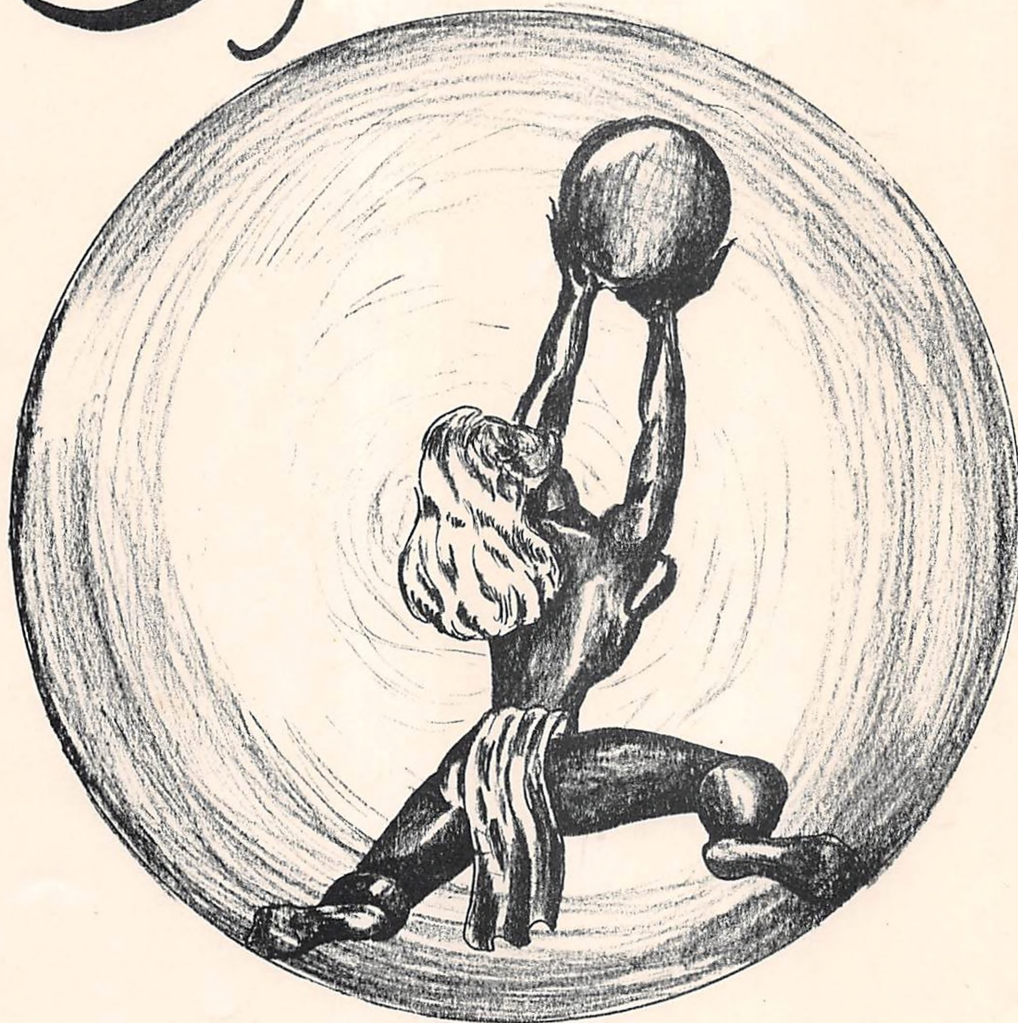


Sphere



NOVEMBER-DECEMBER
1957

November-December
1957

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New Short Story:

[illegible]

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-Leslyn MacDonald Mocabee.

The results of the year-long Art Poll were to have been announced this issue. We will have to postpone it now until next issue for two very good reasons: Not enough time---not enough responses. Here inclosed with this issue is another Poll Questionair---for you newcomers as well as those of you who have not yet responded to the original one over a year ago. Fill them out and return them soon. Please. O.K.?

By
Cookie, MD

Brian Aldiss said that the fanzines would be full of con reports. He could be wrong. They might instead be full of forenafter reports like: RORY FAULKNER MAKES LIVERPOOL-----RORY FAULKNER MAKES BELFAST-----RORY FAULKNER MAKES E.F.R.*. But there's always Walt Willis who according to rumor was so determined to enjoy this convention that he wrote the whole thing up on Thursday night before it started. Leaving the con in WAW's capable hands, I offer herewith an "exclusive".....and it will be exclusive because the other Spherepholk concerned are Val Anjoorian who ordered me to write it (Now damit.. ...you sit down at that machine and write an article on our meeting with the Linards and get it off to Joe by this Saturday or I'M going to come back here and.....) and Forry Ackerman who, last I heard, was jockeying his flying desk out of some swamp with a jet-propeller. Hmm.....that doesn't read quite right, but anyway its some terribly exciting and busysounding Thing he's doing, so I'm sure he won't have time for a Linardicle.

"WHAAT?.....Not one bathtub in the whole Hotel?!" * Eric Frank Russell

Jean Linard of Vesoul, France brought us on himself by publishing a fanzine called MEUH, by writing letters, and by enclosing pictures of himself in some of them. Long before I saw MEUH I had heard comments about it. ("A hundred-page fanzine: he's nuts!"..... "....."I can't understand his editorials"....."That's because you're normal."...) In addition to the admiration, bewilderment, envy, etc., aroused by MEUH there were improbable rumors circulatting, along with Jean's improbable letters, that he had taught himself English in a little over a year by reading Science Fiction magazines. Then — lest anyone doubt that he was a fan, he sent out pictures of a Frank Dietz/sinatra-type face with nice bones and hollows and the most fannish eyes ever. In the first picture I saw, one eye looked East and the other West, coyly seeking each other around the back of his head. In another picture, Linard had one eye blank while two irises bundled cozily together in the other. Of course I knew it was all trick photography. But was it? After all, this man was a FAN, rumored to be a Real Fan, possibly a REAL FAN, and everybody knows a Real REAL FAN is capable of anything. So?

So.....when Forry told us he was conducting a fannish pilgrimage to the BIGGERCON(Germany) via the Linards at Vesoul, Val and I counted our time and money and decided that one-half hour sufficed for the Eiffel Tower, we could run through the Tuileries in ten minutes, The Louvre might be done in two hours, Place Pigalle could wait for our return, who needs a Paris hat? And if we cut out desserts.....: "We'd be delighted to join you, Forry."

"The Manager says there's a 'schvim-bath' down the street."

We left Paris early on the morning of September 12th. We were always leaving places in the early morning which was very hard on me because I hate to go to sleep at night and I hate even more getting up in the morning; but that's not what made it hard. The thing that made it hard is that Val hates getting up even more than I do and I not only had to get me out of bed, I had to to have the desk call me two hours before I would normally get up so I could rouse her"gently". (Please Cookie, call me gently..... I loathe being startled first thing in the morning.) This particular morning was a lulu: we'd been up most of the night before, talking to Ray Bradbury till the wee hours, after which we returned to our hotel to spend the remaining not-so-wee hours packing and talking and giggling and pounding each other's backs and chortling madly and wiping away tears and rolling on the beds and crowing hysterically because we had (honest-to-Bloch, I'm not making this up)

talked to really and truly Ray Bradbury. Salaam. Gasp. Sigh.

Hmmmm.....where was I?

