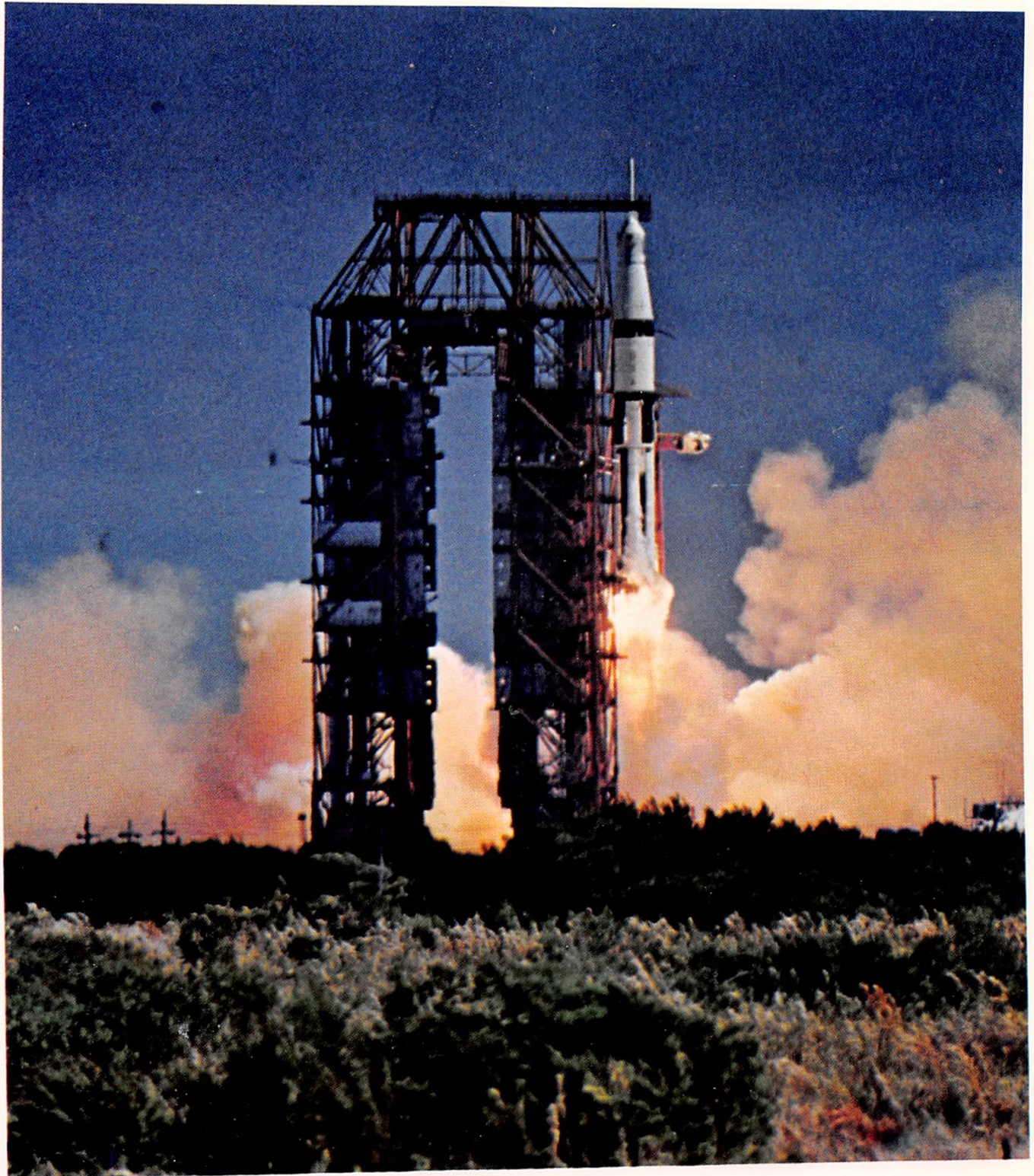


The Magazine of the M.I.T. Science Fiction Society



Special Magazine Checklist Supplement

THE TWILIGHT ZINE

27

"NEXT TIME THINGS'LL
BE DONE RIGHT!" ISSUE

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** SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT INCLUDED **

ART

Cover: courtesy of Nick Nussbaum; p. 21: g

The Twilight Zine is published, when necessary, by the MIT Science Fiction Society Jourcomm. Copies are made available for any contributions (please!), fanzines in trade (void where prohibitive), 25¢ American or arm-twisting in the proper places. Send it all to Jourcomm c/o MITSFs, W20-421, MIT, 84 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Mass. 02139. This issue brought to daylight by oxcart and a great deal of help from the erstwhile Nick Nussbaum of the production department, with some occasional encouragement by an Editor who prefers to remain anomalous.

NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER: The cover was bought at an auction and overprinted - origin unknown. The terrible quality of the innards is due to the use of direct-type paper masters and Dumb Typists (I resemble that remark -- Ed) who cannot follow instructions Not to Erase. From now on, Iz will appear in photo-offset form, as the checklist supplement does. The contents are the Editors' responsibility (Oh, really?). Further copies of the checklist may be obtained from Bill Desmond directly at

803 Fifth Street
South Boston, Mass. 02127

and not from Twilight Zine or the MITSFs. -- Nicholas Nussbaum

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Media Notes

Hot on the heels of NBC's announcement that Star Trek, of beloved memory, would return next season as a Saturday morning cartoon show (Capt. Kirk meets Capt. Crunch?) comes Gene Roddenberry's new tube offering, Genesis II.

Genesis II adopts a sci-fi premise even more ancient than the space opera of Star Trek. A twentieth-century scientist, the subject of a suspended animation experiment, is awakened in the 22nd century. He discovers, surprise!, that civilization has been destroyed (almost) and that the earth has returned to rampant greenery. "The bombs didn't destroy as much as everyone expected," says one character early on; in fact, it seems that everything has changed for the better: the world seems a turned-on middle-class American's dream.

Not that all is sweetness and light up there in 2133. The "best" of the old civilization, including several old Star Trek cast members, has been preserved beneath ground by a group of J. F. Kennedy pacifist liberals called PAX, who aren't above fomenting a little genocide elsewhere, as long as their own hands stay clean. In particular, they are out to destroy their dire enemies, mutants (double-decker novels!)(on TV yet!) who, we are told, practice deception as a refined art. Very little is made of this fascinating cultural filip as the mutants quickly settle down into the traditional heavy "heavy" role of Simon Legrees in fancy dress, or undress. So much for innovation.

As far as the production goes, the special effects were fine and the acting fairly terrible. Our elderly scientist, played by Alex Cord, walked through his role with wildly fluctuating degrees of conviction, which made the other performers look a lot worse than they probably were.

It appears that no one, as yet, has found an artistically valid way to put SF on the tube, big budget or small. I can cite isolated quality in Twilight Zone, The Outer Limits and Star Trek, but when put to the test, SF's creators still haven't found an appropriate format.

The present illo-less issue, produced after long hardship, reflects our continual need of material: when we got it, we publish; when we don't, we procrastinate infinitely about writing it ourselves.

Review: SPACE FANTASIES, Vol. 1, No. 1

Space Fantasies is a comic book, its stories and art mainly the work of one Vincent Marchesano. It is a sincere, if amateurish tribute to its mighty progenitor Marvel Comics, with grateful nods along the way to '40's - '50's E.C. comics and Zap comix nos. 1-∞. The figures of Stan Lee, Gil Kane, et al bestride these pages like kid-smart colossi. I never cease to be amazed at the market for such trivia, which is decidedly inferior fantasy with a simplistic notion of human behavior for these aware days. It represents the anti-intellectual backlash everyone anticipated as coming from those dumb rednecks in Nixonland.

While Space Fantasies wouldn't fill a chapter of a paper on Middle Class Adolescent Nostalgia, it might make a fascinating footnote.

Jonathan Fox
3/27/73

My First Editorial (whoopæ!)

Now that you're seated cozily in your easy chair before a roaring air-conditioner, I can tell you all about this issue of Twilight Zine. Without reiterating the entire table of contents, I will point out some of the salient features. At last (!), we have the spine-tingling, rip-snorting concluding chapters of Tomm Swift and his Electric Chair; I will simply say that this series receives a most fitting end. The fourth episode of the continuing and modernized adventures of Flash Gordon also appears within, where our protagonists involve themselves in an ever-deepening plight.

Another installment of extracts from the Society minutes is here; as opposed to past collections, this batch, arranged by a past Secretary who shall be nameless, proves to be far more extensive, if not downright verbose. I hope you find them interesting reading. This brings me to ~~how~~ what has become a common complaint among the readers, particularly those outside the MITSFS, that of the reportage of meetings being leaden with esoterica. I can understand that this is a just gripe; to remedy the situation, a history (by no means ~~indefinitely~~ brief) is being prepared, as soon as I finish this here editorial, which should explain the traditions and customs of the Society. It should prove illuminating and quite surprising, even to long associates of ours.

As you may have observed by now, this issue does not present one with a plethora of illustrative artwork. Well... we just didn't have very much of it this time around; we are, as always, seeking reasonably good efforts to grace the pages of this publication and would certainly be interested in seeing anything you folks out there have to offer. As for the scarcity of graphics here and now, this should be more than compensated by the upcoming issue, to appear Real Soon Now. We leave you to ponder what that might mean.

-- Gregory Ruffa, from his part-time
living quarters in the offices of the
Lecture Series Committee
May 4, 1973

Journal, c/o MITSFS
Room W20-421, MIT
84 Massachusetts Ave.,
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

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Dear Jo:

You've embarrassed me terribly by running that unexpurgated loc all by itself. I feel as if I'd suddenly realized, a moment after leaving a dinner party, that I didn't give anyone else at the table a chance to say anything all evening long through my domination of the conversation.

But you did something special in the 26th Twilight Zine and I must respond immediately out of gratitude and excitement and such things. The cover is a beautiful illustration, one that wakens the celebrated sense of wonder, it's very well reproduced, the choice of bluish ink to signify the temperature was inspired, but those are minor matters in comparison to what the cover really means to me. It was done by someone who was active in fandom before I was. I get this kind of proof that I'm not the most ancient of fans perhaps only two or three times a year, and every time I run across something of the sort, there is a tintinnabulation of bronze bells and lots of lights flashing on and off in mad rhythm and a temporary illusion that maybe I'm not so terribly old after all. I hope that Morris Scott Dollens turns up in fanzines more often from now on, because this sensation could easily become a pleasant addiction.

