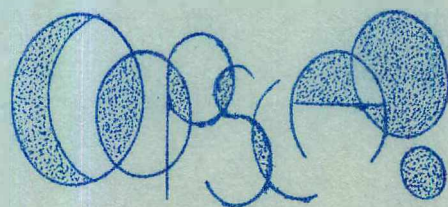


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28-29 COMBINED
 PART I



This is OOPSLA! number 28-29 combined, product of Starflame Publications. Publication schedule is officially known as 'irregular bimonthly' and reviewers found using only the 'irregular' without the 'bimonthly' are frowned upon quite ferociously. This issue is published on Masterweave paper by means of a BDC Rex Rotary using BDC blue ink. Stencils are F1160 by A. B. Dick. This typewriter is a battered L. C. Smith standard which has been in on each stencil of OOPS since the second issue. Subscription rates are: 15¢ per single copy, 2/25¢, or 4/50¢. Longer term subs are not desired but if you insist then 7/\$1. The editor's address is

-----Gregg Calkins-----
 -----1484 East 17th South-----
 -----Salt Lake City 5, Utah-----

Non-dollar-area fans may have OOPS at the same rates by sending cash to the British TAFF representative in my name. This year that worthy is: Ron Bennett, 7, Southway, Arthur's Avenue, Harrogate, Yorkshire, England. Keep him busy!

This is the contents page -- the first in OOPS in many years -- and is specifically dedicated to Bob Pavlat who tells me that I should place my name somewhere in each issue at least once. Fans who prefer knowing what the contents will be without the tiresome task of thumbing pages will also be happier now. Note, however, that no page numbers are listed; I don't believe in going to quite that much extra work. Contents are listed from top to bottom according to the order of their appearance.

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INTERIOR ARTWORK

William Rotsler

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NEXT ISSUE OUT IN DECEMBER

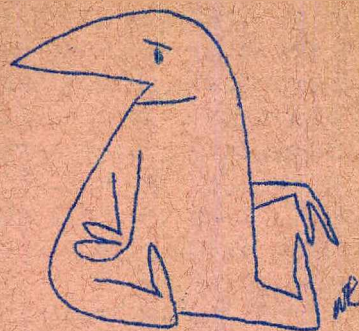
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MAILING ENVELOPE DATA

Look carefully at your address label. Regular subscribers, trades and contributors get white labels; expiring subs are pink; other colors mean do something!

THIS IS A STORY THAT HAD TO BE WRITTEN...

THE LAST MEETING?



Some fannish critics may be of the opinion that because I have written such a considerable number of stories, articles and features over the years there can be no organisation behind them...no attempt to weave the stories into any semblance of continuity. THIS IS NOT TRUE!

Sometimes when a deadline is three weeks past and inspiration doesn't spring forth as I like it to do, I get out my fanzine files (and very bulky they are, too) and flip through them trying to see if there is a particular sequence of stories of mine which requires one further episode to close the file, as it were.

Today (27th June 1959) though, I'm glad to say, a file was closed--not because I sorted through my fanzines looking for one to close but because the whole pulsating drama happened before my eyes---THIS MORNING! It gives me great pleasure to give herewith in grim detail of what I sincerely hope is the conclusion of THE SHAW-BERRY TYPER SAGA. ((For the earlier parts of this gruesome tale see HYPHEN 12 and/or the 22nd issue of OOPS for "Bob Shaw and the Typewriter" and "Aversion to Type." wgc))

To bring you up to date with what has gone before I must briefly state that Bob Shaw purchased the typer, an 1893 Olivier model (patents applied for) together with his famous rusty pedal cycle at an auction sale in Belfast in 1947 at a combined cash settlement of 6/4½d (less than \$1 at current sterling rates) plus tacks. When I became a member of IF in 1954 and said that I would like to buy a typer, Bob offered to sell me his 'old one.' I did in fact purchase it (lulled into a false sense of security because its owner was a pro) and after a lot of difficulty got it home.

It has since become ingrained into fannish lore that the Shaw-Berry typer works by a Tin Of Beans Gravity Feed--and this quite factual example of my mechanical and technical skill has, to quote from a confidential letter I received from a fannish acquaintance quite recently, gotten me the unenviable reputation of being 'something of an eccentric.'

The machine worked, however, and provided I didn't tax it too often it sometimes provided a complete page of words set out in reasonably straight lines, and once, on the 16th of December 1956, I actually typed a whole page without tearing the paper. That, of course, was too good to be true and the machine from that moment on, satisfied that its ambition in life had been fulfilled, steadily began to fall to pieces in my hand. TAB KEY buttons shot off willy-nilly in all directions, and one particular page of pure wit that I sent to a BNF came back with the terse comment that I should 'for Ghod's sake send your sheet music elsewhere.'

Finally, at the beginning of 1959, things became unbearable. The end was near. In order to try and maintain the gravity feed it became necessary to add increasing amounts of weight to the end of the wire which ran from the roller to the left and over the edge of the table and bore the tin of beans dangling below. Soon this weight became so fast that it became necessary to counterbalance the right side of the typer and so I came into contact with a physical problem that defied solution.

One day, in March of this year, I commenced what I knew in my heart to be the last

thing the machine would be called upon to do...the last page of the final chapter of my psychological text book, 'The Weaning of the Neofan,' due to be published in 1973 (my publisher says he can't manage it earlier, which I find disconcerting because he is retiring on reaching pensionable age in 1972). I put the page in on that cold and windy March morning and the round grip at the end of the roller came off in my hand. I started to type and the weight on the gravity feed wasn't just sufficient to pull the roller so I gave the wire a tug with my left hand and the wire snapped and with a buzz like the wail of a pregnant humming bird it lashed upwards and wound around my neck. I decided there and then that I had suffered enough at the hands of this infernal machine.

I stood up, and braced myself. I lifted my right leg and pushed the typer off of the end of the table. I stamped on it as it lay on the ground. Satisfied that right had finally triumphed over injustice I hobbled out of the room to search for my quill.

* * *

Bob Shaw paid a surprise visit to my house this morning. Since he'd returned from Canada at the fall of '58 he had been living and working in England. He told us this morning that he'd got a job in Belfast and would henceforth be visiting us more frequently--which was a very happy state of affairs, to be sure.

I wanted Bob to see the newly minted RETRIBUTION 13 and invited him into the lumber room at the front of the house where such things are kept. We walked in and Bob shouted a polite 'hiya' to my son Colin who was working energetically with his Engineering Outfit in the corner of the room. Colin didn't hear because he was hammering away as if his right arm was attached to a cam shaft.

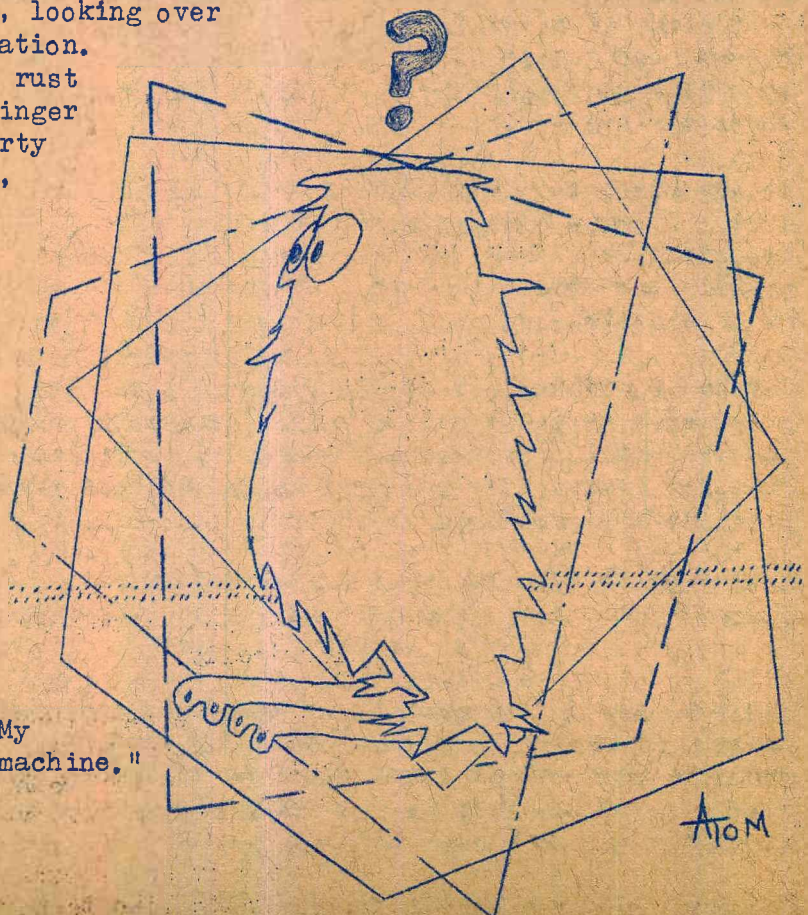
"Hiya," shouted Bob, walking over to Colin, and then...abruptly...Bob stopped. He turned to me and his face was white and full of complete and utter hopelessness. "Ghod, no," he sobbed, "not...no, not that!"

