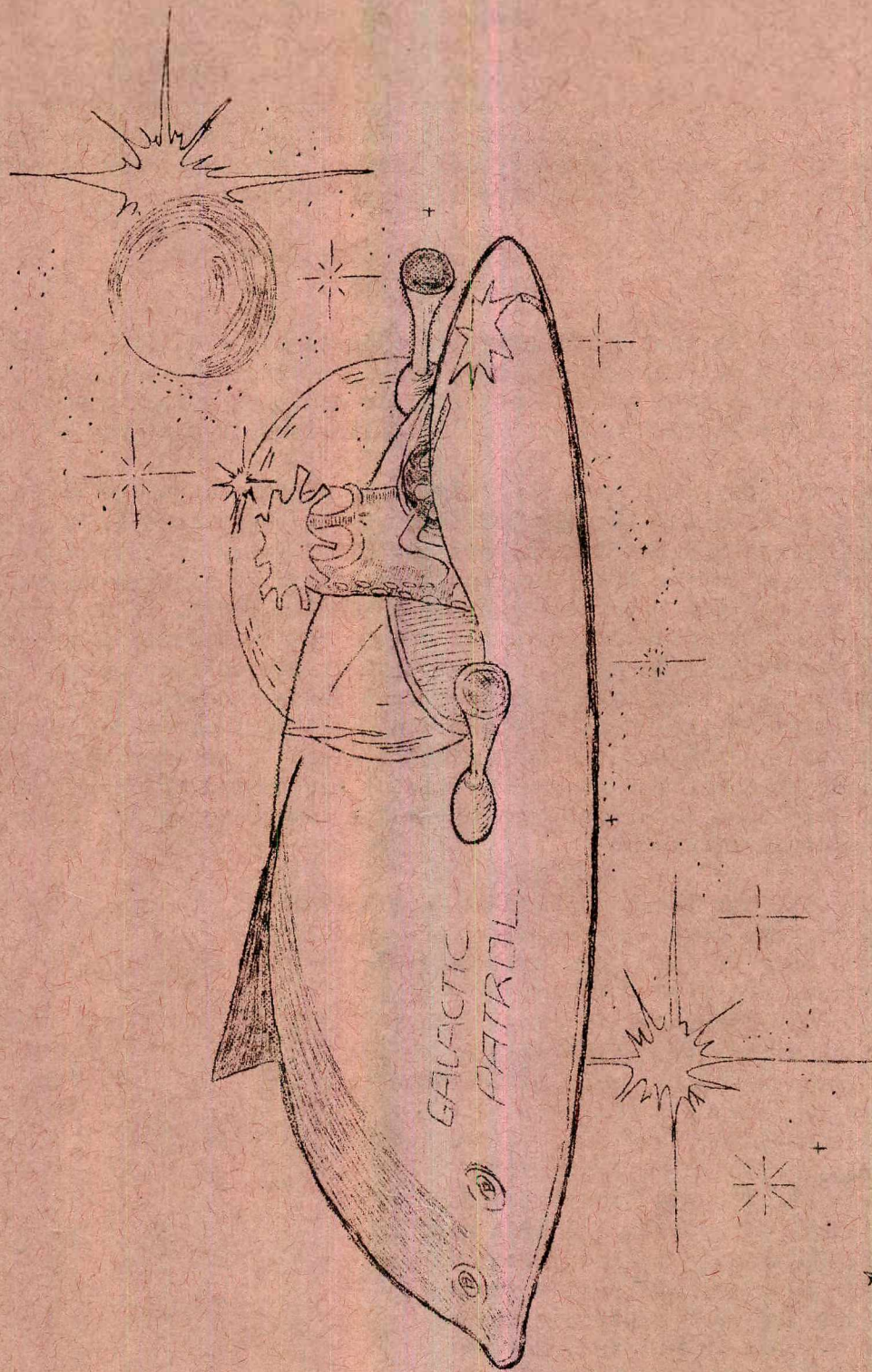


OPS LA 25



10/14

DANS UN
VERRE D'EAU

This, you are hereby informed, is the twenty-fifth issue of a publication known as OOPSLA, sometimes spelled with a ! and sometimes not, as fancy dictates. OOPS--as we casually refer to the publication around these hyar parts --is published by Gregg Calkins, a sensitive fan with a dull, brutish face, for the absurd price of fifteen cents per copy, two for 25¢, four for 50¢ and eight for \$1, by which time the price is not only absurd but is outright ridiculous. Still, a lot of people pay it, which just

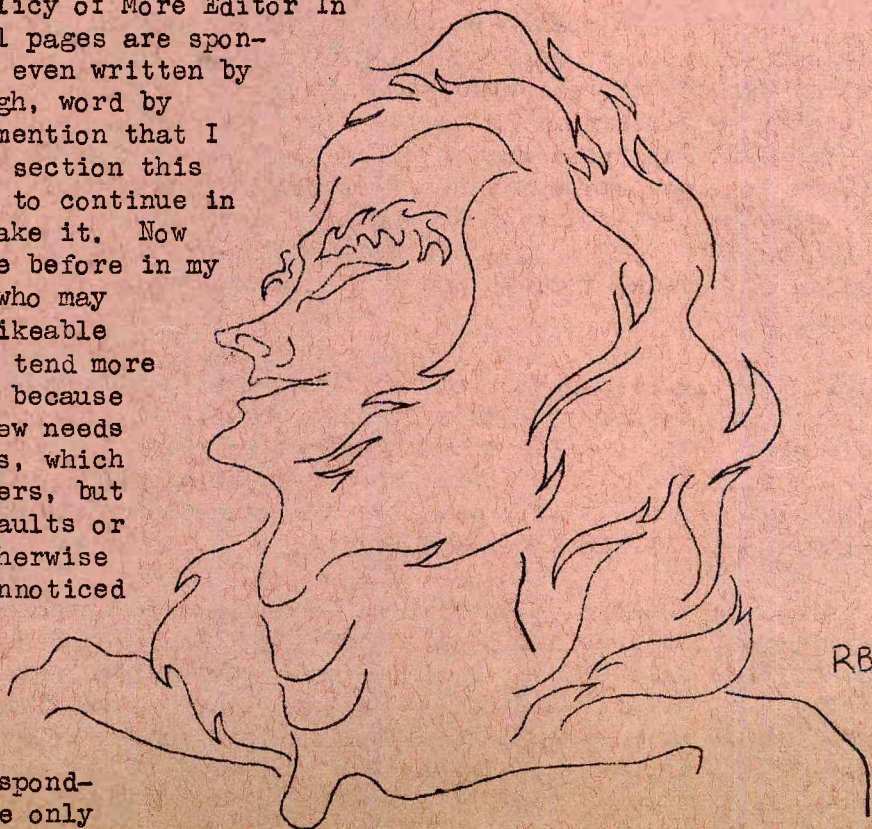
goes to show. In case of comment, all letters, fanzines, monies and whatever except bricks, which go to Bob Tucker direct, should be sent to

1714 South 15th East
Salt Lake City 5, Utah

on account of cause that is my new(est) address and I don't live anywhere else anymore, regardless of what you may have heard or otherwise thought. Furthermore, I solemnly intend to live at this address for at least a year or more, so please consider this a 'permanent' address for me, hilarious as that may sound.

Now let's see...anything more that should be mentioned before we settle down to more general matters? Today is July 3rd, artwork in this issue is by Atom, Metzger, Bergeron, Ray Nelson and Dan Adkins, and the chief delay in publication of this issue, at this writing, is the annoying fact that I took my mimeograph apart to clean it last week and now the beast is clean as a hound's tooth, if you please Sherm, but quite inoperative. None of the usual causes can be blamed; I have no spare parts left over and everything appears to be back in its correct place. I turn the crank and the wheels go 'round and the paper feed feeds and everything works nicely except the paper feeds at the wrong time and then only part-way through the machine and the counter doesn't count and the bell doesn't ding. I am at present girding my loins, however that is done, for another sortie at the dommed thing and if that doesn't work I'll just have to (sigh!) pay money and have Someone Who Knows How fix the thing. Infernal machines!

In keeping with our newest policy of More Editor In The Magazine, the next several pages are sponsored by me and, in fact, are even written by me. For those who plod through, word by word, it is not necessary to mention that I am beginning a fanzine review section this issue, a feature which I hope to continue in the future as long as I can take it. Now I may have mentioned this once before in my career, but for those of you who may have missed it, I'm not too likeable as a reviewer, in general. I tend more to find fault than to praise, because I feel that a worthwhile review needs not to cover the good portions, which should be evident to all readers, but rather should point out the faults or weak spots which might not otherwise be mentioned and thereby go unnoticed in the general confusion. So if I make some of you rather unhappy by my comments--even friends to whom I have expressed approving or even happy sounds by private correspondence--please remember that the only



two other courses open to me are worse still. One, I could remain silent completely...but silence is hardly the reason for which fanzines are published and besides I've been doing that for some time now and I'm rather sick of it. And, two, I could review your fanzines in all sweetness and light, saying nothing but the best and mentioning only the good parts of every issue, assuming there are any, but I suspect we'd both get sick of that before long and we'd be back to choice number one again.

So that's my policy and there you are. Reviews contained in this issue are rather dated, as a whole, but next issue is coming hard on the heels of this one and I intend to get caught more up to date by that time. In a similar fashion, the letter column is somewhat shorter this time and a little older than usual, but again I hope to be caught up by next issue. This issue has been expanded several pages in an effort to get everything in and next issue will also be larger than usual in order to catch up on the backlog of letters and material on hand. So much for policy.



As I sit typing this one evening in early July, it comes to my mind that no matter what happens during the final six months of the year, nineteen hundred fifty-eight has been a bad year for fandom any way you look at it. First Henry Kuttner died, closely followed by Cyril Kornbluth, and now word comes to me by way of a phone call from Ron Ellik that Vernon L. McCain is dead. The deaths of Kuttner and Kornbluth were shocking, of course, but rather impersonal and distant...after all, how well did I know them outside of seeing their names on the titles of books and reading their stories in numerous magazines? But McCain...well, that comes as a personal shock and I confess that I still can't quite believe it. I knew Vernon. We wrote to each other at length and in detail for some time and he was a contributor to these pages, as most of you remember, from the very first. Even before the first issue he contributed suggestions and ideas and was, in general, a foundation stone for the magazine. I miss him already and he is barely gone. I will leave to others the reporting of the details of his death...for me fandom is forever changed and OOPS will never be the same again as it was before.

As if these tragic deaths weren't enough to blacken the year entirely, we have the added smoke and fire and mud-slinging in the East as Dave Kyle and the WSFS and/or various members thereof make thorough fools of themselves. I have received several publications concerning the mess, among them GROUND ZERO, THE BELL TOLLS FOR WHOM, and THE COLE FAX, plus comments and news items in SCIENCE FICTION TIMES, and I must confess that the whole affair still remains mostly a mystery to me. Now that things have gone as far as they have there is no other recourse than to let the chips fall where they will and I trust someday that some relatively unbiased reporter will do the job of sorting through the muck and presenting the facts as they were for all to see.

Still, I would have preferred not to have to see this happen at all. This business of suit and counter-suit is a foolish game in which no one will eventually come out the winner, and in any event and no matter which way the verdict falls, Dave Kyle has accomplished little other than to smear his name with suspicion and doubt. Similarly, the WSFS has accomplished nothing but a great deal of hard feeling in fandom and no little amount of confusion.

