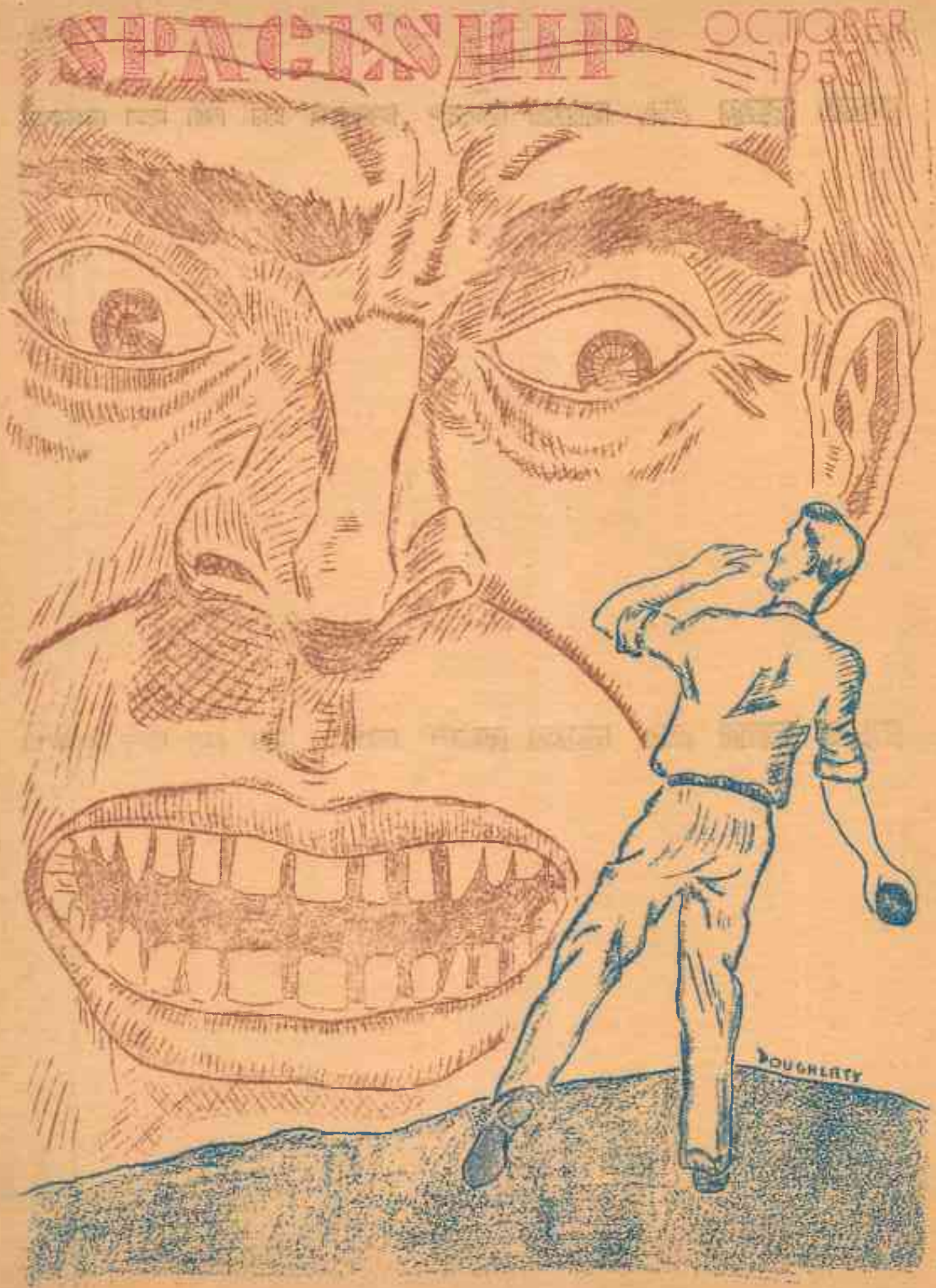
SEAMANSHIP

OCTOBER 19[illegible]



SPACESHIP

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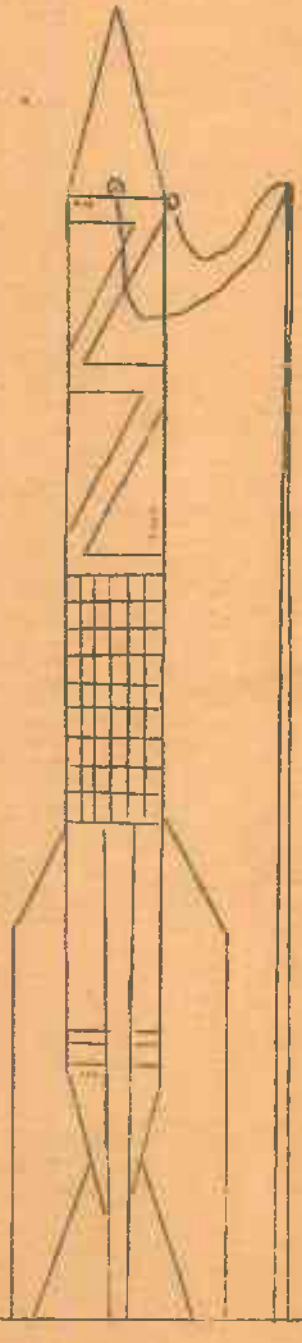

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Richard E Ward

"SCIENCE FICTION IS FOR KIDS"

LARRY STARK

hat seems to be the battle-cry of the entire Hollywood clan these days. Have you seen George Pal's new Puppettoon, "War of the Worlds," yet? Or Howard Hawks' "Thing"--a blood relation to the latter-day Frankenstein monstrosities? Or that 3-D outrage, "It Came From Outer Space?" Well, at least you, like all loyal fans, must have dragged the family and friends down to see the first in the landslide of science-celluloid, Woody Woodpecker in "Destination Moon."

Or were you, like me, duped into paying exhorbitant admission fees to witness such fly-by-night shams as "Rocketship XM" or "Flight to Mars"? If you've parted with cash to witness any of these blots on the reputation of science-fiction, I think you're about to agree that all Hollywood wants out of the sf craze is your money, and certainly not a new medium or background with which to tell good stories. After all, with the low-budget horror show and the no-budget western they've been taking candy from babies for years. Why raise the intelligence-sights just because science-fiction is the West Coast's new plaything?

I don't condemn George Pal for his past accomplishments in stop-motion puppet cartoons. In fact, I'd welcome any good science-fiction films produced by Paul Terry, Walt Disney, or Edison-Biograph. However, I do think that, as a paying fan, I have a right to complain when a producer plainly plans his films in such a manner as to make of s-f a children's cartoon medium instead of (as advertised) a legitimate art form.

Pal produced the first important sf film in the recent string, "Destination Moon." However, from the very beginning it is obvious that he looked upon it, not as the story of a dramatic advancement of human frontiers, but merely another (if longer) kiddies' film.

He bought original story rights from a big name in sf, Robert A. Heinlein, considered a master of realism of background and description. The film to make was "The Man Who Sold the Moon," a dramatic and realistic treatment of the lunar conquests. But George didn't get the message. Instead he picked Heinlein's Rocket Ship Galileo, a children's novel, kept on the "juvenile" shelf at the public library, and not usually recommended for adults. At the very basic step, then, Mr. Pal regarded "Destination Moon" as a film for children.

I won't dwell on the straight melodrama which characterized the entire production, the "drama" represented by mere physical motion and not much else, or the flaccid attempts at humor injected into the deflated script. What impresses me most about the fiasco was the informative and instructive lecture by that foremost American rocket expert, Mr.

Woody Woodpecker. The cartoon-sequence not only recapitulated the entire flight and made of the rest of the film a gigantic anti-climax, it talked of science and science-fiction in the most elementary and insultingly juvenile tones. In preparing the dialogue for the whole film, R.A.H. or his stand-in was somehow induced to shift the sights from the 12-year-old to the 7-year level of intelligence. And this may well have set a precedent, because in more recent films the shift seems to have been ever downward, not up.

