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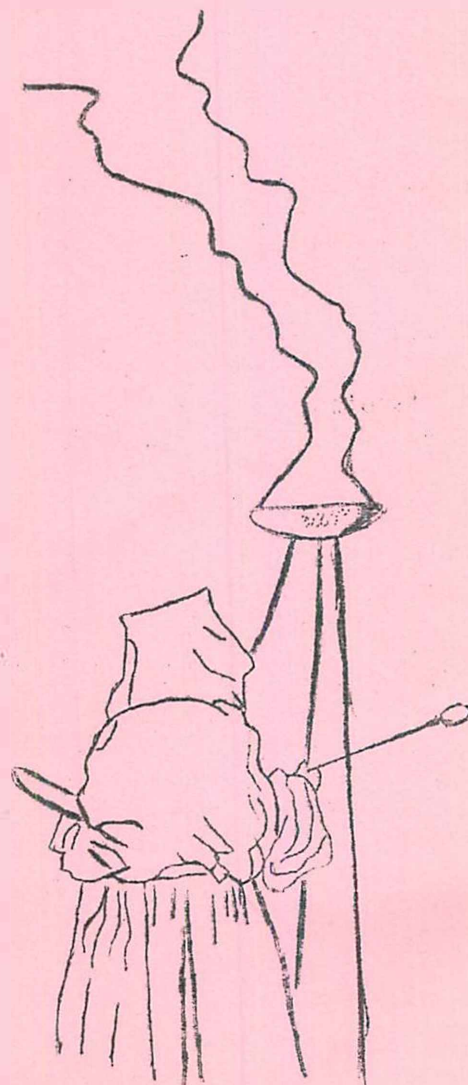
LES SPINGE IO, dated Jan. 1963

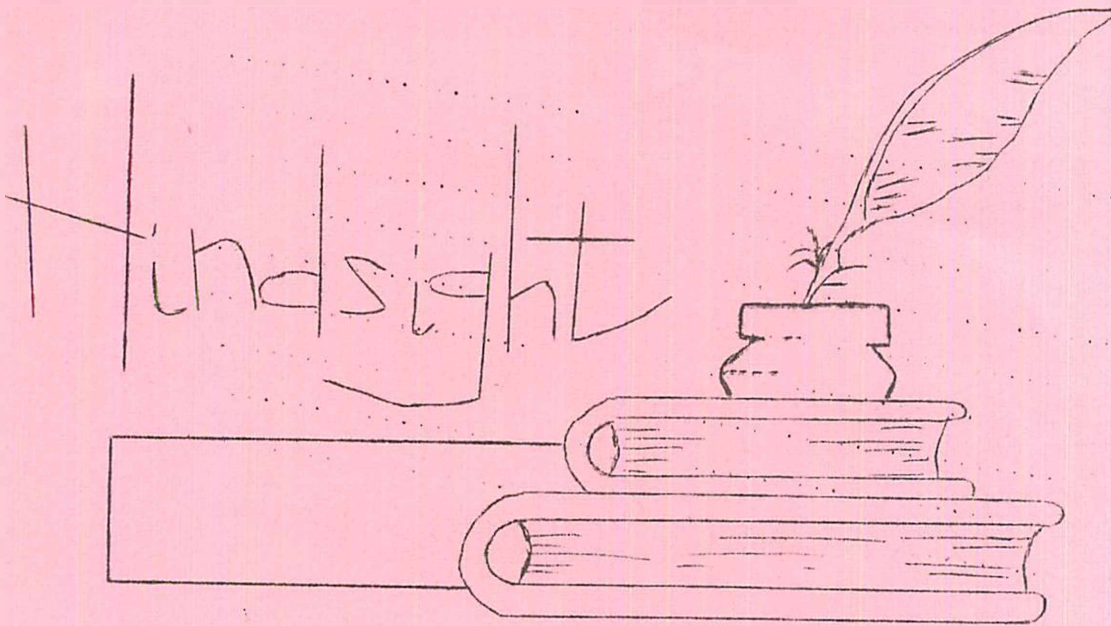
Edited and Published by Dave Hale, 12 Belmont Rd., Wollescote Stourbridge, Worcestershire.

Duplication by Ken Cheslin... the uncrowned king of the colour change.

Available for LoC, contribution, artwork, trade, or sub at a bob per.

Signed Artwork by Terry Jeeves and Dick Shultz. The rest all by Harry Douthwaite: The three of them deserve as much egoboo as they get. Thanks.





Like an idiot I forgot to write an editorial, so here I am, vainly trying to write something of world shattering importance in a mere ten or so minutes. Not surprisingly this is rather difficult, and will obviously be unsuccessful.

Nevertheless, in this issue we have the begining of a campaign to brighten up fanzines. Lazines aren't the only ones who can use colour changes and Pat Kearney isn't the only person who can use electronic typ stenoids. A certain US fan said that LS's duping was impeccable and that the layout was intruguing. This caused us here in the village much jubulation. On where have the old child abandoned days gone....with the snows of yesteryear.

And while you lot are about it, how about you giving some thought to the artists. These never get much egoboo, and occasionally this tells. Harry for example says that people ignore his work in fanzines, and that for all the advice and criticism he gets he might as well paint on walls or ceilings. This is one reason for his quitting active fandom. This is a very great loss, as anyone must agree from the standard of work in this mag and one that could have been avoided. Just a few words in a letter of comment is enough, and if they prevent artists of the calibre of Harry from abandoning fandom then they'll have been worth the trouble.

Maybe you agree that this fanzine is justified.....

Dave

CRY OF THE WILD GIRLS

Nike Deckinger, 31 Carr Place, Fords, New Jersey, USA.

I'd like to comment a bit on Linwood's reviews. In his review of Nirenberg's THE PANIC BUTTON he accuses me of cribbing my article from Donner's "The Un-Americans". This charge I heartily deny. Most of the direct quotes used in the article, which were taken from the film, were copied on my programme when I saw OPERATION ABOLITION and OPERATION CORRECTION at a Cinema 16 showing in New York. I used Donner's article only where the narration had gone too quickly for me to copy down the words. In other instances I used what was said in OPERATION CORRECTION to point out the falsehoods of OA. OPERATION CORRECTION was released after Donner's book appeared in print. The conclusions drawn by me, from the film, are my own private views. If they coincide with Donner's (and certainly not verbatim) then they must coincide with at least a hundred other individuals, strongly opposed to the picture and its implications, and you can't accuse me of stealing from all of them. Otherwise, I don't believe there's any mention in the book of Officer Dunphy's final diagnosis, the expelling of the college girls spliced to imply she was allied with Archie Brown's ejection and several other incidents. I admit I have Donner's book, but I used it as sparingly as I could.

And, another note, the article was conceived, before I set word down on paper, as a comparison between OPERATION ABOLITION and OPERATION CORRECTION, with the idea that the reader could draw his own conclusions as to the validity of each. It came out more as a report on OA, which was not precisely what I was after, but which I felt expressed my views sufficiently and presented a clear picture of HUAC. My original title of the article was TRIAL AND ERROR, indicating the relationship between OA and OC, not Nirenberg's somewhat sensationalized title which he conceived himself.

And if what I did really constituted unethical cribbing, then the same label should be applied to every minister and priest who quotes any lines from the Bible.

Ron Bennett, 13 West Cliffe Grove, Harrogate, Yorkshire,

Mike Deckinger's item was good, and in fact about the best I've read of his. You should sign him up for a series of trufan epics, in which this blend of factual background and wild exaggeration are always welcome.

Even funnier of course was this "Enlightened Fandom?" article by "Leon Collins". Perhaps Collins is Deckinger? The ~~same~~ style of blending a fleeting glimpse of the truth with wild exaggeration appears to be used here, too, though Collins does at times appear to be believing all that he says. Who is he? Some political speech writer you've dug up to provide a few laughs and a little happy controversy?

That's a beautiful title you have for your letter column. Personally, I'm with Archie Mercer all the way if he wishes to call 4 - 30am as equally a preposterous hour as 5am. As far as my extensive knowledge of the situation extends, there is no time before eleven ayem on any day, and therefore any hour named which is before that time does not actually exist and is equal to any other pre-eleven time. And for goodness sake, don't confuse the issue by pointing out that I was playing brag at the Harrogate con at eight o'clock one morning. That was merely an extended previous evening.

I liked Jhim Linwood's fanzine reviews, too, but I never thought I would live to see, even in fandom (where values alter faster than Bruce Burn's address), the true-blue, all-British, government-supporting newspaper, "The Daily Express" discribed as "reactionary"!

I've heard this piece of logic about insects and the future of mankind before. I think that an early issue of Dick Ellington's FIJAGH, a free-running zine of about three or four years ago, ran a piece on one of Dick's pet cockroaches (Dick didn't actually keep any pet cockroaches, but he'll know that I'm only delving back into my friendly memories). It transpired from a survey held amongst cockroaches of a certain age, class and geographic group that they were actually conspiring with Russia to get the Bomb dropped on New York.

