

THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD



# The Leather Couch

WHERE THE

EDITOR RAMBLES, SLEEPILY, ON AND ON AND ON AND ON AND ON AND ON AND ON AND ON AND ON AND ON

A NEW STAR HAS AROSE

Way back when Jim Bradley came over to run off LYRIC #2 he brought along a master sheet of drawings by a fellow called Bob Kellogg. The drawings were terrific, and I started slavering right then and there. Jim was very unselfish about it; he didn't let me have any of the drawings, but promised to introduce Bob and I and to try to get some similar illos for me and PSY. Too much time passed, and then at last came the day that I happened to be at Jim's house when Bob came over for a few hours. I immediately commandeered a master sheet and carbon from Jim's supply and urged Kellogg to make with the pencil..."Do up some of those cartoon-type things you did for Jim." And...he did. I was in heaven. You have no idea how pleased I was at getting that page of drawings. The guy is terrific. I said that before, didn't I? Well....they are.

He drew one character that I used as a representation of Little Willie on the page devoted to "A Bit of Hebeephrenia." Perfect. Then there is the small cartoon I used in the heading of SECTION 8. Ve-e-e-ry nice. There are others I am saving for future issues of PSY. A few of the drawings are just begging for publication, but I'm gonna wait til an article or story comes along that will fit with them.

A few weeks ago Jim and Bob came over to my place and we drank beer and talked for a few hours. This was directly after their Art class at the Portland Art Museum. Anyway, we talked too long, and it turned out that Bob was late. But he still very kindly did two of the very best for me. One of them illustrated THE LITTLE BOY WHO LOVED CATS in this issue. The other will appear next issue illustrating a wacky bit by Terry Carr. I have hopes that he'll do a lot more for me...I just quiver at the thought of the cartoons he could do for some of the material I've got. I'm making no specific promises, but don't be too surprised if something really (again) terrific comes of his talent in PSY #14.

Jim Bradley, who is an excellent artist himself, is practically ecstatic over a cartoon strip he and Kellogg have cooked up for LYRIC. I've seen the first page of it, and have to admit it will be nothing but superb. Even if you don't like poetry you'll have to get LYRIC for the artwork.

FANDOMS, ANYONE?

It would seem that there is a good chance that the boisterous 8th Fandomers are going to pull the same stunt that the 7th Fandomers did when Q died. BUT, just the other day I received The Word from the fellow who seems to have started it all...Bob Silverberg. His letter of comment on the situation will appear in the lead-off spot in next issue's SECTION 8. I'll let you all hang breathless til then. It'll give you something to look forward to...or to dread.

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PSYCHOTIC #13, edited and published by Richard E. Geis, 2631 N. Mississippi, Portland 12, Oregon. 10¢, 3/25¢, 6/50¢ and 12/\$1.00.

The cover is by Bob Stewart (of Texas). Interiors by Rike, Kellogg, Rich Bergeron and Terry Carr. Back cover face is by me. You all know who me is.



THE PADDED

It is no secret, at this late date, that I am far from being fandom's #1 fan fiction enthusiast.

But there is one type of fan fiction I recently came across which interests me very much and which I think might profitably be revived.

Fandom in the 1930's was a far different thing from today. A tiny, humorless, and earnest group of adolescents who worshiped professional authors and had implicit faith that science would someday make Earth a paradise.

Their fanzines were usually printed (they hired it done) and the material was strictly restricted to scientific discussions and material about pro authors and stf.

Since s-f had a far smaller circulation in those days and there were only three magazines, plus one weird one, to which a writer could sell his stories, the average s-f writer did it in his spare time because he was an enthusiast and he had far more in the way of ideas and energy than the market could absorb, unlike today. Since fandom then lacked the eccentricities and cliquishness it has since developed, and since the fans were only too willing to pay unanimous respect to those deities known as writers and editors, fandom enjoyed a far higher percentage of co-operation from the pro field than in any time since, despite the fact that from Third Fandom on we have had many of our own agents planted in key spots throughout prodom.

Practically every top name (and most of the lesser ones) of the 30's has a long record of active co-operation with fandom (which, in the cases of Drs Keller and Smith continues in much the same fashion to the present day), as compared with perhaps one out of five who maintains casual relations with fandom today.

One of the most successful of the fanzines of this era, FANTASY MAGAZINE, made a unique use of their liason with prodom in a form that is known by the not very appropriate title of 'the round robin story.'

The most famous example was a long serial having to do with a "robots conquer the Earth" theme, which ran over a considerable period, each good-sized installment written by a different top name of the day. The A. Merritt and E.E. Smith installments (and possibly others) were lifted out and later reprinted as short stories in THRILLING WONDER STORIES and both of these have seen a second appearance in reprint magazines within

BY VERNON L. MCCAIN



the last five years.

Despite familiarity with this serial I did not realize FANTASY MAGAZINE had done it more than once until two post-mailed FAPA-zines turned up the other day. Each bore the same title, "The Challenge From Beyond," and each was an independent short story reprinted from that magazine and co-written by five different authors apiece!

The first one was written by writers who more or less specialized in the WEIRD TALES type of thing and very definitely carries that air with it. C.L. Moore provided an innocuous introduction in the first two pages; in the next two, A. Merritt, apparently stuck for ideas, lifted the climax from the first chapter of his own "Ship of Ishtar" bodily and inserted it, hastily passing it on to H. P. Lovecraft. Lovecraft was an old hand at ayjay and, while I've never cared for his writing, I must say he came through, in this case, like a master. Apparently Lovecraft was so overflowing with ideas that he could afford to strew them in a carefree manner in every direction and was willing to do his best, whether writing for an amateur magazine or for pay.

He took over the story with a firm hand, used the trifling start given him by Moore and Merritt and, without distorting that at all, proceeded to make it irrevocably a Lovecraft story. The theme he introduced is actually a rather silly one but it is typically Lovecraft and quality Lovecraft, and he went on to embroider it rapidly until he had produced the heart of the story. One has the feeling that he would have liked to have finished it himself...he wrote twice as much as anyone else even then...and only reluctantly turned it over to Robert E. Howard.



Howard, as you all know, created Conan the Conqueror and apparently that was all he could write so he distorted the Lovecraft story badly in order to make the hero a Conan-type individual. The end of the story was handled by Frank Belknap Long and he seems to have felt that anything Howard could do he could do better, so he proceeded to shoot the story off at an even greater angle than Howard and gave it a completely out of character close.

