NUMBER 9

PSYCHOTIC

"THE EXCESSIVE CRUELTY OF PARENTS CAN OFTEN RESULT IN A SUDDEN CASE OF SPLIT-PERSONALITY."

The Leather Cou

WHERE THE EDITOR, INEVITABLY, RAMBLES ON AND ON AND ON AND ON AND ON AND ON.

I was going to use this space for a very formally phrased editorial. Tsk. I was going to editorialize in the grand manner. Foo. I much prefer the informal approach.

You know, almost every faned is his own publisher. He takes care of the subscriptions, runs off the issues, assembles them, etc., yet fan pubbing as such is little thought of and hardly ever discussed. I wonder why.

When a fan publishes a fanzine, and tests its merits in the subzine field, he automatically assumes certain obligatory responsibilities. He (whether he likes it or not) is obliged to shoulder obligations to those poor souls who send in money.

Leave us face it: a subscription is a mixed blessing. For a sub from a fan means that the faned has to keep to his announced schedule of pubbing; he must present legible material; he must keep records, and if he stops publishing the zine, he must refund the monies not used to the reader.

There is no reason in the world why this shouldn't be well known to all fans, and acted upon by all faneds. But, alas, it isn't. Too many eds blend editing with responsible publishing: they confuse editorial license and individuality with publishing. They carry over the idealistic "To Hell With The Readers" editorial policy into their publishing roles. A sad thing. They succeed in giving themselves and fan-publishing a bad name.

I'm inclined to feel that if a fan cannot virtually guarantee to himself in the most soul searching introspection that he will honor his publishing obligations; and can come out monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, or whatever his schedule might be, that he has no business assuming the burden; he certainly has no business accepting long term subs to a fanzine he probably seriously hasn't thought of running beyond a nebulous and inconceivable five or six issues.

Many fans, with absolutely NO experience, leap into publishing simply because they happen to have access to a mimeo, ditto, etc. They don't have any real idea how much work and money goes into such a project, but they are hot to cash in on the egoboo, and fanzine editing seems at the time to be the golden road. So right away they start a subzine, make glowing promises in ads throughout fandom, acquire material from trusting fan-writers, and then boggle at the tremendous WORK involved. Two issues and they fold the damned thing, Gafia for a while, and then sometimes, if their powers of self-delusion and rationalization are great enough, venture forth once again into an abortive attempt at fan-pubbing. (And if the shoe fits, damnit, wear it!)

I suppose all this angry cannonading of mine could come under the heading of "A Review of Publishing Ethics", or some such title. It doesn't matter, really. I've said my say now, none too well I'll admit, but with considerable asperity.

"...and in conclusion ..." may I say to you budding and blooming faneds who are rushing into print with your very own zine, the heady aroma of fame and egoboo shorting out your common sense, DON'T. Don't until you know the score. Don't until you've had things published. Don't, if you must publish, accept subs of more than three issues. In short, DON'T.

COVER by Dave Rike
ARTWORK by Dave Rike, David English, Mike, Jim Bradley, Terry Carr, Bob Stewart (of course)

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THE PAGE

As Redd Boggs recently pointed out in "File 13" the law of diminishing returns became evident in the use of columns in fanzines some time ago. To write an interesting column, one must have something to write about. However, for some reason a fiction has been circulated that a column is just a lot of words about nothing in particular. As a result the most frequent subject for discussion in columns has become 'How I manage to write a column without saying anything.'

For some odd reason this has never been spectacularly successful as a topic for columnizing; why this is the case I'll leave to the sociologists among us.

We keep coming back to the basic premise that a column must be about something; (This applies even more strongly to articles, but we're discussing columns right now.) if one is named Lee Hoffman, perhaps that something can be the trivia of one's daily life. But very few of us are named Lee Hoffman. In fact, if the truth is known, not even Lee Hoffman is named Lee Hoffman. Apparently this is a cognomen borne only by characters in Wilson Tucker stories, and they are seldom available as columnists.

Quite a few columnists try the trivia routine, but this diary, or 'delving into my subconscious' style usually results in the reader bestowing pity on the writer for leading such a dull life or being such a dull person. Which is only natural.... Who else find their way into fandom?

Personally, I've been lucky in having very definite opinions on just about every subject under the sun, and a willingness, nay eagerness, to spread them through the nearest collection of blotchy mimeography. The results may not be literary but they usually say something, no matter how unpopular they make me in the process.

But I've found that even the McCain fund of dogmatism is not bottomless. Maybe I have opinions on every subject apt to come before fandom, but these topics are limited, and I've already expressed my opinions on most of them in previous articles or columns.

In the past I've had the advantage of irregular publishing from the editors who accepted my columns. This way my columns were always six months to a year out of date when they appeared, and by the time I had to supply something else I had a fresh subject on which to vent my prejudices.

That was before I tied up with this Geis character. He is so damnably prompt and regular with publication that the unheard of has happened; he's putting out a monthly fanzine which appears every month! Now...PSY is one of my favorite zines and as a reader I have the greatest appreciation of this service; but as a contributor I must confess I view such unorthodox and vaguely communistic conduct with a Jaundiced Eye (courtesy Ken Beale).

Yes, my friends, you've guessed it....the preceeding page is merely camoflage for that tired old subject....'How to write a column when you no longer have anything to write about.'

Don't misunderstand me; I've not run dry. Not by a long sight. But the articles I now feel the urge to write have little to do with fandom and nothing whatever to do with stf, and thus are not particularly suited for subzine appearance. Instead they will have to appear in FAPA or some

[illegible] group where stf and fandom are no longer domicant interests.

So what do I write a column about...I've been tempted, I'll admit, to write [illegible] [illegible]-type pieces on Geis. There was that stream-of-consciousness piece [illegible] the philosophy of travel which I almost wrote for him. And I thought of doing a piece about neuroses is general and my own in particular which had nothing to do with stfandom except for the final surprise paragraph. But I resisted. I could do a [illegible] style column made up of dozens of little short items, but that takes advance preparation which I haven't made, and anyway Geis has expressed his preference for my [illegible] article-columns.

So be it. But since I can't think of anything on which I have an urgent opinion to express, it will have to be of a different nature from my customary pieces. [illegible] has usually led to disaster in the past. However, you can't say McCain didn't go down trying....and I can always put the blame on Geis for bringing out his magazine so frequently.

So.....here we go. I'm not quite reduced to describing the minutiae of my day yet. But I amgoing to dip into my own experiences for this column. As most of you probably know, I work for Western Union.

And this column? Why bless your inquisitive little minds, this column deals with the science fictional side of a Western Union employee's life.

Now I realize it may come as something of a shock and surprise to learn there is such a side to a WU operator's life, or that he even has a life in the first place, but if you wait long enough, just about anything will pop up in a Western Union office, including science fiction.

Why, I've even stood in my Western Union office and watched one of my messengers staging a knock-down drag-out fight with her own sister on the main street of town in order to keep her there until the police could arrive to take her into custody. And.... But those incidents don't belong in this article, do they?

Ah yes, science fiction. What would we do without it, and wouldn't it be fun to try?

Well, I'd been working for W.U. for some six years when the first such incident I recall occurred. I was working for the Tillamook, Oregon office at the time. It is on a popular scenic highway widely used by vacationers. One day I received a money order addressed to Leslie Charteris. As probably all of you know, this is the name of the author of the popular 'Saint' books.

Charteris has always been a favorite of mine and I imagine I've read at least 75% of his output. How does he come into science fiction? Well, three (not two, as Anthony Boucher once said) of Charteris' Saint short stories are science fictional, and one of them originally appeared in one of Merwin's magazines. Charteris himself is a steady reader of stf and occasionally hit the prozine letter columns in the early 40's, and The Saint has always been a favorite among stfans much as Pogo later became, although lacking any direct connection with the field.

Pottleby
vs.
the woman

Well, I was impressed, I'll admit. With the exception of a small handful of writers, W. Somerset Maugham, Fredric Brown, James M. Cain, Ted Sturgeon (who I was to meet a few months later at the Nolacon), maybe one or two others, no living writer rated higher with me or had given me more satisfaction.

At the time I was very unhappy with Western Union and must confess I could hardly claim to be putting heart and soul into the job. I was civil to the customers, but not a great deal more; they got what they had coming in the way of service with no trimmings.

But Charteris was different. This was a man who had given me many many hours of solid enjoyment, a person to whom I was personally grateful and whose talents, frankly, awed me. This wasn't just a routine transaction but a personal challenge to repay a bit of the enjoyment I'd gotten by giving the finest service at my command.

I prepared the money order, as usual, but fixed everything in advance so there would be no needless delays when the money order was paid. Now, customarily, if a money order accompanies a message we merely read it off to the customer when the money is paid. They do not get a typed copy unless they request it or unless we send them out a notice about the money order first. So, as an extra fillip I carefully typed out the accompanying message, pinned it to the back of the money order form, and placed the whole thing away to await the arrival of Mr. Charteris.

About 4:30 that afternoon he showed up. I must confess his appearance was unexpected. I had expected someone resembling my mental picture of The Saint; a dapper, slim, and slightly bored looking product of Britain. Now Charteris was well-groomed, it is true, and his clothing was of good quality if of the extreme casual type affected by vacationists. I recall he was wearing huaraches. But the man himself looked like nothing so much as an unusually prosperous lumberjack down from the hills for the weekend. Dark hair and dark moustache, a slightly swarthy complexion, and a build like a not quite mature bruin....all this contrasted more than somewhat with my expectations.

After he announced himself I proceeded to go into my high-gear efficiency act, for which I'd prepared so carefully

"Are you the writer?" shyly asked I.

He answered affirmatively, and while I was bursting with questions I was far too anxious to appear sophisticated and with no intent to invade a Writer's privacy by giving vent to my curiosity.

He passed a couple of comments about the nice weather and attractive scenery, while I processed his money order at high-speed, far more aware of the celebrity in front of me than what I was doing, and then left.

That was the end of my contact with Charteris...or so I thought. Five minutes later I made The Discovery. So anxious had I been to give My Hero good service that I had outsmarted myself. I had been so sure that everything had been done in advance that I hadn't made my usual check of all details before allowing the customer to leave. As a result, I had completely overlooked giving Charteris his message.

