

VAUX HALL FANATIC

Seth Johnson sounding off from 339 Stiles Street, Vaux Hall, New Jersey

ROUND ROBIN REPRINTS:

May 6, 1963: When I was a youth there was the Scottsboro case of nine Negro boys condemned to the electric chair for the alleged rape of two white female tramps on a freight train. Then, during WWII there were race riots in Detroit, and some other city had a good deal of racial tension, too. However, I think this unending struggle for Negro rights has risen to a higher level and far more powerful.

As to the Communists, they send agitators into organization that show signs of becoming spearhead of some aspiration or other. They do lead these people into demonstrations and fighting against their lot, but this they could not do if there were not widespread grievances and no other hope apparent to the people concerned. Their idea, of course, is to recruit sufficient of the leaders or potential leaders in the organization to Commies and then train them as agitators and strike leaders and the like. They used to have a whole vacation camp in upstate New York somewhere, which actually was a camouflaged commie college. That is what they mean by "boring from within". And it's pretty hard to resist a guy that seems to know all the answers and just about what is going to happen.

I think most adults are conditioned to fear or despise minority groups. Fact of the matter is that a scapegoat is necessary upon which to project all your own weaknesses and sins. Also, of course, the fear of sex compition for the girls and economic competition for the good jobs. And the more ignorant a person is, the more likely he is to want some scapegoat to absolve himself of all blame. The Puritans came to this country for religious freedom, and one of the first ways they showed their new freedom was to cut the tongue out of a Quaker who believed in the right God in the wrong way. Intolerance is something we always have had with us, and always will until we find a system whereby all men will feel safe and secure and fear no one.

No, I would be most particular whom I shared water with in the sense of Heinlein's STRANGER. There are far too many spongers, moochers and free loaders in the world to take a chance of accepting just anyone on that deal. However, I do feel it is an ideal to be aimed at. To achieve sufficient empathy and friendship that one would never under any circumstances want to hurt, hinder one's water-Brother, or ever to feel reluctant to share what worldly goods you have with him if he needed it. But it is not something to go into lightly if you're at all sincere about it. And, of course, you'd have to be dead certain the other water-brother was totally sincere before offering to share water. But when I use the expression, it is as a beautiful ideal and a wish that all fans could literally become water-brothers.

May 7, 1963: Nope. I didn't get married. The rumor started with Dave Keil who, I believe, saw me fondling a femme fan at ESFA meet and decided I wouldn't dare get familiar as that with femme unless I planned to marry her. I exchanged a letter with the femme after that and that was the last I heard from her. But I'm still a bachelor from choice -- the ladies choice.

.. Wonder if we should get together and start a round robin exclusively for obscene minds, or for those who appreciate the drivel-ling of obscene minds... I might recruit Ralph Watts to that one, but don't know if his mind would be actually obscene so much as wistful. He is paraplegic veteran and somewhat wistful about forbidden topics. Guess all us randy old bachelors sort of like to think about the things we missed. The good things, like moonlight and roses, songs, blondes, and sweet enchanting music in the night and curves and things like that there... Trouble right now is that most of my RR volunteers are teenagers. No place for obscenity in robins with them. Especially since some parents read over their shoulder and might really blow their tops. The teenager himself might know more than we do, though, teenagers of today being what they are.

May 9, 1963: No. Psi doesn't mean wisdom, but it does mean the wise ones will have infinitely more information at their fingertips and by that token be so much the greater. Insanity would be impossible in esper society. First symptoms or aberrations would be caught a-borning and nipped off short.

As to our Platos and Shakespears, we would still develop them. Remember those people had no more access to information than their contemporaries. It's not the information so much as what you do with it. Only thing, I think, is that a Shakespeare would be quickly recognized. One more point. Reasons the greats of this world were considered radical, insane or revolutionary, was primarily because of human fear of the unknown and unpredictable. In a telepathic society, there would be no such fear since complete understanding and sympathy would be the thing. Nothing else could happen. And what you understand, you don't fear. Even if you disagree with it one way or another.

May 11, 1963: If You're really interested in spells and incantations, I'd suggest you read A MIRROR OF WITCHCRAFT, by Christina Hold, Pedigree Books, and SATAN'S DISCIPLE, by Robert Goldstein, Bantam F 581. This last contains a multitude of spells, charms and incantations that you can practise in chemistry class and lab. These are both serious non-fiction books, incidentally. If you want a real nauseating novel on the subject, I'd recommend Dennis Wheatley's THE SATANIST -- which is British hardcover and hard to get. F&SF Book Co. has some for sale, though.

