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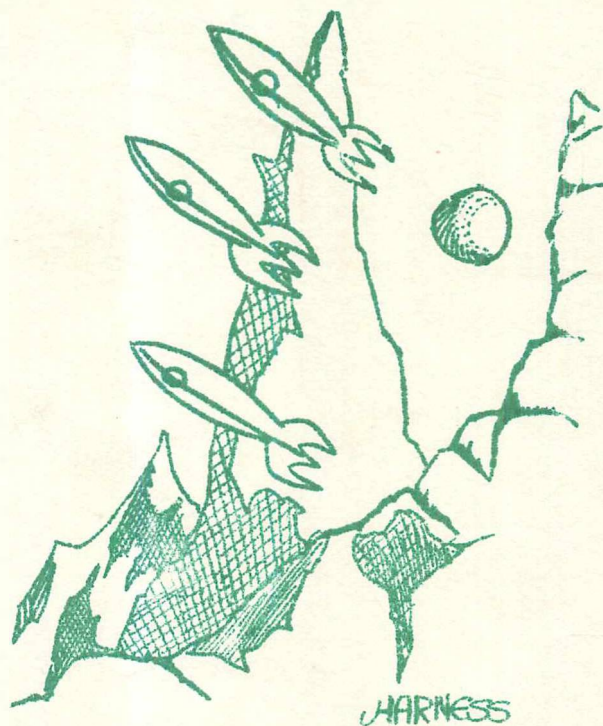
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This issue of Varioso contains:

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Class struggles have always been good for a plot or two in the science fiction context. They make excellent material for writers of the World To Be In Politics variety of social science fiction.

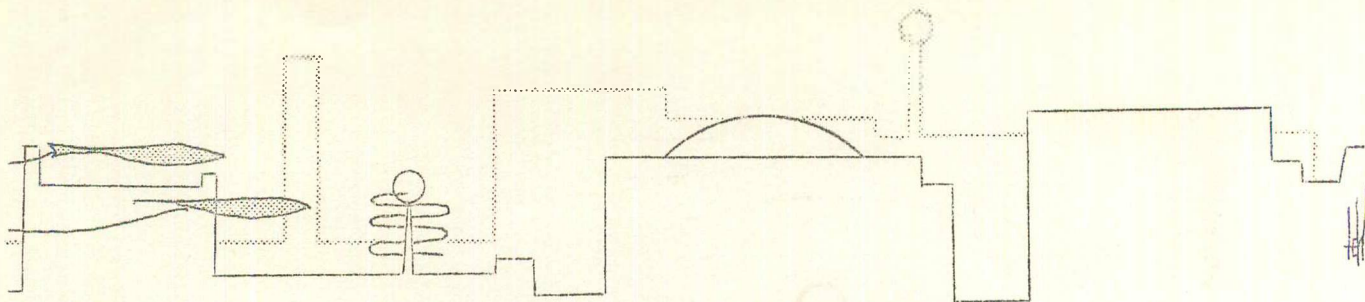
James E. Gunn's "egghead" series is a good example of the type that extends an actual current conflict to an extreme resolution. The ignorant populace simply burns down all the universities, and conducts a scarlet-earth scourge of all so-called "intellectuals". Another instance in which class-struggle is used as a tool rather than as a center of conflict is Jack Vance's "Telek." In this story, men with telekinetic powers form a sort of aristocracy.

But closer to home, in conversations with fans, in allusions to incidents in fanzines, I have often found evidence of class animosity.

Three examples from a recent fanzine: A young, sensitive-faced lad walks into a drug store, casts his eyes over the racks of magazines, and quietly selects one titled Astounding Science Fiction. He pays for it and starts to leave. "One of the drugstore cowboys grasps him rudely by the jacket," writes our fan columnist (from whom I shall take all three examples, because they are representative, well-presented, and happen to be by one of my best friends, who will have a chance to read this before I print it.)

"Hey, he mouths gutterally, running his sounds together, 'what kinda s--t you got there, punk?'

After depicting a scene of laughter and other



mental cruelty, our columnist continues: "'C'mon,' yells the animal, 'let's get th' little sonufabitch!' They slam out of the drug store after the terrified little boy. From the alley behind the drug store, amid the rubble of the store, sounds of flesh meeting quivering flesh are heard.

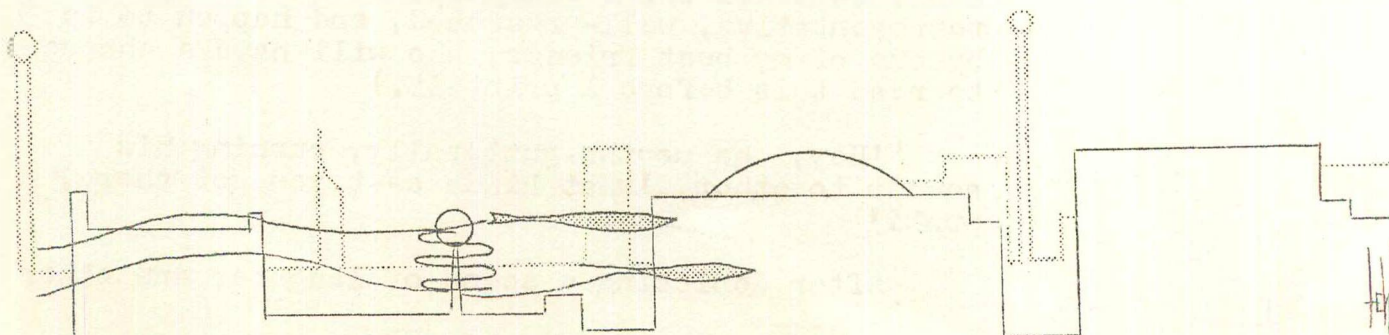
"...No, that lad wasn't me. It was a good friend of mine. He was beaten senseless by a pack of lupine trash that should have been either cremated at birth, or sent to a reformation camp to be thrashed soundly till they respected intelligence, good, honesty, and all the words they would never scribble on washroom walls."

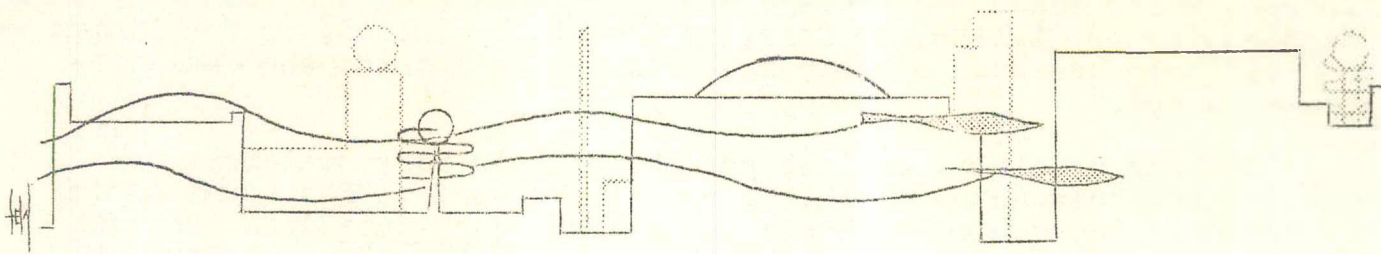
Our same writer is later found at a movie theatre, watching the currently-popular "Them." "In one sequence," our fan friend informs us, "the entymological name for 'ant' was used. ...When it was spoken on the screen, the audience instantly burst into peals of guttural laughter. The audience threw back its heads, clutched its collective bellies, and roared at a scientific name."

The fan's reaction to this was to be "tempted to stand up and shout to the assembled idiots, 'you mindless grub-worms! You ought to be wiped off the face of the land!'"

The third and most significant example tells of "a pack of ignorant laborers (backbone of our country--in capital letters, no less--the average man) searching through the long, sterile corridors of an industrial plant for a scientist who had invented a labor-saving device..."

"...The pack of them, searching through the plant--finding the scientist, a cellulose-chemist--beating him unconscious and throwing him on a pile of stone to line a driveway to the parking lot, both arms broken, his jawbone smashed, blood gushing from both knees and the small punctures from the gravel pile..."





