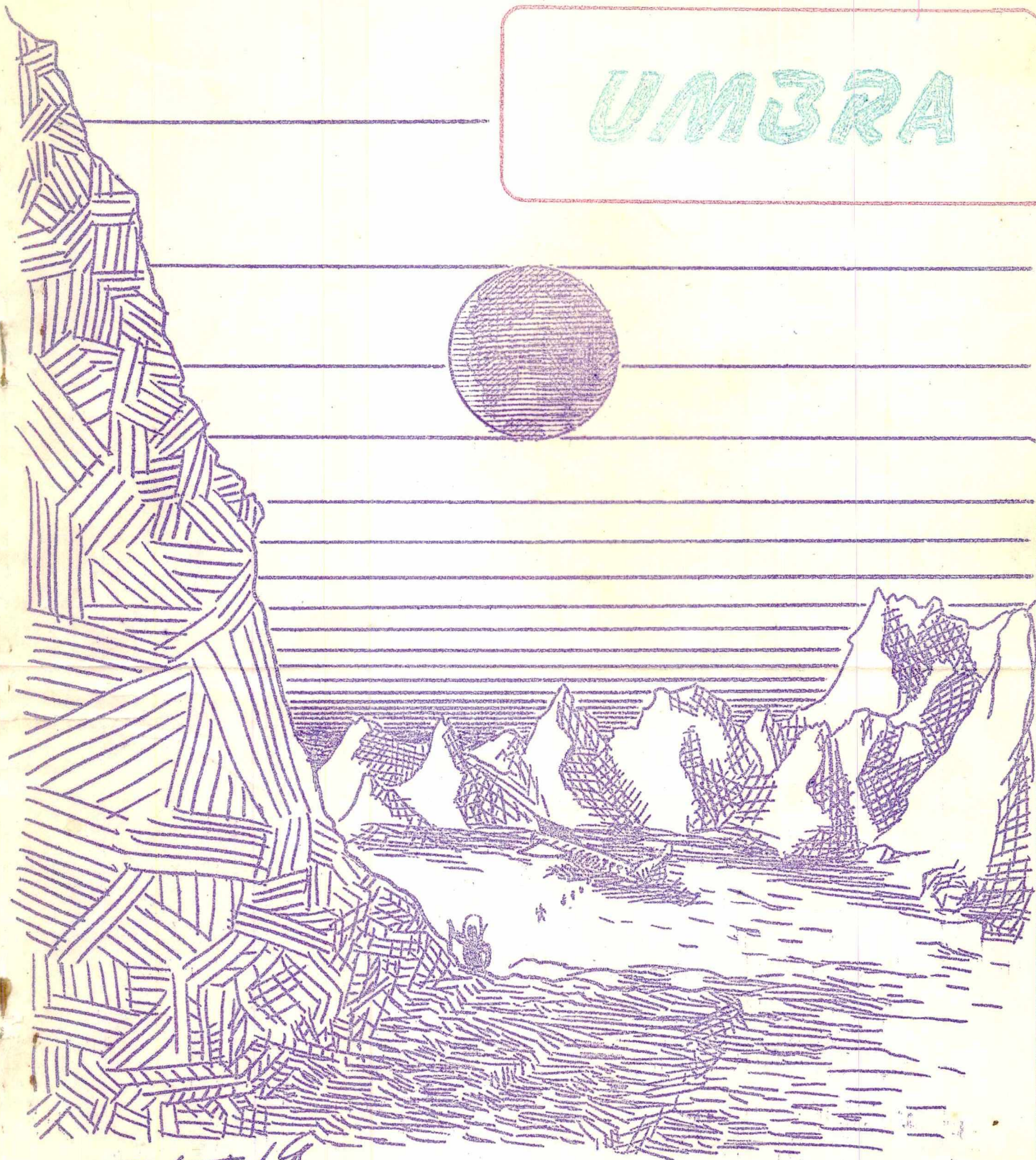
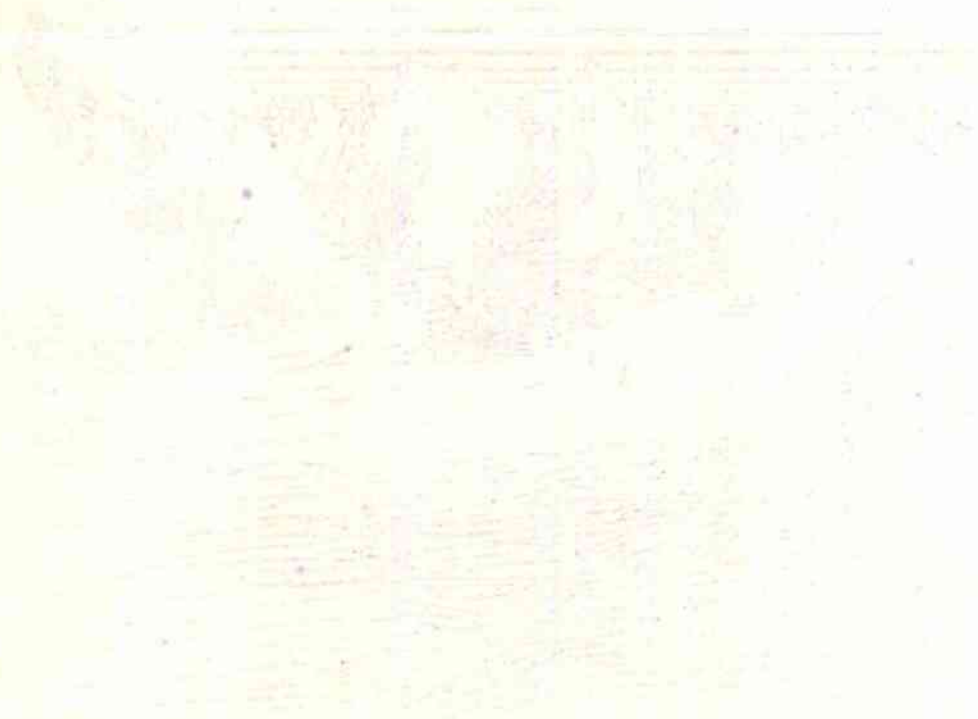


UM3RA



Robert White ss

NO. 9 — SECOND ANNISH — OCTOBER 1955



UMBRA 9 - October 1955 - Second Anniversary

STABLE OF CONTENTS

EN THI APXHI (editorial)	4
THE SINS OF SYLVESTER WEAVER, Larry Stark	5
TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MASTHEAD, autobiographic	7
THE MAN WITH A POKER, George Wetzel	10
UIT VLAANDEREN VLAAMS, Jan Jansen (column)	11
NOIHMA (poetry dept.)	14
WHAAAT (letter dept.)	15
CHICKENSCRATCHES (review), the editor	22

Cover by Ted White

Umbra is edited and published by John Hitchcock at 15 Arbutus Ave., Baltimore 28, Md., USA, on an irregular but frequent schedule. Single copies 10¢, subscriptions three issues for 25¢ and six for 50¢. Longer term subscriptions taken but not advised. Australian agent Ian J. Crozier, 6 Bramerton Rd., Caulfield SE 8, Vic.

EN THI APXHI

I OWE AN APOLOGY TO LEE RIDDLE, he tells me. He came down here to Baltimore on June 21, 1954, and visited Raleigh and me. We had a great time, and I met my first fan editor (outside of Hal). A tremendous experience for me. And I didn't even mention it. Well, so now you know. ## While everyone was up in Cleveland having fun, I took my yearly threeday vacation, and spent the Labor Day weekend with Larry Stark up in the sticks of New Jersey. On Labor Day we went into New York, where we met Lee Riddle and Maurice Lubin. (Someday I'll have to explain "Maurice Lubin" to you.) A fellow by the name of Harvey Segal turned up, and we went to a hotel. Now the purpose of the entire trip was to meet a Greek fan who has appeared in these pages--Basil Coukis--on his first trip to America. He was scheduled to come in to port on Tuesday. So, next morning, after a variegated evening--Lee went to Brooklyn, me to the Bronx & Segal's home, and Lubin to a movie with his googoo doll--we got out to the dock. I'd imagine we got there about 8.30 in the morning. The whole place was quite crowded, and only the baggage had come down off the ship. Lee managed to get a pass to go through the restraining line (mainly through his uniform) and M.L., Segal and I waited outside. An hour or so later, he decided he needed someone else, and got me through the line. He stood guard over the Ks and I over the Cs, as Coukis can also be spelled Koukis. At about 11, we discovered that (a) all foreigners had to go thru an enclosure resembling a pigeon, (b) all f. had a number issued to them stamped on their customs forms, (c) close record was kept of these, (d) Number 791 had not yet gone through. So we waited.

