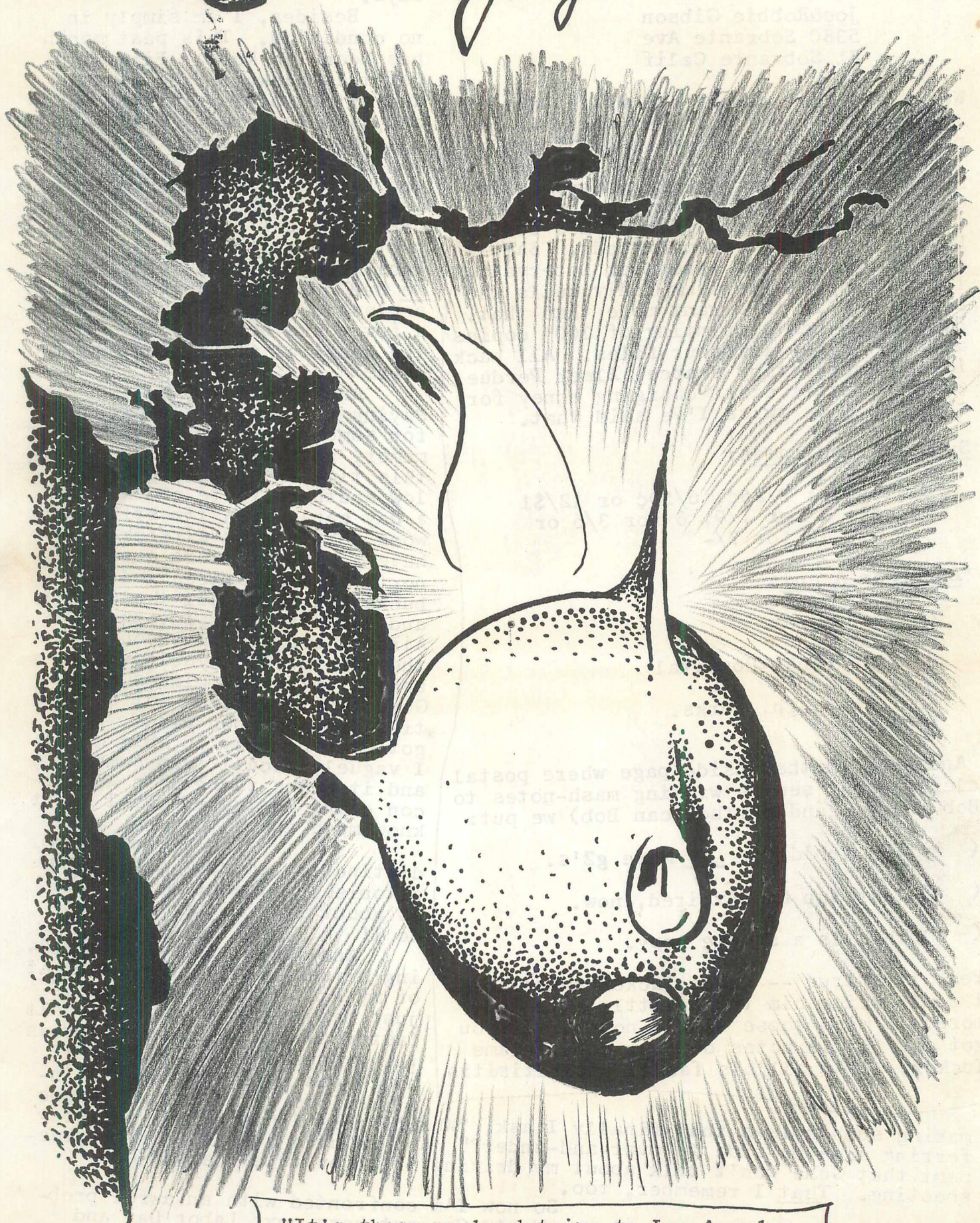


# G2

VOL 2 NO 10

July '63



"It's these weekend trips to Los Angeles  
that get me down!"

THIS IS a monthly-type fanzine called "g2" on anybody's typewriter, but don't quote it, which comes from:

Joe&Robbie Gibson  
5380 Sobrante Ave  
El Sobrante Calif

We do all the artwork and write all this stuff, becuz why else would we be pubbing this thing; and we don't trade it for other fmz except DYNATRON and HORIZONS (and that's like money) or in Great Britain (and we may have to stop that) nor do we send free copies for a Letter of Comment from Anybody. Sample copies are sent at irregular intervals to new and/or irregular individuals who better sub if they want more than that. Each issue has a printing of 100+ copies and the + goes into our files. All back issues are getting scarce, Elmer Perdue, and I'd better start charging money for them; this is twice I've said that.

#### Subscription rates:

Stateside: 3/25¢, 6/50¢ or 12/\$1  
\*Europe: 3 for 1/9, 6 for 3/6 or 12 for 7/-

#### \*European Agent:

Colin Freeman  
Ward 3  
Scotton Banks Hospital  
Ripley Road  
Knaresborough, Yorks.  
England

And here on the inside page where postal clerks can't see me writing mash-notes to Bob Tucker (and neither can Bob) we put:

- ( ) You sub'd for \_\_\_\_ more g2's.
- ( ) Your sub has expired, now.
- ( ) This is a sample copy.

Yes, it's true -- since Tucker subscribed, I don't write him those little notes any more. I miss those little notes. If you got any little notes on your copy, blame Tucker. It's all his fault. Itisitisitis

making such noises that finally I ask, "What's this I hear about you preferring side-by-side to over-and-under?" And we have a gentleman's agreement that Gene won't talk about my driving if I won't talk about his shooting. That I remember, too.

So now I'm confronted with an awful problem. I hear they are planning a World Con out here next Labor Day and damned if I know how we'll escape the thing unless we can get the Kujawas out here again! Anybody know how to build a good skeet range?

THIS PAGE IS CROOKED and I'll take no responsibility for anything it says.

