

FARRAGO #9



DONN BRAZIER

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ST. LOUIS, MO. 63131

Obtainable for \$1, contribution of art or text, printed LoC, or whim of the editor who is seen preening under the lens of Sam Long at the left.

On a recent visit to the Museum of Science and Natural History, Sam and Mary Long called on the editor, who took that opportunity to throw an arm around Mary. Sam, who calculates ozone concentrations wafting toward Springfield, Ill., from the St. Louis metro area, here measures the responses during the "arm-throwing", meanwhile muttering some choice Esperanto expletives over his faithful camera.

The clipping is from THE GUARDIAN of Aug. 14, 1978, and sent in for the amusement of Burt Libe who, by the way, has just returned from England himself after a visit with the girls (now ladies, of course) who were photographed with the Cottingley fairies and of whom Burt wrote in a past FARRAGO. Thank you, Steve Sneyd for the clip; and, no doubt, FARRAGO will hear further from the energetic Burt Libe and his "tireless quest for truth."

Does anyone want to buy some back issues of TITLE, FARRAGO, or NAME? Don't send money. Send a want list, and I'll send you a bill for postage plus 10¢ per issue mailed. It's my get-rich-scheme.

Just a fairy story

The 70-year-old photograph of the so-called Cottingley fairies was faked, according to a report in the latest issue of New Scientist.

The fairies surrounding a young girl in the picture were held up by string, says the report. Many people, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, have been fooled by the photograph, which was taken by two young girls.

The picture was recently studied by a magician, James Randi. With the help of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, he put it through a computer process that can pick up hidden details.

This "image enhancement" showed up the strips and the fact that the girls had access to two cameras.



You never know what the mailman will deposit in your mailbox and then run like hell....like the card to the right from Rob Chilson. What I like best is a good wish-you-well card from an obvious admirer.

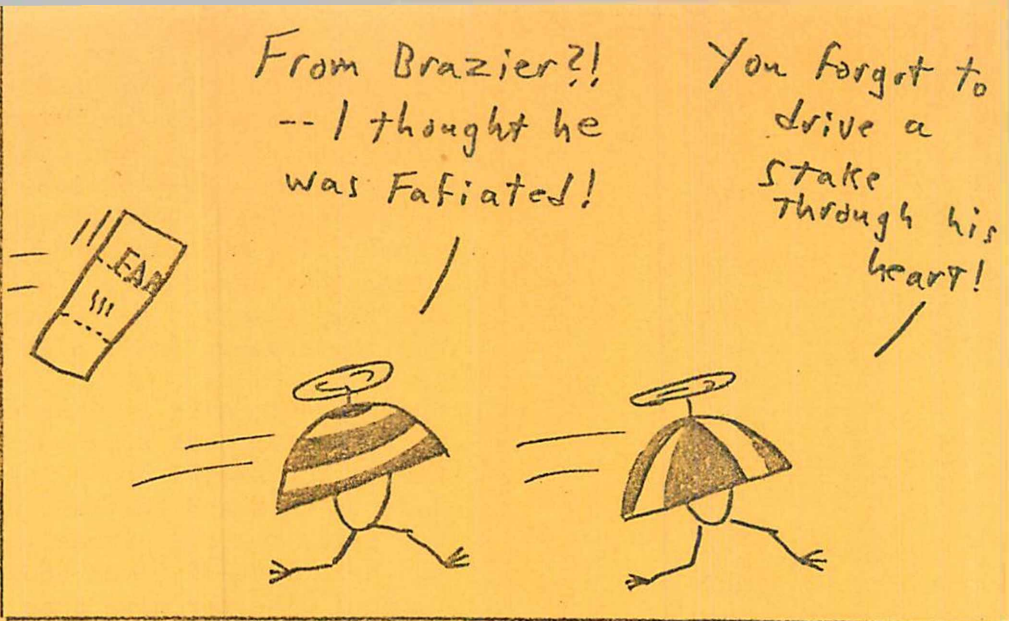
While on the subject of cards...Peter Werner, 907 William-son #2, Madison, WI 53703, is looking for short stories & other

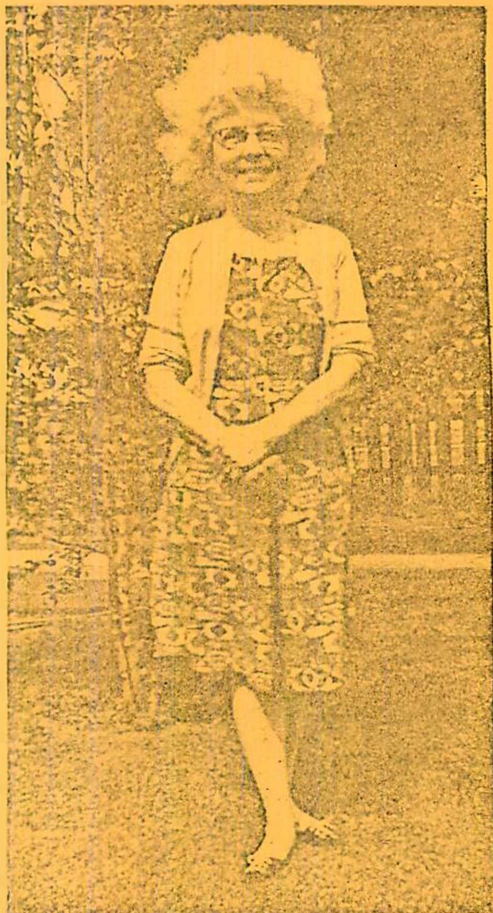
contributions for his new fanzine, PRELUDE TO FANTASY. His first issue arrived the other day, mostly filled with Werner stories, etc. Shows promise, and he has a nominal payment rate for acceptances.

Received a jointly written letter from Burt Libe and Ian Covell whom Burt was visiting briefly in England. Burt says, "I'm really here at the ol' 2 Copgrove Close. Had a hell of a time finding his house. You see, they don't bother to put signs on the streets here in Middlesbrough." Ian then adds to the letter: "my god, was he really here? four hours only. very committed man, fast-moving. we met very easily, talked easier, and parted lingeringly."

So, two pictures I selected of the 6 sent: Ian Covell & the Copgrove kind of house where Ian lives.

Most readers approved of the path toward TITLE that FARRAGO is taking. I guess it's a Brazierizing process.





MY MOTHER CAME FROM SPACE! While going through boxes of old photographs on my usual October trip to Mankato, Minnesota, I found the one to the left. I was very interested in getting some pictures of ancestors for a "Family Tree" book I'm starting. Thus my shock in discovering that my mother came from space. "What planet?" I asked her, "Venus, Mars, Barnard's, where?" She simply smiled secretively and uttered, "Splrfsk!" All these years and I didn't know!

Speaking of "hair", I'm sure that all magnificent fmz editors will tear some out to find art credits listed here. You see, I don't lay out a zine head to tail; I Xerox this and that and when there's enough I put the pages together (sometimes pages are left over for the next issue). Even though the zine is not yet complete I'd better give some credits before I've run out of space:

Front Cover by Sheryl Birkhead; Back by Ken Hahn.
The Guitar-playing Bird by Ken Hahn
Crab Nebula illos by Hank Heath

Is there anything I should say about the contents of this issue? As Gene Wolfer remarked once, in substance: "A fanzine editor ought to stop to reflect." Well, Gene, I've reflected, and I can't think of a thing I've forgotten. Those may be some famous last words!

Tom Staicar, 2288 Hardyke Court, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, with fiction in this issue writes: "I have been fortunate this year to have had seven articles accepted (five published so far) ranging from SF book reviews to an article in the JEWISH NEWS. But FARRAGO will be the first publication to print any fiction by me; it means a lot to me and I thank you." Tom sent some Xeroxes. "Visions of Space Aliens" is in STARFORCE; "Black Hole Shuttle" is in THE HEFLEY REPORT.

At my desk I have something called DATRIX II: HIGH FREQUENCY WORD LIST. It is a list of words that have occurred in doctoral dissertation titles 400 times or more. Since the word "Study" occurred 51,662 times, perhaps the total population surveyed was over 100,000. Anyway, there are a number of ways this idea could be used in studying SF and fandom. What would be the frequency count for words in SF novels, in SF stories? What would be the count for fanzine stuff? (There are no grants available from FARRAGO for such studies.)

As far as I know the following idea is original with me: with no regard to the facts of cloning, one could make up jokes based on the part of the body from which a clone was developed. Example: From a cell in the nose of the donor the clone would be a little snot. Or, from a cell in the buttocks the clone would suffer in many cases from lead poisoning. Etc. FARRAGO may possibly print your jokes. Jokes, he says!

THE SENSIBLE ANALYZER: We're not ready for a lot of questions this time; there'll probably be plenty of carryover from commenthooks of this issue. But I'm interested in this: 1) Judging just the timbre or sound quality of musical instruments, what is your favorite? 2) In music, generally speaking, do you like low-pitched tones or high-pitched? 3) Do you prefer the vocal sound or the instrumental sound of recorded music (recorded to eliminate the stage excitement of a performer). 4) In general do you like slow-tempo or fast-tempo?

*Until about
March/April -
Drew*

A. MERRITT: A PERSONAL REAPPRAISAL

BY BEN INDICK

Several years ago I was asked to do such an essay (as you find here) by the editors of the then-active fanzine, T.A.D., John J. Pierce and Paul Walker. I was going to do a series of similar reappraisals including other old favorites of my youth: Rohmer, Asimov, Hall, HPL, etc. The zine folded; Paul and John had other things coming up with GALAXY magazine. So I used this piece in the HPL Necronomicon APA. And now in my IBID for the Esoteric Order of Dagon. I never did write the follow-up essays, and no longer plan to. I have quite dissociated myself with fan activities. -- Ben Indick, IBID XXIII

The words (as you find here) were added by FARRAGO's editor who has been given permission by Ben to reprint the essay; regretfully I will accept Ben's decision to leave Fandom for the world of professional playwrighting and can only hope that his "good voice" (and red-head) sometime return to give us pleasure. -- Donn Brazier, Sept. 26, 1978

Harry James, the Andrews Sisters, Judy Garland, Mickey Rooney, draftees. 1940. A young fan spends a precious dime in a back issues shop for a coverless pulp magazine. The contents seem to promote wonders, although the authors are all strange to him: THE MOON METAL by Garrett P. Serviss, ALMOST IMMORTAL by Austin Hall, THE CONQUEST OF THE MOONPOOL by A. Merritt.

The copyright dates indicate they are all reprints, stories at least a quarter century old and even older, but the vivid and intricate illustrations by Virgil Finlay, an artist as yet unknown to the fan, offer a vision of marvels beyond those of such action pulps as he has known: the intrepid Shadow, the Spider, not to deny G-8 and his World War I flying aces. FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES is the name of the pulp, as well as its promise.

At 16, self-conscious, neither able nor willing to be part of the cliques his friends have formed, comfortable at home with close brothers, literature has become his avenue to the world, and fantasy the chosen highway. Wide-eyed with wonder, he reads of Lakla, of Larry O'Keefe, of the dread Shining One. He has entered the world of A. Merritt. What a shock to discover the engrossing story is only the first of six parts, and already six months in print! By the time

all six have been found, each part has been read a dozen times and the effervescent bubbles and dots of Finlay explored innumerable times. Love, the author proves, is greater than Fear, and the Shining One is defeated; not so this reader, who anxiously seeks other marvels by the writer.

It is a period when fantastic fiction is to be found primarily on newsstands in the many pulp magazines. None, however, rivals FFM with its prize star, Merritt. And public libraries, after Wells, Haggard, Verne, Balmer and Wylie, seem to offer the uninitiated fan little else. Yet he discovers a copy of Merritt's DWELLERS IN THE MIRAGE, and reads with excitement and reddened cheeks of the bare-breasted Witch Woman and her equally unclad warrior maidens. However, FFM continues to reprint the stories of his new favorite. When they appear, he hoards them, to savor their pleasures; rarely do they fail to satisfy -- a cornucopia of fantastic imagery.

Benny Goodman, Peggy Lee, Frank Sinatra, the Paramount on Times Square and shrieking bobby-soxers, military service imminent. 1943. Nearly all the major works of A. Merritt have now been reprinted in FFM, and THE SHIP OF ISHTAR is promised. But the sale of the Munsey magazines produces an editorial change, and reprints are prohibited. Writers rejoice, but dismayed fans bewail the loss of an awaited treasure. Unexpectedly, however, a new source of Merritt appears: the MURDER MYSTERY MONTHLY series of Avon paperbacks. SEVEN FOOTPRINTS TO SATAN leads it off. A disappointed fan discovers it is not a fantasy. He will wait out many years before SHIP appears. Life intervenes - military service, much traveling, tragedy at home in the loss of a beloved brother - and the stories, by now all read, slip into the past.

The world has many avenues, and we all travel whichever way we can, by choice or drift. We win and lose, and we live. And the past is not forgotten, but it is filed away with all the other bills and receipts we accumulate. Bob Dylan, Andrew Wyeth, Beverly Sills, Mars explorations, Jimmy Carter. 1976. To reopen that file drawer and reread and reconsider is not a simple matter, for it contains also those many years. Rereading is an examination of one's earlier self, of dreams, hopes, successes and failures. So much, indeed, was the fiction of A. Merritt part of life itself to one reader.

Abraham Merritt's fiction writing career spanned 25 years, during which the busy editor of THE AMERICAN WEEKLY, a Hearst newspaper chain Sunday supplement, wrote eight novels and a dozen short stories.

Born in Beverly, N.J., in 1884, Merritt had hoped to study law; inadequate finances turned him into journalism. At age 19 he was a reporter for the PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER. Here he chanced to see what importantly-placed others desired him to forget; he was persuaded to accept a free year in Mexico and Central America, in lieu of money, and the wonders he saw in those exotic climes became integral to his thinking and writing. Folklore and legend would be a lifetime preoccupation. Returning home, his talent brought him a position as night city editor and, in 1912, a position with the far-flung Hearst enterprises. Eventually he became assistant editor and finally full editor of THE AMERICAN WEEKLY. This was no simple rotogravure section, but a full newspaper-size magazine with varied content. One still recalls its pseudo-scientific articles, as well as its genuine science fiction, such as John Hawkins' "The Ark of Fire", illustrated by an artist Merritt liked, the young Virgil Finlay.*

* FARRAGO's editor, in his first fannish period that began in 1934, remembers clipping and saving, not the stories that appeared in the WEEKLY, but the fantastic - in two senses - illustrations of Virgil Finlay. At that time your editor knew absolutely nothing of A. Merritt's editorship of the marvelous WEEKLY and very little of Merritt's fiction-- a development that came along with FFM.

His busy schedule left little enough time for writing fiction but, perhaps to allow his fertile imagination room to roam, Merritt wrote as often as time and energy would permit. If his total accomplishment was relatively small, it was compensated by the fanatical devotion of a legion of readers. All the novels would reach hard-cover publication during his lifetime, with one posthumous exception. At least several of the titles remained in print continuously, and there is a resurgence in paperback today.

For one fan, grown older, how does the corpus of the work appear today -- against many other books read, after Tolkien and a new and undreamed of popularity for the work of Lovecraft and Howard, after the sensuality which fascinated Merritt but which he could not freely express has become an accepted part of fiction?

"Through the Dragon Glass," which appeared in Munsey's ALL-STORY WEEKLY in 1917, was his first published story, and in it was already delineated the type of romantic adventure he would exploit in his later work: a brave hero, a beautiful heroine, in a fantastic world, with an ornate, adjectival prose incorporating references to obscure legends. To lend the story relevance to ourselves, it is narrated within a New York City apartment. This is one of the author's favorite devices. Time after time, as in BURN WITCH BURN, SEVEN FOOTPRINTS TO SATAN, CREEP SHADOW, and THE SHIP OF ISHTAR, he compares by inference the reality of New York (and it sparkles for us with the glitter of the photographs of yesteryear when the city was gay and glamorous) with his fantasy worlds.

As was common in magazine fiction of the day, and as he would often do in later work, Merritt paved the way for a sequel. In this instance, however, it never appeared. The mystery of the world behind the mirror ringed by bejeweled dragons remains untold; still, it is an enchanting bit of *Chinoiserie* fantasy, indebted to a degree to the works of Robert W. Chambers, whom Merritt obviously admired and whose effect would also be felt in "Three Lines of Old French" and CREEP SHADOW. The promise of his debut was amply shown in his second story, "The People of the Pit".

