

PSYCHOTIC

8



The Leather Couch

....WHERE THE EDITOR RAMBLES ON AND ON...AND ON...AND ON....

PITY THE POOR EDITOR....

I'm typing this one-handed. With the other hand I am frantically squeezing the velve of a pressurized insect spray. The room is getting hazy with the stuff, the air is getting thick...it's hard to see.... But I've just gotta get the bugs out of this apartment. I tell you I can't stand living with them much longer. They've gotta go!

What is going on? What kind of bugs is driving toward gibbering sanity?

Typo bugs, that's what!

Somehow, despite my utmost care and eternal vigilance, those infernal Gremlins-of-the-bug-family have literally infested PSYCHOTIC since its birth. Now...it isn't often that a young man-fan like me becomes a mother. Not often at all. And since it has happened, you can bet your contraceptives I don't want my child-zine to grow up a weak, anemic, crippled, typo-scarred object of derision. Nay. Even no. That's why I sit here typing and spzaying, spraying and typing.

Right from the start my poor little PSYCHOTIC shpwed up with a large goof-type Typo bug. I ignored it. I felt that by being very careful I could detect the larger ones as well as most of the smaller innocuous typos.

I was mistaken. Hidden in dark corners and hidden recesses of PSYCHOTIC, the vile things grew. They attained full stature and bided their time. Then, in PSYCHOTIC #5, they STRUCK!!!

Oh, the shame, the wormwoods and sackcloth, the temptations of the bitter cup, the long hours at the Wailing Wall, the rending of good T-shirts and the tearing of hair (and if you've ever tried to tear a hair you know how damned hard it really is).

But, I published #5, hoping against hope that no-one would notice. Alas, poor Psy, I knew it well. For McCain noticed....Ellison noticed....my horrible secret was out. And worse, it is chronicled in full and miserable detail in this issue. Read McCain, read Ellison; read the true enormity of my carelessness.

Pardon while I bang my head against the wall....

BLONK....BLONK....BLONK....BLONK....

Which way is Typos Anonymous?

Audience reaction: (sniffle) "And he's so young, too...."

"Kiss the crud off my hands."

THE PADDED

Doubtless at some time or other you have attended a performance of some stage magician who seemed to be able to continue indefinitely performing unbelievable feats of sleight of hand. No matter how hard you try to figure how he does it you fail. Just when you think you've finally worked out the mechanics of one of his tricks the magician spring his trap and shamefacedly you find the whole thing was a plant designed specifically to take in dolts like you who think they're smarter than they are.

How is it done? Well, the stock explanation is "The hand is quicker than the eye." More specifically, it is explained, the magician controls his audience to such an extent that he deliberately directs their attention to one hand while his other hand is performing the 'magic' in plain sight. (Confidentially, I've spent as much as ten minutes watching the other hand...the one that is not doing anything interesting ...and no matter how closely I watched, it still wasn't. But then maybe that's what the magician intended me to do from the start.)

At any rate, the control which the magician wields over his audience is child's play compared to the influence the average editor has upon his. Through bitter personal experience I have learned that 101 readers out of 100 give their minds a rest whenever they peruse any periodical and let the editor do their thinking for them. This sublime childlike faith in the omniscience of the editor (any editor) is something I shall never understand. Let this same mortal who earns his daily caviar with a blue pencil in one uncalloused palm appear in person and his readers will scoff at his utterances. If he dares write an article for his own or some other magazine, these same readers take great delight in dissecting his effort comma by comma to show what a Mongoloid idiot this savant really is.

But let the editor stay quietly in the background, butchering copy, retitling manuscripts, inserting a paragraph here, a sentence there, and a sneer in between and not only do these same hypercritical people never argue...it never enters their heads to consider any other possible interpretation...not even when the vast bulk of the article in question is devoted to proving, point by point, that the view diametrically opposite to that of the editor is the true one.

I first encountered this curious phenomenon when, as an innocent neofan, I was courting fame and fortune by the obvious and inevitable expedient of writing letters to all the professional magazines. My first encounter with this quality came as a result of my first letter to be printed. It went to a magazine called SUPER SCIENCE STORIES, just a legend to fandom today, but one of the better prozines in 1949. In it I questioned the existence of one Larry Shaw, a fan of the period who had been running riot through the SSS letter column that year and accused the editor of both inventing an imaginary person and writing the letters (this figment of editorial imagination attracted belief from so many readers that he solidified into a three- ((or maybe three and a half)) dimensional being, like the gods of old, and has now become an editor himself--of IF). Whenever I sign my name officially on company business I use only my initials, so, without thinking, I signed this first letter the same way.

BY V. L. MCCAIN

Making the most of his opportunity, Ejlar Jakobsson closed my letter by paraphrasing those immortal words which originally appeared in the NEW YORK TIMES (I think) and get reprinted monotonously each year, "Yes, Virginia, there actually is a Larry Shaw."

Although I later indignantly reread my letter and counted five different places where I had indicated my gender, I shortly received a letter inviting me to join a club.

You guessed it! The letter was addressed to Virginia L. McCain! And it turned out the writer wasn't joking!

That started it and I soon found at least one such distortion attaching itself to each of my published letters.

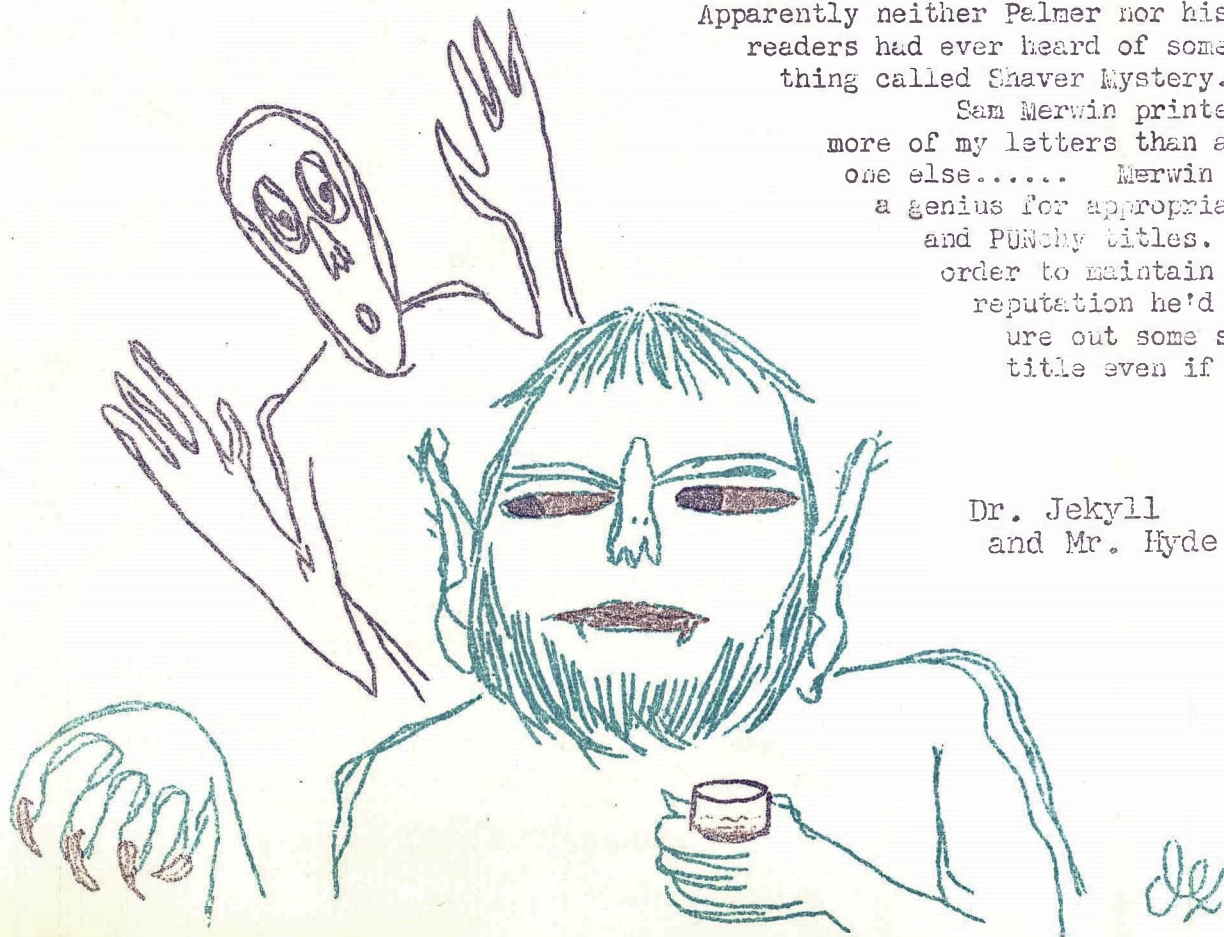
One early letter went to Ray Palmer and got a reply of equal length in the magazine. At that time I was working for Western Union (am again, now) and had access to only WU typewriters. These are not like ordinary typewriters. One of the differences is that they have neither capitals or small letters but a sort of hybrid in-between. This is the only letter on each key so when you write a letter on one of these it is, in effect, all capitals and one is unable to indicate anything which should be specially capitalized.

In this particular letter I was criticizing Palmer for continuing to use Shaver now that he had turned over a new leaf and was editing a good magazine (uh-huh, believe it or not, OTHER WORLDS was a pretty good magazine in its first half dozen issues). I said I had never liked Shaver, either his Mystery stories or otherwise and suggested Palmer send him back to the westerns or wherever it was he'd dug him up from. (This last was meant as an insult...I didn't seriously think that Shaver wrote well enough to have ever sold in the western field.) However, I hadn't been able to indicate Mystery was supposed to be capitalized and in his reply Palmer said he didn't know where I got the idea Shaver wrote mysteries and westerns as Richard S. had never worked in either field. In the near future I got letters from three of my correspondents wondering what made me think Shaver had ever written mystery stories.

Apparently neither Palmer nor his readers had ever heard of something called Shaver Mystery.

Sam Merwin printed more of my letters than anyone else..... Merwin had a genius for appropriate and PUNCHY titles. In order to maintain his reputation he'd figure out some such title even if he

Dr. Jekyll
and Mr. Hyde



had to pick the most obscure part of the letter to find it. And anyone replying or commenting on my letter invariably concentrated on that part to the exclusion of all others.

This reached its ultimate in one of my last letters before I quit letterhacking.

About 13 months earlier a fan had written a letter to ASF reviewing the issue for a year later, rather than the current one. Campbell commented that he was off on the wrong time-track apparently but, intrigued by the idea, proceeded to concoct that particular issue as close to the letter as possible and using one of the most fabulous lineups of talent ever to appear in ASF in order to match the fabulous list the fan had made out. It was Theodore Sturgeon's last ASF appearance; it was Heinlein's only story to appear in ASTOUNDING since World War II; it

was an extraordinarily fine issue and one of the most satisfying examples of pro-fan interplay of all time.

