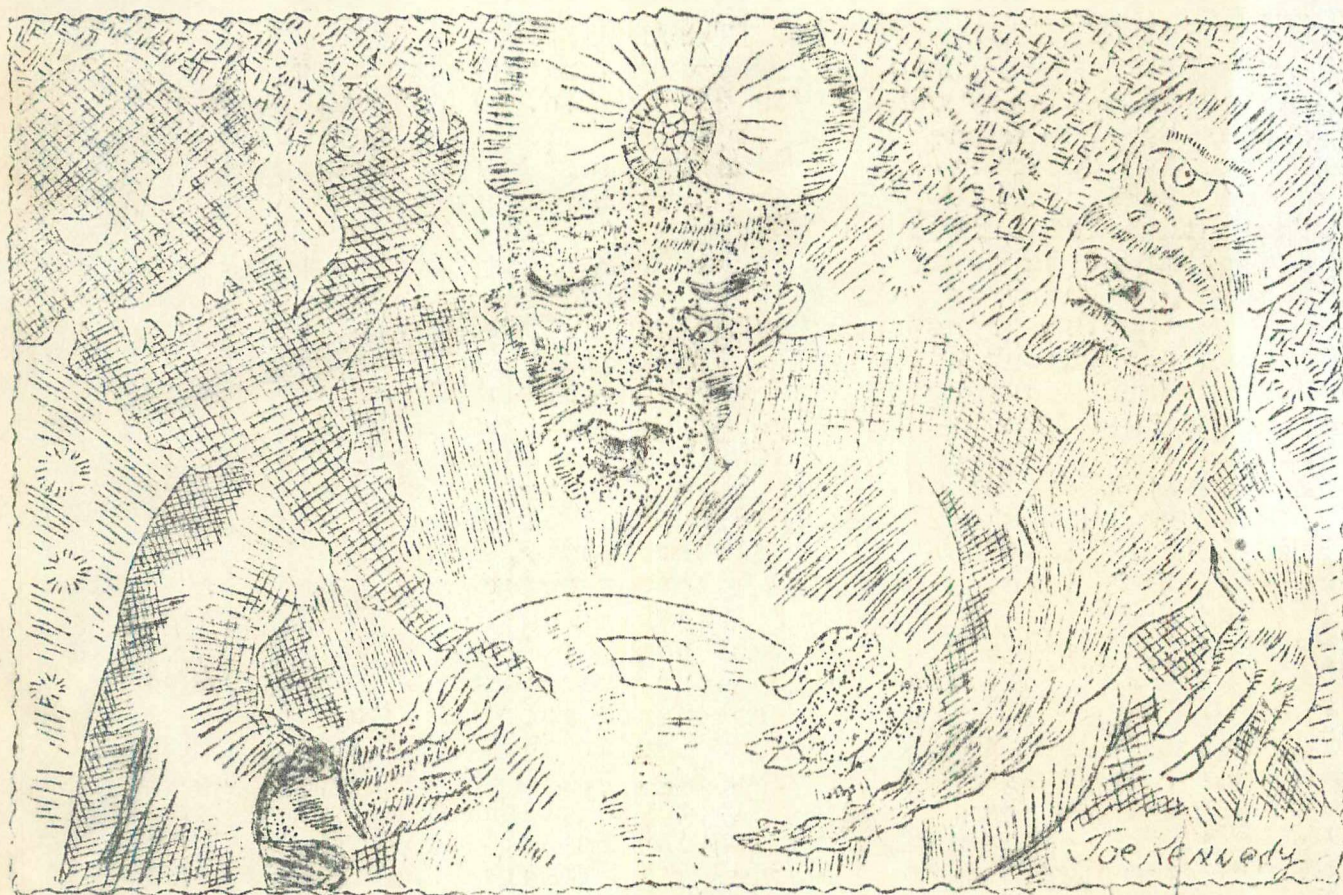


SOUTHERN FANDOM

Second Issue



Fiction

Articles

Features



EDITORIAL COMMENTS

ABOUT THIS ISSUE If all goes as I think it will, this will be one of the neatest issues of a fanzine I have ever produced. Pages 4 and 5, naturally, will have to be excused, as they were stencilled on that bastard contraption I got from Carl Swanson. Also, I beg your sympathy and forgiveness about the errors that have piled up, apparently beyond all reason. I make them every time, but usually I correct them. This time, I found the wax in my correction fluid had coagulated from the medium, ruining the entire bottle. I know the mistakes are there, but I cannot do anything about them. Back to the technical side, I know I have cut some nest stencils with this typewriter. If only I can keep up the good work on the mimeo. This is, unfortunately, a borrowed machine, but I have cut single pages with it before and they have always been good.

ABOUT THE MATERIAL Frankly, I had a pretty hard time scrapping together enough material for this issue. I wanted to use only one piece of fiction. I had intended to use a piece by Joe Kennedy, but it got misplaced. The gruesome little thing by Cockcroft was the only other we had that would fit the space assigned to fiction. I want to thank Mr. Berry Jordan of the Enterprise Printing Company in advance for printing the cover. He promised to do it next week. I set the type, but I was in too much of a hurry to make the run on a press. I am hoping he rearranges the lettering somewhat, or it will look pretty sloppy. I was on the run when I set it. I have included Kennedy's little item more as a curiosity than anything else. It was evidently written back in his younger days as a fan. I took the liberty of correcting the dates and a few of the anachronisms, but mostly I let it go as it stood. This item must not be considered indicative of his present skill, but merely as a relic. The "Let's Set a Goal" ARTICLE will arouse a little controversy, I think. Which was the general idea. How about a letter or article commenting on this?