This remarkable horror tale (1918), set in an Alaskan chasm (presaging his much later novel, DWELLERS IN THE MIRAGE) owes nothing to anyone, and may indeed have influenced the yet professionally unpublished H.P. Lovecraft (an ARGOSY reader) with its hints of non-human, tentacled, god-like creatures. Fans of the magazine were by now aware of Merritt, but his next story would exceed both others in popularity and rival that of another comparatively new writer, Edgar Rice Burroughs. "The Moon Pool" (1918) was an instant success, and has remained one of his most popular stories. Quickly enlarged in its novel-length sequel, THE CONQUEST OF THE MOON POOL, a pattern was set in this neo-Burroughs-Haggard fantastic adventure for much of his later work: a lost race in an exotic, far-away setting; a beautiful heroine and a beautiful villainess. To one degree or another, this cast of characters would appear generically in THE SHIP OF ISHTAR, "The Snake Mother", DWELLERS IN THE MIRAGE and CREEP SHADOW. A supplementary cast of imaginative characters would also appear: frog men, ancient semi-godlike beings, invisible serpents, etc. The debt to Burroughs and his earlier Martian novels is clear, and even the narrative style is similar, the action swinging back and forth from one character to another in continual movement.

Today, the novel is betrayed by its period. One may forgive the dependence of a wholly non-human creature upon a woman; the Shining One seems almost to be a pet of Yolara, just as in a later novel the metal emperor dotes on his human Norhala. (But we have our pets too, dogs and cats, and may be uncertain which of us is the pet!) And we may smile at the stereotypical Irish hero and German villain (in book form, the latter became a Russian as the author expressed his distaste for things Bolshevik!). However, the characterization is shallow and dependent on authorial *dictat* rather than true development. There is no shading, no growth. Lakla is wholly good and Yolara entirely evil. In the late and post-Victorian sensibility, evil was likely to mean power-lust or sexual desire. In this context, true, un-

selfish Love could finally suffice to weaken an enemy to its destruction - which is, indeed, the climax of the novel.

If the novel does not have our contemporary hero, with his self-doubts in a hostile universe, there is nevertheless a hint of it - a hint that is, interestingly, characteristic of many of his climaxes. This is that the villain is not defeated directly by the hero himself; for all his grit and daring, he is more often a bystander at that moment while other agencies as fantastic as the villain perform the task. Thus, the grieving Silent Ones in *THE MOON POOL*, a short circuit in *THE METAL MONSTER*, the Snake Mother in *THE FACE IN THE ABYSS*, a stubborn doll in *BURN WITCH BURN*, the elemental powers of the sea in *CREEP SHADOW*. One wonders at the reluctance of the author, having brought his hero through numerous episodes of personal bravery, to include the final element of the pulp adventure hero. It is as though no man is capable of completely dominating his circumstances and must ultimately need help. Underlying this, the climaxes often have tragic elements: the hero and the heroine have vanished at the end of *THE MOON POOL*; all the beloved friends of the hero of *DWELLERS* are lost and he must return home alone; the hero of *ISHTAR*, at the moment of his triumph, is found dead. Even when the protagonist escapes death, the "happy ending" of fairy tales is absent; their experiences have singed the heroes of *CREEP SHADOW* and "The Woman of the Woods". Thus, if there is depth and development in characterization, it is at the climax, and in the character of the hero alone.

A wistful World War I romance, "Three Lines of Old French", appeared after the *MOON POOL* stories in 1919, depicting love as salvation from despair, a sentimental balm to those who had suffered loss in the war.

From this, Merritt turned to a difficult new idea in a novel which would surely be his least popular, and which would bedevil him over many years into several rewritings. It must have taken courage for the editor of *ARGOSY*, Bob Davis, a knowledgeable man who had developed an all-star stable of writers for a pulp, to print the nearly abstract *THE METAL MONSTER* in 1920. It is almost wholly expository, with the protagonists witnessing rather than causing the climactic events. Whatever happens directly to them, such as kidnapping by latter-day descendents of Alexander's Macedonian troops, is incidental, and obviously inserted for the sake of some action. Nevertheless, for a reader willing to forego the author's usual, if beloved, mannerisms, it is a remarkably successful effort to describe an utterly non-human, non-hydrocarbon based form of life. The story opens in an uncharacteristically leisurely manner as Merritt philosophizes for several pages about the possibilities of other forms of life evolving simultaneously with our own. His interest in popular science perhaps led to this theme; indeed, he prided himself on his scientific accuracy (even if it was of the journalistic sort) and he is never loath to stop the action altogether while he discusses, if only in a footnote, a reference to a text or an article which will lend credence to a fantastic event.

Here at least this preoccupation makes for an ultimately rewarding book; Merritt's own detachment is no more harmful than the discursory opening of a Lovecraft story to the admirer of the latter. The confusion which a young reader felt gives way now to admiration at an unusual handling of a novel subject. And, at least, while *THE METAL MONSTER* retains the human pet female, it eschews the beautiful villainess.

Merritt was quite sensitive to reader response, and if his abstruse, science fictional novel received brickbats and cries of dismay, he returned emphatically to the desired style in a novella, *THE FACE IN THE ABYSS* (1923). Here he revels in the hidden mountains of Peru, with greedy adventurers, a beautiful and exotic heroine from a secret land (which would appear only in the sequel), and even some pint-sized dinosaurs, whose full-sized version Conan Doyle had placed in South America a decade earlier in *THE LOST WORLD*. The heroine is occasionally threatened with that "fate worse than death" so beloved to Burroughs; there are invisible flying serpents which emit "elfin" sounds ("elfin" is to Merritt as "eldritch" is to Lovecraft). The story is no mere romp, however; the elements are very well tied together and lead to

a climax which is at the heart of Merritt's basic morality: all must test their moral strength against their baser instincts of greed and lust. Nowhere in his writing is the test more direct than when these men behold the awesome Face, and within it, their own souls. Significantly, none passes the test, although the hero is saved by the all-powerful Snake Mother. Like THE MOON POOL, the story is set up for a sequel; Merritt provided it, but he made his readers wait seven years.

There were intervening stories, which will be discussed later. When THE SNAKE MOTHER appeared in 1930, it was a full-fledged novel. Apart from the original subsidiary characters, who had long since flowed as golden droplets into the Abyss, the same leads were retained, with a host of new companions. The story moved directly into the hidden land hinted at previously, with a number of science fiction elements hinted at previously: immortal people who are bored and live in dreams, creatures which have been engineered by men into half-beast and half-human, hints of extraterrestrial origin for the serpent people of whom the Snake Mother herself is the last, mysterious super-machinery and a culture which, in spite of its scientific advancements, is prone to Roman-like entertainments in a vast arena. That science fiction should be a part of Merritt is, as has been noted, hardly unusual. Furthermore, it was so obvious that Hugo Gernsback had no qualms about reprinting several of his stories in AMAZING STORIES.

THE SNAKE MOTHER is a robust adventure, its elements neatly meshed, and the morality of the novella is fully elaborated in Merritt's superb shadow-villain, the very incarnation of power-lusting evil -- Nimir. The scenes in which Nimir attempts to wheedle the loan of his body from Graydon, the hero, are among the author's finest. In contrast, Adana, the serpent woman, is equally fascinating: she possesses the sweetness of a gentle grandmother, the firmness of a wise schoolmarm and, in spite of her scaly body and a face that may be serpentine, a sensuality more affecting than that of the lissome heroine. (It should be noted that the latter's ivory body, like those bodies in other Merritt novels and innumerable pulp fiction of the time, never hides any of its voluptuous curves through the clinging gossamer robes which she and her legion of sisters invariably wore, and the authors all remind us of this fact.) A slambang ending is only partially vitiated by pseudoscientific explanations, and a fine bellicose attitude of the hero toward the outside world he has renounced is regrettably eliminated in the hard-cover version. (The novella and sequel were published together under the title of the former as THE FACE IN THE ABYSS.)

While readers were impatiently awaiting this sequel, another novel followed which would later be voted the finest fantasy work in ARGOSY's history: THE SHIP OF ISHTAR, 1924. Its fantasy is as brilliant as the jewels the author continually uses as a metaphor, its episodes dazzlingly creative as John Kenton veers back and forth between the reality of New York and the poetic beauty of a ship suspended in time.

It is a very Burroughsian device for the hero to *wish* himself backward in space and time to the deck of the ship which, sculpture-like, rests on a block of stone in his apartment. In later Merritt novels the hero would not traverse Time, but would be identified with previous incarnations. Kenton skips back and forth between our time and the suspended eternity of the ship, often against his will, manipulated by the gods who control its destiny. Here the author is content to ride with sheer fantasy, and one lone "scientific" interruption. Further, as the ship is already immersed in Babylonian mythology, there is an absence of the usual sprinkling of references to legends of other origins. The writing is quasi-poetic with a feeling for the epic: "Said the Phrygian, low..." "Forward they ran..." "Kenton, my name..." "Of green upon it there was none..." Daringly, much of the novel is set on the isolated ship on an endless, empty ocean, with a group of well-depicted if one-dimensional characters (having lived thousands of years, they could hardly be expected to change!). In one of his most famous scenes, Merritt counters the threat of a horde of armed soldiers with a multitude of bubbles, each

bearing a beautiful, nude woman; the women embrace the soldiers to their mutual doom. Ultimately, he leaves the ship for action ashore, but his invention is such that the pace never flags. And for once the romance of the lovers, consummated aboard the ship, has the warmth and tenderness of genuine love. For many devotees the tale of the precious ship, embedded in its sea of lapis lazuli, is the essence of fantasy itself, and their favorite work in the Merritt canon.

Still biding his time before sequelling the haunting FACE, the author turned in 1927 to straight mystery, and made an Arabian Nights land of New York in SEVEN FOOT-PRINTS TO SATAN. Popular in print, it was also a silent film. The writing assumed a crisper quality than had that of his fantasies. The tale owes much to the tradition of Fu Manchu, although the villain, who presumptuously calls himself Satan, is free of any ethnic bias. The conceit of the seven glowing footsteps of Buddha, which offer a challenger either wealth or servitude, is one of Merritt's most intriguing; however, all the characters without exception, from the Cockney friend of the hero to the pretty sweetheart (the intended mother of Satan's children, naturally) and the astonished hero himself, are clichés. The story, nevertheless, is fun; though far-fetched, it is no more or less substantial than any mystery-intrigue story of the era.

Returning to fantasy in 1931, Merritt wrote DWELLERS IN THE MIRAGE, a novel that would rank among his most popular. It exploits not only reincarnation, but an extra-terrestrial monster-god. "The People of the Pit" as a possible influence on Lovecraft has already been mentioned; in 1928, the latter's "The Call of Cthulhu" was his first clear expression of his Mythos in which potent beings could be summoned by humans who knew the appropriate rituals. Lovecraft uses ancient books as sources of such hazardous knowledge; Merritt offers no such esoteric titles as the NECRONOMICON, nor is his Kraken-god, Khalk'ru, precisely the equivalent of Cthulhu. There are, however, physical if not quite metaphysical similarities: the monster assumes a multi-tentacled form not unlike Lovecraft's, and comes from outer space in response to a summons. In the larger sense, though, it is not a specific personage like the creatures of Lovecraft. In a characteristic aside, Merritt hints that Khalk'ru is an aspect of the Universe itself, the ultimate Chaos which destroys Life, a sort of literal and visible entropy. Moreover, the shape of the being is dictated by the choice of its worshippers. On the other hand, a preliminary letter in ARGOSY detailed the widespread representations of the Kraken that Merritt had seen in his extensive expeditions. Since Merritt and Lovecraft admired each other's work, and were to meet in 1934, one may suspect a debt to the Master from Providence. Merritt was to be similarly indebted in his final novel, CREEP SHADOW, 1934.

DWELLERS IN THE MIRAGE, apart from the image of the terrifying Kraken, is not at all Lovecraftian or weird, however; it is a typical adventure, replete with action, a swaggering if uncertain hero, beautiful women and exotic locales which shift from the far Gobi Desert to a lush valley hidden in a perpetual mirage-like fog in Alaska.

Four decades after its writing, the novel offers a blend of its author's best and worst. The good and evil aspects of the human psyche are again personified in his women. But 15 years after THE MOON POOL, his feelings are ambivalent and Lur, the darker vision (if lighter in complexion than the angelic Evalie) is not the cardboard figure of Yolara. She is real enough but we must regret the conventions of the time that prevented his developing her further. Warrior, witch, suspicious and selfish yet generous, her very name betrays the author's attitude toward her. Lur! Beloved Lur! We remember her from all those vanished years, and all she seemed to promise. But if Lur can never grow older, we must. We discover her to be rooted in adventure fantasy of the old tradition, a creation of the pulp thirties, and one can see her, hair braided in Valkyrie coif, scarlet lips set in a "square" of hatred, "uplifted breast" bare (but was breast ever so unmoving?).

She offers the hero love, and gives it, although in his pride he believes he has taken it; but in this finest, if flawed, of his tragic heroines, how we would like

to see Merritt freed of restrictions, to find within her and express the deep hunger and even lonely fear which her stereotyped hunting companions cannot satisfy. Something of this escapes in her pensive love for the haunting Lake of the Ghosts; more is revealed as she lies dying. Lief/Dwayanu, the hero torn between his modern self and a millenia-old incarnation, loving two women, turns to her: "The Witch-Woman looked up at me. Her eyes were soft and her mouth had lost all cruelty. It was tender. She smiled at me. 'I wish you had never come, Yellow-Hair!'" We recall Edward Arlington Robinson's Tristram and his two Iseults, and his passion and despair; such is needed here, rather than facile description and bravado.

Perhaps it is the voracious nature of the reader to demand all; yet a writer can hardly satisfy all tastes, nor can he predict tastes of generations yet to come or readers grown old. Ultimately, and as Merritt often averred, he must write to please himself.

He had also to please his editor. Merritt, who wrote little considering his certain and well-compensated salability, was chagrined when his editor demanded a happy ending to the novel. In opposition to his own conception, he accommodated the wish and the hardcover version, with a slight change in words, followed suit: Lur must die, and something in the hero with her, but Evalie could live -- to follow her lover out of the Mirage... and become a docile housewife?

The final word was the author's. More than a decade later, in the FANTASTIC NOVELS magazine reprint, Merritt at last had his own way, and the novel transcended its own weaknesses. The hero must lose both visions of Woman simultaneously; Love dies, but is not forgotten. In his beautiful and memorable final paragraph, Lief/Dwayanu leaving the hidden land, bitterness in his heart, recalls: "Ai! Dark Evalie of the Little People! Ai! Lur -- Witch-Woman! I see you lying there, smiling with lips grown tender -- the white wolf's head upon your breast! And Dwayanu lives still within me!"

In an abrupt switch, Merritt went a step further in the direct style of SEVEN FOOT-PRINTS. BURN, WITCH, BURN, appearing later in the same year as DWELLERS, is nearly unadorned, all those words that are part of the Merritt-lover's vocabulary -- "elfin", "corruscating", "opalescent" -- absent. Narrated by a physician, it is spare and direct, so tightly constructed that he does not have to introduce his villainess until three quarters of the way through the novel. When he does, however, she is unique. Grossly fat, hair growing on her lip, repellant, her personality lurks within her brilliant eyes (all Merritt's characters speak volumes with their eyes!). Madame Mandilip is an unlikely but worthy successor to his gallery of females and, indeed, he hints she could appear ravishingly beautiful if she so wished. The story is a tour de force, marred only by some stage-Irish accents he grants a New York policeman. The book was filmed later as DEVIL DOLL, but Madame Mandilip suffered quite a change when she became Lionel Barrymore! Merritt's own title was used even later for a filmed version of Fritz Leiber's CONJURE WIFE, an excellent novel with an already excellent title.

There had been several short stories in the intervening years, two written generously for fan publications, subsequently revised and printed in science fiction pulps, "The Drone Man" and "The Rhythm of the Spheres". In 1926, after ARGOSY had unaccountably rejected it, he sold what he later termed his only "perfect" story: "The Woman of the Wood" to WEIRD TALES. It is an excellent tale, somewhat in the pensive post-war mood of "Three Lines of Old French". His ability in the short story length is considerable, and one may regret that he did not do more such. A somewhat extraneous episode in THE SHIP OF ISHTAR, dealing with the King of the Two Deaths, a fascinating character otherwise quite out of the novel's plot, is superb. The author also left several incomplete stories and fragments after his death, two of which, "The Fox Woman" and "The Black Wheel", were later completed as novels by the artist Hannes Bok. The former can stand alone, and was so published by Avon in a paperback collection of all his short stories. But neither is the quality of

his completed work. Always a busy man, finicky about his fiction, Merritt was a man of many hats, and when writing and editing proved trying, he could gladly duck down to a second home in Florida. Here he shared some 20 acres with "pelicans, cranes and herons, porpoises, sharks, cardinals and mocking birds and extremely large and hairy spiders." His favorite hobby was raising bees. Because it was so hard to please himself, he said, he wrote so little. However, to the end he toyed with the idea of "grabbing family and typewriter under arms and migrating to the key and writing again."