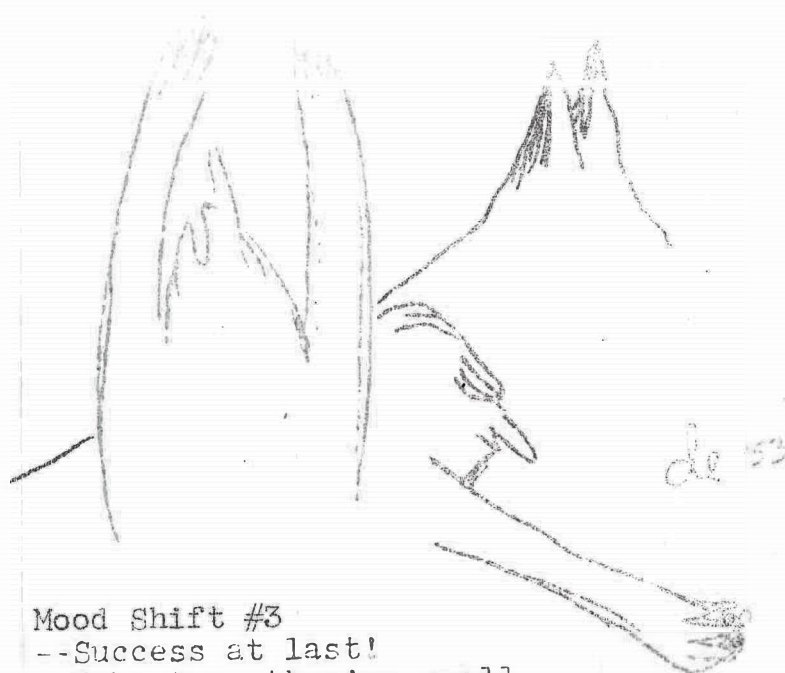
As a neofan, afire to make my mark on our microcosmos, I only wished I'd thought of the idea. Bursting with originality I decided to copy it...altering it just enough to keep myself from being labelled imitative.

Instead of time travel I would make my letter come from another probability world. I warned my closest associate in fandom, Shelby Vick, that something special would appear in such and such an issue of Merwin's mag, and then set out to compose it. First off, I'd learned from experience that you can't be too subtle. I'd tried it a few times only to learn everybody ignored it unless the editor pointed it out for them. People simply don't read fan letters carefully enough to detect any veiled nuances. So I knew to get the idea across I'd have to make it obvious as can be and then pile detail upon detail upon detail so even the most sheeplike reader would get the point.

I concocted a probability world somewhat like ours but different. Merwin had never decimated Sergeant Saturn so I would write my letter in the method typical when that monster ruled the letter columns at Standard publication. This gave me a good start. No one could ignore my first paragraph of corny half-based humor, of the type flourishing in those columns, and think this was just another letter like any other. TIS and SF had both switched from quarterly to bi-monthly shortly after the end of World War II (tho as of this writing TIS just switched back to quarterly after seven years). So I bemoaned the fact that the magazines were still quarterly and surely the paper shortage still wasn't that bad. I cut down the number of stories appearing in the issue I was commenting on and changed the ending of one, criticizing it.

I managed to indicate that the war had ended a year later in my probability world and that the Manhattan project had been a flop. In closing, I requested that everyone who was interested to join the new SF Club I was forming in Vanport, Oregon. (Vanport was a small suburb of Portland ((about 30,000)) which was totally destroyed in a flood in 1948.)

The letter appeared all right. At its end Merwin appended a brief note saying that if anybody was confused by the above it was a typical example of the sort of letter they used to get in the bad old Sergeant Saturn days and was an amusing hearkening back. I believe his exact closing words were, "Some spoof, huh?"



Mood Shift #3

--Success at last!

--Take two, they're small.

Some spoof, yuh. Nobody, but nobody, tumbled to what the letter was all about. I got all sorts of congratulations on it. Everybody thought it was another takeoff on the old-time letters and several well known fans who'd been ignoring me sent me samples of their fanzines.

Even Shelby Vick, who had been forewarned, and whose thinking processes at the time duplicated mine to something like sixty four decimals wrote me congratulating me on the nostalgic nearakening back to Sergeant Saturn.

To Shelby Vick I explained what it was all about. He wrote back and admitted he'd missed it, suggested it might have been a bit more obvious if I'd just mentioned probability worlds spmeplace in the letter. To which I had a ~~x~~ devastating reply... I quoted him two different places in the letter where I had dragged a mention of probability worlds (in one place I had scoffed that they were even more impossible than atomic power and thus a silly subject for stories). I certainly wasn't going to be so subtle that anyone would overlook the point. No sir. Not me. But then I hadn't counted on my dear pal Merwin.

Well, I quit writing letters to editors shortly after that but I made a mind-blasting discovery. I realize to reveal this publicly will rock the foundations of fandom and possibly even bring on an Annish of UTOPIAN. But the Truth must out. This dark power is not restricted to professional editors. Editors of fanzines have this same super-human control over their readers thoughts. Yes, I mean you, and you, and you!

It was about six months after this fiasco that a certain fan editor asked me to do some pro-mag reviews for his magazine. I told him if I did it would probably develop into an article. He said fine...he needed a lead article. So I got to work.

It had occured to me some time before that fans are unfair in the way they judge editors. Some editors have much bigger budgets than others and can splurge on expensive talent, while others have to use all sorts of editorial know-how to come up with a magazine of similar quality. And some editors are hampered by strict company policies and managing editors who make editing a good magazine far more difficult by forcing their subordinates to adhere to a lot of outmoded editorial policies. (This was far more common in 1951 than now. Malcolm Reiss is the only outstanding example of this left today.)

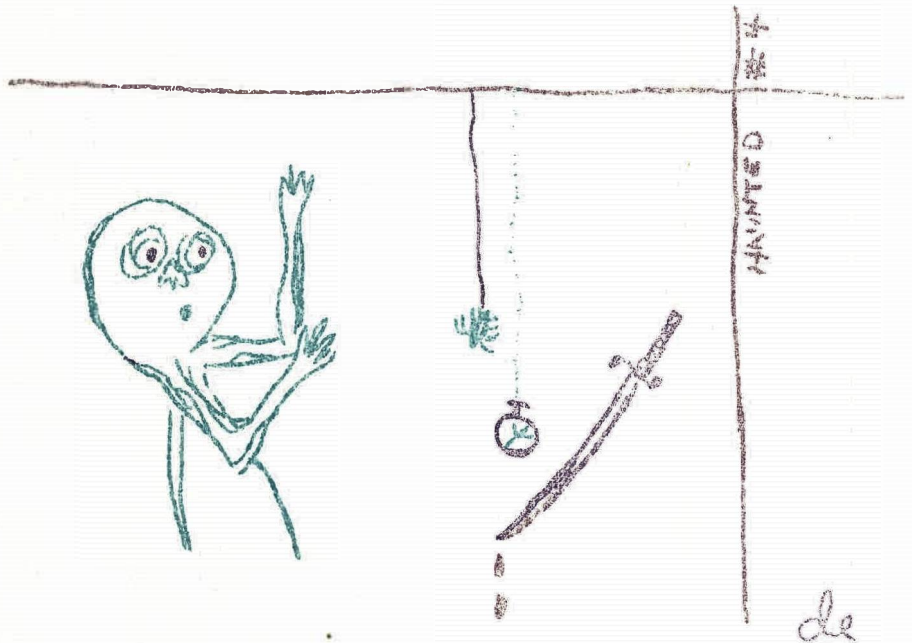
In an effort to judge more fairly and reapraise each editor in this new light rather than just on his finished product I wrote my article.

The editor expressed enthusiasm over the article but with some reservations. Being a rather naive sort, he'd always thought of editors as something akin to Gods, and my callous viewing of them as mere humans with human faults and virtues rather went against the grain, I'm afraid.

I'd managed to find something good to compliment each editor on and thought I'd leant over backwards to be more than fair to each. However, the editor retitled my article. He called it "The Editors Over A Broiling Flame" and illustrated it with a tiny struggling editor impaled on the point of a giant pen.

Probably wisely I made him use a penname on the piece, as I was trying to crack the pro market at the time (not that it did me any good).

After the article appeared more mail, response, and comment was received than



on all the articles and stories published by this fanzine in the past combined. And almost 100% of the responses were irate over the vicious way I'd handled all the editors. The only favorable one I remember coming in at all was from H.L. Gold who had not only ranked #1 in my summing up of standings under this different way of looking at it, but who was probably the only editor to receive no criticism of even the slightest nature from me (his magazine was only about six months old then and quite a bit better than now.)

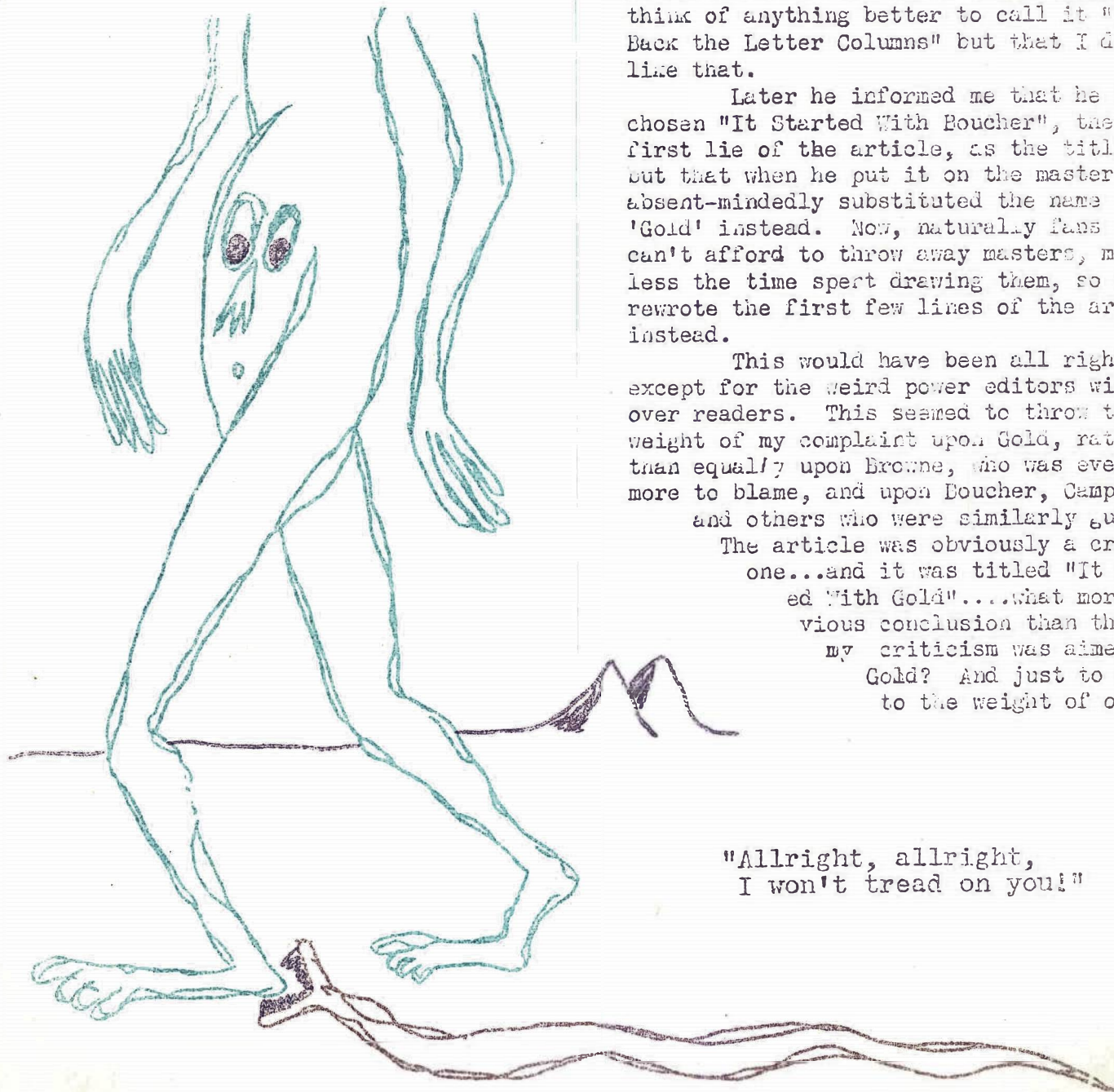
And now I find the same thing happening all over again. Before starting this column for Geis I sent him an article. I rather pride myself on my titles ordinarily, but this time I couldn't think of anything halfway acceptable. So I left it untitled and told him if he couldn't think of anything better to call it "Bring Back the Letter Columns" but that I didn't like that.