It is too bad that man can find no better way to spend his free time than in the destruction of himself...of all people on the face of the earth, you would think that science fiction fans would realize this better than any others, but such is not the case. Fans turn out to be just like anyone else: blind, stupid, full of pride, ready to destroy rather than relinquish the least scrap of recognition, this intangible thing we call egoboo for want of a better term. Yes, nineteen hundred fifty-eight is not a year to remember with much happiness.

dans un verre d'eau III

This page is being typed some time later than the two you have just finished reading and I believe there are several points worth mentioning again. In order, then, my mimeograph (1) has only last week been fixed by me with the help and advice of one Bob Pavlat, a Good Man if there ever was one, and is now in more-or-less good running order. Inasmuch as this issue will be run off either tomorrow or next weekend, I will soon find out for sure. I am at present, however, considering the purchase of a new Rex Rotary, and if that goes through I will have no further problems. I am sorry that this issue had to be delayed so long because of petty problems like these and I trust it won't happen again. Beginning issue after next, I will try once again to stick fairly closely to a bi-monthly schedule. Next issue (#26) will be out rather closely on the heels of this one...before Christmas, certainly...in an effort to get caught up somewhat.

Next, fanzine reviews (2) will commence next issue, rather than this one, and will be done by Harry Warner, rather than myself. Harry will be the first fanzine reviewer for OOPS since Bob Silverberg quit the post to devote his full time to professional writing, and I know he'll do a better job than I would have been able to do.

And, lastly (3) the name of Francis T. Laney has been added to the lists of those from whom fandom will hear no more. In his day, Laney was a giant on the fannish scene; now that his day has passed, his shadow still remains to influence the thoughts and deeds of fans everywhere, as great in stature as it ever was before.

On the Dave Kyle - WSFS scene things are still confused. The recent convention produced many changes, specifically the resignation of Raybin and the dissolution of the WSFS, Inc., but I understand that things on the lawsuit scene are far from settled. There has been a great deal of discussion lately (originally inspired when Madle won TAFF two years ago) over 'what constitutes a fan' and the consensus of opinion here in the States--with which I do not fully agree--seems to be that there are fanzine fans and there are old-time convention fans, the two groups being quite separate and overlapping only slightly. All I can say is: thank God we fanzine fans are friendlier and more relaxed than these 'old-timers' and tend to settle things among ourselves amicably rather than fly off the handle at the slightest provocation. Why, can you even imagine Dean Grennell, say, filing a lawsuit against Walt Willis? Or any other trufan, for that matter?

Well, this year has seen a lot of other funny things happen, so who can say? Take, for instance, the Random House, Inc vs Fandom House, Inc (publishers of SCIENCE-FICTION TIMES) fiasco at the early part of the year. Bennett Cerf's huge publishing concern suddenly decided that the name Fandom House was too close to theirs for comfort and filed suit for unfair competition. Poor little old Random House, unfairly competed against by a couple of amateur publishers. Ridiculous, but it happened.

The year also see Sam Moskowitz get married, and if Sam objects to my calling that a strange occurrence, at least he'll have to admit that it's unusual.

And, to top it all off, Fritz Leiber's GALAXY serial (March-April 1958), easily the poorest novel of the year, if not Leiber's all-time worst, actually won a "Hugo" at the September SOLACON. Of all the happenings in a crazy year, this was the craziest.

With things like these happening, I suppose it is merely routine for me to return to the fanzine field after an absence of almost eight months, but here I am. As I've mentioned before, I still have two years of undergraduate work to complete at the University of Utah, plus two more years of graduate work after that, so OOPS will be around for some time yet to come. So far it has not exactly been what you might call a flash in the pan. Next issue comes out in December, so don't forget to write. Your letters are dearly appreciated.

Gregg Calkins



ROBERT BLOCH

BAH!

HUMBUG!

"Robert Bloch sounds to me like an old fan growing sour." --- Randy Brown
Oopsla #24

There is probably no more horrifying a phenomenon than the sound of an old fan growing sour. Those who have been so unfortunate as to hear it will never forget the experience. For sheer soul-searing terror, it has country music beat a mile.

Sadly enough, we few old fans who still remain in the thin grey ranks are usually unable to detect our own decadence in terms of decibels. Our senile senses, raddled by long exposure to fannish outcries and deafened by the warwhoops of younger and more vigorous enthusiasts, fail to respond. Besides, we are too close to ourselves; like many an old dog, we can't see the forest for the trees.

I am indebted, therefore, to Randy Brown for thus forcibly calling this matter to my attention, and I cannot hesitate to admit the soft impeachment.

Alas, it is all too true. I am an old fan growing sour. Once upon a time I was filled with a sparkling elixir, compounded of two familiar substances; now, one of them has evaporated and all that is left is the vinegar.

But lest Randy be inclined to think too harshly of me for my cranky, morbid, SerCon mutterings about fannish affairs, I hasten to raise my feeble voice in a word of explanation.

I know young folks like Randy are naturally impatient with us old gaffers and our continual ill-tempered outbursts and pointless reminiscences, but I'm asking his indulgence here. Forgive an old man his memories, Randy, and I'll try to tell you just what has soured me so dreadfully on fandom, and why I write such nasty, abusive articles as the one which recently aroused your critical perceptivity in Oopsla.

Actually, Randy, it's all a matter of disappointment. A man can take just so much frustration in the course of a lifetime and when you reach my age (if you ever do; should you boys down in Texas actually get a World Convention, you'll find it will shorten your life-expectancy considerably) you'll realize that long years of fanning will take their inevitable toll.

Fandom, to me, has been a source of endless disappointment and disillusion. Consider just a few of the disenchantments I've suffered through the years:

They lied to me about my birth. Yes, that's right, Randy; shortly after the time I entered fandom, one of the most prominent fans proclaimed that we lovers of science-

Bah! Humbug! II

fiction were star-begotten. Innocent youth that I was, I proudly rushed in and told this news to my parents. They promptly showed me (a) my birth certificate, and (b) the door. The same fan wanted me to sign up for an organization of super-fen known as the Cosmic Circle, but this proved to be pretty much of a bust. I didn't even get to spend a vacation in the Love Camp in the Ozarks.

They lied to me about ruling the world. All during the late Thirties a group of prominent New York fans were banded together in the belief that science fiction was a great potential political force. By advancing social and economic doctrines, fans were to assume power in the future. While it is true that a number of these fans have risen to positions of virtual dictatorship (they're magazine editors) I haven't even been able to get a job as dog-catcher.

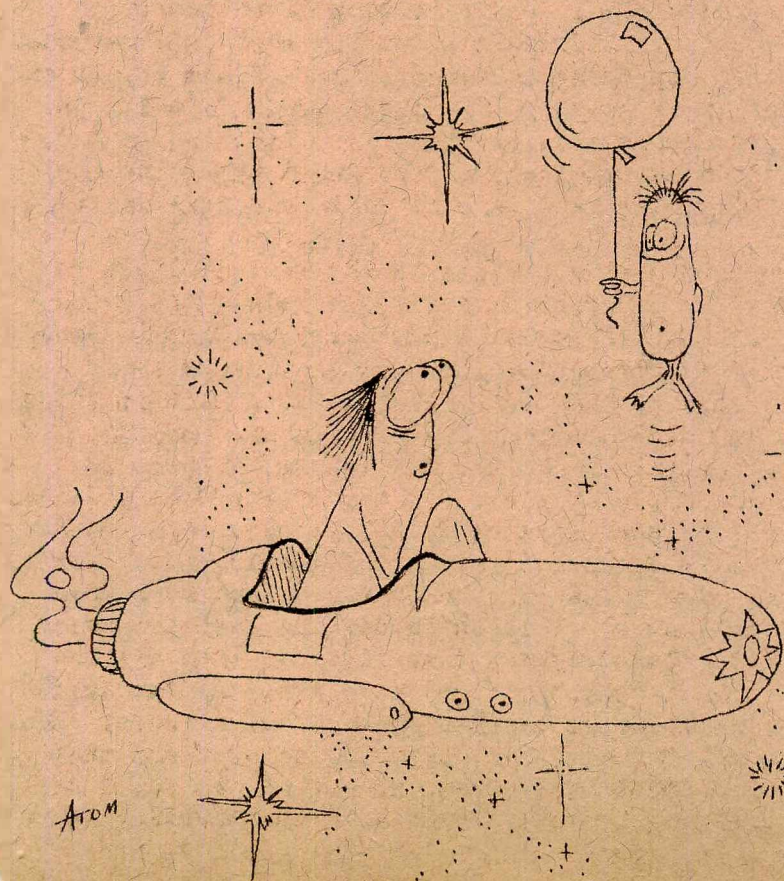
They lied to me about themselves. During the ages that I've been a fan, I've been the victim of countless deceptions perpetrated by other fans. They told me, for example, that Tucker was dead. Not once, but twice! If this is actually the case, then I sure as hell would like to know who it was that won \$1.32 from me at poker in Cincinnati last year. They told me there was a beautiful young femme-fan named Joan Carr, and she turned out to be a rough, tough, brutal Army Sergeant over in England. Still worse, they told me that Boyd Raeburn was a hoax and--cruel and bitter disappointment!--he actually exists.

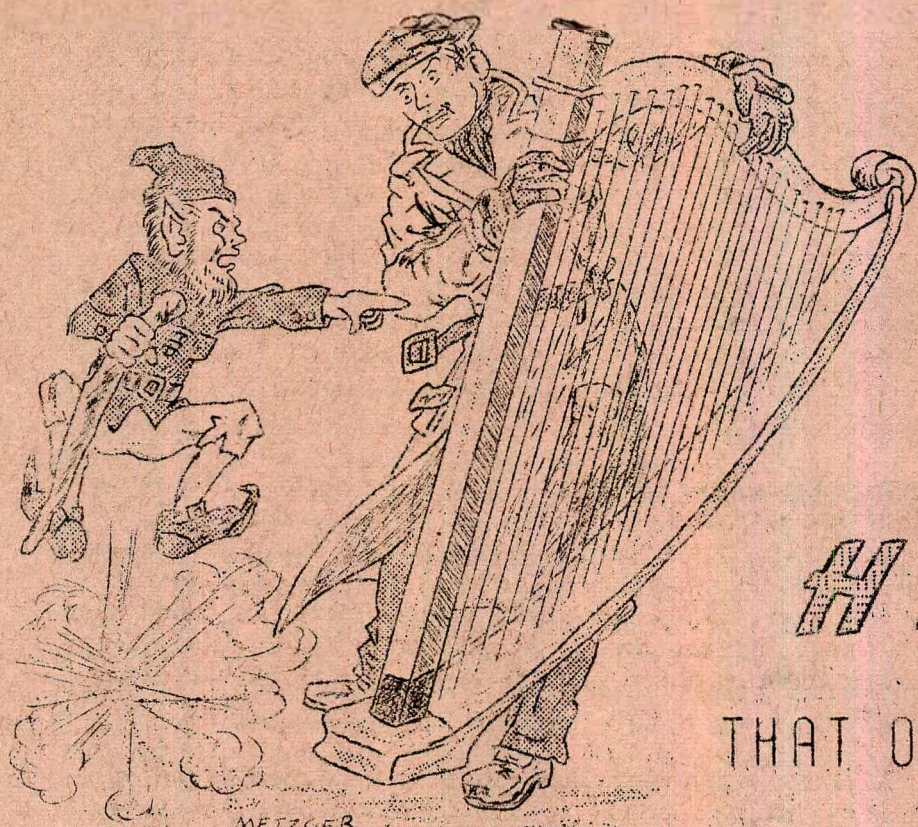
They lied to me about England. No less a fan than Bea Mahaffey reported to me on how hospitably she had been received during a visit to the London Convention some years ago. She said that all the men had lined up to kiss her. Well, as you know, last year a whole plane-full of American fans went over there for a Convention. I checked recently with Bob Silverberg, who attended the Con, and he swears up and down that those hospitality reports are a lie--not a single man even offered to kiss him.