M'ce and Harvey were still back in the waiting room. I wondered vaguely how they felt. Well, at about 12 noon almost all the passengers had come off the ship. Occasionally someone would trickle into the inclosure and wander off. Lee offered to buy me a drink, and went off to the stand in the middle of the floor about 50 feet away. Barely conscious of the customs officials, I pondered something or other--probably how many times I should mention Lee in Um 9--when I noticed someone explaining to a Greek fellow that "there was a Navy man here just a minute ago..." and being totally unable to communicate. The Greek was Coukis, and thus I was the first to welcome him to America. One of the nicest honors I've had this year.

"This is character assassination. AND I LOVE IT!!!"--Ted White.

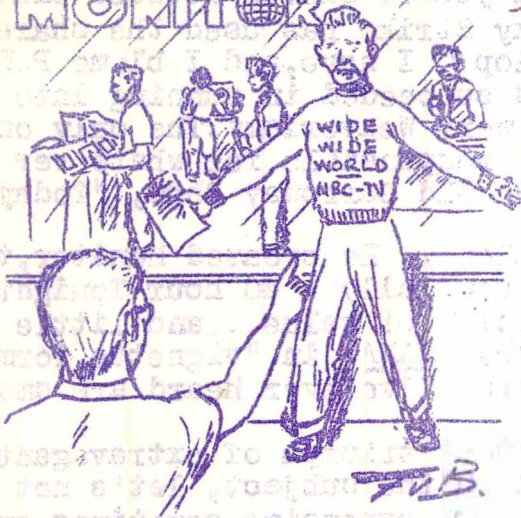
As a sequel to a "mysterious" letter in Um 7, George Wetzel and I intended to write up a feature for Um 8 in which I interviewed George as the winner of the contest. The point of the humor was to be twofold: George was the writer of the letter and the winner of the contest both, and the interview was to get out of hand. At the last minute, George could not participate, and I was faced with writing his part for him. Thus I had to think what he would have said, and it appears I made a mess of it.

George Wetzel has grown tired of Ellison and "Ellisonism." However, I didn't know it at the time, and so I pictured George as making coarsely humorous remarks about HE. I was trying to imagine what George would have said, and was writing it with the intent more to rib his active displeasure with Ellison than to make character assassination (see above).

Someone took it seriously and wrote to Wetzel about it. Apparently the current thought is that Wetzel has a controlling interest in Umbra. Let me say here that, for what it's worth, I consider this an insult, to myself. Umbra is my own magazine, and nobody tells me what I do in it. I appreciate all suggestions, and consider them all, but in the final analysis, although I take advice right and left, I run Umbra. ## I apologize to George Wetzel for insinuations made in Umbra 8.

MONITOR

Larry Stark:



The Sins OF SYLVESTER WEAVER

PAT WEAVER IS A FATHEAD!

Someday I hope to own and operate my own Fapazine...and when I do, that sentence will probably be flown from the masthead four times a year. If you sit still for a few pages, I'll

try to outline why. This won't be terribly steffish, though, for those few who read Umbra but prefer fanzines; and, as with my last article, John, I'm afraid it won't reach your interests or ideas. But I've hated Pat Weaver with a vengeance for years, and now's as good a time as any to explain to the world why.

Pat Weaver runs NBC--a job which is increasingly important to the world in general, and since our house is ruled by Video, extremely important to me personally. He has literally billions of dollars at his pushbuttoned fingertips, and the fate of many an evening of your and my time right in his vest pocket. So far, all he's been able to do about it is goof off.

For a man who runs one of the biggest enter tainment-producing businesses in the world (they call him something like "Vice-President in Charge of Programming" or some such), Pat has an unusual history. He was, and still is, an Advertising man. Just how insidious a fact that is I'll show later. His biggest claim to fame previous to owning NBC was having worked for an overpaid slob called (I think; precision on names has always been my weakness) "Bet-A-Million" Gates. By now Pat has seen Gates's Million and raised him a billion or two.

Once he got his filthy clams on the mass entertainment business, he really went to town, though. Not just former friends, but former conquests now form Pat's reputation. (He admitted most of these things in an expose interview with Steve Allen one night. Steve didn't think of it as an expose, but I did.)

While still a member of the team instead of team captain, he began by making Hamburger of Saturday night television. He instigated "Your Show of Shows"--a 1½ hour program with nine speerate sponsors, each of whom demanded maximum air time for their own commercial-breaks. Pat says, "It allowed small advertisers the chance to buy air time on TV for the first time." Sure it did. It also changed Your Show of Shows into a putrid bosh of too-short capusles of time interrupted all too often by filmed messages.

It also inaugurated a disgusting rash of advertising gimmicks, one of them the previewing of commercials ("This week Crime Time was brought to you by Crunchy-Wunchies, the breakfast food that blows your head off; next week Crime Time will be brought to you by Explosive Tires, the tires that save time by not only blowing out but blowing all the way off the rim!"). That alone doubles the time taken by rtual fluff and cuts down real entertainment. Another result was program sharing: programs using two commercials by one sponsor and the third from next week's sponsor. The practice

breaks the unity of the program; have any of you TV slaves noticed that "Your Hit Parade" lacks something since Lucky Strike has used the share-the-show routine with that home permanent glop? I have, and I blame P.W.

Then he did some good things, which he has succeeded in running into the ground. "Today," "Tonight," and "Home" were Weaverisms. The only one I can stand is "Tonight," and Steve Allen is responsible for whatever staying power that show has. Compared to the old Garroway Show, "Today" is a sad misuse of fine talent.

But Weaver couldn't let a single success alone. He created Menitor, the graveyard where radio is interred. This is essentially a 40 hour Tonight with no picture tube, and it has given us nothing of value...and little that was promised. For instance, here are the DRAMAS in "vignette format" that the great Mr. Weaver promises us. All that I've ever heard are small excerpts from movie sound tracks.

Oh, but let's not forget Pat Weaver's greatest triumph of extravagant lack of taste: Spectaculars! And while we're on the subject, let's not forget Pat's own definition of spectacular: a large, expensive, sometimes amusing advertising sign. The Camels Smoking Ring was the first. The Budweiser sign in New York, that shows galloping horses, or the Anheuser-Busch sign near Newark that features a flying eagle, all accompanied by flashing lights, distance and optical illusions--are best examples.

A TV tube too uses flashing lights, distance and optical illusion; and a Pat Weaver "Spectacular" is a mildly amusing signboard presented only to publicize the brand name or name of something. In fact, one of the ground rules seems to be that the "entertainment" between commercials should not be better written or better acted than the commercials themselves. This would be opposed to a Spectacular's purpose.

The first Spectacular was an accident; perhaps that's why Pat's withering clams didn't ruin it. The two-hour Ford Anniversary Show was superb entertainment and perfect showmanship. When it became such a talked-about success, Weaver and Leibman saw in it the germ of the "Spectacular" formula. It remains a damn good formula--it's just that Weaver can't forget his advertising agency background.

Still there is hope--and I mean short of assassination. I've contemplated that too; but I've also contemplated the horror of a worse meathead succeeding Weaver. That was the only flaw in Cassius' remedy for Caesarism.

No, the real hope of the nation lies in the fact that every once in a while Weaver gets scared to death, and something good happens. Just a short time ago the FCC, the New York Times, and CBS were all talking about subscription television. This is a sure sign that all of them, and Weaver too, know about it a good deal before that.

The results were two more Truly Great pieces of TV entertainment: the showing of Peter Pan and The Skin of Our Teeth, in vignette format, with millions of little advertisers. They were so superior no one branded them with the stigma "spectacular." Pat hopes to prove that commercial TV can give us great entertainment, as great as pay-as-you-see TV. It can, whenever Pat Weaver lets it, for Weaver is the active force in TV programming today. He can't be influenced by public opinion nor public apathy--or Max Liebman's Spectaculars would have been in the ashcan a year ago.

So, since he's where he is in our social system, and since he's what he is, I hope Pat Weaver stays the most frightened ad-man in the Universe!

LARRY STARK

On the next page I am invading the material section of Umbra for the first time in six issues, or a year and a half. This is Umbra's special anniversary feature.

TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MASTHEAD

Hello.

My name is John Hitchcock. I am a Baltimorean. This is my story.

I was born in the intolerably hot, stuffy third floor apartment of the building which then housed the Maryland Diesel School. It was right accross the alley from the first and oldest Roman Catholic Cathedral in America, the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. I remember in later years looking out the window at the gold cross atop the cathedral.

Nobody can deny the fact that I am a Baltimorean. The cathedral, and hence the block of my birth and first years, is in the heart of down town Baltimore, and never in my life have I spent more than two weeks outside the city, and that was only once.

In the spring of 1943, when I was beginning to be aware of things, we moved to the suburbs west of the city. In the past twelve years the city has come out to meet us. But that's quite all right with me.

