't know. After they were gone, we couldn't get started again. It couldn't have been their fault after '63 or '64."

They are gone, the leaves whispered, but what consolation is that? For Trotzky and Big Bill and Joe Hill and Sacco and Vanzetti and Johnny Mitchell and.... They, too, are dead and buried; and their words are forgotten; and their dreams are dead; and the world has moved on until things like that aren't important anymore.

Jimmie Higgins wanted to cry.

"I'm the last Wobbly," he said. "The last of the SLP members. The last.... It's all gone and forgotten."

What does it matter, the leaves asked, that they castrated Westley Everest for fighting for a better world the only way he knew to fight? What matter that they beat out Sam Popovitch's brains; that they shot Togliori in the back? Why should you have chained yourself to a lamp post and spoke against the stupid killing of brother men in some war or other? Why should you have cursed them when they filed off the chains and knocked your teeth out with a club: was one big union worth that? Would you have done it if you knew it wouldn't make any difference?

"Yes!" he cried aloud. "Yes! I would have!"

Ed Smith said nothing.

After a long while, Jimmie Higgins said, "My new teeth; the little dentist, Dr. Weiner, fitted them the last time. He did a good job. I go back next week. He wasn't born probably until the eighties. He doesn't understand. They'll bury me in their little cemetery out back in a little while; they'll be genuinely sorry -- the nurses, the attendants, Dr. Weiner. But they'll never understand; they offer me sympathy when I try to explain... I don't want sympathy, I want them to understand what one big union meant ... I ... I pity them, I think."

"Yes," Ed Smith said. "Yes, that's it."

Jimmie Higgins snorted wearily. "They moved on and forgot us because we had no place any more. There were fewer and fewer of us, and now we're the last of our kind. And yet.... I them, I think."

Ed Smith stared at the sky.

"It's funny," Jimmie Higgins said. "All those dreams forgotten; all those dreams. They deserved more than the worms, Ed."

The wind grew chill.

".... more than the worms," Jimmie Higgins said.

THEY STARED down through the late afternoon sunlight at the clean, neat, sprawling town lying in the valley. Sleek cars like silver bats shuttled smoothly on the ribbon of accident-proof highway that wound along the slope.

"Times have changed," Ed Smith said.

"They have no need of us; they have no place for us. That doesn't seem right. It doesn't seem fair. I saw Joe Hill. I wasn't more than twelve. I was with my old man. He was crying. He said, 'They'll never kill Joe.'"

The attendant came quietly to their chairs; he said, "We better go in now, it's supper time."

Jimmie Higgins looked wearily toward the east. "Yes," he said. "It's time for us to go in. We better go in. Night is falling. It is hard... on old bones."

In our next issue: "THE QUESTION" -- one of David H. Keller's finest stories.

"FANTASY IS IN THEIR HANDS," by Leo Louis Martello -- an article analyzing the handwriting of your favorite stf authors.

"THE LITTLE O, THE EARTH," by William F. Temple -- who turns his attention from four-sided triangles to circles.

PIPE TUNE

Pan sits in the clearing

On the stump of a barberry tree,

Piping his tunes so airily.

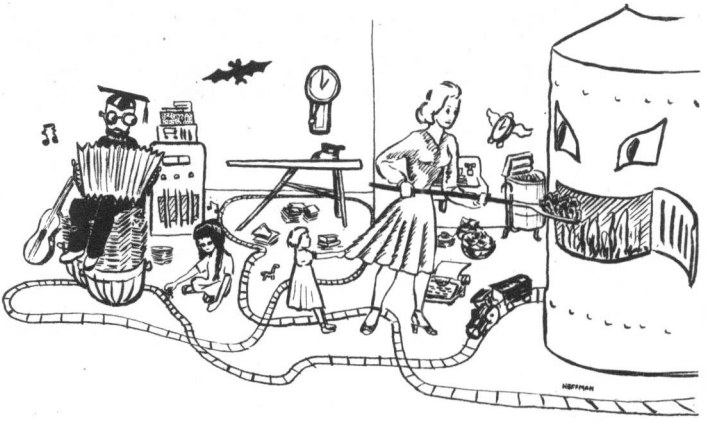
He panics me!

-- Virginia M. White

A WRITER'S PROBLEM:

a puzzle for aficionados

by BETSY CURTIS



TWO RADIOS, a record player, a wire recorder, a bat, a washing machine, an old furnace, thirty-five bushels of toys, a guitar, an accordion, twenty bushels of magazines, books, dollies, magic sets, costumes, cancelled checks and sprinkled ironing, a sink full of dirty dishes, an electric train, a college professor, his full-time wife (who doubles as a science-fiction writer), their nine-year-old daughter Judy (so known because her name is Margaret), and their five-year-old ditto known as Molly because her name is Mary live in a beautiful if unpredictable and greedy house in the country.

All members of this family require more than seven hours sleep each out of every twenty-four through which they pass.

All members of this family subsist mainly on cooked food which they prefer to eat from clean dishes with clean silver. Several of the members are also in the habit of wearing clothes, and one or two prefer these clean. And ironed.

Betsy (and let's call the wife that because that is her name) finds that she likes to be a science-fiction writer because (1) science-fiction editors are such sympathetic and charming people, (2) fans are such sympathetic and charming people, and (3) a story sold is often better than a cent a word earned. This last is most important, as the greedy house eats coal like a...a...vacuum. It also gollops electricity like a BEM golloping purty gals.

BUT BETSY can't write happily in a three-room Plywood Maiden that costs less to live in. So she needs the hungry house.

But it takes so much time keeping the beautiful house clean, and the family ditto, that Betsy can't find hours to turn out deathless masterpieces. (To sell for money.)

Now you have all the clues. The missing ones necessary to a solution of the problem (if any are missing) may be wandering about happily in your vicinity.

