

MEL



"SIR, THERE'S
SOME STRANGE
FELLOW WHO
WANTS TO SEE
YOU..."

JTS
&
AA

NUMBER SEVEN -- that's what this is. The 22nd mailing of SFPA will have this zine foisted upon it, as will a few innocent, unsuspecting souls in genfandom. Editor of Melikaphkhaz #7 is Lon Atkins, Box 660, Huntsville, Alabama 35804. November, 1966. Zugzwang Pub #49. Cover is by Joe Staton, depicting "Doctor Frankenstein's Mistake." Vote the EdCo TAFF ticket! Bear for Ghod!!

Jerry Page told me I should do a zine without saying something nasty in it about him and Hank Reinhardt.....

Why, I asked him, do you give me impossible things to do.....

It's time, I suppose, to restate the Rules under which I'm running my Duplication Service for SFPAzines. Members can submit their zine to me on standard four-hole, legal-length stencils and I'll publish 30 copies (25 for SFPA, 5 for the member) at a cost of 10¢ per stencil. This will be done on whatever paper I have on hand. Stencils must be in my hands five days or more before deadline or there will be a surcharge of 5¢ per stencil to discourage lateness -- those last five days are busy ones. Payment must be received before I will publish the stencils -- unrun stencils don't count for SFPA credit, either. Your five file copies will be sent to you along with the SFPA mailing (in the same .jetpak). These Rules are subject to change without notice, since this is not an official SFPA service at all, but merely a thing I'm doing to help the apa members do SFPAzines if they're away from publishing facilities. If you can pub, please don't overload me.

ASSASSIN

f
i
c
t
i
o
n

by
Lon
Atkins

Harry Smith lay stretched diagonally across the comfortable double bed of his hotel room. Thirty minutes ago he had shucked his energies with his shoes, and had let all tension leave his body as his narrow frame collapsed across the bed. It was late afternoon of Sunday -- a Labor Day's Eve. It was the last cool position of total rest before the battle. Tonite he would be hosting a critical party; perhaps only thirty people would attend, drifting in and out in the basal rythmn of a convention crowd, throughout the course of the evening. But of those thirty, twenty-five must be swayed. Come tomorrow, when the ballots were handed out, there must be twenty-five fewer votes committed to Atlanta.

Harry Smith smiled in repose. His glittering teeth, white and sharp, made a confident display. Neofans meeting Harry for the first time often thot that smile the reason for his nickname -- "Barracuda." Certainly he was physically evocative of that nama, being slim and pale, with a toothy grinning approach on swiftly silent feet. But resemblance went much deeper that physical similarity, said his enemies; they had named him with the sardonic knowledge that painful experience brings.

When he judged it time, Harry Smith rose and rinsed himself to full alertness in the cold shower. After a vigorous towelling, he dressed to the perfection of his dark, conservative taste. He confidently knotted his silken tie, set its golden clasp, and pulled on his coat. Harry Smith smiled at himself in the mirror; he liked the show of his teeth.

In the hall outside flowed a gentle tributary of that great river of fans now filling the banquet room. Harry merged into a lively ripple of faaans and let himself be carried along, down the elevator/waterfall, to a choice table near the front of the room. Harry unleashed his voice; deep, vibrant vitality gilded his words and made his biting smile over into the image of all good fellowship. He dominated the electric conversation, but would gracefully toss the lead to others, confident that control would soon return. And thru the dinner he strwed anti-Atlanta barbs, but subtle ones like tasteless poison.

Afterwards, the crowd's hearts full of spectator joy for the well-chosen awards, the banquet hall was slowly emptied. Harry Smith lingered. He had asked the McDonalds to meet him after the Banquet, near the South door, then to come along to his room and help him set up the coming party. He needed slave labor, he had told them, being blessed by Nature with fumble-fingers and a talent for confusion. They had laughed with their special gladness, generous with their energies for this needy creature. They were young and enraptured by the uniqueness of Life; they knew only the

dignity of the individual -- but a joyous, sharing dignity oblivious to the concept of greed. Later they would be embittered by what Man has made of Life, but today they reveled in Life's promise. Harry Smith had seen them as easy marks.

Ferrying the bottles, the mix and the ice up to his room was a chore that Harry made lighter by chatter. He was careful to maintain the slightly cynical, but basically humanist, personality he has assumed for the McDonalds. Genuine regret tinged his voice as he broached the Atlanta bid: "Damn it, I've got good friends backing Atlanta -- you two scoundrels, for example -- but the thot of what's going to happen to, say, John Phillips just won't let me alone." Phillips was a Negro fan from the Midwest. Mort and Sue McDonald were startled; vague hints had been made by Harry before, but he had never expressed such open alarm. They were worried. Civil rights was the special crusade of the McDonalds' -- and now the button was being pushed. Harry saw that he had been right; a sketching of horrors, mostly bold lies, would serve. He described surliness, hatred, observed on his business trips to the Atlanta con-hotel. An imaginary conversation with a bell-hop was the clincher; Smith touched on unsanitary reprisals brought against Negro guests as described by the mythical bell-hop. The McDonalds were appalled, as expected. They had been supporting Atlanta, primarily on the honest promises of Ross Gallion. Now they would never vote Atlanta; Smith had neatly knifed Gallion with the skillful smear. The McDonalds were sickened by the irrational hatreds of racial bigotry; when they left, on schedule, at midnite they would see similarly inclined friends. Harry Smith was smugly confident that his coup would be multiplied by at least three -- already, in his mind, he was watching the broken face of Ross Gallion, the hated one, as all the money, time and loving toil expended on the Atlanta bid melted down the gutter. Harry Smith the king-breaker watched. More, he thot, it's Harry Smith the death-maker.

A lively pounding on the door interrupted Harry Smith's reverie. The first crew of guests had arrived -- Tom Stanhope with the Corsons and Johnnie Lecoque. Harry greeted them all and slipped about Tom's wide-swinging arm to introduce the McDonalds to the Corsons. Tom and Johnnie had immediately rushed to the bar for provisions, and then the entire group congregated there. Harry went off on an account of Herbie Fenster's difficulties with a busdriver that morning; his mobile face and mimic's voice soon had the assembly roaring with mirth. Another group arrived as the tale ended, thus bringing the party up to a size sufficient for fragmentation into small conversation nodes.

Like some feral hunting animal Harry Smith prowled the room, going from one conversation to another. At key groups he would stop, blend into the background, await a chance to bend the talk in his direction. Then he would pounce -- claws of half-truth and falsehood would cut the flesh of the victim's belief. Smoothly Smith would pass on to banal commentary, but the cruel damage had been done -- the dirt on those claws would fester in the wound and kill Atlanta's chances. Most people have a button easily pushed; Smith had chosen those who would be most susceptible. He had studied them and then pushed their button in such a way as to turn them from Atlanta. It was brutal murder of a sound, honest bid.

Following the pattern of all such parties, inflow was eventually balanced by outflow. Those fans infected by Harry Smith left for other parties; other fen entered and were provided booze and charm by .

Harry Smith -- later they would be found by Smith a second time for a bit of talk on the forthcoming Worldcon bidding session. Harry was engaged in just such a conversation -- he had just finished explaining, in shocked terms, how Ross Gallion had tried to blackmail him into supporting Atlanta by threatening to send fanzines with Harry's political tirades to Harry's employers. He thought he had been quite inventive this time; the tight lines around John Humble's mouth told of another vote lost from Atlanta. Then the suite door had opened abruptly and Myron Hall had marched in. Myron Hall, the chairman of the Miami bidding committee, the man Harry Smith had decided to give the next worldcon to, the man who sighted Harry, shook heavy jowls, and came across the room like an angry bulldog.

"I want to speak with you, Smith. Alone," spoke Myron Hall with a stiff formal anger. Harry led him aside and asked for voices to be kept down if they were "victims of a misunderstanding." Hall came to the point: "I hear you're up here feeding all sorts of damn lies about Atlanta to anyone who'll listen. I want it stopped. I will not tolerate smear tactics in this contest. I will not tolerate it." He spoke with a low, intense rage. Harry Smith felt paralyzed; he forced his voice to defend him. "Simmer down, Myron. I've told a few people how I feel, and I mean it. I'm not connected with your committee in any way. You can't tell me what to say. Not that I'm doing anything but conveying my opinion to friends. If I don't like Atlanta it doesn't reflect on you in the least -- and I'm not using smear tactics. Damn it, now you've made me mad. Sorry, but I don't take well to censorship."

Myron Hall wavered for an instant; he was not sure now of Smith's purpose or scope of action. He compromised his intent to see the issue out by extracting a promise not to sling mud. Harry should see, Hall said, that not only would such tactics dirty Harry himself but they would also indirectly impugn the honor of the Miami bidding committee, especially Myron Hall. Harry Smith agreed; he would only touch on a person grievance, he promised. Hall could get nothing more without a scene; he left uneasily.

Uneasy also was Harry Smith; Myron Hall's action were like a patch of ice in his mind -- almost, he had lost his balance on that ice. But Smith decided that the indignation was a sham; Hall had mentioned shadowing his honor so this was just his disclaimer of responsibility. Were Harry's little assassination party uncovered later by Atlanta supporters, then the Miami crew could cover themselves with reference to Hall's admonishment for Harry to cease activity. It made sense to Harry Smith; he left it at that. But still, he was the least bit uneasy -- Hall had seemed so earnest.

Guests demanded attention. Harry was pulled from his trance into a thundercloud conversation on the Renstone affair. Harry quickly sized up the Renstone supporters and mentally filed a note to corner them alone before they got away and use their blind defense of a friend as a lever against Atlanta. The rut of familiar routine snapped Harry away from his brooding on Hall's attitudes and their ramifications. In the context of deceit only one interpretation was possible, and Harry lived in that context. Smug internally while placatory visibly, Harry soothed the ire from the debate. He turned the conversation onto Renstone's genzine, and from there -- with a skillful realignment of topic direction -- to the fate of genzines in general. Soon all were friends once more; gaging his timing, Harry departed for the

bar with the anti-Renstone faction in tow. He confided to them that while he did not want to hurt the feelings of the pro-Renstone group (who were, after all, dear friends in spite of their rather stupid support of that disgusting character), he Harry was opposed to Renstone and everything he stood for. It was too bad that the Atlanta bidding committee were mostly semi-secret Renstone sympathizers. Why they even planned to make him Fan GoH if the bid succeeded. This was all DNO, of course. Nothing could be said said officially by the Atlanta mob, but it was known to the Knowers just the same by leak from a less sympathetic member of the committee. Keep it under your hat, chaps, and do have another Scotch.....

So it went. The evening changed at midnite into tomorrow and constantly Harry Smith found a weakness or an ossified strength on which to base him attack. He never forced an issue; always the prey would present an opportunity or be guided unknowingly into a trigger remark. Rusty Shelton had been particularly simple for Harry. A simple remark on a fan write-up of the Watts riots had set Shelton, a native of rural Mississippi, astride his hobbyhorse of white supremacy. Smith waited out the initial gust, then tactfully disagreed with the basic inferiority of Negroes while admitting the current cultural lag. A reluctant account of a mythical account with a Negro bellhop in the Atlanta con hotel followed -- Smith appeared hesitant to give the details of insolence and abrupt rudeness. Shelton pounced and pulled out the admission that the hotel management was afraid to fire the Negro because of federal action. Shelton raved. Smith's concluding remark that "they still keep their place in Miami" was not lost.

That internal grin of Harry Smith's was working on the thot of what Rusty Shelton and the McDonalds would have to say to each other should they discuss the worldcon bidding, when Smith gkanced up and saw the neo watching. The observer was from Miami; he was a nonentity to Smith, since he had no swayable vote or any importance atall in the fan world. But that neo was a serf of Myron Hall's -- if he had been sent to spy, why? The uneasiness returned and precipitated swift action. Harry excused himself from Shelton, and confronted the neo with the fact that this was a private party, a thing he would not ordinarily have done. The neo left without protest.

A faint sourness settled over the party for Harry Smith. He tried to wash it away with a powerful drink, but it only made things a little fuzzier, so another drink was conjured up. The fuzziness increased and pushed the sour feeling back beyond memory. Harry was happy now because Atlanta was doomed, tho exactly what this meant he wasn't sure of any more -- it would come back later, he decided. But he watched each word he said; there was a watchdog chained inside his skull that would not permit him to talk of his accomplishment, or of the worldcon bidding. Once he turned from the bar with a fresh bourbon and noticed with a start that the party had shrunken down to a third its former size. Then he remembered the trickle of guests leaving, thanking him for a good time. Everybody seemed happy. Then later he was striding down the dark street with a crew of fen; everybody seemed to be swaying ponderously back and forth, like high buildings in a buffeting wind. They found a small all-nite beanery and irritated the management with boisterous voices, tho some had been quiet listening. When they returned to the street there was a faint dawnish look about the sky. There was a flash of lucidity as Harry crossed the lobby and took the elevator up to his room. The clock in the lobby and the floor indicator in the elevator were bright and clear. Then came the dark.

He awoke in a painful moment, sitting upright in bed with a terrible dread that he had overslept. He fought the dull throb of ache shooting out from the base of his skull -- it was vitally important to remember whatever was causing this urgency. Then he had it: the voting session. His watch showed that the meeting would begin in less than five minutes.

Sorting memories of the nite before as he went, Harry Smith showered and dressed quickly. He felt confident that he had done the damage he'd aimed to do. And the party had been a good one on the pure enjoyment level also -- a marvel that his hangover was so mild. In the elevator Smith remembered the incident with Myron Hall and suddenly his hangover felt somewhat worse. Revenge provided the antidote, and the thot of Ross Gallion's Atlanta bid failing injected cockiness into Harry Smith's stride as he entered the hall.