Later he informed me that he had chosen "It Started With Boucher", the first lie of the article, as the title but that when he put it on the master he absent-mindedly substituted the name 'Gold' instead. Now, naturally fans can't afford to throw away masters, much less the time spent drawing them, so he rewrote the first few lines of the article instead.

This would have been all right except for the weird power editors wield over readers. This seemed to throw the weight of my complaint upon Gold, rather than equally upon Browne, who was even more to blame, and upon Doucher, Campbell, and others who were similarly guilty.

The article was obviously a critical one...and it was titled "It Started With Gold"...what more obvious conclusion than that my criticism was aimed at Gold? And just to add to the weight of opinion,

"Allright, allright,
I won't tread on you!"



de '53

Geis took advantage of the title, an anti-Gold poem he was running, and a recent precedent, to term this "The Galaxy Depreciation Issue". With a title like that any sensible reader knows you're going to find articles attacking the GALAXY editor within, especially if said article is titled "It Started With Gold".

So I note morosely that practically all the letters in PSY #6 operate on the assumption that I was doing a hatchet job on Gold....most of them even praise me for it....when actually I devoted a good part of the article to showing just how superior GALAXY was and that it was precisely because of these superiorities that other magazines tended to imitate one of its mistakes.

Oh well...I guess it's hopeless. Why should people read the articles when they can read the titles and know what the article is all about....like the little boy in a recent VORTEX story who read the first paragraph of each magazine serial and then sent six page letters to the editors criticizing the plot development.

It's hopeless, fellow fan writers....and you pro writers, for that matter, too. We are hopelessly in the clutches of these editors....mere dainty Trilby's to their slaving Svengali's. All we can do is hope they give our articles titles that will bring good reactions. I see no way to curb their power short of going into competition by becoming an awesome EDITOR oneself. And that involves a lot of work...sten-cil cutting...crank turning...copy mailing. I don't really think it's worth it.

Meanwhile if you find a new title on this column, someone else's name above it, the paragraphs shuffled around hopelessly and the entire thing unreadable...then you will know it is not my fault for writing this late at night when I am sleepy and incoherent but merely editor Geis, drunk with power and mad with lust to work his will upon his helpless contributors and readers by stirring his ink-stained forefinger around slowly in the turgid pools of their brains.

SYMBOLIQUE
(symbolic)



The Observation Ward

A FANZINE REVIEW by the Editor

ZIP #2, Ted E. White, 1014 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, Virginia. 5¢, 6/25¢. At present published irregularly.

The most interesting item in this issue is the article by Warren Allen Freiberg in which he is hoist by his own petard. The title is, "The Science Fiction Fan: A JACKASS!" The writing is incredible.

SPIRAL #5, Denis Moreen, 214 Ninth St., Wilmette, Illinois. 10¢, 3/25¢/ Bi-monthly.

Cover by Hazlehurst much good. "Five Years of PEON" by Lee Riddle was interesting, as was the letter section. The editorial, "Spiralities", was a high spot as always in the mag. This mag is good and getting better.

NOTE #8, Robert Peatrowsky, Box 634, Norfolk, Nebraska. 5¢. Bi-monthly.

An excellent cover by Ron Fleshman. High points this issue were the columns: "Rich's Roundup" by Rich Luboff, and "Public Opinion" by Rich Bergeron. An article, "The Art of Refusing", by Hal Shapiro, was very good even though it--like the first of his two articles in last issue, "The Art of Getting"--was much too short. I felt the articles should have been at least twice as long. This zine gets the Geis RECOMMENDED.

CANADIAN CAPERS #1, Harry Calnek, Granville Ferry, Nova Scotia, CANADA. Sent to Americans on the PAR system. Monthly.

This is the OO of the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Fan Association.

It consists of dull reports and editorials and a few items of general interest. Best among the latter was "On Meeting Sam Mines", by Daryl Sharp. It was shot through with forced humor, but still very good, though too short.

THE BERKLEY BEM #4, M. A. Southworth, 1125 Larkmoor, Berkley, Michigan. 10¢. No pubbing schedule listed.

Horrible...truly horrible....

FANSCIFUL #1, Bobby Stewart, Route 4, Kirbyville, Texas. 10¢. No publishing schedule listed that I could find.

A new one, ~~41111~~ hecto'd, and not too well. If the editors ever graduate to a clearer repro process their mag should be pretty good, but hecto is two strikes against anyone from the start. "The Harmonica That Seldom Ever", a column by Jim Harmon, was the best in the issue.

HYPHEN #5, Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd., Belfast, N. Ireland. Two issues for 25¢ or one US promag or sf pocketbook. Irregualr.

The fabulous Willis fabulates again. Material by Tucker, Bert Campbell, Bob Shaw, etc., and a letter section. This HYPHEN zine is unashamedly devoted to fans and fandom. Not for this mag are the "burning issues" of science fiction. By Chu, this is RECOMMENDED! One of the very best fanzines being published today. It is the one zine that no young fan should be without.

SKYHOOK #19, Redd Boggs, 2215 Benjamin St., N.E., Minneapolis 18, Minn-
eota. 15¢. Quarterly. Published for FAPA.

Overwhelming. This zine it perhaps the most literate and "serious" I have ever seen. There is solid meat in these pages, and it takes solid thought to keep up. I am awed at the technical perfection of the stencil and mimeo work. Beautiful. Editorials by Boggs, a long article by Sam Moskowitz, a long column by William Atheling Jr., a splendid letter section; all these make it one of the very best fanzines I have ever seen. Everytime I look at it I am amazed. RECOMMENDED!!

ECLIPSE #6, Ray Thompson, 410 S. 4th Street, Norfolk, Nebraska. 10¢, 6/50¢
Published "...every so often...."

Ray uses a flat bed ditto. I used a flat bed ditto for PSYCHOTICS 1 and 2. It is sheer murder. Reproduction is not good, the masters get spotty and creased.... It is sheer murder. But even after making all allowances, ECLIPSE is just another fan mag.

STAR ROCKETS #7, Raleigh E. Multog, 7 Greenwood Rd., Pikesville 8, Md.
20¢. Irregular.

Because of the number of pages in this issue, I suppose 20¢ isn't too much. After all, forty pages is forty pages. But.... Well, I mean, "so what?" I would prefer two pages of interesting and well done editorials to forty pages of crud. I recognize that quantity is to be admired and all that, but still....

VULCAN #3, Terry Carr, 134 Cambridge Street., San Francisco 12, Calif.
15¢. Quarterly?

The front cover by Denness Morton was a very nice thing indeed. I like very much. The general layout of the zine is very good. And the letter column was good. And...that's all.

ANDROMEDA #2, Pete Campbell, 60 Calgarth Rd., Windermere, West., England.
One copy for a 35¢ promag, 5 issues for a dollar. Quarterly.

Big: 52 pages. Memorable because of a loooong section by Dave Rike. Fiction and articles on the average better than average same in U.S. It's good, but I'll have to see some more before I decide how good.

HODGE PODGE #3, Marie-Louise/Nancy Share, P.O. Box 31, Danville, Penna.
10¢. Monthly.

Very good articles by T.E. Watkins, who discussed some of the prize fluffs on TV (not girls--goofs!), and Al Toth, who examines with great glee the commercials of the soap companies.

A looong letter section that is well handled. RECOMMENDED.

FANTASTIC STORY MAG #2, Ron Ellick, 232 Santa Ana, Long Beach 3, Calif.
10¢. Bi-monthly.

A DEA cover. The mag is devoted to fan fiction re-prints. To my way of thinking a lousy idea. But...it's Ellick's money and such. Who can say him nay?

STARLANES, Orma McCormick, 1558 W. Hazlehurst St., Ferndale 20, Michigan.
Next issue to be printed, 40¢ a copy and \$1.50 a yr.

Some good poems, some bad, nothing exceptional.

Ye Ghods! Where have all the good fanzines gone to? OOPSLA, OPUS, QUANDRY, SFB very rare, VEGA bi-monthly.... With one or two exceptions the new crop possitively stink!

FIENDETTA #6--the annish, Charles Wells, 405 E. 62nd St., Savannah, Georgia. 15¢, 3/40¢. Published irregularly.

The color mimeography is impressive...the material, with one exception, is not. That exception, "The Little Boy Who Bit People", by David English, was excellent in spite of a weak ending.

HA! #s 1 and 2, Peter J. Vorzimer, 1311 N. Laurel Ave., W. Hollywood 46, California. 15¢. Monthly schedule is claimed, but I doubt it.

An exceptionally fine photographic cover on this combination volume. I found it exuberantly wacky. The stories, which comprise virtually all the contents, were satires that depend too much on exaggeration to achieve their effects.

TYRANN #8, Bert Hirschhorn, 853 Riverside Drive, New York 32, N.Y. One sheet of sad tidings: TYRANN is no more. Lamentations.

RENEW #4, John Hitchcock, 15 Arbutus Ave., Baltimore 28, Maryland. 3¢. Published irregularly.

A smug type thing that grew a bit. I enjoyed the typos in this zine almost as much as anything else. Amusing fanzine reviews.

THE NATIONAL FANTASY FAN, edited by John Magnus, Federal 203-B, Oberlin, Ohio. It is the OO of The National Fantasy Fan Federation.

Editor Magnus wants suggestions on how to improve the OO. Simple, John, provide for greater membership participation in the mag: start a long letter column, cut down on the dry as dust reports, and use some generalzine material. Since the TNFF is about the only thing the average member ever sees as the result of his dollar membership, you should make that result as attractive as possible.

DESTINY #9, Malcolm Willits, 2018 17th, Forest Grove, Oregon., or Earl Kemp, 3508 N. Sheffield Ave., Chicago 13, Illinois. 25¢, 4/\$1.00. Published quarterly.

The symbolic cover by Robert Johnson was good, but the interior art, with the exceptions of Naaman and Rog, was pretty bad. Layout is largely uninspired. The business of forcing the reader to "jump" from page 7 to page 14 to page 20 is completely ridiculous. And almost every item in the issue is thus jumped and continued. A very good story by Mari Wolf graces the pages this issue entitled "Prejudice". "Eliminate The Double Standard", by Edward Wood, discusses the situation between the pro and amateur publishing worlds. DESTINY is RECOMMENDED.

GEM TONES #16, G. M. Carr, 8325 -31st. NW, Seattle 7, Washington. A SAPS zine available by trade only. Quarterly.