Only one hint for you puzzle solvers. . . . .the solution to this problem may have something in common with that famous one: "Why is a raven like a writing desk?"

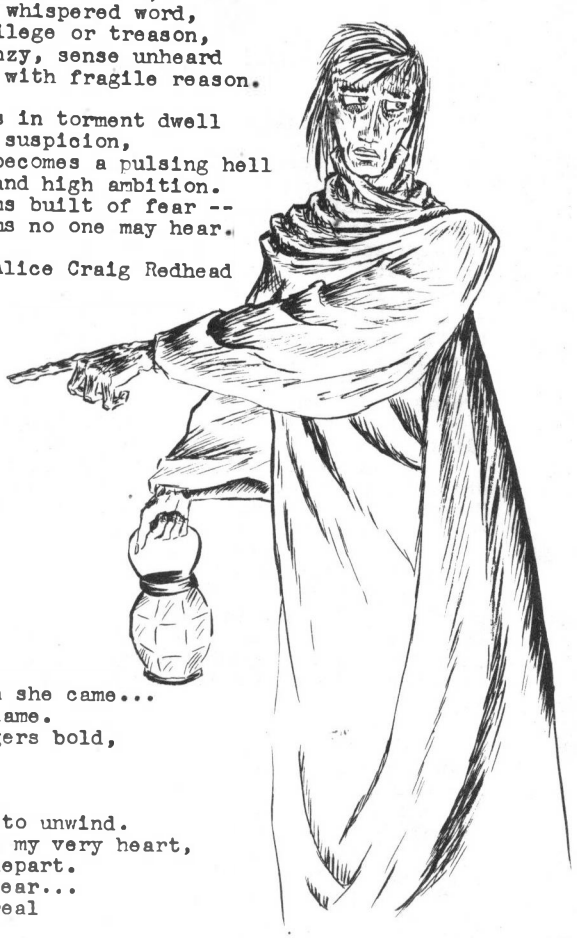
two poems:

THE SUSPICIOUS MIND

There is a vale of fear where bones are white,
Stacked in long rows like cordwood freshly cut,
And ever banshee winds of pallid fright
Revile the timid one whose door is shut;
A vale of fear, where every whispered word,
Imagined thoughts, are sacrilege or treason,
Where minds, in frantic frenzy, sense unheard
And potent cause for doubt, with fragile reason.

There is a depth where souls in torment dwell
In magnified morass of dark suspicion,
Until each hour, each day, becomes a pulsing hell
And bitterness kills faith and high ambition.
Steep are the walls of chasms built of fear --
Self-sealing tombs of screams no one may hear.

-- Alice Craig Redhead



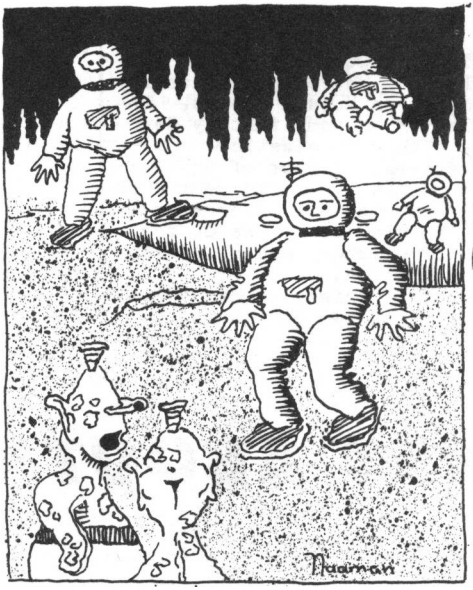
MIDNIGHT VISITOR

Candlelight flickered. Then she came...
Quieter than the wavering flame.
Caressing my spine with fingers bold,
Icy...icy...icy cold.
In a silence that hurt,
Creeping into my mind...
Every curl on my head began to unwind.
Unwanted... yet clutching at my very heart,
Oh, how I wished she would depart.
Invisible, awful, terribly near...
Unknown but enveloping, so real
Is..... FEAR !

-- Barbara A. Kurtiak

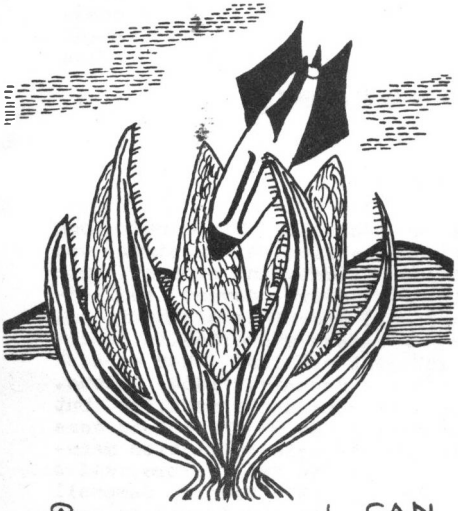
HOFFMAN

CARtooNs:



"BETTER TELL MAW TO WARM UP THE ZLITH STEW, JUNIOR. THOSE HUNGRY EARTHMEN ARE HERE AGAIN."

"I TOLD YOU HE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH IMAGINATION TO DREAM UP THOSE BEM'S!"



I CAN FEEL THAT GOOD MARTIAN SOIL BENEATH ME NOW.

In the summer of 1952 newsstands throughout America were embellished with a new fantasy magazine -- a magazine so skilfully written, illustrated, and edited that it at once gained a place among the very top publications in the field.

But the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, proud parents of the impressive FANTASTIC, have another child, AMAZING STORIES, also edited by one Howard Browne. The cumulative response to AMAZING, from many fantasy devotees, has been somewhat less than enthusiastic.

In this article Bob Silverberg, editor of the fanmagazine SPACESHIP, sets forth his views in regard to the apparent paradox. While we do not necessarily agree with some of Mr. Silverberg's views, we do feel that they are representative of a large segment of fandom and therefore deserve recognition.

