

OPAL
NUMBER

NO. 1000
VOL. 1

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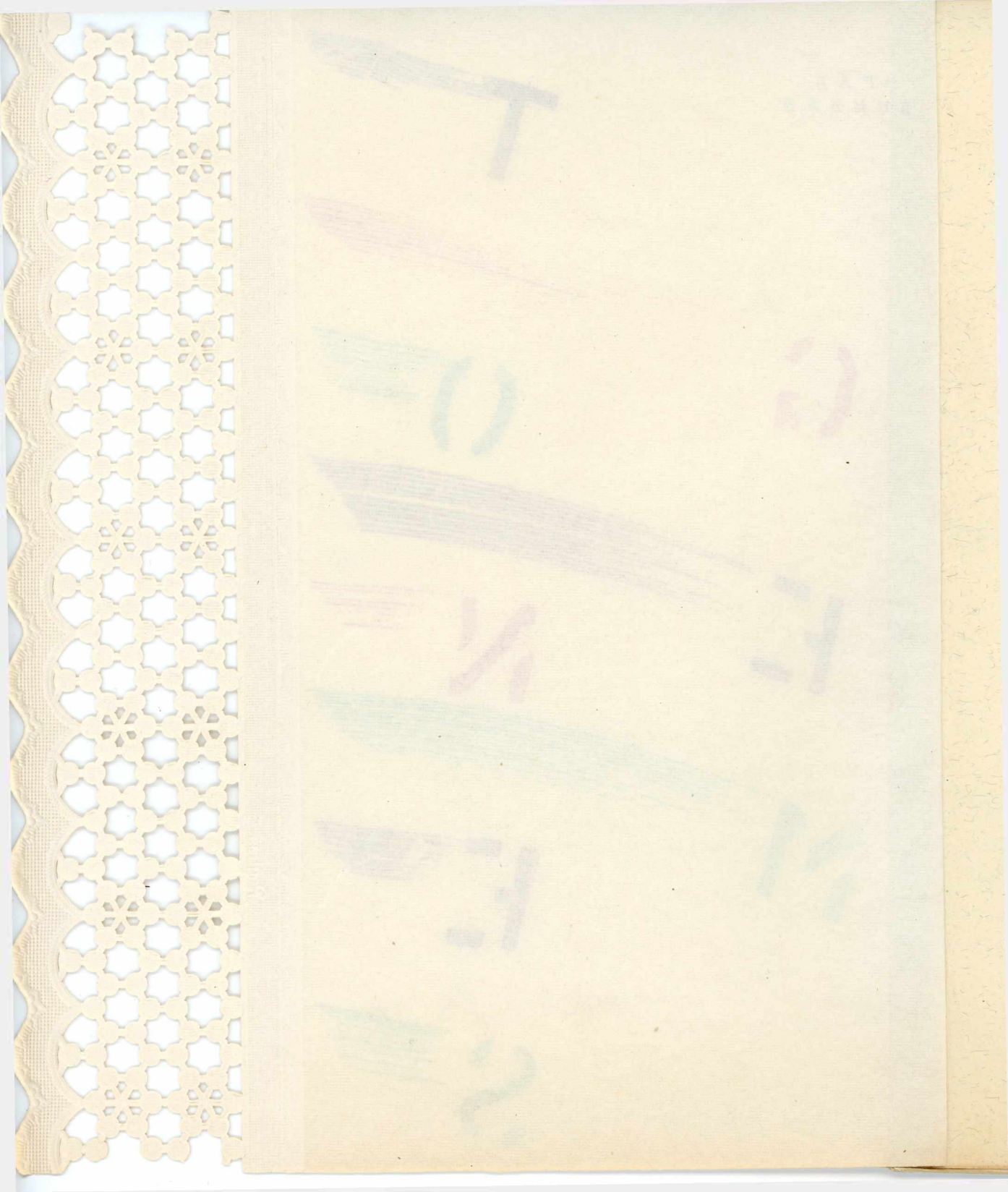
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GEM TONES
VOL. I

OPAL
NUMBER

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The OPAL NUMBER of GEMTONES is
dedicated to that O'PAL o'mine
who dared ask,

"What are you going to do when
you get to opals? Answer me that!"

This is my answer, MEZRAB, honey....

GEMTONES, unless otherwise specified,
is the personal product of G. M. Carr.
Published whenever possible at the
WESTERN REFRIGERATION(& Mimeographing)
COMPANY, 3200 Harvard Ave. N., Seattle,
Wash. Refrigerators and SIMISTEPRAS for
sale; GEMTONES for SAPS #16 and exchanges
only. Copyright 1934.