GEM TONES, too, also, in addition, is hitting the road of no return. It will be succeeded by a regular sized zine as yet unnamed. The "Boo-Jest" review column of fanzines will either find a new home or will cease to exist.

SWARM #1, Frances Gann, 462 South 5th East, Salt Lake City, Utah. 15¢, 6/\$1.00. Irregular.

Double spaced typing all through the 22 pages. Two girl-type editors. GAAAAAaaaaaaa..... Oh, OOPSLA, where is thy sting?

BREVIZINE Adventure, V3n1, W.A.Freiberg, 5369 West 89th St., Oak Lawn, Illinois. 10¢, 3/25¢. Bi-monthly.

Very good paper.

HOW TO DRAW MAGAZINE CARTOONS

WRITTEN & DRAWN BY THESE 21 ARTISTS

Walt Ketterberg, Hal Anderson, Lloyd Baker, Nate Collier, Glen R. Bernhardt, Mel Miller, Lerley Burteen, Ray Dabbs, J.L. Williams, Scott Taber, Dick Snolinski, Henri Arnold, Bill Riley, Irv Hagglund, Jack Bonestell, Walt Muson, Les Colin, Carl Kehler, Allan K. Jensen, Jay Work, Lew Card.

Each of these 21 cartoons is drawn the full size (8 1/2 x 11), just the way they are submitted to the magazines. On the back of each artist's rough is a full page letter, by him, telling you his tricks, tips and working methods.



"As near as I can make it out, it says, 'Do Not Disturb!'"

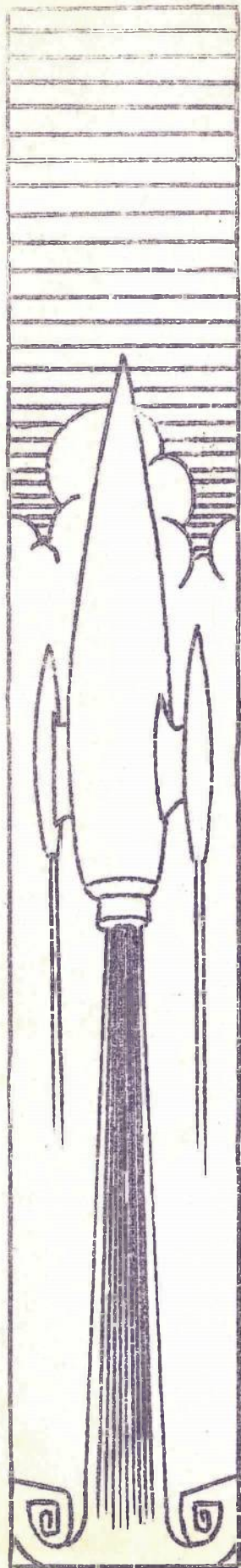
Also, and at no extra cost, you'll receive one FREE SAMPLE COPY of the trade journal CARTOONISTS' MARKET LETTER. This shows you where to SELL your cartoons and, also, lists names and addresses of cartoonists who want to buy jokes and cartoon gags.

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THOUGHTS FROM DEEP SPACE

BY HARLAN ELLISON

TYPO: there is a very little known race of editorial gremlin whose natural habitat and action is of immediate interest, hence the discussion at the beginning of this issue's column. The annoying fly in the hectogunk is an editorial bugaboo name of Typographicus Printrong. It crawls into bottles of correction fluid and sticks it up so that the fluid is all dry when you want to use some, forcing the distressed editor to leave the error as is or type over it. Or it tracks across the page as it is running through the typer and blurs the page, making said editor punch the wrong typewriter keys. There are even species which engage in the practice of turning themselves into flattened word-forms and lying across the pages of copy so that the editor types the wrong word. There are numerous instances of these disturbing fellows harrasing honest fanzine editors, such as Monseigneur Geis. We must conclude, therefore, that the reason this column was erroneously titled "Thoughts From Outer Space" as it was several issues ago, instead of "Thoughts From Deep Space" as it was intended, was because of a Typo. It would be absurd to accuse our mutual friend Mr. Geis. Damn those Typos!

CONDITION OF THE BOTTOM: Report from New York. Well, lads and most lovely lasses, the bottom has dropped from 'neath the field of the scientific fictional. Everything is rushing outward in a vicious race with itself to see who can escape the holocaust first. In the teeming metropolis of NYC dozens of stf writers (and most of your favorites, too) are sitting on their collective rumps pounding out ream after ream of magnificent copy---and letting it slip to the floor. There is no market! All the publishing houses are dumping their wares. While houses like Quinn with its IF are going monthly, for god only knows what reason, houses like Standard are dropping mags like THRILLING WONDER STORIES and STARTLING to quarterly and indefinite schedules, and publications like SPACE are

Bergeron

definitely down the shower drain. It's heartwarming and pathetic to a bastard like me who last issue begged the leeches to get off the throat of science fiction. It's heartwarming in that the scum are being weeded out and sloughed off rapidly as they find there is no market for their imitative crap. A postal card comes in from my very good friend Larry Shaw of IF which says:

Here's what "Mr Science Fiction" says about

MALICE IN WONDERLAND
by Evan Hunter
in the January IF

"...fulsome praise for Malice In Wonderland...Neo-brilliant is the nomenclature for it. Possibly the best SF story I read all year."

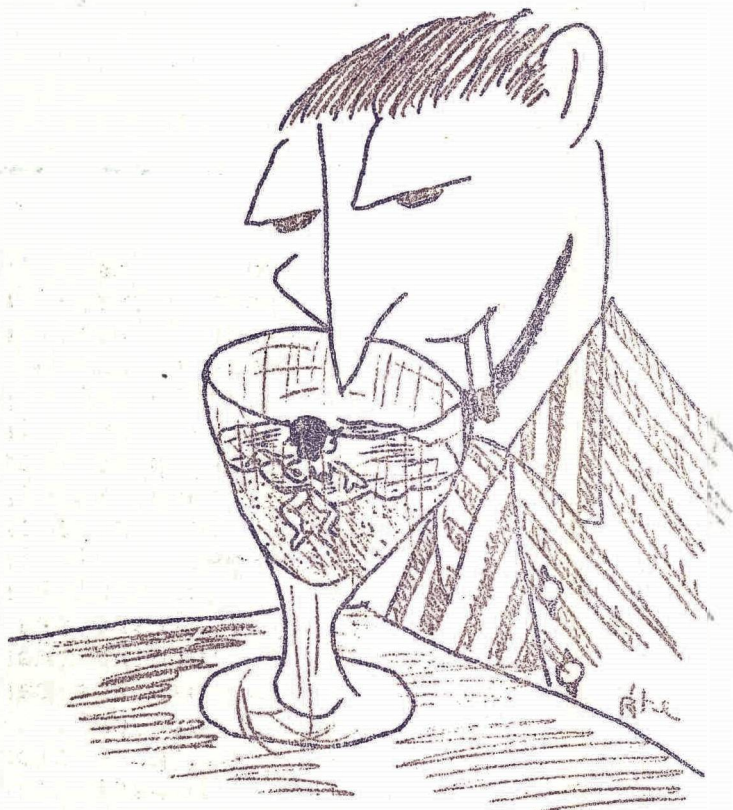
--Forrest Ackerman

Which isn't saying a helluva lot, since Sol Lombino's title-stolen "Malice In Wonderland" was as trite a piece of writing as ever managed to be rejected from Gold's desk. (And you mean to say you didn't know that Evan Hunter was S. A. Lombino?)

But there is more to this situation than meets the eye. It is a perfect example of the situation in The Big City right now. There is an ever increasingly tighter market for the newcomer. Sure, there are hundreds of cases of first-timers selling their stories to the big stf zines. But look at the outnumberingly staggering proportion of writers who are being accepted from the agents like Meredith and Altshuler, and the wee trickle that is the manuscripture of the amateur or non-agent handled writer.

Men like Fred Pohl giving up years as an agent to start free-lancing with Cyril Cornbluth in Pohl's mansion out on Redbank. See Doc Lowndes phoning up two (count 'em, gentle reader...2) New York authors and telling them to whip out a lead story around a cover which will arrive in the morning's mail. Or of men with tremendous talent wearily turning to two-bit westerns and detectives to keep them in striped ties and corn meal batter.

Yes, the New York situation is an odd one, and if the intelligent reader watches very carefully the next few months, he is going to see some outrageous and some completely fantastic goings-on. (Like for instance that AMAZING STORIES is going back to pulp size soon.)



"Are you on the bill, or are you that "free added attraction"?"

QUESTIONS I WISH YOU'D ANSWER: whatever happened to the fans who raved over and published fanzines about (a) Burroughs, (b) Merritt and (c) Lovecraft? What ever happened to the Gnome Press Fantasy Calendars? How long has it been since we were promised another "Dr. Verner" story by Boucher in FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION? What decided Hirschorn to fold TYRANN? Who is "John Bloodstone"? Is Ken Heuer actually a scientist? Who got hold of, and is waiting to publish, the story "c/o Mr. Makepeace" by Peter Phillips which was scheduled for the fourth issue of WORLDS BEYOND before it folded? ((February issue of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION--ed)) What happened to Marian Cox and to Barclay Johnson and to Lee Hoffman and to Rich Elsberry and to Su Rosen and several dozen others? How soon will it be before Cartier comes back to stf? Why don't the blobby Lowndes mags change their method of reproduction? Is Heinlein well again? Which way to the men's room?

POSE A PROBLEM: I've wondered of late why there isn't a magazine in the amateur field akin to PUNCH or THE NEW YORKER. Oh, several offset publications attempt to be the off-trail representatives of the fans, but they fail, on the whole, miserably. The closest I can conjure that would come near to what an "Amateur New Yorker" would have to be, was attacked by the esteemed Lee Hoffman's QUANDRY, which was as far from the real item as your Elk's tooth is from the Rock of Gibraltar. But is there anything that can be done to remedy the situation? Is there a fan magazine that would publish material of such a highly esoteric (not necessarily ponderous or stuffy, mind you) nature that it would embody all the finer aspects of FANTASY COMMENTATOR, SF ADVERTISER, SKY-HOOK and one or two others who every now and then manage to present material such as the tremendous "Taking Science Fiction Seriously" by Reginald Bretnor in the Winter 1954 SF ADVERTISER. At the same time, the magazine would have to come up with fiction much like William Faulkner's "A Rose For Emily" or David English's "The Little Boy Who Bit People" which appeared, much out of character, in Charles Wells' most recent FIENDETTA. It would be forced to delve into the bizzarre, the eminently outre, and the completely off-trail.



"When I want a smoke, I want a smoke!"

I have been so hepped up about presenting material of this sort that in my own publication, SCIENCE FANTASY BULLETIN (soon to change title to DIMENSIONS) I am soon instuting a series of short stories that I've labelled TABOO-BREAKERS. This is the first really concrete step, I believe, in the new direction needed in amateur writing. The field of fan writing is slowly but surely becoming sterile, and if it falters and succumbs, with it will go one of the high talents of the amateur.

I for one enjoy good fan fiction, thinking there is much to be said which cannot be said in the prozines, and often which the prozines are incapable of saying correctly, for their viewpoints are distorted and varigated by commercial leanings.

That they are, is not condemnation, but merely observation.

