

SPACESHIP

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Richard Z. Ward

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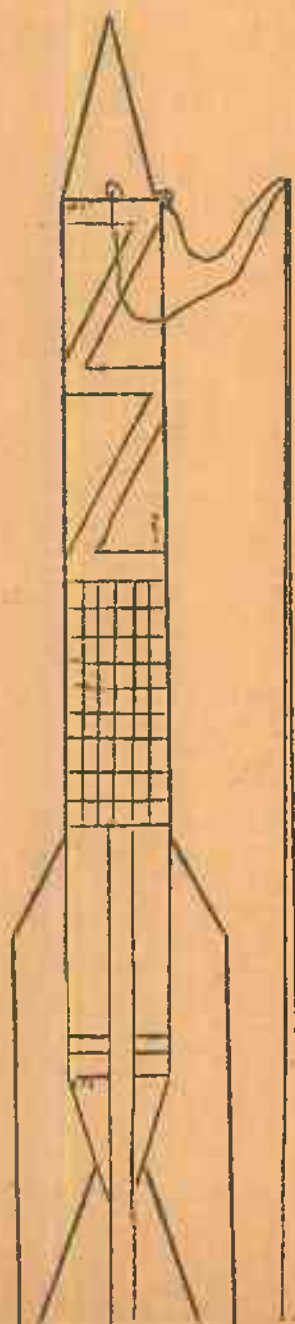
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DAVID H. KELLER'S

THE IVORY TOWER

PREVIEWED BY SAM MUSKOWITZ

Among the many popular stories of David H. Keller, The Homunculus, a novel published by Prime Press of Philadelphia in 1949, received a great deal of attention and appreciation, even from dyed-in-the-wool Keller detractors. The lead characters, the Bumbles and their dog, are easily recognizable. In fact, attempts to disguise their real identity are of a superficial nature. Keller writes best when he writes about himself, and in The Homunculus the misadventures that befall Horatio Bumble when he attempts to grow a baby in a bottle are by now a well-known part of the fantasy world. Prior reading of The Homunculus is of some importance in the perusing of The Ivory Tower, Dr. Keller's as yet unpublished 40,000-word novel, for the latter is in every sense a sequel to The Homunculus.

The Ivory Tower proceeds, however, at a more leisurely pace. There is an element in The Homunculus of seeming hustle-bustle by comparison. In The Homunculus the action shifts at times from Underwood, or the Bumbles' ancestral counterpart of the same, but in The Ivory Tower everything happens right at the home of Colonel Bumble, and the manner of happening is more philosophic, meditative, and reflective, than adventurous.

As in The Homunculus, and to a lesser extent in a great many other Keller works, a comprehensive personal knowledge of the author, his past life, and mode of living, would greatly enhance the enjoyability of the novel--in The Ivory Tower more so than in any other. Yet despite this, the story may be read by an open-minded stranger and still enjoyed on its merits, for even at the age of 70, Keller still remains the story-teller. The touch of interest is not lacking; in fact it is enhanced by the fact that the lead characters of the story spend most of their time in easy chairs, conversing, and the most active C61. Bumble ever gets is in an excursion to examine some clocks that are on auction. It is in this respect that Keller, though hobbling himself with severe literary reservations in restricting the action of the story to his home and garden, must be admired for real ability in writing an adroit and purposeful story in spite of it.

Those knowing the author might be tempted to say that Keller, bitter, disillusioned, and resentful of some of his setbacks, has set on paper in this story his woes, in an attempt at mental catharsis (a term he is so aptly fond of.) They might reach this opinion after finding incorporated in the novel satirically bitter chapters on the diverse nature of the rejection slips mailed him during the course of his half-century of writing, and more particularly in his later years when his writing became a more important factor in his life as other avenues of expression were closed to him because of physical disabilities and recurring illnesses. They will also find a parody of the

mixed reception accorded his return by science-fiction and fantasy fans. Those noting how he has lined up the arguments pro and con and made no effort to strengthen his own case, but instead has pointed out the weaknesses of the defense presented by his enthusiastic and well-meaning advocates, might easily believe this story a mere attempt at mental catharsis.

This is an easy error to fall into, and blandly to dismiss the story, on these grounds, would be to admit a careless reading and weak grasp of the philosophical and psychological aspects present in almost all of Keller's stories.

To preface my point one should be reminded of Keller's story, The Flying Fool, which appeared in the July, 1929, issue of Amazing Stories. That story tells of Robert Smith, the ribbons clerk in a department store, who lives a tight little existence on the meager pay he earns, with his wife and baby in a small city apartment. Smith dreams of release from the stifling monotony of his living. His wife is good and dutiful, but somewhere life has passed him by, has made his existence an unmeaningful drudgery. A newspaper story concerning a Bell Laboratory phenomenon in which a bar of Permalloy was caused to float an inch in the air above a magnet gives him the clue to the construction of an air machine needing no complicated mechanisms, merely a simple electric fan to propel it through the air. He builds such a device. Preliminary experiments indicate that it will almost certainly work. The thrilling idea of being able literally to saunter through the air, anywhere, bringing to his view new vistas, unfamiliar scenery, becomes the great passion of his mind. He assembles the machine on the balcony of his apartment. At night, while his wife and child are asleep, he slips out of bed, dons a suit he has lined with anti-gravitational wire, and starts from the room to the balcony.

"On his way to the balcony he had to pass the little crib. He paused a moment, even touched the little girl's hand....and the love that passed between them in some way recalled another love, and he thought of his wife, of what had been, of their early hopes and ambitions--and how, gradually, one by one those hopes had slowly been blasted, and now, at the age of fifty, he was still a salesman of ribbons and laces...then, sighing, passed through the door, out on the gallery where his soaring invention awaited him. He sat down in the chair and started to fasten the straps. Everything was all ready to press the starting button--

--And the baby cried."

The four underlined words above personify the entire meaning of man and woman's bond in marriage. Robert Smith, a poor, pent-up, frustrated soul, whose cloak of dreams had worn and fallen in tatters from his shoulders, leaving him nothing to look forward to but a future as a clerk of the ribbons and laces counter in the department store, had been granted one last, magnificent change to escape it all--and he would have, except that the baby had cried. Now the conclusion was inescapable. He could not leave with the baby crying; he had an obligation to perform, and the performance of the obligation meant the complete and utter destruction of the last fragment of dream he had rescued for his soul.

The Ivory Tower propounds a similarly powerful truth and does it op-

only, repeatedly, outspokenly, and yet it will be missed because it blends so innocuously with the leisurely pace of the novel. In The Ivory Tower, there comes into the life of Col. Bumble Diogenes, the Greek, who desires above all else to live in seclusion, become a philosopher, and think upon the philosophical connotations of the digit "one" until he had explored all possible ramifications of its significance and brought to the world a new concept of philosophy revolving about the cryptic symbol "one." Col. Bumble permits him to use his "skunk" cellar for the purpose of attaining the solitude he must have to further his great ambition of puncturing the riddle of the number "one."

Later, George, the "disillusioned pharmacist," makes his appearance. Though licensed in his work, George is unhappy because he must spend all his time working for a druggist whose chief function seems to be to provide the public with ice cream soda, candy, heat lamps, and cigars, and only occasionally is the proud pharmaceutical requirement of compounding a prescription ever called upon. He feels that this work betrays his calling. His great ambition is to run a drug store where the druggist is called upon to sell no more than his services as a prescription chemist. Col. Bumble offers him the use of his living room to set up a drug store in which such a lofty ideal may be attained (in exchange for the performance of a few menial household tasks when the druggist is otherwise unoccupied), and George accepts the offer.

A note of fantasy enters the story as through the agency of Pete and Sarah, who so noteworthy helped to bring about the creation of the bottle baby in The Homunculus, both the philosopher Diogenes and the apothecary George fall in love and find, in order to live a happily married life, they must desert their individual pursuits and ambitions, i.e., the solving of the riddles of "one" and the operation of a perfect drug store, and live a completely different life.

George, the apothecary, learns that he has previously bought shares of stock in a drug firm that has now become large and prosperous, and he has the controlling interest. He states: "I am still confused... only a few days ago I was a dreaming vagabond. Then I became the proprietor of a shop with only one customer who consistently bought nothing but soda bicarbonate. In far less time than it would have taken me to compound the simplest prescription I fell in love, married, became the husband of a lovely lady and father of a fine boy. Now, only this morning, I find I am president of a large drug firm; tomorrow, I will start touring the world with my family. It is no wonder I feel completely dazed."

In the novel, all the above has been brought about in a few days' time, with the aid of a touch of fantasy, but in reality Keller has used it merely as an allegorical symbol. Outlined above is the life of an average man who sets out with lofty ambitions and occasionally only with minor ones, and works toward the achievement of his ends, however impractically. He falls in love, and must alter the entire course of his ambition. Often it is for the best, but he cannot know this, and life streams by with such fantastic speed that when he is old and retired it seems that the road to matrimony which changed the course of his life was entered upon but yesterday.

For Diogenes, Col. Bumble has further advice: "Your position, Diogenes," explained the Colonel, "is very similar to that of many great



men who had power but lacked the ability to see where their real happiness could be found. But argument is useless. You are, my friend, caught in the web of circumstance as all men are, once they fall in love. The only course for you is to have to live with her. Since you have to live with her your future residence is a palace. Life with her may not be the dream of a philosopher but it will be very pleasant."

To the above, Bumble could have added the word "practical," and he drives home the point that not all ambitions are inherently wise or to the best interest of the party involved. Often the road to happiness lies in living a perfectly normal life and side-tracking dreams, though he concedes that the individual who has done so will often be disturbed by occasional relapses of "it

might have been."

Bumble does not except himself from the philosophy he has dispensed. The character Pete, with his amazing powers, builds for Col. Bumble an underground retreat, lined with ivory and fitted with every reasonable comfort. This is the "Ivory Tower" to which the writer Col. Bumble may go to begin work on the "great American novel" which he has always intended to write but which has become side-tracked by less pretentious literary efforts. He has secretly felt that the lack of a completely secluded hideaway has been the chief reason for his failure to produce an American epic. In Bumble's case the ambition is achieved after marriage, and late in life, but is nonetheless desirable because of it. Like Robert Smith of The Flying Fool, he is about to attain his most cherished aim, but he shows his retreat to his wife, who is intrigued by the set-up and remembers that she, too, had always dreamed of doing some writing but had never quite gotten around to it, and that this hideaway might come in handy for her. Then too, there is the baby, and such an underground place would certainly be a very safe place for him to play. Bumble understands, like Robert Smith, that there can be no complete escape from life for him. He must think of a wife and child and of the fact that they too have desires and wants, and in order to live with them he must sacrifice.

When a young friend and would-be author arrives at Underwood, Col. Bumble offers him the use of the Ivory Tower so that he may write undisturbed and perhaps, eventually, become an author. In exchange he must only remember to clean the snow on the walk, during the winter, when the Bumbles have driven south for relaxation. Bumble knows that like Diogenes and George, the would-be author will probably never attain his ambition, but will eventually follow the same tack as his predecessors, but in the interim their young friend will be happy and serve a useful purpose in clearing the walks after every snow so that no one will fall and be hurt and sue the Bumbles for damages.

Bumble feels old and tired. He opines that he would spend his last days following the approved, conventional, comfortable course with his family, but mentally withholds reservations. He may never attain,

Col. Keller has written himself completely into the role of Bumble. He is weary of critics and rejection slips and near-attainments. He is aware that sometimes his continuous effort brings discord into his home. He is willing to make concessions for the sake of harmony and his own health. He thinks it would be nice to take it easy and forget about pushing for further attainment, but he couples his decisive statement that he will "write no more" with the reservation "at least I think I will write no more, though if I can find an ending to the story I am planning I will have to write it."

In summary, The Ivory Tower is written with no deliberate effort to make it anything but a meandering discussion. It succeeds, nevertheless, in proving entertaining, incorporates a powerful voltage in psychology in a kindly manner, and definitely makes sense as a novel. Though it would help immensely to know the Kellers personally, and to have read several of their previous books, in order to get the fullest enjoyment from the novel, nevertheless I believe it is possible for an uninformed party to gain pleasure from reading it, and it is not a hopelessly fan-directed work. However, when publication is planned, it is compulsory that a plot outline of The Homunculus preface the story.