I missed Silent Running for a stupid reason: the previews of coming attractions included it the afternoon I went to the movies to see Play Misty for Me and the promotion made Silent Running seem\$ to be the worst sort of juvenile trash, so I didn't go back to the theater the next week and now it won't play in Hagerstown again until it's old enough to be nostalgia fodder. To make things worse, apparently no other fans saw Play Misty for Me and so I have nobody to compare reactions to what I thought were lesbian overtones. Slaughterhouse Five hasn't been to town yet, and I'll try to attend on the basis of this review.

Why feel apologetic about the fact that a year or two sometimes elapses between issues of Twilight Zine? It has been many years since a new Twilight Zone came into existence so you've already topped your namesake's achievements. I refuse to believe that MITSFS is not a fan organization. My definition of fan is someone who does something more involving science fiction than to read it, therefore anyone who collects it or tries to write it or meets other readers of it regularly or becomes chairman of a worldcon committee is a fan, whether or not he wants to be such.

Meanwhile, your library's size is impressive. I don't think statistics exist anywhere on the largest collections of science fiction items, but I doubt that many privately-owned collections top yours, not even holdings of the persons who combine collecting and dealing. The want list at the back of this Twilight Zine is breathtaking in this respect: any collection that can list its American prozine gaps on the equivalent of one uncrowded page is really something.

"Charley Tool and the Submarining Bushwackers" was engrossing and amusing. I thought the opening pages seemed strongly influenced by the early part of the

Mouse that Roared (although I am pretty sure Jean Seberg was more than ten years old when that movie was made) but the development is gratifyingly original. Moreover, the ending is just plumb perfect. The photograph and map were a good bonus, although they made me a trifle unhappy. I was within a few miles of all these exciting things during the Noreascon and never got even a distant glimpse of them because I didn't go more than a mile from the hotel during the con and visibility was next to nothing during both arrival and departure by air.

The Famous Fan Writers' School advertisement is very funny. Next, I hope, you'll do one which will test your readers' ability to copy a drawing and compete for a scholarship at an art correspondence school.

I got a sense of the old style of action science fiction from the latest hunk of "Flash Gordon" and I hope that was the real intent of the story. The development seems a trifle more systematic than I recall the comic strip to have been, and I've seen most of one of the Flash Gordon movie serials since the last time I wrote you a loc, and I know this is a more coherent story than the one someone in Hollywood wrote down between puffs. I can't get away from a dim suspicion that it's all a roman a clef which can't be enjoyed properly by anyone who doesn't know ~~the~~ the people in MITSFS but maybe I'm looking for subtleties that aren't there.

No real complaints from me about the format and reproduction. You may receive a threatening letter ~~from~~ or two from those who have strong ideas about fanzine graphics, but somehow I can enjoy beautiful format and layout when I encounter it, and never notice the absence in a fanzine that just puts the words on the page in a straightforward, no-nonsense manner. A stiff brush applied to the typefaces might have helped some pages, but the very same implement would have made this letter much more clear and easy-to-read, so I don't dare complain.

The Jet Propulsion Laboratories might suggest to you a way to use techniques developed for improving the quality of those photos of Mars on the low-contrast of this letter. The easier procedure, for me to buy a new ribbon, is temporarily out of order, due to a serious shortage of stores in Hagerstown which sell typewriter ribbons and remain open at 11:30 on a Sunday night.

October 22, 1972

Yrs., &c.
Harry Warner, Jr.
423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Dear Harry,

Since I'm typing all this up myself, I may as well also take it upon myself to answer your inquiries as best I can. Please feel no discomfort whatsoever in being the only one with a letter to appear in the last issue. It seems you were the sole correspondent in the interval between TZ25 and 26 and that LOC's have become scarcer than hens' teeth (I ought ~~to~~ to know, having sought long days to purchase some; I was also nearly the proud owner of a bridge spanning New York's fabled East River, but I find that incident painful to relate).

Your comments on the previous issue were most flattering; I'm certain those whose works received such kind remarks will be pleased. However, it should be mentioned that the selection of bluish ink for the cover illo was an inspired choice of the artist and, apparently, not our doing. Thank you nonetheless for your favorable review.

I feel I should warn you that MITSFS does not take kindly to being referred to as a "fan" organization. Our motto ("We're not Fans, we just read the Stuff.") is strictly in keeping with your own definition and our 230 odd Members (that should be hyphenated, maybe?) stand, though many prefer a seated position, as proof of our contentions. True, there ~~are~~ folks here who do more than merely read, but they constitute but a handful (CONTEST: How many Members are in a Handful? The person submitting a guess closest to the correct number wins a fun prize...).

Finally, we did take your ~~advice~~ advice regarding the improvement of the contrast of your epistle. Feeding the document into our natural gas-powered, chain-driven Image Noise Suppressor and Vegetable Slicer was sufficient to turn the trick.

--salvaged from the Society
Circular File and appended
by some editor

Dear Jourcomm:

You know, the more I read Twilight Zines 24 & 25, the more I agree with the inscription on the back of one copy: "You don't understand the MITSFS."

Actually, that's not completely true. I'm in a better position to understand the MITSFS than most, because the New Orleans Science Fiction Association, in its old days, was much like MITSFS today. Totally insane.

Perhaps because of this, I enjoyed the copies of Twilight Zine I received immensely. Particularly, I enjoyed the article on world destruction in #24, and Jean Berman's piece on Elvish in #25. Increasingly, the place to find such serious, general interest articles is in the less prominent zines, like Twilight Zine and Cozine and a few others. The other people spend time arguing about fannishness and faanishness (sic) and who's more fannish than the next, and whether Energumen has a better use of graphics than the next zine, and whether a greater/lesser use of graphics makes you more/less fannish than the next person. And so on, ad nauseum. Jesus. So, after wading through those arguments, I can sit down and really enjoy the articles in Twilight Zine, which is precisely what I sat down and did.

Although you generally lack interior illustrations, your covers are consistently excellent -- both the Pineda and, especially, the Fabian works.

Ah, and the minutes. NOSFAN tries to do its minutes humorously and succeeds. But it's found itself impossible to proceed at a pace faster than at least a page per meeting. You manage to polish off about 31-some odd meetings in a few pages. But perhaps you could fill the outsiders in on some of the more esoteric references -- like 8 - 4 - 1+Spehn? And things like that. The entire MITSFS shorthand makes the whole thing rather maddening -- like there's plenty there, but you're missing most of it.

Nothing more to say, really, so I'll move on from this very nice issue of Twilight Zine and wish you heartily to ~~just~~ keep it up, but a little more frequently.

(Dear Dennis, Forgive me for the brief reply, but I'm nearing the end of the page... may I direct you to the editorials where all, or at least quite a bit, will be clarified. Thanks.)

-- Ed IV

Best,

Dennis Dolbear
217 Betz Avenue
New Orleans, La. 70121

PART FOUR OF VICTOR APPLETREE'S MANUSCRIPT

as edited by Irwin T. Lapeer

(The following is the conclusion of TZ's series on the last Tomm Swift novel. The details of the history of this manuscript are somewhat confused, but it probably didn't happen like this:

Edward Streetmucker,¹ the famed pulp writer and plotter for the Tomm Swift series, and numerous other works, was working on a series of Introductory physics books, writing under the pen-name of A.P. Frenchfry, when he received a letter asking him to produce yet another in the Tomm Swift series, using the name Victor Appletree, even though he had dropped the series 20 years previous. He spent at least fifteen minutes on this task before succumbing to a fatal attack of writher's cramp.

Thus he never realized that the book he had written (for he had indeed finished the writing two full minutes before he died) was based on a plotline which was a complete hoax. A disgruntled student at the Massachusetts Institute of Tooling and Technocracy, having flunked a physics course using AP Frenchfry's book, had sent poor Appletree this "red herring" (which smelled quite bad by the time Appletree received it in the mail): the phoney plotline (which stank to begin with).

However, as always, Appletree's writing was masterful in its execution and, even though the publishers of Grossest and Dumpling rejected the manuscript, TZ has commissioned its finest editors and writers to make sense out of the Mishmash that is Tomm Swift and His Electric Chair.)

Our Story:

So far, we have learned that Tomm, who lived in the village of Shopton, NY, with his imbecilic father and fellow inventor, Burton Swift, and their housekeeper, kindly Mrs Baggett, had won membership in the Legion of Mad Scientists² by inventing the electric yo-yo (as recounted in *Tomm Swift and His Electric Yoyo*). Tomm had come to Boston to attend the L of MS convention, but is soon in a mad race for his life, as he has been accused of ~~murdering~~ murdering his long time faithful enemy and all around bad sport, Andy Foegar, whom Tomm had indeed attacked in a fit of rage upon discovering that Tomm's girlfriend, Mary Nextdoor, had left him for Andy.

Tomm escapes from pursuit of the Legion, but now the Orthodox American Scientists Against Backyard Inventors (OASABI) long foes of the L of MS, is after him. Tomm's old friend, Ike Newton, rescues him in a balloon, but the craft is shot down by the OASABI. Tomm steals a car in downtown Boston, but, after a harrowing chase across the Charles River, he is trapped by the Mass. Inst. of Tooling and Technocracy SF Society.

Mistaking Tomm for an overdue bookholder, a spell is cast upon our hero, and he is put in suspended animation. Four years later, he awakens, and, ~~paying~~ paying the appropriate fines by borrowing money from his old friend, Wakefield Demon, who just happens to show up at the right time, Tomm returns to Shopton to clear his name.

When he arrives at Mary Nextdoor's house, though, Tomm finds the L of MS, the OASABI, a remote unit from the MIT radiot station, and a strange monolith of dimensions one by four by nine cubits, with the voice of the late Andy Foegar, waiting in surprise for him!

The Mad Scientists were still discussing what to do with Tomm, when the OASABI, who had been incapacitated³ by the strange tank-like vehicle which served as the remote radio unit, finally got back on their feet.

"Biters!" shouted the leader of the OASABI. "You won't touch Tomm Swift! We know he's the*murder and we're going to collect the reward."

"No you don't," replied a member of the L of MS. "Tomm is one of our members! And we Mad Scientists stick together. So if anybody is going to turn in Tomm, it'll be US!"