Jack Wert was speaking for Richmond, the weakest of the three competing bids, as Harry took a seat near the back. Apparently this was the last bid, for Wert made a reference to "what Ross and Myron have already said." Wert sat down and the ballots were passed out. Harry penned a blocky "Miami" on his and passed it back. He leaned back and closed his eyes, letting relaxation sooth his aching head. Total confidence filled him now; he was certain of this vote: strong Atlanta matching a strong Miami. Miami would be a few votes ahead, but not have a majority because of the Richmond bid. A second ballot would be needed to dash Ross Gallion and Atlanta.

The results were announced in a dry voice: Richmond 39 (mild applause), Atlanta 227 (clapping and cheering), Miami 236 (an equal demonstration). Harry Smith grinning, baring his predator's teeth. He knew that Miami would pick up about 20 of the Richmond faction. A throat was cleared abruptly into the platform mike. Harry opened his eyes and looked at Myron Hall standing behind the mike. Hall looked weary, as if he'd been up all nite and all morning, but he kept his back erect and his shoulders straight. The weariness was in his eyes.

"Those of you who voted for Miami, we sincerely thank you for your support. However, circumstances now make it impossible for Miami to accept the convention, even if we were to win it. I regret this deeply. Miami hereby withdraws its bid and asks its supporters to vote for Atlanta. Thank you." Myron Hall crossed the platform rapidly, as the expected pandemonium broke loose in the convention hall. Shrugging off questions like a swarm of large mosquitoes, Hall vanished thru the side exit. A few of his closer friends and a largish group of curious fen followed him to the elevators, but it was obvious that he intended to make no statement now. Three old friends got onto the elevator with him.

Seated passively in the buzzing hive, Harry Smith stared at the traitor microphone. No expression crossed his face for several minutes, then his lips peeled back as if they had been slashed open with a sharp knife. The Committee was trying to restore calm so that ballots could be passed out, when Harry Smith stood up with military stiffness. He worked his way thru the crowd and walked slowly to the darker of the hotel bars. His face was brick -- closed hard and dull red.

After two cool bourbons he loosened somewhat. That speech of Myron Hall's had represented a way of thinking so alien to Smith that to have it destroy all the cunning effort of sabotage was like a physical

blow. It made so little sense to Harry Smith. He ordered a third bourbon and dabbed with his fingers in the ring of water left by the drink glass. There was no line of defense. It had all happened so suddenly and so late that triumph for Atlanta had been certain -- there was no need to have waited on the actual vote. He, Harry Smith the previous invincible, had been beaten. The cruel pain of defeat and helplessness forced him to gulp the drink.

He was in that bar finishing his fourth bourbon, when Ross Gallion found him. Ross came silently up to Harry's table. Ross was a huge shadow that leaned across the table and softly snarled: "You bastard! What did you do to him? He wouldn't talk there on the platform after he pulled out his bid. Just rushed off and now I can't find him. I know you and he had a heads-on argument at your blast last nite, but I don't know what about. I know you, Smith; you're a cheap conniving sob. What kind of arm-twisting did you do?"

Harry Smith was glaring now, his eyes focussed clearly on Ross Gallion's angry face. The harsh tone of contempt had slapped Smith into his normal defensive shell again -- gone was the numbed self-pity of short moments ago. Here was his hated enemy come to strut his triumph, come to flourish the prize, come to humiliate Harry Smith. "You didn't beat me," spit Smith. "You were a loser -- all tied up for the axe. Stupidity, that's what did it. And not my stupidity -- oh no, I'm not stupid. It was that pompous ass Hall's stupidity. He's too dumb to know a good thing." Smith sagged a slight bid and paused for a long swallow of booze. Ross Gallion was too busy trying to make sense of the outburst to speak. Harry Smith muttered, more than half to himself: "His stupid honor. He's out of it, man, way out. He's never learned what this world is all about."

Dawning comprehension illuminated Gallion's face. He stared mutely at the stricken Smith as details sorted themselves into the pattern of reality. "Do you really still hate me that much," whispered Ross Gallion. "It's been nine years."

"Get away from me you bastard!" snarled Harry Smith, his voice barbed with murderous overtones. "Yes, I still hate you that much. And I'm not through yet by a mile! Wait. I'll nail your hide up on the wall someday. There won't always be some stupid clown to take the axe for you." The rage did not leave him so soon this time.

Ross Gallion stepped back from the table. Disgust and pity were mingled on his face in equal portions. He looked down at Harry Smith, at the gaunt, toothy man broken unbeknownst, and pity won. "You poor bastard," he said in a voice like a sigh, then turned and began his search for Myron Hall, who would need a friend now who knew why.

Harry Smith waited until Ross Gallion had gone thru the swinging doors of the bar, then he killed his drink, called for another, and slumped enough to suit his mood. All his life Harry Smith had looked down to watch for those feet that kicked the unwary. His life-view was downward and he saw the feet of the world, and the dirt and filth underfoot. He had learned to see the kicks coming and to dodge; he was as swift and skillful on his feet as a toe-dancer. And he could kick. He never looked up for fear of tripping. But somehow he had fallen. Drink followed drink, and by the time the bar closed, the man who saw only half of life had washed his pain into the past.

CHARYBDIS

A-MAZING MAILING COMMENTS ON SFPA 21 * * * GO GO ALGERNON

THE SOUTHERNER #21 (LAOE) * Hefty mailing, and a good one. I'm pleased, and would be even more so if a certain two artistic members had managed to make the anniversary mailing. ## I certainly butchered the O-O, tho, don't you think. Putting out SFPA mailings and chairing DeepSouthCons just don't mix, apparently. But I should have plenty of time this mlg, so lets hope the SOUTHERNER comes out well (and has the Constitution included). The only good thing about #21 was Joe's fabulous cover. ## The size of that waiting list is croggling. SFPA looks healthy.

SI-FAN #3 (PAGE) * Interesting piece of the past. It was fun comparing Brash Young Jerry Page of 1960 to the man we all know so well today -- Brash Old Jerry Page. ## Jerry Burge deals with two controversial novels of 1960, and manages to split decisions with me. Ward Moore's TRANSIENT, I will agree, is "balderdash" -- a long, meaningless, disconnected ramble. Robert Heinlein's STARSHIP TROOPERS, on the other hand, I consider an excellent book. True, it is eposodic, but it demonstrates clearly the workings of a society and the growth of a man in that society. Lack of an ERB-type plot where everything is tied neatly into a package (or one thread is left loose for a sequel) and the Bad Guys clearly Get Theirs is not to my mind a disadvantage. To the contrary, it can be a distinct advantage. Heinlein shows us a world; he shows us the development and solidification of an adult personality. And he does it damned well. That makes the book a success as far as I'm concerned. ## Bo Stenfors put a good deal of sensuality into his sketch of Sue Lyon. But then she's a provocative little lynx, to judge by what I've seen of her pictures. Which brings us to the movie LOLITA (well done) and thence to the novel by Nabokov. Nabokov is one of the true talents of our time, in my opinion. I like almost all of his work. He has a strong sense of fantasy, and he's a good chessplayer (Expert strength to judge by the awareness of the game he exhibits in his writings; try THE DEFENSE, for an exanple). Also, he knows the academic life (read PNIN -- it's a gas). The result is a blend that appeals to me intensely. Does any SFPA out there share my liking for Nabokov's work? ## Brooke needs to talk to a mathematician about "infinity." His definition is useless.

ISCARIOT #19 (ANDREWS) * Hi there, Al. When are you going to start doing mailing comments again? I know that reading the mailings is slow, tiresome work, but how are you going to get the egoboo of seeing your name mentioned unless you at least glance thru the mailing? ## Omighod. More Pickering. His catch-cry of "serious construction" is bombastically pretentious. What little he does construct is drowned in the swirling confusion of his semantics. And articles like this one that do manage to be readable never come to any logically reached conclusion. This article, f'rinstance,

is nothing more than a listing of stories using a religious theme, with a smattering of comment on the nature of the theme thrown in. Pickering's "conclusion" is banal. The whole article also seems to follow Sam Moskowitz' outline of religious science fiction which appeared in AMAZING a few years back -- an inflated paraphrase, one might say. This has been a hasty amateur job of dissection; for a real professional one, see Ted White's appraisal of Pickering in ALGOL. ## Curious, but I've always thought that the "serious constructor" type mentality was the most prone to be strongly religious, yet Pickering cites his atheism and claims that his breed are mostly atheists. Further, he claims that hobbyists are more likely to be devout. Now assuming that he means the "frivolous, faaanish type" by "hobbyist" (as Ed Wood does), I think that Pickering is dead wrong. From my experience, the faans are generally more cynical, more skeptical and less reverent than the sercons. The same quirk of mind that allows the sercon to make science fiction (pardon me, Science Fiction -- one should always capitalize the names of deities) a sacred cow also lends itself easily to the belief in an Omnipotent God (take your choice which). Fanaticism, as history shows, frequently takes religion as its standard. ## Very fine Jones cover. ## You were asking about a Mitchell Trio song last time I was in B'ham. Well, I checked my album and it's called "Singin' Our Mind", Mercury MG 20838. It's a fine album, including an hilarious satire on Ole Miss -- done as an alma mater. ## Don't forget those mc's. Come on back into the apa commentary.

STARLING #8 (LUTTRELL) * You continue to get good color work, Hank. Have you considered doing a "plaid-ink" cover a la QUANDRY? ## Read Brian Aldiss' EARTHWORKS yet? It's another example of Aldiss' skill at stylistic invention, with the expected unorthodoxy of theme-handling. But the plot was old hat, which as you observed is almost always true of the "New Wave". If Ballard's specialty is the destruction of the world, then Aldiss' has to be the world after catastrophe, and such is the case in EARTHWORKS. When you complain of their rejection of the Outer Space story (you say that space travel is becoming vital to our future), I think you are missing the point Ballard and Aldiss are trying to make: that the world of man is on the brink of destruction, either by nuclear war, overpopulation or depletion of natural resources. They say, we may never have time to develop space travel; certainly they have as much right to develop their premises as you have to reject them. Humanity during and after disaster is a complex and valid subject for examination, and observations made there can frequently be generalized to all human behavior. Let the New Wave search thru their basic theme as deeply as they wish; I'll welcome their conclusions, but I'll remember that they are not all of modern science fiction, but only a single movement. ## Evers: That education does not imply intelligence (& vice versa) is an old saw indeed. That you will find this in fandom isn't so unusual either. But you complain about this and then jump on fans for discussing topics you claim they are undereducated on. I don't really understand just whathell you're trying to prove by linking these two accusations. The example you pick, the discussion of the Kings of England, doesn't help me either. The people doing the primary discussion (Dave Hulan, John Boardman and Fred Lerner) are all certainly both intelligent and knowledgeable. True, none are PhD's in History with 20 years of research behind them, but such a personage was not needed for a discussion of the depth of the Kings one. But the PhD should have been the only one to open his mouth, you imply. Except for yourself, I see. You don't mind plunging in and seeming a fugghead. Amen.

DAMNYANKEE #11 (KATZ) * Good grief, I think I've seen that cover in every apa I'm in and a few I'm not in. If I were Joe, I'd not appreciate seeing one of my minor efforts from the dim past cropping up again everytime the moon is full over Buffalo & AtheK puts out a rush apazine. ## Gee, Arnie, I didn't notice all those zines you said were sure to appear with all sorts of gooey sentiments about SFPA Coming Of Age. Why Len Bailes didn't even claim that he wasn't minacing -- he tried his hand at prime minac and admitted to it. But, y'know, I'd have called the shots just like you did if asked. ## Hey, yeah. Do some faan fiction. This is the General Material apa, isn't it? Besides, the last fiction you had in your apazine was that abortion in NEMESIS (remember?); surely you don't want to be remembered as the fan who thot N'APA was better than SFPA. ## TED WHITE: While you may have intended differently, I thot of the development of the powers Max held in an analogous manner to the development of a skill, such as pitching a baseball, playing bridge, or growing single crystals from the vapor phase. If this was the case, I don't see how the deprivation of those powers from Max is going to advance his skill in the use of them, seeing as how he has had only a short time in which to develop his powers per se. (Training "too fine" is a phenomenon to be reckoned with, but it applies only to one who has pushed his skill to its maximum.) While Max's adventures on Qanar are exciting, and thus good adventure novel material, they are not connected with the advancing of his mental powers in any realistic way. Sandy Koufax, Terence Reese and John Sherwood did not become great in their fields by battling headhunters thru South American wilds; they became great by application of their energies to their particular skill. But I read PP as a swashbuckler, and I enjoyed it muchly as such. I'll be buying the sequels enthusiastically. ## Tim Eklund is a very confused individual, as should be apparent to anyone reading his attacks on you, Arn, as well as to those who've met him. I've done both, and thus know how confused he is. Tim seems to want to kick back viciously at a hostile world, and he picked you as target which his associates would applaud an attack upon. I'm sure that Larry never consciously urged an attack on you, tho; Larry does his own fighting. Tim just wants to be a Big Man. ## But 'tweren't the information so much as the keen *advice*..... ## OK, you've got that straight now; Cindy is a good-looking girl, alrite, but Dian is WOW!! Let's watch that "bookend" business...(And I'm cutting out one-shots). ## Just got two Donovan albums: "The Real Donovan" and "Sunshine Superman" (the one Paul Williams had at Tricon). I'm very impressed. Donovan's singles were always good (ie "Colours", "Catch the Wind", and "Josie") but there is a wealth of good stuff on these two discs, especially "The Real Donovan". "Turquoise" and "Oh Deed I Do" I'd put up with Dylan's "Love Minus Zero". But the quotes on the back are the biggest gas; Donovan is a good song writer, but as a quotable speaker he's camp. ## SFPA can have its own Golden Age, can't it, without reference to the Golden Ages of any other apa. I'm looking at the run of mailings starting with #16 and saying that in them SFPA has reached a full roster, a fine ingroup spirit, and large mailings with much very enjoyable material. I'm saying that, for SFPA, these mailings and the future ones of similar or better quality may be looked on as a Golden Age by apa members in the future. I'm not stacking these mailings up against the GA of SAPS or the GA of FAPA, SFPA is its own world. And I'm not claiming a GA on any literary standard; I can't. Nor can SAPS or FAPA. How does the great Golden Age of SAPS stack up against the Mermaid Tavern Ingroup? Or against the Expatriots of Paris in the 1920's? I'll tell you: SAPS is very badly outclassed. So I wouldn't go talking about any

apa Golden Ages on the Absolute Standard, if I were you. I'd talk about apa GA's in the context of the apa under consideration. This has been a Thoroughly Grotched mailing comment in Angry Young OE style. Next quarter: soft shoe routines with hob-nailed boots. ## Say, I noticed that the name of Katz has dropped off the NYCon 3 committee now that New York has the bid. I've got a sneaky feeling that this is so the ex-official k, one Bright Young Fan named ~~Andy/Potter~~ Arnie Katz will have a shot at the fmz award for Querp, err Quit, ahhh Quack, oh, whatever it is. (Bright Young Len Bailes not having to worry about eligibility, being an Angeleno.)

