

PSYCHOTIC



FAN LEAVING NEWSTAND

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nin, Bob Stewart, Bergeron.

THE LEATHER COUCH

I looked at the pile of fanzines...then looked away. "My God," I thought, "This thing you've created is threatening to devour you, it rears upward like a mountain. Quit kidding; it is a mountain." And then I looked at the two masters I had already used for reviews of fanzines. Something snapped.

At length I pulled myself away from the television and sat myself none to gently at the typer. Those reviews had to get finished. It is a duty to fandom to pass on cash and every one. (the excessive use of Ex-Lax is killing me) I went to get the mail. More fanzines. That was the last straw.

#7, I resolved, is going to press with but two pages of the old style review. I raised my right tentacle--hand and mumbled aloud, "I, Richard Erwin Geis, being of questionable sanity, do hereby swear to Ghu that from henceforth and beginning two hours ago, I will not continue to review fanzines as I have in the past. Rather, will I resort to the one sentence nutshell type thing with recommendations yet. (I can't c well today. That's why "recommendations" in the last sentence has two c's instead of the usual three.)

This change in policy is explained by the following reasons: 1. I am lazy. 2. I would prefer to write my criticisms in letters to the fanned himself. 3. The reviews have not had the overwhelming popularity among the non-faned that I thought they might; the feeling is that another article or column wouldd be better. And since this sentiment from two or three letters is enough to justify my laziness, that's what is happening.

HAH! I just looked in a dictionary and found to my joyous and happy horror, that THAT word up above is spelled with two m's and only one c. Imagine, only one c!

Anyway, next issue I should be able to get all the current and not so current fanzines reviewed in the new style. I will try to indicate which ones I think are worth-while, and in exceptional cases, will r-e-c-o-m-m-e-n-d.

Belated holiday cheer to everyone. If I could afford it I'd print this issue on blotting paper and then just before mailing, dump every copy into a vat of whiskey. What fun you'd have wringing out Psy.

V. Paul Nowell, 6528 Gentry Ave., N. Hollywood, California, writes that he is putting out a fanzine to be called DIFFUSE. A generalzine, hecto'd and half-sized, it'll sell for 10¢, 2/15¢, 3/25¢, 6/50¢. Material, Of Course, Is Needed. A letter in the letter section of DIFFUSE brings a free copy, so it should be possible to write a good letter and keep getting free copies forever.

Harvey Segal, 2105 Walton Ave., New York 53, N.Y., puts out a LIST OF SCIENCE FICTION POCKET BOOKS. No price listed, but worth a dime.

The Padded Cell

BY VERNON L. MCCAIN

Sometimes when the night grows weary and the fire burns low and the shadows flicker high across the wall in lascivious pursuit of one another, I remember.....

I remember a time when the world was young (it must have been at least eight or nine years ago) and life was simple and good. Untroubled by McCarthyism, Spillane, and Seventh Fandom, we had little to worry us; trivialities like the atom bomb, mutated fruit flies, and how soon the latest van Vogt superman would discover his hidden talents.



Those were good days and leisurely ones. With what delight did we discover the latest issue of a science fiction magazine on the stands; how happily did we pay our 25¢, bunion ad outward and cover clutched tight against our breast to prevent our name from being further besmirched; how oblivious we remained of the shedding edges of the magazines which leant a hounds-tooth effect to each suit as we read.

In those days fans still appreciated science fiction. As a rarity it was treasured for careful perusal rather than dismissed as mass-produced pap for the crass public, unfit for the delectation of sensitive fannish minds.

The number of magazines during this period varied. I usually refer to it as being eight. That was rock bottom for the last decade and the number when I first became a regular reader. But shortly after the war Wollheim's AVON FANTASY READER appeared, and in 1947 came FANTASTIC NOVELS. But these were both reprint--and poor quality reprint at that--and never were too important.

The eight basic publications included three which I soon dropped as not to my taste; AMAZING and FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, then swarming with deroes, and WEIRD TALES which sagged pretty badly at war's end...although, unknown to me until later, it enjoyed quite a renaissance for a while when it featured many stories by Bradbury, Sturgeon, and some lesser writers.

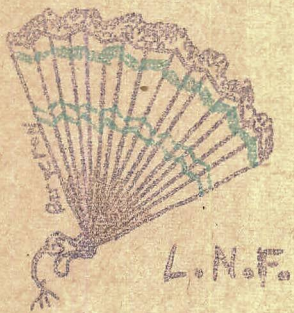
This left only five magazines. After each issue I usually resolved not to buy PLANET any longer. But three months between issues is a long time and science fiction was hard to come by, so I'd usually break down and buy it before it left the stands. Only once did my will-power hold out and enable me to skip an issue. However, PLANET did have a percentage of fine stories, about half of them by Bradbury, and a letter column which fascinated me although I never contributed to it.

FANTASTIC MYSTERIES was also a lesser magazine, although I never contemplated ceasing to buy it. Perhaps once every eighteen months it printed a really fine novel and this repaid me for the dull issues between.

This left only three titles, and these are the ones I really remember, although the others take on a patina of reflected glory. These were, of course, ASTOUNDING, THRILLING WONDER, and STARTLING.

ASTOUNDING was monthly (as were AMAZING and FA). All the others were bi-monthly. If one adds up the total number of issues yearly of magazines I bought regularly, one finds they total 34; or less than two issues every three weeks on the average. Can you new fen who have never known a time when there weren't half a dozen new mags available each week understand the value we placed on each issue?

The period I am referring to covers about five years, from 1944 to 1949. This was the last half of ASF's decade of glory, when Campbell had unchallenged pick of the field. Heinlein, save for one special appearance, no longer sold to Campbell, but all the other great names were writing regularly and appearing regularly in ASTOUNDING.



Meanwhile over at Standard, single-handedly tunneling his way out of a mountain of garbage with nothing but a soup spoon was Sam Merwin who carefully winnowed everything Campbell didn't take and managed to boost his two magazines to heights never equalled before or since.

With what delight do we now recall the endlessly varied atomic dooms, Campbell's scholarly analysis of why the human race must react to atomic energy in certain ways, each Kuttner Hogben, and each Padgett flight of genius, the period when Sturgeon's tales had become more than just simple stories but before they had taken on their present deadly weight of mystic psychological mumbo-jumbo, the best works of Leinster and van Vogt...

But the golden days cannot be recaptured. ASTOUNDING's mischeivous mutants have been replaced by very clever and very dull technicians. The glory that was Merwin seems untransferable to other magazines, and while Sam Mines sometimes succeeds in printing better stories than did Merwin, the mastery of the magazine as a whole is missing...the personality is gone.

PFM has folded as has its sister magazine SUPER SCIENCE STORIES which shared the last year of this period with the three top magazines. Gone also are FANTASTIC NOVELS, AVON FANTASY READER, and FANTASTIC ADVENTURES. AMAZING is no longer the playground for Palmer and Shaver. Only PLANET remains the same. Or perhaps I should say is once more the same.

In 1949 when OTHER WORLDS and MoF appeared and started the expansion of the field that continues today, PLANET felt the pressure of competition. It went bi-monthly, and under the guiding hand of Jerome Pixby, saw a period which found it ranking with the best pulps of the day. But Pixby departed and Mal Reiss soon had the magazine back in the old stereotype.

Only bi-monthly publication remains to remember Bix by.

Of course the old magazines are still available from dealers at fairly reasonable prices; about twice what they cost originally. One can purchase these and bathe in bathetic nostalgia. But it is not the same. The old stories are there, and the fondly remembered ones are as good as ever, but the pages have yellowed, the fresh air of discovery is gone. There is not the anticipation of the next issue which is bound to be just as good, or almost, anyway. And while it's pleasant to remember and re-read, some dark, devious and subversive power has carefully gone through and al-

tered many of the stories. It's true the pages of the magazines have been yellowed to look alike and a splendid job of typographic counterfeit has been done. But to undermine our spirits, and perhaps pave the way for alien conquest, at least 85% of the stories have been rewritten. Subtly, mind you...you can't put your finger on a certain paragraph and say 'This has been changed'. They have followed the plot line of the original stories, the characters' names have been retained, even most of the incidents are the same. But in a spirit of sheerest destruction these vandals have altered the writing style for the worse, making the dialogue cruder, the incident scander, the continuity more amateurish, in short making the entire story a piece of hackwork which could never have sold to the editors involved in the first place and certainly could never have excited the well-remembered enjoyment of such discriminating people as we.

It is enjoyable to re-peruse the old magazines...but also a shaking experience. How badly has time treated many of our favorites.

No, one can't go back. Fondly as I remember the days of scarce issues and magazines filled with unbelievably good stories, I know that more experienced fans of the same day felt this emotion for the years of 1939-42. And in those years Moskowitz and others languished for the unmatched excellence of 1935. In a few years many of you who read this will be disgusted with the quality of current fiction and remember back to when there were a mere 30 magazines when competition wasn't so keen and every mag was filled with fine stories.