Oh yes.....we also had to say goodbye to Lee Sirat ((who is actually a goodlooking gal, not guy, as the name might imply)) who was not coming with us and who also does not like waking up and would we please tiptoe out in the morning. Yes Lee (kiss, hug, have fun, see you in London), we will tiptoe and finally we got to sleep and immediately after, the desk called and I had to get dressed in between tiptoeing and calling Val gently and two hours later Val opened her eyes and I went down to pay our bill and check us out and see about breakfast and some tiredly time later in the train to Vesoul when she said, "How can you sleep with all of France rolling past you?" I hated absolutely hated my dearest friend.

"I really don't think you should ride a motorcycle in that sheathe dress."

We got to Vesoul shortly before lunchtime and just stood like sleepwalkers watching Forry grin at Jean Linard and Pierre Versins who came racing up from the other end of the platform. Pierre Versins of Lausanne, Switzerland and the Swiss Sci-fi Society who looked as though he was cataloging us, and Jean who was shaking Forry's hand but looking as though he didn't believe it. It was rather strange and timid-making. I think we were all wondering if we were going to spend the day in a welter of English-French, French-English translations when Forry's voice crawled into the strangeness: e-nun-ci-a-ting ev-e-ry syll-a-ble of in-tro-duc-tion and easing Jean and Pierre who told us later that they had trouble understanding some American visitors, but that Forry spoke "very clearly". We gathered up our luggage and started off for 24 rue Petit, stopping on the way for "some things for Anie". It was the Things for Anie that brought Val out of her un-Val-like silence; the sight of Pierre walking up with a number of long, unwrapped French loaves under his arm must have convinced her that we'd arrived.

The Linards live in an upstairs apartment which is unmistakably Linard. Jean has clippings, letters, Pogo strips, montages, pictures, fanzines, prozines and rubber stamps all over. It's remarkable how little of Anie is visible, but it only takes a few minutes with the Linards to realize that Anie likes it that way, wanting only what Jean wants, and Jean seems to want to live Science Fiction/Fandom 24 hours a day. Knowing Anie didn't speak English had me a bit worried. One should be able to relax and just be "girls together" with one's hostess, and this is not easy to do in silence. However, during lunch we were, without realizing or making a conscious thing of it, evolving a system. We spoke slow precise English to Anie, and she spoke slow precise French to us, and Jean or Pierre jumped in to unscramble technicalities. It worked fine, It would have even without The System, because Anie is one of those rare women with whom it is possible to be "girls together" in silence.

We talked, looked at photographs -- Jean's and some that Forry had brought with him -- talked, sipped coffee, talked, and in mid-afternoon collapsed for a few hours sleep. We'd been averaging about three hours a night since we left the United States and the coming night promised no better: we were leaving Vesoul on a 3:30 A.M. train. We slept until teatime and got up to talk some more: the convention we'd come from, the convention we were going to, etc. The rest of the day went much too quickly, perhaps because we were all more relaxed now. Val discovered Jean's hoard of rubber stamps and spent literally hours stamping things like "The Innavigable Mouth", "Genuine Poor Printing -- Guaranteed", "Your Samest", and "Yes, but--" on souvenir postcards of Paris which she later mailed to friends odd enough to appreciate these gentle sentiments. She was still stamping when Anie announced dinner. Filling a book in fact with one of a kind samples of each of Jean's stamps. She left off only after Jean assured her that he wouldn't put them away until she had stamped her fill. (I know how that reads Joe, but please leave it alone... ..I like it. ((So, I like it too. -Eds, of course)).....)

The only blight over the dinner was the fact that Jean and Forry insisted on toasting with Kool-aid. Actually they did it at lunch too, but lunch was our first meal together and I want to keep its memory unbesmirched. Ellis Mills (that incredibly foul fied) first brought Kool-aid to Vesoul. Worse yet! He introduced Jean to mixed Kool-aid! That is: One-part strawberry, two parts orange, dash of lime, etc. We suspected Forry was depraved enough to drink it, but Jean? Jean was French. Do the French do such things? Jean noticed our interest (Val's eyebrows had disappeared into her hairline) and tossed off some casual explanatory remark: "Can't drink wine.....ruined liver....youthful excessess." At that (ruined liver of course) Forry's eyebrows disappeared too and we all leaned forward expectantly but hélas, he changed the subject.

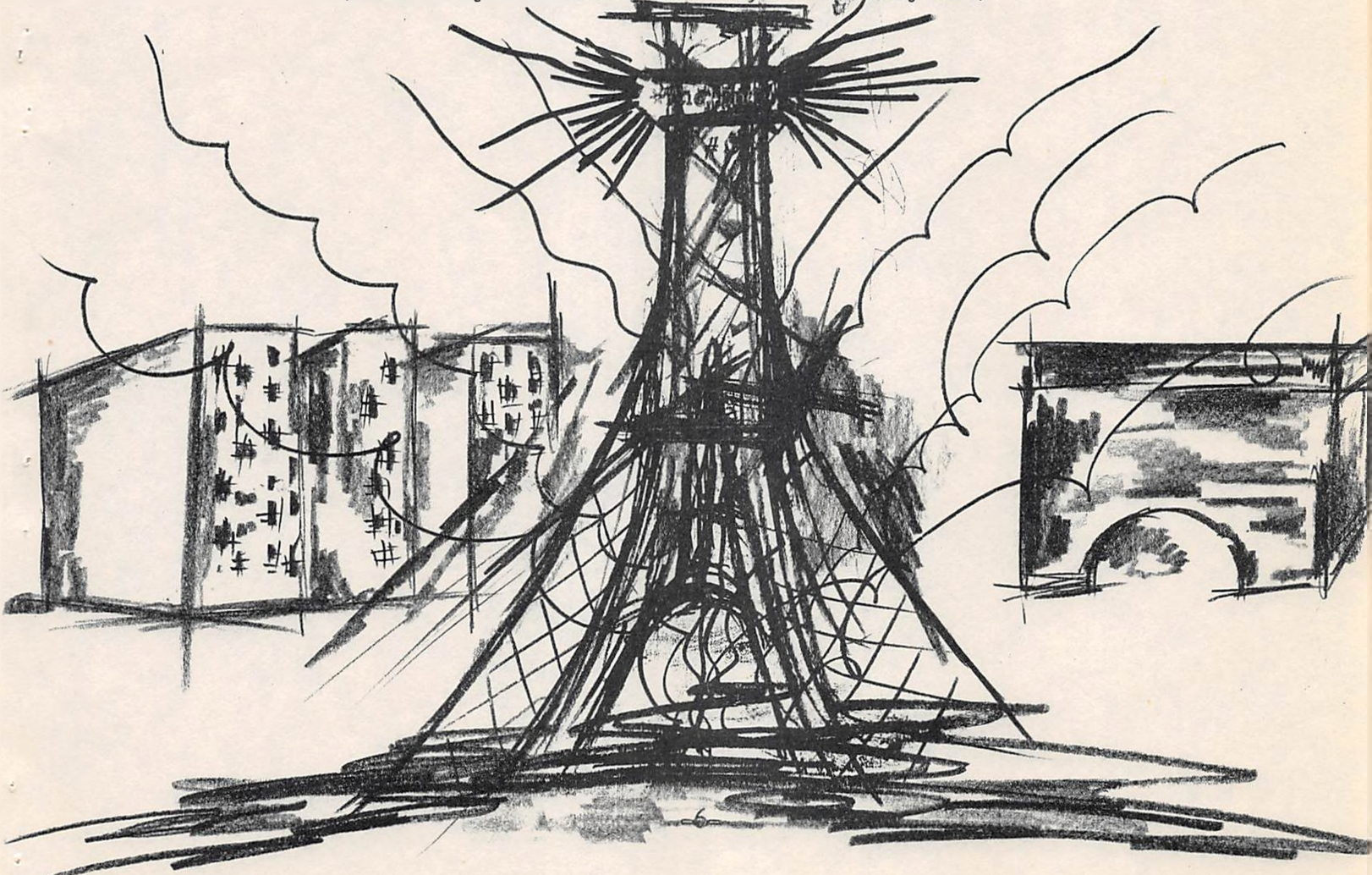
"I agree Cookie-----you've already got a cold."

