

SPACEHOP

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FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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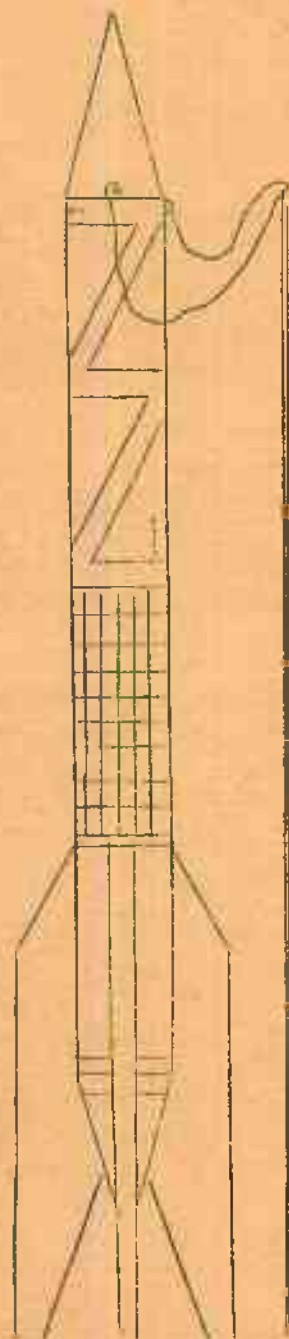
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ARTWORK

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Richard Z. Ward



"THE BOOKS OF CHARLES FORT"

A REVIEW: RAY NELSON

Editor's Note: More than a year ago, I published in SPACESHIP an unfortunate article which teed off on a number of sacred cows that were, at the time, objects of derision for me. In the intervening twenty months since the original article was written, I have come to change a good many of my opinions on the beliefs which I treated with such contempt. However, I don't regret my hasty words, because they touched off a lively controversy which made 1951 an interesting year for SPACESHIP. Nevertheless, I want it understood that the Nelson article, which came to me by way of a defunct fanzine, is chosen for publication here not for its topic but for its merits as a piece of critical writing.



Should I someday be asked what book had produced the greatest influence upon science fiction, I wouldn't name any piece by Poe, Lovecraft, or Merritt, or any of the contemporary s-f writers. I would, rather, nominate a work which is not science fiction at all, but a book in a class all by itself: "The Books of Charles Fort."

Anyone who has not read this book can have no real idea of the basic concepts of s-f, which are assumed in s-f stories but rarely explained. He may even fall into the notion that science-fiction is nothing more than dramatized science. Heaven forbid! It would be closer, I think, to call it dramatized anti-science.

The number of s-f tales directly based on Fortean theories is nothing short of amazing. Among the better-known ones of the last decade, "Sinister Barrier" stands out as the best, though there are many derived from Fort's concepts. Examples are "He Walked Around The Horses," which was featured in Astounding several years ago, and the later Shaver stories.

I feel safe in saying, however, that none of these tales can hold a candle to the original Fort books for sheer thrills, staggeringly esoteric concepts, and writing skill. "The Books of Charles Fort" is actually four volumes in one, and then some--the then some embracing an introduction by Tiffany Thayer and some fairly interesting information about Fort and the Fortean Society. The four books, all published originally in separate editions, are "The Book of the Damned," "New Lands," "Lo!", and "Wild Talents." The fireworks start with the first lines of the first book.

"A procession of the damned," says Fort.

--- 4 ---
 "By the damned, I mean the excluded.

"We shall have a procession of data that Science has excluded.

"Battalions of the accursed, captained by pallid data that I have exhumed, will march. You'll read them--or they'll march. Some of them livid and some of them fiery and some of them rotten."

So opens "The Book of the Damned," and march they do. The first few chapters introduce, in Fort's machine-gun style of hyphens, unfinished and unstarted sentences, halts, pauses, and sudden leaps, the fundamental themes of the entire work. These themes are, first and foremost the underlying oneness of all things, and the relativity of that oneness.

Secondarily, he introduces the concepts of "dominants," or ruling ideas of given ages in history, the idea of a subconscious plot on the part of scientists to maintain their pretty systems of explanations and natural "laws" at the expense of important data that do not fit in those systems, and the notion of an automatic god which is the same thing as what we call the universe.

His first chapters seem to be like the first vague gropings of the intellect of a newborn babe, trying to understand the swirl of inexplicable data assailing his every sense, and revolting, from the beginning, against all authority. Tiffany Thayer, Fort's self-named disciple, apologizes for these first chapters in the introduction, and well he might, for they are full of awkward stumbles in the use of the new, odd style of writing, and filled with such sickeningly unsemantic paragraphs as, "What is a house?"

"A barn is a house, if one lives in it. If residence constitutes houseness, because style of architecture does not, then a bird's nest is a house: and human occupancy is not the standard to judge by, because we speak of dogs' houses; nor material, because we speak of snow houses of Eskimos -- or a shell is a house to a hermit crab--or was to the mollusc that made it -- or things seemingly so positively different as the White House at Washington and a shell on the sea shore are seen to be continuous."

By Chapter Two, Fort states that "You can oppose an absurdity only with some other absurdity," and sets out to do just that. The first "absurdities" he champions are the ideas of visiting beings from other worlds (the core of Shaverism) and the shocking nearness of those other worlds.

The thing that makes these "absurdities" such a pain in the neck to conventionalists is the vast mountain of data with which Fort backs them up. There are tales of falls of fish, frogs, birds, rocks, and every sort of thing you can think of, and a vast number of these tales come from those sources in which we place the most unquestioning faith. We are told of flying disks and flying spindles and even a flying ocean, the Super-Sargasso Sea, from which the fish, frogs, birds, etc., fall. Always the most fantastic ideas are the ones presented and backed up with seemingly overpowering rivers of data. Except for Frazer's "Golden Bough," the root-book of anthropology, there is, I'll wager, no place where presentation of specific cases is carried to such

lengths in the interests of proving a theory.

He points out that at one time nobody believed that meteors could fall from the sky, gives instance of living things that fell along with meteors (and living things that fell without them), thus establishing an uncomfortably close link between the accepted and the "absurd."

Just to make this review interesting, I shall assert that everything Charles Fort predicted came true. On page 257 he states, "We are Intermediatists--but feel a lurking suspicion that we may someday solidify and dogmatize and illiberalize into higher positivists." For evidence that this prediction is coming true, I offer you the testimony of Professor Rhine of Duke U, who asserts that telepathy "is established beyond any reasonable doubt." I also submit, as exhibit B, certain fans who will mince no words in informing you that you are "fished for"--and for exhibit C, I present the Shaver Mystery Club and perhaps even the Fortean Society, at times.

That many of Fort's ideas are gradually assuming the character of universal dominants can hardly be doubted, in the light of the ever-increasing number of people who accept the Duke experiments, the "flying saucers," and so on. Fort, then, is a seer.

However, I rather think those who now are so utterly taken with the New Dominant that all non-Fortean or anti-Fortean ideas are nonsense to them are destroying one of Fort's basic tenets, that of believing in ~~no~~ Dominant at all, through their fanatical belief in those lesser Fortean notions that the master himself described as "absurdities."

II.

The second book, "New Lands," again treats of the fundamental theme of "oneness," and also the themes of "New Dominants," the plot of science to maintain its dogmas by supressing data which don't fit, and other theories introduced in the first book return, but here the spotlight is turned upon astronomy. Again we start off with a blinding flash.

"Lands in the sky--" says Fort.

"That they are nearby--"

"That they do not move."

And with this the bombardment of data begins. We are told that there have been noises in the sky, and lights, and signals from other planets, all meant as messages. The farce of the so-called "discoveries" of Neptune, Uranus, and other heavenly bodies is related with uproarious tongue-in-cheek humor. Then comes the even better story about the astronomers and the comets that almost never did what they "should."

