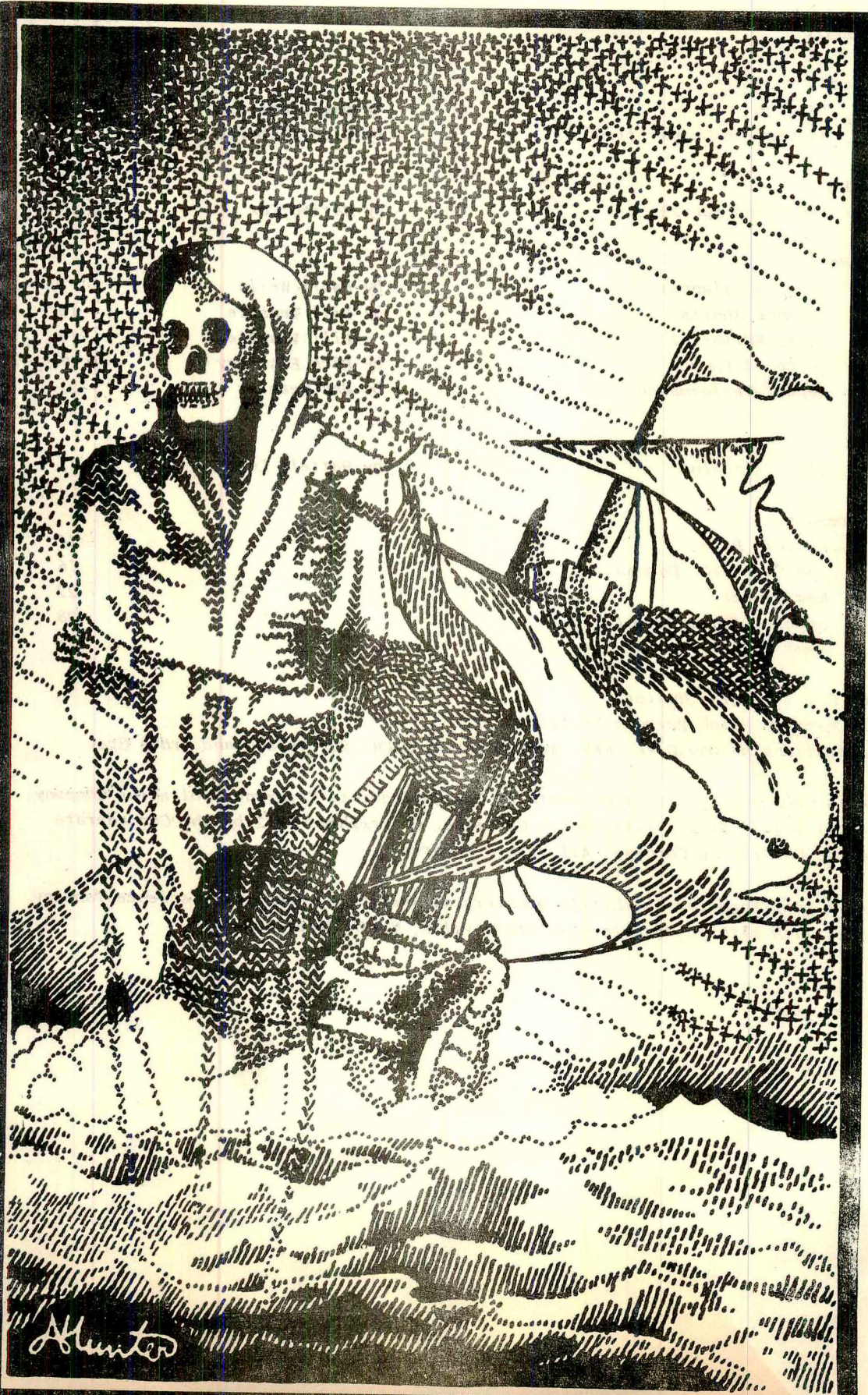


TLMA #5

AUGUST 1952

The Little Monsters of America

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TLMA #5

August 1952

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THUD AND BLUNDER

BASIL WELLS

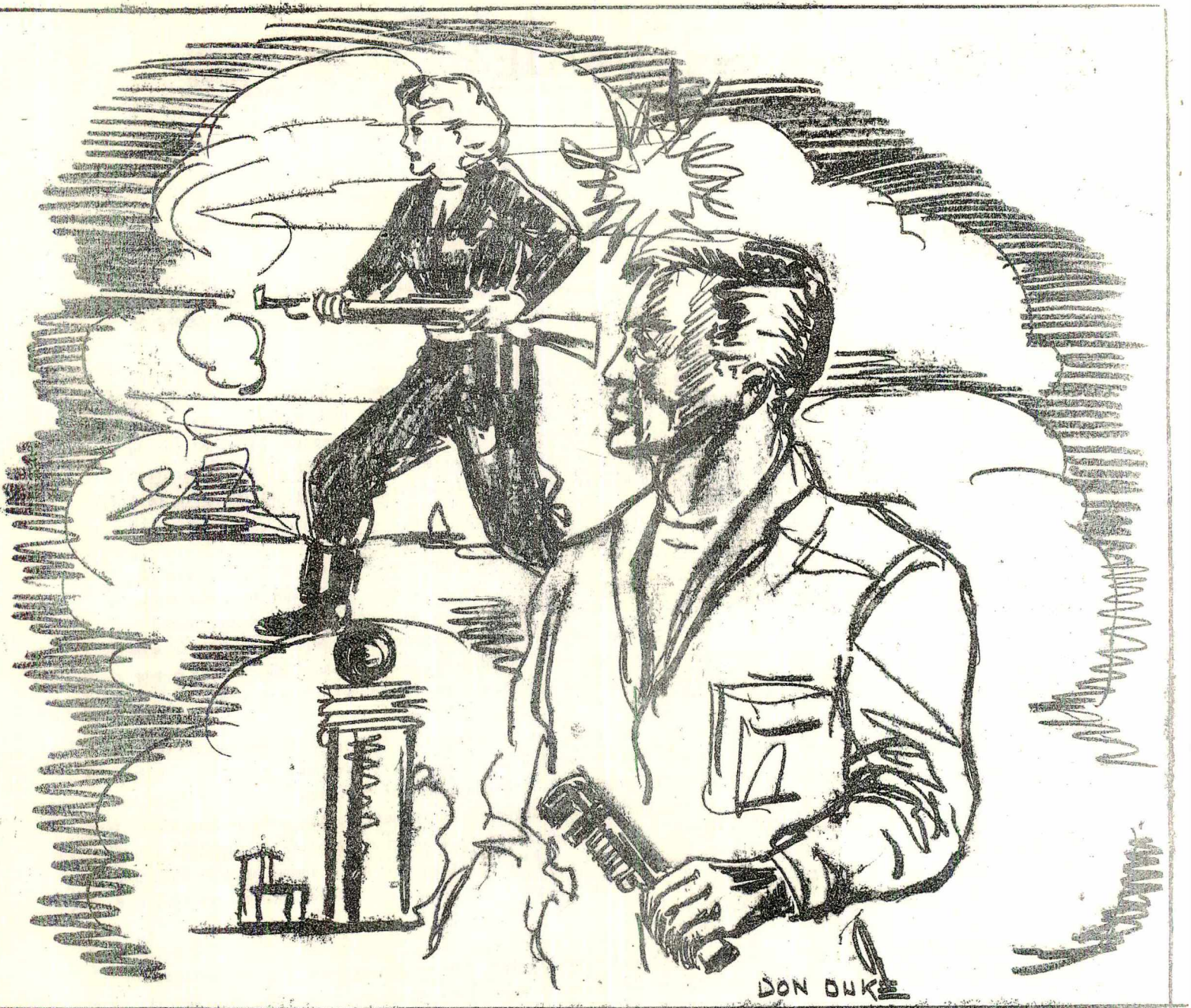
Words and phrases mean so many different things. The English use certain expressions that, to us, have rather vulgar connotations---but mean nothing of the sort to them! And the same is true Down Under. Aussie slang is almost another language. Even here at home we find this true. . . Take the heading above. Most of you take it to mean blood and thunder. Not so--- Take the thud, as in what has happened to our once-bright hopes that Russia might prove neighborly, or the blunder, as demonstrated by our fumbling, bumbling, attempts to rectify that error.

Thud and blunder is the basis of an sf story that tries to be true to life---as homo sap lives it, that is. How a robot or an alien Zrewhosit reacts is something else again. The superman, who whips up a world-saving device overnight, or cannot be defeated or stymined, leaves me cold. Give me a hero or a heroine, whose world threatens to crash about his ears, or has crashed, and watch him blunder and struggle through to some sort of success---or failure. A bewildered homo superior, or a symoathetic alien, stumbling through a hostile environment also holds a reader's interest. Check your favorite stories and see if you agree. . .

Talking about thuds. At Indian Lake, Friday night, rumor has it that those thuds heard on the stairs were not some of HPL's soggy monsters from the slimy deep. Nup---Someone's heavy feet were drubbing the steps. Noisy and cheerful. Saturday night was different. You could even sleep--- Had a good get-together---I expect Lynn has a report on it on the Con somewhere in TLMA. . . Ed Noble and the Curtisses dragged me up to Buffalo the week before that, took for the Sunday afternoon session of the Bufflacon. Good crowd, fifty or sixty. Only met a couple Li'l M'sters there though. All of which leads me to suggest that you try to attend the get-togethers near home. You'll have fun--- even if it isn't Chicago. And you have met Lynn's fair-haired gal, Art Clarke, Bob Bloch, Mack Reynolds, R.E. Smith etc. etc. if you'd hit Indian Lake this year!

