

REVIEW #8

Vol. II, No. 2

REVIEW - - - - - Volume 2, No. 2
The Special James White Dedicatory Issue
(See EYPHEN review)

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c/o Western Union
Kellogg, Idaho.

Processed by Charles Wells.....sorry, Chuck, can't think of anything even supposedly amusing to put after that.

All correspondence and exchanges (REVIEW is available only by exchange, to those of you who didn't already know it) should be sent to McCain (please note new address above, it's permanent.)

REVIEW is published once in a while, tho I sometimes wonder why.

"Does you have a diploma as a egg-sucker?"

This issue has been longer delayed than usual....not really my fault for once.....ran into two towns where you couldn't buy mimeo stencils, believe it or not. One of them I am now living in. Of course, I must admit it's been a week since I got these stencils but then I've been suffering from an extreme attack of gafia, brought on perhaps by trying to produce three magazines simultaneously....hey, hold that....four magazines simultaneously. If some of these reviews seem a bit ancient, it is because I started producing this issue of REVIEW, the third issue of BIRDSMITH, and the fourth of WASTEBASKET, all simultaneously last October. But as of this writing the fourth issue of BIRDSMITH has already been stenciled and I expect to type the editorial and stencil page of WASTEBASKET and wind it up tonight also. As you can see, REVIEW has been squeezed into spare moments. I hope both the other two mags mentioned above will be in the February FAPA mailing. In fact, I should say I hope all three of them will be. For the information of you FAPAns #3 BIRDSMITH got misrouted in the mails and by this time should either be in Burbee's hands, returned to Vick, or hopelessly consigned to the dead letter office. If the last is true I may simply resign from fandom and save myself more grief. Well, could be for the first time I'll have three mags in one FAPA mailing. This is a very FAPish editorial, isn't it? I'm far too indifferent to write a conventional one. Lethargy is my middle name at the moment.....V. Lethargy McCain to you, sir. I didn't feel like working on this even tonite. Only my conscience forced me to. Anyway, all you non-FAPs will be given some idea of what you're missing. Hmmm, maybe you'd rather miss it? I consider that a very nasty crack for someone to make in my own magazine.... even me.

Now that I'm settled in my own apartment and have started living like a human being again (the first time since I entered fandom.. I've been on the road all except 17 months since I became a fan and those 17 months were spent in Eugene when I not only was so broke I never knew for sure where my next meal was coming from, but, to add insult to injury, was surrounded by fans. Seems to be end of page. Hence, end of editorial.

READERS INDIGESTION

REDD BOGGS---2215 Benjamin Street N.E., Minneapolis 18, Minn.

REVIEW is of course a pleasure to read -- and I see nothing wrong with the legibility. There are a few dim spots, but that is obviously the fault of the mimeograph (or the mimeographer -- hiya, Charles?), not the typewriter or the typist. I much prefer this to the dittoed or hektoed issues. The main fault with REVIEW, from my viewpoint, is that you don't say enough things I disagree with; hence, I'm left with a stock of egoboo cliches like "Fine issue" and "I hope you print 100 issues of REVIEW!"

Well, I might give Joel Mydahl a nod for being honest if it kills him: that magazine he's comparing unfavorably with GALAXY is the one that bought his first story. I know of one fan (or ex-fan) who destroyed an article about ASTOUNDING after he had sold a story to a minor competitor of ASF!

((Joel needn't worry too much. IMAGINATION's editorial staff is not on REVIEW's mailing list.... not to detract from Joel's courage any. He didn't know that when he wrote the letter.))

The only protest I feel inclined to make about your comments is about the brushoff given "A Case of Conscience." It is easily top story of 1953 in my opinion; I'll admit that isn't saying too much, especially since I haven't read all of 1953's output, not even all the topdrawer stuff. But no story in recent years has struck me any more powerfully; it is of high literary quality, it has a story background thoroughly detailed and thought-out rather than "exported"; and best of all, it is an impressive speculation about a subject you yourself seem interested in: religion and space travel. (or so I infer from your printing that letter from somebody in Salem, Oregon.) I too wonder what Blish's religion is, but it doesn't really matter, does it? Let's wonder, rather, whether his treatment of the situation in terms of story is valid. For my money, it is. Incidentally, William Atheling Jr discusses this yarn in the upcoming SKYHOOK. Great minds in the same channels -- or is it gutters, this time?

