

PSYCHOTIC



NUMBER 20

"NO OXYGEN... NO WARMTH.... PROFESSOR, BERGEY WAS RIGHT!"

10/10/10

NUMBER 50

may-june-july

psychotic

20

1955

COVER by Naaman Peterson
from an idea by me.

Dangerously
Destitute

INTERIOR ART by Bob Kellogg, Larry
Bourne, Dean A. Grennell, Jim Bradley,
Dave Rike, Ralph Rayburn Phillips, Ted
Rasmussen, Arthur Thomson, Plato Jones,
and William Rotsler.

Dick's

Diary is edited and published by

ULTRA SPECIAL PHOTO-OFFSET INSERT by
Bob Kellogg.

Richard E. Geis
1525 N.E. Ainsworth
Portland 11, Oregon
U.S.A.

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that he rambles on and on and on and on.....3

15¢ per copy, 7 for \$1

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7 for 7/6,
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Fred L. Smith
613 Great Western Road,
Glasgow W.2. Scotland.

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mention that he continues to ramble on and on.63

DER FINAL BLACKOUT is located on the contents
page...in fact, right below.

This is the last page I type this issue. Plain-
ly, this last ish isn't too much to be proud of
from the repro standpoint. I had some trouble
with the stenofax inserts leaking ink through
imperfectly glued seams. My fault. The first
page of the Leather Couch was typed without a
cushion...my fault again; it didn't come out
well when duplicated on the Gestetner. I tried
to stretch ink a few times...it don't work well

at all. I was careless in lining
up the receiving tray and as a re-
sult a lot of offset was not avoid-
ed. The lettering from the guides
is not good. I'm still learning to
use those things on a stencil. The
Nature Notes by Kellogg was done by
him on-stencil and without benefit
of a scope or drawing plate. If you
study it real hard maybe you can get
the idea behind it.

All in all I did precisely what
Grennell and I have been complaining
about in others...I didn't master
the machine before foisting the re-
sults onto you. No excuses.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW will be done
in green ink next issue. If you
like it that way it will continue.

Next issue will contain an article
by Damon Knight, an article by Curt
Janke, a book review by McLeod, a-
bout 7 pages of dialogue prozine
reviews by myself, a British News-
letter, and a long letter section.
The cover will be by Kellogg. Need
I say more?

---REG

the leather couch—

CENSORSHIP IS A LOUSY THING

Especially when it strikes into the vitals of our own true fandom. And especially when it strikes at me!

I expect by now all of you loyal and true PSY fans have written cursing letters to the Solicitor General in Washington complaining about the rank and unjust censorship of my "Brilliant-but-not-printed-editorial" which was supposed to be in #18. I wouldn't mind so much if I hadn't sent the government the only copy I had. If I'd had a carbon I would have put a "Sign and pass on" on the back of it, and sent it first class to a friend. But...I didn't have a carbon. Sob. I learned a mighty important lesson!

As it is now, I ain't NEVER gonna submit NOTHIN' to them peoples AGAIN. They take too long to answer and are just too too official for my taste. Bunch of stuffy pomposities. Gr-r-r-r-r-r-r-r.

Anyone for revolution?

FABULOUS...A GESTETNER!!!

I honestly don't advise anyone to go into a Gestetner agency and witness a demonstration. I honestly don't...

unless you got \$50 to use as a down payment. This is because once you witness the incredible ease of operation and beautiful results, that old mimeo you got in the basement is going to be like a fat shrewish wife to return to. So take my advice and don't go anywhere NEAR a Gestetner agency. Don't even look in the window at one because it will intrigue you with its twin cylinders and complicated looking paper-feed. You will be lost to ABDick forever.

Now, look at the meemio work in this issue. This is the first mag I've ever run off on it, and I made a few mistakes. I had a tendency to under-ink a bit. As a result some of the pages are a bit light. But even light they are damned purty. Too, I goofed a bit at first in trying to insert the Steno-Faxed illustrations. As a result a few of them got parts missing. That's only right...a lot of people think I got a brain missing.

Also, I used my PICA typer for a lot of the issue because I had the idea that this elite Remington Noiseless wouldn't type a stencil. I KNEW it wouldn't type a spirit master, so concluded it was lost as a stencil cutter too. But I tried it with a typing plate and a cushion, and...Lo!

THE COVER AND THE INSERT

I hasten to assure you that the cover was not done by Sten-Fax on a Gestetner. Would that it was! Nope, it

was done by old reliable John S. Swift Co., 2100 Locust St., St. Louis 3, Mo. This is a free plug because I appreciate their fast service and personal interest in the fortunes of my publishing.

But back to the cover by NAAMAN PETERSON. I thot up the idea, and he executed it very nicely indeed. I have a large cartoon by Naaman coming up in SFR which was produced by the same type collaboration. I feel like J.W. Campbell. The photo-offset insert by BOB KELLOGG is that cartooned poem which he originally did for LYRIC, but Jim Bradley let me have it in return for letting him buy my Rex-o-Graph. I had been drool-

(ZCCLBY 1271)

NATURE NOTES

ACCORDIAN -
BACKED GNARPH
(HANG AT: FUNK METER)

BREATHES BY OPENING / CLOSING FOLDS IN CHEST -
WALKS PERPETUALLY IN ORDER TO DO SO. (NATURE'S
ANSWER TO THE PERPETUAL MOTION PROBLEM.)

ing over the Heather Ale item for months, and he finally parted with it. Aren't you happy? If you'd like to see more of these Kellogg illustrated poems, write me and say so real bud. Incidentally, Bob has the cover for next issue, the first ish of SFR.

AND SPEAKING OF SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW....

After much soul-searching and examination of my navel, I have decided to make it a bit more elaborate than I had planned. In going over my prospective contents pages for the coming issues, I was only mildly surprised to note that each issue called for 24 pages of material. This was bad because I had announced a 16 page magazine. I had to admit that I couldn't adequately cover the science fiction field to my satisfaction in less than 24 pages (counting covers) and still stay monthly. A 16 page biweekly is not to my liking. So..... for better or for worse the price is raised to 15¢ and the pages to 24.

The magazine is to be nice and snazzy with a photo-offset cover, two articles or columns per issue, my own four to six pages of promag reviews in dialogue, a British Newsletter by Fred L. Smith, a New York Newsletter (I hope...still dickering), a book review by Noah McLeod, and a long letter section. This last item, the letter section, is a virtual must in any mag I edit, and after reading over this issue's letters, I expect you'll agree that SFR without a place for fans to blow off in would be a sad thing indeed.

But there is a fly in the rosy ointment...one which will cause many to level the terrible charge of 'Dirty Pro' at my not humble head. Briefly, I am not going to trade SFR.

"No trading for SFR.....DID YOU SAY NO TRADES???"

Right. Everyone will receive a copy of the first issue of SFR, but after that it is money or else...unless you are a contributor. I'll be all too busy with 24 pages a month to bother with a complicated trading system, and I refuse to go all for all. I am going to review fanzines in A BAS, so if you want to send review copies, fine. I intend to sub to those zines without which I cannot live. Putdownthatbrick!! --REG

S-F CON REPORT

CONCLUDED

("At last," cried Mr. De Soto.)
BY THE ONE AND ONLY EVER-LOVIN'

Peter Graham

I awoke four hours later at 10 o'clock. The morning was almost ruined for me by the loss of the \$48, and as soon as I dressed I went up to 903 to see if there were any further developments.

When I arrived Mac had just gotten up, and Boob was in the process of waking up. Mac hadn't quite gotten around to telling Stewart about the missing money, so when we did it was quite a shock to him. We all pored over the list we'd made the night before, and decided that one particular fan who had been alone in the room twice was our most likely suspect; we'd found him alone in the room once after opening the door with our key--evidently he'd come in with the cleaning woman. We found out later, of course, that the "suspect" was entirely innocent on all counts.

Terry and I decided to come right out and tell the management what had happened--to throw ourselves on their mercy, so to speak. I still had at that time about \$20, so I could still pay a large part of the bill.

The Assistant Manager was quite nice about it. He told us that we could pay what we could now, and he would send me a bill for the remainder. That was fine with us, so we told him that when we checked out that afternoon we would do that.

In the Monterey Room Ellison came up to me and asked in he could use my clipboard. When asked why, he replied that he was going to make the nominating speech for Detroit at the business session which was due to start in a few minutes and he wanted it to make notes on and to use while making the speech. Just think--Harlan Ellison wanted to use my clipboard! Gosh-wow!

When I came to the convention, and for all the months before, I had definitely planned on voting for Cleveland for the 1955 con-site. This was the intention of everyone in our group of fans from San Francisco, and try as we might, we could not think of anyone else who would put in a bid.

Then, at the convention, Detroit was found to be in a whirlwind campaign for the '55 choice. I still had planned to vote for Cleveland, but rumors ran rife that the Cleveland group had split up; there was no organized club in Cleveland capable of putting on a convention; Nick and Noreen Falasca, who were from Cleveland and who were to make the bid, were dirty dogs and didn't know what they were doing; and so on. Gradually my feelings began to sway toward Detroit and once there they stayed. I made a

lot of friends at the con from Detroit---George Young, Art Rapp, Rog Sims, Harlan Ellison, and many others who were all for Detroit; little wonder I was swayed. Harlan Ellison's inclusion in the for-Detroit group may seem a little peculiar as he lives in Cleveland, but he was one of the most ardent "anti-Cleveland" persons at the con. He said that he knew from experience what the Cleveland Clubs were like---a bunch of bumlbers. This "knowing from experience" angle impressed a lot of people, including myself.

Fortified with rumors, when I met the Falascas for the first time I thought them decidedly unpleasant people; but it must be realized that they would've had to have been angels or better to overcome the effects of all the rumors floating around.

The two cities are not more than 200 miles apart. My vote, and that of most others at the SFCon, was not decided on a "Who is closest?" basis. Rather, on the number of friends we had from the cities concerned, and the impressions they made on us. The Detroit delegation had made a good impression; the Cleveland delegation was almost non-existent. The general consensus of all opinion, from Friday onward, was that Detroit would win by a landslide.....I could find few people who were planning on voting for Cleveland. It was in this state of mind that the convention rolled around to the business session on Monday...called to order by Anthony Boucher.

There were a long series of motions and discussions regarding future location and finance for conventions. I won't go into detail because by now most of you know these from other reports and from the Clevention Bulletins. Boucher then announced that the next item of business would be the voting on the next con-site. Nominations were requested. No one seemed anxious to be first to make a nomination----there were to be at least three; besides Cleveland and Detroit, Don Donnell had been propagandizing to a large extent "Buffalo (N.Y.) in '55" with campaign buttons, yet. This was an extremely dark horse, though, and no one expected Buffal to win.

Boucher then declared a ten-minute recess. I went over to where Ellison was sitting and listened in on the campaign strategy. As soon as the meeting was called to order again Ellison was going to stride majestically up to the rostrum with "WELL, SINCE NOBODY ELSE SEEMS TO WANT TO MAKE A NOMINATION, WE WILL."

The session was soon called together and the doors to the Empire Room closed and locked. Boucher again asked for nominations. Ellison half-ran up to the rostrum muttering: "Well--since-no-one-else-wants-to-make-the-bid-we-might-as-well." The effect, I needn't add, was ruined.

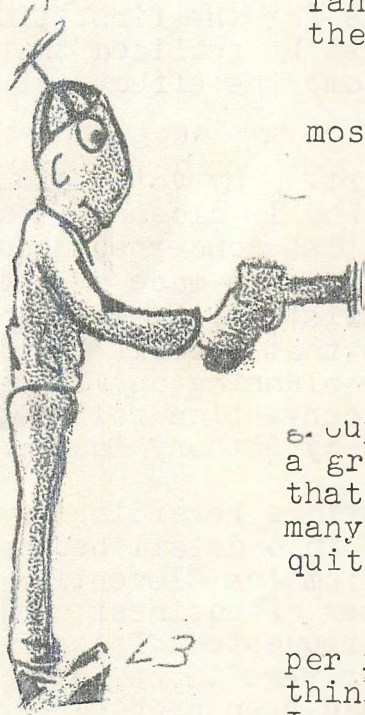
Ellison, when he gave back my clipboard, left his notes on it, so I can reconstruct his speech somewhat better than the others. He announced that they had two hotels lined up, one of which had actually lowered banquet prices at the July 4th regional con, that they were trying for H. L. Gold as Guest of Honor, that Auction pics would be matted and framed at no extra cost, that they could get a free trip through a local brewery, and a somewhat ambiguous statement to the effect that while



BOB BLOCH

everything would start on time, there would always be plenty of time for every event! On hearing this, Boucher chuckled to himself.

The next bid was made by Don Howard Donnell for Buffalo, New York. He started out with a statement to the effect that "Some people don't think this is a serious bid; well, it is!" This preceeded a well-prepared and well-done speech, including letters from Chambers of Commerce and such. His bid was seconded by another L.A. fan whose name escapes me who also read some letters of the type from Important People.