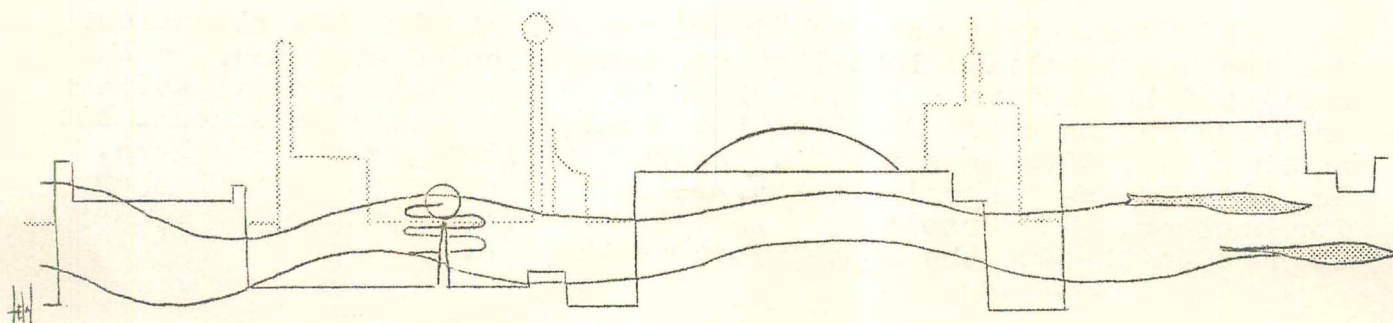
"Mad?" inquires the fan writer. "Yeah, you might say I was a little peeved. But it's nothing serious, gentle reader. Sit back and watch them lay you on your back in The Final Hole with the sounds of some tinny soap opera advertisement ringing in your ears.

"Dig the Brave New World, willya."

These illustrations are lucid and interesting. But I find the stand this fan takes on laughter and brutality nearly as shocking, and just as tragic. His sensitive-faced lad and his cellulose chemist are quite as guilty as his drug-store cowboys and his average men. The movie-scientist with his knowledge of Latin is less so only in degree.

The purpose of scientific language is to convey certain information more readily among a certain group, even as fanwords are meant for fans only--and among fans they fill a special need. Now, use of a name like Formicadae in a movie is not very useful to an audience of people who have no use for the term; and if they have no use for it, we can certainly excuse them for not knowing it. As a matter of fact, no law of humor is being broken by laughing at a person who uses four syllables where one will do.

All of us laugh at situations like that. I know someone who's vocabulary wouldn't compare unfavorably with Webster's. Yet his favorite and infallible reply to a five-syllable word is "You do and you'll clean it up." The scientist can be excused from using such a word only if he has a certain species in mind, which needs further description than the word "ant" offers. In the movie, of course, the word was used as a pretty cheap way to impress people with the knowledge of the "scientist" on the screen. If some fail to be impressed...lordy, I can't blame 'em. But our columnist identifies the audience reaction with "The usual train of demented



thought which leads the average clod-type down the path from misunderstanding to dislike, to fear, to threat, to hatred, to fanaticism and ridicule has been a known and accepted evil since the Gauls invaded Europe."

Perhaps unfairly, I might paraphrase this very sentence, replacing the "clod-type" with the underlined words: "The usual train of demented thought which leads the average snob-type down the path from misunderstanding to dislike, to fear, to threat, to hatred, to fanaticism and ridicule has been a known and accepted evil since the Gauls invaded Europe."

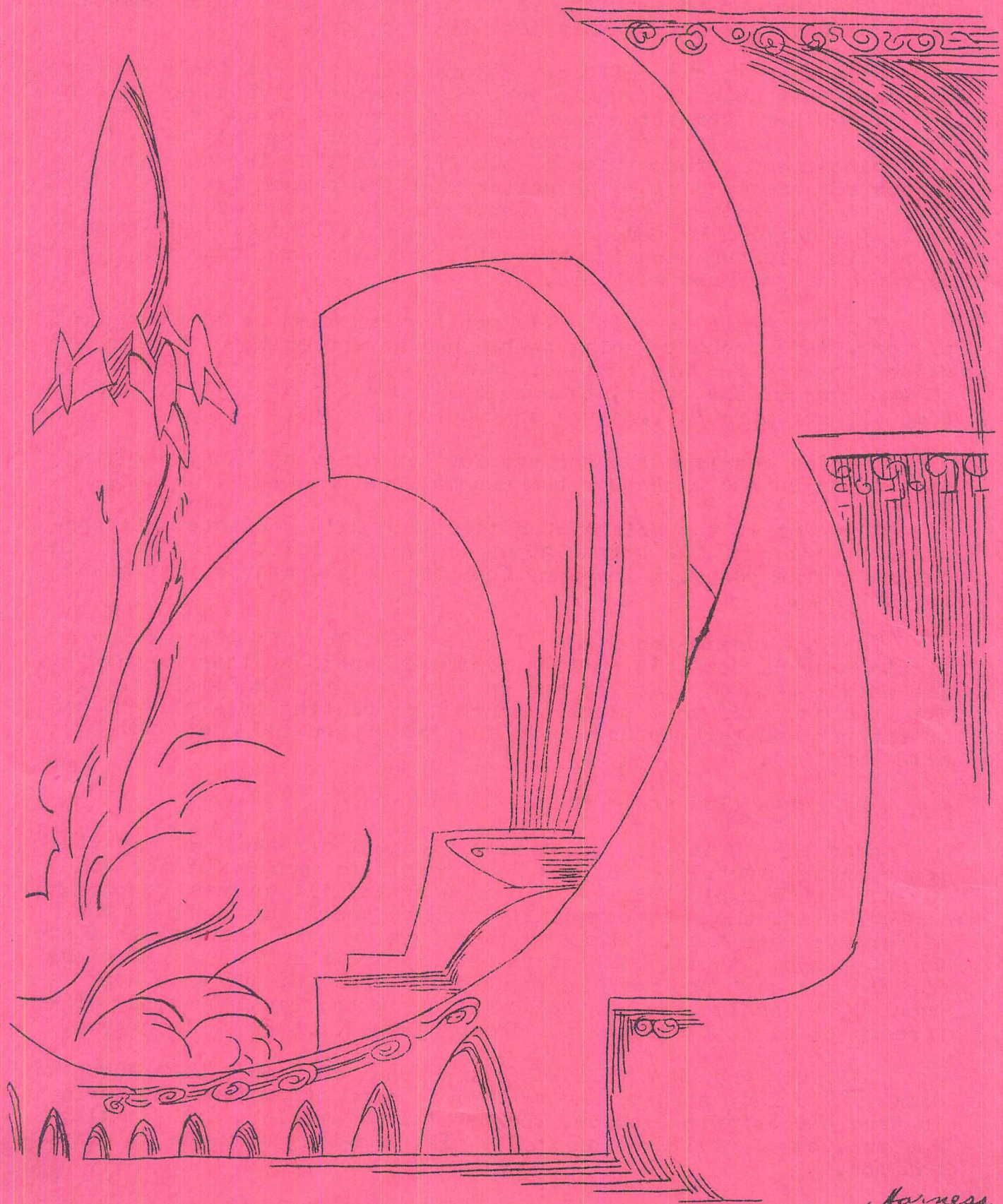
For you see--the Gauls (and the Teutons, and the Huns, and the Norse, and the Turks...) had as much to fear from the sinister, ruthless, though highly civilized Romans--slaveholders and conquerors--as did the Romans from the migrating barbarians. As a matter of fact, the way this lowbrow remembers history, it was the Romans who invaded the Gauls, not vice-versa. And it was the intelligent, civilized, art-loving Romans who slaughtered the crank who said that loving your neighbor was the only way to happiness.

It is my opinion that these..."clods"...have as much to fear for the "snobs" who pretend to be so different as vice-versa.

Take the sensitive-faced lad who was beaten up for reading science fiction. I've been in similar situations without suffering such dire consequences, simply because I didn't try to set up a different set of values for myself, or set myself "above" a group of people such as the drug-store dwellers. If I'm asked (by a specimen who more closely resembles Pithecanthropus Erectus than Homo Sapiens) why I read "this s--t," I tell him "I get a kick out of the s--t." The fact that his mind hasn't learned to distinguish between different kinds of "kick," or that his style of life has no need for an hierarchy of aesthetics, in which one type of pleasure is "greater" or "higher" than another, has nothing to do with why I get a "kick" out of science fiction. I used a language common between us, and in doing so succeeded in telling him why I read ASF. That I find "deep literary and philosophical content" therein was as good as conveyed by the word "kick."

Consider the little sensitive-faced bastard. He won't speak to the drug-store cowboys in their language any more than they'll speak to him in his. As to which language is "higher," I can only say that each usually suffices well, but that both have broken down at this point.

And what, may I ask, is "just" and "right" in this situation? The fan has idealized intelligence, and ridiculed strength. Do the heftier fellows have any less right to assert their special talents than our shy scholar? Think of the beating they take in school, six hours a day, five days a week. Constant ridicule, shame, failure. Is it their fault they're better fitted for one type of work than for another? I'd personally rather take a bloody beating every day than to go through the mental torture they do.



Harness

Maybe our fan writer and his many sympathizers could shed some of their tears for the 19-year old illiterate in my father's machine shop, who came up to me with his third broken drill in an hour with these words: "I can't do this job. I'm too dumb."