32 31 30 29 28 27 26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Plus copies of #16, the most recent issue, at 10¢ each, and all seven issues of my FAPAZINE, Irusaben, at 5¢ each.

Bob Silverberg
760 Montgomery St.
Brooklyn 13, N.Y.



LOVE IN THE CORNFIELD

WALT WILLIS

Sometimes there doesn't seem to be much hope for the world. Europe is full of Old World suspicions and New World atomic bomb bases. In Asia the great powers are defending democracy and justice to the last private soldier. South America is whirling around at thirty revolutions a minute. Everything is in a hell of a mess. Nearly everyone hates nearly everyone, and the newspapers are working on the rest. But in all this animosity there recently appeared one tiny gleam of hope, one oasis of loving kindness. A group of men who had apparently been natural enemies suddenly turned to one another with innocent affection. Pulp editors began to love one another. They greeted each other like longlost brothers. They fell weeping on each other's necks. It was touching. People began to point them out to the UN.

It was Palmer who started it. One day he came right out and threw his readers into a dead faint with the news that there were other sf mags in existence besides his own. Recklessly he went on to blurt out that some of them sometimes printed good stories. All over the country, readers with weak hearts went blue in the face and died with staring eyes. The other editors rubbed their hands and gloated. This was the end of Palmer. Years of editing FATE had finally had their inevitable result. Palmer had joined the ranks of the coverlet pluckers. But no. Palmer seemed to be no crazier than he ever had been. His mag survived. It didn't exactly go from strength to strength--it wasn't in a position to--but it seemed to be doing all right. The other editors were heartily ashamed of themselves. They began to fill their editorials with glowing tributes to other magazines. It got so you hardly knew what mag you were reading. Sometimes you felt like sending it back and asking the publishers to change it for one of the others, if they were so damned good: this one certainly wasn't up to much.

You half expected to see Rog Phillips start reviewing prozines in the CLUBHOUSE. "Now here's a very interesting little mag from a young fellow in California called Anthony Boucher. Tony has started this mag with a young fellow-pro called McComas and they are doing a very fine job. In fact, I'd like all of you to dig into your pockets and send these two young fellows a couple of hundred dollars to help them with this fine job they're doing. I know you won't regret it. I don't think I've ever seen a better mag since the one I reviewed just above. The printing is just fine--I don't know how they find the time--and the stories are just tops. Some of these pro-authors, I think, could teach us fans a thing or two about writing. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised to see some of them in fanzines one of these days. The paper these lads use in their mag is very white and the printing comes out nice and black. There isn't too much artwork inside, which will please people who don't like too much artwork inside magazines, but what there is is very fine and it must cost them a lot of money. With this issue I got a nice letter from Tony telling me that my sub was overdue and I had better renew it. I'm certainly going to do that, and I think all of you should write to Tony for a copy of this very fine magazine of his and see just what these pro-ed-

tors can do. If you haven't seen one of these prozines for a long time you don't know what you have been missing."

But this happy state of affairs was too good to last. Somebody had to come along and spoil it. First, those two unscrupulous scoundrels, Campbell and Gold, preferred producing good magazines of their own instead of praising everyone else's. Now they're even insulting one another in public, just as if they were more interested in pleasing the public than in scratching one another's backs. Let us hope such selfishness will not lead other editors to take an unfair advantage of their brothers by printing good stories, and similar underhand tricks.

And now here's Mr. Fairman. No one can accuse him of these unethical practices, but he leans too far in the other extreme. He strikes an even worse blow at the mutual admiration society movement. He goes too far. He is destroying public confidence in the sincerity of the praise editors bestow on one another. Look at this in the first IF: "No greater boost could be given an infant publication than Howard Browne's name on the cover." Offhand I could think of quite a few names that would be better infant-boosters, but I don't suppose Bob wants his annish devoted to a reprint of the authors' index of the Don Day checklist. "AMAZING is the best science fiction your money could buy." You talk for your own money, Mr. Fairman. I've no doubt Browne could lay his hand on his pocketbook and swear that his mag has the biggest circulation, but to say it is a good magazine is like calling 'Chopsticks' the greatest piece of music ever written. People run shouting down the streets when AMAZING prints a good story. The rest of this ridiculous blurb is devoted to Mr. Browne himself. Devoted? It's crazy about him. Apparently he's an "astounding ((he means amazing)) mixture of Balzac, a ten-ton dynamo, and Peter Pan." Fairman doesn't say just what attributes he has of each, but he insists he's a "great guy." Also that when he does a thing he does it in a big way. Certainly it seems that when he writes a bad story he writes a real stinker, and when he makes a fool of himself he does that in a big way too, as when he threw his 150,000 circulation into a lone fight with little FANVARIETY. But the real case against Fairman's Mr. Browne is this quotation from Fester's Norwescon Report in INCINERATIONS No. 4:

"Howard Browne, editor of AMAZING STORIES, was approached by Jerry Waible with: 'Say, I've got a really hot idea for some of your authors to get to work on. The earth is full of big caves, see, and these caves have sub-human monsters living in them that cause all the trouble up here on the surface by using rays--why --you could work up a whole series, and--' But Browne had turned away, saying to Dorothy de Courcy, 'Somebody ought to bring this boy up to date.' He wasn't smiling."

Those last three words are the most damning indictment I ever heard.

-- Walt Willis

Watch for material by these people coming in future issues: Hal Shapiro & Alice Douglas; Alice Bullock; Bert Hirschhorn; Fred Chappell; Ray Nelson; Roger Dard; Orma McCormick; Charles Morris. Next issue June 30.

THE MAN WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN

REDD BOGGS

Bob Silverberg and Cy Phan, the young editors of Rocket, have asked me to write a "fanzine" article about a fantasy writer you've probably never heard of. He wasn't one of the greats of fantasy literature, but he might have been.

Writing articles for a "fanzine" is a new experience for me, though I am old enough to be the father of any fan I saw at the Greater New York Phantasy League. I attended a meeting a few weeks ago, after seeing in the Bronx paper that August Derleth of the Borderland Press was going to speak on the subject, "Ten Years of Publishing W.H. Hodgson." I've long been an admirer of the late Mr. Hodgson; I own all his books including The World Beyond Time, which they tell me is pretty rare; so I was interested. I went over to the meeting to hear a speech--and I wind up writing an article.

Donald Wollheim, the GNYPL president, introduced me around, and, in the course of conversing with some of the club members, I mentioned the writer I know so long ago who might have become a fantasy great. These two young men from Brooklyn sensed an article and persuaded me to write down the story I told them at the meeting. So here it is.

My acquaintance with the fantasy writer who might have been goes back a long ways--back to the Great War of 1914. I'm a Canadian. I went overseas with an infantry outfit in the spring of 1916, just in time for the great Somme campaign. There were some Yanks in our outfit, men who had come up to Toronto to enlist. Maybe the war sounded like a big adventure to them. Maybe they were foolish idealists who wanted to save the world from the Kaiser. Or maybe they were merely romantic fools -- Anglophiles who wanted to fight for England in her hour of trial.

We had perhaps two dozen Yanks in our regiment when we left Quebec, and this fantasy writer was one of them. Though we weren't in the same company, somehow or other we bumped into each other often enough overseas, in London pubs before our outfit moved over to the front lines in France, and in the rear areas when our outfit straggled back from front line duty. I got as chummy with him as one could get. He didn't talk



much about himself unless he was full of wine. I knew he was an aspiring writer, though, because once he showed me a story he'd written--a powerful, macabre thing in the style of Edgar Allan Poe, called "The Rats." It haunted me for days, and I preferred to take him at his word when he declared that he could write dozens of sketches even more eerie and strange.

Once we got over to France he didn't mention writing very often. I didn't understand why till our chance meeting in the midst of No Man's Land. Let me tell you about that night. It was like the opening

scene from "Macbeth"--a black night full of hurly-burly and battle. Ominous clouds blotted up the moon and the stars. It was a fine night for patrols, if you played it smart and stuck close to the other lads. I

didn't--and in the cold hopeless hours before dawn I found myself unkered in a shellhole, with only a smashed compass and my rifle to companion me. I was lost somewhere between--British and German lines. A parachute flare glimmered somewhere, a red ball of fire in the drifting smoke. Three tattered bodies hung, against the lurid glow, tangled in the barbed wire I had just stumbled through.



I was watching the sky, hoping for a glimpse of the stars, when a furtive movement caught the corner of my eye. Those scarecrow bodies on the jumble of wire had begun to move. Gently, silently, they seemed to be walking up the easy stair of heaven. Then a slithering motion caught my ear. Holding my breath, I drew my bayonet and poised it in the shadows. A tall figure snaked out of the barbed wire and slid over the rim of the shellhole. I drew back my blade and struck at him.

"Odds bods!" muttered the man -- and at the last instant I swept the blade to one side. The blade rasped against stone and buried half-length in the mud. The man's breath sobbed out and he twisted into a defensive position. I looked down his rifle muzzle and gasped, "Hold it, Howie!"

"Ned! Is that you?" Howie wiped mud from his long thin face and relaxed. "My god, you gave me a start! Are you all right?"

"Fancy meeting you here! I'm right as a brevet - captain's salute, but I'm lost. Got separated from my patrol. How about you?"

Howie shook his head slowly. "I'm the only survivor of our patrol. We stumbled into a nest of Germans back there in the dark. It was bad--lord! Ned, that was the first time I ever killed a man with my own hands. I left my bayonet back there in one of those kraut-eaters... Look out!"

He rolled against me hard and we sank deeper into the mud at the bottom of that shell crater as a flare burst almost overhead. Instantly a machine-gun snarled, ripping at those poor bodies swaying on the wire. Slugs cried overhead. Howie cursed and stared at the brilliant flare. "Light enough to read by! All we need is a book!"

"You could read us one of your own stories-- one of those fantastic Poe yarns you make up," I suggested. Then I added curiously, "You haven't mentioned your writing in quite a spell, Howie. You've changed since we got over here. You're not the dewy lad that jointed the outfit in Canada. Are you sorry you came-- sorry that you ran away from home in Massachusetts and donned His Majesty's uniform to come to this?"

Howie laughed shortly. "It was Rhode Island, Ned. But no, I'm not sorry I came. Running away from home and joining this outfit is the best thing I ever did. Whatever happens to me, I know that. If I'd stayed back there I know what I would have become. I can see my fate so clearly it seems I must have lived it once. I'd have become a literary drudge--a tubercular wretch scratching out a living in a New York attic or a melancholy New England mansion. Writing fantastic stories and poems in the mood of Poe."

I tilted my helmet cautiously and worried a cootie with my finger. "You were a proper lit'ry gent when you joined us, Howie lad. Your nose was always in a book, and physically you were pretty fragile, I recall."

Howie laughed again, not harshly. "I was sick, Ned--mentally sick. I can see that now. Remember how I hated the cold when I first arrived in Canada? That was an imaginary complaint. Here I am, lying in a dismal crater and it doesn't bother me. My mother coddled me too much."

"Damme, I'm cold," I told him honestly. "But, as I say, you've changed a lot, Howie. Now what are you going to do after the war?"

"Write, I suppose. I still want to. But no more fantastic stories for me. There's something more important to write: the truth about war, I've been writing a novel in my mind--a novel that will expose all the horror and indignity of war, a novel that will not spare the real facts at the expense of glorifying this 'crusade for civilization'. My novel will tell the truth about the stupidity, pain, filth, boredom, and blackness of war. What kind of world is this where men must hide in the slime of a hole in the ground, like embattled beetles?"

I laid my hand on his wet sleeve. "Caution, Howie. Speak low. Let's talk of other things before you get worked up over the state of the world. Sing for me the latest verse of 'Mademoiselle from Armentieres' you sang when I saw you last at Duvnois."

"I'd need a gutful of brandy to remember it, Ned," Howie sighed.

"What? And you know a genuine Mademoiselle, too. What became of Gaby?"

