

GRIVE







heading  
by  
damon  
knight

# GRUE-23

2

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Our cover this issue was executed in spatterpaint (with stencils) by Mike Rossman. Thanks to Peter Graham, who referred Mike to us and also furnished the original copy of "Investigation in Newcastle" for re-printing.

Apologies are herewith extended to several contributors whose efforts didn't get included as originally planned. These will either be returned to the contributor or held for some future issue. I kept thinking I could include John Magnus's article, "I Remember OPUS," Terry Carr's page of face-critters and two fine cartoons from Arthur Thomson but the pages kept accumulating and I had to end the issue someplace or it would never have appeared. So will you people just named, as well as Plato Jones, Jack Harness and Rich Bergeron please excuse me?

### CONTENTS:

SEND IT TO GEORGE	by James Blish	page 3
IT'S ENEY'S FAULT	Chuck Harris	7
INVESTIGATION IN NEWCASTLE (reprint)	Jack Speer	10
CHRISTMAS TALE	Gerry Kincannon	14
SCHEIDAM, 1671	Editor	15
THE CHAMELEONIC EQUINE (column)	Bob Tucker	18
THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE	Mal Ashworth	20
SFCOn REPORT FROM WITHIN	Es and Les Cole	23
CHERCHEZ LE MESSAGE	Harlan Ellison	26
THE AFFAIR OF THE LETHAL LEPUS	Andy and Jean Young	27
GNURRSERY RHYMES ("verse")	Several People	28
MISCELLANIA	Editor	30
LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS (annotated)	Robert Bloch	43
AND THE MOON BE STILL AS CHEDDAR	Bob Silverberg	44
BELFASTERS (#1--Walt Willis)	John Berry	46
"...OF A THOUSAND FIENDISHLY EATEN ANCESTORS..."	Redd Boggs	50
THE REAR VISIPLATE	Editor	52

Interior illustrations by Ron Fleshman (ESHM), Bob Kellogg, Wm. Rotsler, Randy Jason, damon knight and Dean Grennell. Grue is printed on a Gestetner---a sort of mimeograph with delusions of grandeur---in Royal Blue ink and it sells for 25¢ or 1s/6d, payable, respectively, to either Dean A. Grennell (Editor) at 402 Maple Avenue, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, USA, or Chuck Harris, whose address is on page 53. Caveat lector, y'all.

# SEND IT TO GEORGE

3

by James Blish

About ten years ago one of the professional opinion-research outfits, I forget which one, was handed the job of asking people what they would most like to do for a living, given free choice. If the percentages shown by the sample hold good for our whole population, about five million people in the U.S. want to be writers.

This ought to be a horrifying statistic for those of us who make a living, either in whole or in part, by writing. There aren't very many of us, after all. Fully 90% of all the material printed in newsstand magazines in a given year is contributed by about 500 full-time professionals; the other 10% is supplied by about 1000 writers. If those 4,998,500 other people start producing---

I am not, however, leaping for the chandelier yet. I have already seen some of the work those other people do.

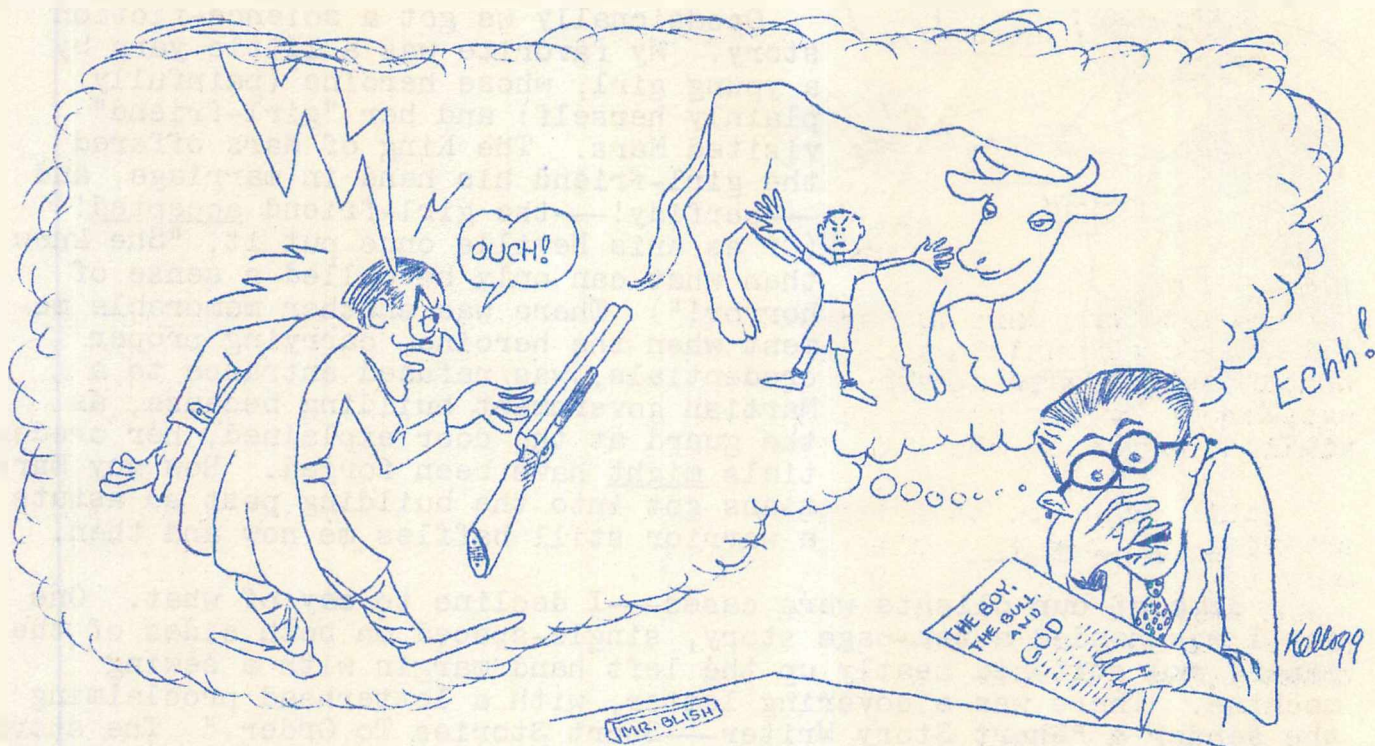
I worked for a year for a large literary agency—one which still represents quite a few top-ranking science-fiction writers—which drew much of its income from reading-fee clients. The reading-fee business, while it is not in good odor among most agents and writers, can be run with reasonable honesty, and this one was. The three of us who read manuscripts for the agent (I'll call him George) conscientiously read each and every page of every story, recommended to George for marketing anything that looked to us to be salable, and wrote letters of honest and specific criticism on all the rest. The only limitation George placed on us was in how harsh we could be with really horrible work; after all, he didn't want to frighten the client away completely, if there was a chance that he might send in another script and another three to ten bucks.

Each of us knocked out thirty or more such letters a week. About once a month one of us would find something worth sending in to George's office. George agreed to maybe one in every five of such recommendations and put the story on the market, and I would guess that half of those he marketed got sold.

But the rest...

For months I had been telling the clients not to solve plot-problems by outside intervention, and had been using the usual standard, absurd illustration: Your story ending, I would tell the hapless client, is basically as incredible as if the villain had been struck down by lightning at the crisis.

Well, sir, to my desk one day came a manuscript entitled "The Boy, the Bull, and God," in which, as the villain was stalking the boy's beloved bull with a shotgun cradled in his arms, he was struck by lightning.



The moral, as we later came to understand it at George's shop, is that there is no such thing as an example too idiotic to be possible; sooner or later, somebody will offer you that exact situation in all seriousness.

One of "my" clients was a man who seemingly had an endless supply of cash. During my entire tenure he sent us one long story every two weeks, neatly typed with a blue-inked ribbon, and uniformly, outstandingly incredible. /I wish it understood at this point that a lot of people use blue ribbons besides Grue's editor—'twasn't me, honest! --dag\_ Nothing that we could say to him, or at least that we were allowed to say to him, could discourage him—but nothing we said taught him anything, either, though we all did our best. He was the man for whom one of the three of us invented the term "idiot plot"—this being the plot in which things happen the way they do only because everybody in the story is an idiot. This is the plot wherein the heroine inexplicably fails to think of calling the police until it's too late; the villain, instead of shooting the hero at once, explains his dastardly plans at great length, and allows the hero to get the drop on him from across a room as big as a banquet-hall; elaborate mistaken-identity complications arise from somebody's failure to ask one single, sensible question; wife and husband are estranged because the author rushes you past the moment when any normal human would have said that he or she was only out shopping. The movies /also radio and TV --dag\_ use these plots constantly, but they're harder to sell to the magazines.

This same dogged writer also carried the funny-hat kind of character-tagging to heights undreamed of by most of our clients. I still remember one of his villains, who, poor man, had to throw back his head, clap his hands together, jump up in the air and click his heels before each and every speech.



Occasionally we got a science-fiction story. My favorite was a little yarn by a young girl, whose heroine (painfully plainly herself) and her "girl-friend" visited Mars. The King of Mars offered the girl-friend his hand in marriage, and —perfidy!—the girl-friend accepted! (Or as Kris Neville once put it, "She knew then what can only be called a sense of horror!") There was another memorable moment when the heroine, carrying proper credentials, was refused entrance to a Martian government building because, as the guard at the door explained, her credentials might have been forged. How any Martians got into the building past so astute a warrior still baffles me now and then.

Some of our clients were cases—I decline to say of what. One day I was handed a ten-page story, single-spaced on both sides of the paper, and stitched neatly up the left hand margin with a sewing machine. There was a covering letter, with a letterhead proclaiming the sender a "Short Story Writer—Short Stories To Order." The story, which was called "My Dream Vacation," made it pretty clear that the writer's dreams were not just anybody's. During the dream vacation, the hero and heroine were followed about the scenery by a character described as the hero's best friend. The best friend's sole function in the yarn was to be punched, kicked, thrown over waterfalls, flailed with barrel-staves, and screamed at by the hero. The only reason for this abuse findable in the text was that the hero had abruptly decided the best friend was a rat. ("Take that, you dirty rat," I said.)

Manuscripts of this order of badness were terrible problems to George, who had to weigh the possibility that the writer might send him another three bucks against the equally good possibility that there was no such writer, and that the story had been instead sent to the agency by one of the writer's clubs, to see whether or not George was still on the up-and-up. These "it stinks" cases always went in to him along with the good stuff; if they were as bad as we said they were, we were allowed to take the gloves off and tell the writer to take up coo-perage or some other inarticulate art. This happened so rarely, however, that I'm afraid we were more than ordinarily savage about it when we were allowed to write an "it-stinks" letter.

Some of the "it-stinks" cases led with their chins by covering themselves with invented glories. One wanted us to know that some of her poems had been printed in the California Who's Who. Another claimed that one of George's best-known professional clients—a man for whom we readers reverently changed our carbon-paper whenever he came into the office—was only a pen-name of the reading-fee client's.

Plagiarists were nowhere near as common as I think all of us had expected to find. I saw only one open-and-shut case during my year at the agency. There was, however, one other manuscript about which we were never able to make up our minds. It was good, competent stuff—a mystery story with an ingenious gimmick—and looked salable, but it seemed naggingly familiar to all three of us, and to George too.

Since none of us were able to remember what story we thought it might be plagiarized from, George eventually asked the writer to send an affidavit that it was his own work—which he promptly did. To this day I don't know whether that story was a piracy or not, and I'll bet George doesn't either.

It is my unsupportable opinion that more piracies are likely to go out from a reading-fee agency than come in to one, especially if the agency, unlike George's, is a mill making no attempt to offer value for the fees. The temptation involved is considerable and steady. Hardly a day goes by in which you don't see a beautiful idea, plot-gimmick, or some other usable piece of property, embedded in the writing of a client you know will never sell a line to the day he dies. Furthermore, the volume of manuscript a reader handles in a year is so enormous that he can't possibly remember each work individually; if the reader is also a writer, he may years later come up in a story with a piece of somebody else's property which he no longer remembers isn't his. Almost all writers actively hate plagiarism and plagiarists as deeply as ministers hate sin; but if you put three ministers on daily duty in a bagnio, how many of them will emerge at the end of a year without having sampled the wares?

This is, as far as I can see, one of the minor reasons why the reading-fee business is frowned upon by responsible organizations. The major reason, however, is the one which the three of us learned the hard way: that not one reading-fee client in a thousand can write, and furthermore they cannot be taught to write, not by the most honest and competent reading-fee critic imaginable. The three of us gradually came to recognize this as a characteristic of the breed: all reading-fee clients, one of my colleagues said, have holes in their heads. Any information you put into them promptly falls out when they bend over to tie their shoes. This seemed to the rest of us to be, as a generalization about a large body of people, probably untrue; but it proved to be accurate. There was no fumble too huge for a client to commit, and, after it had been pointed out to him, commit again in the very next manuscript, and again, and again...

So when those 4,998,500 people finally sit down to their typewriters, I don't expect to be put out of business. Besides, they will all send their manuscripts to George. And I'm afraid he deserves it.

-XXX-

--James Blish

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FOR WHAT WE ARE ABOUT TO RECEIVE-----

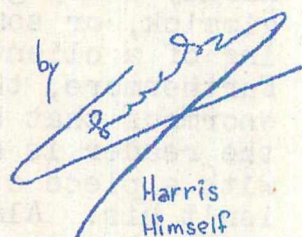
Ever mindful of Grue's variegated readership, I try to include material that will appeal to all bands of the spectrum. Some of the things that creep into these pages are so esoteric as to bring a glaze to the eyes of innocent newcomers; others are, as Edgar Rice Burroughs might have put it, pellucidar. For example, the Blish article just concluded is of the latter class. It can be understood by nearly anyone capable of assimilating the printed word. What follows is an equus caballus of more outré\* pigmentation. I think the circumlocution justified here. If this puzzles you unduly, please feel free to pass on to the next title without prejudice or rancor...but remember that there are those of us, the editor included, who love this sort of thing. Permit us our fun, eh?  
\*such as Gene Outré might ride.

--dag

NOTE: While I have a certain distaste, as previously noted, for repetition-humor, per se, I will confess to having a fair-sized penchant for the carefully vivisected cliché. This "horse of another color" business has been under fire for some time now and accounts of the action have appeared in these pages and elsewhere. Last issue, you may recall, Richard H. Eney made sundry comments on the subject in our FFW section and I related a hypothetical incident in reply. Later, when I thought the matter over, it came as a bit of a shock to me that I had killed off Chuck Harris-- twice in the same issue! (The other time was in the Calkins tale) But reports of the Harrisian demise were, in the words of Mark Twain, greatly exaggerated. As proof, we have the following Article of Sorts, lifted from a letter received since last issue.

--dag

# IT'S ENEY'S FAULT

by  
  
Harris  
Himself

I was happy to see that there was a long letter from Walt, but I was shocked at your variation of "A Horace of a different choler." Surely you realise that Walt is going to be struck all of a heap by this Dreadful Loss, and that it would be completely out of character for him to say a thing like that:

"..... Finally there is a sound in the street outside, and Walt goes to the window, parts the curtains and peers out to see a somber vehicle pulling up in front of the house but, painted on the sides, are the words, 'Digger O'Dell, the Friendly Undertaker.'

'Is that Murphy?' asks Madeleine.

'No,' murmurs Walt, 'it is a hearse of another cooler.'

And you imagine that would be all?-----permit me to continue:

"..... A shudder coursed coarsely through the body, a wizened clawlike hand reached for the bedroom utensil and made a last despairing effort to heave it at the voice, but the fingers twitched, unclenched and were still. Harris was dead. The Greatest Fan-ed had typed the last --30-- under the byline and pulled the sheet from the Eternal Typer. Harris was dead. /You just said that./

Madeleine broke down and began to sob quietly. 'Walt,' She wept, 'he was your friend. He deserved a better epitaph than that.'

Willis stared blankly from the window. 'Yes,' he muttered, 'I suppose he did. I shall miss him. Hyphen will never be the same without him. He was a good joe and he nearly always remembered the difference between its and it's.' He brushed a tear from his eye and motioned toward the Gestetner 66 and the Imperial typer standing in the corner. 'I think.....I think he'd have wanted us to have them.'

John Berry and the aged George Charters nodded in agreement, picked up the machines and carried them off to the attic. Peggy Martin and Sadie Shaw joined with Madeleine in a traditional keening Gaelic lament and the wake was begun. Bob Shaw, his strong jaws moving convulsively\*, gripped Walt's shoulder in a manly gesture of sympathy: 'Walt,'

\*(it was probably gingerbread, but it might have been emotion --crh)

## 8 IT'S ENEY'S FAULT by Chuck Harris

he said, 'let's leave him with the womenfolk for now.' Willis held a mirror in front of the cold mouth, and searched in vain for the stilled pulse. 'Yes, I guess it'll be okay to do that this time.' He picked up the cigarettes and the ghoddminton racquet from the dressing table and hobbled out of the room.....

Finally, after interminable delays, the sad day arrived and the procession formed up and moved off as Harris was borne to his Last Resting-Place on the shoulders of his friends. From all over the world they had come, Tucker and Calkins, Boggs, Eney, Silverberg, Grennell and McCain...even Bloch was there, incredibly ancient in his wheelchair which he had draped in black for the sad occasion. Only Elsberry was missing, having sent word that he was long gone in gafia for one thing and besides nobody could convince him it wasn't another hoax perpetrated by Peter Graham.

The womenfolk climbed into the carriages and the men formed into ranks and began to pace slowly forward as the muffled drums started a slow and solemn dirge. Another face was missed from the ranks and the mourners passed with downcast eyes the sodden gin-soaked hulk in the gutter. In the end James White had run true to form.