THIS AND THAT We are in urgent need of material. Needed are articles, poetry and reviews. Don't send any book reviews; what I want is someone to volunteer to review the pros and fanzines. Anyone willing to do this should first write the editor before submitting anything. This second issue has been in progress more than a year. First, we planned a poetry reprint issue; then we decided on a fiction issue. About half of each one was completed, then discarded. I finally settled on a general fanzine, since the material is easier to obtain. You will probably notice the absence of art work. This was purely intentional, since we wanted to get as much text on the limited number of stencils we have as possible. Don't forget your letter of comments on this issue. We want a large letter section next time.

SOUTHERN FANDOM

Chief
LIONEL INMAN, Editor

**

Art
VAN SPLAWN, Editor

Number 2 * department of interior * 10 cents

Article

LET'S SET A GOAL.....Stanley Miller...10

Features

SELECTED FRAGMENTS.....Editorial Feature.....4

DIARY OF HOBART TWERP.....Joe Kennedy....8

Fiction

THE BOOK SHOP.....John Cockroft...13

Departments

EDITORIAL COMMENTS.....The Editor....2

COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS.....Letter Section...16

-Cover by Joe Kennedy-

SOUTHERN FANDOM is an amateur magazine edited for science fiction fandom by Lionel Inman, at Route 1, Ripley, Tennessee. Material is solicited, but no payment other than a complimentary copy of the issue in which an author's work appears can be made. Single copies are ten cents or three for twenty-five cents. Advertisement rates are as follows: full page, one dollar; half page, fifty cents; smaller, twenty-five cents

SELECTED

FRAGMENTS

FEATURE

If, as Bob Tucker suggests in one of his Bloomington Newsletters, reminiscence is old age, I am dead. And the fact that I am a burned out luminary is made doubly regrettable by the fact that said luminary did not burn very bright in its heyday.

Such thoughts every fan has at one time or another, I assume, so I refuse to become sloppy about it. Memories lie buried here and there-- in a pile of mouldering fanzines, in a long-remembered novel, in personal letters stored away because one can't bring himself to destroy them.

And of the group, I prefer letters for my particular brand of nostalgia, since they exactly parallel one's ephemeral progress in that singular microcosm known as fandom.

Personal letters are apt to be just that--personal. But once in a blue moon you receive one that is just as applicable to fandom at large as it is to the one receiving it.

Following, I have selected portions of personal letters which I consider to be of general interest.

The first bit is by Harold Cheney, who used to publish Atres Artes. Perhaps it contains some information new to you--it did to me. The occasion for this prolonged message, only a portion of which is used, was my inquiry about the blue-~~print~~ process by which his covers were printed and his method of direct hektographing.

Dated March 24, 1946, it reads:

"About last September, I said to myself that I was going to put out a fanzine. I looked through my Latin Book looking for a title that might be new yet good. The same page were atres and artes, meaning 'black' and 'art.' It would have taken a third class fool not to have seen the possibility of the title. Months passed--with the money earned that summer a new Corona was bought. Still the urge to put out a zine persisted. Then one day, conquering my fears, I marched into the local stationery store and purchased a pound tin of hekto refill, three purple carbons, and two bottles of hekto ink. I put in an order for hekto ribbon then too. I wrote to several fans for material. Kennedy sent in a bit. I had visited Thyril L. Ladd, so I was quite friendly with him. If you've seen his articles in Fantasy Commentator, you can see why I asked him for an article. He wanted to, but it seems he has agreed to write for Searles alone, and he is a very honorable guy. Then

Rambling with Collectors came into my head as an idea to print some of the stuff he had written in his interesting letters in my mag. So I had my contents. I melted the gelatin and poured it into a Coco Cola serving tray. Thus, AA, without benefit of any previous experience, was born. You can see the results. But through mistakes come progress.

"My dad has always been interested in stf, so he was very interested in my mag and deplored the fact that I had not let him proofread it. Well, with the aid of the NFFF mss. Bureau and some fans who answered my card, I had some good stuff for my mag and planned to improve it. Dad said that down at the office there were about half a dozen hekto pads that were left from the time that they sold their machine that used them. As they were useless there, he brought them home. So with my hekto ribbon and some thought number two started to take shape. Even edges aren't easy, but they sure are worth the work in looks. Dad took the pics I had from the mss. bureau down to the shop and tried to blue-print them. Since there were only a few copies (23) being made of the mag, it didn't put the company in the hole too much. But am I boring you--you want info on the blue-printing and dittoing and here I am rambling on about my mag.

"Blue-printing costs on the average 8c a square foot. So if you have a mag one foot square for a hundred issues it would cost \$8. As the blue-printing is done at the shop, I haven't much of an idea of how it works. Now for dittoing. The way I got it is the same way I got the blue-printing. The last six pages of AA are dittqd. You have special sheets to type on. I understand that they cost 5c a sheet (compared to 15c a stencil for mimeo) and after running off the sheets, you can save the master and run off some more next year. The sheet is like this: there are two sheets attached at the top--one is regular paper and the other is a heavy sheet with one side heavily carboned. The plain sheet is on top, the carboned one underneath. When you type on the plain sheet it comes out on the back of it like it would if you had a carbon paper backwards. The carbon sheet is torn off, and the back of the paper you type on, with the carbon in reverse, is your master. After that, I don't know how it goes.

"When you said 'for the most part--the best that I have seen' about the hektoing, I suppose you mean that page 15 was the sore spot. That page was dur to my forgetting to clean the pad off before applying the master. If you have a fairly smooth and clean surface and take pains to use a little neatness in the original I think that good hektoing is perfectly possible. The only objection I have to hektoing is that the number of copies you can get is ridiculously low. Oh, I suppose you can get more than the 3c I got but #3c was pretty dim. Now with ditto, you can get over a hundred, really dark, too.

