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HERRIMAN'S KRAZY KAT



By

RALPH

KARGHILL



In his book, THE SEVEN LIVELY ARTS, 1922, Gilbert Seldes selected Charlie Chaplin and George Herriman's KRAZY KAT as being America's outstanding contributions to world art.

Perhaps this high praise might be disputed.....I would not do so...but it somehow seems right that the patheticomic little clown and the pot-bellied cat should be paired together. I suspect that they are no strangers to each other.

Not that their biographies are similar. Chaplin's cinematic portrayals recounted but one story...that of the little man, both humorous and tragic, who existed on the fringe of this world's society; typically, a tramp in "City Lights", a Jew in "The Great Dictator", and the paradoxically lovable murderer in "Monsieur Verdeaux". Herriman's strip told but one story also, and that one of the oldest stories in the western world---but Herriman breathed into it such an incredible freshness and life that it is hardly recognizable as such: The love triangle.

At the apex of that triangle is KRAZY KAT and at the other two points are the strips two other major characters, Ignatz Mouse and Officer Bull Pupp. Their relationship is a strange but simple one: Pupp loves Kat, "hates" Mouse; Mouse "despises" Kat, "hates" Pupp; Kat loves Mouse, hates no one. Here is recognizable an inversion of the so-familiar dog chases cat, cat chases mouse theme, but with Herriman it was more than a cute "gimmick". Against that basic Background he worked more than twelve thousand variations.

The three have antithetic and, in the case of Pupp verses Mouse. Antipathetic characters.

The Kat is a dreamer. Gentle "beyond words", he is gentle with everything but words, a mangler of the English and Spanish languages. To Krazy, the world is a magic place. This was rather well-illustrated by the daily strip of April 22nd, 1942. We find Krazy a visitor to the home of Ignatz. A series of whimses about flying carpets has been appearing and so the reader's attention is immediately brought to the two similar-appearing carpets lying side by side on the floor.

"Magic koppets, dollin?" asks the Kat.

"Yes," says Ignatz.

"Both of them magic?"

"No, only one of them is magic."

Suddenly, one of the carpets leaps into the air, does a flip-flop as if to dust itself, and settles back upon the floor.

"Witch one?" asks Krazy, for such a happening might be expected of any carpet in his enchanted world.

"Dear K.," says Officer Pupp, "his life is warped with fancy, woofed with dreams," and in so saying he reveals some of his own personality. Let "Kop" speak again, this time to a "stranger", a visitor to that Kwaint Kommune, Coconino County, and he will reveal still more:

"Take a good look at this handsome person approaching, Coconino County's perfect person, our super socialite, fashion's favorite--Krazy Kat. A big heart, a sweet soul, a flower's spirit, dream fabric. And then---there's our thorn, our ache, our pain, our sudge (pardon my blush stranger)----the very thought of that rascal chokes. I mean none other than Ignatz House, who makes evil the day by tossing bricks at that dear Kat."

The "stranger", by the way, turned out to be none other than that "thorn" in disguise, a disguise which was quickly seen through by the ever alert eye of Coconino County's single and singular "Constabulary", namely Officer Pupp.

"Offisuh Pupp" is a practical man of the world (the officious, official world at that) but, nevertheless, he is a sentimentalist, which is one of the chief features distinguishing him from his traditional enemy, Ignatz.

Ignatz is a rebel, a cynic, a jeerer. And yet---as pointed out by a karakter, "the Professor" in the March 23rd, 1941, strip--there seems to be something noble about him.

"Hah," replied Officer Pupp, "but you make no mention of the vagabond in the wastrel."

Said the other, "Vagabond, aye, and truly so. His sinful tossage of bricks proclaims it---yet it hardly obscures the valiant within him, withal."

"And for his sins do I jail him, to that duty I confine my efforts."

"Surely, Sir, you could spare a slight eye to his virtue--'t were well worth a wee winkee, eh?"

"Not a blink, not a peek, I seek sin and I punish it, even should it throb in the heart of an angel."

"Ah, well," said the Professor, "I must fare me onward; yet be, if you can, a bit less bruske and a mite more mindful of the merit of his mettle."

Despite "Kop's" protestations, his advisor's words had their effect. Meditating to himself, he thinks: "Ummn, he does spend a pile of pennies for bricks. That's courage in a way. Tossing them is no weakling's job. Ummn, glory of a sort does seem to glean about him...a bit..b-b-but---"

BUT the result of all this is that at the end of the strip, Ignatz still winds up in jail, but this time he has been crowned by his keeper with a laurel wreath, emblem of nobility.

If the Professor and Officer Pupp try to discover the

source of Ignatz's nobility by merely describing his actions, they will fail for that is but half of the story. That quality which we sense about Ignatz arises from a contrast of his actions with what he is---a mouse. If Officer Pupp were to carry out Ignatz's actions, it would make him seem like a pretty bully but for tiny Ignatz to do so, makes him a rebel against the very order of nature, itself. Few have the courage to combat such odds.

The "sinful tossage of bricks" is one of Ignatz's chief delights in life. His aim (and it's nearly always straight to the mark) is to "krease the bean of that kat." Besides whatever symbolic means this has---and I will attempt to explain those in a moment---it also has the effect of bringing Krazy "down to earth", both literally and figuratively. But the curious thing about Krazy is that he loves it. It is doubtful if, unlike another often-mentioned cat, this "curiosity" will be fatal to him. He recuperates with great rapidity and is already all ready for the next missile.

The relationship of the three was simply and effectively defined in the daily strip of November 17, 1939.

Krazy, sitting alone: "He, I'm such a plan ket. I got no fugga, no face, no fortune--nor purse, poise or position--ey! And yet, he's true by me--why should I complain?"

Bop!, a brick hits him in the head. "L'il dahlinski!" he says, meaning Ignatz who is seen in the background. "Is there anybody in this voil more consistint than him?"

"There sure is!" says Officer Pupp, who has appeared to drag away our brick-tossing knave.

According to Waugh's THE COMICS, John Aldern Carpenter remarked in the program note to his Krazy Kat ballet, 1922, that Krazy was the greatest optimist of all time as he maintained an affair with Ignatz Mouse which was complicated by the fact that the gender of each remains a mystery. This is I think, an overstatement of the problem. We know Ignatz's sex: He is married (to a rather mousey-looking "femmy") and has three children. I consider that conclusiv evidence. Also, there's little doubt about Officer Bull Pupp, that "man of affairs." (The word "affairs", here, must not be meant in its more licentious significance if we are to judge from his somewhat limited success with Krazy.)