Deacon Russwat and the ever-so-Rev Cal-Tom Beck marched before the cortege reading the Case for the Defence. Behind the pall-bearers a choir of neofans (sent as a delegation from 187th Fandom) sweetly sang an epic lament that the Poet Laureate, Mr. Normal George Wansborough, had composed specially for the occasion:

'From Maple Ave to Montmartre (Paris)  
Trufandom mourns the loss of Harris.  
Weep, o weep, ye sons of fandom—  
You'll never see another 'Random.'  
He's joined First Fandom in the sky,  
Don't write to him, he won't reply!  
Woe! Woe! Tiddlypompom Woe! Woe!

Newtonards Road and the main streets of Belfast had been closed to traffic and were lined with shocked and sorrowful crowds. As the sombre caravan passed, bystanders beat their breasts (except for the London Contingent, which never does things like that in public) and keened for their lost leader. As the bier /you mean "bhier"? --dag\_/ passed there was a rustle as helicopter beanies were swept off in one last tribute, and members of the Vargo Statten League tossed roses in its path.

Outside the town, as if the angels of Ghu were weeping too, it began to rain. The massive coffin, undecorated except for the symbolic mimeo-crank and phial of correcting fluid resting on its lid, was placed inside the hearse for the remainder of the journey. The cars jaunted over the ruts (naturally you've heard of Irish Jaunting Cars?) and the red-rimmed eyes of the bereaved began to look up the Order of Service and the Last Rites in Hyphen #649 (which had been specially produced with a border that was almost black), as they drew near the Last Resting Place in the Mahaffey Shrine at the top of Mount Errigal.

And then, as they forded the last peat brook, it happened. Water had seeped into the engine and shorted the ignition. The vehicle splut-

tered and stopped right in the very middle. Grayy Boggs, with a pathetic attempt at levity, whispered, 'Hearse today, gone tomorrow.' Shaw raised his streaming eyes to the streaming sky, 'A hearse, a hearse, my kingdom for a hearse.' Grennell winced and laid down his camera: 'If wishes were hearses, beggars would ride,' he said disapprovingly.

Suddenly, as if by magic, the missing hearse of Murphy the Mortician drew alongside with Murphy himself at the wheel, gesturing that the body should be transferred. Its motor clanked sturdily, heedless of the water. Calkins rushed over to lift the bonnet and peer at this marvelous motor but drew back sheepishly when Bloch sternly admonished him not to look a gift hearse in the mouth. Madeleine wound down the window to ask Murphy if he had any connection with American Greyhound, Inc., for, indeed, such efficiency was unheard of in Ireland. But Peggy Martin shushed her and turned to Sadie Shaw with a murmured, 'Hearse not to reason why.'

Before anyone else could speak the window was slammed shut by an angry Walter A. (for Alexander) Willis. His brow was dark with fury at what he deemed rank disrespect for the Dear Departed; his eyes burned like the flickering purple flames of eternal ghufire. He raised one spatulate-fingered hand and there was silence over all Ulster.

'Never,' he gritted harshly, 'Never change hearses in mid-stream!'

From the lightless depths of the coffin came a low, muted whirring sound, as if a long, bony object were rotating rapidly in its echoing confines.

Harris had made one final protest. His was the last word."

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You see what I mean? The English language is finite, and we just cannot afford to make one single pun and then throw the word away. One really ought to use every possible permutation before disposing of the original. You dig me?

--Charles R. "Chuck" (Beware of Imitations) Harris

---

Mohammed shook an admonitory finger at the shade of Haroun al Raschid: "I won't have you trifling with her—bear in mind that she is a houri of another caliph!"

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--dag

#### SUPPLEMENTARY DATA ON THE DEGLER MATA—

Bob Tucker's notes on Claude Degler in a recent issue (#21) received very nearly unanimous approval (one lone reader said he cared for them but little). And several score of readers have requested a little more information on the matter. Peter Graham very kindly loaned me a copy of the "Investigation in Newcastle" report which, as Tucker noted, was written by Jack Speer, who has given consent to its reproduction here. I'd like to explain one thing though: we bear Claude no animus whatsoever and feel he's more to be pitied than censured. But things pertaining to his career were and are an integral part of our microcosmic history and they are presented as such. Following is an attempt at facsimile reproduction, just as it appeared in the Spr-44 FAPA. --dag

## INVESTIGATION IN NEWCASTLE

"If you wish a thing to be done right,  
You must do it yourself; you must not leave it to others!"

If you asked me if I thot Degler was worth it, the answer would be No; but the pleasure I had playing private investigator was worth it.

### Easter Afternoon.

No Degler, Stein, Domnick, or Matley in the Newcastle fonebook.

214 North 20th was a small white house in good condition. After photographing it, I knocked, just as Claude's mother came out a side door, going somewhere. No, Claude wasn't in town—had gone off to somewhere in Ohio. She recognized my name, but not any of those of the Indiana cosmen, and of course she didn't know where they lived. But then, she was busy all day at the factory and didn't see much of Claude and his activities. This wasn't his house; it was his grandfather's. I asked if he had a mimeo at this address; reply was vaguely negative. Degler's mother was a sharp-looking woman, but courteous enuf, in a coarse sort of way, toward me. She became suspicious, however, when I followed up her statement that Claude "has worked around some at various things" with further questioning about whether he had a regular job. I assured her that I merely wanted to know if there was something that would make him have to return from Ohio Monday, so that I mite still see him. There wasn't. Claude had been sick the past week, trouble with stomach ulcers. She would ask his younger brother if he knew where Claude was, so that I mite call him up. Was the younger brother Vergie Degler\*?, I asked. She said No, not volunteering who Vergie Degler was. Robert would fone me at the hotel if he knew where Claude was, but he was too busy with a job to take part in Claude's activities.

214 N 20 being the only address I had, I caught a ride with a hiway patrolman to the police station, where I had them look up several names in the city and county directory. A line on Dominick\*\* ran out, but within a block of the end of this trail was the home address of Claude Degler and Vergie Degler—Vergie apparently is his mother—as given in the directory. It is a mixed negro and white neighborhood, but doesn't look like a red lite district. I photographed the house, which is small and shabby but not delapidated.

Rather extensive inquiries in the suburb of Oak Grove turned up no trace of Matleys, Tylors, or Tilbys\*\*\*.

Rain ended further search, Fone calls to a Walters, a Jenkins, and an Allan in the fone book failed to locate the persons of

\* Named as treasurer of the Cosmic Circle, to whom money orders should be made out.

\*\* Said by Marlow to be the real name of Helen Bradleigh.

\*\*\* Persons mentioned in connection with the OGFS gang war.

those surnames mentioned in CC publications.

Monday.

Stated at the County Welfare Board that I was member of an organization which was considering expelling Degler; explained that considerable visiting goes on among the members with hospitality taken for granted and mentioned Degler's complaints over exclusion from the gathering at the president's home. Also, when asked, told what I had heard via the Marlows about the Degler-Dominick love affair. The worker who handled the case in 1942 was no longer there, but another woman read the file and told me about it. Mr and Mrs Degler were divorced. Joan Dominick's name was Jo Anne (Sp?) Andes, Dominick being her stepfather. She was of lower mentality than Claude, who was also classed as subnormal, tho there were no figures on his mentality in the report, and Mrs Scotten, the school principal, had said that he made fairly good grades. Claude had been twice committed to the East Haven Hospital for the Insane, at Richmond Ind; once after beating up a little boy, who was the County Prosecutor's son, and again after beating Mrs Degler. After the Dominick offense in 1942, they advised sending Claude to the Maskatuck (sp?) school for the feeble-minded, but his mother didn't want to sign the papers, so it was agreed that Claude would leave town, and he had done so.

In the County Clerk's office I got the following information from the commitment records on Claude Degler: He was born 19 May 1920 in Poplar Bluff Mo, and came to Newcastle in 1925 from Wolf Bayou Arkansas. Mr Degler had deserted the family, and he had had a mania for stealing. The Degler grandfather had been confined in a hospital for the insane. The first signs of insanity in Claude were observed in December 1935: extreme nervousness, depressed spells, violent destructive spells. The commitment application was dated March 1936. The attack at that time had been gradual in onset. He had had nervous and depressed spells several times in the preceding year. It was necessary to remove him from school in 1934 because of his extreme nervousness. He was a diligent student and on the honor roll. From January to March of 1936, his mother had to keep him away from other people. He had lately become homicidal. The doctor's examination said that Claude had fits of temper, was unable to tell the difference between right and wrong, and otherwise confirmed the description in the application. He was emaciated, sallow, and anemic, alternately depressed and excited. Homicidal and destructive tendencies. Had attempted to burn buildings. Another physician's statement said he was insomniac, had poor appetite, and cried frequently. Among the papers was a certification that he was the probable potential parent of mentally incompetent or socially inadequate offspring, and calling for his sterilization. In November 1937 he was discharged as having been restored to sanity. There was no record of any other commitment. I was told that his brother had also been sent to the asylum, which mite have been confused by the Welfare Board.

Calls at the local newspaper offices discovered nothing about the Oak Grove fitting. Found nothing about it in the daily paper around the date given.

At the Post Office, they knew of no one named Stein. Box 365\* had long

\*Frank N Stein's return address.

been in Vergie Degler's name.

The County Prosecutor was at the police station. After I identified myself, he told me about the 1936-37 occurrences. Claude was chasing some children who were teasing him, when they passed another group of kids among whom was the Prosecutor's son (he did not mention the relationship till later). The boy was beaten severely, bruised all over. A WPA workman a block away heard his screams and came to stop Degler, but he got away. That evening Claude set fire to the Prosecutor's coal shed, and slipping away again from police and firemen, returned later that nite to burn the garage (containing car) of the next-door neighbor. He then knocked on the neighbor's door. The lady of the house recognized him and screamed. He threatened that he would blow up the whole block. After Claude had been in the asylum a few months, his mother pulled political strings and got him furloughed. She kept him locked up at home till one nite he beat her unconscious, knocked over the kerosene stove, and left the house afire with her in it. He was returned to East Haven, and after staying there a year, was furloughed again, but not declared cured. The Prosecutor knew less about the Dominick case. He said she and Claude had met for statutory rape, but due to inability to prove that it had been accomplished, the agreement for Claude to get out of town was made, and he had gone, tho he'd been around some since then. The Prosecutor, like the others, failed to recognize the name of Helen Bradleigh.

Further search in the city directory found no Tilby, Tylor, Kinney, Hagsmyer, Math, Matley, nor Bradleigh.

Returning to Degler's neighborhood, I made further inquiries and soon found Joan Dominick. She appeared to be 15 or 16. Denied being Helen Bradleigh or knowing anything about her. Said she had not been a member of the Cosmic Club or helped on Degler's publications in any way. I knocked on the door at Degler's, but nobody was home. A note from Vergie Degler pinned to the screen said neighbors had told her somebody had been around several times trying to get in touch with her, and asked whoever it was to leave a note or drop a card to Box 365.

Attempted to fone Mrs Scotten, but since it was a school holiday she was out of town.

#### Richmond.

At the East Haven asylum, the woman at the desk said, "... Degler? Robert-- Oh, Claude Degler." The Superintendent had the folder brot to him. "What's he doing now-- something in the religious line?" I mentioned the Cosmic Concept. The Superintendent said he came in 1936 and was furloughed twice, both times against their advice, last leaving in 1937. They hadn't made any tests of his intelligence, since with that type it wouldn't have been a fair guide to his performance under other conditions. He pointed out, however, that the boy had never gone beyond the seventh grade in school. He had not caused them any trouble while in East Haven. The sterilization called for had not been done at East Haven. At the time of his admission there it was recorded that he'd had nothing to do with the opposite sex. He had been discharged from the asylum as "restored", but it was up to the court to decide whether to judge him sane again. They in the hospital didn't care whether people were sent there or not. Often the relatives would object, and they were

usually harder to deal with than the patient. He mentioned that Claude had claimed to suffer from various imaginary illnesses, had said that people teased him, and had burned down a garage to get revenge on somebody. I asked the Superintendent if he could tell me the name of Claude's type of insanity, but he said it was "a privileged communication, for the family only. I can tell you almost anything else you want to know about him, tho." He did say it was a recurrent type, and asked about Claude's recent activities. I spoke of the Cosmic Circle and his publications in our amateur press association. The Superintendent said, "I guess he's having a recurrence of it now. They'll probably catch up with him again before long. But he stayed out six or seven years, didn't he? I see here he joined the Buck Rogers Club and had a lot of trouble with that because people made fun of him. They go in for things like that. He was interested in electricity, too; used to fool around with it. Anything like that - and religion - anything you just can't put your finger on, they go in for."

On my honor as a stefnist, this article is true and complete.

Jack Speer (signature)

Reprinted at Mafia Press  
January, 1955. From the  
files of Peter Graham, by  
permission of Jack Speer.

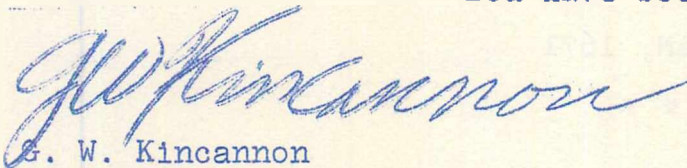


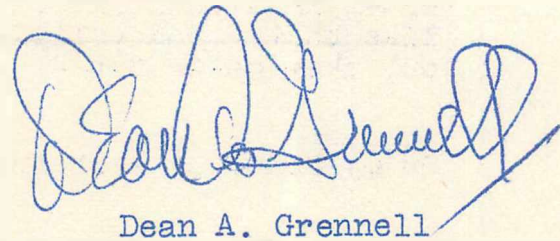
NATURALLY, NO SIMILARITY OR CONNECTION  
BETWEEN THE PRECEDING TEXT AND THE  
ABOVE PICTURE IS EXPRESSED OR INTENDED.

— day

ON A NOTE OF PROTEST: We, the undersigned, are fat-sick and tired of fiction whose course is as fixed and immutable and predictable and inexorable as the progress of a glacier. We are fed up with stories where the hero never misses and the villain always does---stories in which the mortgage is always paid off in the nick of time...stories, in short, that read like fiction. We feel that it is high time that, just once or twice, an unpredictable and wildly unconventional twist materialized in the plot-line. Accordingly, we have written stories incorporating these tenets into their very warp and woof. If you are not careful, you are about to read two of the stories under discussion. If you suffer acute nausea please do not come around to us with your furshlugginer cleaning-bills. The fault lies solidly upon the shoulders of several readers who have written letters demanding to know why we never print fiction. We intend to answer the question in the most effective way we know how. Just this once we will print fiction. And the lectors had damn well better caveat.

You have been warned.

  
G. W. Kincannon

  
Dean A. Grennell

#### CHRISTMAS TALE-

\* \* \*

'Twas the night before Christmas and the cold wind pried with stiff fingers at the rotting window casings of the wretched second-story flat, fluttering the rags that hung there as curtains.

A little girl, wrapped in the tattered folds of an old shawl against the insistent cold, sat upon her mother's lap and listened to the story of the nativity. Tears formed in the corners of the mother's eyes as she unfolded the old, old story in her thin, tired voice. By and by the emaciated little form relaxed and fell into a fitful slumber in her mother's arms. Slowly the good woman arose with her burden of love and laid it upon the bed, tenderly covering it with the threadbare shawl that had once been wine-colored.

"Don't feel too badly, my dear, if Santa doesn't come," she whispered, and sat down in the broken rocking chair. She let her head fall back for a moment's rest but the moment became two and soon she was fast asleep, grey hair blowing gently across her face in the icy draft from the window.

A half hour dragged past on weary feet and then the little girl moved from the bed. She crept to the table where rosy light flashed intermittantly through the dirty window from the beer sign outside. With a blunt, stubby pencil she painfully scrawled a message upon a piece of wrapping paper:

"Dear Santa: Please, please don't forget where we live this year."

She folded the note, wrote "Santa Claus, North Pole" on the outside, and shoved it through a crack under the window. Her nose pressed to the filthy glass, she watched as it corkscrewed down to the street below where the wind seized it and whisked it off down the sidewalk. Shivering, she crept back to bed.

The wayward wind carried her note two blocks down the street and it dropped into the gutter in front of a saloon owned by the richest man in that part of town.

And the note lay there in the gutter, water-soaked and rotting, for three days until a trickle of melting slush washed it down the sewer.

--G. W. Kincannon

---

### SCHEIDAM, 1671

\* \* \*

Roddney Beggs had a dream.

Everybody has dreams---maybe they want to win something, the Irish Sweepstakes, the Pillsbury Baking Contest or a Nobel Prize; maybe they want to buy a 200-foot yacht or bowl 300 in a tournament. Dreams are but the anesthetic that deadens our nerves to the passage of days.

But Roddney's dream was something special. For, you see, he was a devotee of fantasy fiction. He didn't care greatly for science fiction because it gave him a throbbing pain between the eyes. But he could understand and appreciate things like vampires and werewolves and ghouls and fogles and incubi and John the Ballad-Singer.

There was one particular sort of fantasy that delighted him far beyond all of the others. His special weakness was the plot where the hero conjures up a demon and gets him over a barrel in such a wise that the uncouth creature has to grant him three wishes. Beggs kept a running list in his head at all times of the three paramount wishes he would choose should a leperchaun ever accost him on the street and offer him a deal like that. He had read so many stories where the hero had goofed woefully by not giving the choice of wishes enough thought. No demon or leperchaun was going to catch Roddney Beggs napping...no indeed, sir!

Of course he changed them around from time to time as a more advantageous wish occurred to him.

Beggs would have turned down the presidency of his country right cheerfully for the sake of getting a real, sure-enough demon under his thumb just once. In fact, he wouldn't have cared too much about being president anyway, even of the N3F. It would have required too much time away from his beloved backfiles of WEIRD TALES and UNKNOWN WORLDS.

