

THE SOUND OFF!

"DIXIE PRESS" PUBLICATION

DAMON KNIGHT

• • • and • • •

LYNN BRIDGES

ther side.

INNER STANKTORIUM  
(miscellaneous mutterings by the editor -- th' rat).

Thus SOUND OFF!

This is the second time I have found it necessary to ask Harry Warner to mimeo this thing. I hope he won't be stuck with the job for the rest of his natural life. With the third number "Dixie Press" will have a mimeo of its own, and SOUND OFF! will appear from then on, I trust, under its own steam. Thanks a million, Harry, for your generosity in playing papa to these first two issues.

Size of this in future issues will vary, of course, with the number of letters we receive. Please send in your comments on this issue as soon as you are able, because I shall also have UNFAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES to write, dummy, stencil and mimeo for the next mailing, in

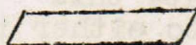
addition to this and the SOUTHERN STAR, and I want to get everything in to the editor as soon as I can.

Remember -- a letter herein insures your membership for another year. It's an easy and cheap way of re-qualifying yourself, and at the same time it enables you to exercise the fascinating and mysterious urge peculiar to all real fans, to write a letter commentating on a fanzine. Only in this case, you are enabled to write a letter commentating on a batch of fanzines. What fun!

SOUND OFF! is truly YOUR magazine.  
Won't you please make the most of it!

*Joseph Gilbert*

Joseph Gilbert.



### Sam on the demon:

I haven't finished the mailing yet, but decided I'd better write down my comments as they occur to me; otherwise I'll have to go back and look up all the items that interested me again. Right now, I'm on SusPro. I still find practically everything Speer writes interesting; there's a tendency to dislike him because he reacts on my inferiority complex, but I can overcome that well enough when I recognize it for what it is. Page 2: hah! caught you in a double-negative, brother Speer -- "not in a publication, I don't believe".

Disappointed the photos weren't included, but enjoyed the thing with the German title anyhow. The small squib about the erotica-in-fanzines question gives me to think. I don't remember seeing the "Disgusting Publication", and my fanzines -- most of them -- are down at the bottom of my packing box, so I can't look it up. Speer's argument seems logical at first glance, but I think it is based more on his personal aversion to erotica than on any logical grounds. After all, a number of subjects having nothing to do with fantasy have been treated in fanzines for some time, many of them making no appeal whatever to the higher intellect. Speer should be the last to complain about this, as witness any issue of SusPro or Ramblings.

This discussion touches on a more fundamental issue, I think -- the general subject of tolerance in fandom. I've been disgusted by some material found in fanzines, too -- mainly the inanities of the very young -- but the solution to that is very simple: don't read the magazines.

Sketch of Washington, like all the other juff sketches, is bewildering at first, but absorbing when you get into it. ..As I understand it, San Francisco and Washington are now the pre-Denver contenders for the '42 spot. I'm torn between two fires: I'll be in New York in '42, so would like to have the next year's convention in the East, where I can attend it; but, the preceding conventions having been held in NY, Chicago and Denver, seems to me the next should logically be held in some far-west city. What's happened to the LASTS? ((The LASTS was dere, Sharli. It seems that the next Convention will be in Los Angeles. If the '42 skindig follows the current trend, it'll be held in the middle of the Pacific ocean. We suggest Washington as an alternative to fans who go sea-sick easily. JB)).

READER AND COLLECTOR was of interest, as usual. I'm particularly fond of the lovely varityped mimcoing. The petard struck me as a little strained this time. I fear HCK, in spite of denials, is reaching out pretty far for some of his items. This sort of thing can descend to more vindictiveness if you're not careful. "Another Man's Viewpoint" found particularly provocative and astonishingly level-headed. Most of

ment of this kind by non-fans is merely silly. With most of this, however, I agree completely. It must be remembered, of course, that fandom being only a matter of some ten years or so old, is still adolescent. When it reaches maturity, if it is allowed to mature, it may take a form altogether unexpected.

One more note, at the risk of calling down HCK's indigestion upon my unprotected head: I'm one FAPA member who's still much in the dark regarding the Nyxon affair, and who knew little or nothing about it until Robbins' and contemporary exposes were published; and I think I can name more. This may be old stuff to HCK, but he should remember that lots of new fans are only now catching up with fan events of that vintage.

PHANTOGRAPH: That cover is a wow, the first really good silk-screen job I've seen on a fanzine other than my own on Snide #2 (plug). Thank Ghu I got mine out first! Back cover, illustrations by Lowndes, "Story of the Story" and a coupla fillers amusing; "Rhapsody Legion" is good; rest of issue lousy.

