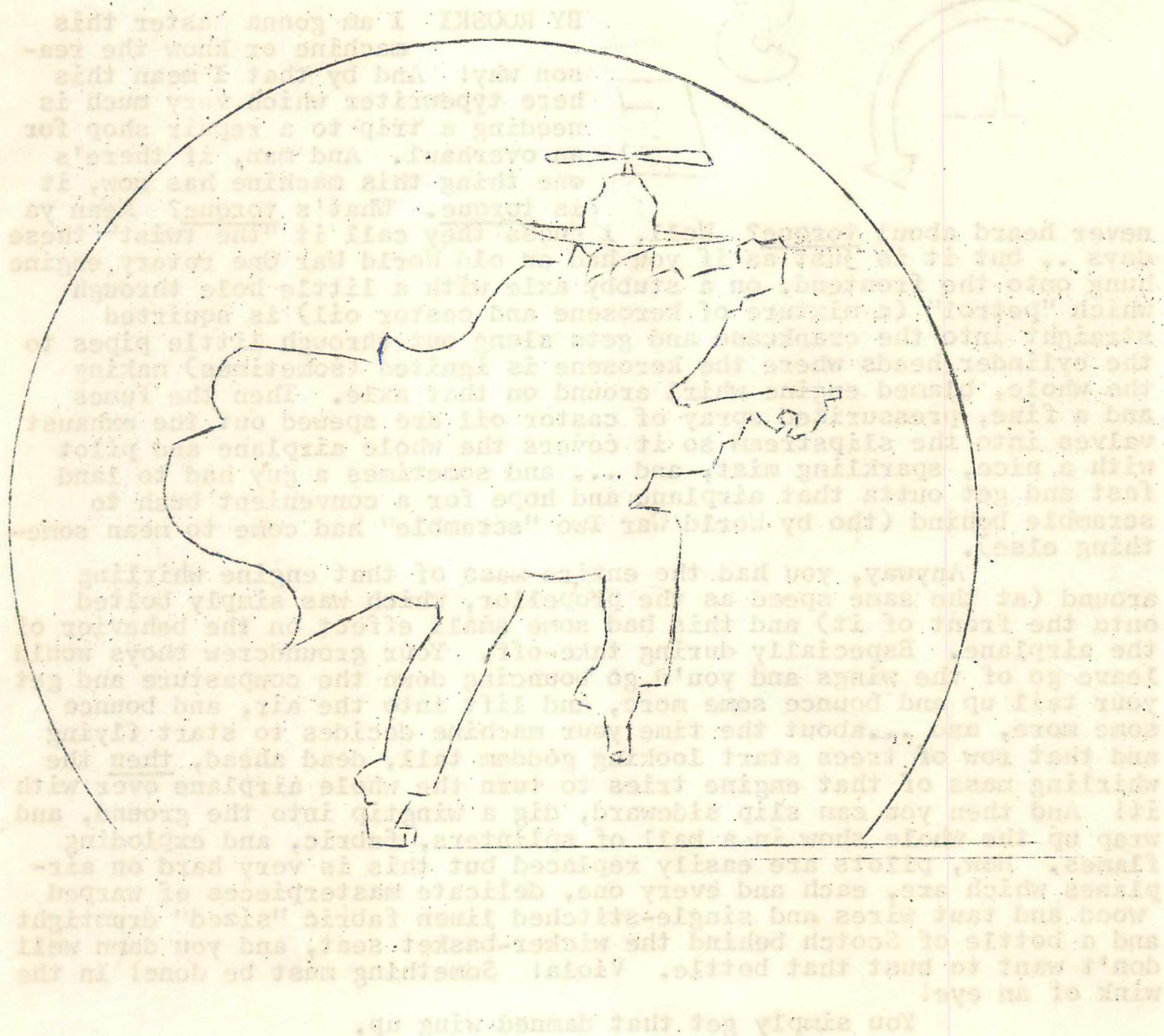
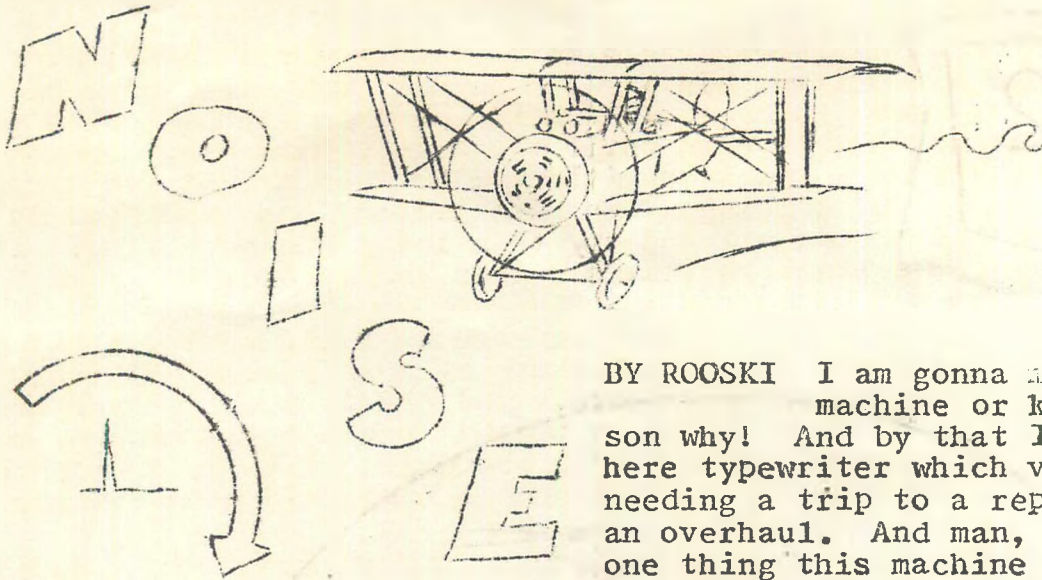


G²



March 1964



BY ROOSKI I am gonna master this machine or know the reason why! And by that I mean this here typewriter which very much is needing a trip to a repair shop for an overhaul. And man, if there's one thing this machine has now, it is torque. What's torque? Mean ya never heard about torque? Well, I guess they call it "the twist" these days .. but it is just as if you had an old World War One rotary engine hung onto the frontend, on a stubby axle with a little hole through which "petrol" (a mixture of kerosene and castor oil) is squirted straight into the crankcase and gets slung out through little pipes to the cylinder heads where the kerosene is ignited (sometimes) making the whole, blamed engine whirl around on that axle. Then the fumes and a fine, pressurized spray of castor oil are spewed out the exhaust valves into the slipstream so it covers the whole airplane and pilot with a nice, sparkling mist, and ... and sometimes a guy had to land fast and get outta that airplane and hope for a convenient bush to scramble behind (tho by World War Two "scramble" had come to mean something else).