They lie about everything. As a faithful reader of science-fiction, I read everything Richard Shaver wrote and not once was I able to remember Lemuria, nor have I so much as seen a single Dero (except, of course, at Conventions.) I studied Dianetics, but I never became a one-shot clear --in fact, I can still drink as many as ten shots and all that happens is I get foggier than ever. I bought a Heir-onymous Machine but it isn't even sticky enough to seal envelopes with.

No, an elderly fan like myself can endure only so much without cracking. After all, I'm a mere mortal, not a Texan. And thus it is, when confronted with the fakery and falsity of fandom I totter to my feet, brandish my truss, and croak:

"Fandom? Bah! Humbug!"





WALT
WILLIS

THE
HARP
THAT ONCE OR TWICE

Friends, have you noticed the strange signs and portents which are appearing everywhere? There are mysterious things happening in fandom. It is as if dark powers from the forgotten past were working balefully among us, their dread influence threatening our innocent fannish lives. But I'd better stop writing like this or August Derleth will start finishing my old conreports on me and flogging them in limited editions. But do you remember that story a few years back about how the Universe, faced with some cataclysmic event, backed up in alarm and went into reverse? It seems to me something like that must be happening in fandom, and I blame it all on South Gate. We've infringed some basic law of nature. Obviously South Gate in '58 shouldn't have happened--myths just don't become reality that way. It's too good to be true. We have in some way shocked the mass subconscious of fandom and it has begun to regress, retracing its development, doing its best to curl up in a foetal position.

One of the more obvious examples was Peter Graham's article in the last INNUENDO in which he publicly eviscerated the latter-day Washington fans and examined their entrails for signs. At almost the same instant, in genial kindly British fandom, Sandy Sanderson was kicking the mangled corpse of Eric Bentcliffe through four pages of PLOY, trampling on everything from his fanac to his sex life. Now this sort of thing hasn't happened for years. Ever since the Michigan Bomb Plot fandom has been all sweetness and light, except for a few minor incidents like Max Keasler's being denounced by Rog Phillips and the N3F and a couple of minor crackpots like George Wetzel and GM Carr. To find anything like these present attacks by intelligent fans you have to hark back as far as the days of Laney and Yerke and the Detroit Insurgents. What convinced me that there was something strange happening, however, was the news from the British Convention last weekend. You know how British Fandom has been for years --anarchic, individualistic, mature. Well, last weekend some fifty of them got together at the George Hotel, Kettering, and in cold blood set up a national fan organisation! I tell you, we are in the grip of strange forces. None of us is safe. The news from Kettering was frightening enough, but something happened to me today that has me gibbering with terror. I've begged Madeleine to keep an eye on me, but I'm afraid these dark forces may be too much for us. Today I got a letter inviting me to join the N3F. Help!

It all reminds me of a plot Vinç Clarke and I were going to write up once, about a very great fan who made a terrible mistake. His name was Hector Q. Drainingboard. You won't remember him, but his name used to be a household word. He was a very important BNF, Hector was, until one day the thought came to him that he was spending too much money on fandom. There must have been a mad mean streak in him, because he let this idea get a hold on him. He used to lie awake thinking about all the money he had put into fandom, all the crudzines he had subscribed to, the paper and postage he had wasted. It got to be an utter obsession with him, and one day he did a very terrible thing. He sat down and wrote to all the editors of the fanzines in his fanzine collection, returning their fanzines and asking for his money back. When he did this Hector must have mortally offended the spirit of fandom or broken some sacred fannish law because something happened to the fabric of fannish existence around Hector, something terrible and inexplicable. He had just mailed the letters and was turning away from the mailbox when out of the slot there spewed a great stream of fanzines, right into his arms. To his alarm he saw that they were the last issue of his own fanzine, which he had mailed only that morning. He staggered home with a doomed feeling in his mind and a horrible, sticky taste in his mouth which he could get rid of only by taking the stamps off of his fanzines and rubbing the stuff off of his tongue with them. Then he found himself compelled to unstaple all the fanzines and straighten out the staples and force them back through the machine and arrange them in neat rows, and do the same for all the individual pages in the fanzine. Then, when he had all the pages neatly stacked on the table, something made him put them on the mimeograph and turn the handle backwards. To his awe all the printing vanished and left the paper clean and new. That part was easy enough, but it was a terrible job scraping the ink off of the mimeograph and squeezing it back into the tube, and it was worse still having to clean the stencils and repair all the holes in them with little pieces of was he dug out of the typer insides. He realised he would probably be able to sell the paper and stuff to the supply company, but that was no comfort because he realised by now he was in the grip of some great and terrible retributive force. Sure enough, within a few days he began to get replies from the faneds he had written to and he noticed with a sinking feeling that not only were they sending back his money, but they were returning the letters of comment he had written, all dirty and crumpled from their files. Hector found himself under the same insane compulsion, this time to clean and press the letters and then to roll them in his typer and go over them character by character, backwards. He saw with a sick realisation that each time he struck a character it disappeared, leaving him eventually with a blank sheet. He spent hour after hour on this hopeless task, but there was even worse to come. Faneds began sending him back the manuscripts of all the articles he had ever had published. This was for Hector the ultimate horror, for he knew as he painfully untyped each manuscript that he was destroying a part of himself. Sure enough, when he came to the end--or rather the beginning--of each one he found he had only the vaguest idea of what it had been about, and even that faded shortly to nothing. After a long nightmare of this literally soul-destroying drudgery, broken at intervals by the necessity to unpublish previous issues of his own fanzines, annishes, oneshots, apazines, Hector realised dully that the end was near. He was getting stupider and losing rapidly all of his literary ability and quickness of wit, and fandom was beginning to seem odd and crazy. He started reading science fiction a lot more and skipping the fanzine review columns and letters. Then one day he had a letter returned from his very first fan correspondent and he realised dimly--though by now he remembered very little about fandom--that his long ordeal was over. Thankfully he gave up reading science fiction altogether except for a while H. G. Wells and then Edgar Rice Burroughs, and finally he forgot fandom entirely, just as fandom had forgotten him. And that's why you never heard of Hector Q. Drainingboard, BNF, and why you should never complain that fandom costs you too much money.



SAY IT ISN'T SO

The last issue of CRIFANAC carried a terrible blow for fandom.

In cold blood and capital letters editor Tom Reamy proclaims:

"YOU HAVE HEARD THE LAST OF MOSHER." I can hardly bear it. For a long time there I had known there was something wrong in fandom, but I just couldn't put my finger on it. It was like one of those background noises you don't notice until it stops, like the engines of a transatlantic liner, leaving you with a sense of loss and insecurity. Then along came the previous issue of CRIFANAC and I realised what it had been. It had been the sound of Orville W. Mosher organising! We'd got used to him toiling away there in the background of fandom, issuing his appeals, proclamations, manifestoes, questionnaires, policy statements, denials and communiques about Project Fan Club, and it was nice to think of that human dynamo humming away there so happily. You felt that all the work must be doing somebody some good, even if it was only the paper mills. Then all of a sudden Orville disappeared after a desperate attempt to load Project Fan Club, which by then must have weighed at least a ton, on to GM Carr, and we stopped hearing from him. There was a strange unnatural silence.

Then CRIFANAC 5 came along and Orville was back! Oh Happy Day. And he hadn't changed a bit. Listen to this; roll it lovingly round your tongue:

It is doubtful that you have heard the last of Mosher. I will be back from time to time. I am working on plans for the long delayed Fan Service Organisation (FSO) which will do things for fandom which no other organisation has been able to do ((not even the N3F?)) even when it makes big claims through its constitution.

There, isn't that our Good Ol' Orville back with us again? You know, I think he's even gotten better. He's got a new idea. Listen:

You will hear more about this organisation in the pages of CRIFANAC. One thing for certain--if you join, you will have to do some work and cough up \$2 for a year and if you run for office and win you will have to donate \$5 to the organisation.

There, isn't that a wonderful idea. I think Orville has positively transcended himself. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing for fandom if all the organising types joined an organisation like this and devoted not only their time but their money to it? A sort of reservation like this is just what the rest of fandom needs, a place where the organisation-minded types can find a spiritual home...or at least a mental one. Because Orville's plans make it quite clear that there is only one grade of intellect likely to join his organisation. Listen to the glowing prospect he offers to those who pay him \$2 to join his organisation and another \$5 to run for "office."

In regard to FSO, you will not hear more about it until a full account is given explaining why the organisation will be set up in such a way and why its laws are such and such. I will want it fully understood that when you join you know what you are getting into and you have no business joining unless you mean to abide by the regulations. Others who may not like the way I've put this may stay out and are welcome to start their own groups. FSO will be going places. There will be no room for those who want in for the name alone or personal aggrandisement (except where earned). Of course those who join early will have the chance to reach the top of the ladder before others who wait.

Oh, of course. But evidently not as far as the money. Shame on you, Tom Reamy, for sabotaging this wonderful plan. Don't you realize that Orville W. Mosher is a great man? Why I'll bet in years to come his name will be a part of our language. I can just see it in the dictionary. Mr Webster and Mr Oxford, get with it...

Mosh (verb transitive) To engage in activity of a bureaucratic or pseudo-organisational nature. Example: "When he was a neofan he did some moshing in the N3F."

Mosh (noun) A state produced by moshing. See mish-mash. Example: "The Committee made a mosh of the programme right from the start."

Moshination (noun) Moshing on a national scale. Example: "The Vanguard Project was delayed by State Department moshinations."

Mosher (noun) One who moshes.

-- Walt Willis ...

A LITTLE LEARNING...

JOHN
BERRY

One of my superiors in the office approached me at lunch time the other day. "I'm given to understand that you're a big noise in this science fiction business," he said.

I looked down modestly.

"Well, I'm not really a BNF yet--that term is fannish parlance for Big Name Fan, by the way--but I do admit to being very active in that particular sphere," I explained. One of my shirt buttons whizzed past his left ear.

It's very fortunate I mentioned the matter to you," he said. "I'm in charge of a Boy Scout Troop, you know, boys between fourteen and sixteen years of age, and since this Sputnik affair became headline news, a lot of them have professed an interest in science fiction."

"Very creditable," I observed. "I can see that because of your guiding influence, these young boys are having their interests beamed in the right direction. There aren't many of us, you know...a few in Northern Ireland, perhaps forty or fifty in England."

"Hmm," he murmured. "But I'm terrible pleased to hear that you are in on the ground floor, so to speak. I want to ask you a favour."

"It's a pleasure," I said. "RETRIBUTION sells for a shilling per copy, and VERITAS for sixpence. I can let you have a full RET file for, let me see, as you're a friend, for ten shillings. Autographed, too. All published in conjunction with a professional artist called Arthur..."

"N...oooooooo, I didn't mean that," he said hurriedly. "We're having a quiz tonight --it's Parent's Night, you see--and these boys are anxious to show their scientific knowledge. I'd be very obliged if you'd condescend to act as Question Master?"

"An absolute pleasure," I beamed. "I'll bring along a few RET's with me, there may be one or two intellectuals amongst your flock."

"Tonight, then," he concluded, looking rather satisfied, "seven thirty at the Scout Hall on the Woodstock Road." I bowed...straightened my tie...gave a confident wink.

.....

The Hall was crowded. Rows upon rows of proud parents, sprinkled with shiny-faced scouts. On the stage was a long table, with four Boy Scouts at each end. Three chairs faced the audience behind the table. The man from my office sat on the left chair. A High Official from Belfast Education Committee sat in the right chair. I sat in the middle.

The Official stood up and rapped the table with a gavel.