CLARGES #4 (ATKINS) * I'm very near pleased with this issue. If I ever go back to genzine publishing, I think a zine of this zine and mold would be what I'd choose to try to do bi-monthly. Missing this was the lettercol, for which I had no time. Personally, I think I like CLARGES better without a lettercol, now that I've had a look at it that way. While lettercols are a fannish tradition, they are actually mostly space-filler. Give me an interesting article anyday. ## My thanx go to Al Scott, who sent me the mss for "Weathervane" and asked me to publish it for SFPA. Well, I wanted Charles Wells' fine story to go to genfandom also, so I put it in CLARGES, to the betterment of that fmz. (Actually, I had a 24 page article by Stephen Pickering on the Intrinsic value of Science Fiction all ready to fill that slot when Charles' story came in. Now don't cry; I'm sure that eventually Stephen will get around to submitting the article to NIEKAS and y'all can read it there.)

UTGARD #10 (HULAN) * A great, huge, enjoyable zine full of fine stuff -- biggest ever thru SFPA, as you know. And Arnie discounts Golden Ages -- poor fool. ## I like the cover. Those ditto colors came out richer than usual; perhaps the paper, or the contrast with the dark black mimeo lines. This is a medium that I'd like to see Joe do more work in; it's full of potential. ## I'm adopting your page counts for my box-score, as of this. Also am taking up your system of not allowing wait-listers credit for participation in one-shots, thus simplifying bookkeeping (by the way, can you think of a word in the English language which has three consecutive sets of double letters?). This increases the page count of several members (including mineself) and gets us sychronized again. ## On "Good Bad Writers" we're again in the position of agreeing on some essentials and disagreeing on others. Burroughs has something, I'll back you there to the hilt. He has, as you point out well, the ability to entrance and entertain by weaving a fantasy world for us. I enjoy Burroughs myself (especially after a few drinks -- no sarcasm intended). The entertainment value of writing is a valuable one (no doubt, the most valuable one in the long run), and I greatly admire the ability to tell an enjoyable story. No argument there, but when you we come to your rendition of what standards "great" literature is judged by, I balk. Now it's true that many "critics" apply the standards you cite, but these are really superficial standards and have only a vague kinship with the standards I use (and my standards are acquired from some very brilliant men; I don't want to claim greatness as a critic myself). The "reality" you cite should be "real insight" -- that's my touchstone. When a work gives me a true insight into the nature of the world, into the hidden depths of human motivation and reaction, then I call that work a candidate for greatness. From here we may depart even more, but I personally require economy of effort, compatibility of style with theme, and elan (this I can't define, but refer you to Arnold's "touchstone method") for a work to

be "great" under the Atkins Evaluation System. In short, insight into the human being is the standard I hold for greatness. A work may have fabulous plotting, brilliant style and a heroic identification-figure and still be dross. I may be entertained -- most surely would -- but I would not call the book great. Burroughs offers little insight; what he does present is usually simple-minded, always anticipated numberless times. I class Burroughs as a fine entertainer, but far from a great writer. Most critics, I'll agree, are far too smug and self-defining. But since you asked about personal standards, I gave you mine and thence springs my dissent. From my point of view, what do you think of the issue? ## I'll tell you why English (History, etc.) PhD's must criticise and Math (Chemistry, Physics, etc.) PhD's must create: it's because that's primarily what they'll be doing afterwards. Most English PhD's will spend their lives as professors teaching about the works of others -- offering criticism. But most scientific PhD's will be doing creative research in their field; even the teachers will be mostly be doing research (unless they're at a small college with no research facilities). ## Damned good article on inertial guidance. This is your forte, Dave. You should be in training to replace Isaac Asimov. I'm serious; with your very readable style and your good general scientific knowledge you're a natural for this type of writing -- and I hear there's a good market. ## What got Dave Hall stirred up about Montgomery is Larry's racial beliefs. At least, this is the impression I gather, since I've seen Larry's comments to Hall in the apas, and they're innocuous. The fanatic on either side of the fence is liable to irrational generalized hatreds -- look at John Boardman. ## THE DEPARTMENT OF QUEER COMPLA*INTS... you mean ASI? ## OK, my one-shots are generally lousy; that much is quite obvious in retrospect. However I still feel there are good spots, and that I'm being picked as a scapegoat for the bad. Remember, I wrote only about one-fifth of MURDER (there was plenty of name-swapping, so you can't even be sure what of it I did write). ## Stiles illos grow on you; at least they did on me. The first few cartoons by Steve that I saw didn't impress me at all, but after being exposed to many of them (& many good ones they were) in a reading of Billy Pettit's file of XERO, I began to appreciate them. Today I'm a dedicated Stiles admirer. He distorts reality, certainly, as do all good artists, but as with other good artists he distorts it in a way that is a valid commentary on the nature of man's reality. Man distorts nature, y'know, and I think the artist making with social commentary will catch and transmit those distortions. But art is a matter of personal taste, and I'm not criticizing your taste for not liking Stiles. Hell, I don't like a lot of art my friends tell me is really Great Stuff. ## Joy in re-reading: yes, that's a valid reason to return to some work if ever I've heard one. Books like LORD OF THE RINGS, THE SUN ALSO RISES, and DOOR INTO SUMMER I've re-read many times because I enjoy them regardless of how familiar with plot and phrase I am. Poetry is especially good for re-reading; there are perhaps twenty favorite poems which I have re-read well over two-hundred times. Shakespeare's tragedies I've been over at least four times each, yet I never fail to find more depth and beauty there. Let me strongly endorse your reply to Billy. ## You've hit a point; Rick's work is undisciplined. He surely displays bursts of multi-colored imagination, but no burst is ever sustained (the sole exception that I've seen would be GOON WITH THE WIND). A fan here for the DSC mentioned that Rick's zines had hardly changed in level since he joined; seeing his latest, I'm forced to agree. No personal slam at Rick, but the word is "disjointed". I think he'd profit a lot from some sustained thot and labor. ## And what's wrong with writing about

ones self in the third person if the medium demands it? Larry's IN SEARCH OF HALLOWEEN should have been in third person, as it was, for my tastes (gee, personal taste is a big thing thing mlg, eh). The effect would have been lessed, the mood partially discounted, if 1st person had been used there. Art admits no compromise with modesty.

Brace yourself, Dave, because here I come again on chess. The inspired guess, as you put it, does have a very important place in chess. Former World Champion Mikail Tahl makes the inspired guess, in the guise of the speculative sacrifice, the cornerstone of his game. Chess isn't precisely calculated out except in special positions. If it were, computers could play prefect chess (I'm speaking of reasonable calculation timewise) -- as it is, I could blindfolded beat any computer yet programed under tournament time limits (40 moves in two hours). Bridge is also a very fine game; I don't want to take anything away from it. Subliminal data is of the ultimate there.

I've got a feeling about foreign bids; I think that the time is fast approaching when we'll see the non-US bid allotted a regular spot on the rotation plan. With the current strength of German and English fandoms, I don't see how it can fail to happen. Frankly, I'm all for it, and if an attempt comes along to ammend the rotation plan to include a foreign bid after (say) the Eastern bid, then count on me to support it. This is supposed to be a world-con. ## You're right; the air in Birmingham is full of a steel-mill stench. But the mountains, as you point out, are nice. And even the down-town is far enough from the mills to not stink, tho it's not exactly cleaner-than-clean. Some of my favorite childhood memories concern roaming about B'ham on chess-tournament weekends with my contemporaries and soaking up impressions of the Big City. ## Here's the scoop on the three flats. With a flat I managed to just roll into a service station in North Florida and get the thing changed (as the tire was almost bald, I got a new tire). After pulling out I drove less than a mile before loosing both back tires: they were glass-infested. I'm sure it happened at the gas station, but there was no way to prove it so I just fumed. You're right about not blaming the car, but after all these are what Gordon Eklund called "mailing lies" and I exaggerated for comic effect. (No, don't tell me; I know that nothing I do for short humor is worth a damn.) ## I use a paste ink exclusively (ABDick 3400); look at all the offset I get. Gee, ain't it terrible. Silk-screens and drum machines seem to have different operation characteristics entirely. ## What I meant to say was that I'd publish anything Len himself writes for ZZ over six pages in length free. I told both you and Len this over DSC, so consider it an established fact. I'd have been a stuck bird indeed if y'all effected your fiendish scheme before I clarified this. I'm glad y'all didn't, because I was rushed badly enough as it was doing last-minute zines.

Chiggers seem to strike areas which are under pressure; I wear (and have worn) stretch socks -- the ankle areas were always saturated with chigger bites after I'd waded thru wet grass in the morning. I wore underwear with an elastic waistband, and this area too was a prime target for the redbugs. And after area_s under compression, yes, they hit the genital area..... ## Harry Warner has hit about 92 consecutive FAPA mailings. The difference between 92 weeks and 23 years is great in magnitude.... ## Sorry to see "The Fan Of Bronze" end. It was a fun thing, even Larry will admit, and one which could have stood endless extension as circumstances in SFPA changed. Hope you feel inclined to start another serial within the next year. Apas will always be ripe for such excellent in-group fiction. (And a great bit about Arnie that was -- I guess you saw the bacover of Joe's FLORIMEL...) ## No, I don't plan to continue self-voting in the

Egoboo Poll. However, I'm thinking of experimenting and using the system I mentioned to Arnie last ish, where each member is given 100 points to distribute in a manner that reflects which zines and members he derives the most enjoyment from (with respect to SFPA contributions, of course). What's your opinion of this type of system? (I want opinions from the entire membership, actually.) While doing away with categories does remove chances for individual areas of achievement to be rewarded, I think it also makes the Poll more honest. You were mentioning how destructive "good buddy" voting was to the poll's purpose, which under the currently used system I take to be reflection of excellence of achievement. However, there's the strong chance that encouraging unrestricted point allotment might make the poll too much of a "good buddy" system. Perhaps the best thing would be to increase the Free-Point category to, say, 25 points, and ask people to try to do all their biased voting there instead of in the talent categories. What say? ## Yep, that was Wally Wastebasket Weber on the back of LENITY. He says he took up the trombone about 27 years ago, but never learned how to use it well, so he decided to haul out the trombone again and start a musical career. Well, one afternoon he was at his teacher's house laboring up and down the scales when a new student came in. Wally claims to be the worst trombone player south of the Arctic circle, so it was natural that the newcomer should inquire, when the screeching paused, how long Wally had been playing the trombone. "Twenty-seven years," replied Wally, going back to shuddersome practice. The newcomer quickly reconsidered lessons from that particular music teacher. ## You're right about FAPA having its prolific members; I was just spoofing with that comment to Arnie. ## "Another Bradbury" makes me think of those few days between the DSC and the Tricon when my apartment was full of fans. A madness came over us all, especially Len and myself, and we started calling out absurd book titles: "John Boardman of Mars", "Warmongers of Mars", "John Boardman at the Earth's CORE", and "The Mind that Time Forgot" formed one series. Then there were one-shots, like "The Synthetic Sandwich-Eater of Mars" and the "Vomit from Beyond Space". YchhhDouble ychh. We shoulda known better. ## Your History continues to be Good Stuff. Valuable....

AN INDEX (HULAN) * Another valuable item. I still would like to see this index (updated of course) bound with your completed History, a year from now when you finish. Any chance? ## Errata: You left out THE WIDGET FACTORY #7 in the Index By Members section. Also, MEL #2 was only 12 pages long instead of 13. I only checked the portions on me, since that's where I'll be most likely to spot errors. (And I'll admit to finding those the most interesting portions.) I'm sure other members will be diligently checking the sections concerning themselves....