No, you can't go back, but there is a special bittersweet quality possessed solely by nostalgia which is well worth the energy necessary to exercise it.

I don't expect to see another age where so many outstanding sf stories exist as in my first five years reading the field. But when the fire burns low, I remember.....



"She loves me, she loves me not...."

The Immortal Storm

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"DIG THIS CRAZY LETTER SECTION"

SECTION

8

Jerry Burge, 415 Pavillion St., S. E., Atlanta, Georgia.

Dear Dick,

Sorry about the delay. Been working far into the night lately trying to tie up the loose ends of the STORM. How did I get into this anyway?

The STORM ad looks great. Very amusing. Bet it attracts a lot more attention, at least, than those modest unassuming things we've been having. Oh yes...the price is back to \$3.95 for awhile---'til January something.

Thanks for the kind comment on ASF0. I'm happy that Fred's story hit you the way it did me. Our mimeo, by the way, isn't so bad. I just didn't know how the stupid thing was supposed to be worked. Oughtta do better next time. I hope.

Lots of stuff worthy of comment in this issue ((#5)), but I've no time for argument right now. Anyway, I agree almost completely with McCain's article. And with most everybody else for that matter. Mal will, I hope, straighten you out about DESTINY.

((Willits, apparently, is quite willing to let me go through life un-straightened out. I haven't heard a word from him (printable, that is).))

David English, 63 W. 2nd St., Dunkirk, N.Y.

Dear Dick,

Just for the hell of it, here are a few answers to your questions:

Q. How did your style develop?

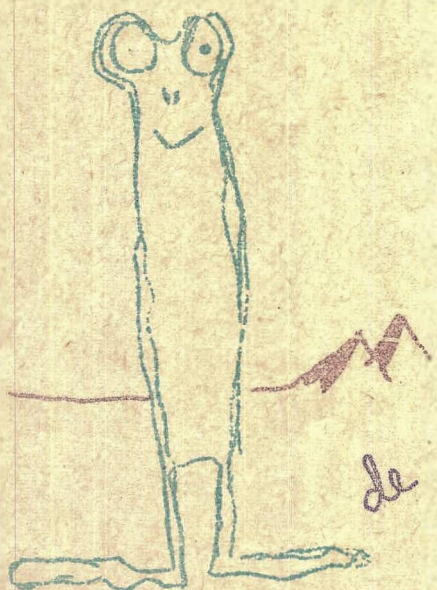
A. It grewed. But not like Topsy. I get sick and tired of things that grewed-like-Topsy.

Q. Have you tried any prowwork?

A. Incessantly. But the pictures are either too dirty to send in, or some fan editor gets them.

Q. What do your parents think about it?

A. They don't--not at all. Inasmuch as my mother characterizes as "crap" even the material in F that does make sense, I don't like to think how she'd react to detoons. My mother can express herself rather strongly, as you may have noticed. I recall once telling her that the Post Office did not object to sex or cursing in lit. as long as it was for the sake of art.



de by de

"Art, fart," she replied. My mother dislikes pornography in any form.

I don't know what that has to do with detoons. It probably does though.

Q. Have you had any encouragement from teachers?

A. Yes, but not about my detoons. Anyway, I resent it.

Q. How do you feel about it?

A. I am surprised at my good fortune in developing this particular style. Frankly, I can't draw worth a damn, except simple--extremely simple--subjects. My hand refuses to translate what I see into inkeon-paper. With this style the hand can do what it damn pleases.

If you happen to think of it in the future, ask me again for some art. I'll see what I can do for you. Right now I'm trying to fill a few other requests before I forget them. I could right them down, of course, but I'd only lose the paper.

Enclosed is a, how you say iy?, self-portrait.

((I'm taking this opportunity to ask again for some art. On bended knees I plead. If you can do a full-page cartoon for VEGA, please, huh?, how about one for P?))

Lyle Kessler, 2450-76 Avenue, Phila 38, Penna.

Dear Rich:

Concerning PSYCHOTIC #5.... By far the best piece in the issue was McCain's "It Started With Gold"; this was an intelligent article on the theme of "bring back dem ole letter columns and dem ragged pulp edges." All of McCain's work is usually interesting and prais-worthy; at least that which I have read.

The Ellisonian column would have been better id made longer. He should have went into more detail on the topics he was writing on; but still it was a good job.

The Reynold's poem w as fair; corny in some places, but still passable.

The letter section was intriguing with the exception of the Balint missive. Enough is enough. How about putting an end to all this frantic screaming of "Down with fan-fiction", Larry. You know after a while it gets kinda sickening....

Hmmmm, I see my boy Viksnins (not meant parentally-Ghod forbid) went a little off his rocker with "Philcon Personalities". On one page he calls Marvin Snyder conceited; Harlan Ellison a skinny guy with an inferiority complex; Rich Elsberry very fat and hyper-critical; Norman G. Browne an egotist if he ever saw one; and myself a bull artist. You don't want to live very long, do you Georgie ole boy? I won't comment on his remarks about Ellison and the others as they'll probably write in themselves; but I will say a few words in defense of my honor, suh. I seem to have gotten off easier than the rest, as he states that I'm a nice guy, good writer, and an excellent editor. Granted, George, granted; but where did you ever get the notion that I'm a bull artist? Speaking of artists, that reminds me of the time I was venturing on the planet Pluto when I came upon, etc, etc, etc....

It goes to show the difference between an adult editor with a great deal of editorial ability, such as yourself ((ahem!)), and a neo-neo editor with absolutely no editorial ability, such as Kent Corey. In Kent's fanzine his name is mentioned at least ten times on each page,

while in PSYCHOTIC your name isn't even mentioned once. You may be going too much to the extreme though, as nowhere in the issue is the editor's name and address listed.

P.S. I'm working on FAN WARP #2; it should be out in about a month.

((As a matter of fact, on the original ms George called you "a bullshit artist". But I sagely bluepenciled the bad word and reasoned that bull-artist conveyed the meaning well enough. Then, too, there was the Post Office to consider---(But Inspector, your highness, sir...I was only... That is...er...I forgot and anyway it didn't seem like such a BAD word, and.... Yessir, but I was only explaining to Lyle what George.... Yessir, but---. Yessir, good behavior...no cuss words...no sex...no red on the cover... one last chance...yessir.)))

Win Marks, box 332, Ashland, Oregon.

Dear Editor Geis:

From a pro as well as a reader standpoint, I must agree with issue 5's assertion that the trend away from letter columns and editorials has cost sf and f books some of their personality and flavor. Your point was especially well taken that pro-authors miss the evaluation of their works by the readers.

However, instead of pouring it all on Horace Gold's poor head, may I suggest that FANZINES could perform this function importantly themselves-- -- and incidentally build a substantial circulation among pros seeking criticism?

Your mention of my letter to the Nov.30 Oregonian acutely pointed out my purpose in writing it. Yes, I hoped to plug GALAXY as well as science fiction in general in this large metropolitan newspaper. Not that I felt mention of my own story would advance the cause perceptibly, but simply that any general mention might attract new readers.

And the field does need new readers. Several publishers over-extended themselves in rushing new titles to market, and right now there is a tightening up, a diminishing process. Spreading too many titles over a given number of fans must have reduced the per copy sale of each title. Which indicates that readership is not expanding as rapidly as many thought.

This might not seem to be the concern of the fan at first glance, but consider this: the more readers, the better the prozine's circulation, the better authors and artists they can hire to provide better fare for the fans.

Don't bemoan the existence of inferior, marginal, ragged-edged pulps. They are the training ground for new authors, and they help provide a market for sf authors in general who want to specialize in this genre of fiction, but who have difficulty finding enough outlets for their output. Having a reliable agent, the best of my output has gone to GALAXY, BEYOND, ASTOUNDING, the old UNKNOWN, FANTASY & SF, and IF. An equal number of my yarns have gone to the lower pay markets, but without sales to these latter I would long since have lost interest and turned to other fields. (You may conclude that this would be no great loss, but I know it must be true with other writers whom you do enjoy.)

Regarding your solicitation of remarks from Gold, Boucher, Campbell, etc., don't be too disappointed if you get few replies. These are the very men who are working hardest at their jobs. They, personally, read

every manuscript that comes in, do their best to encourage promising writers, and have, in my opinion, practically carried the whole field on their sore backs. All three are highly skilled authors and faithful fans themselves. You may be certain that the preponderance of their reader-reaction must be in favor of the type of formats they preserve. What other sensible criterion could they be using?

Never-the-less, I enjoyed your thoughtful, if somewhat tongue-in-cheek GALAXY DEPRECIATION ISSUE immensely, and I have no doubt that Gold did, too.