CREEP, SHADOW, his final novel, appeared in 1934. It has a few holdover characters from BURN WITCH BURN but is otherwise dissimilar in design. It is written in the fuller fantasy style of his earlier work, but is free of the signature trademarks so often present. Like DWELLERS, it has a hero aware of a previous existence; but in this case the sense of reincarnation is shared by the evil heroine, the fascinating Dahut, the Demoiselle de Keradel D'Ys, and her father as well! Dahut lacks something of the intensity of Lur, but she is a realistic witch, whether over cocktails in a New York apartment or on a Long Island estate converted to a representation on ancient Ys on the shore of Brittany. At either end of the millennial bridge, Dahut is a credible snarer of the shadows of men. Unlike Lur, she is saddled with an aggressive and ambitious father, and a past in which they, and the hero, mingled tragically; as in Greek drama, they are fated to relive their roles. Merritt employs a Khalk'ru-like Lovecraftian monster-god here too, "The Gatherer in the Cairn," although it would seem this time more susceptible to human ambition as the father, with its powerful aid, plans to become ruler of Earth. The novel is swiftly paced, and White Dahut, "the Shadow's Queen," is a worthy finale to the portrait gallery of women good and evil the author loved.

It is more than half a century since Herndon vanished into the Dragon Glass, but Merritt's work continues to be read. Avon Books advertises "over five million books sold," and SEVEN FOOTPRINTS TO SATAN and DWELLERS IN THE MIRAGE are back in print with THE SHIP OF ISHTAR soon to follow, graced by a cover in which Stephen Fabian must challenge Virgil Finlay. Colliers has reissued THE MOON POOL in paperback, and Hyperion Press, in 1974, offered THE METAL MONSTER in hardcover as well as paperback. The rest will surely follow.

We cannot bring back the emotion of a past moment, with all it gave us to dream on: bold women, clinging heroines, daring heroes, scenes of bold fantasy. Rereading, we sense exasperation with over-stylized tricks, cliff-hanging pulp jumps, endless pace-killing references to legends which no longer seem exotically beautiful, scientific references that were dubious even at the time, women whose beauty is as dated as the beauties of Mucha, Gibson and Flagg, or the models who stare coldly from HARPER'S BAZAAR and VOGUE; dark, sneering villains and heroes who were incapable of dealing successfully with their own period. There is not the dramatic intensity and crushing beauty of a Tolkien, nor the fragmented, grotesque vision of a Peake, nor the cold and epic grandeur of an Eddison.

....And yet, the man who was a boy who wrote a plaintive letter to his beloved A.Merritt, imploring him to do more writing, still treasures his courteous reply hoping he would be able to devote himself to completing two stories, "one of them as probably the best of any." The letter was written April 25, 1943; on August 20 of that same year, Merritt died in Florida, aged 59.

For all his faults, and whatever debts he owed to other writers, he left behind a body of stories unique in fantasy. Ai Evalie! Ai Dahut! Ai Santhu! Ai Adana! Ai Lur! And A. Merritt is still the Lord of Fantasy!

FIN

Dylan Sets Major Tour for States

New York - Bob Dylan's longest and most on-going tour begins at the Civic Center in Augusta, Maine on Sept. 15.

The three-month schedule will run through Dec. 16 at the Hollywood Sportatorium in Florida.

For the 65 concerts, the band will be the same as on Dylan's "Street Legal" album on Columbia Records and include



three female back-up singers.

Tour dates in Tour Guide

T H E C O L L E C T O R

T O M S T A I C A R

This story is based on some actual events. Dylan and Hammond did meet at the Village night spot called Gerde's Folk City in 1961. Dylan actually played at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor (but not that year) before he became a star. I am 32 years old and when I was in high school and college I was among the fans going wild over the first two Dylan albums. I stayed a fan for years. I saw him on his second concert tour (all folk) and his third and fourth (first electric music ones). I then saw him on the "After the Flood" tour. Now I don't care for Dylan at all. -- Tom Staicar, September 14, 1978.

Jim Allen checked his watch again as he hurried down the crowded sidewalk. One reason was that his shiny new 1961 Chevrolet was due back at the rental office in three hours or they'd charge him for another full day. The other reason was that he always checked his watch regularly. In his line of work it had to become a habit.

For a full thirty minutes he wove his way through the Ann Arbor football traffic jam. Finally he made his way through the center of the city and got to the car rental office. He'd have just enough time to have supper.

He returned the car. He wouldn't need it anyway now that his red 1960 Thunderbird convertible was safely parked in front of the motel. He'd need that Thunderbird tonight but wouldn't be doing any driving in it.

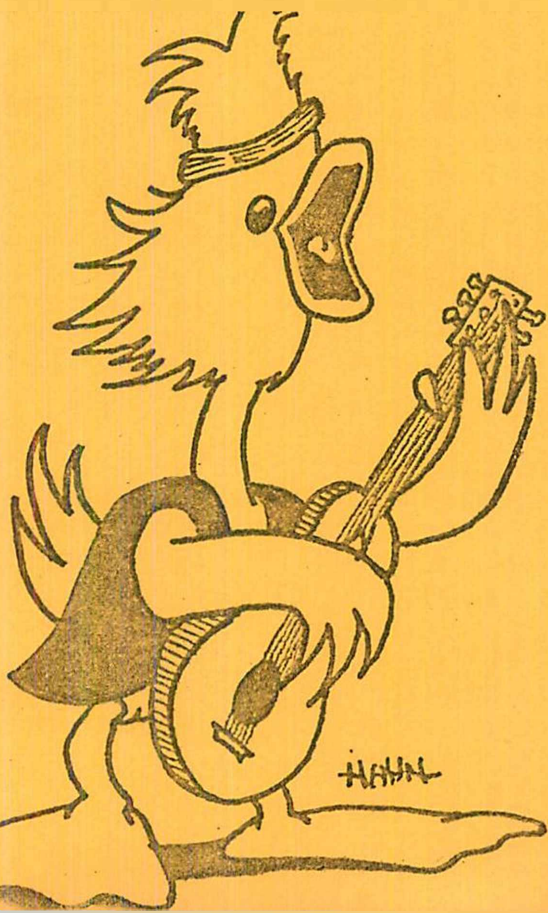
As he finished the last forkful of steak at the Village Bell Restaurant he noticed a young woman across the room. Like him, she sat alone at one of the small tables while all the other patrons were in groups. He received his check from the waitress and noticed that the woman asked a waiter for her check. Somehow she looked familiar.

He didn't think about it again until a half hour later when he noticed the same attractive brunette woman in the crowd of two hundred college students waiting for the doors of the Michigan Union Ballroom to open. She had purchased her ticket for the folk concert a few minutes after Jim had bought his. He decided to try to get acquainted with her. He was drawn to her pretty face, her silky long dark hair and the way her body had somehow been squeezed into blue jeans and turtleneck sweater. She was distracting even to a man with so much on his mind. Before he could get to her she had become lost in the crowd. The doors were opening to the ballroom and a sea of students were heading into the folk concert.

After a delay of fifteen minutes the announcement of the first act was made. It was one of two local folk groups to perform that evening. They performed their clearly imitative versions of "authentic" folksongs which they had gleaned from published songbooks or records. Each song had the distinctive style and even the vocal sound of Pete Seeger, Tom Paxton, or Peter, Paul and Mary. Jim wondered if he could have the patience to hold out.

A male and female duo came out and sang imitations of Ian and Sylvia and of Mimi and Richard Farina. In the middle of their set he decided to make his move. He slipped out of the room and into an adjoining one.

There he saw his target. A young man with curly hair sat playing the guitar. He wore a red plaid flannel shirt, faded blue jeans and a pair of badly worn brown cowboy boots. His harmonic holder and especially his voice would soon become familiar to millions. He was Bob Dylan.



Jim came up to him as Dylan played a note on the harmonica in order to adjust the tuning on his low E string. On his lap were handwritten note cards of his songs with guitar keys at the top. Jim introduced himself.

"I'm a fan of yours from New York. I wanted to talk with you again. I guess you don't remember me, do you?"

"No, I can't say I do. Where was it you knew me from?" He continued to tune the guitar strings, matching each to the one before.

"At Gerde's Folk City in the Village. I haunted the place and tried to get a chance to talk with you but each time you were too busy."

"Wait a minute. I remember you now. You sat on the edge of your seat during every song as if you were listening to Moses

giving the Ten Commandments. Then you practically tried to tackle me that time as I left the stage. As I recall you tried to hand me some line about knowing John Hammond at Columbia Records. By the way, I'm not any more interested in that bull now than I was then." He played a few rapid notes on the harmonica and turned over some note cards with song lyrics on them.

"Listen...I know this is unbelievable but I assure you I know John Hammond. I spoke with him last week. Just last week. I convinced him through his son who's about your age that you and Paul Simon are important new talents and that he should come to Gerde's to hear both of you. I want you to quit this college town tour and go back to New York before next Saturday night."

"Want me to?"

"You're getting nowhere fast. What do you make now, about a hundred a week, after expenses? That's nothing compared to what a major record contract would get for you."

Jim noticed that Dylan was unconvinced. He was afraid that Dylan would be looking for a quick exit in another moment.

"Now what exactly would Mr. Hammond want with me on Columbia Records? He records jazz artists and bluesmen. He even recorded Robert Johnson himself. I'm sure he wants either someone like that or else a pop singer like Patti Page or Andy Williams. He wouldn't want to hear my folky-do songs. I was up at one of those record companies in New York once. Threw me out. Said there already was one Woody Guthrie."

"But, Mr. Dylan, I talked with John Hammond already. Think of the promotion Columbia would give you once they brought out your records. They'd finance tours of big cities like they do for Pete Seeger. From there you could branch out and write lots of songs your own way. You don't have to be just like Woody Guthrie. A record contract could mean a lot."

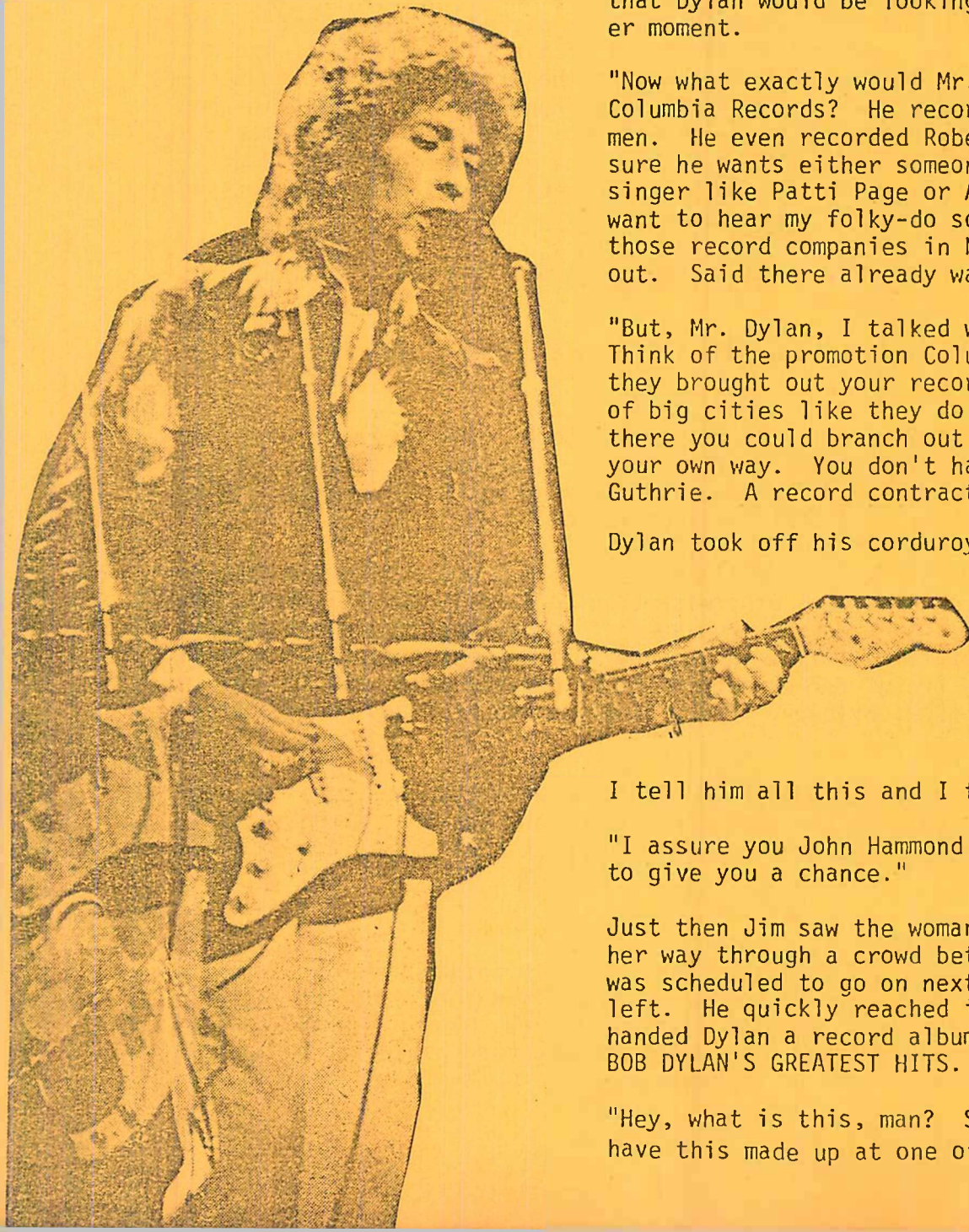
Dylan took off his corduroy cap, scratched his head a little and put the cap back on. "Well, I admit that the thought scrambles my brains a little. But are you really sure Hammond will be there Saturday night? Paul will really laugh when

I tell him all this and I turn out to be wrong."

"I assure you John Hammond will be there. He's going to give you a chance."

Just then Jim saw the woman again. She was making her way through a crowd between folk acts and Dylan was scheduled to go on next. Jim had only moments left. He quickly reached into his paper bag and handed Dylan a record album. Across it was printed: BOB DYLAN'S GREATEST HITS.

"Hey, what is this, man? Some kind of prank? Did you have this made up at one of those Times Square joke



stores to make a fool out of me?" He turned the album over and glanced at the song titles and at the pictures of his album covers. Jim saw the expression on Dylan's face turn from sarcasm to disbelief. "Hey, these look authentic," he said, waiting for Jim's explanation.

Suddenly the woman grabbed the album from his hands. Jim smashed her across the side of the head with his forearm and grabbed the record from her. He made a rush for the door, turning quickly to shout, "Don't forget! Next Saturday night!" Then he pushed through the double doors and started weaving through the crowds to the main entrance. The woman pursued him, matching his running speed but still a few feet behind due to his headstart. He dodged in and out of traffic, trying to lose her in the street outside. Suddenly a Corvette was right in his path. The driver slammed his foot on the brake pedal, the car's tires squealing. The woman spun around, falling onto the grass near the sidewalk. Jim kept running. She hadn't been hit but this would slow her down.

Out of breath, he made it to his rented room. Everything was as he had left it. The woman, as he had half expected, was not there. He quickly assembled the loot from his two days of shopping. Postage stamps, coins, Marvel comics, Robert E. Howard books, Mickey Mouse and Elvis memorabilia. He picked up the holo cassettes of the Buffy Saint-Marie concert of last night and of his talk with Dylan tonight. Fingering the dials on his time module, he computed the exact screen distance required to take all this safely with him in his 1960 Thunderbird. At home in the future that car would be worth \$20,000 to collectors. That money would finance his collecting trips for months and the bribes to keep the government off his back. He'd have money enough to visit the future Beatles in Liverpool and Linda Ronstadt playing to tiny audiences with the Stone Ponies.

The room shimmered. He froze solid with sudden paralysis through his body. The woman materialized in his room.

"Keep your hands up when I shut this off or I'll use a one day paralysis setting and take you back that way."

He relaxed, falling onto the floor as he rubbed his body. The tingling sensation was like a foot falling asleep. Happily it wore off in seconds. "Listen," he said, "let me go. I'm not a subversive. I have absolutely no political connections. You can check my computer files. I'm strictly a collector."

"Yes, I know you are. My file report will show that. You would have been in Washington taking shots at the President otherwise. You're a collector all right, You'll be out of jail in a year. Don't worry. You see, if you collectors aren't stopped, then the entire fabric of time will be in jeopardy. I support strict enforcement of the laws against time travel for entertainment or private gain, and I'm far above your feeble attempts at bribery. Everything you bought today and yesterday will have to go back."

Jim Allen knew there was no use arguing. He could never outrun her once they were back in the future. Two days in the past are not enough, but that's the natural limit. He'd almost made it. Yet he'd had more fun than most people and to him it was all worth it.

Bob Dylan took the Greyhound bus from the front of the Michigan Union and arrived in Detroit at 10:22 that evening. He boarded a bus to New York. On the way he tried to write out some lyrics to go with a song entitled "Blowin' in the Wind" which he had seen on the album cover. He hoped John Hammond would let him put the song in his first or second album for Columbia.