I followed the direction of his shaking forefinger and saw Colin with a hammer poised, looking over his shoulder at Bob Shaw in indignation. Behind Colin was a tangled mess of rust with here and there an odd metal finger rising from the wreckage with a dirty white 'd' or '1/4' or 'q' on the end, signifying the immortal remains of the Shaw-Berry Typer.

"Huh," Colin sniffed, and the hammer rose and fell again with remorseless fury on the heirloom.

Bob literally sobbed. He closed his eyes, sought my arm, and I led him back to the other room, eased him into a chair, and sent for a glass of water.

"I dare say I shall get over the shock in a moment," he breathed, "but it was such a horrible and I might even say primitive ritual. My first pro story was typed on that machine."



BY JOHN BERRY

The Last Meeting? III

"Yes, yes, I know, Bob," I commiserated, "but it was old..."

"I know, but somehow--" and Bob had a shining light in his eyes and he looked at me but his eyes saw nothing-- "somehow I never quite visualized it finishing its days in such a degrading fashion. I mean, to brutally batter such delicate mechanism with a bloody big hammer--it's decadent--I honestly never thought a son of yours would stoop to such a callous action--it's juvenile delinquency--it's..."

Colin came in with wide eyes and something small in his fingers. "Look what I found in the machine, Dad; it's got a picture of St George and the dragon on it."

"A sovereign," barked Bob, "inside the typer was it--good boy--very clever of you-- I'll give you half a crown for the remains."

I crawled between Bob's legs and whipped the coin out of Colin's fingers and dived behind the settee. I peeked over the top and saw Bob Shaw looking at me. I grinned casually, put the coin between my teeth, and tried to bend it. I rubbed it with the end of my tie. "It's dated 1897, Bob," I said, "must be worth E5."

Colin edged towards the door. "I thought I heard something else rattle. There may be more..." Bob strode forward and slammed the door shut before Colin could negotiate the passage.

"Tell you what, John," he said, and his voice took on a new timbre, the resonant quality of a confident public speaker, "I think it only fair that I should purchase the remains of that venerable typer off of you. If you'll allow me the privilege, I intend to mount it at the top of a marble column which I shall erect at my own expense outside the public toilets in Little Fortingale Street, where I first had the urge to purchase the typer. Of course, I shall have your name as well as my own enscribed on the column and, for posterity, people will pause and ponder and look at the..."

"How much?" I said.

"Fifteen shillings."

"Thirty."

"Twenty."

"Twenty-five."

"Twenty-two and sixpence."

"Okay."

"Hee hee," chuckled Bob, and I gave him a sheet of brown paper and he hurriedly wrapped up the mass of twisted metal and he bore it triumphantly away. I went upstairs and looked out of the window. I watched him walk up the avenue. He'd stop every yard or two and he'd shake the parcel and his shoulders would heave and his footsteps would increase in tempo. I smiled as I left the window, smiled at my good fortune in having been at the window an hour previously when I'd seen him in the distance approaching my house.

Downstairs I flipped Colin half a crown. "Good boy," I purred, "you were word perfect--it was very effective the way you hammered that typer. I wish you'd always do things I ask you so enthusiastically."

I looked at the farthing in my hand--the same shape and size and colour of an old sovereign--and I pondered. Would Bob Shaw finally admit defeat--or would I, in the future, once more be haunted by the vision of BoSh approaching with a rejuvenated typer in his hands and a confident gleam in his eyes?

((Inasmuch as certain readers have previously expressed doubts as to the veracity of earlier Berry Factual Articles, I would like to herewith state, in all honesty, that this ms was not typewritten but done in rather illegible handwriting. --wgc...))

Much has been written in recent months about a focal point of fandom. This focal point seems to resemble a woman who doesn't talk much; everyone agrees that such a thing may come into existence, although nobody claims to have seen it so far. I want to preface this fanzine review column with the statement that we are quite likely to keep on waiting for a focal point of fandom to flop into our mailboxes, because there hasn't been such a thing for slightly more than twenty years.

Quandry seems to be mentioned most frequently as the last real focal point of fandom. However, it was quite possible to be very active in FAPA without receiving Quandry and I'm quite sure that it wasn't a major publication to the earnest NFFF crowd in its glory days. Q just happens to have a fully deserved place in the memory of

many persons who long desperately for something as good these days. But I don't think there's been a real focal point for all fandom since Fantasy Magazine's last page was dissolved into its constituent pieces of type and returned to the cases. Fandom

has spread out in too many different directions in the past two decades to make it probable that any fanzine can be a focal point for more than one particular segment of fanning. There are almost insuperable difficulties involved in producing a fanzine that would focus the attention of the fandom fans, the sercon element, the neophytes to the field, the palsied old inhabitants of FAPA, the collectors, and the strange people who exist all year long despite their habit of becoming evident only at conventions. Fantasy Magazine was the leading fanzine just before the formation of FAPA, in the years when every fan had a good chance to get a complete collection of all the prozines, when conventions were an institution that was just coming into existence, at a time when there were only a few years' difference in fan experience between the oldtimers and the newcomers. Fandom has changed since then. Fantasy Magazine today would be worshipped by perhaps one-third of all fans, respected at a distance by another third, and scorned by the rest.

Still, anyone can dream. I'd like to concentrate this installment of the column on material from recent fanzines that would be worthy of a hypothetical focal point for fandom. The dream would turn into a nightmare if I attempted to publish such a focal point, because it would need to possess a gargantuan size to provide space for material that all elements of fandom could enjoy. And yet, scattered through the fanzines of recent months have been plenty of items that this assumed focal point could have printed, with pretty good certainty of delighting a large proportion of its readers.