My schooling began in the County (Baltimore County and City are politically independent). I spent a minimum of a year at various private schools around Catonsville. The best etched in my memory was the Catonsville Church School, the church being the Seventh Day Adventist. Here, in the sixth grade, I became well acquainted with that singular group of fine, devout individuals who perseveringly walk in circles on the straight and narrow path.

At no school did I fit. So, after an equally unfruitful year at the Boys' Latin School, I found myself at the Baltimore Institute, which was the exact opposite of an institution (although it often tried). At the Boys' Latin School I picked up only one thing of importance: from Latin, an understanding of grammatical classification, learned with the language it was built for.

I stayed at the Baltimore Institute until no more funds were forthcoming. This building is three blocks from the Cathedral, and on the other side of the Monument. If you have seen pictures of the Washington Monument in central Baltimore, that is the area I was born in, and the area to which I had returned.

Since my audience is composed of science fiction fans, they may now perk up their ears. At this Baltimore Institute, in 1949, I met Raleigh Multog. He was for several years afterward my closest friend, in a pretty

empty world. Enough of that. I had also seen a few issues of Astounding at that time, and had been properly awed by them. I always wanted to read sf regularly, but never had the money. So I reread it, and I grew more fonder of it the more times I looked at it. My total experience with sf up to December 1952 was contained in Robert Heinlein and three issues of ASF.

Tuition could not be met, and in 1952 I headed for Catonsville HS. At the Baltimore Institute nobody cared particularly, and I was quite free. I wasn't a misfit, because there was nothing to be a misfit from. But I ran back into my old troubles at CHS. I took what was to me the easiest way and ignored their social activities entirely. It was easy.

So 1952 was my first year in a public high school, in the eleventh grade. In the month of December I heard again from Raleigh. He called up and asked me, "Are you interested in science fiction?" I said yes. What else could I have said? Not experienced, as a reader, but quite interested. He told me a lot of things, but the only one I remembered after he hung up was that he was publishing a magazine, and he was sending me a copy of it. A week later, STAR ROCKETS 1 arrived.

I liked it. I think anyone who knew Raleigh first would have. And I can't see how anyone who was introduced to him through SR could have become interested in his club. SR gave a tremendously false impression that was really true but wrong to begin with. (Shall I go on from here?) But this is my story. I liked SR. I told him. He said, "Do you want to be assistant editor?" I said yes. After all, why not? So in January I helped Raleigh put out SR 2. Nine months later I discovered another fanzine besides SR. It was A LA SPACE.

After the spring of 1953 I didn't have much more to do with the workings of SR. But in September, Raleigh put out the first issue of ANEW, a newsheet subsidiary to SR. Now I'm the type who, after seeing a movie makes up one of his own. This time my character trait manifested itself, and I turned up at Raleigh's. He gave me a Dave Bates article on 3D and lent me several fanzines to review in my projected newsheet. Well, what would I call it? Simple. RENEW. In it I read the fanzines and made small noises on paper that were totally irrelevant, but several people enjoyed them.

RENEW 1 appeared in October, 1953. And that is why Umbra 9 is marked Second Annish. Renews 2 and 3 followed in November, and in R3 I made the fatal announcement. RENEW 4 was going to be a fanzine. Rs 5, 6, and 7 would be sheets to balance out the 7-issue volume. (Yes, seven is my lucky number.)

By fanzine I meant a magazine produced by a fan. Since several fans had written to me in a tone that included me in fandom, I decided I would be ethically authorized to publish a fanzine (under my own definition). Renew 4 was nine pages of occasional fmz reviews and fiction by me. Dave Bates, by now a regular, did not appear, but I picked up a second contributor, Nigel Cadell (real name). Please remember that I was now in 12th grade high school. It's always hard for me to put the two together. (Two guesses why.)

Renew 4 I sent out to a list of fifty fan editors. I established a trade, and the fanzine bug hit me. These were the first real fanzines I

had possessed all my own. I could reread them at leisure. Twenty-five fanzines lying around the house was too much for my copying instinct.

It had to have a name. It was a throwup (yes...) between Ultima and Umbra. I picked Umbra, although everyone I asked (all nonfans) shuddered at the sound of an "Umbra." Adversity from the start!

I was happy. I had found something to do. Avoiding high school society left me with an unbearable load of time on my hands. It was at this time that I had discovered the romance of languages, too. It was romance to me. Still is. The first language that I went out and got information on was Irish. (You do remember my spate of Irish, don't you?) I've done that with thirty languages now, and it's still a romance. But you're fans, and you want to go on.

Umbra 3 appeared in May. No matter how often I go back through those old Ums, I must realize that then I was having fun. I was having a hell of a good time. Now I'm not. But I'm carrying on much stronger and more surely than before. Why is up to you. Or maybe this time next year I'll have doped it out, and I'll tell you in the third annish.

Back to the summer of 1954. I graduated the first of June. Ral got me to run off SR 10, a "30-page" job that turned out to be forty. I procrastinated. It was done by the end of the month, and I had promised five days at the most. After that, I was under the weather. Work with no sense of achievement didn't appeal to any part of me, it seems. I went down with the measles, and it got to me. I was out of the running for a whole month, and the lousy disease rendered me apathetic to anything for the entire month of August too. In late September I finally got Umbra 4 out. The summer of 1954 will long live as the worst in my life. And that's why: I didn't do a thing. Before that, I would not care; but now that I had tasted work it hurt.

I joined the Cult and WAPA and Hopkins. Umbra was touched for it, and laid low. Christmas I had two weeks to put in out in, and a term paper as well. Worry about both took up the whole holiday. At what I considered then great effort, I put out Umbra 5, in March. I was using new ditto supplies, and the print was wonderful, but the showthrough was horrifying. I was pessimistic all through the job; but afterwards I slowly and dully realized that this, fan-wise, was the greatest thing I had ever done.

I realized this in time to notice that all of 6 people had written, and they didn't say much. The most controversial issue I put out, and everyone says "Very controversial." Add to that Umbra 6 was illegible and I knew it. Two thousand bleary sheets passing twice before my eyes was not encouraging. After it was all run off, I had to write a final editorial. Whoof. In response to it, I got 9 letters, all quite heartening. You know the rest; summer began, and I fought off the gafia of 1954 to produce Umbra 7 on June 18. Twenty replies and Larry Stark, and I was happy again.

By this time I had evolved a set of fan ethics, principles, which regulate my actions in fandom and fanediting. And I believe that the formation of such a code is the greatest benefit one faned's long experiences can provide, for himself and his audience both.

CONTINUED NEXT ANNISH

THE MAN WITH A POKER

Reprinted from the newspaper BALTIMORE CLIPPER for Dec. 4, 1840. Note: I am of the opinion that Poe read this newsstory and got the idea for his horror tale THE BLACK CAT. Prof. Mabbott, rekknowned Poe authority, disagrees.-G. Wetzel.

The horrible disease called manie a potu caused by a too free use of ardent spirits, is thus jocosely corrupted by the bloods about town, and whenever a poor miserable wretch is seen with glazed eyes shivering limbs, staggering along talking wildly on everything that comes uppermost in his imagination, it is said that the "man with a poker" is after him.

A few nights since, an unfortunate victim to this dreadful complaint staggered from a low tippling shop, where he had in vain endeavored to persuade the bar-keeper to give him a glass of raw rum, in order that his system might be restored, as he said, to its "natural equilibrium," placed himself against a lamp-post, the only friend he could claim at that silent hour of the night. Here he stood crying piteously, his half distracted imagination conjuring up a thousand strange fantasies which seemed to beckon him to the carnal house.

"There's two of us," said he, "the cat and me--the cat's black as hell, and she keeps her claws fastened in my neck. Ha ha! it makes me laugh; that fellow said just now the man with a poker was after me--and he'd only give me one glass, it would have driven him away. He didn't say anything about the black cat--it's been following me ever since 6 this morning, and now it's got hold of me. There used to be two cats, but one killed the other, and if I only had a gun, I think I could kill the black cat. I mean to go into the Texan service, they are all honest men there--but here the streets are filled with thieves and murderers; there are lizards and scorpions crawling up my pantaloons now--burnt brandy won't save me, for there's that tall dark man with a Spanish knife again; he's going to stick me, and there are no police officers near. Watch! Watch!"

The cry of the miserable being brought the watchman to his side, and pointing to a pump on the opposite side, he continued--

"Do you see, watch?--that's the man with a poker. There is only one person that can arrest him, and that is death. How savage he looks! and his long black arm with his clenched fist at the end of it."

"Go over to him, friend," said the watch, "make friends with him--it is true he may throw cold water on your hopes, but he is beloved by the temperate and shunned by suckers."

"He will murder me!"