Then started the big search. I thought maybe they'd stopped in Tillamook for their evening meal so I checked every restaurant in town. No Charteris. On the chance they'd stopped overnight I checked every hotel and motel within 50 miles both that night and next morning. Again no Charteris. Utterly defeated, I notified the sending office that I had overlooked delivery of the message and advised them to refund the sender's charges. They replied thatthe sender (who was Charteris' agent and

had requested Charteris phone him) was absolutely furious as he did not know where Charteris would be for the next six months.

Which merely goes to prove that it doesn't pay to be so successful that you incite hero-worship, I guess.

The next such incident happened a few months later in Ashland, Oregon. Geis' recent comments about Winston Marks inspired this piece, as a matter of fact, since I wondered for a while if Marks wasn't a penname for Verne Athanas.

This was another case of the agent wiring the writer, although this time it wasn't money, and Athanas later stopped in to pick up his telegram. At the time his name meant nothing to me although I've since learned he's a fairly successful contributor to the slicks and a writer of Western books.

I don't recall how our conversation started, but it developed that he was an avid reader of stf and had even sold two or three stories to PLANET a few years earlier (This was one thing that led to my suspicions as Marks as a pseudonym. Only one story appeared in PLANET under Athanas' own name, I found when I later checked the Don Day Index.) He strongly admired Fred Brown and had just finished reading "What Mad Universe" and was wondering if this was the same Browne who'd recently taken over AMAZING.

I'd been a fan for slightly less than a year at this time and was overwhelmed with my importance in the field of stf. I straightened out the Brown-Browne confusion, casually mentioned that I'd met Howard Browne and had had a brief correspondence with Fredric Bown (which correspondence consisted solely of a ghost-written request for material and Brown's brief reply declining, although I didn't tell Athanas that). I also had let him know I was interested in writing stf; while discussing this I'm afraid I made a claim, which while completely true, gave Athanas the 100% correct impression that I was a typically phoney amateur would-be writer. He quickly turned very chilly and made his departure before he got in uncomfortably deep.

It seems surprising that a town the size of Ashland, which is definitely not a writer's settlement, should have two citizens both of whom have written stf. So when Geis revealed Marks hailed from there, I put him down as Athanas' penname, figuring that with the boom in stf he'd returned to a previously unprofitable love under a penname to keep from detracting from the worth of his own slick-established name.

However, Marks' recent letter mentioning having sold to UNKNOWN scuttled this. I was aware of Marks as a recent name and didn't recall any early stories from him. But I checked the Day Index, and sure enough there was one sotry each by him in UNKNOWN and ASTOUNDING. It seems unlikely Athanas would mention appearance in PLANET with pride while ignoring sales to UNK and ASF. So I guess Marks isn't an Athanas penname after all.

There probably have been other such contacts which slip my mind. The only other one I recall occurred last winter. I was a relief manager at the time, and there aren't many managers to relieve in mid-winter. So the company stuck one other relief

and [illegible]f into the Olympia Washington office to help out as operators during the rush that always accompanies legislation.

I worked from 3:30 til midnight, and over weekends it was pretty quiet. One Saturday night I had all my work done, so...for lack of better occupation (circumstances very similar to the manner in which this column is being written)...I sat down and started writing a story (which was later bounced by three editors). I'd completed only the first page when the telephone rang.

The woman calling gave me a telegram and hung up. I'd no sooner left the phone than it rang again. It was the same woman and she wanted to change the telegram but she wasn't just sure how since it was a rather delicate subject she was taking up with her ex-husband.

She wanted to think about it a bit and asked if I was busy. I said no, so she said "Tell me about yourself." My usual response to such a request is to be as brief and impersonal as possible, but she kept wanting more details and was obviously interested, so gradually she worked out, by bits and pieces, what I actually was interested in.

It seems the ex-husband she was wiring was a writer, and in the conversation that ensued she mentioned he had been a writer of science fiction in the early thirties though she didn't know any of the details.

She was quite an interesting person, and in the hour plus that she kept me on the phone our conversation ranged over every subject imaginable. Talk about a person making your ear sore by talking so much...it happened, literally, to me. I was wearing one of these headsets that enable you to have your hands free.

She'd told me her husband's name, so the next day I looked it up. (At this time I was constructing a huge index of every stf and fantasy magazine ever published, including my personal rating of the quality of each story ...and by averaging these ratings I could determine where each writer stood in relation to others. I was about half-way through at this time and shortly after abandoned the project as too time-consuming for the results I'd got.) I don't recall his name or the story he wrote, but he had only one listing in my index; he'd had one story in ASF and evidently he was fairly good, as I'd rated it the second best in the issue. The other story in the issue which I gave a higher rating was "Twilight" by Campbell-Stuart.

The next night she called back again, and again I spent an hour on the phone with her. I began to wonder, I'll admit with some trepidation, if this was to be a nightly occurrance, but that was the last I heard of her.

There was an even more interesting woman working with me at the time....the bookkeeper in this office. She had once sold a story to Collier's , was an incredible mimic, shared every one of my interests except stf and was, all in all, just about the most fascinating female I've ever met, but..... Oh, oh, that's right, I was writing solely about the stf side of a Western Union operator's life, wasn't I...so I guess I can't include that.

"I can offer thou but mine heart, Maria."

THE APOCALYPSE OF ARTHUR C. CLARKE

Arthur C. Clarke is one of England's leading science fiction authors, being responsible for such novels as PRELUDE TO SPACE and THE SANDS OF MARS. As his readers know, he writes hard headed extrapolation rather than space-opera.

In CHILDHOOD'S END, Clarke deserts the school of Heinlein for that of Staplodon, and considers the last days of Homo sapiens. Whether CHILDHOOD'S END is to be read as science fiction or as a non-canonical apocalypse depends on how seriously the reader takes the ideas underlying the plot.

The book itself is diffuse in plotting, as it must be, with the action extending well over a century. The action centers around three individuals who have dealings with the "Overlords", winged humanoids from the Carina region of the Milky Way. There is very little overlap between the three sections of the book.

The central idea, that mankind is doomed without external intervention by superior beings, is uncomfortably near the truth. Atomic weapons and guided missiles place too much power in the hands of men who may be lunatics, like Stalin, or helpless invalids like Franklin D. Roosevelt in his last years. To make matters worse, holding power is dependent, not on good government, but on the satisfaction of key pressure groups. While it is true that the destructiveness of atomic weapons impedes the resort to all-out war, a hare-brained minor official or lunatic dictator might precipitate the crisis from which there is no drawing back.

While the central idea of the book is appallingly near the truth, Clarke's sociology is incredibly naive. Intervention by extra-terrestrials could certainly stop the armaments race. But stopping the armaments race would not necessarily lead to Utopia. It might lead to a depression which would make the bust of 1929 look like prosperity. It might lead to world-wide overpopulation such as predicted by Sir Charles Darwin in THE FIRST MILLION YEARS. It would be far easier for extra-terrestrials to stop the activities of the Kremlin than the activities of local gangs dealing in narcotics and white slaves; easier to stop the activities of Wall Street than of local loan sharks.

The height of Clarke's naivete in social matters is found in two passages on pages 70 and 71. The idea expressed at the top of page 70....that simple, sure birth control and the means of identifying the parentage of illegitimate children would sound the death-knell of Puritanism....is sheer wishful thinking and disregards the nature of modern Puritanism. Motives such as fear of illegitimate offspring and venereal disease restrain only a small minority. The sex behavior of a majority of mankind is controled by irrational fears and hates, easily manipulated by power-greedy cliques.

Equally naive is the idea expressed on page 71 that revelation of the real beginnings of the world's great religions would mean their end. This idea could be dispelled by a little reading on American Revivalism. If a religion satisfies the emotional needs of the masses and the power-drive of an ambitious clique, it is impervious to reason. If the evidence of the external world is against religious dogma, religion becomes fanatically anti-intellectual.

BY EVAN W. MCLEOD

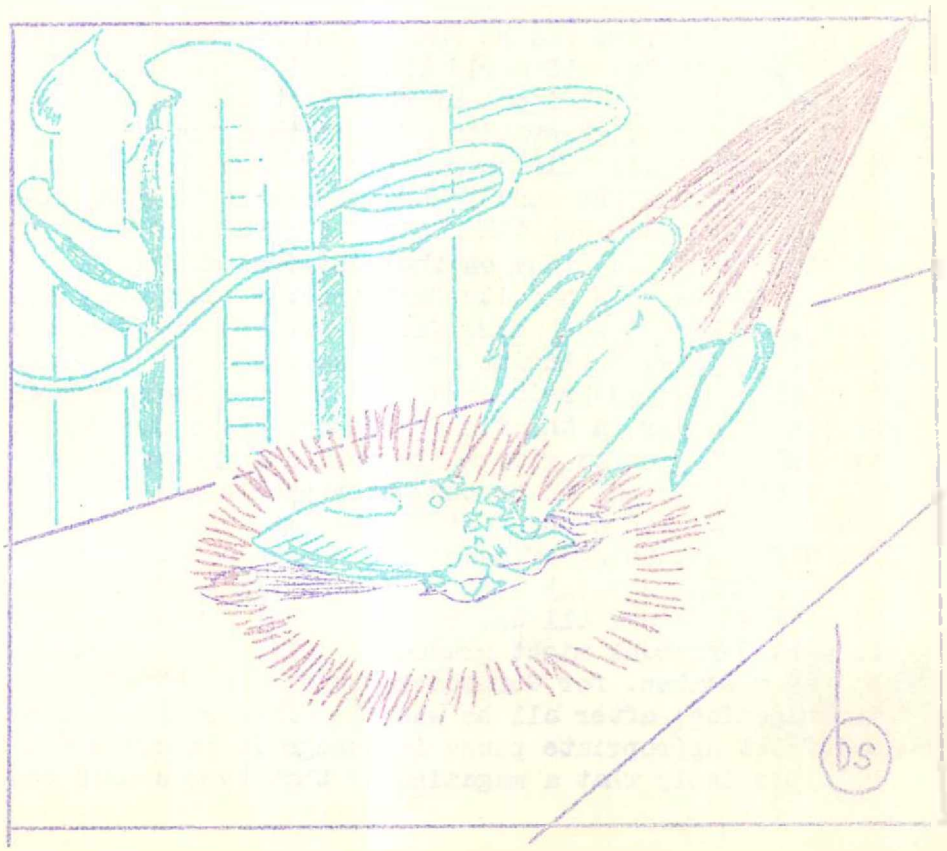
The "Overlords", winged humanoids who evolved on a planet with low gravity and a dense atmosphere, are plausible. Comparatively, bats are closely related to tree shrews and lemurs. The only trouble is that a planet with weak gravity could not hold a dense atmosphere.... This is not mere speculation but is actually observed in the solar system.