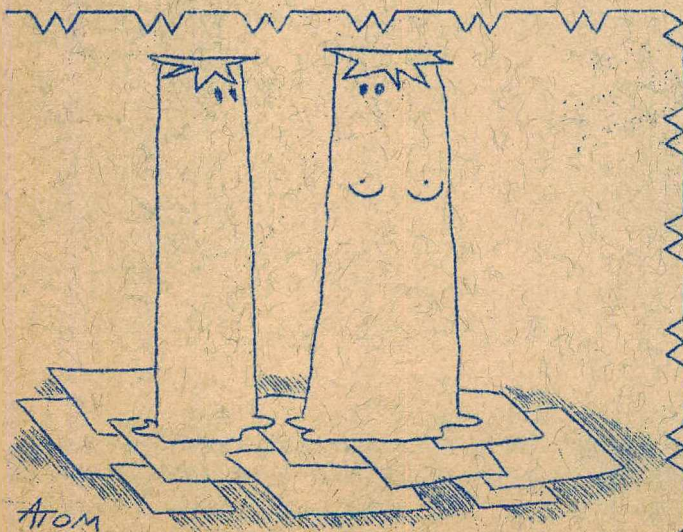


OPERE < CITATO

HARRY WARNER, JR

Let's start, for instance, with the ninth issue of Innuendo (Terry Carr, 70 Liberty St. #5, San Francisco 10, Calif). This has been frequently mentioned as that focal point, with its infrequent appearance as its only drawback. The assumption is wrong; it no more represents today's total fandom than "The Immortal Storm" tells the total story of fandom up to the early 1940s. Like the Moskowitz book, it emphasizes a small segment of fandom in its stable of writers and letter-writing readers, and it is the epitome of a fanzine fanzine. But it is fortunate to possess some of the most literate and entertaining fans today in its own particular crowd, and our imaginary focal point fanzine would definitely require a convention account as well done as is the Ron Bennett article in this issue. This is the Bennett installment that tells of the convention itself. A small proportion of it is wasted as mere repetition of events that we have read about to repletion elsewhere. But most of it casts new light on certain things that occurred in Los Angeles last September. It is unfortunate that its publication waited until so many convention accounts by lesser writers had overfamiliarized fandom with the basic happenings. It is quite necessary for some better method of convention reporting to be adopted by the next TAFF delegate to permit fandom to read a more consecutive and prompter account of the trip. The convention account itself should go into print in one installment as soon as possible after the event; the tales derived to and from the convention could be parceled out when and where the author and editors pleased, since they are not as likely to be scooped by other chroniclers.

Quite possibly more persons consider Postwarp as a potential focal point than the number who claim that status for Innuendo. Postwarp is similar, in its devotion to a certain group of fans and the passionate loyalty that they swear to it in return. I don't have much use for the NFFF, but like the famous Victorian lady who announced that she accepted the universe, I see no reason why I should attempt to deny the existence of this organization or its status as a portion of fandom. I insist on the right to grit my teeth over some of the things that the NFFF does. But the best fan publication might have found space for one matter that comes up in the Jan-Feb issue of this publication (Alan J. Lewis, 129 Jewett-Holmwood Rd, East Aurora, NY). It is the proposal to spread fandom behind the Iron Curtain. James MacLean tells how he has been in contact with the Department of State. The State Department offered to help fandom, a dubious prop for fandom in view of the State Department's reputation in recent decades; but it is quite likely that the improbably combination of the NFFF and State Department is the only way that we can hope to contact any fans that may exist in Russia. If we dig up somewhere the addresses of fans in Russia and write to them directly they'll probably become Siberian fans for inability to explain the mysterious letters coming from Capitalists. Remember "Address Unknown"? And the State Department won't help unless it can work through a 'nationally recognized organization in the field of science fiction,' and there isn't any such group that fits the definition and has no inherent limitations of activities except the NFFF.



When you say you don't love me
anymore does that mean you won't
even slipsheet for me?

The 22nd issue of Orion is the second since it acquired new editorship and resumed publication. (Ella A. Parker, 151 Canterbury Rd, West Kilburn, London NW6, England) This too contains at least one item that would need inclusion in our assumed focal point publication, simply because this item has no real connection with fandom or fantasy, demonstrating through this nature the fact that many fans are interested in completely mundane material if

written by a fan. John Berry's "Dog Ends" is the latest in a series of fictional pieces about his vocation as a policeman. It is impossible to determine if these items are complete romps of the imagination or actually are loosely based on actual occurrences. Whatever the degree of extrapolation, Berry pieces like this one are almost unique in fanzines for the simple reason that they are stories, not inflated incidents. Despite the brevity, there is a plot which twists and turns in skillful fashion, the characterization is vivid, the adventure comes to a definite climax, and the surprise ending is logical, not the most improbable conclusion that could be imagined but a final situation that evolves logically out of the preceding happenings.

The existence of a focal point would simplify the reviewer's task in certain ways. For instance, I wouldn't be uncertain whether some items that are learned enough for inclusion in a focal point were meant for review. The shining example this time is the newly published Eney index to all the SAPS mailings from October 1950 through December 1955. It gives title, publisher, numeration, size, and pagination for more than 500 magazines that appeared in SAPS during that period, and represents the most important piece of research that has come out of fandom so far in 1959. The address is 417 Ft Hunt Rd, Alexandria, Virginia, but don't tell Dick that I sent you because I'm not at all certain about the general availability of this. If you get it you will be immediately confused by one initial blooper: the 13th SAPS mailing was dated October 1950, not October 1955.

Another fanzine that has been receiving focal point attention is Void. (Ted White, 2708 North Charles St, Baltimore 18, Md, but he's probably in New York by now) The collaboration between Ted and Greg Benford has made it difficult to connect this publication with the old Void for the format is radically different; but the results are gratifying, including several items which have focal point generality of interest. I am thinking particularly of the important pioneering work that Void has been doing in the form of lengthy, thorough critical articles which devote several pages to a single issue of one fanzine or prozine. The 18th issue contains Ted's five pages of criticism of Galaxy. It discusses things in a manner that nobody could hope to manage in the traditional manner of five-publications-per-page-of-review. In fact, Void in general might come remarkably close to forming that focal point if every three issues were bound into one magazine. Appearing monthly, it manages to produce every quarter material that should interest almost anyone in fandom; but any given monthly issue is apt to be restricted to one or two specific fields of fannish endeavor, which will then be ignored for the next few months.

Still another extreme of fannish endeavor can be found in Psi-Phi #3 (Bob Lichtman, 6137 S Croft Ave, Los Angeles 56, Calif) A truly representative focal point would need to include something like "Supersquirrel," the Bjo comic strip, simply because it typifies the extremely esoteric fanzine material which can be understood only by persons who are close to one particular fannish clique. Nobody could decently claim that there has ever been a better comic strip installment in a fanzine. The draftsmanship is professional in quality, within the limits of the duplication medium, there's an infectious humor about the whole proceeding, and it can be enjoyed either in its own right or for its parodistic qualities. But the amount of pleasure it gives will depend to some extent on how well the reader comprehends the Californians and their characteristics as they are interpreted here. Fortunately, even a person who had never heard of fandom might go off into hysterics at the tattoo on the arm of the giant.

The impossibility of finding a focal point fanzine that would delight everyone is demonstrated by Volume 2, #2, of Amra (Box 682, Stanford, California). The potential editor of this hypothetical focal point would hardly accept material about Robert Howard's stories because this type of fantasy has almost vanished from magazine form, rarely appears in books, and even seems to have lost most of its supporters. But improbably enough, here's an entire fanzine, beautifully published by some apparent lithographing process, which is devoted entirely to Howard-type swashbuckle adventure.

It contains such esoterica as discussion on why the old fantasy adventure story is no longer popular; matching up of the present political divisions of North America and Europe with the kingdoms of Hyboria; and even an advertisement from an outfit which hasn't been mentioned in the fanish press for long, long months: Arkham House.

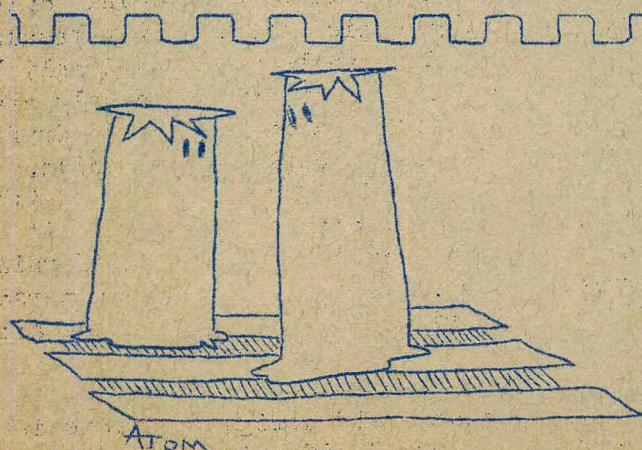
There are other points of difficulty involved in a choice of material for a focal point fanzine. What would you do, for instance, about the people who have found sub-focal points of their own and are perfectly happy to remain in these, and to heck with the rest of fandom? Two publications whose contents deal largely with a restricted geographical area have found favor as actual general focal points. They are Aporrheta, which largely tells of the happenings and thoughts in the London area, and Cry of the Nameless, which draws writing talent from all over but is Seattlized throughout in a magical way that seems to create its own private world. I have not seen the first 125 issues of Cry, but the last few (Box 92, 920 Third Avenue, Seattle 4, Washington) remind me strongly of Grue in its glory days. There is the same fine Gestetnering, a similar omnipresence of the editors in order to squeeze an unlikely quantity of fillers and special notices into the smallest crannies, and an atmosphere of bonhomie. Like Void, Cry is sure to contain something of interest to even the most specialized type of fan in every second or third issue. On the other hand, Aporrheta (Inchmery, 236 Queens Road, New Cross, London SE 14, England) is now undergoing a transition period that makes it impossible to say how it will evolve; recent issues have consisted mainly of the Inchmery Fan Diary, a day-by-day account of a fan's mail, visitors and experiences which any fan could have created but nobody thought of until H. P. Sanderson invented the new stream-of-fan-consciousness form.