"Perhaps not. He is one of nature's doctors; desperate cases he treats with severity."

"Will he take off the cat, the lizards, and scorpions?"

"Yes--he will drive them all away."

"If I knew that, I would go and shake hands with him. I wonder if he'll treat me to a glass of whiskey?"

"Not exactly. Have you any home?"

"None but the market house; and there are snakes there with two heads."

"Well, you had better go with me; you shall have good warm lodgings."

Here the human guardian of the night took the poor fellow by the arm and by occasionally humoring his conceits, got him to the watch house, where he was taken care of for the night.

(FINIS)

UIT VLAANDEREN ENGELS

Jan Jansen



After the slight (?) touch of lunacy which has been evident in this column so far, perhaps it would be nice for you people to read something in a more serious vein. This partly because I don't always feel in the right mood for composing nonsensical items, and wonder whether the time and effort, not to speak of cash, wouldn't be far better spent in a more justified hobby than fandom.

These retrospective moods do not however last very long. A letter or a fanzine will come forward that pleases me so much that I'm apt to go off the deep end again, and submerge myself in the maelstrom of actifandom.

Except in an occasional letter, I haven't mentioned just how large a place fandom takes in personal life though, and to some of the readers, or rather most of them, items about which I grumble would seem so inconsequential as not to be worth bothering about.

However, to go back into fannish history on the continent, as far as such hasn't been repeated again and again, here and there in articles or letters, I came into fandom via some unmentioned fan living in an unnamed town in an unnamed country. This method of introduction is needed, else I am liable to be accused of name dropping. At that time, though interested, I had far too many personal affairs to bother about, and fandom got only a crumble of interest. As time went on though, one accident after another befalling the family and immediate friends, I had to drop one money-consuming hobby after another, and just before starting Alpha, Jan was down to bare necessities, if tobacco and drinks can be counted among those.

With the dropping off of any other hobby than sf fandom, the material that reached me was of course subjected to a more thorough scrutiny than had previously been the case. Names came to the fore as being more active than others, and little by little I began to take an interest in these various persons and their activities. Science fiction, which had become relatively plentiful in the meantime, just couldn't hold all my interest, and anyway I would feel like reading the same sf story or novel again and again.

Hence when the financial situation did improve somewhat I jumped into fanac to the exclusion of anything else. My time would normally not have permitted me to engage myself too deeply, had it not been that my wife changed work, and started in a sandwich bar in town. The hours were very irregular, as usually is the case, and rather than have this shifting about, she accepted to work a regular evening shift.

Sonja went to boarding school, while Jan was left with six empty evenings to fill. With but one hobby left, what else can be expected than that I waded in even deeper, and sometimes wonder myself how come I'm still afloat instead of having sunk to the bottom.

Fandom started off, however, with attracting more cash than ever, and I just had to limit myself to a certain amount of letter writing and publishing, and refrain carefully from spending more. As the months go by however, finances improve, and so does my outlook on the scene of fandom. Alpha leaves Antwerp for the US and the UK in ever-growing quantities, and more mail and fanzines pour in in response to the greater outflow. Somehow or other I have been able to keep up with the flood, excepting an occasional relapse...and I intend to keep going till such

However, given all this free time I suppose it will be fairly obvious that fandom has become far more than just another hobby. Partly it has become a secondary way of life, a new world in which to move around when such mundane things as work and dinner have been cast aside.

I have personally always been very careful in keeping the mailing list exact, with frequent checks whenever I noticed changes of address in one or the other fanzine. And I am therefore considerably annoyed when I find that fanzines with which I am supposed to have a trading agreement fail to arrive. Sometimes this is due to the postal authorities, and they usually get blamed for it in any case. However, I have found the PO, at least as far as Antwerp is concerned, is very careful and efficient where delivery of mail (even printed matter) is concerned. An occasional fanzine gets lost because the last page, where they usually have a label denoting the addressee, is the only page to arrive at Antwerp, the rest of the magazine having been torn off on the way. This is not due to the bad handling given printed matter on the way, which is, or should be, sufficiently known to protect against it, but the increasing habit of sending out fanzines with, as only protection against tears or damage, a couple of staples on the opposite side of the mag. One offender, the last one to arrive here recently was issue eight of UMBRA, which will perhaps explain the rather explicit mention of the matter here.

I am not going to offer the simple solution of using envelopes here, for most faneds will not be able to expend the money needed for this. They're off badly enough, where it concerns finances, after they've published a fanzine, without any additional expense. However, one could find a solution, asking for more work on their part. Underneath the staples (i.e., before stapling them) use a small piece of Scotch tape (or celluloid tape or whatever name it goes under in your part of the country) and staple through these pieces of tape. The staple cannot free itself through this, where it easily tears the ordinary duplicating paper. Actually though, the practice of stapling together fanzines (any printed matter for that fact) is not allowed by postal authorities anywhere. This according to the Berne convention where it was stated that printed matter would be allowed through the mails at reduced rate only if a checkup was possible without in any way tearing the material. The second way to mail them out would be rolled, and a piece of string around them, still a favorite in the UK.

However, non-arrivals do not confine themselves to fanzines lost by the post office. The greater part is due to the non-mailing out of the fanzine. One wonders whether this is really due to the carelessness of the faned or else because of the lack of interest in trading with Alpha on his part. One of these fanzines which has been guilty of this is one of the Texas group.

Other than sending A in trade, I have commented on issues one and two of this fanzine, without getting any reply from the editor. Issue 3 never did arrive, yet I have recently heard from another faned, far remote from Texas, that number 4 contained such and such a piece, in imitation of a style of article for which I had professed little interest. Hence 3 and 4 were really published. Has the editor found Alpha lacking in quantity or quality and decided to drop the trade arrangement? If so, I for one would think it only as part of a faned's duty to advise me of this.

Strangely enough, I now see that this faned is accusing someone else for not sending a trade copy...I have previously noticed, and mentioned the fact in Alpha, that these Texas people are rather hurried in their accusations, and it seems that it applies to more than one faned. I wonder if they have been sending the accused copies of their fanmags, and will they stop after having had a letter of comment and a trade agreement?

When fanzines do arrive here, they invariably have a long list of mentions alongside the address, requesting for contributions to subscriptions, comments, or trade. Up to today, every mag that has turned up has been accepted as trade, and I hope I can keep up the ever-increasing amount of trades that do arrive. Usually they are, however, also marked (and sometimes the request is most eloquently phrased): would you please comment? If there's anything of interest in the magazine, in the meaning that I could actually give some comments on it, I often do. And about a third of the letters I write that way are never answered.

But this is a thing I'm not too worried about -- if it weren't that the next issue is carefully ticked again: please comment. I consider each fanzine sent as a letter from the person sending it on to me; but I also imagine Alpha to be the same, and in trading zines, I find it only correct that if one side comments, the other should at least try to do the same, or not bother me again. I do prefer to write letters to people where an answer is expected, or who show at least that my letters are welcomed and not ignored.

Why put all this down? I ought to know by now that any attempts to make fanzine editors live up to their responsibilities are doomed to be filed away without secondary thoughts on the subject. Certain fans have stated that a fanzine editor loses enough money on each and every issue he publishes to be allowed the eccentricities of not replying to letters, and generally forgetting the world exists other than for receipt of ego-boo in one form or another. Which reasoning I might accept, where it concerns the casual subscriber (though I do not follow that practice with Alpha), but why won't it penetrate some thick skulls that after all the other chap, being a faneditor too, has the same privileges, even if their reasoning should be acceptable to everybody?

So it won't help, and being aware of that, I still send it off to John in case he cares to publish it. Perhaps it will make some people understand why I didn't write that letter of comment -- why I don't bother to

- 14) look up the ticks on the back of the fanzine -- and if I bothered, why I don't follow their requests. It will also explain why in some matters I am rather a conscientious fool.

I like writing columns for a fanzine which would have to be about bimonthly, and then slaving away at the typewriter in July and August, yet being kindly reminded that September 20th should see another dateline to consider. Not every month.....

JJ.
I ONLY HOPE THE FANARCHISTS DON'T DECIDE
TO DO AWAY WITH MONEY
AND START ON YOURS FOR GOOD MEASURE.

We look up at the wonderous skies
Above the myriad of Earth's sphere
As dawn unfolds, our ship shall rise
And leave the Earth forevermore
To sail the heavens, searching far,
Enduring hardship, meeting strife,
Our crew investigates each star
In our search for alien life.

The wonder of sights yet to see
Intrigues us, so we must go on
Through darkness to infinity
Until the last of us are gone.

We must explore the great unknown
That's cast before us in the sky
To find if Earth exists alone,
To answer mankind's greatest Why?—
The question of creation's guise,
The mystery of life sublime,
These answers stretch before our eyes
To taunt us till the end of time.