What I've often wondered, is if you could make the old Voodoo devil doll magic work the other way. I imagine all of you have read stories where getting nail clippings, hair and other parts of a person's body and incorporating in body of a doll, causes the person to experience anything you might do to the doll. Witches make practise of sticking needles in dolls of their enemies or the enemies of those who pay them for doing something of the sort.

But now suppose I mastered this art and opened a male health club. Made doll of each customer and squeezed the bulging bellies and double chins into swelling, bulging, dynamic muscles just where the femmes would admire them the most. And, of course, the moment the customer stopped coming, the doll would promptly be moulded to fat again. Not only that, but perhaps you could cure the lame and the halt by this method. Well, kick that one around for a while and see what comes out.

May 15, 1963: Oh, heck, I'm not crying for discussion on dialectics so much as I'm eager to get a discussion started which will interest all concerned in this particular robin.. Sort of a searching for common ground on which all can be involved.

I notice you left out Korzubsky and Hayakawa and semantics in your list of discussions. Not on semantics so much as on the workings of the human mind and relationship of words to thoughts.

My own mental approach to dialectics is somewhat different. Seems to me the clash of ideas, new or old, give rise to brand new ideas, and that this is sort of a pulse in the evolution of human thought. Also, I'll postulate that all new ideas come from the clash of old ones. That this is part of the ideal of eternal progress and learning.

I'll agree, though, that most of us have a philosophy built around facts or postulates we believe to be true. And in this respect, every argument and discussion is a comparing of notes between the postulates and philosophies of two or more different people, and ideally changing or improving the postulates and attitudes of all concerned. Failure to be able to do this is, to me, the first signs of senility or hardening of the mental arteries.

I'll also agree that all these postulates and ideas have to be tested in the laboratory of human experience. How else can a theory be validated but by constant testing and applying?

Like in the field of science, for instance. Several people came up with the telephone within months of the time Bell developed and patented his. The same thing is true of many other inventions. Thoughts and ideas breed more thoughts and ideas and inventions, in the mind of not one, but many inventors and scientists.

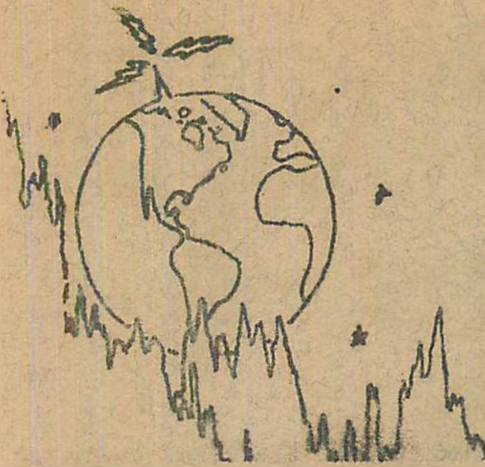
May 16, 1963: Odd that your grandfather should pass away on my birthday. It's always sad to see someone pass on that way. But I have a peculiar attitude towards death insofar as I can't feel too sorry for anyone if the death was painless. Especially if they have discharged all life's responsibilities and need feel no qualms of having left tasks undone. I think the main reason for this was my Grandmother who remained bedridden and dependant for every little thing for eight years before she passed away. And most of that time in discomfort if not actual pain. I think everyone breathed a sigh of relief when she passed away. So, to me Death can be a boon and release. At the same time, of course, it could be terrifying since none of us know what comes after, if anything...

May 22, 1963: Curiosity might well breed a form of religion, or then again it might breed athiesm. Its hard to say what uncontrolled speculation would bring to mind. I've been curious, as you recommend, for thirty or forty years now and explored just about every religious path I could find and "so far stand wherein I came". (Read Rubhaiyhat of Omar Kaayam for some groundwork philosophy on this subject. It's another of those books that have to be read over and over, though. And never appears the same twice in a row.)

Frankly, I consider Communism as practiced in China and USSR to be a form of religion. They have their saints, heroes, holy books which may not be denied or opposed, and the plan for universal peace and happiness if only you give all to the holy cause. And many commies are just as zealous and self-sacrificing as any ecstatic and holy monk you care to name. And live equally austere lives. I do not consider that Communism in the Marxist sense is being carried out in Russia. More a form of National Socialism than anything else. There is no question of "From each according to his ability, or to each according to his need" there, And not likely to be for some time to come.