((There are signs that maybe the letter columns are on the way back. Howard Browne in the latest AMAZING is going to revive it...as an experiment. I think perhaps that the large number of people who bought the Browne mags for the Spilane and "name" writers have stopped buying the minute Browne went to a steady diet of (shall I say "run of the mill"?) science fiction. From Noah W. McLeod comes the news: "Did you know that DYNAMIC SCIENCE FICTION has folded? It had. I had subscribed to it, and the other day I got a letter from COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS stating DYNAMIC has folded, and they were transferring the unexpired portion of the subscription to FUTURE."))

So it is pretty obvious that the long awaited and much heralded depression in stf is here. Right now. The publishers are recognising that most of their readership is young and likes letter sections as a source of egoboo.

Thanks again for the letter, Mr. Marks, and I hope you enjoy this issue enough to comment.))

Robert Bloch, Box 362, Weyauwega, Wisconsin.

Dear Richard:

I should by rights send more than a card to acknowledge receipt and perusal of PSYCHOTIC, but right now I am pressed for time.... am just finishing up a new book, entitled THE IMMORAL SWARM, a 200,000 word history of fan feuds through the years. Of course such a job calls for a great deal of judgement, because in a mere 200,000 words much cannot be incorporated. Still, it's an interesting project. The same must be said for PSYCHOTIC. Imagine this and similar west coast zines will be enjoying a big year because of the coming Convention which will be held in San Francisco. (I pass that along for your information, because I know that bunch -- they probably won't tell anyone in Portland or L.A. about it, out of sheer meanness.) But I'm hoping for big things in '54 all along the line. Who knows? Maybe the Martians will land. But I bet they go back when they hear about taxes.

((I understand completely, Mr. Bloch. Being pressed for time is a great honor. I hope the put you on the cover.

Put me down for a copy of THE IMMORAL SWARM. May I suggest an alternate title? How about MY THIRTY YEARS IN A BEEHIVE, or THE SEX LIFE OF THE NORTH AMERICAN BEE.))

Don Wegars, 2444 Valley Street, Berkeley 2, California.

Dick,

Did I say that I thought that Psy was the best allaround fanmag? For a moment I had the strangest notion that you were using my name as a front to get a little egoboo out of the whole thing, but then taxing my brain to a very great extent, I suddenly remembered that I had indeed stated that I thought Psy was great.... Ah well, I won't retract the statement, but I'd like to clarify it. Psy is the best ALL AROUND fanmag being published, but in certain categories, others have you beat all the way to San Fran and back.

I noticed that I had two letters in SECTION 8.... Whassamatta, Dick, using me as a space filler? Highly irregular, eh watt?

((It was an accident! SECTION 8 gets typed up in spurts and jerks. In one spurt I typed up your first letter, and in a later jerk I typed up the second after having completely forgotten about the first one. After the pages had been cranked off the ditto I saw with numbing horror what I had done. I felt like Sam Mines after the Calkins caper. (Damn, please forgive the goof in not indenting other than the first line in my comment on your letter. I note that I did the same thing with Bloch on the previous page. I just plain forgot to set the margin adjustment. Such is the life of a faned. I should read a little less or do Psy typing a little earlier. Time is now 12:19 A.M.)))

V. Paul Howell, 6528 Gentry Ave., North Hollywood, Calif.

Dear Richard,

I've read your review of The War Of The Worlds, now you read mine. To begin, the movie very skillfully mixed science, accuracy, sensationalism and emotions as very few stf movies have been able to do. It wasn't based on romance...did you notice EVEN ONE KISSING SCENE IN THE WHOLE DARN PICTURE???? As for the professor protecting the girl...sure he was in love with her...people DO fall in love! The actors had good lines and a lot of ability.

The heat ray did damage the countryside, my friend, but you were looking at the WRONG place for the destruction...perspective. The Martians were Reddih-Pink, not GREEN. Why not give mention to the theory of their three lensed eyes and seeing contraption? That was very good extrapolation. Now the last part: As the hero roams from church to church searching for the heroine, half-crazed by finding that "something" had happened to her, and knowing he can't possibly escape the Martian's fury, since his truck was stolen, the audience watched the actual work of the destruction itself. But more important, the audience sees how a few who have remained behind, some reluctantly, are comforted in their last hours by the greatest group of men on Earth, those who represent God. I seem to recall you mentioning being an atheist, so of course you'll scoff at this part. I happen to be a deeply religious person, and being thus, I could see the deeper emotional conflict going on in the hearts and minds of everyone of the people in the churches. The hero comes in, hunts for the girl, and as he does, we hear snatches of "last" sermons, sermons to comfort those God-loving souls who need comfort, and who can die happy, though horribly. This in itself was one of the deepest, saddest, and most life-like parts of the entire production. I can well imagine many Londoners praying in their churches as the bombs from the Blitz spelled sure doom for so many.

Mr. H.G. Wells himself couldn't have done this, because HE was an atheist. Thus it was left to a person like George Pal and his associates,

who have foresight, and have set a movie which shows emotional conflicts much worse than those which presently exist with the fear of Russia and the A and H-bombs. There was fire and thunder for the kids, sure, they represent a large portion of the movie going public; there was scientific accuracy for the perfectionists. And there was emotion and deep thought for the people who realize what a real invasion could mean....either an invasion from Mars, or from our Communistic neighbors across the blue Pacific (facing Siberia, that is).

You missed many of the highpoints of the movie...the men who looted the shops after the evacuation, but who'd never get to use what they'd stolen. This was typical mob reaction, as was the mob that grabbed the professor so as to use the truck and escape. And as they throw the precious laboratory materials from the truck's bed so as to make more room for people, think of what is going on in his mind, for he can see what they are doing, and is instead hurtled back and ground under the feet of the mob. He is probably half insane when they leave. Of course he wasn't taking the Martian invasion coolly as do so many stf heroes, but instead was fighting his OWN emotional battle.

And the reason for the Martians invading...they were vastly superior mentally, but vastly inferior physically. Thus they knew they'd never be able to cope with us(physically) should they come in peace, or with ideas of conquering and enslaving us. Thus they build protective machines, weapons and space ships, and on they come. Quite reasonable in case you later decide to tear into that.

As for the Martians being killed by the germs just as they reach that church, the one with the hero and heroine, perhaps these two characters had counterparts in some other part of the city, or some other city, or even another country...and perhaps the Martians died just after the nick of time...for them.

I believe War Of The Worlds was the greatest, most thought-out, and most thought provoking stf film ten Hollywoods can or ever have produced. It's got its "commercialism", sure, for the masses of movie-goers who don't go to see a picture to THINK, but to be THOUGHT FOR. It will make a million, but those with the ability to read between the lines will remember it for years to come....it is indeed a classic....more so than H.G. Wells' original version.

((I'm inclined to think that you attempt to justify the entire picture in order to justify the religious content. It seems to me that you lose sight of the fact that all the items you defend were ADDED in order to appeal to various sections of the movie-going audience. But in so spicing up the story so that it would attract and satisfy as many people as possible, the redoubtable Mr. Pal and associates very neatly ruined the story as such.))

Redd Boggs, 2215 Benjamin Street, N.E., Minneapolis, 18, Minnesota.

Dear Dick:

I've got more untreated Psychotics here than an overworked mental hospital. They are all stacked in my "immediate action" tray, awaiting the flash moment when opportunity and inclination coincide and I warm up my typewriter for a letter about them. If you hadn't been so persistently monthly, I might have written long ago, but a new issue always arrived before I got a chance to report on the previous number. Disheartening sequence, and it has been going on for some time.

Well, now's the moment, with Psychotic #6 the patient. That's too bad, in a way, because I don't think it was as interesting as several of the earlier issues. As Harlan Ellison would say, Psychotic #6 seemed "slight". How a 32 page issue can be slight, I don't know, but perhaps it's because most of the issue was taken up with regular features. Also, the lead item was a bit of fiction I didn't read.

McCain's new column is unquestionably the best feature of #6. "The Padded Cell" is a good title all right, but I disagree with him that "From Der Voodvork Out" wasn't a good name for Silverberg's Quandry column. I always liked it better than the title of Willis's column. As for "File 13", I never thought it was a title to gloat self-satisfiedly over. I believe I wanted to name the column "Fantasy Impromptu," but Rapp wouldn't have it. I guess he was right. ...Amazing number of articles on fanzine editing have appeared in recent months. McCain's is one of the best -- at least I more closely agree with his ideas than I have with several others. A small quibble, though: Vernon says the editor who prints anything which is submitted or who prints "even the sorriest junk" sent in by friends is headed for oblivion. This is partly so, but I think the way in which an editor's personality is mirrored in a fanzine resides primarily in the handling of material rather than in the material itself. Sure, the material is important, but a Hoffman can take almost any submission and fit it into the fanzine's pattern. Look at some of the early issues of Quandry. By her own admission ("Sic Transit Etc." in Harlequinade, FAPA mailing #65) Lee was using whatever material she could scrounge, largely stuff left over when several old fanzines folded, but the Hoffman personality shows through even then. Possibly it is a matter of making the personality appear in early issues that builds a successful fanzine. Many editors don't know exactly what they want, and others aren't articulate enough to describe it. The contributor must take his cue from the pervading atmosphere of the early issues in order to submit the "Harp" column or whatever item that eventually makes the fanzine a success. Of course the process is an interaction, too: the editor may not know til he sees a certain item that he wanted such material in his mag. After that, he solicits such material.