How about memorable sf and fantasy in the modern mag and book fields? Are we getting any really distinctive literature there? We're getting finely written, perfectly balanced yarns in some cases---enteraining, smooth, urbane, and fastpases fiction---but how many of them will be remembered ten or twenty years from now? Perhaps the plethora of fiction choking the newsstands has something to do with it. Most of us cannot find the time to wade through a hundred stories every month to find them. And the anthologists pass over tales they personally dislike. But how many stories stick like the Shiras' "In Hiding" yarn, or Damon Knight's "Not With a Bang" Or "Slam," in the longer lengths? Where is the modern author, unless it be Henlein, who can be rated alongside Burroughs or Haggard---in reader appeal, that is.

Maybe some of we older readers and fans feel crowded out like the guy we heard about the other day. He found a quiet restaurant that served good food at decent prices--- and no waiting. So he passed around the good word. You know what happened. . . We discovered a new unexplored series of worlds in the early sf mags. It was a weird, forbidden expedition into the unknown---some of us read them on the sly, and enjoyed them the more--- and we never found enough of our type fiction. We corresponded and swapped mags. Leisurely sort of life on an uncrowded island of fancy. So comes the glut of magazines and their acceptance as good reading, along with westerns and detectives and love stories--- Well, we bragged 'em up



DRAFTEE!

BY
BASIL
WELLS

Draftee is a story Basil Wells wrote back in 1943. At that time it was considered too offtrail for the science-fiction pulps. Although written nine years ago, I'm sure you will all agree, it couldn't be more timely.

George Marcus wiped the grease from his tools carefully as he prepared to leave the cool depths of the underground hangar. In less than an hour he would be heading for that hell-on-earth that was this war's fighting front.

George was being drafted. No longer would he work in the comparative safety of this army airfield. Instead he would be running machines in the sunken factories beneath the atomic-blasted ruins of the Middle Western cities our nation yet held.

Rarely now did an atomic bomb land on the American continent, our bombers had pulverized the Stripers' factories and mines, but the conflict had developed into a struggle for the remaining centers of production---both here and abroad. Battle lines were so fluid and confused that they ceased to exist in actuality.

It was the working man, in this the Third World War, who sweated, and fought, and died down below there in the underground pits; brave men who patched and repaired machinery salvaged from the bombed factories, and then kept on running them in the stinking depths of dirt-choked sewers.

"I came to say goodbye!" The girl was tall and strong, beautiful in a healthy well-fleshed sort of way. Her hair was cropped short---dark curls ringing her tanned round face.

"Lois!" His heart was choking his throat. "I hoped you wouldn't be back from the Antarctic sweep until I was gone."

Her eyes accused him silently. There were tears deep in them. She twisted the plain metal band circling one of her fingers.

"This is war, George," she said. "We women can take it as well as our husbands. We are keeping the bombers and fighting planes shuttling their bomb loads to Asia and Southern Europe while you men are giving your lives to keep the wheels of industry moving!"

George was not looking at her. "I wanted you here," he admitted, "and yet, it would have been easier for me to be gone when you came back."

"Don't be silly," laughed Lois. "I want to be with you as long as I can. And every bomb our ship drops will remind me of you. I only wish I could be going along."

"No Lois," George's face thinned. "A woman's place is not in the front lines. In the Air Force or the Navy, yes, there is a place for women. But in the Factories, no. That is the place for fighting men!"

"Women were in the Factories in the other wars, George." Lois' eyes sparked excitement. "I could be with you if---George, I am a nurse---why not?"

"In other wars the factories were not in danger, dear," explained George patiently. "Now to work with machinery is more dangerous than storming a machine gun nest. That is why our Army and Navy are employing the 4-F's and women---to release able-bodied men for the Factory Army."

"George."

"Yes?"

"Let's not talk about the War any more. Let's think about us. We've only a few minutes." Her soft fingers bit convulsively into the hard muscles of his arm. "Hold me close."

He held her close.

THE OUTLINES OF THE city were still there. Squares and crazy rectangles came swelling up to meet the ship, and then they were landing on a bomb-pitted field in what had once been the heart of Cleveland. Blackened walls had been cleared away, and the very soil beneath their ship's giant wheels came from the ashes of a thousand ravaged buildings.

The ship had barely ceased to roll when the drafted men, two hundred of them, raced from the ship to the shallow dome a hundred feet away that guarded the entrance to an underground street. George was one of the last to reach the shielded entrance, and he paused for a moment to look back.

A dozen enemy ships had come swooping down at the grounded transport. The pilot tried to avoid their attack by taxiing away across the field, but the striped ships were not to be denied their prey. The transport exploded outward as a half dozen bombs smashed home, and then the striped ships were gone into the skies in a shower of flak.

"Shame we had to bring you fellows in by air," said the guard. "Lost a good ship. Most of the replacements come in by the trench roads and subways. Lost five hundred trained men in this morning's raid, though, so we had five loads of skilled men flown in at once."

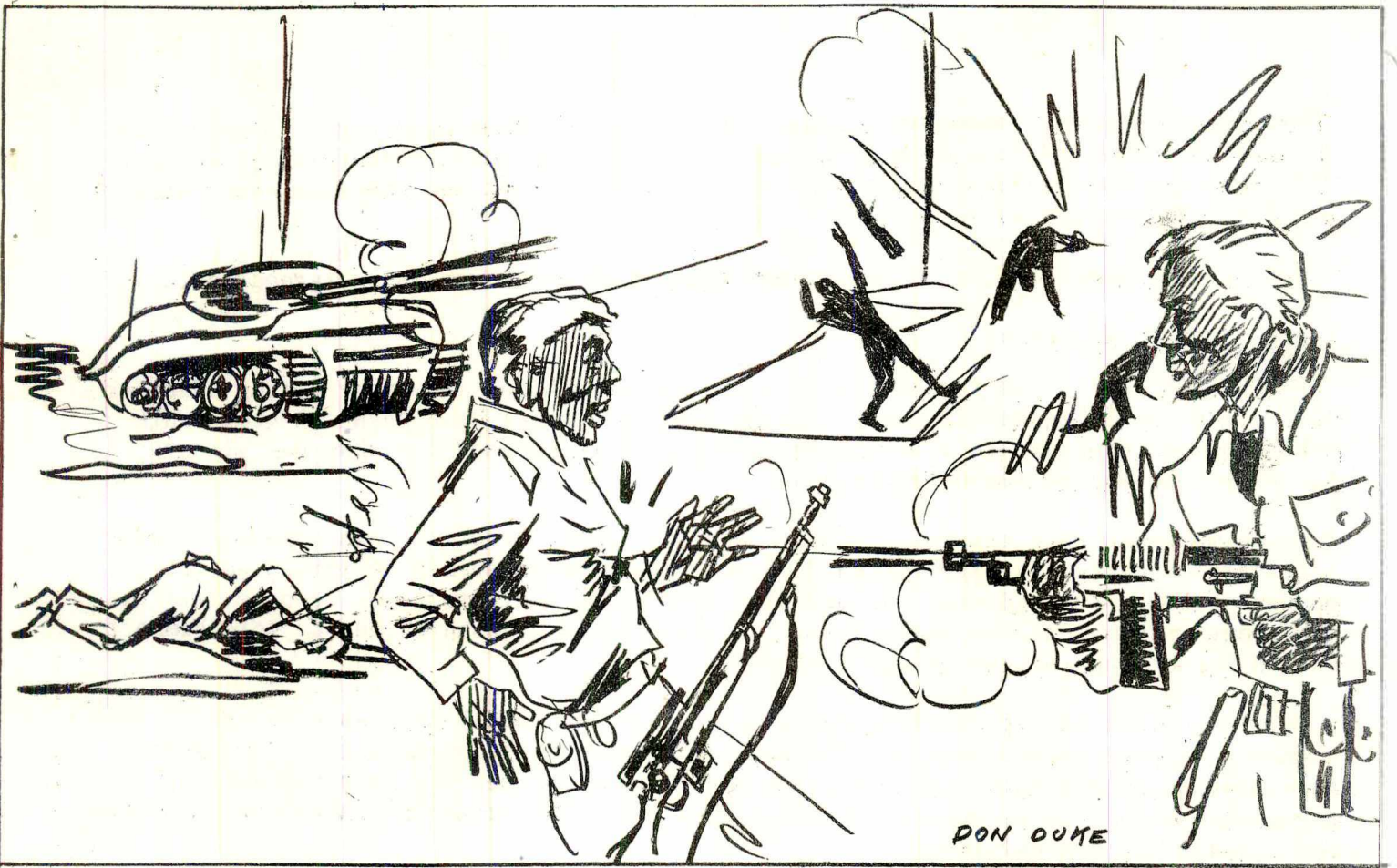
"We the first?" asked George.

"Nope. Fourth." The guard swivoted out at the smoking wreckage. "Got one before it landed. . . . Other two made it okay."

Then the massive outer doors swung shut and the uniformed replacements marched downward along the uneven ramp toward the factories a hundred feet or more beneath the razed city's level.

They passed freshly timbered sections where the concrete walls had been blown down and repaired again. The smell of burnt oil and the roar of machines grew, and they came out at last into a narrow tunnel that was alive with traffic---pedestrian and machine fighting for room. And on either hand tunnels opened into this central street. This was the heart of wartime industrial Cleveland, the front lines.

Well-trained were most of the replacements, the majority of them had been drafted from the Armed Forces, so they took their assigned stations as a matter of course. Within an hour George had found his barracks, a moisture-dripping cement tunnel lined with board bunks, and was at work on a turret lathe in a foul-smelling stone-and-cement tomb of a room. There were a score of other men in the cramped confines of this subterranean pocket of steel and concrete; all of them working grimly at their machines.



