

REVIEW 12

Vol. 11, No. 6

REVIEW

A publication of the Society for the Preservation of Robert Bloch...1

Vol. 2

No. 6

"Bloch is the only true Ghod - Beware of cheap imitations."
J. Espuvius Flippen - 1926

In the past there has been considerable carping about REVIEW's rare appearance, even though a checkup on REVIEW's total issues last summer showed it had averaged appearance only a small fraction below once every two months since its inception, even including the four or five months in which it was officially dead between #2 and #3, before being revived. And this is about as frequent as the appearance of the average fanzine. REVIEW's slowness was a myth. Perhaps it merely gave that impression when it did arrive because it was so small, once only six pages, and several times only eight. This, also, is no less than many fanzines but these usually appear more frequently. And the bi-monthly zines are usually larger. Last issue equalled in size that of the average magazine so....to balance things up REVIEW is now appearing as infrequently as it has formerly been accused of. (Actually that had nothing to do with the delay but it does make a nice excuse.) Reasons won't be gone into here but, barring more drastic action REVIEW's bi-monthly schedule is apt to be closer to semi-annual from now on. Actually it's schedule has not altered one whit since I started it. It comes out whenever I have the time. I just have less time for it now. Of course, the larger current issues do take more time, and to that extent cause more infrequent appearance.

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DON'T STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS

Monotonously the old refrain occurs. "This may be the last issue of REVIEW." No definite statements one way or the other... just maybe. Charles Wells and his trusty mimeograph (and ditto) have done yeoman service for REVIEW for the preceding nine issues but all good things must come to an end and all bright young Savannahians eventually find it time for college. Understandably, Wells' fannish activity is being curtailed including, among other things his services to REVIEW. [And right here I'd like to express public thanks to Charles for the time and trouble he has devoted to REVIEW. It was a thankless and egobooless task but when, someday, I'm left with only memories of fandom, one of the nicer ones will be of my association of almost two years with a young man named Charles Wells.] Fandom is full of quixotically generous people and a fabulous number have, in similar crises in the past, offered, as Wells did, to come to REVIEW's aid. Some of these have since exited fandom; others are now in a changed situation, while probably a few would still be willing to enter such an arrangement. And, almost certainly, the announcement now that REVIEW is dying for lack of a publisher would turn up five or six more Good Samaritans. However, I'm not at all sure I want to establish such a new relationship now that the ties

with Wells are broken. Mailing stencils, and then completed pages, through the mail is not the ideal fanzine reproduction method. And REVIEW has become an increasing burden recently. I would scuttle it with hardly a qualm were it not that almost every issue produces a letter from some fan whom I highly admire and respect which expresses delight in the magazine and desire for its long continuance, usually expressing the phrase that it fills 'a definite need' somewhere in the letter. I'm not sure just what this need is but it seems to be a widely enough held view that I assume it is sincere. These letters not only beautifully boo my ego....they leave me feeling grateful to the sender and rather under obligation to keep on producing REVIEW...not only to elicit similar future letters but also because to quit would seem to be letting down these generous people.

This desire, plus the knowledge that REVIEW is my strongest link with actifandom, would keep me publishing for some time, normally. The Wells situation has rather precipitated matters, however. Normally I should simply start running the zine off myself. But I'm on the road, now, and my mimeo far away, in storage. This issue will be done professionally and quite possibly I shall regularly produce my EMPazines this way, from now on. But I'm not willing to take on that kind of expense for REVIEW....especially considering it's (oops, sorry....its) current swollen size.

Soooo....if you get another issue of REVIEW within the next half-year, give or take a month, you can assume it hasn't folded. Otherwise it has. I'm about evenly divided in my views toward the matter at the moment.

Although I'm no longer doing pro reviews I'd like to, as usual, make my choices for best stories of the year. This time I'm going to comment as I go.

The year was noticable for no novels likely to become stfish classics but, unlike the last such year, 1952, it featured quite a few very fine novels. My choice for best novel of 1954 is:

"Wild Talent" - Wilson Tucker -Rinehart.

This may cause some shocked reactions but not nearly so many as would the idea, one year ago, of anyone naming a Tucker book best of the year. Although it has been an extraordinarily controversial story it has been seriously considered, already, by otherssfor best of the year (See Morse's column, this issue). Tucker has been under heavy attack, first by Gregg Calkins in OOPSLA, and, more recently, by others for the havy use of fannish names in the book. This is a criticism I find completely mystifying. The very act of reading fiction, at all, requires an agile voluntary schizophrenia on the part of the reader if he is to enjoy the book. It is next to impossible to completely forget the personality of the author, whether or not you know him or anything about him. To minds long-versed in this, the mere fact that many of the characters bear familiæ names should not be the least fazing. Anyone who finds this a bar to reading enjoyment must have gotten himself into an awfully deep habit-rut in his approach to reading. Personally, I find the use of fannish names merely an extra fillip (not very important, but still pleasant and amusing) to the story. They neither add to nor detract from the basic qualities of the story itself. They do make for an extra dimension of pleasure for those from the same circles. You read the story as a story... and simultaneously as a piece of fannish foolplay. All the most delightful works of art operate simultaneously on more than one plane. The greater the dimensions the author can work in the more

fascinating the result. I'll wager ever individual who carped about this was also someone who does not like chess. I view with sadness Tucker's expressed intentions of retreating from the attack and confining fannish names to bit roles hereafter. I assume this one dissenting opinion will be insufficient to change his mind but for your consideration, Mr. Tucker, may I offer the following observation? To the vast majority of your readership (95% or over?) what names you use makes no difference. One is as good as another since they've never heard of the fans...and even pros....who strut through your pages. The comparatively small remainder surely do not exert much commercial influence (and I imagine more enjoy than object to the fannish names policy.....although less vocal about it.....among this limited group). As for those who object, you won't lose them. They'll have to read your latest novel to see if they are mentioned, whether or not they approve of the policy. No fan has such an insensitive ego as to pass up something like that. Soooo, Mr. Tucker?

To get back to the story itself, the arrival of Mr. Tucker among the Important Writers of science-fiction will cause less surprise to those of us who have long read and enjoyed the sister field of the detective story and Mr. Tucker's efforts therein than it will to strictly sfnal readers. Mr. Tucker wrote one good sf short as long ago as 1950...."The Tourist Trade"...and two years later he produced an even better one, "Able to Zebra". But as a short-story writer he has tended to produce either (a) the imaginative but amateurish handling of an old idea, (b) the far reach into left field for the clever and cynical subtle switch...an attempt at 'fine' s-f writing which has always backfired except for "Able to Zebra", and (c) the clever and slickly well-done little item of miniscule importance which is forgotten almost as soon as the magazine is dropped. His first science-fiction novel "The City in the Sea" ~~was~~ almost certainly one of the ten worst sf novels of 1951. 1952 brought a tremendous improvement with "The Long, Loud Silence", a novel which is still being discussed. There was another novel in 1953, well written and amusing and so unmemorable that now, around eight months after I read it I cannot recall either the title or any details of the plot except to remember the protagonist was a typical Tucker here (who can be recognized every time by his many human weakness, his unfailing eye for the main chance, his slightly out-of-character wide knowledge on esoterica of interest to sfans and useful in sf plots, and his almost Spillane-like lack of sentimentality and magnetism for women, gorgeous and otherwise...in short, a likable heel). Then came 1954 and "Wild Talent". "The Long Loud Silence" has been tremendously praised by Bloch and others. Tucker himself dismisses it as the only story, yet, in which he's managed to encapsule anything worth while. I would not agree that "Silence" is Tucker's best novel. Certainly, for human insight and a believably created world it tops anything else he's done. But it's not, strictly speaking, a novel, at all. It's a character study, a detailed description of the destruction of a human character. It has no real plot. And, let's face it, in a few spots it drags. Actually, it is part of the main stem of American literature...the serious novel...written (like "1984" and "Brave New World") with sfnal elements. It was relegated to the specialized sf field because it was written by a name long associated with that field. Under a penname it might well have become a literary sensation among New York's cocktail set. But, judged as a story it's not very good. Here is where "Wild Talent" is supreme...for it has a fully fleshed plot, engrossing incident and a fast moving plot that never slackens. Most important,

it had a slam-bang, and satisfying, conclusion. So often a serial has a tremendous first installment, a good second, and a miserably weak third to conclude. I read "Wild Talent" in its NEW WORLDS serialization and found each installment as satisfying as the others. This is rare. And I waited impatient for the next issue both times, wondering impatiently how soon it would arrive....an effect usually had on me by only Heinlein serials.

While "The Long Loud Silence" may represent a greater challenge to Tucker and, as such, be the source of a greater pride, "Wild Talent" is the better done of the two. It is better to choose a lesser goal and achieve perfection in it than to have an interesting half-success in some more difficult one. "Wild Talent" is not an important novel. At best it will probably be remembered ten years from now as only one of the better novels of the mid-fifties. But within its limitations it is well-nigh perfect.

As I said, this is not really too much of a surprise to those of us who also enjoy detective fiction. For Tucker has been writing very topgrade tec novels for some years. None of them are quite so well-done as "Wild Talent" but he was less experienced then. If Fredric Brown is the best new mystery writer of the past ten years then Tucker is one of the three or four runners-up in the same period. "Wild Talent" is the first sign that Tucker did not allow his love for stf to draw him away from the field for which he is ideally suited. Even so I would say, as yet, he is a more important detective writer than science-fictional. But as of "Wild Talent" his is an important name among the galaxy of stfnal writers.