The close of the book, the end of Homo sapiens by transformation into a species so telepathic that all individuality is lost, is an interesting idea. The present "psi" abilities in man are strictly marginal, as are tool-using abilities in apes. It may be that the next stage in primate evolution will be the development of "psi" talents. But when speculating on this it should be remembered that the first great ape, Proconsul, existed thirty million years before the first man. Man's transformation into superman could be delayed even longer.

Why did Clarke write this sincere and powerful book? (It deserves to be called that -- it is no pot boiler.) Fundamentally for the same reason Hebrew writers penned their apocalypses. Clarke is faced with a world in which many of his values, those of an educated Englishman and a liberal, are threatened, if not by the total destruction of an atomic war, then by Communist intolerance. Not seeing a way out by natural means, he invokes the supernatural. For his bat men from Carina, the "Overlords", are, under the coating of scientific explanation, closely akin to the supernatural hosts of REVELATIONS.

The naive sociology of CHILDHOOD'S END is more than balanced by the depths of its central themes, its excellent characterizations, and its vivid descriptions of future societies. It is a must for every fan. If you can't raise the thirty-five cents any other way, rob Junior's piggy bank.

CHILDHOOD'S END by Arthur C. Clarke, Ballantine Books, 404 Fifth Avenue, New York 18, New York., paper bound, 35 cents; cloth, $2.00.



Editor's note--
I'd like to run a few more of these analytical type reviews; ones that discuss book content instead of book plot and action. The trouble is, of course, that such reviews require a bit of thought now and again. I don't suppose the response to this request will be very great; probably Noah will be inspired to do yet another of his excellent reviews. I hope....

How Are You Fixed For Blog

a column by LYLE KESSLER

The illustrious "return of Gernsback" era has finally come to an end. Hugo Gernsback, after years of inactivity in the field of stf and with a nice thick billfold of green, gratis RADIO AND ELECTRONICS, decided to return to his old hunting ground, scientifiction. He returned all right, but with all the [illegible] and stylization of an era long terminated. The man he hired as Managing Editor was probably the most prolific writer of all fan history, Sam Moskowitz. Moskowitz jumped at the chance of this position on the staff of SCIENCE FICTION PLUS, not-----by any means---overlooking the fact that Gernsback could now afford to pay one of the highest editorial salaries. So Moskowitz, a truck driver by trade (and GHOD knows why a man of his competence and command of rhetoric would waste his valuable talents driving a truck as a profession) became the managing ---so he thought--- editor of science fiction's first authentic slick.

SaM resurrected Frank R. Paul from an all but forgotten name in the annals of science fiction (as he had donewa few years previously with David H. Keller) and proved to the stf world that Paul ---who had illustrated the cover and interior of the first issue of the first stf magazine in the world--- could still give the current generation of artists a run for their money, and went right ahead to prove it. His covers for SF/ cost Gernsback thousands to produce, but were considered the most beautiful covers to ever grace an stf magazine; and this was later proven when the MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY in New York City asked permission to display them on their honored walls.

Oh yes, SF/ had its faults but it certainly can't be said to be lacking virtues. One of the worst faults was the dictatorship Uncle Hugo displayed over Managing Editor Moskowitz on the selection of fiction. It can be truthfully said that if ex-fan Moskowitz had been given a free hand with the magazine it couldive become a leader in the field; but no, Uncle Hugo was too interested in slick paper and the like to give a thought to anything as insignificant as story quality. After all, SF/ was to be bought by people who would admire and treasure it, not read it. It was a thing of beauty, and on that point alone Gernsback was right, for SF/ was a thing of beauty if nought else.

During a visit with SaM in the Xmass season he declared that many were the times when he was all but ready to walk out on Uncle Hugo, but hesitated as he thought Gernsback might gradually relinquish his domineering attitude. But alas, he was mistaken, for Gernsback would do anything <u>but</u> relinquish his control over the magazine; after all he was the "Father of Science Fiction" (at this point a brief but appropriate pause in homage is in order for our "FATHER".) and being so knew precisely what a magazine of that type should contain. So, instead of lett-

[illegible] full authority, Gernsback changed from slick paper to [illegible] type paper, hoping that the added bulk would lure the casual reader (and from where the newsdealers usually hide SF, the casual reader would have to be [illegible] casual to find it).

But all this was in vain as the magazine started skipping months and then more months until recently the contributors received their manuscripts and a letter stating that they could not accept the story as they were dissolving publication. And so Sam now glances once again at his Handbook of the Road and [illegible] his truck around the block a few times a day getting in shape for the strenuous [illegible] of driving ahead. As for Uncle Hugo: rumor has it that he will wait another twenty some years before entering the field again as the present era of readers [illegible] "don't appreciate him."

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Another stf book company has been established and probably will be designed to rival GNOME PRESS and all the many other stf book publishers. The name of the company is CHAMBERLAIN PRESS and it's headed by a fellow who appears quite frequently in print, Alan Nourse. The first book is tentatively set for publication on March 25th and is a collection of seventeen stories by Richard Matheson. The title of the book is BORN OF MAN AND WOMAN and is taken from Matheson's classic short story of the same name. The dust jacket is by Mel Hunter and avoids that "sameness" of quality that many of the recent covers have fallen into. Two of the stories have never before been published and none-other than our good friend Robert Bloch has written the introduction. The price is $3.00 per copy (no confederate money, please) and the address is: CHALBERLAIN PRESS Inc., Post Office Box 7 7 1 3, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. As an added inducement if your order is received before publication date your copy will be personally autographed by the author.

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For readability, one of the best science fiction books I have bought in the past five months is the anthology STAR SCIENCE FICTION STORIES No. 2, edited by Frederik Pohl. All the stories are new and Pohl has produced an anthology which may very well be the best of '54. There is not one bad story in the lot and practically all the leading stf writers are represented. The cover is a thing of beauty and is done by a fellow who is new to the field, Powers by name. He also illustrated the first STAR SCIENCE FICTION STORIES anthology. This is a definite "must" for every reader of science fiction.

As an added thought: has anyone ever stopped to consider that Fred Pohl has probably collaborated with more science fiction writers than any man alive. More power to him!

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It seems that the annual "Indian Lake Conference" will have to be referred to in the future as simply the "Midwestcon." "Beatley's (or Beastley's as some fans refer to it) on the Lake" just couldn't be stomached another year and the site moved down to Bellefontaine, Ohio, which is about 25 miles from Indian Lake. Bellefontaine is, I imagine, a small, average midwestern town. I wonder if the glamour of our con will disappear by taking it away from the lake region.

Nevertheless, a group of us from Philly will leave [illegible] and early on Friday, May 21st, for a twelve hour car ride to the conference. We hope to go there for the pure relaxation and entertainment of the con, as we've had enough experience in the field of work, with the past PHILCON.

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The depression in the science fiction magazine field is now a solid reality and has been for the past four or five months. Reports every week from New York tell of one or two more mags folding and also of the huge circulation drop of the others. Previously, stf city-fan gatherings were in a state of deterioration because no two fans had read the same magazines and therefore had nothing mutual to speak about. Years ago fans got together and had regular bull sessions discussing and evaluating the current issues of the four magazines being published; and since everyone had read all of the stories, all joined in the conversation. But with thirty or forty odd magazines on the stands if you mention a particular story to a fan the odds are 4:1 that he hasn't read it. The depression which is now in our midst will probably take us back to those glorious days of yesteryear and eventually leave us with but eight or nine magazines. I'd like to list the nine that in my opinion will weather the storm of the depression.

First in the pulp field:

STARTLING STORIES --- I'm not altogether sure about this old-timer, but I'm hoping against hope that it hangs on.

FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION --- Columbia publications will definitely continue with one of their stf mags. FUTURE is scheduled to go small size, but if it continues to lose money they will probably go pulp size again to save on expenses.

AMAZING STORIES --- I'm listing AS as a pulp since it will soon go back to its old format and probably use a lot of the old features.

Now for the smaller ones:

GALAXY --- With Gold's editorial ability, this one will pull through.

ASTOUNDING --- Campbell won't let anything like a little old depression hurt ASF. (To show you how bad the depression is: at the present time, ASF, which has the largest circulation...has lost 22% of its readers.)

MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION --- Even though it will soon go bi-monthly, Boucher and McComas will pull this through the storm.

IMAGINATION --- Madge will probably hold on under the editorialship of Hamling.

SCIENCE STORIES --- Palmer may hold on to one of his stf magazines along with FATE.

IF --- Our ninth one, IF, is reported to have a good sales record and Quinn will probably continue with it.

I may be wrong in one or two instances but I think the above will be the substantial list of the ones that will weather the depression.

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"I didn't read the fiction in the issue but nevertheless I rate it last as I despise fan-fiction." These words, or similar, constantly flow from the domicile of a fellow in Long Beach, California, Larry Balint. In fact, Balint went so far as to initiate an "ANTI FAN-FICTION" society. But the prize punch line to the "bit" came in a small fanzine published by a group in New York. The fanzine was titled WHY and contained a piece of fan-fiction that was really the kind of slop that Balint harps about. And guess who wrote it, yeah...that's right, our boy Balint.

The Observation Ward

A FANZINE REVIEW by the editor

SUBLIMINOTION STORIES #1, John Walston, Vashon, Washington. 5¢, 6/25¢. Bi-monthly.

The cover, by "Leslie", who is, I understand, the sister of the editor, was unusually good for a first issue. Well, it was good for any issue! I like it very much. The editorial is unique: John will pay money for material, one dollar for any accepted story or article. Now's your chance, boys.

INFINITY #2, Charles Harris, 65 Fairview Avenue, Great Neck, New York. 15¢, 4/50¢. Published irregularly.

By far the most stupefying thing about this issue is the incredible blending of excellent mimeography with superb...may, unbelievably colossal...hectography. I've had this zine a week and I still can't believe it. I am face to face with a technical impossibility. Gees. I could go on like this for pages. By all means get a copy of this zine and be amazed yourself. I can't get over the perfect register on the cover. I'm... (speechless)....