One can't help feel the story would have been better if Lovecraft had been allowed to rewrite the first four pages and finish it himself. But it is an extremely interesting experiment nonetheless and, since fantasy was far more mature in the 30's than s-f, this story tends to be much more smoothly written than its running mate.

The second, or stfnal, "Challenge From Beyond" was opened by one of the greats of the 30's, Stanley G. Weinbaum. Weinbaum's very worst writing was better than 95% of what he had to compete with, but the sad fact is that this opening is a worthy addition to the category of 'Weinbaum's very worst writing.'

The 30's produced a large number of untalented hacks and perhaps the least talented of these was Donald Wandrei (not to be confused with his brother, the late Howard Wandrei, who always wrote under pennames and turned out some of the best stories of the late 30's and early 40's)



who takes over for the second portion and, in a period when completely unbelievable and idiotic heroines were the fashion through stf, produces just about the crudest characterization of such ever to see print. This was his chief contribution to the plot, after which he turned it over to E.E. Smith, high deity of that era.

Smith will never win a Pulitzer prize but there is a sweep and authority to his writing which has probably been achieved by no one else in the field past or present, except possibly for Heinlein. After Wandrei had messed the story up Smith was faced with a difficult task, but he tidied matters up somewhat, remedies Weinbaum's and Wandrei's omission by giving the story some actual scientific basis and, in general, pulled the wordage into some semblance of a story.

However, he had to turn it over to another of the era's more spectacularly bad hacks, Harl Vincent. Vincent was present only briefly, and even managed to build somewhat on Smith's foundation without doing too much damage.

I don't suppose the awe-struck fans of the 30's 30's planned it that way but they pulled a master-stroke in assigning Murray Leinster to close the story.

Leinster was one of the earliest writers of mature and modern stf, the first to do it consistently, and the only one who has found it possible to continue to the present day in competition with the talent Campbell uncovered in 1939 and the early 40's. He is a very prolific writer and so, of course, has a ceaseless idea flow. He has proved, in many slick sales, that he can write smoothly and has developed an ability as a plot mechanic over the vast number of years he has been at the business through tackling every type imaginable.

Thus, if anyone could have saved this story, it was Leinster, and indeed, he did just that. He not only tied all the loose threads together he produced an ending that was acceptable and enjoyable, quite clever, and even a trifle humorous! The ending is the most important part of such a story and as a result of Leinster's yeoman labors this version, despite its crudities and poorer writing, emerges as the more enjoyable of the two.

Having finished with these I was left to wonder just why such an amusing form of fannish endeavor has been allowed to die out. There are several reasons of course....less contact with the important pros....less attempt to emulate the prozines....the inherent difficulties of the form. But somehow I don't feel these are sufficient to completely negate the virtues of the 'round robin'.

And I would like very much to see some modern fanzine editor who has developed a reputation for regular and legible appearance (that's so





the contributors will be willing to do the necessary work without worrying whether the fanzine will fold first) to revive it. I see no reason, either, why in modern fandom we should be restricted by the limitations they had in the 30's. I think it would be interesting to run (perhaps in succeeding issues) three different short stories each with about five authors for each. (It seems like a convenient number for the length and short stories will not scare off or fatigue contributors like a serial would.)

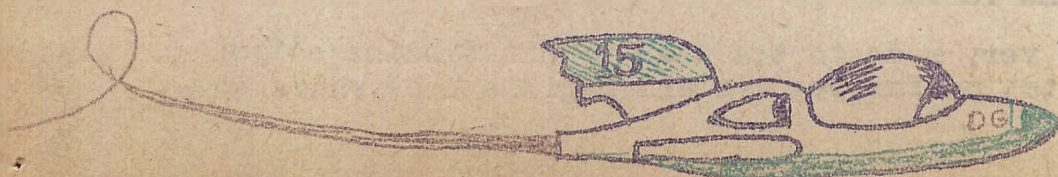
For one story you could have it strictly pro-written. Naturally with our present relations with prodom you aren't going to be able to produce the equivalents of writers of the 30's, such as Heinlein, Sturgeon, de Camp, Bradbury, and Asimov. Instead, I would suggest soliciting certain people who have been selling professionally and steadily for a number of years but who have evidenced a desire to remain in close contact with fandom say (to pick the first five names that come to mind) Bloch, Tucker, Mack Reynolds, Jerome Bixby, and Poul Anderson. Our second category would be made up of semi-pros. (I think both in fairness to the contributors as well as for evenness of writing, each story should be strictly compartmented as to type of writers.) This story should be written by fans who have just recently started selling professionally, say (again grabbing the first five names I think of) Marion Bradley, James White, Dean Grennell, Bob Silverberg, and Joel Nysdahl. Our last category would be for rank amateurs....those fans who have never sold anything but who do occasionally try their hand at fiction, having exhibited an acceptable style of writing, and who have been fairly prolific over a long period of time. I make all these conditions since this would be a particularly trying form of writing in which it would be very easy to bog down so your contributors need a fairly good past record, both to show they have a sufficient idea flow to handle it and so you know they are dependable and won't let their co-contributors down by allowing the story to die.

Again let me mention five names at random who seem to possess the qualifications.....Redd Boggs, Art Rapp, Gertrude Carr, Richard Elsberry, and Lee Jacobs. There are many other names which would fit into each category including, I hope I can say without being unreasonable, my own, in the last group. I know I would be extremely interested in participating in such a project.

There's nothing to prevent a bunch of neofen from producing one also, but this is a very tricky form to work with and the thing that distinguishes the neofen from the non-neofan is that the former has not yet proven himself, either for good or evil, and I think the odds against selecting five different neofen all of whom would have the ability and willingness to cooperate in this sort of project would be very high.

One word of caution. If any of you editors decide to try the project, I would suggest specifying to each writer that he make a carbon which should be mailed to you at the same time he mails the original on to the next writer. That way if some one poops out and takes the mss with him you can copy it off and select someone else for the next step.

---V. L. McCain





A BIT OF

# Hebephrenia

The late great lawyer, Max Steuer, used to tell about the time in court when a defendant's name was called and the man stood up in the jury box.

"What are you doing there?" barked the judge.

"I was called to serve on the jury," came the reply.

"But you must know," the judge snapped, "that you can't sit on a jury and judge your own case."

"Well," the defendant admitted, "I did think it was a bit of luck."

And from our ever lovin' readers came these Willie poems:

Little Willie, feeling fresh,  
Grabbed a girl and started to blesh.  
They went on a spree,  
Now baby is three,  
And that is the way of all flesh.

