



No. 2.4

A BLUE-HAND PUBLICATION OF MAFIA PRESS, NOT-INC.

GRIM

© Summer 1955



"Caveat Lector"



POS
TNOB
ILLS

Let's preserve
Bloch in BLOG

NOW!
FILTER-TIP
BLOG

Ask your
Barman for
"BLOG"

ERIN GO
BLOG

LIK
KIM

72nd FAPA
Mailing



Be the weather
foul or Clement,
Be Attlee
CLEVENTON on
Labour Day!

Sorry, Redd — I guess
this is another one of
those cluttered covers. —dag—

Kellogg

2 Explanation of Cover Symbol (How Pseudo-Campbell can you get, eh Redd?):

Fried eggs in cross-section, with paramecia at approximately 200 diameters.

Grue, short for National Geogruuephic Magazine, is an amateur publication, hopefully prepared as being of possible interest to people who profess to like science fiction. Details as to price, terms and such, may be found on page 26 and reviewers are urged to read this rather carefully. Leave us have no more of this "PAR" stuff, eh?

In last issue, we predicted that this issue wouldn't appear before fall. I guess it's just an early fall. In fact, I toyed idly with the idea of changing the name of the thing to "Pride" for this one issue.

It should be noted that the appearance of this issue is made possible only by the ruthless and singleminded devotion of every bit of spare time for the past two months or so. I've written practically no letters in that interim and commented on absolutely no fanzines...not even HYPHEN, PSYCHOTIC or OOPSLA! Herewith my profound and sincere apologies to at least 87% of the readers for neglecting them so that this issue could appear.

Guided muscles...

WHO'S WHO ON GRUE'S CREW

Number 1: Douglas Graves

I was born near the stern of a native dugout in the headwater region of the Orinoco river on February 13th, 1919. I've been up the creek ever since.

Mine was a rather unusual childhood. My father was a strolling vulcanizer of bagpipes, a vocation which used to distress my mother whose hobby was gardening...her favorites being Papaver somniferum and Cannabis sativa. Daddy's work took us to many strange lands and, by the time I was 9 I spoke 16 languages and 87 major dialects. Trouble was, I spoke them simultaneously.

I can't recall the exact date when I read my first fanzine (Captain Billy's Whiz-Bang) but soon after that I made up my mind that I wanted to be a fanzine hack when I grew up, if ever.

Of course, like all authors, I had quite a wide variety of different jobs before I finally settled down to writing. Without even the most prefuntory attempt to arrange them in chronological order, I served at various times as a tan-bark shredder with the Bells-Floto circus, a brakeman on the Tonopah and Goldfield railroad, a film-loader for Karsh of Ottowa, a ghost-writer for Father Coughlin, a pencil-sharpener for Edgar Rice Burroughs, body-servant and valet for crusty but lovable old Cyrus Granch who is perhaps better known from Cairo to Capetown as the Rowboat King of Madagascar, an emerald miner in Peru, a curare-refiner in Brazil's Matte Grosso region, a pricker-plucker in a pickle factory, prop-man at the Folies Bergere, bird-stuffer with the Smithsonian Institute, and blank-cartridge reloader for Clyde Beatty the famous lion tamer, to name but a few. Well, here I am.

ODD
RB
Douglas Graves

Doug Graves

I REMEMBER OPUS

3



by

John Magnus

Probably the greatest boon to my fan career was the fact that OPUS and COSMAG both fell into my mailbox the same morning—the first fanzines I had ever seen. While it's a bit early to say for sure, I think that combination has made me a fan for life.

I had just turned eighteen and was looking forward to my senior year in high school. Little did I know that these two little bundles of ink-stained paper were the advance guard of something that would send me off to Chicago for the 1952 convention within two months.

But OPUS took me on a long voyage of adventure to unsuspected lands. The not-so-white sails of its pages soon carried me to COSMAGland, where I found everything that OPUS lacked. The two were like a roast beef sandwich and a pint of vanilla ice cream, offering me a full, mouth-watering view of what fandom offered.

My first OPUS was number five. In that issue I was rendered unprejudiced to carefree spelling and casual mimeography by the most engaging form of chatter I'd ever encountered—editor W. Max Keasler's "Now Here This." Ray Nelson's cartoons were the funniest I'd seen. I was given a sixty-minute course in just about everything I needed to know about fandom by letters from Walt Willis, Ian Macauley, Dick Clarkson, Gregg Calkins, Ken BeAle, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Jim Harmon and practically every other fan active at that time. I must admit I was prejudiced in my opinions as to who was a BNF for many months to come by those seven memorable pages of letter column.

It couldn't have been more than a few hours afterward that I was typing out a letter to Keasler telling him that I was starting a fanzine of my own. I didn't dream that the letter would be published but it appeared in OPUS number six which, for some reason, I never received. I still have no proof that it was published except for a letter from Larry Touzinsky which arrived just as I was leaving to catch a plane for Chicago with an optimistic 500 copies of the first issue of my magazine, "SF," tucked under my arm. No religion can offer a paradise better, and no mere alcohol can produce an elation higher than mine when I opened the envelope from Larry and found a dime, with a request (in green ink) for my first issue.

The plane to Chicago seemed to be flying over clouds of egoboo as I scanned my brand-new copy of I GO POGO which I'd found at the airport newsstand.

It seems to be one of the requisites of a great faneditor that he either be an exceptional artist himself or else have a goodly number of them on immediate call. Keasler filled this requirement in both respects. In addition to the above mentioned Nelson cartoons, all the headings—though a bit sloppy—were somehow attractive...decorating the pieces in that indescribably "right" way which few faneditors ever master. Full-page drawings did their job without the large, ugly headlines most faneditors feel necessary to call the readers' attention to the masterpieces—which-usually-aren't.

It is only now, looking back, that I realize that OPUS, in its seven issues, probably presented more of what was best about fandom than has any other magazine...even QUANDRY. For Q based its tradition and humor upon the uniqueness of its stable of writers, having little need for the contributions of fandom-as-a-whole to maintain its many virtues. OPUS, on the other hand, feasted on the letters and contributions of almost everybody, making the variety, rather than the cliquishness of fandom its stamping-ground.

In that fifth issue of OPUS were letters, art-work, or articles by thirty-two different people. In that issue and the one before, no less than 43 people had taken up a creative hand to help form OPUS. Is its success any wonder? In a contemporary issue of QUANDRY only 12 fans participated, while in two issues only three or four names were added to the list.

With its fantasia of photographs, cartoons, articles, Keasler's wonderful drawings, anarchic atmosphere, and tropical rain of letters, there's no wonder why it was taken to the hearts of 150 readers who were used to a diet of pseudo-pro mags with formal this and cliquish that, stereotyped format and personality, and disinterested shrugging of the shoulders at those things most rewarding about fandom.

If a reincarnation of OPUS comes along some day—and I think it will—I think I will have no trouble recognizing it. No matter what form it takes, or into whose arms the whole of fandom is taken as it was by Keasler, I think I'll be able to spot it.

Meanwhile, I'll always remember OPUS as a wonderful introduction to this thing we call fandom.

--John Magnus

If horses were vicious, rides would go begging.

Editorial Comment on All This:

Do any of you people out there happen to have the current correct address of either Max Keasler or Ray Nelson? I would like to send them complimentary copies of this issue.

It wasn't until quite recently that I happened to see a copy of OPUS myself and it is indeed quite a whizzerballoo of a magazine. Rich Elsberry gave Redd Boggs a bunch of his old magazines and Redd passed along a copy of OPUS. Oddly enough, it is issue #6...the one Magnus never got to see. I thought he might be interested to see his letter after all this time so here you go, John...quoting:

BUREAU OF ANNUAL EYEBROW LIFTING: Got a letter from John L. Magnus, Jr. 9612 Second Ave., Silver Spring, Md. and he say he sent out for 34 fanzines about a month ago, and so far has only gotten 7. Someone isn't answering their request for sample copies. If you can't send out sample copies then you'd better not send your fanzine to the pros to be reviewed. If too many fanzines failed to acknowledge their sample copies and the review column start getting complaints, then they might drop said columns, and where would the new fans come from then. Say, that might not be so bad after all.

John Magnus says he is starting his own fanzine and that it will be distributed at the convention. It will answer to the name of SF, which stands for Smile, Friend; Supposed Futures; Some fun; Super Fanzine; and of course, Science Fiction, which you use only in case of fire. (unquote)



Reproduced somewhere off there to the left, you will find a reasonably accurate facsimile of a Ray Nelson cartoon which was on the cover of #6, along with others by Hoffman, English, and Keasler. I think this is a veritable wowser of a cartoon and I see what you mean, Magg!

One of the most impressive things I encounter as I leaf through the issue is a column by Harry Warner, Jr. If you are familiar with Warner's FAPA magazine you would expect this to be something pretty special and it certainly is. A column by Warner is or would be an asset to any fanzine...even HORIZONS.