On his bedroom wall hung a framed photograph of Henry Kuttner, complete with all 28 autographs.

And so it came to pass that one afternoon in late October Beggs found himself in that natural habitat of the fantast, a second-hand bookstore. He was, as usual, looking for a first edition (preferably uncut) of Lovecraft's MARGINALIA when he chanced upon a little volume that had slipped behind the row of books on the shelf. There was no telling how long it had been there but it was thickly covered with the dust of decades, badly scuffed and water-stained. The binding was faded to that nondescript muckledun which only a really old book can ever hope to attain. A mouse had lined its nest with a generous portion of antique paper from one of the corners and the ancient buckram of the binding had peeled away in places. It had a smell that was quite indescribable so there's no point in trying to describe it.

Rodd peered at the cover, saw nothing, and turned to the title page, holding it close to his eyes because he was as myopic as a purblind platypus. Painfully, he vocalized the archaic script of the title, stumbling over the unfamiliar spelling:

"Ye Compenndyum of fpells and charms For ye fummoning oF Dæmons & Imps & fuchlike creatures oF ye Pitt as compiled by Robertius van Bloch, Highe forceror to His Graccious Majefty, Wilhelm I."

Down at the bottom of the page it added: "With fixtene peerlefs fpells For fummoning oF Incubuffes. Dirk van Erp, Publifher, Scheidam, 1671."

Beggs trembled so violently that he nearly dropped the book, a cloud of fine dust arose from it and made him sneeze. His thick, horn-rimmed glasses settled nearly to the end of his long nose. He fought to gain control of his voice but there was a decided quaver to it as he approached the proprietor. Fortunately, the gentleman didn't notice because he was deep in the arcane calculations of choosing a three-horse parlay from the next day's lineup at Belmont.

"How, uh, how much for the old book?" Roddne managed a fair note of indifference, hoping against hope that the price wouldn't run to more than the 78 cents he had on him. What if someone else were to come in and recognize it for the all-time bargain which it so obviously was? O perish the very thought!

"Huh?" grunted the bookseller, "Ahh—take it for a buck."

Beggs gulped faintly. It was a steal at the price—no doubt about that—but he was 22 cents short and the theater where he was emplyed as a projectionist wouldn't be paying him again till next Saturday...three more days. It was unthinkable that he leave this treasure where some dull lout of a science fiction completist might buy it and never perceive its true worth. Couldn't swap his watch for it...that would make him look too anxious. Besides, come to think of it, he'd hocked that last week to buy that Eddison book. Heart in mouth, flopping and fluttering till he could hardly speak, he ventured:

"Give yah fifty cents for it."

The man grunted again—anxious to return to his calculations on the relative velocity of equus bangtailus.

"Sev'nyfi'sense," he articulated around the cold, acrid stub of his cigar.

Roddney Beggs counted out the nickels and dimes and pennies with palsied fingers, dropping a few and scrabbling about for them in the dust beneath the book-racks. He dropped the remaining three coppers into his pocket, grabbed the book and headed for the door.

"Hey!"

Beggs' heart stopped utterly. He'd bobbled it!

"Huh?"

"Yah forgotda salestax."

Roddney hoisted up the skirt of his threadbare topcoat and fumbled forth the pennies. He dropped two in the proprietor's palm and headed for the door again.

"Yah want it wrapped?"

"N-nn-uhh-no...I'm gonna r-read it on the s-ss-subway."

"Okay."

He ran for six blocks, turning at each corner, before he settled down to a hasty walk, puffing like a grampus with the gout. He still couldn't believe the book was his.

Later, back in his room with the shades carefully drawn, he hunched over the book; spelling out words, guessing here, frowning there, sneezing absently from time to time. The mouse had nibbled enough from the corner to effectively censor pertinent parts of all but the very last spell in the book. This was labelled "fpell to fummon Azhtibuth, the Wifh-Granter." But Roddney didn't mind. He did not want to demolish enemies nor compound love-philters. All he wanted was for a demon to have to grant him three wishes.

He had a hell of a time getting all the materials together. The worst was the mold from the mummy wrappings but the dried bat's-bladder wasn't much easier. Did you ever try to buy dried bat's-bladder at a drugstore? The looks they give you.....

But he was spurred on by the chance to fulfill his life's dream and he managed somehow. At last every single thing specified was at hand in ample supply—he'd bought plenty of everything, figuring that he'd be needing quite a bit. He'd even made up his special stick of chalk to the formula given and with this he carefully drew the pentagram on the rug.

At last everything was ready. He touched fire to the mixture of powders with a kitchen match and squatted back on his hunkers to recite the incantations he'd practiced so faithfully. In years to come he was to do this hundreds of times...but nothing ever came of it.

The End

--Dean A. Grennell

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The End

--Dean A. Grennell

## THE CHAMELEONIC EQUINE

grennell asked me to use this title. I don't trust grennell. he probably wants an excuse to make a feeble pun about horses of another color.  
- bob tucker

COME BACK LITTLE FAN, ALL IS FORGIVEN: I have yet to see a San Francisco convention report in which that blackest of all villains, the Sir Francis Drake house detective, is called anything nicer than a misguided S.O.B. Whether the reports be long, formal things detailing every hour of the four days, or whether they be one or two pages hacked out on the closing day of the brawl to meet an early deadline, they all agree on one thing; the house dick should have been boiled in oil.

Did you ever wonder about the shoe on the opposite foot? Yes, friends, the Sir Francis Drake house dick has spoken.

At the November meeting of the Mystery Writers of America, Northern California branch meeting in Berkeley, the guest of honor was none other than Mike Toohy, the fabled house dick of song and story, the man who haunted faaans. Mike Toohy told the mystery writers that "strange goings-on occur in the most elegant of hostelryes, just as they do in the flea-bags, but that he had not lost faith in human nature despite his experiences." This, mind you, barely two months after the convention. See, youse guys didn't faze him a bit. And in answer to a question as to what would happen if a gentleman took a blonde to his room, Mr. Toohy replied; "Nothing, as long as you registered as Mr. and Mrs. and raise no unusual ruckus." The trouble in you fans attending a convention is, you spoil things for yourself by raising the unwanted ruckus. Next time do it quietly.

WERSE VERSE: A divinity student, Fiddle by name,  
Refused to accept his degree.  
"The name Fiddle," he said, "is not any shame,  
But I just couldn't stand Fiddle D.D."

LOOKING BACKWARD: Several months ago, shortly after Le Zombie was finished and shipped off to Grennell for mauling, I cast about for something to occupy my idle little fingers and finally decided to write my memoirs. Oh, nothing so pretentious as the Laney Memoirs mind you ---- I really lacked the background material for an epic of such magnificent proportions, and besides, I didn't know enuff about the sex-lives of my fellow fans to tackle a project of that scope. No, my memoir would be a simple recounting of the things I had seen, heard and done in the past 25 years of fannish activity. I'd drop Big Names and thereby garner egoboo, I'd casually mention secret little tidbits and garner egoboo, I'd dredge up long-forgotten history to lay bare the unknown facts, and garner egoboo. I guessed that in the afore-mentioned quarter of a century I had accumulated enough fan knowledge, both public and private, to make up for any lack of sensationalism my readers might expect in a Laney-type Expose.

You know what the road to hell is paved with. My projected memoirs is now one of the stones. Oh, six pages have been stenciled and

perhaps a dozen pages more are laid out in rough notes and ideas, but at this writing the memoirs are only gathering dust in a drawer.

One of the early stumbling blocks was my lack of magazine files to accurately date this or that. Fake fan that I am, I long ago sold off the files to finance trips to this or that convention. Why, I didn't even know for a certainty when I had entered fandom. I remembered the first magazines and first stories I had read, easily recalled some of the very early covers which had caught my eye, but accurate dating stopped me cold. And so the memoirs were put aside.

In November, however, I spent a week visiting fake fans and old friends in Chicago, and on a particular Sunday was invited out to the Saari residence to test Ginny's cooking and Ollie's ale. Somewhat to my surprise, Ollie owned a complete set of ASTOUNDING, from that day to this one. As I stared at it my heart took a turn and happy old memories came winging back; I even went so far as to offer to buy the entire collection from him, but he merely laughed at me. Praise the lad! I almost lost my treasured fake-fanism there on the spot, so enraptured was I by that immense stack of hoary magazines. The opportunity to check dates however was at last at hand, and I lost no time examining early issues to see if I was as old as I thought I was.

I wasn't. I'd missed by a year.

The first sf magazine I purchased was the June 1931 ASTOUNDING, offering a thriller entitled "Manapé the Mighty" by Arthur J. Burks. The cover scene had been my undoing. Five months later another cover was again the culprit and I shelled out for my second issue, the November number which offered "Raiders Invisible" by Desmond Hall, "The White Invaders" by Ray Cummings, and the first story in a series of adventures starring somebody named Hawk Carse. From that day on I was a gone gosling. For years I had supposed that 1931 marked my entry into fandom, but Ollie's collection proved me wrong. I cannot remember when I first traded letters with another fan, so I'll have to accept the printed record. The June 1932 issue of ASTOUNDING, which featured "Raid on the Termites' Nest" by Paul Ernst, also featured a character named Bob Tucker in the back of the book -- he was listed as having written the editor "a good letter." I'll just bet!

And so this character Tucker, just to prove himself a smart 'lil neo, whipped out his first fan magazine that same winter. It was met with a mixed reception -- boos mixed with studied silence. That was a mistake of course. They should have killed me with kindness.

But the memoirs still gather dust.

THE ART OF THE SUCCESSFUL HOAX Dept: "We talked for a bit on that subject and then switched to something more fannish: How to Pull a Coup Tomorrow. ... We decided to get [the fans] up at 8:00 in the morning to view a few "Walt Disney films on space travel they just brought in." This, however, didn't go over too well, the only victim being one of the fans who was in on the plot but had forgotten." (Don Wegars, FOG)

FROM RAGS TO RICHES Dept: "We're rewriting an old story of mine, with Boob doing the rough draft and me doing the rewrite. He brought his typer over and it sounded real fine, with two typers on the same desk, both clacking away, the wee hours of the morning and also in a smoke-filled room. We didn't get much done, but boy, was it a proish atmosphere!" (Terry Carr, in Abstract.)

# The Man in the Middle

by Mal Ashworth

IT WAS A LARGE HOUSE and the morning-misted drive was filled with postmen, all staggering beneath bulbous loads, towards the door. Signs passed between an armed guard and the leading postman, the postman's side of the semantic interchange being confined to wagging his ears as they were his only free, movable members, and the postmen moved into the hallway and gaspingly dumped their loads. The armed guard, who had been joined by a comrade, ushered them towards the door and, pausing only to strip and search each one at the doorway, escorted them to the gate and outside. Then he turned and re-entered the house, locking, bolting and shuttering the door behind him.



Inside the house a tall lithe fellow descended the stairs clad in a dressing gown and surveyed the mounted mail-sacks with an ironic smile. Idly calculating the exact number of letters contained in the bags he strode towards a door marked "V-e-e-e-r-y PRIVATE. Knock three times and ask for Ghod," beside which the armed guards now stood to attention.

"Good morning Bob," he said, "Good morning James."

"Ghood morning Ghod," they chorussed. He opened the door and walked into the room. Almost before the three-ton spring had closed the door, the internal telephone on the hall table rang. One of the guards lifted it and the voice at the other end said, "Have my morning coffee and any Burbeezines brought in and then you may bring me the 'Highly Confidential, Most Secret, First-Class Emergency, Utterly Urgent' sack."

The guard clicked his teeth smartly and sped about his business. Within seconds he returned carrying a steaming cup of coffee, learned from the other guard that the morning's mail contained no Burbeezines, knocked three times on the door and, hearing a grunt from within, called out: "Is Ghod in?"

"Yeah sure," shouted the voice, "Come right in Boy." The guard waited the regulation twenty seconds and then bore in the fragrently-steaming cup. He was closely followed by the other guard bearing a mail-sack embroidered in gold thread with the label, "Highly Confidential, Most Secret, First-Class Emergency, Utterly Urgent." The coffee was set beside Ghod's right hand (an honoured position) and the mail-sack at his feet (likewise) and the guards withdrew.



Willis's own  
Helicopter  
Graphic

Sipping slowly, Ghod slipped his feet out of his slippers, unfastened the mailbag with his toes and extracted a golden, silver-banded envelope marked "On United Nations Business. Incredibly Secret" by the same method. Neglecting his coffee for a moment he opened it and pulled out the contents, with a wry smile at the £2,000 cheque which was his sole meagre daily allowance. The only other item in the envelope was a bulky file inscribed with the words, "Mighty Confidential and Pretty Urgent: WHAT TO DO ABOUT TUCKER." This was the latest instructions to the Ghod from the Secret General Assembly of the United Nations Organisation (the only authority to which Ghod was answerable) upon one of the strangest cases in the history of The Project.

By some unknown means, an American cinema-projectionist in a small Midwestern town near Peoria, Illinois, by the name of Tucker had learned that the social phenomenon he had known for many years as "Fandom" was, in reality, a Project, organised by the

Most Secret Assembly of the United Nations Organisation. Its purpose was to nurture and develop the greatest intellects in the world, without the knowledge of the individuals concerned, so that at some future date they or their offspring would be fitted to take over the Government of the World and, as the Secretary-General had secretly put it, "Save it from the 'orrible mess a'ead." (Dag Hammarskjöld said that??--dag) For the first time in recorded history the world would be ruled in a unified peace.

Tucker had somehow divined the fact that this was actually what was afoot and that "Fandom" was just a convenient "front" for the Project. This was because the required "Slan" faculty occurred more frequently in so-called "fans" than in any other group. It said much for the success of the Project in Tucker's particular case that his slannishness had reached such a stage of development that he had penetrated the real purpose behind Project Fandom.

Just how much was known to him the Agents of the Project had not yet discovered because, instead of, as might be expected, putting his significant findings forth in a letter to PSYCHOTIC or HODGE-PODGE, Tucker had taken another course, strange and utterly unforeseeable. He had exposed the Project allegorically in a "professional science fiction novel" called "Wild Talents" and the publication of this book had been the first intimation any of the Agents had had that Tucker was "on to something."

The smoothly geared organisation had, of course, come into immediate operation and within a scant few hours, "something was being done." Plans were carefully laid to "take care of Tucker" at the San Francisco Convention but the wily one foiled their schemes by failing to appear---this on some sort of flimsy pretext that his wife was having a baby. This gave the Agents reason to assume that Tucker knew that the Regional Agent, code-name "RAB," of Weyauwega, was not all that he seemed.

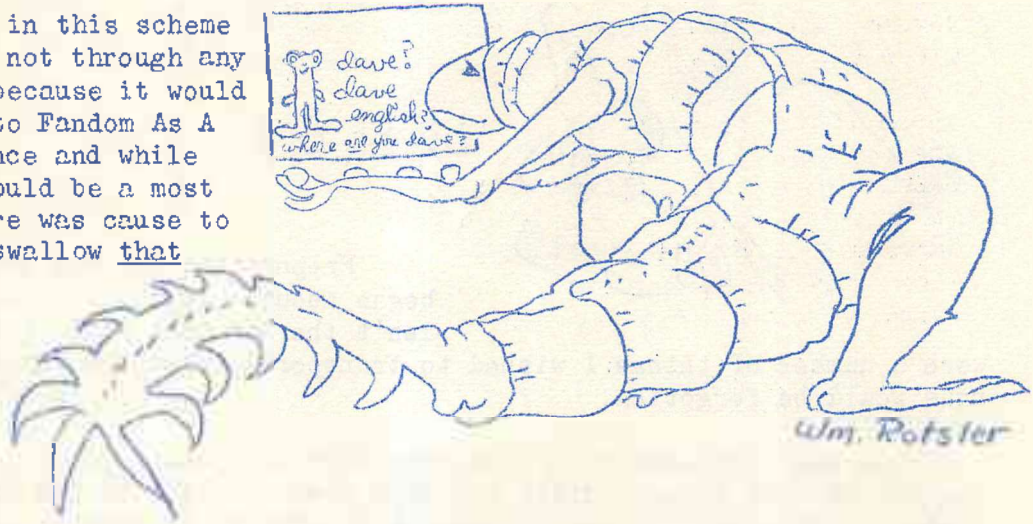
As a preliminary counter-measure, Agent "EJC" of London, posing as a professional editor, had been instructed to purchase for publication several of Tucker's novels, thus allaying his suspicions as to his (EJC's) connection with the Project and, at the same time, helping to keep Tucker both happy and occupied.

Agent "DAG" of Fond du Lac had been instructed to encourage and assist Tucker to re-enter the fan-publishing field and thus to drain off even more of his (Tucker's) (DAG's) free time and money to decrease the liklihood that they would be spent in activities calculated to compromise the secrecy of the project. Accordingly, Agent "DAG" had assisted Tucker in publishing a revival-edition of the fannishly-famous "Le ZOMBIE" and had apparently occluded any suspicions which Tucker might be forming about his connection with the Project.

The letter from the United Nations Organisation (Secret Session) was just giving Ghod his latest instructions in connection with the plan to get Tucker to Britain under the Transfund and then to quietly arrange his "disappearance." After this he would be taken to some secluded place and cared for through his declining years.



The chief obstacle in this scheme arose, strangely enough, not through any action of Tucker's, but because it would be necessary to account to Fandom As A Whole for his disappearance and while organising his "death" would be a most satisfactory method, there was cause to doubt that Fandom would swallow that story a third time.



Ghed pressed a switch on his internal telephone; "Bob," he said, "is there anything else I particularly need to know about this morning?" He received a negative reply and smiled his pleasure, continuing, "Good. Well, you know where I shall be; tell Madeleine that I shall be back at exactly 12:33 and 30 seconds for lunch and that I will have boiled pheasant and roast potatoes for the main course. And Bob, let young Boskins into FAPA, drop Chuck a telegram and tell him to get the latest issue of Form 2706F---that's HYPHEN, you know---out pretty damn fast, have Ernie Higgenbotham drummed out of N3F and start a new fannish feud in California. I'll deal with the rest after lunch."