---Richard Ellington

Little Willie, feeling fresh,  
Grabbed a girl, and began to blesh.  
Her GRUEsome mate came on the scene  
And Willie turned a little Bleen.

---Howard Lyons

Little Willie, horrid brat  
Kicked his sister into a vat  
Sister said, "Ah, fine as wine."  
It turned out to be VAT 69.

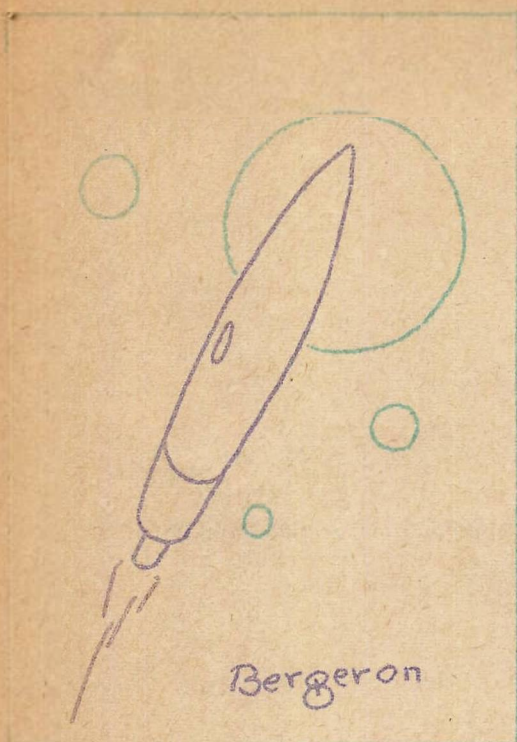
---Howard Lyons

Overheard in a Portland store: "We're a non-profit organization. We didn't mean to be---but we are."





# HUCKSTER'S



Imagine an America where the great advertizing agencies have risen to the position occupied by the Russian Communist Party or the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages. That is the theme of **THE SPACE MERCHANTS**; first published in **GALAXY** as **GRAVY PLANET**.

Mitch Courtenay had risen from advertizing copy-writer to right-hand man of Fowler Schocken, a publicity magnate of the 2--th century. He is quarreling with his wife, Kathy, a brilliant surgeon, who objects to doping coffee with habit-forming alkaloids. To Mitch, a whole-hearted supporter of hucksterism, anything which increases sales is ethical.

Jack O'Shea, midget space pilot, has just returned from Venus and reports the planet can be rendered habitable. Mitch is entrusted with a campaign to secure an iron-clad monopoly of Venus for his own firm and to sell the planet to the American public. The campaign does not go well, largely because of sabotage by Runstead, who is a conservationist or "Consie." On a trip to Antarctica, Runstead has Mitch shanghaied and shipped to Guantemala as a contract laborer. Here Mitch makes contact with a Consie cell, and joins them with the intention of betraying their organization.

He escapes to New York, where he discovers Kathy is the head of the hated Conservationist underground. She wins him over to a scheme to hijack the expedition to Venus and staff it with Consies. The story closes with the expedition about to blast off.

Mitch was childish, vain and completely ignorant of all which did not concern his Very Important Career. Kathy's hold on him was not that of a mate, but that of a mother substitute. A reasonably bright spectral tarsier could have escaped from captivity in Guantemala with far less trouble than Mitch. The authors plainly intend him as a satire on bright young careerists.

There are a number of difficulties with respect to the picture of society drawn in **THE SPACE MERCHANTS**. First, however, this reviewer wants to congratulate Pohl and Kornbluth for anticipating Sir Charles Darwin in drawing a vivid picture of what happens when population outruns natural resources. The **GALAXY** version of their story was published before **THE FIRST MILLION YEARS**.

The first difficulty is: what has become of Communism? A system which dominates half the world and keeps the other half in turmoil does not vanish without a trace. In considering this, it occurs that there are certain advantages in making the hero ignorant and self-centered. Mitch could have



# NIGHTMARE

A Review By NOAH W. McLEOD

seen a crater made by a Russian H-Bomb which wiped out Chicago and ignored it, if it couldn't be used in advertizing.

How was the present trend towards greater government control reversed? How was the United States Constitution amended to give not merely actual but legal control of the government to a handful of corporation magnates? What happened to the labor unions? What had become of the honest side of the capitalist tradition, the side represented by the Better Business Bureaus and Sears & Roebuck's money back guarantee? Mitch is not interested in these questions, therefore he does not tell.

There are even more fundamental questions. Could the advertizing agencies gain the ascendancy described? After all, many people are allergic to high-pressure selling methods. If the Kremlin, with the world's most ruthless police force at its command as well as a monopoly on information, is still unpopular with the Russian peasants, it is very unlikely that Big Advertizing would gain the position depicted. It is possible the absolute power of advertizing was a figment of Mitch's imagination.

Could the Conservationist movement be forced underground? Not all business men are irresponsible hucksters out for a fast buck. The Conservationist movement was founded by Teddy Roosevelt and shares the glamor of his tradition. The sheer military necessity of conserving resources during peace would make intelligent military men conservationist, and history proves a merchantile aristocracy is wise in avoiding a showdown struggle with its own armed forces.

Again, would local police, staffed and run by private detective agencies, and subject to corruption and the vagaries of local politics, be equal to carrying on a struggle with an intelligent fanatic underground? The probable result would be that the Consies would soon control key positions by infiltration and in a few years Fowler Schoken, J. B. Taunton, et.al, would be staring down the muzzles of rifles in the hands of firing squads.

The commercial feud is very unconvincing. History shows that a commercial aristocracy must maintain greater solidarity than any other governing body. A society in which leading business men went gunning for each other would soon cease to be controlled by business men.

An interesting speculation is the division of authorial labor. The best indication is that the plot has a family resemblance to that of THE SYNDIC, written by Kornbluth alone. It seems probable that Kornbluth did the rough work, while Pohl did the polishing.

THE SPACE MERCHANTS is satisfactory as a thriller, or as a satire on hucksters, but it is hardly a convincing picture of a future society. It suffers from a defect common to much of the work of authors associated with GALAXY: that of sacrificing logic and credibility to a slick style and a fast plot.





# SECTION EIGHT

V. L. McCain, Box 876, Kellogg, Idaho.

Dick--

"Fie!" say I to Redd Boggs, and furthermore "Pfaugh! You sir are a hopeless reactionary, completely incapable of appreciating the glories of the new and revolutionary." Were this the age of duello it would be pistils at dawn. (To prove I have stamen-a.)