The material in this issue, after you've unglued your eyes from the numbingly wonderful illos, is somewhat dated because of a four month delay in publishing. Considering the work that went into this issue, that is understandable.

To me, the best item was a bit of fiction by Algis Budrys; I thought it somewhat obscure, but beautifully written.

A LA SPACE, Kent Corey, Box 64, Enid, Oklahoma. 20¢, 6/$1.00 Bi-monthly.

And 20¢ is to. much to pay by about 10¢. It is a foregone conclusion that the price of a subzine has no realistic relationship to actual publishing costs. Therefore it should be priced on a relationship with and to the prices of the other zines being published in the country. Trouble is, there is no set criterion. Some very good ones charge 10¢ while others charge up to 25¢. I wish I'd never started this. Just what does constitute a fair price for a fanzine?

Lynn Hickman is co-editor now. Possibly because she brought a lot of good material along. Even so A LA SPACE still has (layout-wise) the same sprawling sloppy appearance that lowers it in my eyes quite a bit.

The usual Elsberry controversy rages in this issue.... Even when leaving fandom, this Elsberry leaves a wake.

FANTASTA #s 9 and 10, Larry Balint, 3255 Golden Ave., Long Beach 6, Cal. 2/5¢ Irregular publication.

In #9, Balint has his first annish. It is taken up almost wholely with fanzine ratings. In Gleep, the editorial, Balint wonders aloud about the gafia of Bob Stewart and BOO! I wonder aloud too. "Wha' hopp en down thar? You fall i n?"

In #10, Balint initiated a new feature, a news scandal sheet. Very fine. At last we get the true dirt about the fans. It says here that. ..that...'Juels Enters mental Instution!!!'. Harrummph. This sort of yell ow journalism has got to sto p. Irresponsible stories like this throw an unfavo rable light upon fandom. Besides, I have a certified certificate of temporary sanity from my couch-commander.

Fantastic STORY mag # 3, Ron Ellik, 232 Santa Ana, Long Beach 3, Calif. 10¢, 3 /25¢. Bi-monthly.

[illegible] using a variety of material in his mag. #5 has three stories and [illegible] present is a column containing news of British fandom, [illegible] rial, and a letter section. The mag is definitely improving, and should see further improvement each issue. Now, if he'd only change the name of it....

[illegible] 3, Pete Campbell, 60 [illegible]garth Road, Windermere, ENGLAND. U.S.A. subs to [illegible] Miss, [illegible] 303, Redwood, California. 30¢, 4/$1.00. A hopeful quarterly.

[illegible] good fiction and articles, including a long and [illegible] section devoted to the [illegible]. I personally thought "Unethical Equation" by James [illegible], was the best story. The material was good, as was Mike's column, "Ocean." A good letter section is called "Litter Section."

But, myself, I wouldn't pay 3¢, to read amateur science fiction of this quality, good as it is for an amateur magazine. For, and as it may be, and despite all that may be said about it, an amateur magazine that insists on printing fiction has got to face up to being compared to the professional mags. And when that is done the amateur mag usually comes off second best. I should qualify that before I'm lynched upon by bloodthirsty fans. I mean that if a fanzine insists on running material that is essentially pro fiction of inferior grade. Off trail stuff is different. But good off-trail fiction is damned hard to find.

ELIZABETH #5, Charles Wells, 405 East 62nd Street, Savannah, Georgia. Irregular. 15¢ I think. There's no price listed on this issue, and I'm too lazy to dig out an older issue. How can this issue be #5 when last ish was #6? Chuck explains it in his editorial, but I don't believe it one minute.

By Dick Clarkson is another rehash of "The Numbers Racket." The 6th and 7th (fandoms, that is) get another going over. The most ridiculous twaddle I've ever read is this unending business of which fandom is this and which that, and who belongs in what. Bob Silverberg must be helpless with laughter at what has happened since he wrote that QUANDRY article.

The remainder of this sorta smallish issue is taken up by the letter section.

MOTH #9, Robert Peatrowsky, Box 634, Norfolk, Nebraska. This is the last issue of MOTH.

Old fanzines never die, they just Gafiaway....

A pity. No sooner than I give this zine a recommendation, and it dies. I wonder...is there a connection?

All interior illos by David English. The cover by David English. MOTH sure went out in a blaze of glory. Yes. I also note that I had a piece of material in this issue. That could be a contributing factot....

Mostly humor this issue, with Arul Kumara, Ray Thompson, and Meril Shrewsbury.

"MOTHER", by Fred Chappell, was a very nice short short short.

MIFE ONE #2, Don Chappell, 5421 East 4th Place, Tulsa, Oklahoma. 10¢/1, 6/50¢. Bi-monthly.

Not a bad little zine, but not good, either. The 7" x 11" size is distinctive, tho.....

[illegible], January 1954, Orma McCormick, 1533 [illegible] Hazlehurst St., Ferndale [illegible], Mich. Quarterly, 40¢ / 1, 4/$1.50. Printed.

Lilith Lorraine with the first poem in this issue has probably the best poem of them all. Top spot for the lead spot. A very beautifully executed piece of verse.

OOPSLA #11, Another Oopslannish. Gregg Calkins, 2817 - 11th St., Santa Monica, Cal. 15¢. Month-and-a-halfly.

And here is where the BNFs went when QUANDRY folded for good. In this ish are Bloch, McCain, Shelby Vick, Walt Willis, and the ever popular Mae Busche! Including a couple Calkins editorials and a letter section.

This revived OOPSLA is very near what Q used to be, both in style and content. Fine and dandy. I only hope Gregg can keep up the schedule. RECOMMENDED.

REVIEW #8, Vernon L. McCain, c/o Western Union, Kellogg, Idaho. [illegible] monthly. The letter section depends, in this issue anyhow, on the good memory of the reader with regard to how much of it he understands, one should have the last two issues of REVIEW close at hand for reference, since the letters refer to letters and comments that appeared in previous issues, issues which were published many many months ago. Unless one has a good memory, this type of letter section is hard to follow. In the fanzines he reviews, Vernon does an excellent job, but one wonders why only a few are given the treatment. I should think that a zine dedicated to reviewing fanzines and prozines would review them all, or try to. But it could be that Vernon doesn't get all the fanzines, REVIEW doesn't seem to get mentioned much in the fanzine reviews anymore. Unless the new fanzeds are aware of REVIEW....

Ish. I seem to be biting the hand that contributes to me.

This is an interesting zine for those interested in what the title suggests. The letter section, aside from being dated a bit as noted above, is excellent.

THE COSMIC FRONTIER, #5, Stuart R. Rose, R.F.D. # 3, Castleton, N.Y. 10¢, 3/25¢. Monthly. And on schedule, too.

A half-size zine with good reproduction that is hampered, obviously, by the small size of its pages. The material is short and of a so-so quality. I think it could be said that the editor attempts too much, too many features, too many columns, too many stories, and in effect doesn't have any one item that is treated at proper length. A pity. The cover this issue is a darned good one by Bobby Stewart of Texas.

ECLIPSE #7, Ray Thompson, 410 South 4th Street, Norfolk, Nebraska. 10¢, 3/25¢. Published every so often.

Well...the cover didn't quite come off, but it sure woulda been a neat one if it had. By Bobby Stewart (again) of Texas, it pictures a twin jet spacer doing an impossible 90%--er--90 degree turn...sharp! Unfortunately the master got torn and the mending tape shows thru and the title didn't print well, and.... Pretty sad, but more or less understandable considering the type ditto being used.

A story by Bobby Warner, "Act of Violence", and the column by Joel Nydahl were the two best things in the issue. The letter section is always interesting.

Not an exceptionally good issue. Kinda poor, in fact.

DAWN #20, Russell A. Watkins, 110 Brady Street, Savannah, Georgia. Bi-monthly. 10¢.

Happily, Russell seems to have hit or struck or something on the proper use of his ditto. He is getting better copy than I am. How do you do it, eh? In this issue is the first appearance of "As I Was Having", a fan column of proper long length and good solid content. I applaude. By Charles Wells there is what is called (so help me) "Untitable Story". It is not what you might think from a literal understanding of the title, it is a bit of first-class fan-fiction as defined by Bob Silverberg. A letter section of high quality is is evidence. DAWN gets a tentative RECOMMEND. If Russ all keeps this up, his zine could be among the very best.

CRUD, a APA one-shot by Tom Piper and Peter Vorzimer, 1311 N. Laurel Ave., N. Hollywood 46, California.

It is only fitting and proper that this zine be titled CRUD, and also oddly appropriate that I review it on the page before Mr. Vorzimer pleads for mercy. For, truly, if there was any zine that so nicely personified crud, this CRUD does just that. A complete waste of time, energy, paper, ink, etc. You fans out there who received this thing will know what I mean. Those of you who didn't receive it, good. Consider yourselves lucky. The only thing passable about this zine was the mimeography.

And from this same above mentioned Peter Vorzimer comes the third issue of HA! from the same address. It may seem so some that I am being excessively cruel and critical of the two mags mentioned here, but believe me, there is a question of publishing ethics involved. Should crud like this go unchallenged? I fail to see why good stuff should be forced to its knees by reams of this stuff. That isn't precisely what I mean, but it'll have to do.

I'm probably making bitter enemies who will write bitter letters, but I'm

mad. If words were good....

SPACESHIP #24, Bob Silverberg, 760 Montgomery Street, Brooklyn 13, N.Y. Quarterly. 15¢, 2/25¢, 5/50¢.

An excellent yearly item by the editor, "1953 In Review", is the lead off item, with a good piece of fiction by Dave Mason titled "Interview", another "Fil[illegible]" by Redd Boggs, a "Report from Australia" by Roger Dard, "The Way I See It" a column by Bert Hirschhorn, a review of The Red Peri by Terry Carr, a wonderful gem of a poem by Larry Stark titled "Spaceships", and the last item in the issue, the editorial "Back Talk."

This zine just keeps right on being published on time year in and year out. This is the fifth year of publication. An excellent magazine, and RECOMMENDED.

There will now be a long pause while I drink a short beer.

