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The cover of this issue is dedicated to Lee Anne Tremper who says in SPACE CAGE #5: "Now I think there's a conspiracy against me. Here I innovate the idea of sketching the farzine covers to go with the review and about half the zines I received this time had covers that consisted of a microscopic drawing surrounded by blank paper. That is, if they had any cover at all. Perhaps the artists don't like what I've been doing to their cover?"

Happy now, Lee?

H O C U S 14

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Apologies are offered to those who subbed to HOCUS through the mention in NEW WORLDS (thanks Belle) and expected to receive the copy as soon as they contacted me. Sorry friends, that I made you wait till this issue, but there were no more available copies of back numbers. Anyway, the best thing for neos to learn early in the game is that the majority of fanzines today are unable to stick to any accurate publication schedule consistently.

This is issue #14 of that grand-and-glorious fan publication (fanzine, to the esoteric) HOCUS. It is published on a very irregular basis (don't set your calendar by it) by Mike Deckinger who resides at 85 Locust Avenue, Millburn, New Jersey, U.S.A. It can be obtained for trades, contributions, letters-of-comment, or, if you want to be disgusting about it; even cash. Prices are as follows, 15¢ apiece, 2 for 25¢. Not more than a quarter accepted at one time. As I said, HOCUS is on an irregular basis (and will probably remain so) and the appearance of the next issue is in the unforeseeable future.

C R E D I T S

Oh yes, I suppose this is necessary, stenciling and typing done by Mike Deckinger, mimeography by A.B. Dick. Stencils courtesy of Impress Stencil Company, mimeograph courtesy of A.B. Dick Co., Mike Deckinger courtesy of his parents.

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HOW TO WRITE A PLANET-type LETTER

by

Donald Franson

It looks like lettercolumns in the prozines may be on the upgrade once again this year. Of course, there have been continuing letter columns in AMAZING and FANTASTIC (improving), SFS and FUTURE (too brief), not to mention ASTOUNDING or ANALOG (let's not). But the true fannish letter column, which died with SF QUARTERLY, may--just may--be given a chance again, by some friendly editor.

Unfortunately, maybe the fans have forgotten how to write that type of letter. It has been so long since there has been a lettercolumn of the fannish, conversational, humorous, type, yet solidly science fictional, that most of the younger readers (who are the mainstay of any lettercolumn, in any era) don't remember how it was, in the Good Old Days. To save the years of building up a new letterhacking class from scratch, we ought to go back and see.

The fannish-type letter took a long time to evolve, reaching its peak in the forties and early fifties in the otherwise, undistinguished raw-action pulp, PLANET STORIES.

PLANET STORIES was fortunate in having a series of intelligent editors who could go along with a gag, but could tell humor from corn--and who encouraged this kind of letter hacking just enough but not too much. (For a current example of this policy in a fanzine, see any issue of CRY OF THE NAMELESS). The result was a lettercolumn, The Vizigraph, which was held in high esteem not only by the fans, but by the other readers. In the early days of AMAZING STORIES, some of us read the letter column first, then the stories. In the heyday of PLANET, some read only the lettercolumn, and perhaps Bradbury (an incongruous contributor to PLANET's pages at the time).

Take the word of a long time fan who writes in the Winter 54-55 PLANET: (I am not using names, so that no one can accuse me of name-dropping. However these are excerpts from actual letters.) "Now I, personally, don't give a darn what format PLANET appears in. After all, I rarely read the stories. Once in a while The Vizigraph raves over a story and I go back and read it. I certainly don't buy PS for the art--your paper botches this effectively. I buy PLANET for the VIZIGRAPH."

Well, you new readers may ask, what did The Vizigraph consist of that was so appealing? Or the other good letter columns of THRILLING WONDER STORIES, STARTLING, SUPER SCIENCE STORIES, FUTURE, SFQ and other pulps? What was so great about them? What made them great?

Well, first of all, space. Page after page of fine type. Only the pulps could afford this, it seems. A short letter column is a stifled one.

Second, variety. One of the main objections to ASF's lettercol is its lack of variety. The same would apply to IMAGINATION's, which was mainly comment on the stories, as was AMAZING's, until recently. At one time now too long ago, Brass Tacks offered a variety which it does not now have. (Well, there is variety, of a sort--there are

different theories).

Third, and not the least important, an almost complete freedom of expression. Long arguments on philosophy, religion, science (yes, science) were not uncommon. In this respect, the lettercols of TWS/STARTLING and Lowndes' magazines even excelled PLANET's sometimes, concerned as The Vizigraph was with humor.

There are probably those reading those who believe that the letters in The Vizigraph (from the talk about them in fanzines) were the babblings of egotistical idiots. Well, yes, they were; but they were also fine examples of writing, unexcelled wit, and deep, original thought. The best convincer is an illustration. I'll quote from some of these letters. If you want to write a PLANET-type letter (I'm not saying you'll ever see it printed, in this day and age, you could do worse than follow these examples (from PLANET and its contemporaries);

Begin with a crazy salutation, to soften up the editor: (These are culled from the Winter 1948 PLANET, when Paul L. Payne was in the chair) "Foul Fiend Payne; PLP, old thing; Dear PLANET's Loud-Mouthed Parasite; PLANET's Loony Panegyrist; Dear Editor" (Dear Editor? How'd that get in there)? Payne went along with the gag, signing his editorial, "PLANET's laborious pundit."

Then start off with an original opening paragraph, a short one such as: "Taking pen in hand--I realize that this looks very much like a typed letter; it takes a great deal of practice along with native genius..."

Or a long one like: "The great hall, packed to capacity with the teaming millions of Fomalhaut IV, was enveloped in deathly silence. Only the majestic form upon the platinum throne stirred restlessly, watching the far-off gates through half closed eyes. A shout arose from a million throats as the great portals surged open, and the air was rent with the shrieks of screaming trumpets. The crowd parted to make way for the advancing herald. The eyes of the regal figure upon the throne lit up with anticipation. "Has it, then, arrived?" he asked in a hoarse, strained voice. Tenderly, he lifted the Winter issue of PLANET from the mat of grulzak skins at his feet. Quickly he flicked the pages, smacking his lips as he discovered that which he sought. "At last! At last!" His voice rose to an incoherent crescendo. "Now I can send for the noncondensing Sanaton 'Demonstrator' Pipe!" (There PLP, wasn't that preliminary worthy of Chad Oliver? NO CHAD! Put down that ato-gun! AAAAAAAAAAGGHHHH...)"

First comment on the cover. It will do no good, but it is a tradition. "We'll examine the cover first, 'cause I'm a conformist. We have, as usual, Our Boy, Our Girl, and Poor Bozo, whose only function in life seems to be to get ripped asunder everythree months..."

Then discuss the stories, intelligently. Yes, almost every letter in the old PLANET did this. Argue about the science, or lack of science in them, their philosophy and entertainment value, and do it so interestingly that the discussion may carry over to next issue. "Well written, but was ruined for me by a few glaring errors. Listen, McCarthy would never have moved the rock, because he would have been interrupted by his twin from an alternate world. But if he'd never moved the rock, there would never have been an alternate world. Get me? I thought not."

Criticize the interior art-work, if any. "The most glaring error committed by this blot on the fair pages of the Winter issue of good ole PS leers at the reader from page 115, illustrating "Duel in Black". Story states very distinctly that the scene is on the

moon. So Vestal draws in six planet-sized bodies." It's useless to criticize artists for not reading the stories, but it relieves pressure.

Ask the editor unanswerable questions: "Every issue a couple of people ask about PS going monthly, but no answer is ever printed. I take the matter into my own hands. I demand a showdown right here. Is there any chance of PLANET going on a monthly basis in the future? Answer yes, no, or ghuythropl, but answer! (Ghuythropl....Ed.)."

Talk back to other letterhacks: "If you don't want to read abbreviations, why in hell's name don't you stop reading the letter column and wasting your valuable time...?"

Praise the lettercol: "No conscientious hack ever skips La Vizi. One thing that will sell your mag if the stories are printed in invisible ink on transparent paper and the art is scenes of polar bears building igloos in howling blizzards, is the letter department. I wonder if any oily, flattering, sleazy, apple-polisher has told you it's the best in any of the pro magazines. If he hasn't, If he hasn't, let me be the first to assure you that it is. There, happy? What? You knew it all the time?"

If you are a fanzine publisher, contrive to slip in a word or two about your fanzine, but make it entertaining, "I pub a zine called ABSTRACT....We both edit sf mags mags now, Sam, and I'm tired of paying 25¢ for SS...so, WHY DON'T WE TRADE?"

Make dramatic, world-shaking announcements such as: "This is the last fan letter I'll ever write...good bye fandom..."