"I forgot to mention another beauty of dittoing--erasures. You know what a mess it is to erase a mistake on a hekto master--you spread the stuff all over and have to dig the paper almost to get the wrong word off. Well, with ditto, you have a kind of wax pencil. When you make a mistake, you roll the sheet back on your typer till you can see the spot on the master where the mistake is. Then you rub it over with the pencil. Then from an old back sheet with the carbon on it you cut out a piece that had not been typed on and slip this into the machine and type the right word, roll it out again and remove the piece of carbon.

"If you can understand this, go see Einstein. He wants someone to explain the theory of relativity to him."

As addenda to the foregoing, I might mention in passing that I am an old patron of the jelly sheet. Long and loud have I cursed the day I saw a hektograph. Never a more fiendish creation has sprung from the feverish mind of a mad inventor. They are so unpredictable for the unwary! If they are too cold you get over a hundred copies too faint to read; if they are too warm the paper absorbs all the ink on the first ten copies and tears out huge chunks of the gelatin. I have found that with Ditto carbon paper and perfect impression paper and with the pad heated to 72°, around fifty excellent copies may be made.

Cheney's mention of his difficulty in correcting mistakes with the conventional hektoing surprised me, since I had conquered the problem by an entirely different method. When I had typed a page, I proof-read it. Then I typed the correct forms with hekto carbon on another sheet of paper and cut them out and pasted them over the incorrect words. When I repeated words, I cut them from the master with a razor blade.

I think Mr. Cheney is using a misnomer when he designates the direct method of reproduction as "Dittoing." The word is merely a trade name, as we most know. Ditto produces machines of both types, with supplies for each. I have since inspected a rotary machine made, I think, by Hoyer. I have always called the process merely "direct hektoing," but at that I am perhaps just as wrong as he is, since hekto-graphing originally meant reproducing a hundred.

Enough on that subject, though. The next letter alters our pace a little. It was written by Van Splawn when Southern Fandom was just in the embryonic stage, and in it he makes some suggestion which we have followed.

"...I once thought about a fanzine called Southern Fantasy, patterned after Southern Star, with material principally by Southern fans, with "guest columns," etc. You are right, fandom in the South is rather retrogressive, and perhaps a good steady fan-mag devoted to the organization and coagulation of the Southern boys would wake them up. You know yourself that I am just an old Southerner at heart, and I'd like to see what we can do. After we become established and the word gets around about our purpose, perhaps some of the boys below the Mason-Dixon line would rally to the cause. "Son, we're a-gonna secede from Yankee fandom. Dangit, it's a rebellion!" Anyway, I do think the South should be represented by a fan-mag, all practically all activity today is in the East or on the west coast.

Darn right, Southern Star was a swell fanzine. I like the Southern outlook on things, jovial, not too serious, and enthusiasm. The SS had all this, and more."

The next letter concerns mimeographing, usually an interesting topic to long-suffering fan editors. Before buying the mimeo I now have, I corresponded with several persons in the hope that I might discover someone who needed cash in a hurry and who had a mimeograph with which he would part for a trivial sum. The following is from Ron Christensen, who seems to know his second hand duplicators.

"What do you mean for a cheap mimeograph? New Speed-O-Prints cost \$40, second hand they are \$30. Sears-Roebuck, now, are \$30. Julie Unger had a mimeo I bought from him for \$20, and then sold it back to him because the drum was dented. Before that I had priced a repair job on it, and it would have cost three dollars to repair it, if you cleaned it out (some job!). Last I heard, Julie wanted to send for

for a new drum (it's a self-inker) to Montgomery-Ward. Or else he would sell it for \$20 again and pay for all repair expenses. I was fed up with the thing, though. Maybe he still has it. It's worth a try, I should think. Ron Meddox has a lousy one he'd probably sell for \$10 or \$15. I don't know if it can be fixed so it will do decent work. Kennedy has a queer sort of contraption which is just a drum. One puts the stencil on it and rolls it over the paper. ((If our memory serves us right, Bob Tucker very quaintly and appropriately labeled it as a "bastard contraption." -Ed.)) Cost-Joe \$3.75, and he wants to get rid of it. Dale Tarr and Tanner used a tin can on the same principal, fastening the stencil down with scotch tape."

After reading Chris's letter and others similar to it, I concluded that buying a new machine was the best bet, since used mimeos have invariably turned out to be exceedingly used, and only with a new model are you certain of getting what you paid for. Which reminds me of a 7-hand typewriter I bought from Carl Swenson...someday I shall expose him as the nefarious menace to fandom that he is. Shrouding his true nature behind the respectable-sounding firm of Swenson Book Company, his blood-sucking tentacles criss-cross fandom in a network extending to even its most far-flung boundaries, ensnaring unwary fen and demanding their pound of flesh. Are you listening, Swenson, Unger, Korshak, Moskowitz, et al?

That is all for this time. Perhaps these letters, though interesting to me, have no place in a fan-mag. What do you think? If the response is favorable, you will continue to see this feature from time to time.

