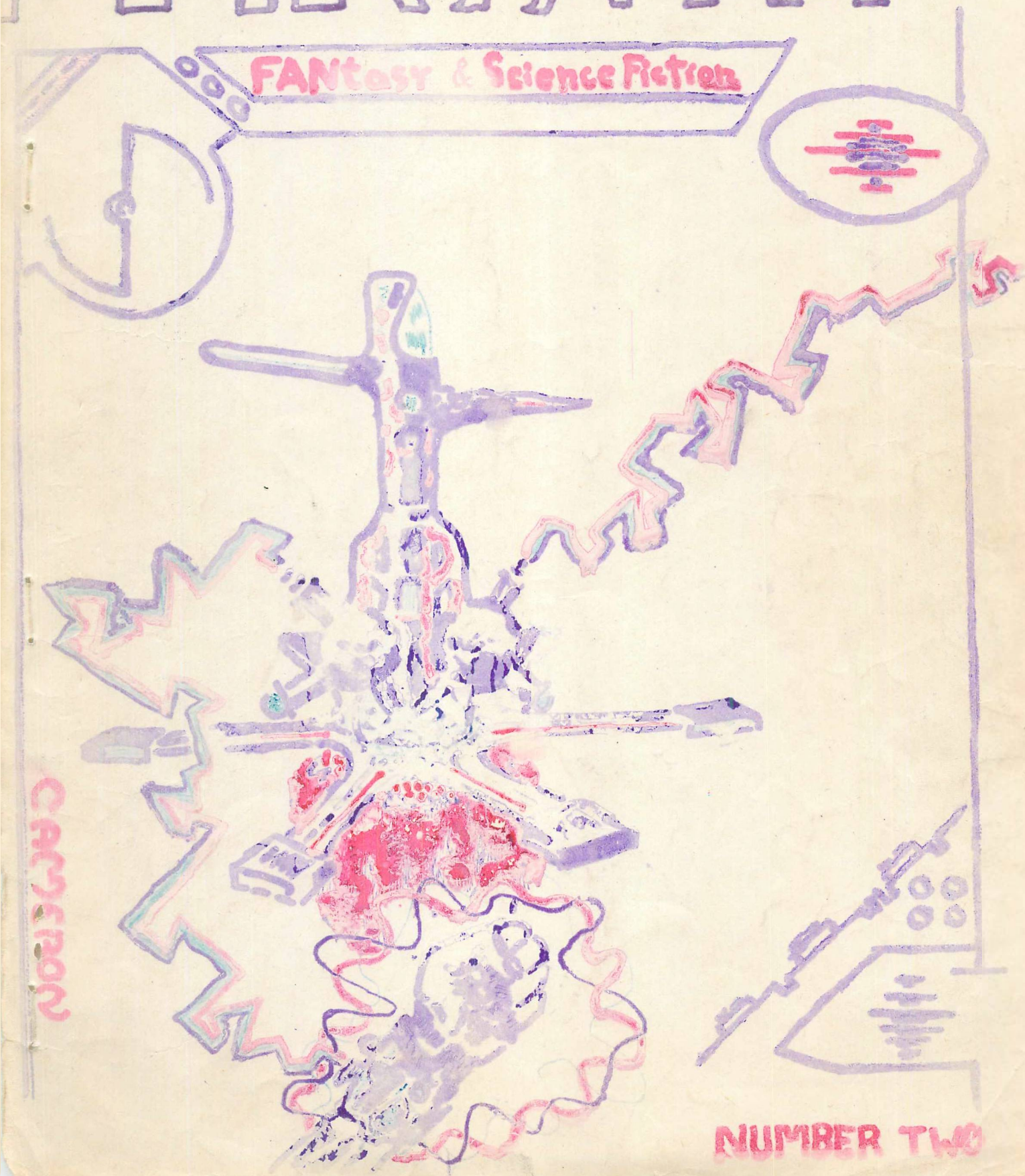


# IMPROBABLE

FANTASY & Science Fiction



CACYPSON

NUMBER TWO





# IMPROBABLE

STAFF

VOLUME I

NUMBER 2

Editor.....Vowen Clark  
Associate Editor and  
Art Editor.....Colin Cameron

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## ART CREDITS

Cover illustration by Colin G. Cameron, from "First Contact".

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Colin G. Cameron  
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Frank Harris



# Editor's Note:

Since our first issue was available only to a small, select group I think that there are some explanations and requests to be made to you:

Ø In the future issues, this space will be used almost exclusively for discussions of matters that will concern you readers and fans. If you know of something that will be of interest to other fans, just write, and we'll try to include it in this department or in the letter section of the next issue.

Ø Have strong ideas and opinions? Know what you do and what you don't like? Enjoy friendly arguments? Have a question or two? What was your answer to those questions? If you answered yes to one or two or even more of the preceding questions, you should express yourself and your thoughts in a letter to Improbable. We'll try to print most of your letters and we guarantee to encourage arguments by publishing both the pro and con side of each discussion. We also promise to try to answer as many of your queries on sf and fandom as we can. So write soon.

Ø If you enjoy writing please remember that Improbable needs lots of material. Any type of story is acceptable (preferably fantasy of sf though) - humorous, scientific, serious, adventure, etc. Not only do we need fiction, but we can use articles about fandom in general, conventions, special events, newsworthy developments, etc. Just send a legible copy of your work to me at 6221 Thorn Street, San Diego, Calif. (before February 14, 1958, if you wish it to appear in issue #3) and we'll try to select the most usable for publication.

Ø Like to draw or sketch? If so, we also need additional artwork in the form of spot-cuts (presently, we will select some person or some persons who could help illustrate the fiction if they wish) to round out the zine. Of course, you can send a few of your drawings to Colin Cameron, 2561 Ridgeview Drive, San Diego 5, California.

Ø And remember, Improbable is only as good as you make it!