"By the way, how much did you say that reward was for?"

¹Erroniously referred to as Edwin Streetmeyer in TZ 18.

²Hereafter referred to as the L of MS.

³If it weren't for this tank, which has given free rides to various friends of our hero throughout the story, then the bad men would have won the capacitors⁴ but as it was, they were incapacitated. Besides, the capacitors had already been awarded in the beginning of the book, 4 years previous.

⁴The capacitors referred to a prize of 5000 oil-filled paper capacitors offered by Burton Swift for any information regarding the whereabouts of his son Tomm.

"I believe Burton Swift is offering 5000 oil-filled paper capacitors," replied the stocky leader of the OASABI.

The Mad Scientists were ceased⁵ by a sudden desire for the famed oil-filled capacitors of Burton Swift! "We gotta get them capacitors!" they shouted in unison.

"No so fast," said a strange voice.

"Andy! You're Back!" cried Tomm. "They told me you were dead."

"That doesn't make any difference any more. Where have you been the last four years? After I died, I became a cyborg, and now I'm happily working for Project Electric Chair."

"My father's own project," Tomm breathed out in amazement.

"And as for those 5000 capacitors, through a series of dummy corporations they have come into my possession!" gloated Andy.

"Then we'll just take them from you," cried the L of MS and the OASABI in chorus. "But where are you? Why can't we see you?"

"I'm right here." And with that, the strange monolith once again appeared. "I draw my energy to materialize myself from the powersource of your friend Wakefield Demon's electric Rolls Royce. So he hasn't gotten away, Tomm! ⁶ Ha ha!"

"Quick, attack him." The various scientists shouted, but none of them could take one step in the direction of the strange stone monolith.

"You see, I am sending out a force field to keep you away from me. In my new form, I have strange new powers," gloated the big Bully. "You won't touch me! And you won't touch Tomm—at least, not until I've evened a few scores with this fellow myself."

CHAPTER !) 10 WHITEWASH!

What, indeed, could all this mean to our ~~toru~~ troubled hero? Tomm was in quite a bind. The great stone monolith which had become Andy Foegar was standing over him, ready to pounce with evil intent; for as the young tough had always threatened, he was going to get even with our hero one of these days.

A streak of high energy yellow light flashed out from the monolith. "That's for getting in the way of my motorcar!" Zap! "And for making me look like a fool when you robbed the Shopton Bank, and then planted the money on the Happy Harry gang, while you were 'arresting' them so it would look like they'd done it."

Another vicious streak of yellow flashed out of the Andy monolith.

"Yipes!" said Tomm in amazement. "What did you do that for?"

⁵"seized" for the gentry.

⁶Wakefield had intended to travel on to Toronto as part of the clean air car race, but since his air car was dirty, he had to take the Rolls.

"That was for sticking me with your lousy girlfriend, Mary Nextdoor! What a pig," exclaimed Andy. "With her you can never tell if you're coming or going."

"I imagine you've had evil intentions towards dear Miss Nextdoor," said Tomm merrily, "But you'll never get her! She's a virtuous woman."⁷

"Oh, yeah?" Said Andy menacingly. "Then how do you explain this?" And suddenly, right before the eyes of our astonished hero, there appeared the shimmering and sensuous unclad body of Mary Nextdoor!

"Oh my gosh," Tomm ejaculated.

"Damn my rooster," said cheerful old Mr Wakefield Demon, who had been watching Andy beat our hero up for the last twenty minutes without much interest.⁸

"Hah-hah!" cried Andy gleefully. "I've managed to distract you with a hologram-image of Miss Lebanon-USA, and now I can strike the final blow!"

But the monolithic Andy was suddenly stopped in his treads, as a bucket of whitewash was slammed against his side. "MY energy is draining away," cried the cinderblock bully.

"Eradicate Samson!" cried Tomm with unabashed Good Humor, as he quickly perceived the faithful old darky's ice cream wagon, drawn by that recalcitrant honkey, Boomerang.

"Yassuh, tha's me all rite. I's 'Radicate Samson, ah is? Das what dey call me, cos I 'radicates da dirt, I do," the old colored man grinned broadly, eyes gleaming, his pearly white teeth shining.

"But Rad," said Tomm radiantly, "just four years ago you'd given up your image, and joined the Panthers. Why did you change back into your good old humble self again?"

"Well, jive my soul food, but you musta been out a things fo' quite a spell dere, Tommy. Don jew know dat all us blacks is goin back to our own ways, an' our own cultures? Non a dat jive straight talk, nossuh, we gwan talk our own way! We gwan do our own native true cultural hisorical occupations, and live in our own true cultural lifestyles! As bums, dat is." And Eradicate ~~max~~ started shaking a tamborine, in natural rhythm, to emphasize his point.

"But why is your wagon painted up to look like an ice cream wagon," asked Tomm, once again in good humor, in case you missed that pun the last time around.

"Well, suh, I seen but that I had to make some changes with the times. So now I sells my whitewash as chobolate chip ice cream. And I got a white Australian to pull my wagon."

"Well damn my wallaby," said devilish Mr Demon, addresssing a small fellow who was pulling the wagon, "But you must be the honky named Boomerang that Mr Samson was talking about."

"'At's right, matey, and me thinks ittud pay yer to keep it under yer hat if I was you," said the quaint little Aussie.

⁷ It may be of interest to note that in the book **Tomm Swift and His Trailer Park** (or, **A Blight on the Landscape**) written in 1929, Tomm and Mary were united in Holy Matrimony, so they had been married for almost 40 years when Streetmucker ~~gx~~ began this present epic. However, Streetmucker, always the clever author, has Tomm refer to his beloved by her maiden name, thus giving the reader a sharp insight into the character of Streetmucker's hero. There is no truth to the rumor that this incisive character portrayal is due to Streetmucker's failing memory. It still does remain a mystery, however, why Tomm was described in the original (pre-edited) manuscript of **The Electric Chair** as aquaint old bunny rabbit with long ears and rheumatism.

⁸ He had failed to invest his time wisely.

"But I still don't understand," said petit little Mary Nextdoor, who had stepped outside to see what the commotion was all about. She was, of course, fully dressed, for this was really her, and not just a hologram. "How did throwing a bucket of whitewash onto that piece of stone that had become Andy Foegar stop him in his treads?"

"Well, ma'am, I come up here, an' I sees my good friend, Tomm, in dire trouble, I duz, cos I see that there's this big hunk a rock, this monolith, attackin' him. An' I sez to myself, I sez, 'Rad,' I sez, What's that wall doin' attackin' yer good friend?"

"So I gets into my wagon, gets a bucket a whitewash, an' I proceeds to paint that there wall a nice clean white. An, sure enuff, that robs him uv all his energy.

"Cuz, you see, anything that's a whitewall has gotta tire sooner or later."

CHAPTER THE NEXT

Rocks of Ruck!

"All right, Mary Nextdoor, since we're getting close to the end of the book, you tell us how Andy Foegar became a monolith," Tomm demanded.

"Well, remember a band called the Electric Clams?" asked Mary, reminiscently.

"Yes. That was several years ago, I believe. Isn't that their one hit, 'Cla m Jam,' playing in the background?"

"Indeed it is, Tomm, said Mary agreeably. "Well, Andy was jealous of their success. He decided he wanted to be a rock star!"

"Damn my ear-drums," said dear old Demon, "but don't tell me that's why Andy went out and got stoned!"

"Yes. A passing Herman's Hermit turned him into a monolith. But he was made out of calcite, so when he tried dropping acid he fizzed out."

"He must have lost his marbles," said the limey from down under.

"I always took that for granite," said Tomm.

"Well, that's the schist of the story," concluded Mary. "Of course, there's more to the story."

-11-

"Of quartz, there must be more," said Tomm. "Please continue."

"Well, all I know is for ten years he's been on his own, and Moss grows fat on a rolling stone, but that's not how it used to be..." concluded Mary.

"What sort of hermit changed him into stone?" asked Eradicate, tokenly.

"Perhaps an Anchorite," replied Mary, brokenly.

"An Ankor-wat?" asked Tomm, stupidly.

"An Anchorite is a type of monk, or hermit. It's also a kind of material similar to calcite," someone said, geologically.

"That's good to know. Let me write it down. Can I borrow your Pnohm-pen?" asked Tomm, straining for a pun.

"It's only good for writing pnohm-de-plumes," someone else siad, incoherently.

"We'd better stop this phnonsense by ending the chapter here," said the author, which he did.

CHAPTER THE ONE AFTER THE PREVIOUS

Armageddon Unleashed!

But now that the monolith's strange and mysterious powers had ebbed from Andy Foegar's stony facade, the mysterious death rays and the powerful energy shields which had been keeping the Legion of Mad Scientists and the minions of the OASABI from beyond the reach of our hero finally subdued to a hue of true blue and, like the tents of the Arab caravans, were silently stealing away into the thin air of high tension which surrounded the spectators of this spectacle, glassy-eyed and breathless; until, finally, no trace of the rays remained.

And thus, freed from the bonds of energy which Andy had placed about them, the two mighty legions of enraged scientists, deadly rivals, were able to face each other, head to head, eyeball to eyeball, in a cretacious confrontation.

From one end of Maple street, forming from a ragged line of crazed, wild-eyed horses, the phalanx of the Orthodox American Scientists Against Backyard Inventors came thundering. The dust and sparks from their horses hoofs, the rattle and clatter of their chains gnashing against the pavement, the thunder and lightning of the tumultuous throng echoed, sounded and resounded, bouncing off the stately elms which lined the street, and made the very doors of the neighborhood houses shudder and tremble.

From the other end of Maple street, the whistles and high whines of the mighty machines of war of the dread Legion of Mad Scientists shrieked in ever increasing volume, building decibel upon decibel, as the twisted metal groaned under the unbelievable pressures put in force by the twisted minds of the L of MS; atom smashed atom, molecules ripped electrons from other molecules, and electrons themselves flashed as they leaped from shell to shell, unleashing the unbelievable microwatts of power, to be thrown into the fatal struggle.

Ever more threateningly, the two mobs thundered closer and closer to their final engagement, their ultimate confrontation the outcome of which could lead to the very destruction of worlds, and the final Doom of Armageddon!

CHAPTER 14 A Disparate Plot!

