





# YANDRO #191

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This issue dedicated to St. Louis fandom, which probably needs all the egoboo it can get about now. (I told you so....)  
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It is a proud and lonely thing to be right.  
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Man has now proved that there is no intelligent life in the Solar System; none whatsoever.





With luck, some of you should be reading this at the convention. Probably not if you're a subber. (Your copy is back in Hartford City, waiting to be mailed. After the con. Patience.) The luck referred to revolves almost entirely around the ink. Five more stencils are yet to be run, and I'm all out of BDC ink; which means I must revert to the ~~the~~ ink I got from Speed-o-Print. It's supposedly for an M4, and packaged the same. But when I put the first can in the holder and started pumping, I got no ink at all on the stencil... a great deal all over the inside of the ink receptacle, though. Possibly a bad gasket is at fault. Natheless, I must somehow get four cans of Speedoprint to squirt enough ink onto the stencils beyond what

they schmear all over the inside of the ink holder to manage five more stencils.

And here we are at charming St. Louis, heart of America's Heartland, champion of the free, home of the....Cardinals? Etc. Hopefully. That we are here, that is.

One recently, reasonably, croggling item was all the furore in the east immediately after the Moon walk: presumably bad weather plagued the east, and numerous sorts were vehemently blaming it all on the "spaceshot". I knew Easterners were provincial--far more so than Midwesterners, truth be told--but that seemed ridiculous. At the time they were bitching their heads off on radio, tv, and in print about the "constant and unending rain" it was lovely, dry and sunny throughout the Midwest. Still is, unhappily. Those in charge of city water supplies are beginning to eye reservoir gauges uneasily, and the farmers are grouching mightily about the lack of moisture -- but they aren't blaming the baby drought on the Moon walk, at least.

Despite the fact that it's a joke on my current (I think, if they ever come through with that check) publisher, I was much amused by the breaking of the "Penelope Ashe" hoax. It is thoroughly believable, quite apart from the roundrobin conspiracy among certain writers to produce as terrible asensational sex novel as they could manage. I can well believe, for example, that 20,000 copies had already been sold. And I can also believe, bitterly, the putdown that the concoctor of the scheme and his cohorts won't realize much....just a paltry \$4000 apiece. It makes you remember and agree with Ted White's anecdote about the publisher who can rave over the phone that he must have a certain non-sf book even if it takes \$60,000...and then blithely begin negotiating with an sf writer about a \$1500 contract for his book. Sometimes I think we're all in the wrong business, fellows. A bunch of fans and pros should come up with a scheme to write the most terrible Susann-style best seller and fool all sorts of well-paying publishers. Why can't we get some of that gravy?

Sad to say, I doubt the scheme accomplished anything outside of soothing the egos of several writers. The book will continue to sell, undoubtedly, and the publishers will not be in the slightest taken back by the fact that they fell for and bought a manuscript specially calculated to be trash. Money talks, and junk sells.

But if editors were sufficiently fannish, they would know enough to be leery of anything with the name "Penelope" on it. Just screams hoax.

One trend of fandom...fanzine publishing (let's not make the mistake of thinking fan pubbing is all of fandom--even though it is, of course)...which depresses me is the increasing move to electrostencilling. That may sound strange coming from someone who has complained in the past about neo-eds butchering artwork as they trace it, or



don't use artwork if you can't do right by it. Agreed, but now I see editors who have proved in the past that they can do fine tracing converting to electrostencil. Even the neo-eds are starting out that way now and then. It all reminds me of the fmzs of past eras, when there was a very conscious attempt on the part of many faneditors to make their fanzines look as professional as possible. Some included blurbs on covers, prices, big name contributors...I've been guilty of those myself...and in general were frantic to make fanzines look like junior grade Astoundings or TWSs. The products are and were often impeccable, and a bit deadening. Even when the material is interesting, you find yourself turning back to the cover or contents page and asking, "Now just which zine is this I'm reading?" And you shouldn't ought to have to do that, no sir. Each fanzine should have its distinctive flavor, personality, if you like. Variety is the spice of fandom. Let's keep our individuality, kids.

That's not to say everything should look like a crudzine (though crudzines have a hal-  
lowed place, certainly, as entertainment of sorts--when they're excruciatingly bad--  
and for keeping any urge to generalize glowingly on the glories of fanpubbing or fan-  
nish perfection firmly in proper perspective). But I hope we don't move much further  
along these converging tracks toward impeccably beautiful and seemingly identical fan-  
zines. I like to associate fanzines with the people behind them, and that's occasion-  
ally difficult any more.

I'll do my bit to avoid the impeccable tag, certainly. Please forgive any light spots  
in this issue and kindly think of them as a Yandro liet motif. I was nursing the ink  
like mad (for previously explained reasons) and I overdid it now and then.

