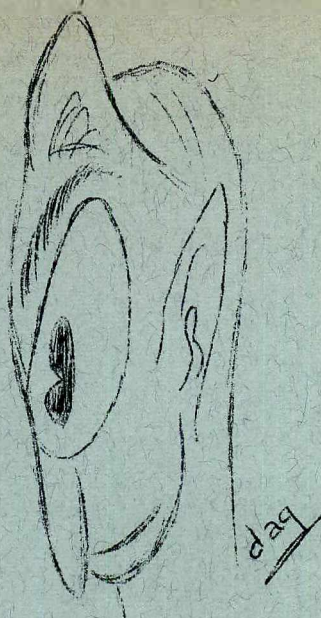


OOPSLA 21





DANS UN VERRE D'EAU

22 March 1957 Almost fifteen months have passed since last I sat down to cut a stencil for OOPS and a great many things have happened in that much time. Since most of you received my "State of the Union" several months ago, I won't bother to repeat myself here except to say that the months have not been uneventful and wasted. The gafia has even been a rather welcome vacation, but I confess that I look forward to this and future issues of OOPS with anticipation. FAPazines are no substitution for general subzines in terms of egoboo and personal pride...and I think the return of Hoffman and Boggs to the subzine field bear me out on this.

At any rate, OOPS is back and there have been changes. Most major change is in the price, now 25¢ per copy. If you feel this is exorbitant, peace be with you and I have no quarrel with you...in fact, very little defense against your claim. But, justifiable or no, that is the price. I've raised it to that for several very good reasons (or so I feel) which I won't bother to explain in detail but which all add up to the continued publication of OOPS. The other change is in publishing frequency...from bi-monthly to quarterly. This is not as great a change as it seems. I may have claimed to have been bi-monthly before this but actually it was much more like once every three months. Calling it quarterly is just making it legal.

BREVITY IS THE SOUL OF WIT

Now hot off the presses of Willis & Sons is that long awaited and far from brief journal of THE HARP STATESIDE. Originally planned for publication here in the States, I was forced to return the stencils to Walt and he has done the job himself, turning out one of the most attractive and beautifully mimeographed magazines I've ever seen. Profusely illustrated by Arthur Thompson and chock full of swamp-crittur type wit, you can not afford to keep 35¢ in the house when it could be used to purchase this intelligent, witty and hilarious account. From the Wandering Irishman, Himself, 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

STILL MORE ABOUT GILDED TITLES

I suppose "dans un verre d'eau" is more like a gelded title than a gilded one, and it deserves some explanation. Several readers have offered their translations and only a few have come close (some of the letters may be printed further on in this issue) but thus far no enterprising fan has fully deciphered same. So I've decided

to Reveal All and get this thing off of my chest. In the first place, the five words of French aren't the whole title...that little squiggly thing out in front with the arrow on it has a lot to do with it. The furrin-talk stands for "in a glass of water" and the squiggly thing happens to be a meteorological symbol for a thunderstorm with lightning. Add it all up and it comes out to be a thunderstorm in a glass of water, which I hopefully intended to be a play on tempest in a teapot. Perhaps I should have stood in bed.

EQUAL TIME FOR HUCKSTERING

Because of the slight lapse of time between last issue and this one, some of the material herein may seem slightly dated in spots. I hope to take care of most of this by judicious editing but this won't be possible in all cases. I apologize to all of my contributors for the delay and trust that it won't happen again.

You may remember from last issue that there was considerable discussion in Vernon L. McCain's THE MARK OF mCcAIN concerning the relative merits of ASTOUNDING and GALAXY and a comment (editorial) that copies of last issue were being sent to Campbell and Gold in the hope that they would comment. Letters from both editors are printed in this issue. An installment of Walt Willis' column, THE HARP THAT ONCE OR TWICE, is back in its regular column form now that THE HARP STATESIDE has been completed in a separate volume. Also present, room permitting, are Terry Carr's FACE CRITTURS on a very late New Year's Eve binge, a short column-like manuscript from Harlan Ellison, another hilarious Berry Factual Article, and an extremely interesting GRENADEAN ETCHINGS by Dean A. Grennell. THERBLIGS should also be squeezed into these thirty pages somewhere between front and back covers. Which reminds me that credit for the front cover goes to Dave Jenrette, wherever he may be. Does anyone have his address?

FOR THE RECORD

This is the twenty-first issue of OOPSLA. (and I can't remember if I was talked into omitting the "!" some time in the past or if I've just been forgetting it) published by Starflame Publications, now back in the State of Utah and located at 1068 Third Avenue, Salt Lake City 3. It is worthy of note that this is my sixth address since the first issue but no such nomadism need be expected in the near future. Also worthy of note is the fact that OOPS now has an assistant publisher, one very gifted in the difficult art of collating, assembling, stapling and stamping. Her wages are minimal (some might say even nonexistent) but she appears devoted to me and it would be cruel

to turn her away so she just might keep the job for some time to come. Warm appreciation is hereby expressed for her assistance...let it not be said that I am ungrateful. Further publishing data for interested mimeographers: the paper used is Masterweave available at \$1.35 a ream, the stencils are ABDick F1160's available at \$2.35 per quire, and the ink and copious quantities of correction fluid are of an undetermined brand issued to the U. S. Marine Corps. Stamps by the U. S. Federal Government, Post Office Department. Typewriter by Elsie Smith. Mimeograph by ABDick.

Oh, yeah. Comments by me.

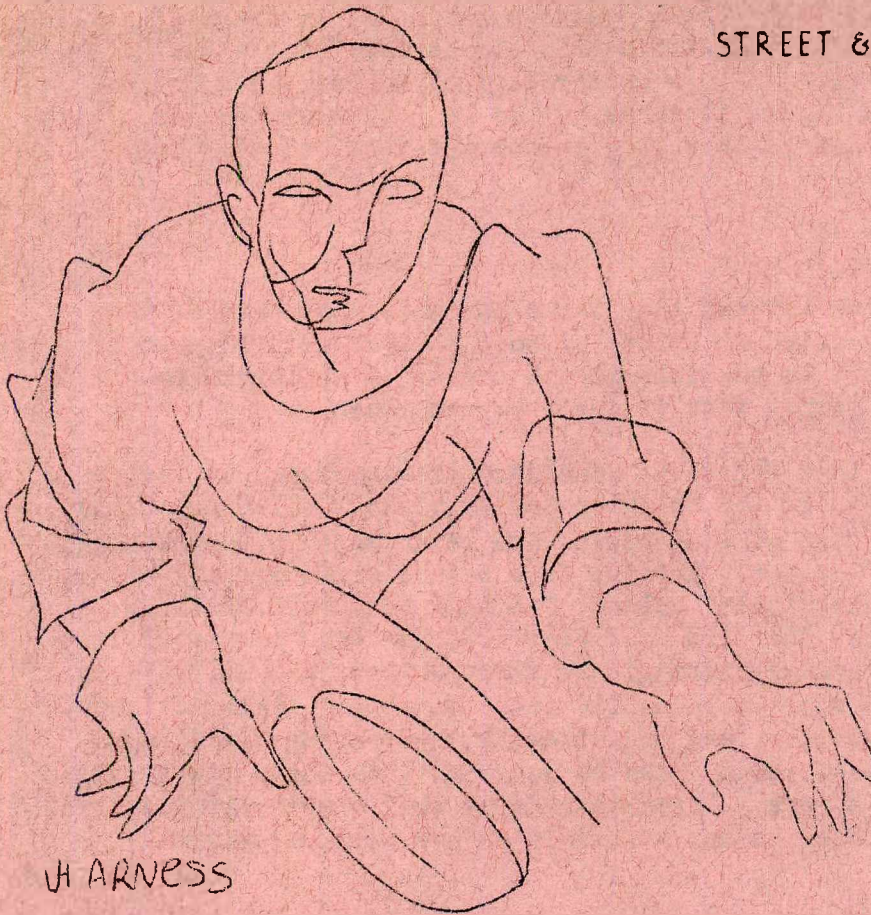


Meggy Carr

STREET & SMITH PUBLICATIONS, INC

John W. Campbell, Jr.

EDITOR



Dear Mr Calkins:

Some one of these days, some general recognition of the situation in the field of science fiction will get around.

Look, guys; asking which is better, Astounding, Galaxy or F&SF is a hopeless and essentially meaningless question. Which is better as a transportation device, a Chris Craft, a Lincoln, or a Cessna? You'd look darned silly in the middle

of Lake Erie with a Lincoln or a Cessna, equally uncomfortable in Times Square with the Cessna or Chris Craft, and acutely unhappy 3,000 feet over Iowa in the car or the boat.

Just because they're all transportation devices they should be interchangeable, serving the same function in the same way?

I know darned well I've run stories Gold rejected, and he's run stories I rejected. I didn't reject 'em because they were bad stories--but because they were inappropriate to the science-fiction function ASF serves. Gold didn't reject 'em because they were bad--but because they didn't fit the function he sees as proper for Galaxy.

Any time any one of us can be successfully copied, that means we've stopped in one spot long enough to be caught up with. For that, we deserve to be passed. The way to stay in first place is not by getting there and pushing everybody else down, but by running faster than anyone else can follow. If anybody can copy a magazine so successfully the readers are confused--the editor of that magazine stood on his laurels while the parade marched by.

My own favorite comment on copying is from Kipling's "Rhyme of the Mary Gloucester":

"They copied all they could follow,
But they couldn't follow my mind,
So I left 'em--sweatin' and stealin'--
A year and a half behind!"

Anybody who gripes about being copied is griping about not being permitted to sit placidly on his tail in peach, not being allowed to stay ahead without running.

John W. Campbell, Jr. Editor

GALAXY



Dear Gregg:

Every time I've seen something by Vernon McCain it's been honest, earnest and intelligent. But those three qualities are all wasted in trying to discover what's eating that small, poisonous sub-species of fandom that I think of as fangdom. The truth is that there is no logical basis for their incessant rattle-and-strike at one target after another. The fangs simply whip out at any moving object. It just happens to be my turn now. In other words, McCain is hunting for motives when tropism is the answer.

How should they be handled? With a forked stick instead of reason.

Certainly the explanation is not that the issue is GALAXY/Gold versus ASTOUNDING/Campbell. Any misunderstandings there were in the past have been amicably settled so long ago that they're almost in a class with "Taxation Without Representation." More to the point, they have nothing whatever to do with the current rancor of the fangs. McCain probably doesn't remember that Campbell was their victim back in 1942 or so, right smack in the so-called Golden (sorry, John) Age of science fiction. Carried to its potential conclusion, McCain's argument could only divert the venom from myself to Campbell--and he's already had it, so, apart from our friendship of eighteen years and the fact that I got my start in ASTOUNDING and naturally have a good deal of affection for it, I have no desire to see either suffer double jeopardy.

He and I both know the fangs don't even strike in unison, much less represent fandom. Now and then, of course, they confuse people like McCain, who expect such fury to have a cause and intently search for it. That's when either or both take the trouble to point out that it's rage for the sake of rage. In any case, they don't stay around long and can therefore be waited out, for eventually they'll either grow up or leave the field.

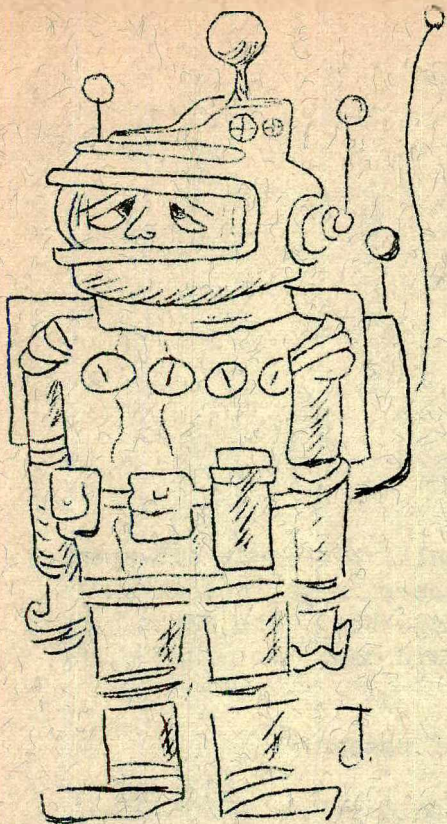
The only way McCain or any other fan can contrast GALAXY and ASTOUNDING is on a basis of personal preference. We and the other editors in s-f have offered a coverage so complete that there is very little overlapping. Each magazine appeals to a special segment of the total s-f audience--and so successfully that I don't know of any magazine yet that has profited by the collapse of another!