But the Kat remains a mystery.

This mystery has been amply expressed in the strip, itself. On May 27th, 1932, we find a census taker talking to Krazy.

Census Taker: "How comes it you say that you're a bachelor?"

Krazy: "Sure I am, I haven't any wife."

C.T.: "And how comes it you say that you're a spinster?"

Krazy: "I ain't got no husband."

C. T., in exasperation: "Gosh, how long is a silly situation like this going to last?"

Krazy: "Until I get wedded."

For once, Krazy got socked by a brick tossed by someone besides Ignatz.

The theme of sexlessness or "the mystery of sex" is expressed on an even more general level than ~~this~~, it appears and reappears constantly in the strip. Often, Krazy is not the principle participant involved, but others. The author has counted over two dozen such stories in strips in the 1930-'44 period alone. A typical enough example is the March 26th, 1941, Sunday page.

As the scene opens, we find Krazy talking to an insect of the Coleoptera Hemiptera family.

Krazy: "Lady Bugg, Lady Bugg, fly away home--"

Mrs. Kwakk-wakk appears and says: "And your house is on fire--"

Krazy: "An'I bet it ain't injoored, needa--"

Enter "Kop": "And your children are alone--"

Mrs. Kwakk-wakk: "Yess, poor little things, yess--"

Krazy: "An' I bet they is all hot in the feets, too!"

Kop: "G'on, git to your kids."

Mrs. Kwakk-wakk: "And to your home before it's a cinder."

Enter Ignatz, arms flung wide: "Well, well, well! Megilla! Megilla McUlata, YOU---of ALL people!"

Kop: "Oh-hoh, he comes, "Big He", a gallon of gall in a pint bottle."

Mrs. Kwakk-wakk: "Showoff."

Krazy: "Still, he's nice."

Ignatz walks away with one arm around his diminutive companion, buddy-buddy style: "How's the ole boy? Still living at the club? Still single--and happy--eh?"

Kop, Krazy, and Kwakk-wakk are left saucer-eyed.

In his sometimes-beautiful introduction to the Henry Holt collection of KRAZY KAT strips, the poet, E. E. Cummings arrives at the conclusion that Krazy, however disguised, is the heroine of our little drama. He postulates this with some enthusiasm and force, but I'm afraid that at this point, and on this point, I have to part "kum'pny" with Cummings.

My thought is that, without his recognizing it, he has succumbed to the temptation to interpret things in an old familiar pattern--and, further, that the truth of the matter is so clearly visible that we have overlooked it: That is, that Krazy is sexless in that same sense that little children are sexless. Here, I believe, we have struck the key-note to what is in much of the strip, that by accepting this one assumption, many of its "mysteries" become apparent to us.

Before we begin to explore this thought further, though, let's do a bit of back-tracking: Briefly, just how did KRAZY start?

Coulton Waugh's The Comics, (says the jacket blurb,) tells the story of "How Krazy Kat developed from a little gag in the corner of another comic strip into the darling of the intellectuals and the subject of a John Alden Carpenter Ballet."

That is, it tells that story among others as The Comics, an uncritical but otherwise excellent sourcebook, details the history of nearly all major strips. It is significant that the Kat is the only one which has full chapter devoted to him. This is fortunate. The author, as a member of the younger generation, was not on the scene when the majority of KRAZY strips appeared. When I first became aware, during the past year and a half, that for thirty-four years there existed a comic strip of rare beauty and originality, I made moderately extensive efforts to get my hands on every possible one. This was not as easy as it sounds. The Los Angeles Public Library has a surprisingly inefficient system, and occasionally I found that in order to receive permission to obtain back-dated volumes of the Los Angeles Herald Express, in which KRAZY KAT appeared, I had to pretend to be a member of the student body of a local university and that my assignment was to study the growth of the American comic strip; this made me feel rather like a conspirator. And grubbing in attics for stacks of ancient newspapers does little good, either--during the war they had little things called paper drives, which now seem to have been incredibly thorough. But the ones I did manage to read, most in the '30s, made it all worth it. It was a genuine adventure in sheer enjoyment.

Anyway, according to Waugh, the first hint of things to come appeared in September, 1909, in Herriman's strip, "Mary's Home From College." On this day--specific date not given--Mary, who fancies that she has some artistic talent, has been spreading paint about the household, much to the dismay of the cook and others. Down in one corner is a minute panel showing a mild--appearing cat looking up with a "Sir?" from a bowl of milk to a canine creature holding his stomach in agony, saying "Touch it not, Kat, touch it not, somebody's doped it with fresh paint."

The basic features seem to be present, alright--except for Ignatz, the unmousey mouse. But, patience, he appears soon.

As time went by, "Mary's Home From College" became "The Dingbat Family" and, shortly thereafter, the Dingbat's cat began to occupy a small but permanent position in the strip. (Still later, "The Dingbat Family" became "The Family Upstairs" still concerning the Dingbats who are now "obsessed by their weird, off-stage torture at the hands of 'the family upstairs'," who are never shown, like the invisible rabbit in the play "Harvey".) The July 26, 1910, strip had the following featurette. First, we see a tiny mouse, then a stone, next the Kat, indulging in innocent rumination. Mouse picks up stone, aims, lets go. Next panel: Kat, alone, paw to head.

That was Ignatz alright.

The strip here is in its embryonic form; even the stone will later mature into a brick. This is experimentation.

One-year-minus-one-day-later, still another characteristic of the strip became openly evident.

Krazy: "My, but there's nothing to do but get lonesome now-a-hot-days." He spies a high distant dot. "Hello, what's this coming through thugh the air?" He smiles happily, vacantly "How fast it travels!" Bam! Of course, He has been struck on the head with a brick. "Dear little Ignatz, it's one of his kalling kards." He turns it over and over, hopefully looking for some inscription.

Herriman's true artistic genius didn't emerge until KRAZY KAT crystallized as a separate strip. Those who have seen examples of his work can little doubt that he was more than a competent artist, but showed true inspiration: his simple, scratchy lines were spontaneously expressive. Krazy, himself, is an excellent example of this, evidencing, to use Cumming's fine phrase, "a secret grace and obvious clumsiness." Herriman's sense of spotting and arrangement was among the best; further, he did his own coloring, a rarity. To my knowledge, the only King Features man at present who does so, is Milton Cannif, creator of the popular STEVE CANYON.