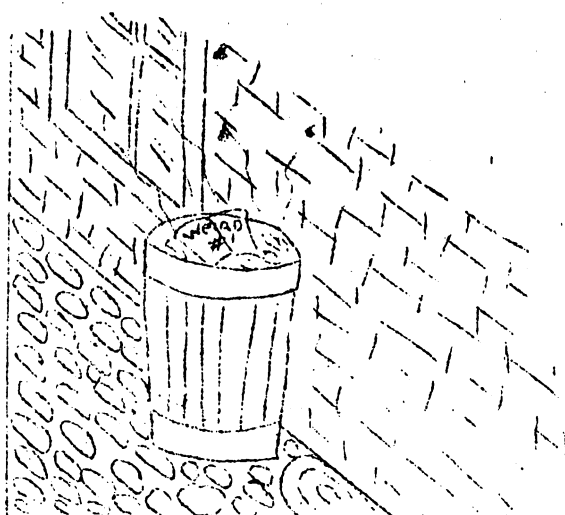
THE END

STILLNESS IN THE NIGHT

There are silences that are unforgettable. I shall always remember one night in the country. As I opened the kitchen door to go out for water at the spring, the silence was so great that drums beat in my ears. The shaft of yellow lamplight flew ahead of me like a bird along the path and, overhead, a million stars blazed in the sky.

This I will remember, I thought. The crisp, bracing autumn air, my orchard with its trees in even rows, the branches heavy with their burden of fruit. No sound in all the world. Then suddenly—a soft thud. First, by the old stone wall. Then up behind the spring, another. It soon became a steady beat. The soft fall of apples—full red fruit dropping to the ground—like blood.

--TRUE STORY



Diary of

HOBART TWERP

- By Joe Kennedy -

NOVEMBER 27, 1947 --- I have decided I would make some more entries in my diary, although my better judgment is against it. The last time I put my adventures on paper, some guy stole it from the third drawer of my hope chest and had it published in some fanzine or other. In the excerpts from this diary that were printed in the fanzine it said I had sold a novelet to Astounding Magazine. This is absolutely true, and the issue came out today with my story in it. I am not telling anybody, but I really took most of my story from an old book I found. In fact, I copied down almost every word from this book. It is a very obscure book, however, for it only sold a few hundred copies were sold. I guess Mister Campbell will never find out about it. The name of the book is "The Outsiders and Others." Hahaha. I guess I am naturally clever.

DECEMBER 14 --- You'd never guess who was here to see me again! It was that Degler fellow. It was like this. I happened to be sitting in the pantry eating pig knuckles and buttermilk, when in the door burst this Degler. I recognized him from the last time he came here and made me president of the Universel Order of Cosmic Characters. But this time he was all out of breath and red in the face from running. He didn't have a coat or tie or any improvements such as that. He said to me: you gotta hide me. I said to him: why? He said: They're after me again; please, just for old times' sake. I said: okay, go down in the cellar and hide in the coal bin. He nodded and dashed down the cellar steps and I could hear the sounds of him wallowing in the coal bin. Pretty soon up drove the police car with the sirens wailing full blast. I began to get a little unnerved. Out of the police car came six detectives and policemen with machineguns and tear gas bombs. They marched up to our front door and right on into the living room. The leader said to me: has he been here? I said: who? He said: you know who. I said: I don't know who you mean. And the leader described somebody who looked just like Claude. I finally managed to get the six cops and detectives out of the house, and they drove off muttering: that's funny, I could swear I saw him go in there, maybe we should get a search warrant. Well, when the coast was clear, Claude emerged, all covered with coal dust, handed me a copy of "Spicy Space-Ship Stories," and ran out the back door, and I haven't seen him since. Funny thing. The ground outside was all covered with snow, but Claude

didn't leave a single footprint. I guess that is because he is smart like me or something.

DECEMBER 15 --- The men with the tear gas bombs are still hunting for Claude. There was a notice in today's paper for all citizens to bolt and lock their doors on the inside until the menace is past. But I bet the menace is all the way to Newcastle by now. Hahahaha.

JANUARY 3 --- I am seriously thinking of getting back into fandom again. I have not been active for several months, but of course I was once a big shot in fandom and I guess my reputation is still hanging around. I got a letter today from a lawyer who said he represents the Street & Smith Co. and that he is coming out to see me next week about something or other. I wonder what it could be.

JANUARY 7 --- Well, I'm back in fandom again. I have become treasurer of the Interplanetary Scientific Slan Society, which is, of course, a great honor. In fact, I have been entrusted with \$87 in club funds. They cautioned me not to spend any of the funds. How silly. As if I could do a thing like that!

JANUARY 8 -- Boy, am I lucky! I have a copy of the very first issue of Weird Tales! I'm as proud as anything. Gosh, won't they all be jealous of me! It was like this. I was down in Blattsburg looking around in one of the second hand mag stores. In some places, I had to push the mould aside so I could look at the dates of the mags. All of a sudden, what should I come across but the first Weird. It was lying on top of a stack of mags marked "10¢ each." I gave a whoop of joy and grabbed and said to the man that runs the store: how much do you want for this--twenty five bucks--fifty--a hundred? He said: do you mean to say you would pay that much for that? I said: well, I'm sorry but all I have is \$87, will that be enough? He said it was. So I gave him the \$87 in funds from the ISSS and took the mag. Wow, am I a smart one. If I was running that store, I would not sell a magazine like that for less than 100 dollars, I bet. As for the club funds, I guess there is no hurry, and I can pay it back whenever I want.

JANUARY 11 --- I am getting scared! The Interplanetary Scientific Slan Society has elected a new treasurer and they want the club funds back. I don't know what to tell them, but I will try and stall them off for as long as I can. What is worse, my mother thought my first issue of Weird Tales was just an old worthless thing, and she took it and wrapped up garbage in it. The city trucks collected all the garbage today, too. I'm scared.