Your conreports are very readable, and even if the idea has been used before it is still a good practice. But both Brian Jordan and you are being a little vague in your descriptions of the defeated London bid for next year's convention and as such are possibly somewhat unfair to the London crowd who were working for the con. The group's advance publicity was hardly due to a "take-it-or-leave-it" attitude as Brian suggests. This would have been a little conceited, I feel, and those behind the London bids are surely mature enough to know that dictatorial attitudes don't go down very well in fandom. The price sheet distributed at the con ~~was~~ a guide and nothing more, London as a site was a suggestion and nothing more and to criticise the London bid on the grounds that Jimmy Groves would be present on the Sunday to take memberships is grossly unfair and a little snide. This was, needless to say, a proposed service to help fans and it is a service which is practised at Stateside WorldCons - and yes, even before any group has been voted the following year's con does that group begin to accept provisional memberships. I rather feel that your little group of CTT is either trying to mislead the general public into thinking



that your own champions, Peterborough, won a great political victory, or else you're misleading yourselves into so thinking. Why, I haven't yet fathomed out. Perhaps so that you'll all have some champion on which to congratulate your lives, perhaps not. More than likely not; I admire Brian, Al, Jhim and Chris in too many ways to suspect that they would deliberately colour the interpretation of fanciful occurrences out of a manipulative vanity, and tend to feel that there's an in-group hoax or something floating around somewhere. It should have been explained more fully.

Seth Johnson, 339 Stiles St, Vaux Hall, NJ USA.,

William Shirer wrote a rather good pocketbook on the local stands. "Journey at Mid-Century" I believe is the title to it. And after the discussion in LS about Nazis and their punishment for war crimes, perhaps it would be a darn good idea if you and the others who advocate being soft with the Germans were to read it. ((Me? Do not put words into my mouth please, Seth!

Never have I said a word about this subject.)) Amongst other things it claims there is already a neo nazi movement in Germany. And following much the same lines that Hitler followed on his road to power. All this could happen again, and of this I'm quite certain if we continue hiding our heads in the sand like Ostriches. I would frankly rather turn over all of Germany to Russia than risk starting another adventure to conquer the world, this time with nuclear hardware.

Isn't there any compromise in Britain between trashy hotels where fen can do as they please and first class hotels where at least there is a toilet and a bath in each room? I'm not rich, not even the faintest bit prosperous for that matter, but I'll be god darned if I'd care to stay in one of these joints where you have to wait in line with twenty others to get into the bathroom. Or drag out a tub and fill with water by the bucketfull. Over here even second, and some third class, hotels have a bathroom with each room, or at worst a bathroom between two rooms.

I liked John Berry's "Dig This", although it seems to take up far too much paper. I wonder though what future society would make of genfandom if it were preserved so they could know about it. I suppose that there will be fandoms in this halcyon future society too. Possibly one in which every fan would have a teletype so his ramblings could be simultaneously typed on the teletype of every other fan. Think of the reams of reading matter you'd get if that were possible. ((Think of the reams of crud as well if a future NGW were let loose with one.)) Though it would be the death knell of the apa and the fanzine, for who would

bother with fanzines when he could sound off to all of fandom instantly.

Leon Collins wrote a thoughtfull and well considered article there. However I do think that fans are a breed apart from mundane clods. One characteristic of fans not shared by mundanes is the ability and willingness to argue and understand the other fellows point of view without getting hot under the collar. Of course fans are fond of rebuttals and debates on almost any topic under the sun. But even in the heat of the most controversial discussions your fan type will consider the other fellows point of view. It won't change his own viewpoint to any great extent, but at least it does broaden his horizons.

John Baxter wrote in his fanzine "Double Star" suggesting that the con committee make one report for those who send the two bucks registration fee telling just what was said and done there. And this I most heartily second. Certainly there are enough tape recorders at the worldcons to take down all the speeches verbatim and possibly even stencil them through the con. And I for one would be sending the registration fee if this were done. Even though I can't attend more often than not.

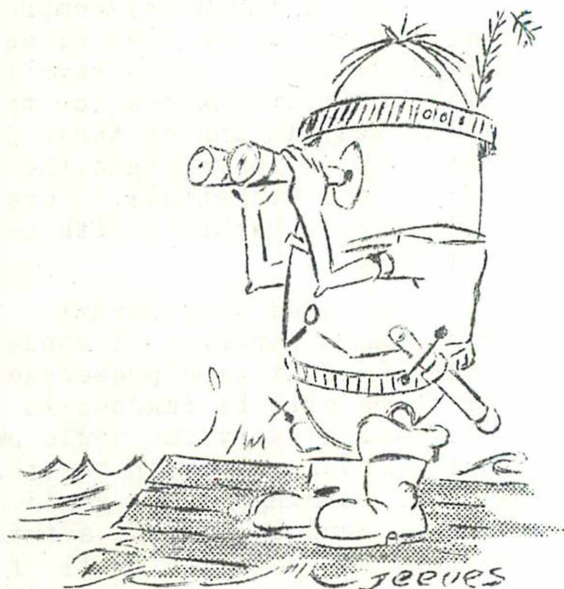
"Man's Heirs" was terrific and I only wish it could be reprinted in more fanzines and put into circulation in mundania as well.

Archie Mercer, c/o BSFA Library, (Basement) 130, London Rd., Cheltenham, Glos.,

In answer to Jim Cawthorn's and Harry Warner's letters - my OMPA autobiography was originally conceived as falling into three natural one episode parts. The two latter parts proved far too long to run in one episode - I wasn't to know that until I started committing them to stencil. Meanwhile, odd matters like that hospital business sort of get thrown up as a by-product - the main stream of thoughts brings them to mind, but they're built on a different scale to the main narrative and are thus out of place there.

Dept. of Cause & Effect - H-bombs are not the cause of existing fall-out. ((It's your word against hundreds of scientists and makers of fall-out shelters. You sure Archie)) It's the further development of the bombs that's to blame.

Jhim's becoming better and better at reviewing / commenting on things. Occasionally he seems to be a mite ambiguous - "The second ish of Pat's fanzine has everything in its favour to make it first class; a long essay on Lovecraft, an editorial on Juvenile Delinquents, a piece on Marxism by a Communist, and an analysis of British and American horror films ..." - that sort of thing, taken out of context, could almost be a satire



on how not to produce a first class fanzine. But generally his comments are very clear and (don't tell him I said so) even intelligent. Like he sort of thinks. More people should do this. It sometimes even becomes a habit if indulged in often enough.

George Lincoln Rockwell for TATF, as Schultz would probably say.

Harry Warner, 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, USA.,

Talking of these fancy expensive hotels. You should have seen the one that contained the Philcon last fall. The room rates weren't excessively high, but I would have returned to Hagerstown a pauper, ready to make a fresh start in life, if I'd eaten two or three meals in the hotel dining room. Moreover, I got a firm impression that any service performed for a guest by the staff must be tipped in folding money rather than the coins of the realm that normally satisfy bellboys. In this country, at least, I imagine that the world conventions must usually occur in fancy expensive hotels because only these are likely to have sufficiently large meeting rooms and other conveniences. But I personally prefer to stay at an older, smaller place, partly because they make me feel as if I were inside one of the movies of a decade or two ago.

As for Leon Collin's article, I'm quite sure that Michael Rosenblum assayed accurately the difference between the old fandom and the current variety, as far as Britain is concerned. There is nothing emerging from the British Isles today that was so consistently thoughtful & sober as the best British fanzines of World War Two. The humour that is so prominent in British publications today existed then, but it was applied with a deft flick of the wrist in the past, as seasoning to the main dish, instead of being brought in on a large platter extended at arms length, as the main basis for the meal. I don't know whether this is good or bad: obviously there are deeper thinkers in the world than science fiction fans, and some of the humour in fandom is almost unique in the world, which would tend to make a good case for the contemporary fandom, but I miss very badly the words that used to flow so freely from Youd, Webster, Burke and company in Fantast, Satellite, and a half dozen other publications. I don't think that the change in American fanzines has been nearly so pronounced.

It is good to know that German fandom got along well with that in England; it's pretty hard to imagine a big delegation coming over the Atlantic from Germany, but I think it's time to start a campaign to help across at least one of them to visit this country, and that might profitably be the topic of the next special fund. (And whatever happened to those individuals who said we'd be deluged with special funds as a result of the success of those for Ella and Walter?) This is an interesting way to publish a con report. It gives the impression that each contributor was able to write with full gusto, knowing that he wouldn't need to recount several days of the same sort of thing.

I might use some further space by quoting a small poem that relates to one of the topics which your correspondents are discussing:

God of the rabbit and the mole
We thank thee for our plastic hole

Where, refugees from cosmic rays,
We spend congested holidays.
When blooms the crocus, buoyed by hope,
We view it through a periscope.

This comes from the least likely source imaginable; a missionary in South America for the Mennonites did it, the Mennonites are an ultra-fundamentalist sect in this country (direct descendents of the Anabaptists), and not the kind of individuals from whom you would expect this kind of thing.

