

ISOMER

No. 2

2nd Qtr.

1955

In The Nature Of An

APOLOGY

to Art Rapp, Dean Grennell and Robert Bloch. I promised them that this rag would be out "soon"--notice the date on Grennell's contribution. Also I said that this would not go through FAPA or CAPS.

And it doesn't really need to go through FAPA like this--I could claim credit for the 6 pages of "Blood, Sweat and Cheers" that was in the last mailing, but as Terry said, "Who'd want to?" Besides, I feel that I should contribute something to FAPA after my long absence.

I should explain what this issue of Isomer was originally intended to be. I sent stencils to various people--including the artists herein, of course--at about the same time, and all were received back almost immediately, for which I thank the three contributors immensely. Then I gave a couple of stencils to a local Bay fan, and some months later heard that he'd typed one of them up so far. And I sent another pair to a prominent fan, with the usual return postage for the done or undone stencils and a stamped return letter, so he could let me know if I could expect them back or not. That was 3 or 4 months ago.

On top of that, my fanac has been steadily dwindling. I have not attended a GGFS meeting in 4 months; my last fan letter was written 6 months ago; I have read about 5 fanzines in the last 3 or 4 months (almost all British), and done nothing in the way of activity. Again, apologies.

During the summer, I acquired an automobile interest (from the customizing angle) to augment my present main interests of Ham radio, Civil Air Patrol, California Cadet Corps, and a now somewhat dormant interest in roller skating.

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ISOMER #2, for the 72nd mailing; postmailed; publishing by Peter Graham, KN6MIX, Box 149, Fairfax, California. 9/27/55

LaTuttle suffered from Creek's Disease,
And various other river ills;
He wouldn't have suffered if his body'd been
buffered
By Widower's Wonderful Liver Pills.

INTERLUDE

by Art Rapp

How Ghada!

As I looked in my mailbox, one dark and fannish night,
I saw among the stiferud there, a disconcerting sight,
I fished it out and opened it up, and, much to my distress,
I found it was a * * * addressed to my address!

I showed it to my family, who screamed and ran away,
I sent a frantic telegram, direct to 4sj;
Within the hour his answer came, marked "URGENT" and "COLLECT":
"Don't come near me with that * * * or I will break your neck."

I took it to a meeting of our club of local fen,
And after we had drunk some drink, I showed it to the men,
They voted to absolve themselves from any taint of sin,
So now my * * * and I are outside, looking in!

I sweated out the months and days as time went creeping on,
Until at last the week arrived to hold the world con;
But I had learned my lesson, and my cards I coolly played,
And didn't produce the * * * until the Masquerade.

Vast volumes have been written, 'all about that great melee,
How sixteen pros were trampled as all fandom turned to flee;
And how the bitter arguments resounded thru the night,
Over which was worse, a * * * or a lousy shaverite.

"An advertisement might dispose of it for me," thought I,
But even KAY-MAR TRADER's readers winced, and wouldn't buy;
Donating it to the Big Pond Fund was one of my inspirations,
But the British returned my * * * and broke off fan relations!

I've tried in every way I know, to exile or to can it,
I even, as a last resort, tried selling it to PLANET!
In utter desperation, fen, I now appeal to you:
When one possesses a * * *, what CAN a fellow do?

Mimeo

Over the roller and thru the drum
See the fanzine pages go,
The fan knows the way to the paper-tray
As the stack of sheets gets low.
The crank goes round with a groaning sound
Like a lovesick alligator,
But the mimeo's shriek is a muted squeak
Compared to the readers', later!

Spaceward, Heh!

As the shining starships hurtle thru the vastnesses of the void
In what tasks of spatial glamour will their crewmen be employed?
You may picture them at keyboards, plotting orbit integration,
But I bet that they spend much more time in shipboard sanitation!

As long as rocketships have decks, their crews will have to mop,
And any object made of brass must shine from toe to top,
And over the atomics' purr will ring the sad complaint
Of lowly crewmen growing highly skilled at chipping paint.

In the spic-and-span control room sits the skipper at his screen,
Watching nebulae and galaxies drift slow across the scene,
But belowdecks, guys with buckets will be washing out their duds,
And the ever-luckless galley help will sit there peeling spuds.

It is great to be a spacer and ride far beyond the stars,
To tell tales of unknown planets in exotic earthside bars,
But it isn't half as glamorous to those whose way is sped
By scraping out the cooking pots, or scrubbing down the head!

Culinary Artist

You may drop him in a parachute, or march him on parade,
But his training's mostly useless, since he must be born, not made;
When he finishes his schooling, he just throws away the book
And bases his career on stew -- if he's an Army cook.

They may furnish him a menu, balanced in caloric style,
With each carbohydrate measured, and with minerals by the mile,
But he will scorn the schedule, and without a second look
Proceed to make a pot of stew -- if he's an Army cook.