Perhaps the outstanding artwork peculiarity of KRAZY KAT was the shifting, consistently inconsistent backgrounds. A house would become a tree, then a huge, jutting pile of rock, next a fountain, and so on. This scene-changing was done silently, unnoticeably between panels and was carried on so effortlessly and secretively that Krazy and his friends never seemed aware of the unstable nature of their world: possibly, they merely accepted it as the nature of things.

I believe that this background-shifting motif was suggested to Herriman by two factors. To explain the first, I must mention that there really is a Coconino County. It is famous as the site of the Grand Canyon, whose fantastically-varied rock formations do not shift but otherwise conform with the general terrain depicted in the strip; one might well imagine that they could, and Herriman did. Herriman loved the Southwest and its clear, bright air permeates his strip.

As for the second factor: This "scene-changing" business reminds us of the off-stage furore in "The Family Upstairs," hinting that perhaps he conceived of his strips in play fashion; I believe this to be so. Many of the panels had "curtains" at their sides and, occasionally, footlights would be present at the bottom of one. The very speeches sometimes seem like entrance or exit lines, and their postures now and then display a conscious sense of stage presence. Possibly, for these reasons KRAZY lent itself easily to ballet development.

But there were other reasons for this last, too. Chiefly, there was no great gap to bridge to think of KRAZY being presented in an older, more impressive, art form for KRAZY was poetry. Herriman was one of the first man to take advantage of a unique medium for artistic expression--the comic strip in which both art and prose are

combined as one. Few others have dared or have been able to do so, which is why the comic strip has so long been synonymous with juvenilia and even when slanted for adult audiences is largely a means for presenting illustrated soap opera or running gags about family life. Only once in a decade does something really worthwhile come along. For a happy period, I thought that Crockett Johnson's BARNABY was going to be one such, but recently I've found myself skipping the strip in the daily newspaper. Nowadays, I deliberately take an out-of-town paper so as to read the only comic that promises to offer anything worth remembering, Walt Kelley's POGO.

I call KRAZY poetry because it was more than something with which one passed a pleasant minute of time, but which one went on thinking about even after the funnies had been folded back up into their companion leaves of newsprint.

To return to an earlier thesis, Krazy had principally a childlike attitude towards life; that is, he had almost virtually no preconceived idea about the world about him and the universe in general. Ignatz and Officer Pupp differ from him in this respect. They are "men of the world". They are "in the know". To Ignatz, Krazy is a cottonheaded infantile; to "Kop" he is an "inspired weakling," a dreamer. To both, he is the incarnation of naivety. What each of them can't see is that Krazy, wide-eyed, sees more than both of them.

Krazy is always the winner in the battle between "Kop" and Mouse, but that they don't see, either.

Krazy's personality is the touchstone transforming theirs and his world into a new, more delightful pattern. Ignatz's nobility has already been mentioned, but that is made possible only by Krazy's nobility. In his regard for Ignatz, Krazy is doing more than obeying the "love thy enemy" admonition, for the mouse has never been the enemy but the prey of the cat; this one new situation, alone, enabled Ignatz's character to develop free of an ancient fear and thus attain a new stature. He overcompensates a trifle, perhaps, but this is to be expected for the relations between rodent-sapiens and feline-sapiens during the first millenium.

One may read into this a moral if one wishes. The strip leaves it unspoken.

The personalities of Krazy, Ignatz and Offisuh Pupp were well established in the early 1910s, but one of the finest expressions of their characters appeared in the December 11, 1938, Sunday color page.

We see Ignatz standing, talking to Krazy who holds several roughly-circular objects in his arms.

Ignatz: "Balls of yarn, my dear Krazy? Going in for weavery, I take it?"

Krazy: "You take it right, dollin. I'm about to wiv a febric."

Krazy departs and we see Ignatz talking to Offisuh Pupp

Ignatz: "Fancy those foolish fingers fashioning a fabric. Ah, the futile foof and fuff of it--a waste of warp, a wanton wear of weft and woof--foowy!"

Pupp: "You blow a bombastic blast, my boastful buffoon."

Ignatz: "If it's a blanket, well, could he weave a horse into it --- if a rug, a bug?"

Kop: "Deft fingers will weave as no feckless fate has wove before -- a fine fabric, fay, with the favor of a fanciful finesse!"

Officer Pupp is getting mad.

Ignatz: "I did but suggest a patern, Koppie, t'was all."

Kop: "I'll weave a jail around you, y-y-you---"

The last, verylarge, panel shows Krazy asleep before his loom. Officer Pupp is gazing in "mild surmise" upon the febrick the Ket has fashioned---a rug with a brick woven into it. Krazy has taken this "emblem of harm, instrument of sin," undoubtedly tossed by Ignatz, and by his constructive, unconsciously-benigne efforts has made it a part of a beautiful thing. It represents, in the most concrete form available, his relationship with Ignatz in particular and the world in general.

In the Molt KRAZY KAT volume, there is an undated Sunday strip with a note from Herriman in a lower corner in response, I believe, to some communication.

The "message" says:

"You have written truth, you friends
of the shadows, yet be not
harsh with "Krazy"--
He is but a shadow, himself,
caught in the web of
this mortal skein.
We call him "Cat",
We call him "Crazy",
yet he is neither.
At some time he will ride away
to you people of the twilight.
His password will be the echoes of
a vesper bell, his coach a
zephyr from the west -
Forgive him,
for you will
Understand him no better than we
Who linger on this side of
the pale."

George Herriman died on April 25th, 1944.

In rare recognition of true artistic genius, and contrary to all previous policies, King Features held no competitions for the selection of a new artist to continue a strip which was uniquely Herriman's own.

That, perhaps, was his greatest tribute.

The End

SCIENCE FICTION IS EASY

By

W HAL R. MOORE W

Any mad fiend of a writer can write science fiction. If he can write any other kind of story, he can write one of the variations of SF; either serious scientific SF or pulp space operas. Space operas are easiest, of course, needing only bizarre trappings and gadgets.

Space operas, after all, are simply action stories in interplanetary settings. To think up these bizarre trappings and odd gadgets it is necessary only to have a rudimentary knowledge of general science and astronomy.