Mourn the good old days: "Where are the great ones? Oliver, Sneary, and of course the supreme JoKs, and others. Have they, peering balefully out of the tangled vastness of their white beards, decided to leave forever the hallowed halls of TRS to us younger fans? Perish the thought. What would we do without their letters to copy from?"

Go as far as to write a cute little story, as: "In the top floor of a great skyscraper in downtown New York is the office of a man who in his hands holds the happiness of millions of people.

"This great personage (who knows, I might send you a story sometime), one Paul L. Payne, is editor-in-chief of that famous literary journal, PLANET STORIES. As we approach, the scene is a lavishly decorated office with all the modern conveniences, concealed lighting, adjoining bar, and built-in blonde.

"Said Payne is a pale, stoop-shouldered individual, seated behind a huge desk, upon which are two high stacks of letters, one resting in a tray marked TO PRESS ROOM, the other in a tray marked TO FURNACE ROOM. Beside the desk are huge sacks bulging with fan mail. Payne fishes letter after letter out of the sacks, scans it listlissly, and drops it into one of the two trays. Occasionally he stifles a yawn.

"Suddenly there is a flash of light, a great puff of oily black smoke, and a crash that shakes the room. A tall, rather greenish character, with three eyes appears, bearing on one grisly claw a letter.

////////////////////////////////////
You'll wonder where the yellow went,
When the H-Bomb hits the Orient.
////////////////////////////////////

"Hey chief..." It begins, but Payne interrupts angrily. "Lissen Col. I thought I told you to quit appearing like that. Scares me out of a year's growth. Stinks up the whole place too."

"Sorry chief, but this is important."

"Well, what is it?" Payne grumbles, "It'd better be important, you know your job is to sort out the mail, a very important job. Now what is it?"

Col holds up the letter with reverence. "It just came in. I knew you'd want to see it so I came right up through the eighth dimension. It's...a letter from Lin Carter."

"Egad, Lin Carter," Payne babbles with tears of joy streaming from his eyes. He snatches it from Col's hands, slits it open reverently...

I think there is a good chance that long letter columns may return someday in the prozines. After all, many "mainstream" mags have them. So sharpen up your typers, fans, and revive the ancient art of prozine letterhacking.

--Donald Franson

Briefly then; I beleive that, by present standards, the most perfect form of society and of life would be one in which every individual had absolute freedom to do exactly as he wished but that each individual also had a complete sense of responsibility towards humanity. In other words, a society, where, if something needed doing, whoever was handy would do it without worrying childishly about whether or not he was doing more work or getting more geetus than the next one, a society in which no one would go hungry because the common sense of his fellow man would not let such a thing happen. In other words, I envision a utopian set-up requiring some basic changes in thinking of most of humanity; if you wanted to pin a name to it you would call it "anarchism" from the root words rather than the commonly accepted dictionary definitions, or, if you prefer, free socialism or libertarian socialism. Or another way: "There can be no true socialism without freedom and no true freedom without socialism." But I mean, hell, if you're going to aim for something, why not an ultimate ideal? Even the Marxists are willing to admit that this is the ultimate form society should take but they claim--and here there claims can't stand up by anybody's standards, including their own--that their form of Marxian socialism is just a step along the way in this direction, though as any halfwit can see, though as any halfwit can see, it's simply leading them deeper into a morass of authoritarian tyranny--so far that they've managed to outstrip the various forms of facism in this respect.

--Dick Ellington(in a letter to me).

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BOOK REVIEW

by John Berry

reviewing THE FRONTIER LIFE OF LES GERBER by Theodore Sturgeon, published by Ballantine Books, New York, Montreal, and Scunthorpe. Price \$5. (July 1972).

This biography is quite probably the best thing that Sturgeon has ever done. I read it all through, all 752 pages of it, in one sitting, and I know you will all do the same.

You see, Mr. Sturgeon recaptures the essential pioneering spirit of Leslie Gerber, and he traces the gradual rise of this individual, right up the scale from neofannism to BNFism.

Of course, as the title suggests, Mr. Sturgeon has taken as his main theme the many duels which Gerber took part in. I can vouch for the authenticity of the narrative, because, some twenty years ago, I was an eyewitness when Gerber zapped a cat, and even I realized that, at that moment, Gerber would go from strength to strength in this much neglected field of self expression.

In the Preface, Mr. Sturgeon gives thanks to his sources of information, many of the old world famous fanzines are mentioned, as well as several court transcripts, including the famous Gerber vs. Ley case back in '66. In chapter one, Mr. Sturgeon gives a brief history of the sidearms used in science fiction fandom. Most of his information is well documented. He gives credit to Irish fandom for first introducing the zap at a British Convention in the early fifties, and I was pleased to see he even made reference to my use of a plonker gun (("a short barrelled automatic, spring loaded, which is actuated by having a wooden or plastic sliver, with a rubber sucker at one end, which is duly inserted into the tube against the spring.." page 17)) at the Washington group Suite at the Detroit convention in 1959.

Mr. Sturgeon gives full expression to his literary technique as he describes in chapter 9 of the famous Nunnery Episode:-
"...and on his face Gerber wore a look of fixed intensity as he advanced across the room. Stepping carefully over two cohabitating cockroaches, he peered round the door. His features grew wan as he saw the vast bulk of Bill Donaho biting off the end of a Jack Daniels bottle. He waited, tense with excitement. In one swift movement, like an untamed roebuck in the scintillating rays of dawn, he leapt across the room, carefully avoiding a missing floor-board. With his teeth bared in the supreme excitement of the chase, he drew his dull-barrelled weapon, and gave the scrawny feline a concentrated rinse from whiskers to tail. Rapidly reloading from a half filled glass of sparkling amber liquid lying near the right hand of a recumbant form, he stretched himself to his full four feet eight inches and...."

Even in that short extract, Mr. Sturgeon rises to the heights of his profession. Such gripping pathos is usually only to be found in the works of Hemingway or Stuefloten.

The famous episode at the Tampa Con in 1965 is dealt with at length. The case made legal history, as it is well known that Mr.

Gerber had behind him the full strength of the legal profession in New York, in the personification of Senator George Nims Raybin. The trial lasted for over three weeks. Mr. Sturgeon had at his disposal the entire transcript of the trial, and as most of it has never been published before, some of the revelations are startling. Take for example the famous cross-examination on the fourth day (pages 188 to 235 inclusive):-

D.A. O'Grady: Mr. Gerber, was the side arm lethal?

Mr. Gerber: Not in so many words.

D.A. O'Grady: Oh, and pray what do you mean by that?

Mr. Gerber: Weeseel, it might have been a lethal lethal.

Senator Raybin: Objection, your honor. The D.A. is forcing my witness into giving expert evidence. We had heard before that it was the first time my client had used elastic bands.

Judge: Objection overruled. Carry on, Mr. D.A.

D.A. O'Grady: But in fact, Mr. Gerber, are you not an acknowledged expert in this particular field?

Mr. Gerber: No. I've used a six' bander Lone Ranger Sureshot before, but not a double-stretch Zorro Mark IV with a guaranteed 90 per cent stretch tension.

D.A. O'Grady: Come come now. I have hear a copy of UMGLICK 23 in which you give lurid details of the prowess of your weapon against one Robert Tucker at Punxatawney.

Senator Raybin: Your honor, if my client could demonstrate....

Judge: Hand Mr. Gerber the Double Stre...the side arm.

Mr. Gerber: It's like this, your honor. You attatch the elastic band here, and snick it on the metal attatchment at the rear. You align your eye against the back sight, and depress the trigger like so.....oh.....goodness me...
.....I'm so sorry.....I....

Judge: Sergeant, carry the D.A. in my chambers immediately...
.....case adjourned until I get a medical report...."

The notorious Gerber-Ley affair, beside providing a unique defence in the annals of forensic cross-examination, also provides Mr. Sturgeon with another vehicle for his superb descriptive powers. Take the bottom half of page 573:-

".....and he must have been electrically charged in that corridor in the Con Hotel in Helena.

The vast figure turned around and looked at Gerber.

"Great Bloch," gasped Gerber, "I'm so terribly sorry. I thought you were Ellis Mills."

"Schwinehund," the man roared, "haf you not seen me?"

"Honest, Mr. Ley, it vas, er... was an accident...I was only...."

Willy Ley's face underwent a series of shades, like the early morning sun shafting its frond-like fingers over a patchwork landscape.....white, pink, bright red, purple, which colors caused the black plate-size blob of black duplicating ink on his white shirt front to stand out in relief. His spatulate fingers hung at his sides like a bunch of bananas in a store window. He lurched forward and Gerber's face became set as he levelled the converted fire extinguisher at Willy Ley, and turned the nozzle to spray....."