These stories are doubly funny because the great mass of data makes it hard to say anything but that these stories are true.

Next comes a stream of data indicating that Earth is not round and that it is standing still. Fort goes over the conventional idea of the universe with a steamroller and a doctor's sure knife. Deftly he cuts away the supports holding up the Copernican system. Then, when it falls, he rolls over it with a steamroller of laughter.

Next he plows into the conventional idea of the speed of light. "There is," he proposes, "no velocity of light." And there is more data.

Then he attacks triangulation as an astronomical device. It, too, falls, or at least seems to fall.

And so on, until there is scarcely one brick left upon another in all astronomy.

Then he begins to rebuild it, but in a new and outlandish shape. The earth is now the stationary center of the universe and the stars blink down at us from a great "shell-like, revolving composition" of which we are the center. Data offered seem to support the idea that this shell is quite near, and that things fall from it to earth.

In Part Two of "New Lands" he takes a different tack. Now he collects data of a less authoritative nature on the subject of the things that fell from the shell and from other planets. He collects data of things that came and unexplainably went in the sky. He collects data on earthquakes and other earthly events, and their possible connection with events in the sky. And he also makes a logical error:

He supposes that meteors are thrown off from the wall of the sky-shell, and explains the arrival of many meteors in one section of the earth over a period of time as being due to the earth's standing still.

However, whether it is the heavens or the earth that moves, there is still relative motion between them so that, any way you look at it, there still is no explanation given for such repeated meteor falls.

Fort is, I suppose, entitled to have at least half as many errors as those systems he attacks, for absolute progress is too much to expect. And one can always fall back on the flying ocean as a place from which these things fall.

III.

In the third book, "Loi," the theme of "New Lands" is continued somewhat, and the primary theme, the "oneness of quasi-mess," is still the channel and the foundation of his thought, but there is again a shift of viewpoint.

The automatic god takes the center of the stage. Against the background of his unorthodox universe, Fort presents the concept that the universe is a thinking, planning being. This god is a good-natured, if rather blundering, entity, given to excesses in answering prayers, such as drowning those who pray for rain.



"Lo" begins: "A naked man in a city street-- the track of a horse in volcanic mud-- the mystery of a reindeer's ears-- a huge, black form, like a whale, in the sky and it drops red drops as if attacked by celestial swordfishes-- an appalling cherub appears in the sky-- CONFUSIONS."

It is here that still another explanation of the "things that fall from the sky" is offered: teleportation.

Does manna fall?

Fort likes to think it does. He likes to think that it has been transported to where it falls by a force of some sort, a thing almost as vague and incomprehensible as electricity and gravity: teleportation.

Do you like to think about frogs falling from the sky? Stones? Slowly-falling hailstones? Worms? Nails? Money? Oil? Blood? Baby protococci? Snails? Snakes? Seals? Any other particular pets? Fort likes to think about them. I like to think about them. Why shouldn't you, too? Surely you will be just as much of a realist as one who thinks about what the capitalists will say about the Communists, or what the Communists say about the capitalists, or what Christians say about atheists, or atheists about Christians, etc., etc.



But if such small animals are beneath you, Fort also presents a choice collection of sea monsters.

Or does your taste run more to flying disks and lights in the sky, or to old sea mysteries? Here they are, along with ghosts, burned bodies in unburned clothes, people from places other than earth, missing persons, wolf men, spiritualists and their friends, poltergeists, and many others, all lending their esoteric support to the idea of the underlying oneness of quasi-ness.

In the second part of "Lo!" Fort stages a return bout with astronomy, this time giving Einstein the once-over. And from Einstein he proceeds logically enough back to God.

Why was there gold in California?

Because the West needed to be settled.

Why did England have a mild climate?

Because England was a center of the British empire and required open seaports and a good climate to function properly in this role.

Men of science put a great deal of store by predictions. Einstein rose to fame on the wings of a prediction. Christianity collapsed into a hodge-podge of pagan cults and totalitarianism because Christ's prediction of the end of the world failed to come off.

If men were consistent, they would be Forteans, because every prediction Fort ever made came true.

Here's one of them (page 734 of my copy):

"Something is especially warming Great Britain, and it cannot be thought to be the Gulf Stream. It may be an organically providential amelioration. It may play out, when the functioning period of Great Britain passes away. I am not much given to prophecy, but I'll take this chance--that if England loses India, we may expect hard winters in England."

Feb 20, 1947. Attlee announces that England intends to give up India.

One month passes.

Then the worst snowstorm in the history of England strikes. Just to give this review an air of authority, I'll quote the Encyclopedia Americana Annual of 1948 for a description of it. "Unheard-of snowdrifts buried the countryside and paralyzed traffic, while hurricane winds tied up shipping and thereafter ensued a kind of destructive chain reaction ... there was a failure to move coal in from the pits, and because coal supplies were short electricity had to be cut; because power was lacking, factories shut down; and because factories closed, millions were idle as well as cold. Finally, with the melting of the snows the flood came, and then ensued a crippling of business and industry that would have endangered the strongest economy and threatened disaster to a country trying to make a comeback from the havoc of war."

Fort is a seer, an infallible seer.

IV.

The last book, "Wild Talents," is, to my mind, the best of the lot. Fort has mastered his off-trail writing style into a smooth flow, though the unfinished sentences, hyphens, leaps, and other mannerisms, still remain.

The topic is superstitions; the characters, vampires, werewolves, witches, spirits, pigs that shine in the night, and nearly every other person or thing that modern science is supposed to have debunked.

If you are interested in weird tales, here is your meat. A weird tale, to be successful, is supposed to be convincing. By this standard the tales in this book are some of the best in all literature. They sure scared me.

The reason they scared me is that I think they are true. The existence of these things is backed up by as much evidence as anything in this world we take to be true. Charles Fort has, I am happy to say, laid the foundation for a new age of superstition. What is that scratching sound outside your window at night? The wind? Guess again.

Are all those people who disappear without a trace every year merely carried off by deros, or is there something else?

In "Wild Talents" Fort unearths all the things the more timid investigators of Duke U. have discovered, then goes on from there. He explains why witches are so often women, and why conventional explanations of various cases of so-called supernatural happenings do not hold water, and formulates a comprehensive theory of poltergeists that holds water so well that an independent Fortean was able to make a successful prediction based on it.

Fort's own predictions all worked out, but science requires, for absolute acceptance, supporting cases of successful predicted experiments by other so-called "independent" scientists.

Art Rapp, at one time America's Number One S-F Fan, in the September 1948 issue of SPACEWARP, discussed some strange fires in a Maccomb, Ill. farmhouse. He said, "Analyzing the situation according to Fort's the—

ories, what I would most like to know are the ages, names, and other particulars about the two children of the household. Particularly, whether one or both are adopted children."

One of them was an adopted niece.

That one "confessed" to setting the fires with "matches."

In the November 1948 issue of SPACEWARP Art Rapp tells just exactly why she could not have set the fires with matches, quotes from some cases paralleling the Macomb case from Fort, and closes with --"I submit for your consideration this: the essence of science is predictability. If Charles Fort, in 1932, could write the words which enabled me, in 1948, to make the prediction which heads this article, isn't Forteanism worth the investigation of scoffers, skeptics, and scientists?"

With this thought, I leave you.

--Ray Nelson

THE TIME MACHINE: A REVIEW

This is the actual text of the review which appeared in the New York Times on June 23, 1895:

THE TIME MACHINE: An Invention. By H.S. Wells ((sic))
New York: Henry Holt & Co. 75 cents.

"You see," said the philosophical inventor to his audience, the psychologist, the medical man, the rector, and the Filby (and Filby was a mere nobody), "You see, a real body must have length, breadth, thickness, and duration. Then there are four dimensions, three of which we call the three planes of space, and a fourth we call time. Now, granting that much, you will understand how I have invented a machine which will run backward or forward in time. I will show you a working model."

