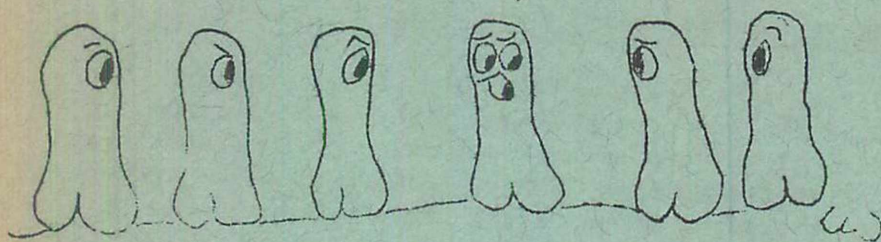
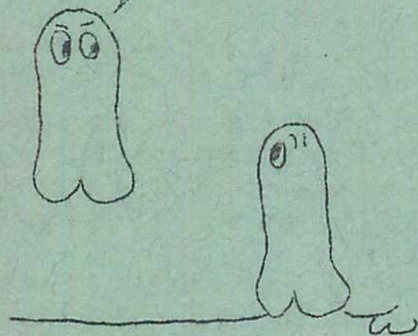


WHY IS EVERYBODY
STARING AT ME?



dup

I JUST DON'T BELIEVE
IN GRAVITY, THAT'S ALL!



TACTUM

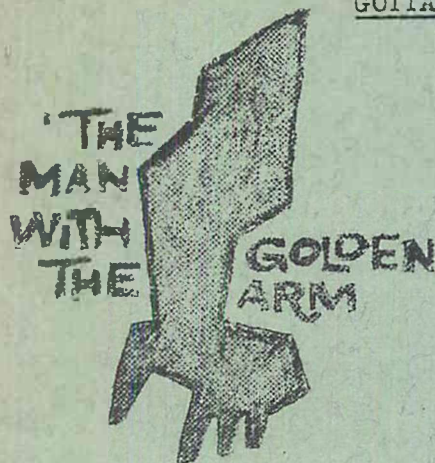
#7

I AM HERE! THE
CONVENTION CAN
START NOW.



THE SILENT ONE SPEAKS

GOTTA KICK THE MONKEY, MAN...GOTTA KICK THE MONKEY...



As you might well know by this time, I thought I'd say a few words on the 'Man With The Golden Arm.' I think it was one of the best films of 1955 and liked it much better than 'Marty.' Frank Sinatra might have had an Academy Award if the picture had had the seal of the industry's approval.

I think that the director and producer, if I'm not mistaken, Otto Preminger deserves a lot of credit for the impact of the film. Also real crazy type soundtrack courtesy of Shorty Rogers helped to make the whole show a moving experience.

I've been meaning to read the book, but haven't got around to it yet. Maybe I will one of these days.

I SAW YOU CRYING IN THE CHAPEL

In a couple of periodicals recently I've seen stories of the weddings of two fans, Lee Hoffman and Harlan Ellison. (No, Orville, of course they didn't marry each other) I also saw in Dave Rike's letter somewhere that there might be a possibility of a third wedding concerning a member of fandom. (And my fandom, at that.) Anyway, about the middle of January I received an announcement that Mary Janice Sadler and David Penney were married on December 28, 1955. I'm not sure of his name or the date, but Sadler is married.

Her fanzine SLANDER had just reached its second issue when she left fandom. I really think that she would have had the South's leading fanzine if she had continued publishing. An article by Harlan Ellison is reprinted in this issue. It came from SLANDER #2.

TACITUM HAS NOT FOLDED

It appears that this issue will be out a long time after the date promised, February 14. Matter of fact it is April 11 today. Even now I don't know when the issue will be finished. Anyhow, it is important to know that I won't be in New Orleans during the summer. So I would appreciate it if all mail would be sent to Dallas after May 5th, otherwise I probably won't get it. If you have already lost my Dallas address, it appears below.

1415 South MARSALIS Ave., Dallas 16, TEXAS

I hope you haven't forgotten my name.

Before I forget, I do have somewhat of an excuse for getting T#7 out late. I've been very busy in the last few months. I imagine I should use my time better, but I didn't. I've typed so many English assignments that I couldn't bear to sit and type stencils on a weekend.

I'D EVEN SEND HIM A GOLD DOORKNOB..... -- Mike May

I have a few fanzines before me, some many months old, but I'd like to review them, so I reckon I will.

FRONTIER #6, Dale R. Smith, 3001 Kyle Ave., Minneapolis 22, Minn. 6/\$3.00, or trade.

This February '56 issue a a beautiful cover showing some thought by Dale. Apparently he wrote to the Union Carbide and Carbon Corporation and received a number of copies of a picture used in the company's advertisements. Or else he got the plate. Anyway, it's a nice cover. This issue has a number of fine articles, but also a number of articles not worth reading because they resemble Sunday supplements too closely. This fanzine might be considered sercon by some and the aim of the Society for the Advancement of Space Travel might be fuggedhead, but it is enjoyable..

VOID #5, Greg Benford, %Lt. Col. James A. Benford, Hq. 594th F. A. Bn., APO 169, N.Y. or 5D Chapel Rd., Giesson/Lahn, Germany. 10¢ or 3/25¢ -- 40 pf. or 3/1DM

The bheer in Germany has evidently encouraged Greg and his brother Jim to publish VOID quite frequently. Maybe because of frequency or maybe because of improvement, I find I liked their fmz more and more. (Most probably because my name's in it, but that's besides the point.) I would wish more illos and more striking or more pleasing layout in the zine, but it is quite well done anyway. There is an interesting letter column, fanzine reviews and articles. Julian Parr goes over Gerfandom very nicely. It is also revealed that the "chola bit" which worried me so was only a sort of a hoax.

You know, now and then, there comes upon me a feeling of nothingness which inspires me to be very happy doing nothing. Such a feeling has come upon me now. I have nothing which needs doing more than these stencils need typing; but, somehow, I don't feel the urge to comment on fanzines at the moment. In the letter column this time, in TAC's (I've finished with VOID at the moment) there is a letter from Ron Ellick mentioning a rather foul deed which is blamed on George Wetzel. If the charges are tru and I'm virtually convinced that they are, it seems to me that something should be done about/ to him... Famous phrase there, something should be done about..., Usually there is nothing done, but anyway perhaps we, the united fans of America, could somehow take appropriate measures against Wetzel. Wetzel seems to rejoice in long distance name-calling, I've noticed several articles of his against Harlan Ellison and Dave Mason. He cannot be sued but maybe a do it yourself machine gun kit could be sent to the right person with the intended results forthcoming.

OBLIQUE, Cliff Gould, 1559 Cable St., San Diego 7, California, U.S.A.

We're back to reviewing again, with Ob #6 the victim. This is somewhat of an annish, so Cliff, in the editorial, reviews his first year in fandom. Cliff has somehow continually managed to garner material from BNF's and raised his mag to the top of the heap in some people's eyes. Cliff's repro is usually very fine. I won't say that #6 is extremely bad because I imagine/hope everyone didn't receive a copy in such condition as mine was. My copy is generally lousy throughout. All I could read was the editorial and the page with a couple of well-chosen letters on it. Several of the pages are not in order. Of course, I'm very happy and fully appreciate how lucky I am to be on your mailing list, Cliff; but, I wish you would send me legible copies of your zine....so much the better to read and all that...even on white paper... I always take great care to pick out a special copy of TACITUM for you, Cliff.

I hope

most of you will forgive the slight personalism I slipped into.

The next fanzine is

only about four months old if I'm not mistaken.

////////////////////////////////////
This is, if you haven't guessed by now, TACITUM, the Silent One, very silent for the last few months, published by Benny Sodek who is now at 1415 S. Marsalis in Big D little a double l as in TEXAS. This issue is number 7 and is coming out sometimes in the month of June 1956. TAC sells for only 10¢ or 3 for 25¢.

The front cover is by Charles Wells through the courtesy of Jan Sadler. The back cover is by DEA, and needless to say, looks much like last issue's cover. Interior illustrations are by Larry Bourne, DEA, Plato Jones, Martin Jukovsky, and William Rotsler.

The article, 'Remembrances of Idiocy', is reprinted from SLANDER #2. 'Strenght' is misspelled in the same way as I usually misspell it. Linos are variously gathered; some reprinted, others from Jan Sadler's file.

Believe it or not, the next issue should be out in a month. Small illos are desperately needed.

////////////////////////////////////
MORE FANZINES

ECLIPSE (#15) Ray Thompson, 410 S. 4th St., Norfolk, Nebraska. 10¢ or 6/50¢

This particular issue isn't as good as the more recent ones preceding it. The mag is very enjoyable mostly because Ray's editorial and other writings are interesting. I like they way he rambles(except in Eclipse Ray's ramblings are much more coherent than mine). Terry Carr contributes a cute piece of fannish fiction which reminds me of a derogation. Of course, lately, everything reminds of derogations. I've got derogations coming out of my ears. A fairly good selection of letters rounds out the issue.

,,,,,commas,,,,,to,,,,,be,,,,,put,,,,,in,,,,,to,,,,,please,,
,,,,,the,,,,,most,,,,,grammatical,,,,,of,,,,,tastes,,,,,

SIDEREAL(No. 3) Eric Jones, 44, Barbridge Road, Hesters Way, Cheltenham, Glos. ENG.

