



Speer's



# SUSTAINING PROGRAM

FAL/F41



Okay then,  
Los Angeles  
in '42

CECI ET CELA

As usual, we are late getting the last stencils of this cut. Tomorrow Milt and us will take our stuff down to Tallwood, to Charlottesville, rather, whence it will be outmailed. So you see the tightness of our time. There may be a Ramblings out this time by way of after-Mailing; we don't intend giving Ramblings up until we're thru with it, which means at least being thru with the List.

Port of Call,

Chevy Chase, DC, is still 3416 Northampton NW, which wouldn't seem much to remark on unless you knew how close we came to having to move because the lessee of the house was going to have to follow the HOLC to New York, before Jesse Jones and some other Governmental bigwigs at the last moment decided that the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (for which our rentor works) wouldn't have to go to New York after all, which made FHLEB employees delirious with delight, as who can blame them? ~~MAILED 10/11/34~~

COMMENTARY, ALPHA AND BETA IN THE SIXTEENTH MAILING

Pp 1, 2, 3

Not, I find, the longest I've ever made this department as far as page length goes, but longer than any recent one; that was a good Mailing

REJECTED!! --BONFIRE

P 3

Which is why I didn't get elected to the Board with the most votes of any of the candidates, of course

QUOTE WORTHY QUOTES

P 4

A temporary return engagement

SCIENTIFICOMICS

P 5

Here's that thing again

THUMBING THROUGH MY SCRAP BOOKS

P 6

Jaifs and strays

THEY DID NOT BE

P 7

But their ghosts still haunt me

CALL IT WHAT YOU WISH

P 7

Ananias turns over in his grave

DEAR CAMPBELL

Pp 8, 9,  
10, 11, 12

If you don't like Harry's reviews, we advise you to skip this

## COMMENTARY, ALPHA AND BETA IN THE SIXTEENTH MAILING

In the first place, Perdue should be called down for his use of the inside flap of the Mailing envelope to spread vicious pro-Yngvi propaganda.

A triple-interlineation, Elmer, loses the character of an interlineation, and just looks like an underlined paragraph with an extra line at the top. I notice the LS&H Club on the membership list, but recall no provision for such to join. ~~There is no provision for such to join.~~

Muchly liked re-reading Rothman's Convention of 1950, which we first read in MS form. In his comments on the previous Mailing, Milt mentions Blitzkrieg tactics as a realiable check on misuse of power. We doubt it. The two carried out so far have been successful, but suppose Taurasi hadn't handed over the records, or suppose we hadn't been able to locate Agnew before the place closed up for the nite? Too uncertain a thing to rely on. I suspect that Koenig's "For Gawd's Sakes" is related to the Spanish "Buenos noches".

The dedication of Sci-Fic Variety to cussing me quite mystifies me, but to proceed to some of the points mentioned: My accent isn't Oklahoma, or anything else. It's Speerese, or rather JackSpeerese, the resultant of such diverse influences as a deviated septum in my nose, a year of shorthand, a great interest in phonetics and other aspects of language, some instruction in enunciation by a debate teacher, a speech impediment amounting to stuttering, a decision to be a loyal Southerner and theahfoah drop my r's, exposure to the Virginia-Maryland ow-diphthong, study of three foreign languages, a colloquial writing style, etcetcetc. As for the upfoodownghu interlineations in the Fantasy Amateur, Tucker must realize that the importance of FooFooism is superior to and takes priority over any rules about impartiality, nonpartisanship, and the like. And I do so never use a book of familiar quotations for Quoteworthy Quotes or Ars Gratia; I have steadfastly refused to have any traffic with the things, for stuff included in the two departments mentioned must be things I happened across which simply screamed to me, "We wanta be published in Sustaining Program!" So soddy we omitted identifying your back in that Chicon street scene, Boety; we recognized it all right, but the le for the photos were stylused from memory, no copy of the pictures being to hand, and on the whole I think I done right well. In re the suggestion that the FAPA should include all fanmags, this was voted down practically unanimously when I posed the question in the IPO polls. I think it would have even less chance of success now; for with the presently constitution of fandom, containing all grades of activity among the fans, it is necessary that a fan should be able to choose what magazines he wants to get, and not bother with the others; but a universal FAPA would mean equal circulations, identical circulations, for all fanmags. The Cosmic Peon's lead story was good.... "Our Impartial Reporter" was best in the Time Scanner, which leaves the paragraf re Smith's parliamentary device for second place, I guess.... Jones' sheet this time is a good deal more presentable in appearance than his previous one, and the contents are not painful to read.... Another Man's Viewpoint strikes us best in the Reader and Collector this time; we check him most of the way, tho not 100%. Notes and Queries is probably second-best.

We wish the Dixie Press luck with Sound Off, but recall that a similar effort on my part failed utterly a year or two ago, and think a letter magazine in the FAPA even less likely to succeed now, when nearly all the actives have their own publications and, praise FooFoo, include in nearly every one's a department reviewing the previous Mailing.... The poetry in CussmoS is so stinky it's not even funny. There are gleams elsewhere.



tho, as in the little man who wept his remorse re Yngvi.