Where, oh, where is that PARTISAN REVIEW of the fan ranks? I have seen no SATURDAY REVIEW in amateur writing, and believe me I would give my mimeo crank handle to see one, too.

Unimportant Incident

a post-atomic vignette

A grotesquely misformed silhouette of the city rose hard and stark against the sunset, its broken towers whistling the lonely wind on its way. The wind hurried to nowhere, for there was no place for it to go on this atom-scarred world. Eventually it would be gone, as were so very many things: abruptly, leaving only an echoing memory behind.

Somewhere, out by where the bridge used to be, a wolf howled, an agonizing note that drifted to the cold, uncaring stars above, lazily.

A mangy cat scurried down the street, closely followed by a dark form that might have been a dog at one time, but was now but a being of fleash and muscle and bone and hunger.

Across the bay the lights of Oakland were out, as they had been for many years now. Sacramento lay to the north, and it was the same: broken windows, falling structures, overgrown streets.

Man had left Earth forever.

Somewhere, Someone gazed at the empty world and dedided that Man would have to be replaced, just as the giant mammals and the giant reptiles before them. Somewhere, Someone surveyed the world and chose.

--- --- ---

It was the next night when it happened, though it did not necessarily have to be the next night. The time was unimportant, really.

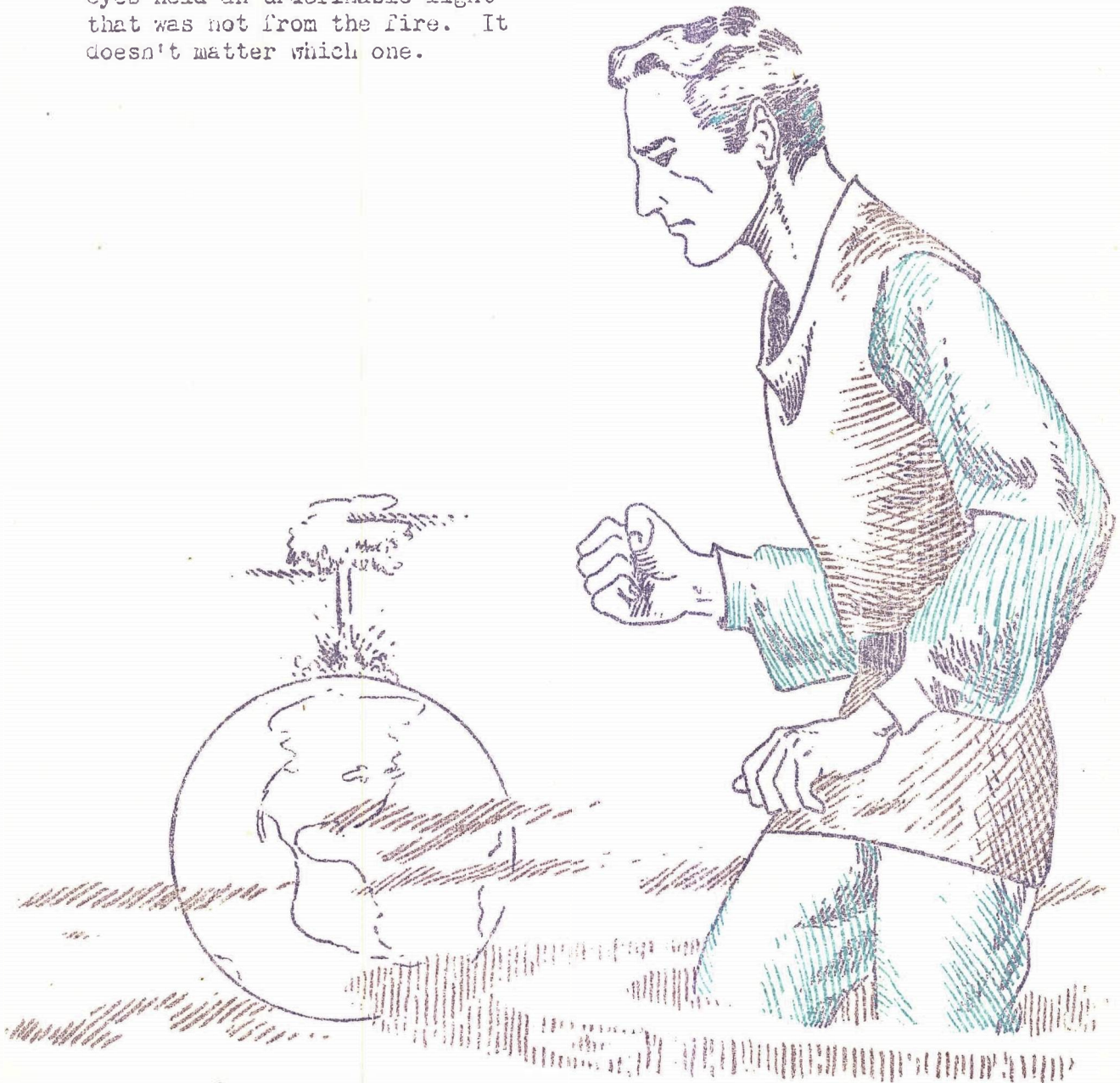
Somehthing went wrong in a warehouse on Bayshore Highway, just outside of San Francisco. Something--it doesn't matter what--exploded. Pieces of metal flew in all directions, and the few animals that were left in the area cowered or ran or were hurt or possibly even killed. The warehouse, after the blast, caught fire and burned with a cold flame that danced in the wind.

After a short time the animals crept up to the warehouse,

BY TERRY CARR

one by one, seeking its warmth. They crouched near it nervously, senses alert for attack from any others. The reflected light from the flames glowed in their eyes.

One animal's eyes held an undefinable light that was not from the fire. It doesn't matter which one.



— SOMEONE GAZED AT THE
EMPTY WORLD AND DECIDED THAT
MAN WOULD HAVE TO BE REPLACED.

Donna P. 1054-1

THE N F F F

BY

DON
SUSAN

From past experience I might call NFFF the National Fan Flip Federati on, because more fans periodically AND intermittently flip their lids about it than anything else save dianetics, J.W.C. vs Gold, nudes, and "popularized" stf. I feel rather qualified to write this article for NFFFer Geis, because I q was NFFF Treasurer and am NFFF President. Thus I stand already condemned. I must be (1) publicity mad, or (2) pro NFFF and therefore just mad.

Well, I'm a bit too old for the "look at me" set; I prefer money to publicity. In NFFF I never had to worry about temptation, tho; there wasn't enough money to tempt even if I were dishonest. This I learned when I became Treasurer. As Treasurer the first thing I received was about \$70 worth of bills and complaints that the last Treasurer hadn't answered them for months. And no money! Oh, happy day....

Well, finally I received \$51.50 from Mr. Fry, the previous Treasurer, plus a very ...well, "confused" letter vaguely explaining why he had been "missing" for a season or so. (Later on I learned he was a Librarian in a university medical library; with syntax like that??) He was consistent with past Treasurers in not reporting on NFFF finances; and looking over his "records"...ah, "files", I guessed perhaps he had no more idea of what he had done than I did. Something he vaguely mentioned in his letter made me wonder if ha hadn't masappropriated funds; certainly I couldn't prove it from his "records". Later I learned it was actually that he had loaned NFFF money at no cost and much inconvenience to himself. A noble, albeit strangely lax gentleman.

Then, from G.L. Carr I learned about two sad messes: essentially "desertions" of a sort. The first stemmed from a NFFF service called the Fanzine Title Clearance Bureau, whereby any fan could learn if the title he was considering for his fanzine had been used before. Levine, the fellow who had the post, just disappeared from sight plus a file of all fanzine titles. Even now we never dared to completely recreate the files (if really quite possible) tho we shall have to do so.

The next mess was even worse. Miss Betty Sullivan, then of Cincinatti, WAS the Librarian of the NFFF "rental" library for NFFF members. For some odd reason, another Librarian was appointed....BUT he never received the library! Sullivan alleged vaguely that NFFF owed her money and then left town. I understand that she is now in Cleveland. I'll have to see what legal action can be taken. Even if it costs more than the library is worth, it should be an object lesson. One of my friends has a lawyer for a father; I understand he enjoys a fine reputation for contract cases including Bailment, specifically deposit and/or mandate.

The next thing I encountered was the much touted Carr-Higgs "feud". Mrs. Carr has been prone to faultfinding, which is an unpopular quality, especially when administered in an attitude of adult superiority vs juvenile defection. However, as a rule most of her allegations were based on truth, though I should say she hits the mark more intuitively and generally than specifically and explicitly. Though on some things I think she is all wrong, I still have a great respect for her. More tact would probably suit both of us better.

Mr. Higgs, it seems to me, never quite understood what Mrs. Carr, I, Bill Venable, and a suffering membership expected of the NFFF Official Editor. It is hard to say what he actually thought, but it would seem he believed enthusiasm for NFFF would compensate for a well-nigh eternally late and hopelessly dated Official Organ. Since Higgs is evidently a likeable fellow, Mrs. Carr's complaints, already tainted with mistrust,

begat by their tone, sounded excessive. But this state of affairs reached a slow but beautiful (?) climax.

Altho thruout 1952 and 1953 Higgs was late in delivering the Official Organ, The National Fantasy Fan, the real crux of things started at the Chicon. The stencils for two really excellent benefits, Fanspeak and Astounding Story Key (the work of the famed Radd Boggs) had been donated so NFFF could produce them for the membership. Higgs had copies of these prepared in advance and at the Chicon recruiting table; they helped considerably to sell memberships. Now, some officers thought Higgs had offered to give these benefits: costs out of his pocket; others, merely as usual: costs out of the NFFF Treasury. That his reaction was to either statement, it was certainly illogically uncommunicative.

The climax was that he had run off the benefits (allegedly by his own statements: at various times and various numbers) but had destroyed them despairing of ever being paid. During the months I was Treasurer, he never asked for payment for the benefits; naturally he got just as little by destroying benefits as by not asking. At about this time he put out the Official Organ, which for reasons of economy, was to be on a stretched schedule, i.e., one issue skipped and the next a little early. However it came out late by any schedule, and as two numbers, giving an "interesting" impression (Oh, lost strands of hair....) and announcing his resignation...because of Carr's "leading". In that issue there was also announced a contest with a set closing date; by the time it reached anybody, the contest deadline was past!

This was too much. Moreover, since Higgs had many supporters in NFFF, Venable and I feared his resignation might not be accepted. Also, a charge had been leveled at one of the directors and by possible implication most NFFF officials. Therefore, a statement culled from piles of letters was presented before the membership in the form of a referendum. It was greeted with mixed but not very negative reactions.

At present the only problem we have with "personel" is not enough of them. We need volunteers. Thanks to Bill Venable most of the procedure has been worked out in detail. My intention is to codify these into a permanent reference. We have good workers now, but need more such (and if possible, better) workers.

We are also faced with a monetary problem. While our services depend little upon funds, our benefits depend upon both workers and funds. Paper and ink, stencils and postage always cost. Until recently NFFF officials have been afraid to tackle the job of having dues raised by constitutional amendment.