But I wonder how people will feel about H-bombing and Eichmann a century from now. It's hard to believe that a hundred years can change outlooks as completely as they do. I've just emerged from this area's commemoration of the battle of Antietam. This was one of the bloodiest battles of the American Civil War, fought fifteen miles south of here. About two thousand men came from all over the country to the battlefield and lived out in tents just as the soldiers had done a century earlier, and on the centennial of the battle, they staged several sham battles before thousands of spectators, complete with all the guns and charges and tactics of the real thing. The public loved this reproduction of the pain and death and destruction, apparently assuming that enough time had passed to make it unnecessary to think about the fact that these horrors really did occur to live men. I hope that something happens within the next century to civilise people. I'd hate to think of a re-enactment of the bombing of Hiroshima, or contests among the kids to see who could build the most realistic model replicas of Dachau.

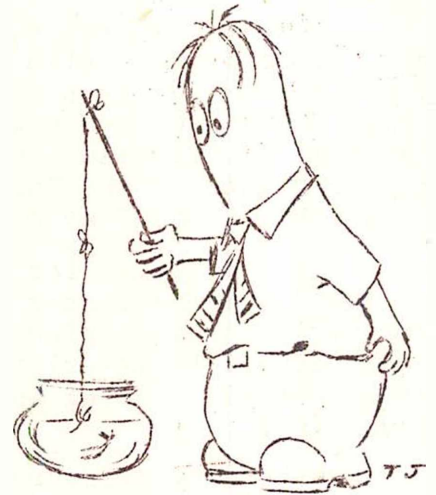
Bert Hodson, 77, Anglesey Road, Ashton-u-Lyne, Lancs.,

A point about conventions might not be amiss - all the articles, comments etc., on conventions seem to convey the impression that everybody knows everybody now were I to attend at Peterborough I wouldn't know a soul there! I do not think so anyway (I've joined the BSFA for the Peterborough Con). And this is the point, would I be a sort of stranger in a friendly land? Is anything done to make a first timer feel at home? At least to dispel the intruder sensation one might easily at such times. I feel sure that many fans are like myself - and would like to attend but are put off by the thought of being a sort of wall-flower for the weekend. It might help to feature a short article on this point by someone who has recently been a "first-timer". Something like this could easily see me being a first-timer at Peterborough, and, I feel sure, quite a few other fans.

Another thing, I would like to set Seth Johnson right on the political set-up of the British Commonwealth. I refer to his comment on England's record at Stanleyville. I am presuming Seth knows that Stanleyville is in South Africa.

The Commonwealth countries are, of course, completely independent of the Mother country and internal affairs the sole responsibility of the country concerned. So that to associate England with Stanleyville is hardly an apt analogy.

Indeed the situation in South Africa is even more confused than might at first appear. On the surface there are two factions-white and coloured. In fact there are three. The white faction is subdivided yet again, for here we have the English and Africans (Dutch) influences. Having seen a little of South Africa, I would say that there is as much hatred between these two white sections as there is between white and coloured. At this time, the power in the land is vested with the Africans, with the consequent severe colour bar. I am quite certain, that, were the British more influential there, we should see a more tolerant approach to South Africa's colour problem, and the eventual return of South Africa to the British Commonwealth of Nations.



I feel sure that had Seth known the true position he would hardly have used such an analogy, it being no part of England's prerogative to interfere with the internal affairs of a completely independent State.

Alan Burns, Goldspink House, Goldspink Lane, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.2.

The bit about expensive hotels. I agree with, but I ask myself, has not fandom been damned by the lunatic fringe? Most intelligent fens either talk quietly, or lie quietly drunk, it's only the younger element that require to dance the twist on the bar counter at two in the morning. And for these, it occurs to me that if we all could rent a house for a con, and everyone chipped in, it would probably be the most satisfactory way. For me, I like expensive luxury hotels, and if I can't afford to pay then I stay at home. I liked the West Park, especially the "all in" terms.

All this talk regards planes intrigues me. I think that I have had as much experience as most, a DC-3, DC-6, Viscount, Caravelle, and on my last holiday, DeHavilland Dove and Ilushyn jet. This last whipped me the six hundred miles from Moscow to Leningrad in about fifty-five minutes, plus a detour they were cleaning out the rocket silos near Leningrad. I've had all sorts of hostesses, but the nicest was on the DC-3 of Jugoslavenski Aerotransport. A plump little slav with a lot of laughter and who served up a most delicious lunch. The most efficient was on the Caravelle of Swedish Airlines. I liked the innumerable sweets dished up by the Russkis. Apparently their pressurising only comes on above ten thousand feet, and if you have sinuses like me, coming up or down makes you feel as if the side of your face was going to drop off. However I transferred myself smartly to the world of reality mentioned in my article and more or less forgot about it.

Etienne Leon Paul, c/o Miss J. Dyer, 6 Trent Rd., Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.,

This may come as somewhat of a surprise to you, having considered me these three months since dead at the hands of OAS assassins. But it is said "An old Leon Paul never dies: he merely lies low for a short spell." My "death" was necessary because my mail was being opened by OAS agents here in Britain, who have for some time held the reins of power over your country (the Common Market is one of their fiendish devices). Still thinking that I am dead they will no longer open my mail.

Also apologies for posing as a fan - I have never read sf in my life, but I saw the chance of passing on coded information to other operatives by way of Les Spinge. My "Man's Heir's" gave in code the names of all OAS terrorists in exile in Britain. This was passed on to a fellow agent who is also posing as a fan and often writes similar coded messages in your zine.

The photo, of course, was a fake too - will send you a genuine one when I am sure it is safe to do so. I owe much to my charming English friend Jenny for information about sf - my apologies for persuading her to lie to you on my behalf.

On behalf of the people of France, I thank you for your unwitting part in ridding my country of its enemies.

Harry Douthwaite who appeared to like what he read, but thought the Con Report was confused and suggested publishing a couple of complete ConReps next time so as to get a more balanced comparison.

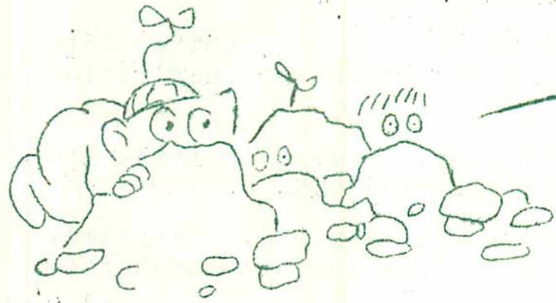
Sid Birchby apologises for lack of time due to moving house and the work involved in selling the old one. He does promise to write something for nextish.

Bill Webb was surprised after reading the ConRep that any hotel ever lets a con be held. Bill wonders "I don't quite see how Bert Hodson, who does seem to have some laudably humane ideas, should attempt to justify the dropping of the A bomb on Japan. Surely military expediency is no excuse for causing unprecedented suffering to thousands of non-combatants. Bert calls this a merciful act."

Tom Armistead Complements Ken and me on "impeccable duplication" and also says the layout is "intriguing". Tom continues "Collins' overlooks the fact that quite a few fans are putting their dreams for a better world into effect, such as Dave Rike and other fans joining peace marches and some attending the HUAC demonstrations. I think many fans enjoy discussing their thoughts and actions not so much to try to make up for a lost chance, but to compare notes."

Rick Sneary commented on IS 3 and 2 in the same letter!

A UNIDENTIFIED DOCUMENT



Things did pick up after the affair of the tea-chest. A week after the incident I had my first real case, a rather curious affair which I had thought of filing under the heading of "The Affair of the Barmy Baronet"...unfortunately the principle in this case was a Lord, not a Baronet, and, far from being mad, he was eminently sane.

It began the night Dave and I went toadstool hunting up by the Wychbury Woods - Dave, genius that he is, had recently come across a rare book entitled the "Nimmerondian" or some such outlandish name, in which he had discovered an old recipe for making invisible duplicating ink...I couldn't see what good that would do anybody: you couldn't see the stuff, you only knew it was there by the sticky feeling upon your fingertips when you held a page...still, I believe Dave found a market for it, somewhere in the States. But I am straying from the story.

We were looking for this rare toadstool, Feeluus Horribilious Stickus, round about the outskirts of the wood on the Birmingham Road side when, as I glanced casually around, I noticed a somewhat strange phenomenon. A local landmark, a pinnacle of stone, about 50 feet high known as the Hagley Monument, was shrouded with a faint electric blue glow. Very faint, even if we were very near to it.

"Ah," I remarked conversationally, "yonder phallic symbol is enrapped in a blue glow...mhap it is a manifestation of some phenomenon akin to St. Elmos fire."

"Isn't that rather unusual?" observed Dave...I stamped on his fingers.

"You are, if I may be permitted to remark, a ruddy genius...we will make a closer inspection of the er, thing."

Fearlessly, I prodded him foward to make the said inspection.