Golly, whatta pile of Futurian stuff this time. Can anyone suggest why? Orchids to the boys for their "Turn the Rascals out!" line, which showed they were taking the election in good spirit -- a virtue in which Rothman was a little deficient. The Science Fiction Terrier irritates us partly for the tone of some of its contents, and partly for being an obviously one-shot publication that nevertheless flies the VLI flag.... Vagabondia #2 has some very good humor of an advanced form; I'm not sure whether it's double inversion or not.... Many of the ads in Levy #37 were beauts; a few were duds, like that one on the front page. The page 2 introductory <sup>for one's issue</sup> is one of the best of its species. (Notice our insertion of "for this issue"; while ordinarily it would be understood, in this sentence we have broadened the universe of discourse so that the phrase is properly no longer implied.) ... Here's another Vagabondia, #1; well, for one thing, we wish we'd thot of "Quotes Quotable" when "Quotable Quotes" proved unavailable--it's so much better than Quoteworthy Quotes. Doc's quotes themselves we do not especially go for.... Liked DAW's almost verbless campaign speech in Fantasy-Views.... The Philadelphia story in Fantasy Faction Field was OK; the one about dying stank; anyway, it's spelled dyeing.... Phantagraph's cover was striking, and the legend for the interior illustrations was amusing (Golly! Why does "amusing" have such an unflattering connotation?) Fillers Waddaya Know and The Science Fiction Club were good.... We would rate Slapdragon Days alpha in the Mind of Man Phantagraph, and Sonnetoid beta. But for this double-talk on paper, I wish the boys would use a typewriter with better letters on it; particularly I would like to be able to tell whether an c or an o is intended.... Bolide is all right; nothing to make gurgle over.... In the FAPA FaN, "The Sacred Constitution" strikes us as being a bit hasty in its belligerency; DAW is disrespectfully referred to our remarks in this department in the Summer SP. Aren't these New Yorkers funny people? They don't know that Queens is part of the city of New York (See middle of P 4 in the FAPA F.)

The poem in Guteto is not so hot. Why couldn't he have been honest about it and put it in prose form?... The article in 4e's For the FAPA raises a rather important question, inadequately debated.... Walpurgisnacht is Alpha in Polaris; the two lycanthropus tales tie for second rating.

Cyclops'

editorial is painful. Inadequate punctuation made "Western Fan Publications" enigmatic in some aspects. None of the material in the issue can be considered good; the heading for the aforementioned article probably should rate highest in the issue.... The gloriously unofficial coat of arms of FooFoo is tops in YHOS, taken with DeCamp's notes thereon. Incidentally, while willingly admit that DeCamp knows far more about heraldry than I (I couldn't even recite the metals and colors), I will dare to call attention to what appear to be errors on his part. Most glaring is his characterization of the bend sinister as two bars sinister; I think "barre" is French for bend, and the error is a common one with which Sprague should be familiar. I question the necessity of having the nuts fullface the camera; also, the blazonry fails to give their arrangement (approximately two and one). (Insert this one sentence back: A bar in English heraldry is a horizontal stripe.) And calling the triangular ulh (dexter chief from the heraldic point of view) triangle a canton seems to me absurd, since a canton is a small escutcheon, hence basically an oblong, superimposed on that portion of the larger shield; possibly tho the term is used here simply to indicate the location. The wordplay in Station Identifications Dept take second place in the issue.... There is more to the story of Censored/Rocket's title than Hurter knows; for when Daugherty took that name

for his magazine, it had already been used by Dan McPhail for his FAPA newsheet, and abandoned by Dan when I pointed out that "The Rocket" was also the name of the official organ of the Manchester Interplanetary Society. Lot of good material in Censored, even down to brief items like the interlineation on P 11. knight's sonnet is the alpha in the issue, the guest editorial beta. Special mention also to the poem singing Glooga's charms. The Time-Travel dissertation reminds me of a manner of indicating it graphically that I figured out several years ago, but my concept of time has changed since then. Anyway, putting it in graphical form helps clarify your manipulation of the subject, whatever theory you choose.... We see that EEE has one of those ditto direct process duplicators. He perhaps needs some more experience with it; my copy of his sheet was none too clear.... The propagandistic portions of Youd's article in Sardonyx we will ignore. He raises an interesting point in noting the mutual exclusion of British and American fiction; mutual exclusion is true to a lesser or greater extent of other segments of culture.... Glancing Behind Us and the fillers here and there star in Horizons. What did we use to make the fotos stick on SP? Paste, of course!

The

back cover drawing for SusPro is supposed to be turned outward, but I'm not sure but what Milt's subconscious mind was wise in causing Milt to assemble the mag with that turned in, by mistake. T'was pretty sad--one those things that we see, 1/3 the way thru, aren't going to be any good, but carry thru to the finish because we don't want to lose the labor invested in them. No comment on the rest of the issue.

That's the longest we've strung out Alpha and Beta yet. Shall have to reform, or something.

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"Abracadabra is a second intention." --John Stuart Mill

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REJECTED!! --BONFIRE

Probably it is that he couldn't have carried platforms for all the minor candidates, i e, the dozen or so who ran for NFFF Boardmen, but anyway Widner failed to publish this after soliciting it/and/saying he would publish it. Widner is a louse. 'Sfolgt: (7)

... And that reminds me that I got to have a platform, I guess. Here 'tis:

1. Equal rights for chimpanzees.
2. Down with Wollheim.
3. Down with Sykora.
4. The purity of Southern womanhood and the supremacy of the white race.
5. No foreign war. Union Now.
6. Seriously, I have always worked for an over-organization for fandom, and think the NFFF has the best chance of any yet, and believe in fandom as a place where stfans can express themselves and pursue their interests with like-minded persons, within the limits of good taste. And that the progressively better realization of this end requires more of an adult tone in fan activities, the continual influx of new blood, and a general spirit of tolerance and good humor.