I doubt if there's another field that can boast such coverage. Detective fiction used to, but not any longer. Viewed editorially, it's a beautiful division of conjoining titles, all combining to form just about a 360-degree literary sphere. There's room for more, perhaps, but there isn't room for less; if any of them went, there would be a grave loss. That is why you can't possibly contrast them except in personal taste; they're all doing different and equally important jobs.

All best,

505 East 14th
New York 9, New York

Stearns



ER...
AHEM...

After John W Campbell Jr and Horace Gold, I hesitate to add my two-bits worth, but after all I am the editor of this so-called periodical. Besides which, I have something to say.

In the first place, it's a shame that I picked this place to skip a year of publication. The year plus gap between McCain's article in OOPS 20 and these rebuttal letters leaves a whole lot to be desired in the way of continuity.

For those of you who don't quite remember the discussion at hand and have neither the copies nor the inclination to dig back and look it up, let me do a brief summary.

The first through fourth issues of GALAXY (wrote McCain) were excellent and made the hithertofore unchallenged ASTOUNDING look pretty drab. Campbell, during that first winter, was printing a large percentage of poorly written, uninspired stories. The first issues of GALAXY were received very well in fannish circles, but after Gold's good-material backlog ran out, he began receiving adverse comment because of the then uncommon 35¢ price and from that it became the fashion to attack Gold for his so-called imitation of ASTOUNDING, advertising practices, and finally personally, all the time disregarding ASTOUNDING's slavish imitation. Summed up, Gold has been getting unjust criticism (i.e., not based on the merits or dismerits of his magazine and his deeds) while Campbell can do no wrong. And, the question is, why?

Says editor Campbell (who, by the way, wrote very formally on letterhead paper with a Street & Smith seal stamped on it, contrasted with Gold's friendly, informal style) rather ambiguously, you can't call either GALAXY or ASTOUNDING "better" because they each perform different functions, which conclusion is also backed up by editor Gold. However, continues Campbell, if we did copy GALAXY (which we're not admitting we did but is more than likely the other way around)...if we did copy then it's their own damn fault for staying in one place that long and therefore they have no legitimate right to gripe. And if Gold copied us (and again I'm not coming right out and saying he did but the facts are history for anyone to see) why that just goes to show how good ASTOUNDING is...after all, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Editor Gold, for his part, blames the attacks on some difficult-to-recognize group of fans, evidently anyone with the rudeness to criticize GALAXY unjustly...and the line between just and unjust criticism, as we all know, is pretty thin. Gold seems to feel that Campbell had his turn, now it's Gold's and the best thing to do is wit and weather it out...at least until it becomes somebody else's turn for a while.

For my part, I could have quite a bit to say but I consider the subject so dated by now that the end wouldn't justify the means. So I'll say that while I find ASTOUNDING best for my reading tastes--I buy GALAXY now only for serials--this is merely a personal preference, nothing more, Horace, although I do feel GALAXY is not as good as it once was. As far as editors go, however, for friendliness and personality (from my limited acquaintance with both) I'd pick H L Gold any time. -- wgc



THIS WAS A REAL GOOD
IDEA OF JOE'S... THROWING
A ONE-SHOT PARTY TONIGHT...
NOW WE CAN USE THE MISSED
SUPPLIES WE GOT FOR
CHRISTMAS!

I DON'T KNOW...
SEEMS TO ME WE'RE
TYPING ALL THE
STENCILS AND JOE'S
JUST GATHERING THEM
UP FOR HIS ONE-SHOT

DOESN'T HE OWE
EIGHT PAGES IN THE
NEXT FAPA MAILING?

HEY! DON'T USE SO
MUCH CORRECTION FLUID!
WE'RE RUNNING LOW ON
BOOZE AND WE MAY
HAVE TO USE
THAT!

AT MIDNIGHT I'M
GOING TO STAND
ON A CHAIR AND
ANNOUNCE THAT
WE'RE NOW IN
NINTH FANDOM.



TERRY CARR'S

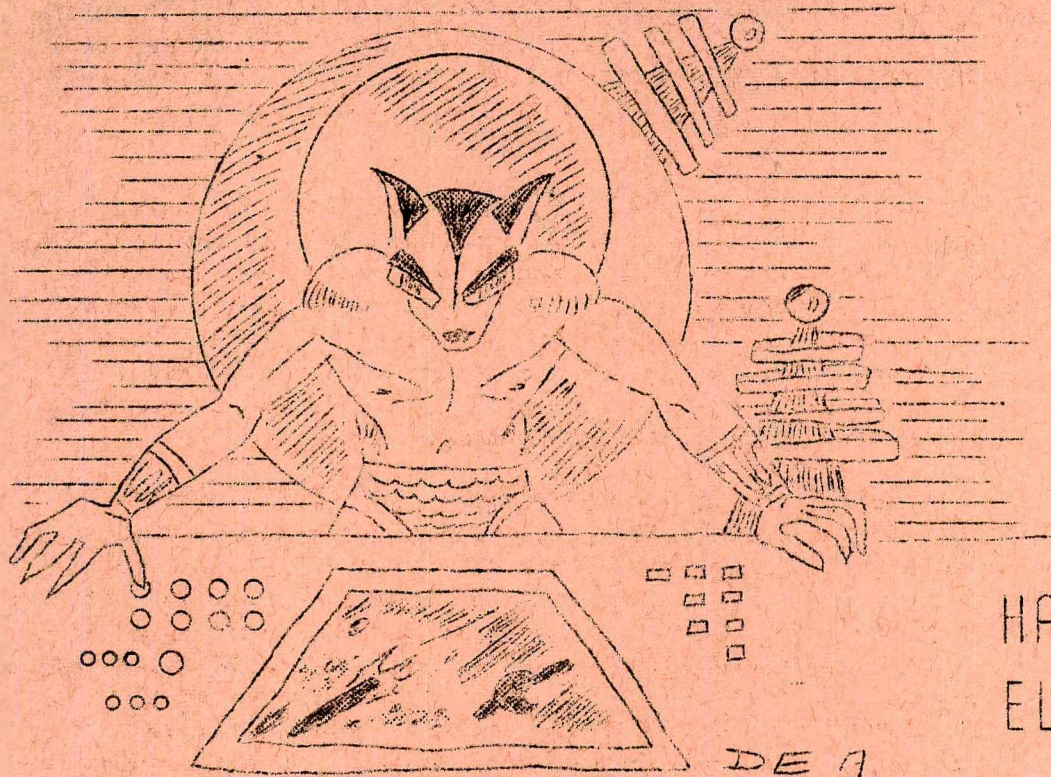
FACE CRITTURS

NEW YEAR'S EVE

SURE WE COULD GET
TUCKER TO USE AS
1955, AND WE COULD
USE THAT KID OVER
THERE WITH THE
DENTAL FLOSS AS THE
1956 BABY!

I'VE GOT AN IDEA FOR THE
COVER OF THE ONE-SHOT...
DRAW THE OLD MAN WITH
THE SICKLE, AND THE 1956
BABY, AND PUT A CAPTION
SAYING, "IT WAS AN OLD
YEAR, AND TIRED."

I'M MAKING A
RESOLUTION TO
READ A COUPLE
STF STORIES
NEXT YEAR.



"wish
you
were
here"

HARLAN
ELLISON

New York is something quite out of the ordinary, you know. Tourists flock to it, annually, yet they find few of the things that make this town really something to behold. I'm ever so fond of New York, and for a number of reasons most people would not consider even sane, let alone rational.

For instance, there is a magazine and cigar shop at the 4th Street stop of the 7th Avenue Subway--down in Greenwich Village--that has a rather remarkable little plaque set into the sidewalk cement outside its front door. This plaque is metal, triangular and says something to the effect that "This space is a portion of the estate of one Samuel L. Gugglefletzt (or someone), and has not been granted to the public." The exclamation mark is almost inherent in this statement, and the whole thing is rather incomprehensible unless you know the New York City laws of will and testament.

I found out only by chance and so I'll relate it with your permission. The deal is that this was part of a building that was once there but was ripped down when Mr Gugglefletzt kicked off. Now when the rest of the space was bought from the executors of the estate, they didn't want this ludicrous little triangular stretch, since a triangular-shaped building is most unbusinesslike and difficult to build--aside from its being ugly and offices not being shaped that way. So the rest was sold, and some joker placed said plate in the sidewalk. Which means that at any time, a cop can come along and tell you to get off that triangular space of about two feet, as you are trespassing on private property. They don't say this, of course, but think how annoyed the owner of that cigar and magazine shop would be if they did. The triangular space is directly in front of his front door. People would have to come in through the show windows.

Then there is Broadway, of course. Broadway is a remarkable street, but it's most remarkable after one o'clock in the morning.

I used to work in a bookstore in Broadway and 46th Street, and after one o'clock I'd make certain I had a clear view of the street. I was working a pleasant 5:00 PM to 2:00 AM shift (and believe me it was sound business practice!) and at one o'clock the weirdest things would happen. For instance, there was the night a white woman

and a handsome negro man were walking together. This is a commonplace in New York and, though not so much-practiced that people don't notice, it is the kind of thing certain kinds of people tsk-tsk and shrug their shoulders about. Well, at any rate, it seems this night in point the young couple (who were well-dressed and minding their own business I assure you) were accosted by a drunken sot of some years advance.

The old toot came stumbling past the Astor Theatre and wandered into the negro fellow, causing himself to drop a gallon jug of some highly-scented and doubtful-quality wine. The spirits splashed all over the place, and the old man instantly began castigating both the man and woman as being (and I quote verbatim) "...scurrilous, seditious, odious, repugnant vandals!" and making certain that they knew he thought they should be "...thrown into the pokey for a million and ten years, and never given any bread or water, any jug of wine, any loaf of bread, and even..." he said, pointing a d.t.-afflicted pinkie at the young woman, "thou!"

He seemed to think this was remonstrance enough and bumbled off, careening into store windows and shop fronts in random patterns. I smiled and started to step back into the shop when I heard a splintering crash. I ran out and was just in time to see the old boy tumbling back out of a men's haberdashery store window, which, it was apparent, he had just tumbled into. The lush came crashing back out, enmeshed in a Bermude walking-shorts set, and screamed all manner of dire profanities at the young couple. They had proceeded in the other direction when he had passed them the first time and had only stopped at the noise. The old man fell face forward onto the sidewalk and I started towards him. Before I could get more than a pace or two out of the book shop, the young couple had run back to him and the young woman, in a moment, was wiping off his bloody face (which had been cut by window glass) with a fine lace hankie.

At this point my faith in humanity was bolstered by several dozen points when the young man and woman lifted the old fellow, who had slandered them most grossly a few minutes before, and carried him into a restaurant, so the police would not grab him. After all the filthy things the old man had said about them, their relationship, and his opinion of such folk in general, they hesitated not a moment in saving him from a drunken disorderly rap and perhaps six hard months in the workhouse.

People are awfully nice, y'know.

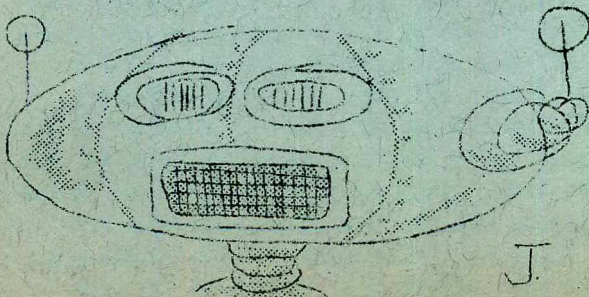
There are a million things that happen in this town and few of them ever get written up. With your permission, again, from time to time I'd like to set down some of the things I've been lucky enough to see in NYC, and if you like them, well, perhaps Gregg can see his way clear to publish them.

Please let me know. Through Gregg and the THERBLIGS column, if you don't mind.

...and come to see New York, if you get the chance. If you live here, then see it yourself.

-- Harlan Ellison ...

o--oo--ooo-----oooo-----ooooo-----oooooooo-----o-----oooooooo-----ooooo-----oooo--ooo--oo--o



EDITORIALLY SPEAKING, it's been some time now since Harlan originally made this offer and many things have happened to him since then; however, I'll assume his offer still holds and that you will see more of this column from time to time. ## That triangular plaque, Harlan...are you sure that wasn't merely to keep the land from reverting to public domain from an estate? -wgc.

WALT WILLIS

THE

HARP



THAT ONCE OR TWICE

children would have been reading to you in childish piping voices the report of my journey foot by foot and then inch by inch up the gangplank, with dramatic accounts of each splinter. But now the suggestion has come down from Head Office that this should become a proper column again: and, lazy hound though I am, I've got to agree with your editor. I've been wondering myself whatever became of those old style fan columns that used to be in all the fmz when I was a neofan back in the late Forties. I'd like to see them back again.