END

THE CLOUDED CRYSTAL BALL
[From *Popular Mechanics*, July, 1909]

Wilbur Wright has made the statement that in his opinion the use of the aeroplane for dropping bombs or explosives into a hostile army is impracticable, as the machines must rise 1,000 or 1,500 ft. above the ground to escape shell fire. At that height accuracy would be impossible in dropping explosives when moving at 40 or 50 miles an hour. He believes their only use in war will be as scouts and messengers.

90 YEARS AGO IN SCIENCE

By The Editor

For some time now I've had these two bound volumes of SCIENCE magazine kicking around in my office closet. It's the complete set of weekly issues for the year 1888. What was the emphasis in science during those years? The fads? Those little oddities -- or whatever that might appeal to me, and through me, to the readers of FARRAGO?

Without pretending to have made any measurements, it is obvious to me that the following subjects were in high regard based on the space devoted and the constant recurrence: weather, exploration, expositions and fairs, disease (especially bacteriology), electrical science.

Although the Jan. 6 issue stated, "The time is past when it is necessary to discuss the probability of the 'germ theory' as explaining infectious diseases", there is, a few weeks later, the results of a survey taken of medical schools and hospitals as to their attitude toward the 'germ theory'. Countless articles throughout the year discuss the possibilities for this and that disease (including cancer) being caused by germs. Yet, "Dr. Mays has contributed a very valuable paper on female dress as a determining factor in pulmonary consumption." Besides "consumption" (the term at that time for tuberculosis) there was considerable agitation about scarlet fever, yellow fever, typhoid fever, and diphtheria. It was reported that London had 5,166 cases of scarlet fever in 7 months. Triumphantly, the July 6 issue proclaimed for tetanus: "Another disease has been classed among the germ diseases."

Though in a late issue the question of ear damage came up in connection with straining to hear telephone conversations, the Jan. 20 issue said: "...through improvements in telephones it is possible to reproduce words both loudly and regularly." Despite this proud claim, the June 1 issue admitted: "It is known that there is considerable difficulty in transmitting speech by telephones over long distances..." And what about the graphophone shown by Alexander Graham Bell (May 25 issue) which used a flat disc instead of a cylinder? Copies of an original, it was said, could be made much easier than for the cylinders of Edison's "phonograph".

The fight was going on between advocates of continuous electric current and alternating current. One study proved by killing three dogs that less alternating voltage could kill-- proving the danger of this system. The three dogs, suitably shackled, were subjected to 272, 340, and 220 volts -- with predictable results. "The dog was

silent and motionless during continuance of current, howled and gasped for eight seconds after circuit was opened; but, in the opinion of physicians present, this was pure mechanical action, as the dog was unconscious from the instant the current first reached him. ... It was their opinion that all these deaths were painless..." -- Aug. 10. When New York City was reported as changing from hanging to electrocution, similar dog experiments were redone with several fiendish variations such as immersing the dog in a metal tank full of water. However, electricity was here to stay as the Sept. 14 issue reported 5,351 electric plants in the country supplying 195,000 arc lights and 1,925,000 incandescent lamps.

A prediction: Prof. Oliver Lodge said that when light is understood as a narrow range of electrical vibrations, the wasteful incandescent bulb would become obsolete. This would happen in a few decades, "or perhaps a century", especially when science knew the answer to the luminescence of the glow-worm. An "electrical vibration", Professor? Another prediction by someone else: "...it is probable that the wind-mill will be used as a source of power for lighting the houses of rich country people." Lighting was a popular subject. In the May 4 issue there was a comparative study of candlepower from commonly used appliances (note the ratings carefully):

Edison incandescent lamp	16 candlepower
Fishtail oil burner	17 "
Gas lights	181 "

Winner, by far, was the magnesium ribbon lamp, in the thousands of candlepower range. Is this the "limelight" once used for stagershows? Could have been, for if you've ever burned a strip of magnesium as every highschool "chemist" has, you'll know that the light is intense.

In 1888 a reader writes in: "Where can one find...the pronunciation of 'Arkansas'?" Another question pertaining to artificial languages: "Will Volapük be more successful?" The magazine was a little negative about artificial languages, saying: "The English language is itself reaching out towards universality, under the influence of commercial and social necessities." Another article touches on "reflex speech", and I am reminded of the irritating "you know" that punctuates so much reflexive speaking nowadays: "...there exists a large number of colloquial phrases that have become automatic." This referred to things such as, "How are you?", and the reply, even if you had a leg in a cast, "Fine, thank you."

Any discussion of black holes in 1888? Not that I could find. However, every science including astronomy was prefixed by the adjective *new*. In every era, all things are new; that's okay, as long as all things are not considered the final one and all. The magazine did not give that impression-- it seemed always to have an eye toward the future and an anticipation of greater things to come. Someone wrote: "The new brand of astronomy studies sun, moon, and stars for what they are in themselves... rather than for the purpose of simply recording their relative motions..." Since Asaph Hall discovered the moons of Mars in 1877, there was still -- 11 years later -- much discussion of Mars' moons and canals.

One rather new science, admitted in France, but not quite acceptable in America was psychology, as "Dr. Martins makes a high claim for the admittance of experimental psychology to an acknowledged place upon the curriculum of every university." However, experiments were going on. A Dr. Durand gave 100 subjects a drink of sweetened water under some guise. Then 15 minutes later he dashed in the room, all excited and bustling with preparations, announcing he had by mistake given everyone a powerful laxative. Eighty of the people became ill.

By 1888 "the knee-jerk...as an index of nervous condition is now widely recognized." But among "the many mooted questions is the function of the bile..." And still a problem: "The cause of baldness, although long and diligently searched for, yet remains undiscovered." However a Dr. Senn of Milwaukee has a solution to the problem

of locating a wound puncture in the intestine. "(He) proposes to inject per rectum hydrogen-gas which finds its way through the entire length of the intestine; and, if an opening exist, the gas will escape, and can be detected." Dr. Senn does not explain how the hydrogen gas is detected-- by touching a match to it? (Note the subjunctive mood in "if an opening exist"...)

I was amused to find that cottonseed oil was considered to adulterate fine pig lard, and numerous kitchen tests for detecting this substance were given the suspicious housewife. In 1886 the Congress approved a tax on the manufacture, sale, import/export of oleomargarine. Already it was known that tobacco is bad for the health, and especially expensive cigarettes whose tobacco is laced with opium!

Did you know that more than half of the inhabitants of Baltimore (pop. 437,155 in 1888) used water closets? What did the others do? Well, some at least had their "night soil" carried to the dump, 10,221,400 gallons in one year. There's an occupation -- night soil weigher at the dump -- for which there's little call these days!

Persons in 1888 were not men and women; they were ladies and gentlemen. And one person wrote in: "Brutes feed. The best barbarian only eats. Only the cultured man can dine."

An article complains of the slow speeds of American trains in contrast to the trains in England which go as fast as 48 miles per hour. In the July 20 issue there is an exciting paragraph or two about the balloonist Lecoq being caught in an electrical storm high above Paris.

Rhode Island would finally be surveyed as the Providence Franklin Society after "incessant endeavors" had finally organized a geographical survey. There was a long report on the eruption of Krakatoa (1883) in the Nov. 9 issue. There was not a thing about the Far West that caught my eye, but plenty of material about the rains on the plains.

"Despite the sneers in some quarters... the movement in favor of manual training is proceeding with remarkable vigor and rapidity." (Recall the comment above about 'ladies and gentlemen'.)

Some science was speeding ahead... "In 1887 Fremy resumed his experiments and has succeeded in obtaining beautiful and comparatively large crystals (of artificial rubies)." And the government trend toward silly projects was already on its way. Some smooth-talking inventor got the House committee to approve a balloon project for \$75,000 and the use of a Navy yard. The balloon was to be made of steel and holding inside a vacuum, making the whole thing so light, the inventor claimed, that it would float upward into the sky. Several scientists said the steel would have to be so thin that it would not withstand atmospheric pressure. However, to no avail, and a scientist wrote: "This is an illustration of how intelligently Congress would be likely to legislate on scientific matters unguided by intelligent scientific advice." The details of the balloon are given in the June 29 issue. Wonder what happened, later?

In the July 20 issue a new book was reviewed with negative comment: LOOKING BACKWARD, Edward Bellamy's classic. Note was taken of Asa Gray's death on Jan. 30, 1888; every botany student will be familiar with GRAY'S MANUAL today. And a short piece told of the remarkable child of age 7 who, though blind and deaf, was making progress in speaking and writing; the child, Helen Keller.

DONN, YOU DON'T HAVE TO ANSWER ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS OR DO ANY OF THESE PROJECTS. BUT IT SEEMS LIKE FUN TO ME, AND THE RESULTS -- IF ANY -- WILL BE SUMMARIZED BY A GIANT COMPUTER FROM AN ADJACENT GALAXY.....

BY GARY DEINDORFER

1. WHAT THREE HALLUCINATIONS WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE? AUTISTIC, FRIVOLOUS, SELF-CONTRADICTIONARY, YOU NAME IT. COLORS AND SOUNDS NOT ONLY OPTIONAL BUT IMMINENT.

None. I've had three-- all disturbing, and one frightening, one full of anxiety, and one pleasant. Fear was generated by a giant hawk about to swallow my car, with me in it, off the highway. Anxiety was caused by a recurring bell sound, on the same highway, as if produced by a steam locomotive warning bell. Pleasure, during the hallucination only, was the result of a beautiful young lady coming to my bed. No more, please!

2. ENTERING THE WORLD OF FANTASY, WHAT THREE REALITY TESTING TECHNIQUES WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO GIVE UP FOR LENT?

Lent holds no meaning for me. I'd give up smelling, tasting, and touching but keeping seeing and hearing.

3. WHAT 10,000 FANS WOULD YOU SELECT FOR AN ALL-STAR POLICE ACTION? UNIFORMS OPTIONAL.

All regional and world concons standing in front of a magic hall of mirrors, augmented by the N3F in full costume.

4. HAVE YOU ANY ABORTED BEGINNINGS TO LIMERICKS? JUST FOR "GRABBERS"...

*There was a strange being from Vega
Whose appearance was much like a Degas
When asked to sit down
It replied with a frown*

*There once was a fan from Missouri, Mo.
Whose schedule of pubbing was so slow
That he mailed out a zine
One of the best ever seen*

5. PRETEND YOU ARE GOING TO START AN ENCYCLOPEDIA. GIVE THREE POSSIBLE NAMES FOR IT. IN THAT ORDER...

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF NEW SCIENCE, ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE ODD, ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FANDOM

6. IF YOU WERE A BIG, BIG COMPANY PRESIDENT, WHAT THREE SF WRITERS/ARTISTS/FANS WOULD YOU HIRE TO SCRUB THE FLOORS AFTER OFFICE HOURS?

Mike Glickmop, Mike Glickscrub, and Mike Glicksuds.

7. IF YOU ARE OR WOULD LIKE TO BE AN ARTIST, DESCRIBE IN ONE 100,000 WORD BOOK WHAT SCENE YOU WOULD LEAST LIKE TO ILLUSTRATE. FLOWERLY PROSE A MUST FOR THIS ONE!

"A rose is a rose is a rose." The book ends after exactly 99,992 words with "Rosa is Rosa is Rosa."

8. DISCUSS BRIEFLY: IS THE ANIMAL WORLD AN EXTENSION OF A HUMAN BEING? IF SO, WHICH SPECIFIC HUMAN BEING?

With porcupines it's a difficult, dangerous, and daring thing they do.

The sensible analyzer

Seventeen readers (the largest group) responded to the first question seeking to determine aspirations toward real (i.e. attainable) abilities. One of my examples was "riding a horse"; Buck Coulson pointed out that anybody can ride a horse and that riding a horse well is the ability. In my philosophy "well" is understood; without top performance, forget the word "ability". There were 47 responses, some duplicated either exactly or categorically similar. For instance:

Physical/Sport Abilities ---	11	Driving car/plane/spaceship ----	3
Musical -----	5	Bilingual -----	3
Socially Adept -----	3	Write/draw Professionally -----	4
Photographic Memory -----	3	Make Money -----	2
		Speed Typing -----	2

Other abilities mentioned: Sleep anywhere on conscious command, survive on only four hours sleep, express exactly what I feel, concentration & devotion to any subject tackled, to take criticism, to repair simple mechanical devices, and to conquer a fear of dentists.

Thirteen readers revealed their unreal aspirations, perhaps most concisely stated by one person: "...most of Superman's powers would interest me..." And what am I to make of the fan who wants to be "heterotherm"? Or the fellow who wants an otar or dragon (friendly type)?

The breakdown of 29 responses shows:

Teleportation -----	5	Telekinesis -----	2
Immortality -----	5	Invisibility on Command -----	2
Time Travel -----	3	Omnipotence/Invulnerability ---	3

Do authors project such desires onto their heroes? Rob Chilson writes: "I'd like the super telekinetic powers I dreamed up for the Starlings of THE STAR-CROWNED KINGS. With that is the 'Starling' sense: ability to sense energy fields, including gravitic, dowsing, awareness of rapid motion of massive objects, awareness of electric and magnetic fields, etc." Apparently authors do...

Wayne DeVette admits to just one desire: "To be able to transfer my dreams directly to film or canvas." Charneau Flic has a good one: "I'd wish this one on the whole human race-- to feel exactly and as intensely the joy and pain of all other humans...in a binding togetherness." Total empathy. As Charneau says, "Maybe this would drive us mad; it would certainly not leave us human."

Questions 3 & 4 bombed out: only 3 responses to the fan "football team" and 5 who admitted having "story grabbers" but refusing to send them.

Eight readers sent in possible fanzine titles; the list:

Politzarian Stories
Wendashitfoes
Sforzando
Copymod
Egobooze
Stf Stuff
Biblio-mania
Opugn
Rivets
Grimsby
A Day in the Life
Synaesthesia
Rom
Hauk
The Mountains Misty
Candlelight
Gestalt
Caryatid
Chthonian Rites
Trapezoid

As for candidates for the Think Tank at some big technological company, eight readers supplied 21 names, about evenly split between SF authors and fans. But I guess Bill Bliss will be the only one hired as he was the only one named more than once! And why not? He's known as "The Contraption Man".

For the purposes of egoboo I ought to print the other fans so nominated: Burt Libe, Harry Warner, Jon Singer, Bob Webber, Ned Brooks, and Tom Digby.

Number 7 - a literary paragraph which, if you are or might be an artist you'd like to illustrate - also bombed out. So let's go to #8 which called forth some meaty discussion by 11 fans on the question of whether a human being is a high grade animal or something different in kind. Well, some were not so meaty. Roy Tackett writes: "You have three questions in two sentences so (very briefly): Yes. No. No." Seems to be a clear vote for humans as animals. Wally Stoelting answers: "Being a plant, I don't know." Dave Szurek writes: "I suspect that human beings are an extension of the

animal world but, scientific or theological dogma regardless, how the hell can any of us really answer that question? We can toss around theories, and that's about the extent of it." ((That's all I was after-- an opinion or two on the subject.)) Wayne Hooks writes: "First I need a definition of human beings since not all people seem to be human." ((Good point: my question assumes that human beings all belong to the same set, Homo sapiens; this may be an error.))

Don Ayres' answer, to me, is ambiguous: "Much of the world's trouble stems from the notion of the privileged class, be it wealth over poverty, aristocrat over peasant, or human over animal. I find no substantive reason to value human life over that of any other creature; life is life -- human, animal, or plant. Vegetarians, note this implication." ((No hierarchy based on value was intended, but explain to me again whether human life is basically animal life or plant life or in a class by itself.))

Allan Beatty's position seems clear: "Beyond physiology, human beings are not animals. Our ability to make choices enables us to originate action and affect the course of events in a way that is qualitatively different from the instinctual or learned responses of animals. Our free will is a divine delegation of subcreative power." The position of Rob Chilson is much the same, I think: "The human race still shares that animal inheritance, but has gone a step beyond, in that we can override our instincts. So I'd say we are more than animals, which obey their instincts like robots obeying their programs." Wayne DeVette perhaps explains Don Ayres' convoluted opinion: "As far as being alive, I think we are an extension of the animal world but when it comes to thinking, inventing, relating and comparing things from past experiences, then I think it's plants, animals, and human beings." The skills of humans also formed Harry Warner's idea: "It's not fair to call the much more capable thing in a human's skull and that in a dog's head both a brain. Humans are unique in ability to do things with their hands; they don't have the periodic nature of the sexual impulse."