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"Universes", says Peirce, "are not as plentiful as blackberries." I disagree.

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And I'm not speaking of universes in the astronomical sense, either, but in the sense of a space within which a given set of natural laws prevails.

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Forward, FooFoo!

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## QUOTE WORTHY QUOTES

"Intelligence and reason are fit rulers of man's instincts just because they are of the same flesh and blood. They are not foreign conquerors, imposing a law that is better because it comes down from above. They are sons of the soil, as indigenous as hunger and thirst, chosen to rule because their laws mean the best harmony of all the instincts.... The impersonal wants, the cravings of truth, beauty, and justice, the zeal for competence in workmanship, and the spirit of good will toward men which are the highest objects of life for man seem far removed from his original proclivities. They are remote in the sense that the forces in their favor have to work diligently and ingeniously in order to make them even partial aims for even a minority of men. But, in a deeper sense, they reside within man himself; and, apart from supernatural aids, the forces in their favor are simply all the good in all men. # These inherent tendencies bear the impetus and means to their own improvement."

--E L Thorndike

Reflections upon receiving Fantasy Times:

"O mighty Caesar, dost thou lie so low?  
Are all thy glories, conquests, triumphs, spoils  
Sunk to this little measure? Fare thee well."

--Sir Francis Bacon, del Rey believes

"Intellectuals, because they enjoy the play of the mind, like to make fine distinctions which to others seem like hair-splitting. Their distrust of emotional reactions, their habits of criticism which lead them to come to the defense of conservatives who are unjustly attacked, and the pronounced individualism which impels every professor to elaborate his own theory of the universe, all stand in the way of simple hearted devotion to a group cause."

--George W Hartmann

"Libbey got the completely baffled look which mathematical physicists are prone to get when a layman attempts to talk about physics to them in nonmathematical language."

--Heinlein

"Some theories appeal to an easily imagined hidden mechanism which will explain the observable phenomena; other theories eschew all reference to such hidden mechanisms, and make use of relations abstracted from the phenomena actually observable. The former are called physical theories; the latter are called mathematical or abstractive theories.... But it is also essential not to suppose that either kind of theory is more fundamental or more valid than the other.... [In the physical type of theory] some visualizable model is made the pattern for a mechanism hidden from the senses.... Examples of this kind of theory are the atomic theory of chemistry, the kinetic theory of matter as developed in thermodynamics and the behavior of gases, the theory of the gene in studies on heredity, the theory of lines of force in electrostatics, and the recent Bohr model of the atom in spectroscopy. # In the mathematical type of theory, the appeal to hidden mechanism is eliminated, or at any rate is at a minimum. How this may be done is graphically described by Henri Poincaré: 'Suppose we have before us any machine; the initial wheel work and the final wheel work alone are visible, but the transmission, the intermediary machinery by which the movement is communicated from one to the other, is hidden.... We easily ascertain that the final wheel turns ten times less quickly than the initial wheel, since these two wheels are visible; we are able thence to conclude that a couple applied to the one will be balanced by a couple ten times greater applied to the other. For that there is no need to penetrate the mechanism....' Examples of such theories are the theory of gravitation, Galileo's laws of falling bodies, the theory of the flow of heat...."

--Cohen and Nagel, An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method

## SCIENTIFICOMICS

We have a bad habit of applying our superior intelligence and systematizing ability to the scientificomies in an effort to think into them more consistency than is actually present in the plans of the authors. The following is a crying example:

