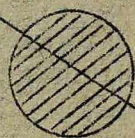
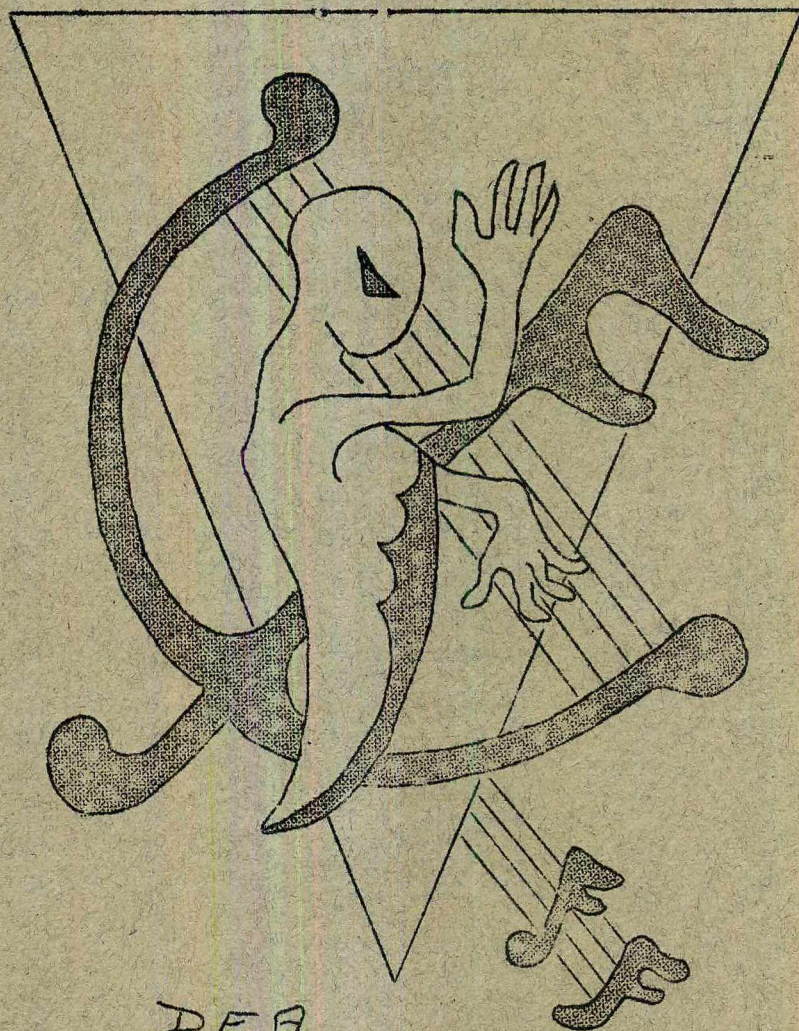
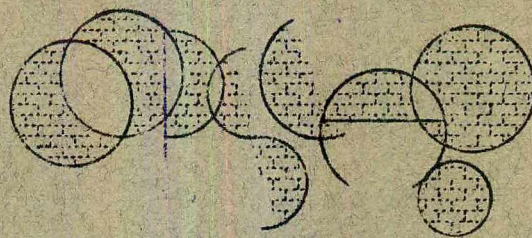


INSURGENT PUBLICATION



A SERIOUS



NUMBER FOURTEEN

...DANS UN VERRE D'EAU

OOPSLA! is published approximately bi-monthly from 2817 Eleventh Street in Santa Monica, California, by one Gregg Calkins who edits, publishes and otherwise slaves over each issue, and sells for the more-or-less astounding price of 15¢ per copy, two for 25¢, four for 50¢. British representative is Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd, Belfast, N. Ireland. This issue is a serious insurgent publication.

For an irregular bi-monthly fanzine, OOPS appears to be more irregular than bi-monthly. This, supposedly the #14th issue and originally due out May 15... and then July 1...and then 7 August...is finally, I trust, appearing on or about

the 4th day of September. At least, that is my publishing date --the day it will arrive in your mailbox is still up to the fates. If you've antagonized your mailman recently this issue may never appear in your mailbox...I claim no control whatsoever over such circumstances.

Actually, all things considered, this was supposed to be the July/August issue, so please consider it as such. A trifle late, true, but after all I didn't invent the calendar so I can hardly be blamed for the month that happens to be current at this particular time, can I? This issue says it's July; the calendar says it's September. Pfui...who is to judge?

For those of you who want the facts, ma'am, just the facts, here is the real story. Between 19 June and 21 July I was taking a 30-day leave from the Marine Corps and hapily wasting my time in Salt Lake City, Utah, in a most gay and abandoned fashion. If I read any science fiction during that time, it was quite accidental. If I saw a fanzine, it was impossible. When I go gafia, I go gafia...

...and so, OOPS is late. Waiting for me upon my arrival back in Santa Monica was a pile of mail and manuscripts THIS high and I immediately began to regret that I had not finished the work on this issue before I went on leave. In fact, I had so much material I didn't know what to do with it, a fact almost unprecedented in OOPS' entire history, even with thirty pages to fill instead of the usual twenty-four. There had to be a solution...a simple one that even I could find.

The only one that simple was to publish another issue, and accordingly OOPS #15 should be not too far behind this issue, say about a month or five weeks, with #16 an indefinite time still in the future. Number 15 will contain a piece by one Bob Tucker, whom Bloch praises so warmly this issue, and also an excellent bit of writing by Harlan Ellison, forsaking his usual axe-grinding for a serious and thoughtful view of the not-quite-future present, as well as the usual columns.

In this issue you may expect to find Vernon L. McCain with a view towards the future of science-fiction in magazine and fanzine form and a thought about selling professionally, in good times and bad. In this issue you will also find Walt Willis discoursing with his usual excellent humor about English conventions and the continuation of his adventures in the United States, following his attendance at the '52 Convention in Chicago. Terry Carr is present with another page of his face critturs; Robert Bloch writes a warmly glowing unsolicited testimonial about a well-known name in science-fiction, Bob Tucker.

Also present is a very fine informative article on pennames and their uses by Dean A. Grennell, which may prove to be the forerunner of an irregular column for an irregular magazine, which is only fitting and proper, appropriately titled "Grenadean Etchings."

The remainder of the issue belongs to the editor, which is me. For the benefit of those who asked, a public admittance is hereby made to the effect that all poetry found herein is mine and is usually signed anon for no particular reason. The small "animal" doodles are mine, also, and should not be blamed on any artist found elsewhere in the issue. Assistant editors in charge of typos are K. R. Lesness and Miss Spelling.

The section devoted to THERBLIGS is somewhat depleted this issue--and I fear it will be slightly smaller next issue, too, due to the abundance of material--and does not begin to contain even the smallest fraction of letters that should have been published or the fanzines that should have been reviewed. Two pages of this section, this time, are titled FARRAGO and devoted to--by now--outdated fanzine reviews. In future issues the fanzine reviews will not be grouped together like this, unless you prefer them this way, but scattered through-out. Next issue's THERBLIGS, though smaller, should be back to a normal level of chaos.

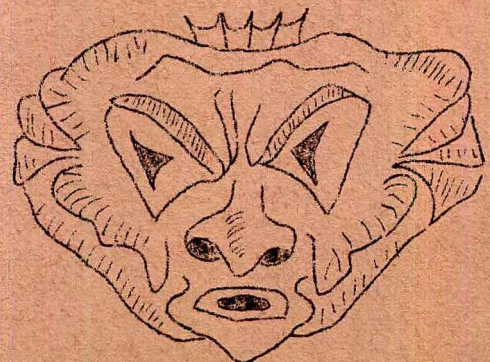
In future issues you will still continue to find OOPS printed on this same type of vari-colored paper but with a slightly narrower spectrum. Instead of ten colors, only six or even four will be available. Personally, I prefer a wide variety of color but the new source of supply sells for only \$1.06 a ream and I can't afford to ignore those prices. I also prefer the type of paper OOPS is presently being printed upon--though readership opinion varies from mild acceptance to almost violent dislike--because it is easy to handle and requires no slipsheeting. It also withstands the rough handling of the post office in good condition.

OOPS is available to foreign readers by trade or for a letter of comment on each issue, in countries where readers are not allowed to show their gratitude in a more lucrative fashion. To those of you who send letters of comment I wish to express my interest in each letter and my thanks for writing. I regret that I haven't the time to answer all these letters, but I want you to know that I appreciate them. A few foreign readers have sent copies of the British Daily Mirror and Daily Express, two copies of NEW WORLDS (one containing a novelette and autobiography of James White for which I am eternally grateful), a May '51 FFM which was badly needed for my collection, and a French edition of GALAXIE which I swear I shall read, some fine day. Many, many thanks to all of you!

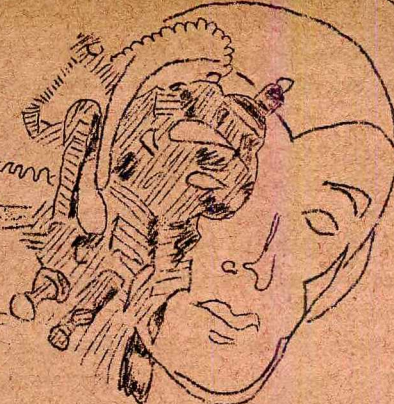
For those of you who might be interested, a few back issues of OOPS are available: 3 copies of #12; 3 copies of #11; and a reading copy of #13. I also have 4 copies of THE RAMBLING FAP! (my FAPazine) #3 and 3 copies of #2. The back issues of OOPS are 15¢ each; the FAPazines are yours for a 3¢ apiece, preferably a 3¢ stamp.

The charming gentleman on the right side of this page is a rather good portrait of your editor, done with remarkable skill. The somewhat dour expression is due to the high cost of correction fluid, which is 35¢ a bottle in these parts. The rugged, handsome features reflect a good, healthy life (the absence of ears can be explained by a plea made many years ago by a young man named Antony while I was visiting Rome, to whom I loaned mine) and the high and intelligent forehead is a direct result of the beneficial effects reading good quality science fiction can have.

-- wgc...



GRENADIAN



ETCHINGS

"A nose by any other name
Is pretty apt to smell the same"
--Wilberforce Shakespeare

Fans didn't invent the practice of using pseudonyms but they have practiced the art with diligence and enthusiasm from the earliest days of First Fandom and even before that in the dim prehistoric days of Verne and Wells (H. G., that is). In casting about for a topic to launch this column, the penname business seemed as good as any.

Why should anyone use a name other than his or her own? The reasons are numerous and many are used for no purpose other than the sheer hell of it. Such caprice motivates a goodly share of them but some writers use a nom de plume--French for "name of feather," a hangover from the days of quill pens--for what seems to be some good and sufficient reason.

Maybe the material being written is a thing of more or less controversial nature and they don't want the repercussions from it to return to them. A fake aegis affords a convenient way of voicing views that couldn't be otherwise states for fear of offending some friend or powerful enemy. Pseudonyms chosen with a purpose of this sort in mind are apt to fall into the first broad category of incognito titles: the sub rosa or "undercover penname." Concealment and secrecy are the primary aims and much thought should go into the choosing and use of this variety of the breed.

The second general class is the facetious penname; the "I don't care if you know who this is, I'm just having fun" type of camouflage. Pseudonyms chosen toward this end are often funny in themselves. They contain punning references or obscure connotations of esoteric significance. A few random samples: Earl E. Reiser, Martin Gale, Justin Case, Abdullah B. B. Ameer, Hoy Ping Pong, Ichy Shellane or Doug Graves will serve to illustrate the point.

