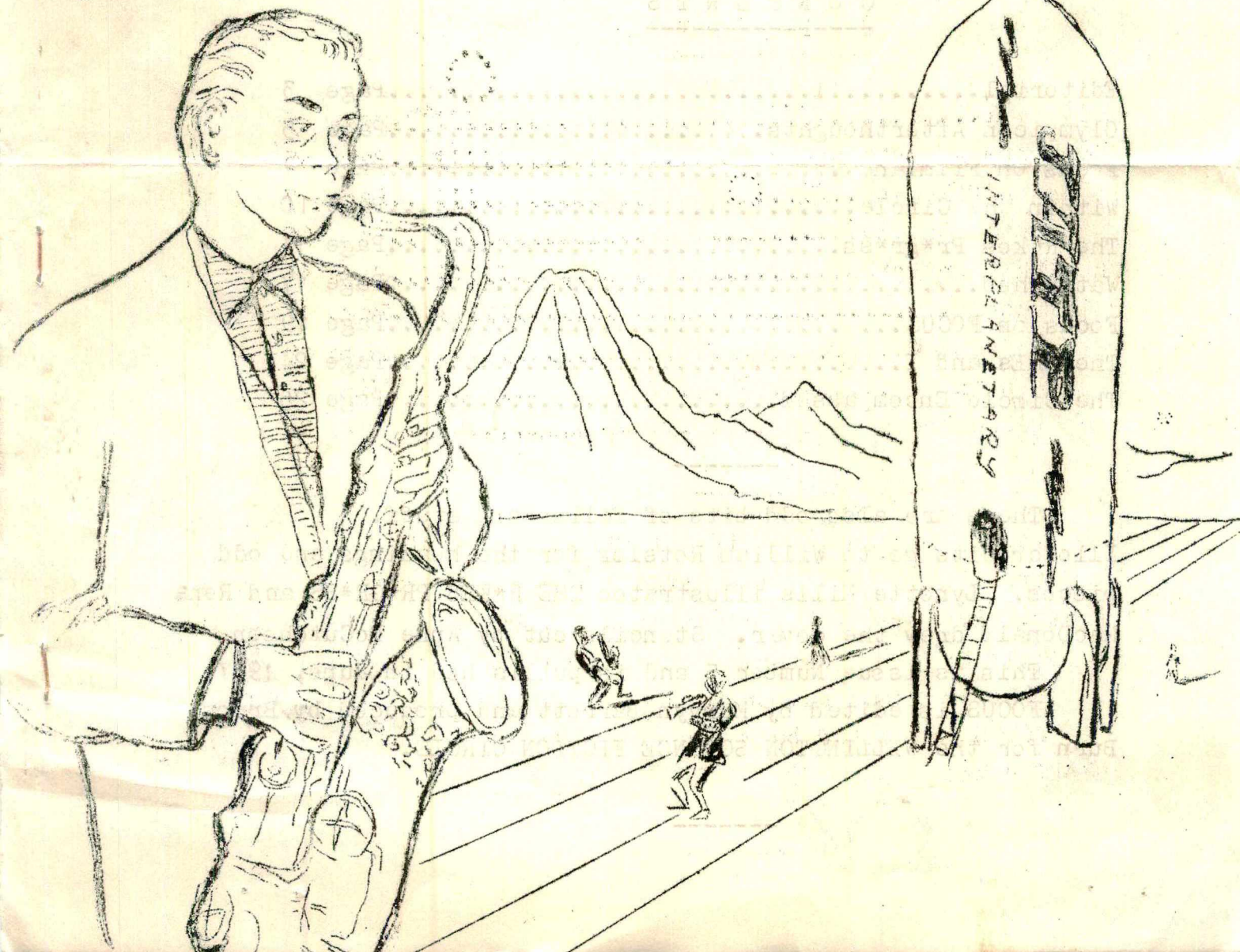


# FOODS

NO. 5





INSTRUMENTS OPTICAL?  
THE WISE BUYER BUYS  
AT 104 TORY STREET.

PHONE: 51-285

# GENERAL SCIENCE SUPPLIES.

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## C O N T E N T S

Editorial.....	Page 3
Olympicon Afterthoughts.....	Page 5
Focus on FilmLand.....	Page 7
Within the Circle.....	Page 10
The R*kes Pr*gr*ss.....	Page 11
Watershed.....	Page 17
Focus on FOCUS.....	Page 19
The BREs and I.....	Page 24
The Circle Encompassed.....	Page 26

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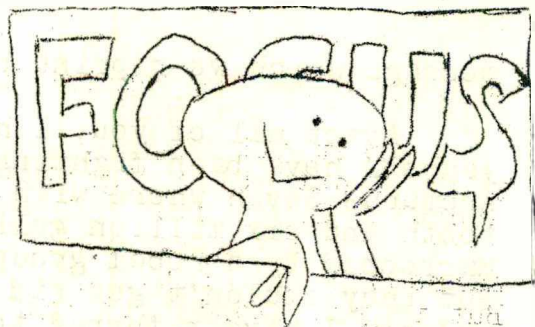
There are also odd bits of filler and stuff.

Illo credits go to William Rotsler for the headings and odd pieces. Lynette Mills illustrated THE R\*KES PR\*GR\*SS and Rena MacDonald drew the cover. Stencils cut by Anne McCutcheon.

This is issue Number 5 and is published in June, 1957,  
FOCUS is edited by Mervyn Barrett and produced by Bruce  
Burn for the WELLINGTON SCIENCE FICTION CIRCLE.