Then there's the cellulose chemist, and the chemist's employer, who have only done half their job. They have evolved a way to save labor, but have forgotten a much less important commodity: man. When an employer lays off a worker, he is depriving him of his lifesblood, and perhaps also of his lifeswork. He is making him an object of shame and pity, no matter what the reason for the firing. His wife and children begin to doubt him. He begins to doubt himself. In addition he wonders where and how he'll eat. The employer is seeking his own ends (as he must), not those of humanity, just as the employee must seek his.

The fan seems to think it's nothing for them to be thrown out of work. It's probably going to be much harder on them than on the scientist with the broken legs. Each of them have been pretty thoughtless of the other, though it is more the employer's burden than the scientist's...he was only doing his job.

The fan despises the workers for laughing, smiling, clapping each other on the back over the unconscious chemist. I do too.

I wonder if the scientist smiled when he'd perfected his process. I wonder if the boss slapped him on the back. I wonder if the chemist got a bonus. I imagine. Look at all the slaves they could lay off now.

To Mr. Average Workingman I say: "Had? You might say I was a little peeved. But it's nothing serious, gentle ordinaryhumanbeing. Sit back and watch them lay you on your back in The Final Hole..." With the sound of some plastic android copulating in a plastic bed of retorts and test-tubes, doing the job of you and your wife in half the time.

And not a clod among them.

What this writer seems to hate is the ignorance, not the violence, since brutality is what he suggests as punishment for stupidity. But I can't believe we need ways to kill or hurt people who are different than us, especially when we contribute more to the difference than they. I think rather that we need new ways to learn to understand people. We need to work toward the leveling of class differences that produce different value systems, and this work should not involve, as our columnist suggests, leveling class difference by simply leveling the lower classes...into their graves.

I'll dig the BRAVE NEW WORLD...as soon as People Like Thou and People Like They stop trying to exclude each other from the world in true barbaristic fashion. Then you'll be helping, not fighting the process of civilization in its millenia-long struggle to unite mankind.



Jim Aletaster asks:

which way is up?

As followers of science fiction, we all advocate progress. If we weren't to a degree mentally blind, we would see what a sham our sanctified literature makes of the entire concept of progress. But still, we all stumblingly grovel after a quantity we cannot even define.

God knows, if there is any direction a science fiction reader idealizes, it is up. But sad to say, few know how to find this direction in relation to themselves, and none have successfully pointed it out to others.

"I don't know what it is, but I want it," is an astoundingly childish attitude, yet most of us reading this now are guilty of just such a demand. We have begged and pleaded, cried and gesticulated physically and mentally for advancement in our own little microcosm. Yet the evidence shows that we, less than anyone, can know where progress lies. We do not know, literally, which way is up.

Take Stephen Takas for an example. Despite the fact that he obviously possesses the aesthetic acumen necessary to procure a gorgeous wife, he is significantly pigheaded in his conception of progress in science fiction.

To him, the more books sold at the highest prices (he being a book dealer), the better off the world of science fiction. Preferably, these

books should be published by his friends so the money can all stay in the family. By no means, he claimed on the podium of the 13th World Science Fiction Convention, should any publisher be allowed to sell books at low prices. There is but a limited amount of money in the fan bank, and if Doubleday can sell the same book for a buck that Greenberg-through-Takas must charge \$2.75 for, then obviously the money is going to be used up much faster and both Greenberg and Steve are going to go broke. Is lower-priced, mass-produced, easily available science fiction progress? Nah -- it's breaking up the field and sending corps of lawyers into action to put Doubleday out of business.

Perhaps our conceit tones our conception of what is or is not progress. When we go to a new science fiction movie, we expect, no doubt, to see the pages of Astounding come alive. We are immensely disappointed when we find that they have to hire mundane actors to make the show, and that the studio is too cheap to hire out a space expedition to capture a genuine alien to fit the part. The first thing we forget is that the paper monsters from our favorite pages are only suggested by the writers. Our imaginations do the rest. When we ask for a believable bem on the screen, we are asking the producer to do something for us that we have long cherished the right to do for ourselves. Our imaginations are so trained and practiced that the average fan

would probably scoff at a genuine Centaurian as being pretty damned mundane. in the fabric of a progress which doesn't exist, and is not sincerely wanted.

Our next mistake is to forget that the average movie-goer has not the several million words of science fiction under his belt that we do. We scoff and jeer at the slightest explanation for what we've known for years. We razz any love interest, forgetting that those mammaries protruding from the cover were the only thing that made us pick up our first copy of *Ridiculous Tales*. We actually felt pretty superior when we find the masses enjoying the plots we decided were cliché long ago. We forget that progress, like any other wedge, has to start at the narrow end if it is eventually to get anywhere at all.

Our final conceit is to refuse to admit that there is other pleasure in the world, other relief from our pains, than seeing a good science fiction movie. Progress wouldn't know science fiction if it was spelled out across the milky way. Any director must keep primary in his mind the fact that he is making a movie, sublimating the idea that he is travelling on hallowed, virginal ground. It is his business to make that movie as pleasurable as possible in all ways. Granted many fail. But we mustn't blame George or any of his pals for trying to please more than the 95,000 readers of ASF. The epitome of fandom's bigotry was consummated when *It Came From Outer Space* was largely condemned just because in addition to being a science fiction movie, it was a 3-D film. And hypocritical? How many of us read and reread stories like *The Veldt*, which had 3-D movies as a theme, long before they ever promised to be an actuality?

We have often longed for the literary recognition which we felt was due us. Many's the time we've wondered when it would be realized that science fiction wasn't just another pulp medium parallel to Romance, Western, and Jungle tales. But when a genuine, learned, capable scholar such as semanticist Robert Plank shows up at a World Convention, no one has even heard his name, much less read such work of his like "Communication in Science Fiction" which appeared in ETC., the review of general semantics, a "must" magazine for all those who deal in language and literature. Dozens of articles appear every quarter in the most respected literary journals dealing with science fiction in its many phases. They are violently ignored, an unimportant phase

Robert Plank probably knows more about science fiction than anyone publishing or writing for a fan magazine today. As it was, he was probably listed as a "neo" on the convention roster.

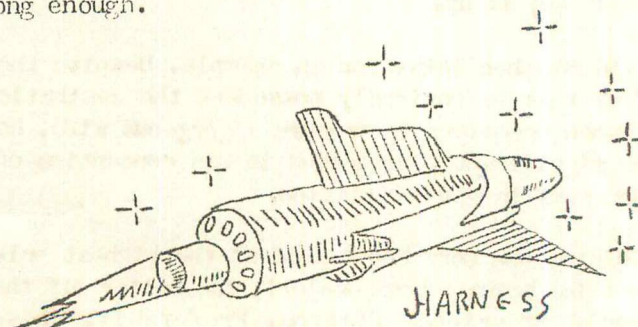
Such is our reaction to three situations which we would objectively consider "advancement" in another field. Is it regression when thousands of people can afford books who couldn't before? When science fiction makes money on the mass market, and formerly poor writers can clean up thousands on script writing? When actual literary value is found in our medium?

This is the 47 many of us waited years for. Now that it's come we will neither accept it nor admit that we asked for it. We've been examining our navels so long we've forgotten which way was up yesterday. The least we can do is to set a saner goal for tomorrow.

There are times when it seems that the cross-section fan just wants the entire population of the world to read nothing but his own favorite mags, to acclaim Henry Kuttner as a greater writer than Shakespeare, and to write rave letters to LIFE and TIME about his fanzine. This would be genuine progress.

I may be wrong about this. I hope I am to the extent that I'd like to do a subsequent article titled "This Way, Mr. Science Fiction." Which way is up? In what directions should science fiction grow? What is the happy medium, if any, between quantity and quality? What commercial pitfalls should it avoid? If you have any ideas that could be incorporated into such an article -- and you probably have -- by all means send them to me through the editor of this magazine.

The field, it would seem, has been in freefall long enough.



ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER CON

In late July or early August, I was informed that there was to be a convention in New York, The Metrocon. A friend of mine from Brooklyn, Dave Foley, gave me the word, so I made plans to take a week off and get in some sightseeing along with the convention.

After much planning, reassuring my family and many unanswered letters to Mr. Foley, I settled everything by calling him long distance to let him know when I would arrive.

On Monday morning, 7 A.A., October 18th, I left Detroit.

Many hours and road signs passed.

I woke up just in time to get my first glimpse of New York City....the spire of the Empire State Building peering up through a thick blanket of fog; all of this seen through the tinted glass windows of the bus which gave it green coloration, and one of the weirdest effects I've ever seen.