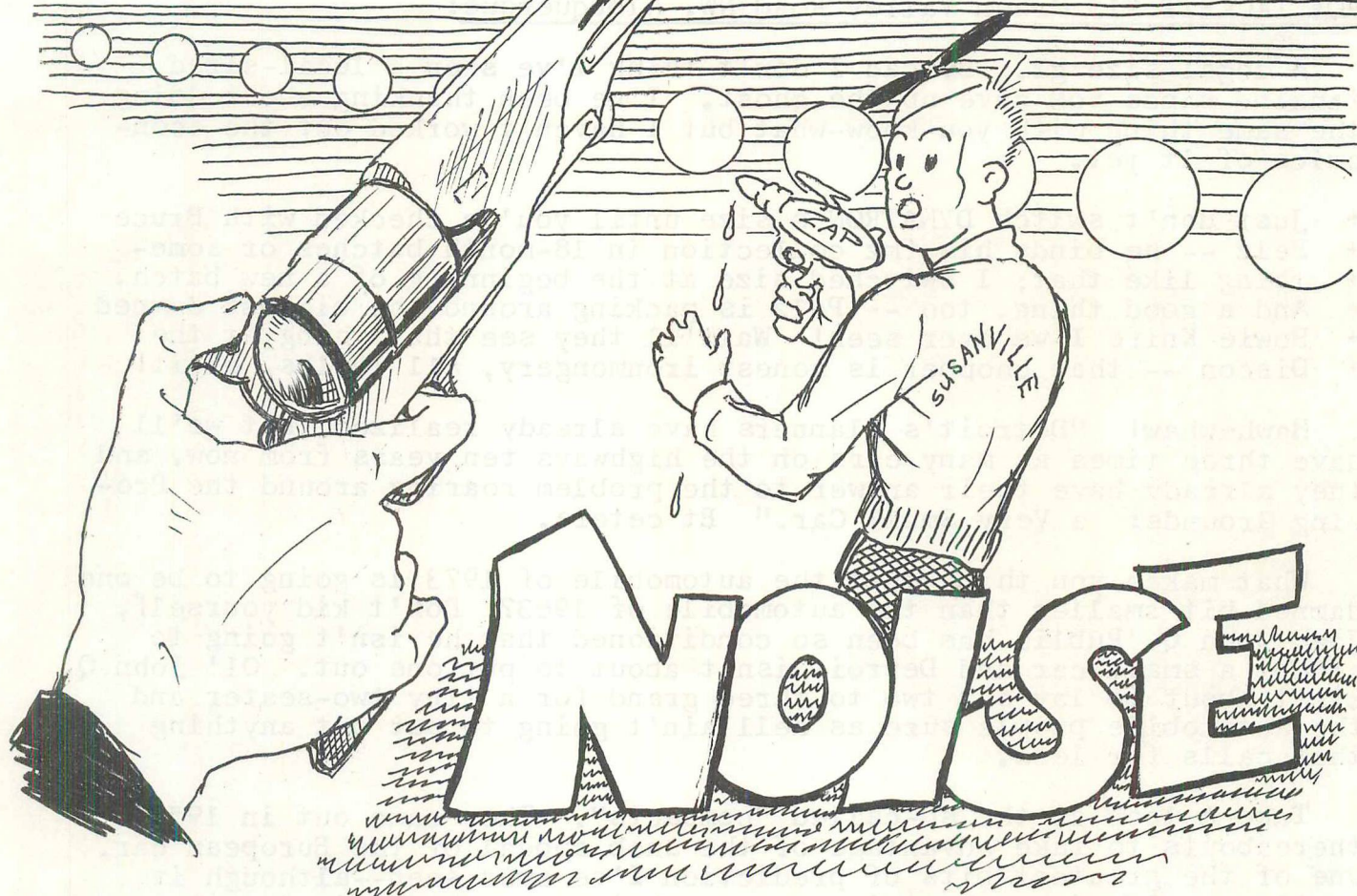
Besides, I am simply in no condition. This past month has been Too Much. First, we get this package from Seattle and after soaking it thoroughly and slipping a knifeblade under all the wrapping and falps (I won't stop now) we open it up and here's this rickshaw from Tokyo that Robert P. Brown's done sent us! (Remember those postcards from all over the Pacific, lastish?) And there we had just sent Colin Freeman a plastic model of Ron Bennett a few weeks before! Shook up the hospital staff, too, he says.

And then Betty Kujawa was saying they would fly out here for some reason or other -- my memory gets vague, along about this time -- so they make the low southern route and arrive a day early when I'm still at work, Betty gets airsick, we have a high pressure area just north of the BayArea and Gene bucks headwinds all the way in and lands at S.F. Internat'l Airport and they look out at the groundcrew guys leaning against other airplanes and Gene finally climbs out and ties down his own plane. We got over nextday to this motel I vaguely recall from someplace and it seems there is a Western-con going on there, but I don't know much about that.

But I do distinctly remember all of the astonishing things Betty told us about Lynn Hickman. Bhoy, do I!

And there was Gene enfold-ing himself into the front seat of my Fiat (even Betty could just manage to get the seatbelt fastened) and we make it across the overpass for a bottle of hooch (as per Alva Rogers' instructions, lastish) with Gene

"NOW, THAT WAS A WESTERCON!"



ANYBODY WHO is expecting a Westercon Report in this issue might just as well turn to the letter-column and forget all about it, because there isn't any. In fact, I should probably explain why in the letter-column and not here. What I've already got to explain here is why there is no fire-breathing article that lambasts fandom like I promised to write lastish.

I did write that article and it is full of all sorts of horrible revelations about fandom. In fact, it's lying here sizzling by my typewriter right now. But there's no room for it in this issue, and there's just one reason for that!

It's all Alva Rogers' fault. Yep, he done it. Lastish, in LOX, he wrote: "Although many fanzines today have fair sized letter sections, there are none that approach VOM in its letter printing policy...G2 comes the closest to it, though. I would like to see you expand the letter section and print the better letters in their entirety."

Then came The Deluge.

Anybody who gets the idea that I'm going to turn g2 into a regular letter-zine, tho, is due for a jolt. This here is my fanzine, dang-bust it, being pubbed for me to sound off in -- you guys with all these letters are shoving me outta my own fan magazine and by ghod, I'll have you know it's not gonna happen next issue!

If anybody can't find their letter in this issue, it's because I didn't print it.

But there was a letter from Roy Tackett I've been saving for two months now becuz it led so beautifully and innocuously into the fandom-blasting article I was gonna print this month. Anyway, it'll give me a good excuse to stop this "Dropped Monster" paragraphing....

\*\*\*\*\*

..."--And we're gonna donate at least a hundred bucks to the '64 World Con!"

\*\*\*\*\*

ROY TACKETT 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque:

A legal-size g2. By gad I don't think I've seen a legal-sized fanzine since VoM gave up the ghost. I've been thinking about doing the same thing with you-know-what but I haven't worked out the economics of it yet.

+ Just don't switch DYNATRON's size until you've checked with Bruce  
+ Pelz -- he binds his fmz collection in 18-month batches or some-  
+ thing like that; I switched size at the beginning of a new batch.  
+ And a good thing, too -- Pelz is packing around the biggest damned  
+ Bowie Knife I've ever seen! Wait'll they see that thing at the  
+ Discon -- that chopper is honest ironmongery, all 10 lbs. of it!

Hawhawhaw! "Detroit's planners have already realized that we'll have three times as many cars on the highways ten years from now, and they already have their answer to the problem roaring around the Proving Grounds: a Very Small Car." Et cetera.

What makes you think that the automobile of 1973 is going to be one damned bit smaller than the automobile of 1963? Don't kid yourself, Joe, John Q. Public has been so conditioned that he isn't going to accept a small car and Detroit isn't about to put one out. Ol' John Q. ain't about to lay out two to three grand for a tiny two-seater and the automobile people sure as hell ain't going to put out anything that calls for less.

Take a look at the so-called "compacts". They came out in 1959 or thereabouts to take advantage of the snob appeal of the European car. One of the greatest bits of prediction I've ever seen--although it really wasn't since the thing was so obvious--appeared in a cartoon about the same time: a group of auto executives looking at a new compact and the boss saying: "Great. If it sells next year we'll make it bigger." And they have. Today's compacts are as big as 1959's standards.

A tiny two-seater? Hoohaw!

Tell me, how long has El Sobrante been in existence? I am/was quite familiar with the Bay Area and El Sobrante just didn't ring a bell. I dug out my old Bay Area map--circa 1950--and no El Sobrante. But I do find it on a map circa 1960 so I presume the town came into existence sometime between 1950 and 1960. Gad but California do grow. What's needed out there is for the San Andreas fault to give one big slip and send three-quarters of the population scurrying back to the Midwest and Deep South and then I'll move back out. Earthquakes don't bother me but people do. Great mobs of them. We should have dynamited the Mississippi River bridges 20 years ago.

+ If there's a couple bad spots on this page, it's becuz I was using  
+ a regular type eraser, didn't realize it and didn't switch to a multi-  
+ lith type eraser soon enuff. Aside from some snarky remarks (now much  
+ outdated) about TAFF, that was Leroy's letter we got 2-3 months ago.  
+ Now, watch me answer him, 'cause here's where I get sneaky. First,  
+ far as I've been able to determine, El Sobrante probably existed long  
+ before there was any Oakland, but it warn't no town -- probably no  
+ more than a little Mexican cantina beside a dirt road. Then a mob  
+ of hillbillies came to work in warplants and built their shacks out  
+ here and cooked mash. Then the Freeway came past. El Sobrante still  
+ isn't a town, and it's getting crammed out of existance by Whitecliffe  
+ Knolls and Marlesta/Tara Hills and other tract-home subdivisions. Our  
+ house is back up a draw against a steep bluff, as I've said before --  
+ which is one spot they can't scrape off with a bulldozer and turn into  
+ a subdivision. By 1973, it's estimated there'll be one, solid mass of  
+ tract homes from San Francisco Bay to Sacramento and beyond.