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# EDITORIAL



WHY NOT SER-CON?

and

THE RETURN OF AN EXILE

A fact that the Editor of FOCUS has been puzzled by for some time is the objection some people seem to have to a fanzine saying something serious once in a while. Why this should be we are not too sure but, judging by some of the letters of advice we have received we are being led to believe that the worst thing that could happen to a fanzine would be for it to print a serious article. While we consider that a fanzine is not the place for abstruse discussions on religion, philosophy and other equally profound subjects, preferring that these be kept to the more specialised publications which have a readership interested in such things, we do feel that to turn down any material that is offered to us merely because it might be constructed as being serious is a rather short sighted outlook.

If we can lay claim to having anything so grand as an editorial policy it is this. To print the best and most entertaining material available to us. That's all. And by entertaining we do not necessarily mean humorous or light weight. It is possible to be serious without being grim and a serious article can be as entertaining as a contribution of lighter intent. A case in point is the article we printed in the last issue by Leo Harding. It wasn't written tongue in cheek but was an idea of the author's well written and put forward in straightforward fashion. Judging from our readers' letters it was probably the best thing in the issue yet, if this wasn't serious what was it? The defence rests.

And now on to a subject which will probably give older fans something to either worry or cheer about, depending on their point of view....

On opening the Editorial offices of FOCUS last Monday we found that over the week-end our premises had entertained uninvited visitors. The air had a strange overpowering odour to it which we found was caused by some patches of an acid-like liquid which had in places burned through the desk top and the floor. Outside on the lawn we found a blackened circular patch of grass which suggested to us that some odd craft about thirty feet in diameter had rested there for some time. Further investigation of the offices revealed in the typewriter on the Editor's desk a sheet of paper bearing the



message which we reprint below.

Avast all of you, I have returned. For the past eleven years I have been fighting my way back from the swamps of Arcturus Seven where with only Wart ears, Frogeyes, Snaggletooth and six million gallons of Xeno for company I was marooned by a rebel group at Startling and Thrilling Wonder. But they couldn't get rid of this old space dog that easily, and now I have returned to find that my tormentors have been consigned to the oblivion where they belong. -What's that, Wartears? Frogeyes can't remember the combination of the lock on the Xeno tank. Tell him to give it a good kick and it'll fly open. That's what I always do. And when he's got it open tell him to bring some of it into me. About a couple of Neptunian Quarts. (The're five times the size of earth quarts.) Operating a typewriter for the first time after all these years is thirsty work.

Now I am free to again wander the space ways and magazine columns thumbing my nose at those "nothing but space between the ears" appeasers who burble unconvincingly of the "dignity of Science Fiction". When I was the astrogator, things were different. The ether vibrated with bad puns, worse verse, name calling and all those other sensory delights, which were enough to make a grulzack leave its Martian pasture in search of writing fluid and papyrus so that it could join in the fun. -Egad Snaggletooth, stop drinking that duplicator ink. We can't expect them to print this for us if we wreck the joint.

Now let every right thinking fan rejoice. Let everyone look forward to a new era of thud and blunder and wonderful cheesecake covers and even more revolting Bems. Let everyone look forward to editorials that begin "Uncork the Xeno keg Frogeyes and let all the space vermin beware lest....". And those vicious irresponsible fans (if there are any left) that engineered my departure in order to improve their own foul ends while all the time claiming that they were working for the betterment of science fiction would do well to move carefully for my memory is long and eleven years of exile have not improved my temper. Let them beware lest unaccountably their duplicators fill with treacle and their freshly cut stencils disappear in a cloud of Xeno vapour. They have been warned.

My return presages a new day for science fiction and fandom and a return to those happy times of the past when nobody cared about trends in film making or fretted in case the boom broke and letters to prozines began, "Dear Sarge," or "To Planet's Lecherous Pterodactyl."

Look for me, I will be around.

Sgt. Saturn.

While we are honoured that FOCUS is the medium by which

the famous Sergeant has made, his return known and while we in no way wish to offend him we would like him to contact us in the hope that eh may be able to throw some light on the inexplicable disappearance from our office of several well thumbred copies of PLAYBOY magazine which form an important part of our reference library..

THE EDITOR.

# OLYMPICON

## AFTERTHOUGHTS

By Bob McCubbin.

"Oh Thou who didst with pitfall and with gin  
Beset the road I was to travel in."

From Omar Khayyam.

I propose, in this article, to show the hidden side of Convention organising as I found it during 1956. In general, a Convention, apart from continuous hard work, is good clean fun. However, for the guidance of others, I give ten hints.

FIRST Never run a Convention with the Olympic Games.... You cannot get satisfactory accomodation because it is already booked or the price is astronomical. To quote the Bible "I was a stranger and you took me in." "Took" is the operative word.

SECOND The Olympicon was too close to Christmas. By the time we were almost normal again after the Con. the Xmas festivities were upon us. As a result of the two lethargies, it has been damned difficult to get things finalised.

THIRD Get your material for the Booklet in time to get a pull proofed before printing. We didn't, hence two errors appeared, and the poor Organiser has to write the apologetic letters.

FOURTH In Australia it does not pay to hire public halls. The owners have to advise the Tacation Department....and that body sharpens its knife and moves in for a slice of the melon. In our case, the melon was already a minus quantity!!!!



FIFTH Make sure that your Committeemen are not TOO enthusiastic. They have a tendency to think that their particular section is the WHOLE Con, and spend accordingly. This leads to grey hairs for the Organiser, and appeals to all and sundry for financial aid.

SIXTH Check all your equipment before the Con starts, and in the place in which it is to function. We didn't!!!! When we played our tapes back it sounded as though a party of Martians were making whoopee, and it was almost impossible to distangle the speeches from the background noise. It is not too nice to have to ask speakers later on (see the Second note) for a transcript of their speeches. It delays the Report also.