BILL MORSE---Science 3(b) Parliament Sq. House, London, S.W.I....

The more I read Chuck's letter, the more I feel that all that venom is wasted on a rather trivial matter. It could be put to far better work if given to Ken Beale for his personal use against Pro's and real BNFs. The thought that my name now stinks in the nostrils of decent Fen is rather awe-inspiring, but the few W.H. habituees whom I have met during my infrequent visits to London do not appear to notice it.

However - I might as well try to justify some of the less accepted matters, starting with Willis (who better?). I have a letter from Willis, in his own hand, enlisting me in a campaign to enlighten Anglo-fen from their tendency to stuffiness, (it has its extreme opposit--indecent). I have also a letter from Bloch, who, presumably, heard of it from Willis-or Chuck- or me- detailing a plan he'd had to get Bea Mahaffey to "knock 'em back, lad, shak 'em to the core." I think Willis handwriting is a more accurate guide than Harris's intuition on that point.

To that end,-the campaign- Walt suggested I might begin by passing around some of my U.S. fanzines. So I took a bundle, one night. As I recall, they included, 2 each, TLMA, Oopsla!, Eusifanse, one each, Orb, Cosmag-SFD. Chuck borrowed the whole lot, loaned me ICE, Vol 1, No 1., in exchange. The exchange was to be a couple of weeks, and I kept my end of the bargain. Five weeks after that, I get mine back with a letter beginning thus:-

"Heheheheheh!

Well.....

Seems as if I sort of mislaid these, Bill. Heheheheh!

Thanks very much for the loanetc."

Certainly, I asked Chuck if I could borrow his Oopsla! annish! His reply intimated that he had borrowed it from Walt. So far, I have not plucked up courage enough to beg such a thing from a BNF like FLEAC, but I'll get around to it. And, certainly, if Chuck had loaned me that annish, I'd have been grateful. What's wrong in that?

Rounding off the fanzine matter - certainly I gave Chuck a slip of paper beginning "You may quote me as saying.....concerning the sub to PHANTAS. It was in reply to a letter I'd had earlier, asking if he might do so.

Lord! How the dirty linen is coming out! Fortunately, I have kept every letter I have received from any fan- even a chain-letter job. I can quote fans from all over the place.

Comes now the question of Dirt. Let everyone remember, as Sem- inole Sam and Howland Owl found out a while back- there are many grades of dirt. Fandom thrives on a grade known as "The Lowdown". Quoting Willis, again: "Pitch me some of this dirt about 6th Fandom and Chicago." Quoting Chuck:- "WHO is Volstead Gridban?" Quoting Chuck:- "That fat babe with the pony haircut, she tried to seduce , and she'll do the same to you."

I like the description of me as a BRE SaM. Doubt if the big man, himself, would approve, though. My voice lacks the rich tone and clarity of diction- I could be heard as far as SaM-perhaps even farther- but doubt if I could be understood. After all, I learned as an Army drill instructor, where the commands are limited and expected. But, strange as it may seem, no one else has ever suggested that I indulge in "shouting down" tactics. Hell- I'd rather drink beer.

I have, personally, bought Vinç Clarke an orangeade. The word rather stuck in my throat, but mine host of the White Horse showed no surprise. I therefore assume Vinç has drunk orangeade before. In fact, I've seen him.

That, approximately, covers my (original) first two paragraphs, I think. Oh- yes- the Bloch-Hoffman matter. I definitely recall our Chuck displaying to me a Bloch letter, before the admiring eyes of the two youngsters mentioned. I cannot recall whether it was introduced as: "I just got this from Bloch this morning" or: "This is the last I had from Bloch." Hell- only BNF's don't have to brag about their BNF friends. I'm a name-thrower myself, ("Willis - McCain - Tucker - Vick - Bradbury") and recall my humble prostration before Chuck, in return for a piece of information that went "No, dear, Ego doesn't buy beer for fans."