-VHC

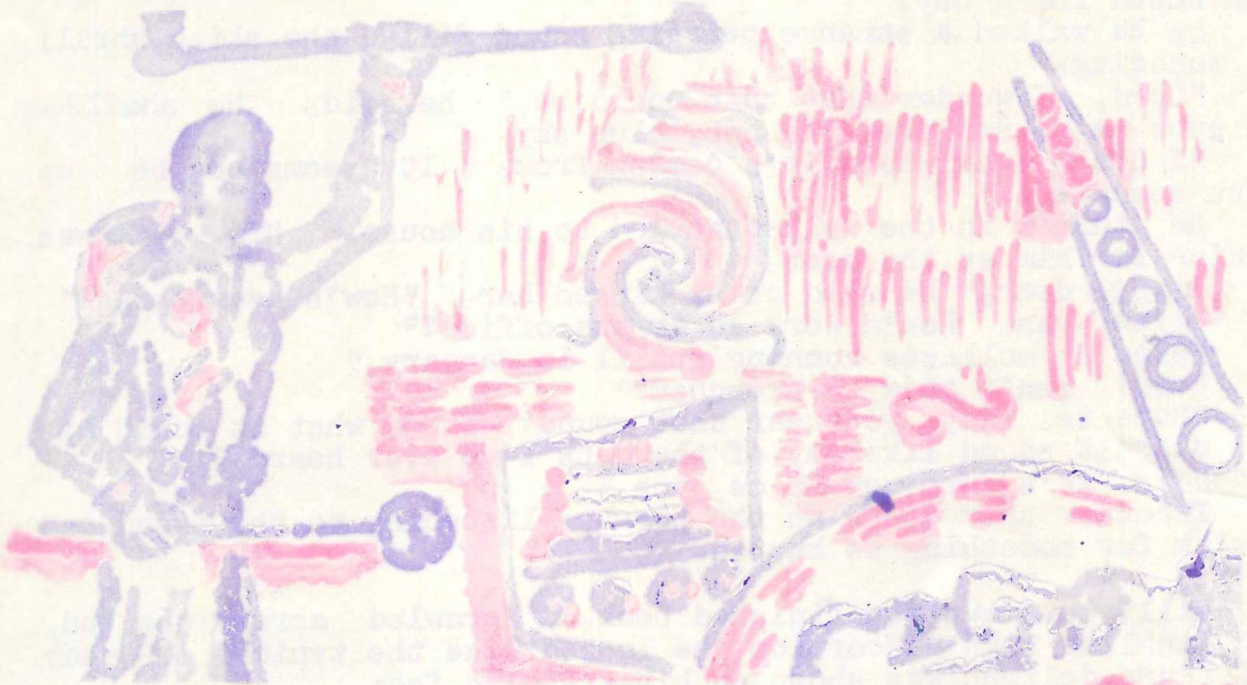


Tyler  
Zany



The best defense is a good offense... especially when you are dealing  
with visitors from outer space!

# FIRST CONTACT



by Colin G. Cameron

CAMERON

## PROLOGUE

Everything was ready.

After months of planning, after years in building, after more months of careful selecting of the crew, they were ready.

Ready to conquer space, ready to push back the bounds of the planet that had held them captive so long, ready to penetrate the blackness of outer space.

The aliens were ready as they stuffed their squat bodies into their first giant outspace ship, as they waited, their colorless faces reflecting images, past and future, when they might eat of quivering animal flesh and drink of the red stuff that flowed so freely...

The seconds remaining slowly ticked away...minus 7

An alien licked its drooling mouth nervously, exposing white fangs...minus 6 - minus 5

The whole terrible crew of death tensely awaited the zero hour...minus 4 - 3 -2-1

ZERO!

Their agonized screams were drowned out as the ship quivered and lifted slowly, then shot into space.

They were ready...ready for the first planetary conquest.

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(Continued Next Page)



It was a hot day, and Dan Purchell had to wipe the sweat away from his face several times as he walked home. He usually rode home on the bus, but today he couldn't bear riding in that hot sticky bus. He was a man of about 25, most average looking except for a few grey streaks behind his temples.

"Anyway, the exercise will do me good." He was thinking of last week when he had to go on a diet because of his weight. He wanted to hurry home for his wife was in her eighth month. They both hoped for a boy.

As he walked a strange peircing sound filled the skies, shrill and menecing.

"Lord, I wonder what that could be," he said. He sheilded his eyes as he searched the hot, blue sky.

"I don't know where it's coming from. It seems to be up there somewhere."

He turned in the walk that led to his house. His wife was waiting for him at the door.

"Hello dear," he said as he kissed her. "How's everything?"

"Fine, Dan. How'd work go at the office?"

"Slow as mollases running uphill in January."

"Wow! Isn't today a scorcher?"

"Sure is. Hey, you hear that sound? Wonder what it could be. Sure doesn't sound like any of the jets I've ever heard."

"Yes, it's sure new to me, too."

Together they stood on the porch, listening to the sound and waiting for something to happen.

Billy put down the finished book. Sprawled across the bed, feet dangling like a scorpion, he looked like the typical 12 year old. Pure delight was shown on his freckled face.

"Boy! That Bob Kemp is sure a great SF writer. His stories give me the chills."

"Hey! What's that?"

The strange sound filled his room, rushing to the corners, echoing back.

"Maybe it's a rocket ship from Venus! Oh, boy!"

BILLY. TIME FOR DINNER..WASH UP..AND GET THOSE HANDS CLEAN!

"Ok, Mom," he shouted back through the door.

When he sat down for dinner he asked her if she heard the sound. She cocked herehead and listened.

"No son, can't rightly say I do," said his hard of hearing mother.

Soon even Billy forgot about the noise that plagued him.

..... +++++ ..... +++++ ..... +++++ .....

As the slender needle scratched the atmosphere, it changed from energy into matter. To is crew, only a few seconds had elapsed. In actuality, three years had passed.

The ship descended slowly.....12,000,000 feet.....11,560,000... 11,000,000. Its skin began to cool from white hot to red hot.

+++++ ..... +++++ ..... +++++ ..... +++++

The brown-spotted animal heard the sound, the deafening sound that hurt its ears. It screamed to itself. Only a whimpering sound passed through its pink lips.

4  
(Continued Next Page)



When it saw the thing that made the noise and its hackles rose.

It yelped in fright, a long howl filling the emptiness.

At last it slinked off, its tail between its legs.

The three men saw the ship, saw it come hurtling from space to the ground. They watched as the last of the flames that licked at the ground had stopped. Then they got into their jeep and drove off to report the fire and the large craft that had started it.

After they had left, panels on the sides of the ship opened, revealing a group of huge fire guns which sprayed a large area with liquid fire. It was pure luck that the men were not there when it happened. The trees and dead plants burst into flame, animals were scalded to death, and the very earth turned molten and ran like water. The intense heat created made the air so hot that it burned, leaving huge clouds of smoke and fumes. Flames shot fifty feet into the air. Flying animals were caught by the licking flames and tumbled to the earth, to be devoured readily by the blasting flames.



"Paging General Halburton...General Halburton, please....."

John Halburton looked up from his work on the desk and wondered what the voice had wanted. A frown creased his heavy emotionless face as he rose, walked through his office door into the reception room, and asked his secretary, Miss Johnson, what the heck she wanted.

"You have a visitor. A Mr. Bradley... He's waiting in the other office."

"Thanks."

Richard Bradley rose as the general entered.

"Yes, Mr. Bradley, what can I do for you? I presume you have security clearance."

"Yes." He showed his credentials. "I'm from the war department."

"Oh, of course. Let's go into my office."

Bradley followed him into the office. "Well, have a seat."

"Only a few hours ago, three men saw what the thought was a meteor. We have evidence that this meteor might be an inter-planetary rocket, a space ship. It may have come from another galaxy. We're not sure. We want you to bring all available troops to the spot where it was found."

"Hmmm. Yes, I see. When shall I bring them."

"Immediately! And make sure they're armed. These creatures could be dangerous."

+++++      ooooo      +++++      ooooo      +++++      ooooo      +++++

The fire didn't last long...it used up its fuel too quickly. Had the ship landed in a dense forest there might have been a disaster.

Slowly the ship cooled...cooled ever so slowly that it still glowed with an eerie phosphorescent glow hours after landing... and that sun, it didn't help much. Columns of steam and smoke rose from the ground nearly obscuring the ship.

In a way, it was lucky that the ship landed in a barren



section of a desert. Unfortunately, the three men had seen it land. Another blunder was when the guns spat out their fire, causing such a fire the desert had never seen.

However, none of this could be helped. Everything was controlled automatically.

The aliens were ready.

The time had come.