Buck Coulson tells about gorilla sign language to support his flat statement: "Human beings are animals, specifically intelligent primates. Humans are not unique in either their good or bad attributes. We have more intelligence than a chimp, but it's a difference in degree, not kind." ((My opinion also.)) Victoria Vayne, likewise on the basis of animal communication, etc., says the gap between human and animal is "not really that great". She adds: "Chimps are on a higher level than retarded humans below a certain level."

I'm going by the Walt Lee definition of the Fantastic. In his REFERENCE GUIDE TO FANTASTIC FILMS, Lee includes religious films like BEN-HUR and THE TEN COMMANDMENTS since they feature supernatural forces at work. -- Buzz Dixon, 7058 Hazeltine Ave #22, Van Nuys, CA 91405, May 26, 1977.

OF CHRISTIANS, CENSORSHIP, AND SCIENCE FICTION

BY

BUZZ DIXON

The shade of McCarthyism has been summoned up. Once again the terrible visage of censorship leers over the land. Repression, the cold, emotionally-warped, irrational hatred of that which is different, threatens to become part of the American scene again.

And this time they're taking on science fiction.

Not as a class, mind you, but the second assault waves have bypassed the targets of pornography and have instead zeroed on on STAR TREK, Flowers for Algernon, and Jesus Christ?

Let's start at the very beginning: Harry Reems and DEEP THROAT. The case against Reems must be one of the most convoluted examples of judicial reasoning ever to disgrace the American bar. Since the definition of pornography differs greatly from individual to individual, Parrish, the Assistant D.A. for Memphis, TN, charged everybody involved with the film of the crime of *conspiracy* to commit pornography.

Immediately several questions pop to mind. First, if no one is capable of defining pornography, then how can one be guilty of conspiring to commit it? Second, in any conspiracy there are some who are more culpable than others. Why was Reems, who only received \$100 for one day's work, given a five-year sentence while the producers and distributors were let off lightly? Third, since there are fifty states and one District in the U.S.A., the alleged pornographers could be tried and convicted no less than 51 times for the same crime! What ever happened to the concept that no person would ever be put in double jeopardy? Finally, since "community standards" (whatever they are-- try defining a community and then applying that definition to every group of people in the U.S.A.) are the current concept in censorship, all a zealous prosecutor has to do is find a suitably repressed town. Even THE MICKEY MOUSE CLUB would be found obscene in some communities.

The Reems case is the first example of how the Court seeks to deprive citizens of the right to make moral decisions for themselves, decide what is worth viewing, and ultimately what each citizen can think. It should be pointed out, however, that Nixon's Commission on Pornography reported that porno was no threat to the U.S.A. and that Nixon, in turn, branded his own Commission as a pack of de-

generates. It should also be pointed out that law and order Nixon declared pornography one of the five greatest criminal threats to America, this from a man who did more than any other person in history to pervert the Constitution.

The legacy of Nixon-Mitchell-Agnew-Burger lingers on and on. Urged on by the conviction of Reems, other prosecutors, using massive federal aid, have brought charges against Al Goldstein's SCREW and Larry Flynt's HUSTLER magazines.

In each case the tactics were identical. First, a repressive community was found, far removed from the magazines' home bases (indeed, until postal officials entrapped Goldstein by ordering 12 copies of SCREW and SMUT themselves, neither magazine had ever been sold in Kansas). The defendants were then dragged in and charged not with pornography but with Comstockery and, in the case of Flynt, "organized crime" (in Ohio organized crime is defined as any conspiracy of five or more persons). The five people in the case were Flynt, his wife, two co-editors, and the Hustler Corporation! The mind boggles at a piece of paper being assumed to be capable of creative, original, or moral-decision making thought. To top it off, Flynt's wife and the two co-editors were acquitted! How can there be organized crime if three of the five were acquitted of the crime? Yet that's the charge Larry Flynt was convicted of.

At this point the majority of people ask, "So what?" In truth, it's hard to get upset about a mediocre porno movie and two magazines which seem to be in competition with each other for the title of The Most Tasteless Zine in the World. Why get excited about smut?

Because, as the old saw goes, "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance."

Because, as prosecutors found it so easy to convict three men of pornography, other bluenoses have grown more bold.

And the frightening thing is this: we aren't battling fanatical right-wingers, political monarchists, or pro-war hawks. We're battling Christians.

What is a Christian? Well, I consider myself to be one. I believe in Christ, the Son of God. I try to follow his teachings as closely as possible, though I fail and sin often enough.

But my religion (Southern Baptist) says that each person may interpret the Bible in his or her own way. To me, being a Christian means not being cruel: I never tell a non-Christian that he's going to hell simply because he doesn't believe (maybe he will and maybe he won't, but I sure can't convert him if I'm browbeating him). I believe in the right of each individual to make moral choices for themselves, whether or not I agree with those choices. I believe that no one man has been granted a total knowledge of God's desires and plans and that any man who claims to have such knowledge is either a liar or a fool.

I also believe that there are some people who shouldn't be allowed to possess Bibles as they go flying off on wild tangents which do more to damage Christ's mission on Earth than anything else I can think of. The fundamentalists who decry pornography, evolution, gay rights, and women's lib are the very ones of whom I speak.

In Emporium, Pa., Daniel Keyes' touching story, "Flowers for Algernon", was banned from the 11th grade classrooms. The preacher who spearheaded the movement claimed the book was about nothing but sex. Pressed as to how he got that impression (there is only one "sex scene" in the book, written without graphic descriptions or obscenities and vital to the story to help develop the character of Charly, the retarded man who gains normal intelligence) the good preacher replied that he hadn't read the book but he had read "several pages".

In the Dallas-Ft.Worth area KXTX-TV banned in whole or part seven episodes of STAR TREK, claiming anti-Christian content. Banned were stories about witches and warlocks, possession of human minds by alien intelligences, summoning up ethereal aliens, and "occult" (i.e. psychic) powers.

General Motors backed out of sponsoring for Easter Franco Zeifferelli's film on Jesus Christ due to pressure from a fundamentalist fanatic in Baltimore. The fanatic claimed (without seeing the film, mind you) that it would misrepresent the life of Christ. The fanatic is at odds with Zeifferelli's comment that people didn't want to accept "Jesus as a man but only as a God."

The problem in these and other instances is that because the people urging censorship are "Christians" many politicians, movie distributors, publishers, and TV executives are scared to take them on. This is the real obscenity. Our government was not set up so a small group of religious nuts could subdue the majority. To me it is a sin to impose one's will on others, which is exactly what the fundamentalists are doing.

The only answer is to fight, fight, fight! Everyone who reads of a pornography conviction should flood all available news media with letters denouncing it. Write congressmen and local officials. Speak up and be heard. Let's stop censorship before it grows out of hand.

I have a daughter who is four years old. People ask me if I want her to read trash. No, I don't. But given the choice between the possibility she might read a copy of HUSTLER or the certainty that she will be denied FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON, I unhesitatingly choose the former.

END

BALLAD
by
PAUL WALKER

Judas, old friend, why do you sit

So still here under this tree?

It's cold. And the wind! Why

Do you stare so vacantly?

Look at that moon, will ya, man!

Red as the blood of a Jew.

And that sky, black as Herod's heart.

I wish I had slept this night through.

Old friend, why do you tremble so?

Is it the ague? Are you poorly?

You were always the hardest of men.

Why do you weep so bitterly?

It's this foul night. The clay's like

The bed of a grave. And

Something's unclean in the air.

I'd give my soul to wash this hand.

Judas, old friend, why do you sigh?

What makes you lonely now?

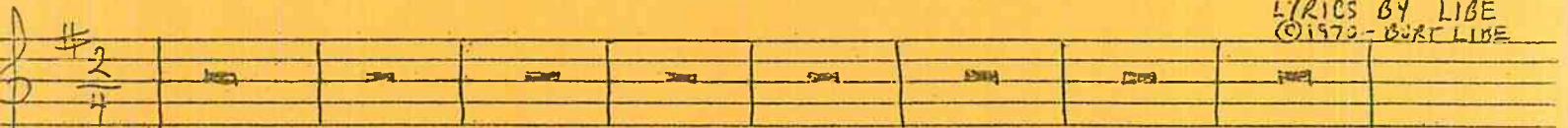
You never needed anyone before.

What do you see up on that bough?

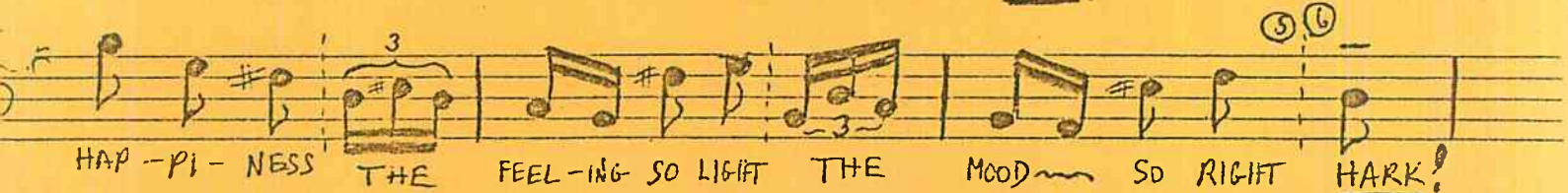
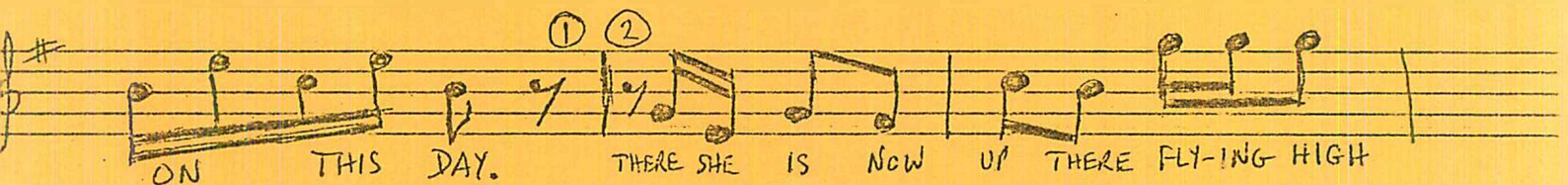
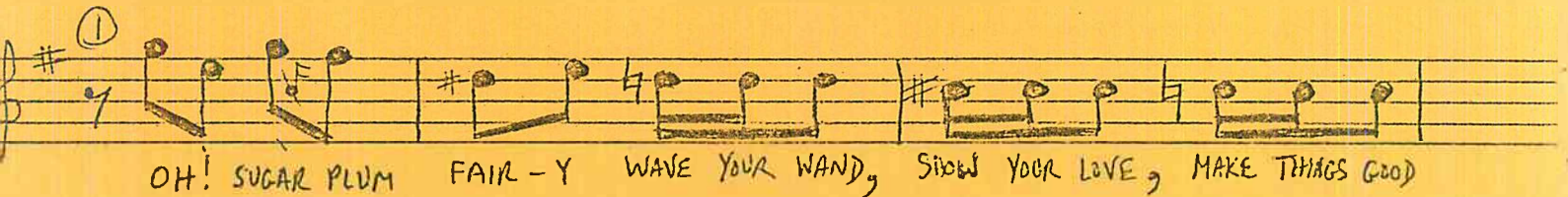
MAIN PHRASE MELODIES

NUTCRACKER - III

TCHAIKOWSKY
8/27/70
LYRICS BY LIBE
©1972 - BURT LIBE



(NOTE: "REST" - FIRST EIGHT INTRODUCTION MEASURES)



NUTCRACKER - III P. 2 TSCHAIKOWSKY

8/27/70
LYRICS BY LIDE

(C) 1970 - LIDE

AT HER PRE-CIOUS SMILE! HARK! AT THE LOVE-LY STARS! HARK!

AT HER PRE-TY WAND! HARK! HER POWER SO GREAT! A - LAS SHE LOOKS UP

IN THE SKY BACK TOWARD HER HOME SO FAR A - WAY. SHE HAS DONE HER

GOOD DEED FOR THIS DAY, AS WAS ASKED, HAP-PI-LY, RIGHT A - WAY.

IT IS TIME TO RETURN HOME IN THE SKY, THROUGH THE CLOUDS, PAST THE STARS,

FAR ~ FAR A - WAY. SHE ~ WAVES FARE - WELL TO ALL OF US,

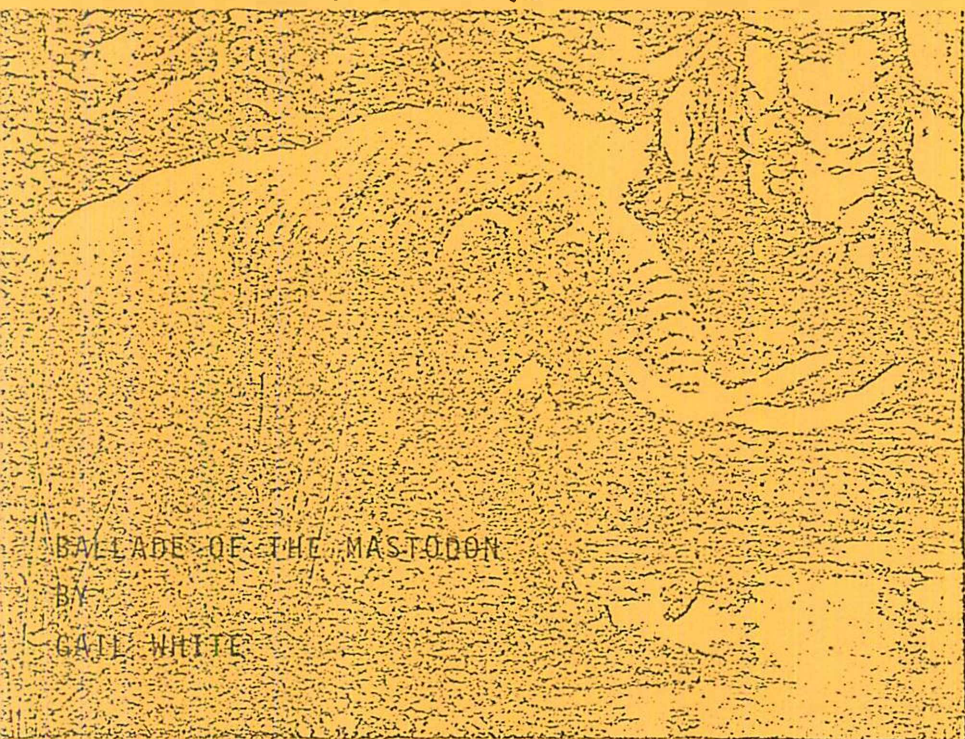
SMIL - ING BRIGHT, FLASH - ING - LIGHT, RAIS - ING HER WAND. THEN RIS - ING - SLOW - LY

WAV - ING AT US DIS - AP - PEAR - ING IN THE EVE - NING SKY.

rit. *delicissimo* *rit.* (GRACE-PHASE MELODY)

⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

*"The Ballade of the Mastodon" was written in
the Natural History Museum, Brussels, Belgium
-- Gail White, February, 1977*



BALLADE OF THE MASTODON

BY

GAIL WHITE

Nebuchadnezzar went to grass;
the world thinks nothing of his plight.
Who care what grave Hatshepsut has,
who dazzled Egypt with delight?
Look round, and ask who dares indite
the epitaph of Babylon.
Death claimed them all beneath his blight
as death has claimed the mastodon.

A pile of bones is Balaam's ass,
the Sphinx a heap of copralite;
and none can say in what morass
Assyria vanished from our sight.
Old loves and battles, wrong and right,
cities and singers, all are gone,
as deep within oblivion's night
as death has claimed the mastodon.

Shelly and Keats and Donne (alas)
no more take up their pens to write.
Plato and Sappho fade and pass,
Napoleon will not rise to fight;
Death quenched Aquinas and his light,
the late Archpoet and Villon,
poet and priest and parasite,
as death has claimed the mastodon.

Envoi:

A few more years, and you may cite
the obits in the MORNING CHRON.
that death has claimed the late Ms.White
as death has claimed the mastodon.

Just in case any reader of this zine has never seen a TITLE I'd better explain that the former Wilde Pickle Press monthly was loaded in every white space with snippets. This new column will print material too good, I think, to be forgotten in my old files.