The fame of Gerber's prowess with zap, plonker, elastic band ziner, and converted fire extinguisher gained international recognition. It is history that he won the TAFF ballot in 1969, and Mr. Sturgeon goes into great detail about the incidents at the Worldcon in Edinburgh, where Gerber held the hotel detective and eighteen policemen at bay for three days. The cause and final conclusion of the Battle of the Worldcon, as it was termed at the Assizes later that year, have been encribed for posterity in many a fanzine, and in the NEWS OF THE WORLD, and from confidential police reports Mr. Sturgeon has gleaned some interesting data about the hitherto "secret Weapon" with which Gerber fought this epic battle. Fans and official authorities have discussed the continuous spray of water which Gerber maintained from his twin hand zaps for three days, and, as Mr. Sturgeon explains (quoting from his police report):-

".....and as far as can be ascertained, the jets of water only ceased after the main waterpipe to the hotel had been blocked. This was done in the first instance, not to incapacitate Gerber, but to stop the main streets of Edinburgh from being flooded. Subsequent investigations proved beyond doubt that Gerber had inserted two lengths of rubber piping from the barrel of his water pistols to the main water tank in the roof of the hotel. For almost three days Gerber kept the police from capturing him, and, his final surrender was only facilitated with the assistance of two frogmen from the Royal Navy. Perhaps it should be pointed out that..."

Although I received my edition as a reviewer's copy, I would unhesitatingly recommend that this book should be in the possession of anyone calling himself a fan. The prose is exceptional, and through the medium of Mr. Sturgeon's pen we are shown many hitherto neglected sides of Mr. Gerber's passion for aggressive intent at fannish gatherings. It is not often that a writer of the calibre of Mr. Sturgeon ~~simply~~ decides to use his superb literary technique to implement fannish history and technology, and I for one am grateful for this service he has rendered. As Mr. Sturgeon says in his appendix :-

"I have done my simple best to bring to you all the simple story of this well known personality. Although he zapped me at the Boise Convention in '71 I bear him no grudge. It only cost me \$14 to get the ink off my best suit, although I have always felt he went a bit too far when he zapped me in my second best suit the following night. However, that is history and I have kept my third best suit (he got me with a spray of red ink just as I was leaving the con) as a souvenir, so that I can hold my head up high and say that I, too, was zapped by Leslie Gerber. Of such characters is our heritage made....

I feel that anything else I say would be superfluous.

---John Berry

And it will be good exercise for you too, Jesus.
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THE LONELY GAFIATE

by Leslie
Nirenberg

He lay there for a moment and shook his head, in an effort to clear his clotted brain. His frost swollen fingers reached for his temple and were moistened by the blood which flowed from the shallow cut. Now how did that happen? he thought. He glanced at the pile of glass glittering on the pavement in the moonlight, the remains of the bottle of wine which Barney had asked him to buy. He grovelled towards it in a futile effort to save some of the remaining drops, but he was stopped suddenly by a shaft of pain which shot through his abdomen. He fell back and lay motionless for a moment, gasping for air, his breath a column of steam rising into the star-peirced sky.

He knew it was his hip again. Last time it had happened in St. Joe, but Barney had been there to help. He drew the soot blackened coat tighter about his shoulders to ward off the sudden chill which had gripped him. He tried to make himself comfortable. Barney would be looking for him soon, he thought. He'd be wondering what had happened to his 75¢. Yes, Barney would be out looking for his bottle, and it would only be a matter of minutes before Barney would find him. Barney was a good man, he had always helped him, why shouldn't he now? But he knew he was fooling himself. Barney wouldn't come, he couldn't come, not if he wanted to catch the southbound 5:05.

He looked up at the sky, a black piece of meat sandwiched between the slices of brick which flanked the alley. He smiled to himself as he realized that the stars, and yes, he too, were the ketchup and relish in this humanly inedible God-sized repast. Yes, he was part of a great sandwich for God, or the gods, whichever it happened to be. He pictured a great hand reaching towards him, the same hand which had millions of years ago punched the light-holes in the sky, reaching to grab this morsel from some gigantic tea-plate, at an Olympian orgy, perhaps.

It was getting colder. He knew he should have fortified himself with a few nips from that bottle, but it was too late now, the bottle was gone. He looked toward the end of the alley, at the neons as they blinked their sugary welcomes to So-and-so's Bar and Such-and-such's Cleaners or This-and-that's bank. He couldn't remember when he'd last seen a pedestrian walk past his alley. Ha! His alley! Yes, it was his alley, all his now, it didn't belong to a soul, save him. He looked at his brick walls, he looked at his garbage cans, even that cat over there scrounging through a bundle of papers was his. His head sunk into his coat, and a sob issued from his weathered lips. This was his alright. He screamed, "It's mine alright. It's my death-bed." Then he fell back, exhausted. He tried to shout for help but no sound came, he had depleted his last ounce of strength with that shouting. He mustn't shout, he thought. He mustn't shout until someone came. Then they would hear him and maybe call a cop, yes a cop would even be welcome now. The cop might pound the piss out of him, but it would be worth it for a warm bed in the hospital and some hot soup. It would be some improvement on this.

He knew it was cold now, but somehow he didn't feel it. His breath rose in great clouds. The pain in his hip was gone now, and

so was the chill. He felt suddenly warm and relaxed like a kid who had just flopped in bed after a relaxing day of play. He closed his eyes and felt even warmer and more secure.

A flash of light shot suddenly from above. He blinked his eyes open and squinted towards it. It was a window. It opened and voices issued from it:

".....get some air into this place....."

".....anybody hear know Hole in the Bucket?...."

They were young voices.

".....yes, I bought a bottle of Capt. Morgan...."

He knew them from somewhere.

".....say, did you hear about Bjo's?....."

".....look, you'll never find that ghoddam focal point...."

His eyes widened. Yes, yes he knew. He tried to shout excitedly, "Yngvi is a louse!" He tried it, but it came as an inaudible grunt.

".....sure he deserved that Hugo but....."

The sounds rained down on him like a warm drizzle. Why couldn't they hear, he cried to himself. He wanted to see their faces, he wanted so to see their faces.

"....when I was making this turn a guy in a Masserati cut me off and..."

He mustered his strength to cry, "Who sawed Courteney's Boat?", but instead came a hoarse whisper. He sobbed quietly in frustration.

".....then she turned around and slapped him...."

His breath came harder now. The columns of steam rose less frequently from the matted hair of his beard. He trembled and gripped his coat in an effort to rise but the pain in his hip reminded him that he must not leave his newly acquired world.

".....what about that Filk session, Juanita?....."

He lay back exhausted and wept quietly.

".....can't now. Deckinger took my guitar into the Men's room..."

He sunk down and lay motionless now, breathing heavily and weeping softly.

".....but ghod man, I mean Bloch is worth more than 63¢..."

He tried once more, raised himself on an elbow. He screamed "SOUTH GATE IN '58" and fell to the cold pavement, silent.

".....what's that out there?....."

".....must be a cat down in the alley...."

"Hey Bill, tell us about your cats."

"Yeah, howcum they have those crazy names?....."

--Leslie Nirenberg

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....HIS EYE WAS ON THE SPARROW

A 55 year old woman was robbed of her purse and stabbed under the chin today while she was praying in St. Gregory's Roman Catholic Church, 144 W. 19th st. Her assailant escaped.

The woman, Miss Ella Considine was kneeling in a pew when a man took her purse. She struggled with him and was stabbed. Then he ran across to an apartment and disappeared. Miss Considine was treated at Knickerbocker hospital and released. Her purse contained \$1, she said. Two other persons were in the church at the time.

ARS GRATIA EGOBOO
by Rog Ebert

Since this is a first installment of what may yet become a regular fixture in HOCUS, an explanation of the point-rating system--fandom's most muddled--is more or less in order.

Fanzines will be reviewed on four areas of importance: written material, artwork, reproduction, and layout. Each area will be worth four points. A perfect fanzine gets 20 points. Ergo, if I'm any good at this game, the average fanzine should get 10 points. But I'm notoriously soft-hearted (some say soft-headed).

A dangerous trend in modern fandom is that towards really shoddy repro under the guise of "genius" or something. The very neo pubbers, especially, seem to feel that their fanzines are of such obvious importance that botched up repro is excusable. This column will campaign for better repro as a means to better fanzines. Which it may well be.

Layout is apparently something which 20 percent of all fan pubbers have no conception of, and about another 10 percent have no enthusiasm for. I think layout is instrumental to a fanzine's overall influence; witness the effect superb layout had on the impact of zines like SATA and SKYHOOK, etc.etc.

Address all fanzines for review to me at 410 E. Washington, Urbana, Illinois.