It is not I who have missed the point, but Mr. Boggs. I quote from my own words as published in PSYCHOTIC (to what more authoritative source could I turn?) as follows, "I...mutated the breed into something higher, nobler."

Here is the true point. Common ordinary single line interlineations are a thing of the past. Onlu hopeless fuddy-duddies would waste their time on this outmoded form since the advent of the wondrous mccainterlineation. It was in recognition of the fact that the new was a complete departure from the stodgy sameness of the old that I christened them mccainterlineations.

And in proof positive that mccainterlineations are a fait accompli, despite the picayune criticism of Mr. Boggs, may I point out that mccainterlineations have already appeared in such magazines as PSYCHOTIC, REVIEW, INSIDER, and BIRDSMITH (all the leading publications, you will notice).

In fact, as the originator of this magnificent new art form it is so far beneath my dignity to answer such cavilling that I shall tear up this letter prior to mailing it to Mr. Geis.

The defense rests.

((Yaaaa... You can rest, Vernon, but I'm the one who had to spend three hours sorting out the pieces and putting them together like a jigsaw puzzle. Hereafter how about letting me tear up your letters when I'm through copying them for SECTION EIGHT?))



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

Dear Richard:

I was beginnig to fear for PSY's health a few issues back, but if you can hold to the standard equalling ish #11 or better, you'll have it made.

I need some information. Am compiling a history (short one of course) of science fiction mags, but my knowledge of many of the mags between early 1953 and the present time is limited. If any fans can send me some information to the following effect, it will be appreciated: in what month and year did SPACE STORIES end?; did ROCKET STORIES end?; did WEIRD TALES go to digest size?; did FANTASY FICTION end?; did TOPS IN SCIENCE FICTION start, and when was the last issue?; did COSMOS start, and has it ended?; did DYNAMIC end?; did VORTEX appear on the stands?; did SCIENCE STORIES end?; did 2 COMPLETE SCIENCE ADVENTURE BOOKS end?; when did PLANET go quarterly?; when did the Standard mags go quarterly?; is UNIVERSE still going? -- on what pubbing basis? It seems like quite a lot, but while I have estimates on some, I would prefer as much exactness as possible. So, if any can answer the above for me, I'd appreciate it, and will acknowledge their help in the article.

((Gads but it must be a terrible life you lead, Paul, cut off from civilization, living in the wilds of darkest Hollywood, with the nearest comprehensive newsstand hundreds of miles away. I note, however, that the Pony Express gets through to you pretty frequently. You might try sending some money to James V. Taurasi, 137-03 32nd Ave., Flushing 54, N.Y. and inquiring about back issues of FANTASY TIMES. I feel for you, Paul, but I can't..quite...reach...you....  
But, to get back to your letter---))

"Why Not Blast The Crudzines?" by Harry Calnek: somehow, while reading this, I got the impression that Harry was glancing from his typer to an open copy of DIFFUSE #1. Perhaps it's a guilty conscience on my part, though.

"Crudzine" to my way of thinkinking, is an optional term. I've read reviews on "crudzines" which I thought had lots of promise. I've also called promising fanzines crudzines myself. There is no set definition of a crudzine. That's because the popular conception of a crudzine is rare. I've seen ONE crudzine in my day that was truly a crudzine...and yet doubt is intermingled with my opinion. It was hectoed in one color, almost faded out, and handwritten. I happen to know that the editor of same was a rather young fellow who probably hadn't a great knowledge of fans and fandom yet, much less fan editing. My doubt persists on one basis....the fellow may make a good editor later, after gaining experience. He started too early.

Until someone can come up with a concrete term for what constitutes a "crudzine", let's not argue about how to blast or not blast them.

And one last word: what makes a good reviewer? Sure, any and every body has opinions, but what type of person does it take to review a zine and



say to an audience of perhaps 80 to 150 readers, "Do buy this!" or "Don't buy that!" I would venture to say that a good reviewer is more scarce than a good editor.

((It seems a shame to admit that "thinkinking" is a typo, but admit it I must.

You do raise a legitimate point, Paul, in saying that an exact definition of "Crudzine" is lacking. But I spot an error in your thinking when you qualify your judgement of the crudzine you cite as an example by saying that the fane~~d~~ in question is young and might make a good editor after he has gained experience. Sure, granted, etc., but you were judging a specific issue of a specific fanzine, and as such it should be evaluated as a finished product and on its own merits. You'll hoplessly bog down if you consider the ifs, maybes, and might-have-beens. If an issue is bad, then call it bad.

A "crudzine" might be defined as simply a fanzine that is badly or carelessly duplicated which contains badly written material.

A good reviewer is perhaps anyone who can best evaluate a fanzine and compare it to the best in the field. The rub is that very few reviewers use what might be called a correct set of values. Some may think reproduction all important while others stress material. Still another group may think layout and format the most vital. And, of course, there are many who swear by the editorial "personality." And so it goes. The best qualifications a reviewer can have are Experience, Background, and Objectivity.))

And now we come to a special feature. Dave Rike received a circular-type letter in the mail and sent it up to me for my edification. I wasn't that hungry, so I am presenting it below for your edification. (Love that word.)

Dear Shaver Mystery Club Members, Fans, and just readers of my stories:

No doubt you'll be surprised to hear from me after all these years, but something important has happened, and I want you to know about it, and also want to ask you to help. As you know, when my Mystery was going full blast in AMAZING STORIES, we were beginnig to get somewhere; then Mr. Ziff ordered the whole thing killed (because, he said: "a reader had written him a letter complaining because I disagreed with Einstein--and that's going too far; we don't disagree with Einstein!"). Well, after that I got nowhere, fast. However, now there is a chance that we can finally get going again.

Ray Palmer has started a new magazine called MYSTIC, and although he's having a tough struggle in these times of bad magazine sales, TV and so on, he's getting his fifth issue out. Now he wants to give the Shaver Mystery its chance again, and this



time, forget the fiction, but place the Mystery before his readers in a strictly factual way, insofar as it can be made factual. We all know proving the Mystery is virtually impossible, but we all know that it is something important, and should be brought out into the open. If any knowledge is to be gained, and anything done about it, it must not be squelched as it was before.

Ray doesn't exactly agree with me in everything, and I don't frown on other interpretations of the Mystery (such as spirits, etc.), but that's to the good, and maybe we can untangle it with a real good arena available for argument. MYSTIC'S discussions culimn (remember the wonderful discussions column in Amazing?) can be the hottest letter section of any magazine in the country. Ray, unlike Mr. Ziff, will give every one of us the right to have his say, not only the Einsteiners. Einstein may be right, but that doesn't mean everybody else is wrong!