Had seen SFERRIER previously. I've read versions of the latest Queens affair from both sides, and done my best to consider them impartially; as usual, I'm in sympathy with the Futurians.

BOLIDE interesting, what there was of it.

HORIZONS unreadable as always. This issue is a total loss, far as I'm concerned, except for the squib on the last page about NFFF. ((Sometimes I wonder if I'm the only one who manages to struggle thru Harry's horrible hectoing. HORIZONS is one of my favorites, and I never miss reading an issue. The truly remarkable critical faculty displayed by Mr. Warner, especially in his reviews, has a real fascination for me. Incidentally, the hectoing may take a turn for the better soon, as Harry intends to experiment with hecto carbons in future issues. JG)).

CENSORED was of especial interest to me. I was "or the inside" of its publication, since Fred Hurter is one of my oldest & best fan-friends. Even allowing for prejudice, I thought this issue unusually good; every item, being impregnated with the peculiar Canadian humor, was screamingly funny. Particularly enjoyed the naive item in the editorial about the "goo that could be smeared over the stencil to fill up the mistakes". Re the article on time travel: the concept of two or more copies of the same thing co-existing is perhaps a hard one to get used to, but it's perfectly logical. You don't create matter out of nothing; you simply move part of it from one place in time to another, just as you might cut an apple in two and separate the halves.

VAGABONDIA: #1 is very interesting, especially "The Book" and the account of the gustatory eccentricities of the Futurians. #2 is very funny, but I'm not sure I approve of this kind of campaigning, even in fun.

INTER NOS (?): A typical FAPA "thing", which I'd like to see less of.

SARDONYX: Chauvenet annoys me when he assumes that nobody else is interested in his reasons for doing things. Youd's article admirably combines practically the gamut of fan writing -- poetry, humor, serious discussion. ..I wonder if Harry W is ever sorry he rejects things like this because they are "too controversial".

Only kick on the rest of the ish is that LRC's exclamation points lose force through over-use. Mengarini's poem acceptable, except that "soughs" and "loves" in the nextolastanza sticks in my craw. The quotes are mildly enjoyable, as usual, and of course the colors are lovely.

CUSCUMOS. The less said, the better. ((Amen! JG)).

FANTASY-VIEWS: very funny. Ditto FANTASY FACTION FIELD.

FAPA FAN is bewildering. Rothman says the FAPA needs more money; Wellheimsays it doesn't.

LE VOMBITEUR: Page 2 — haw haw hawhawhaw! Gosh, wow, boyoboy. Lowndes, I love you.

MILTY'S MAG: Consistently good. "Convention of 1960" hilarious. The ending is lovely. ((My sentiments, too. I've read the darn thing twice, and intend to go back and read it again. Excellent, Milt! JG)) In "Stuff", Milt makes Speer's arguments against labor unions look pretty silly, but doubtless in the next SusPro Speer will make Milt's arguments against his arguments look ditto. It's all very discouraging.

Thanks for the picture of Elmer. He looks like an adolescent Errol Flynn, minus cooly-duster.

PHANTOGRAPH for April is worthless, all but the last page. "Pathetic Chulcker" and the Ø couplet I like.

TIME SCANNER: Material good, ditto mimeoing. Can this be Studley's work? ((Not unless Studley has suddenly acquired Lowndes' typewriter, and writing style. JG)).

GUESTO: If this is a translation of a poem in Esperanto, okay. If not, I think I'd have liked it better as straight prose.

BY 4E: Interesting, but pretty thin stuff for publication. This is another of the sort of thing I think the FAPA could do without.

SOUND OFF! I've already intimated what I think of this. I'm wondering, tho, if you've bitten off more than you can chew. If many more fans send you letters as long as this one, you'll either have to cut 'em all to the bone, or put out upwards of 50 or 60 pages, pica. Not that I'll object to that latter! ((Is there a millionaire in the audience? For that matter, is there an audience? JG))

POLARIS: To get into this, I had to overcome my natural prejudice against fan fiction; but I found the contents astonishingly good. "The Midnight Visitor", which I read last, I liked least. What plot it has is obvious about half-way through, and from there on is anti-climax.

"The Hat" is also pretty transparent, but interesting nevertheless. In fact, the unemotional way in which it's told gives a kind of creepy thrill — not at the moment of revelation, but after you're all through reading it.