\*\*\*\*\*

The two army and four civil defense trucks turned off of the paved main road onto a dusty, dry dirt road, filled with ruts and grooves. The drivers of the big vehicles fought the steering wheels, their faces and muscles taut and straining, while in the back of each vehicle men bounced around, tossed and turned, or simply sat there, choking from the dust.

One of these men was Robert Flynn, a private first class.

"Hey, Rich, let me have a fag."

Rich...Richard Whatzizname...handed him a cigarette across the aisle. "Here ya go."

He said "Thanks" and leaned back against his pack and closed his blue eyes.

"What's this all about anyway?"

"Heck if I know, Bob."

Suddenly the truck jarred to a grinding halt... A voice said ALL RIGHT YOU GUYS...ALL OUT ON THE DOUBLES!!!

"Ok, let's pile out."

Rich and Bob were the first out of the army truck. All around them was black, charred ground...red hot ground (Bob thought it was the color of the ground until he saw the small yellow flames that danced inches above the soil) and ground so hot that it had been molten (Rich figured this when he saw how it had bunched up and formed small pools).

"Looks like there was a fire," said Bob. "But that's not a reason to call us out."

"But look how the ground is. Red hot! Man, there isn't enough wood around to boil water!"

"Eh? I guess you're right. Now what explains this fire?" He looked from spot to spot.

No answers.

"Rich, I said why this. You deaf or sumpthun?"

He turned around to question his friend, then saw the bewildered, puzzled, frightened look in his eyes.

"What's the matter?" He shook his friend by the shoulder.

"L-l-look, Bob."

"Where?"

"O-over there. Behind that rise," he pointed with his finger.

The color was so perfect, so close that you had to look twice before you would notice it. Despite the distance it looked huge, two or three hundred feet high.

Then somebody screamed, "Look! The sides of the ship are opening! Take cover, men. Take cover!"

The wail of the special loudspeakers on the trucks shattered the stillness...

Smoothly, silently, three panels facing towards the men opened, panels that had not been visible. They slid to the side, inside the ship. From the dark deeps came the smooth sound of well-oiled machinery. Then several sounds, much like signal generators, flowed through the air, floated to the ears of the men. It had a curious effect on the personnel. They turned to each other and talked in hushed tones.



"Say Bob, that sound...it makes me feel funny. What do you suppose it is?"

"I dunno, I dunno. It makes me feel funny too. It sounds something like those crazy noises you hear in horror movies."

The sun began to set and the hot baked earth began the process of cooling. Stiff, strong breezes blew from the north, pushing the warm air up and away. The stars shone.



"Burr. Cold!"

Bob slipped off his pack and opened it. He pulled out a heavy coat and put it on. Rich did likewise.

"We may have to spend the night here. I wish something would hurry up and happen."

Several of the men had made small fires and Rich volunteered to get some wood.

Bob leaned back against a sand dune. He pulled out the

crumpled cigarette Rich had given him. After lighting it he inhaled one long slow breath and blew out a cloud of smoke through his nose. He watched the wind pick up the smoke and carry it a few yards before dropping it. Then pick it up and twist and turn and tumble it like an acrobat. At last it would dissapate and the sky would hold it captive.

A loud thump! sounded. Bob jumped to his feet.

Somebody shouted, "Look...the ship!"

Through the dim night a second thump, twice as loud.

Bob saw the unearthly glow that hung around the interplanar conveyance. His eyes widened; his face turned pale. From the ports protruded two magnificently curved ramps...each possibly fifty feet long. Even as he watched, the last ramp from the last port swung down, held by imperceptible vinculum embedded somewhere in nadir. Finally the shiny blue-grey teratology hit the hard pack - desert floor with a fulminic crash.

The sound stopped.

The sound is dead.

Quiet...

All around him men were gradually and carefully moving forward on their stomachs. Bob unslung the trinitrotoluene rifle and squatted down on his knees.

Firing position...

All was quiet.

He pushed back his helmet with one hand and ran a shaking antenna of limb through his blond hair. He withdrew it and stared agog at his wringing wet hand. It was a cold night. He hadn't realized how much he was sweating.

Then the truth hit him.

"No...no...no!"

He wasn't sweating from work. He was afraid.

He sank to the ground, his tear-stained face buried in his massive hands.

"I'm chicken, I'm chicken," he moaned.

"Help me, I don't want to die. I don't!" he belated.

Soon everything was under control. He brushed the remaining sps from his eyes...sat upright and returned the dropped weapon to the firing position.

Then the face guns began.

Men died.



A boy, not more than nineteen, screamed as the liquid inferno hit his body and face. He ran a few yards crying at the top of his lungs, then fell to the ground, twitched once or twice, and lay still. The flames enveloped his body like bloodthirsty hounds. The air was filled with the pungent stench of burned flesh.

Bob screamed in terror. Five men, trying to get close to the ship had been caught by a huge ball of fire that splattered and enveloped them. In spite of his terror, Bob saw where the red conflagration came from. Located at the plinth of the column of ship were several red tubes which seemed to be mounted on gimbals. When anyone would fall into an open area they would be fired upon by the deadly nightmare.

He stumbled forward. He ran, fell, stumbled, crawled, slid, and ran. He fell on his face, choking on bits of yellow hot sand. He rolled over on his back and lay there, gasping for air, the blessed air. Clouds of low hanging smoke swirled around him, filling his lungs with a repugnant, nauseating smell. He put his sleeve to his mouth and stumbled to his shaky feet and ran, weapon in hand. Ran...ran...ran. Ran around in circles trying to get out of the swirling gasses, the gasses that smelt of fire and flesh.

A ball of yellow scintillation wizzed over his head.

It exploded as it hit the ground...

PAIN!

Bob looked at his arm and screamed. His whole arm was enveloped in flame.

He tore the jacket off violently. His arm felt like a thousand needles has been pushed into the nerve endings. His shirt was on fire, his singed and burnt arm throbbed with torment. He plunged to the ground, buried his flaming limb in the cool desert sand.

"Lord, Lord, Lord," he kept repeating.

Finally the pain subsided, not much, but so it didn't hurt too much.

It was then he realized that he was standing at the base of the ship.

About fifty feet to his right was one of the magnificent metal ladders that led into the ship. He put one foot cautiously on the first step.

It surprised him when nothing happened.

He ran up the next few steps and paused.

A bullet from one of his comrades arced through the air, whizzed past his face, and buried itself in the soft metal.

With a curse he ascended a few more steps and crouched down behind the protection of the metallic railing. His arm throbbed with pain. Then he laughed.

The lit cigarette still hung loosely from his cracked lips. He grinned a foolish grin to himself and started up the remaining steps of steep scaffolding. The cigarette dropped from his mouth as another missile came streaking by his head. He cursed whoever fired it.

At last the top step was his and he ran across the threshold and through the open port.

He was struck dumb by the mass of intricate machines and mechanisms that filled the ship. Suspended on rails on huge girders were tremendous meters and power winches that reached down the one hundred feet to the floor with great long metal arms. Spars and beams ran the entire length, huge metallic monsters with gaping mouths. An immense ball of glass-like material slowly moved up and down the height of the ship, pulled by twelve chains, chains with links the size of a man. The brilliantly burning globe lit up the ship, scintillation shadows and sun light throughout the magnitude of ship. A bank of Con-



trols, meters, gauges, and switches confronted Bob with its enermity.