Going through the Lincoln Tunnel I had a violent urge to start a leak and watch everybody scramble....but I controlled myself.

At 6:20 A.M. the bus pulled into the 34th street station. This rather bothered me, because Foley was waiting at the 50th street station, where I had been told by the Detroit office that the bus would pull in....I attempted to burn down the Detroit Bus Terminal when I got back, but they stopped me just in time.

A phonecall paging Dave straightened this all out. He said something to the effect that he had Dan Curran with him, and that they would be right over. They finally reached the station, picked up my suitcases and led me out.

The first impression I got of the Empire Hotel was that it seemed too respectable a place to hold a science fiction convention.

After making a halfway decent attempt to look human again I joined Dan and Dave in the lobby and we went out for some breakfast. We talked sleepily of many things, then they both had to go to work, and I went back to the hotel to get some more sleep.

That night Dan Curran took me down to the Village to see Metro, the robot being built for the convention.

few of us in New York for the World Convention were here for the Metrocon, when Dave Kyle and Sam Moskowitz set out to prove that NY should have the bid for '56. But here's the proof...

Metro's builder is a rather unique person named Dave Mason...less refined people would probably label him a character. Mason lives on Jones street, the name of which fascinates me. — and of course, Jones street is only one block long!

Mason told me about the time that Cal Beck's mother had one of their meetings raided by the local cops. Some of the charges were quite cute; narcotics, pornography, homosexuality, and several more which I don't recall at the moment....and this because they excluded her from the meeting! We talked of many other things, while the fellows finished off two quarts of back beer Dan had brought and tried to finish up Metro.

Mason began expounding anarchy to me, or rather Fanarchy, which is anarchy vaguely distinguished. (Incidentally, the Fanarchy group puts out a good fanzine, COUP; this is both a plug and a recommendation. The address is Cell 14, 14 Jones street, New York City.)

After this, they decided to show me the Village...since this was a weekday night I was told I would not see the generally accepted tourist attractions. We ended up in a bar talking about heraldic crests and listening to Eartha Kitt, Harry Belafonte, and some classical music on the juke box, while they had some more beer.

Wednesday night Foley and I went up to the top of the RCA building after poking around downstairs. As for the view from the top, I am forced to use a very overworked adjective: "fabulous." While we were up there we got a story idea about a fellow who finds the master switch to all the lights in New York City.

We made a circuit of the book stores in the vicinity. As all fans know, this was an immediate mistake for anyone who is trying to conserve money.

I once tried to deduce what a person was like from the books they read. This was what was stacked up on my dresser next morning: MAGIC, SCIENCE, AND RELIGION, essays by George Malinowski; ESSAYS OF GEORGE ORWELL; THE SCARF, by Robert Bloch; POGO PAPERS; and 42nd PARALLEL, by John dos Passos.

Dave and I went back to the hotel, because he

had to work out a sort of quiz program for the Halloween party. He adopted my idea of a ONE MINUTE, PLEASE type thing, and enlarged on it with some impossible questions. Since he wanted to talk some things over with Mason, we ended up over there again.

We walked in at a decisive moment: Mason had just roused himself and was wandering about in a stupor looking for some coffee. It was a long green stupor with lovely abstract designs in black and red. While waiting for the coffee to heat up, Dave and I teased the cat, Vanilla, who had been in the coal bin playing again.

To make things nice and cozy, just as the coffee was being poured, Dan Curran walked in with a bottle of wine. The wine later inspired Dan to give a sterling performance complete with brogue, of a bartender in a play.

Before we could put the masterpiece of a play Curran was spouting on the recorder, we had to figure out how to work it. I won't repeat the remarks made about its running condition.

FEENEY IN THE TREES, the play was called, among other things. It turned out rather well, even if I did get a chance to read it through only twice.

Thursday Dave Foley took the afternoon off from work and we went to the Museum of Natural History. The artist in us both came out as we marvelled over the magnificent back-grounds in the display cases. Afterwards we went out to the Hayden Planetarium and saw a show called VAGABONDS OF THE SPACEWAYS, or SKY, or something like that.

Friday night various fans began to appear in the lobby of the hotel....you can always tell them by the look on their "sensitive fannish faces"....slightly harried.

Dan Curran was a member of the Metrocon Committee, so I ended up sitting in on Dave Kyle and Sam Moskowitz worrying about where they were going to get a big enough place to put the 400 expected attendance for the con. Actually, I don't think that many turned out, but they sold at least 300 memberships, and there were usually around a hundred or so listening to the speeches with 20 or so of us standing around in the ante-room gabbing.

After listening to them worry for a while I got restless and went downstairs to see if anybody I knew had checked in. I walked over to the desk to inquire about the state of affairs, and then I thought I saw something vaguely familiar: a pair of blue suede loafers....last place, Detroit Convention. The shoes belonged to Dick Clarkson, one of the last people I expected to see at the Metrocon, since he had assured me that he would not be able to attend because of college.

Well, it was nice to see him again...even if we don't like the same type of music. We always argue about Dave Brubeck, whom I like and Dick doesn't.

Others in Friday night were Lloyd Eshbach and the Cleveland crowd who are putting on this year's World SF Con, and some of the other New York area people whose names escape me.

Later a bunch of us dropped in on the Fan-archistCon in Mason's "Mauve Grotto," which in reality is his basement. The subway riders consisted of Art Saha, Lee Riddle and several fans from his neck of the woods, Fran Farrell, well-known fake fan Phyllis Scott, Dick Ellington, and a redhead who kept trying to compose Shakespearean sonnets. She, however, did not go over with us. She insisted on going home to get nine hours of sleep! Dan Curran and I made up the rest of the group.

Despite confusion, subway, and fans in general, we finally arrived at Mason's. Quite a few people were already there...all wearing red Fanarchy armbands. I had one, but I left it at the hotel, since I did not go wholeheartedly with the idea behind it.

Among the beer-drinking crowd were Stan Serxnew, Pat Sabator and her sister, Sheldon Deretchin, John Closson and Dave Foley, whom they had put to work painting signs.

One of the first people to speak to me was Serxner. But I said no. He wandered off into the corner looking very disappointed. He was one of the many who asked the same question. They all seemed disconcerted by my matter-of-fact ANO."

Various people complimented me on my enacting of the broken-down space belle, Gertie, in the tape-recorded play. Mason had already remarked that I did a darn sight better than Pat Sabator after she had put away a pint of gin. I guess this is an accomplishment. I'm not quite sure.

Later, after much confusion and watching people wander around emptying beer bottles (I remembered the old Detroit Fan phrase: "Beer is the only true Ghod!"), Lin Carter and Dave Kyle came in, whether together or independently I don't recall.

A group of them secreted themselves in a little room with the recorder and began doing off-the-cuff recordings...such God-awful cat-erwaulings I've never heard before! quite a bit of tape went into recording Lin doing the Aton chant from the movie, THE EGYPTIAN.

Finally most of the people cleared out and went over to the Jericho, a local bar, to absorb some more. The rest of us watched Mason clean up the basement.

Dave Foley showed me CRUDE, which is his hilarious take-off on the pb editions of art.... something which ought to be printed for all of fandom to enjoy.

Later I found out that among all that screeching coming from the room where the tape recording was going on was Dave Kyle, typing up some stencils!

We bade Vanilla the cat and his waterbug good night, and dropped into the Jericho to see how everybody was faring. It was 3 A.M. when I finally got back to the hotel.

For some strange reason I got up around 9 next morning...went downstairs to look up some food; bumped into Lloyd Eshbach, who had the same thing in mind, so we combined operations and went down the street to a small restaurant for breakfast.

Learned something which makes me very happy—

Lloyd said he might have to print up a second edition of Eric Frank Russell's short-story collection, DEEP SPACE. He seemed quite pleased about it, as he really hadn't expected it to sell as well as it did; in fact, the Leinster novel he was so enthusiastic about wasn't selling half as well.

Things like that happen.

I wandered around talking to various fans until registration opened, got a Metrocon card and program, which looked quite nice, though I cannot vouch for the outcome since I did not attend the speeches.

I noted with interest that the guests of honor were Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett.

I was informed of the fact that Lin Carter had just sold a novel to Shasta. And of course, there was the auction with Sam Moskowitz presiding.

I tried every once in a while to listen to the speeches, but I found that I enjoyed myself more talking to the bunch in the ante-room: Joe Gibson, Lee Riddle, Dave Foley, and various others. Isaac Asimov walked in and tried to greet me enthusiastically, but I beat him off.