"The blackeyed minx took up with a Yank flier. Make it plural. You must line up these days to kiss her willing lips, let alone--"

A fresh flare burst over us. As we tried to cling closer to the mud, the night shook apart and opened like the gates of hell, emptying jagged light, sound, smoke and fury upon us. Steel and dirt flew overhead and after a long while I felt Howie turn his head toward me. "Another one like that, Ned, and we're it!"

"'Twas close," I admitted, shakily. "Ah, for a cigarette now."

"Sorry, but my makin's are wet," Howie said, amused. "Everything I own is wet, except for my rifle. He lay just below the rim of the shell--hole, a little higher than I. The flare was drifting away, but I could see his calm face pressed into the mud, helmet forward, its edge buried in the disputed earth. I was about to speak again, when Howie seemed to move, bodily, all at once. He rose, he flew, he fell, crushing down over me. The hellgates had blasted wide again. I had the sensation of flight, rising into a realm of exploding stars. I floated up, up...

The next thing I knew there was a reassuring firmness under me. I opened my eyes and focused on a chap with a proper British mustache bending over, doing something to my leg. I felt nothing. Behind the man a lamp glowed dimly, showing me a crowded hospital ward. I struggled to speak. The words clogged in my throat, and the man answered me impatiently, No, No, No. I hadn't managed to ask, but I knew he was answering me. Howie was dead.

I was in the hospital for long months afterward, but I found Howie's grave when I was walking again. It was in the brown earth of autumn, under a white cross among many in the British cemetery at Sissone, France. There he still lies, and the name on the cross means nothing to anyone alive but me. Yet, if the Great War hadn't come along, he might have written greater fantasies than Edgar Allan Poe or William Hope Hodgson. If he had lived, he might have written a greater realistic indictment of war than A Farewell to Arms. He was a fine potential writer, and I remember him for that, as well as for being a stout pal and a brave man. I'll never forget his name: Sergeant Howard Lovecraft.

-- Redd Boggs

REPORT FROM AUSTRALIA

ROGER ORR

Fans are ultra-sensitive critters, and nowhere does this neurotic symptom manifest itself more than in the frantic boosting of everything that is the "best" in fandom and panning of everything that is "worst." Naturally, among the "worst" features of science fiction are reckoned the comic strips, though many fans, like this writer, are Jekyll-Hyde creatures walking around ostentatiously clutching the latest ASF or Galaxy, and then, in the privacy of their locked and barred rooms, drooling over the latest adventures of Lili Abner and Invisible Scarlett O'Neill.

Of course, this sensitivity of the average fan is not confined to the comics -- they merely represent one extreme. In many other ways, fans demonstrate their fear of being ridiculed. First, there was the outcry against the "Bergey Girl." Let it be known here and now that this columnist is an implacable foe of girlie covers. SF magazines should have science fiction covers. A girlie cover on an s-f mag is as out of place as a robot or spaceship would be on the cover of SEE. But most fans who assailed Earle Bergey did so on the one ground that his cover females were scantily dressed. Presumably, had the Bergey girls been completely and respectably clad they would have been acceptable to fandom! And imagine fandom's dismay when GALAXY (the magazine considered irreproachable) suddenly showed up with a back cover nude! The fans voiced their disapproval in no uncertain fashion, blaming Horace Gold for all and sundry including the high cost of living. It's at this point that I'd like to give my talk on the facts of life: advertising is a magazine's principal source of income, and the editor, however lofty his publishing ideals, often does not see advertising copy before the readers do...whereupon the advertising manager is able to sneak almost anything into the magazine. Furthermore, most publications must have advertising to survive, and frequently pulp publishers are in no position, economically speaking, to set themselves up as censors and reject ads not in tone with the rest of the mag. (ASF is the outstanding example of a magazine with a selective ad policy.)

But this is where we came in, and I wish all publishers would realize that the girlie cover will result in a one-time sale to the fellow who is looking for lively reading but who finds some junk about the future instead; girlie covers will sell girlie magazines and rocket ships and robots, we like to think, will sell sf magazines.

What there is of the local news: membership in the Australian Science Fiction society is now creeping close to the 100 mark. Many new names, not hitherto heard of, are coming to light. Fandom seems in a healthy and virile position at the moment, but there are ominous clouds on the horizon. The government, alarmed at Australia's economic position, has started drastically to reduce and curtail imports. Unlike the previous

restrictions, which were aimed mainly at the dollar area, these new laws are of a more sweeping nature, and imports even from Britain are to be stopp'd. We don't know as yet just how this will affect books and magazines, and, in turn, fandom. The old-guard fans with overseas contacts will continue to get at least some of the prozines by means of trades, but the newer type of fan recently beginning to appear had first been drawn to the field by British prozines such as AUTHENTIC SF and NEW WORLDS, which are sold on Australian newsstands. Most of these new fans were existing mainly on a diet of the British prozines and the British reprints of USA prozines, but if the British mags are now prohibited from entering the country, then, like the vampire deprived of his daily pint of blood, the new fans will disappear from our ken.

PEN PALS DEPARTMENT: Speaking of new fans, one of the most enthusiastic I have struck in many years is a Melbourne fan named Leo Harding. This lad is good fan material, has already written a fairly good story which will see fanzine publication, and has a keen interest in the field. He wants to trade with American fans who may be interested. His full address is Leo Harding, 510 Drummond St., Carlton N.3., Victoria, Australia. He wants any US prozines, but particularly GALAXY, which he has never even seen.

One of the most interesting items to see publication in this hemisphere is the recently-issued TALES OF CLARK ASHTON SMITH. This is a bibliography of all the stories of CAS, with complete information on when the stories appeared, names of the magazines they appeared in, etc. No collector should be without a copy. Less than 500 have been printed, so better rush 20¢ to the publisher, Thomas Cockroft, 3 Stilling St., Melling, Lower Hutt, New Zealand. This booklet was published with the approval of Clark Ashton Smith, and the proofs were checked by him prior to publication.

The lone Aussie prozine, THRILLS INCORPORATED, is still going strong in its latest format, 32 pages pocket-size, usually containing a novelet and two shorts each issue. (So far eighteen issues have reached the US and we have been told that the nineteenth is on sale in Australia-ed.)

Next issue: A complete report on the Australian Science Fiction Convention, held in Sydney on March 22.

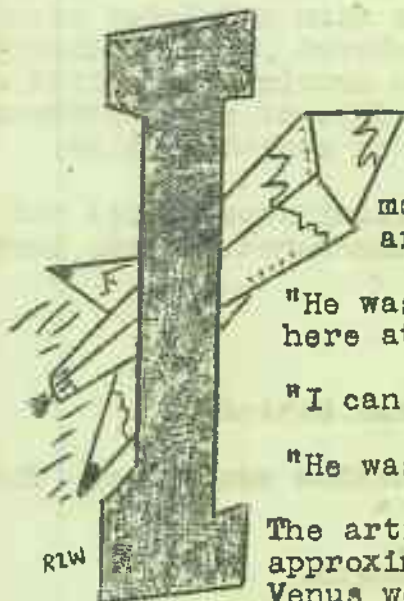
--Roger Dard

Almost forgot to include this: You get this issue because-----

- ☐ You have a sub and will get at least the next issue
- ☐ You have material in this issue.
- ☐ We trade.
- ☐ You bought this one issue. If you want #18, cough up.
- ☐ This is a review copy.
- ☐ Subscription expires WITH THIS ISSUE! It's your last unless--
- ☐ Sample copy. Comments and/or subscription appreciated.

SOFT RAIN

MORTON D. PALEY



It was evening, eight hours before the revolution.

"Herzio wouldn't have betrayed us," Dannin said, more to himself than to the ring of familiar faces around him.

"He was not to be trusted," said Juliano. "He is not here at the appointed time."

"I can't believe it of Herzio," Dannin insisted.

"He was not to be trusted," said the old man, Juliano.

The artificial lights of the city were slowly fading, in approximation of Earth after sunset. Soon this part of Venus would be dark, they all knew. Then would come a slow grouping of forces which would strike quickly and disastrously at the power of the Dictator. Unless...

Unless he were warned in time.

All of them knew the importance of surprising the Dictator. They could not win unless surprise was on their side. And if they lost...

For thirty years, ever since the War of Dissolution on Earth, Venus had been under the rule of the Dictator, who had seized power quickly and directly. There had been no contact with the mother planet ever since; whether because of the effects of the War, or the machinations of the Dictator, was not known. What the people did know was the hunger in their stomachs, brought on by terrible taxation and an unbalanced economy. Unbalanced, because the Dictator competed with the common farmer by selling the products he took in tax on the open market at prices less than the farmer's own.

Real clouds were moving underneath the white dome which sheathed Venus.

"It's going to rain," said Carol. Carol was a blonde-haired girl whose father had been killed by the Dictator's men a year before.

Juliano sniffed at the breeze. His time-lined face relaxed a little.

"Soft rain," he pronounced. "A farmer's rain."

Dannin stood still a moment, lost in thought and memory. Then the present business pressed in on him.

"All right," he said. "You all know the plans. I want each group leader to tell me the part he and his men will play."

Kurt, a beefy, sandy-haired man, began speaking, but Dannin wasn't paying attention. They had been over the plans too many times before; each man knew his job down to the fraction of a second. Dannin was thinking of a time long, long ago, when he had not known how terrible the world was, when he was a boy on his father's farm and loved everybody and thought everybody loved him. He remembered running through the fields of red grain with the soft rains which nourish the plants of Venus splattering all around him, he remembered days of sheer contentment and no responsibility. Then his mind dwelt on something else.

His father, gaunt and worried. His father, talking about taxes and a bad harvest. The day the strangers came. He remembered a farm, burning.

Juliano's cough brought him back to reality.

The others were leaving. Only the old man remained behind.

Neither spoke for a moment. Dannin knew what Juliano would say. The old man stared him in the face a moment.

"It's about Herzio, isn't it?" asked Dannin at length.

Juliano nodded. "He is not at his house," he said. "He is not here."

"Perhaps he had an accident," replied Dannin. "He might have been called away--anything could have kept him away."

"We would have heard from him, at least. You know that."

Dannin shrugged his shoulders in resignation. "I suppose I do," he said. "But what do you want me to do about it?" He placed his hands on the old man's shoulders. "We knew the risks when we started this, all of us. We're but a tiny segment of the whole, Juliano. We can only do our part and hope.

"Herzio couldn't tell them much," he went on. "They may think it's just a local outbreak. And no matter--it's too late to call it off."

Juliano nodded in understanding and walked slowly away. The sound of his retreating footsteps was obscured by the gentle pattering of the soft rain which had begun to fall.

Dannin breathed deeply and closed his eyes for a moment. The air never smelled quite so good as when a soft rain was falling. Strangely, the chance of his impending death did not upset him in the least. He felt as if he had only purpose, not feeling. Not even the fact that he might not live to know the outcome of the struggle could disturb him. It was a strange feeling.

A warm breeze fanned his cheeks. Dannin was so lost in thought that he failed to notice the purr of a car coming up the street behind him. He looked up, too late, and as he leaped for cover the air shook with the blast of gunfire.

They left him lying there in the street, lying in the soft rain.

-- Morton D. Paley

"FOR THE FANS" : RAY PALMER

"SEZ WHO?" : RICHARD ELSBERRY

Late in 1949, the news filtered through the grapevine to Jimmy Taurasi that a new magazine, Other Worlds, would soon be reality. Taurasi, of course, hurried around to find out more about this new addition.

Clark Publishing Company was soon discovered to be the culprit and Taurasi managed to get a statement from the editor, Robert N. Webster. Said Webster, in clear ringing tones: "We plan to use the best authors it is possible to attain, and the magazine will combine all the good features of such top-notch mags as Astounding, Blue Book, Argosy, and Amazing. We definitely plan to put out the best s-f magazine on the market." The tip-off should have been the mention of Amazing. Going from the sublime to the ridiculous in one sentence is rather hard.

Subsequently it was announced that Robert N. Webster was in reality Ray Palmer, late of Ziff-Davis. While in Cincinnati, Palmer hired Bea Mahaffey as his managing editor. In other words, a glorified secretary. It was good business sense on Rap's part--Bea is pretty, and a fan. She would be something to adorn the office, and she would perhaps also induce the fans to buy the magazine because it was "edited by a fan."