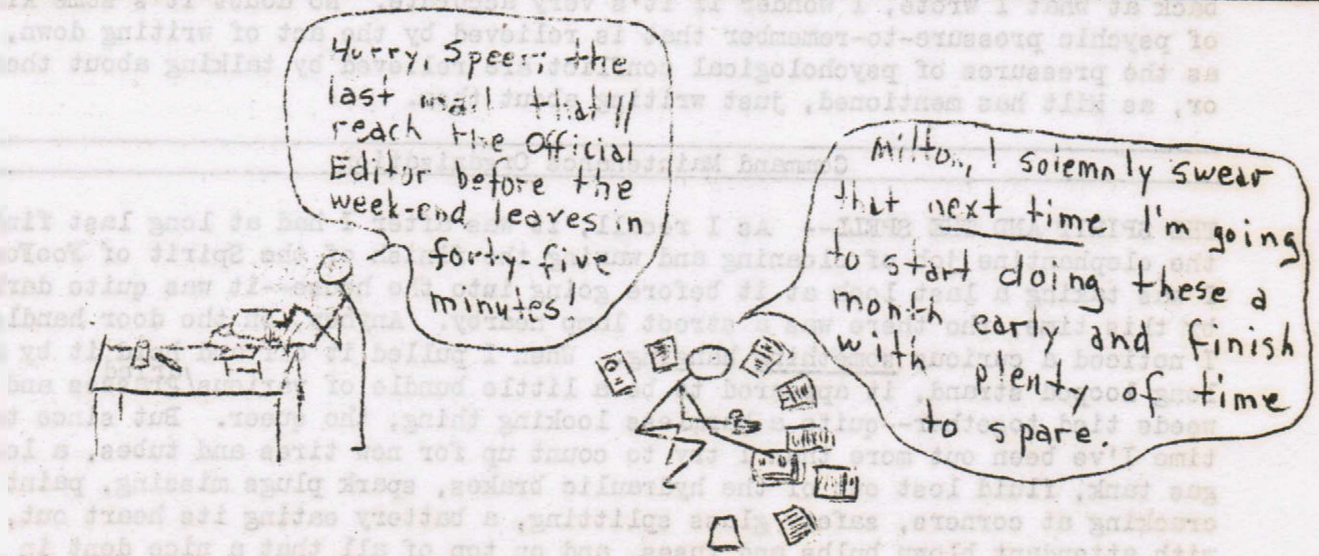
## HOW MANDRAKE DOES IT

From the frequent occurrence of the phrase "seems to" in the artist's notes in boxes, such as accompany most of the squares in Mandrake the Magician, one would suppose that hypnotism entirely accounted for the power of the man in the two-color cloak. It is true that this takes care of the greater part of his tricks, possibly even including that ingenious way he has of projecting a person's memory picture thru his eyes onto a white wall for observers to see. Some extension of straight hypnotism--even granting Mandrake the power frequently found in fictional hypnotists to control with a glance and a gesture--is necessary in some cases, in that we must suppose the old boy to have unusual telepathic powers, so that he can send his commands to his hypnotee without speaking a word.

But in addition to all this, we must introduce telekinesis to explain many of the Magician's doings. You remember telekinesis--the Prince of Peril, and the airship that moved when he wished hard enough. Well, Mandrake has that in large quantities. He can not only make you think you're hanging in the air--he can make you hang there, if necessary. Much more than that, tho: From whatever atoms may be flating around in the atmosphere, he can transmute materials and bring out a finished product--like an axe--with a wave of the hand. He has a further control over matter with his mind that almost constitutes a different class of power--he can change its size and form. If he can't, I don't see how he could transform Rheeta back and forth between a girl and a black leopard; nor can I imagine him hypnotizing the world so that he made it think he was able to enter the houses of the little people.

Give a guy perfect hypnotic power and ultimate telekinesis, and he's pretty much got the world by the tail. Among the half dozen or so things that may still cause him trouble are being blindfolded (in which case he loses all his powers), not being entirely wised up on the situation, a woman's wiles, sleeping gas, and an utterly alien universe in which our natural laws don't operate (Like Dimension X). But whatever: even Superman has his vulnerable points.

Say, is there any truth in the rumor that the brain foy's rown at Dalig's temmer???





## THUMBING THROUGH MY SCRAP BOOKS

These notes appear on the backs of two blank checks in my scrapbook, in the handwriting of myself and Dan McPhail:

- (me)- New SFN out. Hohlheim reports Madle leading.  
 (him)- Have to be careful-- Bro. Patrick is giving us the "fishy eye". --Had letter from J.V.B. --he said DAW had won and Michael & Madle leading with only a few votes out. ----I found that SFN copy I lost --am ready to start work on FANDOM--  
 --Quit Laughing!  
 (me)- mimeed?  
 (him)- Fantasy Herald to be a 16 page quartely. Query - Do U want a copy of the 4 pages of Pic. Phan ?  
 (me)- Yah. Also another War Drum if you have it.  
 (him) List contents of New FAN:  
 (me)- Edit- Fanf- IPO- Problem Child -RML (S-F 12 yr. old) As Others See Us  
 (Anonymous biographies of Miller, Pohl) Ye Fantaisie Books Taurasi gossip  
 Gossip by "(Himself)" Have you received Wiggins' Galaxy?

A cartoon of a caveman and his wife; he is perusing heavy stone tablets by the firelite, some of which are tossed around on the bedskins. Says she: "I don't mind you reading in bed, but watch out where you toss those things!"

The free theater ticket I got from the Man on the Street, and never got around to using because no stf pictures or the like were playing at that theater within the time limit.

A clipping from the newspaper publication of It Can't Happen Here, the last few paragraphs. I'm a sucker for beautiful bits like that.

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 Command Organization Maintenance
 

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Does writing a thing down cause you to forget it? Maybe I'm funny that way, but I can remember the details of a thing remarkably well for months, until I write them down, and then immediately they slip my mind so completely that in looking back at what I wrote, I wonder if it's very accurate. No doubt it's some kind of psychic pressure-to-remember that is relieved by the act of writing down, just as the pressures of psychological conflict are relieved by talking about them--or, as Milt has mentioned, just writing about them.

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 Command Maintenance Organization
 

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THE SPIRIT AND THE SPELL-- As I recall, it was after I had at long last finished the elephantine job of cleaning and waxing the finish of the Spirit of FooFoo. I was taking a last look at it before going into the house--it was quite dark by this time, tho there was a street lamp nearby. Anyhow, on the door handle I noticed a curious something hanging. When I pulled it off and held it by a long looped strand, it appeared to be a little bundle of various grasses and weeds tied together--quite a harmless looking thing, tho queer. But since that time I've been out more than I try to count up for new tires and tubes, a leaking gas tank, fluid lost out of the hydraulic brakes, spark plugs missing, paint cracking at corners, safety glass splitting, a battery eating its heart out, with attendant blown bulbs and fuses, and on top of all that a nice dent in one fender from being parked all nite on Connecticut-av after running out of gas. We have hung the offending herbs up on the wall of our room and have been intending to ask some of the intelligentsia who troop in and out if they know how to cast a counterspell, but haven't thot to yet while they were around.