"Keep your hand always near your gun," the foreman warned George. "There is a Striped system of factories less than fifty miles away, and they attempt to capture or sabotage our lines every few days."

"Yes sir," agreed George, his eyes watching the moving shaft of metal he was shaping.

"This is a battle of production," the foreman went on. "The United Nations have become a system of island cities linked together by airplanes. In the smaller towns and villages the Strippers have established themselves precariously."

George looked at the foreman curiously. "It is our duty to see that the wheels of industry continue to turn," he recited in a nasal monotone, "and to guard against the sabotage or capture of our industrial cities by the enemy. . . I've been reciting that little poem to all the men I trained back at Appalachia Field."

The foreman laughed shortly. "Saves me giving that pep talk again," he said. "Regulations to do it. We all want to work like hell and win this brawl. A lot of high-sounding words don't help much."

"Washington seems to think so." George looked around the steaming foulness of the low-ceilinged room. "They try to tell us we're driving the Strippers back into the sea. We know different, those of us who've been working for the Air Force, and we figure production would climb even faster if the workers knew the truth."

"We know plenty, brother!" said the foreman. "Every few days a factory is blown up or raided. If your guys in the Army and Navy would quit bellyaching about softer beds and more meat with their meals they might be able to blast more Strippers."

"They could do more," admitted George. "Red tape ties them up though. A pilot can fly only so long and then he must be relieved. Targets must be approved in advance. The crews are eating their hearts out for a chance to meet the enemy on even terms, and most of them are women at that!"

"Keep the machines rolling," the foreman flung back at George as he turned to leave.

George shouted agreement.

THE BOMBS FELL with the regularity of a pistoning machine. At every crump of shock the vaulted walls seemed to sway. George felt each shock as a physical blow. His heart was pounding and he felt the muscles twitch in spasmodic disharmony all over his body. He was battered and bruised.

Yet the machines were running steadily, and the little electric cars came at regular intervals to carry away the finished parts. The workers seemed oblivious to the maddening hell of sound that was smashing only a few feet overhead. George felt his jaw ridge with muscle, he was as brave as these haggard unshaven men he told himself, but in his stomach winged things fluttered.

A terrific blast rocked the long low room, and it had hardly died when the alarm bell sounded. George looked around. The men were stopping their machines. The alarm must have meant serious trouble for the orders were to keep the machines rolling at any cost. With them he went to the tool-room where the attendant passed out battered old Garands and Springfields.

George grinned lop-sidedly. Outdated weapons to face the high-velocity machine guns of the Stripers' soldiers! This was why the casualty lists for the Factory Army were so high. Bombings, accidents, and lack of modern weapons! Maybe this time the United Nations would not disarm so completely again—if it were not too late already.

They poured out into the underground street, to find a gaping rift letting through the ragged blue of the Ohio sky. And squattin in the plowed-up middle of the street was a great round ball of metal.

Even as they came out of the connecting tunnel a dozen ports swung wide in the monstrous ball's sides and speedy little armored tanks vomited out. Eighty, or perhaps a hundred of those swift little destroyers of the land, swarmed into the adjoining tunnels before the ponderous barriers of metal could drop into place to seal off the attacked sector.

George saw the massive ball lift on exploding thunderbolts of fire, rockets, toward the hole blasted through Cleveland's protective roof of earth, and then a rough hand jerked him back into the tunnel's depths even as the thick metal barrier thundered into place.

"Thanks," he shouted to a man who was suddenly not there. He started racing toward the sound of exploding firearms, the other man's back guiding his steps.

And then the man ahead was stopping, reluctantly, and he spun around until George could see his blank surprised face. There was a gaping hole in his chest from which redness began to seep.



George flung himself down. A heavy one-man tank was waddling toward him, its heavy caliber guns gouging metal. He dropped his heavy rifle, its outdated cartridges could not harm this robot monster of alloys, and drew his Air Force Issue automatic. Twice he fired, and the oversized explosive bullets ripped the vulnerable treads into shards.

The tank wheeled about in aimless circles, helpless to advance or retreat.

George crept back into the angle of a concrete wall. A heavier gun from further down the corridor began trading shots with the tank. The concussion of the confined explosions was terrific. Thundered smashed and rocked from wall to wall.

The tank was hit; it seemed to swell outward like a puffball, and he crouched lower. Something smashed at him; smashed him backward through the thick wall.

Beyond the wall he was submerged in the murky foul depths of a lake. Odd that a lake could exist here in the heart of underground Cleveland. . . . He was battling the choking liquid death that strangled and smothered him.

He clawed upward hopelessly through the taste of acrid chemicals and harsh disinfectants that permeated the depths. Upward until at last he saw a distant gray light that grew until he could see once more.

NO LONGER WAS HE in a lake. This was a clean white bed. There were other beds in a long row. And there was a nurse with her back turned toward him. Her hair was black and cropped boyishly short. He made a sound, and she turned.

His heart slowed its beat. She was not Lois.

"Bad luck?" his dry lips whispered.

"Your right arm." The nurse turned her head slightly away. "No more Factory Army for you!"

Then Lois came from nowhere, apparently, and her arms were about him. Oddly, her eyes were free from tears. He sensed that she was glad to have him back even with but one arm. She laid her head beside his on the pillow.

He wanted to tell her about the factories and the hell of the production lines that he had seen so briefly, but his tongue and lips refused. Later perhaps! For the moment he wanted to forget the War and all the destruction and hatreds it engendered.

"George!" she was saying gladly, "the War's over! An hour after the hospital wing brought you here the Stripers were attacked by spaceships---from the outer void! And at the same time another spacer landed near New Washington in Utah!"

George grunted. "How'd that end the war? We're both working on spacers, Lois."

"But these are alien ships, scouts for a horde of machine men---robots! The only one the Stripers captured boasted as much before he fused his metal body."

"All Earth is united now to fight off the invasion. . . ."

She kissed him, quickly, and smiled.

A HUNDRED PARSECS away, speeding invisibly toward the sixteen planets of the double suns of Kunmath, the vast exploratory globe's commander smiled wryly at his second. . . .

"I'll catch it all right," he agreed. "Losing five escape craft and a hundred slightly-worn robots won't help my record in the least. May end up aboard a lunar freighter."

"But they were humanoid like us, Dena, and committing planetary suicide. I couldn't cruise there off planet and see that happen. So I supplied the shock that restored a measure of sanity."

Dena's eyes warmed hotly. "I'd have done the same," he said, "sir! By transferring their fear of one another to us you saved their primitive culture. . . "

THE END

In far-off Patagonia,
Where the horn is on the hoof,
The Indians are, I grieve to say,
Alas, Alacaluf.

They do not view the traveller
With evident delight,
But alack, aloof, they mumble
In their beards both day and night.

No maiden with come-hither
That makes the wolves cry Woof!
May marry one, lest she become
A lass alacaluf.

Battell Loomis

A Texan passed away and upon arriving at the gates of his eternal home, remarked, "Gee, I never thought Heaven would be so much like Texas."

"Son," said the man at the gate sadly, "This ain't heaven."

A HOT DOG IS THE ONLY ANIMAL THAT WILL FEED THE HAND THAT BITES IT--

THE EDITORS PAGE:

Convention time is upon us again-- How many little monsters are planning to attend? If you haven't sent your dollar to SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION BOX 1422 CHICAGO 90, ILLINOIS yet, do so at once. This is going to be the best con yet and take it from me, they are a lot of fun. Lets all try to go. I have just received a communication from Julian C. May, convention chairman, that a meeting room is being held for our use at the convention. We will hold a business and just plain old time get-together. How many of you may I count on meeting there?

This issue of TLMA is one that we are especially proud of. We feel that we have given you 2 of the finest pieces of fiction to appear in an amateur publication this year. What do you think?

Max Keaslers Repeat Performance hasn't arrived yet at this writing so I'm afraid it will not appear until next issue. I hope to have #6 out 1 month from now. No we aren't going monthly. Just this one next issue.

See you all next month....

A FEW FACTS AND FANCIES ABOUT THE MOON

By Marion Cox

What is the moon? Just a heavenly body revolving around the earth, you say? You're wrong; it's much more than that. It is an object of wonder and mystery. Since the beginning of mankind there have been people who wondered about the moon. Consider some of the explanations for its existence:

Some scientists think it was formed separately from the earth, while others think it was once part of the earth. In this latter group there are those who think it was torn from the spot that now holds the Pacific Ocean. Others in this group believe that the earth was once shaped like an hour glass, with one section much larger than the other. The two pieces separated and the smaller one became our moon.

Another mystery still puzzles some people. This is the question of whether or not there is life on the moon. Scientists tell us that the lack of water or atmosphere and the extremes of temperature make any form of life, particularly as we know it, impossible. There has been discussion of life of some kind existing in the interior of the moon or even on the back of the moon, but there is very little possibility of this. It is an interesting question, however.

If we suppose that life could exist, we are faced with another question. What form would it take? Would it be intelligent? What physical form would it have? Of course, we have no way of knowing.

We know that the moon has some very definite effects on earth. It controls our tides, with the help of the sun, and makes it possible for us to predict high or low tides with surprising accuracy. It helps us tell time, for each phase of the moon takes a week and it takes four weeks to complete the cycle. Thus we have our week and month. The moon has a hand in eclipses, too. Imagine the superstitious fear and awe of primitive people when the day darkens and the sun disappears as the moon glides silently and majestically across its face.

It's human to be curious about things we don't understand, and it's human to want an explanation for such things. Perhaps this fact explains some of the many fables and stories that grew up around the moon. For instance, the man in the moon was created to explain the markings on the face of the moon. Today we know the markings are caused by mountains, valleys, and craters.