VOID #21 (Ted White, 107 Christopher St, #15, N.Y. 14, N.Y; co-editor, Greg Benford. Monthly for 25¢, trade, letters, etc.etc., 24pp.)--This is almost completely by White, who contributes a long and well written insight into Calvin Thomas Beck and peculiarities, a column-sized Gambit, that is mostly comments on the current fan scene and the current Ted White, and various other shorter items. White is an entertaining essayist, altho his pieces sometimes run off slightly at the typer. Both the Beck article, and the controversial critique in Yandro #85 of AMAZING would have been smoother and possibly more effective if they had been written with some sort of outline in mind. But both read to me as if they were written straight through, without preliminary outline, and then probably revised. This may be slander; but the sometimes rambling, point-less byways that White travels detract from the effectiveness of his essays. A possible compensating point is that his resulting style is informal and sometimes even friendly. Beck is the creator of the Journal of Frankenstein and several of those 25 cent culture (e.g. male pin-up) magazines you see in bus station newsstands. White describes a 24 hour session during which he helped Larry Ivie lay out an issue of the Journal in Beck's basement. Sometimes I wonder at the lives of fans who can casually spend 24 hours doing such a thing on a basement floor. Here in Urbana, we haven't even seen the Journal of Frankenstein. This article is one of the best character portraits in recent fanzines.

Unless it's my imagination, Benford is getting squeezed out of VOID, issue by issue. Benford stuff this is limited as usual to editorial comment and some letter replies. Which may be, after all, the ideal way to co-edit a BN Fanzine. The fanzine reviews, titled "Bricks from a Glass House" in an inspiring show of modesty, are now being done by Tom Condit and Howard Lyons, altho Dave Rike may join VOID's reviewing staff in the future. The reviews are rather scrambled, possibly because of the great number of reviewers and also because White is unable to refrain from throwing in his

comment on the fanzines as a sort of a bonus. "The Boot", subtitled "a monthly award for outstanding fuggheadedness", is well aimed at the Fantastic Universe botch. Interiours are mostly by Andy Reiss, who has 2 cartoons on page 15 that are both fresh and funny. This is both unusual and encouraging in fan cartooning. Cover by Lee Hoffman sums up fandom's opinion of Analog nicely. Material:4.1. Artwork:3.7+ Reproduction:4.6+ Layout:4.9+ Total: 17.3(86.5%).

RETROGRADE #2 (Redd Boggs, 2209 Highland Place, N.E., Minneapolis 21, Minn.; monthly for trade, letter of comment, 8pp.)--Labeled as a second experimental issue, this contains editorial plans, miscellaneous comments, notes by Jim Harmon, and letters. Boggs is the paragon of fannish reproduction, and Retrograde illustrates this. Repro and layout are tops. Boggs' comments are smoothly and intelligently written, in a sort of New Yorker style run through OOpsla. Main lack is bulk--Retrograde is over before it begins. Boggs says his plans for the fanzine are not complete; but he has another good one on his hands if he can decide on a formula. As it stands, Retro is a superbly produced nothing; an interim fanzine holding forth until Boggs can come up with something solid. Present plans are to stay monthly, and if the next issue is, say, 20 pages, and as well produced as this, it should be a landmark of sorts. Material:4.2- Artwork:none-Repro:4.8-Layout:5.0-. Total:14.0(93%).

YANDRO #87 (Buck and Juanita Coulson, Route #3, Wabash, Ind; monthly for 15¢, 12/\$1.50, or sometimes trades, letters of comment, 28 pp).--Dan Adkins has a tremendous cover this time, one of his professional-type jobs. The rest of this issue is given over to the editorial columns, fanzine reviews, and pages and pages of letters. Only major non-column material in the issue is an odd but effective article by Rodney Waggoner that is more than slightly goshwowish. Waggoner's thesis is that stf needs a "change". Yet in the sentence before this startling panacea, he writes: "The field is all shook up. It's in a state of alteration, of change." His thinking is sort of fuzzy in places, and the article as a whole reads something like a term paper. One rather awkward ingredient is his use of fire as a metaphor on which to hang his article. (Examples: flamed to a blazing peak of popularity...embers still glow...roaring flame...steady warm hue...). Waggoner makes one highly debatable presumption: "The average reader of today is forced to sift through perhaps 200 stories to find even one that is worth reading." Taken literally, this would mean that only two or three stories a year out of the combined output of all the prozines are worth the time and trouble for reading. Some disillusioned fans may go along with this, but I refer Waggoner to the Best from F&SF, Ninth Series, for at least half a dozen that I enjoyed. One rather curious literary combination turns up when he speaks of "Writer, good writers such as Remarque, James Joyce or Faulkner..." On the whole, the article reveals an author who is very idealistic, overly conscious of his style, and not especially reserved in his opinions. Perhaps a little less enthusiasm (optimistic or pessimistic, as it may be) would have produced a more thoughtful article. I think that perhaps in another six months, or maybe a bit shorter Waggoner might be coming up with altogether another grade of stf criticism. The next Yandro will revert to the General-zine format, but this stockpile of letters had to be

mopped up! Artwork, as always, is good throughout; most of the letter comment is on White's Amazing article and the National Rifle Assoc. propaganda sent out with #86. Apparently there are very few prospective NRA members in the Yandro readership. The fanzine reviews by Buck are fandom's most comprehensive, but sometimes have a tendency to read like the Reader's Guide. Most Yandros are better than this one. Material:3.5- artwork:4.5- layout:3.4- reproduction:4.5. Total: 15.9 (79.5%).

GLAMDRING #1 (Bruce Pelz, 980 Figueroa Terrace, Los Angeles 12, Calif., irregular, 6pp).--This is a fanzine comment substitute that seems to have come up with a few of the best recent fanzine reviews. Pelz reviews in a way that I faunch for; he inserts personal opinions, side comments, non-sequitors and so on cleverly enough so that the review is entertaining, regardless of whether or not you've seen the fanzine. This is probably not the ideal--or traditional--way to review fanzines, and it works better in something like Glamdring, than it would in a regular fanzine reviewcol. Material:4.0- artwork:2.7- repro: 4.7- layout:4.0. Total: 15.3 (77%).

--Rog Ebert

WHERE WAS GOD?.....

Christians say that God is everywhere and that he knows everything and that he rules and directs everything. He is, omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. He knows, says the Bible, how many hairs are on every person's head, and when each sparrow falls. He knew about the Chicago school fire and saw nearly 100 children die in the flames. He saw 7 children, aged 2 to 11 die when their Virginia home went up in flames, while their parents were attending an Easter Sunday service. It surely must puzzle the minds of the sad and bereaved parents, why God, in whose honor they had arisen early, took advantage of their absence to destroy their children. Perhaps they are asking that if he couldn't have spared all of them, wouldn't he have at least spared one? Religionists will say we are unfair in blaming God for the holocaust. Well, if we admit that he did not cause it, we can still say he did nothing to stop it. Surely he could, if he is omnipotent. This is merely one of the inconsistencies of the superstitious nonsense that is called religion.

--The Liberal, 1959.

H O C U S P O C U S

Floyd Zwicky
1602 Fifth Ave.
Rockford, Illinois

I liked the cover of #13. Sure the musculature is a bit weird, but who's to say how an e.t. should be constructed, even to the unsymmetrical arrangement of the whiskers?

About the review of ON THE BEACH, you may have noticed that some critics have disagreed with you. They seem to think there was a little too much supine fatalism, and that some sort of way could have been found, at least to prolong life among the survivors.

HIS FATHER'S HOUSE by Edward Ludwig was the best thing of its kind HOCUS has yet printed. And Prosser's illos were very good, though I agree with the correspondent who says that Prosser uses a bit more shading than is needed with a mimeo.

Tucker's satire on hi-fi was also good, but a bit puzzling. Are we to infer that a certain degree of interest in this field will result in the possession of a creature similar to the one who ends the article?

What is sacrilege? Anything that doesn't present religion in a favorable light? I think the attitude of the writer of SF and the fan is easily explained. Science fiction, deals reasonably enough with science, which branch of human endeavor deals with the search for verifiable truth, regardless of where the search may lead. Since religion does not use the scientific method, and doesn't permit its use, these two have little in common, and naturally any writing that purports to deal with pure science, occasionally takes a crack at religion here and there.

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Bob Tucker
Box 702
Bloomington, Illinois

Did you notice, in those closing scenes of ON THE BEACH, that a street-cleaning machine had just washed down the streets of Melbourne? I'm referring to those last three or four shots seen in the last thirty or sixty second of the picture; the scenes were taken at dawn while the streets were empty, but a water spraying street-cleaner beat them to it--wide wet streaks are visible up and down the street.