## THEY DID NOT BE

There was a vagrant note, an extract from the middle of a fan fiction story the scene for which was a meeting of the compromise '39 Convention Committee, with members from both the Wollheimists and the Triumvirs. All that I have saved of this extract is the line for which the whole of it was written: "He yielded the floor, and Wollheim took it. The old lion lashed out as in days of old, but the power was gone."

After that I haven't the courage to give any more this time. At that, tho, it's no worse than some of the things that McPhail has confessed to me as we confab over his fan reliques.

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### Maintenance Command Organization

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Add complete descriptions: The kind of an American who, when he hears the name "Kwasind" spoken of, wonders whether it's Slavonic or Persian, maybe.

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### Organization Maintenance Command

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We recently noticed a book written before the First World War which carried very excellent humor of a very modern and advanced sort. Eugene Field was the author, and the title was "The Times Primer" or something like that. It consisted of pages in pseudo-McGuffey style, of which the following brief one is a fair sample: "This is a Wasp. The Wasp has pretty black and orange stripes on it. If you will pat its Back we will give you a nice Picture Book."

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### Maintenance Organization Command

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This series of interlineations is a commentary on the elasticity of English.

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### Organization Command Maintenance

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## CALL IT WHAT YOU WISH

Jack Speer has had a severe mental shock. He liked Joe Gilbert from the first, liked him and liked his writings, and has remarked to other correspondents what a swell guy Joe appeared to be. Gilbert intended but never got around to sending Speer a foto of himself. But the other day the South Carolinian dropped up to DC in person to see the boys, and the F discovered that Joe is a coal-black negro. Two psychiatrists attached to the GWU Medical Center are working on Speer's case, but are not too optimistic.

(For the benefit of those people who always misunderstand our 100% whole cloth policy of this department, let me state definitely that the latter half of the preceding paragraf is not founded on fact.)

A Texan who specializes in cryptanalysis announces confidentially the result of his analysis of Kornbluthian and other Mind-of-Mannish poetry. He has discovered that such poetry conceals a secret code in which the Michelists agreed to keep in touch with one another when freedom started being restricted. And that explains why the poetry in question makes such perfect nonsense as poetry.

Speer is hunting signatures for a constitutional amendment to standardize the term which shall mean "members of the FAPA". The recent flood of abominations like FAPA's, EAPAns, FAPAers, etc, has upset his sensitive soul.

DEAR CAMPBELL

It is more than two years now since I stopped writing in monthly about your two publications; and once I stopped doing it regularly, I ceased to write at all --my only letter to you in the interim was when I wanted something, i e, permission to reprint the Road Song of the Transport Caisles, and I never got around to thanking you for that. Well, so at this late date, tho I've finally caught up on reading the stories I wanted to read in the intervening Astoundings, I haven't the nerve to write a letter direct to you, so am retreating to this device of the open letter to record some of the things that various stories made me want to say. I promise you that I will avoid, so far as possible, routine comments on the quality of stories, and will avoid mentioning them when I read them but they aroused no further thoughts on my part to speak of.

The covers for May and June, 1939, are the farthest from what I like to see on Astounding, being human figures with little suggestion of fantasy about them, and hazy use of dead colors. Apparently other readers felt the same way, for thereafter we had no more of that sort, and after a few more months of feeling around, you got started on a much more acceptable sort, which developed into the symphonies that the latest so many have been. Interiors have also picked up, even such bums as Kramer and the Isips beginning to be fitted to stories they can illustrate.

McCann's forecast for the Voder is interesting, but wouldn't all voices transmitted that way sound just alike?... The idea in del Rey's The Day Is Done is interesting, if true; at considerable variance with the picture given in other prehistoric stories, such as The Last Neanderthal Man.... Employment is delightfully wacky, but quite improbable scientifically if I know anything about it at all. I'm not altogether familiar with the amazing electrolytic process for restoring relics, tho I've heard it works; but applying it to animals is pure legerdemain. Such legerdemain, incidentally, has come to be quite common in adapting scientific ideas to the other elements that it has been found advisable to incorporate in modern science-fiction.... De Camp's Design for Life is well criticized as simply showing that Earthmen were bound to be humanoid, and proving nothing at all about e-t's. It doesn't prove even that beyond a reasonable doubt; all along de Camp takes the weight of evidence at this or that alternative and ignores the other possibilities, so that I doubt that his final result has a probability of 50%. For all that, many of his ideas are interesting; for example, the smallness limit of the brain.

The June issue is particularly unoutstanding, and the fact that I read it in bus stations and other uncomfortable places, on the way to Oklahoma, didn't increase my appreciation of it. When the Future Dies has a nice O Henryish ending, and the idea in Pressure of disbalance among the chemical reactions in the body is a new idea for me; aside from that, little of interest. I notice One Against the Legion concludes in this issue. It was a comedown from the first two Legion stories like Paradise Regained from Paradise Lost, but is fairly good at its own level; Giles Habibula reached unexpected stature.