HARRY WARNER : Ben Indick mentioned Carl Sandburg's Neanderthal side. This side of him made an appearance on the memorable occasion when I met him in person. He didn't have a stone ax in his hand or drag around women by the hair but he seemed to be having as much trouble coping with civilization as a Neanderthal would have. It must have been in the late 1940's. He had been engaged to appear in the lecture series which the local teachers' association sponsored in Hagerstown. I answered the telephone at the office. Sandburg was on the other end. He had just gotten into town on the bus, nobody was there to meet him, and he wanted to know what he should do. I went down to the bus station, escorted him to the newspaper office, and on the way he told me he didn't have a guitar which he would need for the songs he always included in his lectures and he didn't know what to do. At the office I telephoned around until I found someone from the teachers' group while all the girls in the front office kept sneaking into the newsroom trying to get up courage to approach the poet, who just sat there looking helpless. We finally found him a guitar somewhere and he gave a fine lecture-recital that night. An official of the association offered him overnight hospitality, since he had no plans about where to spend the night. The next day, Sandburg decided he felt like working on his novel and it was nearly a week before he finally left his overnight host, who was a spinster of advanced years. She suffered an unmerciful kidding for years afterwards from local friends who insisted that it was her charms rather than the need to make progress on REMEMBRANCE ROCK which had caused that long sojourn in Hagerstown by the poet. -- Feb. 13, 1978

CHESTER D. CUTHBERT: I did not like Huxley's BRAVE NEW WORLD, but I consider it a classic science fiction novel; I liked Doyle's THE LOST WORLD, and I consider it a classic too. A book's merit, it seems to me, is in its content, rather than in one's personal reaction to that content. --2/6/78

IAN COVELL: John Brunner recommended THE LIVES OF A CELL (Thomas) to me at a convention. I have read it several times since. The author has that capacity to take a sideways view of things that marks the exploring mind, that type of mind that probably most typifies a genius. Did you know we had one authentic genius who used to write SF? His name was 'John T Phillifent'-- look up KING OF ARGENT or GENIUS UNLIMITED. I have always been a little surprised that this author with his clear prose, speculative content and nearly dispassionate view of humanity did not achieve more recognition. But there is the way of the world. ... In our genre 'fan' really does mean 'fanatic'. I think this is because SF is the only genre which is applicable to our entire lives. There is no area of existence it does not touch on to some extent: reality, fantasy, philosophy, sciences, literature, music. It can explore any personality from the adolescent to the old old man in any type of setting. You can read it, live it, sleep on it, ponder, talk about it. SF covers everything. ... By the way, would anyone have a bibliography of Dashiell Hammett's stories? -- Feb. 2, 1978. (*Write to Tony Hardin, Box 9660 Kirkwood Branch, St. Louis, Mo. 63122 who publishes a pulp oriented zine, XENOPHILE. He may have featured Hammett in a past issue.*)

PAULINE PALMER: A good novel that explores music in an SF theme is Biggle's THE STILL SMALL VOICE OF TRUMPETS. It doesn't actually get into the musical possibilities of assorted alien physical configurations so much as it explores alien cultural attitudes and flexibilities. -- Feb.2, 1978

DON AYRES: Eric Mayer's mentioning of books and records moved via the movers reminds me of a story Dr. Brandon (SIU herpetologist) told about the time he moved to Carbondale. One of the movers just looked at the cases of books and files of reprints and asked why anyone would be crazy enough to pay money to move all those. Dr. Brandon asked him if he'd care to work as a mover without a truck, two-wheeler, and other hardware. The man said no. 'These,' Dr. Brandon said, 'are my tools'. They got along fine after that. ... In the progress of knowledge and accumulation of information, Thomas A. Edison was reported to have said, 'We know a hundred things that don't work.' -- Jan.2, 1978.

HARRY WARNER: On the question of liking or disliking prose: I just don't react to something if I'm unable to understand it. It's as meaningless as what's going on behind me when I don't turn my head or look into a mirror. I must be able to comprehend something to arrive as a dislike or a like for it. But all this is more or less theoretic by now, because I've stopped trying to read that which I can't understand. There is more than enough comprehensible stuff in print to keep me busy liking and disliking for the rest of my life, without burdening myself with experiences which will leave me neutral. -- Jan.13, 1978. *(I find a difference in my attitude on this between reading fiction prose and non-fiction prose. Lack of my understanding of a fiction piece gives me a strong negative reaction. It brings up wave after wave of dislike. On the other hand, non-fiction most often intrigues me, causing re-reading, pencil-and-paper work, etc. when I don't understand it. This leads to liking, but gradually getting negative as I admit finally that it's beyond my comprehension after all.)*

DAVE ROWE: One of the things that really infuriates me about newspapers, the Evening Echo in particular, is obviously posed pictures. They are so false that it completely destroys any last remaining beliefs one has in a free, unbiased, truthful press. At the beginning of December some friends and I went to help out with a vegetarian carnival in Bristol. We all knew it was going to be a disaster but we had promised to help the fellow 'organizing it', altho his idea of organization was 'suck it and see'. So feeling rather like the band playing on the Titanic we turned up on the appointed Saturday morning. And so did the local paper's photographer and so did...nobody else. So (ghod damn it) I posed. I posed wearing a vegetarian T-shirt (slogan, If you love animals, don't eat them) whilst standing in front of a manually upheld poster (slogan, Give your bird a treat this Christmas, don't eat it) whilst watching another of the helpers and her two children 'having a go' on one side of the stalls. OK it's propaganda, but it's still phony, it's still posed. And nothing was really happening, nothing to report. --Jan.26, 1978. *(There was something to report all right -- nobody showed up! But newspapers perhaps have a kind heart (?).)* ... My favorite story of the moment is one from a short book on animation: a dizzy blonde asked an animation writer what he did for a living. He replied that he wrote scripts for Bugs Bunny. She replied 'Why! Bugs Bunny doesn't need scripts, he's funny enough on his own.' *(Well, Dave, only goes to prove that each person has his own "reality".)*

STEVE McDONALD: I don't think Seedy Doyle is alone in getting knocked out by various writers. I recently got knocked into a loop with Fred Pohl's GATEWAY, and I read the serial version of Steve Robinett's STARGATE about four times in a year, and thought TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE was one of the best SF books I've read. Usually, the great book feeling only strikes once or twice a year, if that. It's not 'first contact' either -- I've been reading SF for years, and I can still get knocked out at any moment. Bradbury can still spook the pants off me with some of his dark visions. But, as you age, you can find yourself coming back to a book and having a whole change of mind about it. I now find Harry Harrison fairly crude, suitable for an audience age of 16. And you can spot padding, up to 50% of it in I WILL FEAR NO EVIL. And Asimov! The Good Doctor sets a complex problem and proceeds to solve it, and the hell with characters. But he's fun, and so is cotton candy at the funfair. -- Dec.21, 1977

COLUMBUS RAINY DAY IN INDIA

Holy Words to be written in Capitals

PLANTS	TREE-DUTY
GREEN	COLOUR
ARCADES	NATURE
RAINDROPS	GREEN POWER
GRASS	SHIT
RAIN	GARBAGE
WOODLANDS	EARTH
VALLEYS	VEGETATION
TREES	CREATIVITY
HORIZON	RIVERS
SNOW	WATER
WINDOW RIGHT	PARADISE
SEA	FARMER
SAILBOAT	MEADOWS
WIND AND WATER MILLS	AIR
HEDGES	GARDEN
HANDMADE	NUDITY
POND	TO WALK
LAKE	BY CYCLE

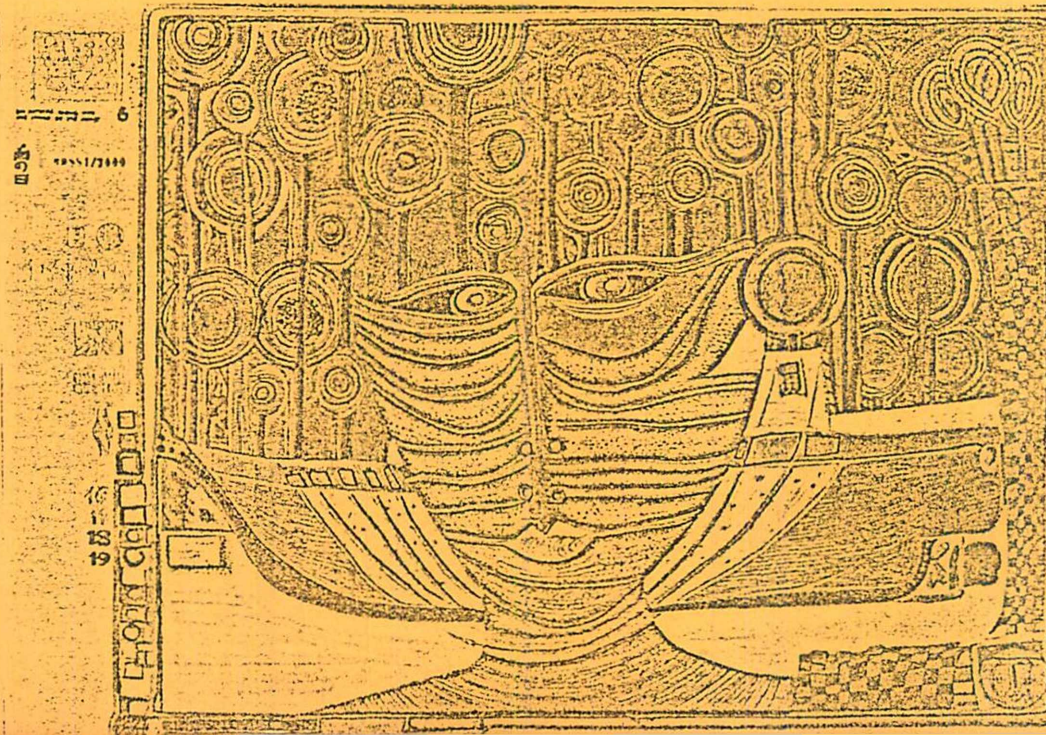
WHO OR WHAT IS HUNDERTWASSER ?

He is an Austrian; he is a graphic artist; his colors are intense, his lines curved; he could walk into a London dining room wearing on each foot knitted socks of different colors encased in two kinds of sandals which he has made and a multi-colored sailor's cap on his head.

He has rather definite ideas, a sort of prophet with a following. For one thing, a straight line in art or architecture is a no-no; for another, he likes the color green. And so his forms are organic and green things encircle windows and grow out of the roof. The "poem" to the right accompanies the illo below. The words reveal his interest in what I'd define as ecology.

The little book of black paper, THE ALBERTINA EXHIBITION OF HUNDERTWASSER'S COMPLETE GRAPHIC WORK 1951-1976, shows his work beautifully printed with bright, yet compatible colors enhanced with spots and areas of metallic printer's ink. Various authorities tell of his life and criticize his work-- in that usual high-blown way affected by critics.

One paragraph has provoked me to write this sketch, even more than my desire to acquaint you with this artist if he's unknown to you as he was to me. This is it: *"(His work) is often veiled, sometimes not easily understood except in emotional associations, not obtrusively tendencious. Still, is it not a mark of real accomplishment to hint rather than to point, not to give away your message too cheaply?"*

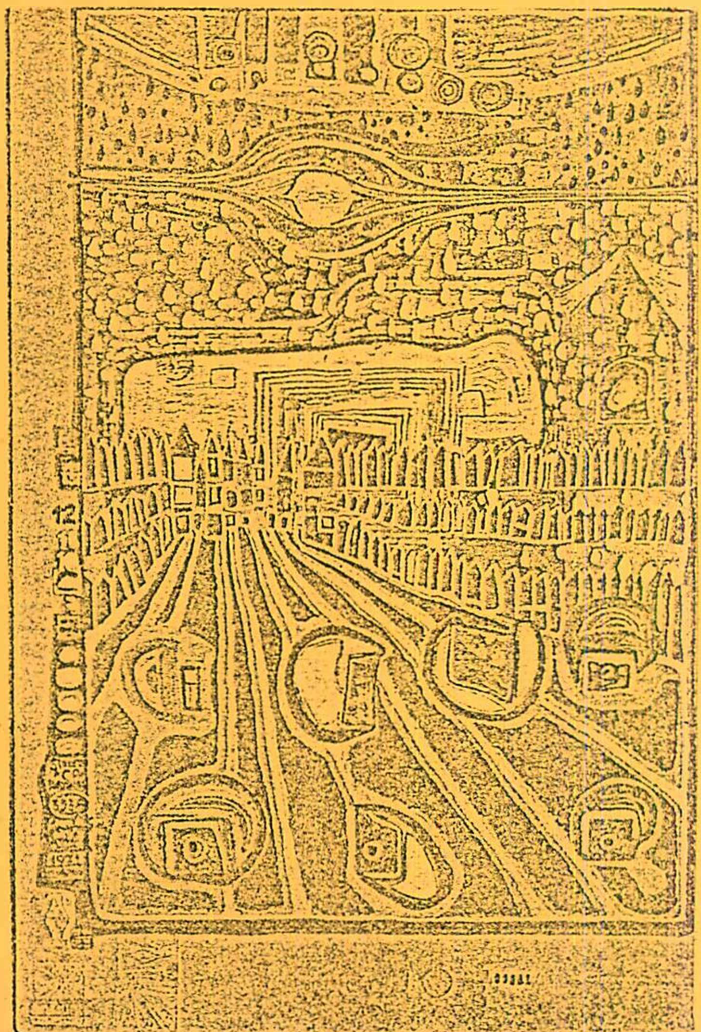
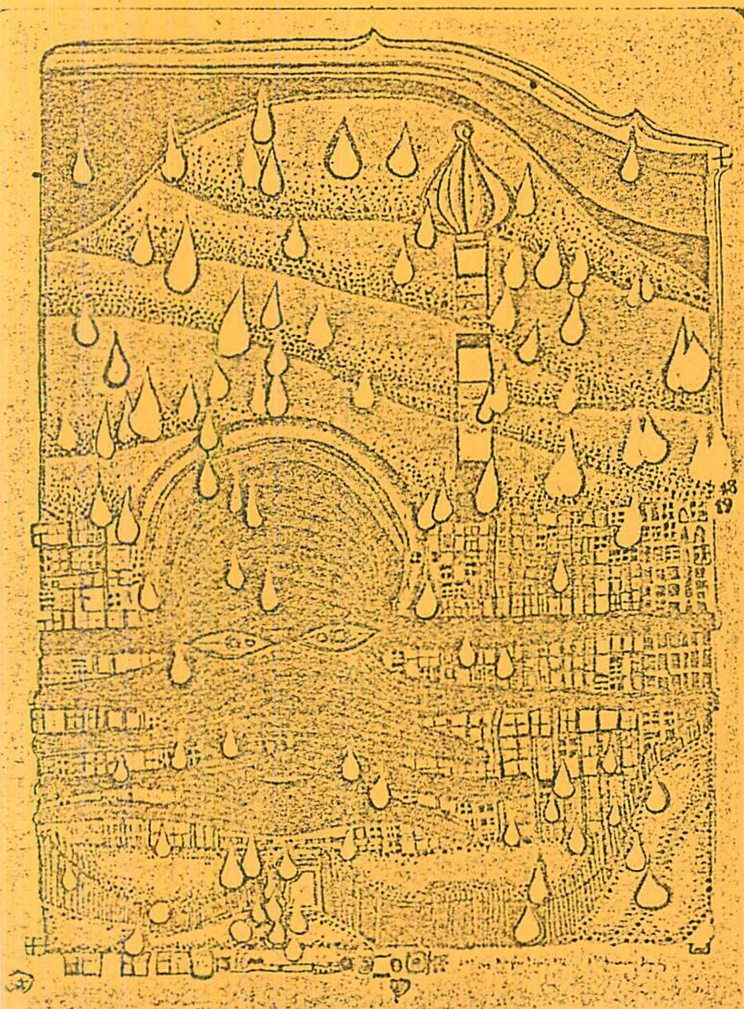


Perhaps the degree of hinting as opposed to pointing should be related to the *message*. Extremely simple messages require pointing; example: "FIRE!" Middle-ground messages can stand more hinting, but pointing should rise to preference again as the message becomes more complex. Example: in hard SF or straight science where the message is complex, and is appealing to the intellect, it would seem to me that hinting adds a needless burden to the already



struggling reader. Perhaps what we have here is a dichotomy: intellect vs emotion. And so what I have already written may be valid for intellectual messages and invalid for emotional ones. But I believe I've struggled with some SF where the author has perhaps confused the two kinds of messages, and lost me, or simply hints so much that I can't figure the whole thing out and give up.

However, I am not immune to emotion and react to it when I understand it. I have cried at a passage in a book (THE WALL by John Hersey). And so I like Hundertwasser's line & color; but I don't understand the message.



BLOODSHOT EYES AND OTHER JOYS

A few of the books, etc. of possible interest as reported by the editor

BEYOND THE MOON by Paolo Maffei, translated from the Italian by D.J.K. O'Connell, The MIT Press, hardcover, 1978, \$12.50.

First published in Italy in 1973 as AL DI LA' DELLA LUNA, the book must have sold extremely well as it went through 6 editions, the translation in hand being the 7th. The author is Prof of Astronomy and Director of the astrophysical observatory at Catania University. He purports to take us on a voyage from the moon to farther reaches of the universe toward "the limits of time and space". A very interesting trip, and lots of intimate facts of great use to sf writers who are planning epics of the universe. Although neutron stars are discussed, it seems odd that Black Holes were not mentioned, even in passing-- assuming that a traveler can pass one of them. Perhaps Maffei does not yet accept them as genuine. Lots of excellent black and white photographs (and diagrams) in the book, though it's a lot more than an elementary "picture book". Maffei's name has been given to two galaxies he discovered by the use of infrared photography (they don't show up at all in blue light.) Recommended for people with enough interest to pay the price (which I didn't have to do since the book was sent to me for review in the EXPLORER magazine.)