There were several kinds of them of course. First, there was the Boggs 'File 13' type, a parade of pithy paragraphs about current scientific events. Those were the days when a pro editor couldn't drop a serif off his typeface without half fandom picking it up and brandishing it as evidence of A Trend. Yet only a few months ago Astounding published in almost consecutive issues two stories with a completely identical plot (test pilot hypnotized by instruments)--incontrovertible evidence that Campbell Is Slipping Again--and nobody batted an eyelid. Why, in the old days that would have been a major sensation. Articles would have been published in all the fanzines speculating as to whether Campbell had taken to drink, dope, or to accepting bribes from Galaxy. He would have been criticized, defended, vilified, whitewashed and psycho-analysed within an inch of his life. But nowadays he could put a half-naked woman on his cover and nobody would remark on it.

In fact, he's just done it. I don't expect anyone will start jumping up and down and pointing to it, because nobody did when about this time last year Astounding first got around to conceding the existence of sex. What I am wondering is how many fans on reading that surprising story turned frantically to the contents page and saw with a curious thrill that the usual byline "Assistant Editor: Kay Tarrant" was missing? Why, this was a semi-mythological event worthy to rank with the day Jane of the English Daily Mirror lost all her clothes. This comic strip heroine, as you may know, displays selected portions of her anatomy every day and during the War it became a legend with the troops that on Victory Day she would show All. It was practically one of the Allied War Aims. The story goes that on VE Day she did, and spurred on by this glimpse of what they were fighting for, the Allied Forces went on to beat Japan.

But how many present-day fans know or care about the Legend of Catharine Tarrant? The story is that Miss Tarrant is an acidulous spinster whose life is dedicated to keeping Astounding a clean-cut magazine for John's super-scientific Boy Scouts. She might accept bad stories, accept stories full of elementary grammatical errors, even accept stories twice that shouldn't have been written once, but there's one thing you could be sure of: that when John W. Junior looked in from playing with his diatronics set or Hieronymus machine or whatever the latest fad was, he would never find that she'd accepted anything that would raise a blush from a pure-minded young lady. (Whether it would arouse any interest at all was of course another question altogether, and one that doesn't seem to have worried either of them.) Miss Tarrant, dedicated from the neck up, fought for Astounding's honor as she would have no doubt fought for her own, if the occasion had ever arisen. The legend goes on that in the days when Astounding had its own stable of writers they used to get up to some horse-play, and one of the ways they kicked over the traces was to vie with one another to see who could sneak something dirty past Miss Tarrant. Obscene double meanings and erotic allusions were painstakingly thought up and cunningly inserted in per-

I suppose it was too good to last. For a long time there, all I had to do when an Oopsla deadline loomed ahead was to dig out that big envelope full of used bus tickets, Texaco maps, timetables and similar cherished souvenirs, and recount the events of another few hours in 1952. If I'd been left alone I'd probably have kept it up indefinitely, getting nearer to the end of the trip without actually arriving, until your great-grand-

The Harp That Once Or Twice II

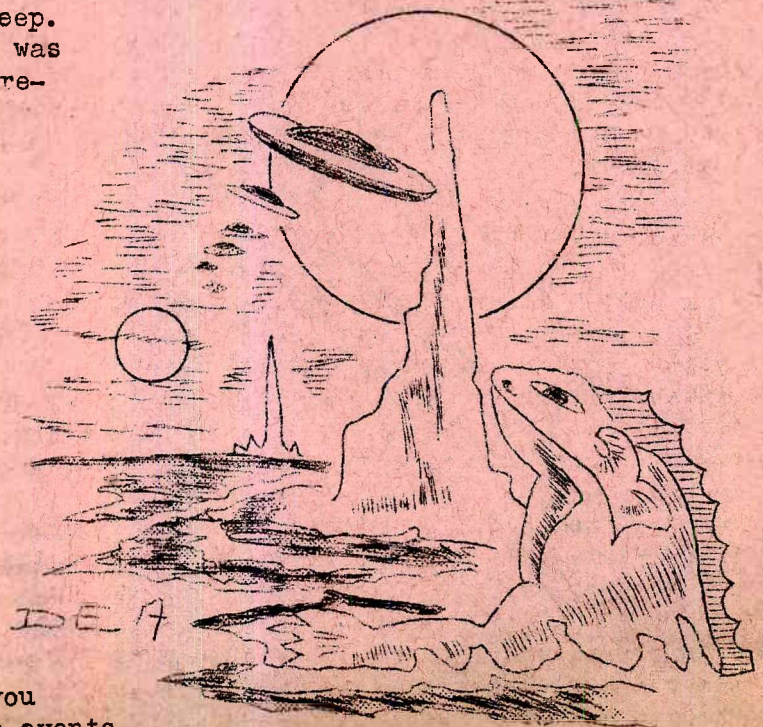
fectly serious stories, camouflaged with all the literary skill the authors could command. But none of them could get past the faithful guard of Miss Tarrant's shining blue pencil. None, that is, except George O. Smith. He won the contest in a canter by getting into print a story about a man who built a better mousetrap (which I wouldn't be surprised was written especially for the purpose) in which the hero's tomcat was referred to casually as "the original ball-bearing mousetrap."

Now, in the light of all this, wouldn't it be interesting to speculate on what lay behind the omission of Miss Tarrant's name from the issue with the sexy story in it, and its reinstatement the following month? Has Campbell gone in for sex with the same enthusiasm he went in for dianetics and seduced Miss Tarrant? Has an ultimatum come down from old Street & Smith that like King David they need sex to restore their failing circulation and that Miss Tarrant must give in or go? If so, is Miss Tarrant being driven out of her mind by the conflict between her principles and loyalty to good old S&S, so that she's accepting stories twice and so on? Or was it merely that she was on holiday when the offending story was put in, and when she got back there were angry scenes and stamped feet and slammed doors and tearful reconciliation?

Of course one of the reasons we don't have this type of column any more is the same one that explains why I haven't been able to give the dates of any of the issues of Astounding I was thinking about. Generally, fans don't keep their prozines the way they used to, and they don't have them available for reference. As for the current issues, those fans who buy them all don't have time to read them: and those who don't buy them all often find it embarrassing to take their typer down to the newsstand and write their column there. We do have prozine reviews, Ghod help us, but in the nature of things as they are, or as they were until quite recently, they can't be the leisurely conducted tours they used to be. They resemble more the desperate cries of policemen during a riot, directing refugees to places of safety or warning them of particular perils.

There's an even older form of this type of column, the science snippets one. This has been dying since the days of Will Skora, and there are plenty of us waiting to dance on its grave. Nowadays you can get the same information, presented quite as inaccurately, in the newspapers and promags. We also have the flying saucer fringe of fandom, but the less said about that the better. I've nothing against flying saucers personally, you understand--it's just that I don't like the company they keep. Incidentally, didn't anyone think it was a shocking thing to see a reputable reviewer like Santesson devote a whole page of Fantastic Universe to discussing Adamski, Leslie & Allingham as if they were more than crackpots or swindlers?

Then there's the purely fannish type of column, including Convention Reports and social notes from all over. Usually the trouble with these is that when the events are interesting you don't feel like taking notes, and reports tend to degenerate into lists of people you didn't eat breakfast with and who was under whose bed. Pending the invention of a pocket tape-recorder there's nothing to be done about this, unless like John Berry you just invent everything including the events



The Harp That Once Or Twice III

themselves. But now I come to think of it, there's one fannish occasion I can partly report. Yesterday Irish Fandom had a farewell party for Bob Shaw, who is sailing shortly for Canada. The hosts were James and Peggy White, in the new White house up in the Belfast Mountains, the entire deposit for which was paid by the sale of one story to Astounding. (It's the only one-story house in the world with two floors.) Madeleine is in hospital, so I took some notes so I could tell her about it and thus I happen to have some authentic dialogue. Everyone in Irish Fandom was there--James and Peggy White, Bob & Sadie Shaw, the venerable George Charters, John Berry, Gerard Quinn (the K. Winn of the Fansmanship Lectures, though he didn't know this himself until last night), and me. When George arrived, James and Peggy called him to the window to admire their front garden, recently reclaimed from the primeval jungle...

James: Look at my new fence posts, George. Observe the symmetry.

George: Call that a symmetry? Where's the headstones?

Peggy: Did you see the Sweet William?

George: You mean that stuff you planted the shamrocks beside?

Peggy: I didn't plant those shamrocks; they came up by their own Sweet Will.

James: Don't you like the anenomes?

George: No, I hate those things. They gave me one in hospital before I had my operation.

James: It's a pity they didn't believe in euthanasia there. They might have put you out of our misery.

Bob: What's euthanasia? Siberian Boy Scouts?

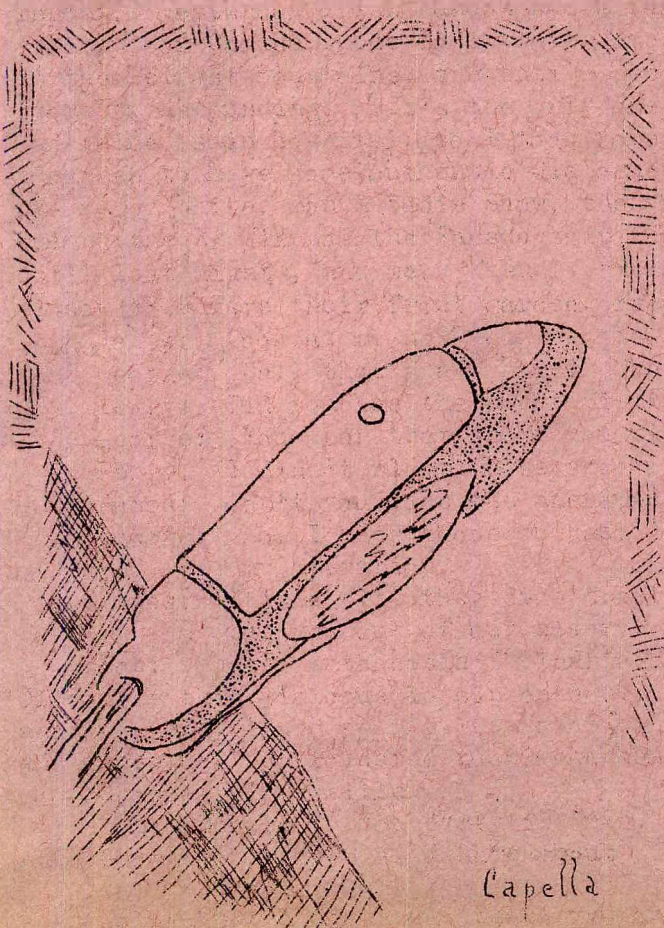
Of course this dialogue is condensed... Another time they were talking about clothes and Peggy mentioned seeing in a shop window a pair of knickers with "No, no, a thousand times no!" embroidered round the hem.

George: In Braille?

Bob: Tch tch. You dirty old man.

George: At my age, I have about as much interest in women as I had when I was four.

Bob: What a dirty wee beast you must have been.



Maybe I had better explain that George is the oldest of our group by a few years, though he doesn't look it, and it has become a Berry-inspired tradition that he is in an advanced stage of senile decay.

When the drinks were served I suggested everyone throw their glasses in the fireplace, shouting "Skoal!"

James: Do that and you'll be skoal-ded.

Peggy: Shall I throw some coal on instead, shouting "'s'coal!"?

James: No, if the room gets any warmer we'll all lapse into a coma.

George: Well, if you don't want a coma, just put some semi-colon.

Bob didn't move a muscle of his face. "I think, he said gravely, "I'll save that one up and laugh at it when I get home."

James was showing us some transparencies of Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea.

"This character was using atomic energy 100 years before it was invented," he said.

"His watch was fast."

Later, Peggy was bringing in the supper,

and bumped into the tea-trolley on the door tread. "Those trolleys should have caterpillar tracks," suggested someone.