Black Destroyer was good; I wish now I'd read it straight thru instead of sampling the ending and the middle, and hearing it discussed in Brass Tacks, before I buckled down to reading it. It hadn't a prepossessing appearance, from the illustrations and blurb.... Trends is lovely; if this were all the Michelists were plugging for, there'd've been little grounds for opposing them; it just happens to fall in that delicate borderland of things we can all agree on. I do want to object to one thing, tho--Asimov's term "Neo-Victorian" to indicate a sentiment for suppressing scientific progress, trusting in God, and so forth. Apparently all he knows about Victorianism is that it was



extreme in matters of morality. Actually, it was a period of great religious doubts, of questioning in all fields of thought, and perhaps the great scientific progress the world has ever seen.... City of the Cosmic Rays stank; easily the worst of the series.... Lightship, Ho! was the baldest piece of verbal sleight-of-hand you've published.... I liked what I could understand of Tools for Brains; possibly if I'd waited till I took that Int Col Math course I could have followed it with more understanding. Liked also Geography for Time Travelers. Beats me how the geologists can figure out as much as they do from the evidence available. The vivid style helped a great deal, too, reaching its peak in "And Gondwanaland was destroyed!"... Greater than Gods was excellent. Moore showed herself able to see the good and bad in both of the alternative futures, which is deplorably unusual in science-fiction authors. Her references to Purpose at the end of the story I don't like, but they can be passed over. The science and logic of the plot are open to criticism, too; if we disregard the possibility of plurality of causes (convergent multiple pasts to a given single future), something that has appeared in sf since July, 1939, merely talking with the futures should have set up disturbances than would alter them to some extent, even without the hero's choice of a third alternative at the climax of the story. It was a beautiful piece of writing, anyway, and Schneeman's illustrations were up to it.

The August number. Heavy Planet is ordinarily good. Milt had a difficult task here, in telling us the story from the viewpoint of an extra-terrestrial, and I think Wollheim has succeeded somewhat better in some of his stories that leave Earth out of the picture. A great fault of Heavy Planet is common to many of your spaceship stories: we are unable to follow the action with satisfactory pictures in our minds, because we aren't as familiar with the spaceship as the author is, and the actions of the characters don't work out right in our individual conventionalized spaceships.... General Swamp seems to have been generally disliked. I went for it, myself, maybe because I enjoy accounts of military strategy. Seems to me Engelhardt did an excellent job.... Heinlein's Life-Line sounds plausible, but I think it runs up against the same difficulty that confronts stories dealing with the fourth dimension as another spatial dimension, like the first three: If there is such a thing, and it has any meaning for us, it should be constantly manifesting itself; an explosion here should dissipate part of its energy in this fourth direction; similarly a radio wave. Aside from that, I would question the idea of Life-Line because it assumes that there is a single line that the individual's life is certain to follow, an assumption almost never accepted in present-day timetraveling stories. By the way, I'll lay ten to one that Life-Line was written before Heinlein worked out his famed history of the future, or at any rate was written without regard to it; otherwise he wouldn't have been so foolish as to date it in 1939. The reference to Pinero in Methuselah's Children was an afterthought.... The Blue Giraffe seems composed of odds and ends of deCampism. Some things, such as the hero's "damned rational" adopted son, and the display of deC's knowledge of language. Other elements I objected to.

September. One of your best covers up to that time. Forces Must Balance was pleasant reading--I remember reading it in front of the Library of Congress Annex, waiting for the building to open--but about the only thing you remember afterwards is Hudspeth's speech about benevolent monarchy.... Ether Breather was a winning little thing, with a perfectly maddening ending. The author's plaintive tale of his "Seashell" story was a nugget, too.

My general reaction to all of Grey Lensman (Why didn't you keep spelling it "grey" all the way thru? It fits so much better than "gray") was like my reaction to Rogers' first cover for it. I liked it, but all along

there was the nagging feeling that maybe the author was just using some tricks to make us like the story, for example by appealing to our egos, but judged as literature it should rate quite low. So then you go to the Chicon and see Smith in person and decide that he's incapable of such trickery, and you also discover that the concept of the Grey Lensman is very useful in discussions about individual liberties and the superman and so forth, and that the Arisians and the bone-gazers and others are also valuable, so you decide the story was good. And then after awhile that nagging doubt comes back. Well, certainly some parts of the novel do not seem inspired: the episode or two in which Smith describes his raving rays and flaring screens and shearing planes are probably included simply because the trade presumably still demands them. One other observation: By repetition and other devices, Smith should make the skeleton plots of his stories stand out more than they do; there is a tendency for them to become smothered in the details, and afterwards the editor has to explain to readers that Kim became a miner so he could get a second line on the Boskone base, usw.... I didn't read Episode on Dhee Minor, but the title interests me. Is "Dhee" supposed to be pronounced "die"?... Shawn's Sword shows Rothman in every line. There is good character delineation here, but as Milton himself admits, insufficient story to carry it.... Rust is the kind of story I just hate, it's so bleak. Why couldn't the author have let us have just a little bit of hope at the end?

Heinlein's November story, Misfit, has something of the same defect as Shawn's Sword, but surmounts it more successfully. I have one complaint against Slipstick Libby: Heinlein has calmly taken for granted the doctrine of prima facie knowledge, and expanded upon it, but if I mistake not, the weight of modern philosophical thought on the subject is distinctly against the idea that a person can have certain knowledge intuitively, inborn.... Strikes me that the boys are getting darned specific about something that is still in the very theoretical stage, when they write these articles on space war tactics.