The first two issues of Other Worlds were very bad. Rap candidly admitted that they weren't anything with what he had coming up. In the third issue he echoed Fantasy - Times: "To tell the truth, some of the authors concerned donated their manuscripts, just to aid in getting the magazine started." Yes, it was nice of them to donate their stories, and don't think Palmer forgets his friends. Of the ten stories in the first two issues, three were by Shaver and six by Phillips.

Palmer was quite insistent that "we intend to beat each (sf mag) at its own game by giving the readers exactly what they want." I don't think the fans ever did have anything to say about it. If they had, they probably wouldn't have asked for a diet of Shaver, Phillips, & Byrne.

Rap thought that by the third issue the fans would begin to see what he thought was good s-f. He even went so far as to state "...and we predict that by our sixth issue you'll find the changes so vast as to be almost unrelated to our feeble beginnings." The third issue showed the way in Palmer's policy of the best that money can buy, containing only three stories by Shaver, two by Phillips, and one by Palmer himself. He did manage, though, to squeeze in 10,000 words by "outsiders."

After the first couple of issues of the mag were out, Palmer made so bold as to write an article for Fantasy - Times called "My Mag One Year From Now." As is the case with Palmer, he makes some pretty broad statements, which can only be proven or disproven by your own personal taste. Maybe you like the way Rap is editing OW--I don't.

The magazine Palmer was yakking about is supposedly the type he was publishing with issues 9-11. You might compare those issues with Palmer's idea of what they would be like.

"I said," he wrote, "I'd give the readers the magazine they asked for:

(1) "Trimmed edges." It's pretty hard to put out a mag today, especially a pocket-size one, without trimming the edges. That wasn't done, as Palmer intimates, for the fans.

(2) "A size easier to handle." It might be easy handling but so are a lot of other magazines. In fact, it is so easy to handle that without staples it is often falling apart.

(3) "Better stories. By better, you meant in regard to writing, treatment, plotting, etc. And especially better editing." It's a pretty brash editor who says he prints better stories than someone else. Palmer undoubtedly means better stories than he started out with, and that's no trick. But as to better editing, I can only grin and bear it. It is not better than JWC's or Boucher's, but perhaps he means better than he was doing at Ziff - Davis. Anyone who uses as much Shaver as he does can't really call himself a good editor, no matter how many pennames he gives the fellow.

(4) "The best authors obtainable. We've paid better rates than Amz ever paid, or maybe Astounding, to get some of them." Here, the accent is on the some. Sure, payment on some short stories will average 5¢-6¢ a word, but a lot of mags pay a \$100 minimum which averages out that high. And the contents page of OW #15 clearly states: "Basic rates, 1¢ per word." That is even under Amz's basic rate! Somehow, we feel that Phillips, Shaver, Byrne, and Palmer are not the best authors available. Paying his rates, Rap can't get anything better. But what pleases us most is the fact that Rap prints his own stories, and since he owns the magazine he doesn't have to pay himself for them, saving more money!

(5) "Little things, like putting the name of the artist at the bottom of each illustration so you know who did it; putting the number of words in each story on the contents page; fan news; personals, etc." As you've probably noticed, half the time the artist's name isn't at the bottom of the page, or any place on the picture. As for the fan news and personals, they can be scrapped as far as I'm concerned.

(6) "...such artists as Paul, Bok, Jones, Finlay, Smith, Krupa, Kohn, Macauley, Brundage." So far, I've ~~never~~ seen Paul, Finlay, or Brundage in the pages of OW. Instead of trying to get some of these artists it's too bad he didn't get rid of Terry, Smith & Co. and keep Red Ruth.

(7) "We've made it a policy to give fan artists a break. We'll have fan art in every issue..." Jon Arfstrom, a well-known fan artist, sent Palmer a bunch of samples which were not for sale. Generous, kind - hearted Rap bought the pics from Jon without asking if they were for sale, for the overwhelming sum of \$2.50 each. What a break for Jon! You've undoubtedly seen the full - page Arfstroms which Palmer made off with for that ungodly price. Of late, though, Grossman tells me that Rap is paying \$20-25 for a full page pic.

(8) "We've given fan writers every possible break." So what? I can't see how it makes any difference if a guy is a fan or not. An author is an author, no matter what he reads.

An editor's job--theoretically--is to buy the best available s-f, and not to give a fan a break because he reads s-f, and maybe some other fans might buy that issue to read his masterpiece. Palmer should stop giving the fan authors a break --- and start giving his fan readers one.

(9) "We threw out the silly idea of not mentioning competition." But only to lull the fans to sleep, so they would think Palmer would go through with the rest of his boasts. ((See the Willis article, Page Eight in this issue--Ed.))

And Palmer finished with one of the most glowing paragraphs in all the literature of fandom. "In our case, it's 35¢ we're after, and for a darn good reason. Think we're trying to milk you out of a dime? Wait till you see what we do with that dime. We'll pay rates authors never heard of before. We'll add to the magazine everything we can, to make it tops. Take, for instance, back cover paintings?...more pages? Sure --as soon as that dime grows. It isn't so we can make more money. We don't care if we don't make a dime...we are fans and we love s-f..."

As to the milking, I'll leave that up to you. But I just wonder how long we have to wait to see what Palmer is going to do with the dime now. I guess he is paying unheard-of rates just now, but I'd sort of like to see back cover paintings. However, Palmer had me completely fooled when he said he loved s-f. I never would have guessed.

In #4 it looked almost as if he were trying to make good on some of his promises. He had good stories by Russell, van Vogt, Jones, and Bixby, but they added up to 32,000 words--compare Byrne's 37000word Colossus.

The fifth wasn't bad, but 56,000 words were by Byrne and Palmer, 39,000 of those a rehash of an old Amazing serial. Van Vogt, Bradbury, and two others crowded 11,500 words, hardly enough to flutter the \$\$\$.

#6 wasn't much better. Nearly 50,000 words were divided between Shaver and Byrne, and that doesn't leave much room. And two of the other stories were reprinted from fanzines -- you'd think Palmer couldn't afford good stories, or didn't want to buy them.

And so it went with the next two issues. More Phillips, more Shaver, under various names, and the same bum stories. Palmer's trial period was over, and it was a failure. As Mahaffey said in #4: "You're aiming for circulation instead of satisfied readers. You got AS on the brain."

The way he was using his old Amazing authors left no doubt as to Palmer's objective. It was circulation, and the money that went with it. He was charging 35¢ to get better authors, he screamed, but vV and Brad were held to infrequent short stories. The long stories were always by Shaver, Phillips, Byrne, and occasionally Palmer himself.

Rap realized that interest was lagging, and fired off a string of promises which, if collated and compared with the actual happenings, would make a lengthy and interesting article alone. And then, finding it lucrative to write for himself, he began to make it a habit. Starting in #10 he was represented in #10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16. Shaver and the rest were all well represented.

I'm not trying to say these boys can't write. I leave that up to you.

My gripe is that they are Palmer's old buddies from the halcyon days of Amazing, and he said he was out to get the "best" available. And he was to pay top prices to get it. Yet these guys hang around his neck like millstones, and I don't think he wants to get rid of them too badly. After all, they do write the same type of story that Rap writes, and if you're going to fill someone else's purse besides your own, why not your friends?

Just what sort of fellow is this Palmer? A good editor, a blowhard, a circulation seeker? It's hard to tell from his past career. Graduating from the ranks of fandom in 1938, he took over the editorship of Amazing when it was in the doldrums, and put it briefly on top. A year later, he started a companion fantasy magazine. But, even as poor as his early issues were, and Shaver-infested as the later ones, Palmer claims it was not his fault. He says he was aiming at circulation since that's what his bosses wanted, and he didn't care especially if he printed good stories. He confidentially adds, also, that he really didn't like what he was printing at Amz and that he really likes the Astounding type story. Well, from reading OW you'd never know it. If such is the case, how can we tell if Palmer is a good editor or not?

Let's take a look at an editorial in #15: "Four years ago we discovered another of the many writers we can claim as our own discoveries in the 22 years of our editorial experience. He had never written a word when we asked him to write a story. He did one...it certainly was a stinker...but we asked him to do a novel. Then we began advertising it in Amz. We even had three - color back plates made, heralding it as one of the greatest novels of s-f history. We bet, in fact, on a blind pig. We won. That story was 'So Shall Ye Reap' by Rog Phillips."

Here is a good example--in fact a sterling example--of the way Ray Palmer goes about editing a magazine. An entirely new author sends in a short story, the first he's ever done. It's terrible. Palmer says, "Great. I'll have this boy write a novel for us. It couldn't be any worse than the stuff we're printing now." So our budding author, who has never written anything but this one short story, ~~undertakes~~ the novel. Palmer, in the meantime, is advertising this novel, which is still in the typewriter, as the greatest s-f novel ever written! That, you'll admit, is a pretty big statement to make about the first novel of an untried novice. But what does Palmer care? He blithely goes ahead and has the cover plates made up, planning to print the story no matter how good or bad it is. So he's lucky and it comes out good. But you wouldn't expect a sane man to admit he had a novel written for his magazine in that manner! Anyone who would edit a magazine like that must be crazy. Any day now I'll be expecting a letter from Palmer commissioning me to start on a novel for him.

We can skip the other little incongruities in the story, such as the fact that Phillips' first story was not "So Shall Ye Reap" (he had had several others in both Amz and FA over a period of nine months before the novel appeared.) But Palmer, having been in the business for 22 (?) years, shouldn't be expected to be able to remember five years back...after all, he isn't a young man any more.

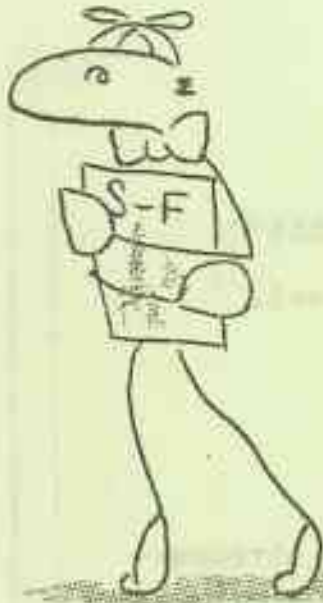
--Richard Elsberry

MAGAZINES FOR SALE

FFM, good to fine condition, 50¢ each postpaid. 1942 Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec. 1943 Sep Dec. 1944 Sep. 1945 March. 5/\$2.

Bob Silverberg, 760 Montgomery St., Brooklyn 13, New York

THIS is Herman. He is a fan. He has just bought a copy of a science-fiction magazine. It has a sexy cover.

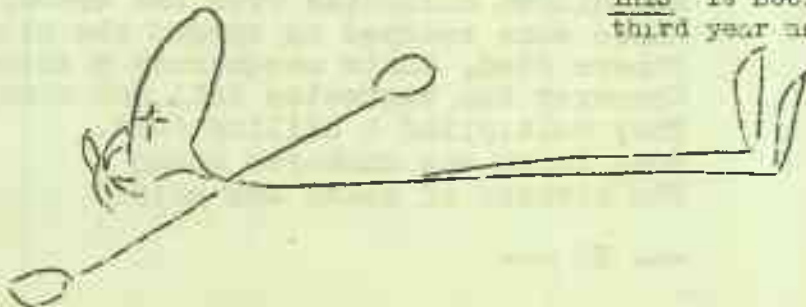


FANS
WE
ALL
KNOW

THIS is Wellington. He is a fan. He is a completist. He has just been to the newsstand. He goes there everyday.



THIS is Bob. He has just completed his third year as the publisher of a leading fansine.



—Lee Hoffman

HAG'S MIRACLE

DRAMA McCORMICK

I purchased clothes at Star Galactic Shop
Until my credit was exhausted, quite;
Then, waiting by my favored Mono stop,
I saw the hag! My spirit lanced with fright!
So very ugly, old, disfigured, she
Compelled my soul to shrink with sudden dread.
I fought for control, instinctively,
While pity made me bless her homely head.

I hastened home without a backward look,
Because I feared some wicked, alien curse;
Emotions stirred me strangely, as I shook
from head to foot, examining my purse;
Amazement coursed, where fear had been, in streams--
My wallet bulged beyond my wildest dreams!

