

Starling 11



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Coolies: Lots of people

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YOUR MAN IN MISSOURI EDITORIAL

by the Hank Luttrell part of the editorial staff -- Lesleigh already wrote enough of this issue.

Try a question: Have you ever started a science fiction fan group? I'm not ashamed to admit the truth in my case: I've helped in that particular task twice now. That must make me as experienced as almost anyone on the subject. I don't think many of you will remember it, but long ago I published an article in Starling by Dwain Kaiser on forming science fiction fan clubs. I don't remember what Kaiser had to say, actually, and I don't have a copy of that Starling with me at school to check. But I thought I might say a few things about it -- not a Handy, Do it Yourself Guide, as the Kaiser article tried to be (I do remember that), but just some general (and generally worthless) natterings:

Someone in one of the apas I belong to recently asked me just how the fan group in St. Louis got started. That started me thinking about it. . . Paul Gilster was the very first person to ever mention the possibility of forming a St. Louis fan group to me, I think. But Paul was the only other active fan in the St. Louis area that I knew of, and there hardly seemed to be enough people to make such a project worthwhile. Rich Wannan, seeing Paul's and my addresses in the N3F roster, wrote us both and suggested the formation of a St. Louis club. But again we were both unenthusiastic, it didn't seem like three people were enough for a club, somehow. As I said in reply to the question in the apa, the fan population in St. Louis eventually reached sort of a critical mass, and OSFA fell out. OSFA was formed in July, 1965, shortly after that year's Midwescon -- seeing the Cincinnati fan group in action, holding a convention, convinced us that St. Louis should have a group, too -- and looking around us, we noticed that by then St. Louis did have enough active fans to make such a group reasonable.

The first thing done to get the club off the ground was the publication of a mimeographed bulletin (then called Sirruish, which is now the name of our quarterly journal -- now the bulletin is called OSFan -- this is all very confusing.) This was churned out in my basement (read: catacomb) in one afternoon-evening on my hand-linked Vari-Color mimeograph, and mailed to everybody in Missouri and much of Illinois who we could think of -- plus a few others, people like Buck Coulson, who we just wanted to bother. (Well, we wanted him to review it.) My records show I mailed about 50 copies around and about.

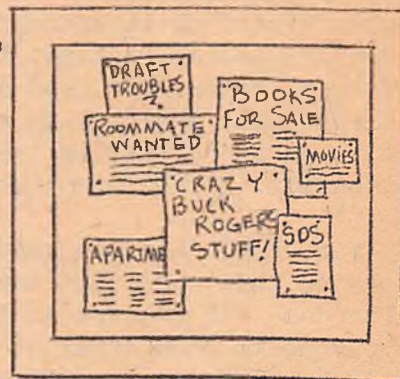
We didn't have a name for the club then. But that came along pretty fast. And many new members showed up quite fast, also, most of them are still around. A regular meeting schedule was established, officers were elected, friends made, a treasury slowly accumulated, a constitution written and promptly ignored. . . Things Happened. We decided it would be groovy to have a regional convention -- after all, the Mid-4 wescon was the single event that had generated OSFA in the first place. Ozarkon I

ST. LOUIS CON IN 69

was held, in July, 1966. Also right around then we decided to bid for the 1969 Worldcon -- thinking ahead, yes. So. OSFA goes on, in July 1967 we held the 2nd Ozarkon, and of course this July we'll sponsor the 3rd annual St. Louis convention. And our Worldcon bid goes on (yes -- that thingy on the left there.) And OSFAn goes on! And Sirruish goes on. (At this point you may turn to the end of James Dorr's article -- haven't numbered the pages yet, you know -- and read the information there concerning these two publications.) (Back?)

OSFA wasn't really that hard to form -- the only work demanded of me, personally, was a few long nights in the catacombs of my home publishing something or another. OSFA just sort of happened because it was time for it to happen. . .you know, a critical mass of fans.

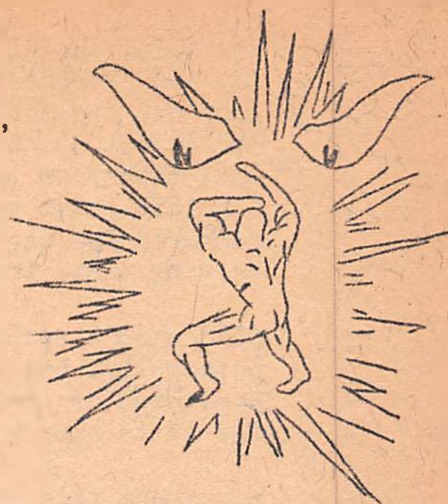
Now about this other fan group you've allegedly started, Mr. Luttrell . . .I'm going to school at The University of Missouri at Columbia (not to be confused with Columbus) this year -- after transferring out of the state university in Rolla, Missouri, where I was exiled last year at this time. MU is big -- 20,000 students. I was quite positive that there were enough sf readers (and potential fan-types) on the campus, if they could be reached, to form a healthy, interesting, enjoyable fan group. So I printed up a number of flyers, and tacked them up all over campus. People began calling me. If they were from St. Louis, I told them of OSFA, and if they weren't, and in any event, I told them that we should form an sf fan group on the MU campus. They agreed! So one sinister gloomy night we gathered together in the lounge of the cafeteria of my living group and talked about it. We met a couple of more times, and continued talking -- not in that lounge, but in a basement room of a place called the Ecumenical Center, sponsored by the United Church of Christ and The Episcopal Church, where we have been meeting every since. The date for official formation is November 2, 1967 -- that was when we sat down and decided, yes, we are now a club, and elected temporary officers. I understand that as of yesterday (December 14, 1967) evening, we have recognition as an official student organization by the University. We have weekly meetings now, quite a few members (a lot of them have even paid their dues, gosh-wow), and are planning big things for the future. Like chaining ourselves to the Library steps until they purchase more science fiction, and picket the University TV station until it agrees to telecast Star Trek. We might even do a few reasonable things, I don't know. I may let you know about it when it develops, though.



I promised that I wasn't going to make this a Do it Yourself Guide -- but. . .Well, should you sometime feel the desire to start a club. . .

I suggest you ask yourself if the area you are in needs a club. St. Louis did, MU did -- and then push a bit. Go down into your basement or catacombs or whatever and publish a fanzine or tack up a flyer all over the place. Then watch things happen around you. Your only job will be to see that things don't fall to pieces simply through lack of communication!

Forming the university club, called MoSFA, The Missouri Science Fiction Association, was somewhat more work for me than OSFA was. In the first place, I'm probably much busier now, not only with school, but with fanac -- OSFA, 3 apas and a genzine -- when OSFA was formed I was a lazy high school student, and lazy high school students don't really have that much taking up their time. And getting MoSFA off the ground seemed to involve an incredible amount of telephoning. You can't really imagine how hard it is to get a hold of twenty university students, most of them living in dorms, until you've tried it. Walking around tacking up flyers all over a huge campus isn't really that easy, either. And filling in all the forms needed to get University recognition. . . try answering this question: "In what ways has (or will) your organization fulfill the purpose for which it was (or is being) organized; such as: its contribution to the total education of its members or its contribution to the academic mission of the University?" I wanted us to sound like a Serious, Constructive organization on the form, but at the same time I didn't want to lie. So I tried to sound somewhat pompous, and answered, in part, something like this: ". . . most of us don't read science fiction because we feel it offers a more significant commentary on the world around us, or because we feel it offers us more of an education than any other form of specialized or general fiction, though we do believe it can offer both commentary and education, often. We read science fiction primarily because we enjoy reading it. . . we certainly don't claim any magical qualities for science fiction, but we do feel it is an important, interesting form of literature, and one which deserves our attention. . . ." I thought that made us sound pretty harmless, anyway.



So far, MoSFA has produced one contributor for Starling, Bill Garnett -- you see his work on this page, and several other places in other parts of this issue. He has also done all the art in the last two issues of OSFAn. While I was still introducing everyone to each other at MoSFA meetings, I would come to Bill and say, "And this is Bill Garnett, who is the cartoonist for the Maneater." (MU's student newspaper -- you know, the Missouri Tigers, and like that.) Then someone else would come into the room, and I'd introduce everyone again, and I'd come to Bill, "And this is Bill Garnett, cartoonist for the Maneater." Bill was sort of our only celebrity.

Perhaps by next issue several other members will have decided that they might contribute something to Starling -- I will be disappointed if they don't, I think.



Two controversies dominate this issue of Starling: Fahrenheit 451 and censorship. Controversy is fine, wonderful -- I wouldn't want the issue any other way. But it can be carried too far, and I think if the next issue were also dominated by these subjects, it would have been carried too far. I'll print some reactions on both subjects next time, if they are worth publishing, but not to the length that you'll find in this issue. It is probably time for some new controversies, humm?

Ozarkon, July 26, 27 and 28 ++ StLouisCon in '69
Peace, Apple Pie and Motherhood, always.

N Y C O N III

For me, this fannish adventure began on Tuesday morning when we (the Couch family) took off for New York from Lambert St. Louis Airport. I had flown to New York once before on a school trip, but it had been in a prop, of course, so I was amazed when we set down at Kennedy a mere hour and a half later. In fact it took us almost that long to get from airport to hotel via taxi.

When we arrived at the hotel, we found Hank Luttrell and Ted Kehr, a mundane friend, waiting for the promised space on our room's floor. Upon investigation, we found the Hilton's Family plan to be cheaper than con rates and so registered as 5 Couches rather than 7 fans. We did manage to procure seven beds and stuff 2 in a storeroom thingy connected to the room. It was rather amusing trying to pretend there were not 2 extra people in the room.

After arranging ourselves, we settled down to study a map of NYC and decided what we wanted to see. My family wanted to go to the Empire State Building, only 2 blocks away, but I decided not to as I had been there before. It is the most marvellous view of dirty buildings in the world. So while the rest of them trooped off to be tourists Hank and I walked around looking at people. I think the best way to realize just how many people there are in NYC and surrounding area is to walk around and see blocks and blocks and blocks of stores and office buildings. It is mind staggering to think how many people must be needed to support all these.

When we got back to the hotel, we examined the Village Voice to see what was going on down there. Then we called Andy Porter to see what was happening with the con. He said he'd be over later.

When the others returned, everyone sort of laid down and dozed off. That evening, Hank, Ted and I ate in the hotel (a mistake) and ran into Andy on the way back up. He told us about preparations for the con and gave us a grand tour of the rooms in which it was to be held. We were quite impressed. After he left, we walked down to Times Square and examined the book stores. Never in my life have I seen so many theatres, so many lights, so many book stores and souvenir shops in so few blocks. We found the

Or A Look At Ellison-Con

One Week Later

BY LESLEIGH Couch⁷

rest of my family in a rather large book store where Mike McInerney works. He must have been pleased to see them as they bought quite a few books including Juanita Coulson's Crisis on Cheiron (plug) and 7 volumes of Audubon's Birds of America. We then strolled back to the hotel and watched New York TV until 2 AM.