May 31, 1963: It wasn't Ziff-Davis who increased the price of their product, but economics that diminished the value of your dollar. Another reason why you and your generation should take an avid interest in politics and economics and what causes inflation, depression and war.





I'm in N'APA. In very bad standing indeed, for I've missed the past two mailings and will be up for fine the next mailing. Actually N'APA is just a glorified round robin with forty participants instead of mere five. Most of the zines just print comments on the other zines in the mailing and sometimes this mutual backscratching can get kind of tedious. But let me put it this way; Join N'APA and print up a four page zine of some kind. Plenty of fans will be willing to run off your stencils or masters for you.

Write yourself up muchly as in the round robin and introduce yourself to the forty. Some of them will respond with personal letters, others will mention in passing in their own zines, and others will simply ignore you. And take this attitude: N'APA can and

will be just as good as its members make it. Even at worst, it makes a wonderful podium to sound off your gripes and pass out your pats on the back.

..N3F isn't misgoverned as badly as all that.. The trouble is we are used to having near-genius running N3F, and when Ralph Holland died, there just wasn't - and isn't - anyone to fill his shoes. Personally, I feel the main cause of dropouts is reckless recruiting of people who really aren't fans or have any fannish potential. Also, failure to involve these people into some fanac or other in N3F. But all this isn't something the Directorate can do much about. It's something done down on our level of writing welcome letters, and corresponding and robbing these neofans till they find their niche and become really involved in the organization. And these things we, ourselves, can do - no matter who is directing the organization... But there is one thing that you better start to realize right here and now! Any dynamic and growing organization is going to have factions and feuds and tug-of-war on policy and government. It's when an organization is dying that there is no friction or feuding. Simply because no one gives a damn any more. So my advice is to stick with N3F, try to participate in some fanac at least, and try to do something in your own quiet way to build the organization up, regardless of who is running the thing.

July 4, 1963: Right. Twenty years from now Kennedy will appear entirely different and in perspective historically, which is impossible now. But the fact of the matter is people twenty years from now will know a great deal more about Kennedy than we ever will. His friends and associates will have written biographies of themselves and him and a number of wise-after-the-fact books will have been written about his role in today's world situation. And he, himself, might get around to writing his memoirs.

I thought it was common knowledge that we surrounded the USSR with missile and air bases when the Atlantic Pact was signed. We even have a Nazi General in charge of NATO European troops. Personally, I can't see the point of all the furor for the Russians are now able to deliver missiles to any part of the world right from deep inside the USSR. Sputnik alone proved that. So although we could destroy them totally with the pushing of a button, they can do the same to us. Only trouble is, that by the time both got through hurling their nuclear armament at each other, there wouldn't be any life possible on earth. The whole atmosphere would be so radioactive as to poison all life, both animal and vegetable.

July 10, 1963: Will be interesting to hear how you postulate the speed of light limitation will be overcome by future astronauts. If hyperspace and the fourth dimension are pure bunk, then it stands to reason mankind will never travel beyond the solar system or perhaps a few of the nearest stars. As to who the space colonists will be in the future, I can only postulate that every civilization has its misfits who simply cannot live in their native environment.

These are the pioneers of yesterday and tomorrow. It might well be that they will be mostly single when embarking and marry enroute or upon arrival in the case of deep freeze suspended animation type travel.

Setting up bases on moon is a matter of logistics. Remember that at first, every lb that goes to the moon will have to have a ton or more of fuel to propel it up there. That alone precludes Earth-toMoon shots outside of first exploratory rockets and claiming parties, etc. Might be a whole space satellite station fully supplied will be assembled in orbit around earth and then slowly sent into orbit around moon. Then rockets would start transporting personnel out there. Materials, non-perishable at least, could probably be shoved in right direction to fall under gravity of moon satellite to be captured by men in space tugs or something and there assembled for use or transferred to moon ferry for landing. Come to think of it, we could do the same thing for the Mars and Venus satellites. Load them up and shove them in right direction and wait five or ten years for them to arrive under initial thrust. Someone postulated that Martian moons were satellite space stations artificially made, by the way. Now I wonder if these could be taken over by earthmen and used as bases? Especially if they could be hermetically sealed or something. We'd still have to transport the air and hydroponic garden for air purification and food, but not nearly such serious problem as transporting air and food all the way.