So actually pennames can be catalogued primarily in terms of the number of people they are designed to fool. Another sub-species are those names thought up and used by people who find their own natural names to be unsatisfactory for some reason or other. These can fall into either of the groups aforementioned but many figures in the world of writing make use of names which, they fondly hope, are easier to remember, easier to spell or more impressive than their own. "Lester del Rey," for example, is part of his name but not all of it. The entire names runs on with high Spanish fervor to such lengths that few people who are not professional pearl-divers could say it on one lung-full of air. Many literary figures re-christen themselves and then proceed to adopt the name for all ordinary purposes in their everyday, non-writing lives. Some of them even have their former name legally changed to the new one.

Grenadean Etchings, II

Others prefer to write under one name and live under another, on grounds that they avoid a lot of crank letters and phone-calls that way. *

Most professional authors, particularly in the sf&f field, have at least a few pennames that they use from time to time. It is by no means uncommon for an author to have two or more stories in the same issue of a magazine under different names. For some reason it would be frowned upon for a contents-page to list two stories by the same name.

Thus you will encounter issues of early aSF's with yarns by Anson MacDonald and Robert (Anson) Heinlein under the same cover. Lester del Rey and Philip St. John can be found a few pages apart, as can Lawrence O'Donnell and Lewis Padgett and other attributes of Henry Kuttner--a man whose profligacy of pseudonyms is legendary.

Many editors use pennames when they submit for publication in their own pages. Thus Ray Palmer uses "A. R. Steber" and "Wes Amherst" (from Amherst, Wisconsin, where he gets his mail) and Anthony Boucher will occasionally run material in F&SF under the byline of "H. H. Holmes." The latter is interesting because it is one of the comparatively rare cases of a pseudonym having a pseudonym. Most libraries prefer not to humor author's whims as regards to false fronts and you'll find the name "William Anthony Parker White" written under Anthony Boucher's name on the fly-leaf in neat librarian's script. So far as is known, H. H. Holmes has no pseudonyms.

And then there are the joint-pennames, used when two or more authors collaborate on the same story. These are often used for the purpose of convenience. Cyril M. Kornbluth is fond of the practice, having participated as a member of such gestalt scriveners as Ivar Towers (taken from the name of an apartment where he and other wirters lived at one time) and Cyril Judd, the joint handle he uses with Judith Merrill. As a rule, these joint-names have a relatively low concealment factor.

Let's consider for a moment how one goes about the choosing of a pseudonym. We'll concentrate upon the first or sub rosa type because if you are merely looking for a facetious penname then the sky is the limit and you can go to any ridiculous extreme your fancy wishes: Oswald Herringbone Hossradish and Obadiah Snellingham and Rupert Philbert van Shaughnessy and...well, you see what I mean.

But those examples just cited show one of the first and most important rules of choosing a camouflagable penname. It must be convincing and credible. There must be about it not the slightest trace of a taint of phoniness to call suspicion to it. People are born and bestowed with names that defy belief but a pseudonym, because it is phony, must avoid looking phony at all costs.

Therefore you must cross off at the start all such grandiloquent furbelows as the little touches that go between the surname and the given name. Abandon the things like van, von, Mac, Mc, St., Ste., O', á (as in Thomas á Becket), Ter, Vande, de, du, and Vander. There are other fillings for sandwich-type names but these serve to give you the idea. Nothing sounds with such a leaden ring on the reader's ear as a name like La Verne St. Leger V_anden Pomeroy-Smythe or some similarly over-enthusiastic collection.

Avoid, too, names that sound too much like a byline under a story. This sounds paradoxical but the advice is sound. A special danger here is the name made up entirely of units usually encountered as last names. A new author named "Bruce Rogers" sounds too good to be true. If it really is his name, then he can successfully authenticate it. But if his name is Gottfried Schwartz, a name like that will bring the eye of suspicion to bear upon him.

Grenadean Etchings, III

Choosing a penname carefully is very much like naming a baby except that you'll be using it yourself. So you'll want to make sure that the initials can't be turned to some undesired end and that the name of parts thereof cannot assume unwanted meanings. It would do you no perceptible good to have a name like George Philip Krapp although the man who was born with that name did fairly well in the field of letters without bothering to change it.

Summing up so far, a penname must be both pleasant-sounding and smoothly convincing. It must have an eminently plausible ring to it. People seeing it must be quite willing to believe that it could well have been the name of the guy next door. Then there's one more very important thing to consider--it must be easy to remember. It's well known that some names are much easier to remember than others. The basic form of a name that's easy on the memory is one that has a one-syllable first name and a two-syllable last name with the accent on the first syllable, thus: Steve Canyon, Pete Graham, Dick Tracy, Gregg Calkins, Buck Rogers, Dick Wilson, etc. But not Dean Grennell--that rhymes with hotel /sic/ and not with kennel.

A sidelight on this is the Art Wesley business. Originally it was a joint pseudonym compounded from the middle names of Gerry W. Kincannon and my own. But it had such a plausible, convincing ring to it (it fits the syllable form just mentioned) that by the time that fans started noticing that Art Wesley and Dean Grennell lived at the same address, many of them assumed that AW was the real name and Dean Grennell was merely a clumsy attempt at a penname.

Which brings up the next point. A pseudonym, no matter how well chosen it may be, is not enough. You also need a pseudoaddress and, if possible, a pseudostyle to write in. I'm speaking from a basis of activity on the fan level now. If you're writing in the pros, your address needn't enter into it. But fanzines print addresses most of the time and your own address or even one near it is a dead giveaway to any observant reader that there's something putrescent in Copenhagen. So you will have to line up a relative or friend in a different city who will re-mail your outgoing material and who will forward your alter ego's mail to you.

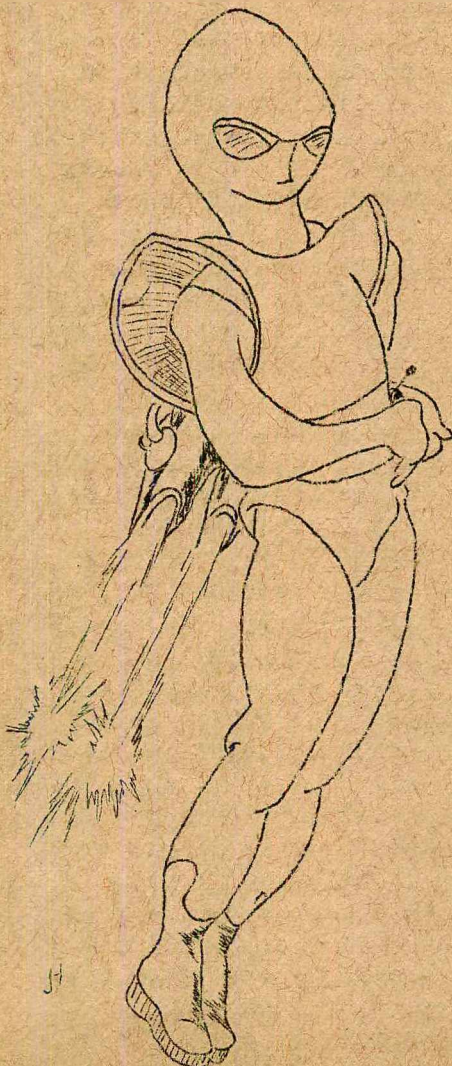
Then, if you can remember to keep from using the little characteristic pet-words and catch-phrases that we're all unconsciously addicted to, you may get away with it for some time. If you entertain a ghost of a hope of keeping it a secret for very long, you and the mail-handling accomplice will be the only ones to know. The first time you mention to your best fempal that "I, in reality, am Gustav O'Riordan, author of 'What Price CAPTAIN FUTURE' in the new issue of FANTASTIC FANTASY FANTASIES"--upon that day your citadel of anonymity will commence to slowly and inexorably crumble away. This is in accord with Fogle's Law, which states that the keeping ability of a fannish secret varies inversely as the tenth power of the number of fans who know it.

Good luck...

-- Dean A. Grennell...

-/-

Credits this issue: cover by DEA, interiors by DEA, Harness, and Capella. Doodles by the editor.



THE MARK OF MCCAIN

seem to be trailing the parade lately. Last fall I did a somewhat derogatory article on Seventh Fandom; at the time there had been no articles about the movement which weren't of a starry-eyed nature. But before it found its way into print, half a dozen such had preceded it including two in the same magazine.

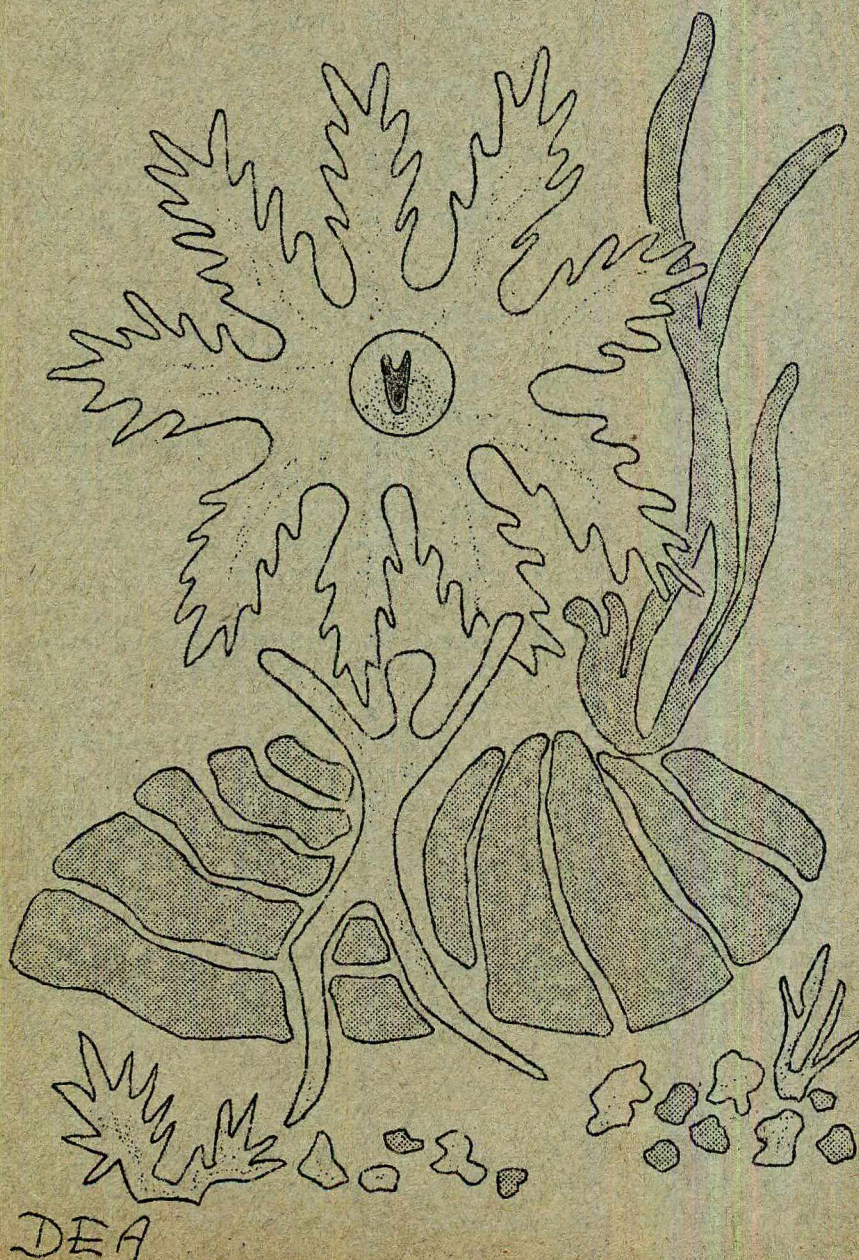
This time I'm making an even more belated entry, for at the time of this writing there have already been a spate of articles about the incoming science-fiction depression, starting 'way last summer with Bob Tucker's comments in SFNL.