This revision does not mean that we will not have the burden of memberships at the old rates, but each membership at the new rate means the lessening of the burden. Size reduces cost per individual. If NFFF had right now a thousand members at the new rate of \$1.60, we could definitely offer four benefits before mid-year.... (if we had no volunteers, I'd try doing all the typing, dummyming, stencil-cutting, and mimeography myself; it's probably no more work than editor Geis does. Tho I hate the idea of doing that and being NFFF Preseident simultaneously.) And even tho many have resigned their posts (finding the new year promising less spare time), most of our services are going.

If we get enough volunteers for duties, and new members at the new rates, NFFF should have the best year EVER. The member will then receive his money back manyfold in services and benefits not to be found elsewhere for so little or simply not to be found elsewhere.

NFFF is for the active fan, the enthusiastic reader, the collector, and the corresponding and/or social stf enthusiast. At worst, NFFF is a good gamble. Before, I wouldn't say it was even that, and even then many were satisfied. If you are willing to put your money on the best thing in fandom, send \$1.60 to

JANIE LALB
ROUTE #1,
HEISKELL, TENNESEE.

Make the sum out to her. Banks and Post Offices are difficult sometimes.

Section

8

Dean A. Grennell, 402 Maple Ave., Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Dear Dick:

The Galaxy Depreciation Issue:— I can see why none of the editors bothered to comment on this. It wasn't particularly pleasing to them and not sufficiently irritating to be worth drawing a blaster over. On your cover you shout (in effect) "Come and see Horace Gold get drawn and quartered!" and his friends (one of which definitely I'm) and foes alike go flocking into the middle pages to witness the carnage only to find that someone is gently chiding him for not incorporating a letter column into GALAXY.

Me, myself, personal, I'm damned glad that GALAXY doesn't have a letter column. I consider them the dreariest messes of hawg-wash (ranking only slightly above the truss ads) of any of the departments. The only reason so many fans applaud the letter-columns in STARTLING or TWS, for instance, is that they can use them as a sort of public house of ill-fame wherein they can barter their critical opinions for egoboo. I'll admit that I generally read the things, but afterwards I always find myself wondering why. But then some may find fascination in M. Z. Bradley's opinions on birth control and numerous fan's views pro and con religion. To me, like I was saying, letter-columns are as to fan-fiction to a Palint.

Your cover on #6 was nice but you might have given a scrap of egoboo to Pete Samerjan who took the photo in the first place or to Joanne Arnold who posed for it. No?

((You, sir, have the eye like a hawk and the memory like the elephant. And here I've received lots of compliments on my excellent drawings.... I imagine you have a photographic memory to go with the rest of your shutter-bug stuff.

I suggest that even letter-columns can be interesting reading. It all depends on the person conducting them. Or it (mixed that one up proper.)

Richard Bergeron, R.F.D. #1, Newport, Vermont.

Dear Dick:

The covers on #5 leave a bad taste in my mouth. Not that you should go out and buy better tasting paper; as far as I'm concerned I'd rather see Psy with "straight" covers rather than the type I've been seeing. And I don't mean like the one on #6 either. That one was pointless. ((Wrong, Rich, I thought it had two very good points in its favor.--REG)) I'd prefer to see something with a stfnal idea behind it used other than something with a fannish idea behind it.

In #5, McCain said what he wanted to say in his usual fine style. But even to me, a person whose knowledge of stf can be dwarfed by the head of a pin, it seems slightly incredible that because the vanishing of the letter columns science fiction has, as Vernon points out, taken a turn for the worse.

While ASF has never had a letter column that would "fit in any other magazine" because of its "lengthy and abstruse discussions of highly technical points of controversy" "with Campbell at the helm of ASTOUNDING", it has maintained its lead of the science fiction field from so far back that someone with a better memory than I will have to fill in the date of its ascendancy. To this day you can pick up a copy of the

magazine and find that it hasn't changed much from McCain's description. Plucked purely at random from my bookcase shelf, the "Brass Tacks" column in the June '53 issue is filled with: a long letter of comment on a Campbell editorial "Unsane Behavior", two bating letters praising "Null ABC" for its high probability content, a problem for mechanical brain bugs, and an argument in defence of the politician. This type of letter column, year after year, in a magazine that has enjoyed the success that ASF has; reveals to me at least that the job of keeping tabs on the pulse of the readership rests not with the writer but with the editor. Even if there had been no letter columns Bradbury would have known that pressure was building up against his Martian stories. His editors would have told him or they would have stopped buying. What bigger hint is there than a drop in sales? It seems improbable that in this day when at least one fan writer has asked "Is the science fiction writer a lost artist?" that editors wouldn't work in close harmony with their writers, nursing them over whatever disadvantages a relatively letter columnless publishing medium might have. I agree that GALAXY probably gets a smaller percentage of commenting letters than the old type SF mag, but it seems common sense to suppose that the letters Gold does get are worth more than the ones attracted by the SF pulp of the past with its quota of juvenile glory seekers.

((Why do you assume that ASF is successful because it uses that peculiar type of letter column? Because of the popularity of the mag a lot of people assume that all of its departments and policies are automatically the best and to be imitated.

But how is the editor to know of a resistance to a type of story unless there are letters from every segment of his readership to tell him so? Obviously by printing a dozen or so letters per issue an editor can easily convince many many readers (via the egoboo route) that their letters will be in the next issue. He received thousands of letters and is happily in touch with his readers. The letter columnless mag is in danger of going against the current and not knowing it.))

Peter J. Vorzimer, 1311 N. Laurel Ave., W. Hollywood 46, California.

Dick:

Egad and Gadzooks! How I look forward to receiving PSYCHOTIC. You have the best damn zine around these parts. Now I am anxiously awaiting #8. You get better every time. That cover reminded me of one or two of my fan friends. And that bacover, forsooth! What reality!

Now...to that mention you made of NAPA, etc. Note: we do not live in Southron California. You're just a bunch of damn yankees living up there. You're right about all the hustle and bustle that goes on down here. Just ask Nowell: I've never heard more cuss words than when that boy tries that hecto of his. Abstract, the magazine of fantasy, my new rag, a companion mag to STARLIGHT, will be out within the next week and a half. 16 pages photo-offset, with pro stories for only a dime!

What do you mean "...so little in the way of good fanzines seem to emerge." You'll have to eat your words when you see the first NAPA mailing! One thing, it's entirely different from all other APAs. Even Balint will grudgingly admit that.

Don't forget.....February and LIFE draw nearer.

I called Piper down in La Jolla, yesterday. Never fear! FASCINATION will be here! (Egod! What a lousy rhyme) FAS won't be mailed out because it'll be in the NAPA mailing, neither will Ellik's FSM or Balint's rag.

I will be up in 'Frisco one of these sunny days to rub elbows with the peasants up there. Too bad Portland's so damn far away.

((You mean that FANTASTIC STORY MAG and FANTASTA are no longer sub-zines? What happens to the trades? How about some clarification from you boys?

Oh, I dunno. I kinda like being isolated up here from you Southron boys. I get more work done.))

W. Paul Nowell, 6528 Gentry Ave, North Hollywood, California.

Dear Mr. Geis:

Item-by-item, PSYCHOTIC #7 was good. AS USUAL. Let's zip from cover to cover: COVER ONE, different from the past PSY covers, and quite refreshing, too. Leather Couch good (thanks immensely for the plug). The Padded Cell by Vernon L. McCain: Mr. McCain is one of the greatest writers (both fan and pro) today, in my opinion. His "memories" were nostalgic, though I am a comparatively "new" fan compared to the era in which he began fanning. However, it brings back "bittersweet memories."

SECTION 8 was interesting to me, as usual. THE WORLD OF OLAF STAPLEDON by Noah W. McLeod was a good review. If I had five dollars to spare I'd go and buy TO THE END OF TIME.

A BIT OF HEBEPHRENIA was good this, too.

THE OBSERVATION WARD was okay, though I tire of fanzine reviews in most all fanzines. ((Just wait til you are hungrily scanning the pages of rival fanzines for meager mentions of DIFFUSE.)) AFTER HOURS VISIT was surprisingly good as a column. Bouquets to Bill Reynolds and best of luck for repeats.

SECOND SESSION was wood, too. Ah, the life of a fanzine editor. Backover good, though typically Geis. ((Heh? You wanna fight? Of all the....))

Now news of DIFFUSE. It's slow going with a hecto. There have been some abridgements to my original mailed announcement. The info is as follows: HECTOED...FULL SIZE ...FOUR COLOR WORK...and PUBLISHED IRREGULARLY. It runs 22 pages first issue. Got some good stuff (I believe) therein, and I thank you now for your submission. Changed the title to match the "idea" of the thing...PASSING THOUGHTS. Like? ((Yeah...except for the possible scatological implications.-REG)) Sub rates are: 1/10¢, 3/25¢, 6/50¢, and 10/80¢.

I am rather disgusted with my hecto, but otherwise things aren't so bad. I'll send you a copy of D as soon as I get it done. 8 pages are so far printed, leaving 14 to do, and if you're familiar with hecto's, that'll be a while yet. Oh what I wouldn't give for a ditto. (Sigh!)

((As a matter of fact, I once toyed with the idea of doing PSY with a hecto. After a sorrowful experience with one a bit later, tho, I put that particular toy away in the closet. I never want to see it again.

I wonder what you'll think of McCain after you read his letter which follows immediately after PSYCHOTIC procrastination.))

Vernon L. McCain, c/o Western Union, Kellog, Idaho.

Dear Richard,

Kinda late answering your letter. Sorry. Been sorta slow getting round to my correspondence lately.

Much as I'm flattered by Nowell rating my article first for the issue, I find his letter triggers a much more violent reaction than the others. The one quote that particularly irritates me is "If Gold started the policy of no letter columns, and everybody followed suit, it must have been good. As they say 'imitation is the highest form of flattery'". Oh, my God! This is on the same level as "Fifty Million Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong." Let's look at it another way. After World War I Mussolini strong-armed his way into power in Italy and became a dictator reviving a form of ruthless tyranny and oppression that had almost vanished from the world sometime earlier. Stalin shortly did the same and they were followed by Hitler, Franco, Peron, and a host of lesser men of the same breed in smaller countries. "Imitation is the highest form of flattery" says Nowell (actually, a misquote...the original saying is 'the sincerest form' which it probably is. I'd hardly class it as the highest form). Therefore, since Mussolini was imitated by many other men, successfully, what he did must have been good. And by the same token men ploughed their fields for over two thousand years using precisely the same implements. It was only during the last century that someone refused to imitate this and developed much more advanced methods. But far more ploughed

their land in the primitive way than have used the modern method, so it must be best. All I can say is nuts.