One particular facet of all the new scientifilms that seems to make all producers agree with Mr. Pal & Co. is the problem of the form and variation of the extraterrestrial. In most cases the concession to grammar-school intelligence can be summed up in a recent anthropomorphic title: "The MAN from Planet X." Just about all invasion and/or visitation films have featured distinctly humanoid progeny of Dr. Karloff's Frankenstein monster in the role of the other-world inhabitant, despite the fact that even pulp writers are finding it hard to convince intelligent readers that the thinking anthropoid presents the sole workable plan for intelligent creatures.

Two exceptions come to mind. In "The Day the Earth Stood Still," the entire question of how a being purporting to be extra-galactic happened to be obviously humanoid, Caucasian, and a political liberal was sidestepped as neatly as any of the better pros could do, and with considerably less scientific-philosophic dialogue or Darwinian jargon.

The other exception was "It Came From Outer Space" (In passing it might be mentioned that the long, monosyllabic, descriptive titles that characterize scientifilms seem one more concession to the moron mentality.) in which 3-D glimpses of what were billed as Ray Bradbury's other worlders showed them up to be more akin to the conglomerations of insectoid construction and human intestines which Wally Wood creates for Entertaining Comics' Weird Science and Weird Fantasy. At no time, however, did the celluloid versions seem as real as the ones in print. The characters, too, resembled Ray's Martian Chronicle conceptions about as much as Mike Hammer does Sherlock Holmes.

"The Thing (from another world)" featured a vegetable entity whose digits, just by luck, added up to four rose-thorn fingers (with two knuckles apiece!) and an opposed thumb. Howard Hawks must have been extremely grateful to John W(ho-goes-there) Campbell jr. for conjuring up so convenient a visitor. Why, with but one glib reference to vegetable regeneration of ripped-off limbs, Howard's boys could rent the same Frankenstein getup last seen playing straight-man to Abbot&Costello.

George Pal conceived of Martians in his new thriller-diller in a form which would have shocked Wells (HG) and Welles (Orson) by its inaccuracies. The novel went on at length describing "a humped shape about the size of a bear" and an enormous mouth "surrounded by two bunches of multi-purpose tentacles" which were later described as the ultimate development in fingers, with arm and hand dwindled to nothingness. No mention was made of feet; HG surmised that the feeble tentacles, on less-gravitied Mars, might have supported the head-body above the ground.

Pal skipped or ignored HG's scientific speculations entirely. His Martians emerged a technicolor melange of crayfish, sting-ray, and TV camera, all supported on delicate mantis-like legs. Believing this unreal comedian to be a waterless Martian operating under added pressure and gravity is difficult. The Martian foot, which is the last view of the

extraterrestrials seen in the picture, is a conglomerate fusion of the most flimsy and delicate forms of chicken-claw, insect's leg, and octopus tentacle. None of them, singly or in combination, could have supported a Terra-spawned body of such topheavy proportions, let alone assume the added burdens of increased gravity.

Bill Leonard, drama-screen critic for CBS and Knickerbocker Beer, has in the past been critical and at times brutally disdainful of Hollywood's attempts to bring science-fiction to the screen. I was very surprised, then, when he recently gave "The War of the Worlds" a particularly good recommendation. He called the audience reactions "those of genuine fear and horror, instead of the outrage and derision which met 'The Thing' and 'The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms'." He did not say the Pal production either confirmed or converted Bill Leonard's view of science-fiction, but from someone whom I'd pegged as an enemy, the opinion was surprising. It was even more surprising when I saw the bloodied remains of the novel which survived after Pal and associates had converted it to celluloid.

Were it any other but this lasting classic of science - fiction (and something of a personal favorite) I might agree that Pal's production was satisfactory. There seemed to be a genuine effort to render an accurate portrait of the events and the emotions of the novel. Inventive and ingenious devices and interpretations were used to advantage. The power and awesomeness of the story were at least contemplated and attempted, and a great deal of well-planned and effective shots and actions were given footage. It was definitely not another "Beast" fiasco.

However, this is not some original script; it was a classic. The oringinal novel holds as much impact and impressiveness today as it did in 1900, despite talk of artillery rather than H-Bombs, horses ra t her than automobiles, gigantic cannon-shells rather than prototype V-2s. This particular novel, by its classic proportions, not simply in sf but in literature, deserves the best possible treatment. I don't believe it got such attention.

I don't mean the updating of ideas and inventions, the references to magnetic rather than mechanistic transportation, for instance. I once read a copy of the Howard Koch script, written in 1938 for the Mercury Theater. The modern descriptions and treatment made the show the sensation it was, and preserved the feeling of reality that Wells' novel presented. Those innovations, like Pal's, were not only valid , but actually helped to create an accurate translation of the book . Pal's concessions to The Hollywood Way ruined a chance for a great picture. His omissions and faulty translations have made of a great novel a mediocre film.

For instance, the trick photography was in many cases terrifying--in others outlandishly artificial. The continual slowness of the Martian machines deadened the pace of the film, and seemed unnecessary. At one point, the double-photographed machine floats, light as a bubble, to Earth, yet carries intertia enough to demolish a skyscraper. Such scenes ruined the good points of Pal's illusions. The idea that a ray could pick out a man at one time, a tank later, vaporize both, and yet

leave trees and grasses unsinged, seemed at first awesome, later ridiculous. Replacing Wells' "black gas" by this, I think, was a mistake.

Even worse an error was the discursive lecture on a solar system most people have already heard about, which opened the film. Wells opened simply and directly, talking of Earth-Mars relationships exclusively, not rambling aimlessly and with no reason (save to display Bonestell cartoons, perhaps?) all over the universe--and in the process snubbing Venus entirely. The whole thing had the ring of a lecture at the Hayden Planetarium; at any moment I expected the inevitable, "And then, boys and girls..."

Pal has committed what I should call detrimental errors in the cutting and treatment of the story proper. It is on the grounds of story and drama that I call his film unsuccessful in bringing Wells to the screen.

Three glaring omissions present themselves. First, his elimination of the buildup of emotion in a large crowd viewing the Martians out of the cylinder, in the pit, but not yet in their machines. Wells used half a dozen chapters between the unscrewing and the first heat ray, and very effectively described the play of emotion in a crowd. Orson also gave this plenty of air-time. Pal cut the whole sequence to a group of three, and launched into military operations almost immediately.

Second, a la pal all weapons fell harmlessly against the Martians, and they roamed practically unopposed. With this interpretation the thrilling "Thunder-Child" episode is ignored entirely. The whole history is one of futile flight and useless, discouraging rear-guard action by the humans. No "Thunder-Child" gives momentary hope or relief from dejection in the film, nor portrays human courage as anything but futile and empty fist-shaking at whirlwinds. The only incident of human triumph was by animal combat to protect a mate, somewhat akin to a conditioned reflex. Though it's perhaps a valid assumption that the animal would win where the mind would not, I would call Wells' more romantic view of human endeavor more satisfying. The surprising yet useless victories of the ram seemed to me the "second-act curtain" of the novel.

Third, by compressing the end, Pal succeeded in reducing the long, lyrically depressing descriptions of desolation to a few brief flashes of screen-time. The dramatic descriptions of stark, motionless Martian machines, and finally of dead Martians being fought over by kites and crows and dogs, were snubbed painfully.

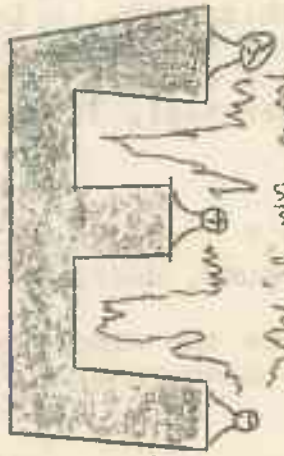
Instead Pal first gives the Martians invulnerability (by virtue of the idiotic bell-jar force-screens) throughout the film, and second dumps the whole question of the Martian defeat glibly into the lap of The Divinity and Hollywood's greatest gimmick, True Love. As the picture was put together, the Martian error was not the moral one of heartless machanical invasion. It was not the practical one of neglecting to examine all the facets of a new environment before removing one's spacehelmet. It was not even a defiance of Divine Plan--though that immediate retribution for desecration of a churchwindow certainly looked it.

