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we



THE VENGEANCE OF DR IBID

BOB TUCKER

Last week another one came. With eager yet trembling hands I ripped open the large envelope from Ohio and watched in fascination as the brightly colored sheets of paper fell into my lap. My breath quickened as my terror mounted, but still I pawed through the treasure trove--another medical mailing had arrived! FAPA? SAPS? OMPA? Those mundane bundles pale into mediocrity when compared to these strange mailings from Dr Ibid.

Hastily now I searched through the leaflets, the circulars and folders, the isolated pages torn from magazines, as I sought out the juiciest items. Ah! There was one! The fleeting flash of flesh caught my eye and I turned back to gaze upon her naked beauty (in full technicolor). Everything was open to me. The woman lay on a dissection table, about half way through a post mortem.

Dr Ibid was again exacting vengeance.

I've been getting these morbid yet fascinating mailings for some years now--ever since the day, in fact, that I put the good doctor into one of my mystery novels. I was aware that Dr Ibid sometimes read mysteries and so, without a word of warning, I cast him as a coroner in the book. A coroner who habitually smoked large cigars. The next time I saw the doctor he was smoking a large cigar; and now my mail is continually filled with these croggly pictures and suggestions on how to kill people.

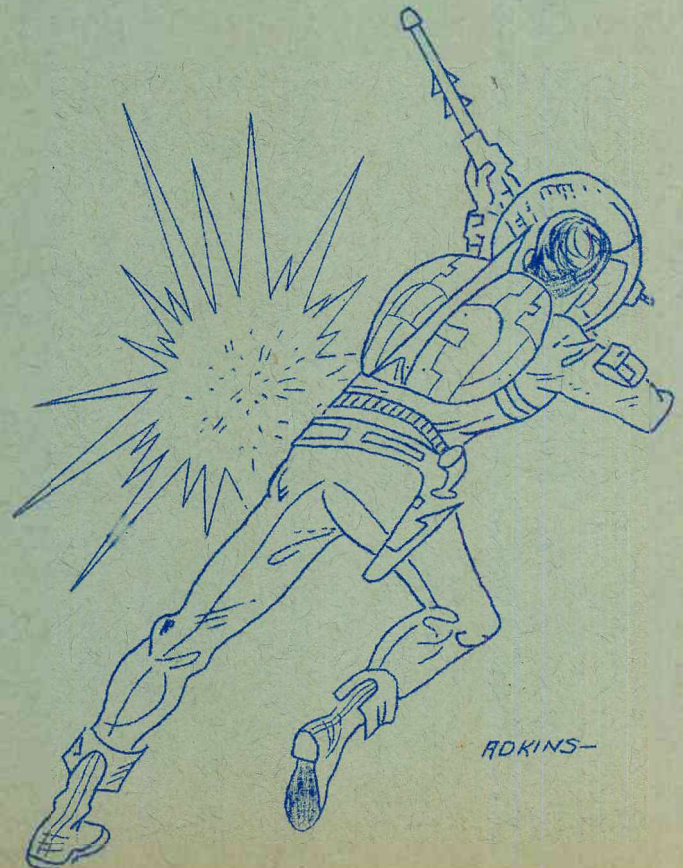
As every schoolboy knows (according to Willy Ley), the experts are always making fatheaded pronouncements on this and that trivial matter: they have said that there are only seven basic plots, and they have said that there are only forty-seven ways to murder a man, and they have said (in reference to mystery novels) that everything has already been written--today's novels merely refine the old methods. Bosh and nonsense. Thanks to the vengeance of Dr Ibid I am ready to astound the experts.

There are some twelve hundred ways to die.

The United States in collaboration with the other nations of the world, has compiled an International Death List which details over twelve hundred causes of death. The unlucky tourist who meets his demise overseas must jolly well conform to this Death List, too, if he wishes to come home for burial. Woe be to him who makes the mistake of expiring from something new or unknown, something not on the list; he may rot in red tape before he gets back in.

But cheer up: there is a wonderful opportunity for smuggling here.

European undertakers are a canny lot and have their own quaint standards, or practices, of embalming. Their practices



The Vengeance of Dr Ibid II

fall far short of American standards, of course, and one of their corner-cutting tricks is to remove but not replace the eviscera after the embalming is finished. Now, as all of us criminal minded types will instantly realise, that will leave behind something of a vacuum, so to speak. The body will be lighter and not-quite all there. So what better way to smuggle in the complete set of The Life and Loves of Frank Harris? And you need have no fear of the Customs Bureau. I wrote them about the matter and have it straight from the horse's mouth: they do not open coffins coming into this country providing the bill of lading is in order. (Now you know how all the books "privately printed in Paris" reach this country.) There is something fine and noble in a Customs Bureau which places so much faith in bills of lading.

But back to our good Dr Ibid. Lately he has been passing along to me several suggestions anent murder. I Don't believe he wants to see me hung; I sincerely think he is trying to help me write stories which are out of the usual rut. Here, for example, is a little folder showing a young lady doing her morning exercises. What a priceless opportunity for a perfect murder.

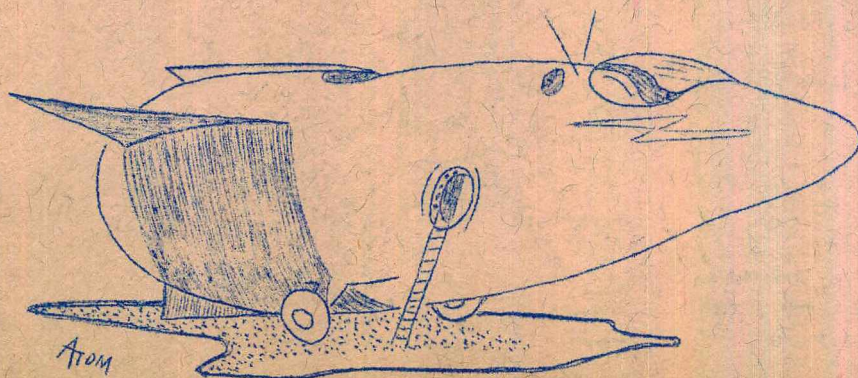
Perhaps the most perfect, most foolproof way to murder your unwanted mistress is to talk her into killing herself for you. Appeal to her vanity. A startling number of sweet young things manage to die for vanity each year and why shouldn't the master criminal take advantage of it? The cunning male begins his perfect crime by suggesting to his mistress that she is getting oh, to teensy-weensy broad about the hips and that perhaps certain exercises will work wonders for her. They will indeed. They will pack her off to an early grave. The little folder pictures the lady with her rump in the air but her feet, chest and head on the floor. She is doing rump puch-ups. Meanwhile our master villain is standing by, helping her count. He does this every morning for weeks, or months, and by and by he collects her insurance, for he will, of course, have had the foresight to insure her life in his favor. Dr Ibid's folder shows that this risky position allows air to enter the lady's unmentionable aperture--air which cannot be expelled when she arises from her exercises; and air trapped in the aperture works upward into the body as surely (if more slowly) as air bubbles injected into the veins.

Name me the mystery novel which used that method of murder?

Now let us examine this brightly colored folder which depicts a...no, let us not. This is a family fanzine. And besides, I think I'll save this particularly nasty trick for my next book. Instead we'll pass on to a circular containing a graphic photograph on the cover. The photograph reveals an ordinary bathroom with an ordinary man lying on the floor. The ordinary man is dead, but he didn't slip and fall from the tub, Boyd. This ordinary man fell from another instrument which is portrayed in the background with its lid raised.

That thing is an innocent killer, too. The good Dr Ibid, always thinking of me and my search for unique murders, scrawled a note on the margins: "Kill your coronary cases by an overdose of griping cathartic." Bless him. I can just picture my editor

allowing that to pass by her in manuscript. She is the woman who deleted the cannibalism in LONG LOUD SILENCE; she is the editor who chopped out entire passages of embalming art in THE MAN IN MY GRAVE. What would she do when I offered a story which entailed the murder of a man on the stool? Need we even consider it?



The Vengeance of Dr Ibid III

But let us remember, if it is not already too late, that this is a family fanzine and go on to brighter things. (You are publishing this, aren't you Gregg?) ((Sometimes I wonder.))

Death from Poisoning is a fine, homey title to have in one's bookcase. I keep my copy next to Hoffman's A Child's Garden of Cusswords and The Best From Playboy.

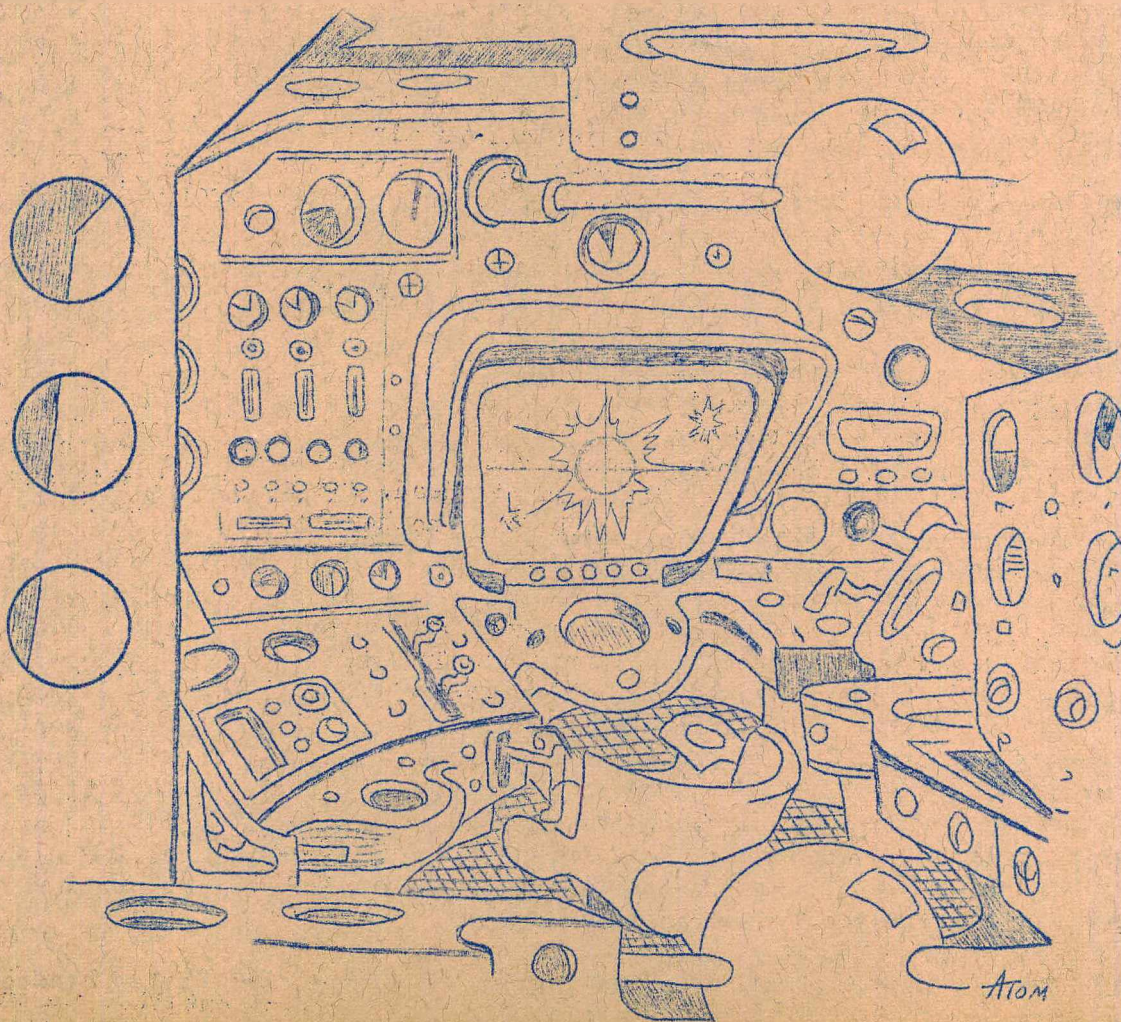
It seems that, with the exception of tuberculosis, deaths from poisoning exceed that of deaths from all infectious diseases lumped together, and no matter what the newspaper obituary said, Aunt Nellie didn't just accidentally die from eating those imperfectly canned green beans. Uncle Tom, saddened and tear-stained, got her insurance money, you see, but he was a wise old coot who knew the score.

