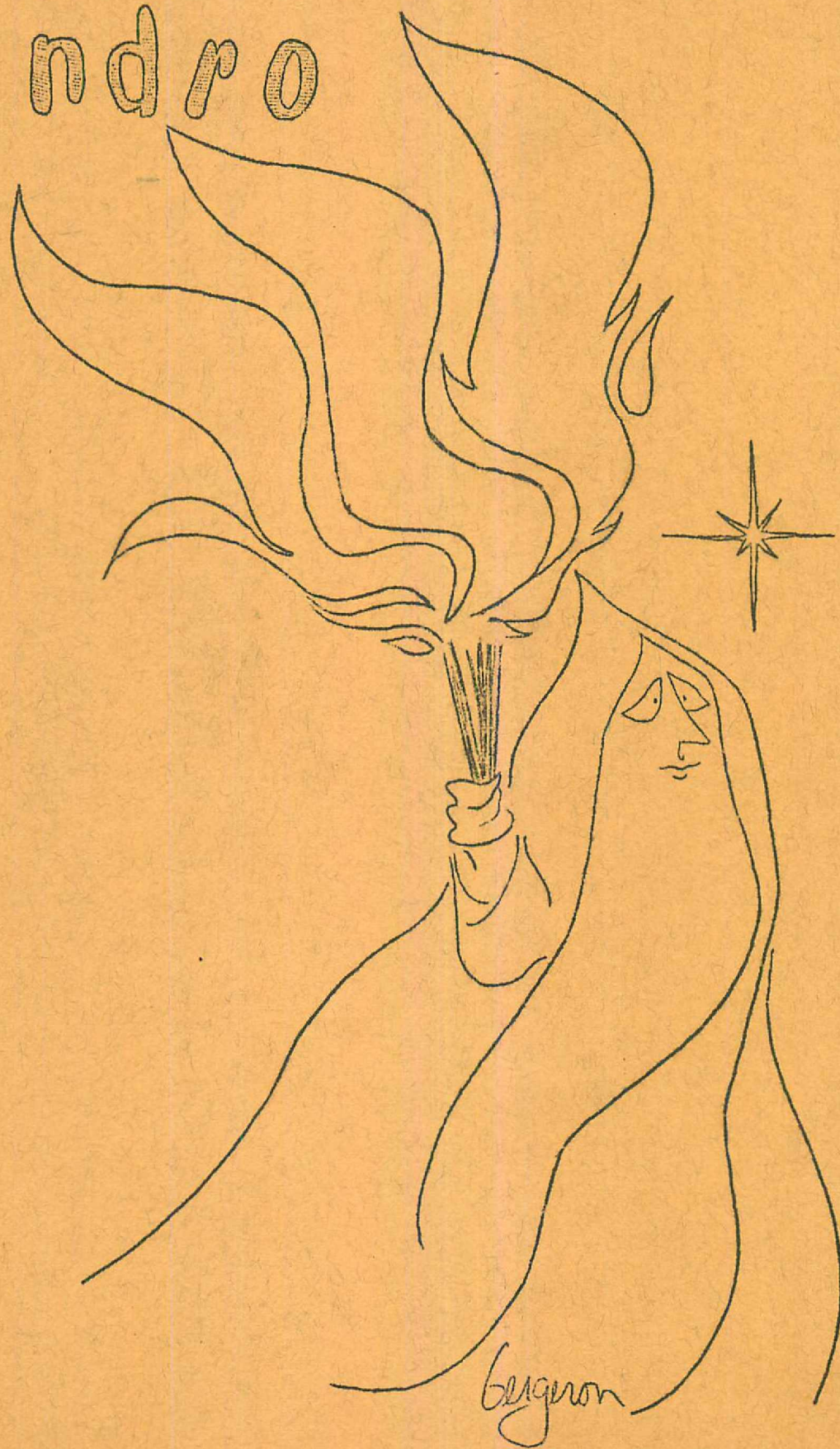


Yandro



Yandro

101

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Somewhere loose in here should be a pledge for the Willis Fund; these were printed by Joe Sarno and are being distributed here because as long as our names are on the Committee we ought to do something for the cause. (Pledges may not be in every copy; I'm not sure how many Joe gave us, so if we run short we'll omit them from copies going to people like Willis, the Shaws, etc.)

*The feghoot this time is a sort of collaboration between Dean McLaughlin and RSC. Dean told the story at the Chicago party; when I came to write it down I could remember the punchline but not his prologue, so I wrote one of my own. (If the buildup has defects, remember that it was composed on stencil and tailored to fit the available space.)



Before I forget, the cover and contents page lettering of YANDRO are by James R. Adams. No one but a fellow anti-letterer like myself can know how much I appreciate this little chore off my time - no one.

The drop to one page editorials this time around is dire necessity and extreme laziness working hand in mailed fist. It is now seven minutes after two (that's Eastern Standard Time, which we are on... someday when I have a lot of time, I'll try to explain this to our

British and West Coast readers)...and I have four stencils yet to run, after typing this and cutting the two editorial cartoons (if you care to call them that)...and we hope to get to Cincy in time this evening to do a little partying.....if that rightward pulling right front tire doesn't wrap us around a tree on those meandering 'hills' in SE Indiana and SW Ohio. I had planned to take along summer-type clothes, but with the temperature hereabouts currently at a blistering 57, I dunno. At the moment, Buck is in Silver Lake, depositing Rann with our family dog-sitter, I have not begun to pack, and Cincy is by way of Anderson to drop off the tad at Bruce-sitter Granma's.

If you're in the fishtailed room, or whatever it is, at the North Plaza, and reading this, we made it.

The article thish on Laos sets me wondering. What is it, a 20th Century syndrome or what - this gimmick of big nations using small, unwilling nations as testing grounds? Sure, history is full of small nations being used as battlegrounds, but the combatants were usually the big nations themselves, and damage inflicted on the small fry was generally of the you-shouldn't-a-got-in-the-way-junior type. Now the big nations put in money, some highly trained behind the lines personnel, and mountains of egging-on propaganda, then sit back to watch the poor little fellas get killed and see which "side" wins. It all reminds me of a gigantic, brutal chess game, with the pieces, mostly pawns, being real people shoved this way and that without much or any say in the matter. So the Laotians do not like to fight, and avoid killing. What a sacrilege! To imagine in this day and age there could possibly be a nation that would prefer anything, even conquest and assimilation, to the taking of human life. I mean really, how backwoodsy can one get?

Frankly, the whole thing strikes me as a bit sickening. The only intelligent idea that involved humane methods of warfare that I ever encountered came, strangely enough, from the era and attitude of Conan (now and then, not always). If there is a disagreement, we let the two leaders contesting for power fight it out, personally. Whoever wins, wins, and that's that. Must the development of civilization always mean that the little guy who doesn't know what the hell's going on is the one to get clobbered?

So the politicians (Laotian) get richer. I've never noticed a particular spate of poverty stricken politicians from any nation. By the way, Joe, while you're down there in the statehouse, how's about putting up a bill for a dip-into fund for tired, indigent housewives? Everybody's dishonest but me.

...JWC



Rather an international issue here; Ertl from Argentina, Scognamiglio from Turkey, Nelson from Canada and Gorman from the USA. The Ertl story, by the way, has been in the files for a long time. Ricky first got in touch with us in late 1954. He contributed a few articles and stories to what was then EISFA, and to a few other US fanzines. He was interested in forming a South American fandom, but was frustrated by the fact that the Peron government

felt that mimeographs in private hands might be used to disseminate revolutionary propaganda. Ricky dropped out of touch at the time of the anti-Peron revolution; since we had this story of his in the files I held it, figuring to run it after he'd got settled again. Since that time nobody in the US has heard from him; by now, I don't think we're going to. The present story wasn't his best, but it will have to stand for a memorial.

Several letter-writers commented on Juanita's and my comments on Charles Wells' story in CADENZA. Wells himself explained that he had intended the girl's explanation that she "liked sex" to be her own rationalization of her prostitution, rather than the author's explanation of the reason. So I withdraw my comments and I hope everyone remembers the last issue well enough to know what I'm talking about.

This is one of the most excessively fannish weeks I've ever put in. On Friday, June 16, Juanita, Bruce and I drove up to Milwaukee for a visit with the DeWeeses and side trips to see Phyllis and Arthur Economou and the Grennell family. We came home Monday night and spent Tuesday recovering. Wednesday night Juanita began cutting illustrations for this YANDRO. Today is Friday the 23rd; we hope to get YANDRO finished today and a few copies assembled, after which we'll be taking off for Cincinnati and the Midwestcon, which will last until Sunday night. By now, everything is beginning to seem a bit unreal.....

Naturally the issue has been thrown together rather hastily (as evidenced by fanzine acknowledgements scattered hither and yon thru the mag). Fortunately the selection of material was pretty well cut and dried; most of it is stuff that was originally scheduled for the 100th issue and which got crowded out. Next issue will, I hope, be out in a couple of weeks -- I get the second week of my vacation then -- and that will put us back on schedule. Also, I'm getting a pair of new glasses today, which will speed up both stencil cutting and correspondence; it takes more time when you have to peer intently at what you're copying or answering. Aside from an article by Ted Pauls and another "Golden Minutes" column I haven't the vaguest idea what will appear next time -- probably more letters of comment on the 100th issue.

I should stay away from Milwaukee. Not that I got sick this time; thanks to Dr. Dupla I got by with a remarkable lack of wheezing. But I hit all the book stores to pick up the various paperbacks that have come out recently and failed to be distributed around here, and I wound up with over \$5 worth.....

We'll be seeing quite a few of you at the Midwestcon in just a few hours; to the rest of you, I'm sorry you couldn't make it and equally sorry that we won't make the Worldcon and I'll look forward to your letters. (Mellow, aren't I? I must be sick.....)

RSC

FOOTNOTES *from* ~~ed~~ gorman

It's a wonder what a few months time can do. It took all my meager knowledge accumulated through nineteen years to write "A Polluted Premise", but in the days following I've learned quite a bit. So, to salt the proverbial wound.....

I think the one thing which we were deadlocked in was a definition of the word "literature". Stating one's belief in this area is much the same as letting down one's guard. So, I turn to the inevitable escape and categorize the word.