Eric charges only 15¢ or 1/- for Sidereal. A very good buy. In the many pages of this issue have been crammed many, many good features. All the regular features of any fanzine are here and some good cartoons, too. I can't find much to say about this 'cause there is so much to chose from. A little review horribly recalls the fact to me that O.Giosher is still trying to huckster off copies of CRIFANAC on poor unsuspecting neofen. Please don't buy any, nobody. Get SIDEREAL though, you'll enjoy it. Now , Cliff, please don't say this is a bad review...I know it is...

INSIDE and Science Fiction Advertiser(no. 49) Ron Smith, 611 J. 114th St. N.Y.C. 25¢ per or 5/1¢.

This is the tenth anniversery of Fantasy Advertiser which started the long line now represented by INSIDE. I'm not familar with any other members of the combo except Inside but from the early issues I've seen the mag has come to be a publication that can only be called semi-professional. There is a history of the first ten years and an index of material published. Other material in this issue includes the second part of an article on H.P. Lovecraft by Lin Carter, also included is an article by Robert Bloch written in March 1954 discussing the crash of the SF boom. His explanation, neatly put in the title 'Worst Foot Forward', is easy to take. Too much Buck Rogers glutted the market. As I've said before, INSIDE is easily the best amateur publication around.

(?) (Apparently a first issue) Jerry Millett, 1446 Garden St., Park Ridge, Ill.

This is an effort by a science fiction club to express their dedication to the folk literature of the machine age. Of course, as might be expected, it is loaded with fiction. Most, all but one, of the stories are lousy. The one good one, "Search" by Ida Lou Wigert has a novel twist which might sell it to a prozine. Mimeographing is fairly good, but smudged in spots. If you have an extra copy of your zine I imagine the club would appreciate trades.

ESP (#1) Don Stuefloten, Rt. 1, Box 722, Hemet, California. No price readily visible.

I'm not sure, but I believe this is the lad, a friend of Lyle Amlin's, who has been forbidden by his guardian to waste his time in fandom. Don has made an admirable start in fanpubbing. I find the appearance of the mag very good. I don't care for the material mostly by the editor, but the artwork is fine and the cover beautiful. I'm sure this fanzine will improve greatly. This is also mostly meant for trade, but some money would probably also bring a copy.

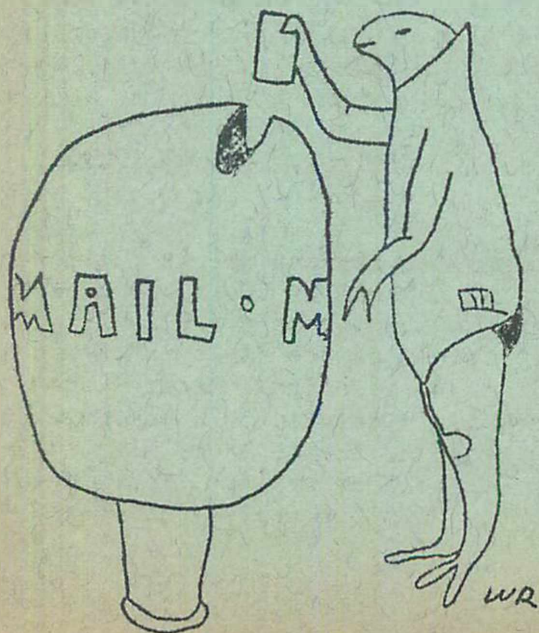
I have a copy of WHILSEY which is now one of the little poetry magazines. Ron has really done a fine job. If any of you like samples of modern poetry in a SF-fantasy vein, I suggest you write Ron Voigt, 3859 Sullivan, St. Louis 7, Missouri.

There are many other fanzines around that I would like to review but they're packed away or otherwise inaccessible. I'd also like to thank the people in FAPA who have taken pity on a poor waiting lister and sent him their mag. I appreciate them all. I hope I have some time this summer to write all of you.

BEING A PLACE OF FURTHER WASTING OF SPACE TO NO GOOD END

Things are looking bad around Dallas today. It looks as if Mike May has completely forsaken all things fannish; George Jennings is struggling along toward Apa-fame; and Randy Brown is having an interminable number of troubles in getting out MARK. And, as if our troubles weren't enough, Mosher is organizing again.

But things are worse in New Orleans, from which place I've just returned. No publishing fans at all, but many, many readers. Of course, Strickland went back to Gould in San Diego and McIlhenny was struck by college.



But there are new fans coming in from all over. Even some up in Denton, Texas. A group at NISC got together and published a fiction-heavy zine called BOLIDE. Pretty bad, but it's a start.

MUZZY is still going strong and even if it carries a high percentage of fiction the fiction is certainly of a higher quality than is ordinarily found in fanzines. Incidentally, MUZZY #8 came out recently. I haven't my copy of it here now, but I don't recall anything I wanted to criticize in it.

This will be all for about a month, I hope. I hope I can get another issue out in a month. If I'm lucky I can.

Thanks for the loooong letters.....bunny

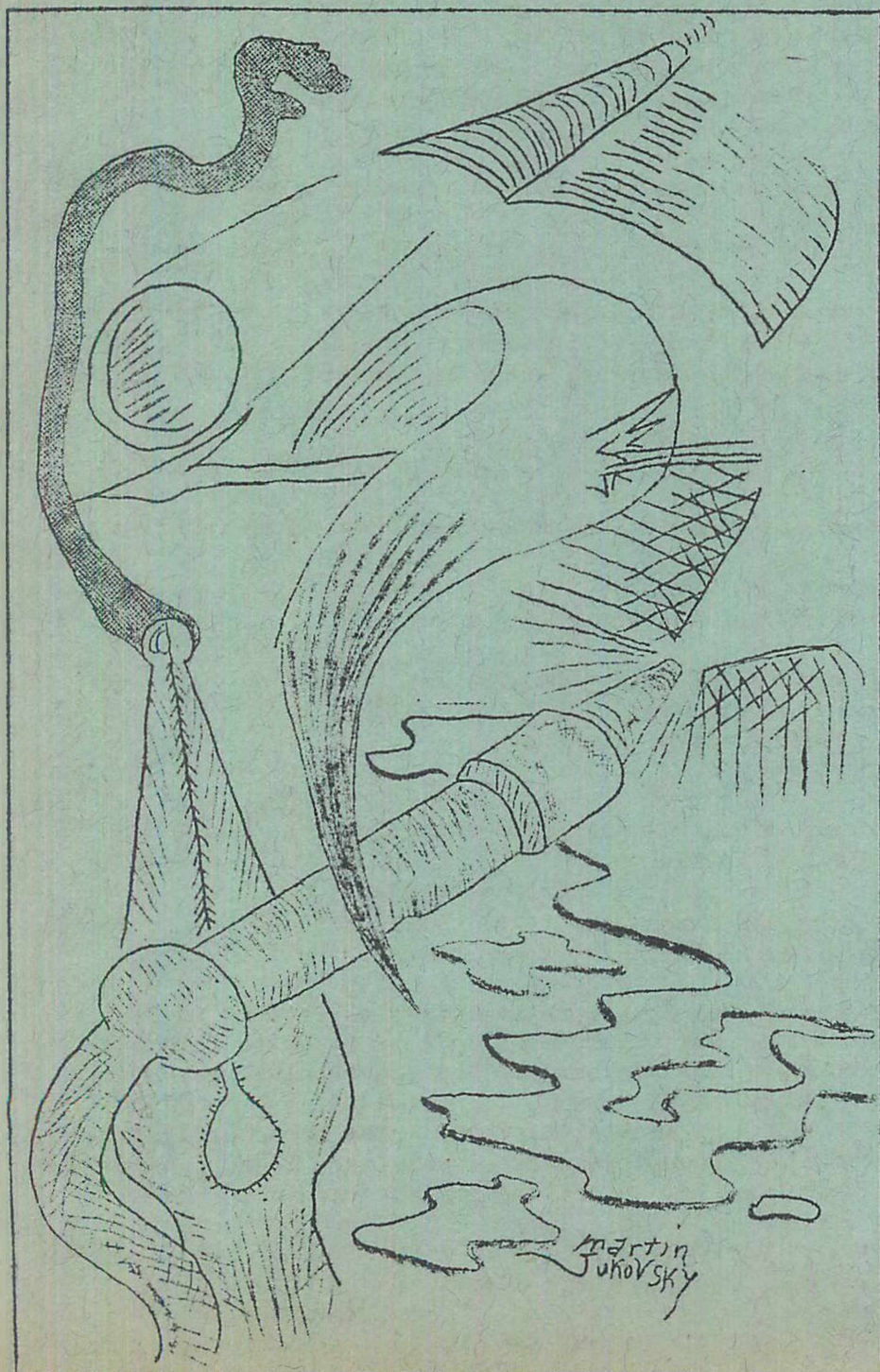
NAME OF A NAME BY MIKE CHANDLER

An awful lot of dust has been kicked up lately on the sub- of whether fandom was a way of life, or as it was so elo- quently put, a ghoddam hobby. The main bone of contention leads to the question of what is a way of life?, or what is a hobby?, or what is a ghoddam?, or several other semantic tangles that usually end up sounding like trying to find out who shaved the barber?, or when will Achilles pass the tortoise? It has no doubt been responsible for as many bloody noses as could Joe Louis whip Dempsey? (Well, maybe not that many, but a lot...)