All you need to begin, supposing in advance that you know a little bit about plotting, is a nodding acquaintance with the planets. A few hours study will tell you the general characteristics of the planets. Your hero may expect to encounter large quantities of carbon dioxide gas---and hence ultra luxuriant jungles, the experienced writers would lead you to believe-----on Venus for instance. Mars specializes in ~~rarefied~~ atmosphere and limited water supply. On Mercury the heat would be unbearable, and on Pluto the cold is likewise calculated to render terrestrial life untenable.

All right, you aren't going to skip your hero around to more than one planet or moon if you want to keep within some of the bounds of plausibility, so you settle on a single locale for your story. For example make it Titan, the sixth moon of Saturn. You choose Titan because the books tell you it is a mysterious moon--little is known about it. The less known about your SF locale the better for you. You can do anything there, the more bizarre and unusual the better.

So Titan it is. Now comes the easy part. For your story you need motivation. Treasure is always a fine motivation. The hero is searching after great riches -- for a noble purpose, of course. Maybe his is a quest for finances to carry on a tremendous project that will benefit all of mankind.

What kind of treasure? Here is where those bizarre trappings come into play. First, it must be a treasure indigenous to the area. Second, it must be recognizable to the reader as related to something he knows. What kind of treasure, indeed? It is simple. What kind of treasure is sought here on earth?

"Pearls," offers the man in the navy blue moustache O. K., let's try pearls. But, on Titan there is no water, we learn. So our "pearls" have to grow in some element different than the terrestrial oyster. Well, let's put them in flowers

quartz flowers that thrive without water or carbon dioxide. Exotic moon flowers in which grow the fabulous Twilight Jewels of Titan, Each worth several fortunes on dear old Terra.....they even grow for the same reason; a grain of sand imbedded in the heart of the flower.

But, says the book, there is no atmosphere on Titan. How then, without wind currents, did the sand get into the flowers. Well, obviously then, the sand will have to move of its own power. Which creates for us, ready made, a fine obstacle. Nothing less than the dreaded "living sands" of Titan. You breathe life into these sands, explain that they constantly roam the surface of the moon seeking deposits of calcium. The sands are built-up as a constant and dreadful menace to our hero --- a juicy morsel of calcium himself, you know -- and your story is half written.

For the other half bring in a woman. Make her a millionairess sportsman from Terra. She is out on Titan on a lark. Looking for twilight jewels just for the damn hell of it. She, of course, hinders the hero in his own gruelling, heart breaking prospecting; endangers her life and his, several times exposes him to a big, fat case of L O V E. You can take the story from there. Only don't take it too far, I've already used it.

The foregoing is an example of my basic idea. Science Fiction is easy. All you have to do is Switch Common Terrestrial obstacles and threats to psuedoscientific counterparts.

So you need extra-terrestrial menaces. O. K., just for example let's take the earth terror of the Portuguese Man O' War (So help me, this is spontaneous.) This jelly fish is poisonous and causes severe burns and sometimes even death from its touch. So we are on venus. To make things worse fill the air with vagrant currents and super---deadly venus Men O'Ware. You guessed it. Named after their earth counterpart these little beasties float in the air, trailing long streamers that are deadly to any earthman without a special suit.

Your hero is in a Venusian prison camp falsely accused and convicted he----ectc., ectc. He escapes from the camp, but without a suit so he is in constant peril from air-borne jelly fish.

Or take---well, infection. The slightest scratch will turn the poor devil into a blue toadstool. Anything, animals of course, are easy. Any jungle animal you ever heard of or dreamed of can be lurking under yon thirty-foot fern leaf. Only they must be extra-terrestrial editions of these animals, remember. Or insects. Hahoy tiny termites that burrow under the flesh and the bones. Anything. It takes just a little thought.

Then, when you have an impressive lineup of terrifying menaces and insurmountable obstacles, sit down and write your story. I leave you there. Your own hard-won techniques of plotting and writing fit into your SF stories elsewhere.

When your rejection slips start coming back on sheets of pressed Martian chartruese fungus you'll know you're in. Try, it is easy, I tell you. Easy.

At least -- I think it is. I'll let you know for sure if I ever sell any of mine ---.

THE SENTIENT METEORITES

BY
WILLIAM D COX

They were three days out from Mars on the Mars to earth run; when it happened. The ship blew up. The next thing the crew knew, the found themselves out in space. A small group of men in space suits falling together back towards Mars.

Underwood made a quick calculation. "Fifteen days before we strike the atmosphere of Mars."

The men grew silent. Ryan spoke: "You sure that's right, Underwood? In sixteen days we could be saved. That's when the next ship is scheduled to leave for earth. We're right in their path---they couldn't miss us. We would be saved."

An aching silence came over the phones as Underwood mentally checked over the calculations. "No---no---I was right the first time. We'll enter the atmosphere at exactly one p.m. July the third."

Silence crept over the phone again. Finally, Underwood began to cry. Tears rushed from his eyes down his cheeks and came to rest on his upper lip, making it itch. He tried to reach up and wipe them off with his hand but his helmet was in the way. That made him burst into tears. His sobs came in over the phones to the other men, making the hardened space veterans uneasy.

"Take it easy, Underwood," ordered Ryan. "There's no need to go to pieces. We have a good chance of being saved. You know that often unscheduled privately-owned yachts take this course. We have a good chance of being saved, yet. All we have to do is to hold ourselves together mentally and we have a good chance of coming out of this alive."

"Liar, liar," screamed Underwood, "we're going to die! We'll burn! We'll burn to death when we hit the atmosphere!"

It was young Jenkins, who started to go to pieces next. "Shut up, shut up," he cried, "shut up or I'll kill you!"

Underwood's hysterical laughter came back over the phone. "Kill me. Ha ha ha ha ha. Kill me. How are you going to kill me, Jenkins. Strangle me to death! Ha ha ha ha."

Jenkins screamed back at him. "I'll kill you, I tell you." He sobed, "I'll find a way".

"You'd better start looking for a way then" laughed Underwood. "You've only got fifteen days."

"Cut it out," yelled Ryan, "What do you want to do, drive us all crazy. That's an order!"

"You're in no damn position to order any body," taunted Underwood, now feeling full of power.

Jenkins began to sob. "This must be a dream," he cried, nothing like this ever happens in real life."

"If you think it's a dream why don't you pinch yourself. Ha ha ha ha ha ha."

Jenkins tried to choke down his sobs. He failed. "I wish I could pinch myself. Oh God I wish I could."