ACRUX #4 (COX) * Decided that I couldn't wait until '68 to see Fabulous Los Angeles Fandom, so I'm planning now on making the Westercon next summer. See you then. ## Well, we're bound to drop down in percentage of 1.000-hitters as the roster stabilizes (and I think it's reached a fairly stable point now). The ten we have (as of the 21st mlg) are 40% short-termers. Still, Bailes and Staton look steady as rocks (and I'm intending to try), so we should have some 20/20's in a couple of years. What surprised me was Dian breaking her string; disappointed me too. ## Liked your "(experiment)". If you'll peek under ACRUX #4, you'll find that Joe's drawn another girl of the same winged species as appeared on FLORIMEL #1 and inspired you then. A perfect invitation for a sequel.

Very few TNFF's came out this last year (even counting the help Wally and I gave), but that didn't seem to particularly slow down the N3F. Janie Lamb even put out a couple of "semi-official" zines of her own to keep in touch with the membership. I guess apathy is just as natural a state to the N3F as rabid fuggheaded mouth-running is. The N3F is like crabgrass. ## The major thing I dislike about the self-vote in Egoboo Polls, Ed, is not the use of the privilege to vote for ones-self, but to not vote for ones-self. That is, if a modest person (I know, they're damned hard to find in fandom) deserves an award but refuses to give himself votes he should, then the Poll will be more inaccurate. In fact, this happened; Arnie Katz was so shy of the Poll because of the self-vote, that he failed to vote himself the maximum in each category as he so well deserved. This should certainly assure Arnie a high spot in the Most Modest category come next Poll. ## The reason Len minacs is "Keeping up with the important stuff, his college work." Choke. Gasp. Snurffle. College work is very important indeed, but how does Len keep up with doing in-person fanac seven nites a week? (My insidious spies -- and my sidious ones too -- report that Len does study when he can slip in a bit between bouts of fanac and hi-jacking Chap-Stick supply trucks.) ## Mention Harry Warner and I think of baseball. Sneaky way of mentioning that as I type these letters (words, sentences, etc.) the Dodgers are about to begin playing the Cardinals. Larry Jaster will be trying for his fifth straight shut-out of the Dodgers this year. A croggling feat, which deserves immortality, like some fly trapped in a small bit of amber. However, I don't think Jaster will be getting that fifth shut-out. Don Sutton and the rest of the *fabulous* Dodgers will be intent on stopping him. (Y'know it's a shame that no LA fanzine-fen are real Dodger fans.) ## OK, I'll scream and holler and pound my shoe on the table about there being no DS stuff in this ACRUX. I always enjoyed reading your natter on Good Ole DS, and one day I may even read a second DS novel because of it.

FLORIMEL #2 (STATON) * Great cartooning throughout. I can't say too much about how much I enjoyed your work in this mailing, so to partially compensate for my lack of articulation, here's a large size package of *****E-G-O-B-O-O****. ## Couldn't help but notice your impeccable repro. Why it's some of the best I've ever seen -- masterwork! Pray tell: what genius does your mimeography? (How'm I doing, Arnie?) ## "Like to lie a lot..."??? Why, Joe, I'm hurt. My poor sensitive psyche is injured, even, by that cruel remark. I'll have you know that everything thing I write is the Absolute Truth. Well, maybe just truth. ...But honest, it's at least partially true; that is, there's a shred of truth in my fanzine accounts. In the best TIME tradition. ## Well, now I must Deal Harshly with you on the subject of Bob Dylan. "Whining" is not a word well-fitted to Dylan's songs (tho some might call his voice such). The "world I never made" element is certainly there, but it is Dylan pointing out the idiocies, hatreds, pettiness and bigotry of our world. (As an aside, are you familiar with the poem of Housman's from whence came the "world I never made" phrase? Not pulling a Janifer, but read it if you're not -- an ACLU member should appreciate it muchly.) How else is an artist to protest such conditions? Do you call Dickens, Norris and Gorky whiners? You may not like Dylan, and that's understandable considering it took months of forced exposure for me to begin to dig, but don't call a man a whiner who says forcefully: "This and that are wrong, because they are Hate, Stupidity, Greed and Bigotry." Call him instead "one of them Commie

agitators" or "a Shit and a Moral Crud" (if you want to refer, correctly from what I hear, to his private life). Of course, he is a cynic of no small magnitude. He frequently is bitter and brutal, but again I don't think its whining. But enough of this; I'm sure Arnie had a Few, Short Comments also... ## First, let's make that "most of the people in fanzine fandom are all fairly intelligent and well read" (tho that's still stretching it a bit). At the Tricon I got cured of the notion that fans are intelligent by contact with tons of semi-literate (could read, but not write) morons who attended the con in the guise of "fans" but who had little or no acquaintance with the fanzine world. (Tho a few of these, calling themselves I believe "Lee Jacups", "Norman Clarker" and "Ernie Kapz" weren't such bad sortz atall.) Anyway, the worst sort of these swarm around the con discussing ERB and Harvey Comix entirely in monosyllables. (The better sort retreat to the bar and discuss jass and r'n'r entirely in monosyllables.) These "fans" are distressingly uninterested in the Intricate Technicalities of Esoteric Doctrines as we more intelligent fanzine fans are. Why one of them attempted to begin a conversation with me at the Tricon, so I casually commented on Burstein's treatment of the anomalous optical properties of InSb (assuming $M = 0.03$ m -- then the curvature of the $E(k)$ curves near the bottom of the conduction band is strong, with a subsequent shift in the long-wave optical absorbption edge to smaller values). When this unfortunate individual expressed puzzlement I refered him to PHYS REV, 93, 632, and then proceeded to what was doubtless more familiar territory to a verbally-inclined man. But the clod was unfamiliar with Cantwell's recent translations of the Hyperborion "Book of the Half-Dead".... nor could he converse intelligently on Starbert and Le Seurte's excellent paper of analysis on the effect of sub-cortical lesions on the adult wombat. These boors have no acquaintance with education. But rather than continue, allow me to refer you to Swacinski's penetrating paper on this topic in the July issue of JOURNAL OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY. ## Gee whiz, did I Let Slip the horrible truth about my experiences trying to pound physics into the perfectly elastic head of Al Scott (boy wait-lister...)? I hope you intend keeping All That Quiet. The same blood-stained mallet is still available, and I'll buy a copy of Sears&Zemansky myself if the job must be done.... ## Agreed. Incentive points should be for voting in the Egoboo Poll and not the OElection. ## Serious John Boston has toddled off to school at Vanderbilt, which is within striking range of Huntsville by car. Perhaps if 'Bama plays the Commododores in Nashville I'll be up that way and can witness John carrying an ANALOG around in full view of the public. I'll bring a length of hemp.... ## I guess you have seen LITTLE CAESAR many times. It's a flick I've heard a lot about but have never been able to see. Something always happens so that I'm out of town or in the hospital when it's shown on TV. Once I was all set to see it on the late show (according to the schedule in the paper) and some Bing Crosby musical came on instead. Said smiling announcer: "I'll bet you movie fans are ready for a change-of-pace after last nite's exciting showing of LITTLE CEASAR..." I coulda killed th' bum. ## That rat-fink Jaster did it. He just shut out the Dodgers for the fifth time. And worse, the Pirates swept a double-header. This is a sad nite for Dodger fans the world over. I may *drink* tonite (as a matter of fact, I've got a head-start on myself...). ## Say, I just heard the phrase "...in Murray, Kentucky ..." as I turned the dial of my trusty transistor searching for Good Music. What happened there in Murray today? (9-27-66) Did you bomb the Post Office, Joe? Or were you caught with ANALOG by a lynch mob?

SUCH AND SUCH #9 (LUTTRELL) * Glad y'all had a successful Ozarkon. Wish I could have made it (Joe Staton & John Boston would have been on my route, so they might have come too), but that's con biz. Next year. ## Well, Barr seems to have quietly faded away after that attempt to hold on to TAPS...tho it sure looked like he could have remained in that apa. I suppose this vanishing act is for the best (for Barr & fandom). Had he stayed around there would always have been suspicion, and Barr's own personality was repugnant to many fen. There would have been too many awkward situations.... ## Dave Hall was an interesting member and therefore I was sorry to see him go. Has he lost all interest in SFPA now? Or just run out of red ink? At any rate, I'd like to see him rejoin the wl. Also Jim Hall. ## Speaking of St. Louis, I'm listening to KMOX. Harry Carey is announcing the Dodger-Card game (Koufax vs. Jackson). Got to keep abreast (or "abreat", as Arnie Katz would say) of the pennant race. Last nite (cursed nite) there was a special announcement about the rioting there. Tonite Stan Musial came into the booth and when Harry asked him to say a few words about the Dodgers, Stan called them "a veteran young club." In a way, I suppose, he's absolutely right. ## I hear Heidelberg is planning on entering a bid for '69, but have no idea how accurate this rumor is. ## And speaking of Ray Fisher, I'd like to see him and Joyce take out a dual membership in SFPA. ## Gee, it's been difficult to pull mc's out of this short SaS; you should develop your mailing comments more thoroughly, or put more snappy hooks in them. And remember, comment hooks begat comment hooks.

TRACE (WEBER) * Wally, you've no idea how happy this made me feel when it arrived the afternoon of deadline day. All my faith in fankind was rekindled, and I regreted those nasty things I'd said about you probably dropping out now that you'd moved to Seattle. (Now watch you forget this mailing and be dropped; I hope you get those four pages in on time -- or even a day or so late) ## Passed your old place the other day and it looked pretty unkempt. The grass was weedily overgrown; the paint in shabby condition; an old newspaper had decayed beside the steps; empty Swanson TV Chicken Diner boxes were strewn about the garbage can. That you'd want to know that nothing has changed. ## Guess what the latest idiocy at work is. Because of pressure on the Structures group to get out a bunch of design reviews, and because of a lack of personnel to accomplish those reviews on time, I've been temporarily reassigned to Structures to aid in These Times Of Stress. Simple? Intelligent move? Well.... maybe, but my going leaves the S-II ordnance system with no one to take care of it, so Ed Green has been temporarily reassigned from Propulsion to take over my slot while I'm reassigned (Ed once worked in ordnance). However, Ed's slot on the S-IVB was left vacant by that reassignment, so a man from Electrical who used to work in Propulsion has been temporarily given charge of S-IVB propulsion systems. Of course this also left a temporary vacant slot, so a new man as yet unassigned permanently has been temporarily made responsible for the Electrical slot. Of course, each of us must "keep an eye" on our regular spot to stay cognizant of developments and to "help out" our temporary replacements. Still seem simple and intelligent? No, you say, but it sounds like Huntsville.... ## That cover looks suspiciously like Igor Snerdpoo's work; at least it's highly derivative. ## Good seeing you again at the worldcon. Are y'all serious about that Seattle bid? That's going to leave me a damnably tough decision, you're aware. LA has the edge now tho.

MELIKAPHKHAZ #6 (ATKINS) * And how do ya like that: special Stiles cover and extra-special Staton cartoons. More *Staton* cartoons are slated to appear in future issues of MEL (and even this one, luck permitting). ## Hmmm. Perhaps I was a bit Rough and Unthinking in my mailing comments in MEL #6. My apologies to all (except Page and Reinhardt) who I insulted this batch of mc's. I plead Strained Nerves and Too Much Huntspatch. Really I'm just a Sweet Foot-shufflin' Slob at heart.... ## The faan-fiction reveals my Ulterior Motive for running for OE -- I wanted a chace (read: "chance") to perpetrate another terrible pun.

TRIVIA #1 (HICKMAN) * Sorry that I didn't have enough time in that incredibly rushed last few days to do anything much but rush. Otherwise I'd have read your editorial comments and discovered that this was intended for SFPA. Please disregard the notice in THE SOUTHERNER that you owe pages -- you made your "6 original" with pages to spare. Ouch! It hurts to have my first O-O full of my own errors; I don't intend letting it happen again. ## And welcome back into SFPA. I'm glad to see former members returning, even tho I'm a newcomer myself (I slipped in between your memberships, Lynn). ## Enjoyed all the general material. I'd like to see Phillifent be right about toplessness being on the way in...and I'm absolutely positive Arnie Katz would be an enthusiastic supporter of any such movement. Not that he'd go topless himself, but he'd manage to get a hand in somewhere. ## Only recognize a couple in those First Fandom pictures, so I'm looking forward to the identifying list next ish. Were they all made during the same evening? I notice that the same background is used and that Bob Madle was wearing the same bow-tie thru-out. ## I wasn't around when the pulps were decorating the stands, and I never encountered any until after I'd started college. Gadsden was pretty well isolated from the normal flow of old zines thru the few second-hand book stores. When I finally tried reading pulp fiction, I found almost all of it unreadable. Most of it wasn't written in a style I grokked, and added to that was the ridiculousness of the "scientific" background that frequently dragged on for several pages. I soon gave up on the pulps, yet I could see that had I been reading them off the stands when they appeared I would probably grok them very much. Burroughs, for example, I read first as a young child and even today I can read Edgar Rice and be transported into his special worlds. But I know that had I encountered him for the first time in college (or probably even high school) I'd have rejected him as a bad hack. The answer is obviously nostalgia -- tastes developed before critical facilities are well developed strike a chord back to the happy times of youth. And nostalgia seems to me a valuable thing; I wish I had nostalgia for the pulps the way I do for most of the pro-zines (very especially ASF) from late '53 to late '58-'59. ## I see by the theme of the art in this that you too are a sympathizer of the Phillifent movement.

HUCKLEBERRY FINNZINES (HICKMAN) * The "last issue" is the first non-standard letter size zine to circulate thru SFPA (to my knowledge), so you've set a record there. Interesting capsule history you present; a lot of fanning. I'd like to see you expand your comments on the southern cons you've attended, and so would the rest of SFPA I'm sure. And plan on including a report on the Atlanta Worldcon of 1970. ## Nice Barr stuff on that "Final issue", but since there were three different drawings there weren't 25 identical copies and so I could only allow 1 page of credit. Still, enjoyed the art (and kept the one of the neat broad for my own mailing).