Many other things have been seen in the markings of the moon—a rabbit, a boy and girl, an old woman. Each one has a story or legend telling how it got up to the moon.

Some of the superstitions seem very silly to us and it's hard to understand how they originated. There is the belief that certain crops should be planted in the full of the moon. The waxing and waning of the moon was also believed to influence crops. These are not the only beliefs connected with the phases of the moon. For instance, a woman who wants her hair to grow longer must cut it while the moon is waxing, or growing larger.

I suppose everyone has heard of moon-blindness or has used the words 'moonstruck', 'loony', or 'lunatic'. All these stem from the fact that people once thought the moon affected the brain. The rays of the full moon were particularly dangerous. There are still people who believe this.

Superstitious people sometimes believe in vampires, werewolves, or other mystical and mythical creatures; these creatures were supposed to reach their full powers in the full of the moon.

You can see for yourself just how much influence the moon has had on the development of civilization on earth. It leads one to wonder if the other satellites in our solar system have done as much for their planets. Perhaps someday, when man has learned to travel through space from planet to planet, we shall know.

SCIENCE SHORTS

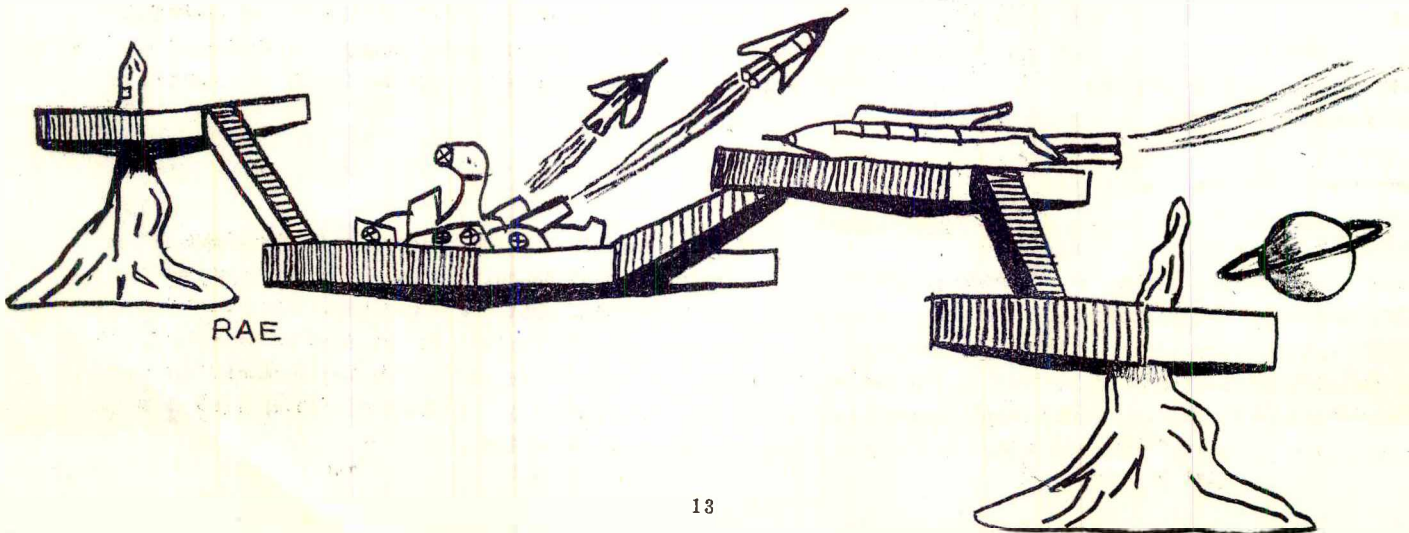
by Bill Venable

BULLETIN---The research laboratories of Beaver Bros., prominent soap-manufacturing firm, was raided by revenue agents of the Federal Government last night, who had been tipped off by an unidentified woman that they were running an illegal still. Revenue officers said that the scientists, who originated the miracle ingredient that puts sunshine in the wash, had been distilling whiskey on the sly and apparently gotten some of the contraband mixed in with the company's product. The officer told reporters that the bureau of Internal Revenue was tipped off by an anonymous woman who reported that her last box of soap had put moonshine in her wash.

The flying saucer scare has been exposed by government scientists as a cheap advertising hoax. Dr. I. Knowit, top man in the government's saucer research staff, reported that telescopic photographs of the flying saucers seen over Hoocheegoochee, Ga., revealed lettering on their undersides that read, "SMOKE MARSWEED. THE CIGARETTE MANUFACTURED FROM CANAL-GROWN TOBACCO". Scientists have radioed to Mars to devise some better method of advertising, as the saucers have caused such an uproar on Earth.

TULERIN, a by-product of the manufacture of GUNKAMINE, which has been proposed as a cheap substitute for the more scarce ILLITERINE, may be used as a substitute for GUNKAMINE where the supply of ILLITERINE is too scarce to permit manufacture of TULERIN, for which ILLITERINE is a cheap substitute. (Figure that one out--)

The study of alcoholism is progressing to the point where results are beginning to show, according to Dr. A.L. Cohol of the American Whiskey Institute. Dr. Cohol told reporters during an interview that he was personally engaged in studying the affects of alcohol on human beings, and invited reporters to have a drink. The doctor further said that his experience was proving very rewarding and he found his studies very pleasant. He apologized for the number of snakes in the room and said that the next time reporters came around they might see the elephants. The interview was terminated by the arrival of the beer distributor. Dr. Cohol expects to be able to study for another month before going to Bellevue for an indeterminate stay.



GUEST EDITORIAL

THE POPULARIZATION OF SCIENCE FICTION

BY BILL VENABLE, EDITOR OF PENDULUM.

In the days when science fiction was young and fandom first grew up, there was, compared to present times, a tremendous solidarity about the thing of being a science fiction fan among other fans. Back when Gernsback the fabled was editor of the first magazine exclusively devoted to science fiction, when H.G. Wells was hot stuff and Jules Verne hadn't been too long gone, it was verily a mark of distinction to be a fan of science fiction.

Now I can't set myself up as an authority on the old days, for I am not an old timer in fandom. On the contrary I must confess to being among the more recent crop of young fans; reminiscing is not in my line. Through the various clubs, though, that I have joined, I have come into contact with these rare old timers and listened to their tales of scarce promags first hoarded into attics, protected against ravishing by unsympathetic wives and careless children in later years, and finally exhibited in 1950 to the wondering eyes of comparative children in fandom. And they have told me what it was like to be a fan in them days; so gather round, chillun, and hear of the wondrous days of yore when grandpa went out every night to hunt BEMs at the corner newsstand.

You see, science fiction was a new thing to folks 40 and 30 years ago. As H.L. Gold remarked in one of his recent editorials in Galaxy Science: "There is no idea so powerful as one whose time has come." (I think he was quoting somebody else, here but I am too lazy to dig it up so we'll let it pass.) 30 years ago science fiction's time had not come.

If you were a reader of science fiction, the general public, together with all your NORS friends and relatives, looked upon you as slightly, though harmlessly, crazy. For one thing, science fiction was considered a lower form of literature---i.e., "trash"; for another, it dealt with subjects that were obviously the writings of insane men. Who ever heard of going to the moon!! Ridiculous!! How could you waste your time reading that trash?

But you could, and did, and consequently you were a rare bird, a freak species; and although you might be considered an intelligent person in a conversation about politics or the weather, science fiction was out as a tie between you and your friends, it was something you couldn't share.

Except with other rare birds and crazy dreamers.

And so fandom rapidly became a tight, friendly little society of outcasts; and there is no association that is more pleasant than that among mutual outcasts.

This solidarity lasted for well-nigh onto 20 years. It lasted right up until the beginning of the second World War; and then it began to crack. It had carried through the heyday of WIERD TALES, AMAZING, ASTOUNDING, and all the other magazines whose pre-war issues are dreamed-of things. Because science fiction was still the pastime of people who were slightly off their rockers.

Then science fiction's time came.

With the rapid influx of new magazines and new readers of these magazines; with readers of s-f everywhere you turned and a new mag almost every month or so; science fiction was psychoanalyzed in the public eye and found sane. Not only sophisticates and the pseudo-scientific intelligentsia. What there was that brought this change about I can only speculate. Perhaps it was the fact that modern science has brought so many of science fiction's old dreams into the realm of respectability and even reality. Perhaps it is the increasing awakening of the people of the world to the future that technology has in store for humanity. In many cases (viz 1985) it was preoccupation with the possible social evils that might spring up in the future.

And fandom, in turn, has lost something. Now, I can't maintain that fandom is going to the dogs, for certainly it evidences signs of health and growth rather than degeneration and decay. But it has lost something nevertheless. It is bigger and more scattered; it is more commercialized and professionalized; and it is more impersonal. There is no longer the pleasant intimacy and solidarity that comes from association with other outcasts. Instead there is a boom-time and a rush to get in on things by the general public. Fandom has lost all of its personal touch that bound a few scattered fen together; it has become a seething mass too big for any one fan to know even the half of it.

I am not one to judge whether this change has been good or bad. With Benet, I can only "say neither, in their way, 'It is a deadly maric and accursed,' not, 'It is blessed,' but only 'It is here-'" For it is here, and for the present, here to stay.

The rest is up to you. What do you think about it?

Guest Editorial, which first appeared in the June TLMA, was well liked by most of our readers. Your editors have decided to make this a permanent feature of TLMA. Bill Venable, well liked editor of PENDULUM was chosen for this month's issue. In the next issue we will feature Norbert Hirschhorn, editor of TYRANN. We will try to get any fan editors you wish for our editorials, so write in and let us know who you would like for the #7 issue.