Other than demon rum, a startling list of agents are employed to commit murder and commit suicide: furniture polish, liniment, pine oil, plastic cement, soap, Vicks Vaporub, weeds, cockroach powder, ammonia, drano, nicotine, oil of wintergreen, carbon tet, fumes from an acetylene torch, novocaine, aspirin, anacin, insulin, and sewer gas. Demon rum is specifically mentioned because it occupies an honored place: nearly half of all poisonous deaths are from alcohol in one form or another.

But the guys down in the bar don't seem to care a fig.

There now, you know almost as much as I do (which is precious little) about murder. When are you going to write a book? But leave Dr Ibid out of it unless you too wish to be subjected to a constant barrage of unsettling pictures and texts.

— Bob Tucker



Ron BENNETT



Part VIII: Where
the Wind Comes Sweeping Down the Plain

colonial EXCURSION

After leaving Bob Tucker the cars in the Detroit-Chicago Caravan, the fannish motorcade, continued their way to the Solacon by travelling along Highway 66. Tucker was the last fannish outpost; after McLean, where Bob had met us for breakfast, the trip across country began in earnest. No more sidetracking or stopping over to visit fannish centres. Heck, where were there any fannish centres to visit? The Highway is a good road and we made good time on our journey. Fred Prophet and Jim Broderick told me that there was a song, "Get Your Kicks on Route 66," which got on the hit parade in the States some time ago.

We by-passed Springfield, Illinois, and travelled on to St Louis, which we also by-passed. Here we crossed the Mississippi by a toll bridge. The heavy traffic meant that we couldn't stop for me to add the River to my collection of colour shots already safely in the camera. We were now in Missouri, another State for my collection. As the highway cut through different small settlements, I saw for the first time the typical American towns I'd become accustomed to in second grade Hollywood films. I found them quite fascinating at first. My main recollections are that they were flat and that, because of the sunlight's glare, I was glad of the sun glasses I'd bought in Ohio. Fred and Jim remarked that gasoline was cheaper in Missouri than anywhere else they'd travelled. Priced at twenty-five and nine-tenths cents a gallon it certainly did seem a bargain. Fred remarked that there had been news of a 'gas war' in that region. Later we were to find that petrol was five cents a gallon cheaper.

We skirted the Ozarks as far as Springfield, Missouri, resisting the pressure of roadside billboards advertising various caves in the mountains. At Springfield we managed to find the pre-arranged rendezvous without too much delay, the Red Rooster Motel. This was my first experience of a night in a motel and I made the most of it. After the virtual non-stop ride from Cleveland I was pleased to take a bath. I had quite a talk with the motel manager, who taught at the local school. We compared methods of teaching uninterested pupils the intricacies of mathematics.

The motel afforded quite a reunion. We met up with the Falascas, Bill Donaho and Bill Rickhardt, Roger Sims, and A H Blackwell. Frances Light and Martha Kemp drove in soon after we arrived and gave me a welcome cup of coffee. I sat drinking it while they seared my eyeballs with flashbulbs. Jerry DeMuth was there and Sandy Cutrell drove in after a while, fresh from his side trip to Indianapolis with the people he had with him, Greg and Pat. Later this couple was to become known simply as 'The People'; they got up to the weirdest tricks. While we were gathered together talking in the Detroit room, another car drove up and from photographs I recognised Bob Pavlat and Ted White. Ted is in his very early twenties and had his best beard with him. Ted is primarily a talker and has a habit of going into unnecessary details on minor points. This is most annoying at first, but I feel that it is a result of shyness. Just when you feel that you're getting used to it, Ted stops talking sheer rubbish and becomes a very friendly and pleasant travelling companion. I had over a week of his company on the return trip from Los Angeles and I was glad this unnecessary assertiveness was only temporary.

Of all the fans I'd looked forward to meeting in the States, Bob Pavlat headed the

Colonial Excursion II

list. Three years ago he had offered to act as PLOY's representative in the States and since that date he has worked unflaggingly, writing letters for me, collecting and acknowledging subscriptions, paying my FAPA subs, and going out of his way to hunt up for me outre and out of print books. I'd heard from the Bulmers and from the Americans who invaded England for the London World Convention nothing but praise for Bob. It's a rare state of affairs when one hears nothing but good about someone and the upshot may be summarised in the sincere phrase that Bob Pavlat is a Good Man. We stood around talking and trading cigarettes and after going into town for dinner (thank you, Nick and Noreen) we turned in about eight thirty.

Some idiot called Rickhardt called us early the next morning. I made a mental check to find that this was Monday, 25th August, at the same time cursing Bill because it was only 4 a.m. It later turned out that everyone was up and ready to leave, the idea being to get in as many daylight hours as possible for driving and to avoid the heavier traffic that was sure to be travelling later in the day.

At Tulsa I saw my first oil pumps. They weren't as numerous or as big as I'd been led to believe. They were a link with home, though. In Leeds there is a company which makes most of the drilling equipment used in these fields. We were now in Oklahoma, driving along the tolled Will Rogers Turnpike, which parallels the Sixty-Six as far as Oklahoma City. Perhaps it was the fact that the tunes from Rogers and Hammerstein musicals are favourites of mine but this State seemed to have a personality of its own, a most pleasant one. If western Missouri had seemed flat, Oklahoma made it appear mountainous by comparison. I saw my first corn and had my first real sight of the great plains. Just before we were due to arrive in Oklahoma City, Fred, Him and Roger Sims, who had joined us for a spell at the wheel, spotted roadside adverts for a real live ranch. The draw here was that there would be no charge for entry, or for leaving the turnpike.

This was the Buffalo Ranch, which turned out to be authentically ramshackle, with a dirt yard, the soil well ground down and tightly packed. There were some stuffed buffalo, saddled up, ready for the ranch photographer to take dude pictures. Huddling together inside a wired enclosure were some buffalo, some real live ones, as well as a few donkeys or mules or whathaveyou, and oddly enough there was a zebra, too. I went over to have a look at an odd wooded structure, picketed as being an Indian house. A hoary Oklahoman, tanned, rugged and well weather beaten, told me to stick around as the Indians would start their dancing at the house in about an hour's time. I had just known there was a tourist trap angle around the place somewhere. I looked around for the others, wondering whether they were ready to beat a hasty retreat, but they were taking moving pictures of the animals and watching a ranch hand stick an advertising label on the car bumper. I asked the Oklahoman about the chewing gum and sweet wrappers he was picking up and stuffing into a sack. We agreed that tourists were generally untidy and unmindful of the beauties of the countryside. Learning that I was from England, he told me that he'd been on the Continent during the First World War, and told me something of the way the State was opened up by the coming of the railroad. I felt like a regular Ernie Pyle. "In the old days," he said, "one could ride for days without seeing another person. Travelling was slow and a person took in what he saw. These days everyone's in too much of a hurry to get from here to there and he doesn't bother about what's in between." It's an old argument, of course, and one which applies in America perhaps even more so than in England, where roads and the cars that travel along them are not built for the same speed.

We drove into Oklahoma City. As the car slowed up to take a corner, I took a couple of photographs of the first Indians I'd seen. Some of the Indians were wearing modern dress while some sported traditional garb of blanket and leather jacket. Faces of both Red and White were weather beaten and heavily tanned. The glare was most noticeable. The time was getting well on towards noon. We parked the car and fed a pile of nickels into a parking meter and went to meet Jim Caughran at the bus station.

Colonial Excursion III

First of all we had to find the bus station. We hit on the likely place, a busy terminal, at the second attempt, and after checking that he would most likely be arriving shortly after noon, had a stroll around the immediate area. I bought a card for Inchmery Fandom and sent it to them. When I had left Harrogate I had stayed for ten days with Sandy Sanderson and Joy and Vince Clarke and had played the LP of the film "Oklahoma" practically daily. I got a real kick out of actually being in the state. After feeding more nickels into the parking meter we left Jim to stand guard at the terminal and Fred and I had a further look around. We found a bookshop which sported nearly twenty different sf magazine titles and we browsed through these. I thought about buying the Oklahoma LP, which seemed a fannish thing to do, but I shied away from the \$5.95 price tag.

We strolled back to the bus station to find that Jim still hadn't arrived and were surprised when Fred was paged over the loudspeaker system. It was Noreen Falasca, ringing to inform us that they'd had a spot of car trouble and had stopped to have the trouble rectified. Fred took me down the street and bought me a hamburger and a piece of apple pie and coffee. Then we went back to the bus station again. Jim Broderick was there with a tall gangling youth who turned out to be the long awaited Jim Caughran. We loaded Jim's luggage into the car and drove out of the city. Jim told us that he had so much luggage because he wasn't returning home to Lincoln, Nebraska, after the Solacon but instead was moving up to Berkeley where he was joining Terry Carr, Ron Ellick, Carl Brandon and Pete Graham at the University of California.

We ate lunch as we drove that day, making cheese sandwiches and gobbling them down. We did stop for gas just before we reached Texas and found that the attendant was a science fiction reader who was most interested in the fact that we were going to Los Angeles for a convention. It was practically all we could do to prevent him hopping into the car and coming along with us.

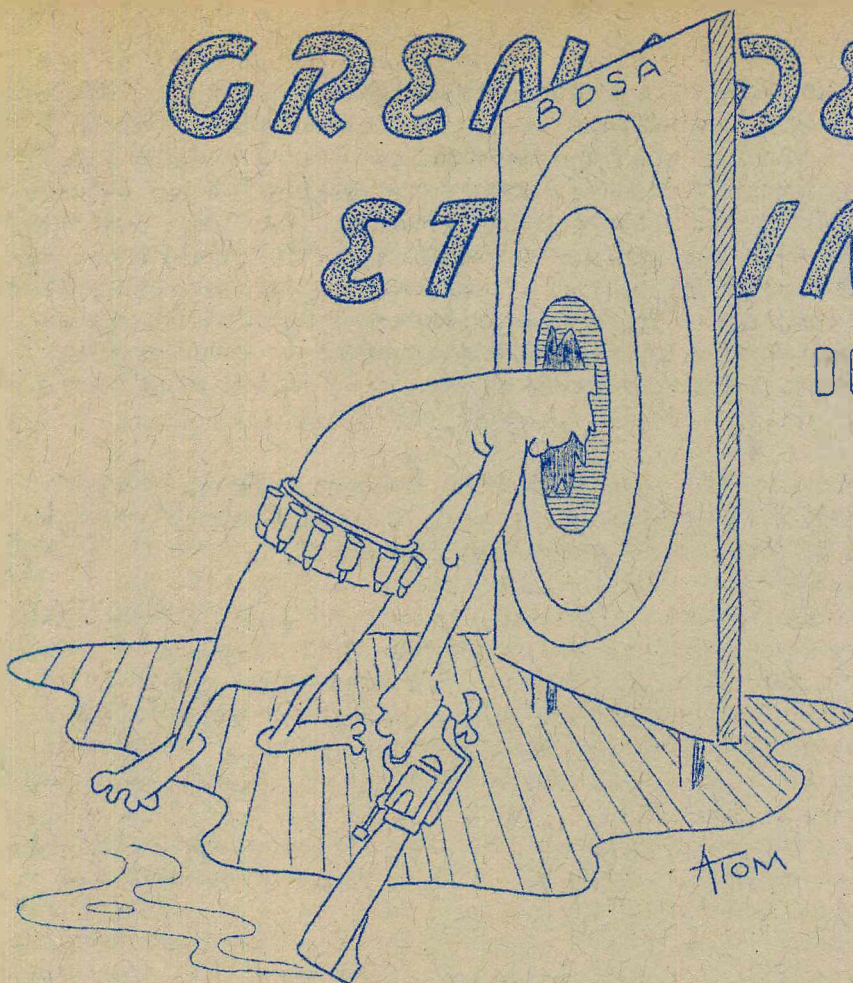
We met up with the others in Amarillo, in Texas, where we stayed overnight at the Ranch 66 Motel, slap on the Highway. It's a pleasant place and can be recommended to any future fannish travellers. It has an inviting swimming pool and while the group went splashing about after a hard day's driving, A H Blackwell and I tried to borrow a ball from the office so that I could show him the intricacies of English soccer. We had no luck and wandered back to the pool.