When I awoke Weds., I thought sure it couldn't be later than 7 AM, but it was almost 10. It seems that when one has a brick wall 10 feet from their window, their room is in perpetual twilight. I began to wake people up, so that we could do something that day. It took quite a while for everyone to get up and dressed (7 people and one bathroom) but finally we were braving the mysteries of the subway on our way to the American Museum of Natural History.

The Museum is a huge place next to Central Park. We wandered around for hours staring at the exhibits of plants, animals and Indians. (It bothered me somewhat to see American Indians considered "natural history.") I was particularly fascinated by the dinosaurs -- 2 rooms of them. I remember when I was very little, subscribing to "Junior Natural History Magazine" so I could get a book on dinosaurs available nowhere else. The book was somewhat of a disappointment, because the only thing it had in it that I didn't already was a map of this particular museum showing their dinosaur rooms. Needless to say, I was thrilled to be at last seeing them.

After a while, we decided we might as well see Central Park, so we crossed the street and entered the jungle. The thing that impressed me most was the wildness of the place. Sure there are paths and fields, but much of it is rocks and trees, quite different from the neatly manicured lawns which grace most of St. Louis' Forest Park. We walked around a lake and I was considerably surprised to see many people letting their dogs run free, even letting them swim in the lake. But I suppose when there is only one spot for being free in the whole of Manhattan it is difficult to prohibit freedom there.

When we got back that afternoon, we ran into a few fans, notably Donna Mathews and Jerry Kaufman. We wanted to go down to the Village, so they came along. Again we rode the subway.

When we got there, we found it quite easy to find Washington Square. It was quite an interesting place, the only place besides Central Park where I found people looking, well, comfortable. After watching awhile, we were off looking for Bleeker Street. After finding and traversing it awhile, we came upon what appeared to be the tourist or at least the entertainment district. We found the famous Cafe Au Go Go, where The Blues Project were playing, and the Garrick Theatre featuring The Mothers of Invention. Hank, Ted, Chris and I decided to stay and see The Mothers. The show started off by an act called The Times Square Two. They were rather funny, but their act seemed too practiced. And then there was the main event, The Mothers. There were at least a half dozen of them, all dirty and long-haired, though one had very beautiful silver hair. Someone had told me that Frank Zappa, their leader, had longer hair than me, but it is not true, not true at all! For the uninitiated, The Mothers base most of their act on parodying pop songs, something they do extremely well. They did beautiful parodies of things like "Baby Love" and "Hey Joe" ("Hey punk, where you going with those buttons on your shirt?") At one point, the three singers spit on the stage and Zappa goes, "Wasn't that gross?" Zappa has a remarkably deep, cultured voice which seemed out of place saying snidely, "Thank ya, boys and girls." The Mothers ended their act with an incredibly wierd number to which some girl was doing imitation exotic dances -- she wasn't part of the act, she just wanted to dance! After the show, we went back to the hotel and to bed, too tired to investigate reports of other arriving fans.

Thurs. morning the art show was supposed to open so we went down early to enter some art by our St. Louis artist, Mickey Rhodes. However, there was nobody stirring near the art room, so we went down to the lobby. Ray & Joyce Fisher were wandering around, having got in the night before and we stopped to tell what little had been going on. They introduced us to some fans they had met already; Ruth and Jean Berman, Fred Hollander supporting a beard and a Maneki-Neko button, and Earl Thompson.



That day, Hank and I decided to see the Statue of Liberty as all patriotic Americans should. We had quite an adventure getting there on the subway and discovered a complete city, it seems, under the streets, even under the waters. Somehow we safely emerged at Battery Park and got the ferry out to Miss Liberty. The Statue is on a small island in the harbor. Besides the statue surrounded by terraced landscape, there is a refreshment center, a dock, and some office buildings (? -- at least I doubt that anyone lives in them.) We entered the base of the statue and took an elevator up 10 stories to an observation deck. Then we got to climb a narrow spiral staircase, which you are warned against at all turns, to the head! There you could look out tiny windows and see the harbor and Manhattan -- actually not too impressive. And then we climbed back down. The staircase is incredibly narrow and winding and very scary to climb especially down, but we made it. We took a ferry back to shore and managed to make the subway trip back without getting lost!

Once back, we decided to check the mezzanine for fans. Sure enough there were some standing around, but registration had not yet started, so we went up to the room for a few minutes! We found Mickey's art still up there so we brought it back down with us to see about entering it in the art show.

Hank had spread the artwork out and was trying to fill out the forms given him, when a man wearing a "St. Louis in '69" button came up and commented on the art to me. I said, "I see you're supporting us." and he said Ray Fisher had given him the button earlier. I then introduced myself and he said, "I'm Jack Gaughan." It was a good thing that he was still examining the art and did not see the expression of complete surprise on my face.

Later we went and stood in line to register. We saw many fans there and spent the time giving out Sirruishes and collecting info on parties that night. I wandered off for a moment and when I came back Hank introduced me to 3 fellows he had just happened to run into who turned out to be APA45ers Fred Haskell, Jim Young and Ken Fletcher. That was just the first of many surprise meetings! We finally registered and were presented with very handsome name-buttons bearing the ~~APA~~ ~~45~~ con symbol and name. We also received a monstrous program book which is a credit to the committee!

Later that evening we went back down to the Village, to the Cafe Au Go Go. The Cafe is a rather small, dark place with benches like church pews! The show that night consisted of The Dickens, a competent Canadian group, the Times Square Two (again?) and The Blues Project. We had to wait for a while for the BP, as Al Kooper was held up at the ABC studios on something about the Monterey Pop Festival! But he finally got there and the wait was worth it.

The BP were absolutely incredible. I don't remember everything they played, but I do remember a beautiful Jamaican, Dirty John John with his bongos. And Kooper, one of the greatest musicians in the world. They played a 20-minute version of "Flute 9

Thing" which was unbelievable. I walked out of the place absolutely numb, barely able to feel the cold of the New York night.

By the time we got back to the hotel I was aware enough to make the transition from one world to another. We went looking for parties and first found an LA one. After a while we went up to a Columbus Party. After a while we heard rumors, of all things of a collating party. We found some people in a very small room collating "Spock-inalia" a fanzine devoted to Mr. Spock. They chased us out as soon as we acquired a copy so we moved down to Fred Haskell's room where Ken Fletcher was madly drawing. The smell of magic marker was stifling. Finally the party degenerated into a pun session and we decided it was time to go to bed.

Rather late the next morning I wandered down to the mezzanine. I sat in front of the as yet unopened art show for a while watching people ramble back and forth. In that way I met several interesting people, including Alex Eisenstein who had come from Germany, where Uncle Sam had stationed him, for the con. Shortly after noon, the con was officially opened by John Boardman in a black wizard's rig chanting the invocation, which I could not quite hear. Then there was the introduction of notables, which went on for quite a while, because, as Ted White said, "I remember a con where the introduction of notables involved only 6 people." After he had named half the people who were supposedly already at the con, Ted began the program early, with a discussion between Terry Carr and Dick Lupoff which I didn't stay for.

Instead we went out and looked at the art show and the huckster's room. A funny thing about the huckster's room, there seemed to be very few fans in there, at least most of the people I saw there were unknown to me and seemed to be people off the street. We spent some time going around reading badges and trying to find people we wanted to meet. I found it quite dizzying to try to read a name in the three seconds or so a person walking past was close enough.

I skipped most of the program that afternoon but did get occasional glimpses of a bearded Alex Panshin beyond Elliot Shorter and the swinging door. One thing I did see though was "The Ellison Auction" in which Bob Silverberg auctioned off Harlan for the benefit of TAFF. Randy Garrett not being there, Bob tried hard to take his place in insulting Harlan. The auction started off slowly, despite Bob's explaining that in the one hour of Harlan's time you could have him do anything, within reason. One gentleman had had him write a story of which he got 10%. Things enlivened when a chick in a digger hat bid on Harlan. He asked that no one bid against her, but someone did, forcing her to pay \$40 for Harlan, the highest he has ever gone for. When the young lady went up to claim her purchase she was followed by 3 of the Columbus bunch (she was from Ohio) who proposed she be auctioned off, half the proceeds to go to their con bid, the other half to TAFF. She went for \$42 to some Texan. If any of you think \$40 is a bit much to pay for one hour, she was with him a good deal more than that and he bought her dinner at least once.

That evening the Galaxy of Fashion brought a display of female flesh much appreciated by most of the audience. It also brought some very clever costumes, most seemed meant for a controlled climate but seemed useful including a "parts dress" (actually interchangeable "Dynamic asymmetry") a coat with an extremely high collar which covered the face and a "wind chime" dress which was most impractical but perhaps could be used in jewelry.

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That evening LA had a stifling crowded open party and Columbus a rather dead semi-private one, so we grabbed a drink and some people and started our own party. I don't know how many people were there, not too many, I didn't know all of them, but it was a good party. Judi Shephton, Mark Owings & Doc Clark managed to produce soda and ice and glasses from somewhere. Larry Janifer came in and stumped us with

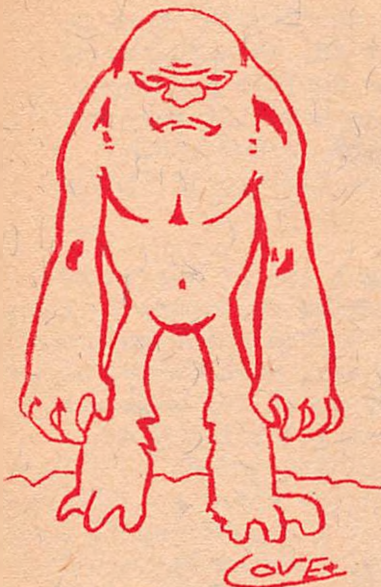
a quiz on the first lines of sf books. It was a quite good party, my parents were surprised to find it in progress when they returned from somewhere. I don't know much about the latter part of the party, as I went to sleep, but I know Bill Mallard came in for a while, Rich Wannan levitated between two chairs and half the room broke up over a joke about Nancy Sinatra. Funny thing, she called just after the party broke up.

Saturday opened with a "Discussion" between Harlan and Ted White on the "New Thing" with Harlan saying its happening right now baby, and Ted saying something is always happening so what's so special about now. It was an interesting discussion which somehow got around to how fans wrote in to save Star Trek and why doesn't the NY Times review sf. Harlan also told how sf is discriminated against when it comes to ad budgets and such. He suggested we write the distributors, Bob Silverberg said write the publishers and somebody said "let us know who to hit and we will." That's a new thing.

The next thing on the program was a debate between Norman Spinrad and Fred Pohl. Norman's contention was that Mr. Pohl should not edit 3 out of 5 sf mags, but Harry Harrison knocked that in the head by announcing just before that he is now editor of Amazing and Fantastic. But it was an interesting discussion, the little of it I heard, enlivened by remarks from Lester del Ray.