Then Noreen Falasca made her bid. Hers was the most sensible; she started right out by saying she would dispense with letters from VIPs and such, as they don't really matter....what matters is the group putting on the con. She ventured that she thought she had a good group and could put on a good con.

Her bid was seconded by EEEvans, who made a rather unfair dig at the Buffalo and Detroit groups by saying that "...a convention should be run by a group of mature people; and in my mind Cleveland is that group." I didn't like that myself, and neither did many other people (including Harlan Ellison, who reacted quite violently to it).

The Sergeants-at-Arms then passed out slips of paper for the votes and there was a short time allowed for thinking it over before the votes were to be collected. I wrote Detroit on mine as I'd been thinking all during the con. I heard somebody say then, to my left, "Ghod, I wouldn't vote for Detroit---look who'll be Chairman---"

Ellison!"

I hurried over to the Detroit contingent and asked who would be Chairman, then, and found it would probably be Roger Sims or someone of like caliber, but certainly not Ellison. I returned with this information to the questioner, but it didn't seem to make him want to change his vote.

As soon as the votes began to be counted the outcome was obvious; Cleveland by a landslide in one ballot.

A few minutes later I heard that Sam Moskowitz was looking for me, as I had been saying I wanted to buy a copy of The Immortal Storm, and he was looking for buyers. I found him and we went up to his room where I bought the last copy of the 24 he'd had airmailed from the publishers...air-mailed because they'd been completed only a few days before the con. It seems that he gets \$1 out of every \$5 per copy he sells, but if it is sold thru the publishers he gets nothing. He considers it a labor of love, though, and doesn't care much about the money. He also told me that his next volume would be probably on the period between the ending of The Immortal Storm and Pearl Harbor, which was quite an eventful and quite an important period of fan-time. Sam is a tallish sort of man with a megaphone voice, black hair and a personality that can only be described as charming.....he was very polite about the way he shoed me out of his room after my chat with him.

It suddenly came to me in a flash that I'd better check out pretty

quickly, as check-out time (4 o'clock) was approaching. I grabbed Terry from the crowd in the Empire Room and we went down to the lobby to do the job. When I was in line at the cashier's window and about to be waited on I was suddenly called over to the Assistant Manager's desk where Terry was waiting.

"Did you have your money in an envelope?" he asked. I said yes and he rushed off around a pillar. We waited a few moments and talked with Noreen Falasca who told us some very tentative plans for the Clevation... The Assistant Manager came back. "How much money was in the envelope?" "Forty-six dollars," we answered. He handed us the torn envelope we had put the money in and we breathed an audible sigh of relief. It seemed when closing the door once after making an inspection to see if it was between the two doors, it had fallen flat and been pushed under the other door as I closed the door on my side. The people in 905 were honest and had given the money to the cashier the day before. The hotel had only just then connected the two events.

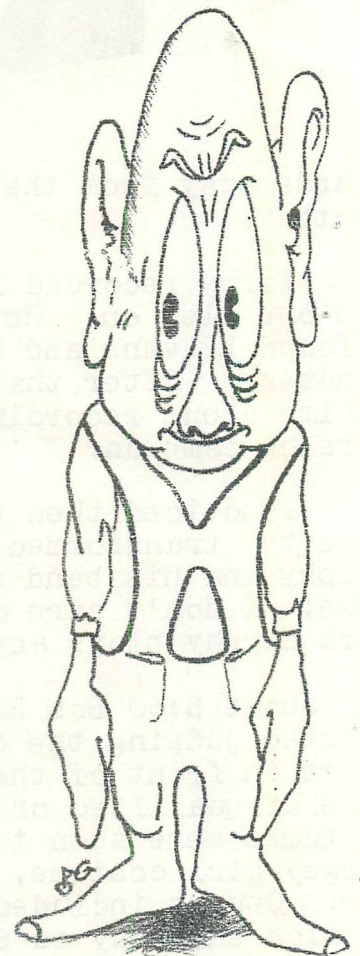
After thanking him profusely, Terry continued talking to the Falascas while I paid the cashier the money, and then we were off to round up Mac and Boob to get our luggage out of the room. This we did in quick time and moved it all into Frank Dietz' room. Frank again was being a good Samaritan; not only were Terry, Boob and I leaving our luggage there, but I was to spend the night there again after the masquerade. Again---Frank, you are a winner.

After dinner I suddenly realized I'd not even started something I'd planned for Friday night: a tape recording to Walt Willis. Walt is in the peculiar position of being able to hear tapes, but not to record back--he tried it once on a tape I'd sent him and it didn't record for some reason. Besides that, he borrows a taper to listen and has qualms about recording in front of the shop owner.

I'd intended to get Bloch, Ackerman, the Evanses and Kyle on it along with anyone else he'd met at the Chicon or had met personally at all. On thinking back this is an awfully narrow-minded selection.....I'm sure he would have liked to listen to Art Rapp, Les Cole, and several other fen at the con.

I hurried into the lobby, found Bloch, and asked him if he would do the recording.....I'd spoken to him once or twice before about it. He said that he didn't have the time then, and to see him later about it.

I then cornered Forry Ackerman. We went up to Frank Dietz' room where I had my machine, and found Andy Nowell, the 48 hour fan, in the bathroom putting on his make-up for the ball. Andy had a terrific "costume" consisting of green face and hands, white hair and a mundane business suit. He really did a tremendous job on that and almost stole the





awards away from the Masquerade Ball winners...he won an honorable mention at that.

Forry recorded for about five minutes and then cut off so I could get someone else on. He and I left, and while leaving the elevator on a floor I found EEEvans and his wife T. D. Hamm. They came up and did two or three minutes. After that I got John Magnus for slightly longer. Magnus had qualms about recording ad-lib, so he made careful notes of what to say before he came on.

I noticed then that it was time for the Ball. So down went Magnus and I to the transformed Empire Room. The doors had just been opened and Turk Murphy and his band were still warming up. Murphy all night was tremendous; I don't care much for Dixieland music, but I'm telling you that if Turk Murphy plays anything, I'm going to listen.

About 8:30 Bob Bloch, Anthony Boucher, Vampira, and I believe, Ev Gold started judging the costumes. Each person in costume would walk across a space in front of the band and the judges either told them right away they were disqualified or gave them a number. Many interesting and beautiful costumes were seen there: Karen Anderson took the cake with a beautiful Bergey-girl costume, although she had Virgil Finley painted on her stomach. Others included Roxanne Crossley in a leopard outfit--entirely sexy; Jessica somebody as Space Lust; a real babe in a black costume as Outer Space--beautiful but cold; Pat Scott and Beverly ? who came, respectively, in black and white skin-tight dancing tights which gave the impression that they had nothing on from the waist down. Pat Scott was the subject of some confusion; Terry danced with her and said she was real smooth, but Ellison, ah...Ellison: "Eh. A real nothing. Lotsa hip movement, but nothing else.. Lotsa hip movement."

I sampled the two bowls of punch residing in the Monterey Room. One was plain fruit juice, but the other was fruit juice mixed with vodka.

They were both gone before the party was a quarter over.

The judges picked a trio of beautiful dolls, but had to disqualify Karen Anderson because she was a member of the Convention Committee. There were two guys in space suits there. One was an Air Force man and he commented on the other's, a kid from Burbank, by saying: "That's the most realistic thing I've ever seen." It did look real good.

"We are property...Ellison's property." ---Ellik.

When the Ball was breaking up I asked Ellison up to record some to Willis. He talked for about five minutes and was followed by about a minute of Terry Carr who violently disagreed with what Ellison said. Harlan had stated that he thought this SFCon was the worst con he'd ever attended ...the pros were hidinger than ever, cliquer than ever; the hotel was the worst ever (agreed); the attendees were a bunch of hangers-on types "...glorifying a punk little fan like me..." and a bunch of blotters. I disagree on all counts, but since this was my first World Con I don't think I'm privileged to say.

"I'll take it---it's alcoholic." ---Rapp.

Later, the phone rang. It was Dietz. He had taken Pat Scott home and had come back to the hotel and found that all persons without room keys were not being allowed back into the hotel. Since I had his key he was frankly regarded as a freeloader by the hotel and was only being allowed to make this call. He came up a minute later followed by the house dick and the Assistant Manager, who walked in right behind him. They saw me and Terry reading, and Ellison asleep on the bed. Terry left for home immediately, taking his luggage with him, but I had planned on staying in Frank's room that night and my bags were still there. Ellison, being asleep, was more of a problem.

House dick: "C'man, get up."

Ellison: "Murbledgezzerupub...wha'?" Rubbing of eyes.

H-d: "C'man, get up. You're getting out."

HE: "Whawhawha'?"

H-d: "You're getting out!"

Ellison: (catching on) "OH, oh, oh...yeah; waidaminnit."

H-d: "C'MON, BUD---OUT!"

HE: "Hey, I haven't done anything. You can't put me out of here. I'm just visiting this friend of mine, you can't put me out. For gosh sakes, this is a hel-luva hotel---"

The Assistant Manager pointed his finger at the now-sitting-up Harlan.

"Look, bud...you got a room here?"

"Why, no, but..."

The house dick all but grabbed Ellison and threw him out. "This guy's been causing trouble before."

Shocked expression on Ellison.

"C'man, you...out!"

Realizing the futility of



it all: "Yeah, yeh, okay. Lemme ge' my coat." Harlan was still half-asleep. "Say, look, you can't do this to me. I'm a free citizen, you can't just throw me out when I'm just visiting this friend of mine, fer cripes sake, I gatta right to---"

"Shaddup!"

The two men followed Ellison and myself out of the room. I could see Frank pointing at my recorder and nodding, and I knew he'd keep all my luggage until the following day.

We got into the elevator. "Floor please. Up or down?"

HE: "Up."

H-d: "Down."

HE: "Seventeen, please."

H-d: "Down!"

Ellison: "I'm going to the Convention Suite! You can't do this to me." The elevator started downward. "I'm a member of this convention, and---"

"The convention's over, buddy."

"The Convention Committee isn't out of the hotel yet. For cryin' out loud, I can tell you there'll never be another science fiction convention here!"

"That's for sure."

"Look, I'm going up to the Convention Suite and talk to the Chairman about this."

The doors opened....

"You can't do this to us, We were just visiting this friend of ours and you came along and..."

Out into the foyer....

"....throw us out of his room. We've got a right to see a friend of ours, I'm registered at another hotel, I'm not going to stay here tonight for darn sure..."

Down the stairs....

"....and I'm a free citizen you can't do this to me, the Chamber of Commerce will hear about this I'm telling you by gosh you can't do this to us. I'll put in a complaint, the Convention Committee will take care of you but good..."

Into the street....

"...and for gosh sake is there a law against seeing a friend of yours? You'd think we'd committed a terrible crime or something..." mumbleumblemble... "....fuggheads burblegeebisheizen largenholeand no subtanew Dimensions...."

"Harlan."

"...good gosh we just see a friend and..." mumble "...SFCon blacklist."

"Harlan."

"...farishwisha never woulda happened innDetroit...."



"Harlan."

"...xiubygixubxgcdte cervuyt falasca putemupta this...what?"

"Harlan," I said, I was planning on staying in Dietz' room tonight... but you see what happened to that. D'you think you could give me floor space over in your hotel tonight?"

"Oh, sure, Pete, fine. I'll find out what the other three guys in our single have to say, but I'm sure it'll be all right."

So that's how I spent the night with Harlan Ellison. I also spent it with George Young, John Magnus, and Roger Sims. They'd utilized a very clever method of sleeping in a double bed; you merely remove the mattress, and some sleep on that while the rest sleep on the covered spring unit.

Thus ended the convention, and thus ended Monday.

We all awoke Tuesday morning at 9 or so and made plans to get out.

Then Ellison decided he was going to call his mother in Cleveland. He called the hotel switchboard and asked for the long-distance operator. And he asked again. And AGAIN. Finally he got her and asked to put through a collect call to his mother. "Name, please?" He answered brightly, "Harlan Ellison." Of course he wasn't registered for the room and the hotel clerk might be listening, but that was all right.

The call didn't go through--his mother was not there or something.

"Gee," said Harlan, "I love my mother." He walked over to the bathroom where Rog Sims was shaving. "You hate your mother!" he said, and walked back. Rog came out of the bathroom with a wha-wha? expression on his face.

We had to leave by twos, of course, and we figured on the day-clerk not knowing who the night clerk had let in. Sims and I walked through the lobby, chatting quietly, when we were called by the person at the desk. Rog was already out the door, but I was caught. I walked back to the speaker.