Anyway, you had the entire mass of that engine whirling around (at the same speed as the propellor, which was simply bolted onto the front of it) and this had some small effect on the behavior of the airplane. Especially during take-off. Your groundcrew bhoys would leave go of the wings and you'd go bouncing down the cowpasture and get your tail up and bounce some more, and lift into the air, and bounce some more, and ... about the time your machine decides to start flying and that row of trees start looking goddam tall, dead ahead, then the whirling mass of that engine tries to turn the whole airplane over with it! And then you can slip sideward, dig a wingtip into the ground, and wrap up the whole show in a ball of splinters, fabric, and exploding flames. Now, pilots are easily replaced but this is very hard on airplanes which are, each and every one, delicate masterpieces of warped wood and taut wires and single-stitched linen fabric "sized" drumtight and a bottle of Scotch behind the wicker-basket seat, and you damn well don't want to bust that bottle. Viola! Something must be done! In the wink of an eye!

You simply get that damned wing up.

"The spirit of Joe Gibson walks over Berkeley fandom
these days --" ...Ted White in MINAC #12

Who knows what evil lurks
in the hearts of faaans?

There wasn't much problem during landings. Y'see, those rotary engines had no throttles; they ran at just one speed -- wide open. So when you wanted to cut power to come down for a landing, you just had to switch the blamed thing off! The "windmilling" propellor kept the thing whirling past its ignition points so when you switched on again (you had a little button on the control stick) it started right up. In fact, this was the only engine that kept running even tho a cylinder or two misfired -- and they always did. Other airplanes with other engines had no torque or castor oil spray, but they were always coming down with a dead engine. As you come sailplaning down in this little kite, tho, and you need a slight boost to clear the fence, you just blip the engine (and keep that damned wing up!) and switch off again. Blip it once more to sail across the field. Once more, and touch down to roll right up to the Squadron Mess. No need to walk all that way!

Jules Verne had been dead a mere dozen years in 1917; H.G. Wells was fifty, and had written his War In The Air just nine years before... and does anyone know just how old Robert Heinlein and E.E. Smith were, then? (Ike Asimov wasn't born until the Prohibition Era.) So you see there just wasn't much really exciting to do then except fly airplanes. So let's check if any bracing wires have pulled loose and pour in some more kerosene and castor oil and try this thing one more time. It's down there over the treetops that she gets really bad.

Another problem I got which you are no doubt seeing right on this page is what looks like lousy repro -- meaning the printing job leaves something to be desired, here. The print shows through the paper where it shows at all; and as if that weren't bad enough, there are those tiny specks of ink all over the page. This is decidedly not the nice, clean print we are accustomed to having in this fanzine.

So when I said I knew nothing about mimeo work, that I had found great difficulty with what little I had done, I wasn't kidding. And when I went over to San Francisco and bought a ghoddy supply of mimeo paper and stencils, what do I come home and find? I come home and find this is not the best weight of mimeo paper, that my 3 boxes of stencils are all white stencils which (I am told, now) are not the best stencils I could get, either.

On top of which it has just occurred to me that corflu looks a little bit like French blackberry brandy, which is what some of the guys used to consume in copious amounts to counteract the effects of all that castor oil!

Wonder if there's any Science fan who now wishes to advise me on how a rotary engine really works with the offset cams and the piston rods and the cylinders firing in sequence to make it whirl around? Pfui. I won't print his letter.

"The way Ted White sounds, you'd think someone had called his wife a queer!"

Or maybe Betty Kujawa will write about how it is to loll around in a plushy, twin-engined Piper Apache with autopilot and oxygen and radio checks and drift-vector/fuel-duration computers and maps that look more like IBM charts allatime and a skyful of fast executive aircraft and jetliners and military manned missiles and howcum that helicopter don't have back-up lights? and--

Get that wing up!

But the thing hasn't changed all that much. What could roll an old biplane into a ball of fire can still send any modern aircraft cartwheeling down the runway. Just forget what you're doing and dig in a wingtip. You can be on top of the deck in bright sunlight, but with an engine fire and radio and instruments shorted out and not a hole in the clouds anywhere but you think you know there are a couple mountains down there somewhere. So maybe you don't check all the bracing wires, and strain your petrol thru a French trollop's petticoat--We're clipping the treetops right here. This is where it's the worst.

--But you check out that modern airplane just as particularly, with more know-how and regulations backing it up so there's damned little chance of such things happening. But still they happen. You mix with other pilots at an airfield and there's always some guy it's happened to.

So what the hell, you want to live forever? Then don't drive an automobile. Maybe you check yours out carefully, but most of those other nuts couldn't care less.

What bemuses me about it is how much more thoroughly it applies to spaceflight.

If Congress will cut back the appropriations just a bit more, we'll kill our first Astronaut.

Some poor fool always thinks he has to go.

Okay, pick up the tail back there and swing this machine around and I will try it one more time. And jump back fast when you swing the prop on a hot engine -- this was also the era of one-armed airplane mechanics -- and you other guys hang onto those struts until I give you the nod.

You ready?