Well!

I certainly never expected such quick results. Or am I taking too much for granted? Of course, it may be just a coincidence that the 15th mailing is so very much better than the 13th.. but, nevertheless, the improvement is there, and even the spelling shows it! Hmm.. I guess you all showed me!

Covers on all (Well, almost all).. neat formats, illustrations, and even the hekto'd 'zines are entirely readable. It is a pleasure to pick up a 'zine and be able to read it, to look at an illustration and enjoy it without having to fill in half of it, to read an article without guessing at what it is trying to say.

Perhaps the most interesting comment about the SAPS 15th mailing, however, is not the almost sudden improvement, but the emergence of a clear-cut example of that fan-phenomenon - a "feud". These fierce personality clashes have contributed a great deal of interest to the history of fandom, in fact, what history there is of fandom consists mainly of the ramifications of these several 'feuds'. Occasionally they arise from sincere clashes in conviction among friends; sometimes from jurisdictional disputes; usually, tho, the 'falling-out' and consequent breaking up into separate groups comes from personalities whose ideas and purposes are too utterly unlike for operation as one group. Jealousy, pettiness, ambition and intolerance are just as evident among fans as among any other group of human beings, if not more so.

The Carr-Cole controversy appears to be a minuscule example of this fury that rages among fans. Completely spontaneous, and completely unprovoked, the very paper on which their respective 'zines were mimeo'd apparantly caused the feuders to start bristling.. Evidently the aura of 'simpering idiot' emanating from GEMTONES acted as a catalyst on the libidinous stench exuding from ORGASM and when the fumes of the explosion had cleared away - Behold, a tiny feud in miniature! It will be interesting to watch and see whether there will be a flocking to take sides by interested participants whose vituperation, vilification, backbiting, jealousy and/or self-righteous indignation will fertilize this feeble sprout into the usual flower of eventual insurgence.

VIOLETS AND VITREOL

There appears to be two types of ana criticism, factual any opinionated. Naturally, any criticism will consist of opinions as the critic interprets the material he criticizes; but many so-called 'criticisms' ignore facts and offer merely a "Thoroughly entertaining" or "Ugh! Where's my bottle of sea-sick pills?" These comments don't help much except as an indication of reader-reaction, nor, on the contrary, harm much. If Fan A says of fanzine B, "It stinks!" he merely expresses an unqualified opinion. If, however, Fan A says "Lousy mimeo why not try Punkawful stencils?" he offers constructive criticism based on the fact of a nearly illegible fanzine. Frequently the opinion-type criticism reflects less on the material criticized than on the would-be critic. A vulture's unfavorable opinion of a piece of meat may merely mean it is not rotten enough to suit him. A hungry human might differ.

I have attempted to rate the 15th SADS mailing on a numerical basis which is, I frankly admit, completely arbitrary. My scale for scoring is as follows:

APPEARANCE		LEGIBILITY		INTEREST VALUE	
Cover	2	Spelling & Grammar	2	Variety	1
Inside artwork	2	Clarity of repro.	1	Fiction	1
Ingenuity	1	Format	1	Article	1
		Neatness	1	Filler material	1
Perfect score	15			Idea content	1

#1 ORGASM-Les & Es Cole, 3040 1/2 Adoline St., Berkeley 7, Cal.

Honesty compells me to rate this 'zine away up at the top of the list for excellence of production. The material was definitely good, interest value high. However, it still stinks of overripe adolescence. Too bad the Coles can't pull their otherwise excellent brains up out of their pants or at least interrupt their mental masturbating while editing.

a. Appearance: Cover. No artwork, but nice color scheme 3

b. Legibility: Excellent mimeo, easy reading format 5

c. Interest: Wide variety of material, witty 5

#2 REVOLTIN' DEVELOPMENT-Martin Alger, 118 N. Center St., Royal Oak, Mich.

a. Appearance: Colorful cover & contents, interesting pix 5

b. Legibility: Completely readable, neat, well laid out and correctly spelled. A pleasure to read. 5