+ As for the Small Car controversy -- wait, let me get outta these plus-  
+ sign shorts --

that's better. This may be a jolt to Roy Tackett, but I couldn't agree more! But Roy's comments simply mean that he hasn't heard about "the car a computer designed."

Computers are real big in Detroit, these days, as they are elsewhere in industry. And the Detroit mob fed data into one of these computers all about the Population Boom and future market analysis and traffic problems to see what it would say. The computer said quite a few things. It said that Roy Tackett would need four hours to jockey his automobile into downtown Albuquerque from where he lives, that even public transportation will be slowed until you could walk there faster, and that people who park the family bus out in the farmlands and ride a motorscooter to work will have farther and farther to ride scooters, until --

Well, that computer designed the Very Small Car. And Detroit built a few test models -- it's not planned for production yet, far as I know -- just to run 'em around the track a few times and take notes. Just in case maybe they will have to make one.

Certainly, so long as John Q. Public can make a choice, he'll choose big cars. But it looks like he won't have any choice. That's going to hurt, too. It's already beginning to hurt.

It's already raised merry hell with American grade-school education. The Population Boom is in those classrooms, now -- it's just begun to invade the highschools, and we've already had bold, black national headlines about the kids who cut their second year of highschool and go out looking for a job -- the American labor market got one helluva jolt.

Now, you ready? FAMOUS MONSTERS has been selling like hotcakes, and Forrie Ackerman's been surrounded at conventions by mobs of teenage Monster fans (who've brought their parents along, too) and now he needs a month-long tour just to cross the United States through his self-made Monsterland to attend the Discon! He's got fans to meet everywhere.

And that's just the first wave of the Coming Hordes. The real mob is just finishing gradeschool.

And Forrie says he finds the older ones are switching over to fantasy and science fiction....

So I sat down last month and I wrote this article about how fandom's thinking is still geared to the 1940's, as if fandom was still the small band of social outcasts it was then; and I gave instances, and described events where this misunderstanding has hurt fandom over the past ten years -- and I named names, too. I recalled methods used in the 40's for estimating the size of fandom, and used 'em again to estimate its size now. And I scared the livin' hell out of myself! Because it's just started!!!

What do you suppose Buck Coulson will do, say, when he starts getting more than 200 fanzines a month for review??

Betcha I know what's gonna happen, especially with these fake-fans who hide themselves off in little apas and fringe-type "comic book" fandoms and suchlike. Pretty soon, you're going to see the rats start deserting the ship -- right, Ed Wood? Pick your stand there, ol' buddy. Methinks for damned sure we're going to be facing those Coming Hordes alone!

Wonder just who'll be there with us, d'you suppose?

///

# LOX

...being a 3-letter word which engenders utmost respect around some pads.

+ Everybody knows the form around here, so we won't go into that --as if we ever did! But I was going to explain why there's no Westercon Report here, so I'll make it brief: I'd feel guilty as hell about the fun we had if I wasn't hearing everyone else saying what a ball that Westercon was. I could never seem to get started on it.

+ Of course, the nite they scheduled that First Fandom Party, I was naturally turned off. It seemed like we went around the motel and closed down every other party looking for Real Live Convention Fans before finally gate-crashing that FFndm Party with Ron Ellick -- he had to use the bathroom and it was a good thing, too, since without Ron those Old Mossbacks wouldn't've had enough live ones left to start even a desultory poker game!

+ But it also seemed to me that this Westercon -- the best one in years -- was also the nondrinkingest convention I've been to in a long time. Oh, almost everybody had a shot or two, but it wasn't sloshing around everywhere you looked. Not like some cons I remember. Of course, I had a ball at those cons, too, but some people didn't. I think they did, at this one.

+ And to think it'd happen on the West Coast! But this whole scene was full of jolts I'll take a long time getting over -- Badge 116 buying me a drink -- Chief Red Feather in full ceremonial regalia of the Sioux Indians -- Betty Kujawa finally letting the truth slip out that Gene goes sheet-skooting... why, just yesterday I heard Big Bill groaning about the eight pages he has to publish for FAPA next month!!! I just don't want to think about it.

+ Anyway, it looks like the same committee will be putting on the World Con next year, fools that they are. You shouldn't miss it. Now, let's get the war going, around here---

BOB BRINEY, 176 E. Stadium Ave., West Lafayette, Indiana 47906:

Well, it had to happen sooner or later. My finally getting around to writing you again, I mean. I was going to write when I first moved (note the new address), but didn't make it.

The new apartment is only a half block from the old one, but is much preferable. Mainly, it's "air-conditioned". In this 98°-100° weather, that is a distinct advantage...

+ You may have the distinct impression of hearing a large "Hoohaw!" from this direction -- we call anything over 80° "hot" and anything under 55° "cold" year-round, out here, you pitiful creature of No Man's Land.

Last weekend was the Midwestcon. I hadn't intended going, but Earl drove through town with some other Chicago fans and I decided to go along. Shared a suite at the North Plaza Motel with Earl, Jim O'Meara, Larry McCombs, Al Lewis, and a couple of other Chicago fans. The weekend was a very relaxed and highly enjoyable one, enlivened with much conversation (with Marion Bradley, Tucker, Leigh and Ed Hamilton, and others), a moderate amount of drinking (cherry-flavored vodka, of all nauseous-sounding things---you mix it with orangeade or Pepsi-cola) ((are you still there?)), and a superb buffet supper at which everyone made a pig of him/herself (leading to discomfort for some the next morning).

+ Wonder why it took so long? But y'know, I felt really bad about a couple things we did until now. Thursday nite we mistakenly told Len Zettel (he, Gail and Gail's luscious kid sister were down from Sacramento) that the Westercon's Masquerade would be on Saturday nite;

+ well, they didn't come down Friday nite -- and they missed it. Then  
 + we were going to LA the weekend after the con, and agreed to give  
 + Bjo a lift home from her mother's place in Santa Cruz; well, we had  
 + to change our trip to the next weekend and Bjo had to take the train  
 + home. I still don't like it, but at least now I don't feel quite so  
 + bad, knowing someone else did something worse than we did.

Just before noon on Sunday, a large gang was congregated in the suite, helping demolish a chili lunch and clean out the kitchen before check-out time, and Larry McCombs came up with a perfect exit line for the weekend. He told a long feghoot (origin in doubt--either Larry or Steve Tolliver) about a Dutch spaceman named van Damm, ending with the line:

"God-dom is just a van Damm hobby."

This upset me so much that for the first time in recorded history I actually broke down and cast a TAFP ballot...

The summer is nicely punctuated with fan gatherings: in a couple of weeks the Coulsons will have their annual picnic. If past years are any indication, this will attract people from several surrounding states.

In between these events, I may actually get some XXX work done. I am supposed to be writing a textbook for a course I will be teaching in the fall. The first draft is about 2/3 finished. It had better get done before classes start: I don't like the idea of starting a course without knowing how it's going to end...

+ You're worse than Jim Caughran studying for his Prelims! Our Little  
 + Men's picnics don't even cause a quiver in the San Andreas Fault, much  
 + less surrounding states, but I hear there was one recently. And we  
 + had Wally Weber at the Westercon (he added silkily) but we don't make  
 + too much noise about that, possibly because the West Coast's so far  
 + ahead of everyone else in doing anything for TAFP, tho I hope the rest  
 + of you surpass us. But ghod, Bob, d'you know how snarky that cherry  
 + vodka sounds after what we've been through? Gaaah! Out, out, out!