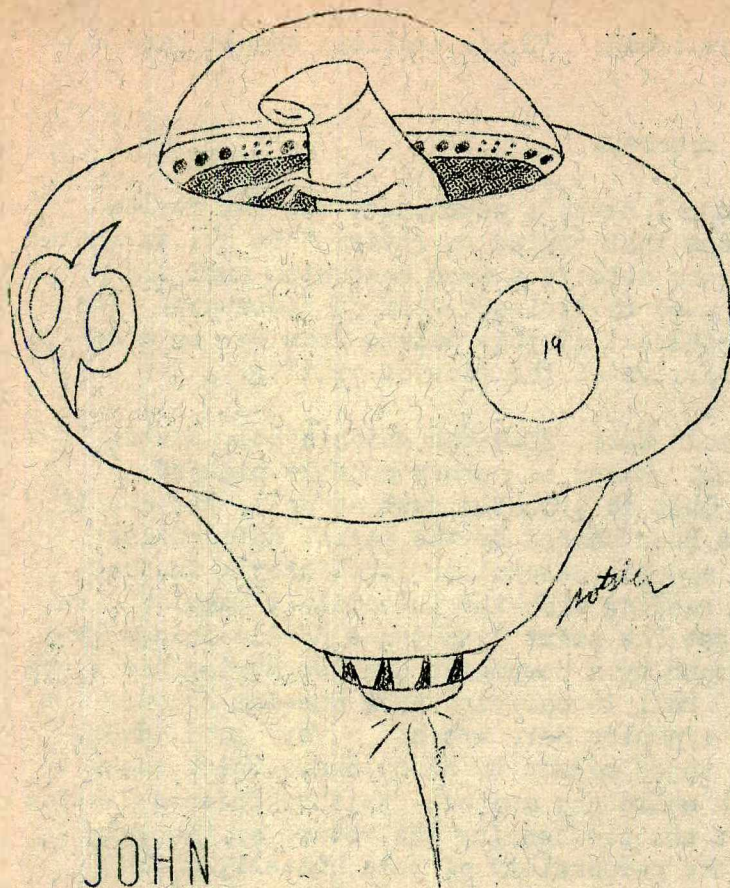
John: For bringing in the grub?

Bob: Yes, especially when it's home cocoon.

Had enough? There's one last type of column I haven't mentioned, the fmz review column. Nowadays there are so many fanzines that trying to review them all is rather like swatting flies. I'd like to see someone attempt a more searching analysis of certain fans and fanzines, the way Laney used to vivisect them in Spacewarp. I'm no Laney, but I'll try to give in each instalment of this column from now on a detailed review of one fanzine, the last to arrive at the time of writing.

This time the victim is Muzzy #8, from Claude Hall, 2214 San Antonio St., Austin 5, Texas. 46 pages. 25¢ or Pay After Reading. Muzzy is rather muddily mimeoed on coarse paper, something like Dimensions. This is probably just as well, because if it had been any more legible it might have been banned by the postal authorities; some of the fillers are jokes of doubtful age but determined indelicacy. The cartoons are not particularly distinguished, ranging from the infantile (Example: man holding dagger, caption "I'm sure you'll get the point") to those doodle-things by Dave English which look as if they were drawn by a pneumatic drill during his lunch hour, but which many people seem to like. Hall is carrying on a one-man crusade for more amateur fiction in fanzines, but the examples here are not a very good advertisement for his cause. There is a rather vapid column by Nancy Share which shows promise of developing into something worth while and another "Whither Science Fiction" article by Wilkie Conner, better than most and prophesying the return of the pulps. But the main interest of the magazine is the personality of Hall himself, which rather resembles that of a disgruntled Max Keasler. Hitherto Hall's main claims to fame that I am aware of have been an account in an early Muzzy of his desperate struggles to produce the magazine while in the Army, which was sincere and quite moving, and a more recent article asserting that some other Texas crudzine was superior to Quandry, which was so absurd that everyone ignored it. Both these Hall-marks are evident in this issue, especially in the fmz review section where, while his judgements are still odd, his writing bears out the decided promise shown in the early Muzzy article and his later reports from Germany in his Apazine. His comments are forceful and pungently expressed. Examples...Psychotic: "I wouldn't recommend this crapzine to a bird dog." ...A La Space: "In the editorial, Kent Corey says 'I'm back' and the reader is quickly struck with the associated thought that the air might have remained a little fresher had he remained away." ...Merlin: "It must be interesting to someone, yet you can't think who." And so on. You might not be able to agree with two out of three of his assessments, but you must admit it's fun to see someone stick out his neck like this, even if it's brass, and it makes a nice change from the reciprocal backscratching that fills most fmz review columns. Admittedly Claude lets his own friends down easily, but fortunately for us he doesn't seem to have many friends: and unfortunately faneds being the hypersensitive creatures they are, if he goes on like this he'll have even less. However that's his worry. Meanwhile the rest of us can sit on the sidelines and enjoy the brawl.

Incidentally, about this sort of thing, I had a pained letter the other day from an English fan because of something I'd said expressing approval of A Bas. He felt that the sort of name-calling that goes on there, especially the Ellik-Vorzimer fight, was in poor taste; that fans shouldn't be cruel to one another, even if the victim was a fugghead. Fuggheads have feelings too, he pointed out. Well, that's true, and I admit I wouldn't go in for this sort of thing myself. But there seems to be a type of fan for whom this is a way of life, and presumably they enjoy it. It's like amateur boxing. It's not my idea of fun, but if two men like to go into a ring and try to hurt one another I don't see why I shouldn't watch them with interest without feeling any vicarious guilt on their behalf.



JOHN
BERRY

CUFFED AT THE FRAY

It is surprising the change that comes over a visitor to Oblique House after he or she has played Ghoodminton. When I specify 'change' I mean both physical and mental. Fen in general seem to regard Ghoodminton as a somewhat effeminate form of recreation. After all, they argue, a shuttlecock hit with a square of cardboard is only a stage removed from ping-pong.

I have tried to dispel this inaccurate conception about the lethal qualities of the game. This hasn't been too successful, probably because some mis-

guided people think I am inclined to exaggerate slightly. I must impress that if played correctly, Ghoodminton is quite a dangerous form of recreation. And we in Willisland play it correctly. I don't want to dwell too much on this aspect, but I want you to realize that during my months at 170 I have seen heavy damage inflicted to the following items: two windows, one large wooden table, one small wicker table, a table lamp, two pictures and a wall. As far as personnel are concerned, Madeleine has a Ghoodminton finger, Walt two bloodshot optics, I have four scarred ribs, and we don't call James White 'Lefty' for nothing.

So you can appreciate that we are rather peeved when we mention Ghoodminton to visitors and they sneer contemptuously (as they do) and mutter, "kids stuff."

Then an impending visit caused us to reach a decision. We would put Ghoodminton over in a big way.

...

I want to tell you about two individuals who stayed at Oblique House a few weeks ago. Two very nice fellows, actually. Mal Ashworth and Tom White. Typical fans. I sized them up immediately as worthy Ghoodminton opponents. Mal showed signs of being the aggressive type...a second Madeleine. Tom was obviously going to baffle us with science.

Walt had prepared the plan of campaign, and we began the first phase. We let them watch Walt's television whilst we encouraged Carol to twiddle with the focus dial. The effect of this was to cause partial second degree eyestrain, as was proved by two interesting events. First of all, Mal said he wanted to take photographs of us, and as he bumped his way down the hallway he produced a minute mechanical contraption which I thought was a miniature Edwardian snuff box, but which he claimed was a camera and he even manipulated it as if it was a camera. Secondly, Tom White wanted

Cuffed at the Fray II

to show off his petrol lighter and he set fire to the curtains and my moustache, in that order.

Phase two, to get them ready for the slaughter, was to give them a heavy meal. Madeleine and Sadie exceeded themselves. As Mal and Tom sat back and, prompted by Walt, stuffed themselves with cake, we grinned knowingly to each other.

The third part of the shock treatment was a clever gambit known as pun-worrying. Walt, James and Bob, aided by the Dribbling Terror (George Charters) threw complicated puns around the room with slashing speed and reckless abandon. I calculated that at the end of the session, Mal and Tom were about fifteen puns behind. At this stage, with one phase to go, they were in prime condition--eyesore, heavily dined and mentally ruptured.

Then Walt muttered that classic phrase: "Ghoodminton, anyone?"

We paraded in the chamber and brought into operation the last part of the visitors pre-Ghoodminton treatment. We sat Mal and Tom down in front of a very effective electric fire. Soon their eyelids were trying to carry out the Laws of Gravity. We thought of the sleep the two victims had lost the night before, en route from England, and we gloated.

At last the stage was set for another chapter in the history of Ghoodminton. Two poor souls would shortly be let loose to preach the perils of the game to the world in general and fen in particular. We would teach them to sneer at Walt's brainchild.

As a prelude we played an exhibition set to give them a rough idea of the hazards, although with great cunning we played at half speed. We licked our lips in anticipation as Walt dragged Tom and Mal to their feet. "Tom partner Madeleine, and Mal partner John," announced Walt.

The game began. I started to work away at Tom, giving him the odd hack across the batting arm. Then the first casualty occurred, and strangely enough it wasn't a visitor. Mal returned the shuttlecock with such force that it hit Madeleine in the neck and temporarily stopped the flow of blood to (or from) her brain. We dragged her off, protesting feebly.

Bob Shaw took her place. I want to tell you about Bob Shaw. I maintain that the boy should have been a ballet dancer. The rhythmic Grecian suppleness of his movements is beautiful to behold, and as he flits across the court, arm flowing in a superbly artistic parabola, one can almost visualize him approaching the climax of the 'Waltz of the Snowflakes.'

The contest resumed. Bob had not even chance to perform his first pirouette before Tom White, suffering the after effects of phase one, hit Bob on the back of the head instead of the shuttlecock. On reflection, it may have been the shape of Bob's head that baffled him. In any case, Bob was out of action. Instead of two visitors receiving medical attention, our two best players were.



Cuffed at the Fray III

James stood up and we grew silent. The way he gripped his cardboard foretold of the horrors to come. I would describe James as being ponderously inevitable. The sight of blood stimulates him.

Inside thirty seconds he was lying beside Bob and Madeleine. It was rather tragic the way it happened. As you may know, it is a foul if the shuttlecock strikes you in the face. The rule is that if this happens you shout "FAYCE" at the top of your voice. This gains a point. This happened to James, but Mal misunderstood the resultant shout. He was so bewildered as he saw James scowling at him shouting "FAYCE" that he obliged with the edge of his bat.

George crawled into the fray and it was at this juncture that I regained a little of our lost prestige. I drew visitors blood. Well, to be honest, I did so indirectly. I returned the shuttlecock so fast that as Tom swung his head round to follow its flight he nearly cut his head off on his collar. He even condescended to allow a little pool of blood to form on the floorboards and thus received the proud distinction of letting blood flow for the cause.

But the shock treatment we gave Mal and Tom began to tell. The human frame can only stand so much. They were too tired to defend themselves and gradually allowed themselves to be beaten to the ground. The odds, despite our precautions, were slightly in favor of the visitors...three injured to two. A moderate Ghoddminton score.

Mal and Tom produced sufficient strength to have supper and change into their best clothes for the return trip to England the same night. We recovered quickly, being used to it, but Mal and Tom jerked about the house like cripples with rigor mortis.

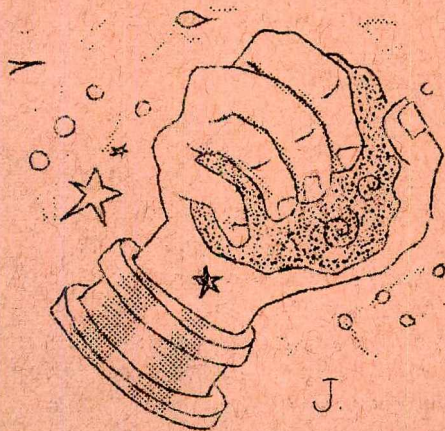
A trolley bus service runs past 170 so we were able to prop Mal and Tom against a convenient wall and eventually transported them to the boat. For a small consideration, two strong porters promised to dump the two of them in their bunks. The ship sailed away into the night.

...

Nothing has been heard of Mal or Tom since and I have been led to believe that the next BEM is postponed indefinitely.

-- John Berry ...

WORLD'S END



BILL ROSE

"'Tis strange, this world we've come across, Lomar.
But, then, we've never journeyed out this far.
Let us look close to see what we may see--
Perhaps we'll find some valued property."

"But, Modan, it's late and time is flowing by;
If we are missed, they will question why."

"You're right, Lomar, I should not hesitate;
I know the punishment if we are caught late.
Here...take it up and drop it in your haversack,
We'll grind it up and melt the metal out
when we get back."

DEAN A GRENNELL'S

GRENADEAN ITCHINGS



WHERE HAVE I SEEN THAT FACE BEFORE?

I asked myself, peering at the Apr56 issue of IF, fresh upon the stands. Here was a dyspeptic-looking man with a huge mop of dandelion-colored hair (and Indian war-paint, yet!) aimlessly wiping down an improbable-looking handgun (presumably--it could be a paint-sprayer) with a rag, also flaming yellow to match his locks. Upper background waits a second figure...female, that much is hardly dubitable...and behind her a rank of crouching guards or goons or what-have-you. Scene appears to be some sort of arena. Nagging thought: where have I encountered this situation before? Blind-ing flare of déjà vu, then...of course, ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, Jan56, pps. 8-83, "The Executioner," Algis J. Budrys, novelette, illos by Freas...yes, yes, of course. Now I remember. (Happily, I not only have an eidetic memory--I used to know what that meant but I forgot--but I have the Jan56 aSF right beside my left elbow.)