No, the Martians were laid low not because they ran contrary to moral law, nor because they broke a law of nature, nor yet because they defied the Lord God Himself. The act which forced their inevitable destruction was their shameless contempt of that Supreme West Coast Dogma that the course of true love must forever end in a happy fadeout. The instant it became obvious that these invaders would, if not destroyed, flagrantly rob him of a clinch-kiss-fadeout ending, Pal stepped into the frame and cut down the dastardly villains within fifty feet of film. Justice triumphs again! and the average intelligence of moviegoers drops another 20 IQ points.

--Larry Stark

DRAGONS

DAVE MASON



ver since I made that Malaya run, I've believed in dragons," said the Second Engineer morosely.

Mister Wintersitt is a union bartender and never takes offence at any remark not absolutely obscene. He merely poured the Second another small rye, and resumed wiping the bar.

I was only slightly interested myself, because the Second is a liar of practically professional standards. I indicated my lukewarm attention with a lifted eyebrow.

"Now, that fella..." said the Second, indicating the middle-aged citizen who was nursing a beer a few feet down the bar, "is a dragon."

I looked at him. No scales, no wings, no fire coming out. I shook my head.

"A dragon doesn't have to look like the ones in the fairy stories." The Second kept his voice low, for which I was thankful, because the citizen with the beer was a man of some size and weight. I have never liked barroom fights, a fact which is true of most seamen. And you can believe that or not, as you please.

"When I was in Malaya, in Yongdongplink--"

"Where?"

"I think that's how you pronounce it. Anyway, I did a fella a favor--a native. Wasn't much of a favor, but he wanted to do something for me in return. So he told me about dragons."

"A real favor," I said.

"You said it. Way he showed me, I can tell a dragon forty feet away. That's why I didn't sign aboard the Elsie Bagwell. Her chief mate was a dragon."

"So? The Bagwell's back in port now. Nothing happened to her."

"No, but it could have." The Second finished his rye and Mister Wintersitt came sliding up with another. "That dragon could have lost his temper. The whole damn ship could have burnt up."

"I thought a dragon looked like a dinosaur," I ventured.

"Some do, when they want to. A dragon's like a werewolf, it can change shape any way it wants to. Like that vampire who was port engineer at

Jacksonville, for Green Circle Lines. He couldn't cross any rivers but he was all right from the company's point of view. Some companies'll hire any kind of slob and let a good man rot on the beach."

"Yeah."

"Anyway, this fella in Yongdongplink showed me two-three dragons they had living right there in town. One of 'em was a white man, a local police inspector. Another one kept a store, so you can see you can find a dragon doing anything. Not like a werewolf or a vampire, sticking close to their own place. But there's ways you can tell. It shows."

"What ways?"

"Why should I tell you? You don't believe me anyway." He waved Mr. Wintersitt away. "No more--I gotta date. See you around, Jake."

He went out, walking carefully but not unsteady. I saw the middle-aged citizen looking at me. "Thinks you're a fire-breathing monster," I said, grinning.

"Drunk as a skunk, hey?"

"No, he's like that sober." I fished for a cigarette. "Believes in all kinds of crazy things. Mr. Wintersitt here'll tell you. I've sailed with him myself--a good guy except he's nuts."

Mr. Wintersitt nodded. "He's always polite to my customers, even when he figures one of them's an evil spirit. Remember that redheaded girl he brought in, claiming she was a banshee?"

Both the middle-aged man and I laughed. Mr. Wintersitt said, "Excuse me a minute. Got to go down into the basement, switch over the beer pipes to a new keg." He disappeared.

The middle-aged man found a cigar in his pocket, put it between his teeth. "Mpff--as a matter of fact, your friend was quite right about me, though I'm blessed if I see how he spotted it. Has he found you?"

"No," I replied, then watched the other hunt for a match. "Here--take a light."

He lit his cigar calmly, and I stopped exhaling flame.

"Watch the woodwork," said Mr. Wintersitt warningly, as he drifted up through the floor. Solidifying, he pulled back the beer handles.

"One on the house, gentlemen?"

--Dave Mason

FIVE

Is the magic number. I need just five Astoundings to complete my file of that fine mag, and will pay well for copies in fine condition (with covers) of these issues: Nov 1930, Oct 1933, May 34, Mar 36, Sep 40--bob

UPBEAT

HARRY WARNER, JR

One of the finest titles ever created for a science fiction story was "On the Brink of 2000." It has everything that a fantasy story title needs. The title contains a hint of suspense, it definitely indicates that the story is science fiction, and the reader senses the promise of the new things to come in the new century that lies ahead.

But I think that this title may hold still another significance, which has nothing to do with the story for which it was created. History seems to hint that the coming of the year 2000 may result in a huge leap ahead for humanity's way of living. There seems to be a sort of concentration of mankind's principal achievements around the beginning of new centuries.

At least one complete book has been based on this idea. Holbrook Jackson wrote The Eighteen Nineties, a book about British literature and art around the time of the 20th century's coming. Jackson expressed the theory that the waning of a century causes a burst of energy and production on the part of its most talented men. It is as if these men were anxious to produce art works and stories for which the dying century would be remembered. Jackson could point to such men as Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw to support his theory, both of whom seemed stimulated to greatness as 1900 approached.

A student of history with a flair for statistics might spend an interesting research program on this subject, covering all forms of human endeavor. A hasty glance appears to confirm the suspicion that the events which have the greatest effect on our lives are jammed into the years just before and just after the start of the new centuries. You can think back over the history of the United States for confirmation. The big things happened around the turn of the century, from the discovery of the continent, eight years before the 16th century began, to the arrival of powered flight, three years after the present century started.

I'm not referring to the events like wars and political upheavals which fill history books. Wars go on most of the time. So does scientific research. But the actual introduction into the average man's life of new ways of doing things seems concentrated at the turn of the centuries. Remember how many new things came into general use in the United States during the 20 years from 1890 to 1910. They included the airplane, the automobile, the typewriter, the telephone, the practical application of electricity for a dozen different daily activities, and many other new ways of doing things which may have been discovered but weren't put to full use during the preceding years of the 19th century. The pattern of the average fellow's life certainly changed more radically from 1890 to 1910 than it has from 1910 to 1953.

All this may have a real significance for us. It may be a clue to science fiction fans to the date when the things we like to read about

will become reality. Another clue may be the rate at which research and development are progressing on many of the principal props of science fiction stories. Present indications seem to point toward the realization in practical form of space travel, atomic energy, rolling highways, and many other things of the future in four or five decades, just as the new century comes.

This is tough on the older readers of science fiction. If the theory is correct, the men who pioneered science fiction in magazine form will be dead before the things of which they dreamed and wrote came into existence. On the other hand, the beanie set in today's fandom have an excellent chance of living long enough to read in the newspapers what they're now reading in science fiction magazines, barring a sudden decline in the average individual's life expectancy.

There's one other consolation for us in the hypothesis. If we're still alive when the new century arrives, we might be so delighted by all these new things that we'd hate to die in another decade or so; and maybe that burst of genius at the brink of 2000 will produce a longevity serum that will permit you and me to test our ideas with the arrival of 2100.

--Harry Warner jr

((The foregoing article was delivered as an address to the Disclave held in Washington, D.C., earlier this year.))

*

BETWEEN THE STARS

Through the lack of air between the stars
dreaming of a woman's hair the green strands
of beauty pleasures in the things that are
his home the place where he was born pearl-sands
along the beach red-trees in spring alone
he dreams of home scarcely thinking of ahead
the strange place where men have never flown
the distant pale planet the sphere called Earth.

--Robert L. Peters

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TWIN PROPHETS OF DOOM

BOB SILVERBERG

BRAVE NEW WORLD, by Aldous Huxley. Doubleday, 1932. Bantam, 1953, 35¢
1984, by George Orwell. Harcourt Brace, 1949. Signet, 1950, 25¢.

ldous Huxley, like that other portrayer of the future, George Orwell, is a prophet of doom. Huxley and Orwell both have examined our culture and found it wanting. Both are frightened men.