And to present another face of this literary Hydra, we have asked Howard Browne for his own opinions.

SOME WORDS ABOUT fantastic...

by Bob Silverberg

HOW HOWARD BROWNE has been able to reconcile his career-long ambition to edit a top-quality science fiction magazine, one which will rank with the best in tone, format, and content, with his career-long profession of editing the two poorest (and admitted so by Browne himself) professional magazines of the field, will long remain one of publishing's greatest mysteries.

Mr. Browne was filled with exuberant promises when he took over the helm of AMAZING STORIES with the January, 1950, issue. The venerable hulk had been abandoned by rats and fans alike, but before Browne had been editor more than a few months plans were afoot to transform it into the ultimate in science fiction magazines: 8½" x 11", 144 pages, with 32 pages in full colors, and a line-up of authors which was enough to turn pale Messrs. Campbell (then struggling to cling to his once-unquestioned supremacy) and Gold (at that very time concocting his own plans for reaching the

By the end of 1950 we realized that AMAZING was not, after all, to burst from drab degeneracy to the leadership of the field in the space of one issue, and it returned to its accustomed position at the bottom of the field. Browne staunchly maintained, through the next year and a half, that he was printing the best science fiction available, and it was only in March, 1952, that he admitted in a press-release circulated by Ziff-Davis to a number of leading fans that what he had been printing all along was (and we quote) a "formula of adventure and 'cops and robbers on the moon'" and that the time had come for Ziff-Davis to issue a new magazine which would relegate the aforesaid formula to "its pulp sister-publications, 'Amazing Stories' and 'Fantastic Adventures.'"

This press-release not only proved that Browne had no delusions about what he had been printing in his magazines, but also put an end to a morass of contradicting rumors dating from October, 1951, which had said that Z-D was once again contemplating entering the top bracket of s-f publishing.

Then, finally, the magazine appeared at the end of March. Fans everywhere, recalling the disappointment of 1950, evinced surprise that Ziff-Davis had actually carried through its plans, even though Browne had gone from one pole to another, the largest size to the smallest.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I am sold on it. FANTASTIC is as unlike the Ziff-Davis stand-bys as the latest ASTOUNDING is unlike the Clayton issues. I am almost willing to forgive Ziff-Davis for thirteen years of publishing, in which time AMAZING and FANTASTIC ADVENTURES published no more than a dozen outstanding stories between them. I am almost willing to forgive them for foisting the Shaver hoax on the world, because this new publication compensates nearly for all the Z-D miscues.

FANTASTIC is by far the most attractive magazine in the field, and seems to have the best facilities for reproducing artwork. Its fiction is of high caliber, and of a distinctive type which makes it impossible to compare with that published by aSF, GSF, and F&SF (all of which run their own distinctive types.)

What I like most about it, however, is the clean, make-up-for-old-sins atmosphere. Nowhere in the magazine is there mention of its two sisters; nor is there a boasting editorial nor offensive advertising. It is merely a vehicle for fiction, by far the most attractive vehicle in s-f history, and in presenting its fiction it succeeds. It is a good magazine, and now we have a Big Four at the head of the field. I refuse to be prejudiced by the Ziff-Davis label, and weighing it objectively as if a new, untainted publisher had entered the field, I can only pronounce it a top-flight effort.

Browne has big plans for this pet new project. He's paying up to 10¢ a word to maintain the pace set by his first issue, with word-rates on a merit basis. He intends to sell it to a much wider market than the other leaders aim for, and as an eagle-eyed observer in the world's largest city I can vouch for his success. Riding in the subways every day, I notice all sorts of people holding a now-familiar yellow cover, people who do not look at all fannish --- and who probably would rather be found dead than

holding an AMAZING.

Browne intends to find authors who have won fame in other fields, such as Raymond Chandler and Truman Capote, and while this is not a sure-fire method of getting good science fiction, it is a fine method for expanding the borders of the field and allowing better writing. (Capote, incidentally, vigorously maintains that he has never written any fantasy, but apparently he did not return the fat paycheck for reprint rights to "Miriam.")

In short, Browne and Ziff-Davis have gone a long way toward atoning for all their un-illustrious career with only two issues of FANTASTIC, and if they can keep it up I'm all for them. I never dreamed I'd ever say that Ziff-Davis has produced a fine magazine carefully edited, but that it is, and I hope that its success will be little short of fantastic.

. . . AND A REPLY

by Howard Browne

SOME YEARS AGO a Midwestern newspaper, swollen with a sense of its own importance, replied editorially to an attack by another, and smaller, paper by saying, "These jackals grow too bold."

The phrase has a nice Elizabethan ring; and while disclaiming any sense of importance myself, I'll freely admit that the

same line has come to mind upon reading some fanzine articles attacking me and the magazines I edit. Since most of the articles were unrealistic and irresponsible, and since it is axiomatic that only the very young and the very old know everything, I saw no reason for offering a defense.

The same conclusion goes for the article by Mr. Silverberg. However, the editors of fantastic worlds have asked me to reply to it, offering the refreshing innovation of printing my reply in the same issue with the Silverberg piece.

I think the best way to do this is with a paragraph-by-paragraph answer. Since you can call a man illegitimate with one word and force him to use five hundred to prove he's not, the answer may seem tedious by reason of its length. But here are my answers, true and unvarnished:

I have never had the "career-long ambition" to edit any kind of science-fiction magazine. I would much prefer to put out a detective magazine, and before too long I hope to do so. But my preferences are immaterial; my job is to put out good science-fiction and fantasy publications and whatever ability and talent I have go into doing my job well.

I have never "admitted" that Amazing Stories and Fantastic Adventures are the two "poorest professional magazines of the field." To make such an admission, even if I believed it were true (which, emphatically, I do not) would be the sheerest stupidity. Whatever my shortcomings, stupidity is not one of them.

