

OOPSLA 26





You are now holding the twenty-sixth issue of OOPSLA. It is a fanzine. I am the chief high mucky-muck around here and my name is Gregg Calkins. I have, as usual, recently had a change of address and the current place of publication of this magazine is as follows:

1484 East 17th South
Salt Lake City 5 Utah

All faneds please make the necessary corrections in your address books. Thank you. Now then, OOPS sells for the ridiculously low price of 15¢ per copy, 2/25¢, 4/50¢ and eight for \$1. OOPSLA is a bi-monthly fanzine, it says here, but actually there have been twenty-seven issues published in a grand total of eighty-nine

months and that averages out to some three and one-third issues per year; which isn't too bad when you stop to consider where some of those years were spent. I say there have been twenty-seven issues published even though this is only twenty-six you are reading because in this particular case issues #26-27 are being mailed together in the same envelope at the same time. There are several reasons why they are being stapled separately rather than as one extra-large issue but other than to explain that it is infinitely more convenient to me to do it this way we won't go into them here. If it bothers you to have these magazines undated you may consider #26 to be the March 1959 issue and #27 to be produced for the month of May. There will be a July issue, even though it will probably be out in June rather than July, strange as that may sound when coming from me, and a September issue has every possible chance of appearing in September if the fates are willing. A November issue is even contemplated, but I won't put too much of a strain on your credulity all at once so let's just forget that I even mentioned that.

Artwork in these two issues is widely divergent in nature and comes from the remarkably able pens of: Dan Adkins, Richard Bergeron, Arthur Thomson (ATOM), Mrs Margaret Dominick (DEA), William Rotsler, George Metzger and Ray Capella. As a sop to those of you who demand a contents page, the contents of these two issues follows: two installments of Ron Bennett's TAFF trip to last year's SOLACON; columns by John Berry, Walt Willis, and Dean Grennell; two installments of Harry Warner's new fanzine review column; an article by Bob Tucker; and several pages of letters and covers and back covers and editorial and the like.

Oh yes...beginning with OOPS #28 I am starting a new mailing list; on approximately the last page of this issue is a break-down of the names I now carry on my present list. If your name appears on this list in a questionable status I suggest that you contact me at once to make sure you get transferred into the new ledger. Trades with more-or-less regular publishers are desired and non-dollar-area fans can subscribe to

...dans un verre d'eau II

OOPS either for a letter of comment per issue or a suitable sum sent to TAFF in my name, take your pick. Foreign (i.e., non-U.S.) sf mags are also acceptable. Otherwise, freeloaders are not encouraged. Subscriptions aren't much but they sure help to pay postage and are most gratefully received. There now, that should take care of the sordid business details.

As the more perceptive among you may already have noticed, OOPS is now being published in blue ink; moreover, by a brand new mimeograph. The old ABDick finally gave up the ghost and current and future issues of OOPS will be published on a new BDC Rex Rotary, model M-4. At present I am still having some difficulty in adjusting to the transition so if reproduction suffers in these two issues please do not hesitate to say so. As for the blue ink, at the time I originally decided to buy the new mimeograph--and this was some time ago--I decided also to make the switch to blue ink. Black ink was so dull, so boring, so...so commonplace. And at that time, only GRUE was published in blue. Well, you all know what has happened since then; now blue is all the rage and now blue is so dull, so boring, so...so commonplace. However it is too late now to make another change so all I can say is that I hope you like the new color.

A strange thing happened to me on the way to the observatory the other night... That is an old beginning but I think my story is new. Have a listen. Now I'm only a Junior Scientist Of Sorts, having qualified for that title by passing the Andy Young Achievement Test Mark III, and you wouldn't think that odd things would be happening to me quite at this early stage of the game, but take last winter...just take it. I was taking a beginning astronomy class at the U. Being a student by trade and a science fiction fan by nature I thought this might be a good way to combine business with pleasure and perhaps earn an easy grade in the process. So I'd been puttering around with the class, attending occasionally to see what the lectures were about but mostly reading the book. The class went to the observatory twice to use the 9" reflector but I didn't make it either time as I had more important things to do. Now you may think this lack of attendance would be bad for me and you might be right, but the truth of the matter was that I could not stand to be there for fifty minutes a day five days a week and listen to the idiotic questions being asked by my fellow class members. They actually embarrassed me to listen to them.

But, anyhow, to get to the point, eventually I learned about the Geminids. For those of you so uninformed the Geminids happen to be an annual meteor shower so named because they seem to come from the constellation Gemini, although of course they really do not, and which appear around the 10th to 13th of December and last all night. This year they were to be at a maximum at 5 a.m. on December 13th. For reasons that would seem obscure--if not highly peculiar--to the man in the street, I decided to observe this phenomenon. Accordingly, I circled the date on my calendar and tied a string around my telescope so that I would not forget by the time the 13th arrived.

Came the 11th and with it one of those highly peculiar heavy fogs we get about once in every five years and it just so happened that this was to be one of the years. The fog gets so thick and dense that it matches anything California can produce and probably would rival London if only we had some yellow smoke to go with it, but in our case the fog is more a case of extremely low-lying clouds than surface fog. I like to consider it subsurface fog. At any rate, it produces some very beautiful effects; the world becomes covered with frost and every tree, shrub, bush and blade of grass is suddenly a magical thing of gingerbread and lace...if you're close enough. Distance becomes merely a concept meaning more than six feet away and is undefined; beyond that all is nebulous and white and quite unreal. The effects produced by this foggy condition are among the most beautiful sights I ever hope to see, but still at times they are not altogether welcome.

Nevertheless the fog persisted all day the 11th, got thicker on the 12th, and showed no signs of diminishing on the 13th. Now, you might wonder, was a dedicated Junior Scientist Of Sorts going to get around this?

...dans un verre d'eau III

There was only one thing to do. Praying that my old car would last, a friend and I sat out for the top of the Wasatch Range, a spur of mountains belonging to the Rocky Mountain chain and lying immediately to the east of Salt Lake City. It is about a ten or fifteen mile drive to the top of the pass as you head east and a climb of some several thousand feet. I felt sure this would be enough to clear the top of the cloud layer filling the Salt Lake valley; besides, it was the highest point anywhere around and if it wouldn't do it nothing else would.

When we got to the top the fog appeared to be clearing a little and we could see some stars. I parked the car, turned off the lights and got out into the very black and very silent night. Did I say silent? Here we were in the middle of nowhere and in the wee hours of the morning to boot, not a light or house or car in sight, and the night was filled with drunken laughter. For a moment I felt like a character out of a van Vogt novel but then I realized that at the top of a nearby summit a group of college students (or so I assumed--who else would have the time and energy?) were on a combination sledding and drinking party. It sounded like they were having a hell of a lot of fun to me...but we were there for business, not pleasure. I turned my attention to the stars. At least I think they were stars. Each one looked like a fuzzy patch of light, so hazy that I couldn't even count the points on each one and even the simplest layman knows that all stars have five points. You don't have to take an astronomy class to know that. Not a single solitary meteor trail was in sight, nor even a hint of one, and it didn't look as though there would likely be any, either. Maybe the Geminids were off schedule or something.

Suddenly my friend said: "My God, I hope they don't hit us!" and I realized that for the past few seconds there had been a ripping, sliding noise, the sort of sound a sled or toboggan makes when sliding over the top of frozen snow, and the laughter was getting wilder and closer. I decided it was about time to get out of there, all things considered. Not that I seriously considered that they might come anywhere close to running into us but if they happened to stop nearby and come over to see what it was that we were up to there's no telling what would happen. The actions of college students are hard enough to predict when they are sober and this crew was far from that, and Roscoe alone knows how they would have reacted to our simple story that we were standing there in the freezing night hoping to catch a glimpse of some "shooting stars" through the thick blanket of overcast.

As I turned around and my lights tunneled through the night not a shooting star but a shooting sled flashed through my beams, missing the car by less distance than I care to recall, streaking down off of the snowbank piled high by the side of the road and down across the asphalt pavement with a horrible grinding sound, thereby deep into the snowbank on the opposite side of the road thus saving themselves from an additional mile or more down the mountainside on a ride I do not care to even contemplate. Frankly, it gives me the cold shudders.

As we drove off, one of them was still sprawled semiconscious in the middle of the pavement where he had fallen when the sled first hit the highway, and the others were half buried in the snow on the other side of the road. Arms and legs stuck out at odd angles. It had been a wild ride and I only hoped they felt it was worth it.

Like I said, it sounded like they were having a hell of a lot of fun.

MATHEMATICAL TRICK OF THE WEEK "What," he began, "makes the speed of light constant?" Cassellahat did not even blink. "Velocity equals the cube of the cube root of gd ," he said. - Far Centaurus, van Vogt

This publication, by the way, supports a number of worthy causes this year and among them are: TERRY CARR FOR TAFF! - BERRY TO DETROIT! - WASHINGTON IN 1960! Naturally you are free to make your own decisions, but a careful analysis of the situation by your editor has indicated that these are all excellent choices.

...dans un verre d'eau IV

ATOMIC THEORY REVISITED

"Atoms are—" the keen eyes surveyed the heavy face hanging beyond the bars "--atoms are small particles inside your body that cannot be seen or felt. But they are there, many millions of them, making up the entire bulk of your body or any physical object. Every object on earth --the planet itself--is made up of atoms that are, quite naturally, revolving at tremendous speeds. Uncounted millions of them are constantly revolving about, inside you; were there no atoms there would be no you. When your body dies they cease operating, become something else--dust perhaps and you no longer exist. They cease moving in their orbits and transmigrate to some other form." Bob Tucker in 'Exit' ...If only Neils Bohr had known this!

