

# Starling

I JUST LOVE POPULAR CULTURE...! DON'T YOU?

I MEAN, IT'S SO GENUINE, REALLY...

I AGREE TOTALLY!

LATELY I'VE BEEN GETTING INTO PUERTO RICAN CULTURE ... VERY COLORFUL AND QUITE CREATIVE IN IT'S OWN WAY, TOO.

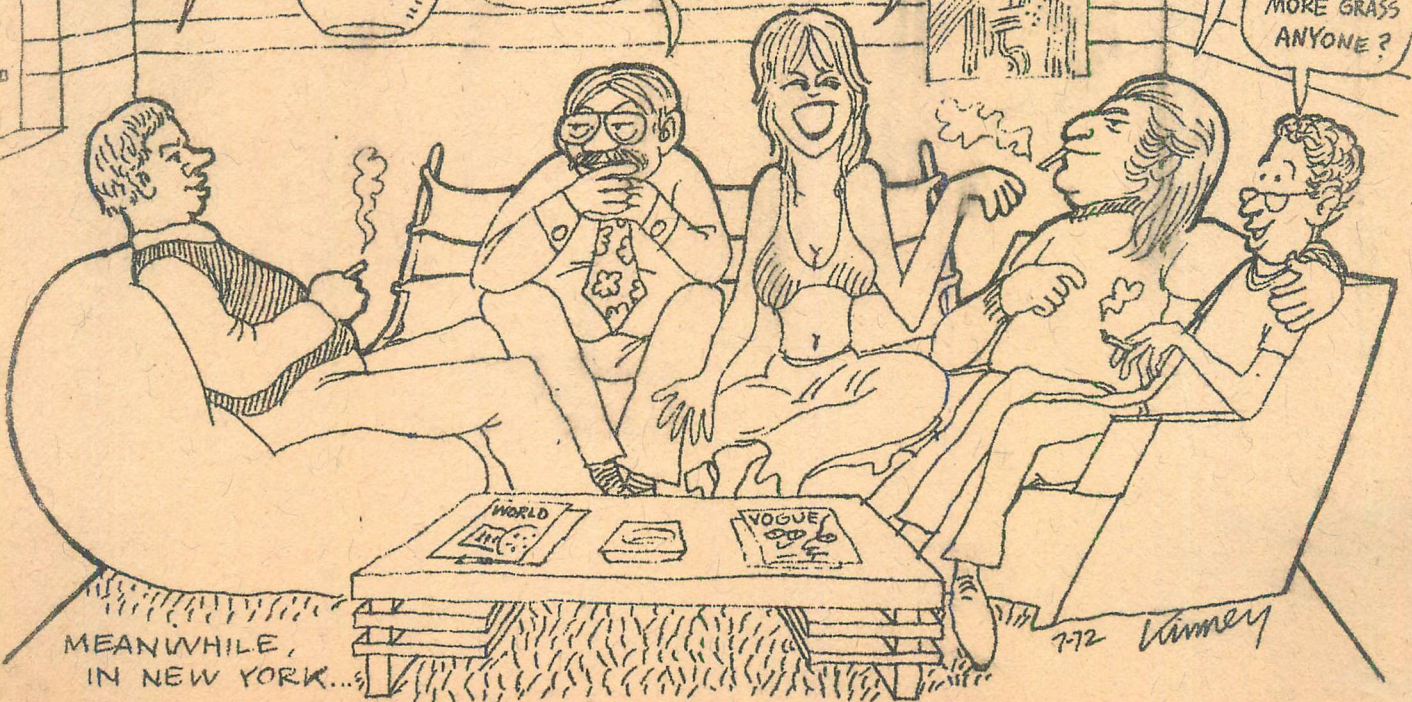
JOAN AND I ARE EXPLORING SOME OF THE SPANISH STOREFRONTS AND FINDING A LOT OF SURPRISES!

AND WHY JUST THE OTHER DAY RICHARD AND I WERE BROWSING THRU THE LITTLE JUNK SHOP DOWN AT BROADWAY AND 11TH ... YOU KNOW THE ONE? — GOOD! ... WELL! WE GOT THE DARLINDEST MILLER BEER CALENDER FROM 1938 ... FOR JUST TEN DOLLARS. WE FELT WE WERE VERY LUCKY WHAT WITH THE WAY PRICES ARE DOUBLING AND TRIPLING THESE DAYS!!

OUTRAGEOUS ISN'T IT!

PRETTY SOON AVERAGE FOLKS LIKE US JUST WON'T BE ABLE TO AFFORD POPULAR CULTURE ANYMORE!

TEE HEE! MORE GRASS ANYONE?



MEANWHILE, IN NEW YORK...









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cover -- JAY KINNEY

Notebooklings (Editorial) -- Hank Luttrell . . . . .	3
The Worst from Wastepaper -- Grant Canfield . . . . .	5
With Malice Toward All (A column about Books) -- Joe Sanders . . . . .	12
The Frisbee Players of Triton -- A. M. Schneider . . . . .	17
When Britain Led the Space Race -- Andrew Darlington . . . . .	20
Miss Tey Considered -- Lesleigh Luttrell . . . . .	24
Words from Readers (Letter Column) . . . . .	29

backcover -- TOM FOSTER

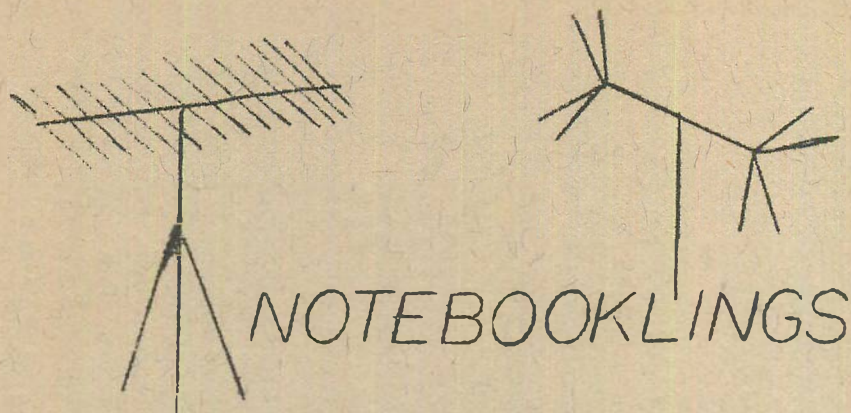
#### INTERIOR ARTWORK

Sheryl Birkhead 2  
 Grant Canfield 5, 6, 7, 9, 10,  
 12, 16, 17  
 Grant Canfield & Jay Kinney 31, 33

Grant Canfield & Tim Kirk 11  
 Jack Gaughan 14  
 Mike Gilbert 21  
 Doug Lovenstein 25, 29



+ Hank Luttrell +



Since the last issue of Starling, summer has at last come to Madison. In my last issue's editorial, I allowed as how we were probably going to survive our first winter up here in the frigid north. After that issue was published, we had a huge late snowfall -- but we survived that, too. I must admit that I'm glad that summer is finally, definitely, here. Winter is so long in Wisconsin. Not too long ago some of the Couches came up to visit us, and mentioned that some spring flowers that have long since vanished in Missouri are still around here in Madison. All of this tends to make me look forward with enthusiasm to Fandom's Summer Festivals which are to take place very soon in Cincinnati, better known as the Midwestcon. The affair will probably have come and gone before you get this Starling, but I do hope you were able to come and worship the sun with the rest of us.

The rest of our convention plans for the year can be briefly stated: Torcon. We've been in Toronto once before, in 1970 when the fact that the Worldcon was held in Germany precluded our attending the Worldcon; we went to Toronto's Fan Fair instead. We enjoyed that trip immensely -- the convention was great, and we also liked Toronto, and we are looking forward to returning. We arrived in Toronto early for the convention and among other things spent a great deal of time in their museum -- a splendid place, I recommend you spend some time there.

#### STARLING CONSUMER REPORT

First of all, I'd like to report that we've certainly been fine, upstanding consumers lately. That is, we've purchased one of ultimate consumer oddments, a color television. A friend of ours works in a video studio for the university, so when we began thinking about buying a set, we asked him what sort he would recommend. "Buy the best," he said, "Sony." The Sony color receivers, it seems, are technically far ahead any of the US models, as they use only one electron gun rather than the three required by older processes. The result is that they Sony's not only tend to have a better picture, but they tend to be more reliable. Our old set was a tiny black and white Sony which we had gotten second hand from Ray Fisher, who had bought it only to view the first space walks. The Sony warranty is much superior to any offered by domestic brands, a fact which more or less finally decided us upon getting the Sony. Our new set is a 15-inch set, rather than the top-of-the-line 17-inch set; but after our old television this one seems huge.

I've never been much of a television watcher, actually. When I was very young, I can recall attaching myself to the screen for most of Saturday morning (which I called "Cowboy day") to watch old western movies -- such as those featuring Hopalong Cassidy, one of my favorites -- and a few made for television horse opera series. Apparently in those days westerns were considered standard Saturday morning kiddie programming, rather than the cartoon yardgoods that are broadcast today. Eventually



this steady diet must have lead to a surfeit, because by high school I couldn't be dragged to watch a western, either on television or at a theatre. It is only more recently that a strong interest in American movies, particularly fine directors like John Ford and Howard Hawkes, has lead me to an appreciation of the western film genre.

During my high school days, I was contemptuous of television, and considered almost all of it a waste of time. I believe I allowed myself to watch "Twilight Zone," but very little else. I'm sure I missed lots of enjoyable programs -- but I was busy, tucked away in a corner reading science fiction; during my later high school days I became increasingly active in fandom. When I went away to university, there was little opportunity to watch television, but it was during this period that I began to develop an increasing interest in movies. Eventually, after Lesleigh and I were married, it was this interest, basically, that led us to purchase that 8-inch Sony. Then, having purchased it, there was constant frustration that there weren't more movies being broadcast. One of the few advantages of living in a huge city must be the fact that the many TV stations will broadcast a large number of films.


We soon developed the habit of watching network and local news -- or at least turning on the set and listening to it while making dinner, and watching anything which seemed particularly interesting. Very little network programing managed to hold our interest for very long. We made it a point of watching "Laugh-In" for a while, but soon grew tired of it. Some of the adventure shows are okay if there isn't anything else to do; "Ironsides" in particular we seemed to watch fairly often. Jack Webb-produced shows are always good for a camp laugh or two, but I don't often feel like wasting my time that obviously. Last summer there were two replacement shows that we thought were great: "The Copy Cats" and "The Marty Feldman Comedy Machine." The Feldman show in particular was brilliant -- I understand that it was sort of a watered down version of the British "Monty Python" series. It certainly made US attempts at television humor -- even "The Copy Cats", which was pretty good -- look pale.

Our television in Columbia was often a focus for small get togethers while we clustered in front of our set for some dreadful movie -- dreadful movies at least provided lots of opportunities for interesting conversation; in fact conversations become necessary to compensate for the movie's lack of interest. Not all of them were dreadful, though, come to think of it. The W. C. Fields series was splendid, though the Mae West films which accompanied Fields were sometimes not as good. The Universal horror film series was sometimes fine, with things like Bride of Frankenstein, and sometimes horrible, with a never ending supply of "Inner Sanctum" movies. We get some interesting movies here in Madison. The local PBS channel broadcasts a fine series of "art" movies, plus a locally originated series of RKO features, which range from "Citizen Kane" to "King Kong" to the Marx Brothers and Val Lewton horror films.

On our old set, it was impossible to read the subtitles on foreign language films broadcast on PBS. This was very frustrating. It got us thinking about a set with a bigger screen. We've always enjoyed watching color television at friends and relative's houses. . . so here we are. In order to get some use out of our new investment, if nothing else, we've been watching a little more network program lately. . . there still isn't too much which holds our interest for very long; perhaps we just haven't watched the right shows yet.



# THE WORST FROM Waste Paper



BY GRANT CANFIELD & FRIENDS

Some time last summer I discovered, as we all have at one time or another, that I had fallen drastically behind in my correspondence. Being a fan of both Courage and Per-spicacity, I determined that the easiest way to rectify the matter would be to publish, in time-honored tradition, a one-shot letter substitute. So I did.

Not for a minute did I reckon that 6 more issues of WASTE PAPER, as this little piece of therapy was called, would be published, nor that it would tend to appear on a bi-weekly schedule. But with a Mailing List of 50 persons (and 2 questionables), I was astonished to receive enthusiastic response from 90% of the persons! With such regular fixes of gooey egoboo, I could not help but forge ahead.

Despite its modest success, however, WASTE PAPER was the type of personal fanzine which burns itself out very rapidly. It lasted through 7 issues, from July to December 1972. In the same span of time, Richard Geis almost completed one issue of his public diary. He might have accomplished more, I am told, but his rubber pyjamas sprung a leak.