Actually, I didn't take these too seriously for a while. As long as I can recall, someone or other has been moaning the blues about how sf was about to stub its toe. But despite these Cassandras, the field kept expanding with only minor setbacks. This expansion apparently continued until mid-fall of '53, although by that time page cuts and slower schedules were fairly plentiful.

The incident that really brought this home to me, however, was the folding of FANTASY FICTION. Naturally I've known from before the first issue that this mag-

azine occupied a highly precarious position and had a very uncertain future. But it was so exactly what the doctor ordered for many of us who were dissatisfied with the current crop, and so far superior to all its competitors that wishful thinking crept in and we tended to regard its future with undue optimism. Its death is the sorriest news since the demise of the magazine it so closely resembled, UNKNOWN WORLDS.

Actually, a much more important portent was the news from Standard Publications. STARTLING and TWS rode out the blackest days of World War II, members of the tiny handful of sf readers could rely on. They did drop to quarterly publication, but only because of the newspaper shortage. But as soon as this became even slightly less serious they went bi-monthly as a matter of course and never deviated from this until the halycon days of 1952 when STARTLING went monthly. Now, less



The Mark of McCain, II

than a year after the days of the monthly STARTLING these old standbys are quarterlies. This is chiefly due to the general recession in the field, of course, although I suspect the few remaining pulps are being harder hit in loss of sales than the predominant digests. The readers who buy only one or two magazines naturally look where the biggest display of sf magazines are...and that's on the digest side. Also it is easier to give digest mags prominent display than pulps. Thus only the devoted reader or the buyer who purchases everything is apt to find his way into the pulp side.

So there's not much doubt about it. The depression is finally here. How long it will last is hard to say. It might be over in a year or it might last six. We saw a somewhat similar, though far less serious, situation in 1951, remember, after the big two-year expansion of 1949-1950. Now we're coming out of an even larger two-year expansion period, 1952-1953, and this may not be a real depression, after all, but only a breathing period.

I'll admit it looks like the real thing, though. So what are we in for?

Most are taking the gloomy view...the one that is logical if one accepts the once-prevalent in fandom idea that our mission in life was to spread the glories of sf as widely as possible. The more readers the better, the more magazines the better, the more movies, radio shows, etc, the better, and the more fans the better. Ten or fifteen years ago it was common for the more enthusiastic fans to concoct elaborate methods of trying to induce the virus of sf-addictism in their friends. One of the more important editors of the field carried on a campaign for years trying to stimulate such activities. And, of course, it is precisely this philosophy which leads to the creation of such well-intentioned white elephants as the National Fantasy Fan Federation.

Well, that theory no longer is one of universal acceptance and a few of us radicals have swung to the extreme of actually trying to discourage growth....in fandom, at least. I, for one, was extremely happy when Rog Phillips' "Club House" bit the dust. The Phillips column had done more to make fandom grow than any other single force in history and it had altered the whole character of fandom by bringing in a different type person...not that this new type was in any way superior or inferior to the old type...but they were different and they changed fandom. Many of us preferred the old type to the new which somewhat resembled a combination of the American Legion and the Housewives Thursday Knitting and Tea Auxiliary.

Perhaps the influx of the members of Seventh Fandom immediately after this death would appear to disprove my theories for certainly they altered fandom more and towards even worse ends than had their too-conventional predecessors. However, if one examines Seventh Fandom closely enough it can be seen that their extreme cliquishness and faddishness and occasional downright stupidity are actually highly exaggerated versions of the most noticable traits of the old fandom which we were in danger of losing. Therefore it would appear Seventh Fandom was actually a reaction against the past, an extreme swing of the pendulum to correct an abnormal condition. And, happily, Seventh Fandom (or at least what it has come to stand for) now shows signs of abating. Many of its prominent members, including one of the two people most responsible for it, have expressed their disgust with it and disowned it. The movement may be completely dead for lack of members by the time this appears, although all the Seventh Fandom principals will doubtless still be around.

So fandom stands to gain by the depression. A fandom of 200 active members with perhaps 500 bystanders would be a much more rewarding fandom than the current one. Less publicity is what fandom needs and happily that's what we've been getting the last twelve months. However, even I don't recommend we shrink back to the size of Second Fandom, although that is easily the most colorful period in history.

The Mark of McCain, III

doubtless due to its small size.

What about science fiction itself? Here the news is both good and bad. For the reader it is very very good. Less magazines mean less stories. Less stories mean not so much struggling by the writers to turn out quantity and this means higher quality on the individual story. Those of you who remember back to the low period of 44-48 know that while we had some punk writers around the good writers had a far higher average of quality than those same writers have now. Of course, part of that was due to the fact the market was so small they sold only part of their output...the best part.

But if this depression becomes as bad as looks possible, this may recur. It could even be aggravated. The field has developed a host of good--and some fine--writers during the boom and these will be in competition with the old-timers. Some will desert the field entirely of course. But with an occasional rare exception (John D. MacDonald appears to have written sf strictly for the money, which makes him unique among the top writers in the genre) writers, good and bad alike, seem to get their kicks from writing s-f. They write it for the fun of it. And while they can't devote themselves completely to such a low paying field in many cases, they will turn out a certain percentage of it to be sold at lower rates than their regular high-paying markets will give. Fredric Brown is the outstanding example here, of course.

The Audition



Look back at those old magazines and you'll find such top writers as Kuttner and Leinster with three or four stories in an issue, under various names. Frank Belknap Long continued to sell heavily but he was about the only low-grade writer who did. You'll find many names of people who sold a lot in the 1940-1942 period and who have also sold a lot since 1949, but you'll find they sold only two or three stories in between. These are the marginal writers...professional, but not really good. If the depression gets bad they'll be squeezed out again, which is tough luck for them but fine for the reader. You'll miss some readable stories but you won't have to wade through a lot of crud for the one worthwhile item. Once again when you pick up an average magazine you'll know that probably four out of five stories (if you really thoroughly enjoy sf and fantasy) will reward you for the time spent on them, and at least two or three out of five even if you're particular.

HARNCESS

It's a truism that every fan yearns to be a pro and here is where the bad news comes in. It is going to be tough--very, very tough--for a newcomer to break in in these years. And the initial break will not necessarily be followed by a host of sales. Unless you have the type of mind that grinds out brilliant plot gimmicks endlessly, a la Kuttner and Leinster, your newly acquired professional polish won't sell your stories.

The field has been something of a sellers market recently. It's switching to a buyers market with a vengeance.

You'll just have to resign yourself to keeping your job in the hardware store and enjoying reading prozines and writing for fanzines. Only your very best stands any chance of selling.

The Mark of McCain, IV

It's no secret that I've shared these universal fannish dreams. It's also no secret that unlike most who've tried very hard, I've completely failed to sell. Which could be because I actually haven't worked very hard at it for a long time. I turned out a lot of stuff in 1951 but since then I have written precisely three stories. Two of these were mailed off on completion, six months ago, to an editor who had asked to see them. I just found out the magazine has folded without my getting the stories back. I have copies of them, foresightedly stored away, but as things are I'm not going to bother wasting postage resubmitting them anywhere else. With things in the current condition one can't tell from day to day which magazine will still be around by the time your manuscripts arrive. And with them cutting back on schedule most of them are overstocked anyway.

So there's no point in trying to make it the easy way, any more, as I was trying to do, by selling to the less particular magazines first and working up. These stories were submitted to one of the lesser markets and they were slanted that way. They aren't the best I can do and that's all that stands a chance in the future we face.

About the only way to be sure the magazine will be around long enough to buy your story is to submit it to the best ones, your favorites. And they have required a lot in the past...with their competition dropping like flies their acceptance standards are in the process of skyrocketing. You don't just have to write well enough for them any more; you must compete with the very best efforts of guys like Ted Sturgeon, Poul Anderson and J. T. McIntosh.

And I think the day is past when you, if you're an amateur anyway, can sell to this type of magazine by slanting towards it. The stories that will sell will be only the ones that ring true throughout...the ones that are written in the best possible way, regardless of whether it matches any editorial standards or not. Of course they will still buy just the stories that fit their policies, but there will be enough of the type that don't compromise, but still match policy, to fill the magazine. As for the others of this type...well, it's a buyer's market. If your story isn't the particular type wanted, it just won't sell. What to do with it? Well, there are always fanzines. I have a hunch we may see some very good fiction fanzines if times get really rough. I might even edit one myself.

Anyway, what writing I do will be aimed at the top from now on--I may be wasting my time but it won't be wasted on a goal that actually would prove unsatisfactory if achieved. I'm through with aiming at the fringe magazines. Not that I would refuse to submit or sell to them...but it will be only stories which are designed for the best magazines and which have failed to sell there.

And even if I did think it possible to slant stories, now, it is far more difficult to slant your story towards the editorial requirements of the top magazines than the others.

So, personally, I intend to write precisely what I feel like writing and do it as well as possible. At the moment that happens to be a story which by its very nature violates the #1 taboo of all magazine editors, according to a recent poll. Will it be salable? Even if I do a better job on the writing than I expect, I doubt it. But is a story I can write with sincerity and without being ashamed of that on which I'm spending my time. There will be satisfaction in writing it and I'll probably learn considerably more by tackling this, a tougher project than any I've undertaken before. If I should prove lucky and sell it...that would be a real satisfaction, more so than slanting a story towards SPACEWAY or ORBIT and selling it. That's my blueprint for the future and whether you like it or not, I'm afraid it's the one you'll be forced into, too, if you have any ideas of selling.

Anybody moaning the depression blues?

--- Vernon L. McCain

PRELUDE TO A CONVENTION

I don't know
that I should

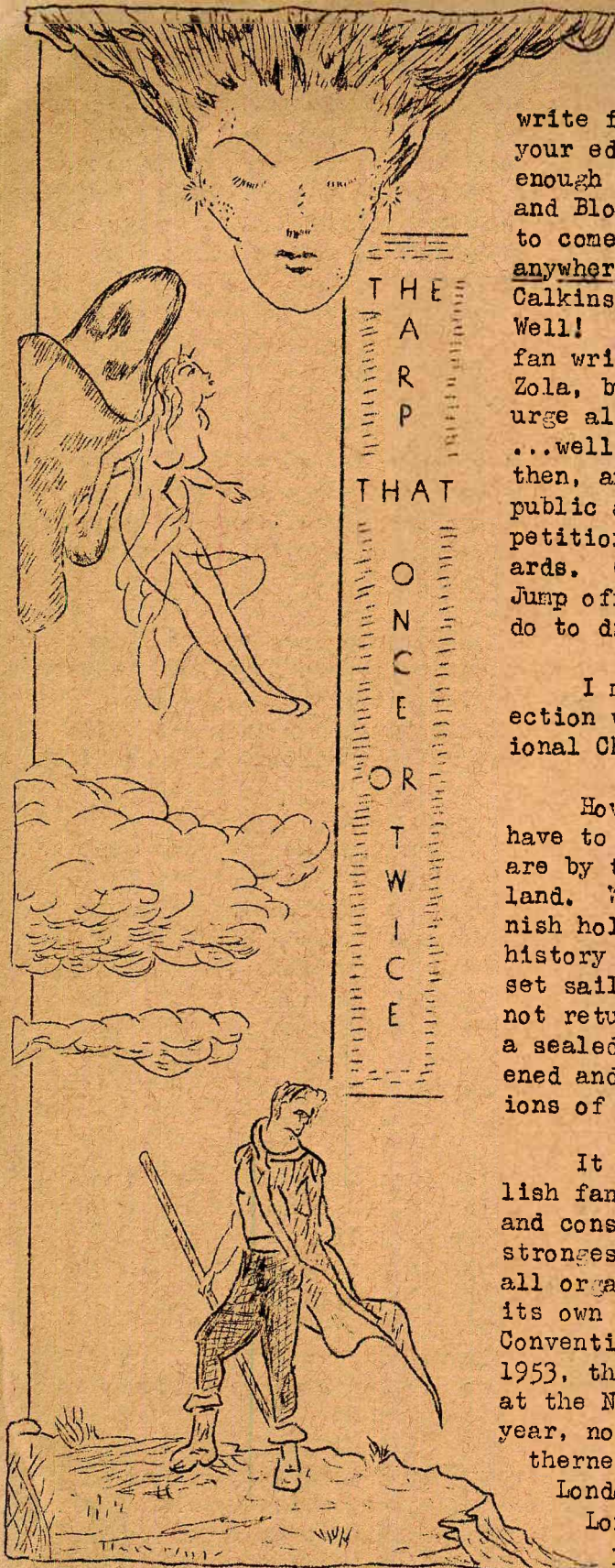
write for this old magazine any more, after what your editor said about me last issue. It's bad enough having to consort with no-goods like McCain and Bloch without being called names. I don't have to come here to be insulted, you know. I can go anywhere and be insulted. Did you hear what that Calkins said about me? "Willis is like cheese." Well! What a thing to say to a poor inoffensive fan writer. I knew I'd never make another Emil Zola, but I never thought I'd be a gorgonzola. I urge all my loyal fans to rise in their thousands ...well, hundreds...dozens...all right, both of you then, and inundate Calkins with demands for a public apology. Cable him. Write him. Draw up petitions. Parade in front of his house with placards. Go on hungerstrikes. Shoot congressmen. Jump off high buildings. Any little thing you can do to draw attention to this terrible injustice.