Exclusive: We hear H. Gold is dickering with Short Stories to buy WEIRD TALES as a companion mag to GALAXY...

'Twas reported on the Editors Page that REPEAT PERFORMANCE would not be in this issue. Two hours after printing that, the mailman arrived with said column----so read on----you'll find it after all.

Lynn + Carole



A TRUE-LIFE PHOTO OF BOB BLOCH
SNAPPED AT INDIAN LAKE BY WALT
GUTHRIE, SEEMS AS IF BOB IS FROM
SOUTHERN MILWAUKEE.

The Screamin' Demons



LETTERS FROM THE READERS.....

Due to an extra amount of good material I wanted to bring you in this issue, the letter column will be rather short.

Dear Lynn,

In reference to TLMA #4: I can't decide between ONLY A MOTHER or THE STUFF OF DREAMS as the best story in the ish. The latter was very Merrittish and consequently better written. Then again, of course I never did like Merritt..... Anyway the cover was O.K. - which one are you? Macauleys guest editorial was very familiar to me. Viva la Robert Bloch and his letter. Does Carole H. have a sister? A twin sister that is..

Sincerely,

Larry Shannon
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Lynn,

There must be something wrong with me. I neither understand nor enjoy Battell Loomis. I read that BLIND MANS MONEY AGAIN the 2nd time, something strictly against my principles, and I still don't get it. I had to read the story he had in WORLDS BEYOND twice too. But at least I understood that, after a fasion. I tell you he's giving me a complex. Please reveal that he's from Mars, or 3592 A.D., or a flying saucer or something. I can't bear the thought that I'm stupid. The STUFF OF DREAMS reads as tho written from experience. I wondered hoe Beale got that way. Basil Wells THUD AND BLUNDER-- Excellent-- ONLY A MOTHER -- personified cosmology. That's hardly an adequate comment, but I thought the phrase sounded good. Keasler is great, and the footnotes leaef a fine Cuppyesque air to his fan History-- but have you been CORRECTING HIS SPELLING? This will never do. What sort of editor are you, tampering with the individualities of your writers? My what a lovely picture is on page 13. And she is a fan? One would never know it. She looks perfectly normal. OH, OH, Loomis again. Well now, wait; this I can understand. Pretty good. Kinda funny. (weak attempt at a chuckle) I think I'm getting it. Intellectual humor?

Yours,

Dick Ryan
Newark, Ohio

Dear Lynn,

Referring to TLMA the following is one fans opinion. The Artwork is excellant, as fanzine art is usually extremely amatuerish. The articles were equally good. In all probability TLMA is the top fanzine in the U.S.

Keep up the good Work.

Richard Dabrin
Flushing 65, N.Y.

The Voice of Fandom

by
Rick
Elsberry

How I got roped into this I'll never know. I don't exactly remember telling Lynn I'd write him a column, but suddenly, out of nowhere, a postcard appeared bearing the cryptic words: "Your Voice of Fandom due March 15." I laughed bitter tears. What was this crazy man talking about? Then, it came to me. Well, why not write a column just to spite Hickman? Easy enough, I thought, but that absurd deadline. I destroyed the card.

"Voice of Fandom"--I turned it over in my mind awhile. Why that title? What if someone actually believed that I was "The Voice of Fandom" and began to sue me for things said by Laney, Shapiro, and Willis. Titles, ~~hmm~~. Well, I thought, why not Nothing Sirius again? No. Nothing Sacred would be much better. Ah, The Rake's Progress—No, I was saying that for the ChiCon report. Well, what about File 26? that's twice as good as File 13. But as you can see, none of these titles were acceptable to Hickman, who was doggedly determined to use "Voice of Fandom". After all, he had it already stenciled.

NOT WITH A BANG

Dianetics is dead. I doubt if it was a very spectacular demise. I can see Hubbard and Purcell rising early one morning, chores and then drive quietly down to the Federal Building. Inside they answer the necessary questions, fill out the bankruptcy papers, stare at their shoes, and generally seem embarrassed. Perhaps they solemnly shake hands before leaving the building. No photographers wait outside to greet them, but maybe one very disinterested cub reporter from the local newspaper stops them for a statement. Later it is shunted along the AP news wires, during the slack period when there isn't much important news. Maybe, in some towns, it is pulled from the wire and a paragraph devoted to it in the next edition, maybe not. It isn't that important.

A few people will probably ask, "Why? I thought they were making a lot of money." It wouldn't seem so. The assets were listed at \$400,000 with the liabilities an overwhelming \$212,000. No mention was made of Mexican bank accounts.

L. Ron Hubbard (1950-1952)
May His Bankroll Rest in Peace

THE BIGGER THEY ARE, THE HARDER THEY FALL

I'm disappointed in some fans. In Fanvariety #13 I had a completely ~~obvious~~ hoax about JWC quitting as editor of ASF. In fact it was so obvious that Max didn't want to use it, Venable talked him into it. So what happened? First thing we knew, Fantasy Times was up in the air and demanding a retraction. As if this wasn't bad enough, I got a letter from Chuck Harris in England, who should know better: "I saw your other article about THE CAMPBELL in Fv(?). Is this fact? Who's getting the job? Walt's been beseiging the post office since he heard the news, but I think he's about given up hope now." Then Redd Boggs showed me the first-January F-T. Arthur Jean Cox devoted his whole column in that issue to the hoax. He explained how Rick Sneary brought a copy of FV to a LASFS meeting and created a near riot. I can still visualize the hurried telephone calls to Ackerman. Cox then pointed out the flaws in the article and ended up with: "Either Elsberry is hoaxing or has been hoaxed." I assure you, I have not been hoaxed. The reports continued to flow in; here's one from Bob Silverberg: "Ken Beale...also fell for your gag...at least he mumbled something to that effect at the last QSFL meet."

When fans the calibre of Willis, Harris, Sneary* Beale, Ev Winne, and others fall so hard for a hoax, I begin to wonder as to the average intelligence of fandom as a whole. Not that these fellows are dumb, they just should have known better.

I wonder how a hoax on Vance-Kutter would go over? Probably like a lead zeppelin.

SCIENCE-FICTION ACADEMY AWARDS

The academy award balloting is over, with its numerous surprises, and I've been wondering why no one has bothered with some academy awards for the science-fiction pictures of last year. So, I've come up with my own awards for the s-f movies. Having only seven to choose from, the awards are therefore somewhat limited in scope, and also reflect my own tastes. Take them for what they're worth. The seven movies are: Seven Days to Noon, The Thing, The Day The Earth Stood Still, When Worlds Collide, The Man From Planet X, Five, Lost Continents.

Best Actor: Micheal Rennie ("The Day")

Best Actress: Susan Douglas ("Five")

Best Supporting Actress: None; no supporting actresses.

Best Supporting Actor: Newspaper Man in "The Thing"

Best Movie: "The Day The Earth Stood Still."

Best Photography: "The Day The Earth Stood Still."

Best Musical Score: Leith Stevens for "When Worlds Collide."

Best Direction: Arch Oboler for "Five."

Best Special Effects: "When Worlds Collide" (who am I too quibble.)

Special Award: Margaret Sheridan; just for being herself.

DEPT. OF QUEER CO-INCIDENCES

Lee Hoffman takes a vacation in Cuba. Immediately the government is overthrown. (I suppose Russ Watkins will find some hidden meaning in that heading.)

H. L. GOLD MEMORIAL SECTION

Gold's blowup in the February Galaxy was rather uncalled for, considering the way he had the facts garbled. Prelude to Space was never reviewed by aSF, just mentioned by Miller in his review of another book and there was absolutely no need to mention the publisher. And, The Stars Like Dust did not startle the reviewer, as Mr. Gold raves. Time and Again was the book that Horace was thinking of, and Miller did not seem especially overwrought to me. Perhaps Gold finds this kind of slanderizing amusing--I don't.

I'll bet, for that matter, that Campbell would like to know when he's going to get his whole format back---

Gold also states that he is not "susceptible to 'scientific' fads or cults." However, his newly inaugurated For Your Information comes dangerously close to bridging the gap. It most certainly will replace Mr. Fixit, and eventually, who knows, maybe even Mr. Anthony. Only time will tell.

BRICKS to Bob Tucker (SFNL) for his listing of: "In the March issue of Galaxy, editor HL Gold reveals he has used 32 pen-names, and also quotes his physical description under the heading, FANTASTIC WORLDS. It in some small way compensates for my starting and finishing "The City in the SEA."

And how did that add for the Astounding anthology sneak into the April GALAXY? Gold must be asleep at the switch--or maybe his advertising manager is trying to do him dirt.

BURNING BRIGHT

If the postoffice inspectors happened to look in the fifth issue of Shel Vick's CONFUSION, Vick might find himself in plenty of trouble for sending inflammable substances through the mails. Matches aren't especially dangerous, I suppose, but the postoffice might get a little burned up about the whole thing.

DID I DREAM IT?

Someplace, sometime, the idea came into my head that Rena M. Vale (Shasta's "Beyond These Walls" was a pen-name for Jean Cocteau. Can anyone tell me where I got this fantastic idea? Or am I going completely batty?

MORTITURI TE SALUTAMUS

R. J. Banks still goes blissfully ahead with plans for his Promag Parade, a review of every promag ever published. He still needs someone to sit down and read every issue of Amz, FA, SFO, OW and several other so-called s-f magazines. I wonder if anyone thought, who will want to stand up and admit that he read that many Amazings? Fans aren't that crazy. This is a job for the NFFF, with their unlimited resources of neofans just waiting for someone to write and give them a job like this. With the whole of the NFFF behind this project it could be completed in jig time. Say by 1984.