For one thing, and this is self-evident, there are many sorts of literature. Shakespeare has been claimed to have written it, as was Aristophanes, Jack Kerouac, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allen Poe -- the list is endless. So, apparently, there's no one type of literature, and only common denominators can be used to denote relation.

Even the dictionary is vague in its terminology: "The written or printed productions of a country or period". One might as well have no definition as to use this, because it allows too much to be included and specifies and segregates nothing.

There are "literatures of" the historical, of the contemporary, of the plot-types of literature. Every published (and unpublished) book or novel can be termed "literature" by someone and qualified thus legally. I think what we're looking for is "literary". But again the dictionary break-down is obscure and worthless.

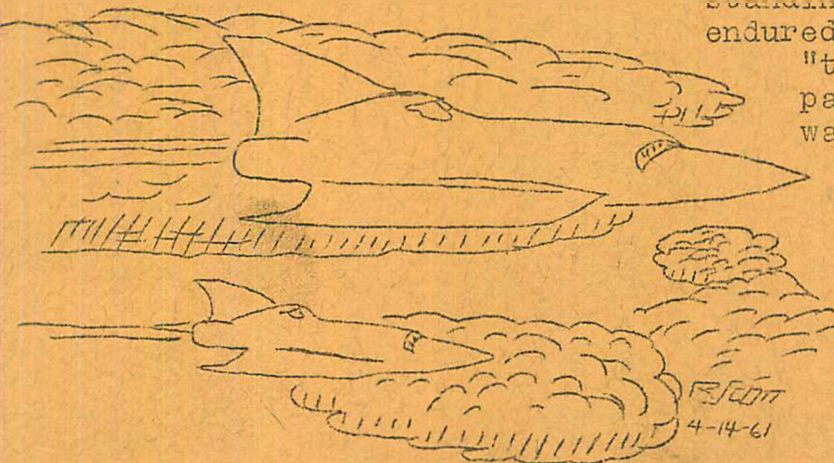
So, to make a leading statement, let's say that every type of book forms its own type of literature. The scale on which is decided its "literary" worth is therefore difficult to work with. So how are we to decide? Well there is the test of "time", the test of "popularity" and the test of "truth", the first two of which are practically synonymous. But these can be biased and can be based on something as invalid as luck. Dickens is a good example of this; he was not the best of his generation, nor was he a particularly able writer when compared to any specific period's authors. But Dickens has lasted because of his "stories", because of the entertaining aspects of his writing.

David Copperfield, for instance, wasn't a Great novel. It was a very good novel, but the thought and style which set it down weren't out-

standing. So why has "Copperfield" endured? If it passed the test of

"time" then it must have also passed the qualifications forwarded by "truth". But so

have a few other novels, dealing with duplicate subjects, conveyed with the same skill and compassion. So why has it lasted? Who knows?



To a more immediate subject, Ray Bradbury. I don't see how anyone can deny that Bradbury writes "literature" or that his attempts aren't "literary". I don't think we've established in any of our English colleges or in any stream of thought or through all the critics what the word "literary" requires. We have seen examples, and they have been broken down and explained, but once away from the illustrated work, we are back to the beginning, unable to make any certain movement.

If one is to say (as I did: I'm retracting it) that "literature" must be "of the heart" then he is stipulating what literature can or cannot be; if one says that "literature" is to be completely directed at problems related to all rather than an isolated individual he is again stabilizing and demanding something which has already been proven erroneous.

A clear-cut definition is impossible. Even Mencken found no allied segments of one great book set against another. As times shifted so did the literature and so did the writer's task. Similarity is found only in intention, and even this is arbitrary, and conflicts and contradicts "task".

For instance the "intention" of a "literary" effort should basically be the desire to reveal honestly and candidly whatever emotion and whatever conflict and whatever meaning the writer so desires. I used Moby Dick as an example of this; Melville did write clearly, specifically, what he intended to, and so, to my way of thinking, his novel was "literary".

But even this self-imposed restriction which I've made can be easily disproved. Balzac was, for example, a poor stylist. Parts of his work are beautifully written, but the major portion of his output suffered from a rather bulky, overly-ambitious free-form which told none-too-clearly what it was Balzac was describing. The "prelude" to the Balzacian novel is long and describes the background where the drama takes place -- and sometimes this takes as much as thirty pages of intricate, dull, lifeless description. And as for the "content" of his books, Balzac's readers often find the need to go back and to re-examine some of the passages in order to determine exactly what he inferred. And sometimes even this proves in vain, for Balzac has clouded his meaning in too much specificity and familiarity. One is unable to apply a certain character's reaction to another individual because Balzac wrote so intimately. In the most severe sense of the word Balzac wasn't "Universal" as was Melville.

As you can see the term "literature" is an annoying circle.

So literature depends on "period" also. It must, if we can judge it. And as far as our better contemporary writers go, Bradbury is their equal, despite the fact that his media is/was science-fantasy, and theirs mundane civilization.

Our school of criticism is unstable and self-conscious. A predetermined "form" is required of "literary" works, and since this is so neither form nor criticism is valid if it's to endure. We find our -



selves in an upheaval -- the popular books fail to make an impression because of their triteness, but the "literary" novels also are unsuccessful because of their hyper-experimental qualities. We have found no touchstone with the past; Maugham is scoffed at, Hawthorne shunned. We've turned to poets, to Pound, to Wolfe, to Thomas, and therefore our means of expression and their interpretation have also become obscure and varies and practically impossible.

Mailer is a sub-Hemingway, a guttural romanticist whose world is painted through a rose-colored beer bottle. Shaw is suffering from leprosy of style and thought, and has become so much talk. Jones is long and minute and entertaining but has dealt overly long with a banal subject. Vidal is aristocratic and traditional and views his work with a blind eye. Saroyan, Steinbeck, Hemingway faltered long ago, babbling incessantly of bygone days and (in Hemingway's instance) a world that never existed and perished in a progressively senile mind.

These, gentlemen, are our mentors, and for their own reasons they've shown themselves unlasting (in our time, anyway). I, personally, can read as much "truth" in the mystery novels of Raymond Chandler as I can Hemingway's "literary" efforts.

I can read more in Bradbury's stories.

So if we're weighing "literature" in Hemingway vs. Bradbury's case, there's no reason why one can't choose Bradbury.

The world's spread further, examined more, and the task of a true chronicler has increased. And to complete a whole portrait of an era such as this several writers are needed.

And when the "leaders" have dwindled and their message weakened and their purpose become neurotic, it's time we begin to look elsewhere, away from the center, to the outer areas.

To science fiction, to mysteries, to westerns.

But please, not to comic books!

now is the time for all good gin to come to the aid of their cointreau
....Dean Grennell

THRU TIME AND SPACE WITH GRENDAL BRIARTON
by Ferdinand Feghoot

On one of his innumerable time-travelling expeditions, Grendel decided to explore ancient Babylon. After careful preparations, including a short hypno-course in the language (Babytalk), he set off, waving cheerily at the group of friends, wives and process-servers gathered to see his departure.

Only a few moments later, he was back, bruised, disheveled, and gasping for breath.

"What happened?" demanded the assembled multitude.

"I made an elementary error," replied Grendel. "I forgot that primitive peoples are always excessively touchy about their religion and as a result I was very nearly clobbered for blasphemy."

"But what did you say?" inquired one of his wives.

"Why, I actually said very little. I arrived in Babylon, you see, immediately following an enormous earthquake. Buildings were in ruins all around me; some were actually twisted on their foundations. In such circumstances, of course, my carefully prepared maps were useless. Needing an orientation point, I approached the chief priest and inquired 'Does your ziggurat face different lately?'"

UNIVERSAL REACH

—fiction by—ricky erl—

Hundreds of eyes were on the shiny hull of the "Gitana" as she stood on her tail of flame, and then she darted off straight into the Chilean April sky. Dozens of newsreels had filmed in its every detail the greatest achievement of Humanity. The next day the whole world was alive as it had never been. Chile was the most spoken word for a long while, and everywhere people congregated to form rocket societies.

After seven months the spaceship "Gitana" came back, bringing with her the very wonderful news of very near planets.

Then, the Chilean government gave free the plans of the prototype, but with the drives missing, and that same day twin spaceships darted off successfully into space from the new Valparaiso Spaceport.

The route to the planets had been opened.

"Damn it! What a nasty sense of humor they've got! Those bums sent us a crazy drawing of a wonderful up-to-date spaceship and - with nothing to push it!" Major Olivera was pacing angrily around his office. Professor Castañares kept his tired gaze off the blueprints he had spread on the desk and objected:

"Yes, but you must admit they planned the most beautiful machine - if you omit mentioning the drive. Every bolt, every part placed with an artist's perfection."

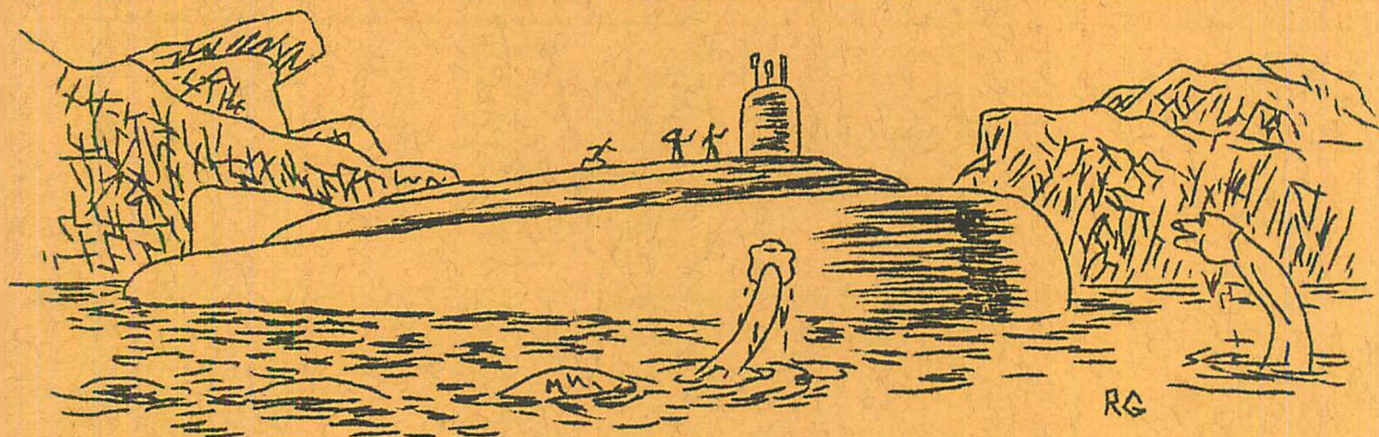
"And what do you care, Professor? For that place of a bolt? Of the position of the berths? Or the way you've got to strap yourself into the cushion couch? No, nothing of this means anything to us. And that damn thing is atomic. Nowhere can you see insulations. Now you go telling me there were no real crew aboard. And go on telling that the pictures are also a fake. Bah, don't waste saliva, Professor, you even don't believe your own words. Wake up!"