I must state that this campaign has no connection with a similar one inaugurated by the National Cheese Manufacturers Association.

However on second thought I suppose I shall have to forget my own wrongs, overshadowed as they are by the grim events about to take place in England. We are, my friends, about to witness a fan-nish holocaust of dimensions undreamed of in the history of fandom. In a few days from now I shall set sail for the scene of the drama. In case I do not return I am casting this manuscript adrift in a sealed envelope so that you will know what happened and that I died a martyr to the great traditions of fan conreporting.

It all started with the rise of Northern English fandom a couple of years ago, when the serious and constructive Manchester Group became the strongest fan organization in the country. Like all organisms it carried within itself the seeds of its own destruction--it began to think of holding Conventions. It did in fact hold a small one in 1953, the "Mancon." In spite of appeals for help at the National London Convention earlier in the year, not a single Londoner turned up. The Northerners' feelings were hurt. They accused the Londoners of being apathetic and selfish. The Londoners retorted by criticising the Mancon publicity, claiming they'd never heard of the thing. Some even hinted that no convention run by dull-witted Northerners could be worth attending.

Consequently the Northern fans came to last year's London Convention with chips on their shoulders. Some of these were immediately splintered to matchwood by Bert Campbell, editor of the promag Authentic. Observing Bea Mahaffey in conversation with a group of Northerners, he was heard to utter the historic words: "For Ghod's sake somebody rescue Bea from those bloody provincials!"



THE
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TWICE

The Harp That Once Or Twice, II

This seems to have been accepted as a declaration of war. The Northern fans sat sullenly through the proceedings, noting every hitch and mishap in the official programme with a sort of grim satisfaction, and then went home to write bitter scathing convention reports...with titles like "A Bloody Provincial At The Fiascon." These were some of the politer phrases that were used. Others were "shambles... chaos...flop...dis. race." All would be different, they implied, when they ran the National Convention. They had a name all ready for it. 'The Supermancon.'

Seeing that they actually were eager to take over this responsibility, the Londoners gladly surrendered it. They were only too pleased to get rid of the White Horse's burden. For years they'd been running the National Convention, and they'd got neither profit nor thanks for it. They were delighted to have the opportunity to sit back for a change and see what sort of hash their critics would make of the job.

Meanwhile the Northern fanzines kept on publishing their convention reports.

All of them hammered away at the inefficiency and muddle of the organisers, and none of them gave the Londoners any credit for the months of work they'd put in nor to the fact that in reality the '53 London Convention had had more bright and original ideas than any convention in the history of fandom. Their smugness began to annoy people; some of them began to think it might be fun to pull the Northerner's serious and constructive legs.

In September '53 the Belfast group invited London fan Vinç Clarke to the Oblique House. The affair was treated as a Convention (Robert Bloch, Shelby Vick and others also having been invited but unfortunately unable to attend) and there was an official programme. Item No. 6 was "In Secret Session: Proposals for brightening up the Supermancon." We found that the idea had already occurred to some of the London Circle. We kicked around a lot of wild and hilarious ideas, but when

Vinç Clarke went home we thought that would be the end of it. It is an axiom in Irish fandom that the London Circle never get anything done unless they have to.

So we were quite surprised when some weeks later we got a London Circle one-shot. With circulation restricted to the London Circle, and Irish fandom as "neutral observers", it was headed 'Operation Armageddon. Bulletin One. A Plan To Brighten Up The Supermancon Without The Co-operation Of The Manchester Group.' There were two pages of suggestions for doing this, most of them thought up in Belfast, and they included:

- 1(c) A fake programme, messily hectographed, to be issued at zero minus four weeks. To be followed by a second fake denouncing the first and offering another and deadly serious programme.
- 2(c) Small skull-&-crossbones stickers for putting on bottles and glasses left unattended.
- 2(d) "Reserved" notices for seats.
- 2(e) Notices to be hung in the Convention Hall -- GENTLEMEN, LADIES, NO SPITTING EXCEPT AT THE PLATFORM, THE SUPERMANCON COMMITTEE SLEPT HERE, APPLY TO CHAIRMAN FOR YOUR MONEY BACK, etc.

HARNES



The Harp That Once Or Twice, III

- 2(f) Paper bags printed "IN CASE OF SICKNESS...MANCON COMMITTEE" to be pinned on the backs of seats.
- 4(a) Ron Buckmaster is arriving early and is delegated to try and put another mike in parallel with the public address system.
- 5(a) Mancunians have an idea that Convention time-keeping is easy. Suggested that one minute before advertised starting time, Charlie Duncombe, surrounded by us (Note: Charlie Duncombe is the London Circle's loudest answer to Sam Moscovitz) yells "Minus 60" and gives the count of "Minus 50, 40" and so on. The last five seconds to be chanted by all Londoners and on "Zero" a starting pistol to be fired.
- 5(b) On the second day, alarm clocks mark zero hour. Suggested everyone bring one, conceals it on self or in bag, pre-sets it accurately.
- 6(a) A 'window-smashing' joke can be bought--a dozen aluminum plates approx 3" by 1½". When dropped in a bunch they make a hell of a clatter, like a large plate-glass window falling in. We emptied them on the tiled floor of the White Horse lavatory and Lew (the bartender) came dashing upstairs two at a time. Suggested sets be bought or made; at intervals a beery voice is heard from the bar singing in a Scotch accent "I belong tae Glasga'" (Peter Hamilton of Glasgow, editor of the promag Nebula and Chairman of the Supermancon, is a teetotaller.)
- 9(a) At some dull interval during the programme, London Circlers form chairs in circle, start playing cards.
- 9(b) Half-way through sessions, fan at doorway asks in loud whisper "Have I missed anything?" Fan in front row replies "Not a thing."
- 9(d) During a selected speech, rows of Londoners sit with blown up balloons in one hand and a large pin in the other. Not doing anything, but the psychological effect should be tremendous.

Well of course most of these ideas are just fanciful creations of a mischievous imagination, not to be taken seriously and highly unlikely to be put into practice. We thought the whole scheme was like that, laughed at it for a bit, and forgot about it. For the first time in our fannish existence, we had underestimated the London Circle. Just the other day we got OPERATION ARMAGEDDON #2 and found out that the London Circle are still on the ball. There are two more pages of suggestions, like:

- "15(a) Before the Con opens, London Circleites perform a snake-dance at one end of the Hall, accompanied by tomtoms, (small fire on sheet of corrugated iron?), answer queries by explaining that it is a rite calculated to ensure success of Supermancon.
- 22(a) Phase 1. Five minutes after beginning of Guest of Honour's speech a live mouse is liberated.
Phase 2. Girlish screams, cries of "Rat," all London Circle women climb on chairs.
Phase 3. Hunt the rat.
Phase 4. Lull. Then Dot and Daphne faint.
Phase 5. Chaos. "Give her air!" Rush to open all windows. "Brandy!" Indignant speech by husband about "verminous hall," "wife in delicate condition" (this need not be strictly true.)
Phase 6. Law and order prevail. Guest of Honour carries on with speech.
Phase 7. Release second mouse.
- 22(b) The rat could be imaginary...arrange London Circlers in zig-zag pattern through audience, at a signal have them raise excited cries, jump on chairs, etc, to denote passage of rat (might even get a mass hallucination.)"



The Harp That Once Or Twice, IV

In addition to this, a determined effort is going to be made to get the Convention Committee drunk. Special drinks reinforced with absolute alcohol and with names like "Martian Dew," "Venusian Swampwater" and "Old Spacedog" are being compounded for this purpose by Ted Tubb, who must now be known as Bathtub Ted. There are 25 Londoners travelling overnight by road. They've booked a suite at the hotel and plan an all-night party, for which they are issuing exclusive passports. The Northerners don't know anything of the London Circle plans, but one group of them, the Liverpool fans, have pulled off quite a coup. They've booked the lounge of the hotel and got the management's permission to hold their all-night party there. I wonder what the chances are that the Londoners will have their party closed down at an early hour and will force their way into the lounge. When you reflect that the last British regional convention, the 1953 Medcon, was by all accounts just one running zapgun fight, you realise that literally anything can happen. In addition, Peter Hamilton, the Convention Chairman, is already at daggers drawn with the London pro editors, the Northern fans have split into two warring factions, and the new editor of their official zine has resigned and thrown in his lot with the Londoners.

I doubt if Northern English fandom will survive this Convention--I only hope that British fandom will. Irish Fandom will do its best. As soon as the Con starts I intend to put on a badge labelled "Innocent Bystander." On the second day I may change this to "Non-fan." If there is a second day.

And to think I used to complain that British Conventions were dull!

THE HARP STATESIDE (Continued)

Shortly after midnight we crossed the Mississippi. Or so I was told--I didn't see any sign of showboats or levees. Perhaps because it was dark at the time, but I still felt the Mississippi belonged to an entirely different part of the country. However I wasn't going to argue about geography--I had measles during the United States. Besides Wendayne had chosen this point to announce that she couldn't sleep in the car, and that was bad news, especially for me. Not only because motels cost money but because I had a timetable all worked out for getting around the United States and it allowed only three days for getting to Los Angeles. It hadn't allowed for the two days we'd spent at Palmer's place, either, so I was already that much behind schedule.

The situation didn't make me warm to Webbert any more. I'd had a look at the map and it seemed we were going several hundred miles out of our way to leave him off at Salt Lake City, and him with a bus ticket to the place in his pocket. I thought of leaving the car and going on to the West Coast by myself by bus, but then I'd miss the Grand Canyon. If in later years I ever became disenchanted with fandom I'd never forgive myself for passing up the Grand Canyon in favour of some fan.