A very close contender for best novel was that fine fantasy tour-de-force:

"I Am Legend"--Richard Matheson--Gold Medal.

And deserving of honorable mention is the best ASTOUNDING serial in years:

"They'd Rather Be Right"--Clifton & Riley.

It's interesting to note that this is the third in a series which started as an average but enjoyable short, followed by a very poor novelet and now a really fine full-length novel....a spottiness unique in series stories to my memory.

This was the year of the Novelet however. Two novelets in close competition would, individually, either one have been a walk-away for best story of the year in any category in a normal year. My choice for first is:

"The Cold Equations"--Tom Godwin--ASF.

This story requires no comment for those who have read it. It's virtues are self-obvious. ~~For~~ Those who haven't should quickly remedy the situation.

The other truly magnificent novelet was:

"For I Am a Jealous People"--Lester del Rey
BALLANTINE Star Short Novels.

This is the best del Rey has ever done and it hurts to have to place it second to anything. It is the first science-fictional story dealing with religion I've ever enjoyed and certainly one of the most unforgettable stories in stfnal history.

Last, the best short story...apparently overlooked by everyone else as I've read not a word of comment on it:

"It's a Go-odd World"--Jerome Bixby
BALLANTINE Star Science Fiction #2.

Added note: the magazine and dates given for "The Jet Propelled Couch" on the last page are correct...and the second installment out today is very surprising and makes this two part article even more of a must for stfans than before. A truly unique item.

READER'S INDIGESTION

ERIC BENTCLIFFE, 47, Alldis St, Great Moor, Stockport, Cheshire, U.K.

The weather over here this Summer is terrible. It has rained every day for the past couple of months around here, not heavily every time, but it's rained. Getting to the stage now when we are thinking of planting seaweed in the garden or building an Ark. Most folk, of course, are blaming it on the A-Bomb. Would be rather amusing if the Bomb was banned because of the weather it is 'causing' ...rather than its more deadly effects.

Must admit being wrong in my forecast that the Zap-gun would be an outmoded weapon at the Supermancon. This device was present in varied form - from a model aircraft with six jet orifice's in the wings (this was wielded by Vince, but not with very great success as the range of this weapon was very limited) to a one-hundred shot water-rifle born by Brian Lewis of the Medway Mob. This latter weapon was much in demand whilst Alistair Paterson (editor of the Vargo Statten Mag) was present. I think almost everyone in Room 133 borrowed it at one time or another to help express their opinion of his mag. Peter Hamilton (of Nebula) was early in the queue!

The London shower, who were holding a party (petting party) in one of the other hotel rooms...attempted to raid the bigger group in 133 (which was a lunge -originally) some time around 1 am. They were repulsed with heavy losses. This inspired Norman Shorrocks, Mal Ashworth, and myself, about an hour later, to attempt a sortie to the London room...just to see what was going on. No battle resulted from our reconnaissance, the elses being by this time in too comatose a state to care what doom befell them, the females of the gender were so far gone that they no longer even worried about the Fate Worse Than Death (Ted Tubb). There was no resistance and very little booze in this room so we left almost immediately. However before departing from the region of the LC, I staggered into the bathroom next door to where their party was being held...and turned on all the taps in sight. The strange thing is I have yet to find out if the bath overflowed, or whether any of the elses were drowned!...

ROBERT BLOCH, P.O. Box 362, Weyauwega, Wis.

That's the trouble with this whole discussion: everything is so damned moot. You bring up queries as to whether or not 2 snifters of Napoleon brandy are better than 1 -- and wouldn't 20 copulations a week with the perfect partner be better than 20 a year?

Well, Vernon, I am willing to settle this thing once and for all. I am willing to sacrifice myself in the spirit of research; lay myself on the altar of Science as a willing victim.

You may consider me as contributing my time, effort, and ability as a human guinea-pig, absolutely gratis and without charge, for the coming two years.

That's how far I'm willing to go to settle this matter properly.

And in return, your contribution is merely minor. All you do is undertake to furnish me, for the duration, with an unlimited supply of Napoleon brandy and perfect sexual partners.

During the first year, I will take 2 snifters of Napoleon brandy per diem (that's 14 a week) and indulge in copulation 20 times per

per week.

During the second year, I will take 1 snifter of brandy per diem and indulge in copulation 20 times during the year.

Then I shall (still at no cost to you) undertake to write up the whole controlled experiment and submit my findings to you, privately.

If you think they should be published, in the interests of scientific advancement, I will agree to joint publications, with a 50-50 split, of course.

Who knows, we may thus revolutionize philosophy, psychology, semantics, and the entire brandy industry? Our names will go down in history along with those other heroid martyrs -- Walter Reed, Goethals, Koch, Landru, etc.

Fair enough?

Then start mailing me the partners. The brandy will have to be sent by overland truck -- there's a law against mailing liquor.

As for you, and your Western Union itinerary, I detect a certain depression on your part when you mention that after you leave you're just a fading or forgotten memory.

This doesn't have to be, Vernon.

Let's put a little thought to the matter and make the name McCain memorable. Kilroy did it. Why not you? Scribble your name all over the walls of every Western Union office in the country. Etch it in the window-glass. Burn it into the arms of the office-girls with cigarette butts. Let's make the name of McCain a byword with Western Union. Let's make you unforgettable. Within a year, if you have the patience and persistence, you should achieve a point of recognition where anyone, anywhere, can step into a Western Union office, go up to the man in charge, merely whisper your name, and elicit an immediate response of, "Oh, yeah -- that sonafabitch!"

This, Vernon, is true satisfaction. It is greater than the happiness of mere sensory fulfillment. More intensity, more duration, and no harsh laxatives -- only the mild center leaves. Such a tribute could never be ascribed to mere "undiscriminating good will". And it might easily lead to your elevation in the ranks. (Elevation by what means, I'm not prepared to say, though).

Give it a thought. And meanwhile, start packing those ideal partners. Only one to a box, though: they might get ideas en route, otherwise.

REVIEW is fine, very fine. I am happy to see Bill Morse represented -- lost track of him, and he's one of my fond memories. My wife likes him too, but that's no criterion. After all, she likes Tucker.

In re questions in your letter: I wrote fulltime from 1935 to 1941. Not entirely fiction, though - I also did a large amount of ghost-writing for politicians. (Of course this was fiction, too, and fantasy-fiction at that: but it doesn't exactly fit into the same category.)

As to San Francisco...all I can say is that it was the most. I have never, but never, spent such a delirious week in my life.

Did an 11-page singl spaced personalized conreport for the benefit of some non-attendees who seemed interested, and sent it out on a route, with carbons. You will probably see it eventually, because it will either appear in Tucker's LEZOIBIE or in that cheap rag Grennell puts out. Suffice it to say that I only managed to crowd in about half of the interesting stuff that went on.

However, if you'll refer back to my letter which you print in the current REVIEW, You'll realize that mine was perhaps a most distorted outlook on the Convention. I just was lucky enough to have a completely wonderful time. It may well be that many others will come away grumbling about the program, the hotel, the private parties, the excesses of some of the youthful fans, the snobbery of the filthy hucksters, the high price of liquor, the barometric pressure, the vulgarity of the oaf who m.c.'d at the banquet, etc.

But I escaped all this, by a series of clever ruses. I didn't see more than half the program...I stayed down the street at a cheaper (and much quieter) hotel...I managed to sneak into several private parties under the alias of Claude Degler...I heard about the young fans and the hucksters but luckily didn't actually encounter any of the incidents myself...didn't do much drinking...never noticed the barometric pressure, if any...and wore ear-plugs during the banquet so I couldn't hear myself talk.

It worked out just fine.

Some points in your letter rather puzzle me. You speak of digging up "A novelet which I started last winter with Sam Mines vaguely in mind since the lead character was a lesbian."

Now I suppose it is none of my business, but as an oldtimer in this field, let me give you a piece of fatherly advice. Never base your lead character on an actual person. And what's more, in this particular case I'd doubly stress the point because I have met Sam Mines twice and don't think he is a lesbian. You simply can't afford to believe everything you hear about editors. I wouldn't accept such a rumor about Mines unless it came from Francis T. Laney himself. And Laney is, by his own admission, a notorious philatelist.

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

I see you've changed your publisher. This Charles Ells does equally as good a job as Charles Wells did. ... Good letter section indeed. I wonder why I can't ever remember that you even have one? Bloch's letter deserves wide circulation but I think that it's true that there are some people who criticize the conventions for reasons other than being browned off at the "ingroup." I can think of one chap who seemed to have no trouble mingling with those he found congenial at the conventions and yet found much to criticize. ... Lee Hoffman's reaction to Charles' query, "Why didn't you tell me you were famous," sounds nicely typical of her. She has a disarming way of striking the right balance between wry humor and proper modesty. ... Walt's description of Hyphen replacing Q like "a load of rubble can fill the gap left by the collapse of a beautiful bridge," on the other hand, is wryly humorous but hardly properly modest. In fact, calling "-" a load of rubble is the best example of bushwa I've ever heard. Come now, Walt; it's at least a Bailey bridge!