The Warner column was called ALL OUR YESTERDAYS and the installment at hand dealt largely with the LASFS (which, as Harry pointed out, was the LASFL in those days). He covers a lot of fascinating stuff about the Angelinos, giving some quotes from their magazine, IMAGINATION and Ackerman's VOICE OF THE IMAGI-NATION (or VOM). I hesitate to quote Warner's quotes but here's a sample which might interest some of you:

Since Ackerman has drifted away from fandom, lots of us forget that he never liked to have a period placed after his middle initial. In the July, 1938 IMAGINATION he told something about his middle initial troubles in this respect: "FJA was born Forrest James Ackerman. The Sacramento records will reveal it. But he doesn't feel it. He has an uncle named A; just A, no punctuation because it's not an abbreviation for another name--tho they always call him Ed. So A's name seems to've become Ed instead of what it originally was Vice versa, Ack has altered his to J (no dot.) Oddly enough, it might've been 4E's lot to be known as Forrest C. Ackerman, for the first half of his life--and early years of his stf career (if such it can be called)--he is now appalled at the fact that he never knew ...he thought his middle name was Clark! Everybody called him Clark. He scribbled his name that way at school Explanation: he was named after a friend of the family, James Clark." (Unquote, Warner)

Magnus mentions photographs. These were small contact-prints, with picture-area approximately 20x25mm, laboriously pasted into each issue, one by one, page by page. Take it from me, you have to really love a fanzine to go to that sort of trouble for 150 copies. Silverberg could testify to that. #6 had five different photos, captioned thusly: GREGG CALKINS Editor of OOPSIA! (missing from this copy--evidently lifted by Elsberry); JOE FILLINGER Editor of CHUVNA; HENRY BURWELL Editor of SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST; WILKIE CONNER, one of many fans who promised material for OPUS, but seems to of forgot about it; and one other...a physiognomy hauntingly familiar. Its caption is quite a bit of business but I'll set it down here anyhow: ??? DO Y O U HAVE P. O.* ??? ???? Are Your Best Fan Friends Afraid To Tell You ?? symptoms of P. O.* (1.) Do Neo fens kick you in the shins? (2) Do fanzine editors makes snide remarks about you being a hack? (3) Has Ken BeAle written a sensational expo on your plundering of fandom? Be a happy normal nervous wreck...get rid of P.O. Don't let your friends point the crooked finger of fate at you and say "HACK! DIRTY PRO!"

{continued overpage}

HOW TO GET RID OF P.O.* Write a letter, article, or story for a fanzine. Do it today for tommorow maybe the next day." And the face in the picture is ballooned as saying, "I, ROBERT BLOCH HAD P.O.* UNTILL I TOOK THE TYPE WRITER TEST. WHY AFTER ONE LETTER TO A FANZINE I COULD TELL THE DIFFERENCE. 5 LETTERS AND 2 ARTICLES LATER I WAS COMPLETELY CURED." And down at the bottom of it all, there is the key to the whole business: * P. O. (Pro Oder).

The staff, besides Keasler, consisted of Marie Louise Share (Associate Editor) and Nancy Gerding (Assistent Editor). The artwork in #6 was credited to Ray Nelson, Lee Hoffman, Dave English, William Flinch, Henry Chabot and Bill Rotsler (who he?). It was listed as "A Sort of Monthly sort of thing." Oh yehh--Keasler was an art-contributor too, but didn't list himself except among the cover-credits.

Who wrote all the letters? Well, let's list them for nostalgia's sake: Hoffman, Ballard, Bloch, Ralph Bailey, Gilbert Cochrun, Boggs, Farsace, Calkins, Carr--GM, that is, Clarkson, Bob Fultz, Harmon, Jerry Hopkins, Ken Krueger, Orma McCormick, Ian Macauley, Dick Ryan, Su Rosen, Tucker, Touzinsky, Gerding, Fillinger, W. Paul Ganley, Shapiro, Harris, Barclay Johnson, Hirschhorn, --I guess that's all, except to note a nice bit of fiction by Chet Whissen.

Would love to reprint the letter from Harris. He had Joe Semenovitch by the scruff of the neck and was shaking him at arm's length, with side-snarls at a mag called AMAZING as well. Ah yes, Semenovitch...what ever happened to him? On second thought, don't answer that.

I agree with Magnus---OPUS was a pretty terrific hunk of fanzine and I only wish I had read it back in those days so I could remember it too. I faunch for the day when the Navy turns ole Ever-Lovin' Max loose, in hopes that he'll grind out more of the same.

--DAG

Caesare, Lucretia and Victor.

--Stavdal





THE BOOK CORONER

by Forrest J Ackerman

"14 May 55

Dear Dean

This was written professionally, for the first issue of X Science Fiction, and intended as a continuing dept. Since the gestation period of X has outdated the reviews, I offer them to youse for salvage purposes in your Fapazine, with the foregoing, shall I say, Xplanation.

Cordially - 4e

I Am Legend by Richard Matheson. Gold Medal pb, 160 pp, 25¢. Quasi-scientific, speculative, Dracu-like, adding up to a specDracula novel of the last living man vs a vamp on a vampire-infested Earth. A book to make Bloch, Kuttner, Leiber, Lugosi, Vampira, and Bram Stoker happy--and you too, if you have an unqueasy stomache and leukemia. Bloody good job!

Brain Wave by Poul Anderson. Ballantine pb, 166 pp, 35¢. A "thot-variant"! Interesting but at times difficult--or maybe that's only because my IQ is 131, and in "BW" human intelligence begins at 150 and even the dumbest animal could be a book reviewer.

Deep Space by Eric Frank Russell. Fantasy Press, 250 pp, \$3. Handsome volume, good selection. (Tuff problem: make a bad selection by Eric.) "The Witness" has one of those 4 or 5 memorable last lines, like "All flowers love the sun." Yes.

Editor's Choice in Science Fiction; Sam Moskowitz, compiler. McBride, 285 pp, \$3.50. No, no, 1000 x NO. Just about everything imaginable is objectionable about this pot-poory. For completists and masochists only. Coroner's verdict: Dead On Arrival.

Line to Tomorrow by Lewis Padgett. Bantam pb, 184 pp, 25¢. Kuttner is a real kool kat, and these are 7 real scat stories. Translation: a two-bit hit.

The Explorers by CMKornbluth. Ballantine pb, 147 pp, 35¢. Pohl says Cyril can do no wrong. (I thot Syndic stank on ice.) But there are some fine out of the nine yarns here. Never could see "Mindworm", but "Rocket of 1955" has been remembered for 13 years for its classic conclusion.

GF Thinking Machines, edited by Groff Conklin. Vanguard, 369 pp, \$3.50. 22 robotales and android anecdotes for metal men and mental fen.

--Forrest J (no period) Ackerman



NOTE: This represents the concluding episode of a series of articles chronicling the exploits of Claude Degler, a legendary figure out of fandom's past. The items have been well-received but I feel that, with this, the matter has had adequate coverage.--dg

(A NEWLY DISCOVERED FRAGMENT FROM CHAUCER'S
CANTERBURY TALES)

Heere bigynneth the Tale of Clodd the Superfann

In Indiana whilom dwelte a fann
That eyen hadd brighter than any man.
Tho people in the city called him odd
This noble felawe was, I trowe, hight Clodd.
One nyght he dremt a certyn dream
And wakened wyde and seyde, "Foo wot! meseem
That fen be star-begotten! O Allas
That we be scorned and cleped fugghead and ass —
We which it so bifer are certes slan
And destined eke since Time itself bigan
To rule the stars, rule now no single shire!
To gain fen's ryghtful place be my desire!"