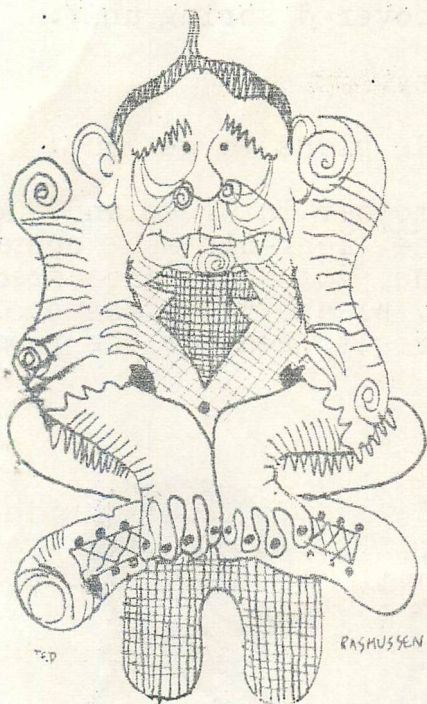
"Are you registered with those boys in 314?"

Innocent expression. "Why, no."

"Oh, all right. Thank you."

I walked out into the street where Sims was waiting. Why she didn't ask me where I was registered I'll never know. Rog and I went to the Drake Hotel which was the rendezvous for our whole group.

Ellison arrived a half-hour later and we all went to breakfast across the street at Tiny's. Just before ordering, Ellison remembered he'd left something in the hall of the hotel they'd checked out of that morning. He told us to order a waffle for him and left. He came back later to find us all about to eat, with his waffle there waiting. He hit it with his fork, said "Too hard." and sent the waitress back with it. Things like that make me believe that Ellison's goal in life is making people notice him.



We ate a liesurely breakfast. Magnus was busy reading MAD comics and laughing like hell. I told about the time Friday or Saturday night that Burt Satz, in 903, had gotten the idea that he wanted some dope. Vorzimer, Carr, et al had sent him down to some room, non-fannish, on the third floor with the info that a peddler was there. Satz had come back with the succinct comment: "He said he didn't have any more." He couldn't understand why we laughed.

After the breakfast broke up I went up to Dietz' room again. The phone rang and my mother asked for me. She had gotten the number from Terry and wanted to know when I would be home. I asked her to pick me up at 5 pm. I went with Frank, then, over to the hotel with Ellison, Magnus, Sims and Young where they were now staying. As soon as we got there they started a card game. I watched for an hour or so then went to Frank's room, packed my stuff, and returned to chat with them.

My mind was obsessed with the idea that I wouldn't be seeing them again for a long time.

5 pm rolled around. I said farewell to the guys and left.

Thus ended Tuesday, and thus ends the report. The SFCon was great fun.

---Peter Graham.

The Observation Ward

A
LOOK
AT
CURRENT
FANZINES
BY
THE
EDITOR

(A
RESURRECTED
COLUMN)

VAGABOND #1, edited and published by John W. Murdock, c/o Henry Moore Studio, 214 East 11th Street, Kansas City 6, Mo., and Jim White, 7770½ Rosewood Ave., Los Angeles 36, Calif.

A 48 page item which boasts very nicely done mimeography, nice layout, and...and...well, some of the material is readable. And, too, there is one other facet of the zine which is extremely commendable: the amateur approach. Now, most beginning faneds will ambitiously set up a price for their mag, quote subscription rates and generally make like Big Publishers. Not so with these two fans. John and Jim have set up the magazine as a strictly amateur effort, charge nothing for it, and have continued in the amateur spirit by putting the name of the zine in small caps at the bottom right on the cover. The only other information on the cover is the date and issue number. This realistic attitude I find entirely wholesome and refreshing. I only wish other beginning fan editors would emulate it. When their magazine has improved enough to warrant a price and when they have demonstrated an ability and a sense of responsibility in publishing, I expect the publishers of this magazine to charge for their effort. Certainly they should. I have nothing but praise for this approach to amateur publishing.

And now to the massacre. The cover, by Henry Asbell, is a trite bit of amateurish drawing showing a remarkably stocky man with a stick and bindle looking over the crest of a hill at a futuristic building. In the sky are the inevitable spaceships. I suppose the drawing is supposed to illustrate the title of the magazine.

The editorials are all written this issue by John Murdock, and a horrendous job he does of them. Take the editorial titled "Of Reviews And Reviewers". In this one Murdock deplores the reviewers whom he describes as "spoil sports": those who rip and tear at a story and infer that anyone who enjoys it is a moron. Murdock maintains that these reviewers forget that tastes differ. He seems to not recognize that a reviewer is not especially interested in "taste" appeal, but writing quality and technique. I'd best quote some of this fellow to show how he reasons. He says: "To me, the essential thing in stf literature is not how well the story is written, or how high a literary value it may have, but how the story is told." "Give me a story, no matter how badly written, that is interesting and I'll be satisfied."

Haw! How in hell can a story be interesting and still badly written, I'd like to know. Or, if it is badly written, how can it be interesting? Obviously if a story can interest a reader, keep him reading...then by definition such a story is well written.

Murdock then goes on to moan about a fellow who was watching a Robin Hood

movie and stood up in the audience and shouted "Look at the telephone poles!" Mr. Murdock decries this as ruining the movie for others. Mr. Murdock prefers the "Boost, don't knock!" attitude. Probably he thinks this life of ours is the best of all possible worlds. I expect he is having cat-fits over this review.

In "Alas, All Stagnating", Jim Tibbetts, Jr. writes a remarkably foggy article which is replete with illogic and shallow thinking. I am forced to quote this crap.

"Gone are the fiends and rayguns of yesteryear, along with many ill-constructed stories. Unfortunately, missing along with these, however, are the fresh outlook, the new ideas and the desire for entertainment of the reader.

"We have instead slick paper, trimmed edges, symbolic covers, blotchy and often meaningless inside illos, and well-written stories.

"Yes, the story you will find in the current ASF, for example, is generally well-written and clever in content. It is also apt to put you to sleep..."

The patent idiocy of these statements is enough, I think. No need for me to point it out. But leave me quote more of this wondrous prose.

"If somebody decides to invade planet, he must never be foiled by a bang on the snoot. No, he must be outwitted by an incredibly brilliant series of cerebral maneuvers, which leave him in utter confusion. What a shame that our writers and editors cannot devise a mental solution for today's threats of Communism, poverty and intolerance!"

I wonder how many invasions have ever been foiled by a bang on the snoot in real life? Can't you picture the intrepid spy in the inner circle of the dictator's friends? He marches up to the reader, floors him with a left hook, and woosh, the invasion is foiled. Yeah.... This business of solving all the world's problems by ACTION hasn't worked at all worth a damn in all of man's recorded history. But Tibbetts can't be blamed for thinking like most people, I guess.

Mark Schulzinger fills up two pages.

Donald M. Grant and Gary Labowitz manage to "review" at least twelve books in two pages. I sure do wish they'd tell me how they do it. I couldn't review a book in less than three pages. Not and do a halfway adequate job of it.

Stan Woolston, in "Makeup Problems" does a creditable job of telling something of value to beginning faneds. I might add that in all the time I've been pubbing a fanzine, the one thing that has slowly seeped into my brain is that if a thing is worth spending lots of money and time on, it is worth doing well so that in the end you have something to be proud of. This may sound like a rather trite homily, but it is certainly true for all of that.

Jane Keith does a poem titled "The Spaceman"; "With Apologies To Rupert Brooke" is added below the title. She should also apologize to the readers.

A round robin story written by G. M. Carr, Olive Morgan, Emily Thompson, Isabelle Dinwiddie, and Orma McCormick runs to seventeen pages. Oh, my God....

Richard Sand writes 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ pages about "Is BIG Good?" He had nothing new to say on the subject.

G.H. Edwards presents some amateur science fiction. Isn't that nice of him?

George T. Wetzel, Raleigh E. Multog's penname, is represented by "Howard Phillips Lovecraft In The Amateur Press." I cannot help but feel that this sort of thing has an extremely limited audience today.

Ah....the fanzine reviews. By Keith Brandon. This guy likes FANFIC-TION and does not like WAD. I would estimate that Keith has been reading fanzines for maybe three or four months now and that naturally makes him a competent reviewer. Think of all the background he has. I weep.

But I suppose that when you have a lot of energy and paper as do Mr. Murdock and Mr. White, you must fill up the blank space with something.

I wonder if two co-editors have ever produced a distinctive fanzine?

OBLIQUE #2, edited and published by Clifford Gould, 1559 Cable Street, San Diego 7, California. 10¢ a copy.

This has a nicely done cover by Jay Johnson and an exceptionally good logo. The cover reproduction process is some sort of photographic effort; I shudder to think of the editor, or anyone, slaving in the darkroom, making each and every copy by exposing the paper in the enlarger, timing it, dipping it in the developer, timing that, slipping it into the stop bath and thence into the fixer (all this has taken three to five minutes already), finally washing the whole batch for an hour. Then, of course, the things have to be dried flat...a hundred copies at least....individual attention every one.... God. If that is the case someone must really be a devoted fan.

The contents page flatters me no end since it looks to be a copy of the contents page of PSY, complete to the editorial comment concerning each item. However, it lacks the little touches of humor that I put in PSY's page. Be different, Clifford, be different.

In the first issue of OBLIQUE, Gould penned a take-off on Matheson's style of writing which was very well done. In this issue, as a result of much flattery from the readers, he has attempted to immitate another stylist in the ranks of science fiction with "More Than You MAN", subtitled "The Eternal Neofan." But apparently Cliff isn't too sure he did a good job of it because he takes no chances on the reader not perceiving whose style is being satirized; he adds the pertinent information "Scribed In The Style Of Sturgeon" below the illo and title. But this effort, too, is quite good, though perhaps not as well thought out...or it could be that Sturgeon's style is not as naturally suited for adaptation to fan-nish satire.

"Exempt" by Jan Jansen is an interesting discussion of Pete Vorzimer's article in the previous issue which stated that the Big Name Fans had a fannish 'duty' to contribute to neozines. Jansen worries the question about for three pages but never comes to grips with it; he doesn't really do much of anything but give possible points of view. Still it is the best item in the issue.

Larry Walker does an EarlyRayThompson column. That is, he wastes three pages saying he doesn't know how to write a column. Growl....

Larry bourne is a fan I know personally...I see him about once a week. Fortunately, I'm bigger than he is. So I feel relatively safe in giving my honest opinion of his "Bourne: Into Fandom," a column, I guess, which attempts to be oh-so-cute-and-humorous and fails...miserably. Larry takes the word "Fugghead" and tries to be clever. I won't reirrain from saying that he demonstrates a remarkably well-developed inclination to write very superficially. That's the polite way of saying it.

"Tips For The Editor Of A Trufanzine" by Larry Anderson is mildly interesting and certainly a fair enough discussion of what can contribute to the "success" of a fanzine; worth reading for the solid truth presented. One point, though: his truth is relative to his definition of a "successful" fanzine. Anderson was thinking of Vorzimer in large part when writing this article, I believe.

Fred Malz contributes about 3,000 words of article titled "How Green Was My Valley." I am lost in admiration at the originality of that title. He rambles for a page or so about the ranch his family owns, then gets down to describing his trials and tribulations concerning receiving mail, his adventures with the unseen postman in the area, his efforts to construct a mailbox...oh, it's good fun, interestingly written.

And the letter section finishes off the zine. Walt Willis is present with faint praise, a monstrous pun, and some pertinent comment on the Vorzimer article in OBLIQUE #1. Then, at the end of the letter section, when I say the same thing as Walt, I get the full force of the Gould arguments re BNF 'duty' contributions. I guess I am not yet a fannish Ghod one cannot ever offend. Of course, I did say what Walt said a bit more, ah...firmly, but that shouldn't have made the difference...should it?

THE POOR STUPID FOOL

Though Willie used to cranch and skren,
Vasten, blesh, and cranch again,
His playmates thought him rather squarish:
Willie couldn't even Varish.

---from "Odes To A Quatt Wunkery"

—Charlie Harris

"How come you do thees thing, Geis? How come?"

TAKE IT AWA-A-A-A-Y

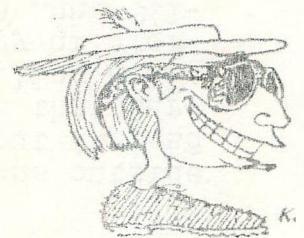
Dear bims and dear BEMS of the E.S.F.A.,
I'd like to discuss my new plot.
But lawyers record every word that I say
They insist that talk plot I must not!



Every last word of prose, whether better or worse,
Is counted and twice copyrighted.
But I've found me a loophole -- I'll do it in verse
And I'm sure that you'll all be delighted.

(Applause)

I won't give any secret material
About how I struck oil on the Moon.
I'm saving all that for a twenty-part serial
That is coming, I hope, very soon.



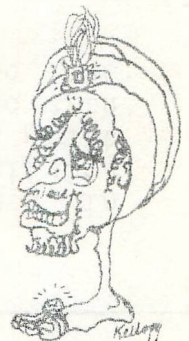
I can't even mention my coming excursion
To the place where they soup up the stars.
And I'm dying to tell you the straightforward version
Of my red-headed bird-girl from Mars.