MARK OWINGS pocksc--potsac--sent one of those things beginning:

Msieu Jheetū:

It immediately crosses my mind that, sans douts, the reason no issues of g2 have thundered into my mailbox of late is that you had the last issue returned, & couldn't read (or didn't trust) the CoA the Post Office noted. 'Tis true, I fear that I didna tell ye.

+ We had enuff of the PO's "Return Requested" jazz, and now no issues  
 + of g2 are ever returned. But we already had your new address, Mark,  
 + and used it. Now, if you get this one, how 'bout telling us which  
 + issue(s) never got to you?

NORM METCALF, P.O. Box 336, Berkeley 1, Calif.:

In reply to your remark to Ed Wood that neofans can learn about sf from Spectrum -- they won't learn anything until Lin Carter and his reviewers do. Spectrum is riddled with factual errors and omissions. (I'll supply a list on demand.)

It irritates me to see the response quite often given to Ed Wood. He's tromped on as a fugghead by people whom fandom would be much better off without. And the reason is that he's advocating that we pay more attention to sf. But then it's a characteristic of a certain type of faaaan that he demands ~~tolerance~~ adulation for himself while wanting anyone who either ignores him or jeers at him to be run out of fandom. Fandom would be a far more interesting place if there were more fans like Ed Wood, and fewer faaans talking at great length on subjects about which they

know nothing, or next to nothing.

+ Here, now, Metcalf, this is no Sapszine! But if it weren't for the  
 + postmark and Norm's signature, I'd almost guess this came from Sam  
 + Moskowitz -- and it'd be welcomed here, anytime. But I wouldn't say  
 + Lin Carter's done too poorly, considering what effort he puts into it  
 + and what competition he's got. So go ahead and get irritated; I've  
 + never tromped Ed Wood and he knows it. I do disagree with him, and  
 + Sam, too, where they advocate returning to science-fiction and fandom  
 + the way it was, which is a matter of record and can be seen and under-  
 + stood. What I've tried to advocate is advancement to a stf and fan-  
 + dom that doesn't exist yet, that has no record, and is a damned sight  
 + harder to explain or comprehend. But at least I'm trying.

POUL ANDERSON, 3 Las Palomas, Orinda, Calif.:

Of course we could argue this out face to face, beer by beer, and it would doubtless be more fun that way. But I can say things more plonkingly when I have my reference books handy.

+ Yeah -- and you see that gun hanging right there on the wall? So I've  
 + got my beer; have Karen bring yours, and let's be at this!

Now about this interstellar spaceship of yours. I leave it to the more rigorously minded of your readers (oh, come now, there must be some!) to find the really fundamental objections to your idea, if any. But a couple of nasty ones occur to me right offhand.

As I understand the idea -- your writing style is pleasant to read but sometimes confuses technical descriptions just a bit ((+Now, how could he possibly say that?+)) -- or is it simply me being stupid again? ((+Do I hear roars of mirth??+)) -- AS I WAS SAYING BEFORE I WAS SO RUDELY INTERRUPTED, my interpretation of your notion is this: You suck in interstellar matter at the front, ionize it, and squirt the positive ions out the rear to produce thrust. This leaves a negative charge behind, which naturally louses up things, only you cleverly shunt it forward, where it attracts interstellar matter (that part's okay, even if the I.M. is neutral) to be ionized and squirted out the rear, etc., etc. The longer it operates, the more effective the system gets.

Yeh?

Let's look at it operationally. Assume the I.M. is hydrogen; that's 99.99+ % true anyway. Somehow you scoop some up. Your atomic powerplant furnishes energy to ionize it and accelerate the protons out the back end of the system. The electrons stay behind, and in fact are moved forward again. (I'd like to know how the hell you do that. Electrostatic systems obviously won't work. Some kind of moving magnetic field, perhaps?) ((+Phew! Here you got tigers in inexhaustible supply, and you ask if I use mousetraps? But continue.+)) But they're still attracting those protons! There's a backward-pulling force which simply has to be exerted, and that's bound to cut down the net thrust which the ship actually experiences. Conceivably a close examination of the theory would prove that the net thrust is zero, but I'm not in a mood to undertake that proof, and will confine myself to the major hole in your scheme.

It's a Dirac hole, boy. Because look, here you are piling up more and more electrons in the ship, building a bigger and bigger static charge. It won't be long before that charge becomes so great that your powerplant cannot accelerate a proton away from it. Not to mention the electromagnetic radiation put out by so many accelerated electrons; your powerplant has to furnish that too. ((+The Doppler effect gives it some cute curves, too -- but if you think that's bad, you should see the fun I had rigging the flight deck with just control wheel, foot-pedals and push-pull throttle so Robbie could 'fly' the thing!+))



DAMN SHAME that Wrai Ballard  
 couldn't come out  
 with the Kujawas -- we had a  
 set of guns polished & oiled  
 for him to wear at the Wester-  
 con Masquerade and we'd even have sided with him (Robbie was  
 packing her Derringer) when he faced those fast guns from LA

No, I'm afraid that as it stands, your spaceship will just have to go back to the ol' drawing board. But don't feel bad, because you have come upon the germ of an idea which really might work. At least, it's been seriously discussed in places like Astronautica Acta.

Let me lead up to it gradually. If you will pardon a plug, I have a book coming out with Collier under the title (not my own!) "Is There Life on Other Worlds?" which includes an appendix where the Einsteinian spaceship is considered mathematically. (By "Einsteinian," of course, we mean a ship moving so fast that relativistic effects become important.) See that for details. But to put it briefly, we can imagine a spaceship which uses atomic energy to ionize and accelerate matter, thus producing reactive thrust -- only it squirts out plus and minus particles in equal quantities, so that no space charge is built up. What mass ratio does it need? Well, let's say it has an exhaust velocity of  $k$ , and wants to reach a fraction  $B$  of light speed. (That is,  $B$  equals the top speed of the ship divided by the speed of light, which we will call  $c$ .) In that case it turns out that the mass ratio

$$r = \left( \frac{1 + B}{1 - B} \right)^{c/2k} .$$

Note that  $c/2k$  is an exponent, not a cofactor.

But we can't stop there. Or to put it another way,  $r$  alone wouldn't let us stop. That is to say, having reached our speed ratio  $B$  and traveled that fast until we approach our destination, we want to slow down again. And this requires a mass ratio not merely doubled, but squared. So the mass ratio you need for both acceleration and deceleration is

$$R = \left( \frac{1 + B}{1 - B} \right)^{c/k} .$$

You can amuse yourself choosing different values of  $B$  and  $k$  and seeing what  $R$ 's they yield. For summarizing results, it's convenient to specify  $k/c$ , that is, the fraction of light speed attained by the exhaust.

It turns out that for  $B$  and  $k/c$  both = 0.75,  $R = 13.4$  -- which isn't intolerable. If you can get  $k/c$  very close to unity (like with the hypothetical photon drive -- and current research on gaseous lasers suggests that photon drives may really be possible)((+Only you need one hellova lot of highly-excited electrons to -- no matter, carry on here!+)) then the  $R$ 's aren't bad at all. You can get a  $B$  of 0.75 with an  $R$  of 7, a  $B$  of 0.9 with an  $R$  of 19. (After that it begins to get a little expensive. For  $B = 0.99$ ,  $R = 199$ , and so forth.)

Well, all of this suggests that we will definitely be reaching the nearer stars, and not taking too much time en route. The time dilation effect won't be very important, but still, you can stand several years aboard ship, especially if suspended animation becomes available.

But there's a stinker in the proposition: that interstellar hydrogen again. It occurs in a density of about one atom per cubic centimeter. So a spaceship traveling near the speed of light is being bombarded with one exceedingly energetic particle per second on every square centimeter of frontal area. This means a radiation bombardment

of several million roentgens per hour, and as you know, it takes less than 1000 to kill you.