c. Interest: No fiction or poetry, but good articles 2

- #3 INTERGALACTIC-Gordon Black, 12095 Rosemary, Detroit 5, Mich.
 a. Appearance: Beautiful. As you see, I took a long look and went out and bought a pen to try out for myself. 5
 b. Legibility: Readable all through, easy format, neat 5
 c. Interest: The Fan's Garden of Verses almost made up for the lack of solid stuff 2
- #4 ALPHA AND OMEGA-MEG Johns, sinclair av., steubenville, ohio
 a. Appearance: Covers, plenty artwork inside 5
 b. Legibility: Readable, but hard work. Poor stencils? 4
 c. Interest: Articles, stories, poem..and Carrie's column! 3
 (Yup, I'm a she, too... G. for Gertrude, M. for Martha alas)
- #5 HURKLE-Redd Boggs, 2215 Benjamin St. NE, Minneapolis 18, Minn
 a. Appearance: Cover, neat but not gaudy..no other artwork 2
 b. Legibility: Completely readable, nice format, spelling, etc., very nice mimeoing, easy to read 5
 c. Interest: Variety of ideas, well expressed 4
 (I dunno why Rodger Young should remind me of Bradbury, but it does..I get the same tingle in the solar plexus from that Burl Ives recording as I do from B's savagely neat knifing.)
- #6 SAPIAN-Ray C. Higgs, 813 Eastern Ave. Connersville, Ind.
 a. Appearance: Lots of artwork, nicely done, tho borrowed. (I like colored covers, gives a finished appearance) 4
 b. Legibility: Neat, readable reproduction and format 3
 c. Interest: Variety of stories, articles and poems 4
- #7 SAPROPHYTE-Henry W. Chabot, 309 E.18th St., New York 3, NY
 a. Appearance: Artwork excellent, beautifully reproduced 5
 b. Legibility: Good mimeo work, but let's not get in a habit of ignoring correction fluid, that's a very useful invention, particularly for the sake of neatness... 1
 c. Interest: Obviously, this is primarily an artzine, so I'm rating it on the illos..I lik'um. Too bad they don't have stories with them..have you thought of farming them out like the prozines do.. call up some fan author and say, "Look, I've got a nice cover pic, how about whipping up 50,000 words by next Tuesday..?" 4
- (All Decorations gladly received. Please forward Oak Leaf cluster, etc. via earliest Dragon Express...)
- #8 NUDITY-Richard Eney, presumably Florida..doesn't say.
 a. Appearance: Nice cover (is 'nice' the word? my mv!) 3
 b. Legibility: Easy-to-read format and reproduction 4
 c. Interest: Limited variety, only two articles plus the review of SAPS #14, but is outstanding because it actually

contains an idea which appears to be original with Eney and not a re-chewed leftover. I refer, of course, to the editorial blasting H.Beam Piper and J.W.Campbell for "Temple Trouble"--Apr.aSF. Can't say I found anything especially obnoxious about the story myself, but I'm glad to see what somebody else thinks about it. Especially glad to see that somebody thinks. Most 'zines hold more words than thought...(Where'd you get the idea I dislike reviews? I just think there should be more than a rehash of the last mailing)

#9 BEND SINISTER H.W.Felkel, 1511 Pinewood, Falls Church, Va.

- a. Appearance: Cover -- undistinguished, but a cover... 2
- b. Legibility: Could hardly read my copy, but the contents were intriguing enough that I waded right in and guessed at what I couldn't see. Wouldn't do that for many, tho.3
- c. Interest: Exceedingly limited variety, just a hinted review of 'The Thing' which I've seen, so I agree, a chatty 'biography', and, of course, the SAPS review. Interestingly written, neatly arranged. 4

How about some inside art, maybe a story or some filler? If you are using fresh stencils, your trouble might be in the platen of your typewriter.. Too soft a platen sometimes gives that insufficient-ink effect. (You were evidently the only Shakesperian in the bunch..at least you finished the quote and caught the gobbledegock. I guess '...a rose' was too, too subtle for SAPS.. some of 'em nearly went berserk trying to read it straight!)

#10 OUTSIDERS-Wrai Ballard, Blanchard, North Dakota

- a. Appearance: Cover; - nice, too. Also inside artwork 5
- b. Legibility: Neat & readable, but uninteresting format. Would look better broken up into smaller paragraphs and interspersed with illos and/or filler 2
- c. Interest: Contents could have made an article, a review, and maybe even a story-satire. The material was all there. But spelling???? watch those 'ie's.....

('Quasi-belligerent' - who, me? tsk tsk. The 'A' was supposed to be on the 'A' line but slipped... Gremlins, no doubt. You had a lot of interesting ideas in this issue, wish there was room to comment on them.)

#11 AONIA-Bob Pavlat, 6001 43rd Av., Hyattsville, Md.

We could expect better than this from you, Bob.