Your fanzine reviews strike me very favorably. They are fair enough but don't sacrifice interest on the altar of impartiality. I haven't seen a number of the fanzines reviewed, but of those I have seen, I disagree with your analysis only in the case of Torquasian Times and of Muzzy. TT I found dull. Muzzy I find to be one of the most completely diverting fanzines since Fanvariety/Opus. Some of the material is space filler, as you say, but most of McMillan's and nearly all of Hall's material is wonderful, especially that "Antitwerp" yarn. Muzzy #1 made me very happy Hall was going into the army where I thought he wouldn't perpetrate any more of those things, but issues after #3 or #4 make me sorry he is going to Europe where I suppose he can't create any more of his fanzine masterpieces.

Very amusing letter section you've got here. I rather agree with Atkins' arguments. It is certainly easy enough to enjoy reading both Herman Melville and, let's say, E.E. Smith, if you approach each author in the proper spirit and mood. I also enjoy both Beethoven and Richard Rodgers, Renoir and Emsh. ...As for Atkins' declaration that fanzines "serve a set purpose in printing stories that are taboo to the pros", I doubt that very much. Despite the influences Atkins mentions, it seems that the taboos in the pros are less strict than ever before in regards the very "sacred institutions (?)\" he mentions. See also Atheling's column in Skyhook #19 about science fictional extrapolation of religion.

(Incidentally, Bradbury's "The Man" is a story about Christ, though not a "madman".) And even if stories in the pros fall under such taboos as Adkins' envisions, I doubt if it is likely that fanzines will get them. Not if they're any good. There are various little magazines such as Bradbury sometimes sells to, the whole avant-garde movement which specialized in material which breaks taboos. And there are the book publishers, who generally have less strict taboos. Take Clarke's novel, "Childhood's End", in which all religions, except a form of Buddhism, are wiped out through the Overlord's information about human history. Such a thing might be taboo in the pros, but I rather doubt if any fanzine, even Fantastic Worlds, is going to obtain such material.

Nowell's letter surprised me with its use of the adjective "cheap" to describe the material in Del Rey's (now Harrison's) magazines. I've enjoyed Space SF and SF Adventures considerably more than Mines' magazines. Lots of good stuff in them.

"The War of the Worlds": so far as I can see, your criticisms are unanswerable. But I thought it was a damn good picture, and I enjoyed it all. Matter of fact, I didn't think I would, since I was disappointed with "When Worlds Collide." Maybe I was overwhelmed by that big screen and the gorgeous color -- it was overwhelming after TV. And while I don't care for the "love-conquers-all" theme any more than you do, I didn't mind the love interest. That girl, whoever she was, was extremely edible. She was a nice decoration, I thought. As for "the demented people with little or no sense" crowding the churches, well, I suppose that's basically an appeal to the mass mind, but it seems to me that it was probably pretty realistic. A lot of people trapped in a city like that would undoubtedly congregate in the churches exactly like that. ... I thought "When Worlds Collide" failed in not giving us the emotional impact that must have taken place when Earth was destroyed. -- so far as I remember it was just a spectacle, not a catastrophe so far as the people on the ship were depicted. "War of the Worlds" didn't make that mistake: the emotional impact of the Martian attack was made real by the separation of the two lovers. The audience was therefore concerned with the destruction of Los Angeles, whereas otherwise it would have just been a spectacle. And that girl was edible!

((I'm inclined to put more weight on neatness and layout, apparently, Redd. If only Hall had longer passes in which to work on MUZZY!

After "Malice In Wonderland" by Evan Hunter in the latest IF, all this talk about the prozine taboos will be life tilting at yesterday's windmills.

Really good fan-fiction is almost impossible to get.

My quarrel with "The War of the Worlds" is not with the technical effects (which I thought adequate), nor the undoubtedly high degree of realism attained in the mob and church scenes; it is with the basic premise that Hollywood MUST change, must omit, must twist, must dilute, must add ingredients and fiddle with plots in order to turn a universally acknowledged work of fine fiction into a "commercial" pap suitable for consumption by the American public. There are always exceptions to this, but mostly even the much ballyhooed starkly honest films like "From Here To Eternity" are such incredible compromises with reality as portrayed in the book, that one doesn't know whether to laugh or cry after seeing one of the monstrosities.

Oh, well..... Ping-pong, anyone?))

Dave Rike, Box 203, Rodeo, California.

Dick:

McCain's column was the best of the issue again. One of the ultimate examples of individualism in a fanzine can be shown in WILD HAIR, a one-shot which Laney, Burbee, and Rotsler (and some others such as Rog Phillips, Al "AA194" Ashley, Cy Condra, Syd Stibbard, Art Widner and others, most of whom have passed from fandom) put out every now and then starting in 1947. It's a perfect example of "To Hell with the readers...", from Rotsler's nudes and phallic symbol people to Burbee's and Laney's sundry caustic commentaries on the LASFS and assorted people. I doubt if there ever was anyone who agreed with them wholeheartedly, but it certainly was a fmz that was enjoyed. To really appreciate the mag you have to see copies of it. MASQUE and BURBLINGS are the remains of the Insurgent fanzine. They still keep up the tradition of "To Hell with the readers", with a full page of interlineations and sundry remarks for covers and almost anything they damn well feel like publishing for contents. Of course since these mags are distributed for FAPA and to friends, they don't have to worry about subscribers and such stuff. However, some people don't care for this sort of radicalism; one FAPAn even threatened to sic the Post Office on them.

Your comments on "War of the Worldd" jive with what I thot of the thing. The prevalent cliché of young handsome scientist and beautiful lady is getting to be a bit sickening. The stf film I recall that didn't have that feature thruout was "Destination Moon". Two scenes in this pic especially intrigue me...: that one when the Martian dies, opens the hatch of the saucer (or whatever it was), dangles his hand out, and then up comes our hero, puts his hand around the Martian's wrist and dryly comments, "He's dead." It's beyond me how he arrived at that conclusion. The other is when the Martian comes up to the heroine and pats her on the shoulder; I always wondered what in the Hell would've happened if he goosed her instead.

I've yet to see a stf film I'm satisfied with; "King Kong" comes nearest since all the screaming by Fay Wray and such seem to be a parody of such stuff rather than the regular thing put down seriously. "The Shape of Things to Come" (which I saw twice on TV) is also a fine pic. It's too bad we can't have more faithful film versions of good books.

((It's also too bad I had to cut the major portion of your letter, Dave, but space is being used up too damned fast. A two page letter is about tops for SECTION 8. Even then it should have "content". But three pages of elite type... that is too much. How about sending me a copy or two of WILD HAIR. I'll be sure and return them and pay postage both ways.))

George J. Viksnins, 4152 Parkside Ave., Philadelphia 4, Penn.

Dear Rich,

I bet you have been receiving letters from persons concerned re: "Philcon Personalities." Well, all I have to say is: I wrote how I thought those persons were, and I was not trying to get even with anybody.

((I'm not printing your other letter, George, and I cite the Stewart Mennicucci case. If you want to feud with Norman Browne, do it by private mail or your own zine. Why you wrote the letter in the first place I don't know; Norman, in his letter last issue, proved the very points he was howling about.))

THE

WORLD



OF OLAF STAPLEDON

BY NOAH W. MCLEOD

TO THE END OF TIME ...a review

Olaf Stapledon believed Homo Sapiens eternally and irrevocably damned by his own stupidity and greed. To him there was no salvation, either supernatural or dialectical; both Christ and Marx were mistaken. This vision of futile man, insignificant in an infinite universe created by a transcendent God, is most plainly brought out in THE STAR MAKER, but underlies all five novels in the recently published anthology TO THE END OF TIME.

For some reason not known to this reviewer, Stapledon's works--with the exception of ODD JOHN--have been unavailable to American men. THE FIRST AND LAST MEN was printed in an American edition in the early thirties, but was never reprinted. I waited for years to get THE FIRST AND LAST MEN and SIRIUS, and had just about given up hope, when Davenport's anthology came out.

Though a deeply religious man, Stapledon had a profound suspicion of Revivalism, with its hostility towards art and science. In THE FIRST AND LAST MEN he predicted the alliance between business and Revivalism which has come about in America since World War II which is responsible for the present wave of anti-intellectualism and the attacks in the name of Christianity on personal freedom. This is his most conspicuous success as a prophet.