FALCHION #1 (REINHARDT) * Welcome to SFPA, Hank, you barbarian. The group has been needing a theological influence, not to mention someone to help Arnie Katz help share the load of being the butt of egoism jokes. I'm sure you'll do nicely in both capacities. And now that you've moved to Alabama (asute fellow, you) the 'Bama contingent of SFPA is four, tying California and Georgia. Doubtless this will mean more frequent Hearts Games, so I can expect my income to rise accordingly. (Never got a chance to properly thank you for the generous contributions you made to the Atkins Fund across the Hearts table at the DSC, Hank. Thanks sincerely for all the cash.) All in all a most hilarious transmittal of the famed Reinhardt personality; true to the spirit of Hank, but heedless of certain Facts (which I was wise enough to set straight in advance in the editorial segment of MEL #6). ## Interesting stuff on the mace. Hopefully there will be articles on other hand weapons in forthcoming issues of FALCHION, which will make every mailing (threat). I'm a little skeptical, however, about your choice of the sword as the best single weapon to give a man. To clear the point up I'm asking you to select your favorite sword and meet me on the turf at Legion Field. We'll stand on opposing 20 yard lines to start the contest. I'll be bringing my favorite 12-gauge, semi-automatic shotgun. This contest will be fine warm-up for my competition next spring in the National Trap-Shooting Championship. ## Edged weapons, ehfff? Will an article on the use of the paper-cutter do? I've had a hefty amount of experience with that particular weapon since going to work at BECO. We get drawing and specifications in uncut, in rolls. It is necessary to unroll them and cut them to size before use, so I've been enabled to Learn Another Trade in addition to engineering. The standard model paper-cutter is about twenty-four inches square. In functional position it has a blade attached to the right side, pivoted on the far side from the user. A metal strip permanently attached to the wooden base serves as the second blade for a scissor-like cutting arrangement. Paper is lured into the gap, measured against the scale set in the upper edge of the cutter, then severed mercilessly. However, for all its efficiency, no army has ever relied on the paper-cutter (excepting bureaucratic hordes). The primary weapon of Rome's Legions was the Pilum (a spear), but after closing for hand-to-hand combat many fighters preferred the paper-cutter. And against a man armed with a court summons the paper-cutter is essential; a spear is somewhat awkward. The paper-cutter has generally been regarded as a working-class weapon, and has been handed down as a symbol of drudgery. However, some NASA paper-cutters are used only on ceremonial occasions. Because of its lack of glamour, the paper-cutter has been ignored by writers. Please, somebody -- write a novel where the hero uses a paper-cutter. ## Enjoyable zine; keep those FALCHIONs coming.

LORE #6 (PAGE) * Been told recently that LORE is a damn fine zine? Oh, you did. Well, you're right; it is. ## D. Bruce Berry's reminiscences were good reading. He conveys an excellent picture of the small Greenleaf operation, tho I wish he'd done a bit more towards painting Bill Hamling's personality. Almost all of the other prozine editors have been dissected in the fan publications, but I've never seen this done for Hamling. ## Lee Hoffman's THE LEGEND OF BLACKJACK SAM deserves the best, and Bob Bloch with his fab review and Joe Staton with his fab illo have done their part to give her the best. SAM and this bit bring touches of QUANDRY out, and since I consider Q the best fanzine ever, I really lapped up the novel, the review and the illo. ## Say, can I ask LORE a question

here in my mc's? Here it is: Whose pseudonym is "Eric Lee"? That should be an easy one for you. ## Can't really agree with Burge that Leiber did a poor job; it wasn't Burrough's Tarzan, but I thot it an adequate novel. Any turgidity of style that Leiber displays has been more than matched by Burroughs himself on many occaisons. And remember that Leiber was saddled with the onerous burden of writing from a movie script. Even Sturgeon and Asimov failed to succeed under such odds. ## OK. Four pages of credit for LORE. You thus owe two this mailing -- hope you got it in. ## Oh, yes. To be credited for the writings of yourself under pseudonyms, you must make sure that the OE is aware that you used the pseudonym. Otherwise: tough luck, Chollie. Now will the real T.M. Moriarity please step forward..... Or maybe Leo Tifton. ## Needed more ink on that cover illo; the effect is spoiled as it is. Was it done on Billy's machine? To get much good black area I've had to crank my mimeo so that a minute e-lapses between each sheet, while with an electric machine this is close to impossible. Another triumph for the hand-crankers!

SI-FAN #4 (PAGE) * Ah, Brash Young Page again. Jerry was clearly showing signs of becoming what he is today as long ago as 1960, and in this 1961 issue it is clearly impending. Now what I want to know is why someone didn't see all that back then..... and administer euthansia. ## All I can say about Beck's conclusions is "Yyrrkk!" If doing away with mad scientists, slaving BEMs and the "gadget" fixation castrated science fiction, then the field must have been impotent to begin with. Not that I think this; to the contrary I believe that the best science fiction ever written is exclusive of that atmoshere Beck yearns for. The evolution of sf into a medium of comment on mankind and his destinies has been a maturation of the field. Entertainment hasn't been sacrificed; the ability to gain depth has been added. ## Jerry Burge writes a good column; hey Jerry, why not do an "opus" type SFPazine (with *Mailing Comments* thrown in, of course)??? ## Gee, Ed Wood sounded the same then as he does now. Same thots, same words, same Wood. ## Must read the Vardis Fisher Testament of Man series one day soon, tho I've got Durrell's Alexandrian Quartet to finish fisrt. Time never seems to be available to start a series, tho, because I like to read a book straight through, and it's perferable to read on of the many one-shot novels I've got stockpiled. Just bought a couple more today, as a matter of fact. One was an anthology (Damon Knight's ORBIT) which I highly recommend -- original stories by Anderson, Blish, McKenna, Disch, and others. ## Considered reprinting the Operatot 5 article in LORE now that the series has been revived?

HUSHPUPPY #1 (JACOBS) * A stirring Suthun Welcome to you, LeeJ! A toast, if I may, to SFPA's aquiral of such a distinguished fan -- the toast to be drunk in the Bheer Of Your Choice on my next Atlanta trip (which will surely have occured by the time this mailing comes out). ## Hey, that was some worldcon, no? I recognized your costume at the Ball: you came as the Mafia. Dark suit, dark shirt, light tie, and a suspicious bulge under your left armpit. The suspicious bulge, of course, was a bottle of Coors. ## You've met every SFPAn but Hank Luttrell, haven't you? That's certainly an enviable record and should give you enough material to fill several Abnormal Psychology textbooks. Not to mention a book on famous bheer drinkers and a mongraph on xenobiology. And when Dave Van Arnam gets in you can do another volume on bheer drinkers. ## I recognize your reference to "coke." You mean cocaine, naturally. While I'd noticed the gleam in Jerry Page's eye before, I'd

always attributed it to an innocent pastime such as glue-sniffing. Many is the time Jerp has told me "Pulps are the best!" Aware of his sly sniffing activities, I thot he was refering to the glue used to bind the pb editions of pulp-reprints now so easily available on the stands. (Personnaly I prefer the glue used by Signet, tho Ballantine must be admitted to be a strong second.) To be rudely shocked by the reality that Jerp is not a harmless glue-sniffer, but a vile, degenerate user of "coke" was quite a shock indeed. No doubt he picked up this disgusting habit in the army, for did he not mention that towards the end of his stint of duty he became aware that he was a shorttimer. This is obviously a reference to the fact that the use of drugs degrades the mind and body, shortening the life-span of the addict. Alas, I fear the degrading has gone too far already: Jerp is a confirmed regional con chairman and a dirty pro. From such insanities there is no hope of successful rehabilitation... ## Y'know I can see the pattern now; all of SFPA will be living in Los Angeles on Southern Memberships (having joined in the South) by 1970. I'm definitely headed out there myself, to add to the four members already there, and you'll be back in LA before long, Lee (by Historical Precedent). Then the stampede will begin, with Arnie, HankL and Joe transferring to UCLA; HankR being given the California office of his Assassin's Guild; Jerp & Jerb naturally gravitating out to that writer's and artist's paradise; Larry stationed there with His Branch of the sevice; Lynn moving out to take advantage of the fact that anybody driving in LA needs lots of insurance; Wally being transfered there by Boeing (don't ask me how -- Boeing, like Ghod, works in mysterious ways); Billy getting the same way; Rick heading out because it's collector's heaven: Charles coming to teach math at UCLA (so he can flunk Len, Joe, Arnie and HankL); and Al and Bill moving there because it's The Fannish Thing To Do. Then we'll change the name of our apa to the Southerncalifornia Fan Press Alliance and exclude anyone who can't correctly name two-dozen topless bars in the LArea. ## Don't worry, Lee, about being called a minacker. We Appreciate your stuff greatly, and any member who isn't dull minac would not qualify for for harrassment. The exception is Len Bailes, who (when accused of minac) gets purple in the face and hops about on one foot sputtering threats about "Harness-type minac" and firing dire expletives of a scope and ferocity remarkable for a young Jewish lad like Len, who led a sheltered life in the North during his childhood. An Experienced Oldfan like yourself, who would just snap: "Yeah. So what?" at an accusation of minac is No Fun to bait about it.. And besides, we all worship at your feet, Lee Jacobs....

WARLOCK #13 (MONTGOMERY) * Certainly an enjoyable issue; you've done well in the stick. (Of course, you had the very good Hulan and Plott articles to base your zine upon, which is an asset in anybody's book.) ### Bring on Patty and I'll beat him blindfolded for you. Playing blindfold used to be a stunt of mine (tho I've doubtless gotten rusty in four years) and I once beat a class A player that way. ## A solid Alabamian's fanzine seems like the best place to mention 'Bama's crushing victory over an exceptionally fine Ole Miss team last Saturday. Kenny Stabler passed for 16 completions in 19 attempts. This is the same Stabler who last season couldn't pass water with accuracy. Man, he wasn't for sour owl shit then, but the Bear took hold of him and made a quarterback out of him. I have a bet with a Skeptic; if 'Bama wins all (not counting ties) I win \$10, if they lose one there's no bet, but if they lose two I pay \$10 (& if they lose 3 I pay \$20, etc.) I plan on collecting \$10. You see, I Believe -- I Believe in the Bear. The teams he coaches don't beat

themselves; they have the fundamentals drilled into their skulls. Then the Bear teaches them football like few other men can; he teaches them what the game is all about. Finally, he gets them up emotionally for the weekend combat. Of course Alabama has yet to meet Tennessee, probably their supreme challenge this season (other than the inevitable bowl game). There's one they could lose if they're not in top form. ## Despite battle signals to the contrary, I think that you and Arnie would get along fine if you were allowed enough time to get to know each other. If fact, could we all get together, I think we would have about the most compatible open-membership apa ever (with the possible exception of some small semi-secret apas). ## SFPOPO had better watch out: CALATSOUSPO has hired Hank Reinhardt to eliminate the membership of any organization supporting the PO. Hank has been instructed to make these assassinations as painful as possible; so...care to change your mind? ## Hollinsworth seems more and more a simple-minded clod. The discovery of his plagurism is the topper. May he wither and rot, and spend a decade of isolated agony rereading endlessly his ENDLESS SHADOWS.... (And your HPL books, of course.) ## Dave Hulan's SOMETHING FELL ON ALABAMA is clearly the prime fannish item (and besides, it mentions ***my name***), so I'll comment on it next. Good, accurate reviewing is what I'll say. Dave pinpoints the weakpoints (mainly my one-shots) and the strongpoints (the possibility of luring Andy Zerbe in real fanzine fandom) with typical Hulan insight. And now I'm proud to announce the winner of the Sludge Soap Sweepstakes: Dave Hulan!! Dave has won a fabulous trip to a dream island in the Pacific and since he picked *Arnie Katz* over Tim Eklund, Dave will be marooned on Thari-Kunbi, a four acre island 1000 miles from Samoa, with his choice, *Arnie Katz*, for six fabulous months!!! This dream-trip coutesy Sludge Soap Company, Inc. Dave will also be given *tax-free* a year's supply of Sludge Soap and Barfo Dogfood. Hope you enjoy your idyllic island venture, Dave!!! *Arnie Katz* has already been crated up and sent air-express to Thari-Kunbi, and the air-express men will soon be by for you, Dave!!! Congratulations on winning this fabulous prize (Tim Eklund, runner-up)!! ## ((Mc's get pretty raunchy too, just like some one-shots.)) ## Bill Plott's article was interesting; his newspaper work would provide Bill with a source of such articles for any fanzine he might decide to do. ## Getting back to Dave's article now that it's less drunk out (man, was I sloshed! I saw Dave's comment that he thot Arnie the better looking of Arn & Eklund, and zap I was off on that crazy tangent), I consider this a valuable item indeed. It's a level evaluation of the worth and content of ALA-apa, and thus ideal material for some future fannish scholar who is unable to get his hands on those first two ALA-apa mailings. Furthermore, it documents another bit of Southern fanac for SFPA, which I like to think of as the center of current Southern fandom and thus a repository of memories of Southern fandom. So my thanks to Dave for the review and to Larry for instigating and publishing it. ## Can't fathom your "mild dislike" for electrostencilling, Larry, in light of your noticeable fondness for offset covers. In fact, you've mistaken more than once some of the art I ran which was electrostencilled, calling it offset and praising it. Both methods allow a very true reproduction of the original drawing. How can you laud fidelity in one case and scorn it in another? It makes no sense on any logical level. ## That's a sly grin on Jerp's face in the lower bacover foto. He's gloating over the fact that he had just slipped FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES #1 under his shirt while we were all recovering from the first flashbulb. He acquired his technique from Hank Reinhardt. Hank has a very large collection of PLANET STORIES.