Nick and Noreen hadn't turned up and Fred had phoned through to Oklahoma. The service station told him that they'd left and were on the way. I took some shots of the gang at the pool, being particularly pleased to get some action shots of Jim Broderick diving. He's very good and a pleasure to watch. After a while we had a look around for a restaurant and found a place a mile or so back along the highway called "Cecil's Steak House." While we were eating there we saw Nick's car pass by and knew that they'd made it safely. Bill Donaho was a little upset because I ate chicken fried steak in his native state and made nasty remarks about Englishmen being reared on fish and chips.

We had the Prophet car checked for oil at the service station next door and Jim Broderick had a tussle with an inquisitive locust, the first I'd seen. I picked up a couple of maps and the attendant there loaded on me a pile of combined bottle-and-can openers. I certainly felt convention equipped. Back at the motel we heard what had happened to Nick and Noreen and we prepared to turn in for the night. Jim and I were put in with Bob and Ted. We immediately moved into the kitchen the room sported and used the table for a friendly brag game, pooling our coinage (British and American) as counters with which to play. We all had poker faces after the long day but we lacked the sustenance to brag at any length. We sorted out who owned what and looked up the motel's coke machine for a last refreshment, standing by the pool and looking up at the stars. It was a fine evening and everything was right with the world. Then we turned in. ((Part Nine will be published by Ted White, 2708 N Charles St, Baltimore 18, Maryland.))

GREENNELL'S STUNNINGS

DEAN GREENNELL



It seems advisable to reopen the subject of future firearms development. For one thing, the first discussion of this gave rise to several questions, misapprehensions and relevant discussion; for another, candidly, I suffer from a chronic shortage of subject matter for these little tete-a-tetes (had you guessed?) and can't think of a better subject just now.

I had not intended to imply that no further development and growth is possible in the line of weapons. I am sorry if any-

one misinterpreted me. What I meant to say is that there is much to be said for the basic fundamentals upon which our present firearms are designed; further, that there is a fairly good possibility, barring a new and different branch of science, that people of the next two or three hundred years will still be using arms not radically different from those presently in use.

Now, then. Let me chink that up a bit. If a completely new set of phenomena is discovered, it could change the picture. On the other hand, it might not. It has been many centuries since gunpowder was invented, since the appearance of the first crude artillery which used rocks of a suitable size as projectiles. But the most ultra-modern, high-speed, multi-barreled aircraft cannon differs from those earliest cannon only in matters of performance and refinements. Basically it is still a matter of solid projectiles in a barrel open at one end, in front of a charge of granular powder which is set off at the convenience of the operator. I hope this is clear: today's firearms are still contiguous descendants of the very earliest firearms (just as Mitzi Gaynor is a member of the same species which, at one time, included Neanderthal Man). My case lies balanced upon the hairline of distinction between improvement and innovation.

Now, putting aside for the nonce such fascinating avenues for speculation as possible innovations, let us consider how much room remains for improvement in the present breed of firearms. There are things which today's firearms should be but are not. They should be less expensive, lighter in weight, more accurate, of greater capacity, utterly dependable, able to retain their effectiveness over a span of several decades of disuse and neglect, and of wide flexibility as to power, noise, rate of fire, etc. Let us consider possible ways by which some of these desired objectives may be reached.

To begin with, the design is completely wrong in that on neither shoulder weapons nor hand guns does the line of force from the recoil pass through the point of resistance to recoil. Let me simplify that and illustrate: extend your index finger like the barrel of a pistol and push gently back on the tip of it, simulating the recoil of a

pistol being fired. You will feel a warping strain in the wrist and the tip of the finger will tend to come up even though you are pushing straight back on it. Now extend the finger next to the index, the longest one on your hand (unless you are a werewolf). You will probably find you can push somewhat harder on the middle finger with little or no tendency to flip it up. This is because the center finger extends in practically a straight line from the main bones of the forearm, the ulna and the radius. Design a pistol so that the barrel becomes a straight extension of those two bones and you can say farewell to the chief problem of rapid-fire: the up-flip of the muzzle after each shot. Problem remaining: your line of sight must be about three inches above the axis of the barrel so you can see along it and this gives rise to the inevitable problem of parallax correction; how to make a line of sight and line of bore coincide at a given distance without diverging at all other distances?

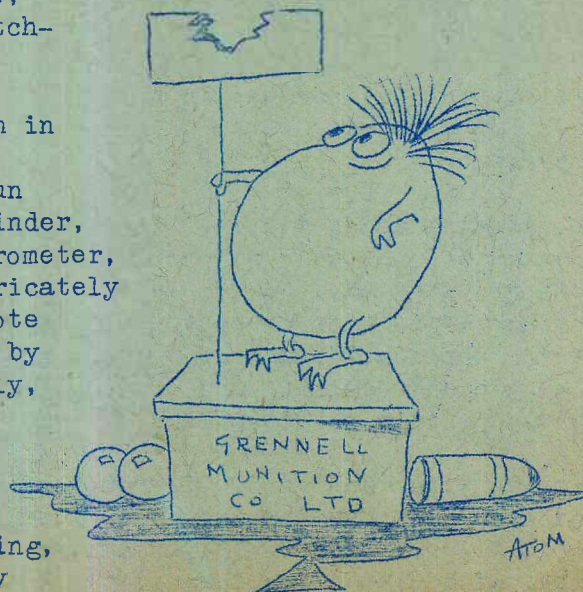
This dropped-barrel idea has been tried although with what success I cannot say. There was a photo of a Russian pistol shooter on the cover of a recent copy of Guns magazine and he was holding a pistol built along the lines described.

Excessive recoil can be counteracted to some degree by properly designed muzzle-brakes. These are either slots milled into the barrel or deflecting devices externally attached. Their purpose is to catch the high velocity exhaust gases as they come roaring out after the bullet. Oddly, it is this exhaust gas rather than the bullet which accounts for the greater share of the recoil. By "hooking" the gas and forcing it to pull the entire gun forward as the blast subsides, a substantial percentage of the "kick" can be eliminated. Problems so far: muzzle brakes add to the bulk of a gun, especially hand guns, they accumulate powder fouling and need fairly frequent cleaning and there is some question in some minds as to whether they have an adverse effect upon accuracy.

With this in mind, it is possible to lighten the weight of a gun greatly by judicious use of duralumin and magnesium alloy parts. Some of the dural cylinders used in pocket model revolvers are fantastically tough. I have read that one arms company demonstrated this by loading a standard .38 shell into a revolver with a blank barrel --that is, one of solid metal with no hole for the slug to pass through--and firing it. Such lead as could flow out through the paper-thin crack between the front of the cylinder and the back of the barrel under the almost inconceivable pressure of the totally enclosed explosion. But the cylinder, they said, remained unbulged. I'll believe this when I see it and I'm not anxious to see it.

A possible solution to the problem of eliminating parallax in the dropped-barrel gun would be to have an optical sight similar to the conventional telescopic sights of present arms with a set of mirrors arranged to give a periscope effect. Telescopic sights on handguns can be demoralizing, however, since they magnify the natural shaking and twitching of the shooter's hand.

If there is a means of assuring hits with a gun in the hands of inexperienced shooters, it is not readily apparent. True, one could produce a gun which incorporated a folding tripod, a range-finder, a weather-vane, an anemometer, thermometer, barometer, gravimeter, and such sundry gadgets which, intricately cross-coupled into telescopic sights and a remote triggering device might assure long-range hits by eliminating the human element--or, more properly, substituting a mechanical element for it. To such a weapon might be added the benefits stemming from proximity fuses, homing projectiles and capsules of instant-acting anaesthetic in the tip. It scarcely needs saying, though, that such a weapon would be sickeningly



vulnerable to all the gremlins besetting mechanical equipment (Fogle's Third Law of Maintenance states, in part, that the incidence of breakage and malfunction in machinery varies directly as the fifth power of the complexity expressed in megazurgs...). A gun of this sort might be expected to require as much training for its successful operation as it required by present weapons, probably more. It would also require a highly trained corps of technicians to keep the units in some semblance of repair.

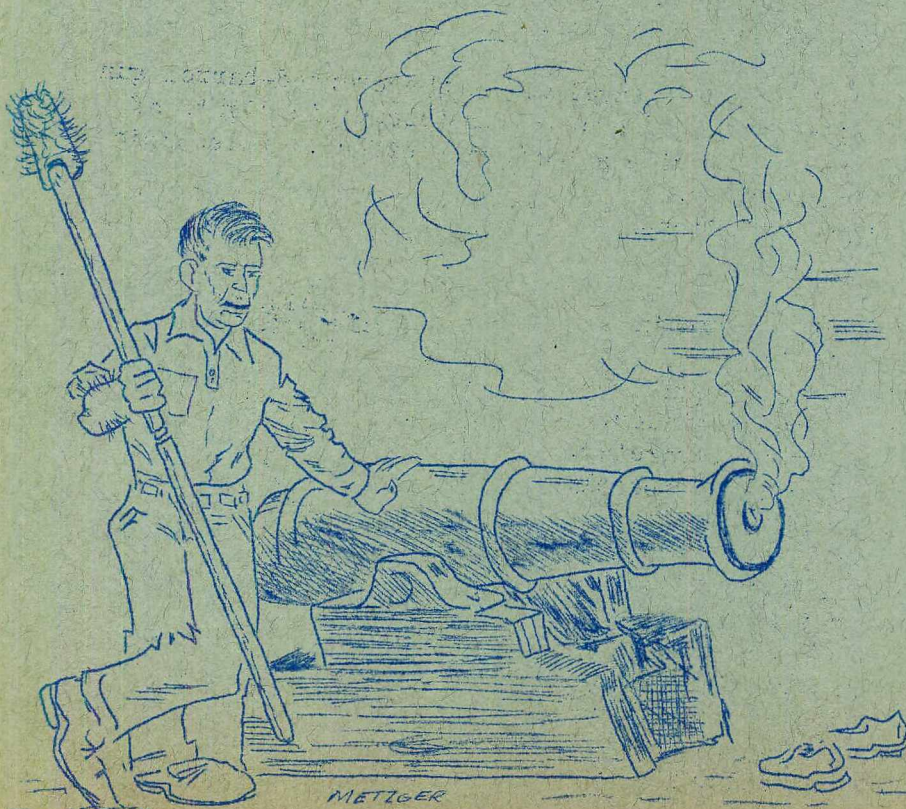
A promising field for improvement might lie in substitution an electrical ignition for the present mechanical/chemical system. If the charge could be set off by a spark or a glowing filament, it would be simple to have pressure on the trigger transmitted to a crystal of some piezoelectric material similar to the slabs of Rochelle salt used in phonograph pickup cartridges. Pressure is thus transformed directly into a pulse of electrical energy which could be amplified or relayed and used to set off the propellant. The new, compact mercury-cadmium batteries used in hearing aids and transistor radios could be used here to good effect. Such a sub-molar lockwork would be a gunsmith's dream, being completely free of creep, backlash and similar shooter's bugaboos. It would have the added virtue of being adjustable over a wide range of pull weights.