He stood looking at the green lawn that spread outside the tall building. On the mast at the left there was the Argentinian flag undulating and dancing in the autumn breeze. Many birds were on the flower beds, and occasionally a private aircraft would let hear his soft hum but would remain invisible behind the clouds.

Major Olivera lit his ninth cigarette and drew a long breath. After a while the sun sank into the horizon and neon-lights began to welcome the first shadows.

"I've got it! I've got it! It's all clear now! I tell you I must see immediately Major Olivera! It is most urgent and secret. You're playing with fire, Lieutenant, I tell you. You might even lose your job!" Professor Castañares dropped his briefcase on the desk and caught his breath. He managed to stop panting. Lieutenant Ayala spoke hurried words into the intercom, and Professor Castañares was told to enter.

Professor Castañares almost entered running the office. "I've got it, Major! I know now! It is as easy as this: their drive and fuel tanks are not on any known dimension of ours, BUT IN A DIFFERENT DIMENSION! Yes, yes, but let me first explain, later you comment. See, my theory is that there are innumerable or perhaps infinite dimensions. Every one



is very different and much wider and larger than the other. Here, then, our difficulty is to grasp this idea. Now, these boys in Chile managed to put their whole drive in another dimension, but with the outlet in our four-dimensional world. This way they can carry any desired amount of fuel without the slightest variation in weight. But I -- no, let me finish first, question me after, please. Well, I happen to believe that if we could put the ship into, let's say dimension Q, and then this way we could reach the farthest boundaries of the Universe and be back in less than an hour of our four-dimensional world. Waddo you say, Major?"

Major Olivera smiled and produced a sheaf of papers and pictures.

"Here, take a look at those blueprints. Prototypes, but can be improved. Our spies are plenty good, huh?" His smile grew wider.

Professor Castañares looked wide-eyed at the plans and stared incredulously at the enlarged photos. Slowly he began to breathe out some words.

"The plans...we, oh we've got the whole Universe!"

And so it was. Argentina planted the first blue-white-blue banner on a planet that circled along with the other systems, on a small part of the Horsehead Nebula. And that was only the beginning.

FANTASTIC FUNGI

(being a list of fanzines received but not reviewed in STRANGE FRUIT)

TERROR #4 arrived after column had been stencilled; I'll get you next issue, Larry. FIRST VENTURE arrived in time but as of this writing I don't have the promised new address for the editor. Next time. LYRA #1 is entirely written in German. SCIENCE FICTION-NYTT is entirely in Swedish. DEFENESTRATION #1 is listed for OMPA and trades only. Same for UL #3. SONOMA #5 is NAPA, SNICK AND SNEE is CRAP (note to neofans; that's a publishing group...I haven't even read the zine yet), POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC #9, 10 & 11 are intended for SAPS, SKYRACK #33 is a Special Case which is too involved to explain, and REQUIEM is a one-shot and if Koning has any copies left he operates considerably different from me. If anyone is interested in getting copies of any of these I'll be glad to provide addresses, etc., in a letter (but I don't guarantee that any will be available.) This particular bit of filler will doubtless be considered useless by most readers: I'm listing everything received mainly as an aid to my own memory (which needs all the help it can get.) RSC

CYRANO'S TRIP TO THE MOON

ARTICLE BY giovanni scognamiglio

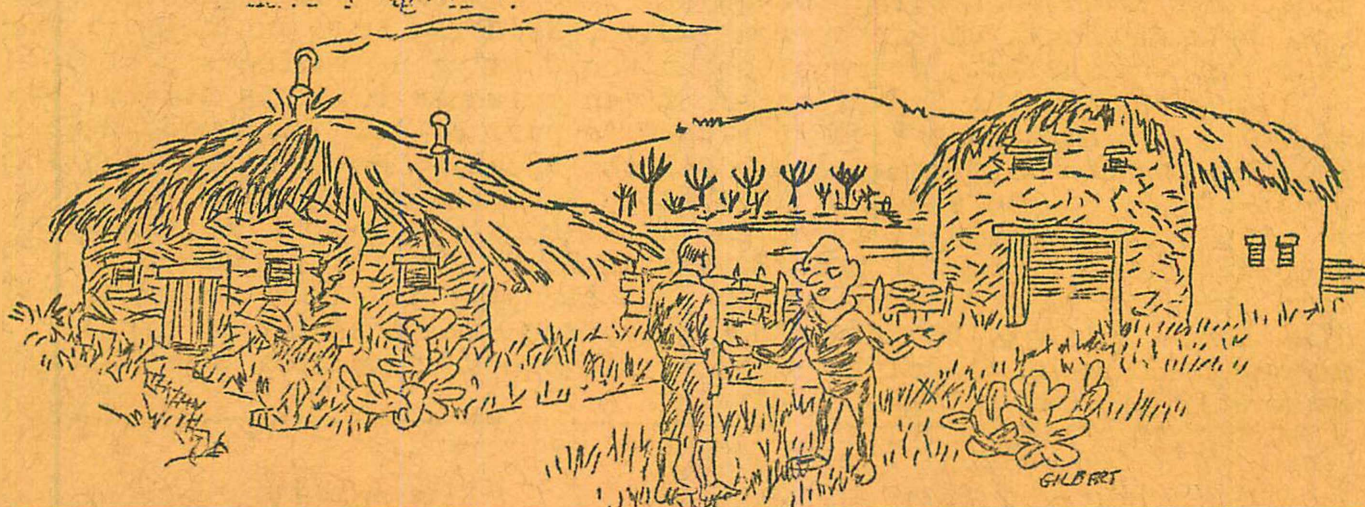
I suppose that to some (or to most) of us the name and figure of Cyrano de Bergerac are mostly correlated with French playwright Edmond de Rostand's highly romantic play brought to the screen some years ago and brilliantly played by Jose Ferrer. I confess that for long years this was also my personal cognition of Cyrano, plus some rather elementary notions of French classic literature, learned at college, through whom I had notions about the real Cyrano de Bergerac, a rather strange and pathetic figure among the XVIIth Century poets.

It is only some years ago that, thanks to my interest toward sf, I came across a new aspect of the now unfortunately forgotten works of de Bergerac: his fantastic tales, mostly his "The Other World". "L'Autre Monde" (The Other World), whose first edition was published in 1657 under the title "Histoire Comique des Etats et Empires de la Lune" (Comic tale of the States and Empires of the Moon) and after the death, in 1655, of its author, is definitely not sf but it's surely the only way a poet back in 1643 could have written about such fantastical items like trips to the Moon and, later on, to the Sun.

As a poet, Cyrano de Bergerac is mostly a vagabond poet, a soldier turned to poetry and all kind of science after being wounded twice, first at Mouzon and then at Arras (remember the siege of Arras in Dumas' "The Three Musketeers"?). As a man he was ugly and mishaped and madly and desperately in love (in some ways Rostand was right). All in all he was a strange adventurer, a lonely, embittered individual hated by most and with a lot of high-placed enemies who disliked not only his manners (let's say that he was a highly cultured beatnik "ante litteram") but also his virulent tongue.

Of his works, some plays and poems have still a place in French classical literature, but, as the man himself has understood, his main creation remains "The Other World", this enthralling mixture of utopia, philosophy, and poetical fantasy.

Of course, as far as literary history is concerned de Bergerac is not



the first to have imaginatively travelled to distant planets, but he is the first among French writers and also the first real poet to treat such a subject.

A poet, yes, but also a man who in his times had studied also scientific problems and theories and who had, in some ways, tried to use them as a basis for his flying mechanics.

But let's try to summarise a little the book (a rather hard task that we hope to manage without looking too pedant): in the first chapter of "The Other World", titled "States and Empires of the Moon", Cyrano begins with telling about his early flying tentatives in which, after fastening around him a quantity of bottles full of dew, he succeeds in reaching space. The process is explained by stating that the evaporation of dew under the sun's rays was enough to carry him - and the bottles - high up in the skies. At this point of the trip Cyrano discovers that he is too far away from the Moon, so, by smashing some of his bottles, he returns to earth and falls down in Canada. It is there that he manages to work on his second flying machine: a small wooden case surrounded by fireworks of all sort. With this he finally reaches the Moon and finds that there lies none other than Paradise itself, including the Prophet Eli and the usual Serpent and the famous Apple Tree. It is by using one of the Apples that, despite Eli's advice, Cyrano finds himself out of the Paradise and in another, alien, place of the Moon.

It is there that he is taken prisoner by some huge "human-beasts", that he soon discovers to be normal human beings of abnormally big proportions, who walk and act like quadrupeds. Among those he meets a gentle demon who calls himself "the demon of Socrates" and with his help discovers a lot of strange things (the giants of the moon don't eat but only breathe the subtle fragrances of foods, and sleep not on beds but over large mattresses made of different flowers). Finally it is again through the help of the said demon that Cyrano manages to come back to earth and to land in Italy.

In the second chapter, titled "States and Empires of the Sun", the poet, who imagines that his book relating his previous adventures had been published with great success, tells about his imprisonment near Toulouse (being more or less accused of sorcery) and of his escape and his further trip into space aboard another machine of his called the "icosaedre" (a kind of huge box provided on the top with a great glass pot composed of multifacet pieces of glass and with a great hole in the bottom). Here the flying process is explained by stating that the "icosaedre" with reflecting the rays of the sun emanates such a heat that the same cause an air current which, escaping from the hole in the bottom of the machine, transports the whole thing up in the sky.