The inventor places on a table something like an alarm clock. He touches a spring, there is a buzz, and the whole thing disappears. The inventor explains how it has slid into space. Then he exhibits his working apparatus. Astraddle of that he launches himself forward into AD 802701. What he sees is horrible. There are two races, each degraded. The underground ones devour the upper ones. His escape depends on a lump of camphor and a box of safety matches. Speculations of all kinds are numerous and ingenious. With the commonplace Filby, who was brain-weary at the beginning of the story, we are afraid that that tired feeling would be cumulative when the conclusion of "The Time Machine" was reached. It is a pessimistic business.

M A G A Z I N E S

Wanted in good, clean condition, covers and innards intact, by Bob Silverberg, 760 Montgomery St., Brooklyn 13, N.Y. Will pay C-A-S-H!!
Astounding Nov 30, Oct 33, Mar 36, May 34, Jan Feb Mar Apr May 37, Feb Mar Jun 38, Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov 40, Aug 41. Captain Future Fall, 1941
Cosmic May 1941. Comet Mar 1941. Science Fiction Apr 1943. SF Quarterly # 4 6 7. Wonder Stories Feb Apr 1936, Jan Feb Oct 1935, Dec 1934.
Planet Stories Spring, Fall 1941; Winter 42; May 43. TWS August 1936.

THE FANZINE I DIDN'T PUBLISH

ALICE BULLOCK



like most dyed-in-the-flesh, inch - wide yard-long fans, I had a yen to edit a fan magazine. The tense of the verb "have" is past, you'll note. So is the yen, almost.

How does one go about organizing a fanzine to edit? Lots of ways. My approach was positive. First consideration was material to publish. I'd write the contents of the first issue myself. Amateur writers of SF and fantasy aren't psychic... they don't send material for a non-existent publication to a gal they've never heard of.

I planned carefully. I would send copies of my fanzine to every fanzine editor in creation. I'd ask, not only for exchange copies, but their own stories, hot off the editorial typers. After all, I had professional patterns to go by. Howard (Amazing) Brown writes for If. Paul (If) Fairman does likewise for Amazing. Anthony (P&SF) Boucher startles readers of Startling; H. L. (Galaxy) Gold picks up a word count at the new magazine Fantastic, and so on ad something or other.

But the first issue had to be dealt with first. I had my own material. Swell story all about a mad scientist, et al., complete with rejection slips from all the best professional magazines in the field. No personal bias in establishing which 'is the best: I had rejects from them ALL. I did make up my mind that, as editor, I would try to be as nice as, well, say Gold. His rejections are so sincerely sorry that your yarn didn't hit Galaxy standards that immediately you're wretched because you aren't Bradbury-Heinlein just so you could deliver what he wants. Browne writes a nice letter too, as does Bill Hamling. Here I am, not sticking to the story line, which could be one reason I know so much about nice letters of rejection.

I picked a lead story (my own, of course) of which Anthony Boucher had said that it had a nice beginning. Naturally, I ignored his further statement that the middle sagged and the end was flat. The zine must have balance, so I wrote an editorial embodying my appeal to other editors. So far, so good. Poetry? Certainly! I'll try anything once.

Editorial, lead story, poem. That should be enough for the initial try. Wait! No name. Cogitate. Ruminare. Speculate. Ah..h..h..I'd call it FANTALE, and use the lovely lines of a fantail pigeon for the trademark, like ZD on Ziff-Davis publications. Editorial work done. Now for backshop.

Hastily I looked around for an angel, Broadway variety. Too far from Broadway; no angels. Dug down in the maw of my genuine imitation alligator purse. How much were stencils? A quarter each, but a quire of

em for \$3.70. I learned a new word there, but it cost me. Quire. Nice authentic ring to that word. Stylus--mere 55¢. Ream of mimeograph paper, \$2.00. Stamps, splurge, two bucks' worth. No discount for quantities. Never let it be said my heart was weak, but the jaws of the alligator, dislocated, hung loosely.

Home, and the kitchen became a workshop. Clean the goop out of type on the trusty Royal, give it laryngitis by removing ribbon. Never has a space bar been less cooperative. . . not even on Mars with the Martian version of Four Roses. I wanted to justify margins and look professional. Each line, with careful counting of letters and a worn-out thumb, was perfectly even with itself. Twenty - five lines of type, twenty-three different right-hand margins. I can shorten the telling, but I couldn't the work. Another trip downtown for stencils. I only ruined four, but I needed them. Another dollar -- and red ink slopped over onto the kitchen floor.

I gave up trying for justified margins and concentrated on erratic spelling. One week, ten gray hairs and two vertical lines between eyebrows later, the stencils were cut. Oh--gosh! The cover!

Stygian gloom. I drew fantail pigeons that were unique. Poor, pathetic, moulting parodies of plucked buzzards. Not even Dali in a mood of high hilarity could have claimed laughing recognition of my fantail pigeon. The title would have to stand alone. Grabbing the stylus and lettering guide, I strove mightily. The title stood, alone, but at an inebriated angle. Experience I had--which is always something you get when you're looking for something else.

Now to run it off. No machine. A loan office would let me use their machine, for a fee. They didn't loan machines--only dollars, for interest. I might need those too. Red ink flowing. They took me for five bucks for using their satanic contraption.

It spit ink at me, thick, toothpasty black ink. It popped all the well-rounded letters, o's, e's, c's, etc., right out of my nice stencils with an all-over polka-dot design. It decorated the fresh sheets of mimeo paper with inked ribbon streamers. I fought with courage... bare fists, and bells that pinged. Justifying margins was nothing to this.

My hands absorbed ink, but the paper didn't--not in the right proportions, at least. The polka dots grew to coin dots. The ink climbed my arms to my elbows, then the neck. Permanent mourning. It wouldn't wash off, even with lye soap. My hide did, though--I'm no longer hidebound.

The wastebasket filled, overflowed, and so did the floor. Not even one fanzine off that rolling cylinder. Two fairly good copies of Page 2, ten of Page 4, none readable of Page 5. By the time I'd ruined Page 14 I threw the un-inked, pristine stencils of 15 through 20 into the general confusion, gave the janitor a dollar to burn the whole mess, and went home.



Therefore, editors of fanzines, you will not get a new fanzine called FANTALE. I returned the hand stapling machine for credit and the stamp that were to wing FANTALE will be used for fan letters to fanzine editors. You're better men than I am, hunks of tin.

Rog Phillips says putting out a fanzine is a labor of love. I don't know about love, Rog, but labor is pure, unadulterated understatement.

And thus--30. Finish. Fini. The end--for this--and the fanzine I didn't publish.

--Alice Bullock

WHISPERS IN THE HALF-LIGHT

ORMA MCCORMICK

Strange lurid thoughts of crawling terrors drift
Unbidden through the brain; unholy spells
Are cast, where human spirits never lift
The shadowed fingers from their hidden wells.

Between the dream-worlds and the waking days,
A vastitude of fantasy is born,
Weird whispers call with mystic roundelays
To realms where there is neither night nor morn.

Vague fascinations lure with evil tinge--
No black or white, but dreary banks of taupe,
Where mortal man can do no more than cringe
When demons steal his last faint ray of hope.