A few minutes later, Ghed, looking like an ordinary mortal in sports flannels and jersey, was striding down the road swinging a tennis racket and almost chuckling aloud to himself at the thought of his double slaving away in a stuffy government office to preserve the illusion that Walt Willis was just an ordinary, working, "fan."

t h e e n d

---Malarky J. Ashworth

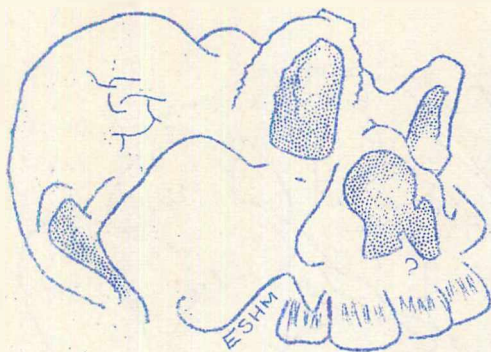
ARTISTS...your attention, please.....

Grue needs artwork, preferably of a somewhat humorous nature. The preferred arrangement is to carry an assortment of drawings on file to fill vacant spaces (such as this one). Therefore, unless a drawing is totally unsuited, it is kept on file until used, even though it may not appear in the next issue after receipt. There are some items we don't especially want, such as tracings from photographs, "borrowed" cartoon gags, nudes and abstract designs. When submitting artwork, PLEASE do not put pictures on both sides of the paper (makes it hard to trace them onto stencil), please mail them flat on reasonably lightweight paper. NOTE TO FELLOW FAN-EDS: have a few Ron Fleshman illos (sample at right) extra. Will send a few, with Ron's address, to reliable, competent publishers while the supply lasts. Ron, of course, gets a copy of the issue they appear in. ---dag



# SFCon Report From Within

by Es & Les Cole



Preparation for the convention, for me, really began about a week prior to WH-day, or why the hell isn't the bar open yet? I began packing, for there were a number of things I wished to transport across the bay and I wanted to be sure none would be forgotten.

An extra steamer trunk had been carefully set aside for our gear and each item was stowed with loving care: The cork from a bottle of Old Crow which was traditionally passed on each year to Tony Boucher; the mimeograph machine and 300 quires of typed stencils which was traditionally passed on to the outstanding actifan; the empty cash box which was traditionally passed on to the succeeding con committee; and the Mae West just in case the Bay Bridge collapsed on our way over.

Of course, my wardrobe had been selected with great care and I'd received it from Christian Dior only a short time before. I wanted to be sure to be recognized as a member of the inner circle when we greeted fen at the various ports of entry. Dior is now turning out a completely new line based on these styles which he calls the Fannyish Look.

And suddenly it was time to leave. In a little while we would be renewing old acquaintances and meeting for the first time all those wonderful people who had been merely tables of contents to us before now.

We checked into the hotel and dashed right out to the Greyhound Bus Station. The really soul-searching true-blue fen travel exclusively by bus. And to our utter exuberant delight, the first member to alight from bus No. 503 out of Chicago by way of Jackson Hole was none other than Folkswagon Benz. We had never had the opportunity of meeting Benz---or "just plain Folksie" as he prefers to be called---before this, although he was well known to us by reputation. He had completely conquered fandom, as you all know, by participating in the production of that fabulous half-shot publication "Glue" (subtitled "Confidentially, It Sticks"). He hadn't actually written anything, but his contribution of turning the mimeo handle was invaluable. The mag had been distributed in the Saps mailing of spring 1937, and we were able to recognize Folksie immediately by the ink stains on his hands and clothing.

We could have spent all day talking with Benz if it hadn't been for the next couple of arrivals. Their names are legend in sf---Caldwell Bubble and J. T. Campanille. They have always maintained they wouldn't attend a science fiction convention if it were held right across the street from their homes, and since they lived directly across from the convention hotel, they were leaving town for the duration.

From the bus station, we rushed over to the train depot. We wanted to make sure in case someone had been unable to make connections on the trailways and were forced to travel by rail. We recognized a few people alighting---Bob Heinlein and Ray Bradbury were helping each other with their luggage and we waved them directions to the hotel---but as we suspected, no one really important arrived by train.

The convention suite was jammed by the time we returned to the hotel at 2:00 a.m.,

## 24 SFCON REPORT FROM WITHIN by Es & Les Cole

with all those fun-loving, enthusiastic personalities who make fandom what it is. They were engaging in their usual playful activities which we affectionately know as Fandalism. Bob Briggs, one of the younger fen who hadn't yet been conditioned to convention brew was sleeping soundly in one corner under the Hy-fy system one of the other attendees had brought along from Georgia, and Lee Jacobs was sending transatlantic messages on the radio transmitter. We managed to find a three-legged chair and by propping one end on an empty can of beer, we were able to relax with this gay crowd. A committee of 150 had been dispatched to dig up more glasses and ice, so the room was quite roomy with the remaining 300 guests.

There had been a little trouble earlier. A few of the pros had tried to get in on the party. They had been dispatched kindly but effectively by the other members. And I recalled having passed a rather hang-dog group in the hall when we were on our way upstairs. We had tried consoling them by explaining there would be a good program the next day, and considering their ages, they really should turn in. Most of them agreed and dispersed rapidly, but a few hung around for a while, looking backward in time at their own fannish years.

The gang finally left about dawn. We took advantage of the break to sneak in a little sleep. Our program was scheduled to begin at 1:00 p.m., so we felt safe in leaving a call for four o'clock. The pros certainly wouldn't mind waiting after their years of experience with publishers and editors, and none of the fen would be up before then.

The hotel, of course, failed to get us up, and we awoke in time to join the gang that was going out to dinner. In spite of our default, the day had been a huge success. The program had come off on schedule because again the guardian angels of fandom had come to our aid. The NFFF had spotted our absence and considerately took over for us. And it wasn't just altruism on their part either. During the course of the afternoon, they managed to attract three new recruits out of the crowd of four thousand. And you could spot the glows of pleasure sported by the new members as they showed off their badges...Bob Bloch looked radiant while Gina Lollobrigida and Willy Ley stood in the doorway so the breeze would flap their silk ribbons.

Next day the program came off right on schedule. There were a number of speeches and panels including talks by Dr. von Braun, Dr. Einstein, Dr. Fermi, Dr. Fishbein and E. E. Smith, Ph D. We'd purposely kept the program light so people would have good appetites for the banquet that evening.

As you've already heard the banquet was a tremendous event. All the hours we had spent with the chef handling each detail of the dinner proved worthwhile because everyone later acclaimed the spaghetti and chocolate milk as delicious.

The after dinner speeches were also delightful. Bloch was never more humorous than when he discussed the various Tucker surveys. It seems Tucker has been surveyed so many times, they're considering turning him into a freeway.

The room really quieted and became attentive when Harlan Ellison rose to speak. We all knew how sincere and serious he is about science fiction and that whatever he was about to tell us would be worth paying attention to. He sure was, too.

The next day's schedule had John W. Campbell, Jr. and Horace Gold debating on fanzines vs. subzines, but most of the attendees were trooping out to the art museum for the exhibit. By the time we arrived quite a crowd had gathered around the free-form sketches by Bill Rotsler. Now there's a boy with real talent. Unfortunately, the curator of the museum discovered it, and the pictures had to be removed.

The final day of the convention really bustled. More speeches, more panel discussions and the Auction. Competition really ran high with fans bidding beyond their budgets on original tape recordings of the dialogue in room 770, Jack Woodford's rejected manuscripts, and paintings which were destined for reproduction in France. There was a lot of good-natured and lively spirit displayed, and I've just been informed that the hotel insurance will be able to cover hospital fees.

The last item was finally sold---Evelyn Gold was purchased by J. Francis McComas---and everyone scampered off to get into their costumes.

When we entered the ballroom, we were immediately struck by the vast array of versatility and uniqueness. Les and I had wanted to appear as Farmer's famous story "The Lovers," but we couldn't seem to find a science fiction theme in our interpretation of the title. Later that night we discovered a number of people with similar ideas, so we really wouldn't have been very original after all.

Dancing was slightly impeded by the woman who kept curling up into a mound in the middle of the floor---she wanted to be "The Green Hills of Earth" where everyone could see her, and when someone accidentally spilled some punch on her, the place became rather muddy. The orchestra leader was also faced with considerable diversion when the artificial satellite kept buzzing round his head.

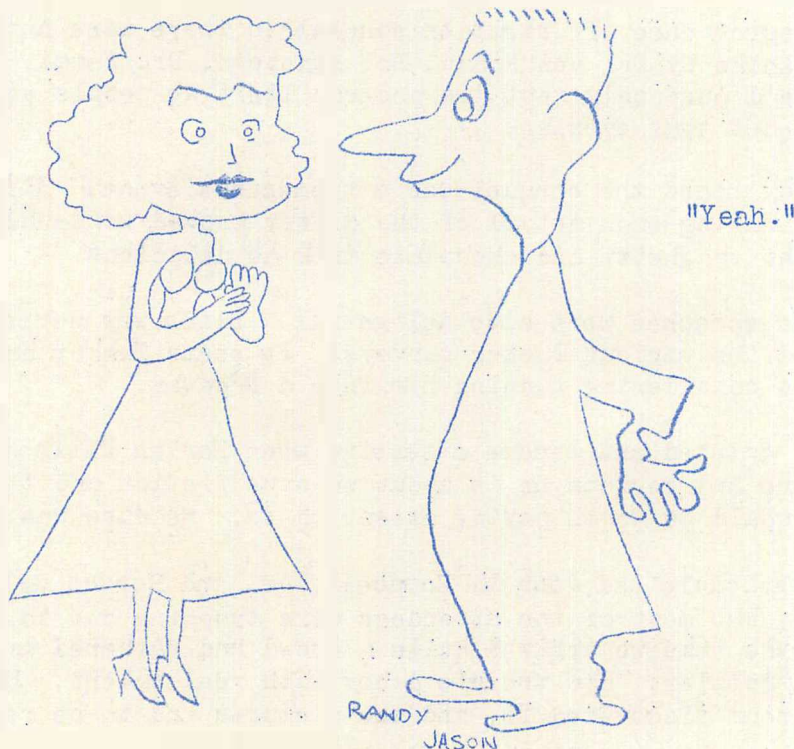
Everyone danced, took pictures, and participated in the tape recordings which were to be sent to Army camps and hospitals all over the world. To date over one hundred million feet of convention tape has gone out to veterans and service men all over the world and this year we were proud to be sending some out to Camp Forget-Me-Not in Inner Tanganyika. (That's near the headwaters of the Umpumquoko river. --dag)

It suddenly occurred to us that it was already four days later and the SFCon was over.

Well, we just hope everyone had as much fun as we did.

---Es and Les Cole

"I love  
conventions---  
they give  
one a  
chance to  
let oneself  
go!"



- 26 (NOTE: Several recent letters have suggested that Grue should carry a bit more fiction. Whether or not this represents an opinion of the majority, I don't know. I expect to find out not long after this issue is mailed out. If three somewhat-related stories constitute a trilogy and if a sextillion comes after a quintillion, then I have a sextology by Harlan Ellison, to a total wordage of approximately 4600. But, as this page is being stenciled, Grue has already passed the 50-page mark for this issue and I can't spare the 8 pages it would take to run the six stories complete in this issue. So I propose to dole them out one or two at a time as the need arises. Any further introduction would be rather redundant as most of you have heard of Mr. Ellison. --dag)

## CHERCHEZ LE MESSAGE

by Harlan Ellison

Karj Dandrea, extra-special secret agent of the Galactic Federation sat quite still as the banks of klieg lights burned down into his eyes.

From somewhere beyond their perimeter he could hear the words of the Supreme Commander, "The Redge are advancing on our system, Dandrea, and the only person who can save Terra and all its dependant colonies is--you."

The last word struck Dandrea with power and clarity. Suddenly his shoulders sagged, for he felt the burden was too much. The Commander continued as though he had not noticed the change in Dandrea: "The message we are preparing to pour into you, under hypnosis, is the keystone. It could only be carried by one man---one man thoroughly trained to get through the Redge lines and hypnotically conditioned so the message cannot be dragged out even under mind-wrenching torture. Are you ready to undergo this treatment? It is more thorough than anything yet dreamed in the mind of man."

Dandrea's head bobbed momentarily. The lights flared.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Karj came to, a headache was ripping the lining from behind his eyes, the fibers of his brain seemed to be aflame. He was facing the granite countenance of the Supreme Commander. They were in the spacious, panelled, war-buttoned office of the Leader. Both the Leader and the Supreme Commander faced him.

"It has been completely buried, Agent," said the Supreme Commander, "Not even total brainwashing can dredge it from you. This time we shall get through!" A wild light showed for a scant half-second in the depths of his eyes.

"You know your instructions?" questioned the Leader, knowing full well Dandrea knew them better than the face of his mother.

"Yes, sir. I am ready to go," Dandrea replied, pulse quickening.

"Then....get through," cried the Leader, clamping the desk top with a quivering hand.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dandrea was hurried through the tube to the General Outpost GHQ. Three months it had taken. His left arm was a useless stump, still occasionally bleeding where the Redge torture-experts had used a vibro-saw on it, his body was a wearied and near-broken thing.

His face was puffy and the acceleration of the tube-car brought a grimace of pain to his lips as the blue veins near the surface strove to break through the pasty flesh stretched taut over his bones.

The tube-car whined to a stop and the three men bundled him into a waiting

stretcher---he screamed once in terrible pain as a bearer gripped him too tightly.

They hurried through the underground passages, stopping only occasionally to blurt out a clearing password to a hard-eyed guard with flame rifle at alert.

The door to the Supreme Outfield Commander's headquarters rose out of sheer rock at their approach and two space marines parted at a word from a stretcher-bearer. The door opened and an orderly ushered them into the SOC's presence.

He looked up as Dandrea's stretcher was carefully set down before his desk. His brow drew down as he surveyed the hulk that had once been a Special Agent.

"Tough trip, Agent," the Commander said, quietly.

"Not so bad, Sir," mouthed Dandrea around a face full of broken stumps that once were teeth. The Redge experts were thorough if nothing else.

"I've just been reading the report from the De-Hypnosis Lab, Agent," said the Commander, ticking his finger against the sheaf of papers. "Care to tell me about the trip through?"

Dandrea hesitated a moment: "Not much to tell. They got my ship as I broke through near Bartma IX in the Horsehead Nebula. Took me to their GHQ on Red and worked me over.

"I spent two months there and they tried everything on me: trickery, torture, narco-synthesis, post-hypno suggestion, plain everyday beating, threats, brainwashing ---everything except bribery.

"But they couldn't get it loose. It was piled in too well. They were getting set to just put me out of my misery when I clubbed my guard and stole his car. I'll never know how I made it to the rocketport and off that Hell-planet, but I did and I got through." He subsided with a gasp, a thin trickle of yellowish blood streaming out of his mouth and down into the torn neck of his jacket.

He gasped and swallowed, painfully, "I got here and they de-hypnoed me. I went through a lot, I guess, but it was worth it. The enemy didn't get the message." His eyes glazed and he could hardly see the expression on the Commander's face.

"No," sighed the Commander, ripping up the report from the De-Hypno Lab, "I guess they didn't. Not that it did us much good. The clever fools buried it so deep that we can't get it out either."

\* \* \* \* \*

--Harlan Ellison

---

Next issue we hope to have an article by one of Disney's electricians on the problems of lighting for undersea cinematography entitled "Twenty Thousand Kliegs Under the Sea."

Andy and Jean Young explore a well-traveled path with a morsel of Holmesiana called:

#### THE AFFAIR OF THE LETHAL LEPUS

We recently came across one of the unpublished letters of Sherlock Holmes, written to Dr. Watson at a time when Watson's medical practice kept him from working with Holmes on this particular case. A quotation from the letter follows:

Owing to urgent matters at hand, I can only sketch in the barest essentials of the recent Sussex poisoning case. You may recall that a Mr. Jonas Witherby was found dead by his servants shortly after his dinner one day last month. The police determined that his death was due to consuming a large quantity of rabbit stew which had been heavily poisoned by feeding the rabbits a gradually-increasing diet of arsenic. As Witherby had no known friends or relatives benefitting from his death, suspicion fell on his cook, who had complained of abuses from Witherby, besides having once been confined as a homicidal maniac. He also raised rabbits. But my own investigations showed that the culprit was a disinherited and embittered nephew from Australia. When the police asked me how I knew the cook was innocent, I replied, "Elementary. Analytical investigation of the cook's rabbits showed no slightest traces of arsenic. This indicated to me that Witherby had died from eating the hares of another killer."

--Andy & Jean Young

# GNURRSERY RHYMES

Being a sort of kennel for homeless doggerel. --dag

## FANTHEOLOGY

Sometime, each fan in his career  
To inner voices lends an ear  
And with true fannish asininity  
On fandom foists a new divinity.

It has been done before, he knows,  
As when the glorious Ghu arose  
And gathered believers true  
Until opposed by famous Foo.

Then, Cosmic Circle had its birth:  
"To Hell with Heaven; Claude's on Earth!"  
And it might be alive today  
If Clod had washed his feet of clay.

Soon mighty Roscoe's cult arose  
(As every SPACEWARP reader knows)  
Interpreted by deacons three:  
Rick Sneary, Edmund Cox, and me.

The moral of this history, slant,  
Is: cults ain't founded by one fan,  
Attempts by two make fandom nod,  
For only t'ree can make a God.