"Why, this must belong to an extremely intelligent race," he deduced.

It was then that he gasped as he saw them!

He retched...the squat pale pink bodies; the small spherical heads; the white fangs; the blood-red lips; the terrible blood-shot eyes; the short flabby arms; and the flared proboscus.

Oh, Lord!

They were all dead.

The atmosphere? The gravity? Concussion? Who knows?

After a while he felt well enough to get up and leave the ship.

+++++      ooooo      +++++      ooooo      +++++      ooooo      +++++

### EPILOGUE

What killed the invaders? For years scientists pondered over that question. They finally gave up, the riddle unsolved. There were no clues, no way that they might learn the secret. Despite most splendid efforts to preserve them, the beings deteriorated and disintegrated after a few weeks.

Helen and Dan Purchell looked at the sky for the last time, then turned and went back into the house.

Billy snuck out that night to see the battle and got exactly what he deserved when he got home.

Halburton looked at the report, sighed and put it in the files. He went outside and hailed a cab.

The dog was killed by an oil truck a week afterwards.

The three men were released from military servailance years later. No one could take a chance in this day and age.

Richard Jameson was buried July 4, with a military salute to bravery, as were the remains of the other dead soldiers.

Dianne and Bob were married late in August. They went on a honeymoon at Grand Canyon.

The metal from the ship could not be analized and was scrapped. Many of the surface craft used now are made from its parts.

Pieces of the ship are exhibited in the modern museums. It is often pleasing to the eye to see the people of this planet parade by the display, the display containing the plaque taken from the space ship. They look and stare and gaze at the small, inscribed piece of metal, trying to figure out the sentence that hasn't been deciphered. It says:      MADE IN U. S. A.      -CGC





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sure send your money soon to either Colin Cameron or Vowen Clark. But,  
you'd better hurry! (See the contents page for our addresses.)



// First, I feel it only fair to warn you about "A Famous Murder Case". You may possibly be shocked to learn that it is not science fiction or even fantasy. So all of you fans beware! It is an interesting little bit of humorous fiction that we thought was too good to pass up just because it isn't sf. Perhaps you would like to read more fiction of this type? If so, I'd sure like to oblige, so write and tell me. -VMC//

# A FAMOUS Murder Case

by Hugh Redmon

This is one of the famous cases solved by the world's greatest detective, Hugh Redmon. It is impossible for me to depict the entire case, but I will present, as it happened, the famous scene where detective Redmon points out the murderer of John Gargoyl, the wealthy bank executive. My account opens after all the people connected with the case had been assembled in the living room of John's estatey mansion.

Detective Redmon: I, the world's greatest detective, will now weigh all the facts of this horrible murder and then I will point out the murderer.

Mrs. Rutledge: Oh, how nice.

Redmon: PLEASE! I have to have quiet, Mrs. Rutledge.

Mrs. Rutledge: Well!

Redmon: First of all, it was I who first set forth the proposition that Mr. Gargoyl was murdered. The police thought at first it was suicide but there were a few facts that lead me to believe it was really murder. First, there was no suicide note; any idiot knows there has to be a note. Secondly, John was stabbed eighteen times, four of those in the back. After I pointed out to the police he had been stabbed in the back, they agreed it was murder.

Mr. Dudley: Bravo, bravo!

Redmon: Thank you. And now, on with the case. Mr. Dooley, you were the only one in the house at the time of the murder with the exception of Mrs. Rutledge, Mr. Dudley, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Smith, Miss Sturdly, Mr. Hancock, the four butlers, the eight maids, the dope peddler, and Mr. Cameron, is that not correct?

Mr. Dooley: Well...yes, but you forgot about the TV repairman.

Redmon: Don't try to evade the issue, Dooley! What were you doing at the time of the murder?

Mr. Dooley: What time did the old coot die?

Redmon: At exactly 10:15.

Mr. Dooley: How do you know that?

Redmon: Well...I...er...that is...NOW CUT THAT OUT!! I'll ask the questions around here! Now, James (the butler), what were you doing at the time of the murder?

James: Sir, I was serving refreshments to guests.

Redmon: Refreshments?

James: Booze, sir.

Redmon: Ah ha! All we have to know is who was out of the room at the time you were serving booze, is that not correct?

James: No, sir! Gargoyl was in the room. The lights went out, when they came on he was dead.

Redmon: Oh, yes. I forgot.

Miss Sturdly: When are you going to tell us the murderer?

Redmon: Please, one thing at a time.

Miss Sturdly: But...

Redmon: Now, Mr. Smith, you and your wife were seated on the divan with the deceased between you just before the lights went out, is that not correct?



Mr. Smith: That is correct, but who was sitting beside the light?

Redmon: PLEASE!! I'll ask the questions around here, if you don't mind. Now, who was seated beside the light switch?

All: Not I.

Redmon: No matter, for I am ready to point out the murderer. First a brief resume of the clues: The fact that John told Harry about foot prints in the flower bed; and Margaret sang "Leaning On The Ever-Lasting Arms" in the beauty parlor; and that Tom was seen entering the First National Bank with a white carnation in his hat; and that Mr. Hancock was seen with the only left-handed whirlyzizer in existence; and that Mr. Gargoyl had 450 enemies, including the president of the NAACP; and that Alfred E. Neuman finally got a hair-cut proves beyond doubt James forgot to water the lowly flowers today!

Miss Sturdly: But...



Redmon: Let me finish please! The real murderers are you two, Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

The Smiths: Huh?

Redmon: Is that not correct?

Mr. Smith: Prove it.

Mrs. Smith: Yeah.

Redmon: Very well. It is no secret that you two have hated each other. In fact, you both have threatened to kill one another several times. When the lights went out due to a power failure the other night, you both saw your chance. You both grabbed a letter opener off the

coffee table in front of you and started stabbing at each other, forgetting that Mr. Gargoyl was sitting between you. TAKE THEM AWAY BOYS!

Police: Yes sir. Come along you two.

Mr. Smith: I thought I was stabbing the wrong one, the letter opener went in too easy. My wife has the skin of an elephant.

Mrs. Smith: Oh yeah? Well, I knew I was stabbing the wrong one when I couldn't find your big fat beer belly.

Redmon: I rest my case.

All: Yee, hooah, yee, hoorah!

-HR

\*\*\*\*\*

Two mice were running across the top of a cereal box.

Mouse one: "Hey, why are we running?"

Mouse two: "What's wrong? Can't you read? It says 'Tear along dotted line.'"

\*\*\*\*\*

Women who are not interested in clothes, usually are not interesting in clothes. -Reader's Digest

.....

There's nothing wrong with me that reincarnation wouldn't fix.