A Little Learning II

"Ladies and Gentlemen," he said, "this Science Fiction Quiz, sponsored by Belfast Education Committee, has been organised by Mr Robertson, your beloved Scout Master." Robertson stood up and acknowledged the sporadic applause. "And it gives me great pleasure," continued the official, "to introduce you to an important science fiction personage, who has written articles for publication in England, USA, Sweden, New Zealand, Australia and Belgium. At great personal inconvenience he has devoted his time to come here tonight and act as Question Master in the Quiz...Mr John Berry."

I coolly poured a glass of water and sipped it, raising a hand as the crowd applauded...applauded for several minutes. I felt annoyed that I hadn't asked Walt to bring his tape recorder along...such egoboo would do wonders for my TAFF nomination.

"Two teams are competing," said the Official, "A and B teams. Mr Berry will ask members of the teams a question in rotation and the team with the most points at the end of the contest will win a cash prize. I will now ask Mr Berry to address you and commence the quiz."

I stood up. "Ladies and Gentlemen, I publish a fanzine called RETRIBUTION and an OMPazine called..." and felt a sharp kick on my ankles. I looked and saw Robertson, my co-office worker, hiss "ask 'em the questions, you idiot." Somehow Robertson said that whilst giving a really charming smile, spoiled only by the rather unnatural expanse of dentures he revealed.

I picked up the question paper and turned to a pink-cheeked boy in A team.

"What is the speed of light?" I asked.

He hesitated and then said: "186,000 miles per second."

There was no need for me to look at the answer.

"Correct," I shouted, and clapped my hands, encouraging the audience to give the boy a big hand.

I turned to the boy in B team and read out his question.

"Who is Fred Hoyle and what was the name of his first publication?"

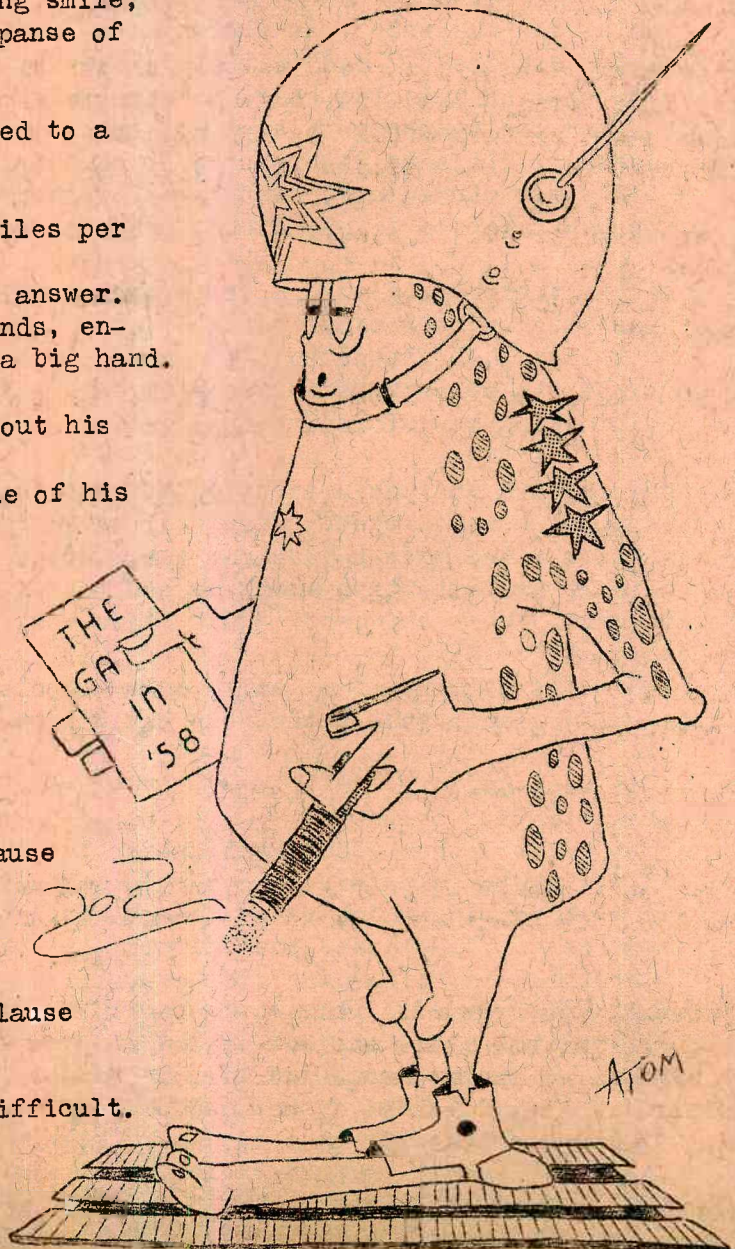
Hmmm. I pondered. Who the hell was Fred Hoyle? He wasn't in OMPA or FAPA, I knew. Of course, there was always SAPS...

"I think he is a mathematician at Oxford University," said the boy after a short pause, "and his first book was called 'The New Cosmology' and it was published in 1951."

Ha. That explained it, I thought, because I didn't enter fandom until 1954. The boy seemed confident enough, he'd make a fine neofan. I hammered the gavel.

"The answer is correct," I said and turned to the next question whilst applause thundered from the auditorium.

"What is Mare Nostrum?" I read out. Difficult. Dead difficult. If the boy made some reference, even though it be vague, to a female horse's breathing apparatus,



A Little Learning III

I decided to give him full points. These were only youngsters, see.

"It's a crater on the Moon," the fool said. Trouble was, everyone clapped and cheered before I had time to announce that he was completely off the correct track. But I decided also that the kids needed a mite of encouragement. I read out the next question. It was a woozer!

"In his later V-2 experiments, how did Major General Dornberger eliminate the tendency of the rocket to explode when it reentered the earth's atmosphere?"

The poor boy was silent, almost in tears. Heck. I knew how he felt. I gave him two full minutes to work it out, although I knew it was hopeless to expect an answer.

The hall was silent.

I gave the boy a look that would have embarrassed a simpleton.

"No marks," I said, "and for the next question..."

Robertson tapped my arm.

"Give 'em the answer," he hissed.

"Okay," I smiled, and fumbled for the answer paper. I couldn't find it. "Where the hell is the answer paper?" I asked.

"Answer paper?" he snapped. "There is no answer paper! We don't know the answers. That's why we asked you to come. You're supposed to be the expert. Now tell them the answer, quick, before they lynch you."

I looked at the audience...at the way they craned forward in anticipation, eager to know just where the V-2 had initially gone wrong. I wanted to know, too.

I flogged my mind into top gear, no easy task.

"The V-2 had the tendency to explode when it reentered the earth's atmosphere," I said hoarsely, "because its reentrance caused friction."

I knew this was elementary. Judging from the murmur from the audience, they knew it too. So I was forced to use bluff, a questionable attribute entirely foreign to my nature.

"Cornberger therefore fitted a refrigerated waffle-flange to the nose of the V-2," I said as quickly as I could, "and in conjunction with a slowly heated intensifying skillet switch-goob fitted to the gyroscopic control, caused the emergence of the rocket into the atmosphere to occur in an abstract state before the friction occurred, thus eliminating the aforementioned unfortunate tendency."

I leaned forward and was amazed to see that the first three rows of spectators had suddenly become cross-eyed. They started to shake their heads frantically and one or two older women made a rush for the 'Ladies.' One Boy Scout fainted. The Official and Robertson shook my hand and slapped me enthusiastically on the back. "Magnificent," they enthused, "just shows what education, intelligence and memory can do."

I polished the remains of my nails on my lapels and bowed once more as a veritable thunder of applause caused the very building to vibrate.

And so it went on.

"What is Orion?"

I started to tell them about Paul Enever but they seemed to arrive at the conclusion that it was a star cluster, or something equally as fantastic. And so on for over another hour, during which time I had to tell them in great detail about the Expanding Universe... "Y-yeeees, the Universe is certainly expanding, oh, definitely it is. Everything is going away from everything else at such a rate that it'll all eventually disappear up its own space-time dimension..." And I had also to shed a little lucidity on the subject of how the first space men will discover if a planet on which they landed contained air... "And as soon as the space ship has landed, someone will open a little slot and slide a lighted candle outside at arms length. If it goes out, they are in a vacuum. Crikey. That's kid's stuff. You boys are supposed to be pretty knowledgeable..." I was secretly pleased I'd always read Willy Ley's column in Galaxy.

A Little Learning IV

I must admit my most anxious moment came when I had to supply the answer to a question about the refractive powers of the 200 inch telescope at Mount Palomar... "and it is a bit complicated, see, but the 200 inch mirror reflects the rays of light onto other mirrors which are geared in such a way that, weeeell, take it from me it's a most awfully complicated process. I may add that it took 420 men three and a half years to polish the mirror to an accuracy of 1/120,000,000th of an inch, and that's some polishing, folks. Yes, I can vouch for that, the mirrors refract okay. And the next question..."

By the time the quiz had finished there was an aroma of perspiration humming from the audience. Most of the men were in shirt sleeves, several women were asleep--or, as the hospital later announced, in a hypnotized state--and three members of A team had lock-jaw.

Amid scattered applause I announced that B team had won and the four Boy Scouts staggered over to collect their prizes from the Official, who was a ghastly shade of greyish-green.

Soon afterwards everyone trooped outside, and although I had Boy Scouts at each entrance I sold only three VERITAS.'

.....

Robertson was still slightly shaken next morning at the office.

"I didn't realise that science fiction was so complicated," he gasped. "That Education chappie estimates your I.Q. at around about 197."

He ducked as another shirt button parted his hair.

"Of course," I explained, "there is another aspect of science fiction. Fandom. We publish fanzines and write stories and correspond with people and have conventions. Tell you what...I wonder if your boys would like to get a real insight into fandom?"

.....

Hey, folks, I'm on a good thing here. I've arranged to go to the Scout Hut once a month to show them the Path To Fandom. For my first practical lecture I'm showing them how to compile a fanzine. Yes, RET 12 is going to be pretty big. Twenty-five boys rushing about putting a fifty page, 150 issue fanzine together shouldn't take long, whereas normally it would take me about three weeks. The second lecture will be an audience-participation demonstration on addressing envelopes, and maybe soon I'll be able to take my Gestetner along...boysoboy...

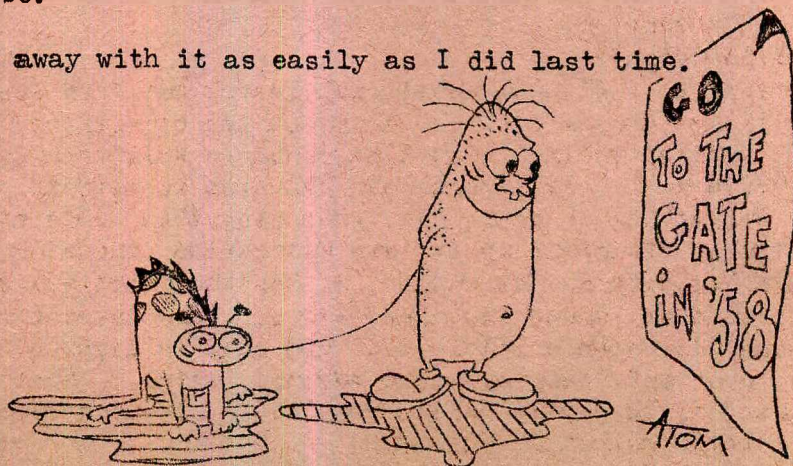
There's only one drawback.

I've been asked by the Education Official to ask as Question Master at a science quiz at the local university.

I don't really see how I can refuse.

And I really don't think I'll get away with it as easily as I did last time.