I am not ordinarily a reviewer but I could not let this issue go by without mentioning several noteworthy items produced in recent times. One is James Gunn's outstanding "Station in Space," easily the best writing about space and the construction of the first space station that I have ever seen or hope to see. You almost feel that Gunn has been there and seen the things he describes; the prose is beautiful, touching, infinitely descriptive. If you miss reading this your soul is the less for it. ## Also on the recommended list, particularly if you are a van Vogt fan--and I am--is the recent SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB selection of a one volume publication of "Slan," "The Voyage of the Space Beagle" and "The World of Null-A." For the \$1.90 price tag this bargain cannot be beaten. Van Vogt comes up with some horrendous flaws directly in the middle of his stories at times and his endings are often vague, yet he is without a doubt today's chief possessor of a true sense of wonder and imagination. ## Even more worthy of note and an item I would most definitely urge all hardcover readers to contact is Marty Greenberg's PICK-A-BOOK, a means whereby new Fantasy Press and Gnome books are available for as low as \$1.20 per copy, and those two publishing houses, I need not add, have put out a good deal of excellent science fiction. Contact Marty at PO Box 63, Hicksville, New York. He says that "business good, could be a lot better but it isn't too bad I'll be happy if it gets no worse. As to fan support you'll have to define fan. If you mean the variety that does fanzines we don't have too many. I consider a reader of sf a fan and its the average reader who supports us. I guess the active kind spends all his money on paper and ink and postage. I love them all anyway." All I can say is that you'll find no better place than PICK-A-BOOK to buy good science fiction at a price that will still leave you money left over for stencils and stamps.

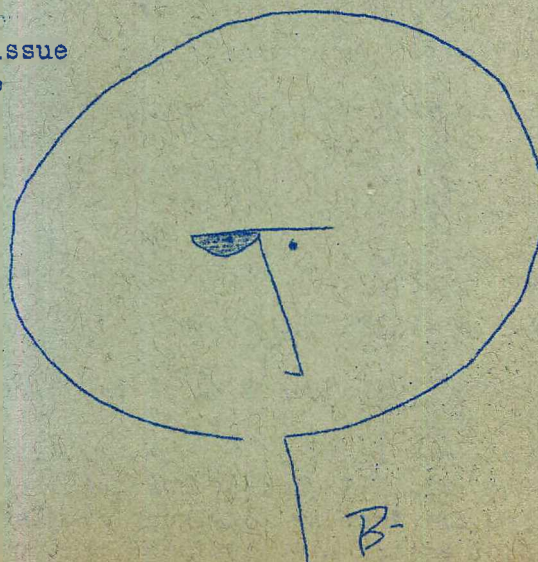
NEATEST TRICK OF THE WEEK DEPARTMENT

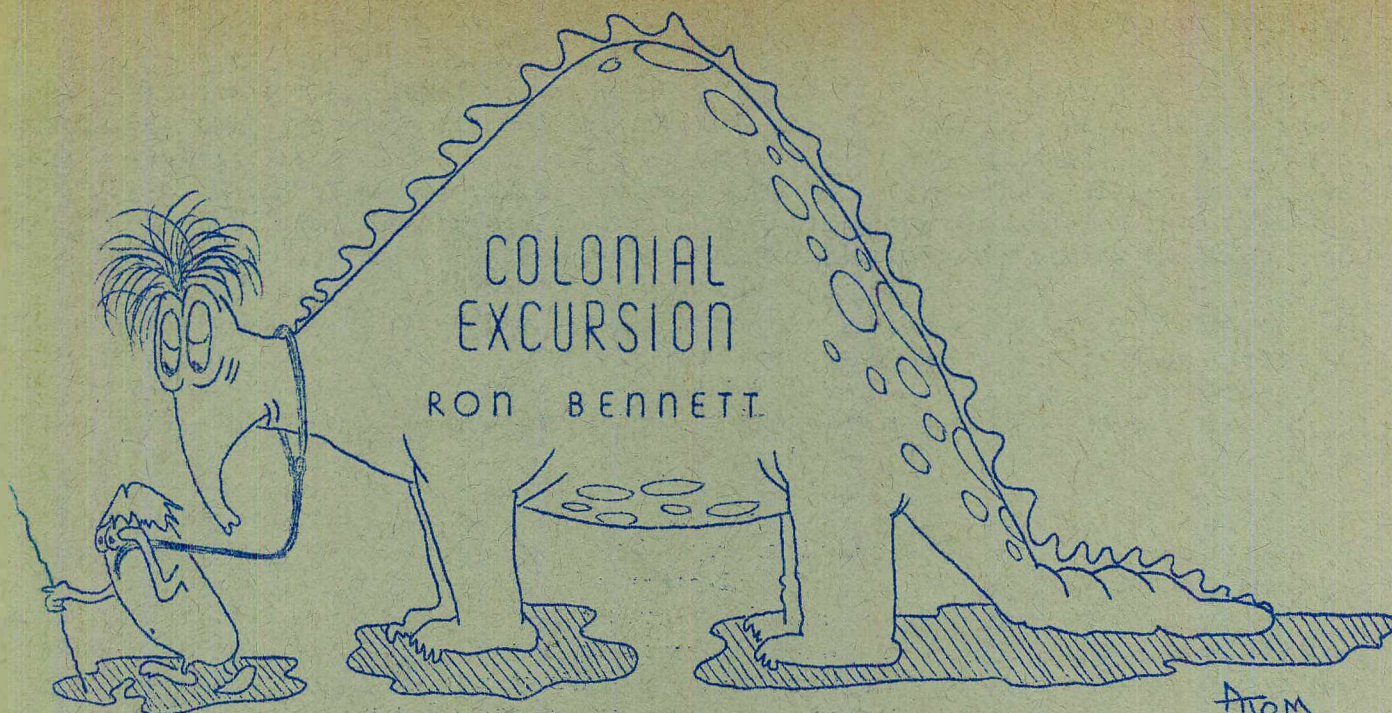
"The science fiction of two decades ago was heavy handed and machine bound: it was Noble, it had a Purpose, and it Taught Science in sugar coated capsules. ...Heroes were reasonable facimilies of Hercules in mind as well as muscle... Every heroine was an unquestioned virgin who somehow managed to spend years locked away in a ship or on an uncharted planet without losing it." Wilson Tucker in the introduction for 'Time:X'

And that's just about it for now. Remember, next issue out in late June so don't delay too long with those letters of comment. But before I go I've leave just one thought with you if I may without fear of disturbing anything. If you could, at your choice, be any fiction character you would like to be and live their "life" in place of yours, whom would you choose? And why? I think it's an interesting thought and I'd very much like to hear your opinions on the subject.

Maybe one of these days I'll even give you mine.

Gregg Caletins





((Editor's Note: Ron Bennett was England's TAFF representative to the Solacon held in South Gate last September. A report of his adventures and misadventures is now being published by several magazines, of which OOPS is one. Part I appeared in PER-
 THELION; Part II in APORRHETA; Part III in YANDRO; Part IV is immediately following;
 Part V will be in SPECTRE; Part VI in SPACE DIVERSIONS; Part VII in PLOY; Part VIII
 is in OOPS 27, included with this issue; Part IX went to Ted White; Part X to Bryan
 Welham; and Part XI will be in OOPS 28, due out in late June. Ron still has much
 more to write after Part XI but when and where they will appear I have no way of
 knowing as of this writing. --wgc...))

Part IV: Every Street A Boulevard

It was well after mid-day that I awoke on Wednesday, 20th August. After the hectic
 gin-laden night before this wasn't so surprising. Dick Ellington had already gone
 off to work but Pat was still around, looking after Poops, and now she had two help-
 less children on her hands. I was still in my daze and sat around listening to the
 New York radio stations, which are just like commercial television without the inter-
 ference, and drinking coffee. I tried some Wheaties, a minor ambition I've had since
 the war years when I was an avid Superman fan. The American troops used to bring
 comic books into England and in those days I had a collection to match Ted White's.

Sandy Cutrell came round and together we walked on to Fourth Avenue. I saw a snack
 bar advertising hamburgers and went inside to sample my first. Like a fool I ordered
 French fries with the thing and found myself paying through the nose for chipped po-
 tatoes that in England would cost me sixpence. A further disappointment was due:
 the highly rated malted milks turned out to be nothing but milk shakes at twice the
 price I would have to pay at home. Still, I enjoyed the experience of ordering my
 first American hamburger. It tasted much nicer than the weak imitations they sell on
 Coventry Street, in London's West End. And in a warped and twisted way I also en-
 joyed paying out my first dollar bill.

We then took the subway downtown. The New York subway didn't set any rivers afire
 with me. Compared with the London Underground its directional signs are poor and do
 not attract attention and lack of paint and colour makes the system dirty. To
 a Briton who is constantly criticising the hygienic standards of British life in com-
 parison with the American, this was a disappointment. Do Americans save their larger
 than life signposts and their colourful dress, their brighter outercoating, as it
 were, for the upper levels? I'd hate to think so, but the New York subway could

Colonial Excursion II

certainly learn from London. We emerged to that upper level, with its bright sunlight and clean cut colours, at 34th Street. And that is where my afternoon of kicks began. Looking back, now, I find it hard to believe that such little things pleased me as much as did the bigger aspects of the trip; silly little things like seeing the latest MAD on sale at a street corner newsstand. I took a couple of colour shots of Macy's and we walked over to the store.

I'd heard a lot about the store, of course, from reading The Big Puff and the Reader's Digest, amongst other items, but apart from the reputation this too was something of a disappointment, being just like any department store at home except that it's bigger of course, and except too that smoking was not permitted and I had to stub my cigarette.

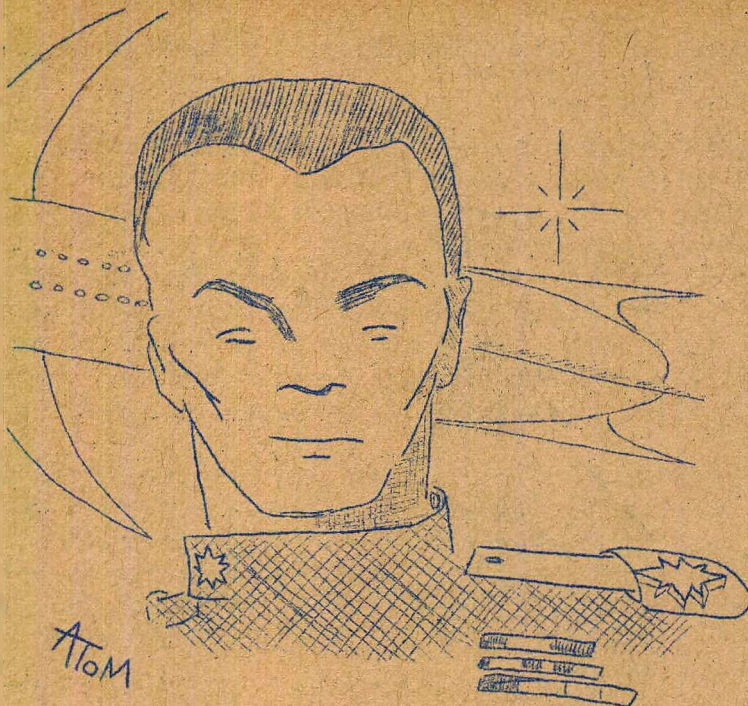
From Macy's we looked across at the Empire State Building and I took some more shots. We walked over to this, this...well, how do you describe it? We walked over to it, anyway. And we went in, too. I was a little surprised that not only did one have to pay to go to the top of the Building but that the price was a dollar thirty. This was nine shillings. One can walk round goodness knows how many of England's stately homes for half-a-crown, or thirty five cents. Sandy told me that there were one hundred and two floors and that there was an excellent observatory on the eighty-sixth. We followed the express elevators. The lifts at home are nothing like this. I don't suppose they have the room to get really started on a fast trip. This car took a few seconds over a minute to make the eighty-six floors.