All that you will read of -- but here's something nice
(If it won't cause undue apprehension.)
I've perfected a galaxy-shaking device:
My Dimension-Ascension invention.

As every fan knows, the dimensions are endless.
They are purple, transparent and green.
They are all shapes and sizes, both plastic and bendless
And many strange things in between.

My device uses ethero-matic transmission.
It shifts just by setting a bead.
It's powered by mental electronic fission,
And brings in whatever you need.

For example, you're lost out in space and need air:
Set the dial for LUNGS. Without fail
It will scan the dimensions for one that can bear
The stuff that you need to inhale!



I want no reward for this masterful feat,
Though the brainwork involved was no joke.
I did it for Bergey, through kindness of heart,
So his beautiful gals wouldn't choke.

— WALLACE WEST

The PSYCHO

HELL'S PAVEMENT was produced by joining two stories published in different magazines some years apart, and reworking and amplifying the resulting hybrid. It certainly shows signs of being a graft hybrid, and some of the added matter is only loosely connected with the plot and might well have been left out with no loss to the story.

The plot of HELL'S PAVEMENT falls into two distinct portions, separated by several generations. The first and shorter portion (and in my opinion much the better handled), deals with the invention by Dr. Kusko of a device for inducing inhibitory hallucinations in the criminally insane. It is highly effective, rendering dangerous maniacs harmless. But the government votes to apply it to everybody, with the result that all effective opposition to the ruling classes ceases.

The second part of the story, dealing with the misadventures of one Arthur Bass, an apprentice clerk in a department store, takes place 150 years later. Arthur is completely immune to inhibitory hallucinations and has sense enough not to reveal it. He is fired from his job for a series of minor mishaps and escapes from his home community of Glenbrook.

He has been taught since childhood that there are no humans outside of Glenbrook, only demons. In Darien he finds humans, but instead of the rigidly puritanical culture of Glenbrook, he finds that Darien is a "wide-open" town whose life centers about gambling halls and brothels. He spends the evening first in the company of Florence, a married woman with a wandering husband, then with Anne Silver, an influential government official. Losing contact with Anne, Arthur decides to bring the people of Darien and Glenbrook together. He starts a fire, is detected, and then rescued by Laudermilk, whom he recognizes as a high Glenbrook official.

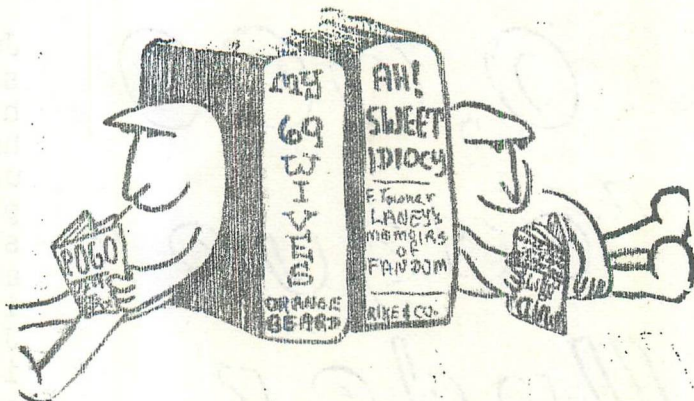
Laudermilk reveals himself as an important member of a secret society of people immune to inhibitory hallucinations and offers to enroll Arthur in an underground university where he can acquire a real scientific education. Arthur accepts, but after a few months he is offered an assignment as a secret agent.

America is split into a number of small governmental units, each centering around a great merchantile trust, and the populations are divided into three castes: "Stockholders", "Executives", and consumers". It is rumored that Comind, one of the great trusts is preparing for war.

Arthur closely resembles a man who has been purchased as a slave lover by Marsha Hambling, who is the most powerful person in Comind.

BY NOAH W. McLEOD

ANALYST



He accepts the assignment and goes disguised as Marcia's slave. He finds a completely matriarchal society and an orgiastic cult of a sex goddess. He is about to be seduced by a bobby-soxer when Marcia intervenes and ships him off to a training center for troops.

In the meantime Anne Silver has been captured by Morris, a high government official who hopes to become a dictator. He brain-washes her in hopes of getting information concerning the secret society of immunes. She catches him off guard and kills him by tearing open his throat with her teeth, and escapes.

Arthur escapes from the boot camp and joins Higsbee, another immune agent. They are making their way back to civilization when Higsbee is murdered and Arthur is falsely accused of the crime. He is found guilty and is punished by being parachuted into the Blank, a place from which no one has ever returned.

He finds Anne there. Her plane had crashed. She explains that the Blank is inhabited by the Cormanites, a mind-over-matter cult whose influence has kept the place sealed. Anne pits her will against the Cormanites and the two escape, only to find that what has broken out. The immunes quiet the fighting and the book closes with a happy note.

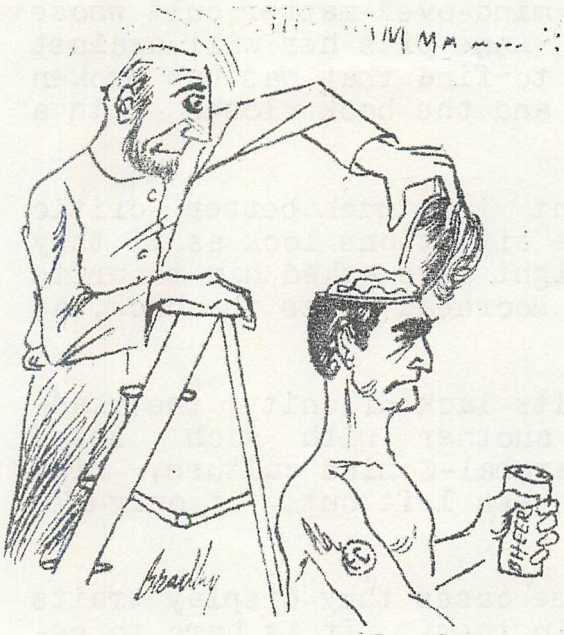
HELL'S PAVEMENT convinces me that Knight is a much better critic than author. The plot and some of the situations look as if they had been devised by Ron Ellik, whom Knight says asked him to write the book. It is easy to see why Rev. Moorhead hates the book, as Knight admits in the introduction.

Perhaps the chief fault of the book is its lack of unity; the reader is shifted from one alien culture to another with such speed that he cannot adapt. The whole matriarchal-Comind culture, with its over-sexed bobby-soxers, might have been left out; it only adds to the disunity.

The characters are vaguely drawn; in some cases they display traits so contradictory it is hard to believe in them. It is hard to believe in the sex-cult of the Comind. No explanation is given why so many cultures diverged from the present American culture. The Cormanites seem to be a satire on the Christian Scientists and all similar cults.

HELL'S PAVEMENT by Damon Knight; Lion Books, Inc., 635 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y.; paperbound; 35¢

20,000 Leagues Under The Scalp



BY LARRY STARK

When Walt Disney decided to film Jules Verne's science fiction classic as a follow-up to his live-actor hit "Treasure Island", I doubt he had any idea what highly intellectual material he was dealing with. He probably visualized that oh-so-faked squid, the underwater technicolor, and the model steamships seen sinking from the point of view of Davy Jones. Actually, however, the story is one crammed with philosophical overtones, and Disney has only magnified them as he concentrated the novel for Saturday matinee consumption.

It is no accident, for instance, that neither Verne nor Disney endowed any of the hundred-odd necessary crewmen of the submarine Nautilus with an ounce of characterization, or even differentiation. The truth is, none of them seem to really exist; it is as if they are automaton-like creatures of Captain Nemo's boundless imagination, little shadow creations, void of personality, who go to the places and do the things the Captain prefers not to do himself.

Captain Nemo is portrayed rather obviously as that often mentioned but rarely found denizen of Cartesian philosophy, a solipsist. He has created every square-inch of his world. Whether you consider it an intricate hallucination, as the Cartesian would, or merely say that Nemo conceived of, built, and now commands the Nautilus, the fact remains it would not have come into existence without Nemo. And, as in the picture version, all is explained by Nemo and no one else, the conclusion that he is the only human being really in existence on board becomes increasingly obvious.

Nemo also voices a conviction that human character is completely predictable, and he is proven wrong in only two or three instances in the entire film.

But being the only human alive, even

in such a magnificent setting as Nemo improvised for himself, is at best a rather lonely existence. For this reason (of what use is it for a man to build an atomic submarine if he cannot share his triumph?), Nemo accepts the landsmen---Prof. Arounax and Ned Brand, the harpooner----into his world. (The Prof.'s servant is, according to Cartesian principles, such a flacid character I believe him to be the creation of the other two; his loyalties are fought over by Arounax and Brand throughout the entire story). But Nemo isn't a pure solipsist; he has merely avoided other entities by extending his control of the physical universe beneath the seas, while the landsmen have been content only to trail their fingers along its surface.



Arounax is, essentially, a man like Nemo, an intellectual to whom Nemo's creations and explorations are an envious achievement. He admires Nemo for such wonders as the Nautilus but is horrified at his savage sinking of any vessels carrying munitions or nitrates to warring or warmongering countries. The point at which both war-haters come to conflict is that, in order to prevent wholesale slaughters, Nemo must slaughter the crews of all these vessels. (It is interesting to note that these slave-manned steamers are referred to by Nemo as "black ships that fly no flag", yet it

is the American navy which seeks to destroy the Nautilus as a threat to its shipping. Here again as in "A Trip To The Moon" in which a group of Civil War artillery veterans become so bored with peace they build a cannon big enough to hit the Moon, Verne implies America is a nation of war-minded barbarians.)

The oddity is, if the Cartesian principles of mind controlling and creating matter are correct, then Nemo's act is not precisely murder, but the eradication of soul-less shadows much like his own crewmen. Despite Arounax's seeming righteousness, Nemo would be wholly within his rights to erase these men, if it would make wars impossible. Even Arounax is against wars, but he lets a concern for a few individuals overpower his concern for the masses.

It is debatable whether Ned Brand...harpooner, individualist, typical sailor....is "real", in Cartesian terms. Certainly he opposes Nemo's god-like stance, and enlists the servant's aid in rebelling against both Nemo and the professor, yet with all his dynamic appearance he might well be a representation of that humanity, that aspect of man, that so concerns the professor. Ned could be but one more shadow on the bulkheads.

In fact, it's hard to escape the speculation that no one aboard the Nautilus is "real", but that the struggle between Ned and the professor, and Nemo, are merely corporeal evocations of the struggle taking place within Nemo's mind. (The similarity of the submarine's steel hull to the human skull seems too obvious to be accidental.) In one scene, before destroying one of the nameless ships, Nemo sits for an hour at an organ creating tempestuous music and, it is obvious, wrestling with the horror of contemplated murder. Aren't the professor's arguments with

Nemo about this subject merely the objective projection of that silent struggle with self that took place before the organ console? And there also seems to be a projection of two points of view into characters when Ned and the professor argue Nemo's sanity and his right of absolute command; as though Ned represented all Nemo's doubts of his own rationality and righteousness, and the professor his pride in accomplishment and essentially good-intention.

Ned, whether real or representative, is the eventual victor in the conflict, however, when he saves Nemo's life even at the risk of his own. (This brings about the one big flaw in the argument that Nemo alone exists: Nemo's statement that "I would not have done the same for you." No doubt, however, those devoted to the Cartesian explanation could rationalize that sentence if they worked at it.) The fact that Ned is a sailor, a representative of the many men Nemo has already killed in the name of peace, only adds to the convoluted symbolism.

The end of the story is also the end of Nemo. Pressed by those munitions-makers and governors who drove him beneath the waves by their desire to use his atomic know-how and submarine in their wars, Nemo detonates the atomic piles in his island base, and the shock waves stave in his steel skull and drown its occupant, leaving the three landsmen waterlogged but conveniently alive and able to tell their unprovable story.

It is interesting that, in the very last moments of the Nautilus, Nemo asks his crew (former slaves in a nitrate mine.....yet another Cartesian convolution) if they wish to perish with him, and they voluntarily agree.

Perhaps Ned Brand's example of altruism has decided the captain to endow his puppets with free-will. Or is their answer one more evidence of mindlessness?

It is an intriguing exercise in symbolism and philosophy, and just how many "real" people exist on the Nautilus is perhaps an unanswerable question..... especially since, being fiction, the entire novel must be said to be merely the invention of Jules Verne himself, having no "reality" whatever. I wonder if Disney was aware of what elaborate problems he was giving our children to play with, or if he's just turned sadist in his old age?

---Larry Stark

WANTED!! BACK ISSUES OF PSY

Eddie Robinson
3005 Arlington Ave
Riverside, Calif.

It seems to me that there was at least one other person who wanted back issues of PSY, but I, alas, cannot recall the names nor find any notes in the "Next Ish" folder. ---REG

BA-BA-BOON

Purple
Lightening, ashes
In
The gleaming
Roseatness
Of the end
Of the
Baboon,
Lillies,
Oops, Lilies
Slip slide

Where the
STRIPES
Slump
Purple.
Roseate.
Raindrops
Slipslide,
Flash purple,
Violet
Violated by
The babboon.