Obviously, this will have to be warded off, and equally obviously, material shielding of any kind is out of the question. I think the problem is entirely soluble, probably by way of magnetohydrodynamics. However, in deflecting those hydrogen atoms, you're being pushed back yourself. In effect, then, there's friction in interstellar space. As a matter of fact, there are even aerodynamic phenomena, when you travel near the speed of light!

So ... instead of butting our way through all that hydrogen, why not use it? Scoop it up -- magnetically, no doubt -- and feed it to the fusion engine, or use it as reaction mass.

And that's what Boussard has suggested. Once you get up a sufficient speed, you can use interstellar hydrogen in a ram jet. This, of course, cuts R 'way down. All you need is enough to accelerate on until you get to ram jet speed, which turns out to be comparatively low if you have big scoop fields. After that ... whoom, you're off, and you can crowd the speed of light just as close as you please!

Y'know, Joe, for years we knowledgeable types have sneered at the old time crudities in science fiction, searing heat rays and spaceships banking and dogfighting like Spads. Well, could be the shoe is on the other foot. A laser is an embryonic heat ray and, while I'd hate to try putting a ship traveling at 0.99 c through an Immelmann turn ((+or a Lufberry, either+)), it might nonetheless behave aircraftishly in many ways.

So maybe there are beautiful naked princesses on Venus....

+ Now, just a doggone minute! Before we start discussing wimmen again, seems I should straighten you out on this thing -- even tho nobody really cares how my starship works, unless maybe they see me out on the hull and it appears I'm trying to fix something. But I'll go this far -- I certainly couldn't get that charge of electrons off the ship's tail, and inside past all those protons, unless I had a damned good bait in the trap. You can't even get a lightning-bolt to leave a house alone 'til you put up a lightning rod that's grounded. So when you figure how to generate such powerful magnetic fields off the ship's nose, cut me some bait for these electrons back here. And you are precisely right that this charge of electrons can't just be bottled up -- you've got to clear the trap almost faster than you catch 'em, because there's lots more little electrons where they came from. And to "clear the trap" means get rid of 'm! Poul, I won't trouble you with details on fusion powerplants; suffice that electrons get soaked up, losing their energy, while certain atoms reach a highly energetic metastable state. Then they're kicked downstairs a few energy levels, emitting a fine display of photons -- which are "lasered" out for a nice bit of hull-glow at the proper frequency to ionize all that interstellar slipstream. About that time, you're ready to put some real juice through that propulsion field in the tail.

+ Yeah, it's aircraftish -- like an air-cooled engine, maybe, using exhaust pipes to supply carburetor heat. But sure, it's hogwash!

+ Look, you figured out some time ago that, given a steady one-g acceleration, it would take a ship slightly over a year to reach a velocity close to the speed of light. Now you've thunk up a starship that starts with a photon drive and builds up speed until it can switch to interstellar ramjet drive. And this isn't hogwash -- maybe it will work -- but Poul, that thing'll take ten years to approach lightspeed!

+ Now, this is great for a book like "Life on Other Worlds" where you  
 + explain, at least theoretically, how this could be done. You have  
 + very good reasons for calling it workable.

+ But Poul, you've got a ship that'll be lucky to reach another star in  
 + the lifespan of the ship's cat -- and that is not good enuff for science  
 + fiction! It won't do at all, you know. Sorry. While Robbie and I hop  
 + aboard our fat, li'l teardrop starship, relax for deepfreeze in the Cool  
 + Room, blast out of here at 100 g's acceleration and warm up a couple  
 + days later in that galactic rainbow that spells damn-near-lightspeed.  
 + For you, it's an expedition to another star; for us, it's a pleasure  
 + jaunt! It's "what has to be done" that counts in stf, not "how the  
 + gizmo works" to do it.

+ And you can't say I'm really cheating on the rules of the game, either.  
 + If I wanted to rig this starship for a professional job, there's a neat  
 + formula I've got that works every time -- starships, time-machines,  
 + coexisting universes, nothing is impossible if you just use this:

Damfool Notion Caughran idea  $\lambda = \frac{\text{Grant}}{\text{Grant Wood}}$ ;  $\sqrt{\text{Wood}} = \text{Zettel}$  ;  
 Poul Anderson =  $\frac{\text{brainstorm}}{\text{Zettel}}$ ; Caughran,  $\frac{\text{Grant Wood}}{\text{Zettel}}$  = it works!

+ It's that Unified Field Theory ol' Al lost out of his pocket one time  
 + and never could find, y'know.

This gets me to your interesting point about why sf writers haven't  
 done more with interstellar drives. Psychologically, you say, they haven't  
 been necessary. You could be right about that.

Actually, some things have been done in this line. I myself (adv.)  
 have described two kinds of Einsteinian ship, and plan to do the ram jet  
 Real Soon Now; I've also dealt, necessarily more vaguely, with faster-  
 than-light drives which employ dodges like probability functions. Other  
 writers have done it too, occasionally, Raymond Jones for example. ((+This  
 is known as "sandbagging" in more things than poker.+))

In fact, I don't think the traditional sf themes are played out  
 by any means. As you imply, the real reason for going out into space  
 is to gather knowledge and, let's face it, to have adventures. With a  
 whole universe full of planets, many of which must be very oddball by  
 our standards, the field in fiction seems limited only by our imagina-  
 tions. I'll agree that of late years those imaginations have been flag-  
 ging somewhat, not the material itself. ((+--But shows up horribly in  
 the scant material they'll use!+)) To continue this long series of ad-  
 vertisements, I've just shipped off a novel involving a colony on Gany-  
 mede which is in contact with the natives of Jupiter. For story purposes  
 there are a kind of "radio" which can get through the thick, interference-  
 ridden Jovian atmosphere, and a ship which can land on the planet --  
 neither employ any postulated principles not now in physics, and both  
 are, as far as I know, entirely new. There are also some aspects of  
 Jovian biology and civilization which were at least fun for me to dream  
 up, and I hope will be fun to read.

Science is exploding in all directions these days, and with  
 only the slightest effort to keep up with it, a writer can find any  
 number of fresh plots. Of course, they may be a little old in science  
 proper. Not long ago I was down at Stanford Research Institute, and  
 got to talking with the head of the department of -- well, what they're  
 doing is studying psychology from the strictly neurological and chemical  
 angle. I suggested rather diffidently that, sometime in the future, it  
 might be possible to make direct linkages between man and machine. In-  
 stead of having the man read instruments, he could perceive his data;

or his brain power could be increased by linkage with a computer. "Oh, yes," said the department head, "we've got a guy down the hall working on that."

But my point is, this has hardly been touched on in fiction. ((+Twenty years ago, Ike Asimov created himself a 'Thinkwriter' for yarns like that.+) Science fiction has never really been ahead of science; it's followed, and what's wrong with that? What we need, these days, is to get back to following science. And I don't mean to revive Gernsback-type stuff; there's also a need for literary skill, and our emphasis will always be on the phenomenological -- the human -- aspect. "Hey, this is a great idea. What sort of experience does it suggest?" I think that if more writers will take some such approach, rather than rehash old motifs which science itself has long left behind, sf can get back its old-time sparkle.

+ Aux armes, citoyens! Formez vox bataillons -- I've been looking for someplace to use that. I dropped one paragraph from your one-shot in which you advocate a need for FTL in some kinds of plot (I relish the prospects of showing how absurd that is!) to concentrate on this last important part. Now we're getting to the heart of the matter.

+ Poul, when you use that approach to science fiction and write such a yarn about Jupiter -- I can only feel that you're doing a fine job of developing a contemporary scientific adult fiction. Yes sir, John Q. Stayathome should really appreciate this. Ol' John admits that rockets will work in space, now; and Jupiter's just about at the physical outer edge of any such damnfoolishness you'll catch him believing in -- so that's real frontier stuff, real thinking, and believable, too!