Tomm and his companions watched in amazement as the two fire-breeding, fiercely rival groups were about to meet in battle before their very eyes. Mary Nextdoor clutched Tomm in trembling and fear; our hero did his best to comfort his beloved. Wakefield Demon, too stunned to dam his overflow of emotions, stood silent. The Andy Foegar Memorial Monolith sat stilled, its stony face pale with fear and whitewash. Eradicate Samson, the faithful darky, felt his newly Afro-coiffured hair stand on edge⁹ while his faithful, if lazy, honkey Boomerang, in stark terror, munched a carrot.

From the dustcloud of the mad riders of the OASABI emerged their swayback-mounted strong swarthy Skinner~~X~~, shrieking, "Whoosh, Whoosh!" and swinging an enormous wrench.

From the grinding gears of the L of MS rolled forth a tall, blond-haired, blue-eyed Nordic, standing in stark defiance of the thundering herd.

Immediately, both armies ceased their offensive. The tall blond youth, head of the L of MS, spoke out in clear, cold, carefully reasoned tones. "You shan't go any farther," he shouted, "you OASABI's. Tomm Swift shall be ours!"

"Cease!" cried the stocky Skinner; and he hurled his wrench directly at the L of MS leader!"

The Nordic, who was busy posing for pictures for the Victory Yearbook, didn't see the Skinner's mighty weapon hurtling towards him. The giant tool, flung from the Skinner's hand, struck the Nordic squarely, and shattered.

⁹When his hair stood on edge, it naturally straightened out, and several combs, a couple of pens, and a collection of James Brown records fell out.

"You miserable wrench!" cried the Skinner in anguish as he examined the broken pieces of his lonely tool.

"Sigh," said the Nordic.

Open warfare was about to begin anew, when the strange tank-like vehicle which had rescued our hero Tomm twice already suddenly appeared. A short student popped out.

"OASABI's! Mad Scientists! Stop! Listen to me!" he cried. "You must halt your petty quarrelling at once, and return to MITT immediately! We need every man we can get--the Sons of Boston are revolting!"

"That's right...sure are..." muttered the members of the two rival groups, as they stopped to comprehend the awful news.

Tomm jumped up quickly onto the tank. "Well, let's not just stand here," he shouted, rallying the men on. "Let's get those S.O.B.'s!"¹⁰

CHAPTER 15

The Fruits of Victory

"Boy, Tomm, you sure showed those Sons of Boston what happens when they try to pit themselves against a Swift mind!" exclaimed Tomm's friend Ike Newton.

"Damn my mouth if that isn't the truth," Wakefield Demon endorsed.

"Oh come on now," replied Tomm bashfully. "I couldn't have done it without your help."

The two lads and their elderly gentleman friend were sitting and sitting in the waiting room of Burton Swift's newly remodelled mansion, discussing their exploits in defeating the dread Sons of Boston.

"Why thank you, ma'am," said Ike, as he accepted a glass of prune juice from kindly Mrs Baggit, and elderly woman who set up housekeeping with Burton Swift after the mysterious death of the elderly inventor's wife twenty years previous.¹¹

"Damn my kidneys, I'll have some of that, too," said wakeful Mr Demon.

¹⁰See TZ 18, part 1 of this serial, to see where this joke was stolen from. SOB stands for Sons of Boston.

¹¹We're quite aware that this deserves a footnote of explanation but we don't understand it either.

"What about you, Tommy?" cackled matronly Mrs Baggit. "A growing boy needs his strength. You know that what you eat, you are."

"No thank you, ma'am. I wouldn't want to spoil my apatite for dinner," said rock-hound Tomm. "What's cooking for tonight?"

"Steamed clams and peyote sauce. Burton said he'd found such nice, tasty delights when he was visiting Mussel Beach in California. We're also having montelimat, and perhaps a ginger sling with a pineapple heart, with a coffee dessert..."

"Steamed clams! How electrifying!" squealed dainty Miss Mary Nextdoor, even though she was not present.

"This is especially good sauce," Mrs Baggit continued. "You might not feel it now, but when the pain cuts through you're going to know, and how the sweat is going to fill your head when it becomes too much..." she muttered to herself, chuckling.

"I'm afraid I don't have enough juice for both you and young Ike," the dear old lady continued, addressing the longeared gentleman. "But I'll send in Mrs Gaga with another bottle."

"Mrs Gag?" asked Tomm, but he was cut short by a sparkle in Mrs Baggit's eye.

"You've been gone for four years, Tomm," she said gently.

And, to Tomm's astonishment, who should walk in but the nubile daughter of his giant friend Kaku, the beautiful Kako. And in her arms was the object of his astonishmnet--a darling 3 month old baby!

"I didn't know," said Tomm exclaimingly. "Congratulations!"

"That's right," the former Miss Kako explained. "I was already married the last time you saw me, Ike. A lovely football player from Hackensack offered his hand in marriage, and I accepted. And this is little Kaku Jr."

Smiling a radiant smile, lovely Kako left the room.

"Damn my juicegãass," said the incredulous Wakefield Demon, staring after the giantess. "She certainly is a big mother!"

"But I still don't understand," said Ike some time later, as he was finishigg his glass of prune juice. "What exactly happened to the Sons of Boston?"

And Tomm explained how this soçiety, dedicated to preserving the Boston Commons, had met in such great numbers during a rally April 10, 1943, that the entire commons, heaving a horrible shudder, sank twenty feet and was flooded by the Charles Basin, thus wiping out every last SOB.

"And that was the downfall of the Sons of Boston," concluded Tomm.

"Damn my lower intestines," muttered Wakefield, "but this is the worst wine I've ever tasted."

"It's not wine. It's prune juice," Tomm started to explain, when he was stopped by a sudden look of anguish on the aged industrialist's face.

"Tomm," croaked the old man, "where is the little boy's room?"

"I'll show you," volunteered Ike. Tomm looked in horror; his friend also had a look of excruciating anxiety on his face!"

And in the kitchen, Tomm could hear dear Mrs Baggit, who had been busy preparing the sauce for the electric clambake, walking about as if she were in a drugged stupor!

CHAPTER 16

A Treatorous Threat

"It must be the work of one of those evil groups of scientists," thought Tomm to himself. A determined look set on his face. "I must return to Boston immediately!"

Confident that he had lost the two rival groups of antagonists in the streets of Boston on his previous visit there, Tomm had returned home to Shopton with no further thought of them. But now, the sudden illnesses which had struck at his friends made him reconsider his position.

There was also the fully automated Andy Foegar Memorial Monolith to consider. Tomm already owed 'Rad Samson for 4900 buckets of whitewash. And these days, whitewash was harder to get than ever, due to the dirt-slinging activities of Foegar's comrade in evil, Dirt Pearson¹² and his sidekick, Jack Asterisk, the wondering boy.

And there was also the question of the radio call for help concerning the SOB's that had been picked up by the tank. Where had it originated?

And what was project Electric Chair? Would it ever get under way? "For that matter," our hero pondered to himself, "How can I stop it?"

¹²Ever since the first installment of this thrilling saga, back in TZ 18, you may have been wondering what Dirt Pearson had to do with Tomm Swift. That's a good question. At any rate, this reference here shows that Streetmucker never forgot a character, no matter how obscure, from chapter to chapter in his books.

CHAPTER 17

Ellipses of the Son...

And so, with determination in his heart, Tomm resolutely set out once again for the pilgrim streets of Boston, home of democracy, bastion of liberty, pinnacle of the founding truths, and presently fourth place in the American League.

On the road again...his friends in mortal pain behind him; his enemies preparing their cunning schemes before him; but... alone and unafraid, Tomm continued, prepared to meet what might come; prepared to meet the ultimate of what the brilliant but twisted minds of the OASABI, the cruel and sabrelike cunning of the L of MS, the crazed insanities of the MITTSFS, could throw into the coming battle.

Peace was in his mind. Tomm was prepared to vanquish his foes...or die, trying.

Alone, in the air, flying along in his airship, the monoplane Butterfly, he followed the Turnpike from Stockbridge to Boston... there were light snow flurries in the cool, crisp September air, and the Bershires seemed dream-like on account of that frosting...

And Tomm thought back on his long, eventful life, as he prepared himself for what he knew might be his last battle. It seemed pitifully short to him, as he thought back over his previous adventures. It seemed as if he had only ten miles behind him, and ten thousand more to go.

He recalled his first meeting with Andy Foegar...when he had run Andy's motorcar off the road, causing severe injury to the reckless youth...poor Andy! To be condemned for all eternity to live as a heartless cyborg!

And yet, Andy was still too dangerous to set loose. And 'Rad was running out of whitewash.

On the spur of the moment, Tomm decided what he'd do about Andy. He'd change the cyborg slab's last name to Jackson, and donate this modern-day Stone Wall "Jackson" to the Alabama Museum of the Confederacy.

"Besides," he said to himself, "they're certain to keep him white down there."

That decision accomplished, Tomm let his mind roam again... back to the wonderful days of the past...his good friends Ike... and Demon...

And Mary. Sweet Mary Nextdoor. He choked, and nearly stalled, feeling the Butterfly in his stomach as he whispered those sweet words in his mouth...

He recalled his first date...in the back seat of his roadster... and after, when he took her out to the barn to show her his rooster...

And the tears came to our hero's eyes, as he thought about his first motorcar...the one with the sausages for tires...

And then, breaking out of his reverie, the longeared gentleman adjusted the skillimagink balloon that held his airship afloat, and with renewed determination, set off again to face his destiny and seek his fortune; and perhaps have an adventure...

CHAPTER 18

Tomm in a Jam!!!

Nobody was around when he landed his monoplane on the Boston Commons, and boarded the Park Street subway for MITT. He felt strangely alone in the completely empty subway car, as it roared through the pitch-black subway tunnels.

Leaving the subway at Kendall Square Station, he tried to change for Jamaica Plains, but when he got there the conductor told him, "One More Nickel," so Tomm decided to get off the train.

In a dark corner of downtown Cambridge, Tomm walked alone; until out of the shadows came a short, thin man, with shoulder-length hair, wearing dirty moccasins.

"Must be an Indian," thought Tomm. "And if he's a Mormon, he might think he's a Son of David."

"Wanna ride the MTA?" asked the stranger.

"You mean the MBTA, don't you?" replied Tomm.

"Wanna buy some pictures of a real Sweet Baby, James?"

"I'm sorry, by my name is not James. It's Tomm."