SEVENTH Be sure that, when transport is arranged, both driver and his passengers are well briefed. Our play had a 25 minute intermission between Acts One and Two because, when Graham called for Harry. Harry was watching TV, or changing the baby, and didn't hear the doorbell. Graham thought that Harry must be on his way------. Can you see the panic? And visualise me, standing before the curtain, asking the audience to be patient.

EIGHTH We decided on a large banner, 29 feet long, outside the hall. Yes but we did not calculate the effect of a gentle breeze on such a spread and so had a constant stream of people telling us that our banner was down, or twisted, or reversed. That meant getting a long ladder out and staging a wrestling match on the face of the building.

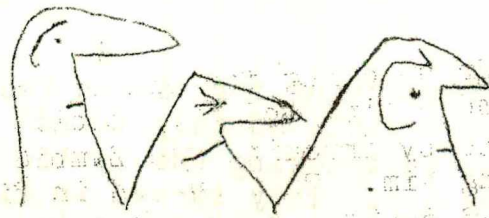
NINTH Don't have TOO much material to auction. Out here in Australia it would not be wise to cull what you get, because almost anything in the way of S-F will sell, even though it is not conducive to frantic bids. To keep somewhere near our timetable, we had to rush the bidding along thus spoiling our own market. Thank GHU that we had the foresight to duplicate catalogues, thus avoiding the timewasting business of describing every item. We used the member's register numbers as the means of identifying bidders, thus simplifying the final reckoning process. Our system has a weakness...one chap found that he had bid in more than he could pay for, and wanted us to sell it again, then screamed because we deducted our commission!!!!

TENTH Make sure that everyone picks up their OWN purchases ONLY. Larry Jones had a party at his flat after the Con, and someone walked off with the cream of his collection. Some time later, the missing items returned anonymously through the mail. Even an anonymous apology would have soothed Larry a little but he didn't get one!!!!

Those, brethren are the major pitfalls we found. In spite of everything though, Melbourne will run the next AUSTRALIAN Convention. Remember EASTER 1958 in Melbourne, Australia.

# focus on filmland

7



The following is a transcript of an interview which took place last Thursday afternoon on Station 2ZB's Women's Hour. Being interviewed by our Women's Hour compere, Miria, is Mr. Edmund Sweehack, a New Zealander, who has for some years been resident in Hollywood (California) from whence he has just come following the completion of a film in which he starred.

MIRIA: Well first of all Mr. Sweehack, I would like to say how happy we are to have you with us in the studio here to-day, and we do hope you won't have to leave us too soon to return to your film making in America.

MR. SWEEHACK: Thank you Miria, it is very kind of you to give me the opportunity to be here and be able to speak to your listeners and, should they be listening, those friends of mine whom I have not yet had the opportunity of seeing privately. And it is very nice to be back here although it is only for a very short time. My shooting schedule is already set for my next picture and I must return to Hollywood in three week's time.

MIRIA: First of all Mr. Sweehack I'd like you to tell us something about the film you have just completed and then perhaps you would answer a few questions for us about life in Hollywood generally.

MR. SWEEHACK: The film we have just completed and in which I starred, is a Science Fiction story titled THE BAIT OF THE ZOMBIE BUG MAN. I of course play the part of the Zombie Bug Man. Briefly the story concerns a Venusian Bug Man who comes across space to Earth as a scout for his planet which is considering invading Earth. He can, I think be best described as being an insect in vaguely humanoid form, but entirely devoid of human emotions. His saucer goes out of control over the Island of Haiti and crashes there. His unconscious body is picked from the wreckage by a local renegade doctor who has been making zombies of living men and selling them to work the sugar plantations. By injecting a mixture of Pentothal and Gammexane he succeeds in gaining control of the Venusian Bug Man with the ultimate goal of utilising the Venusian science from the wrecked space ship and of course gaining control of the world. He installs the Bug Man with the wreckage from the saucer in a huge secret cave and orders him to re-create the weapons that were destroyed in the crash. The now mindless Bug Man is entirely under the will of the doctor who orders him to kill with the new weapons in order to test their efficiency. The Bug Man does this but the doctor underestimated the power of the new weapons and is himself killed by them. With no one to control him the Bug Man now begins killing indiscriminately although as the effects of the doctors drugs start to wear off he regains control of his actions.

Prospecting for oil on the island at this time are two men and a girl and they decide to try to help the terrorised natives by tracking the Zombie Bug Man to his lair and destroying him. They succeed in finding his cave but the girl becomes separated from her two companions and is captured by the Venusian. A strange love for the girl forms within the hitherto emotionless Bug Man but she tries to escape from him and he, enraged at being spurned by her decides that she will instead be used as a specimen and he straps her to an operating table with the idea of dissecting her. Her two fellow scientists come to her rescue however and they succeed in getting her away from the Bug Man, although one of them loses his life in the process. A bomb made from dynamite is planted at the cave opening and explodes sealing the entrance before the Bug Man can emerge. Alone in the cave now I have my big dramatic scene in which I, as the Bug Man, am seen trying to claw my way out of the cave but gradually growing weaker as the oxygen in the air is used up and I collapse to the floor; suffocated.

MIRIA: That sounds tremendously exiting Mr. Sweehack and I suppose it must have taken quite a long time to film.

MR. SWEEHACK: Well no, not really. The actual story was written and the screening play prepared in a period of four days. The longest time spent on any one detail was the time spent in designing the appearance of the character I portray, the Zombie Bug Man. Of course when you make a film of this nature it's necessary to make sure that anything you put into it is scientifically accurate, or as accurate as you can get it within the limits of your budget. The science fiction fans who go to these things are very quick to spot any mistakes you make on the science side of things. I don't think though that they'll find many in this picture. We went to a lot of trouble during the fifteen weeks it took to film this story to make sure that errors of this sort were kept to a minimum.