"It seems" he said, sucking his fingers from a prone position on the moonlit greensward, "to be charged with some sort of static..er electricity."

"Hmm," I commented from the shelter of the half-full toadstool sack. "Whatever it was it's not there now.....tomorrow night we shall return, properly equipped, to make a more scientific examination."

The next night, Dave being reduced to a satisfactory state of obedience by certain hints I had thrown out regarding the interest Ella Parker still had in discovering the identity of the person--or persons--who had removed the plug from her bubble bath at the fabulous '65 World Con, we arrived at the scene of operations to find the monument exhibiting a healthy looking blue glow.

We tried various methods, details of which I will not go into here, before we got concrete results. Acting on a flash of inspiration I chained Dave to the monument.

"I am," says Dave, "Lord Dobbem of Bagley. I wish to thank you for permitting me to use this body, albeit temporarily."

"Not at all," I answered (I was in a generous mood), "anytime. Tell me sir, in what way are you connected with this pillar's uncharacteristic blue glow?"

"Ah, I'm glad you asked me that"...he settled himself more comfortably. "During my lifetime" he paused importantly, "I'm a ghost you know"....

"Yes?" I answered absently, "pray go on."

"Well, during my lifetime I discovered a method.....a method of viewing future events. And via the discovery of mine I became acquainted with S/F fandom and, well, it's perfectly simple, I liked the look of it and devoted the rest of my life to its study."

"And the monument?"

"The monument....well, I knew I'd never live long enough to be able to participate in fandom, but I did want to leave something behind me as a sign to fans of my interest, and my knowledge of them. And so the monument is merely a representation of the famous Thompson stylo... the one with which he cut the prize winning "Bem and Child" for the.... oh...but that isn't yet..you see, you don't recognize it because he has not done it yet."

I considered this for a long moment. "And what are you doing here now, I mean, how come the blue glow and the haunting?"

He looked shamefaced. "Well, it was like this. You remember the reports of that bloke who spotted a blue halo around the Michigan fans? I saw that even myself via the timeviewer, and, as luck would have it, I died laughing at it."

"You died?"

"I died."

"Oh...."

"Yes, and what is more, when I got to the other side, I found I had incurred the wrath of a certain demon, who, in life had been a fakefan - time is all different over there you know. Anyway, this chap took exception to my hilarity, and by devious means established control over me. Now, when I sit in the banqueting hall of 200th fandom, I'm never sure when, by some whim of his, I'll be whisked away to haunt

this place. Interferes something frightful with my celestial fanac you know."

A cloud passed across the moon. "And is there no way you can break this curse?" I enquired.

"Well, of course there are ways; but I can't do it myself. You see, a living human has to fight and defeat this fakefan demon...er...I don't suppose...?"

I thought. "I'm not one to dely," I stated. "Give me time to gather certain materials, say until tomorrow night. Then we'll see."

Soon after Lord Dobbam had left, Dave, who had been able to follow everything that went on, spoke. "Ken, so you realise what you're taking on? This could be extremely dangerous."

"I know, but what must be done must be done," I said carefully.

Dave looked at me with a new light in his eyes. He took me by the hand. "I'll say this Ken, you've certainly got guts!"

I spent the next day in preparation.

* * * *

The next evening we arrived at the monument just as the sun went down. "I'd like to talk to Dobbam, Dave" I said, "would you mind...?"

So Dave sits down by the monument, and soon I'm talking to Dobbam yet again.

I handed him a zap. "Hold that carefully," I said. Then I got out my kit and started work. First of all I drew a large pentacle around the monument with duper ink, and set at each of the points a copy of Analog. Then I set out at each of the inner points a saucer of the tears of firstissue-blasted neofans, for purity, and finally I wrapped myself and Dave/Dobbam in thick armour made of Hyphen crudsheets, which are guaranteed to turn the foulest pun.

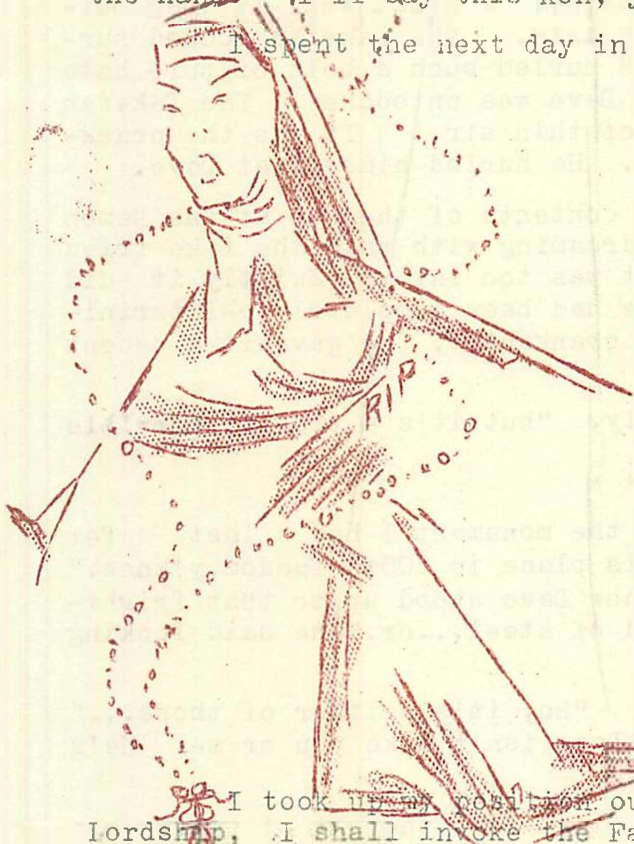
I took up my position outside the pentacle. "In a moment, Your Lordship, I shall invoke the Fakefan Demon: when he arrives you will release Dave - he is your champion."

"What a brave, brave lad," heispered Dobbam. (I thought of Dave seething down there in his subconscious).

"How right you are," I murmured. "Quiet now, I begin."

Fakefan Demon, I enjoin you appear,
Foul fiend, wretched soul, come here!

COME HERE!



By the smell of grottled greeps,
By the eye that never sleeps,
By the tears a neo weeps.

COME HERE!

He came.

He stood at one side of the pentacle, newly released. Dave stood at the other.

"I should have known," says Dave reprovingly. And turned to face the foe.

The fakefan. Ah, he reeked fakefan from the top of his oily hair to the soles of his polished jackboots. Not an inkstain, not a hair out of place, immaculate.

"OK" he rasped...(a nasty habit fakefans have), "another sucker for me to deal with."

He launched a bolt of mental energy; I could feel it even outside the pentacle. Dave didn't turn a hair. The fakefan looked surprised. He gathered himself again, and hurled such a bolt of pure hate that the very grass shrivelled...again Dave was untouched. The fakefan snarled, whipping a hunk of steel out of thin air. It was the crankshaft of some poor murdered duplicator. He hurled himself at Dave.

At six paces, Dave emptied the contents of the zap at the Demon and the zap was filled with corflu. Screaming with pain the fake tried to claw the corflu off himself, but it was too late. Swiftly it did its dealy work, and in a few minutes he had been completely obliterated. All that was left was the broken crankshaft, (we gave it a decent burial later)...

"He deserved it," I said grimly, "but it's a pretty horrible way to go."

* * * * *

Later, sitting at the foot of the monument I had a last few words with Dobbam. "Dave has earned his place in 200th fandom y'know." he said. "What puzzles me though, is how Dave stood up to that frightful mental attack. He must have a mind of steel...or," he said looking at me thoughtfully, "no mind at all."

I took a slow puff at my pipe. "No, it's neither of those..." I took another slow drag. "You see, Dave isn't like you or me. He's well, just different."

I paused. "Different, that's all. I've thought of taking him along to the Fannish Research People, but I don't like the idea of them getting their hands on him."

I wondered vaguely whether I should tell him about the Night of Thunder - the night the Thing came down in the Bell Pool. But I didn't.

With the dawn Dobbam departed for 200th fandom, for good this time, and Dave and I wended our weary way homeward.

MEN CHESLIN

ENSUITE



COLIN FREEMAN



Coming to a stop a few yards in front of the ramshackle building I gazed wearily at the sign over the entrance.

ULTIMATE CLASSIFICATION CENTRE

"Another blessed customs house," I muttered.

My custodian seemed amused. Do not be too impatient," he admonished. "This is the last one now. You'll soon be on your way."

"It about time too," I grumbled. blessed examination since I arrived here. dead than it was being alive."

"This will be the seventh It's more difficult being

My companion shrugged and led the way inside. We were standing in a narrow corridor with three doorways on the right and three gateways on the left. The first gate was manufactured from some glittering substance - probably holy mother of pearl - and a neon sign proclaimed it to be the entrance to heaven. Somewhere, far away on the other side, The Halleluja Chorus Cha Cha Cha catapulted from a multitude of harp strings.

"The Holy Angels Skiffle Group," my custodian replied to my unspoken query.