Well, well. Sure! Ole Samson Joyce, in his trial suit, complete with ruffles at the cuffs and the same embroidery and jewels and...(business of snapping fingers) sure, I knew I should recognize it. Why looka there, that's his "...old favorite; a gas-fired 15-millimeter Bogen that had been with him since his old days as Associate Justice of Utica." Interesting to know that in some future spoke of If, the Bogen people will be making hi-fidelity pneumatic pistols.

Random thought: if he is going to start slinging shots at that girl in the background I for one would not care to be one of those guards standing right behind her. Oh, well. Quibbles. What story, if any, does this illustrate? Peek inside...hmmMM... "The Executioner," by Frank Riley. Put copy back on shelf, shuffle away smirking, ignore glare from newsstand proprietor.

Small world, isn't it?

Irony aside, what probably happened was that Freas painted the cover and showed it to Aye-Jay who wrote a story around it and showed the story, in turn, back to Freas, who then drew up some black and white illos to go with it and they made a package deal of it and took it around to show to Campbell and he liked the story and the interiors but somebody vetoed the cover painting in favor of the ghastly but sensational van Dongen they ran on the Jan56 issue. So, rather than let a perfectly good painting go to waste, Freas sold it to Quinn (or to Mel Hunter, art editor at IF) and they had a story written around it by Frank Riley, whoever he may be, and...voila!...two versions of "The Executioner" for the price of one. Spillane fans should be having a ball.

AND, SPEAKING OF GAS-GUNS,

there aren't hardly any other kind, even now. Outside

Grenadean Etchings II

of a few spring guns--Daisy air-rifles, for instance--bows, crossbows and things like that, all guns are gas-fired (more properly, use gas as a propellant) right now. Sure, most of them use powder but they burn that to a gas and it's the gas that does the trick. And any sf author who comes around with compressed air pistols as weapons of the future will have a hard time convincing me.

Why? Well, let's take this "15-millimeter Bogen" for example. Fifteen millimeters is very close to 19/32nds of an inch, which figures out very close to caliber .60 or thereabouts. Will guns of the future evolve to caliber .60 affairs powered by some gas that is compressed and released as is, e.g., carbon dioxide? Very very unlikely. Possibly where you want a very low-power weapon such as the presently popular CO₂ rifles and pistols which are ideal for light target work and perhaps potting at sparrows, starlings etc. But dash it all, it's by far the wrongest kind of approach for a weapon used in perforating the umbilici of beauteous blondes in the approved Mike Hammer tradition.

With the exception of a few industries such as the manufacture of automobiles and household appliances, changes come about because the new version is better than the old. There has been very little basic change in the design of revolvers in 120 years, sole exception being the incorporation of self-contained metallic cartridges about 90 years ago. The design of automatic pistols has changed only in the most minor of details (for example, they've gone from hard-rubber grips to walnut and back to a plastic) since the advent of the 20th century.

The reason for this is that there's really very little that can be done to change the firearms of the present to make them any better. New models concentrate chiefly on smoothness of action, symmetry of line and design, minor trim such as imitation gold triggers on Browning automatics and upon engraving. Fine firearms are a true artform...have been for centuries...and there's almost no limit to what you can spend for one (British gunsmiths, the finest in the world in certain fields, think nothing of charging two or three thousand dollars for a double-barrelled big-game rifle.) But basic changes? No.

What, after all's said and done, can you do to make them better than they are right now? In what way should improvement move: make them more powerful, more accurate, more deadly, easier to carry and fire, quieter, more dependable, of greater capacity, or perhaps more appealing to look at?

Let's take that power angle. Consider for just a moment the engineering problems involved in compressing a gas--any gas: carbon dioxide, nitrogen, helium, hydrogen sulfide--to a pressure of 60,000 pounds per square inch, of holding that hellish pressure under tap, ready for instant unleashing, for weeks, perhaps years, and then, at the moment of firing, the problem of releasing it, all at once, 100% dependably, to drive the projectile out through the barrel. What kind of tank can you store 30 tones of pressure per square inch in for years without loss and without danger of accidental explosion? What manner of release mechanism will release it without danger to the person firing the gun?

The problems are, I assure you, fraught with the gravest complications. But here, come to think of it, why do you have to store the propellant and carry it about in the gun in the form of a gas? Why not play it smart and have a chemist nitrate some cellulose and some glycerine and combine them and mould them into flakes and granules and then load these into inexpensive brass tubes. You could plug one end with the projectile and form the other end over nearly solid and plug the last bit of hole with a cup containing a wisp of lead azide or potassium



Grenadean Etchings III

chlorate or mercuric fulminate or a similar explosive sensitive to a sharp blow. Then, when you wish to unleash all this pressure, all you need to do is to enclose the light brass tube (or cartridge if you prefer) with a steel tube of sufficient strength to contain 4000 atmospheres of pressure (this, I might add, is fairly important...I mean making sure the barrel is stout enough to take it) and you seal it all in save for a tiny opening about 1/16th of an inch in diameter at the base of the cartridge and through this you drive a pin to set off the lead azide in the cup--firing pin and primer, respectively--and this touches off the nitrocellulose and nitroglycerine granules in the cartridge proper and they speedily convert to gas with the formation of considerable heat and pressures as high as 100,000 pounds to the square inch or more...it depends upon the load and various other factors...and the projectile, recognizing the pressure differential between the 14.7 psi on one side of it and the umpty-thousand pounds on the other, moves out the barrel, accelerating at a number of gravities you could hardly believe.

So let's concede that the propellant is capable of all the power we can use and, actually, a great deal more. Working pressures of 12 to 24 thousand psi are much more common in handguns, yet 100,000 or more is right there, if you need it. What's more, powder is progressive-burning. It saves some of the boost for the time after the projectile starts to move, when there's more space to fill if the pressure is to be kept up.

So there's an incredible amount of engineering to do before Bogen or anyone else produces a "gas-fired" gun of any caliber that will come close to equaling the performance of even the lowliest firearms.

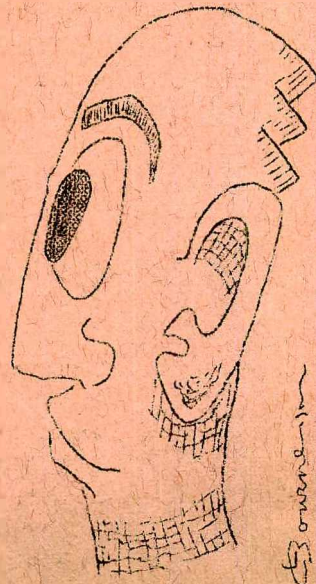
A random word here about "supersonic bullets," such as Philip José Farmer mentioned in "Moth and Rust." Heaven only knows when bullets first broke the sound barrier, but it was a long time ago. Most rifle bullets and even a fair number of the handgun bullets travel at velocities above Mach One when leaving the muzzle. Even the humble .22 "long rifle" leaves the gun at around 1125 feet per second...substantially faster than sound. The hottest commercial rifle loads approach Mach Four while experimental numbers have climbed towards 10,000 feet per second...almost Mach Ten.

I might note, also, that even the hellishly fast 10,000 foot-second job is still not even close to traveling at 1/3 escape velocity, which is around 37,000 fps.

But even at a creepy 4000 fps or so, it doesn't take a large slug to do a lot of damage. The pill from a .220 Swift appears but little larger than the head of a kitchen match and yet it will scream through the half-inch thick web between the top and bottom of a piece of steel railroad track and it will leave behind it a hole nearly 5/8" in diameter, blown cleanly out of the solid steel. The edges aren't even rough, it's rather as though it had been cut very quickly with a torch.

At velocities above 4000 fps, metals and most solids tend to behave as turgid gases, especially after collision. At velocities of 1000 and upward the effect is there although not in such a spectacular manner.

Why doesn't the .22 Swift supersede all other rifles? Mainly because it has too much power. It's fine to hunt coyotes with...at close range it spreads them out over a fan-shaped area some fifteen feet behind where they were standing...but it's stupid to shoot a deer with one, or any other game you wish to preserve fairly intact. Moreover, the report of the gun is something to experience and the barrel life with hot loads is pathetically short...

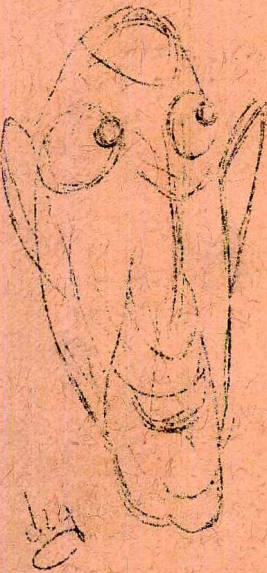


Grenadean Etchings IV

75 to 200 rounds, depending upon the standards of accuracy it must maintain.

So much for power, what about accuracy? Not much to be done there, I'm afraid. The limiting factor is not in the gun, it's in the shooter. There is hardly a firearm made today (except possibly for the very cheapest) which is not capable of better groups than any ordinary person can fire in the "offhand" position. The answer is not in the sights, nor the barrel, nor the trigger mechanism. The answer is in getting something to steady the gun while aiming and to prevent the shooter's "flinch" at the moment of firing.

Flinch varies with the individual, of course, and with the weight of the gun, the weight of the projectile, its velocity and the gun's recoil as well as upon the sound of the report. Raising your caliber to 15 millimeters, I'm afraid, is evolution in reverse. The earliest single-shot muzzle-loading pistols were often caliber .58, firing a round lead ball driven to low velocities (say, maybe, 300 to 500 fps) by large charges of a coarse black powder. They were almost as hard on the shooter as they were on the target.

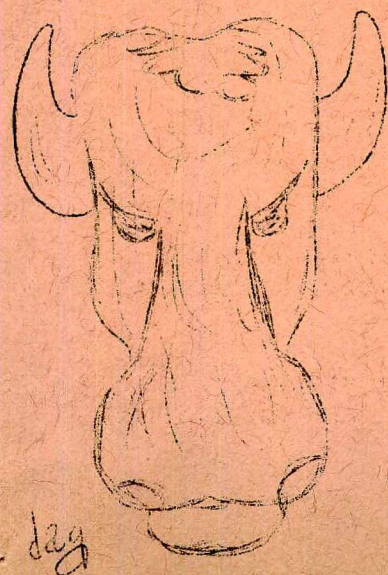


Even seven thousandths of an inch in bore diameter can make a lot of difference. A reasonably hot .38 special load or a .357 (which is the same diameter) will kick far less than a .45, which oddly, has considerably less striking force. I do not think I would care to entrust my wrist to firing a 15 mm gun which threw a slug of any size fast enough to do any good, particularly since the drawing doesn't show any sort of muzzle-brake or compensator.

What's more, 15 mm cartridges or bullets cut the capacity of the magazine way down. Obviously, you could get almost twice as many 9 mm slugs into the same clip as 15 mms; more than twice as many if you staggered them side-by-side as the Browning 9 mm does.

So the Bogen doesn't stack up for potential accuracy either. As for deadliness: that's hard to say, of course; its slugs might be coated with some quick-acting poison so that the merest scratch is instantly fatal, or it might fire small explosive bullets. Hollow points would be not too effective since they disrupt mainly by the force of their rotation rather than by flattening upon contact and the velocity you'd be able to get out of a huge punkin-ball like that would not mean much upset as it hit.

Could the Bogen be quieter? Possibly yes to that one. You cannot effectively silence any gun which fires a bullet at velocities greater than the speed of sound for the simple reason that the bullet itself makes a fair percentage of the noise after it leaves the muzzle, just as an airplane, cracking the sound barrier, can sometimes break windows over a wide area. You can't silence a revolver of any sort at all since they all leak powder-gas between the front of the cylinder and the back of the barrel. It is an educational experience to fire a hot load from a .357 magnum by dim lights or in total darkness. A shimmering disc of bright blue fire gushes about five inches in all directions to sides, top and bottom around the back end of the barrel, accompanying a tremendous gout of pale-blue and orange flame about the size and proportions of a large water-melon (Hi, Burbee) which issues from the muzzle. You could silence the muzzle-blast on a revolver, true, but there's little you could do about that 10" wafer of fire between barrel and cylinder...the worst of the noise.