For some reason I was running around for a while after this -- I remember visiting the N3F room (it was away from everything and usually quite dead) and the Dick Powers art show (beautiful). I remember coming out of the elevator and seeing Roger and Judy Zelazny. I said hi and they returned the greeting! It was pleasant to realize they actually knew me.

That afternoon Roger and Chip Delaney were supposed to have a dialogue. Neither one knew exactly what they were supposed to talk about, so they mostly answered questions. It proved to be quite interesting, especially when Chip explained that Einstein Intersection was actually the piecing together of several notebooks he had filled about ancient and modern myths. Roger recapped the speech he made at the Ozarkon, which made me feel quite good. Later we tackled a sign up on a bulletin board advising that the complete text of the speech was in Sirruish, available from us. Very late that night some kid came up to our room and bought one.



Next came the selection of the con site for '68. Los Angeles and San Francisco were bidding. LA had first chance with Al Lewis, Bjo Trimble, Gene Rodenberry, Harry C. Stubbs and Hal Clemet! It was really not too good a presentation! But many people were confident that fans would vote on the basis of what LA had been doing all year. Next came Frisco! Ben Stark, one of their 3 chairman, spoke first on their previous cons. Then Lester del Ray and Bob Tucker seconded it. They were followed by Roger Zelazny who gave his "Baltimore lobster speech" with San Francisco inserted. But their coup de tait came when Harlan Ellison gave the final seconding speech, 5 minutes of pure Ellison, who has a love-hate relationship with his audience.

During the voting, the doors were completely barred so it would be a fair vote. However, only about 550-600 people voted. When the results were announced, it was a shock to find that Baycon had won. It seems LA was right to fear "walk-ins" who knew only what they were

told in the 15 minute bidding speeches, assuredly not everything there was to consider about each bid.

That evening was Star Trek night. Mr. Roddenberry had let the convention borrow not only the first ST episode of the new season which was quite good but also a film of Star Trek "Bloopers" which apparently the cast and crew had made for their own amusement. It included such classics as NBC's peacock suddenly switching from color to black and white, Captain Kirk's true feeling toward Yeoman Rand, and several breaks in costumes and lines.

Sunday dawned bright and early, but we didn't see it in the perpetual twilight of our room. However, I did arise early enough to see most of the business meeting. There were only 100-150 fans there (seemingly, almost equally divided between fanzine fans and non-fanzine fans, from Andy Porter's query.) It seems a bit unfair that this few people and the small number who voted on the con site should have the power to decide on the most important fannish event of the year. I suppose that's why most of the rulings made at the meetings are only suggestions or permission! Anyway, at this particular business meeting it was decided that the con can be "permitted" to add 2 additional science fiction achievement awards. A poll of the ~~audience~~ revealed that most were in favor of these being "best fan writer" and "best fan artist" at Baycon. This poll was taken for the benefit of Ben Stark. It was decided to make every 4th year beginning with '70 an official "out of the US" con year and a ~~committee~~ headed by Ray Fisher was set up to study the complications.

I skipped the first part of the program this day in favor of eating, but returned in time to hear John Bush and a rather dead-looking Mike Moorcock discussing "publishing conditions in the United Kingdom." It seems that publishers and critics there have accepted sf as a serious form and treat it as such! Moorcock said that his grant from the British Arts Council was only large enough that it inspired enough faith in his publisher to continue printing New Worlds. And it seems this Speculative Fiction magazine is doing better than ever!

Next was an interview with Jack Gaughan who talked about being as sf artist and why his best work was not always accepted for the final product ("If you do two bad blue sketches and one good red one, but they have a lot of red covers that month, they'll take a blue one!")

There followed a dialogue between Sid Coleman and Dr. Asimov on "Should there be more or less science in science fiction?" Dr. A. argued that sf, as a source of science writers, such as himself, could be the saviors of the world's populace, while Coleman argued that sf does not have to be scientific to have literary value. Actually, I think the only thing separating the two sides which formed behind these views was whether or not something could be good science fiction if it was not based on science!

The St. Louis contingent had planned to give a party that night and it was to be in our room! So we spent several hours that afternoon rearranging furniture to make more room and hiding away some supplies in unlikely places! We had quite an adventure searching for ice. All the regular ice machines, it seems, were empty, so we went searching for others. We climbed up and down the steps, which for some reason were covered with flashbulbs. In the process we discovered at least two hidden office floors, miles of back passages. Finally Earl Thompson directed up to a huge ice machine just off the ballroom. It was rather funny trying to carry the ice back up to the room without attracting the attention of the fans at the auction. (I have not mentioned the auctions before, but there was one each day! Harlan was usually the auctioneer. He did quite a good job of selling Jack Gaughan paintings, original manuscripts and other goodies, but was even better at peddling his new book,

Dangerous Visions!) We finally got the ice up to the room, swiping glasses and ash-trays as we came.

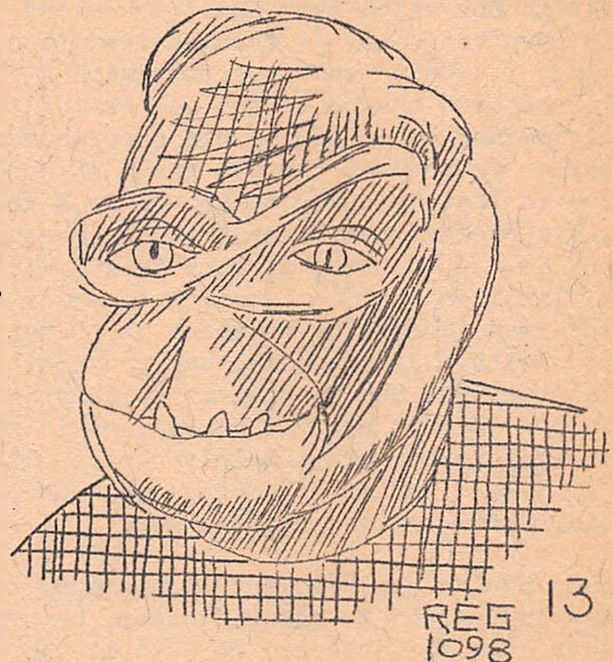
After the preparations were complete, we went down to the art show where final bidding was taking place. Chris and I had a little money and wanted to buy a Gaughan sketch. We decided on one illustration of "Warlock of the Witchword" and I bid on it. Several minutes later we returned from admiring Jeff Jones' Conan, which I believe Alex Eisenstein bought, to find some fellow bidding on "our" Gaughan. The name he used was "Helmut Geiger" but that was not the name he wore. We found out later that he was bidding for a dealer. Chris and I immediately upped our bid, just as the time came for the close of written bids. The picture then had to be verbally bid upon; we were quite lucky to have Bjo put our sketch up first. We got it with no opposition!

My mother had also bid on a Gaughan sketch, but it got beyond the price she wanted to pay for it. However, she really wanted a Gaughan and so stayed for the verbal auction. Thus, she managed to purchase the beautiful final painting for the March '67 F&SF illustrating The Little People. It is somewhat different from the cover in color shades. It is a fantastic painting.

That evening was the Costume Parade. We had come in and were standing around waiting for something to happen when Jerry Kaufman came over and asked me how I'd like to be in the costume parade. It seems some guy was dressed as Harlan Ellison and was looking for a girl to complete his costume. He did look very much like Harlan Ellison and had even received Ellison's stamp of approval! I thought this quite an amusing idea and so agreed to it. There were many good costumes, 98 in all. I was a bit nervous to really pay close attention to those that came before us. But it was fun to walk across the stage and get my picture taken by numerous photographers. Perhaps the most amusing event was when George Scithers announced as the next costume "Dr. Asimov" and the real Harlan Ellison walked across the stage with a pipe in his mouth and a coat slung over his shoulders. The applause was loud, but it became deafening when the real Dr. A. scrambled up the stage and beamed his way across.

While Harlan was standing by the photographers, my parents somehow persuaded him to let them take a picture of him with me. It was rather exciting to get my picture taken with the real Harlan.

After the costumes had all paraded across the stage, a Star Trek skit was presented. It seemed amusing what I could hear of it. Then Scithers asked all the Messers Spock to come up on the stage. There were at least 8 people disguised as this ST character. One of the Spocks asked the fake Harlan Ellison who he was supposed to be. He answered, "Harlan Ellison," and the Spock said, "Well, I don't read much science fiction. . . ." The judges returned with their list of semifinalists and I was shocked to find that we had made it that far. I think it was because of this fellow's remarkable resemblance to Harlan. The real Ellison, along with Dr. A., was a semifinalist also. While we were standing in line I heard them talking. Harlan: "Now, let's go on together, and I'll tell them that



it wouldn't be fair for us to win anything." Ike: "Fine, but this time let me walk first."

Needless to say, we did not win.

Immediately after this, we ran up to the room to find the party already in full progress. It was rather late when we got there, so we helped Fred Lerner carry out what he claims to be an old fannish custom. That is, singing "God Save The Queen" at Midnight! Then John Boardman announced that his familiar (really his daughter, who dressed as a devil, had assisted him in the invocation and the costume parade.) was now celebrating her second birthday. At least 50 fans serenaded her with "Happy Birthday." A little later, as the room was quite crowded, we decided to go up to the Columbus party for a while. On the way up, the elevator operator stopped one floor below our destination and refused to proceed any further until given a libation. We found Larry Smith standing at the door of the Columbus suite. He said he was looking to see if he knew the people coming in. "You know us." we said, and went in as he slowly agreed. Their party was as crowded as ours, so we only stayed long enough to see Dr. Asimov depart and talk to some people who asked why we weren't at our party. We got the same elevator when we tried to return to our floor. This time the operator took us up to an empty floor and remained there until he had received a liquid bribe. It was quite funny to find out how to get some elevator service. I must say this particular fellow was one of the nicest in the establishment. He didn't curse at us in Spanish.

We found our party a bit more comfortable when we returned, but still it was so crowded as to force me to remain in one place for the remainder of the evening. I saw many people come and go, including Judy Merrill, Chip Delany and John Brunner, but was unable to talk to as many as I would have liked. A bit prejudicely, I thought it was one of the best parties at the con. It finally broke up around 4:30 AM, but we did not retire until at least 6.

Five hours later we dragged ourselves out of bed so that we might attend the Banquet. It was the usual "rubber chicken" banquet fare, but then, I suppose that most people weren't there because of the food. After the clanking of silverware had ended, Harlan, the toastmaster, got up and began his speech by turning the dial on a little box which then emitted a wierd "Outer Limits" type sound. He then proceeded to down the hotel (a fannish tradition, but it deserved it) and tell "Ellison Stories." Ted White was presented with a gilded ping-pong paddle, he took it quite well. Ted offered thanks to the members of the committee, esp! Andy Porter, who deserved it immensely because of his super-human efforts, and John Boardman. After that, Harlan introduced the fan guest of honor by saying "The only thing I know about this guy is that he never talked to me." Then Bob Tucker gave his speech entitled, "Meanwhile Back at the Ranch," mainly because it kept wandering off in every direction and he had to bring it back to its main point, whatever that was, with that phrase. Harlan then decided to allow time for the "extra" awards to be given. He gave Forry Ackerman 10 minutes in which to present the Big Heart Award, and he did it in that time with a speech which amply explained why Janie Lamb deserves the award. Harlan then offered Sam Moskowitz the same amount of time in which to present the First Fandom Award! Sam, of course, could not explain why Ed Hamilton deserved the award in that short a time, mainly because it took him 8 minutes to tell his opening age-old joke. Harlan did manage what is perhaps a fannish first by hurrying Sam up with his "Outer Limits" noise-maker!