So, what I want you to do is sit down right now and fill out the coupon I've placed at the bottom of this letter, and subscribe to MYSTIC for at least 12 issues (it's published every other month) and better, for 24. You get it that way for 25¢ per copy instead of the newsstand price of 35¢. You save \$1.20 on a 12-issue subscription. The magazines come to you in heavy envelopes to insure good condition. Ray does things that way.

Incidentally, MYSTIC is a combination of fact stories, articles, theory, and fiction based on fact. It's very interesting reading, but what I want to see in it is the things I've got to tell the world, and they must be told! I've been pretty discouraged in the past, but this may be my big chance. So, will you stand behind me as you have all these years, and at the same time stand behind Ray Palmer? Believe me, he needs help too! Subscribe right now, and send the coupon and your check DIRECT to Ray Palmer, Amherst, Wisconsin. I'm depending on you. And thanks very much!

Your old friend,

RICHARD S. SHAVER  
Rt. 2, Box 39  
Amherst, Wisconsin.

It would appear that RAP is in serious financial trouble indeed if he has now turned to the Deros for help. I trust you will all stuff money into large envelopes and mail it to the poor man. After all, us fans should at least make sure he pays Grennell for those stories. T'would make for bigger and better GRUES.

Ron Ellik, 232 Santa Ana, Long Beach 3, California.

DeaRichard:

She didn't come up; its surface was clear.  
Willie had kicked her in the LASFS beer.

Oh, well. That's just my ending to Thompson's thingamarottle.



"Why Blast The Crudzines?" "Why Not Blast The Crudzines?" Why the hell worry about the crudzines, sez Ellik. You remember, I'M SURE, the first ish of FANTASTIC STORY MAG....I do, only too well. Anywee, I like to think I have gone a bit since then, and have improved my zine somewhat. A crudzine, even a poorly mimeo'd, cover-with-the-name-sparawled-all-over-it thing like mine can become something good if it takes its time. Just you wait and see. Nyah. It takes time, not blasts or compliments.

Just to show how far my zine has progressed---well, name me another reprint fanzine published in Long Beach that has Shelby Vick as ass't ed.

If you think I'm kidding, wait'll my sixth issue comes out in July, or write Shelby himself.

Sly way of getting a plug, eh wot?

((Yeah, you're a clever one.

I'm glad to hear that Vick is helping you out. He unquestionably can provide many many excellent articles from his fanzine files which deserve reprinting.))

Harry Calnek, Granville Ferry, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Dear Dick:

Supposedly, every faned does work hard on his zine, but apparently hard work does not pan out the same in most cases. First you must define what you mean by hard work. Do you mean he sweats over the process of typing stencils with index finger? Does it mean he works hard cranking mimeo or ditto? Does it mean he works hard trying to get some good material for his effort? I suppose you have to take all these into consideration. From personal experience in several years of aircraft construction work I found that one man could work like hell doing a job and do a good job and do twice as much as any other worker. The man next to him might work twice as hard and do one helluva poor job and not half as much. And so it seems with just about everything. You can't judge anything by how hard it is worked at. Work expended is meaningless if the final product turns out to be no good. It is only wasted time and energy, and Chu knows there is that in abundance in fan publishing.

((Agreed. It is the fanzine that finally plops into the mail box which should be judged, not the good intentions or good excuses that the faned sends along with it.))





# HOW ARE YOU FIXED....

a column by LYLE KESSLER

Sub Title: TRIPPING THE LIGHT FANTASTIC or A REPORT ON THE  
FANTASY VETERANS CONVENTION....

Forward----- Probably the most common occurrence in the stf fan/pro world is what is modestly labeled as a science fiction convention. Listing the number of such conventions - annual, local, world, etc - since the first one in Philly in the year of '36 would be pure guess work; but the number would very definitely be in the hundreds.

In all due sincerity I shall now modestly label this year's Fan Vet Con - which took place on April 25th at Werdermann's Hall in New York City - as undoubtedly and by a clear margin the very worst convention to ever take place in the length and breadth of science fiction.

## THE TRIP DOWN

The alarm clock sounded its daily recital in the Kessler domicile at the uncouth hour of 7 A.M. on a warm Sunday morning in the latter part of April. Washing and dressing in unhurried leisure - if there be such - I awaited the arrival of Glenside Penna's top fan (by N3F vote yet), John Fletcher - known as Fletch.

Being of a bright and high mentality, Fletch announced his arrival by breaking the peaceful bliss of the early morning and leaning on the extra-loud horn of his Buick. We left 76th Avenue in low gear with the lingering curses of the now awakened neighborhood echoing in our ears.

Arriving at the Greyhound Bus Terminal we parked the car and impatiently awaited the 9:30 bus. During the interim we gulped down several cups of coffee and doughnuts at the coffee shop next door,

....FOR BLOOD?



and Fletch pulled the prize bit of asking the waitress for a wet rag so that he could wipe the doughnut jelly off his sticky hands. The waitress eyed us closely, first glancing at the "I DON'T LIKE McCARTHY" button prominently displayed on my jacket, and then looking at Fletch and shaking her head several times in perplexity. Miracle of miracles.... she handed him a wet dish cloth.

Just then the loud speaker warned us of the arrival of our bus and we dashed out and secured seats in the rear of the bus. After an uneventful ride of reading WRITER'S DIGEST and MAD we entered the fair city at about 20 of 12. Being slightly ravished we made our way out of the 34th Street Terminal and looked for the nearest place that displayed a fair quantity of food. Upon replenishing ourselves with ham/cheese sandwiches and milkshakes we entered the nearest subway entrance and asked for directions to our destination. Leaving the subway at 14th Street we walked to 3rd Avenue at E. 16th Street where Werdermann's Hall is located.

### THE CON PROPER



As we entered the con room a shabbily dressed gent wallowed up to us and I reached into my pocket and groped for a dime as I thought him a recluse from the bowery; but instead, he asked us to register and I recognized him as James V. Taurasi. Ray Van Houten was handling the registration and we spoke a few moments about the con.

Charles Harris and I spied each other simultaneously and we had a long bull session on the past Philcon and allied subjects (mainly the incident when I sold a copy of FAN WARP to Isaac Asimov and didn't know it was he. I'll never live that down!). I introduced Fletch to Harris and he took a photo of the two of us. Harris mentioned writing to Geis requesting to do the Fan Vet report for PSY, but lost out since I had my bid in first. I'd like to state here and now that Charles Harris may cover all future Fan Vet Cons for PSY as I am one lad who won't be attending one for a hell of a long time.