Grenadean Etchings V

A single-shot pistol, having no recoiling parts, whose projectile travels somewhat slower than does sound, can be silenced very effectively although such a silencer adds to the bulk and detracts somewhat from the accuracy. During WWII, the OSS made use of Hi-Standard .22 automatics, firing standard-velocity .22 shorts, with the action locked until after firing and these were equipped with silencers that actually made little more noise than the traditional "muffled cough" you're always reading about in detective stories.

Dependability, capacity and aesthetic appeal...the better of the present-day crop are adequate in these respects. A 15 mm Bogen could hardly be more dependable, would have less capacity and, from the pictures, I'd say has less appeal to the eye than any of half-a-dozen mid-20th century weapons, most of which were basically designed in the late eighteen hundreds.

The so-called "ray-pistol"--if it ever appears--can offer certain worthwhile advantages to justify its existence. It would be very handy to have a weapon with an infinitely adjustable range of power, from the merest flick to stun a specimen of wildlife desired for domestication or later use as food...from this on up to a wide-open capability to consume a creature the size of a dinosaur into smoke and vapor in a single microsecond. A gun like that which could be turned on and left on and sprayed like a garden hose, would offer undreamed-of potentialities.

Consider its efficacy for use as a stick-up weapon. No need to confront your client face to face with possible chances of future recognition, no need to kill him--a risky course at best--rather one need but to crouch back in an alley and wait for a likely victim and stun him, dragging him to some spot offering privacy for a leisurely search, then a clean getaway as he sleeps...if this strikes you as a likely start for a prozine plot, I think it's been done...in GALAXY, if I'm not mistaken. And I could be.

But, seriously, until the ray-guns come along (and don't hold your breath), firearms will continue to have it over all sorts of compressed-gas weapons, blowguns, spring-guns, magnetic-repulsion guns, etc. &c. There has been little change in the last century, there need be little change in the future. The present design is adequate. In other words: "THE ZAP-GUN WILL NEVER REPLACE THE .357 MAGNUM!"

-- Dean A Grennell ...

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A

sixth tender poem of the Old Spaceways titled...

"Better not wait up for me"

Space is awfully big.

You can look in any direction and it just goes and goes and goes.
All cluttered up with comets and planets and stars and things.

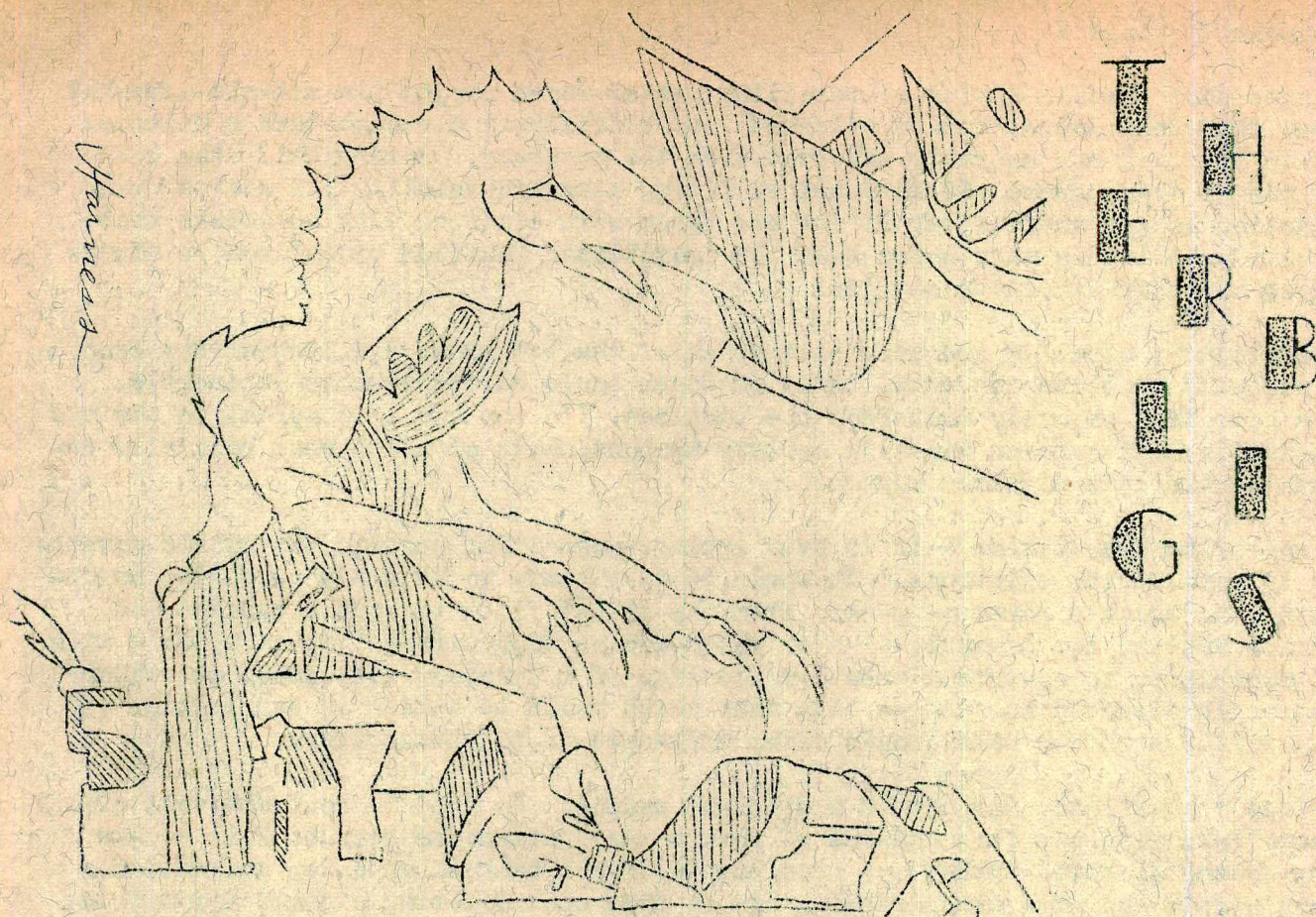
Einstein said it's all relative.

And that if you go in one direction long enough and far enough
That pretty soon you'll circle around and wind up where you started from.

That's comforting.

Somebody goofed when they fueled this ship...we got off okay
But the astrogator says we stand to miss Pluto by a cool million miles.

I don't think we'll be home in time for dinner.



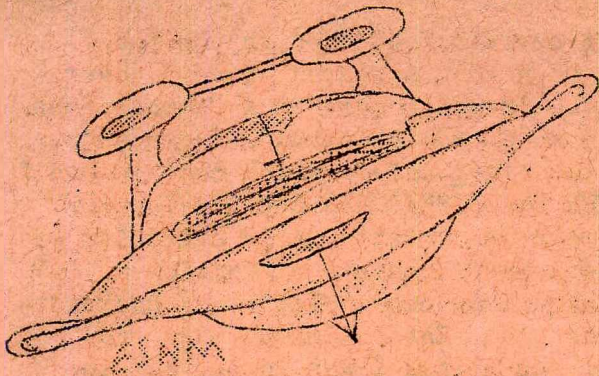
Well, here it is already the 22nd of May and I'm not done yet. Not much left, however, besides this section. Unfortunately, dated as some of the columns in this issue may have seemed, Therbligs is apt to seem even more so. Most of the letters I have for publication this time are well over a year old, a defect I can hardly remedy except by publishing this issue and hoping you will all write me fresh letters for next time. For my part, I'll try to have a fresh OOPS out in three months or so.

Before I start on the letters, however, I'd like to give credit for the artwork in this issue...cover by Dave Jenerette, interior illustrations by Dean Grennell (dag), Jack Harness (Harness), Dave Jenerette (J), Marvin Bryer (MB), Ray Capella (Capella) L S Bourne (Bourne), Mrs M Dominick (DEA) and Bill Rotsler (WR or rotsler). I've tried to make sure all drawings were signed...if I've slipped, please excuse me. Artists, sign your drawings--at least initial them, each and every one, to help me remember to include your signature when I put them on stencil.

Regarding this matter of artwork, it has long been an OOPS policy to use a right smart amount of lickin' good drawings, usually about one to a page or slightly less. However, what with the skipped year of publication, my backlog is getting extremely low and I'm casting around for artists to help fill the void. I've already written to several of the more well known artists in the field asking for material, but now is an excellent time for you beginners or struggling neo's to show me what you can do. The pages of OOPS were never more wide open than now.

Without further ado, let's get on to a longish letter from Bob Bloch: "Lots of good things in this issue, but I think McCain's evaluation of GALAXY and it's reception by the rabid fan element takes precedence over anything else. I think it's a masterly analysis, right down to the line. I do disagree with McCain, however, on minor points. First of all, I'd assign considerably more merit to the GALAXY serials as a whole than he does, particularly THE DEMOLISHED MAN and GRAVY PLANET. I think Vernon rather stacks the deck by insisting on "literary" merit. As he goes on to say himself, later in the essay, "Most science-fiction is not great literature." But judging the above titles within their frame of

reference. Both are head and shoulders above most serials published in the field, and the general acclaim accorded them by critics when they appeared in hard covers did nothing to hurt the cause of science-fiction. I'm quite certain that most fans --if they found themselves in Horace Gold's place as an editor--would accept and print these serials: particularly after reading the other novels which come in and form a pitiable contrast. I can find flaws in THE DEMOLISHED MAN and GRAVY PLANET --but then, if I'm in a flaw-finding mood I can work up a pretty valid criticism of the Bible. Fact remains that nobody has yet done a more dramatic exposition of ESP than Bester, and nobody has come up with as successful an extrapolation of hucksterdom as did Pohl and Kornbluth. Literature? Maybe not. Entertainment, and good entertainment? My vote would be yes. ## One of the things I was hoping McCain would comment upon would be the peculiar background of many science-fiction fan-critics. He touches upon the fact that the libraries are filled with classics, and suggests that people dissatisfied with science-fiction seek them out. ## But has it occurred to him (and to you, and all of us) that perhaps one of the reasons why there is such harsh and unwarranted criticism of science-fiction by fans is because many of them do read the so-called classics? ## That is to say, many of these more articulate critics happen to be college students, or freshly-graduated from college. In their student roles they have been forcibly exposed to a certain amount of literature. Their English courses consist, in part, of analysis and evaluation of said same. ## At the same time, they indulge in schizobiblia (this is my own word, patent applied for) by simultaneously reading science-fiction. It isn't too surprising, therefore, that they tend to get their values mixed--and also, their expectations. They seem to be the victims of an unconscious reasoning pattern, as follows: "I read the classics. The classics are good. My superior intellect causes me to appreciate them. Therefore, if science-fiction doesn't measure up to classical literary standards, my superior intellect remains unquestioned; but it must be the fault of the editors and writers in not supplying me with great literature." ## I say this reasoning is unconscious merely because I believe most of these critics are unaware of the fact that they seek to apply the wrong yardstick to science fiction. They are given quite an ego-boost by the realization that they dig the Elizabethans, or get hep to the symbolism of Melville, or find Henry James real nervous. It may be that they align themselves with the avant-garde and go off on a Kafka kick or a Sartre spree. ## And the moment they are reminded, directly or indirectly, that science-fiction is not the same breed of cat, they become extremely defensive. Instead of admitting to themselves that they are not full-time appreciators of the Great Books Club but sometimes sneak in a little entertainment, they prefer to place the blame on the entertainers. "It isn't our fault that we aren't reading Great Literature all the time--it's the fault of the pros because they don't consistently provide it for us." ## Hence some of the pretentious and egregious criticism one encounters. ## It is true that editors and publishers, through the years, have utilized the commonplace advertising techniques of flattering themselves and their audience by using terms like "classic" and "masterpiece" in describing certain published science-fiction works; but this should be taken with the same grain of salt with which one takes advertising claims for motion pictures, toothpaste, or a new brand of soap chips. Within its frame of reference, there's nothing wrong with such designations. But the "cool, refreshing" effect of brushing your teeth with a certain compound is not equated with the "cool, refreshing" effect of a breeze wafting its way to you as you lay in the sands beneath Diamond Head in Hawaii. And a science-fiction "masterpiece" doesn't have to measure up to the same standards as PARADISE LOST. (Even PARADISE REGAINED doesn't manage the trick, for that matter.) ## The surprising thing, to me, is that in some instances science-fiction can justifiably take its place as a worthy swimming-partner in the mainstream of literature. When it happens, editors such as Horace Gold deserve credit and congratulation for the selection and encouragement of writers capable of superior production. But to expect continual perfection on the part of either editor or writer is unreasonable and unrealistic. If fandom is just a goddam hobby, then prodom is just a goddam job. There are "dedicated" fans, but they are a minority. There are, perhaps, "dedicated" pros, but they are also a minority--and a most underprivileged and



underpaid minority, at that. Most fans demand entertainment and most pros try to give it to them. When the entertainment is good, that should be sufficient. The rest is lagniappe. And as McCain says, GALAXY certainly offers enough of the latter. (Box 362, Weyauwega, Wisconsin)"

What you have to say is true enough, Bob, except for where we disagree on personal likes and dislikes...for my part, I stopped reading GALAXY some time ago when I began

finding it a chore to sit down and read an issue. I figured, logically enough, if it's no fun to read, why read it? I do still buy GALAXY for the novels, however... serials, that is, and not the term as she is sometimes loosely used in the magazine business. The thing that strikes me as "lacking" about this whole discussion about the qualities of various prozine editors is best exemplified by your letter. That is, your letter is the one either Gold or Campbell should have written, yet neither one of them did. If you had not taken the time to write it for them, it would have been left undone. Why?