With all due respect to Pete Vorzimer, I don't see much resemblance between him and F. Towner Laney. A string of Chinese firecrackers and an H-bomb. Same difference. But I liked your description of Abstract -- the contrast between the "reasonable letters" from readers and Pete's irrational reactions to them. ...

I agree with you that the best crack was omitted in Hyphen's printing of the Stasis Statistics letter if it's "you'll like the white horse in." Your interlineation, "He who hesitates is last,"

is very nice too. I note with beaming approval that you are learning to write very amusing orthodox interlineations are not foisting off on us that horrible bastard type interlineation you were advocating in PSYCHOTIC awhile back. Why, you may even be eligible for the Jack F Speer Prize given annually to the best interliner of the year (the prize is a new dash --- or underline _____ typeface -- your choice -- for your typewriter). Write for details. But don't write Speer; he hasn't heard about it yet. Write DAG or Tucker or somebody -- they haven't heard about it either but they'll go along with the gag and refer you to somebody else. And if you're as tired of the subject as I am, you'll be glad that I hereby drop the subject of the Jack F Speer Prize.

RON ELLIK--, 277 Pomona Avenue, Long Beach 3, Calif.

Geis is always quick to jump on someone who mis-phrases a statement, and call such mis-phrasing juvenile or idiotic. Such might seem to be the case here, if we go over everything carefully enough...

I said that Ellison and 7APA, per se, were un stomachable to me. I said that they were doing wrong in inviting sixth fanners in. I said that is was a club proposed to help out 7f.

Somebody hit me on the head, will you, and inform me where I said that the organization was helping out 7f? I have never seen an organization hit so damned far wide of its voiced and admitted target as 7APA, except maybe the NAPA that Vorzimer formed in SoCalif. 7APA has not helped out 7f at all.

Geis stomps on me for paying lip service to the idea that 7apa is a fuggheaded idea. Geis says I might actually be of the opinion that it was a good thing for an esoteric APA to form. He says my only condemnation of the club is that they invited 6th Fanners in.

The hell with it.

I met Ellison at the World Con...before that I merely disliked what his typer spewed out at fandom. Now I thoroughly dislike the originator of such idiotic excretions. It is absolutely beyond my youthful years how anyone can go so far out of his way to make enemies. It is obvious from my complete lack of comprehension that I have much to learn in this wide and complex world of Harlan's.

So I have that brash irresponsible immaturity of style and thought that gets under your skin consistently, eh Ricardo? Someday, grandpa, some brash, irresponsible immature brat is going to get under there and turn you inside out. Then you'll catch on that twenty-six year-olds ((long since 27, now. v.l.m.)) who put on magnificent airs of condescension and patronization to us kids don't always show the glorious summit of maturity that they would have us emulate.

Vern, next time I act mature, send me a bomb, will you?

BILL MORSE, Science 3b, Parliament Square House, London, S.W.1.

One other thing, while we are on the subject of the big disagreement--I'll send you the actual postcard from Willis, so that it can be produced for the record. Not that I feel that I am being treated as a BRE McCarthy but the "I have here, in my hand....." sort of stuff is so easily challenged and a Name like Willis is a big thing to dispute with.

[Editor's note: The germane portion of the p.c. is herewith reproduced. And Walt, it is not handwritten, but typed on what appears to be your typer (now don't blame Madelaine) and

PRO'S PROSE

guest installment by Eric Bentcliffe

Quite a few of you folk Stateside, do get British science fiction, some of you may even read it. This then, is not for you but for the fans who don't get U.K. publications. You might, tho, find one or two of my opinions at variance with your own, if so, and Vernon permitting, I will be only too happy to take up cudgels with you.

NEBULA SCIENCE FICTION No. 9

Although not as stylish in appearance as NEW WORLDS and SCIENCE FANTASY, this magazine is possibly the most popular amongst Fans over here. Mainly because of its editor, Peter Hamilton, and his go-ahead policy. Britishers (as we so dislike being referred to) have always been champions of the underdog, and when NEBULA first appeared hardly anyone over here gave it a commie-in-McCarthy-land chance of survival. Peter was young (he has only recently attained his legal maturity) and inexperienced in the field of SF. However, NEBULA continued and improved with each issue. It still has a fair way to go but is entirely and enjoyably readable. The effort and improvements made in the magazine by Peter have earned him the admiration of almost all U.K. fans. The exceptions are unable to admire anyone but themselves. This current issue features a short novel by Ted Tubb, a lyrical exposition of what is almost mankind's end; how the Iron Curtain almost prevents Terra from repelling an alien invader. An old theme, but Tubb is a good enough writer to make it seem almost new. NEBULA is edited and published in Glasgow, Scotland but this issue is almost taken over by the wild Irish. There are stories by James White and Bob Shaw plus a regular fan column by Walt Willis. I believe that Peter is thinking of putting out a BRE (Belfast Reprint edition) of his magazine in Gaelic! It is hard to compare a British mag with an American, but I should place NEBULA at about the level of TWS and STARTLING. It's well worth getting.

NEWBURY IN ORM by Islwyn Evans

This is a current paper back publication which from its makeup would appear to have been originally scheduled for hard cover publication. It is printed on book paper and is jacketed in a similar style to FANTASY BOOK. Perhaps the kindest way to review this novel would be to say that it is printed on nice paper. However this reviewer is only kind to dumb animals (especially blondes) and does not intend to be so blinded by the excellence of the makeup into skipping the peurile contents. The story is written in the too too British style of a decade ago by a Welshman. This, tho, is not the only incongruity found within. The story is about a RAF type (and being an ex-RAF type myself, I must state the characterization isousy) who whilst testing an atomic powered interceptor lands inside a Flying Saucer, yes inside gentlemen, for this is no ordinary Adamski type FC, but a look-out planet despatched from far Antares to keep an eye on things. Squadron-leader Newbury, our pilot, has innumerable adventures with the inhabitants of this private-eye-planet, Orm, getting mixed up with all kinds of weird characters....flying winged horses, webbed footed Antareans, a compatible Antarean female goddess...and others. As science-fiction, this novel could qualify for next years Fantasy Award. Not recommended to anyone over ten.

THE STELLAR LEGION by E.C.C. Tubb

This is a very good somewhat space-operaish yarn and one of the best (if not the best) which SCION have published. As the book opens a galactic war is in process betwixt the colonies of Terra, ... who of course wants home rule. In the background Terra wins the war and the great war fleets return home to be disbanded. Commander Hogarth, admiral of the fleet and virtual imperator of Terra during the war, does not however intend to be demobilised. He agrees to take command of a penal colony on an almost sterile planet and proceeds to train the inhabitants, unmercifully, into fit candidates for his Stellar Patrol. Much of the book is given over to life on the penal world and the methods of training which are both inhuman and extremely logical. There is great excitement when an official of the Terran government comes to inspect the colony but eventually Hogarth gains sanction for his Stellar Patrol because of an attack on the penal colony by an alien spaceship. The plot, in synopsis, sounds trite but the story is well written, the characterization is good, and I found it quite entertaining. Recommended.

BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE No 6

In case the name seems unfamiliar let me hastily inform you that this is the VARGO STATTON SF MAG, under a new name. The makeup and styling of this magazine, has improved almost 100% since the first issue. It is now large digest sized (the same size as NEBULA) and excellently laidout. The stories within however have shown little improvement. This magazine is unashamedly slanted towards the younger element of SF reader, which should explain why the stories do not appeal to the hoary reviewer. The features are intelligent and most palatable. They range from 'Fanfare and Such-like', a column of review and comment on the fannish scene to 'Science facts and forecasts', the latter being brief enough to be interesting. The editor (Alistair Paterson), and staff of this magazine are attempting to form the VARGO STATTON SCIENCE FICTION LEAGUE, which would seem to be a sort of junior fandom composed of those who venerate Vargo (otherwise John Russell Fearn). Perhaps a quote would help to give you a better idea of this thing; "The membership fee - will be moderate and will cover the cost of a handsomely enamelled badge, League letter headings, and all the material essential to a well run organization. It is hoped to procure further advantages for members, but these will be announced when the present mass of suggestions have been sorted out." Which sounds, to me, like a cross between a Cooperative society, and the NSF. If it does succeed, it should prove a useful (?) breeding ground for fans. I think you will find it worth while to add a copy of this to your collection, for tho the stories are poor you will find the features interesting.

Anyone got any '43 aSF's for sale ??????????????????????????????????

I always think of Redd Boggs as having blue eyes and brown hair.

signed
in your handwriting. v.l.m.7

(postmarked Nov. 24 1952 330pm)

Dear Bill,

.....Yes, British fandom is lamentably ignorant of who the big names in American fandom are. May I enroll you as an ally in my lone fight to make them US conscious? Bring your fmz down and circulate them round the WH for one thing. The only one they know about there is Q.....

Walt

CHUCK HARRISM "Carolyn" Lake Ave, Rainham Essex ENGLAND

I have not seen Ellik's reprint magazine myself, and I was wondering if Lee knew anything about an issue comprising of QUANDRY reprints. Personally, I've always felt that Q should be left as it is and not hashed up for reprint zines. Quandry was more than just a good fanzine; it was a gestalt encompassing almost everyone in Sixth Fandom. And, above all, it was a topical fanzine, and no neofan will ever understand the fun we got out of it by reading an assorted collection of pieces snipped out at random. Surely it would be better if this hypothetical neofan borrowed a set of QUANDRY, -- or as near a set as possible, -- and read through the thing for himself. And, if people do insist on reprinting from it, I feel that Lee should be consulted about it first.