When Harlan had regained the podium, he introduced the GoH by telling how hard Lester had worked to the the honor, by bribing the committee, threats, etc. Lester | 4 then gave his speech. He said it was a 2 hour speech he had wanted to give for a long time, but mercifully he kept it short, sweet and interesting, even though it

was a protest against the "new wave."

Finally it was time to give out the "Achievement Awards." Harlan first announced that one had been lost in the mail and the person who had won two would get the other later. When Ted protested his letting the cat out of the bag, Harlan answered, "They won't know who he is 'til he's won the other." But everyone guessed that he was speaking of Jack Gaughan who won both pro and fan artist awards. He looked very happy about it. Then the other awards were given out! Alex Panshin gracefully came down from the balcony to accept best fan writer. Fred Pohl decided that winning another Hugo for IF meant he could continue to edit 3 magazines. Dr. Asimov accepted the award for "The Menagerie" with the remark about the con committee, "Remember they picked Harlan and this hotel." Larry Niven won short story above Harlan's protest, "The Last Castle" by Jack Vance took novelette, and Bjo accepted the Hugo for RAH's The Moon is a Harsh Mistress. The banquet ended with Andy Porter announcing that New York was bidding for '74. I wonder if NyconIV will be as big (1700 registered), as impressive and as fun as Nycon III?

END

Lesleigh's Nycon III report is reprinted from QUARK #4, published by Lesleigh and
Chris Couch

I've got these duplicates that I want to sell:

PAPERBACKS (very good condition, 25¢, 5 for \$1) The Furies, Keith Roberts;
The Puppet Masters, Robert A. Heinlein; Saga of Lost Earths, Emil Petaja;
Echo X, Ben Barzman; Wasp, Eric Frank Russell; The Island of Dr. Moreau, H.G. Wells.

PAPERBACKS (less than good condition. . . whole, with covers, usually they have my name scrawled across them. 20¢, 6 for \$1) The Infinite Moment, John Wyndham; The Time Machine, H.G. Wells; The City and The Stars, Arthur C. Clarke; The Menace from Earth, Robert A. Heinlein; The Dark Destroyers, Manly Wade Wellman /with/ Bow Down to Null, Brian W. Aldiss (Ace Double D-443); The Wall Around the World, Theodore R. Cogswell; A Decade of Fantasy and Science Fiction ed. by Robert P. Mills; Conditionally Human, Walter M. Miller; Time is the Simplest Thing, Clifford Simak; I, Robot, Isaac Asimov; Worlds of When ed by Groff Conklin; And Some Were Human, Lester del Rey; The Space Egg, Russ Winterbotham; Far Out, Damon Knight; The War of the Worlds, H.G. Wells; Third From The Sun, Richard Matheson.

GALAXY NOVELS: The Warriors of Day, James Blish (good, 25¢); Jack of Eagles, James Blish (my name is on it, 20¢); The House of Many Worlds, Sam Merwin, Jr. (good, 25¢); The Black Galaxy, Murray Leinster (no cover, 15¢).

MAGAZINES (almost new condition to good unless otherwise stated.) The Saint Mystery Magazine, Sept '61 (Rohmer, Avram Davidson, August Derleth) 25¢; Beyond Fantasy Fiction, July '54, 40¢; Weird Tales (digest size) January '54, 40¢; Fantastic, May '67, 30¢; If, Feb, '67, 30¢; Magazine of Horror, January, '68, 30¢; Galaxy, March '55, 40¢, Oct '65 (15th Anniversary issue) 30¢, August, '60 (cover slightly torn) 30¢; Astounding SF, Nov '52 (cover loose) 40¢; Amazing (35th anniversary issue) April, '61, 40¢; Fantasy and Science Fiction, Oct '58, Aug '59, Nov '58, 30¢ each, March '62 (tape on spine), January '63 (my name is on it), 25¢ each; Science Fantasy #56, 40¢; Mad #'s 75, 81, 82, 30¢ each.

Order these from me (Hank) at my school address in front -- I'll pay the postage on orders over \$1, under that, How about a quarter or so extra?
I needs lots of things, if you have something you want to trade, write me.

With MALICE TOWARD All JOE SANDERS

++ a column about books by ++

The Invaders, by Keith Laumer. Pyramid, 50¢

This is an incredibly bad book, a total botch. It isn't nearly as good as the TV series in most respects -- and even the few points where it's better somehow work against it.

Fan reaction to the TV Invaders has been pretty negative. I've seen the show denounced as low-grade, primitive monster-movie stuff, the hero described as a "panty-waist," and the basic concept of alien-invaders-walking-among-us labeled as paranoid.

Maybe so. But heck, nobody's perfect.

Old ideas have been used in some interesting finished products -- like Invasion of the Body Snatchers, another gosh-they're-taking-us-over story! For me, anyway, watching on a black & white TV, The Invaders works. It looks good. Besides, I think we're all like Bill Cosby as a child; we all like to be scared sometimes. As the introductory spiel says, The Invaders is a nightmare. And I enjoy it.

This book, though. . . It's hard to separate from the TV series in a way. For one thing, Laumer could never have sold this lump of three stories anywhere, with the possible exception of Amazing under the editorship of Paul Fairman, without the TV tie-in. Moreover, the stories almost have to be read by someone who's seen the show. They rely on an experience outside themselves for completeness, the human characters are not at all interesting or the aliens at all menacing unless a reader can fill in the blanks from memory of what he's seen on TV. But Laumer even fumbles this by sloppiness and careless contradictions.

16

The characters are pure stock types, constructed with all the skill of a child piling up alphabet blocks. David Vincent, the hero, for example. We learn almost immediately (p. 12) that he's an MIT graduate, a little later he hunts up an old friend who helpfully blurts: "You -- David Vincent -- the toughest linebacker that ever wore a Phi Beta Kappa Key? Scared? The lad that won more decorations in Viet Nam than -- " (p. 30)! Wow. The great American sf hero. But that's all we ever find out about what David Vincent is like. Why does he do what he does? There's no telling.

Roy Thinnes is sort of a faint carbon copy of Paul Newman, but he makes David Vincent more interesting than this. And, by the way, football is not a varsity sport at MIT. (I wonder if Laumer ever tried to check what he'd written for facts.)

Laumer departs from the TV plotline by showing David Vincent on the run, hiding out from the aliens. This is a logical improvement on the TV show, I think, because it's always bothered me that David Vincent should walk around in public, when any aliens who've kept track of the times Vincent has thwarted their schemes could slither up beside him and zap him on the back of the neck with a heart-attack thermowhattle. So, okay, here Laumer is better than his model. But he makes idiocy of this on the plot level by explaining that David Vincent is hiding because the aliens think he is dead (p. 56) -- after he just called in to his home office thus revealing to anybody interested that he's alive. Besides, Laumer cannot spoil the Hero he built up at the beginning, so he can't let David Vincent feel the full effects of running and hiding. Of course, Laumer mentions that David is getting gaunt, tattered, etc. -- but as a genuine hero, he remains radiantly and heroically Sexy, melting the heart and will (in vain, poor dears, for David Vincent has a Mission) of any secretary, waitress, or elderly librarian he meets.

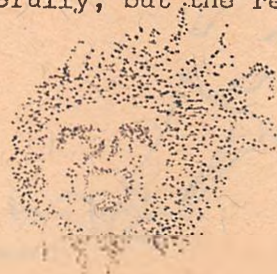
If David Vincent is a stock hero, the Invaders are stock villains, rasping out lines like "Yes, David Vincent. . . I still live!" They are no more convincing than the human characters. How do the Invaders reveal themselves? How does David Vincent stumble into their plot? Instinct. So Laumer doesn't have to explain things. The trouble is that in his treatment of the aliens Laumer flatly contradicts the TV series. The TV Invaders land from flying saucers -- that's how David Vincent found out about them; he almost crashed into a saucer with his car one night. Laumer's aliens have been "dropped in tiny one-alien pods" (P. 102). The TV aliens' bodies melt as soon as they're at the point of death; the bodies of Laumer's Invaders are almost indestructable. (I wonder if Laumer ever watched the TV show on which the book was supposed to be based.) Yet even this doesn't always hold true. In the first story, "The Discovery," David Vincent kills one alien by pushing a heavy crate on him and another by spearing him on a fork lift tine. (I wonder if Laumer ever reread what he'd written.)

The Invaders is supposed to be the "First in a thrilling new series based on the smash ABC-TV hit." It was extremely unbusinesslike of Pyramid, then, to publish this book. Because I don't think anyone interested in science fiction or anyone interested in The Invaders is going to be very much interested in future books in the series.

* * * * *

A Note on Pornography

To spin off from the last installment of this column: Fairly recently we've had to change our notion of what man is like. Once upon a time people believed, or said they believed, that God was in charge of the world and that everything would be okay. Somewhat later people believed, or said they believed, that man could run things to suit himself; they were unwilling to discard the language of the past and they spoke of science and religion coexisting peacefully, but the real measure



of life had become the mind of man. Still, things were supposed to be fundamentally okay. Science was based -- it had to be -- on an assumption that man could understand and control his life for his own benefit. It was this assumption, sometimes expressed as "using God-given reason," which dominated our thought for several centuries:

More recently, as I say, that picture has been altered. The reasons for the change are probably too numerous and too complex to squeeze into a short survey like this. World War II, even more than World War I, showed what reasonably-applied science could do, when intelligent, efficient people from the heart of civilized Europe decided to scientifically wipe out several million of their inferiors. But, anyway, it's rather hard these days to believe that the old confidence is still justified. We are not sure what we really are, and we are not sure how binding the old rules of behavior are. In particular, our attitude toward literature has changed. When told they shouldn't read a certain book, people respond, "Why Who says so?" And it's hard to answer them by mouthing formulas like, "There are some things decent people don't mention in public. . ." After all, what is decent, anyway? Who decides? As Leigh Couch put it, last issue: "Who shall keep the keepers themselves?"