I have long been enthralled by the possibilities and the engineering problems implicit in the use of a liquid propellant for automatic weapons. True, present-day gunpowder could be carried within the gun in bulk form and metered out shot by shot but there would be considerable difficulty in making such a system function uniformly in all positions and conditions of climate, humidity, etc.

Admittedly, there would be a lot of bugs to work out of a liquid propellant weapon but let us blandly look past them to the benefits to be gained. Primarily, you would have an infinite range of powers, variable from shot to shot. With a tank full of go-juice you could have a choice between a lot of medium-power shooting or a few rounds of all-out blasting, or any desired mixing of the two. This would infinitely simplify the cycle of automatic fire by eliminating the bothersome step of extracting the spent cartridge case. It would greatly reduce the weight and bulk of ammunition.

I will idly toss in, in passing, the possibility of supplying projectiles to the gun in form of a coil of lead wire which is snipped off in the desired length and fed into the chamber in front of the dollop of liquid propellant, with what benefits might accrue to variable bullet weight.

There is probably not too much profit in discussing chemical or bacteriological coatings or fillings for the slugs. Nicotine, curare or cyanide, for instance, could make a mere flesh-wound result in death in a matter of a few minutes. A culture of anthrax bacillus swabbed on the tip might do the same in a matter of days but what the hell, I mean, why? Curare, in suitably



small doses can produce temporary unconsciousness and/or paralysis. However, a gun is not an overly satisfactory substitute for a hypodermic needle. The "anaesthetic bullets" so frequently used in the Doc Savage stories, for instance, have little relation to any real-life counterpart. Any projectile capable of penetrating air has the unfortunate property of also penetrating flesh. An anaesthetic slug that goes clean through a person conveys him scant benefit. A slug so light as to barely pierce the skin would lose its momentum within a very few feet and fall harmlessly to the ground. The instantaneous anaesthetics are by no means as quick and efficacious as one would assume from the ubiquitous way they keep turning up in fiction.

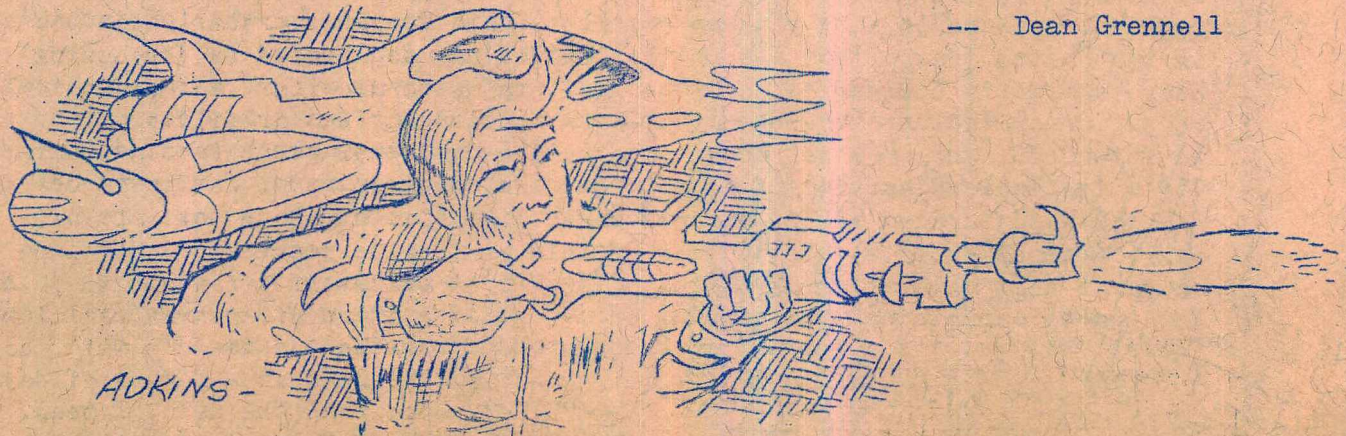
There is, perhaps, more promise in the line of explosive slugs. I mean miniature shells containing some sort of explosive with an appropriate contact or time fuse. The writer has cooperated in experiments involving conventional rifle and pistol bullets which embodied gunpowder, primers of the sort used in reloading cartridges and caliber .22 blank cartridges, but none of these have met with really significant success. It seems the better part of prudence to avoid really tremendous velocities in such loads due to the considerable danger that such a slug might detonate prematurely within the barrel resulting in a blown barrel (not from the bursting charge but from impeding the heavy propelling charge behind it) and discombooperation to all parties present. A solid bullet at the highest velocities has much more destructive potential than an explosive-bearing slug at its moderate velocity. This is not to discount the possibilities of suitably designed projectiles carrying the really energetic types of high explosives.

For instance, it could be possible to incorporate a shaped charge into projectiles for a hand or shoulder weapon. Briefly, a shaped charge is a lump of explosive with one face, the forward one, shaped into a hollow cone. Upon detonation, incandescent gas under intense pressure and velocity is emitted from all surfaces and in the cone it encounters the other shock wave all around and, in effect, you get a focusing, a concentration which, prior to the atomic bomb, was modern technology's closest approach to the irresistible force. Shaped charges are widely used in antitank missiles and one can turn the end of the shell into a jet of liquid steel at velocities in excess of 14,000 feet per second. This stream can squirt through several inches of armor as if it were warm butter and in the closed confines of a tank it can get pretty pesky.

Full automatic fire in such a gun could have its advantages. Of course, semi-auto fire should be available at option and it would be nice--and not too difficult--to incorporate a variable rate-of-fire selector so that under full auto the gun would not necessarily spray its entire contents out in one mighty belch of which no more than the first shot or two went where it counted. Thanks to the dropped bore line and and cyclic rate, such a gun as we've been postulating should permit directing the fire as easily and as accurately as squirting water from a hose.

This is by no means all that can be said of the subject but it will suffice until some future time. Meantime, if you have any comments or addenda, blaze away!

-- Dean Grennell

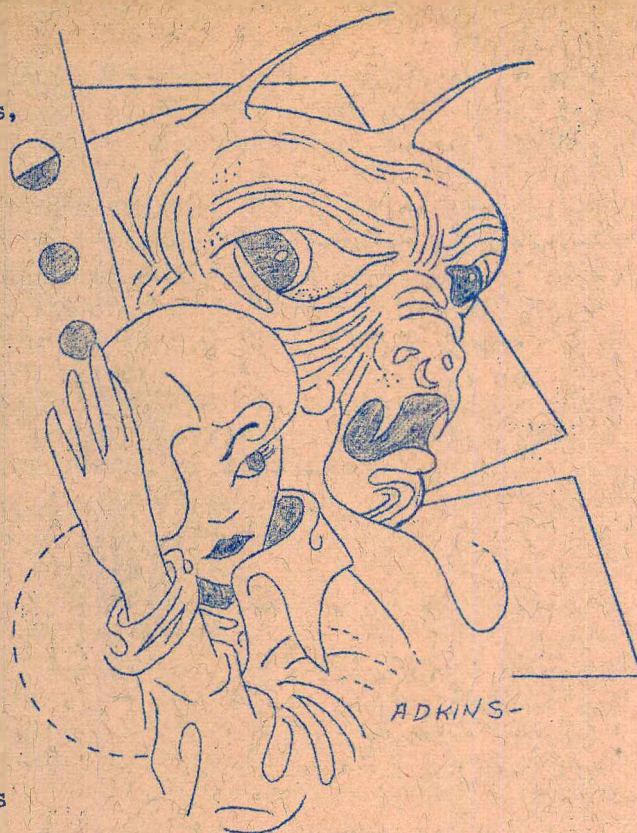


Although you are reading this fanzine review at almost the same locus in the space-time continuum as the first review in my new series, the date of creation is several months later. And I must confess that the most impressive thing about the winter's fanzines to me has been their weight. I have just staggered down the stairs from the attic with the cold weather harvest from the fan press and find that its weight approximates eight pounds. This does not include ayjay publications, fanzines which are under-the-counter in nature and seek obscurity, and the imposing number of publications that don't have me on the mailing list. In all these pages, there should be some things that are comparatively new and different, amid the usual clutter of articles on why there should be more science in science fiction.

There's one publication which isn't going to be rated first in the polls at the end of 1959, Dhog, but I'd like to give it primary attention here because it accomplishes something that I don't remember seeing so

clearly demonstrated in any fanzine of the past. It is the fanzine equivalent of the embryology demonstrations that you may have seen in museums or at high school science fairs. For the first time in my experience we have a clear and consecutive view of a potential BNF developing from an invisible non-entity through the stages of growth and vitality. Right now this fan, Ted Pauls, is causing the shell of his egg to shiver and shake. He's just about ready to emerge and he gives every promise of possessing a long, healthy fan life. By some good fortune, Ted began publishing while in this incomplete stage of fandom a several-times-monthly publication on the order of the letter substitutes that Ted White and John Magnus popularized. Dhog has given an almost weekly demonstration of his development from a neofan who even dusted before Ted White came calling to be certain of making a good impression into a more sophisticated and experienced fan who now isn't afraid to condense letters of comment and use fannish slang because it's appropriate, not simply as a demonstration that he knows the lingo. Dhog has a limited circulation, apparently comes to you because you've sent some pennies or comment or fanzines or are an attractive female, and the address is 1448 Meridene Drive, Baltimore 12, Maryland.

Another novelty in the quarter's crop of fanzines is Void. You won't believe it's Void when you see it because it has been completely Tedwhiteized in its physical appearance. As you may remember, Void was one of the few fanzines in the United States that was neither edited nor duplicated by Ted. Greg Benford finally decided to join the great majority and Ted's alleged attack of gafia now includes co-editorship of a fanzine for which monthly publication is intended. Once you get accustomed to the Gestetner-clean duplicating, Ted's professional-appearing format, and the changes in typeface, you can see the old Void lurking behind its new face, like a robot whose basic nature isn't changed despite substitution of this or that new mechanical part because of some alteration of duties. This first collaboration issue is mainly devoted to explaining what's going on and getting the decks cleared for the future, but there's a reprint of a Vernon McCain article from FAPA that



HARRY WARNER

starts off a new series telling about the other hobbies that possess fandoms analogous to science fiction fandom. Vernon wrote about the record-collecting fanzines and fans. The price of Void is two bits and the magazine is using Ted's address, 2708 N Charles St, Baltimore 18, Maryland.