WALT WILLIS, 170 Upper M'ards Rd, Belfast, N.Ireland

Did I tell you that Chuck and I sent Laney a Fugghead Award? I had a blank of the original award taken from an old Fandango and we dressed it up with a seal and added the citation: "Francis Towner Laney earns this Award by devoting his Find Mind and Fabulous Talents to the accumulation of small pieces of paper with inherent limitations as a medium of literate self-expression." I was sad when Laney left FAPA.

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FANZINES AT MIDNIGHT

Huge accumulation this time due to the long interim between issues so let's to it--

A BAS #5--Boyd Raeburn, 9 Glenvalley Drive, Toronto 9, Canada.

A joyous exception to the dismalness of most north-of-the-border fanzines. In fact, A BAS when combined with Les Crutch's hoary FAPazine LIGHT comprises about 98% of the worthwhile fan-publishing from Canada in recent years. Odd how often insurgent publications put to shame those of the more conventional fans who live in the same area. A few years back insurgentism was in slightly bad aroma due to the conviction of a few that they must rebel and be as shocking as possible at all times with or without provocation. This adolescent attitude (although its most noticable practitioners were old enough to know better) has faded away with the years and, now, after a long period as a fellow-traveling insurgent who propegandized against clubs and serious constructivism at every opportunity

I am willing for the first time to publicly accept the name of insurgent, myself. Not that I have anything to insurge against. I long since severed my connections with all clubs except FAPA. At any rate the publishers of A BAS happily seem to be able to forget they are CANADIANS(!) and instead concentrate on being fans...a refreshing switch, indeed. Derelæcti Derogations (a continuing feature composed of partly fictional, partly real quotations of various fans, Toronton and otherwise, compiled into a pages long conversation) is an original and individualistic trademark and I hope it continues in each issue. Recommended.

ABSTRACT--Peter J Vorzimer, 104 Toyon, Goleta, Calif. 25¢

Somehow, despite my flat refusal to send any money for it, I received the conish of AB. It is a good issue featuring a more restrained Vorzimer than in previous times, although not all the rough edges are gone, by a wide measure. "Con Preview" by Art Kunwiss (the anagrammatical penname Russ Watkins uses whenever he tries to write humor) merely confirms previous evidence....that Watkins can't write humor. What makes this one offensive is not that Watkins tried but that Vorzimer placed it side by side with one of the typically brilliant works of that fannish genius, Robert Bloch. This one is called "The Conventioneers Prayer" and if I'd known this was going to be in it I'd probably have sent Vorzimer his dime or 15¢ or whatever it was he was demanding. The Bloch article is well worth 25¢. The rest of the issue, while containing material worth perusing if received in trade wouldn't drag even a 1943 penny from me in payment, however. (If puzzled see my last ABSTRACT review.) Incidentally, in case you're interested in turning a profit I hereby promise to subscribe to any (reasonably priced) fanzine which features Bloch as a regular columnist if the editor in question will send me a bill. Don't be too eager, though....I'll check with Bloch first. In the long con report some of Vorzimer's reports of his own activity indicate that it might be wise to raise the upper age limit on his proposed by-law to force all fans under 16 or 18 to come chaperoned to cons or be refused admittance to 21, the age of legal responsibility. Of course this would affect many more people including one P. Vorzimer, wouldn't it? Something to think over, Mr. Vorzimer, eh? Odd how people justify censoring of other people's reading matter but lack enthusiasm for having their own censored. Of course this still wouldn't protect us from the Sykora's and Deglers but as far as legal responsibility goes I can see no difference between a 15 year old and a 20 year old. And, as I recall, the fan who passed out in front of an elevator at the Chicon was past eighteen. Certainly the antics of (some) teen-age fans at conventions is a first class headache but I lack enthusiasm for a proposal to declare as adults only those the age of the proposer and older. All in all an interesting magazine which would improve considerably if Vorzimer weren't so anxious to be the first explorer in angel-less areas.

ALPHA--Vol. 1 #7 Dave Vendelmans, 130, Strydhoflaan, Berchem, Antwerp, BELGIUM. 60¢ (for a sub - issues unstated)

The only Belgian fanzine. The contents page contains a bewildering array of names and addresses so I hope the above is the correct one. I was under the impression this was primarily Jan

Jansen but since his name and address appear no place on the contents page the exchange copy of review will go to Vendelmans and someone kindly let me know if I'm mis-mailing it. This fanzine, unfortunately, was oversold to me before I ever saw a copy. Don't misunderstand. It's good...quite good. But it's not the unique and exciting mag I'd been led to expect...not a Belgian HYPHEN. Most disturbing to me was the prevailing British air throughout. Maybe I'm expecting too much of Continentals writing in the English language but I'd expected a different air and atmosphere. It's almost impossible to pick up any zine from the U.S. or from the British Isles without instantly recognizing its origin. Of course Aussie zines also have a very British air and Canadian magazines in great part partake of the faults and/or virtues of American fanmags but if one failed to read the contents page, letter column, and editorials wherein the origin is mentioned or discussed it would be very easy to mistake this for an English magazine. The contributors in great part are British, the literary construction, layout, style of mimeography... all strongly resemble what we've come to regard as typical of British fandom. Maybe I'm asking too much. After all, Antwerp is considerably closer to London than New York.....or, for that matter, much nearer to London than I am to New York. (Current location as this is written, for the curious, Tacoma, Washington.) Much of ALPHA is clever, most well done, and, if one makes allowances for the fact the editors are working in other than their native language (a patronizing attitude I object to. I much prefer to review on the basis of a fan is a fan), then this is a truly prodigious accomplishment. But, aside from that, it is just another above average fanzine which has not, as yet, at least, exhibited the individuality necessary to establish it in the hall of immortal fanzines.

ANSWERZINE--Orville W Mosher, 1728 Mayfair, Emporia, Kans.

This probably sounded like a great idea but in practice it thuds resoundingly. A postcard sized zine in which Mosher runs off the answers to all ~~ix~~ his correspondence and circulates so everyone can read. In the first place two thirds of the answers ~~xx~~ are of no general interest. And, to completely scuttle any worth in the idea, he fails to print the letters which they are answering, thus making the answers completely unintelligible except to the person addressed.

BEM --#3, Tom White, 3, Vine Street, Cutler Heights, Bradford, 4, Yorks, England.

Last time I gave a rave review to #2 and hailed this as a very special addition to the ranks of fanzines. #3 is quite a letdown from that very special second issue (didn't see #1). From the summits of 'almost as good as HYPHEN' it has fallen to the level of ALPHA as 'just another above average British zine'. Faint praise, perhaps, boys, but still praise. And, having previously proved you have what it takes to edit a sensational zine I hope you prove this issue to have been only a temporary off-moment. This issue leads off with another of those articles from the inexhaustible Bloch typewriter which any other fan would give his right arm to have written....Bloch only gave one finger. ThisN's twin conreports by a fan and pro...both of whom live in Weyauwega,

Wisconsin, I suspect. Vince Clarke Continues the engrossing memoirs of his life with the fabulous Ken Bulmer, publisher of the one and only NIRVANA. Better luck next time. How about another article by your younger brother....a promising fan-writer if I ever encountered one. All the best fan-writers deny interest in fandom and/or sf from Laney through Rapp to Bill Ballard.

BORED STFW Wayne Strickland, 4920 Orchard Ave. San Diego 7, Calif.

A one-shot. I'm proud of all the other reviewers for not making the super-obvious pun, nor will I. Strickland is said to be only 12 and there is nothing about this magazine which would contradict such an assumption. If Strickland sticks around fandom a few years he'll probably be writing some very readable material and perhaps doing some worthwhile publishing and by the time he's 19 or 20 he may sprout into a first-class genius. Most of the most outstanding fannish products seem to have gotten quite early starts with 12 about the minimum. But at present this product offers nothing which can be recommended.

BRENESCHLUSS--various editors, 5 Furness, St. Marsh. Lancaster, ENGLAND.

Most recent of the spate of zines which decide if Willis can do it they can too. But there's only one HYPHEN. At any rate, the present trend is an improvement over those dreary fictions which comprised 95% of the non-Belfast output from the British Isles about a year ago. Oh, I forgot. They also contained con-reports. The irrepressible and omnipresent Bloch is back, again, with the third article on cons I've reviewed this issue. Knowing Bloch I presume he sat down in a spare half hour before plane time the night he left for San Francisco and knocked off nine or ten on the same subject, mailing them out at random to whatever editorial names first popped into his mind as he dashed for the plane. As usual it is the best thing in the issue. Second best is an autobiographical article "A Prominent Female Member of Lancaster Fandom" by Irene Gore, a typically fabulous fannish character. She ends the first paragraph of her article with the question "Does anyone want to marry me?" I gather she's the girl-friend of one of the other two co-editors but I'm a trifle confused over which one. This bears looking into. What sort of fan offers free advertising space to his fiancée to aid her in entrapping a man?

CANADIAN FANDOM #23--Gerald Steward, 166 McRoberts Ave. Toronto 10, Ontario, CANADA.