Tucker's article interesting, but doesn't give much information. "Sara Gabrielsen Goes to Paradise" I liked very much, although I didn't expect to. It has much of the melancholy charm of Hans Christian Andersen.

"It Wouldn't Work" is also excellent, and shows a maturity of style which is startling from Tucker. I, for one, would like very much to see POLARIS continued.

If Ackerman's account of Daugherty's million-dollar costume is on the level, I'm just a little nauseated. ((Seems that the celebrated 500 dollar portion of the suit was the plastic glass of the headpiece; originally intended for an airplane, but since it proved slightly faulty, it was made a present of it on request. JG)). "Wahlpurgisnacht" is only fair.

Oh, yes — the cover reminded me of some UNK drawing by Cartier, but I can't remember which.

SCI-FI VARIETY. Yet another mention of Speer as a small person — but I saw a pic of him on LeZ, & he was tall and gangling. If it wasn't Speer, who was it? Or is there a conspiracy in fandom to give S the reputation of smallness?

Enjoyed Tucker's blitz on Juifus, and what's more I liked the quote Tucker quoted. It's astonishing the way BoB is growing up of late — in unguarded moments he has let it slip out that he actually reads literature!

I am getting tired of reading references to the Purity restaurant, and never reading the story. Spit it out, boys, or shut up, one or the

other. ((I'd tell it here, but I understand that Tucker wants it for LeZ. It would have appeared in the third STAR, but I cut it out. And, Boy, did I suffer for my sins! Wait'll you see how Bob deals with the great Gilbert in the second edition of "Humblings". Frightfully forceful fellow, this Tucker chap. JG)).

BT's remark about delicious things in life being verboten reminds me of the classic motto in "The Stolen Dormouse" — "All that is not compulsory is forbidden".

Tucker's proposed solution to the problem of WAPA and fanzines in general seems to me obviously the only one. For one thing, there's really no reason why more than 50 copies of a thing can't be turned out on a hekto. We printed 120 of the last Snide with hekto films, and could easily have done more; 200 maybe. I've done 70-odd with a tray-hekto, and think I could do more. How about some agitation and propagandizing-of-friends on this question?

"Point of View" rates a ten easily. Who's Dorothy Sanford?

XIOS: The cover is just beautiful, thass all. Willie and I looked long and hard, but couldn't find any error. It's getting me down; I usually consider myself pretty observant. ((I laid down on the floor and laughed for ten minutes upon reading that it was "the National Broadchasing Company". Well, five minutes, anyway. JG)).

The coat-of-arms is amusing, and reminds me of the one I vaguely intended to draw up a long time ago.

Speaking of errors, Art made several unnecessary ones inside — those blotted-out slips. Nexttime, dope, cut a patch!

I'll believe Kornbluth is only 17 when I see his birth certificate, maybe.

Evans' letter: Very inspiring, and I'm looking forward to hearing EE's paper at the Denvention. But I'm not sure just what he has in mind as a long-range program for fandom. If he is assuming a "purpose" for fandom, such as has formed the basis of unsuccessful clubs in the past — well, I reserve judgement, but I fear I won't agree.

CYCLOPS: About the best I can say for this is that the mimeeing is good, and of course the Bok drawings are swell. The fanzine article is adolescently incoherent, in spite of a plug for me.

FANTASY AMATEUR needs little comment — necessary and good. I agree with Tucker's "sweeping changes".

And that, much to my surprise, seems to be all. I might add that I have a WAPazine in mind, but don't know when I'll be able to publish it. I'm saved for now, far as activity is concerned, by that sonnet in Fred Hurter's CENSORED.

*Damon*

Correction please: on page three, damon refers to an article on time travel in CENSORED, and speaks of two copies of the same thing co-existing. Well, I missed the last part of the argument and rudely cut him short before he was finished. The rest of it follows. (A certain maxim pertaining to horses and locking barn doors would fit in nicely here, I believe). The missing portion — "Heinlein's conception of a four-dimensional body as a 'long white worm' is useful in this regard. David R. Daniels, of course, covered the whole time question adequately and beautifully in his 'Branches of Time'".

It was my intention at this time to say something sparkling and witty about "burning Bridges behind us", and to then pass you on to the next letter. However, there's a chance yet that I might get to the LAcon, and I have a particular aversion to being poked in the snoot by a chappie whom I like as well as I do Lynn. So I'll just pass you on to this very decent gentleman, and go out into the corridor and sneer at

Captain Future while he has the floor.