City of the Corporate Mind, in December '39, is somewhat better than the average of the PP&F series, but has plenty of faults. Personally, I'm inclined to be very doubtful of the assumption in this story, Methuselah's Children, and others that an individuality can be lost simply by putting someone into a telepathic hookup. After all, if memory is a structural change in the cerebrum, as most of us believe it is, it is definitely confined spatially, and bears a relation to one body quite different from that which it bears to others in telepathic rapport.... Campbell seems unjustifiably proud of his two-color interiors. They had improved a little bit by the time of The Roads Must Roll, but apparently didn't go over well enough to justify their continuance.

January, 1940. The Smallest God was an altogether enjoyable story with an unexpectedly satisfactory ending.... Requiem sehr gut.... In the Days of the Cold awful.... Your heading to McCann's letter, "Maybe Disney will now introduce Lemuel Locomotive?" is interesting in that Disney does exactly that in The Reluctant Dragon, and exactly as McCann describes it.... McCann's filler about the possible strength of ordinary metals is good news. Slan is the only story that has used it so far, that I recall.

You're wrong in your editorial on If This Goes On--. Stimuli alone are not sufficient to determine the reaction; differences in the organism can get widely varying results from the same stimulus. If This Goes On-- was good, but bogged down toward the end. I question the possibility of deducing a person's mental states from graphs of the changes of his face, even if the face does reflect the feelings. Any machine that could properly take care of all the other variables involved would have to have judgment--which means that it would have to be intelligent, and would also be susceptible to error.... Locked



Out is a good example of a fault that Astounding is particularly susceptible to because of its policy of presenting stories backgrounded on future civilizations. It's the same thing that's wrong with so many of the "Gotta-fix-the-spaceship" stories, as someone named them. We are given a problem to solve, and just as we should be able to beat Ellery Queen to the solution, we ought to be able to figure out the solution before the spaceman does, if we're good. But we can't, because we simply aren't familiar enough with his ship and the means at his disposal. Sometimes we may hit on it by chance, but we have no way of knowing, so must just stand aside and watch the story unroll.... And Then There Was One may be scientifically unsound, but that doesn't hurt the story any. This is a swell example of the story of a future environment when you do know all the factors, and it's like watching a chess game. Very effective conclusion to the story, too.... Knight succeeds exceptionally well in a story that has no relation to Earth. Well, the people may act all too human, but at least the Earth is not mentioned in the story....

March. The Emancipated is de Camp at his best, with political satire, phonetics, zoology, and his other talents showing up to great advantage.... Chapter from the Beginning is good, but unfortunately the story itself is almost completely told by the blurb, introduction, and illustrations, so that you finish reading it with the doubt that it was worth it, to get the extra of the paragraphs on Nwug trying to formulate a new idea, and his expression of triumph at the conclusion. Something ought to be done about the illustrations giving the story away. I remember with regret how completely the illustration stole the big surprise from The Eternal Mask in a Sloane Amazing. There are many other examples of the same thing.

Final Blackout is one of the best stories you have ever published. The stuff Hubbard put into that! The unkillables--History of the United States for two generations by a half-dozen implications--The new feudalism-- An article ten times as long as the story could be written developing things suggested in it. The writing style was ideally suited to the story. The Lieutenant was a character long to be remembered. And the much-disputed conclusion to the story was in my opinion the best that we could have hoped for.... Unguh Made a Fire. One of those depressing things that I don't like.... Repetition. Van Vogt can take the simplest sort of adventures and give them trimmings and interpretations that make them representative of or vital to the histories of whole civilizations.... Ley on gas was interesting and valuable. Notice the absence of gas in the current 32d European war?... Seems like Lester should have been able to do more with the idea than he did in Reincarnate, but I can't figure out how. Incidentally, I doubt that one would be able to relearn hearing so easily with all the nerve connections scrambled, because there would no longer be the smooth progression of one note just above another, and speech in two different keys would present entirely different combinations of sound.... Admiral's Inspection OK, but degenerated at the end into one of those gotta-fix-the-spaceship stories that I complained about.

You take a very restricted idea of "machine" in your May editorial. Machines have other uses besides converting one form of energy to another. They must put characters on paper, work out complicated mathematical problems, make light change the chemical nature of emulsion on a paper, and so on. For those purposes, machines must be complicated. Perhaps some jobs can be simplified, but so machines in the future will be more complicated than anything we have today.... Last of the Astorites. Maybe these gloomy, hopeless stories have their value in making you appreciate happy endings when they do occur, but I don't enjoy reading them.... Hindsight, altho I considered the details of the plot illogical in places, did give me a new idea: The suggestion than a number of different pasts

may each result in a given single future. This is an elaboration of the concept of the plurality of causes, and since Hindsight was published has shown up in several other stories. As it happens, Williamson's resultant futures were not exactly alike, but there is no reason why they could not have been, if we accept the plurality of causes. I am inclined to disagree with the concept of Williamson and others, that time is a tough web, which will resist attempts to alter it, but will let them have it as literary license.... Hot Filament is disturbing. If the collision theory is wrong, maybe we'd better go back to the nebular hypothesis. I find it so easy for myself to make little slips in arithmetical and other calculations, I wonder if the boys haven't missed a bet somewhere along the line in dismissing the various suggestions of the origin of the solar system.

I have already expressed my opinions on The Roads Must Roll in SP.... Unseen Tools, like Tools for Brains, was good so far as I could follow. I definitely dislike, however, the little cartoons you have accompanying this and later science articles, including The Science of Whithering. They just rub me the wrong way, like the cover for Flabbergasting Stories. Don't ask me why; it's subconscious, so I can't tell you.