The rest of the evening was light and easy with singing, guitar-playing and comfortable silences. At 3:00 A.M. we were strung out along the cobblestones en route to the station. It was cold and quiet. We waited just a little while for our train, Anie fingering her bracelet and Jean his Bolo Tie, both gifts from Forry. Pierre found our car for us, Val got on first, said goodbye fast and disappeared to find a compartment. Jean, Anie and Pierre walked alongside the moving train trying to say unsayables. We waved until we couldn't see them anymore.

"Yorkshire pudding?.....Horrible stuff, but I know a little Chinese place...."

One thing more: The interlineations have nothing to do with our visit to Vesoul. They preserve for posterity some precious moments in Germany and England, moments fraught with mood, meaning, and international good will.

(Joe? If you're still with me, this really is*)



IN HIS OWN TIME

ERIC DANVERS

It was only a dingy basement room, but Henry Latham had equipped it with loving care and much hard-ship, until it was as complete a laboratory as could be found in the whole city. Henry was proud of his work-room, forgetful of the long years of half-starving and worn-out clothes which it had cost him. It had also cost him his wife but that too mattered little.

Marie had been wide-eyed with joy when the sloppy college boy with the dreamy eyes had first proposed marriage — everyone said Henry was the most brilliant boy in the school. But a few short years of marriage and having to scrimp to keep food on the table had changed the romantic girl into a bitter nagging wife.

Finally she had had enough of him, and had gone off to greener pastures. Henry had barely noticed her going, except that now he must prepare his own food, a job at which he was none too adept.

Even when the Mecklenburg Foundation took recognition of Henry's brain and voted him a grant to continue his research, life for him changed very little. He was given the use of the fine laboratory at the Foundation, but he continued to do most of his work in the basement of the house where he had his flat.

Now he stood and stared down at the long work-bench over which he had spent so many long hours. At the far end of the table stood a metal box about two feet in each direction. Henry bent over it, looking through the thick-glass top in an attempt to see through the heavy blanket of greenish gas which swirled inside. It was over this metal case that Henry had spent a great deal of time just standing and staring.

Now was the big day.

Slowly he pressed a valve on the side of the box, and the gas began escaping with a soft hissing sound.

Moving back so that none of the fumes touched him, Henry waited for all the gas to escape. Nervously he edged closer. He looked down into the metal case and felt his heart leap as he saw the small puppy lying within. It had not changed since he had placed it in the box over a year ago!

The small animal lay there as though it had just gone to sleep a second before.

With trembling hands Henry unsnapped the air-tight lid and let the fresh air of the room enter. Almost instantly the tiny dog moved and then slowly yawned and stretched. A few seconds later it was standing on its hind legs, trying to scramble from the box, yapping at him in recognition.

Henry lifted the dog and set it down on the floor, where it raced playfully around his feet. Slowly Henry sank into a chair, his legs too unsteady to hold him up. He could still scarcely believe his senses, even though he had felt sure for so long that this would be a success. He had discovered the long sought secret of "suspended animation"! A year had passed over the small puppy since it had been placed in the gas-filled metal case, and the dog was the same as though no time had elapsed at all. There were no ill effects — no changes whatsoever!

The world would be rocked on its collective heels when news of this discovery was made known. Even the directors of the Foundation would be stunned.

They had had no inkling that he was working on this during his sparetime. They thought his full time was devoted to research into causes and cures for cancer and leukemia.

This would startle them!

* * * * *

Dr. A. Bernard Calloway, Director of the Mecklenburg Research Foundation, looked up as Henry burst into his office. The Director hated anything that smacked of informality, and the fact that it was Henry Latham did not lessen his irritation. He looked disdainfully at the tall, spare man in the ill-fitting clothes who stood awkwardly in the doorway.

"Oh, it's you, Latham," he said coldly. "Come in — close the door behind you."

Henry closed the door and stood somewhat nervously before the Director. He could feel Calloway's cold-fish eyes looking him over. He fidgeted. "Excuse my breaking in like this, Calloway," he said. "I would like to talk to you for a second if you have the time. It's about —"

"Sit down, Latham!" Calloway's voice was as chilly as his stare. He waited for Henry to fit his gangling form into the chair. "I'm glad you dropped in this morning. I was about to send for you. No, don't interrupt until I am finished with what I wish to say. For some time we of the Foundation have been none too happy with you — or your work. You may have guessed this, maybe not. However, I have recommended to the Board that your grant be withdrawn. They have agreed. As of this notice, you are finished with this Foundation. That is all! "

Henry stumbled to his feet. To have this flung at him in the face of his elation over the new success of his experiments! He could only stare in disbelief at the Director. Calloway rose to his feet, also, and stood staring back at Henry through his pince-nez. There was a trace of a smirk on his face.

Henry found his voice. "But I came to see you about some of my experiments," he finally got out. "It's about my work —"

"We no longer have the slightest interest in you or your experiments. Your relations have been severed with regards to the Mecklenburg Foundation. You are dismissed!"

Henry involuntarily backed toward the door, feeling Calloway's eyes on him. The Director smiled slightly, his lower lip curling.

"And, Latham," he said. "There is no harm in my telling you this. You have never fit into this organization. In fact, you have been a complete misfit from the very first. I would have had you dismissed sooner had I had my own way. However, this is soon enough."

He turned back to his desk, and picked up a sheaf of papers, apparently forgetting Henry's presence. He smiled to himself as he heard the door close.

* * * * *

"The dirty bastard," Henry thought to himself as he rummaged through his desk, as he picked up the few things he wanted to take with him. "The lousy back-stabber! Just because someone shows a little free thought!"

Blindly he made his way down the hall and out of the building. Why is it, he wondered to himself, that in this so-called scientific age most people should be so anti-intellectual? Why should they look down on someone who genuinely wants to acquire knowledge? Even in high-school and at the university he had been the object of much teasing because he had been so studious. How strange, he had thought even then, that in an institution of higher-learning he had been taunted because of his great thirst for every bit of knowledge he could acquire!

He made his way along the street toward his flat, his emotions seething. If he stumbled into anyone he did not notice — his mind was too full of bitterness.

Henry let himself into the house and through force of habit headed for the basement laboratory. He entered the damp room and switched on the lights. He stared about him, at the place where he had spent so many hours of intense effort. Such a short time before he had stood here in ecstasy over the success of his work, and now he was back, with his career gone and everything flung in his teeth.

Henry knew what his whole trouble was. He'd known it since an early age. He had been born into this world much too soon! He should not be living in this time and age — he should have been born perhaps a century later, to live in an age when science would have come into its own. He could picture himself if he had only been born a hundred years hence — living and working when the scientific mind was accorded the recognition it deserved!

He felt something nuzzling at his feet, and stopped to pick the puppy up into his arms. He petted it absently, and then like a bolt of lightning it came to him. Mad thought? Maybe, but it could work!