MIRIA: I suppose you had quite a few important scientists on the set while filming was going on. I know a film of this nature always attracts a lot of interest from specialists in this field.

MR. SWEEHACK: Yes we did have a few on the lot at different times. Willy Ley came over one day and I think he must have been rather impressed because when I showed him my Zombie Bug Man costume all he could do was shake his head and mutter under his breath in German.

MIRIA: Perhaps you will tell us Mr. Sweehack how you managed to break into motion pictures.

MR. SWEEHACK: Well I was rather fortunate really. During the filming of THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON I heard that the producer was looking for a stand in for the creature just in case anything should happen to him that would delay production; like, er, drowning or catching cold for instance. I rushed around and applied for the position and because I resembled the creature very closely and wouldn't need much additional make up I was given the job. I also got a screen test but nothing came of it and I had just about given up hope of becoming a film actor when the offer to play the part of the Zombie Bug Man came. Naturally I took it



and that just about brings my story up to date.

MIRIA: Well that's wonderful and I think it shows that the success stories we read about can still happen. Now, your work must bring you into contact with quite a few famous and interesting people. Perhaps you'd name some of those you've met.

MR. SWEEHACK: Well of course I've been so busy since I started making films that I haven't had much social life and there are quite a number of people I've yet to meet, but I have met, let me see now, the Three Stooges, three very alert and interesting gentlemen of the screen, ah Roy Rogers, Arthur Lake, you know he used to take the part of Dagwood in the Blondie films, Sam Katzman a very able and astute producer and, oh many others.

MIRIA: What are your plans for the future Mr. Sweehack? Are you going to stick to film work exclusively or would you like to go into other facets of the entertainment world as well?

MR. SWEEHACK: Well, as soon as I return to Hollywood we start making RETURN OF THE ZOMBIE BUG MAN and that will keep me busy for a few weeks. Eventually though I'd like to tour New Zealand as part of a live theatre production because I think it is the duty of an artist to give of his talent to the country that raised him. I have in relationship to this approached the Manager of the New Zealand Players and offered my services to him. He was very interested but had to point out that there are very few, if any, plays that are suitable vehicles for my particular talents. I was forced to agree with him but I'm sure that if we put our heads together something suitable could be found.

MIRIA: I certainly hope so Mr. Sweehack. Well I see our time is up so once again I must thank you for coming along this afternoon and I'm sure we all look forward to seeing your film. What was the name of it again?

MR. SWEEHACK: THE LAIR OF THE ZOMBIE BUG MAN.

Mervyn Barrett. May 1957.

#### IT MIGHT ROLL

HOLLYWOOD --- The latest story concerning the circular Capitol Records tower here has to do with two Martians who landed their space ship in the parking lot adjacent to the building.

"You go look around it, and I'll wait here for you," said one of them. Carefully the second Martian approached the Tower, then made the complete circle around it. With a relieved look, he returned to his friend and said, "They'll never get it off the ground!"

(With acknowledgements to DOWNBEAT for May 2, 1957. Thanks.)

WITHINTHECIRCLE

ooOoo

It was suggested by one or two people who wrote to us that in each issue we profile one of the Circle's members, so that the reader will be more familiar with the people who are responsible for this Gigantic lumber which we call FOCUS. Richard Paris, the Circle's founder, was the logical choice for first one to get the treatment, but the problem arose; who is to write it? We took the coward's way out and conned him into writing it himself. I guess what we were after was the usual type of self written pen portrait. You know, the "I was born in - and started reading S.F. when I was - years old. I think we'll get to the moon in - years." type of thing. As you will see this is not what we got, but Richard regards it as an outline of his identity and he is in a better position to know than any of the other Circle members.

Richard.

I am to write some sort of a word sketch of myself.

Being a very passive member of the Circle it is either to get mine over and done with, or my friends are sincerely interested in what my true nature is.

Firstly we can gather from logic that my true nature is the same as all other people's. Then what does that leave me to describe? We all have bodies, and the same actions and reactions working through all to keep the body going, then what must be different about me and the other people, and vice versa? I suppose it is the fact that we are all individuals and have grown up in different environments, people, places, etc. This would probably mould our different personalities.

Then the only difference between me and other people would be my personality - for they never seem to be common for all people, do they?

I am to write some sort of a word-sketch of my personality, then. Whether my particular one is good or bad, or indifferent, I do have one. My name is Richard Paris, a name given to cover a complete living organism made up of over one thousand billion living organisms. Where the particular Richard Paris is in that I cannot find - unless it is the personality. But that is a product of that organism of particulars. My intellect is the complete amount of so called thought I have ever thought - whether through outside influence or inside so called reasoning or deduction. Then my intellect also is a product of this organism. My feelings are too of my emotions or of my organism. As instinct is the power behind the organism - what part of my body or my personality then shall I claim as mine? Or that thing which I shall describe?

Name is Richard Paris, "I" am here, somewhere, I have "friends"

Continued on Page 23.



17

# watershed by bem

EXTANT 3. Michael Baldwin, 53 Shadforth Street, Mosman Sydney, Australia. 12 pp., fcp., duped. 1/-

I think this 'zine is slung together any way it fits. I stress the word "think" because I just could be wrong. Maybe Michael has carefully weighed the worth of all the items in EXTANT, added a few bits of his own, and then meticulously placed each word of each sentence so that it has just the right effect upon the reader.

If so, then EXTANT must surely be one of the most carefully published fanzines in fandom, because the effect upon the reader certainly is powerful.

This issue is an improvement upon the previous two: The Editorial was readable. Page four was amusing. Pages six and seven were good. If you had to pay the postage deficiency on EXTANT, you probably got your money 's worth.