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Ted White
107 Christopher St.
New York 14, N.Y.

I have a suggestion; I suggest either you use less pages or stronger staples, and mail your zine folded. The reason I say this is because my copy of what I guess is HOCUS #13 starts off with page 5.

Leafing through, I find that I really don't find much of the material interesting, or comment-worthy. Marion Bradley should have mentioned, if only as a punchline, that the neofan John Koning gave

her was gingerbread--I had a taste of it, and it was quite good.

I don't find Arkham House invaluable, and I am a reasonably complete collector of sf. The only AH book I have is the original SLAN. There may have been a few other sf volumes, but I don't recall them. Sf fans are not necessarily fantasy fans, and in any case I must agree with Harry Warner that issuing a man's wastebasket-leavings is doing him no favor. I for one have never found anything to excite me in Lovecraft (and I'm pleased that a number of other people have reached similar conclusions), and I couldn't care less about the fragments of stories even he regarded as hopeless. I consider Arkham House a very close thing to literary ghouliness; it disgusts me to see a company literally preying off the excrement of a long dead hack. There are worthwhile services in issuing a dead man's notes, only if they serve to throw some great insight onto his material, or if they have intrinsic quality of their own. Even Lovecraft fans assure me that these last books of leavings lack anything but name-value.

Writing does not necessarily consist only of constructing prose fiction, nor does fiction consist only of science fiction. In fandom one inevitably learns how to handle words far better, and becomes a more literate person. This is the main value fandom has for would-be writers. I think writing a con report is as much of a challenge to a writer as writing pseudo pro-fiction. In fact, writing a good con-report requires a good deal of a writer, and I am willing to take my hat off at any fan who succeeds at it. But if a training ground is wanted for fiction writers as well, I still think fandom is acceptable. (Mind you, I'm not pushing fandom as the place for all this, but just pointing out the possibilities). If you can write a good story, you can write good science fiction, or anything else. And you can develop story writing talents just as easily in writing stories about fans, or even writing Berry-type nonsense.

There is an excellent reason for not writing "Contents: Pornography" on your fanzine. The Post Office is staffed with a bunch of moronic, bureaucratic clods, and to tempt anyone who handles your mail, anywhere along the line, is inviting disaster. There are literal minded clods in the PO who would take such a description of contents seriously, and search your zine for justification to ban it. I doubt any of us could completely escape a mind bent upon ferreting out some morsel unacceptable to the PO in our zines. Likewise, the PO is not that familiar with these mimeo things--they look externally, like cheap pornography. They just might figure you were stupid, and take your word for it that HOCUS was pornography.

It does not pay to trifle with the PO. If you do, you start getting your zines back (with postage due) from people whom you know want the zines, marked "refused". (This has happened to me. It is inexplicable).

This invective about Von Braun is the first thing I've seen by Dodd that interested me enough to make me take issue with it. One might as well rail against Smith and Wesson, for the use of firearms in the wars, or Herr Doktor Porsche, for the VW Jeeps used by the Germans in WW2. Dodd is no doubt one of those people who feels "science is bad because it was "used" against him/people.

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Harry Warner Jr.
423 Summit Ave.
Hagerstown, Maryland

Incidentally, my copy of #13 may have been opened for postal inspection, unless it just naturally fell apart in the mails. When

it arrived it was neatly bound up with some sort of the fraying brown twine that the Post Office here and probably throughout the nation uses. Some of the remarks on the back cover led me to believe that it might have been the Post Office that looked inside. There have been other suspicious incidents lately. A tape correspondent recently scolded me for bad splicing, and when I asked for details, he said that a tape had arrived with a splice on both sides of a break. Now I'm absent minded enough to splice on the wrong side of the tape, but even I refuse to believe that I'd put a splice on both sides, and we're now convinced that someone in the Postal system wanted to know what we were chatting about. The moral might be that fandom would do well today to be a bit less obvious.

The front cover looks a trifle posed, but I like it in general, and the Prosser fans might be pleased to know that I approve fully of 3 of the 4 illustrations for "His Father's house". But the one on page 26 is another example of what happens when he bites off more than he can chew. I've seen Marlene Dietrich look worse than this woman, in recent unretouched photographs, while the fellow looks as if he'd come off a MAD cover.

I liked your choice of reprints, especially the one by Bob Silverberg, which demonstrates how times have changed--nobody even tries to be a completist anymore, since another decade's stuff has piled up. Marion's article complements nicely the related passage in her convention account in PHANTASY PRESS, and the story that I've already mentioned is pretty well done. Your review of "On the Beach" is the most thorough going-over that I've read. I have severe doubts that the movie will cause anyone to change his mind about the wars of the future. I'm afraid that people will see it, and will decide consciously or unconsciously that heck, it's just another of those crazy movies. Nobody has ever decided not to commit crimes by the fact that the criminals always lose in the movies.

John Tucker's article is slightly out of date by now, since a few more refinements have been invented by the Madison Avenues Gods of the Music World. There's an article in the current issue of HIGH FIDELITY about a home music system that is considerably more elaborate and expensive than the one described here. Arthur Sellings' article was one of the items that prompted me to read the issue immediately--a new topic, and quite a valuable elucidation of it.

I was surprised to see all that discussion of such a brief article about sacrilege. Cussing is certainly illogical, no matter what your beliefs may be. Maybe fandom should use the appropriate and non-theological terms, like: "You Blothead."

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Paul H. Rehorst

215 May St.

Elmhurst, Illinois

I can easily understand why some of the British fan might take exception to much of the praise and glory Americans heap upon Von Braun today. However, they should remember that times do change, as do people, and Von Braun was never a NAZI in the sense that Hitler Goering, and other deep-seated party members were, or members of the dreaded SS Corps were, for that matter. Von Braun was a youthful scientist, engaged in military scientific endeavours for his country, with little if any interest in things of a political nature. He was caught up in a vicious circle of terror, of which he himself knew little about, and was powerless to destroy or counter it one bit. He isn't anymore guilty of the deaths of those British citizens who died in WW2 V-2 attacks, than were our allied scientists guilty of

killing those Japanese citizens, who died in our two Atom-bomb attacks against Japan in WW2. Individual efforts honestly put forth in behalf of one's own country must be separated from the possible guilt of political leaders who guide their countries down the road to war. Guilt is usually determined by the victor, regardless of his relative right or wrong himself in that matter.

It is my personal opinion that Stf-fen should have nothing whatever to do with commie-tainted fen; since such rot-brained creatures merely employ Stf as a front for spreading Marxism. Don't be a friend to a known Communist, the same as you wouldn't befriend a coiled rattlesnake.

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Alan Dodd
77 Stanstead Rd.
Hoddesdon, Herts.,
England

I don't care too much for all these old reprints, somehow. I think it is cheating for an editor to use all old stuff that has seen print once, because a percentage of his readers will definitely have read it all once, and to make them sit through it again is all rather frustrating.

I reviewed the book of ON THE BEACH in YANDRO quite some time before the film was ever thought about, so I read your review very interestedly. I do agree, lets keep it in science fiction, but I fear that things are gradually moving towards the state where it seems the wrong people are in charge of the weapons to do all this. I saw a German film last night called GENERAL SPIEDEL which showed how he, Krupp, Kesselring, and every other Nazi from the first or second World War are now back in power--in the same jobs they had then--so perhaps it isn't unreasonable that someone like Von Braun should be back in his field also after the war. However, to all those who mention words like "diatribe" and "hate" about my opinions on Von Braun, fail to share with me my experiences of being under attack by his missiles. However, it would be interesting to see in the future if their parts of the world are suitably hit by missiles of the Russian equivillant of Von Braun--should they be lucky enough to survive--will they then feel the same philosophical feelings toward him--Tupelov or whoever it is--that they now feel towards Von Braun? I somehow doubt it. My own thoughts are that if Von Braun's rockets had been somehow able to hit the United States' cities in 1945 the way they hit ours--would he THEN hold the same exalted position in the U.S. that he does now? Somehow I doubt it very much. However, when the Russian rockets have ceased to fall no doubt we'll see if any existing U.S. Government wishes to employ Tupelov, who is responsible for them, against the next enemy--say the Chinese--and see if they give him the same treatment they gave Von Braun. Only after they have been hit by an inventor's rockets can the persons concerned make a true judgement of him, to my way of thinking. However in the next War there's unlikely to be anyone around to employ the man who makes the calculations for the rocket flights, and that at least is some consolation--this time the rocket man is going to die along with the people he killed, this time he won't get away to a nice soft, well-paid job, and he won't be one of the last to die thinking of contributions he has made to science and the saving of the "free" world. We'll see.