The newest thing about The Vinegar Worm is its final proof of what most of us had suspected from previous issues: that fandom finally has a new humorist, in distinction from its numerous members who go around imitating other humorists. Bob Leman, 2701 South Vine St, Denver 10, Colorado, publishes it and the price is \$22.50 per copy if you insist on subscribing. It is pretty hard to define this new type of humor that Bob has introduced. It is not the Blochish pun and emphasis on quirks of fannish personalities; neither is it the Tuckerian specialty, that of uncovering the ridiculous things that fans say and do in such a manner that you're amused all over and don't get too angry even if you're the victim. The most obvious traits of this Leman brand of humor are its straight-facedness, its ability to last through an article or story of considerable length without sounding like excerpts from a joke book, and the sense that there is a profound truth lurking behind the satire in which Bob specializes. Those who may be tiring of parody as humor will be glad to know that only one item in this fourth issue falls even remotely into that category, "A True and Complete Explanation of the Present Parlous State of Science Fiction Together with an Account of the Discovery of the Dreckmeyer Formula," which derives from a Cyril Kornbluth story in Boucher's magazine, later anthologized, whose title I have unfortunately misplaced in my memory banks.

The most different kind of fan publication in this three-month span is one that bears the recipient's name as an integral part of the cover, is bound with brass rings just like those you used to try to grab on the merry-go-round, and can't possibly see another issue until near the start of 1960. It is the Atom 1959 Fan Calendar, published by Inchmerry fandom at 236 Queen's Road, London SE 14, England, apparently for the men of good will about whom everyone thinks around the holidays. This contains the most delightful Atom drawings that you've ever encountered, which is saying a great deal, a complete index to all of 1959's 365 days, and a listing of special dates in much the style of the fabled Poor Pong's Almanac. To the best of my knowledge, it is the only calendar which is complete if you happen to be among those fans who live 31 days each April because of Mercer's Day. It arrived along with one of the issues of Aporrheta which have been appearing so plump and so regularly that the recipient wonders if this is really fandom. I suspect that a day is coming when fandom will suddenly start talking about Aporrheta in the same tones that it now uses to rave about Quandry and Hyphen and Slant; the magazine is currently suffering from a slight taken-for-granted difficulty that involves most fanzines that appear regularly and never fall below a high level of excellence.

I thought that there was something vaguely familiar about another fanzine whose title and publishers were new to me. It wasn't until I'd laid away Equation in the attic, then resurrected it for this review that I realized the source of the haunting I-have-been-here-before impression. It's a bit reminiscent of the early issues of another fanzine whose sanctification process is well advanced, Fanvariety. Equation has the same sort of overpowering good humor and earnestness emanating from its pages that Max Keasler's fabled publication possessed, and those qualities are enough to make you overlook the blotty mimeography, some dreadfully bad art work, and catchall contents. New to you unless you're a collector or incredibly old will be the reprint of "The Challenge From Beyond," the round-robin which Moore, Merritt, Lovecraft, Howard and Long created two decades ago. You'll be surprised at the identity of the writer of several sections, if you read the thing before looking at the paragraph that tells you who wrote what part. The fanzine is edited by Paul Stanberry, 1317 North Raymond Avenue, Pasadena 3, California. I suppose that it contains a price somewhere but I haven't been able to find it on this second glance-through.

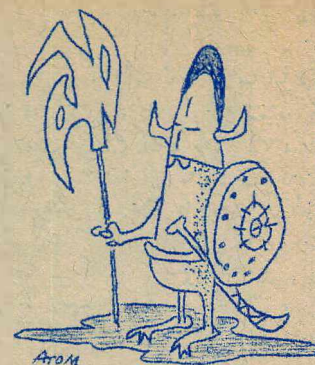
And while we're still in California it might be a good idea to look at Psi-Phi. My prediction that nobody will ever pull another Carl Brandon hoax because of the ex-

istence of this original hoax seems to be justified: Bob Lichtman, 6137 South Croft Avenue, Los Angeles 56, California, seems to spend most of his fannish time trying to convince people that he really exists. The second issue of the publication of this brand new fanzine shows imposing improvement over the first one and contains an article that describes with apparent seriousness a project to film a movie based on the Tolkien epic. Ted Johnstone announces in this article that it'll run slightly more than twelve hours with pictures "150 degrees wide" whatever that may mean. The hardy band of producers seem to have thought of everything except the little matter of obtaining film rights. Psi-Phi, incidentally, is completely different from anything else now emerging from fandom, for its use of double-size pages folded down the middle to form a solid spine is just like a professional magazine. It's a dime an issue or free for contributions or letters of comment.

I shouldn't include Framished in this column because I can't find a thing in it that's new unless it's the announcement that 8¹/₂th fandom is dead, and if you think that looks funny written, you try to pronounce the numbers followed by the th and you'll really have something to worry about. It's produced by Rich Brown, 127 Roberts St, Pasadena 3, California, and bears much the same slight resemblance to Fanvariety that I mentioned in Equation; understandably so, because Rich did the production work on the latter publication, too. Another similarity to Equation is Framished's inclusion of an important reprint, in this case The Fansmanship Lectures. Bob Shaw's documented ideas about how to succeed in fandom are gathered together from their original incarnations in Slant and Oopsla. Hey, there's something new and different about Framished after all: it costs only a nickel a copy and runs to 28 pages, which is just about the best price-to-size ratio that fandom has encountered in years and years.

The novelty connected with the 40th issue of Shangri-L'Affaires is that here is a Gestetnered fanzine that is difficult to read in certain areas. There are two extenuating circumstances for this: one is the fact that the material is so entertaining that you forget the faintness of some of the pages, the other is that the LASFS had just acquired its new duplicator and wasn't too well versed with the modus in which a White or Grennell do their operandi. However, I still contend that colored paper and Gestetnering are incompatible; the duplicating process produces a thinner typeface on the paper than liquid ink mimeographs and even the best-linked Gestetnering needs white or the lightest of colored hues as the background for best performance and appearance. Hopes that Burbee would become an integral part of the resuscitated Shangri-L'Affaires were pulverized by this issue but there's a welcome second-best substitute, a lot of articles that prove that everyone in Los Angeles doesn't hate everyone else, after all, as the more cynical writing emanating from that city over the years had indicated. The address is 2548 West 12th Street, Los Angeles 6, California, and the cost is either 20¢ or fanzine or letter of comment as exchange.

Ground Zero is another fanzine that is valuable for reasons other than superlative material or format. It is proof of a new phenomenon in fandom: that of convention fans turning into fanzine fans. I have nothing against the fans who qualify for the title because they go to lots of conventions, conferences, and meetings of their municipal fan groups, but I feel that they are of a different order of fandom while they confine themselves to this type of fan activity, simply because it's not doing other persons much good. So it's a heartening thing to see three of the New Yorkers like Belle, George Nims Raybin, and Franklin M Dietz, Jr, appear at the masthead of a fanzine instead of showing up in print only among lists of persons who were seen either at this or that meeting. When you go to a gathering, you'll amuse hardly anyone but yourself; when you put out a fanzine or compile a checklist of fantasy fiction you're doing something that other people can enjoy too. This third issue of Ground Zero features a Solacon report by Ted Johnstone that manages to squeeze more actual information into a small territory than any convention account that I've read, and an interesting account by Belle of "The Space Child's Mother Goose," a book that seems to have escaped the attention of the rest of fandom until now. (1721 Grand Avenue, Bronx 53, New York. Fifteen cents per copy.)



There's no need to hunt for the new aspect to Retribution. The magazine has undergone a considerable change of policy, which calls for a smaller proportion of each issue to be set aside for the Goon Defective Agency and more space to be devoted to less specialized types of fanzine material. It is impossible to sit back knowingly and say that this is wonderful or that this is terrible; certainly there has been nothing in fandom like the Goon mythology, but nobody in his right mind could complain about yet another outlet for the general fan writings of the British and Irish people whom Berry features in this issue. Another novelty is a photo page, three shots on which are priceless candids. And Atom is back as staff artist, apparently recovered completely from that awful attack of gafia. The address is John Berry, 31 Campbell Park Avenue, Belmont, Belfast, Northern Ireland. In his upheaval of policy John seems to have forgotten to put price or trading information into this February issue.

Fanac is also changing in one unwelcome sense: it's the same to look at, has the same publishers, features the same kind of material, but it doesn't fall into your mailbox as often. Even though it hasn't been achieving its "every other week or near it" schedule for the past month or more it's still first with the news in fandom. There hasn't been a fan news publication to equal its cheerfulness, urbanity, attractive appearance and fecundity of information sources since the days of antiquity when Dick Wilson was publishing the Science Fiction News Letter. It comes from Terry Carr and Ron Ellik, Apt 7, 2444 Virginia St, Berkeley 4, Calif. Four issues for 25¢.

There's something else new about Miriam Dyches: she is now Mrs Carr and getting along remarkably well under that formidable name of explosive connotations. Miriam has the habit of changing her own name just this once but her fanzine's name with every issue. The two issues on hand are Moor Park and Uneven which appear under the generic heading of Goojie Publications. Uneven runs pretty heavily to fiction of varying degrees of fannishness, with Mr Carr's own contribution holding the place of most interest. Don't get confused by this; its title is "The Fan Who Hated Quotecards" and by coincidence there has been some publicity in fanzines about a real West Coast fan who has declared a war unto the death on quotecards, but Terry dissects actions of a hypothetical person whose final doings are a shrewd reflection on the things that fandom can bring a person to do. I really enjoyed Moor Park more than Uneven because it contains much more of Miriam's own writings, which would be interesting even if they weren't written by a girl-type fan. Fifteen cents each; T Carr's address, of course.

There aren't any new superlatives to describe the achievements of British Isles fandom so I'll do a very unfair thing and lump together into one paragraph three stupendously enjoyable issues of as many publications that arrived during the cold weather months. This means that Hyphen, Triode and Orion aren't appearing with the regularity of some other British and Irish publications, but they are approximately equal in their entertainment value, literacy, and uniformly high quality of contributions, which is saying an imposing say in view of the justified reputation of Hyphen. Orion is a variable star which had blinked out altogether for a number of years and in this revival is led by mostly females who make it an even better publication than it was when it shone under the editorship of Paul Enever. The address is now Ella Parker, 151 Canterbury Road, West Kilburn, London NW 6, England, and the price is 15¢ per issue. Triode comes from Eric Bentcliffe, 47 Alldis Street, Great Moor, Stockport, Cheshire, England, costs 20¢, and in this 15th issue seems more like Retribution than does the new Ret, for some reason I don't quite understand myself. That living, breathing legend, Hyphen, costs 15¢ and the 21st issue came from Chuck Harris, Carolin, Lake Avenue, Rainham, Essex, England.

It seems wrong to mention Spectre so late in a fanzine review column, but it doesn't fit in too well with the newsness theme of this installment, and having said that I can find nothing else in a critical manner about Bill Meyer's publication. It re-

minds me strikingly of Copsla, which you are probably reading at this very moment. This fourth issue contains another wonderfully funny deadpan article by Bob Leman about the little-known big events of 1958 in fandom, but the bulk of the issue is filled up with the bread and butter of fanzines--reviews and letters from readers--done so well that almost any reader is apt to want to go out and publish a general interest fanzine like this too. The address is 4301 Shawnee Circle, Chattanooga 11, Tennessee, and you must do something to get into Bill's good graces to receive this, because he is not to be bribed with subscription money.

Almost new to fandom is Larry Bourne's act of copyrighting Brillig, whose 13th issue informs us that the costs is 20¢ and the address is 2436 $\frac{1}{2}$ Portland Street, Eugene, Oregon. This publication is coming close to growing into a New World Writing-type fanzine because the contents are uniformly serious or avant-garde or both. If Dick Geis's struggles with utopias and government are a bit too dry for you, you can't miss the points of Jim Weber, who pounds them home without subtlety but with great effect in a parody on a do-good television program.