What's that wire hanging down from? ... But one thing that has got me puzzled about you people's response to my "interstellar kick" these past months is how nobody has mentioned fannish freedom! You've all seemed to expect somebody (me, especially, for some odd reason!) to try the Lordly BNF Act in that starship, turning it into his own, little egoboo empire and maybe viciously attacking anyone who challenges his "supremacy" so the rest of you just suffer along in silence rather than get involved. Is there no longer any feeling among fans that you can handle any such nonsense? You most certainly can! It's been done. It just never won any fan polls.

But ... for cripe's sake, you certainly have the concept of fannish freedom. Each of you practices it -- and you're fans, while today's stf reflects almost no concept of it at all -- to the extent that your whole approach to living is different. You're quick to defend it; in fact, a number of fans are downright trigger-happy about that, so much that anyone can push their buttons. In some one area or another, many of you are hypersensitive about it -- you've got some sore places where the whole world tried to kick hell out of you for thinking for yourself -- and you sympathize with anyone else who's received such kicks, often to a fault. Any fraud or con artist can spot that about you immediately and play his tune on it, and you know it. And when you object, others pounce on you for mistreating the poor creature! Any fraud or conniver knows that, too. Fandom's a beautiful setup for that game.

But ... for all that, why aren't you quick to see any good outlet for fannish freedom? A starship full of fans could handle a lot of our problems -- maybe drastically, but some things always get learned the hard way -- and look where that'd leave us! The behavior of some fans is definitely not acceptable according to the standards of conduct of 20th Century western culture; but we've also developed standards of a fan-type culture (you can hardly call it anything else but that) just from being such insatiable students of human behavior and historical trends. So a few fan couples are "living in sin"; so there's a homo or two; so a number of fans are nudists; so we've had unwed mothers and wife-trading and a group orgy or two. And so a lot of us don't approve of such jazz -- but nobody has to approve. Nobody even has to condone it; but we do, because we know a bit more about it than most. Where a study of good sources reveals some behavior to be dangerous, we're most likely to find it out; but we couldn't be motivated less by such "source material" as political speeches, church sermons, Hollywood movies or Madison Avenue advertisements.

Most of us exercise a degree of personal freedom that many people simply couldn't comprehend -- and that such "rebels" as the beatnik crowd would never believe -- simply because we're not so adolescent that we must have the "security" of social acceptance. Society demands this; nonconformists are punished. So we just make damned sure society sees us as happy, little conformists who look just like all the other sheep -- and what we do or think when society isn't looking is nobody else's damned business. The fan-type culture we have, without much effort to bring it about, simply evolved because we knew this about each other, that we do exercise this degree of personal freedom.

Now put us into a starship and you see what it means? No trouble from outside. No misunderstandings due to slipshod contact over long distances with too many at once. And given the means (from the same place we got that starship, of course) and a planet or two to make our own, I'm not too sure we'd all want to come back.

I know of no concept of fandom that says all fans have to like each other. But most fans I've met would rather hate each other than have to like society, if it came to that.

And we've no burning desire to revolt against society. We simply want to leave.

Let's try a quick takeoff, this time -- jump the machine right into the air with one, hard bounce of the wheels and make it fly ... Norm Metcalf tells me that E.E. Smith, Ph.D., was 27 years old in 1917 when flying crates like this was an easy way to die young. Norm says little Bob Heinlein was 10 years old -- and so was that other precocious youngster, L. Sprague de Camp! And Johnny Campbell, Jr., was only 7 years old! Ah well.

Fandom in a starship (or Capsule Fandom, if you will) means we could handle some of the problems we've got inside, for a change, like the technique employed by several smart bhoys to insure that frauds & con artists like themselves can get away with it. Rather than risk being called down for their deeds, they make a practice of calling down everyone else on every pretext they can find or invent, and then raising such a nauseous stink that fandom recoils in disgust. Thus, they make any such action unpopular so, they think, other fans won't take it against themselves and their ilk.

They actually think they've discovered something new -- that if a few fans may even see their behavior for what it is, nothing can be done about it!

Then there are the few really serious critics of fandom who can label us a bunch of nuts with some justification -- but not without revealing their own shortcomings, I'm afraid. Laney was one. He said we were sick because we didn't want to revolt against society, that our desire simply to leave was a psychotic withdrawal, a proof that we were too cowardly to face the world or our true selves. And he did face it. He kept beating his head against that blank wall until it killed him.

Fortunately, most of us are fully aware of the double meaning inherent in our desire to leave this world behind. Every single time we get off this planet in science-fiction (or in fantasy, for that matter) we end up looking back at it -- at its past, at its present, and at its future. We're not trapped down among the blank walls, any more; it's as simple as that.

But that makes fandom more than entertainment and "escape" -- prone; it makes being a fan not only "proud and lonely" but, on occasion, a damned rough test. And there are some who can't stomach that. Some few would have fandom a sanctuary for the parasites of society -- the lazy, sex-ridden, hopheaded, ego-hungry pampered brats of an overly-pampering world. The frauds and the con artists are their heroes in the struggle against such "uncool" concepts as leaving this world and its sick pampering behind. They like the blank walls. It's fear that they hate -- fear and uncertainty.

But I never saw a frontier yet that didn't have its border ruff raff -- especially after it got safe enough for women and children to come struggle and die with their menfolk. Then the scum figure it's safe enough for them, too. They come out and strut and fight in the streets and brag about what big, tough frontiersmen they are. But not a damned one of them will go wandering alone into that trackless Unknown ... they aren't crazy!

But when a frontier gets that crowded, it's not healthy. It's time we moved our Rendezvous on into the Shining Mountains out beyond all that, out of reach.

So I put it into a starship, here

It's immediately obvious, isn't it? If we had all factions of today's Big Fandom on board, some of 'em would be screaming to get off. Well, we might find a planet or two they can be dumped on -- and good riddance. But won't they paint us the black scoundrels for it! Tsk. Such a shame.

It's bound to come to that, you know.

(But you say I haven't expressed things at all clearly? That, for one thing, I haven't drawn a strong enough line between liberty and license? Why, then, you have something to say and here's the place!)

A NICE,

NORMAL

PLANET

Scribble this on the back of an old envelope: we're in orbit around a double-sun on the edge of the Hyades Cluster -- a good fifty-odd lightyears out from our Home Cluster and one hundred and fifteen lightyears from Earth.