Prosser's artwork was very good again, especially the drawings of the castles, the spires, ramparts, etc., but the paper is a little too dark to show greater detail of his drawings, somehow.

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Mal Ashworth (for TAFF)
14 Westgate, Eccleshill
Bradford 2, England

Well first off, I want to say that I have immensely enjoyed HO-CUS; I found everything in it--and there seemed to be a lot--very interesting. This includes Edward Ludwig's story, HIS FATHER'S HOUSE, which stands out in my mind more than almost anything in the issue. This is an event of almost unprecedented peculiarity in my case, as I rarely find fanzine sf readable, let alone memorable. The Prosser illustrations accompanying the story also strike my mind as being excellent (though distributed possibly in less than ideal order); the drawing of the city and the sea was a real knockout.

I enjoyed your own bits, and the reprints were fine, particularly Bob Silverberg's. If that young fellow sticks it out he should make a professional writer one of these days. But I wouldn't like to guess which one.

Arthur Selling's FANTASY HILL provided extreme interest too. He really managed to convey some of the atmosphere of the district, and he has me well and truly hooked. When I'm next in London I'm sure I shall hightail it for Notting Hill and lose myself ecstatically among those ambrosial musty old book stores.

And there was a sentence in Norm Metcalf's letter which rather tickled my fancy: "Sneary is interesting, but what happened to the Sneayisms?" Why there, I thought, goes one now.

Another thing while delighted me about the lettercol was the discussions about how much interest God takes in fandom. My own feeling is that He has been gafiating far too long, and that if anything, we ought to get Him to try and take more of an interest in it. After all, if anyone is ever going to publish The Perfect Fanzine, I reckon He has a better chance than most of us.

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Al Andrews

1659 Lakewood Dr.
Birmingham, Mich.

The cover this issue was....well, I'll let that go. I like cat-broads as much as the next cat-broad-liking fellow, but this feline babe seems a bit dumpy, even gnarly. Also, she seems to f-l-o-a-t. The idea of the illo is interesting, but the execution is poor.

Silverberg's little flick of humor as regards completism was amusing, and in the main, the piece was worth reprinting. Sometimes I wish that I had a great, vasty, hall of shelves so that I might become a completist too; I think that would make me a completely insane, yet infinitely happy soul.

"Memoirs of an Stf fan" by Miller was a bit of a bore....not that all this didn't happen to him, I suppose, but just that it is a somewhat dull affair. His remarks about evolution and the Bible were amusing (and pathetic) since it is typical of the ignorance of people in general on both the theory and evolution of the Bible. I sometimes marvel at the idiot logic some people try to pass off as reason. Idiotlogic is the premise that to decide between two alternatives it is only necessary to learn of one of the alternatives....and ever so lightly, of that. There is one good piece of advice on such a subject which is: KNOW YOUR TOPIC". So few do, that they succeed easily in making an ass of themselves. However, I grant that the churches of Christianity are no help in Bible-learning since they generally fall to one of two basic evils. One, that being unable to discern between Bible-teachings and man made dogmas.

And two, the lukewarm state of compromise on everything, thereby producing only vague, misty, indistinct lines of beliefs. Take the hell-fire doctrine, for example. They won't get rid of God-bedamning doctrine, and they can't make such sadistic nonsense stick, so they can only compromise and say, "Well, it's just whatever you want it to be." Ask a minister of Christendom to explain "hell" in relation to "Sheol", "Hades", and "Gehenna", and watch the steely-eyed glare that you get.

Marion Zimmer Bradley's article on neofans is so true in many ways. All too often the fan who was a neo becomes, as he matures, so emeshed in the fanish world that he loses sight of a little thing called "sf" which is supposed to hold fandom together. And many times one finds that neofan, with all his faults, more interesting than the true-fandommite who cares little for sf.

HIS FATHER'S HOUSE by Ludwig was very entertaining, and had perhaps just a shade more polish in a few spots it probably could have sold to FANTASTIC a few months back when Fairman was just publishing fantasy therein. Prosser here did well also. Particularly the illo on page 21. The man looks rather like a "Prosser self-portrait" type and almost cartoonish, compared with the superbly distinctive face of the girl. That girl is a real piece of art by Prosser...one is almost tempted to believe that she must have been drawn from a live model or a photo.

The lettercol was long and varied. The only one I'll comment on now is Dodd. His view of Von Braun is basically right, but there is something about it that isn't right. It is true that American did not face in WW2 any air or rocket blitz, but Dodd seems to be on the brink of a "crusade" against Von Braun. Let us face it, be we American or British, Von Braun is not the one and only injustice in the world. For that matter, is it unjust (by our worldly standards) for a man to produce deadly weapons for his nation when it is at war with other nations? Consider the American heroes (or do you prefer the word "murderers"?) who turned a Japanese city into a nuclear hell by inventing the A-Bomb. Come now friends, let's be cynical, yet HONEST, the German scientists were killers. BUT our fine American and British scientists were just jolly good chaps and joes doing their bit for the war effort? CRAP!! If we are going to call the war scientists killers and murders, then let us not be swayed by whether they were paid in pounds, dollars, or marks. I can understand Dodd's emotional dislike of Von Braun, but why particularly Von Braun who is now paid in dollars, aren't there some ex-Nazi's being paid in British pounds for him to take care of first? Understand, I'm not defending any nation for the stupidity that causes it to slaughter men. We may wind words, wave flags, make slogans, play bands, etc., but it does not alter the fact that WAR CAN NOT BE JUSTIFIED. Try justifying the loss of 16,000,000 people in the last war.

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Len Moffat

10202 Belcher

Downey, California

Re: lettercol (which I usually read first anyway): Friend, I DID NOT say that Arkham House is of little interest to the modern sf collector. I said it was of little interest to the modern sf fan. All fans aren't collectors, you know. Certainly AH books on and of sf are of interest to sf fans and collectors, but the point that I was trying to make was that the Lovecraft/Horror type stuff is of

interest to a minority, rather than a majority of sf fans. HPL's "Outsider" is being peddled at outrageous prices because there are persons willing to pay these prices--they want it that badly. AH would do the field a favor, perhaps, by reprinting this (and other such rare books and selling them at a reasonable price. And I do think that AH's prices are reasonable, considering the fact that it is a specialty house, and can not operate the same as a big, moneyed publisher. But when a small house brings out a book in a limited edition (as it necessarily must) and said book becomes a collector's item, Foo help the poor collector who didn't latch on to a copy at the original publishing price. Of course I can guess why the small house does not bring out reprint edition to meet the market demand. They want to publish other things too, and with limited resources simply can't keep reprinting a "hot item" and publish other favorites too. Not when they are in the biz for the love of it.

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Walter Breen
311 E. 72 st.
New York 21, N.Y.

The illos in HOCUS were of highly variable quality--the Prosser and Joni Cornell ones, rthough not the best I've seen in fandom, were still good.

I don't care too much for poetry, but that was well made up for by the Igberg reprint. The Miller "Memoir" is worthwhile as an example of what is REALLY meant by the Sense of Wonder; I suppose it just barely misses being goshwow, but prozines were probably better in 1942--some of them anyway--then they are now.

I see where the Mezbian One has found herself a far more easily obtainable source of that scarce fanfood Egoboo. It was enjoyable, even to this neo.

Very good review of OTB, Mike. You might have mentioned one point: the naked, littered, empty, streets of San Francisco exactly parallell the equally implausible n.l.e. streets of New York in "The Word, the Flesh, and the Devil".

The Edward Ludwig story (who he??) is almost pro quality, but just falls short of success by failing to relate the protagonist's developing deadly touch and physical changes to his origin; and I find the notion that he came from an afterworld, under the circumstances described, repellent. The thing is unsatisfying, even as fsy.

The Notting Hill piece will probably have something to say to bibliophiles, but it had nithing to say to me.

Since when is Yngvi a fannish god even to GMC? I smell fuggheadedness lurking around.

I smell it also in John Pesta's letter. A person can be a professional athelite and still be an idiot. There is no necessary connection between athetic training and intelligence, or even literacy. Pesta left himself wide open for this: A gorilla would probably make a better halfback than Pesta would, but does this make the gorilla more intelligent? And I cannot agree that "religon is just as good a theory as any for explaining where we all came from." There is far better evidence for the (non-theistic) evolutionary hypothesis than there is for the Jehovah's witness biblical hypothesis that Jehovah god personally made Adam and Eve on the fifth day of creation, sometime in 4004 B.C.

Harry Warner-- isn't it at least equally possible that Bradbury and MZB might have discovered the prozines several years later and with less ease, had they not "wasted their time with fandom"?