JANUARY 12 --- I am writing this up in the attic closet where nobody can find me. Down below at the front door, the lawyer from Street & Smith Co. is waving a copy of "The Outsider and Others" and ringing the doorbell and swearing something awful. I would not answer that doorbell for a million dollars. Also, these last few nights I have been having nightmares of H.P. Lovecraft coming back and haunting me. But right now at the back door, the president and vice-president and treasurer and six members of the ISSS are trying to bust down the door with a battering ram. I can hear it starting to splinter. Maybe I should have gone out to the garbage dump and collected the pages of the first issue of Weird Tales and stapled them together and tried to sell it for half price. But I guess it was too late. The back door is giving way. I wish I was older so I could join the Foreign Legion. Gosh. They say South Africa is beautiful in the spring. I'm scared.

THE END

LET'S SET A GOAL

By STANLEY MILLER

A special interest group like fandom needs to have a specific objective in order to justify its existence. A few wild plans like Degler's Cosmic Love Camp in the Ozarks have emerged, but for the most part they have been impracticable. To merely suggest an idealistic plan is enough to make the rest of fandom relegate to to the sub-regions inhabited by Claude. But I dare to tread the dangerous path...

No one needs to be told what is wrong with fandom as a group. Each fan has his own special interest, and he goes serenely about his solitary devices. He may be corresponding with other fan or prefer reading the pros or publishing a pointless fan mag. That is all to the good, for such is the life-blood of fandom, but what all these separate entities need is a common goal, a *raison d'etre*.

On first thought, any fan can tell you why he is a fan. He might name any of the three activities mentioned, or half a dozen others. But it is my sincere belief that fandom goes much deeper than that. It does to me.

Fandom is a way of life, an outlook. It is potentially a powerful force. Fan are different from all other people. That is not to say they are entirely superior, for in some ways they are inferior to the average man. (It is hard to classify the "common man.") But as a rule, fan have a wider knowledge, keener insight, broader sympathies, and a higher intelligence rating. But it is not my intention to provide more fuel for ego-boo.

But with all the brilliance in the world, we will never get any further unless we stick together. I fully realize that getting fandom to unite behind any single cause would be a major accomplishment. But I believe there are a few things which most of us advocate.

A hasty list I have compiled includes:

- (1). Abolition of war and the forming of a World Government.
- (2). Improving education and establishing the scientific method of thinking.
- (3). Eradication of race prejudice and group thinking.
- (4). Removal of religion and other superstition.
- (5). Achieving space travel.

Each reader is welcome to supplement the list with ideals of his own, but in this article I shall deal only with those I have listed.

The first, the abolition of war, is something I think every real fan will agree with. He sees the sheer pointless brutality of forcing men to fight other men they have never even seen, much less hate, for high sounding, but false and worthless "causes." The people of a country seldom want war except in self defense. It is the ones with something to gain who advocate and causes war. And, strangely enough, these men never do any of the fighting.

I think another cause of war is the fact that most people are provincial in their thinking. Their city is the best, their religion the

only true one, their state the best, their nation is "god's country," etc. And thus it is easy for the propaganda experts to arouse them because of this regional patriotism.

Very few fen I know are guilty of this narrow-minded type of jingoism. Fen are cosmopolitians. Southern fen admit that the South has as many faults as the North, and they do not hate a "Yankee" because their grandfathers happened to fight the Civil War.

The fen type of reasoning is the kind which must be inculcated into every citizen before we reach the millinium, and the best place for this to be done is in the school system. It is unfortunate that most teachers, who to a great extent mould the minds of the young generation, are just as narrow and full of prejudices as the lowliest clod-hopper.

If more fen would become teachers, they could do immeasurable good.

That naturally brings us to the next on the list, i.e., improving education and teaching the scientific method of reasoning and doing things. To one who has gone through the public school system, I do not need to elaborate upon the myriad dogmatisms from emotionally unstable teachers and the general stultifying atmosphere of the whole educational program. The mentally capable student is slowed down to the snail pace of the dullards, until by the time he finishes high school it is remarkable indeed if he is still any different from the rest.

However, it would hardly be fair to place the entire blame upon the teachers. Blame more the miserable compensation of the teaching profession which prevents most really capable persons from entering this line of work.

Sometimes, of course, you find a real teacher who is unselfish enough to work for the negligible sum he receives. But these are few and far between. Fankind could help a tiny bit by supporting all movements intended at raising teachers' salaries and improving the educational standard. And, I repeat, more fen should become teachers.

At the same time, fen could do much as teachers toward preventing race prejudice, instead of impressing more vividly the dubious superiority of the white race as the average teacher does. Outside of a few like Paul Cox, the Georgia boy who discovered "scientific proof" of Negro inferiority, fen are not guilty of this type of group thinking. The intelligent person realizes that those of the colored race are human beings, having both faults and virtues. He knows that some Negroes are inferior to him mentally, while at the same time others are superior. It depends on the individual.

It is a sad commentary on the human race that every man must consider himself a little tin god, deserving to be toadied to by all those more unfortunate or lower in station than he.

In the South, you have to more or less conform to the general pattern if you wish to get by. If you* defend the colored race, you are branded "n---- lover, which has a connotation somewhat lower than a reptile in the grass. I remember one occasion when a fellow was calling the Negroes practically every vile name he could think of. He topped his tirade off with the following little gem:

"I think any white man who would lower himself to a n---- is just as bad as they are." I pointed out that that type of person (is usually of a higher mentality than the ones who are always calling the Negroes bad names. This angered him somewhat, so he retorted with the inevitable, "If you think so much of the damned n-----s, why don't you go and live with them?" I answered to the effect that if conditions demanded, I would have no objections, and that it would certainly be prefer-

able to living with his kind.