THE END IS

When I was over at Bogg's he mentioned to me that Don Wollheim had left Avon and that the Avon titles of fantasy and sex had folded. My eyes are dry and I feel fine, but if some one offers Wollheim a job I'll be the first to drag out a crying towel. It's the law of averages, I suppose, two mags fold and two others spring up (the del Rey 'things') to take their places. But I couldn't think of two more worthy mags to fold than those Avon abortions. I hope Wollheim is unemployed for a long, long time--in the s-f field, that is. I don't want the poor guy to starve. Even dumb animals must eat.

I am also waiting for Bogg's to break the news about Auggie Derleth. What a sneaky way to get to read "The Outsiders."

SIGHTS FOR SORE-EYES

Ted Cogswell sold a script to "Tales of Tomorrow" a couple of months ago and it has undoubtedly been performed by now. "ToT" is running on a very close schedule, and seems to having trouble in getting hold of stories. According to Ted, "ToT" is even in the market for ideas. His story was a perfect TV script, three characters and one set. The TV programs do have to watch that budget carefully. Payment is about the same as if you sold it to a magazine, about \$100.

There is also a possibility that this will be put on at the ChiCon. Ginnie Sarri asked Ted for a script, and he sent her that one just before he sold it. However, Scoot-Meredith didn't think there would be any trouble in producing it if they wanted to. And that also reminds me that Hal Shapiro mentioned something about a s-f ballet at the ChiCon, when he was up here last month. He didn't seem to know too many of the facts but he thought it was a combination of Beethoven and Stravinsky. As much as I like Stravinsky, I don't think I'd like this.

Ballet is a very delicate art. Dancers spend years practicing before they become even mediocre. And the ChiCon committee undoubtedly plans to throw a group of amateurs before us. Well, after having seen Sadler's Wells and the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo perform, I don't think I'd care to see a fine form of entertainment prostituted.

I can see it now. A corny set, even cornier costumes. Bloch, Korshack, Eshback, and Evans come on as the premier danseurs. They do a few arabesques and leap into the wings. On comes the corps de ballet, led by Bob Johnson, Ed Wood and Bob Tucker dressed to represent spaceships. They settle slowly to the surface of the Moon set and Bloch, Korshack, Eshback, and Evans come on stage as the crew members. They take possession of the Moon in the name of The Little Men's Elves, Gnome's, Science-Fiction, Chowder and Marching Society. About this time the archfiend, Ted Ritzky, dressed as an engram sneaks onto the scene and tries to confound the intrepid spacemen.

But the end is not yet. Three beautiful selenites---Pat and Bea Mahaffy, and Judy May---dance spritely on stage clad in scanty costumes. They are the prima ballerinas. The whole ballet ends up in a smash finish with the three girls scaring off the engram, and falling in love with Bloch, Korshack, and Eshback. With the help of the corps de ballet they fly back to earth, leaving Evans to watch their claim on the Moon. As it ends we see Evans, a pitiful figure of a man, slumped over the edge of a crater, crying softly.

Music by Stravinsky, Book by Bradbury, Choreography by Elsberry.

BAGATELLES

Dedication heard on a west coast disc jockey program: "Charles Burbee wants us to play for the LASFS, 'When You Say I Beg Your Pardon, Then I'll Come Back to You'... a little later on Russ Watkins requested 'I Get a Kick Out of You' for F.T. Laney... according to that excellent little zine NIRVANA, Duggie Fisher is giving up fandom and will enter a monastery this summer. Sounds like monkey business to me... Rumor has it that Walt Willis got his sixth straight rejection slip from Bulmer, too. Willis hasn't given up yet, though, and promises that he'll make NIRVANA#9, or know the reason why. Bulmer is silent about the whole thing, but Chuck Harris mentioned that he told Willis to submit again, "When you learn how to write"... I suppose HL Gold canceled his subscription to TIME after they polished off THE GALAXY READER, likening modern s-f to Defoe... if anyone can read his copy of Current Science Fiction, I'd appreciate them telling me what its all about... looks like Julian Chain is Judy May, and of course Animadexter Powell is old P. Anderson, in the flesh... even better news from Briggs, besides the fact he's been discharged from the army, is that he won't revive ZAP... what if Lemuel Craig wasn't Vernon McCain?... Arch Obler making "The Twonky" from the Kuttner story... 'Circus of Dr. Lao' now on Broadway... Burt Lancaster looking for s-f movie that he can produce and star in... Cogswell, Anderson, and Dickson doing 13 radio scripts for NBC, a possible summer replacement series... de Sica's 'Miracle in Milan' is one of those must movies... Hal Shapiro organizing a club for bachelor fans...

--rich elsberry



REPEAT PERFORMANCE

THE AIRCONDITION FANZINE COLUMN

Once upon her time when fans were fans and men were just plain were, fandom was a just a trugg-a-lugging it along. It was late fall of 1944 and fandom was plopping out all over.

Le Ackerman started the FANCYCLOPEDIA in early August with the help of the LASFS. The Fancyclopedia was 100 pages long ways (one lane of course, but there wasn't much traffice anyweigh.) It solded for \$1.00. Copies are now a collector's item, (and you know how collectors are, specially after five.) It was all finished up and mailed around Septemer 22.

Avon was publishing "DWELLERS IN THE MIRAGE", and "FACE IN THE ABYSS" (not the sequel to FACE ON THE BAR ROOM FLOOR). These were two couple of some of the best books I never did read. Why, I spent two (1-2) hours avoiding reading them, (It wasn't realy to hard since I didn't have a copy of either book).

Ronald Clyne was doing some (about three table-spoons full) illustrating at the time, one being a new edition of "DWELLER ON TWO-PLANETS". Bok was allso up and coming, (Remember what they use to say, "There goes Bok, isn't he up and coming.") He had an exhibit-A of 40 paintings in a New York gallery. (I bet is was crowded with all them cooks running in and out of there).

On or along side September, Ken Kruger held a Buffalocon, (those things are heavy too, not that I ever had to hold one for long). Some of the sights taken in were poker, book hunting, poker, Niagra Falls, poker, and a small conference followed by a poker game. The Slan Shacker were there, with a dash of Damon Knight. He was then editor of, one of fandom best fanzines, SNIDE. He later edited a prozine, (but don't hold this against him, cause it may be hot) titled WORLDS BEYOND. WORLDS BEYOND ran some good fiction and postage stamp illustrations, (which only goes to prove, "One man's postage stamp may be another man's prozine illustration.)

PILGRIMS THROUGH SPACE AND TIME landed in late November.

Fandom's top fanzine of the time was ALCOYTE. Francis Laney edited this with the help of Samuel D. Russel. ALCOLYTE was published quarterly and actualy payed for its self in subscriptions, (Did you ever hear of such a thing...) It was devoted to fantasy (and never a cuter pair did you see anywhere) with a lot of material by and about Lovecraft. I don't think you could find a more serious fanzine if you tried, and some have tired. It did have it moment tho, and one of them was in the last issue. It was a take off on some of the advertising at the time, put together by Robert Bloch. Here's the ad...

"FAN DEALER ARE SPRINGING UP RIGHT AND LEFT, IT SEEMS. THE LATEST IS ROBERT BLOCH.

For the benefit of readers and lover of fantasy, I advertise the following Sensational Bargain Offers:

ODYSSEY - Homer, famous Greek fantasy author.

FIRST EDITION of Modern Library, cond. fair.....\$12.00

ILIAD - Homer sequel. cond. fair (no cover)..... 8.00

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHURS COURT - Twain

Rare book (pub. before 1900)..... 27.00

WIZARD OF OZ - Baum - story of wizard, witches, and tin robot.
 illustrated. cond. ??? \$30.00
 THE BIBLE - rare AUTOGRAPHED EDITION 75.00
 RAGGERDY ANN - weird tale of animated rag dolls
 illustrated in color - cond. poor 25.00
 MOTHER GOOSE - Strange adventures of Little Miss Muffet and Giant Spider, etc.... 33.00
 GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES - amazing stories of giants, orges, etc 15.00
 AESOP'S FABLES - rare 188th edition - fantastic yarns of talking animals 60.00
 GYPSY ROSE LEE'S DREAM BOOK - occult lore, palmistry, fortune telling, etc 45.00

These are just a few of the many startling bargains available in my ~~sucker~~ fan list. Also bound copies of National Geographic Magazine, Boy's Life, etc. As an extra inducement, the first 100 fans buying merchandise to the amount of \$50.00 and over will receive FREE a cover from either ASTOUNDING, WEIRD TALES, or AMAZING STORIES. I personally rip off the covers from the magazines myself.

EXTRA! BACK ISSUES of the FT. MCARTHUR camp newspaper, at \$25.00 a throw!!!! While they last!!!
 Hurry!!!

If I get any offers on this stuff, I am going to prepare a little deal whereby those who are interested in life on other planets can buy MARS candy bars at \$1.00 apiece.

I guess fandom has always had book-dealing trouble. ACOLYTE nearly always ran a printed cover. The magazine itself ran 14 issues which is a close second, but still last years mink coat. One of the best cover was on the last issue and by a new fan, at that time, called William Rotsler.

That enough history today, children, put your books away and go throw rocks at the second-graders.
 Merry Christmas to you'll

Ever lovin yers

Max Keasler...