Inasmuch as I've given CANFAN poor reviews while viewing with favor some sloppily mimeod near illegible zines Steward mailed me a specially messed up copy. Unfortunately this doesn't improve the contents a bit. This is the best issue I've seen since Steward took over. The editorial is a blazing little piece which leaves Norman Browne nicely roasted....a splendid example of the fannish personality committed to paper (and I'm speaking of Steward's, not Browne's). Most of the latter half of the magazine is devoted to Howard Lyons....a sort of zine within a zine. And it's fairly good, although nothing to rave over. But it is enough above the usual CANFAN level to take most of the credit for the improvement this time. The letter column has always been better than the material deserved. The rest of the magazine resembles previous issues.

There are reports CANFAN may be passed on to a fourth editor/publisher which probably won't improve it any but might be a good thing for Steward, whom I'm assured is a most unCANFANNish type. No surer recipe for disaster exists than to try to edit a magazine which has a personality at variance with one's own.

COSMIC FRONTIER #10--Stuart K. Nock RFD#3 Castleton, N.Y.

Usually there's something unique about each fanzine which calls for comment. Occasionally one pops up which is so normal, average, and ordinary one has to work to produce a review. CF started out as a normal undistinguished fanzine and ten issues later it is still a normal undistinguished fanzine....which in itself distinguishes it. This type zine usually doesn't last past the third issue. If you're an avid fan CF has a slight value as fillin information to keep one conscious of everthing going on in fandom. Many fairly well known names contribute to it or write in letters. But, otherwise, I can't really recommend it.....not that the material (most of it) is really bad. It's not. But neither is it very good.

DEVIANT #4--Carol McKinney, Sta. 1, Box 514 Provo, Utah.

There have been complaints from time to time that an unusually well-reproduced fanzine draws nothing but comments and compliments on the repro., with little mention of the material. Apparently it hasn't occurred to these complaining that the reason is that most people like to comment favorably and so look for something they can sincerely praise. And the material in most of these magazines is not of much use for such a purpose. People who lecture on the importance of neatness and pains in producing a fanzine always cite SKY HOOK and, recently, GRUE. The reason, is of course, that these are the only ones they can cite which have extremely good reproduction without the material suffering. Boggs obviously takes great pains. I think Grennell takes more than normal, although most of the credit is due to the Gestetner. The old dittoed GRUE's were nothing special. In fairness to Dean, though, none of the other Gestetner produced zines can match GRUE in appearance. All this preamble leads up to is another kudo to Mrs. McKinney for her very fine mimeography. When the first issue appeared it had many faults but I felt they would vanish rapidly and she would be producing a good sturdy workmanlike, if non-novaish, fanzine, a la PEON. The magazine has improved and much of the worst removed but not as rapidly or completely as I'd anticipated. Subzine editing does not seem to be a natural feminine talent. The femmes hold their own, and better, in the apas, but there was never an important femme edited subzine till QUANDRY and, alas, there's not been another since. McKinney was the most promising contender to appear since, but it is now apparent that the fussy, frilly, indirect approach of so many femzines is here to stay in DEVIANT. These traits probably make Mrs. McKinney that much more charming in person but in a generalzine, they detract. I seem to be damning with faint praise all over the place this issue and if it's getting monotonous I apologize but again I must say much of the material is quite good and the magazine is well worth obtaining. I just can't get enthusiastic over it. There's a very entertaining fanzine autobiography by Dick Geis and more memories of Oak Ridge by Dorothy Hansen. Either of these could sit unashamedly in the best of fanzines. The rest rates from fair to dull.

EPITOME #2--Mike May, 9428 Hobart St. Dallas 18, Tex.

A neozine...legibly mimeod, averagely edited, with inferior material. Where it goes from here depends on the contributions it draws. Lucky acquisition of material by two or three top writers could inject life into the zine. Otherwise it will probably fold after another issue or so.

FAN FICTION--Vol. 1. No. 1, Ronald Voigt, 3859 Sullivan St. Louis, Mo.

The following quote is from the editorial. "Most faneds allow space for just a coupla stories in their fanzines, just enough to bore you. FF will have complete issues filled with the stuff, enough to put you in your grave.///The only persons, undoubtedly, who will like this mag, undoubtedly, are those who see their stories in print." (The two undoubtedly's are both Mr. Voigt's contribution, not mine.) When the editor knows so well in advance precisely what he's doing and writes such a perfect summation why should I bother writing my own review?

HYPHEN #10-- Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd., Belfast, N. Ireland.

Voted #1 in Gregg Calkin's authoritative poll of fanzines (a judgment with which I differ only slightly. I voted it 2nd, or possibly 3rd. I don't recall for sure just where I put CONFAB.) But whatever your views HYPHEN is indubitably very near the top and certainly everyone should admit by now that Willis is currently the world's #1 fan. Such part-time pros as Tucker and Bloch are working at a disadvantage and Ackerman is now very close to a forgotten man. (personally I wish Forrie would return to actifandom. I always liked and respect Forrie as a fan but now he is represented almost completely by his pro activity, much of which is growing more and more hard to swallow). This issue is very very good. It is also below average for HYPHEN...two statements difficult to reconcile for any other fanzine...~~XXXX~~ even PSYCHOTIC, the mag I voted #1. Apparently all the contributors decided to do something different this issue and the only authentic portions left are the letter column, interlineations, and illustrations. You can't call yourself a fan without this one.

MINI #1--Jacob Edwards, 1010 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, Va.

Widely assumed to be a hoax by a pseudonymous Ted White (editor of ZIP) I rather doubt it....chiefly because MINI has more editorial personality and a generally more entertaining atmosphere than ZIP even though the material isn't so outstanding as in recent issues of ZIP. If this is a camouflaged White he'd better retain the fake-face. It's better.

NANDU #2--Nan Gerding, address which was recently changed eludes me.

This is a SAPS zine, anyway, so don't know how widely available it is for trade. As mentioned above femmes put out fine apazines and this is an example. Currently SAPS o.e. Nan runs off zines for about half the members and still manages to produce 60 or 80 pages of her own mailing. And none of them in the least bit peccable.

THE NEW FUTURIAN--Autumn 1954, J.M. Rosenblum, 7 Grosvenor Park
Leeds 7, England.

I can remember when REVIEW had an unusually British flavor if four overseas magazines were reviewed in the same issue. Now about every other one comes from some non-U.S. source, and most of these from Britain. What brought about the sudden rise within the last year of exchange copies mailed to REVIEW I don't know unless Bill Morse has been beating the drums for me over there. Or perhaps this represents a strong upsurge in British publishing. More probably both. If someone else has not already preceded me in saying the super-obvious I hereby dub TNF the 'British SKY HOOK'. Mimeography is less spectacular and physical layout and appearance not so splendid as the Boggszine but otherwise the resemblance couldn't be more marked. However, it is not an imitation. It is a revived publication which originally flourished close to a decade ago, and whose editor has evidently just emerged from a bout of the seven-year gafia. If one wishes to produce a literate magazine about fandom and if there are certain natural ways which work best. SKY HOOK and the FUTURIAN have both discovered the same methods independently. Each issue is a fascinating and eagerly waited experience. This one contains another installment in Walter Gillings (the Cro-Magnon of fandom) accounts of his early struggles to establish sf and/or fandom in Britain in the late 20's and early 30's. Hope he continues it up to the present. So often these accounts stop just as they get really fascinating. But of course recalling the recent past has little nostalgia value. An amusing incident is recounted by Vince Clarke. There's a dull book review of a long-out-of-print sf story, columns by "Phoenix" and J.K.H. Brunner, the latest installment in a triangular dispute by pro-writer John Christopher (ex-fan C.S.Youd), a critic and a defendant, and a lengthy letter column which is interesting though doubtless less to Americans than Britons. If you import only two fanzines make it HYPHEN and THE NEW FUTURIAN.

NITE CRY, Aug. 1954--Don Chappell, 5921 East 4 Place, Tulsa, Okla.

This is the most recent, but still unreviewed, issue at hand. Maybe their just dating late and delayed or possibly the magazine has folded. Since the latter is quite probably and the magazine is fair, but not outstanding I shan't do a detailed review.

NUCLEONICS #3--L.S.Bourne, 3709 S.E. Hawthorne, Portland, Ore.

An amusing little zine by a fan I predict will never be an important editor. He quite obviously likes to take things easy and enjoy life too much. He might become a worthwhile apen or a well-known contributor or columnist to other zines. Certainly if he doesn't just relax his way right out of fandom it will be worthwhile having him around. If it weren't for this overwhelming impression I might hazard Portland had produced a competitor for Geis. Geis, himself, and the mag off so appearance is good and the material and layout are both better than in similarly early numbered issues of PSY. Bourne has just as much or more editorial personality than Geis if somewhat less of the high-powered approach which is also indispensable. Nope. I'll be really surprised if this mag sees more than two more issues. But I hope I get those. I could use a few pages less full-page illos, tho.

Geis's own PSYCHOTIC is not reviewed here because I've already mailed my copy of the latest issue into storage as it is the one fanzine I save. Can I give greater praise in a review? .

OOPSLA 15--Gregg Calkins, 2817 Elevent Street, Santa Monica, Cal.