- a. Appearance: Cover. Well, at least it has a cover. 2
- b. Legibility: Completely readable, adequate format, neat 5

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c. Interest: There were several interesting ideas in this issue but they were so overwhelmed in a mass of yordage as to be easily lost. I agree heartily with some of your comments and would have enjoyed a more concise presentation. 1

#12 ZAP-Robert Briggs (Not completely anonymous, anyway)

a. Appearance: Very nice, very nice indeed. 5

b. Legibility: Mimeing not so hot. Do you clean your typewriter keys for every stencil? Hmmm? 2

c. Interest: The most interesting thing was that so many words could be misspelled in such a small space. In fact, it was 'horrible'.. The editorial was cute, though, even in its misspelled condition. Pix are OK, I like the titles. My favorite is the EEM with the ice cream cone. What does 'Torist' mean? Tourist? Taurist? Torus? 1

#13 ZZZZZ ZZZZZ ZZZZZLE-Walter Coslet, Box 5, Helena, Mont.

Walt, you devil you! What are you trying to do, get us to drooling into our typewriters? It's bad manners to brag, my momma told me, anyway why don't you just set up a panorama camera and enclose a microfilm like Alger...

a. Appearance: You know what I think of straight typing, long paragraphs, and pale hekto. No cover, even. 0

b. Legibility: Must have changed your brand of carbon, this was easier to read (or was I just too fascinated by that description of fancollector's Heaven). 1

c. Interest: The most interesting thing (aside from that burn-me-up gloating about backlines) was the retort from William Rotsler. I'd been getting a rather poor impression of Rotsler as an artist. Now I find that this is due to the fact that he draws 'em on paper and lets the editor transfer it more or less - mostly less - skillfully onto the stencil. Mr. Rotsler, I apologize for assuming that you were drawing strictly from feel. I agree heartily that the meat of a mag is the idea content, the art and format merely the spice. Meat with no salt gets monotonous, doesn't it? 1

SPECTATOR & Z PRIME deserve mention because they were in the mailing. SPECTATOR is adequately presented for the purpose. You are doing a good job, Eney. Z PRIME doesn't pretend to be more than an introduction, and made a favorable impression on me because Bob Silverberg had the guts to admit a preconceived notion was wrong. Some people are unable to give up a prejudice, others save face by refusing to admit it.

"...naturally disinclined to stand in awe of things like...quackgrass...because of their insignificance. But aren't such things equally as marvelous as super novae and galaxies?...."

Redd Boggs,
Hurkle #5, April 1951.

INSIGNIFICANCE

A seed....

A hard, round, ball of life -
Lifeless until it loses itself
and its identity as a seed....
A miracle of potentiality.

A seed....

A pinpoint speck,
Dry, shiny and minute,
Too small for human eyes to see
except as a dot of night,
Within its universe contains
Quadrillion galaxies of molecules
With trillion atoms.. each its own solar system
of madly whirling bits of light.

A seed....

ly garden scatters them untidily,
Mixing flowers raggedly by the walks.
I will sweep them up before they
Reach the ground
and burn them, lest they turn to weeds....



NOTES TO A NEOPHYTE

Advice from Manly Banister

Here's what it seems to take for good mimeo work--best stencils available, best ink available, a fresh pad, and a good grade of off-set paper, vellum finish. Mimeograph paper is an abomination. Such paper has only one advantage--and that is that it can be run without slip-sheeting if you are only going to print on one side. It will offset a little, but not much. Offset paper (for use on offset presses) will do just what its name says--it has to be slipsheeted--no getting around it. As far as the machine is concerned, anything will do. I could do work just as good on my printing press, using a stencil instead of type, but it would be a lot more trouble. A cheap drum mimeo will do work just as good as a fancy machine--but not so fast and you never know where the next impression is going to begin on the sheet. That's all you pay more money for extra convenience, not for greater excellence of the end result, where clearness of impression is the criterion.

Another thing I found out about mimeographing and which I think is the fault with a lot of bad work. Some guys, I guess, think the ink-pad is a permanent part of the machinery. If I were working the mimeo every day, I would change the pad perhaps every week or two, I don't know. But I do change the pad with every edition of the magazine, starting with a brand new fresh pad. A pad that sits around clogs up, and the longer it sits the worse it clogs. If I were running a monthly sheet of 12 or 20 pages, I would still change it with every edition. My pads cost 40¢ each and cheap at half the price.

Ink makes all the difference in mimeographing. Cheap ink is an abomination. I use an ink called Supreme 500, at \$2.50 a pound--expensive, but this stuff can't separate from its oil base. I was advised by my mimeo supply man to leave water base inks strictly alone. They are used mostly for a silk screen duplicator now available in the country -- very high speed and what not.

I get the Supreme 500 ink from Tempo Sales Co. They have a branch here in KC, another in LA, I think, and one in Pittsburgh. Their address here is 1413 Grand Ave., Kansas City, Missouri. I don't know their Los Angeles address.