Upon the demise of WASTE PAPER, several of the more perceptive and intelligent Mailing Listers (a group widely known for intelligence and perceptivity, the veritable creme de la creme of fandom, you betcha) indicated to me that perhaps there were bits and pieces from the seven WASTE PAPERS which could and should be shared with a broader spectrum of the fannish audience. In short, it was their suggestion that I assemble a WASTE PAPER Retrospective.



I figured, what the hell, this is a cheap way to get a fanzine piece. So I did it. 6  
As a matter of fact, I assembled two such pieces.

The second of these two pieces contains all the vile, foul, offensive, obscene, disgusting, perverted, odious, lewd and downright dirty material printed in WASTE PAPER. It will appear in a forthcoming issue of Terry Hughes' fanzine MOTA. Please tell him why you are subscribing, so the sudden influx of sticky quarters doesn't confuse him.

Terry has no class, of course, which is why he gets the dirty parts. But STARLING is a high-class Family Fanzine, and its editors are known throughout fandom as the epitome of gentility and aristocratic "breeding", though Hank does have one of Wisconsin's most disgusting collections of tow jam. At any rate, STARLING gets the first of the two WASTE PAPER Retrospectives, namely the clean parts.

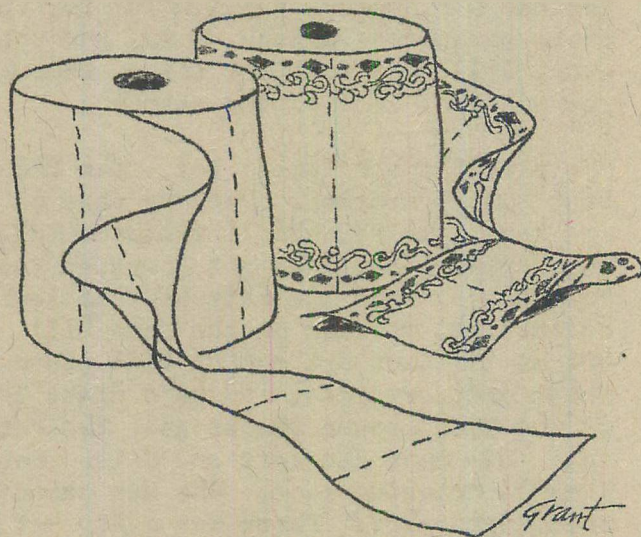
Here they are. I hope you enjoy.

\* \* \* \* \*

PORSCHE NEWS (from WASTE PAPER 1) Now we have it: a brand-spanking-new white "non-appearance" Porsche 914, with just over 500 miles on it at this writing. The first day we had it, we drove across all the bridges. We drove north across the Golden Gate Bridge, then east over the Richmond Bridge, then back into San Francisco by way of the Bay Bridge.

The Porsche 914 is available as either the "appearance group" option or the "non-appearance group." Both cars are exactly the same, nuts-&-bolts-wise, but with the "appearance group" option you get black vinyl rollbar, yellow foglights in a special chrome underbumper, and plush-pile carpeting. Also a slightly niftier center console. "Appearance group" 914s cost \$300 more than "non-appearance groupers," so we opted for the N-A. Actually, I think it looks better than the "appearance group," because it is more "pure". The foregoing is an example of "reverse snobbery."

We have found that this classification system can be carried over into other, non-automotive, aspects of life. Cathy will say, "We're having hot dogs for dinner. Do you want an appearance dog or a non-appearance dog?" If I say I'll have the appearance dog, I get mustard and relish with it. The non-appearance dog is your basic unadorned weiner. Similarly, we have discovered that you can get appearance or non-appearance toilet paper, aspirin, or dope (the appearance group dope is cleaned and seedless). WASTE PAPER, as you probably have already surmised, is a "non-appearance" fanzine.



AN EVENING WITH GROUCHO (from WASTE PAPER 2) Bill (Fillmore) Graham presented Groucho Marx in concert at the Masonic Auditorium Friday evening. Cathy and I went. We had great seats. In fact, we had terrific seats. David Steinberg, the comic, was there too, and we had better seats than he. He was a row in back and off to the right of us. We were dead center, third row from the stage, possibly the best seats in the house. We didn't have to "know" anybody to get such good seats, we were just lucky.





Anyway, for three hours we listened to Groucho Marx tell anecdotes from his Vaudeville days, talk about his brothers, tell funny stories, and sing funny songs. There were also film clips from Animal Crackers, A Night at the Opera, A Day at the Races and Duck Soup. It was one of the most pleasant evenings of our lives. Cathy and I are both Marx Brothers freaks, and we wouldn't have missed this for the world. Groucho is 81 years old, and he's not going to be around much longer.

I can't begin to relate all of the stories he told, about some of his famous friends, such as W. C. Fields, T. S. Eliot, Winston Churchill, Laurence Olivier, Fanny Brice, and on and on. He started the show by talking about his family. He told how his brothers and he got their nicknames. Leonard was always chasing chicks, so he became Chico. Arthur played the harp-- as well as any other

musical instrument you care to name, according to Groucho--so he became Harpo. Julius was the serious one, so he was Groucho. A younger brother was in some nebulous fashion interested in, or associated with, the wreck of the Hindenberg, so he was Zeppo, for zeppelin. The youngest brother had been given a pair of rubbers ("the regular kind," Groucho explained, "the kind you wear on your feet"), but he didn't like to wear them in the rain. He didn't want to get them wet. He was called "Gumshoes", which became Gummo.

Terence O'Flaherty, a columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle, says only a fool would try to paraphrase Groucho Marx, and when you think about it, that's probably right. However, I'll be a fool and try to remember just one of the stories he told, just to give you a slight feel of the evening.

"We played the Palace a lot. The Palace was the top theater in Vaudeville, where the best acts performed. Once we were on the same bill with Sarah Bernhardt. She only had one leg. She demanded a thousand dollars a performance, and it had to be paid before the performance. She got fourteen thousand dollars for two performances a day for seven days. And she only had one leg! I had two legs, and I only got thirty five dollars and we were on the same bill. Another time we played the Palace with Fanny Brice. Another act on the bill was called "Stedman and Rats and Cats". Stedman had these ordinary rats, and he'd dress them up like jockeys and they'd ride on the backs of the cats around the stage. The cats were the horses, you see. It was an incredible act! Stedman and Rats and Cats. One night we heard a scream and I went running into Fanny's dressing room. She was standing up on a chair with her clothes gathered up around her waist. There was a big rat on the floor. Stedman came running in and he captured the rat. This wasn't one of the rats from his act. This was a big sewer rat, and Stedman captured it with his bare hands. A sewer rat! A year later we were on the same bill again, with Stedman. This same rat was now the star of the act! That's a true story. All my stories are true stories, mostly."

TIM KIRK WRITES (from WASTE PAPER 3) "Isn't Los Angeles a swell place?" ((You can have it, Tim. In fact, I'll write you out a deed. Cathy says if she lived in LA she'd spend all her time looking at her feet, because she can't imagine she'd ever have a reason to look up.))



THE DEATH OF ENERGUMEN (from WASTE PAPER 3) Mike Glicksohn is folding ENERGUMEN, and I know why. It's because he's a Sore Loser! But that's okay, because I am too. Therefore, as fellow Hugo-has-beens, we made a Pact together. I am no longer a fan artist,,having turned my energies into making WASTE PAPER a Hugo-calibre fanzine. By the same token, Mr. Glicksohn is no longer a fan editor. His first portfolio of fan art will appear in the upcoming issue of Mr. Bill Bowers' OUTWORLDS.

THE THREE BEST JOBS IN THE U.S.A. (from WASTE PAPER 4) Our man in Kansas City, Phil Hofstra, recently made a business trip to Washington DC. While there he visited the U.S. Bureau of Standards. He reports that within those hallowed halls can be found the 3 cushiest jobs in the nation.

BLOWTORCH JOCKEY!!! At the Bureau of Standards are laboratories for testing all types of building materials. One of these labs is set up to establish ratings of combustibility, or non-combustibility, of materials such as metal siding, asbestos insulation and so forth. A sheet of roofing asbestos, or whatever material is being tested, is attached to an upright frame, which has numerous leads to a bank of computers along one wall. The laboratory technician monitors the computers, but it's the lab assistant who has the real soft job. All day long he shoots the testing material with a blowtorch until it burns. That's all. That's his job, blowtorch jockey at the Bureau of Standards.

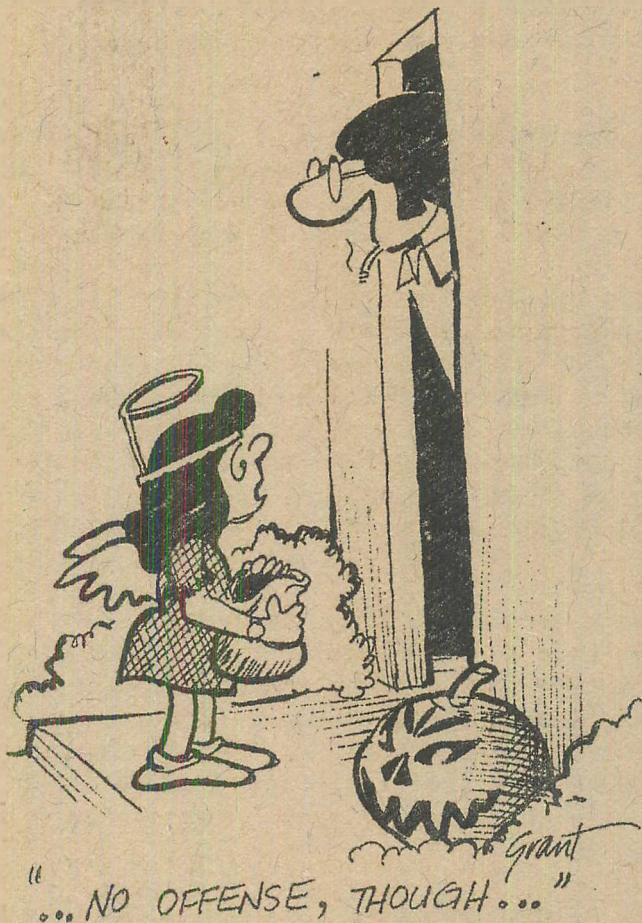
HAIL-CANNONEER!!! The second of the three great jobs to be found at the Bureau of Standards is in another materials testing lab. In this lab they test roofing materials for damage due to hail bombardment. Besides the omnipresent bank of computers, monitored by the senior lab technician, there is also a freezer full of custom-made ice balls or 'hail'. The assistant technician goes to the freezer for a load of 'hail', which he then loads into a specially-designed cannon. Then he fires the cannon at the roofing material being tested. So that's his job: hail-cannoneer. If you have any Pirate experience, you're probably a shoo-in for this job.

PLUG-PULLER!!! The last of the three great jobs is to be found in a lab where they test traps. Not like in mouse, but like in sink. There's this sink sitting there, see, with its S-curve trap underneath. The trap is attached to the computers, which will measure flow rates through the trap, coefficients of corrosion, constants of clogage and so on. The plug is put in the sink, and the lab assistant pours in a few gallons of water. The senior lab technician goes over to watch his computers, and when he's ready, he shouts, "Pull the plug, Gridley!" And Gridley pulls the plug. That's what he does all day long: fills up sinks with water and then pulls the plug. Terry Hughes, Chris Couch, and Hank Luttrell, with their vast experience as Professional Dishwashers, would be naturals for this job.

And I spend all my days hunched over a jive drawing board, drawing details for architectural projects for the Military-Industrial Complex, ruining my eyes and my kidneys. And what do you do all day long?

BASQUE-ET CASE (from WASTE PAPER 4) John D. Berry, wandering cowboy nomad, is back in San Francisco after his travels in the North, where he slew a Frost Giant and beat a poker hand of 4 aces with a pair of sixes and a loaded Bluntline Special. Last night the three of us crowded into the Porsche and went to John's favorite Basque restaurant, a family-style place in a North Beach Basque hotel. John begged me not to reveal this, as it will surely destroy his reputation, especially among Brooklyn fandom, as a Famous Food Freak--but John D. Berry actually had enough to eat! He got filled up! He turned down Cathy's offer to finish up her last slab of beef! This is not science-fiction! This is fact!





GOBLIN NEWS (from WASTE PAPER 5) Halloween has come and gone. Cathy and I drove down the Coast Highway to Half Moon Bay to get our pumpkins this year. It was ever so much more ethnic to wade through the mud of Tom & Pete's Drive-In Pumpkin Patch to pick out our pumpkins than it would have been simply to buy them at the supermarket around the corner. WASTE PAPER is nothing if not ethnic... although to tell the truth, our ethnicity is your basic WASPism.