However- Para 1; para 2. Now for para 3:-

I can point out, any time I'm there, at least three fans in the London Circle under 21. They haven't even done their Military Service yet, which puts them around 18-19. There are also a couple of occasional visitors who are, at present, doing their two years

in uniform. The point is not very important, except that they hog the dartboard, and their aim is very poor. Makes the corner dangerous for serious drinkers.

Concerning the Con. Committee- almost invariably there were Dorothy Jacobs (as she was), Charlie Duncombe and Fred Brown and another type whose name eludes me for the moment. They would foregather early, while Tubb and Vinç Clarke were still chatting to other drinkers. Usually, when the entire Committee had collected together, they moved to another, quieter, bar.

And the final paragraph- I will definitely state, here and now, that I heard Ego say "...and I thought it was good". And Carnell replied "...Well, thank you, Arthur". I don't recall mentioning any boot-licking, but I have seen Ego buy the drinks (though, as Chuck said, not for fans).

As I say- the whole thing is rather a storm-in-a-teacup; and, if you had omitted two half-sentences, I doubt if it would have arisen at all. Strictly speaking, there was only one person who could really feel annoyed, but Chuck never even mentioned it. It's a pity he had to boil over, because it is not so important as that. However- "Dear Chuck, here comes my armor-plated olive branch."

JOE SEMENOVICH---155-07 71st Ave., Flushing 67, N.Y.

How in the world Joel Nydahl can come to classify GALAXY as a slick or semi-slick is beyond me. A comparison of Asimov's stories, for example, to Wylie's, would be ridiculous; Asimov writes mysteries and his style, compared to Wylie, is atrocious as are most sf author's styles. Wylie has the ability to write literature, Asimov does not. Yet under Joel's classifications, both are slick writers.

True, GALAXY may be about the best sf magazine in the field, but that is in the sf field and no where else.

Science-fiction will never become mature reading matter. It can be compared to Westerns; occasionally sf will come out with; "Giants in the Earth" or, "Oregon Trail" but nothing more than that- Huxley's, "Brave New World", Orwell's, "1984" can be classified as such. But how many "Oregon Trail's" and "Giants in the Earth's" can be found?

Of course GALAXY is better than IMAGINATION. It is interesting to note, however, that IMAGINATION usually contains a story by St. Reynard, who, without a doubt, has a better style than any Gold author. Only thing wrong is that he does not take much time out for his plots.

BOB TUCKER---P.O. Box 702, Bloomington, Ill.

I stand here with the skame flaming on my face and admit that the M'Intosh quote was indeed swiped from you, and not taken directly from the magazine. If I were a completely honest character I would have so mentioned. I had reason to regret my other words on M'Intosh in that issue of SFNL: his first book did not by any means live up to the promise of his short stories. It started fine but ended dreadfully; ended, to be truthful, in space opera and the fatuous hero saving the world ... there is even a scene where his ship drops down over Washington, where the crowd turns out to cheer his victorious arrival. Hamilton-cum-Cummings. Tsk.

At present, I have no plans for abandoning fanmag-pubbing, and expect to carry on as usual, although somewhat curtailed. Just shipped off my latest FAPA pub to Hoffman to print for me, and for the past four or five months I've been slowly gathering material for another LE ZOMBIE. I rather think I will return to that, with perhaps one or two issues a year. Have about 20 pages together now, and maybe ten or fifteen more will complete it.

GREGG CALKINS -- 2817 11th Street, Santa Monica, California.

I don't particularly regret the loss of FFM from the stands, because it obviously wasn't the magazine it had been. I don't believe it was even intended to be. But I do regret the loss of the old FFM. It always was--and in some extent always shall be--my favorite magazine. In its back issues were the treasures of the fantasy I loved so well. Sf always did take a back seat with me in respect to good fantasy, and the old FFM and FN were just chock full of the Merrittales, Haggard, the English authors who painted their lost cities so vividly, John Taine....a million masters who worked quietly yet worked their magic deeply. With FFM gone, and most of its back issues already in my files, I fear I'll have to turn to UNK for my older fantasy source. aSF will do in some respects, too, but I fear neither of them will be to me what FFM/FN once was.