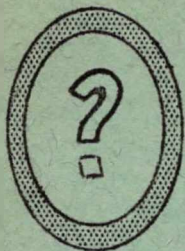
SPORADIC #13 (PLOTT) * "At this typing (Dec. 22) it looks as if this issue of Spore will be post-mailed from Opelika where it will be run off on my old Speed-o-print." But fate doesn't like being told how it's to dance, does it? Rarely do things work out according to my plans, and it's a small solace seeing that others suffer the same difficulties. Still, not all the swirls and turns and dartings of life are unpleasant; many are unexpected joy. Perhaps a philosophy of "dance to the music" is wise. More and more it seems so to me. ## Strange that this Spore should have been intended for the 14th mlg; that was the first SFPA mlg I ever saw, and I believe the third apa mlg of any sort (the other two being N'APA). Those crazy little magazines made quite an impression on me; it's curious that I succumbed so drastically to their influence then, when a brief earlier exposure had left me so cold. Perhaps there are certain times when one is vulnerable to the fanning disease, or perhaps this was just the first sign of senile decay. But regardless, I suspect I've been caught for good. ## The inability to adequately conclude his novels is Dick's major drawback. I think it is because Dick himself is unsure of the real meaning of life and will not write a book that does not concern all of life as he sees it. Naturally, this leaves him in a dilemma; he will not neaten things up as this goes against his grain, so he leaves an unresolved situation. There are indications of a hidden force -- mysticism seems important -- but there is no clear philosophy transmitted, as is transmitted by most excellent novelists. Yes, I consider Phillip Dick a very fine writer in spite of this flaw; he has much insight into humanity and a stylistic talent also. HIGH CASTLE deserved its Hugo. ## I've got the feeling that Bryce Walton was a pseudonym. His style, fixation of theme and publishing history flag me. Does anyone out there know? Jerp: there's a legit question for LORE. ## REG sold several stories, all published as by Robert Ernest Gilbert. My favorite of the bunch was "Hunt the Hog of Joe", from INFINITY I believe. ## Spore stood the two year gap between stencilling and publishing very well. I'm looking forward to your resuming a spot as a regularly contributing member, as is every one else.

ZAJE ZACULO #11 (BAY-LESS) * Marvelous Staton cover there (accurately depicting the momentous discovery that Len Bailes really is a hobbit). I like the paper your zine is done on also. And I suppose if pressed for comment I might mention that the ink is distributed evenly, or that those staples are Tot 50 designed for the smaller Tot staplers. (Anybody for staple-fandom?) If asked to mention the text, I might say that above every comma (or almost every one) there is a slight mark. This is easily prevented by using the Upper Case comma (how many of you have ever seen an Upper Case comma?).True minac draws horrible reprisal, Len Bails (not a typographical error). ## But I'll relent and do some real comment; I can't be nasty for long to a furry-footed hobbit. How did Niemur and Strauss make out with you? ## Al Scott has indeed worked his way up the gigantic waiting-list of SFPA to the #1 position. His dedication to SFPA is obvious from this long pilgrimage. In fact, if he isn't killed picketing the UNC cafeteria to protest the use of C-rations in Viet Nam, Al should become a Productive member since he is now living in Cleveland where Charles Wells can prod him into doing a zine before deadline. You and I know so well how Al needs to be prodded. I'm even thinking of sending Charles an electric cow-prodder for the purpose. ## Just once, to make me happy, do a Big ZZ. Even twelve pages would be a Jiant ZZ. ...*Sigh* When the script for ASF is finished, when Al Andrews reads a mailing....

CLIFFHANGERS #10 (NORWOOD) * This came to me a circuitous route and arrived on the very verge of Too Late, but I was glad to see it, for it meant another member represented in the Anniversary mailing (which was also my first mlg as OE). I wanted to see every one there. Still, the struggle with those mutilated stencils was almost one too many sore ordeal. ## Good to see that autobiographical section. Your typical zine is impersonal, so it's difficult to get to know you. In fact, most of what I know about you I picked up from Al Andrews and Larry Montgomery. ## If you reduce time by the square of the distance reduction, then things aren't going to seem normal, as you state in "Escape in Time." You'll need to make the reduction proportions the same. Oooppps (blush), cancel that. Things would seem normal to those inside the reduction area. One of the dangers of first drafting mc's is snapping off a comment without thinking. ## Had ERB won the Best Series, after the other Hugos he took, I'd have lost all faith in those awards. ERBdom does not meet my standards for being a great fanzine, nor even for one deserving of the Hugo. "Slickness" is not a quality I place near excellence of content. If bloc-voting by a fringe group can select the Hugo winner, then the award becomes an award for excellence in the fringe area alone. Next year: Hugo's for BATMANIA and Marvel Comics. The year after we can proceed upward to Dr. Seuss and Little Golden Books.

THE 5th AGE #1 (BRUCE) * And a merrie welcome aboard to you sir. Any one who can manage to waterski in Rick's backyard should feel at home in SFPA; we all suffer from delerium tremens too. ## If the protagonist of the Travis piece was among the first to be immortalized, how does he know that the life expectancy is running away like that? Like, you've got to have people dying to establish a life expectancy, and there's no way for the expectancy to run ahead of the first (approx.) immortal. ## New Orleans is a swingin' place, alrite, and thus a natural for a con. Y'all have a group there, you mentioned that would be interested in a DSC. With the new Jackson group also interested, it looks like the DSC will be going for the next couple years or so. ## Enjoyed your first SFPA zine, Bill, even tho in the confusion of those last days it came out a bit incoherent in organization. Sorry to skimp you and Billy in the mailing comments, but this will be the last stencil of mc's.

AMPHIPOXI #4 (PETTIT) * CHESS REVIEW doesn't particularly care for a "cynical" story, to judge by all the inanities I've read there. Still, I'm thinking of polishing Foak up and submitting it. Then if they buy it I'll have Foaked 'em good. ## Jeff Jones is fabulous; seeing his "Stormgatherer" and "The Witch King" at the Tricon made me realize how much of an artist he really is. Those paintings had considerable impact. ## Well, a lot of the writers condemning the South make their living by producing verbage most of our beloved democracy will lap up. This type of professional critic of the "popular injustice" deserves no answer; he is a parasitis worm. But there are writers in favor of the civil rights movement who back the movement out of genuine belief, and some of these do the most good for their cause by writing full time in support of it -- these cannot be criticized for writing only, for they are doing their movement palpable good. The problem is for the layman to tell the two species apart. ## I didn't care for "Blonde on Blonde" the first time or so I heard it either, but there are some good songs there, as well as a portion of bad ones. I don't the like the direction Dylan is evolving, tho. The same applies to Dononvan. The LAF satire in PLAYBOY latest on this is pretty fair. ----- FINIS



A

MYSTERY

*** The mystery I have in mind is very simply stated, but apparently cannot be answered to everyone's satisfaction. Dave Hulan tried to approach it from the direction of Edgar Rice Burroughs. "What is good writing?" Set up a standard to judge by, and you'll be attacked by fifty kinds of demons with contrary ideas. Standards, it seems, are ultimately personal things.

Exactly why I consider certain books and stories to be great, others to be very good, and still others to be sheer tripe, is a question I cannot answer even to my own satisfaction. I have a few vague theories, but I'll come to them later, after I've looked at the problem from a particular viewpoint: the murder mystery story.

About the time I got into fandom I began reading the novels of John D. McDonald. I'd read sf by him much earlier, but I'd never tried his contemporary novles, and they are where his talents are concentrated. I was tremendously impressed by McDonald. Here was a man writing commercially, in volume, and achieving a power and insight that marked him as a very good writer on my private scale. How did he do it? Always I had been interested in the art of writing, and now I became more interested in the how of good writing. Perhaps from the how I could achieve stronger concepts of the why.... and the what.

I sifted thru samples of many mystery/thriller writers: Christy, Canning, Chandler, Queen, Hamilton, Stout, Hammett, Carr, etc. Of these I first picked Donald Hamilton; he showed promise, but wider reading of his works showed he lacked scope. Still, he had written a couple of excellent books, and a handful of good ones. Then, almost simultaneously, I discovered Chandler and Hammett. These men were superb writers. Hammett was the better, to judge by what I've read so far; THE MALTESE FALCON comes close to great writing. What Chandler does in THE LONG GOODBYE, supposeively his best, I don't know, since I've not been able to find the book on the stands here.

So I had three writers I called very good, and I had what little bit I maybe have learned by examining their styles, their methods of presenting what they had to say, and finally what they had to say. I was impressed, but I had no pivot to turn the whole thing on for an article (and I wanted to talk a little on this question that Dave had raised for SFPA -- my comments in the MC's were capsule and had no concrete referents). The pivot was recently provided by an essay of Raymond Chandler's: "The Simple Art of Murder", from a book of the same title (in paperback in two volumes, the second called TROUBLE IS MY BUSINESS). Chandler is after the same question that Dave raised, but his efforts are confined to the "detective story." Chandler has a goodly number of right ideas, which he develops well for the most part, and a few wrong ones, which he glosses over (eg, "Fiction in any form has always intended to be realistic."). When I finished the essay, I saw that it had clearly pointed out the reason why I had

isolated McDonald and Hammett and Chandler as the best writers of the group. They wrote of reality, in the realistic style, and their skill and awareness were enough to transmit that reality.

This is Chandler's point in the essay, that good fiction is a comment on reality, but that it must be a genuine, non-trivial comment. When Hamilton started his Matt Helm series he ran out of scope; he tried to fake it. As Chandler says: "It is easy to fake; brutality is not strength, flipness is not wit..." McDonald succeeds with his Travis McGee series because he is concerned in it with real problems; he has not faked it. The problems are not those that are set for McGee, but are the problems resulting from human interaction with human and with impersonal society. McDonald wields a wicked scapel.

Chandler raves at the ridiculous structures of the "deductionists." People are forced to behave contrary to their nature; coincidence is mangled; the incredible stupidity attributed to the police/official investigators -- professionals -- is absurd. The entire novel exists merely to pose a clap-trap problem, then answer it with a contrived solution. Such novels can almost never contribute an insight into the reality of existence; they cannot be great literature. They can be entertainment, however, and as such they've thrived. Entertainment has no obligation to provide insight; insight is there for those who can find it, anyway. Entertainment merely promises to please the body and/or mind, thus entertainment must be an individual thing, for we all have different standards of entertainment. And each of us has a spectrum entertainment values for each of the emotions, each of the senses, and each of the intellectual axes. Here is a trap: to confuse our personal standards of entertainment with insights into the nature of the world. The great writer provides insight and entertains both; he makes his writing a part of the reader, and what interests the reader, ultimately, more than himself?

Sigh But what is insight? We've merely pushed the problem back one step, and find that we've not really gained much, because insight means different things to different people. Or tell me what blend of entertainment and "insight" is best. That's another matter of taste. Perhaps the best way to show what I mean, even tho what I mean has to be a pretty fluid thing due to the tremendous variety in taste and subject matter, would be to take a book and talk a bit in my fuzzy way about what entertained me and what taught me (or commented well on a thing I already knew). A magnificent example springs to hand -- THE MALTESE FALCON.

Here is a famous book, which was the basis for a famous movie. Certainly everyone has seen the movie; Humphrey Bogart did a master-job with his interpretation of Sam Spade, the protagonist. The book is less well read; many people, having seen the superb film, have no desire to read the book. But this is a mistake (I made it for a while); the book surpasses the movie.

Hammett's style is noticed immediately. It has economy; it rides low to the ground, and smooth -- only in a place or two does it scrape. This style gives you a clear look at the people of the book; you are interested in the murder of Archer, of course, but you are more interested in the motivations of the characters. Spade treats the murder of his partner in a casual way; you wonder why. Then the Levantine, Joel Cairo, appears and attempts to buy "the black bird" from Spade. Obviously there is a complicated tangle behind the death of Archer,

and the subsequent shooting of Thursby, the man Archer was shadowing. Hammett has hooked us well; he's given us a formal mystery (the murder of Archer), a treasure (the Maltese falcon), and a glimpse into a fascinating personality (Spade). There are bonuses: the story reads easily and realistically -- you believe in it -- and the minor characters are all themselves alive, not the standard cardboard.

The entertainment is the unfolding of the mysteries and the broadening insight into the characters, especially Sam Spade (a number of the minor characters are cameos, so we a single glimpse). The mystery of the falcon is solved; its reflective tableau is a probe into the participants. Hammett comments here on the greed of man, on the illusion that can be a life-force, on the deception that can be and is practiced. But this is not enough for Hammett; he has an even more powerful tableau ready for us in the solution to Archer's death. Here Hammett opens up Sam Spade for to know. Before we've had hints, been given clues to hold, but this is the moment of truth, as Hemingway would have put it. It's a terrible insight that drives this deep. Spade isn't exactly a nice guy, but he has an implacable strength, and he's honest with himself, which is more than his antagonists are. What he has done throughout the book show you his code; what he does at the climax shows you the extent of his strength and self-honesty.

Hammett has shown you a world and then taken you along with him as he visits familiar haunts. You've been gripped by his ability to build tension, and you've been amazed to find that the traits he points out are ones you've noticed in your own world. You've been entertained, and the entertaining has been mostly thru his insight. A good book, you must say.