While unaware that "rats and fans" had deserted us, we did learn that Amazing Stories was the largest-selling science-fiction magazine at the time Silverberg speaks of -- a position it still holds.

AT THE TIME plans for the new Amazing were shelved, it was not known just what effect, if any, the Korean situation would have on paper supplies. Rather than chance running into such difficulties before the new format could be firmly established, the project was dropped. Future events showed that the cancellation was not necessary, but we could not know that at the time.

I hate to get crassly commercial but Amazing Stories was never "at the bottom of the field." In fact it led the field in the only way any magazine leads the field -- on sales.

The press release Silverberg mentions not only did not come from the editorial offices of our two stf magazines; it was not even seen by us here until it was released to the public. Consequently my "delusions" are still intact.

Mr. Silverberg's almost ecstatic reaction to the first two issues of FANTASTIC, our new digest-sized publication, is gratifying. But I have no illusions because of it. That segment of fandom which writes most of the letters to editors, puts out fanzines and joins fan clubs is famous for building heroes one day and tearing them down the next -- both with little justification. When this group discovers that the second issue of FANTASTIC contains a long suspense story containing not one bit of fantasy or science, I shall probably be damned as a traitor to the field.

The fact that this story was not put in as a thumb-to-nose gesture will in all likelihood escape them. How many will realize that a magazine so expensive to produce must, if it is to go on, gain readers who do not ordinarily read (and certainly almost never buy) a science-fantasy publication?

For this is something fandom must understand: there are not enough dyed-in-the-wool fans to keep in business the kind of magazine we have made FANTASTIC. It is printed on book paper, illus-

trated by the best artists money can buy, has (beginning with the second issue) a lavish display of color inside, and pays up to 10¢ a word for stories. All this, to get painfully realistic again, costs a great deal of money -- money which, if we are to stay in business, must come back to us bearing a profit.

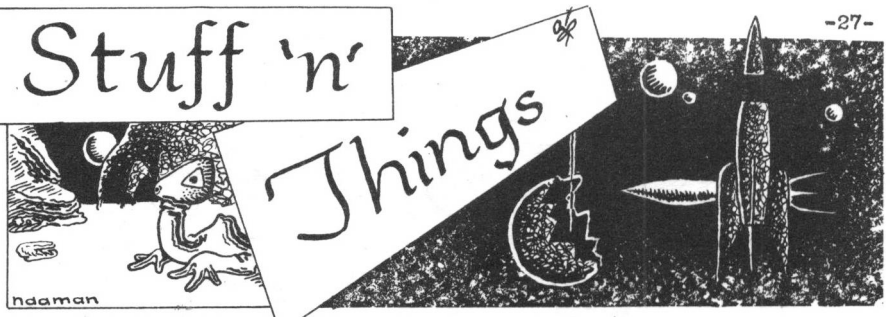
And so we make overtures to another -- and larger -- group of fans: the detective reader. We ask them to join in the fun, to discover that there is another kind of fiction besides detective stories. Let them find out how good science-fantasy can be and they may be won over to becoming devotees of the genre. These, you must understand, are readers whose interest is in good fiction, not in fanzine reviews, letters to the editor, and what the editor of Peon thinks of the present policy of Thrilling Wonder.

Let me say here and now that my thinking is not to convert science-fantasy readers to detective and suspense fiction. Exactly the reverse is true; for FANTASTIC will remain predominately science-fiction and fantasy. But we need new blood, a wider audience, and this, it seems to me, is the way to get it. Will such a plan succeed? I don't know; but I mean to find out!

IN CLOSING, let me again touch on one of the basic facts of life too many fans insist on ignoring: magazines, like bean soup and bicycles, are put out to make money. The more you spend to put them out, the more money you must make to continue putting them out. This must be done in the best possible way to insure that profit. You must take steps to gain the widest possible consumer acceptance. If doing that upsets the Old Guard, then the Old Guard must either adjust or turn to the magazines that do things their way. That's why FANTASTIC will not tell you, the reader, that it is your magazine and please tell us how to run it. We hope to run it for a quarter-million readers -- run it, not as a few letter writers and fan clubs would like, but the way that will induce the greatest possible number to buy it every issue.

We hope sincerely that you will be one of them.

Stuff 'n' Things



From David Bennett and Thomas Purdom, co-chairmen of SOCIETY FOR THE CONQUEST OF SPACE, comes what we think is a noteworthy item:

"We are currently organizing a pressure group (dubbed a Space Travel Lobby by Willy Ley) to work for the establishment of a space station project of major proportions by the United States government.

"By being an overwhelming threat of retaliation for aggression, the station will be able to make war an impossibility. And, by being the first step in the exploration and colonization of space, it will inaugurate a new era in human history, an era to which the last million years will have been but a prologue...

"We can say that we have Willy Ley's support, which should serve us as evidence of our honesty, sincerity, etc. If you are interested in forming a club or in helping as an individual, please write to: DAVID BENNETT and THOMAS PURDOM, SOCIETY FOR THE CONQUEST OF SPACE Building 917, Apartment 13, Bainbridge Village, Maryland.

Tumbling onto our desk the other day was FLYING SAUCER REVIEW, an excellent publication reporting all the latest instances in saucer sightings, et al. A note from Elliot Rockmore, Editor, reads, "Our group is interested in contacting anyone who can help us in our study of flying saucers, and I would appreciate whether you can pass along the names of any science fiction readers and writers who are interested in the subject and can collect and loan all reports they have." Address: P. O. Box 148, Wall Street Station, New York 5.