The elevator operator, or lift man as we'd call him, suddenly began to chant in a monotone: "In 1945 a Wellington bomber crashed into the side of the building coming through two elevator shafts; the pilot and navigator crashed down to their deaths in the very shaft up which you are now traveling." I've heard better hi-fi records but at least this recording could answer questions. I asked him how high up this had happened. I was told that the plane crashed through into the seventy-second floor. Need I add that at that very moment we were at the seventy-second floor?

The observatory has all the usual tourist attractions, with recording machines and souvenir counters. We ignored these and stepped outside onto the paved walk. I'm normally not a person to get wildly enthusiastic about the man-made wonders I'm obviously supposed to get enthusiastic about, but if there ever has been an exception in my life then the Empire State Building is that exception. The view is breathtaking. I really enjoyed taking pictures of the different landmarks...the Chrysler Building, Radio City, the famous "Skyline" and the rest. Even I picked out the United Nations Building and I got a kick out of pointing out the Queen Mary which was to sail back to Southampton the following day, and the SS United States which was docked close by. I imagined that the children at school back home would be quite pleased with the films I was taking and I regretted that I would not have Sandy alongside me when showing them. He made an excellent guide; a walking encyclopedia.

We had promised Pat that we would get back for dinner so we traversed our route. Afterwards Shel Deretchin, the London Convention's "Boy Ugh," dropped-in and by indulging in some brilliant mathematic calculation he and Sandy decided to show me Greenwich Village. We drove down in Sandy's car. The Village is a weird place. I have heard of areas having their own decisive personalities, but I've never felt that such a personality could be as tangible as is that of the Village. The atmosphere is wholly one of informality. When Shel and Sandy parked the car and took me past the higher prices tourist traps, I was amazed to find crowds standing about on the street corners, not looking sinister as one has been let to believe street corner crowds look. These people were just talking; some greeted Sandy and Shel as we strolled past them. The streets were lined with other liesurely crowds, some sitting on the steps of shops and apartment houses, some sitting on the fenders or bonnets of parked cars. I discovered that these cars probably didn't even belong to those who were sitting on them. Strange indeed is Life In Other Lands.

Colonial Excursion III



Shel told Sandy that I should be taken to Macdougall which I assumed was a friend of theirs, Macdougall being in England a well-known brand of baking powder. This friend of theirs turned out to be a street. That, I suppose, is the Village for you. We had a look in a music shop which was called, I think, The Folklore Center. I noticed that in the window was displayed a copy of the Lee Shaw edited "Caravan," no longer a mimeographed fringe-fanzine but now a semi-professional photolith job. I was told that Lee has a subscription list of some two hundred strong. Fandom certainly was never like that!

We went into a little coffee bar in which two or three characters were playing chess. One of these was introduced to me as David MacDonald, the editor of METROFAN, the fanzine

that had gotten itself involved in the Kyle-Dietz lawsuit war. Dave asked me what I thought of it all and I told him that I wasn't taking sides in the matter. Which is just as well. Much later I was told that Dave asks probing questions so that he can obtain material for his fanzine. Naturally I don't know whether or not this is true; it's just what I was told.

While I was talking to Dave, a character looked over my shoulder and was introduced as Tom Condit, of whom I had heard, and whose name always reminds me of a cocktail. He's a friendly, informal type and though we only managed to exchange a couple of words we did find later that we had common interests.

We wandered on down the street, turning left at the end of the block to investigate a bookshop which was installed in a cellar. Here were found a couple of cartons of pocketbooks at the back of the store and we each made purchases. Then we crossed the street to a second coffee shop which was as near to Soho as anything I saw in the Village. This was Figaro's, where the folk music fans gather; the walls were plastered with esoteric inspirations appertaining to their Way of Life.

Shel and Sandy marched in with me in tow and they enthusiastically greeted a young lady sitting amongst a group by the window. I didn't recognise her and was a little ashamed of myself when they introduced Lee Shaw, for I had met her in Kettering in 1956. I passed on the regards of the Bulmers and the Clarkes but Lee didn't seem wildly enthusiastic. We sat down and Shel bought me a glass of iced coffee. By rights it should have been one of those fannish occasions that Go Down In History but it fell flat. We sat and stared at each other, nobody quite succeeding in breaking the ice. Lee is the listening type of fan and though, as Inchmery fandom will tell you, I'm the talking type, I do take time to warm up. Bob Pavlat will tell you this too; later he was to accuse me twice a day of being a fake as I didn't talk like a runaway tape recorder, as Vince had stated. By the time the trip was over, Bob had changed his mind.

It struck me as a sad thing that someone who had been such a part of Willis' State-side trip and who herself had been elected as a TAFF delegate should now be so out of touch with things. It might have been just plain selfishness on my part that I was disappointed because Lee wasn't wildly enthusiastic at meeting me on home territory but she didn't seem to be having a really happy time. I hope I'm wrong. It just seemed so damned futile and it dawned on me that the sense of futility was part

Colonial Excursion IV

and parcel of the Greenwich Village scene as is its informality. Perhaps, indeed, the two go hand in hand.

I don't remember Lee as much as smiling during that meeting. Admittedly she was faced with Bennett, a formidable imposition at the best of times, but the only spark of the Lee I knew and loved as a fan came when she was telling me that these days she was completely out of fandom. "The only fanzine I'm editing these days," she said, "is Science Fiction Five Yearly." She told Shel and Sandy that they should show me something of the Village that O. Henry made famous in 'The Last Leaf,' which interested me greatly as I've always been a short story fan and the above story is, of course, a classic. Lee was referring to the street which doubled back and looped past and through itself and I looked forward to seeing this phenomenon for myself.

We left Figaro's and walked back along Macdougals, looking in again at the Caricature (which the regulars call the "Cari") to find Dave Macdonald challenging us to a game of cards. I tried to get them interested in brag or even poker but Sandy has too much sense to become a gambler and so we settled for Sandy and Dave teaching me how to play 'Hearts,' a game I had heard of but hadn't played. The rules seemed familiar and it was the old story of beginner's luck except for the fact that I have often played the game in England but under a different name. Yuk.

Shel had to leave about this time and Sandy took me to see where Fourth Street crossed Eleventh Street, this being a seeming impossibility as in New York City the streets run from East to West and the avenues from North to South. I was also shown a street which joined itself and a building that is on two streets on one side and one street on two sides. It was all very confusing and by the time Sandy took me back to the Ellington's for supper and a last natter before going to bed in the early hours I was a bigger nervous wreck than ever before.

((The fifth part of Ron's report will be continued in SPECTRE, available from Bill Meyers at 4301 Shawnee Circle, Chattanooga 11, Tennessee if you write and ask.))

OooO OooO OooO OooO OooO OooO OooO OooO OooO OooO OooO OooO

READ ANY GOOF BOOKS LATELY? DEPARTMENT

"...the thin film of Edenite that, by forcing the pressure of the water back upon itself instead of trying to hold it out by brute force, tricking the pressure itself into furnishing the necessary strength (for the hull of the submarine) would make it possible to plunge four miles below the surface."
... "...the unexplored Deeps...six miles, seven miles and more straight down, beyond even the range of our most powerful exploring cruisers..."

UNDERSEA QUEST, Pohl and

Williamson

—Which just goes to show that while you can trick some of the pressures all of the time and all of the pressures some of the time...

HOW OBSOLETE WAS MY GRADE SCHOOL

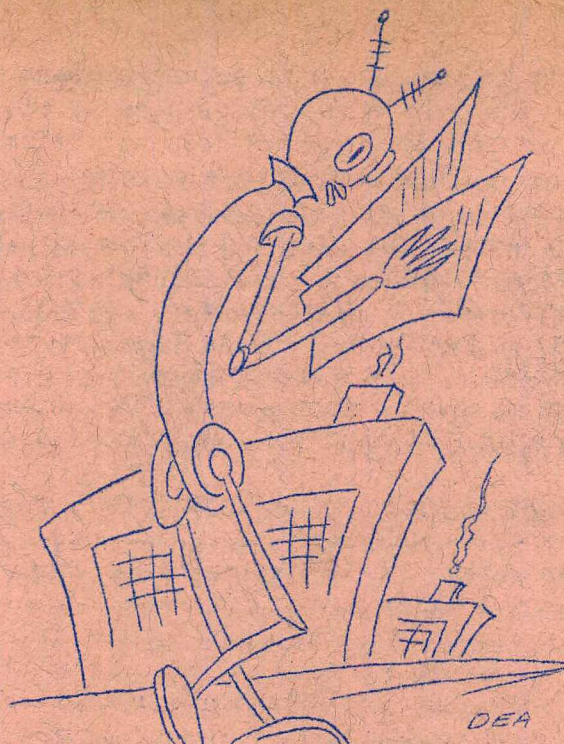
Letter of comment in PSI-PHI 2 remarks:

"...it's quite remarkable to find a neo-fanzine that is practically free from silly spelling errors." The editor remarks:

"OK, so I payed attention in grade school. Don't rub it in. By the way, I'm 16."



