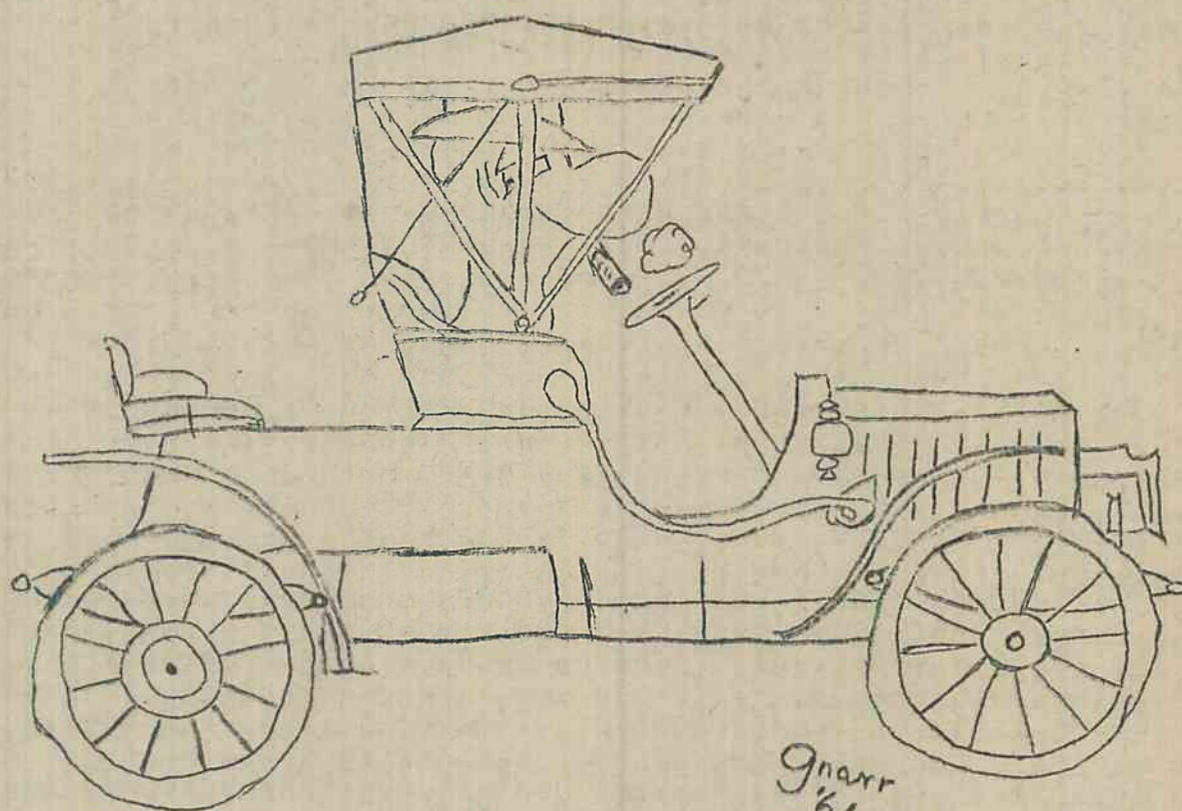


The Vinegar Worm



Gnarr
'61

Greetings, dear freinds. You are,
I am sure, happy to have in hand

THE VINEGAR WORM

Vol. II, No. 3. Published for the 96th FAPA
Mailing by Bob Leman, 1214 West Maple,
Rawlins, Wyoming

*

In an entirely unprecedented departure from custom, this issue is being commenced three days after the arrival of the last mailing. Today is May 21, and I have already stencilled and run off the cover overleaf. Without wishing to appear immodest, I would venture to say that there's not another member so far along with his 96th mailing zine as I am at this time. And while it will probably be true that this issue, like its two predecessors in FAPA, will reach the OE the day before the deadline, yet it makes me feel uncommonly smug to be as forehanded as this.

Actually, the reason for my access of ambition is quite simple: I have a new toy, and I want to play with it. As possibly most of you will know by the time you read this, I am the proud new owner of a model 105 Gestetner, and until the novelty of owning it has worn off I'll probably be cutting stencils for all I'm worth in order to have something to put through the machine. Thus far I have printed two sides of a practice sheet, containing some random ramblings and a Rotsler and an Atom, and have mailed it with the non-FAPA copies of this magazine. In addition, I ran off a hundred copies of a broadside advertising a back-yard pet show my children and some of their friends are in the process of arranging. Those three pages, together with the cover of this issue, comprise my total output to date. Just wait till you see this page.

*

My elder daughter, who is twelve, buys books sometimes when she has a little money to spare after making the necessary outlays for popular records and candy, and recently she brought home a book entitled Yours Till Niagara Falls, by Lillian Anderson, illustrated by Marjorie Bauernschmidt. It's a collection of the verses, wisecracks and sentimental passages that youngsters used to write in each other's autograph albums. And perhaps still do; much of the matter was apparently familiar to Francie. I was loath to tell her that it was also already familiar to me. She has a firm conviction that anything her parents like, or have at any time liked, must necessarily be square, old-fashioned, and unworthy of the attention of a teen-ager. (She became a teen-ager a year ahead of time on her own hook--chronology be damned.)

I was reading her little book in a nostalgic way, when I came upon this verse:

"Henry is a proper noun,
Parse it up and parse it down.
Neuter gender, hopeless case,
Object of a funny face."

that is in any way better verse or wittier than the rest of the matter in the book, but because it stands as a clear example of what's happened to education in this country--and, in particular, how the teaching of the English language has gone to pot.

The use of the verb "parse" seems to indicate that this verse is of pretty antique invention, since it had already passed out of currency in those far-off days when I was learning my grammar. And what is worthy of note in the verse is the obvious inference that may be drawn from the words it uses: that the youngsters who wrote it in each other's books knew what "proper noun" and "neuter gender" and "case" and "object" meant. They could make--or at any rate understand--jokes about the rules and definitions of English grammar. Today's children can't. The teaching of grammar in our schools today is not pursued rigorously and consistently and in every grade, and when it is taught the rules and definitions are abridged where possible, and the youngsters are not obliged to learn them. (Such activity might take up time that could be used for learning "Social Attitudes" or "Group integration.")

The consequence of this is of course that children grow up to use slovenly English. Do you ever watch television? If you are seeking an opportunity to writhe in discomfort, listen for a while to the grammar and pronunciation current on that great educational medium. Do you ever read newspaper columnists? These gentry appear not to know the subjunctive mood from Adam's off ox. (I hold Mr. Westbrook Pegler, for example, to responsible for the frequent use of the word "gender" where "sex" is intended.) Do you ever read fanzines? I don't think I'll elaborate on this one.

Surely the primary function of education is to teach children to speak and read and write their native tongue, and all else is dependent upon and must follow from this. If a child's knowledge of English is faulty, then he is forever handicapped in his search for knowledge--and perhaps in his capacity to think. Our schools, in their failure to lay a powerful emphasis upon the formal teaching of grammar, are crippling a generation.

*

Fun's fun and all that, but the articles on the "Operation Abolition" film that Bill Donaho reprinted in the last LIMBO are such unrestrained exercises in mendacity that I feel I must say a few words in an attempt to set the record straight. Not that I expect it to do much good; the people who have accepted these articles as truth had their minds made up long before they read them, and penetrating a closed mind is the most difficult task known to man. An open-minded reader would surely have arranged to see the film itself before reaching an opinion, and I cannot for the life of me comprehend how anyone who actually saw the film can accept the interpretations given by Moon and Wolfe in these articles.

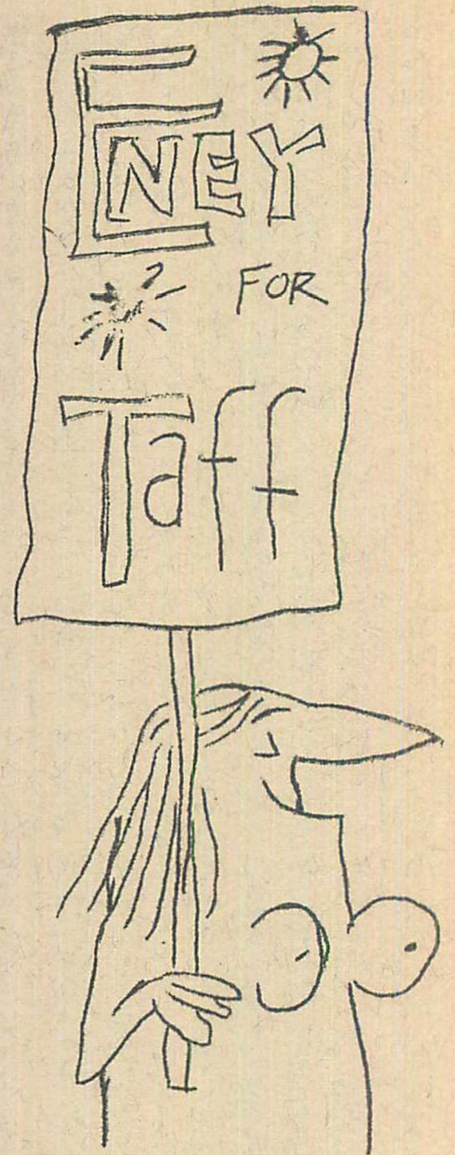
But evidently there are such people. Just why they are so anxious to disbelieve the evidence of their own eyes, I will not hazard a guess, but certainly their efforts to persuade the public that the film is a fairy tale have been long, loud and persistent. The bulk of the anti-film propaganda attempts to persuade us that shrewd editing and cutting have distorted the truth. This is a question I will return to; but for now, I would like to point out that the film contains nothing that did not happen. And even if we were to allow the charge that the makers of the movie were monsters of untruth, yet there is plenty of plain unvarnish'd footage which proves the film's point.

I propose to take up some of the charges and allegations made by Wolfe and Moon, and some of the "facts" presented by them, and to cast a critical eye upon the honesty and bona fides of these gentlemen. In what follows I am indebted to the researches of M. Stanton Evans of the Indianapolis News, and those of Congressman John H. Rousselot, of California's 25th District.

Let us have at Mr. Moon first. His article (page 4, LIMBO #6, reprinted from The Christian Century, January 4, 1961) paints a gemütlich picture of a law-abiding group exercising "their lawful rights of protest and petition by picketing the hearing". But they were "provoked beyond their ability to maintain their self-imposed disciplines" by "the fumbling and brutality of policemen" and became noisy, whereupon the police turned fire hoses on them and washed them out of the building. Now this particular interpretation of what happened seeks to place the blame for the commencement of the violence on the police; but the actual facts are these: the noise the mob was making made it impossible for a municipal court that was sitting in the building to proceed with its business, and the students were directed to leave. They refused. They behaved, in fact, in a highly provocative manner. It then became necessary for the police to eject them, after all attempts to reason with them had failed. It must be borne in mind that a provocateur is seldom an injured party.

Moon says: "The movie carries no credit lines; apparently no organization is willing to admit responsibility for it." The implication is that the producers of this sinister document want to remain anonymous. Actually, the reason no credits were placed on the film is that the film was presented as an official document of the HCUA to be submitted to congress. In such cases credit lines are not normally included, because the document is officially authenticated by the presenting committee, and not by a private individual or firm.

