

The



NEOLITHIC

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"This year let's all give a little to the indigent rich."

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with the pictorial aid of: John Nelson and Rab

This is Neolithic, a monthly magazine. Neol, with All Mimsy, will go to all who send contributions or letters of comments (sent at the rate of four a year), five cents in postage (also sent four times a year), or who trade on an all-of-ours for all-of-yours basis. Neol comes from the basement of Ruth Berman at 5620 Edgewater Boulevard, Minneapolis 17, Minnesota.

I came into science fiction by way of television: the trashy, hasty, substitute for fairy tales, half-baked science fiction they used to give to children. The sad truth of the matter is that I was very sorry when they finally took Captain Video off the video. In fact, till last summer we got re-runs of Rocky Jones and Flash Gordon which I used to watch, roaring with laughter, and I was sorry when they went off, too. Nostalgia played a large part in getting me to watch such absurdities as Flash Gordon after the absurdities became obvious to me; they'd appealed to my childish "sense of wonder," and in watching them, I could recall the earlier pleasure. Also, the stories were ridiculous, but they were stories -- after all, lots of people like Edgar Rice Burroughs. But most of all, I think, I kept on watching those absurd stories because they were absurd; they were often more fun than their own parodies. To prove the point, here is a description of a typical Captain Video show as I see it in my memory.

The opening bars of the overture to The Flying Dutchman come blaring out of the television set. They blare partly because this is loud music, but mainly because my little brother has the

bad habit of turning the set on full blast. I quickly lower the sound and sit back to hear the familiar voice of Fred (Rogers) Scott crying, "Captain Video-o-o! And his Video-o R-rangers!"

It is a rousing opening, but the scene changes and Rogers comes onstage with a fixed smile in his face, a Power House Candy Bar in his hand, and the information that Captain Video loves Power House Candy Bars and hopes we do, too. I think of the candy bar which I ate to get a real Captain Video Rite-O-Lite (complete with battery, and bulb, and Luma-Glo card for writing secret messages); I wince. Rogers beams and goes away.

Now comes a line-up of the important characters in the current serial adventure. Here is Captain Video. See his fearless, character-rich face. Note how his thin, sharp features resemble exactly the thin, unscrupulous lips of the villainous, sinister Dr. Pauley.

In this serial, one of the Video Rangers had been sent to spy on Dr. Pauley. The Ranger had been against the move, but the fellow had just recovered from a dangerous insanity. Enough, he had come back and, before the Ranger's horrified eyes, shot Captain Video. Commissioner Cary (a reactionary fuddy-duddy who always behaved like a liberal because he wanted to support Video, whom Cary loved as a son) had been sent to Mars to investigate. The day before, the program had ended as someone, who had somehow gotten into the locked, private room, said "Good evening, Commissioner."

The script-writers, however, have not reckoned with my need for voices. It is with serenity that I watch the Commissioner gasp, whirl for the lights, look, and exclaim, "Captain Video! But...but..." "Careful," says Captain Video, "Pauley's agents mustn't find out." Having gone through a dialogue with Cary which is more or less a parody of the recognition scene in The Return of Sherlock Holmes, Video leaves to pull a similar trick on the Ranger. Video explains to the Ranger that he and the spy had arranged the "murder" so that Pauley would not be suspicious. Now Video must get away from Mars without being discovered by Pauley's agents (Pauley has loads and loads of agents. He dotes on them). This means that it would be unwise to take a regular spaceflight. Neither can they take a Video Ranger spaceship, because Pauley would be suspicious if a Ranger spaceship took off all of a sudden. Answer? The Captain explains that it's quite simple. He and the Ranger will steal a Ranger ship. Dr. Pauley won't expect any harm from a ship piloted by a (supposed) thief. They go out and crouch behind ashcans waiting for an opening to make their robbery. Captain Video takes the moment to explain to the Ranger why good men always win even though the bad men can break every rule (bad men distrust each other). The opening comes and they dash forward. End of today's show.