--from the SPACEWARP of the  
17th SAPS-mailing, created  
by SFC Arthur H. Rapp, MP  
(for "Master Poet").

And now I'd like to ask Sister Economou to set the mood for us.....

Gnurrserly Rhymes, Gnurrserly Rhymes,  
Neat little verses--quite clever at times.  
Unfolding the saga of Willie the Gory, relentlessly bypassing meter for story.  
Relating the charm of a cuddlee-pet,  
Sound so cute---sure as ghin you'll wind up with one yet.  
Even though they smash poetry rules by the score,  
Reckless rhythms or rhyming in three out of four,  
Yet Grue-fans (all True-fans) keep begging for more!  
Rhyme them with Burbee or rhyme them with Harris,  
Hi-ho, they're more fun than a slow boat to Paris.  
You'll find Bloch in his cloch...he's the faaan's Father Time.  
Meet them all here, mah friend, it won't cost you a dime.  
Exit now P. H. E. End of Gnurrserly Rhyme.

---Phyllis H. Economou



Well, we warned you:

Little Willie, with a siphon,  
Stole gas from car of ed. of HYPHEN,  
Made cocktail a la Molotov,  
Blew Oblique House's attic off. --dag

Willie in a mood demure  
Gave a nickel to the poor.  
Pat his precious little head,  
Ain't his fault the nickel's lead. --PHE

(NOTE: In a recent issue of A BAS, Bill  
Stavdal asked Raeburn, "would you accept  
'abortioner' as a rhyme for Vorzimer?"  
I queried Rich Eney on the matter and he  
said it wouldn't do, submitting this:)

#### TRIOLET ON PHYSIOLOGICAL POSSIBILITY

I know he's Ghod to Vorzimer  
But Rotsler's nudes are False to Fact  
Will William's wife divorce him or--  
I know he's Ghod to Vorzimer--  
To realism force him? For--  
How can I phrase the case with tact?  
I know he's Ghod to Vorzimer  
But Rotsler's nudes are False to Fact.  
--Eney

FROM OGDEN TO NASHVILLE, FROM MEMPHIS  
TO SAINT JOE...

I doubt if it would be worth the effort  
required to artfully contrive a round-  
about situation about a young lady who  
had a bonnet in her bee,  
Just to work up a rhyme for Burbee. --dag

A quiet young fan named Pete Vorz  
Was attacked by a passel of boars;  
Said he from a tree,  
"You can't do this to me---  
You have 'way too much esprit de corps!"  
--Bob Kellogg

Little Willie cast a spell,  
Opened up the gates of hell.  
Slipped inside with mischief reeking,  
Now poor Satan wakes up shrieking. --PHE

A bleary-eyed fan named Jim Bradley,  
When told that his brother felt badly,  
Dumped a half-quart of beer  
Into the lad's ear---  
A treatment the patient fought madly.  
--Bob Kellogg



Being: Grennell's  
 Ramblings,  
 Usually  
 Extemporaneous...

# CONCERNING SOME POTENTIAL FANS, AS YET UNBRANDED

Stephen Takacs, the affable proprietor of "Stephen's Book Service (125 Fourth Avenue, New York 3, N.Y.)," mentioned something last summer that I've noticed too. "Why," he approximately asked, "aren't there more fans in Iowa? Doesn't anyone read sf out there? I have customers in just about every state in the Union except Iowa. What's with Iowa, anyway?" Well, I did notice on some list here a while back that there was a fan (wish I could recall his name just now but some reader will supply it, I'm sure) from What Cheer, Iowa, and this restores my faith in the Fitness Of Things because What Cheer is doubtless the most Fannishly-named of all Iowa's metropoli (stop wincing, Speer) and hamlets. But Mason City, Iowa, given considerable mention by--I believe--Burgess Meredith, seems to harbor some denizens who would require but the most rudimentary of indoctrination before taking their place among the weird half-world of them wot reads That Crazy Buck Rogers Stuff. For the following information, I am deeply (though indirectly) indebted to one Frank M. Robinson, a good sf writer and a nice guy in his own right, who sent Bob Bloch the following clipping from the Chicago Sunday Tribune of 14 Nov54:

## I quote: TOMBSTONE PUT AT GIRL'S DOOR BY PRANKSTERS

### Seize 2 Students Who Terrified Family

Mason City, Ia., Nov. 13 (AP)---Weird pranks, including a note which said "in earth and skie and sea, strange thynges ther be," have resulted in two Mason City Junior college students being charged with removing a tombstone from a cemetery.

Donald Vajgert, 18, and Richard Tierney, 18, who described themselves as members of a secret lost world literary society, were arrested after police investigation turned up the secret society. Bond was set at \$1000 each, and it was posted last night.

Police said the "spook pranks" terrified members of a family on whose porch the old tombstone was left.

### Call Prank an Experiment

The students told them they meant no harm, police said, and merely had chosen a 17 year old high school girl as the object of an experiment to determine the reaction to evidence of existence of strange creatures of the night.

The students were quoted as saying the secret group met each Saturday night and walked thru a cemetery.

About Sept. 24 they decided on their experiment and took a tombstone which was leaning against a tree in the cemetery. They propped it against the door of the girl's home.

### Prepares Two Notes

When there was no reaction, Tierney, using Old English lettering, prepared two notes.

The first note contained a quotation from a novel by H. Rider Haggard to the effect that "in earth and skie and sea, strange thynges ther be."

Tierney said the second note was mostly junk which he made up in an effort to compose the words "as creatures of the dark night write them."

This second note, along with a grave marker, was left in the front yard of the girl's home the night of Nov. 5. The note said in part: "The stone of dethe hath layn agynst thy threshold. The runes are caste, the banne shalle fal....Thy skeen is found fayre to the beyngs of the nighte, and eftsoons this daye thy blood wyll be thyrs even."

### Hang Dog's Body in Tree

On the same night the students found the body of a small dog at the city dump. They wrapped it in a sheet and hung it by a noose from a tree limb near the cemetery's little chapel. The H. Rider Haggard quotation was pinned to the animal with a thorn.

The frightened family turned the note over to the police. (End, unquote)

Can't think of a single comment that wouldn't be anti-climactic and superfluous. But doesn't that make you feel normal??

Some five issues back I made mention of what I called the "Legion of Silent Fans," who send you a coin, a note saying, "Dear Sir: Enclosed find \_\_\$, please send a copy of your magazine to, etc." One gets quite a few of these and my views on the matter have mellowed with the passing months. These days I'm grateful for the dough. But now and then a letter arrives requesting a copy of your magazine which is somewhat less conventional. My highly esteemed colleague, Mr. Robert Silverberg, once received a request for an issue of his magazine (SPACESHIP) which was, perhaps, less conventional than most of the ones I receive. He passed this along through the WO3W some time ago because it dealt with one of the other members and, when I asked about it, he said he had no special objections to my reprinting it here. But let me preface the actual quotation with a word or two of explanation. The letter is hand-written in pencil and, in places, it is a little hard to decipher. I'm not casting the first stone here--have you ever seen my holography? I will make every reasonable effort to render it faithfully on the typer except that I won't try to insert after-notes between the lines and, if the word is in doubt, I will insert a {?} after it. Ready?

Quoting:

To  
Bob Silverberg,  
760 Montgomery  
Brooklyn 13, New York.

Julia Ballew,  
P O Box 6091,  
E. Austin Station,  
Austin 21, Tex.  
June 21.54

Dear Sir—I hope you understand, all I say and, answer me Seriously. I just saw report of your "Spaceship," a "serious quarterly reveiew of S.F." in Robt. A. Madle's colum in "Future S. F." for Aug. Enclosed 15¢ change & 3 stamp for the issue with "1953 in Review" article. I'd like to have back issues if available--state Price? --especially for Redd Boggs column "File 13" to be perused with sincereity. I tried to find articles by him for many years. Would like to have his personal address if available to a mere fan,--or fw'd him this letter to let him write me. Is there an S.F. of F. S. F. writer, you know of, named John (or Warof) {?} F (or P. Kruger (Kroeger--Crozier--Cruzier etc) If so, what magazine does he write for. Have important communication for him and he can identify himself to me by the right novum number. Ive read & studied all kinds SF & F.S.F. ever since I can remember (I'm 45 now) & I'd read all the text-books of 4 degrees of Medicine-Surgery-Biochemistry & Homeopathy when I was 14. I have a fair to average ESP The Shem Ham Pho Resh and Kabbabala are understandable by me. Some of the "novice" articles anuse me, tho I am only a novice, I

know. One Race has  
nominated me a

Tzomvhe	90	H N
Zomba	6	F U
	40	O M
	6-5	O E

(I'm not sure I have this right,  
but I think it's close. --dag)

The Story "Asylum" p. 108-120 by  
Alice Bullock in Aug. "Future SF" W O

just about covers me, too as of now!& I understand an E S perceptionist is liable for incarceration as protection for the Citizenry in general! Your Science books are good education for the general citizenry. However using comic books with the not v basis do the best job. Get out more & more so all the kindergarten minds "A.U.M." can be come educated basically. And Hurry them! Get some your best artists together with a group of well versed ("lylamas") Sacred of top understandings & let them devise at least a dozen not Nihilist-Nietziest or Facist. syndicated (or Not) comic strips for dailies (even I would help.) and devise deep religious presentments that will cover {coven?} the intelligence of all or each creeds & races, be the reader 6 to 60 in years in picture forms similar to comic books. Divine Truth can be presented just as successfully as Crime. Use Satans own weapons against him. Numbers don't lie. I tried all the systems I've seen & devised others. Truth is truth in any denomination. Help open eyes that they may see, & ears that they may hear, and mouths that they may confess the one Divine Truth. Sincerely, For God & America & World.

Unquote.

## 32 MISCELLANEA

We have reached a state--Grue has, that is--where about 1/3rd of our readers reside outside the United States. It becomes difficult at times to guess how much of the stuff Grue prints will have any meaning for them. For instance, I wonder if the newspapers outside the US carried any news about the latest End-Of-The-World scare. I first became aware of the Big Event when I noticed the following item in the Fond du Lac Commonwealth-Reporter for 16 Dec 54:

### DOOM PROPHET QUITs

East Lansing, Mich., Dec. 16--(AP)--Dr. Charles A. Laughead, who college officials say believes the world will end Dec. 21, Wednesday resigned his position as a staff member of the Michigan State college hospital.

The state board of agriculture, the college governing board, accepted his resignation routinely but asked for an explanation.

M.S.C. President Dr. John A. Hannah reported to the board that Dr. Laughead, a staff physician since 1948, was resigning because of his belief the world will end Dec. 21.

"I first heard about this business when a group of students came to me," Dr. Hannah said. "They told me Dr. Laughead had been holding meetings at his home and preaching the beliefs of some peculiar religious sect."

Dr. Hannah said Dean of Students Tom King and Dr. C. J. Menzies, head of the college hospital, investigated and that Dr. Laughead admitted and talked freely about his beliefs.

Dr. Hannah said the group believes that the world will end Dec. 21 and that flying saucers from Venus or Mars, the M.S.C. president wasn't sure which, would rescue some select survivors from mountain tops.

"We understand he is disposing of his belongings and preparing to move to one mountain top to await the rescue." (Unquote)--

Well, as you may have suspected, the world didn't end after all and the major excitement of the occasion was experienced in Eureka, California. This was near the center of the strongest earthquake felt in California since 1906 and LIFE reports that one resident who'd read the Laughead story ran madly through the streets, screaming that the world was ending for sure.

Dr. Laughead, meanwhile, had fled to Oak Park, Illinois. Here he joined the lady who professes to be in direct contact with the spacemen, one Mrs. Dorothy Martin, who said her first communication was simply an introduction to a superior being who said he was "Elder Brother from Venus."

Let us now pause a moment while Dave Rike chortles "Elder Brother is Watching You!" in his best Orwellian manner.

Dr. Laughead didn't actually go to a mountain-top to escape the deluge as the Commonwealth (we sometimes refer to it as the "Commonfilth-Repeater") would have it. (Hmm--I just said that, didn't I?---there has been a three-day lapso since the preceding paragraph and it seems the least I could do would be to re-read what I'd written before!) Instead, he went to Oak Park to keep the final vigil with Mrs. Martin and her friends. A large crowd of townspeople gathered, not all of whom were properly imbued with the spirit of reverence warranted by the occasion. Last I heard, Mrs. Martian (oups! there goes a typo) announced that the crowd was too unruly and the Venusians weren't going to destroy the earth after all and it served them right for being so unsporting about it all. O sniffff.....

BELL, BOOK & FLASHLIGHT.....

From the Milwaukee Journal, 3 January 1955:

### ANGLICAN PRIESTS DESCRIBE HOW TO CAST OUT DEMONS

London, England

By Chapman Pincher

A commission on divine healing set up by the archbishops of Canterbury and York has been hearing testimony that many sick people are really possessed by demons which can be cast out by medieval methods.

Two Anglican priests who have specialized in the ancient religious practices of exorcism stated that their services are often in demand. The priests explained how

they worked as a team, to decide where in a human body or a building the demon is hiding.

When they have agreed on a diagnosis, according to the testimony, they decided which type of medieval ritual is required to cast out the demon and end its influence. They gave instances in which their methods seemed to have succeeded after doctors had failed.

The priests who appeared before the subcommittee on exorcism and demonology sitting at Lambeth palace insisted on giving their evidence in Latin, explaining that only in that language could the complicated classification of demons and other intricacies of their art be exactly described.

"It was just as though we had been suddenly transported back to the 14th century," one observer said.

Later the priests translated their statements into English for the benefit of the commission members who cannot understand Latin.

The commission, set up last year, includes bishops, doctors, psychiatrists and psychic researchers. This investigation into the power of faith and prayer in healing is expected to continue for two more years. All the evidence may eventually be published but the names of the two Anglican priests and some of the other witnesses are likely to be kept secret.

In its proper and technical sense, exorcism is a ceremony used by the Christian church to expel demons from persons who have come under their power. It dates from the earliest days of the church and in the Roman Catholic church is carefully regulated by canon law.

(Unquote)

There may be some who have patiently read through all of the foregoing in the confident hope that, in the end, Grue's editor would make some sort of masterful summation that would shed equal light on all of them, tying everything together with no untidy loose ends—a comment, in short, concise, coherent and cogent.

I hate to disappoint such readers but the truth is that all of these things seemed at least mildly interesting to me and I thought perhaps some of you would be interested too.

However, I will wait here for you if you would like to go back and read the final paragraph of Speer's "Investigation in Newcastle" over again. (page 13)

It has only been in the last year or so that I finally got around to reading "The Virginian," by Owen Wister (Grosset & Dunlap, 1902). I have been hearing it discussed most of my life—discussed and quoted from. I'm glad I finally got to it and if you've missed it up till now, I heartily recommend it. It appears to be the original archetype of all horse-opera from that day to this one. Everything is there: the Clean-Cut Hero (though The Virginian differed in having uncombed hair and a moustache in the illos); the mean, nasty, sneering Villain (Trampas) and the impossibly lovely School-marm (Molly) who seems, as someone once said, "virtuous to the point of eccentricity."

Possibly the most celebrated line in the book is one embodied in the following quotation:

It was now the Virginian's turn to bet, or leave the game, and he did not speak at once.

Therefore Trampas spoke. "Your bet, you son-of-a-\_\_\_\_." (his blank --dag)

The Virginian's pistol came out, and his hand lay on the table, holding it unaimed. And with a voice as gentle as ever, the voice that sounded almost like a caress, but drawling a very little more than usual, so that there was almost a space between each word, he issued his orders to the man Trampas: —

"When you call me that, smile." And he looked at Trampas across the table.

Unquote. But we'll toss this about a bit on the next page.

I've been doing a lot of quoting so far---that, I'll concede. But I'll start saying something myself just as soon as I record a paragraph from a recent letter of Bill Stavdal's:

I was astounded to see in 'The American Language,' which I mentioned to you a while back, that 'Canuck' is lumped in with such derogatory terms as Bohunk, Wop, Dago, Spic, etc. I always have, and still do take an unreasoned pride in the name 'Canuck.'

It sort of astounded me too. Particularly so because I recall at least one occasion when I referred to the aforesaid Stavdal as "that noble Canuck."

I'll note here, without bothering to dig up the actual quotation, that earlier in The Virginian, a friend of his had called him a "son-of-a-\_\_\_\_\_" (again the blank is Wister's) and the Virginian had only smiled and taken a playful poke at him.

To me, this indicates one thing. It is not what they call you but what they seem to mean by it that counts. Human beings, lacking any well-developed talents for telepathy, use words to implant their thoughts, opinions and ideas in the minds of their fellow men. I think it is primarily the thought that is important and the words, so long as they convey the thought with a minimum of distortion, are relatively unimportant.

I am told that, when a Frenchman wants to convey the insult to end all insults, he calls his victim a "camel." Now a camel is an unlovely beast and not too sanitary but if you're not a Frenchman, you could call me a camel and I'd probably shrug it off and say, "Okay---you're a Lucky Strike...so what?" But, knowing that it is supposed to be the ne plus ultra of French epithets, if a Frenchman called me that, I'd pop him one.

Take, for another example, the term, "billy-goat," or--in strictest accuracy--"he-goat." In common English usage it doesn't carry much opprobrium. Translate to Spanish and you come up with cabron. If you have the poor judgment to call a Spaniard or a Mexican a "cabron," you had better smile from ear to ear and be ready to do a 9-second 100-yard dash as well. The word in Spanish carries an assumption that the wife of the one so named is unfaithful and this, to a Spanish-speaking man, is the ultimate insult.

The Japanese are a race which, by tradition if nothing else, are supposed to be punctiliously courteous almost to the point of being ridiculous. But I recall reading somewhere that there is--or used to be--a class of young bucks in Japan who played it the other way and took great pains to refer to each other in the most shockingly vile terms at their command. By inversion, the worse you cursed a friend out the better it proved you liked him. But now and then one of them, just to lend spice, decided to take the insult seriously and then the fur would fly.