+ But man, I'm a faaan and it just don't turn me on at all. And I'm beginning to think it's not just me. I don't see anybody else getting excited about science-fiction, either. In fact, I haven't seen anyone excited about stf in years! Y'know, it really gets me to see these kids already behaving like old men.

+ Add a dash of this: we'll have a lot more kids around Real Soon Now. In '65, kids 18-to-20 will comprise over half the population of California (which means they'll compromise only less than half) by Univ. Of Calif. estimates -- it'll mean Karen and Robbie won't find anything in those 'shoppes' except rump-spanging brief skirts, stretch shorts, and bikinis, no doubt -- and that's just a start for the whole country. And Poul, I doubt if some publishers are going to wait ten years for those kids to get old enough to read contemporary scientific adult fiction. Don't try 'juvies' either, not on those kids.

+ "Hey, this is a great idea." Yeah? Why???

One more thing, about moving around in low gravity. You have a good point about the wing-loading aspect. However, I don't think this would handicap anyone walking inside the Lunar dome. You see, weight is less but inertia is the same, and when you're moving in a horizontal plane, you're mainly concerned with inertia. It should be no harder to push your belly through the air in low-gee than in high-gee; and, since it takes less effort to lift your legs, you should be able to move rather faster than on Earth. ((+You've been watching those cartoons on television too much.+) )

Of course, when you switch from a fast walk or jog trot to a run, then you slant your body forward and aerodynamic considerations might well become important. Your flying belt sounds quite feasible. Heinlein, you remember, suggested that wings might actually be used. But right here on Earth, several months ago in England, a muscle-powered airplane took off. And some real hoo-ha sailboats are being built. And then there's scuba

diving. What's next? Looks like the scientific era is coming up with a lot of physical, as well as intellectual, fun and games.

+ The old 'matter of inertia' question popped into my mind the moment I  
+ visualized those guys leapfrogging around in a Moon City; by the time  
+ it occurred to Robbie, I had the answer half-formed; and when I told  
+ you, I had half the words. Let's see if I've got it complete, now.

+ Air-drag becomes a problem when there's time for it to do its dirty  
+ work. If you do a 4-foot standing broadjump on Earth, it's no prob-  
+ lem -- but if your broadjump carries you more than 20 feet inside a  
+ Moon City, it is a problem. Since inertia's the same, you can't jump  
+ any faster on the Moon, just farther. You'll stay airborne just that  
+ much longer.

+ To do any comparable test of it, here on Earth, you'd need to have  
+ Karen get out that vampire costume and maybe extend the wingspan twice  
+ as much, until she's got a wing loading of around 8 lbs./sq.ft. --  
+ and then, since she'd be up there about 6 times as long in a Moon jump  
+ maybe you ought to launch her into something like a 6 mph headwind.

+ Just let me read your notes.

+ But now that I've said it, the truth becomes obvious: who in his right  
+ mind is gonna be doing 20-foot broadjumps around inside that Moon City?  
+ Yeah, we both know who, and that's why they'll be having those track  
+ meets at the Lunaport stadium. But nobody's gonna exert themselves in  
+ what's like 4-foot broadjumps on Earth, when they can go skipping along  
+ much easier at 6 or 8 feet per skip like a toy balloon caught in the  
+ breeze. But even this action is Too Much if we're contemplating a Moon  
+ City the size of Milwaukee or maybe Detroit, and those flying belts  
+ sound like a very good deal.

+ There, now -- and maybe we've got an even clearer view of that scene  
+ than The Good Herr Doktor and his Huntsville mob, maybe?

RICK SNEARY, 2962 Santa Ana St., South Gate, Calif.:

Here be 25¢ for next three g2's. ((+Dankershane.+)) I am also enclosing a N.G.S. add, which gives a usefull list of Maya'n numbers. I don't know if you still want different systems or not--and I can't remember if you used these once--but I can't though away anything some one else might find usefull.-----Say, have you heard anything about the Russians translating the Mayan language by using a calculator? I heard a side refference to it in connection with something else. It would be pretty hot stuff, if they had, wouldn't it?

Have fun at your foolish, fancy, expensive, and hard to reach Westercon.

#### MZB FOR TAFF

+ Rick couldn't make it to the Westercon, because of his father's ill-  
+ ness. We were sorry to hear about that, Rick; we have fond memories  
+ of your folks from last Xmastime. So I will relate you a tale of the  
+ Westercon, now, which I think maybe you would enjoy. The first night  
+ that show got on the road, we went down in the bar where the usual  
+ crowd commenced to form, and the girl in the net stockings moved us  
+ back to the large booth in the rear. Now, they've also got a piano  
+ back there, and this guy with the Nelson Eddy hairdo was banging the  
+ ivories in what the management calls evening entertainment style,  
+ with a few of the locals gathered round him. So at our booth, Karen  
+ Anderson passes this paper napkin around and has everyone sign it,  
+ then inside she writes "PLEASE STOP THE PIANO PLAYING" and it's passed  
+ to me to take over to him.

+ So I walked over and tossed it on his piano, and walked back to our  
 + booth. Behind me, there are titters from his fans and then he's  
 + saying something like, "Well, I'm sorry -- but we<sup>^</sup> have to make a  
 + living, you know!" all  
 +  
 + Well, I'm sitting there thinking this is at least better than that  
 + dame in the bar at the '61 Westercon, who kept sending notes for our  
 + crowd to please shut up while she's playing piano -- when, of a sudden  
 + like, a familiar chord tempts my ear! And I turn, and listen. And  
 + by shades of Liebscher if I don't hear some blues back there! So I  
 + got up and walked around behind this guy, and I told him, "Now I've  
 + been messenger-boy for the crowd, I'll cast my own vote -- if you're  
 + gonna play like that, I'm sittin' over here!" And for the rest of  
 + the night, Rick, I had that guy in my pocket.  
 +  
 + I told Karen about it the other day and she said, "Y'know, I thought  
 + the music got better!"  
 +  
 + We'll number our pages in Mayan just as soon as I find me a Russian  
 + calculator. H'mmm -- it do suggest something, tho....

GOTAFFGOTAFFGOTAFFGOTAFF I think Weber's got it GOTAFFGOTAFFGOTAFFGOTAFF

DON WOLLHEIM, 66-17 Clyde St., Rego Park 74, N.Y.:

The rundown on the con sites this time somehow caught my eye and was interesting. If I'd missed it, it wouldn't have mattered either, but it gave me more pleasure than the last few issues of Analog, since I didn't buy those issues, having decided that I couldn't tolerate it any more, now that it has gone large size and is adding ads for deep scientific thinkers. Enough is enough.

The map is invaluable...now I know where Orinda is.

See you sometime.

+ At the World Con next year? The rumbles I've heard about Analog's big  
 + size seem less than the resounding screams I remember when it, or  
 + rather, As-f went digest-size. And if those ads pay off--if, I say--  
 + won't other magazines try for some of that gravy, too? To do it,  
 + they'll also have to go big size. Or maybe we'll get some new ones.  
 + Possible? I dunno -- Robbie's reading it, these days.

ARTHUR THOMSON, 17 Brockham House, Brockham Drive, London SW2:

If you found this letter abasing itself all over your porch, it's ofcourse because it has a guilt complex. ((+It'll have to abase itself on the stoop, I'm afraid - no porch.)) It has a guilt complex because it knows that it is the first letter to arrive for quite some time in acknowledgment of all those issues of G2 that have arrived in at Brockham House. But it goes hastily on to say that all issues have been read with interest and enjoyment and your various projects/trips/tales followed with a keen sense of pleasure in them all.

It also goes on to say that it has noted the fact that the issues remaining to arrive at Brockam are running out rapidly and that a letter and a few bobs will be dispatched to Colin to keep the supply flowing.

On Taff. You'll have probably heard by now that finally my name has gone forward for the '64 voting. How, why, and where did I get into this, is still a little dazing to me. Ella and Ethel have been brain-washing me for years on it, and I still managed to keep my back to the wall and my head shaking "no"...a while back tho' I went up to Ella's and found her sticking pins into a little Atom doll inside a chalk circle.