It has been said that it must be a way of life because it changes your outlook on life and alters your way of looking at things. If that's so, then Bach is a way of life. Trying to hum two parts of a fugue at once does some- thing to you, somehow. Seriously, anything you take seriously is a way of life. Baseball, which is ballied as promoting every virtue from chastity to civic pride, is without a doubt a way of life, for the people who like base- ball. I know a fellow who thinks entomology is a way of life. No one else does, but he does, and that's all that matters. He's happy with his in- sects. Unlike some fans, he doesn't insist that if anyone collects bugs, then the collecting is a way of life.

What it all boils down to is that if you think it's a way of life, then it is. For you. You may think that fandom is invariably a way of life, whatever that is, but then the Bach fan and insect collector who dabble in fandom wouldn't agree. But then they're wrong and you aren't of course.....

The question will prob- ably never have a final solution. It's kind of confusing when both sides have irrefutable evidence. Semantically, it's a non- sense question. The truth? It probably lies somewhere



between the two extremes, somewhere around the realization that you don't have to be schizochronic to have more than one "way of life."

AN UGLY TRICK has been noticeable in fanzines lately. The interlineations, once the backbone of fannish humor, are failing. Some of them almost even make sense. This clearly cannot be tolerated, so here are a few rules for writing interlins, derived from observing at dangerously close range some of the best examples:

1. The main consideration for a really good interlin is that it make as little sense as possible. If it makes sense, then it is only a warmed over bon mot, and not so damn bon at that. Intelligibility should be avoided at all costs.

2. If you have patience and an unusual amount of mental stability, you might try logogenetics. Pick any subject, and look through a book until you come to a word concerned with that subject. Then, write down the next word. Find another word, and write the word after that. If instead of a subject you pick nonsense words at random, the whole thing may appear to be just a bunch of nothing. It is a bunch of nothing, but that fact shouldn't be apparent. This effect can also be gotten by two people. Each one writes a word on a strip of paper, folds the word out of sight, and passes the paper to the other person, who repeats the process. This produced the following:

IF THE FILLED TO ST LSTIPS ARE IN CRITICIT, THEN F OOL D....

3. If you're afraid that you aren't inventitive enough to try logogenetics, then there are about 2000 other languages besides English. For instance, if you want to use Spanish, pick any phrase from a small guide on Spanish. An excellent phrase is:

¿DÓNDE ESTÁ LA S. LA DE D. S., POR FAVOR?.....

This is especially intriguing because of the usual inverted question mark. The reader will turn the fanzine upside down, thinking that the real meaning is hidden, like the twofaced Mandy & Andy drawings. This makes for lots of laughs.....

The Scandinavian languages are okay, too. The Swedish edition of GILLY produces many of the top grade type like:

"...Örske darske hibrbiel öradörjbask Horace Gold....."

4. If the above method isn't enough, try fixing your shots. German and English can give real zens, like this one:

".....YNGVI IS A SMUTZIGER VOGEL....."

...which, of course means that Yngvi is a dirty bird. "Smutziger Vogel" is a lot more unintelligible than just plain "louse."

5. Be esoteric. Limit the number of people who can understand the interlineation to as few as possible. HYPER has had an enviable record in regard to esoteric interlins. For example:

...My first step to world conquest will be a totalitarian fish factory in Peel.....

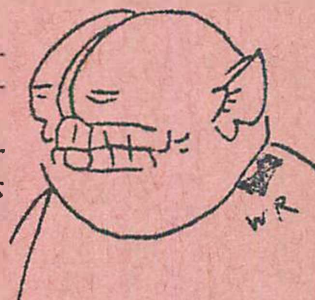
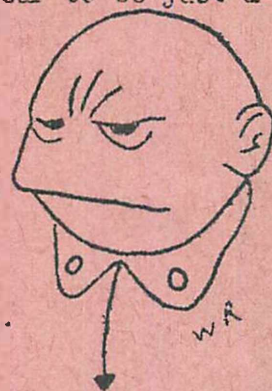
You will find that almost anything can be taken out of context. This bodily wrenching of a sentence from its paragraph can produce amazing results. The possibilities of FLIBEGAN'S are unlimited.

That's it. These rules have been gleaned from the best and most unintelligible interlineations on six furry legs. I hope that they can help bring back that total lack of understanding that the interlins once had.

after all, you can't let an art die out.....

THISS'ILL

-- Mike Chandler --



INTERVIEW

This is Terry Carr, and on the program today I will be interviewing Mr. Boob Stewart, who is a...

Um-hmm, Boob Stewart. BOO! I publish it...you know, the magazine; it's a...

Magazine...oh, well, that's a...

Fanzine.

Yeah.

He is what's known as a...

I've got...uh...you know Tucker?...That guy...?

Oh...

He writes, uh...Wilson Tucker...

Yeah.

Uh-huh...well, uh...anyway, Mr. Boob Stewart is a fan of...of...of what?

Science Fiction. You know, rocketships...babes...stuff like that...

Oh! Yeah, well...sort of...

Um-hmm. But there's other things...you know, fandom and fanzines and...

Well, uh, suppose you...

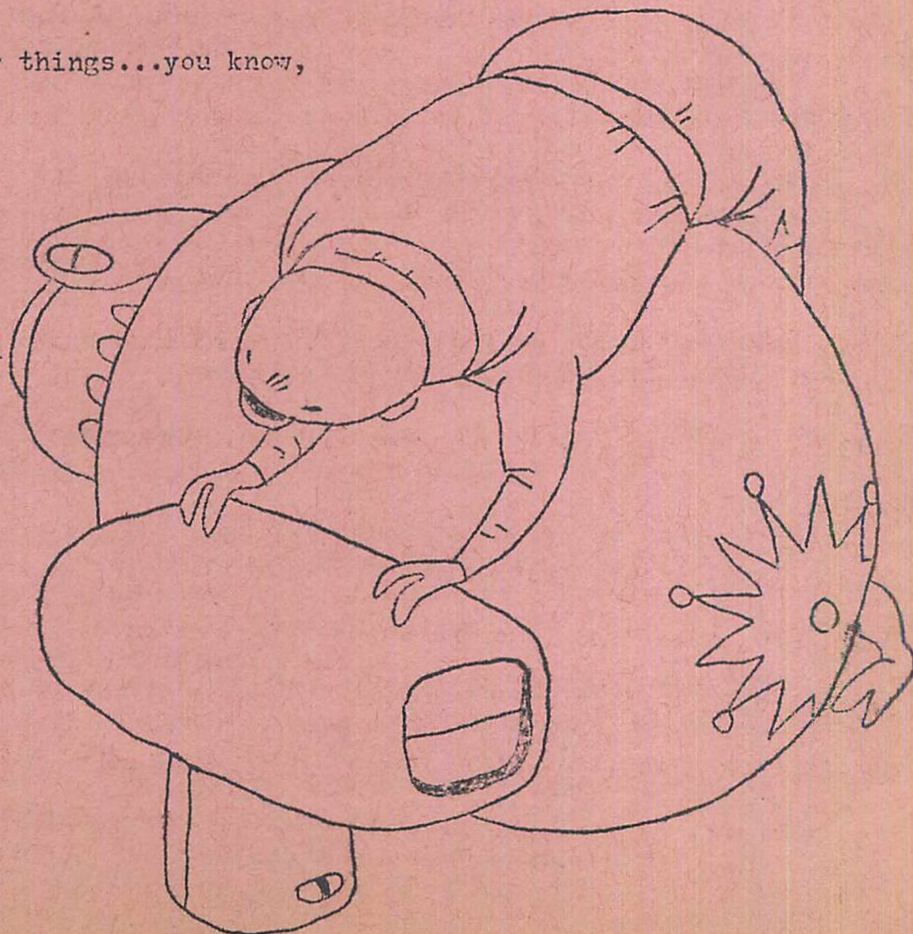
...Dheer...

Suppose you tell us, Mr. Stewart, about...well, what would you say is the general picture today in fandom...

WGBH

A

FAN



...I mean, how's the picture there?

Oh...well, I mean, it's neither up nor down, I mean it's, you know, fans and fanzines come and fanzines go. You know, it's...uh, well, there was QUANDRY, and SPACEBARK, and, you know, it's just that way, and there's really not much to add. This guy Sam Moskowitz, he wrote a terrific book, "The Immortal Storm," a history of science fiction fandom, and in it he covers everything, all the way from the beginning of science fiction way back in 1926, when Hugo Gernsback...

Umm-hmm, yes, well...

Gernsback put out...

I see, yes...and he covered the whole history. I see.

Yes...all the way from...

Now, Mr. Stewart, what would you say...uh, what is...well, what does a fan generally do during the day?

Well, uh...

Run down his activities for us.

...There are various kinds of fans...there's the serious constructive fan, and there's the fannish fan. Now, the fannish fan...

Well now, what kind of fan would you say you were?

Well, uh...oh, I really couldn't...oh, I'm just...I read the stuff, I like science fiction, I also like fandom. I mean, it's neither up nor down...

Well, in other words...

It's like...take Sam Moskowitz...take him, for instance...he wrote this book...it's...oh my gosh, it's 60,000 words or more...

Well, would you say, then, that you are just a fan?

Ohhh...well, I really couldn't say...I mean, I read it, like I say. I read the stuff, and I collect it...I...

Well, what do you mean by the "stuff," Mr. Stewart?

Oh, uh...

Do you mean science fiction?

Yeah. Now, take "The Immortal Storm," for instance...

Is that science fiction?

Oh, it...in a way, yes it's, uh, a history, you see, a history of...

Well now, Mr. Stewart, I was looking at this cover of "The Immortal Storm," and it rather intrigues me...now what are these magazines here?