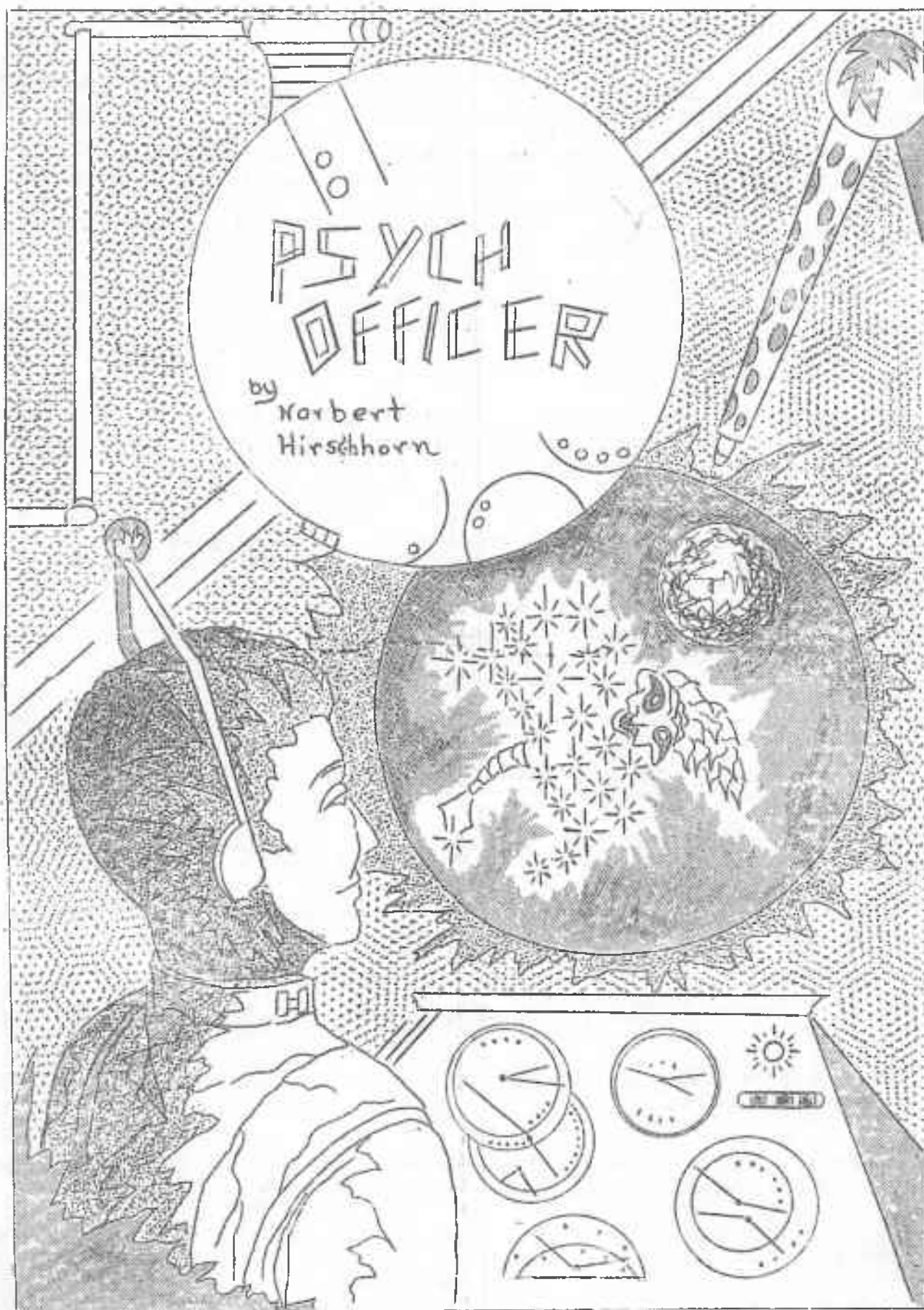
The darkness claims with confined festival
A summons bidding all to join the dance,
Though souls resist such intercessional,
They are enthralled by Half-light's cryptic trance.

Why should one wish to leave a pleasant dream
To answer voices charged with sorcery?
When utterance may echo in a scream
Why should such whispers find response in ME?

BACK ISSUES OF SPACESHIP

All these are available, postpaid, from Bob Silverberg:

- #4, September 1949. Seven copies left. 5¢ each.
 - #11, January 1951. De Angelis, Morris, Verdan. 10 copies. 10¢ each.
 - #12, April 1951. Adams, Warner, Silverberg. Second Anniversary Issue. One complete copy left, 10¢. Three with pages missing, 5¢ each.
 - #13, July 1951. Two copies, missing a page each. 5¢ each, or free with the first two 25¢ orders.
 - #14, October 1951. Mack Reynolds, Boggs, Dard, Winne. Eleven copies available, at 10¢ each.
 - #15, December 1951. R.R. Winterbotham, Ish, Dard. Four copies. 10¢.
 - #16, February 1952. Lilith Lorraine, Paley, Morris. Ten copies. 10¢.
 - #17, April 1952. 40-page third anniversary issue. Moskowitz, Boggs, Willis, Elsberry. 10¢ a copy. Any copies left after Sep. 1 will be sold for 15¢ each.
- Issues number 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 sold out.



Richard Z. Ward

PSYCH OFFICER

NORBERT HIRSCHHORN

Around Earth, there circles a lonely guardian of the skies. Never ceasing in monotonous elliptical orbit, it wards off all possible aggressors, human and otherwise. It also serves as an automatic refueling station for ships going beyond Mars. This artificial satellite is manned by a rigidly-trained crew, volunteers, serving for five years. Many of these men are attracted to the space station by the novelty of it, some by the eternal quiet of space, and some because of sorrow and loneliness. Although some maintain these men have been shanghaied, actually they are products of a series of intensive tests. They have passed, and passed by considerable margin, rigorous body exams in free space. But most important of all are the psychological tests. Men who live isolated in the station must be men who do not crack easily. Each candidate must be tested thoroughly.

Yet it is inevitable that men living within a stone's throw of home, but unable to reach it, Tantalus-like, should crack under the strain. Therefore, it is necessary to have on hand a competent and emotionally stable psychologist. He--you--is one of the most vital of all.

It must be emphasized that candidates for this position be carefully screened. Such things as the psychologist's past and present environment, his heredity, past acquaintances, social well-being, are most painstakingly scrutinized. Any small, seemingly insignificant unwanted element must not be permitted to get in, or it may spell the eventual downfall of the station...

-- Manual for Psych Officers

I.

Captain Johnson, as he walked toward his private cabin in the massive satellite, was intercepted in the hall by Sam Cardin, the radio man.

"Just received a call from the Arcturus," he said. "They say the new psych man is on their ship."

"It's about time he came," the captain remarked, wryly. "I've had some rough moments ever since Doc Sands was killed."

"I don't think this fellow will ever take the place of Doc Sands," Sam said. "He was like a father to us all." He reflected a moment. "Of all people to stop the radiations from Jet 3, why was he the one?"

"Guess we'd better get going," the captain said, curtly. "They'll be here in two hours."

II.

At the officer's table in the elaborate luncheon hall, the new arrival, who had preferred to eat alone, was the topic of discussion.

"There's something funny about that guy--" started the chief petty officer.

"He's just new, that's all," roared the hulking master tech from the far end of the table. "Give him a chance to get better known."

"I dunno," the petty officer said softly. "I dunno."

"I do know something," put in the first mate. "That accent of his sure gives me the creeps. I wonder what it is."

Cardin took a slow, measured sip of coffee and gently put the cup down. "I know it's my specialty, but I'm beat. I've never heard it before. It has a bit of Scandinavian in it, and a bit of German, and something that's neither. I don't know what that is. He has trouble with some of his words, too. Maybe he's just learned English."

"Isn't there a regulation that states that the psych must know English well?" asked the captain? "Seems to me I've heard of it."

"Well, yes, and no," answered Cardin. "Nothing about any accents--"

The petty officer, who had been musing while the exchange of words went on, said, "He seems different. Sort of...sort of alien."

"Cut it out, damn you," said the big tech. "Pretty soon we'll all be as screwy as you are." He laughed, loudly, and so did a few others. Cardin sat deep in thought, staring at the empty coffee cup in front of him.

III.

The captain could see that Chief Petty Officer King was badly shaken up. His face was ashen; his jaw twitched nervously; his fingers played with a paper weight on the desk. He spoke quietly. "I saw them."

"Now look, tell me what you saw."