Another publication that has been evolving too rapidly to determine how its contents would fit into a focal point is Retribution. The last word received from Berry is that Ret will continue regularly, after a sturm und drang period that birthed the most alarming rumors. Presumably we won't see too much more of it until after the Detention, and I don't know if it will be mostly GDA or general in nature. The 13th issue, latest to float across the Atlantic, contains the first fanzine crossword puzzle in many years and probably the first in history devoted to fandom rather than prodom. Otherwise the issue is mainly devoted to the goon saga. (John Berry, 31 Campbell Park Avenue, Belmont, Belfast, Northern Ireland)

At this point it will be necessary to scrap the focal point theme because there isn't room for extended comments on more than about half of the other fanzines that arrived in Hagerstown from mid-March to early July. To cover with economy of words as many of them as possible:

There hasn't been a first-rate fanzine from a brand new fan during the spring and

early summer. But two hibernating fans have awoken. Jan Sadler Penny shows a remarkable maturity and originality in Slander, revived after a lapse of a couple of years; it's really an ayjay-type fanzine masquerading as a general fanzine, with a very few fine extras like Larry Viereck's "The Adventures of Alfie." I am less thoroughly happy about the return of Leslie Norris. He has managed to make his mimeography almost as clumsy as his hectography was years ago when he was a young fan, and at least one letter published in the first issue of Fantoccini since his reactivation was obviously intended as a personal bit of gossip, not a communication for the public prints. (Jan Sadler Penny, 51-B McAlister Place,



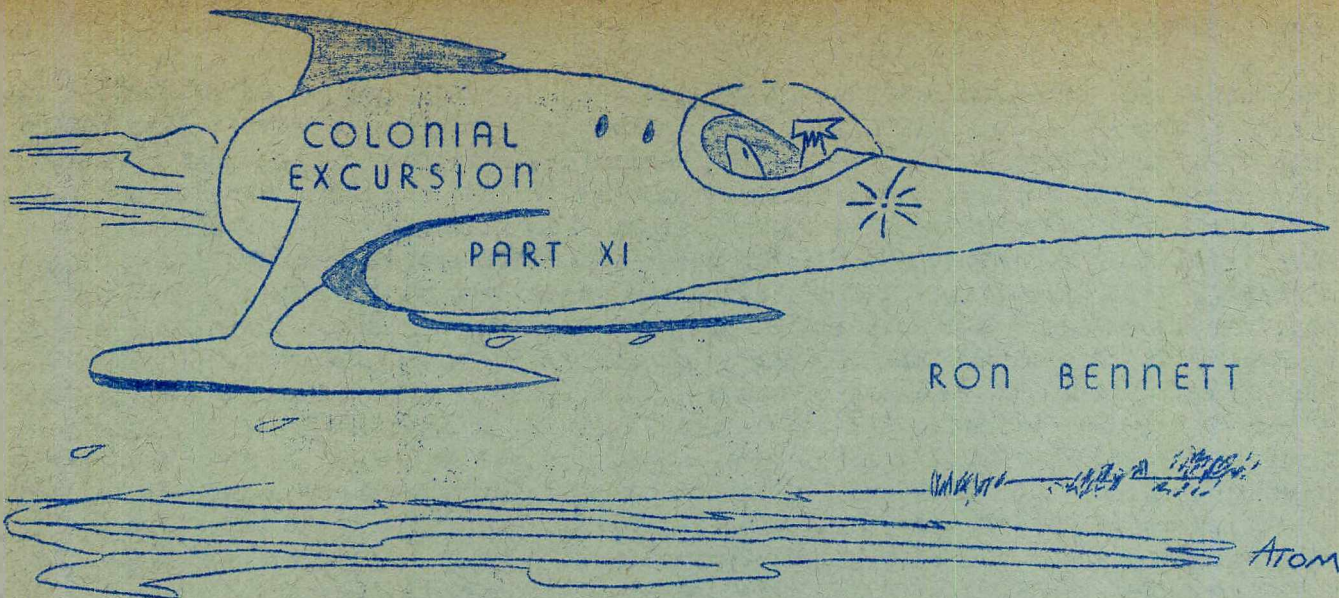
I understand Jules Verne has applied for membership in 1st Fandom.

New Orleans 18, La; Leslie Norris, 7263 Farmdale, North Hollywood, California)

Profanity has all sorts of points in its favor: luxury reproduction, really distinctive illustrations, and literate poetry, together with the first piece of music that has appeared in fanzine form for several years. This is a setting of a Heinlein poem. (Bruce Pelz, 4010 Leona St, Tampa 9, Fla) Even fatter than Profanity is the 11th issue of A Bas; I give it only passing mention because it's been out so long by now. If "As Others See Us" by Walt Willis doesn't lead off the next anthology of contemporary fan writing, whoever does the anthologizing is unable to recognize important fannish prose. Another excellent and extensive convention and trip account by the editor also deserves mention. (Boyd Raeburn, 9 Glenvalley Dr, Toronto 15, Ontario) Borderline between ayjay and general fanzine in nature is Rock, basically intended for SAPS but apparently quite well circulated beyond the pale. There's an air of hectic gaiety about the entire proceedings that might repel some fans, but I like it, and there's a pretty good story on the doppelganger theme. (Es Adams, 433 Locust Ave, SE, Huntsville, Ala) Walt Cole, who had not distinguished himself for bravery in the past, has published in the second issue of The Cole Tax a project before which the strongest fans might quail: a complete index to the stories of Bob Silverberg in prozines, including collaborations and pseudonym jobs. There's quite a bit of other Silverbergiana in the issue, including a brief story; the entire thing is handled very well, recognizing the ways in which Bob excels most prolific prozine writers without making false claims for the literary merits of his prozine stories. (W. R. Cole, 307 Newkirk Ave, Brooklyn 30, NY) Two more issues of Disjecta Membra have appeared since this column's last installment. Ted Pauls still can't settle on a policy, vacillating unpredictably between a letterzine and a general fanzine, but the improvement in his output that I've mentioned before is continuing and it will be interesting to see what emerges after the Whites are no longer in personal contact with him. (Ted Pauls, 1448 Meridene Dr, Baltimore 12, Maryland)

For the choicest page of humor of recent months I'd nominate a little item in Urp (T/Sgt Ellis T. Mills, PO Box 244, Carswell AFB, Texas) This is the announcement of Fire Invention Year, a celebration of the manner in which fire keeps the economy upright through slum clearance accomplishments, job-provision for insurance men, and destruction of bothersome women like Joan of Arc. The proclamation is a deadpan parody of the announcements made by this or that cause about its priceless contribution to American life, and more logical than most of them. The whole magazine is excellent but again I'm not sure how many copies are available to people who aren't in SAPS and OMPA. Another bit of brief amusement is Terry Carr's "The Chaser" in the second issue of Quixotic. I don't think this is quite as successful a parody as most Carl Brandon items because Terry parallels falling out of love with gaffiating from fandom, and most people find the latter absurdly simple to accomplish. But it's still a neat translation of the John Collier yarn into fannish. (Don Durward, 6033 Garth Ave, Los Angeles 56, Calif) Shangri-L'Affaires spreads its humor over entire issues instead of concentrating it in one particularly devastating item. But it continues to confound everyone by appearing regularly; the Gestetner is practically under full control by now and life in Los Angeles is beginning to take on the idyllic aspects of fanning in Belfast under the cumulative impact of this magazine's pleasant contents. (2548 West 12th St, Los Angeles 6, Calif) Of course, Hyphen is the past master at this sort of thing. The 22nd issue is thin but that's the only manner in which it disappoints. I found some difficulty in forcing myself to read the prose; it was too pleasant just to sit there and worship the wonderful Atom illustrations. (Walt is still at 170 Upper Newtownards Rd, Belfast, Northern Ireland)