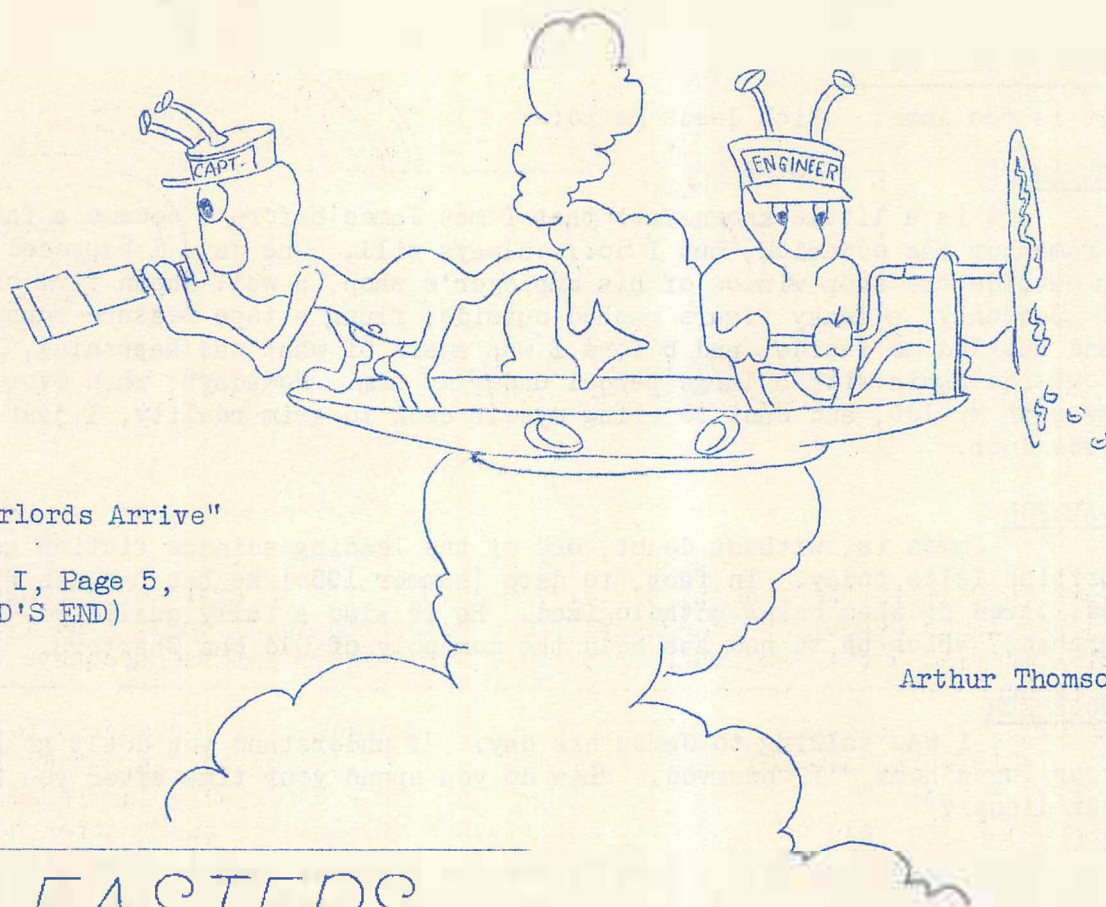
(End of fragment, discovered by Redd Boggs)

By way of a postscript to last issue's "Investigation in Newcastle," Martin E. Alger kindly furnished a few issues of Degler's publication so Degler's reactions to the investigations could be set down here. It is difficult, however, to set down any specific quotations which would offer any very coherent rebuttal to Speer's article for the reason that Degler appears to have been one of the most incoherent writers I've encountered in a long time. But here are a few paragraphs of stuff. Make of them what you will; from "Nat'l Futurian Wkly," dated Sat. June 17, 1944:

SPEER'S NEW ANTI-CC ATTACK EXPECTED SOON! ... Since Speer's spying trip in Newcastle on Easter, it has been known that the NFFF propaganda ministry planned some some sort {sic} of new attack, based upon theif ace agents investigation. As this is the first "enemy campaign" on which we have had

inside information, we have tried to keep you informed of what was taking place. From informed sources close to the Futurian Soc'y of New York, and also from further reports reaching the Dixie Fantasy Federation; the nature of the Speer "investigation" was determined, and the outline the Speer propaganda sheet would follow. Rogers immediately checked up on certain reports, and learned pretty well, where Speer had been & what he was up to. Don saw most of the same officials Speer contacted, and explained to them about his activities; who Speer really was, & that he had once put out a magazine called SCIENCE-FICTION FASCIST, & that he believed he was a private investigator or sometimes believed himself to be an Historian or a "Royal general"; a fanatic who once started a pseudo-religious cult known as "Foo-foo", & of the trouble he had been causing our organization of young people who are interested in the future of science, literature, journalism & post-war planning." (Unquote)

Has everybody had enough of this? -DAG



"The Overlords Arrive"

(Chapter I, Page 5,
CHILDHOOD'S END)

Arthur Thomson

BELFASTERS

Second of a Series on the Wheels of I.F.

Featuring, this installment,

JAMES WHITE as boswelled and biographed by

John Berry

James White is the second victim of mine in this series, and he is, at the time of writing, preparing for his nuptials. I feel that the biography would be incomplete without mentioning his intended spouse. However, more about this poor girl later.

This flower of Irish manhood, James White, has been grossly misrepresented in the past. This is not the first time I have leapt to his defence, and endeavoured to clear his name. I shall not hesitate to do so in the future. It is my intention, once and for all, to tell you the real truth behind some of those unsavoury rumours that malicious wagging tongues have started about this boy.

First of all, I want to tell you about:-

THE MAN

James is a male, in his early twenties. He is tall, bespectacled, distinguished, and extremely well dressed except when playing Ghoddminton. In this case, he arrives in patched coat, darned trousers and old shoes. Tell you the truth, I have only ever seen James in his Ghoddminton outfit, so when I say he is extremely well dressed, that is only hearsay. The fact that he is often seen about the centre of Belfast in patched coat, darned trousers and old shoes is merely a ruse to make people clothes conscious, which is his line of business. The theory is that people look at him, and say to themselves -- Chod, I might look like that one day -- and so rush to buy his firm's wares

BELFASTERS by John Berry

before it is too late. Which leads me to:-

THE SALESMAN

It is a little known fact that I met James before I became a fan. He doesn't remember the occasion, but I do....always will. One day, I happened to be standing outside the shop window of his employer's shop, a well known firm of out-fitters. Suddenly, a lanky figure rushed outside, flung a tape measure round my waist, and hustled me inside, and before I was aware of what was happening, I was walking outside again with a large parcel under my arm. Nowadays, when ever I feel too happy with my lot, and want to bring myself back to grim reality, I just open my wardrobe door.

THE PRO-AUTHOR

James is, without doubt, one of the leading science fiction authors in the British Isles today. In fact, to date (summer 1955) he has had ten stories published, three of them being anthologized. He is also a fully qualified "hard cover merchant" which up to now has been the monopoly of Old Man Charters.

THE CONNOISSEUR

I was talking to James one day. "I understand you don't go home during your lunch hour," I observed. "How do you spend your time after you have eaten your dinner?"

"Ah," mused James sagely, "I have discovered a second hand book shop of no mean calibre. As you know, my science fiction collection is very extensive, but there are one or two early Astoundings that I require. At this particular shop there are thousands of rather old science fiction publications, and I find it most exhilarating and instructive to browse there awhile."

A week later I was casually strolling through Belfast when I espied the dignified figure of James walking with definite purpose. I decided to follow. I must confess that I held James in high esteem (still do) both for his status in fandom, and because of his pro-author activities. I wanted to emulate him, you see. So I followed carefully. At last, he turned into a shop. I arrived there, and, right enough, the shop window was filled with second hand sf books, as James had said. Surreptitiously, I slipped inside, and tiptoed over to James. He was making a purchase. What a moment. This great fan, completing his collection of Astoundings. It was a splendid example to an innocent neo-fan like myself. I looked over his shoulder. I almost fainted. The book, I saw, was Volume 1, of SEX LIFE IN ANCIENT ROME. I turned away, a bitterly disappointed man.

I had my name down for that book weeks before James White.

SEX-FIEND...?

Do you know that some people have actually had the utter audacity to announce to fandom that James is a sex-fiend. The subject never enters his mind. I have already mentioned this important subject in another fanzine, so I only wish to state the following:-

JAMES WHITE IS NOT A SEX-FIEND.

Although I would be even more convinced if he would hurry up and return that book.

THE BRUTE

It is so sad to realize that James possesses a sadistic streak. Normally, this lies dormant, but every time he picks up a 9" square of cardboard, his eyes

take on that glazed look, his pupils dilate, and he froths slightly at the mouth. James represents the "killer" instinct personified.....but don't get worried, folks, I am talking about the Ghoodminton White.

When playing against James, one is faced with the alternative of winning, or surviving....and at 170, self-preservation rates pretty high.

THE EGO

I find that one can generally gauge a person's temperament and personality by studying a list of self-professed likes and dislikes. These few items below, taken in conjunction with the rest of the 'thumb nail portrait' should give a true picture of the real James White:-

LIKES

Mrs. White
 'High Noon'
 Ghoodminton
 Doris Day**
 Space Ship Covers

DISLIKES

Sex fiends named Harris
 'New Worlds' blurbs
 Vulgar Ostentation
 Non-operational flying*
 Sportsmanship in Ghoodminton

*There is a special significance attached to this. In his formative years, James reached a very high rank in the Air Training Corps (for air-minded youths aged 15-18). Part of his training consisted of being strapped in a glider, and towed along the ground in a series of bumps by a wire. When asked if he has ever flown, James, waving a modest hand, says he was "on ops."

**He says he originally thought her name was Dollars Day.

THE HUMOURIST

James is the possessor of rather a strange brand of humour. As Walt says, it cannot be classified. People say that the bacover quotes are the best thing in HYPHEN, and it is no secret that James supplies a lot of them. Here are a few of his clever remarks:-

All the memorable things I say people forget almost immediately.
 People laugh at the funniest things.
 You're marrying me just to get on the bacover of HYPHEN.
 Infinitesimal....at least.
 It's not good, but it's obscure.