As anyone who has ever been faced with this problem will agree, the strain of choosing between the relative attractions of the Grand Canyon and Charles Burbee is very wearing on the intellect, and the place we stopped at that night didn't raise my spirits. It was called Tama, Iowa, and consisted of a road stretching to infinity in either direction, a sleazy motel, a dirty garage and some trashy Indian souvenirs, all in advanced stages of decay. This was something new to me in the States--hitherto everything had been polished and opulent, immaculate and new, a ballad of chromium and glass. But this fly in the ointment brought home to me the essential difference between the average Irish, British and American landscapes. In Ireland when a place gets dilapidated the people continue to live in it undismayed until it falls down or is burned to the ground in one of our periodic disturbances. Then they move along the road a bit and build another one. The result is that the place is littered with ruins ranging in age from 30 to 3000. In England when a building gets dilapidated they restore it, patching it up here and there from time to time until it gets to be sort of an anthology of architecture. In America, on the other hand, buildings are never allowed to get dilapidated. As soon as they begin to show

The Harp That Once Or Twice. V

signs of wear, or even before, they tear them down and build something bigger.

It's this restless energy and extravagance that hits the foreigner first. Shops and diners are open all night, lights blazing away wastefully from sunset to dawn, a whole body of workers staying up all night to cater for people who don't want to go to bed. All very startling to anyone from a country where everything, but everything, closes down well before midnight. It seems almost eerie. As Bob Shaw put it once when George Charters told him he went to work at 6 a.m.: "are there buildings and everything around at that time?" I couldn't imagine what sort of people inhabited this mysterious nocturnal world.

Next night we stopped at Kearney, Nebraska, and the trip hit a new low. The motel was short of rooms and I had to share a bed with Webbert. Quite apart from the fact that my dislike of Webbert was now approaching the stature of a mania, I am not used to sleeping with men. I was horrorstruck by the thought that perhaps I might in the middle of the night make some amorous advance to him. Webbert would, probably, run screaming from the cabin in the direction of Los Angeles to denounce me to Francis Towner Laney. I wished I had something--a sword, the State of Nebraska, anything--to put between us, but all I could do was to get as far away from my bedfellow as I possibly could.

Little comet, is your flight
Faster than the speed of light?
Weren't you told that it should be
 $\sqrt{-3}$? -- anon.

I only fell out of bed once, and nothing worse happened as far as I know. Next morning we left Kearney at the crack of 1 a.m. I had been up and about for hours, looking ready, but it didn't seem to have any effect. My impatience abated only when Rog got the speedometer needle hovering comfortably 'round the

70 mark. I didn't know how to drive a car myself at the time, so I didn't mind how fast he went. The only times I got a bit uneasy was at night, when it was often quite clear to me that we were driving off the road or into a stone wall, but the road always managed to dodge 'round in front of us again and I regained my simple trust in the driver.

On the rest of that day and during the following night we drove on through North Platte, Ogallala, Kimball, Cheyenne, Laramie, Rock Springs, Green River and Ogden. I don't remember a thing about any of them, but it's nice to think I've been there. And to be able to say, in an offhand manner, "Last time I was in Cheyenne.."

Come to think of it, the last time I was in Cheyenne, Forrest J. Ackerman told me, "This place is noted for its fiction, you know."

"Is it?" I asked innocently.

"Sure," said Forry. "Didn't you ever hear of Cheyenne's fiction?"

We passed through a thunderstorm soon afterwards and I fully expected Forry to be struck by lightning. However he survived, and next day desecrated the name of Zion, also.

That thunderstorm is one thing I do remember. Ah, to have driven in a fast car through a thunderstorm in Wyoming! The change from sunny afternoon to unnatural night, the road to Laramie a dwindling streak in a dimly lit tunnel, the horizon advancing and receding under the storm clouds, the lightning on the mesas...

We didn't stop at a motel that night. Webbert had expressed a wish to be home by Sunday morning and though he kept saying it didn't really matter, everyone else seemed to think it was a hell of a good idea. So we torn on through the night. Forry and Mari took turns at relieving Rog at the wheel. I stayed in back, watching the United States whiz past and catching up on my sleep. Webbert stayed in the front seat playing with the car's cigarette lighter. This was one of those gadgets

The Harp That Once Or Twice, VI

on the dashboard that you press in when you want a cigarette and it pops out again glowing eagerly when you've changed your mind. Webbert, the lighterman, had taken over the control of this device and kept it in perpetual readiness in case Rog or Mari would attempt to light a cigarette themselves. You could see that as far as Webbert was concerned it was the greatest invention since fire. With this he could beat anyone to the draw.

'Round about four o'clock in the morning, when we were somewhere near Green River, I awoke to find the car full of smoke and some sort of a commotion going on in the front seat. The car had stopped, the door was open, and people were hitting Webbert energetically. Reluctant to interrupt this noble work I waited until they had stopped and the car was in motion again, and then asked what had been the matter. Apparently Webbert had practically burned himself to death with the cigarette lighter. This seemed to me the epitome of poetic justice. I nodded contentedly to myself and went back to sleep.

-- Walt Willis...

((To be continued))

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A RHYME OR TWO FOR YOUR READING ENJOYMENT ...

A female robot typist from Lyra,
Had a fight getting someone to hyra,
But the offer she got
She turned down on the spot...
Seems that they wanted first to re-wyra.

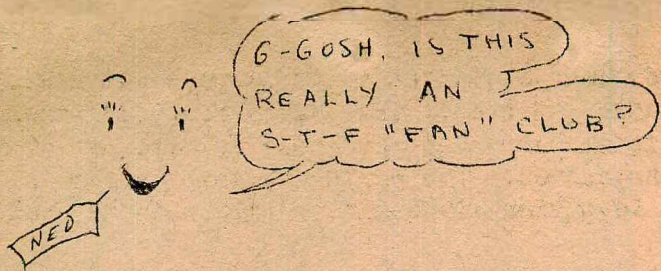
First the moon and then to Mars,
All the planets, next the stars,
Then across the starry sea
Into the next galaxy.
What, my wandered son, what then?
Why, turn around and back again.

First the exhaust tubes and then the fins
(Hold them on with safety pins)
Next a cabin built for two
(Put the viewport in with glue)
Put in the engines, fuels and stuff
(Solder will be strong enough)
Hooray! We've built a rocket ship!
(I'll bet it doesn't last the trip)

Must be a government project.

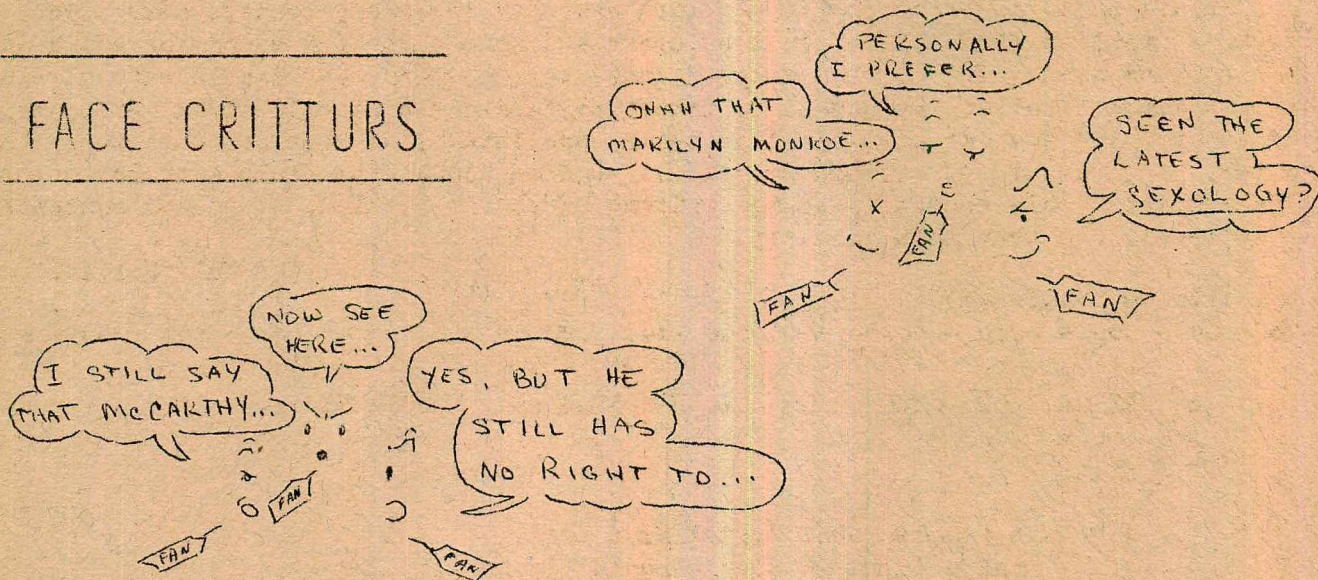
A wise man of old, after drinking a cask
Of the best 'montillado, set himself to the task
Of counting the stars. After nights without slumber
He found that they were of a most fearful number,
When, by a new way, at a sum did arrive
Simply counting the points and dividing by five.

-- anon

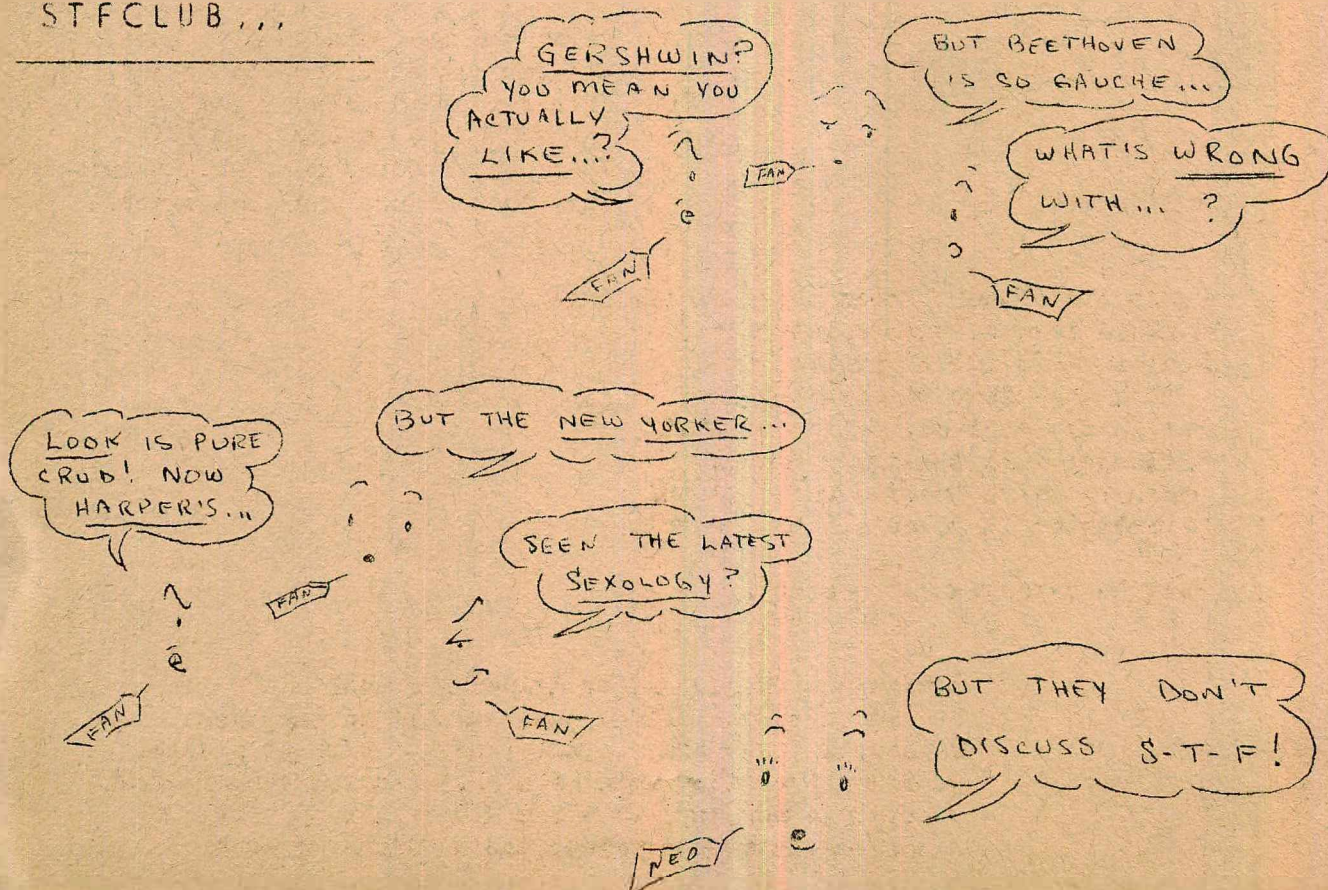


TERRY CARR'S

FACE CRITTURS



NEOFAN AT STFCLUB...



UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIAL

ROBERT BLOCH

If I were ever called upon to redecorate Wilson Tucker's home, I'd certainly see to it that a framed motto would hang upon the parlor wall.

The motto, of course, being, "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country."

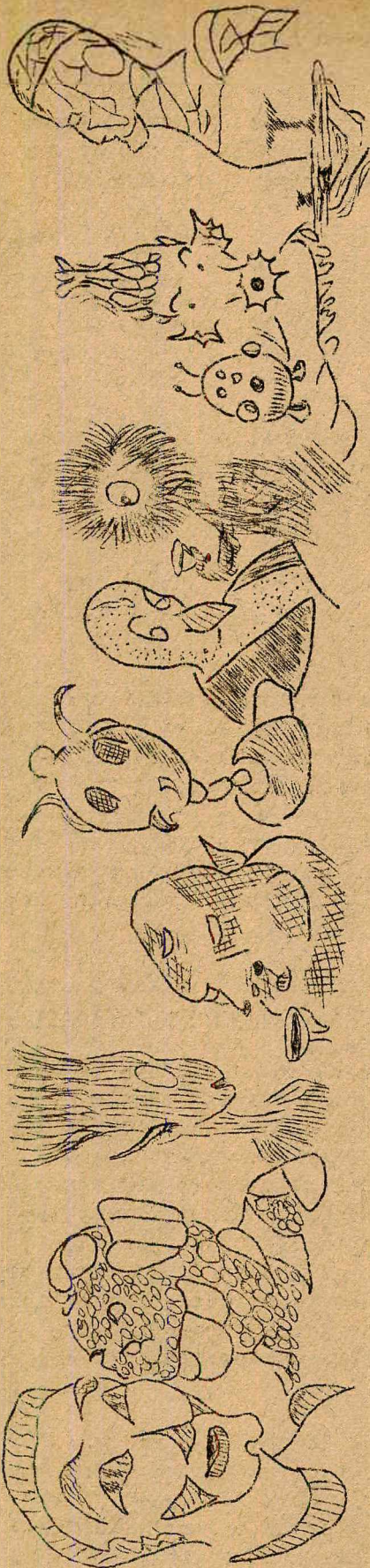
At first consideration, perhaps, this may seem a bit absurd to the average science-fiction fan. Surely such an aphorism is not applicable to Tucker--to Bob Tucker, to the Tucker of song and story.

Surely, one might reason, there is no individual in fandom who has received more mention or attention than the aforesaid Tucker. For a period of over two decades he has been a famous figure: a "BNE" even in the days before the term was coined. He has received deserved kudos and plaudits for his work as an editor, a fanzine writer, an actifan, a leading figure in fan-politics and fan-policies, a convention speaker and entertainer, a wit, a correspondent. And unlike his sole rival for the title of Number One, Forrest J. Ackerman (who has to a great extent retired from fan-activity in recent years), Tucker continues to contribute regularly to current fanzines as a fan rather than in the arbitrary capacity of a reviewer or commentator.

More significantly, Tucker's name is mentioned constantly: it is almost impossible to pick up a copy of any current fanzine without coming across at least one reference to him. Generally, a given issue will contain a dozen or more mentions of the Bard of Bloomington. He has become a legend in his own time, and it would be impossible to imagine the curious microcosm of science-fiction fandom as it might have evolved without his influence. Surely this is generally conceded and surely--one might well imagine--this is enough "honor" for our prophet in his own country.

But we deal in dichotomy here, and must remember that there are, in reality, two aspects of Tucker--Bob and Wilson. Bob Tucker, the fan, has his deserved accolade in fan circles. Yet Wilson Tucker is virtually ignored.

I make mention now of Wilson Tucker, the writer. The author of eleven published novels and an equal number of stories in major markets. Granted, some of his efforts have been in the category of detective fiction, but concerning his science-



Unsolicited Testimonial, II

fiction, Tucker's acknowledged wild talent has too often been greeted with a long, loud silence.

His books, of course, have been reviewed in those fanzines which devote space to critical appraisal of the field: but so, for that matter, have the books of any tyro or hack who happened to attain publication. Such commentary is routine.

I am more interested in the almost complete lack of interest, discussion, and appreciation of Tucker as a writer.

For Tucker is a writer, and a considerable one. This fact is known to publishers, editors, critics, and many of his fellow-scribes--but with few exceptions, seems to have entirely escaped the observation of fandom.

Fans who wax ecstatic over the work of an author who has published one or two science-fiction efforts seem to be unaware of the extent of Tucker's output. And more to the point, they have so far failed to see the uniform progression, the constant maturation of his style.

In science-fiction, as in every other field of writing, plot and theme are matters of individual taste. But style is a constant: it is the important ingredient which determines the value of a given piece of work.

Tucker offers, with disarming simplicity and direct narration, a clean and lucid narrative approach. Many immature readers seem to find themselves fascinated with many immature writers, simply because those writers ignore stylistic consideration in order to carry on a gay, mad love-affair with an unabridged dictionary.

Not so Wilson Tucker. He writes fluently and forthrightly, employing few polysyllables and avoiding terminological trickery in an effort to dazzle or display a specious erudition. In other words, he wouldn't be guilty of something like the preceding sentence.

And more important, Tucker--in his science-fiction work as well as his Charles Horne novels--has given substantial evidence of his great gift for characterization.

Whether it is due to the age-group of the majority or to an avowed desire to read purely for entertainment, the fact remains that many fans display little or no awareness of the aesthetic canons governing competent writing. Consequently, their allegiance goes largely to writers who present "ideas" or rely upon intricately-plotted melodrama to sustain their stories. Two-dimensional characters are accepted without question: stereotypy is the rule rather than the exception in the creation of hero and heroine. Seldom do fans demand any greater depth of perception and analysis than can be found in the slick-soap-opera puppets of the MARY WORTH variety of comic-strip. Indeed, to judge from the reactions of fans to perpetrators of this type of characterization, they deem it the very ultimate in sophisticated delineation. A writer who daringly permits his hero to have a few weaknesses, or who introduces a heroine with glasses is regarded as a genius.

But the false facade is usually easily penetrated, for in the type of story I have reference to, the hero remains basically heroic throughout and the heroine (deep down inside; or rather, shallow down inside) is really our old friend, Miss-Potential-Typical-Wife-and-Mother. The better the writer, the more glibly he disguises his characterization-cliches, but the cards are always stacked for the inevitable terminal clinch.

Tucker avoids this. His characterization is completely honest; his human beings are human throughout. Their aspirations and motivations are psychologically sound: Tucker is not afraid to plumb the psyche of a heel without branding him with

Unsolicited Testimonial, III

the "villain" label or seeking to obfuscate his animality in a maze of pseudo-psychological referents.

Perhaps the best available parallel at hand is that of the detective-fiction field. Tucker's work is to science-fiction what Graham Greene's "entertainments" are in relation to the average "whodunnit."

It amused this reader to peruse reviews of THE LONG LOUD SILENCE and note how carefully the average amateur critic avoided dealing with the character of the protagonist. Unable to accept the concept of a book without a "hero," the critic invariably ignored the protagonist entirely and concentrated on the plot-element alone. Although THE LONG LOUD SILENCE is basically nothing more than a series of cleverly-integrated episodes serving to limn the gradual degeneration of a man in a degenerating environment; in a word, a character-study.

As such, in my opinion, it is worth twenty of the average "future civilization" yarns in which a brave young crewcutted stereotype combats a horde of villainous old power-symbol stereotypes for the sake of an abstract stereotype labelled Democratic Freedom and a concrete stereotype with blonde hair and a C-cup bra. This latter yarn, ingenious and entertaining as it may be (and frequently is, thanks to streamlined modern treatment) depends almost entirely on gimmicks and gadgetry for its appeal. Tucker goes far deeper, probing fundamental flaws in the psyche, determining basic drives--and does it effortlessly. His very artlessness is in itself an art: it is not easy to convey sound characterization in terms of everyday dialogue and commonplace action and reaction.

Even his minor characters come through completely, and his version of a "big wheel" is infinitely more convincing than the average science-fiction superbrain (usually a high government official who can think on five levels at once, much to the dazzled delight of the sophomoric reader who seldom realizes that he is being presented with nothing more than a cerebral Superman with neon underwear over his superego.)

Wilson Tucker's contribution to science-fiction lies in this realistic approach--he has successfully employed the techniques of naturalism to a field bordering on supernaturalism. While readers scan his work seeking for cleverly-planted fan-names they can recognize, they might also do well to search out character-traits which have equally real counterparts in actual life.

Stories such as THE TOURIST TRADE and ABLE TO ZEBRA exemplify those elements of ironic humor which mark the Tucker output: I venture to say that had they appeared under a pseudonym, their author would have been hailed as a great new "discovery" in the field. As it is, in the minds of all too many fans, "it's only Bob Tucker." Tucker, who is expected to be clever, whose outsize ability is taken for granted, as a matter of course.

Through the years, it has been the policy of this writer to go along with the gag--to consistently lampoon, libel, and lark with BNF Bob Tucker. And as Bob Tucker, I'm sure he invites and enjoys such treatment. But I've become increasingly aware of the other Tucker--Wilson Tucker, writer--and found him to be quite a different person. One, however, equally well worth knowing; and one deserving of a very special kind of admiration and respect.

Might I suggest that those of you who have not yet made the acquaintance of Wilson Tucker do so at your earliest opportunity? I think you'll discover, as I did, that meeting him will prove to be a rewarding experience.

-- Robert Bloch...

FOR

FANED'S ONLY

From time to time, polls have been held in various fanzines in an attempt to determine the "top ten" fanzines of any definite period. Most of these polls have ended either incomplete or highly biased in favor of the fanzine conducting the poll. This is a natural consequence of polling a random audience, especially of any particular fanzine, since a certain percentage of the readers will be 'loyal' and another indefinite percentage will be much more familiar with the fanzine conducting the poll than with any other in the field.

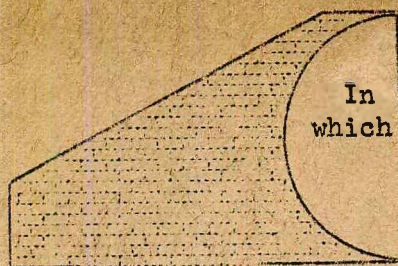
The answer lies, accordingly, not in polling a random audience but rather a carefully selected one. In an effort to select such an audience, OOPSLA! is confining this poll to include only the people who should be in a position to recognize the top ten fanzines of the year--the faned's themselves.