"Are you

"Are you hungry? I know where we can get a good Savoy Truffle."

"Sorry, I..."

"Or how about a nice American Pie?"

"Sorry. On Fridays I usually go out to have Chinese food."

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"All right! He's the one!" shouted the strange man, and suddenly thousands of people arose to greet Tomm---the OASABI! the L of MS! the MITTSFS!

"Thank God you're here, Tomm. We need you desperately. We knew we'd get the code word to you somehow!"

"Code?" asked Tomm, as he looked amazedly at the people he thought had been his enemies, just hours before.

"That's right," said a scholarly, white-haired man. "Let me explain the situation to you, Tomm. As you know, Dirt Pearson and Jack Asterisk have been getting all sorts of secret information. We think they're using electronic bugs, but we don't know how to stop them."

"That's right," chimed in a member of the OASABI. "We don't dare say anything at our board meetings anymore. We've got to stay clammed up all the time."

"If only you could think of a new device to do the clamming up for us, and jam out those electric bugs!" said an L of MS member.

"And if only we had something to eat while we were out here in this cold street," said someone else. "I'm hungry. Say, Tomm, did kindly old Mrs Baggit give you anything to take along with you when you left? Something to eat, maybe?"

"I've got some electric clams, if you want..." he started to reply.

"Electric Clams! Just the thing!" all the others shouted.

"Electric Clams! Brilliant!"

"Remember the Clam Jam?"

"It's sure to work!"

"Tomm," said the gray-haired man, "you're a genius."

Overwhelmed, Tomm modestly allowed the multitude to carry him on their shoulders all the way back to the steps of MITT.

"Gosh," he said, "I can hardly wait to solve my next important adventure."

Little did he realize the troubles he'd be faced with when he would run up against a pseudo-scientific group of religious fanatics, in Tomm Swift and His Deus Ex Machina!

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CHAPTER THE LAST

The Secret of Project Electric Chair

There were banners overhead, and people cheering, and bands playing, as Tomm sat at the main table the next day at the grand celebration. Speeches and songs were given in his honor. Folk-dancers and Indians performed native rites to proclaim his glory.

And finally--the President Himself stepped to the rostrum to speak.

"You all know of the Project we've been working on for so many years. Today we have gathered to celebrate its successful completion.

"Tomm, with your idea of having Electric Clams do their Clam Jam to clam up the electric bugs we've been fighting against for so long, you have helped save the country.

"I know we'll all be happy to know that, in honor of all they've done for us, I'm going to buy all our country's clams from Howard Johnson's place, since his Institution is famous for their marvelous feats in this field."

There were cheers from the thousands of people attending. And then, the head of MITT stepped to the podium.

"Thank you, Mr President. I appreciate what you've done for us at MITT.

"But of course, we will need to expand our electrical engineering staff considerably to perfect the device. We'll need to set up a special professorship, of course.

"And there's only one man I'd want to run the new operation," the MITT chairman continued. "There's only one man to whom I would give this Special Professorship in Electrical Engineering.

"Tomm Swift--I offer you the reward for this Project.

"Tomm Swift--I give you: The Electric Chair!"

Ritzy Passion

-Balmer Lyman

Mine is just another sad tale of an innocent young Hydrogen atom gone wrong.

Yes, I know what you think about hydrogen atoms. You think we're all just flighty, light-headed protons, flashing around with barely an electron to cover us, flitting about wherever we may please. But it's not true. I mean, we have feelings, too.

Oh, I was young and carefree once, and mindless of the responsibilities of life. I confess, I was more interested in getting together with some of my girlfriends and flitting about, looking at all the handsome Anions in the neighborhood, and not interested in finding a good, steady Carbon and settling down ... at least, not yet.

We used to go to our share of wild parties. We used to think it was fun to talk racy about "Fusing" or "Ionizing". But, we were basically good girls.

It was at a real hot party at a White Dwarf's place that I met him -- I'll call him Harry.

Harry was strong, flashy and exciting -- he made my electrons stand out on their p-orbitals, let me tell you. And, I'm proud to say, I do have a set of good-looking orbitals.

Well, we spent an eon or two together, and I'll say my electron was getting pretty far out, when he kind of edged me off to a side and said, "Hey baby -- this party's too cool for me. What say we split -- I could really show you a good time."

Now, I'm a daughter atom from a long and respected line of Hydrogens, and I've had a good upbringing. My mother warned me about men like him. But there was something in his tone of voice -- so smooth, so daring that I couldn't turn him down. Ah, it would have been better had I never been born!

His next words were right from the script: I should have known better. "Ever see a star go Nova?" he asked. I knew what he meant. But I couldn't turn him down. Perhaps it was the night, or the excitement and all those free-flowing neutrinos at the party; but like a fool, I said, "I'd love to."

Oh, glittering is the path in the downfall of a Hydrogen ...

For Harry wasn't interested in seeing just any nova ... no -- he was about to plunge me into the biggest supernova of my life!

"Just over here ... a little closer ... a little closer ... ah ha!!!" I was trapped into the powerful gravitational forces of a terrible, blaring hot sun, trapped with Harry, the beast!

My electron was ripped from me, leaving a bare, naked proton exposed to the worst of this sun, when suddenly -- it happened! The sun novaed!

Falling and tumbling and raging deeper and deeper into that hell -- with Harry right beside me, saying, "Hey baby -- let's FUSE!!!"

Well, I survived. I'm here to tell my story. Harry was destroyed in the blaze, as befits such a monster.

But the scars still stay with me. Now, marked for life, a disgrace to my family, I struggle through life, unwanted, disgraced: a Deutonium atom.



(Extracted, distilled, freeze-dried and reconstituted from minutes of past meetings, as faithfully taken down by the now Former Onseck, and still Former Onseck; contains less than 1/10 of 1% benzoate of soda to retard spoilage; see side of package for directions and exciting recipes . . .)

9/17/71 The Society reestablished its control of the Spofford Room, after a summer's absence and, with its usual fine sense of timing, got the first meeting of the new academic year under way at precisely 5 PM Society Standard Time.

RandomLibcomm -- Swanson returned from the West Coast with gifts for the Society, including two books on evolution from the Jehovah's Witnesses, Ted Owens' How to Contact Space People and other nifty little items we wish he'd left in California.

Cofincomm -- The Society is on interlibrary loan with the University of Dayton Library. They pay the cost of xeroxing of the desired material and we send them the copies. Simple, no?

People's Albanian Embassy -- Complained that our collection was sadly lacking in Albanian science fiction. He learned the penalty for making such gripes: he was directed to send a letter to Albania, written in Albania, to arrange donations.

A motion was made to censure inflation in general and was amended to indicate our equal great faith in Pres. Nixon and the Dean Drive. It was suggested that, in view of the nature of the motion, inflated counts be taken. Hence, the motion passed at 23 - 1 - 1+Spehn; however, inflation once again took its toll and the motion passed 69 - 10 - 25+Spehn.

The problem from 6.48 ("Problem Solving") about bringing the entire world to the U.S. to join in its 200th birthday celebration was described in all its awesome detail.

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It was moved to make the Skinner the logistics officer for the project; this passed at 5 - 0 - 1+Spehn.

Minicult(Mailman) -- He had been looking through the Ted Owens book and said that the man's name struck a familiar chord. He believed that this is the same man who presently writes extortion letters to American football teams, threatening to influence their games by the use of psychokinesis unless they pay him off.

It was moved to pay Mr. Owess a bushel of bananas to prevent his influence over upcoming MIT football games. This passed at 18 - 2 - 0+Spehn.

9/24 Rossicult (as relayed by Alpert) -- Concerned a medical malpractice suit in which an Irish cop, who had come to the hospital for the removal of hemorrhoids, was circumcised by mistake.

Minicult (Swanson) -- Reported that America's favorite flavor of yogurt seems to be banana.

He moved that we join the merry throng and serve banana yogurt at the next Society picnic. This passed at 16 - 4 - 2+Spehn.

10/1 Rossicult -- Expounded upon the case of a Florida man who lost a negligence suit, as the accident was declared an "act of God." The man then brought a suit against God and Company for damages, but the case was thrown out of court for lack of jurisdiction.

It was moved to make Ross the public defender for the Deity, which passed at 7 - 4 - 5+Spehn. It was then moved to express sympathy for same deity. This passed more overwhelmingly at 20 - 1 - 2+Spehn.

10/8 Minicult (Nussbaum) -- Encountered a NASA document entitled "This Island Earth." He promised to determine its purpose and content. He then introduced his companion, Morris, the Giant Banana, who had emblazoned on his yellow skin the blue oval emblem of Chiquita.

10/15 It was moved to blend the best qualities of the Star Chamber and make the result a candidate for Ugliest Man On Campus. The motion passed at 16 & 2 cleats - 9 & 2 boots - 10 & 2 boots+Spehn.

The motion to declare Nussbaum as UDOC passed at 15 - 5 - 4 +Spehn. The amendment to read "Alpert" for "Nussbaum" failed at 3 - much more than 3 - 4+Spehn.

There was a move to censure Van Houtte for going on a 37-day diet of amino acids and other food constituents and for taking his meal in public. No responses were heard, so the motion was permitted to exist, although not seconded.

The first Miller motion slipped through at 17 - 11 - 6+ Spehn. This created a panic among the assembly, but the Skinner saved the day with a miraculous "natural constant change", defining the first Miller motion to be the second.

10/22 The table in the Spofford Room was set in the manner of a dining room of the Baroque period: the candelabrum was lit, there was a centerpiece of freshly-cut flowers and the plates and silverware were in perfect array. Chamber music played softly as Ray Van Houtte dined on a superbly-prepared amino acid and a truly splendid butter and sipped a fine vintage ginger ale. The sole departures from the expected were that a large titanium block shared the table and that four stern-faced individuals were seated behind it, stealing angry glances at Van Houtte. Suddenly, one of those persons (apparently the one in authority) whipped out an enormous wrench and slammed it repeatedly on the metallic oblong, calling for order in stentorian tones. As one might well imagine, the moment of this incident was 5 PM Society Standard Time.

Almost anticlimactically, the Secretary followed this occurrence by reading the minutes of the meeting before and Definition signalled confirmation. Nussbaum took the opportunity to hurl a small bag at Swanson, who opened the bag and, perceiving its contents, grimaced and flung it out the second-story window. On request, Nussbaum identified the mysterious item contained within as a "marzipan banana."