HARRY
WARNER
JR



*opere
citato*

There are quite a few fanzines accumulated since the last time I reviewed fanzines. As nearly as I can recall, it was early in 1939 when incoming material for Spaceways became plentiful enough for me to drop the fanzine reviews that I had used in its first few issues as a space-filling measure. However, not all of the unreviewed fanzines since that date are still readily obtainable so I will limit myself, roughly, to those that have reached me between late summer and medium autumn of 1958.

This column will depart in certain respects from traditional fanzine reviewing. I plan to skip most of the time certain classes of fan publications. It isn't possible to review all fanzines because (a) I don't get them all, (b) I wouldn't be able to fit many of them into the reviewing method that will be in use, and (c) Gregg would not have enough space to publish something about everything that comes from the fan press these days. So you will find little or nothing about fanzines that are mainly concerned with news and news-type gossip, those which are available solely to a limited clientele like FAPA or SAPS productions, and publications by fans that have little or nothing to do with fandom or fantasy. This will exclude many fine things in the ayjay groups, certain issues of Canadian Fandom, major contemporary influences like Fanac, and letter-substitutes like the late Stupefying Stories. In most cases I think that the editors will understand and approve, if they're trying to limit circulation to an inner circle or a special interest group.

The easiest and most obvious way to review fanzines is to write about them one at a time. However, this system has been worked to death over the years and the basic result is that the reader compares his reactions with those of the reviewer. If energy permits, I plan to try to cover recent fanzines by topic matter. This may involve two or three mentions for a fanzine in one column, if that fanzine happens to publish a variety of material, or it may mean complete snubbing of an excellent publication if its contents don't happen to fit neatly into any category taken up in that particular column. If it's names and addresses of all recent fanzines you want, there are several comprehensive review columns where you can find them.

The modest four-pound stack of fanzines with which I'm working this time gives strong evidence of one major fannish factor: the love of fan gatherings continues to grow apace. Conventions, conferences, and just plain visits of fans seem to produce consistently better writing than more abstruse topics, probably because the writers need only to use their eyes, ears and memories rather than any great quantity of planning and thought. Unfortunately, the flood of convention accounts that should

be drenching the fannish press by the time this column appears is only a slow trickle as I write, in mid-November. The only blow-by-blow account of the Solacon up to now is a honey, thirty-two pages of it, in the third issue of Polarity from FM & E Busby, 2852 14th Avenue West, Seattle 99, Washington, which costs 25¢ if you aren't in SAPS or the good graces of the Busbys. The convention is described from both the Mr and Mrs viewpoint, a system which permits us sometimes to see the same events from two angles, other times allowing the writers to cover two aspects of the convention that were happening simultaneously in different geographical areas. The Busbys might be described as modified realists in their convention reporting techniques: they don't go muckraking but they don't skip over the nastier events. Their descriptions are helped immensely by two pages of Solacon photographs which miraculously do not suffer from the washed-out faces that afflict most fans who face flashbulbs.

A different kind of fannish chronicling can be found in the second and third issues of Aporrheta from H P Sanderson, "Inchmery," 236 Queens Road, London SE 14, England, available at one shilling per copy. It's "The Search for Strawberry Ice," the account of how some Inchmery fans tracked down the Goon in his natural habitat and spent a vacation seeing other portions of the tight little isles and their fans. I suppose that idealized would be as good a word as any to describe the writing by Sandy. It makes you want to catch the next steamer for Great Britain or Ireland or anything in that general vicinity and spend the rest of your life having as good a time as that described in the vacation tale. The reader also gets an uncomfortable feeling that he'll never find it within himself to enjoy himself as thoroughly as these people did. I assume that this wild odyssey for strawberry ice cream wasn't quite as idyllic as it sounds; if it was, there's no point in dragging out your existence among people and surroundings anywhere else on earth.

Raw and primitive, almost illiterate in some respects, but still highly entertaining is a third variety of fannish historical material. It's "A Short Inaccurate History of the Dallas Futurian Society" in a plump publication which apparently has no title. Jim Hitt, 2432 Hillglenn Road, Dallas 28, Texas, is the man to contact, but this first issue lacks reference to price as completely as it lacks a name. The writing is dismally careless but so completely typical of the vendettas and messes into which local fan groups can fall that it's worth asking for. It describes the adventures of Dallas fans when most of them were on the outs with Mosher and is quite fair about the whole thing, relating in painful detail the intrigues that went on to discredit and make uncomfortable this individual. I've never read anything by Mosher but I hope that he can do a better job of writing the language than this. A sample, strictly sic: "Ever since the first or second meeting of the club was gathering at various and assortied places. The meeting were consisting of nothing much but auctions. The books and materials for which I could not determine a source. These auctions were selling a great amount of books on credit." Elsewhere in this issue these Texans achieve the stupendous feat of misspelling Houston.

The general tendency for fans today is to try to be amusing and gay at any cost in their writings. This makes it hard for the sercon type of analytical or bibliographical article to push its way into existence. The species still can be found, but it sometimes must be dug out from beneath a patina of humor or located in rather obscure fan publications. A sample of the first situation can be found in "The Art of William Rotsler" by Bob Bloch in the 8th issue of Innuendo. Innuendo, a quite bloated fanzine in page quantity, comes from Terry Carr, 2315 Dwight Way, Berkeley 4, California, for letters and trades. It's hard to be sure about specifically what Bloch intends seriously and what is spoken in jest about Rotsler's talent for "evocative symbolism," but the article contains things that badly needed saying. Some people seem to continue to believe that those Rotsler sketches are just pointless pictures, nothing more. Bloch reveals exactly how they have bubbled up from the Rotsler subconscious and how the Rotsler subconscious is an approximate facsimile of yours and mine as far as erotic symbolism and a few less exciting things are concerned. A quite different kind of writing about rather similar matters has appeared in the

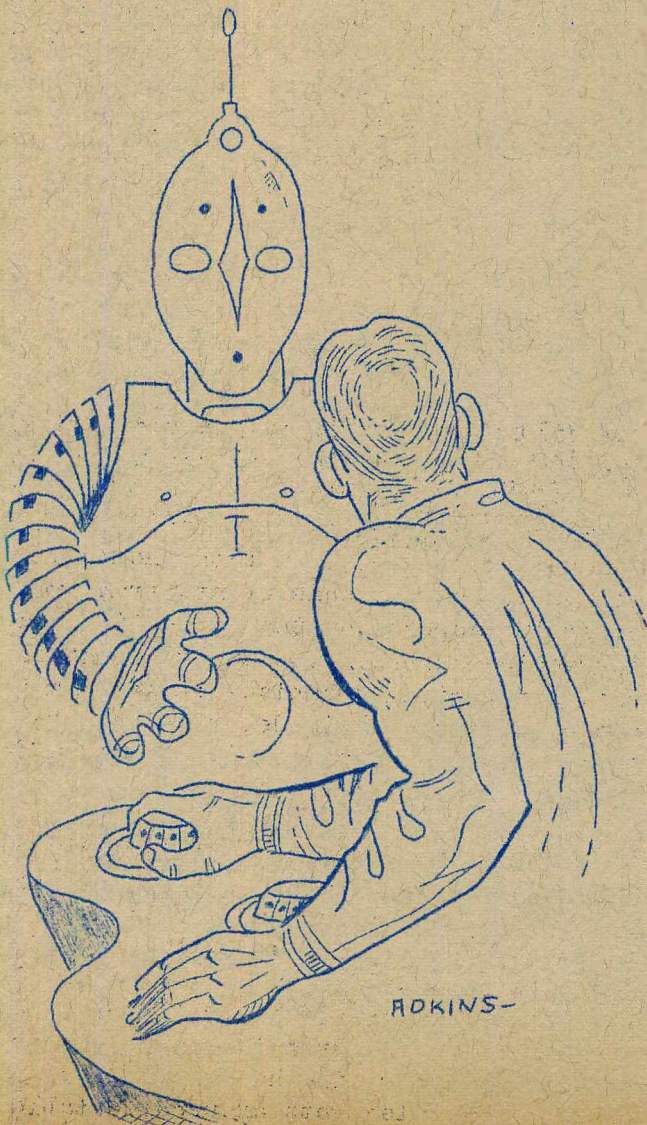
first two issues of The Fanzine of France and Science Fiction Quarterly which Pierre Versins publishes at Primerose 38, Lausanne, Switzerland, in return for prozines, letters and similar things. This is the first thorough study that I have encountered on the basic things behind the fantasies of H. Rider Haggard, an author whom we're apt to rate today as a harmless story-teller who no longer has any particular significance. Serge Hutin has done a thorough job of getting to the essence of the basic fears and desires that underlie those stories, carefully citing chapters and titles to back up his points.

Raw material for fannish historians keeps bobbing up in the fannish press. Closest to home for me is the article by Jim Avery in the fourth issue of a fanzine you may never have heard of, Omega, published by Rod Frye, 408 Alleghany Road, Hampton, Va. Jim was the co-editor of Spaceways, has been dead to fandom these many years, and now bobs up with a son who is planning to publish a fanzine and this memoir-type article. It is a remarkable job of recreating events that happened twenty years ago solely from memory; I could spot only two or three minor misstatements in the recollections which were written nearly a thousand miles from Jim's source material. The same claim for accuracy can hardly be made for the article in the first issue of Fijagh by V. A. Shatov. Fijagh is published by Dick Ellington, PO Box 104, Cooper Station, New York 3, New York, for OMPA members and "congenial types." Shatov isn't an NFFF member, in case you're wondering where he came from. He's identified as a young consular official in Russia who visited the United States and wrote a series of articles about his experiences for Pioneer, a boy's magazine published in Russia. This translation is too good to be true in its anecdotes of the two cliques of New

York fandom. No, those cliques aren't the kind that you're familiar with. One group is led by a young rake who owns several printing plants and four radio stations and apparently has orgies constantly. The other group is led by a "young worker with a frank, open countenance and hair as red as the banks of the Dnieper," and instead of having orgies, he defies the police to publish the truth about the United States and drink "strong tea in glasses." I suppose that the truth about New York fandom wasn't considered printable enough even for Russian boys to read.

I also enjoyed more autobiographical material in the form of an article by Rog Phillips, "Words Without Music," in Innuendo number eight. It throws some light on his fan department writing years and also illuminates a bit too clearly for his own good certain aspects of Rog's opinion of himself. Or maybe I'm just jealous: he seems to be able to use I, me and my in fanzine writing even more frequently than my own fabulously high rate of prevalence of first person pronouns.