For Thanksgiving we'll  
invite Elaine Du Pless  
and daughter---they'll  
make tasty hors d'oeuvres  
and then...."

Charles then introduced Burton Beerman and the fannish gabbing continued. As it was a rather warm day Fletch and I excused ourselves and journeyed to the bar to become properly lubricated. We introduced ourselves to two New York fans who were seated there, John Clossom and Marty Jukovsky. After a sufficient length of time we re-entered the con room, only to be disappointed in seeing that no pro writer, editor or artist had yet arrived. At this time last year the room was chock full of them.

I noticed a nice looking blonde seated by herself and I walked over and took advantage of the situation. After speaking to Trina Perlson for a few minutes a whole row of fans, starting with Beerman and Fletch, wandered over and I had to introduce my lovely discovery to the mob.

Van Houten had made a previous announcement that the con would be slightly delayed until a few more notables arrived; now he again stood up and



called the con to order. While he was speaking Calvin Thomas Beck made his appearance along with his mother and a friend. I shook hands with Cal and sat and spoke with him during the first part of the con. He told me that he was busy agenting the memoirs of the fellow who had come with him. His friend had served with the Nazis--against his will--during WW-II and the book also dealt with his experiences in a concentration camp in the U.S. It sounded interesting if not salable. Van Houten introduced the first speaker, Robert Frazier, whose talk was a big plug for the sf course of which he was co-instructor for the City College of New York. Next came Thomas S. Gardner, a gent with a delightful deep southern accent. I never did find out what his talk was about as I was too busy speaking with Beck on the fan fiction anthology he was editing. Beck has narrowed down his selection of amateur sf fiction to about 30 or 35 pieces, of which 17 or 18 will be chosen for the book. All authors will be paid by the publishing company. I'd like to disclose some of the fans who are on Beck's list but feel it's best not to as 17 or so will be very disappointed.

At this point Evelyn Gold and Marty Greenberg entered the room; this somewhat enlightened the atmosphere. Then Willy Ley, the Guest of Honor, gave an excellent talk on American and German developments in the field of rocketry; in fact, this was the only good thing about the whole con. Harry Harrison spoke about SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES and the possible revival of SPACE; his plans sounded promising but not very plausible. Cal Beck got up and spoke of a new club he was forming on the East coast, The American Science Fantasy Society. Then George Nims Raybin spoke on the SF Circle in New York.



"Let's go try out my  
False Detector."

A short intermission was called and John Clossom and I went to a public telephone to call Karl Olsen and find out where in the duce he and Ish were hiding themselves. No one was home so we ventured to the bar where I spoke to Shel Deretchin who I had last seen at the Philcon.

The auction was now starting so we entered the main hall and sat down. Ed Emsh made his entrance, soon followed by Sam Moskowitz and Dave Kyle. Moskowitz showed me a copy of his anthology EDITOR'S CHOICE IN SF, which has a fine selection of stories but a poor dust jacket cover. In fact, the cover that artist Paul did for THE IMMORTAL STORM is much much better. (Concerning the STORM -- Sam informed me that the Atlants group has had a series of unavoidable delays in the publishing of the book but everything was now cleared up and the STORM would be out in June.)

I then spoke to Dave Kyle for a while and we later watched the proceedings of the rather incompetantly handled auction. One cover painting (purported to be Bergey's last magazine cover) had just gone for 10 bucks, the highest priced item at the auction. A ten minute break was called and I renewed my acquaintance with Charles Lee Riddle who had arrived a few minutes before.

Deretchin introduced me to a hefty broad by the name of Gilda who was broad where a broad should be broad. The ten minutes passed fastly and the auction again began.





"Really dear...you must learn  
not to lose your head so much!"

Taurasi offered for sale - at 50¢ a copy - copies of the forthcoming issue of FANTASTIC. The fan next to me rushed up and secured a copy and on his way back I enquired why he paid 50¢ for a copy of FANTASTIC. He replied that he could review it all the more earlier and I found him to be Henry Moskowitz. Hank told me that it was his practice to remain unknown at conventions and not to let anyone know who he was. He also was slightly startled to find that I was Lyle Kessler; he said he expected me to be an el-

derly man with a slight dictatorial complex (he had received this impression from a letter of mine concerning the Philcon which appeared in Norman Browne's now defunct VANATIONS).

Someone introduced me to a lad with a glass of beer who went by the title of David MacDonald

James Taurasi, bearing a large cake, announced the cake commemorated THRILLING WONDER STORIES' 25 years of existence. He apologized for Sam Mines' absence and then drew in a mighty lungfull of air (along with other assorted odors that were present at the con) and commenced to blow out the 25 candles. This he did very nicely along with half of the frosting which ended up on the clothes of the attendees in the first couple rows. He gave the cake and a rusty pen knife to Trina Perlson and asked her to divvy out pieces to the gathering. Trina cut the cake into separate pieces and I was one of the lucky few to get a piece. Dave Kyle took a bite of my cake and we watched the auction continue a few minutes until Taurasi finally announced the end of the con.

#### AFTERMATH

After these glad tidings Fletch, Hank and I went to the bar to see if we could gather anymore fans to go out and have some supper. We saw Dave Mason who had come to the con by way of a bicycle...a real fan's fan he. A party of us - including MacDonald, Moskowitz, Jukovsky, Deretchin, Closson, Fletch and I strolled down the streets of N.Y. looking for a suitable restaurant.

A drunk hobbled up to us in want of a handout and we handed out Fletch to him; but the drunk was slightly sober and handed Fletch back to us.

We finally ended up in an automat, and after various escapades, we finished eating and walked across the street to Union Square. We were one short as MacDonald had left for home.

Union Square is known throughout the world for its famous impromptu soap-box speeches. After listening to people speaking on McCarthy, the Geneva Conference and the merits of communism we decided it was time to act. I told the boys to back me up as I was going to get up and blast the hell out of McCarthy and the communist doctrine. A little nervously I got up





and spoke, and by sheer common sense and double talk the commies in the crowd lost that round. Entwined in the talk were various phrases from the GETTYSBURG ADDRESS, the BILL OF RIGHTS, and THE GREEN HILLS OF EARTH. Honest! When things had reached a feverish pitch of screaming back and forth we folded our tents like the Arabs and silently stole away.

We walked the streets to Hank's car, laughingly reminiscing over the Union Square incident. John Closson kept us close to tears relating the various ways we could upset the speech-making

there. We'll have to try it someday.