Our job is threefold:

Explore. Analyze. Exploit.

Add that we have a problem: our starship is beginning to show signs of structural weakness. Nevermind how or why; we'll go into that later. But we've got to lighten ship. Not people -- dumping half our complement of 500 fans and the provisions they consume wouldn't lighten a starship's mass by one-tenth. And we can't junk any of our magnetic field generators which do make up most of the ship's mass.

We've got to dump some of the fooferaw so many of you insisted on bringing along. Then we can tear out nearly half our Supply Decks.

All right, go find another envelope. I want this taken down.

It's a fairly common binary, as double-star systems go -- and it's one of the kinds that have planets. The primary sun, the one that has the planets here, is about half the size of Sol but three times brighter and with about the same mass. Its companion is a giant, red "ghost star" almost twice its size but with a mass hardly more than twice Jupiter's -- a big, blood-red gas bubble so thin you can see the stars through most of it.

There's one small world circling the primary sun that's about our size -- almost as big as Earth in both size and mass. Of course, it's not Earthtype; the surface temperature looks to be about 100° Centigrade, on the average. And it doesn't vary much.

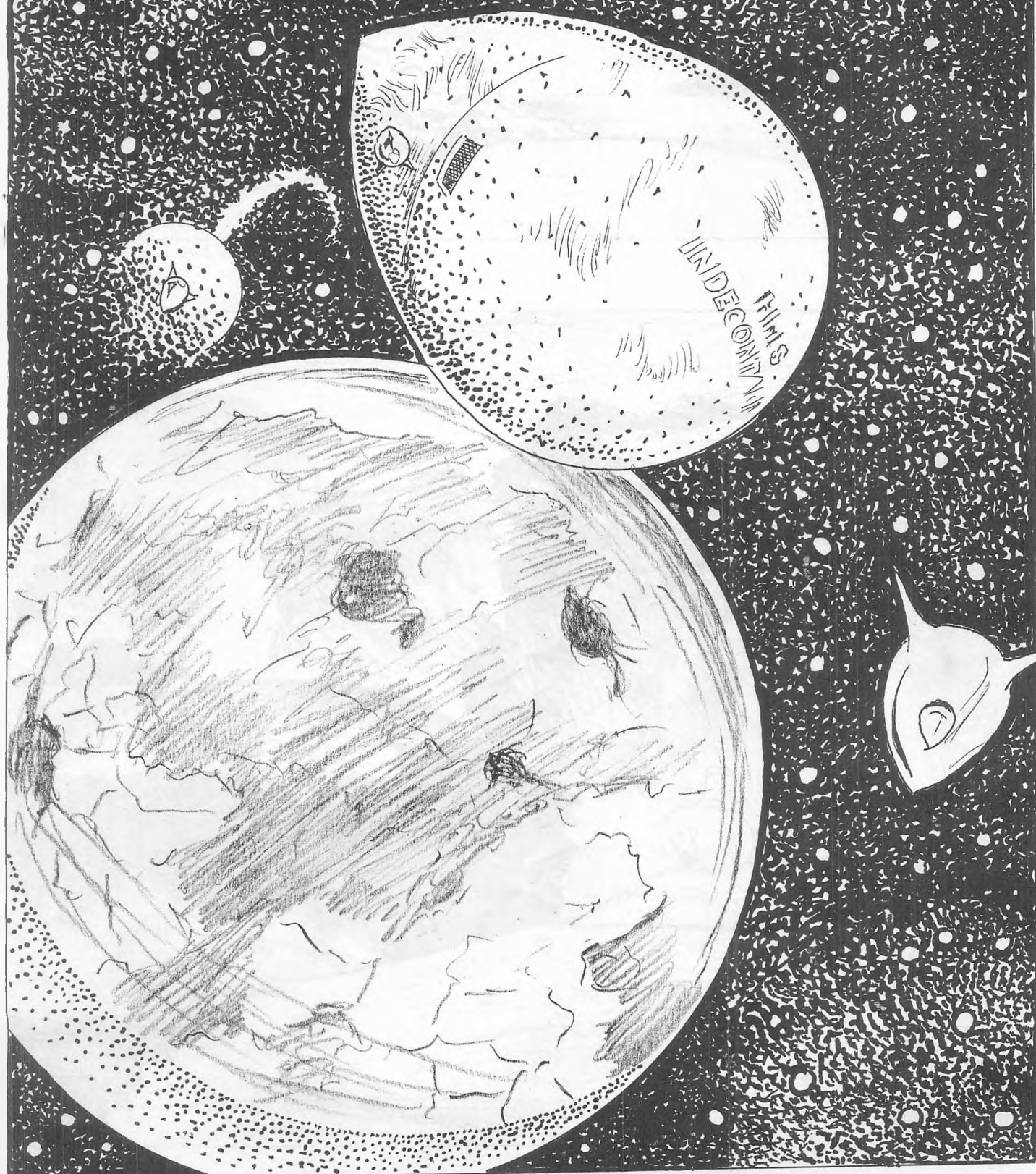
We'll call the primary sun Devil Star and its companion The Devil's Horns -- for reasons which will become obvious, presently. From here, we can't make out much of the rest of the Hyades Cluster -- for the simple reason that it's an open cluster and we're into the fringes of it, now. Earth's astronomers have found about 150 stars belong to this cluster, but that could be one-tenth or nine-twelfths of the total suns it has. Any one guess is as good as another.