Other celebs wandering around were Marty Greenberg, C.M. Kornbluth, Walter Kubiak, the ever-present Evelyn Gold, and her small son, who was standing in for H.L. In a corner of the ante-room Dave Mason was arguing with Garry Davis, World Citizen, about something of World Shaking Importance, I'm sure. I met a friend of a friend, fellow by the name of Dave McDonald. Dave was wearing a button I immediately coveted, but he wouldn't give up: "McCarthy for Fueller." I bumped into an acquaintance from the Philcon, Dave Ish. We talked about Harlan Ellison and quickly switched the subject to talk about our troubles. Mine was that I wasn't getting enough sleep. Dave had poison ivy all up and down one arm, and there were boils breaking out on it to make things more painful. He kept muttering something about wishing that he'd left it home. Dave Foley wandered up and I introduced them; he told about the 4 or 5 hours sleep he had obtained at Mason's, much against the will of Mason's wife, small son, and cat. Dave Ish and I commented on Foley's selection of outfits; levis and flannel shirt!

Note: Dave seems to be the most common name in fandom. Every other person I ran into was named Dave.

To make a long day of introductions and re-meetings short, I will only comment on a few happenings...such as the strange look that John Clossen and I got when we went into a drug store and asked for some penicillin tablets for his sore throat...or Isaac Asimov insisting that I was lying about my age...or finding out that Marie Uney has a twin sister, very pretty and very sweet...and that there were many confused people wandering around...

Then there was the Halloween Party at the very exclusive Lotos Club. A bunch of us walked over through central park. We had a great time dodging traffic and construction signs.

The Lotos Club had an air that made you want

to peek under the carpet to see if there was a doorman hiding there sneering at you; but the place was beautiful.

The hit of the night was the panel, though Dave Foley should have let some of the speakers talk a little more. Dave had varigated the idea we had had two nights before: instead of him giving them the subject to speak on, he had the audience put the questions to them. The panel consisted of Sam Moskowitz, Tony Boucher, Katherine MacLean, Isaac Asimov, Harry Harrison, Evelyn Gold, and another whose name I find it impossible to recall.

If the panel didn't follow the rules set forth, the robot was supposed to clobber them; but Metro seemed to have enough troubles of his own. Too much of Evie Gold's little son, probably.

One of the little incidents worth talking about happened between Isaac and Katherine MacLean; he kept putting his arm on the back of her chair, and she kept removing it; after about three rounds of this, she figured out an easy solution: she reached over and took a drink out of somebody's hand and put it in Isaac's offending hand. I will never forget his look of amazement.

The first question was put to Asimov by Dave Ish: "Tell me, Mr. Asimov, what is the place of sex in science fiction?" Another one of the questions was one asked of Sam Moskowitz: "What is a fan?"...I wish Sam had been allowed to finish, instead of having to be cut off at one minute.

And then there were the femme fans who kept ordering "Grasshoppers," which were a beautiful shade of green and all foamy and served in a champagne glass.

Another great event occurred that night...or so they tell me: A.J. Budrys smiled! As far as I can tell from all reports he hardly ever cracks a smile. Dan Curran relates the time a group of them were coming back by bus from a Circle meeting, and Kyle and Budrys were sailing paper airplanes out the window...while Budrys remained stone-faced throughout the whole proceeding.

Other highlights of the evening were some films of past conventions (which I had seen at the Midwescon) and the movie which made such a hit in Frisco, BORN OF MAN AND WOMAN.

The only complaint I have about the film is the quality of voice that is used as the creature's; I found it much too deep for what I had imagined it to sound like. Also, the sound equipment used was not too good, because if you didn't know the story you couldn't follow the dialogue too well.

When the movies ended a bunch of us decided that we would go back to the hotel and raise some hell. Dave Foley got stuck with carrying about 40 or 50 pounds of tape recorded, Mason joined us carrying what was left of Metro's head...and there were others, like Dave Pap.. "Smith," as he preferred to be called.

We had a good time walking back through the Park, singing various songs at the top of our lungs -- I remember a loud rendition of SAM HALL, and a slightly off-key version of GOOD NIGHT, IRENE on one of the main thoroughfares near the hotel.

We were informed of a policy of the Empire

Hotel that no guests were allowed up after midnight...and since it was only 2 A.M., we didn't feel that anyone would object.

The rest of the night is rather a jumble of people and things, and I do not care to attempt to tell them in chronological order. Therefore:

Foley reciting Dylan Thomas quite effectively, and then breaking into some stuff from POGO...meeting Karl Olsen...Shel Deretchin, who kept wanting to take my shoes off...Dave Mason telling about the imte he worked in a mental hospital out on the coast...somebody passing a bottle around and looking very amazed when I didn't take a shot...Joe Gibson making a comment about my popularity...and then finally Curran, Olsen and I ending up down in my room...Dan fell asleep on the bed and Olsen and I sat there and talked all night. Yes, that's right: talked!

About 6:30 a knock sounded on the door and I opened it up to admit Dave Ish and Marie Uney...they, too, had been up all night wandering around the town.

Dave again muttered threats to himself about cutting his arm off and mailing it home.

We decided that we would go out and attempt to rustle up something that resembled food... I remember vaguely the note Karl left the peacefully snoring Dan Curran: "If you wake up and find us gone, us is left..." or something on that order.

Dave got one of the strangest breakfasts I've seen in a long time: Lemonade and a sandwich—but since he was a fan I decided that there

was nothing so strange about it.

I remember other things most vaguely Sunday afternoon; life wandering into the convention hall and wandering out because I wasn't able to coordinate the words being said into sentences. Karl discussing hi-fi with Lloyd Eshbach, whose 18 year old son is also an enthusiast...Dan Curran and I getting strange looks from other fans when he thanked me for the use of my bed...Dave Ish and Marie Uney back from the top of the Empire State Building, where he got two or three nose-bleeds in the course of the jaunt...I tried speaking Spanish to Dick Clarkson, and got nowhere... eating spaghetti in a place on Broadway with Karl, Dave, and Marie.

We said goodbye rather sadly...

Monday morning I roused myself out to catch a bus at 7 A.M. or so, checked out at the desk and headed for the door when I heard the clerk call me. I went back to see what he wanted, and he handed me an airmail letter which had been waiting since Friday night or Saturday morning. It was from John Magnus informing me that he couldn't attend the con... I gritted my teeth and started for the door again.

I kept dozing off on the bus, but I never quite got all the way asleep.

By the time I reached Detroit I was ready for a week of sleep; I had been just short of three days without it.

And now New York has the World Convention.

Well.....

...MARY SOUTHWORTH YOUNG



THE

MOBILE

FAN

near
TRAVELS
+ far

W. I. W. E.

A PAGEBACK FEATURETTE...

ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION AS ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION

If a title is well-chosen, its functions may be many. Modern literary critics can do much with a title; often, one feels, more than the author intended. Many of the new-critical devices, such as paradox, irony, and wit may be discovered in the titles of archaic authors who never went to college to learn what they were doing.

At least, however, the well-disciplined title may be allowed to do three things. It will certainly act as a symbol, it should give the reader some idea of the theme, and may in some way explicate, or shed light on the general purpose of the content.

John W. Campbell may or may not hate his present title. But one thing is certain. He couldn't change it. Distasteful as it may seem, the reader knows what to look for on the newsstand. After two or three issues, the words of a magazine have very little objective connection with its title in the mind of the reader, anyway. From then on, they serve only as a design, a gestalt which motivates the readers' brains into a fairly well-set pattern. The title merely as a symbol, then, is important.

But a title should also give the prospective reader -- even the accustomed reader -- some idea of what to expect. Here the modern fan, and perhaps even the modern editor grows a little doubtful. "Astounding," be it printed larger or smaller than the appended "Science Fiction," just doesn't satisfy either the fashionable intellect or the sensitive ego. The adjective, of course, along with many equally outrageous siblings, hearkens back to the old days when one of science fiction's big selling points was the fact that it was completely different. The mere fact that it was "astounding" gave it a share of preferred stock on the open market. Later titles (If, Imagination, Galaxy, and plain, cultured old Fantasy and Science Fiction) are evidence of its newer brand of interest, but Astounding will probably continue for many years to be picked up, even subscribed to, by people who just want to be astounded and don't give a second-hand wonky whether Mars is a planet or a candy bar.

There are many ways a story in ASF can astound you, and usually more so than any other sf mag. Galaxy may give you kick endings and psycho-pstuff; F&SF packs a mag full of cute little literary pieces. Fantastic usually manages to be. But -- and perhaps not so coincidentally -- ASF usually is the more astounding.

The newer, engineering ideas almost always find their way to ASF, maybe sometimes at a loss of overall literary quality, maybe not. These ideas, bred and farmed out by Campbell, are what keeps the magazine on top. While few of them are intended to elicit actual traumatic experiences, there's nothing like a genuinely new idea to open your eyes. And I imagine that the much talked-about fellows who sicced the FBI on JWC were rather astounded by that particular issue.