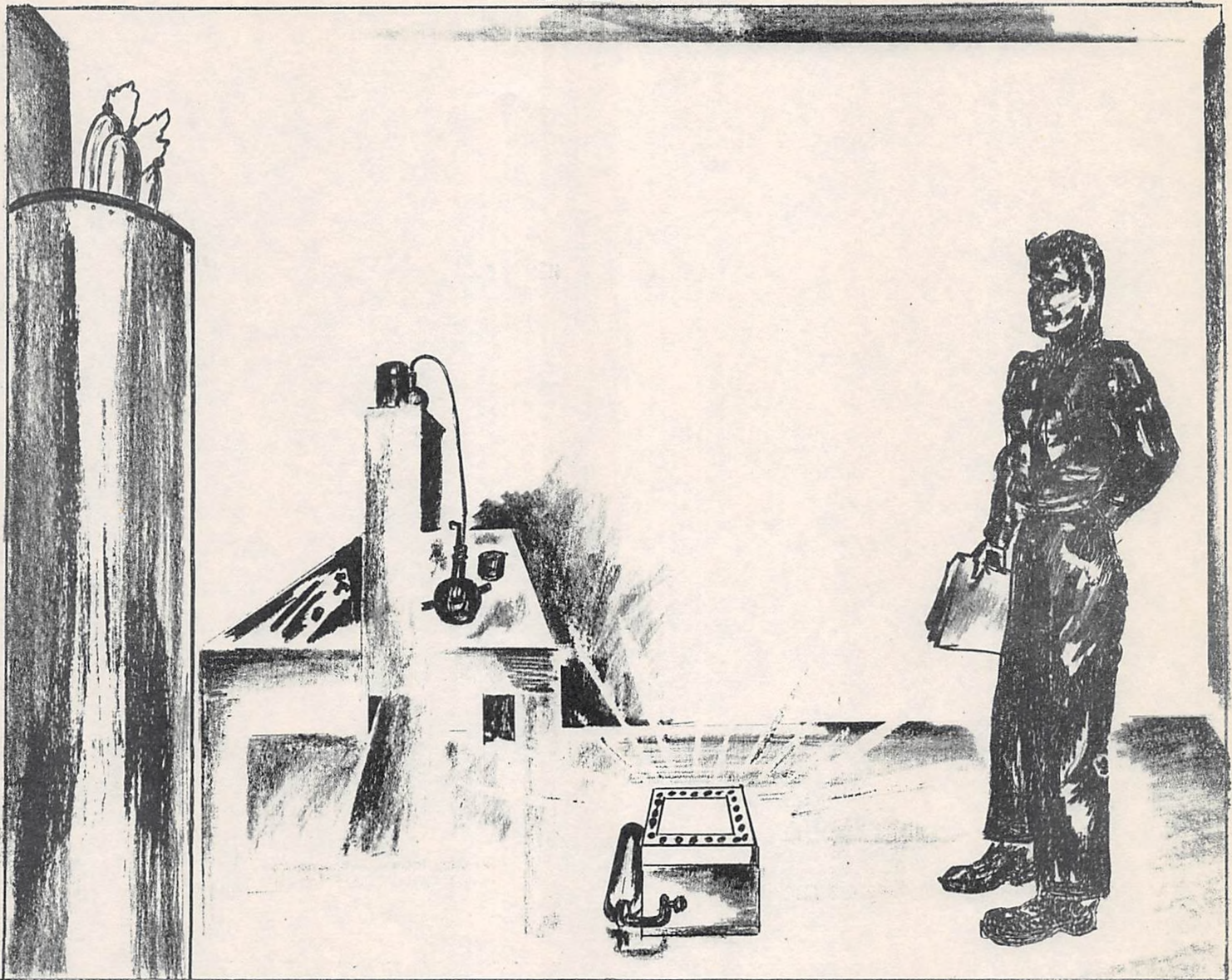
Why not, he fairly cried out. It had worked on the dog, why not on a human — himself? There would be no way to completely regulate the time, but he could put himself into a state of suspended animation, just as he had done to the pup. It had lived a full year without any bad effects, why could not the same hold true with a man for a much longer time? Perhaps even a hundred years!

The enormity of the idea fairly floored him but his mind had seized on the thought and was already racing with ways in which he could carry it out.

He had nothing to lose — except his life, and that meant less than nothing to him now.

"My God," he breathed hoarsely. "To be able to live in a time more fitting for me. I can do it. I am sure of it."

His main problem would be to find a place where his body would be untouched and unfound until such time as he was ready to reawaken, and his mind no sooner raised the question than he knew the answer. The old family crypt. It would be perfect. He was the last of his family. There would be no reason for anyone to ever go to the underground vault in which his family had been buried through the past several generations. He could sleep there undisturbed for as long as he wished, for years — maybe even centuries — to awaken in a newer greater age. A golden age where his intellect would at last come



.....!He stared about him, at the place where he had spent so many hours of intense effort." into its own!

* * * * *

Henry stared about him at the equipment he had assembled methodically during the past two weeks. He had worked under a great strain, not the least of which had been the task of smuggling all this equipment into the family vault without being seen. It had taken a great deal of labor and secrecy had demanded that he do all this unaided.

The very success of his greatest experiment depended upon his carrying it out unsuspected as well as undected.

Now he stood in the crypt, staring about him at the things he had assembled.

The coffin-like box of heavily chromed metal, practically unnoticeable among the other coffins in the vault. The thick lid which would be air-tight when he pulled it shut behind him; the time-equipped mechanism which would open the lid at some far distant date, maybe fifty years from now, maybe more; and most important of all, the cylinder of the gas upon which the entire project depended. The green gas which would preserve his body and his life as long as it enveloped him. A small nozzle connected the cylinder to the chrome casket.

-IN HIS OWN TIME-

Henry had checked these things time and again. He was not afraid for his life, but his scientific mind made it compulsory that he check each detail thoroughly, no matter how seemingly unimportant.

He knew that nothing could go wrong. His thoroughness would preclude that.

He laughed silently to himself. As far as the world would know, he had disappeared from its face — to reappear in his own time.

He eased the heavy stone door of the vault open and breathed in the damp night air. Silently he crept to the top of the steps and peered at the sky-line of the city. Here and there a light glowed, and he wondered what the people behind those lighted windows would think if they only knew the drama about to take place here in the heart of their town. For a few minutes he stood there, then slowly he descended to the vault, and pushed the door shut behind him. Through the dim light from the lamp he made his way toward the coffins which lined the walls. His family. He stood for a second at the foot of the casket which held the remains of his mother.

He had always been close to her, and her death when he was still in high-school had been the one great loss he had experienced in his life. Tonight he felt close to her again.

With an effort he tore himself away and moved toward the casket in which he would lie. He was only trembling slightly as he stretched out full length and pulled the door shut over him. He had gone over it in his mind so many times that the actual performance was almost routine.

With his foot he felt for the valve which controlled the gas jet. He slid it open and heard the hiss of the gas as it poured over him.....His feet seemed suddenly to go cold, then his legs went numb. He felt a tingle in his shoulders, and then he blinked his eyes..... .

* * * * *

Henry opened his eyes to total darkness. The lamp no longer burned. He felt as though he had only closed his eyes for a moment, yet he knew that it had been much longer. He reached out his hand and felt for the cover of the casket, in which he lay. It stood open and he knew his time-lock had worked flawlessly. He sat up slowly and edged to his feet. He lowered himself carefully to the floor and felt his way toward the door, his eyes trying to pierce the darkness. He slid his feet along the stone floor to keep from tripping and his hands came in contact with the door lever. He released it and pulled on the heavy door. It gave grudgingly. The steps leading up were covered with debris, but Henry could see the light of day. Feverishly he clawed his way through the rubbish and stones, letting them roll into the vault.