After reaching the Sun he's again taken prisoner but this time by the people of the birds who live in a certain part of it. Condemned because he is a man, the most cruel among all the species, he is saved by the parrot of one of his cousins. Delivered from the birds Cyrano meets the people of the talking trees and after that encounters Jompanella, the philosopher author of the "Civitas Soli", who introduces him to Cartesius. At this point the book ends abruptly or rather seems to end like that. In fact, de Bergerac has exposed all he wished to expose: his own philosophical points of view, his own astronomical conception, and mostly his own religious belief.

Obviously "The Other World" once summarised in this doesn't really look like a masterpiece of wit, satire, and poetry. Fantastic in many ways, Cyrano's work is a light, pleasant - at times very much nonsensical - piece of writing. Philosophy is involved, Bergerac mentions at the beginning Gassendi and La Mathe Le Vayer; his talks on the atomic constitution of the Universe are at times epicurian and at times lucretian. But really, who cares about that: there are strange machines, a man flying in the skies, meeting strange people on distant planets. That's not, of course, science-fiction, but it's still the best way, for a poet, to handle such a fantastic theme.

I don't know if there is an American translation of Cyrano de Bergerac's "L'Autre Monde" but if there is, well, do try to get it and I bet that you'll enjoy it. Then, after reading it, I hope that you'll forgive me for having betrayed Cyrano in such a way.

Good hunting!

EERIE ECOLOGY

(Being a short column devoted to those fanzines left over from last issue's STRANGE FRUIT; the blasted things just turned up in a corner after having successfully hidden while I was cutting the column this month.)

POISON #1 (David Crossen, 44 Ferry St., New York 14, N.Y. - irregular - 20¢) A fairly average first issue, except for M. E. Chaber's "The Ghetto", which is well above the average fan fiction. (I suppose it should be, after all...) William Tenn's "The Search For Poison" reads a bit like something dashed off hastily in reply to an editorial request to "write something about poison". Rating..2

FANTASMAGORIQUE #1 (Scott Neilson, 731 Brookridge Dr., Webster Groves 19, Missouri - bi-monthly - 15¢) An almost incredibly well-reproduced first issue. Material tends toward serious criticism -- of stf movies, stf books, stf magazines and stf fans -- and while none of the writing is exceptionally good, it's at least average, and the writers are all capable of expressing themselves coherently. In general, this is a neat, well-put-together fanzine. Rating...3

BUNYIP #4 (John Baxter, P.O. Box 39, King St. P.O., Sydney, N.S.W., Australia - bi-monthly - free for comment) A couple of items here; a good humorous piece by John Foyster on his encounters with Scientology and part 2 of Don Tuck's scholarly survey of WONDER STORIES. Then there is a Dodd column (notable mostly for a quote about Spaniards, who "look identical to ordinary Europeans" -- you mean they aren't ordinary Europeans, Alan? They're extraordinary Europeans, perhaps?) Letters, editorial and filler round out the issue. Rating...4

EAST & WEST NEWS #37 (Peter Campbell, Birkdale Cottage, Brantfell, Windermere, Westmoreland, England - 30¢ - published "as often as possible") This isn't really a fanzine; it's the official organ of a group dedicated to international fellowship. There is the usual side-issue of spiritualism (doesn't anyone but me believe in international brotherhood without believing in The Mysterious Knowledge Of The Orient?). At least, mysticism is at a minimum here, for this type group.

JETSTREAM (Bob Parkinson, 52 Mead Rd., Cheltenham, England - 10¢) is an annual one-shot, or something. Rather fun.

An Informal Report on Laos

reported by

DEREK-NELSON

Until recently, the following facts were both true and well-known: 1) the CIA directed much of the US foreign policy and 2) there were twelve nations in the communist bloc. Now, thanks to the typically brilliant blundering that marks the US throughout the world, the former fact has added two nations to the latter. Laos, sometimes subtitled 'The Comedy of Errors', is one of these, and the subject which I have attempted to record below.

The Kingdom of Laos, aside from being, as I have mentioned, the latest foreign policy blunder of the West, is also a tiny, lambchop-shaped and landlocked little kingdom in SE Asia. As everyone probably knows by this time it is the only nation in the world that issues license plates to elephants, has illegally grown opium as its major export, except in time of 'war' when news cable cops first place); and has Uncle Sam's hard currency as its major import (with Cadillacs running a close second.---paid for by you-know-whos money). It is probably also the only country where the right wing pro-American leader (Phoumi 'our boy'*) is related to the politically fuzzy neutralist leader (Souvanna, who refuses to define neutralism on the grounds Laotians dislike precision) as well as the leftist, pro-communist rebel 'Red Prince' (Souphanouvang, the bad guy). Then there is the King of Laos who is related to practically everybody of importance (he had a fertile father), is recognized by both left and right alike as chief of state, and who so far has done nothing protect his kingdom except guard a golden Buddha (and, until recently, keep his late father pickled).

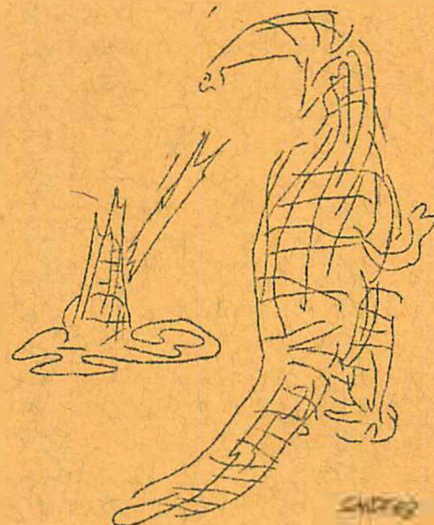
But before I confuse things even further, let us travel back through time ** to 1954, and the conclusion of the communist victory of that year known as the Geneva Agreement. At that time Laos was created as a 'neutral, independent' state. Its government became, however, generally pro-Western, rather sleepy and corrupt, in other words, typically Laotian. To prop up this mistake the masterminds of the CIA built up a 24,000 man Royal Army that was just as sleepy and corrupt as the government, and at least three times too big. In the backwoods, meanwhile, two wayward battalions of Path-

* - CIA quote ** - ahh...reference to science-fiction.



et Lao roamed at will. At Geneva it was agreed they should be incorporated into the Royal Army, along with their leader, the Red Prince.

And so for six years things slid merrily along while everybody in power in Laos got richer and the Royal Army hunted for its wayward comrades. Once, after surrounding and capturing one of the battalions with its men, women, children, cows, chickens, etc., (naturally without a fight) the Royal Army let this whole motley crew walk through its guard one night and escape. When the guard commander was asked how come, he replied "That would be difficult to explain." This was the CIA created army! Unfortunately, it is on our side.



However, the whole blissful mess might have continued indefinitely had not one Laotian (Kong Le) stepped out of character and acted forcefully. It all began at the beginning of August when a young Laotian officer sought out the French tactical advisor in his company and asked brightly, "If you were ordered to capture a city, sir, what positions would you head for first?" The Frenchman yawned, woke up, and said, "That's easy. First I'd seize the railroad station, then the airport, next the main radio station, important government buildings, police posts, and, if possible, army HQ." Then he went back to sleep and the Laotian went away happy.

And so it happened that on August 9th a rather confused and frustrated paratroop commander (Kong Le) led his battalion into revolt in Vietienne. First he took Wattay Airport, then Vietienne Radio, the chief government buildings, various police posts plus Army HQ, in that order. Incidentally, though there is a railroad station in the city there is no railroad (a normal situation in Laos).

Kong Le, having taken over, rushed to install the neutralist Souvanna as premier while the coup made good news copy. Unfortunately he paused to bask in the glory and before long things drifted back to usual. Those who believed a Laotian could remain active for any length of time were proven wrong, the US suspended military aid to the kingdom and Red China headlined "US Intervenes In Laos By Stopping Military Aid". However, the US did intervene by giving aid to Phoumi in the south and disregarding the neutralist government of Souvanna and Kong Le. Then came a quite lively interlude of switching sides and shouting slogans as both sides struggled for power while the Pathet Lao secured much of the countryside and Russia and Viet Mihn first began sending technicians in. When things had settled down somewhat Kong Le found himself alone as other commanders supported Phoumi (mainly because the US was paying the \$130 per annum army pay and not Kong Le, and why else would a Laotian join the army except to make money). So Phoumi, rather slowly, advanced on Vietienne with US encouragement, advisors, CIA, weapons, and cheers.

Several months later was fought the Battle of Vietienne, a struggle that will go down in history as unique. When Phoumi finally got into position to attack he gave rather vague orders to capture the town; sort of a "Damn the bullets, full speed charge!" American 'advisors' had the job of planning, leading, and executing the assault. Fortunately they

had the only other paratroop battalion in the country with them, and it was the only other Royalist force of ANY fighting ability. Meanwhile the communists had brainwashed Souvanna and Kong Le into believing the US was attacking them and so rebel units joined the defenders. Even so, the clash was a most gentlemanly struggle. When a Royal armoured car moved into a street it would wait till the thoroughfare was clear of pedestrians and traffic, then open fire till out of ammunition when it would back off into a handy sidestreet. Meanwhile a rebel armoured car that had been patiently waiting at the other end of the street for firing to stop would roll out, make sure all was clear, and just possibly it might let loose with a salvo until it in turn ran out of ammo. At the same time infantry would advance firing often and high, which accounts for the majority of bullet holes in second story walls in Vietienne. These bullets and shells were marked "To whom it may concern" in the opinion of US Embassy officials. You see, no soldier on either side would deliberately shoot an enemy as no good Buddhist should kill a fellow creature and the troops are all good Buddhists. The Buddhist faith therefore probably accounts for the mild disposition and general laziness of most of the army--and rebels. Anyway, Phoumi did capture the city though it suffered considerable shell damage (enough to make the French Embassy start digging shelters for later conflicts before they were stopped--because they were damaging public morale). This, together with most of the 300 casualties, was caused by Pathet Lao artillery in the surrounding hills. That this artillery was manned by NORTH VIETNAMESE and not Laotians is an obvious conclusion to draw from the fact that targets were hit, and no Laotian ever hits what he aims at.