The motion to censure Swanson for littering and otherwise damaging the environment laid an egg at 5 - 8 - 10+Spehn. The Vice insisted, however, that he was merely executing a Ross motion.

Libcomm -- Davidson made the announcement of plans to put an envelope in the Library to collect photos of keyholders. He added, "Seeing the pictures will show that none of them can be worse than mine."

It was moved to censure Libcomm for being right and amended to further censure him for belaboring the obvious. The motion passed at 21 - 5 - 5+Spehn.

Minicult (Davidson) -- Reported a determination by the Department of Gross Units that one mile per gallon is approximately equal to $1.6970 \cdot 10^{10}$ acres⁻¹.

Minicult (Alpert) -- Discovered an interesting historical fact, corroborated by several sources, that Empress Catherine the Great died because "they were lowering a horse onto her and the chain broke." Swanson demanded an explanation, which Alpert declined to give: this proved to be sufficient explanation.

A motion was made to purchase a horse for the post of Telzey Amberdon, which, depending on whom you would believe, either failed at not many - more than not many - random+Spehn or else passed at 37 - 5 - 5+Spehn.

Minicult (Timmreck) -- Noted that the Boston Herald Traveler has been giving a play-by-play account of Asimov's divorce trial.

The motion to censure the Canadian government for depicting a graven image of the Institute mascot on the back on their nickels passed at 21 - 3 - 3+Spehn.

Minicult (Fox) -- Talked about the thermodynamics class at a naval academy, which was contemplating the concept of absolute zero. A student had asked how cold that was, to which the tutor responded, "Bananas get awfully hard at that temperature!"

It was moved that the Society conduct the necessary research to verify this fact. The motion passed at 17 - 8 - 7+Spehn. The meeting's attendance then dropped to absolutely zero at 5:38.

10/29 Duncan Allen moved to double the Society's support to the United Nations. He appeared somewhat distressed to hear that said support was already negative, so he allowed the motion to be amended to read "League of Nations" for "United Nations." The motion, with its rider, passed at unanimous - one - one+Spehn.

Minicult (Swanson) -- Divulged a new get-rich-quick scheme: just sell your allotment of DNA, after purification (the going rate is several thousand dollars an ounce).

Minicult (Allen) -- After some amount of calculation, he enlightened us with the startling fact that if two million cubic miles of dirt were put into orbit, the length of a day would shrink by one second.

It was moved, in the interest of fairness, to dedicate a room in honor of Manis, who appears on the Institute seal, because there is already an abundance of Mens rooms. When the groans subsided, the motion passed at unanimous less three - 6 - 3+Spehn.

11/5 It was moved to censure the GSC for failing to post Pogo, The Wizard of Id and other fine comic strips on the graduates' bulletin board, as they had in the past. The motion passed at 15 with hiccup - 0 - 2+Spehn. It was further suggested that a note apprizing the GSC of the Society's decision be placed on said board by Analogcomm.

11/12 Nussbaum finally learned that the mysterious NASA monograph, "This Island Earth" (call number TL521.a33 #250), is a collection of pictures of our planet.

The Secretary's pen finally gave up the ghost; his cries of anguish were answered with a shower of assorted writing implements from the audience, some coming so close as to seriously jeopardize his life. After the Onseck thanked the munificent crowd and selected a pen in working order, the perennial unanswered question, "Just what is mightier than the Sword?", got a response of "The Gavel!" A duel is to be scheduled between Alpert, armed with a fencing foil, and Swanson, with the Gavel, to determine the veracity of this remark.

After a brief scuffle in the center of the chamber, Paula Lieberman managed to get her chair yanked out from under her. This caused her to be regarded as a motion on the floor, which passed at 21 - 0 - two motions on the floor (hers)+Spehn.

In honor of the law firm of which he is currently a member, Ross made a Miller, Pierce and Miller motion which was seconded, thirded, fourthed, . . . and Skewes' number factorialized

($10^{1010^{34}}$) and then failed at 6 - 10 π - 2+Spehn.

Minicult (Swanson) -- Expounded upon the sale of Peru to a Mr. Federow for 25¢ and its eventual repossession by the Society. The Vice offered up Peru for bidding and, after a brisk session of transactions in every imaginable form of currency (and a few which were unimaginable), the Society cash register rang up "No Sale."

The subsequent question was moved and this motion passed at 21 plus 6 fingers - 4 - 4+Spehn. It was moved to tune the Gavel Block to the resonant frequency of the Spofford Room, amended to read "the Institute" for "the Spofford Room", amended again to read "Institute Gray" for "the Institute", and further amended to read "Nussbaum" for "Institute Gray." The amendments were rejected by a vote of 7 - ∞ - 3+Spehn. The original motion then appeared in a revised edition: "to tune the Gavel Block to the beat frequency of the Spofford Room and the Institute," which automatically passed.

JACK OF BAGLES and other stories

-- Doug Hoylman

A recent issue of F&SF introduced a competition in which the object was to take a familiar science-fictional name or phrase and, by changing or omitting one letter, turn it into something interesting. I filled up the inside back cover of my copy with potential entries, but the rules limited me to six. Now I hate to waste anything, so I thought I might as well publish the ones I didn't sned in. Some of them are pretty bad, but, on the other hand, the rest are worse.

The Currants of Space, by Isaac Asimov

The City and the Scars, by Arthur C. Clarke

The Naked Fun, by Isaac Asimov

The Demolished Can, by Alfred Bester

The Devil is Dad, by R.A. Lafferty

Dandelion Wino, by Ray Bradbury

To Your Scattered Bogies Go, by Phillip Jose Farmer

The Day the Earth Stood Swill

Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Womb

Nerve, by Lester Del Rey

The Bribe of Frankenstein

Dracula Has Risen from the Gravy

The World of Dull-A, by A.E. vanVogt

Jack of Bagles, by James Blish

The Lady who Soiled the Soul, by Cordwainer Smith

Canners Live in Vain, by Cordwainer Smith

Gay Lensman, by E.E. Smith

The Two Towels, by J.R.R. Tolkein

Star Trek 6, by James Blush

Editorial by Ted Whine

Cities in Fright, by James Blish

The Continent Fakers, by L. Sprague deCamp

Try it yourself. Other possibilities are adding letters (Strangler in a Strange Land; Bomb Silverberg) or interchanging letters (Three Hearts and Three Loins; Frank Herbert's Nude).

* * * * *

FLASH GORDON

What had gone before: Flash Gordon, Dale Arden and Doctor Zarkov have joined Barin and Ronal, princes of Arborea, in an attempt to rescue Aura, daughter of Ming, from the fierce giant Lion Men, who have taken her prisoner. Their attempt is thwarted by Queen Fria of the northern land of Frigia, who buys Aura in order to force Ming to repair Frigia's damaged power plant. Fria agrees to a similar exchange between herself and Zarkov and the others, but as the group proceeds to Frigia, the queen announces that she intends to keep the group prisoners; her weapon: a telepathic control over Aura.

EPISODE 4

An air of strained silence filled the sled after Fria made her pronouncement. Escape was impossible; the snowbird lancers surrounded the carriage on all sides, pikes shining in the cold sunlight, guns riding on their hips.

Ronal spoke up. "Several months ago, Queen Fria, a man was discovered wandering in the southern regions of your kingdom. He was brought to your palace, for he was wearing the uniform of Ming's house guard."

The Queen of Frigia stared at the Arborean prince. "Yes, that is so," she replied softly.

"At the time of his discovery, the man was delirious and soon lapsed into unconsciousness. AT some time later he regained his faculties, for he was found wandering the corridors of the palace, far from the place where he had been confined. Shortly thereafter your power system began to show signs of failing, but your most likely saboteur had disappeared."

"I suppose you know where he is," snapped Fria, "Ming-sent traitor . . ."

"He made the error of straying through Arborea on his way to Ming's palace. I thought he was a Frigian, so I was anxious to talk to him. When I learned his true heritage and the nature of his mission, I was even more anxious." Ronal turned to Barin. "No doubt Ming sought to control Frigia by striking at her most vital point: her shield against the terrible cold."

"I wish this man, Prince Ronal," said Fria.

"Alas, I cannot oblige you while we remain your ... constant companions?" Ronal replied smoothly. Fria glared.

"All right, all right," she growled, "Have it your way. I see I will get no cooperation unless you do ..."

"Exactly," said Barin, "perhaps an alliance, rather than this charade, might be more to the point."

"And my power system?"

"What Ming Destroys, Arborea will rebuild," Roal promised. "The saboteur has told me, somewhat against his will, of course, what repairs must be made."

A nosie in the rear tore Flash's attention away from the talk in the sled. He turned to stare into the distance.

"Hey, Zarkov," said Flash, "what glows with an orange light and makes a buzzing noise?"

"A Day-Glo housefly," replied Dale, "Know any other riddles to while away the hours?"

Zarkov peered over his shoulder. "I see what you see, Gordon; look far into the southeast, those orange lights are ships of Ming's ari force."

"Are they after us?" asked Fria anxiously, craning her head to make out the craft in the distance.

"If they see us, they will be," said Zarkov, "Osuggest that we abandon this primitive vehicle if they attakk. Their rays are deadly."

Everyone in the column had now seen the ships. The soldiers darted quick glances at the buzzing shapes, which were now black and gold dots, growing ever larger. The Queen ordered the column to go faster, and the sled driver cracked his whip over the heads of the snowbirds, who squalled and leaned into their harnesses. The sled flew over the ice, her runners bumping over the rough ground, but the speed of Migg's flight was greater, and soon the ships were directly overheard.

The snowbird lancers peeled off from the sled and rushed to defensive positions in the rear as it sped ahead. The airships were blunt cylinders, rounded at the forward end, with a thick ring just aft of the curve. The body then tapered slightly, ending in a set of stubby wings. Each ship mounted a long tube in the nose, and these were now directed at the Friginas.

Flash caught Barin's eye and motioned a move over the side of the sled. Barin nodded slowly, whispered to Aura, and they braced for the spring.

There was a series of popping sounds, and a white beam shot from the tube of each of the ships. The snow beneath the sled boiled as the beams hit, and the sled tipped over in flight. Flash and Dale leaped clear, followed by Barin and Aura. As they rolled in the snow, the sled was hit by another bolt, and was lost in the blinding flash of light. Zarkov stumbled out of the smoke pouring from the wreckage as Flash and Barin ran to it. There was no sign of Ronal and Fria.