After a long delay, King spoke again. "I have to check the station's time clocks by checking the position of Earth. When I was doing it I saw them." He looked past the captain. His eyes fixed on the rivets in the castite wall. "They were large and beautiful. Their wings... they...oh, God, their wings." He began to shake with hysterical sobs. Finally the captain broke from his sudden stiffness, and gave King a good swift slap. "...big wings, no eyes..."

"You poor fool," the captain said. "You fool. Come on, let's visit the psych." Still laughing, King permitted himself to be dragged down the corridor.

IV.

"I would appreciate if you left," said the psychologist stiffly.

The captain took a long look at King, and walked out. He had to give the psych credit. King had been soothed to a strange calmness. The guy had some sort of almost-hypnotic power. Oh, well, he thought, he's just different, I guess. But like Sam Cardin who sat and thought, he wasn't sure if that was the answer.

"Now tell me all that happened," the psych purred smoothly.

"Well," answered King, "I was doing my routine checking when I saw some small specks coming from sunside. They caught my eye, and I watched

them come closer and closer. And finally I saw them."

"Yes, and what did they look like?" prompted the psych officer.

"They were beautiful. They looked like giant dragon flies, but their wings were much more, infinitely beautiful. I...I can't describe them. But they seemed hostile, somehow."

"Hostile?" asked the psychologist.

"They didn't show it, but I felt there was something evil about them. There were quite a few of them. The wings were so radiant that I was dazzled; I wasn't sure of anything."

"Tell me," came the sudden question, "would you like to be first mate?"

"How did you know? Oh, I guess it's your job to know. Yes, I've always wanted that position, never could get it. That guy always gets the best of everything."

"The trouble with you is that you want to get ahead and don't realize that it just isn't...ah...in the cards for you to do so. These things you saw are beautiful, infinitely beautiful as you say. They are representative of your ambitions to be outstanding."

"Now wait, just wait a second. I may want that position, but I tell you I saw them. I know it's not my imagination!"

"Now...you'll get better as soon as you get back to Earth," said the psychologist soothingly. King's mouth dropped.

He stood up, his face stricken with utter disbelief. He stared at the psychologist and then slowly turned and walked out.

V.

During the next few weeks, three similar cases came up. Rafferty, the hulking master tech, and two jet men, saw the beautiful creatures. In all cases, the Psych established that these men were emotionally unstable. He sent them back to Earth, all still swearing they had seen them in the sky. Captain Johnson stood helplessly as he lost his best men. He had no say in such matters.

The days went by slowly, agonizingly. The tension built up inside the space station, a tension almost unbearable. And in his isolated cabin the strange psych officer sat contentedly surveying the situation.

The captain took his spectroscope analyses of Sirius and studied them closely. Then he jotted down some observations, snapped shut his notebook, and lit one of the treasured cigarettes. He inhaled deeply and watched the smoke curl pirouettes about his head. A slight noise brought his head around, and there was the psych, watching amusedly.

"Say, you really shouldn't come in here. It's...oh, well, there's no harm to it, said the captain. "Take a seat...I'm going to check the time, and when I open the visiport we'll have a beautiful view. I have to take the time myself, you know--I can't trust the ass they sent to replace King." He glanced at the psychologist.

"It was no fault of mine that he went the way he did," said the psych cautiously. "If I had kept him, he might have become dangerous."

"Yeah, I guess you're right. The thing that gets me is how come four men see the same thing." He turned and carefully scrutinized the short and balding psych officer.

"You had better check the time, Captain," he said carefully.

The captain walked over to a control panel and pushed a red button. Quickly and noiselessly, a partition in the walls slid open, revealing an inner panel of clear, translucent plastic.

He took out the instruments and set them up near the panel, and squinted through them into the sharp blackness outside. He screwed his eyebrows for a moment, and stared at the small specks coming closer to the station every moment. Then he saw them more clearly.

"Good lord--look at the wings."

He saw a symmetrical group of strange-flying things. Their massive, radiant wings shone and glimmered like a myriad stars. As they swooped about the station the wings changed from one color to another: from ruby to emerald, from emerald to a blinding yellow.

Captain Johnson staggered away from the plastic partition, his eyes wide with fear. His hands clenched until the finger nails dug into his palms. The sweat trickled down his back and neck, a cold, fear-given sweat, even in the heat of the melting walls.

"Look at them," he whispered, unable to move as the creatures swept down on their prey. "Look at their wings."

He heard a strangely familiar voice, now with harsh alien overtones, saying, "Yes, we are beautiful, aren't we?" He heard a rustle of wings behind him, and he turned, slowly, knowing exactly what to expect. And he saw what he expected. His screams rose and fell, and then ceased.

Finally the burned and charred hulk hung silent in the blackness. Tiny specks of colored luminosity winged their way, silently, toward the large and beautiful Earth.

. . .

It must be emphasized that this position (of psychologist) must be granted with caution, so that the man chosen embodies only the highest qualities of the profession. . . in his hands rest the destinies of each man aboard the station, and, should an undesirable slip past the examiners, it may spell the eventual downfall of the station...

--Manual for Psych Officers.

--Norbert Hirschhorn

ALL'S WELLES IN BANGKOK

Bangkok, Thailand, March 28.--Bangkok had its "Man from Mars" scare last night. A radio broadcast warned "the world is faced by calamity caused by dangerous rays from another planet."

It was hours before many listeners learned that it was a fiction broadcast as part of a Thai Royal Air Force anniversary celebration. The story told of a mad scientist harnessing cosmic force to destroy the earth.

--N.Y. World Telegram and Sun

STRANGE LEGENDS OF THE LITTLE MEN

HAL SHAPIRO AND ALICE DOUGLAS

Authors' Note: This was written from notes taken in February 1951, while we were stationed in Alaska.

Not too long ago, there was a brilliant flash of light in the Alaskan sky. At the same time, there were reports of "Little Men" being seen in the Chugach foothills.

News agencies sent reporters to track down the source of the brilliant flash and to investigate rumors about the Little Men. They returned empty-handed.

A few days later, a group of us were sitting around in a quiet Fairbanks saloon, discussing the light and deciding on everything of momentous importance, including the Little Men, flying saucers, and allied phenomena. It was a well-heated discussion.

"Yeah, I've heard all the stories, but I still don't believe in those so-called flying saucers," exclaimed a droop-stem pipe with an infantry GI behind it.

Alice put down her glass and remarked, "You guys remember Charles Fort? He found reports of space ships and Little Men almost 100 years ago."

"Sure," spoke up Hal. "Saucers and Little Men have been reported from Old Mexico, New Mexico, Arizona, California, and many other places."

One of the men in the group had been silent for quite a while. Now he looked around the table and said, "I'm not worried about the saucers. It's the Little Men thing that has me stumped." He paused for a moment to down some drink. "I've done a lot of research into Little Men, and do you realize that nearly every race on Earth has legends of them?"

That was the way it went for hours. Then, about 11:30, a sudden silence fell over the crowd as, one by one, we noticed a small figure perched atop a half - empty beer bottle on the table. One man nudged another, and he nudged the next, until all eyes were focused (as well as could be expected) on the Little Man. When he had everybody's attention, the Little Man hopped down from his seat and shoved his pointed little cap back on his pointed little head.

"Never in all my 4,000 years have I heard such rank nonsense as you people are spouting." His high, shrilling voice seemed to carry from one end of the room to the other, yet our table was the only aware of his presence. "I'm glad I stopped in here for a bit of refreshment. Otherwise you birds would have argued all night and never come near the truth."

The Little Man waved his hand, and the beer bottle on which he had been

sitting rose into the air, tilted, and some of the contents dribbled into a tankard which the tiny one had materialized from somewhere. We did not see him make it. It was just there suddenly.