Oh, uh, AMAZING STORIES up here...well, as you know, Hugo Gernsback put out...oh my gosh, several mags...uh, SCIENCE...uh, what was it, SCIENCE & MECHANICS or something like that...then he put out something else, let's see...anyway, he's very interested in electronics, and also in sexology, he puts out a very interesting magazine...

Yes...well, what...er, is SEXOLOGY a fanzine?

Oh, no, it's

Well, what connection does it have with fandom?

Well, really not much, except, other than the fact that Hugo Gernsback puts it out, but you see it's a fascinating magazine, it's all on sex, and uh...

Yes, well, Mr. Stewart...

...Analyzes it in a very thorough manner, and...

Well, Mr. Stewart, uh...

...Has pictures, of course...

...I'd like to ask you...uh, with pictures?...well, Mr. Stewart, ahemmm, well, to get back to this cover, I mean, are those drawings of books or, uh...

Uh, well, they're from, uh...oh, the various editors, like, you take...oh...

yes, Gernsback...Did he edit this ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION here?

Well, he edited several...he edited SCIENCE & MECHANICS, and AMAZING...

Was that a fanzine, or a ...

These are...I'm speaking now of professional magazines.

Professional magazines.

Yeah, there's a big difference between a...I mean, they're two distinct entities... a ransine and and a prozine, as we call 'em...

Well now, just exactly how would you define a fanzine? I mean, the general public usually thinks of a fanzine as...

Yeah, well...

...as a magazine about...

Yeah, I know what you...

...about radio or TV, or movies, and so on...

Well, not that sort of fanzine. You see, this is entirely something different. You speak of a fan, well, you don't mean, you know, like G.E. electric stuff...

Yeah...uh...

Now, you know I'm not speaking of that...

Uh, we're sponsored by Westinghouse...

Oh, I see, yeah, I'm sorry. But, uh, however, the fanzine, it's, uh...well, it's well, take "The Immortal Storm," it's...

Is that a fanzine?

Well, in, uh, yeah, in a sense it is...it was sold, but of course it's still a fanzine. I mean, a fanzine and a prozine...there's a big difference...

Well, just exactly what is the difference?

Well, the difference is that...well, simply that one is...oh, it has...there are various differences, I mean it's very hard to put my finger on any one...I mean, they are two separate and distinct entities, and...I don't want to confuse you with...

Yes, well, what would you say was the purpose of fandom? I mean, what...

Oh, you mean,...

What do you get out of it?

Yeah. Well, uh, it's...uh, well...it's a heck of a lot of fun...oh, we get...well, it's definitely something that's, uh, well, it's a real good thing.

Yeah, mmm-hmmm. Then, you think that it's a good thing.

Yeah, mmm-hmmm.

Would you say that...uh...you were in a position to speak authoritatively?

Well, in a way, yes...I've been in fandom, and I know what's...you know, what fans are fans, and which fans aren't, I mean, I know what's coming off, and...uh...

Well, now, Mr. Stewart, I saw a word in here...it's...what is this...uh, egoboo?

That's, uh...oh, it's...

Is that something like fried eggs?

Uh, no, no, it's very separate and distinct. I mean, you must be kidding...uh...

Well, it looks a little bit like...

Yeah. Egoboo is more like...

Boiled eggs?

No, uh...ego...you know what the ego is...uh...it's something like suki...the psych..

Yes, the cosmos. Yes. I was speaking to a Mr. Stein...

Yeah, it's something like the soul. I mean, the ego, what's blown up and all that...

Oh, oh, boo...well, that's my fanzine. Which reminds me, we've got an annish coming out. Have you heard?

Uh, an annish?

An annual, you know. I've put it out a year now, and boy, I've really sweat my, uh, fanny off with that thing...I mean, I've really worked...oh gee, I've put many hours,

Uh, I see...an annish. Well now, Mr. Stewart...this fanzine...uh, just exactly where did you happen to get the odd title of BOO!? Does that relate to, uh...egoboo?

No, it's just sort of an abstract relation...well, take James Joyce...uh, his titles, uh, forget it...uh, he thinks of his titles, and...uh...

Well, would you say that, uh, that the things that you publish would qualify as literature?

Oh, well, in a sense. I mean, you can't look at anything that way...I mean, that's really taking things down and sort of, uh, really putting them down on the table, and not looking at them while they're...you know...in a general sense, I mean, it's a... nothing that can be scoffed at...

Yes, but I mean, you're publishing things, and they are written by people...

Oh, certainly; yes.

And you're paying to publish these, and you must have some reason, and I thought maybe that because...well, there are various "little magazines" which publish material that is, uh, of too high literary quality for general circulation, and therefore were published in literary magazines. So, I thought, Mr. Stewart, that perhaps your...uh, fanzine, BOO!, was publishing Literature. Now do you really think that it...

Well, uh, I really can't say. It's a perfectly logical question, and...

Well, when we invited you up here today we understood that you were an authority on fandom, and...I think if anybody could give an answer to a simple question like that, it would be an authority on fandom...

Yeah; oh, sure.

And when we ask a simple question...we hope to get a straightforward answer, because our listening audience is interested, and...

Uh, well, I agree with you on the value of a straightforward answer...I mean, a lot of times when I ask questions I really expect...I mean..it's one of those things that this world has got to be with...

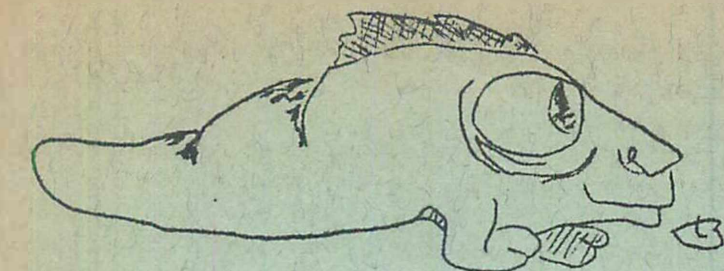
Well, would you or would you not say that the material you print is Literature?

Well, uh, that's very reasonable of you. I mean, uhhh...to put it very frankly, it is...it's very reasonable of you to say it that way. Well, uh, what was the question?

Well, thank you, Mr. Stewart...unfortunately we have run short of time, so we will have to cut short our discussion. I'm sure our listening audience found your remarks interesting and, uh, informative.

-- 30 --

-- by BOOB STEWART
& TERRY CARR --



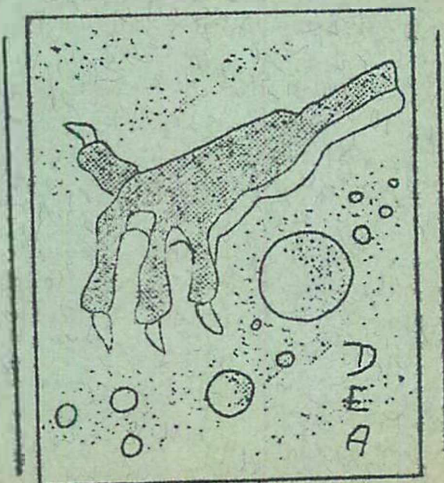
RAY
SCHAFFER'S

FANALYSSS

THE PARADOX MEN, by Charles L. Harness (Ace Books) 163 pp.

After completing the reading of this extremely paradoxical, action packed, and swift moving novel, (that contains some of the most intricately-woven plot twists and super science gimmicks that I've encountered in quite some time) I couldn't help feeling that possibly Van Vogt is responsible for this work, as the style and delivery is quite reminiscent of many of the Master's earlier efforts. Due to my never having run into any other writings by Harness, I feel that it is very possible that there exists a pseudonym relationship between Harness and Van Vogt. Can anyone, for my info, confirm or deny such a possibility. Perhaps I am wrong in making such an assumption; but even if I am in error, one cannot deny the fact that upon the reading of 'The Paradox Men', both Harness and Van Vogt are graduates of the same school of writing (and thought). Plot twists are ever present in this novel, with the vast majority of them leaving the reader in a confused state of mind, as several paradoxes are intermingled into the plot. (I rather suspect that the author, also, had his mind in a jumbled state on the completion of this work, as it would require an ultra-genius to unravel the complications involved.) To begin an attempt to even partially explain the workings of these mentioned paradoxes is an enormous undertaking; however, I shall do my best to present the over-all picture. And away we go to

The story is set in the year 2177 A.D., an era when the continents of North and South America have emerged into one great despotic empire, after the Third World War, with the Society of Thieves being the only group in Imperial America that still recognizes the rights of men to be free in the sense of thought and action. The society is in a state of gradual deterioration and one man, Alar, (who is actually two men, with each of his individual bodies existing in different time streams, confusing, eh wot?) has the task of saving his society from destruction. Alar is supposedly a special type of super-human who is capable of (1) scenting on-coming danger to his body by an increase in his heartbeat, long periods of time before the danger is recognized in his conscious mind, (2) projecting an immaterial object into space by means of his optics, thus, a human slide projector, (3) traveling in time, as he has a four-dimensional body, (4) projecting sounds from the depths of his mind out into space, so that the sounds become audible to other persons in close proximity to himself, (5) discharging an electronic force from his optics so powerful as to kill another human.