I nodded and stared at the second gateway with heightening interest. It was made of wrought-iron and a shabby sign bore the legend - PURGATORY. The last gate was composed of overwrought-iron & led down to Hades of course. It was too dark to see clearly beyond, but I somehow had the impression that they were spreading fertilizer on the front lawn.

I turned my attention to the three doors on my right. The first through which my companion had disappeared, was inscribed * EXAMINATION ROOM -; the second - APPEALS -; and the third door boasted the initials W.C. I suppose they could have stood for Weather Clerk, but I had more than a passing suspicion that it was another doorway to purgatory. I was saved from further reflection by the reappearance of my custodian from the first door. He beckoned me inside.

"Saints alive," I mumbled, which was probably a half-accurate description of the three bearded characters seated behind the desk. The proceedings were far too tedious to relate here in detail, but a brief summary should fill in the picture sufficiently.

In effect, I was being examined to decide my ultimate destination. It was explained to me that I would be awarded marks with a possible total of 80 % for good behaviour and 10% for prayer and worship. I would require a minimum of 40 % for behaviour and 10% for worship to get into heaven. Between 20% and 40% for behaviour, and between 1% and 10% for worship would gain me admittance to purgatory. Anything less than this would be hell.

The outcome of it all was that I was awarded 20% for good behaviour and 1 % for worship, which just scraped me through into the middle classification. "It's purgatory," I groaned. I was pretty mad about it too.

"All my pals have gone to hell," I pleaded. "I insist on joining them. What will happen to the card school without me?"

My custodian steered me firmly into the corridor. "Next door with you," he sighed. "If you are not satisfied you will have to appeal to the Governor himself."

As I entered the second room I just managed to prevent myself from exclaiming, "Good Lord". That would have been too corny even for this story. It would be rather difficult to describe the appearance of the Governor. I remember thinking he was in dire need of a haircut but otherwise he was more or less nondescript.

"What are your grounds for appeal?" he asked me kindly.

I paused for a moment in order to consolidate my arguments. "It is this 1 % for worship," I finally burst out. "It isn't justified and it would be on my conscience for the rest of my death if I didn't come clean now."

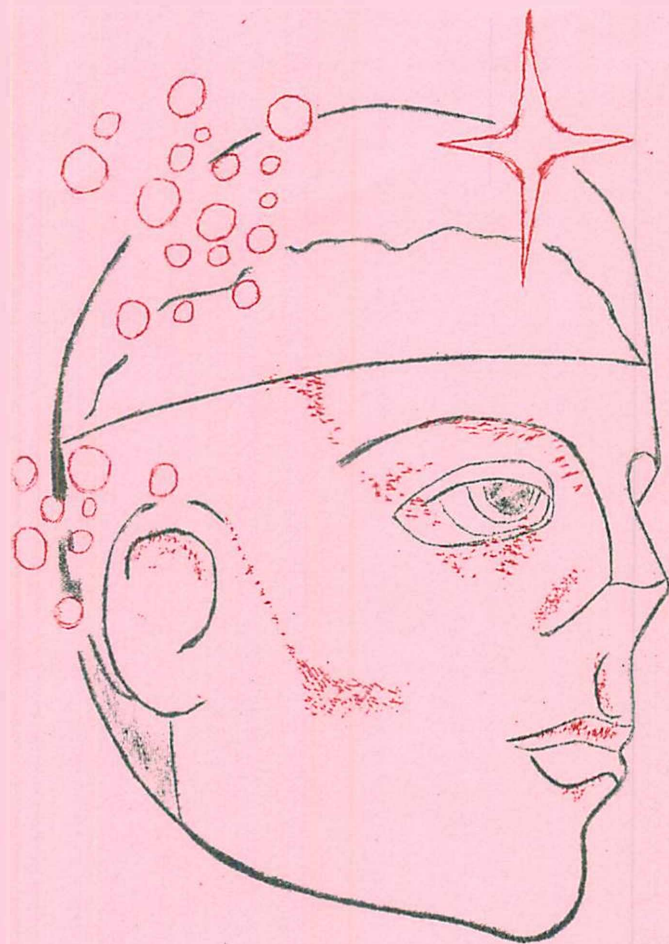
The Governor studied my dossier for a while. "There's no error," he murmured. "You put in several months of prayer in 1953. I should say that 1% is rather on the harsh side if anything."

"Oh, but that wasn't genuine prayer," I interrupted him. I planned it deliberately as sort of insurance for when I came here, but I didn't realise that all my mates would be going to hell. I think I ought to be there with them."

"I like your spirit," the Governor smiled, "but you are mistaken in thinking your friends have gone to hell. They have all gone to another place - its existence is not publicized. We don't like to mention it up here, er ----it's, er --- we just don't like to talk about it. However, I think you have earned yourself a place in this particular community."

The Governor turned to my custodian with a sigh. "Take this poor lad to the transit office," he nodded towards me, "and get him a visa for infernal fandom."

"Good luck," the Governor called as my custodian led me very, very gently out into the corridor.



THE taff CRISIS

MIKE
DECKINGER

The tall, well-proportioned, stern-faced man crossed his legs, took a puff from his cigarette, and tiredly leaned back in his chair, as he exhaled the smoke through his nostrils. He coughed once, and took another puff.

The room he was seated in was in semi-darkness. Sunlight shone through a half-opened window, casting a pale glow on the farzine littered floor. A broad, wooden desk rested near a door; its surface held a large Royal typewriter and a ream of paper. Beside the paper, neatly arranged in a small pile, was a stack of opened letters that had been recieved and read, then carefully replaced in their envelopes. A naked light bulb dangled precariously from a stringy wire in the centre of the room.

The person seated in the chair absent-mindedly scratched at his forehead. The pale glow from the cigarette wreathed his determined face.

A knock sounded at the door. The man in the chair did not move.

"It's unlocked," he commented dryly.

The knob turned and a heavysset man entered. He mopped sweat from his face with his pudgy hands and approached the seated man. He walked slowly and with a discernable air of dejectedness.

"No good Ray," he said deeply, "no good at all."

Ray crushed out his cigarette in annoyance.

"You're sure of it, Fred?"

Fred nodded soberly.

"I tried. You've got to believe me; I tried. I contacted New York but they said no. Then I phoned the Midwest but again I was turned down. LA is going to the dogs, you should know that - why I tried them I'll never know. Ever since LASTFS broke up LA fandom has been on the rocks. They won't accept."

"And Frisco?" Ray spoke with little expectation in his voice.

"No dice. Gibson's influence reached them long ago. They're confining their fanac to fanzines only. Nothing else. They're all polite about it - no one barks at me for asking them. But they all refuse just the same."

"Then it's through," Ray said wearily, "after seventeen successful years TAFF is through, finished, unwanted..."

"Don't take it so bad," Fred urged, his voice brightening, "there are other things besides TAFF. Everyone knows what a successful TAFF Manager you've been, no one's trying to deny that. Join an apa, pub a genzine, go to the next con. It's not right for a fan to concentrate on one phase of fanac to the point that everything else loses any meaning."

"Why won't anyone accept?" Ray shot out sharply, startling his companion.

Fred fumbled over the answer for a moment. "I'm not sure why but maybe they're tired of the whole idea. Overseas traveling does not have the same appeal today that it did fifteen years ago. Fen have traveled before, they get bored of it."

Ray stood up shakily and switched on the light. He gestured towards the table with the opened correspondence. "These letters represent just some of the refusals I've recieved, only a small percentage, but all practically the same. They don't want TAFF and I suppose they don't want me either. If there was only some gimmick we could use..."

Fred considered this carefully. "You know what a dud the tape recordings of the Moskowitz hearings were as an inducement to accept a TAFF nomination. You're crossing shaky ground when you make an offer like that."

Ray nodded. "I know, I know that. Those recordings were a mistake. I should have realised that as a one-shot they would have been acceptable, maybe even retained my FAPA membership," at this point his voice broke for a moment, "but offering them any fan willing to accept a TAFF nomination was foolish. The principals involved nearly had me embroiled in their lawsuit for the publicity I gave them. But there were other ideas. I could have offered the prospective nominee a FAPA membership once."

Fred, who had spent the better part of four years on the N'APA w /l looked at Ray in astonishment. It was common practice for a member of FAPA to provide for another fan to take his place, through a mention in his will, but this generally took time, and only two of those clauses had had occasion to be used.

"I had a game of poker with Boggs once," Ray said wistfully, "and the stakes kept creeping higher and higher. I was lucky then, luckier than I'd ever been, and finally I took Redd for all the cash he had on him. Only he wanted to continue and so did I, so we staked his FAPA membership against my mimeo. I drew a royal straight then you know," he smiled oddly, "first damm royal straight I ever got in my whole life. And I had his FAPA membership, only it was useless to me, since I was still a member myself, so we agreed I would have a lease on it for a year, so that if I chose to, I could grant it to someone else and Roggs couldn't bellyache on it. Well the year went by quickly - too quickly. I could have used the gimmick then if I had needed it, but I just didn't."