Now that the paperback publishers have made both of these classics of the science-fiction field available at low cost, they deserve comparison. Both have achieved popularity far greater than does the average science-fiction novel, or even the superior science-fiction novel. Both 1984 and Brave New World--particularly the latter-- are not really science-fiction at all, but warnings set in a futuristic cast. And Bravo New World, like most of the works of Bradbury, is actually anti-science fiction.

Huxley sees technology--apparently as exemplified by brighteyed young American college graduates in white smocks--swallowing humanity. Brave New World, aside from its entertainment value, is a tract. Huxley desperately wants the world to make a conscious choice between two paths, one path leading to the technological civilization of The Year of Our Ford 623, and the other path leading to a more "natural" development of mankind.

Orwell, too, saw uncomfortable trends developing in our society, and extrapolated them into his picture of 1984. It's fortunate, perhaps, that Orwell wrote his book five years ago and died shortly after; had he written his novel today, amidst McCarthy probes, guilt-by-association theories, and other Big Brother techniques which have come into being in the last few years, his protest would probably be too strong a dose for the reader to take.

Huxley fears science; Orwell, political power. The horror of 1984 is considerably more immediate than is that of A.F. 623, and is a simpler concept. It is not difficult to extrapolate today's book-burnings, revisionist historians, and limitations on free thought, into the rigid thought-control of 1984. It is a bit harder to picture modern technology becoming the monster that engulfs all of human life in the brave new world. Huxley is even more of a pessimist, if possible, than is Orwell.

Both books have one other feature in common: the bewildered anachronism who is the central figure. Winston Smith is the child of his times, but in the back of his mind there is a memory of a better time, and it is this yearning for the early 20th century that leads Smith to the final betrayal in Room 101.

Similarly, John, the Savage of Brave New World, is a 20th-century man who has landed in A.F. 623 without benefit of time-travel. Having been born on a Reservation, he knows nothing of the chrome-plated Fordian civilization, but clings to the only morality he knows, that which he has found in forbidden books. Each man comes to hate and fear the civilization he finds himself in, and in the end both come to ignominious ends: Smith, broken in Room 101, admits that two and two make five whenever the State considers it so; John finds his only retreat from the brave new world in suicide.

The motives for Orwell's fear of the developing trends lie on the surface. Orwell was a firm believer in the rights of the individual, and saw the developing pattern as something inimical to his way of life. 1984, which points out the dangerous trend developing, is his natural protest.

Huxley, on the other hand, is the son of one famed popularizer of science, and the brother of another, and yet he appears to regard science (and, more specifically, technology) in an almost medieval light. But does he? A superficial glance might show him as totally anti-science, but this is scarcely the case, any more than is Orwell totally anarchistic.

No one, not even Huxley, will deny that Science is a Good Thing. Huxley must not be interpreted as a voice crying in the wilderness, demanding that we burn the scientists, smash the radio and television sets (on reflection, this is not so bad an idea) and do away with steam heating. Huxley realizes that the conveniences developed by science are of immeasurable aid, just as Orwell knows that the political state can be of service to Man. But the burden of the arguments both of Orwell and Huxley is that Man must be the master, never the servant of the State or of Technology. Once man becomes the servant, all is lost.

Thus the basic motives of Huxley and Orwell are the same. Orwell fears encroachment on the rights of the individual by political power. This is obvious. Huxley, although it is not quite so obvious, fears exactly the same thing, and also fears encroachment by technology upon the freedom of mankind. He hints--but never explains--how the world of A.F. 623 came into existence: some two hundred years from now, it will be legislated into existence. Somehow, science and government will join to control man.

This, according to Huxley, is the great menace, the element of control. In the brave new world, an opiate called "soma" is the chief remedy for any troubling thoughts. But the greater menace, Huxley says, is not the fact that the populace takes soma, but that the populace is con-

trolled. It does not take soma; it is given soma. The operative words are in the passive.

All manner of arguments have been fought about the purpose of science-fiction. Some editors claim that science-fiction is an entertainment medium alone. But these two works somehow rise above the science-fiction field, because besides entertainment (and both are entertaining stories) the books provide angry protests against present-day civilization.

Both Orwell and Huxley prefer "unhappiness" --in the sense of physical discomfort, starvation, cold--to controlled "happiness." Neither wants any limit whatsoever set upon the free development of mankind. It is easy to misunderstand Huxley as a reactionary or worse, demanding the abolition of gadgetry and of all science. He is not. Brave New World, like 1984, is an eloquent tract for the freedom of Man.

--Bob Silverberg

BACK ISSUES

Back issues of Sship are going quickly, and the stock is almost depleted. We still have these on hand. All prices include postage.

#22 -- July 1953. Lithoed Grennell cover; material by Grennell, Elsberry, Ellison, Shapiro, Dard, others. 10¢.

#17 -- Apr 1952. 40-page Third Annish, covers by Ward and Keasler, material by Moskowitz, Boggs, Willis, Elsberry, Dard, Chappell, Chabot, others. A scarce item. 15¢.

#16 -- Feb 1952. Lorraine, Paley, others. One copy, 2pp. missing --5¢.

((Issues 1-15, 18-21 are out of print.))

IRUSABEN (my FAPAzine) -- #11 and #12, 10¢ each, both for 15¢.
Z PRIME (my SAPSzine) -- #1, 5¢.
BOB SILVERBERG, 760 Montgomery St., Brooklyn 13 NY

Party Of The Second Part—
HARLAN ELLISON

Now Bert Hirschhorn is a fellow who publishes a magazine I enjoy reading. Bert has wit, perspicacity, and a flair for editing a fanzine that is definitely a fanzine.

Harlan Ellison is a fellow I like too. I like his magazine and most of the time I like the way he edits. His magazine, however, is not of the same variety which Bert chooses to label a fanzine. SFB believes in a policy of "something for everyone." That is, when you turn to a copy of SFB, be you sf fan or pro, you will find some article, fiction, poetry, or review which will be to your liking.

When Mr. Hirschhorn ("for Bertus is an honorable man...") sais SFB is a fine-type mag but he can't read it after two or three issues because of the raucous bellowings of its editor, he is indicating that he cannot enjoy a magazine which does not share his personal viewpoints. Now Bert is a great fellow and often have I read his periodical TYRANN with a mixture of pleasure and deep concentration. When Bert runs an article he personally likes, however, he just presents it. He has an editorial nature that is, ostensibly, cold and methodical. TYRANN features its material all on one rather high level. Bert has reason to be proud of his magazine, for it is an outstanding amateur magazine.

Now let's look at SCIENCE FANTASY BULLETIN.

Harlan Ellison is a naturally exuberant person. He has a most highly-developed sense of wonder which allows him to stand in open-mouthed astonishment at the sight of the Niagara Falls, or laugh like a Watusi with the wiggles over a copy of MAD. This same sense of wonder is what makes him leap to the ceiling when in comes a thick envelope containing a story by Bill Venable, for instance, which Ellison feels is a gem.

So our noble editor goes ahead and demonstrates this faculty for astonishment by ballyhooing the Venable ms. in every possible way. And when the readers later agree, by an undeniable point score that rates Venable's story above most of the stuff Astounding publishes, why then Ellison is so happy he burbles some more.

Now Bert ("and Bertus is an honorable man...") seldom brags about the material in TYRANN. Whether this is because he doesn't think the stuff is good enough to brag about (though that couldn't be it!) or because Bert is naturally more reserved, is a topic open for discussion. However: how many stories have you published, Bert, that drew letters from the editor of Collier's saying that with minor touching-up that could have appeared in his periodical; or how many new faces have you fostered in your own magazine? SFB has "discovered" over thirty new talents in the lone year it has been published. We haven't sat back and swallowed up the material of the present BNFs, but have gone and purposely struck out in new directions to widen the scope of the amateur science fiction field with new viewpoints and new talents. This, we feel, is a great deal more important than sitting around and saying, "I publish a good magazine. It is an end unto itself."