### LYNN BRIDGES:

Shortly before the arrival of the Summer FAPA mailing, the fifth issue of a fanzine called THE DAMN THING appeared. This particular issue of TDT was interesting, to me, because of one article -- an attack on the FAPA.

Inasmuch as I had recently joined FAPA, but had not as yet seen one of the mailings, I was naturally curious as to how much of the article was accurate. Well, chums, the truth may hurt, but the answer is that far too much of the article was absolutely correct.

Quote. "With one or two exceptions, the contents of FAPA mailings are the most poorly written...hodge podge, illegible, insignificant, and immature pieces of tripe...that we have ever seen. There are more than just one or two exceptions; otherwise we have to agree.

Again quote. "In the last mailing a huge percentage...of the aggregate material consisted of reviews of the mags appearing in the previous mailing. My God, if this goes on it won't be long before the entire FAPA mailing will consist of reviews upon the reviews of the reviews of the reviews of the last mailing." Unquote. Now look thru the contents of the last mailing, or, probably, this one. Wellllll? Personally, we like reviews, but too much is more than enough, and I've resolved that no reviews will go into anything I put out for the FAPA. Much better, it seems to me, is the idea of a sort of VoM for FAPA, such as SOUND OFF!

More quoting: "And why does this condition continue? ...because fans are too lazy to put out a worthwhile mag for the FAPA. All they need is something in the mailing to maintain their membership." Unquote again. That particular bit strikes home with almost painful accuracy. No need to name any particular names or mags, they stand out all too well as it is.

((For lack of a better representative, I hereby dangle a washboard from my neck to protect me tumny from well-placed bean-shooter pellets, turn a pot upside on my head to serve as a helmet, arm myself with a rubber band and a box of paper clips, and clank gloriously out in defense of this not-too-noble organization.

Seriously, Lynn, the principal reason you won't find any STARDUST's or SPACWAYS's in the FAPA is the fact that every magazine in the mailing must be paid for out of the income of the fan publishing it. There is no financial reward whatever, and for some fans who have to issue a subscription magazine and/or live on their salaries, a FAPA magazine is a real sacrifice; something they must give up other pleasures and amusements for, sometimes, surely, the sacrifice must be other than small luxuries alone, too. In such cases, economy of publication is essential, and length and legibility must suffer.

Secondly, these FAPA magazines must be almost entirely written by the publisher. You write a column, Lynn -- and an excellent one, if I may say so -- and know what a task it is to think of enuf material to fill two or three pages. Imagine the task of filling ten or twelve pages every three months! Quite a job. Reviews furnish a simple, easy way to fill two or three pages, and serve the same function, therefore, as fan mag reviews in subscription fanzines. I agree emphatically that they are overdone in the FAPA, but until the members start kicking in with material I see no way in which the evil can be avoided.

And finally -- the number of mags put out simply to maintain membership; those fly-by-night, once-a-year ephemera are, you'll find upon closer examination definitely in the minority. READER AND COLLECTOR, SUSTAINING PROGRAM, POLARIS, HORIZONS, SARDONYX, MFLTY'S MAG, all appear masterly, and I believe you'll find that most of the other pubs in the

organization appear at least bi-yearly.

However, I think that I speak for the entire FAPA in thanking you for your criticism; too much of which is undeniably justified — for it is evident that sincere criticism is an essential in any democratic and progressive — and not even the Futurians will deny that the two go together — organization.

Anybody else got a complaint they want to SOUND OFF! on? JG)).

And now that all that is out of the way, for some comments on some of the items in the Summer mailing that were worth while.

SCI-FI VARIETY. Tucker liked, of course, even if most of the mag was taken up with reviews.

THE READER AND COLLECTOR. Best item in the mailing. Need we say more?

MILTY'S MAG. This, as you doubtless know, is the item which is invariably mentioned first when FAPA mags are discussed, and has the reputation of being tops. And I wasn't dissapointed. The CONVENTION OF 19-60 story was very enjoyable.

HORIZONS. Legibility none too good, in fact I couldn't read some parts of it, but nevertheless I liked it.

SUSTAINING PROGRAM. Being still somewhat new to fandom, I have the quaint idea that fans should have something to do with science fiction. Speer obviously has no such delusions. But SusPro was well done, sorta amusing, and definitely one of the better things in the mailing.

CENSORED. Could be better. But then, could also be much worse. At any rate, I'm looking forward to the next issue.

YEOS. Nicely done, and good for a few minutes entertainment. For lighter stuff, I much prefer this type of stuff to the Futurian foolishness.