There's just room enough to say that two newszines are reaching me with fair consistency. Fanac continues to be the reliable source of the kind of news in which most of us are interested, and scored the sensation of the season in late June by distributing a single-sheeter from Dean Grennell, his first publishing in much too long. (See Innuendo for address) Fanview got off to a shaky start when its editors assumed too starched an attitude in the first issue; it's more relaxed in its fourth issue. (Johnny Bowles, 802 South 33rd St, Louisville 11, Ky) -- Harry Warner, Jr



In Practice Fred Prophet drove through the Mojave Desert while the rest of us slept. I woke up about seven in the morning to find that we were entering what seemed to be a sizeable town. It turned out to be Los Angeles. We parked the car and had a look round for breakfast. Bill Donaho did his party trick of clearing everyone's breakfast. Around nine we staggered into the Alexandria Hotel, somewhat haggard, stub-bearded and very tired. The others left me to book in and then went off to their rooms. I saw Nick and Noreen Falasca talking to a tall and quietly smiling beanpole, a kind of even more youthful Wally Weber, and went over to join them. The beanpole turned out to be Terry Carr, whom I thanked for all his support in the TAFF campaign. He told me that the beercan tower to the moon project at Berkeley was hoping for a boost that weekend, and that the other Berkeley-ites would be attending the convention. I told him I was looking forward to meeting Carl Brandon and Noreen looked a little sad. "Tell him, Terry," she said. And so I learned that Carl didn't exist. Having already experienced the loss of Joan Carr, with whom I was in direct correspondence, this news didn't hurt me nearly so much, but I had to confess that it was quite a hoax. Nick stopped beating his head on the nearest stair rail and we went into the coffee shop for a second breakfast.

Back in the hotel lobby I found Ruth Kyle talking to a second beanpole, this one a little older than the rest. I stuck out a hand and said: "Mr Bloch...?" Bob shook hands and said: "Ghod...it speaks English," and introduced me to a non-fannish business associate of his and we sat around while the business associate told us some smutty jokes, all of which were corny. It amazed me that Bob could show such polite enthusiasm at them, laughing at them all and looking as though he'd come to Los Angeles especially to hear them.

It dawned on me that Fred, Bill and Jim Broderick had gone off to bed, which left me in a little of a fix. My cases were in their car, which meant that I couldn't shave. Anyway, I didn't have a room and had to stick around in the lobby hoping to catch them when they finally did appear. Some young woman kept fluttering around us and was introduced as Miriam Dyches, of whom I'd heard before through FANAC and letters from Alex Bratmon. When this group broke up I took her for a cup of coffee. Quite a girl. Apart from telling me that her name isn't really Miriam Dyches it appears that she's got a fixation about the old joke, the cult of the BNF, for Miriam is convinced that she's a BNF and that if she isn't she soon will be. It needed only an odd word to convince me that she's a Russian princess when Walt Leibscher came up and joined us. Belle Dietz offered me the loan of her and Frank's room if I wanted to sleep but I thought about missing the Detroit boys if they should come downstairs.

Out in the lobby once again two stalwarts of the London convention, Wally Weber and Will Jenkins, pulled my leg about English currency. I suggested a quiet game of brag but Will sneaked off leaving me to Boyd Raeburn who wanted to know all about the trip across country. A kindly little lady came up and shook hands, asking how I

The Mark of McCain IV

Here I had another problem...nothing to go onto, a very awkward position, and a moderate height...but luckily there were other lockers on the other side and, although they were a bit further away, I managed to reach them also, then rolled over into a position from which I could safely drop to the floor.

I'd accumulated a nice layer of dust from the locker tops on my clothes, my hand was bleeding all over the place and had to be bandaged, after which I had to mop up the trail of blood, and I paid for a replacement for the transom glass from my own pocket. But, despite my immature refusal to accept the facts of my imprisonment, I slept in a nice soft hotel bed that night.

I had somewhat of a similar experience once when I left my keys in my coat on leaving another office, locking myself out and in a strange town where I knew no one. That was even more clearcut as I had no tools to work with save the contents of my pockets and that consisted of one handkerchief. And the solution, which took me through two locked doors, took less than five minutes. However it was a less serious situation than the other in that when you are locked out it is always possible to call a locksmith if absolutely necessary.

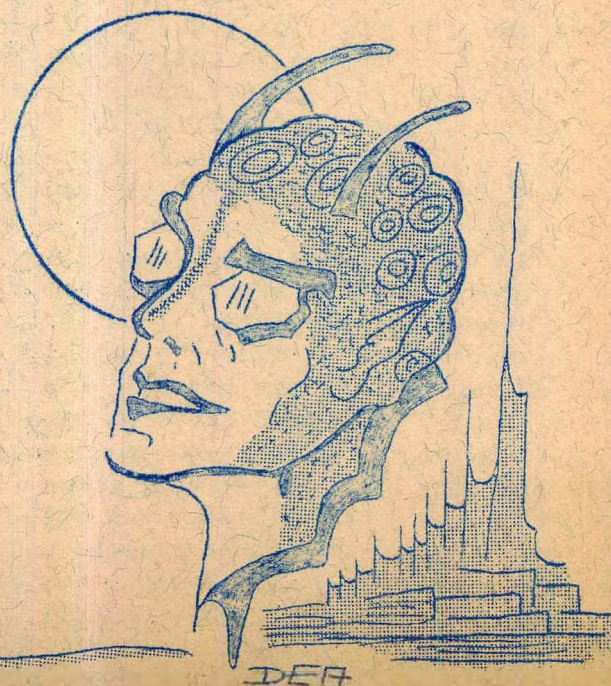
Don't get the idea that I regard challenges as always consisting of being locked into or out of somewhere. It is just that they are a bit more clearcut under such circumstances and the possibilities can be scrutinized more easily. But the same philosophy can be applied to much more intangible problems such as an unsatisfactory job, unpleasant living condition, or almost anything which poses a problem.

I honestly believe that there is almost no problem which does not have some fairly simple and practical solution if only sufficient stimulus is applied to make an individual use the imagination to think it up. Occasionally the solution cannot be used because someone in authority, either through lack of imagination or through some other motive, considers the solution impractical or undesirable and vetoes its use. This probably is particularly true in the case of politicians and government officials who have so many people to answer to that they are seldom allowed to pursue any clear-cut solution (although I think there are many answers to most of our most insoluble problems...had one the freedom to actually put them into effect). But even in the case of a veto all is not always lost. Frequently it is possible to figure your vetoing individual into the problem as an extra factor and, if he has not ruled out too many possibilities, it may be possible to work out a solution which not only solves the problem but also contains something extra which will bypass him or overcome his objections.

Believing, as I do, in the basic solvability of almost all problems I have little patience with any protagonist (I refuse to call him a hero) who refuses to attempt to take his environment into his own hands and do something constructive about his own problems. That is one reason I like a story like "Master of Life and Death" and why I've become increasingly bored with the typical British science fiction story, typical British movie, and, yes, typical British foreign policy maneuver.

And I remain quite fond of the British populace and of British fans, but I do wish they'd quit bragging so smugly over what is probably their greatest weakness.