Ray straightened himself and slammed his fist at the light bulb. He struck it at a side angle, sending it spinning through the air. Grottesque shadows fled across the walls.

"I don't like to see it end Fred, I don't like to see TAFF going down the drain like this. It was my baby before, when the doldrums first started I pulled it out of that rut. I can do it again if I have to."

"Be reasonable," Fred pleaded, "Fandom is through with TAFF. They've had it for so long, year after year, that it's coming out of their ears by now. It's fandom that decides TAFF Raym not you, no matter how you feel about it. No one in fandom will volunteer for TAFF, even though he'd be a shoo-in for the victor. Contributions have ceased to pour in. People are dissatisfied with..."

Ray stabbed his finger at his friend as the last words reached him. A strange grin spread across his face.

"They're tired of TAFF. Allright, maybe they are. But maybe too they're tired of the way TAFF has been altered. Maybe fandom would like to see it changed, maybe the response would be greater if it were."



Fred shook his head. "You know how things are."

"Yes, and that's precisely why I'm going to change them," enthusiasm bubbled in Ray's voice, "look Fred, what happens to a TAFF winner when he's sent overseas?"

"The usual thing; he meets other fen, sees the sights, visits people."

"Of course, but what is the primary reason for a TAFF winner to cross the Atlantic?"

"To put out a one-shot, of course. To get all the local fen together in some room and put out a one-shot which is distributed throughout fandom." He shook his hands in exasperation. "Why else would a TAFF winner be sent overseas?"

When Ray replied it was almost in a whisper. "Why not to attend a convention?"

"Convention?" Fred looked up startled. "That was done years ago. Everyone got tired of it, you know that as well as I do. TAFF winners today don't want to attend cons, they want to put out one-shots. They want to put them out, fandom wants to read them - simple as that."

"But is it? Don't you see, maybe the cycle is shifting. Maybe fandom is unconsciously rebelling against the present TAFF policy. Sure, they may still like TAFF per se, but they don't like the one-shot angle."

"Then what do we do about it?"

"We junk it, that's what. Pure and simple, we dump the idea of TAFF winners putting out one-shots with the foreign fen. We reinstate the system of a TAFF winner attending a con. How many of the past winners have done so? There's no rule against a past winner running again. Think of the vast amount of potential winners." A strange sensation of ecstasy was taking hold of him, "We merely announce that the rules are being changed. Effective today, the British TAFF winner will attend the next WorldCon in," he glanced at a notebook on his desk, "South Gate. There will be no one-shot, nothing for him to do but enjoy himself."

Ray hurried over to his desk and in one motion swept the letters off onto the floor. He pulled out a neat mimeo stencil from his desk drawer, fitted it into his typewriter, and disengaged the ribbon. "You contact every available fan who might have a chance of winning," he told Fred, "I'll start by typing up the new rules."

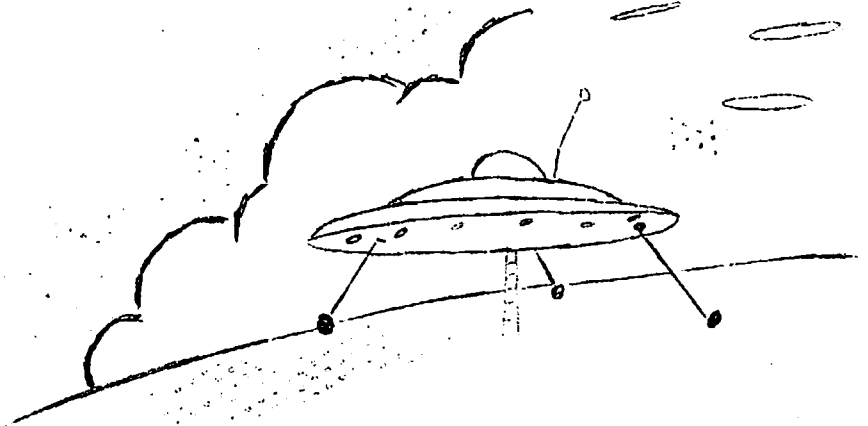
As his fingers raced across the typewriter keyboard, an almost undistinguishable glow appeared in his eyes. A curious elation gripped his fingers and his body felt almost numb with expectation.

TAFF was being reborn!

...Mike Deckinger

In France they have Romance - in England hotwater bottles.

SEEING IS BELIEVING



Aldrich Burns

So Tinkabell lay dying and Peter Pan called out, "All the children who believe in fairies clap their hands," and of course a great wave of restoring neural energy brought Tinkabell back to life.. It isn't quite like that, fictional even, J. M. Barrie wrote it, but year after year it's brought back to life, and becomes all of a piece with Santa Claus and end-of-term exams where you have to believe in about thirty-five (or was it forty at the last count) atomic and sub-atomic particles that scientists have put in to bolster up a theory that had the skids under it before it started. Yah to Schrodinger and the probability of finding an electron in a given volume of space. Me, I believe in Santa Claus, it's a lot safer, and doesn't add to the hazards of space by putting up an extra radiation belt. Whoever wrote that seeing is believing did so with tongue in cheek. We can delude every sense a human has, and therefore I say that it is just as logical for me to believe in anything I want to, as in anything I have to - like thermodynamics, which caused a small scene between me and a female type lecturer, when I asked if the laws we were being fed were modified or unmodified.

But if anyone thinks that this is going to go on and explain how we can be deluded then I refer that person to any good encyclopedia, under "O" I think. No, I'm going to discuss a personal theory, that intelligence is proportional to imaginative facility. Yes, the more you imagine, the brighter you are. The ones who don't imagine are the dull solid clods, IQs way, way down in the seventies, the hewers of wood and drawers of water - well not even that like, they probably haven't the sense to draw water without spilling it. Most of us have seen the film "Harvey", with Jimmy Stewart playing what I think is one of his best parts ever. You all recall how a taxi-driver taking him to the asylum (that's a stupid wrong word. An asylum is a place of protection and shelter, whereas our misnamed establishments are places where they drug you, shock you, and cold bath you until you are exceedingly glad to get out) said that going in, his fares would stop him to look at birds that weren't there and all sorts of things whereas when they came out they were snappish, miserable and full of the cold grey light of reality.

Now this business of what constitutes reality is one that causes me some interest. I gather that it is best defined as dependent upon what is believed to be so by the entities peopling the environment in which one finds oneself. For instance if I was in the midst of a group of pre-war style Germans who believed Hitler was God, why then I would swiftly adjust my reality to that concept. This is the time when some nark jumps up and accuses me of changing my coat to suit circumstances. Only a head case goes out in a blinding rainstorm with a summer suit on and no mac, and only a head case wears a heavy ulster when it's 40 C. in the shade, but after all that's reality, whereas presumably standing in Red Square and attempting to preach the restoration of the monarchy is merely having the courage of one's convictions. No, reality is governed by environment, but if you want a nice comfortable life then you have to go Vicar of Bray-wise and work with reality as dictated by the surrounding entities. This doesn't mean that while outwardly we have to work with reality as it is dictated, we can't have a private life of our own, inside.

Well, all fen have. But do they make the best of it? I think not. If someone screamed out in the middle of a fannish gathering that "Will s is Ghod", most of us would perhaps feel embarrassed, those halcyon days have slipped away. So when I met Walt just a little while ago, I deftly fitted him out, in my mind, with a long white cloak, a pair of wings and a halo. I was surprised how well he suited them. But Walt is a nice fellow, I accepted him as part of my reality. Fannishly speaking the hardest bit of reality part accepting that I've done lately were the Mercatorial whiskers, they were Marxian enough to wither away at least a dozen states. But with exercises I've managed it.

Exercise is the key to building a suitable reality for oneself. Reality need not be consistent, but it's best if it is. That way the enchanted forest is not likely to become the slag heap from the local gasworks (Do gasworks have slag heaps? Ours don't, they are all busily looking like escapees from Analog.) at some inconvenient moment. Personally, I graduated from enchanted forests a long while ago. My personal reality has now spread out formidably to include four Galactic systems, complete with economic systems, political arrangements, and all the appurtenances of a great and intelligent civilisation. Now the test of reality is how it stands up under examination, and once in a while I check test myself to see that the reality is being maintained and extended. But of course, to maintain the actual reality, use must be made of a small but important part of the mind, to contend with the unpleasantly imaginary world of work and what the clods call reality (but do they know any better?) Now speaking personally, I've often got from the Development of Space Flight Section of Terran Central Library to the bar in Stellar Park, without any idea of what happened between departing and arriving. That is, since the route was a familiar one, the automatic section of my mind took me out of the library and onto the fieldway that took me to the park, all without conscious effort on my part. So what I have to do in the imaginary world is mostly done by the carefully trained automatic section. Of course, occasionally, the imaginary world can be coped with easily. I short circuited the business of conforming to the reality represented by the group of entities in my imaginary world with a most efficient ruse. Long ago, I succeeded in convincing them that I was mentally unbalanced, but able to do what was required of me,