Ha ha ha ha ha ha, If you're a sleep, Jenkins you really can pinch yourself. Ha ha ha ha. Go ahead, try it Jenkins. Ha ha ha!

Jenkins pushed his hand over to his leg and squeezed hard.

He woke up.

THE END

SOCIOLOGY AND FANTASY

BY FREDDY HERSHEY

Well, Westercon III is a thing of the past and memory now. It was a good show, made so by the wondrous co-operation of the the local fans, the authors, the generosity of Bonestell, the hard work and planning of the Outlanders, and the good showing in attendance in spite of the transit strike.

Financially, the affair was a whopping success. Fannishly speaking, it was better. Everyone has been very kind in their criticisms, and we are very happy that the planned program came off as perfectly as it did. Elsewhere, you will be reading reports of the affair; in the Shaggy, in the Outlander, and in other fanzines.

It is not my purpose here to discuss the Westercon III at great length, but to discuss the most lasting thought that I took away with me from the affair. For this thought, I have Ray Bradbury to thank, because in his opening remarks, before he read his little story, he said something that really set me to thinking. And I had decided that once the flurry, worry and work was over, that I would relax and forget fannish activities for a while.

But he made me think when he said that in the field of science-fiction and fantasy lay the last stronghold of expression about our world gone mad. The socially conscious writer can here combine his talents for story telling with his ideas of what is right or wrong with our civilizations, and make his suggestions and pleas without being labelled as a "Red", as Ray said.

In the past writers have resorted to fantasy many times to cry their displeasures with their worlds. It is no accident that among the classics now are such books as "Gullivers Travels", "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court", and "Penguin Island".

Our highly mechanized rat race into possible oblivion is the fear and fact that drives Bradbury to write a story such as "Pedestrian".

The authors of the above three books had other bones of contention, of a piece with their times. Jonathan Swift, one of the most tragic figures in English literature, left a bitter denunciation of the court foibles, the chicanery behind the thrones, the greed of the ruling classes, and the hypocrisy of the political parties in his "Gulliver". Originally published anonymously, because he was afraid of the reception that the book would have, it was called "Travels Into Several Remote Nations Of The World", in four parts, by Lemuel Gulliver.

At the time he began his bitter satire, he was already one of the best known political satirists of his day. Contrary to his expectations, his world was amused by the work. Especially in the first two parts, he injected so much fun, that the brilliant design of the author has to this day been overpowered by it. A knowledge of the history of his age (1667-1745) would be necessary to appreciate the wit, depth of understanding, biting humor, and pride of ideals, that led this daring spirit to so write. A host of those that followed in his steps as writers to be contended with in their times could number Smollett, Scott, Belloc, and Chesterfield.

Samuel L. Clemens' fantasy of the Yankee that invaded the Round Table, is well known to everyone. It is required reading at some time or other in school. But as I recall, the teacher that helped (?) us with our English lessons at that time, did nothing to impress upon us the other reasons that Clemens had for writing this delicious fantasy. And today, it is not surprising that Bing Crosby should be the representation of the Yankee. Of such is the kingdom of fame!

Clemens' early interest in the Arthurian legends began in 1885, when he came upon Sir Thomas Malory's "Le Morte d'Arthur". He was fascinated by the work, in alternating moods of delight and burlesque. The current fashion was to glorify medieval England. Tennyson, Swineburn and William Morris were writing the romantic lay poems, that were so popular. In a spirit of revolt, he conceived the counter romance that would show the viciousness and foolishness of the ancient customs that they were so busily magnifying. The brisk and brash Yankee would match his radical wits with the conservative traditions of the Court and the Church and lay the superstitions of the day with his practical inventions.

Although he conceived most of the story in burlesque, he did not hesitate to execute a great deal of it in righteous anger. Twain hated tyranny, cruelty and superstition. Since it was impossible for him to ridicule them in cold blood, he did it through the medium of his leading character. Speaking and acting thru him, he rises to eloquent diatribes against oppression, kinghood, (an aristocracy and ecclesiastical power over a burdened people.) While the original aim of the book has lost much of its force, now that there aren't so many admirers of the Middle Ages, it is an excellent example of the force of fantasy to express what couldn't have been so openly expressed otherwise.

In 1918 the name of Anatole France, if not the name Jacques Anatole Thibault, was as exciting to any lover of books in any country as the name Mark Twain, if not the name Clemens. During his time he was regarded as a modern socialist, who was also a wit, and so viewed the world's injustices and follies. His fame has of late declined, and he is not as well thought of as he was before his death, but time will unquestionably restore him to the high favor he so justly deserves. If you are only going to read one book by Anatole France, by all means choose "Penguin Island".

L'Île des Pingouins, was written in 1908. It is a comic history of a civilization from its beginning to its frayed-out end. The characters are not men, but penguins. A spiritually blind missionary mistakes these creatures for men, and baptises them "When the baptism of the penguins is known in Paradise, it caused neither joy nor sorrow, but an extreme surprise. The Lord himself is embarrassed." The very saints in Heaven cannot agree on a solution that is satisfactory to everyone.

Upon suggestion the poor little animals are converted into men, and the zealous missionary proceeds to teach them the ways of men. But the devil is standing by, and insinuates his assistance. By teaching them to wear clothes, they learn shame; from quarreling over their lovers, they learn to quarrel over material possessions; and so they proceed to amass all the dogmas, legends, superstitions, and vices that man is heir to. France interjects sly asides at the foibles of mankind at every turn. No phase of the civilization of his day is not touched on in some manner.

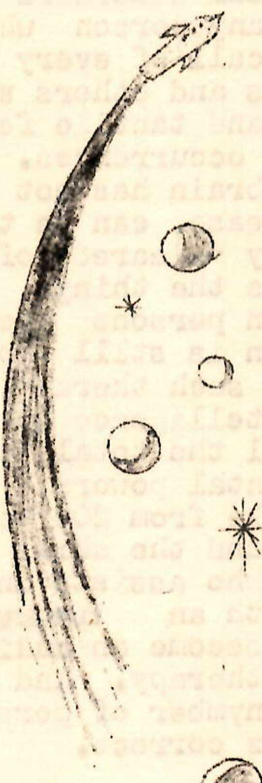
Actually the book is an excellent study of the formations of the institutions of mankind; how they rise out of some specific need, and then deteriorate into a shambles of the first fine idea. Fantasy? FACT!