WHAT WILL THEY THINK OF LAST? by Horace L. Gold, Institute for the Development of the Harmonious Human Being, Inc., 1976, and GALAXY, 1950-1961, \$3.95, paperback.

A short intro by Robert Bloch credits H.L.Gold with helping SF come of age and this collection of editorials, essays, and autobiographical material illustrates well the wide range of Gold's interest, his familiarity with science and writing, his humor and imagination. His writing, to me anyway, seems convoluted, with some passages requiring more than one reading to follow the tunnels of his mind. The effort is worth it. The little book, about the actual size and appearance of an early GALAXY, has lasting value, too, quite beside a fan's interest in a SF editor-- it is a commentary upon the middle 50's era, and earlier as Gold brings in anecdotes from his earlier years. It is a book I'll keep; you might want the address in case the book, being "privately printed" hasn't shown up in your area: P.O.Drawer D, Crestline, CA 92325.

THE UNEXPLAINED by F.L.Boschke, Pocket Books, 1975, 1978, paperback \$1.95
THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF IGNORANCE, ed. by Ronald Duncan & Miranda Weston-Smith, A Wallaby Book, Pocket Books, 1977, 1978 Paperback \$7.95

Sometime ago I hurriedly passed up the first book as "just another occult or far-out psycho" book; a later look convinced me to buy it. It could have been a large appendix for the second book for it, too, dealt with "ignorance" in the special area of Earth Science. Long, long ago I had collected this type of "science does not know" information in a notebook I called COSMIC DUST, a concept that began The Frontier Society (See Warner's ALL OUR YESTERDAYS). Thus, I recommend both books. The second, by a great variety of authors (mostly British), runs a long gamut of subject matter and degree of difficulty-- something for everyone: cosmic mysteries, physics, chemistry, math, evolution, psychology, physiology, and general philosophy of "ignorance". Both books are well-adapted for browsing; both have indices; both are superb sources of SF ideas. The first book repeats at intervals the idea that "school books have it all cut and dried and to read them is to miss the nebulous aspect of many of the most basic concepts of science." I find this refreshing, which is not really a paradox to my faith in science in technology; it only increases my respect and appreciation for science on the high levels of competence.

BUTTER SIDE UP by Dr. Magnus Pyke, Bantam Book, 1977,1978, paperback \$1.95

The cover has two sub-title "blurbs" which exactly indicate the contents: "The Delights of Science" and "An exciting new look at the world of science in your own backyard." Well, not *exactly*. Although the compilation in one place makes it new, quite a bit of the material might be familiar to you from a number of tid-bit sources. Fascinating even on a re-reading. The "Butter Side Up" refers to the probability of which side a falling slice of bread will land-- on the dry side or buttered? Besides an index, the book has a well-captioned contents listing on 3 pages. A few of the key words: blood, eggs, enzymes, explosions, beer, gravity, bathtub, thixotropic, rain, icebergs, ultrasonics, illusions, and thunder. If you're the type of person who sees mysteries in all the little things around you (as you know I do), then you'll love this book. It also opens up areas of discussion as to the validity of all Dr.Pyke's explanations-- another sure-fire come-on for the typical TITLE-circle.

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA GENESIS

As most of you know, I'm not a moviegoer, but this might be a good spot to give a reaction to the two "films" above. I looked forward with a great deal of excitement to the 3-hour introductory premiere of BATTLESTAR; I gave up after 90 minutes. It bored me. I can't put my finger on why this happened exactly but I failed to see any great SF plot developing or any characters that impressed me positively. Maybe by now it's great, but I'll never know. As for any great special effects, I didn't notice any; what I did notice was that the same identical effect or "scene" was used several times within the 90 minutes, which probably gave some work to the film editor but irritated me. Now GENESIS is another ball of wax. This is one of those "surround" films, produced in Hollywood, and shown in the Science Museum in St.Paul, Minnesota. Their "Omnitheater" is fantastic-- a combination of planetarium projector and this 3-D film projection. GENESIS is the story of the beginning of the universe, the birth of Earth, and the arrival of life on a still active Earth. Thrills were provided by 3-D helicopter flights over mountains and volcanoes, the Big Bang of the universe birth, earthquakes-- the part about tectonics was terrific. The combination of visual and audio effects was excellent; the narrator's story line was well-done and he, best of all, knew when to shut up and let us look and listen by ourselves.

FAR AWAY AND LONG AGO by W.H.Hudson, E.P.Dutton 1918

One doesn't hear much about W.H.Hudson (THE PURPLE LAND and THE CRYSTAL AGE) nowadays, and so it was a delight to find this "A History of My Early Life" buried in the museum's library. The style of the writing is a nostalgic treat-- that painstaking development of each sentence, those paragraphs of meandering asides, that attention to the small detail of color and sound, that awareness of bird and tree. The viewpoint shifts between the activities of the small boy and the romantic memories of that small boy now grown to age-- an altogether, unconfusing, delightful mix. I suppose it's not right to mention such an old book, but I assume that any large library might still have some edition of it on the shelves. One ought to wait in the reading of it, though, until one's boyhood is "far away and long ago," and a purple light has fallen on the years.

INSIGHT, formerly NSI Newsletter, "Premier Issue" (but Vol 3 No 1 in the series)
National Space Institute, Suite 408, 1911 N. Fort Myer Dr., Arlington, VA 22209

A 10 page, slickpaper zine at \$15 a year (Membership) that gives news on space and its use as an important tool in solving Earth problems. President: Hugh Downs. Material in the zine may be reprinted without permission although proper credit is appreciated. Before von Braun's death he was a bigwheel in the venture which is non-profit educational. The zine alone is probably not worth \$15, but that's why the fee is tax deductible-- it supports the NSI.

Dear Ellen-0:

Forgive this method of communication...just remember my age! I wanted to thank you for making the Earth trip back from the moon more pleasant than usual. You are a younger original than I, and probably didn't harbor the same secret romantic thoughts I did, but I'm hoping you were kind to me for reasons other than that I too am an 0. It was a real surprise and delight that you ordered a bourbon and water, my own favorite drink. Actually, it was a surprise, too, that the ship had the stuff in stock.

The second delightful surprise was that you had some rose bushes and knew about Tiffany and Peace. There're not many people that would trade lettuce space for a rose bush. I know I'll never make it to Baltimore to see your bushes (or you) again.

Returning to the thoughts of the first paragraph, I guess I was mostly delighted that your eyes (and manner) accepted me as a man -- a male, if you will. I'm not too old that I've forgotten how important that used to be-- and how really thrilling. (If I'm wrong, if it's just my imagination, just forget it.) However, you seemed to be embarrassed about your eye glasses. What for, there's a lot of us 0 people with glasses including me. (I didn't have mine on because I don't need them except for reading when I can find something now and then.) Anyway, I thought you looked terrific in them and I liked the way the blue frames matched the darker blue of your hair (and the natural blue of your eyes, ha!).

I don't know if I told you how impressed I was that Washington okayed your cloning. Frankly, I haven't gotten used to the idea. (Certainly I have no desires of that for myself-- even if I were accepted.) But your talent of magnetic sensing seems too important to trust to old-fashioned genetics. My only regret here is that your clone (living in my very own city!) is only twelve years old -- a wee bit too young for a man of my age, considering that I want the whole ball of wax. (You'll probably ask me -- if you ever reply to this letter -- what a "whole ball of wax" is. What it really is I have no idea, but I mean the whole sexual bit.... well, as much of that bit as I can still manage!) My grabbing hold of your round shoulder with a little squeeze when we said goodbye at the port was an expression of my feeling toward you which I couldn't resist. That you didn't object has been leading me to rather rosy dreams. Impossible dreams.

I wonder... Should I torture myself by seeking out Ellen-1? It wouldn't be too hard to do, but I'm afraid. I'm somewhat of a "dirty old man", and besides I might delude myself that it is you, really you. I don't know what might happen. At the moment I've put the idea aside, but who knows? Maybe a quick glimpse of her might be all right-- from a safe distance.

I wish I could say I'd see you on another moon trip, but I've passed my eligibility now. Though I'll never be able to get to Baltimore, is there any chance you might be coming here? Don't the medics check up on originals as well as their clones just to see how things are going? Or is it all done by teleputer?

Please answer. Tell me about your roses if nothing else. If you feel so inclined please do it rather soon. I'm not having any organplants, thank you.

Dreaming of you,

Bill-0

Bill

(TO BE CONTINUED)

S E N E T

Senet was by far the most popular and important of the many board games of ancient Egypt. The archaeological evidence indicates that the game was played by all levels of Egyptian society. Apparently the moves of the pieces represented the wanderings of the human soul in the underworld (afterlife).

None of the surviving Egyptian documents tell us exactly how the game was played, but the following rules have been devised by the Swiss archaeologist, Gustave Jequier and corroborated by the German Egyptologist, Edgar B. Pusch.

Senet is a race game for two players. Each player has five counters, black or white. The playing pieces move in a pattern similar to the way an ox plows. (see figure 1). To begin, the pieces are placed on squares 1 through 10 with the white pieces on the odd-numbered squares and the black pieces on the even numbered squares.

Movement of pieces is determined by throws of four 2-sided dice. The dice score: One white side up. . 1; two white sides up. . 2; three white sides up. . 3; four white sides up. . 4; four black sides up. . 6.

Players alternate throwing the dice, until one throws a 1. This player has the black pieces and moves the piece on square 10 to square 11. After the first move, the player continues to throw the dice. If he throws, 1, 4 or 6, he moves any of his pieces the indicated number of squares along the game track, and throws again. If he throws a 2 or 3, he moves a piece the indicated number of squares and the turn passes to his opponent. The second player must make his first move from square 9, but then may move any piece. Each turn ends with a throw of 2 or 3.

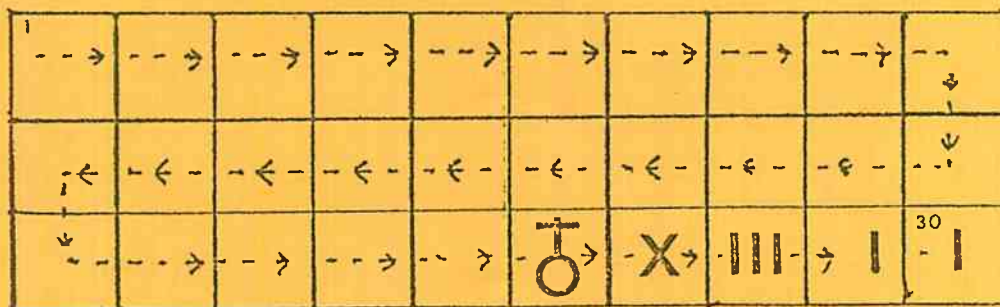
If a piece lands on a square occupied by an opposing piece, the opposing piece is "attacked" and moved back to the square just vacated by the piece in play. Two pieces of the same color may not occupy one square, but two pieces which occupy consecutive squares protect each other from attack. Three pieces of the same color in a row form a protected blockade; they can neither be attacked nor be passed by enemy pieces, though they do not block the progress of pieces of the same color.

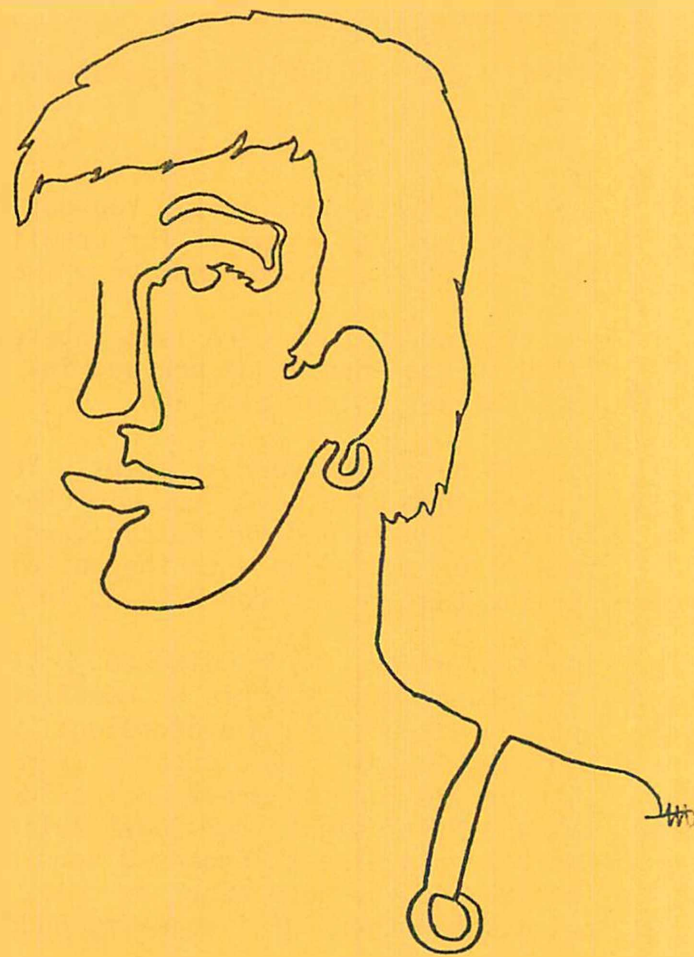
Any dice throw which cannot be used to make a forward move must be used to move a piece in the reverse direction on the game track. (A piece may not move backward onto an occupied square.) If no move can be made in either direction, the turn ceases.

Square 27, marked by an "X", is the 'trap'. Any piece landing on this square must return to square 1 (or the first vacant square) and begin the journey again. Squares 26, 28, 29 and 30 are 'havens' where pieces are not vulnerable to attack.

When a player has moved all his pieces into the last row of the board, he may begin to take them off by landing exactly on square 30. If any of the pieces of the last row are attacked and thrown back to the first or second row, the pieces of the same color which remain on the board may not be moved off until the lagging piece returns to the third row.

The player who first moves all his pieces off the board is the winner.





CRAB NEBULA

ERIC MAYER

They say when you gafiate your faanish career flurries before your eyes in flashes of locs and illos, like the uncollated pages of a thick annish caught in a high wind. You would have started this article that way, once. Once, you might have thought it worthwhile to gafiate. But you were a fan then.

Now you longer outside Fandom. Like a moviegoer who's left a bad film early, you stand under the bright marquee, exchanging words with those few others who could not understand what the rest of the audience apparently found so moving. The posters beside the doors look as inviting as before and you hesitate, wondering if you should go back inside. The dark, deserted street is not inviting.

Sometimes you can't stop yourself from thinking what a thrill that first issue of OUTWORLDS gave you when it materialized in your mailbox amid the utility bills and slick magazines. It was like nothing you'd ever seen before. Strangely warm, as if fresh from some alternate reality. You sensed in its pages the existence of dimesnions alien to the printed page as you had known it until then.

You remember reading ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, too. It was THE LORD OF THE RINGS all over again. You were drawn into a new world, alive with heros and villains, good and evil, history, customs. But this was, in a sense, a real world. It extended beyond the pages of Harry Warner's book into the real past and, more marvelous yet, it reached into your own future. You had never been aware of this other world before, but it lay close by, hidden in the interstices of mundania, sensed by only a gifted few. And to reach it you didn't need a spaceship or a time machine or even a rabbit hole. All you needed were a few stamps and quarters and a bit of

scotch tape. In no time, you'd walk the loccols where Degler once roamed.

But it's not like Harry said it would be.

Maybe it's your own fault. You got off on the right foot. No matter how mangy the fanzine, you loved it for crawling into your mailbox. Never mind the fleas. You praised everything and every loc you wrote got printed. Not like now.

You figured editors were less interested in imagination than in filling white space so you turned out pen and ink spacefillers and your illos were printed too. But that was a long time ago.

You did best with your articles. You bought the various INCOMPLETE BNFs and studied them astutely. You mimicked Burbee and everyone said you had a great future. You turned out cotton candy pieces - a few grains of sugar and a lot of fake color puffed up with the hot air of puns and empty witticisms and laborious chatter that passes for writing in the supposedly literate realm of Fandom.

Finally you even made OUTWORLDS. It was easy once you found out that the Great Carr had cranked out his Brandonizations by the simplistic expediant of lifting entire sentences from professional works and replacing mundane terms with "ego-boo" and "beanie" and "duper". Fan critics were still whirling their propellers with praise for the Great Carr's "double-edged satire" when, in plain fact, he'd thieved his insight from Roger Zelazny and John Collier. So you cranked out your own Reader's Digest Condensed version of the EXORCIST and translated it into the faanish and you were about as close to becoming a BNF as one can come, without being some other BNFs' drinking buddy.