Fiction in fanzines hasn't been too frequent or lengthy in recent months. There is no doubt about the identity of the most curious item. It's a story in the same issue of Omega mentioned earlier, "Narsa of Clautus," by someone with the unbe-



lievable name of Richard Askew. Think about the name, if you don't understand the adjective immediately. It starts out as a pretty conscientious job of transposing the plot of "Tosca" to a future and distant place but soon degenerates to an incongruous copying of the actual dialogue and stage directions from the second act's final scene. Creative copying, on the other hand, will be found in that eighth issue of Innuendo as the first installment of "On the Road" by the alleged Carl Brandon. If I read many more parodies by a nonexistent person like this I'll start to believe that a real person could turn anything that's ever been written into something that has bearing on fans and fandom. There must be real people who can think of lines like "...a traveling salesman who said he'd never heard of Dean Grennell or Lynn Hickman." Another copy job, this time involved in stylistic reproduction, is virtually the only thing in the eighteenth issue of Stellar, published by Ted E White, 2708 N Charles Street, Baltimore 18, Maryland, and who probably isn't publishing Stellar any more in any event. Walt Willis somehow manages to convert the Mickey Spillane cliches and vulgarities into something poetic and human by a neat plot twist toward the end of "Mike Hammer at the Clevention."

Bound with that unnamed Dallas fanzine was a year-old, previously undistributed second issue of Spectrum. It was apparently published in one final flaring-up of fannish energy by George Jennings, but I can't give you his address as it is illegible in my copy. "The Fakefan" reads like early Terry Carr fan fiction: expert in dialogue and the art of keeping the narrative moving but suffering one tremendous handicap. Terry tries to use one character as the center of interest as the story begins and shifts to another character midway through the three-page yarn. George Moore wasn't able to make this shift of attention entirely successful in a book as long as "The Brook Kerith" and I suspect that it's impossible to do smoothly in a short story. And if you are a Goon enthusiast--or if you aren't--you still can't do without the 11th issue of Retribution, even though an attack of gafia prevented it from possessing ATOM illustrations. John Berry, 31 Campbell Park Avenue, Belmont, Belfast, Northern Ireland, is the publisher, it sells for 15¢, and the Goon saga is supplemented in this latest issue by the true facts in the often-described repair of the Berry duplicator numbering device, the aquatic aspects of the Goon Defective Agency, and the second in Berry's series of you-figure-the-solution-to-a-Goon-problem.

If American fandom had not existed it would have been necessary to invent it because British fans write more good material than they can find space to print in their own publications. I might cite the account by John Berry of recent fannish visitors to Belfast, in the first issue of John Champion's Impasse, 249 S Catalina, Pasadena, California, which costs a dime or trades; the same British Burbee in the first issue of Fijagh with one of his rare pieces not concerned with fans and fandom, detailing with Thurberish perfection of narration and restraint what happened after he cut his arm while attending woodworking class; and yet another Berry description of the repair of the numbering device on the mimeograph, an event which seems destined to produce as many thousands of words as the taste of that little cookie touched off for the narrator in "Remembrance of Things Past." I got so fascinated by the aptness of my comparison in this last sentence that I couldn't bear to interrupt myself long enough for reference to the fact that it's in the third issue of Polarity.

Good artwork has been a trifle scarce in recent fanzines, what with the absence of large Rotsler canvases, Art Thomson's dolce far niente, and such factors. The one that sticks in my mind most doggedly is the cover of the eighth Innuendo: Bjo's depiction of a propellor-beanied fellow looking at the Mona Lisa and mumbling, "Sure, Leonardo, but it'll be hell to stencil!" This is the second of a series, Through History with J. Wesley Trufan, that bears a pleasantly suspicious resemblance to the cartoons of similar intent that used to appear in the Saturday Review. I can't wait for the sight of a fan sidling up to the old Teuton and saying: "But, look, Mister Gutenberg, pure fantasy won't sell, and you didn't even slipsheet it."



The flickering reflections of flame from the roaring fireside reached out and illuminated the alabaster bust of Beethoven on the pedestal in the corner of the music room as the last few bars of his Pastoral Symphony reverberated round the four walls. Gently, almost sadly, I closed the small book which contained the entire orchestral score and placed it reverently in the book case by the old and faithful gramophone. None of this new-fangled hi-fi for me. My gramophone needed only a little white dog to sit by the trumpet and I had my own mobile HMV label. The machine had been good enough for my father and his father and it still worked well, even if the handle did slip slightly.

Moreover, its slightly musty tone seemed to give exactly the atmosphere I sensed the Old Masters would expect.

I reached over to my indexed notebook containing all of my classical record collection...my favourite composition was Tchaikovsky's Symphony number six, the Pathétique (the theme of which some Tin Pan Alley laggard had reproduced a few years ago as a crooner's ballad entitled 'The Song of a Starry Night') and I tried to make up my mind whether to play it or 'Variations on a Theme of Paganini' by Rachmaninoff. Suddenly the door burst open and Terry, my brother-in-law, stood on the threshold, holding a heavy case in his hand.

"Hi," he grinned. I surveyed him...a typical teenager; thick black hair nearly reaching his shoulder blades; a cheerful expression, indicative of one 'sent'; long jacket; jeans; and the big case.

I undid the top two buttons of my smoking jacket and switched on the standard lamp.

"It's pretty late," I observed. "Shouldn't you be at home?"

"Didn't Diane tell you?" he grinned. "I'm stopping here for a week."

Hmmm.

"Take your bag of clothes upstairs," I suggested.

"I brought them this afternoon," he replied.

"So what's in the big case?"

"A record player."

"A record player?"

I threw a protective hand round my family heirloom, trying not to sneeze as the cloud of dust from the cloth-backed turntable rose around me. I gave Terry a modest look, reflecting my surprise and regret that he didn't deem my gramophone a suitable

medium to play his records.

Rump Stake II

His records.

Hmmm,

"Is it hi-fi?" I asked pensively.

He patted it affectionately...nodded.

"We'll try it," I said benevolently, "and I'll let you choose. The 'Pathetique' or Rachmaninoff's 'Variations'?"

He slumped nervously forward and ran a tongue over his lips.

"Can't we...can't we play one of mine?" he asked.

I felt somewhat paternal...after all, he was young and I was...weeeell, not old, but I had married his sister and blood is thicker than...

"Well, alright," I said slowly. I mean, I saw him reach forward with an electric plug and I was nearest the socket...

Terry nonchalantly threw aside a sheet of brown paper and revealed a superb red and cream structure with a keen looking row of dials. He opened the lid by simply pressing a button and the innards of the record player revealed a maze of mechanical arms and claws and wires. He flicked through a pile of thin wafer-like discs, chose one, and placed it on a horizontal spindle arising triumphantly from the bowels of the machine. A series of complicated actions ensued involving much criss-crossing of mechanical arms and the disc disappeared from sight like a pit life down the shaft. Terry's face assumed a celestial expression, like someone hammering on Them Pearly Gates, as he impatiently waited for the needle to get in the groove.

A horrible blast from the machine blew me backwards in the chair and the chill horrors of the damned made my hair stand on end. I presumed immediately that due to some miscalculation the disc manufacturer had inadvertantly included as a prelude the oral sounds of an operation whereby catgut was being withdrawn from the animal without it being under anaesthetic.

Terry started to pant like an affectionate Pekinese.

"Wait for the vibes," he drooled in awe.

I loosened my collar and took a quick shot of soda water. Neat.

"My Ghod, Terry," I said, "there's something alive in there."

But he was beyond redemption. His eyes disappeared into the top of his head and his body jerked as if an electrode was titillating his lower vertebrae.

"Just listen to them vibes," he screamed.

I recognised that the time had come for immediate action. The boy was obviously suffering from an obscure form of pernipsii. I raised the soda syphon and prepared to depress the lever when he suddenly sat upright, a look of stark disbelief in his eyes.

"Where's Krupa?" he asked, "He should have come in by now."

I put a finger in each ear to drown the horrible cacophony from the record player and peered anxiously around the room.

The boy was obviously stark raving bonkers.

"Oh Perdido, Perdido, wherefore art thou, Lionel," he sobbed.

The situation was serious. We couldn't have this on both sides of the family.

Finally the record player bounced a foot in the air and the terrible noise ceased.

I let my ears attune themselves once more to virgin decibels. Terry wiped a bead of sweat from his brow and threw off his jacket, momentarily blinding me with the sheer slashing brilliance of his vest. He seemed to take a grip on himself again, picked up a handful of the thin discs and dumped them one by one into the machine.

"Listen to this first one," he beamed. "Sammy Davis singing 'That Old Black Magic.'"

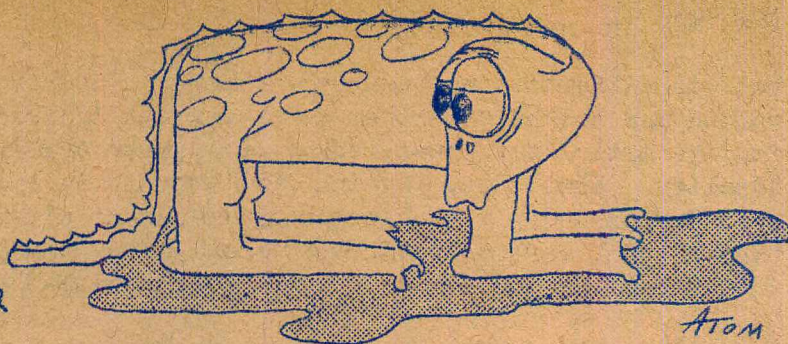
The record started off reasonably well--I could even understand some of the words--but suddenly Sammy seemed to go berserk. I backed away in terror, my hands groping wildly in front of me and suddenly...I shot forward like a rocket!

I leapt three feet in the air, landed, vaulted Terry with feet to spare, and began a rapid circumvention of the room like a hurdler with the hot foot. Eventually I subsided in a heap on the floor just as the record finished. Terry reached down and shook my hand with a strong grip.

"I always knew the others were wrong," he confessed, "they don't know the real you!" He heaped such lavish ego-boo on me for my apparent appreciation of jazz that I basked in the praise, even though it was a misapprehension on Terry's part.