You may set him down in Zanzibar, or somewhere north of Thule,
With nothing but a case of spam, and no help but a coolie,
And he will sulphurize the air with cussing-out the gook,
But somehow you'll get stew to eat -- if he's an Army cook.

My favorite conversational gambit with G.I. cooks is to tell them, "Boy! This is just like Mother used to make!" just as the cook begins to glow with pride, I add, "Yeah, she couldn't cook either: that's why I ran away from home to join the Army." (Note: It is inadvisable to make remarks of this sort to a cook unless you outrank him.)

When I came into the Army, I promptly gained 20 pounds, which probably was more a result of plenty of outdoor exercise than anything else -- but I've kept that poundage ever since, and in fact I notice either my clothes are all simultaneously shrinking, or my waistline is expanding. All sorts of things happen to G.I.'s, but I have yet to hear of any of them starving.

your local recruiting office.

For further details, see

ROBERT BLOCH

Once upon a time, boys and girls, there was no MAD COMICS.

Once upon a time there was no POGO.

Yes...and believe it or not...there wasn't even a Stan Kenton!

In those primitive days, before the coming of trimmed edges and digest-sized magazines, science-fiction fans were few and far between ...no one had ever conceived of a Convention, the first fanzine had yet to be published, and the beanie hadn't even been invented.

What do you suppose fans did in the Dawn Ages? You'll probably never guess, so I'll tell you. They read magazines!

And one of the magazines they read was WEIRD TALES.

They read it thirty years ago...before there was such a publication as AMAZING; before WONDER and ASTOUNDING came into existence...when there wasn't even the faintest cloud looming on the horizon as a prelude to the Immortal Storm.

Since then a full generation has passed. Thirty years have come and gone. And WEIRD TALES is no more.

I am wode-painted and keening over its demise, but a bit regretful that I don't detect more mourners at the funeral. As I write these lines, however, I've yet to see any mention of WEIRD TALES' passing in the current fanzines. Not so much as an interlineation disturbs the endless references to MAD, POGO, cool jazz, Courtney, and other topics of interest to the Serious Constructive Fan of Today. I dare say that many of the more eminent authorities on Brubeck and Little Willie have never heard of WEIRD TALES. I am quite certain that an even greater number may have noted patronizing or disparaging references to the publication but didn't read it.

Indeed, for the past ten years or so, it was quite the fashion to dismiss WEIRD TALES as a fantasy magazine of interest only to the oldtime followers of H.P. Lovecraft -- as such it wasn't worth the attention of readers who paid allegiance to contemporary authors in the science-fantasy genre.

But now that WEIRD TALES has gone to the Happy Haunting-Ground, it may be permissible to remind some of the late-comers that a giant has fallen.

For during the first 20 years of its existence, it played a highly important part in the development of the science-fantasy field. Under Edwin Baird, Farnsworth Wright, and the early editorship of Dorothy McIlwraith, WEIRD TALES made signal contributions.

A surprisingly high percentage of today's "big names" did their early work in WT's pages.

It may come as a shock to contemporary fans to scan a list of WT contributors and note such names as Heinlein, van Vogt, Bouche, de Camp, Pratt, Sturgeon, Williamson, Simak and others of similar stature.

Many do not realize that WEIRD TALES printed the first professional work of Henry Kuttner, C.L. Moore, Fritz Leiber, August Derleth -- that WEIRD TALES developed the talents of many "old-timers" in the field such as Long, Wandrei, Binder, Edmond Hamilton -- that for years Ray Bradbury spent his time trying to crack WT rather than the SATURDAY EVENING POST -- and that WT was making the honorable mentions list of the O'Brien and O'Henry yearbooks as far back as 25 years ago.

WEIRD TALES developed artists like Bok and Finlay...served as the creative cradle for "classic" characters such as Conan, Jirel and Northwest Smith...printed the early del Rey and Cartmill and set the pattern for the later UNKNOWN. Fredric Brown, Manly Wade Wellman, Eric Frank Russell, Nelson Bond -- the list of WT's contributors is an Almanac de Gotha of Gothic stylists who later came to concentrate on the more lucrative straight science-fiction markets.

And yet, to many a writer in the "great years" of WT's history, the publication of a story in its pages -- even at lesser rates -- was a desirable achievement. I well remember Stanley Weinbaum telling me, only a few months before his death, that he wanted desperately to write a yarn that would "hit" WT. For at that time (incredible as it may seem to those who are familiar only with recent developments) publication in WEIRD TALES carried with it a prestige value; insofar as it was the only magazine of its kind to enjoy critical recognition. WT stories were reprinted generally in anthologies long before the war brought the "sf boom" into being. For many authors, writing for WT was a labor of love.