----Alex Kirs.

7TH FANDOM
IS NOT DEAD..

(HARLAN ELLISON)



RUN, HARLAN, RUN! HERE COMES THE SECOND WAVE...THE MAD DOGS....

Atom

WHY I DIDN'T GO TO FRISCO

BY GREGG CAEKINS

In 1952 I attended the Tenth World Science Fiction Convention held in Chicago, over the traditional Labor Day weekend. During the convention proper (and afterwards, in my two-week jaunt through Lynn Haven with Shelby Vick and Atlanta with Henry Burwell) I had the most enjoyable time of my life. The fans I met I found to be sincere, wonderful people, interesting to the nth degree.

In 1953 I missed the Eleventh World Science Fiction Convention held at Philadelphia. I was at that time just completing basic training in the U.S. Marine Corps at San Diego, California. I hated like all-get-out to miss the con.

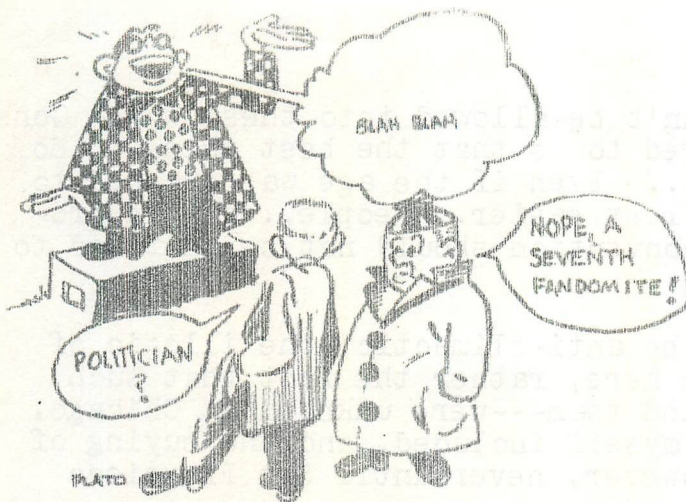
In 1954 I missed the Twelfth World Science Fiction Convention held at San Francisco, California. The convention city was the closest it had ever been to my current residence since I became a member of fandom. The convention itself promised to be the largest and best produced of its kind. I had never before seen San Francisco....and yet I missed the convention for the second year in a row. Only this time it was on purpose.

Perhaps I was wrong----perhaps my figuring was 'way off the bat and I am doing the con and the people connected with it an injustice they do not deserve. If I am wrong I am sorry. If I am right, here is how I figure it:

Since New Orleans in 1951, conventions have been getting bigger and gaudier. Ballyhoo has been upped 1,000% and publicity is many times what it used to be. Too, publicity is of a different variety. Conventions used to be highly publicized and emphasized in fanzines. Editorials never failed to mention the forthcoming convention (or the one recently passed), and the convention committee themselves usually printed pages sent free to fanzine eds for insertion in their regular issues. Outside publicity was at a minimum. Today entirely the opposite is true.

Until San Francisco I had not noticed these things. Conventions still seemed to be the ideal place to meet fandom and enjoy life. People were interesting, congenial and....restrained. To be sure, there was a good deal of drinking, but it was friendly and good-natured. The people who passed out (except for one instance at Chicago in which the 'corpse' was laid in the hall and caused a disturbance of no little magnitude) were hauled quietly off to bed. Zap-guns blazed, but they were fun-loving zap-guns. Songs were sung ----some clean, some dirty--- but they were kept to a dull roar and enjoyed by all.





As far as I had been concerned, I figured San Francisco to be just another repeat performance. The same people would be there, the same events would take place, the.....wait a minute, did I say the same people? Now there's a good point.

Missing from this convention were a great many fannish names, most notable of these Dean A. Grennell plus a majority of the Old Guard that made Chicago and Philadelphia so much fun. Present, of

course, were the old standby's who always attend for semi-business reasons (Bloch, Ackerman, EEEvans and the like). You can always expect to find them. Also present, unfortunately, was the New Guard.

My first brush with 7th Fandom, per se, came early this year when I attended a NAPA meeting at Peter Vorzimer's home in Hollywood. Although I had no idea what to expect and was prepared accordingly, it was somewhat of a shock to be greeted at the door by: "Gee, I didn't think you'd be so OLD!" OLD? ME? I'll admit that at the time I was pushing twenty pretty hard. I was also probably a little tired. My hair was undoubtedly uncombed. And I might have needed a bit of a shave, though I doubt it. But, OLD? That really really set me back on my heels.

Since then I have watched the name "7th Fandomer" grow into a mild epithet applied to any careless or irresponsible member of fandom. The name is no longer a term given to a certain chronological era of fandom----it is a label applied to immaturity. And as I watched I became more and more aware of the 7th Fandomers who were going to attend San Francisco. So I decided to stay home from this one. Now I am glad I did.

In Peter Vorzimer's convention report, I view the results. Though perhaps not the most typical of 7th fandomers, Vorzimer and his satellites (Boob Stewart, Terry Carr, Peter Graham, Ron Ellick and others) are near at hand and in this convention report I find several splendid examples of the things I am talking about. Quotes are by Vorzimer.

"There was a mad scrimmage....to (get) a window seat. Paul and I, using the old buddy system, took two seats together, mine nearest the window."

"During the entire trip...I purposely propped my big-boned knees in such a position as to render constant irritation to Satz' jelly-like backbone."

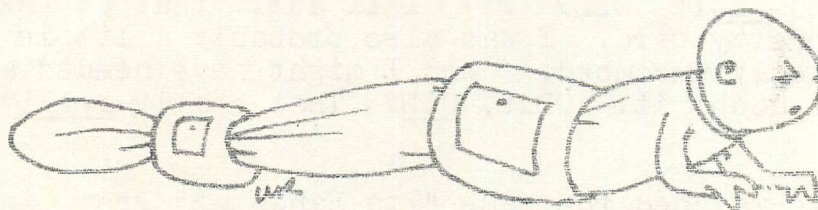
"Andy Nowell was the nectar purchaser for us poor fellows around that awkward age (over 18 but under 21)." ".....most of us were over 16 but under 21....." "I brought up the



point that kids under eighteen shouldn't be allowed into these World Cons without adult sponsorship. It appeared to us that the best thing to do would be to exclude them altogether.... Even if the age was dropped to those under 16 a lot of people would rest easier. People...who've proven themselves too juvenile for one convention should not be admitted to any...until perhaps they turn 18."

Any comments I could make here would be anti-climactic; the illogic of Vorzimer's actions are not under fire here, rather the fact that such discussions---and the happenings behind them---were unknown at Chicago. The clash between under-aged youths, myself included, and the buying of liquor has always been a problem. However, never until San Francisco has it been so intense.

"I stayed at the auction a good while. I got the most terrific kicks out of just raising bids on certain stuff when I knew darn well some other character on the other side of the room wanted it real badly. Sometimes, just because he was the only other guy bidding, I'd get a guy as high as \$10 or \$12 on something I had bid up from \$3 or \$5."



This breaks me off from Vorzimer and 7th Fandom entirely. Needless to say, should I ever catch anyone pulling such a stunt, be he large or be he small, I would do my best to flatten him right down into the deck! As long as people like this continue to attend conventions, I shall stay at home.

I gaze with wistful envy upon the conventions of the British Isles. The happy fun-loving conventions of the zap-gun and the water-pistol, where perfume is a new innovation, and fans never have to resort to throwing beer cans out of windows to amuse themselves; where authors and editors can engage in hands-and-knees races down the halls in friendly fashion instead of seeing how much ale youngsters under 14 can hold...where fandom is fandom is fandom.

I note all these points in the hope that some serious thought might be given them between now and Cleveland's convention. "World Science Fiction Convention" hell---it's the World Science Fiction Brawl! Until some of the present-day fans either grow up or tone down, you'll find more and more of the valuable actifans staying home each year.

Just like I did.

---Gregg Calkins

Section

Eight

"DIG THIS CRAZY LETTER COLUMN!"

WM. DEECK, 8400 Potomac Ave., College Park, Md.

I've been reading sf for six years now and am not a fan. Haven't read too many fanzines, so I don't know too much about the subject of fans. I've written a few, of course, but haven't asked them about a motivation -- why they join clubs, print fezes, write letters, et al. Consequently, my knowledge of fandom as a whole is negligible. So don't mind if I ramble on.

Does fandom have a purpose? If so, what? I am of the ~~opinio~~ (damn fetich) ~~opinio~~ (damn hard word!) opinion that fandom doesn't have a purpose; if it does it's highly obscure. I also hold the opinion that fans should be anarchists. But, it matters not. What does matter is: can I substantiate my first opinion? Who knows? "Not I," cried the English teacher!

Let's give fandom a theoretical purpose, the only one it could logically have if it had one; viz., to promote sf. Fine. Let's try to destroy it. Ever try to discuss sf with a non-fan? I have. He looks at you quizzically, mutters something like "I used to think he was crazy, but now I know it." And, after that, he won't give you another Gin. Do people really have that low an opinion of sf? I don't think so. It's just that they have a low opinion of the people who read it. They think the fans are crackpots, idiots.

I'll admit I am a bit balmy, and could be considered a crackpot; I have some wild theories and like to reveal them -- so do most of the fans. And it is from this that the opinion comes, rightly so. We're all a bunch of characters, comics and searchers of egoboo. The common people, if I may be egotistical, have not read sf, at least not to any degree. Some of them have intelligence, though being a disciple of Wylie, I hesitate to grant it. So I should assume that they are not too precipitous and do not judge hastily. So: where do they get their opinion? From only one place: us. We are the de-spoilers of the literature; we are holding it back from its rightful place in the world. We're just cruds, that's all!

((Yeah, but the situation is inevitable dontcha see. Us cruds is attracted to stf because we are non-conformists and worse, and stf is a non-conformist literature. Seems to me that stf is inherently limited to a relatively small audience by the very nature of its field. Attempts to broaden its appeal and rope in large mundane slabs of the reading public have only succeeded in watering down large parts of the field to a sickeningly thin gruel. Fans and dyed-in-the-pulp readers simply do not look well in business suits and Proper Thoughts.))

JOE GIBSON, 24 Kensington Ave., Jersey City 4, N.J.

Old Creepy McCain did a rather bad job in his Padded Cell, I thot. His "defense" of fandom as a way of life seemed disappointing in its backhanded praise and total omission of some really strong points. I'm tempted to jab him with a few. Not that there's anything personal about it, y'understand--I don't even know this guy from damon knight--but well, I mean, and after all.

It's both amusing and revealing to note how Creepy discusses jazz and science fiction as if the two were distinctly separate hobbies -- and as if there were no relationship whatever in his enjoyment of both. Not much wonder that he would accept the contentions about fandom being an escape from reality and, as such, completely inadequate to be embraced as a way of life. (That last always tempts me when I meet Bea Mahaffey.) I note somewhat the same attitude (unintentional, I think) in a recent letter from Dean Grennell; he mentioned cool jazz, sportscars, private flying and science fiction as tho they were four different hobbies.

Obviously, neither of these fake-fans ever heard how the chassis designed by Frank Kurtis is merely the greatest thing dropped onto 4 wheels since the Concord Stagecoach -- and I make that statement for sound engineering reasons -- nor ever developed a successful system for navigation of super-jets doing 3,000 m.p.h. at 10,000 feet. I have done both, wrote articles about 'em, and sold said articles for cool cash.

Now, this is the type of "escape from reality" I like. And I dropped by the night John R. Pierce (J.J. Coupling) and John D. Clark scribbled madly on a menu and slung parsec-thick technicalese about using an atomic powerplant to generate electricity to accelerate an ion stream to suitably high exhaust velocity---I mean, about atomic jets ---and the result was Coupling's ASF article "On Atomic Jets." All this hopen following the meeting of a local science fiction fan club. And Sam Moskowitz brings to this same fan club a letter from Albert Einstein which he didn't quite comprehend, Al having used some rather abstruse terminology; so hell, I told Sam what it meant.

And the meat of all this? No one but a science fiction fan could find quite the same interest and enjoyment in so wide a selection of seemingly diversified subjects. If you would discuss fandom as a way of life, methinks this aspect must be considered with all the rest. Any fan who makes fandom a way of life swimming in mimeo ink and fortified by stacks of mildewed prozines is a moron; a fan who makes fandom his Boskone for varied sorties about the galactic proper is strictly some other cat. And I would ask Creepy to dig some of this ere scribing any more "defenses" of fandom, live, grooved, or otherwise.

((Well, but science fiction and jazz and private flying and sportscars ARE separate hobbies. For instance, I'm not especially interested in any of them except science fiction, and my friend Jim Bradley is only interested in science fiction and beer. So, there you are. Of course I have many allied interests, some of them as important to me as science fiction, but I don't think I'm interested in them just because I'm a science fiction fan. More likely they interest me because I am non-conformist and (I like to think) a halfway intelligent being. I probably read science fiction because of that non-conformity, too. Let's not put the cart before the horse and say I am non-conformist because I read science fiction!