My machine is an automatic inker, which doesn't mean what it says. There is nothing automatic about it. The drum holds 1 lb. of ink, and I re-ink at the beginning of each stencil (after 200 copies). Sometimes oftener if the ink appears to run thin. Have to keep a sharp eye out, and the minute the copy gets dim in one spot or another, the pad is ready for re-inking. Takes plenty of ink, too. I use up 3 lbs. per edition. (200 copies or so). If your machine is a hand inker, this may account for some of the spottiness. I assume that you can look into the drum and see the perforated interior of the shell, that you pour ink into it and either scrub it down with a built-in brush or use an ordinary paint brush for the purpose. In any case, being stingy in this department will account for spottiness of the impression. Or trying to run the drum too fast. Such a machine is designed for a top speed of about 60 impressions per minute. Are you taking one full second for the turn-over - or jerking it around? A smooth, even turn works best. The paper I use is off-set paper, hence slow drying. The ink stands up on the surface, and it dassn't be moved from between the slipsheets for at least ten minutes. Sometimes longer, depending on atmospheric conditions. My machine is one of those automatic gizmos put out by ABDick about 15 years ago. It has a mechanical slipsheet-er on it, and when using it has to be run at its slowest speed, about 60 or so a minute, and you stop every 25 impressions to feed in more slipsheets, owing to the fact that it will hold only 25 slipsheets at a time. Disgustingly slow. If run any faster, the thing gets tangled up in its own flailing arms. It takes about 10 minutes to run 200 copies -- if nothing happens. Four pages an hour is my rate when everything goes well, which it does not always do. Sometimes only 3 an hour. And sometimes the whole affair gets so balled up I leave it and go sulk in a corner until the humidity, the temperature, the amount of static in the materials, or whatever else is causing the mess, alleviates. It is about as fast as hand-feeding my printing press which I run at 1000 per hour for general work, 300 or so for color, 750 for work I want to be especially good, or where the inking must be singularly heavy, and at 1500 for cards and other small pieces and when I manage to achieve a state of personal dissociation from my fingers. I have heard of people who feed these monsters at 2500 per hour, and I am sure I have seen some of their printing work--it's half on the page and the other half on the platen.

I thought GENTONES rather nice, but goodness, what are you using for ink? The oily smudge soaks through, it seems to separate from its base. Look at your letters closely--with a magnifying glass. See how the fibers suck up the ink and blur the outline of the letters? You will always get that with mimeo paper. I use offset printing paper--offset vellum, it's called. It is not as expensive as mimeo paper when bought in ream lots. That 70 lb India paper I have been using costs \$1.45 a ream after it is cut to size out of the full ream. (24 lb. mimeo paper which is the same weight) costs from \$1.80 to \$2.00 a ream. I got nine cut reams out of a full ream of paper. 60 lb. white offset weighs a pound less to the 8x11 ream. This will allow more pages for the same postage cost. Costs 50¢ a ream less, too. When using offset paper, the ink stands up thickly on the paper and dries out slowly--so it has to be slip sheeted. As I said, my machine has a slip-sheeter connected to it--it's a nuisance and slow, but makes all the difference in the world. Offset printing paper, by the way, can't be got, so far as I know at a stationers. You have to get it from the wholesale paper house and buy it a ream at a time. These are available in various sheet sizes, so you select one from which the size you want can best be cut with the least amount of waste. They sell the paper to you by the pound--around 23 or 24¢, usually, up to 30¢--which is high, unless the paper is light enough to give a lot more sheets. For instance, 60 lb. costs about 30¢ a lb. while 70 lb. substance costs about 24¢--but the 60 lb. will give you 8000 sheets 8x11 for \$25.00, while the 70 lb. will give only 9000 sheets for \$35.00. Any way you look at it, it's an expensive proposition.

Stencils, too, will make all the difference in the world--even when the ink is right. I have tried practically every stencil made, and won't use anything but Royal Blue--that's the name of them. If they quit making Royal Blue stencils, I would probably quit publishing. A. B. Dick's most expensive stencil is almost as good, but not quite. I have used Sear's stencils, but find them rather soft and gummy to work, and not very good for drawing on. Other brands of stencils are too hard. The kind I use have the plastic sheet over the stencil to type through--makes a much better cutting job. It permits a hard enough strike to make the impression, but avoids cutting out the letters. If you have trouble with your stencils, the next stencil you cut, hold it up to the window and look through it. Every letter and line should appear clean, clear and gold..

en in color. Any spots of blueness showing in the letters or lines means stencil material that will block the flow of ink. Are you using a backing sheet for stencil cutting--also a covering film of plastic? Maybe you are cutting with a portable typewriter? Most portables will not cut satisfactory stencils at all. This one I have will (Royal DeLuxe) but a large machine cuts them better. Do you use a textured silk screen as a drawing plate. Under the stencil, that is, and on top of the drawing you are tracing.