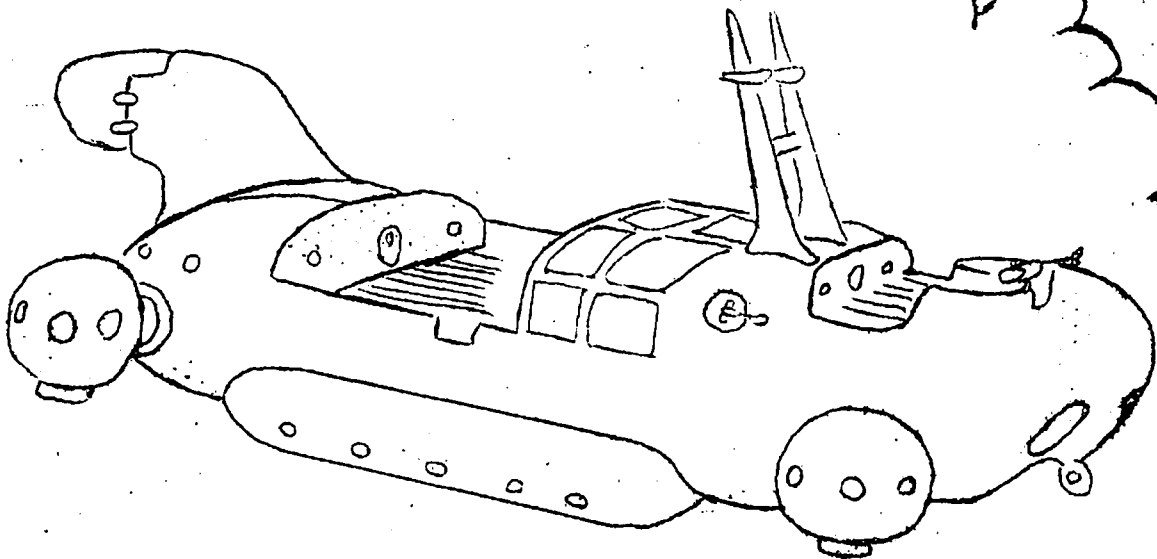
so they are quite content to leave me alone. You have to be clever, and zealous in maintaining the reality pattern that you create for yourself.

That, I believe, is the cause of the number of nervous breakdowns and the amount of mental troubles in the imaginary world. People are educated from childhood to accept the imaginary world as the real one, to conform in other words. Not outwardly, but right through, the result is that they are for the most part like rats in a trap, with no hope of escape at all, and the madness that takes some of them is merely the struggling of the soul to get out. Madness appears to strike more frequently among university graduates and people holding technical positions of high responsibility. These people have a tremendous life dynamic, and like a high amperage electric current, when it gets loose there's lots of trouble. You have to wrap it in rubber to hold it, or neutralise it with another current, or earth it with water - is insulin a non-conductor?

So, I would like to see courses in imaginative development run alongside with the normal technical courses in a university. Of course such a series of studies would be very difficult to formulate, but there is a ready-made source that is available. Would fadom survive becoming a university course? It is a very resilient thing. I think it probably would. And I've tried and tested it -- Walt Willis would look splendid in cap and gown...

.....Alan Burns

Have you picked up that trouble-maker Herod?



Yes Caesar, we nailed him in Jerusalem. ex Yandro

WORMS

STEVE LEON PAUL

Have you ever wondered why a perfectly sane - but can I, I wonder ever use that word about myself - have you ever wondered how a man can take an axe and hack up his faithful wife and innocent, loveable children. You have? Well, I can satisfy your curiosity, you see I've just done that very thing and for what? But pause, let me wipe away the blood, the sweat and the tears - yes, tears. I loved them.

This is really a simple story about worms - do worms make you, all of you, think of those wiggling, segmented, brown things in your garden? Not me, to me worms are those things you read about in medical books, filthy parasites that crawl in men's guts. You pick up their eggs from innocuous looking food, they hatch inside you and live in your guts. Not me you say - why not you? You're a statistical average like anyone else and chances are you have. For sure it's not only corpses that worms live on. But don't let me worry you, please, not that, these Earth type parasites doctors can treat quite simply and successfully.

For me it's different, my worm, The Worm, come from Out There, an egg through the vastness of space. But did it have to pick on me. Why me? No, it does not hurt. The thing does not damage my insides but the whole horror of the thing is that I know it's there all the time. It's telepathic. The worm sends me messages like it's sliming through my half digested food and worse, unthinkably worse, this foul thing does. How can I stand it? Knowing all the time the place the creature is - no, no, it's not hurting, not feeding, but I must kill it. Exterminate the filth. All the poisons I've taken in these last torturous weeks, and all to no avail, till come the Great Day it left me - Free, my body my own again and no messages from the Worm.

Later I found my wife in tears - The Thing - the unspeakably foul alien was using her to pass its eggs to our children. Hack! There was no other way, I've saved the others from the living curse. Burn all the bodies.

Still no messages from the Worm. It's dead. Good, no not good, was there ever any telepathic worm? I'm a sane man, and that's an insane thing to believe. Why, oh why, for what reason did I kill them. I loved them. Yes, tears.



Jim Linwood

THE FANALYTIC EYE

FOCUS a magazine of dissent - edited by Pat Kearney, 33 Elizabeth St.
London W.I. OMPA and friends are fortunate to get this.

One of London Fandom's most promising youngfans has produced in Focus a fanzine whose material matches its excellent reproduction and editorial skill. I should say that as most of the contents are reprints this is cheating, but as Pat seems determined to get the right sort of material on a single theme he can be excused.

The theme is based upon Anarchism and Pacifism in the cinema, and there are some excellent reviews and appraisals of the great Spanish director Bunuel by Alan Lovell, Edward Granville and the guy who writes the British Film Institute leaflets. Eddie's portrait ironically looks more like General Franco than the filmmaker. Another sub-theme of the zine is the exiled American writer Henry Miller, who makes his mark upon most things Pat writes these days. It was Dick Shultz who said of Miller; "Anyone who insists on referring to women by the four letter word for vagina looks pretty silly claiming a deep understanding of life and mankind." This not only applies to Miller, but others who refer to one half of the world as cunts, crumpet or skirts. After wading through Miller I'm convinced that he's never had a fully satisfactory love affair.....his encounters are purely physical and filled with arragence and disgust for his partner. But some of Miller is really powerful when he isn't screwing or indulging in philosophical slush. The opening parts of Cancer where he writes of utter poverty and moral corruption that goes with it. This is Miller at his journalistic best, but when he tries to write he's just an old bore - writing on lavatory walls.

Pat has even scooped with a Henry Miller reprint "Rue Lourmel in Fog" reprinted from "My friend, Henry Miller" by Alfred Perle., which doesn't even justify the smallest of claims Pat makes about him.

In "To Sit or Stand", reprinted from the Left Wing Solidarity, Harry Forrest writes a garbled attack on the Labour Party and other right wing forces, and sticks up for the Committee of IOG, thinking that piles alone can topple the establishment. Pity that Pat couldn't find a better account of the CIOG to reprint.

Artwork is done by Eddie with his usual professional polish, but the plum of this ish is obviously Harry Douthwaite's artwork, which has the same youthful vigor as the editor's writing. A superb ish, but surely fans can write this sort of stuff, without having to reprint material from left wing magazines.

THE BUG EYE II LoC, trade or Evergreen Reviews to Hel Klemm, 16 Uhland St, 413, Rheincamp-Utfort/Eick. Moers. W. Germany.

Another ish of Gerfandom's English speaking fmz, which isn't up to the standard of previous ishs, but it abounds with enough controversy to merit more LoCs than a better polished production. The bewilderment about Nazism, Totalitarianism, etc of previous TBB's has come to the forefront this issue. Most of what is said is pretty old hat, and is of little interest to most fans, who are more sophisticated than most when it comes to the unusually hotheaded subject of politics. I've found that the people with the least anti-German feelings are the British soldiers who fought in the last war. A natural reaction after being indoctrinated by ludicrous propaganda to find that their German counterparts were human too, and obeying orders in much the same way. True, most Germans never had experience of the beastality of the SS, but one of the few good things of the last war was the prevailing feeling that nothing is gained by killing fellow men.

Thea Grade and Rolf Gindorf both write on Nazism, the latter being worried about political apathy that allows the political cranks to rise to power. One of the most controversial subjects in Britain today arising out of the recent fascist riots is how to defend democracy against totalitarianism without using the brutal measures and censorship usually associated with Fascism and Communism. I fear that if legislation against racialism was made it might have the same effect as Prohibition had on drinking.

The letter col is excellent, and several of the correspondents seem shocked and dismayed that Hel mentioned that he attended a communist meeting. This should be compulsory for anyone's political education if only to discover that Communists don't have horns and tails. Communist meetings in Nottm. are quite popular - it's the only time one can hear some good live folk singing.