more from BILL MORSE --

Joel Nydahl has got me wrong, I'm afraid. Looks as if I'll never live down reading IMAGINATION, though 'tis better to have subbed and ceased, than never to have read at all. I have the feeling that a large number of fans just quote the majority when it comes to outlawing specific magazines from the shelves of serious fen (YUK). My head remains unbowed concerning Hamling, though. I do not recall, at any time, claiming that GALAXY was the inferior product, other than to ASF and MofF&SF. The whole point was that GALAXY was, to me and at that time, an echo of Campbell, and I was seeking variety in my reading. I might just as easily have taken up OW, instead. After all, I'd been smiled upon by Mahaffey at New Orleans, and RAP had printed "Martian Through Georgia" and a couple of episodes by Bloch - the titles are lost, but the story content is remembered, and that is my criterion for an issue.

You see what I mean? ASF-MofF&SF-STARTLING-THRILLING WONDER and IMAGINATION. As good a cross-section of stf as you'd have found anywhere, at that time.

Finally- the pay off punch. The sub to MADGE was taken out, not by me, but by another. Otherwise I'd not have stuck so long to it. That, at the time of which I wrote, would have left GALAXY-OW-AMAZING and the FANTASTICS. If I'd had to choose, I guess it would have been one of the first two, and that's as far as I'll go. More likely I'd have transferred my allegiance to the E.Q.M.M., which is also a masterpiece in its own line. Indeed, I got my first copy of F&SF under the impression it was the E.Q. job, and without checking the title. Some of the covers were ambiguous, if you recall.

Is it clear, now, Joel? Maybe you didn't see the original piece in CONFUSION, but the point, all along, has been that I like mixed reading, whether stf., crime, humor or "straight" fiction. And I got it, so far as stf is concerned.

FANZINES IN REVIEW

DAWN #18--Russell K. Watkins, 110 Brady St., Savannah Georgia.

DAWN used to be illegibly mimeod. Now it is illegibly dittoed. Revived after a couple of years, the magazine doesn't seem to have changed much. It's chief virtue formerly was a Ken Beale news column. Beale is no longer present. This is one of those too too earnest fanzines which practically wiggle out of their own skins attempting to prove their wittiness and worthiness to be liked. Such an attitude of course invariably results in failure. Typical of the general attitude of this magazine was a straight-faced parody on "You Made Me Love You" recently written by Watkins which winds up "The NFFF, you made me love you." Most of this issue is written by Watkins himself. There is a bit of very mild amusement in "A Friend in Need" and in what is supposed to be a brilliant pen name, Art Kunwiss he massacres what might have been a good idea in the write hands. If Watkins would learn how to handle his reproduction equipment and then just relax and quit trying so hard (trying to clean up fandom, trying to prove he is a regular feller, trying to prove he has a sense of humor) this magazine might be a success, but I doubt it.

FANTASTIC Story Mag--Vol. 1, #1, Sept. 1953 - Ron Ellick, 232 Santa Ana, Long Beach 3, California.

This take-off on FSM (they reprint fan fiction) isn't very well mimeod but most of it is legible. There are some rather suppressed qualities around the edges of this zine which indicate Ellick might have a lot more on the ball than is shown here. There might be a place for another reprint mag such as SFD formerly was but I doubt if there is enough good fan-fiction to support one. Oh, I suppose you might keep one going a few issues until you used up the entire output of Marjorie Houston and Clive Jackson and perhaps half a dozen isolated stories from other writers which were of top-notch quality. Certainly this first issue doesn't indicate any great exercise of judgment even among available fan fiction. Among other items the editor chose to reprint, without permission, the second worst story ever written by yours truly. (He couldn't use the worst one, Peter Graham had just gotten through reprinting it without permission). The rest of the items included aren't much better. However, I must be grateful to this zine for one thing. The suggested subtitle for it set up a train of thought in my mind which led to the new title for REVIEW's readers column.

HYPHEN--Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd., Belfast, Northern Ireland.