And so we search throughout the years;
We stop to land, and then we go
But more and more our quest appears
A secret man will never know.

HARVEY SEGAL

poetry dept.

norma

WHAAA

G. M. Carr, 8325 31st NW, Seattle 7, Wash.

OK, so I'm dumb, so it took me all this time to figure out that Jan Jansen's column isn't supposed to be factual--it's actually another form of fan fiction disguised as a "column." That being the case, I take back my disapproval and permit myself a frosty chortle of amusement. Subtle humor is so rare in fandom that it had to sneak up and bite me before I could figure out what it was.

And while I'm about it, I will publicly admit that George Wetzel's name has now been removed from my list of stuffed shirts (not that it will make any difference to Wetzel, who long ago decided that a foul fiend resided within the well-stuffed shirt of GMC instead of any normal fan) and state that his crifanac lately has been well worth reading. This letter about counterpoint rhythms, (though well over my musical depth) bears absolutely NO resemblance of any kind to either HP Lovecraft or Charles Fort. Welcome, Wetzel, to the fellowship of faaaans bearing the GMC seal of approval. That entitles you to one used McCarthy button.

Redd Boggs's remarks about it being "so disconcerting to find a fugghead journal turn into a leader in the field..." is interesting as a glimpse of Redd's mental inflexibility. "Once a crudzine, always a crudzine" would be disheartening if it were true. The fact that it isn't true is what makes fandom so fascinating. This year's crop of neos is bound to turn into next year's crop of fanzine editors of greater or lesser distinction. To watch the evolution and growth of the individual editors probably is the most rewarding aspect of fanzine reading, second only to the pleasure of getting to know the editors via the fanzines they produce. SKYHOOK's static perfection presents a far less interesting insight into its editor's personality than, for instance, the transformation of Vorzimer's crudely mimeoed crudzine into a beautifully offset crudzine; or Geis's delightfully ditto'd PSYCHOTIC into the sourly sarcastic photolith'd zine of the same name which just recently died.... Or watch a feebly miniscule little neozine like Ted White's ZIP expand in stature into the current whopping 42 page plus covers in 5 colors standard 8 1/2 x 11 as Ted himself expands in stature as a fan. The best that Redd can hope to do is maintain his present pace -- I doubt very much that he can ever excel what he has already done. Which of course, is no reflection either on SKYHOOK or Redd Boggs....but look what great scope for improvement there is for UMBRA.

I'm surprised that story by Noah McLeod wasn't sold to a prozine. Could be they are too prissy for plain speaking? I thought it was a very well written and smoothly paced little tale; NEVER TRUST A TARSIOID was highly entertaining.

ANDY YOUNG, 10 Sumner Rd., Cambridge 38, Mass.

Something about Noah McLeod's reviews rubs me the wrong way. I just can't pin it down. He has different tastes from my own, it's true, but usually a difference in taste doesn't make me feel uneasy, as I do when reading his stuff. The only thing I can put my finger on is the assertion that Sturgeon tries to imitate the Mike Hammer series, which seems pretty unjustified to me.

The same general malaise accompanies his prose fiction thing, too. It just seems sort of sickly. I seem to be the only person in fandom who doesn't like Noah McLeod. And I can't even give a reason! It's sort of discouraging.

I consider the price of a fanzine to be merely a feeble attempt to keep publishing from being such a financial burden. Naturally, if an editor thinks he's got a good mag that fans are willing to pay a fairly high price for, he'll charge more; also, if he's using some rather expensive process of reproduction, he'll have to charge more than otherwise. Mostly it's a matter of asking as much as you think you can get -- almost anyone is willing to pay a nickel for anything not too terribly bad, or even a dime if it's thick. And no fanzine, no matter how big, or how high the quality of its material, has ever cost more than a quarter, to my knowledge. I'm sure that Harlan Ellison thinks more than five times as highly of DIMENSIONS as some hick neofan thinks of his 5¢ crudsheet ((I am forced to agree.)) -- it's just a matter of economics. The demand for fanzines is highly inelastic: you could charge anywhere from 5¢ to a quarter and your sub list wouldn't vary by much more than a factor of twp. ((sic)) So you generally ask about a half cent a page which is about average. If you want to eliminate the people who silently sub and restrict your readers to your closer circle of correspondents and friends, you raise the price, and if you want egoboo and your name in every review column you lower the price. That's about it.

Comments on pp 16-17 ((made by Archie Mercer)) inspire the following defense of SYNDIC: chiefly, that the SYNDIC was not a case of a dictatorship, but that it relied solely on "good will" of the kind economists talk about. The chief concern of the syndic was that "its credit be good", you will recall. I'd like to point out that the Syndic was at least as much a democracy as our present government -- it HAD to please the population to stay in business! -- but it wasn't a republic.

✓ Why people who try to define technical terms which have a rather fixed and rigid meaning don't look them up in a dictionary, like syncope, I don't know. Wetzel's defn. is OK but clumsy. My Webster's New Collegiate handles it nicely. ((New Century Dict.: "...in music, to begin (a tone) on an unaccented beat and sustain it into an accented one, which is thus apparently shifted back; also, to employ tones so affected in (a passage, piece, etc.)"))

Speaking of new instruments which might lead to new forms written especially for them brings to mind RCA's new "music synthesizer" which was recently demonstrated via an RCA Victor record over our local music station.

We should have spoken to Ted White at the Con about the cover of ZIP. Truly a masterpiece of mimeoing, it seemed just a bit crowded artistically. Overdone just a little. Too many layers of ink, too many lines. Unclear, sort of. On the other hand, I very much like the rocket

blasting up through the letters on the inside of the cover, which you failed to mention. It was simpler--maybe more direct or something--and I enjoyed it at least twice as much as the cover. Very nice and clean. However, if there weren't ever a worse cover on a fanzine...

I enjoy reading Jan Jansen and dislike reading G. M. Carr. Hah.

Summary: We'd like you to go mimeo so as to be easier to read, etc. You are surrounded by experts on the subject; why not get them to help you? Surely you can't defend the color of ditto compared to the color of mimeo, for color work.

((This is a reply only to the above four lines. I find my dittoing far easier to read than the average (your) mimeo ing. I am not "surrounded" by experts. In this city, George Wetzel is the only fan I know who mimeos, and he's too busy to help me. Ted White is the only real mimeographer in the area, and he's inaccessible during 8 months of the year, when I have to go to college, as he lives 60 miles away on the other side of Washington, with only tentative bus connections. You may mean Magnus, but he is a stranger in this city, as he's away 8 months of the year, and we hardly live with each other during the summer, either. Now: therefore I must take up mimeoing all by myself. I have a mimeo, an old, impaired AB Dick. Parts are next to impossible to get. I'd have to buy a new mimeo. Next, as if the cost of mimeo weren't enough, I'd have to buy supplies, which are a bit more expensive than for ditto. I'd have to start all over again, being a practical stranger to mimeoing. And I am not-surrounded by experts. Mimeoing takes more time, due to inexperience, and the care with which I handle anything inky, than ditto, which is quite clean, and with which I am much more familiar. Furthermore, I don't want to change over. I like dittoing. To me it's far more informal. I just can not be myself when I type on a stencil: the whole atmosphere of mimeo is quite stiff and formal. Next, I am studying English Lit and History, which combined require the reading of 200 to 350 pages a weekend. My other college courses include six languages. I am carrying what is known locally as a "heavy schedule." I hope you understand my position. Will you allow Um to stay dittoed?))

RAY SCHAFFER, JR., 128 N. Wise St., North Canton, Ohio.

The book review and bit of fiction by McLeod in this same issue, September, is just about par for the course as far as Noah is capable. McLeod never seems to come up with any material that is definitely outstanding, but what he does write is quite good and shows definite signs of sincere effort, a goal that I wish more writers in fandom would set their sights on. The letter section and fanmag reviews were both enjoyed and made for interesting reading. I especially liked George Wetzel's discourse on the relationship between the "blues and classical music, as I am extremely enthusiastic about music in the allied fields of "blues," "dixieland," and jazz. However, I must disagree with Wetzel in re to his statement that "the late 1930s are the high water mark of good swing music. The be-bop crud of today is lacking in sound musicianship of good arrangement, melodic ideas, and harmonic setting." I fail to comprehend how George can use the above statement as being grounds for disliking the "blues" and dixieland" of today, for both of these styles of music do not rely (and never have relied) exclusively upon good arrangement, melodic ideas, and harmonic setting. The true

"blues" and "dixieland" of today (predominated by Negro singers and musicians) has not changed in style and approach from the 30s, if one will take the time to compare the music of the two periods. However, the popular field of music has attempted to be-bop up the tempo of the music to fit the popular approach and this has resulted in sheer crud from the popular artists; and perhaps this is what Wetzel is referring to and not the Negro predominated fields of "blues" and "dixieland." If so, I likewise am nauseated by the popular brand -- especially the present wave of popular vocalists and big-name bands who are making a miserable attempt at mimicry.