After a long pull on the tankard the Little Man wiped his little mouth on his little sleeve and sighed, "Don't know how you people can drink such vile stuff. It doesn't have the tang like the grog King Arthur used to brew. Oh, well, the world has changed and a guy has to have something to dampen his throat." Seating himself about fifteen inches over the bar, the Little Man looked around. "Let me introduce myself.. I'm Corkaforpushapullyainanout. Just call me Corky. My particular job is to visit establishments of this type and when the barkeep starts to open a bottle, I push the cork down. Someone pass a bottle down here. I'm getting dry."



Someone passed a bottle. Corky repeated his levitation act and went on. "I don't have much time to spend here, so you men listen carefully while I give you the lowdown on this Little Men business.

"It all started long ago, so long ago that taxes hadn't even been invented. Our history is lost in antiquity. Not even the clan's historians can recall how or where or why we started. It must have been when men first came to Earth, because there wasn't much use for us before.

"Let's take Gremlins first. Someone pass that bottle back down here. This talking makes me thirsty.

"You all know about Gremlins. Well, I'm a member of the family. The original tribe started with Icarus. Remember him? He and his father made wings of wax and feathers for some silly reason or other. It was the original Gremlin who melted the wax on the wings."

Corky had, up to this time, been floating above the table. He lowered himself gently to the wood and began pacing back and forth. His long, tan slippers whispered softly as he paced. His voice sounded like a singing bell.

"You all know that the Gremlins were first seen during World War I. It was a matter of GHQ policy that we be seen. (Better explain that that is Gremlin Headquarters--authors' note.) Too many pilots were being grounded for negligence when it was really our work. It wasn't until WW II, though, that we really had a chance to start specializing. But when the different Air Forces of the world got those fine, complicated aircraft, we started to go to town. Some of us jammed landing gears, others blew out radio tubes, a few were assigned to tearing control cables; the gals, Pifinellas, were assigned to flight control instruments like compasses, gas gauges, oil pressure and temperature gauges.

"Of course, the jets gave us something new to work with and the kids took over there. GHQ seems to feel that if you're more than 2000 years old you're too old to fly jets. Ridiculous. I'm as fit as any kid.

"However, let's get back to family lines. There are the Trovs, Dwarfs,

Elves, Gnomes, Kobolds, Leprechauns, Fees, Sides, Trows, Fantines, Aukis, and the Cluracans. That's not all the family, but it's enough to start with." Corky paused. "Where's that bottle? How do you expect me to talk intelligently if I have to stop every five minutes and ask for refreshment?" After whetting down the dust in his throat the sprite danced a little jig on the table and, "Whoosh, men, that's more like it. Now, let's get on with the talk.

"The Trolls are the particular name that the people of the Scandinavian countries give to us. The members of the clan there are just like people. Many of them are friendly and help farmers around the farm and help old ladies do housework, and such. But there are always the mischievous ones who're always souring milk in the spring house, putting dust in corners and under beds, and scaring horses on the roads.

"In Estonia, Germany, and Britain, the branch of the family called the Dwarves does its work. Ireland is the land where we're most favored. Back in the days of the early Celts, the Cluracans, Leprechauns, and Sides (he pronounced it Shee) moved to the Emerald Isle. The Water Fays moved there too, but they haven't been seen in years. Cousin Kobold lives in Germany. He, along with the Trolls, work in the Little Men's Mining Company holdings throughout the world. Most of them are expert metalsmiths."

Corky paused for a moment and looked at the clock on the wall. "Almost time for me to go. But give me your attention for a few more minutes and I'll... someone pass the bottle." Someone did.

"We don't talk about the Trows now--went bad, every last one of them. Moved over to the Orkney and Shetland Islands and went plumb bad. Must have been the climate. All they're good for is to devil people.

"Mustn't forget the Aukis, the South American Branch. Not many of them but they're real specialists--doctors. Have a training school in Peru. And while we're on the subject, let's clear something up. Don't you make the mistake of confusing the Little Men with the "small races." The "small races" are human. Here in Alaska there's a tribe that lives with the Eskimos. Back in the USA, in the Catskills, there's another tribe. But they're a bunch of shiftless loafers. All they do is make twenty-year Mickey Finns and bowl on the grass. I can understand their whiskey-making, but wasting that time bowling beats me.

"There's another small race in Hawaii. They call themselves the Menahunes. Marvelous people. Construction workers, most of them. Only work at night, though. In fact, they don't tackle a thing that they can't complete during the dark hours.

"I think you have all the facts now, lady and gentlemen, so I'll be going. I'm a little late for a little date now."

With a wave of his hat, Corky ran through the air, jumped to the bar and ran down it, pushing a bartender's thumb in a beer bottle on the way out. He jumped in the air when he reached the end--and he disappeared.

--Hal Shapiro and
Alice Douglas



Making up "Soapbox" for this issue is even a more difficult task than usual, because the Third Anniversary Issue drew an inordinate amount of comment (mostly highly favorable, though some complained that the letter column was too short) and selection of five or six letters from the inch-thick sheaf I've accumulated is impossible. The second best thing is just about the best I can offer, and that's a selection of excerpts from most of the letters received.

Bob Tucker: An unusually fine issue! # I want to reprint parts of Willis' "Love in the Cornfield" in forthcoming "Gems from the Fan Press" section in News Letter. (P.O. Box 702, Bloomington, Ill.)

Dick Ryan: Congratulations on a noble annish. The mimeography was completely legible...the different colors gave the issue a sort of festive air. # Moskowitz' article was interesting, even tho I've never read much of Keller. Willis was short but good anyway, while Hoffman's page was the sort of thing that brings on convulsions. # I liked Mort Paley -- "Soft Rains" -- altho a great love does not exist between me and fanfiction. If fanfiction must be published, let us have more well-written ones like this. And like "The New Frontier." # The part I liked best of the art folio wasn't even a drawing, it was the few lines accompanying Chabot's contribution. Who wrote it, Chabot or you? ((me)) (224 Broad Street, Newark, Ohio.)

Richard Z. Ward: It's the best yet, Bob, a real credit to you. You had a lineup on the contents page that promised only the best and results were tops. Mimeo job excellent. # Wonder if you could give a friend, Jim Fleming, a hand. He's interested in getting together a group of fans who are interested in the fantasy writings of Gilbert Collins (who has appeared several times in FFI.) (Details on request--Jim Fleming, Box 273, Sharon, Kansas.) # Best of wishes for a successful future. (61 Chautauqua Ave., Jamestown, New York.)

Gregg Calkins: Cover is one of the best yet on Sships I've seen.. # Moskowitz didn't particularly enthrall me. The Willis bit was really great, though. The kind of thing I would like to be able to write. Elsberry very fine. Along with the Willistuff, this is easily the best in the ish. I've long awaited someone with the fire and brimstone Rich has to tear into OW the way it should be torn into. He did a great job...# Backtalk, needless to say, was excellent. Extremely interesting, and well written. # All in all, a fine annish, above the regular ishs by far. (761 Oakley Ave., Salt Lake City 16, Utah.)

Ray Capella: Re SPACESHIP, 3rd Anniversary Issue: TERRIFIC! For my money, the supposedly "top" fmz (Quandry) was left far behind with your last two issues--especially, of course, with #17. # The stf Portfolio is very, very good. Whew! # Flattery, somebody might say; I call it well-deserved praise. (480 Clinton Ave., Brooklyn 16, N.Y.)

Robert Coulson: Congratulations on SPACESHIP No. 17! Even a newcomer like myself could tell it is something special. Best item was Willis' "Love in the Cornfield." Second place to Lee Hoffman's "Fans we All Know," and third to Elsberry. But what did Palmer ever do to him? (Silver Lake, Indiana.)

Max Keasler: The mimeographing in your anniversary issue is the best you've ever had. The stencilling is smooth as I ever seem you have it. Ward did quite nicely with the cover...glad to see you're using him.. Willis smack at Amazing well done...like Walt, well done. But most fans like the Irishmen a little rare. # Well, Elsberry is in there slapping too, I see. The poor pros, they never have any rest. Elsberry seems to of caught Palmer with his Shaver mystery showing. # Lee's page of little people is not only clever but a relief after all those pages of text. Ever Lovin Yers... (420 South 11th St., Poplar Bluff, Missouri.)