New Members

Melvin Kinder 143 Wabash St. San Bernardino, Calif.
 A/2c James B. Hardin AF 14404 226 1906 - 3 AACS DET. Mt. Home AFB, Idaho
 Andrew Harris Racine, Ohio
 Roy Lavender Box 132 Delaware, Ohio
 Dee Dee Lavender Box 132 Delaware, Ohio
 Dal Young 530 W. Washington St. Napoleon, Ohio
 Bill Redman Front St. Statesville, N.C.
 Lawson Sharpe Hotel Holgate Holgate, Ohio
 Alice Douglas 5037 Maplewood Detroit 4, Mich.
 A/2c John Shay 790th AC/W Squadron Kirksville, Mo.
 P.H. Economou P.O. Box 456 Coconut Grove Sta. Miami 33, Fla.
 Arnold Rosen 1015 Boynton Ave. Bronx 72, N.Y.
 Stephen F. Eure Rt. #5 Box 159 Greensboro, N.C.
 John Lewis Canterbury Apt. 1943 Chaucer Reading, Cincinnati, Ohio
 Wally Juntunen 790th AC/W Squadron, Kirksville, Mo.
 Roger Dard 232 James St. Perth, Western Australia, Australia
 Vic Waldrop, Jr. 212 West Ave. Cartersville, Ga.
 Sylvia Wilson HiHo Rancho Cafe Rt. #1 Barstow, Calif.
 John L. Magnus, Jr. 9612 Second Ave. Silver Spring, Md.
 Robert R. Wheeler 75 Canal St. Port Jervis, N.Y.
 Sandy McClain 3651 Beilecrest, Hyde Park, Cincinnati, Ohio

ASSUMPTION UNJUSTIFIED

By RICH ELSBERRY



"The spaceship of the Richardson Foundation reached Neptune on August 19, 2129. . . after a time they landed on Triton, largest and first discovered of the five moons. Triton proved to be an airless body roughly three thousand miles in diameter. The expedition was there three days to study the retrograde motion of the moon and to make photographs of the primary. . ."

"History of the Outer Planets," Poul Gray,

Luna City, 3 cr.

"M' lar--" The voice reverberated from wall to wall in the small room. "Get up off your dead tentacles and come up here on the bridge," K'gar's voice roared into the sun room.

Slowly M'lar stirred himself. Effortlessly he reached over and flicked off the switch, so as not to be temporarily blinded by the too quickly opening of his eyes in the glare produced by the tremendous sun lamp sunk in the ceiling. Instantly, he could feel the pressure of the intense light removed from his eye lids. Then slowly, he worked his massive body to the edge of the soft couch he was lying on and sat up.

M'lar was in no hurry to come to the bridge. He knew whatever it was that K'gar wanted he would wait until he got there. M'lar went slowly down the corridor on his two short, squat legs, wavering from side to side because of huge bulk.

He finally wandered onto the bridge arrayed in a brilliant orange suit. It would be hard, though, to imagine a suit on a being like M'lar. He was a Rigelian--squat and massive, with thirteen tentacles sprouting from the most unlikely parts of his anatomy. His three eye stalks flittered about, reacquainting themselves with the control room after the long period in the solar energy room.

"It's about time," said K'gar looking annoyedly at M'lar's orange garb. Having little taste for colors himself he wore a drab brown tunic, which fit him like a tent, but offered perfect and unhindered movement of his tentacles. "We're entering a planetary system," he finished.

"Oh." Then, politely, "Isn't it about time for you to replenish yourself?"

"No, I still have two weeks or more before I'd collapse." Besides, you could always revive me anyway. There's no hurry. And I'm certainly not going in there when we're entering a planetary system. You'd probably forget to do half the things this scout ship is supposed to."

"Oh, I don't know," was M'lar's sarcastic reply as he wandered over to inspect the log. "There are really only two things we have to do. It would be pretty hard to forget those," he said as he kept one eye on K'gar and the other two on the log.

"Then what are they?" K'gar flashed back unexpectedly.

M'lar hesitated a moment, then began: "Why, to locate a habitable planet, and to watch for information on possible alien cultures."

"You're rather prone to forget that last part."

"Why not? We haven't found any yet, and we have to check. In a galaxy the size of this one, everything is possible."

K'gar sent the ship into an orbit to circle the system's small sun. "I've looked this system over pretty well. There are ten major planets and several large-sized moons. However, only the inner planet looks habitable. We'll pick it up on the other side of the sun."

THE INNER PLANET

M'lar and K'gar trudged slowly across the harsh inner planet landscape, equipment slung over their backs. From the close proximity of the planet the brilliant sun hung close to the horizon. The barren earth was crisscrossed with great fissures.

"Another failure."

"Well, what do you expect of a G-type sun anyway?" said M'lar.

"Not much I guess. The surface temperature is only slightly above 750 degrees at its greatest. That just won't do. Besides that, this is just a midget planet. And when only half the gets sunlight, that just doesn't make for a large habitable area. Of course, the fact that the planet always keeps one face to the sun keeps the temperature high on that side but the part in darkness must be down near zero. As for the atmosphere--most of it seems to be frozen in the dark side." He sighed, "I guess there are some disadvantages in coming from the inner planets of a blue-white super giant."

"Some disadvantages he says. Why the planets of this system don't even have sane atmospheres. Why we haven't come across more than two hydrogen sulphide atmospheres yet. They must be rather unique."

"Yes," K'gar sadly agreed. "The second planet, of course, isn't any good to us either. All water, and those cloud layers cut out most of the sunlight."

"And the third," chimed in M'lar. "What a combination. There isn't much sense in visiting it. I checked it with our survey instruments and they show that the surface is nearly three-fourths water. And what atmosphere--mainly oxygen and nitrogen. How could anything evolve in an atmosphere like that?" He shuddered.

"I'm sure I don't know. The rest of the planets are too frozen over too, to consider holding life. I checked the outer ones with the vacuum thermocouple on our telescope and most of them are close to absolute. I'm afraid this will have to be another unsatisfactory report."

They walked in silence for a time. The going was slow even the slight gravity. Finally they were back at the STAR CLUSTER. M'lar shrugged the equipment down off his shoulders and shoved it into the airlock. They followed. As they waited for the pressure to equalize K'gar made a mental note to recommend larger airlocks in his report. When the inner door opened they shed their space armor and put the survey equipment away, then moved to the bridge. M'lar wandered to the control board and began to set up a course for the next system to check.

"Hey, what do you think you're doing?"

"Huh." M'lar turned and looked quizzically at K'gar.

"You're forgetting a few things. We've still got to look over this system. Who knows, perhaps an expedition similar to this one passed through here once. We should at least make an attempt at fulfilling the government's orders. Kiano knows they're few enough. I feel like you do--that the system is uninhabited. But that doesn't stop us from giving it a look-over."

"Just where do we look?"

"Our only hope is that if another expedition has passed through here they've left a marker of sorts somewhere, like we did on this planet. That, of course, is providing that there are other races capable of interstellar travel. And providing we can guess where they would put such a beacon."

"Well, the system doesn't have too many important features. The planet we are on now would be one place such as an expedition would stop. The only other places I can think of would be the rings of the sixth planet and that retrograde moon of the eighth planet. Those seem to be the most likely places to have been investigated. They certainly are distinguishable in a solar system that looks much like any other."

"Well, I think we'd better be moving then. Those rings will take a lot of time to cover from what I've glimpsed of them." He waved a tentacle at M'lar.

"I still think we're wasting out time, but you're the director."

They blasted off.

DISCOVERY

The huge shadowy disk of the eighth planet loomed up in front of them.

"Wild Goose chase," murmured M'lar.

"Possibly," K'gar admitted. "The sixth planet certainly offered nothing. The three rings are made up of space debris and there was no solid place I could see where a ship could land easily or where a marker had been set up. A ring system like that must have been caused by several of the larger moons getting too close to the planet and being broken up by its tremendous gravitational attraction."

"I went to space academy too," said M'lar looking vaguely annoyed at being lectured. He began decelerating as the moon grew larger in the visiscreen.

"We'll give it the once over lightly."

"It's almost as large as some of the planets of this system --that won't be easy to do."

The STAR CLUSTER cruised low over the moon. K'gar watched the visiscreen intently.

The geiger counter chattered abruptly.

Residual radioactivity from the landing of a spaceship could cause that, K'gar thought. He saw nothing. "Make that run again, M'lar. And slow this crate down a bit-- it would be too easy to miss a beacon."

Annoyedly, M'lar wheeled the small ship around in a fifty-mile arc and cut two jets.

"Down there--see-- That's a rocket swath as sure as I'm standing here," K'gar shouted amid the chattering of the geiger counter. "This could be what we've been watching for. Set her down--"

K'gar was down at the airlock when M'lar finally set the STAR CLUSTER down near the scorched earth. He quickly slipped into his bulky space armor and stepped in to the airlock. Soon he was shuffling across the frozen ground of the airless moon. K'gar had his heaters turned on full force but still it was freezing cold inside the suit. The temperature of the moon could not get much lower, K'gar decided. His helmet light was good only for short distances and the cold blackness of space seemed to lap around the edges, as if it were anxious to encroach on the weak beam. The rocky terrain made his progress necessarily slow.

The ship's powerful searchlights come on-lighting the moonscape with a harsh brilliance.

"Can you see anything?" M'lar's voice crackled into his helmet.

"No not yet. I'm not exactly sure what I should look for."

"I'm coming out."

"No--"

"Why not?" M'lar replied quickly and angrily.

"If there is anything here one of us will be able to find it. And I don't want to leave the ship unmanned in alien territory. That's is an order."

"You didn't think much about that on the inner planet," he raged. "We both left the ship there. You just want the glory of discovering something for yourself--"

"No," K'gar said evenly. "On the inner planet I thought it would be perfectly all right. We knew nothing of alien races-then. I'll admit I did not think we would ever come across one. Now the situation has changed radically. We must be careful. The aliens could be close by-and I don't want the ship unmanned if they should return. Besides, we don't know if there is anything here to discover--"

K'gar walked on methodically. His eyes caught a gleam reflected from the STAR CLUSTER'S searchlights as he crossed over the edge of the burnt earth. The sun, at this distance, was of no help and the planet did not reflect much light. It hung in the sky overhead, a lighter darkness against the intense blackness of space.