LARRY STARK III, Route 9, New Brunswick, N. J.

My father's interest in Haiti resulted not long ago in his buying two recordings of the Haitian folk music, one on-the-spot collection of informal gatherings of native Haitians, and the other a professional group of folk singers. There ARE distinguishable similarities in their styles, though the second is a lot more polished and "commercial." But the interesting thing to me was that the professional group turned out music decidedly similar in texture and rhythmic pattern to THE ORIGINAL DIXIE JASS BAND!

The similarity of Jazz to improvised Fugues has been noted quite often. In fact, it's the cornerstone of Brubeck's quartet. Using Jazz idiom instead of European folk songs as basic elements, Dave and his boys compose contemporary improvised fugues, obeying most of the classical rules, and injecting Jazz from any past or present style that they feel necessary.

BUT, the basis for the Blues wasn't CLASSICAL, so far as I've heard. If you heard any of Bessie Tucker or Ida Mae Mack (They're on X Label lps) you ((George Wetzel)) would think twice about your generality. (Off-cord note: at the last WSFA meeting I found out how to make the old Blues-Shouters sound as they ought to: play them barely audible over a crowd! Really, their style of singing was evolved for that specific purpose...and hearing them compete with the conversation and WIN in the important musical spaces gives you a much better appreciation of what they were doing and why they had to do it that way.) AN AMERICAN IN PARIS, RHAPSODY IN BLUE, and Debussy's GOLLIWOG'S CAKE-WALK had lines of influence going in precisely the opposite direction: they heard Jazz, took what they needed, and built symphonies out of it. Classics didn't make a dent in Jazz till Whiteman and Gershwin collaborated, and the death of the brilliant and creative Mr. Gershwin left the not-so-brilliant "Pops" to make "Symphonic Jazz" popular. Much later, Bix did study classics, but I doubt if the classics' influence on Bix influenced very much of the music of the time. And MUCH later Harry James "alluded to a Hungarian Rhapsody," accidentally or intentionally, during the '38 concert. Aside from serious studies of harmonics and progressions by the Bopsters, and the Fugues of the Moderns, I don't think the classics influenced much of anything...and certainly not MOURNIN' BLUES or CLARINET MARIALADE BLUES by the ORIGINAL DIXIE JASS BAND. They're a little too hot for Bach to handle.

I lost my head. If you should find it,
please mail to 15 Arbutus Ave., Baltimore 28, Md.

69 is sort of a hypo-phallic symbol

WIM STRUYCK, Molenvijver 40-C, Rotterdam (N.), Holland.

FRISIAN is a written language. Frisian is spoken, generally, in Friesland. Except maybe in the towns or cities (if you want). But even there people can speak Frisian. As Dutch is compulsory in schools and official buildings (courthouses, etc.), the Frisian farmers (outside of the city) ought to know Dutch. But I doubt if they all do. They don't want to, to be sure. I don't know how many Frisians there are. It's one of our 11 provinces (Friesland). Say 500,000 - 600,000 maybe less. Now don't laugh, but those Frisians take their own Frisian nationality and language very serious. If they could get a place in the United Nations, as "a nation," they'd do so. Serious. Just about a year ago there's been a lot of trouble in Friesland, when for instance, a journalist refused to speak or understand Dutch in a courtroom. Of course, it was only a way to show their wishes. A stunt. But there are still a lot of Frisians (and they are a stubborn lot, nice as they may be) who want Frisian compulsory in schools, courtrooms, etc., instead of Dutch. You see, our country seems not to be small enough.

GREGG CALKINS, 2817 11th St., Sta. Monica, Calif.

Regardless of what Magnus says (and I'm damned if I know where he gets his misinformation) OOPS still has a few issues to run. I will print twenty, at the very least, and probably a great deal more than that. I do anticipate a slight drop in frequency in another seven months, because at that time I'll be getting out of the Marine Corps and readjusting to civilian and college life...activities which usually play merry hell with fannish activity...but other than that, I expect OOPS will be around for years and years. Off and on, perhaps, but nevertheless around--perhaps or even probably like another Tucker.

The notice of the de anthology is the best news this year.

"Never Trust a Tarsioid" by McLeod is the first bit of fan fiction I've read in many many months, and I must say I found it enjoyable, to say the least. I make it a policy never to read fan fiction, being so often disappointed (and also because I don't have time to read all the good, professional fiction I'd like to read, so why waste time on generally inferior stuff?) but this is one time I'm glad I read it. Amusing if not outstanding.

JAN JANSEN, 229 Berchemlei, Borgerhout, België.

Please don't let your French go to blazes because of Alpha. Even if I have neglected my work for the last couple of months trying to write sufficient material for your publication, and risking my life pinching stamps from the office to pay for postage on letters, and getting told off at home for typing into the small hours of the night for to write the letters I might have written during the evening if it had n't been for having to write you, besides getting told off at the PO for posting too many parcels to Baltimore, doesn't mean that you have to sacrifice a moment of your worthless time for me, you know.

And how sarcastic can a nasty foreigner get?

GEORGE WETZEL, 5 Playfield St., Baltimore 22, Md.

As to Mack's TARSIOID story it is not without some merit. But as I am a sincere friend and fan of McLeod, it would be dishonest to praise this story; yet on the other hand I would not descend to the Ellison and Boggs types of criticism. So I will make my comments constructive. Mack's articles are always good; his stories are in my humble opinion not but passable fare. The reason for the discrepancy between (19

the two types of writing he does. I think boils down to the fact that he does not consider fiction for his most concentrated effort. As a result it is lacking in a certain originality or freshness of ideas. I suspect that you naturally will disagree, as an editor invariably defends his contributions, which action I cannot criticize; for if you don't stand not only behind your own editorial judgment in your issue's contents but also back up the authors, they might stop sending material.

However, since to me one reason for amateur journalism is to give not only the objectivity of print to an author but likewise for him to obtain constructive criticism (a rare thing among fans who seem more to follow the destructive criticism pontifically given out by Ellisons and Boggses) so that he might find in such constructive criticism an occasional helpful observation to better his prose. Therefore I offer to Mack this: why keep the scholarly, the particular pungent expressions, the fine analytical writing in his articles? Why not attempt writing a story in this same style? It is obvious that Mack up to now has kept this facet of his prose output only for his articles. To me, to read a story written in the same style as his articles would be excellent.

There is a slight hint of this article idea of Mack's in his TARSIOID story where he has the crittur read aloud somewhat of a sexy incident. But this passage is all too brief. Think what a story Mack could write if he would bring in, if not make some part of his story, as central idea his particular views on sociological stuff? Mack apparently delights in attempting humorous stories. There is nothing wrong with this; but if he feels the compulsion to write humor, why not combine it with his theories--extrapolated as a story--of society? What would result would be an interesting social satire. To me that seems to be the forte indicated as Mack's type of story. The present story as past ones of his strike me as strongly savoring of the type that formed the format of Amazing and Fantastic Adventures under Palmer's editorship, stuff which turned me against those magazines. Of course, some one with tastes different than mine would think otherwise.

However, if you forget these points of different tastes, I still think you must admit that Mack is groping subconsciously to the story of social satire and should be advised as to this. The charge that I am suggesting he write as I do is a common retort to any suggestion to a writer that he change something in his style. However, I think I can and have evidenced that Mack's future literary development is inherent in his articles and not something from my own background. I must admit that many times a writer turns out the sort of material he does simply because he does so at the promptings of his own TEMPERAMENT. Hence the charge that I imitate Poe and Lovecraft is a case wherein my critics overlook the fact that the supernatural tale is one that interests me because of my interest in comparative mythology and not because of any idolatrous, slavish copying of Poe and EPL.

In that wise perhaps Mack is also following the bent of his own personality in writing stories that strongly smack of Palmer's zines. But I argue that Mack has given proven facts that satire, based on his own ideas as reflected in his articles, is his forte. And that the Palmerish stories he does are merely but one of the many faltering steps he must take before he finds the type of story best in harmony with his background. I might also say that the Palmerish stories were proven to be bad examples of writing. When a writer starts as all writers do in his initial period of imitation of others result in his prose, he should endeavor to make the best examples of the story type (though his articles seem to

indicate the scholarly satire instead) he is interested in. If he is truly drawn to the Palmerish type, then he has picked a bad model, and no criticism or suggestions should be made to dissuade him from this type; it is consonant, if so, with his temperament, and no one could change him.

((As for defense of TARSICID, see Gregg Calkins's letter.))

DES EMERY, 93 Hemlock St., St. Thomas, Ont., Canada.