Most readers of FW will probably be already familiar with PROJECT FAN CLUB -- a quite ambitious plan which includes publication of a booklet titled "How to Form a Science-Fiction Fan Club." Mastermind Dick Clarkson writes, "Publication will be underway about the last of January. As to progress, we have been getting first responses from overseas countries, such as Sweden, Cuba, England and Australia. Publicity is now well launched, and articles coming from this typer are right prolific." Dick's address: 410 Kensington Rd, Baltimore 29, Md.

This is no place to hide the ratings for material in our last issue, but we're cramped for space, and besides we feel a little ornry. They went like this: 1) ARKHAM HOUSE STORY, 2) THE DOOR, 3) THE IMMORTAL GAEL, 4) ALL CREMATED EQUAL, 5) NEW VOICES, 6) THE SOUL SEEKER. Voted the best illustration was Jerri Bullock's pic for ALL CREMATED EQUAL. Second was Jim Bradley's drawing for IN GENERAL.

Keep sending those votes; they determine the amount of payment!

And, in line with the vaudeville axiom of leaving your audience with a laugh, we have a quote from Rory Faulkner of Covina, Calif., concerning Walter Willis, dean of Irish fans and recent visitor to U. S. "Willis is a delightful creature, very quiet and modest, though. Someone asked him what impressed him most in the U. S., and he quite unexpectedly replied: --- not Forry Ackerman, not the Chicago convention, not even Jane Russell, mind you --- but 'Malted Milks!'"

The Wayfaring Strangers

By Wilson Tucker

Illustrated by
JIM BRADLEY

"Pardon me," the stranger said. "Is this Earth?"

CHARLES HORNE slumped on an overturned washtub in his back yard and sulked. He held his face grimly in his hands, dug his bony elbows into his knees and spat on the ground. He tried to imagine a sufficiently unpleasant place into which he could stuff his yapping neighbors. Blast them, blast his wife -- in fact, blast them all. It was a good house and it had been hard to find and he was determined to stay there.

The thin, gangling man must have leaped over the fence or something. Of a sudden he was standing there beside Horne, examining him in curious interest.

"Pardon me," the newcomer said in foggy English. "Is this Earth?"

"No," Horne retorted nastily, "this is Mars."

"Oh my! Are you sure?"

"I guess I know where I live, don't I? This is Mars. Get the hell away from here!"

Horne glimpsed a sudden flash of silver in the waning afternoon sunlight and looked up at his strange visitor. The gangling fellow had taken an egg from his pocket, an egg coated with a metallic silvery substance. The stranger's face was coated with unexpected terror. Swiftly, cradling the silver egg in the palm of his hand, he smashed it into his face. Hand, egg and skinny head vanished in the resultant explosion.

Stunned, Horne stared down at the body now crumpled on his back yard grass.

"WHO WAS IT?" the heavy voice demanded again.

Horne thought these things only happened in the movies. He thought the torturous sessions were nothing but the vivid imaginings of a scriptwriter, cramming drama into screenplay. This was no screenplay -- this one was real. His mouth was dry and his tongue seemed swollen, but they denied him water. His throat, nostrils and eyes burned with the hazy curtain in the room but they continued to blow smoke in his face. Somebody, just beyond the lights, suggestively thumped his palm with a heavy leather object. The room was hot, stale, foul and as black as a witch's heart beyond the close circle of stabbing lights. He closed his eyes and somebody jerked at the roots of his hair.

"Who was it?"

"I don't know, I don't know," Horne cried. "Dammit, I've told you a thousand times -- I never saw him before! I don't know."

"Then why'd you kill him?"

"I didn't kill him, he killed himself."

"Why?"

"How should I know? I never saw him before."

A volcano of smoke erupted in his face. "What did you say to him?"

"Stop that, will you!" Horne coughed and strangled. "All I said was, this is Mars."

"Do you think this is Mars?"

"Of course not!"

"Why'd you say that?"

"I was mad."

"Was he a Martian?"

"I don't know!" Horne wailed.

"Are you a Martian?"

"No!"

"Why'd you want to kill a Martian?"

"I didn't kill a Martian."

"Who did you kill?"

"Nobody."

"Was he your wife's lover?" the voice suggested darkly.

"No, he wasn't my wife's lover--my wife hasn't got a lover."

"How do you know?"

"Oh, rats! Please give me a drink?"

"Do you really want a drink?"

"YES!"

"I'll give you a drink -- I'll give you a whole pitcher of ice-cold lemonade -- if you'll tell me why you killed him."

"I didn't kill him, I didn't kill him!"
"Who did?"
"He killed himself."
"How?"
"With an egg. A silver egg."
"Have you got an egg?"
"No."
"Will you give me one of these eggs?"
"I haven't got an egg -- you know that, you searched my pockets."
"Where'd the egg come from?"
"He took it out of his pocket."
"Did he offer you an egg?"
"Oh hell no!"
"Why not? You were partners, weren't you?"
"I never saw him before!" Horne grasped his throat. "I've got to have some water."
"I've got some ice water here . . ."
"Give me some--!"
"Just answer one question. Just one question, and you can have it all."
"I didn't kill him," Horne moaned.
"Did your wife kill him?"
"Of course not!"
"How do you know?"
"She was in the house all the time."
"She could have shot him from the kitchen."
"She didn't shoot anybody! I've told you -- he killed himself with this egg."
"Why'd he want to do that?"
"Because I said this was Mars."
"Do you think this could be Mars?"
"Now that's silly. This is earth."
"How do you know?"
"I live here, don't I?"
"Why?"
"I don't know!"
"Did he come from Mars?"
"I don't know."
"Where did he come from?"
"I thought he jumped over the fence. If he didn't do that, maybe he fell from the sky or something. I just looked up and there he was -- standing there."
"Didn't he tell you where he came from?"
"No."

"Didn't he offer you a partnership in this egg deal? Didn't he offer to supply you with egg bombs?"

"Oh that's silly."

"Did you quarrel with him?"