For although possessed of wide knowledge and a fertile imagination, Stapledon was a poor prophet. In his THE FIRST AND LAST MEN, he had the final struggle for world empire between America and China. And a China still Capitalist! He did not foresee the use of atomic weapons within his own lifetime. To him, space travel was something in the far future, not a few decades away.

Most of THE FIRST AND LAST MEN is laid in the far future. It describes the eighteen species of men who evolve in the several billions of years before the extinction of the solar system. Although all are called men and all are intelligent, they would be classified by biologists as belonging to different orders, or even classes, of the Vertebrates. There is as much difference between the flying men

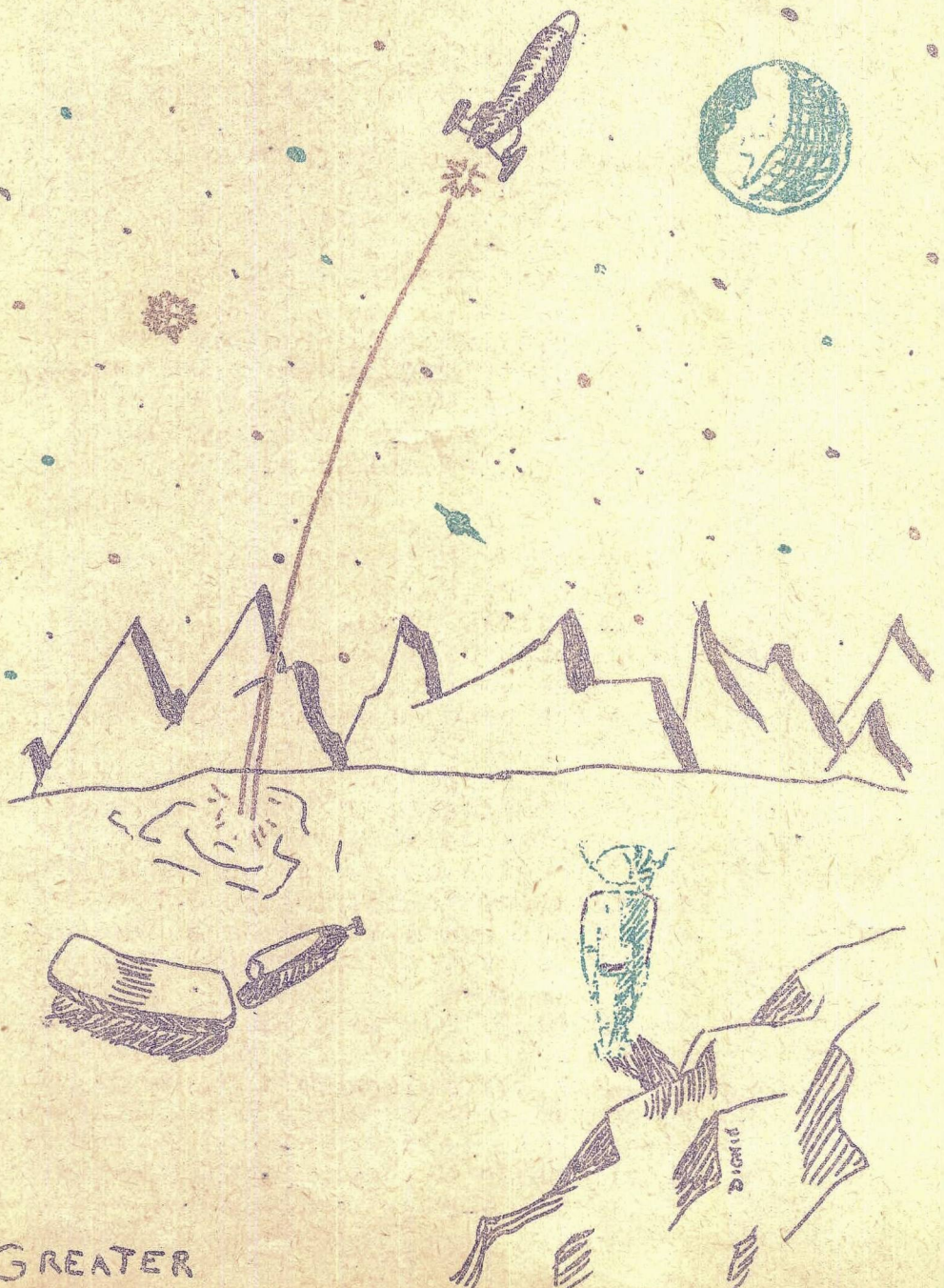
Full-page illustration by W. J. Reynolds

of Venus and the last men of Neptune as between a robin and a rat. The biology is excellent, however, and the accounts of the evolution of the various human races are convincing.

THE STAR MAKER has three peculiarities which should be discussed. The narrator, Stapledon himself, travels through space and time by purely mental means. Any spaceship or time machine which could cover the space and time of the story would be unconvincing. Secondly, the long time scale, which makes the universe several trillion years old, is used. This was discarded by Astronomers some years ago when it became apparent that the source of stellar energy is not the total annihilation of matter, but atomic fusion. The age of the universe is now believed to be about five billion years.

The third and most important point is this: although the intelligent beings of THE STAR MAKER are of the most varied nature, derived from every main type of human beings, the economic systems are mostly caricatures of 19th century English Capitalism. This is because, to Stapledon, the cardinal sin was not sexuality, but greed. This was the perfectly natural result of his observations of the misery and frustrations of the English unemployed during the twenties and thirties.

The Star Maker himself makes the biblical Yahweh seem puny. He creates not one, but many universes, each more perfect than the last. In some there is no space, modes of vibration taking the place of linear dimensions; others are static, are without time; in yet others, time has two or more dimensions. Some universes are monistic; in others the struggle between good and evil rages. THE STAR MAKER is a rich mine of ideas for the



writer of science fiction.

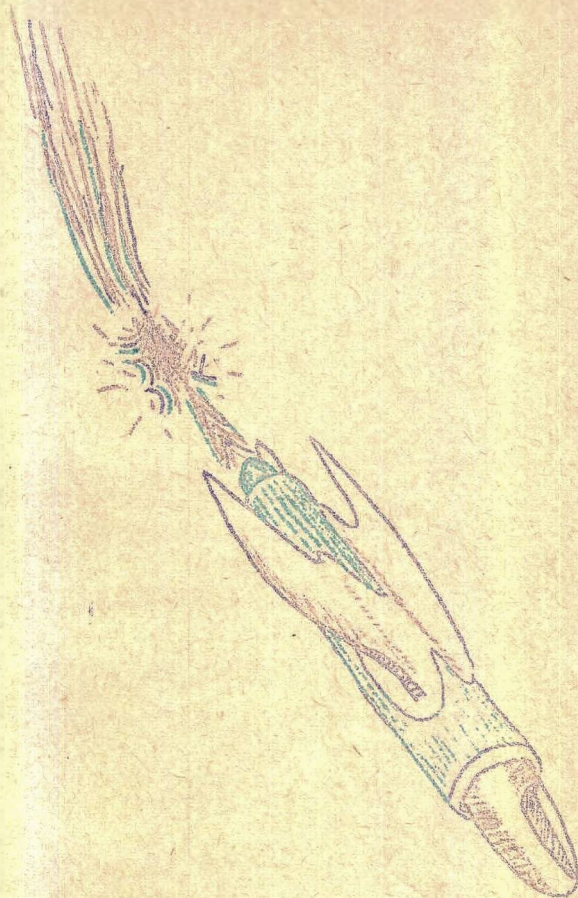
ODD JOHN and SIRIUS are works of social criticism; in the first, English Society (and by implication, all Western society) is viewed through the eyes of a mutant boy of unusual intelligence; in the second, through the eyes of a dog of human intelligence. Most men have read ODD JOHN, so it will be touched on only incidentally.

This reviewer is a sucker for dog stories, so SIRIUS is easily his favorite among Stapledon's works. Although Sirius was a wonder dog, his morals were deplorable by the standards of dog stories. This is because most American dog stories belong to the action-adventure genre and are bound by its taboos. Stapledon, writing social criticism for the British hardcover market, could ignore these taboos. So Sirius had all the promiscuity of the domestic dog, and because of his intelligence, the emotional conflicts which aggravated his sexuality. No matter how satisfactory physically a bitch was, she could never be a true spiritual companion. Hence his dependence on the girl Plaxy Trelone, a relationship which ultimately proved fatal to him.

Sirius, in spite of his promiscuity and homicidal tendencies (he killed three men on various occasions), was intensely religious. This interest of Sirius was used as a peg on which to hang a discussion of modern Christianity. In spite of his distrust of Revivalism, Stapledon was not hostile to Christianity. His portrait of Geoffrey, the deeply pious pastor of a London slum parish, is truly sympathetic.