Anyway, then we carved our pumpkins. I have a certain reputation in the neighborhood for carving the most gruesome, most grotesque, but most "charming" pumpkins on the block. This year, if I may say so, I outdid myself.

Trick or treat dialogue coming up here. One of the characters is me. Guess which one.

"Trick or Treat."

"Hi. Have an apple."

"Thank You."

"That's a very nice costume."

"I'm an angel."

"I can see you are, honey."

"You have a very large nose."

W. C. Fields had a word for small children: "Fricaseed!"

DISGUSTING MAIL (from WASTE PAPER 5) "Eeeeeeeeyyyeccccchhh," Cathy said, opening a package from Alpajpuri, "What's this?" What it was was two slugs from Washington, wrapped in cellophane, with two little salt shakers marked "his" and "hers". Gee, thanks, Paj. Unfortunately, Cathy is on a low-oligosaccharide diet, so I ate them both.

LEFT-HANDED CAVEMEN (from WASTE PAPER 5) Freff and I were talking about the custom of hand-shaking. I maintained it probably evolved from cavemen showing their right hand was weapon-free, therefore = friend. 'What about left-handed cavemen?' Freff said. I fantasized a left-handed caveman holding a knife behind his back, and dropping the axe from his right hand, thus fooling his stupid foe into thinking he was unarmed. The enemy advances to shake right hands, and slice. Freff said, "There are a lot of old left-handed cavemen around, you know."

TUBE TALK (from WASTE PAPER 6) Nostalgia time for you kids too old for APA-45. Cathy and I were over at Calvin and India Demmon's house recently. During the course of an extremely pleasant evening, one of the subjects of



conversation was an old TV series, which Calvin and I both remembered from our childhoods, called Winky Dink. Who Out There remembers Winky Dink? Winky Dink was a cartoon character who was always getting into trouble, and it was the responsibility of "you kids at home" to draw Winky Dink out of trouble. You had this "Winky Dink Magic Screen", a sheet of simple acetate, which stuck to your TV screen. You drew on it with "Winky Dink Magic Crayons", which would rub off with a rag. Suppose Winky Dink is in trouble. The announcer comes on voice-over and says that what Winky Dink needs to get out of trouble is a boat. So you draw a boat in the middle of the TV screen. Then you get the thrill of seeing Winky Dink escape in the boat you drew. (Of course, if you don't have a Winky Dink Magic Screen, and if your mother has threatened you with castration if you ever again draw with crayons on the real TV screen, all you see is Winky Dink floating across the water, supported by nothing.) I think Marshall McLuhan would have liked Winky Dink. I remember another kids' cartoon show, about a baseball freak named Rootie Kazootie. He was heavy, but nothing like Winky Dink.



**MORE TUBE TALK** (from WASTE PAPER 6) If you listen to the theme song for All in The Family, as sung by Carrol O'Conner and Jean Stapleton at the start of the show, you may be as puzzled as I was by the next-to-last line. I could never make it out. It sounded something like, "Jeezer oiler sour red grape." However, the TV critic in the Chronicle recently solved the dilemma by the simple expedient of phoning the producer and asking him what the line is. You can do that if you're the TV critic for a big metropolitan daily. Anyway, here's what they are really singing: "Gee, our old La Salle ran great." Remember where you read it. No other fanzine performs this service.

**BIRTHDAY BOY** (from WASTE PAPER 7) My 27th birthday has come and gone. Cathy's parents gave me 5 bottles of wine. Her grandmother gave me a whole bunch of homemade jams and preserves. I got birthday cards from Morris Keesan, Terry Hughes, Sheryl Birkhead, and my insurance agent. I trust this won't be misinterpreted: Cathy herself gave me a set of horns.

**KIRK EGOBOO** (from WASTE PAPER 7) WASTE PAPER 7 extends ALL Egoboo to Tim Kirk, an obscure fan artist from Long Beach, California. Many of you know Mr. Kirk as the two-time recipient of the Hugo award for the Best Fan Artist of the year, but that is just one facet of the amazing Mr. Kirk's colorful personality. Did you know, for instance, that he has also enjoyed a lucrative career as a door-to-door TV GUIDE salesman? Or that he once rowed across the Caspian Sea in a rusty tablespoon? Or that he has six wives, all named Felix? Or that he recently had a cover illustration on a Lin Carter novel from DAW Books? (True fact. It's a beautiful piece, I might add.) Those of you who think they have met Mr. Kirk in person, and who therefore picture him as tall, dark, and handsome, will be surprised to learn that that is merely his public persona, an automaton controlled from a cavern in the



area of the spleen by the real Tim Kirk, who in fact looks exactly like one of his little creatures, which is to say criminally cute. However, it is not for his cuteness, nor his artistry, nor his salesmanship, nor his rowing, nor his wives, that WASTE PAPER extends this honor to Tim Kirk. Rather it is for his substantial contributions to the field of Sexology. As the author of the definitive text, The Coital Uses of Cream Cheese (Harper and Row, 1971), WASTE PAPER is proud to salute you, Mr. TIM KIRK!!!

CAT FAITH (from WASTE PAPER 7) The last night John was here, having brought a few more things to store in our basement storeroom, we had a minor crisis. John had left the back door open for a few minutes and we thought we had lost Chloe (at the time she wasn't Chloe, just "cat"). Cathy and I combed the house looking for her, but to no avail. We were sure she had wandered out and was laying squashed on Fulton Street. John kept saying, "Have faith in your cat. I guarantee she's still hiding somewhere in the house. Just have faith in your cat." We didn't believe him, though, and worried all evening, between spurts of futile searching. Finally she came strolling out of one of her hiding places--I can't imagine where she could have been that we couldn't find her-- yawning as if to say, "What's happening? What's all the fuss?"

John yawned himself and said, "See? You just have to have faith in your cat." Then he broke the chair.

THE LAST WORD (from WASTE PAPER 7) And this time it really is the last word. This has been fun, folks, and I hope to see you all again some time soon. Hang in there, keep those cards and letters coming, and don't let your meat loaf. Merry Christmas--or YULE IS, AS IS GRANT.

Peace.





# WITH MALICE TOWARD ALL

+ Joe Sanders +



One evening about a month ago, as I lay sprawled in front of the TV, I heard a muffled thud from somewhere in the house. I checked upstairs where my sons were asleep. Nothing; they all were asleep, curled up in their various beds with their various blankets or teddy bears. The only sound was an occasional baby snort. The goldfish in the big boys' room goggled curiously at me. I concluded that I must have imagined the noise, and I went back to the TV. Then the same noise. This time it seemed to come from the basement, so I opened the door and turned on the light. Everything looked okay until I noticed there was a book at the foot of the stairs. Floating.

On the night the pipe from the sump pump clogged, our basement was piled high with cartons of books, magazines, and records. That, in fact, accounted for the sound I heard -- as the box at the bottom of a stack became completely saturated, it came apart and dumped all the boxes stacked on it into the water. Dealing with this catastrophe hasn't, to put it mildly, been fun. However, I've learned a couple of things I'd like to share with you.

The first thing has to do with practical steps. A great deal of my spare time, after I had pumped the water out the window, replaced the pipe, and got the pump connected again, has been occupied in drying things. Some scattered observations from that time may have a certain grim fascination for other book freaks. I discovered, as a matter of interest, that there were really serious differences in the quality of paper, cover stocks, etc. used in magazines and books. The bindings of Pocket Books pbs, for example, tend to burst as the pages absorb water and swell. And, as of the early-mid 50's, GALAXY used a cover stock that tears like tissue paper when wet, the ink slipping through the fingers like cold slime. Even the staples in those GALAXIES were of inferior quality, bleeding long rust stains down the page. The cover inks of WEIRD TALES, SPACEWAYS, and AMAZING/FANTASTIC from the 50's also tended to come loose,



but in sheets, transferring large chunks of cover illo to any other magazine in the stacks. (Incidentally, Polaroid pictures turn into a rubbery film, hanging off the cardboard backing in flacid sacs, about twice the normal size of the snapshot. They dry into wavy, funhouse-mirror versions of the original.) F&SFs were the publications least affected, because their dull-finished covers held up well and didn't even wrinkle very much. Mimeographed fanzines dry okay except for staple-rust stains, but the dittoed ones transfer rather badly. Of all things, record albums are likely to be most seriously affected by immersion, both because the cardboard itself comes unstuck and because the paper cover glued to the cardboard, also unstuck, is likely to adhere to the covers of the next album in the stack.

As more general advice, I'd suggest that anyone in a similar mess try to separate things while they still are wet and then let them dry in such a way as to preserve the shape. When there are large numbers of wet items, it's difficult to find a place to put each out separately, but everything tends to stick together worse the longer its left piled in a heap. Mary and I strung clothes lines around the garage (later the basement, when we got that dried out) and hung rows of pulp magazines, comic books, etc. all over the place. That brings me to a second piece of advice. Naturally, pages tend to wrinkle and covers to curl; however, if the magazine or whatever is hanging with its spine up it will dry roughly in the right shape. We began by standing things upright to save space, but that didn't work at all. Sopping wet, they collapsed forward on themselves; the pages of hardcover books slid out of their boards. Once we had the clothesline up, though, and a dehumidifier going, the process became a more or less mechanical job of taking down the wash every day or so.

The second important point struck me while the turmoil was still going on. I was surprised at how well I could function at a time when much of the collection that I'd assembled with loving care, carried from Roachdale to Indianapolis to Fargo to Mentor, appeared utterly ruined. It was as if the stuff wasn't as important to me as it had seemed. I decided it wasn't -- not as important, anyway. Being the person I am, I'll probably always love books. Now, though, I have people to love, too. I realized I'd checked upstairs first not simply because that was the most likely place for a sound to come from but because I was most concerned about what could happen there, to my three sons. My collection was most important to me, I suppose, when I had nothing else. Right now, I'd rather lose all the books I own than have my fourteen-month-old son, Gregory -- who's cradled in my arm, taking a bottle of juice, as I write this -- fall downstairs and skin his knee.

\* \* \* \* \*

I notice that STARLING lately has had less about stf, more and more about various other areas of pop culture. As a matter of fact, I read about as many mystery novels as stf. Would you people prefer me to keep the reviews as they have been, change to mystery reviews, mix or alternate reviews of stf and mysteries, or what? Please give me some advice.

\* \* \* \* \*

JACK OF SHADOWS, by Roger Zelazny. Signet, 95¢.  
TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES, by Roger Zelazny. Signet, 95¢.  
STRANGE DOINGS, by R. A. Lafferty. DAW, 95¢.

Criticism of works by living and growing writers probably is an inherently unrewarding activity. It's like testimony from a man who's just been run over by a diesel semi -- he may be able to comment on the truck's speed and the design of the tire tread; but he can't really say much about the rig's destination or whether the driver's in



control. That's especially true of Zelazny and Lafferty, two extremely talented and supremely self-assured writers. Each seems utterly sure of what he wants to do, and each has faith in his ability to do it. So take this as another installment -- I've written about both men before and certainly will again -- in my continuing fascination with their work, destinations and the journies thereto.



Despite its fascination, Zelazny's recent work impresses me as heading full speed in the wrong direction. In particular, it seems to me that Zelazny is experimenting with kinds of stories that other people have already done. And though in many ways he's a better writer than Jack Vance or A.E. Van Vogt, Zelazny still can't do a Vance or a Van Vogt as well as the original.

JACK OF SHADOWS is the semi-Vance novel. It's like Vance in its lovingly constructed alien world (supposedly a future Earth but actually, like Vance's *THE DYING EARTH*, simply a place where Imagination can do its damndest), its elliptical characters (who reveal very little of their true selves in dialogue exaggeratedly formal at the most chaotic moments), and its appearance of being an improvised game (in the strange world the hero, his opponents, or the immediate setting may reveal any completely unexpected trait the author wishes; once mentioned, strange traits can be fitted into a provisional structure, but as the story proceeds the author can drop in more surprises at will). JACK OF SHADOWS is an interesting book, rather more resonant than most of Vance's work but somehow less successful. Vance's characters (such as Kirth Gersen of *THE STAR KING et seq.*, and Adam Reith of *PLANET OF ADVENTURE*) are monomaniacs. They want one thing, simple to define though extremely difficult to get, and a reader finds that desire easy to share. With that simple purpose in mind, Vance's characters are easy to understand and identify with. Their super-cool language and surface behavior don't keep a reader from appreciating them as human beings. Jack of Shadows, now. . . Zelazny is doing something more subtle with character than Vance. But I'm not sure what. Jack wants revenge, power, and the girl. Okay, those are easy to recognize, but I'm not sure why I should care. Jack's desires are based on actions that took place before the story opened, and on relationships only hinted at. But without that background, how deeply can a reader understand Jack? He is interesting as part of the strange world, but his personal concerns are not especially gripping, since a reader shares few of his thoughts or feelings. Jack's actions before he is aware that he owns a soul, his rejection of the soul when it is brought to him, and his final acceptance of his soul are interesting, too, but Jack feels the effects of having a soul for too little time to let a reader know what difference it has made. Elsewhere, in *LORD OF LIGHT* for example, Zelazny makes the characters part of a ritual pattern; the echoes of symbolic roles help to flesh out the characters. In JACK OF SHADOWS, though, the shape of symbolism is private. The Lord of Bats is Jack's enemy, but we don't know why -- nor, though "Lord of Bats" suggests some evil principle, is this deeper reason for hating him developed. Their antagonism remains vague and arbitrary. Finally even the nature of reality is literally what anyone imagines it to be, Jack says, too occupied with his immediate concerns to do more. So, interesting as the book is, it never comes to life for me. While I was reading Zelazny's early stories, they struck me as rather sketchy and fragmented; then, as I finished reading or shortly afterwards, everything would come together and my heart would break. JACK OF SHADOWS remains merely interesting.