With the city secured, the war degenerated into the previous type of skirmish and threat that had proved so popular to all concerned. Kong Le and the Pathet Lao withdrew north while Royalist troops followed, but did not pursue.

Now that Vietienne was occupied and the neutralists angered, the US did not pursue the course it had set out for itself. Phoumi also sat back and got richer after installing Doum Oum as Premier (who also got richer; all Laotian politicians do). But the communists were aroused and aid poured in for their supporters who withdrew to the Plains of Jars, where Kong Le had now retreated and joined them.

Now came the counter-attack as rebel bands pushed from the Plain of Jars with Viet Minh and Russian technicians and volunteers. During this gradual seepage of the Red tide (some metaphor, eh?) one perfect example of the inefficiency, laziness, and disregard for the basic elements of warfare exhibited by the Royalists is the story told of Xieng Khouang (a town just south of the Plain of Jars), which was in rebel hands though the airport was believed government held. Now, for identification purposes each base or airport has a complex system of signs used to show supplying aircraft if the troops below are on your side, as this is important in a country where the towns have a habit of changing sides so fast.

On this occasion an American-piloted Dakota with supplies for the garrison appeared overhead one day to find the runway bare of any sign but containing seemingly friendly, waving soldiers. The Laotian captain on the plane looked up what the sign was supposed to be and said to the pilot, "I'm not quite sure but I think it's supposed to be a Z today. No, wait, it's a D. That's right, a D."

But still no letter on the runway and finally the captain takes a chance and orders the pilot to land. Once down the door opens and an officer with a white armband peers in to be met by the furious captain

demanding, "Where's your D?"

The pilot drawls, (That is exactly what the report says - drawls; do all American pilots drawl?) "He means where is your Z?"

But the Laotian at the door answers jauntily, "Oh, that. It's not D or Z today; it's L. But we forgot all about it. Sorry!"

And so it goes in Laos. By the way, the white armband signifies a government soldier, a red one a rebel. It is the only way you can tell the sides apart since both in many cases use American weapons and wear American uniforms. However, no one would dare use trickery (like switching bands) to infiltrate an enemy position since it just isn't cricket. I mean, it just isn't done in the best company in Laos.

Meanwhile the struggle continued while the faltering and contradictory statements of the Eisenhower Administration did nought to help matters. The Ugly American was also somewhat stunned, it seemed.

The battle centered around control of two strategic positions, the Astrid Highway (a jungle trail leading to the Plain of Jars) and Kam Keut (rebel control of which would cut Laos in half).

On the Highway the Royal Army at one time made a spectacular advance of 20 miles in 9 weeks, somewhat of a record for it till it made a drive of 15 in ONE week in February (it was later learned the rebels had withdrawn that far voluntarily and the Royalists had naturally tagged along). Presently there are several confusing moves being made around Kam Keut as both sides have dropped paratroops all over the place around the town and just left them there. It's pretty much of a silent struggle (no shooting) and doesn't seem to be accomplishing much (which is nothing new). Finally, there was the one dark night over a month back when the Royal garrison in Vietienne watched the big toad swallow the moon (it was an eclipse) and blasted every weapon in town at the toad to make it disgorge friendly Luna. (It did, and became the biggest Royal Army victory in months.)

That magnificent episode failed to halt the rebel advance and it became evident the country might fall. So a SEATO meeting was called. All it produced was a lot of hot air, and the evident desire of France not to get involved in Indochina again. Meanwhile the Eisenhower-CIA mess was dumped in President Kennedy's lap and he went on TV to tell the nation rather hysterically how another outpost of democracy is threatened by Russian subversion and rebels. (Which, by the way, is some statement. It is quite noticeable that only in rebel-run districts are left-wingers returned to power and only right-wingers in Royalist run districts. I doubt if a free election has ever been held in Laos, and I doubt if anyone really cares! To over 90% of the Laotians the world is flat, mainly populated by them with a few whites hanging onto one side and few Chinese on the other. The 'powers' that most Laotians recognize are not the Great Powers of Russia, US, China, etc., but the spirits of the woods, creeks, flowers, etc., known as phis.) But for all the speeches and threats to the rest of SE Asia the West did not act and Kennedy lost his second country in two months to the Reds (he's batting .1000).

Another Geneva Conference was called by the British, and after delay, agreed to by the Russians. The same agreement called for a cease-fire which is in effect only technically. Fighting still continues, but it seems the Royal Army has pretty well given up, what little spirit it had is gone.

This CIA created mistake is one of the most ridiculous armies in existence. Its members consider it a civil service job and a campaign to them means they get a chance to fire their guns (which is a considerable

advancement over their first attitude of not touching weapons). With this Royalist Army on our side many feel it strange Laos hasn't fallen long ago, but fortunately the Pathet Lao are the major opposition. Before reinforcements by Kong Le and outside advisors they numbered several thousand, a majority of whom are racially Lao, who form half the population of Laos. The remainder were recruited from the Kha (slave) peoples, who are primitive and live in the local equivalent of the sticks.

None of the rebels fear Royal Army assaults (?) and laugh at attempts to round them up. Yet the Lao rebels, who comprise the two wayward battalions mentioned earlier, are no more anxious to fight than their Royalist counterparts; after all, they are also Buddhists. But the Kha rebels used to scout an army post in the dead of night, fire a few quick rounds and then run like hell for deep jungle to gloat over the ruckus they caused. However, they try not to shoot too many Lao for, as the old proverb goes, "dead Lao buy no opium" -- and who in their right mind would shoot the only middleman between them and civilization?

The North and NE are the rebel centres where most of their troops spend their time in occupied villages with willing native girls (unless they're married, as many of them are) and the Laotian equivalent of rum, in this case made from rice. The few dedicated anti-government rebels are probably just anti-Lao, since even their leader spouts only a Marxist front. (He can't tell Marx from Engels and ANY good communist can do that; a statement that produces the observation that the Red Prince just wants to rule Laos and cares boo-all for the liberation of the workers from the decadent imperialistic American clutches.)

In fact, things are so bad and rebel activity so poor that instead of just adding a few instructors to the Pathet Lao as Russia

did in Vietnam, for example, the communists have had to place six North Vietnamese in every sixty man rebel company, run all the artillery and ack-ack guns, ferry supplies, train troops and generally urge the rebels on. But even these 'advisors', and the sometimes dedicated officers, are not enough to lead the Pathet Lao to victory, especially when it means serious fighting. It must be the climate or something, since even the Vietnamese aren't all that eager to fight.

But enough, on... we shall conclude, sometime.



NOT

The Pathet Lao Kha rebels may have no concern for the Royalists and killing, but the same holds true for the Kha tribes who are anti-communist. They flourish behind rebel lines liking the Pathet Lao even less than the Royalists (and they hate them!). The major tribes are the Meo led by Vang Phao, and it is they, not the Royal Army, that have the Pathet Lao quivering in their Russian-made and North Vietnamese supplied bootstraps. In fact, in one week they probably kill more enemy by ambush and raid than both sides have inflicted combined in weeks of fighting (?) in the regular skirmishes.

And so we reach the present. The II Geneva Conference of 14 members is now in session, and if the amount of time the Chinese Reds have rented suites and cars for is any indication, it'll be in session for months to come. The International Control Commission (of which CANADA-yeah! is a member) is supposedly policing the ceasefire, but its Indian delegate seems pro-communist just as Souvanna is leaning dangerously to the left.

In Laos itself fighting goes on in a minor way what with most of the Astrid Highway now taken by the

rebels as the Royalist perform a 'strategic movement to the rear'. At the same time rebel forces have cut the Vietienne-Luang Prabang road within the last month and presently are less than twenty miles from the royal capital itself. Meo strongholds are under attack as the tribesmen are a thorn in the communist side; the town of Vadong having been evacuated by them a short while back under heavy attack. But aside from these troops complete confusion and apathy reigns on the Royalist side, though help is present aplenty in the form of aid missions.

In fact, in Laos presently are members of the armed forces of nine nations on active duty advising both sides or in the middle: Indians, Poles, Canadians, (middle, theoretically); Russians and Viet Minh on the left and Americans, Thai, French and Nationalist Chinese on the right. You look back--Nationalist Chinese?--but then this is Laos.



STRANGE FRUIT — ASC

FANAC #74 (Walter Breen, 1205 Peralta Ave., Berkeley 6, Calif. - bi-weekly - 4 for 50¢ - British Agent, Archie Mercer) Breen is doing a good job of keeping FANAC "indispensible" for anyone wanting to know what and who are going on in fandom. Aside from wishing that he'd print everything in the readable typeface instead of switching from one to the other, I have no complaints at all. Rating...7

AXE #4 & 5 (Larry & Noreen Shaw, 16 Grant Place, Staten Island 6, New York - bi-weekly like clockwork - for donations to the Willis Fund) Primarily about Willis and the Fund, but other news items are included. FANAC with propaganda. Rating...5

SCIENCE FICTION TIMES #357, 358 (S F Times, Inc., Box 115, Solvay Br., Syracuse 9, New York - irregular - 10¢ - foreign reps, H.M. Johnson, Roger Dard and Sture Sedolin) Mostly pro news, padded with fan news in times like these when there isn't much pro news. Rating...4

AD ASTRA #4 (Ed Bryant, Jr., Route 2, Wheatland, Wyoming - quarterly - 15¢) The idea of a seriously-oriented fanzine edited and mostly written by neofans is apt to produce a shudder from any fannish veteran. Eddie does much better than most. The editorial writing is still a bit self-conscious, but he has, in the main, interesting comments to make. Accent on stf; reviews, forthcoming books, little-known items (which, unlike Hamlin's series in GHOST, really are little-known) and all stuff like that there. A little verse and fiction. Rating....4

HARBINGER #2 (Don Thompson, Room 36, 3518 Prospect Ave., Cleveland 15, Ohio - irregular - free for comment) Future issues will, it is said, contain "outside" material. This one is editorially written and is reminiscent of Boggs' writing in DISCORD (though it's even shorter). A promising beginning. Rating...4