JOHN
BERRY



More years ago than I care to remember, I walked down the Mall with my father and saw, for the first time, what he called "a real soldier." Resplendent in bearskin, scarlet tunic and blue pants, his enormous shining beetle-crushers gradually wearing a hole in the paving stones as he crunched his way up and down and turned about with enormous aplomb--there indeed was the real thing. I stood in awe and wonderment by the railings of Buckingham Palace and quite forgot to look out for KGV. This magnificent looking creature marching up and down was not in the least bit fazed by the surrounding citizens. He was going to march up and down when he felt like it regardless of their pop-eyed and giggling admiration; furthermore, he showed no sign of blushing, nor any tendency to drop something, nor did he show the least fear that he might slip up on those heavy studded boots and land with a bump. That self assurance fired my imagination to a degree hardly lessened through the years, although I spent more than half of them in uniform myself. The Guardsman has an extra polish all his own, as Ava Gardner found out. She, the dim-witted little whatever, once spent ten minutes or more trying to break one outside the Palace in company with a Press-agent and a photographer, and LIFE printed the pictures. She failed. To say she is not the favorite pinup of the Brigade of Guards might be an understatement, because the Guardsman in question would have been in for fourteen days if he had broken. The point is that he didn't, and the Guards chalked up one more for the book.



On duty or off, the Guardsman has an air all his own. You can see the glamour of it on duty at the Palaces and the Bank and in Barracks. You will see them off duty, looking less glamorous in battle-dress but still outstanding in their cheese-cutters, with the brass-rimmed peaks, swaggering 'round St James' Park and Hyde Park and Trafalgar Square, wowing all the little pieces of fluff passing by. You never know where they will turn up next--on stage at Covent Garden Opera, film extras with Robert and Elizabeth Taylor, butt-marking at Bisley--the perks of being a Guardsman often outweigh (to the Regular) the little awkwardnesses that crop up from time to time.

These are genuine Guards only prerequisites. The Covent Garden Opera lark dates from the days of Queen Victoria, who felt that the regular non-singing extras were scruffy shamblers and commanded that in the future all such jobs should be given to her Guards. Aida, any Wagnerian epic, any of the spectaculars--if you attend a performance of any of them at Covent Garden, watch out for the extras. They are Guardsmen, getting 9/- (\$1.60) each performance, rehearsals included. There is a free meal and (given the right producer) a free pint of Taylor Walker's best treble-X wallop added if luck is in. Don't expect to see the face of that ruggedly handsome giant who refuse to oblige your request for a smile that morning as you waved your camera under his nose. The bunch on Palace duties are not eligible for odd jobs. That comes when they are back in Chelsea or Kensington or Pirbright, merely going through the motions of being soldiers.

It is not always a pleasant job that crops up, as a friend of mine in the Welsh Guards found when, shortly after World War II, the American War Graves Commission (—it was called something like that, anyhow; it was a long time ago) decided to remove the bodies of some US servicemen from their graves in the Necropolis and return them Stateside. Fifty Taffies were sent across from Pirbright to dig them up. On the first day four collapsed entirely, a dozen or so had fainted at least once, and all but a very few had felt the strain to the extent of vomiting at frequent intervals. You do not have to dig down very far into a grave to let the smell loose and there is no more revolting smell than that of a long-dead body. After the second day the Guards were relieved of the duty and it was left to the firm of a civil contractor.

At the other extreme, when Robert and Elizabeth Taylor ((no relation, of course)) were filming in England a detachment of Guards was detailed off to play themselves in action. They were most enthusiastic about it, taking the thing as a good piece of relaxation. At the end of the first day's shooting, a view of the rushes made it so obvious that here were real Guards alongside imitation officers that the order went out that the next day they would be scruffy. This they were even more enthusiastic about and did their best to look almost as untidy as the film officers, but it was no use...a film actor playing a Guards officer is never going to look like anything more than a film actor playing a Guards officer as long as you show him beside real Guardsmen. At the end of four days the whole thing was called off and the scenes were cut out of the film. Not that any of the Guardsmen were worried about that; not at £4 (\$11.25) per day. Cash.

Those are exclusively Guards perks, but no soldier, sailor or airman in London need ever go short of a meal and money if he is interested. He has only to stroll into the Nuffield Centre for British Servicemen and walk up to the Enquiry Desk and he will see a list of jobs available with the rates of pay offered and possible pickings and perks to be had.

Let us suppose that we have a date with a little piece of fluff tomorrow afternoon starting in St James' Park and going on by way of a restaurant to either a show or a dance—or even five bob's worth of dark in the back row of a picture house. We are looking for some job that will produce all the pennies we need and still end in time for us to get a reasonable night's sleep, lest we get caught for duty tomorrow morning. That sets the bounds of our search and we look over the list with that in mind.

Item: buffet hands at a society dance in a big hotel in Park Lane. So much per hour and help yourself to the food whenever you get the chance. Clear up when it is over and empty all the glasses into one big job for an enormous booze-up. Plenty of tips, for sure. Sounds hopeful, but it will not end before four a.m. and we have this date in the p.m. of the same day.

Night staff in a big warehouse, loading and unloading trucks. Good pay, bang-up meal at midnight, but tiring and it doesn't end 'til 6 a.m.

J. Bloggs, coal merchant, wants men for loading and delivery. This is probably the best paid of them all. There is a basic rate for the man who humps coke, "Dirty Money" for the man who humps coal, and "Very Dirty Money" for the man who fills up the sacks. All filled by shovel and oh! how tiring it can get. If you could take a long bath and then sleep for at least twelve hours after, it might be worth the effort, but not with this

perks
and
earn-
ings

Perks and Earnings III

little piece of fluff to be met tomorrow. We'd have the money for the outing but not the energy.

So, we take a look at the most regular employer of casual labour supplied by the Muffield centre: J. Lyons, of the teashops. Old Joe Lyons sold out to Messrs Salmon and Gluckstein years ago but his teashops still sell the best cuppa tea in London. The Lyons Corner House is probably the best example of the business anywhere and caters for almost anyone. If you are reasonably flush, the Brasserie (no, nothing to do with lingerie--look at the spelling again) offers good food, served by waiters rather than waitresses, and has an enormous wine cellar to help the appetite. If, on the other hand, you are hard up, wait until the Salad Bowl opens up on the Cafeteria floor. In the Salad Bowl you pick up a plate and pile it as high as you are able with whatever takes your fancy. Pressed meat, roll-mops, all types of salad you have ever heard of. You can pile the plate higher than its own diameter, if you are clever enough to carry it all, then collect a chunk of cream chocolate cake and a cuppa coffee. And all you pay is fifty cents.

Chances are that the white-coated type holding out the paper napkin and cutlery is a serviceman earning the cost of tomorrow's night out. Or the one bring up a pile of clean plates. Or cleaning the table when you leave. Some of the males in the Serve Yourself look and sound rather A and P* but Lyons' need all the staff they can get and these work hard.

You might try the wash-up in Lyons. Basic rate of pay and certain rules. No smoking, for one thing. Never let the flow of plates stop, regardless of the heat, the steam, your aching back or your tired old doggies. The plates must go on. Mindful of this there is another rule: no flirting. You can't snog in the fog of the wash-up. Same rules for the plate fillers. The plates must go on. For a time, during the rush hour, you find yourself pushed to get enough clean plates and then enough food to go on them. You get into a tearing rush and fill everything in sight, which invariably means there will be a lull in custom and there you are with all those plates getting cold on you. So you shove them on the grill to keep warm--not too hot or the plates will crack or the food go hard. Just do not stop, because the moment you do the rush will start again. You cannot let up until the front staff start filtering back for their own meal; then you can relax a bit and pull out those prime cuts you have been saving for your fellow workers.

Simplest job going is cleaning up after the mob has left. All you have to do is wait to make sure that dear old lady has really finished and gone and not just toddled off to the Ladies, intending to finish her cup of tea after she has performed the necessary rituals. If she comes back and finds her cup of tea gone that dear old lady is liable to turn into a screaming harpy. So you potter around her table and those next to it, cleaning ashtrays and filling milk-jugs and sugar bowls for fifteen minutes and hope that after that you can get away with it. If she turns up just as you lay hands on her cup and saucer, you hold your breath for a moment and then murmur that you were about to top it up with hot tea for her--only to find that she has come back for her evening paper which you had been hoping to swipe for yourself.

Ho-hum...nearly time to go home. I think we take the plate fillers job. Mind you, I have seen swaddies on leave doing commissionaire outside some of London's film theatres before today, and probably will again. Finally, from memory, the finest part-time job I had was relief postman one Christmas before the war when I was one of the 2-3 million of the country's unemployed. The hours were good, the pay higher than I had expected and there were little perks on Christmas Day like glasses of wine or Scotch, chunks of cake and the odd chink of silver to make things easier.

You can always live--not in luxury, but in essentials--in London.

* A and P: "common are to either sex Artifex and Pontifex." Old Latin grammar rule.

Before we get too involved with the letters this time--of which there are many--I'd like to take a moment or two with my nominations for the Good Man Of The Year Award. They are: David Rike, Bob Pavlat, and John Quagliano.

Dave Rike responded to my plea for PEANUTS books at the time when they were not available in Salt Lake City (this has been remedied since then, thank goodness) and just recently sent me a long-wanted KING ARCOO book which I could not have gotten here as we have no second-hand magazine stores.

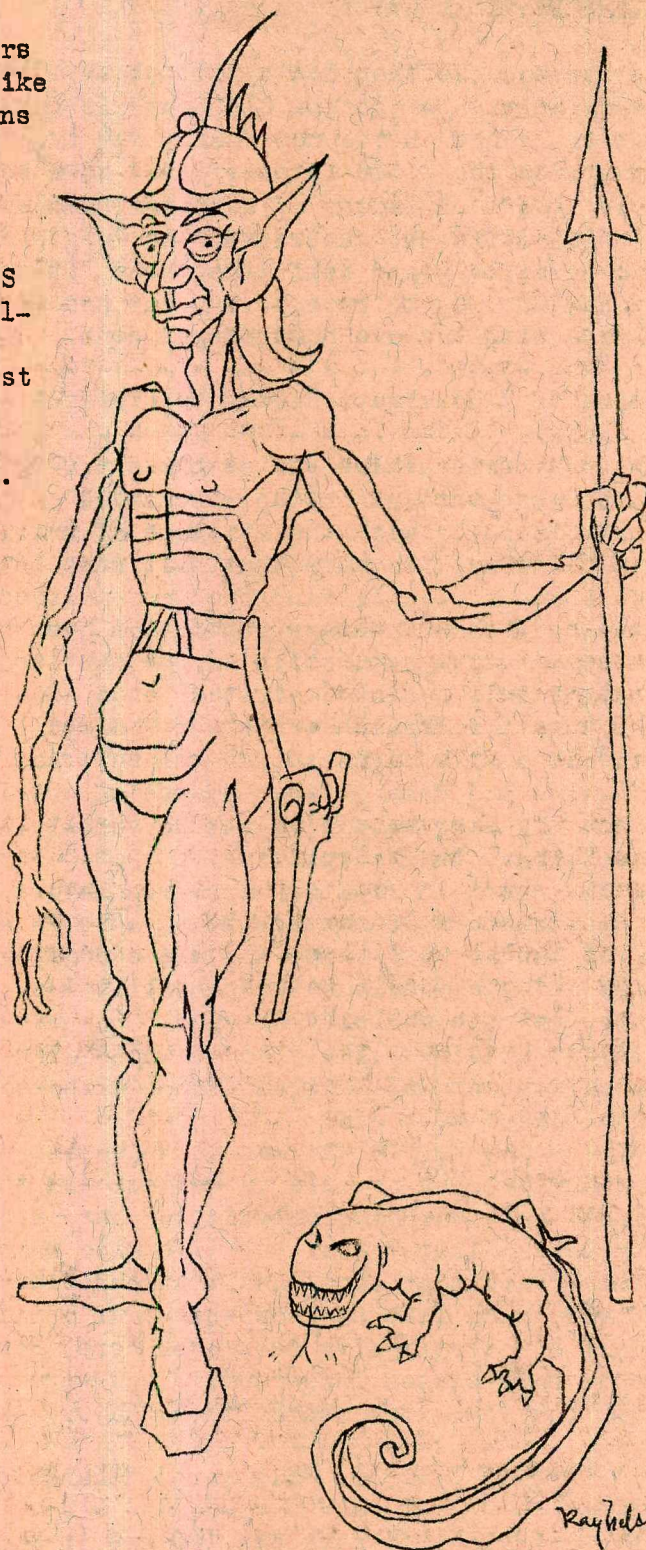
Bob Pavlat has recently contributed much technical help (along with Chick Derry) and moral support in my battle to get my mimeograph back in operation. Without his inspiration I would probably still be sitting here wishing it was fixed.