So does *TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES*. In this one, Zelazny is doing his own *WORLD OF NULL A*.



Through a series of bodies, the hero guides humanity toward what he considers a saner life. Zelazny's story is much more clearly organized and better written than Van Vogt's, but again it's ultimately less impressive than the original. I'm not even sure but what the neatness detracts from the overall effect. Being able to follow the plot better than in Van Vogt's novel, a reader is able to pay more attention to the character(s). Trouble is, all the characters sound the same. Not act the same, now, but since the book is written in the first person and since the central character is supposed to delete part of himself between incarnations, it's puzzling that each narrator up and down the scale writes in the same tone, etc. Someone might counter that they are, after all, forms of the same person and that Megri is an extremely perceptive and literary gangster to begin with -- another thing that distracted me, since the image of Mafia leaders hardly fits Zelazny's hero and there's no hint of how he came to be so suave -- but that just suggests another question: If there's so little difference, why bother to go through the process at all? Zelazny's future society is interesting, but not described fully enough to show the effects of his hero's actions, either. So, again, why bother? The question comes up at the end of the book, too, and Zelazny's hero replies "How the hell should I know? . . . I am not even certain what I have learned myself, except that I now appreciate what it feels like to have been assumed into the workings of a great machine." True. In the book the machine is the plot. It's well constructed and -- that word again -- interesting. But the central character in all his roles gives a reader only part of what it feels like. We are aware of the sensations of being a cog, turning and being turned; however, the cog never becomes individually, believably human.

The odd thing in both books is that Zelazny is not simply dogging it, hacking out things that will sell because of his reputation. In each novel his handling of details is ingenious, and the whole mannered, cryptic production is executed with patience and skill. It probably would not be so interesting, against all odds, if Zelazny himself weren't interested in it. Zelazny seems perfectly sure of the value of what he's doing. I wish I could get some sense of what it is.

Lafferty, on the other hand, makes uncertainty work for him. A good Lafferty story flickers in and out of focus, rambles away from the point down a grassy lane that somehow drops a reader back into the thick of the issue, hems and haws, and pauses from time to time for discussion of the art of storytelling. You're never quite sure what he's getting at, or why a story works. But most of the time it does.

As the above list suggests, much of Lafferty's best work is in the novel length, where he has room to perform his whole repertoire. In the short story length, his ideas tend to be too visible. "Once on Aranea," for example, has some lovely moments, like the fast survey of other astroids very early in the story. But the story has no room for digressions. All Lafferty can do is run through his plot, a variation on a theme that would not disgrace or ennoble a medium-quality fanzine. Space explorer who looks like a spider is trapped in a cocoon by alien spiders on an asteroid, so that he can turn into a spider. He does. When he's retrieved and taken back to Earth, spiders start appearing all over the place . . . Yes, you can finish it for yourself. Lafferty gives the story as much freshness as he can in the writing, notably the description of the explorer in the cocoon, but it's still a dumb, trivial idea. The story, despite Lafferty's efforts, isn't much better. However, he succeeds in bringing a tired idea to life in "Dream", by his use of juicy detail: "Did the lampposts have hair on them, Miss Teresa? Did they pant and smell green--" Fun.

The stories in STRANGE DOINGS vary in quality, but the level is fairly high. Some are pleasant, some are charming, and some can cut you to pieces through the charm. It's not simply that Lafferty has cute ideas. Any dullard can have strange ideas, stack them on a page with a steady erosion of interest, and conclude that writing sure is a lot of work. Lafferty, at his best, does an intricate dance around his ideas, oc-



asionally stopping to comment on how odd they look from different angles and to remark that this writing is a fascinating thing, isn't it? It is. And Lafferty's fascination with storytelling - the endless inventing, shaping, envisioning, putting things together, recognizing, patterning - shines through many of these stories.

Look, for example, at "Continued on Next Rock." On its face, the story is about a group of archaeologists who dig up love notes, incredibly varied in language and age, all addressed to one of their party by a mysterious, timeless stranger. Eventually Magdalen, the girl, is crushed by falling rock -- corresponding, it seems, to solidified time -- and Anteros, the man, becomes a stone figure waiting to be uncovered in the dig. A curious plot, perplexing on its own terms; a reader can impose general coherence on it only by straining. I think that's part of Lafferty's point. The archaeologists are trying to make a coherent picture out of scattered traces of man's presence in time. Magdalen has her own wider and more sensual kind of knowledge, which the others begin to glimpse. And finally the expedition's activities are infiltrated and diverted by another effort to pull together human meaning out of fragments -- Anteros' notes to Magdalen, which stretch human understanding even farther by their form and content: "I am the earth, woolier than wolves and rougher than rocks. I am the bog earth that sucks you in. You cannot give, you cannot take, you cannot love, you think there is something else, you think there is a sky-bridge you may loiter on without crashing down. I am bristled-bear earth, there is no other. . . I am the rotting red earth. Live in the morning or die in the morning, but remember that love in death is better than no love at all.". Anteros' images are deliberately nonhuman and many are consciously unpleasant. But he insists that the one he loves must accept this much of life, too. He represents the impermanent, wordless side of life; yet he composes a love song and etches it in flint. The tension between those drives, in Magdalen, creates an explosion that destroys her -- at least in this time and place -- and imprisons Anteros in stone, while most of the others get back to their efforts to comprehend a narrow, comfortable version of reality.

The story is rough, obscure, and deeply moving. In fact, it fits the description of the stone Anteros on the story's last page: "The carving was fascinating in its miserable passion, his stony love unrequited. He was earth, he was earth itself. Whatever period the carving belonged to, it was outstanding in its power." By concentrating on efforts to create a meaningful vision, in this story as elsewhere, it seems to me that Lafferty is commenting on art as an especially individual expression of the human desire to comprehend experience.

Is that what the story is about? I think so, in part. But many threads are left dangling in my rapid reading, and anyway "Continued on Next Rock" is impressive not as an explanation but as a story. The ideas it hints, suggests, and implants stay with a reader because they're part of a disturbing story. Lafferty's characters are often as nonchalant as Zelazny's, but they are also unpredictably crotchety, babbling, amazed or amused at the unexpectedness of life, and alternately delighted and horrified at being alive. But they do try to make sense of it all. Lafferty is showing that even though an artist is doomed to personal frustration and artistic failure, he still tries to grasp and communicate the widest sense of life that he can. And that's important, certainly, but it's the way Lafferty says it that makes the point newly moving. Lafferty is able to involve a reader in an activity of reading that dramatizes the shaping activity he's writing about. That's quite an accomplishment. Lafferty is quite an artist.





# THE FRISBEE PLAYERS OF TRITON

As he was leaving his conapt with his wife Julie, who had on as usual her ultra-natty outfit even though they were only going down to the laundromat in the building's basement, Ed Glotz got into a philosophical disputation with his wrist-watch.

"That's so great about Nietzsche anyway?" said the tinny voice of the autonomic, self-winding, homeostatic, heterosexual, wholly-obnoxious timing device in its usual telepathic manner.

"Shut up, you punk!" shouted Ed at his arm. "Nietzsche was a lot better than that bum Schopenhauer. Nietzsche could beat Schopenhauer with one hand tied behind his back!"

"Oh, yeah? Sez who?" screamed the voice in his brain.

"Sez me," raged Ed, ripping the mechanism from his wrist. "I've had enough of your backtalk. Take that!" He hurled the watch against the wall of the corridor. "And stop looking at my wife, you sex maniac! Don't think I haven't noticed."

The broken watch lay on the floor, silent.

"My God," said Julie, prancing into the elevator, her arms full of clothes. "He thinks he's talking to his watch. A grown man, physically grown. No, I take that back. Physically not completely grown. Still infantile in parts." She snickered. The elevator responded to their presence and they plunged downward.

The laundry room, when they entered, was empty of other humans. Immediately, a clamor went up from the dozen or fifteen washing machines therein.

"Take me, sir and madam."

"Take me, don't listen to him! His rinse cycle is too short."

"No, use me, I'm better! I guarantee satisfaction!"

"Take me! Don't listen to the others. Everyone ignores me cuz I'm over here in the corner. It's not fair."

"Ed, let's use this one," said Julie. "This one is cute." At once she began stuffing clothes into the machine she had selected. There was much groaning and muttering from the other





washers, but they eventually settled into resentful silence.

18

"Thank you, lady," said the machine Julie had chosen. "I think you're very attractive yourself. You may call me Herbie."

Jesus, thought Ed, I almost forgot. What with my juvenile argument with that perverted watch. The big frisbee contest. To decide the fate of the human race, in our struggle against the repulsive, inhuman slugs from Triton. We don't stand a chance, what with the fact that Percival Smith-Lloyd-Jones, the slugs' best frisbee thrower, possesses psychokinetic powers. We're doomed. Unless A. G. Krauten, the giant Berlin frisbee cartel, manages to come up with something at the last moment. Strange that we should put our faith in those German so-called *Urbarmenschen*. That we turn to them in our time of need, almost instinctively it seems.

Maybe I can find something here to read, to take my mind off the fate that awaits us, Ed thought, shuffling through a stack of cheap, sensational-looking magazines left in the room.

"How about a little music while you wait?" piped up Herbie. "I'm actually quite talented. May I suggest a little Wagner to begin with? Only fifty cents for five minutes."

"Come on, Ed," said Julie, wriggling up to him. "That sounds like a good deal. Only fifty cents. How 'bout it, huh?"

"I'm saving up to enroll in the Hoboken School of Opera for Autonomic Devices," said Herbie.

"How about something from Beethoven's Ninth?" said Ed. "Like the Ode to Joy. I'd much prefer that." For some reason I don't think I could take any Wagner at a time like this, he thought. Adolf von Dungkopf, head of the Krauten cartel, is no doubt listening to selections from Wagner's Greatest Hits on his stereo autoplayer. At this very moment. While preparing to sell out Terra to the slugs.

Julie shot him a look of contempt. "Troublemaker. Herbie can't be expected to give in to your every little whim, you know." She came over to him again. "What are you reading? No doubt one of those trashy science fiction magazines you always seem to be attracted to. Like a fly to honey, or whatever the metaphor is."

"Simile. And anyway, it's a bee to honey. What I'm reading is actually very thought-provoking. It's about the world famous writer Philip Strick--"

"Philip Dick," Julie said with disgust, wadding his expensive orange caterpillar-hair pedal-pushers into a ball and throwing them into the clothes-hamper. "You can't even get a simple thing like his name straight. And I had to marry you. The biggest mistake of my life. One for which I now have to pay by living with you. A man who's no good even in bed."

"The point is, it's presented as a parody, while in reality--"

He broke off. Is it a parody or a pastiche? I never can remember the difference between those two words. First I can't remember his name, and now this. My God, he thought, I must be losing my mind. No doubt as a punishment from some higher entity that watches our every move.

"Maybe it's true. I've been indulging in too much of this so-called literature--to the extent that I can no longer face up to the real world. To my duties as a husband."



12  
He stared gloomily at the lurid magazine without seeing it.

"I just can't understand it," said Julie. "I mean, what kind of person would write for one of those magazines? It's probably financed by our enemies. The slugs." She shuddered.

"This particular writer--Schneider, as he labels himself--claims to be from Canada. Though I've never heard of him. So it's possibly a pseudonym."

"Canada? No wonder he's lost contact with reality. What with polar bears roaming the streets day and night. If they have streets, which I doubt."

"These magazines are not all bad, though. They--"

"No real man reads that kind of trash. Herbie, I'm sure, wouldn't be caught dead--so to speak--reading any science fiction. Would you, Herbie?"

"Herbie, schmerbie!" broke in Ed, his face red. "Herbie's no ordinary washing machine. He's too uppity. There's only one life form that's that uppity. The slugs."