Some readers of Stapledon may be shocked by his frank discussion of sex, and his sympathetic portrayal of such characters as Jacqueline, the French prostitute of ODD JOHN. But the real question is not "Why does Stapledon write of these subjects?", but "Why are they taboo in American literature?" It seems to this reviewer that the real sources of puritanism in modern America are two: the desire of business men to enhance their power by controlling the sex lives of the younger adults, and the unhealthy influence of frigid women on their children. Fanatical puritans are the products of unhealthy home environments.

Both SIRIUS and ODD JOHN take a dim view of Western civilization. The dominant motives of the rulers are vanity and greed; those of the masses, superstition and mob instinct. Both scientific curiosity and spiritual enlightenment are viewed with hostility by elite and herd alike. This reviewer wonders how long a Russian Stapledon would last. He also wonders if a writer of the Stapledon type will be possible in



DIGNIF—

America a generation hence.

The last story of the anthology, THE FLAMES, is a fantasy about an invasion of the Earth by living flames. It is minor compared with the other works, but it is based on the same view of the universe. It has a charm of its own which the other works lack.

TO THE END OF TIME is well worth the five dollars asked. To the fan it will be a collection of thought provoking classics; to the writer, a mine of ideas for stories. It is distinctly not for Revivalists, McCarthyites, nor Old Maid Aunts.

TO THE END OF TIME; THE BEST OF OLAF STAPLEDON, edited by Basil Davenport, \$5.00, Funk and Wagnalls, New York, N.Y.

A-BIT-OF HEBEPHRENIA

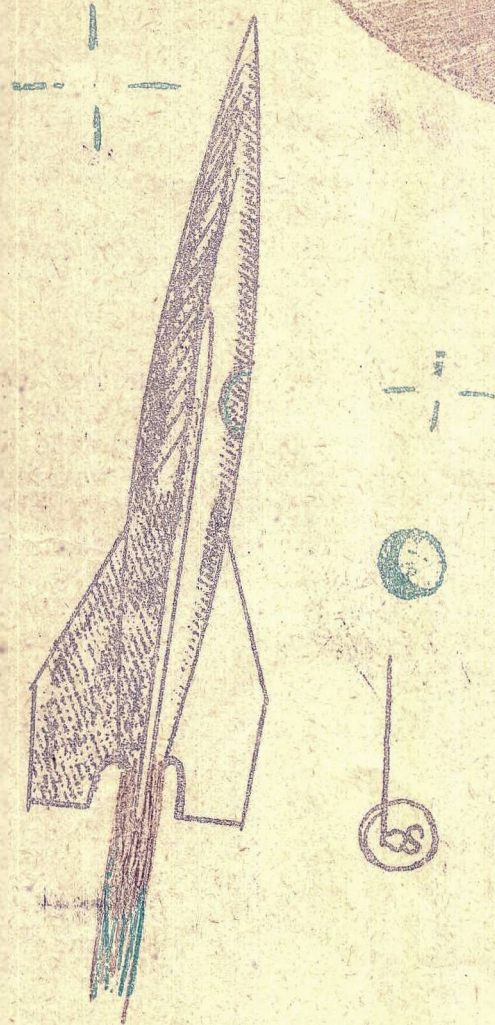
The Inspector found two bodies lying on the floor. There were glass fragments and water stains on the floor. What happened?
Somebody busted the Goldfish bowl.

...No Accounting For Tastes.
Willy alarmed his space-pioneer parents,
Including the BEMish native kings.
For he hung around the harem tents
And took pleasure in making things.

--REG, "Venal Verse For Virgins"

From TIME:

Near Elmira, N.Y., after 200 volunteer searchers spent the night frantically combing the woods for them, Faith Wheelock, 11, and her sister, 5, returned from their "camping trip" and complained: "We had a hard time getting to sleep. All those people kept crashing around in the brush."



The Observation Ward

A FANZINE REVIEW by the editor

THE COSMIC FRONTIER, Stuart K. Nock, R F D #3, Castleton, N. Y. 10¢, 3/ 25¢, 12/\$1.00. Monthly.

The cover, admittedly the best yet, presented a neat appearance, and if the editor can run covers and interiors on a par with this on the November issue, he should be able to forget about the art problem. We'll see what happens next issue. I should note here that I did this cover and altered his cover layout to suit myself. I even used a bit of color, something Stuart has shied away from in the past. It looked pretty good, I thought.

"The Immigrant's Son", a short story by Peter Christoph, committed the sin of losing track of the main characters in order to drag in a hoary old time travel gimmick.

George J. Viksnins conducts "Fanzinia", a review column that consists almost totally of subjective reactions.

I agree with the first paragraph of the editor's article, "The 3-D Fad", in which he states: "Well, every fanzine is running an article on 3-D and stf, so I might as well run one, too. Really too many of such articles can be boring."

A full page announcement on page 10 informs us that if we pledge some money to THE COSMIC FRONTIER a newsletter will be issued in an attempt to help finance the FRONTIER. I'm sure that's just what fandom needs, another newsletter....

The serial that had been running in this fanmag finally died of sheer exhaustion and killed off the crew and the Captain. Not very sporting at all, and certainly not a good story. The serial ran, in wordage, much much too short for the size of the plot it had to support. The plot was pointless and lopsided.

There is an editorial on page 17 which is very aptly named "The Big Alibi."

SCIENTIFICTION TRADER, vln1, John Walston, Vashon, Washington. 10¢, 6/50¢/ Bi-monthly.

Six pages of nothing make up this fist issue. After waiting for an intolerable length of time after his plea for ads appeared in FSM, the editor decided to go ahead and issue this in the hope that ads will arrive. He says:

"I think my ad rates are most reasonable, so why i n blazes don't I get some ads?"

"I hope I haven't annoyed you, but I'm getting slightly peeved looking every day in the mail for ads that aren't there."

Clearly John is not a fan to tamper with. Better not cross this boy or he'll stuff his fanzine down your throat. After all, here he is willing and eager to become a thriving faned, a BNF, and everything, and nobody cooperates....

I doubt there are enough ads in fandom to support another adzine.

VEGA XII, "The Annish", Joel Nydahl, 119 S. Front Street, Marquette, Mich. 50¢ this issue. Other issues 15¢, 4/50¢, 6/75¢, 8/\$1.00. VEGA is now bi-monthly. Ha!

The cover illo is by Dea, and if it weren't for the fancy shading plate work and three color mimeography (which alone make the cover outstanding), I wouldn't think much of it as a drawing. I never have been a keen admirer of her work, anyway.

Whew...the contents page reads like a Who's-Who in Fandom.

The only things I didn't think were top drawer were the Art Folio by Juanita R. Wellons, and "Meditate Please" by Don Cantin. The art folio by Wellons was pretty sad; I can't imagine why Joel ran them at all. They were all done in an obviously amateur and childish technique. After reading the Cantin piece I went back and read it again. I figured that there had to be something I'd missed; surely it was not just the pointless blatherings it seemed to be? Alas, it was.

I particularly got a bang out of "Ann-ishes Are A Plague" by Redd Boggs.

The seventh fandom controversy continues to rage in this issue with Walt Willis, Dean A. Grennell, and Bob Tucker. It appears as if seventh fandom done bitten off more than it could chew.

"The Epic of 1418", by Norman Browne, was one of the best Con reports I've read in all my fannish days. There are supplementary reports by Bloch and Tucker. All are excellent.

"The Noble Soul", a delightful short story by Larry Saunders, was an exceedingly enjoyable and ribald story about a talking dog.

"All Else Is Perfect", a story by Fred Chappell, also rang the bell with me. These two stories should quell Balint & Co, for a long time.

Hah, on page 7, on the bottom, it says: "AN EDITORIAL---by JOEL M. NYDAHL, Esq." Such dignity....

One quibble and I'll go...there is a page in the back of the zine (yeah, Joel, here it comes) devoted to the material available "In Coming Issues". With blurbs yet. With professional phrasing and everything. Fie on thee, Joel...I hereby accuse you of "Ellisonism."

Altogether a whale of an effort, and a whale of a buy for fifty cents. I don't know if any more of these are available, but it might pay to drop a card and see. This VEGAnnish is something that shouldn't be missed.

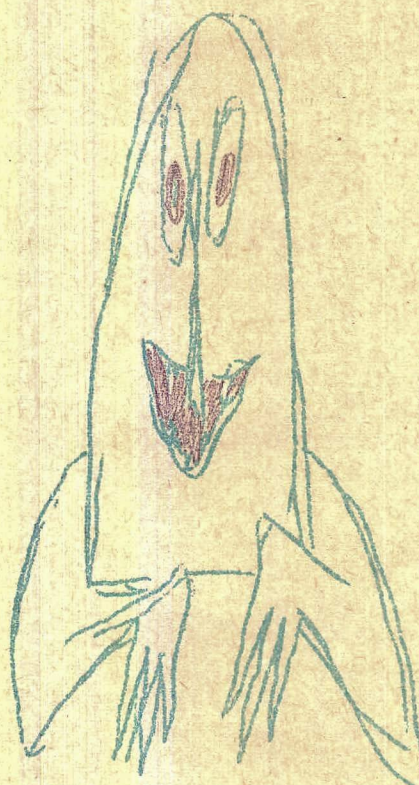
Whup--almost forgot to mention the terrific full-page cartoon on page 60 by David English. Easily the best drawing in the issue. I'm still laughing.