There are countless other works that have done much the same thing. They leave a delicious aftertaste to the reader of fantasy fiction. Under the cover of fantasy, the author can ride his pet peeve for all it is worth. His tools are humor, hate, understanding, love and all the other abstracts that can be collected. This is the flavor that gives the writer of fantasy fiction an edge that other writers cannot have.

My deepest thanks to Ray for making me think for a little while, and in so thinking, be better able to appreciate his talents, ideas and ideals, as well as those of the other fantasy writers that came before.

FINIS

OUT OF THIS WORLD



I have seen the distant sun
Rise above a Martian waste.
I have crossed Venusian swamps
With exotic foods to taste.

I've been chilled by Pluto's cold,
Blood has boiled within my veins,
When on Mercury's hot side
I have prayed for unknown rains.

Jupiter I've conquered, too;
High amongst its lofty mounts,
Where I breathed poison air.
And I've drunk from Io's founts.

I have stood in solemn awe
Gazing up at Saturn's rings.
I have slept on asteroids
Where the very silence sings.

I have leapt from star to star,
Spanning light years in a day,
I have seen the past and future,
And in Time I've lost my way.

I have done all this in comfort,
The result of an affliction,
For, the normal otherwise,
I'm a fan of science-fiction.

Don J. Nardizzi

A REVIEW OF DIANETICS

By E. EVANS

DIANETICS: The Modern Science of Mental Health. By L. Ron Hubbard, published 1950 by Hermitage House, New York, \$ 4.00, 525 pages.

This new scientific text-book, by one of the top-flight science fiction authors, is rapidly becoming one of the most seriously talked-of books in America. The Los Angeles "TIMES" book section for June 25 showed it in fifth place in sales of non-fiction books in the Los Angeles area, and tenth in the nation as a whole.

WHAT IS DIANETICS?

It purports to be an entirely new method of evaluating the human mind, and of treating it for all mental disorders which keep it from optimum use. It is claimed that any person who has been "cleared" by Dianetic Therapy has full recall of every single thing and event in his whole life, in words and others words, smells, tastes, picturizations in full color, and tactile feeling of any and all injuries or other facets of such occurrences.

It is claimed that any person whose brain has not been physically injured by accident, surgery or disease, can be treated by this Dianetic Therapy, and can be totally "cleared" of all inhibitions, psychoses, ect., (The author calls the things that cause these difficulties "engrams"). That even persons institutionalized for mental disorders, if their brain is still physically uninjured, can be tremendously helped by such therapy, with a hope for eventual total "clearing". That Intelligence Quotients can be greatly raised by these treatments until the total "clear" has full use of all his inherent and innate mental powers.

Such treatments, or therapy, will take from 200 to 1000 hours, depending on the person being treated, and the skill of the "auditor", which is the name given to the one who assists in the treatments. It is also claimed that anyone with an ~~ordinarily~~ intelligent mind can, after reading the book, become an auditor, and successfully assist another person in the therapy. And from experiments being made in this community by a number of persons, it is apparent that this statement and claim is correct.

One of the greatest contributions to the science of the healing of mental troubles which this new book offers, is a new technique known as "the repeater method", which has been found by experiment to give wonderful results in other forms of therapy as well as in Dianetic treatments. This consists of having the patient go over and over the same thing until he has "talked it out of his system", one might say. This technique seems to be brand new as far as mental therapy is concerned, but is "as old as the hills" to metaphysicians.

Another great contribution which Dianetics makes is the fact that it is possible for a person not only to "remember" some incident of his early life, but actually to "return" and "re-live the incident", Having full recall of all words spoken or other sounds heard, seeing in full color all scenes involved, feeling, smelling, tasting everything that actually occurred at the time.

Even more startling, that a person can do this concerning things that happened when his body and regular mind were unconscious. For the author states, and seems to have proved, that the very body cells themselves can store up impressions that are much like what we call memory.

Just what can we predict for the future from this new discovery of DIANETICS? Those who are studying it seriously have only one answer as yet: Wait! Wait and hope!

It is too new, they say, as yet too untried for long periods under hundreds of carefully controlled tests, to know how much it will really prove to be. Yet present indications all are distinctly favorable. The initial results which the author promises are being fulfilled.

As to whether or not the author's promise of complete success can also be fulfilled remains to be seen. He has made a number of startling claims, and says he has case histories which will prove his claims true. It is to be hoped he is right.

To those who have known L Ron Hubbard merely as one of the science fiction's top authors, and to those who know him personally, although perhaps only superficially, the fact that he could conceive and write of such a science is somewhat startling.

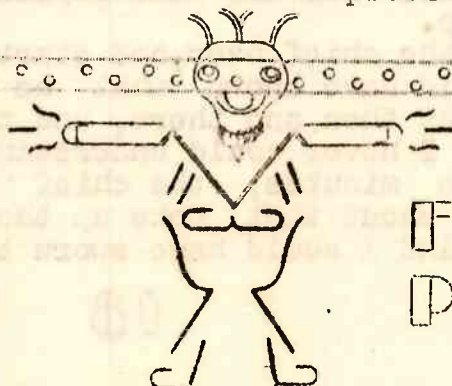
This reviewer, having heard much about the book before he could get a copy and study it for himself, tried to keep an open mind on the subject, yet did have some doubts.

But as page after page was studied, his admiration for Hubbard's ability grew and grew. He began to feel very strongly that here was something truly great; a tremendous concept. There was forced upon him a feeling that this was marvelous stuff; that it was a real and worthwhile contribution to mankind.

The book is often verbose - this reviewer feels that it could all have been said in three-fourths of the wordage. Yet it is clear and plain and easily understood, and perhaps it is that very verboseness which makes it so. It is also forced upon the careful reader that the author has done a tremendous job of research and laboratory experimentation to be able to figure out and report such masterful concepts as those given. Either that, or he is the greatest imaginative writer that ever lived.

It remains for the future to prove which is the case.

SOUTH
GATE
IN '58



DON'T
FORGET
PORTLAND
IN '50

PINCUSHION PETE



BY ALBERT
HERNHUTER

I don't know why I ever signed up on that stinking freighter. Maybe it was because I just wasn't used to only one meal every two days. But it's too late to gripe about it now.