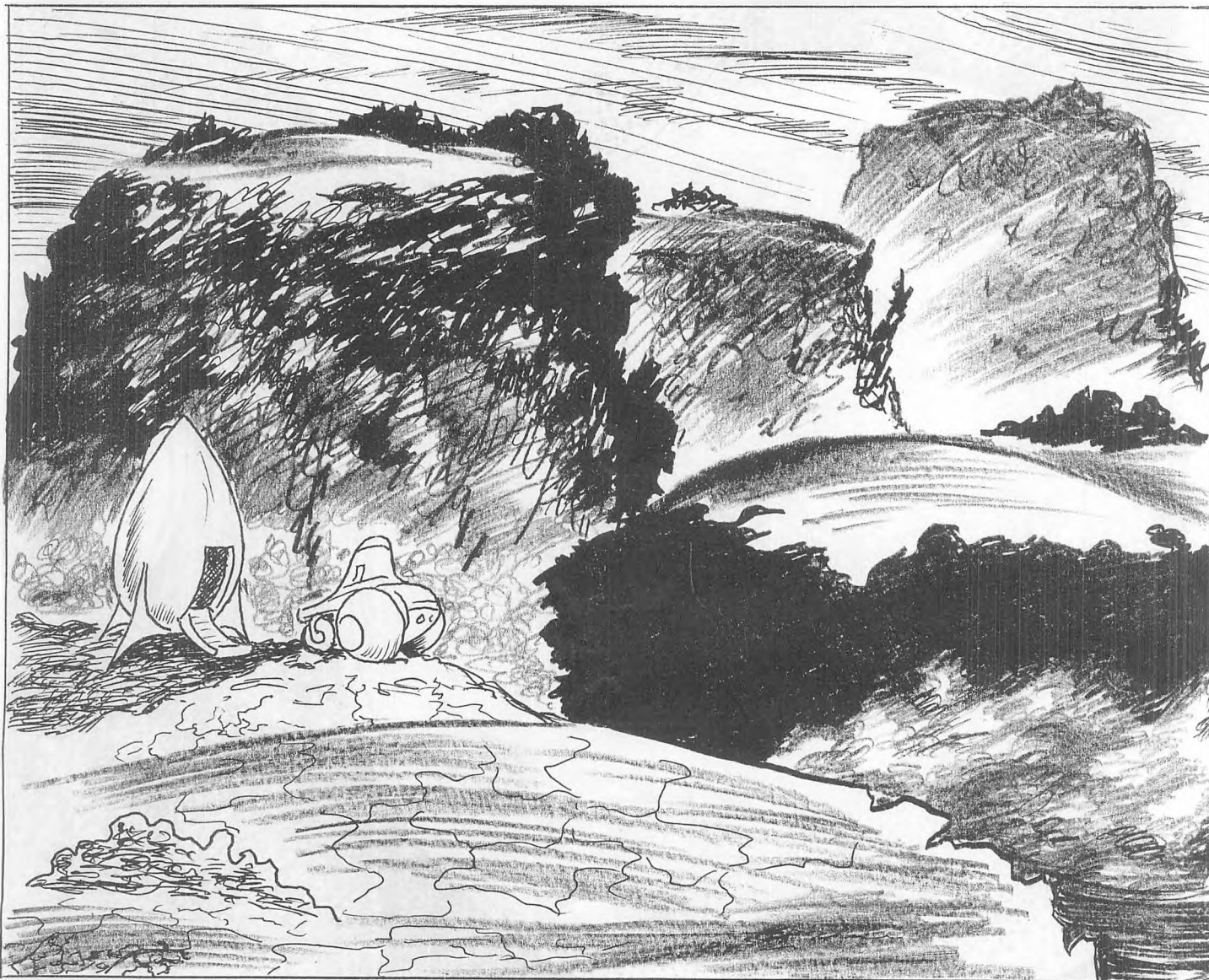
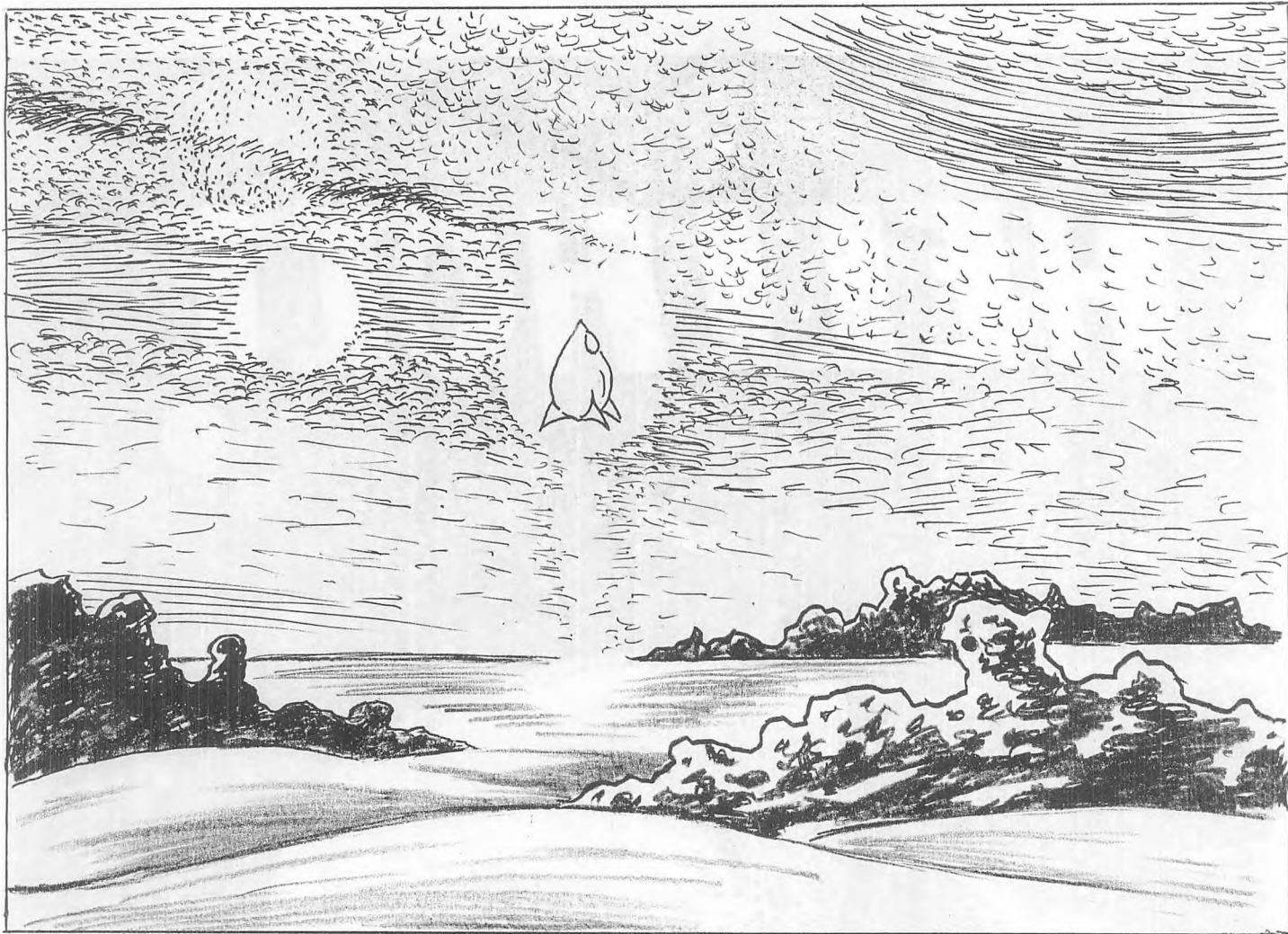
The planet we're orbiting, I've called dnq -- a hundred degrees Centigrade is 212° Fahrenheit on your kitchen oven thermometer -- and its two fair-sized moons, the Hinges. But there are some things we ought never to overlook about any nice, normal planet going peacefully about its business round a good, steady sun.