Moon says: "Sheriff Matthew Carberry could report that 'there was no act of physical aggression on the part of the students'; he also reported that when he spoke to them the students were attentive and responsive." This alleged quotation is lifted from a Reporter article by one Paul Jacobs, although Moon does not say so. The fact is that sheriff Carberry did not say anything of the kind. After the Reporter article appeared, Sheriff Carberry issued (on December 6, 1960) the following denial: "I did not make that statement. I do not know the



author of the article, Paul Jacobs, and have never spoken to him and have never been interviewed by him."

Moon says that the committee's own chief investigator "publicly admitted, on the Goodwin Knight television program, that the movie as edited contains inaccuracies and distortions." The facts: on this television show Wheeler (the investigator) was trying to establish that the film was in no way distorted. One of his interrogators, Burton White, a teaching assistant at Berkeley and head of the Bay Area Student Committee, was vigorously alleging distortion, and brought up some points of sequence which Wheeler described as "minor issues." The following dialogue ensued:

Wheeler: "Are you basing the whole fact that everything is a lie because these two minor incidents occurred?"

White: "No, I am basing my discussion on the fact that the film does have inaccuracies, does have distortions."

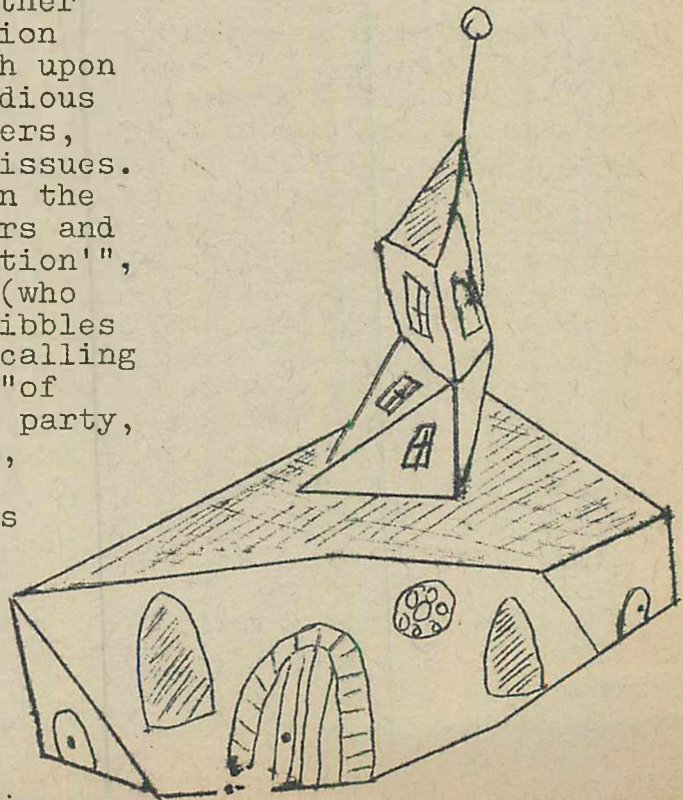
Wheeler: "All right, we have admitted that. Let's go on to another subject."

White: "You have admitted that, Mr. Wheeler?"

Wheeler: "Certainly."

The widespread lie that Wheeler said the film contains distortions resulted from a rather neat piece of distortion by this same Student Committee. They published a pamphlet which printed a portion of the above dialogue; and the part they printed began with White's "No, I am basing my discussion. . ."--except that they omitted the word "no." Reread the above from that point, and you will see how the student committee's selective editing made the exchange appear to be something quite other than what it was.

But this is typical of the propaganda against the film; in charging distortion, it resorts to any and all of the tactics of which it accuses the film makers. That is one of its chief techniques. The other is to raise a cloud of obfuscation and confusion, harping at length upon minor detail, examining with tedious minuteness inconsequential matters, and ignoring entirely the real issues. This is Mr. Wolfe's technique in the second of these articles, "Errors and Distortions in 'Operation Abolition'", reprinted from The Californian (who he?) for March, 1961. Wolfe quibbles and pettifogs about the film's calling Archie Brown "second in command" of Northern California's Communist party, whereas in fact he's lower down, and about the film's saying that Brown received 35,000 votes for supervisor, whereas the actual figure was 33,583, and about the film's calling Harry Bridges an "international Communist Party Agent" whereas nobody's been able to pin it on him yet. All this is clearly simply a campaign to get you to concentrate on this



or that unimportant tree, so that you'll fail to grasp that the forest exists.

Wolfe's slipperiness of language sometimes evokes a sort of sour admiration, as one must admire the fast-talking of the expert con man. Listen to this:

"THE FILM: Narration states that Douglas Wachter is 'an agent trained to carry out Communist Party activities.'

THE FACTS: Not a shred of evidence has ever been produced to support this statement. Wachter, at the time of the demonstration, was an eighteen-year-old sophomore at the University of California. He was very popular on campus because of his leading role in the protests against the execution of Carryl Chessman and the demonstrations in support of the student sit-ins in the South. Because his father has been identified in the past as a Communist and hauled before the committee, Wachter had to refuse to answer all questions in order to avoid being forced to answer questions about his father."

Now the real fact, as Wolfe must surely have known, is that Wachter was an official delegate to the 1959 convention of the Communist Party. Everyone is free to draw his own conclusions as to what Wachter actually is; but note the slick evasiveness of Wolfe's language. The soundtrack says that Wachter was an "agent trained to carry out Communist Party activities." Wolfe says, "Not a shred of evidence has been presented to support this statement."

Well, you know, he may be right; it may well be that no one has had occasion to present evidence in a court of law that young Wachter is an "agent trained to carry out Communist Party activities." If that's what you're trying to prove, the mere fact that this man was a delegate to the Communist Party convention is not legal evidence that he has been trained to carry out Party activities. But anybody who has looked at all into Communist theory and practice knows perfectly ^{well} what the truth about Wachter is.

But I seem to be doing exactly what Wolfe was trying to get me to do: concentrating on minutiae and ignoring the real point, which is that the extremes of opposition to the HCUA are in many cases directed by agents of Russian foreign policy, and that a lot of innocents have been used by the Communists. I ask you again--you who saw the movie--to read these articles and to inquire of yourself what the truth actually is. If you took part in the demonstration, then of course you cannot judge; who will admit to himself that he has been duped? But this point cannot too strongly be made, and Donaho's two reprints forcefully emphasize it: that the anti-film propaganda is attempting to cloud the issue by trying to force you to ignore the real point, and the real truth: that the student demonstrations aided and comforted the Communists, and that these demonstrations were inspired by, and to a considerable degree run by, the Communists.

-The End-

ERNLEY
FOR TAFF

SERIOUS CONSTRUCTIVE FICTION DEPARTMENT

BRISKER PIPES

by
Farley McNitt

Rubadene Mandible switched off the vacuum cleaner and stood quietly for a moment in the sudden silence. Then she cocked her head in a listening attitude. There was something wrong in the silence, some missing quality in the soft air of the suburban Saturday morning.

She discovered the answer. Of course! The drone of the lawnmower had ceased. Rubadene shook her head wearily. That man! It really was almost more trouble than it was worth to keep him at work on the lawn.

She crossed to the door and opened it. Sure enough, there was the mower, sitting silent and deserted in the middle of the lawn, with less than a quarter of the mowing completed. She peered up and down the street. Her husband was not in sight. She sighed and returned to her dusting, wielding the cloth somewhat violently.

A few minutes before lunch-time Grover Mandible banged the back screen door and came whistling into the kitchen. Rubadene looked up quickly from the table she was setting. When Grover whistled that way it meant that he was feeling guilty about something.

"All finished with the mowing, dear?" she inquired sweetly.

Grover flushed slightly. "Kinda got side-tracked," he admitted.

"I was helping the new neighbor move some furniture."

A trace of frost came into Rubadene's eye. She had seen the new neighbor. "I wish you'd help me with our furniture some time," she said. "How did you like her?"

Grover was wary. "Why--all right, I guess. Seemed like a nice little woman. Had a very sad life, I understand."

"It doesn't look so sad to me. She paid cash for that house, you know, and I saw in the paper how much alimony she's getting. It looks pretty comfortable to me, being a rich divorcee at her age. . . Not that she's all that young," Rubadene added as an afterthought.

"What's for lunch?" Grover asked.

"Ham-and-cheese sandwiches and beans. Was she wearing those skimpy shorts again?"

"Shorts? Yeah, she was wearing shorts."

"Well, I don't think I'd wear those tight shorts if I were as fat as that."

Thoughtlessly, Grover spoke his mind: "Why, she's not fat. I'd say she's got an extra good figure."

Rubadene fell strangely silent. Grover had finished most of his sandwich and half of his second cup of coffee before he realized that this was not a companionable silence. He undertook to strike up an easy conversation, but unfortunately he resumed the conversation at about the point at which it had been dropped.

"I guess Triolet's got a pretty easy time of it now," he said, "but it wasn't always that way, she says. Old Gumber gave her a pretty hard time while they were married. She said--"

"Triolet!" said Rubadene. "You're on first-name terms, then."

"Oh, sure," said Grover. "She's very friendly. You know, she's got a very interesting hobby. She's a fan."

"Well, she's a little too old and too heavy to wear those--a what?"

"A fan. You know, science fiction."

"You mean those Buck Rogers magazines you read?"

"That's part of it," Grover said, "but not all. Gosh, I've been reading science fiction for years, but I never realized until now what fandom is. Rubadene, you'd be astonished if you saw some of those fanzines. It looks like a lot of fun."

Rubadene looked blank. Grover said, "Fanzines. Amateur magazines. Boy, she's got a million of 'em. She's got this sort of a den, with a desk and a mimeograph machine and bookshelves all around and a couch, and more science fiction and fanzines than you ever saw. She told me that a lot of people think that GRUE was the greatest fanzine of them all, and she's got a full run of it. She showed me her file. She's mighty proud of it. I spilled my martini on her copy of number 19 (it was ditto'd, you know) and she almost had a fit. Of course it did--"

"Martini?" cried Rubadene. "Martini? At ten o'clock in the morning?"

"Oh, we only had a couple. Maybe three or four. Fans are kind of unconventional, you know. They did make me a little woozy, there for a while, but after I'd laid down for a while I felt as good as new."

Rubadene's voice has almost lost the capacity to express outrage. "Where did you lie down, Grover?"

"Oh, on the couch in her den there. Fan-den, she calls it. She publishes a fanzine of her own, on that A.B. Dick."

"Grover, I don't know what you're talking about--and will you please stop yawning like that!"

"Sorry, hon," Grover said. "I'm a little tired, I guess. Think I'll take a nap after lunch."

"What? Grover, you never take a nap."

Grover yawned hugely. "Sure I do," he said. "Anyhow, I used to. I guess it has been a while since I took one."

"Well, I should think so," said Rubadene. "A long while. Grover, I don't think you've taken a nap since our honeymoon."

Grover considered. "Yeah, I guess you're right. I always did feel sleepy after--" He was silent for a moment. "You know, this fandom looks to me like something worth investigating. Maybe I'll take it up." He yawned again.

"Grover, what is the matter with you?"

"Why nothing, sweetheart, nothing. Little sleepy, that's all. Not as young as I was, I guess."

"There's still most of the lawn to mow, you know," said Rubadene.

"Yeah, sure, I'll mow it later, after my nap. Say, did you ever hear of the letters FIAWOL being embroidered on underwear?"

"Underwear?" asked Rubadene. "Men's or women's?"

"Uh--women's."

"FIAWOL? No, what does it mean? Where did you hear of it?"

"Lord, I don't remember. One of the fellows at work, probably. I don't know what it means." Grover pushed back his chair and left the room.