NEURO is plain and simple mimeographed -- all the typewriter face, that is. Model 96 AB Dick Mimeograph with slip-sheeter attached. Did just as good work with a \$30 Sears Roebuck duplicator before I got this one, but you couldn't depend on the register with it, and it was a hand model. This job is electric and has a million gadgets on it, but doesn't print any better. All the heads heretofore have been letterpress printed on the 8x12 jobber mentioned. All the illustrations engraved in zinc and printed similarly. Typeface makes another difference. The face on my Royal Portable is the only face, to my way of thinking. This is Royal's large elite type. Ordinary elite is too small to make a good looking stencil; pica is too big. This face is about half way between. My stencils are cut on a Royal Standard... I had to pay something extra to get the standard type torn out of its innards and this large elite face substituted. Then, too, the lines are justified by the "Typewrite Like Printing" method--my own little discovery, I might add and wait for the huzzahs. Have you ever seen this? Peddled a mess of brochures about it around the country some time back. If you haven't seen it and would like a copy, will send you one.

I do the printing after the mimeographing. Never lose more than one or two, and frequently none at all on the press, but the mimeo is just as apt to louse up 50 at once and I count by finished copies. The story body is mimeographed, the rest printed on the jobber. The picture is zinc engraving, made from original artwork of the same size--just woodblock style or line or woodblocks that print with any regular printing press. Haven't got 10,000 bucks worth of equipment, paid a hundred for this creaking old press of mine (must be a hundred years old, too) and have maybe another century invested in type and odd bits of lead and equipment. I'm dropping out zincos in future and substituting mimeo drawing. I have been practicing of late, determining the limitations of the

material and have come up with the answers to quite a few questions. Definitely believe there will be an advantage in layout. This was impossible (or practically so) using zincs—obdurate metal! Expensive, too. On the last issue, I spent two weeks mimeographing, and six weeks printing. No more of that. Not to mention the time spent engraving the zincs. I am having the cover done out (the engraving that is) this time and maybe one illustration inside --- the rest will be either lino block or stencil art. Stencil is a cantankerous material but it can be whipped.

You might be happy with a printing press --- and you might be sorry. It is slow work---and linotyping costs money. I can set a 25 pica line ($4\frac{1}{8}$ ") in ten point in about $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 minutes. 16 to 20 lines per hour---and I have been practicing for two years. Until you learned the case, it would take you four times that long. You can figure, with a little practice, on working up to a top speed of three or four words a minute. Gives you a wonderful opportunity to change your mind about the cast of a phrase or sentence. It isn't a hard job or anything like that --- just time consuming. I could set up this copy of GENTONES in about 16 hours of typesetting time. Changing the format and printing two pages up would make a total of nine runs. With a handpress, you could make each press run in about 30 minutes (200-300 copies). That takes care of time out for inking occasionally. The first make-ready would take perhaps 30 minutes to an hour, and require 15 to 30 minutes each time the form is changed. (9 times). Let's see---that's 16 plus $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours printing plus, say 4 hours make-ready. Without too much variation in the form, you could cut that last to maybe an hour after you get onto it. Hmm. That's $21\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Oh yes, as it would cost a fortune for enough type to set the book up all at once, you buy just enough (about \$15 worth) to set up the two pages you will print each time. So this has to be thrown back after each pair of pages is printed and before you can set up the next pair. Throwing back takes about $\frac{1}{3}$ as long as setting up, sometimes as little as $\frac{1}{4}$, so you get speedy and throw it back in $\frac{1}{4}$ the time, that's four hours. Total, $25\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Not too bad---put in two hours every day and it can be done in two weeks....but better give yourself three. When I first started setting type, I set a 200 word page in four hours or better. Now I can set a 550 word page in about three. There is a fascination about type, though. It's not for impatient people who have to get a thing done right now.

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You wouldn't want a press bigger than 5x8. Anything bigger than this is dreadfully expensive and devilishly hard to run by hand. My present press is an 8x12--originally a treadle press, but I have connected a motor to the flywheel and let the electric company do the work. The handpress I used to have was a 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x10. I could print 600 postcards an hour with it (if I flew at it) and NEKRO pages at the rate of about 400 per hour, unless the form was unusually heavy, then the pace became a plod.