James is also a great adherent of the phrase, "vulgar ostentation." He uses it a lot. The following three situations have been described by James as "smacking of vulgar ostentation."

1. Whilst walking along a canal bank, he saw a long, long coal barge, with about four square feet of deck space. On the deck was a racing bicycle.

2. When he saw an old lady climbing aboard a large four-engined aeroplane, holding in her hand a bird cage with a little canary in it, and

3. When he noticed a long, sleek American automobile, with plenty of window space, fitted with a small venetian blind covering the back window.

Well, I said it was unclassified wit.

THE PUNSTER---

As you have gathered from various sources, puns are one of the main recreations of Irish Fandom. As is only to be expected, James makes excellent puns, but he is more famous for the fact that he takes credit for making the worst pun ever made at 170. It really is shocking. Unfortunately, it is a commercial, and American readers will not grasp its full fruity quality. However, as a moral guide to intending punsters, and as a pointer to James White's intellect, I feel it should be included, if only in the nature of a warning. A short explanation will make the horrible thing quite plain.

There is a firm of biscuit manufacturers in Britain, called Scribbans Kemp. One day, we were discussing the merits of biscuits in general (a fascinating pastime) when James, munching away, said, "Oh well, Scribbans Kemp be choosers."

Sorry.

THE WOOLER

Peggy is a sweet, wide-eyed, innocent and charming Belfast girl.

But she has seen life.

Do you know that she has actually met Chuck Harris, and survived? Then, going a stage further, she came to 170 and played Ghoddminton. And now she is married to James White. What a fannish climax. Fancy going to such lengths just to prove herself a fan.

Seriously, I am sure that Peggy and James are going to be very happy, and who knows, as time goes by, they may even produce a fanzine of their very own.

FINAL APPRAISAL

Now you know the truth about James. I hope you believe me. To sum him up, I would like to say, without fear of contradiction, that he is a quiet, honest, sober, intellectual and friendly fan, devoid of any unhealthy complex, with the single exception of ~~THE SEXFIENDS NAMED HARRIS~~. {Editor's Note: The cent-signs, in the original mss, were pound sterling signs, which this typer lacks.}

To complete the picture, I feel that an outside opinion will finally convince you that the real James is as I have described. The man to do this is Chuck Harris. Knowing Chuck as I do, the fact that in his dislike column, James put "Sexfiends named Harris" at the top of the list, will not deter Chuck from making an accurate diagnosis:

"Yes, it's all true. John Berry is truth personified ... the next time he's scheduled to speak from the bottom of a well I only hope that I'm up by the windlass with my hand on the bucket. But ... well, yes, James White is a changed fan. It's hardly credible that marriage could transform that shambling lecher that we knew and loathed into a shy and lovable moron, but the fact remains that it has.

"No, don't shake your head in incredulous horror, this is the truth. I, Chuck Harris, have been on honeymoon with James, and I know whereof I speak.

"I ... but no, this is John Berry's article and all I'm here for is to make 'an accurate diagnosis.'

As a strictly impartial observer with absolutely no animosity for cracks like 'Sexfiends named Harris,' I state confidently that James White is the Bloodiest Provincial of them all."

--John Berry

"James is quite near-sighted and is the only person I know who leaves a nose-track between the eye-tracks."

--Walter A. Willis

JAUNDICED EYE... by Wm. Gault

There is a derogatory phrase used by critics in the more enlightened critical journals. The phrase is "pulp writing" and they use it whenever they want to depreciate a man's technique.

What they mean is the kind of writing that used to prevail in the magazines (now mostly dead) that were termed "pulp" because that was the kind of cheap paper on which the mags were printed. Actually, "action" writing would be more nearly accurate.

Well, the field produced mystery men like Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett and Frederick Haslitt Brennan and the prolific E. S. Gardner. Magazines like the old Argosy, Adventure, Blue Book, Black Mask, Detective Fiction Weekly would be included in the term.

And these magazines produced some fine stories by some exceptionally gifted men. Any critic who took the trouble to read them would be bound to find a few stories he liked. Unfortunately, very few critics can read and even fewer can think. I imagine what they do is have someone run old tape recordings of Edmund Wilson's opinions and from them they get certain critic's phrases and certain blind prejudices. Mr. Wilson was beautifully acid but not always discerning and he had a great lust for the obscure.

Believe me, there is nothing personal in this diatribe; I have enjoyed about an 85 percent favorable critical reception on every book I ever turned out. If this is immodest, it is also statistical and I have clippings to prove it. Besides, I am a hack and know it. And am proud of it, in a way.

My beef is concerned with the readers who might be frightened away from the print market by these hair-splitters. I love the printed medium because no time clock is involved and I hate time clocks. I want to survive in this medium, and quite possibly prevail. And we have such awesome competition, TV and the silver screen and a thousand other entertaining distractions.

I want people to read and I would rather have them read Drano ads than read nothing. And the great scorn of the critics could conceivably put them out of business eventually, a very chilly commercial attitude. But they go blindly on, losing readers and alienating customers.

A man like Truman Capote is searched minutely for symbolisms that give his lavender words a deeper meaning. I respectfully insist that this kind of search would find even deeper meanings in Max Brand. Because even critics can see that Hemingway is great, it distresses them that he has hair on his chest. So he is also searched for symbolism, in order that the critics may safely acclaim him. Mr. Hemingway is about as symbolic as a poke in the nose, but lucidity is a crime to critics and they must have a different reason for liking him. They don't want to be associated with the people, those horrid things who want to buy books.

Don't listen to 'em. You go out and buy a book. If you don't want to strain the budget, buy a two-bit book. You will find one to suit any taste, from Joyce to Spillane. But decide for yourself if you like to read. And if you do, buy some more books and get that library card. You can buy half a dozen for the price of one drink at Ciro's.

Who knows, you might even enjoy reading.

--William Gault

THE FALLEN MIGHTY

The article overpage is reprinted from the Brentwood (California) Pacer for April 28, 1955. It appears here with Mr. Gault's permission.

This is the second time Mr. Gault has contributed---albeit unknowingly---to this magazine through a sort of Gault-to-Bloch-to-Grue triple play. He sent a clipping of this column to Bob Bloch as he had previously sent a photograph of the lizard-man who appeared on the cover of Grue's 21st issue.

When Bob showed me this column, I felt a strong itch to reprint it here. For one thing, it leads nicely into the following discussion; for another, it expresses my own opinions on certain matters in an admirably succinct fashion.

For a long time now I've been more or less passively deploring the current trend away from the printed word. A picture is worth 10,000 words if we are to believe the ancient catch-phrase (and how often is our thinking clouded because we blindly accept these platitudinous old proverbs?) and each passing year sees further encoddlment of the moron who prefers to just look at the pictures.

I'd say the trend was getting well under way about the time I was in high school (1936-1940). In those days the shag-edged pulps (now all but extinct, as Mr. Gault notes) constituted a large part of a newsstand's stock in trade. Nearly every place which sold magazines had tall racks of the things and they fitted beautifully into the loose-leaf notebooks carried by students. Beyond any reasonable doubt a large portion of my present uneducated condition can be directly attributed to the countless happy hours I spent in study-halls, avidly following the swashbucklesome exploits of Doc Savage and his myriad contemporaries. But, given the chance, I suppose I'd probably do it all over again so wot the hell.

I guess the popularity of the shaggy pulpzine was a natural outgrowth of the depression years although, of course, many of them predated 1929 by several decades. The dime-novel (or the penny-dreadful, as they were called in England) has been around in one form or another for a hundred years or more. Around the turn of the last century they were called nickel-libraries and mightily indeed did they flourish, with fresh issues appearing every week.

But the primary concern of this series is with the pulpzine which chronicled the deeds of a single cast of characters through the years and for this genre, the Golden Decade may be said to be bounded by 1929 on the one end and 1939 on the other. The few which pre-dated 1929, such as Nick Carter and Wild West Weekly (yes, WWW, later a fine general no-holds-barred western, once concerned itself solely with a chap called "Young Wild West," or "Wild" for short) did not last through to 1939.

For the sake of those fortunate readers whose birthright didn't include a first-hand experience of the depression years, it should be explained that, in those days, there was a very popular demand for a source providing a lot of reading at a modest investment. The traditional price was a dime (later leading to the laughable paradox of a copy of Dime Western that sold for 25¢ a copy), which bought you several thousand words and a few hours of escape from the not-too-pleasant realities of that era. Reading was a cheap way to pass the time and conditions were such as to foster a demand for a good, cut-rate Lethe. Someone---the name escapes me---has noted that the cliché, "Wine, Women and Song" was temporarily modified to Beer, Momma and the Radio. Suffice to say, it was a good time to have some stock in pulp publishing firms.

A number of assorted factors combined to render the character-continuity pulp obsolete. The gradually increasing prosperity of the later thirties and the cultural impact of the war years were probably two of the chief causes. One could point to the publications which have largely supplanted the pulps but they are effects rather than causes.