"No."

Someone began playing with a light, the brilliant thing just before his eyes. It winked off and on, off and on. He closed his lids to shut it out and an unseen man standing behind him removed another handful of hair. Horne jerked his eyes open. The light winked off, winked on, off, on. In the small silence he could hear the tinkle of ice cubes in a glass. Water was poured back and forth from one glass to another, much of it being spilled on the floor in the process. Rank cigar smoke stung his nostrils.

"Why do you hate your neighbors?"

"They yak all the time," Horne said wearily.

"Why do you hate your wife?"

"I don't."

"Why do you hate Martians?"

"I don't know any Martians."

"You killed one."

"I didn't."

"He said you did."

"That's a lie."

"He'll turn state evidence against you."

"I don't care."

"Do you want to get the jump on him?"

"I don't know how."

"You can confess first -- let him take the rap."

"Confess what?"

"That you killed him."

"I din't kill anybody."

"Okay -- but if he confesses first, you'll get the chair."

"If who confesses?" Horne asked weakly.

"The Martian."

"But he's dead."

"Is he?"

"Sure he is -- right in my back yard."

"So you did kill him!"

"NO!"

"What'll happen to your wife?"

"I don't know."

"Maybe her lover is out at your house right now."

"She hasn't got a lover!"

"Oh, that's right, you killed him, didn't you?"
"No, no, no, no ...."
"Do you believe in Martians?"
"No."
"Then who was that man?"
"How should I know?"
"Why'd you kill a man you didn't know?"
"I didn't kill anybody! This guy just showed up there in the yard -- he pulled an egg out of his pocket and killed himself. I don't know anything about it!"

A SOLICITOUS WIFE and a bored cab driver helped Charles Horne totter up the front steps of his house shortly after dawn. His wife peered nervously from the corners of her eyes to see if the neighbors were watching, acutely aware that the spectacle might give them a bad name.

His throat, lungs and eyes raw from the long night's ordeal, his sanity wavering, Horne drank nearly a bucket of water and promptly made himself sick. He collapsed across the first bed that he found in his path and slept stolidly until noon, arousing then to cautiously drink some more water. It stayed down. Heartened, he sat up, reached mechanically for his cigarettes and then hurled the package from his hand. The air in the room seemed close and stuffy. Horne called loudly for his wife but there was no answer.

He groped his way through the rooms, through the empty kitchen and out into the back yard, seeking fresh, clean air. Carefully he avoided the spot of yesterday's debacle and seated himself on the sweet, green grass, his back turned to the ugly spot and the memory. Horne sucked in huge lungfuls of air and sighed his contentment.

"Pardon me," said a voice in foggy English. "Is this Mars?"

Horne's front teeth involuntarily bit through his lip, bringing blood. "Please go away," he begged.

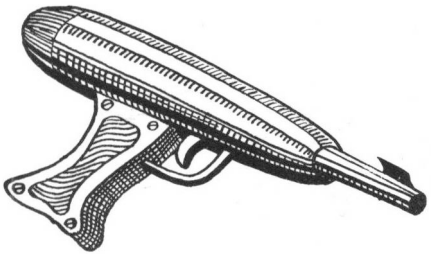
"I must know! Is this Mars?"

"No," Horne answered very slowly, very carefully. "This is not Mars. This is earth."

"Are you sure?" persisted the gaunt stranger.

"I am dead certain," Horne said with growing fright. "This is my house. The neighbors told my wife it was haunted but it's my house and I like it. My house is on earth. This is earth. Now please go away!"

Swiftly the thin, gangling fellow pulled a silver egg from his pocket and smashed it into his own terror-stricken face.



There was one way to make a successful marriage a certainty. The bride merely had to undergo a simple.....

CEREMONY

By J. T. Oliver

Illustrated by Richard Z. Ward

THE DOOR was locked; shades were drawn. The room was dark save for the misty glow of sunlight trying feebly to filter through translucent shades.

There were two women in the room: one old, wrinkled, confident -- the other young, pretty, and frightened.

They sat for awhile in silence, allowing their eyes to grow accustomed to the gloom, the old woman smiling slightly to herself, the girl watching her nervously, face pale.

At last the old woman walked over to the center of the room, knelt, took a piece of chalk from her dress pocket and began to draw a five-pointed star on the carpet. It was mathematically precise, revealing her experience and skill.

When it was completed, she motioned silently to the girl, and they both stepped close to the outline of the chalked figure. The girl was breathing rapidly, obviously terrified. The old woman was still smugly confident.

The old woman said, "Are you ready, my dear?"

A hesitation. "Y--Yes."

"It isn't too late -- you can still back out, you know."

"I ... I want to go through with it."

"Very well. But remember what I've told you. No hyster-

ics, and no arguments. If there's anything he hates --"

"I'll remember. Let's get it over with."

The girl clasped her hands before her and stared intently at the chalked figure on the floor. The other smiled, pleased.

Then the old woman took from her pocket an intricately carved wooden box, black with age and handling. She opened it, took out a pinch of weirdly glowing green powder. Carefully, she sprinkled the powder on the star, stepped back, and began to chant a sing-song spell. The girl listened intently, but couldn't make out the words.

When the old woman finished her chant, there was a moment of silence. The girl moved closer to her companion, parted her lips as if to speak. And then it happened.

WITHOUT WARNING, Satan suddenly appeared inside the drawn star. He appeared as a man, because that is the way women think of him. A handsome, subtly evil man, expensively attired.

The girl gasped, tensed to scream, then caught herself. The old woman spoke:

"I have another for you," she said.

"I see," murmured Satan, smiling. "The usual pact, I suppose?"

"Yes, the same. Her virginity in exchange for your spell."

Satan turned his attention to the girl. He eyed her intensely until she looked away, embarrassed. He seemed pleased.

"Are you ready?" he asked.