Another of the top zines...rated third in the poll Calkins took which of course cannot be accepted as unbiased since, despite Calkin's best efforts to prevent undue prejudice in favor of the magazine taking the poll, they can't help but be slanted somewhat in favor of the fan or magazine responsible. However, at least OOPSLA did not rate first which is a common result in such polls if the magazine is even halfway decent. OOPSLA actually got more votes than any other magazine, 37 out of 40 ballots returned... Although the poll was limited to fan editors who presumably think more independently and have a wider knowledge it is probable that all, or practically all of those polled receive OOPSLA and that probably a smaller percentage are familiar with any other fanzine on the list. This is not Gregg's fault. He can't send cards to editors he's never heard of. The same thing would happen with any editor conducting such a poll. Despite it's number of votes OOPSLA rated only third since it tended to be listed farther down in the returns than the other high votes. It got only four firsts compared to 11 for HYTHEN, 6 for PSYCHOTIC, and 7 for fourth-placer GRUE. And I doubt if its favored position swayed the returns by more than one or two places which would still leave OOPSLA in the top half-dozen mags...a fair result in this reviewer's opinion (incidentally I was amazed to find CONFAB not even listed...thus indicating it had less than five votes....dont people believe in voting for letterzines, even when they're of this quality!) One thing you can be sure of in OOPSLA....nothing but cream. Calkins pulls material from just about anybody he wishes. This issue starts with a disturbing glance into the mind of Harlan Ellison. I am not a psychiatrist and, anyway, Ellison hasn't asked for my opinion so I shan't give it. But, in any case, Ellison is literate if at times not coherent and these pieces always have a morbidly clinical fascination. Bob Tucker likes to write travelogues for some reason. I'm happy to report he's finally getting the hang of it and they now read as well as the rest of his material. But twas not always thus! There's Walt Willis regular column and a new and very well done fanzine review column by Bob Silverberg. Hope Bob keeps this up. The biggest reason for founding REVIEW was precisely because no such column as the one Bob writes here was then in existence. Since Bob does it just as I'd like and considerably more briefly than I (plus absolutely no effort on my part) then I might be able to give up FANZINES AT MIDNIGHT. It is a chore at times, especially when you pick up the eighth issue of some utterly undistinguished magazine and try to think of something to say about it. Then comes the fanzine poll from which I've been liberally quoting and finally Calkins unique and tasty hash "Therblings" which combines a little bit of everything.

OPERATION FANTAST--sub \$1.00, #16, Capt. K.F. Slater 'Riverside' South Brink, Wisbech, Cambs. England

The official voice of OPERATION FANTAST, which, despite the same name, is a loose-knit international sf trading group which can get you just about anything on either side of the Atlantic.

Slater has many pro-contributors. (Unlike the U.S. most pros are/were fans and retain very close contact with fandom.) In addition to being the top addition to the sf field in the past five years, J.T.McIntosh is also rapidly proving himself the most literate of writers on the subject of writing sf...just as Damon Knight is the most skillful writer about already written sf. Perhaps someday McIntosh can be induced to write a handbook for beginning sf writers. It would probably have to be privately published by some fan, though. I don't suppose there's enough demand to make it commercially profitable...in which case McIntosh probably couldn't spare the time. Rest of the magazine will be familiar to those who've previously seen the magazine and for those who haven't let me assure you it's well worth receiving. Finances must be looking up since Ken's return to civilian life. OF is printed again for the first time in several years.

ORION #7--Paul Enever, 9 Churchill Ave., Hillingdon, Middlesex, ENGLAND.

ORION was one of the first British zines to break free from the stuffiness so prevalent a year ago. No insult is meant to ORION when I add that a number who have since followed its path have surpassed it. ORION is still a very good fanzine and one I'd hate to quit receiving. It is edited tastefully throughout and if the material is not often the type one reminisces about five years later it is always good and always fits nicely with the magazine's editorial personality, a statement which is not always true of some of its more high-flying competitors, even the illustrious HYPHEN. Special exception: a fiction serial "Such Dark Design", which I didn't read.

PEON #33--Charles Lee Riddle, 108 Dunham St. Norwich, Conn. 10¢

How many of you can match that 33? Seventh year of publication. The second anniversary was one of the very first fanzines I ever saw... correction, one of the first good fanzines. I'd received quite an assortment of junk prior to that but had seen few of any quality except FANTASY-TIMES. I was quite impressed.. Fiction by Nydahl, Columns by Carr, Mason, and Harmon, a readable and controversial article by Harry Harrison, more columns by Watkins, Clarkson, and Macauley, and a splendid piece of pro-stuff philosophising about Isaac Asimov about a series of reviews in IMAGINATION which have gotten under the skin of more than just Asimov even though he has been the target of these completely unreasonable attacks. Why not subscribe to this one? Unless you already trade for it, that is. Probably the only fanzine you can feel quite sure will continue publishing regularly till your sub expires and the material is always worth the money.

PHANTASMAGORICA--Vol. 1. No. 2, new series, Derek Pickles, 197 Cutler Heights Lane, Bradford 4, Yorks. ENGLAND.

Another revived fanzine. This time in the guise of a casual informal zine, far different (and better) than the old PHANTAS.

REG**Robert E. Gilbert, 509 West Main St., Jonesboro, Tenn.

Beautifully drawn and reproduced versions of a variety of pictures by a talented and capable artist, apparently Gilbert, this is very

nice to look at but rather frustrating to a paid-up member in The Movement to Encourage More Reading In Christmas Cards and Fanzines. Skipping advertisements the total magazine takes about 30 seconds to peruse. The only reading matter consists of various advertisements for Gilbert's art. An idea for editors who want to put out elegant looking fanzines would be to take him up on it. Since even adequate artists are so difficult to come by in the current fannish scene it might well be worth while to pay out cash money to Gilbert for illos to dress up your mag. I would say he is easily on a level with Grossman and Arfstrom in their fannish days just before they broke into the pros.

RHEA--Fall 1954, Fred Malz, 38 Seville St., San Francisco 24, Cal.
25¢

A rather pleasant but rather empty little magazine. Probably expensive since it's in the offset process. Editorials are readable but only serve as appetizers for a main course that never arrives. Several precious pages are wasted on a piece of fiction by Bob G. Warner including a full page illo which, while amateurish is better than you usually find in a fanzine and much better than the story it accompanies. 'Tis by Malz himself, by the way. Only real piece of roughage is a Calvin Beck column. Beck makes his usual prophecies only the editors crossed him up by delaying publication until the action event (the election, in this case) had already occurred, which leaves Beck looking shall we say, just the least bit silly. At that the Democratic Party managed to squeeze through with a hairline majority in both houses which is about 1000% better fulfillment of his prediction ("Overwhelming landslide defeats.... eclipsing all other (victories the Democratic Party's) had in the past) than usually occurs. Gos', it must be wonderful to look into the future and see things denied us ordinary mortals. I still delight in remembering the time Beck predicted wholesale arrests of fans by the FBI for indulging in propeganda.

SCINTILLA #18--Larry Anderson, 2716 Smoky Lane, Billings, Mont.

18 issues, practically no two of which bear any resemblance to each other. This may be a good way to roll up issue numbers but few more effective recipes for editing an unsuccessful magazine could be devised. Latest issue is a single sheet legal size containing a short story, some fanzine reviews, a cartoon, a bit of editorial burbling and the address.

SCHNERDLITES #1-Nigel Lindsay, 311 Babbacombe Rd., Torquay, Devon, ENGLAND

An OMPazine...and typical of first issue apazines. Witty in a number of places, especially the between-the-lines section on the back page while still groping and rambling through much of the issue. But Lindsay obviously has all the requisites of an apa-pubber and this is a worthwhile tradezine if he wishes to continue it that way. Wish I had time enough that I dared send my name to the OMPA waiting list.

SPIRAL --Nov. 1954, Denis Moreen 214 Ninth St., Wilmette, Ill. 10¢

After a bad start SPIRAL picked up about issue #5 and has been steadily improving since then. Now it undergoes radical policy changes for the usual reasons and while I approve of the more per-

sonalized slant, this issue represents a net loss from #8 due to dropping the letter column, SPIRAL's best feature.

Damn. I'm getting tired of writing fanzine reviews. Four hours & still not thru..

TART--George Jennings, 11121 Tascosa Dr. Dallas, Tex. 6 issues, 30¢

A bright little zine that could improve or could get worse. The letter section which occupies over half the mag is fine...the two contributions aren't. In particularly poor taste, and making for annoying reading is Ron Ellick's account of a visit to LASFS. I don't know about the rest of you but I'm getting pretty damn sick of teen-age fans who affect artificial cynicism. Just as the old cliché about having to learn to take orders before you can give them you have to learn good manners before you can deliver an insult properly. A well-delivered insult deflates its target (preferably fifteen minutes later when he suddenly realizes what you meant) and amuses the bystanders.....and it is delivered rarely and only when circumstances definitely warrant. Of course you can spew out constantly your low opinion of the world and those around you but it only succeeds in confirming the view most people already probably had...that you are a bore.

UMBRA--#4, John Hitchcock, 15 Arbutus, Ave., Baltimore 28, Maryland.

After the blast delivered last issue it is only fair to reveal that this issue is an improvement over earlier issues. It's still a poor fanzine. But, while the dittography is frequently dim every fourth or fifth page you find one you can read through without eye-strain. Hitchcock is a bit more repressed and coherent than previously. Noah McLeod, usually worth attention, has an interesting review on "Conjure Wife" which deserves better presentation than the Hitchcock reproduction and surroundings. George Wetzel consumes six pages. No need to repeat what I said about him last issue, either. Letter column is fair...the portions you can read. Rest runs along similar lines. As I warned last issue no punches pulled where this mag is concerned in the future. I'll give credit for anything good but won't soften the criticism any. This issue is a very big improvement. But it's still poor enough that it is not recommended.