-- Vernon L. McCain

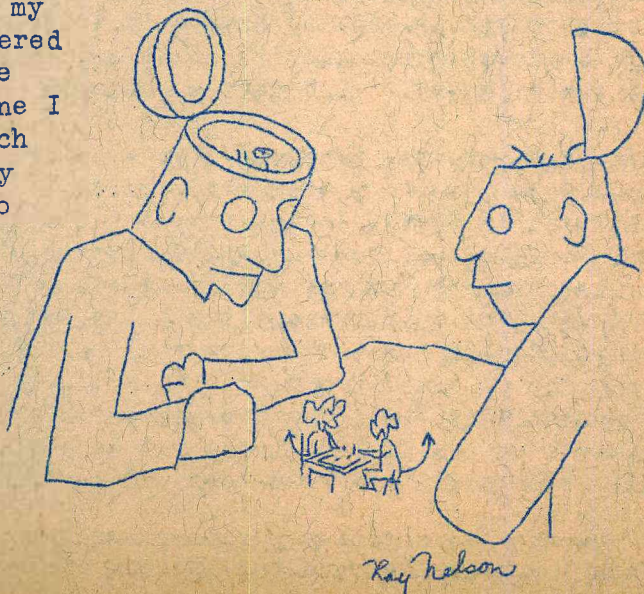


Washington office. There is a trick lock on the door to a storage room in the rear of that office which has repeatedly trapped the unwary. Various prisoners have devised various solutions to their dilemma but in only two cases was the problem really clear-cut. The first happened several weeks before I first came there. A man hired to wash the windows who had been given a key to the office came down after midnight, was accidentally locked into the back room, and found himself trapped with no one to help him. He accepted the situation and waited (presumably with patience) until seven a.m. when the first employee arrived and freed him. This is a typical demonstration of what Sanderson would have us believe is 'maturity'...a calm acceptance of that which cannot be altered and a firm refusal to hunger for some clever 'magic' solution which would make everything come out right.

My first week in the office I came down one night, also after midnight, and also wandered into the back room with the same results. I might explain that the room opened through another locked door (which could be opened from the inside) into a honeycomb of passages running through the building and leading to entrances to various offices. All of these were also locked and the stores empty of anyone who could have been prevailed upon for succor. One hallway led to an outside door but it was locked and had no key. It opened onto a deserted sidestreet and I would probably have had to wait half the night for a passerby. There was a transom I could have called through but it would have been useless as an exit, being much too small and screened over. Even if I had gotten help I'd locked the outside entrance to my office, so no one could have gotten in to release me. There was also a transom over the locked door to the main office, but it latched from the other side and could not be opened from my side. There were no chairs or ladders available although there was one table and a variety of tall lockers, all of them much too flimsy to support the body of an adult. I am no locksmith and, anyway, the only tool I had available was a hammer. There were some dustcloths around, also, and various items of clothing. I'll admit the prospect for escape looked none too bright but I am an immature type and I flatly refused to consider staying in that stuffy little room all night, missing my rest, as I had to work next morning. Early in my teens I'd concluded that it is practically impossible to find a problem without some sort of solution if you are only willing to devise it and put it into practice.

It took a bit of figuring but within twenty minutes my immature reactions had freed me.

My solution? I pushed the table over against the locked door, stood on it, took the hammer, wrapped it round with the dust cloths (as a matter of fact I don't think it was a hammer at all but a pair of heavy pliers...some tool, anyway) and deliberately broke the transom. You'd be surprised how strong is the conditioning against such an action. I found a definite pause between the time my brain ordered my hand to break an undamaged transom and the time when my muscles responded. Then I removed the shattered shards, cutting a deep gash in my hand in the process. This left a hole to the outside, one I could get through but too high for me to reach from the table. So I moved the table over by the lockers, used it as a place from which to hoist myself up onto them. I think I caved in the tops somewhat but by stretching myself at length over the three of them (they usually are lined up three together) I distributed my weight between three of them and they held. They were close enough to the transom that I was able to bridge the gap between the lockers and the transom with my body and then, in an eel-like motion, work myself horizontally through it.



government, unless British fandom is far more influential than I'd suspected, since I'd found this view crystallized and typified most obviously in the reaction of the bulk of British fandom.

One thing I think I should make clear: I am a longtime Anglophile. It's true that I abandoned my tentative daydream of someday moving to the British Isles quite a few years ago, but my general attitude towards the nation has remained one of unusual warmth and personal identification. If my enthusiasm has dulled and my admiration turned a bit sour in the past few years it doesn't alter the fact that my orientation is still basically pro-British. While there are things I dislike about the British character, I am also pro-American and despise much that is typical of the average American. However, while lack of dynamism and a dedication to clinging to the status quo may at times be annoying, especially when the British try to force other nationalities into the same mold, it is part of the warp and woof of British character and I have no burning desire to change it. It is a characteristic one can actually regard with a certain affection, but the viewer should be free to not only recognize that it exists but also discuss it.

Certainly Sandy Sanderson's reactions prove my point nicely. Sanderson twists my discussion of the advantages of action, as a philosophy, over those of reaction (and I'm using the term in its literal, not political, sense) into admiration for God-hero protagonists. It is true that I praised a novel about which I commented that "the hero played God" but please note that the hero was merely 'playing' at the role; no supernatural powers were involved and he could not be interpreted as a God-figure himself, either in the sense of the paranoiac protagonists in the old L. Ron Hubbard tales (a persecuted hero who was actually greater than other men, capable of super-human feats and incapable of wrong decisions) or in the more commonly referred to van Vogt style. I suppose you might say the van Vogt heroes were more of a maniac-depressive pattern, but (while Sanderson's charge that they used 'magic' may be valid) they never were really God-figures. They were merely super-men...men with the normal human frailties but endowed with certain abnormal powers not given to everyone but a bit more useful than the ability to wiggle your ears or twist your thumb out of joint.

Then Sanderson makes the statement that as the reader matures (for which we can presumably substitute "as Sanderson grows older") he outgrows the interest in such plot structure and prefers a more 'mature' approach which he presumably feels describes the British tradition. Apparently Sanderson thinks sitting still and allowing events to happen to you, without making any real effort to alter them to a more pleasing pattern, quietly moaning all the while, is the recipe for maturity. If so, it would seem he has confused maturity with senescence. This is the typical pattern of your feeble octogenarian, waiting for the inevitable end, not of your healthy individual still in his prime. Of course in a sense senescence is maturity and the comparative youth of fifty or sixty is still immature in that he hasn't completed a cycle, just as the ripe fruit is immature compared to the rotten fruit.

But certainly the philosophy of allowing events to happen to you without attempting to change them is a singularly futile one and one which this writer finds repellent although it obviously has a powerful attraction for many. The general justification for refusing positive action is that man is a pawn of fate, a unit so tiny and insignificant as to have no effect on his environment. But here, I feel, there is confusion with the impracticability of any one person, say, attempting to abolish poverty single-handed, with the very real possibilities of that same individual affecting the items he personally contacts in his daily life and which are his responsibility. Comparatively few of us are placed in a position to alter the economic or political history of the world but each of us has control over his environment to an extent. This brings it to a very personal level.