It has long been the contention of this writer that Walt Willis ranks second only to Robert Bloch as the greatest fan humorist of all time. True, a Tucker or Burbee may occasionally match him, but not consistently and only Bloch tops him. That any one else could do so would come as quite a surprise and it would be unbelievable if one were to claim anyone else could not only match his quality but duplicate his pithily punning style. This issue labelled "The Beacon" is devoted

almost entirely to the adventures of several Belfasters in introducing the British Isles to Bea Mahaffey. The first three pages ramble on in the inimitable Willis fashion and just when the giggles are approaching critical mass comes the big letdown. Willis winds up his portion where James White joins the party and from then on the narrative is handled by White. Could anything be more unfair to readers prepared for an entire issue of Willis? This White is not too well known over here. Willis' number one sidekick he is known chiefly for being the first typesetter to ever speak up in defense of E.E. Smith when Skylark was being maligned and for having a name on which Willis takes great joy in punning. More recently White sold stories to both NEW WORLDS and ASTOUNDING and developed a very smooth and professional style. (That 'developed' back there should be demonstrated). He finally broke into the fan press recently with a couple of humorous (but not very) pieces. So this reader reluctantly read on, hoping White would have the good sense to quote as much Willis conversation verbatim as possible. Instead, the unthinkable happened. For a while I thought Willis was ghost-writing the piece. With a slight change in viewpoint, for 14½ pages (count 'em) White sustained the Willis style complete with unbelievable puns and pixie-ish viewpoint with never a letdown. Not only does this piece qualify to rank with Willis', it is of a calibre to match the very finest things Willis has ever done. Why White has been hiding his puns under a zapgun this all this time is a mystery. The entire article has only one flaw. On page 7 White says "a person hasn't really lived until he's helped Bea Mahaffey climb a mountain." This is very amusing indeed, to anyone who has ever met Miss Mahaffey. Farther down he says "A person hasn't really lived until he's helped Bea Mahaffey down off a mountain." Coming on top of the other this is about three times as hilarious.

On page 9 he says: "A person hasn't really lived until Bea Mahaffey has tried to poison him." This is also amusing but not nearly so much so. From then on this same refrain pops up every other paragraph. Only it is no longer amusing. For some reason otherwise top-flight humorists seem to feel anything is funny if repeated over and over, like the main gags in a Preston Sturges movie. They're right to start with but the law of diminishing returns soon sets in. Oh yes, how did I determine Willis didn't ghost-write this surprising eruption from the typewriter of the largest of the little people? Well, when the party reached London Willis takes over again, and I found it a definite comedown. Willis definitely made a mistake in ever letting White see print. He should have stuck to printing SLANT and kept White too busy setting types to learn to use a typewriter. Special note to James White: Please forget all this foolishness about writing for cheap, money-grubbing publications like ASF. Such is below you. Furthermore fandom needs you. (signed) Your devoted fan, Vernon McCain. P.S. Any time you're too busy to write anything yourself, it's ok to let Willis go back to publishing his own stuff again, temporarily.

MUZZY #2--15¢--Pvt. Claude R. Hall US54100511 Btry A, 6th Tng Bn
AAA RTC Fort Bliss, Texas

Poor mimeoing and poor material except for a very fine piece "I Remember Fandom" by Art Rapp. Rapp must have an endless fund of such reminiscences. See if you can't make this a regular column, Claude.

OUTSIDERS--Wrai Ballard, Blanchard N.D.

Voted #1 SAPS zine this mag well deserves it. Wrai doesn't trade with too many people but it is certainly worth any necessary trouble to get on the trade list. Not only does this have the usual Ballard rambling and the "Not Poetry Corner" which consists of Art Rapp and some people who wish they were Art Rapp but there are a couple of fine reprints from earlier SAPS mailings by Bill Calabrese and Art Rapp. (Where'd this fella Rapp come from, anyway. Seems to be staging a comeback or something. ~~Thxxxx~~ To those of you who are new to fandom, may I explain that four years ago during what is now known as Fifth Fandom Art Rapp just about was fandom, being voted first in just about every category imaginable... with fandom's top zine....single-handedly running the NFFF when it was a good club, a dominant member of SAPS and FAPA and fan-writer extraordinaire. He's now proved himself also the dean of Not Poets. Among other things Redd Boggs informs me the original Superfan ((before Lee Jacobs bestowed the title on Boggs, himself)) now carries a mimeograph around in a barracks bag, which tops even my history of publishing on a mimeo carried in the back seat of a car.)