This freighter that I'm talking about was one of those second hand junk heaps that some fellow buys, thinking that he can make a little money hauling freight on the Venus-Earth run. And maybe a little on the side hauling in a few cases of chewing gum to the Greenies (they go nuts over the stuff), and maybe bringing back a little bit of ghunk. This ghunk is pretty potent stuff. It really packs a punch, not that I take any. Uh, Uh, not me. It saps a fellow's strength faster than sponges can soak up a pool of water. But even though it saps your strength, it's supposed to sharpen you up mentally. Like I said, I don't take the stuff, but the captain does.

That's why they call me "Pincushion Pete", but this is how it all happened.

The captain had a couple of cases of chewing gum, and he was happy. He thought that he had the whole deal fixed up; but the Greenies had different ideas about the trade.

The Greenies had about five pounds of ghunk to trade. The captain nearly did handsprings when he heard about it. With that much, he could retire and live in ease for the rest of his life. In fact, the only reason that he didn't turn handsprings was because he'd just taken the last of his supply of ghunk, and was so weak that some of the boys had to carry him. The only thing that he had to do to become a millionaire was to gyp some stupid Venusians out of a few pounds of drugs. But those Venusians weren't so stupid.

The first thing the captain did was to offer half of the chewing gum in trade. The chief shook his head negatively. Then the captain offered half a case more. Still no. Then he started going up package by package, and then piece by piece. Still, the answer was no. The captain added half a dozen pieces of bubble gum. All of the natives jumped up and down, did handsprings, whacked each other on the back, and really got themselves into a frenzy. Did I say all of the natives? Well, I didn't mean all of them. The chief still said no. Any other person would have given up and gone home. But not the captain. The ghunk had really sharpened him up.

He called the chief over, and started talking to him in Venusian. If I would have known what he was saying, I would have skipped out right then and there, and taken my chances on crossing the swamp. But I never could understand Venusian.

After a few minutes, the chief nodded his head. The whole tribe let out a shout that woke up the animals in the swamp for miles around. And I could have sworn that the chief winked at the captain.

Well, the captain ordered a few of us to carry the gum out to the natives, while he got into the ship. I was carrying some of the stuff, and wondering why he has five of the strongest guys on the ship carrying something that one of us could have done easily enough. Then I found out why.

Just as I put down the case that I was carrying, there was a flash and a roar, and the ship took off. Then I figured out what made the chief change his mind.

The Greenies are vegetarians, and they needed strong but stupid guys to help chase away some of those things that come out of the swamp and eat up the gardens, and maybe a few Greenies on the side. And just then I felt like I just filled the bill.

Well, we were stuck out in the middle of the swamps, and we knew it. Some of the fellows tried to get away, but they didn't get very far. The Greenies had to pull them back out of the middle of a pool of quicksand. After that, we gave up trying to get away.

The chief took a liking to me after a while, and I thought that I had life easy. It didn't last for long though. One day the chief came up to me and asked me, in pidgin Venusian, if I knew how to play football. It seems that somehow he had gotten hold of a football, and a set of rules.

Did I know how to play football? Boy, did I tell him. I told him about the days back on Earth when I was on a football team at a big college. Of course I didn't mention that I was water boy. Now I wish I had told him the truth.

When the chief found out about my knowledge of football, he got some teams together faster than you could recite the Martian alphabet backwards eighteen times. And then he asked me to play.

Right now I'm resting from the last game, and I know how a bear feels after wrestling with a porcupine. You see, the Venusians don't play, themselves. They're much too weak for that. Instead, they have some sort of an animal trained to play for them, while they sit back and watch the game.

And those damned animals have spikes all over themselves.

There is more to life than this:
A pretty girl, an eager kiss -
There are worlds unconquered still,
There is strife in vale and hill,
There is illness to be cured,
There are storms to be endured,
There are battles to be won,
So do not ambition shun.
Who will lead the pioneers?
Who will bathe in blood and tears?
Who will wear the laurel crown?
Achieve the glory, fame, renown?
Go and carve your niche in fame.
Sweat and toil and make a name.
All "I" want from life is this:
A pretty girl, an eager kiss.

COMMENTS APROPOS

TO THE READERS AND WRITERS OF SHANGRI-LA

Dear Shaggy:

To tell you that the last issue had a good cover and bad mimeoing is to tell you something you know. While I highly approve of the rotating of editors to insure that none of them get too tired or give up, I think it does have the fault that one editor must take the blame or glory for the work of another. It also lacks the standardization and stableness a magazine needs for a good reader response.

I have been thinking of a few faults in the system, and this is a good time to air them. For one thing, you don't (I speak now to all editors of Shaggy) use a letter column regularly enough to attract them. Were you to print three pages of letters an issue, you would assure yourself letters. And you should have a letter editor, to write them up, so that the comments and style will be the same. It doesn't take anything away from the editors, as they haven't been doing it anyway.

Next, you use altogether too much local talent. While this is mostly good, there have been a number of times it showed the strain. There is unfortunately little you can do about it, as few of you know anything of the big wide world of fandom beyond the state line, and wouldn't know whom to ask for material.

And lastly, you have no editorial policy. Shaggy is just a hoge-poge. If only the same writers wrote regularly, you would set some pattern that way. But, with most of them only appearing once in six months, there is little hope.

But, the covers are good, it comes almost always on time, and that is often, and it usually has good mimeoing.

I'm glad Bill listed FINEAL BLACKOUT as an exception, in his article on Hubbard. I hold it to be the greatist story I have ever read. And while I don't feel qualified to argue the point, I thought I liked most of Hubbard's stories 'till I read the article.

I'm glad to see that the minutes are catching up, but I wish you would put the date, rather than the number on them.

Eph's article was good, but I think you're missing a bit by not including a book review or two of his with every issue. He is so free with them, they are good, and it would form some sort of pattern that could be followed.

Rick Sneary
2962 Santa Ana St.
South Gate, Calif.

Dear Shaggy:

Just a few remarks on your 20th issue...

The Schneeman cover was excellent.

The interior type-work and mimeography was very poor.

There were only 16 pages and no back cover. Hmph!

So much for the obvious.

Blackbeard's article was a little obvious too. I think he was a little too hard on Hubbard-as-a-pulp-writer. Hubbard has

entertained me with many of his stories and I never considered his writing "involved". But that's all a matter of opinion. As for Dianetics, I'm taking the "from Missouri" attitude. If it works for humanities' good, I'm for it. But it will take several years before we really know if the stuff is worth while. I have more time than money so I can wait. Up to now...from what little I've seen and heard...it hasn't impressed me to any great extent. So I got rocks in my head. So I'm happy.