"So, Ed Glotz," said the machine, its gestalt beginning to waver before their eyes, "you've found me out. Yes. Allow me to introduce myself. Percival Smith-Lloyd-Jones. At your service. As it were." The form of the washing machine was now barely visible; imposed over it was the outline of a nauseating-looking mass of gastropodial jelly.

"Julie, how horrible! It's Smith-Lloyd-Jones himself, Triton's champion frisbee player, here in the basement of our very own conapt building!"

Julie gave him a withering stare. "I don't care what you say, Ed Glotz. To me, Herbie, in whatever form he assumes, is still ten times the man you are. You schmuck. Besides, I don't understand what those stupid words like 'conapt' mean." She turned away from him. "Herbie, just say the word and I'll divorce this creep and come and live with you."

I can't believe it, Ed thought. I actually can't believe it. My very own wife, falling in love with a disgusting mass of slime from Triton. The champion of our mortal enemies. The being that will singlehandedly, so to speak, in all probability, bring about the destruction of our entire human civilization and plunge us back into a morass of barbarousness and existential ickyness. I think I'm going to be ill. I can actually, no kidding, feel my gastronomical system working itself into a tizzy of such magnitude that I'll be forced, whether I want to or not, to actually throw up.

"It'll never work, Julie. As regards you and Herbie-Percival. I know what kind of a woman you are. You demand continual satisfaction. But these slugs reproduce by binary fission. So I guess the laugh is on you after all."

"Oh, Herbie! What are you doing?" Julie was leaning up against the bank of washing machines, arching her back, and wriggling her hips frantically. "Oh, Herbie, you big hunk of man, don't stop!"

"You forget, Mr. Glotz," said Smith-Lloyd-Jones, "that I possess psychokinetic powers. Developed to a considerable degree of dexterity."

I can't stand it, thought Ed to himself. I'm getting out of here. He made his way shakily outside the laundry room to the elevator. To think that human society should succumb to such a species. From a satellite that goes against the natural order of things. As does, inevitably, its dominant life form. He pressed the button for the fifteenth floor.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



# WHEN BRITAIN LED THE SPACE RACE<sup>20</sup>

The Fifties Comic Space Hero

+ Andrew Darlington +

In the dark days of the 1950's, when Apollo and Mercury were still figures from mythology, and Science Fiction was a dirty word, Britain was leading the space race on at least one front. Comic hero Dan Dare was liberating the Treens of Venus from the oppression of the Mekon. He rightly substituted the democratic rule of President Son-dar. Meanwhile Jet-Ace Logan was battling alien invaders with names like the Diphdars, while Captain Condor was extending Earth's colonial empire into the galaxy.

Amid the world of Radio's "Housewives Choice", "Beyond our Ken", and "Forces Favorites" listened to in houses with strangely TV-arielless rooftops, a uniquely British explosion of space fiction was feeding pre-pubescent hungry imaginations. It pointed questing fingers towards the books of astronomy on the school library shelf, or the haunting world of paperback fiction, Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, "New Worlds" and "Galaxy". While for those who had T.V. there was Nigel Kneale's "The Quatermass Experiment" or "Journey into Space".

For convenience it can be said that the fuse that was to lead to this explosion of British Science Fiction Comic-strips was lit by the launching of the first issue of the "Eagle" comic. That was 14th April 1950, with Dan Dare's "Kingfisher" adventure emblazoned in color across the glossy cover. It would be no exaggeration to say that Dan Dare's zig-zag eyebrows became the Mr. Spock's pointed ears of their day. Or that the Mekon bore more than a few passing similarities to the Daleks in terms of popularity as well as belligerence. After all, it was possible to buy Dan Dare jigsaw puzzles, Dan Dare pop-up books, Dan Dare plastic models, while there was a Dan Dare serial being run on the radio.

Before Dare of course, there had been comic-strip heroes like Superman from America. There was Steve Dowlings' "Garth" dating from 1943 in the "Daily Mirror". There was the "Tarzan" comic running American newspaper strips of the Edgar Rice Burroughs hero, as well as space-travel oriented stories, aimed at the Juvenile market. There were also 'newly' styled strip-comics like "Knockout" produced in the UK providing the catalyst between the traditional British, and the more direct American styled children's publications.

But Dare was unique. Perhaps his most directly traceable predecessor was Flash Gordon. But then the sword-wielding fantasy aspects of that character discount prolonged analogy. It is more relevant to remember that contemporary to the Dare craze astronomer Patrick Moore was writing his fact-based "Domes of Mars" series. Captain W E Johns, famous for his Biggles stories, was producing his slightly more fantasized "Kings of Space" series which became compulsory reading for budding SF heads. It is to this science-fact based and British tradition that Dare's characteristics are to be attributed.

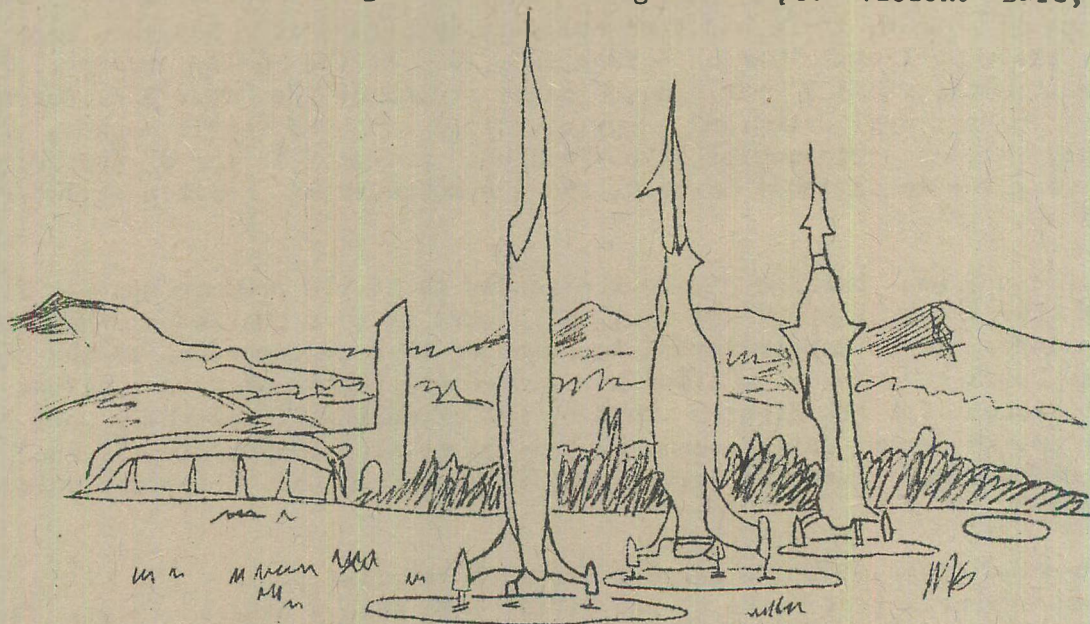
It must be remembered that the largest and most detailed photographs of Mars available in the most advanced text books showed little more than a blurred image. It was not impossible to find books in the school library that advanced the theory that Jurassic-type life-forms thrived beneath the clouds of Venus. So, if reptiles, why not



<sup>21</sup>  
Trees who occasionally produced genius-mutants called the Mekon who were destined to rule the Galaxy.

Frank S. Pepper, creator of Captain Condor, remembers the origins of the genre of these British comics. "For the first few years after the war, the paper shortage was terrible. Big publishers, like the Amalgamated Press (now IPC) couldn't expand because they were so tightly rationed. Even their existing papers were little 12-page pamphlets. While, because paper was rationed on a quota of pre-war consumption, other printers were in a better position. Printers who had specialized in expensive catalogues and advertising material were entitled to buy their percentage of whatever they had used before the war, even though catalogues were not produced because the shortage of consumer goods made advertising a waste of time. Consequently these people had paper to spare, and many of them launched into publishing magazines. Hence the era of the horror comic. Most of these printers knew nothing about editing magazines and didn't even try, because there was an inexhaustible supply of ready-made material in America. It was possible to buy a complete set of plates for an issue of an American horror comic for about 50 pounds, churn out a few thousand copies until the paper ration was exhausted, sell them at sixpence or a shilling -- and they sold! However, some firms did make serious attempts to originate new papers."

Among these new papers was the Hulton Press's gravure process "Eagle". Dan Dare was originated by Frank Hampson, under whose guidance he enjoyed his greatest success. When Hampson left, and Frank Bellamy took over the artwork it developed in a slightly different direction. Bellamy now illustrates "Garth" as well as preparing graphics for "Radio Times" (including TV's space/time series "Doctor Who"). He recently won the Foreign Comics award of the American Academy of Comic Book Arts, the only Briton to be nominated, and a battle scene from his "Heros the Spartan" strip, including over 200 figures, was exhibited in the New York academy. The Dan Dare 'mythology', however, had become passé to an extent. The writers were forced to extend their themes beyond the limitations of the strip's original conception. In doing so they damaged the character identity and strip continuity. It is perhaps indicative that when, in later stories, the Mekon was re-introduced, he became 'a belligerent being from deep space', his Venusian origins conveniently forgotten. Eric Eden took the Dare strip through a period of nadir, until Keith Watson's illustrations brought it back to life and vitality by restoring some of the original Hampson vision. Dare, under





22

Hampson, originally explored the solar system, starting with Venus, Mercury and Saturn, then back to Venus. There was a brief look at Mars in the 'Red Moon' story, but the tales from then on acquired a galactic vista, with locations like 'The Platinum Planet'. Keith Watson and David Motton (who had connections with 'Jet-Ace Logan') filled in some of the solar system gaps, with the story set on Jupiter, and the 'Solid Space Mystery' Mekon story, but the rest of the 'grand tour' failed to materialize.

None of the space heroes who came in Dare's wake had quite the same impact. Most of them died soon after the initial novelty phase. But while Dare became "Eagle's" prestige figure, although suffering from the inevitable backlash of his original fame, other strips were quietly gaining ground from a quality standpoint.

"Captain Condor" was created to launch "Lion" under the editorship of R T Eves. Frank Pepper, who had worked on things like Sexton Blake and Rockfist Rogan since 1930 became heavily involved in "Lion", and its companion paper "Tiger", for which he created the Football series "Roy of the Rovers". Condor was never so rigidly format-tied as Dare and so did not suffer from the inherent drawbacks this entails. The action was set around the year 3000 AD, when Earth was expanding her colonial empire into the Galaxy in hyper-drive star ships. The vista for settings was therefore limitless. In fact, during Pepper's twelve year stint as Condor's creator, the strip retained its basic integrity through a bewildering array of artists. Subject matter ranged from giant plant growths strangling London, to a war in space fought against the bird-like Orcs, to the invasion of the 'Indestructible Men' whose metabolisms had been altered by strange whirl-wind life-forms on a far planet, to the artwork of Brian Lewis (who did covers for Science Fantasy and New Worlds magazines) and the "Push-Button Planet" where rival robot brains fought out a centuries old surface war while the planet's native population lived in a devolved Medieval-type society in vast underground labyrinths. Yet, although this flexibility was an advantage, it was disadvantageous in that the characterization was never as fully realized as either Dan Dare or Jet-Ace Logan. Similarly, there was never any degree of 'mythology' of an Earth culture or secondary characters involved.

In both fields, however, Jet-Ace Logan can be regarded as successful. The action was always placed one hundred years into the future, during Earth's exploration and colonization of the solar system. Although stellar aliens both attempted invasion of the system, and kidnapped Logan to their own world, Earth never quite conquered the secret of star flight. Action was therefore limited to Earth's back yard of the solar system, building up a complex image and detailed history of each planet. Logan was brought into being in "Comet" under the editorship of Monty Haydon and the "Amalgamated Press" who had acquired publication in 1949. Eventually the company was brought into the Daily Mirror group to become first "Fleetway Publications", and then "IPC Magazines Ltd". The juvenile publications were put under the management of Leonard Matthews who merged "Comet" with "Tiger", Jet-Ace Logan being transferred under the new mast head, and the new writer/artist combination of Frank Pepper and John Gillat, where he prospered.

In addition to these three major strips, perhaps "The Space Family Rollinson" of "Knock-out" can be added. Dad, Mum, Joy, Betsy, Joey and Bob ran for a number of years without achieving either the longevity, or the relative maturity of its contemporaries. There was "Space Kingsley" who appeared in a one-shot annual that remains pretty impressive, within its context, in retrospect. The annual included two picture-strip stories plus a long detailed text adventure fragmentary enough to be set upon each planet in the solar system in turn, but held together by the common theme of the drifting Lemas moon which had entered the system. The "Tarzan" comic, which lived largely through reprints of American newspaper strips, also ran a series of space strips which maintained a high standard of originality. Although many were of American origin,



like the one that featured a planet called Terra Nova (a name that also cropped up in Dan Dare -- the latin 'new earth'), a planet on Earth's orbit, but always eclipsed from view by the sun, a planet that was governed by women; the period in the magazine's history under the editorship of the then unknown Michael Moorcock featured original UK fiction including Moorcock's own "Sea of Demons" (in two parts Vol. 7 Nos 50-51) and an article "Renegade Terror" (Vol 8 No. 49, March 7, 1959).