\*\*\*\*\*



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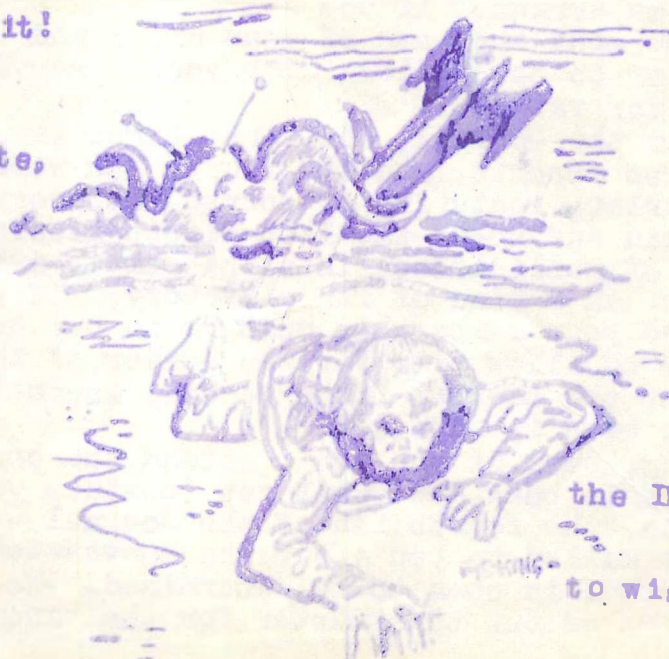
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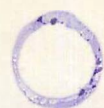
Although we are a bit late,



the IMPROBABLE staff wants  
to wish you a HAPPY NEW YEAR!



# The Con Spot



// ed's note: the following is from a recent letter to Colin Cameron from Len Moffatt, the secretary of SOLACON. We hope this letter will answer some of your questions, however, if you still want to know a lot more, you can write to: Len Moffatt, 10202 Belcher, Downey, Calif. or you can write to us and we'll try to get the info.//

"All you have to do to join the SOLACON (which is the 1958 World Science Fiction Convention combined with the '58 Westercon - to be held at Alexandria Hotel, 5th and Spring, Los Angeles over the 1958 Labor Day weekend under the "South Gate in '58" banner) is send a buck to our treasurer: Rick Sneary, 2962 Santa Ana St., South Gate, California.

Your dollar will bring you a membership card and The SOLACON Journal...the first 3 issues will contain progress reports and all of the other info re the convention (room rates, banquet rates, ad rates in the Journal, etc.)

The first ish of the Journal is available to them as joins immediately, so why wait?

If you plan to attend the SOLACON (and we hope you do!) you can send in a second dollar to cover the attendance fee - or you can wait and pay the second dollar upon your arrival at the convention.

There are no age limits. Any sf fan or pro with a buck can join and any fan or pro with two bucks can join and attend the convention.

Room rates at the Alexandria are as reasonable as can be found, starting with five bucks for singles and going up from there, depending on how much space you want, natch. See Journal for complete list of room rates. Making reservations at hotel is simple. You can do it directly with hotel by writing them or through me, the SOLACON sec'y. We want to fill up at least 150 sleeping rooms at the hotel in order to obtain free use of all the hotel's meeting rooms throughout the convention. That's the deal we made with 'em and it shouldn't be too hard to fill up those rooms - even with two or three persons to a room!

Oh yes, if you have a club or a group of friends who want to rent a block of rooms, so you can be handy to each other at the convention, it can be arranged if you all get your reservations in early enough. Just send the name of your group and the names of the people in it to me or to hotel along with your reservation fee (once again, see Journal for rates).

Getting back to the Journal, the first three issues, as I said, are news and progress reports, and the fourth ish will be the SOLACON Program Booklet, featuring of course the programmed activities, and will also contain and up-to-the-last-minute listing of SOLACON members as of date of publication, in alphabetical order and with addresses - to serve as a kind of fan directory. If you want to be sure of being listed your membership must be in our hands before July, 1958 (we have to allow time for the editor of the Journal to lay out copy and get the booklet lithographed, assembled, etc.), so if you join now you have it made...

One other thing, even if you don't attend the convention and pay only the membership buck, you will get (besides your membership and progress reports) the fourth ish of the Journal - the program booklet. It will be mailed to you after the convention is over.

Our guest of honor is soon to be determined. We already have Tony Bouché set up as our toastmaster for the banquet (the prices



for which will be within the range of everyone, with three choices  
of show, so you won't have to pay for something you might not like).  
Here's a list of the SOLACON committee, for your info

Anna Sinclair Moffatt, Chairwoman  
Rick Snoary, Treasurer  
Len J. Moffatt, Secretary  
Rog Phillips, Program Director  
Honey Wood, Registrar  
Forrest J Ackerman, Pro Publicity  
George W. Fields, Pan Publicity  
Stan Woolston, Printer  
Ted Johnstone, Novelty Investigator

Our consultants include:

Frank & Belle Dietz, Travel  
Dick Ellington, Auction Material  
Walt Willis, Irish Publicity  
Arthur Thomson, English Publicity  
Roger J. Horrocks, Australian & New Zealand Pub.  
Jim Eison, Editor of Journal

Well, you can read all this in the first ish of the Journal...

Sincerely,

Len Moffatt



# CRITIQUE



reviews of recently published books - conducted by Vowen Clark

## FANCIES AND GOOD NIGHTS

Collier, John - Bantam - 50¢

Ah, here's one for us fantasy fans. This superb anthology contains fifty stories (not bad, only a penny each) by a modest writer of no small ability. Mr. Collier is compared to "Saki" on the back cover; I agree and wish also to compare him to Ray Bradbury (the uncrowned king). This is a collection for (actually, of) madmen, bottled genies, ghosts, wild friends, blood-curdling murder, and fantastic situations. A great example of the macabre and bizarre. Truly great reading by a great talent.

## THE THIRD LEVEL

Finney, Jack - Rinehart & Co. - \$3.00

This is a collection for everyone. These twelve stories cover a wide range of types: "Such Interesting Neighbors" is a conventional sf tale about a couple from the future; "Second Chance" is a somewhat unlikely fantasy; and "Contents of the Dead Man's Pocket" is just-plain-slick-quality fiction. (Of course there are many other stories, these are just representative.) These are the three categories the contents seem to appear in. Of course, some of the stories are dull and unreadable (after all, almost every collection contains a few stinkers) but a good portion have the ever popular "Finney-touch".

## TIME FOR THE STARS

Heinlein, Robert - Scribners - \$2.75

This juvenile was a sad disappointment to an old Heinlein fan. The heroes are two teenagers named Thomas Paine Leonardo da Vinci Bartlett and Patrick Henry Michelangelo Bartlett - better known as Tom and Pat. A pair of twins were never less credible. Problem: radio is found to be worthless to the earthmen exploring the stars. Development: it is found that twins are easily trained to be telepathic to one another. Idea: place one twin in star ship and the other on earth. Results: communication by telepathy and dull reading for all.

## PILGRIMAGE TO EARTH

Sheckley, Robert - Bantam - 35¢

These fifteen tales, largely reprinted from GALAXY, are sort of ordinary in quality, style, and theme. Enjoyable (not quite as much as Sheckley usually is) but containing nothing spectacularly good or bad. Most of the stories seem to be in a humorous vein but they leave much to be desired.

## THE ANSWER

Wylie, Philip - Rinehart & Co. - \$1.50

This short novel was billed as "a simple fable for our age". It was simple indeed. Too simple, in fact, to hold the reader's interest. The whole theme is based on the idea that an angel dies each time there is an atomic explosion on earth. This tale would hardly survive to be published were it not for Mr. Wylie's reputation.