DAWN #19, Russell K. Watkins, 110 Brady Street, Savannah, Georgia. 10¢. Bi-monthly.

"The Paid Fan" by Editor Watkins is the best item in this issue. It was fan-satire of the better type. I got quite a bang out of the ending.

DAWN, I see, is now in the conventional 8½ x 11 format, having abandoned the traditional legal size. I think the legal size is a bit awkward to use from a layout standpoint, but it really doesn't make a great deal of difference. In the old days DAWN was a letter-zine. I think there is now a great need in fandom for a good letterzine like DAWN used to be. POSTWARP, under R.C. Higgs, is lucky to be published twice a year. Now...if Watkins could see his way clear to change DAWN back to what it was, and publish regularly...he could have a top zine. Let's hope it comes about. A monthly letterzine would be perfect.

AFTER HOURS VISIT



de '53

"Bring something
round:
We'll have a ball!"

a column by Bill Reynolds

For a while I envied the kids who can enjoy space-opera over TV, some of it is pretty good. But then, I've always enjoyed space-opera. Even movies feature stf; we used to get half-baked horror and fantasy. Then there were memorable things, a lot not too good, that increased my interest in stf back in the late thirties and early forties.

The greatest comic-strip ever to see print and wide distribution came out in that day. Dick Calkins and Phil Nowlan gave life to a panel. How different BUCK ROGERS is today! It was a huge rambling story, often you wouldn't hear of Buck for a year while watching the adventures of Buddy and Alura. You remember them...they were the youngsters with whom we kids could identify. And what adventures!

When I was very small Buck used to appear in a local Bay-Area newspaper. I went more for the attractive FLASH GORDON strip that was just starting then. Those Calkin drawings were too unique; the stories by Nowlan too tedious. Even when they reappeared in FAMOUS FUNNIES

years later they couldn't compete with those complete strips in the old PLANET COMICS. I just couldn't stomach serials at that time.

And then it happened! The old strips were bound into BUCK ROGERS comics #1. A friend lent me the comic. I must have read it over a dozen times. Even the big sections of the strip were deleted, but it was enough to make me a Rogers fan for life. That is, the life of Nowlan teamed with Calkins. Here was a world of the future that kept going on. What I thought were cruddy drawings of rockets, architecture, and a thousand other details now looked like something that might be. Sure, the planets' characteristics seemed wrong; you didn't need a space suit even on Pluto. But maybe conditions might change naturally, and man might have a hand in making alien surroundings suitable for himself. Anyway, how could we really tell what would be waiting for man in outer space? We'd never been there.

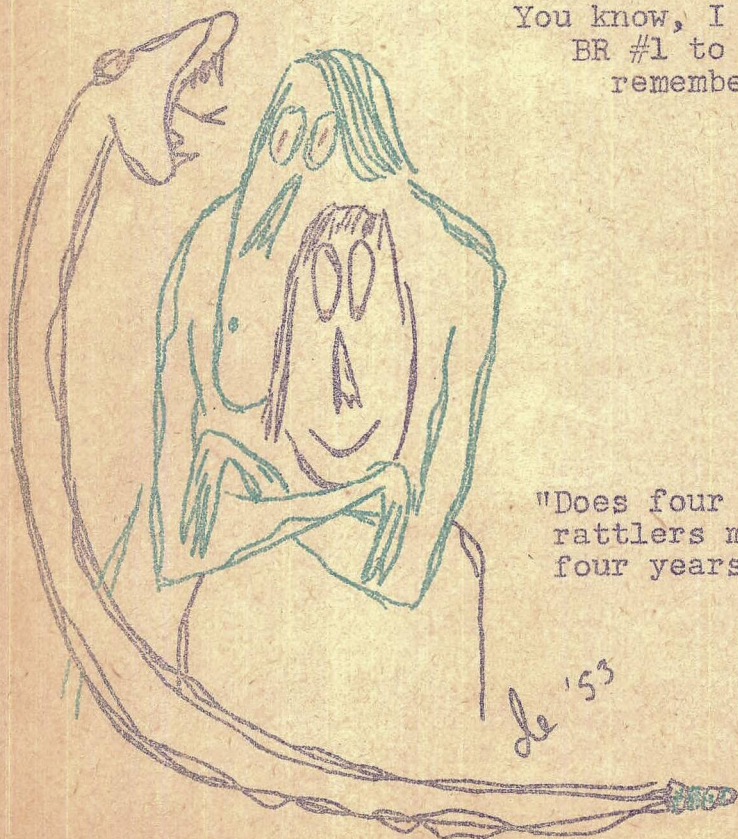
But in the Buck Rogers stories I was there. That city of the Cat-people on Mars looked convincing under the genius of Nowlan and Calkins. That spider-ship might be a good idea in that terrain. What marvelous robots with those jointed limbs! And there's Buck telling the story...I wonder if maybe it couldn't be true.

Like a fool I returned the comic to my indifferent friend. He'd forgotten he had lent it to me. That's honesty for you. Numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5 eventually hit the stands. The first three issues seemed the best. But Buck underwent a gradual change. The original creators were soon missing, World War II started creeping into the 25th Century. The villains began to look more like the Germans and Japanese under Rick Yager's pen. The years had been hard on Buck; recently he had a time machine to fight the Communists. As I've said, the years have been hard on Buck, and I pity the kids that see his ghost.

You know, I think that I would pay \$5 to get BR #1 to complete my collection. But who remembers Buck now?

.....

Ron Ellik had the courage to admit that Bergey was his favorite artist (Fsm #2). Sure Bergey created a lot of BEMs. What have we got against BEMs? It appears that Bradbury and associates have an antithapy toward the poor things that amounts to a plague. That's bad BEMs of course. Any BEM that I can imagine is a bad BEM that chases girls. But can you blame him? Those girls should be at the beach where their charms can be appreciated...or some other place that fits their attire. What are they doing in space anyway? They're an



"Does four rattlers mean four years old?"

de '53

structural addition to BEM territory and they deserve the punishment they get. Can you blame BEMs for being mean? When they're shown destroying cities and people they're actually trying to remove these irritating creatures that insist on parading in BEM-land. Whatever these bad BEMs do is natural and instinctive; they're defending their homeland and preserving their culture.

A BEM might leer at a girl in a Bergey. Maybe he's not going to kill her. That represents the highest form of BEM: this BEM wishes to merge the two races, not to destroy one and degrade the other with the crime. So he saves the child for a greater destiny. The handsome man defending her must be destroyed; he is interrupting a natural BEM impulse. A natural impulse, considering the girl, that the man seems to lack.

.....

Claude R. Hall is a faned. Considering the tremendous efforts to turn out MUZZY, we all have to admit that. Reading his letter, I was at first enraged at Geis. But let's face it, Claude. What faned has it easy?

Other editors have social obligations and demanding duties that distract them from their fanzines. What editor doesn't grind his teeth over the poor contributions or the absense of any stuff?

Do other faneds consider the situation in which you edit MUZZY? They expect it to be hard, they've gone through a lot of misery getting out their own zines. They've gotten what seemed like unreasonable, malicious reviews, but they kept right on blasting just as you did, just as you probably will do despite going over seas.

Just what was wrong with the review? The only thing that I could find was that it was too short. I remembered MUZZY after that review because I wondered how you could do it. I kept promising myself that I would sub. But one question kept raccuring: "How does he do it?" That was out of sheer admiration. If I'd seen MUZZY, I would have liked it. I like the effort that I knew you were putting out. To me that heralds a guy who won't give up. And that's the trouble: I would ignore the contents. All you'd need is more time. But a fanzine isn't just effort; it's the result of effort.

MUZZY will show up again. Let's hope it will be when you can settle down with the idea that MUZZY isn't a farewell to American Fandom before you head overseas.

.....

Looks like Tom Piper's ABBERANT will be delayed. In fact, it won't be ABBERANT; it will be FASCINATION, which will come from Tom's new address of 6111 Vista de la Mesa, La Jolla, California. Tom's silence over my 50¢ sub caused extreme suspicion toward the Post Office. You've got to watch everyone during this Administration. Got to watch myself and this visit.

"Sister, you ain't
a dog!"
"When did I say
I was?"



BIG SHOT

Jerry, the bartender, frowned to himself as the voices of the customers floated to his ears from the rear of the bar. There were only six in at that time of the night...1:30 A.M....and four of them were grouped together talking, or rather listening, to an oldish looking man, raggedly dressed, who was downing beers at an amazing rate.