Display type (for titles) runs into money. About \$6.50 a font on the average. Some are cheaper and some cost more.. Printing takes a little knack that comes with practice. You can find books and books on it in your public library. See if your library has a copy of Graphic Arts Monthly. Every print shop has it--they even send it to me--free subscription. Chock full of printing ads and articles. You will find type foundries listed in it -- send away for type catalogs. There must be a branch of American Type Foundries nearby, get a type catalog from them (but don't necessarily buy their type, it's the best, but also the most expensive).

You could do like I do -- mimeograph your text and print the titles -- have small cuts made (about a dollar each), or do lino-cuts you could print with the press - save a terrific lot of time.

Personally, I got interested in printing....and printing has only one purpose....the reproduction of a large number of copies. What I should prefer doing in the way of amateur publishing is putting out small-size ten-page printed items and observations at odd intervals.

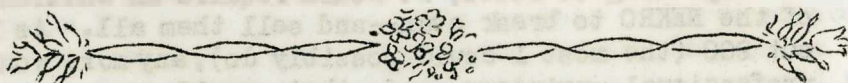
Speaking of costs, it would require an edition of 10,000 of the NEKRO to break even--and sell them all. As I only put out 200 (the most I could possibly do), any more would require professional printers and that would run cost up further, hence numbers would have to climb in order to reduce cost, but each number would add to the cost, etc & etc.. At 25,000 copies I would still be hardly more than breaking even, as there would be distributors to pay and so forth. It costs about \$25,000 to launch a magazine for one issue, and much of that has to return in order to make a second issue worth while. Publishing is an expensive business.

Speaking of getting fanzines out of one's system -- it happens in the best of families. I will never know what makes stf fans tick, because they tick for all manner of reasons.

Lots of them are just kids with a tin horn they want to toot, others are psychopathic cases, and still others are people who want to do something-- anything to work off their restlessness.

Mostly, I suppose, they are a lonely tribe -- because if they had friends they could be out with, they wouldn't be sitting in writing letters to people they don't know. I went for years, shunning fandom like a plague. Then I began to hit the pros, and fans began writing to me, some asking me to contribute to fanzines - which I was foolish enough to do - the stuff I was writing then, when not good enough for pro publishing wasn't good enough for anything. Several were after me to start a magazine, so I started NEKRO, and now I'm dropping it again. Yup--one more issue, #5. The dern thing has ruined my health and given me nervous twitches. I've gotten to the point where I drag myself with loathing to do anything on it. The last issue of NEKRO should be out by the end of July. I have not felt well enough to consider running it myself, so I sent my machine across town to a friend who will run it off for a fee, and send back the mimeo. Ups the cost enormously. Then I will have to gather the pages and staple up the books and that will be the end of it all.

I have some other things I want to do - and some things I have to do - and the mag just takes up too much time any more. I have, for instance, taken up oil painting -- which I find very restful and relaxing. Besides, I'd like to catch up on my sf reading sometime.



DEPARTMENT OF USELESS INFORMATION

PAR-A-NOI-A, Pathol., a chronic form of insanity marked by systematized delusions, especially of grandeur or persecution. (Underlying the common meaning and the legal use of the term 'insanity' are the concepts of social incompetence and social nonconformity.)

The Winston Simplified Dictionary,
Encyclopedic Edition.



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Sandra ignored a tiny twinge of pain as she adjusted her bridal veil to a more graceful sweep. Her father smiled down at her anxiously.

"You all right, honey?" his whisper seemed choked.

"All right, Dad," she smiled back at him, her eyes shining with joy. The music swelled triumphantly and her father's arm tightened as she laid her hand on it. The organ rolled its insistence again.

"Come on, Dad, I guess it's time for us."

Her father nodded and the usher opened the door. Waves of music rolled over them, waves of light, waves of fragrance from the flowers, and all the solemn beauty of the cathedral lay before her. The spotless satin runner for her feet, already strewn with rose petals by the attendants who had gone before, beckoned to where, dim in the colored shadows, Arnold waited. She couldn't see him through her veil and through the distant mistiness but she knew that after all the separation, all the struggle, he was there....

Slowly they stepped in time to the music, each step a pause and then another. Sandra felt her father tremble as he walked.

"Poor dear," she thought, "He's so worried.. I wonder if he thinks I can't make it." The smile deepened on her lips as a chuckle quivered in the corners. "As if anything could keep me from Arnold today." Another step, and pause. She lifted her head and breathed deeply, savoring her triumph. They had all tried to stop her from marrying, all of them. Even Arnold had been willing to let them stop her, but she was not willing. There was nothing the matter with her that love could not cure, nothing that would not go away now that she had Arnold, and his arms about her. How silly of them to call in doctors for long-winded consultations when all the time it was just Arnold that she needed. Now that he had finally been granted leave to come back and marry her she would...another step, another pause... Strange how solemn everybody looks, usually the mothers and a few old ladies cry, but the rest should all smile on the bride and her father as they come down the aisle. Why do they all look so strained. It is as though they all are wearing Dad's same anxious look... another step, another pause. A long one this time, while she waited off the pain. Her father's arm was rigid as iron, his jaw clenched as he stared ahead.