And to John Quagliano, who went into the Army this October, many thanks for some sf mags which have been long missing from my collection but are no longer.

Incidentally, there have been several fannish visitors in Salt Lake City this year, all of whom we enjoyed having, and I'd like to extend the welcome mat to any fans who might be passing through this way to stop in for a visit.

So far this year we've had Lars Bourne, Ron Ellik, John Quagliano, Ted White, Sylvia Dees, Bob Pavlat, and none other than Britain's gift to fandom, Ron Ploy Bennett, all good fans and true.

And now to the letters.



THERBLIGS

Rick Sneary, 2962 Santa Ana Street, South Gate, California

Here's my 25¢ for
the next two issues

(cheep at the price). You and Boggs are about the only ones that I still keep a subscription-due card on...other fanzines are eather free, forigen, or in-frequent... In regarding pocket-book boom. I remarked in a letter to Moskowitz (oh yes, I write SaM. Of course he doesn't write me, but that isn't importen) I mentioned that I thought one reason his survey showed that actifans bought fewer pbs than just readers was that the pbs were largely reprints. I know I don't buy a lot of them for that reason. I'm no compleetest, and I have the magazine version.

Willis is willis... I liked his ideas about why there is so little reference to science fiction in fanzines. This is true for me (not that I appear in fanzines); but I fear that some new fans that want to be "smart" and make like the old timers

think that because they don't talk about it that it isn't importen or fannish. I've change my opinion about the Old Gaurd in the last 13 years, but it still does exert a great influence on the new fans. But by copying only the outward appearance , the new fans miss the solid interest that have kept the older fans in the field so long. There is a certain amount of narrow-mindedness in fandom nowadays, it seems, regarding people with different interests. As Bennie-Bergade-come-Insurgent elament is full of its own persiflage and self importance, it tends to drown out other views and opinion. Some Fake-Fans may be remembered, but not with the fealing of Willis or a Hoffman. (((I agree with you one hundred per cent. --wgc...)))

 Ron Bennett, 7 Southway, Harrogate, Yorkshire, England The first thing I looked up in this issue was Willis. Why this genius wastes himself working at a mundane job, I just don't know. Excellent observations on the percentage of SF in fandom and the pros attitude to fandom. Similarly with the attitude of British to American fans at the London convention. I'm not too sure that Walt went into the point with the intensity it deserved, though. You'll find the loud-mouthed type over here, too, and if American tourists have that immature reputation over here, I can tell you that the English have a comparative reputation on the continent, though there it's not so much a "Say, ain't this quaint?" attitude as a "Don't these dirty foreigners smell?" outlook. And the superior English traveller who still wants his cup of tea and fish and chips in Paris is just as ignorant as the superior American who sets up his movie camera in St Paul's and demands that a special service be put on for him. I've seen them both, but the Americans I've met personally, in Britain and more especially on the continent, have been surprisingly quiet. Why you're almost human! At the convention itself the American visitors appeared mature because dammit they WERE mature. I can't see immature youngsters being able to afford the trip and the fans who did travel to London were those who are economically and socially established; many have families and the resultant responsibilities. Of course they were "quiet." Of course we were shabbily dressed. How many fans go to conventions in their best outfits, with drinks likely to be spilt over them? Why, it's even within the memory of the current era of British fandom of someone running about at a convention with a zapgun loaded with gin! ... Surely the people who can best comment on the differences between the social and working aspects of life in Britain and the States are those who have experienced BOTH, not those who have experienced one and can imagine the other? Personally, I call my boss 'Mister' too, but I've also worked under bosses who have been called by nicknames, Christian names and that undefinitive quality of 'sir.' (((I'd very much like to know what your opinions are concerning Americans and American fans now that you've been over here, Ron. By the way, JoAnn and I both wish you could have stayed longer while you were here. Maybe we'll be able to save enough to come over your way, one of these days. --wgc...)))

 Peggy McKnight, Box 306, "Six Acres," Landsdale, Pennsylvania The Philadelphia Science Fiction Society would like to have the '60 con in Phila. Our President asked me to send this release to you in hopes that you will publish it in one of your coming issues of your fanzine. Does your fanzine take advertisements? If so, what are your rates? For my own information, would your editor please put me on your mailing list? How often is this fanzine published? etc (((Very amusing 'news release' and one of the best I've seen recently, but since we around these parts are supporting Washington in '60 I don't think I'll reprint it. No, we don't generally accept advertisements, but if you insist OOPS will include tastefully done ads printed by the advertiser in the mailing envelope for, say, \$1 per hundred towards postage costs. And, no, my editor won't put you on the mailing list for your information. For money, yes, or even for trade, but not for your own information. Sorry. etc. --wgc...)))

Therbligs III

For heaven's sake, don't tell me the bidding for the 1960 con is going to be as bad as it was for 1959? All year long I kept getting convention plugs from various groups calling themselves "active fans for many years now" and yet the mail was invariably addressed to places I had moved from three to four years ago. Now, if this year follows last year's pattern, I will soon be sent several subscriptions from the "active fans" in Philadelphia who have long been intending to subscribe but never got around to it before now. But back to the letters...

Rev C M Moorhead, Bettsville, Ohio

You're "damned" right I have a good opinion of myself; why shouldn't I? Don't you have

a good opinion of yourself? It would seem you have from the frequency of your letters in different prozines as well as fanzines.

If a man doesn't have a good opinion of himself, he can be sure it won't be long until no one else does either. Personally I don't give a "hoot in a holler" what that pin-headed Chuck Harris thinks about me; my ambition is to so enrage him that he will eventually begin to foam at the mouth. Seems I am not only giving him hydrophobia but a lot of other nit-wits along with him.

((That's funny...I'd always thought that men of God were quite humble. --wgc...)))

Peggy Cook, 6830 Gracely Drive, Cincinnati 33, Ohio

... Maybe through your fanzine I can get in contact

with some fen via the U S Post Office. Mineself, I am a gal-type child of some eighteen summers who has managed to survive my first year of college. I've been reading and collecting sf since '52 and have an almost complete file since then of GALAXY, ASTOUNDING, F&SF and the now defunct family of pulps edited by one Sam Mines. Oh, and please--do you know where I can get a copy of the ish containing "The Lovers"? I missed it and have been trying ever since to locate it.

Couple of weeks ago I was reading over the letter columns of TWS and SS--you sho nuff was/is a fire-breather. Do the others still survive? Now that I can't find these dear old mags I kick myself for not joining in the fray. Sheeh--religion, sex, more-women-less-clothes-on-the-covers.

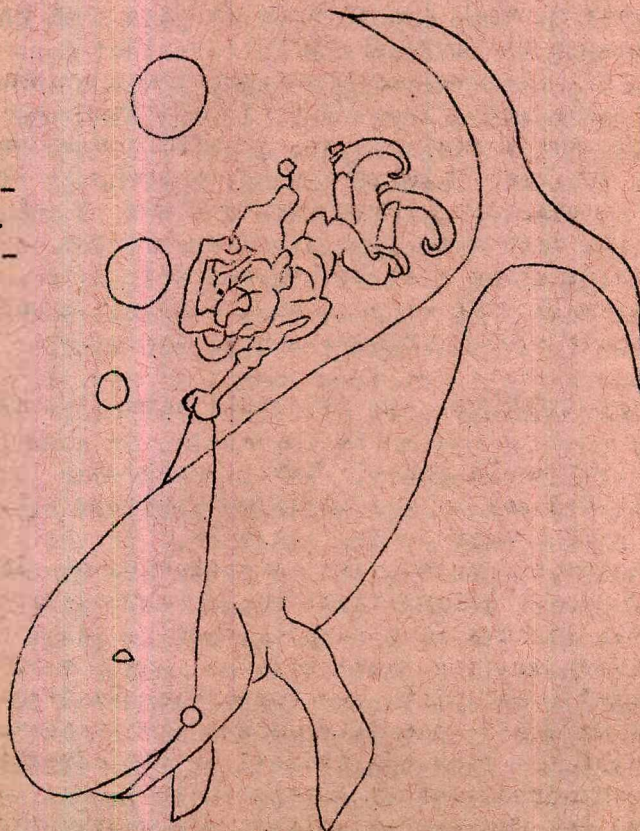
As a little favor, if you know of anybody, terrestrial or otherwise, who likes a good argument for its own sake, let me know.

I'll take almost any side...

((Faneds of the world, arise. --wgc...)))

Bob Stewart, 2179 Old Shell, Mobile, Alabama

I've just recently been reading a few fanzines...the first I've read in two or three years. One reason I decided to get hold of some is that I was interested in the reactions of fandom to the satellites. "I'll bet the fmz are flipping," I said to myself when Sputnik I was slingshotted upwards. And when the newspaper editorials got white hot with anger over a Russian victory, I found myself wondering if the fan press was frenetically castigating the American scientists. As well as I discern from OOPS and the other dozen or so zines I've read in the past month, the fannish reaction is typically advanced over the average layman in This Space For Rent matters. While the daily newspapers scream like they've been stuck with a Sputnik prong, the sf fans disregard the fact that the Russians were



Ray Nelson

Therbligs IV

first completely, instead calmly rejoicing over the fact that *Man* has finally done it. Fans...I love 'em.

Your ATOM, Bergeron, and Rotsler illos are excellent. Seems like other fan artists would realize after a while that illos to be mimeed should be the simplest of line drawings for easier stenciling. Those Rotsler creatures are extremely easy to do... he probably puts them on paper as fast as his hand can move across the sheet, and yet they are infinitely more pleasing to the eye than spot illos of the multi-shaded DEA and Terry Carr ilk.

I would like to know if Rotsler makes his living entirely as an artist or if he is otherwise employed. He always seemed to me to be a sort of Mystery Man of Fandom... some kind of Camarillo Zorro...his illos appear frequently in the best fanzines but you never see anything by or about him. Or maybe I just read the wrong zines...

((True, the Rotsler and Bergeron's are usually easier to draw, but I sometimes prefer the detailed, difficult to stencil artwork of other artists for a change of pace. Both types have their merits. Rotsler used to be a walnut rancher and sculptor (he did the fountain for the Beverly Hilton, among other things) among his many talents, has recently given up the walnut ranching as well as one or two other things. You may see more on him next issue along this line. He publishes irregularly but fairly often; however, 99% of it goes to FAPA or his personal friends. --wgc...)))

Ethel Lindsay, Courage House, 6 Langley Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey

I loved your
combined Atom-

WR cover and was very impressed by the envelope.