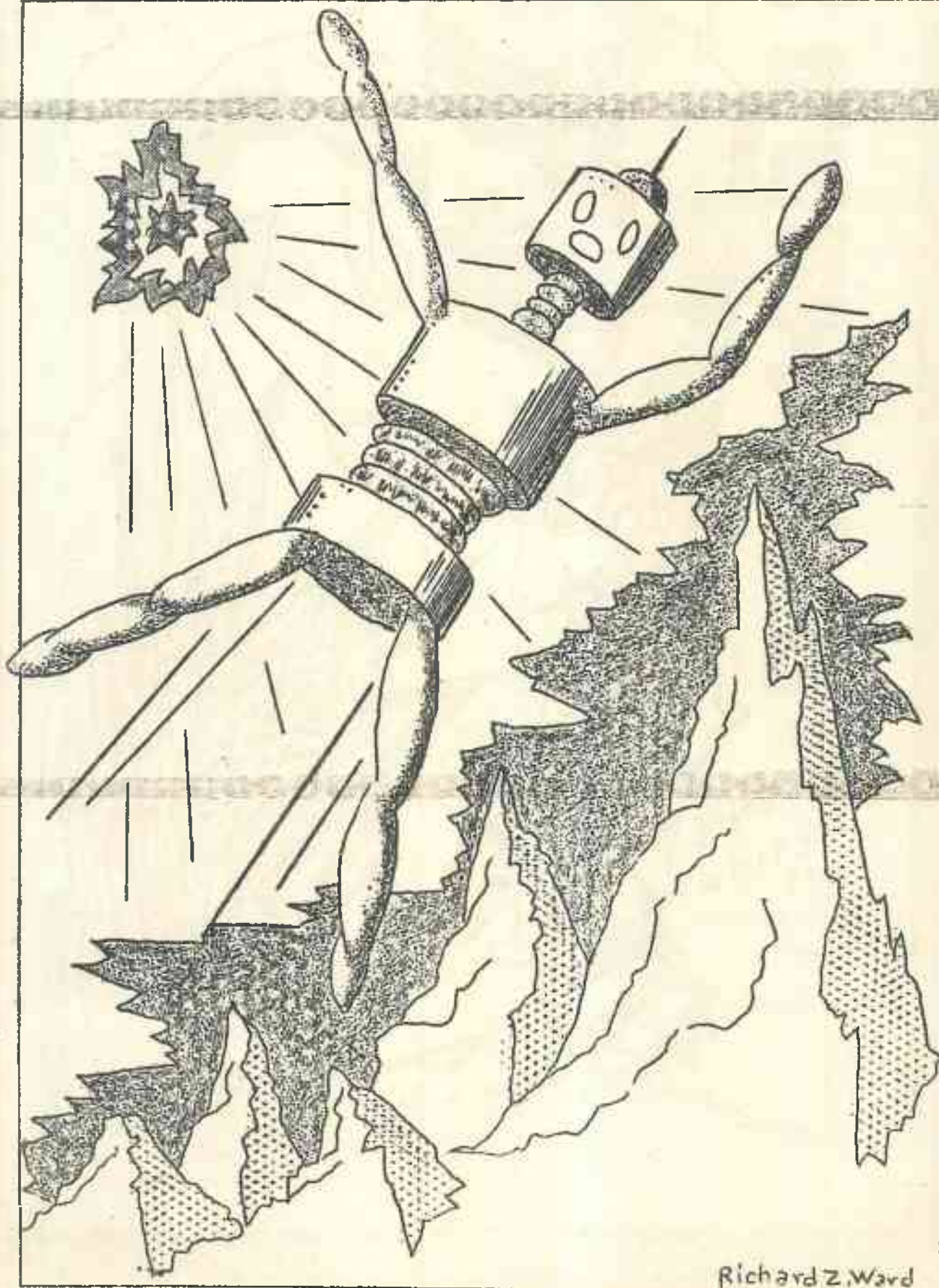
INVASION

ISABELLE DIA-WIDDE

A brooding calm lay over the Earth
On the night of a masquerade ball.
The guests were clad in fancy attire
Circling the dimly-lit hall.
Louis XIV danced with a rag doll,
The Queen of Hearts with a chimney-sweep
Puss-in-Boots with Mother Hubbard's Dog
And Lucifer with Little Bo-Peep.

Music grew merrier, then quite mad
Unnoticed the figures that now stole
In and out amid the hectic throng,
Following the wake of Old King Cole.

Venusian visitors scattered
Deathladen dustmotes over the crowd,
While some escaped to spread the plague
Others died, their masquerade a shroud.
Wherever the dustmotes fell and clung
They multiplied a billion fold.
Soon Terra was numbered among
The planets of death and cold.



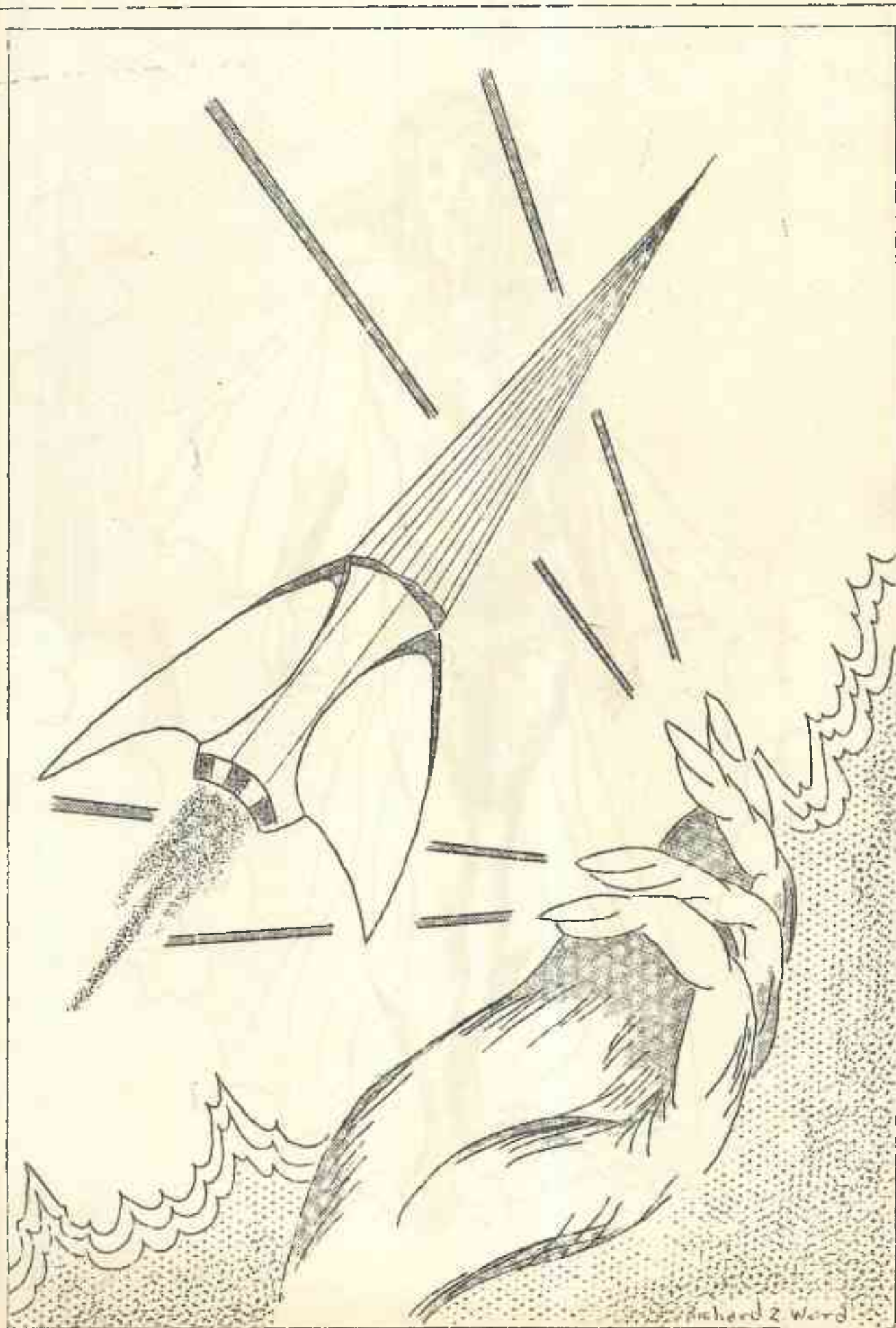
REPTILES

OF
SCIENCE
FICTION
ART

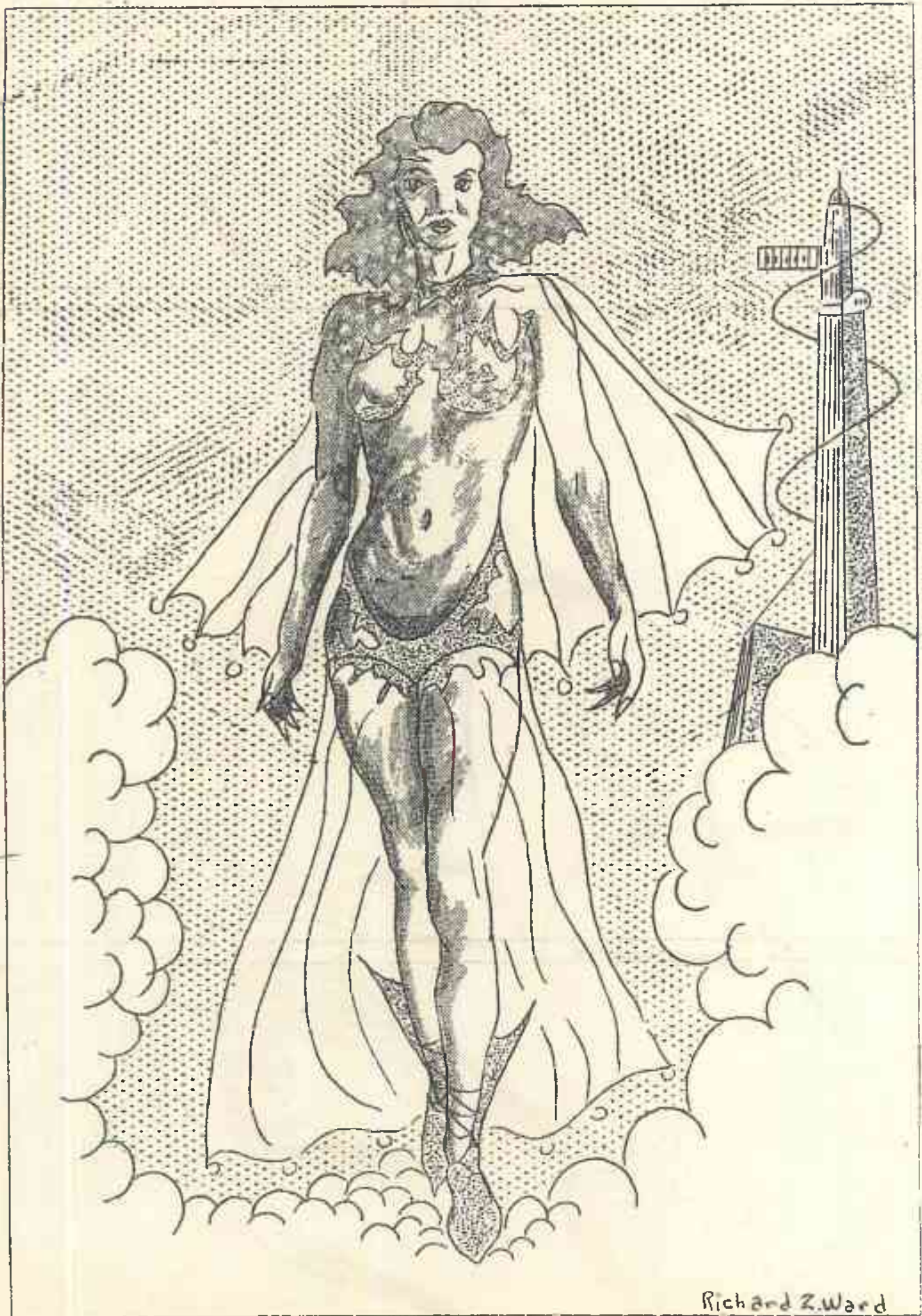
Richard Z. Ward,
and
Henry Chabot



Richard
Z. Ward



Richard Z. Word



Richard Z. Ward

man, reaching out into the night, grasping at the cosmos with clumsy hands, stretching forth at the stars...bright dots in the blackness looking back, laughing, challenging, wondering at the bold