July. I don't think The Mosaic merited mention in the Saturday Review of Literature. Its depiction of the future Moslem civilization is good, but the time theory of it has nothing original in it, and indeed is one that has been pretty much abandoned because of the contradictions it leads to, which can be escaped by further developed theories of time traveling.... I didn't rave over Emergency Landing. If it's the first story of that sort that you've ever read, you may like it, but I have the feeling that the same idea has been used before, and it's one that's no good on a repeat.... I've already expressed myself on Coventry. Incidentally, I kept trying to pronounce "Fader" "Fader" till two-thirds thru the story.... The Idealist was good, even if a bit overdone.... Science of Whithering was of some value. Idea about increasingly expensive weapons and increasing difficulty of a revolution is interesting. I doubt that Whithering is anywhere near a science yet. And the fact that extremes may cancel out when all the theories are superimposed on one another doesn't mean that some of the canceled extremes may not be true.

The Stars Look Down was swlegant.... Vault of the Beast was wowful. I like this critter that can change its shape so completely, like I like mechanical mice and the smallest god--because there are times that I'd like to have that ability myself.... Done Without Eagles had stuff in it that you could mull over afterwards, but the plot itself fell between two stools--divided interest between the old man, who was apparently the hero, and the mutant, who was invited in mainly because Lester was interested in him. I notice Schneeman has drawn "the black gang" as composed of negroes. Smatter fact, the term doesn't refer to race at all.... Moon of Exile stank. Too compressed, for one thing. For another, it falls into Harry's classification of the monthly interplanetary stinker that editorial policy seems to demand.... McCann's info about how much of the world's work the total supply of U<sup>235</sup> would perform is disturbing. Apparently we're going to have to find some other radioactives before atomic power can be generally used. And therefore all these recent stories in which this or that is run with specifically U<sup>235</sup> are going to be out of date shortly.

[To be continued next issue, when possibly we'll get around to dealing with Unknown also.]

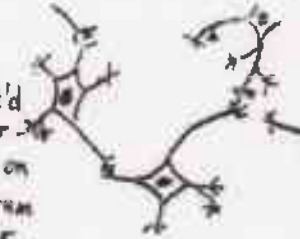


# MY FIRST TWENTY-ONE YEARS

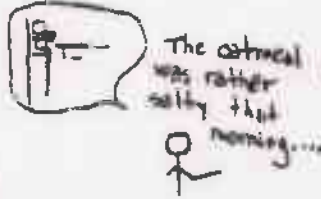
Some extracts, quite incomplete even as regards their own subject matter.

Born August 9, 1920.

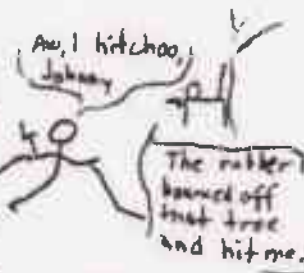
1921 Certain things that I'd  
1922 Give a lot to under-stand were going on in the infant cerebrum of John Bristol Speer.



1923 My earliest memories are in this year, some may be of events which occurred before I was three years old.



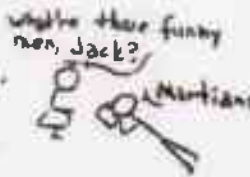
1924 In my preschool boyhood I was a very usual sort; there  
1925 Is no evidence that abnormal behavior patterns were formed in my early years.



1926 Scarlet fever made Speer miss the first few days of school, but he entered shortly after, and by Christmas it was obvious to all but him that he was a near-genius.



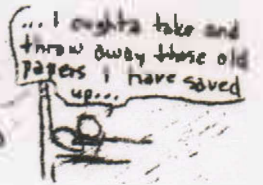
1927 My first self reading was the Sept 27 Amazing. It is possible this was while I was six years old.



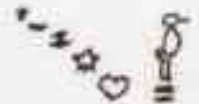
1928 In these years nothing untoward occurred, but  
1929 Speer showed a bookish turn. In the course  
1930 of a summer or so, he devoured a set of The Book of Knowledge.



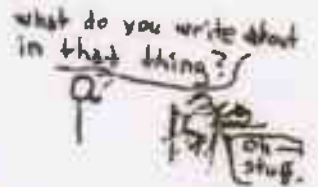
1931 My collecting days began with a Buck Rogers 2431 AD, but after a few months broke off.



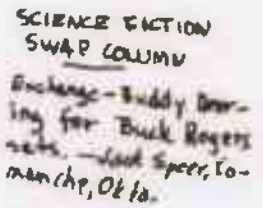
1932 At last I was of age to be a full-fledged Scout.



1933 Beginning of present unbroken diary.



1934 Resumed collecting, returned to science fiction, and began in fandom.

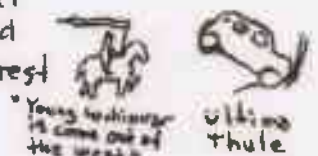


1935 I don't feel like drawing any funny pictures for these years. I got badly off track in several ways. An observer would have guessed I was headed for being one of these inadequate, extreme-introverted droops.

1937 I became active in fandom. In later '37 and early '38 some of the losses of the last two years were made up, but most were not.



1938 Out into the world; but I continued in my old behavior patterns the rest of the year.



1939 Most of my beliefs underwent great revolutions



1940 A year spent mainly in reestablishing standards for action.



1941 Set out along my new line.