I didn't think it judicious to tell him at that particular moment that I'd backed into a good old family heirloom one and a half inch long steel gramophone needle.

WALT WILLIS



THE HARP THAT ONCE OR TWICE

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME WOULD SMELL

I'm saddened to see that science fiction is becoming a dirty word again. The prozine editors are hauling down the 'SCIENCE FICTION' masthead hand over fist and scuttling off of the sinking ship in droves. And yet it seems only the other day that they were moving heaven and earth and everything else on their covers to figure those words as prominently as possible: the bare two words SCIENCE FICTION by themselves were even deemed a surefire prozine title and it seemed that at any moment we would have a prozine called THE ORIGINAL SCIENTIFictional SCIENCE FICTION STORIES OF SUPER SCIENCE FICTION.

Now it is of course unreasonable to expect prozine editors to call their magazines science fiction merely because that's what they are; that's the sort of idea that would only occur to us silly fans who are always completely out of touch with reality. But it does seem to me that all this chopping and changing is a bit hard on the innocent cover designers and printers, so I'd like to suggest a little innovation that might help everyone.

It is that there should be a large blank space on all covers on which the appropriate OK word of the day could be inserted at a moment's notice, thereby enabling the editors to keep abreast of the vagaries of the public taste. The magazines could be sent out to the newsstands with the space empty and on the day before they're to be put on sale dispatch riders would leave the editorial offices with a supply of rubber stamps with which the newsstand owners could stamp their supplies. A year ago, for example, all the titles could have been changed to something on the lines of INFINITY SPUTNIK STORIES and a current title might well be ASTOUNDING HULA HOOPS AND OTHER PSIONIC DEVICES. Then if sex ever recovers from Elvis Presley and we go back to the good old traditions of professional sf, we could have nekkid women again and titles like GALaxy or ASStounding or Imaginative TAIL or even just The Magazine of F. You can see at once how big a help this would be in promoting sales without departing from the best ethical practices of professional sf publishing.

YES, SON, THERE IS A CARL BRANDON

In its short but vivid lifetime, younger San Francisco fandom has produced two remarkable things, Carl Brandon and a tower to the Moon made out of beer cans, and until a few weeks ago I was quite sure I knew which of them was imaginary. Nowadays I wear a crash helmet every time the Moon is in the east. The creation of Carl Brandon is the most ambitious, most ingenious, most daring, most successful and mostly wholly admirable hoax ever accomplished in fandom. The only comparable achievement was Sandy Sanderson's creation of Joan Carr, the young editor of the 'all-female' fanzine FEMIZINE, who had such a life of her own that many people including myself refused to believe she didn't exist when the truth first came out, so that even now I still find myself filing Sandy's fanzines separately from Joan's and thinking of him as a fan who became active only quite recently. In addition, Joan was a more active and prominent figure than Carl. And yet I still think the San Francisco hoaxers have the edge. Sandy had the advantages of isolation, while the San Francisco people paraded Carl through West Coast fandom without being exposed. Also, Sandy kept in the background while manipulating Joan, but Carr and the others were active in their own right contemporaneously with their creation. Finally, and most important, the quality of Carl Brandon's fanactivity not only transcended that of his creators',

but was different in character. He was a member of their group in his own right and walked and talked with them as a separate individual, so that we don't only have his fanzine articles to re-allocate but spoken comments and opinions and facets of personality. That's why I think Carl Brandon is too good to lose. This handsome young soft-spoken Negro with his lazily brilliant wit and thoughtful mind was an asset to fandom and I say we should keep him. I say that fandom should rise up from the four corners of the world and tell the Berkeleyites "DON'T LET CARL BRANDON DIE!"

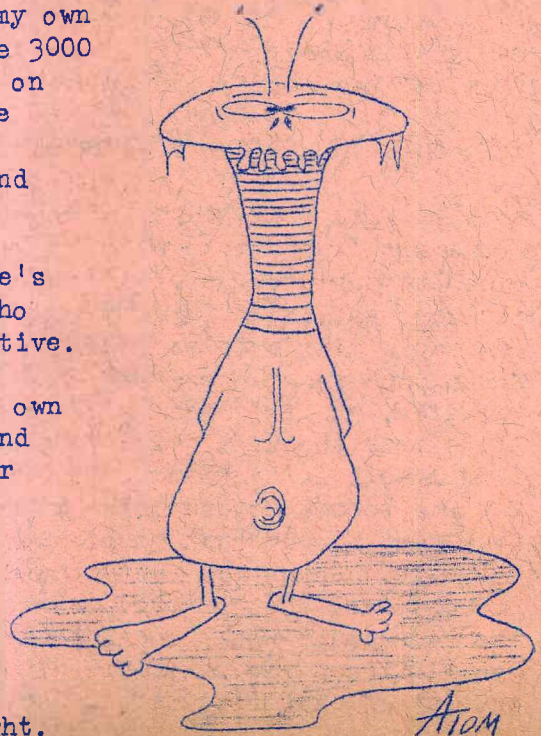
I hope they'll listen to us, but even if they don't we can keep Carl alive by believing in him, as in Barrie's Peter Pan where the child audience keeps Tinkerbell from dying by proclaiming their belief in fairies. I appeal to you all to believe in Carl Brandon. Carl Brandon does not exist: very well, it is necessary to create him. Faneds! When you can't remember the author of a good quotation, credit it to Carl! Let him take the place of those old men Anon and Trad. Fan Authors! When you write an article anonymously and it's good, byline it Brandon! Convention Reporters! When somebody does or says something wonderful and you can't say just who it was, say it was Carl Brandon! And everyone--when you want to quote something good you said yourself, put it in Brandon's mouth! (A very useful way, I might point out, of avoiding such awkward phrases as "I said a rather brilliant thing the other day...") And of course, when you contribute money anonymously to TAFF or some other good cause, have them publicly thank Brandon.

Between us we will build up Carl Brandon to even greater heights and make him a living symbol of all that is best in fandom. All that is fine and good in us will be personified in Brandon; we will make him our ideal, our idol, our ghod. As we march into fandom's bright future with this living legend at our head, let our cry be "CARL BRANDON LIVES ON!"

CAN THIS MARRIAGE BE SAVED?

I see someone else is wondering why fans don't hardly write to prozines no more. This time it's Marion C. Oaks, formerly Marion Cox (who seems to have gone to a great deal of trouble to find a husband who would make her change her name as little as possible). She suggests it's because we've become self centered. Well, that may be true but it doesn't really answer the question, does it Marion? Now we have to ask, why has fandom got so self centered that it has lost interest in science fiction, or at least doesn't express what interest it has? Well, as you all know, this is a fearless crusading column, partly because of my own noble dedicated character and partly because I live 3000 miles away from anyone likely to come and punch me on the nose, so I'm going to Name Names. Nothing like Naming Names, as that well known friend of Zola's, Jack Hughes, used to say. So I name Horace Gold and Bob Silverberg.

Horace, who is a Good Man, is named only because he's the most prominent of those professional editors who believe that the opinions of fans are Unrepresentative. He would I suppose be prepared to admit that we've occasionally been right in the past--after all his own magazine, with trimmed edges and tasteful covers and everything is just what us fans had been asking for in our impractical way for twenty years--but he doesn't believe on the evidence available to him that what we say nowadays is of much interest to anyone. That in itself wouldn't matter so much, though personally I feel as unoriented in a magazine without a letter column as I do in a room without a fireplace, but the real trouble is that he has convinced the fans themselves that he's right.



The Harp III

Well, to be more cautious because I don't know how you feel and I'm sure Horace did not mean to discourage us anyway, people like him have convinced me. I hardly ever write to prozine editors these days because I just don't know what to say. Generally it seems to me that much of the contents are garbage, but there's no point in saying so, however cogently, if the editor is going to reply that your opinions are Unrepresentative because he has fifty thousand dedicated subscribers eager to swear affidavits in their own blood that every last word in every story is deathless literature. Reading between the lines you can sometimes see that he privately agrees with you but that he feels as Bernard Shaw once said to a lone heckler after a first night: "Who are we, against so many?" Or as Liberace commented on his critics, rather more brilliantly than Shaw, I thought: "I cried all the way to the bank." (Incidentally, I'd better make it clear that Gold doesn't reply like that; he discusses your criticism seriously and at your own evaluation level.)

Alternately you can put yourself in the position of a simple minded teenager graduating from Tarzan and try to look at the stories from that angle, but the strain induced by this contortion is excessive...and after all there is no reason why the editor should prefer your guess to his own, or indeed that of an actual simple minded teenager graduating from Tarzan—who is in this field an expert witless.

The other difficulty for us is that science fiction is getting harder and harder to read and that's where Bob Silverberg comes in. In the old days there used to be good authors and bad authors: you read the former and skipped the latter, and you could get through the entire monthly output of sf in a few hours. But nowadays, when most of it is written by Bob Silverberg, it's a much more tedious and frustrating operation. You can't get through Bob Silverberg boilerplate that fast.

Boilerplate, I should explain, is the name printers give to slabs of preset type containing little items of "interest" about the Amazon or astronomy or suchlike which editors of small newspapers use to fill up odd spaces. I imagine the average prozine editor faced with a twenty-three page gap in his magazine falls back equally thankfully on a handy Silverberg story, available in all stock sizes. He knows it will

be competently written, with unexceptionable syntax and spelling, it will hold the reader's attention sufficiently to lead him on to the next story, and no one will fling the magazine away in shock or anger. The fact that nobody will remember the story the next day is not important—most of the contents of the magazine has always been like that. The real trouble is mainly that the editor hasn't made any effort. The use of boilerplate is a dangerous addiction and the better the boilerplate the more dangerous it becomes. If the boilerplate weren't so good the editor might go looking for material from some amateur or crackpot or starving poet or lazy writer and once in a thousand times he might bring back a masterpiece, or at least a story bad in such an original way that it might inspire one from someone else that would be better. (There are more successes inspired by failure than by success.) It could be argued that Bob Silverberg, and to a lesser extent Ken Bulmer, Harlan Ellison, and some others, are menaces to science fiction. They represent a new type of too-competent specialist hack—exfans who know the whole field of science fiction from the inside and use that knowledge to create a mechanical simulacrum of it for money; a thing that walks and talks and fills up space like science fiction but hasn't got the true flame of life inside it.