Al Andrews-- even if the Biblical histories have archeological support, that is no reason to beleive EVERYTHING one reads in Genesis, or any other book of the collection. Like when do you expect them to conform to the story of the ringstraked & speckled sheep and cattle, or the sun standing still, or the talking snake in the garden of Eden?

Billy Joe Plott--why bother hunting for an external reason for living or dying? Why not just assume that you are here with the rest of us, living, and that the only purposes are those which human beings devise--mainly enjoyment?

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John P. Tucker

P.O. Box 445

Roswell, New Mexico

Cover: While I like Prosser very much, and consider him one of the best fan-artists around, I'm glad to see another artist getting the oppurtunity to appear on the cover. The pic of witch with her familiars is appropriate, and she looks like the kind of gal with whom I'd like to be (a) familiar. Blank verse usually leaves me pretty blank too, but Peggy Cook's, and a few other examples are certainly representitive of the more highly developed state of the art. THE CARE AND FEEDING OF NEOFANS is a highly instructive article, and I'm indebted to Marion Zimmer Bradley for the information relative to certain modes of conduct on this planet. One hint to Bradley: Neofans are the most fun if stowed--especially female neofans. Don't try baking....too many wind up half-baked. HIS FATHER'S HOUSE was a new treatment of an old theme, an excellant variation of the third basic plot of fantasy. The nondestructiveness of the plot was enough to hold interest. The Prosser illos were, as always, something more than superb. I especially liked the ones on page 19 and 21.

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Dick Schultz

19159 Helen

Detroit 34, Michigan

Where on Earth did you get those little pix on p.4. They were GHOOD. They appealed to this puny brain.

Well, besides Hivkman who backed Ford there was Bruce Pelz in Pro-FANity as well. There was also another fanzine that backed Don, but I don't have it with me at the moment.

Juanita Coulson can draw some cute pix, at times. That "golf practice" on page 6 was one of those times. Putting it with Peggy Cook's down beat poem was a mistake, though. The two were opposites in subject matter and treatment. Seperate, they are good. Together, they just fight each other.

Gilbert fitted the PITTCON ad just right. Just the right flavor to it, if you asked me.

Bob Silverberg's article on collecting I liked, it was funny to me. Maybe one has to be a collector before one can appreciate jibes at it. The mania is something that seems funny to one who has let the bug bite him before, and is still somewhat prone to globbering on the UNKNOWN's and Gernsback AMAZINGS at the hucksters' stands at the cons. And while not a gentle exaggeration in the Berry school, Bob could have been able to write it that way if he knew the style to any extent. Bob, here, though, demonstrates his skill with satire and burlesque.

It was fun trying to decipher the author's names and "get" the punchlines once one knew to whom they referred. What was nice about them was the feeling of "inner-circle". If you could get the jokes,

you felt like you had accomplished something that only the "elite" could do. Mary Shelly was the best of the lot, but that tinker-toy Isaac Asimov came in a close second.

MZBradley managed to make me glad that I met her at the DETENTION. For this is a great writer. And I don't think she has ever yet plumbed the depths of her ability.

To Bob Jennings in defence of Warner; Harry is judging Prosser's art by the basis of his own tastes. As such, they are unique and individualistic. Every person has a right to their own tastes, and as such, has a right to air his feelings towards any particular bit of art.

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Archie Mercer
434/4 Newark Rd.
North Hykeham
LINCOLN, England

The cover was good, but not absolutely to my taste--still, it was better than Prosser. Silverberg's piece was readable, if not maybe QUITE worth reprinting. (I mean--to be worth reprinting it ought to be absolutely top grade). The next run of short items all rate much the same, then the story which of course I didn't read.

Arthur Sellings' piece was the best thing in the issue, being an eminently printable article indeed. You were lucky to get this. The "Krishna" article was also of considerable interest.

The lettercol's pretty good, but you want to watch this gal Mary Land who keeps butting in with comments--they're not always quite as clever as she thinks they are. Take Alan Dodd's letter for instance--Alan Dodd's views on Von Braun, I think are wrong, wrong, wrong--but they ARE sincere. As she realizes at the end. But about 2/3rds down the page when Alan's holding forth on a subject he feels strongly about, to come in with a feeble pun on "Retribution" is not perhaps in the best of taste. There are one or two other places, where her replies tend towards the puerile too. In general though, the lettercol's well handled, and an asset to the zine. ++You'll be pleased to learn, Archie, that Miss Land has been dismissed from the staff, for being guilty to the remarks you accuse her of. Happy?++

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Joe Patrizio
72 Glenvarloch Cresc.
Edinburgh 9, Scotland

My first comment is a bit of a complaint, I'm afraid, it's about the colour of the paper you used for H #13. I didn't go for that blue at all. It had a depressing effect, which, I suppose will only serve to prove that I'm a bit of a psycho or something, but lets have a happy colour next time, or try red ink on blue paper, that might help.

Cover; A good idea gone bad, I'd say. The basic idea was fine, but bits of bad drawing spoiled it--for example, the hands, the cats, and that deformed looking leg.

As for "Ford for TAFF" fanzines, ORION and ProFANity were the only two that I ever saw, and in fact, I think that ORION was the only British zine plugging Ford. I can't say that I agree with you that five is the ideal number of TAFF candidates. This seems to many, although one argument in favour is that with so many candidates running, everybody would be sure to have a favorite to vote for, whereas they might not with three.

Good article by Bob Silverberg. As one who managed to withdraw from completism just at the last minute, I was interested

to read about what I'd missed. I've managed to keep my collection down to the confines of a large wardrobe, but this necessitates keeping my clothes in the most unlikely places. Being a relative newcomer to fandom, I'm glad that some fanzines give me the opportunity to see some of the better pieces of a few years ago.

Al Andrews' "Famous Faces" were fabulous, dammit, I can't think of anything else to say about them.

"Memoirs of an SF Fan": It seems a slight waste of time to comment on something as old as this, but although old, it wasn't dated. This is the sort of article I like, finding out how other people got started on sf fandom and suchlike, and I liked it, except that it stopped just as Dave Miller got in the groove.

Marion Zimmer Bradley's piece was too short to make much impression. I just thought I was going to enjoy it when it stopped.

As for "His Father's House", I'm afraid I don't like straight fiction in fanzine, but this was well written, except for the ending which I thought was made symbolic at any cost. Those Prosser illos were great, particularly the one on p.27.

John Tucker's article really defies comment.

Having sort of come in in the middle of things, any comments I can make on the letters must be pretty limited, but one thing I must answer is Billy Joe Plott's remarks about the British attitude towards the Germans. From a purely logical viewpoint, arrived at thousands of miles away, it is reasonable that everyone should be given the opportunity to correct their mistakes. But Plott must remember that for a goodly part of WW2, the British were in constant fear of being overrun by the Germans. A great many people haven't forgotten this, as this sort of thing takes a very long time to forget. I must hasten to add that I am not among this number, as I was too young to understand much of what was going on at the time, and I also managed to resist indoctrination into German-hating. Actually, there is something of a parallel issue going on at the moment, where many Britishers think that the Statesiders' attitude towards the Russians is unreasonable.

The other point from the lettercol that I can mention is Prosser artwork. Many people seem to be against him, but if those illos in this are typical, I don't see why everyone is kicking.

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Donald W. Anderson
141 Shady Creek Rd.
Rochester 23, N.Y.

Cover---I HATE CATS!!!!

Editorial---Not having received the last issue, there is little here that I can comment on. The change from Astounding to Analog means only one thing as far as I can see. Campbell is trying to disown the mag's association with the "lunatic fringe" that made and supported it, and he's going for the far vaster "normal" readership.

"The Perils of Completism": Having had a little contact with completists in the stamp-collecting field, I can readily believe that this article states the true and unvarnished facts.

"Memoirs of an sf Fan"; Amen and Halleluia. I'm having this same trouble with my wife, right now. After 15 years of reading SF, I still can't convince anyone of the merit of the stuff.

"His Father's House": I must be cracking up. I liked it.

I'd like to know what John Tucker's article had to do with sf. Seriously John, you ought to see my stereo outfit. To start with, see, I tore out the walls at each end of my house...

"Fantasy Hill": not of particular interest to me, but well written.

Now on to the lettercol. Janet Freeman; If you are going to assume a God, then you have to assume that he is intered in fandom and fans. If you are not going to assume an all-knowing and all-powerful God, then there is no point in assuming any God at all, even for the purpose of speculation.

G.M. Carr; so this is the famous G.M. Carr? From what I've read in some of the better known fanzines, I expected that she would come blazing in waving a .357 magnum, taking potshots at everybody and anybody. Oh well, we live and learn.