And then, I am usually astounded, if not incapacitated by the sight of the 100 or so back issues of ASF I haven't gotten around to yet. Perhaps it isn't so bad -- the title John W. Campbell was so ungraciously stuck with some 18 years ago.

travels far

It's too bad that the Midwescon didn't really come off this time. The prospects were rather exciting, and at the very least, your editorial staff was looking forward to an original time. But the inner geography of that motel should've been more sensitively assayed.

The right to quickly change rooms should be inalienable in the if-world of fandom. The right to get inklings of what's going on so that our rights may be judiciously exercised is corollary. This place was marked off in monkish little segments, however, in exactly the worst possible arrangement. It was impossible to find out where you were, where you had been, or how to get anywhere else. About the only memorable moments were sitting on a stairway reading Ellison's Detective Works, and later watching Garrett dive into the pool and nearly lose his pants, which he did later intentionally. Everyone is much happier when he's discussing women than when he's rampantly disgusting them.

All of which puts me in mind of a limerick I once wrote

There's a sterling young writer named Garrett
Whose stories are 21-carat,
But his jokes and his verse
Get progressively worse
Until I don't see how Doc can Barrett.

Anyway, we hope Don, Doc, Ray, &co. re-exercise their imaginations between now and then, and come up with something a little less fated, at least to this personality.

travels near

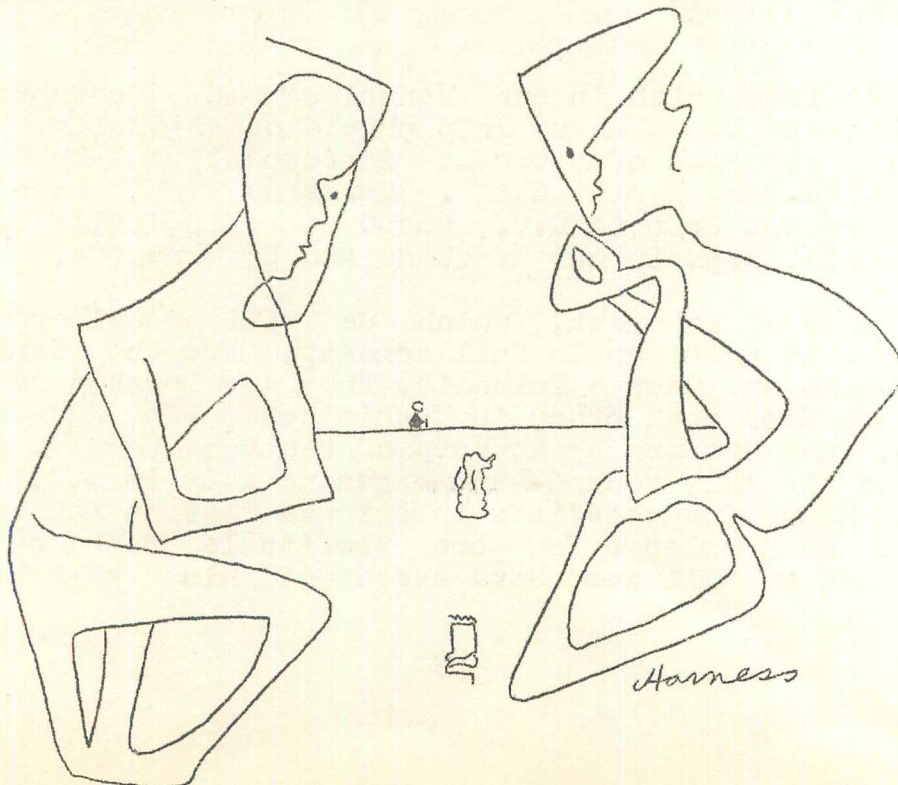
We don't lose faith in our Venusiangreed Fordmonster just because it makes us drip purple occasionally. But even the strength of a broad, introspective I-beam is faced with Test X ultimately. Our time nearly came during a recent trip to D.C., where we periodically meander to fill gaps in our magazine and book ranges.

Two stores of interest, which we will consider our pleasure to write up in full someday, are the Central Book Store and George Friend's. They are located several doors from each other in Washington's Pink Haze district, and are run by members of the same family. Central is the only second-hand magazine shop in D.C.; Geo Friend Himself specializes in science fiction and Paris nudes. He juggles a few more profitable books on the side, and we will soon have mastered his telephone-

code, win, place and show.

After browsing through the monstrous stacks of nearly every book published since the thermometer started to rise in 1952, we suddenly remembered our parking meter. We informed Mrs. Friend of our intentions, and she allowed that we should just bring the ticket right to her if the police were mean enough to persecute customers of a paid-up shop, and she would have it taken care of at once. After all our browsing and purchases were satisfactorily completed (it was dollar-day, so we came away with 13 vari-colored columes), we were surprised to find that our section of the universe was billed for three dollars. Not wanting eventually to be called in from Oberlin or some other inconvenient spot on one of those come-pay-for-your-fixed-ticket, we've-got-a-new-commissioner campaigns, we decided to throw up the generous offer. So, like the good, solid citizens we really are, somewhere deep within, we drove over to the Central Violations Bureau and dutifully deposited our three dollars.

"Alas," said Alexander, when he could conquer no more, and so did we when we found that our trusted key would no longer operate the Fordmonster's ignition. This left us with the same feeling Roundtree, the famous pirate, must have had when he raised his sword to give the command to board, only to see both arm and blade sail over the lee rail in front of a cannonball. We tried for a rather tiresome 45 minutes to get the old key to cooperate, then faithlessly abandoned all in search of a beer and a side of cornbeef. We eventually wound up down by the river (don't laugh, mom, it may be your son tomorrow), and finally stopped in to see some good friends at the Shamrock Inn. Dave & Mickey Woodward sing hillbilly songs and serve beer at the end of pretty waitresses' arms. One thing led to another, and soon we had called up Publisher Ted White, and slyly invited



him and collaborator Larry Stark down for a drink, hinting the while that they might profitably bring some ignition-jumping tools along. We knew if anybody could do the job...

We hadn't seen the fellows for a while, the size of the while suggested by the length of White's beard, so we had a jolly time discussing things. Among other things, we got our first glimpse of Stellar, which looked good even at a distance. Eventually conversation evolved to the subject at hand (an old rhetorical trick), and we decided a look at the ignition in question was energetically in order. We dropped back over to the Central Violations Bureau, and the old thing was -- well, I won't say purring -- in no time.

All this renews my faith in fans. You see, with such a wide range of talents available at the flick of a fan-directory, nothing is impossible even for a broad, introspective I-beam.

what it's all about

Nobody would think of giving their spare time to publishing things like this, so we must look for a different word than hobby to justify our activity, or, of late, our inactivity.

You see, it all started so quietly -- we just sort of looked up one pleasant summer day, and found ourselves doing layouts -- it is only natural that it should end in similar decibels. In a manner of speaking, we just sort of looked up one pleasant summer day, and found that we hadn't published anything for a year and a half. We dug around and came up with some material that looked just ever so tempting, but we decided not too, after all. Layouts and everything may be fine. Sure it's fun to look over stuff with an eye to printing it, but no -- there are so many other interesting things to do. It's more fun just to sit back and turn out a few pages of fiction a day, read whatever one wants at just the time it occurs to one, and in general, to lead what will doubtless be our last summer of reasonably uncommitted leisure--although even a full-time job is leisure after Oberlin College.

But this is a world controlled by impulses, personalities, and the interaction thereof. So naturally, as soon as we begin associating with publishing people once more, well, we just can't go to sleep without indulging ourselves.

TERRY CARR'S

FACE CRITTIURS

SEE A STF MOVIE

We've always thought that Terry Carr was a very talented individual, albeit one unfortunately confined to an environment which tended, like advertising, to make one satisfied with less. I am speaking, of course, of enthusiastic, happy-go-lucky Bay-Area Fandom. But here is an item rescued from the Hoo Haw period of fandom which shows a pervasive humoristic attitude (which was the religion of West Coast fans), proving to us by its quality that Terry Carr deserves even more fame than he has already been accorded by his followers.



LOOKLOOKLOOKLOOK!!!!
IT'S GOING TO KILL THAT
GIRL, AND THE HERO US
HELPLESS!!

NEO

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT - SHE'S
JUST A NON FAN ANYWAY...

FAN

BESIDES, THE HERO WILL INVENT A
DEATHRAY ANY MINUTE NOW AND
KILL THE MONSTER...

HOOK, JOE, YOU
WERE WRONG!

NEO

LOOKLOOK!!

YEAH, HE BATTED HIM OVER THE
HEAD WITH A ROCK, INSTEAD...

FAN

WELL, WHAT DO YOU WANT
FROM A LOW BUDGET
PICTURE?