Sydney Jordan's "Jeff Hawke" of the "Daily Express" is possibly the sole survivor of the whole genre of the British Space hero. The movement that sprang into being during the 50's, lived on into the 60's, with the peculiarly British traits that now appear to be lost amidst the welter of American fantasy-oriented comics, in which the aliens are invariably Communist!

Following in the British fiction tradition of Holmes, Bulldog Drummond, Sexton Blake, Paul Temple, et al, the space heroes had aides to whom they could explain difficult aspects of the plot. Dan Dare had Digby, who did little more than provide comic relief. He most certainly 'knew his place', acknowledging his inferiority to Dare at every turn. Plum-Duff Charteris, however, although sharing a common rotundity with Digby, was considered the intellectual and scientific superior of his man-of-action 'pal' Jet-Ace Logan. He was the down-to-earth stabilizing influence, usually dragged into Logan's light-hearted pranks somewhat reluctantly, following the hero into bizarre situations because Logan 'needed someone to look after him'. The exact ego relationship between Captain Condor and Quartermaster Pete Burke was a little more difficult to analyze. Neither of them showed very pronounced character traits beyond a sometimes ponderous seriousness and dedication to duty. Apart from the fact that Condor was the guy who gave the orders, their characters were probably interchangeable.

Although, of course, all three strips adamantly resisted alien territorial ambitions, they shared an imperialistic belief in Earth's right to a colonial empire. As with Asimov's "Foundation" vision, the idea of expansion into, first the solar system as with Jet-Ace Logan's tales of the colonization of Mars or Venus, and the galaxy, as with Captain Condor's "Slave Hunters from Outer Space". Dan Dare took part in both enterprises at different stages in his evolution.

However, towards the end of the sixties, the momentum was lost. "Eagle", once the largest selling boys paper in the U. K. was merged with "Lion" (which had dropped Condor a year previously). Some of the 'middle period' Dan Dare strips were re-run, including the unique adventures featuring the sub-aquatic invasion of Earth's oceans by the Cosmobes and Pescods, a story which brought back such original Dare characters as Lex O'Malley. Then Dan Dare was dropped. Similarly "Tiger" was merged with "Jag", and although the former was the dominant name in the merger, Logan survived as a series of re-runs dating from 1960, before he, too, ceased.

Fifties ephemera is currently enjoying a 'pop' revival, with a renewed interest in vintage Rock 'n' Roll, and Bobby-Soxer fashions. Perhaps the time is right for IPC to delve into its vaults and reprint some of its SF comic strip gems from that unique period in one big anthology.



# MISS TEY CONSIDERED

+ Lesleigh Luttrell +

Josephine Tey was one of the nom de plumes used by Elizabeth MacKintosh, the name under which she wrote eight mystery novels between the years of 1929 and 1952. Eight novels is not a lot for a mystery writer, and while several of the books were rather unusual, Tey cannot be characterized as one of the great innovators in the mystery field. Josephine Tey's name will only be mentioned in a history of detective or mystery fiction, while most of that chapter will be devoted to the names of Agatha Christie or Dorothy Sayers. It would be taking nothing away from those fine ladies, however, to say that in her eight novels, Josephine Tey achieved a style of writing, a level of characterization and even an intricacy of plot that compares to those of the better-known Christie and Sayers.

The Man in the Queue, published in 1929, was Tey's first attempt to write a mystery novel. In it, she introduces her detective, Inspector Allan Grant of Scotland Yard. Grant is a bachelor from a Scottish family. He is a good policeman apparently, but has a bit more imagination and 'flair' than usual. The title character of this book is the murder victim, who is killed while standing in the queue for seats at a theater. Most of the book shows Grant and the police plodding along, finding out who the murdered man is, discovering a few things about him and bit by bit building up an impressive case against his best friend and eventually capturing the suspect. Grant does much of the work and is satisfied with the case until he talks to the man. Then he becomes convinced the man didn't do it. Working on his own he manages to prove the murderer is a completely unsuspected character with a very obscure motive. The major part of the book, the case-building and Grant's subsequent doubts, is quite good, and builds up very well done characterizations of the dead man and the murder suspect, who are off-stage most of the time, as well as the on stage personalities of Grant and the people he questions. The ending is not so satisfactory. Tey was not at this point quite a good enough mystery writer to convincingly explain away all the beautiful circumstantial evidence she had spent so much time collecting. And the reader who likes to solve mysteries before the detective does will probably think this book unfair, in that just about every clue is very misleading. However, it is an interesting book and enjoyable for characterization, particularly of Inspector Grant, if nothing else.

Tey's second book, A Shilling for Candles is a bit more of the usual sort of mystery in that the mystery could be solved by an astute reader before the detective (again Grant) manages to solve it. This more satisfactory plotting is accompanied by another large dose of Tey's fascinating characters. This book involves the murder of a young actress, and so features a number of people in that business (and introduces Marta Hallard, who is the closest thing to a girlfriend that Tey allows her Inspector Grant.) Perhaps the most entertaining character is Erica Burgoyne, a young doctor's daughter who manages to interfere with the police investigation by hiding the prime suspect long enough to collect evidence to prove his innocence. Erica, however, doesn't solve



<sup>25</sup>  
the mystery; Grant does that cleverly enough to satisfy most readers. This is the sort of book that anyone who likes writers such as Dorothy Sayers, or Ngaio Marsh could read with great enjoyment. There is really nothing new in it, no startling plot devices, but it is very entertaining.

Miss Pym Disposes is, on the other hand, a very odd sort of book. Miss Pym, the main character, is a spinster who is enjoying some public attention because she has written a popular book about psychology. She is not a psychologist, though. "She read her first book on psychology out of curiosity, because it seemed to be an interesting sort of thing; and she read all the rest to see if they were just as silly. By the time she had read thirty-seven books on the subject, she had evolved ideas of her own on psychology; at variance, of course, with all thirty-seven volumes to date. In fact, the thirty-seven volumes seemed to her so idiotic and made her so angry that she sat down there and then and wrote reams of refutation. . . Providence so ordained it that not only had the British public tired of fiction, but the intellectuals had tired of Freud and Company. They were longing for Some New Thing. And Lucy proved to be it. So Lucy woke one morning to find herself not only famous, but a best-seller. She was so shocked that she went out and had three cups of black coffee and sat in the Park looking straight in front of her for the rest of the morning."

As a consequence of this, Lucy Pym finds herself invited to speak at Leys Physical Training College, where a school friend of hers is headmistress, and she ends up staying several weeks. The College seems very odd, at least to an American reader. Its object appears to be to teach young women to be either nurses or teachers of physical education, whichever type of job they happen to get. The characters make this book. In fact, someone expecting it to be an ordinary mystery will very likely find it rather dull, since no crime is committed until the book is two-thirds done, and then no one is ever caught or even suspected by the authorities (Miss Pym, of course, does discover who the criminal is). Miss Pym is the major character, with the students and teachers at the school also coming in for their share of attention. My favorite character is the 'Nut Tart', a nickname given to a South American girl who comes to the college for the dancing lessons, and to forget a love affair. The reader sees these other characters through Miss Pym's eyes and gets to know them very well; although the murder and the subsequent happenings make Miss Pym realize that "As a psychologist she was a first-rate teacher of French." Because the characters are so well done, it does not bother the reader that the murder is rather straightforward in method, that the book contains little actual detection, or that the murderer gets off scott-free. (I have read that a movie was made that featured Miss Pym as a detective. I would be very grateful if any Starling readers could produce a title or any other facts a-





bout such a movie).

My favorite Tey book is The Franchise Affair. This is based on a famous case of the 18th century, the Canning wonder. The real affair involved a young girl, Elizabeth Canning, who disappeared on the way home from a visit to relatives and reappeared at her home a month later with a story about being abducted and imprisoned. She eventually determined that she had been imprisoned in a house of ill repute a short way out of London. A large cavalcade of friends and law officers went out to the house and arrested the owner, even though the house little resembled the description given by Miss Canning. They also arrested a gypsy staying there who Canning accused of having cut off her lace stays and keeping them. The owner of the house was branded for harboring a thief and the gypsy was condemned to be hang for the theft of the stays. Luckily for her, a London official decided that the girl's story was just too inconsistent to cause someone to hang. London was divided into Canningites who championed the girl and an equally large group of people who didn't believe her. She was tried for perjury, convicted and sent to the colonies where she married and left a large number of descendents. No one ever found out what really happened to her during the month she was missing.

Tey transplants the story to this century, although the plot is basically the same. A young girl, Betty Kane, is missing from home for a month and turns up in rather bad shape with a story about being kidnapped. She claims she was held by two women who wanted her to be their maid. The women she accuses are a mother and daughter who have recently moved into a big old house just out of London, and who aren't well liked in the neighborhood because they keep to themselves. The girl tells a very good story and her description of the circumstances and the house is much better than the real Miss Canning's story. Inspector Grant figures only peripherally in this book, the main characters being a lawyer and the two accused women. The lawyer falls in love with the younger woman while defending her. Since Betty Kane's story is so good and so consistent, Tey has to decide what really happened to the girl while she was missing. Betty Kane is found to have actually spent the month with a man (what most people suspect Elizabeth Canning was doing.) The main facet of the book is not this proposed solution to the 'Canning Sensation', but the descriptions of the feelings invoked by the case. The public dotting on the girl and hatred for the two women builds up to a crescendo and is very startlingly broken in the revelation scene, but only after the house of the accused kidnappers, the Franchise, has been burned to the ground. The Franchise Affair is really a very satisfying book, particularly for readers interested in true as well as fictional crimes.

Brat Farrar is fairly atypical Tey, in that it is really more of a romance than a mystery. It is the story of an imposter who incidentally uncovers a very old murder. Brat Farrar, an orphan, is persuaded to pretend that he is the heir to Latchett's, an English estate, who was presumed to have committed suicide when he was a young boy. Farrar is basically an honest young man, but his love of horses (the principle business of Latchett's is raising and training horses) drives him into the plot, and he presents himself to the Ashby's as the long-lost Patrick. The reader holds his breath as Brat tries to pull it off -- knowing that he can't keep it up forever, yet hoping that somehow he comes out all right. The reader will also hope that the Ashby's aren't too hurt when the inevitable revelation comes. Tey has created another group of interesting characters in the Ashby's -- Aunt Bee who "has a face like a very expensive cat," and who has raised the children and managed the estate since the death of their parents; Simon, Patrick's twin brother who is sure that Brat is an imposter even when everyone else believes him; Eleanor with whom Brat falls in love; and Jane and Ruth, the very different identical twins. Although the mystery part of the plot may not be the whole book, as some mystery fans seem to prefer, and the happy ending may seem



a bit contrived, the characters are interesting enough to make the whole book worthwhile.

Tey's last three books all feature Inspector Alan Grant. To Love and Be Wise contains a very odd mystery and a deceit of very large proportion. The reader might think the solution to the mystery is a bit unfair, but this opinion is unreasonable, since the clues are all there. Perhaps the reader will be confused by the multiplicity of characters, too confused to see the clues. This book again features Marta Hallard (Grant comes suspiciously close to getting romantically involved with her in it), and the residents of Solcott St. Mary, a little English village that has become an art colony. These include Lavinia Fitch who has written twenty-one books. "Lavinia wrote her books with great ease, being genuinely interested in the fate of her current heroine. She might not remember afterwards whether it was Daphne or Valerie who had met her lover when she was gathering violets in the dawn on Capri, but while Daphne (or Valerie) had been in the process of that meeting and that gathering, Lavinian Fitch watched over her like a godmother." Lavinia's nephew is Walter Whitmore, who has a BBC radio show, with very popular weekly talks. "The talk was about 'What Earthworms Do for England.' The 'for England' was a typical Whitmore touch. Other men might speak on the place of the earthworm in Nature, and no one cared two hoots either about Nature or earthworms. But Walter pinned his worm on to a Shakespearean hook and angled gently with it, so his listeners saw the seething legions of blind purpose turning the grey rock in the western sea into the green Paradise that was England." Other characters are the famous playwright, Toby Tullis ("It was surprising to think that a national institution like Toby Tullis had even been subjected to the processes of conception and brought into this world by the normal method."), the novelist Silas Weekly who "resented beauty, . . . and made a very large income indeed out of that resentment.", and Miss Easton-Dixon who wrote fairy tale books and read Hollywood magazines in her spare time. If the reader becomes too involved examining these characters (or caricatures, as you prefer), he has only himself to blame for not solving the mystery.