I shall make no attempt to list currently published or eligible fanzines, but shall leave that up to your own judgement. As you are all aware, fanzines come and go with startling rapidity and it is somewhat of a task to keep current zines separate from the dead ones. However, in this case, it would be greatly appreciated if votes were confined to publications currently being issued or only recently folded. Try to make your selections from those fanzines which have shown a marked degree of activity in fandom during the past year, though not necessarily to fandom circa 1954.

If you are a faned with whom I trade, then, stapled to this sheet you will find a stamped, self-addressed postcard suitably mimeographed for your vote. Simply select your choices from one to ten, write them in the numbered spaces, and mail the card. I am making this poll as simple as I possibly can in an attempt to gain the high percentage of participation that will be necessary to have even a half-correct answer. YOUR cooperation is important, since approximately 65 faneds will be polled, both in this country and overseas. In the case you receive this card and you are not a faned, it is being sent to you because you are a rare case...a person not presently publishing a fanzine, but someone who has left a significant mark upon fandom and assuredly is in a position to be able to select the top ten fanzines being published today.

In voting, please avoid ties where possible. When they cannot be avoided, please indicate that they are ties. INCLUDE YOUR VOTE FOR YOUR OWN FANZINE IN THE PLACE YOU FEEL IS APPROPRIATE. Do not hesitate to place your own fanzine in the place where you feel it belongs as all votes are confidential and none will be individually revealed. Vote in terms of quality, contents, legibility, contribution to fandom, and the general effect the fanzines have upon you. Votes should be as accurate as possible and as complete as you can make them. At the bottom of the card are also three spaces for you to write in an additional entry for the three top fanzines of all time, if you feel so inclined to choose.

It would be appreciated, although it is not vital, if you would sign your card with either your name or the name of your fanzines. This is merely so I can be assured the cards did not get in the wrong hands and that all the voters are qualified persons, aware of the field of fandom and its fanzines.



In
which

gives
letters

and
reviews

FIRE
ESCAPE

and
mish-mosh

WATCH
YOUR
STEP

THERBLIGS



"But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked.
"Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat: "we're all mad
here. I'm mad. You're mad."
"How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice.
"You must be," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come
here."

The above comment is borrowed from both Lewis Carroll and Dick Ryan. I am almost positive that Carroll wrote it the first time, but Dick Ryan quoted it in his FAPazine, DEVOIR, and I couldn't help but think how appropriate it would be for THERBLIGS. As the old, oocold saw goes, 'you don't have to be mad to read THERBLIGS but it sure helps...'

I am almost afraid to begin work on this section this issue. It has been such a long time since OOPS #13 was current that the fanzines and letters have piled up in one corner...well, a little bit of warmth is trapped there by the normal circulation of the air; some water was spilled by the pile, once, and never cleaned up; a few other nonessential items thrown on the pile...and now something sits there in the corner where before were only letters and fanzines. To tell the truth, I'm afraid to go near it!

However, this might all be brought about by the terrific new pocket-book I have just finished, titled "I Am Legend" and done by Richard Matheson. It is a Gold Medal Original pocket-book and reprinted from no other source, so if you don't get it, in p-b form, you won't get it at all. And that would be a shame, for it is easily one of the most powerful, exciting novels of this year. Only "Conjure Wife" had more impact than this, but this followed much the same line of writing and climax. I will not even so much as hint at the plot; but if you miss "I Am Legend" you have only yourself to blame. Highly recommended!

If any of you noticed on the first page of my first editorial, that little vertical squib about OOPS seems to state that Gregg Calkins' sell for the more-or-less astounding price of 15¢ per copy, two for 25¢, four for 50¢. However, I assure you this is not so. OOPSLA! does indeed sell for those very same prices, but anyone who paid that much money for copies of Gregg Calkins would be very much grunted, I fear. True, the copies are life-size and animated, but a glance at the picture at the bottom of the second page should soon clear up any doubt that might be in your mind as to whether or not you want one. You don't.



DON HOWARD DONNELL: Willis, in his column, commented, "How many of the faneds to whom Boggs writes those long, detailed, constructive, helpful and eminently quotable letters of comment on their zines take the same trouble to write Boggs about SKYHOOK?" I received one of those long, detailed, etc., letters (it was a postcard) that was supposed to be helpful and constructive on STARLIGHT. It was filled with the most part with cynical quips and lame attempts at humor. It was in no way constructive. Now I'm the first to admit STARLIGHT is far from perfect. I realize its flaws, and my co-editors and I are striving to correct them. We receive many letters of criticism, for the most part telling us just what is wrong with the zine and suggestions for improvement. We welcome letters like that. But when we receive a letter (or postcard, as is this case) that is unconstructive, derisive and just plain insulting, we think it our right to disagree with it, and in fact, refute it. I wrote a letter back to Boggs in which I told him what I thought of his brand of criticism. It is his right to write whatever he pleases, and it is our right to say what we think about it. We will never be indignant about constructive criticism, but when someone writes a card that is outright ridicule we get mad! (I see I have lapsed into the editorial we, but I am speaking for the whole staff.)

As for writing a detailed criticism of SKYHOOK, I would, if I received one. I sent STARLIGHT in trade and have yet to receive his magazine. Perhaps I will yet. Or perhaps he doesn't deem to exchange zines. (5425 Santa Monica Blvd, Apt 205, Los Angeles 29, California)

A highly interesting letter, this. I have little comment except to say that when I was first starting OOPS, I did receive, with some regularity, helpful letters from Boggs. In fact, he even subscribed. I still carry him on my books as a subber, and only with this issue am switching him over to the trades side. As for the postcards, I have no information except this letter. Perhaps Boggs would be interested in clarifying the matter?

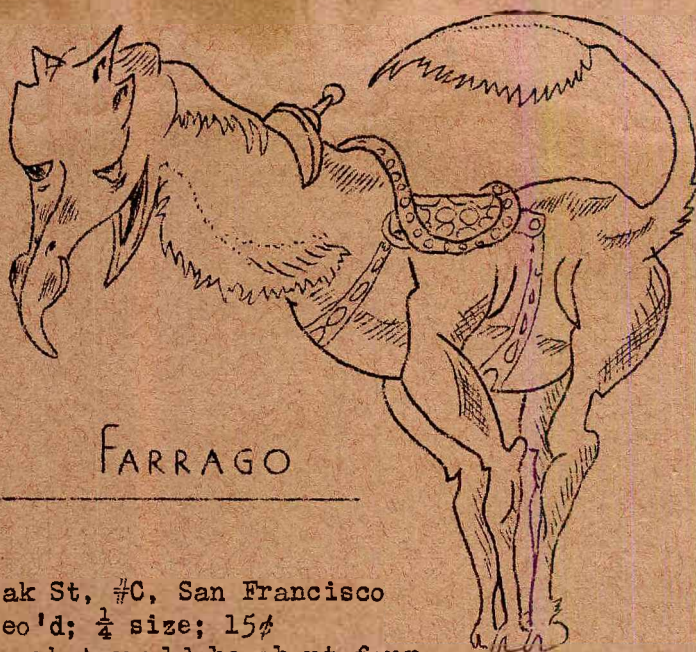
I'm having a little bit of trouble with paper, this issue. The \$1.06-per-ream market I was so jubilant over has vanished in the mist, and I'm back to using \$1.19 paper again. Not a vast difference, true, but it adds up when you buy 20- or 30-reams at a time. Anyhow, the local market is gone and I have to send back to Chicago for this other paper, so that may leave me short for this issue. In fact, I think I'll have to cut two pages off of this issue in order to get it all printed this weekend. The thought of waiting another month to get this issue printed is absurd, so that's out. I'm afraid this issue of OOPS will be only 28 pages long, then.

Also missing from this issue is the third poem of the "Tales Of The Old Spaceways" series, forced out because of lack of room. But I already have two more written, and they will be back with #14, for those of you who enjoy them.

...this being the section of OOPS currently devoted to the reviews of contemporary fanzines

...these reviews in almost all cases will be of a rather jaundiced nature, a veritable plague of xanthopsia, so please don't all you faneds who receive derogatory reviews for your particular cacography jump on me ...it's just that I regard almost all fanzines as des bêtes noires and, accordingly, take a bit of a caliginous view of them all

...I proceeds with the fanzine reviews.



XPNERN v1#3: William D Knapheide, 992 Oak St, #C, San Francisco 17, California; three times a year; mimeo'd; $\frac{1}{4}$ size; 15¢

Aside from the incredible price for what would be about four sheets of full-size print, this magazine is almost totally incomprehensible. The mimeographing is sub-standard, even for a quarter-size mag, but though the ink is strategically placed so as to be unreadable I still managed to find out enough to tell me this was an index of sorts. Just what it is indexing I am not sure, but if I see Knapheide in San Francisco this year I'll ask him and find out.

THE COSMIC FRONTIER #8: Stuarck K Nock, RFD #3, Castleton, New York; monthly; ditto; half-size; 10¢ per, 3 for 25¢, 6 for 50¢, 12 for \$1

For some reason I have a warm feeling towards this one, though I'm blamed if I know why from reading just the material alone. Although the reproduction is quite excellent, most of the material is of little interest. Admittedly this is a switch from the fanzines which contain excellent material but print it so poorly that you can hardly read it. I'm not sure which case is the worst. A little neofannish in most parts, especially an article by Peter Vorzimer in this issue, but a following article by Oskar Stosser more than makes up for that. A very good review column is about the best single thing in the issue. The mag has excellent possibilities and will undoubtedly be much more interesting once it gets away from half-size.

GREY v2#1: Charles Wells, 405 E 62 St, Savannah, Georgia; irregular; mimeo; single page newszine; by trade and complimentary copy only

A most interesting newszine, I've always found. For the most part, one page isn't quite enough, but Wells does manage to get quite a bit into that one page. Now that he's made FIENDETTA into a FAPazine and put this on a trade basis, it's pretty hard to get a copy of anything by Wells unless your an editor yourself, which is a shame. I believe all faneds should publish at least one subzine.

SONIC #8-9-10: Michael A Bos, (The North Shore Futurian Society Notesheet), 24 Spencer Rd, Killara, Sydney, NSW Australia; monthly; mimeo; half-size; 5 US promags

An eight-page monthly that no doubt represents quite a bit of fanac to Bos and co-editor Hubble, but is of little interest to the average fan unless he is interested in Australian fandom or the NSFS. As far as clubzines go, this is a good one --but little else than a clubzine. Incidentally, that subscription price I listed of '5 US promags' is apparently for one year (12 monthly issues).

EXPLORER #2(?): Ray C Higgs, (O-O I.S.F.C.C.), 813 Eastern Avenue, Connorsville, Indiana; bi-monthly; mimeo; 50¢ per year membership dues

With Higgs taking over the O-O of this club as well as that of the N3F, this magazine has lost individuality and now looks just like any other Higgs-edited magazine. I understand a lot of people think the world of Higgs and that he is a wonderful guy--I have never met him--but regardless of this, he's no editor.

ABSTRACT #3: Peter J Vorzimer, 1311 N Laurel Ave, W Hollywood 46, California; monthly; ditto; no regular price listed but the October issue is 35¢

Well, one thing I will say and that's that this is a nice large fanzine. The covers are usually photo-offset and nicely done and the interior printing is quite readable. Vorzimer seems to be sort of a poor man's Harlan Ellison, but then I always did find quite a bit I liked in SF BULLETIN. The mag is a little neofannish and a little goshwowish but I think you'll find it quite worthy for the next few issues. I rather think that it will fold shortly after the end of the year, however, as editor Vorzimer will either find it too much work and lose interest in the sf field or will be forced to cut down in size due to costs until he can no longer produce the type of magazine he wants because it costs too much. We'll see. But the next few issues will no doubt be highly worthwhile.