I saw the two opposite philosophies demonstrated on such a level several years ago. When I was on the road for Western Union I frequently would fill in at Olympia, our

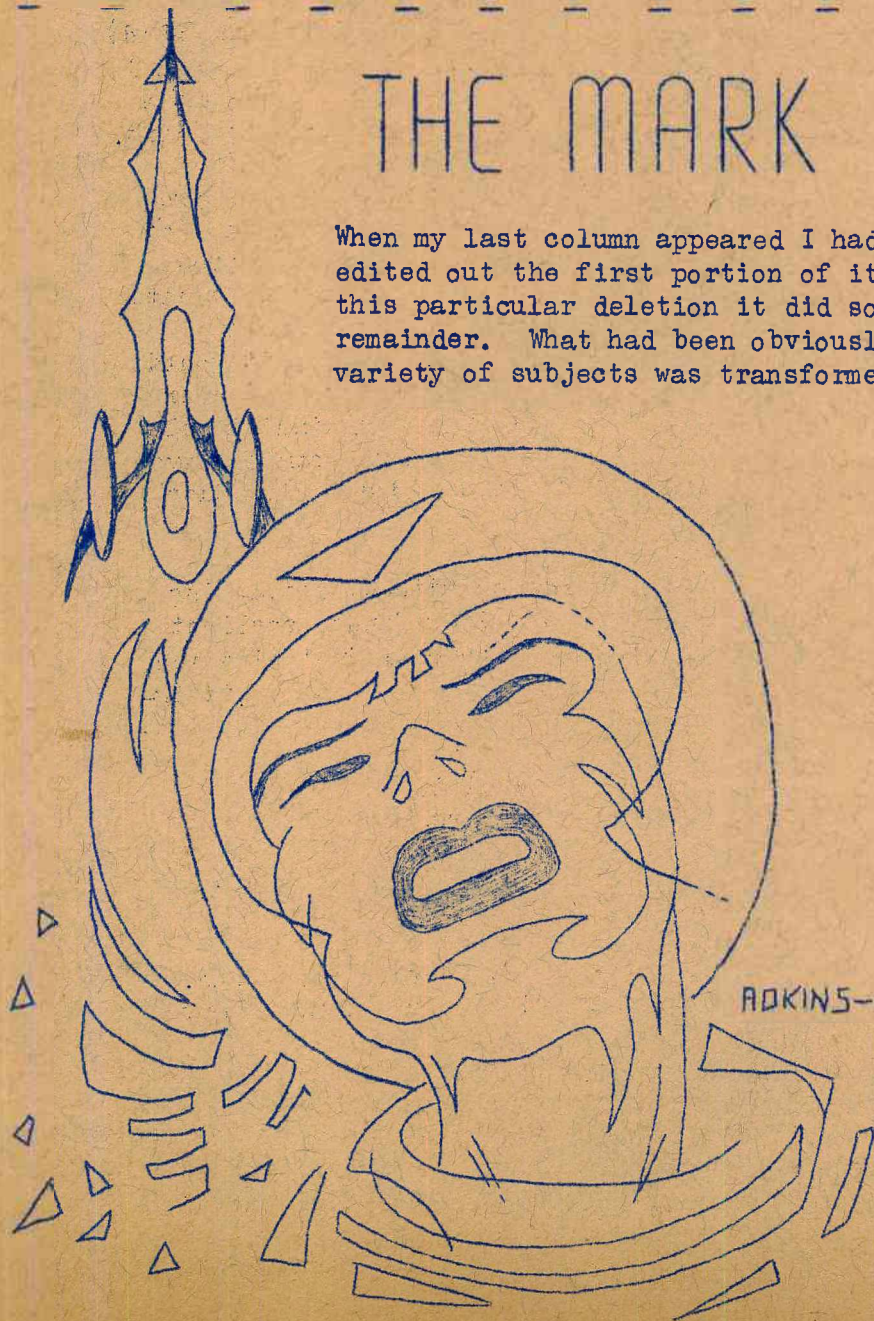
On the 10th day of June, 1958, fandom lost one of its finest writers when Vernon L. McCain died of peritonitis following an appendectomy. A longtime personal friend, Vernon had been writing for OOPSLA! since its second issue and since the eleventh issue had been writing a regular and very popular column, THE MARK OF mcCAIN. Seven installments had been published when Vernon died, the last appearing in issue number twenty-three, and until recently it appeared as though the seventh would be the last; however, this was not to be the case. Miss Lillian Cartas, Vernon's fiancée, was a non-fan but she did her best to notify Vernon's correspondents of his death and take care of as many final fannish affairs as she could with her limited knowledge of fandom. The eighth and final installment of his OOPS column was among his effects but was untitled and as she had no way of knowing for whom it was intended she mailed it to Vernon's best friend and correspondent, Bill Morse, who immediately recognized it for what it was and forwarded it on to me. Here, then, at long last, is that final piece, presented in memory of a good friend and outstanding writer. Many of Vernon's columns were controversial and in that respect this one is no different. Please feel free to comment upon it and discuss it as you would if Vernon were still alive. Intelligent controversy desires rebuttal and I know that Vernon would have been as sorry as I will be if the silly superstition of "speaking no ill of the dead" deprives his final column of the comment it so richly deserves. -- Gregg Calkins

THE MARK OF mcCAIN

When my last column appeared I had some misgivings. Calkins had edited out the first portion of it and while I felt no qualms at this particular deletion it did somewhat upset the balance of the remainder. What had been obviously a column rambling through a variety of subjects was transformed, superficially, into an article about Bob Silverberg, Boy ProAuthor.

Unfortunately, near the end of the column I wandered into a discussion of British character, a subject which clearly did not belong in such an article. So far as I know, no one has complained of the juxtaposition, as I rather anticipated.

However, it did provoke some responses of another sort, which surprises me not at all. One person wondered if I was not confusing the British populace with the British government. I don't know what led to such an idea as I attempted to make clear that the conclusions stemmed from a variety of sources which could be expected to accurately reflect the mood of the nation as a whole. Certainly I wasn't relying on the views of the



The LASFS held their business meeting and a local fan showed some colour slides of science fiction art and table top moonscapes. I found myself sitting on the floor next to George Metzger, who I recognised from photographs. We slipped out into another room and had a word or two about Alan Dodd. George introduced me to a fair and young femmefan. Surprise, surprise! This turned out to be Sylvia Dees, editress of FLAFAN. She looked much like the pin up photo she'd sent me except that her complexion was probably fairer. I had a little difficulty understanding her accent as she kept slurring her words. I wasn't at all sure whether this was local dialect or merely teenage awkwardness; it turned out to be a combination of both.

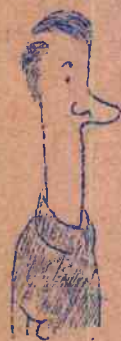
Ron Ellik and Sylvia asked me whether I ever drank tea and I said I'd make some. Sylvia seemed to think that tea prepared in the English manner would be quite something so I raided Forry's kitchen but couldn't find any tea. I made do with instant coffee. Gem Carr came along to help me but neither of us could find any sugar. I decided to go and ask Forry. I found him in a corner listening to someone who was talking enthusiastically. Forry introduced me to Ray Bradbury. I shook hands and said something appropriate to the look on my face. I suppose if it hadn't been for Ray's stories I would never have become interested in sf and, logically, wouldn't have been there in Los Angeles either. Ray told me he liked London and that he was hoping to go over to England in 1959.



I staggered back to the kitchen and drank my coffee. Bob Pavlat popped up from nowhere to tell me that there was present half of the FAPA membership roster. "There's the Berkeley boys," he said, "Ted, myself, you, Silverberg, Burbee..." "Burbee?" I echoed, "I didn't know he was here." "Haven't you met him?" asked Bob. "Come with me." He led me out into the yard in front of the garage. A pair of well built and stocky men were standing before someone who was neither stocky nor well built and who had a very closely cropped hair style. Bob introduced me to Gus Wilmore and Lee Jacobs and then said: "Burb, have you met Ron Bennett?" Burbee shook hands and asked Bob: "Is he in FAPA?" "Sure he is," Bob answered, to which Burb pulled out a bottle and said: "Welcome to the club. Have a drink." I did, too.

Bill Donaho came up and was introduced to Burbee as "one of your biggest admirers." We stood around chatting about the Motorcade. Sylvia came up and accused me of being a fake-Englishman as I hadn't drunk any tea. I showed her the Ackerman collection and we found Bradbury wandering around inside the maze looking at some of the pulps.

I found Fred Prophet and Jim Broderick in the crowd. They told me they'd put my cases in their room and presented me with a duplicate key. Some local femme fan came up and told me she was from the local club and wasn't I from out of town? I said that I was and she told me what a marvellous club the LASFS was.