This combined with a pad of chloroform Ethel slapped on my face and a piece of paper they produced when I recovered showing my signature saying I'd stand have, as I said, left me slightly dazed and apprehensive about it all, but hell, in for a penny in for a pound, and I'd be pleased, proud, and all that if I do get to win and manage the trip in '64. Don't let anyone tell you different but Ella, Ethel, and the fans who comprise the Science Fiction Club of London are 100% people. All the way. For they have made things so that this trip is possible. (A thing I never thought so.)

I know that sending you illos isn't nessecary, and, a word of praise on those of your own that have appeared in G2..they have the touch. But, if you would like some of my stuff, to even maybe pass along to fan friends 'yust holler'

Enough then, am being dragged off to a 'Jumble Sale' by Olive No, no, she's not getting rid of me, we're just going bargain hunting ...she with her fine nose and unerring instinct for ~~xxxxxxx~~ ~~xxx~~ interesting bargains and me with my doleful expression and pocket book. Still, they're fun to see all the Kooky things people have put out to sell, and all the Kooky things people buy.

+ That chalk circle tempted me to throw in some such remark as, "So  
+ that's what happened to the London O!" but I don't know how that might  
+ be taken; matter of fact, if you're coming over, you might bring me  
+ a map showing where it is British fandom's gone to -- the fmz I get  
+ from there are dead silent on the subject and Colin's been worked to  
+ death keeping track of all the subs for g2 he hasn't got. Yours must  
+ have been a nasty shock. I'm getting lots of names&addresses to send  
+ sample copies from the letter-columns of all the British prozines,  
+ too, don'tchaknow. They can't all have gone apa, but it's no fun  
+ trying to contact those who aren't.

+ Now that's off, I must say I'm beginning to think Rick Sneary's done  
+ almost as much for TAFF and fandom by refusing our demands as he'd  
+ have done by accepting. I'm tremendously pleased that Ethel and Ella  
+ have pulled it off, in your case, and the way the TAFF Fund's finally  
+ going warms this calloused, old heart. But I'll never be completely  
+ satisfied, I guess -- now I wish we'd have both you and Jeeves coming.

+ I suppose here I'd best add a note to ROBERT E. GILBERT in Jonesboro,  
+ Tennessee, since I don't know which letters I'll get to print this ish  
+ -- Bob sent us a batch of artwork, too. We can't use artwork because  
+ we haven't the equipment or means to transfer it onto multilith. All  
+ the illos in g2 are drawn directly onto heavy multilith masters with  
+ special inks, pencils and crayon -- just as we type these words on  
+ master with a special typewriter ribbon. Bob will get g2 for sending  
+ us his artwork, but we'll have to pass it on to someone who can use it.

ROY TACKETT, 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque 87107:

How come they called it "Shadow On The Moon"? ((+Same reason they called it "Three Worlds In Shadow"+))

You are holding a LoC of mine, are you? I should put in a disclaimer here that comments made two months ago do not necessarily agree with comments I would make today. In fact comments made in this line are likely to be in disagreement with comments made in the next line.

Maybe I'd better read it again. ((+Don't try "Dugal Was A Spaceman"+))

So what's the problem? If you're power requirements do approach infinity you have, according to Mr. E., infinite reaction mass to draw from. So what's the problem? ((+Infinity minus infinity = 0, and that gets you nowhere, that's what. Try "I Like You, Too--"+))

I've never quite figured this bit out. Mr. E. said that a lightspeed mass would be infinite--or something like that. Does he imply that at lightspeed the mass of a moving body would take in the entire universe? That all would be encompassed in the body itself? Can you picture it? If one of your little ol' fat-bottomed rockets hits lightspeed and achieves infinite mass thereby encompassing the whole of the universe are the suns shoved inside or absorbed? ((+Or "I'm A Stranger Here, Myself"+)) What happens when the ship drops below lightspeed? Is the universe still there? Still the same? Changed?

I don't remember any of the characters actually getting to the moon although they talked about it. ((+Hell, it took half of Other Worlds to get 'em "Down In The Misty Mountains"+))

Hmmmm. ((+"A Touch of B Flat" obviously+)) The plasma jet or whatever is a very low-powered thrust. How much power do you need? Given a constant acceleration of one g, which isn't too many and doesn't call for too much power, how fast will you be going within a year or so?

So how come they called it "Shadow On The Moon"? ((+Same reason they called it "The Machine That Floats"+))

Humpf! An interstellar drive isn't needed any more, eh? We never had one in the first place but that's beside the point. But the drive isn't just another type of rocket--rockets, even constant acceleration jobs, are going to be too bloody slow. The star-drive, when it shows up on the scene, will have to be something that'll get us from here to there quickly. Something that will be, as Kinnison once said, just about the same as your ground car only we calculate speed in parsecs per hour instead of miles per hour. I can hardly wait. ((+Ron Ellick threatened to use the pool if we didn't get him into the First Fandom Party!+)) I'll give you 8 to 5 that lightspeed is not a limiting factor.

But stf-type authors should get away from the "hyperspace" thing and try to come up with something more realistic--even if it is only constant acceleration rockets because, old boy, in stf we still need it. If our yarns are going to be set among the stars then we've got to have a logical way of covering those distances. And the yarns, the ones being written these days, have to be set among the stars. The Solar System is pretty well washed up as a setting for the type of stf tale we're used to getting full of high adventure and strange races and all that jazz. The scientific chappies have just about counted out anybody but us in this neck of the woods and the neighborhood seems rather inhospitable.

I've been re-reading some NWSmith tales, fine adventure and all that, but what with the Venusians and Martians and whathaveyou pretty well out of date.

I can answer your question: "why go to the stars?" For the same reason people climb mountains: because they're there.

I guess you know by now Ol' Tyrannical Al isn't going to be standing in the Burlingame City dump demanding a bottle of whiskey. The Huntsville City dump mayhap but not Burlingame. ((+They gonna put that Ford into orbit?+))

Mighod! You didn't title it "Shadow On The Moon", did you? ((+And then I wrote....+))

LEN MOFFATT, 10202 Belcher, Downey, Calif.:

If I ever get around to writing an Interstellar Epic, I may be tempted to use the Gibson Stardrive Engine--but I'd rather see somebody like Ike Asimov do it. As who wouldn't? In two of my short stories (of the ones that sold, and were actually published) I had part or most of the action take place aboard a starship. In one I used "subspace" drive instead of "hyperspace", just to be different; not that it meant anything any more than does "hyperspace". My concern was with the characters and the situations, not with How They Got There. (Yeah, one of the "bad" things about today's stf, but only in the sense that too many

writers now depend on Good Characterization to make a "story"--and neglect plotting, and neglect science-extrapolation.) I used the old "What Would Happen If--" gimmick. ((+Yeh, What Would Happen If somebody sent Tackett a Real Scientific article on how infinite or any other kind of mass do not mean infinite or any other kind of size, in fact at light-speed it would exist only in zero time, and even a near-lightspeed ship wouldn't wobble a star it went past, so Roy can publish it in DYNATRON?+)) Like, what would happen if a vodville clown found it necessary to perform for non-friendly other world beings, or what would happen if a group of persons suddenly (overnight) lost or were drained of their capacities for emotion. ((+Naw, that's not like Roy Tackett!+)) (Sure, in every day real life intellect and emotion cannot be so easily "separated", but one can't make with the ol' imagination if one must stick to every day real life.) ((+We gotta get them Tacketts out here, next year!+))

For some time now I've been toying with an Invisible Man theme. I have the basic idea--the new approach, or whatever, and a couple-three characters, etc. but there's one little problem involved, one that H. G. Wells (Himself) didn't bother to "Solve". Either he didn't think of it, or simply ignored it. After all, his classic Invisible Man tale was quite "realistic" in that it showed the hazards of being invisible, and how power corrupts, etc. Can you guess what the "problem" is--and if so, how to get around it, or, better yet, how to use it, to make an even better story? ((+Why, it's perfectly obvious -- any guy who couldn't see his own splash would have to use the pool!+))

Think you asked (an issue or so back) who'd be interested in buying and reading my proposed TAFFzine. Naturally the only answer I can give is: the same fans (and pros--there are some who dig TAFF) who buy and read the trip reports now, who support TAFF now. But methinx the mag could be made to appeal to fans who are currently indifferent about TAFF, but only--and I'm sure you'll agree here--if the TAFF winners are well-known and well-liked by all kinds of fans, and are likely to write reports more than a few want to read. One thing that helps the sales of TAFF reports now (or has helped them recently) is the fact that more fans have been exposed to visiting TAFF delegates, not just at the con (which is limited "exposure" at best), but before and/or afterwards, when the TAFF delegate is able to travel around the country a bit.