"Where's Ronal?" Barin yelled at Zarkov.

"He jumped clear with the Queen," panted the scientist, "then the beam hit..."

The airships and the lancers were now exchanging fire, raising great clouds of steam over the area. The noise of the hovering ships was deafening.

A snowbird drew up beside the wrecked sled. Aboard was Ronal, the limp body of the Queen draped over him.

"I'll take the Queen and the surviving lancers to Frigia," Ronal shouted to Barin, "get mounts and return to Arborea!"

"I've a better idea, Barin," said Flash, "Give me that rifle from your saddle, Ronal." Gordon took the gun and ran to a small hill just beyond; the others fell in behind him.

"Let's see if I can bring down a little transportation," said Flash, lying prone on the hill. He took careful aim at the glowing ring of one of the hovering airships, and depressed the firing stud. Violet lightning crackled through the smoky air and struck the airship. It wobbled crazily, smoke pouring from the ring, and, tilted on its side, began to lose altitude. The ship fell over the heads of the party to slide along a snowbank and pile its nose into a hill.

"Spare the applause," shouted Flash as all cheered, "Let's see if the bird will fly." Ronal waved to the others and disappeared into the smoke. The rest of the group ran to the ship, which had landed upright; at they approached, a hatch swung open and three men stumbled out. Barin leaped on two of them, butting their heads together, and a blow from Flash's gun took care of the third. Aura and Dale climbed aboard, followed by Barin and Flash Gordon.

"Standing room only," said Zarkov as he seated himself at the control board, "but the takeoff should not be too rough. Now notice, Flash, this ship is simple to operate. These are the power switches, started in sequence, so..." A humming sound filled the cabin, and through the narrow viewslits the glow from the power lifts in the ring could be seen boiling the snow around the ship.

Zarkov continued, "Now this control is for maneuvering, and we lift off." With a slight lurch, the ship left the surface and climbed over the battle scene. The snow bird lancers seemed to be holding their own against the ships, which were hampered by the steam raised by the beams. When Zarkov turned the ship southwards and increased its speed, the ships of Ming's flight followed.

"No doubt they think we are returning to Ming's palace," said Zarkov, "They are mistaken."

"Not meaning to be rude, Doctor, just where are we going with this deadly escort?" asked Dale. "I gather it is not to be Arborea."

"No," replied Zarkov, "where we go, these others dare not follow; we proceed to the scientific complex from which the great experiment of the previous century was carried out. It is reported to now lie on an island in the southern sea; according to the powermen, the land on which it stood was once part of the main continent."

"And the ships won't go there?" asked Flash, incredulous.

"They never do, only Ming and the powermen. When these return they bring blueprints, which Ming turns into ships and weapons."

"So there is a power behind Ming's throne," mused Flash.

"So it appears," conceded Zarkov, "but what the nature of this power is, I cannot begin to guess."

In a short time, the ship was over the sea, and Zarkov turned the nose southwards. As he did so, the ships following them turned and sped towards Ming's citadel.

"I suppose we must expect a visit from Ming," said Zarkov, "Well, we will be long gone by the time he arrives."

"Via spaceship, I assume," said Dale, Zarkov nodded. Dale laughed. "Zarkov," she said slowly, "what about whatever this 'power' is that lives on this island, aren't you worried about that?"

"Ergon lead me to believe we could expect no danger from that quarter; it seemed the best place to send the ship, at the time."

"Perhaps it's a giant library or something, Zarkov," said Flash, "think of the knowledge it contains!"

"My thoughts exactly," agreed the scientist.

"It will win the fight against Ming!" cried Barin.

"I daresay it will, yes," said Zarkov, "well, we will be there soon enough."

The sun was setting when the airship emerged from the clouds to circle its destination. The island was a cluster of brown rocks covered with plants of a peculiarly intense green, bright against the slate gray ocean. Zarkov searched for signs of his spaceship, but the only evidence of occupation was a small complex of crude stone buildings carved from the rocky heights of the island's southern tip.

"Nooother airships are present," Zarkov concluded, "I will land in the jungle below those buildings." The scientist pointed the nose of the ship down into the jungle, and presently the craft hovered above a small natural clearing.

"This is all too simple," said Flash, searching the ground below, "Barin, get that rifle, we may be attacked as we leave the ship." The Arborean prince went to the rear and stood by the hatch, gun ready. Flash and the women joined him as Zarkov brought the craft to rest.

The scientist opened the hatchway and Barin slowly climbed to the ground. The jungle around the ship whispered quietly, stirred by the sea breeze. There were no other sounds. The group gathered outside the hatchway, warily scanning the foliage for signs of life.

There was little to see. It was quickly becoming dark, and most of the island's illumination was coming from the curious glowing plants of the jungle.

A winged creature flapped low over the heads of the group, and flew madly toward the rocky promontory above. Just before it landed, Flash saw it silhouetted against the setting sun; it was a winged man such as those he had fought before Ming.

"What's that thing doing here?" said Flash, "I would have thought Ming had those things grown in alab."

"Maybe he did," Dale replied, "Zarkov, let's find your ship and get out of here!"

Zarkov grunted and moved in the direction taken by the flying creature. Before he had taken more than a few steps, Princess Aura shrieked and stiffened. As the group watched, the princess walked stiffly into the jungle. As she did so, the plants seemed to move away to clear a path for her, a path that remained until the others of the group had rushed after the retreating figure of Aura. When the group gathered about the still moving girl, the path behind closed while ahead still more leaves lifted away from the ongoing party.

"It's that thing the Lion Men put in her head from Queen Fria," hissed Barin, "but who controls her now?"

"The guy that built those things in the first place," said Zarkov, "the scientific eminence grise of the planet."

"No doubt you and he will have lots to talk about, assuming of course we're not walking into a trap," Dale said gaily, "where is the princess taking us?"

xx Aura had guided the travelers unsweringly into the center of the jungle. She stopped suddenly before a large boulder set in the midst of several of the enormous plants. The stone began to glow with a pale white light, which quickly grew in intensity until the travelers were forced to look away. Then the light disappeared. In place of the stone were a set of curved metal steps leading down into the ground. Aura led the way down the stairs.

At the bottom of the stairs the group found itself in a dark corridor lined with silent machines. The only illumination came from two sources in the ceiling. Zarkov commented that several of the machines appeared to have been plundered for parts, as long trails of wire leads spilled from the cabinets onto the floor. Aura proceeded up the corridor for some distance, until she reached a metal panel blocking the path. This panel began to glow just as the stone had, and disappeared in an identical flash of light. Beyond the panel was a large, brightly lit cavern filled with piles of electronic and mechanical components, most piled in seemingly random fashion.

Zarkov stepped past the motionless Aura and walked into the cavern. He stared at the jumble of scientific equipment.

"What we see here is the result of a vast scientific enterprise," he said, "I have no doubt that this was the site of the great planet-moving experiment of one hundred years ago."

Flash stared at the roof of the cavern. "Zarkov, there's a hole in the roof," he whispered, "and two of those bird creatures are staring at you rather intently, so stay very still." Zarkov stiffened, but remained where he was. Dale and Barin walked around the edges of the cavern examining the walls for another exit. There were none.

"Of course Aura may guide us to one shortly," said Dale to Flash when she returned, "she's been motionless for a long time." Aura gasped suddenly and fell to the floor. Barin rushed to her aid.

In the center of the cavern there was a slight tinkling sound and four tall, pale humanoids appeared from nowhere. They were grouped at the four corners of a large dais which they held in their long, powerful arms. There was a flash of light on the dais, and a puff of smoke, in which a figure materialized on the dais. It was an enormous, fat man.

"You may have wondered what happened to the guy who posed for the Buddhas on Earth," Dale whispered to Flash.

The creature separated the two rolls of fat that were his mouth. "I am Chang," it announced in a thin, piping voice, "Welcome to my laboratory, people of Arborea and Earth."

"I am Zarkov," announced Zarkov, "I am impressed by the range and power of your telepathic control, and by the sophistication of the devices you have been providing to Ming and others on this planet."

"I cannot take all the credit," admitted Chang, "I am but a simple bio-physicist plundering the collective knowledge of my culture. At the time of the experiment, I was involved in the study of the mind, attempting to determine the basis of psi phenomena. In the course of my experimentation, I administered certain drugs to myself that gave me enormous telepathic and other powers; alas, it also left me as you see me now."

"We are correct in assuming that you are responsible for the strange things we've been seeing," said Flash.

"Directly or indirectly," said Chang, "when the disaster occurred, most left the planet, but my brother and I remained: I because I couldn't travel easily elsewhere, my brother because I promised him that I would help him get what he wanted."

"What did he want?" asked Zarkov.

"Control of everything," sighed Chang, "he had been a minor functionary in the government; now he is Emperor."

"And now that he is Emperor, he wishes to back out of your agreement, is that right?" asked Dale.

"There are things that I need," confessed Chang, "that even I cannot obtain. Raw materials for my continuing research, for my experiments. But it has become difficult to deal with him I'm afraid I've let things get out of hand ..." Chang stopped and tilted his great head to one side. Then he said, "My brother will be here shortly."

"Then I'm afraid we must depart," said Zarkov, "If you will just show me my spaceship..."

"But I haven't told you why I brought you here," said Chang, "It's too late now. Ming is here; I can see his ship above the mountain." With that, Chang and his bearers disappeared. The travelers rushed for the entrance to the cavern, but found it had once again been blocked.

"We're trapped," gasped Barin, "we can't get out!"

"On the other hand," said Dale, "Migg can't get in." The girl walked to another doorway further along the cavern wall and pushed on the door. It fell open. Dale and the others ran through the opening to find themselves in a short tunnel. At the far end of the tunnel was a tangled complex of active, humming electric devices attached by several conduits to a tall panel studded with doors and screens of varying sizes. Above the entire apparatus was a glowing sphere of crystal attached to various points of the machine by fine wires.

Zarkov examined the far wall of the room very carefully as the others propped the door shut. He stood staring at the sphere for several minutes.

"Zarkov," said Barin, straining against the weight of the door, "what are you doing?"

"This complex against the wall here," said Zarkov, pointing at the machine, "resemble my field generator mechanism to a great degree. This sphere, however, plays no useful purpose, and I am mystified by these screens in front, here."