Consider the spectro we've run off on dnq's atmosphere: plenty of hydrogen, nitrogen, chlorine, fluorine and formaldehyde -- with not a speck of water vapor and almost no trace of oxygen. If the planet had a cloud blanket, some of you would probably be theorizing that it's a "dustbowl" planet, and even lacking that may not stop you. And you'd be wrong.

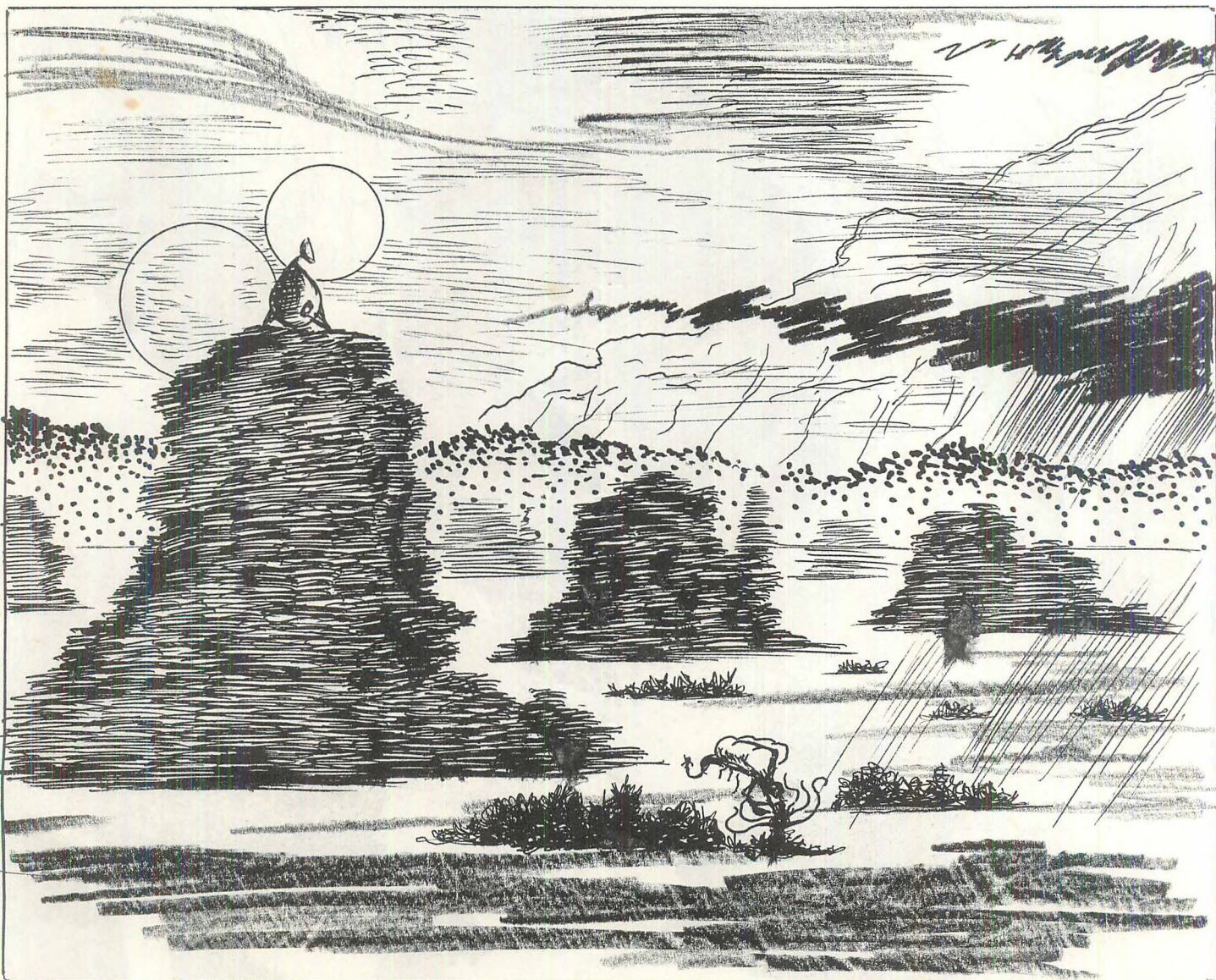
Of course, I've already done a close-orbit scan of the place before saying anything....

HELLHOLE









Hah! Thought that would get you down there to see for yourselves! Nice job, too, save for those damned fools trying to land in that South Polar Region at the height of its dust-storm season. Casualty lists will be posted in the morning.