Judging from the newstands in Indianapolis, Indiana -- of all places -- I can't imagine anything which could not be printed and publicly sold. (Which might show my lack of imagination, but still. . .) Some of these books have little quotations from sociological studies printed in the inside blurb to emphasize their redeeming social importance, some contain learned introductions by Ph.D.'s, all are pornography in the traditional sense of the word. But, as I say, it's hard to explain why pornography is bad. We used to think that sex was not a respectable subject; now it seems no less disreputable than a lot of other human activities. We used to think that the end of life was contemplation of Ultimate Truth -- God -- or the reasonable self's perfecting itself in knowledge. Now, we're not so sure. Why shouldn't a man use up his time being excited by a book if he wants to be? Hard to say. So, barring a resurgence of conservative morality or some convincing empirical proof that reading pornography often leads to socially destructive action, it seems unlikely that we'll see any widespread, effective censorship. Despite the Supreme Court's recent second thoughts about absolute freedom of expression, re Ginzberg, etc., the fact remains that there is a large audience for over-the-counter pornography and that it's being pretty well satisfied. I think this situation is unlikely to change. I don't think we can put our rather forced innocence back together again.



But I also -- speaking now as an individual, not as a member of any group advocating public censorship -- am sickened by some of the things I see in print. Sex as a topic does not disgust me, and it's my guess that we'd have fewer cold, hurt marriages if people heard more, sooner about sex. (George Bernard Shaw is supposed to have recommended Lady Chatterley's Lover as a marriage manual; that strikes me as a rather good idea, just as I'd recommend Baldwin's Another Country as a caution that good sex doesn't automatically make a relationship.) But I am disgusted by sex plus brutality. Cruelty is nothing new in itself, and G. Legman made the point several years ago, with hysterical urgency, that we have traditionally

been more tolerant of violent death in art than of sexual love. Not that all sex involves love: that's part of our problem now. We have known that man could destroy himself or others and what special fun it is to destroy ourselves. I can't explain -- heck, not the popularity but the existence of books like The Story of O, The Image or The Itch otherwise. Perhaps its because sex has always been considered a personal, private thing that authors now picture the use of sex as part of the deliberate destruction of their character. Sometimes, this is part of what I mentioned earlier -- we're absorbed in taking man apart to see what makes him tick. But this new kind of pornography is rather frightening in its contempt for the individual -- sometimes for everyone apart from the author's viewpoint, sometimes for everyone, period.

It's probably impossible to censor this kind of writing, to judge how much is serious exploration and how much simple feeding of sick desire. We can hope -- I do -- that we will find some meaning on the other side of this chaos. In any event the writer and the reader must have freedom, even if it means freedom to isolate and brutalize themselves. The results will have to be judged as books, of course; in addition, each reader must evaluate them as part of his experience.

I'm speaking, remember, as an individual -- one critic to each of you out there holding this issue of Starling. I've been trying to explain why the traditional standards of "decent" literature don't apply any longer. I don't think anything can be done about this by the church, the government, or any special little pressure group. If anything can be done, each of us will have to do it by himself. If fact, I don't think we necessarily should be ashamed if we enjoy books based on or containing frank treatment of sex; I think we should be sorry, though, if we enjoy reading about sex gained at the expense of someone's human dignity, the assertion of will when it means the destruction of another individual. The last thing we need now is more vicious alienation. The books published today, like the things we read in the newspaper, should provoke us to question ourselves: Who am I? What am I doing here? I think we'll come out okay if we honestly questions ourselves -- if we realize that we have to accept books, even "dirty" books, as part of the real world but if we refuse to accept what they show us as the whole world.

END

OZARKON III

The Date: July 26, 27, 28, 1968 (The last Fri-Sun. of
of the month)

Registration: \$2.00

Location: The Ben Franklin Motor Hotel

825 Washington

St. Louis, Missouri 63101

rates: \$7 single

\$9 twin

+ A banquet, parties, hucksters, movies, auctions, more +
More information: Norbert Couch, Rt. 2, Box 889, Arnold, Mo. 63010

The Guest of Honor:

HARLAN ELLISON

WORDS FROM READERS LETTER COLUMN

Steve Johnson, 1018 N. 31 Street, Corvallis, Oregon 97330

The English Universities (or, at least Newcastle) sound like the ones in Germany: very loose organization, few exams. A visiting German student told me that they have one exam during their entire college career covering the entire four-five years. (I got the impression that this single exam was over a week of almost solid testing.) He went on to say that the faculty didn't really care whether the students got an education or not -- it was up to them to come to lectures, do research in their subject matter area. Sometimes I wish this would be the case in the USA; mainly the part about everyone ignoring you. Heck, I'm hardly in school and I've got every fraternity on campus mailing me junk and coming over to sell me on their living group. And from what my friends tell me, the local churches begin their blitz in about two weeks. To combat them I'm writing "atheist" "Fosterite" or "First National Bank" on all religious preference cards shoved at me (and there are dozens of them), but I really doubt if it will do any good. (It's not that I mind religion, it's just that I hate somebody trying to sell me theirs!)

I wonder which "mundane reviewers" Lesleigh was thinking of when she said a few had praised 451. I never read any favorable reviews of it outside fannish circles. My opinion? Very good, except for that damned chase scene where the cops chased after Montag in the Dick Tracy style anti-grav units. Helicopters would have worked just as well (if not better) and the anti gravs just looked fakey.

Creath Thorne, Route 4, Savannah, Missouri 64485

The audience laughed when the police with the rocket harnesses came on the screen in Fahrenheit 451 when I saw it also. I particularly remember one girl who laughed very loudly and who kept shouting "Oh no, oh no, they've got to be kidding." Actually, I was so busy watching her (as was everyone else in the audience) that I didn't see much of the movie at that point. That scene must have struck a sensitive chord in her, or something.

Do you remember the scene in F451 where the police grab a teenager and cut off his long hair? The audience I was in clapped wildly at that point! Beware, Hank Luttrell!

Joe Sanders' article was very good. I disagree, however, with his assessment of H.G. Wells. (1) The statement that "outside fandom people usually remember Wells as an optimistic, shallow journalist" is wrong. Wells is considered to be much greater than that by most critics. See any standard literary history for proof. (2) Wells' early science romances were just that -- romances. Wells' main purpose in his early

years was not to educate the public. That stage came later! (3) The period of pessimism in Wells' life came at the end of his life in the 1940's. It was then that Wells lost faith and confidence in the human race.

Doug Lovenstein, 425 Coolville Ridge, Athens, Ohio 45701

I liked REG's and Klein's work best -- Gilbert's art is quite original, technically, and visually. Klein's machine on page 12 showed much imagination -- this is the kind of illo which is good in itself and needs no "explanation." Now the back cover, while technically well done, annoyed and bothered me! It was an illustration. It told a story. A piece like this cannot (successfully) be stuck in a zine as a filler (or, as in this case, as a back cover) without due explanation. A reader (me, anyway) cannot look at an illustration of this nature and accept it merely as a piece of art! The question arises as to what is happening! A situation like this can ruin an otherwise excellent piece, and this, in my opinion, is what happened here.

Harry Warner, 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Richard Gordon's article is comforting in the sense that it proves the United States has no monopoly on the suspicion that college is just a way of marking time and becoming eligible for higher pay. I'd guess that one out of five college students is really capable of benefitting intellectually from what he's undergoing, and one out of ten will be a better worker throughout his life because of his college years. But we seem to be in an educational weltanschauung nowadays in which the amount of time spent in school has the same magical importance as the number of rosaries or masses for a specific object used to have. I suppose the whole unwieldy education-structure is justified by the accomplishments of the minority who really benefit and by the comfortable way it supports those who teach and administer the institutions. But I doubt that it can continue to grow as it has risen up in the past half-century; already it is threatening to send the entire tax structure toppling in poorer parts of the nation.

I spoke my piece on censorship of pornography the last time I wrote a letter. That leaves me with little to say this time about Leigh Couch's article! One minor suggestion: why not call sex education courses something else, to avoid the outrage induced in some people by the two words "sex education"? Family living might be a safe disguise, under which the students could learn just as much about sex as they do under the more lurid title! Naming it family living might also encourage the educators to put more stress in the course on the real purpose of sex education, to encourage the kids to go out and become members of families as they reach adulthood. There may be an occasional teenager whose sexual destiny lies only in a Don Juan type of life, but I suspect that for most, the greatest happiness lies in restricting sex to its legal and morally acceptable locale, married life!

Joe Sanders' contribution sounds as if it might have been written for school purposes. But it read better than most academic exercises that wander into fanzines, because it lacks the rattling off of self-evident matters known by





instinct to all fanzine readers. I've always thought that 1984 was different from other novels considered because Orwell seemed to intend at least in part a satirization of the present day, instead of solely predicting the future! I wonder if it's safe to conclude that the menacing things in early Wells novels really were due to his "disillusionment"? Isn't it equally probable that Wells introduced the belligerence of the Martians and the surgery of Dr. Moreau simply because he wanted a good excuse to get a riproaring conflict going in books that were aimed at entertaining a large public? My understanding of Wells is that he was quite optimistic about society's chances of improving itself and only quite late in life did he feel shocked that the world peace he'd imagined had not come into reality the way his tanks and other prophecies had materialized!

John Boland, 2328 47th Street, Moline, Illinois 61265

Not only is Fahrenheit 451 not entertaining to the average movie goer, it isn't very interesting to the average fan, either. Not this average fan, anyway. Maybe some mainstream reviewers liked it -- I know the man for Life did -- but Crowther butchered it in the NY Times, and with quite a bit of justification, I thought. As Lesleigh points out, the flick's about books -- or book burning to be more precise. Now I'm as fond of books as anyone, I'd venture; but even so I found Fahrenheit 451 a christawfully dull movie -- where I didn't find the book dull at all! The difference might stem from the fact that Bradbury did not write a novel about book burning, he wrote a novel which used book burning (and boob-tubery) as dramatic elements to put across a theme. I can't come up with a better example of Truffaut's bungling ineptitude than that the war never comes in movie. And that blows Bradbury's theme! So the people are all living in a child's universe? So they studiously ignore the reality around them? So what? According to the flick, so nothing. Boredom, yeah. But boredom without an end in sight, which is a bit different from the price the people in the novel pay for their evasions. Quite frankly, I'd vote for an episode of "The Invaders" before I'd vote for Fahrenheit 451. "The Invaders" may be pretty cruddy, but at least the people behind it don't have the crust to turn out something cruddy and capital-P Pretentious!

Willard P. Osborn, Route #7, Rome, Georgia

Oh yes, by the way. . . the world lit. teacher for two of Rome's three high schools asked me to brief her on the subject last week. She wanted to know if it would be worth the trouble to schedule a unit in sf, if there is any real variety in the field. I think I convinced her. I also told her to get her students to order Starling, so they could see what the fanatics of the movement were like. //This sort of frightened me. I could just imagine getting an order from some school teacher for 40 copies of Starling. HL//

Stephen Lewis, 2074 Pauline Blvd, Apt 1A, Ann Arbor, Mich 48103

If the editorial on Fahrenheit 451 by Lesleigh and yourself in Starling #10 was designed to stimulate comment for the letter column, I think you may well succeed. Certainly few recent movies have received such mixed reviews, from wild enthusiasm to complete disgust.

My own reaction was that of embarrassment and disappointment!