His heart was pounding so hard he could hear it thundering in his ears. He made his way up the steps to the outside world, his eyes blinking in the bright light.

He had succeeded, he knew. This was another century in which he now walked and lived.

Tremblingly he put his hands on the top ledge and stared into this new world of his.

And as he stared at the utter desolation in every direction, the stark realization came to him, that he was the only living thing left on the face of the Earth!

FANZINE
QUOTES
& Comments.

If you would like to join the Society for the current year send dues of \$1.00 to WSFS, Len J. Moffatt, Secretary, 10202 Belcher, Downey, Calif.

This is the first of a new series. You might call it a new department, only we can't be sure of its regularity. But, as often as enough Fan Magazines are on hand "Fanzine Quotes & Comments" will appear. The regularity of this publication has been established. The source for this column hasn't.

"Well? Don't just Do something, Stand there!"

***"If I don't hear from you, you won't hear from me...."

"Please remove this staple only" ((HOORAY! At last a scoop as far as we know. How many times in the past have you removed the wrong one and had only a sheaf of pages in your excited hands? This will not happen when you receive MEADE in the mails. Number 2 consists of 17-pgs, hectographed with three-color cover by R. Martin. Some pages are not too well reproduced, especially page 12. The poetry is fair with "The Femfan's Lament" registering first with us. "Out of the Vats" should grow into an interesting department.

Ooo

"I cannot type anymore tonight.....My hands are..." But that's as far as we will quote on this article, otherwise the Superstition would be Exposed. For a first issue this "fmzine" (and we quote Mr. E. Gorman) shows good promise of editorial: ".....intend on bringing back the 'nicklezine' or 'slobzine'....." Request for material such as "Movie Reviews", "Book Reviews", "Stories", "Illustrations", "Advertisements", "Poems", "Letters of Comment", and "Personals" should bring the contents of this new Fan Magazine representing the Northwest Territory into prominence soon. Best of luck to you!

[illegible]

Both #7, and #8 have very attractive cover illustrations by Adkins. Much work and design obviously goes into each issue of SATA. The results are always top notch. Our favorite quote for these two current issues: "Henry Fonda, Stage and Screen Star, Plays the Bull Fiddle!" (Or was it - 'Bill Fuddle. Subscribe to SATA Illustrated, you'll be happy if you do.

[illegible]

This is the 10th issue to appear, we understand. We'd like very much to see the other 9----Censorship permitting,etc.
Bet there would be much to "Quote" from those so we have heard. A very interesting fan mag
Get one-----you'll want to see more!

From: Lars Bourne
2436 $\frac{1}{2}$ Portland St.,
Eugene Oregon.

SKYHOOK #25 Redd Boggs, Editor. Marlon Z. Bradley, Associate Ed. 20¢ / 6-\$1.00

2209 Highland Place, N.E., Minneapolis 21, Minnesota. (Quarterly)

To our way of thinking this issue along with the ten years of publishing history behind it rates SKYHOOK very high indeed in the fan firmament. Number 25, the Autumn, 1957 issue contains 48 pages of countless quoteworthy items. In all, a mature publication of excellent mimeographed items of lasting merit. Yet all is not sercon // whatever that is? - Official Proof Reader. // We quote: "Larry Shaw

wants chase stories! And since over most of this section of the Northern Hemisphere the leaves have already fallen it would be well to keep in mind the clever cover illustration on current SKYHOOK as well as: "It's Always

Summer on Venus." We could quote more---but why not get a copy yourself. You'll like it. You will want to see more. (But we never saw damon knight's name spelled*) ZODIAC #4 Larry Sokol, Editor-Publisher. 10¢ Ea. / 6-.50¢

4131 Lafayette Ave., Omaha, 31, Nebraska. (Bi-monthly)

Interesting cover by Don Simpson. 24 pages, or 26--if you count the cover and contents page, and a very neat job done with flatbed ditto we understand. We quote: "A Labor of Love (Hah!) Publication"..... "You can buy complete do-it-yourself coffin kits from us. Order today." Caption under TWG Cartoon---"I still think Mom should have hired a well driller."

QUIRK #3 Larry Ginn, Box 81, Rt. 2-and Johnny Holleman, Box 77, Choudrant, La. (Bi-monthly-Quarterly-?). 10¢

We quote: "We laughingly charge 10¢ a copy"-----And we are pleased to say:

You get a lot to like for the dime, too. "Mirror" is an interesting bit of fiction. "Concept" by Vic Fletcher is a most original approach to the pro magazines. Many should remember back when it was the fad to tell a short story using song titles to fill in the sequence. We found this to be unique, and in a way it was a revelation to recall the names of so many of the pro magazines. Good art, especially on pages 17 and 3, in that order. "Is Sci-Fi Literature" by Guy Terwilliger best single item in issue.

OTHERS Received too late to read all. But will attempt a brief "Quote" at least:

THE INNAVIGABLE MOUTH, #3 The Dec. '57 "Special Issue" featured a brilliant 'moderne' art concept. Jean & Annie Linard, 24 Rue Petit, VERSOUL, Hte FRANCE work hard on this neat, multi-colored Dittoed publication. Its mood and scope is most unique in Random. If you haven't tried it yet, you've missed a lot. Better catch up. In #3 a smart sign conveniently placed warns: "May BE Opened".

SCURRY - #2 L. A. Hickman 304 North 11th Mount Vernon, Illinois.

SEND YOUR ZINES IN, EDS, WE'LL QUOTE FROM MORE NEXT TIME..... question-----and we quote: "It's a fan isn't it? gal in maternity ward appears much relieved we think-----all she cares is the answer to her

*-as it was on page 27. Which could bring up a subject for an interesting fan article. viz. Why? Or why not?

THE READERS' DEPARTMENT —

Wherein the Editors seldom have —

The Last Word

FROM: Bill Pearson, Phoenix, Arizona. SATA Illustrated.

"Dear SPHERE, Such Modesty! Not screaming the names of the editors, and the guy who held the machine while you were running page 3, and the guy who did the fabulous lettering on page 16, and like that.....I just can't believe it... ..I guess there's a first for everything.....I notice you need art. Or else you just don't care much for art, one of the two.

I like your reproduction process. What is it? Photo-offset? ((Multilith-Eds.))

As you will notice when you get SATA, I also go for fiction.

Both stories in Issue #7 (Anniversary Issue) were very good---except OUR DEAR DEPARTED had one major flaw, as I see it. Or perhaps it didn't.....I cannot decide now whether the people involved were intended to be People-Type or Insect-Type. The female human is superior to the male in a great many ways, but one of them is definitely not the drive for advancement. And that is why the defeatism of the 'males' in Kent's story seemed implausible to me."

((Such an interesting letter as yours surely deserves some careful consideration. Perhaps we might offer an explanation since there is not sufficient time for Kent to read your letter and make adequate reply: We interpreted the story OUR DEAR DEPARTED to relate of a reptile-human-like form of intelligent life on Venus. Therefore not limited in any way to Earth standards. We agree entirely with your line of reasoning yet who can say what trend a civilization might take in its ever-changing cycles of rise and fall sequences? - Letters such as yours will make this Department wider in interest. It's always better to know why a reader likes, or doesn't like a particular item. So let us hear from you often. -Eds.))

FROM: David McCarroll, Boulder City, Nevada. MEAD.