In other words, this fellow has really got that it takes to make for himself a success out of life. As I have mentioned above, there is also another part of Alar, namely, the 'Microfilm Mind'. The 'Mind' is

a freak of nature, in that he is a walking encyclopedia and acts as chief-council for the Imperialists. (Of course, the 'Mind' being the other Alar, he is opposed to the Imperialists and is actually and naturally a secret supporter of the Thieves.) Now, the question arises as to how Alar can be two in one. Damn good question -- only wish I could answer it adequately. To confuse you even more, let me put it this way. A super, giant-size spaceship (capable of exceeding the speed of light) is used by Alar to escape an on-coming Atomic War with the other power in the world, the Eastern Federation, so that he might return to earth five years earlier (in as much as that rocket travels faster than light, it travels backward in time -- ah, yes, it surely does that) and upon returning Alar changes his appearance and becomes the 'Microfilm Mind'. Naturally, when Alar returns under this disguise, the other Alar is also in existence; thus, two Alars. And the obvious consequence of such a paradox is a continuous cycle of Alar coming and the Mind going. At least, I think that this is the general idea behind the novel.

Oh yes -- how does Alar save the world from destruction. Well tis this way... When Alar takes off in the rocket, time automatically stops (due to his backward trip in time) and so the oncoming Atomic destruction is averted, which results in the creation of a paradox. And such a paradox it is. Gads, a fellow could go bugs trying to make any sense out of such an occurrence.

Anyway, read it and find out for yourself how extremely confusing any one novel can be. I guarantee that if you like Van Vogt, you'll like 'The Paradox Men'. And if you don't appreciate writers of the Van Vogt school, I suggest you pick this novel up merely for the excellent discussion therein of the rise and fall cycle of civilizations, as there are several worthwhile 'food for thought' ideas within these pages.

-- Ray Schaffer, Jr. --

a special review by the editor of INFINITY no. 4

INFINITY started off rather well and I'm sure it had the backing of a lot of fans. Mostly, I guess, because Larry Shaw was almost a fan himself, and because the fans thought INFINITY would be a fan's magazine. Shaw seems to have run into trouble from the start. First, there was a distribution problem that slowed the mag down and pretty well erased INFINITY from the minds of the casual readers. Then, it seems to me, that the quality of the stories has dropped quite a lot. Larry Shaw has a nice group of writers but the stuff being printed is mediocre.

Take the August '56 issue, for example. The first story I read was the "...brilliant New ISAC ASIMOV Story...". It was hardly brilliant or for the matter, new. Perhaps it was an attempted character study, but I doubt it. It's probably more likely that Asimov and Shaw both knew that the story, "Someday", was from the long worked, hacked line or family of machinetakesovermankindsoonerorlater type re-runs. But Shaw needed a name, the story was cheap, etc., etc., so on and so forth...

The three novelets are all written by very good authors. But none of them came with a guarantee that every one of their stories would be good. All three of the novelets, by Wilson, Allen, and Garret, are slight, poorly thought stories. The story of uru might be called pleasant reading, but certainly no one would call the story good.

The short stories are of the trick ending type, or else sketchy glimpses of the writer's imagination. Robert Silverberg's story, "The Final Challenge" is easily the best piece in the whole issue. But it wasn't worth 35¢.

Maybe Shaw is trying to seal INFINITY on the strength of its departments; but there aren't enough fans and besides, fanzines are cheaper.... benny.....

THE SILENT ONE LISTENS

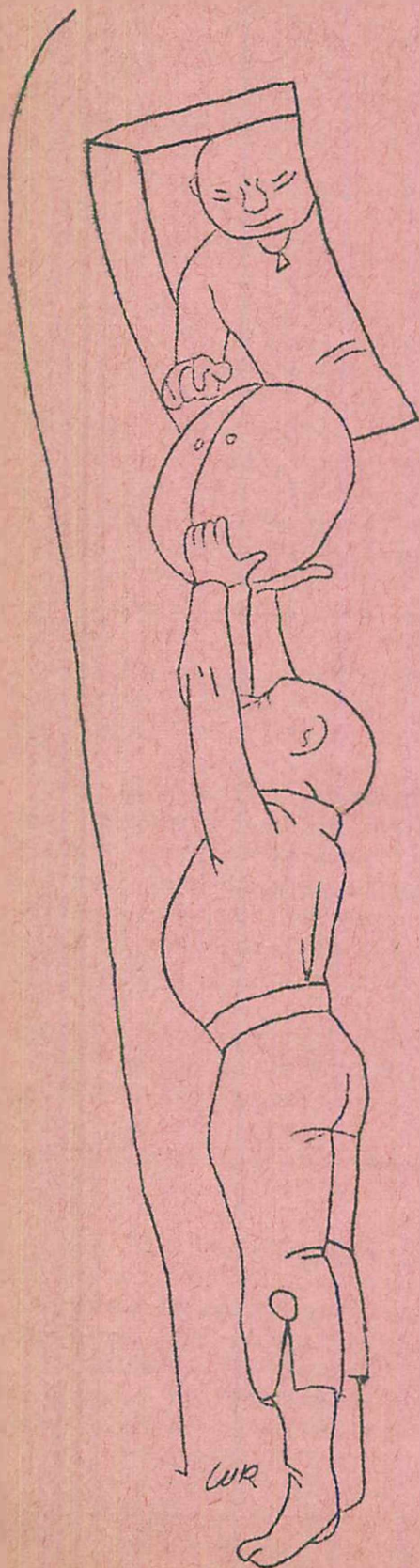
David Rike * Box 203 * Rodeo, California

Hall's argument about the merits of Hodge-Podge over Quandry seems futile and unimpressive. In fact, the sum total of what was said has given me the impression that Hall is what he calls a "sheep-fan". He gazes into a mirror and tells himself, over and over again, that HP was better than Q and, by damn, come hell and high water, he unfailingly believes it without, as he says, "...delving into the qualities of truth and error and the underlying reasons that make a truth..."

I can well imagine how Ronel writes the Dallas Deros: Here it is after school and Ron is down working at his job as a parking lot attendant for the Sears store there. Ron is going around scrounging up any ol' pieces of paper he can find: discarded copies of The Heyhole, parking stubs used pieces of Kleenex, and so on. He ambles on around the lot some more, looking for inspiration; he finds in: an empty MG. He dashes over and sprawls over the hood, his mind grasping hard for the plot for the Dero. No plot comes to him, so he writes. He doesn't bother numbering the various and sundry scraps of paper since that makes it more fun that way, and easier, he just rearranges them in another pattern than he did be4, when he typed up the typescript, and he has a different Dero. Other afternoons, when he hasn't much paper and no MG to garner inspiration off of, he pens installments of the Great Wall of China and letters to faneds about what a dirty bird Peter Vorzimer is. Ron doesn't have to think of anything at all to pound out bits like that.

Coulson's remarks about nudes has been borne out already, in FAPA. The particular fanzine is SalMartinez's Shadowland (forget which number, but one of the last litho issues that were 1/2 size) which is incidentally an Oklafez also. The fillers in question occupied a considerable page area as did the smaller Carr-Rotsler illos in T-6 and were true proportioned line drawings. The critical acclaim toward the zine all made mention to how nice the nudes were, with one noting, in his comments, that even tho he didn't go for nude illos before, that he had an especial liking for the ones in Shadowland. Maybe if Kent would try and put out a fuz like Sdwld, instead of what it has been, he'd get someplace no doubt instead of wallowing around in the mire along with the other crudzines. I guess, however, that's too much to expect from Kent and Walt, at this time at least.

P.S.: Just remembered, the mss. that Carr sent you that's a transcript of a taping that he and Boob made, ad lib, is a pretty fine take-off on the Two Interviews Of Our Time, a Fantasy LP that's been sorta popular.



I THINK I'LL BE ANOTHER ELLISON.....

GERALD A STEWARD * 166 McROBERTS AVE. * ONTARIO * CANADA

Mike May's column was fairly interesting, but I am afraid he has the wrong slant on insurgentism. Just because a person prints an imitation derogation in his fanzine, this does not mean he is an insurgent. Insurgentism is an attitude and an ideal. Insurgents insurg. For example, the original insurgents were a group of fans who broke away from the main body of fans in Los Angeles, and more or less revolted against the Lasfas. Originally they were members of this club, but there was a dispute about something, and a group of members broke away and "insurgenced" against the Lasfas. They became known as "Insurgents."

The Derelict Insurgents came about in much the same way. RonK, Boyd, and I didn't exactly break away from the Derelicts of Toronto, but we did get together and "insurge" against an undesirable member in the person of Norm G. Browne. (This may have been before your time, or when you were a rank neo still hacking letters to the late and unlamented Planet Stories.) In any event we called ourselves "Derelict Insurgents" and kicked up quite a storm and minor feud that found its way into several fanzines. And when we were not "insurgencing" against Browne, we were harshly criticizing "certain" fanzines.

When Browne quit the Derelicts of Toronto, and went off into the hills of Mount Forest, licking his wounds and retiring, for all intents and purposes, from fandom, we might have dropped our "Derelict Insurgent" monicker. We had, however, found it a handy and succinct title. It has become an identifying symbol for our threesome, just as NBC has its chimes and CBC its "eye."

You might say that, at present, we are insurgencing against fuggheads.

On the other hand, from the evidence I have seen, the Dallards are not insurgencing against anything, with the possible exception of Orv Mosher, in which case Mosher would be the insurgent (providing he fought back), since insurgents are always in the minority.

I note that Clod Hall, the tedious Texan, has a few remarks concerning me in his column. The only trouble is that he has said nothing new, just repeated himself. I got quite a chuckle out of his line, "Those that ain't...cain't," and the whole paragraph that this beautiful example of fuggheadedness appears in. This is like saying, "Can you do as good/well?" You know, it's the old story where A criticizes B and B retorts with "Can you do as good?", which is an absolutely stupid remark to make. You should hear Raeburn do his diatribe on this subject. (Since you met him in Cleveland, maybe you have heard it.)