John Berry's tale was just a leetle far fetched this time. I can imagine the diamond tiaras all right, but the long tailed morning suits! no! Why, women have begged with tears in their eyes before their husbands would wear one--I know, one one occasion I helped to beg...no soap. No conservative male, and they practically all are, would so drastically change his wearing attire, no matter what the size of sudden wealth. I don't believe it. Why, it takes years to make him throw away an old felt hat!

I have been musing, here I am still writing to you my same old letters of comment. I am glad to know that you do like to hear the reactions to each item, and I think that it is very good of you to pass them on to the contributors concerned. John Berry does that to me from the letters that come into Ret and I sure appreciate it. When I started writing to you, I was a member of the Glasgow Club, now defunct...they all got married 'cept me. It was Alan who put me onto OOPS and I remember how thrilled I was at the first copies I got. I have kept them all, too. Had anyone told me then that I should come to London, meet hosts of fans, shake hands with Campbell and help zip up the back of his wife's dress, I should have exclaimed...never! Through fandom I threw up the stodgy life I was living in Glasgow, and have put in more work and had more fun since I first started writing to OOPS than I ever then dreamed of. This all ought to add up to some deep original thought, but all I can say is...ain't life funny? ((You're right about the clothes, Ethel...in fact, I would wear more disreputable-but-comfortable clothes than I do now, if I were rich, because then I wouldn't have to maintain any sort of "front" at all. In clothes, comfort comes first with me. If they just happen to be in fashion or even look good, so much the better, but that's definitely secondary. ## Enjoyed your letter very much, and this is as good a place as any to state once again my feelings about letters and letter columns for the benefit of the rest of the audience. In the first place, letters which merely comment on each item appearing in the issue are greatly appreciated by both myself and the writer concerned. In the first place, they give me some sort of an idea of the type of thing the reader likes, and in the second place they are a vital source of egoboo to the writer himself, since it is my policy to clip them out of every letter and mail them on to him in one bunch. Just because I don't often print this type of letter should be no indication that they are not appreciated; however, I do not feel that they would make particularly entertaining reading to the rest of the readership, so I save the letter column space for those people with something particular to say, or else those who comment so entertainingly that I can't bear to let them pass by unseen. But the important thing behind the whole idea is that every letter, no matter what kind, is deeply appreciated in one way or another. --wgc...)))

Larry Shaw, 319 East 9th Street, New York 3, New York

OOPS 24 and HYPHEN 20 both arrived today, making it

pretty frabjous all around except that the amount of work I turned out at the office suffered.

I notice a good deal of discussion in several recent fanzines of the fact that many fans fail to acknowledge the zines they receive these days, even when they enjoy them. I agree that this is a sad state of affairs, and think Something should be done about it. If nothing else, an inquiry into the reasons might be helpful. In my case, I find that my intentions are invariably good, but when a fanzine that I thoroughly

enjoy arrives I usually owe the editor a letter in reply to his last letter to me in addition to the letter of comment on his zine. This means I must spend approximately quadruple the amount of time it should normally take to write a letter of comment, half of it spent digging the letter-to-be-replied-to out of the mess on my typewriter table or the bookcase that flanks it on the right or in the file cabinet that flanks it on the other side. Knowing in advance how difficult if not impossible the search will be, I usually give up before I begin. ...

(Time out there while I tore a piece off the typewriter. To explain: this is a beat-up Underwood Noiseless that once belonged to Harlan Ellison and the "I" key hasn't worked properly since I acquired it.)

Anyway, OOPS 24 was excellent, as usual, except for the lack of Grennell. I thoroughly approve of an editor taking up large chunks of space

when he rambles interestingly, as you do. Tucker, Berry and Willis were fine, of course. I agree completely with Walt about the SF Bookclub advertisements; and both my publisher and I have pointed out to the ad rep who sells space for us how stupid and wrongly-slanted they are. They're also an annoyance, because the agency that buys the space always plays coy until the very last minute about what ad they want to put where, and there are always several frantic phonecalls on the day the covers are due to print. I would refuse to accept the things, which is theoretically within my province (though probably some editors couldn't say the same) but I'm afraid whatever took their place would be on the order of "Amazing New Discovery Shows You How To Double Your Gasoline Mileage" (the Discovery turns out to be a book telling you how to adjust your carburetor) or something even worse. So I let bad enough alone, figuring that if all the sf zines look alike from the back, at least it will be harder for critics to figure out where to stick the knife.

Stick to your guns on dating. I don't know how the business of prozines using cover dates later than the actual publication dates got started, but it would be impossible to change the situation now. The thing has gone on so long that if a newsdealer has an issue dated March, he removes it from his shelves on the first of March in anticipation of receiving the next issue. Since the newsdealer is the last man in the world the publisher wants to buck, I don't foresee anyone departing from this system. But there's no reason whatever for a fanzine publisher to use it, and doing so might confuse future historians.

Keep OOPSLA coming every two months and I'll be happy.

((So would I, Larry. And thanks very much for the fine letter. --wgc...)))

dick ryan, 166 e lane avenue, columbus 1, ohio

Berry writes fine fan fiction. I don't think this piece was quite

up to his usual standard, probably because I'm not aware of the connection between it and the actual situation which probably inspired it. That is to say, if there is a marked discrepancy between the incomes of various members of IF, I've missed hearing about it. (Here I am using fan fiction as denoting fiction about fans, not science



fiction by fans.) Most good fan fiction is an enlargement of some situation, event, or possibility which is common knowledge to us, or which we learn about early in the story. I'm thinking of the cycle about the incredible typer, of Warner's fapa story about the fagiated fan who relived his fannish days through his magazine and correspondence files, and most particularly of WAW's pre-convention serial of 1952, which I'm sure you remember well.

These were developments of existing situations, and every fan who read them enjoyed them to the extent that he was aware of the actual situation. Anyone knowing something of the rivalry among New York sf groups, for instance, appreciated all the more the scene in Walt's serial in which he is met at the boat and abducted by one group --whereupon another group storms his prison. Walt took the fact of rivalry and expanded it until the rival groups were practically armed camps, fighting for the privilege of exhibiting a valuable "property." Such fiction is understandable without that special knowledge of existing situations, but it takes on extra meaning when the reader is in on the joke, as it were.

Harp is very fine, and isn't this the longest-lived column in fandom? Walt's probably more in touch than I am (hell, I know he is) but I would have thought that pros are taking more, rather than less interest in the fan field. I notice them more than a few years ago, in fapa and fmz and lettercols. And of course in conreports. (((I can't say for sure whether The Harp is fandom's oldest column or not, on an all-time basis, but it has been running since at least March 1951 (QUANDRY #8 is as far back as my Q files go) which makes it seven years and eight months old with this issue. It ran until December 1952 in Q (#28) and was picked up around March 1954 in OOPS and has been running continuously in these pages since then. --wgc...)))

STRICTLY SIC! DEPARTMENT From SFTIMES 2nd August 1958 issue, under the heading "Moskowitz Married" by Belle Dietz

"...Sam will have quite a time transferring the bulk of his sf collection to their apartment which, although roomy, is really not large enough to hold his collection plus the bride's 2,000 elephants. (She collects little elephants.)"

--and gives them away when they grow too big to keep?

Same magazine, same issue: "There was a reception cocktail party from 2:30 to 5:00 in the afternoon for other guests at which pick champagne was served."

--the handles were removed before serving, however.

 Bob Leman, 2701 South Vine Street, Denver 10, Colorado I could start off with a long list of superlatives describing OOPS--and they'd all be true--but I have gathered, even in the short time I've been in fandom, that this magazine is by general consent one of the top five or so, and I presume that goshwowboyohboys from a neo would be substantially meaningless, so I'll restrain that impulse to start hollering. But I do want to enter a note of appreciation for the consistent flavor of unobtrusive erudition that pervades the magazine, and for its pleasantly literate quality. You and Berry and Willis all write a nice clean unpretentious prose that's a pleasure to read--and say something in the bargain.

Two--three days ago I picked up the June INFINITY, and behold! the poems of Calkins in all their glory. What a fantastic slathering of egoboo--and a nominal sum of money with it, yet! This is surely the toploftiest pinnacle of fanning; the closest approach, I should think, is Boggs and Grennell having a book dedicated to them. The poems were good, too, especially "Robots are the strangest creatures..."

Walt Willis' comments on the wisdom of including sercon sf material in a fanzine strikes me as about the most sensible thing I've heard on the subject, and as a new editor I propose to profit by the advice of one of the masters. I must say, though, that I always find "Renfrew Pemberton's" prozine reviews in CRY vastly entertaining. I guess maybe the test is quality; sercon has to be good not to seem fuggheaded, while fannish stuff can get by with just a leetle originality and a passing knowledge of English grammar and spelling.

((((And some of it doesn't even have that. --wgc...)))

Therbligs VII

Harry Warner, 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland

Something occurred to me as

I was reading the Berry and

Willis items that were the major non-editorial portion of this issue. It's fascinating to think of the trouble that will exist for research men in the field of literature in the future if anyone in today's Irish fandom should become a true literary giant of the stature of a Joyce or Shaw. If fanzines survive to the time when the literary detectives start working on the problems of the origins of genius and influences and early writings, the questions of who was Shakespeare and how Dickens planned to end that unfinished novel will become pallid trivia in comparison with the mass of material that will be available about the early writings of the great Willis or Berry or whomever. It's difficult for you and me today to be quite certain when an Irish fan is telling the sober truth, when he's exaggerating, and when he's just plain lying in his descriptions of the things that go on in fandom over there. I imagine that a research man could use up three or four years of a scholarship in the 21st century tracking down all possible meanings of the Willis reference to "John Berry's fleet of long-playing intercontinental ballistic budgerigars" in this issue, for instance.

In any event, I thought that both Berry and Willis were top notch this time, and it is remarkable that they even seem to fit into one another this time by putting emphasis on the same matters like clothing and various favorite references to Irish events. And to think I could have changed the course of fannish history if I'd gone to the London convention. Willis would not have written that passage about how well dressed the Americans are, he might have substituted for it some highly controversial statement, and all fandom might have been plunged into war. Disdain for clothing is about the only way of thinking that hasn't changed for me as I've grown older. My system of determining when it's absolutely essential to buy some more clothing is simplicity itself: I ignore the scattered, occasional references to the state of my wardrobe until on three consecutive days, three people who are total strangers to one another take me aside and whisper to me that I've probably not noticed that the hole in my shoe's upper is growing rapidly larger, or warn me that I'm bound to trip and suffer a nasty fall because the fringes from my frayed trouble cuffs have now grown long enough to reach the ground.

I was glad to learn that you've now become a member of the Shaw stable of writers. It's quite pleasant to have a prozine reprint your fanzine stuff for even a nominal consideration; less nice when someone like Ray Palmer reprints something without even bothering to tell you about it. I had a dreadful time finding out what he'd published of mine in Other Worlds; the few people who mentioned it to me did so in terms that were incomprehensible because they assumed that I knew all about it. It wasn't until Ron Ellik took pity on me and mailed me the magazine in question that I learned how Ray had jumped at the chance I had given him to exercise his masochistic impulses.

Bob Shaw, (now back in Ireland, address unknown at the moment)

Well, I seem to
have lost your

last letter--a thing which is growing more and more frequent now that Claire is running around and gets into as many places as John Berry does fanzines. I suppose that in the absence of your letter to jog my memory I should write something about the last OOPS to get me going. I note that you have changed your place of residence; it must be the gypsy blood in you. I enjoyed John Berry's little fantasy, if I may call it that without risk of offending anybody who has been taken in by John's repeated claims that his stuff is factual--his last article, for instance, is based on a claim that he is poor and the rest of IF rich. In actual fact, JB is quite a wealthy man. My father is in the Royal Ulster Constabulary, so I know. In addition to a good salary they get all kinds of allowances. Married men get their rent paid, they get a uniform allowance, a boot allowance, a bicycle allowance. My father even gets an allowance for the upkeep of his shotgun. Investigation would probably reveal that JB gets a typewriter allowance too. Berry is so well off that I have actually known him to take a bath in drinking water.