GREY, Charles Wells, 405 E. 62nd St., Savannah, Ga. A one-sheet mimeo'd column type thing. In this, the third issue, Charles roasts Kent Corey over a hot flame. He reviews FANSCIFUL and finds it wanting in the reproduction dept. He liked Chuck Harris's INFINITY. Oddly enough, Wells and I both have the same opinions regarding these identical zines. I must especially agree with his estimation of A LA SPACE. Corey has just got to grow up sometime....

UMBRA #1, John Hitchcock, 15 Arbutus Ave., Baltimore 28, Maryland. pubbed 9 times a year...he hopes. Realistically, John lists subs at 3/25¢, and 10¢ for a single copy.

A good humorous editorial about the trials and tribulations of using a hecto. A pretty darn good fanzine review. A short letter section was good.

On the debit side we find poor duplication. A lousy cover. Bad fiction. Very poor layout.

But, wotthehell, a lettering guide or two and a litti e thought re the proper use of space, and this zine wouldn't be too bad at all...if the level of material improved.

HENCE #1. "...is published bi-monthly by the Probability publishing group at 347 Oak Road, Glenside, Pennsylvania. Single copies, $.15; one year subscription, $.90. All manuscripts must be accompanied..." John G. Fletcher is the editor.

After all that has been said in the fan press about originality and the cursing about the shameless copying of the GALAXY format...what have we here but the most shameless of them all. I was going to let it go as a neo failing and wait until the second issue showed the promised improvement with regard to format. That was before I spotted the "All New Stories" on the cover. That, I feel, is going too far!

Aside from the above mentioned imitation, HENCE shows a remarkably advanced interior layout. Whether this is merely another facet of pro copying or not is hard to say. It doesn't matter much. The main trouble with publishing an amateur magazine is that of deciding what to copy and what not to copy from the pro-zines. But even so I think one should consciously copy only a short time...just long enough to learn. After that you should have ideas of your own.

The one thing I dislike (and will condemn) is thoughtless imitation; subconscious imitation of an admired magazine with little or no thought of the malaprop results. I see nothing wrong with learning by experience the good points of layout by copying from the pros, or of trying to adopt the tried and true methods of the professionals, but I do dislike the transparent affectation of a "Probability publishing group."

"DIG THIS CRAZY LETTER COLUMN"

SECTION 8

Jim Harmon, 427 E. 8th St., Mt. Carmel, Illinois.
Dear Rich,

PSYCHOTIC is a damned good fanzine! The thing I like best about it is I got it free. For the last few years nobody much has sent me sample fanzines. Suddenly in the last few weeks you've all got generous again. Do you younger fans have some kind of underground klan that decides who gets sample fanzines?

In the old days I used to chisel fanzines better than anybody. I remember I milked free SPACEWARPS, MUTANTS, SCIENTIFANTASYS for years. I didn't spend over a dollar for fan mags the first three or four years after I became one of the True Faith. Now I have to pay out good money -- damned good money. The best I can print.

I have a suggestion. Change the title to PSICHOTIC. More Stfis, don't you think? Be sure to give me credit every issue.

McCain's column most excellent. The only trouble is, it isn't a column -- it's a series of articles. And they make chaps like me who do write columns -- HARMONY, HARMONEY, THE HARMONICA THAT SELDOM EVER, etc. -- look bad. Of all the Gall (Gall is divided into seven parts)! Columns are supposed to be a series of connected items -- like After Hours Visit (Reynolds is good at it.) Naturally a serious constructive article may be better, but it isn't a column!

Your excellent letter section seems to be taken up with THE WAR OF THE WORLDS and whether prozines should letter column or not letter column. Well now...

I thought W of the W was quite good as a movie. Yet some of your objections are valid. But you should remember Hollywood doesn't deal in exact art or science. Detective story fans are often dismayed at the way cops pick up murder weapons in their handkercheifs -- that wipes off the prints neatly. You have to run a pencil down the barrel and pick it up that way. Western story fans are frequently disturbed by the unauthentic dess of screen cowboys. So few White Mule drinking, tobacco chewing hardened-killer gunslingers wore shirts with a rose garden enbroidered on them. There have even been those critics who objected to Hollywood giving a happy ending to MACBETH. So you see science fiction fans have no more to complain about than anybody else. You have to go to the movies expecting tripe rewriting and scientific inconsistencies. Within the usual Hollywood limitations, Wof the W was a good picture and it even had less of the usual cliches than most pictures. Just consider the fact that it claimed to be based on a story by H.G. WELLS as just another promotion stunt. As an original story, it stands up fairly well. And the acting, color, and photography were good. It very probably was the best science fiction Hollywood has yet turned out.

As for the religious points in it: whether the Christian religion is right or not, the fact is that many people believe it is. Without giving notice to religion in times of such crisis would have been completely ignoring reality. Whether Christianity is right or not it is a good thing for most people. I don't know if the idea behind our religion is true (it sounds too much like wishful thinking to me) and I think orthodox ritualistic worship is silly, but I do think religion is a good thing for the masses. If that sounds like I consider myself above the masses, it sounds right.

I like the idea of a benevolent Supreme Being and Life Eternal, but I'd like some justification for believing they exist other than my liking it that way.

Tom Marks doesn't seem to be completely leveling with you about the pro reaction to letter columns. I'm a pro, too (3 shorts, 1 novelet, and an assignment for a serial) and I know many pros are glad that many promags don't run letters. Obviously, the space filled with letters might be filled with one of their stories. Personally, I enjoy reading and writing fan letters and have the naive faith that a good story will sell, despite decreasing markets and limited story space in a magazine. Actually there is no sound commercial reason for not running letters. It is a matter of personal opinion and taste of the editors. Gold, Browne and Boucher frankly have little use for the majority of fans. I hope they don't object to my saying that, since they've said it themselves many times. Other editors who may like fans better are guided by the examples of these leaders, but who knows that a GALAXY with a large letter section would sell less well than the present one? I really don't think the readers measure the story contents of a magazine by quantity when buying the magazine. If so, it would seem that the mags with 120 or 128 pages would never sell any issues, what with the number of 160 page magazines still around...6 or 8 yet. I wouldn't say a letter column would gain any magazine any measurable number of readers, but I don't think it would lose it any. It just isn't an important factor, one way or another, in the mass sale of a magazine. However, it is important to the minority of fandom and some pros, so I don'd see why they couldn't be included where the tastes of the editor comply.

IMAGINATION runs both a letter section and a fanzine review and it is one of the few magazines that have managed to stay monthly and 160 pages. That does show something. Not that this contributed very much to MADGE's continued good health, but that it didn't detract from it, at least.

Incidentally, Rich, the letter pages in AS and F are due solely to the need for a space-page filler when they started using inside ads. No great pressure or change of heart.

This letter ran a great deal longer than I intended. Lovecraft starved because he wrote long trambling letters, you know.

Send me a few dozen more PSY's. I might subscribe. (Not until I see if I can chisel some more, tho.)

((You got no beef about McCain's column, Jim. I read short articles in the editorial page every day in the newspaper. These are written by "columnists".

But, if I changed the title to PSICHOTIC, while admittedly more stfish, would neccesitate (neccessitate?) changing the whole departmental slant of the magazine. I don't feel up to it. That is a good name, tho.

"Religion id the opium of the people." Da, I agree. I'm inclined to be suspicious of it bezause of the clear psychological basis. If the average person didn't NEED religion as a mental crutch, so to speak, would there be any religious manifestations?

Thanks for the letter, and come again.))

Robert Bloch, Box 362, Weyauwega, Wisconsin.

Dear RE:

PSYCHOTIC #8 reached me with the wonderful cover depicting the bar at the Phoncon: your artist has the gift of caricature down to a T. Let's see...gent on the left is Lester del Rey: in the middle is L. Sprague de Camp wearing Fletcher Pratt's beard: young lady in background is Bea Mahaffey: lad on the right is Ellison, pointing to an illustration in a BULLETIN. Present issue seems to be Moskowitz and that's good: he is in the vanguard of literate essayist-commeetators who have something to say and say it well and honestly. I note your note appended to my letter, regarding Ray Cummings. As near as I can discover, Cummings changed his name circa '38, to Dean R. Grennell. Ellison's article queries:"What happened to Marian Cox, Barclay Johnson, Lee Hoffman, Rich Elsberry,

[illegible] several dozen others...which way to the men's room?" If he gets an answer to the second question he may find a clue to the first. Fandom is a fast moving thing. I'd say its manifestations were ephemeral, but I'd fear a typo.

((Foo...ephemeral manifestations are easy for me. It's words like necessitate that throw me. I confuse easy with double lettered words.

Of course, Mr. Bloch, you should know about Cummings-Grennell, but I've seen a picture of Grennell, and he just don't look that OLD. Unless he started writing as a mere child.

Uhhh, Bradley, the fellow who did the cover, wasn't at the Philcon last year.... However , he is glad to know that his imaginary characters are for real. As for me, I always did want to know what Ellison looked like .))

Bob Peatrowsky, Box 634, Norfolk, Nebraska.

Dear Dick,

It's good to see the Bradley illo on the cover. So few artists in fandom these hectic days. Most who try to do fanzine illustration are either "scribblers" (those who don't have the artistic talent and training in the first place) or "sketchers" (those who have the talent and trainihg but simply won't devote the proper amount of time needed to turn out a creditable illo). So Bradley's work is a more-than-welcome change, particularly so when it's appearing in ditto. I've always prefered a ditto to a mimeo for the main reason that I think better art work can be turned out on it. Of course, I've always run into arguments in expounding this pet opinion of mine to other faneds. Most everyone seems to have some sort of prejudice against that "horrible purple print."

I'm wonderring whether you typed the Leather Couch before or after the rest of the issue had been typed. I don't know whether there actually were more typo bugs this issue or if it was just that your editorial about them had put me on the lookout, but they seemed more abundant. (My favorite of the issue was the one on the first page of the PADDED CELL---quote "thesexsame" unquote.) I don't imagine typos would be too hard to make, tho, typing the masters with the ribbon in the "off" position. In the curre t issue of MOTE I typed about half of the zine without the ribbon until I discovered I was getting hunch-backed from sitting with my nose next to the master trying to see what I was typing. So I finally gave it up and typed the rest of the issue with the ribbon. It doesn't give as sharp an impression but it's easier on the eyes and back.

You've finally cleared up one point for me...your age. I'd heard that you were in your twenties, but didn't know how far. So far I've weathered 28 summers and at least twice that man y hard winters. ((Hah?)) Perhaps you, I, Grennell, and a few others could start an Old Fen's Home.