PSYCHOTIC--Richard Geis, Vol. 1 #5. Monthly 2632 N. Mississippi Portland 12, Oregon.

In reviewing the first issue I said this mag might go places. It's already on its way and bids fair to give VEGA a run for its money for position of top fanzine of this era. This zine reminds ~~me~~ of SPACEWARP more than any other mag since Art Rapp joined the Army. This issue is called the GALAXY depreciation issue. This magazine is very highly recommended.

SATUR AY MORNING GAZETTE--John Magnus, Federal 203-B, Oberlin, Ohio.

This mag isn't much but what can you expect of a single-sheeter news and comment sheet issued weekly. Cleanly mimeod by editor Magnus, I'd call this an improvement over his S, and well worth the price and more, since as far as I know he isn't charging for it. Probably available by trade.

SPIRAL --Denis Moreen 214 9th St., Wilmette, Ill. 10¢ per cy

Pretty good mimeoing. Pretty poor material. But Moreen promises a radical editorial change next issue which should help. The one thing in this mag which is top-notch is a column by Moreen himself, "Spiralites", one of the best news columns in some time.

PRO'S PROSE

AMAZING STORIES--December-January

Jerome Bixby nicely handles an idea that should have been expanded to short novel length, at the least, and Wallace West has a try at rewriting last year's "No Land of Nod" with the sexes reversed. Rest of this issue isn't really bad, just over-obvious and not at all stimulating. Mel Hunter has a marvelous cover that should sell like hotcakes. First one by him I've seen which lives up to the raves he's been getting.

GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION--"The Caves of Steel" is Asimov's best serial since "...And Now You Don't" though still far short of that memorable yarn which is probably his best novel. Is this the first robot story in which Mr. A. has identified the inventor of the positronic brain as being named Asenion? I don't recall it before. At any rate a very clever touch, though one which will be lost on most of his readers. Winston Marks produces a small gem in "Unbegotten Child" and Roger Dee turns in a mildly amusing though sub-par for GALAXY story about a veterinarian. Sheckley's "Keep Your Shape" is nice but unmemorable. Other two stories slipped in when Gold wasn't looking. Below average for this magazine. Better luck next time.

THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION--November

MOF leads off this issue with a full novelet by Clifford Simak which is his best story since the unforgettable "Good Night, Mr. James". "Shadow Show" might well rate as one of sf's all-time finest novels if it weren't for a weak ending. Kris Neville's "Worship Night" is a quiet thing of joy. Sturgeon is present, over-esoteric as lately, but still Sturgeon, bless his typewriter. Mildred Clingerman's "The Word" (and I hate to use this one) is definitely 'cute'.

SPACEWAY--December

Give FANTASY BOOK a professional format, large distribution, and a few more pages and you have SPACEWAY. Same old-fashioned plots, same stiff writing. But it's still better than SF PLUS. Gene Hunter has a novelet which manages to sustain interest but best thing in the issue is a British reprint, "Now You See Them--".

TOPS IN SCIENCE FICTION--Fall

Stunning format, here. Cover is beautiful, and interior not too far behind. Vaguely GALAXY-ish throughout, but better. A shame to waste it on reprints from PLANET. Hope this succeeds and they start using new material in this format as they promised. The stories? Despite such names as Bradbury, Brackett, Brown, and Abernathy, you won't miss too much if you skip this mag although most of them are readable. The Bradbury-Brackett yarn contains an interesting early example of the climax of "Mars is Heaven". But that format is really sumpin.

Reccomended stories

Jerome Bixby-"One Way Street"-AMAZING
Mildred Clingerman-"The Word"-MOF
Winston Marks-"Unbegotten Child"-GALAXY

Very Highly Recommended

Isaac Asimov-"Caves of Steel"-Pt. 2-GSF
Kris Neville-"Worship Night"-MOF
Clifford D. Simak-"Shadow Show"-MOF