Next, a personal squib for Bob Farnham, who asks: "Gregg--as a personal favor... in the next issue of OOPS would you put in a squib for MARGARET STODDARD who was at Cleveland to contact me by mail. I've got to locate her and straighten out a slight misunderstanding...she thinks I'm a SNOB! ...of all things... (506 Second Avenue, Dalton, Georgia)

Miss (Mrs?) Stoddard isn't on my subscription list, Bob, so I can only hope some other reader of OOPS who knows her will pass the word--and your address--on to her. And if you're listening, Miss S, I'll personally vouch for Bob's un-snobbishness.

At this point, I would like to interject a Famous Last Word from Dean A Grennell (a goood man!) from a letter dated 13 December 1955 (quite some time ago) which reads as follows: "...I think it was in TRFap that you challenged me to a contest in procreation. Now I wish to note that when you get to five, if you want to win the race all you need to do is to acquire one more... Barring unforeseen circumstances, five is sufficient for all of our needs--as I'm sure you'll agree when you see them! However, I think I might offer a bit of advice in a purely sporting sense (that is, in the sense of good sportsmanship...there's some treacherous semantics lurking here): you'll have a much easier time outdistancing us if you form some sort of alliance with a female of the species. Parthenogenesis is a difficult business at best and for a male, even a Marine Sergeant, it is damned hard indeed."

Well, now, that was written 'way back when and I have since then formed an alliance of sorts with a female of the species, but Grennell has upped the ante on me...as of the 30th of March of this year they added a sixth to the We Love Dean Grennell More Than Anything Fan Club. And I ask you, is this fair? But I'm not licked yet --I'm still willing to try. My wife doesn't know about this little...ah, sporting proposition I believe you said, Dean...as yet, so give me a little time yet to sort of break the news gently. After all, seven...

The Science & Fiction (sic!) Critics Club's Mrs Alma Hill says, bitingly: "According to our records, which would be hard to confuse since I merely jotted the facts on your address card, we requested a sample copy all right but we enclosed the 15¢. Furthermore, we NEVER request sample copies without sending SOME payment, even in cases where none is mentioned. ## Enclosed is another 10¢ worth of stamps and I hope you realize you are now obligated to put out at least as good a quarter's worth as SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY. We just can't

wait to see how close you come. (230 Clarendon St, Boston, Massachusetts)"

All I know is that when I opened your letter, no money came out of it. I'm not trying to deny what your records show but more than one person has written saying they were enclosing money and then forgetting to do so at the last moment. ## Interesting obsession you have there, about me being obligated to do such-and-such for your quarter's worth. Now, I haven't read SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY for quite some time, myself, but I have no yardsticks with which to compare it to OOPS. I'll bet you one thing, though...they don't run Silverberg, Ellison or Bloch as often as I do.

On the "dans un verre d'eau" question, Sam Johnson guesses: "While I do not know French, the title to that column suggests only one thing to me, being a tempest "in a teapot." The connection is there for me, in some esoteric basis, but I cannot clearly define it. (817 Garth Avenue, Jacksonville 5, Florida)"

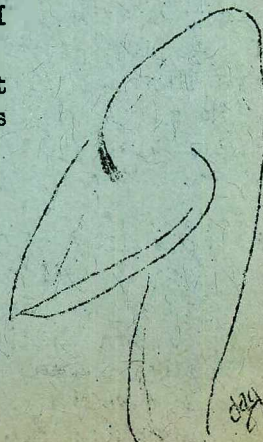
RIGHT! I don't know what you win, Sam, but you guessed it. And you were the only one to really even come close. The reason I picked the title was because my first choice "Tempest in a Teapot" had just been used by Charles Wells and I wanted to find something different yet similar.

One thing I'd like to know, somebody...anybody...is how did the chartered plane to London come out? I got a letter from the LONDON TRIP FUND of the WSFS Inc some time ago asking me did I want a seat on a plane to the London con this September for a fabulously low price. I did but couldn't afford even the low price and neglected to even send them \$1 for progress reports, so I'm in the dark.

Speaking of the WORLD SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY, Inc (PO Box 272, Radio City Station, New York 19, NY), they--in the person of Frank M. Dietz, Jr--have informed me that they are collecting a library of records covering the history of World conventions, and...well, I'll quote: "The library will consist of material such as Program Booklets, Progress Reports and Memory Booklets of all conventions, fanzine reports, newspaper clippings, photographs and films, and write-ups in prozines of the conventions. All material must be obtained through donations, all fans who donate material will receive special mention for their aid in helping to form the library of the WSFS. The library will be for the use of the WSFS and will in time be on display at some permanent spot for the use of all fandom. ## ...of interest for the library are three issues of OOPSLA which contain material which we feel is of lasting value, these are numbers 3, 7 and 8. We do not have at hand a complete file, but these issues are of interest, thus we would like to inquire as to their availability. ## This library is not intended for the use, or to become the property of any individual or local organization. We wish to stress this in all our relations with others, so a fuller understanding of our interest in this library may be had by all."

Also, please note that all correspondence should be marked "Attention: WSFS RECORDS LIBRARY" in addition to the address. Unfortunately, I have no back issues of OOPS except a few of the most recent, and I can be of little or no help. I'm publishing this in the hopes that some of you readers may feel like donating some of your back issues if you no longer want to keep them.

Eric Needham comments: "Mark of McCain. Lots of nothing in particular, all readable yet curiously incoherent and unrelated. If I had to give a reason why GALAXY gets a bad name, I'd say it is because it is so uniformly bloody awful. If McCain likes reading and enjoys this stuff, I don't know what to think of him. Of a couple of dozen issues of GALAXY I've read, not a single yarn is outstanding or memorable by my standards. Two weeks back

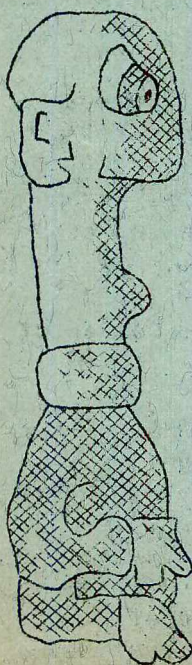


I bought a copy, read it, passed it on, and here and now I'm unable to remember a single story in it. It has reached the stage where I pick a copy up and glance through it before I buy. (30, Richmond Grove, Manchester 13, England)"

Thanks for the kind words, Eric, which I didn't print but appreciated very much. You mention liking the illo of the "White Knight" on the first page of Bloch's column last issue...it's a curious thing, but I've received more comment on that illo as being the best in the issue. That isn't curious, but the fact that so far almost everybody has referred to it as the "White Knight" decidedly is! What's the story behind this? Sorry to say I don't know who drew it (RC in this case does not stand for Ray Capella) but I will admit that I swiped it from a Christmas card from some fan group...British, too, I think.

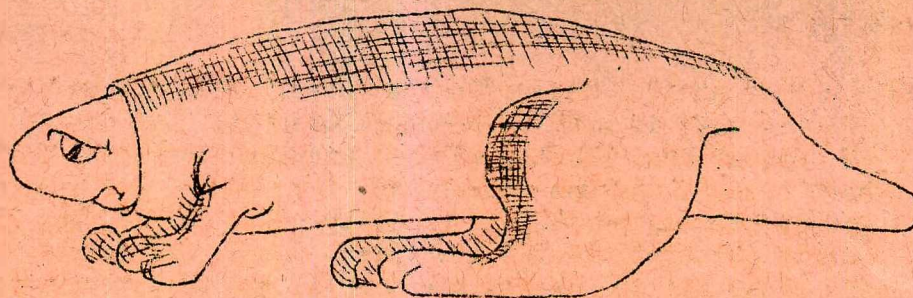
Dean Grennell has quite a bit more to say, so let's let him: "Reading Walt's final episode, I am astounded for the 714th time (I've been keeping track) at the coincidental similarity of our reactions to things. His impressions of Los Angeles are much the same as mine were the time I visited the place. I, too, was expecting a green and gold paradise and was astonished to find it reclaimed desert. Walt, it seems, didn't get a chance to be impressed by the sprawling enormity of the place, though, since he didn't fly in and spend a lot of time walking about. We flew in from the north in an old DC-7, narrowly missing Mt Wilson observatory, and spent what seemed like hours whizzing along over miles and miles of match-box houses at 180 mph or so before we landed at Mines Field, which is still only in the central part of the place. I would not have been willing, at the moment of landing, to bet that Los Angeles could be fitted into the entire state of Wisconsin without poking over a border here and there. ## Berry's article, from title to the last word, was fabulous. It more than fulfills the great amount of promise he's shown ever since he turned up as a recruit to the Belfast horde. One thing puzzles me though: can anyone explain why there are no fans (that I know of, anyway) in Eire? It seems odd that Dublin, which in its day produced such quasi-fans as James Joyce and Oliver St John Gogarty, can't turn up at least a few fans, while Belfast, it would appear, has fans behind every bush and under most rocks. It doesn't seem a satisfactory solution to guess that they all sublimate their various urges

and drives with the Irish Republican Army, does it? ## I note with approval that many of Rotsler's more discerning BEMs are now members of the BDSA--Betelgeuse Dump-Shooting Association? ## Archie Mercer to the contrary, Willis doesn't even do a great deal of editing for HYPHEN these days. Most of the work on that is being done by CHUCK HARRIS (A Good Man, well-deserving to have his name in caps) and it's high time people began giving him some credit for the good job he's doing. If CHUCK HARRIS was the self-advertising type, as are some fans, and did a lot of tub-thumping, this would be obvious. But CHUCK HARRIS just quietly carries on without too much fanfare and keeps turning out fine, fat HYPHENS with probably a greater frequency than they might appear from Belfast. ## Back home and checked the files...you're in the July '52 aSF--pps 166-168. ## Best thing in the whole issue--I thought--was McCain's splendid defense of H L Gold...this, also, is something that should have been written long ago. Would have written it myself but I knew I couldn't do it a quarter this well and I held off hoping somebody would do it for me. Three cheers and a tiger for good old VLMcC! (402 Maple Avenue, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin)"



Bound

Thanks for the info on where to find my letter in aSF, Dean...my letterhacking days are so far behind me that I doubt if I'd have found it by myself. I was pretty close...got the right year (with a little fudging) anyhow. Those were the days when I wrote letters to any pro who had enough money to put out a sf zine.



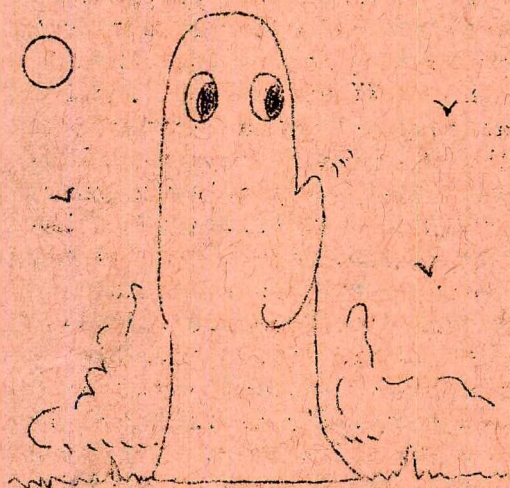
And from Rick Sneary I hear that: "McCain should have ear to the ground out here. Bradbury as a writer seems very much out of favor with most of the people I have talk to. But what is more, he has changed as a person to the extent that most of the local people that once took pride from knowing him now hold him in rather low regard. But I fear that the comments on GALAXY are rather...well, Vernon just overlooks most of the argument. I can imagine that as active a fan as he is is unaware of the countless things that Gold has done personal to gain the ire of fans. Again, I know a number of stories from people who know him that show how hard...in fact how he has gone out of his way...to make himself hard to get along with. ## Bringing Palmer in is almost a Palmer-like trick. No editor has ever suffered more personal attacks and is so roundly disliked. He is so discredited that anything he does is automatical discredited—or, lest, I be falling into the same pit Vernon did, this at least seemed true when I was active. ## Your convention by invitation is what I think The Convention should be. While I couldn't make it, I'd be in favor of it. There is nothing snobbish about it, as a convention of anything else is made up of selected dalagates. (2962 Santa Ana Street, South Gate, Calif.)"