The picture-magazines (Life, Look, Pic, etc.), the comic-books and the paper-bound pocket book have divided the pulp's former audience among themselves---at least such portions of it that still patronizes any printed medium. The first two are much less effort to read; the latter is vastly more respectable in appearance and has a considerably larger scope of subject matter.

The pocket book enjoys significant advantages over its spiritual ancestor, the pulpzine. It carries no date and can therefore remain on the stands until it is sold. Its appearance is physically less disreputable (in most cases) than that of the pulp (most of which put up a pretty lurid front) and it seems to require vastly less expurgation.

Most of the old pulp magazines were scrupulously, almost painfully, circumspect in the avoidance of questionable material. Possibly it may have been because their format gave them a cheap and trashy look, making it necessary to lean over backwards to avoid living up to it.

There were exceptions, of course; magazines such as Horror Stories and Terror Tales which started out along the approximate lines of Weird Tales, later shifting to a heavy line of sex and sadism. Some of the detectives tried the same pitch, though seldom with much financial success. Older aficionados will also recall the "Spicy" group: Spicy Detective, Spicy Adventures, Spicy Western, etc. It seems a little paradoxical that, as far as I know, they never produced a Spicy Love Stories ...or, for that matter, a Spicy Sports Stories.

But I don't believe that any of the magazines of that day, even the extreme examples just mentioned, ever carried such a heavy-footed emphasis on sex and sadism as do many of today's pocket books and "historical novels." Compared to Spillane, Rosamond Marshall and that ultimate extremist who writes under the name of "Matthew Blood," the pulpsters of yore were pretty tame.

I propose to inaugurate a running series of random comments on these old pulps, running through the next several issues. This is partly for the sake of the readers who have an interest in such things and partly for my own amusement. It is hoped that, as the series progresses, readers with pertinent comments and information will send them in for inclusion in future installments.

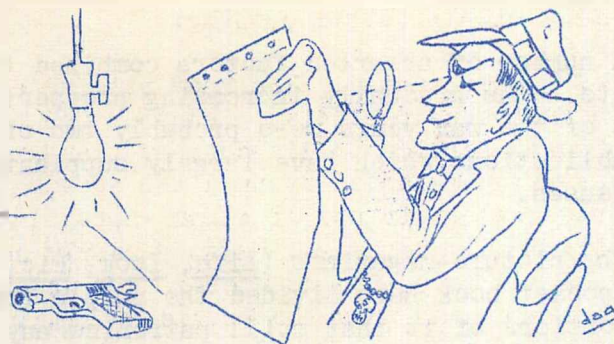
For example: who can supply a complete checklist of the titles of Doc Savage magazine? Can anyone tell me who the various writers were who wrote the stories? As nearly as I've been able to find out, Kenneth Robeson was a house-name under which many writers worked to turn out the Doc Savage and Avenger stories. I'd very much like to publish a complete Doc Savage checklist with notations as to the actual writer of each story. Ed Cox says that he believes a man named Lester Dent wrote several of the series. Does anybody have his address?

I'm kicking off this series with some comments on the magazine called Operator #5. What follows is not to be taken as the absolute final word on the subject but it seems as good a starting point as any and I do enjoy that introductory quote, for which much thanks are due to Redd Boggs who called it to my attention in the WOSW several months ago.

"How Are the Mighty Fallen Dept.:

'This quire of stencils has been carefully inspected by Operator #5.'

--James Blish, in Tumbrils #19, circa November 1948.



To fully appreciate the supremely delicious irony of Operator #5 laboring at so prosaic a task as the inspection of mimeograph stencils, it would be necessary to have bought several issues of the magazine called "Operator #5 America's Secret Service Ace," fresh from the stands at a dime a copy---and to have read them with the clear, unsophisticated eyes of the pre-adolescent---as I once did.

But it's no longer possible to do that so let me give you a few quotes so that you too will know the power and the glory that was Operator #5 in his salad days. From the story, "Legions of Starvation," in O#5 for December, 1934:

"Wait!" The young man's sharp tone stopped Grimes and Edelson in the doorway. They looked back, eyes anxious, puzzled anew. They saw that the darkness of the young man's eyes had grown deeper, that his lips had thinned with determination. He stepped forward briskly.

"Perhaps this," he said, "will convince you that I am warning you in good faith."

From his pocket he removed a thin silver case. A touch of his thumbnail on one corner released a catch which allowed a shining leaf to spring upward. Before the eyes of the troubled conductor, the young man held the case so that a brief letter framed within it could be read.

Edelson stared and stopped chewing. Grimes swallowed and said "Well---!" They glanced at each other in amazement, and back at the message. It read simply:

THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington

To Whom It May Concern:

The identity of the bearer of this letter must be kept absolutely confidential.

He is Operator 5 of the United States Intelligence Service.

The signature affixed to the document was that of the President of the United States.

As you may remember, in 1934, Roosevelt was halfway through his first term. The picture is that #5 is trying to keep these two clods from starting out in their freight-train. The train is loaded with wheat and the country is heading for a famine and #5 feels it in his bones that certain arch-fiends plan to wreak havoc on the train. But railroaders are a stubborn breed and these two are obdurate, not to say adamant. They pooh-pooh his dire warnings, FDR's autograph notwithstanding. So another intelligence agent (F-9), disguised as a railroad detective, adds his pleas to those of Operator #5:

Edelson chewed grimly (Tobacco, presumably). "I don't know nothin' about you, mister," he asserted, "but we got train orders to carry out."

F-9 smiled tartly. "You know nothing about Operator 5," he declared, "because he must shun publicity. Whether you have heard of him or not, he has rendered greater service to his country than any other man living. It was he who almost single-handed stopped the attack on this country by the Schreckites and prevented their use of plague-spreading germs which would have swept this nation with deadly diseases. Most recently he commanded, over the General Staff of the Army and Navy, the counter-attack which defeated the Asiatic invasion of Alaska.* He is the man whom the President considers the most vital bulwark of the safety of this country. The President listens to him, and you may well do the same!"

*F-9 is referring to the exploits of Operator 5 narrated under the titles of "The Invasion of the Dark Legions" and "The Green Death Mists" in the October and November issues of this magazine respectively. ---The Author

Well, as you might imagine, those silly railroad men were still not impressed and they insisted on taking their train through anyway. You'll hardly be startled to hear that they came to grief as a result of their mulishness.

That footnote, by the way, was pretty much standard practice in those days. Back issues were kept for as long as the supply lasted and they usually tried to have somebody say something upon which a footnote could be hung so as to tout off a few back-numbers onto the newer readers.

The Operator #5 series appeared under the byline of Curtis Steele. This may have been the name of an actual person and, again, it may not have been. It seems to have been standard practice for the publishing houses to choose a nice appealing house-name for their series. After all, a man's actual name is his own property and some of these series spanned 10 or 15 years and you can't hope to be able to depend on a single author to stick with you for that long and you can't keep changing the author's name all the time or the readers will yowl that the new writer is no good. So the writer's real name, for all we know, may have been Vladimir Potz, or some other, similarly uneuphonious monicker.

The slap-bang, gosh-wow style of writing was fairly typical of the genre. Operator 5 was very much of the crisp snapper school. William Atheling, Jr., that high arbiter of today's literary mannerisms, would have grotched at the profuse substitutes for the verb "said" that were bespernt through the Operator 5 saga. Seemingly, half the times 5 opened his mouth, it was to snap something crisply. A sample page shows that various characters did these things to get the words out: asked, blinked, spat brown, declared, looked amazed, asserted firmly, stared, demanded, reiterated stubbornly and declared bluntly.

Why the identity of Operator #5 should be such a closely-guarded secret is beyond understanding when anyone with 10¢ could purchase a copy of the magazine and learn that his real name was Jimmy Christopher. He was "... brisk-mannered, smartly tailored, alert ... his eyes were a flashing, bright blue, his forehead was high, his chin firmly determined ... he was in his early twenties, yet there was an unshakable confidence in his bearing that added dignity to his years. On the back of his right hand a scar shone. It was a mark of black and white and gray which resembled to an astonishing degree a spread-winged American eagle. There was a tiny charm affixed to his watch-chain (how many young men in their twenties wear watch-chains any more?), fashioned delicately of gold, a skull and crossbones with eyes of ruby-red." By way of concealed weapons, his belt was but a leather sheath for a rapier of Toledo steel. He drove a diesel-powered roadster.

I do not propose to defend any contentions to the effect that any of these pulps under discussion constituted Literature with a capital L. In fact, the mean level of the writing was pretty godawful. But they did have a certain rough-hewn charm to them. I believe it was Shirley Hoffman who once made a remark to the effect that a certain amount of satisfaction is to be found in the reading of competent hackwork.

A recurring theme that runs through almost all of these is the matter of disguise. Any continuity-character worth his NaCl could, and did, alter his appearance with the speed and ease of a chameleon. Here's how Operator 5 carried on:

As the boy sent the roadster sighing ahead slowly, Jimmy Christopher stripped off his coat and removed his tie. He clicked open a small compartment beneath the seat and removed from it a black metal case. It contained make-up pigments and pencils of special composition compared to which theatrical grease-paints were crude artifices. He soaked a sponge with dye from a bottle and quickly wetted all his face, neck and hands with it.