Hovering on the border of the ghost land that contains the ayjay magazines, outside the territory which this review covers, are major productions by John Quagliano and Dick Ellington. Both the former's Quagmire and the latter's Fijagh are intended primarily for ayjay circulation, but each seems to have somewhat more widespread circulation than the OMPA and FAPA magazines generally get. I'll refrain from giving addresses and full details because I'm not sure how much general fandom publicity the editors want but both are fine in different ways: Fijagh because of Dick's absolutely distinctive, instantly likeable writing style and the unusual bypaths of reading and acting that he explores, John's for another phase of Jim Weber's television antipathy and a lot of other Brilligish material.

And that leaves one paragraph to mention more briefly publications which in some cases deserve more attention. The Devil's Motorboat, (Nick and Noreen Falasca, 5612 Warwick Drive, Parma 29, Ohio), is probably a one-shot with a delightful improvised air throughout that gives the impression of having fallen out of some ayjay mailing. The eighth issue of Science Fiction Parade comes from Len J Moffatt, 10202 Belcher, Downey, California, and Stan Woolston will take over the title after this from 12832 Westlake Street, Garden Grove, California. The final Moffatt issue provides behind-the-scenes information on the Solacon that should be important to fannish historians for ever and ever. Don Durward, 6033 Garth Avenue, Los Angeles 56, California, is just getting his bearings as a fan, after producing first issues of Quixotic and Little Name Fan; they give evidence that he will be another subject for disbelief by people who remember Carl Brandon, because he's got enough ability to be suspected as a pseudonym or downright fake. The only Linard publication on hand in major proportions is the fifth issue of The Innavigable Mouth, from 24 Rue Petite, Vesoul, Haute Saone, France. Jean is better but still not able to maintain his crippling pace of a couple of years ago and this letter-substitute is giving Annie a chance to practice her English and Jean a slight relieving of his conscience twinges over the piled up mail. And Ted White, who gaffiates more productively than most fans at their productive peak of activity has been turning out a variety of small personalized publications besides the major products that he's producing or co-editing. He'll have two new addresses, four new titles, and another slew of publishing contracts by the time you read this, no doubt, so this is as good a point as any to halt the reviews for the time being.

-- Harry Warner

((And this is perhaps a better place than most to point out that these fanzine reviews emanate from 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, and that while neither Harry nor this fanzine promises to make any sort of attempt to review all fanzines received, still you have a much better chance if Harry gets a copy of your magazine than if he doesn't. --wgc))

LETTERS AND SUCHLIKE

THERBLIGS

large pile of letters which has been accumulating here over the past few months, beginning with the long one from that old time Sixth Fandomite...

Richard Elsberry, 82 Lee Avenue, Schenectady 3, New York

Was poking thru some fanmags in my file cabinet the other night and came across a copy of the Dec '45 "Husk" with a story by Cpl Dean W. Boggs, one of his earliest efforts. Got a 'zine from the redhead the other day and was surprised to find out he is working 12 hours a day; during the years I knew him I don't think he ever worked. He must have taken everything the University of Minnesota had to offer and probably had to quit. Actually I'm envious--I liked college life and wouldn't have minded going for 7 or 8 years.

Saw Wells' "Invisable Man" on the Late, Late Show the other night and noted when the credits were run that two of the actors were Don Stuart and Harry Stubbs. Very appropriate for a sf film.

...I guess I've sort of achieved the sf fan's goal--working (at least some of the time) on missiles and space vehicles. Unfortunately it is not very glamorous--actually it is the hardest type of job we have; those people are all crazy and don't give a damn about money and their completion dates are ridiculous. It's all overtime and headaches, and I'm damn glad I've had as little as possible of it. Did a couple of sales promotions for them earlier this year and have pitched in on a couple of others, but have managed to wiggle (with the help of a pregnant wife) out of two other assignments down there. But they finally caught up with me.

Oops 25 arrived yesterday. And I've finished reading it and marking little marginal notes with a dull red pencil. Being an editor, I have nothing around the house but dull red and blue pencils; they're always dull by the end of the day and they always wind up in my shirt pocket. But who cares?

Re all the deaths; I was surprised but not shocked. I received one of Boggs' mags a few weeks ago which carried the information; it simply served to point out how out of touch I've gotten with things. Reading OOPS also has the same effect. Once in a while a name strikes a responsive chord--Willis, Shaw (those hardy English perennials), Keasler (what ever did happen to Max?)--but most of the stuff passes over my head. Your comment on Leiber's serial, for instance--I haven't read more than two issues of Galaxy in two years. And I read those two for lack of anything better to do while spending two weeks in a thoroughly disorganized Army reserve unit.

Those two issues of Galaxy bothered me, though. They were highly depressing--so was the location I was reading them in but I think they would have been depressing even at home. I began to wonder (but not enough to read any other issues) if this was becoming standard sf fare. What ever happened to Padgett's robot Joe, and Gallagher (or was it Galloway?), and the "fun" stuff that used to appear in ASF and TWS? You can take only so much doomsday and despair--and isn't that what Gold decries? I seem to recall--yes, here it is--"Anyone for Doomsday? Not you! Not us!" says Gold. Yet the September and October issues of his magazine are full of it. In "Lastborn" by Asimov, Miss Fellowes and her little Neanderthaler are blasted into the Stone Age, victims of a society which places progress above poetry, a society without a heart. Our society. "On The Double,"

THE SOLACON SEEMS
LIKE A THOUSAND
YEARS AGO!



by Biggle is not a doomsday story; but it is a typical O. Henry with the lucky, bumbling Earthmen plodding through to victory against superior technology. In Clarke's "Stroke of the Sun" the umpire is burned to a crisp to assure a political victory; a satire, I suppose, but not very funny. Damon Knight's novelette 'destroys' a no-good Earthman who tries to gain wealth through an alien device he doesn't comprehend. Nothing was really accomplished in the story--and I certainly wasn't entertained. There was no point of reference; I couldn't fit myself into this story at all. I'd have much preferred to read about a well-intentioned modern day man destroyed by a system, plan or policy developed in our present society which he cannot cope with or comprehend. Because this may be the way I'll "go under" one of these days. Tenn's "Lisbon Cubed" in the next issue is much like Knight's story--the Earthman decides to fight the aliens on his own and succeeds only in getting himself painfully killed. Where is the inspiration, uplift, entertainment that used to be in sf? Bloch's "Block That Metaphor" is another story that left me cold--given the situation Bloch has set up the outcome is inevitable. The only fun Bloch might have had in writing it was considering how the woman was to be mutilated; consider the outcome if the hero had had sex on his mind. But then this is a family magazine. Just seems to me that there is a bit too much killing and violence to be found in these two magazines. The only story I really enjoyed was Pohl's "The Wizards of Pung's Corners" and one good story per each two issues is not a percentage to keep me reading Galaxy. Maybe it's a sign of the times or the author's don't want to cover well-trodden ground again, but damn it there wasn't anywhere near this amount of this type of story in the pre-1950 period. Then it was the exception, now it seems to be the rule. I think if I ever start writing sf I will have a little sign on my typewriter that will read: "Would JWC have printed this in 1941?"

Do you consider yourself a "trufan" (p. 4)? Seems like fandom is becoming something akin to a masonic organization with perhaps more than 32 levels. At the top of the heap we have the Old Guard (which I see now extends back only to 1945 for some reason--what about the pre-war fans such as SaM; are they now Past Exalted Grand Fans or something?) and at the bottom the Neofans. Someplace in the middle come the Trufans. I could probably draw a fairly detailed picture if I knew more about Masonry... There does seem to be some definite connections, though; in Masonry non-Christians can achieve only a certain level and in fandom fuggheads are kept in their place.

What's this about Max Keasler being denounced by Rog Phillips? Sounds wonderful. Knowing both, I have visions of a wonderful feud. I was also surprised at Willis referring to GM Carr as a "crackpot"; far from mellowing, Walter seems to be getting a bit crotchety and not at all respectful of his elders. Can't say I blame him, used to do the same thing myself; now I prefer simply to ignore those who annoy me. Usually they go away.

Sneary's comment, or rather question, on why Willis wastes his "genius" on a mundane job brings to mind Kenneth Gray. There probably aren't a dozen fans who recognize the name, but he is dear to the hearts, I'm sure, of Poul Anderson, Gordie Dickson and Ted Cogswell. Also myself. He speaks 7 or 8 languages, read my copy of Stapledon's "First and Last Men" in 40 minutes (something I've never been able to accomplish in 6 years) and is a superior intellect in all respects. I wouldn't even try to calculate his IQ. But he is very happy as office manager of a vending machine firm, reads voraciously, and enjoys his kids. He aspires to nothing higher. He's a man who has found his niche and is sublimely happy and I envy him. The rat-race gets to me on occasion.

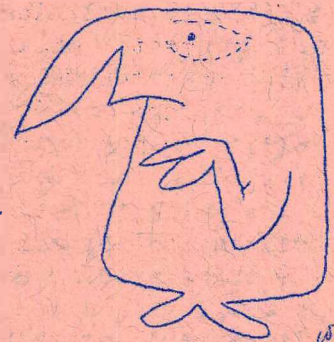
You are supporting Washington in '60. Hmmm. Does the Capital group still include my old drinking buddy Bob Briggs? We kind of lost track of each other after he went into the Army. At both the Nolacon and Philly ('52?) the Washington Delegation was perhaps the craziest group on the premises. Most of the other names escape me except Lee Jacobs and Terry Felcyn--the latter a femme that intrigued me. She moved to San Francisco not long after the con and I lost track--as I have with almost everything



fannish---but she'll always be a fannish memory. Ever hear of her?

I hate to puncture your ego, but Bob Leman's comment that Oops is one of the top five fan mags is a sad comment on fandom. Oops is good and I enjoy it, but I think it used to be better. And I can remember a time when Bannister, Hoffman, Mullen, Boggs and Macauley and others were producing super-zines, printed, offset, and giant mimeo jobs. Apparently the quantity and quality of zines has dropped or Leman is boosting your ego. I wouldn't know; no one ever sends me zines any more. Except my trufan friends. However, don't take this too hard; in fact, ignore it. I'm really just jealous that you can find time to put out a magazine and I can't even write an occasional letter. Seems like old times---Elsberry with his foot in his mouth again.

((No, Dick, to a certain extent I think you are right...the quantity may have upped a bit but the quality is just like the fabled old gray mare. I wish I knew for sure just in what ways you consider that Oops used to be better, though...I could always make some changes. ## The science fiction being published in Galaxy is more or less representative of the field as a whole, with certain magazines being exceptions, of course, and that isn't saying much for the state of sf these days. The trouble is, the sf market is--or was until recently--so large that almost anything will sell to somebody, somewhere, and where can you find the author who can afford to write good sf for pleasure when in the same amount of time he can write three times as much low quality verbiage for cold hard cash? Let me quote from none other than H L Gold himself in the current SF TIMES: "The (science fiction) rush produced so huge a strain on writers, who of course produce the very thing we sell, that quality just had to drop. Too many markets were competing for the output of too few skilled writers. Borderline stories, which ordinarily would have been sent back for tuning up and polishing, had to be bought as is because somebody else would have grabbed them without change. Routine ideas and treatments had to be good enough because magazines were buying wordage to fill pages with, and writers were harried into turning out material that most of our temporary competitors were buying sight unseen. New authors sold quickly to learn anything but bad writing habits, and were thus deprived of editorial guidance that would have gotten them through their necessary apprenticeship. And--obeying Gresham's Law--the bad drove out the good. Conscientious writers were demoralized into leaving the field, and some worthy titles were put to death along with the unworthy." Frankly, Horace, we knew it all along--we just wondered when you would get around to admitting it. But now that the bubble has burst, will Galaxy get around to publishing good sf once again? Hmmm? ## The Willis-GMC controversy goes deeper than that, Dick...suffice it to say that Walt is fully justified in what he says. ## The Trufan, oddly enough, is not defined in either Bob Tucker's 1955 edition of The Neo-Fan's Guide or the Hoffman-Boggs 1952 edition of Rapp's Fanspeak so I hesitate to commit myself in print without knowing what I might be saying for sure. Bob Tucker, isn't it about time for a newer and more comprehensive edition?)))