So you touched down in the North Polar Region and found giant dunes of paraformaldehyde dust and low spines of pitted, dust-eroded rock. So you moved south to where the continental mantle (if you'd call them continents) began to break up; you had us set down a Li'l Jim Dandy Explorer Wagon Kit and you landed, assembled it, and went snooping.

And you found that at 100° Centigrade, salt melts. You found that all the veins that are minerals in the crust of an Earthtype world have turned to liquid and seeped out of the crust on this planet. And you found that while such liquified metallic salts seep down, they do not corrode -- they don't make hills and valleys like Earth's rivers.

You had fun getting the Explorer Wagon down into that!

And you found some real, nice li'l rivulets mildly diluted with radioactive liquid uranium salts, eh? Cheap stuff. D'you realize all that's needed to "mine" this world is a bucket? The stuff pours out for you!

And you found monsters. Okay. Chlorine and chromium atoms can form molecules in this temperature range so damned much like the kind of molecules we know iron and oxygen can form -- in short, protein molecules -- that I'm not surprised. Saw it in a SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN ad, one time. Only, there was something about there being little difference between plant and animal life in that kind of ecological cycle, and it had some interesting side-effects. Like, you got enough liquified chromium salts in a pool to get this started with a nice chlorine mist, and the stuff starts forming a pink-red fog. The funny thing about this fog is that it can burst into flame -- and release its own oxygen to keep burning.

Sure, you saw the rocks burning down there! And streams that glowed like liquid light. And plants that crawled. And a giantsized reptile-starfish thing. And black rain.

That's and . !

And don't come around telling me about "dustbowl" planets or "watery" planets or worlds covered with dry, dead seabottoms or catacombed with giant caverns or just a frozen mass of methane snow and rock. I'll just say, "That's nice -- now, what does the rest of the place look like?"

But now that you've had your fun&games, let's do something constructive around here. The Lower Hinge, over there, seems like a fair-sized moon to me. Only thing is, it's rather close to this sun and it's hot. We'll need to cool it off.

So some of you take ship and scout out this planetary system for some ice. Poul Anderson tells me that if you dumped seas and lakes and atmosphere -- real, breathable air -- onto old Luna, it would all leak off into space, sure it would, just like everybody has always said ... in about half a million years!

So get the hell out there in those liftboats and bring me some ice!

And let's the rest of us build a couple Leinster towers at the poles of that moon. Only we won't waste 'em on such nonsense as lifting ships off the surface; we'll use 'em to clamp a magnetic sphere around this moon and charge it up with ions until we've got a good layer. Then if the sunlight's too hot, we can damn well filter it.

Sure, we won't have soil. The place will be sterile as hell until somebody comes out and germinates the place, but it'll be ready for immigrants whenever they come. And don't you see, it's ours.

We know where it is and that it'll be ready.

And as star rovers, we're finally in business. We've got something to sell, now.

(Haven't you guys found that ice yet? Hell, use dowsing rods!)

Personally, I wouldn't want to live out here if they gave me the place. But it is a rich spot; the ready accessability of Hell-hole's mineral wealth is in itself just like money in the bank. Sure they'd have to lift it off the planet -- but the kind of culture we'll sell this to wants off-planet accomodations anyway and figures to pay the cost of it no matter where they squat. It's the life they're accustomed to!

And there's enough other mudballs swinging around in this system that they can terraform, themselves, to take care of their future need for expansion. All they need to start is a waiting water-world.

A foothold.

They'll do the rest -- to suit themselves.

And this spot's far-enough out so I'll bet we won't be getting back only to find someone else has already gone out and colonized it behind our backs! In fact, considering the size of our Home Cluster, I'd bet they aren't even going to be ready to come out this far, yet. But I'm figuring we can hold out for some bunch who really want to get away from it all (for whatever reason) and will pay through the nose to find this place.

'Course, I dunno what we'd find if we went nosing down into this Hyades Cluster -- and I'm not so damned sure I'd care to find out!

That's the main reason I decided that we should hike clear out to the Pleiades Cluster before looking for ourselves an Earthtype planet to explore. Trouble with Earthtype planets is the tracks we leave behind could show it's the kind of world we came from! I would as leave give any track-sniffers plenty of area to choose from, and the Pleiades are 500 lightyears from Earth.

And a good 400+ lightyears from right here. And we swung wide through our own cluster, past Regulus, and covered nearly 300 light-years getting out here. And then, 500 lightyears to get back to Earth -- I know, I know; I said it was just gonna be a thousand-year trip.

Well, maybe fifteen hundred....

Just be thinking about what a helluva drunk we can all have when we get back!

* * *

NEXT MONTH while we're taking the Long Jump out to the Pleiades (and I'll tell you something about that in a moment) you're all invited to another seminar, here -- I'm gonna lay a li'l Simple Relativity on you cats!

Now, everybody I know who starts talking about either General or Special Relativity, or even just Einsteinian concepts in general, invariably will throw in some mathematical jargon. To them, that's what it is! And they always end up saying what a really beautiful concept it is -- mathematically!-- and how, to understand all the implications of it, you'd need one of the greatest minds on Earth. Which sounds very impressive, as I'm sure you've all agreed; but it also happens to be absolutely worthless to us.

And I've always thought if the concept on which Relativity's based is all that beautiful, then you should be able to explain it with pictures -- without using any mathematical nonsense at all!

As for artwork next month, my reference books have a series of astronomical fotos of the Pleiades, each magnified a bit more than the last -- put 'em in sequence and it's like you were approaching the place! I'll see what I can do with that. Also, the Pleiades Cluster is filled with quite a luminous mass of inter-stellar dust&gas -- not thickly, but enough to be visible....