invader of the skies...ships blasting off into the unknown, long trails of

fiery smoke, eyes straining at the

dark, gleams of metal against

the skies, ...little

strange

red men

being

hewed down,

forced into

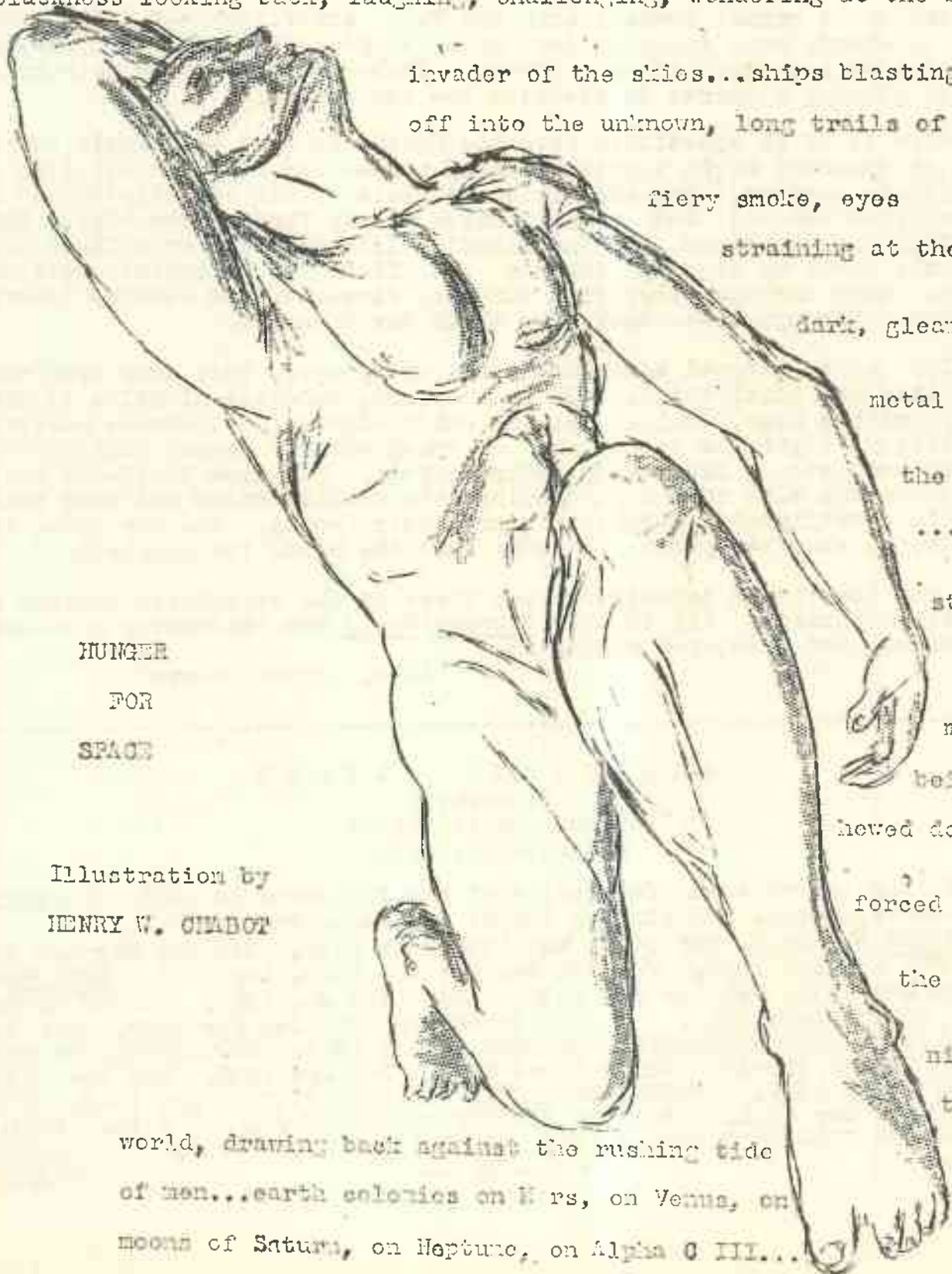
the cran-

nies of their

HUNGER
FOR
SPACE

Illustration by
HENRY W. CHABOT

world, drawing back against the rushing tide of men...earth colonies on Mars, on Venus, on the moons of Saturn, on Neptune, on Alpha C III...



MOVIE REVIEW: UNKNOWN WORLD

G. ARTHUR STEWARD

For some reason this movie has received little publicity in the fan and professional press. Since this movie, unlike many other B Stf pics, is not quite a total loss, it is worthy of at least passing mention.

Even though it cannot compare with the four top-flight s-f films since 1950, it stands head and shoulders above Rocketship XM and suchlike, on the point of accuracy if none other. There were no noisy meteors or similar glaring mistakes to distract the fan viewer.

The story is of an expedition into the Earth to find a suitable cavern in which humanity might survive, should the A-bomb wipe out all life on the Earth's surface. The expedition consists of six scientists (one is a female, of course) and a millionaire who is footing the bill. They sail from San Francisco to the Aleutian Islands, and from there they enter the earth by digging through the floor of an extinct volcanic crater. Once through, they find tunnels, fissures, and caverns (sorry: no dero). Through these they make their way downward.

Finally, after several adventures, failures, etc., they come upon what looks like the ideal thing. It is a cavern, hundreds of miles in diameter, with a high, vaulted ceiling which contains a luminous material that affords light, a large lake of fresh water, ground suitable for agriculture, etc. Everything looks perfect, but even Hollywood would not be content with such a pat ending: the rabbits which had been taken along for experimental purposes bear their young, and the young are found to be sterile, putting a crimp into the plans for survival.

Comes the inevitable cataclysm, but three of the expedition survive it and return topside. All in all, Unknown World was reasonably good entertainment, and I enjoyed seeing it.

-- G. Arthur Steward

M A G A Z I N E S W A N T E D

Bob Silverberg
760 Montgomery Street
Brooklyn 13, N.Y.

I'm willing to pay cash for copies of the following in good condition, with covers, pages, and binding intact and well-preserved:

ASTOUNDING Nov 1930, Oct 1933, May 1934, Mar 1936, Jan Feb Mar Apr May 1937, Feb Mar Jun 1938, Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov 1940, Aug 1941. AMAZING-- Feb 1933 Jun 1936, Feb Apr Dec 1938. STARTLING Jan 1942. PLANET Sp Fal 1941. COMET March 1941. FANTASTIC ADVENTURES Jan Mar 1940, May Oct Nov 1942. FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES August 1940. CAPTAIN FUTURE Fall 1941. WONDER STORIES Jan Feb Oct 1935, Feb Apr 1936, Nov Dec 1934. UNCANNY April 1941. FUTURE Dec 1941. SCIENCE FICTION Apr 1943. COSMIC STORIES May 1941. SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY # 4 6 7 8 10. THRILLING WONDER STORIES December 1939. MARVEL TALES Dec 1939.

THE NEW FRONTIER

FRED CHAPPELL

Sometimes in the cool, crisp evening, when the wind whipped her cotton print dress into funny little folds and ruffles, Mrs. Farren could feel her husband's kiss touch her lips. Light and silent, they were, but Mrs. Farren could feel them.

And sometimes when an unpleasantly-pleasant radio announcer's voice was speaking of the wonders of a certain soap product or a new stove or toaster, Michael Farren's voice broke in, oh, so smoothly! His voice broke in, delivered its message, and was quiet: "Hello, Molly." The announcer always went on speaking just as if nothing had happened.

And, of course, nothing had happened.

It was just after the silent kiss and the quiet voice of her husband that the wave of loneliness came to Molly in waves.

This was the world of the future, the age of the conquest of space, the moment of the rocketship to Mars. Men now went out to other planets, had their adventures, and came back home to their wives and kids.

But not always had they done so. The first man to the moon didn't, nor the second, nor the third, nor the fourth expedition.

Mrs. Farren remembered the hot dry day and the hot dry Arizona sands. The kiss of farewell...the wink just before he entered the ship...the roar of the rockets. Wild animal - rockets screamed and hurled themselves against the restraining bars of Earth's gravitation. The bars broke, the ship left...and never returned.

Countless wives of countless pioneers had been widows because the countless frontiers had taken their husbands. The ocean had taken explorers. African veldts...Brazilian jungles...Tibetan mountains...

And now space. The greatest frontier. The unknown, different, new frontier. When you are lost in space, there are no tracks or blazed trails behind you to follow home...if you could follow them.

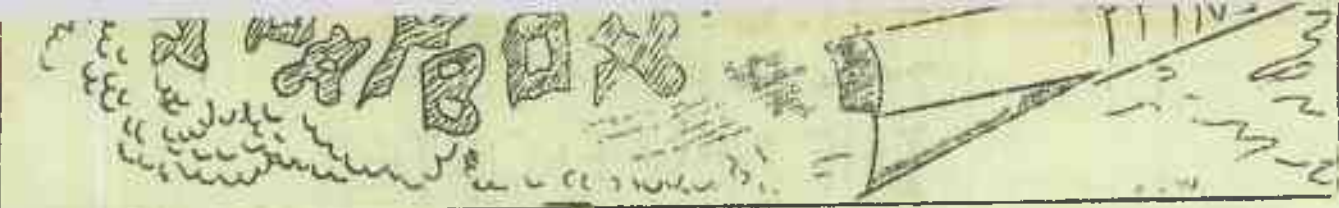
There was no human element in space travel. Automatic machines appointed the destination, landed the vessel, and, if the ship were lost in space, it was lost by automatic machines. The men followed their routines like automatic machines, too.

And that was why Molly Farren was lonely in waves. She didn't like to look up to the moon, and that was why.

"The World is getting Space-Conscious," the announcer said.

"Hello, Molly," said Michael.

-- Fred Chappell



Ev Winne, 109 Ashley Street, Springfield, Mass: Redd Boggs' project is well taken. The Fantasy Annual 1948 was not a N3F project -- just the poll. Certainly wouldn't want to take any credit from Redd, who edited one of the top fan projects ever, in the annual. # Another statement was illogical: "When one realizes that some of these accomplishments (N3F's) aren't so impressive after all, the whole thing sinks down and collapses." Impressive or not, if they are accomplishments, then that's something done and better than nothing. But more important, how does the Richardson Index trouble or other errors take away to the point of collapse all the value of a fine 00 in 1951, or Rapp's "Fanspeak" ((which I never got in three years of membership--Ed.)) or Boggs' "Futurist" etc. ((This is in answer to the Boggs letter in Sship 15.)) ##

* * *

Russ Winterbotham, c/o NEA Service, 1200 W End St., Cleve. 13 Ohio I've been busy as the dickens but the strip ((Chris Welkin)) seems to be moving along, collecting readers and papers. We are now being translated into Finn, Turk, and Spanish, and we have another paper (English) in India, so we're getting around. Utica New York has started the Sunday page, and we still have hopes of getting the color paper in a NY Sunday although I see the News has started Jack Williamson's spaceship story. # We have prospects for television, too. # I think the long-promised action is in full swing now, and later modifications will be to improve on the story, to eliminate a lot of the non-scientific hokum that we were literally forced to insert by local events and too many cooks in the broth. #

* * *

Some announcements: Gerald A. Steward, 166 McRoberts Ave., Toronto, Ontario, asks me to mention the fact that a fan club has been formed in Toronto, and any Canfans in the vicinity are welcome to contact him for details. Dave Ish notes that the next two SOLs will be the "Willish" and "Sollish" to raise funds for the Willis drive; both extra-large, price 25¢ for both or 12½¢ each. Guess that makes it tough to buy a single copy, huh, Dave? (914 Hammond Road, Ridgewood, New Jersey.)