"I received your anniversary issue of SPHERE.....I have deduced that it is an adult fan-mag, published by an adult. Woe is me, for I am exactly the opposite. MEAD is a fanzine published by a young editor, and it is also full of writings by neos and young fans.....I will review SPHERE in MEAD#3. Why don't you have any fanzine reviews, or book reviews in SPHERE? I think reviews are what give a fanzine a lot of get-up-and-go. All fans enjoy egoboo. I like your lettercol, but why isn't it larger? In MEAD #2 my lettercol was pretty small, but that was due to not getting very many letters. I should think that a fanmag of your standing would get them by the pound every week.....What kind of reproduction do you use? Is it a photo process or what? It intrigues me. It looks to me like the ideal method of reproducing a fanzine. I just can't help liking the whole mag, but dern it, you could have more articles in it. I liked both "Pathetique" and "Our Dear Departed". ..They're just the type of story I need in MEAD, although I lean to a more faanish type of fiction....."

((Thank you, Dave for your complimentary letter which we enjoyed very much. Don't have any feelings of selfconsciousness in being a teenager and publishing a teenage publication. There can be no doubt about it---it's a great accomplishment, and you have already made two issues of MEAD appear into the fanzine world. With Number 3 you should be firmly established. See "Fanzine Quotes" in this issue which should

-THE LAST WORD-

answer your objection to the lack of Review Articles. Keep up your good work.
Write us again soon. -Eds))

FROM: Ron Ellik, Berkeley, California -

"Just a postcard to say.....'The Oklacon Five Is Still Alive!' "

((Late in this entry, and this was postmarked Sept.11, but feel sure they are all
still very much alive. And if so, would like very much to hear from you. -Eds))

FROM: Dan McPhail, Lawton, Oklahoma - PHANTASY PRESS.

"I know that, with your travelling over the entire Southland, your time must be very limited and I appreciate your taking time while at Greenville SC, to write. I appreciate too the current issue of SPHERE. In exchange for the first five numbers. I mailed you all back issues of PHANTASY PRESS that I have.....plus a copy of FOGBOUND, a one-shot that Sam Martinez and I issued when he was grounded here overnight one time. If you are a completist in fanzines, I can send two issues of FANTASY CHIEF that I put out for the State club when we were getting started about '54. Did I understand from your letter that you issue other publications? ((No, that was a reference to past fan doings when we published OBERON. Other references would have been STARBLAZE, and THE FLARE, which are also extinct and date back to about 1942)) Your circulation? I assume you have Madle ((Yes.)) and Taurasi ((Soon, we hope.)) And how about Don Ford....((Don't know his address, but would like.)) How about Ron Parker ((Yes.)) he recently bought out a large fanzine collection. Moskowitz? Rosenblum of England.....with his NEW FUTURIAN...((Not yet, have sent introductory copies though.)) The July-August('56) SPHERE was a real treat to read. I gather you are limited in the reproduction of art work and printing back-to-back, but the appearance is excellent. I got a big kick out of re-reading the poems and bits from the old TIME TRAVELLER and FANTASY FAN (I was a contributor to the latter). The short short-story, "Assignment" was interesting, and Chamberlain's "Martian Mountains" was wonderful. And very good art work here, too. Other features were all read and enjoyed, but my favorite was the excellent article on Covers by Stone. A very fine analysis. It inspired me to comment on it at length in my up-coming issue of The Press (#17). Look forward to your First Annish. Good luck. It was a pleasure to meet you.....your interesting personality is reflected in your fine magazine. I trust you will give some coverage of the Oklacon and I hope you will make it to Dallas in '58!"

((Shades of the Mutual Admiration Society -- nevertheless, we found your Publication extremely interesting! The publication exchange policy is satisfactory with us, as well as a plug now and then in your magazine. We welcome any material from you that you may care to submit for publication in future issues of SPHERE. In the mad rush to get into the race into outer space, we too, are building up a stock-pile of material. Would like very much to have the addresses of more fans who would like to receive SPHERE. -Eds))

FROM: L. A. Hickman, Mt. Vernon, Illinois - J.D. - ARGASSY, etc. SCURVY, etc. and others.

".....Don't have time right now to do a con report.....I must try to get SCURVY#2 this weekend if possible as next week I leave for Ohio and a week's sales conference. SCURVY has a report in by Ron Parker, so you see I didn't even have time to write my own. I've spent almost every spare minute since the Con (Oklacon V) trying to catch up on getting my fanzines out.

I didn't get the SPHERE you put out just before the Con. You said you had planned to bring some extra copies and then didn't, but would send me one when you got back to Florida.....ARGASSY has a con report by Walt Bowart.....((We read it. It was real great! We liked it very much.-Eds)) I'm glad you liked the Half-Shot. It was a lot of fun doing."

FROM: John Koning, Youngstown, Ohio -

"Dear Lance: and anyone else who may have a hand in SPHERE, I am still not clear as to who is/are the ed/eds of SPHERE, the answers in "The Last Word" lead me to believe that there is more than one editor but I can only find Lance Thorndyke's name and that wasn't even in the zine. Ah, well, if you don't care neither do I.

I saw SPHERE and thot what a nice fat issue it was, then I find it's on one side, I'm not too clear on multilith process but I think you can print on both sides. It looks

-THE LAST WORD-

neater and the reproduction is clear and easy reading but as several others have said it just looks half missing.

The cover fits the title and the same thing with variations will make your zine recognizable if I should lose my glasses. "The Bat" is fairly well written and I enjoyed it, I like this type of story but doubt that even a Transylvanian village could produce a word like VLKOSLAK, it would take a fan. I never knew that Chamberlain lived in Youngstown, I thought I was the only semi-act or acti-fan here, I even asked several other fans if they knew any in Youngstown and they said no. What gives, does Chamberlain really live here? ((Right. He, also an artist-writer friend are located there. No doubt Youngstown must have more sci-fi fans than just three, wot? Why not check, and let us know too, we'd like to send them a get-acquainted-issue of SPHERE.-Eds)) What with the Sputnik in the sky I can imagine what your zine will have to say on science next ish. By the way SPHERE is one of the only fanzines today containing poetry.....is good. Didn't care for "Spoils", but the other Mocabee piece, "Treasures" was something I can say I like, very good.

As for "The Unconventional Shift" it has a twist that reminds me of some one of the older fantasy authors, but I can't remember whom, it was an average piece. Enjoyed some parts of the last story, and some letters in the column, I think maybe SPHERE may improve in the future and I'm subbing for a year to find out."

((We appreciate your faith in us. We do not intend to let you down, either. Let us hear from you regularly, criticism like yours is especially welcome. -Eds))

FROM: Betty Garrett, Miami, Florida.-

"So you've completed one full year of publication, and your first anniversary issue is quite the best yet! I have been reading s-f only for two years, yet your fiction seems to be on a level with that being professionally published currently. Looking back over the past issues of SPHERE I thought you might be interested in my favorite stories listed in order of preference: "Sham", "Wake Not the Dead", "Our Dear Departed", "The Martian Mountains", "Junior", "Drink To Me Only", "Pathetique", "The Unconventional Shift", "The Change", and "Assignment". There you have my ten favorites. I will leave the articles and departments to anyone else who may wish to rate them in order of their preference. You did have some very good ones. I liked the one earlier in the year on Space-Flight and the one on the SPHERE Art Poll, to mention two that come to mind first. The cover illustration on your first anniversary issue was heroic in concept and surely was beautifully symbolic. As you know I am new in this reading and appreciation of science fiction fan magazines, but yours seems to please very much and here is my renewal subscription for another year. Keep up the good work." ((It was very interesting to see your favorite line-up of ten best stories. It gives us a measuring device for the future. We promise to try to top them in the year ahead. Let us know from time to time how we are progressing.-Eds.))