FALSE WITNESS



JOHN
BERRY

He pushed me into the room. It had the usual bare walls, drab-ly painted...the bare table in the centre of the room...the old typical bareness....save for the high amp spotlight on a swivel at the far side of the table. He sat me down opposite this. I knew he would. They always did.

He sat opposite me, but he didn't switch on the light. He offered me a cigarette, acted kind of pally.

"Where'd ya get the IIO dollars?" he said. He raised an eyebrow, sarcastically, as if to say that he wouldn't believe me anyway. I knew he wouldn't. That's the rub, you see. If you've nothing, no cash you get arrested for vagrancy... 'wandering abroad without visible means of subsistance'....then, if you do happen to be flush, but you're still found 'wandering abroad', you can be hammered for having money in your possession 'believed to have been stolen.' Can you win? That's what I wanted to find out.

"Won it at cards," I grinned. It was true actually.

I was slow. The right hand had a heavy gold ring on the little finger, and it caught me on the forehead. Not hard. Just sort of grating. I sensed that it was just a preliminary.

"Where'd ya get the money?" he asked again...this time slowly, as if he was getting tired of asking.....for sure, he'd only asked me twice.

I thought about it. I rasped the back of my hand over the two day stubble. Now I got cuffed for telling the truth. So not to tell the truth. That's self preservation, isn't it?

"Get stuffed," I grinned, fixing my lips with difficulty.

He was good. Really experienced. The greenhorn cop would have bashed the side of my face in. Not this joker. He laughed as though he really enjoyed it. Maybe he did. He looked like a masochist.

"Look," he said. "Place done five miles from here last night. IIO taken. I drive over again this morning. Pick you up on my way back unshaven. Dirty. Hobo-type. You can't account for your IIO dollars. Good case I'd say."

"Coincidence," I said. "on it at cards last night."

"here?"

"Place a hundred miles from here."

"here?"

"You say I took it from a house."

This time he really did hurt me. Kicked me on the shin under the table. I didn't expect that. Clever, too. I mean, bruises on the face don't look good in front of the press. And you can't very well roll up your trousers and show a blackened shin bone.

Then he really surprised me again. Handed me his hip flask. I couldn't believe my luck.

"Go on," he smiled, showing even white teeth.

Well, you know how it is. Bourbon. Slightly warmed by his body heat. Did me a power of good.

I handed it back again.

I didn't like the way he smiled.

"Let's take the statement." He sat expectantly, plastic covered notebook open, ball-point poised.

"I'm not making a statement," I said.

He held his head on one side. Handsome he was. Sort of brown sheen off his skin, like a film star. Smelled like one too. A mite too much of the After-shave lotion. Nice cream shirt, light brown slacks, wavy crinkly hair. Definitely a good looker, the sort the gals go for. I know I've looked like that before now.

"Listen, did you do the job?"

"Nope," I said. I meant it. I didn't do the job.

"Well, let me take a negative statement, then."

"You mean.....a statement to say I was playing cards a hundred miles away when the job was done, and won 110 dollars?"

"Yeah, that would do fine."

I didn't like it. He seemed too pleased. Maybe he wanted me to think he looked pleased. Maybe he was working some sort of doublebluff. Cops usually like the other sort of statement. The 'I did it' sort of thing. And no really tight interrogation? Too kind of casual. As though he was satisfied he'd got the job cleared. More, as though he'd got the job cleared by me. But you know what they say. It can't hurt you if you tell the truth. Don't believe it. He took a short statement off me, as I've described. I couldn't recollect who was at the card game...too much drink...and I didn't want to give him the names of the couple of close friends with me. Their wives...you know. And when I signed it, I asked if it was OK?

"Sure it's OK," he grinned. Very nice he was. I didn't like it not one damned bit.

"I can go then?"

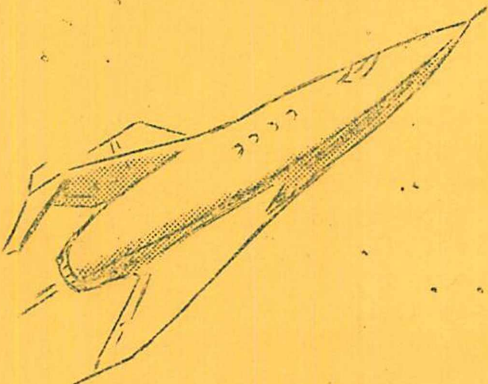
He stood up, crossed the room, opened the door for me. I went through it. Should have noticed there were two doors...it soon hit me. I'd gone through the wrong one...

A coloured boy shared the cell with me. He was sleeping off a drunk. He'd vomited on the blankets, both his and mine.

"What gives?" I yelled. Boy, was I mad.

He came over. His light blue, almost greyish eyes were an inch from mine. The iron bars stopped me from ripping him apart.

"I'm charging you with the breaking last night," he said softly Too softly...



It takes time....sure, and if you're guilty, you realise it's part of the risk you took, and you lost, and to hell with it but it's all in the game. But I didn't do it. I wouldn't go so far as to say that I've never made an unlawful entry before. That wouldn't be the truth, and everything I've told you is the truth. But, so help me, I didn't even know where the dump was I'd supposed to have broken into. And the weeks passed, and then before the judge and jury. Pretty Boy was good. I reckon he thought an MGH scout was mebbe in the jury.

"....yes sir, and I examined the broken window, and found two latent finger impressions, which I photographed."

I looked at the picture of Abe Lincoln behind the judge. Seemed to sneer at me, Abe, not the judge. What the hell did I worry about fingerprints. I'd never touched the window....

"and so I arrested him for vagrancy. When I took his fingerprints, I thought, well now, that left fore and middle finger look familiar..."

A fly landed on the back of the court stenographers neck. The neck became red, but the fingers were working so fast that they didn't have time to flick it away. Pretty boy was sure telling the story...

"and when I compared them, yessir, I had been right. The two latent finger imprints on that window were identical with the left fore and middle fingers of Hector Steinhouse..."

HECTOR STEINHOUSE.....that was me???

And then of course it hit me. The blasted hip flask..the dirty rotten bastard...

A young lawyer can fight most things. When they're young they are inclined to be over enthusiastic, which, in my case, was but good. But I saw the exhibit myself. Even a cross eyed idiot would have had to admit that the enlarged photograph on the left, of a mark on a window, was identical with the enlargement on the right, the left middle finger of one cretin Hector Steinhouse. I'd convinced my lawyer you see that I was innocent. That boy showed rare perception. But I guess a combination of Pretty Boy and that exhibit was too much for my lawyer. The last thing I heard before I fainted, was 'and is sentenced from five to ten years.....'

I felt my chin. Uh huh. I unplugged the electric razor. I opened my wardrobe door...hmmm...I selected the grey suit and slacks..... and I also pulled out the brown and white slickers with the inch crepe soles. My tie...well, it was silvery grey, with light blue fronds..... cost a girl friend of mine twenty five bucks. Shirt..? New one, with a stiff dark blue collar. I took my time over dressing. A hell of a change from a cell....a county remand jail ain't too bad, but a three man penitentiary cell...two days of that was enough..I had a grievance, they should have sprung me after a coupla hours. I really worried there one of my cell mates was a home....

Well, I thought I looked good, and I'm not immodest. Well, not much. I winked at my reflection in the mirror.

I swung the Impala into the highway and stopped outside Dawsons Creek. I knew my way to the Sherrifs Office. It looked the same. I even expected to see the coloured boy still sleeping it off.

Pretty Boy was cleaning his .45. Nice shiny new badge, I noticed. He looked up, looked down again, then did one of the most surprised double takes I ever did see. And I've seen some.

His eyes stood out of his head.

"Not.....not Steinhouse?" he breathed.

"The same." I quipped. "The same self who got from five to ten a coupla days ago.....nice job that, taking the print of mine off the flask, and saying it came off the window. Trouble is, Pretty Boy, you did it once to often."

He didn't say anything. They don't, at first. They find it hard to believe. I guess you do too.

I wiggled my FBI badge infront of his peepers.

"Come on, Pretty Boy," I breathed. "Don't bother about the office. A replacements on the way."

"How did you.....?"

"Been on to you for some time," I explained. "Nothing as low and mean as a bad cop. You shoulda used your head and lost a case once in a while. They even heard of you in Washington. That's why I got the job. I told you the truth. I did win IIO bucks the night before at cards. Actually I won near 400, but the call came through to take IIO, to give you a chance, you know. We reckon you did it at least five times. False fingerprint evidence, I mean. We've got to protect the old system you know."

I took the .45 out of his trembling hands and put it in a cupboard. I gripped him by the shoulder. No struggle. He was bewildered.

Funny thing, as we left the office, I inadvertantly got my right slicker stuck between his feet, and damned if he didn't fall down the steps and on to the cement sidewalk.

"Hell, sorry," I said loudly. I allowed a look of reproach to cross my face as I picked him up. Folks were looking, you see. I smiled as I spoke to him. I let people see my look of concern as I dabbed the blood offa his elbows. "Nothing quite so low as a bad cop," I spat into his ear.....