After all, Clod, one does not have to be a...baseball player...to criticize a baseball player. Think, Clod, think before you speak, don't be a Vorzimmer. Be original, think, you know, like brains are for.

("How would you know...." and etc., I know, Clod, I know. Like I said, be original.)

REDD BOGGS * 2208 HIGHLAND PLACE N. E. * MINNEAPOLIS 21, MINNESOTA

Dallas as a center of insurgentism is a truly frightening idea, not because Dallas couldn't use a breath of fresh air or because insurgentism per se is bad, but because it seems that you are adding to the life of that curious literary genre called the "derogation." The weakness of the present movements called insurgentism is nowhere better advertised than in the fact that the only weapon wielded is a bludgeon. Well, occasionally the Torontocans used derogations like quarterstaves, but these others are crudely used - very crudely used - and at best it is a pretty limited device, not

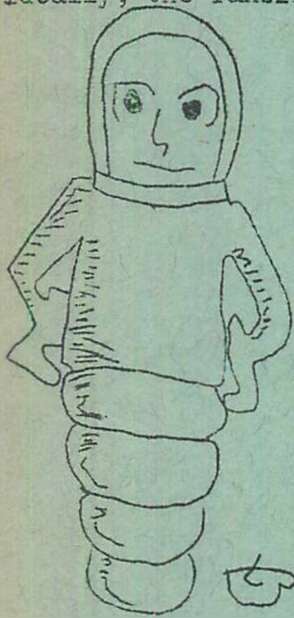
DON'T BITE MY NAIS:

very lethal and not very impressive. Insurgent minded fans should read some Fan-Dango issues from c.1950 to discover how really devastating insurgent literature can be.

Claude Hall is often wrong but usually interesting. I don't know what it is by Marion Bradley he refers to that was so bad, but one of the Q classics was written by HZB under a penname or rather was printed anonymously. Anyway, I liked Claude's notion that God created man to provide Him with egoboo.

Schaffer parades a lot of interesting ideas and writes a good book review. I disagree about the quality of Andre Norton's work, however, which generally I've found solid oak and difficult to saw through. Incidentally Schaffer's reviews would be easier to read if you'd break up those imposing paragraphs three or four ways each.

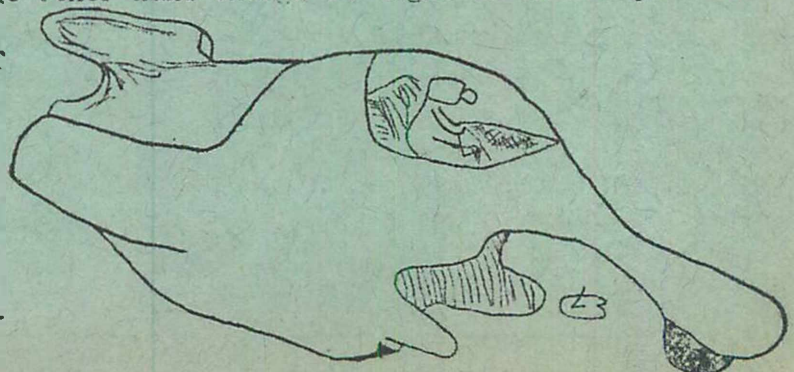
"The Silent One Listens" is good. And by the way I appreciate the way you've chosen department titles that fit your fanzine title. Too often the title of a fanzine is just a tag -- it wouldn't matter to the editor whether his magazine was titled X-sub-1 or Motherlove; whereas, ideally, the fanzine title should be the pattern maker, shaping the whole "atmosphere" of the magazine. ... "I feel like a Ben out of chlorine" is a good line in Marion Bradley's letter, but she's wrong in feeling that way, I think; I don't believe fanzines have changed since 1948 quite as much as she implies. There was a lot of fan-centered material then, and there's a lot of science-fiction centered material now. ... Too bad about Claude's eyes. He should obtain a tape-recorder and write his fan stuff (and his college term papers too, for that matter) by dictating them. That should save his eyes; he can sit there with his eyes closed, drinking beer, and composing deathless fan crud... Since he types with his eyes closed, transcribing the stuff from the tape should be no problem. ... I got a kick out of Sneary's letter, which was the best thing in the whole issue. Nice to see Rick back.



ALAN DODD * 77, STAINSTEAD RD., HODDESDON, HERTS., ENGLAND

Page three of the lettercol this time is a terrible confession for a fanzine editor to make. I quote the unforgiveable confession "I usually don't answer or reply to any of my letter writers." Is this why they call you the Silent One? Now picture it - everyday hundreds of letters arrive at Calhoun Street with each one of them asking dozens of important questions. We've found out the Benny is short for Benard but there are probably dozens more asking what the "L" stands for - yet you, you criminal refuse to answer their letters and don't even print them. How are they going to know you even received the letters for a start? Do you realise these questions might be important to him and that if he doesn't get the answers he might, out of sheer frustration, go out and chop some old lady up with an axe. Just because you won't answer his letters. Seems like you've made a Federal Case out of it.

On the other hand though it might be an occupational disease, Jan Jansen mentioned once to me of the apparent reluctance of Texas - er, pardon - TEXAS - fans to write letters. He's write too. TEXAS fans never write letters. None of 'em. You can write to Jennings and Brown and Lay & Co., but you'll never get a letter. Can you explain why? (These direct questions are getting me... unfortunately out letter writing fervor usually hits when we have no one to



BUT IF FYTER DON'T TYPE SIDEWASE LIKE WAN'S WILL !

write to... or then, maybe it's a new party line I've haven't been informed of.....) The only TEXAS fan I can think of at the moment who writes letters is Claude Raye Hall - though frankly I'm in two minds as to whether I ought to even believe in a Texan with a name like Claude. It is quite evidently a pseudonym for a New Orleans fan who has found himself in Austin. Don't you agree? ((To tell the truth I find it much harder to believe there is such a thing as a New Orleans fan...))

Dallas Derogations is always the brightest spot in TAC for me and quite the funniest item is the wicked way Davison jabs and insults the way you drive. Maybe this could be born out by the fact that you really don't have a car at all? Do you? ((More direct questions, although I can't see why, the other Dallards are always eager to corroborate some of the incidents Davison mentions.... They also say he doesn't know about some of the better ones like yield right of way signs...)) Maybe that's how you got to the Clevention. I know you wuz there because I have an article that mentions the Clevention by Mark Schulzinger which will appear in the next CAMBER((free plug)) and he mentions you were there so how did you get there? HUH? ((Emphatic direct question... I was motivated to Cleveland by a monumental vehicle sprung from the depths of human progress colloquially known as the one, the only, the original Greydoggy...))

G.M. Carr mentions a mental picture of TEXAS in her letter which is probably shared by more people than you might think both here and in the U.S. And why don't you give Boyd Raeburn his oil-well? I think he deserved it after that explosively funny and irritated letter of his threatening to hit you over your pointed head. Don't tell me you actually had the timidity((sic)) to personally hand Boyd a copy of Tac at the Clevention. Ah - no wonder they say TEXANS are brave.

My favorite line in Tac 6? "Jan is a girl, Randy is a boy and I am a TEXAN." Do you expect the jury to believe that?? ((We'll have the trial in Mississippi...))

RON ELLIK * 277 POMONA AVE. * LONG BEACH 3, CALIFORNIA

In Raye Claude Re: I am exceeding sorry that Master Hall is stone deaf in both eyes. I shouldn't doubt that he is myopic--ghood ghod, he's had to look at his own mimeographing in MUZZY fr most of three years now! Hell, if he expects pity from me, I wouldn't advise him to hold his breath until he gets it--I've been promised by my optometrist that I can't expect more than 20-400 vision the rest of my life if I continue reading like I do. (I have 20-400 right now, by the way.) And I told HIM-- well what I told him needn't be reprinted in a sweet, gentle, clean fanzine like TACITUM. Poor vision doesn't bother me. I continue reading several thousand words a week, typing a few thousand more, and mimeographing (which is, you know, a strain on the eyes) a whole mess. I will probably be stone blind soon myself, and then Claude and I can form a club with the two of us. THE CLAUDE RAYE HALL AND RON ELLIK FAN CLUB-- subtitle, "You have to be blind in one eye and not able to see out of the other to join."

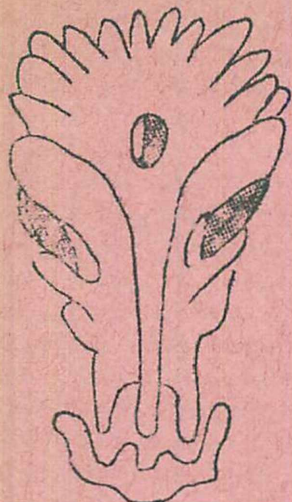
Would you like to take me up on that offer to publish a special Ellik-versus-Hall issue of pure crud? It might be fun. I don't think Clawed will play along, though --sounds(in T. 6) as like unto though he is all gone and got mad at fandon, and won't have anything more to do with us. (meek whisper) i hope, i hope, i hope.

I will go down in history as The Fan Who Challenged Claude Hall And Won By Forfeit.

Dave Mason and I would like you to print something for us in TACITUM. It will appear, substantially in, FATHERD and Coup, and anywhere else I can get it published. We have a very, very good reason for asking you to do this, and we both promise it is not a

LET'S TRY RED...