It was always thus with its "great years" editor, Farnsworth Wright. Wright remains one of the forgotten heroes today; but here he was, in every sense of the word. The ravages of Parkinson's Disease failed to quell a brilliant intellect, a scholarly and critically keen editorial insight, a mordantly keen sense of humor, and above all, a genuine devotion to fantasy literature which had no relation to the profit-motive. WEIRD TALES never made money for anyone -- publishers, editors, writers, or artists. But it made friends. It made progress for the field. As a developing-ground for talent, WT contributed as much or more than any other single magazine. Though its accent on fantasy and horror may seem dated and distasteful today, it is impossible to dismiss the illustrious roster of talent which found first fruition within its pages. WEIRD TALES needs no apologia ...or for that matter, epitaph. The magazine may be dead, but its influence lives on, and will continue to flourish for many years to come. Sic transit, gorier!

Page 1
Out: 1 January 1955

Dean A. Grennell,
402 Maple Avenue,
Fond du Lac, Wis.

Dear Pete:

So what do you say for a guy who sends you two stencils and says you should "type anything you like on them?" Well, I suppose I could say that I am rather unaccustomed to typing on stencils other than the familiar Gestencils. You request that I use the sheet of carbon on both stencils and return it...so I will return it but I am using one of the "carbons" ('cushion-sheets,' I call 'em) that comes with the Gestencils. In fact, I'll probably use a fresh cushion for each stencil---and return yours in a virginal condition. You see, a quire of Gestencils comes with a plastic sheet and maybe a dozen of the cushions included at no extra cost (I pay \$2.50/Q for them---what d'you pay?) and I never use the cushions when I type with the black L C Smith that cuts most of Grue's pages. On that machine I just use the hard plastic back-sheet because I find it makes for a sharper letter. But I'm cutting this on a nearly new Smith-Corona office-model and the letters on that are so sharp and fine-lined that I find it works better to use a cushion-sheet to thicken the lines a bit. I still put the hard plastic behind it to give a firmer surface to cut against (as I'm doing now) and I have removed the film from a Gestencil and put it over the "Campus" brand stencil you've supplied. This is because I don't like to get the keys all glucked up with wax while I'm cutting. I find that films, like cushion-sheets, can be used for a number of stencils without ill effects.

But enough of this shop-talk. I'll turn to your accompanying letter and see if it contains any questions I haven't answered yet. There might be some of sufficiently general interest to provide fodder for discussion. At any rate, they ought to carry me a little fodder down the stencil.

"Do you still think I don't exist?" Well, I'll say this, Pete---you probably possess as much bona fide corporeality as the next person. There are times when I wonder if anybody, including the writer, really exists or if we are all the figments of Robert Bloch's imagination (or, for that matter, Bill Hamling's Imagination). If you mean do I still think you are a pseudopod of Terry Carr, no, I don't. I've decided that it is the other way around. And while I think of it, Pete, thanks for sending me that page of face-critters for Grue. I must compose you a Little Willie poem sometime!

#How much does it cost to send a consignment of Grues to Burbee (for FAPA)?# Now that is an interesting question. Until recently---last issue (#22) to be exact---it ran around \$4.50 to send 68 copies of a 50-page issue to Whittier, Cal., from Fond du Lac. But last time I sent 68 copies of the 64-page Grue/Bleen and 68 copies of the 40-page Le ZOMBIE to Whittier, wrapped up in an empty box that had held 10 reams of mimeo paper (well, not an empty box, but you know what I mean) and it weighed in at 39 pounds. Now, technically, the maximum weight allowed for Parcel Post is 20# and two twenty-pounders would have ran me in excess of \$6.50 and I checked with American Express and the cost there was the same almost to the penny. I did not check with any truck or rail-freight companies because I trust them not. It was much too close to the deadline by then and I've known trucks and freight to take unbelievably long to make even a short haul. Once we had a carload of furnaces take 5½ weeks to come to FdL from Elyria, Ohio---they lost the whole furshlugginer freight-car and later found it on a siding in West Virginia! So I checked with a good friend and shooting-buddy

who works in the local postoffice and asked him what he'd suggest. First thing he asked me was "How many pages does each copy have?" I said that no copy had less than 40 pages and he said that that made them books, subject to the special rate that books go under. It seems that 22 pages is the breaking point past which a pamphlet becomes a book, regardless of the stiffness of the cover (they've amended the rules to cover paper-bound pocketbooks and such). The book-rate is 8¢ for the first pound and 4¢ for each additional pound up to some figure considerably in excess of 40#. And the lovely part of it is that it is the same, regardless of zone. You can mail books from Lubec, Maine to San Diego for the same cost as mailing them from Fairfax to Rodeo---or to Box 150 in Fairfax for that matter. So I sent this huge carton of fapastuff to Burb for \$1.60...and it got there on time too! I still feel good when I think about it.