Alan Dodd; I don't especially care for Von Braun either, but dammit all, I don't think the Japanese feel very much love for the scientists of the Manhattan project either. The U.S. managed to kill almost as many people in one horrible instant, as Von Braun and his cronies did in several months. The only difference was that the A Bomb was on our side. There are damn few are in any position to condemn any other person for the work he did to see that his country win the war.

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Bob Leonard
1630 Farragut
Chicago 40, Ill.

I don't like the cover much this time. Regardless of what anyone says about Prosser, he's the best artist you have by far and his illos in this issue are better than ever.

Editorial; I can't see what's so terrible about Astounding's name change. What, with prozines falling all over the place these days, something like this is trivial, if it will help keep the circulation up. And let's not equate psionics with the name change.

"Perils of Completism:" Two articles this time about the dangers of overdoing a hobby, but this one has it over "Warning". Silverberg is excellant. Some of the details he mentions are a bit dated, but the essential spirit of completism is the same as ever.

"Famous Faces" was too overdone, like most of Andrews' stuff.

"Memoirs of an sf fan"; another outstanding reprint, and, surprisingly, less dated than the Silverberg piece, although it was written before I was born. My own experiences are somewhat similar, except that I was older when I discovered science fiction magazines. By all means get more of these reprints, especially from older fanzines.

"This is the Way the World Ends"; an excellant film review. I saw ON THE BEACH downtown on New Year's Eve and I agree pretty much with your comments. But I don't think it should be criticized on the grounds that it concentrated just on these five people. It makes the tragedy more personal, and while everyone would probably react a little differently from everyone else, I do not think the dramatic impact would be improved by concentrating on some larger number and might even be lessened if too many other people were dragged into it. The audience tends to be come hardened to a large number of deaths if each one is presented briefly enough, and they would have to be brief if more were considered in ON THE BEACH. Lots of people get killed on tv shows every day, but nobody feels very sorry about them. The absence of bodies bothered me at first, too, but I got used to it soon like you did. I think the bodies were left out for the same reason that more people weren't covered and for another, more subtle one--it leaves more to the imagination

that way. It's one thing to see the streets filled with bodies and quite another to see them empty and know that everyone who should be there is dead, and wonder what happened to them. The primary object of ON THE BEACH is to get people to think, and scenes like this, though not truly realistic, certainly help. The most impressive scenes of the movie for me were the Australian nurses passing out boxes of poison stamped GOVERNMENT PRESCRIPTION, and the one you mention of Julian stuffing the blanket along the cracks between the floor and the garage door, getting in the car, and starting the motor. There is nothing more horrible than watching people commit suicide.

HIS FATHER'S HOUSE was an excellent dark fantasy, perhaps the best thing in the issue. In a way, it's a pity that Weird Tales folded, since there is no real market for a story like this. My only criticism of the story itself is that the language is a little too flowery. Prosser's critics have probably eaten their words about him not being able to draw realistic human figures. The illo on page 21 is PERFECT. Prosser has done a magnificent job of illustrating this story.

INSIGHT INTO KRISHNA was a good specialty article. Only fault I see is Cook's inclusion of Tarzan as a character whose fame never reaches the general reading public. This just isn't so.

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Rick Sneary
2962 Santa Ana St.
South Gate, Calif.

I still have not read CAMBER, so I still don't understand Dodd's views. After what the British people went through during the blitz, it is easy to understand why they would still have the Germans. But understanding why does not make it logical or reasonable. In the case of Von Braun, to the best of my knowledge, he had nothing to do with making policy. He was not accused of war crimes by any government. He personally would have had two choices. Work on a project closely related to his heart's desire, or suffer death or imprisonment. As it was, he was arrested once at Hitler's orders, for wasting too much time planning space rockets. Only the military commander of the project saved him. I agree that the results of his work were horrible, but how many men would have been able to resist their country's call? None of the Manhattan Project men did, that I remember. There are those who would say that Doctor Openheimer was guilty of worse things than Von Braun.

Who is guilty in a war, and who must pay afterwar, have led to quite a number of wars. The British children who died by V-2 blasts are no more dead than those that died by more conventional bombs. And not a bit more dead than the German children who died under American and British bombs. As for who started it, I have just been re-reading Churchill's History of the Second War, and while he makes Hitler out as the madman who started it, he blames Prime Ministers Baldwin and Chamberlain for not stopping him when they had the chance. America's refusal to join the League of Nations was another contributing factor. There is blame enough for all. So we can not afford to cast stones for past deeds, but judge each of us on what we do today, and may do tomorrow.

Silverberg was still amusing, but he was writing from a different world. It was seemingly only shortly after the bubble (or dam) burst. till now the active collector/fan is far rarer than First Fandomers at the DETENTION. I think it was partly the final realization that you couldn't complete your collection--mixed up with what ever it was that went out of sf itself, about the same time.

Ludwig's story layed it on rather thick, I thought, though it did avoid what seemed to be an obvious ending. That of finding that each generation a demon (?) mated with a mortal woman who died in giving birth to another demon son. Of course, it didn't explain the way Elaine would wither.

"Fantasy Hill" was fairly interesting, but I've never heard of this place before. I couldn't even be sure it was part of London. I'm not uselly at that great a loss, but except for a few of the people I'd hever even heard of the events. Nor even know there was something you could call a hill in London town.

Bernie Cook is interesting too, though I regretfully feel the Viagens don't rate with the other mentioned great fiction worlds.

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THOSE WHO DIDN'T QUITE MAKE IT DEPT. There are plenty more letters, but no more room, so I'll have to copy CKY's style in disposing of the rest. SETH JOHNSON declares that Ghu is the true ghod of Hecto and Duper fan-ed's who have their hands covered with the ineradicable ghu. He says the mimeo fan-ed is a devotee of Foo. TOM CONDIT didn't like the items by Andrews, Bradley, Tucker, Cook and Miller, and felt the last two articles should have been better developed. Says the Silverberg piece was of vague interest, and didn't care for the letters. Tom felt that Sellings' article was good, but it should have been longer, and that "His Father's House" was superiour to most fan-fiction though it needed tightening up. Thought the Prosser illos were comic book style. Says Von Braun makes an ideal colleague for Edward Teller, and that Russia is less liable to push the button to start the war. DON FRANSON thinks MZB is wrong saying "BNFS (or old fans) do not ignore science fiction as much as she implies." Enjoyed my review and Bernie Cook's article too. BILLY JOE PLOTT thought the limbs were out of proportion on the cover and the cats were a little too straight. Says Prosser was great as usual. Liked nearly everything but "Fantasy Hill" and "Insight into Krishna". Says Berry has the right approach in leaving religious theories out of fanzine. Wants souther fans to contact him. ALAN BURNS says Alvar Appeltofft is the worst completist he knows. Thought MZB's article a delightful vignette but doesn't like neofan because "they're all too bony and stick in my throat". Thought "His Father's House" was poor. Says he detest's De Camp's stories and give him Conan any day. EARL NOE didn't like the way Hollywood altered the film ON THE BEACH from its book version. Disagrees strongly about Von Braun. Thinks fandom is sacrilegious, too. ALVIN FICK enjoyed the Silverberg article, and is annoyed he missed the HPL article. BOB LICHTMAN thought the cover was a trifle sloppy. Says I need slipsheeting--will you help, Bob? Liked Agberg's gen and thought the Prosser illos were excellant. Asks Jennings why should fandom as a whole bother about God? Good question. Says to tell Rick Sneary he has a copy of BRILLIG #7 he got from Pelz. VIC RYAN mentions other fanzines plugging Ford and says he thought A WAY HOME was better than ALIENS 4. Tells GMC to avoid 43,000 YEARS LATER and FIRST ON THE MOON. MAURICE B. GARDNER enjoyed the Ludwig story and Prosser illos best. RUTH BERMAN thought the Cook and Bradley articles were too sketchily written. TOM MILTON thinks "The Care and Eating of Neofans" would be a better title for MZB's article. And there are letters from JEFF WANSHEL, FELICE ROLFE, BOB JENNINGS, JERRY PAGE, DOROTHY HARTWELL, PAUL SHINGLETON, KEN HEDBERG, PHIL HARRELL, ED MESKYS, JACK L. CHALKER, L. SPRAGUE De CAMP (who says "Khoda hafez-e-shoma" among other things), and PETER SINGLETON. Also a "Wish you were Here" postcard from CARYL CHESSMAN which has no return address, but is slightly charred. I wonder...

- (✓) Trade
- () I'd like to trade with you
- () Review copy
- () Subber
- (✓) You have egoboo in here
- () Sample copy
- (✓) How about contributing
- () Last copy if I don't hear from you
- () You owe me a letter
- () You're a BNF
- () You think you're a BNF
- () I'd like a letter of comment on this
- () Your name is J. Christ, esq.

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