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Closer now, she could see the white robe of the minister, the pastel cluster of the bridesmaids, the darker cluster of Arnold's attendants. Her eyes searched for the blue and white of Arnold's uniform.. Ah, there..but who is standing in front of him? That dark stranger with his back turned. I don't recall him. Why is he standing in Arnold's place? For heaven's sake, hasn't anybody presence of mind enough to nudge him to move over? Another step, the faint wave of irritation passed in the concentration of moving her suddenly heavy feet. Her father's arm was comforting to lean on as she rested.

Another step.. The heaviness passed, and joy swept over Sandra in a wave-like ecstasy. Her heart rushed ahead of her demurely hesitant footsteps, gushing it's love toward Arnold, enfolding him in her desire. In spite of herself, her heart beat faster, her lips felt dry and an enormous thirstiness possessed her mouth, a thirstiness for Arnold's kiss. She strained through the veil, trying to see his face, but the stranger still stood in the way. Everyone else was looking at her - why did this person turn his face away? She craned her head to one side so she could see Arnold. His eyes were full of tears, his usually pink and chubby face drawn into a parody of cheerfulness. Sandra inwardly laughed,

"I thought it was the bride that wept..."

She almost called to him, checking herself in time,

"Don't look so sad, Arnold, honey, this is a wedding, not a funeral..."

Her own joy shook her with another wave of ecstasy. How strong the odor of the flowers... how supremely sweet! ..As though they had gathered up all their brief lives in fragrance and offered them now to her as their bridal gift.

Only a few steps more - she could see her mother's face tear-swollen behind the lace handkerchief. She wrenched her eyes away impatiently. "Why do they cry? Why do they try to dampen my happiness with their tears?" She looked beyond the family pews toward the altar, where Arnold waited... Only a few steps more, only a few more pauses. The music climaxed its triumphal anthem and Sandra's heart swelled its echoing triumph. In spite of them all she was here, victorious, going to Arnold, toward love, toward life itself... they could not keep her imprisoned in a sickroom, deprived of love's consummation. No, she was too strong for them, she had fought for her right to love, to know the mystery and the splendor

of two lives joined, two souls mingled, two bodies made one flesh. Now it was hers... no one could stop her. One step more..

Sandra left her father's arm, stepped forward alone. Through the veil she dimly saw her bridegroom in his place beside her.

"Dearly Beloved..." the preacher's voice was far away, "we are gathered together in the sight of God and of this congregation to join this man and this woman...." Sandra could hardly hear him, so loud was the beating of her heart. She lifted her veil and placed her hand in her bridegroom's. The hand that took hers was not Arnold's bewildered and uncertain touch. She turned her head. It was not Arnold's familiar face she saw, but the face of the stranger. He smiled at her, possessive and sure, and the dark radiance of his smile calmed the frightened flutter of her astonishment. With sudden understanding she smiled back at him. This was her bridegroom, not Arnold, and she had known it unwillingly all the time.. but now that she could see his face.. The wave of joyous ecstasy was greater than any she had known before, drowning the sound of music, the fragrance, even the sight of everything else. The clasp of his fingers tightened on her hand as she closed her eyes and lifted thirsty lips for his kiss....

"It's all right, son." The bereaved father put his arm around Arnold's shoulder as they left the church. "Thank you for everything. It's just as well she went when she did, so that you were spared any further torture. It would have been terrible for you if she had died in your arms...later." He swallowed. "We all appreciate that you were willing to go through with it, knowing that she was dying and that it could come at any minute...at least, she died happy.." He gave the bowed shoulders a squeeze and turned to help his weeping wife down the steps. Behind them they could hear lingering guests:

"That was nice of Rev. Jones to preach her funeral sermon instead, wasn't it? So thoughtful of him. He must have had it ready and with him all the time..."

"Yes, and what a mercy for the parents, saves them the cost of decorating the church again for a funeral...."

DEPARTMENT
OF
QUEER QUOTATIONS

the human race? The answer
is written by a Reverend
waving a flag before a bull.

we disagree violently with everything

we wish to point out that a

comment on the age of the

so-called "human race"

is to criticize

---L'ecole