VULCAN #5--Terry Carr, 15¢, 134 Cambridge St. San Francisco 12, California.

Someday Terry Carr is going to look back at his Face Critturs days and shudder. Terry shows signs of being on the brink of developing into a considerable fannish talent any day and has been showing such signs for several years now. As yet it's still promise. And the Face Critturs are a regrettable premature bid for artificial concocted fame. Carr's insight into human nature is not yet deep enough nor his artistic skill yet great enough to pull off a tour de force such as this would have to be. Presented a page at a time, as in the past one could just ignore them and wait for Carr to think them over. But when nine successive pages are devoted ~~xxxx~~ to them in Carr's own mag the time has come for loud protest. Rest of the issue is a hodge-podge with only the letter column holding much interest. But of course those nine pages of Face Critturs in the front of the mag prejudice you. Like Carr, this magazine seems always on the verge but never quite develops. I wish Carr would discover his metier. I expect great things.

LETTER FROM LONDON

There are, as our revered editor points out, almost no limits to the puns he could have used to head this column, starting with "Bilious" and working on down through Mor Senseless Stuff, right to "Semaphorically Speaking". ((Also considered...."The Morse Code", "Morse: International", "Re: Morse", "Morsels of Fannish Wisdom", and (courtesy B.Bloch,) "The Morseian Chronicles" -- v.l:m.)) The main reason that I felt like keeping it as a letter was that, once I started columning, there would be no limits to the pomposity I could exude. However, I, for one, would like to see if there are any new puns available, so if there is a fresh heading to this page, we shall all know that Vern has let his imagination run riot.

It occurred to me, after I had sent off the last letter, that there are awful penalties for the British Serviceman who gets all mixed up in politics, especially to the extent of making statements of personal preference. So if any of you want to get in a little practice in blackmail, here is your chance. Not that my opinions are so distasteful to the Government, but the Law is the Law, they say.

It does seem as if I was a bit off the mark about the effect of Attlee's tour upon Attlee, but I am not entirely convinced. He sticks, at all times, to what he figures is the exact and literal truth, and often uses such pedantic language that everyone thinks he has said something different. You need to be a Jesuit, at least, to be sure what the old man is saying. None of the rich and fruity phrasing of Churchill--who called Attlee "A Sheep in Sheep's Clothing", once. If you have read his autobiography, or even extracts, you will have a fair idea of his ability to reduce everything to its least attractive Lowest Common Factor. Terribly honest, and terribly dull.

And now that Maxwell Fyfe has gone to Another Place as Viscount Kilmuir, I guess Diogenes had better get a new glowworm to his lantern. I subscribe to the Conservative Party, myself, but let us have no illusions about them all being knights in shining armour. Those I have met recently have been more like Tradesmen and Businessmen in frayed serge suiting, and handier with a platitude than a lance. Every Monday noon, during sessions, one can attend a meeting in Westminster at which a party M.P. gives a talk on the previous week's work in the House. It can be most enlightening. Some of them deliver a speech; some try to; some try not to. A few manage to make themselves interesting as well as informative, but most of them are a little too plausible. There are just a few who enable to voter to retain a little of the faith he puts in the men he elects (God help him) in authority over him.

To some extent, Walt Willis is right when he says that the BBC TV would never put on anything quite so controversial as the McCarthy investigations. For that matter we do not have anything quite like that here to show. All the same our TV has had its moments. There was, for instance, the occasion when a member of the Economist staff delivered a rather schoolmasterly lecture to Pandit Nehru, and then asked him if he did not really deserve such a lecture, after his behavior had appeared so childish (for a statesman) over Pakistan. This was during a Meet the Press Show. There was also a political forum--one each, Liberal, Labour, Conservative--during which a middle-aged female got hold of one of the mikes and positively oozed venom at the Socialist portion of the audience. The main subject was food, and she gave chapter and verse to prove that prices were not, either, going up. I thought for a moment that she was going to tear

the eyes out of one of the opposing faction who tried to prove-- also with chapter and verse--that prices were, so, going up. The camera kept focussed on her right to the bitter end, when she had talked herself out, and seemed even to have run out of breath, but she didn't see why she should give up the Mike.

Probably Walt didn't see that--might even have been before he bought his TV, for all I know.

But this is supposed to be a column for a STF fanzine, so we had better change the subject. I was warned in advance that Tom Godwin had a really special story in an upcoming ASF, so I was on the lookout for it when my copy arrived. Since the notice came from Vernon McCain, I read *The Cold Equations* first and didn't read any more stf for the rest of the week. I think it can certainly stand comparison with anything by Sturgeon and Bradbury, and I am honestly not really sure that there can ever be anything in the future even to approach it for perfection of detail, right down to the metal that the girl's shoes were made of. Up to the discovery of the stowaway the story was good but from then on it was unbelievably perfect. We had the chance of getting a mushy happy ending; a trick happy ending; a "Brave Spaceman gives Life for Girl" ending--there was no limit to the possible ways in which Godwin could have got around it. But he methodically extinguished each one, not coldly, in spite of the title; not angrily; he just led us inexorably down the track we knew to be inevitable. Each time one of the characters came up with an idea we had a surge of hope that this time we had found a way round. But each time, again, we had the same lost feeling as we realised that it had never really been a chance at all, only a dream of what might have been, IF. I think it is the only story ever to have brought tears to my eyes. Godwin has been putting out quite good stuff for some time now, but this is, without a doubt, his masterpiece. It should be anthologised for the next two hundred years.

It may well be that *"The Cold Equations"* has made me harder than ever to please, but when Carnell sent me my copy of *"More Than Human"*, I felt that although this was a damn good story, and a credit to Sturgeon, it still seemed to fall short of what he had intended. There was the feeling that there were one or two points hanging on the verge of being made, but not quite coming to the surface. Perhaps, if he had taken slightly smaller strides between each of the three parts, and brought the opening story along a bit farther, and started the third part a bit earlier, there would not have been the same feeling of a book being written purely for the edification of, say, a dozen people, all of whom have been for a long time acquainted with the whole story. It had something of the effect of the original *Galaxy* Bradbury, *"The Fireman"*, but with greater gaps between the three episodes. It's a case, this time, of "divided they stand, united they wobble", even if they do not fall. The idea of *Homo Gestalt* is brilliant enough, but there is too much trickery in part three, and though we are left with virtue, as always, triumphant, it seemed just a fraction too slick. Maybe I expected too much, after the rave reviews the book got (and no book has ever lived up to its reviews, with the possible exception of *"Caine Mutiny"* and *"Cat of Many Tails"*, plus a couple of English publications). Whatever happens, though I'll recommend *"More Than Human"* to anyone who enquires, I doubt if it is the Book of the Year that it has been claimed to be by Carnell and a couple of others.

Tucker's *"Wild Talent"* is a damn good story, too, with a bright idea, plenty of well-rounded characterisation, and a quite reasonable pace. For anyone who doesn't recognise the BNF names he uses, it can be a bestseller from the word Go. But those names pulled me

up short every time I got into the swing of the story. This may be a personal quirk, because I loaned it to a couple of UN-fen, both of whom raved over it, and I'm awful sorry, Bob; but you should have applied names of BNFs who really fitted the characters you used. Then I'd not have had any difficulty in accepting the moves of them all. I don't know of any more fascinating subject than the psi powers, and both Tucker and Sturgeon have produced what can stand as being probably the best in a long time in that field, ^{but} for the reasons already mentioned, I could not put either of them as being Bookoftheyear Choices.

((Well! This should certainly cure any suspicions which may have been held that REVIEW ever censors its columnists. Some of you will doubtless remember that "More Than Human" was selected by this magazine a year ago for precisely the honor Bill sloughs off, the Best Sf Novel of 1953. And just to compound matters, elsewhere in this issue you will find "Wild Talent" cited for this same distinction for 1954, together with a discussion of the complaint laid at its door by Morse and others. -- v.l.m.))

I prefer to reserve judgment on the Clifton-Riley story serialised in ASF until I have had the final episode. It is in my line, of course, and Clifton has put out some fine stuff, but when he works in double harness, he loses a little of his effectiveness. By himself he wrote "What Have I Done?", a gem of a story. With Alex Apostolides he produced a couple of shorts which, while good enough as ideas, seemed to fall short in the presentation. ((Including "What Thin Partitions"?? -- v.l.m.)) It seemed as if, instead of vetting each other's work, and smoothing it down whenever he felt it needed it, they first picked their plot and roughed it out, then divided it into equal parts and just stuck the thing together as it came off the typewriter. With Riley, so far, there has been none of the jerkiness that became common with Apostolides, so I remain hopeful, but after the letdown of the conclusion of Gunner Cade, I don't feel like going out on a limb and saying anything is especially fine, in my view. All the same, I have high hopes of "They'd Rather Be Right", and I'm waiting patiently for part four.