Be that as it may, the trouble from the point of us fans is that we know Silverberg and Bulmer and Ellison. To the nonfan aficionado they may be just a couple of dozen names he knows he can skip if he's in a hurry, but we know them to be fans with a genuine love of science fiction and the knowledge of what it can be and, we believe, the ability



to write it the way it should be written. So we keep on plugging through the boilerplate, hoping, always hoping. Story after story looms up, is started with hope, read with disappointment, and finished with annoyance for another wasted half hour. For me, it's getting so that I can hardly bring myself to read a sf magazine any more, and yet I'd hate not to be there when they break out of the commercial groove and write the stuff they believe in. Bob, in memory of your fellowship with us fans, won't you help us out? Couldn't you arrange some secret sort of code so that we can recognise The Story when it comes?

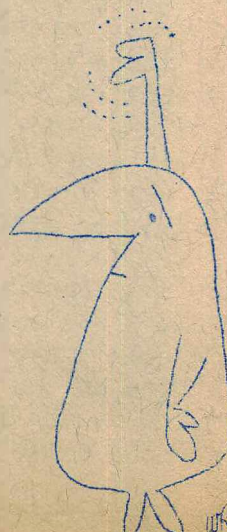
But whatever the reason, and there are a lot more than those, the sad truth is that Marion is right--prodom and fandom are drifting apart. They are like a couple who stuck together through their early struggles, helping one another and together bringing up a lovely but delicate little child called Science Fiction. Now one of them is being wined and dined and flattered by rich strangers and forgets the early struggles and the other feels neglected and doesn't talk any more. There are faults on both sides, however, and no doubt they'll realise this and come together if the child falls ill again. But, meanwhile, I sometimes wonder which of them is really looking after it better today?

FANZINE REVIEW The last arrival is an envelope containing both STELLAR 21 and VARIOSO 17. STELLAR (Ted White) is a good fanzine but since two thirds of this column was suggested by items in VARIOSO (John Magnus) I suppose it's only gratitude to give it preference. The Marion Oaks article mentioned above is in this issue and so is an excellently unpompous and interesting long editorial. The cartoons vary from big and bad to small and good, with Lynn Hickman somewhere in the middle. The good ones are excellent little caricatures by Lach, who could do with someone like Grennell to write his captions, and some of those little figures by Rotsler and others with captions that may have been added by the editor. This seems to me to be a new development in fan humour and one with immense potentialities. Already some of the funniest cartoons I've ever come across in fanzines have been the Bennett captions to Rotsler's fillos in PLOY. I'd like to see the idea extended as a help to editors like me who are completely devoid of artistic ability. Could some kind fan artist supply us with cartoon Do-It-Yourself kits--little figures in various poses and with various expressions that we could put together over our own captions?

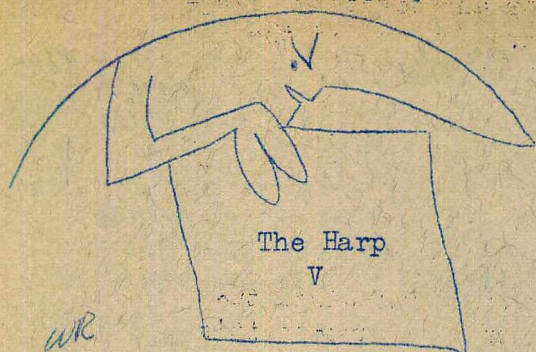
However, the real meat of this issue is Jim Harmon's column. "Harmony" used to be a regular feature in Lee Riddle's ultra-respectable fanzine, PEON, where it shone out like a naughty deed in a good world. I've known Harmon to be lewd, rude and outrageous at times but never dull. Similarly it seems to me that every issue of Magnus' fanzine so far has had something thought-stimulating in it. This time both of them live up to my expectations with a Harmon review of what he calls moral horror stories and a fascinating side reference to 'No Blade of Grass.' Harmon suggests that, briefly, morality is simply efficiency and therefore the actions of Youd's characters are logically unsound. But read what he says--there's enough in these few dozen words to argue about for hours.

The letter section is in small, space-saving type of jewel-like clarity and has plenty of interest. One odd introduction caught my eye, though. "Buck Coulson has edited more issues of a fanzine in the past five years than any other fan. Can you make that statement?" Yes, I can. Buck Coulson has edited more issues of a fanzine in the past five years than any other fan. Okay? (VARIOSO, John L. Magnus, 2712 N Charles Street, Baltimore 18, Maryland.)

I'm writing this on the 26th December. I hope it's safe to mention that. Last year I happened to say that I was writing this column on Christmas morning and the entire fan population of an English town



not at beginning of column



(This space for readers' captions.)

rose in righteous indignation. Has Willis nothing better to do on Christmas morning, was the way he put it. I tell you, it's a hard life being a Thinker. There was I, Willis, the dedicated visionary giving up the crass pleasures of the flesh like Albert Schweitzer and retiring to the monastic seclusion of the fan attic to give my Message to an anxious world, and this sort of thing happens. I tell you, any more of this and Albert and I will retire into SAPS.

Mind you, I can see that English fan's point of view. I can visualise quite clearly the Willis how he'd on Christmas morning as it must appear

to him. Aroused from uneasy sleep, Willis the Faaan staggers downstairs to answer the Postman's knock, ignoring the piteous cries of the children as they awake to find nothing in their stockings but piggy banks, mimeo paper price lists and little tracts about filial responsibility. "Bah, humbug," he sneers as the postman gives him a cheery seasonal greeting. He snatches at the mail, throws away the Christmas cards unopened, and devours the rest greedily for egoboo. Pausing only to throw a lump of slate at an old man gathering winter fuel he slams the door on the postman's outstretched hand and stalks up to the attic, there to compose a nasty mean column poking fun at fan organisations and other manifestations of human goodwill.

Well, all I can say is that it wasn't quite like that. What happened was that round about half eleven that morning the children invented a new game the rules of which were too involved for me to follow. I mean I couldn't figure out when you were supposed to scream and knock the bricks down with the lorry and when you were to crawl round the sofa on your hands and knees growling. I don't know what this game is called--"WSFS Directors" or something, I think--but if it ever catches on professionally my children are made. So I sneaked away unnoticed and took my diary and the remaining fragments of my eardrums up to the attic, feeling an old fan and tired.

And now here I am again, 366 days older, with the same eardrums but a different diary. The diary is here because it contains my Notes. Throughout the year every time I think of anything clever I write it down in my little pocket diary with the result that finally the diary is crammed full of brilliant witticisms all the way from January First right through to January Third. Some of them are legible as well and this tiny barrel has already been scraped for the bacovers of HYPHEN. There still remain a few dregs which I find myself compelled to transfer from one diary to another, year after year. I'm sick of the sight of them by now so I'm going to unload them onto you. Stand clear.

Here's one that looks like a filler from Confidential: "Astronomer Royal is sex pervert." I hope this won't bring Andy Young down on my head--I've got quite enough hair there without his beard--but I'm beginning to take a dim view of professional astronomers. The British Astronomer Royal is a typical example. He came on TV one night and said, as bold as brass right there in my living room, that the money squandered on space flight would be better devoted to building new telescopes. Now, I ask you, what would you call a man who'd rather peer into bedrooms through telescopes than go out with girls himself? That's right, the word is voyeur.

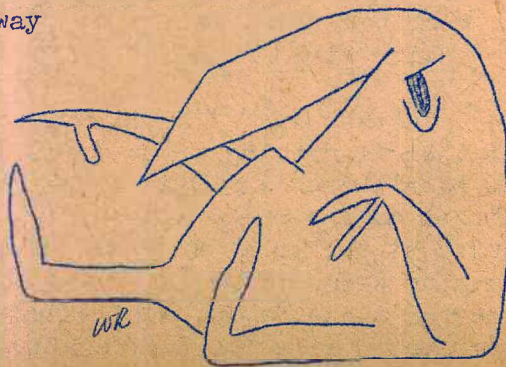
Here's another one: "Carson and the Suffragette." Those earnest people who complain that there's nothing about science fiction in fanzines will be pleased to learn that this hasn't even anything to do with fandom. Lord Edward Carson is principally remembered as the prime agent of the partition of Ireland and in his spare time he prosecuted at the trial of Oscar Wilde, but this little incident I read about in his biography seems to me to give a far more illuminating glimpse of his character than either of those famous achievements. He was a member of the British Conservative Government during the Suffragette agitation in the early years of this century, and

The Harp VI

one day one of the young ladies chained herself to the railings in front of his house. This was one of their favourite techniques for drawing attention to their campaign for women's rights and it usually meant policemen with hacksaws (she'd have hidden the key), journalists with cameras, a big crowd and a spread in the papers the next day. But not with Carson, though. He merely called his butler and sent him out with a jug of water and instructions to lay a trail from the girl's feet to the gutter. After a while the jeers of rude passers-by were too much for the young lady and she unchained herself and went home. This confirmed my impression that Carson was a clever but very unpleasant man. What do you think.

The last one simply says: "The Bible." This has been here the longest of all because I was afraid of writing anything about it in case I should give offense to anyone. I wouldn't mean to and I really don't see why it should, but you can't be too careful when people even object to your writing anything for them on Christmas Day. But I'll tell you what the idea was so you can judge for yourself if it would have been all right. Briefly, I was thinking about all those Salvation Army skiffle groups, jazz masses and rock-enroll sessions the Chruches are using to bring young people to religion. This sort of thing seems to have started with modernised versions of the Scripture such as "The Bible Designed To Be Read As Literature" and the praiseworthy idea is to bring religion to the people in their own vernacular. Now there are a lot of godless people in fandom, despite the inspiring example of such fine representatives of organised Christianity as the Rev Moorehead, Calvin Thomas Beck, and Mrs Carr, and it seemed to me that in my humble way I might help fandom to see the light too. After all, why should rock and roll fans be invited to jive through the pearly gates and the fine sensitive souls of fans left wailing in the outer darkness? So might I diffidently present "The Bible Designed To Be Read As A Fanzine?"