The Daughter of Time is a very remarkable book. All of the 'action' takes place in a hospital room where Grant is recuperating from falling through a trap-door while in pursuit of a burglar. He is overwhelmed with stacks of books to read, some from his literary acquaintances of the previous book. However, Grant does not particularly care for reading more than a few pages of each book ("The Case of the Missing Tin-Opener by John James Mark, had three errors of procedure in the first two pages, and had at least provided Grant with a pleasant five minutes while he composed an imaginary letter to its author.") Eventually, Marta Hallard takes pity on him and brings him a bunch of 'faces', actually portraits of historical people who had some mystery associated with them. One of these is Richard III. Grant is intrigued by the picture: "it piqued him to have mistaken one of the most notorious murderers of all time for a judge; to have transferred a subject from the dock to the bench was a shocking piece of ineptitude." He decides to do some investigating into Richard's mystery, the murder of the princes in the tower.

Tey is a Plantagenet partison, and so Richard is vindicated by the book. The book is very convincing, though, particularly in the way the evidence builds up. Grant starts out believing the standard Tudor/Shakespeare/Olivier version of Richard as an evil monster and gradually changes his mind as the evidence is uncovered. Grant is first struck by the fact that all the contemporary history of Richard was written by a man who hated him (having lost his land and title by being on the wrong side), and this information has been picked up by most historians since, from St. Thomas More on. With the help of a history student, Grant finds the real truth -- Richard was devoted to his brother Edward, he had nothing to do with the death of George, and he didn't kill the princes. The reason Richard became king was that the little princes



were bastards -- their father had been married before he married their mother, and so they weren't legitimate heirs to the throne. Richard was made king by an act of Parliament. Henry Tudor revoked this act when he took the throne because he was married to Edward's daughter, the sister of the princes. If Henry thought his wife helped him look more like a rightful heir to the crown (Henry himself was the grandson of a bastard), certainly it must give the princes an even better right to the throne. Henry killed the little princes. At least the reader of this book is convinced of that. The evidence against Henry is as good as that the reader will find against any murderer in any mystery novel.

Tey's last novel, The Singing Sands is rather an unkind way to leave Grant. The book opens with Grant, suffering from a nervous condition - especially a fear of 'Small Enclosed Spaces', on his way to Scotland for a holiday. On the train, he sees the discovery of a dead man, and becomes intrigued with the man after he discovers a poem he has written on a scrap of paper. Instead of enjoying his holiday with his cousin Laura, visiting with her children, fishing (his only real outside interest) or entering into a romance arranged by Laura, he spends his time on uncomfortable journeys and in odd places. This investigation helps him recover from his nervous breakdown, and in the end he does prove the man was murdered and established his reputation as the discoverer of a rather important lost city. At the end of the book, Grant returns to work with only a murder report to show for his vacation. Tey leaves her character more or less happy with his work, but not quite satisfied with his life.

Josephine Tey was certainly not a very important or influential writer of mysteries, but neither is she a person who can be put into a cubby-hole and pointed to as one of the many examples of this or that type of mystery writer. She was her own sort of writer, relying mainly on her ability to create intriguing and entertaining characters to hold her books together. A critic may fairly point out that her best plotted books are based on real happenings. But she was a truly good writer of mystery fiction. Any mystery reader tiring of too-clever murderers, of cardboard characters and poor writing will find her a welcome change.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19: The Frisbee Players of Triton

"Well, Ed, how's the little wife doing these days?" boomed Herbie's voice from a loudspeaker inside the elevator. Faintly, from the background, came the delighted squeals of Julie.

Rushing to his compartment, Ed slammed the door. I'm not safe anywhere, he thought. Even in the elevator. He turned on the radio. Maybe there's some news from Berlin. Something to give us hope, even though I doubt it.

"Care for a little game of frisbee, Ed?" crackled the receiver.

My God, he thought. It's everywhere. A kind of Harry Warner of the airwaves. How terrible.

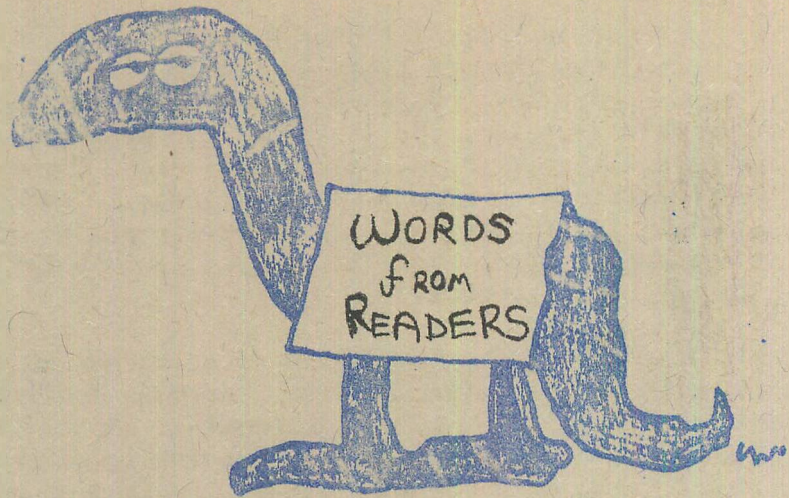
Returning to the radio, he clicked it off. This whole thing is ridiculous, he thought. Maybe I should write it up and submit it to one of those pseudo-scientific magazines I'm always reading. Atrocious Stories or whatever. Going to his desk he got out a sheet of paper and stuck it into his typewriter.

"Not so fast, Ed," chirped the typewriter, spitting the sheet of paper back out onto the floor. "As I recall, we have a little unfinished business to wind up. We were discussing Leibnitz's metaphysical concept of the urban monad in relationship to---"

"Not Leibnitz, you twit. That's Silverberg."

"Leibnitz, Silverberg, all these German philosophers look the same to me," whined the machine. God, thought Ed Glotz, this could go on forever."





Will Straw, 303 Niagara Blvd., Fort Erie, Ont., L2A 3H1 Canada

Film fandom in Ottawa seemed to have been undergoing a re-birth while I was there; the first course that will study film as an art and an end in itself was approved for inclusion in the English Department at Carleton University next year (there is one in the journalism department, but it relates film to mass media in general and ties it in with practical journalism) and an art cinema finally opened in the city. (It has showed a tremendous success in the first few months of its operation by running rock films on weekend nights and Marx Brothers festivals.) It seems totally absurd that next-to-nothing of this type has existed in the city previously, but I am glad to be getting in at the beginning; I'm friends with a lot of the people responsible for this Re-Awakening, and get invited to \*Special Screenings\*.

Isn't any form of nostalgia that involves recreating elements of the past by its very nature ill-founded; because we can bring back the culture of the fifties without wanting to or being able to live amid the politics and social milieu present during that decade. Art forms may be of poor quality and of no value but they can never be unpleasant because they were created for pleasure. I find it interesting that the reaction by people like Juanita Coulson to the fifties revival isn't paralleled by any kind of similar reaction to nostalgia based on the 1930's or 1940's. The people who lived through those eras seem themselves to be as caught up in reviving their culture as do those discovering it for the first time. The 1950's, I suppose, is not far away enough that we can treat it in that way, but it's easy to separate Goldiggers Movies from bread lines and Henry Aldrich from World War II.

Jay Cornell, 105 E. Wilson, MSU, E. Lansing, MI 48823

Juanita is very right about nostalgia in regards to rock. I think the general explanation for the feeling applies here, too: at times when the present or future seems bad or uncertain, there is a tendency to retreat into the (usually imagined) security of the past. I disagree, however, that people who do so are either lying or had a naive youth. An uncomfortable present which forces one to look backward also tends to gloss over the bad points and play up the good ones, almost involuntarily. I remember an episode of "Twilight Zone" which had that as its theme. A man who was always dwelling on the glories of his childhood traveled back in time and relived a beating he once got from a gang. It took this to remind him that it was not all that great, but earlier he wasn't lying (at least consciously). The National Lampoon



is very good at nostalgia-wrecking, with their humorous and all-too-true portraits 30 of the Fifties and other ghastly periods of American history.

Harry Warner, 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

I don't know either why the rock and pop people are doing these near-identical remakes of old records, but something of the same sort almost drove me mad in the classical music record field all during the 1960's. Stereo arrived and almost all the manufacturers decided to have all their top conductors and performers make new recordings in stereo of all their most successful monaural discs. So here I sat for the better part of ten years, wishing they would finish this endless job so they could resume where they'd stopped their much more pleasant task of making first recordings of forgotten Verdi opera and Schubert songs. Now they're doing this again and quadraphonics are coming in and I can't bear to think of another decade devoted to replacements.

Joe Sanders is the first person I've noticed reviewing The Return of the Time Machine by Egon Friedell, which seems by nature ideally suited for discussion in fanzines. But this review still leaves me uncertain about a couple of matters; when the story was originally published if this is a reprint, what Friedell did in addition to writing this book, and whether Friedell and Wells had any contact aside from the alleged correspondence. Maybe a genuine fan would know all such matters, but I suspect that quite a few of us have never heard before of either the writer of or this sequel to The Time Machine.

Isn't the attitude several people express toward John Wayne quite close to Creeping Werthamism? To complain that Wayne may inspire people to make right via might isn't basically different from charging that comic books cause kids to become criminals. I opposed the Vietnam War because I don't think you can effectively fight communism by killing people who believe in it, and I oppose a boycott of John Wayne movies because the fascist ideal isn't going to be harmed by bankrupting people who make movies with fascist themes. But maybe it's the spirit of the times. A member of the Maryland Legislature recently said in all apparent seriousness that Jane Fonda should have her tongue cut out as punishment for saying what she thinks.

Chandler is an author I've been meaning to read ever since World War II, when I was commissioned to hunt his novels in paperback form by a fan who had discovered Chandler after entering the service, and couldn't find them at the PX where he was stationed. No success in my promise to myself yet, unfortunately. There was at least one other film based on a Marlowe story, Farewell, My Lovely, released in 1944. It isn't listed as released for television in the only reference that I have on hand, the Maltin paperback of TV films. Double Indemnity is another of the movies for which Chandler did scripting. From the quotations in Michael Carlson's article, I assume that Chandler had a very strong influence on John D. MacDonald, unless both were influenced by some stylist independently of one another.

Grant Canfield, 28 Atalaya Terrace, San Francisco, CA 94117

In answer to Michael Carlson's question, the actors who have portrayed Philip Marlowe in the movies are: Humphrey Bogart, Dick Powell, George Montgomery, James Garner, Robert Montgomery, Howard Duff, Gerald Mohr, Philip Carey, and, most recently, Elliot Gould.

Bogart played Marlowe in The Big Sleep, as Carlson notes. Not only is this considered one of the best cinematic productions of a Marlowe novel, but it also has a strong following among Bogart cinemaphiles as well. Even though comparisons to his



portrayal of Sam Spade in The Maltese Falcon will be obvious and inescapable, many consider Bogey's role in The Big Sleep to have been the superior characterization. I have to agree. He played Marlowe a lot looser, a lot shrewder, a bit less cynical than he played Spade. On the whole, I think his characterization of Marlowe comes across as more intelligent and perceptive, whereas Spade is mostly just tough and hard. I personally rank both films among my all-time favorites.

George Montgomery did a creditable job in a movie called The Brasher Doubloon, based on the Chandler novel The High Window. Montgomery played Marlowe too serious, too "sharp," and (I suppose he couldn't help this) too young. He also had a neat little pencil-thin moustache, like Errol Flynn, and I just couldn't dig that on Marlowe, sorry. Well, it was a pretty good movie, it followed the plot of the book rather well, but George Montgomery just was not Philip Marlowe.

I think the James Garner portrayal was quite good. In the movie Marlowe, based on Chandler's The Little Sister, I think he caught many of the facets of Marlowe's character very well. And I think it's unfair to say that Garner was too young to play Marlowe, because in the middle of the series of novels (which I think is where The Little Sister falls) Marlowe is around 37-40 years old. At the time he played the role, Garner was probably around that age -- though, being Hollywood, he appeared a little younger, but let's allow Tinsel Town a little leeway, hey?

I've never seen the movies where Marlowe is played by Mohr, Duff, Robert Montgomery, Carey, or Powell, curse the luck. I'd be interested myself in knowing what movies these were, so I can look for them on TV, or at some of the local Old Movie Houses.