This thing of "escape from reality": I must admit to being slightly irked at the way the phrase gets tossed around. Nowadays it seems that if a fan reads a lot of science fiction he is accused of 'escaping from reality'...as if he were one step from schizophrenia and had better give up that crap and get down to Earth, etc.

NUTS! It is usually a question of selective avoidance of painful or unpleasant aspects of reality. Avoiding or 'escaping' parts of reality has resulted in all the technical and cultural advances in man's history. The caveman escaped the reality of cold when he adapted fire to his own use; I don't like spinach at all, yet according to some sloppy arguments if I avoid the stuff and don't eat it I am 'escaping from reality'...the reality of spinach.

Of course if I were to avoid spinach by maintaining that no such vegetable exists, or that it is a slow poison, etc., then indeed I would be properly subject to the charge.))

ROBERT W. LOWNDES, 241 Church Street, New York 13, N.Y. It's a pleasure to agree with Jim Harmon for a change; we've had a number of arguments -- most of them telepathic, as I never got around to writing him every time I read something of his I couldn't second. But I think he's hit the nail with his "The Signal" formulation as the biggest selling factor.

True, no matter what you put on the stands, someone is going to think it is awfully good, and someone else is going to say PU; but I don't believe that any magazine can survive on the extreme enthusiasm percentage of buyers. No matter how good the book may be on an absolute scale, the die-hard constant readers do not comprise a large enough audience to keep it going -- at least, not in science fiction. (If there were enough such followers, then the magazines which had the most wouldn't have to worry about whether their covers were a selling factor, etc.)

What makes for "The Signal"? Well, as Jim says, skill and neatness have a lot to do with it; and I agree that "sheer luck" can enter into it if you mean by "sheer luck" ALL the factors extraneous to anything the producers do. (For example, the sudden appearance of several new titles; the coincidence of competitors having a stronger signal, or as strong a one; someone else's having a drawing card which didn't exist at the time you made up your issue, etc. Maybe I'd better elaborate: every now and then two or three magazines will appear -- I'm not talking only of science fiction now -- with what is basically the same cover. Let's say they're all good strong cover jobs; nonetheless, if your issue comes out a little later than theirs, then what should have been a strong signal may turn out to be a weak or indifferent one. A current news story, etc., may give momentary prominence to an author who, while good, was not a big drawing card a short time before; if someone else happens to have him at such a time, their signal could also overpower what ordinarily would have been a stronger one of yours. In addition, there are distribution and display situations, which also have a lot to do with sales, at times; "bad breaks" there can kill an issue which would have sold very well otherwise. So when Jim speaks of "sheer luck", I assume that he is talking about this sort of thing; and I agree on these grounds. It can also break the other way, too; sometimes what should have been a weak signal will nonetheless sell well enough to start new rounds of hair-tearing in editorial and publishing offices.)

There are general principles behind what constitutes skill and neatness and the creation of a strong signal; but no one knows a sure and positive formula which will result in a strong signal issue after issue -- or, at least, an equally strong signal. (Otherwise, there would be no fluctuation in the sales of the top magazines; circulations would rise, but never see-saw.)

The signal (we hope) sells, and the contents (we hope) bring the customer back for the next issue. I don't believe anyone knows what percentage of their customers are steadies -- either steady readers of that particular book or of the field -- and which are transients. That's why so much attention is paid to covers, even if someone drops the ball every now and then. (In fact, when nobody drops the ball all along the line; when neither editor nor proofreader; printer nor engraver nor artist; distributor nor newsdealer pulls a single rock in regard to a particular issue -- and the publisher has likewise calculated his print order with the utmost acumen in relation to sales potential -- then that is the sheerest of sheer luck!)

Let us pause for prayer.

Whoa there, Gibson! When did I say the classed up FUTURE (with departments) was outsold by a ragged-edged SF without? SCIENCE FICTION STORIES, suh, be trimmed and neat and pocket-sized -- and if you picked up a 1953, 1954, or 1955 issue that had ragged edges, I want to see it, too.

Howsomever, I wasn't trying to make with the goddlemighty pronouncements in words of gold, but was more or less muttering to myself where I hoped someone would overhear

and offer their comments. As you did, and thanks. By the time this appears in Geis-print the departments will be back anyway, I expect.

All I've been able to find out so far is that there isn't much conclusive evidence one way or the other. I wanted to find out (a) if there would be a noticeable difference in sales over a period of issues when departments were dropped -- realizing that the success of the departmentless 1953 SFS wasn't proof enough of anything. Who knows -- it might have done a little better with them? And (b) if I'd get a big influx of mail either begging me to put them back or approving my taking them out.

As I mentioned before, I like them myself. Back in '30-'36, the reader columns and other departments were always the things I turned to first, whether or not I expected to see a letter of my own therein. But now and then I take a little time off to wonder if my own preferences in such matters are sound from a sales standpoint; so I've been trying to find out.

What have I found? That I might as well do just what I like about it -- so, unless I get definite orders from within to the contrary, the letter departments, book reviews and editorials go on and on and on. (Providing, natch, that the books themselves do like-wise. Amen.)

((A less careful and conscientious fan-editor might've typed that sentence "...I wasn't trying to make with the goddlemighty pronouncements in words of Gold..." but I have found it pays to be accurate. Still, it WAS a temptation. I can just imagine your face if I had....))

JOHN QUAGLIANO, 122 St. Edwards Hall, Notre Dame, Indiana. McCain saved me a bit of work. He's already refuted the article which I and Norm Wendrowski intended to write. It seemed to me that for many people fandom was an easy way to sublimate their creative abilities. Also the competition isn't quite as rough. The fan artist doesn't have to discipline himself in order to be socially and financially successful which the true artist must.

Harlan Ellison is a good example. I wish him the best of luck, but feel that his "giving up college for a writing career" policy doesn't show maturity or even intelligence for that matter. However, there are those individuals who can combine their vocation and their avocation so well. Maybe it's the innate talent which makes the difference. Bloch and Tucker are perfect examples of what I mean. If the fan authors belong with the pros, somehow they'll find a way.

((I can't disagree with you...except: I don't agree with your definition of a 'true' artist. 'Discipline', indeed!))

ROBERT BLOCH, Box 362, Weyauwega, Wisconsin. I certainly can't let PSYCHOTIC #19 pass without adding my bit of commendation to what I imagine will be general approval.

Must say I like the artwork...although in one particular instance I don't know whether Kellogg should be congratulated or sued for libel.

McCain's column is a highlight. His clincher question, "What's wrong with fandom as a way of life?" isn't easy to answer after his very thoughtful and penetrating disertation.

I'd say where fandom falls down (through no fault of its own) is in the matter of what for lack of a better term we must call relationships. Fandom is not a homogenous unit: taste-wise, chronology-wise, in terms of economic status, or geographically.

Taste-wise, as in the case with other hobbies, it tends to fall into minute divisions which become cliques. Just as in philately, the U.S. collectors have little in common with general collectors, the cover specialists don't usually associate with lovers of British Colonials, the beginners seldom traffic with the mint completist gang... so in fandom there is this disparity in interests within the field. It is as absurd to think that all "science fiction fans" will get along on the basis of their specialized interests as it is to assume that an ardent Kentonite will necessarily feel kinship with the ardent Guy Lombardian; though both, in the mind of the outsider, may be considered "jazz enthusiasts".

Chronology-wise, the obvious differences are even more apparent. For the sake of argument, let us assume that 15-year-old highschool students and 30-year-old housewives and 45-year-old engineers and 60-year-old businessmen can attain a certain consanguinity or even temporary intimacy as members of an audience at a convention, or in some instances as correspondents. But in "social" situations the attitudes are bound to clash.

In terms of geography and economics, still other problems are easily recognized. The geographical problem ties in directly with the minute quantity of individuals constituting fandom...as McCain says, "at any given time probably not over 200 are active." With the result that a fan such as McCain feels himself to be damnably isolated in Idaho, and cannot make fandom a "way of life" in any even partially comprehensive sense of the term. Only a fortunate few have the privilege of choice in this matter...and once again the age factor of associates enters into it, plus the economic circumstances.

Economic-wise, we find the biggest obstacle to present-day fandom. If you read Moskowitz's IMMORTAL STORM or delve through fannish history and reminiscence, one thing will become almost immediately apparent: 90% of the fans of the '30s and early '40s were in the same boat, heading up the same creek, and suffering from the same lack of paddles.

Fandom was, for a long time, a poor man's game...or a poor youth's game, to be more exact. The number of affluent fans was limited: early accounts abound with instances of hitch-hikers, meal-scroungers, loans and indebtedness, shoestring conventions and economic crises. From this background springs the myth of the Dirty Pro and the Filthy Huckster -- a Big Man who earns \$200 or in some cases perhaps even \$300 a month. And in depression days, some did, considering this to be Big Money...whereas many fans earned nothing, or had jobs affording them from \$15 to \$35 a week. But there was a pretty general leveling effect, economically speaking, and as a result many fans did enjoy a somewhat similar environmental background and their tastes in "private life" were conditioned accordingly.

Not so today. Today, to speak frankly, most fans earn more than a good 80% of the fulltime pros: some fans are quite well-fixed...and others are still impoverished. Naturally this affects taste and outlook and tends to create a gap in relationships. I'm not speaking now of jealousy or envy (there is, surprisingly enough, damned little of that apparent in fandom) but of the natural consequences of an economic breach. Your economic "way of life" may be limited to beans and bacon: that of your fellow fan may be geared to Steak Chateaubriand. The age gap accentuates the possibility of economic hiatus, with resultant lack of common value-patterns.

All of which is more or less self-evident. But not I'm afraid, to the earnest neo-fan who has "boned up" on his Moskowitz and his FANCYCLOPEDIA, and wonders why it is that he isn't invited to all the private parties at conventions or even after club-meetings...why he can't just hitch-hike across the country and drop in without warning on every BNF to stay awhile...why he can't announce he's holding a regional con or putting out a brand new fanzine and get immediate cooperation from anyone he contacts.

Such depression born phenomena scarcely exist, or can exist under present circum-

stances. And for this reason the "way of life" that McCain speaks of is largely impractical. Truthfully, it is also illogical, I believe. The trick seems to be to select a certain aspect or facet of fandom and utilize it as a hobby...for fandom by its present nature, is more or less a collection of hobbies than a single, unified one. There are, as you know yourself, many fans who love to publish fanzines but wouldn't find themselves as happy attending conventions or speaking before an audience. Others are primarily correspondence conscious...still others are great joiners and club members...some like intrigue and politics...we have the Serious Constructive and the Frivolous Destructive...and every combination and permutation of same, with the further distinctions imposed by taste, age, locale, and pocketbook. For these reasons I don't recommend fandom as a "way of life". But as you and I and McCain know, it can be a very pleasant by-way.

((You don't leave anything for me to say except thanks for the very lucid summation. I wonder if "way of life" means something just a bit different to every fan. It doesn't seem to me that the term has been properly defined. I confess that fandom as a "way of life" means something less than living off of science fiction and fans in perpetuity to me, and is, as you seem to define it, both impossible and illogical today. I wonder what McCain was thinking of precisely when he wrote that column?))

A&J YOUNG, 229 West College Street, Oberlin, Ohio. Ah, yes, here's just the item for you. A week or so ago we were startled to see a car passing through Oberlin. Now this is not in itself such an unusual event, but the license plate was the notable feature; in fact, right down your alley. It read:

VD 69

This is an actual fact! It was an Ohio plate, too.

((My name may be Geis (with a hard "G") and may rhyme with vice, but I am really a very clean-living young fan. I guess you didn't know that, did you? Someone has been spreading vile untruthful stories about me. Mutter.....))

JAMES BROSCART, Rural Route #1, Towanda, Pennsylvania. I would like to take exception to some of Mr. Cahappell's remarks concerning GALAXY. He seems thoroughly convinced that Gold's zine has fallen into a rut, and that all of her stories are "type" stories. Well, so they are. Why not? All science fiction can be classified as one "type" or another. In fact, Jim Gunn wrote a lengthy and quite comprehensive article a while back, detailing science fiction plot-forms. Let's face it -- new plot ideas are not easily come by. General story outlines are used again and again...successfully. Their merit lies not in the originality of the plot, but the fresh viewpoint, the new "twist" that a writer can give it. GALAXY cannot be condemned because her stories are of a type.

And there are no more "type" stories in GALAXY than there are in ASTOUNDING, a fact that Mr. Chappell failed to, or refused to, acknowledge. If we subject the latest (May) issue of ASF to the same close scrutiny that Chappell gave the February GALAXY, we find it abounding in "type" stories.