I went back inside the kitchen and found Bob Silverberg talking plots with Doc Evans and E. E. Smith. A jovial, balding man came into the group and was introduced as Tony Boucher. He asked me about my trip and asked Bob about Randy Garrett, who it appeared had gone off into the wilderness to study religion. Eventually Bob Pavlat suggested going off for a drink but, although

I had developed a thirst, Wally Weber was going back to the hotel and was looking for anyone interested in sharing the ride with him. I figured I'd prefer the sleep to the drink and so after a last look round, saying goodnight to everyone--I heard later there were a hundred and fifty present--I left with Wally. I went along to the Detroit rooms and, using the key Jim Broderick had given me, picked up my cases. I took these upstairs and went to bed. I'd no sooner closed my eyes than the telephone rang. It was Jim Caughran, looking for a place to sleep. I told him to come on up. Just a Trufan, me, always willing to help a fan in need. Especially when they're willing to sublet.

Colonial Excursion II

liked being Alan Dodd. I immediately recognised G. M. Carr and passed on Cecil's regards to Mr Carr. Len Moffatt came up and asked whether I'd seen either Rick Sneary or his wife, Anna, who was the convention Chairwoman. At that moment Anna herself appeared and after a quick word with the reception desk clerk and the hotel manager in his office, fixed me up with a room. For the record it was 839. I got a word in with Rick Sneary in the N3F's showroom and he introduced me to Anne Chamberlain, one of the N3F officials. I wandered down into the lobby, which looked comfortable enough, but I now had a room so I went upstairs to bed for two hours. I woke up at six and took a quick bath, having trouble with the complicated faucet system. Boiling hot water kept streaming out of the shower every time I tried to turn it off.



I went downstairs to find George Raybin and Max and Elaine Phillips all ready to go over to Forry Ackerman's home. I'd heard that Forry was hoping to throw a party (as well as hold the usual Thursday LASFS meeting) that evening and I'd looked forward to going. However, I still hadn't found my luggage which was still, presumably, in the hands of the Detroit boys. For all I knew they were sleeping and wouldn't care to be disturbed. Will Jenkins said something about seeing Fred Prophet leaving with a case under his arm. "He was looking for a pawn shop," said Will, seriously.

Max dragged me into a car, which turned out to be Wally Weber's though Wally didn't drive. There were three femme fans in the front seat and eight crowded men in the back. Frank Dietz and George kept singing the British National Anthem so that I kept standing up and banging my head on the roof of the car each time. I was glad when we finally pulled up outside Forry's.

The place was already rather crowded when we arrived and as the evening progressed it got more and more crowded. The Berkeley boys were there in force. Peter Graham seemed rather shy but to balance this there was a very lively Ron Ellik, who told me his name was pronounced "Eel-ik," and we talked for a while about his fannish nickname, 'Squirrel.' I was later told that Ron can be very squirrely but throughout the weekend he struck me as being a very nice guy, a lot of fun, thoroughly sensible, and it was a pleasure meeting him.

Barbara Silverberg and I traded travelling experiences and Bob, complete with beard, showed me over the Ackerman household. Every room is lined with bookshelves and there is one room in which the walls are just plain dummy books, it being traditional for visiting fans to title the books themselves. I wrote something about "How I Cried For Fandom" by W. Gillings, which was more unkind than funny, but I got a laugh out of some of the other titles. Bob went hunting through screeds of magazines for foreign editions of his stories which have appeared under pennames. He told me he had used around two dozen different pseudonyms but refused to divulge them.

I decided it was about time I sought out Forry and did so. He was showing a pile of books to a group of fans. I took his shoulder and sidled up to him. "Look," I said, "this isn't much of a party. Let's slip away, you and me, and find ourselves a bit of fun, have a few drinks and find a couple of women. The host here will never miss us in this crowd." Forry turned round with a puzzled look, shook hands as though he recognised me from the London Convention and said: "Well, well, you made it. And after all the money I'd given to Detroit fans to lose you on the way. Say that might be an idea about slipping away. We'll go and see if the car works." I muttered something about not being interested in cars but Forry insisted that I saw his and he went out and opened up the garage for me. There was no car there; instead this double parking lot was crowded out with magazines, magazines and even more magazines. Bookshelves packed close together made a little maze of the passages which ran between them, and at one time when I tried to get out I bumped into A. E. van Vogt talking enthusiastically about some old pulps to John W. Campbell.

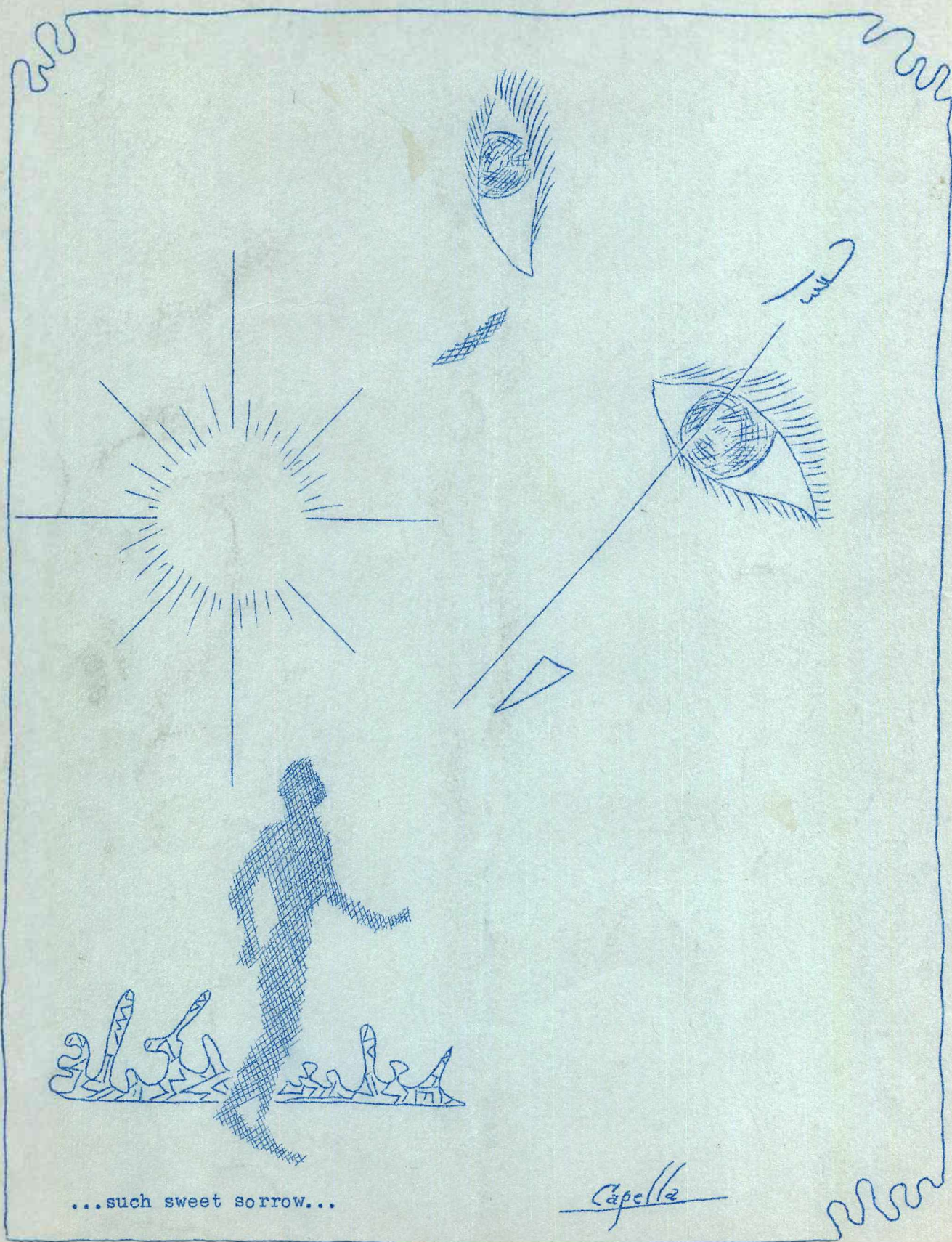


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...we don't know...



...such sweet sorrow...

Capella