Arriving at Hank's car we jumped in and rode the streets of New York until we reached Dave Mason's domicile where the boys were heading. We bid good-bye to them and Hank then drove us to the Bus Terminal where we sat and spoke with him for a while.

Hank had recently broken into the pros by way of the LONDON MYSTERY MAGAZINE and another detective magazine from abroad.

Fletch and I said good-bye to Hank and climbed aboard the bus for Philly. Even though the Con was a complete flop we still had a heck of a good time with the fans from New York and thereabouts.

---Lyle Kessler.



### TIMES HAVE CHANGED?

A Once-In-A-While Sort Of Thing Conducted By Rich Lupoff

"They tell me you're putting out a new science fiction magazine. May I ask why? After all, there are better things to be done than to add another magazine to a market which is already overcrowded. I began reading stf in 1933, when there were only two magazines on the market, and it's my candid opinion that the fans and the poor long-suffering newsdealers were a lot better off then, because what was lacking in quantity was more than made up in quality.

If you had something new to offer...but you haven't, any more than any of the other mushroom magazines have....

---letter from M. Smith in February, 1940 ASTONISHING.



THE  
LITTLE  
BOY  
WHO  
LOVED



CATS



Illustration by Bob Kellogg

Once upon a time, not too long ago, there lived a little boy named Henry. Henry Spence Rodmungton was his full name, but everyone, including his mother, called him Henry. Who would want to come out on the front porch, cup their hands, and yell down the street, "Time for lunch, Henry Spence Rodmungton! Oh-ho, He-enry! He-enry Spe-ence Rodmu-ungton, lunch is ready!"

No, they just called him Henry.

No one could have guessed what would happen. It was not even a quarter-formed inkling in the back of anyone's thoughts. That is to say, such a thing had never been seen in Henry's town, and there was no reason to believe it ever would be seen. Further, they could not even conceive of such a thing. Henry, indeed!

Mrs. Rodmungton heard the news when the fire truck screeched up to the curb in front of the house. The firemen clumped over the azaleas, and up to the porch, where they pounded the front door. "Mrs. Rodmungnetton?" inquired one of the firemen.

"Rodmungton," corrected Mrs. Rodmungton in a soft, winning voice.

"Yes, yes," the fireman acquiesced impatiently, "your little boy, uh, what's his name...?"

"Henry?" supplied Mrs. Rodmungton.

"Yes, yes, that's the one. Well, he's up a telephone pole at Spruce and Seventeenth, and won't come down. Says he's a cat or something. We don't want to take a chance on causing him to fall. You better come 'long with us and talk him off that pole. He's holding up traffic and everything. You can ride in the fire truck with us."

So Mrs. Rodmungton, whose ancestors had dipped bilge-water from the hold of the Mayflower and never would have approved of their descendants climbing telephone poles, went with the firemen. They howled and screamed down Terrace to Elm, turned right on Elm and bolted straight-away toward Seventeenth. They turned left on Seventeenth and sirened their way til they sighted the crowd around Spruce. There was no doubt about it. Plain as linsey-woolsey, there was Henry up on the pole.

The fire engine braked to a dead stop and Mrs. Rodmungton, very casually, as though this happened every other Wednesday, stepped down and walked



through the crowd to the base of the pole. "Henry," she snapped, very succinctly, "come down here posthaste!" She said it in her very best This-Is-The-Voice-The-Child-Psychologists-Advise tone. Henry meowed.

Needles to say, Mrs. Rodmington was taken aback. Squeals, screeches, screams and simpers she had heard from her son at one time or another, but this was the first time for a meow. Henry did it again, just to prove it.

Without further delay Mrs. Rodmington spewed forth prodigious amounts of tears, her ducts opened til it seemed the town might have to make for the hills. It was, some say, the show of shame and sadness that coaxed little Henry off the pole. As his mother stood below him showering tears which ran off the firemen's rubbercoats in rivulets, Henry descended.

Kittycat fashion.

He dug his fingernails into the rotting telephone pole and skittered down rapidly, landing on all fours; having dropped from a height of five feet. Henry erected himself and shyly came to his mother's side.

She took her clenched fists from her red and swollen eyes and stared at Henry for a moment—then she began to cry again.

The little boy stood beside her for a moment, trying to understand why his mother was still crying if he had come down. Then he mewed, very softly. Mrs. Rodmington's mouth, a singularly rock-ribbed portion of her anatomy, rapidly descended to the general vicinity of the first button on her seersucker suit.

Little Henry, brown eyes shining, tousled brown hair giving him an air of wild happiness, nose cool and moist, laughed gaily. "Oh, mommy, you're so funny!"

Mrs. Rodmington grasped Henry's arm firmly and dragged him the thirteen blocks home.

\*\*\*      \*\*\*      \*\*\*      \*\*\*      \*\*\*

Daquiris' always provided a stabilizing note, and Pembroke C. (for Colbey) Rodmington fingered his with respect for that note. After ten hours in the real estate firm of Bummelheis, Sackxnay, Dignin, Dunn, Grennel, Thirtwater and Melba (Rodmington was third in line to be added), Pembroke was exhausted. Now to have come home to something like this.

He harumphed imposingly, "Let's try that again, Millicent. Just exactly what did Henry do today?" He raised his eyebrows in expectation, much as Mr. Sackxnay might have done.

Mrs. Rodmington smoothed the seersucker skirt over her knees and said, "He climbed a telephone pole at Spruce and Seventeenth, first, and then meowed at me. Then when I got him home..."

"He what at you?" interrupted Pembroke rudely.

"Meowed."

"Humm, continue," commanded Pembroke, assuming a speculative air.



"Then when I got him home," went on Mrs. Rodmington, "he refused his crackers and peanut butter, poured his soup out on the floor, poured his milk into the empty bowl and began lapping it like a...like a...well, like a cat." She paused, but not even the customary hmmm came from her husband. "And just before you came home, I caught him spitting at Arthur," she said, pointing to the mange-ridden Pekingnese in the corner.

Pembroke C. Rodmington fingered his daquiri, his chin, the arm of his chair and his wallet, in that order, and said: "Take him to the psychiatrist."