ROCKETS Vo. 5 No. 4. R.I. Farnsworth, Box 271 Pittman Nevada. U.S.A. 14 pp., Oct. 50¢ per issue, off-set. The Magazine of Space Flight. Official Publication of The United States Rocket Society.

This little magazine is interesting. It is a regular publication of USRS and bears an honest "Stargazer" flavour. Little news items are to be found all over the place - and these would appear to be the main items in the 'zine. There are a few letters - and two or three photographs. Altogether an interesting 'zine. -----

ONCE IN A BLUE MOON. The Manchester Circle, c/- Dave Cohen, 32 Larch Street, Hightown, Manchester 8, England. 27 pp., 4to., duped. Free (?)

An odd item containing stories, articles, illos, and personalities in a wild jumble that is quite exhilarating. The standard is generally fairly high, particularly with stories like "No Choice" and "The Stranger". "Purely Coincidental" also is a story worth reading. It's all about what might happen when the Loncon of '57 gets along.

If a second issue of this 'zine is pubbed, don't miss it. -----

U.F.A. Bulletin. Richard A. Koogler. 5916 Revere Place, Dallas 6, Texas, U.S.A. Free (?). 4to., duped. 6 pp.

I don't believe it! I just don't believe the 'zine exists. Must be a hoax. Mind you, it does carry some news - Mathseon to write Incredible Shrinking Man; Wyndam's DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS to

be filmed - stuff like that. But the 'zine as a whole can't be real. Maybe I ate cheese that evening.

1st. SFAIRS publication, MONOLOGUE. Lars Helander, Lohegatan 11, Eskitstuna, Sweden. Free for letter of comment, trade etc. 24 pp. fcp. duped.

I think Lars should be congratulated on this first SFAIRS publication. Generally, the standard of production is fairly high, and the numerous illos scattered throughout the 'zine are really enjoyable to look at. For the full length of the 'zine, Lars chats about almost anything of interest and even manages to mention one or two controversial subjects such as racial segregation in sfandom. The four short pieces of dialogue by Linard (I presume) lead from each other, gradually building up to a first class punch line.

The second publication will be in Swedish, but the two following will be in English, so why not start trading with Lars?

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FAPFED No. 5. Ron Ellick, 277 Pomona Ave., Long Beach 3, California, U.S.A. FAPAzine with a free circulation out of the organisation. 4to. 24 pp. mimeoed.

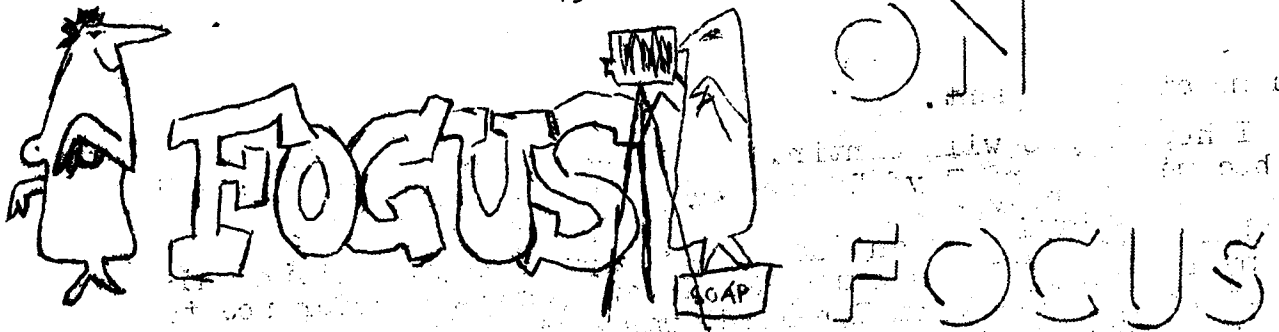
The duping not very good in this issue. That's what happens when you use the paper Ron has. Big feature of the 'zine was a six-page self-contained section giving the rules for playing INTERPLANETARY. I tried the game with a couple of brothers who were too darn lazy to read the rules and we found it too slow and complicated. But it is recommended. Dean Grennell's piece was amusing, but not exactly wonderful.

Lars Helander and Jan Jansen teamed up on A LITTLE CHOCOLATE AND SVENSKA CHEESE and produced an interesting and entertaining quarter-of-an-hour's-worth. I don't know when FAPFED 6 will be pubbed - Ron's in the Marines, as you probably know - or what it'll be like, but it might be a good idea to contact the fellow.

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THE HARP STATESIDE - Walter A. Willis, 179 Upper Newtownards Rd., Belfast, Northern Ireland. 72 pp. 4to; duped, 2/- a copy.

Although this monster publication deals with WAW's trip to the USA in 1952, there's no doubt that it will be one of the highlights of 1957. Seventy-two pages!!!! I won't go into any detail about the effort, but take it from me that if you let this pass you by, then you've let something really worthwhile slip from your grasp. Send your two bob to Walt and if - please note emphasis - there are any copies left, you'll receive one of the reasons for the continued existence of fandom.





This is our second letter column and for a while there I didn't think we were going to make it. Perhaps our readers think that we are beyond criticism. If this is so and they do think that, then we must disillusion them and modestly say that it just 'aint so. We admit that we are not quite perfect yet, and because perfection is our aim we welcome letter of criticism or even, better yet, praise. After all it is but a small thing we ask, a few hastily penned lines to let us know that you are still around and receiving us. If we don't hear from you we might be forced to take drastic action, like maybe dropping you from our mailing list. So be it. On to the letters.

MICHAEL BALDWIN, 53 Shadforth Street, Mosman, Sydney, Australia.

\*The other night, when I came home from the SF meeting at the Sydney Bridge Club, I discovered in the mailbox a copy of FOCUS No.4.