Morris Taylor: Received my copy of Sship #17 yesterdan and just thought I'd let you know my reaction. As you know, I subscribe to quite a few fanzines in the U.S., but I can honestly say that for sheer enjoyment none of the others can match Sship. ((For your own safety, Morris, I've decided not to run the rest of your letter. It's so utterly egoboosting that everyone will think I wrote it, and if you've ever read Unknown you'll know what happens to you when a hundred or so people stop believing in your existence, all at once. But I appreciate your words very much, because it's people like you who have made Sship last as long as it has.)) (470 Spence St., Winnipeg, Canada.)

Charles Gregory: Congratulations on your third anniversary as editor of Sship. This was a wonderful issue, except for the letter column, which was too small. All the stories were good except "Resurrection," which had no story to tell. Lee Hoffman's drawings were hilarious... Walt Willis, of course, had the best article, because it was not only well-written, but amusing also. (Kelly Drive, Millington, N.J.)

Hal Shapiro: Re math thing on Page 23 of #16: used to pull that all the time and once stumped my high-school algebra teacher with it, even though she should have known better. Tell Lewis that in step three (in his version) Y-square minus XY means simply one minus one, which totals zero any way you figure it. By the same token, the other side, Y-square minus X-square, also totals up at zero. And where you have an algebraic equation with zero on one or both sides, that is where the problem ends. Well, with that problem as a basis, you could prove that Mars is a red tennis ball eighteen miles above the earth's surface. (790th AC/W Squadron, Kirksville, Missouri.)

Redd Boggs: ...the format was quite good, I thought. Ward's cover is another of those crude conceptions of his that are striking despite everything. They are stylized to an extreme...I'm not sure whether RZW has any talent, but like Paul (whom he seems to resemble in several ways) he gives me the impression that he does. In the portfolio of art Ward's robot and spaceship pix were the best, though the femme wasn't too bad. Didn't like Chabet's "Hunger for Space" much. The figure seemed badly proportioned. Who did the words accompanying this pic? Leeh's little peepul were nice: she handles stick figures as well as anybody I know.

"Love in the Cornfield" surprised me a little. It's more bitter than sweet--an unaccountable switch for the #1 fan of three-fourths the land

area of Tellus. Is this a glimpse of the real Walt Willis? Is he another Sam Russell, the polite, smiling gentleman, about whom Laney once remarked, "If the IASFS could look into his mind, they would recoil from him as from a Laney."? Anyway, this was an article full of blades and boffos, and I liked it. # "Three Years of Spaceship" was interesting. I wonder what percentage of fanzines are started before the editor has seen a single fanzine or only one or two, at the most? Maybe it's a good way to start; it would seem to prevent fanzines from becoming stereotyped. Trouble is, fanzines produced without direct reference to other fanzines are modeled after the prozines, and that's worse yet. # I didn't know you printed a poem by Lee Hoffman in Sship #11, but I had some notions that the poem of hers I published in Sky Hook #12 was the first she'd had published outside of her own magazines.... (2215 Benjamin St. N.E., Minneapolis 18, Minn.)

There were a number of other comments which arrived after this column had been set up--Ian Macauley, Charles Wells, David English, Russell Watkins, all sent letters, some of which I managed to acknowledge. In reviewing #17, I find unanimity on just three points: everybody liked the number of pages and the price, everybody liked Ward's artwork, and virtually everybody thought the Walt Willis piece, though shortest in the issue, was the best. In making up the rating I find there is no doubt about first place, but after that I've got six pieces tied for two positions. In the following listing, the articles tied are listed in descending order--I found there was not enough difference between them to justify splitting them up:

1. LOVE IN THE CORNFIELD (Willis)
2. Tie: BACKTALK (Silverberg)
THE MAN WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN (Boggs)
FANS WE ALL KNOW (Hoffman)
3. Tie: FOR THE FANS--Sez Who (Elsberry)
THE IVORY TOWER (Moskowitz)
SOFT RAIN (Paley)
4. REPORT FROM AUSTRALIA (Dard)
5. THE NEW FRONTIER (Chappell)

And everything else in the issue (poems, fiction, letters, reviews) came out pretty much even. It's interesting to note that for the second consecutive issue, a two-page item seemed to pack more punch than a 3000-word lead article! In #16 it was Paley's short piece, and here Willis. I'd hazard a guess that in this issue, despite some strong competition, Ray Nelson's article will end the trend--it seems to hold a good deal of true reader interest, even for a confirmed scoffer at Fortean ideas such as myself.

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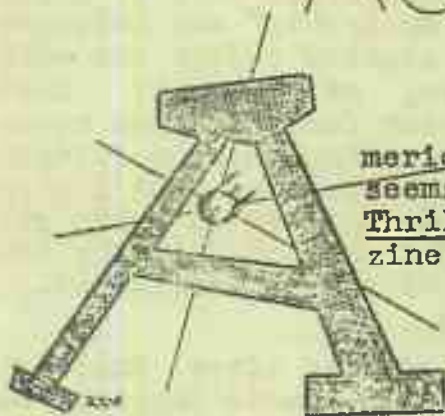
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REPORT FROM AUSTRALIA

ROGER DARD



merican fans have no monopoly on the surprises, it seems. The N. K. Hemming who writes stories for Thrills Inc. and who had a story in the British pro-zine Science-Fantasy turned up at a recent Sydney fan meeting and, to the surprise of everyone, turned out to be Norma Hemming, an attractive girl in her twenties. Hey, there, Lee Hoffman, are you listening?

The arrival of Norma Hemming was the culmination of an upsurge in femme fan activity in Sydney. A number of gal fan are now active, and one of these, Rosemary Simmons, is publishing VERTICAL HORIZONS, an all-femme fanzine. Her application to join the Sydney Futurians touched off an explosive controversy recently. A number of fans bitterly opposed her application on the grounds that, in the past, the Futurians had nearly been wrecked by allowing girls to join the society. The idea apparently is that sex and fanning do not mix. The gal was stubborn and re-applied, and after a lot more discussion some of her principal opponents reversed their stand and agreed to vote for her admission. Rosemary, and any other femme fans, are now eligible for membership.

The Rosaleen Norton book mentioned a few issues back (bound in bat's skin and selling for \$25) has not yet appeared. According to my Sydney informant, a dispute of some sort has come up between Miss Norton and the publishers. However, the book will eventually appear--in an edition of only 100 copies. Advance orders have come in from all over, including one from Forrest J. Ackerman! I never thought there would be so many people willing to pay \$25 for a book.

Three new titles appeared in the "Scientific Thriller" series of pbs: SATAN'S SABBATH, KILL HIM GENTLY, and YOU CAN'T KEEP MURDER OUT, all by Paul Valdez. The early titles in this series were definitely sf and fantasy, but now it would seem that only the name of the series links it to science--these new ones are detective yarns with a slight horror element. A new fantasy book, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, recently appeared, written in the much-imitated (but rarely equalled) Thorne Smith style. This is a story of a precocious baby who smokes cigars, drinks champagne, and makes passes at the gals. Price is about 50¢.

Sydney fandom, with the cooperation of the distributors, inserted 1200 leaflets in copies of the BRE Astounding, plugging fandom and inviting readers to the Convention and/or the regular weekly meetings. "The response," says Graham Stone, "was not encouraging." 38 replies were received, and 13 joined Graham's AUSTRALIAN S-F SOCIETY (which has a membership of close to 100, the biggest in the history of Aussie fandom.)