\*\*\*      \*\*\*      \*\*\*      \*\*\*      \*\*\*

Mrs. Rodmington apologized profusely, but the thin red lines of welts left on the doctor's face, hands and ankles remained. "No doubt about it," said the psychiatrist with a faint Austrian lilt, "your zon is suffering from an acute traumatic hallucination, brought on oztenzibly by maltreatment zomewhere along the line...." He fought off Henry who spit and hissed momentarily and then clawed wildly at the good doctor's person. The Doctor prescribed several things, among them a lack of baths and an abundance of riboflavin, and indicated with smugness that Henry would be back to normal in so short a time, that it might be termed, "The Cat's Pajama's."

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Three weeks later Henry was shedding.

Mrs. Rodmington had developed a distressing tic in her left eye, and Pembroke had dropped to fourth on the list of addees to the company trade name. In addition, the entire town now referred to Henry as the cat-kid. This displeased Mrs. Rodmington.

Then it came. The straw, you might say, that layed the mighty camel low with broken vertebrae.

It was on a Sunday and the Rodmingtons were surrounded by the circle of friends they had carefully cultivated (and which had of late become smaller) sipping tea and dropping almond cooky crumbs in the deep purple pile rug, that it occurred.

They sat facing each other in the living-room --- Pembroke could not yet afford a "drawing-room" --- with someone expostulating airily on the relative merits of Boulton's direction of Holst's "The Planets," when the back door inched open and Henry padded across the floor.

He foot-over-handed it into the living-room and meowed out of the corner of his mouth. Out of the corner because he was carrying a kitten in his teeth.

Mrs. Rodmington noticed first.

She leaped to her feet and screamed.

Then the guests saw it.

They gaped and gasped as one.

Then Pembroke, who had had his back to Henry, turned and saw it.



"Migand!" he bellowed, the blood draining from his face, leaving it resembling old pewter ware. He began to blubber.

"Henry, Henry, my little Henry," foamed Mrs. Rodmungton.

Pembroke recovered himself enough to rasp out of the corner of his mouth, "Don't make a scene, Millicent!"

"Pembroke, I must tell you!" it was evident Henry's mother was at the breaking stage. "I loved once before you! Please forgive me! It was a gay, mad flirtation with an alley cat. A big tom named Tom."

"Lord!" crimsoned Pembroke, shaken to his puritan heart, "There's even a name for it, I believe. Oh--oh--oh, dear me!" He fainted.

Mrs. Rodmungton collapsed on top of her husband, a shivering hulk, sobbing her remorse and hiccups.

Henry crouched on the deep purple pile rug, the little kitten with the big brown eyes and tousled brown hair, clenched by the nape of his neck, in the child's mouth.

Henry meowed.

---Harlan Ellison

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## KNOT POTTERY \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

.....or "cherce" verse

### THE CONVULSIVE FINDING

Our stupid Willie indulged in sin;  
He drank from a bottle labeled "GIN."  
But soon discovered that bottle had been  
The one his mother kept ammonia in.

---R.E.G.

### OLD JOKE

Willie, with intent to kill,  
Flang poor sister down a hill.  
But though her chest was split in half,  
She said, "It only hurts me when I laugh."

---R.E.G.

-----  
"Yeah, but this isn't even out of the crate yet!"  
-----



## 2nd Session

WHERE THE EDITOR, WITH A ZLIGHT

AUZTRIAN LILT, CONTINUES TO RAMBLE ON AND ON AND ON AND ON AND ON AND ON AND ON

OH.....(SOB).

In PSY #11 Vernon McCain let it be known in his column that he had some extra copies of his FAPA-zine WASTEBASKET available and would send a copy to anyone who dropped him a card. The issue contained material by Bloch, Tucker, Warner, Burwell, Bok and contributing editor Walter Willis.

Three days ago I received the latest REVIEW from Vernon plus a short note. I reproduce below (sob) the note.

"Ha! You'll never sell me any ads in PSYCHOTIC.....  
I offer that issue of WASTEBASKET free to all comers and list contents including Tucker, Bloch and Willis plus other equally big names who are perhaps less well known to current fandom and you know how many requests I got? Precisely three, that's how many. And me with about forty more copies of it left here. I hate to throw them away but I'm damned if I'll send them out at random to fans who might not be interested. Maybe I should send off review copies yet.

You'll never go into serious competition with SCIENCE FICTION ADVERTISER with this kind of results, pappy....."

So here I sit covered with mame and shortification at the thought, nay... the proof, that the advert power of PSY is so low. Me for the ashcloth and sashes. Oh...(sob), pass the bitter cup....

### WHAT YOU SHOULDN'T MISS

Is a new fanzine from England titled BEM. Edited by Tom White and Mal Ashworth, it features material by Walt Willis and Ving Clark. Indeed, Willis, with an article called "How To BNF Without Tears", and Ving Clark, with a column titled "The Nineteenth Eye From The Left", practically steal the the mag away from the editors with their superb material. I recommend this to all and sundry. Adresses are:

Tom White  
3, Vine Street,  
Cutler Heights,  
Bradford, 4.,  
Yorks., ENGLAND.

Mal Ashworth  
40, Makin Street  
Tong Street,  
Bradford. 4.,  
Yorks., ENGLAND.

They welcome exchanges and material and letters and subscriptions. Subs for us Americans are "...one (mint cond.) U.S. prozine for two issues."

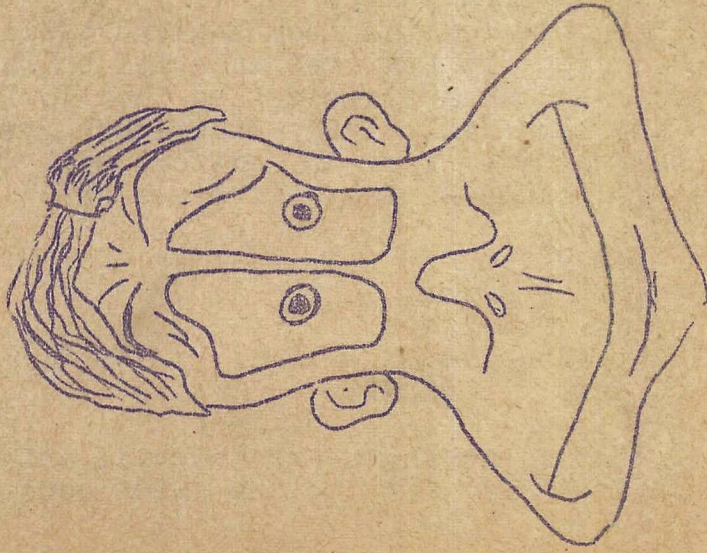
### AND SO TO BED

Goes PSYCHOTIC #13. The last page is done and the mailman is due in a few moments. I now leave you to your own devices for a couple of weeks.



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