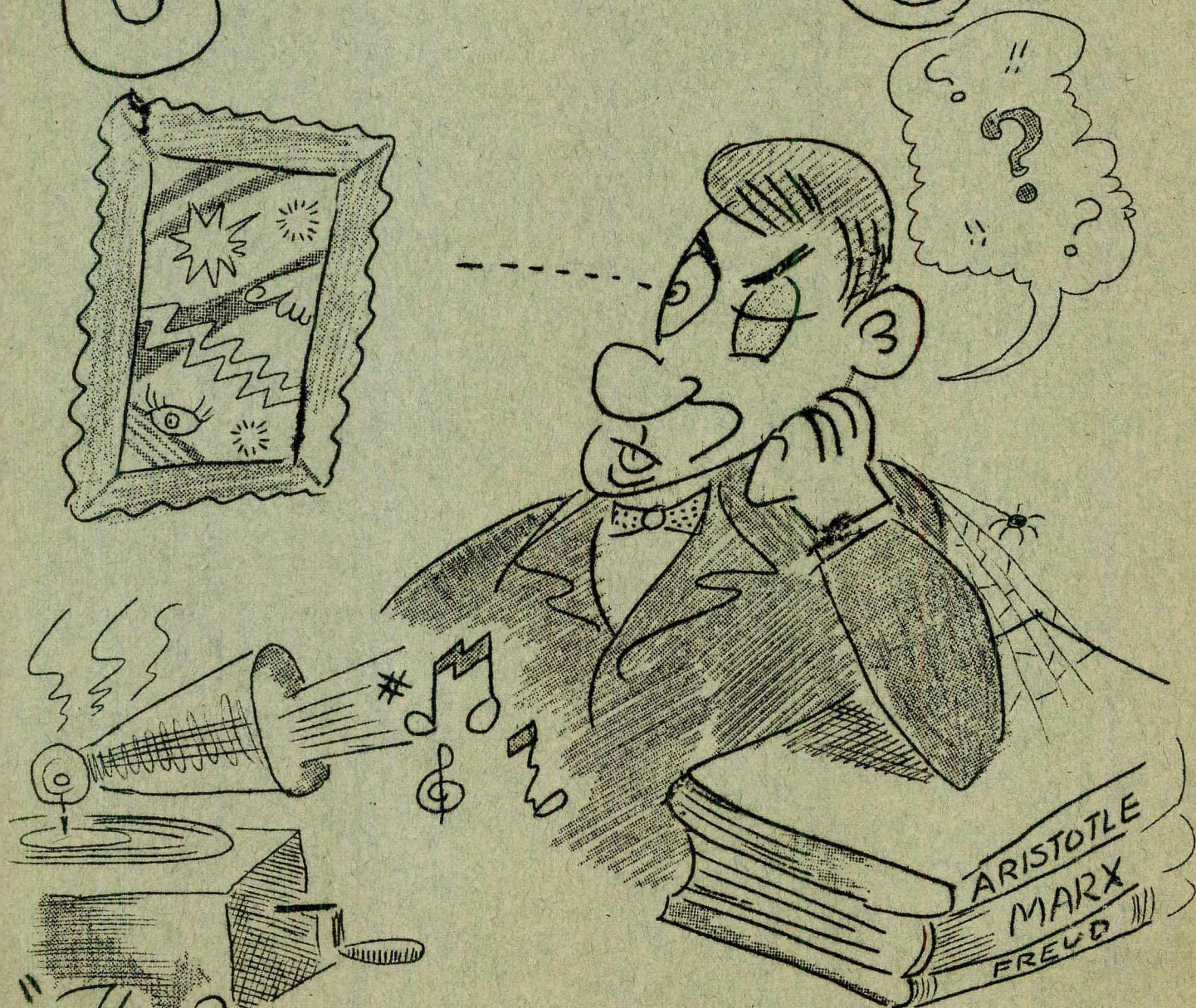


Joe's Jottings

#4 ~ UAPA



"The Magazine of Cultural Americana"

APRIL - 1906

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The Magazine of Cultural Awareness

Joe's Jottings

Issue the 4th

JOE'S JOTTINGS is published every now and then for the Vanguard Amateur Press Association by Joe Kennedy, 84 Baker Avenue, Dover, N.J. This issue is scheduled for the 8th mailing -- but when that'll be, Lawd knows .. 'Tanyrate, this is being run off in mid-April, 1946. JOTTINGS, incidentally, is the magazine which insists on leaving a space between each paragraph, because, various people to the contrary, we think it breaks up the page quite effectively -- and mimeographed amateur publications are no joy to read as is. Thanks are extended this trip to the NFFF Manuscript Bureau, from whom we purloined Dale Hart's poem, "The Vow." ... Why aren't the names of the subscribers listed in the official organ any more? Frankly, we're a bit curious as to the identities of our unfortunate readers. ##

X - RAY ON VANGUARD

As things now stand, it very much looks as if the Vanguard Amateur Press Association has reached the most decisive point in its rather brief history. Enthusiasm due to the organization's newness has died down to a substantial extent, and it seems to me that VAPA today faces a critical period which should either make or break the Vanguard of the future. Recently it was deemed necessary to abandon the policy of regular bi-monthly mailings, apparently because of the difficulty in procuring enough magazines to make such mailings worthwhile. This may be a sign of declining interest; perhaps not. However, it seems fairly obvious that if the present state of things continues, slim mailings may lead to even slimmer mailings -- or none at all. At the very least, VAPA finds itself confronted by a very formidable rut.