But more: the insights are deep ones, the story has an economy commensurate with the style, and finally the entire structure is a single organic whole possessed of a spare elegance. This is a book which waits to be pronounced great. I'll give you my opinion when I reread it a few years in the future, but for now let it stand as excellent.

As I stated in my MC on UTGARD, my own standard for good writing is based on the requirement that that writing contain insight in the nature of reality. This does not require the writing to be a photographic imitation of reality, but merely requires that the writing contain some essence of reality. Indeed, most good writing distorts the world to a greater or lesser extent in order to focus the readers attention on some aspect of nature (primarily man's) that is under examination. And reality is more than what we do and say -- it's also what we think. An insight into reality is really a glimpse into how man thinks and how man relates, or more obscure, into why man thinks and why man relates.

Of course, a writer must be able to convey his insight skillfully. As mentioned, I prefer to see an artist work to scale, so that the work does not over- or -undershadow the insight in aim. An the work must fit well, stylistically and in detail and intent. This makes a good work; greatness depends on excellence in filling these requirements, and furthermore on the possession of "elan" -- a "spirit of greatness" which I cannot define; it must be sensed.

But back to my theme; read THE GLASS KEY and THE MALTESE FALCON by Hammett, DEATH TRAP and THE DROWNER by McDonald, and THE SIMPLE ART OF MURDER by Chandler. Then look at the Mystery of good writing up thru the collonade of the murder mystery. It's a view worth having.

ONE MORE ONE ROUND

an article /
/ a collection of recollections

A dreary town is Lexington, Virginia. It's an old town of about 4500, set in a valley of western Virginia. The major industry of the place is fleecing students from Virginia Military Institute and Washington and Lee University. The natives -- "townies" to the students -- maintain a sullen attitude towards the very people they exist off of. It's just human reaction, I suppose, to feel this way. The townies (most, that is -- there are exceptions) feel that the students are a bunch of smart-alec young trouble-makers living off the fat of their parents. Most townies felt the students were a variety of parasite, and it galled them no end to live by fattening on the students. Imagine being a parasite on a parasite.

But enough of that. I was just trying to set the tone, to show how most merchants reacted to my contemporaries there while I was in school at W&L. The merchants I'm going to write on were exceptions to the rule for natives; they were good people -- a family of three -- and they became my good friends in the three years I sopped up beer at the Town Inn -- known locally as "Snookie's" after a former owner.

Snookie's was a rough place my freshman year. I recall hearing of one brawl there where a student lost most of his front teeth in a friendly argument with a group of opinionated townies. The kid had been making it with a local girl and had run into her brothers and a few of their friends in Snookies. I went in once with some buddies and we looked around nervously at the scrofty clientele and dirty floors and beer glasses. We escaped with our lives -- nothing happened at all -- but the general atmosphere put us off the place. My freshman year I hit Doc's and the Paramount pretty much exclusively.

Early fall of my sophomore year I hear that Snookie's had passed onto new management. Later that fall the word went around that the new management was trying to attract student trade. Yecchh, I said. But one Thursday nite in early November a group of fraternity brothers brought the news back to the house that Snookie's had been transformed. The Happy Hour there was swinging, with *free popcorn* and the management played the juke box themselves. The next Thursday a team formed to check out Snookie's and substantiate or disprove the reports of our drunken comrades. I naturally volunteered for the team.

The joint had been cleaned up; the floors and booths were scrubbed, the walls repainted and redecorated, the glasses well washed, the clientele half-student and three-quarters washed. We took over four

booths at the far end of the place, adjoining the kitchen. I'd better admit right now that we were all set for a grubby, gross place and had decided to be pretty gross ourselves. We succeeded. The thing that kicked us off, after we'd been initially cooled down by the re-decoration job, was the rest-room. It had not been redecorated -- there was still an antechamber with lavatory and towel dispenser, and a vile 4' by 4' room with the commode. It was disgusting. The light in the little room was out and people had missed the john (later that nite it overflowed, so people just stood outside and aimed in the door rather than brave the two inches or so of water, etc., standing in the vile place). Nothing more was needed to make a bunch of bored, beery students -- mostly sophomores -- into a most repulsive bunch of people. We got loud and vulgar (thinking back, I'd have thrown us out).

The running joke was that the rest room was a Civil Defense Bomb Shelter -- in fact, the name stuck and when I graduated everybody who frequented the place called that room the Bomb Shelter, many without knowing why. Our group propagated the idea that if an air-raid siren were to wail, we'd all be herded into the place by the CD people. The thot of thirty-five people packed into that stinking chamber was enough to provcke hooting laughter.....from sixteen drunks. That was our group; we explained to the other drunks in the place and most of them hooted helplessly too. A few, looking from the hills, just quietly hated us.

On the periphery of my consciuosness I was aware that the management was slightly distressed, but they wanted student trade so they had to put up with student shenanigans now or lose all chances. Getting established is a delicate business when you've inherited the wrong kind of reputation from the previous owner.

Next Thursday, of course, a team returned to the scene of such Great Fun. Less boisterous this time, we learned the names of the owners: Harry (sixtyish, large, not talkative generally), Suzy (Harry's wife, plump and gay, definitely talkative), and Faye (their daughter, in her late twenties, friendly enough but not extremely talkative). They were good people, obviously wanting to run the real bums off and get a better class of trade. I liked them, as did we all, but I didn't suspect then how much time I'd be spending in the Town Inn my remaining years at W&L. Actually the place my friends and I did most of our beer-drinking at then was called the Liquid Lunch. The joint made good hamburgers, but beer in the tall can was 38¢. It was only 35¢ at the Inn. This meant for every eleven tall ones we bought at the Liquid, we could have bought twelve of at Snookie's. Gee whiz, how could we pass up such a tremendous saving?

Let Christmas holidays pass, and exams after them, and then let the second semester get a good grip on our routine. By March a permanent Snookie's team had formed; it consisted of a senior called Rusty, four juniors -- Bob, Bruce, Andy and George --, and four sophomores -- Ray, John, Scotty and Lon (yeah, me). We had taken over the place. The owners knew us all and liked us -- they tolerated a lot. Bruce had discovered a song on the jukebox called "Let Me In" which was gross as hell. We promptly adopted it as a theme song for the Snookie's teams and would play it many times a nite. The repetition of the tune irritated certain townies, and out of this was to come a great ploy the next year. As the spring passed into summer, we learned the other habituates of the Inn, learned to be perfectly comfortable there, and learned that the owners, Harry, Suzy and Faye, were genu-

inely good people. Let all the spring pass, as we drank golden-hued brew and laughed and argued the relative merits of Bud & Schlitz and Hollins & Sweetbriar. Final exams came and ended our weeknite drinking expeditions, and we departed town thinking of the Town Inn (or as we were more likely to call it, "Snookie's") as a fine place, a place with some truth of its own. That it had become a friend and not just a place, we would realize later in the summer.

Fall seemed to arrive late, but after that initial madness, rush week, we rushed to Snookie's for the magic brew and moral refutation of the banality known as routine classwork. A schedule evolved: every weekday between 4:30 & 5:00 the Team would creep or caper into the Town Inn and gather in the two booths facing the street windows. Not everybody would always appear -- usually someone was abscent, come to think of it. But those present would quaff 'till 5:55 (dinner at the House was served at 6:00), then scramble for the cars. Following dinner, there would usually be 2 to 4 returning for a nite's drinking.

This was the Golden Year of Snookie's. A group foto of the fraternity was nailed to the wall behind the counter, and almost every member signed on some occasion during the academic year. On a few rare nites we dominated the place, taking every booth and bar-stool by attrition. Outsiders entering would snoop about for sitting room, complain about "clique control", and depart grumbling. Naturally, we gloried in it. That year the Town Inn was our territory. The game of "Cardinal Puff" raged -- I became the second most powerful pope (yielding only to the introducer of the game). Our theme song was given a "permanent" slot on the juke-box; S-9, I recall the number still.

The juke-box was a weapon that could be used to drive all but the hardiest townies out into the nite. Tunes like "Ahab the Arab" and "My Boomerang Won't Come Back" were on the box, so we's play them -- maybe a dozen times running. By putting a quarter in, punching our torment selection, and pretending to look at the selection until the record was over -- then punching it again -- we outraged the ears of the less drunken townies. They were especially fond of "Ahab the Arab"; I remember one nite when a mere seven repetitions drove ten of them away.

One local stoic, "Ape" by nickname, could endure anything. He'd just take an extra-deep pull at his beer when "Ahab" started up. "Ape" was a semi-alcoholic who seemed as much a fixture in Snookie's as the Bomb Shelter. He never did anything but drink beer and borrow money when he could from freshmen. If you tried to talk to him, he'd ignore you for a while, and then start in on his football days in highschool. To hear him talk of his hard-hitting line play, you'd think he was blood kin to Attila the Hun.

Another townie who came in pretty regularly to shoot the bowling machine was a smart fellow named Ray. He tried to conceal his intelligence from his buddies, tho; in a mob he showed all the sparkle of a bucket of mud, but alone he could converse well on many subjects. His secret shame was liking to read books. On the bowling machine, tho, he didn't mind showing his skill. He and two others battled a couple of nites a week for King of the Hill at a buck a game.

The bowler was old -- long, low-set, with a moving light that had to be at a certain point when the puck struck the pins for maximum points. I had taken to doing a lot of my routine study at Snookie's in the afternoon over a couple of long beers. Reading assigned novels, or do-

ing math homework, or learning German idioms were easy things to do while nursing a beer along; indeed these tasks seemed easier with beer trickling into my tummy. As a break from such strenuous toil, I would sometimes get up and shoot a game on the bowler. One of the owners, Suzy, who was a good player herself, noticed and showed me how to hit the most favorable strikezone (not the one marked on the machine). I practiced and started playing for money with the bowling machine addicts. Within a month I was breaking even; after six weeks I was winning at a good clip. I even shot the only perfect game I ever saw gotten off the machine (and collected double for it).

Exams finally came; after them, the senior members of the Team were graduated. In my class, one Team member entered Law School on the 3-3 plan, another died during the summer of a kidney defect, another almost flunked out and thus had the fear of actually doing so put into him so badly he actually began studying. One sophomore did flunk out; another got married. Suddenly, as a Senior, I found myself the only member of the original Snookie's Team still frequenting the Town Inn. It was a proud and lonely thing.

New regulars from the student population established themselves. The local habitués remained encrusted. This fall I spent almost every weekday afternoon in the Inn, drinking tall Schlitz with a measured slowness while I alternated between doing that day's schoolwork and hustling on the bowling machine. That fall I made about \$5 per week on the bowler, by narrowly edging everybody I played. The transients and newcomers knew I was lucky; they also knew my luck couldn't hold up. But it did.

Often now, I'd talk with the owners. Afternoons were slow, so only one or two of them would be in. Harry leaned to politics; he disliked the administration. So did I, so we got on fine. Suzy joked and touched on light subjects. Faye hit the light side also. They got cards from the departed graduates of the Team, and would joyfully pass on the new. On rare occasions, the graduates would return, one at a time, from wherever they were existing. Snookie's drew them back. In the familiar booths, they'd gaze about the place and see old friends and strangers. They'd regret the passing of the Team and dislike the fact that the Sigma Nu's were infiltrating the place. The Bomb Shelter was immutable; they'd laugh about that. Harry, Suzy and Faye would give them a beer or two on the house for old times sake. Then they'd be shaking hands all around and leaving, a little sadly, this good memory of their past. I was one myself the next year, driving up from Chapel Hill and seeing the old and the new with mixed emotions as I drank my beer and joked with Suzy and won a few nostalgic games on the bowler.

It was a grand old place. I had practically lived there for 2½ years. Harry, Suzy and Faye were good friends. I'd borrowed money from them in a tight situation, and I'd helped Harry quell more than one incipient fight. I'd filled in behind the bar in a pinch, and I'd studied there for all of my exams, in the quiet afternoon at a window booth. Suzy gave me a present from all of them when I graduated. The Town Inn had a quality I've never found in a beer hall since; the joints in Chapel Hill were coldly commercial -- in Huntsville they're even worse. Before I leave this side of the country, I'm heading back up to Lexington, Virginia, and walk into the Town Inn, play S-9 on the jukebox, and order one more round. I want to see the old and the new, but especially the old -- the nostalgic things.

- - - - - U P * J U M P E D * T H E * D E V I L - - - - -

Well, I've been back to That Restaurant again. You know, the one I rambled about in CLARGES #4. Tonite, this very nite, another Happening occurred. The waitress seemed drunk to me from the start; for one thing when she took my order she asked me: "What to drink?" Not strange, you say? Well, try it like this. Me: "I'll have the 6-oz. sirloin done medium well, please." She: "That's nice. What to drink?" Me: "Iced tea." She: "Giggle. That's nice. What did you say to drink." Me (seeing she'd written nothing on her pad): "Iced tea to drink....and the 6-oz. sirloin done medium well." She writes it down and turns to go. I shout: "Hey, thousand Island dressing on the salad!" She turns and looks at me vacantly, takes a step back toward me, and (so help me!) asks: "What to drink?" I concluded then that she was into pleasantly (or perhaps unpleasantly) *high*. When my meal arrived there were no french fries with it, and fries go with the little steak I had according to the menu. I pointed this out. She brought the fries. The fates allowed me to finish my dinner in peace, reserving their last surprise -- I picked up my check. I reproduce it here, verbatim, for your edification and amusement:

Sirloin steak.....	\$2.00
med well.....	.25
Iced tea.....	.25
	<u>\$4.55</u>
Tax.....	.27
	<u>\$4.82</u>
Fr fries.....	.25
	<u>\$5.27</u>
Tax.....	.32
	<u>\$5.59</u>

I laughed; I couldn't control it. Laughter spilled out over my booth and coursed down the aisles. I remembered past experiences and the spring of mirth bubbled on. I laughed myself all the way to the cashier. I handed her the check and said: "The waitress seems to have made an error or three on my check. Would you check it, please?" She stunned me completely--she was pleasant; she changed the check to read correctly; she apologized for the errors. My jaw sagged down to my belt buckle. All I could do was grin idiotically (a talent of mine) and stammer: "Err, do you really work here?" As I left I knew there would be repercussions from this; the management would hear of it and fire the person responsible for my escape....the cashier.