Everything we write is more or less fantasy. ..if we are postulating the colonists travel in deep freeze, then the crew would simply go on to another star if the first one didn't have planets.

There was one scientist who postulated that there are a number of stars invisible to us because the natives took apart their planets to build one thin, egglike shell around their sun and rotate it just fast enough so centrifugal force would match former planetary gravity, thus enabling them to raise their population to googol power. And after that one, my hollowing out Venus is light fantasy, indeed. Come to think of it -- one author had our earth converted into a spaceship and the moon ignited with nuclear fire so it served as a sun for our voyage through space to other suns.

Colonists and adventurers are generally young people. People who find no place or comfort within the framework of their social system and seek release in strange and far away places. This has been characteristic of the human race since before recorded history and will probably never change. If and when it does, mankind is near its demise.

July 23, 1963: Five things that grouch me about this society are first the endless cycle of wars and depressions. 2, the extreme poverty of most of the world's population. 3, the sex mores and havits. I'm opposed to monogamy, for instance. Consider the custom archaic and old-fashioned.

As to religion, I remain an agnostic. If there is a God, however, I seriously doubt if he is an Anthropomorphic God. Postulating that he lives in space, it stands to reason that he would have no use for lungs. Granting he can create matter as an act of will, then there would be no need for hands to manipulate things with. Since he is everywhere at all times, there would be little use for legs, either. I'm inclined to agree with the occultists who say that this whole Universe is but one manifestation of his beingness.

To me a Utopia would have to be characterized by several things. First the ability of all people to grow mentally and better themselves. Two, the ability of all people to sell their services - no matter how mediocre - at a living wage. Third the ability and custom of all people to participate in at least one sport and really become proficient at it. Fourth the ability for all people to participate in some cultural activity or other such as the theatrical arts, music, painting, sculpture and things which help ennoble and uplift the mind and soul of mankind. Last but not least, cradle to grave education. Also, of course, a world government.

I think the fact the younger generation is security minded is reflection of the uncertainty of our times. Big business gobbling up small business, the constant inflation of dollar wiping out people's savings as they do, and the general insecurity all make people think of security first and other things after. In fact, I suspect most of them feel that once they achieve security and niche in some corporation or other, that they can then be free to pursue happiness in their own way.

You have roused an avid desire to read WALDEN II. Only trouble is, I haven't got around to reading WALDEN I yet. But in my mind, the classic Utopia is Edward Bellamy's LOOKING BACKWARDS FROM YEAR 2000. Of course, this was socialist system Bellamy was describing, but it sure sounded like wonderful place to live.

Another one appeared in AMAZING STORIES right back in the beginnings. Forget the title of the story, but it postulated that Atlantis was still living under dome under ocean and that they had deliberately submerged their continent to avoid wars with the primitives just growing into barbarism in the rest of the world. I just wish I could remember title and author, though. But that was thrity-five years ago that I read this thing, and that's too long for this feeble memory of mine.

I'm afraid you're taking fannish articles too darn seriously. Most of them are composed right on the typewriter and don't take much more time than writing a good letter. It's not a term paper designed to display your knowledge, but merely something you're hammering out to entertain and amuse and interest the fans. So, in the future when you're asked for an article, just sit down and write the thing. It won't take much longer than writing the courteous letter of refusal, and will get you more correspondents to boot -- plus fanzines from other faneds, hoping for similar contribs to their zines.

Aug. 24, 1963: Seems to me we could use another fanzine in N3F just for the letterhacks. Only the thing should be published at the expense of the letterhacks themselves. I suppose the thing could be broken down into cost per page and let each pay the cost of printing his own contrib. In return, the contrib would be printed exactly as written, without editing or deletion or distortion - which has been my sad experience at the hands of TIGHTBEAM editors.

For a long time I've wanted to set up sort of a combination spirit duplicator fanzine and quad type robin, with the contributors hammering out their contribs on spirit masters and the editor simply running them all off and mailing whenever twenty pages or more accumulate or once a month at the latest. The members would simply pay ten cents per page to editor to defray the expense of printing and mailing.

And you know, this would make an excellent transition media from letterhack and neofan to active apan. Only it would be available to anyone who could type a master and mail.

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