Designed on an entirely new set of principles, with unusually high publishing standards, VAPA has, for an amateur press association, remarkably few active publishing members. On the present roster there are perhaps eight, ten, or at most twelve members who have access to duplicating facilities and who can be relied upon to put a magazine in the VAPA bundles at least twice a year. On the whole, there are more writing members than publishing members, which may at least partially account for the situation.

Perhaps another explanation may be the fact that anyone may purchase a subscription to the mailings. And here, I believe, is where there's a far greater loss in potential publishing ambition than might be expected. From the standpoint of the subscriber, the flat \$2-a-year subscription rate is an exceptionally neat deal. Why publish or contribute to the mailings when for sixteen bits you can receive all the VAPA mailings for the next year? The negligible 50¢ extra is definitely a saving when the

comparative cost of publishing is taken into consideration! The subscribers, who constitute a large percentage of VAPA's audience, have no stimulus, of course, toward contributing material to the mailings. Maybe I'm wrong, but in times to come, the abolishment of the subscription deal seems advisable. When Vanguard was in its infancy, subscriptions may have proved an effective system for enlarging distribution, but if a large and productive roster is to be maintained, persons receiving VAPA mailings should be required to support them through writing or publishing. If growth is to take place, the weeds must be eliminated.

Granted that Vanguard is to have more active members, it will be necessary to recruit them -- from where? How favorable are the chances for gaining a dozen or so publishing members from out of the blue? Available, near at hand, is a large reservoir of potential VAPA publishing talent -- I'm referring to fantasy fandom.

A number of the more active Vanguardifs got their start in ay-jay work through sfandom; two or three others are still active in the field. But there are still chaps who turn purple with horror at the mention of the word "fan", and to whom the appellation "fan material" denotes the nadir of writing and editorial quality.

The original concept of Vanguard was, you'll recall, "to provide for the exchange of opinions and publications .. largely pertaining to fantasy in literature and/or concepts derived therefrom..." *

However, in the fan publishing field today, a situation exists that is exactly the opposite to the present position of Vanguard. In fandom, there are more publishers than writers! Many of them are newcomers, barred from FAPA by long waiting lists, but who still manage to turn out creditable fan-mags, balancing their natural enthusiasm with a degree of literacy. Some of these will graduate into professional journalism, as many fans before them have done. Others will gradually subordinate their interest in sfantasy to a greater interest in art, music, literature. Right now, they need a laboratory in which to test their creative talents: a place that welcomes off-trail writing efforts, new ideas, fresh points of view ... an audience of highly critical readers of above-average intelligence. Vanguard can supply such a laboratory.

It seems to this observer that, so far, VAPA has gone out of its way to avoid stepping on FAPA's toes. It has frequently reiterated its policy of not trying to snatch away FAPA members -- but I'm wondering whether it isn't perfectly legitimate to offer stiff competition! The mundane APAs, which cover virtually the same territory, don't seem troubled by this worry. And Vanguard, by intention, is fundamentally an entirely different type of organization from FAPA. At any rate, I'll still maintain that even within the confines of the fan field, the extent of amateur publishing is in itself so varied that there's room for two or more press associations. Perhaps in one

* -- Article 2, Constitution of the Vanguard Amateur Press Association, first mailing.

(5)

respect, Vanguard is working at somewhat of a disadvantage. In FAPA, publishing members have one common basis for material when all else fails -- stfantasy and/or fandom. This one interest has been enough to hold the group together, to make its mailings well supported, to give it a lengthy waiting list, with more candidates for membership than it can possibly absorb in a hurry. Not stfantasy alone, of course, but underlying all else it is this one factor which has made the group's continuance a certainty. In NAPA, AAPA, UAPA, ad infinitum, there are also common grounds of interest: amateur publishing for its own sake, the mechanics of printing coupled with politics of the organization. Material in certain of these mundane APAs is less of a worry than it is in Vanguard. To quasi-quote Art Widner, some of the enthusiastic printers consider "Mary Had a Little Lamb", printed on high-grade paper stock in all colors of the rainbow, far superior to sincere efforts done on cheap mimeographs. Vanguard, having set its sights a bit higher, must be willing to work without a common basis for material if it is to remain completely "literary." True, the initial nucleus of the NYC bunch may have at first provided a foundation of mutual interest. But as any amateur press association expands, it is bound to depend more and more upon the contributions of a widely distributed cross-section of membership, including contributions from people of varied interests and points of view. A glance into past ay-jay history should confirm this trend.