LOX

The lettercol may seem an odd place for it, but those of you who've asked for something more by Robbie Gibson may be pleased to note that she's finally been tempted to write something more. At the risk of belaboring a point, tho, I want you to know beforehand that Robbie worked at the Univ. of Calif. Police Dept. in Berkeley for several years and that the U.C.P.D. is a fully accredited police department (rather than mere uniformed campus guards) handling all crime within their jurisdiction, whether it involved university students/personnel or not -- and usually it doesn't. Such crime as book thefts, bomb scares and Leftist/liberal student rallies (riots? what riots?) may be what you'd expect; not so, a shotgun killing, a murder in the library, a rather ugly juvenile gang rape case, even the rather brilliant but mentally deranged characters who are drawn to a university campus -- as well as the not-so-brilliant ones. Missing only are the family fights, the drunks, the sordid petty misdemeanors any metropolitan police dept. has to contend with. Included, of course, are personal contacts with the metropolitan police, appearances in court, even some contact with the FBI, and a firsthand knowledge of police work in general. With this background, Robbie isn't exactly a typical female fan, nor even a typical female; I'm rather glad of it.

NOTES ON A SEMI-UNIQUE PHENOMENON: FANDOM

...Robbie Gibson

Monday, March 2, was a sparkling day in El Sobrante; the rainstorm that had dampened Sunday was gone, and warm sunshine was rapidly drying things off. Up in the Sierra, search parties were preparing to bring out the 85 bodies of victims of the Paradise Airlines plane crash which had been caused by the storm - gentle rain at sealevel had been a blinding and killing blizzard at the close-to-6000 foot level of Lake Tahoe. Oakland Police had put out a 'Sig-alert' bulletin to all denizens of the Nimitz Freeway/Hegenberger Road area to be on the alert for a wild - and probably rabid - timberwolf which had escaped from the Oakland SPCA earlier that day, and described it as being 'grey in color, resembling a german shepherd, but with yellow eyes, and weighing from 90-120 pounds' - anyone having information please call Oakland PD at once.

All this was quite enough, you might say.

But that wasn't why fannish phones were ringing, or why the mail had taken an upturn, or why I cracked up when I read a letter that came in response to a 'sample copy' of g2.

Monday, March 2, was the day that Walter Breen had an interview with the Berkeley Police Department in regard to things printed in various fanzines, including his own. Ray Nelson went along with him, sort of an 'amicus curiae' thing, I gather, but he was left to cool his heels outside while the officer interviewed Walter and his lawyer. Must have been frustrating for Ray. It was also the day Ray's wife, Kirsten, wouldn't admit to much more than her own identity on the telephone - not just to me, but to one other individual that I know of for sure - on the implied idea that their telephone might have been 'tapped' THEIR TELEPHONE??? Sheesh. Some semi-beat fringe-fans in the Bay Area were - with a few non-beat fans who should have known better - contemplating a fannish blast in retaliation for a fannish blast that went out in January. Reactions on the latter have ranged all the way from a \$10 cablegram from Europe to an ostrich-like ignoring of the thing - and all points between. On the whole, tho, strict neutrality has been comparatively rare, and slightly croggling where it did appear.

And withal, the regular life of fandom was progressing: a lawsuit on the East Coast was trickling its way thru the courts; certain fans in several cities were cohabiting without benefit of clergy but not

being even slightly reticent about the fact - indeed, it was in some cases slightly difficult to keep up with the bedhopping to be sure which fan - or fanne - was at which pad; the Army had dropped all charges in a suspected case of draft-dodging and the LA PD was (to the best of my knowledge) not pressing charges of 'possession of narcotics' in regard to another fan; THE ACLU has been reported as giving up its attempt to get the INW off the Attorney General's list (partly due to non-interest on the part of the Wobblies themselves) - much to the amusement of Wobbly-fans - or should that be fan-Wobblies?; recriminations were still flying thru the ranks of the NFFF and related areas about the collapse of the Handicapped Children plan, due to somebody's spewing at the typewriter without checking their facts; apa members were checking constitutional means as to how soon and how they could blackball a certain Waiting-Lister; the Postal Department was taking an interest in the mail of certain people who had evidenced a remarkable lack of common sense in their publishing; one fan had completed his term of servitude on a sodomy charge, and another was currently 'in stir' because of a small matter of forgery; the Church of the Brotherhood of the Way, altho not actively crusading for converts, was officially recognized by the State of California as a duly organized and incorporated religion, with all the privileges thereof; and a Scientology auditor was upset about the efforts of some fannish factions to bring a suspected child-molester to justice, on the grounds that it would 'set him back' emotionally just when they were gaining in their attempts to 'clear' him.

That was March 2. Of course, the majority of fans were going about their lives in the way they always did - working at gainful employment, living at peace with their neighbors and friends, marrying, begetting and birthing children, quietly enjoying their fannish associations, planning to attend the Convention in Oakland next September; in other words; being the quiet, sane and thoroly nice people they are. BUT, they were, from Coast to Coast and including Europe, Australia and other farflung points, generally aware of the above facts, and could probably name the individuals I have described, and could give chapter and verse regarding the incidents mentioned, whether or not they have ever met in person the perpetrators thereof: Fandom is not only large and farflung, it is also yakkity, and the DNQ circuit progresseseth mightily.

On March 2 Joe and I received a letter which I believe to be a classic example of something or other. It was a breath of fresh air, appreciated vastly in the midst of the current hassles; in the twelve years I have actively inhabited Fandom I have seldom had anything arrive mailwise which was more welcome, considering the timing. Joe, from the vantagepoint of 20 years in the Microcosm, says that the writer is obviously a smart lad, who hasn't been around long enough to get stupid.

Not only do I concur, but I hope he can retain his naivette and straightforward common sense; we need it.

Among other things we (Joe) were (was) taken to task about taking fandom seriously, instead of considering it important only as experience in writing and illustrating.

This last grabbed me, folks, right here where I live. I admit that FIANWOL is a long way from how I conduct my life, but I'm closer to it than FIJAGH, for sure. Twelve years spent in any microcosm has its effects on the psyche, no?

And then, referring to the open letter to George Scithers in our last issue, the question was brought up as to why we didn't do something about this situation. One of George's original points, of course, was why hadn't anyone gone to the cops?!

For this young man who wrote the letter and for anyone else who may have had similar twinges of curiosity, I wanted to give a reassuring sense of proportion, and explain why I sat down on March 2 to put my comments into print. I don't want anybody to be left in any doubt as to our point of view.