Rubadene sat at the table for a time in deep thought. Then she rose and went into the bedroom, where Grover was sprawled upon the bed. "Honey?" she said. "Grover?"

He grunted sleepily. "Mmmmm?"

"Grover, I don't think I like this fandom. You're not going to make a habit of it, are you?"

He half awoke. "Lord, no. No, sweetheart, never a habit. Fandom is just a goddam hobby, that's all."

HORROR UNPARALLELED

(An entry to the NFFF Weird Story
contest which failed to get to
the contest editor in time)

by
Blossom Grabenhorst

Great God, to this very day my heart beats faster when I think of that awful, creepy, crawly, nasty old monster that slithered out of the foetid miasmal swamp on that long-ago day when the tom-toms thumped out their hypnotic rhythms in those incredibly ancient purlieus where the diaphanous wraiths of a gentler people trod graceful measures to the hellish cacophony of the infernal percussion instruments. I am an old man now, and drunk most of the time, but even here, in the safe warm surroundings of the packing case at the end of the alley where I and my bottle of vino live in modest seclusion, I sometimes seem to hear the whispering footsteps of the Followers down the echoing emptiness of that ancient temple where the soaring ^{columns} led to awful immensities of height at the top of which lay in wait those dripping simulacra of men known as the Bifteks.

It all began in the palatial uptown (New York) apartment of the suave heir to a milk of magnesia fortune, Ira van Diphthong, who had been my roommate at Harvard, and whose lovely sister, Consuela van Diphthong, was my own affianced bride.

"By Jove, Gipfelbury," ejaculated van Diphthong excitedly one day, "just have a look through the magnifying glass at this Ancient South American Artifact which I was fortunate enough to pick up for a song from a bearded ancient who purveys such curiosities in a dusty, cob-webby cubbyhole with dusty windows, down in a low slum of the city!"

"By George, van Diphthong!" I exclaimed excitedly, after taking a long look through the magnifying glass, "This is incredible! If I am not mistaken, the strange symbols on this Ancient South American Artifact delineate the history and precise location of an ancient civilization, where unspeakable rites were performed!"

"Ah, but Gipfelbury," sibilated van Diphthong smoothly, "you missed this sentence right here."

I stared thunderstruck. He was right!

"van Diphthong," I cried incredulously, "does this mean--?"

"Yes," he responded. "That civilization remains extant somewhere in the high jungles of South America. And only you and I know its location!"

A few short weeks later we were cleaving the hot Carribbean waters in van Diphthong's luxurious 178 ft. yacht, "The Bluebird," which had in its cellar a full supply of guns, pith helmets, and other costly explorers' supplies. We were off to discover the lost city of Pellunidar! Only we two adventurers had the key to its location, and we were determined to unravel that ghastly mystery which had been hinted at by the mysterious symbols on the Ancient South American Artifact. Little did we know the horrors that lay in store for us! Had we dreamt then of the unspeakable thing that coiled its loathesome length in the dread crypt under the temple, we would have put the sails of the yacht into reverse, and returned to New York!

Little need be said of our landing in Cape Town, of our dreadful safari through the steaming South American jungle, of the lions and tigers with which we had to fight with, nor of the ever-louder beat of the tom-toms of the pursuing blacks, who were chasing us because van Diphthong had inadvertantly offended them by stealing the great ruby that was the eye of their god, which was a mere statue.

Suddenly one day van Diphthong replied loudly, "Great Scott, Gipfelbury, look there! There is the baby-grand-piano-shaped mountain of which the curious symbols on the Ancient South American Artifact spoke!"

"Great Heavens, I believe that you are right!" I returned with a beating heart. For there stood the baby-grand-piano-shaped mountain of which the curious symbols on the Ancient South American Artifact had spoke. With renewed vigor we pursued our perilous way through the febrile rainforest.

The closer we got to the Lost City the more uncomfortable we felt. We sweated a lot and had trouble with our bowels. Then came the dreams. Ah God, those dreadful nightmares! Cursed be the day that I dared approach that ghastly haunt of Bifteks and Volisch, that frightful home of horrors inexpressible! Night after night we slept poorly because of the ghastly, roiling infestations of snakes, worms and bugs that crawled all over us in our nightmares, even under our pajamas.

But we persisted. By now van Diphthong was a man obsessed. He would be all sweaty and red in the face and hold me by the arm and remark in a high impassioned voice, "Gipfelbury, she's there. She's there, in that lost city we've come so far to find!" Sometimes he would fall down foaming in a fit and yell very loud. He was referring to a Princess who appeared to him in his nightmares, who didn't wear very many clothes and warned him against the high priests of the Lost City who were the slaves of a prehistoric burrowing race that really controlled the world.

Then came a memorable day. "By Jove, Great Scott!" observed van Diphthong in a scream, "there is the gates of the city!"

And so it was.

How can I describe to you those titanic gates? Just try to think of the biggest thing you ever saw, and these were even bigger. There were clouds around the top, they were so high. We didn't know how to open them up. But we walked up to them anyhow.

Great God, had I but the words to describe what we felt then! From the faery spires and minarets of that ancient sleeping city came floating an oldritch music that bewitched our senses so that we were all but in a swoon, and we saw as in a dream a translucent iridescent bubble drifting from on high, containing a beautiful maiden without much clothes on.

"It is the Princess of my dreams!" whispered van Diphthong inquisitively.

Gracefully she emerged from an airlock in the bubble. When she spoke her voice was like the chime of silver bells:

"You have come, then, Drulyng-Wun. My call to you was heard. For three millennia have I waited in the dreaming towers of this ancient city for your reincarnation. Soon will you recall the oath you took in the fragrant bower near the peaceful waters of Vomi-Tus, when first we realized that the long night was approaching, that the reign of the Volisch was about to begin. Long have we gentle Peri-Tonis wandered as ghosts through the slumberous avenues of somniferous Pellunidar. But now, at last, you, our hero, handsome as a god, loins girded for battle,

have come to probe the nother depths and destroy the dread Gangr-Ean, and so end the reign of the Volisch."

"Gracious Princess, I am honored," I vouchsafed enthusiastically.

"Not you, him," she chimed voluptuously, gesturing toward van Diphthong.

A startling change had come over that worthy. His weak chin had become firm and bronzed and he wore a tunic and sword and carried a shield, in place of the explorer's suit he had formally been wearing.

"My own fair princess Coro-Nari," he reviled in a noble tone, "it is I, Drulynge-Wun. Lead on to the lair of the Gangr-Ean!"

My head was spinning. "Great Scott, van Diphthong," I exclaimed, "what on earth has come over you?"

"Silence, you miserable slave!" he revealed loudly. "I am no longer Ira van Diphthong, but rather the Prince Drulynge-Wun. Nor are you any longer Peter Gipfelbury, but rather my slave, you miserable slave! Now follow! We go to slay the Gangr-Ean!"

Great God, what words can do justice to the path we trod! Downward, downward, ever downward led the labyrinthine tunnel that led downward from the lost city. Strange rustlings heard we, as of loathesome monsters following close behind. These rustlings were probably made by the harder kind of monsters. There were also squishy noises, made by the soft kind of monsters, which were all slimy. I trembled with fear, but van Diphthong (or Drulynge-Wun, as I must now call him) trod fearlessly the unspeakable path that led ever downward from the Lost City.

Suddenly we spied the monster! My heart rose to my throat! But Drulynge-Wun was fearless. The keen blade whispered from its sheath and flashed in lightening strokes. "At last we meet, Gangr-Ean," he revoked boldly. "Come and meet your doom!"

Would that I had words to describe the battle which ensued! The slithery slimy lengths of the monster uncoiled in endless profundity from the stench-laden depths of the horrible cavern from out of which it uncoiled. The great sword sang and danced and flashed in that confined dripping cavern, and bit by bit pieces of the monster were hewed away, until the last fragment twitched to its end there on that noisesome floor. Drulynge-Wun stood glistening with perspiration, his bulging muscles rippling all over his body.

"My hero!" cried the Princess warmly. And in a trice she was enfolded in the manly arms of the stalwart hero.

"This marks the end of the rule of the Volisch," grimaced the hero smilingly, "and an end of serfdom for the people of Pellunidar!"

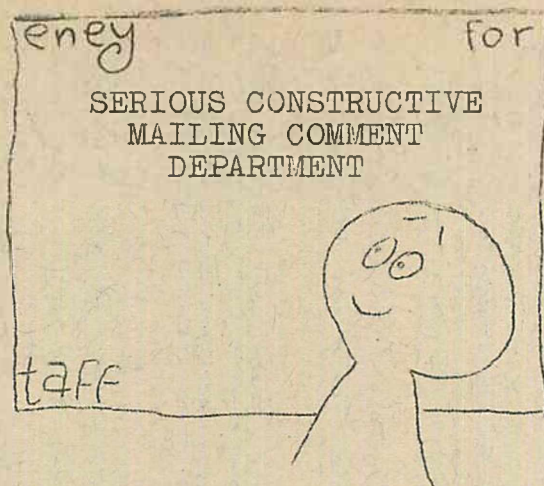
"Hip, hip--Huzza!" vociferously ejaculated the liberated peasants, as they urged various native delicacies upon the triumphant hero. "This man has liberated us from the Volisch!" And they began to perform a quaint native dance in honor of Drulynge-Wun (or van Diphthong, as I must now call him).

And later, as the great yacht, "The Skylark" cleaved through the hot Polynesian waters in its voyage to New York, a little bird overheard van Diphthong murmur to his bride, "You are a Princess to them, but to me you are--my wife."

-The End-

A civilization is characterized by the words it uses. How much more decent is the plain American "correction fluid" than the affected English "Correctine."

From Memoirs of an Aging Reformer



WHY IS A FAN? - Kemp-Shaws: The astonishing thing here is the widespread agreement among the contributors that Laney was right, that many, if not most, fans are in some measure mental cripples, unable to face or cope with the world, and are in fandom because it affords a substitute for life. If this is true, then fandom is indeed a dangerous narcotic, and should be as rigorously controlled as are heroin and alcohol and other such refuges for the incapable. There is a considerable body of evidence in these reports that for some people fandom is a world more real than the real world. Such people would appear to be as dangerously neurotic as the drug addict or the alcoholic. The world in which these unfortunates live is the needle of the bottle; the world in which some fans live is fandom--"Fandom Is A Way Of Life."

Just how bad is this? Certainly the FIAWOL fan is not a grave social burden like an addict or a wino. He is, I should think, simply someone who has elected not to compete in the world, and has taken refuge in a substitute make-believe world. Now there are plenty of people who have made such an election who are not fans.: people who have, after mature thought, declined to accept contemporary American values and the conventional pressures, and who refuse to strive for "success". They most usually lead bohemian lives--in part, at least, because it's cheap--but they work when they must to get enough money to support that life. Their lives and values will not appeal to most people, but they have entered into them deliberately and, one supposes, rationally. They have withdrawn from the world to watch from the sidelines.

But a genuine FIAWOL fan isn't watching the real world at all; he's entirely out of it, almost unaware of it. He's found himself a much more comfortable little world in which to roost. This situation is, as Laney pointed out at considerable length, most unhealthy.