Freddie's Westerncon message was a wee bit late but no fault of her own. Shame on the co-editors for being so late.

Dave's minutes were interesting, slightly entertaining, but not very educational to us people who attend the meetings. Jazz 'em up a little, Dave.

Eph's title was terrific. The article itself was alas "old hat" to LASFS members but a handy thing to have around for arguments on the subject presented.

This is a short letter, it seems. What more can I say? It was a short issue!

THE

MAGNIFICENT SUICIDE

AUDREY SEIDEL

He stood on the bank of the little stream
Straight and cold and slim
'till he found a place where the water was deep
where he knew it would cover him

His master was gone, his job was gone
The world was cold and dead
he was all that was left and quite alone
--and he made the stream his bed!

With plastic paper and ball-point pen
(for writing under water)
he set himself to compose an ode
on the subject of man's great slaughter

He wrote for hours, he wrote for days
'till he could not hold the pen
his last great act (a verified fact!!)
was to sign his name,

and then
he smiled a little and smiling, sighed
and after a while he quietly died.

---we found the record beside him there
and we stopped to read it--it took all day--
then we knelt on the bank and we said a prayer
for the brave little robot who'd rusted away.

RAFFLE BAFFLE

BY

WEAVER
WRIGHT



Shortly before the Cinvention we started having a raffle of a new book each thursday nite at the Club. If I had kept track of every winner and what was won, I'd have a very impressive briefby now; as it is (not yet having "total recall ") I'll just have to stumble back thru my memory as best I can and pick out the highlights.

The thing is: After awhile it began to impress itself on me, as raffler, that there was always something funny about the rafflee (if there is such a word; if not, I just made it up). Every time 20 to 30 people take 25 to 40 chances on 1 book or 2, and nothing strange about it at all---but no! First there is the repeater technique: If Len Hoffatt wins a book one week, he is sure to win another the next. EEEvans and Chas Kelly are great repeaters.

Or take the case of Russ Hodgkins when World D was raffled: He already had the book...he didn't particularly care for the story...he didn't need another copy--so he won it.

"HBHickey" (in unmasked life, Herb Livingston) visited the club. His brother, Berkeley Livingston (of Amazing fame) accompanied him. Berk was asked to draw the winnin name from the box. Berk drew Herb's. And there's another aspect: Visitors; visitors are always walking off with books, while regular members, who plunk in their dimes week in and week out, win nothing.

There is always something screwy about the raffle, I swear it! And it is not just stretching the imagination to find a coincidence. Each time there are about a coupledozen people who could win the book and there would be nothing at all curious about it--they wouldn't be guests, they wouldn't be repeating, they wouldn't be wanting the title desperately, or anything; but no!

A couple mettings ago Arthur J. Cox was sitting next to van Vogt. Van's Masters Of Time was being raffled. Jean is Probably Van's #1 Fan. "Pick it out for me," said Jean. Van did. (Tendrils?)

The book was dedicated to him, so naturally he already had a copy (and very fancilly and fully inscribed, it might be added); so naturally E. Everett Evans was the one who won E.E. Smith's FIRST LENSMAH.

At the last meeting, I Picked out the winning name, just to be sure there'd be no shenanigans. (If freddie had picked it, she would have been certain to have picked it for Alan, her husband. If Hernhuter's sister had done the honors, Albert Hernhuter would undoubtedly have been the winner.) No, I didn't pick one for Wendayne (or, better yet, myself). I never had a chance, because just as I was reaching in, "Lucky" Kelly sidled up to me and said, "pick mine and I'll buy a book from you." There's no surprise conclusion to this article: I simply couldn't refuse, and so I picked out Kelly's name from 30.

A REVIEW OF

THE BRIDGE OF LIGHT

A. HYATT VERRILL

GIVEN BY EARLE PRINCETON

From the front cover to the back, cover illustration, contents of the book and announcements of forthcoming publications, this latest volume from Fantasy Press is a delight to the science fiction and fantasy fan. The book is the famous novel "The Bridge of Light" by A. Hyatt Verrill, which first appeared way back in 1929.

Briefly, the story concerns the adventures of an American archaeologist who found an ancient Mayan codex (a picture-writing which tells of some great feat, prophecy or other information or legend) and through his efforts to find out its historical and financial value, is led to discover Mictolan, a hidden city existing in the present time, which carries on life as it did in Mayan times. The hero has to travel through dangerous tropical jungles, faces all sorts of problems, sees Mayan life in all its mystery and color, and gets the girl. (There is always a girl, and the heroine of this book is just as beautiful, charming, intelligent, and high-born, always highborn, as any heroine in a Merritt book.)

The things that make this book different from the standard fantasy potboiler are, first, the writing style, which is smooth and extremely well done, as is to be expected from A. Hyatt Verrill, and second, the extremely authentic Mayan & South American background, which is a product of Mr. Verrill's personal experiences as an archaeologist.

The cover, by Cartier, is excellent though somewhat monochromatic. The back cover is excellent, too, for it lists several forthcoming books which should be pretty good. We'll list them here for your convenience:

Genus Homo, by DeCamp and P. S. Miller,
Galactic Patrol, by E. E. Smith
The Moon is Hell, by J. W. Campbell
Dreadful Sanctuary, by Eric Frank Russell

My gosh, I must be slipping. I liked this book!

--Earle Princeton

----- Election Notice -----

Director: Alan Hershey	re-elected
Secretary: Arthur Jean Cox	Formerly: Dave Lesperance
Treasurer: Ira Rosen	Formerly: Freddie Hershey
Committeemen: Forrest J Ackerman	Formerly: Walter Daugherty
Russ Hodgkins	E. Everett Evans

These are the new officers of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society for the term July 1950 - December 1950

ATTENTION!

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

ISSUE NO. 23 OF SHANGRI-LA
WILL CONSIST OF CONTRIB-
UTIONS FROM ASSOCIATE
MEMBERS ONLY?

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS, HERE IS YOUR CHANCE TO HAVE A
WHOLE ISSUE OF THE CLUB MAGAZINE CONSISTING OF
MATERIAL WHICH YOU YOURSELF HAVE CONTRIBUTED.

ALTHOUGH THE SHANGRI-LA WILL BE
OUT ON OR ABOUT OCT. 1ST,
ALL CONTRIBUTIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY

SEPT. 15TH,
1950
ANNO DOMINI