Now, I don't reccommend that every fan go out on the street, collar a person and shove the truth down his throat, but we should defend what we believe when the occasion arises and we are not too greatly outnumbered.

But on to number four on the list. There is sure to be some dissension when we discuss the abolition of religion...there is always the arguement of freedom of religion, and I agree. A person has the right to worship a totem pole if he desires, so long as he does not try to force others to do the same.

But no one has the right to push christianity or any other religion down the throat of a child who is too young to decide for himself.

My own case is probably typical. Until I was old enough to have a little individuality and do a little thinking of my own, my mind was a hodge-podge of the various terrors vividly painted by the hell-fire and brimstone sermons I heard. That class which is always so afraid of practically everything that gives pleasure ruining the mind of the young generation should look into really important things like this.

Religion--and I speak of christianity in particular--has a record hardly to be envied. It has opposed almost all the advances made by science, especially in the theoretical field. It burned Jeanne d'Arc and the hypothetical witches of Salem. It teaches that men should have faith instead of reason and should accept as absolutely true one of the most ambitious, but least convincing, works of historical fantasy ever concocted.

In addition to all this and more, the religious fanatics in Tennessee succeeded in having Evolution outlawed as a course in the schools of that state in the infamous "Monkey Trial."

But to all this I can only object. If you know of any steps which would put the skids under christianity, your suggestions are earnestly solicited.

As for space travel, about fandom can do, as I see it, is stand on the sidelines and watch. There have been various rocket societies who experimnted with models, and no doubt they did some valuable work, but when the first ship lands on the moon, it will most likely be piloted by the army.

The first attempt at space flight will be attempted during the lifetime of most of us, maybe it has already occurred. Perhaps the first one will fail, but others will follow and succeed. Then will fandom be vindicated.

THE END

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THE BOOK SHOP

By John Cockcroft

"It's no use, I just can't go through with it."

The forlorn little creature let a shudder wrench through his bedraggled form. He was a piteous sight indeed standing beside the unmade bed, the long snout of the .22 target pistol looming ominously from the nervous clasp of his screwy hand...

"Oh God, why am I such a coward? Only one pull and it will all be over; my wretched life will blink mercifully out and then I'll be free. I'm going to die anyway, so why can't I pull the trigger?"

A sob wracked hysterically from little Henry Hecklebottom. He didn't want to die at all--but he couldn't go on living knowing he was going to die--within the next six months. Cancer, the doctor had said, cancer in its final stages; beyond all possible hope. Henry Hecklebottom couldn't take it; he was on the verge of nervous collapse. And to make matters worse, he couldn't end it either. He couldn't get up enough nerve to send the bullet crashing through his neurotic little brain, even though it meant the termination of six months of mental agony. He was a coward, and he knew it.

* * * *

Henry Hecklebottom found himself on the sidewalk in a strange part of town. What he was doing here, he did not know. He remembered vaguely that he had stumbled from his shabby apartment room and wandered deliriously about the city, his mind in a semi-comatose condition. But just why he couldn't remember. A haze seemed to have passed between him and his past. He knew who he was and what he was--and from there his memory trailed off into formless mist.

He took hold of himself and forced his faculties into a more alert condition. With considerable effort, he took note of his surroundings. It was obvious to him even in his lethargic state that he had never been here before.

It was a normal enough scene; a typical other-side-of-the-tracks section of the average city. The only thing was that the buildings didn't seem as substantial as all of the other buildings he had ever seen before. At first glance, they were as staunch and sturdy as any, but the longer he looked the more unsubstantial they seemed. The buildings, in fact the whole picture before his wondering gaze, seemed to flicker. The picture became a pattern of tiny notes of darkness and light, much as the half-tone screen used in photo-reproduction.

At first, he allayed this to the fact that he was a bit under the weather. He shook his head violently and made a conscious effort to bring his eyes to a definite focus. The harder he tried, the worse things became. Now the filmly patchwork seemed to weave back and forth, up and down; almost imperceptively at first, but then the undulation became greater and greater. Henry Hecklebottom's eyes rolled about in an effort to keep up with the wildly gyrating landscape. His whole head began to sway to the outré motion. Suddenly, he didn't feel well

at all. Little Henry Hecklebottom was seasick!

Finally, when he couldn't stand it any longer, he realized that while he was weaving around, the landscape had become firmly rooted once more and could be accepted as real genuine solid substantial fact. That is, if one discounted the slimy mist that was crawling fiendishly through and about everything in sight. It was a pale roseate mist that pulsed uncannily; rhythmically in tune to his now wildly beating heart.

Instinctively he realized that the mist was more than it appeared to be on the surface; it was a creature--a being--it was alive, and it had a will of its own.

Sluggishly, the mist moved toward him. Henry Hecklebottom felt sick at his stomach. A wild, unreasoning fear raced through him.

The mist swooped upon him, causing intermittent icy and burning sensations to play roughly about his nerve ends where they contacted the living slime. Henry Hecklebottom was really sick by this time; his eyelids closed with a tremor and he swooned dead away.

He did not slump to the ground, though, as would have befitted the occasion, but rather remained upright as the mist thickened and held him.

Upon awakening some time later he was aware of motion. It was a short eternity before his fogged senses told him that this motion was caused by his feet walking rhythmically. On and on he trudged; he didn't know why or where--he didn't care. He only knew he was walking.

He came at length to a bookshop. It was a drab, dingy affair, and the murky, age-stained window was literally piled with musty old tomes of just about every description imaginable, and then some.

A strange urge overwhelmed Henry Hecklebottom; an inward desire to enter the shop and gaze over the row upon row of dust-covered books. Not that books claimed any interest for him; in truth he had hardly read half a dozen books in his entire miserable lifetime.