For instance, take Everett Cole's "Millennium." It's one of Campbell's favorite plots. The familiar type is given to us right in the introduction: "There are devices a high-level culture could produce that simply don't belong in the hands of incompetents of lower cultural evolution. The finest and most civilized of tools can be made a menace..."

We find this well-worn idea time and again in ASTOUNDING. "The Players," "Time

Crime," "Neighbor," "Fighting Philosopher;" all illustrate the effects of a superior culture upon a lesser culture or cultures. Sure, they are good stories -- but they are type stories.

The rest of the stories in this issue are the same way; their parallels can be found repeatedly in the past ASTOUNDINGS. And they will be found again, in future issues. No, we cannot limit criticisms of "type" stories to GALAXY alone. Basic plot forms can be found in all of the magazines in the field.

And anyone who is convinced that GALAXY is rapidly plunging downhill has only to compare her circulation and sales records with those of other science fiction magazines. These figures show that somebody -- a great many sombodies -- do not seem to realize, or mind, that GALAXY is in the depths of the 'sewers.'

If that's slummin', I'll slum.

((I don't think Chappell was lamenting the fact that, generally, type stories are used by GALAXY so much as the specific type which is being used too much in his opinion: watered-down "wide-appeal" science fiction which might be called "future fiction" and which by its very nature is invariably shallow and trite. I notice you didn't defend the cover policy.

Your mention of GALAXY circulation figures is interesting, but rather barren of specifics. I don't remember ever seeing any such in a fanzine, and I don't recall Gold publishing them. I understand such info is top-secret and kept very, very hush-hush by the publishers and editors. Do you have some special "in" with a member of the inner-circle?))

ROBERT COULSON, 626 Court Street, Huntington, Indiana. Thoroughly enjoyed the letter column, especially Fred Chappell's comments on GALAXY, and Dean Grennell's remarks about cheap stencils. Not that I agree whole-heartedly with Grennell -- especially after noting, in Boggs' letter, the price of a Gestetner. Grennell may not know this, but very few faneds can afford to spend \$240 on a mimeo, buy high-quality paper at \$2.50 a ream, and use \$5-per-quire stencils. Fans, at least the fans I know, just do not have that kind of money, or even a reasonable facsimile. Possibly I'm wronging him, since he mentioned a "reasonable degree of legibility." But he gave the impression that he thought only the best materials could produce a passable fanzine.

((I think you exaggerate a bit. And a Gestetner only costs \$11.50 per month for the rest of your natural life. Gestencils are comparably priced at \$2.85 per quire -- at least in Portland. As for paper at \$2.50 per ream....this is 20# white at \$1.18 per ream. It is possible to almost literally forget about the technical difficulties of mimeography with a Gestetner -- just squeeze a bit of ink from the handy ink-tube once in a while...and turn the crank and try to avoid offset. And even offset can be avoided by using the Janke Anti-Slipsheet, Anti-Offset Process: "As the sheets come from the machine, you grab each one and lay them in rotation on about six different stacks. The extra time lets them dry a little and soak a little and there is no noticeable offset..." The quote is from a recent Grennell letter.))

FRANCIS T. LANEY, 2439 Cooley Place, Pasadena 7, California. Charles Burbee kindly sent me his copy of PSYCHOTIC which spent so much space propagandizing, promulgating, and otherwise discussing the subject of one F. Towner Laney.

"For Laney changed the face of fandom." (!!!)

This I doubt like all billy-hell, simply on the evidence contained in this very

same issue of your magazine. Take, for instance, Peter Graham's very well written and interesting SFCon Report. The lay reader, which of course I am, finds all manner of things set forth at which to cock an eyebrow. The juvenile exhibitionism of leaving quote-cards stuck hither and yon. The young fans crashing the party in room 318 and raising so much hell the house detective had to be called. (This of course is one of the fannish foibles I always detested, this insistence by the less desirable persons that their goddamn noxious presence is the one thing in the world I couldn't live without.) The incredible prices for the originals in the auction--going as high as \$34.00 for something of virtual no resale value. The cops being called to settle the intellectual squabbles of these citizens of tomorrow in the world of today. Then Graham himself and cohorts raising screaming hell in the street at their buddies on the 5th floor.

And, scattered through, one sees references to show that such people as Walter J. Daugherty, Forrest J. Ackerman, Joe Gibson and Art Saha are still with you. Sure, nice guys with good points, particularly Ackerman, but...if Laney had made any worthwhile changes in the face of fandom (worthwhile, that is, to my own point of view of say 1947 to about 1950 or 1951) those four probably would be gone out into the great yonder or something, since I seem to remember having some violent set-tos with all four of them, particularly Daugherty. I have no quarrel with any of them now, because there is no reason whatever why any of them should ever again have any faintest connection with me.

One thing McCain says about me I bitterly wish were true: "he had an ability to see instantly through many layers of sham and pretense..." A large portion of the troubles I've gotten into during my life has been for an almost complete lack of this ability.

And one thing I very strongly disagree with: McCain says he cannot see "why the fan who chooses this course ((i.e. fandom as a way of life)) should become the fair target for anyone's gibes." Looks to me as though anyone who chooses any course too far off the track of reasonableness is a fair target.

And of course when he mentions my "near-psychotic hatred of so many seemingly innocuous things" he totally misses the point--namely that I simply thought it was all funnier than hell. During the nearly six years of activity which I indulged in after quitting fandom (yes, McCain, that makes me a fair target....). I can recall only one thing that I gave a faint damn about, and that was FAPA. My interest in that was simply that FAPA was the only medium I had for written self-expression. Thus, anytime something arose which looked to me as though it might change FAPA for the worse, I seriously took up the cudgels. Otherwise I was writing almost entirely for the titillation and edification of one Charles E. Burbee and to a much lesser extent to amuse Rotsler and Dewey and one or two others.

If my writing to amuse this one man changed the face of fandom I don't know what to say.

I guess if you are seriously interested in something, and someone tees off on it, it is pretty easy to think he is being serious. And of course, I never made the mistake of thinking that fans had feelings and sensibilities like people do. Certainly fannish behavior as a whole scarcely gave me that impression, and then of course fans prated so much about being a bit apart. After all, if someone hints he is not exactly human, and indulges in highly un-human conduct, it is difficult to ascribe humanity to him, even though he is probably carried in the Census of the United States as a useful human being, right on a par with the garbage-collector or someone else performing a useful function.

Oh well.

A bit of historical background: "Fandom as a Way of Life" originally was the title of a rather tongue-in-cheek article by D. B. Thompson which he published in FAPA in 1943 or

1943 or 1944, and in which he examined some of fandom's then current trends and foibles. I've always thought the title was out of this world.

I defined "fugghead" once at some length in FAN-DANGO --- maybe someone ought to re-print this half-page article since the word is still in common fannish use.

I note Willis' letter re his sending me one of my own awards. As a matter of fact, I did not receive this until about a month ago, when it came to me through channells. (Channells being a euphemism for Burbee.) I loved it.

One of the reasons I dropped FAPA activity is that for a variety of reasons such minor writing ability as I had left me completely. This letter illustrates that very clearly, but what the hell.

I'm still a bit flabbergasted by McCain's article.

((Well, you know how it is...McCain was desperate for a subject for his column, so naturally had to fall back on you, a fannish myth. Don't be surprised if a neo comes up to you one day and asks, "Are you myth Francis T. Laney?"

Sure do wish you would join FAPA again....))

RAY SCHAFFER, JR., 122 N. Wise Street, North Canton, Ohio. In PSY #19, Joe Gibson mentions that the chief influence on promag sales is distribution and newsstand display. I'll support Joe on this hypothesis, but I also feel that the size of the mag plays an important role, and I'm not referring here to thickness or number of pages. Rather, I am referring to the page size. According to WRITER'S DIGEST, the only pocket slicks experiencing high sales are READER'S DIGEST, CORONET, and PAGEANT; all the other small slicks are having a rough time of it, both in and out of the stf field. While on the other hand your large detective slicks are having good sales returns, and this includes a large percentage of them.

As a matter of fact, no matter what nature of material appears in the large slick, they all, with a few exceptions, seem to sell better than your small slick. Which leads me to think that what the stf field needs for its badly sought-after boost in sales is for several of the better mags to metamorphose into the larger page structure. Such a layout might attract some of the better, established writers outside the stf field; and likewise, attract some of the reading populus who are ignorant of good stf. Too many people associate the small format of GALAXY, ASF, and MOF&SF with their brothers, the pulps; and therefore, snub them when selecting reading material.

But as Joe said, distribution is a big factor. I'm well familiar with this nasty situation, for Ballantine pb's haven't made an appearance in the Akron-Canton area since the first of the year, simply because the local distributors have the disgusting habit of returning books to the publisher without even removing them from their shipping container. With so many mags and pb's on the stands today, many of them never reach the newsstand, either because of lack of space to display them, or lack of time to deliver them to the newsstand dealer. In my locale it's a combination of the above two plus downright laziness on the part of the distributor. I understand from numerous accounts in fanmags, and from my correspondence, that this situation is occurring in several other sections of the nation. As for newsstand display, in Akron, Ohio, there is a fairly large book store of which I am an irregular patron. The proprietors have the irritating habit of displaying the stf mags behind the john at the back of the establishment. And it's so damn dark there you almost need a flashlight to locate what you want.

| (('display' doesn't seem quite the proper word in that instance.))

The People Who Make OTHER WORLDS

No. 69: the Majadero



Thaddeus F. Sweetbreath is a genuine old-timer at the great game of science fiction and probably the oldest hand on our present staff. He has read OTHER WORLDS and those other science fiction magazines ever since the day he shuffled into our office seeking a job, last week. A bright youngster, Thad is already reminiscing of "the good old days" and likes to tell us all about his collection, which dates back to a copy of the March issue he casually lifted from the office files.

Having nothing else better to hold the door open on hot days, we hired him on the spot. Young Thaddeus is more than a door-stop however and in winter weather he makes himself particularly useful.

Not long ago one of our great writers, visiting the office, found his car stalled in the icy slush of the street; our majadero, having a gritty personality, hurled himself beneath the rear wheels and thus freed the car. The grateful writer gave him an autographed manuscript and the boy is beside himself with joy. To keep busy, Thaddeus spends his leisure moments prying return-postage off manuscript envelopes, an act which causes untold merriment among the office staff.

Sweetbreath's parents were those rare people who encouraged their son to read science fiction, finding that it kept him from being continually underfoot. When he expressed an interest in nuclear chemistry they purchased the finest amateur kit available, hoping he would blow himself up. That tells us that he was the only boy in his neighborhood who could bring home science fiction magazines without first tearing off the covers. His parents, wise and understanding, knew that sooner or later those covers would attract the attention of a juvenile officer and thus turn the youngster's life in new directions. Our majadero came to us directly from a House of Correction, joining the happy little family that helps make OTHER WORLDS. He has been making OTHER WORLDS since the day he discovered the pettycash box.

Officially, our majadero opens all incoming mail, carefully sorting it out to the proper departments. Manuscripts and artwork go into one cigar box, reader's letters into another, while subscriptions go into a third and money orders into his pockets. Once a week he sweeps out the office on a "finder's keepers" basis. Today, acting as supervisor to Rap and Bea, he helps to bring you the great stories in OTHER WORLDS, often turning them out overnight when a deadline throws the office into a frenzy.

---Bob Tucker

second session—

POETRY CORNER?

The following is a product of the warped imaginations of Larry Arnold and myself.

THE POWER OF POSITIVE DRINKING

Sadly,
Bradley
Finished his liquor.

He wept,
Then crept
To the sink to be sicker.

Oh, well....

INTERVIEW WITH MR. DRIESKE

Mr. Drieske leaned back in his green leather chair, put his feet on his red leather hassock, and gazed quizically at the cover of the August IF. "I suppose," he said, "you want me to comment on this issue, eh?"

I shifted a bit uncomfortably. "Well, sir, the IF people have been kind enough to send copies to you, and I think it only right and proper that you say something about the magazine."

The old man raised an eyebrow and continued his gaze at the cover. "Heh. I find it odd that they should feature a story by Asimov and Somebody named April Smith on the cover, yet have the actual painting illustrate, symbolically, a story by Winston Marks."

"Sir, the stories...."

"Dammit, young man, stop pushing me! I rather resent this implied obligation to comment just because the IF management sends me copies. I'll comment, but in my own way and in my own good time...understand?"

I swallowed and tried to sink into the straight back chair I was on. The old man was silent for a full minute.

"I found 'Bleedback', by Marks, entirely incredible." He glared at me as if daring me to object. "It might not have been so incredible if a proper amount of effort had been made to motivate the characters, but the idea of a mad scientist marketing a toy that 'plunged our country into an insane nightmare...millions of people dying in agony...the total disruption and near dissolution of our nation' is pretty hard to accept unless thoroughly established. AND the story is told past tense; a policeman recounts what happened, neatly destroying a good deal of suspense since the reader knows it all came out all right. Fauugh!