Not only FAPA fans show VAPA potentialities. Walter Coslet, Van Splawn, Burbee, Riggs, Elsner .. there are many more who would make good active members and publishers. But if the ranks of Vanguard are to be swelled by fantast recruits, mailings must offer these prospective publishing members occasional material which would directly appeal to them. Fan-tods and Stefantasy fulfill this need in part. Science-Fiction was a step in the right direction, but Zissman, we fear, made an error similar to that which nearly doomed stfantasy fandom fifteen years ago -- failure to realize that, as far as fans are concerned, s-f is more science-FICTION than SCIENCE-fiction. Possibly Judy lacked sufficient background in the stfield to make Science-Fiction convincing and was forced to rely too heavily on pseudo-scientific speculation, but at any rate the material didn't appear too well balanced in this respect, despite a number of excellent features. A VAPAZine devoted to critical fantasy reviews, and articles dealing with the more mature aspects of stf, plus decent fiction and poetry, might do wonders ... a magazine similar in content to The Acolyte or Fantasy Commentator may serve to convince some Vanguardifs that stf has more possibilities than the obvious ones. While VAPA's new recruits might contain few counterparts of Koenig or Searles, you'll have to admit that fantasy in Vanguard has scarcely had a decent break. Personally, I've long contemplated such a mag, and intend to work on it when the press of other activities has slackened a bit. In the meantime, the fact remains that VAPA, in order to survive and expand, must search new fields.

The air's becoming a bit stuffy in here.

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GLEANINGS FROM THE LETTER BOX

....In the wonderfully wacky microcosm of science-fiction-fantasy fandom, the weird things that pop up in the Morning Mail have long since ceased to inspire any unusual surprise. Fans have become used to anything -- and we oughtta know. But while flipping through a file of old post-card messages, we actually chanced upon many which extracted at least an exclamation or two of interest or amazement. For the heck of it, we're reproducing a few below. In each case, typing and spelling have been copied as closely as possible from the originals.

---oOo---

PROVIDENCE, R.I. June 7, 1945. # Dear Joe: I have just read the copies of the letters that I have written you; my god man I dont blame you I must sound like a moron, well I'm not, I just can't write a good letter, probably for the very simple reason, that I never tried very hard befor. Not that I wast to much time on them at present, you must admit that it's rather hard writting to someone you haven't had the pleasure of meeting. I'll endever to do better if we hapen to do any corasponding, which you, nodoubt hope we dont. #

---oOo---

DETROIT, MICHIGAN. April 16, 1945. # JoKe: I thought you would be interested in the following clipping from the April issue of Technocracy Digest: "What was the fate of those people who espoused Technocratic ideas in fascist countries in Europe? The Deutsche Technocratische Gesellschaft in Germany was disbanded and its exponents sent to concentration camps. The Technokratike Spolecnosti in Prague was disbanded when Hitler moved into Czechoslovakia. The T Nederlandsch Technocratisch Verbond of Holland was broken up by the Gestapo. And in Italy those engineers and students who advanced Technocracy there were sentenced to five years confine. None of these organizations had any affiliation with Technocracy Inc., but they advanced similar ideas and carried on similar studies. Apparently those ideas were not in conformance with fascist ideas." PS: You said that once almost all of the N.Y. Futurians were Techs., could you find out if any one of them has a study course book, and if he would be willing to swap it for old FFM's or sell it?

---oOo---

WOODSIDE, N.Y. March 19, 1945. # Flashy-flash! Sam Mason late of Philly Futurians now in N.Y. for good. He and I starting new fen club. Hope it will revolutionize fendom with it s new prin ciples. U like join? Time fro first meeting not set yet. We need members first. Mason go t mineo!!! He and we other members we hope we'll get putting out 3 or more fenazines. *** We smell Wollheim xx (double-cross) Think he kick o ut young fen keep only his inne r circle. Ple ase answer if want join immediately like to know. #

---oOo---

BOYKINS, VIRGINIA. December 10, 1944. # Dear Joke: Re. remarks on ego, meet heavy contender in that field. I would like to be the behind

((oops!)) the scenes power in world politics with empires quaking at my whispers, nations divided ~~xxx~~ by a mere wave of my grimy mitts etc. but will probably end up following my modest little ambition for a simple position with DuPont as a major ~~research~~ research chemist at one hundred grand per. All this I can dream of while earning a buk an afternoon at the corner grocery. Frustrated little jerk ain't I? #

---oOo---

BUFFALO, N.Y. December 2, 1944. # *** Excuse the pencil but I'm writing this in a burlesque show during the intermission. Some guy keeps wanting to sell me a little booklet. #

((Home, James ...))

-----oOo---

T H E V O W

I will love you as long as that coral lives,
 vowed the young man.
 He pointed a brown finger offshore,
 Toward a many-hued mass that could be seen
 Just beneath the water.

Soon after, an American geologist
 Who was much interested in Polynesian coral
 Discovered the mass and added it to his
 collection.
 Within his specimen case, it slowly died
 an arid death.

And by another peculiar coincidence,
 The young man who had made the vow
 Met a new love and ran away with her
 To an island far away. There, she bore
 him many children,
 Between complaints that he was unfaithful
 And a poor provider.

--- DALE HART.



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