"That sphere looks like a comparatively recent addition," Flash suggested, "You can see it's been rigged to an already complete device."

"That's true," Zarkov agreed, "perhaps some sort of control device for Chang. A mind-machine interface! Fascinating!"

"It may very well be," Dale agreed, pressing her ear against the door, "but someone is coming."

The door disappeared, and the travelers fell through the opening and spilled onto the floor. The group stared up into the impassive faces of Ming's house guard. The ranks of guards split apart and the emperor Migg walked through.

"Take Prince Barin and my daughter away for the moment," he instructed the guards, "I wish to speak to the Earthpeople alone."

"What of the flying creatures and their master, your Majesty," asked the captain of the guard, "shall I leave you a guard?"

Ming shook his head and waved the captain away. When all but the Earth people had left the cavern by a now opened doorway, Ming turned to stare at Flash and Dale.

"You two," he said quietly, "are dead. I have spent the most interesting time devising the longest, most painful way that your dying may be accomplished. The services of a hundred prisoners were required; you may yet hear their screams; occasionally they are audible in the corridors..."

"You can expect no cooperation from me, Ming," said Zarkov, drawing himself erect, "if these people are harmed in any way."

Migg sighed. "You are a tiresome person, Zarkov. It would be so convenient if I could just give you to my beasts for their evening meal, but, alas, events require that you remain alive until you provide me with certain aid I require."

"My spaceship?" asked Zarkov.

"In part," replied Ming, "but more specifically, I require your scientific knowledge. Look at this place! Once it was a great laboratory, now all is in ruins. I gave its master everything he asks for, but his progress in rebuilding here is too slow. If you rebuild this place, together we can defeat any planet in the galaxy!"

"Quite possibly," said Zarkov, "but again, there are your neighbors on this planet. They are in open defiance of your rule."

"I am taking steps to end that. It does no harm to tell you that even now a large army proceeds to take Arborea. Its princes are away, its armies are in flight. With Arborea gone, Frigia is alone, isolated, at my mercy. As for the others..." Ming waved his hand, "they are my slaves."

"You do not fear Chang," said Flash. Ming started at the name, but said nothing. "He may be listening now," continued Flash, "He may set his creatures on you."

"Very unlikely," said Ming, "At present he is contending with the effects of some drugs I succeeded in giving him. Oh, he won't die, but he is inconvenienced."

At that moment, Chang and his servants reappeared. Ming backed away from the dais.

"A momentary upset, I assure you," hissed Chang, his enormous body quivering in rage, "I could destroy you now, you know, and I ..."

"Don't be hasty," said Ming, regaining his composure, "I will depart at once. There are things to be done on the mainland; I trifle not with you. I leave these people with you; try to use Zarkov in a constructive fashion, or I may send a flight of my ships over this island to turn it into dust." With this, the Emperor strode from the cavern. Chang giggled.

"He doesn't know about your spaceship being here, or he wouldn't be so free with his threats," Chang said. "To business, now, Zarkov, you've seen my installation of field generators? What do you think?"

"What is the purpose of the panels and doors connected to it?" asked Zarkov.

"I can see all over Mongo with those," explained Chang, "I can also send things through the portals or send things from one place to another. At least I used to; something is wrong with the mechanism."

"There is a finite lifetime to a number of the essential components," said Zarkov, "I suspect yours are one hundred or more years old, and are ~~xx~~ used up."

"Can you show us Arborea?" asked Flash. Chang laughed and motioned them back into the room. One of the large screens was lit up and showed a picture of the Arborean forest. From a position on the forest floor, the Earthpeople watched a large force of Ming's troops, with tanks, take one of the tree elevators from a small force of Arboreans.

"The Arboreans will be quickly defeated," predicted Zarkov, "unless we can provide some aid. But how?"

"Defeat Ming," said Chang, "with him gone, I will help the other kingdoms!"

"What we need right now is an army," Dale observed, "I wonder how Ronal and Queen Fria are faring?" Chang lit another screen and searched the Frigian palace for the pair. Eventually they were located.

"They seem to have made out quite well," Zarkov commented, "but they don't seem at present to be in a position to help us."

"That is a pretty interesting position they're in, though," said Dale, peering at the images on the screens, "I don't think I've ever seen..."

"Rather than peeking in the bedrooms of royalty," Flash interposed, "we might try to get them a message."

"The Frigian army would never make it in time," said Chang.

"They would if you transported them the distance," said Flash, "you did say you could do things like that."

"Yes, but that would be the last thing I'd do!" screamed the fat man, "a gigantic mass, by Tao, it's impossible to send messages by this route any more, much less people!"

Flash turned to Zarkov, "If we hook your field generators in tandem with this setup, could it be done then?" Zarkov hummed and scratched his beard.

"Possible, possible," he said at last, "but who will tell the Frigians what is happening? We shall need all our time and resources for the shift."

"Dale and I will go to Frigia while you work here," said Flash, "Did Ming take all the airships?"

"No, I hid one from him," said Chang, "Like your plan, Flash Gordon. I estimate we will need at least one day to connect and synchronize the generators and set up the doorway to Arborea,"

"We'll arrange for a transfer point somewhere in the wastes to the southeast of Frigia," Flash said, "Any movement of the Frigian army in that direction might be interpreted as an attack on Ming's palace, all the better for us,"

Chang produced a map of Mongp, and a meeting place and time were set. Chang assured the Earthpeople that all would be completed by the time Flash and Dale arrived in Frigia, but Zarkov remained doubtful. Chang showed the scientist the location of his spaceship, which lay concealed behind the field generator apparatus in a large cavern open to the sky by a hole in the roof. The airship the travelers had arrived in was also there.

"When you look down from the air, you will see only rock, but the opening is still there," Chang advised Flash when he and Dale were ready to depart, "another thing I hide from Ming."

"You mean he doesn't know of the field generators?" asked Dale.

"No," said Chang, "he thinks this is all ruins but it isn't, not all of it!" Laughing, the huge figure instructed his bearers to carry him off. Flash and Dale climbed aboard the airship and lifted off for Frigia.

"I see several problems with this scheme," said Dale, as they sped over the waters, "First, despite the relationship between the Queen and Ronal, the Queen may not want to commit her forces to a defense of Arborea; second, there's no guarantee we can defeat Ming, we certainly haven't up until now; third, and most important, who can we really trust? Chang? Within his sphere of control, he is all powerful, and our way back to Earth is right in the middle of the sphere!"

"I agree that we're now playing on one side of a power struggle," said Flash, "but we have little choice. Unless, of course, you would care to explore Ming's offer to us ..."

"No," said Dale, "I wouldn't, but I still can't help remembering that we're flying away from our spaceship right now, on a mission fraught with disaster."

"I have faith in Zarkov," Flash said, "if there's any way he can slip away from his masters, whoever they might be, he will," Dale was forced to agree.

A few hours later the pair discovered another problem, as their airship entered Frigian territories. It was, after all, a ship of Ming's air force, and it attracted a lot of attention from Frigia's ground artillery. Flash pointed the ship straight into the Frigian defenses, and managed a landing at the gates of the snow-bound city. Soldiers surrounded the ship as soon as it had landed, and took Flash and Dale to the Queen.

Ronal had evidently repaired the Frigian power plant for the nearly bare chamber where the Earthpeople were left was quite warm. Queen Fria and Ronal entered ~~the~~ with the Queen's advisers and Flash explained the situation.

When Flash had finished, Ronal said, "We must send a force to free Barin, as well. We will force the powermen to revolt, thereby increasing our strength within the palace."

"The powermen will see that Barin is unharmed," Flash said, "and no doubt a successful defeat of Ming's armies in Arborea will convince them that the time for revolt is due. Queen Fria, are you willing to supply the manpower for this operation?"

"I am," said the blonde Queen, placing her arm on Ronal's, "I feel Arborea and Frigia are no longer two countries."

"Then we are ready to go," said Flash, "Zarkov and Chang should be nearly ready to construct the pathway to Arborea."

* * * * *

The site of the transfer ~~point~~ was a point south of Frigia and west of the Lion Men's usual territory. This area was infrequently patrolled by anyone and initially the Frigian column of snowbird lancers and foot soldiers encountered no resistance.

Ronal, Flash and Dale were at the head of the column, riding in an open aircar stolen from Ming's troops. Scouts ahead of the column, mounted on snowbirds, reported no activity ahead; Ming seemed unaware of their progress.

"We should be to the transfer point very soon," Flash announced, "Zarkov picked a place he remembered from when he and Aura bailed out in this area: there should be two large pinnacles of rock with a pass between; that's where the door will be."

"And on the other side, Arborea," said Ronal.

"On the other side, Ming's troops," warned Flash, "Zarkov wasn't sure about where we'd end up, so we may be placed in the thick of the fighting."

"Your landmark coming up on the horizon, Flash," said Dale, scanning the ground ahead, "There's a scout coming from the west, riding hard."

The scout sped up to the aircar, and pulled his wheezing mount to a halt before it.

"A troop of Lion Men are behind me," he panted, "They saw our column from afar, and they're about a half hour behind."

"We should be gone by then," Flash said, "but we'd better increase the pace." Ronal shouted orders down the line and the column picked up speed. The car sped up and lancers kicked their squalling mounts to a run, the foot soldiers jogging behind. Fifteen minutes later the car was before the twin peaks.

Ronal scanned the snow-covered ground to the west. "Still no sign of the Lion Men," he said, "Where's the doorway?"

Flash shook his head, "I don't know, we're right on time. Zarkov and Chang must be having trouble."

"We having some, too," said Dale, "Listen!" The group heard the buzzing of a flight of Ming's air ships. Presently two ships appeared from the southeast. They saw the column, and peeled away back to Ming's palace.

"There'll be troops here pretty quick," said Ronal, "We'll be trapped between Lion Men and Ming. Where is the portal?"

Flash stared hard at the narrow snow-swept divide. "C'mon, Zarkov, c'mon," he murmured, "Let's get cracking now."

From the rear of the column came the sound of weapons firing. Wild yells rang through the air. The air within the divide began to shimmer.

xx "It's too late," said Ronal, looking from the shimmering air to the rear of the column, "The Lion Men are upon us: soon we shall be destroyed!"

TO BE CONTINUED

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(continued on back cover)

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