The urge was so strong that he didn't take into consideration this fact. He was in the store before he realized he had entered. In fact, he had no recollection of having entered at all. One moment he was out on the street looking in, and the next instance --he was in the book-stall. He was puzzled.

"Why bother to think it out?" he mused, his brain revolting at the mounting prospect. "I'm here; I might as well look about."

He glanced around, realizing he had never entered a shop like this before. The only time he had seen so many books was in the school library, and he had only gone there when there was no other alternative.

For a long time he just stood there and looked about him. The closeness of so many printed words filled his soul with awe.

Then coming back to the finite world, he reached forth and clasped a large book in his lean fingers and drew it to him. He blew sharply on it and almost choked as a thick sheen of fine dust arose from the smooth leather surface. It was a strange hide, one he had never seen before. He felt a queer sensation at the pit of his stomach as he realized that the texture was similar to that of his own skin. Turning the book on end, he read the title: "Cadaverous Vegebondus; The Wandering Corpse."

Flinging the book from him, he reached for another and another. He flung them away in a fit of loathing. "Meggotides Reignus." "The Unholy Worm," and "Rites and Runes of the Black Mass" were among the volumes he selected and cast aside at random.

Utterly unbalanced, he turned and fled--only to run directly into a shelf of mouldy books which fell upon him, knocking him to the floor. He looked around him and screamed; a long, loud, unpleasant scream that echoed harshly within the narrow confines of the shop. The door--the entrance to the shop was gone. It had vanished completely, leaving only four walls; a veritable tomb of books.

Even as he looked, the room seemed to extend before him in one direction and formed a sort of passageway between two shelves of evil volumes. Scrambling to his feet in the stumbling haste of a frightened animal, he entered the corridor and raced down into the darkness as fast as his feet could take him, his arms waving uncontrollably in the air about him, snagging thick masses of cobweb and other corruption.

Around and around round the passageway; more than once he was brought to an abrupt and painful halt as he came face to face with a right angle turn.

It seemed that he ran on for days; his clothes were nothing more than tattered rags; his face was a mass of wrinkles and creases that seemed to age him twenty years. Flecks of foam appeared now and then on involuntarily moving lips, and light glinted strangely upon two uncomprehending orbs.

Suddenly the thing that was once Henry Hecklebottom rounded a final turn and entered a somber room hung with foul green funereal trappings. Livid green fires burned smokily in braziers mounted on human skulls, filling the whole room with the stench of the charnel pit.

Standing in the center of the room was a man, tall and angular. Whether he had a green complexion or not was indeterminable; it might have been merely the reflection of the grisly fires that flamed hotly in the braziers. A huge protruding forehead swept back and upward forming a smooth sweet-shiny hairless pate. A long green oart-green robe dangled loosely over the stooped shoulders, covering the raw-boned carcass from view. The hands of a corpse protruded from the mouldy shrouds; a corpse in the last stages of dissolution.

The entire spectacle was nauseating, even to the now quite mad Mr. Hecklebottom. His eyes bulged and his teeth clenched spasmodically. Blood spurted from a nasty gash in the bottom of his tongue and dribbled down his torn clothing, gleaming blackly in the eerie green radiance of the funereal room.

"I--I--want to--to--get--out of--here! Sh-sh-show me the way out!"

Hecklebottom fell to his knees and pleaded as though to a deity.

"You want to leave?" boomed the shrouded figure in a deep sepulchral voice that reverberated from the depths of hell itself. "Why? Don't you know how well off you are?"

"Please! I must find the way out! I must leave this place or I shall go mad!" roared the mad Henry Hecklebottom.

"Very well then," droned the creature, a look of curiously intermingled sadism and pity toying over his face. "Here then; here is the way out!"

As these words were uttered, the whole cavern was filled with a blaze of incandescence. A hole appeared suddenly before Henry Hecklebottom; a deep hole and very dark. He heard a gurgling sound and looked down into the rift. Far below, rushing and swirling madly was a dark expanse of swift water. And it was beckoning him downward.