As for praising del Rey and ignoring IF, I would disagree with you that del Rey was pro-fan. The fact that he plugged the Philcon ceaselessly hardly makes him pro-fan in my book. A number of other editors, who also ignore organized fandom as a whole, did that. However despite the endless amount of mud smeared on him for no particular reason I've been able to see, I consider del Rey to have been one helluva editor. It's quite true he printed some of his own stories under pennames....but after all, del Rey is the product of ASF's golden period, a bare step below the all-time greats such as Heinlein, Sturgeon and van Vogt in prestige. Campbell was only too happy to print such stories in the heyday of ASF, and I hardly think they dragged down the level of del Rey's magazines. In fact, in the present competitive condition of the market, del Rey's mags had a definite head start on their competitors by having an exclusive pipeline to the works of one of the two or three most prolific of the top twenty or twenty-five talents ever developed in the sf field. What your views on the ethics of the matter are hardly has any bearing on the quality of the magazines. It's also true that he indulged in some very unprofessional conduct in his relations with writers and agents, not fandom. I believe that is their affair and not ours. After all, Campbell and Street & Smith are probably less popular with writers and agents than any other editor or publishing company, but I've never known this to be used as an argument that the magazine is no good. If Campbell can continue to publish a top-rank magazine by indulging in some practices that may be less than admirable (although it appears it is usually more Street & Smith's policy rather than Campbell personally) that is no concern of the fan's, any more than it is any of the fan's business what the editor eats for breakfast or who he is sleeping with. When such policies tend to have an adverse effect on the magazine, as many of us think it did on ASF when it got its first real competition and all its top writers except Asimov completely deserted the magazine, then and only then does it become a subject for examination by the fan. The same is true of del Rey. As far as I can remember, del Rey never, in any of his three major magazines, printed a really shoddy story as happens occasionally in most mags and constantly in such mags as the Palmer publications, IMAGINATION, and SF PLUS. He had many good ones and a few outstanding ones. With competition so rough that was quite an achievement. And he produced, for my money, the top magazine available today, FANTASY FICTION. (As it happens, quite a few old-time fans have made precisely the same statement...) What the future of this magazine will be, under Fletcher Pratt, remains to be seen but its first four issues were a truly uncanny reproduction of the greatest fantasy magazine of all UNKNOWN. Certainly, the del Rey pubs had their faults. They appear with extremely annoying irregularity and their subscription department can be described as little short of fraudulent (more than once I've received my sub copy after I'd already purchased the succeeding issues on the newsstands). But this does not affect their content in any way nor excuse the reckless and unbiased charges fandom has made against them. This is very similar to the campaign of scurrility Gold has been submitted to in the fan press from the start (although it seems to have been letting up of late) for indulging in plain everyday salesmanship...of a type palid indeed compared to that Ray Palmer has always practiced.

As for my ignoring IF, well certainly Mr. Nowell has the right to regard it as outstanding if he wishes. I have an equal right to my opinions; that it is about as mediocre as it can get. In an article such as I wrote, one can hit only the high spots. A detailed examination of the policies of every sfmag in history is not possible. One mentions the leaders and the pioneers and also the horrible examples. One ignores the vast majority of magazines which only follow in the others' footsteps. IF is about as typical of this category as any I can think of. It has never been really good nor really bad. It's published a few putrid stories (it had a Shaver-tale and one by Palmer in the first issue) and it has also published a few (a very few) fine ones. But for the most part it has been typical of that anonymity which has been creeping over sfmags which I was attacking in that article. IF might be said to have been a forerunner of the trend since it hove on the horizon about six months before the no letter column trend gained momentum, and it has usually had a miniature letter column which is slightly, though not much, better than none at all. As to the Fairman and Qui nn

editorials...again opinions may differ. Nowell may have his and I may have mine, but these editorials, especially those by Quinn, were precisely what I was talking about in the depersonalization that has come over stf.

Re Knapheide's complaint that I overlooked the possibility that fandom would wither if the letter columns vanish -- I didn't. I simply didn't regard it as having any particular importance in the article I was writing. Actually I think it doubtful that fandom would die completely although we would become smaller...but I think that would probably be a boon. However, even if fandom dies completely it is no affair of the pro-editors. They owe fandom nothing...it is not part of their job to nourish and maintain fandom. However, they do owe stf something and it was my contention that the present trend could ultimately result in just as serious an eclipse for science fiction as might result to fandom.

((There is the point, Vernon, that the pro-editors have a definite vested interest in fandom because of the many many writers and even editors that have risen from the ranks. I think in one sense fandom is what makes science fiction "different."))

Robert Bloch, Box 362, Weyauwega, Wisconsin.

Dear Dick:

PSYCHOTICKled me no end, particularly the reminiscent/review portions: it is interesting to us members of Senile Fandom to see others discovering Stapledon and cavorting amidst the pages of old issues of WT. Before long fandom will come full cycle and people will again be reading Cabell and Dunsany and AFTER THE AFTERNOON and THE SWORD IN THE STONE and DR. ARNOLDI. Comes the revolution and S. Fowler Wright will rise again: people may start collecting the early work of Garret P. Serviss and Victor Rousseau and Arthur J. Burns and Ray Cummings and Edmond Hamilton. Stranger things have happened. I know of no other field of literature where people under forty can be classified as "old-timers"...a fascinating feeling, but with gruesome undertones. Shucks, by present day standards, Ellison is a veteran fan. Time is getting to be more relative every day, as one of my pupils name of Al Einstein used to remark. So cheer up: your back is ues should all be collector's items by 1955!

((There are times when I feel ancient, myself. I first started reading stf at 10. That was 16 yrs ago. Did you say Cummings? I remember reading his stories in my 12-15 years. (Oh, wasted youth.) Even then in my uncritical period he didn't impress me too much. Of course that was the tail end of his career in stf. Couldn't he adjust his writing to the new "more character" writing requirements, or did he just get another job?))

Terry Carr, 13 4 Cambridge St., San Francisco 12, Calif.

Dear Dick,

ONCE AND FOR ALL: I AM NOT PETER GRAHAM! Boob started that myth, and Vic helped it along a bit, until it just got rolling and many people to this day think in a vague way that I'm either him or he's me or both of us are pennames for Degler or something. I doubt that he'll be publishing a damn thing, aside from FAPA-SAPstuff. He took over seattee from Knapheide in 1952, grumbling about how Knapheide always got it out late. Since then he's put out one half of an issue of it. He has the latest issue all assembled and all, ready to go (in fact, he has had for about six months now), but hasn't mailed it out. I dunno...I'm getting pretty disgusted with Graham-the-publisher.

Comments on latest Psi: Rike's cover looks good, but I think you could have done a neater job on the twist and turn type of shading. McCain's column was quite good again. "World of Olaf Stapledon" is rather interesting, though no world-shaker.

Bill Reynolds: he's good; with a little practice he should be one of your best features. The three detoons to go with the column were priceless, particularly the first: "Bring something round: we'll have a ball!" Incidentally, I think I've done you

one better in regard to the 1954 conreports situation. You got Pete Graham to promise you his. I've asked Bill Reynolds to do me one. I think I've got the better of the deal.

"Big Shot" isn't much as fan fiction, though it isn't too bad. Bradley's ill is okay, too, but the story gave him no chance to do a good one...nothing to illustrate, actually.

You've got an unread backlog of 32? Gad, man, you Haven't lived! I mean really, my backlog must be about a hundred or so now, and about that many fanzines (most of them old FAPazines that I got from surplus stock sales in FAPA and haven't had the guts to wade thru as yet). Oh my, mine is the life....

Well, off I go in a cloud of rust....

((As I recall, I too asked Bill to do a Con Report for me. Only I asked him quite a while ago. Soon after the PHILCON 2 report by Harris. How about it, Bill, which is to get the report?

You are very perceptive, Terry, Jim Bradley complained no end about how hard that story was to illustrate.))

Don Wegars, 2444 Valley St., Berkeley, California.

Dick,

PSY was a little late, eh? Maybe a day or two? One day? I KNOW it wasn't on time...or was it? The cover by Rike was excellent; somebody will go as far as to say he's the Mickey Spillane of Fannish Art.

#7 didn't look right to me. It didn't have the 'comph' that was present in both 4 and 5. I guess when a fanzine gets along in issues and the ed starts thinking about the ANNISH, he gets a little bit tired. Nothing objectionable to 7, but then the only things I liked were SECTION 8 and McCain's column. McCain really tears my heart out. He's almost as bad as Edgar Guest. But I like it, I like it....

The marathon by Boggs was interesting to the point of being too interesting. I kept looking for the next item. You're right about a letter that doesn't have 'content'. Maybe I should say something that would be of interest to your readers. But I can't, I'm not made that way. If I was, I'd be a book reviewer.

Real sorry you're not going to keep the fmg reviews on such a large scale. Then you won't be able to mention FOG, except if you think it's an "exceptional case". Besides, your reviews were interesting. Half of those editors that didn't like your reviews were probably getting fed up with bad reviews when you came along and dumped the whole thing in their lap. Why a person can't take honest criticism is beyond me... but I guess they've run across so many guys that haven't been honest in their criticism that they're ready to bust a gasket when you showed up.

But like I say...keep the criticisms honest and, if you must, keep them short... but KEEP them.

((Go away with that talk of an Annish. I swear you readers think about it more than I do. Just for the hell of it I might run the PSY 12 issue to a maximum of ten pages....

Curiously, I haven't recieved one "lay off" plea from a fanzine editor yet. This is January 22.

Report on PSY #5s sent to editors of stf in America. Nuthin'. Mari Wolf sent in a reply, but it was so fulsomely complimentary that I decided not to print it. I am always interested in compliments, of course, but I know they make boring reading for other fans.))

Robert Peatrowsky, Box 634, Norfolk, Nebraska.

Dear Dick,

Incidentally, the next issue of MOTE, #9, will be its final appearance. After several months of contemplating, I've finally convinced myself that this is my only way out, much as it saddens me to have to fold MOTE. I'm not dropping out of fan-

dom or fan-publishing; just dropping MOTE in favor of another less formal and more frequently published zine, the name of which has not been decided yet. I've thought for a long time that I'd like to try my hand at a letterzine, so letters (I hope) will make up the bulk of "it." I'm pleased to note that you agree with my thoughts that there is room in fandom for a letterzine. I'm going to try to partially fill that niche.

Being a ditto man myself, I was wondering about a few of the technical details of PSYCHOTIC. Such as: what brand of masters do you use, what kind of ditto do you have, and do you type the masters with your typer ribbon in the "off" position? I've tried typing masters with the typer ribbon both "on" and "off", but don't seem to get the sharp impression that you do. I imagine that my ditto has something to do with it too. I've got one of those little suitcase-sized Master Portables. No cylinder, no pressure adjustment, etc. Oh yes, I've been using Columbia masters for the last two or three MOTES. They're the best I've tried so far.

((Glad, very glad to hear of the new zine. A letterzine is a definite need in fandom. Have no fear about the trades; I'll carry you for awhile.

I use A.B. Dick shortrun masters. I type with the ribbon "off". The thin coating of carbon on the master explains the sharp type. The machine I use is a REX-O-Graph.))

Ray Thompson, 410 South 4th Street, Norfolk, Nebraska.

Dear Dick:

McCain especially good this time. Brings back happy memories of the good old days. In those days I had just been introduced to science fiction. I read only FA for a year before I discovered that other magazines existed. It was only until 1950 that I became interested in it enough to write letters to the editors...none of which were ever printed. It wasn't until 1952 that I got a letter pubbed in FA, the mag I cut my teeth on. However, I think I must agree with Vernon about his remarks re Merwin's editorship of the Thrilling magazines.

Unfortunately, I got in on SS and TWS just at the end of Merwin's stay. If memory serves correctly, I believe the first issue I bought was about four issues before he left. Consequently, I have only the criteria for judgement gathered simply by going through the back issues belonging to other fan (meaning Martin Graetz). At any rate I disagree with McCain's remark that "...and managed to boost his ((Merwin's)) two magazines to heights never equalled before or since." While the first part ("...before...") may be true, I am of the opinion that today's STARTLING and THRILLING WONDER are so far ahead of the Merwin types, as to be almost pathetic. Of course, the jacking of the Eixby fanzine review column by Mines (a murrain on the house of him!) has knocked a goodly portion of SS's props from under her.