Es Adams, 433 Locust Avenue, SE, Huntsville, Alabama

Dollar moneys, send fine fanzine, call oopsla, send

to Es, if got old issues (call back ishes by we who know the "fannish" lingo) send also if Es send nuf dollar moneys to pay or if not Es I think would love to here from you of the prices of these "back ishes." (as is Es's "wont" to call them, the old issues of your magazine oopsla). Es to put it simply wants all oopslas he can get and will even send more dollar moneys if he hast to do such. PS - Yes, I am Es and I wrote the hold letter in third (is that right I'm not real good in English?) person tense and the signiture I guess came as a "twist" ending which I guess is the kind you like in the stories in your magazine oopsla don't you. I will write more of this kind of good stuff with "surprise" endings if you want me to or you can print this one because you want to if you really want to print it in your magazine oopsla I like the style I wrote in to, did you.

((Is somebody pulling my leg?)))



Ralph Watts, 2230 Big Run Road, Grove City, Ohio

I believe
that any

stf lover that calls himself a fan has also been sickened by the Kyle-WSFS mess. Too bad that this sort of nonsense (and what else could it be called?) can turn up in science fiction. Of course, my only knowledge of this silly feud comes from a second hand source, but I don't have to be in on the sordid, petty details to be completely disgusted by the whole affair! Oh, I know that fan have their differences of opinion, but I thought that this was confined to just plain ordinary ribbing. In other words, just material to fill out a fanzine or stir up a good natured fannish argument. If it doesn't become too heated

an affair, a simple corny feud does much to stimulate the lagging interest of us fan characters. And, of course, the fan does have these periods of "hate anything to do with sf."

Maybe this Kyle-WSFS mess couldn't honestly be called a fan feud--at least I've never heard of such things reaching the lawsuit stage. How very unwise to let this matter develop into such a big stink. Certainly it could have been settled in a more gentlemanly manner. Always thought that all stf fan were one big happy family but this sort of activity sort of turns me some on that notion. If that sort of childish goofiness goes on in general fandom, I'll stick to the smaller, more compact group such as N3F. If ever an outsider had reason to cast ridicule on this reading and fanning hobby, he most assuredly has fuel for that fire now! A very good thing that little of this will leak out to the general public...they have always considered us to be some sort of crackpots.

It would seem, Gregg, that your opinions are my opinions too. Especially where they concern Fritz Leiber's Galaxy serial "Big Time" being chosen the best novel of the year. Hadn't taken this up with anybody before as I thought it was just me and my poor stf taste that disagreed with this award. Am delighted to find a fan that shares a mutual hearty disliking for this novel. It would, without a doubt, get my nod for the dullest, most thoroughly jumbled up mishmosh of a story that has been printed during the past ten years. I was never so surprised in all my life as when this novel was chosen as the year's best. I will admit that in such a poor novel year as 1958 it had little competition; still, "The Big Time" was not even readable. Heinlein was robbed! Even if given a juvenile tag by some big shot literary critics, "Have Space-Suit--Will Travel" was by far the year's best stf book. If this be juvenile...well, then just call me sonny. I liked it!

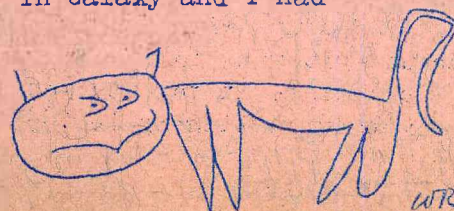
((We are not alone on "The Big Time"--many who wrote felt the same way, including Walt Willis and Buck Coulson among others. One who did not write the letter immediately following this. ## I printed your WSFS comments mainly because they reflect the feelings and opinions of a great many fans who wrote, particularly those like yourself who are more reader-type fans than actifans. Personally, I feel that the only Kyle and Raybin can ever hope to repair the damages they have done to their own reputations is to get together and withdraw both lawsuits completely and apologize to fandom for the mess they have jointly made...not without help from some others.)))

Djinn Faine, 2548 West 12th St, Los Angeles 6, California

A comment of a critical
nature on a statement

in your editorial that was made rather unfairly and unjustly--I feel so, anyhow. Your remarks on "The Big Time" winning the Hugo were superficial, supercilious and uncalled for. I'm sure that others besides myself did not find the story to be one of Fritz's worst. The literary quality was of high standards and the plot was good. I happened to mention to Fritz that I had only read the first part in Galaxy and I had been looking for the next ish to finish the thing (I HATE serials) and he sent it to me. I could not put it down until I had finished the entire bit. In your editorial you don't call a spade a spade (as you see it) but a goddamn shovel!

((Whoa there! Just because Fritz Leiber is a Good



Man to send you the second part of his serial does not carry with it the distinction of also being a Sure-Fire Good Author. One of my all-time favorite books in my entire collection happens to be "Conjure Wife" by that same author, but unfortunately this does not add anything to the quality of "The Big Time." I do think it was the year's poorest novel and if it was not also Leiber's poorest effort then I hope I never live to read it.)))

Len Moffatt, 10202 Belcher, Downey, California

I, and I imagine a goodly number of others, must disagree with one line in your editorial, i.e.: "Yes, nineteen hundred and fifty-eight is not a year to remember with much happiness." The fact that South Gate in '58! turned out to be such a happy success--despite the things that happened during the year--will always be a happy memory for me. Had the SOLACON been a failure then yes, indeed, the year would have been a dismal one to remember... But, and thanks be forever to the fans and pros who helped us, the SOLACON is a bright and happy memory in an otherwise unhappy year.

(((Bennett writes much the same thing and I hurry to correct my original statement. I completely overlooked South Gate when I wrote it. I apologize.)))

Bob Leman, 2701 South Vine St, Denver 10, Colorado

Thanksgiving day, a steady gentle snow falling, a log crackling in the fireplace (not burning very well but crackling like hell) a glass of sherry at my elbow--peace, it's wonderful. And then conscience had to rear its bug-eyed head and point out to me the appalling stack of unacknowledged fanzines and unanswered letters on the desk. And here I am, trying to get my head above water. OOPS 25--the only British Fanzine published in the United States--arrived some time ago, was hastily read and thoroughly enjoyed, and was put in the stack with its margins much marred by notations. And I still plan to write a letter commenting (need I say enthusiastically?) on the issue. Meanwhile, just to indicate that I'm not dead, I'll pop off this card to say thanks and by George, you've got a whale of a magazine here.

(((Thanks and by George, the Pony Express is slow these days. Never did get that letter. ## Loved that line about "the only British Fanzine published in the US...)))

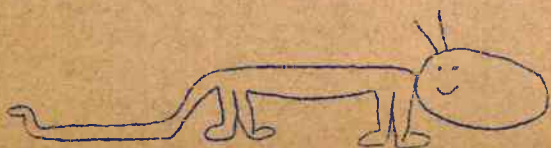
Tom Reamy, 4047 Herschel, Dallas 19, Texas

Willis is brilliantly astute in his appraisal of Mosher but he just can't know. Really know! He hasn't lived in the same town and been in the same club with Orville Watson Mosher III. Good Lord! Willis can hear the sounds of Mosher organizing in the background but he has never been close enough to be caught in the gears. Did you know that Mosher actually has plans for taking over the world? I'm serious and so was he. It was an organization called THE LEAGUE OF KNOWLEDGE. He explained it to me and another guy for about three hours one time. It consisted of gradually organizing the scientists, technicians, magicians, etc, into small organizations which could soon affiliate all over the world. WITH MOSHER CONTROLLING EVERYTHING IN THE BACKGROUND! It's a good thing Mosher is repulsive personally. What would happen if he were handsome, charming, dynamic, a regular Rock Hudson? Some of his psychopathic ideas might be realized. A new Hitler is looming on the horizon!

(((The editor hastily adds that the opinions expressed herein are not necessarily his own and also that I'm glad Mosher doesn't live in New York.)))

Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave, N Hollywood, California

Walt Willis in your last issue says that Russia has done a lot for space travel by creating a challenge and I agree. But what has it done for science fiction? Space travel stuff is all over the place but sf is not booming. Is it possible that the new readers whom we must depend on to keep sf holding its own are saying: now that we've got space travel we don't need science fiction? This is an ignorant attitude for two reasons: 1) we don't



have space travel any more than we had automobiles the day Carl Benz came chugging down the Strasse, and 2) we'll always need science fiction because imagination, not necessity, is the true mother of invention.

Of course it is true that science fiction doesn't have a monopoly on space travel any more. There was a day when you couldn't find any serious discussion of it elsewhere; and now you can, so possibly those who are interested in the subject are looking at the fact books instead of science fiction. So wait until they have caught up with all the facts and all the short-sighted predictions of the fact book writers (I except Willy Ley and von Braun and a few others); they may turn to science fiction again.

One of the best compliments science fiction received is when the President said, in introducing Killian's report: "this is not science fiction." Implying: although this sounds like that crazy (or advanced) stuff called science fiction it is a serious prediction by scientists. Science has not caught up with sf by a long shot and never will have as long as they have that proverb "easier said than done."

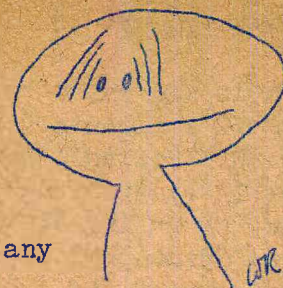
What does Therbligs mean? May I guess? This here editor runs big letters if good subjects? But I noticed a couple letters on such an un-sf subject as revolvers (rays or disintegrators or even daggers would be more to the point). However, they do deal with inventions, which are important in science fiction.

((Since your letter is in two parts I will comment in two parts. In the first place, science fiction was better although not better off when it had fewer of these new readers and more imagination, a quality sadly lacking today. You cannot expect readers to flock to the stands to buy sf publications in quantity when these publications are poorly written and not worth reading--although this is precisely what happened for a while. When the new reader discovered the "boom" sf to be poorly written crap he dropped it like a hot potato and the boom was merely an echo. ## In the second place, while I would rather read good sf than almost anything else, it is not my only love and this is not a science fiction fanzine, per se. In OOPS I publish things I feel will interest my readers because they have interested me, be they articles on cats, British Guardsmen or guns, and if there are interesting things written about the sf world why so much the better. When the sf field is uninteresting it will be ignored, as it should be. As should anything.)))

I've been reading a few fanzines of late and there seems to be a general discussion about whether fanzines should discuss science fiction or not. Now...the only reason I ever sent for any fanzines at all was to read about science fiction. In the non-science fiction world of print there is such a blank silence on it, broken only by idiocies and condemnations, that I hanker to read something about science fiction as distinguished from reading science fiction itself, which is an activity I know we all indulge in more than average regardless of denials. Prozines used to have a lot about science fiction in them but now there are only a few such. So, I thought, maybe the fanzines... Well, they do, most of them...but not so much that I like to hear anybody say let's cut it down.