Nick Solntseff is now Australian representative of the NFFF, in place

of your columnist, who has resigned. # In the last issue of Sship, mention was made of a booklet published by Thomas Cockcroft, TALES OF CLARK ASHTON SMITH, which was available only from Cockcroft in New Zealand. I have now been advised that copies may be obtained by remitting 20¢ to his USA agent, Russell J. Hodgkins, 8813 Halldale Ave., Los Angeles 47, Cal. This is an excellent bibliography which I have no hesitation in recommending.

The first Australian S-F Convention was held on March 22, attended by 58 science fiction enthusiasts. Most of those attending came from the Sydney area, where the convention was held, although there were a few fans from upstate and one sole fan from Melbourne, Race Matthews. Doors opened at 10 AM Saturday morning, after which an hour's informal discussion took place. Master of Ceremonies was Royce Williams, co-author of the stf book "Zero Equals Nothing" (Futurian Press, \$1.50) who read out the good-will messages as they arrived, introduced newcomers, commented on the proceedings, and in general kept up a bright flow of patter.

Among the displays were two impressive items contributed by Quantas Airways, an Australian line. These were scenes contrived with three-dimensional models, one item showing part of the Australian coast from trans-Pacific rocket height, the other a lunar landscape. According to reports, the latter was "well in Bonestell's class." Among the magazine displays were early stf magazines from 1926; notable fan publications from 1933 Fantasy Fan to a current Slant; perhaps most unique of all was the exhibit of foreign s-f. Included were Narraciones Terrorificas (Argentine), Los Cuentos Fantásticos (Mexico), Antologicia de Cuentos Fantásticos (Mexico), Fantastica (Spain), Les Aventures Futuristes (French-Canadian), Fantasy en Wetenschap (Dutch), Vekans Avenytur (Sweden), and an Irish mag whose title I can't reproduce unless Bob has a Gaelic typewriter. And a number of foreign stf books--"Les Rois des Etoiles" (The Star Kings) and a German "Invasion von Merten Mond."

Another part of the magazine display which aroused some interest was a group of rare 1927 Weird Tales, loaned by your columnist. The walls of the hall were lined with stills from s-f films, some going as far back as the UFA moon rocket films. Following the formal opening at 11 A.M., and speeches by chairman Bill Veney and prominent fans Graham Stone and Vol Molesworth, came the auction. High prices were realized, a current Galaxy bringing slightly over \$3! After lunch the main session began.

Reports were heard from various fan organizations, and several motions were raised by the fans. One highly controversial motion was that urging censure of the Australian mag Thrills Inc. Despite the presence of Norma Hemming, a Thrills writer, many fans did not hesitate to express their condemnation and contempt for this prozine. Upon taking a vote, however, the motion urging action against Thrills was defeated.

Following dinner, a Yugoslav fantasy film, THE MAGIC SWORD, was shown. There was no organized activity until the day after next, when an open meeting of the sponsoring body, The Futurian Society, was held. Thus ended Australia's first s-f convention--not spectacular by US standards --but a step in the right direction, and an outstanding success by anybody's standards.

--Roger Dard



Some of you may have noticed that this issue runs 28 pages, although it's my ironclad editorial policy to publish 26 pages per issue, excluding such things as anniversary issues. The extra two pages this issue result, not from any attempt at beneficence, but just from my own slovenly ways of thinking.

Last issue, you know, SPACESHIP ran to 40 pages. Now, a 40-page issue is not something you turn out every other week, and in order to fill it I had to do some serious digging for material. As it turned out, I dug a bit too deeply, and came up with more material than I could use.

Fine, I thought, I'll leave out the Bullock and Shapiro-Douglas items, and put them into #18, to back up Nelson and Hirschhorn. When one is publishing 40 pages, one has lofty thoughts, and I didn't realize that #18 would run only 26 pages, but I had planned well over 30 already.

That posed a pretty problem. I chopped a page out of poor Rog Dard's column, which always suffers because news happens whenever it pleases and not whenever I have a deadline. I took a page out of Soapbox, for which I'll probably get scalped by the readers. Then the Hirschhorn story ran to four pages instead of the five I had expected, and that cut it down another. Finally I clutched my wallet to my heart and turned down an ad.

Even so, it ran to 27 pages and a mailing wrapper. I could have held BACKTALK to one page and given Rog Dard back his missing page, but no more Aussie news was forthcoming, and he couldn't very well manufacture some. I could have cut BACKTALK anyway, and run 26 pages plus wrapper, but since I want the wrapper on the outside I'd have to leave a page blank, and I might just as well fill it as leave it blank. Then again, I could try homogenizing the Nelson article down by a page, but on reconsidering I figured I had better not tamper with it any more than I had.

So you've got 28 pages. I'm going to try for 26 next time.

.....

Ray Nelson's article in this issue was originally scheduled for publication in Russ Watkins' fanzine DAWN, and came to me upon the demise of that mag. # Joiners will be interested in the BACHELOR'S STAFF ASSOCIATION OF THE WORLD (Chairman, Sgt. Hal Shapiro, 790th AC/W Squadron, Kirksville, Mo.) which offers a considerably interesting program for 25¢ dues. Write to Shapiro for further info. I'm a member.

.....

The feature article next issue will be, sad to say, by Bob Silverberg. I don't do this often--the last was in December 1951--so please be tolerant. No point shoveling out the egoboo in Sship each issue without grabbing some for myself! The article will concern British Reprint Editions of U.S. prozines, and will include a complete checklist.

A good many of you requested that we run the thumbnail biogs of our contributors again, so--

RAY NELSON, one of the members of Art Rapp's SPACEWARP crew a few years back, is now an old married man (to fanne Perdita Lilly) and is located someplace in the Chicago area. After winning a reputation as something of a stormy petrel, he's ceased to be an active fan of late.

ALICE BULLOCK, a femme from Albuquerque, N.M., has done a good deal of fan writing for such mags as PEON and FANFARE, and has also managed to peddle two stories to Weird Tales. Unlike Ray Nelson (who published a short-lived fanzine) she has never done any fan publishing, and, if I read her article correctly, never will.

HAL SHAPIRO and ALICE DOUGLAS are also ex-members of the famed SPACEWARP coterie; Shapiro, after a sojourn in Alaska, is now an Airforce Sergeant in Missouri, and Douglas is usually located in Detroit. Shapiro has sold fiction, too--to love pulps. He's 22; Alice refuses to divulge any information of that sort.

NORBERT HIRSCHHORN is a young New Yorker, a high-school student who has caught the fever, poor fellow, and is publishing a dittoed fanzine, TYRANN. He has had a number of stories and articles published in various fanzines in the past six or eight months, and is an active N3Per.

The other contributors--Dard, Ward, Capella--have all been introduced. But in answer to Redd Boggs (who said the biogs were too vague) we'll go even further and say that Roger Dard is an Australian, while Richard Z. Ward and Raul Garcia Capella are artists.

About a day after this hits the mails, I'll be far from Brooklyn, gaffing in the wilds of West Copake, New York. From June 28 to August 25 I'll be a non-fan, as has been my custom for the past four years. So if your letter of comment on this issue of Sship is not acknowledged you'll know why--I'm out of town and the letter is in town. All letters and fanzines addressed to my home address will be received and put aside until my return, so don't hesitate to write anyhow. SPACESHIP, #19, will be issued some time in late September.

Last issue used up most of the backlog of material, and now I'm on the lookout for some printable stuff for future issues. Chief requirement is non-fiction, serious or otherwise, of any length up to about eight single-spaced pages. Can use a very small amount of very short fiction--preferred length is 600 to 1200 words. Have no requirements for poetry at present, nor crossword puzzles and similar miscellany. If any of you can draw, and wish to become the second member of the present art staff, submit a couple of samples and I'll let you know what sort of pictures I'm looking for. Sship eats up a lot of material, and can always use plenty more, so don't be hesitant about submitting.

Have a nice summer, folks. I'll be back to the wars in September.
--Dob Silverberg

SPACESHIP

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