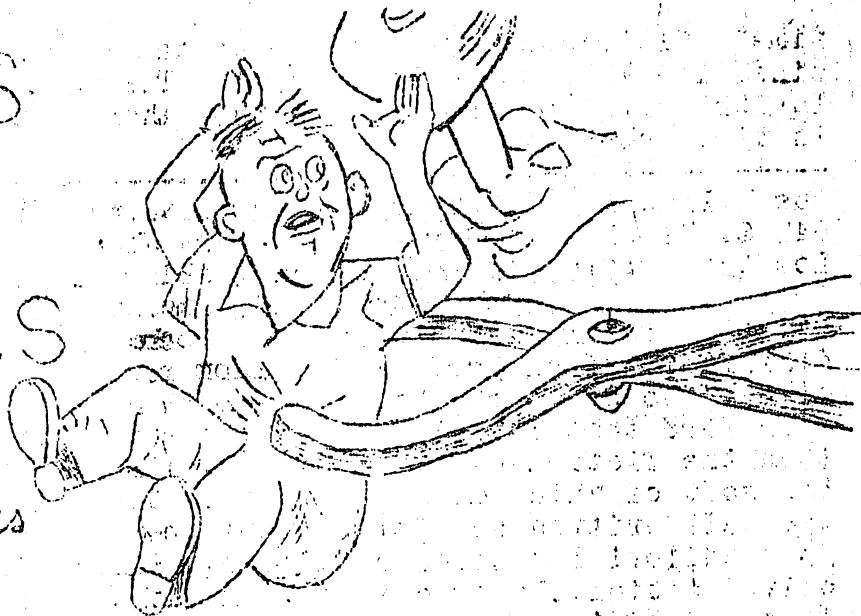
the end

Comments

AND

Complaints

From the Readers



Tom Jewett Many thanks for Southern Fandom #1. Hope you can keep
670 George it up. Cover is the usual Cockroft squiggles with tentacles
Clyde, Ohio which John loves so well, but which becomes boring after
 a while. One wonders if John can do anything else. Mim-
 eeing okay for beginners--and I oughta know. Printed contents page
 neat. Dero hunting good. Turning on my electron microscope, I final-
 ly made out the heads of what looked to be two dero. Reading the ar-
 ticle, I found that that was the expedition. I shall always carry that
 disappointment with me. Photo could have been better. ((That photo
 turned out pretty good, I think, considering the very feeble light we
 used. -Ed.)) Kennedy good as usual, but I'd go him one step further by
 imagining the PROZINE I'd like to publish. More satisfying. Fiction
 tolerable to fair. Kennedy won't collect THAT kind of fiction! Rot-
 sler art looked like he traced from Flash Gordon. Parting shot: DON'T
 roll the zine up for mailing. Unmanageable after unwrapping, wrinkles
 look terrible. Simply fold once and staple that way. Easier and looks
 better in the long run. Hoping Southern Fandom gets along okay.

Van Splewn Imagine my surprise on getting your noble Southern
5175 Kensington Fandom! It was almost like, and as welcome, as the
St. Louis 8, Mo. proverbial message from Garcia: I see you used
 John's cover right off the bat--and it doesn't look
 half bad either. You sorta slipped up on your printed contents page--
 which incidentally looked pretty good--in stating that I had done the
 interior art work. Wasn't me, but Wm. Rotsler. By the way, did you
 send him a copy, or did you think I had done the drawings? If you
 have a spare, send it to him. Helps create good will, y'know. Where
 did you get your contents page printed, anyway? ((Did it myself at
 the Enterprise Printing Co. here in town. -Ed.)) Looks nice, especial-
 ly those neat type faces. It would be great if you could print only
 material written by Southern fans, but I'm afeared there's too few of
 those critters around. Proving through the prozines gets names and
 addresses occasionally, but oft times not many of them have any writing
 ability whatever. Oh well, you can always use pseudonyms--fr'instance
 "Hamfet Cobb Lee, of Georgia," huh! The two mimeed interiors looked
 fine, especially the one in red. Are you using different colors next

time? "Intrigue" was just about the best thing in the issue, with "Fanzines I'd like to Publish" next. The mimeoing wasn't too clear, but I lay the blame on the typer rather than your printing. It'll clear up in time probably.

Gus Willmorth Pleased to receive the #1 issue of Southern Fandom
643 S. Bixel today and was very pleased to see a new effort arising
Los Angeles 14 in the fan publishing field. -- Well, I read through
 your zine, and, except for the poor stenciling, found
it to be fairly interesting. I reckon (as Kennedy says) I'm one of the
disillusioned old guard; I seldom read fan fiction, and actually com-
pleted two of yours which were rather amusing. It is rather obvious
therefore that I would find Kennedy's article to be of more interest
than the fiction--which I did. Aside from being cliché as hell--it's
the sort of thing most fan editors think of in their off moments--it
was well written and pointed out some pretty basic fanzine needs. Re-
your editorial mention of "Strange Holiday", that picture was well re-
ceived nationally by critics, and, though I couldn't be sure, had a
fair box-office drag. A great many LA fans thought it good too. It's
too bad fantasy doesn't go over well in Ripley.

Rick Sneary ((The following masterful exhibition of ignorance
2962 Santa Ana of spelling is strictly sic. To correct Rick's letter
South Gate, Cal. is to destroy his own inimitable style. -Ed.)) The
 mag was very well done. I don't usually notes such
things as dummyed edges, but did this time. The slightly out of line
typer was all right to. In fact I thought the funniest thing about
"Revenge" was the way Apelling looked. ((Fortunately I can't demon-
strate the way it separated the word with this typer. -Ed.)) I thought
you did it on purpose the first two times. One the hole the mag gave
me a odd feeling. Tho I neaver read one, it seemed to me SF was like
the fanzines of th old days. Maybe it was the double mention of Tuc-
ker (The Great), or just the way the stories and article were wor-
ded. It was quite refreshing anyway. I liked it all. The art work
was exalant. The cover by Cockroft was right up to his high standard,
and the two inside pics by Rotler were good too. A new type of art
too. Sort of modernistic, tho not quite that bad. I suppose the little
"V..." on the bottom mens that Ven Splern cut the stencils. ((Right))
He is very good at it. It was a grate loss when The Star Rover folded.
I am displeased with you about the picture. First I thought it was two
deros. But that is beside the point. You rolled the zine, thus crack-
ing the picture. Then too, you put too much glue on it, it was almost
imposable to take it out without tairing the mag in two. And lastly,
who is who? I'm puting you down as being on the right. And higher up.
((You are so right again. -Ed.)) Well anyway thanks, it adds two more
to my collection of fan photos. I wish to question you about your
story "Intrigue." In line 21 and 22 the person known as Dagger said.
"I bet you climbed up the trellis to get in here and frighten Mother."
It later said that Dagger was also Degler and Shaver. Can you offer
any written proof that Degler ever had a Mother. Let alone a father?
((Some facts seem self-evident at first, but since you mentioned it, I
am inclined to believe he was reproduced by fission from something or
other. -Ed.)) Glad you found Joke's article. Good too.