PILIKIA #6 (Chuck Devine, 922 Day Drive, Boise, Idaho - bi-monthly - 15¢) The editor mentions that he's primarily interested in artwork...it shows. After an inauspicious start, the mag is coming more and more to resemble the better dittoed zines of the recent past -- SATA, TWIG ILLUSTRATED, QUIRK, etc. -- as far as artwork goes. (It isn't up to SATA yet, but it could be in a few more issues.) Written material is fair-to-middling, with Don Franson's little piece on the hero who learns how to operate an alien vehicle in 5 seconds or so taking top honors. Repro is only fair; a lot of blank spots. Rating...4

CINDER #4 (Larry Williams, 74 Maple Road, Longmeadow 6, Mass. - mostly monthly - 15¢) Improvement. Oddly, of the two pieces of horror fiction included, the one by Deckinger is superior to the one by Haydock. (Odd because Haydock is a monster fan and Mike, as far as I know, isn't...) Lettercolumn features a controversy over why fanzines are published; if Cascio keeps writing in the discussion could get interesting. Nothing else memorably good or bad. Rating...3½

REALM OF FANTASY #5 (Jack Cascio, 401 East Central, Bensld, Illinois - quarterly - 20¢) Better than usual, if only because there is less of it. A couple of samples of blank verse aren't bad at all; a couple of pieces of fiction (I can't call them "stories" because one doesn't even come close to being a complete story) are pretty bad. For those who like that sort of thing, there is a multilithed cover by Ralph Rayburn Phillips (plus some badly reproduced interiors by him) and a comic strip bearing a great resemblance to "Krazy Kat". I don't like either Phillips or Krazy Kat, but if you do, you might get your money's worth out of this issue. Rating....3

HEPTAGON #2 (Dave Locke, P.O. Box 207, Indian Lake, N.Y. - monthly - 15¢) There is some good material in here, if you can read it. Repro is sharp enough, but my copy was so light as to be practically unreadable. Very good lettercolumn, for a second issue. Rating....4

THE NATIONAL FANTASY FAN Vol. 20 #3 (Ralph Holland) Since this is the official organ of the N3F, to get it you presumably have to join the organization -- I don't see any dues listed, so write Janie Lamb, Route 1, Box 364, Heiskell, Tennessee, for details. Aside from club news, there is a history of LASFS, a couple of columns and the "Naffer's Guide To Current Fanzines", which lists 84 zines. This is a listing, not a review, but considering the number of fans who've asked me for just fanzine titles for trade or sub purposes it should be valuable. In general, TNFF is a neat, purposeful-looking mag. (Oh, here's the dues, in a separate membership application; \$1.60 per year. Not exhorbitant for the quantity of material received; others can argue about the quality.)

AMRA #15 (George H. Scithers, Box 9006 Rosslyn, Arlington 9, Virginia - irregular - 20¢) It claims to come out 8 times a year; maybe it does. There is also a half page of editorial credits listed, which I am not about to reproduce. Best news is the addition of Roy Krenkel to the art staff; the already good artwork is improved further. Material covers Conan and other epic fantasy; despite my opinion that six feet of dirt would make a better covering I rather like the various articles. But it's worth getting for the artwork alone. Rating...9

VOID #24 (Ted White and various servile assistants, 107 Christopher St., New York 14, N.Y. - irregular - 25¢ - British agent, Ron Bennett) As in most VOIDS recently, the lettercolumn and editorials (3 of them) provide the most interest, though a Harry Warner article and another installment of "Willis Discovers America" are good. Since Ted comments on our artwork in this lettercolumn, I guess it's fair to say that there isn't an illustration in the entire issue of VOID, including the cover, that I'd even consider publishing. The rest of the material was entertaining. I can't think of anything to say about it in particular, so I won't say anything except that I liked it. Rating...6

SPECULATIVE REVIEW Vol. 3#2 (Dick Eney, 417 Ft. Hunt Rd., Alexandria, Virginia - irregular - 3 for 25¢ - British Agent, Archie Mercer) Another zine that could almost be classed as "indispensable" to the science-fiction fan; a well-reproduced, intelligently-written publication devoted to discussing current science fiction. If you don't read stf any more, you'll get nothing out of it; if you do still smuggle your mags out of the corner newsstand, you should enjoy SR. Rating...6

DISCORD #12 (Redd Boggs, 2209 Highland Place NE, Minneapolis 21, Minnesota - six-weekly - free for comment - co-editor, Marion Bradley) Marion reviews current stf; I don't agree with her opinions, either, but they're well done. (I don't seem to agree with any other stf reviewer, except occasionally P. Schuyler Miller.) Redd reviews Don Tuck's "Handbook" and almost but not quite convinced me I should buy a copy. Redd also feels that laughter is the proper answer to censorship; I submit that his example of 17 convictions in 19 arrests is no laughing matter. "The Great Dictator" was one of the funniest movies ever made but it was rather ineffective as an answer to Hitler. The lettercolumn is even better than usual. Rating..7½

BANE #? (Vic Ryan, 2160 Sylvan Rd., Springfield, Illinois, USA - irregular - 15¢) Notable this issue is an excellent lettercolumn and a good Tucker item. A column by George Locke is good, as is the editorial. I review books and Ed Gorman talks about stf. But the meat of the issue is in the lettercolumn, with names ranging from Don Wollheim and Harlan Ellison, thru Redd Boggs, Harry Warner and Sid Birchby, down to Floyd Zwicky and John Baxter. Lively. Rating...7

VAHANA #1 (Les Nirenberg, 1217 Weston Road, Toronto 15, Ontario, Canada - 25¢ - irregular?) This is a Big-Little magazine, of the Habakkuk or Esprit variety. Harry Warner questions the current Civil War mania in a fine article. Roger Ebert objects to motivation-type advertising, Art Rapp writes about Indian pottery and, in the feature article, Ray Nelson discourses on "The Theory Of Humor". All good; Nelson's article is probably the most controversial but I personally enjoyed Warner's more. There are various filler items; poems, cartoons, etc., including some captioned photographs that are at least as good as those in the last HELP! In the editorial, Les wonders mildly why he seems to have been chosen as spokesman for World Jewry by his neighbors...I can answer that, Les. It's because you can get worked up on the subject. (I can't, for example, picture Sid Coleman being considered as a spokesman for World Jewry under any circumstances.) Anyway, I'm looking forward to the lettercolumn in the next issue. Rating....8

VENTURA #1 (Phil Harrell, 2632 Vincent Ave., Norfolk, Virginia - no schedule listed - 25¢) A mammoth first issue; 48 pages plus a lovely Frosser cover. Reproduction is good, and along the sides of the pages where the mimeo ink apparently didn't penetrate, the editor has painstakingly inked in the missing letters, which must have been a horrible job. The zine is probably a bit overbalanced with fiction to suit most fans' tastes, but there is some good stuff among it. Particularly John Berry's article, Marion Bradley's longer story (she has two included), Peggy Sexton's book review and Alan Dodd's...uhhh...err...thing. Phil shows an unfortunate tendency to burble in his editorial, but I suppose I shouldn't put down enthusiasm too harshly. There is a long Round Robin story that isn't nearly as bad as I expected, but isn't quite the greatest thing since Heinlein, either. Rating..6

I want to finish on this page, so: ORION #27 (Ella Parker, 151 Canterbury Rd., West Kilburn, London NW 6, England - I don't see a price but try 25¢) Huge; 72 pages. Rating..8½ CRY #151 (Box 92, 507 3rd. Ave., Seattle 4 - 25¢) Good as usual. Rating..7 KIPFLE #14 (Ted Pauls, 1448 Meridene Dr., Baltimore 12, Md. - 15¢) Smaller than previously, but still good. Rating..7 HYPHEN (Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd., Belfast 4, Northern Ireland - 15¢) The usual excellence. Rating...7½

~~GRUMBLINGS~~

GENE DEWEESE, 3407 No. 22nd. St., Milwaukee 6, Wisconsin - While Prosser had the best thing in the artfolio, I enjoyed the Barr one the most (just my ridiculous sense of humor showing). And the Hensley article was the best thing in the issue -- or in the last several issues, probably. It sounds like Hensley is having more fun in the government than just about anyone....

I don't want to sound uncomplimentary (I enjoyed the cover very much), but the picture of you with the artillery looks as if you were staging an unsuccessful last ditch defense against an attacking horde of upset stomach virus.

EDDIE BRYANT, Route #2, Wheatland, Wyoming - When I first picked up YANDRO #100, I thought that the guy in the topmost photo was Forry Ackerman. (Is that insult or praise?)

Dean Grennell's articles are enjoyable so keep them by all means. But I'd still rather have reminiscences about FANTASTIC ADVENTURES than FLYING ACES!

Hmmm, here's a little item that certain of the readership may be interested in. One of the items on the Restricted shelf of our local library is Orwell's "1984". It rests in between "Lady Chatterly's Lover" and "God's Little Acre".

/I look like Ackerman, eh? Well, I'm not insulted, but don't get too close to Forry at the next convention.... RSC/

ART HAYES, Bird's Creek, Ont. Canada - Alan Burns' suggested collectives, or even the idea of collectives, seems to imply a desirability for stereo S.F. This idea of collectives would, in my mind, reduce SF to a level not worth reading, since it would become merely a collection of cliches, the better ones being quickly worn out through repeated use. Machine made S.F.?

What is the story behind this Joe L. Hensley? Can't believe it to be true, but then, almost anything can happen, even this.

Really liked that artfolio. Not something on which I can comment on though, but still enjoyed.

It would seem that the most livening up the Yandro Lettercol came about as a result of Deckinger's Revelation. Now that the furor is ebbing, the lettercol seems to be reverting to a duller shade of meaning. It would seem that to get a lively lettercol, someone must be insulted. /Well, good ol' Ted White just came along to liven it up again; see below. Believe me, anything is possible in Indiana politics. RSC/

KEN HEDBERG, Route 1, Box 1185, Florin, Calif. - Haven't read all of the mag yet, but I disagree violently with Burns' article. Why not have a distinctly separate plural for little brown dogs, big black dogs, female poodles, etc., ad nauseum. Then all of us can go mad instead of a selected few.