How many fans are there, then, who have gone all the way on this FIAWOL business? I submit that there are not nearly as many as this symposium would seem to indicate. I believe that to the great majority of fans fandom is no more than a hobby--more intensely absorbing than most hobbies, perhaps, but still only a pastime, and no more indicative of neurosis than a powerful interest in golf or book-collecting. Madame Anonymous, for example, can make a statement like, "The people who populate the mandarin world are just so much flesh to me," and you think, By God, she's round the bend! But reading further it's pretty plain that she's firmly footed in the real world, and that despite her statement to the contrary, fandom to her is JAGDH₁₁₋

It occurs to me, as I read over the last page, that it may appear that I protest too much; indeed, it may be that I do protest too much. I seem to be a little vehement in my contention that most fans are not escapist screwballs, and it makes me wonder whether I'm not trying to convince myself. I live a pretty prosy, conventional kind of life--and I like it that way--and those few of my mundane friends who know of my hobby think it's an oddball way for somebody to spend his spare time. (I spend a lot of time pointing out to them how inherently ridiculous it is for them to freeze their butts trying to kill an elk that they'll not even eat, but I'm in a minority here, and everybody knows that the majority is always right.) I suddenly find myself wondering whether the reports in WHY IS A FAN? may not have planted a seed of doubt in my mind about the rationality of fandom. Mind you, if I thought that everybody in fandom was as nutty as a peanut cluster, and that my staying in it meant that I was also a candidate for the laughing academy, I'd stay around. What I'm wondering is whether I have a deep-down, locked-in suspicion that I am nutty because I'm a fan.

I really believe that my answer to Kemp was as honest as I knew how to make it. And it's a matter I've given some thought to. A long time ago --in mid-1959, I'd guess--I had cause to ponder this question. In PITFCS-SS 128, Ted Cogswell wrote me the following open letter, which I take the liberty of reprinting because it was an open letter:

And why should a gentleman be casting his pearls before fans? I mean, there are certain things that just aren't done--and anyway, they're happier with their own kind; and playing to the pit will get you noplacé. All of which means that the Vinegar Worm just came in and I found it a joy and a delight until I got to the two chunks of fannish fiction at the end. What the hell are you trying to do, recapture your lost youth? . . . Why waste your time on side-splitters for the beanie set? And all this be not hand biting but honest concern because you spent pages writing what you shouldn't be writing instead of what you should be writing. Look -- the reason you write IT is because you've got something to say, something that you want to communicate (what IT is doesn't matter -- it may be a profound tragic insight or simply a bit of something you found amusing at the moment and wanted to pass along). And unless you are on the make and trying to Get People to Do Things, your concern is with communicating with your peers. The best thing of course is to sell it -- that way you get paid for doing what you would have done anyway. But if you can't sell it, you give it away. You write a letter, or you publish it yourself so you can talk to more people at once. But these people are never faceless -- they are the people you'd be spending your evenings with if they lived in your town instead of some other. As a rule one doesn't voluntarily spend his free time drinking beer with adolescents (no matter how bright) or dullards (no matter how old) unless he himself is one and/or the other. . . ¹ or has a more than usually strong neurotic need for recognition.

Now the need for recognition and its accompanying ego inflation is part of the natural state of writerdom. This

¹ Ellipsis Cogswell's.

is why so many science fiction writers leave their own honorless countries periodically and go on pilgrimages to the annual feasts of fandom. Who among us can deny the momentary warmth that comes from the stranger's mumbled words of praise for past words written? Ah, I in my day have seen the uncomfortable loitering of the great in lobbies. And the lesser great. And even such as I. But the price. . .ah, the price. After the momentary orgasm, what then? How does one dispose of the gold toothed shop girl picked up in a moment of drunken need? Here speaks the dreary voice of duty. She did not sell, she gave -- and by such has certain claims that must be met. If one is not an expert at the delicate art of disengagement the decent interval stretches endlessly. Talk is all that can fill the void, but whatever is there to talk about? And when one tries, then what? Especially when she insists on steering the conversation into literary channels by asking What you think of Vincent Peale's latest book.

And what does ^{one} say to the undersized fan when he tries to bridge the stiff and silent gap by confiding that classics just ain't like they used to be back when Shaver and Rog Phillips was writing them.

All of which is a long way from The Vinegar Worm, but not really. To begin with, most fans are slobs (as am I, since by definition a slob is somebody who bores the hell out of you without supplying you with Scotch while he's doing it, and the world is full of people that I bore the hell out of). One reason most fans are slobs is that they insist on talking their kind of shop instead of mine. I have no objection to gossip providing it's about people I know, but theirs never is. And when I try to enter in like a good fellow and toss out something really fresh and interesting like the news that Joe Glutz just sold his old ASF serial to ACE, they just look at me blankly and then go back to talking about people I've never heard of. This isn't all, however. If there were an occasional oasis in the great arid desert of fannish talk, if, after the long and animated interchange of memories of that hilarious moment when Rodney Gugwurst threw a roll of toilet paper out of the hotel window at the EASTWESCON, somebody would start kicking an idea around just for the fun of it, I might look at general fandom with a less lackluster eye.

All of which leads us through the back door of the point. It takes just as much energy to write fannish humor as it does a bit of intelligent nonsense. So why waste time on them when you could be wasting time on us?

Now most of what Cogswell has to say seems to me to be largely irrefutable. I refer you to the last sentence of the first paragraph of his letter. What, in the name of all that is reasonable, does one answer to this, when one clearly would not voluntarily spend his leisure drinking beer with adolescents or hobnobbing with dullards, and yet remains in fandom? Well, one answer would be that fans aren't necessarily adolescents and dullards. But on the other hand, there is a distressingly large number of both. Then again, it may be that I (and you and you) am a dullard (since I am most definitely not an adolescent) and so in fannish circles have found my peers. But I think (or at least I keep telling myself) that Cogswell is falling into a basic error: he is confusing the

extremely broad spectrum of fandom that you find at a convention with the people I'm talking to, who are the people who make up fanzine fandom, and in particular, of course, FAPA. The truth is that I don't know of any group as large as the ^{one} I find in fandom that I feel to be my peers in the matters I want to communicate. I'm in contact every day with people who are, as I am well aware, more intelligent than I am; but they are engineers and geologists and such, and, by my standards, only half educated, and sometimes I want a bull session that concerns itself with matters that these people are not interested in and know nothing about. I want to talk to people who know that when I say Rosinante I mean Don Quixote's horse. I just don't know a larger group than fandom of which that's true. Sure, there are dullards. But there are also many people whose writings I enjoy and whose ideas demand attention. A good many of them are here in FAPA.

All of which, I now see, fails to refute Cogswell. Why is a Fan? God only knows.

TYPE SPECIMENS - Danner: One of the very best zines in the mailing. I am a scholar of no inconsiderable accomplishments, but I must admit that there were allusions in this poem that were beyond me. Still, volumes of exegesis have been devoted to "The Wasteland", and I don't doubt that "Type Specimens" will inspire like books, so if I wait I'll have these allusions explained for me. And, while I'm speaking of Eliot, I would like to say that this poem reminds me very much of "Four Quartets," and, in particular, of "Burnt Norton." Not, of course, in form, but in the lofty plane in which it is conceived and the sustaining of a most difficult pitch without discordant notes. The two refrains, the one about the quick brown fox, and the other about packing the box, are a brilliant conception, and have been handled with an exceptionally sure hand. The contrapuntal use of these refrains is most deftly done. I particularly enjoyed the variation where the reader, who at this point is falling under the spell of the rhythm of the counterpoint, is neatly jolted out of his reverie by the unexpected turn (in the "12 Pt. Kennerley Italic" verse): "dozen quick brown foxes." This looks to me very like genius.

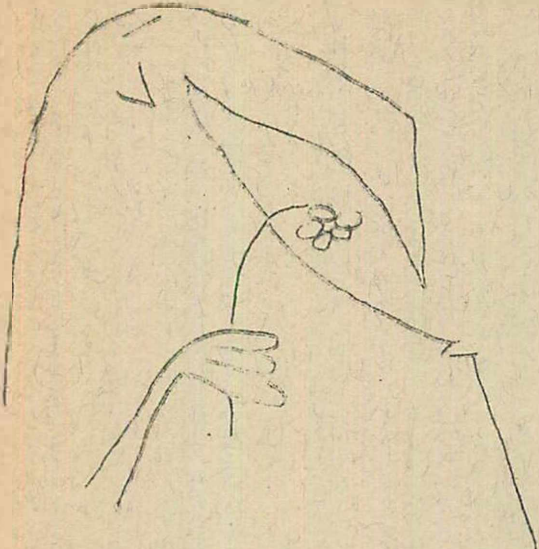
The printing was good, too.

MONSTER-TIMES - Taurasi: Sheeesh!

LARK - Danner: By George, you have a greater fund of odd facts at your disposal than anybody I know. Who else in these United States would know that carousel music is made by a Calliophone? Or, for God's sake, that the Calliophone is manufactured in Muscatine, Iowa? Remarkable. ++ At this point begin three lines which have been typed over three lines which ~~collided with~~ ^{collided with} correction fluid; and I'll be interested to see how they turn out. As must by now be perfectly clear to everybody, I am exceptionally unskilled in manipulating typewriters, stencils, duplicating machines and the rest of this fannish paraphernalia, but I'm learning, freinds, I'm learning. ++ You're right that there's no such word as "justixipation", but there ought to be. Let me suggest a Punch-type Toby competition on what the word means.

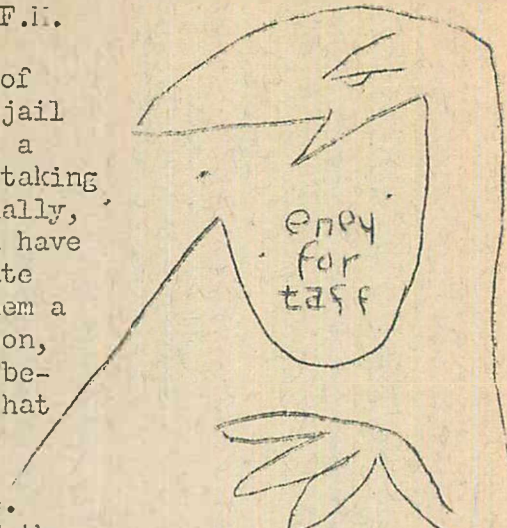
LIGHT - Croutch: This would have been easier to read without the double columns. ++ This is the first issue of LIGHT I've seen. Do you always use that logo? It makes me think of the monthly magazine of some obscure but evangelistic religious sect. ++ The Twain story is "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven". ++ What is LIGHT like ordinarily? Fiction, like this issue, or other matter?

SERCONS BAME-Busby, F.I.I.



I like your notion of sticking kids into jail for a day or two as a deterrent to their taking up crime. But actually, I don't think you'd have really to incarcerate them. Just give them a tour through a prison, and I think they'd become very anxious that they never find themselves locked inside such a place.

I have recently had the



experience of making a tour through the state prison, which is here in town, and if I had ever given any consideration to taking up crime as a vocation, a look at the inside of those gray walls would have instantly dissuaded me. As prisons go, it is, I am told, not bad at all. It is a tiny prison--there are about three hundred prisoners--and the warden is of the progressive school of penology, and there is clearly no actual physical discomfort for the convicts, and yet the notion of being inside those walls is totally terrifying. They fed us lunch in the prison dining hall--and it wasn't a bad lunch--and then we made the tour through the institution. In this state a convict has a choice whether he works or not, and a considerable number of the cons had elected not to work. Mostly these fellows were lying on their bunks, staring at the ceiling, and didn't even look at us as we went by. All the cell doors were standing open. The law provides for time off sentences for each day of work the cons do, but these birds were apparently all set to vegetate until their sentences were served. The warden showed us the maximum security block, where the real wild animals, the convicts who live only to get out of the walls and resume their lives as predators, are kept. This is, as it happens, the newest and brightest part of the prison. It's a giant room, a couple of stories high, which has, up high, a catwalk along which guards carrying shotguns walk. (I guess they were shotguns; I can't see any utility in a rifle under those circumstances.) In the middle of this big room squats a hollow square of stone cells, each with a grilled door and a vestibule with another grilled door outside that. Monte Cristo himself wouldn't have a ghost of a chance of getting out of one of these things. And this is in what I am sure is the smallest state prison in the country. The security measures in a prison like Joliet, say, must be something incomprehensible to the laity. I can only say that a look at our little prison scared the shoes out of me.