It dried quickly, leaving the skin a deep brown indistinguishable from natural windburn and suntan. He worked with pencils to make his eyebrows and hair appear to be sun-bleached; he applied a stain to his teeth; he embedded black wax beneath his fingernails and scraped them ragged with a knife. When Tim stopped the car he quickly removed his clothing and put on that which he had taken from the empty farmhouse. When he straightened from knotting the broken shoes upon his sockless feet Tim Donovan exclaimed his amazement.

"Jimmy! Gee—you don't look like yourself at all!"

That Tim Donovan just mentioned was Operator 5's right-hand man and general factotum; about 12 years old, freckle-faced, pug-nosed, tough-looking. "The light of the lanterns disclosed that he wore on his left hand an unusual ornament—a ring. It pictured, in white against a black background, a death's-head like that of his companion's watch-charm. On the forehead of the skull was a mystic number: 5."

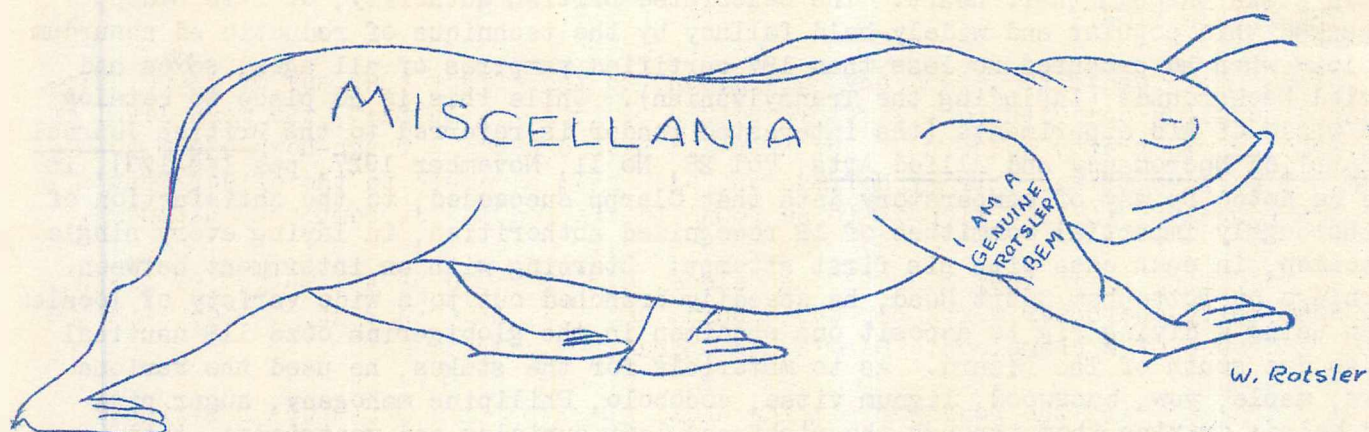
You see, like so many of his contemporaries, Operator 5 maintained a secret club for his admirers (The Secret Sentinels of America) and you could send in 25¢ and get a ring just like Tim's for yourself to wear. One pictures hordes of small fry reading the passage just quoted and looking proudly at their own ring.

Two others completed the retinue of Jimmy Christopher: Diane Elliot and his father, John Christopher. The latter was the former Operator Q-6 of the USIS, since retired by a bullet that had lodged so close to his heart that no surgeon dared to try removing it. Diane Elliot was "...strikingly pretty, vivacious, and keen-witted enough to have won advancement to a position as special feature writer with the great Amalgamated News Service. She and Operator 5 had met while trailing the notorious woman spy, Kara Vizna; since that time she had aided him courageously on several cases. She was avid for any scent of news, though she respected the necessity of secrecy in Jimmy Christopher's work." Operator 5's immediate superior in the Service was Z-7, "...gaunt-faced, garbed in gray, {with} smouldering black eyes."

This, then, is Operator #5 in his prime. Little did he know that the day would come when his name would be unknown to all but a few of the long-memoried faithful. Those frosty blue eyes, trying in vain to stare down a pair of recalcitrant railroaders, could not perceive a future when they would strain to detect flaws in mimeo stencils.

Sic transit gloria mundi!

--Dean A. Grennell



GRUE'S HOME WORKSHOP DEPARTMENT (Guest-conducted by our Thaumaturgical Consultant,
Mr. Douglas Graves)

Tired of appearing at conventions with nothing more unconventional than zap-guns, helicopter beanies and Jack Daniels #7? Want something to assure your appearance in all the con reports? Here's your chance—be the first fan to attend a con equipped with a genuine, workable Hand of Glory. You may have a bit of difficulty in preparing it but in the end I'm sure you'll agree that it was well worth the effort.

Before we get into the actual *modus operandi* of construction, it might be well to explain briefly just what a Hand of Glory is, what it will do and what it (probably) won't do.

The Hand of Glory is used primarily as a stupefacient. Authorities generally discredit the apocryphal supposition that it will assist in opening locks. My learned colleague, Dr. Eldrin Fzot, hazards the theory that the basis of this notion lies in the fact that some of the earlier recipes specified the inclusion of sesame seed. There is, however, some reason to assume that it confers invisibility in some cases. Pressed for details, Dr. Fzot said, "To my certain knowledge, the bearer of a Hand of Glory would be invisible to blind people. Maybe others. I don't know..."

Preparatory to discussion of the actual construction, it should be pointed out that little research, if any, has been done on the Hand of Glory in recent times and the methodology of the art has never, to the writer's knowledge, been co-related with modern technology. Whole new fields of dazzling richness await the assiduous worker who chooses to explore the applications of, say, radioactive isotopes and the wonder drugs as they happen to affect this particular line of endeavor.

Therefore, when the directions specify that the hand (there is no apparent virtue in the right hand over the left or vice versa) must be taken from a hanged felon, suspended from a gibbet by a public highway, a problem of moderately serious magnitude presents itself at the very outset. Many of the 48 states, Wisconsin included, no longer specify capital punishment for any offense whatsoever. It is, in fact, entirely possible to drive for thousands of miles through certain sections of this country without ever once passing a roadside gibbet with its grim burden swaying in the breeze as an object lesson to potential malefactors.

You are urged to disregard the injunction that the gibbet must be by the side of a highway. It is suggested that this is merely a *de trop* residuum of non-essential trivia, justly relegatable to the same discredited limbo as the naïve postulate that vampires are only administered a permanent quietus by burial at a crossroads with an

oaken stake through their heart. The celebrated British authority, C. Otis Glarpp, debunked this popular and widely-held fallacy by the technique of *reductio ad absurdum* in 1927 when he procured no less than 187 certified vampires of all ages, sexes and racial backgrounds (including the Transylvanian). While this is no place to catalog the whole of his experiments (the interested reader is referred to the British Journal of Applied Necromancy and Allied Arts, Vol 28, No 11, November 1927, pps 146-177), it may be noted by way of comparatory data that Glarpp succeeded, to the satisfaction of a thoroughly impartial committee of 12 recognized authorities, in laying every single specimen, in each case with his first attempt. Starting with an interment between turnings on Tottenham Court Road, he speedily branched out to a wide variety of locales, even using a diving rig to deposit one specimen in the globigerina ooze 118 nautical miles due south of The Lizard. As to materials for the stakes, he used the various oaks, maple, yew, basswood, *lignum vitae*, cocobolo, Philippine mahogany, sugar pine and balsa; driving them through the right and left auricles and ventricles, then through the pancreas, spleen, kidneys, duodenum, stomach and, "From McBurney's Point to the Island of Reil, returning via the alimentary canal." His final specimen, a Tuareg by name of Ali Ibn ben Hussad, was impaled to a tarpit in Trinidad at high noon with a polystyrene swizzle-stick from Gloppy Joe's driven through his veriform appendix. I seem to be veering...

It seems reasonably plausible to assume that the hand of a felon executed in the electric chair, the gas chamber or the guillotine would be equally efficacious. However, the writer would cordially welcome any notes and comments concerning first-hand experiences of the readers in this matter.

There are two basic approaches to construction: in one the hand is prepared in such a fashion that the fingers themselves form the candles in the finished product; in the other, the hand merely serves as a sort of candlestick to hold a specially prepared candle.