Take the term which, presumably, lurks behind the delicate blank in the Wister quote. If it's what I presume it is, the word "dog" is approximately synonymous. Here, again, the literal meaning is fairly harmless in itself. Say to someone, "Aw, you dawg!" and the chances are, he'll just grin. Call him a "cur" or a "dirty, yella dog," though, and you'll start to fray his good-nature.

Is there, I wonder, any significance to the fact that nearly all of the insulting terms common to the English language imply no particular derogation to the insultee--most of them set him apart as an innocent (though unenviable) victim of fate.

Take what comfort you can, Bill, from the thought that I meant it as a complimentary term when I called you a Canuck. If I were a Canadian, I'd be proud of the term too. In fact, I wouldn't mind being a Canadian if their cigarettes weren't so fearsome dear and their light-bulbs didn't flicker. That is in mild rejoinder to sundry emanations from Toronto. You can call me a yankee, Bill, and we'll call it square. The privilege is not extended to those south of the Mason-Dixon line....

If your interest extends to the phenomena grouped under the term "flying saucers," I'd like to direct you to a fellow named Gray Barker, who gets his mail at Box 2228, Clarksburg, West Virginia. Gray puts out a handsome lithographed publication called "The Saucerian." This sells for 35¢ a copy and appears to cover the subject from alpha to omega and perhaps a bit beyond. But I was fascinated by something in the following quote:  
(from #5, January, 1955)

"A flying saucer pilot that spoke Russian and asked how far it was to the German border was reported by a Czech workman from St. Remy near Epinal, France. The workman, Louis Ujvari, 40, told the police the saucerian, who held a revolver on him, was heavily-built, wore a crash helmet and shining epaulettes. He asked whether he was in Italy or Spain, then said goodbye in Russian. The saucer looked like "two air plates (whatever that is -- Ed.) (Ed. of Saucerian, that is.--Ed. of Grue) face to face," with a periscope sticking out. As it flew away it made a noise like a sewing machine."

A sewing machine, mmm? Somebody really ought to tell Fredric Brown!

\*        \*        \*

Also got a quiet little chuckle out of this cute fluff from FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, Jan 55, page 93:

"Other stories will include a fresh light satire by Mildred Clingerman, a fascinating study of a Martian life-form by Leigh Brackett, and another adventure (possibly the eeriest yet!) of Manly Wade Wellman's John the ballad singer."

It was bound to happen, wasn't it Wrai?

#### "IT STINKS AT A FEATHER'S TOUCH"

\*        \*        \*

I hate Scotch Brand Cellophane Tape and Arthur Godfrey can go peddle his Lipton's. Scotch tape, as we usually call it, has always struck me as one of the most infuriatingly cantankerous things there are. It is miserable stuff to use, it doesn't hold when you want it to and it doesn't let go when you want it to. Go to pluck some from the roll and 99% of the time the end is snuggled firmly down onto the roll and it is a major operation to free the end so you can start pulling it off. When it does start to come loose, the next problem is to get it bit off. The patent dispensers usually don't work and are very apt to come apart under strain. But you finally get a hunk haggled off and then what happens? This: in the process of wafting the stuff from dispenser to resting-place the ends flutter together and the sticky-sides touch and when this happens you might as well throw it away (if you are able to let go of the infernal stuff) and start all over again. Scotch tape, stickum-to-stickum, adheres like burrs to the ears of a cocker spaniel.

Scotch tape shows up here in one of two forms. Many fanzines are mailed all naked to the gaze of the postoffice (with brave disregard of nudes on the cover, etc.) and the senders secure them roundabout with scotch tape and/or staples...sometimes as closely as every inch or so. Now the staples aren't so bad...even those formidable things apparently constructed from 8-gauge piano wire. I've always meant to buy a real staple-remover but so far I keep using a palette-knife left over from the days of my painting enthusiasm---or, if I can't find that I battle them tooth and nail. But the worst magazines to get at are these which are either folded down the middle or rolled into a tight coil (from which they are doomed never to recover their original flatness) and fastened with this farshimelte (two m's, Harvey?) scotch tape. No matter how carefully you peel the stuff away, it leaves great gouges and furrows down the edge of the magazine as though some uncouth beast has been gorging itself upon it. I am proud to say that Grue is mailed flat in envelopes. The readers may suffer while reading the derm thing but opening it is relatively painless. "Derm" is no typo, Terry Carr. It is an honorable and ancient adjective of stefnal connotations, stemming from DERM FOOL, by Sturgeon out of UNKNOWN WORLDS...long a particular favorite story of mine.

Scotch tape also turns up here clinging with grim tenacity to coins sent by our subbers (Too Bless 'em!). I'll concede that there's some justification here. The US postoffices use an automatic canceling-machine that zips the envelopes through with great speed. A loose coin in an envelope is very apt, under acceleration through the machine, to blaze through the end of the envelope and go hissing across the postoffice like a tiny silver bullet. A postoffice is no place for a werewolf, it would appear. There is a way out of this. You can mark it "hand-cancel" or you can foil them by putting the stamp in the upper center of the envelope in which case they have to hand-cancel. But most people take a strip of scotch tape and fasten the coin to the paper with that. So I sit here and carefully peel the 25¢ pieces away and throw them into the cash-drawer. Infallibly, some of the adhesive clings to the coin and the coins, in turn, cling to each other in small silvery clumps.

If anyone ever has occasion to publish a fanzine in Fond du Lac, I can recommend that they get their supplies from Wegner Office Supply, this without reservation or hesitation. But when they see me coming in for another cargo of mimeo stores, do you know what they say to each other?

---

"Here comes Old Sticky-Quarters."

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Commenting on the last issue, James Blish made what seemed like an eminently sensible suggestion at the time. He opined that it would help matters immeasurably if I would write my stuff up beforehand, especially things like Miscellanea here. He said it would help to iron out superfluous trivia and minor gaucheries which creep into these paragraphs in spite of hell.

So I determined to try it. In fact, I actually wrote out 7 pica pages of Miscellanea on paper, intending to burnish it a bit in transcription. So what happens? Well, as I might have known, the first thing I did was to lose the 7 pages. Tonight, after nearly three weeks of fruitless searching, I ran them to earth on a shelf of the eight-tiered pagoda I have constructed to hold stencils and other papers difficult to store and classify. Not too surprisingly, they were right where they should have been all along...which is the last place I'd have thought to look for them.

Having finally found this heap of unkillable prose (i.e., deathless), I sat down to stencil it and, purely as a matter of routine, I read it over first. Reluctantly, I have decided that none of it was worth bothering about in the first place.

So that's the way it goes. I predict, from past experience, that I will feel the same way about the stuff I've stenciled in a short while. But by then I'll have it on stencils and will use it to keep from wasting them. I am afraid that you will have to continue to put up with the symptoms of first-draft on-stencil composition, Jim. But have you stopped to consider that the mold is what gives the roquefort its flavor?

It sounded like such a good idea, too.

#### PASSING THOUGHTS

Have you ever heard of a child writing a thank-you note to Santa Claus after Xmas?

There appear to be at least five different magazines on the newsstands devoted to "Physical Culture." Have you ever seen one devoted to mental culture? Me neither.

#### COLOR ON COLOR

Both paper and ink come in a wide variety of colors. While black-on-white is by far the most popular, some like to experiment with other arrangements. Obviously there are some combinations more suitable than others.

Extensive tests have been conducted to determine which color-combinations show up best. Cards were painted in a wide variety of colors and several people approached each card until they could make out what it said. The average distance for each combination was recorded and the following results were arrived at. In descending order of visibility, they run:

- |                                   |                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Black letters on yellow field. | 11. White on bottle green. |
| 2. Black on orange.               | 12. White on scarlet red.  |
| 3. Yellow-orange on navy blue.    | 13. White on purple.       |
| 4. Bottle-green on white.         | 14. Purple on white.       |
| 5. Scarlet red on white.          | 15. Navy blue on yellow.   |
| 6. Black on white.                | 16. Navy blue on orange.   |
| 7. Navy blue on white.            | 17. Yellow on black.       |
| 8. White on navy blue.            | 18. Scarlet red on yellow. |
| 9. Yellow-orange on black         | 19. Yellow on navy blue.   |
| 10. White on black.               | 20. Purple on yellow.      |

Admittedly, many of these pairs are not suitable for mimeo-work. I suspect that #3, for example, would be rankly impractical for a printed page, besides being painfully lacking in esthetic charm. From the other end of the scale, they run this way:

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 50. White on orange.             | 56. Bottle green on scarlet red.        |
| 51. Navy blue on scarlet red.    | 57. Scarlet red on bottle green.        |
| 52. Orange on emerald green. (!) | 58. Navy blue on purple.                |
| 53. Scarlet red on black.        | 59. Scarlet red on purple.              |
| 54. Navy blue on bottle green.   | 60. White on yellow. (Curiously enough, |
| 55. Yellow on emerald green.     | yellow on white ranks #43.)             |

I think the surprising item is the red-on-white, which I wouldn't have placed nearly as high. The source of this data is PRINCIPLES OF COLOR AND COLOR MIXING, by J. H. Bustanoby (McGraw-Hill, 1947), if you'd care to explore further.

#### A FEW LINES ON FELINES AND BEE-LINES:

I am not particularly superstitious and I strive to be even less so than I am. If the occasion demanded, I could shatter mirrors with equanimity and admirable savoir faire, sang-froid, etc. I regard it as a pure co-incidence, in no way remarkable, that something lousy usually happens every 13th and I shrug it off with a stout materialistic sneer. I like cats and particularly admire black ones. Once some customer gave me a black kitten which I happily brought home with intent to adopt. Jean promptly--and unexpectedly--had to go to the hospital. So, with an evening on my hands, I visited a photographer friend who had just bought a brand-new electronic flash unit of the type commonly (but mistakenly) called a "strobe unit." These were quite new in those days and we proposed to try it out with the usual shots of arrested motion. As a likely subject, I took the black kitten, tentatively christened "Jinx." As a starter, we decided that I'd hold Jinx by his feet, upside down, release him, and Al (Hauser, the photographer) would snap him in the act of flipping around to light on his feet. Imagine our dismay when the "strobe" gave a pained ping and went out of business on the first shot. Not long after that some friends of ours professed a strong desire to own a black kitten and I gave Jinx to them because, frankly, he was too much trouble to take care of, what with me gone all day and Jean in the hospital. I don't recall anything dire that happened to them and I still say that I have nothing against cats, black or any other color.

But for some time now I have been experiencing experiences which would, I'm sure, be a shade unnerving to anyone lacking the frigid rationality upon which I pride myself. I'll be driving along the road and I'll see a black cat in the ditch ahead. It will appear to be watching the license-number of passing cars and it will let those in front of me go past, only to risk all 9 lives in a mad dash to cross my bows.

Out of curiosity, I took to watching in the rear-view mirror to see what the cat would do after such a frantic sprint to get across the road in front of me. But they would just get to the opposite ditch and crouch there, glaring after me with feral, green, malevolent eyes. I wish to state that no observable, connectable misfortune occurred after any of these incidents. Nothing; just the cat, always black, waiting for my car to come along, running across in front of it as if it had to, then waiting in the other ditch and watching me drive on. Since I've been noticing this, not one single cat of any other color but black has pulled such a stunt...white, maltese, yellow, brindle, tortoise-shell and other hues of cats treat me with the icy aloofness known to any observer of catdom. The trait seems confined solely to all-black cats of the breed known to vets as the "domestic short-hair" or common alley-type cat.

I wouldn't consider this worthy of mention if it hadn't been for a sort of crowning incident that took place a couple of weeks ago...January 25th, to be precise. I can only assume that this particular cat was possessed of more than the usual traditional cat curiosity. He probably thought I wouldn't be along for a little while yet and wanted to look into a likely-sounding noise out in the field or something. I don't know. All I know is that I came over a gentle rise along a stretch of rural road between Marytown and Kiel. Off to the left, out of the corner of my eye, I could see a sooty speck galloping across the snow-covered field. It was a black cat, some 70 yards or so from the fence and maybe a quarter-mile ahead of the car. He was running purposefully, as though it had suddenly occurred to him that he'd better cross that road but quick.

Amused, I experimentally stomped the gas-pedal. I'd been making a leisurely 50 or so and the shift snapped down into 3rd and the car picked up to maybe 65 by the time it got even with the cat. But it wasn't enough. I suppose he heard the motor pick up because as I fed gas to the 88, the cat did likewise. Belly brushing the snow, legs whirring like a humming-bird's wings, that cat streaked for the road, went under the fence without missing a step, screamed across the road a bare 10 feet from the front bumper of the Olds and...you guessed it, came to a halt in the opposite ditch and watched me over the top of the next hill.

No, nothing unlucky happened that day. In fact, it was one of the better days--got some nice orders, collected a couple laggard accounts, got home early that night. Everything went, if anything, better than usual but not remarkably so. I dunno. It beats me. But I'm glad I'm not superstitious or I'd be worried sick.

Scat, dammit.

\* \* \* \* \*

# GESUNDHEIT

Speaking of luck, and we sort of were, weren't we?---reminds me...when you and I get a cold, we curse the thing and resign ourselves to two weeks or so of thick-headed misery. Almost nobody enjoys a cold in the head. I say "almost" because I suspect that, if he's still alive, there is one guy today who blesses his guardian angel everytime he gets a sore throat or a running nose.

Air pressure varies quite sharply with changes in altitude and the human mechanism is more sensitive to changes in air-pressure than you might think. There are several cavities in the head--particularly around the ears, nose and sinuses--which seem to be equipped with little one-way valves. Go up in an airplane and the air at ground-level pressure vents out of the cavities quite easily. Start back down and the valves close...or tend to---it varies with the individual...and you have to either swallow or hold your nose and "blow through your ears" to open the valves and let the air back in. If you don't do this, you are apt to find yourself back on terra firma with your ears still up there somewhere as far as pressure is concerned. This can be anything from uncomfortable to excruciating, depending on the individual and the range of pressures.

Most people can "keep their ears with them" ordinarily but nearly everybody loses this ability when the cold virus takes over. The little valves get all thruppy and bluggery with mucous material and they stick. Therefore, the USAF grounds flying personnel when they are in the grips of a head-cold. This is partly for humanitarian reasons and partly because it impairs one's efficiency to have a red-hot coal in each ear. Altitude, if I may digress for a moment, has all sorts of odd effects. The semi-vacuum of the upper airs can pop the crystal from a waterproof wristwatch if it is also airtight, as I found out from experience. If you have a good, tight filling with a small pocket of air inside, it can give you the grand-daddy of all toothaches. And prolonged sessions on oxygen at high altitudes render the male of the species temporarily quite apathetic to the opposite sex.

I wish I could remember his name, I'm not sure if I ever knew what it was. But he became a sort of legend around Tonopah (Nevada) Army Air Field in the summer and early fall of 1944.

The first time it happened, it was remarked upon but nobody thought too much about it at the time. He was a radio-operator/gunner on one of the air-crews that we were training for B-24s and one morning he went on sick-call with a cold. He was grounded and they sent up a replacement for him and the crew went out and smeared their 24 all over the top of a nearby mountain. All 10 men on the crew were killed that time, including the replacement. This was considered mention-worthy but not unduly startling.

The next chapter is the one I remember very well indeed. At the time I was working on the Ground Gunnery Range some five miles or so out in the desert from the base. My particular position was on Moving Burst Control, the northernmost of the long string of ranges. Things were progressing in a routine, i.e., snafu, manner that morning when somebody yelled that a plane was coming down in trouble.

It sure was. I took one glance at the big olive-drab B-24 sinking toward the sagebrush with a feathery plume of black smoke trailing from one wing and I dived for the field phone to pass the word to cease-fire along the ranges and get out there with ambulances, fire-engines and whatnot. By the time I'd raised the Range Office the ship was a wide, blazing pool of 100-octane gas, some 3000 yards in front of our firing-line. It was a relief to hear the firing cut out along the ranges about that time because, even at 3000 yards, a skipping .50 slug is still working off its second wind.

Three of the ten made it out of that one and we watched their chutes come down. One of the guys came within an ace of dropping smack into the fiery puddle of aviation gas from the plane. He slipped the shroud-lines frantically and made it over the edge but the extra impact from the slip-chuting, plus the thin air in the first place---the altitude was around 4500 feet there---cost him a couple of broken ankles and some nasty sings as he crawled away.

It seemed like hours before the ambulances and stuff got there. We called for trucks and sent the crews back to the base because it wasn't a good thing for their morale to stand about watching such a thing. But we watched because there wasn't anything else we could do. We'd have gone out to lend a hand but there wasn't any means of getting there.

When details filtered back, we learned that it had been Crew #101. And somebody remembered that was the crew that the Super-Jonah radioed for. No, the radio op had not been one of the ones that got out. He was with the other six when they hit. But it wasn't the end of our boy after all. Seems he'd gone on sick-call again that morning with another cold in the head.....

So they put him on a third crew and he made it all the way through with them and

left us for a tour in the ETO with the Eighth Air Force. What happened to him after that, I've no faintest idea. But I suspect that his reputation went with him---those things have a way of doing that---and I wouldn't be surprised to hear that his fellow crew-members worried a bit whenever he started to sniffle. I damn well know I would've.

#### HISTORY AND A SMALL RED BUG

\* \* \* \* \*

Then it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, 'ow's yer soul?"

But it's "Thin red line of 'eros," when the drums begin to roll, ...