And, really, as long as you haven't seen the inside, it doesn't appear to be a bad place at all. The trusties are around town all the time, often driving the pen pick-up trucks, and one very quickly becomes habituated to the sight of the prison uniform. There are quite a few trusties at the pen, and they are very jealous of their privileges. I have been told by the deputy warden, and by the local manager of the Bureau of Land Management--whose job it is to fight forest fires, and who uses these felons in his work--that a trusty who takes unfair advantage of his privileges will very quickly and unpleasantly be convinced by his colleagues that that's not the way to behave. One of the cons, a fellow named Tricky Riggles, is a rope-trick man (the lasso or lariat, not the Indian rope trick) and he's a regular performer at church bazaars and P.T.A. fund-raising shows and the like. He's in for murder.

A FANZINE FOR NOW! - Lewis: This listing of books on hand seems to be becoming de rigueur here in the organization, so I may as well join in the custom. I find that I have currently between the bookends here on the desk the following books: The Vampires of Gholis, by Sproat; How to Decorate a Turnpike, by Gossley; In Mossy Skulls, by Bagby; The "Silverlock" Sourcebook, by Murphy; Famous Currycomb Collections, by Blore; Pogo and I, by Kelly; Kenyan Cookery Simplified, by Kenyatta; Innsmouth People, by Lovecraft; and Secrets of Technique, by Rubirosa. My current interests are pretty well reflected in these volumes. Next time around I may give another listing, demonstrating the workings of my grasshopper mind.

SALUD - Busby, E.: Your remark that I've never been very active moved me to check up on just how much fanactivity I have engaged in, in what will have been about four years in fandom at the time of this mailing. I have published zines of my own--exclusive of this issue--in the amount of 179 pages, of which all but three pages were my own writing. I have had published --as best I can count--twenty-seven items of one sort or another in other people's magazines, and there are two or three items out awaiting publication now. And apart from letters--and I'm not the world's most faithful correspondent--that's about all of it. You're quite right: I haven't been very active. That's not much of a corpus of work in four years. / / I, for one, have been enjoying the quote pages. I have always been puzzled at Wilde's remark on coming out of that brothel; it seems an unlikely thing for a practitioner of his own spectacularly repulsive perversion to have said. He was not a sodomite as the legal dictionary defines the term.

ICE AGE - Shaws: Wilsey makes a point that I can't recall having heard elsewhere, but which, once said, appears most obvious: that to comprehend whether you are hearing good fidelity in musical reproduction you must keep yourself aware of what "live" music sounds like. I haven't been to a symphony concert for at least a year and a half ---we do not have a local orchestra---and now that Wilsey has made this obvious observation, I realize that I have been becoming less and less critical of the quality of my machine, which is of something less than the highest fidelity. / / I can't remember what Buz said that prompted your comment, "the World's Prize Idiot Driver is the Missourian", but my own vote for the prime highway menace is the Californian--or "Prunepicker" as we call them out this way. Highway Thirty goes through town, and I travel Highway Thirty quite a good deal, and Highway Thirty is, together with Highway Sixty-six, the main East-West thoroughfare. All summer long the road is a roller-coaster of tourist automobiles, and the air is full of the sound of clanging metal, as cars go caroming and bouncing off each other. Every day I drive twice past the garage that hauls in the larger number of the wrecks, and with almost every licence plate from another state you'll find a California plate. I have myself been driven off the road by lunatic drivers four times this summer, & and two of those times it was by Californians. When you consider that there are fifty states from which tourists may come, you might, if you are of a mathematical bent, try to determine just how astronomical are the odds against this happening if it were only coincidence. The inability of Californians to drive safely has been officially recognized in this state. We have here in town an irascible old man of immense wealth, a doctor of medicine by trade, who affects eccentric ways and who has to his credit more secret and public philanthropies than the whole fish-eyed Rockefeller Foundation. A few years ago he served for a time in the state legislature. While he was there he introduced a bill which had of course no chance of passing, but which reflected the sentiment of all the people who live in towns that are on U.S. 30. This bill proposed that all California cars entering the state be required to attach to the car, when they entered, a large red danger flag, which would be removed when they emerged on the other side. The bill failed of passage, of course, but the whole state had a good laugh. / / Mustard: I don't think there's such a thing as good pre-prepared mustard. Buy pulverized mustard, and just before dinner mix it with water or vinegar or (preferably) stale beer.

THE RAMBLING FAP - CALKINS: Or is it Calkslin? As spelt on the cover, it's hard to tell. // The Corey business was as fuggheaded a thing as I've seen in my time in fandom, and I don't think you should even have honored it with a reply, even though you were answering for the sake of Grennell and Willis. I doubt that there was a soul who gave attention for an instant to Corey's silly notions. The only thing to do with these nits is to ignore them. // I do regret the shortness of our visit when I called on you that time. And except for a couple of short layovers at the airport, I've only been in SLC once since, and then I was going at a dead run the whole time. But one of these days, perhaps. . .

DESCANT - Clarkes: My goodness, you have swallowed a quantity of pro-Castro propaganda, haven't you? But you entirely miss the point of the objections to comrade Castro: that he is the agent of a foreign power inimical to us, and that under his dictatorship Cuba constitutes a Communist beachhead in this hemisphere. Is it your thought that if the comrades take over South America and then move north, they will stop at the Canadian border? Sure, Batista was evil; so is Castro; sure, Batista was a butcher; so is Castro; sure, Batista was a dictator; so is Castro. It's a matter of Tweedledee and Tweedledum --except for one thing: Tweedledee was ours, and Tweedledum is theirs. Only if one is a doctrinaire Rightist or Leftist will he find a difference between dictators of the right and of the left (if these terms are meaningful any more). Hitler or Stalin-- what's the difference? Well, in World War Two we saw a difference: Stalin was on our side and Hitler was on the other side, and we helped Stalin all we could, although no sane person would have held that he was not a dictator, or that he did not keep concentration camps, or that he wasn't one of the bloodiest butchers of all time. But we did all we could to help him because he was on our side and we had a war to win. Today we are engaged in a great cold war, which may at any time become hot, and we'd like to have a friend, not an enemy at our soft underbelly. If we could support Stalin, why not Batista? // Having said which, I beg you to permit me to offer my congratulations on the really marvellously done bit of double-entendre, KM "The Story of Dickie Duncan." It's too bad that most of the things one thinks are really remarkable in fanzines are the things you can't do much more than say "GREAT" about. The "CBC-TV couplet", for example; beyond handing you a string of superlatives, how do I comment? And the same is true of the satirical analysis of Jewishness. I think I've used the word before about your work, but I'll say it again: Superb.

A soap opera for foreign-car buffs, to be called, "Porsche Faces Life".

ALIF - Anderson: Before I comment on this zine, I want to apologize for the really atrocious typing in the past several pages. Its causes are various: first, that I'm a lousy typist; second, that I'm using a strange typewriter; and, third, that I've been taking some pills that affect my eyesight.

I'm not kidding. Let me tell you about these pills. But, first, an announcement!

I have acquired a status symbol. Oh, not a Jaguar, or a cabin cruiser, or anything like that, but still a status symbol that gives me something in common with a Bucks County-dwelling Madison Avenue man: I have acquired an ulcer.

It's only a little one, to be sure, but my physician has put me on a restricted diet (restricted, God help us, to things that are the exact antithesis of a reducing diet) and he has prescribed a number of mendicaments. I take green capsules, and tiny white pills, and medium-size white pills, and great big white pills. Now the tiny white pills are intended to inhibit the proper functioning of the vagus nerve, and thus prevent mental tensions from causing the juices in the stomach to seethe and boil; but it has certain side effects, viz., an intolerable dryness of the mouth and a blurring of the vision. The doc told me that I'd have a dry mouth, but he failed to mention the other, and for a while I was scared to death, thinking that my whole body was coming apart at once, like the one hoss shay. Eventually he told me about it, and it was a comfort to know that my eyes hadn't cratered on me, but right now I can't see.

(Continued on page 30)

While I was stencilling the letter from Cogswell on page 12, I got to thinking about the fact that I've never had a letter department in my publications. The reasons for this were, first, that I type hunt-and-peck, and it seemed only right that all this labor should go to stencilling my own imperishable prose and not somebody else's; and, second, that not to have a letter column served to make the magazine a little different from all the rest.

But the trouble with not printing letters is that people don't send you very many if you don't print them, and I like to get letters. When I first started to publish--at any rate beginning with my second zine--I used to get lots and lots of letters, and I enjoyed practically all of them. But bit by bit the number dwindled, as it became clear that none of the letters would be published. I send enough copies of this thing to people outside FAPA that I ought to receive about ten times as many LoC's as I do, and I attribute this to the fact that I've never had a letter column. (I refuse to give serious consideration to the suggestion made by the dunder-head over there in the corner that the damn' thing is so lousy that nobody wants to write a LoC.)

And so, eminent colleagues, I have decided to take the letters I have, which are few but of high quality, and give you The Worm's first

SERIOUS CONSTRUCTIVE LETTER COLUMN

A letter from A.J. Budrys:

It would embarrass both of us, or I would kiss you madly for the Rogue Moon plug. I'm glad you enjoyed it. (It does seem to me, though, that "justice" in this context is whatever the judges--that is, the Seacon membership--say it is. A book is, after all, written to say as much as possible to as many people as possible. If several hundred people decide some other book was more interesting, it seems to me that it would be the purest kind of justice. I'm reasonably sure the democratic process is a sound political institution. I'm even surer that when a large group of people who pay for a service voice an opinion on the quality of that service, they represent a group of qualified experts, not just an undifferentiated electorate. So a popular verdict in this case is even likelier to be fair than it would be on some reasonably elementary question like the recognition of Red China.) I'm always glad when somebody likes a book of mine, because that's one satisfied customer, anyhow.

"Pencil guster" presents no puzzle at all. "Guster" is obviously a

a vulgarization of "Auguster." Many ancient trades, originally founded in the middle ages, contain technical terms which, through the centuries, have debased the original Latin. A striking example of this philological degeneracy occurs in the mimeographer's trade, where "duper" is a colloquial rendering of the French* "du perdre," that is, 'of lose,' or, 'to make illegible.'

I think I am on the track of a Long Branch resident--old enough to have been employed as a nurse changing President Garfield's bandages during his convalescence in this former posh resort community--who as a very young girl attended Sunday school in Lewellen, Nebraska, with Dorcas Bagby--whose father was, of course, the instructor of that class. If I can get any sort of intelligible information out of this now doddering great-grandmother's childhood memories, we may be able to trace something of Miss Bagby's--was it Miss or Mrs? I may be on the track of some other Dorcas Bagby--earliest days as a tot being instilled with a concentrated dose of Hellfire and Damnation. We may be able to determine where the seeds of that (divine) madness were planted. My informant, a woman named, interestingly enough, Sarah Moswell Grieve, is an occasional baby-sitter for us, and when she began a rambling reminiscence of her youth in Lewellen, I pricked up my ears. Unfortunately, Mrs. Grieve is not, as I have said, very well able to sustain a thread of thought. But with some patience, we may unearth considerable. Would you be interested in having me follow this up, and if so do you suppose Lampson college could be persuaded to tender a small research grant, since Mrs. Grieve's fee is \$1.25 an hour?