It is of course only a oneshot so far (though the Moslems have other ideas, I understand, and if there are any reading Oopsla I apologise to them too) but fans should feel quite at home with it once they can be led to realise how closely it resembles the literature with which they are familiar. Like any fanzine, it starts off with an explanation of how everything started (Genesis)...production problems and so on ...and then goes on to an account of the history of the fan group principally involved (Exodus, Leviticus, etc). It goes into a lot of very interesting detail about various feuds and other incidents, rather like The Immortal Storm but not quite so pompous, and there's some other remarkable material, too; prose, poems, etc, which nowadays could never be mailed out in Portland. Instead of having the interlin-eations and bacover quotes scattered all over the magazine they're concentrated in one section (Proverbs) which is quite an interesting idea in the way of format. The first part tails off a bit with a lot of columns and articles by various LNFs with funny names like Habbakuk, but the second part starts off again with a bang with a series of something like convention reports. There are four different eye-witness accounts of the same events, by reporters called Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. (I know this sounds improbable but I'm almost sure it's not John Berry.) These are followed by a sort of post-con travelogue (Acts) telling what everybody did afterwards. Then there's the usual long letter section, the only difference being that the letters are to the readers (Epistle to the Thessalonians, etc) not from them, and the zine concludes in the usual way with a forecast, a sort of In Times To Come department called Revelations. The format is a bit crowded and there's no artwork, one thing it has in common with New Worlds, F&SF and Galaxy, but there is some very fine writing in it and I strongly recommend you get a copy. I don't know about letters of comment...I suggest you ask your local minister...but I doubt if you have much chance of getting one printed. It's like Galaxy there, too.



Well, that's that, and now I've got a nice clean diary for next year. I notice now though that I don't seem to have said much about science fiction this time. Sorry about that, but I've been reading a lot of prozines lately and they're inclined to put you off a bit, aren't they? For my money, the best science fiction coming out these days is not in magazines or films or even books but on BBC television. The third Quatermass serial, by Nigel Kneale, has just started. You may remember that one of the previous ones was made into an excellent film with Brian Donlevy: though it was a condensation of a three-hour television production in which not a moment was wasted. This Quatermass series is remarkable for two reasons. First, it is true science fiction, with no concessions to morons the film people evidently believe the general public to be. Second, the general public loves it. There is no doubt at all that in these Quatermass serials science fiction has reached the mass audience for the first time in its history. Mightn't it be significant that it is reaching them with stories that are true science fiction? I'll tell you the plot of this one so far so you can see what I mean. Quatermass is struggling against an Army scheme for the Dead Man's Deterrent, a hydrogen bomb launching base on the Moon which will automatically destroy all life on earth if the Western powers are ever attacked. (An interesting extrapolation of current NATO strategy.) Simultaneously his aid is invoked by a palaeontologist friend who is discovering five-million-year-old manlike skeletons in a building excavation in London but is being held up by the discovery of an unexploded bomb. When evacuating the neighbouring houses it's found that one of them has been deserted for years as haunted. Quatermass and his Army rival find that the 'bomb' is actually a five-million-year-old spaceship. There is a sealed bulkhead marked with a pentagram. At the end of the last installment a soldier screams and says he saw a figure walking through a wall. Four more installments to go of Quatermass And The Pit!

FANZINE REVIEWS On hand is Dick Ellington's FIJAGH 2 (Dick Ellington, PO Box 104, Cooper Station, New York 3, New York). I am getting tired of clever-obscure fanzine titles so I'll just callously say that this one stands for Fandom Is Just A Goddamn Hobby. It's a good thought and a true one though, and it's very pleasant to see a fanzine from someone in New York with a sense of humor and even a sense of proportion...if those aren't both the same thing. The best thing in this issue is the fillers--this is not a criticism, there are twelve solid pages of them. They're almost all very good but my favourites are the ones about the Indoor Birdwatchers (sample birds: The Extramarital Lark, The Gimlet-Eyed Titwatcher) and the new Futurian Constitution (sample rule: Expulsion shall not imply loss of any privileges of membership.) There is also some fascinating further information about those big new liners which will take fans across the Atlantic for \$50 and which we've been getting tantalizing glimpses of in the mundane press. The only real contribution in the magazine is one of those genuinely factual accounts by John Berry of events in his own life which give the impression that he's getting into training for a report on his trip to Detroit. In the sophisticated environment of Fijagh it stands out like a Boy Scout among Bohemians. No reflections on either, but it will be fascinating to see what John makes of certain segments of US fandom. The other contents of this issue are a reprint from a Little Magazine which is of Little Interest (Dick says he needs material, but we would have taken his word for it), another death kick from the WSFS brawl, and some lively letters. There are no startling Trends in Fijagh and all it shows is that a likeable and interesting fan is likely to produce a likeable and interesting fanzine even without much help from contributors.

DEPARTMENT OF THOSE WHO SHOULD HAVE STOOD IN BED

From Gambit 28. "ERRATTA: Go back to page 2...and...change

'It seemed that humor was appropo' to 'It seemed that humor was not appropo.' There are undoubtedly many other errors in spelling..."

Apropos your errata, Ted, my advice is to quit before you get in too deep.

-- Walt Willis

BALANCE SHEET AS OF OOPSLA 27

As you have already noticed, issues #26 and #27 are both included in this envelope. Beginning with issue #28 I am making out a new mailing list; for your information, the following list contains the names that will be included on it. If your name is shown as 'doubtful' or 'sub expiring' it will not be included until I hear from you.

SUBSCRIBERS

Caughran, Jim	Allard, Ray	Adams, Es	Broyles, L D
Devore, Howard	Bisenieks, Dainis	Bratmon, Alex	Brown, Mrs R G
Franson, Donald	Cook, Peggy	Dietz, Frank M	Dunn, Sally
Johnson, H S	Economou, Phyllis	Emery, Des	Eylmann, Klaus
Lambeck, Robert	Gordon, Bennett	Hinmon, Tom	Helgesen, Martin
Pavlat, Bob	Kalin, Paul	Kvanbeck, Bob	Lichtman, Bob
Quagliano, John	Moreen, Denis	McKnight, Peg	McJunkin, Bill
Smith, Dale R	Pelz, Bruce	Prieto, Frank R	Pauls, Ted
Sowers, O R	Reed, Mrs H	Ryan, Dick	Rolfe, Felice
Watts, Ralph	Shaw, Larry	Sanders, Joe	Schultheis, Steve
	Stephens, Richard	Tucker, Bob	Webbert, Jim
	Whalen, Pat		

SUBS EXPIRING WITH 27, NOT YET RENEWED

Hill, Dean	Hope, Peter B	Ackerman, Forrest	Barr, George
Johansson, Alf	Kimball, Clay	Cummins, D R	Greenwood, LaVerne
Mercer, Archie	Mittelman, Florence	Hipwell, Melvin	Hoyer, Mildred
Steward, Ger	Skeberdis, Peter	Koning, John	Lyons, P Howard
Travis, David	Weber, Wally	Peatrowsky, Bob	Ryan, Vic
		Sneary, Rick	Schultz, Richard
		Windham, Larry	

CURRENT TRADES

Polarity (Busbys)	Northlight (Burns)	Brillig (Bourne)	Retribution (Berry)
Quixotic (Durward)	Triode (Bentcliffe)	Void (Benford)	Ploy (Bennett)
JD (Hickman)	Innuendo (Carr)	Yandro (Coulson)	Camber (Dodd)
Varioso (Magnus)	Fanac (Ellik)	Canfan (Grant)	Hyphen (Harris)
Sata (Pearson)	Meuh (Linard)	Vinegar Worm (Leman)	Shaggy (LASFS)
Aporrheta (Sanderson)	Spectre (Meyers)	Mammon (Moran)	Slander (Penny)
Gambit/etc (White)	Orion (Parker)	A Bas (Raeburn)	Inside/SFA (Smith)
	Amra (Scithers)	Twig (Terwilliger)	FFM (Versins)
	Cry of the (Nameless)	Youngzines (Youngs)	

TRADES BEING DROPPED

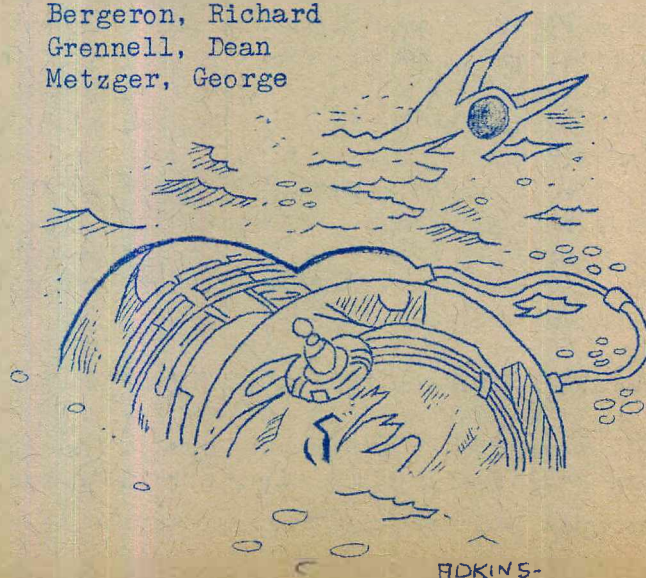
Califan (Rike)	Comet (Appeltofft)	Framished (Brown)	Impasse (Champion)
	SFaira (Helander)	Now & Then (Needham)	Brennschluss (Potter)
	New Futurian (Rosenblum)	" " (Turner)	SF Parade (Woolston)

CONTRIBUTORS

Capella, Ray	Adkins, Dan	Bloch, Robert
Harness, Jack	Berry, John	Bergeron, Richard
Rotsler, Bill	Dominick, Mrs M	Grennell, Dean
Willis, Walt	Morse, Bill	Metzger, George
	Thomson, Arthur	
	Warner, Harry	

MISCELLANEOUS

Bulmers, Ken & Pam	Allen, Don
Clarkes, Joy & Vinç	Boggs, Redd (?)
Derry, Chick (?)	Burbee, Charles (?)
Eney, Dick (?)	Danner, Bill
Falascas, N & N (?)	Elsberry, Dick
Geis, Richard (?)	Farnham, Bob
Lowndes, Bob (?)	Lindsay, Ethel
Silverberg, Bob	Madle, Bob
Shaw, Lee (?)	Smith, Fred
Vick, Shelby	Shaw, Bob & Sadie
	Tucker, Denis
	Wells, Bjo (?)



ADKINS-

Capella