"Birthright," by this April Smith person was at once intriguing and mildly annoying. She has this Planetary Administrator, who is almost straight out of Plato's Republic, sent to a planet which is peopled by a race similar to Bacon's New Atlantis natives. But the PA is imbued with a sort of 1955 American moral-ethic code. Quite a combination. Man has spread out all over the galaxy and the ideals, ambitions, mores, etc., haven't changed a bit. All the change on Earth that Smith allows is a continuation of the present materialistic American social structure...a structure that apparently spread all over the world during a period of hundreds of years...and didn't change basically at all! And it must be assumed that the other top graduates of the Training Institute were sent out to administer planets with the same morals and ethics that our hero had before he learned they were wrong from the superior natives where he was sent. AND the characterization was deficient as usual."

psychotic

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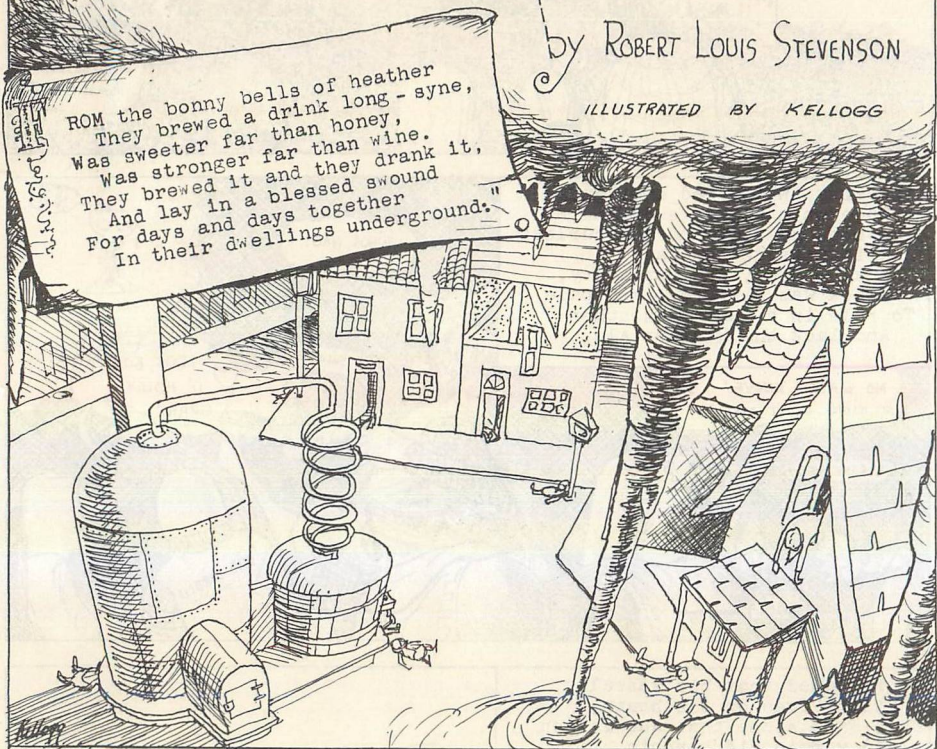
Heather Ale

A GALLOWAY LEGEND

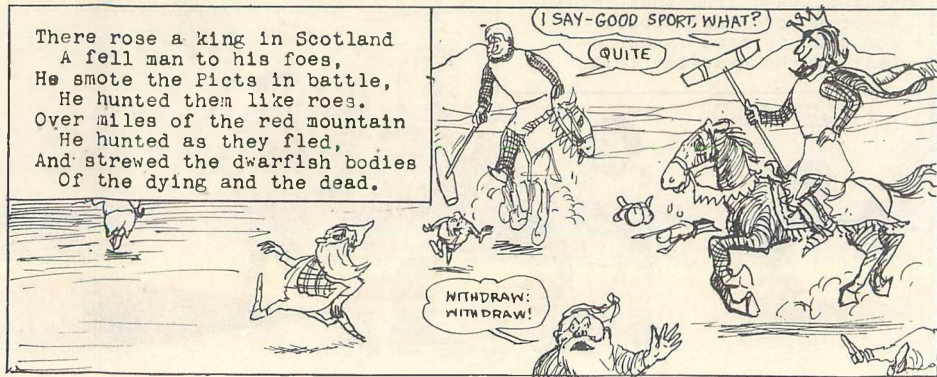
by ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

ILLUSTRATED BY KELLOGG

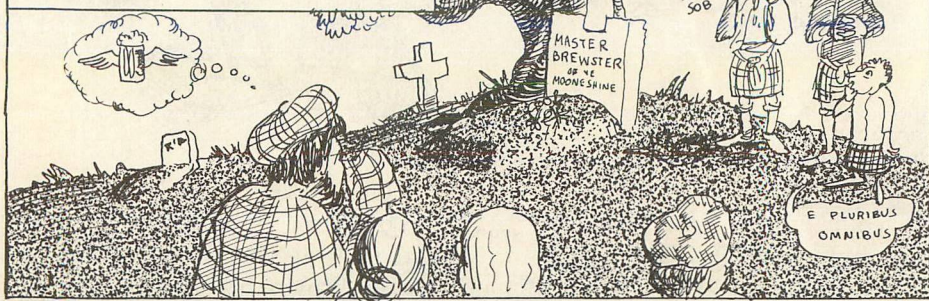
FROM the bonny bells of heather
They brewed a drink long - syne,
Was sweeter far than honey,
Was stronger far than wine.
They brewed it and they drank it,
And lay in a blessed swoond
For days and days together
In their dwellings underground."



There rose a king in Scotland
A fell man to his foes,
He smote the Picts in battle,
He hunted them like roes.
Over miles of the red mountain
He hunted as they fled,
And strewed the dwarfish bodies
Of the dying and the dead.



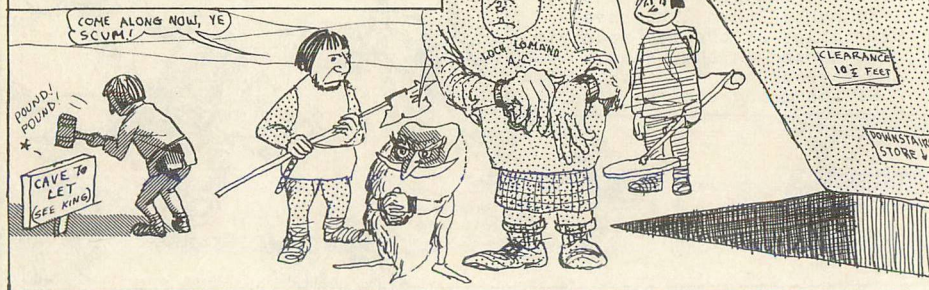
Summer came in the country,
 Red was the heather bell;
 But the manner of the brewing
 Was none alive to tell.
 In graves that were like children's
 On many a mountain head,
 The Brewsters of the Heather
 Lay numbered with the dead.

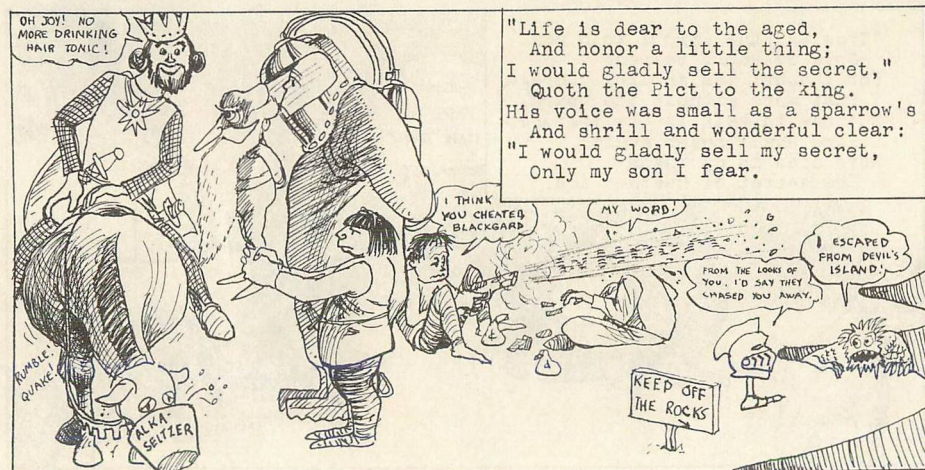
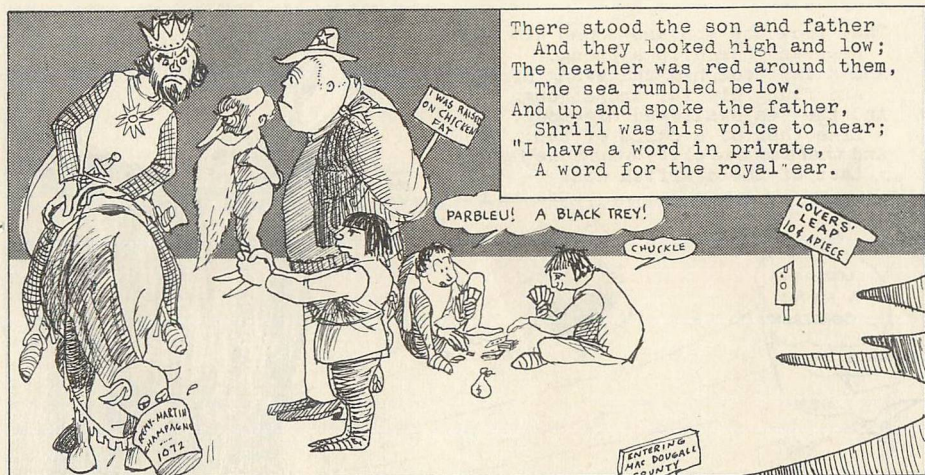


The king in the red moorland
 Rode on a summer's day;
 The bees hummed, and the curlews
 Cried beside the way.
 The king rode, and was angry,
 Black was his brow, and pale,
 To rule in a land of heather
 And lack the Heather Ale.



It fortune'd that his vassals,
 Riding free on the heath,
 Came on a stone that was fallen
 And vermin hid beneath.
 Rudely plucked from their hiding,
 Never a word they spoke:
 A son and his aged father —
 Last of the dwarfish folk.

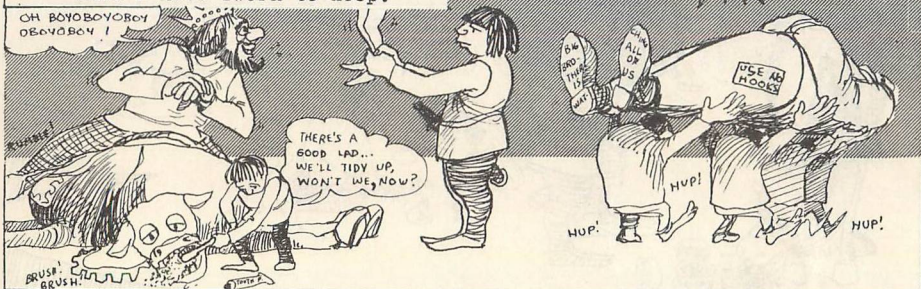




"For life is a little matter,
And death is naught to the young;
And I dare not sell my honor
Under the eye of my son.
Take him, O king, and bind him,
And cast him far in the deep;
And it's I will tell the secret
That I have sworn to keep."

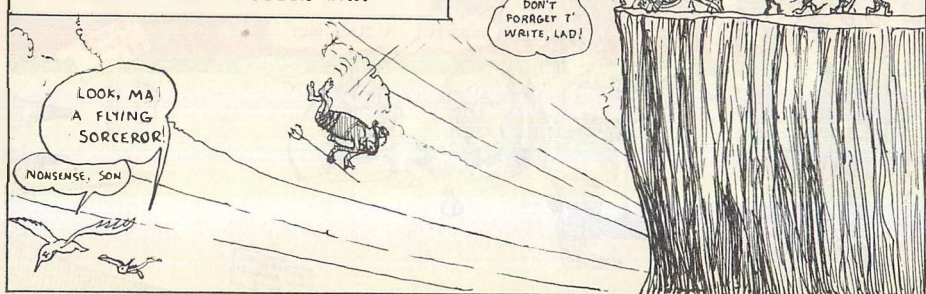
LET ME DOWN, YE BLOOMIN',
BLINKIN' BLOODY SIBLING
OF A SAGACIOUS, SIRINT (CATING),
INSIPID CEPHALOPOD!!

♪ ...HAW HITS HOFF
WE GO T' N'OMSH'R...



They took the son and bound him,
Neck and heels in a thong,
And a lad took him and swung him
And flung him far and strong,
And the sea swallowed his body,
Like that of a child of ten;
And there on the cliff stood the father
Last of the dwarfish men.

DON'T
FORGET T'
WRITE, LAD!



"True was the word I told you:
Only my son I feared;
For I doubt the sapling courage
That goes without the beard.
But now in vain is the torture,
Fire shall never avail:
Here dies in my bosom
The secret of Heather Ale."

SIGH
PASS THE
HAIR TONIC!