6  
CONTINUED



(Critique, continued)

EARTH IS ROOM ENOUGH Asimov, Isaac - Doubleday - \$2.95

A very good collection by a great writer. VERY GOOD

PEOPLE IN THE SKY Asimov, Isaac - Bantam - 35¢

One of his best novels. EXCELLENT

DANDYLION WINE Bradbury, Ray - Doubleday - \$3.95

The longest work by the old master! Great! EXCELLENT

SCIENCE FICTION CARNIVAL Brown & Reynolds - Bantam - 35¢

The accent is on humor. GOOD

STORIES FOR THE DEAD OF NIGHT Congdon, Don - Dell - 35¢

For fantasy lovers! EXCELLENT

BEACHHEADS IN SPACE Derleth, August - Berkley - 35¢

The writers could have done better. GOOD

OCCAM'S RAZOR Duncan, David - Ballantine - 35¢

VERY GOOD

THE GREEN ODYSSEY Farmer, Philip Jose - Ballantine - 35¢

Good for adventure fans. VERY GOOD

REVOLT IN 2100 Heinlein, Robert - Signet - 25¢

Come on Bob! We know you can do better! POOR

THE WINDS OF TIME Oliver, Chad - Doubleday - \$2.95

Well, what can you expect in a juvenile book. FAIR

GREAT TALES AND POEMS OF EDGAR ALLEN POE - Pocket Library- 35¢

A collector's item to be sure! EXCELLENT

DRACULA Stoker, Bram - Fawcett Books - 35¢

A classic reprint. EXCELLENT

So long till next ish. I hope hear if you agree with my opinions.

-VHC

\*\*\*\*\*

If there's anything harder than breaking a bad habit, it's to refrain from telling people how you did it. -Reader's Digest



# TERRAN REPORT

by John Lin

Original manuscript recording of first expedition to surface of Sol III (expedition cruiser 13P138):

"It looks like the Hall of the Grand Hierarchy!" (It should be noted that the recorder was not in frequency until surface expedition had entered largest structure of small villages) "It does except there are no pulpits, only a blank white wall with some curtains on each side." (A call from engineer five follows: Back here, a machine room! (Captain of cruiser speaks) You sure of no danger if this machinery is activated? (Engineer five) Yes, sir! There is no danger. (Captain) All right, activate it.

At this point an unknown disturbance stopped the recorder, the rest of the report is from the crew of Cruiser 13P138 after return to base.

(Engineer five) Upon activating this machinery, terran stick writing appeared on the white wall, the color of which soon disappeared, revealing several huge furry mammals in a setting of sand and rock such as one might see on Sol IV. The creatures were huge with quick nervous movements and large brown eyes (it is very interesting to note that they numbered only two). We were fascinated with this scene before us, only when a great reptile drove off the mammals did we come to realize this giant reptile was coming towards us. At this point we retreated to the ship, no one was injured but myself (my eye was injured and I had to be helped back to the ship.).

End of report of first terran expedition to surface of terran Sol III.

\*Translation of terran stick writing proved unpronounceable: Walt Disney's "Living Desert".

-JL

## WANTED:

- g back copies of MAD for ext.
- g back copies of PANTS for vms.
- g copies of fanzines for ego to review.
- g members for JISFC (see ad on page 10).
- g material for our next ish (see editorial on page 2).
- g letters (see page 24).
- g MON&Y!



# PACKAGED PAPERS

fanzines on parade - conducted by Colin G. Cameron  
.....

Lessee now... this being the first review for this mag, I can only review those which come from my collection, which is not up to date, at present. Now, the first one on the agenda is...

TVIG: Guy E. Terwilliger, 1412 Albright St., Boise, Idaho. #6.  
152. 63 pages. Ditto & Mimeo.

Repro: excellent  
Material: fair to good  
Artwork: fair to excellent  
General: very good

Guy exemplifies in his editorial how not to do something. I'm afraid he'll never be a do-it-yourself plumber again. Most of the material is rather run-of-the-mill, except for mebbe "IF I SHOULD DIE" by Johnny Holleman. This annish was unusually large - 63 pages to be exact. One thing I noticed though: although most of the material isn't any bonfire, it's very enjoyable, and good for steady reading. In fact, once I started reading, it seemed that I couldn't stop till I had read everything in it. Most strange... Most average material doesn't affect me that way. But..

SIGMA OCTANTIS: John Mussells, 4 Curve St., Wakefield, Mass. #7.  
Free Sample. Sub rates on request. 40 pages. Spirit duplicator.

Repro: fair  
Material: good  
Artwork: very good  
General: good

John starts right off by telling the qualities of a fanatic, and how to become one. Only he says that fanaticism is a form of escapism, with which I don't agree. A fanatic is 98% pure American (as Mussells says), but devotes all his spare time and some which isn't spare to one or even two hobbies. An escapist refuses to do anything which is beneficial to anyone or anything but himself; and recedes from life, refusing to face the harsh realities. Most, but not all escapists, are old-fashioned or behind the times. Other material was: FAKerr's article on the sf boom; a good piece of fiction by Eric Cashen; another by Peter Walsh; an article on the recent geophysical year; more fiction by Maylene (John has what you might call "a literary zine"); letter col; a rather poorly written conclusion to the "FLESH AND FURRY" series by Neal F. Wilgus; and, of course, the fanzine reviews conducted by Rob Williams. John's zine is neatly done in three colors.

(Continued Next Page)



YANDRO: Buck & Juanita Coulsen, 105 Stitt St., Wabash, Ind. #57.  
10¢. 19 pages. Mimeo.

Repro: good  
Material: very good  
Artwork: fair  
General: very good

The repro on this ish was good, but the yellow and green paper kind of gets on your nerves. One steady color looks better. I believe. The two editorials were entertaining, to say the least. They take up space without really saying anything. Then two con reports; one on the Loncon, and the other about the Stoccon. Then came a tremendously well written story by Glenn King, who really out-did himself this time, called "THE INITIATIVE OF ROBOT E20". And one page stories usually don't hit it off too well... A column by Dodd (he seems to have his foot in almost every zine!) and an Ertel piece of fiction; then the letter col, with a short amount of long letters.

CAVEAT EMPTOR: John W. Thiel, 2934 Wilshire St., Markham, Ill. #2.  
10¢. 17 pages. Mimeo.

Repro: inferior  
Material: fair  
Artwork: fair (even if my pictures ARE in there!)  
General: fair

The title should have warned me, but I went ahead and got it anyway. John's main trouble is the poor repro his machine gives him. Most of the illos didn't come out at all, with just vague lines and scribbles on the page. But John tells us that he's got the repro problem licked for his next ish. We'll see... Meanwhile in #2: a fair story by Don Stueffloten; a column by Dodd; and a terrible story by John Butterworth; another column by somebody (no name given, and if it was, it didn't come out at all in my copy so...); "INFAMOUS LAST WORDS" by John and Richard Brown (corny); book reviews by King; a lengthy letter col; and an article by King (again?). Let's see how #3 comes out, John.

Also here are SIGBO (DeMuth), SATA ILLUSTRATED (Pearson and Adkins), and BRLFSK (Champion //I wonder if you could consider this a true zine.//) which are fairly well known, and reviewing them would just take up so much unnecessary space. So... nebbe next time.

As I said before, I haven't got many zines to review. Of course, the above were not all of them, but there is a definite shortage. So send your zine to be reviewed. Mail to: Colin Cameron, 2561 Ridgeview Drive, San Diego 5, Calif.