FROM: Ray Schaffer, Canton, Ohio. - APOLLO PLAY .

"Enjoyed SPHERE, number 7, which was my first look-see at your fine pub. Mmmmmmmmmmmmm
.....that repro! Impeccable! But such modesty.....why NOT list the members of the staff? This is rather null-fannish, y'know.....ignoring the Lust for Egoboo. Your comments, oops, excuse me,.....the editorial comments in re Sputnik moves me to ex-pound a bit upon the controversy. It appears, at the moment, that the most determined drive in Washington is against the tendency to hoist an American-made satellite at any cost - - - even at the cost of interfering with the far more important missile program.Sputnik would be used as an excuse to fatten the Defense Department's outlay and thereby restore employment. And---that phenomenon of focus on one thing at a time also accounts for an unprecedented amount of interest in advanced education----a goal that was only recently a subject of ridicule.....A thot in closing....Yassir, there's no stopping science. Before long, we'll know what's on the other side of the moon. Meanwhile, many people don't know anything about life on the other side of their own town."

((Many thanks for your thoughtful views. We shall be looking for the next issue of your APOLLO PLAY. Why not list the members of our staff? We do ignore the egoboo-bug. No one will enjoy this 'zine any more simply because we list our names. So? -Eds.))

-THE LAST WORD-

FROM: B. W. Lex, Clarence, New York -

"Thank you for SPHERE #3 and #4. In them I find a vast improvement over Vol.2,#2. More illustrations, cleverly designed headings improve the interior look. I know very little about multilith, but I must say, I've NEVER seen a fanzine with such neat and orderly reproduction.

A few spotcuts pertinent to the subject at hand would further improve the interior. Also the kind of type used on pages 4 and 23 of SPHERE #4 would give a better appearance to the 'zine'.

It is refreshing to occasionally find a fanzine without the continual round of 'yuck-yuck' material so common. I am not against humor, your zine has some humorous spots, but I like to settle down and be serious occasionally.

As for the blank pages controversy, why couldn't you put the blank pages next to each other (back-to-back).....and then there would be a continuous collection of filled pages? Actually, my idea is probably silly, and the best thing to do is just leave it as is.

Fiction and articles are all o.k.....I am planning to start publication of my own zine soon.....I enclose 20¢ for the Sep-Oct,'57 issue."

((Well it's refreshing to get a letter like yours from a new reader of our pages. And, we are happy to have your views that regardless if we print on both sides of the sheet or not you find most of our output readable. Your suggestion is not silly about placing the blank sides back-to-back; but for our needs would not be too practical. There would be glue cost/problem to mention the most obvious. Our primary difficulty is the lack of time and help needed to print professionally on both sides of the page. Last issue, our First Anniversary number, the one which you have just requested and which has gone out to you today, is an exception. We spent much more time on that, since it was our first Birthday---we shall try to keep it up. But we can't promise yet. There will be more one-sided pages in the future no doubt. We do hope that the views and overall policy, however, will not reflect a onesidedness---how else could we continue to call our publication SPHERE? Which is precisely what we intend to continue to do. Let us hear from you again. Subscription?-- Eds.))

FROM: Stephen F. Schultheis, Warren, Ohio -

"Sure wish I'd been here when you were up this way, but I must confess that I would not have missed the London trip for anything. What a wonderful time we had! It's the first Con that has been solid fannish enjoyment for twenty days straight-- from the time we met in New York to the time we said farewells again upon our return. Am looking forward to the.....Con Report....Enclosed you will find \$1.00 for the next six issues of SPHERE. Keep up the good work!"

((Indeed we can keep it up with such swell support from wonderful friends like you, Steve. We haven't forgotten the host of pics you took of the Newyorcon. If you like we offer you complimentary space in these pages to sell any that you may still have. This goes for the more recent London Con as well. Any more actifans there in Warren? -Give them an introduction to SPHERE. A free copy will go their way if you should send any names and addresses. O.K.? -Eds))

FROM: Tom Daracott, Jr., Charleston, S. C. -

"How's everything with the publication?..... I am still anxiously waiting for S P H E R E."

((We apologize for the delay on last issue. But as mentioned elsewhere, it was our first Birthday and more time was spent in getting it out. The results of which you must admit were better than previous numbers. Your story: "Path ique" has already received letters of hearty approval. Not rave notices, you understand; not even a deluge of letters---yet. But we like very much your style and look forward to more manuscripts. Considering a fanzine's restricted circulation is it pleasing as well as astounding (free plug for JWC of Street&Smith) the percentage of active response received regularly. Let us hear from you again, soon. -Eds))

-THE LAST WORD-

FROM: Tom Reamy, Dallas, Texas. - CRIFANAC.

"....The first ann ish.....The cover wasn't very good, but I'm certainly glad to see an illustration there. Of course, I'm all for art work, and the lack of it gripes me. I'll send you some stuff real soon which you can do with as you please. If there is anything specific you need give me all the info and I'll do my best.

The Aldiss Con Report was pretty bad for an author of his stature. It sounded like a sercon writer trying to be fannish and not having much luck.....I see you corrected the spelling on Koogle's article. I don't envy anybody that task. I had it to go through on CRIFANAC #5. Number 6 is late, late, late! Don't know when it will be out.....As soon as possible. I envy you your regularity.(Do you take Carter's Little Pills?) ((The secret's out---now who told you? Of course we do, as well as Mill-something---town, good or bad you can at least count on our regularity. We'd rather be regular than right---or even president. And above all we want to be thought of as just a regular guy-/s. Editorial plural:we,us, etc, of course. -Eds.))

"The Night Wind" left me cold. I just don't go in for this sort of thing. Would have liked to see a full text of the Ackerman interview....."Pathetique" was an interesting idea, but Darracott just isn't a very good writer. I hate to say these things because who knows what you may be using as a penname? I assume some of the stuff is yours....."Our Dear Departed" I liked. Again the writing was typically fannish but the story was quite good. You probably know as well as I how ticklish it is for one Fan Ed to criticize another, but I'm writing this as if CRIFANAC were perfect and there were no possible rebuttals you could make.....SPHERE'S weak point is its artwork, and I don't intend to step in and save the day. I'm not that good. I probably put more emphasis on artwork than is necessary, but I guess all would-be artists do.....The best way I have found to judge a fanzine is:"Would I print this in CRIFANAC?" It may sound a little snobbish, but it seems to work. The only thing in Vol.2, No.5 is the Ackerman article which I would have loved to have in full.

I seem to have made SPHERE sound very poor.....((Yes, Tom, and you asked that we strike out that last reference of yours, which we did. Yet you did finish by saying that SPHERE was not entirely worthless. We welcome for consideration any fiction or artwork you may care to send. With drawings we would request that you put them directly onto a standard paper Multilith Master to prevent any alteration in transfer. Will be happy to announce right here that the SOUTHWESTER-CON #6 will be held there over next July 4th week-end. As soon as more definite plans are made send us details for immediate publication. Eds.))

FROM: Ray Bradbury, Los Angeles, California.

"Thanks for the latest issue of SPHERE. I particularly enjoyed the Ackerman material and THE FEATURE DESK. Keep up the fine work. Best wishes always..."