K'gar moved in the direction from which he had seen the flash of light. "I've found something," he said hesitantly into his helmet mike.

Yes, it was the marker he'd been looking for. A pile of silvery objects against the bleak, blackness of the moon's crust. Cautiously he looked them over. Then, deciding it was not a booby trap, he wrapped his sheathed tentacles around the pile, carefully so as not to miss any. When he was certain he had a firm grasp on them he headed back toward the illuminated scoutship.

K'gar laid his burden down beside the ship. Clutching one of the cylindrical objects in a tentacle he climbed into the airlock. He could see M'lar watching him through the transparent plastic of the inner airlock door. Carefully he set the artifact down in a far corner of the airlock. Then he pushed the button that would close the outer door and let the ship's atmosphere in.

He stood close by the inner door, watching it. He could see out of the corner of one eye that M'lar was anxious to open the door and see the cylinder first.

As the first faint wisps of tenuous atmosphere entered the lock, he watched the object carefully. His three eyes extended on their stalks to give him optimum vision of the object. Nothing seemed to happen. Soon more air was coming in. Now he saw a change. The outside of the object suddenly turned dark brown-then with a bright flare it seemed to collapse into a thousand pieces on the airlock floor. The cylinder now presented a dull metallic surface, where before it had been partly covered. K'gar decided it had had some flimsy outer covering.

When it began to melt K'gar futilely punched the button to evacuate the lock but it was too late. By the time the lock was again airless the artifact had melted down into a small puddle. Now it was solidified.

K'gar kicked it outside the lock and motioned for M'lar to get a talkie. Soon M'lar's voice broke into the still quiet of his helmet: "Some display. What do we do next?"

"I'm afraid we can't bring the rest of them into our atmosphere, if that's what happens to them. Evacuate the store room on this side of the ship and open the port. I'll bring the cylinders around the side of the ship and put them in the port. At least we'll be able to bring them back that way." Now move--"

BASIC MISASSUMPTION

K'gar whistled as he heard the sudden sigh of air when the inner door of the make-shift airlock was opened to admit M'lar. "The ship can take care of itself," he said as a way of explanation. "Besides I wanted to see what you're doing in here."

"Not very much I'm afraid," admitted K'gar. "There is little we can do with the ship's limited equipment."

"Have you found out what type of metal it is?--or the purpose of the cylinders?"

"Yes and no. The metal is some sort of alloy. Neither of the metals in the cylinders are found on Feeth because they melt and exaporate at that temperature. However, several expeditions have found them on other worlds." He paused, then added, "Worlds that were cold, and sometimes airless."

"Of course, there are plenty of other problems the scientists can work on. The markings, undoubtedly writing of some sort, will have to be deciphered. The question of the cylinders has been so ruthlessly ripped open and the purpose of the cylinders. I admit those last two have baffled me."

"Mightn't they be specimen containers, or something similar?"

"Yes, I've seriously considered that. And the vegetable matter could be labels identifying what is inside. But why would they always be ripped open at one end. That I can't understand."

"Perhaps the specimens escaped, or maybe the containers were opened after being sealed."

"Well, to be frank, I don't think that they were for specimens. They're too small for that. And besides, why were they left in a small pyramid like that? You would think they would use something more important as a beacon. Despite all this, I still think they were left there as a marker."

"However, if you're right and they were specimen containers, it is more likely that they were opened for some reason we don't know. It seems to me that they were all opened from the outside. That sort of kills your theory of escaping specimens."

"I guess you're right. Perhaps though, the aliens decided to leave a marker and had nothing expendable--so they left these," he gestured toward the containers sitting upright on the bench, "whatever they are."

"You might be right. But can you imagine what these beings must look like if they come from a planet on which this metal is used freely. It must be nearly all ice, probably airless. I can't conceive of such a being."

M'lar couldn't either.

HOMEWARD BOUND

M'lar, K'gar stood staring into the blackness of the Coal Sack. The dark nebula where only a few points of light stare unwinkingly out of velvet blackneww. The Coal Sack--that section of space composed of dead burned-out husks of suns that can only be detected by a spaceships precisely accurate energy-radar screens.

"Yes."

"I've been thinking about what you said earlier. You know, about the aliens leaving that marker."

"Yes," again.

"I think that perhaps the symbols on those containers were meant to mean something to us. I don't think they were put on there unintentionally. I noted that there were three or four different words on several of the labels, but there was one that was predominant. It could be that the labels on these containers give the name of the various races of the planet--or the planets of their system."

"I remember your inspecting the containers. The vegetable matter, or labels, was detachable. It is not likely, but it could be that they were put on for that reason."

"Yes, now I see it-- That's why the containers were all ruined. They were of no value to the aliens and could tell us nothing as they were. But the labels--that is another matter. We might not have found them had they been lying on the ground. But attached to the metal cylinders--and piled up, we'd be almost sure to find them."

Slowly K'gar quieted down. Then he moved to a table and picked up some metal writing plates. "I think I know the name of the aliens, or, at least the name of their planet. It was the one most used on the containers."

"Well, what do you think it is?"

"I can't pronounce it, but I'll write it out for you."

Slowly the grouping of characters grew larger. When K'gar was finished he stared uncomprehendingly at the alien word that he had placed there:

PORKANDBEANS

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!!!!!!!

TLMA, in its endeavor to provide and promote science-fiction and fantasy, is issuing a 60,000 word novel by Basil Wells. "SONS OF THRANE" is one swell book, written by a man not only familiar to you from these pages, but from his two published books and approx. 100 short stories and novelets which have appeared in Planet Stories, Super Science Stories, Stirring Science Stories and many other magazines. Prepublication price of this fine novel is only \$1.00, the price will advance to \$1.50 after publication so send your dollar in NOW!!!!

Send \$1.00 to Lynn A. Mickman 239 East Broad Mamlit Apts. Statesville, North Carolina asking us to reserve a first edition for you.

The next issue

The next issue of TLMA will carry a history of the planet THRANE, the covers will be by that up and coming fan artist, Richard Bergeron.

If there is a sheet in your issue of this magazine stating that your membership has expired, you will not be sent the next issue unless your dues of \$1.00 has been sent in---so get those dues in, next issue will be a mighty fine one you won't want to miss.

Dear Lynn,

On to TLMA #4. A very nice cover again. I think I'll frame it. The little guy in the middle, between the creep with the horns, and the dragon, looks vaguely familiar, can't remember where I've seen him though. No such trouble with the one near the top, a spiting image of my Spanish teacher. The stories were good, especially "Only A Mother". And I liked "Star Song." Does Loomis write that way on purpose, or does he cut words out of a newspaper and paste them together haphazardly? His article was interesting even though I have no idea what it was about. Likewise for his letter. Since there is nothing I disagree with violently, in this issue, I leave and crawl back to my Toadstool.

Sincerely,
David Papayanopulos
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Hickman;

I received my sample copy of TLMA this morning, and although it did not meet my expectations, I'm enclosing another quarter to take another look. Maybe I'll like the August issue better than June. I honestly hope so because I've been looking forward to becoming a Little Monster. Everyone is entitled to an off issue now and then and perhaps this was yours--? To be specific, your art work and typography are of the best-- your make up very attractive and your wife a honey--- Be happy and may your union be blessed with a multitude of little m's. I liked the Banister article, poetry, letters and fan history and mildly enjoyed the rest. Except for the fiction-- It was outrageous-- Why-- Oh why, will amateurs persist in being so doggoned cosmic? Why do they attempt a cathedral mural before they can draw a cartoon? After all, life is People. All-- and I do mean All great literature is people-- the greatest seller of all time, the Bible, teems with people. But your writers, every last one (in this June issue at least) feel that people are too insignificant for their talents. Only the Sun, the Earth and God Himself are worthy of their attention--Of course, it is much easier to sit down and allow a stream of subjective abstractions to pour forth, than it is to painstakingly conceive, plot and execute a story in which human beings (or slans if you wish) come to life -- if only briefly with a flicker. No reader would dare attempt to "identify" himself with the Supreme Being, therefore the labor of characterization and creating the illusion of reality is avoided. And there is always the hope that the reader, ~~even by the time he reads the end of the story, will think of the writer as a person and not as a god~~, therefore, it must be great tho it bores me to death". There's hope for these writers. Many great writers and most lesser ones have suffered through the same outpourings of blather. Then, when they drag their consciousness back from infinity -- or out from their inner egos -- to focus on the stuff of life, people and emotions .. then their work begins to live, arouse and excite. Or could it be that I am too circumscribed in my thinking to grasp or appreciate True Significance?? If this sees print I'm sure all the Little Monsters will no doubt say "Economou is a BIG MONSTER -nyaa" But best wishes anyway--

In all sincerity,

P. H. Economou
Miami, Fla.

Greetings:

Cover: Liked it, especially the caption. Also like the slip sheet idea on contents. Probaly just 'cause its a novelty, Also liked were the 3 fiction pieces. I usually skip over fan fiction, but, surprisingly, I find that most all in TLMA are of excellent quality. Thud 'N' Blunder: no comment. Repeat Performance: Have long waited for Moskowitz to do a sequel on THE IMMORTAL STORM. Science Shorts: Enjoyable, as usual. The Battell Loomis thing was also enjoyable. 'Tis this sort of thing which makes TLMA so good. Didn't understand the Patti Sharpe poem. Glad to see my comments on Macafferty make print. But must take issue with Janie Lamb. She's a wonderful girl, but we see these things differently. By far the best write up on Banister I have yet seen.

See ya in Chicago,

Hal Shapiro
Kirksville, Mo.



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