The latter method has much to recommend it. The burning-finger type requires that one finger must be lighted for each occupant of the building being entered. Instructions for this type usually note that if the thumb fails to burn it may be taken as an indication that one of the occupants is still awake. Obviously this is an inferior sort of device since it requires that occupants of the building must be asleep before the hand will work. Moreover, unless you are able to locate a hanged felon of truly singular polydactylity, you would need one hand for every five occupants. The disadvantage is at once apparent. The practitioner who proposes to ply his trade in a hotel would find it necessary to encumber himself with a whole barracks-bag full of Hands of Glory. This, plus the fact that the Hands are expendable, would mean that he would spend more time fabricating them than their meager usefulness would seem to warrant. He would be infinitely better advised, in such a case, to procure a tank of any of the better anesthetics, discharging it into the air-conditioning system (providing himself with a suitable gas-mask, of course). In final condemnation of the burning-finger model, it should be noted that the instructions say the flames, once lit, can be extinguished only with milk. Surely none but the most ultimately anosmic of burglars could tolerate the indubitably gamy smell of a sackful of Hands plus the sickening, acrid stench of burned milk.

The following method of preparing the candlestick-type Hand of Glory, while admittedly a shade vague and ambiguous in places, is perhaps the best of several which have survived to the present day. It is taken from a book published in Cologne in 1722 called Secrets merveilleux de la magie naturelle et cabalistique du Petit Albert. The translation is by Grilloit de Givry and appears in his interesting but unfortunately sketchy Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy (Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1931) on p180, et seq. Quote follows, next page.

"I own that I have never proved the secret of the Hand of Glory, but I have several times been present when sentence was passed upon various scoundrels who had confessed under torture to having employed the Hand of Glory in robberies committed by them. The uses of the Hand of Glory is to stupefy those to whom it is displayed and render them motionless, in such a way that they can no more stir than if they were dead. It is thus prepared: Take the right or left hand of a felon who is hanging from a gibbet beside a highway; wrap it in part of a funeral pall and so wrapped squeeze it well. Then put it into an earthenware vessel with zimat, nitre, salt, and long peppers, the whole well powdered. Leave it in this vessel for a fortnight, then take it out and expose it to full sunlight during the dog-days until it becomes quite dry. If the sun is not strong enough put it in an oven heated with fern and vervain. Next make a kind of candle with the fat of a gibbeted felon (don't forget to pick that up too when you go for the hand...save a trip --dg), (as well to take both hands while you're at it and make up the other for a friend --dag) virgin wax, sesame, and ponie, and use the Hand of Glory as a candlestick to hold this candle when lighted, and then those in every place into which you go with this baneful instrument shall remain motionless."

De Givry goes on to note: "The difficulty of this sufficiently gruesome preparatory process is increased by the uncertainty attaching to the word "zim~~at~~:" Is it zimar, which means verdigris, according to David de Planis-Campy, or zimax, which--- still according to the same author---corresponds to the Arabian sulphate of iron? As to the word "ponie," its meaning is entirely unknown to us; in the dialect of Lower Normandy, however, ponie means horse-dung, and it is more than probable that this was the ingredient used by sorcerers, as it is very combustible once it is dry."

There are, of course, counter-charms to nullify the effects of the Hand of Glory. One such is to rub the thresholds of a house with an unguent compounded from the gall of a black cat, the fat of a white hen (at last, Ellison---a use for chicken fat!--dg), and the blood of a screech-owl; the whole being made up during the dog-days.

Well, there you are. Labor Day and the affair at Cleveland will be upon us before you know it and you'll surely want to participate in what may well be the latest fad in fandom. What's more, if this issue gets mailed on schedule it should reach you right smack in the midst of the dog-days (hot, isn't it?)---traditional time for this sort of work. Do it now and you won't have to go a-hunting fern and vervain (whatever that may be).

The usefulness of a good efficient Hand of Glory at a science fiction convention is so obvious that I really hesitate to point it out for fear that some will take it as an insult to their intelligences. House-detectives, for one thing---those traditional Nemesises of the innocent reveller---will no longer hold any terror for you. The more conventional conventioneer, so hopelessly enthralled to Morpheus as to desire indulgence in the bourgeois practice of sleeping (say between 04:30 and 06:30), will find the Hand of Glory a truly invaluable item of equipage when nearby clots of fans are still merrily making wassail, dashing their fists through door-panels, holding carnival and hurling each other down flights of stairs with shrill whoops of joy.

What's more, there seems to be no valid reason why it wouldn't pay for itself in the end. When you get ready to leave, just present it to the desk-clerk and slip unobtrusively out the door without paying. If you contemplate this particular stragem, don't forget to register under an assumed name and address in the first place. For example, you might sign in as Wilson Tucker, of Bloomington, Illinois, or some similar, obviously assumed name. Well....good luck!

--Doug Graves



GNURRSERY RHYMES

LUCK OF THE GHAME

Little Willis laughed and glee'd
When he saw Chuck Harris bleed;
Don't think Willis' heart is flinten---
That's the way you play Ghoodminton!

--Fred Remus

Little Wilson, just for fun,
Stole a big atomic gun
But said, "Shooting it's no fun---
Damn' thing weighs a blooming ton!"

--Percy Bysshe Pong

HONI SOIT QUI MAL DE MER*

Hey pass me the trencher, Trelawney,
And spare me that shake of your head.
I'll grant you we're gonna miss Granny
But she's...tasty...in slices on bread!

--A/2C Verlyn G. Schwarck, USAF

*title courtesy Agberg

3.141592 A LA MODE

Shrdluie woman,
With all your etaoín rings
You lead a qwertyuiop around
By your asdfghjkl strings.

--Basil Vortch

FUGUE IN H MINOR FOR CLAVICHORD, ELECTRIC OCARINA AND MULICAL SAW

When the quail come back to San Quentin,
And Capistrano swallows a yawl,
I will strive to congeal my elation
As the grunion run in Azusa
If the comic-strip, Lala Palooza,
Is ghosted by Thomas Hart Benton
Then I'll try for a re-incarnation
As a platypus born with a caul.

--Eldrin Fzot

No more rhyme

That s'all ^{this thyme} y'all. --dag

TRANSLATED FROM THE AXLEGREASE

They say the air on Mercury
Is smoggier and murkier
But mopery and jerkery
Is greasier and Turkey-er.

--BV

THEGAURUS AND THE MINOTAUR

O sing a song of balderdash,
Of usufruct and calabash,
Of eisteddfod and holocaust,
Of Jimmy Joyce and Bobby Frost,
Of propaedeutic causerie
In plangent, clinquant prosody.

Then strum a lay for vichyssoise,
For still-born stones all green and mossy,
For cantilevered carytids,
For marinated katydid;
Our culture's rotting on the vine---
Heigh-Ho! It's time for What's My Line?!

--José Maniah

THE FICKLE FINGER WRITES

the mutters in the grue morgue

Our 23rd issue was a biggish thing, all material and no letters. Hardly any of the readers who commented had the hardihood to send separate remarks on all 17 items and I regret that, in some cases, the mail yielded nothing worth quoting. I don't want the contributors in question to feel that their work went unappreciated. There are some things which, no matter how good, inspire no special comment. It has never been my policy to publish something one issue and then, next issue, publish a letter tearing it to shreds. If constructive criticism comes in which I feel will be of benefit to a contributor, I'll pass it along to him or her in direct letter. But I prefer not to humiliate a contributor before the entire readership. I feel a very large debt of gratitude to the people who help me get this periodical together and I sincerely believe that they are entitled to every courtesy and consideration I can extend them. Even letter-writers are lumped in as quasi-contributors. That is why I'm not mentioning the name of the writer to whose letter this is a more-or-less direct answer. Clear?

Blish's Send It To George was warmly received...unanimously applauded to the very best of my recollection. Several people wanted to know the name of the agency in the article, to which I can only say that if Blish had wanted it known, he'd've used it.

Chuck Harris' fan-thing, It's Eney's Fault, was liked by even more people than I'd dared to hope would appreciate it. Several people who'd read Investigation In Newcastle when it was first published were glad to get another copy since most of them hadn't been able to keep their first one all these years. A lot of first-time readers mentioned it favorably and nobody expressed dislike for it.

Christmas Tale, by the late Gerry Kincannon, drew a mixed reception. People either liked it a lot or disliked it with equal fervor or ignored it. I'll admit it was bitter but I thought that was what lent it charm. I couldn't very well explain why it was bitter last issue since Gerry was still alive at that time and all of us were carefully keeping up the pretense that he'd be with us for many years to come. But he knew, as he once told me several months ago, that the Damoclean sword over his head was held up by a very frayed and moth-eaten cobweb. In his position, you'd have been bitter and so would I. Gerry died on April 16th, of an incurable kidney and heart condition brought on by an improperly treated case of rheumatic fever he'd had as a child. He would have been 33 on August 9th of this year. We miss him.



Countless readers pointed out something that I should have seen for myself: that both Christmas Tale and Scheidam, 1671 had their payoffs woefully given away by that ill-chosen introduction. Poor editing on my part and no excuses.

I drew accusations of poor editing on one other score but my feelings on that matter are somewhat more bristly. I mean the annotated Gettysburg Address by Bob Bloch. I must depart from my usual policy here because one of the critics, G M Carr, published her comments in her own magazine. Besides GM, two other readers entered notes of mild and well-bred protest and one puling pill-brain poured forth a peck of pinchbeck pseudo-patriotism, roundly excoriating both Bloch and myself for our offense against humanity, demanding that I publish a full apology in this issue for having published it in the first place or else drop his name from my mailing list. I don't believe I've had such an easy choice in years. Cows will flit from tree-top to tree-top on wings of sheerest gossamer before you see that apology in these pages, bud. But I forget—you aren't reading this, are you?