# THE IMPROBABLE FUTURE

A preview of the future by the editor.

Although our next issue (number 3) is open for suggestions, so to speak, we now have part of our line-up planned definitely.

C. G. Cameron will present another offering to the altar of readers. A delightful short story entitled "WEED". It tells of the adventures of a character by the name of... But wait and read it in the next issue.

I hope to make another contribution called LANDING SITE. It tells how aliens make a perfect contact with the earthlings except for their choice of a landing site.

Of course, there will be all of the regular features: reviews; editorial, letters, The Con Spot, etc.

Well, things seem to be shaping up fine, but we still need a lot of material of all kinds. Just send your written or drawn work to either Colin Cameron or Vowen Clark (see the contents page for addresses).

-VMC

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A committee should consist of three men, two of whom are absent.

French Proverb: God cures; the doctor sends the bill.

-Reader's Digest

\*\*\*\*\*

FANG!

PROS!

ANY AND EVERY ONE!

Be sure to attend SOLACON (the new name for the World SF Convention #16 combined with the Annual West Coast SF Conference XI) held in Los Angeles, California at the Alexandria Hotel during the time period of August 29th through September 1st.

Membership fee: \$1.00

Send your \$2.00 to: Rick Sneary,  
2962 Santa Ana St., South Gate,  
California. Send it soon!

Registration fee: \$1.00

\*\*\*\*\*

The sum of the parts can be greater than the whole - especially when it comes to repacking a vacation suitcase.

-Reader's Digest

Sign posted in laboratory: Are you helping - or are you part of the problem?

-Reader's Digest

New musical show on Broadway: "Lend an Ear" with Vincint Van Gogh.



## THE PROS

Reviews of recent issues of prozines.

GALAXY (Editor: H. L. Gold, Galaxy Pub. Corp., 421 Hudson St., New York, N. Y. Jan. 1958, Vol. 15, No. 3. 35¢)

GALAXY continues to be one of the top American zines in its first ish of the new year. One of the best features of GALAXY is the regularly good line-up of writers. This ish is no exception... The novel ("The Knights of Arthur" by Fred Pohl) is an amusing comedy set in the near future about a group of enterprising characters who take advantage of the recent atomic war. The two novelets are: "Rex and Mrs. Rejilla" by Gordon R. Dickson, a surprisingly bad attempt at the story of a delegate from another world; and "The World That Couldn't Be" by Cliff Simak, an interesting tale of a hunter versus an unbelievable creature on an alien planet. The most outstanding fiction appears (this time anyway) in short story form. To be specific, "The Hated" by Paul Flehr and "Kill Me With Kindness" by Richard Wilson. "The Hated" tells of an attempt to alleviate the hatred that builds up among the members of the crews that have to live in the cramped quarters of a space ship. It has a delightful ending. "Kill Me With Kindness" is one of the best short pieces of humorous writing to come along in GALAXY in a great while. It tells about a man imprisoned in a perfect utopia... A utopia he tries to improve upon. The regular features (including the article by Willy Ley on zero-g life) are good, as always. The illustrations are average with one or two exceptionally good ones by Martin and Gaughan. All in all, it was definitely worth the money and time spent.

-VMC

SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES (Editor: Larry T. Shaw, Royal Pub., 11 West 42nd St., New York 36, N. Y. Jan., 1958. Vol. 2, No. 3. 35¢)

This particular ish takes up Shaw's new policy // I gathered from the last ish that this is a temporary change. -VMC// of having two "novels" instead of three, as they had before. Also thrown in are two short stories, plus The Fan-Space (by Archibald Destiny) and the lettercol. The first novel, an extremely short one, is by Ivar Jorgenson, called "Hunt the Space Witch!" which, strangely enough, is not about a space-witch hunt, but of a man who is searching for his long-lost blood brother. It starts off strong and descriptive, but the ending was a complete let-down, like most Jorgenson stories. The second equally short novel was a change for the better. It was "One Against Herculum" by Jerry Sohl. Unfortunately, it started off rather weak and mediocre, but ended up very good. Still mediocre, but good. The shorts were fair. I imagine Shaw used them to fill up space. Then, in Fan-Space, it was announced that the column was not for fans, but for readers, who Destiny probably hopes to convert to fans. Who didn't know that before? Bash was sadly missed. Artwork was the worst yet.

-CSC



# AFTER

by Vowen Clark

The robots methodically, and very thoroughly, ground the humans underfoot. They left the crushed and torn bodies lying in the burning ruins. They abandoned the rotting flesh of men and animals. They left the grotesque, swollen corpses in the stagnant water of swamps and lakes.

The air was thick and hot with the stench of scorched flesh and bones. But the air would have to be full of sordid flies and insects for a while longer because the metal men weren't finished.

The steel imitations of men had to be shined and polished. Their bodies had to be cleaned and oiled until they glistened in the warm light of the sun. All this must be accomplished before they could rebuild.

They repaired themselves in the once secreted, well-hidden underground workshops provided by the new masters.

The proened and prettied themselves so they would be ready to serve; to serve as they once had done for some of the humans; to serve as only emotionless machines could.

The robots worked day and night. They needed no rest, for the men had made them tireless.

Then they began their second job.

The human's greatest achievements were torn asunder. The cities were pulverized; the towns ravaged; the roads and highways were destroyed. Everything once known to man was mangled, crushed, and burned.

Slowly, ever so slowly, the surface of the earth was undone, changed, and mutilated beyond recognition. Mountains were leveled and valleys filled with the resulting surplus dirt. Forests were burned and deserts flooded. Soon, the world was covered with coldly gleaming constructions; huge buildings of unknown use rose and spread over the level, dead countryside. Strange plants sprouted and struggled skyward to become brightly colored, alien gardens.

Earth became a paradise, a perfect utopia... but not for men. Still the robots labored... New, carefully controlled, constant rivers flowed into crystal-clear lakes. The lakes were then surrounded by ominous cities and spanned with odd bridges.

Presently, the work stopped. The world was now ready to meet its new inhabitants. It had been completely remolded so the awaited time could not be far in the future.

The robots encircled a large, flat slab of steel. They waited patiently.

Fly dots appeared overhead, then grew as they dropped screamingly earthward. They slowed, then eased onto the new and carefully-readied landing place...

Each in turn split and an acrid odor drifted up and out in great blue clouds. Small creatures then emerged amidst an aura of crackling, hissing energy.

A message raced back from the leader, and somewhere deep



within one of the spherical space ships a pseudopod shot forward in instantaneous response. Each of the robots collapsed with spasmodic twitches as, inside their complex artificial brains, fuses burst and coils slowly began to cool.

Now that the newly rebuilt world had been acquired by the tiny bits of slime and protoplasm, there was no need of the robots. Now the motive power that had driven the machines to murder their once great makers could be cut off. There had been no cause or need for the usual costly war; the humans had built machines for their own destruction.

The sun sank in a blaze of glowing color: color that would only be seen and thought of as a curiosity... One of many curious things to brighten a vacation.

The earth became a tourist resort.

A tourist resort for beings from another star...

-VMC

.....  
BACKLASH!