TED WHITE, 107 Christopher St., New York 14, N.Y. - The cover: Midwestern Gothic?

I don't know where it started, but just for you, I've put a HELP

STAMP OUT HUMAN BEINGS sticker on the envelope of this letter. I got mine from Walter Breen. I dunno where he got his, but I suspect Paul Krasner (of THE REALIST), and this considered perhaps the use of the sticker by Elektra is not so odd at that...

Marion's article is excellent (I've been planning to dig up "The Planet Savers" and "Centaurus Changeling" the next time I can get at my prozine files in Falls Church, and now I am even more determined to), but I don't think she should label these editorial cuts "censorship", and especially I question her identifying them with national characteristics, although this is an easy slip to make. To start at home, alright, fine: we know that Boucher, Mills, and Goldsmith all edited Marion's stories for separate and distinct reasons. Quite often these were not even matters of editorial taste, but rather in order to cram an X-number of words into a Y-amount of space. (Why editors will buy 60,000 words, say, without requesting cuts by the author, and then try to cram them into 45,000 words of space is beyond me, but I assume they have an answer. I've been fortunate in avoiding this, as a rule.) But even when practical considerations do not intrude, editorial biases will. I wonder if Marion even bothered submitting her stories to Campbell...and does anyone among us believe that had Campbell bought them (ridiculous thought!) they'd have gone through without many a blue-pencilling from the ubiquitous Miss Tarrent? (It's so handy to have a scapegoat, eh?)

So, let's just suppose that the editorial cuts made in Italy were not really examples of undead Popery exerting an iron hand, but just the bias of a Catholic editor...that not every English editor is quite so anti-sex...and that a perhaps more liberal French editor would have permitted more political comment. Each of these things might as easily happened with an American publishing house, and while they may echo national thinking on a subliminal level, I think Marion would do better to compile a more statistically relevant set of data on foreign editorial cuts before assuming their national nature. If this side of the article had been (you'll pardon the expression) censored, I think it would have stood up much better.

Was the question at the bottom of p.8 inspired by the illo at the top? If so, perhaps yet another definition of "hot toady" could be supplied....

It's a real surprise to see "The Fallen Mighty" and Dean again. Did you hijack this from the mythical GRUE #30, or will Dean be doing more for you?

The illo on p.21 is, if not a swipe, directly inspired by OZMA OF OZ (if that's the title I want -- the one in which Tik-Tok is introduced, and Dorothy meets Ozma)...

The art folio leaves me cold. I appreciate Juanita's labor over the hot mimeoscope to achieve this quality of stencilling, but I wish she'd chosen better stuff to spend this talent upon. The Darr looks like a quick sketch (the technical effects in achieving the equivalent of pencil smudges is interesting), and a not so very good one; the Bryer reminds me of the fanzine art of ten years ago -- heads doodled in school notebooks or cribbed from photos and stuck inappropriately into fanzines -- the layout isn't even good; the DEA is slightly above her usual pitiful average; the Gilbert shows -- again -- his absolute incomprehension of the use of line for texture, looking -- like all his illos -- gross and ugly; the Barbi is "cute" and I suppose as good as any example of what Seth Johnson cites as the "artistic cartooning" which he wishes I had in my poor, artless VOID; the NOTT is nott muchh; the Prosser is a regression to an earlier style which I find repulsive; the

Scott is bad amateur cartooning; the Ran Scott I mistook for a bad Adkins; the Bjo looks like one of her older items, and the stencilling in this one instance seems to harshen areas she would've kept softer; and the JWC suffers from Juanita's usual faults: out-of-proportion heads to bodies, and a quality which I can only identify as this-is-a-sketch-and-it-just-grew-like-ropsy which may account for poor positioning of anatomy and figures.

"Grumblings": I thought the existence of TETRAHEDRON wasn't to be hinted at. And now here you've gone and publicly exposed it to your multitudinous audience. I hope Franson can take the ensuing publicity. ## I doubt like hell that sex criminals inherit their "evil" traits, but I might agree with Ralph Holland that they should be sterilized from the point of view that it might prevent future pregnancies resulting from their rapes... But as I'm sure has been pointed out, "sex criminals" is a damn loose phrase, since the laws in most states are so rigid that under strict interpretation a heavy percentage of married couples are legally "sex criminals". Every so often there's a case of marital privacy being violated by hungry cops and a resulting prosecution for "sex offenses" which should, by rights, have offended no one. Under this looser definition of "sex criminal" I am absolutely opposed to enforced sterilizing, since it just might affect me. ## Seth Johnson should be told about IPSO... or maybe he shouldn't, at that. His idea is just the thing to spring on the N3F. It might provide that organization with enough diversion to keep it out of our hair for another several years.. and Johnson with it. ## Could someone tell me what the good Reverend Moorhead actually does? Surely he hasn't a church of his own? His dogmatic and "unChristian" assertions are one reason why I steer clear of organized religion, particularly organized Christianity. ## However, I do have a few words on the subject of Mike Deckinger's surprisingly controversial "Revelation". You see, Mike wrote the story after reading Andy Reiss' "A Story" in VOID 22, and submitted it to me, along with a letter raving about how "A Story" had inspired him. I rejected "Revelation", not because of the controversial nature of the idea, but simply because I didn't think it exceptional enough to make me want to print it in VOID when my policy was rigidly anti-fiction. (The Reiss story I did like well enough to make the exception.) I've come to print more fanfiction lately (that is, fandom-inspired fiction), but it struck me Mike's story belonged in a little magazine, preferably one with atheistic leanings. I wonder, had I printed it, if it would've gotten the reception it did in YANDRO...? I doubt it. VOID circulates (apparently) among a further-in circle in fandom, made up a good deal less of religious zealots, and it was from these your screams came from initially. No one objected to the blasphemous theme of "A Story", for instance, although one or two said they didn't like it as a story. ## Oh come now; it's been one hell of a long time since my layouts were so unreadable that "the reader has to look hard to find the name of the author, or reads half a page before realizing that he's now on a different article". In fact, I don't believe I ever committed this particular sin. I recall in my senior high school year, when I was given control of the appearance of the school magazine, going over back issues and pointing out all the goofs in layouts of exactly this sort. It was my aim to have every facing two pages balance, and never to make opening pages or credits ambiguous. Since this was before I'd ever started STELLAR, and I carried my ideas quite clearly to that zine (which I presume was your offender, since it had fancier layouts than most zines), I could call you in error purely by induction, but it would be easier for you simply



to riffle through your back files (if they're handy) and cite chapter and verse. I doubt you can, because I suspect this is an after-image which would be dispelled by actual reference. At least you've put my sins in past-tense; I presume I'm no longer guilty of arty layouts?

/Well, I didn't have any trouble with the last VOID. My file of STELLAR is not handy, I assure you. However an ideal sample of confusing layout is provided in the "Review Section" of ZIP #7. Possibly I should explain that I'm not claiming that any of your layouts that I saw were so complicated that they couldn't be figured out, but that headings which have to be figured out at all are distracting and take the reader's

attention away from the material being headed and are a Bad Thing. My only beef on VOID is/was your habit of putting both the title and author at the bottom of the first page rather than the top; all very avant-garde I suppose, but it irritates me slightly. Not exactly confusing, just annoying....and distracting. As a matter of fact, that bottom-of-the-page layout seems to have been a favorite of yours, now that I've located a few STELLARS. Since I can't find the specific example I was looking for I'll have to back down and say I exaggerated -- but I still dislike your layouts and I still think they're distracting. (I recall one article in one fanzine where I had to go back to the contents page to find the author's name, but it's either in a STELLAR I can't locate or in someone else's fanzine.) So your layouts aren't, technically, "confusing"; just distracting.

Taking up points in reverse order; as far as I know, Moorhead is a practicing minister. ## So you might be sterilized as a "sex criminal", so? What's your excuse for wanting to be a father? ## Nobody who publishes Dave English's squiggles is going to be accepted as an art critic around this house. Once in a rare while they have the saving grace of being funny, but damned seldom. ## Grennell will be doing as much stuff for us as I can talk him into (which at the moment doesn't look like much.) He's still thinking about another GRUE, though. RSC/

Now that I'm thru being distracted by Ted (that's what I get for composing on stencil) we go on to:

JERRY PAGE, 193 Battery Pl. NE, Atlanta 7, Georgia - Yandro 100 arrived, and has one point in it which I'd like to clear up. Namely, on page 43, where Bob Farnham says that my father has passed away, it should be Jerry Burge's father. The mix-up is understandable, but I would appreciate having it corrected.

The very best thing in YANDRO #100 is hard to decide upon. I suppose it's a tie between "The Fallen Mighty" and "I Was A Fake Legislator For The N3F". These were fabulous. While the article "National Characteristics Of Censorship" was written in a tone that seemed as stuffy as the title, it is probably next among my favorites, followed by the Artfolio. Then, the departments (your departments always seem to maintain the very same level of "good" with total indifference to what they contain) and the rest of the material which all struck me as more or less indifferent.

Alan Burns, who is, in my humble opinion, one of fandom's best writers, didn't have much of an idea; I can't decide whether he's being facetious or not. Alan Dodd's column was very good.

I suppose I should keep my mouth shut in regards to the various opinions about "Ode", but as its perpetrator, I do feel that I have the right to categorically deny the validity of any criticism which accepts the thing as a poem; whether Ebert's, Willick's, Wanshel's or Jennings'. However, one thing does worry me, and that is why no one has denounced the specific anti-religious references in the thing. Don't you have anyone among your readership who has studied theology?

(And to make one small comment about the Deckinger controversy: Have any of the people who wrote in offended at his story read Graves' "King Jesus"? I know that Mike hasn't.)

About the defense of Palmer in REALM OF FANTASY: I merely want to say that I feel that as a whole fandom is as intolerant as any Ku Klux Klanner I've known, and that this intolerance is registered against Palmer to an offensive degree. I've no objection to attacking an idea that Palmer adheres to, or one that Heinlein or Campbell adheres to. But these personal attacks against them are offensive; and no less your own attacks against Palmer than the various attacks of others. The defense falls back, but I doubt that we rest.