+I'm a sucker for books about movies -- so here's what I could find out:

+Philip Carey played in a TV series called "Philip Marlowe" in 1959. Robert

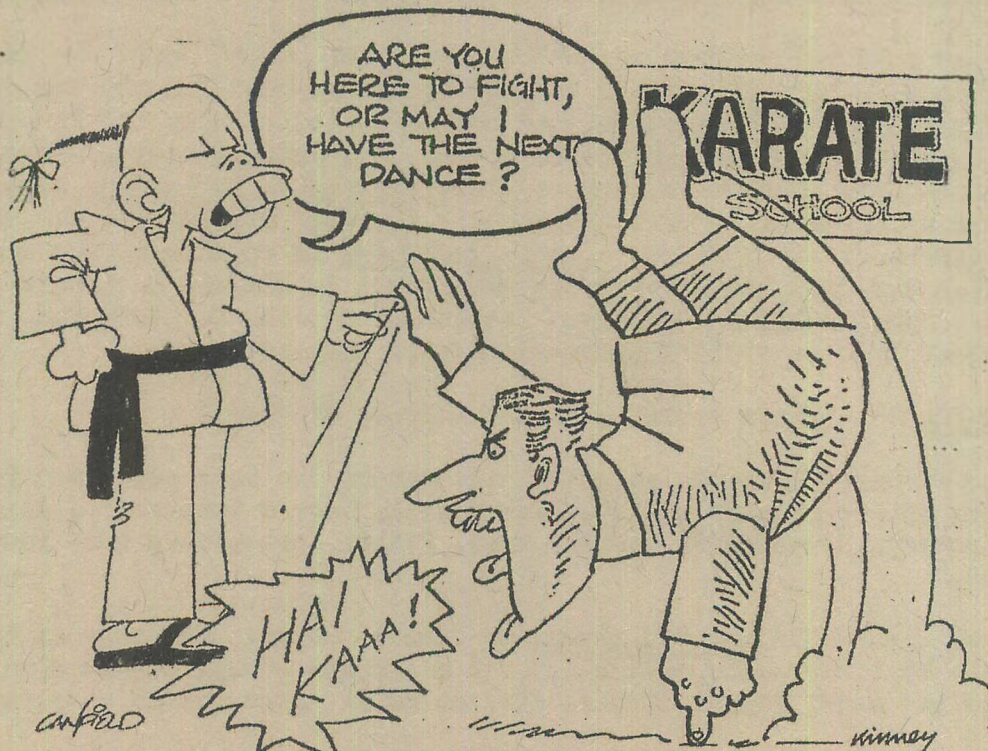
+Montgomery directed and starred in The Lady in the Lake (1948). I can't

+imagine what movie Dick Powell might have played Marlowe in, unless it was

+the one called Farewell My Lovely (also known as Murder My Sweet), released

+in 1944. I couldn't discover anything about Duff, or Mohr. -HL

The most recent Marlowe movie is The Long Goodbye, just released, in which Marlowe is played by Elliot Gould. Scoff if you want, but see the movie. Gould is actually a





superb Marlowe, although I couldn't help wishing he was just a teensy bit tougher<sup>32</sup> looking. Leigh Brackett did the screenplay, and to my mind this was the worst element of the movie. I know they made a lot of decisions in favor of cinematic "effect," but it seemed to me they threw away some of the best detection scenes -- you tuned into the lead character after he found a bit of information; the plot-line suffered as a result.

+The director, Robert Altman, is well known for practically throwing away his +scripts and improvising his films. So it is hard to tell just how much the +movie you saw retained of the Brackett script. -HL

However, the characterizations, from Gould's Marlowe on down to most of the supporting cast (especially Sterling Hayden as a raucous, hard-drinking, suicidal writer -- a part that was originally to have been played by Dan Blocker, I understand, before he died -- and Henry Gibson as an almost diabolical psychiatrist) are what the movie is all about. Brackett and the director manage to get in some sly digs and spoofs at typical Hollywood detection fare. I liked this movie, but I came away feeling somehow disappointed. Not in Marlowe, because I was aware that Gould's portrait was so deep and accurate, but that they didn't tell the story the way they should have. It bogged down at times, almost got boring. Chandler would never have let that happen -- although, to tell the truth, The Long Goodbye, as last of the "regular" Marlowe novels, was more moody and introspective than many of the earlier works. Come to think of it, maybe that means they did a better job on Chandler than I'm giving them credit for, what the hell.

Incidentally, Michael Carlson is wrong when he says that The Long Goodbye was the last of the Marlowe novels -- but he's right at the same time. A later novel, Playback, was published with Philip Marlowe as the protagonist. This book was much slimmer and skimpier than any of the other Chandler novels. I am given to understand that it was originally written as a potential screenplay, but didn't sell, so Chandler hastily changed the name of the lead character to Philip Marlowe and published it as a novel. So, you're well within your rights not to consider this a true Marlowe novel, as the character differs in many respects from the Marlowe we all know and love from the other novels.

+We recently got a note from Carlson saying that he had discovered and read +Playback while in England recently, and thought that the book might be an +attempt to give the Marlowe series some sort of smooth ending. -HL

Bruce D. Arthur, 57th Trans Co., Fort Lee, VA. 23801

Fully agree with Carlson's opinion of Chandler. Ballantine is doing the same thing with some other authors; bringing out their books regularly until you've got a nice wide self of their works. They're doing it with Dennis Wheatley's books right now. I think it's a marvelous idea. I've always thought that "Complete Works" should be published in paperback instead of hardcover, since a much greater number of people could afford them. Some other authors I'd like to see the same type of thing on: Rafael Sabatini, Philip Wylie, Alexander Dumas. (Dumas, of course, put out about three hundred books, which would be ridiculous. But an edition of his historical novels would be nice. I have a twenty-five volume set of such at home, and it's not complete.)

Sander's column reminds me of something I've noticed about DAW Books; if the book has a good cover, it's probably a rotten book, and if it's got a rotten cover, it usually turns out fairly good. (I have yet, though, to read a really excellent DAW book.) Wollheim has a lousy artistic sense, I think. The cover on Brian Ball's Regiments of Night is one of the worst things from Freas I've ever seen; cluttered, garish, and overly "busy." Not Freas' fault, however; when I got a chance to visit him last week





he showed me another version of the cover he'd submitted to Wollheim. It was quite well done, showing the Regiments breaking out from the underground fortress, covering the earth in a dark flood.

On scary movies: The scariest movie I ever saw was a Walt Disney flick, strange as that may seem; Darby O'Gill and the Little People. The banshee in that movie shook me so badly that for months I was afraid to go to sleep at night because I knew that the banshee would "get me" if I went to sleep. (Er, I was pretty young at the time. I'll have to see it again sometime; I'll probably scratch my head and ask, "Now how did that scare me?")

Sandra Miesel, 8744 N. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis, In. 46240

As a long-time John Wayne fan, I'll line up with Michael Carlson rather than Buck on the range of his characterizations. Are the heros of Wake of the Red Witch and She Wore a Yellow Ribbon carbon copies? Or The Halls of Montezuma and Hondo? In the old days Wayne often as not played the good-bad guy who lost his girl to the good-good guy (which always disappointed me somehow) as in Reap the Wild Wind and Pittsburgh. I love the classic John Ford westerns, especially Yellow Ribbon and have watched them times beyond number. (Although I think the supreme Ford-Wayne effort was The Quiet Man in which the good old Irish-American stock company was augmented by the Abbey Theatre players with results that were as lyrical as exuberant.) Wayne just hasn't done peep on his own these last few years with the exception of True Grit where the character of Marshal Cogburn was remodeled from the book to fit what the audience expected to see. In 1950 he might have played closer to the original.

Anybody out there share my esteem for grizzled old character actors who traditionally populate action films -- and often are the only factor which makes them watchable? \*Sigh\* The seamed face and silver thatch of Jim Davis finds no better employment nowadays than in a Coffeemate commercial. (But inasmuch as that stint earned a reported \$30,000 we need not weep too loudly.)



The most interesting thing in the latest Starling was the echoes, in the letter column, of Jim Turner's classic article. All the knee-jerk liberals exhibit their conditioned reflexes to the word "fascist" and "John Wayne," displaying all the fashionable myths in classic purity.

First, the myth that fascism is a right wing philosophy, when, in theory and practice, it is and always has been a left-wing movement. Nazi, after all, was short for National Socialist, and the actual practice of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has mirrored Nazi practices in every way. They even both persecute Jews.

John Wayne, in films and in private life, projects an image that is actually anti-fascist as it is anti-communist. It is the image of the Hero, of the man who makes up his own mind and acts on his beliefs. The fascist and communist system is violently hostile to such a conception of Heroism; for the fascist-communist the highest good is to obey The Leader, whether it's Hitler or Chairman Mao. "The Duke," in and out of the films, plays the role of the man who decides for himself whether or not to obey, but who, once he has decided, is willing to stake his life on that decision.

Second, there's the myth that the right-wing factions in this country got us into Viet Nam, when in fact left-winger Jack Kennedy played a major role in getting us in and right-winger Dick Nixon has played a major role in getting us out.

Third, there's the myth that violent movies like Dirty Harry and The Cowboys are "obscene." Dirty Harry is objectionable, not because he is lewd or off-color, but because he, like the figure John Wayne always plays, is a hero, a man who makes up his own mind. Don't forget that at the end of Dirty Harry, Clint Eastwood, after having done his best to be a good cop, throws away his badge. He has reserved, to the end, his independence, but he does not throw away that badge until after he has defeated the thrill-murderer he swore to get.

John Wayne and Clint Eastwood are very offensive to certain kinds of people, the kind of people who don't find movies like Easy Rider obscene at all, though they are just as violent. In Easy Rider we are asked to identify with drug runners out for nothing but an easy buck and a fix. . . actually not heroes at all, but the kind of people who would be, in a John Wayne movie, the "Bad Guys." If you happen to be the kind of person the protagonists of Easy Rider are, then you like Easy Rider, you feel comfortable with it. And you hate John Wayne and Clint Eastwood because they are playing a kind of person you are afraid you might never be able to be. They are playing A Man.

Jay Kinney, 3576 20th Street, San Francisco, CA 94110

Murray Moore must be one of those guys who have a knack for rubbing me the wrong way. Here in your letter column he calls Beyond the Valley of the Dolls obscene. Really now, Murray. I can see you rejecting my illos (if you squint real hard and keep one eye closed. . .) but for you to be blind to the mind staggering greatness of Russ Meyer's film is too much.

Probably this is not the time or place to go into the many merits of this particular movie; suffice it to say that never have I seen so many insights, stupidities, lousy jokes, great jokes, and just plain entertaining arbitrary plot devices combined in one movie. I left the drive-in (the only place to watch a Russ Meyer flick) unsure whether Meyer was a genius or an unconscious fool who had stumbled across



<sup>35</sup>  
a pile of diamonds and unknowingly mixed them in with a bowl full of sequins.

Angus Taylor certainly was entertaining this time but he left me hanging there having jumped from SF & mainstream literature to fandom to Harold Sheldon. At this moment the name "Sgt. Pepper's Starship" hits me as very nostalgic but quite irrelevant to now. However in its own context, the 1968 George Foster cartoon fits it perfectly. Now if only we had some 1973 George Foster cartoons. . .

+I don't suppose anybody out there knows where George is these days? --HL

Jerry Kaufman, 417 W. 118th Street, Apt 63, NYC 10017

You mention seeing some of Hitchcock's early British films. There is one thing about The Lady Vanishes which has always bothered me, and which I wonder if you've noticed. In one scene the girl (name?) points out to Michael Redgrave the name Froy written on the window; the train goes through a tunnel for ten seconds, after which the name is gone. I find this extremely improbable. Given ten seconds or less, the spies have to get over to the dining table, lean over Redgrave, and then beat it. I wouldn't cavil if the movie was otherwise slapdash, but the rest is much better constructed. Of course the tune itself that Mrs. Froy must memorise is a little silly. And whatever did it mean?

+No one rubbed the name off -- it was written in the steam and dirt on the window and was erased by a fresh layer of smoke. -- LML

Kinney's series of fan cartoons are very apt, and complete. Does this mean he will never do another, having summed them up so completely and devastatingly?

Gene Wolfe Box 69, Barrington, IL 60010

How can I thank you adequately for a Starling with lines like: "So many good writers never do turn out anything entertaining, so everybody jumps on one who does." (I knew there was some reason so many fans dislike my writing.) and "I know I can remember seeing some kind of crude Buck Rogers production but a snatch is all I can remember." (I was mostly watching Wilma myself.)

Lester Boutillier, 2726 Castiglione Street, New Orleans, La. 70119

Starling seems to be a multimedia fanzine, with just about the only form of popular culture not covered being comics. Is this because of an anti-comics bias on your part, or have you had comics articles in the past and plan to have some in the future?

+Coming next issue, "The Further Works of John Stanley" Part IV in my Great American Comics series. -- LML

WAHF: Amos Salmonson, Doug Carroll, Darrell Schweitzer, Tim Lucas, Aljo Svoboda, Ken Ozanne, Donn P. Brazier, Michael Carlson, Sheryl Birkhead, Sean Summers, and John Dowd.