"Yeah, this guy was really tanked," said the man, gulping beer after each sentence. He wasn't exactly sober himself after thirteen of those mugs, but still seemed to have his wits about him.

"He was nuts, ya' mean!" interrupted a second party.

"Naw, not nuts, drunk. Cheap wine—I could smell it on 'im. So as I say, here I am minding my own business in this little tavern, and he walks in and says to everyone: 'I'm wearin' a A-Bomb under this coat, and I'm gonna blow yo' all tohell in ten minutes.'"

"Well, acourse everybody laughed, and he got real mad. Mad as hell I'm tellin' you. And he says it again. He's gonna blow us up in ten minutes with an A-Bomb strapped to his chest."

"Har, har," laughed another. "A real 'big shot', eh?"
For this he received a dirty look as the man continued.

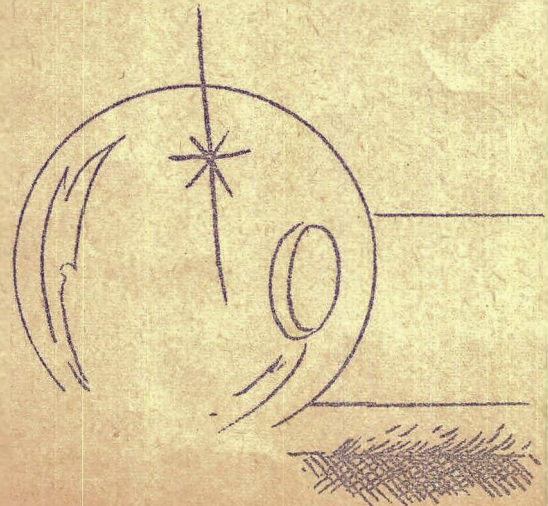
"I started figurin', s'pose he was tellin' the truth? What the hell would happen to me? I wasn't gonna be no piece o' radioactive dust, I can tell you that right now. I figures an A-Bomb shelter's best.

"I paid up and high-tailed it for the Pershin' Square garage, which had a shelter. Several people looked at me kinda funny as I was runnin' down the street, but I didn' care, I was gonna live through this damn thing...that's moren' they could say.

"Well, I made it down with about a minute an'a-half to spare. I made sure I was way back in a safe spot, and well...you know the rest."

Jerry frowned again. He could remember that, all right. It had happened while he was in the factory, and the Russos had bombed hell out of the United States. Apparently they had timed it with this drunk, or else he knew what was coming off ahead of time. Yes, it came back now; Los Angeles leveled, New York, Chicago, Detroit, everything damn near. Then the germs had been turned loose, and...it had spelled doom.

Jerry wiped the excess oil off the rag he had been cleaning with. The man yelled for another beer. Seemed strange, serving something like



BY JAMES B. NOW

beer. Jerry couldn't take it—oad for his guts.

"So it seems like I and a few others were the only men left on Earth, by golly. Them damn germs didn't affect all of us, either. Naw, didn't kill us, but did worse. Made every man in the world—every man and woman—sterile. Completely sterile...."

The man gulped his beer, looked at his friends, and said: "Good thing we had you guys to carry on the 'idea' of it, anyhow." He smiled faintly, paid, and left.

Jerry pumped out five light oil lubrications and carried them to the end of the bar.

"What'cha think, Jerry?"

"Too much beer—good thing oil doesn't do that to us robots!"



Second Session: WHERE THE EDITOR

CONTINUES TO RAMBLE ON AND ON...LABORIOUSLY AT TIMES...TO THE VERY END.

Time is 12:05 A.M., Sunday, January 3, 1954. Honorable editor attempting last item before final assembly of PSYCHOTIC #7. So sorry, but under influence of Charlie Chan movie just seen on TV. At least the butler didn't do it....

Got news.... Next issue threatens to eat me out of house and ditto machine. Gonna have a loooooong McCain column, the return of Harlan Ellison's column, a cover by Bradley (already printed), an article by Donald Susan, a bit of fiction, the usual departments, etc. At present I don't see how I can keep it inside 30 pages.

News done arrived that SF will fold in favor of a regular sized zine to be called VAMP. Good luck, John.

Jim Bradley came over last night and we had quite a yak fest. He also brought the master on which he had been working for so long. We felt that it needed a certain something to unbalance the picture so that the logo would balance up the entire page. What to do.... Put in a light and have it hanging to the left of the figures? Or a TV microphone? Or even a window. A window is what we decided on. You'll be seeing it next issue. Also discussed Willits and DESTINY a bit...deplored "jumps" in text. Ate cookies...ran off part of this issue...ran off cover...critical discussion of color effect...gave Bradley masters for more drawings....he left and I contemplated typing this editorial section, decided to leave it til now.

Tonight a pair of old-time fans from the PSFS days came over (Joe Salta and Juanita Sharp) and we got acquainted...discussed Portland fandom...beat them both at chess(HA!)...they left...I watched honorable Chan solve case in Mojave desert...then started this editorial binge.

Third page of Bill Reynolds' column is a bit dim. This is because I goofed and printed it on wrong blank page of piece of fiction. Therefore had to run over both sides...poor master unit all petered out. Maximum pressure, too. Also first page of fiction item got some spirit fluid on it. The carbon deposit got dissolved in spots. Goofs all over in this issue. And I tried soooooo hard, too....

I am about a week late this issue because of two deadly family get-togethers. You all know what they are: the gathering of the clan...the bored looks...the frantic and desperate small talk...the men talk of cars and beer and such like that there...the women talk about clothes, cooking, and so on...I sit there in between, bored to tears, unwilling to be so impolite as to drag out a stf mag, all the while cursing the utter waste of time, thinking of the work that should be done on P.... On Sunday and Christmas this happened... there are two lousy sides to each family, and each must have its day. And no way out.... Short of mass murder, that is.

Aside to Denis Moreen: You, know, you do look like me.... I had to phrase it that way...after all, I am the bigger-name-fan aren't I. If it were the other way around, then I would look like you!!.

Please do not ask for back copies of PSYCHOTIC; they are no longer extant. In fact, there ain't no more!

I HAD some notes around here somewhere.... Letters, letters, letters.... AH HAAAAA. Found 'em under today's mail. If I were a girl editor I could say "...today's male.", but, since I'm not.... (pretty bad, huh?)

Hmmm. One note says: "It's Easy To Fool a Fan!" It is a reference to an article by Francis Bordna that appeared in the #3 issue of this zine of mine entitled, "The Forgotten Man of Fantasy". Do it stir some memories among you all? It should, for it was one of the most liked items of that issue. Hiram G. Brentwood, the "forgotten man" in the article, with malice aforethought, simply DOES NOT EXIST AND NEVER HAS. He is a figment. And a highly successful one, too, for NOT ONE FAN CAUGHT ON.... NOT ONE!

Gullible, aren't you?

I must modestly boast of adding the footnotes and jazzing up the "selections" from Brentwood's work.

Face it...you has been HAD.

Information from Southron Calif has it that a group of fans down there are going to start a new APA. This one to be NAPA...the National Amateur etcetera.... I never cease to wonder at the hustle and bustle that goes on down there...and so little in the way of good fanzines seems to emerge. They are working on a publicity-for-fandom write up in LIFE that, if it comes off, should make many of them automatic members of the BNF club. Or something. Watch LIFE in February....

Whatever happened to A-LA-SPACE? Has Kent Corey..."the extroverted fan"... decided that the egoboo wasn't worth it? As always happens, two days after I write this I'll receive ALICE in the mail...it always happens.

This may shock a good many fans, but I am so far behind in my reading (aside from Asf, Galaxy, and Beyond) that the number of unread mags now totals 32. Have I got a backlog...it's even threatening to become a frontlog.

As I type this the Ballyhoo calendar...desk type...that sits on my...ha... DESK...is slowly and surely, with every clack of the typer, vibrating itself closer and closer to the edge. In just another minute it should go over the precip--- theprecipic---the EDGE. Just a little way now... One or two

WHOOPS, it went.

Looks to me as if the long heralded stf depression has arrived. Or is it "arriven"? Anyway...it is here. A letter section in FANTASTIC coming up (a sign that the readers are no longer to be ignored), rumor that AMAZING is going back to pulp-size, SS and TWS going Quarterly (what a shocker that was), the death of DYNAMIC, all these are proof positive. I do not view with alarm.

An apology to Dave Rike is in order at this point. I promised there would be some of his Blood-and-Gore type art on these two pages. I forgot. Didn't know you'd have the cover, did you, Dave?

And as the sun sinks beneath the waves, we bid a fond farewell to the island of PSYCHOTIC which is now completely hidden by the steam, Tooodle.



DIDN'T THINK I'D MAKE IT,
DID YOU?