Oh, sorrow! You too cast aspersions upon the humble hecto. I used a hecto for the first four (I believe) issues of MOTE and managed to draw a number of compliments on the reproduction. Of course, on the other hand, I've seen some horrible examples of hectoing, too. Seems to me that the main trouble is that most people don't know how to operate the thing, and don't stick with it long enough to learn. A hecto admittedly has limitations but also has one point in its favor. It is slow and limited to shorter runs (I printed up to 85 copies with mine) but it is also about the cheapest reproduction method. The matter of price is probably what attracts most users in the first place. They've heard somewhere that a hecto is the cheapest reproduction outfit so they rush right out and buy one without bothering to find out something about the outfit first. And then they're disappointed, disgusted and disgruntled when they find that it won't print hundreds of bright copies and that is requires a day or two waiting period between printings. And who gets the blame? The hecto, of course. I've heard of numerous fans who, like you, had "sorrowful experiences" with a hecto. The gelatine breaks up or comes loose or something else. I can't say that I've ever had any of these troubles with mine, and I learned how to operate it from the instructions on the lid. So I can't quite understand all the hecto blues. Then why did I switch

Why a mimeo, you ask? Simply because the circulation of my zine outgrew the hecto's limits. The hecto still works fine. It saddens me to see fans turn up their noses at the process.

Do I detect a typo in the last paragraph of The Second Session? That sentence "And Willis is back with OOPSLA." You mean HYPHEN? ((Nup. I meant Willis is in circulation again with his column in OOPSLA. Last time I saw it it was in Q.))

As you said, "...the rats are disclaiming Seventh Fandom...". So true. Two, that I know of, have printed announcements of such intentions. It really seems a bit silly to me. About a year ago the big fad seemed to be "I don't go Pogo" and now it's "I don't go Seventh Fandom." And the ones who are doing all the disclaiming now were among those who were doing all the claiming only a short time ago. Now all it takes is for someone to announce that he's forming eighth fandom and everyone will be jumping to get on the bandwagon. I'll bet Silverberg wishes now that he'd never written that article for QUANDRY.

((A blast on the strumpets please, professor. Thank you. Ahem. Be it known that henceforth, forsooth, begorra, notwithstanding, etc., that I am now starting NINTH Fandom. All babes-in-arms kindly line up on the left.

How's that for foresight? I know it must trouble all you fifth, sixth, and seventh fandomers to be so rudely rendered passe, but that's life. T.S, fellows.

Anyone making a false move toward Tenth Fandom is a put-down subversive and will be publicly flogged as a security-risk. I HAVE SPOKEN!))

Don Wegars, 2444 Valley St., Berkeley 2, Californis

Dick,

PSYCHOTIC #8 arrived on the day that I was home from school, and working on FOG. The postman threw it on the steps, and it danced around a bit until it decided to act like a mature fanzine.. I went out into the fog (there actually was a fog that day) and picked it up. Retreated to the warmth of the house and looked in vain for a place to sit down. Typer was on the chair, repro-machine was on the couch, dummy copies spread all over the floor, so I stood up over the heater and started to read.

Just thought of something. I heard about that article that you ran about Hiram G. Brentwood--in the 2nd Session, natch--and I remember that you said that we had been had. Well, Mari Wolf has been really HAD. In the latest MADGE she makes like she knew the old guy personally. Ah, Geis, you are the sly one. ((Heh, heh, heh...))

Liked the cover on #8 especially. With it, you cease to be a fanzine and become a fanzine. Not that there's much difference in my way of thinking, but P looks more like a magazine now. I can't complain. Hope you keep your drawing on the back, tho.

I wish I could get back the dough I sent in to the NFFF. I got the paper, envelopes stickers and the mag that they send out, but I think that's about all I will get. The benefits don't seem to be around like it says on the application form. Even a quarter sent in to KIX brings a badge, membership card, spurs, picture of Roy Rodgers, and other stuff. Maybe the NFFF should send out autographed pictures of Ellison.

((After reading the Bloch communication re the cover on #8, are you sure you'd like a autographed picture of Ellison? The NFF doesn't actually seem to exist for any definite purpose. What, I wonder, is it supposed to do?

Hmmm. I plan a de cover next issue, another cartoon-cover by Rike for #11, and a fannish sort of thing for #12 by Bradley. Maybe by #16 I will get another straight cover to run. I kinda like fannish type covers myself. Especially the humoro us kind. To me the imitative pro cover is a bit affected. There, I said it.))

Bob Tucker, Box 208, Bloomington, Illinois.

Cheers, Richard:

This is in delighted response to the 8th PSYCHOTIC, just arrived. Delightful is the proper term for the journal. And just to boast of my intelligence, let me say that I caught and recognized the devilish typo in McCain's column without any help from you; later, after reading your apologies, I went back and checked to make sure we were thinking of the same typo. I can usually spot typos all by myself. Maybe this is because I'm a slow reader, or maybe it is because I follow each line across the page with a pencil and move my lips as I read.

My favorite typo occurred in a Joliet, Illinois newspaper. I believe that Walt Liebscher (who formerly lived there but now dwells in Los Angeles) still has the paper. It occurred in a front-page headline and had to do with factory work. several factory shifts were being dropped as I recall, but the typesetter neglected to put the letter F in shifts. They tell me that in Joliet that day, newspaper people scurried about like mad buying up all copies of the paper on the streets, while delighted citizens hid their copies in the wall safe for posterity.

One request: when you finnaly decide on a reporter to cover the coming convention for you, insist that he turn in an accurate report, and as complete a story as possible. If you've followed the fan magazines for the last few years, you surely have noticed the wide discrepancies in the reports coming out of each convention., Frankly, it amazes me the way ten fans can sit in a convention hall all day, listen and see everything, and then write ten different versions of what happened. It has almost come to the point where the non-visitor must compare the ten versions and then guess as to what really happened. Sad to state, fans (most of them) would never, never make good on a newspaper, despite their love of publishing. They simply can't report what happened with any degree of accuracy.

((Heaven forbid a typo of such magnificent proportions in PSY. I would have no recourse but to change the name of the zine from PSYCHOTIC to A LA SPACE.

You have a bad habit with that pencil and lip moving business. I expect you got that way trying to read some of the illegible fanzines the postman leaves in your care.))

Charles Wells, 405 East 62nd Street, Savannah, Ga.

Rear Richard:

You have a good mag here, boy. In fact, it's the best appearing today, unless VEGA is still publishing (I haven't got any issues since the annish myself--have you?)--and it didn't/doesn't have you beat by far. I forget about SKYHOOK, I see --- of course, it's a fapazine, but considered as a subzine it too beats you. Let us say PSY is approximately the best mag on the market. I must contribute to it soon.

The best thing in thish is Vernon's column. Ellison's column is also good, but I must take issue on one point -- English's story THE LITTLE BOY WHO BIT PEOPLE isn't out of place in FIENDETTA -- that's just the kind of material I've always wanted, tho I have never been able to get it.

Other stuff good too. I see you disagree with my likes and dislikes in material, but do I care? I'll continue to publish what pleases me, thank you. In my opinion, that's the best way to get to BNFdom, altho that isn't exactly my goal with fta.

I can't figure what everyone who publishes huge annishes are so exhausted afterwards for. Joel Nydahl, for instance. I certainly did more work than he did in the sam e time, but I bounced back right away with GREY, but he goes off in some corner and disappears. Hmph. (I mean by more work that I published three mags during the same two months -- QUANDRY, FIENDISH, and a fapazine. Sure, I didn't have to type all of Q, but the sum total of the three is still more than the sum total of his annish. The FIENDISH alone was almost as time consuming at least in mimeography, considering my color work.)

((I think PSY is going to continue to improve. Charles, until it is as good as or better than VEGA. I think Joel, like his earlier counterpart, Ellison, has burned through the volatile and spectacular top level of his fanac. Now begins the long slide into oblivion. It seems to be a cycle every fan goes through; like a candle in the fannish night. Some candles, of course, are longer than others and brighten the fannish landscape for a lengthy time.))

Lyle Kessler, 2450-76 Avenue, Philadelphia 38, Pennsylvania.

Dear Richard:

Undoubtedly your most interesting feature is your letter collumn, it gives the m agazine the sparkle and aliveness that most of the zines of today are lacking. Another thing that I especially like is the manner in which you put PSY together; namely the original idea of not using a contents page. Most fanedz would never think of putting out a fanzine without a contents page, ever if the issue was three pages there's always a contents page. But I like your way better, it's more fun to flip the pages and come upon a McCain column or a letter from Bloch or an article by Viksnins titled "Split Personalities I have Known." It adds more just to the mag if you know what I mean (it's funny, but few people do know what I mean; possibly because my ideas are so revolutionary, I suppose).

Speaking of Viksnins, I hear he has quit fandom because of the many remarks labeled against him. I think the final blow was when you didn't print his letter answering Norman Browne as whenever anyone mentions science fiction to him he immediately screams out "DAMN THAT GEIS!"

In issue #8 I enjoyed practically everything, but I'd like to offer a difference of opinion on a remark in Harlan Ellison's column. Ellison declares that "MALICE IN WONDERLAND was as trite a piece of writing as ever managed to be rejected from Gold's desk." From the viewpoint of everyone that I know who has read it, it promises to be the story of the year. Just because Gold rejected it doesn't mean it is a piece of trite. Remember Gold also rejected THE LOVERS. By the way, as long as I'm on the subject, is it true that Ellison never really sold a story to the MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION? They say Boucher has denied it. And this after Ellison gave a long talk at the PHILCON on how he broke into the pros. If it's true something tells me Ellison is going to be walking around minus a head.

As a whole I like David English's detoons, but not an overabundance of same in one issue. Try to cut down a little on them and above all don't make the mistake of using one as a cover as Peatrowsky did in the last NOTE. Detoons are excellent fillers in the inside of a zine, but never as a cover.

((I hardly think not using a contents page is original, but thanks anyway. There are three reasons why I don't run a contents page; 1. they strike me as wasted space, 2. affected, and 3. because I'm lazy.

Alas, poor Viksnins.... He has good reason to blame me for his "reputation." I sent back his innocuous first submission and asked for illustrated word pictures of the personalities he was writing about; examples.