TO A FAN, GAFIATING YOUNG

The day you won the Fanac poll
You overfilled the flowing bowl,
And hot of cheek and red of eye
You drained it down and dropped it, dry.

Now, the morn all triumphs know
Dawns in ash where flames did flow,
And laurel, dry, does not aspire
As laurel, green, did to the fire.

Marked, now, the speech once full of quips
Is chilled and gelid on the lips,
And joyful odes to Boreas flung
Are but a coating on the tongue.

(I get the haunted feeling that this is not entirely original. The bad parts are mine, all right, but I'm not sure about the remainder.)

Well, I'm not going to point out at any length--others will do that--that Operation Abolition's credit has been badly impaired in a court of law. Having been a professional political propagandist myself, in my own day and time, I've observed that any film of anything can be made to say anything about anything--and the doctored film does not, on the other hand, always mean the truth has been doctored, too. "O.A." seems to have been caught with its hands on the splicer; this doesn't necessarily mean that there were no Communist agitators, or that the students were not "marched. . . obediently to the drums of professional Communists." BUT what is more likely, I think, everything considered,

* Note the charming debasement of a debasement. (In our house, however, we have only a crawl space.)

is that we have once again fallen into the trap of thinking that either a man is a professional agitator or he is not a Communist. There are by now I suppose thousands of trained crowd-whippers, some of them Communist trained, others trained by defectors from Communism, who all apply the same techniques. These people are professionals--in fact, they have almost no other profession--either for pay or much more often for psychic satisfaction; anyone with a tub to thump can attract them. They drift back and forth across political lines like strayed coyotes. Many of them are hopelessly attracted by potentially riotous causes; they bloom among brickbats. They have a tropism for these things; half a paragraph in a newspaper will send them scurrying down to where the action is, and they will surmount the nearest wastebasket and yell whatever they think needs yelling, in the cause of giving themselves something to yell about. We live in a time where the previous generation's systematic methods have left left us with thousands of troops who have been discharged but refuse to leave the field because they know no other way of life. I don't know whether the Communists had people on their payroll among those students--they could have, I suppose. But however many of them there were, I will bet bet you a bottle of whatever is good beer in your neighborhood that the active, enrolled Communists were heavily outnumbered by these Flying Dutchmen.

As for the efficacy of institutions like the HUAC, I can only say that in another country someone very near and dear to me harried the radicals and put them in jail with much greater efficiency than it is done here; broke up one spy ring after another--which is by no means the same thing, but seems to go hand-in-hand--prevented them from publishing their broadsides and paralyzed their riots with soldiery. It didn't do the slightest bit of good; it never did prove, to the general population, that Communism per se was both dangerous and evil. It was almost a year after the Communist occupation ~~xx~~ that we were able to raise any sort of armed guerilla resistance to them; nothing we were able to do was one tenth as effective as twelve months of unhindered Communism. (It was quite effective--twenty years later we're still fighting, which is pretty good going, considering the unsuitability of the terrain for this kind of operation.)*

I'm not suggesting that the thing to do is to invite the Commies in for a year. But I am suggesting that the blanket repression of all radicalism seems to have no effect whatever; do not mistake the lip service of the "good man" who says 'Damn the Commies!' for the sort of steadfastness that will continue to resist a regime that may well choose, in his case, to pin a Hero of Labor medal on his chest because it needs good lathe operators. The "Commies" he damns are Bearded Agitators with Bombs. Show him an MVD Lieutenant with a smile on his face, or a clean-limbed young Red Air Force Officer who babbles about the natural beauties of the collective farms he can see from orbit, and he cannot quite bring himself to pull the trigger on this near facsimile of the Kid Next Door. Repressive measures create an easily-hated picture of semi-bestial, hysterical maniacs; obvious neurotics who goggle at you from tabloid halftones. But these will not be our invaders. We will be taken, if we are ever taken, by a million Yuri Gagarins; the first thing they will do is liquidate the trained agitators, while the DAR smiles in incredulous relief, and the HUAC finds that the MVD has a better dossier on subversives than the FBI does, and considerably more fear of them. Yuri Gagarin doesn't like

"We," of course, means 'us Lithuanians,' which is an attempt by me to ride the coat-tails of people who have fired shots in anger.

riots any better than we do--they are noisy, undisciplined, and conducive to breaches of the proper Good Order of the community. On that possible day, ninety-nine out of a hundred Party Books will be death warrants to the people carrying them. But that will be small consolation to us afterward; some consolation, mind you, but not much. I recommend to you, without reservation as a piece of good information, Cyril Kornbluth's Not This August, which was written after a careful study of these matters as they had played themselves out in other countries. The plot is, of course, a commercial plot for a commercial novel--Cyril had a family to feed. But the sketches of daily life in Occupied America are quite something else--Cyril had a thoughtful conscience.

Well, I don't know--I don't want to keep beating this drum--but I think Reynolds is trying to show us precisely how Americans and Russians would find it expedient to talk to each other in a world where Communist supremacy is a settled fact. I find many things to chill the spine in those polite, friendly 'Of course it was all an economic competition' dialogues between loser unable to fully accept loss and winner enjoying the joke. I don't get mad at Reynolds--I take off my hat to his powers of observation. There are horrors outside the forced labor camps, which very likely will disappear from the Soviet economy as soon as the USSR is industrialized enough to make slave labor expensive. The aim is not enslavement of people--it is enslavement of societies. Master can condescend to slave; if he does not, as a matter of fact, his own class has to weed him out for its own comfort. In this probability world where the USSR doesn't invade us because it doesn't have to, you will find that most contact between communist and U.S. individuals will be on a much easier basis than it is now--'easier' in the sense that jagged lumps will never, never, be permitted to appear in the conversation, for reasons vital to the self-esteem of both parties. And in the final analysis it's the preservation of self-esteem that carves the shape of society, and hence of the future. The division between leaders and followers is always the division between those whose self-esteem is founded on a pride in "facing facts" and those who will not risk their self-esteem by testing it against the impact of "facts." Whatever the leaders choose to call a "fact" is the social fact, and the followers group up behind the leaders, letting them bear the brunt. If we lose to the Russians, our leaders will be people who have faced the fact that we were beaten not by moral superiority--that we will reserve for ourselves, full of legends of gallantry, a la the South of today--but by a better "system"; a crude mechanical device. So we will be able to tolerate the Russians, and they will be able to tolerate us, and if we can only manage to keep imprisoning the individualists who say "But we are slaves!" we will be able to live in peace and amity for as long as the Russians can preserve their hegemony.

I think Mack Reynolds is the most intelligent anti-Communist writing sf today; he has sense enough to be afraid of Yuri.

bests,

aj

Leman's crushing rejoinder to the letter from A.J. Budrys:

Aw, come on, now, pal. Does a majority vote make one book better than another? Is Peyton Place a better novel than The Mansion, just because it sold thirty times as many copies? Like it or not, the novel is an art-form, and some are good and some are bad, and whether the public

at large thinks it's good or bad actually has nothing to do with its quality. I would, in fact, go so far as to say that if a novel is popular--in the big, best-seller sense--it's probably a bad novel. John Q. Public has many sterling qualities, but taste isn't one of them. I too believe in the democratic process--as a means of protecting the people from the government, which is what our constitution was drawn to accomplish. But to call it justice when a bad book receives an award that a good book should have had because a majority voted for it is to make of the democratic process a horror that can in time drown the nation in a pap of mediocrity or worse. I happen to think that Rogue Moon is a good novel--not just good science fiction, but a good novel. (You're not embarrassed by fulsome praise, are you?) There's much to be said for the other nominees, but it seems to me that A Canticle for Leibowitz and Venus Plus X aren't exactly novels--or at any rate they lack homogeneity--and the other two candidates not serious works, although they are certainly both good interesting pieces of science fiction. I didn't know, when I wrote the plug, that Rogue Moon would in fact be a nominee, or what books the others would be, but I stand on my high hopes for it.

I'm not quite sure I know what you mean when you say that "Operation Abolition's credit has been badly impaired in a court of law." The only thing I can think of is the acquittal of Robert Meisenbach, who was accused of slugging a police officer during the riot, and the fact that he was acquitted persuades me of nothing at all. He did, after all, pose, after the trial, with his arm around Betty Jenkins; his attorneys were, after all, Charles Garry and Jack Berman; and he did, after all, have as his guest at a victory dinner, Benny Bufano. I have, you must understand, great faith that justice will prevail in our courts; but Meisenbach's associates in this affair, and the fact that amongst the guests at the victory dinner were four members of the jury, including the foreman, lead me to wonder whether this acquittal has any meaning beyond a new notice that Americans will continue to feel that boys will be boys even when they're staring into the canon's mouth.

As to Reynolds: almost thou persuadest me.

*

A letter from Bob Lichtman:

/I have/ an entirely new attitude towards fandom. No longer is fandom the place where I go when I want to do something. Now it's where I go when there is absolutely nothing else to do, as on this dreary Saturday when it's very windy and threatening outside. (It rained yesterday, and I have every reason to believe it may do so again before this day is over.) This is partially why PSI-PHI is no more. The next issue, had it appeared this summer on the non-existent timeline we called a schedule, would have run some 60 pages. This is plainly getting out of the hobby and for-fun class. AMNESIA, which will never, ever, run over 16 pages because I won't let it and whose circulation will be limited to right about a hundred copies (plus or minus ten, at times) accomplishes the same purpose in a much more workmanlike fashion. Namely, it gets me fanzines. I don't read all of those I get, but at least I get them all and can choose my reading material. Too, I've been reading a lot of other things lately, such as a book full of poetry (it was part of my required books in English 1B this semester, but after we passed through the dozen or so poems surveyed by the course, I began reading many of the rest. For this reason, I thoroughly dug your poetry page this time around. The first one on it is partic-

ularly fine.), and literature (including another stab at Shakespeare, whom I still find mostly dull).

My own pet peeve in packaging is the salt and pepper packets that one one is served when one is in a hospital. These are designed to be torn along the perforated line at the top, after which you are supposed to tip it over and pour the salt or pepper onto the food. What happens in practice is that, while the top tears off nicely, you are unsteadily perched on the edge of your bed, or in more dire straits lying flat on your back, and have little control over your pouring facilities. Therefore, all the salt or pepper ends up in one spot on the food, thus rendering that particular spot entirely inedible.

Sir, I object to your analysis of the San Francisco incident. You are making the common mistake of connecting honest opposition to something (the HCUA, in this case) to underhanded opposition to the same thing. That both the Communists and the students (including myself) are opposed to the Committee on Un-American Activities does not mean that the students are Communists or even--to employ the favorite term of the Birchers--"Communist dupes" ("unwitting", of course, to carry that much misused term to its ultimate foolishness). It is altogether true that there were Communists at the "riots" and that they were doing all they could to help things along, as logically they would do, but this does not mean that the students were motivated to oppose the hearings in the first place by the Communists.