CYCLOPS. Didn't care so much for the material. Nice appearance, tho.

SARDONYX. LRC really puts a lot of work into his mag, and gets results! Liked Youd's article, probably because I disagree with it, being a violent isolationist. At any rate, more SARDONYX!

Looking over the first part of this stuff, I seem to have offered a lot of criticism of the FAPA, none of it constructive. Such was not my intention. If I didn't like the FAPA in general, I'd simply forget about it, and charge my membership dues to experience.

But I do like the FAPA, and can see nothing wrong with it that can't be fixed up. The most important item for FAPA improvement is more sense of responsibility on the part of the members. After all, in so close an organization, improvement must come from within. At present, a handful of fans seem to be carrying the whole load. If everyone would make an effort to do at least his share, there'd be nothing whatsoever wrong with the FAPA.

Well put, Lynn, and thank you.

Before locking up this Forum and going home to swing from the chandelier, I'd like to express an opinion of my own concerning something in BONFIRE.

The bulletin was clearly mimcoed and stenciled -- for which credit to Warner -- well written, clearly explained, and full of solid, sound advice -- credit for that going, of course, to Art Widner. There's only one item open to criticism; strong criticism -- the sample test.

It is a premise so evident as to offer no room for debate, I think, that the fandom of today is one almost entirely divorced from the pro mags that originally inspired it. A fan is no longer recognized as a slightly screwy chap who knows what year Amazing was first issued, and

that in between intervals of dunking doughnuts, Doctor E. E. Smith writes serials for Astounding. A fan today is known as a slightly screwy chap who writes letters and articles for fanzines, maybe edits his own mag, takes part in fan activities, tries, generally without success, to write his correspondents at least twice a year, and perhaps — just perhaps! — reads Astounding and Unknown when he hasn't anything more important in the fan line to do at the moment.

So.

What, then, of Johnny Jones, who's been in fandom only two months, and is thrilled with it, bubbling over with anxiety to take an active part in it. But he's spending all his small allowance joining the LAcon club to help sponsor the '42 Convention, and can only afford one fanzine and enuf postage and paper to write articles and letters to it. He hasn't the vaguest idea that John W. Campbell is also Don A. Stuart. He probably doesn't even know that Campbell was ever anything but an editor. If he lives in a small town he probably knows of Future Fiction only by name, and doesn't even know Planet exists. Know the editor of Comet? Nonsense. Never even heard of the mag.

He would make a great fan, this Johnny Jones. He would be a worthwhile asset to the NFFF, the very type we're looking for. He couldn't pass Widner's test if he studied for it.

Meanwhile, Hank Horselaugh has no desire whatever to become an active fan. Too much time and trouble, sez Hank. But his father has pots of money, so Hank buys every fanzine going. He reads 'em all, during the times when he isn't running around chasing pretty girls. He even knows who the author of the long dead Jules Grandin series is. He's deadwood, worthless, a blight on any decent organization. He could pass Widner's test with an almost perfect score.

For that test is this: an ego-boosting device which enables older fans to howl, "Yahhhhh! I know the answers and you don't! Myaahhhhh!

It can in no way gauge a fan's potentialities. It is strictly a knowledge test. If you've been in fandom long enuf, you can pass it, if you haven't, you can't. There can be no two ways about it.

A fan's first requirement for membership should be his activity record; after that, there must be a test slanted for the fandom for which the NFFF itself is slanted for. Must be. For otherwise, a questionnaire is completely useless. The questions must be designed to discover a fan's attitude, aptitudes, degree of willingness to cooperate. The only trouble is that they're hard as hell to think up, quite different from the pro questions. I know. I sent twenty into Milt Rothman. They were not-at-all good questions, but they were a start, and they were built on a pattern which I sincerely believe must be followed if the entrance exams are to accomplish anything at all.

For it's something more than obvious that what a person knows about the history of Wonder, can not and will not make that person a valuable member of the NFFF.

Incidentally, your comment on this or any other phase of the NFFF is welcome here. Ditto suggestions and ideas. I believe we can make this a valuable field for discussion of the NFFF, with a little thinking. Or is that last idea too novel for you?

Well, that's about all for now, good friends. Don't forget to SOUND OFF! when you finish this mailing, will you? Good! We'll see you then at the next mailing, along with UFM, and Harry Jenkins' JINK, which was forwarded out of this mailing due to the lack of a mimeo, and to the priority of TANART. And I hope very much you enjoyed this edition of the forum.

Or do you prefer even margins? Oh, well —!

Cheerio,