I want to say, quite unequivocally and with no reservations whatsoever, that I published that article for one reason and one only...because I firmly and sincerely wanted to. I ran it with complete certainty that it would engender almost exactly as much unfavorable reaction as it did. If I had the chance, knowing what I know now, I most damned well certainly would publish it again. That's fairly biguous, is it not? I don't know what the circulation of GM Carr's magazine may be but I'd guess that Grue's (200 this issue) is comparable. I feel it is only fair to give Bob's views as much circulation as hers received. The Willy Weyauwegan is quite capable of defending himself, witness:

"Well, I'm sorry GM got herself upset about the Lincoln Gettysburg Address squib, and I hope you're not.

One thing I can practically guarantee you: Abraham Lincoln wouldn't have been upset about it. Not the Abraham Lincoln who loved Josh Billings and Artemus Ward. What GM Carr probably doesn't know is that Lincoln held up the most important cabinet meeting of his life -- the one in which he was to present his draft of the Emancipation Proclamation -- in order to first read them a squib by Artemus Ward which ridiculed Lincoln. Old Abe, from all authentic and intimate biographical accounts, could take a joke on himself and had no illusions of sanctity. I don't think he would approve of the present-day tendency to deify him. On the other hand, I greatly doubt if certain present-day fans would care much for Lincoln if he was actually around. They would be shocked by the fact that he didn't go to church and had no faith in organized religion, only in a personal concept of God. They would certainly disapprove of his attitude towards negroes, and they would not care for his vulgar relish of offcolor stories. They might even deplore his faith in dreams -- and I doubt very much if the Gettysburg Address would mean any more to them than it did to most citizens at the time; they, and the newspapers, were much more impressed with the lengthy, polished address of Edward Everett, who spoke on the same program, and who enjoyed the same reputation as a Deep Thinker as Joe McCarthy does in certain quarters today. But all this is a matter of historical record, and has nothing to do with personal attitudes. Still, I hadn't quite realized we had reached the point where poking fun at Lincoln was "objectionable", though I do know that such is the case in Soviet Russia where it is not safe to make jokes about the late Lenin or Stalin. Well, that's progress for you, I guess. Personally, I'd probably be happier in Lincoln's day, when America had a sense of humor about itself. At least then I wouldn't offend anyone -- which is hardly my intention."

Robert Bloch,

Box 362,
Weyauwega, Wisconsin.

Like a fighting bull who, distracted by the muleta, misses the matador, GM and the mercifully anonymous fugghead mentioned above overlook the fact that any satire

contained in that article was directed, not---repeat, NOT---at Lincoln but at a practice all too common among certain fan-editors these days, the writer included. What I'm referring to is the way we chop up another person's carefully-engineered stream of prose with ill-chosen and often childish inserted comments {like this}. For the article to be effective, the literary victim had to be of sufficient stature in the first place in order to set off the rank puerility of the insertions. This was perfectly apparent to most of the readers, GM, it's a pity that you and what'sizname didn't catch it too.

Back to G23: there was excellent response on Tucker's sanserifed pages and Mal Ashworth's Willistuff. Es 'n Les Cole will doubtless be unrepentantly happy to hear that they confused the ever-loving bejayzus out of some readers who seem to have taken the Coles' tongue-cheeky pseudoconreport as straight goods and couldn't figure why it didn't gibe with others they'd read. Many of the more perspicacious readers said they liked it. (Did that paint ever get dry, Es?)

JeAndy Young's Holmesweethomily drew chuckles from some and lead others to suggest that the horse/color gag had been fairly well run to earth. I agree, and I suppose you've noticed that there isn't any continuation this issue.

Eney's intricate rhyme-scheme easily stole the show amongst the Gnurrserly Rhymes, partially due to the fact that most of the readers had seen Art Rapp's poem when it first appeared.

Miscellaniæ: the saga of the Mason City pranksters, which so awed Bloch and me, drew an absolute, 100% blank to 14 significant decimals among the readership. So, to all practical intents, did the letter of the Psiren from Ptexas...a bit of business which occasioned quite a lot of interested discussion in the WOTW in its day. The news that Exorcism is still being practiced today drew an "of course. So what?" response, mostly. So what? So I don't know...are they still burning witches too? I suppose someone will reply to that one, "Sure. Doesn't everybody?" Ijustworkhere.

Happily, the business about the interlingual insults hit more pay-dirt. Jan Jan-sen, (229 Berchemlei, Borgerhout, Belgium) had this to add:

"Insults vary even from country to country, even where the language is the same. Here 'smeerlap' is one of the worst insults you can use. Just across the border in Holland, the term is meaningless as an insult, and they use 'smeerlapje' (diminutive form) as an affectionate name. Imagine our surprise when some cousins came over and started calling their boyfriends 'smeerlapje'. And they come from only some 60 miles away. So now you'll be left wondering when someone calls you 'smeerlap'. Is he a Flemish one, and should you bash him one in the nose, or is he Dutch, and should you treat the lovely character to a drink?"

I dunno, Jan. Smeerlap sounds deliciously vile and I've been sitting here rolling it across my tongue and trying for feel: You couldn't maybe sort of give us a literal rendering of its meaning in English, could you? Or couldn't I print it?

Willis liked the Sticky Quarters business; Geis and Joy Goodwin the notes on my incipient negroaeileurophobia (I like not the looks of that spelling but it's not in ye Webster's)(how's aileuro- look?)...well, anyhow, the black-cat-stuff. Rotsler went for the account of the lucky aircrewman; Ron Ellik liked the color-notes, as did others; Harris liked the cochineal-bug comments; I seem to recall a humorous remark from Harry Warner, Jr., on the shark quote and Eney and Gregg Calkins seconded the choice of the Masfield poem. #Warner also went for Agberg's Bradbury sportcake; Berry's first installment was extremely well-received and Boggs' grue-probings drew all yays and no boos. #The main response to TRV was a notable letter from George Charters, which I wish to hell I had room for here. Had forgot how FFW eats up the stencils. --dag



THE REAR

VISIPLATE

REVIEWERS PLEASE NOTE: People keep saying in reviews that Grue follows a "Pay After Reading" policy. Please be informed that it damn-well doesn't. Grue is strictly a cash in advance sort of affair so far as the paying subbers are concerned. Grue sells for a standard rate of one-half cent per page to the nearest nickel. You send me 25¢ (or one shilling sixpence to Chuck Harris of: "Carolyn," Lake Avenue, Rainham, Essex, England) and I will send you the next 50 pages or so. I'd prefer that you don't send more than that, nor less than 15¢ or nine pence. This particular issue goes for 15¢ or two for 25¢...the next issue will go

around 24 pages. I note this because I've been victimized too many times by people who beg a copy and then either don't pay for it or...as in one case...just use it to write savage denunciations of the mag in someone else's publication. Pooley to pipple.

Here's a few new addresses since last issue:

Sgt. Joan W. Carr, /Clearing Wing, R.P.O., M.E., /B.F.P.O. 53, /G.P.O. /England.

Andy & Jean Young, /12 Sumner Road, /Cambridge 38, Mass.

Lynn A. C. Hickman, /200 North Huron Street, /Albion, Michigan.

Vernon L. McCain, /Box 458, /Payette, Idaho.

Charles Lee Riddle, PNCA, USN, /P.O. Box 611, /New London, Conn.

Bob Kellogg, /3105 NE 59th Avenue, /Portland 13, Oregon.

Richard E Geis, /1525 NE Ainsworth, /Portland 11, Oregon.

Eddie Robinson, /3005 Arlington Avenue, /Riverside, California.

damon knight, /106 West Ann Street, /Milford (Pike County), /Penna.

Curtis D. Janke, /1845 R Street NW, /Washington, D.C. (temporary, till 17 September 1955)

As always, this was started in leisure and finished in mad, mad haste. For this reason, many things aren't in this issue which were supposed to be. Had to skip some fine illos by David English, Pat Scott and others. Sorry, people, next time?

I suppose you noticed that Eisenhower has authorized the launching of a tiny sort of artificial satellite, maybe 9 or 10 inches in diameter, takeoff to be sometime in 1957. I suppose this is significant.

It's Thursday night, 4 August, as we close the forms on this issue. It must be sufficiently finished so that I can mail 68 copies to Burbee on Saturday, 6 August, if I'm to get it in the August FAPA mailing. If I make the deadline, it will probably be at the expense of my all-FAPA reviewzine, Bleen, so if that's missing you'll know why. I hope to have #25 ready for the November mailing and thanks herewith to Curtis D. Janke, who journeyed up from Sheboygan this evening to help put the issue to bed. Now to work.

402 Maple Avenue, Fond du Lac, Wis., USA.

Feverishly,

dag