DAWN #21: Russell K Watkins, 110 Brady St, Savannah, Georgia; bi-monthly; ditto; 10¢

Have you noticed the large number of ditto'd zines being issued lately? If I had the cash to buy a ditto, OOPS would probably take a fling at it, too. I am largely impressed by the ease with which you can run color on a ditto and I would like very much to take a fling at it myself. DAWN is excellently ditto'd, proving that most ditto zines could be done much better than they are. The magazine is generally readable, nothing outstanding, but Watkins irks me a little with his air of "hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil" although perhaps this is just one of his own little personality quirks and he does it unconsciously. Truly excellent (!) in this magazine is "Fanzinio"---a listing of all currently published fanzines. This feature is eminently useful and I've had it come in handy a dozen times already.

A LA SPACE v2#1: Kent Corey, Box 64, Enid, Oklahoma; bi-monthly; litho'd; 20¢ per

The 20¢ price is a little steep if Kent is catering to the general fannish field, but I imagine it costs a little bit of \$\$ for Kent to have the mag printed the way it is. Why he does it, I don't know, since the artwork is generally sloppy and hardly worth the expense. Admittedly I am jealous, since the method of reproduction used here is far superior to mimeographing, however little Kent is justified in using it. The material inside is average; not good, not bad. Corey seems to have established a mutual admiration society with Lynn Hickman but why I don't know, since STF TRENDS is no better, if as good as A LA SPACE. Best parts of this mag are the drawings of "Alice" and other gals by Don Duke and Bowart. More, more of these!

DEVIANT #2: Carol McKinney, Sta 1, Box 514, Provo, Utah; bi-monthly; mimeo; 20¢ per copy or three for 50¢

A most promising magazine! It has a delightful whimsical touch that has been missing from the field since the days of Lee Hoffman. Although I don't think McKinney is the writer that Hoffman was, she undoubtedly has a flair of her own for this sort of thing that makes interesting reading. Altogether this is one of the best fanzines currently being produced. She could do with a couple of good columns and some articles, but her own little section of DOZFAC is highly recommended for originality and whimsical attitude. This is one fanzine I'm always happy to see arrive in my mailbox.

STAR ROCKETS #9: Raleigh E Multog, 7 Greenwood Road, Pikesville 8, Maryland; irregular; mimeo; 20¢ per issue, 12 for \$2.25

I find that subscription rate highly amusing, ^{AND AMUSINGLY HIGH} but other than that there is little else of interest in the magazine. It needs artwork, some concentration on layout and format, interesting material and a helping hand up to the shoulder.

VULCAN #4: Terry Carr, 134 Cambridge St, San Francisco, California; irregular; mimeo 15¢ per issue, four for 50¢

One of the more interesting of today's fanzines, but not a contender for #1 spot. The material almost always falls short of being 'good' but is usually of interest, somehow. This magazine could--and will--improve to be one of the leaders on the West Coast and I'm going to keep my eye on it. Carr is good when he tries.

Therbligs, III

DIMENSIONS: Here is the first issue of the new, highly touted (by Ellison) fanzine to be issued henceforth in the place of **SCIENCE FANTASY BULLETIN**. In this issue, however, I find only SFB with more pages and a new name. Ellison continues to write as if he were a professional editor writing to an audience that is uninformed about the private lives or personalities of the writers. In a professional field, this might be true; but definitely not, in fandom. However, Ellison write a squib about his front cover by Jack Harness that seems to indicate that Harness is both unknown to the readers and a genius in the field of art by the grace of Harlan Ellison, Himself. Harness is neither an unknown quantity nor a genius by any other grace than his own, if that, though a very capable artist. Suffice it to say that **DIMENSIONS** is a continuation of SFB; slightly grown up, a wee bit better presented, and very capably done...but is still the same old Ellison. And I can think of no other professional editor that Ellison reminds me of other than Ray A. Palmer...you can take that comment for what it's worth. No subscriptions accepted unless by request, so I won't bother publishing the address.

...I just got back from a trip to down-town Santa Monica to buy a desk lamp. This is one of these swivel-armed deals that clamps on the back of the desk and will move to cover almost any point you wish. It uses two two-foot flourescent tubes for light and does a wonderful job.

While downtown I couldn't help taking a run over to the Chevrolet dealer's and looking at the new Corvette. This is really a sports car! It's so low I can hardly believe it, yet sitting inside is as comfortable as can be. I notice a few extra-wide gaps in the chrome stripping where the doors open and close, and also in the back piece that covers the convertible top, but these are minor points. The over-all picture of the car is a dream...a \$4100 dollar dream, too. I can't afford one, but oh how I wish I could...the speedometer registers up to 140 mph!

BOB TUCKER: Fish and tush, running down a good novel like "Wild Talent," as you did. Don't you read a magazine called **SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST**? If you did, you would quickly learn, sir, that I am compared to Hemingway. Of course, I think the reviewer made a mistake...

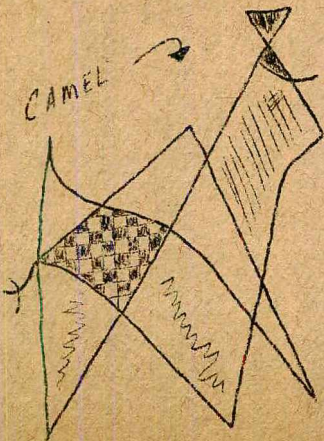
That same issue of **SF DIGEST** also reviews the Jerry Sohl book you liked so well. Sohl was compared to Anatole France and Voltaire. This is proof positive that the reviewer doesn't know a tome from a hole in the ground. Sohl lives about ten blocks from me and we have taken to greeting each other on the streets as "Mr. France" and "Mr. Hemingway." As yet we have fooled none of the local citizens.

Ted Carnell has bought "Wild Talent" for serialization in **NEW WORLDS**, but he is timidly changing his own name to "Parnell" for fear his outraged readers will storm the office. That is, he is changing the name of the story character. And quite candidly, I don't mind at all fans and people panning me, my books or my writing in general. I'm quite aware of the literary level of the work I've published, and cannot complain of rough treatment. The only science fiction book which does contain some merit is "The Long Loud Silence." If and when I can top that I will feel that I've taken another forward step.

A London Publisher brought out simultaneous editions of "Silence" in hardcover and paperback this past winter. Went pretty well in both editions. Dell Books bought the story about two years ago but has shown no inclination to publish it to date. Perhaps the startling resemblance to Hemingway has frightened them. Well...they can't have the money back.

Signet Books is publishing "The Time Masters" next month (July). And Rinehart is bringing out the \$2.50 edition of "The Science Fiction Sub-Treasury" in about three months.

Bellefontaine this year was a queer deal with the conventioners split into three camps (for sleeping purposes).



Therbligs IV

and undoubtedly you will be reading about the doings in the fan press. Harlan Ellison was officially frowned upon for publishing that jackass report in SF (the Magnus magazine) a while back. Be advised that Ellison was venting his spleen on something or somebody and that dirty old sex was not nearly so rampant as he claimed. The article almost kept Phil Economou away. Not knowing from personal experience just what to expect, she read his article and hesitated. But happily, people like Bloch and Barrett persuaded her it was so much meadow mayonaise, and she flew up from Florida. This thing called fandom could benefit by several more women like her.

I guess that about 175 people were there; official count at the banquet was 149 and the remainder were in bed with hangovers. As you might expect the real entertainment went on at the Ingalls Hotel (a rat trap), the Fountain Lodge Motel (a sucker trap), and the Karus Motel (an excellent place with a landlady who believed in cooperation.)

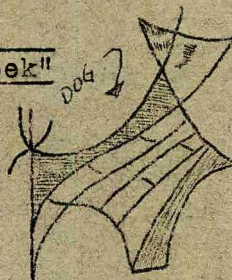
Big wheels wheeling about the place were Isaac Asimov, Ed Hamilton and Leigh Brackett, that character Bloch, Phil and Betty Farmer, EE Evans, Lloyd Eshbach, Doc Smith and his wife, Ted and Judy Dikty (who showed a home-talent movie entitled "Crud and Sand"), that character Garrett, Marty Greenberg, Evelyn Gold, and numerous smaller cogs. (PO Box 702, Bloomington, Illinois)

By now, of course, you know that Dell has finally brought out the pocketbook edition of "The Long Loud Silence" in 25¢ form, Bob. I finally bought a copy and promise to read it faithfully sometime this month. A review is called for in the next issue of OOPS...a most carefully considered review, too, in the light of your views of your own writing in this letter, and Bloch's views, elsewhere in this issue.

The following joke courtesy of Shelby Vick: "I suppose you heard the one about the werewolf? In human form he was a radio announcer; as a wolf, they used his paws for station identification..."

"De Zegelsplakken op de Adreszijde in de Rechterbovenhoek"

I'm afraid there are many, many more letters and a big stack of fanzines I'd like to mention, but I'm afraid THERBLIGS will be cut to six pages this time and as the next two are already cut (they're fanzine reviews that have been cut since about May) this will be my last page. But I'll tell you what I'll do...if the paper holds out, I'll add an extra two pages on behind the fanzine reviews and sort of fill out the issue with the best and most enjoyable letters. (P.S. - THE PAPER DIDN'T LAST... SORRY.)



I have a dog or two drawn on the page for you --one is a stuffed shirt, the other a toy-type crittur...

Now I am in a dilemma. I have too much space left to just leave blank and sign my name on--yet I don't have enough space to print a letter or anything worthwhile. I hate to drivel on like this, using up room, but it seems to be the only thing left to do. In doing so, I might mention yet another of the ACE double books that is out, this time combining two new novels, un-reprinted, by Andre Norton and the second by Lewis Padgett and C. L. Moore. How can you go wrong for 35¢ for these? I have not yet even so much as looked inside the covers, but I predict that the novel by Norton, "Daybreak--2250 A.D.", will be an excellent story. And if it's just good reading your bookshelf needs, try "The Cold Equations" by Tom Godwin in the August, 1954, ASTOUNDING. A masterful story, told precisely with a powerful impact!



Which seems to wind up this issue of OOPS. At the last minute I have decided to put those two pages of fanzine reviews as the third and fourth pages of THERBLIGS, leaving these the last two pages. OOPS #15 should be out shortly, and I hope to be hearing from you in the mail, soon, about these issues.

-- wgc.



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Please list here what you consider to be the ten most enjoyable fanzines currently being published or only recently gone.

1. Grue
2. Oopsla!
3. Skyhook
4. Hyphen
5. Psychotic
6. Spacewarp
7. Dimensions
8. Abstract
9. Mimi
10. Fog

The following three are what I consider the three best fanzines of all the time I have been aware of fandom.

1. Skyhook
2. Hyphen
3. Fantasy Commentator

This card is filled out to the best of my knowledge and ability

Richard Bergeron

THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS



Gregg Calkins
2817 - Eleventh Street
Santa Monica, California

IS THIS YOUR LAST OOPS?



Of course, you know the answer to this better than I do. And that's why I'm asking.

If this slip is enclosed in your mailing envelope, chances are that this is your last issue unless you do something about it. If you are a regular subscriber, this--plus some sort of indication via mailing label, usually--is an indication that your subscription is expiring with the enclosed issues...or at most has only one more issue to go. If you are an editor with whom I trade, chances are I haven't seen a copy of your fanzine for such a long time that I'm not sure what has become of you--better check your mailing lists to make sure you haven't lost my name... or if you just haven't been publishing lately or are out of business, better let me know. And some of you, of course, fit neither category. Chances are, then, that this is a sample copy to see if you respond: if you do not, of course there will be no further copies sent to you.

And if you can't for the life of you figure out why this is enclosed with your OOPS, you'd better get in touch with me right away. Obviously we have difficulties between us...and if you want the next issue, it's up to you to square them away.