DEA



hoax, but an expose of a very nasty sense of humour. If you doubt me, you can write to Mason, or even to George Wetzel himself.

It seems that a few months ago, I took it upon myself to break off my long and belaboured correspondence with George Wetzel. We had been swapping missives for some time, off and on, maybe as much as two years. Finally it got to the point where he was starting to use language I didn't like, and was, in general, building up molehills into mountains. I am making only general statements because an exhaustive summary of our letters would take up twice as much room as the correspondence itself.

It happened that, later in December, I got a very brief note with the return address of Mason, 14 Jones St., N. Y., N.Y. This note said, in effect, that I was a Nazi-German, an anti-semitic, a stupid, fat, teen-ager, a homosexual and in general, a very poor candidate for Man of The Year -- to put it mildly.

Now, this rather shocked me, as I did not know Mason. (I assumed it was Dave Mason, although the first name was not used.) I have never corresponded with him, and have never received COME. So I be-sat me down and wrote a strong letter in reply, accusing this Mason of muddy thinking and confused writing, of obscenities uncalled for, and of prejudices unwarrented. I told him in no uncertain terms that while I was a teen-ager, of seventeen years of age, fat and mayhaps stupid, I was not Nazi-German nor was I homosexual. I also mentioned that I would take great pleasure in hanging him by his thumbs some day.

So back comes an Air Mail letter apologizing, stating that Dave Mason has not lived at 14 Jones St. for some months, and, most important, that he did not write the letter I referred to (I had sent it to him...). He also enclosed a letter he had received at approximately the same time with MY return address, typed in precisely the same way I type my letters, and signed with a counterfeit of my signature. It said substantially the same things my letter had said -- only it called Mason a dirty Jew instead of anti-semitic, a Communist instead of a Nazi, although it did call him a homosexual. It also referred to Ron Smith and Harlan Ellison as Cornies and homosexuals, and intimated some dandy little pieces of obscenity that would not go through the mails in a fanzine.

Mason asked me to get this notarized a bit in some fanzines, to publish some of it in FAHRD, and promised that he would publish it in COME. I suggested to him that we dedicate an entire issue of one of our fanzines to George Wetzel (since Wetzel was the only person who could have authored these letters, although neither of us has DEFINITE proof that it is he), publishing these letters, our own correspondence, and articles by us and other people concerning Wetzel and his antics.

As yet neither of us has figured out any particular way of getting back at Wetzel for this. We can't drag him into court (ho ho) because we have no proof. To paraphrase Raeburn, "There's no proof, but it's so ghedarned EVIL!" I have no doubt that (1) Wetzel will not go to the NYCon, (2) he will not come home from the NYCon, if he does go. Mason says that the entire N.Y. bunch would forfeit their souls to get their hands on him--and, personally, I'd like to be amongst the group tearing his hair out and making him swallow it.

We will discuss between ourselves what To Do About Wetzel. We would like any suggestions from the audience.

(Pause...if this is all true then indeed something should be done about such an obnoxious person...but, Ron, if it isn't, you receive the Fan Crud Macking Award for 1950.....benny.)

To inform general fandom, here is the latest hot tip from L.A. fandom concerning the con:

The Chesley Donovan Foundation, who sponsored the Eighth Westercon last summer, intend to make a bid for the 1957 World Convention. They intend this very soberly and seriously. (Redundant, ain't I) They are dead set on having the convention. Nothing (eccchh) will stand in their way.

The trouble is, of course, that I did not overly enjoy their convention last year. It was a fine convention--as far as being a convention went. It was off-schedule, of course, as all conventions are; it had an auction, a banquet, and the other normal things. But (1) your dollar brought you nothing more than a copy of Magnitude, a copy of the program for the convention, a membership card, and your name in the register; (2) the auction was probably the poorest in fan history. Walt Daugherty, who did the auctioning, said later that he was extremely sorry he had not made more money for the con, but but nobody he knows has had such a sorry lot to sell; (3) and, finally, the convention was run by teen-agers who set up the program, wound everybody up, set the ball rolling, and then practically dissappeared. Ron Cobb and Tad Duke were around the convention activities most of the time--but this hardly helped matters any. The rest of the Chesley Donovan Foundation were sotted 71 of the 72 hours, or were busy making passes at the girls hanging around.

Myself, I wasn't even in the hotel for a good part of the convention. The rest of the time, except for the auction and one meal scheduled by the con to have certain speeches I wanted to hear, I was in my room, or somebody else's room, or wandering around with Calkins. Sometimes, I was with Cox and Kepner... I definitely did not take part in convention activities after the first couple I experienced.

Which is all rather normal for a fan at a convention being run for Forry Ackerman, I suppose.

No, this isn't supposed to be a convention report, is it??? But id Chesley Donovan bids for the World Convention next year, I sincerely hope somebody else in this area does too--cause I don't wand CD to get it.

But, of course, who else could get it? Not LASFS or the OUTLANDERS--neither group wants it. Not enough interest in the membership. Two years ago I expected that by this time Wayne Strickland and his protege Cliff Gould would have gotten a hyper-active fan club going in San Diego, but it hasn't happened. As GMCarr says, Seattle fandom couldn't sponsor the convention. Larry Bourne tells us that Portland fandom is gone gafia for the most part. Who's left? San Fransisco? Hah. They would probably do a dandy job of it, but last I heard there were certain areas in San Francisco that didn't want to hear the words science fiction for another fifty years. There is even talk of shooting down the space satellite if it passes over the Bay Area. These areas, the Sir Francis Drake Hotel in particular, shall remain nameless.

Damn, if we don't give it to C D we'll have to ship it to London....

((You could break the unfair rotation program of course, and give it to Charlotte or Atlanta.....benny))

A horse! A horse! My fandom for a horse! -- LeeH
BOB FERNHAM * 506 2nd AVE. * DALTON, GEORGIA

I rise to dispute Mr. Hall's remarks concerning Lee Hoffman's Quandry...I have read every copy she ever put out, and even considering it was a mimeographed zine, in ten years as a fan I've never seen any zine surpass it for content. Willis is always funny. He can't be serious at any time; it's just not in him, that's all, and here I'm going to stick in a barb of my own; to best judge he(or she) who is being criticized, first look towards he(or she) who is doing the criticizing. This is my only comment at at any time regarding Mr. Hall's remarks. Nope; I'm not peeved...he has as much right to his say-so as I have to mine, and we both have the same right to disagree with anyone. And I disagree with him concerning Quandry.

One of the four major items in this issue was a bit of careless writing by Claude Hall who is gaining quite a reputation of some sort. In this one he will bring the wrath of the Lee Hoffman fandom era down on his head. You know why? Because he hasn't researched much before rushing into hot-headed print.

 Egads, fandom is made up of so many easily injured people these days. Granted that Claude has reason to snarl back at people who criticize him even though their criticism may (or may not) be justified. It could be that there might not have been any such band-wagon as Claude mentions if he hadn't started trumpeting about Hall and Texas from almost the very first. Even good humoured joking or reference can be carried to the point of disgust. I personally have no great feeling one way or the other about the whole matter. But I would like to point out that Claude has let himself in for more grief. In re Lee Hoffman. Maybe she didn't do much writing in QULNDRY itself; but she has written reams of very fine and readable material in E.A.P. over quite a period of time. She is a capable writer.

 Also, has MUZZY published anything of great literary worth? No fanzine editor with any sense starts publishing with an avowed intention of publishing great literary works! Some have and they were pitiful. I think there is one on the scene today. I forget his name but he publishes a fanzine that strains terribly to look like a prozine, failing miserably.

 As for MUZZY, there may not have been much adverse criticism since these days everything is on a goody-for-you-say-goody-for-me kick. I suspect that the people who don't go along with that usually throw up their hands and say the hell with it - why bother? Because, after all, it is of no great consequence.

 If MUZZY is published for ego-boo, which is a good enough reason in my book, try to show a little discretion in what you publish. Then you may not be so open to adverse, and probably well deserved criticism, which seems to upset you unduly.

 Relax Claude, and enjoy yourself. Remember, most of the great people since the printed word have had critics, many of them much more severe and important in the lives of those great men than any little piddling around in a fanzine. At least I should hope it is not of a comprable nature!

 Despite the fact that Edmund Davison is a friend of mine, I find these pseudo-derogations tiring. The "message" is good enough, but writing something of this sort demands more than a knowledge of fan-personalities and events. Then when it has to stand up against an original, and better series it lacks more luster.

 "A is for Red" is a weird type of avante-guard, I guess. Better than the Aga Yonder thing anyway because at least here you have words with which to wonder what the hell Voigt is writing about.