LOOKLOOKLOOKLOOK, JOE!!!!

NEO

ANOTHER HORRIBLE, UGLY,
GREAT BIG MONSTER!!

LOOKS LIKE AN OVERGROWN
CARROT TO ME...

FAN

OH, THIS IS EXCITING!

NEO

NOW THEY'RE GOING TO
KILL IT WITH AN H-BOMB!

THEY SHOULD'VE TRIED
SICING A GOPHER ON IT!

FAN

GEE, I THOUGHT THAT WAS
A REAL NEAT PICTURE!!!!
DIDN'T YOU THINK SO?

NEO

SOMEHOW IT LACKED
SOMETHING...

FAN

the end

fan history...

Fountain Lodge
Bellevue, Ohio -

David F. Ryle
WPDM
Potsdam, N.Y.

THE
LETTER
TO
POTSDAM

Famous last words:
"Let's see. Of course
the convention is this
weekend."

Readers' information:
a good time was had by
all the fifth annual
midwescon, held the
weekend of June 10,
1955.

Love

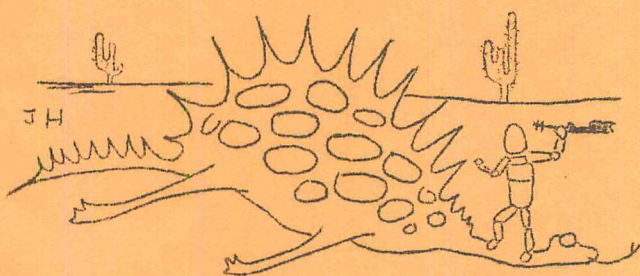
3 June 1955

HAVING WONDERFUL
TIME —

WISH YOU
WEREN'T HERE

Love

GO WEST YOUNG FAN



staged by fargo

22-a

---"YOU SHOULD OF SEEN HITCHCOCK TAKE DOWN AN INTERLINEATION IN ARABIC." ---WHITE---

When I finally learned for sure I'd be in San Francisco for Labor Day, it was a foregone conclusion that, as in years before, the convention adventures would be recorded after my return home.

There are a number of ready-made adages offering themselves as excuses for putting it off so long, not the least a propos of which is a certain favorite about the plans of mice and men. But the fact is, I could never convince myself enough that I'd actually gone to sit down at the typewriter and talk about it. Things had looked unpromising.

The whole faux started out on the wrong pas at the DETROITCON, where two Detroit fans were discussing desperate-sounding plans for getting to California. Roger Sims, George Young, Harlan Ellison, and maybe some others would drive an agency car to San Francisco at no cost. This is a not uncommon means of transportation for autos bound for rentacar or similar type agencies where speedometers need not read zero at the finish line. We all acted quite convinced, but I'm sure no one actually had any very serious hopes. We could at least go home with the conviction that we had made the necessary gesture towards the unattainable.

Not only wasn't California a place to go galivanting to over a weekend; it also required money and time off from work, both of which were out of the question, since I simply couldn't tell the boss to go to hell. The boss is my sole source of money, and incidentally also my father. What ever inspired me while driving my father and mother home from work that day is beyond me forever.

"It's a damn shame," I said. "Here are three of the most important fans in the country that want me to go to San Francisco with them, and at absolutely no cost to me except food. It's probably the only chance I'll ever have of getting there. One isn't invited to California every week."

"But how do you know you can trust these people?"

"Trust them!" I exclaimed. "What do you mean, trust? Robert Briggs is the founder and president of the Washington Science Fiction Association, the most respected group in the country. He has a wife and three kids to worry about, and a \$10,000 a year job. And Mr. Young and Mr. Sims are going to be chairmen of next year's convention."

"Well it is a shame, but..."

"Got it! Why didn't I think of that before. I'll work time and a half after I get back. Summer school is over, I won't have anything else to do. It's all settled."

And much to my surprise, it was. I wrote Rog and George that night. In a few days I got a letter from Bob Briggs, the prominent

Washington businessman.

"Hear you'll be going to Frisco with George and Rog. Maybe we could get together and take the same bus up."

I got on the phone immediately, and told him we could as easily, and more cheaply, drive up in my car. Times and dates were agreed upon. Leaving 8:00 Monday should get us to Detroit in time for a little rest before the scheduled 3:00 Tuesday departure.

Just as quick as that it was settled. From this and the events that follow, you'll see how hard it is for me to believe that it all actually happened. It has taken me two years of nearly silent fanmanship to convince myself. But I have finally managed to gather together my thoughts enough to reason that I must in fact have attended the convention. My sincerest gratitude is hereby extended to all those writers who have, by personal letter and by mentioning me kindly in their convention reports, helped me to bring myself to the inevitable conclusion, and the equally inevitable recording of the fantastic sequence of events which made up that most unbelievable two weeks.

This is NOT A CON REPORT. It is a saga of what happens to fans when they are foolish enough to leave the redoubtable comforts of their mimeo machines and fanzine collections--a saga which will put Dougherty's Travels in Arabia back on the musty shelves where they belong. Moreover, it is the noble and life-giving continuation of a grand tradition which began when the first fan's car took on the semblance of an accordian on its way to the first real convention in Philadelphia.

Everything recorded is true, though everything is not recorded. Circumstances and laws require the omission of certain chapters, otherwise suitable only for fiction or verse.

1

I loaded the Venusiangreen Fordmonster at 6:15 a.m., and left Silver Spring for the heart of Washington, where I would turn across the Anacostia River, and back into Maryland to Briggs' house. It didn't take me more the 40 minutes to get within a couple blocks of his house, but it took me two more hours to admit defeat, and beg for reinforcements from a drugstore phone booth. If this can happen in the middle of a supposed civilization, it's no wonder they never return from the tundra. That maze would've stumped everyone from Watson to Masserman.

I was soon within Briggs' gorgeously decorated house (his father's an artist--so's he, for that matter), but after some cold water and an aspirin, the sunglasses went back on, and we were off, but seriously.

The driving was beautiful, and completely pastoral. Every pre-

vision I'd ever had about going west floated past my eyes. It didn't seem like more than a few minutes before we left Route 40, The Golden Route West, for the Pennsylvania Turnpike, The Quicker Route West For The Present. It wasn't such a dream after night fell. After-dark driving is completely boring to me, and Bob couldn't do much because of his eyes. Little of the drive is clear now, and I doubt that much of it was then. I only remember the sun coming up over a broad concrete crossroads, at the moment I realized we were in Michigan.

But it's a long long drive from Michigan to Detroit. We bored through miles of suburbs, nearly every one of them having the ring of a major American City, straight past the Hotel Detrouiter, scene of the DETROITCON. More suburban names, nearly every one of them recalling some Michifan. Orma McCormick Lives Four Blocks From Here. Howard Devore Lives Way Down There. Nine miles more, and I turned into Larkmoor, and pulled up in front of Mary Southworth's house.

Harlan had been there a couple days. He helped us unpack. Bob and I could do little more constructive than collapse into soft chairs. First impressions flew like mad. I had a letter to Mary, a talk with Harlan, and an extra couple hours to wait for George Young to come with the car. I was given to understand that George was always late.

I began to wonder what I was doing and why. My only driving force was the idea that this was something I'd always wanted to do, and though I'd probably do it again and again, I somehow realized that a first trip, like a first love, is never forgotten.