* * *

Redd Boggs, 2215 Benjamin St. NE, Minneapolis 18, Minn: Spaceship #10 continued to show improvement in format; it was neater and better mimood than ever before. Richard Z. Ward is your most promising artist, I think, though his cover didn't appeal to me: it was like some of Paul's old covers. So much was happening in the picture that there's no center of interest. Ward's pic for "The Survivor" showed imagination, and some of his little fillers were

good. The heavy cover is a fine idea; so is the 24 lb paper inside. # There were some acute observations in Paley's article, such as his remarks on the rapprochement of detective story and sf in Mof&SF, but I found his argument a bit too diffuse to follow easily. Good article, though.

Lilorraine's article left me with mixed feelings. I had the feeling that though her arguments might be true, her premises weren't based on the facts and that she isn't as well-acquainted with the science fiction field as she is said to be. Apparently Lilith's acceptance of science fiction is based on the fact that it coincides with her concept of literature: that it must "uplift" instead of tell the truth, and it must give a Platonic, rather than Aristotelian, view of the world. Needless to say, this concept of literature is hardly the dominant one today, with realism holding sway, but it's one that may find favor today. Unfortunately Lilith's concept is less the "literature for literature's sake" tradition (since she sees a utilitarian purpose for sf) than the old genteel tradition. When she goes so far as to cry out against scientists and college professors "indulging in the vocabulary of the comic strip, the soap opera, and the corner drugstore" she's flying into realms too rarified and remote from reality for me.

She gives the impression that s-f depicting a world without violence or wars--"a world of romance, science, beauty," etc.--is the norm in scientifiction and is being withheld by a secret conspiracy of "editors, fans, and oftentimes writers." This is certainly dubious. Lilith's many outcries against modern literature, which refuses to accept her concept of gentility, should convince her that the whole temper of the modern world is against her, not just a clique of people out of touch with things as they are. On the other hand, maybe she's right. The "thousands of writers" she has converted to s-f presumably embrace the genteel tradition she champions, and I haven't noticed any tremendous increase in the number of new pulp writers. Is it that the editors don't like the attitude of these writers--or is it that these writers refuse to write on the level of ten-year-olds? Lilith might say that it is part of both, but either way it shows persecution complex typical of would-be geniuses who are unable to market their stuff and instantly decide that, though the general public weeps for their stuff, the editors and critics are allied against them. I admire Lilith for her indomitable stand against the literary world, but even as regards s-f, I am not persuaded she is right. ##

* * *

Gregg Calkins, 761 Oakley Street, Salt Lake City 16 Utah: Beginning with the cover: yes, yes, I like it. Very good for artist Ward. One comment: the ship should read "XB-17," not the other way around --Experimental Bomber #17, you see, XB-17. I like the heavy stock for the cover. # Lilith Lorraine has some good points (and some bad ones) in her little bit, but for my money she's too weak and namby-pamby in saying what she thinks. If the article had been more forceful it could really have been something. Too weak, too anemic. Either that or not enough power to interest. Morton D. Paley's bit was good, though, and made fine reading. Pic for The Survivor was nothing short of terrific, magnificent, marvelous, and all the adjectives in the book. # Letter column good. "The Survi-

vor," by itself a readable piece of fanfiction, was put in the superb class by artist Ward's superb illo. Pretty terrific, I thought. # Backtalk is the fine point of the ish. I'd like muchly to have this expand to three or four pages. Seriously, though, I liked this best of all, and I'm not including the mention of OOPS you gave. #16 was a fine ish. ##

Capsule comments: Artist Capella to don Khaki soon...dammit, now we have a one-man art staff (Ward)...we wish Hal Shapiro would send us another copy of his explanation of Jim Lewis' proof that 1 equals 2, since we lost his first one just in time for publication day...think you remember it, Hal? There were many others who wrote: Gerald A. Steward, R.J. Banks, Orma McCormick, Raul G. Capella, Fred Chappell, Charles Gregory, RZward, Ian Macauley, Dave Ish, Charles West; David English, Dennis Campbell, Charles Wells, Larry Anderson, and maybe some others--plus many who met me at the Fan-Vet Convention and spoke to me there. Sorry there wasn't room to print more than your names, fellas--in fact, while I was in the throes of this issue, many of you sent letters which I thought complimentary, and received not even an acknowledgement! Those people--and I've listed a lot of them above--are requested to see page 39, and please accept my thanks and apologies.

Soapbox will run to four or five pages next issue, and there'll be loads of room for everybody, so don't hesitate to write and tell me how this big issue strikes you!

Last issue's ratings:

1. Speaking of Science Fiction (Paley)
2. The Survivor (Morris)
3. Science Fiction and Civilization (Lorraine)
4. Report from Australia (Dard)
5. Review: FLIGHT TO MARS (Reynolds)

Surprise of the issue was "The Survivor," but no doubt the illustration helped it to reach its position. Ward's pic drew unanimous praise, and his cover was well-liked.

Charles Wells submitted this sequel to Jim Lewis's bit last issue proving 1 equals 2. I've forgotten most of my algebra, but somehow despite what you guys are trying to pull I'm sure 1 is 1.

$$\begin{aligned}
 x &= 2 \\
 x &= y \\
 x^2 - y^2 &= x - y \\
 (x+y)(x-y) &= x - y \\
 x+y &= \frac{x-y}{x-y} \\
 x+y &= 1 \\
 4 &= 1
 \end{aligned}$$

Charles Wells

MAGAZINES WANTED by Bob Silverberg, 760 Montgomery St
 Brooklyn 23, N.Y.: Amazing Stories August 1939, Wonder June 1934.
 HNS August 1939, Tales of Wonder #1 3 6 8, Strange Stories
 issues 2-12. This supplements the list on page 28.

RESURRECTION

—PAUL STEPHENS

He stood now, by the open window, on his last night, watching the palely-gleaming sea splashing on the rocks, and listening to the wind as it howled round the old house. The night before, Marlowe had taken his small motor-boat down to the beach with a hole bored in its bottom, and set it going by itself out to sea. He estimated it would go three miles out to sea and sink.

Marlowe was a scientist. He had written books; he had published scientific papers; he had carried out research that had made him benefactor to the world. His life had been everything that he had hoped and intended it to be, in his ambitious youth, but one fear had obsessed him throughout his whole life -- the fear of death. By this Marlowe meant not the actual process of dying, nor the possibility of life after death (for Marlowe, as a scientist, had far too logical a mind to believe in that); rather did Marlowe fear the forgetfulness of himself that would come to his friends and relations, and even to those of the present and the future, who would have cause to study the Science to which he had devoted his life. His intention was suicide, but suicide not for any common reason. Marlowe's body, although old, was quite healthy and active. Perhaps, in a thousand years or less, the world would have the means to rejuvenate such a body as his, or, at least, to increase its life-expectancy by many years. This was Marlowe's great hope, and upon it he based his whole plan. On this slender hypothesis he had worked for many years in the secret caverns below the building, which now he would enter for the last time.

Rain began to fall again as he left the window and the world looked abysmally dull and somber in the watery moonlight. A perfect night to make a quick exit from the world, he thought. He smiled wryly. The fire burned brightly in the hearth and cast shadows around the room unseen as he left it for the last time. A chair creaked in the warmth of the firelight. The door behind the great dusty bookshelves was firm and solid--a door that only he knew how to open.

It opened silently as he inserted the peculiar key between the boards and manipulated it, and closed just as silently behind him, without a clue to its being. The stone steps were dark and winding and covered with the dust and cobwebs of years, as he went down them. When he reached the bottom, he was a considerable way below the old house, with a roof of solid rock above him. He was in a small chamber. How many years would it be, he wondered, before this chamber was discovered--perhaps many hundreds. But Marlowe could not risk the possibility that by then the scientific development of the world would be far from great enough to perform what he required and so his body should not be discovered in the chamber. There was a complex mechanism hidden behind the rock of an apparently smooth wall that only a magnet could set in operation. It would take surely a thousand years or more before this second hidden cavern was revealed, he thought and hoped.

The second door opened. Near the bottom of the lift-shaft down which Marlowe now went was a lever, which he pulled. Immediately there came

the rumbling of an explosion, which indicated that the stone passage down which he had come and the lift-shaft itself were filling with disintegrated rock from the walls and roofs, according to plan. Marlowe was in the second and last chamber. Now there was no going back.

He was filled, momentarily, with a slight fear and regret, which he dispelled as he crossed the room and entered the large cylinder in the corner. He stripped and greased himself. Then he sealed himself into the container and began to breathe pure oxygen. He turned on the anaesthetic. The steel cylinder was connected to a tank of liquid air that was designed to open and flow into it when the stopping of his heart sent off an electrical impulse. The air inside the cylinder itself was already being displaced gradually by nitrogen, as also would be the oxygen remaining from his breathing apparatus when he was dead. All this and all else, his dieting over the past days, his will, the missing boat that would indicate his suicide at sea, was planned to the last detail. Everything had gone according to plan. The deed was done.

There was no stopping now. Nothing in the world could spoil his plans. He realized it, and it should not have worried him--but it did. He began to feel the effect of the anaesthetic. Soon he would be dead: the winter would come and he would still be here -- the spring would come, spring with its green leaves and flowers, birds singing, pretty girls in summer dresses, picnics, sailing on the sea, making love, new songs, new light, new laughter, birth and death--and he would still be here. A cold hand touched his heart and he shuddered. He did not want to die --yet. The spring! He wanted to see the spring, wanted to bask in sunshine again, wanted to live again! He made himself be calm and forced himself to reason. How many years, he wondered, before he was discovered? A multitude of visions passed before his eyes, a flickering of light and darkness, of winter and summer, of new discoveries made, buildings towering to the sky, cities of the future, bright and shining things--canyons of steel and stone, perpetually bright. How many hundred years? He struggled to keep awake, as the visions blurred and faded. A thousand years, perhaps--a thousand years?

There was a hiss of liquid air in the cylinder as the light went out, and a thousand years of darkness settled upon the freezing corpse of Marlowe.

--Paul Stephens

GREEN CHEESE DEPARTMENT

"New Haven, Conn., Mar. 19 (UP)--Harold C. Urey, chemist and Nobel Prize winner, informed moon-struck lovers today that the thing they gaze at is nothing but a large lump of dust. He disputed a theory that the moon was a torn-off fragment of the earth. His theory is that the moon was born independently from a cosmic dust cloud. The scientist offered that theory in his new book, 'The Planets: Their Origin and Development,' published today by the Yale University Press."

--The New York Times, March 20, 1952

Shucks, thought it was Limburger.



THREE YEARS OF SPACESHIP

The growth of SPACESHIP has been a surprising one, for me, at least. After running off the 20 copies of the first issue, back in April 1949, I felt a certain thrill of accomplishment, but nevertheless the feeling was strong in both myself and Saul Diskin, a longtime friend who collaborated with me on the first eleven issues, that SPACESHIP was only a temporary venture, a new diversion.

Now, three years later, it seems strange to consider SPACESHIP temporary. Few fanzines of late have lasted seventeen issues, and even fewer last three years now. The top fanzines of April 1949--SPACEWAR, SCIENTIFANTASY, FANSCIENT, GORGON, FANTASY COMMENTATOR, DAWN--are now one with Fantasy Magazine and The Time Traveller, but SPACESHIP seems to roll along smoothly with no sign of a stop.

In 1949, Saul and I had been reading the prozines about a year. I had first become interested in imaginative fiction when I found a copy of 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA in 1943. By 1947 I had read most of Verne and Wells, as well as Planet Comics (which I recall reading in 1942, my first taste of s-f) and was casting around for more when Wollheim's fine Viking Portable anthology introduced me to a new field. And in early 1948 I began buying the pulps and writing fan fiction.

As do most new fans, Saul and I paid much attention to AMAZING STORIES. We were fascinated by the Clubhouse section, which had started only a few months before we first saw AMAZING. We rarely had enough cash to buy fanzines, but by reading the reviews we formed what we thought was an accurate picture of what a fanzine was like. And then one day, after a lengthy discussion of fanzines, we decided, without ever having seen a fanzine at all, to launch SPACESHIP.