That is a fallacious concept, brother, for the purpose of an amateur magazine, while obviously to give pleasure to its editor, is to make a mark on the sf ranks and improve things to some small extent. Magazines like QUANDRY and OPUS, while 100% enjoyable and two of my favorite fan-

zines, provided, when they were present, mirth and merriment, which is certainly justification in abundance for their publication. It cannot be disregarded, however, that they contributed nothing original!

Let's face it. Too long have most faneds muttered words to the effect that, "I'm in it for fun... I won't lose any sleep over whether fandom gets advanced or not." Now, that is a noble attitude indeed, if you happen to be on the isle of Pago-Pago with your mimeo and three subscribers in the person of two illiterate natives and a mountain lion, but for a halfway intelligent fan to think so is sheer idiocy. To function efficiently in an ever-changing fandom, you must needs contribute something to the overall perpetuation and furtherance of the genre, in either an amateur or professional sense.

This is a defense of SFB. I feel it necessary because SFB is, as Bert Hirschhorn insinuates, "a new kind of fanzine..." The reason SFB is a differently-edited periodical, insofar as the fan realm is concerned, is that it serves a purpose before aided and abetted by a few mags only, among them Bob's SPACESHIP, Don Day's FANSCIENT, and possibly a few of the older vintage fanmags such as STARDUST or BIZARRE. SFB purports to be an innovating magazine. We try to do things no other fanmag would attempt.

The mere fact that I happen to like the material I publish, and exhibit this fascination in "horn-tooting," is not necessarily proof positive that I'm an egotistical ass. It seems to me that the material in a magazine speaks for itself, and no matter what the editorial policy of the editor may be, or the manner of presentation, or the quality of duplication, it is ultimately the material which counts. If Bert deems it necessary to condemn my magazine simply because I find it pleasing to bleat about the stuff I've sweated, intimidated, cajoled, bled, threatened, and paid out good money to get, why should my friend Bert begrudge me the pleasure of talking about my material? All he need do, when he runs up against my bleating, is turn the page and read on.

SFB is different. Because of that we've been attacked a number of times. We've been told time and again by different readers to do this or that, to insert and change that, to alleviate or clean up this, but we prefer to hew to a fairly straight line. Such things as an overall overhauling of format, wider use of illustrations, color mimeography, multi-faceted columns by People In The Know, have served to put at an end, to a great extent, the bellyaching of a vociferous minority who demanded changes which would ultimately have brought a loss of identity.

SFB is not only designed for the died-in-the-birdbath fan. It is a magazine which the lay reader can pick up and enjoy without stumbling over esoteric phraseology and private jokes. And SFB will continue to be a publication that will vacillate as its editor vacillates. If I suddenly decide that Robert Sheckley is the greatest writer alive, I will so state, and state it through Appreciation Issues, Citations, or any one of a multitude of gimmicks. And, if comes the day when I am more "mature" according to the viewpoint of Bert, so then will SFB mature.

SFB specializes in the best, I think. The only yardstick I can fall back on is my own, and since, to put it bluntly, I'm editing the damfool thing, then my editing abilities and considerations must ultimately be the final judge.

I blow my horn about SFB, then, simply because I like SFB, and if you don't like it...buy some other magazine. And by all means, buy TYRANN. Bert never blows his horn.

--Harlan Ellison

FILE 13

REDD BOGGS

RECALLED TO LIFE

This month File 13 is five years old; the first installment appeared in Art Rapp's Spacewarp for October 1948. This anniversary means little however, for this column has been dormant since mid-1951, when the fourteenth installment appeared in Quandry. Lee Hoffman snared File 13 upon the demise of the subscription Spacewarp by getting in her bid a few days ahead of Bob Silverberg's. The fact that Lee is prettier than Bob had nothing to do with it, for Lee was supposed to be a boy in those days. Unfortunately it became apparent that Quandry, though one of my favorite fanzines, was not the most congenial place for File 13, and I obtained Lee's kind permission to move on to SPACESHIP.

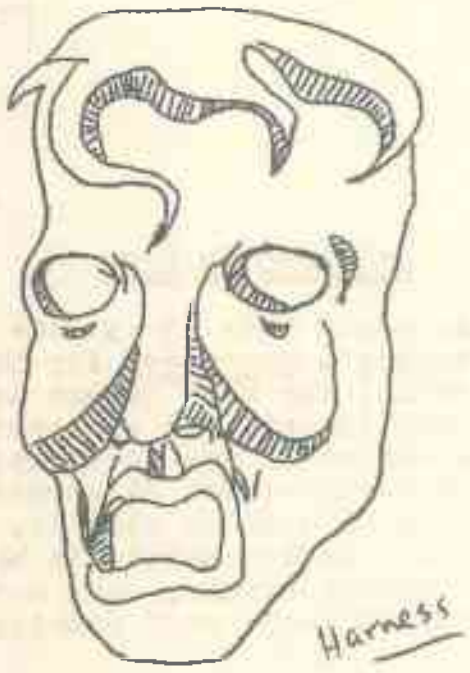
Do you feel a rumor coming on? If you do, I want to emphasize that there has been no misunderstanding between Lee and myself. She is still one of my favorite people and remains a valued correspondent of mine. If she hadn't allowed Bob Silverberg to acquire the rights to File 13, I would still be writing or not-writing this column for Q. After all, as we all know now, Lee is a pretty girl.

COLUMNS RIGHT AND COLUMNS WRONG

Columns, which became a popular feature in newspapers during the 1920s, naturally were a part of fanzines from the very beginning. Such fans of the '30s as Don Wollheim, Doc Lowndes, Forrest J Ackerman, Jack Speer, and Sam Moskowitz were at one time or another columnists in fanzines of the day. Most of the early columns contained more news than comment, but the "opinion pillar" was established by Peter Duncan, Clyde Beck, and others. The straight "news" column became almost extinct with the rise of the fan newspaper, and by the early 1940s few fanzines relied on columns as a distinctive feature. The appropriately - titled "Beacon Light" in SPACEWAYS was one of the few outstanding columns of the day, and it kept alive the opinion pillar tradition in an era when, apparently, hardly anybody else had any positive beliefs or at least the audacity to state them boldly in print.

Columns, especially comment columns, didn't become a major preoccupation of fandom till around 1948, when Art Rapp hit upon regular columns as a means of obtaining a steady supply of material for his monthly SPACEWARP. The previous year, Jack Clements' "Jackpot" had aroused much comment and controversy in its two appearances in 'WARP, and now Rapp went into the column business wholesale. Besides File 13, he acquired columns by Rick Sneary, F. Towner Laney, Wilkie Conner, and T.E. Watkins. Several of these columns are still going strong in other fanzines. When QUANDRY replaced SPACEWARP as the "top monthly," it continued the trend in columns, and the trend has now become a fad. Nearly every fanzine today relies upon regular columnists to supply a major portion of its material, and we have seen the advent of outstanding columns by such people

as Walt Willis, Richard Elsberry, Ken Beale, Richard Bergeron, Dean A. Grennell, David English, and even one Bob Silverberg.



In fact, such is the demand for columns these days that every fan is a columnist. At least, nearly every fan is. Only the other day I heard a report that one fan among the Philcon attendees did not write a fan column, and I eagerly sought for details. I wrote the fan in question and asked him if the rumor was true. "Yes, I'm no columnist," he wrote back taciturnly. Further investigation showed that he was a neofan, 11 years old, and the only sf magazine he had ever read was a borrowed issue of Science Stories. Furthermore, he attended the convention strictly as a visitor, having been dragged along by the friend who had lent him the magazine.

But why don't you write a fanzine column?" I asked him bewilderedly. A bit of puzzlement mingled with the shame manifest in the trembling strokes of his childish scrawl. "I guess," he admitted reluntantly, "I just don't have anything to say."