--Kipling

And heroes they were, too. Seems to me it must have taken quite a high degree of heroism to sally forth to the wars in that get-up. I can't think of a single fighting-man in recorded history whose battle-dress was more coldly calculated to serve as a clear target. I'm speaking, of course, of the famous British "red-coat," which was inextricably linked with the Royal Infantry for upward of a century. Who can say how many stout-hearted Britons perished needlessly because tradition decreed that they had to do their fighting in that ultra-flamboyant outfit? What might things be like in some parallel universe where the British soldiers had a sensible khaki uniform as early as 1750? There's a fairly good chance that the upstart colonists might never have won their independance against a foe better-clad and better-generaled. I wish some literary explorer of alternate time-streams would try his hand at something along the lines of Ward Moore's "Bring the Jubilee" with a beginning premise that the American Revolution had either been unsuccessful or non-existent. I think it makes for interesting speculation.

If you have any vestigial interest whatsoever in what we call the Revolutionary War, I earnestly recommend that you read "Revolution 1776," by John Hyde Preston. It has been published by Pocket Books, Inc., in a Cardinal edition under the title of "A Short History of the American Revolution," number C-25 at 35¢ if you can still find a copy on the stands. It's a worthwhile thing to read if you suspect, as I am beginning to, that a certain percentage of the stuff fed to us in school is highly-colored poppycock. The points of divergence from traditional apocrypha are too numerous to note here and the book carries an aura of candid impartiality which I found both convincing and refreshing. I like written material wherein the author says in effect, "Here are the facts---make up your own mind." Maybe that's why I like Edward R. Murrow better than I like Fulton Lewis, Jr., when it comes to radio news-analysts.

The red of the tommy's coat---wending back toward the original subject---came from a scale-insect called the coccus cacti or dactylopius coccus and, as so often happens in the insect kingdom (e.g. the mosquito and black-widow spider), it was the female of the species that brought fame and renown to said species. The coccus cacti is a blood-relative of the mealy-bug and the enchantingly named scurfy bark louse, also, though quite a bit more distantly, of the common bedbug, or cimex lectularius. The only other scale-insect of any benefit to mankind is the coccus lacca, a native of the Far East which secretes a resin-like substance which is made into shellac. The thing about scale-insects which makes them useful---in the two cases mentioned---is that soon after hatching they attach themselves to their source of nourishment and remain there, not moving, till the end of their days, secreting shellac or, in the case of coccus cacti, the dyestuff called "cochineal."

It takes approximately 70,000 girl-type cochineal-bugs to produce a pound of the stuff but in recent times cochineal has been almost entirely superseded by chemical dyes, such as the aniline group. It is, I believe, still used as the dye for certain uniforms and...here's an appetizing morsel of lore...for coloring confectionery.

Thought perhaps you might be interested in the part played by a Central American bug in British and---indirectly---World History.

## MISCELLANEA

### DEMETRIUS AND THE NICE TIGERS

41

Here cracks a noble record. January 30th, 1955 marked the second anniversary of the first Grennell fan-type publication (yes, it was that thing called "Enigma." Might as well admit it now.) And January 21st marked off nine full years of parenthood for Jean and me, being, as it was, Pat's ninth birthday.

So I've been a parent for nine years and a fan-publisher for two of them and---to the best of my knowledge---in all that time I haven't committed a single cute saying of the children to print. I am about to do so but I wish it known that it is a step I do not take lightly. I have argued and remonstrated with myself. I have taken long walks and cold showers, even. But I still feel that I can't contain the following any longer. Soon Grue will have no distinctions left except that it has never appeared with a questionnaire-sheet to fill out and return.

It happened last summer on the trip to New England which was extensively covered in Grue #21. We had returned to Rhode Island and both Jean and I felt that we owed my mother, sister and sister's husband something special for their extended tour of duty as baby-sitters. My brother-in-law had expressed a desire to see "Demetrius and the Gladiators," which had just opened in Providence so we bundled the whole crew, including son Chuck, into the car and took them up to see it. Chuck was four at the time.

I could do a lengthy article on my dismay over the way the Cinemascope process has become interwoven with a type of plot which I can only refer to as a "cross-opera." It seems that every picture filmed through the anamorphic lens must Carry A Message. But enough of that until another time. Suffice to say that Demetrius was played by Victor Mature and if you have ever seen that gentleman under a full head of steam in a cross-opera, Superman will forevermore seem like a 97-pound weakling. Mature, in a typical cross-opera, can scatter a herd of stampeding elephants and tear a boa constrictor in two with his bare hands without so much as mussing a single curly lock.

Of course Caligula, or whoever it was, didn't know this (having never seen Vic in action, I suppose) so he---poor optimistic fool!---contented himself with merely throwing three tigers into the arena with Mature, whose hands, as I recall, weren't even tied behind him...in fact, he may have had a short knife...I'm not sure.

Well, as you might imagine, it was a slaughter. Only three tigers against Victor Mature, and the poor things compounded their predicament by attacking him one at a time. Pity tigers don't have a religion or they could have been beatified for their martyrdom. But I didn't say anything about all this to Chuck. Instead, as we were leaving, I asked him how he liked the show and he thought a moment, then commented, "I didn't like 'at man 'at hurt oze nice tigers!"

It is things like this that make raising a family worthwhile.

\* \* \* \* \*

I'd like to recommend a book. Ordinarily, Grue doesn't mess around with book reviews---there are so many other places equipped to do a better job---but I consider this one rather special and out of the ordinary. The title is THE SILENT WORLD, by Captain J. Y. Cousteau with Frédéric Dumas. The copy at hand is a Cardinal edition, published by Pocket Books, Inc., and it sells for 35¢. There are 225 pages, profusely illustrated in b/w and color. You might say it is a sort of non-fiction science fiction. The subject is deep-sea diving in---rather, with---the aqualung. The subject is, to me, an intrinsically fascinating one and the author's writing-style is as engaging as any I've recently encountered. I particularly enjoyed the chapters "Monsters We Have Met," and "Shark Close Up." The first one hilariously debunks all sorts of popular legends about perils of the deep, with especial attention to the "devil-fish" or octopus. The second discusses the author's experience with sharks.

I would like to quote three paragraphs from the chapter, "Shark Close Up." If these three paragraphs don't make you want to buy and read the entire book, then you probably wouldn't like it anyway.

One day we were finishing a movie sequence on trigger fish when Dumas and I were galvanized with ice-cold terror. It is a reaction unpleasant enough on land, and very lonely in the water. What we saw made us feel that naked men really do not belong under the sea.

At a distance of forty feet there appeared from the gray haze the lead-white bulk of a twenty-five-foot Carcharodon carcharias, the only shark species that all specialists agree is a confirmed man-eater. Dumas, my bodyguard, closed in beside me. The brute was swimming lazily. In that moment I thought that at least he would have a bellyache on our three-cylinder lungs.

Then, the shark saw us. His reaction was the last conceivable one. In pure fright, the monster voided a cloud of excrement and departed at an incredible speed.

\* \* \* \* \*

The subject of poetry is one that appears every now and then amongst the incoming mail. Calkins and Stavdal, as well as others, have quoted bits from their favorite poems and I've finally dug up the poem which I'd name as my own particular favorite. This wasn't easy because all I could remember of it was a line or two here and there; couldn't recall the title, the poet's name or even where to find it. But now that I have found it, I'm still not quite sure why it should be the poem that made the greatest impression on me but I am even more firmly decided that it is. My reasons for liking these lines seem to go deeper than words can penetrate and the only thing I can offer as a reason is that I like the fit of the words and, in places, the almost hypnotic cadences and alliteration. The first two lines of the third stanza are the ones that haunted me into finding it. See what you think of:

#### CARGOES

Quinquereame of Nineveh from distant Ophir,  
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,  
With a cargo of ivory  
And apes and peacocks,  
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,  
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores  
With a cargo of diamonds,  
Emeralds, amethysts,  
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smokestack,  
Butting through the channel in the mad March days  
With a cargo of Tyne coal,  
Road rails, pig lead,  
Firewood, ironware, and cheap tin trays.

---John Masefield

I regret that my ignorance of the field of poetry is of such abysmal stature that I don't know whether this is written in iambic pentameter or coronary thrombosis. I do know that it's one of the very few poems I can read over several times, the way I can sit and stare at some paintings for minutes on end. I wish I knew why.

# Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

(As it would appear in a typical fanzine) by Robert Bloch

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty { that used to be a magazine, you know } and dedicated to the proposition { guess we still are dedicated to the proposition, if the right dame comes along } that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war { from what you read about it, nobody was very civil, were they? } testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived { watch your language, there! } and so dedicated, can long endure.

Who sawed Commodore Farragut's boat?

We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives, that that { now, how! } nation might live. { This you calling living? } It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

John Wilkes Booth is a louse.

But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate -- we cannot consecrate -- we cannot hallow -- this ground { Then what are you horsing around for? } The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here { Dead men don't struggle, do they? Or are you thinking of them putting up a stiff resistance? } have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. { Let's not get off detract here! }. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here { it says here } but it can never forget what they did here.

Fan away to Fredricksburg with Fritchie in Fifty-Five!

It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here, have, thus far, so nobly advanced. { This is a comma-tose statement if I ever saw one } It is rather for us to be here dedicated { A Dedicated Fan, huh? } to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion { Howard Devotion? } -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, { Let's not drag religion into fanzines, huh? } shall have a new birth of freedom --

"I'll fight it out on this line if it takes all summer"- Grant

and that government of the people, by the people, { You mean "buy" the people, don't you? } for the people, shall not perish { Is that anything like an annish? } from the earth. { Not a bad first effort for a neo-fan, Mr. Lincoln, and as you wise up on fanzine writing your style will probably improve. Meanwhile, got to remind you that in spite of all the yapping you did, you clean forgot to tell us your address. How far is Gettysburg from Harry Warner's place? }

"No matter how drunk, the South will rise again!"-Jefferson Davis.

--Robert Bloch

((You know...a thing like this could cure you. --dag))

(after much too long a time, it gives me more pleasure than I can conveniently 44  
express to welcome Bob Silverberg to the raffish ranks of Grue's contributors. --dag)

## *And the Moon be still as Cheddar*

*by Bob Silverberg*

The big rocket cut through the black like a sword through glue. It blazed a molten path in the sky, leaving little trailing sprinklings of rocket-trail.

Captain Olsen led his men out on the cold pitted orb of the moon.

"Let's go," he yelled. "Hurry! Get as much as you can!"

They hurried.

"More!"

They brought more. They plucked up the moon, plucked it live and pulsing and threw it in the hold of their ship. "More!" yelled Captain Olsen, but there was no room for more and finally they went back to Earth, heavily laden.

The people were waiting for them as they put down at the spaceport, waiting with hands outstretched.

"Green cheese," the Captain said. "Green cheese from the moon." He pointed up at the silent sky. "If you look through a telescope you can see the new crater. Green cheese--a thousand dollars a bite."

The people rushed up, eager.

"Is it true? Is it really green cheese?"

"See for yourselves," said the Captain. "Green cheese. A thousand dollars a bite. Look." He lifted a piece, broke off a corner, and swallowed it. He closed his eyes in ecstasy a moment. "A thousand dollar's worth, right there."

A small grubby well-dressed man stood in front of them. "I'm Rogers," he said. "W. J. Rogers. I'll take it all."

He began to haul bills out of his pocket.

"I have to have it all."

"Sorry," Captain Olsen said coldly. "One bite to a customer. Pick up your money."

They sold it all. A thousand dollars a bite. The Captain sat over his heap of bills, while the crew watched happily. They were all rich for life. The Captain looked gratefully up at the moon and tried to see the crater from which he had torn the cheese. He couldn't. All over the earth, ships were taking off for the moon.

A rat came out of its hole and wandered through the ship. There was a small crumb of the cheese left in the hold. It wandered in, sniffed the cheese, worried it with his nose, and walked carefully around it.

(continued overpage)

The grubby well-dressed man came back. "I'm back," said Rogers. Two men with guns stood behind him.

"Take me to the moon," he told Olsen. "I have to have more green cheese. You wouldn't sell it to me before."

"Not for anything," Olsen said. "I hate you and your filthy kind."

He looked up at the lonely moon. "No more cheese. I won't take you. Vandals like you destroyed Rome."

"I don't know anything about Rome," Rogers said. "Take me where the cheese is."

"Cheese!" cried a group of people standing around the ship. "More!"

"Green cheese!"

"Moon cheese!"

"Cheese!"

"I won't take you," Olsen said. "I can't."

Rogers shot him. The Captain crumpled over his heap of bills. "Start the ship," Rogers ordered the crew.

"We don't know how," they said.

"I will, then," Rogers said. He moved to the control panel.

The rat in the hold sniffed the cheese once again. Then he gave an insane laugh and knocked the cheese flying with a stroke of his long thick tail. "Green cheese, indeed," he said.

The ship blew up.

--Bob Silverberg

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Merrill!

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# BELFASTERS

a series of profiles

46

by

John Berry

## PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT

In response to a general demand for more information (one correspondent from the Azores spelled it 'defamation') about the characters of Irish Fandom, I have decided, at great personal risk, to devote my time to compiling a fascinating series of factual articles on the Irish Group.

In preparation for this great literary event, I have been keeping a surreptitious note of their mode of dress, their conversations, their intimate personal lives, and other startling data which, I say without fear of contradiction, will hold the fannish world enthralled, mystified, and, indeed, enraptured.

Tentatively, my schedule runs like this:

1. WALT WILLIS---Neo-Genius.
2. James White---The Dry Wit.
3. Madeleine Willis---The Amazing Athlete, or Athletic Amazon.
4. Bob Shaw---The Erudite Enigma, or The Recalcitrant Raconteur.
5. George Charters---He of the Pun, or The Pun-He Man.

Without further ado, then, allow me to present Willis.

---

"Ghod said Let There Be Slant  
And there was Slant..." ---James (White) Version

Walter Alexander (for A.) Willis, or just plain Willis, as he is affectionately known throughout fandom, originated Slant. He is the brains behind Hyphen. He has travelled vast distances in the pursuit of fandom, a subject on which he is the recognised authority. He had a hand in The Enchanted Duplicator (it's healing well). Why, he is even referred to in fannish circles as Ghod...presumably the Ghod of Hyphen and Mirth.

The enormity of my self-appointed task has just struck me. How can I, a mere neo-fan, have the utter audacity to write about this fabulous character? How can I, with my limited literary capacity, describe in detail a personage whose word is respected on six continents? My sole qualification is that I am in personal contact with him and therefore am in a position to note those important little idiosyncracies.

## THE MAN

Meeting Willis for the first time, one gets the impression of a razor sharp mind, in complete control of the situation; able to allow the conversation to glide along amiably but not get out of control. Physically, he is tall, sort of fair-haired (well, not dark anyway) with photogenic features (my wife says). I am pleased to report that he is an ideal family man, with a pretty daughter, Carol, whom I'm sure you have heard about, and a charming wife named Madeleine whom I shall dissect in the third article in this series. (A job to be handled with caution or your scalp'll be forfeit.)

Walt is a generous host, eager to be friendly and sociable, and bursting to guide innocent neo-fans like myself through the early trials and tribulations of fandom.

I feel that Walt's general appearance has been summed up remarkably well by that witty columnist, Bob Shaw. (His calumny appears in "-") (Excuse me...I meant to say 'column' --dag) I consider it impossible to improve on this description. Even should I attempt the task, the result would be the same. So, to keep people from calling me a plagiarist, I will quote Bob's paragraph.

His favourite apparel consists of an old, well worn wind-cheater, and an old, well worn pair of trousers, and an old, well worn pair of carpet slippers. He also wears an old face, but hasn't a patch on it. The only other salient points about his appearance are that he stands very far from the razor when shaving, (That figures...Our Walt is no Shaver-Fan!) and his comb must have had pyhorrea (Could it have been trench-mouth or, to use the proper term, 'Vinø's Angina?'). As you may have noted, he is very careless about his dress, about his meals, about everything except books. He is even careless about money---careless about how he gets it.

Thanks, Bob. That I can endorse.

Pamela Bulmer, showing unusual perception for a female, states that in her opinion, 'Walt is a handsome man, in a delinquent sort of way,' and that he is an 'unassuming genius.'

So now you know.

#### THE PROVIDER

Oh yes, Willis suffers that dreaded mundane disease of having to go to work for a living. Notice that I specify go to work, I didn't commit myself to saying that he actually works when he gets there. After all, he is employed by the Northern Ireland as a servile savant, which tells you immediately that if he follows the accepted Civil Service Charter, the only connection between Walt and work is the twenty third letter of the alphabet. His chief occupational hazard at the Ministry concerns the twentieth letter of the alphabet.

#### THE WIT

As I said before, Walt has a razor-sharp mind (I'm told he attributes this to black-strop molasses). Anyone can make puns---everyone does make puns---but not like Walt. Walt's puns are in a class by themselves...in fact, they are spontaneous...and good. His mind is so nimble, so quick, that it takes apart every sentence he hears, every word is carefully digested, every possible meaning and inflexion tried out, and an invariably clever pun is the result. But in a split second. I wish I could meet the genius who labelled them 'Lousy Willis-type Puns.' (Indeed a pundit worthy of punishment.)

Presuming that you haven't been tortured too much by them already, here are a few LW-T puns to cheer you on your way: To the statement, "Those houses are like rabbit hutches," Walt replied, "Naturally, weren't they built by the Borough Council?"

In a letter to the Editor of BEM, complaining of the bad typing, he wrote, '...unless you want 150 readers with ruptured eyeballs, and I truss you don't...'. On another occasion, George Charters wouldn't play Ghoddminton. His excuse was that he had a toothache, but I thought it was because I had criticized his service in an article. Walt refuted this. 'George is conspicuous by his abcess,' he said. (BoSh says this always was a good pun.)