Best thing in the ish was The Harp. On the subject of prozine ads, have you noticed the number of ads for telescopes which are popping up now that satellites are going

Therbligs VIII

up? All this "get ready for a terrific sky show" stuff is going to talk a lot of people into buying equipment which is sure to disappoint them--to the ordinary man in the street there is no bigger letdown than to peer through a telescope at stars and see only...stars, looking just the same as they do to the naked eye. As for sputniks, I, who have had years of practice at sky searching, have not yet been able to spot one even when I knew almost exactly where to look. They must be pretty insignificant.

Interesting letter col. I note that in his reply to me Boyd Raeburn talks about the higher standard of living, a phrase which is rapidly becoming meaningless to me--perhaps because it is so similar to the current advertising catch phrase of "better living." Everything they make these days is for better living--but what does better living mean? Am I to believe that a kettle with vapour control or a fridge which I can open with my toe, or a car seat which remembers my favourite driving position is going to improve my existence? Let us say that I am walking towards a fridge with my arms so full of provisions that I cannot manipulate the door handle. All right, I turn round, set some of the stuff on a table, then open the fridge and transfer the goods into it. Had I been able to open the door with my toe the operation might have been over half a minute sooner. Has a half minute of my life been wasted? I don't think so--I was still thinking, seeing, feeling, moving and getting exercise; and, if I was really perceptive that day, learning that it is better to carry only what I can handle, because if I was so loaded down that I could not open a simple fridge what would I have done if a wasp had landed on my nose or if I had tripped? Conversely, with a toetouch door would I have gone around the rest of that day doing everything thirty seconds in advance? What would I do with that short span of time snatched from the maw of eternity--watch TV?

But that's getting away from Boyd. I didn't mean that those people who gave the answers I mentioned were not justified in emigrating. No doubt if they settle down in a new country and live their lives there they do have reasons which are basic and important to them. What I was commenting on is that they don't seem to know what these reasons are. I was only saying that their answers to my questions were silly. Just the other day I found a beauty in this series. In a British magazine a woman said that she would not live in England because it did not have the splendour of Niagara or the grandeur of the Canadian Rockies. Ignoring the fact that it is further from Vancouver (where the lady lives) to Niagara than it is from England to Canada, did she really leave everything she knew etc etc so that she could be near, comparatively speaking, to the Rockies? I don't know if the Rockies are even visible from Vancouver but I am tempted to imagine a little scene like this:

Man: (coming in from work) Gee I worked hard today. What's for supper?

Woman: (rising from chair at window through which can be seen some tips of mountains beyond the neighbouring buildings) I'm sorry dear. I didn't get down to the store today 'cause I hurt my toe as I was opening the fridge. My arms were overloaded and a can of sauer-kraut dropped on my foot just as it was pressing the toe-bar.

Man: But I'm hungry!

Woman: (smiling) Don't worry, dear. After all, we still have the Rockies. Just pull up a chair and look at them until you're satisfied.

Man: (after two hours of contemplation) You're quite right, darling. Dear me, I think I've had too much. Are there any peppermints left? Alka-seltzers? Salt? Anything at all?

((Before we continue with the next letter, I have been requested to put in a plug for the SOLACON MEMORY BOOK, now on sale for \$1 per copy, available from one Ann Chamberlain, 2408 S Grand Avenue, Los Angeles 7, California. K Martin Carlson says you'd better hurry because copies are limited.)))

Kent Moomaw, 6705 Branble Avenue, Cincinnati 27, Ohio

OOPS! covers are not her forte, as a rule, but I

got quite a charge out of this one. The utterly crushed look on the Rotsler bem's face is positively tremendous. I trust you'll feature more of these composite covers

Therbligs IX

as the opportunity presents itself, like.

I've never stepped into a hole or anything, but I imagine the sensation is the same one gets attempting to navigate a staircase after dark. If you live in the same house long enough you reach the point where you can just about sense the number of stairs leading from one story to another and become able to bound up and down them at a fair rate of speed even in the dark. Occasionally, though, when you're carrying a plate of food or something else that requires concentration in order to keep balanced, you miscalculate somewhere along the way and wind up with either one step too many or one too few in mind as you reach the bottom. Often, I step forward assuredly only to find that there's still one step left, and wind up dropping a foot or two to the level of the living room floor. Very disconcerting. Even moreso is the situation wherein you think there's another step...but there isn't. You stick your foot out fully expecting to take one last step downwards only to plunk it down short on the floor itself, feeling as though someone had pushed it up at you. This, with a very full glass in your hand...well, that's what paper towels are for. (((I just stumbled onto another very interesting experiment the other day. Try standing in a very dark room with your hands full of glasses or what-have-you and attempt to pull with your teeth a light cord hanging down far enough so that you can just reach it on tip-toe. After you've lost your balance the first time, you'll never get it back. --wgc...)))

Ron Parker (new address unknown at the present time)

I might unflinchingly (not to mention without hes-

itation) warn everyone against Russian sf. I read one in a recent issue of USSR which was utterly repulsive in its style and hack idea. While one story shouldn't really make for a condemnation of the entire Russian sf scene, it should be noted that such a magazine having been designed especially for the US would take great pains only to display the finest material. Besides, they usually conform to articles about Russia, which have to be read with excruciating care lest thin lines of propaganda absorb themselves in your mind...and this is a frighteningly easy thing to happen, too.

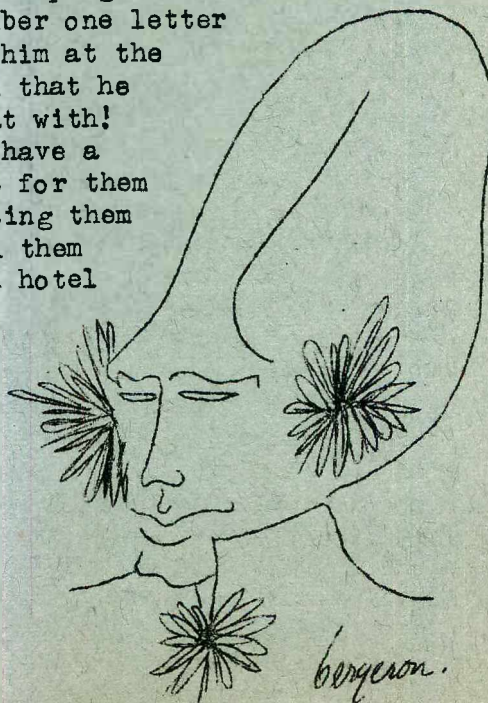
Arthur Thomson, 17 Brockham House, Brockham Drive, London SW 2

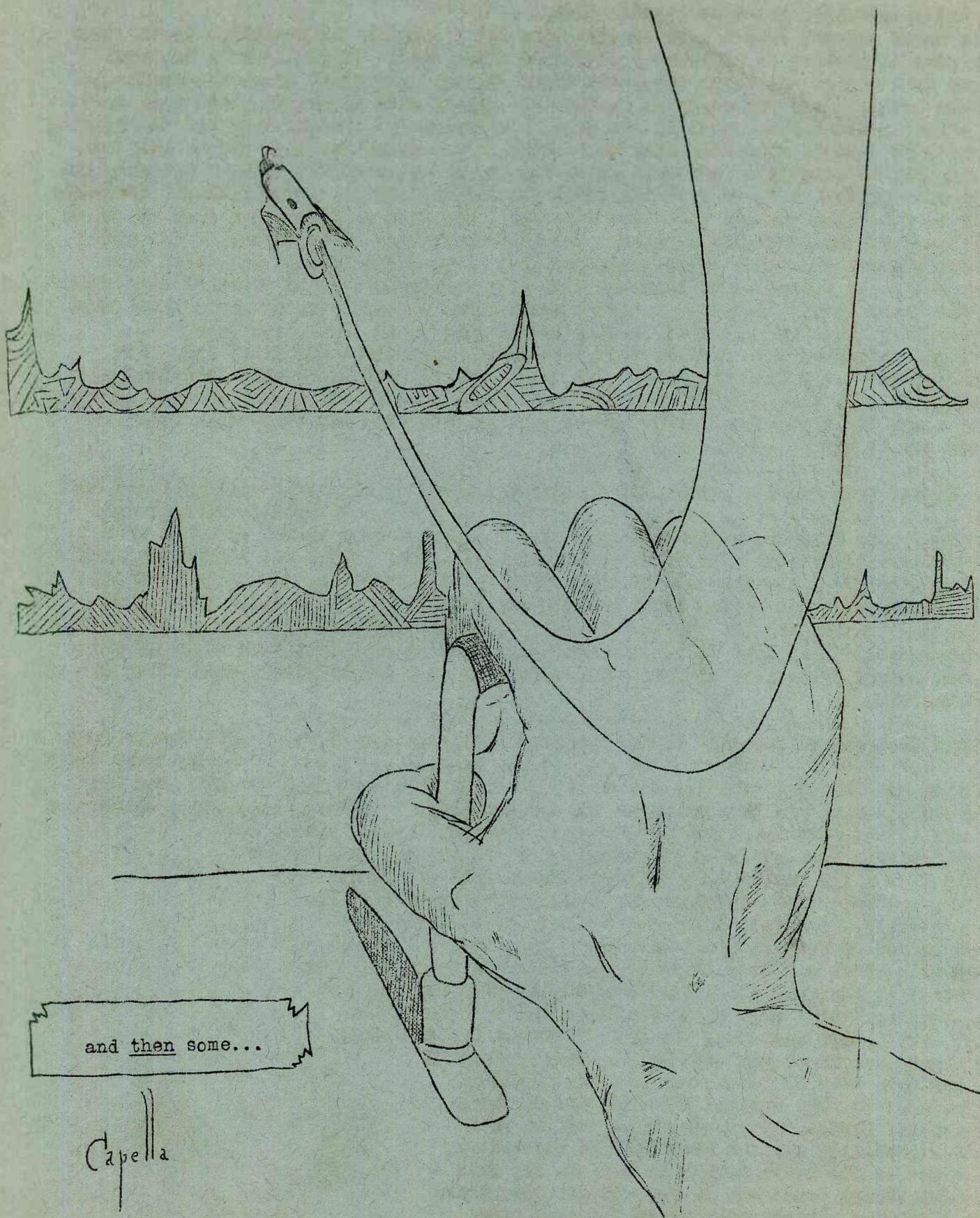
The Tucker query on how many fen

were at the Oklacon...this is one of those things that does just happen. How many conventions have you been at where you met everybody. Counting heads at a convention is one of the most difficult jobs I could imagine. Groups gather and disperse with almost bewildering complexity. I remember one letter I had from a fan saying that I hadn't spoken much to him at the convention we'd just attended--and I would have sworn that he wasn't there. I'd been looking for him to have a chat with! I've passed by fans in hotel corridors, gone back to have a word with them, and then searched for about two hours for them --though it was only about half a minute between passing them and turning back. And, then, finding after I'd found them that they'd been searching for me! Of course English hotel corridors and rooms are complex; in some you can go up and down several levels in just one length of corridor. In 'The George' I'm sure one corridor starts off horizontal and wends its way to vertical...narrowing all the time till in the end you come out in the large fireplace down in the main lounge, though don't ask me how you get down there after walking upwards from above for some time.

And thus ends the letter section this time...even nine pages aren't enough. Apologies especially to H P Sanderson, Fred L Smith and Donald Franson.

This has been a STARFLAME PUBLICATION.





and then some...

Capella