I have not had much of a chance to have a good look at it, but it does seem a considerable improvement over issue No.3, both in content material and in size.

The part I like best about the magazine, however, is the cover. What a wonderful illustration. What wonderful reproduction. It is without a doubt one of the best illustrations of Saturn I have seen in a fanzine. There is one small thing. I do wish you would ask your cartoonist what the deuce those small bits of junk are doing, detracting from the view of the main object in the illustration:

I am glad to see that FOCUS has not resorted to the practise of putting questionable or obscene material in the contents, a practise which I fear far too many fanzines are carrying out.

As for the actual contents, Mr. Harding's article seemed to be too long-winded. The editorial seemed like the editorial of a fanzine, and your poem struck me as being more of a filler than anything else.

The letter section was most interesting, particularly the letter from Dave Cohen stating the running procedure of the Bridge Club. By a strange coincidence, the night I received FOCUS, this policy was implemented against two "fans" of this city. They also happen to be fanzine editors.

I cannot think of anything else that was in the magazine, as I have just lent it to my friend Bill Hubble, and have not got it

with me at the moment.

I hope FOCUS will continue to improve, and who knows, you may become a second Boyd Rayburn.

I have never read any of the writing of Boyd Rayburn and my reaction to his name when I came across a reference to it in a letter from Don Ford, was a gasp of astonishment and a cry of, "It couldn't be." I was right. It wasn't. It would of course be too much to expect that the leader of one of the greatest modern Jazz orchestras that ever existed would also be a Fan. My badly worn old JEWELL 78s by the '46 Rayburn band have given me hours of pleasure and I think it is one of the great tragedies of our time that this wonderful organisation was not able to make it financially.

FRANK A. COULTER. Administration Bldg. N.Z. Forest Products,  
P.O. Box 14, Tokoroa.

"Thanks for sending me a copy of FOCUS No.4. I found it quite entertaining and thought the article by Leo Harding on GALAXY and ASTOUNDING outstanding."

R.L. BENNETT. 22 Atkinson Ave., Papetoetoe, Auckland.

"Thanks very much for the No.4 FOCUS...Surprisingly good although I've never had much interest in fan Mags. I didn't even know of its existence - not even a whisper. The cover was lousy..... It's one thing you should try and improve. I made a few contacts when I arrived here this time last year but I did not even get around to going to a club meeting. FOCUS however seems about my size. Local interest, no effort and f... Well the contents of No.4 I really enjoyed, especially Merv's editorial, Leo Harding's article Lynette's pix and the general standard attributable in full or in part to Messrs Merv and Bruce. W.S.F.C. sounds Okeh. Grog and music - sounds about my level - progressive jazz!"

Most certainly - progressive Jazz.

MARGARET DUCE, 46 Bon St., Alexandra, Victoria, Australia.

"Comments on FOCUS? Okay, you asked for it... It wouldn't be ethical to comment on the cover, so I'll start with the Editorial: This was compounded of the usual zany slathering of goo, need I say more? Letters from Loveland? Well...hmm...yep. Watershed? Greatly improved but too long. View from the Ghoulaxy? Considerably better than many supposedly 'professional' analyses of science-fictional trends! Spaceman Jones? Oh, well, it could happen to anyone. The New Mayhew? Very, verry good! Focus on Focus; good title. More of this please. These American characters write real crazy. The Circle Encompassed? Interesting as usual. Last Words? Help! Help! I'm a prisoner in a Slobovian stinkweed factory! Lynett your illos are terrif! Particularly the Searlish creation connected with The New Mayhew."



JOHN G. TRIMBLE. Ashiya, Japan.

"FOCUS 1-4 arrove, and I feel a bit like I've been blitzed. When you said that I might find a FOCUS coming my way, Merv, I thot of one ish. Happy to have received them, tho, as I've got a fuller picture of where you've gone from number one.

Improvement, definetly.

'Bout the only thing interesting in the first three was the SPACEMANSHIP bit, in No.1. Number two and three showed the same stiffness thst number one had, and had nothing to liven them up.

Number four is a different story. Now you're getting somewhere. (What's this bit of continuing a story from pp 20 to pp 9?) I like the effect of looseness that four has ( and the previous ones didn't.) Keep it up, I think you're headed in the right direction.

Shaver lives near Ray Palmer in Amherst, Wisconsin, U.S.A., and I hope he stays there. Stu Byrne can be corny enuf without the My stery lousing up the works again. (Or the "flying saucers.")

Don Ford's bit of chit-chat filled space, but didn't print much in the way of news. (At least it wasn't news to me. Anyone for CONTACT?) For some reason I liked it, tho, guess I'm addicted to that sort of column.

The VIEW FROM THE GHOULAXY article by Harding covered ground in a newish sort of way. Didn't drag his ideas on the burst of the "boom" into it, just mentioned it in passing. Too many fans are concerned with the fact that the boom died, and why, and not what its effects were. 'Course, maybe I'm prejudiced having been an ASF fan from away baek.

Wasn't TOO ser-connish, either.

Y'know, it's interesting what a non-fan thinks of fandom. Couple of guys in the barracks here, happened upon the ish's of FOCUS which I was absorbing. Mystified. "You mean that this is something like a chain-letter?" "What sort of club is science fiction?" Good Ghu, that last one!

And it's even worse when you get a FAPazine. They think I'm completely batty. (Maybe I am?)

Well, I haven't made too much sense, nor said anything that could be construed to be ser-con. But I feel better. And I LIKE FOCUS. That is nothing in itself, but I value my opinion."

The idea of the Ford bit is just that - chit-chat. We're not a newszine and anything we print in the way of news is just co-incidental.

WALT WILLIS. 170 Upper Nards Rd., Belfast, Northern Ireland.