Finally, it gives me great pleasure, as a final example of the LW-T Pun, to announce that the following specimen has never before appeared in print. {huh}

Walt states, "My grandfather was a printer, and I reverted to type." Sensational, isn't it? {Well, Rog Philips always thought so.}

Besides puns (I'm beginning to hate that word), Walt is also an exponent of the 'witty retort.' Only the other day, for example, I was an innocent foil for his deadly art. I was telling the Irish group about a Holiday camp I had visited, where physical training early in the morning was compulsory. "...so, at about 6:30 in the morning," I said, "a big chap came in, grabbed me, dragged me out of bed, and flung me outside."

"Her husband, I presume," said Willis. The annoying thing was that I was totally innocent and blushed profusely, thus confirming everyone's suspicions that it was true.

#### THE WANDERER

WILLIS HAS BEEN TO AMERICA. This is the first thing he told me, five minutes after our initial meeting.

#### THE SPORTSMAN

Willis also likes to play tennis, which is recognised (by me) as being symbolic of virtuous and unblemished manhood. I prefer poker. {You should meet Tucker}

But Walt also plays Ghoodminton. Better than this, however, HE INVENTED GHOODMINTON. This is my reason for applying the term 'neo-genius.' I think that this is one of the best things he has done for Irish Fandom, even including buying a TV set.

You all know about Ghoodminton, of course. {For the benefit of anyone who doesn't know, the game called Ghoodminton is a skilful blend of the more interesting features of table-tennis, badminton (Bhadminton?), ping-pong and Assault With A Deadly Weapon.} Let me explain Walt's attitude toward it. White is quite capable of hacking your fingers off. Shaw will attempt assassination. Madeleine will frequently attempt to abstract your epiglottis. But Walt does none of this. He is a true sportsman, and disdains brutality of any sort. He simply flings his bat the length of the room, sinks his fist into the wall, turns red, and says, with great feeling and eloquence:-

---

"Bloody Hell."

---

Maybe a psychiatrist could make something out of this...the exclamation, not the article.

#### THE HUCKSTER

Walt has an extensive collection of S.F. Hundreds of Astoundings are arranged in chronological order along the bookshelves, and piles of others, Galaxys, Ifs, etc., are also stacked in prominent positions. When a meeting at Oblique House is about to break up, Walt announces loudly, "Prozines, anyone?"

Everyone, rather naturally, takes no notice. Walt, not to be outdone, rattles a few halfpennies in a tin and assumes a pathetic expression.

On my first visit, this procedure was all new to me. Consequently, I was unaware of the dangerous position I had taken up near the doorway. As Walt croaked "Prozines for sale," I was trampled underfoot by the concerted rush. The last thing I remember, after the stampede had passed over my defenceless body, was Walt rattling the tin under my nose.

The secret, which I have discovered from careful observation, is not to relax vigilance for a second, otherwise all is lost. Well I remember the George Charters episode. The poor soul, in an unguarded moment, actually picked up a prozine WITH WILLIS IN THE SAME ROOM. The rest of us gazed in silent pity as Walt tiptoed over to

him, a savage gleam of triumph in his eyes. I'll never forget that despairing look in George's eyes as he dug his hand into his pocket.

Walt caught me once, too. But I really don't feel too badly about this. In fact, I'm quite proud of my collection of hundreds of Astoundings, dating from the very first issue.

#### THE EDITOR

This is Willis supreme. This is his avowed vocation. As the editor of Hyphen, Walt brings to the fore his powerful organising abilities, without which the next issue of Hyphen would undoubtedly only be a mere Number 28 or 29. It really is marvellous, the way he organises his staff.

When the Hyphen issue date is imminent, Walt girds his loins. Under his masterful direction, everyone rushes about with stencils, reams of paper, etc., expertly dodging the showers of printing ink that emanate from a protesting duplicator that frequently becomes red hot through brutal usage.

Not until the last staple has been fixed, does Walt finally lay down his whip.

#### THE WRITER

Oh, Walt is diabolically clever. I would be the next-to-last to deny it (Willis likes the last word in these matters). His writings prove his skill. I think his style is brilliant. It is unique...an opinion, I might add, with which Walt concurs.

Seriously, though, while Walt's articles are somewhat longer than most, I find that interest is maintained right up to the bitter end. His descriptive flair for putting his reader into the picture, as it were, is most effective. I have read most of his works avidly, and I feel I must include one or two paragraphs of what I consider choice examples of his art. Not the funniest, by any means, but these two items clearly demonstrate what I mean by 'descriptive flair.' From Quandry 13:

Round about 6:30 that evening, I was sitting outside in my slippers---sometimes I wish I could afford a chair---when a telegram boy arrived carrying, of all things, a telegram. I opened it. It seemed the thing to do. ....Steady now, I said to myself, and clambered off the roof. I dashed through the front door to show the telegram to Madeleine. I think she suspected the moment she saw me that something was up. Female intuition, I suppose, or it may have been the fragments of wood and glass hanging round my neck. I really should have opened that door first. If you have ever seen a woman who has been told to expect an important visitor (In case you're wondering, it was Perry Ackerman. --dag, in less than an hour you'll know what happened next. I stepped out of the blur of action, and through the back door. I lose more doors that way.

This next example is my favourite, so far. It comes from Quandry 27&28, and deals with Walt's experiences with the American Emigration Authorities:

...I had to call this a queue, because it was anything but a line. It was in the form of an enormous bulge, tapering to single file between two tables. When the pressure got beyond so many tons per square inch, a mangled body would be projected with great force down between two tables in front of the Customs Inspector, in no fit condition to tell lies about any dutiable goods he happened to have. Every now and then, the mass of angry people at the back would surge forward, pushing the queue, the tables, the customs officials and everything else before them several yards further down the shed. I calculated that, assuming we survived this heat, we'd push the bastards in the Pacific by December.

See what I mean?

---John Berry

# "...OF A THOUSAND FIENDISHLY EATEN ANCESTORS..."

by  
Redd Boggs

50

"Worsel and his crew threw away their DeLameters. Only when it is absolutely necessary does any Velantian use any artificial weapon against any Overlord of Delgon. He is too furious, too berserk, to do so. He is scared to the core of his being; the cold grue of a thousand fiendishly eaten ancestors has bred that fear into the innermost atoms of his chemistry."

---Quoted from CHILDREN OF THE LENS by E. E. Smith, Ph. D.  
Page 25, ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION for November 1947.

"I hid among the boulders in the foothills outside the little town of Grue, and in this security watched the countryside. It was peaceful enough, now, but there would need be a slight change of plans. Grue was a smoldering pile of wreckage. A visiting band of Martian raiders had preceded me by several hours."

----Quoted from GENTLEMEN---THE QUEEN! by Wilson Tucker  
Page 117-118, THE SCIENCE FICTION SUBTREASURY (Rinehart)

The two quotations above represent cause and effect, with this magazine serving as a connecting link. But it remained for the Erudite Minneapolitan to explore the ultimate labyrinthine ramifications of our title's etymology. Gentlemen---The Boggs!: (And not an issue too soon, either. --dag)

Dear Dean:

W03W  
Mar 2 55

From that quote from EESmith you put in the first issue, I've always thought Grue was roughly synonymous with "gore," but 'taint. Today I looked it up in the New English Dictionary, which gives the history of each word in the language, and found that "Grue" has many meanings, but doesn't mean quite what I thought it did. Maybe you can use some of this info in Grue -- if that noble fanzine continues -- so I will summarize my findings.

As a noun, Grue has five distinct meanings. (1) A particle. Comes from Old French, meaning meal or grain (cf. gruel). Usually used in the negative sense to indicate, "not an atom, not a whit," etc. Found in English as early as the fourteenth century.

(2) A crane. This meaning comes from the Latin. Earliest known use in English is in a poem written 1595-6: "The Gru befoir me thair appeirs  
Quhois legs wer lang and syde."  
The crane, of course, is a bird and not a device for lifting.

(3) A kind of meal cake made in Cheshire. First known usage in this sense was found in Health's Improvement (1655) by Moufet and Bennet: "Had Galen seen the Oaten Cakes of the North; the Janocks of Lancashire, and the Grues of Cheshire, he would

have confessed that Oaten Cakes and Oatmeal are...meat...for tall, fair, and strong men."

(4) Ice in flakes or detached pieces. Early example from Farquharson, 1835: "At this rapid the whole bottom was covered with silvery gru." (Can be spelled either gru or grue.)

(5) The action of Grue (see verb); shivering, shuddering; a shiver or shudder. It's often spelled "grou," as in this passage from Edinboro Magazine, May 1820: "A seikenan' grou cam ower my heart..." Another example, from N. Macleod (1867): "The Sergeant experienced what is called a grue -- the sort of shiver one feels in a nightmare."

As a verb, Grue has several meanings. It comes from Scottish and dialectical sources, and was not found in Old English or Old Norse but has a cognate in Old High German, namely in-gruen. Variations are found in Middle High German, modern German, Dutch, Old and modern Swedish, and the word itself is found in Danish (Grue). (Our Webster's Collegiate attributes the adjective "Gruesome" thus: "(Of. Dan. gru horror, grusom.)" --dag)

(1) To feel terror or horror, shudder, tremble, quake; to shrink from something; to be troubled in heart. Earliest usage: after 1300. Stevenson in Catrina (1893) used it: "I begin to grue at the sound of it."

(2) Of the body: to shiver, shudder. Found as early as 1400 in this sense. Sir Walter Scott's Redgauntlet (1824) used it: "He...said things that garr'd folk's flesh grue."

(3) To thrill. From H. Coleridge's Poems (1849): "His every member grueing with delight."

(4) Of a crane: to utter its characteristic cry, as in R. Holme's Armoury (1688): "The Crane grueth."

There is also Grueful, meaning fearful, horrorstruck. In White Wings by Black (!) (!) (1880): "He returned -- somewhat grueful -- his hair wild, his face wet."

Also Grueing, meaning the action of Grue, shuddering; horror. (Grue has that effect on some people, I understand. --dag)

Gruesome (inspiring fear, awe, or horror; fearful; horrible; grisly) was apparently -- says the N.E.D. -- introduced into literary use by Sir Walter Scott. The spelling was always "grewsome" till sometime after 1850 and that spelling is still sometimes used.

There's some more stuff of minor consequence which I will spare you. All this is found in vol. 4 of the New English Dictionary on Historical Principles, 13 volumes (including supplement and bibliography), the most scholarly dictionary of the English language. Meanings #1, #4, #5 as a noun are listed in Webster's International. But I bet you didn't know your fanzine was a crane or a meal cake.

Sincerely,

(Do you suppose that bit from Old High German has any connection with Gruen watches? --dag)

Redd

# THE REAR VISIPLATE

52

Once again the time has come to make such necessary footnotes as may be required to wind up the issue. Sometimes I feel that this is my favorite department.

There are several announcements to make so I will get right at them.

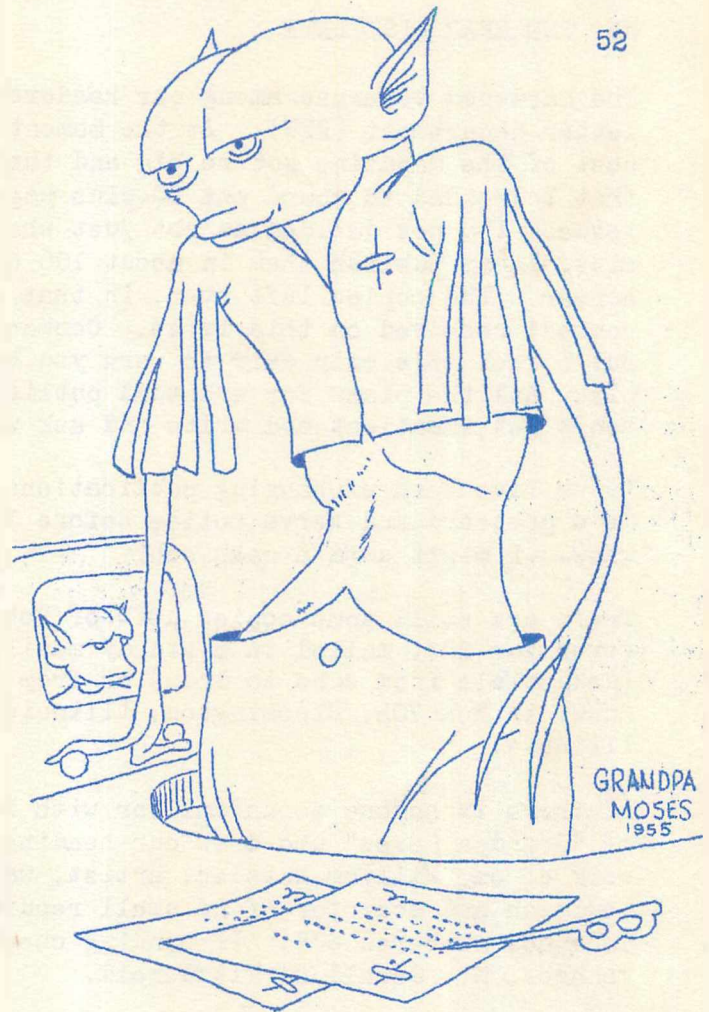
This issue of Grue is not a Fapazine. Its only connection with the Fantasy Amateur Press Association is that some members of that group will receive copies. I can't say how long this arrangement will continue but this issue is an independant magazine unto itself.

NO ISSUES OF GRUE ARE PLANNED FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. Do not look for the next issue before September...and it could be a little later than that. There is a good and sufficient reason for this announcement. For the next six months or so I expect to have my time so thoroughly taken up that there will be very little left over for publishing amateur magazines, writing letters, commenting on the publications of others, or working up material to be submitted to other magazines. From Wrai Ballard, via Phyllis H. Economou, comes the term for what necessitates such a proclamation: FAFIA, or Forced Away From It All. Summer is always short on spare time for me...it's the peak of the busy season in the heating business and a lot of other things intervene. But this year we propose to remodel the second story of 402 Maple Avenue to give us some desperately needed lebensraum for our burgeoning brood. This means that I'll be spending my fanning-time at such mundane pursuits as being a carpenter, painter, interior decorator, roofer, etc. To use an expression that impressed Boggs, I will be buried in mundac.

So this will serve as notice to various interested parties: contributors, subscribers, fan-editors who exchange publications with me and correspondents...no more Grennell until further notice. Mind you, I don't say I'm dropping out of fandom. I am merely suspending activity until an availability of free time permits me to resume again.

If you have a subscription for Grue with a balance remaining after the 25¢ is deducted for this issue, you can do one of two things: you can either request a full or partial refund of said balance or you can leave it on deposit against the day when, once again, the monotonous clanking of the Gestetner is heard at Mafia Press.

Unpublished written material in the backlog will be returned to the writers upon request or if it isn't published before the end of 1955. It will not be sent to other fan-editors. Artwork in the backlog will be passed on to carefully selected fan-eds only with permission of the artists.



The hardened veterans among our readers will note a missing department this issue: the letter-department (FFW). At the moment, some 18 pages of that are stenciled but the rest of the magazine got so big and there were so many letters still to go into FFW that I decided to round out 50-plus pages, sans letters, and dispense with FFW for this issue. I'm not decided as yet just what I'll do about those 18 stencils. If time permits, I may publish them in about 100 copies and send them to the people whose letters appear. The copies left over, in that case, would be sent in response to letters of comment received on this issue. Comments on this issue will be welcome, of course. But I feel it's only fair to warn you beforehand that I won't be able to write in reply. And the plans for eventual publication of FFW are only tentative at best so please don't get impatient and write and ask when you're going to get it, etc.

If we have been exchanging publications, I'd greatly appreciate it if you would drop me a postcard and serve notice before lopping my name from your mailing list. You never know---I might send a cash sub!

There are still some copies left of Bob Tucker's LE ZOMBIE...38 pages plus a litho'd cover for 25¢, mailed in a sturdy manila envelope. You may order it either from me (deductible from subs to Grue) or from Bob Tucker, whose address, as everybody must know, is Box 702, Bloomington, Illinois, USA. Bloomington is a small town near Shirley, Illinois.

If there is anyone so unfamiliar with fanzine artists that they can't spot the identity of "Grandpa Moses" who drew our heading--ilho this time, I will explain that it is the work of one William Rotsler, artist, walnut-rancher, gag-writer, patriarch, symbolic logician and sculptor of no small repute. Mr. Rotsler exists at Camarillo, California, in a box numbered 638. If sending checks or cheques, make them payable to his business manager, Mr. Gerald C. FitzGerald.

Our covers are the work of Mike (or, as he sometimes spells it, Mique) Rossman, who may be reached at 2 Meadow Way, Fairfax, California.

This issue of Grue will appear with no warning whatsoever in the letterboxes of certain unsuspecting people in England and Northern Ireland (and how have you been, Mr. Charters?). In many cases it comes as an exchange but if they feel an overpowering urge to pay for it, they may remit the sum of one shilling and sixpence to Our British Agent. This august personality is none other than Chuck Harris, whose address is "Carolyn," Lake Avenue, RAINHAM, Essex, England. Messrs. John Berry and Arthur Thomson are notified that this issue reaches them free of all charges...Berry for his contribution and Thomson (see, Arthur?...I spelled it right twice in a row) for value received and then some. To the rest (with the exception of those who exchange with me), I'll explain that they needn't pay for this if they don't want to but if they do pay for this copy they will receive the next issue when it appears...and I'll take bets that Grue #24 will be along some day.

*\* also Scotland*

In response to various inquiries: No, I doubt very much if I will attend the Midwestcon in Ohio this spring and it seems equally doubtful, if not more so, that I'll be able to get to Cleveland for the convention next Labor Day weekend. Wish I could but I just plain can't make it.

There are no back issues of previous issues of Grue available. If anyone has any back issues they're about to throw away, I'll gladly pay the expense of returning them to this address. Quite a few newcomers would like to find out what it's all about.

Have a real nice summer, hmm?

Cordially,

6 March 1955

*Dean*