A note to illustrators and logoists...I have a fair backlog on fillos, though not  
covers, but I have used most of my logos. I'm reusing some. Logos for "Strange  
Fruit", "Golden Minutes", "Grumblings" and ones saying simply "Yandro" are welcome in  
modest amounts. Please don't make them overwhelmingly large; I like lots of artwork  
and white space, but Buck pays the bills and he says we cram as much wordage as pos-  
sible into the smallest amount of space. And pleasepleaseplease put your name on any-  
thing you send in, illo or logo. It doesn't have to be a great big inky signature  
that defaces your beautiful masterpiece...but please pencil somewhere on the drawing  
or lettering your full name. I have this great big hairy box full of lots and lots  
of illos, and if something doesn't have a name on it, I tend to cry a great deal, and  
get everything all wet. And some of you use waterbase inks, and then we have a ter-  
rible mess. Hoping you are not the same....

JWC

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## A COLUMN

by Bruce Coulson

This is entirely for newcomers. Past history of the columns:

<u>Yandro</u> #155	first column
<u>Yandro</u> #160	second "
<u>Yandro</u> #163	third "
<u>Yandro</u> #175	fourth "
<u>Yandro</u> #179	fifth "
<u>Yandro</u> #182	sixth "
<u>Yandro</u> #186	seventh "



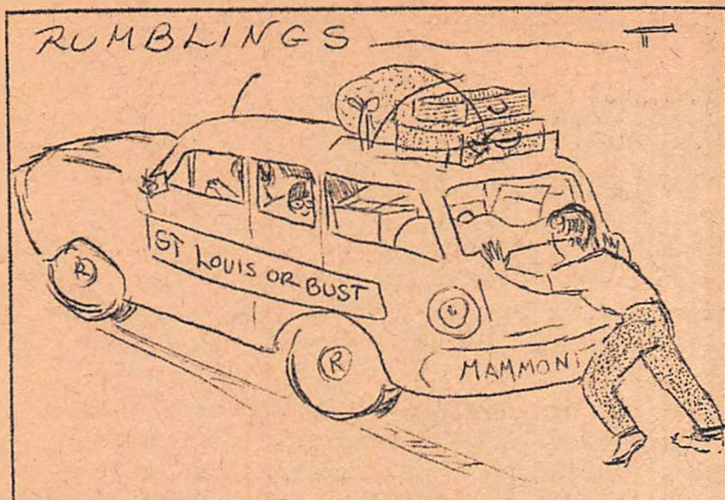
I've just got done with THE FOUNDATION TRILOGY and  
though I like it, I think Mr. Asimov could have made  
it a tetralogy.

I think Frank Edwards is trying to be Robert  
Ripley! His STRANGE PEOPLE is quite a bit like Rip-  
ley's BELIEVE IT OR NOT BOOKS.

Well, see you at the convention!

BEC





Seems like old times, dashing to get an issue out before the Worldcon. Actually two issues. We mailed issue #190 on Aug 25, and today is Aug. 26. The delay on #190 was due to the fact that I ordered 1000 envelopes from an Illinois firm, the envelopes were shipped from a Chicago suburb on July 28 and arrived in Hartford City, approximately 200 miles away, on August 25. In the meantime I had finally given up waiting for them and ordered another 1000 from the Ft. Wayne outfit we get our paper from. The replacements cost twice as much, but arrived 5 days after I mailed the letter. In the future, I'll try to

allow for longer travel time on shipments. Anyway, the last-minute rush is the reason the fanzine reviews are scattered throughout the issue. I didn't have time to look up filler items for each of those "holes"; neither did I have time to review all fanzines received. The remainder will get in next issue. Those of you who get this issue at the Worldcon (assuming that all goes well and some of you do get copies there) will have advance copies; we won't mail the remainder out to subscribers until we get back.

Saw "Charly" at the local theater the other night (along with a total of 6 or so other people). A great show. Hard to compare it to something as completely different as "2001", but while the acting in "Charly" is incomparably better, I don't think the overall effect is quite as great. Fine movie, though. I even persuaded a coworker to see it, and he enjoyed it - and he wouldn't read science fiction if you forced it on him. Actually, during hay fever season I do a "Charly" almost every day. I wake up dull, listless, uncoordinated, and not very bright. Then I take a hay fever capsule, and in half an hour ~~I am~~ I am brilliant, sparkling, witty and so on. Then about the middle of the afternoon the effects start to wear off and I go back to being dull, uncoordinated, and the rest. (Actually, these pills, unlike most drugs, really do increase my mental capacity somewhat. Or at least, at one time I was able to beat Gene DeWeese in chess if I was taking the pills, and couldn't beat him otherwise, and I don't recall any similar claims made for the "mind-expanding" drugs. Currently Gene has improved to the point where he beats me no matter what I do, but I still give him a better game during hay fever season.)

In the past I have made some remarks about Hartford City being a small town. I just saw the ultimate example of it when I drove home after work tonight. As I drove past the municipal airport, I saw a group of men cutting hay on the premises.

The souvenir industry has already begun to capitalize on the moon landing. There will be the usual cheap gimmicks, but in the mail the other day came an offer of something different. This is a series of 21 medals, each about the size of a half-dollar. (Anyone remember half-dollars?) These cover the history of US spaceflight, from "America's First Man In Space" in Freedom 7 through the Apollo 11 flight. They are made in three different series: bronze at \$3 apiece or \$63 for the set, silver at \$12 apiece or \$252 for the set, and platinum at \$1000 apiece or \$21,000 for the set. Any rich fans in the crowd?