MALICE IN WONDERLAND was trite in respect to the plot structure and manner of writing. The treatment the unique story and bits-of-business received was hardly what could be called 'good writing.' The story was good in spite of the hack work, not because of it.

How about it, Harlan, any word on the subject of MoF and Boucher and the story?

Next issue will stagger you, Lyle; detoon on cover.))

Presage of Evil

The taste of acrid dust upon my lips
I wended my torturous way
Through broken passages of the temple
Far from the measured light of day.
My torch's ambered flare had shone upon
The enigmatic sculptured halls.
Queer distorted shadows fled before me
And writhed in dance along the walls.
Fears that had been dormant, now raised their heads
Strange nuances were in the air.
Was that the shuffling footsteps of mummies
That surged around me everywhere?
Was some Pharaoh's recreated soul
Watching my movements through the night?
Had I trod these dusty pathways before,
Had I been a white-robed acolyte?
Hasten your waking, Ra! Deliver me
From clutching fingers of the dead.
Bring me out of this dark charnel house
To acclaim your glory overhead.

PANORAMA FILMS

INSTALLMENT #4

MONSTER OF THE DEEP is in the planning stages at Columbia. Steve Fisher will do the screenplay while Sam Katzman is producer. Hopes are for 3-D and Technicolor. Shooting will commence about November of 1954.

IT STALKED THE OCEAN FLOOR is the title of another and that is absolutely all I know of it. Thanks to Forry Ackerman for the tip, tho.

THE NAKED JUNGLE from Paramount by George Pal is completed and should see release soon. Alas not stf, it has special effect that a stfan might enjoy. Charleton Heston stars.

THE PHANTOM GHOUL is a tentative movie to star Bela Lugosi.

THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON is the new title for the BLACK LAGOON mentioned last time. This is now completed.

THE WOMEN ON THE MOON, in 3-D and sepia-tone, stars Victor Jory, Marie Windsor, and Sonny Tufts. Al Zimbalist produces. This is now completed.

THE ELECTRONIC MAN is expected from Universal International in 1954.

ROAD TO THE MOON has been cancelled due to a flood of stf comedies. Martin and Lewis are expected to shoot one soon.

MURDERS IN RUE MORGUE, Poe's famous piece, is shooting at Warners.

DAY NIGHT very well prove to be the stfilm of the century. Richard Carlson is preparing it. More info later. Watch for it!

THE FROM OUTER SPACE starring George Winslow and Charles Coburn is started at Panorama Productions with expected release thru 20th Century Fox. Doubt if this is true stf.

CONQUEST OF SPACE has started filming under George Pal for Paramount with Joan Shawlee and Eric Fleming. Richard Conte will not be in. Pal prefers to use players unknown to filmdom.

BEYMAN BEAST starring Glen Ford and Gloria Grahame is shooting at Columbia. Don't think it's stf, but the title is intriguing.

SPACE GIRL, starring Lili St. Cyr, was mentioned.

MAD MAGICIAN, mentioned last time, has been completed.

THE GHOST OF O'LEARY, starring Barry Fitzgerald and Yvonne DeCarlo, is shooting in London for Allied Artists Associated, British Pictures. This is a color comedy.

BATMAN in serial form is being re-released.

TRANSVESTITE is a Bela Lugosi pic that was scheduled, but never showed.

THE ATOMIC MONSTER is still another Lugosi pic that never panned.

SPACE PIONEER was scheduled for RKO.

WHY BLAST THE CRUDZINES?

By PETER J. VORZIMER

The zine of an editor is always dear to his heart. In most cases he puts forth his supreme effort into his magazine. Sometimes, because of lack of experience and knowledge of the type of reproduction he is using, the typical novice or neo-faned editor winds up with what is cruelly termed, a "crudzine." I say "cruelly termed", because no matter how bad the actual zine is physically, it is the thought and work put into it that counts, not so much what it looks like.

A fan who puts out a fairly poor publication on his first few trios is usually blasted so much, that he will either quit his publishing altogether or start writing back cursing letters in return. These are usually the two categories that they fall into.

The main thing I wish to stress is constructive criticism. An editor invariably puts his all into his mag. Because he is not acquainted with the problems of his duplicating machine, his reproduction may be very poor. Because he doesn't realize that no matter how dark the red ink may be, it will not go on any pink paper. Because he does not first try to go to many different people to secure stories, he invariably winds up filling the mag himself with his own stories under half a dozen pseudonyms, which in turn the experienced fan will immediately spot and immediately start blasting away at the poor faned. All these are typical mistakes made hundreds and hundreds of times by hundreds and hundreds of budding faneds.

The thing I wish would be abolished is the cruelty of other more experienced faneds towards their neo-faned cousins. The only thing that segregates the two is the experience gained by one over a period of time, as opposed to the poor neo-faned who knows nothing of how to put out a zine.

Now, in summing up, all you faneds who, as neo-fans were blasted by other fans, should, by all means, give good, sincere, constructive criticisms and try to help the other kids who try their best. Instead, as I have seen and heard all over the [illegible], these faneds more experienced in time and knowledge, set down to their typewriter and blast away at those poor, sincere, neo-faneds, only succeeding in discouraging completely and having them drop out. This is not the way it should be done! When an editor sits down to comment on some new budding zine, or to write a review column, he should try to help the neo-faned to better his mag, and to become a part of that wonderful field of good fanzine publishing. If you faneds followed this example, there would be no "crudzines!"

AFTER HOURS VISIT—

"Is it that our love can never be, Carlotta?"

A COLUMN BY BILL REYNOLDS

Anthropologists and poets have speculated over man's greatest invention and discovery. Fire, the wheel, electricity, steam, or nuclear fusion; all have fond champions.

My vote goes to the humble orange box. Not because it protects a succulent fruit, but because it best shows off books and stf magazines. Not only that, but orange crates can substitute for furniture for destitute fen. And if the fan has courted death to enlarge his collection, the faithful orage box can substitute for a coffin.

Imagine a fan's life. His crib was an orange box. And his education soon began.... On the ends of these ubiquitous crates he found beautifully illustrated scenes from the Salton Sea, from them he learned what indians look like, he saw such animals as a rhinoceros on Strength Valencias, he found pansies on the Mariposa boxes. Why send the child to school? There are plenty of words to belabor at spelling. No need of toys; just break up the boxes into toy houses or carve into figures. The Depression holds no fear for this stf-bred child; the boxes can be broken up to be sold as kindling to destitute neighbors. And you have wood for your own hearth, too.

Above all, these humble crates shelter many stf collections. Paint 'em up a bit and they make darn nice bookcases and cupboards. And best of all, the fan doesn't have to divert funds to acquire these gadgets.

So, a salute to the lowly orange box....

LIFE running down local fandom doesn't sound so good to me. Any of those fat, prosperous magazines arouse trepidation. Magazines like the POST or the SATURDAY REVIEW have to satisfy two groups of people: their readers and their advertisers. And we readers like to laugh at somone's foibles or frown at the machinations of some evil doer. The whipping boy has to be found; somone who can't present any effective opposition. The traditional targets are the government and those who donit advertise on any huge scale. So we don't see anything about holding companies controlling much of the transportation of our country. Certain oil and automobile manufacturers invest heavily in mags like LIFE and POST. An examination of power interests in our National Forrests would be very enlightening.

By the reader must put up with estimations of activities on a very [illegible] scale, like economy in federal spending, or on mite sized problems like cruelty to disabled roosters in some small town in the mid-west....like a group of teen-age fanatics editing very mediocre stuff called "fanzines" in southern California.

That is, if any article on MAPA even appears in LIFE. The chances are that it might be too 'local' or 'specialized' to entertain it's nice, passive readers. Might be good for a laugh, though...those crazy fans. How about that big write-up in LIFE a few years ago? Did it have that banal 'bitter-sweet' chiding that LIFE has made into an exact science?

We'll see. With luck, maybe we won't.

.....

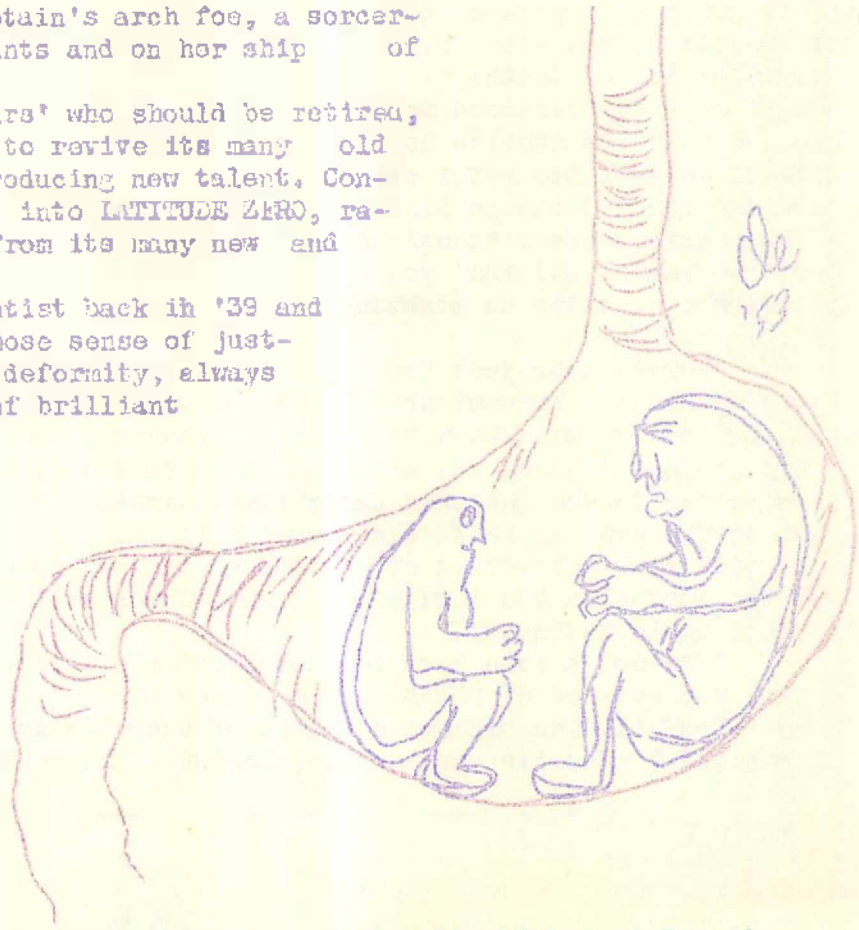
The exploitation of stf by radio and tv in recent years is nothing new. There's just more of it. 1940 was 1 B.C.; Before Collecting in my case. But that didn't mean that I lacked stf entertainment. Besides merely reading the stuff at the tiny store where I worked, I enjoyed some fine programs on the air.