// The following is an excerpt from a letter from one of the members of the group that received our first ish. Honest fellows, we didn't write it! -VMC//

JOHN W. THIEL

Markham, Illinois

"I think a proper balance of humor and seriousness is what makes a fanzine good, so why not continue as you were before, adding serious things? // I hope John will realize that our change in format was necessary for more general reader acceptance. -VMC // I found IMP #1 entertaining, beautiful, and funny. Also, it had what fans all over the world strive for, and what few succeed in obtaining, namely, personality. // Egoboo! -VMC// The fanzine was a rather fresh swimmer in the sewer pools of fandom (apologies to cliches). // Egoboo? I'm not sure how that was meant. -VMC//

We will appreciate your comments (good or bad) and your questions. Just write to: Vowen Clark, 6221 Thorn Street, San Diego 15, California.

.....  
Attend South Gate in '58!

Weather Forcast: "Clear today except for early fog, followed by smog, followed by late fog."

The normal life span of Indian elephants ranges from 45 to 60 yrs. Some live to 70. Few live over 100. -You read it in IMP!



-a movie review-

-conducted this ish by Colin G. Cameron-

# THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

from the story of the same name, by Victor Hugo

Produced by Robert and Raymond Hakim

Directed by Jean Delannoy

Written for the screen by Jean Aurenche and Jacques Prevert

Starring:

Emeralda.....Gina Lollobrigida  
Quasimodo.....Anthony Quinn  
Frollo.....Alain Cluny  
Poet.....Robert Hirsch  
Clopin.....Philippe Clay  
Fleur De Lys.....Daniele Dumont

In Cinemascope and technicolor

An Allied Artists release

-----  
The picture begins by showing the cathedral of Notre Dame. Weaving through corridors and passages, the camera finally comes to rest upon a wall, on which is inscribed a word...ANAYKH. Then the narrator begins the story...

Gina Lollobrigida, as a gypsy girl, dances and sings acceptably, but it is her beauty and not acting which dominates the screen. She saves Robert Hirsch from a band of thieves by marrying him (I might add that she was also a member of the Gypsy-Thief Association. The Poet, who was about to be hanged, was saved by a ritual; he could go free only if one of the gypsy women would have him for her husband, which Gina did). However, the attitude she had was not that of the faithful wife. On the contrary; she saved the Poet only because she felt pity towards him. But she did not know of the chemist, Quasimodo's master, who watched her with envy...

Meanwhile - Quasimodo is crowned King of the Fools by a group of drunk peasants. They are actually making fun of the present king, Anthony Quinn, as Quasimodo, does a tremendous job of acting as the hunchback. He is borne about on a throne by the peasants, shouting and mumbling in his half-speech, and blowing a silver whistle.

"I can hear it!" the poor half deaf bell ringer cries. "I make music!" he shouts.

Then Quasimodo's master, an alchemist, arrives upon the scene and quickly disperses the group by ordering Quasimodo to come with him. The alchemist has an idea...

"See that girl?" he points down a dark alley to Emeraldalda. "Go get her and bring her to me," he commands. The hunchback hurries off down the street after the girl, who promptly becomes deathly frightened (silly girl!) of the ugly figure pursuing her. She runs as fast as



her prayer legs will carry her and literally falls into the waiting arms of her rescuer, a young knight in shining armor. Of course they promptly fall in love. But there is still the ever-watchful, suspicious alchemist...

The alchemist finds the couple making love and runs a knife (which Esmeralda had discarded) through the poor boy's back. But, in such a manner as not to be seen by anybody. Then he reports the incident to the local law-making body, accusing Esmeralda of the crime. The poor chap, it seems, is not expected to live, so she is tried for attempted murder, without ever hearing the testimony of the knight. The people think evil spirits influenced this misdeed, and accuse Esmeralda of being a witch. The alchemist smiles at this, but inside he is jealous and sad. He does not wish her to be killed. He wants her for his own.

But the members of the jury sentence her to die. The young knight, fully recovered, does not wish to talk with her and runs off with a pretty little lady of the court. Despite the feeble attempts of her husband, Esmeralda is brought into the town square to be executed. Suddenly - with a huge crowd gathered around - Quasimodo swings down from the towers of the cathedral and picks up the girl. In a dead faint, she is carried to the top of the cathedral and held high above the crowd. Then the hunchback carries her into his room and leaves her on his bed while he wards off all attackers.

"Sanctuary!" he cries, and the church officials close the huge wooden doors, keeping the mob from entering.

"But if they are allowed to stay there," says a member of the court, "all criminals will not be persecuted, simply by taking refuge in the church!"

"The sacred right of the church must not be violated," says a church official.

The king gets an idea from a prisoner in one of his famed dungeons. He learns that the right of sanctuary may be temporarily raised. With this note, he sends his army to the cathedral to capture the girl...

Meanwhile, Esmeralda is busy getting acquainted with Quasimodo. It seems, every time she wakes up from a nap, that he simply frightens her. Finally she calms down, but is aroused by a noise coming from outside...

The beggars and thieves of the town come forward, shouting: "Sanctuary! We want sanctuary!" They stop at the foot of the cathedral and shout that if Esmeralda can escape from the law by claiming sanctuary, they should be able to, also. They set about knocking in the doors.

Quasimodo sees this all from above, but thinks that the people have come to take Esmeralda away. He dislodges columns of stone and heaves them over the edge of the tower. Their effect is earthshaking. Not only earth-shaking, but disastrous as well.

The beggars and thieves, paying no heed to the crushed bodies of their comrades about them, continue to batter down the door. They look up and see the contents of a huge cauldron of boiling material rain down upon them. That takes care of a few more...

Then the king's men arrive upon the scene and quickly put a few arrows in the backs of most of the crowd. Esmeralda, who has watched down the see what was happening, gets shot in the back and dies. The leader of the crowd finds himself with a sword between his ribs.

Quasimodo, who did not see Esmeralda leave her room, thinks that he has scared away the attackers. He goes to her room, only to find it empty. He hunts through the cathedral, calling her name. When he happens to look over a balcony, he sees the dead Esmeralda being dragged off behind a horse with a rope around her neck. For some reason, this makes him very mad. He throws people off the highest



points of the cathedral. Then he happens to spot the alchemist scratching a word into the wall of one of the corridors. He creeps up behind him and throws him over the edge.

Many of you may have seen one of the two previous versions, or both. In this new film, Anthony Quinn portrays the hunchback as a more human creature than monster. Although not nearly so flamboyant as Charles Laughton's version in 1939, nor so dramatic as Lon Chaney's portrayal in 1923, Quinn makes a disfigured man instead of a monster, and therefore makes Quasimodo's problems seem more believable.

This was the first version to be filmed on location in Paris. The settings in Cinemascope and color are imposing, particularly the huge Notre Dame cathedral which dominates the scenery almost as much as Giza. Also, in previous versions, Quasimodo's master was a priest. This part has now been changed to that of an alchemist, which it adds an added note of romance, but also a contradictory note in the church setting.

In the ending, Quasimodo goes to the gallows and finds that Esmeralda has been placed in a cage in a cave. Scrabbling through corridors and passageways, he finally locates her, lying dead on the ground. He lies down beside her and stays there until he dies of starvation.

The film closes with this memorable note from the narrator:

"-years later, men found two skeletons locked in close embrace. When an attempt was made to separate them, they crumbled to dust-"



# Improbable



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TO

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Markham, Illinois