"Yes. I ... I think so."

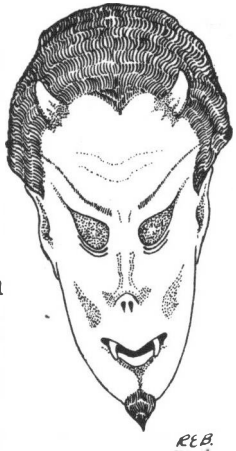
"Then we will go," said Satan, extending a strong, well-manicured hand to draw her into the magic star.

The girl hesitated, shivering. She turned her pretty, frightened face to the old woman. "Go with him? You didn't tell me -- "

The old woman, brisk and business-like, took her firmly by the hand and led her to the star.

"I'm sorry, my dear," she whispered. "I didn't tell you because I was afraid you'd change your mind. It simply can't be done here. You must go with him if you want it to be completely successful. My spell has lasted for more than forty years, and my hus..."

Her voice trailed off into nothingness as the girl, speechless with fright, was drawn into the star-shaped portal. Satan put his arms about her, said an ancient word, and they disappeared.



THE OLD WOMAN sighed and sat down on the edge of the girl's bed. Absent-mindedly, her hands reached out and picked up a large cardboard box. She smiled, removed the lid, and fondled the silky white garment it contained.

For the hundredth time she wondered what would happen if the men ever found out. Would marriage vanish? But it was all for their own good, she rationalized. Look what happened when brides didn't make deals with Satan; they were usually divorced within the year.... But with Satan's magic to help the woman, she never lost her man!

Her reverie was interrupted by the sound

of voices downstairs, and then the tread of heavy masculine footsteps on the stairs. Shortly, there was a knock on the bedroom door.

"What is it?" she called.

"It's me, Herbert," came the reply, muffled by the heavy oak door. "I want to see Kathryn a minute."

"You can't see her now, Herbert. Don't you know it's bad luck to see the bride before the ceremony?"

Herbert mumbled something and then went back downstairs.

The old woman laughed softly and settled back to wait for the girl to return. . . .

Lost Minstrel

By Lilith Lorraine

Lost minstrel of a world more wide
He walks the alien earth,
A god whose worshippers have died
Before he came to birth.

You listen only half-entranced,
And half in breathless dread,
To stately themes the star-folk danced
In cities cold and dead.

The pale imperial city-states,
high pinnacled in Hell
And then, since cold or kindlier fates
Forgot him for a spell.

Where orchid auraed seraphim
Sing by their seas of fire,
At times you hear a holier hymn
Rise from his ancient lyre.

At times you almost realize
That he is not as men,
Until he sings your lyric lies
And lets you dream again.

For should you glimpse the haunted shore
Of his remembering,
He'd have to take the trails once more;
He is an alien thing.

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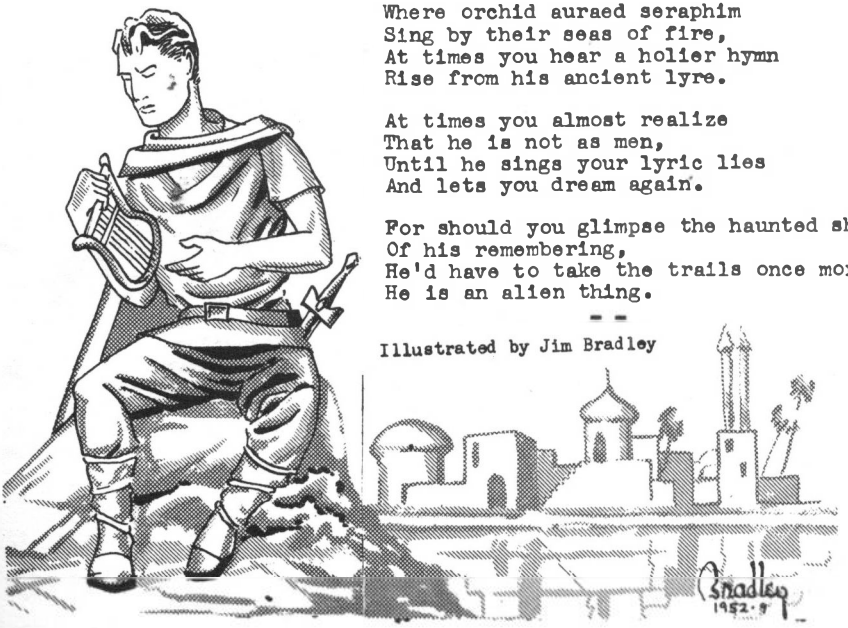
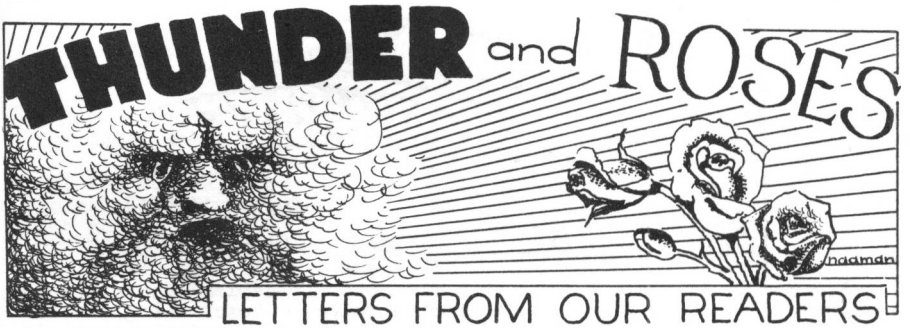
Illustrated by Jim Bradley





ROBERT BLOCH, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

You have put out a most impressive magazine... appearance-wise, art-wise, and contents-wise. Your contributor's lineup would be the envy of several pro-mags. You can and should be proud of the job you've done.