Oh! Has Tucker noticed these two names in movie credits? In "Rat Race", the audio recorder named Hugo Granzback and in "Can Can" the story editor named Bobbie Tucker? Projectionist? Ha!

/Bob Farnham also wrote in to retract his error of the last issue; apologies for misleading our readers and all that. But you must admit that fandom practices a casual intolerance, rather than an active one; personal attacks are restricted to verbal display (except for the rare activities of a Wetzel or the WSFS lawsuits). As far as I'm concerned, Palmer's tasteless and insufferable bragging about his own products leave him no more defense than the most vulgar tv commercial; I object to the hard sell, especially when applied to fiction. RSC/

DEREK NELSON, 18 Granard Blvd, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada - I don't always consider those who agree with me noble, etc. I try never to argue unless I have facts to back a statement and religious arguments are silly for that reason. Thus, though I myself am an agnostic I take exception to people like Fitch and Deckinger who consider that others are silly to believe in God. No one has any right to say what others believe is silly unless they can prove it.

Marlon Zimmer Bradley was really interesting although I disagree with her somewhat. Since I can't prove what I'm saying I'll take her word for it, but to me the French version is the only one that makes sense. Unless spreading knowledge of contraceptives is against the law in England I don't understand its banning. And why would the RC Church have such



control in Italy; sexually it's just as liberal as France and while maybe 20% of the French are church-goers only 10% in Italy are.

Strange, but I've thought of collectives in the same way Alan Burns has but what always stumped me has been how would understanding of the terms be achieved by general readers? It would help segregate stf even more than presently.

I didn't like DeWeese's fiction though it was well-written. Oh, to have been alive during the days of FLYING ACES, WEIRD TALES and most of the rest of the early mags if...if they were as good as reported. Things are always better when you look back on them. Why John Kasper? It wasn't even interesting: though Ebert's poem is better than some of the stuff from F&SF. It was good. Doddering Column and Hensley's article were interesting though I liked Hensley's account in PARSECTION better. On Golden Minutes: I've read Mills' book and Flynn's. The US helped drive Castro into Red arms, admitted, but he didn't have to stay there. Plus there are communists in his government who helped push things along. And the "Cause Of World War III" is not only juvenile, but boring as hell. It took me quite an effort to get through it. Are you sure the Alexandria Quartet is a series? I believed it was more an outlook on one problem, theme, story, whatever you want to call it, from the viewpoint of four different people.

/I was using "series" to mean a set of inter-related books, not necessarily as a sequence of events; sloppy phrasing, maybe. I think the advantage of Mills' books are that they do give the other side of the story; if you can't get an honest middle-of-the-road opinion you can at least read both extremes and arrive at a better balance than if you just read one side. RSC/

VIC RYAN, 2160 Sylvan Rd., Springfield, Illinois - Your Sears Tower might well turn out more pages than any other faaan mimeo; the Iron Maiden has been around longer, but it generally passes in less-active circles, like from Gerding to Jacobs. Perhaps the LASFS Gestetner might surpass your output, by sheer numbers of fen using the beast.

Dr. Dupla, unfortunately, has interpreted the silence of Springfield printed matter into a statement about being cut from the BANE mailing list; quite the contrary -- my bi-monthly fanzine only took five months between issues.

/I think that's something for various neos among the readership to remember; one should allow at least a 6-month wait before becoming anxious about the non-receipt of a fanzine (unless, of course, you discover that others have received it). Very few fan publishers have a really rigid publishing schedule. RSC/

CHARLES WELLS, 679 Wilson Rd. NW, Atlanta, 18, Georgia - I think Marion's article, though well done and interesting, suffered from a basic flaw of reasoning. She cannot logically arrive at the conclusion that in the US the mass-market writer has more freedom than anywhere else if she bases the conclusion on the fact that her own stories are less censored here than elsewhere. For she says herself, "I had...been sufficiently aware of American traditions and taboos to induce the editors to take a chance on a story with a strong sex angle." Naturally, if she is more familiar with American censorship traditions she is going to be more successful in writing a story that won't be cut by an American editor than one that won't be cut by an editor in another country.

It may well be true that American editors censor less; I don't know. But I don't think her experience alone is any good as evidence. I'd be

interested in hearing what writers in other countries have to say about this.

I'd not be surprised to hear that France is hard on political discussion in stories. The degree to which politics is a sensitive subject in France is hard for the average American to understand. America has something the political scientists call a "consensus": most Americans are agreed on a form of government and the ideals it is supposed to promote. They differ, as Nixon inastutely said about Kennedy and himself, on the method. They differ radically. But their differences are minute compared to the differences between Frenchmen. The Communists, the anticlerical anticommunist Left, the Catholic Right, and more recently the Catholic Left are in fundamental and bitter disagreement over the very form of government France should have.

Maybe you and Claude Hall would like modern "abstract" art more if you stopped regarding the works as pictures and started regarding them as paint on canvas, which is what they are intended to be. I like modern art if for no other reason than that it is fun to argue over what a painting looks like when it is not obviously a representation of some particular thing. Besides, why should artists paint pictures of things? Cameras are a lot less trouble.

I just noticed that paragraph contradicts itself. So be it. Only very small-minded men never contradict themselves. /I'm afraid that I look at art from a very personal viewpoint, i.e., "Could I have drawn that?" If, as in the case of Mondrian's linoleum designs and some of the other examples of abstract art, the answer is "yes", then I say it's pretty poor art, because I'm no artist. I have no particular quarrel with surrealism or impressionism or various other schools as long as there is enough drawing ability shown to prove that the artist in question is doing his "modern" work deliberately and not simply because he doesn't have enough talent to draw realistically. RSC/

BETTY KUJAWA, 2819 Caroline, South Bend 14, Ind. - I am begging you to join the Webster Quimmley Society -- for the middle-of-the-roads -- he said on tv we will get a badge or emblem -- redwood on one side, birch on the other, with a tough plastic layer separating them. The membership card will have on its back an "Instant Loyalty Oath" suitable for notarizing which one may whip out and repeat when queried as to one's stand and loyalties -- oh, it's a swingin' gang, I tell you! I wonder how many other fen felt moved to write in to this fine fannish-type fellow -- on tv he looks in his mid 40's and looks and talks much like Walt Kelly. I advocate we all get behind this sterling movement -- its battle cry and slogan is "Sanity and Freedom"! Onward and upward with ol' Webster!

YANDRO 100 was, to coin a brand new phrase, superb! But Buck just can't look rough tough or threatening! There he is on the cover wid gun in hand and looking as benign as a kewpie doll and kinda cuddly like --

The MZB report on the censorship of her works here and overseas was of great interest. Very fascinating to see what country censored what and all.

DeWeese's fiction didn't move me too much -- I still adore him on movie and book reviews and hope he'll do more of them and soon (hint). Gene /Gene Kujawa, not Gene DeWeese/ was enchanted and entertained enormously with the Grennell FLYING ACES article -- he was commenting to himself all over the place when reading it. Wish Dean would do more of this type.

The Joe Hensley thing was a gas! Only in Indiana, eh? Oh brother --

here in Golden Minutes Briney talks of the "Alexandria Quartette"! Oh brother, indeed! Have finished "Justine" -- shall get the others -- must reserve judgement till have digested all four -- as of now am puzzled no end (but enthralled and enchanted and madly in love with the city of Alexandria from reading the book -- same reaction to Hong Kong after reading "Suzie Wong" -- couldn't have cared less about its plot or characters but I LOVED Hong Kong!) All my review mags tell me I must read the entire quartette to grasp what's what -- so far am in a puzzlement. But do like Durrell's writing.

Wish Avram had known my "Smoke Vaticans" was given me by a certain man of the cloth from Notre Dame Univ.

/You do get hold of the damndest things; I'd never heard of the Webster Quimmley Society before. I appreciate the birch and redwood bit, though. ## Gah. Ackerman, upset stomach virus and kewpie dolls -- that's the last time I let anyone publish my picture! RSC/

BILL BOWERS, 3271 Shelhart Road, Barberton, Ohio - Marion Zimmer Bradley's article was very interesting, but having read only "Seven From The Stars" (which I liked), I couldn't comment on the whole article. I'm learning all sorts of things lately. For instance, I never guessed that an editor could just "cut out" sections that didn't please him. I thought, in my simple, trusting way, that the editor would either accept the whole piece, or throw the whole thing out.

"Improved Collectives" was most interesting. I'm not much at grammar (that's what has always short-circuited my desire to be a writer), but I whole-heartedly agree with Alan's idea. I think it would make things a bit more interesting, and I'm waiting to see some of the weirdies that come up. Of course, then we have to convince the pro writers to use our contributions, which might not be too easy a job... "Strangeness of aliens" just doesn't sound right for some reason.. Another thought about planets; how about a "sibling of planets" to designate the planets of a single sun? A "metaling of robots"? What we need is something to take the place of this "system" to show a group of stars. And I think we could find a better name than "spaceship" for these ones that use the space-warp deal; as I understand it, this "other space" isn't really space at all....

"The Day of The Cheese" was to me a delightful satire. I don't know if it was meant to be; but it was to me. Stories which others claim to be satire give no such impression to me; others that I think are satire, no one else agrees. I like my satire to be amusing (I don't like Pohl's work very much), because that is what satire is to me -- poking fun at some aspect of our present society. I don't think there can be such a thing as "serious satire", tho the author might have some purpose behind his humor.

"Grumblings" is becoming very interesting. I don't see why everyone is picking on RAP; so he's a bug on flying saucers and Shaver, so what? I have only two copies of OW, but they convinced me that he was a better editor than any editor today besides Ted Carnell. He knew his readers were sf fans, and he talked to them like he was one too (I imagine he was). But he gave me the impression that he was having a lot of fun; and he wasn't afraid of the competition, he gave them free plugs all the time. Some of these editors today give me the impression they think they are doing us a favor by stooping so low as to edit an sf magazine.

Oh boy! Adkins is my hero. From what I've heard of Campbell, I imagine he must have had quite a shock. Send in a few more fan artists. /Sorry to cut you short, but we're out of room. RSC/