GF

Embarrassment because I went with non-sf-reading friends and expected them to see what real sf (as opposed to drive-in monster films) can be. Disappointment because they didn't, and because I didn't either.

You mentioned the "dismally boring" television as making an important point. Perhaps the entire movie was making the same point in precisely the same way, by forcing the majority of the audience -- so much so that the lack of any real dramatic involvement and the audience's desire to react in some way caused the unfortunate laughter in the escape scene!

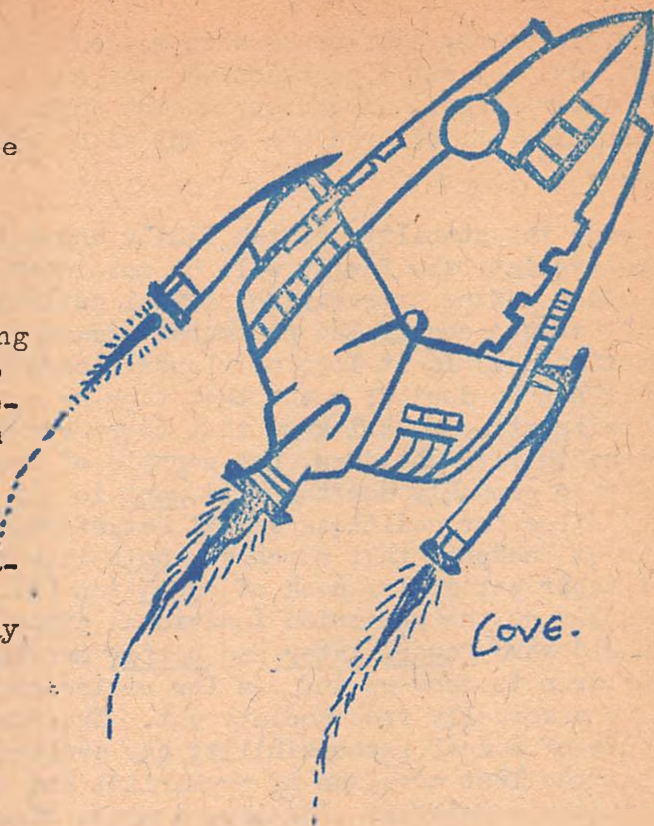
I have been told that Bradbury was consulted to some extent, or at least was satisfied enough with the finished result to say that it agreed exactly with the story as he told it.

Is it possible that serious sf cannot be adapted from the written form to the visual without losing its depth and real meaning? Style is also important, and I sensed nothing of the Bradbury style with which I am familiar. Too exact an interpretation of poetry will always be lifeless.

Star Trek, though the episodes are of course uneven in quality, is much more successful in presenting sf themes, whether to a necessary general public or to sf fans, and it apparently is written directly for the medium of tv, with knowledge of what can and must be done for effectiveness. Deep significance maybe it doesn't always have, but several shows have captured my complete attention like no other dramatic presentations of sf in recent years. That to me is the only criterion that counts.

John Boston, 816 South First Street, Mayfield, Kentucky 42066

Some intemperate thoughts on censorship: Perhaps interest in utterly worthless (by Our standards) pornography is a symptom of psychological disturbance rather than a cause of it! Remember Jimmy Walker: "No girl was ever ruined by a book." Could the cause lie deeper? I think so for the simple reason that most "hard-core" pornography is of no conceivable literary or artistic merit -- it's only raison d'etre is its dealing with sex, or more particularly, the manner of its dealing. This appeals to young people because sex is a forbidden topic. Hard-core pornography assumes sex should be forbidden, that it is basically evil, despite any platitudes to the contrary. Cast your eyes over a rack of paperback sex novels -- look at the titles, the blurbs. Their whole trend is toward sex as immoral; look at the number of times you will find the word "sin" used as a synonym for sex in titles and blurbs. The only thing that makes them appealing to young people is the simple fact that they impart such a delicious feeling of wickedness; otherwise no teen-ager would bother wading through the endless repetitions of clinical circumlocutions. I speak from experience on that score. A warped attitude toward sex is a prerequisite for enjoying such pornography -- not a result!



Yes, voluntary self-censorship may call for a responsibility the average man does not possess, but I question whether any censor you will pick will have that responsibility either! I cannot imagine anyone volunteering for a censorship job -- or accepting one offered him -- unless he was a pretty sick type of moralist to begin with.

As for the stability of the family and sexual freedom, I contend that in a sexually free society the family will be more stable than in a sexually repressed one. Reason: making extramarital sexual outlets as legitimate socially as marital ones will reduce one of the pressures toward marriage in general and early marriages in particular. Is it love or glands? Leigh Couch asks. Good question. But the glands will not be denied; better that they be satisfied without the necessity of marital commitments. We all know that there are vast numbers of parents who are not competent to rear children, not capable of responsible marriage! Furthermore, many of them probably don't really want to get married and have children. But if we can (a) allow for guiltless sexual satisfaction outside marriage, and (b) break the social lockstep that marches people into marriage, and immediately after termination of their particular peak of education (if not before), and that looks askance equally at the unmarried individual after age 25+ and at the childless couple, we should have fewer, later and better marriages and as a result better homes for our children to grow up in. As for rising divorce rates and VD and whatnot, we don't have a sexually free society yet. The restraints have been popped off but so far no sense of sexual responsibility has evolved and achieved the institutional position that the lost moralism of premarital and extramarital chastity enjoyed. // Later marriages: Ideally, a woman should have all her children before she reaches the age of 28-30! That way, the parents will still be young enough to try and keep up with their children when they reach their teens. Unless you are young enough to remember what it's like to be an adolescent and try to understand your children, you won't be able to command their respect or love! The only way something like this would work in most cases is if medical science raised the life expectancy to such an age that 50 would be thought of as 40 is today and so on! LMC//

As for broken homes, better a home broken by divorce than one broken by constant fighting. The mere presence of an adult male is not in itself healthy for the child. Better to have no father about than to have one who must be an enemy because of marital maladjustment. Better to have peace and one parent than war and two; the latter case is truly the broken home.

James Suhrer Dorr, 824 East Cottage Grove, Bloomington, Ind., 47401

Regarding censorship, I tend to agree with Harry Warner in that censorship of opinion worries me quite a bit more than censorship of pornography! Material dealing with sex can, of course, also represent opinion and this, I assume, is the core of Supreme Court difficulties in having to act as 'literary critic.' The Ginzburg simplification may or may not represent a step forward (I think it does although I envision the creation of numbers of loopholes complicating -- and making more subjective -- rather than simplifying future court decisions: the redeeming feature is that even if it should serve to protect the guilty, it will, at least, protect the innocent also!) ! //It didn't protect Ginzburg very well -- and I still don't think him guilty of anything more sinister than high pressure advertising and bad taste! HL //

Potential harm in pornography? I tend to agree with Leigh, although, not being a sociologist, I claim no authority in the matter. The difficulty in an argument of the order (reply to John Kusske) 'Given that we don't want to censor pornography unless it is harmful, then it isn't my worry to prove pornography harmless. . . 24

you must prove that pornography is harmful -- not only just harmful, but harmful enough to justify limiting an important freedom" is that it applies with equal facility to everything from LSD to do-it-yourself lobotomy. If there are indications that something may be dangerous, the fact that one is on the side of Important Freedom does not justify his turning his back on the fact that there is a question. Not if people are blowing their minds while we are waiting for the opposition to come up with sufficient proof to help us make up ours.

Problem with censorship: it is opposed to freedom. The workable compromise, as Mr. Kusske points out, seems to be regulation (i.e. not prohibition). If I (being of sound mind and in my majority) want pornography, then indeed I should have it. If I really want it, though, I should not object to having to go to a little bit of trouble getting it if this trouble insures that it will be kept from people who are likely to be harmed by it.

Joe Sanders' section is, as usual, excellent. Skipping to the end, though, I do have one question. Granting that Orwell's future is the closest to present reality, Huxley's still seems, to me, the more frightening because it seems at moments so pleasant -- sexual freedom (& exquisite pornography, Mr. Luttrell), no population worries, material comfort guaranteed, prejudice abolished, complete satisfaction with one's lot (society even provides island retreats for those few recalcitrants who refuse to be satisfied). . . .Orwell's society seems horrible and therefore seems easy to guard against. I am not so sure about Huxley's!

Buck Coulson, Route 3, Hartford City, Ind. 47348

Actually, there is no definite information on the good or harm that censorship does. Due to the variability of the human mind, I doubt that even a "controlled experiment" (with one group exposed to erotica and another one kept from it) would provide a definite answer, even if it could be tried. Leigh has a good point -- what one reads has an effect on one (if it didn't, there would be little point in reading.) Obviously, the effect is not identical on all readers; the question is whether the material considered for censorship is harmful to most people, and if not, whether the majority must be deprived for the sake of the minority!

However, if one comes out in favor of censoring materials which have an adverse effect on a minority of their readers (I can't imagine anyone believing that a ~~small~~ majority of the readers of pornography are thereby turned into sex maniacs, considering the vast amount of readers involved), I would like to put the question to a particular book. Like most books, it has no observable effect on most of its readers, and is of pronounced benefit to a few. But -- its readers have also been moved to slaughter, torture, and mass executions of an amount seldom surpassed, and they have done so in the firm belief that they acted on the book's teaching. I refer, of course, to the Bible. It has, at various times, inspired its readers to acts such as the Albigenian Crusade, the Inquisition, the Salem witch trials. Its staunchest defender in the United States today is the Ku Klux Klan. The Reverend Colonel Chivington massacred Indians "with a Bible by his side!" to quote a current

Indian protest song. A few years ago a nice Boston boy who read nothing but the Bible went out one fine day and shot down 17 innocent people! For that matter, I believe the recent massacre in Texas was performed by a staunch Bible-reader. If the entire readership of a book is to be condemned by the actions of a few, then the





Bible is a far more dangerous publication than Fanny Hill or current pornography.
(Prosecution rests. . .)

Incidentally, it's interesting that when Bible-readers shoot people, the cry is raised to ban guns. When Speck knifes people, it is implied that it's due to his reading matter. Whether the blame goes to weapon or book seems to depend on precisely which weapon and book are involved.

There is another point in censorship; who does it? I really wouldn't want Leigh to pass on which books I can or can't read -- and after this letter, I'm positive she wouldn't want me censoring her literature. But at the same time, I'm positive that either one of us would make a better censor than the people who actually have been doing the job in this country.