((Many thanks to you, Ray. We appreciate your thoughtfulness very much. We just finished reading your recent book, DANDELION WINE. For sheer beauty of style alone we were spellbound from beginning to end. To have you numbered among our active readers is indeed another good reason to add to our feelings of pride as each new mailing is prepared. Let us hear from you again. Eds.))

FROM: John Alexander, San Juan, Puerto Rico -

"Well here I am on my island in the sun. This place is a painter's paradise. The first anniversary issue of SPHERE is quite an improvement. I liked the cover illustration."

FROM: Ted K. Wagner, Houston, Texas -

".....Liked SPHERE....GENERALLY....WERE A FEW ITEMS THAT WERE UNDER USUAL QUALITY THAT I expect in 'zine of SPHERE'S printing quality....Koogle, for instance.....First, he should keep his details straight.... It was I, not Terry who had the Black clothes, Eye Patch, and 'many days' growth of beard'.....Hellsbells!...Terry...takes three months to sprout 1/10" on his chin.....Koogle also mentions the bathtub full of ice....ice keeping the beer(...Bheer...)'down to 3.2 and cold too!' Was the beer poured into the bathtub??? Was it, as I suspect, left in the bottles and said bottles placed into the ice in the tub....? All-in-all, I enjoyed SPHERE....Not yet of the caliber of GRUE &/or HYPHEN, but dinna fash yersel'....GRUE and HYPHEN are both of the same calibre yet

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entirely different from each other....and there is plenty room for SPHERE.....
...Am figuring to see SPHERE up there with the others, soon.....Hoping you are
the same....."

((Thanks for your letter Ted, which we shall answer direct soon. But for fear that
we may forget some of the details we'd like to reply to two questions right here.
The wooden eye-opener that "Kim" found so exciting was actually a hand-carved job.
Although we do suppose that similar models can be obtained commercially, it just
goes to show that even an insignificant homemade piece can be appreciated. We would
like very much for you to send us the William Terry illustration which we left in
Oklahoma. Complimentary SPHERES will be sent your way until we repay for the postage
required to send us the illustration. Will be looking forward to your planned fan
magazine making its appearance soon. -Eds.))

FROM: Guy Terwilleger, Boise, Idaho - TWIG.

The first annish of SPHERE arrived and I was muchly impressed.....The pic in the
sphere is an improvement.....However, for personal reasons, I found your previous
logo for the title more appealing. Rather missed the familiar lettering.

Found Aldiss' "Oh To Be in England After the London Con" quite good. One thing I
will say, he kept me guessing as to whether he was being serious, or facetious.Come
to think of it---I'm still not sure but prefer to think it was the latter. 'Twas
nice to have an item on the Con that wasn't about it. Nice change of pace.

Find your "HemiSPHERES", as always, interesting. Also the newsy items on page 9.
The series on Ackerman was the outstanding event in the issue.....What happened to
your art for this issue? The one pic, other than that on the cover was good, but I
expected more of them. After going through the zine I had to backtrack to see if
what I remembered was right. Sadly, it was....."PATHETIQUE" was good, nice ending.
Knowing the music it contained was helpful to enjoying it...."OUR DEAR DEPARTED" was
enjoyed, but not particularly liked. Explain that if you can! I think because I
was forewarned of what was going to happen---not necessarily by the story itself,
but by the general theme of it.....Missed your usually longer letter column. There
have always been points of interest in it, and here I found only four letters. With-
out saying, Bloch was the best.....Glad to see you opening your margins more. There
were few pages that seemed to be almost crowded off. Gives your zine a much neater
appearance.....I think SPHERE is making excellent progress and am looking for-
ward to seeing it for a long time."

((As usual, Guy, your letter is well meant and well sent. Constructive criticism
such as yours is most helpful if we are to succeed. Will answer other details of your
letter direct within a few days. Let us hear from you often. -Eds.))

FROM: Mrs. Lee Sirat, Springfield, Virginia.-

".....I think the new cover of SPHERE quite timely, what with Sputnik and Mutnik
beepingly zooming into the headlines. Good show....."

FROM: Ed Chamberlain, Youngstown, Ohio.-

".....I received the first annish of SPHERE the other day, and it was exceptionally
good. SPHERE has come a long way in a single year! The two stories were very good,
with "OUR DEAR DEPARTED" taking the lead. The illustration for this story was excellent.
Koogle's article surprised me no end.....it was so coherent. How in the world did you
get him to improve his spelling.....did you stay up all night correcting it? One
other question: Is Don Anderson for real? ((Yes, why don't you look him up there?-Eds.))
Enclosed is \$10.00 for five two-year subscriptions for the following...."

((Now Ed, in addition to being a regular reader, as well as contributor, that last
enclosure shows us your sincere interests in this publication! In closing let me wish
you and all of our readers the very best of Seasons'Greetings.And this coming from
Florida, we might still appropriately say:"See you later,alligator...etc." But in
order to remain competitively contemporary these days it might be well to say also:
"See you tonite, Satellite.....That's the trick, Sputnik!" Hit Southgate---in '58!

..So, 'til next year....keep writing, your -Eds.))



HEMISPHERES

NEWSWEEK, 11-11-57: In "Letters" section reader Berkley of NYC suggests - "Re-elect President Eisenhower with the slogan: 'He Kept Us Out of Mars'."

In the same issue, and same section, reader Etzelt of Delray Beach, Florida says: "We're terribly concerned about lagging behind Russia in the satellite race. But how often have Americans been first?.....Remember Henry Ford who said: 'Show me one and I can make a million.' We often have to be shown." (Besides, we have the EDSEL, don't we?).

BELGRADE, A/P, Nov. 9: A Yugoslav scientist said today the Soviets launched an earth satellite two years ago.....that on Oct. 25, 1955, a mysterious object flew over Yugoslavia....not a meteor....possibly a flying saucer. Now, after comparing the visual impressions with the impressions of two years ago, the scientist has come to the conclusion that the flying object of two years ago was an experimental Soviet satellite.

LOUSANNE, Switzerland, A/P: Auguste Piccard, famed stratosphere and deep sea explorer, predicts space travelers of the future will go on trips lasting several thousand years and return to Earth without aging. In a lecture he outlined how man would some day travel to distant solar systems in ships driven by the force of light and near the speed of light. "Only on landing would they perceive that the Earth's calendar had advanced....." he declared. "Everything in the space ship will have been suspended and preserved in time.....This is no longer science fiction, but strict reality, established by Einstein's theory of relativity and now provable in the laboratory."

NOV. 13-W.S. JOURNAL: A U.S. Jet Sky Tanker flew a record 6,350 miles without refueling. Gen. C.E. LeMay, USAF Vice Chief of Staff piloted the KC-135 from Westover, Mass. to Buenos Aires in 13 hours and two minutes.....The following day set another speed record on the return trip to Washington---5,204 miles, made in 11 hours and five minutes, a speed mark for a non stop jet flight. This supports the claim that the global bomber is far from scrapped by the missile.

Nov. 26. A/P) (Everyone these days view travel to the moon as a snap. But when the time arrives that commercial flights become a reality to distant planets, even within our own Solar System, there seems to be one big problem: how will the sale of tickets to children be computed? Will it be half-price, based on the kid's age at the beginning of the trip on Earth, or full price based on the termination of the flight on some distant planet years later? Well?

By all means see the article: Hypermissile in TIME, December 2. (Science Section) The glide missile as discussed should bring to mind the countless paper darts that have been so plentiful at many past S F Conventions. Remember?

Another example of: We had it first!