Surely you could have given the Bulmers more than a paragraph, though? This kind of thing happens only once a year, you know, and especially when you were host, you'd think you'd almost be able to write up the whole zine on nothing but.

The only argument I'd have with Noah McLeod's review of Golden Apples concerns his attitude. Evidently he feels that Bradbury can't co-exist with Clarke or Heinlein, and evidently others agree with him. I don't understand why. I have no difficulty in reading Bradbury, Clarke, Heinlein, or any good author at any time, before or after, or with another. Good writing is exactly that--good writing. I can't say I prefer Bradbury over Clarke or vice versa, although I agree that I've read good adventure with Bradbury and exceptional mood with Clarke. Why insist on shoving an author into a category?

((Bulmers: apparently you didn't read too carefully (tho I don't blame you), because I mentioned that they were here for all of a few hours. What we (us Baltimoreans, etc.) had intended was to have them down here for a week, and take them on leisurely trips around; however, by surprise the New York group showed up, feeling apparently that we down here were incapable, or unwilling to, show a little hospitality. So the Bulmers operated according to their original plan, and went on back to New York. Secondly, since I fully expected them to be here for some time, I didn't bother with many things which I wish I had brought up, and which would have made interesting reporting. Practically all the time was spent in conversation, mainly introducing them to America. Next, this sort of thing doesn't happen only once a year. See EN THI APXHI, this issue, and find out all about my meeting Basil. Who, incidentally, was well worth all the waiting and bother to meet. Hope you get a chance to run into him.))

TED E. WHITE, 1014 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, Va.

We've a girl this year at school whose ((sic)) an exchange student from Holland. Name's Carla somethingorother. I expect I'll know her better, as she'll be on my art staff for the school literary zine. I'm the Layout Editor, Art Director, Printing Liaison ((sic)) ((excuse me, Sic)) Editor, Literary Editor (one of several), and general flunky... I'm also stryng out for the lead in the Senior Dramatics Club play, THE MALE ANIMAL, by Thurber... I also walk dogs...

((I just thought you might like to hear from Umbra's art editor, Ted White. He doesn't have much chance to express himself fan-wise, as his erstwhile magazine is being taken over by someone else, Larry Stark, who I assure you is someone else! Theodore, as we call him, has been drawing covers for this magazine for five issues now. Besides this, he has undertaken to mimeograph John Magnus's unsteady magazine STELLAR. These activities in which he engages are actually designed to remove him to a large extent from active fandom. This retirement, I fear, is in part due to a severe slap in the face he received in this very magazine Umbra, when he erroneously spelled "erroniously" "erroniasly."))

"If I wanted to know what was written on the henhouse floor..."

CHICKENSCRATCHES

STF TRENDS, Lynn Hickman, 200 N. Huron St., Albion, Mich., SAPS & general circ., varityped & lithood, 9 pp. This issue is almost entirely a letter column, and the letter column has almost entirely one purpose: to straighten out one Jan Jansen. For those who don't get Trends (this is rapidly becoming more a report than a review), Jan apparently made some statements about Americans wanting war, following that old line which we discover from the more pessimistic reports in our fine journals has engripped the European mind, and found its expression in the nearly fanatic Hate America campaigns in Europe some time ago. Americans Gibson, Schaffer, Harmon, and Briggs formed the most voluminous part of the rebuttal section; however, I find that with all the pertinent remarks called forth by these four and others, I remember Jansen's comment best: "I believe in getting into hot water; it keeps you clean." #20

PLOI, (transliterating from the Greek) PLOE (using the usual method) or PLOY (what it's supposed to be), Ron Bennett, 7 Southway, Arthur's Avenue, Harrogate, Yorkshire, England, 1/-, irregular, mimeoed, 36 pp. Another one of those delightful things called British fanzines, which by their own admission, surpass the American counterpart in quality. You must understand one thing about my memory: when names are all alike, I tend to confuse them, and make quite a few generalisms. Thus when the British fans have the same names (English), the same addresses, and participate seemingly so equally and with the same spirit—it is very hard to tell one member of this delightfully homogeneous group from another. It's just the same thing with the rash of housing developments all over the suburbs of Baltimore: they all have Anglo-Saxon names, which are further hackneyed into commercialism in order to attract buyers with equal efficiency. And when the houses are all generally alike, we old guard suburbanians merely refer to them as "the development at Frederick & Shadynook Lane" or "the development behind the filling station just over on Edmondson Ave." or "that development out on Del Rey Rd. beyond Edmondson that curves around into Ingleside." Unfortunately, this is a noncommunicative method to use with American fans, since none of us know everything about the doings of the British group. On to PLOY 3, as Ron is undoubtedly wondering what I thought of it, and what I thought of his fellow fans' zines, since to him English fans are all different. The lucky guy—being able to tell Britishers apart. The most outstanding piece in this issue was the Kettering convention report. Again, this centers about my hardships in distinguishing between British fans enough to make intelligent comments about their works. The Kettering affair was a focal point about which everybody talked; thus I am able to distinguish further between the British group than if each one had taken a different topic. It's still not very successful, but for me, it's the only possible thing. Please remember, all you fellows, that I look forward with great anticipation when I receive ANY manila envelope with Queen Elizabeth on it. #3.

DIASPAR, Terry Carr, 134 Cambridge, San Francisco, Calif., trade/FAPA/interest, mimeoed, 12 pp. Terry has folded Vulcan, which fact provides the background for the following quote from DI: "I decided to hell with it. Accordingly, I passed on the material I had to a few worthy fanzines and discarded all my plans for VULCAN. As of the time you read this, VULCAN is definitely and irrevocably dead. DIASPAR is its replacement, and a damned poor one, I'll grant you." That last sentence is typical of Carr. If he thinks his stuff is poor, why, I'll just have to go along with him. A time ago, when I was in the imp, he was in the habit of sending me little packets of deathless fan stuff, and he would send along a note describing it; at the end of the note he would say "So here it is. Read it and retch." Now while we tend to discourage conceit among our associates, I find it rather unhuman to have no ego at all. He might at least be hopeful about what he turns out. Worthy of mention: bacover, containing well-excerpted quotes satirizing McCarthyism, and subtly enough, dedicated to Terry's namesake, G. M.

KAYMAR TRADER is no more, and I cannot help feeling myself blaming its new editor, Gary Labowitz, for the demise. It was something of a shock to find KayMar Carlson giving up the job, and I had doubts, as I suspect many fen did, about Gary's capabilities. It's probably unjust of me, but I can't help thinking, Gary Labowitz: he's the fellow who finished off Kaymar Trader. What with KT gone and SFA part of IN-SIDE, I'm beginning to wonder about those nebulous fellows we often see around fandom called "collectors": has the irrevocable malignancy of a mafia wave hit their ranks too, as well as fandom's?

VIEING, Wayne Strickland, Apt C Bldg 113 US Naval Base, New Orleans 14, La., 10¢, 3/25, no sch., mimeoed, 22 pp. Editorial is titled THE VAGARY. I suppose Wayne has a monopoly on vagaries? Fiction. Let me say that normally I don't like the fiction that appears in fanzines. I liked Noah McLeod's story. So I printed it. I don't like the fiction here in V. I might have enjoyed skimming though it in ms form, but I know I wouldn't have put it in Um. Issue contains reprints, from 1940s fanzines, book review, T. Carr. Wouldn't you be surprised if I said, "RECOMMENDED."

ANDROMEDA, Pete Campbell, 60 Calgarth Rd., Windermere, Westm., Eng. 6d (10¢). Mimeoed, 16 pp. Last time around I said I couldn't recommend this mag because it changed too much. Allow me to describe its cover in order to demonstrate. Two columns: top offirst, "aug 1055, N. 13"; in square below, Andromeda, split between vital statistics. Below that, a contact want-ad-type thing. Below that, answers to a crossword puzzle inside, typed upside down, of course. In second column, ad for collectors a la (or au) Kaymar Trader. At very bottom of page, 3 line ad for FLYING SAUCER NEWS. (Me, I push SAUCERIAN.) On the inside, a short and a long story, (see above review) and a 2-page spread article comparing Am. and Brit. SF. Worthy if only because it did it in only two pages. Has a format vaguely reminiscent of STF TRENDS, for some reason. Must be the columns. But the next issue is the last. Any guesses as to what it'll look like?

"I'm being bifocaled to death!" -Larry Stark

SCHNERDLITES, Nigel Lindsay, 311 Babbacombe Rd., Torquay, Devon, Eng., OMPA/trade, quarterly, 6 1/2 x 8 ("That unimaginable dimension..."), mimeoed, 28 pp. Fan fiction British style, convention report, British-fan-type art section. A handier thing I have never seen: perhaps because it is the size of the human hand (outstretched). At any rate, it's another one of those wonderful little British things. One of the nicest things about publishing a general circulation fanzine, as I do, is the prospect of receiving these British fanzines in trade. #3.