Still another point. In the US, erotic material is, generally, censored. In Europe, most erotic material is exempt, and political ideas are censored. If censorship is beneficial, I should think there would be some evidence that US citizens are more moral, and Europeans are better off politically -- after all, the differences in censorship have been going on for quite a good many years now. I don't really see any such evidence, though.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Larry Herndon, who wanted to know if there was some publication where he could find out who won the Hugos -- at this point I must mention that OSFAh (see the last page of James Dorr's review) was one of the first newszines to carry that information. It is also here, in Lesleigh's review, for those of you who still haven't seen it. . . if there is anyone still left who hasn't. Larry also wants to know why Carl Bobke signed last issue's back cover "Cedar." So do I. Jerry Kaufman, who DWQ-ed the best part of his letter, but also said he liked F 451. One more on my side. Mike Montgomery, who doesn't tell one pun in his whole letter. And he likes my lettering. But can you read it, Buck Coulsndemands! Bob Furey says he lost his Starling, and thus can't say much about it. Seems reasonable. Gene Klein says Starling is a bit too 'high brow,' but very quickly inserts that he is using 'high brow' with his meaning. Which made me wonder what that meaning was, sort of. Also wanted to know why I didn't at least WAHF him last time! I dunno. Consider yourself mentioned twice this time, Gene Klein. Dick Flinchbaugh sent the wonderful cover (back- ? - I don't know where I'll use it yet) on this issue, says he likes my lettering (but can you read it, demands Buck Coulson), and spells my name once ²⁶ with lower case letters. hank -- like that? Carl Bobke sent me some more artwork. And: Paul Powlesland, Robert E. Gilbert (more art, more art, thanks), Greg Shank, Ann Chamberlain, George Foster, Hank Davis, Russell T. Boggs, W. G. Bliss (with a story you'll see some time in the not too far distant future.) Say, George Foster sent art too, almost forgot, can't do that: thanks, George. Dennis Cloud.

UNFAILINGLY FAHRENHEIT

-- A Belated Review --

By JAMES SUMNER DORR

I would have liked to have had something like this to publish before the Hugo awards were voted on. Not that I think an article in Starling would have influenced the voting, but perhaps it would have been more to the point then! As is, it represents a supplement to Lesleigh's and my reaction to the film, as presented in last issue's editorials, and some of the reactions expressed in this issue's letter column. --HL

The following (c) Copyright 1967 The SPECTATOR

" 'Established, 1790, to burn English influenced books in the Colonies. First fireman: Benjamin Franklin.'

- RULE
1. Answer the alarm quickly.
 2. Start the fire swiftly.
 - 3! Burn everything.
 4. Report back to the firehouse immediately.
 - 5! Stand alert for other Alarms."1

There was an old man named Farber who once had a talk with Montag. He does not appear in Francois Truffaut's film version of the novel Fahrenheit 451. There was a 17 year old girl named Clarisse; she does not appear either. There is, rather, a somewhat older girl -- with short hair.

This, then, is one of several deviations that Truffaut made from the material he was working with -- and it is a change for the better. Not only does it cut out Bradbury's romanticism for the very old folks and the young'uns -- one of the author's few bad features -- but, with the casting of the same actress as both girl and wife, it allows a direct comparison where such comparison adds immeasurable strength to the story! We have, in essence, two sides -- two potentials -- of the same women: the woman who might have accepted society and the woman who might have refused acceptance. We choose the one we like best (Julie Christie, is, I think, sexier with long hair)!

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This change also represents a simplification of the original story! Truffaut has, to be sure, added some complications to his story², but the main trend is toward

simplification -- and this indeed is proper to the movie. One simply cannot squeeze all the details of a novel into an hour or two's entertainment and the wise director knows this. He has to add new details to take the place of those he omits or else simply abandon the attempt at verisimilitude. If he cuts and adds well, his end product is a work of art in its own right.

In Truffaut's film this simplification becomes a positive virtue. It becomes, itself, an addition -- because in Bradbury's vision of the future society this simplification has become the guiding credo.

" 'Does the name Usher mean nothing to you?'

'Nothing.'

'Well what about this name: Edgar Allen Poe?'

Mr. Bigelow shook his head.

'Of course.' Stendahl snorted delicately, a combination of dismay and contempt. 'How could I expect you to know blessed Mr. Poe? He died a long while ago, before Lincoln. All of his books were burned in the Great Fire. That's thirty years ago -- 1975.'

'Ah,' said Mr. Bigelow wisely. 'One of those!'

'Yes, one of those, Bigelow. He and Lovecraft and Hawthorne and Ambrose Bierce and all the tales of terror and fantasy and horror and, for that matter, tales of the future were burned. Heartlessly. They passed a law. Oh, it started very small. In 1950 and '60 it was a grain of sand. They began by controlling books of cartoons and then detective books and, of course, films, one way or another, political bias, religious practice, union pressures; there was always a minority afraid of something, and a great majority afraid of the dark, afraid of the future, afraid of the past, afraid of the present, afraid of themselves and shadows of themselves.' " 3

Expressed by Fire-captain Beatty, the pattern is easy to see:

" 'The bigger your market, Montag, the less you handle controversy, remember that! All the minor minorities with their navels to be kept clean! Authors, full of evil thoughts, lock up your typewriters. They did. Magazines became a nice blend of vanilla tapioca. Books, so the damned snobbish critics said, were dishwater. No wonder books stopped selling, the critics said. But the public, knowing what it wanted, let the comic books survive. And the three-dimensional sex-magazines, of course.' " 4

In Truffaut's film there is another simplification -- or perhaps an extrapolation! In Bradbury's society the printed word has not been entirely banned -- although there is ample suggestion that it will be. It is the people, after all, who have defined society as Bradbury sees it and, while government authority might find some printed records convenient in carrying out the public's wishes, members of the government are themselves a part of the public. If the firemen are in any sense, conditioning the public, they themselves will share in that conditioning.

" 'What've you got there; isn't that a book? I thought that all special training these days was done by film.' Mrs. Phelps blinked. 'You reading up on fireman theory?' " 5

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In Truffaut's version all training is, presumably, done by film.6 And this makes

the society a particularly beautiful one to show in a film -- it is entirely visual already.

Given, then, the visual society, Truffaut captures it magnificently. The film is beautiful. And it is faithful to Bradbury in another way -- to Bradbury the poet.⁷ For Bradbury is, after all, at his best on the visual level; much of the film's beauty comes from Truffaut's ableness in rendering Bradbury's rich descriptions back into pictures.

"With his symbolic helmet numbered 451 on his stolid head, and his eyes all orange flame with the thought of what came next, he flicked the igniter and the house jumped up in a gorging fire that burned the evening sky red and yellow and black. He strode in a swarm of fireflies. He wanted above all, like the old joke, to shove a marshmallow on a stick in the furnace, while the flapping pigeon-winged books died on the porch and lawn of the house. While the books went up in sparking whirls and blew away on a wind turned dark with burning."⁸

And so Fahrenheit 451 is to be enjoyed as vision -- as vision and sound.

Truffaut is, however, playing a joke. There is the change of lighting on the monorail car, there is the violet in Julie Christie's hair, there are the books falling in slow motion. The film is beautiful, and wonderful -- wondrous fair -- and darkling.

"Abruptly the room took off on a rocket flight into the clouds, it plunged into a lime-green sea where blue fish ate red and yellow fish. A minute later, Three White Cartoon Clowns chopped off each other's limbs to the accompaniment of immense incoming tides of laughter. Two minutes more and the room whipped out of town to the jet cars wildly circling an arena. . . .

'Millie, did you see that!'

'I saw it, I saw it!' "⁹

Why are the credits read before the film instead of being flashed on the screen in the usual manner? Because Truffaut's film is to be a product of the society it represents. Why is there only one "wall-TV" in Montag's house when the novel says he has three? Because, obviously, there is only one wall-screen in the "TV-parlor" that we were sitting in under the delusion that it was an ordinary theater. Why are things shown for their beauty alone?

Fahrenheit 451 is a product of the society it represents -- a society where books are not read as books but seen on the screen. A society in which the public prefers things that way.

A rather grim question hinges on the fact we are watching the film in the year 1967.

How many of you have seen Ulysses?

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NOTES:

1. Ray Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451, p. 32.
2. The most notable is the scenes with the "book people." Montag has been introduced to a boy who "is" The Martian Chronicles; shortly afterward we find that he is to be the Tales of Terror and Imagination by Edgar Allen Poe. This normally would not make much difference unless one has read The Martian Chronicles and remembers a

story, or a related theme, called "Usher II" in which Poe has a certain amount of importance. See note 3, below.

3. Ray Bradbury, "Usher II" from The Martian Chronicles, pp. 133-34. "Usher II" was written in 1950, the same year that "The Fireman," which Bradbury expanded into Fahrenheit 451 three years later, appeared in Galaxy Science Fiction Magazine. It was also a year in which increasing parental pressure was forcing librarians to pull Grimms' Fairy Tales off the children's shelves and there was talk of drafting a "comic code" for approved comic books. This latter move forced one publisher -- Entertaining Comics, Inc., known to fans as EC Comics -- out of business as a comic publisher. They still put out Mad in magazine format.

4. Fahrenheit 451, pp. 52-53

5. Fahrenheit 451, p. 87

6. Which brings up the question of how Montag could read in the first place! Truffaut partially answers this by showing Montag reading slowly, "sounding out" difficult words. Suspension of disbelief must take it the rest of the way.

7. The former side of Bradbury -- Bradbury as intellectual -- has a rather poor reputation with a number of science fiction fans, actually. Lester del Rey never ceases to revile Bradbury for his description of the Tyrannosaurus Rex as a "thunder lizard" in "A Sound of Thunder," and much of his other work shows a similar disregard for science. In Fahrenheit 451 the worst faux pas is, perhaps, this on p. 103:

"And then he came to the parlor where the great idiot monsters lay asleep with their snowy dreams. And he shot a bolt at each of the three blank walls and the vacuum hissed out at him. . . He held his breath so the vacuum could not get into his lungs. He cut off its terrible emptiness, drew back, and gave the entire room a gift of one huge bright yellow flower of burning."

8. Fahrenheit 451, p. 84.

9. The only note of hope perhaps lies in the fact that the law still requires the copyright notice -- the only line of print in the entire film -- to be shown.

END

SELFISH PLUG: I want to mention OSFA's two fanzines, Sirruish, edited by Leigh Couch, Route 2, Box 889, Arnold, Missouri 63010, and OSFAn, which I do up each month.

Sirruish #5 was thick, 65 pages, with a section of Jack Gaughan art, a long review section and letter column, a short report on the 67 Midwestern, and a report on the 67 Ozarkon, including Roger Zelazny's GoH speech! This issue is 35¢, future issues will be 25¢! Sirruish #6, if not out already, should be around real soon.

OSFAn is a monthly newszine, averaging about 8 pages, perhaps 10 in the near future. Many of you have asked me to publish fanzine reviews in Starling -- but I won't. I'll publish a regular, extensive column of this kind in OSFAn, however, written by Chris Couch. Fanzines for review should be sent to him at the same address 30 given for Leigh up there. In addition to the reviews, I publish news about new and current books, paperbacks, movies, TV programs of a more or less science fiction or fantasy related nature, fan news, convention news, anything I can find which I think of interest to science fiction fans. 10¢ or 10 issues for \$1. Or you can join OSFA as a non-attending member for \$1.50 a year and receive both OSFAn and Sirruish. Send OSFAn money to me -- you can send dues to me, too, for that matter.