- - -

RUSSELL WATKINS, Box 557, Hq Sq 3650 AFIW, Sampson AFB, N. Y.

As for suggestions, I can only advise more articles slanted toward the collector and better artwork.... Do, by all means, have a letter column. A letter column, in my opinion, is the lifeline of any fanzine... They offer a means of controversy that can't be found in articles or editorials. I found this out in publishing DAWN AND THE IMAGINATIVE COLLECTOR and think it runs true of all fanzines.

- - -

EUGENE DeWEESE, Rochester, Indiana.

You're going to have a letter column? One question: Why? And one hope: That it will be kept short. Very. (Comments? Ed.)

- - -

HENRY MOSKOWITZ, Three Bridges, New Jersey.

"The Arkham House Story" was exceptional. The Thompson photo was astonishing. I rather imagined Derleth to be short, thin, and wearing dark, hornrimmed glasses. Gad! He's good for another thirty or forty years... The Flight of Azrael was good Smith. What more can I say? All Cremated Equal -- What did the title have to do with the story? Otherwise, it was all right.

- - -

DICK CLARKSON, 410 Kensington Rd., Baltimore 29, Md.

The ideal fanzine must have two things... and in this, I'm sure that most fans agree. Those two things are: humor and fan interest. By that last, I mean articles and such for information of fans, etc. ...The ideal fanzine must be directed at actifandom, mainly. But it should be comprehensible to casual fans.

- - -

BILL A. PECK, 1041 W. Agarita, San Antonio, Texas.

I was expecting something great, but the greatness of FW is FANTASTIC! (No reference to the great new pro mag by the same name.) Since all pro mags cost 35¢ now, FW is the best way to spend a quarter, anyday!...I've always meant to ask. If a story published in FW were to be good enough for a pro mag, could the author re-sell to said mag? In other words, does FW release full rights?

(All rights are released, and copies of FW go to all professional editors and anthologists in the field. Ed.)

- - -

PAUL POWLESLAND, 322 North Street, Oneida, N. Y.

Got the first issue of FW. Excellent first issue.... Give your cover artist more room.... and expand your BEHIND THE TYPEWRITER column to include artists; probably people want to know something about your artists, too. (That we will do. Ed.)

SAM SACKETT is a young Nebraskan recently transplanted, with his wife Marjorie, to Southern California where he teaches English and Creative Writing. Last year the Sackett duo increased the nation's population by one (a boy), and we're promised a repeat performance for early in 1953. Sam also acts as Associate Editor of a fanzine.

KRIS NEVILLE was born in 1925 in Carthage, Missouri. He did his share of roaming with the army and Merchant Marine, then settled on Los Angeles as the logical place in which to turn his experiences into fiction. His first sale was to SUPER SCIENCE--a thrilling experience, he says. But the following day the thrill was punctured when an English professor returned one of his compositions with the notation, "You write like an illiterate." Nevertheless, Kris Neville has since then been featured in virtually every stf and fantasy magazine to strain the legs of a newsstand.

The name of WILSON (Bob) TUCKER is the only one which might make us hesitate before saying that Ackerman is the world's No. 1 fan. Ever since we can remember (and we're old enough to know better), his letters, stories and wit have graced the pages of fanzines and prozines alike. For quite a few moons he published his own zine, SCIENCE FICTION NEWSLETTER. In recent years he risked his position as a True Disciple by turning out a number of top-flight detective novels, but strengthened it with his latest book, THE CITY IN THE SEA, published by Rinehart & Co. and reprinted as GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL No. 11.

BOB SILVERBERG is a New York fan, "on the wrong side of six feet, and weight about 165. Entered fandom in 1949 with the first issue of SPACESHIP, still a going concern. A member of SAPS, FAPA, and NFFF. Have sold four items, all to semi-pro magazines. Chief fan activities are publishing, writing for fanzines, and adding to a monstrous magazine collection."

BETSY CURTIS' first published story was "Divine Right," appearing in the Summer, 1950, issue of THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. Editors Boucher and McComas blurbed, "Here's a bright new talent to add to that small group of women who can depict the broadest implications of future sociology and technology through their minute domestic impacts." Now, after scads of more recent appearances, Betsy has become one of the freshest new stars in the field.

J. T. OLIVER writes, "Born in rural Georgia on Oct. 7, 1927. Discovered active fandom about 1947. Since then I have co-edited three or four fanzines and contributed material to numerous others. My favorite hobby is writing, and I now have almost a complete set of rejection slips. Editors have been most co-operative in supplying them."

JERRI BULLOCK is a Hayward, California, artist and writer. She writes, "Being a shy young maiden myself, I don't quite know what to say. About the only thing I can relate is that I'm 23, crazy about science-fiction, crazy about illoing same, crazy about writing same; and crazy about horses. Now, how did they get in here?

"When I'm not drawing, I do quite a bit of riding, attend all the rodeos, horse shows, etc. Would like nothing better than to make a fortune (even a small fortune) on my artwork and to use the rotten lucre to stock a 2 or 3 hundred acre Arab ranch....

"As you've probably guessed, I would like to follow in Finlay's footsteps as a scratchboard fiend. I can never hope to reach his type of perfection (besides, that would be copying his style), but I have hopes of learning a new technique of my own, any year now it looks like."

Miss Bullock offers this thought to accompany her excellent cover drawing:

MAN'S CEASELESS ENDEAVOR THROUGH THE AGES HAS BEEN TO COURT THE STARS AS HE WOULD WOO THE MOST SEDUCTIVE OF WOMEN. YET THEY REMAIN ALOOF AND UNATTAINABLE THROUGH SPACE AND TIME.

HOW LONG MUST MAN WAIT TO FINALLY SEDUCE THIS GLORIOUS VIRGIN, THE UNIVERSE, AND MAKE HER HIS MISTRESS?