- - - - -

"Hank, Billy's run out of water. Here's a bottle of beer. Could you.?"

- - - - -

The two cons -- DSC and Tricon -- deserve a few words, even tho I've no desire atall to write a formal conreport on either. Both were highly enjoyable conventions; each contrasted starkly as to type with the other. The DSC was small, being essentially a conversation group of good friends, many of whom were meeting physically for the first time. Ten members of SFPA were there, and some waitlisters also. Being the sole member of the con-committee active, I was kept running the whole time, and thus I missed more than I would've liked missing. Still, it made me happy seeing and talking with so many good friends.

The Hulans I had met before for the first time the weekend preceding the con, and it was good to be able to keep on getting to know them; they're wonderful people. Joe Staton and Ron Bounds came Thursday nite; both are good fannish friends who I had contacted right after entering fandom. Then, by golley, a whole parade of old fannish friends poured in: Al Scott, Len Bailes came with Ned Brooks, and Bill Bruce had arrived via airmail; over from Atlanta came Jerry Page, Lee Jacobs and Hank Reinhardt, while arriving late from Anniston was Larry Montgomery (whose name I'm not gonna leave out this time). The next morning Billy Pettit dragged in, late. Of the neos present, Ken Fields and Ray Maner from Villa Rica impressed me -- the others depressed me. The con swung; it consumed Much Bheer. Hell, the con was, for me, pure great: it was SFPA come alive.

Tricon started well, with a party Thursday nite that was riot with fabulous fannish personalities (even Arnie Katz was there). I was too busy darting from handshake to handshake to notice much about the beer supply until it gave out (you can tell I was in a bad way). Then I wound up in John Koning's room mostly listening to John, Steve Stiles, Arnie Katz, Alan Shaw, Lee Hoffman and Mike McInerney talk. Eventually I got thirsty enough to wander back downstairs in search of more beer. I didn't find any, but was pulled into an argument I knew nothing about, pronounced somebody right, and found Charles and Jane Wells with Al Scott (boy mutated beanpole musician). Charles introduced me to Terry and Carol Carr. I found another beer. Reasonably early Friday morning I staggered back to bed and sleep.

That nite set the tone for the Tricon, but I would never have known it Friday morning and afternoon. Things seemed to have suddenly gotten stagnant. I wandered and wandered; so did everone else, so nobody talked. It was depressing, just walking and doing little else, but this was the Great Worldcon and I didn't want to miss a moment. If I had caught on then, I'd have napped the latter part of the afternoon, but I didn't -- owell. Later, I learned, and afterwards enjoyed the Tricon very much, tho not really as much as the DSC, overall.

At Cleveland I met three members of SFPA for the first time: Dian (WOW) Pelz, Lynn Hickman, and Rick Norwood. Dian is beautiful and fannish; the word is WOW! Lynn was a gentleman oldfan, clearly a Good Man. Rick was Southern, intelligent and friendly; curious that I had to go to Cleveland to meet him. All three were the type of people I instantly like; SFPA seems to have a lot of this type.

A running listing of high points of the Tricon (from an Atkins-eye view, but not chronological): the Saint Fantony ceremonies, with the costumes, hilarious lines, and the honoring of two fabulous fans; the late parties, in many places in and out of the hotel; STAR TREK, and especially that ST costume modeler; Project Art Show, where fab stuff by Jeff Jones and Jerry Burge competed with fab stuff by George Barr and Jack Gaughan and Dian Pelz and Bjo; the Hugo Awards Banquet and the awarding of most of the Hugoes; the Costume Ball (with LeeJ as the Mafia); the N3F Hospitality Room at 3:00 in the morning where Wally Weber was making a fresh pot of coffee and setting out new peanut butter and crackers -- and everybody else was passed out or asleep or comatose; the Asimov-Ellison joke session; missing the preview of TIME TUNNEL; fresh beer arriving at the Baltimore party; drinking the fresh beer at the Baltimore party; the prices in the huckster room -- they revived my sense-of-wonder; Serious Discussions with Len Bailes; Dian Pelz; New York's victory; a last look around on Tuesday morning.

The two cons taught me a lot about fandom, in addition to being just pure entertainment. I'll say that I prefer the regional con, basing my opinion on the five regionals and one worldcon I've attended. As Dave Hulan maintains, it's easier to meet and talk to the fans that you're interested in seeing at a regional, and the atmosphere isn't charged with that frantic need to move around that I noticed at Tri-con. Nevertheless, I'm definitely supporting New York this '67. (And Los Angeles for '68!)

"Don't groan so, Wally; it was only a pun..."

A FABLE..... Once upon a time there was a carefree young hobbit named Bay-Less Baggins (of the Menacton Bagginses -- not to be confused with the Sackville-Bagginses). He merrily hopped about the whole day long singing filk songs and chanting G&S patter-songs. At nite he would party with the merry hobbits and other creatures of his acquaintance. Once, at a party, he even cleverly impersonated another hobbit, and everybody clapped. Oh, Bay-Less Baggins was a happy young hobbit indeed.

Then on a gusty fall day, old Uncle Beerbelly Baggins called cheery young Bay-Less Baggins into his private parlor for a Serious Discussion. He showed the lad a Golden Mimeograph, which was as a matter of fact an enchanted duplicator of marvelous powers. Old Uncle Beerbelly Baggins explained to the bright young hobbit that this machine was a magic one, and that it was the power that kept the ogres and wolves and blizzards away from the Shire Folk's Promised Area. Young Bay-Less Baggins tried to look attentive, but his mind was really wandering about the cool green fields and treey hills where his friends were running and jumping and making merry in the way of hobbits at their leisure. He hardly heard old Uncle Beerbelly Baggins explaining how every six months at least six magic pages had to be cranked out on the enchanted duplicator and sacrificed to the great ghod Activity Requirement. When the old hobbit's voice ceased, merry Bay-Less Baggins shouted a happy sound and ran outdoors. The sun was warm and comforting; it was time to play.

Then one day bright young Bay-Less Baggins noticed that the sun wasn't shining any more. He looked up and saw a dark, gray cloud obscuring the sun. Young Bay-Less Baggins shrank down and hazy in his mind was a memory of the Golden Mimeograph. He raced to Uncle Beerbelly Baggins' place on trembling legs. He found the Golden Mimeograph and frantically he began to crank out pages. But after doing only five he fell to the floor exhausted and disheartened. Outside it was darker than ever. Suddenly Uncle Beerbelly Baggins was there, murmuring comforting words as he turned the crank and produced the magical sixth page. Bay-Less Baggins felt hot relief flood him; he shouted that he would turn the crank many, many times next time. He hardly noticed the sad, knowing smile on Uncle Beerbelly Baggins' face. The sun had begun to shine warm yellow again, and young, happy Bay-Less Baggins had to run outside to watch the gray clouds be pushed back North by a friendly Southern breeze.

Care-free days passed. It was a happy, happy time for young hobbits in the prime of their hobbitry. Ah, the warm days full of games and cozy naps in the sun, and the nites, sweet as wine, filled with parties and revelry. Young Bay-Less Baggins hardly noticed when old Uncle Beerbelly Baggins packed a sparse bag and limped away East. Once, as Bay-Less Baggins lay on his back in a lush meadow and ran

his furry toes thru a patch of four-leaf clover, he thot a short thot about the Golden Mimeograph. It must be time he went and cranked six pages out. But that was (shudder) work, and he would get to it Real Soon Now. He rolled over and went to sleep.

He shivered himself into wakefulness. The warm sun was not to be seen and little flakes of white were falling from the gray sky. A large, shaggy, gray animal was sitting beside young Bay-Less Baggins. The animal was panting, its red tongue lolling out the side of its mouth. "Errr, hello," said Bay-Less Baggins, not quite sure what to say to this strange creature. The creature said nothing, for wolves can't talk. But this wolf was tired and hungry. Young Bay-Less Baggins made a tasty pre-nap snack. Young, carefree hobbit is a reknowned delicacy among the epicures of wolfdom.

"Turn off the sunlamp, EdCo....oh! Excuse me, Lee..."

Most of this issue has been run off by now, and in fact is collated. Some facets of the issue need explanation for non-regulars. The cover actually depicts Hank Reinhardt, who is considered as a ghod in certain benighted corners of SFPA. The entire issue, with the single exception of the first four paragraphs of "Assassin", was first-drafted directly onto stencil with a Reinhardt-take-the-hindmost attitude. I therefore apologize for mistakes in spelling, grammar, construction, and fact. If you take violent exception, sue Anheiser-Busch or the Jack Daniels' Distillery. For members, excuse the absence of "The Circus of Dr. LAOE" -- I've decided that serials just don't fit in a zine with a reasonably sized outside distribution (which will be varying), so I killed the serial. Since I was only planning to ramble, it's no loss atall. For those who read the one exciting installment faithfully, (confidentially) the good guys would have won in the end.

"Arnie, have you met Dian and Katya? ...Arnie? Arnie. Arnie! ARNIE!!"

This quarter I've been priviledged to attend the company Communications Meetings (which occur monthly) as the representative of Vehicle Systems. My job in this capacity is simple: I gather complaints from my co-workers, edit them, and present them at the meeting. Sounds simple, and is such, but the meetings are endurance tests. Surprising how most people, given an opportunity to speak (then positively encouraged), will hold forth at great length on any absurd subject. I've endured it a numberless count thses past meetings. But in a way the thing has been a blessing -- it's given me an insight into Senator: and other such animals. The urge to run off at the mouth seems to be a distinctly human characteristic. Hell, who knows? Maybe it's what makes a fanzine editor.....

But this much I do know: that when my turn has come I've heard enough repetitive questions, enough stupid gaping at answers (followed by a request for repetition), enough long announcements that there there will be no questions from Joe Blow of Gasblast Section, Building 6969, who incidentally admits to being a loyal employee of Brown, having a wonderful little wife and four kids and, ha ha, needy of a raise. I say two words when the spotlite strikes me; I say: "No questions."

Certainly this is a shrewd move by the company, to be sponsering a grip session where all the gasbags get up, shoot off their precious mouths, then see their words in print in the minutes (circulated for initialing to all employees). It gives them a real feelings of ac-

complishment. And I certainly don't mind the company placating the gullible employees; it's the fact that I've got to attend and listen to fools swelling up and repeating questions asked a dozen times per meeting, a dozen times per year, and all answered by the same answer. To say it bores me is charitable. But there's no way out for me; I was chosen for this quarter and I'm going to attend or else....

There is one small consolation; I've watched the fellow who conducts these farces, and he's fully as bored as I, if not more. Then I get off work thirty minutes early from these things. This makes a good bargain -- those thirty minutes can be priceless.

 "Gee, Charles, you don't like page-count wars....."

Here we are with the Box Scores, the favorite hatred of the quantity-haters. Thish I've used a bit of unfair advantage and dipped into the current mailing for a decision: I claim half of ISCARIOT. I did enough work, including stenciling artwork, typing, publishing, and mailing out issues to merit such credit, according to my Authority. Thus, here are the Box Scores as of SFPA 21. I took Dave Hulan's re-count as the new base. Furthermore, I'm rounding credit to the nearest half-page to simplify things. Chou.

MEMBER	HITS/AT BATS	B.A.	TOTAL PAGES	PAGES PER MLG
Andrews	17/21	.810	208	9.9
Atkins	7/7	1.000	317	45.3
Bailes	11/11	1.000	92½	8.4
Bruce	1/1	1.000	9	9.0
Burge	1/2	.500	6	3.0
Cox	4/4	1.000	59½	14.9
Hickman	3/6	.500	108	18.0
Hulan	17/21	.810	531½	25.3
Jacobs	1/1	1.000	4	4.0
Katz	10/11	.909	161½	14.7
Luttrell	9/9	1.000	243	27.0
Montgomery	12/13	.923	288	22.2
Norwood	10/19	.526	128	6.7
Page	4/5	.800	188	37.6
Pelz	7/8	. 875	84	10.5
Pettit	6/6	1.000	61½	10.3
Reinhardt	1/1	1.000	8	8.0
Staton	11/11	1.000	157	14.3
Weber	2/2	1.000	14	7.0

Individual totals on the last mailing went as follows: (1) Page - 84; (2) Hulan - 73; (3) Atkins - 69; (4) Luttrell - 32; (5) Hickman - 29; (6) Montgomery - 24; (7-8) Andrews - 12; (7-8) Cox - 12; (9) Katz- 11; (10) Norwood (10). The Activity Index was 24.2 -- an unusually high figure. This Page fellow is running rampant; indications are he will be abundantly present this mlg also. Perhaps some form of insect spray would be effective.....

 "Yes, Jerry, I've read your story. But I appreciate the ten autographed copies of it just the same....."

This is the largest issue of MEL yet. Limited as I am by lack of time and lack of ability, I was unable to put out a jiant issue of Mel as I had hoped to. My rising interest in and enjoyment of SFPA may yet cause me to do a Big Issue of MEL. --See y'all next time around.....