That boy will never become Number One Fan, but I respect him. What other fan ever admitted that he had nothing to say? The fact is evident from a glance through any fanzine you glance through that most fans have nothing to say--but all fans write columns. The only thing in the average fan's little noggin is a smudgy desire for egoboo; he has no more fiery beliefs or hot opinions than had the fan of 1940, but these days that doesn't stop him from taking up many pages in current fanzines saying nothing over and over, and then improvising on the theme.

Nearly every fanzine today falls with a hollow thud into my mailbox; the sound results from an empty-headed fan manufacturing egoboo out of nothing for the sake of a fanzine column. Even File 13 (and that "even" was sheer egotism) sounds hollow, like a shout down an empty rain-barrel. And there's no remedy for this condition unless you, the readers, withhold egoboo from columnists with nothing to say until they begin to find something to say--or get out.

Having laid myself wide open for a quick trip to the bottom of the ratings in "Soapbox," I'd better find something to say--or find File 13 the first victim of the winnowing process so much needed among fanzine columns today.

CATCHING UP ON CLIPPINGS

During the past two years I've collected dozens of newspaper clippings for possible use in this regular and frequent column. For some reason many of them seem a little out of date by now, but some of them are still interesting. For instance, here is a news-story about a lion-tamer in Germany who was jumped by one of his charges. The man dodged as-

ide, "drove both fists into the animal's face," and knocked the beast "into stunned submission." Fantastic? Not at all. You see, the lion-tamer's name was Tarzan Baumann.

According to this clipping from a Los Angeles paper, Henry Kuttner graduated cum laude from U.S.C. in June, with a bachelor's degree in English. His wife, C.L. Moore, will graduate in February, and Henry is still on campus this year, working for his M. A. Did Fantasy-Times print this? # And how did you spend your vacation? I'll bet you didn't have as glorious a time as the fellow who wrote to the "Question and Answer" department in the Minneapolis Sunday Tribune travel section to inquire, "Where can I rent an inner tube to float down the Apple River, Wisconsin, in?" # At this point I toss away a dozen clippings about L. Ron Hubbard's domestic troubles... You can see how old they are.

What was that about the labors of Hercules? The Christian Reformed Church recently sent a petition to President Eisenhower asking him to "curb and prevent" profanity in the armed forces.

A BACKWARD GLANCE

Inside the writing box of Herman Melville, his executors found a small clipping containing what was probably his own motto: "Keep true to the dreams of thy youth." I'd like to focus down the sentiment, at the risk of cheapening it, and suggest it as a motto for fan editors: "Keep true to the dreams and enthusiasms of your first fanzine issues."

I've been looking through the files of several favorite fanzines, and perhaps it's a subjective reaction, but I think the later issues of many a fanzine are seldom as good as the first ones. The first issue is of course usually awful--first issues are always haphazard affairs--but the next few issues have a vitality and sincerity that disappears in the routine of putting out a fanzine regularly. Later issues have better material and often a neater format, but one is left with the feeling that the editor has lost the essential of every first-class endeavor : enthusiasm. Sometimes he falls into apathy or sinks into cynicism, and in any case the effect is usually one of rarification, as the editor's interests become narrower through frustration.

It might be enlightening for the fan editor to sit down some evening and reread the complete file of his own fanzine. The naivete and crudity of

the early issues might embarrass him, but I think he'd be impressed by the enthusiasm and originality he displayed back there. He may even be inspired by his own example to go on to better things in the future. Perhaps he may be able to borrow some ideas from those early issues--ideas about policy and format and content that got forgotten during the intervening numbers. We are the product of the past, and especially of our own pasts. In editing fanzines, as in other things, we shouldn't forget the past if we want to grow and enlarge.

NOTES THAT MISSED MY WASTEBASKET

Sturgeonphiles should make a note to get hold of a forthcoming Zane Grey Western. Sturgeon has a yarn called "Cactus Dance" in an upcoming issue. It's funny, it's wonderful, and it's a fine fantasy too. I had an advance peek at it, and if I were Gold, I'd have bought it for Beyond. # In the last File 13, I asked what had happened to R.L. Farnsworth and the United States Rocket Society. Since then the USRS has become blatant, if not active, advertising in ASF and other places. Don't blame me. # I wonder if beards are sacred to Roscoe? # Here's an old note: it was National Wheaties Week for three weeks running on "Dimension X." What ever happened to "Dimension X"? What ever happened to Wheaties?

Prophet without honor: "...Television, my own guess is, may never reach the stage of being in everybody's home, as radio broadcast receivers are now." John Campbell said that, in an editorial, June 1945. # Did you notice Sibley's doublespread illustration, pp. 44-45, for Clifford D. Simak's "Kindergarten" in Galaxy, July 1953? Though there is no hint of it in the text, the illustrator shows the soldier whom Peter and Mary meet on the road to be a negro. I asked Simak if this were his intention, or whether it was a detail added by the editor and/or artist. He said it wasn't his idea, but that he didn't object at all. I thought it was a nice touch myself. # Wild notion: since most science fiction stories are set in the future, why shouldn't they be told in future tense?

I just heard a radio announcer say, "And now for the second and last half of the program." # Who is Erik van Lhin? He seems to be a well-known science fiction personality who is trying to build up another identity by using a radically different style and approach. So far as I know, he hasn't appeared anywhere but in the magazines formerly edited by Lester del Rey, but he may not be del Rey. ((He is--ed.)) # The Little Men of San Francisco are gone, but a new fan group is developing through a fantastic migration: most of Washington D.C. fandom is relocating in the Bay Area. Lee Jacobs and Karen Kruse are already there, and others are expected in October. Poul Anderson, formerly of Minneapolis, is also settling in Frisco. If this trend develops, by convention time in 1954, most of fandom will already be on the scene as permanent residents. See you there!

--Redd Boggs

EDITOR'S NOTE: What Redd didn't say in the foregoing column is that FILE 13 was consistently regarded by SPACEWARP readers as fandom's top column, and in its lone incarnation in Q it drew a similar reaction. Prodding the reluctant Mr. Boggs to write columns is a difficult job, as Lee Hoffman can testify, but I hope to have File 13 on hand fairly often in Sship. Reader comments will be welcomed both by Redd and myself.

REPORT FROM AUSTRALIA

ROGER DARD

The Second Australian SF Convention, held in Sydney last May, was not as big a success as official reports would suggest. Impartial fans expressed great dissatisfaction at the bungling and unimaginative handling of this important affair. Official figures showed that 84 people attended the con, and 42 the cocktail party. Despite official enthusiasm, fandom as a whole was not impressed, and from Melbourne's rising fan group, now constituting a serious threat to Sydney's present leadership, comes this ominous ultimatum: "Next year will be Sydney's chance to show it can run a Convention efficiently. If not, it should be its last."

The con began on Friday May 1 with a cocktail party. After an informal session Saturday morning, the main session commenced with a speech by Vol Molesworth on S-F as a Development of Modern Literature, which has been reproduced in mimeo form for distribution. Molesworth traced the history of sf from prehistoric supernatural tales to the present era. R.D. Nicholson, the editor of FORERUNNER (and only Australian writer to break into Galaxy) spoke on S-F in Specialized Publications, giving an account of the history of prozines and s-f book publishers. This was followed by a discussion of "The Science in Science Fiction" by Phineas Glick and Rex Mayer, two fans with scientific training. Finally Graham Stone, president of the Australian SFS, spoke on "Fan Organization."

A film program was held Saturday night, with a showing of the Czech fantasy "Krakatit." Sunday morning the auction was conducted, with the usual fancy prices: the 25¢ pb The Puppet Masters brought 14/6 ($1.50) and pulp Amazings fetched over a dollar apiece!

The formal business session was held on Sunday afternoon, and the usually dull proceedings were enlivened by a strong attack on Graham Stone by well-known fan Bill Veney. Veney was supported by other fans in his charges that Stone had refused to cooperate with fans in other states, and that he had abused his privileges as president of the ASFS. Stone, supported by two partisans, denied these charges. Finally, in order to prevent the meeting from degenerating into an uproar, Veney decided to withdraw his original motion. In addition, he had seen the impossibility of getting a satisfactory reply; Stone's only answer to the complaints had been the arrogant reply, "I am a law unto myself!" Fans in other states, however, supported Veney's attack, hoping that the airing of these grievances might persuade the ruling clique of Sydney fandom that fans in other states could not be treated as poor relations.