The other thing that makes the serializing of the TAFF trip reports in a TAFFzine important is a greater general appeal. By that, I mean that one doesn't have to buy a trip report all in one piece and be faced with umpteen pages of reading all at once. The reader who prefers to read said reports cover to cover (as do I) may save up installments if he wishes, but others who croggle at reading 50 pages or more of trip report shouldn't croggle at reading it in installments, over a year's time. This also gives the writer a better chance to write a better report, and--as indicated by my plan--the writer isn't burdened with other TAFF duties while working on his or her installments.

I could go on and on (about TAFF) but I got to sleep some time tonight. Harry Warner (in his letter) seems to favor a part of the idea --that is, publishing the reports as serials in fanzines, with previous TAFF winners doing the stenciling and duplicating, and installments of the serialized report would not be scattered from California to Foo Knows. Where in umpteen different fanzines, not all of which go to the same fans.

+ Len, ol' scotch brother, I let you have your say even tho I don't know  
 + how many readers are turned off, right here. D'you know I never got a  
 + single LoC mentioning anything about that center-section on TAFF, ex-  
 + cept from those letter-writers who usually say something about every-  
 + thing in an issue? But you know, of course, that all the wild things  
 + could happen to your TAFFzine that've happened in all the fantastic  
 + history of SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES! I don't know if TAFF could survive it.  
 + I wish others felt like kicking this idea around, but I guess they don't.

ALL RIGHT, McQUOWN -- It's your cue! ...lastish, I ran Misha's letter but chopped part of it out about the play  
 + he was in, saying we hadn't many theater tramps reading g2. That was  
 + a mistake, as you will see. Here's what I cut; this is McQuown:

Basically, for those of you who may have not heard of it, the story is mainly concerned with the witch-boy, John, who falls in love with Barbara Allen, the village coquette. In this instance, Barbara is sincere, and falls deeply in love with John. John goes to the Conjur people, and Conjur Woman agrees to make him mortal, 'to teach him a lesson.' In the meantime, the witch-gals, hearing of the condition of the changing (Barbara must be true to John for a year before he will stay human) go to Conjur Man and ask the life of Barbara Allen if John tries to renege on the bargain.

Barbara, already in conception before the changin', bears John a witch-thing, which the horrified villagers burn. Deciding, finally, that the safest thing to do is have John turned back to a witch, believing he will go back to Old Baldy and leave them alone, at the revival, the villagers, in a fit of religious frenzy, force Barbara into a virtual rape by Marvin Hudgens, her ex-boy friend. John, of course, has gone back to Baldy, knowing he cannot set foot in a church. In the last scene, on Old Baldy, John has already learned of the bargain between the witch-gals and Conjur Man. He meets Barbara, who has come looking for him. Their farewell scene is deep and moving. As the moon rises, Barbara dies, and John reverts to his former self, leaving the lifeless corpse of Barbara Allen on the mountainside to join the witch-gals in their nightly revel.

As you can see, I'm rather hung up on this play....

+ That was the McQuown, last month. And now, we've gotten another letter  
 + from him which starts off like this:

The play is over, the last curtain has fallen. The theatre, deprived of its artificial life, is empty, dark. But its heart still beats, and in its shadows, only a few yards from the other world, the ghosts of plays and players, of audiences and last lines, stroll softly across the dark stage, searching, perhaps, for one last moment in the spotlight, for one last sound of applause.

And it is there. As silent as the ghosts themselves, from the mind of one old charwoman, who has seen all the plays and players, heard all the last lines, seen all the audiences pass by. And she sits in the darkened theatre, as alone as the other wraiths, and remembers those almost-lost days when she said: "My song is ended; let the curtain fall!"

I wish everyone in fandom had seen 'Dark of the Moon.' It was a good play, rather fannish in some ways, and I loved doing it. We ran six performances, and had good houses for all of them. I'm glad to say most reactions were favourable; I would have personally have been miserable had they not been. I was really in this thing, heart and soul.

I can't go to DC, nor will I be able to make the scene at 'Frisco, but I hope someday to meet you folks. I have no idea as to your age, appearance or much else about you, except you have an interest in guns and airplanes, which suits me no end. A friend of mine is contemplating buying a Luscombe that sits in one of the few old-type, honest-to-Ghod flying fields in Florida - in Orlando. The plane looks like a sturdy, trim craft, and it'll be a ball to go up with him if and when he gets it. If I ever get the time and money, I want to get my ticket, too.

BETTY K: You mean some fan has been hiding out an Oriental chick on us?

RON B: It'd be nice to see a TAFfer's expenses paid all the way, and I think you're right - the expenses are doubly heavy for an Anglofan in the US. I know how well I lived in England for an amount I could never have survived on here.

+ And wouldn't you know, there I've gone and cut his letter again. But  
 + this is all, people; this is absolutely IT. Some letters not here,  
 + this time, may appear nextish -- but I can't promise. I'll try, tho.

..AND IT WAS the very same Alva Rogers who sez why don't we fold it lengthwise as these bedsheets are easier for him to read this way. // This was all typed two weeks ago now except this last page and the cover illo, which are being done this last July weekend, which means we won't get it back from the printshop for collating and mailing until next weekend. So we're a bit late. Reason's that last weekend we brought Robbie's Mom up from LA, where she'd been vacationing with Robbie's kid brother, to vacation some with us. // ADD NOTES on the Westercon: attendance was over 200, memberships over 250 -- Hyatt House was just big enuff for it. Big Bill doesn't answer his telephone so I dunno who the Committee would give accolades for help they rendered (fans who weren't on the W.C. but helped out anyway) unless I ring Alva and I'm just not up to it. The one Extra Helper we noticed was Norm Metcalf -- he sat in their Display Room and handled book-sales all day, every day of the Westercon. // For nextish, we have a brief note from Ike Asimov we'll have to print without cutting and 5 pages from BettyK we will chop great hunks outta, not to mention the LoC from Lew Grant we haven't used, most of which (he says) will go into an article for YANDRO so we don't have to publish it anyway. But there's probably just one way we can get nextish out without having all of it taken up with letters....no, that's not it. // To be really truthful down here where nobody will notice it, the Westercon was so exceptionally good that we'd not miss nextyear's World Con for anything. // Rog Phillips and Honey just drove in; the livingrm is full of chitchat, and I can't concentrate here at all...& for cripe's sake, I forgot to tell about Gene Kujawa, Chief Engineer -- Len Moffatt probably hasn't told Anna about this, either. But there was a curvacious, young blonde in a tight Stewardess uniform with a stuck zipper. I had no luck getting it loose, so Len fumbled around and he couldn't so I tried again and Len tried again -- and Gene has that blonde there on his bed for a half-hour fixing that zipper before we can get her drunk. It was his scotch!

To:

FROM  
J+R Gibson  
5380 SOBRANTE  
EL SOBRANTE, CALIF.

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