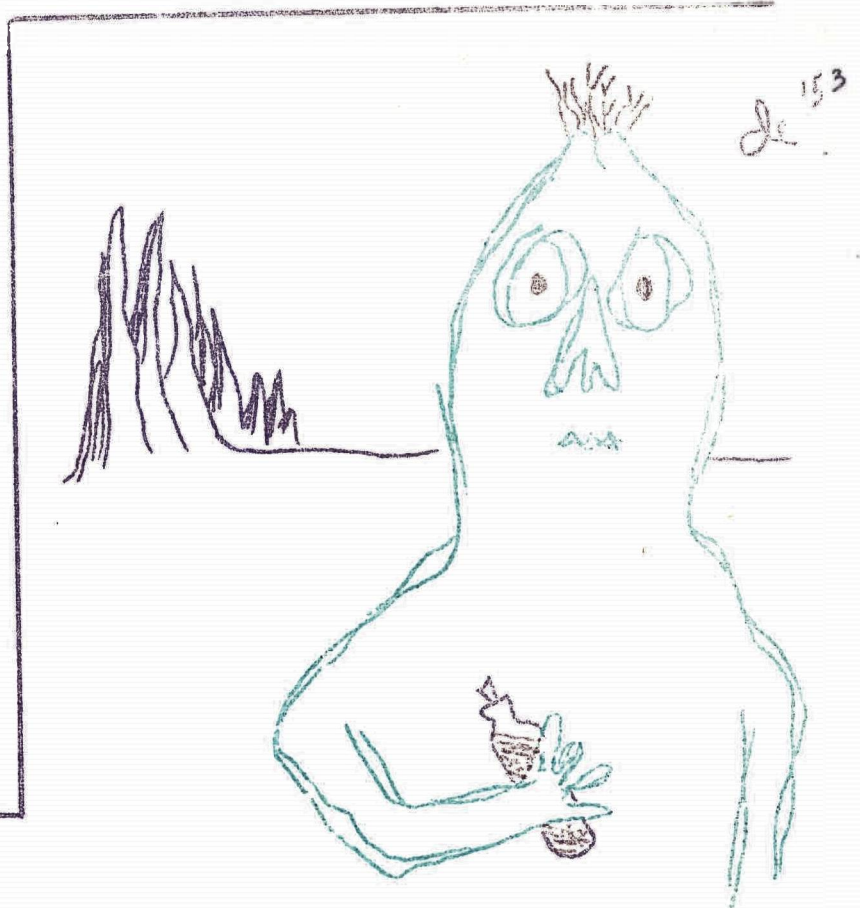
GHOD! NINE PAGES OF LETTERS! How DO you do it, Geis??? ((Groan...it ain't easy I'll tell you.--REG))

MY GHOD, it's cold in this town! The temperature has been hanging around zero all day, and it's supposed to fall below, to about -20 tonight. 'Seven cold in the house--haven't been able to make the thermometer clear 65 at all. This is a COOL weather heating system we've got. Ask Peat...he knows....

((Much as I would like to think that the arbitrary axeing of the fanzine review column by Mines has knocked props out from under SS, I'm inclined to think it merely loosened them the slightest bit. Soon, perhaps, Mines will see the light and court our favor again by bringing it back. He may start clutching at circulation straws pretty soon.))

((P.S. We just got some snow here in Portland; a piddling six or seven inches. It didn't even stop the busses. Had to go to work as usual. No customers, tho....))

AFTER HOURS VISIT—



A COLUMN BY BILL REYNOLDS

About every two or three months I buy a postcard; think regretfully for a moment while my pen fills and then sadly begin to write this piteous message:

Dear R _____,

Well, I still can't make it to your house to get my mags. I got some swell bed-sheet Astoundings that I know you will enjoy. Almost as good as BOOK OF PTATH and Jones' RENAISSANCE that are in those mags I lent you. Sure miss those yarns; can't wait to reread them. But that will have to wait a couple more weeks. That is, unless you want to mail them; I'll gladly pay the postage.

Would like to hear from you anyway. How's your story progressing? Boob or Terry are always glad to get good material, you might try them. Hear you met Knapheide in the city, maybe you might attend a GGFS meeting. Hope to see you soon.

Bill

"Ye Gods, lending old ASF's and UNKNOWN'S!" many fen will exclaim, "I'd like to see him get them back."

Ah, let me confess further. I'm sure, almost, that I also lent a batch of Unger's FFF's. Will I get them back? I remember that I lent some old FUTURES to a person in-different to stf I found out later. He lost those with a PLANET #10. He assured me that he would buy some new zines to replace them. I assured him that we were still friends and that he didn't need to go to all that bother. And we are still friends because they were extras in my collection.

But I couldn't learn. To a fellow college student I lent over twenty ASF's between the years 1946 and 1949. I got them back, alright, after some gentle reminders. He should have been as gentle to my mags. He left a complete biography of himself in my mags. Bent pages to keep his place; he must have had amnesia. Judging from the condition of two mags, he ate like a lion, always leaving a bit for the vultures, and smoked like a volcano...leaving a grim message of destruction in the strata of pages.

"The thing is— it grew the grass on my head and the hair on my lawn."



Serves you right for not getting
a mime!

But those could be replaced with some difficulty.

And I still didn't learn. Then I met R____, a young highschool student that acted like a real fan. Working on a novel he said. Hoped to edit a fan-zine he said. All the wonderful, not so impossible ideas that every young fan has. Here was someone who would appreciate real vintage stuff. Not at all like those other guys; he'd protect my mags with his life.

And protect them he did. Every response to my many cards has been a dead silence. Somaybe he did sacrifice his life. But that's not going to deter me. My cards will follow him into hell. And so will I to get my zines.

"Say, here's another youngster. Bet he'd like to read the original SLAN. No, better start him on

some old CAPTAIN FUTURE." Will I say that someday?
Some fen just never learn.

Met a student from the University of Texas. At a friend's house in San Francisco during the Christmas holiday. We showed him the town. Turns out, during a drive to pebble beach...a marine paradise...that he believes in the existence of the flying saucers. Not because he has been exposed to the sensational stuff that has been turned out in the pocket-book field; because he hasn't, he's only interested in drama. Like the friend in whose house he was staying. (How can people be so one-sided?) He claims that he saw a saucer twice while in Mexico several years ago.

The first time that he saw a saucer was when he was in the hinterlands. The ship was several thousand feet directly above his party. It remained perfectly motionless for 'thirty to forty-five minutes'. It gleamed like metal and no sound could be heard. There were no binoculars or cameras among the party. Then the thing soared 'straight up' until it disappeared.

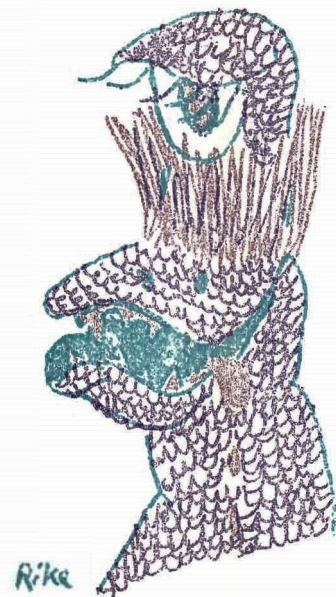
The second time was in Mexico City. This saucer was inclined at a sharp angle, 'just hanging there motionless' for some time. Then it moved forward over the city.

Naturally many questions ensued. He could not remember any photographs appearing in the papers. He just accepted what had happened and let it go at that.

Paul Mittelbuscher is at Keesler, Mississippi now. He hopes to be out of the service soon.

Ron Ellis has a story for FANTASTIC STORY MAG by the anti-fanfictionist himself, Larry Balint. Says Ron: "I have a new story of Larry's that he gave me some months ago before he started this anti-fan-fiction crud. I will print it sometime in the future as a one or two page filler. It is a little over one double-spaced page, and is pure Bradburian fantasy. Darn good, tho."

Since when is Bradbury's stuff pure? Ray reminds me of Kuttner's gaudiest best, which isn't too good. Anything Larry does will be an improvement over Bradbury...and fan fiction.



Another Woodbury Deb

THE

Second Session:

WHERE THE EDITOR CONTINUES TO RAMBLE (with malice aforethought) ON AND ON..AND ON.

Ohhhhh....I just ran McCain's column off on the dot. Halfway down the next to the last page is a typo such as never should happen. I'm only glad I saw it in time to correct it in these editorial pages. Whew..... It says; "...the first lie of the article..." A perceptive reader might recognize that I inadvertently left out an "n" while typing that, but a not so smart one might take it at face value. It should read, "...the first line of the article...". I'm sorry, Vernon, I really am. On bended knee bones I plead for forgiveness. Y'see, I was under the influence of a young lady at the time (she had the prettiest influence I've seen in a long time) and was not responsible for what me typing finger was doing.

I wonder if any of you wonder about what happens to your letters to me. What do you think happens to them? Do you wonder if they are burned, thrown away like an empty bottle, or possibly saved to gather dust in a forgotten corner of an abandoned shelf in a little used cupboard in my kitchen? I will enlighten you: none have been burnt, none thrown away, and most of them languish on the above mentioned shelf. BUT that is to be changed in the future. It is my resolve to make these missives do a double duty. Of late I have been busy with the paste and razor slicing up these letters; dividing the ratings and compliments from the "content". The ratings of each piece in PSY will go to that contributor unless they are of general interest or show another characteristic that I fancy. In which case they'll end up in SECTION 8; tho not many will make the grade I suspect. But the main point is that the ratings you so obligingly contribute will not be going to waste; you will, in effect, through me be speaking directly to the author. I think this a good idea; I know I should like to see the reaction to my efforts in other fanzines, and my contributors are, after all, human too. All of you can bow down to Richard Bergeron for this idea; it was he who did the same for me regarding my piece "The New Psychosis" which appeared in Racy Higgs' SAPS-zine. He very nicely copied down the remarks of the other SAPS members re my effort. I can't take the time to copy your remarks about the items in PSY, but I can damn well cut them out and paste them together. This should be a common practice. Think of the egoboo we all is missing. Trouble is, I'm going to paste up the boos as well as the cheers. This is a go ahead signal for constructive criticism....

Oh yes, you probably noticed the elite type in this issue. I traded my portable to my step-dad for the use of this Remington standard. I like it much better. Fewer typos, if you can believe it.

Noah W. McLeod writes: "Did you know VORTEX has folded? I recently got a short-short back with a notice that it has suspended publication." Ah, the grim reaper of economic reality continues to harvest a goodly crop.

I'll whisper this: The department store that goofed with the week-late delivery of paper a couple of months back, did it again. Only this time it was in my favor. I ordered five reams of the usual cheap paper I use, and they delivered five reams of top grade stuff. It is used in this issue along with the remnants of the older cheap stuff. HA!

Seventh Fandom, it would appear, is not yet. OOPSLA is back. And Willis is back with OOPSLA. And the rats are disclaiming Seventh fandom, deserting, changing their names, folding fanzines, going Gafia, and otherwise disavowing that once Holy thing.

Fannish History is being made, yet who is there to write it down?

Don't look at me. I'm a stranger here myself.

See ya.....



Lined — so tired