Most important news was the sudden appearance of two prozines, POPULAR SCIENCE FICTION and FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION (no relation to the U.S. Future.) Both are digest size, sell for about 20¢ U.S., contain one novelette and three or so shorts per issue. First issues will contain re-

prints from U.S. mags, but the editors hope to use Australian material of comparable quality soon. #1 FUTURE contains stories by Kuttner, Christopher, Lesser, and Merwin, and #1 of POPULAR uses yarns by Jakes, Leinster, and Blair, all reprinted from prozines of the last five or six years. With #2 of POPULAR, a fan department run by Vol Molesworth will be inaugurated. Both magazines are bi-monthlies.

The other Australian prozine, AMERICAN SCIENCE FICTION, continues to appear monthly and unnumbered. Current issue features "Adventure in Time" (Philip St. John) and "Survival of the Fittest" (Gene Henderson), and the next will include "Fires of Forever" (Chad Oliver).

The clash between Bill Veney and Graham Stone at the convention brought into the open a feud which has been simmering for quite some time. Veney and many fans living in states outside New South Wales (of which Sydney is the capital) have disliked the manner in which the ruling clique in Sydney has been running the show. It is charged by many outlanders that the leaders of Sydney fandom, Stone, Molesworth, and their cohorts, are inclined to run fandom without asking for the advice or cooperation of other fans. These fans have rendered service to Australian fandom, and they are needed. But Australian fandom does not want a dictatorship.

Your reporter has been dragged into the feud as well. For some time I have been engaged in fighting the oppressive Australian customs regulations. For this I have actually received condemnation from the Sydney group, with the sole exception of veteran fan Dave Cohen. Stone and his supporters have actually denounced me as a "wrecker" of and a "menace" to Australian fandom for my fight against the Australian customs.

Finally the payoff came when Graham Stone informed me that he would not accept a renewal of my membership in the ASFS, and demanded that I "Get out of fandom." Reaction to this was varied: first, Bill Veney set up fan groups in each state, composed of fans opposed to the ASFS. Second, the Perth branch of this new Australian group passed a resolution condemning ASFS and declaring that no member of the Perth SF Group could also be a member of ASFS.

Later, following an appeal from Lyell Crane, secretary of the ASFS, to your columnist, for "fan peace," this regulation was lifted. Crane's stated intention is to bring peace to Australian fandom within twelve months, and an end to all feuds. While many people, including myself, are frankly skeptical that he can accomplish this, I wish him the best of luck and hope he can succeed in this task. Australian fandom is too small a body to be rent by such internal feuds, as it is at the moment.

--Roger Dard

WANTED: MATERIAL

Spaceship is always on the lookout for new material and new writers. We specialize in critical articles--examples, the Stark and Silverberg items in this issue--and if you have an opinion to voice, here's the mag. Book reviews (comprehensive ones), movie reviews, etc., are welcome.

BROTHER

FRED CHAPPELL

He always told about it on Sunday at dinner time. He told it all slowly and Mother and Dad and Richard hung on every word like starving people grabbing on crumbs of bread or something.

He said: it is wonderful -- you should see it -- I can't describe it.

But he went right on describing it. He told stories about it and told how it looked and everything. It was all bad, of course, but that wasn't as bad as some things he would say.

He said: you know how metal smells -- that is the way the rocketship smells -- just like steel -- and it's shiny -- it's very shiny -- we have to keep it clean -- you know: shipshape.

And then he'd look at Dad and Dad would nod and smile wisely. He'd say: yes, that's how it is.

Dad thought he knew all about it because he was in the navy when he was a young man, but it wasn't anything like the navy--that's what Neil said.

But when he got to talking about how great it was just to be on the rocket: you know--just to feel like you have a part in the ship, and how it all looked and smelled--well, that part was the worst of all. It almost made me throw up right there on the table. It was the way he talked about it, like he was going to heaven every time he rode the rocket.

I knew all the time that he was telling it just for Mother and Dad and Richard. It was all a big lie and he didn't believe a word of it. He just told it for their sake--I'm only 13 but I could see it plainly.

I'll have to admit that Neil put on a good act--he never did let his guard down for a minute. Even when I got him alone he still put it on.

I'd say: you don't really believe all that stuff do you? Now do you? Really I mean.

All he would do would be to look kind of surprised and shrug his shoulders like he didn't know what I was talking about.

When he was home Mother and Dad would baby him and let him do whatever he wanted to and sneak him money and everything. He really had them going. When he was home and I wanted to talk Mother would always say: shh --be quiet, Jerry -- let Neil talk -- after all he won't be here long -- you can talk any time you want to.

I was always glad when Neil went off.

Richard is only nine and he believes everything Neil says. It makes me sick to watch Richard listen to Neil--he sits very hard and paying attention like he was afraid to miss a single word Neil says.

One night I was talking to Richard while I put on my pajamas. I said: you don't really believe all that mud that Neil says do you? I mean really. You don't really think he likes going on a rocket do you?

He said: yes I do.

And so I told him the truth: that is only an act Neil puts on. He really hates to go, I know. Don't you believe me?

He said: no I don't. If that's right why does he go at all? He doesn't have to. Why does he go at all?

I didn't answer him. How should I know why he went? I guess he was just stupid like those people that believe in fairies or God or something like that.

--Fred Chappell

combined with SOAPBOX

For some reason #23 kicked up a storm of comment. Hardly anything in the issue failed to raise an argument of some sort. When the dust had settled, the final ratings looked like this:

1. The Great Temptation (Richard Elsberry)
2. Signed, Sealed, and Delivered (Dean A. Grennell)
3. The Way I See It (Bert Hirschhorn)
4. Report from Australia (Roger Dard)
5. Fanzines in Profile (Harlan Ellison)
6. The Art of Rosaleen Norton (Hal Shapiro)
7. Operation Yorick (Dean A. Grennell)

Both Elsberry and Grennell drew the same number of first-place votes, but no-one picked Rich's article for lower than second, while DAG came up with two sixth-place votes which knocked his average down. Many people commented that Shapiro's article had no place in a fanmag.

But I disagree. The material I want to print is critical: reviews, essays, and the like. Shapiro was discussing a tangential field, true, but I considered the article of importance to the fantasy fan. By the same token, I'm willing to run articles on fantasy movies (see page 3), fantasy comics, fantasy authors, fantasy editors, or fantasy fans, provided the article measures up to the standards I want to set.

I'd like to run a book-review section -- but I don't want ordinary reviews. Anyone can summarize a plot; I want more than that. See the dual-review of 1984 and Brave New World for an idea of requirements. The same for movie reviews.

SPACESHIP is not much of a market for fiction, but I do accept three or four short "idea" stories a year, stories of professional quality but not of professional theme. I don't want either fan fiction (which I define as fiction about fans) or fan science fiction (defined as poorly done stories on professional themes.) SPACESHIP uses an infinitesimal amount of poetry, but it has to be exceptional work.

In short, Sship wants material. I don't pay, but I'm fussy.

* * *

The two editorials last issue kicked up much thunder. My words on the size of the World Cons brought letters from the two people mentioned, Norman Browne and Lyle Kessler.

Norman Browne, 13906-101 A Ave., Edmonton, Alta, Canada: Oh, boy, OH, BOY! I'm sure happy to see that someone else in fandom isn't afraid to raise his voice and show he has some individualism and opinions. I certainly hold utter and complete dislike for BIG conventions. If you are

all by yourself, your chances (to meet friends) are next to hopeless... One partial solution is to get in with a group... The trend seems to be away from BIG conventions on a national scale and towards more smaller, local conventions of pure fannism. ##

Lyle Kessler, 2450-76 Avenue, Phila 38, Penn: Sure the Philcon is big, but is that the fault of the Philcon Committee Members? Are we supposed to run out and stop all publicity after the membership runs over two hundred? Should we send back the membership dollars? The Con gets bigger every year, and there's no stopping it... But we can still... make the quality of the con match the quantity. ##

Silverberg, again. At the Philcon I shared a suite with nine other fans, as recommended by Browne. The con was big, all right, with hundreds of non-fan readers on hand, but the small core of active fans found an answer to this--small parties which centered around Suite 1417 and its inhabitants.