Since POGO is still highranking in the view of many fans, I see no reason why I should not disagree publicly with one or two of McCain's remarks in a recent issue of OOPSLA! while it is true that Kelly is inclined to repeat some of his situations--like people getting into Albert's stomach, ((tonite is Sunday....and guess what today's POGO installment was....a frog investigating Albert's lost voice is accidentally washed into his stomach....this original idea will probably be good to string out for four or five Sunday papers. Well, at least the dialogue is clever -- v.l.m.)) or one or two of the characters getting lost in a swamp and being rescued by Owl and a Ol' Firing Fly-- he has always been known to work for the very last giggle in any situation. All the best missionaries repeat themselves time after time, once they hit upon a telling analogy. Why not Kelly, who is a missionary in the field of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness?

The Okefonokee people rose to fame and the love of millions of readers because they truly bore Malice towards none, Charity towards all. They were essentially a bunch of uncomplicated people with a strong resemblance to our own acquaintances, who got a great deal of fun out of just living. The fact that, incidentally, Kelly got over a lot of what TIME calls "simple, grassroots philosophy" was just a side issue for us. We just liked meeting the swamp critters because they thought they were people. Even when, first Albert was tried for eating Pup-dog, then Churchy was sought for bootlegging mail, we never doubted that they would both come away alive. The villiyans were too

hammy for anything but guffaws, and some of their arguments were ridiculous enough to persuade even the most timid POGO aficionado that right would prevail in the end. It is only when Kelly brings up his mordant political satire--I think that should be capitalized--Mordant Political Satire--that he loses his attraction, because, since the arrival on the scene of Mole MacCarony and, more especially, Simple J. Malarkey, there has always been the possibility that some of the malice they bring with them will rub off on the others. We don't want our ideal swamp to be spoiled by these upstarts. No-one ever expect that Sarky McCarbre would ever taste any delicious Turtle Soup brewed from Churchy La Femme, nor, despite the arguments of Seminole Sam, did we expect for a moment that Albert would be convicted of murder; but these new intruders into the swamp scene bring an extra and un-nameable horror with them. It is as if the perspective has been deliberately lost and distorted, in order to make a point to the readership which has been aware of the basic idea for a long long time. Why preach to the already converted?

Possibly you have already read and enjoyed the POGO Stepmother Goose. My copy only recently arrived(Thanks,Vern!). I was tickled pink by This Is The Hunt; fully appreciated The Town on the Edge of the End, and I was really delighted by the Trial Scene from Alice. Now, I read Alice when I was even less than That High, and have reread it several times since, but I never in my wildest dreams figured the angle that Kelly took. There is a crystal clearness about the thing from start to finish, so much so that I've decided to read the book once more in the light of Kelly's translation. And this time he has kept the malice within the realms of reason, and remembered all the old Kelly touches. Would I be wrong if I suggest that most of the drawings of the Bench are made from actual photographs of another and more famous one? That part of it is none of my business, after all. I just revel in POGO, and rejoice in the fact that the quality of UN-maliciousness has returned, if only for a space.

The reason that Comic Book Pogo folded, I think, is that it had overdone the repetition that Vern mentioned. The daily strips are continuous and there is a great deal of time between each series. The quarterly comics, on the other hand, began to run to a definite and invariable formula. The first section would bring in most of the characters and make a few well chosen cracks about things in general. Then we would get in a session in which Albert would either get mixed up with a large plank or with a tree, with the expected results. Next, a short tale in which Albert recited a poem of some sort in Kelly's very clever gibberish. Lastly, Howland Owl and Churchy would throw food and stuff all over the place for no particular reason, talking, quite often, about some matter of no relationship to the fight. In other words, Pogo Comic had become a ritual parade. Some of the preambles to the rituals were as clever as we could expect from Kelly but the fact remained that we got tired of the invariability of the material. Happily, the daily strips keep up their reputation for poking gentle fun at us all, with the exceptions I have already mentioned, and those are not as frequent as they once were. Indian Charlie I could also do without. Mis' Sis Boombah, on the other hand, is a welcome addition to the staff, and if she can beat a little sense into the head of that sanctimonious old slob of a Deacon Mushrat, he might not be so eager to invite his revolting friends to the Paradise of All True Fen.

You may recall that on a previous occasion I gave Vern a quick guide around the White Horse, and that one or two people were quite annoyed about it. I was, by the time the shouting started, nowhere near London but I did hear that a few members of the London Circle were screaming for my blood and had later gone so far as the project of a mimeo'd circular-cum-petition-cum-denunciation of the Big Slob Morse. When I first got back to London I was kind of occupied by the arrival of the GirlFriend from Canada, who does not read stf. So it was some considerable time before I managed to put in an appearance at the new HQ of the London Circle, The Globe. I went, not in fear and trembling, but wondering how many greetings I should get. I was quite surprised to find that, not only was there no outburst of zapping, there were even cries of "Hello, Bill, where've you been all this time? Have a beer?" In all the crowd assembled there and all those who turned up as the night went on only four avoided me at all, and of them two have since unfrozen. It seemed to me as if the vast majority of the London Circle had agreed with most of my description, after all, though I was quite politely asked by one of the more regular members to notice that the lunatic fringe seemed to have fallen off since the move from The White Horse.

In a way I was just a little disappointed. There was I, all keyed up to beard the lion in his den, and where was the lion? There was not even a cub. There was one possible cat with claws long and bloody enough to rip out my eyes but she was very tamely occupied elsewhere (Actually 'tamely' is hardly the word to apply, except in relation to 'the lion's den'.). But it does seem as if all the foofaraw that has been aroused has been even less than a storm in a pint-pot. I had intended to write a thrilling, gripping story and then there was nothing. So I decided I'd be really witty about how my personal charm had been solely responsible for the lack of animosity, only that would never have been believed. Then came the idea that it had all been chuckled over by those least concerned, and that it might well be entitled "Psychoneurotic makes Clear", as an indication that this particular black sheep had been received back into the fold. Unfortunately we cannot even have that, and this particular episode ends without even a whimper. It just didn't even gather enough momentum to start, let alone be brought to a finish.

Do not think, just because the lunatic fringe has fallen away, that there is any shortage of characters at the Globe on a Thursday night. Not so. They are just as strongly individual as any other group of fen. They have just, quite quietly, and as politely as Englishmen should, elbowed the others out.

There is ground for discussion, if you like: the comparative politeness and courtesy of English and American. I have strong opinions on that score, but not wishing to be torn apart by irate fellowcountrymen, I'll not say a word. Let's you and me keep it as an open secret, eh?

It does seem as if, now that the US is beginning to lose its temper publicly, the several nations of Europe are starting to admit the possibility of virtue West of the Atlantic. There was an Italian mentioned a few weeks ago in TIME. There comes now our own Herbert Morrison, and I quote from an interview: "The thing I like about the US is that they can, and will, change their minds. Much more so than we will." Yes, you may say, but that seems only half-hearted praise to give. True, but it is a hell of a long stride from what was becoming a dreary custom. Before the war, there was a poem(?) in an English magazine which parodied the old kindergarten rhyme-- "The King told the Queen, and the Queen told the Dairymaid, Get a little butter for the royal slice of bread."

The parody referred to a newspaper baron, beginning-- "The Boss told the Sec., and the Sec. told the Editor, Print a bit more slander on the Barcelona Reds."

The tendency to make indiscriminate cracks at the Yanks has dropped since a certain baron has left us in gloom and sorrow. There will be the odd outbreak, no doubt, just as some of the Hearst and McCormick press still make swinging swipes at us. But it will be more in the way of a ritual formula, murmured to appease some remote and long-dead deity. And thank God for that.

Footnote:--Columnist Morse will probably be offended at the number of commas removed in stencilling this column while I suspect at least some readers will regard the editor as derelict for leaving so many in. All I can say is this man Morse has an endless supply of commas and no end for ideas for new places to put the....that last is a trifle unfair. His punctuation is, for the most part, eminently correct by the standards of the last century but to eyes accustomed the the free flowing-style of the present day it comes out in rather choppy fashion so I compromised by removing about half the excess ones thus making myself equally offensive to all and proving lack of partisanship. I sympathise, Bill. I overuse commas, too...but compared to you I'm a tyro.---v.l.m.

I wonder what ever happened to Shelby?

Ad seen in a recent Seattle newspaper:

On our screen today!

Bob Hope and Rosemary Clooney

in "RED GARTERS" and "FANCY PANTS"

Recommended reading, for those who are interested either in the human mind, science fiction, the way life sometimes copies artifice, or the various differences in recounting a real life story which so strongly resembles a fictional plot, "The Jet-Propelled Couch" in the December and January issues of HARPERS. This recommendation is not, repeat not, to be indicated that I consider the story a great revelation, true, or worth serious investigation (although the psychiatrist did seem to me just a trifle narrow-minded in completely rulling out the one in 100,000 possibility that the story might be true, lacking any proof to the contrary and any evidence of other insanity save a history of an abnormal childhood which would encourage this type fantasy). It merely happens to be a remarkably engrossing account of something which combines various interests of the average fan.

Now I wonder. Was it ATLANTIC instead of HARPERS?

And could it be the Jan. & Feb. issues rather than Dec. & Jan.

How embarrassing. That's what comes of living on the road & having to throw away your magazines as soon as they're read.

And of course I haven't yet read the second installment which should be on the stands tomorrow. Today's 1/3/55

-----All for now. See you next issue, if there is

P.S. Magazine and issues listed above are correct one.