MERLIN, Lee Anne Tremper, 1022 N. Tuxedo St., Indianapolis 1, Ind., 10¢, 12/#1, monthly, mimeoed, 24 pp. Merlin is a hard thing for me to review. It isn't outstanding, but it ought to be--in another way than one, perhaps--but still outstanding. I'm just sitting here looking at it and it's doing nothing at all to my eyes. It's just one of those things that I could exist perfectly well without: you might be interested in it. It digs no reaction out of me, but I feel for some reason it should. #11

ALPHA, Jan Jansen, 229 Berchemlei, Borgerhout, Belgium, 15¢, 6/90¢, bimonthly, mimeoed, 28 pp. For some time I have been generalizing sweet nothings all over Jan in our correspondence. Most of these descended around the subject of the atmosphere surrounding Alpha. Since it is an English language publication, I am able to detect atmosphere, and I hold myself capable of detecting changes in atmosphere, too. So when Jan began to lean toward the British side, I advised him to re-Flemicize alpha. Or Alpha, if you must. And although it was probably unwittingly, he turned right around and did it. For some issues' time now, ALPHA has been as Flemish as it could without indulging in a column from Wim Struyck or someone similar (just who?) written totally in Dutch. So now it is time to assess this atmosphere, as it seems to be the clinging sort, and will stay put long enough for me to say something about it. Well, after all that build up, what I have to say is very little. About as anticlimactic as "yes" or "No" and I believe about as meaningful.

In this issue of A, there appear pieces by Bentoliffe and Bennett (Brit.) and M-L Share and McCain (Amer.), and in my estimation, the latter conform more with the editorial atmosphere (Flemish) than the former. Jan himself speaks neither in the American or the British "id-iom," but just plain English. If anything, Flemish English. ...Alpha has become the mainstay of the Continental Fandom and instrument supreme for the well deserved glorification of Low Fandom. #11.

ECLIPSE, Ray Thompson, 410 S. 4th St., Norfolk, Nebr., 10¢, 6/50¢, bimonthly, mimeoed, 24 pp. Eek has been revived three times, and for once now, I'm glad to see it back. As a matter of fact, American fandom is so shallow now I'd be glad to see Star Rockets back. And even more, I detect throughout this issue, and especially in the letter section, a Turning Toward EEK for a possible American mainstay. Just slight indications, but in these bleak days of fanning, very very well worth watching carefully. #13.

"Discounting smell, it had an atmosphere."

INKY INKY BLOOD

JD, Lynn Hickman, 200 N. Huron St., Albion, Mich., 20¢, \$1/6, bi-monthly, lithoed, 30 pp. From Plato Jones's locker comes something new—well, in name, at least. JD looks like STF TRENDS, it has a bit of the atmosphere, but it just isn't to me as good. Twelve good pages this issue are taken up with Hal Annas's story, which deals vaguely with the concept of a civilization in which men and women eat one another to live. One can imagine what parts of the body—the female at least—are involved in this thrillingly dull little narrative. Annas is a pro, and I can't help that, but I just didn't care for his story. The title? Red, Hot, and Hungry, what'd you think? I rather think H. A. would take more pains with a tale intended for the pros. Oh yes, there's Dick Ellington, who tries to woo me with his intentionally colloquialized English mutterings. Sorry, not in the mood right now. #Were the early Trends all like this thing? Issue 22, to correspond with the 21 ishes of T.

sCINTillation, Mark Schulzinger, 6791 Meadow Ridge Rd., Amberley Village, Ohio, 25¢, \$1/10, irreg., mimeoed, 38 pp. I assume the title is intended to refer to the city of Cincinatti. I haven't bothered to look up Amberley Village, Oho, on the map. Mimeoeing isn't good. (Notice how I like to supply extra letters: mimeoeing. Yet I have never exxcuted an occasional.) Issue is boring. I don't think it'll last ten issues. Issue 5.

BRENNSCHLUSS, Irene Gore, 45 Worcester Ave., Bowerham, Lanc., Eng., indefinite rates and schedule, mimeoed, 60 pp. 8x10. This is what I've been talking about re British fandom magazines PLUS very wide margins. The spaciousness of the thing takes a little away from the British flavor (which I will NOT go into again). Although it does this, I imagine the British find it quite refreshing. Second issue, second annish. My, they ARE indefinite, aren't they?

UNDERTAKINGS, Sam Johnson, 1843 Embassy Drive, South Jacksonville, Fla., 15¢/comment, no sch. listed, mimeoed (by G. Wetzel), 40 pp. elite. This fanzine has all the flair of a gettogether between fans and people who are "interested actively in stf" and who know about fandom. Thus with this background (I'm not stating, mind you, that this is the case; it just seems so. I am drawing a simile of sorts.), they discuss anything and everything. Johnson's elite typeface and excellent layout system, operating through the medium of George Wetzel's quite commendable mimeoing, produces an unmistakably scholarly atmosphere to the actifan. Recommended for those who can read, preferably college students. Not recommended to Texans...

TACITUM, Benny Sodek, 1432 Cahoun St., New Orleans 18, La., 3/25¢, mimeoed, 24 pp. Published in New Orleans, where Sodek is hiding out from the angry Texans he enraged by failing to spell Texas TEXAS, Tacit continues to be Texan. Note five lines above. This issue was intended for the Clevecon, and as is the case with most such endeavors, just reached me, as I deigned not to be one of the boys and sacrifice my college tuition on four wild days. The issue: as usual with Texans, fabulous... in Texas. But here on the other end of the South, I am not aroused by the wonderful doings in the largest state (when does Alaska come in?). Why waste all these lines on Tacitum? Perhaps because it communicates the atmosphere of wasted lines itself. I see that Claude Hall is here too. I suppose that he will soon announce in loudish tones to fandom that Texas fandom is of exquisite quality. Shades of Canada, a play too! (25

INSIDE, Ron Smith, 611 W. 114th St., Apt 3d310, New York 25, NewY., \$1/5., bimonthly, photo-offset, 62 pp., halfsize blowdown. This is put out by a general group of New Yorkers known here as the Colony. These people seem to mark themselves by living in Manhattan on streets bearing numbers in the 100s. The apartment house at 611 W. 114th seems to be the nucleus, as it houses the Smiths, Ellison, and Silverberg. INSIDE takes the cream of BNFs and semipro non-actifans and complete pros, puts them together, and is obviously trying to go somewhere. It is beyond my ken just where, but INSIDE (the title appears on the trick inside front cover) gives you the great ones in a UNIFIED setting, and it can't help being good. Impression I get says it's good despite itself. #11.

ORION, Paul Enever, 9 Churchill Ave., Hillingdon, Middlesex, Eng., 35¢/yr., bimonthly, mimeo, 6x8, 36 pp. If I've reviewed this before, please remember my unfortunate inability to distinguish well between British fanzines. And although, as I've said before, this must sound pretty disheartening/disgusting to the editor, it's another British fanzine. I honestly wish that I could do them rhetorical justice. Please remember that. #11.

MUZZY, Claude Hall, 100 E. 20th, Austin, Tex., 20¢, irreg., mimeo, 58 pp. Utterly repulsive. The worst thing about this magazine--no, I must say the worst things--are as follows: the editorial personality goes against my grain; the material is yellow-journalistic in caliber and presentation; and good illos by good artists are ruined. Hall knows how to cut an illo on a stencil. (GHOD, does he know!) But from there on, he has not what I'd call expertness with the mimeo medium. There is an average of one illo per page--and the average size of these is one third of the whole page. Layout takes up more--and what's left is the text. Which is pretty puny, if you ask me. He has about fifty illos to use. And the material fails utterly to back it up. Well, there you have it. Most definitely not recommended. Check that address: 2212 San Antonio St. MUZZY is not Texan. It is unique. Uniquely poor...so much like the Baltimore branch of the Hearst papers. Comprenez?

This fanzine is being sent abroad for the special purpose of tapping foreign interest in Umbra and fandom. Excluding the UK, of course, I would like replies, if feasible, in accordance with this purpose. I certainly hope you enjoyed the issue. To those to whom English is the native language, the same applies; but it's different, since I know (more or less) about Anglo-American fandom. Low Fandom and German Fandom loom as broad frontiers to the east, lit only by the glow of first dawn. Until the next issue, or till I write you, or till you write me, a cordial leave-taking. Thanks to everyone who was behind Umbra 9. JH.

John Hitchcock
15 Arbutus Ave.
Baltimore 28, Md.

Printed Matter Only
(DRUKWERK)
Return Postage Gtd.
Forwarding Postage Gtd.,
and opening for postal
inspection permitted,
if necessary.