Since we had never seen any fanzines, all we could do was pattern the magazine after the prozines, and so the first issue contained nothing but the beginnings of three serials, plus a short plea for material. I had a half-size Speedoprint which I had been using for other amateur publishing, and so SPACESHIP #1 consisted of eight half-size pages, closely covered with print on one side of the page.

Two of the stories were collaborations between Saul and myself; the third was mine alone, though I hesitate to claim it now. All of the artwork in the first issue was done by me -- the cover (a simple sketch of a spaceship in flight) and a bem illustrating a story. Luckily, only twenty copies were mimeographed, so not many fans can exhume the early SPACESHIPS the way the fan writings of Bradbury are unburied and laughed at. I retained two copies, and Diskin two, and one went to Phillips for review (we couldn't spare copies for all the pro reviewers then.) That leaves fifteen...but I can only think of three fans who have copies now, and as far as I know there is only one complete file in existence outside of mine. We peddled a number of copies to friends at school who were mildly interested in s-f, but doubtless those copies

have long since been mislaid.

SPACESHIP started on a monthly schedule. There was no dearth of material, because Saul and I had been writing fan fiction for more than a year and we had quite a stack of it. Since we were complete unknowns in the fan field, no one contributed anything--I don't believe any active fan even heard of the mag until the second issue was out and the third under way--and it was strictly a staff-written project.

The May 1949 issue was a bit more ambitious. Ten pages, this time, all fiction, still half-size. The original price, by the way, was 10¢ per copy. The cover on #2 was the same as had been used on #1--I had left the dateline blank, and we used the same stencil and lettered in the new date by hand. #2 contained the conclusions of the three serials plus two short-shorts by Silverberg. The only noteworthy thing about them was that one was entitled "Second Genesis," the same title as was used recently by Eric Frank Russell for a Bluebook story.

The May issue was likewise limited to 20 copies, but the school sale was lower and so more fans have copies. I took a chance and mailed a copy to Clif Bennett, who was publishing CATALYST at the time. Bennett answered with a letter of criticism which shaped our policies in large measure, and also sent a copy of his fanzine. We were amazed to see that it was mostly non-fiction. We had thought fanzines were supposed to print amateur fiction!

#3, June 1949, saw an increase in size by about half an inch, to 6x8. It was eleven pages, with the same old familiar cover stencil used. The issue contained two stories by Diskin and one by me, and I added a line to the old cover stencil that said, "All stories complete in this issue." On looking back, the stories stand up pretty well even today.

We intended to continue the monthly publication, but both of us were going to be out of town for the summer, so we decided to skip the July and August numbers. And then, in July, Rog Phillips gave us our first review.

The dimes began pouring in in amazing fashion. . . circulation boomed up to thirty, which we considered phenomenal. Art Rapp sent us a copy of SPACEWARP, a few other fanzines showed up, and we got quite a bit of correspondence. "Today I am a fan," I thought, and the bug had bitten.

Saul was ill for most of September, and I put out SPACESHIP #4 almost singlehanded. The original cover was still used, but it was battered and covered with correction fluid, and one significant change had been made: the price had been lowered to 5¢ a copy, and all subscriptions adjusted. After seeing some of the other fanzines, we knew that Sship (the abbreviation was coined by Alan Grant, one of the early subscribers) wasn't worth the 10¢ tag.

#4 contained ten pages, and was consciously patterned after some of the other fanzines we had seen. As an economy move, we used only one staple, at the top. #4 contained a short story by me, which I illustrated after a fashion--a so-called "humorous" story in the Lefty Feep manner. It was followed by a poem reprinted from the Scientific Monthly, and an editorial which announced that we were entering FAPA and would henceforth publish quarterly. We installed "Soapbox," a letter column which contained one letter, and also two columns: Pros and Cons, a one-shot prozine review column ("Flash: a new prozine edited by Robert N. Webster has appeared.") and Saul's Spot.

Between #4 and #5 we made the acquaintance of Charles L. Morris, a South Carolina fan (since drafted) who supplied us with a goodly load of fan fiction and poetry, and who rates as our first outside contributor. We managed to acquire a staff artist, James Lewis, a young Long Islander who did the artwork for the next year and a half.

#5 saw a new deal all around. We scrapped the old spaceship--design cover in favor of a neat illustration by Lewis which I fouled up in stencilling. The issue was dated October, 1949, but henceforth we were to be quarterly. #5, which had the first decent mimeo job of the lot, contained fan fiction by Morris and a long short by you-know-who, plus a hoax feature to which Rog Phillips devoted a little space in his column, and Saul's Spot. We distributed this issue (and the next three) in FAPA, and drew an encouraging if cool reception.

#6 hardly counts--just two pages, distributed in FAPA only, a list of pennames I had compiled. #7, January 1950, was the most pretentious to be published at the time--16 pages, plus a special FAPA supplement, of four pages--but fouled up by an experiment in mimeoing on both sides of 16lb. paper. The cover was a nice one, by Stan Segal, a local boy, and the issue contained fiction by Morris and Silverberg (you must have realized by now that fiction was our long suit till 1951) plus an interview with Sam Merwin, who had rejected our first issue, and others.

Then came #8, April 1950--the first anniversary issue. By now we were printing 110 copies, of which 70 went to FAPA. But #8 had an attractive lithographed cover donated by Clyde T. Hanback, with the pic by James Lewis. It contained seventeen pages, legibly mimeographed for a change...fiction by Morris, Silverberg, and pro author James Adams, the latter a two-part serial bylined "August Argyll." Plus the usual features and this time about three pages of ads; by this time we were selling out completely the 40 copies reserved for general sale.

#9, July 1950, saw the era close. This was a "breather" issue of 16pp. composed entirely of fan fiction and poetry. Outstanding mention was a dianetics story by Diskin. This was the last half-size issue, the last mostly-fiction issue, and the last to be circulated in FAPA.

#10, October 1950, came as a surprise to most. During the summer I obtained a large-size Speedoprint mimeo, and #10 was thirteen large-size pages, mimeographed pretty near invisibly. Since we had doubled the content, we felt justified in doubling the price, and back it went to its original dime. We printed 110 copies of this, none for FAPA, and sold about sixty copies for cash money, but mostly for a nickel since the reviewers still listed the old price. #10 contained two short-stories, by Dick Verdan and David English, but for the first time accent was on non-fiction with an editorial, two articles (one on dianetics) and the usual features.

#11 saw us enter higher circles...sixteen pages, on heavy paper. Cover by Lewis, his last for us...two stories, by Charles Morris and Michael de Angelis, plus poetry (one by Lee Hoffman) and three articles, all of which I wrote. We were unable to secure any non-fiction, so in desperation I wrote it all. This issue was well-received, and we were on our way toward popularity at last.

Diskin dropped out shortly after the January issue, and I was the sole editor. With the April issue, my first solo, first move was expansion to 26 pages, a jump of ten. Originally the expansion was for the April issue only, the Second Anniversary, but the change was well-liked and I

made it permanent. The cover was an outstanding job, by Ray Capella of Brooklyn and dittoed in four colors by Bobby Pope. And for this issue, I made sure that I wouldn't have to write the whole thing myself--I solicited material from most everyone of any importance.

Jim Adams contributed a long story, "The Man With Hyper-Hearing," which is probably the best fan fiction Sship has used. Harry Warner sent a short article about the early days of fandom, and also included were David English and Barbara Chandler, and a controversial article by B.S. plus a book review culled from the New York Times. This issue was the first to receive much notice in the fan press, and I felt sure that SPACESHIP would become one of the leading mimeo fanzines before long.

#13, July 1951, was one that I felt proud of. 26 pages, again, it featured an article by Redd Boggs which had been squeezed out of the previous issue, plus material by Bob Tucker, Lee Hoffman, Marion Bradley, Barbara Chandler, Norman Ashfield, Orma McCormick, and others, with fiction by Verdan and Berger. This was as big a collection of "names" as I had ever had. Cover, another beauty by Capella, stencilled by Lee Hoffman. Shortly after this one was issued, Sship received an A-listing in Sam Merwin's final Startling, and circulation was booming.

I returned from my summer vacation to find that SPACESHIP, within the course of six months, had become one of the most popular mimeo fanzines and the year and a half of obscurity was forgotten. #14 finally saw the format crystallize along the lines hinted at in #12, first developed in #13, but not fully jelled until #16. The cover, by Capella, was ruined in stencilling, for the third straight October. (Odd how I ruin the cover pic that month.) Interiors by Capella suffered a like fate, and I took heed and bought a load of new mimeo equipment, unfortunately too late to improve much of #15. Included in #14 was an article by Mack Reynolds on writing, one by Ev Winne on the N3F, and stuff by Semens, Verdan, Boggs, and others. Notable was the addition of Roger Dard as permanent Australian columnist.

#15 and #16 appeared less than two months apart, despite the "quarterly publication" line on the contents page, and so they're too close for historical appraisal. They did see the first colored paper I've ever used, the stiff orange stock used on the covers. #15 featured Russ Winterbotham, who described the birth of his comic strip, and an article on Astounding which I had written for Wylde Star, a fanzine which had folded in 1950 and left me a number of cut stencils. I published the aSF article, even though it was poorly stencilled and added no glamor to the other pages.

#16 added Morton D. Paley as regular columnist, and featured Lilith Lorraine. As I write this it's only been out a few weeks, and reader response has just begun to trickle in, so I'm unable to form any definite opinion on the issue. But, as a rule, I'm satisfied with the current issue only till the next one is out, and then the earlier one joins the ranks of the 1949-50 issues in limbo.

SPACESHIP's circulation is now among the highest of the mimeographed fanzines, a far cry from the days of 20 copies per issue. A combination of price-raises and foldings has made the mag the biggest regularly appearing 10¢ mag on the market, which serves as a good selling point.

This giant anniversary issue is intended not only to serve as a culmination of the work of the first three years, work which has pleased me

if not completely satisfied my ambition to publish a fanzine of permanent interest. I hope to do a good deal better in the issues to come. Just how much better depends, not only on the material I'm able to dig up and my own ability to fit words onto stencils, but on the comments and suggestions from the readers, destructive or otherwise, which are almost as welcome here as new subscribers.

Some statistics follow:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ISSUE #</u>	<u># OF PAGES</u>	<u>SIZE</u>	<u>COVER ARTIST</u>
Apr 1949	1	8	5x8	Silverberg
May 1949	2	10	"	Silverberg
Jun 1949	3	11	6x8	Silverberg
Sep 1949	4	9	"	Silverberg
Oct 1949	5	14	"	Lewis
Dec 3 49	6	2	"	None
Jan 1950	7	16	"	Segal
Apr 1950	8	17	"	Lewis
Jul 1950	9	16	"	Lewis
Oct 1950	10	13	8 1/2 x 11	Lewis
Jan 1951	11	16	"	Lewis
Apr 1951	12	26	"	Capella
Jul 1951	13	26	"	Capella
Oct 1951	14	26	"	Capella
Dec 1951	15	26	"	Capella
Feb 1952	16	26	"	Ward
Apr 1952	17	40	"	Ward (bc--Keasler)
Seventeen issues		302 pp.		Six artists

And this just about puts the cap on the seventeenth issue, opening the fourth year of publication. Rest assured that #18 will not be 40 pages --this is strictly a one-issue expansion--but it will sell for the usual 10¢ price, and will contain the same quality of material you have come to expect. The feature next issue will be by Ray Nelson, about Charles Fort, just to show we're neutral. Supporting cast will include Alice Bullock, Hal Shapiro, and all the regulars.

This issue is being mimeographed in an extra-large edition, to handle the extra fans who, no doubt, will be enticed by the prospect of four pages for a cent. I'll appreciate it if each of you will, if you enjoy this issue (and I hope you will) recommend SPACESHIP to just one fan. If you like subscribing to Sship, then probably he'll enjoy it too--and I know I will.

So at last I reach the end of this issue. Please don't be annoyed if I don't get around to answering your letter of comment, but rest assured that I appreciate your interest in SPACESHIP and am deeply sorry that the present inflated postal rate makes it impossible for me to answer each person who comments on Sship and still continue eating. Please do write and tell me what you think of this issue, and I'll do my best to make reply--but I'm not promising.

You can rest your eyes, now, because I'm too pooped to fill the rest of this page. Take it away, Max Keasler.

--Bob Silverberg