"Was there ever a second issue of AW?" (that was a mag I did for 7APA) No.

Numbered copies of Le ZOMBIE: doubtless you know by this time...we pulled a real sneaky there. Tucker got #1, DAG got #2, Bloch got #3, Tucker got #4, Willis got #5 (because he'd sent me TED #5)...and everybody in FAPA got #6. Copy #225 went to Chuck Harris of the Rainham Harrises and I don't recall that the rest of them got numbered at all. Ain't we devils?

"Was there ever a 17th issue of Grue?" There was indeed...a very handsome issue it was, too (if I do say so myself). Had a hand-painted, full-color cover (in oils) and five different colors of print in the finest oldtime traditions, also photo illcs and pen drawings as well. Number 18 seemed quite a bring-down after that. In fact. Sorry---Mafia Press policy forbids saying to whom it went...in case you were going to ask. "Were any issues of Grue before #16 of more than one person circulation?" I think you mean #15, Pete---that was the first Rexographed issue which had a circulation of maybe 60 copies. But the answer is still yes. Grue #12 had a press-run of three copies, using carbon-paper and has been read by five people, counting myself. It would not look too bad beside a Grue of today (except that it would require a helluva lot of purgation before release to the general public--that's the fine part of a highly limited circulation), having as it did an 8½x11 double-weight photo cover and maybe a dozen photos inside as illustrations. The other issues?---well, I hope they didn't reach many people apiece as the subject matter was very much custom-tailored and they'd seem quite vapid to anyone but the original recipient. But the idea of making up several issues of sharply limited circulation before branching out into mass-produced fan-publishing is one I'd wholeheartedly recommend to budding fan-eds (to paraphrase Leslie Charteris, fan-eds don't bud, they fester). It gives you a chance to get a lot of bugs ironed out of your mag before it must face a keen-eyed public. And collating a one-issue one-shot is really a snap. There's been many a time when I wished Grue had never qualified for that phrase "Printed Matter Only."

"Hey, what's fubar mean?" Darn right it ain't in your dictionary. It is, I believe, a slang-term of Army origin like SOP, SNAFU, etc. The usual definition is "Fouled Up By Army Regulations." OK? The end is in sight and if I didn't end soon anyway it would be morning and then I'd have to close with something horrible like:

Graham the dawn,

PS: Send me a copy, mm?

Real

Return Postage Guaranteed
Printed Matter Only

Peter Graham
Box 149,
Fairfax, California

950432

WHO'S GOT THE DING-DONG? ... AN ELEPHANT BROUGHT HER IN AND LAID HER BY MY SIDE...GET YOUR GRIMY EYES OFFA ME...HE'S GOT A LO*FI VOICE...MAGAZINE COVERS COURTESY OF THE MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY, DR. WEAVER WRIGHT, CURATOR...I ALWAYS THOUGHT X-RAY CAMERAS WERE MUCH LARGER. LANNY WOULD TURN OVER IN HIS COCOON IF HE HEARD THAT...I KNIGHT THEE DUB...I WOULDN'T LIVE ON THE MOON IF YOU PAID ME...SKATCH...PERNICIOUS ANEMIA...I KNOW A GAL IN TIAJU-ANAM, SHE KNOWS HOW BUT SHE DON'T WANNA...DOWN AT CAMP WE HAD THE ROYAL ORDER OF THE SANI-FLUSUM, WITH SUBSIDIARY ORDERS--KNIGHTS OF THE BOWLE, ROYAL ORDER OF THE PURPLE F--T, AND SUCH...SAM, GET YER ~~W~~ TAHR AHN...SIR, THE CHARGE--PHFT-ft--ON THIS CHARACTER IS--PHFT--I CAUGHT HIM URI-PHFTFT--URINATING BETWEEN THE WALLS OF HIS HUT--PHFTT. NERO WASN'T A TERMPLE MAN/ HE HATED TO SEE A MAN'S HEAD ROLL:/HE BURNED THEM INSTEAD, ~~EXTER~~ USING HIS HEAD,/ AND WIDOWER'S WONDERFUL PETROL...THE GAS STATION ATTENDANT DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I MEANT WHEN I ASKED FOR A TRI-METHYLCHLOROHEXANORALIZATION--ALL I MEANT WAS A SIMPLE GREASE JOB. Sorry, no mailing comments. Tch.

You get this because;

You're in FAPA_____

You appear herein_____

You're an interest~~ed~~-ing
soul_____

Otherwise_____

You're in SAPS (I'm not sure yet if this will go through SAPS, or which mailing if it does, but it wanted me to and I've got enuf, so I may~~be~~)_____