Well, the old space flight shows are gone, and I'm sorry. The sf shows aimed at adults fill (or, more often, try to fill) different needs. Of course, it may well be that it's better this way. I might despise Captain Video, Tom Corbett, and their like, if they were still on. This way I have the enjoyable parts in my memory. Only (grotch grotch grotch), they're not very well preserved. Anyone remember the name of Captain Video's ship?

I wonder if anyone can tell me the name and author of a story I read about three years ago in an anthology, I think. A man was wrecked on a planet. Every day the light was a different color, so that one day it might be as if he wore rose-colored glasses and the next day everything might be tinted with blue. At night he heard the noises of people. They seemed to be gentle, happy people, and every night the noises seemed to come closer. Then the man was rescued. His rescuers told him that his miracle planet was simply a planet with a wild orbit, taking it around many differently colored suns. At the end of the story the man had grabbed his rescuers' lifeboat and gone off, hoping to find his way back to the strange planet. I've looked through several anthologies trying to find this story, but I can't seem to locate it.

The following story was written about three years ago in an otherwise disgusting "unit on creative writing" for English class and printed in a sort of "little magazine" composed of stories written for the unit. I reprint it now, totally without permission, because (one) Swifka probably wouldn't mind, (two) he's out of town for the summer and I couldn't get permission if I did want to, and (three) it's not copyrighted.

BOB AND THE PARK RECREATION DIRECTOR
Mike Swifka

The story opens with Bob (a stubborn child who never learned to talk because he didn't want to) sitting by the bubbling fountain in Simonds Memorial Park, and dangling his feet in the water with his shoes on. The Park Recreation Director, at this time, is picking up trash in the nearby tennis court. He stops, looks across the court at the fountain where Bob is sitting, and walks over to Bob:

PRD: Hey there, watcha doon?
BOB: Hmmm?
PRD: Getcha feet outa the water.
BOB: Um-um.
PRD: Come on now, don't get wise. I got plenty authority.
BOB: Ummm-ummm.
PRD: Aright, wise guy, come on (grabs Bob by the arm).

BOB: Tshaaaaaahaaa (He takes keys and pliers from the back of PRD's belt and throws them in lake).
PRD (Obviously mad): Git in there kid! (points to the combination refreshment stand and recreation room)
BOB: Pneieff?
PRD (to himself): I gotta call the cops.
PRD (into phone): Hullo, Sargeant Tonoose? I gotta nuther o' them joovnile delinquents; come and get him, willya? Thanks.

Bob is throwing checkers into the fountain. The PRD moves behind the refreshment stand. Bob crawls over to the stand and sticks his head over the counter.

BOB: EU, Eu Eu er EU EUU.
PRD: Heeeeppp! Don' do 'at, kid.
BOB (points at popcorn machine): Wuzzat?
PRD: Huh? Oh, 'ats a popcorn machine.
BOB: Bobcoomasheee, bobcoomashee, THA, Tha, tha.
PRD (to himself): Whatta wild bunch this new gen'ration.

Bob moves behind the counter and picks up a bottle of pop.

BOB: Wuzzis?
PRD: A bottle of pop. Put it down.
BOB: Um, um.
PRD: Put it down! (starting to shake)
BOB: Ummm, Ummm (opens the bottle and pours it in the popcorn machine).
PRD: Hey! Cut it out (shaking visibly now).
BOB: Naaaahaa (opens another bottle of pop and does the same thing).

PRD runs out of door screaming, just as police drive up.

PRD: OBBLE, obble, obble...

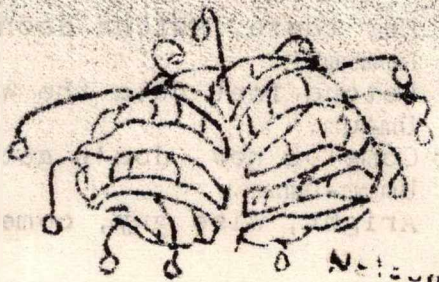
Bob is still opening pop and pouring it into the popcorn machine. The police load the director, who is now babbling incoherently, into the car and drive away. Bob tires of his game and wanders slowly back to the bubbling fountain.

a burning bush



Some Shrubbery

Pill Bush:
green, yellow, pink,
red, plus sugar pills
for hypochondriacs.
Drugs grow above the
reach of children.