I would not be opposed to the HCUA if it used what I consider to be some decorum in dealing with that which it is established to deal with. But this senseless dragging through the mud of people who are most likely innocent--and the accompanying blanket of suspicion thrown over everyone who objects, or even says nothing one way or t'other--is to my mind Bad. If I am thus in your eyes one of the "witless creatures" you saw in "Operation Abolition" then I'm afraid I've nothing more to say. My reactions are not emotional, they're logical. They really are.

And what is your opinion of the John Birch Society? I have nothing but admiration for their self-avowed goal--to fight communism. However, I think they are carrying things too far in this fight. For instance, some of the more outre Bircher beliefs are that (a) all literature written today that depresses the reader and makes him sad is part of a Communist plot to render us susceptible to the advances of Communism and (b) most of our government officials in the past fifteen years have been acting as "unconscious tools of the party." The latter belief is clearly idiotic (though considering the social unrest Senator McCarthy managed to foment, one wonders if there is not a spark of truth. The former item is completely insane. But it's believed by far too many people, and a lot of censorship in libraries has been the result. What next, I wonder? There is definitely a Communist threat, and it has been with us for some years now and is likely to be around a good deal longer, but these scare campaigns are hardly the way to go around combatting it.

Despite all my comments above, I agree with you wholeheartedly on the value of peace marches. A more foolish pastime I cannot imagine. Peace marches accomplish nothing, but do manage to create a good deal of ill-will.

I enjoy bugging men on picket lines. Recently in Los Angeles most of the supermarkets were being picketed on account of a soft-drink strike. The signs urged the shopper not to buy a good many of the more popular brands of soft drinks. Just for the hell of it, I went in and purchased one of the less nauseous of the banned drinks and walked out merrily chuggallugging from the bottle, much to the dismay of the more concerned picketers.

I'd like to conclude with "See you in the next FAPA mailing," but unfortunately I seem to have lost ground in my fight for membership. From #5 position last time to #6 this time. However, I may be in by the end of the current administration.

best,
Bob

Leman's partially-apologetic reply to the letter from Bob Lichtman:

Well, I guess "witless creatures" was a pretty strong term to apply to a bunch of young people who are firmly convinced that they are acting in a good cause, and who further believe that their actions are dictated by logic. (And, boy, it's a hell of a lot of fun, engaging in something like this. Dad'll be mad as hell when he finds out about it.) But I think that the well-meaning students who participated in these shenanigans were having at windmills, and in doing so were serving the Russian cause. The HCUA has not, in simple fact, ever harmed an innocent person--nor, as best I can tell, a guilty one. It is anything but the ignorant beast that the reams of propaganda of the left would persuade us that it is. We have congressional committees because it is necessary to determine whether new legislation is needed, and congress could not operate without these committees. The HCUA is serving a useful function; indeed, an indispensable one. And it would appear that somebody, somewhere, is being touched on the quick by its work; I can't recall hearing all this noise during the time that the HCUA was investigating Nazis.

As for the John Birch Society: I don't know anything about it. I have read none of its literature, nor have I ever talked to one of its members. What I have heard about it has been from the pages of Time, the Denver Post, The New Yorker, The Nation, The New Republic, and a good many other second-hand sources. All I have seen of Welch's widely-hated Blue Book are out-of-context quotations printed in journals not noted for disinterest and fair play. (And I'd guess that that's true of about 99% of the people who noisily damn the John Birch Society.) So I have to say that I don't know anything about it. Welch, if he in fact said the things I have seen quoted, would appear to be as far round the bend on one side as the more intemperate enemies of the HCUA are on the other. But I can't escape a feeling that an organization that has the enemies that the John Birch Society has can't be all bad.

*

A letter from Anthony Boucher:

My familiarity with the Dorcas Bagby canon is more bibliographical than real. (It was I, for instance, who tracked down, through the late Gellert Burgess, the pseudonyms under which "The little Snakes" and others of her shorts originally appeared in THE LARK.)

I do have some acquaintance with her poetry, in which I find a significant relationship to that of the Spectrist school.

As a scholar, however, firmly believing in the separation of fact from fiction and hoax, I must protest your wholehearted acceptance of OPERATION ABOLITION. Its faults may be more apparent here in the Bay Area than in Wyoming; certainly it includes every kind of distortion, from simple exaggeration to altered chronology to outright falsehood.

(Even the S F police agree that no student "leaped the barriers" to start rioting.)

Personal opinion: The HUAC riot--fairly stupid on the part of both students and police--was as much manipulated by communist pros as the Harvard Latin riots--which were rather more severe.

Sincerely,
Anthony Boucher

AB:hjh

Leman's deferential answer to the letter from Anthony Boucher:

It strikes me as a rather shameful thing that a writer as eminent as Mr. Holmes should be employed as a mere amanuensis. It may be true, as they say, that you keep him chained to a stout peg and weekly flog him to the typewriter; and the rest of the story may be true as well, that all the writings ascribed to Boucher are in fact by Holmes, who is socially unacceptable because of a tendency to drip an unpleasant green ichor on Aubusson carpets, and must therefore be kept under close confinement. But conformism can be carried too far: this man is a genius in his way, and he should be accorded the honors due him, despite his peculiarities.

I hope to God you're right about the riot, but I don't think so. I've already said a great deal about this in this issue, and I'll not further belabor the matter (and, in any case, you're all agin me, and I sometimes wonder whether I have the fortitude to continue to go on carrying the flag for a cause--however right--that is so universally unpopular). But I guess I don't really mean that; you've got to keep on fighting (or at any rate talking) for the truth.

*

A letter from Dick (RIP) Schultz:

Your blast at the student rioters in San Francisco rather surprised me. Especially as I've gotten much the same version as the Carrs and Donaho presented, from three separate people, here in Michigan. One was a practicing psychiatrist, another a co-ed at Eastern Michigan University, the third a Head of Nursing at Saginaw General Hospital (the last through word of mouth). Hmmm. Odd, they're all women.....

Knowing the UnAmer Act Comm as I do, I'd say that the Donaho version is correct, that the rioters were students provoked by the police into retaliating, that the House UnAmerActComm is indeed worthy of being rioted against. I'm surprised you swallowed J. Edgar Hoover's malarkey in such a large gulp without gagging. If you wish, I could examine the motivations of Hoover somewhat, and show you why he might be blinded sufficiently into putting forth such an erroneous serving of propaganda as is Operation Abolition. For one thing, he thinks the FBI should be given powers and more powers to (and how often have we heard this before?) "protect the people against themselves." If you ask me, it's the people that need protecting from the government!

Leman's acerbic rebuttal to the letter from Dick Schultz:

(Note to everybody but Schultz: the above two paragraphs are two out

of a two-page elite-type marginless letter. All the letters here are being cut, but this one more than most, mainly because at this point I'm tiring of swivelling my head from letter to keyboard in an attempt to copy accurately. ((And I'll thank you all not to point out that I have not been copying accurately; I'm doing the best I can.)) All right, now to your letter, Dick):

How, exactly, did the police provoke the students? If a noisy mob is interrupting the orderly processes of justice, and the court orders that the disorder cease, so that normal procedure may continue, and the noisemakers increase their din when requested by the police to silence themselves, where's the provocation? Who provoked whom here? It seems to me that the graduated income tax is an unfair, unjust and inequitable law (as a matter of principle: my income isn't sufficient for the matter to be of serious economic importance); but if I lay prone on the steps of the Senate Office Building, bellowing at the top of my lungs anti-income-tax slogans, and had with me a thousand like-minded people, all determined to make as much noise as possible, and all persuaded that the Senate is a manifestation of the anti-Christ which must be fought at all costs--but by peaceful means, of course--if, I say, this were the situation, and our howling prevented the Senate from using the Democratic Process to carry on the business of The Republic in an orderly manner, then The Police might well be justified in using harmless means to push us off the steps of the building. Look, anybody must admit that the police were exceptionally gentle in the face of severe provocation. At Harvard, in the Latin riots Boucher spoke of, they used tear gas to quell a bunch of young rioters out of control. A big mob of undergraduates will--more quickly than most mobs--lose its sense of proportion, because of the uniform age of its constituents. The boys at Harvard and the kids at San Francisco thought the matters at hand were very important; each group had thought about as deeply about the matter as the other. One idea began as a joke and the other as a part of a long and sinister conspiracy. If you doubt this, you might ask yourself why washing people off steps with a hose has raised such an awful amount of noise, while the Harvard tear gas has not aroused a single peep. I hope it's clear by now that I don't go around hollering that a liberal is a communist, but I also hope I've made it clear that I wonder why more of you don't take a look at the parallels and dissimilarities in performances like these, and ask yourselves why one group isn't treated like the other.

J. Edgar Hoover had nothing to do with "Operation Abolition".

You say, ". . . it's the people that need protecting from the government." Of course. In fact, Amen. That's what I keep yelling about. I am a conservative, which is to say, a constitutionalist. Our constitution was designed precisely to protect the people from the government--not from Big Business, or Big Labor, or Big Crime. From the government. Man has never been enslaved by Big Business, nor by Big Labor, nor by Big Crime. It has been enslaved by the government. If we can restrain this beast, the government, we can remain people, not slaves; and since I don't want to be a slave I fight the liberals, whose goal is to strengthen the government in Washington.

--And I thank you for your kind attention. I've gone on at dreary length in this letter column on this same subject, and enough is enough. There will be at least one subsequent letter that will have the infernal gall to disagree with me on this matter (doesn't everybody?), but I promise not to argue about it. Just because I'm right and the rest of you are wrong doesn't licence me to become a bore.

Note: yesterday my Olympia fell off its table and sustained grave damage. It has been dispatched to the Olympia retailer in Casper for repair, but meanwhile I've borrowed this Royal portable in order to carry on. I will be interested in the results I achieve. I find typewriters to be rather mysterious machines, but I had attained a sort of mutually-suspicious rapport with the Olympia. Now I find myself trying to control this recalcitrant contraption. I ask your forbearance.

And now, back to the Serious Constructive Letter column:

A letter from Avram Davidson:

Pencil gusters. I used to be a pencil guster for Eberhard Faber, specializing in their Soft Leads #s 2 to 11AA, and so I can give you the low-down on this highly skilled craft. The graphite mixture comes out of the squeeze press in one continuous shaft. Of course it has to be broken into pencil-lengths, which is done by a girl working a treadle-press. Before the shafts are put into the cedar by the birdie-man, as he is called, it is necessary to put tiny invisible (except by microscope) gussets into them, so that they will snap at the slightest pressure and break while being sharpened. If this were omitted the average lead-pencil would last 37.63 days, instead of being worn out in 29.71 days as is now the case. The profits to the Company from this built-in obsolescence are enormous: and the man who puts the gussets in pencils is called a pencil guster; do you have any other questions, you scab, fink, blackleg, jackleg, you?

I do not know if or not the Communists were behind the San Francisco riots depicted in OPERATION ABOLITION but I am now convinced that the film itself was dishonestly edited and the evidence at the trial of one guy accused of copslugging (one of the humane arts, anyway) and acquitted convinced me further. I will see if I can locate and send you some of the arguments printed to argue against the film. Generally speaking I surely don't believe in civil disobedience but I surelier even than that don't believe in civil-obedience-by-cop-club. Cops are all too inclined to get out that old club and start clubbing whenever they don't like even tiny little things and I am sort of sour on them for this reason. It needn't be so, and the British police show it needn't. As for Congressional Committees, I'm not against them or even against an Un-American Activities Committee: I'm just angry at the fact that the current U-A Com is firmly in the hands of Xenophobes like Walter and Domestic Fascists like Eastland. How dare the Congressional Committee confine itself to subversion from the left and totally ignore subversion from the right? Why isn't it investigating the defiance of American law and order by Douthern Redneck mobs and Southern office-holders? Because Walters is a shit-head and is indifferent and Eastland is a niggerkiller by nature. Ward Moore once said to me, "I don't like congressmen much, but I prefer them to commissars", and so do I. But I like them very little indeed. Subversion runs all around the circle and if the Un-American Committee continues to prove that it is concerned with only one sector of the circle I shall consider the members to be as un-American as the characters they oppose.