TIME OUT OF FLAKE

Don D'AMMASSA

++ fiction by ++

Kelly sat on the abandoned railroad trestle, his feet dangling over the edge into space, his hand absentmindedly twisting wispy strands of grass from where they grew in bunches between the rotting ties. Water rushed under the trestle with a continual gurgle, like the flushing of a toilet with the handle stuck and all that water swirling around and around and ever, never getting anywhere, neither forward or back, accomplishing nothing but the production of a whirlpool!

His gaze rested on the handful of grass that he had gradually accumulated, as though noticing it for the first time; his hands stopped, transfixed by his eyes, and a dormant part of his brain slipped into low gear, considering, and communicated . . . and a handful of desmembered lives went sweeping over the edge of the trestle to be swallowed by the hungry water below.

Kelly listened to the water, fascinated in the true meaning of the word, though he could not have recognized it. This trestle was today's treasure, his latest find, the newest refuge for starved emotion, numbed by disuse, vestigial, ready to atrophy from lack of application. Each day saw him in a new place, monopolizing a new complex of sensory elements, finding new balm for injured sensitivities. Kelly bombarded himself with a wealth of external stimuli, novel situations and environments, in order to compensate for his deprivation of emotional involvement in the world.

Kelly, the orphan, son of no man born of no woman, brother to none and friend to himself, shifted around among a near infinity of people and orphanage-ciphers, with no attachments, no ties, no involvements, and no true feelings.

So he searched among the non-sentient for that which the sentient, through disinterest or misunderstanding, had either refused to offer him, or found itself unable to offer! So one day he came to the trestle.

And he met the ogre!

Ogres, say the story books, are ugly. Uglier than the mind can imagine, with warts and blisters, scales and claws, tumors and blemishes, with foul breath, beady eyes, unruly hair, and malicious spirit. The story books tell true, but they also tell false.

Oddocnob was an ogre, perhaps the last of his kind -- and certainly the ugliest of ogres. He lived under the trestle, as ogres will, listening to the water, as twelve year-old boys will, dreaming whatever it is that ogres dream about, living his ogre life in his ogrish way. So it's not very surprising that when he discovered that he had a visitor, he acted like a good ogre should.

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"Who's that sitting on my bridge, pulling out my grass, listening to my river, and interrupting my dreams?"

Kelly didn't believe in ogres, but he didn't disbelieve either. He just took things as they came, for after all, what other way is there to take anything?

"Who's that?" answered Kelly. "Why are you bothering me? Go away and leave me alone." Which, you will grant, is a most unusual thing for a little boy to say to an ogre.

Oddocnob bristled. Whoever was above, he wasn't performing according to the ritual. He was supposed to be frightened and run away, so that Oddocnob could go back to his dreaming.

"Go away from my trestle or I'll eat you," he bellowed, doing his ogreish best to sound fearsome.

"You go away, I was here first."

"You were not!" shouted back Oddocnob, forgetting decorum. He recovered himself, took the mothballs off his defense mechanisms and prepared himself. It had been years since he had been forced to show himself to scare off a human. Before, the sound of his voice had been enough to ward off the hardest soul. These personal appearances were dreadfully disturbing, though. Oddocnob felt a twinge of self dislike whenever his appearance turned another being's calm to crisis.

Muscles protested as he pulled his bulk out of a little hollow beside one of the trestle buttresses, his clawed feet splashing through swift running water and turbid mud.

"I'm coming up after you, little boy. This is my trestle. I eat anybody who tries to take away my trestle."

Kelly jumped to his feet as the bloated bulk came into sight. He showed no fear, though apprehension clouded his face. He hadn't wanted to interrupt anybody, but he wanted to be left alone.

Oddocnob gibbered, distorting his features, uttering the most menacing sounds he could manage. He ran madly through his entire repertory, sure that somewhere along the line he would strike the right note and terrify the young boy into abject terror.

"How did you ever get to be so ugly?" asked Kelly when the ogre was finished.

Oddocnob was shattered by the experience; first by the total failure of his best efforts, second by the short, disarming, and horribly jarring question.

"Just born that way I guess," he answered at length, "My mother was frightened by an orc."

"Just like me," said the boy, more to himself than to his companion.

"What's that? Was your mother frightened by an orc too?"

"No. I don't know. I never had a mother. I was born ugly, just like you."

Which, to put it mildly, was hardly normal conversation between a human and an ogre.

TRESTLE

"But you're not ugly. You're human. Not a bad looking human either, as far as I can judge."

"Oh, I'm not ugly on the outside, like you. I'm ugly on the inside. I'm all twisted up and different and not at all like other people. I feel like you look, I think."

All of which was most perplexing to an orge, especially an ogre like Oddocnob, who was not at all happy with his ogrishness.

"Well," he said, rumbling out the words, "That still doesn't alter the fact that I am an ogre and this is my trestle. It is my role as an ogre to be frightening, and it is your role as a human to be frightened. Please?"

Kelly considered, his face wrinkled in little worry lines. "Why?"

"Why?" Oddocnob's tone was an intricate melange of confusion, frustration, and disbelief. "But. . .but that's just the way things are! There isn't any other way to do things. We each have our roles in life and we have to fulfill them as best we can. There just isn't any alternative possible. You're just confusing the issue out of all proportion. All you have to do is run away when I frighten you; that isn't so hard, is it? I mean, after all."

Kelly listened attentively to everything Oddocnob said, but he was still indecisive. "I just don't see why it should be that way. I mean, there you were, sleeping under the trestle, completely at peace. I was up here, making no noise, bothering no one. So why do you have to disturb your sleep and my sitting just to come up here and scare me? Why can't we just leave everyone alone? Why can't everybody leave everyone else alone? Why do we always have to bother each other? Everybody's always pushing and pulling and making you do things you don't want to do and saying things that make you unhappy and never letting you do the things you want to do, even when it doesn't hurt anybody or anything. . ."

For a moment Oddocnob feared the sentence would never end, but Kelly eventually ran out of air and subsided, red-faced and anxious.

"I know what you mean," the ogre said at last, all the frightfulness gone from his voice. "I used to wonder why people could never leave me alone too. But everyone ran from me and got others and came looking for me with torches and pitchforks and guns and things. Then I'd have to move. It didn't make any difference what I did, whether I frightened them or not. As soon as they saw me, found out where I lived, they came after me and I'd have to move again. Never any reason. After a while, I began to think maybe it was best for me to be an ogre, because then at least I knew what I was and where I belonged."

They both stood there then, silently, neither wanting to break the small bond of unity that they had established between themselves. After a time, in which something had passed between them, an intangible yet real commonality of experience, in which Kelly found more of humanity in the ogre than he had ever found among his own kind, and the ogre found the first trace of sympathy, no -- understanding, that had ever been proffered him.

Kelly sat down again, abruptly, not actually disregarding the ogre's presence, but considering him as a problem satisfied, the closed column on the ledger, with the solution ready to be carried over to the next column of computations. Oddocnob

seemed to have forgotten his self-assured role also, moving his obese bulk across the ties to the boy's side, settling beside him with a vast shifting and readjusting of fleshy pads and gnarled limbs.

"You know," said Kelly at length, "We're kind of alike, you and I. Neither of us belongs, really."

"Yes, we do. You belong with the humans, and I belong alone, like all trolls."

"No," said Kelly quietly to himself. "I'm just as alone as you are. No one talks to you, no one talks to me. They talk at me, but never to me."

"Then why don't you go someplace else?"

"I've been doing that all my life; going from one place to another just never solved anything, that's all. Everywhere I go the people are just the same. They give me everything I ask for sometimes, but they always make sure I know it. They act as though they're doing me a big favor, taking me in and all, when they're doing themselves just as much a favor. They think they should have kids, or they want someone to carry on their name, or they want someone to boss around. But they never want someone to talk to; they want property, not people. I'm always the adopted son, never the son."

Oddocnob was silent, feeling the common bond between the two, thinking that maybe they were two of a kind. And if they were, could they stand to lose one another? But it was a hopeless thought. There was a world for little boys and a world for ogres. The two worlds might brush each other, but they could never coincide.

"It's too bad you're not an ogre," he said aloud, though not addressing the comment to the boy. "If you were an ogre, you could live with me."

Kelly looked up, a funny sort of look in his eye, his face animated somehow with an inner restlessness and a yearning.

"Why can't we pretend that I'm a ogre? Who's to know?"

"Can't be done: I'm an ogre; we have our rules too. Our rules are set for us. If you're not an ogre, you can't be an ogre. That's just the way things are."

"You sound like a human, you know. That's what they always say. But why are things that way, and what way are they? What does it take to be an ogre anyway?"

"Well, an ogre lives under a bridge or a trestle or a pond or something where there's water for fish and plants for berries and roots."

"I could do that. I could live here with you and eat fish and berries."

Oddocnob feared the boy's enthusiasm was getting out of hand.

"Hold on, there's lots more than that. You have to be so ugly that people never dare to stare you in the eye. You have to spend all your time despising people and sitting around despising yourself. And you have to spend your whole life chasing people around because you don't want them to know how lonely you are."

"But I can do all that. People never stare me in the eye. Most people never stare

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anyone in the eye; they're afraid they'll see in others the things in themselves that make them so unhappy. It's easy to despise people, and to despise yourself. Everyone does it all the time anyway. And I'm sure I would want to scare people away from me. That's why I came out here in the first place, to get away from people and be with myself, and the world."

Oddocnob nodded sadly. "But now comes the hardest of them all. Ogres are immortal. That's the worst part of being an ogre. Humans only have to live with themselves for a short time. We have to live with ourselves forever. That's the big advantage humans have over us ogres. There's an escape for them, a way out."

Kelly was silent. The enthusiasm had left his face now, the little engine inside that had pumped life into him for the first time in many months beginning to run low.

"Couldn't I be a part time ogre, or something? Just for as long as I lived? Couldn't I stay with you even that long?"

The question was listless, and Oddocnob felt his two hearts twist as he saw that Kelly had about given up. Perhaps it was best for him, after all. And then Oddocnob started. For he had felt sorry for another; ogres could not feel compassion, friendship, or fellowship. He was no more an ogre than was Kelly.

"Boy," he called out. "Maybe we can give it a try. Maybe you can live with me. It's never been tried before; maybe it'll work."

And so they tried it, while search parties made the brief search, out even briefer because Kelly was of no importance to anyone. Kelly lived with Oddocnob and they talked and both wondered just what they were. Both had escaped their old roles, but neither was sure of just what their new roles would be. But they were happy. And perhaps happiness is more important than niche-filling anyway.

END

ST. LOUIS CON IN 69

*A major midwestern convention center, with fine convention facilities.

*An interesting, diverse city

*Sponsored by OSFA, currently with over 50 members, and growing: experienced with the organization of two regional conventions, a third to take place this year (see page 19)

*Committee members active in all facets of fan activity: fan publishing (& apa membership), convention going, collecting, etc.