CLAY TABLETS

from BRUCE PELZ, 10 May, 1960

The fantasy-empathy project (which may never come about, but is fun to consider) involves getting a number of people with a high degree of empathy together, under well controlled supervision, and using hypnosis to project them into particular fantasies, in order to see how much they would identify with one of the characters and to find out just what the experience would be like. The idea would be to start with an early-grade fantasy such as "Winnie the Pooh," and progress upwards to Tolkien. Possible gradations would be: Hans Christian Anderson, "Peter Pan," "Alice in Wonderland," and then "The Lord of the Rings". An extension of the idea which has been suggested is to use -- again, under rigid control, probably under the supervision of some hospital -- one of the hypnotic drugs they've been experimenting with. It's just a whacky idea, but I for one would like to try it -- and there are a few others who would, too, so maybe one day we'll get around to it.

I saw the Groucho Marx production of The Mikado. Ted and I went to a LASFS party that night, which started around 8:30. We were the first to arrive (a small party: total of about 8 showed up), getting there around 8:25 and demanding "Where's the TV?" as we came in the door. Our verdict was that it was good except for Groucho, who had an excellent time, even if the audience suffered. Also, they should have had more time.

The following Friday we saw another Mikado. This was a high school production -- a high school in the Spanish-Italian area of town -- an all-girls' high school. This last we didn't find out until we were seated in the auditorium. Actually, for what they had to work with, the production was quite good. The costuming, make-up, and scenery were excellent, and a few of the characters (including Koko, thank Ghu) could even sing and act. The best job of make-up and costume was on the Mikado, who entered down the center aisle of the auditorium with a monstrous number of attendants, guards, etc. He was fabulous, until she opened his mouth.

from GEORGE KARG, June 26, 1960

Both Miss Arnason and I were very perturbed by your snide editorial comment on Miss Arnason's letter. Miss Arnason was only trying, in her somewhat incompetent way, to clear up the confusion about Loy Pren's brand of chess; a confusion, I may add, caused wholly by you. You have hurt Miss Arnason, hurt her deeply. She is a sensitive girl, as improbable as that may sound, and I had just told her that her draft of a new Loy Pren story was rotten from end to end; you hit her when she was down.

"George," she said to me, "this is too much; I can go no

further. I wrote a sonnet for her, and now she does this. A viper, George." Tell me, Ruth, have you ever sat in one of the city's only two coffee shops, with someone talking like this beside you -- at the top of her blank voice? I am the laughing stock of the Ten O'Clock Scholar. I want a public apology. Miss Arnason and I may have our disagreements, we may not always be hampered by reality, but we are not liars, psychopathic or otherwise.

[We took Karg's letter around to eaa. She read it, looked up, smiled pleasantly, and said, "I have known that weevil for almost four years. He is not a liar; he sees things."

Karg had no comment to make on Miss Arnason's comment, except "So she's turning nasty, is she? I think the gin does it." After serious consideration of these statements, we do not feel that we can make an apology to either eaa or Karg. They are not only unhampered by reality, they are untouched by it.]

from JEFF WANSHEL, June 27, 1960

I have come to the conclusion that your readership is a gloomy bunch of cowards. Why, right in NeOL 4, I stood up with a gleam in my eye, wetted my vocal chords, and came out and gave some serious, constructive views about Utopia. Well, did anyone think this was unusual? That I, reknowned fuzzlehead had actually dropped my guise of humor and said something that anyone could tear to pieces? Did anyone come out with a formaldehyde-enshrouded pen and denounce me as a fakefan? They most certainly did not.

Well, down with the half-baked assininity.

and more WANSHEL, June 28: I like your ramblings on the play: will have to read "Zeepsday" Zomeday. Schultz was readable and had a fair idea; one wonders where he picked up this knowledge of the speech of gnomes - I never have seen a pic of Dick. The last line is nice. I'm coming to the conclusion that everyone on the NeOL staff is a psycho.

Neolithic
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