And you were quite pleased with yourself. You could Brandonize your way into faanish immortality now, you figured. The possibilities were virtually endless. Carr had never done the BIBLE for instance, or THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA. There was only one problem. Parroting those Greats was a deadly bore. Most of their productions weren't worth emulating anyway. You figured there were things you could do better. But those things weren't of much interest to fans.



As soon as you started to explore your own abilities rather than ripping off the past, you were done for. Fandom doesn't much care about the truth. It likes a good whine all right. It's acceptable to go around exposing your private affairs and wailing about how one is altogether too sensitive for the world, but you had a hard enough time outgrowing that particular stage of adolescence to dare go back. Besides, you weren't after that exhibitionistic kind of sincerity, but something simpler.

So you let a good thing get away. You didn't describe your drinking habits or your sex life, or turn out reams of first draft ramblings, or try to ingratiate yourself to the editors of the large circulation zines and, most especially, you didn't go to conventions. You were starting not to be a fan.

There was a time, when you moved to the city, when it looked like you might still live up to the promise you showed at the beginning, when you were voted second best new fan of the year in the poll conducted in the best new fan's fanzine. You met a fan couple who treated you well, but after a while it became apparent that they were treating you like a neofan - and you were 26

years old, and not a neo human. The idea of Fandom seeping out of its interstices into the real world disturbed you. You didn't go to see the fan couple any more.

Later you met some fans at a fan meeting. They talked about conventions, and publishing, and feuds and when you had to keep explaining that you were going to law school because, yes, you were impure enough at heart to want to get along decently in the real world, you knew that this kind of Fandom wasn't for you.

So after a while you forgot about writing for the sons of OUTWORLDS. You concentrated on a column for a low circulation fanzine that tottered on the brink between fandom and mundania. Finally you started your own, even tinier fanzine. Circulation didn't matter much. You knew you'd be lucky to find fifty people in Fandom who cared about the kind of thing you were doing.

You weren't following in Willis' footsteps any more. That path had been travelled too much and too many explorers had already reported back. We all know what's down that path and it's not all that much. You were going your own way and beginning to wonder whether it was a way worth going. You've always needed applause and as you grew older and chipped away all your artistic borrowings and affectations, and found the core of your talent to be very small indeed, your audience both real and potential shrank correspondingly.

And you liked being voted second best new fan, dammit! And if giving your right arm won't get you into professional print then you'd love to see your name pop up in a praise-filled loc, or a best of the year anthology or the FAAn Awards and the hell of it is you've even tried to crank out the requisite garbage, like you did five years ago, but you always get bored halfway through, and disgusted at yourself because you're not a fan and you shouldn't concern yourself with fan preoccupations, and even if you were a fan, fans don't ever think about such blatant recognition. Do they?

So you type this up, just before leaving for Evidence class. You consider sending it to one of those big circulation fanzines with hundreds of readers. Get started again. Reach for the handle of the enchanted duplicator again. You consider throwing it in the wastebasket and getting out of Fandom entirely.

But in the end you stick it in the envelope and send it to the small circ zine that inspired it because, after all, you're not a fan.



TO WHAT MAD UNIVERSE

PORTRAIT OF BILL BRIDGET, A PRELIMINARY TO INSTANT MATTER TRANSMISSION

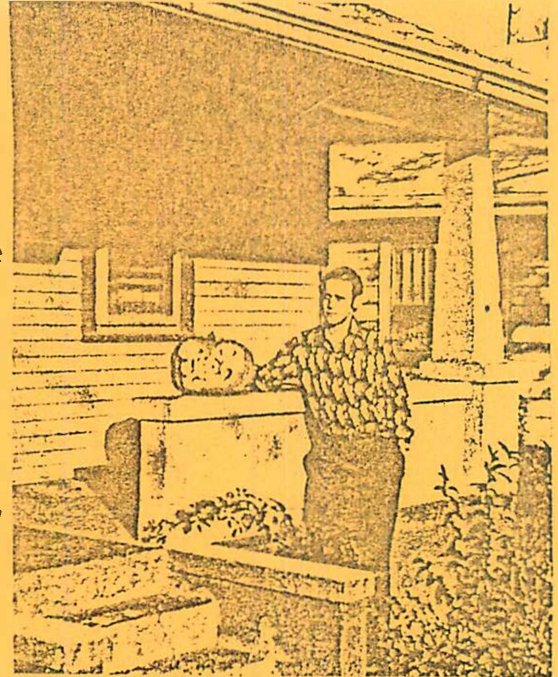
"As for Chilson's piece on a parallel world where there are still pulp magazines, I loved it. But I think Mr. Gary McGrady would merely like to receive the things, whereas I would not be satisfied with anything less than making a transition to the other world myself. Recall WHAT MAD UNIVERSE? Yeah, like that there. Hail Doppell!"

Bill Bridget
3800 W. Michigan St
Apt 807
Indianapolis, IN 46222

JUNK MAIL & OTHER JOYS

"I'm damned if I wouldn't like to see this thing again. Now, I'm going to try a unique experiment, commenting on a fanzine without having read it. To do this, first I skim it, then I read a little patch here and there, and observe the way it's put together for clues. Then I sling a fabulous fannish line drawn from other zines, and last of all I make the letter ambiguous." -- John Thiel, 30 N. 19th St., Lafayette, IN 47904.

In order to make room for his ambiguous photo at the right, I have skimmed his letter to find only that good points were awarded Charneau Flic and bad points to the rest. The ambiguity of the photo lies in the two portraits shown, one rather pumpkinish and probably the real John Thiel.



"When you first sent me that copy of TITLE #3, I was a sophomore in high school. Today I am a legitimate grownup, out of college, struggling with my first job. How strange it all seems. (*He makes commercials for WIRL/Peoria.*) I did not quite get the ending of 'Mother of Invention', but I felt as if I should have. One of the times when I feel the author is right, and it's me who is at fault. (*I had that same feeling-- comes on me often.*) In actuality Burt Libe remains a fan by continuing to take part, though I doubt that he is actually God's unappreciated gift to the genre, as he seems to imply." -- Jim Meadows III, 606 Jackson #2, Peoria, IL 61603. (*Note that Jim has a new address.*)

"We once had an English next-door neighbor who, when I was about to go to the hospital for the birth of a child, asked Andy if he'd like her to come over in the mornings and 'knock him up'... Fans are people, and different from each other. I've seen fans challenge the competence of pro-writers, sometimes very rudely. Most fans have little interest in the 'fandom mogul'. Fans gossip very little about non-fans. They're usually too busy communicating with each other, socializing by letter or fanzine or in person at cons. Fans are interested in the same things non-fans are: being with friends of like interests. Nobody speaks out faster than a fan when something sets him off. And fans are better equipped to express themselves because they're better read. Writers are people, too. Some are shy, some are arrogant, some are fans, some non-fans, some are nice guys, some are entertainers, some are less competent as writers than others. It wouldn't take much effort to get what Burt Libe wants from fandom. A would-be writer can go to cons to attend writer's panels. He can read fanzines that concentrate on fiction. He doesn't need to involve himself in the politics of fandom to do these things. You get from fandom what you want. All one has to do is decide." -- Jodie Offutt, Funny Farm, Haldeman, Ky 40329. (*Pretty good advice there, my pretty!*)

"If I may put my oar in on the question of poems about light bulbs, I think the problem is in the names of modern gadgets. Most words found in poems are so old that their origin is lost in the mists of time, while their meaning is clear a vast wealth of connotations and emotional weight lies behind them. The names of modern gadgets, on the other hand, are awkward compounds of phrases which have not acquired the weight of connotations. Thus 'candle' is an old word and looks right in a poem, while 'light bulb' is new and does not. The power of a word is partly its sound and partly its cargo of emotional connotations, and 'new' words generally fail both ways." -- Ned Brooks, 713 Paul St., Newport News, Va. 23605.

"Frankly, Burt Libe's column left me feeling 'so what'? His ostentatious iconoclasm is hardly impressive in a group which can boast Harlan Ellison, Ted White,

Boyd Raeburn, Roy Tackett....or even me, for that matter. As for his impression that he's capable of improving a mouldering field of literature, I'll believe that when I see it." -- Buck Coulson, Route 3, Hartford City, IN 47348.

"Well, OK, I hear what Doc Wertham is saying (I got a copy of that article from MD, too), that the mass media (egad, but I hate that term 'media') is not solely responsible for violence being abroad in the land but, rather, produces an atmosphere which makes it acceptable. Doc shows much more sense than the PTA types who insist that our propensity for violence is all because Tom and Jerry cartoons are shown on the tube. Und zo maybe I oversimplify but it occurs to me that we have a penchant for violence because we are a violent species. Some discussion at Iggycon indicated we are changing, that we are becoming opposed to violence. My daily newspaper tells me otherwise. ... Hmmm. If von Braun was the Opener to the Stars, then how to classify Lang who was von Braun's inspiration? THE WOMAN IN THE MOON was what set von Braun's feet on his particular path." -- Roy Tackett, 915 Green Valley Rd, NW, Albuquerque, NM, 87107.

"'Ode to an Electric Bulb' was illuminating, but boring. Some of the ideas are good, but the poem is too diffuse, too wordy. Flic could have made it one-third as long. ... Eric Mayer really shines when it comes to conveying sense memory atmosphere. Let's have more Mayer! Amen. ... Burt Libe doesn't want to play the fannish game. Nobody's forcing him to. He has talents in a lot of areas, to judge by things by him in TITLE. Nobody can take that away from him. I liked the piece, because I like to see some belly-aching once in a while. But, after all, he is only generalizing. He didn't do nearly as good a job of expressing this theme as Eric Mayer did in TITLE when he wrote the article questioning the idea of BNFhood. I would like to see more from Burt Libe. He says what he thinks. Good. But in this article he could have taken it much farther if he'd supplied specific anecdotes to support the points he was trying to make." -- Gary Deindorfer, 447 Bellevue Ave #9-B, Trenton, NJ 08618.

"I wonder if Mary Long knows the meaning of 'double knock' which Dickens mentioned so frequently in his novels? I've thought it might be pounding on a door with both hands, or hitting the door twice, or hitting the door twice as hard as usual, but some passages in the novels seem to rule out all those possible meanings. Today I was thinking about a term which I heard endlessly when I was a boy and haven't encountered in adult life or seen in print. It was 'goonie'. A goonie was a rock that someone was throwing at someone else. If the rock was just lying on the ground, it was a rock, but it was a goonie if it was being hurled or had just been thrown. This seems to be in line with the way the more primitive languages have more words for the same object than sophisticated languages. ... Don't worry about what Hank Heath said about pipe-smoking. We both know it's really nothing more than a latter-day substitute for breast-feeding pleasures." -- Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, Md 21740. (*Your goonie set me to thinking of any similar terms of my youth, now no longer heard as far as I know. One comes to mind: 'dibs'. When another kid got some candy or something, the other kids would holler 'dibs' which meant that the stuff had to be shared -- or else!*)

"About Jane Austen -- this is a good place for a story about her birthplace. The caretaker was driven out of his mind by American tourists knocking on his office door for reassurance that this was indeed her birthplace. He asked that the trustees spring for a tasteful brass plaque informing them of that fact, and it was put over the door. A fortnight later (that word was used in the account I read), he was back before the trustees demanding that the plaque be taken down. 'Twice as many people come around and knock now!' he said. 'Only these are British and they ask, "Who was Jane Austen?"'Charneau Flic's ode to the bulb reminds me of those British poets who wrote poems to locomotives and power-line towers: 'Nude giant girls that have no secret'. A little long for greatest impact." -- Rob Chilson, Rt 3 Box 181, Osceola, Mo. 64776.

"I enjoyed this issue a lot more than last issue. Lots of short, diversified stuff, that's why. Eric Mayer's CRAB NEBULA was great. More, more, more. Burt Libe, however, I don't understand. He doesn't so much set himself apart from the fan as set himself against. Not that I can't see some of his points, but I really can't see his distinction between fan and non-fan as being anymore than a distinction between a good person and a bad person, by Burt's standards. ... Owen Hanner did a good job in conveying Wade's personality, his motivations. Two fine stories in this issue, which is more than usual. I am impressed. ... There are two things to remember about locs and writing. First, that no reader gets as much out of a piece of fiction as the writer puts into it. Second, that no loccer puts back into a zine as much as the editor put out. -- Marty Levine, 6201 Markley Hall, Ann Arbor, MI, 48109.

"For me, two pieces stood out: Chilson's 'From a Wild, Weird Clime' and your 'The Peel and the Pulp'. The Chilson was very, VERY good. It was handled well enough that the mood really came across. I could feel Gary's despair at the end. As for your piece, I had to keep reminding myself that it wasn't fiction. ... Recently I took a trip to Arkansas with my father in his motor home. He has a CB and that sucker was going constantly. I never really liked CB or CBers, but after that trip if I ever hear another 'Breaker one-nine' I'll start screaming. The idiotic, inane, insipid crap I heard going on set my teeth on edge. But, we passed thru St. Louis on our way back and I thot of you there." -- J.Owen Hanner, 338 Jackson St. Apt 2, Libertyville, IL 60048. *(That's a CoA please note. I have found traffic info and street directions helpful at times, but the usual 'talk' is empty of real content. Maybe somebody giving a short book review would be different!)*

"Gimmick...Capra talks about virtual particles in THE TAO OF PHYSICS, the creation of particles with mass greater than the mass of particles from which they arose. Maybe not greater in mass, but requiring more energy for their creation than is present in the proton. Or something along those lines, for physics has never been my field of expertese. It can only be explained by bringing in the uncertainty principle. Another... Borges in his essay 'A New Refutation of Time' develops his idea that time is no more necessary a construct of reality than absolute space is. He speaks of the almost immeasurably small moments of 'present' out of which we construct all sensation and thought. Is there a sort of quantum mechanics of metaphysics? Where the smaller the unit of time, the more uncertain how much occurred within that time? What if within these incredible brevities of our present moments we actually live our entire life, where we relive ourselves infinitely with each 'present' moment? In a fantasy story what would be the character of these separate existences? Could we all be living every possible life in the universe, now Charno, now Confucius, now Judas, now the last saber toothed tiger?" -- Charneau Flic, 17 High St., Natick, MA 01760.

"Eric Mayer continues to produce a fine, thoughtful, and engaging column marred only by its continuing brevity. When are we going to see some fiction, Eric? ... I disagree with Covell about violence being a substitute for sex; the real world is a violent one in which mayhem is commonplace. The list of examples from the world of nature is endless, and it has nothing to do with sex. Am I less responsive to alleged brutality because I'm a trained zoologist and have accepted this philosophical responsibility, or what?" -- Don Ayres, 5707 Harold Way #3, Hollywood, CA 90028.

"Burt Libe has come out and spoken the truth in the center of postal tinseltown. Let's hope more is forthcoming from other fen." -- Dave Szurek, 4417 Second Apt B2, Detroit, MI 48201. *(How about that Mayer column this issue!)*

WAHF: Chester Cuthbert, Jeff Hecht, Lester Boutillier, Gene Wolfe, Nanek, Burt Libe, Ben Indick, Wayne DeVette, Wally Stoelting, Wayne Hooks, Allan Beatty, Victoria Vayne, Gail White, Eric Mayer, and Mary Long.

HEY BIRDWHANGER!

FEATURING:
BIRDWHANGER CORD
FROM: SKEETRA
AND THE GANG
by KIM HANSEN

ANOTHER BRAZIER ZINE JUST CAME
IN-- I'LL PUT IT WITH THE OTHER

47 FROM HIM FOR
THIS MONTH...

WONDER HOW HE
PUSS SO OFTEN?

SURE

WELL---
I'LL
TELL
YOU!

FIRST, YOUR ORDER IS RECEIVED BY
ONE OF DONN'S ROBOT SECRETARIES...

BRAZIER
PUBLISHING & CO.

THE TOTAL
AMOUNT DETERMINES
HOW MUCH WOOD
DONN'S TRAINED
BEAVERS WILL REDUCE
TO SAWDUST---

WHICH IS THEN CHEWED TO
PULP BY HIS COWS---

THE PULP IS THEN STAMPED INTO PAPER BY
MAGIC ELVES, WHO ALSO COLOR AND CUT THE PAPER

THEN, A WIZARD CAUSES THE
PRINT TO APPEAR... AND A LOVELY
WENCH COLLATES
AND STAPLES

AND FINALLY,
DONN LOADS HIS
SLEIGH AND
PERSONALLY DELIVERS
EACH COPY!

MERRY XMAS
DONN!

DOES THAT
ANSWER
YOUR
QUESTION?

YES!
BUT NOW I
HAVE ANOTHER
-- DO YOU OWN A
BIG BULL?