"FOCUS 4 arrived in fine shape and I enjoyed it very much, especially that nonsense about the Chinese prisoners. I was going to say something about having found a message in FOCUS

about a prisoner in a New Zealand fanzine factory, but I see you beat me to it. Your editorial was sensible, but you can't assume that an editor knows when he's printing bad material. After many years experience in fmz publishing I've come to the conclusion that there is no possible item, however lacking in merit, which will not appeal to someone. Usually it's the author of course, but often his delusions seem to infect the editor too.

I suppose you're kidding about South Gate, but just in case not, maybe I'd better say that these people have been propagandising for SG in 58 for ten years and it's a sacred fannish tradition that that's where the 58 con will be. It's one of the main reasons London bid for 57 and got it - to make South Gate in 58 possible under the rotation plan.

Richard Shaver is still going strong. At least I got a copy of Mystic the other day with one of a series of articles by him about the Mystery. I haven't read it (and don't intend to as long as there is the phone directory and other more interesting books in the house to read) but it seemed to be the same old stuff.

Ford's column was pithy and informative.

Liked the fmz reviews. Sorry you had such a forbidding introduction to Hyphen, but that issue was as you realised an unusually cliquish one.

Harding's article was interesting, though one might argue with his assumptions. At least Gold and Campbell might. Campbell wouldn't hardly do so out loud, but Gold would be quite likely to reply to it. Did you send him a copy?

Mervyn Battett's piece left me wondering whether this was an actual editor or a sort of fictional prototype, a confusion worse confounded by the title. The only Mayhew I know is the British MP and in the contents you spelt it Mayhem; as far as I know this means indiscriminate slaughter and the article didn't seem as savage as that. It was interesting though whichever way you took it. I was shocked that only one other person commented on Spacemanship. To me this was the article of the year, a regular little gem.

Liked your intro to the readers' letters. What was that about there being no fan humorists in NZ?

Glad to see Cohen is at least still alive, even if he is kicking. I needn't entirely give up hope of him paying me the £5 he's owed me for 18 months.

Finally, thanks for the kind words about Arthur's illos. I'll pass this copy of FOCUS on to him. All the best for now, and congratulations on what seems to me the best fmz ever to come up from down there."

We were of course kidding about the Outlanders and their motto. Mervyn has been familiar with this slogan since the days when Rick Sneary was using it in his letters to



Thrilling Wonder. Never sent Gold a copy. Should have. Must do so. Mayhew was an editor of PUNCH. The first I think - who wrote a series of short articles about the London poor. We pinched the title from a series that PUNCH ran recently and tried to make it as much like the same style as possible. Sincerest form of flattery you know.

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WITHIN THE CIRCLE (Continued from Page 12)

"I" am seventeen years old.

From this small treatise may you deduct my personality, not that I have said much about my "good points" or "bad points" or my inferiority of superiority complexes as the case may be. My personality is my writing for when "I" write my personality is injected into it. The total amount of ideas I have on the subject - whether right or wrong.

It may be interesting to note that the Greek interpretation of the word "personality" means Mask.

I must finish now, but others will be here to tell you of their work and selves, and to show you where I went wrong.

A rather knowledgeable philosopher once said: "We are the total amount of all we have ever "Thought"." And how small are our "thoughts", that we must learn how our bodies operate, and even then not completely.

Watching our thoughts we become aware of the poverty of our minds compared with the richness of our bodies. The delicately poised chemical reactions, the carefully adjusted mechanisms, these organs of astounding ingenuity are necessary that we may live - but what of the mind that inhabits this genius that is in our bodies?

Richard Paris.

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Due to the presence of inactivity this issue of FOCUS is approximately three months overdue. We hope to speed up the appearance of the next three issues or so in order to bring the 'zine back on to its proper schedule.

M.B.

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# THE BRES AND I

Roger Horrocks.

"New Zealand is a small country lost somewhere in the South Pacific, and safely isolated from such important culturalising influences as Commercial TV, American horror comics, or even Potrzebies." That is how H\*rr\*cks superbly summed up the position in 29 immortal\* words.

The fudnick might also have added American SF magazines to his list. In fact, if it wasn't for the British Editions of ASTOUNDING, GALAXY and F&SF we Antipodeans would probably miss all the excellent SF produced regularly by such authors as Asimov, Blish, Henlein, Simak, Poul, Sheckley and so on. These three magazines, therefore, occupy a pretty exalted position among Australasian fans, especially in comparison with some of the junk that has been produced locally.

Doubtless many fans will have wondered, as I have, just what differences exist between the AMEs and the BRES. To begin with, let's take a look at:

ASTOUNDING. The most obvious difference between the two editions is in the size. The AME follows the American fashion of pocket-size ( $5\frac{1}{2}" \times 7\frac{1}{2}"$ ) magazines, but to make things difficult the BRE is slightly more than  $\frac{1}{2}"$  longer. To me, this seems an unnecessary waste of time and work. The whole magazine has to be reset and respaced, and is the larger size any more attractive? No, but it's a darn si ght clumsier! The AME is also printed on better type and is thus much easier to read.

To make up for any deficiency in page size, the AME has 32 more pages than its British counterpart. Some higher mathematics shows that this amounts to 7424 (note that  $\frac{1}{4}$  carefully) extra square inches of type. This means that by purchasing the BRE we lose about 12 pages of AstSF every month, (grr!); and this means either the omission of some short story (such as "Ceramic Incident" from the October AME) or more often an article (e.g. "The Troublesome Dimensions" by Poul Anderson from November, or "Names! Names! Names!" by Asimov from December). Occasionally some of the letter-col is also jettisoned.