Walt Willis says that the pros aren't interested in fanzines much. Could it be that one of the reasons is that fanzines aren't interested in them much? If I were a musician and wanted to read about music, music criticism, ways to improve music, reasons certain musicians stink including myself, etc, I would read a certain music magazine only until I ascertained that 1) it didn't say anything about music and was proud of it, and 2) it was only interested in the people who went to concerts, what their private lives were, and so on.

I don't consider myself a pro with 4 sales and 61 rejections but I can understand their attitude, not only on this but in the total lack of time they have. Maybe the reason they turn up only at conventions is that this is sort of a three-day holiday for them, when they can put aside their writing chores and devote themselves to fannishness. How much time do you think, say, Asimov has, what with part time science too? Don't forget many of them are former fans and might be tired of fan activity. Just because they don't write to fanzines often doesn't mean anything. I know a lot of



people who don't write to their own relatives without a prod (I am one of them). Some people's talents lie in other directions, like organizing or speech-making, something which I couldn't possibly do. I don't consider them non-fans just because they are not literary minded.

I'm not saying it is wrong to criticize all present science fiction, comparing it with some ideal in the past or in your mind's eye; but to imply that sf is not worth talking about--well, if I want to hear that baloney I'll read some rag like the Saturday Review. What I'd like to see is for fans and pros to get away from this Byzantine dissention and unite against the real fuggheads--the ones who don't like sf, never read it, wouldn't like it if they read it, wouldn't read it if they liked it, don't like anybody that reads it, or read anybody that likes it, simply because they are united in their opinions that it is no good. And you are not certain that it is worth talking about (not really, but it would seem so from a hasty reading of fanzines).

Now don't get me wrong. I have so far seen a lot of good in fanzines, even those things that are far from science fiction. It's only that I expected a lot more and that I certainly didn't expect to see such a controversy in fan magazines at all. Did you ever open a copy of "Motor Trend" and see a letter that said: "Is that all you talk about is autos?--"

((No, and I don't expect to ever open a copy of aSF and see a similar letter about science fiction--unless it's about a certain phase, such as psionics, Dianetics, etc --but you must remember that in both cases these are professional magazines in their respective fields. Fanzines are amateur publications and as such are subject to the whims and notions of their individual editors. Since they invariably lose money, they do not have to cater to a specific clientele in order to stay in the black...they can publish whatever they like. So they do. As I said before, if science fiction rates discussion then it will be discussed as quickly as would any other subject, perhaps even a little more so. If it does not rate discussion--and a majority of it does not these days--then it is best ignored.

The point is that we fans are no longer mindless slaves to science fiction...at least some of us are not. We publish what we like.

But by the same token, there is always room in fandom for another editor--yourself, perhaps--to come along and publish just exactly the type of magazine you are looking for. I, for one, would be glad to see it happen, even though I have no inclination to do it myself.

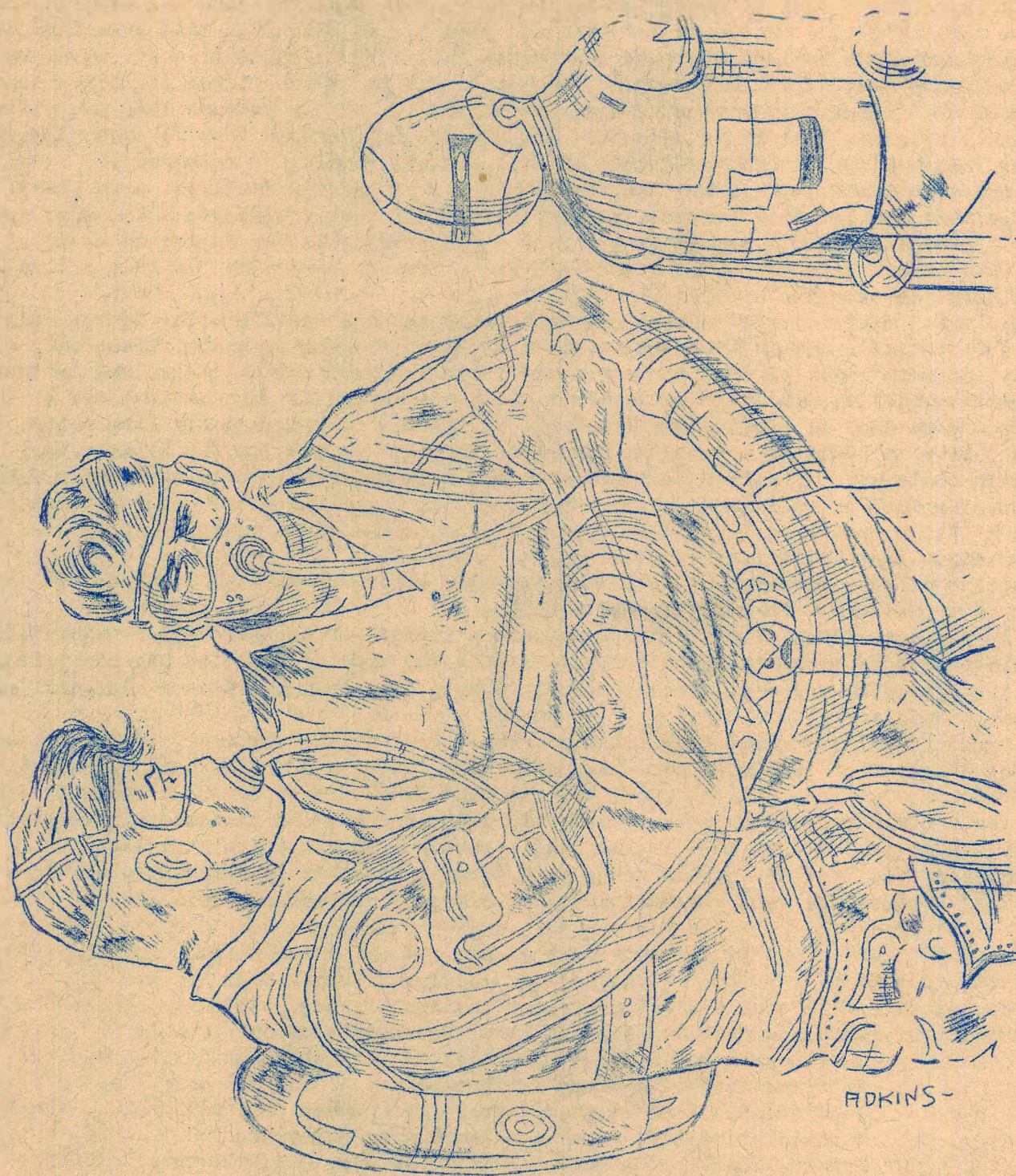
The comment on the lack of time the pro's have needs little rebuttal. Perhaps you are of the opinion that most fans are unemployed laborers and thus have so much time to write and publish, but the plain fact is that there are twenty-four hours in every day for everybody everywhere in the ever-lovin' world and the manner in which they are used is, in the free nations, at least, pretty much up to the individual. And as for this business of all of us fans banding together to stand shoulder to shoulder against the real fuggheads, I have only one question. Why?

Well, that's just about it for these two issues. A lot more letters arrives, of course, for which I was duly grateful and I hope that equally as many will come again in response to these issues. In a hurry, preferably, because I'd like to have the next issue out in mid June and of course the letter section is an integral part of a readable fanzine.

Particularly enjoyed among the letters I did not have room to print this time were those from O Raymond Sowers, who wrote a most excellent letter, Chick Derry, Bill Danner, Rich Brown, Harry Warner, Ethel Lindsay, Denis Tucker, Archie Mercer, Bob Pavlat, Dick Eney, Buck Coulson, John Koning, Bob Lichtman, Ron Ellick, plus a number of others. Perhaps I should have published three issues this time?

And now it would appear that there is just enough room for me to remind you that both of these issues have been STARFLAME PUBLICATIONS.



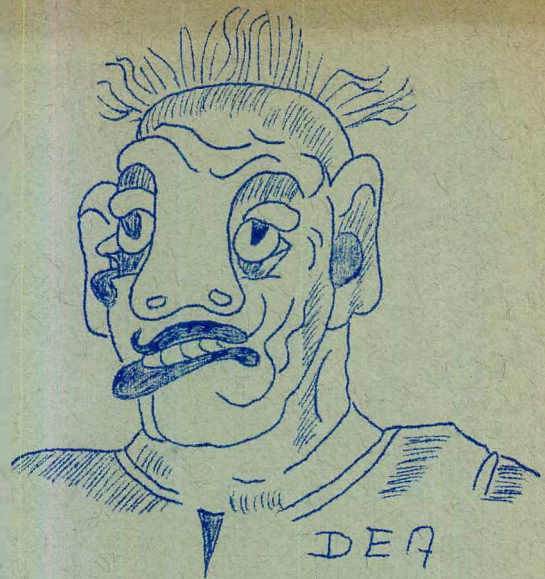


A SAD

TALE OF WOE

...and one best left unsung. And I'd leave it that way, too, if only I weren't so far behind in my campaign promises.

This issue is being mailed on May 25th, just about three weeks later than my first scheduled mailing date for this issue, and the reasons for the delay are many.



But let's go all the way back to last November and begin at the beginning. At the end of the summer I sort of lost my head and decided it was time to clean my old ABDick Model 77 rather thoroughly and in the process managed to retrizzle the flimmerator. No amount of work on my part seemed to help and the people at the ABDick shop solemnly assured me that I had broken a whatizit and they were no longer being made for the 77 and that was that. Broken but unbent I nevertheless managed to squeeze out one last issue on the 77 by means of liberal use of hacksaw and hammer (I'm not fooling) but at the end of that issue I had convinced even myself that it was Time For A Change.

Accordingly, I bought a new Rex Rotary Model M4, which was delivered in late November. Christmas came and went and with it fall quarter final exams and my annual Christmas season employment at the Post Office, and winter quarter came and got me all bogged down and by the time it was ready to leave I was just about ready to get things started to begin to commence to publish another issue. Actually this is not entirely correct...I had been working on OOPS all along but not very regularly and in a very disorganized fashion. For example, issues #26 and #27 in this envelope originally were intended to be a giant annish...until I found my stapler would not staple that many pages at once. And like that.

So it went. At first this beast was 100% different to operate than the ABDick and I had--and still am having--to make adjustments to its way of thinking. In the process it went berserk and utterly destroyed two stencils which had to be recut and which slowed down progress tremendously. The next weekend I ran out of ink unexpectedly (the salesman told me a can of this ink would last about as long as a can of ABDick ink and he was only half right) and rushed down on a Saturday only minutes before closing to get another can and when I got home it turned out to be purple in a blue can...so there went that weekend's work. Inking is still my main problem--this thing gulps ink like a thirsty Irishman locked overnight in a liquor store--and I apologize for the spotty reproduction this time. But I'm getting better with every page. And speaking of spots, I made the mistake of buying Gestetner paper this time. Since I was going up in the world, so to speak, I thought I might switch paper at the same time as I made the switch to blue ink and as far as the paper was concerned, at least, it was a bad mistake...this stuff leaves a great deal of offset and is not nearly as absorbent as Masterweave. This will be rectified next issue, I fervently hope.

Then...but why drag this out any longer? I had nothing but troubles this time and that is why I'm so much later than scheduled, for which I am sorry. Next issue, then, is rescheduled for mid-July to keep it from being so close after this one and I'll see you then, huh?

best,

Gregg