LATITUDE ZERO was a gigantic serial in weekly half-hour installments that ranged from the scientific reality of today...an atomic submarine called the Omega, to the fantasy of a griffin attacking the small crew. A top writer produced the show. Arch Obler, I believe, but could be wrong.

The story is involved and vague after all these years. A couple of young fishermen find this mysterious sub beached on a desolate strand. They revive the two survivors, the elderly Captain (I'm almost tempted to call him Nemo; I can't recall his name) and his huge negro servant, Simba. They join forces to pilot the Omega back to the Captain's underwater base at longitude 130 degrees 50' W., latitude zero; anyway, that's pretty close...it was near Australia. In the course of their adventures they fought the Captain's arch foe, a sorceress on an island of animal-plants and on her ship of dead men.

With tv taking the 'stars' who should be retired, radio has a great opportunity to revive its many old transcriptions as well as introducing new talent. Considering the expense that went into LATITUDE ZERO, radio might draw a good Hooper from its many new and younger listeners.

Radio had a super-scientist back in '39 and '40. PETER QUILL, a genius whose sense of justice made up for his hunchback deformity, always managed to abort the schemes of brilliant opponents. One villain, a physical and mental giant who liked cats, died because of his own experiment. His only impediment was a defective heart, so he forced Quill to transplant a gorilla heart. Even Quill regretted his opponent's death after the operation; the gorilla survived with the weak heart. For a couple of weeks, the writers toyed with the idea that the gorilla showed the emotions of his former master.



so I said, 'Eat me.' I said---

Almost daily or three times a week one station had a quarter hour serial called THE MAGIC ISLAND. It was as outspokenly juvenile as the JACK [illegible] program that immediately followed it. The lost continent theme was used in this one (which one I can't remember, except that this island could rise to the surface of the ocean accompanied by the clank of machinery and the wails of clarions). The plot centered about a couple of kids attempting to escape the island. What exactly happened I can't recall.

For a few weeks BUCK ROGERS appeared in half-hour bits. Before he could really get under way in a fight with the "Black Planet" he disappeared from our area. I often wonder how that story ended.

A lot of horror, of course. THE BLACK CAT was one, I think, that really scared anyone wishing to remain tuned til 11PM.

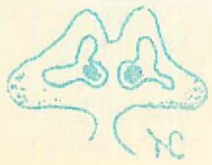
Some times I find it difficult to enjoy the current crop of stf. Even the mags bore me. I wonder why?

That reminds me.... You convention-eers be sure to have your draft cards when you visit San Francisco. You'll hear about the "Black Cat" and other colorful places when you are in town...at least odd places, a joint for queers the way the city watches the "Black Cat." It's sometimes hard to tell a man from a woman at those places, and it's not because of the dark.

Bordna's trick in PSY #3 isn't new, but it's good to make us eat crow once in a while. ((eds note: Bill refers to an article written by Francis Bordna about Hiram G. Brentwood, "The Forgotten Man of Fantasy". None of the readers caught on that Brentwood was a fictitious person and that the stories ascribed to him in the earlier WEIRD TALES never were printed.)) It is harmless fun and has no lingering effects except a subconscious after thought (and I'll bet everyone entertained it) that you thought something was wrong. You assure yourself that you were too polite to mention it.

Here's a project for the more active 'criminal' element in fandom: fictitious fanzines. Why not shuffle fan history about by announcing the 'discovery' of the earliest fanzine known? It wasn't known before because it was a project of love and distributed among the small group of fans that produced it. It can be in a large city; fandom (at that early time) wasn't aware of itself as an organized body. Most of the news in this 'discovery' will concern the prozines and movies of that date with club activities of obvious vintage to spice it all.... Paper and reproduction must show the ravages of time. Check on the use of staples; probably glue or tape would be better.

You don't even have to 'discover' the thing. Just show it about the Con to dazzle the avarice of BNF's. Be an innocent dupe who gave this historical document away. The Piltdown man had a school of sceptics as soon as it was 'discovered', but it managed to deceive many Anthropologists. Maybe you can fool a lot of fen.



2nd Session

WHERE THE EDITOR RAMBLES

WITHOUT MUCH PREPARATION, ON AND ON AND ON...AND ON...AND...ON...TO...THE...END...

This issue of PSYCHOTIC is chock full of interesting things, but they are of the type only I know about. This issue has been a great trial to me. Much heartburning and travail. Let me explain....

First of all, the typers. At present I am using an old and beaten up Underwood to type this. Yesterday I used a newer and smoother Remington Noiseless. Before that I used a Royal office typer. Within a week I expect to be using still another typer with a 14" carriage. This is how it happened:

Originally, I used my Remington Noiseless Portable for the first [illegible] issues. It wasn't too good, but it worked after a fashion. It had a tendency to skip spaces. I spotted the Remington Standard Noiseless at my stepdad's and talked him into letting me trade him so that I could use the standard. I thought it would be an improvement; it wasn't. If anything, it was worse than the portable. Desperate, I had the standard cleaned by a typer co., meanwhile using the replacement Royal they let me have while the Remington was getting a high price bath. The Remington came back in beautiful shape, but still wouldn't type masters worth a damn. (See Observation Ward.) GRIMLY DETERMINED, I went to the typer co. and explained my needs. It was agreed that a new typer was needed. We looked at typers, and settled on a reconditioned typer with a 14" carriage that would be guaranteed to type a beautiful master. Too, it would permit typing the master in odd positions; lengthwise, slantwise, etc. Ideal for my purpose. They would have it ready for me in a few days. So I walked out of the store with this typer to use until the other is ready. What I go through for you....

On a hunch I went up to the sixth floor book dept, in M&F's where I work, and backed a saleslady into a corner. Ruthlessly I questioned her about the next Pogo book. I was merciless. At last she broke under the torture of a fanzine being read aloud. She was a stout character, tho. She took PSY and VEGA with only a shudder, but BOO! finally brought her to the floor screaming for mercy. I extracted the information I wanted, then threw her a much read copy of MAD. She retired to the stockroom to read it. Poor thing, she licked my shoes when I gave it to her, she was that grateful. The information I got was this: The next Pogo book to be issued will be titled POGO'S STEPMOTHER GOOSE and will be out in April. It will cost the usual $1.00.

Dave Rike did up a cover for the rear end this issue that I didn't plan on when I typed up the credits on the contents page..er..editorial page. He mentioned the idea in a letter and I liked it. He did up the master and sent it up. I think the meaning of it may escape a few, but I think the timeliness of it is great. The things you can do in a monthly....

And this is where I right a wrong: In The Observation Ward I tore Vorzimer limb from limb, and I must say derived considerable pleasure from it at the time. However, the strong words I used have been bothering me for at least a week, so I must recant just enough to clear my conscience. Let me put it this way: the two mags reviewed, CRUD and HA!, were all I said of them, but I went too far in condemning all of southern California fandom. There are other exceptions besides FANTASTA. And just yesterday came a new zine from Vorzimer, titled ABSTRACT, which is photo-offset and which looks like a comer after a few issues of shake-down cruise.

Gaaaa...I goofed. Just ran off Isabelle Linwiddie's poem and forgot to put in a credit line. I'm truly sorry. Every issue something happens.....

Dear Mr. President:

Re your recent letter to me: I feel that I am not subject to Selective Service on account of some mysterious mutant strain in my make-up which makes me different and that.....

SECTION 8 SUPPLEMENT

From Bob Tucker: "Here's some news most everyone was expecting: Palmer has just killed SCIENCE STORIES, and the word rate on UNIVERSE has been cut to 1¢ per. Sad, indeed."

And from Lyle Kessler: "As an added note on the mag depression, PLANET has gone Quaterly and down to 98 pgs. and TWO COMPLETE SCIENCE ADVENTURE STORIES has folded. From what I see now the magazines may fold far faster than I predicted.

"Virgil Finley, who in my opinion is an excellent artist, has lowered himself to the point of drawing a comic strip for a lousy comic called Mystery In Space. The title of his strip is "The Mad Planet" and is as bad as it sounds.

Ray Schaffer Jr., 122 N. Wise St., North Canton, Ohio.

Dear Dick;

Just scribbling in a few mad lines to inform you that your zine, PSYCHOTIC, is a real fine as wine periodical. Goes over well with the gods.

I have to disagree with Grennell - - letter columns do happen to possess some good points, namely, letters, in their favor - - certainly not all the letters are hawg-wash. As Ellison would say - - there's Gold in them thar hills. It just takes some searchin' to find it. I'll have to admit that some letters are pretty darn cold as charity (jive talk for dull), but out of every pile of trash one can usually find one treasure. Just as in any prozine (or fanzine) the reader generally run across one good story or two out of the half-dozen or so contained therein. (Even VORTEX had a couple half decent ones.) The reader also usually comes across an interesting letter or two out of the accumulation that makes up for the time wasted in reading the other nasty letters. A ton of earth, an ounce of gold! Trash and treasure! A gallon of sap, a cup of syrup! Trash and treasure! A huge pile of weeds, a small pile of vegetables! Trash and treasure! Two hours spent reading a stf mag, one remembered story! Trash and treasure! Years upon years of reading stf, a small fund of memorable stories and a philosophy on life and the universe! Trash and treasure!

Great losses, small gains! Large amounts of reading, small recolections! Some there are who think only of trash and some there are who forget the trash and cherish the treasure. Some there are who become lost in the trash, and some there are who seek only the treasure. Yes sir, there's much trash and fine treasure in reading the stf mags. Likewise there's much trash and fine treasure in reading the letter columns. Don't forget that, you letter haters.

((Uhhhh....I think Grennell will concede the point.))

A friend of mine came over last night, and after we had watched a bit of TV, he mentioned that PLAYBOY magazine (the mag whose first issue contained the full-page Marilyn Monroe nude) is running as a serial Ray Bradbury's FAHRENHEIT 451. Tsk, tsk. Can you imagine the Bradbury prose check by jowl with pictures of nekkid young women?