The convention by invitation is not exactly my invention, but it is a good idea and I would like to see it done someday. I had considered it myself here in Salt Lake once, but marriage and school put that necessarily in the future. Besides, SLC is not the type of place to hold a science fiction convention...no bars. Only beer joints and State operated liquor stores for package sales only. Interesting thing about the State controlled liquor stores...they recently upped the price of liquor licenses (you have to buy one each year to be able to buy liquor at all) and claim that they're going to use the extra income for the rehabilitation of alcoholics.

Phyllis Economou airmails: "The cats are gone but their nuisance value lingers on. Despite time and vacuumings, my sister, who is allergic to cat fur, recently left my house midst copious sneezes and streaming eyes. But, for the temporary thing it was, it was fun to play hostess to the beasties. Startling, too --these half-wild cats streaking unexpectedly in and out of the window, half a dozen times on an active night. The funniest incident of all I left out as it might well have carried me on for chapters had I attempted to describe it. That was when, realizing the cats would be around for awhile and disgusted with getting my hands and everything else that touched them filthy, I caught two of the savage creatures and gave them baths! NOT together... (436 West 20th St, New York 11, NY...may have moved from this address by now, though)"

I guess I haven't mentioned it yet in OOPS, Phyl, but my wife and I got two kittens about two-three months ago. They were quite young when we got them...not even weaned yet, in fact...and we keep them inside all of the time, so they're growing up with the idea that we're momma and poppa. And do they love us! Most cats, as you know, are independent and aloof creatures, but not these two...they're the friendliest critturs on earth. I'm not saying that they won't change as they get older, but here's hoping they don't. At present, if we're anywhere in the room, the place they'd like to be most of all is in our laps. And when we go to bed at night, so do they...right in with us. We don't mind. They're pretty warm on cold nights. We wouldn't part with them for the world, although the landlady didn't think much of them when she finally found out about them...they were smuggled in during the dead of night when we first got them.

Archie Mercer articulates: "On the cover...BDSA. Some day perhaps somebody will tell me what it means. Grennell uses it. You use it. I just sit and wonder. ## Letter from Bloch...without knowing much about the instances he quotes, I have noticed the same thing over this side. For instance, the Star, one of the London evening papers, has a daily strip called "Dot and Carrie." Dot and Carrie are typists--Dot twentyish, Carrie thirtyish--who work in a small office, and their fellow workers are a small and select company...Mr Spillikens the boss, Junior the office-boy, the charwoman, and an itinerant junior partner who crops up every so often for variety. But the thing is...they've been the same ever since the 1920s or so. That is, the same but gradually changing. But in the wrong way. Junior, for instance, if he was an office boy in the '20s, would be well over 40 now and the girls'd be even older. No, the way in which they change is in their outward appearance--Dot for instance wears flapper-clothes in the early strips and gradually adapts her clothes, hair-style etc with changing fashions. (A year or two back the artist was ill, so they re-ran some of the older strips just for the hell of it, so it was demonstrated clearly.) About the only change in "circumstances" that has been allowed, as distinct in keeping-up-with-the-times-but-growing-no-older"changes, is that Carrie was eventually allowed to marry--but still stay on. ## I would like to see a strip where the characters DO get older. Where the office-boy grows up and leaves, where new staff are taken on and so on. It'd be easy enough to work. For instance, a senior typist who got married might legitimately retire. But she could still keep popping around to see the old gang, gradually becoming less and less frequently as her successor was built up. And so on. Thereby not breaking the continuity abruptly. That way the readers could sort of identify the entire establishment with their own and take an active interest in what happened as well as the daily gimmick. I personally think that way it'd be a success. (434/4 Newark Road, North Hykeham, Lincoln, England)"



Behole the Sun
Once more
doth
come
Oh welcome be
With
merry
glee.

BDSA...Brandon Dump Shooting Association. There's a story behind that, of course, but rather than trying to explain it here I'd much rather see Dean do a good job on it in his next column...how about it, Dean? Also...there is at least one comic strip in the US where the characters do just as you say--that is, grow older, even change jobs and major story foci around the various characters as they grow up and assume a more important role. I'm speaking of "Gasoline Alley," of course. As for whether or not it's successful, all I can say is that it's been going...well, my parents say 'as long as we can remember' and while that's no more accurate for exact figures than carbon 14, it's still a good approximation of duration.

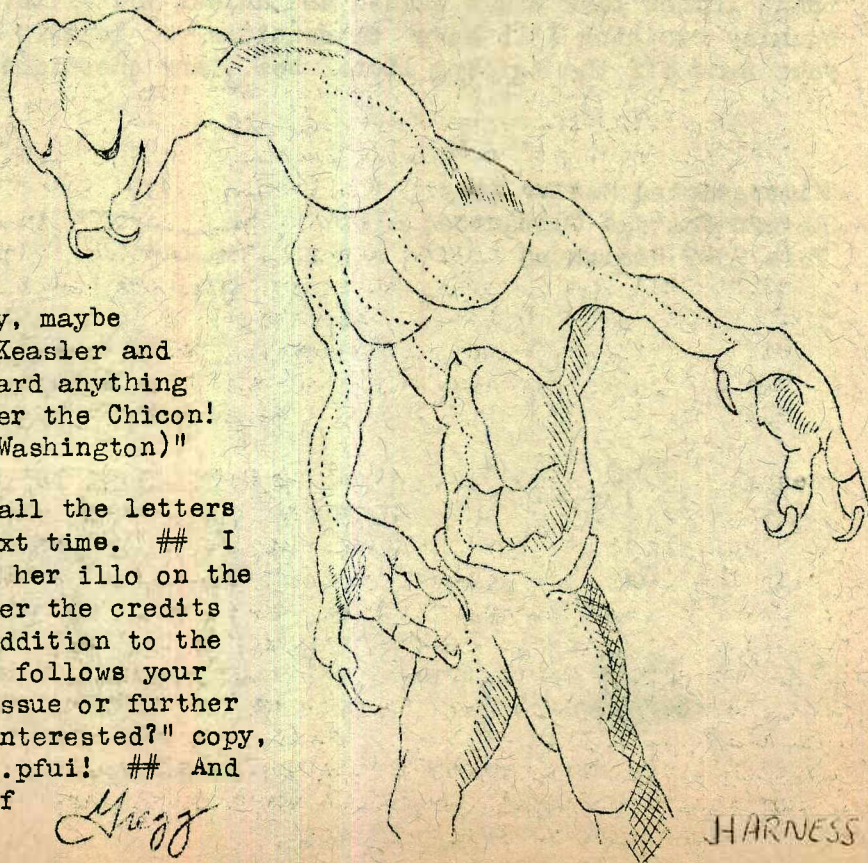
A very late letter from Fred Smith goes on: "...on the acquisition of the '55 Chevy, news of which gave me pause, as Willy put it. I'm trying to visualise a 21 year old Marine in this country having the wherewithall to run a pre-war Ford, let alone the equivalent of a '55 Chevrolet. Tell me, do you do it solely off your Marine pay and what do you intend doing with it when you go to college? I'm interested because, depending on your answer, I might decide to emigrate to the USA. The standard of living in this country is pretty grim for most people and I'm convinced that Britain is now a backwater of civilization. Certainly we're keeping up in the atomic race, have the H-bomb, and are slightly ahead in jets but the taxpayers are scraping the bottom of the barrel and living in

horribly overcrowded slums or near-slums to pay for it. Sweden, on the other hand, is nowhere in atomic energy, jets, etc., but the people somehow get by without these things and make do instead with the highest standard of living in the world, the most advanced architecture and interior design anywhere, and a realistic, if controversial attitude towards social problems, sex education, etc. They also manage to get along with their neighbours and haven't been involved in any of the brawls of this century. I don't know how they've done it exactly but I intend to find out, if possible. (613 Great Western Road, Glasgow W2, Scotland)

Yes, when I had the Chev I was buying it solely on Marine Corps pay, which is not of the highest but still quite adequate when you consider that food and lodging was already taken care of in the bargain. My pay was \$140 a month and I paid around \$85 for the car, so you can see I had some left over. I could still have kept the car when I went to college, too--the GI Bill pays me \$135 a month just to go to school--except for the fact that I got married last fall. And I couldn't afford both a car and a wife, so the car had to go. Temporarily. As soon as JoAnn graduates (Mar58) we're going to buy another one. As far as America goes, Fred, there are all sorts of pros and cons, but you have to admit that the standard of living is fabulous and the taxes aren't quite as bad as everybody likes to make out they are...but from the way you talk about Sweden (and Switzerland?) I think it sounds like we'd both better go over there instead! By the way, this was a very interesting letter, Fred, and I wish I'd come to it sooner and could have printed more of it. Write again.

Vernon McCain comments that: "I'll try to remember to stick a quarter in this letter for "The Harp Stateside"; not because I feel it deserves a volume to itself or because I have any mad desire to retain it as a permanent memento of fandom, but simply because I want to find out how this story turns out. Will Willis actually ever find his way back to Ireland? It's beginning to look unlikely. He's been wandering through the unexplored wastelands of Western America for the last three years now, apparently without anything more than vague thoughts about returning, as yet. Apparently he aims to try to relegate Ulysses to a bush-league status. And if he does get back, what will await him? Will Madeleine still be waiting? Certainly it would be hard to blame the poor girl for abandoning all hope and remarrying. Say, maybe that's what happened to Keasler and the reason we haven't heard anything from him since right after the Chicon! (908 Walker, Wenatchee, Washington)"

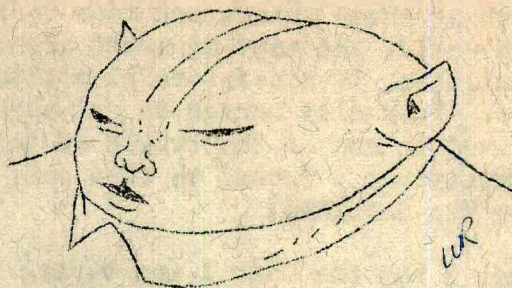
That's about it. Thanks for all the letters and I'll try to print more next time. ## I want to credit Jean Young for her illo on the opposite page, stencilled after the credits were typed up. ## Also an addition to the bacover symbology...if an XXX follows your name, your sub expired last issue or further back and this is a "are you interested?" copy, so if I don't hear from you...pfui! ## And that takes me to the bottom of the last page for OOPS #21.



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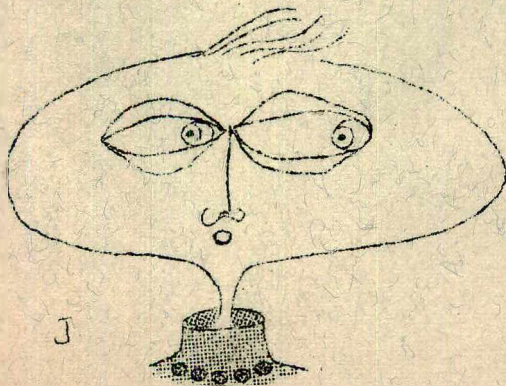
Meggy Carlson

EDITOR & PUBLISHER



This has been the twenty-first issue of OOPSLA, the Fake Fan's Almanac, now in its sixth year of publication (for whatever that fascinating bit of news is worth) and issuing from the fifth return address in that much time so you know that this is a moving fanzine. Frequency of publication has ranged from an exact six-weekly to what I laughingly called bi-monthly and is presently a fairly dependable quarterly. At least, it will be quarterly from this issue on...#20 came out in January 1956, so you can see why everybody laughed when I called it a bi-monthly. Oh, yes...I also advertised monthly publication at one time--just before I enlisted in the USMC and folded the magazine for good. Subscription rates are slightly high...25¢ per single copy, two for 50¢ or four issues for \$1...but I'd like to keep the circulation down to a manageable figure and this is the best way I know of to do it. Immediately following your name on the address label is a cryptic symbol of some sort which may be decoded from the following list: a \$ means that you are a subscriber (or else you sent money for a sample copy) and the number immediately following this is the last issue you will get on your subscription; T is for trade and R is for review, but if either one is followed by a ? that means that I'd like to know if you're still publishing a fanzine or doing reviews and there's a good chance that you won't get OOPS #22 if I don't hear from you between now and the day it comes out; a ! means you are a contributor, Ghu bhless you; an x means things look black indeed and unless you write, subscribe or do something equally exciting I'll have to consider you legally dead and (horrors!) cross your name off the mailing list. Now...any questions?

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