Now something you may at first be inclined to dismiss as trivial or amusing. You use the phrase "a whiskery rabble"--ignoring the "Peace March" with which I'll continue to disagree until there is some marching etc against Russian nuclear policy, preferably in Russia--I want to take issue with your phrase. A little symbolism goes a long way with a lot of people, for it is easier to think in symbols than in concepts. I wear a beard. My reasons are nobody's business. I hurt no one by wearing a beard. I have a right to walk the streets of the of which I am a citizen without being insulted because I choose to wear a beard. I am continually insulted, and I make a distinction between good-humored comments and insults--after all these long years I

ought to be able to. I think there must be something crippled & sick about people whose invariable reaction to the sight of a beard is ugly hostility. I don't for a second place you in this class. But your use of the phrase "a whiskery rabble" to describe a group which you next proceed to denounce for reasons having nothing to do with whiskers is an indication that you are sufficiently influenced by the Yahoo mentality to succumb to its feeble-minded tendency to Look For The Symbol--the big nose or big feet or big teeth or beard or eyeglasses or whatever the Hell. That the general reaction to the beard is feeble-minded is shown by the poverty of the remarks. When I first grew a beard, 9 out of 10 morons would say, "House of David!" and guffaw as if they had thought of something very original and funny. That was twenty years ago and the H of D has dropped out of sight since then and of course a feeb can no more remember anything twenty years back than he can twenty days back. He will now yell "Castro" with the same guffaw. Also, "Sanny Claws", "How are you fixed for blades", "Rabbi", and "Beatnick!" Ask him what a beatnick is and he has no idea, except it's a guy who wears a beard. As a matter of fact very few beats do wear beards, but what we are pleased to call The Communications Media and which are aimed 90% at the feebs and also find it easier to depict in terms of the Easily Recognizable Symbol have convinced the peapickers that beat=beard. Thirty years ago the cartoonists had a simple way of indicating that a character was a communist: they drew him with a beard, despite the fact that at the time the Cominform had exactly the same number of beards as the US supreme court, i.e., one. It is of course the fear the slob or feeb or yahoo has of anything that is different. And guys like you, who appear to be neither slobs, feebs, nor yahoos, play into the hands of this substitute for rational thought by taking the easy way out and tagging with the symbol.

Please don't.

It is a quibble to tie in "the competence of Israel to try Eichmann"--a competence of which you have doubts--with the conceivable difficulty, though by no means "almost impossible" one as you say, in determining "what 'the Jewish people' is". When we are attacked our enemies have no difficulty in determining who we are. I can't concede that it is only for a purpose of defense that a difficulty should arise. Those victims of German (I will not say 'Hazi': I will say 'German') evil died because of their being members of an easily identified and commonly recognized kith --regardless of how defined--known as the Jewish people. More of those who survived live in Israel than elsewhere; Israel is a Jewish state by its own declaration and by general acknowledgement, friendly and hostile, as Ireland is a Christian State, Ceylon a Buddhist, and Pakistan an Islamic one. No one else is available to try Eichmann for his crimes against the Jewish people than the Jewish people of the Jewish State of Israel. I am certainly not for letting him go because of a quibble. He is also being tried for crimes against Humanity. Define humanity. In a letter of mine published in TIME, a journal not noted particularly for philosemitism, I wrote: "Piracy has always been defined as a crime against humanity, and it is international law that a pirate, regardless of where his crimes were committed, against whom committed, may be captured anywhere and tried anywhere, by anyone. If this is so of the capture of one ship, how much more so of the murder of six million people." No law then in existence saved a single victim from the ovens. No nation saved them. And no nation then in existence evidently considers itself competent to try their slayer for his crimes against them. There is only Israel. I could argue that its subsequent coming-into-existence does not in any way disqualify it, but the subject of why there came to be a trial, that is, the crime itself, is one I cannot long dwell on at any one time.

"...the fruit you buy at the store has been robbed of its taste...especially what they've done to apples." No, those "big, rosy symmetrical" apples weren't robbed of any taste, they had none to begin with: them's WESTERN apples, boy. Order, if you can, some of our smaller non-glamorous EASTERN apples, such as the NYC area favorite, the Macintosh, or the Baldwin, Jonathon, Winesap or Northern Spy. You'll find the taste is still there: but noble old US Commerce, which is against labor unions and men with beards, prevents you from getting anything but artificial blobs of pulp, just as it forces carcinogens into your oranges, deflavorizes your cheese, ensyrups your wines, and does a thousand other things to save itself money and play the parasite on the general ignorance of proper food as of other values. Only where there is a great regional resistance plus a great regional source--such as the Hudson Valley & Macintosh growers--does the Factors Cartel have to back

off. Not that they give up, mind you, even here: there are still boobs enough in this city who go by looks to provide a market for those bulbs of liquiscent feh with the rich red color and the knobs on one end and no taste, no scent and hardly even texture.

In case you continued to miss it in the papers, Mailer got off because his wife refused to press charges, he expressed contrition, they are all one big happy family, and there is more there than meets the eye. You rate him higher than I do. The thing which perhaps hides his talent from me is his monstrous ego--he has a positive lust to be worshipped, and is not only willing but eager to be crucified to achieve this. He has a compulsion to take down his pants in public and shout, Mine is bigger than yours. Maybe, if he can get over all this--but I doubt it. He is too busy saving mankind.

Didn't we exchange comments in CRY or eppis? My memory...when you get to be my age...

frantishly,
Avram Davidson

Leman's wholesome bourgeois reaction to the letter from Avram Davidson:

My goodness, you are tetchy about them chin-whiskers, aren't you? The fact is that the sentence was unfortunately phrased. When I said "whiskery" I did not intend to convey "bearded", but evidently that's the idea that came across. If I had had in mind bearded men I think I would have said "bearded" or possibly "bewhiskered." It may be that the mot juste for the idea would be "unshaven." Anyhow, I was trying to express in an economical way the idea that I thought the Peace March people would be pretty raffish. I have not, I beg you to believe, anything against beards, nor any notion that there is anything disreputable about sporting one. My late grandfather, who was born on the day of Lincoln's first inauguration, wore a goatee from the day his first fuzz sprouted until he was decently interred, and he was a man of almost stupefying dignity and respectability. I have, consequently, always associated the beard with venerable wisdom, and not at all with beatniks or communists. I can see, however, how twenty years of hearing people hollering "Beaver!" at you might make you a mite sensitive on the subject. But I must take exception to your lumping me with the yahoos. I am, as a matter of fact, a most Houyhnhnm-like feller, and I offer, in support of this, the fact that I am often affectionately referred to as "old horse-face."

I've already said my say on the HCUA matter, but there's one little matter that you should take note of. You say that the HCUA is "concerned only with one sector of the circle." Now the HCUA was initially authorized to investigate Nazis, and for a long time Nazis were all it investigated. I cannot recall that at that time we were subjected to widespread propaganda against the committee. A Nazi and a Commie are both unspeakably evil. But today to Nazis have no power, and the comrades unquestionably have. It is thus at this time much more important to investigate Communist influence in our domestic affairs than to get after these grubby little would-be Huey Longs. Sure they're nasty little varmint; but they don't represent the clear and present danger that the comrades do.

As you surmise, I doubt the competence of Israel to try Eichmann. I am deeply concerned with the rule of law, and this trial clearly goes outside the law as we understand it. Justice? That's another matter. Eichmann obviously needed to be tried, and convicted, and removed from the face of the earth, and somebody had to do it, and surely if anybody has the right to do it it's Israel. It goes without saying that there cannot be such a thing as punishment sufficient to atone for this man's crimes; let him be removed from the world and his name written in history beside those of Hitler and Stalin and Genghis Khan and the other mass butchers. I know that in raising the question of the legality of this trial I risk the accusation of being a partisan of this creature; but I have also defended the right of Communists and labor hoodlums to take refuge in the fifth amendment, simply because I believe in the rule of law. We have all seen evil men go free because they were able to use the safeguards that the law provides for the

protection of the innocent to escape condign punishment, and most of us have deplored this as a failure of justice. Of course it is; but it is The Law, and we frequently suffer defactors to escape justice because to do justice would rend the fabric of The Law, and so, in the end, create hideous amounts of injustice.

Do you perchance know Mailer personally? It sounds to me as though there's a personality clash here that's blinding you to his immense talent. Maybe even genius. Many of the great artists have been turds as people, but if they produced a work of art it didn't really matter in the long run. I detest Mailer's politics, and judging from what I read in the newspapers I don't think he's a fellow I'd choose as a boon companion, but by God he can write, and I'm still hoping for a book from him that will belong on the shelf beside The Sun Also Rises and The Sound and the Fury.

No, we didn't exchange comments in CRY. I think you have in mind Bob Lichtman, whose name is sometimes mistaken for mine, but who is another fellow entirely. He is a tall skinny youth, and I am a short fat patriarch. Also, he writes a damn' sight better than I could at his age.

As for your age, aren't you aware that it's just exactly the right age for a man to be?

(Note to the membership: The above is about half of Avram's letter. The rest of the letter referred to VII no.1, and hasn't been reproduced. But he made one remark in that part of the letter that strikes me as wise, witty and funny (and then, too, he's agreeing with me) and I want to stick it in here: "Your comments on jazz I jes couldn't accept more wholeheartedly. Are we alone in realizing that the cats have no clothes on?")

A Trade Magazine for firemen, to be called, "Good Hosekeeping".

(Continued from page 17)

That's my excuse, and you can like it or lump it.

And now, as Mervil Culvercast used to say, onto the ish. // The Jack Armstrong theme music was a rousing march, to the words, "Wave the flag for Hudson High, boys, / Show them where we stand. . ." Oder etwas. Anyhow, there wasn't anything weird about it. Or wasn't that the reference? It's hard to tell. // "Through Space and Time With Ferdinand and Isabella" isn't much for plot, but I cannot adequately express my admiration for the style. Most of us are pretty heavy-handed when doing this kind of thing (as are you, here and there) but on the whole your touch is light and deft.

A cowardly skin-diver is known as Chicken of the Sea. --J.G.

HORIZONS - Warner: The hospital thing contrives to be funny about a matter that couldn't possibly have been funny to you, and interesting while talking about a period that must have been mostly the deadliest boredom. A really first-rate chronicle. But for God's sake, what was it that that fellow said while he was coming out from under anaesthesia? // As for your reply to Moskowitz, let me repeat what I said back there to Clakins: why lend weight to this sort of nonsense by replying to it at all? And I'm surprised at Sam; he ought to feel secure enough in his eminent position in the microcosm to be less umbrageous about real or fancied derogation. Metcalf has, as a matter of fact, paid for a few of the things in New Frontiers--something like sim-tenths of a cent a word--but this was, I think, to certain pros who don't give away work as a matter of principle.

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And this, dear freinds, marks the end of the issue. It has been pleasant to chat with you, and I hope you haven't minded that the left margin has been, for much of the issue, as irregular as the right. I'm trying to start a new fashion.