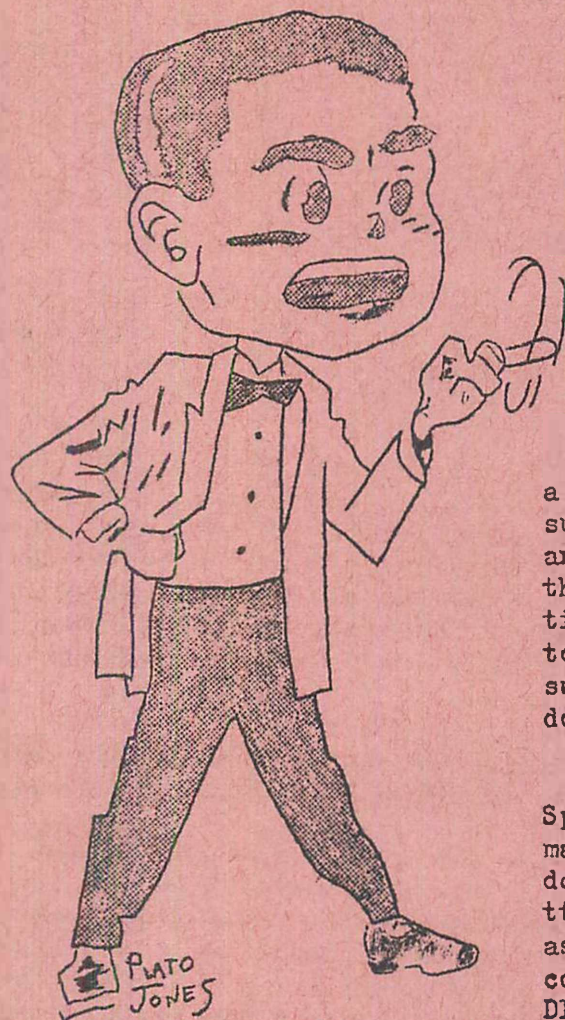
 Marion Bradley writes an honest, forth-right letter. However, I think we of the 1948 era are of Fifth, not Fourth fandom. Or has it been revised again?

 That remark about Jan is a girl Randy is a boy and I am a TEXAN pretty near substantiates something which I've thought about for many a moon. Are Texans people? I suppose that will lead to repercussions!

 Well, that about covers it. Which reminds me of the cover. It was well done. Reminded me a lot of the old comic book drawings in the Actions Comic group in the thirties. (mid and late) The style, that is. The bit in the lower right detracted from it somewhat but we must remain stfictional.

I WAS THINKING IN TERMS OF CRAYFISH.....

REMEMBRANCES OF JDDJDDY



In looking back over a number of fanzines, a thing which most fans periodically do, I was surprised to find that there were any number of articles and stories which I remembered more than just well, which were concerned with relatively unimportant topics. In fact, they were on topics rather close to imbecillic. Things and subjects of such fleeting moment that I was doubly amazed at how well they had stuck with me.

One of them was a satire-story called "The Sportsmen" by Richard Elsberry -- he of the dramatic withdrawals from fandom. It was a cleverly-done thing, concerned with the then (it was written sometimes in 1952) hot discussion in fandom as to whether ASTOUNDING was copying GALAXY's cover format, whether GALAXY was copying ASTOUNDING in size, content, et al, and/or whether

Messrs. Campbell and Gold were at each other's throats.

It was told in the context of the Elizabeth, New Jersey, air crashes which shook the nation during that period. The method of subtle lampoon and sound extrapolation Elsberry used tied an all-too horribly real series of events to a completely impossible fictionalized situation (that of the two editors trying to assassinate one another); and did it in such a manner that I suddenly found myself accepting the satire as a possible answer to the wholesale plane failures.

Another brilliant piece of persiflage that sticks with me was a duo of short vignettes by Charles Burbee, used in one of the later issues of Lee Hoffman's famous QUANDRY. The one which I recall so vividly was called "They Walked Through Glass" which related how several friends of Burbee's had stumbled unseeing into plate glass doors and windows of super-markets, and like that. It was of no great import, but was related in such a

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quiet, unassuming manner that it was enchanting. The two pastiches were probably extracted from letters, as Burbee was, and still is, notorious for declining to contribute to fanzines. LeeH was a close friend of his and thus we may assume that this is true. All the same there was a wit and charm about them, although they talked about the most cursory of subjects, that has fired them in my memory for quite a long while.

I remember an article in Bob Silverberg's SPACESHIP, too. It was one of those deadly serious analytical things with the tone of great research, and actually no real importance behind it all. It was Redd Bogg's "Flight of the Skylarks", an essay summarizing and discussing E.E. Smith's space epics. Even the essay had a sweep to it that could only come from indirect association with the topic of Doc Smith's stories. To say it had lasting value would really be setting yourself out on branches. Yet I remember it sharply.

But all I did was lean on it! -- joyce

I don't think there are many fans of several years standing who will forget Marion Zimmer Bradley's fanzine review column "Cryin' in the Sink" which moved around from fanzine to fanzine, by way of Max Keasler, and finally wound up in my own publication.

The subject matter was as superfluous as could be conceived: fanzines. And yet there was a tone to Marion's writing, a perceptiveness that transcended the boundaries of what she was writing about, and made the column a thing of real value. Her comments were judged harsh, much of the time, and the Bradley style of reviewing was at the opposite pole from the Rog Phillip's (or "Let's send 'em a dime even if the mag is rotten, they're trying!") style of review; but there was more good, solid, constructive criticism on the field in general in Bradley's reviews than in all the other fanzine review columns in the country put together.

Of course these are only a few of the articles and stories I remember from earlier fanzines. The fans are a voluminous sort, and their imaginations spew pretty fast and pretty steadily.

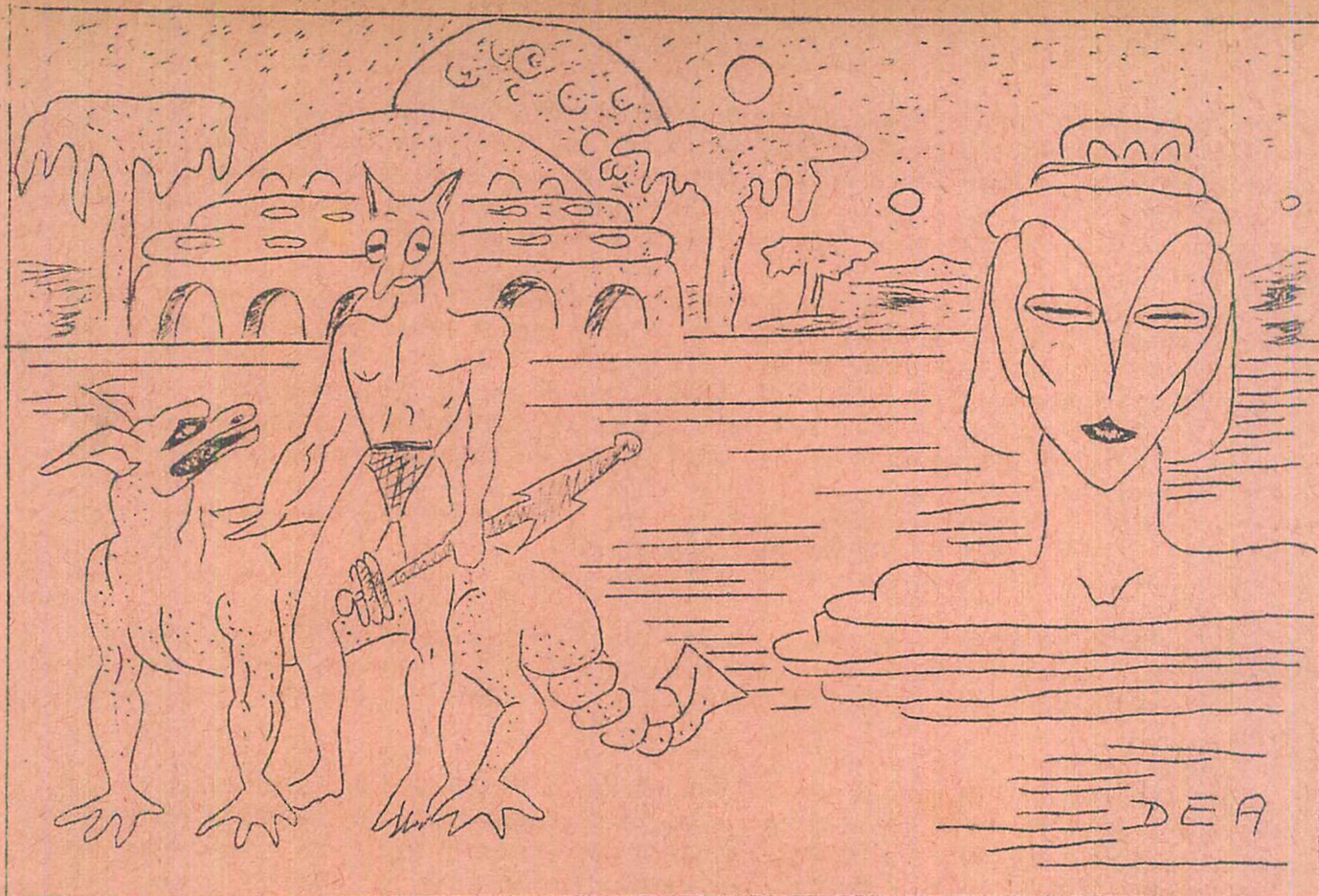
Me? Obsolete?

Why then is it that we remember -- retain a sense of pleasure, or imminence -- certain pieces of work by amateurs, and completely forget others? For the most part, forget the bulk of what has been published?

If I had to sum it all up, I think I'd say that fan-writings are stained by attitudes of immaturity and triviality. The lack of retentative value inherent in fan material comes, I believe, from the fact that most fans deal with subjects of relative unimportance, subjects that pass quickly from our sphere of interest, and are thus worthless.

Articles about Sacco-Vanzetti, the Graf Zeppelin, the writings of Gouvenuer Morris, Anna Held, etc. are no longer of interest, though at their times of peak attraction the world was literally glutted with printed word about them. Matters of immediate interest are what we find stimulating.

-- Harlan Ellison --



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