A more careful comparison of the two editions will disclose other differences. For example, take the December 1956 AME. Thishish featshid (oops!) and excellent cover by Dongen illu-



25  
'guts' of the mag were sent over to England from which Atlas Publications prepared the April '57 BRE. Not only was the interior reset, but the cover was rephotographed and a new block made. (Also slightly more than 1/2" added to the top!) The results; The fur of the Nidorian on the cover which looked so real on the AME became coarse and blotchy; the mouth was completely ruined; the blood on the bandage is unrecognisable as such. In short, the painting is spoiled. (Double grrr!) The previous issue (October 56 AME ... February 57 BRE) was even worse treated. Grey becomes green, brown becomes purple, and the man's face becomes... Well, pretty horrible wasn't it? I just wish that Atlas would be more careful over these illos...

On to GALAXY, whose two editions are almost identical. In fact only difference worth mentioning is that the AME contains about 14 extra pages (allowing for ads., of course). Occasionally Strato Publications have fun deciding what to discard, and once in a while covers are switched. (I only hope the delightful four-armed Santa on the January AME will still be used for the BRE sometime...) Hats off to Strato for getting the BRE "Galaxy" onto the stands about a month before the corresponding "Astounding"!

FANTASY & SF, now, has appeared in a number of forms. A BRE ran for some time then folded. At the moment there are American, Australasian, French and Spanish editions on the go. It is the first two we are concerned with here, although they are almost impossible to compare! The AME contains 128 pages of good paper, nicely bound, and is pubbed monthly. The AustE consists of 112 pages of newsprint, held perilously together by two staples, and is pubbed irregularly. The interior is reset and the index of the AustE bears only faint resemblance to the index of the corresponding AME, or even to its own cover!!

In conclusion I would also like to mention some of the other English Language editions which, sadly, are no longer with us.

IF had a BRE for 15 issues, 128 pp. GALAXY-size. The AME is still going strong in America with 120 pp only.

THRILLING WONDER, STARTLING STORIES, AMAZING and DYNAMIC SF had BREs. All were pulps, 4to size (except for AMAZING which changed to the GALAXY format toward the end of its career). Of the above, only AMAZING still exists in America.

The stories from another American pulp, PLANET, have been reprinted in these parts many times. A BRE PLANET survived for some time, and during a boom there was even a New Zealand edition! The British prozine TOPS IN SF ran for its three issues on old PLANET Material. More recently we have SF MONTHLY, The Australian mag, using PLANET reprints for its later issues.

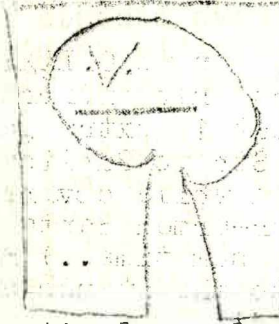
The ill-fated BEYOND ran in Britian for some months, as did the more fortunate FANTASTIC which still appears regularly Stateside.



Stories from a number of American magazines and anthologies featured in AMERICAN SF and SELECTED SF, two thin Aussie 'zines which ran successfully for several years.

Other American magazines with British counterparts were; SUPER SF, SPACE SF, FUTURE SF, WEIRD TALES, SF QUARTERLY, ORBIT SF, and of course the fabulous UNKNOWN WORLDS.

# the circle encompassed



This is a description of how this particular column, which purports to be a run down of Circle activities, was written. It all started about three months ago in a conversation between Bruce Burn and Mervyn that went something like this....

BRUCE: "Are you going to use the Circle Encompassed in the next issue of FOCUS?"

MERVYN: "I suppose so, I hadn't thought about it really."

BRUCE: "Who's going to write it?"

MERVYN: "I'll get John Morgans to write it. It's about time he did something for the 'zine."

After that came several conversations between John Morgans and Mervyn which covered a period of about two months. They went rather like this....

MERVYN: "I've decided that you are going to write The Circle Encompassed for the next issue of FOCUS."

JOHN: "Me? What can I write about?"

MERVYN: "Write about the Circle's activities."

JOHN: "HA. What activities?"

MERVYN: "That's your problem. I'd like it as soon as possible please. FOCUS is already behind schedule."

A week later. A telephone conversation.

MERVYN: "Have you got that thing written yet?"

JOHN: "give me a chance. I've been out nearly every night this week and I was with Joan (ot it may have been Barbara, Maureen, Peggy or any of a dozen other names as John's romantic life moves so fast that it is difficult for a mere onlooker to keep a track of the players without the aid of a scoreboard) most of the wekend,"

And thus it dragged on for several weeks. The same question from Mervyn and reply from John. And then one night they were walking home after attending a function together and had reached the corner of Hawker Street, from where they would each go their separate ways when John stopped and held out to Mervyn three scraps of paper saying, "Here, I didn't give this to you earlier because it's so bloody awful that I wanted to be out of the way when you read it. Please don't use it."

When he arrived home, Mervyn unfolded the three sheets of writing pad paper which had been typed on Richard's typewriter - the only one we've ever seen that types a wavy line - and read what John had written. It was just as he had warned and he decided to bow to John's wishes which is why were not going to print THE CIRCLE ENCOMPASSED by John Morgans.

Mervyn Barret.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE:-

1/- per copy.

2/6 for Three.

The Editor will also accept payment in copies of PLAYBOY and Marilyn Monroe Calendars.

We hope to publish the next issue very shortly and so we would appreciate receiving your letters of comment etc. as soon as possible.

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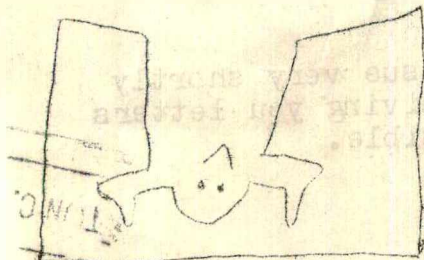
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