2

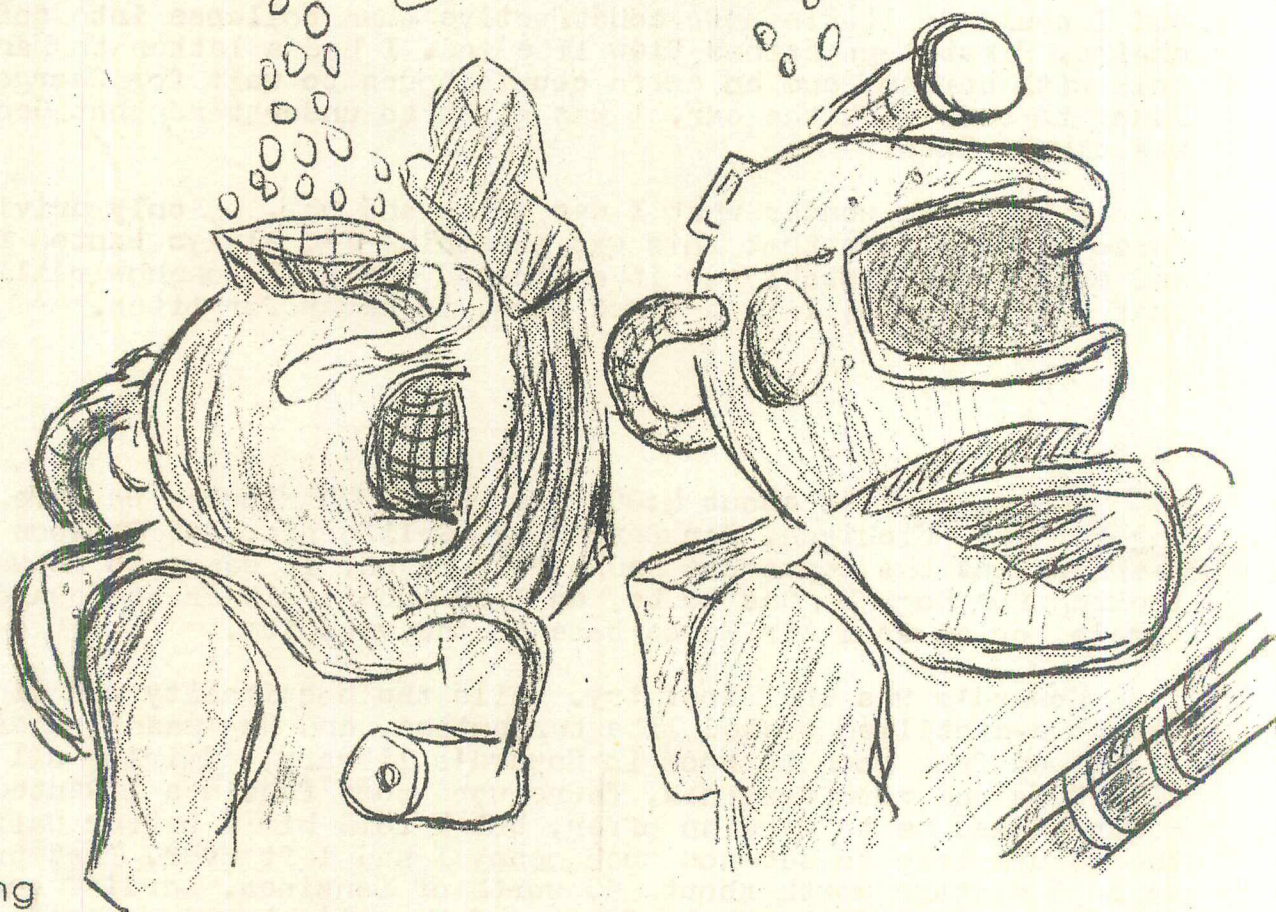
George came at about 4:00, and within 20 minutes we were leaving Berkley, Michigan, for Berekeley, California. But we soon learned that the departure had barely begun. It seems to me we were looking for Rog. He was to be, as I remember, either at Howard Devore's, or at some Air Force base in the vicinity.

Howard's was the first try. While the hospitality was fine, the home-distilled tasted like turpentine, and Rog wasn't there. We roamed from room to room in Howard's library, admiring all the mint UNEs and rare fanzines. There were some fanzines I wanted. Howard asked me to make an offer, but I told him I better wait for the return trip to see how much money I had left over. That proved to be a mistake worth about \$90 worth of fanzines. Lord! I could have had a five-foot stack of some of the oldest and greatest fanzines published, a complete run of mint UNEs, and a few cruddy old Clayton Astoundings, had I but been able to look a half day into the future.

After goggling at Howard's wife for a while longer, however, we struck out once more in search of Rog. We wandered about 100 miles looking for some ridiculous Air Force base everyone had a

JULES VERNE presents

20,000



starring

CAPTAIN HEMO

as James Mason

NED SEA

as Kirk Douglas

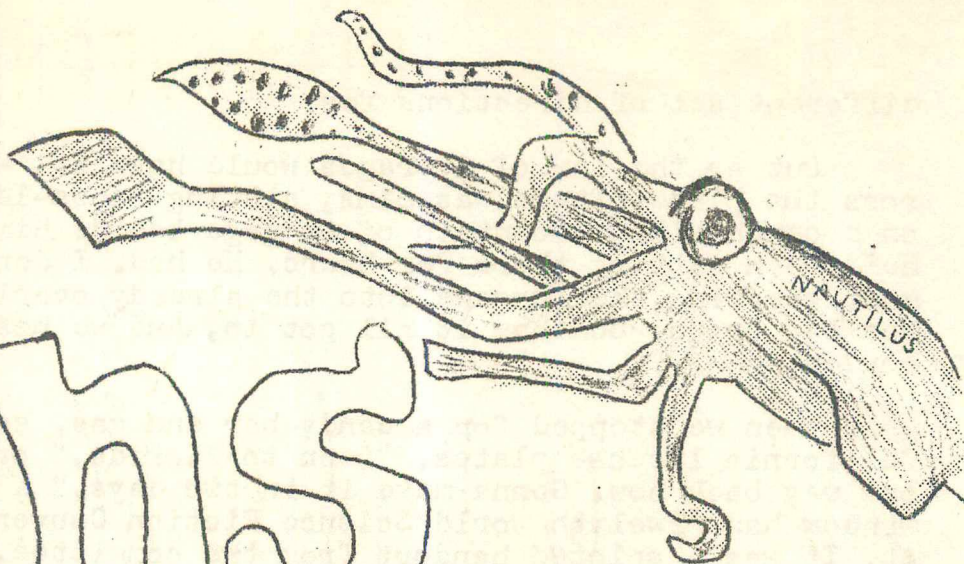


PROF ASTRONAUT

as Paul Lucas

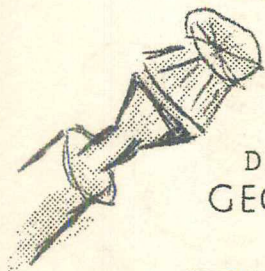
MELVIN MELVIN

as Peter Lore



Fans UNDER THE Sea

THE PACIFICON
IN
RETROSPECT



DIRECTED BY
GEORGE FRIEND

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
FORREST J. ACKERMAN

"This is easily the most ...
thing I have ever seen."

--Bosley Crowther

"...Good celluloid..."

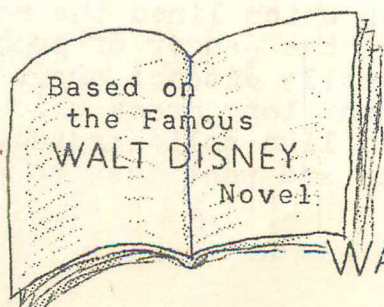
--Walter Kerr

"...held me nauseated."

--William Atheling

"...best acting I've ever seen
from a squid."

--damon knight



Based on
the Famous
WALT DISNEY
Novel

COLOR BY
WATERCOLOR

MIMESCOPE

different set of directions for.

But as the law of averages would have it, we finally ran across the place. There was Sims, sitting cross-legged-cross-armed on a bench with a mountain of luggage beside him. He looked like he'd been sitting there for hours. He had. I don't know who groaned most stuffing the luggage into the already overloaded 1954 Pontiac, the car or us. Somehow it all got in, and we headed for the Ohio border.

When we stopped for a candy bar and gas, someone noticed our California license plates. "Been to Florida," one of us said, "on our way back now. Gonna make it in two days." A sign in the back window had "Twelvth World Science Fiction Convention" written on it. It was a printed handout from the committee. I wonder what happened to the sign. No one remembers taking it down.

We reached Napoleon, Ohio at about 8:30. We headed for High street immediately. We were in front of the house in a few minutes. At this point someone suggested that Lynn Hickman had moved recently, and that we might not be able to find him at all. We left High street, and found a drugstore from which we could call. After about ten minutes and a licorice bar or two, Lynn was out in front with his Lincoln-with-the-nearly-full-ashtrays, to lead us home.

For a couple of hours we talked, looked at Argosies, ate, and drank. Soon I asked Lynn when he was going to let me back into fandom. He told me if I drank a jigger of Jack Daniels Black Label straight, he would admit me back into the fold. I thought this was darn generous of him, especially since it was his Jack Daniels and his jigger. Shucks, it was easy. I didn't even need a chaser. Furthermore, he promised to let me be a fan as long as I was good. Over another Jack Daniels, I promised to do my fannish best.

It was late when we left Hickman's. I hardly noticed the Indiana border when it flew past.

3

My sporadic and very uncomfortable napping was interrupted occasionally by references to the "HAROLD'S CLUB, RENO" signs. Once or twice, while still in a half-stupor I thought we were in Nevada already, and started cussing people out for not waking me up. The flat Indiana countryside was both interesting and boring in the moonlight.

Once we pulled off into the high grass which lined the road to change drivers. There was an argument about the danger of such procedure, Harlan claiming that there were usually ditches about ten feet deep along the side of the road, and the long grass which grew out of them was cut level so that it looked like solid ground. After the change, I cursed peacefully for a while and went back to sleep.