In other words, I spoke without thinking last issue. There's no way of preventing the cons from growing huge, now that s-f circulation is so inflated. Instead of grumbling about a situation which can't be prevented, the only solution is a Midwestcon, or a HEcon, or a 1417.

The other editorial comment which brought replies was that asking if there was too much Silverberg in SPACESHIP. Bert Hirschhorn, in his column, had suggested this as the major fault of the mag. These are the replies received:

Norman Browne: I frankly don't think you are (putting too much of your personality into the mag) --and I further think that you are at the opposite extreme of not putting any or enough. # One extreme is Ellison, who forces his personality into every page of his fanzine. A happy medium seems to be found in VEGA, for another example. Joel seems to have developed a rapport between himself and his readers without all the fanfare that besets SFB. I dunno. I've always felt that you represented the Great Enigma and seemed so cold and aloof in your fanzine. Thus my surprise at Hirschhorn's reference to "putting too much of yourself into your fanzine." ##

Robert Coulson, Silver Lake, Ind: As for SPACESHIP reflecting the editor's personality, name one magazine that doesn't. I buy Sship because I like your personality, and refrain from buying SF Bulletin because I don't like Ellison's. I follow the same routine with the pros. # And what's the matter with a big convention, anyway? Can't you get just as drunk in a big hotel as you can in a small one? There's no law against ignoring the official program, if it sounds too formal for you. Anyway, I always enjoy your comments, even if I don't always agree with them." ##

Claude Hall, Fort Bliss, Texas: Bert Hirschhorn should go soak his head in a bottle of mimeo ink! I'm wondering if he knows the definition of "fanzine." I know for @3#%&=$?¢! sure that I don't buy Sship because of the articles and stories it contains--although some of them are pretty good at times. I buy Sship because Bob Silverberg's personality is in it! And I damned sure wouldn't if it wasn't. Does Mr. Hirschhorn know what made Slant, Quandry, and Opus the fanzines they were? Without the faned's personality a fanzine is hardly more than a hulk of

paper with ink on it. ##

Paul Mittelbuscher, Sweet Springs, Mo: Hirschhorn, who usually knows whereof he speaks, slipped up when he belabored you and SFB...too much Silverberg in Ss? BAH! ##

Charles Harris, 85 Fairview Ave., Great Neck, NY: As for Hirschhorn 's objections to Silverberg, I'm on your side. In fact, I'm more on your side than you are. I think you should print more of your own articles, expand your editorial, and even insert comments in (or comment on) others' material. "1952 in Review" was, in my opinion and apparently in that of many others, the best article ever printed in Sship. ##

((I've never been bashful about printing my own stuff; there's one in this issue, and a "1953 in Review" coming up soon. But one thing I will not do, and which I oppose in other fanzines, is insert parenthetical comments of my own in someone else's material. It's unfair for the editor of a magazine to argue back to his writers; besides, such a practice breaks up sentence continuity, damages structure, and in general hurts the material. Nope. Whenever material requires editorial comment, I insert a small F&SF-type blurb, space permitting.))

The letters above seem a rather emphatic mandate to continue Sship on much the same keel as before. I don't see any practical way of measuring the amount of Silverberg per issue, nor do I think it's overly important to the success of the magazine. Enough!

Some people actually commented on the stories and articles in #22 as well. Charles Harris noted that the "cover is terrific,in idea, layout, drawing quality, and reproduction. Take a bow, Dean. And as if this weren't enough, Grennell's story is (at least in my opinion) the best piece of fiction ever printed in Sship. # To waste no less than four of your beautifully-mimeo'd pages on descriptions of fantasy artwork is completely unjustified. Miss Norton's paintings are not in the slightest way connected with science fiction." Joel Nydahl echoed this comment: "I started to read Shapiro's article on Rosaleen Norton, but bogged down in the middle. No interest. What is this doing in a stf fanzine?"

Burton Beerman wanted to know if all the pennames quoted in Elsberry's article were actually pennames, which they are. Claude Hall added, "Elsberry's article was sure an eye-opener. His views about Palmer, I agree with, but when he starts cutting up old Merwin, he's chopping down the wrong tree. What if Merwin did sell to himself! It just proves he wanted to keep a good story in his own mags. Stories like "House of Many Worlds" haven't exactly degraded old Merwin's rep, you know. # I didn't suspect that a Kintuck jackass could ever be hidden in a short story -- but Grennell sure did the job. I certainly got a kick out of his story, "Signed, Sealed, and Delivered." ##

Old man Elsberry came in for a good bit of praise, too. Jerry Hopkins, in giving Rich a first-place vote, said, "Love to see Elsberry rip into some promag or other subject as he did with this idea," and other comments ran along these lines. # One of Grennell's few boots came from Paul Mittelbuscher, who characterized him as "a born columnist, but not so hot as author or artist." Maybe I'm sticking myself into the mag again, but allow me to disagree with Paul most emphatically on all

counts. I can think of five fans who make better columnists than the Wisconsin Wit, but damned few fan writers who turn out better fiction.

George Viksnins pointed out the lack of interior artwork, which is not exactly unknown to me; just that I can't see much use for artwork in a magazine of this sort, except for occasional fillers to break up the solid pages of print. No really good artwork can be reproduced well on stencil, methinks, and until some better method is available to me Sship will use little artwork. I'm too lazy to spend long hours stencilling artwork, and since the disappearance of Richard Ward I've been unable to find someone who'll do it for me consistently.

Terry Carr, 134 Cambridge St., San Francisco 12, Cal., writes of a Fanzine Material Pool from which faneditors can snare material without much difficulty. New faneds would do well to investigate this scheme.

Enough letters. Let's talk about sf. It seems to me that, despite the vast quantity of high-grade stories being brought us by ASF, GSF, F&SF, SS, TWS, the ex-del Rey mags, IF, and many other mags, the best s-f of all these days is coming from Ballantine Books, the exciting new firm which began publishing last fall.

The Ballantine plan is to co-publish simultaneous hardcover and paperback editions of original books, the hardcovers selling at $1.50 or $2 and the paperbacks at 35¢ or 50¢. The first Ballantine sf book was the 16th in the series, but from then on they've issued one science fiction title a month, and plan to continue at that pace.

The first was that outstanding collection of new short stories, Star SF Stories. Editor Fred Pohl is paying 9¢ a word for stories for this annual collection, which reads like a super-issue of anyone's favorite magazine. They followed this with The Space Merchants, a noteworthy story but hardly unfamiliar to anyone whose file of Galaxy goes as far back as 1952.

The third Ballantine sf book was the only clinker in the lot, Fletcher Pratt's competent but routine The Undying Fire, which appeared only last May as "The Conditioned Captain" in Startling. Next came Gerald Kersh's The Secret Masters, which is not very good science fiction but which is a whale of an adventure yarn, This was followed by Henry Kuttner's tremendous collection, Ahead of Time, ten short stories including one outstanding original, "Year Day." The rest range in publication dates from 1942 to late 1953, but all bear the craftsmanship which is a Kuttner-Moore hallmark.

The fifth Ballantine sf novel is causing the big news: Arthur Clarke's Childhood's End, an original novel (though expanded from a New Worlds novelet) which is one of the great books of the field, certainly the top story of the year. Just issued was Bring the Jubilee by Ward Moore, 1952's best magazine story, and the October Ballantine selection is to be Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451, originally advertised as Frost and Fire by another publisher. Listed as coming up is exciting material by Sturgeon, Wyndham, Kuttner, and others. Ballantine is obviously the firm to watch in the sf world.

It's also been publishing some fine non-science-fiction, or is that a dirty word? I enjoyed City of Anger by William Manchester especially. But that's it for now; next Sship is due at the first of the year.

--Bob Silverberg

SPACESHIP

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