Since I used up the space for fillers by doing fanzine reviews, I hereby include a few fillers in the editorial, thus giving me a chance to avoid thinking. NATIONAL WILDLIFE reports that the Food and Drug Administration has seized 10 tons of coho salmon from Lake Michigan because they contained 3 times the maximum permissible allowance of DDT. (And I bet you didn't see that in America's mighty newspapers; I certainly didn't.) This is causing considerable hassle, because today, how many years after DDT was first produced in quantity, nobody knows what a safe tolerance level is. The one we have was set arbitrarily; not one person knows whether it is too



high or too low. It is known that DDT is harmful to humans; how harmful is guesswork. And if it should prove that the current legal levels are too low or about right, you can write off the Lake Michigan fishing industry. This country doesn't need to worry about Russian ballistic missiles; if they do land there won't be anyone around to watch them. Juanita may have mentioned in YANDRO a report on a new pesticide given by the Ft. Wayne agricultural radio program; there have been cases of dogs walking through a field after it had been sprayed and dropping dead.

From UNDERGROUND, via ATLAS: German high school students were asked to predict life in 1984. The predictions included a three-day work week and consequent boredom, divorce by computer (like a super vending machine), legalized marijuana (presumably to combat the aforementioned boredom; sounds like someone has been reading Mack Reynolds), government prizes awarded childless couples, long-distance phone calls cheap but rationed due to demand, and an outbreak of plague in Boston. (Why Boston, I wonder? What does Boston mean to teen-age Germans?) Used to be, very rarely someone would make a series of cautious predictions of the future in a mass circulation magazine, and be greeted with utter disbelief. Science fiction is finally becoming accepted by the masses (and all the fans who talked so much about how wonderful it would be if only this would happen are now filling fanzines with complaints about the degeneration of the field).

I notice another rash of complaints in fanzines from young fans, saying that the fan establishment is discriminating against them. This is nonsense, but it seems to affect a good proportion of new fans. Generally these are kids who think that a liking for science fiction is the only badge of acceptance needed in any fan group. It doesn't work that way, in fandom or anywhere else. Fandom is not a monolithic body; it is semi-organized anarchy where people are friendly with those they like. The question isn't, "do you like science fiction?"; that's assumed. The question is, "what else are you interested in? what kind of science fiction do you like? how's your sense of humor? are you capable of carrying on an intelligent conversation?" There are no questions about your age; fandom is the one place where everyone is accepted equally, without reference to age. But this has its drawbacks; if you want to be accepted as an equal, you have to act as one. In daily life, older people tend to patronize the young, look down on them somewhat, and make excuses for them. None of this applies in fandom (it may apply to certain individual fans, but they are not the norm). The objections seem to come from young fans who want to be equal but still have excuses made for them when they foul up. Sorry, kids; in here you are equal, and if you make an ass of yourself you'll get called on it just as quick as anyone else would. At the Midwestcon one night I sat on one of Couch's couches (actually it was a bed, but I couldn't resist that) and talked to Doug Lovenstein for an hour or so. Perfectly enjoyable - to me, at least. (Doug didn't say.) And, of course, Doug isn't likely to make idiotic statements - but if he did, I wouldn't make excuses because I'm 41 and he's 15. (And of course I've had young fans catch me in lapses of intelligence on occasion, but that's irrelevant because I'm not the one complaining about it.) There is also the fact that fans tend to gather into groups of individuals with similar likes and dislikes, and it may take a newcomer some time to locate a group he fits in with - but one exists, I assure you. "Name" fans are not one big conspiracy. (For example, I get along with Ted White well enough, but we are more likely to talk and correspond with newcomers of our respective types than we are to each other.) If you feel left out of things, it's not because there are fannish cliques conspiring against you; it's because you haven't yet found the particular clique that you will fit into. Keep trying, and you will, unless you're totally obnoxious (we have some of those in fandom, too).

I wonder what a psychologist would make of the fact that all of my close friends are from 5 to 20 or so years younger than I am? Fear of losing my youth, probably. (But then, when I was young I got along better with adults. I have never been particularly happy with - or interested in - my alleged "peer group".) I never liked the "typical" teenager even when I was one (luckily, fan teenagers are seldom "typical"), but I fit in better with the "young adult" category than with the slightly ossified middle-agers. (Or at least, I like to think I do....) And that's it for now; maybe next issue we'll have a con report.

RSC



# DIFUGALITY

column by  
dave locke

## EVOLUTION OF THE CRYSTAL BALL

As each new generation shouts disbelief at the dogmatic assertions and accepted phenomena of the last, precepts change and established institutions are compromised in order to draw in the faith of the new crowd. Anyone who has even cursorily studied the history of churches has understood the evolution necessary so that they maintain their congregations as Man becomes broader-minded and society climbs out of the darkness. As society changes, institutions must be modified or replaced altogether. It's the result of an increasing degree of enlightenment, and this is obviously as it should be.

But some of the bastards are clever.

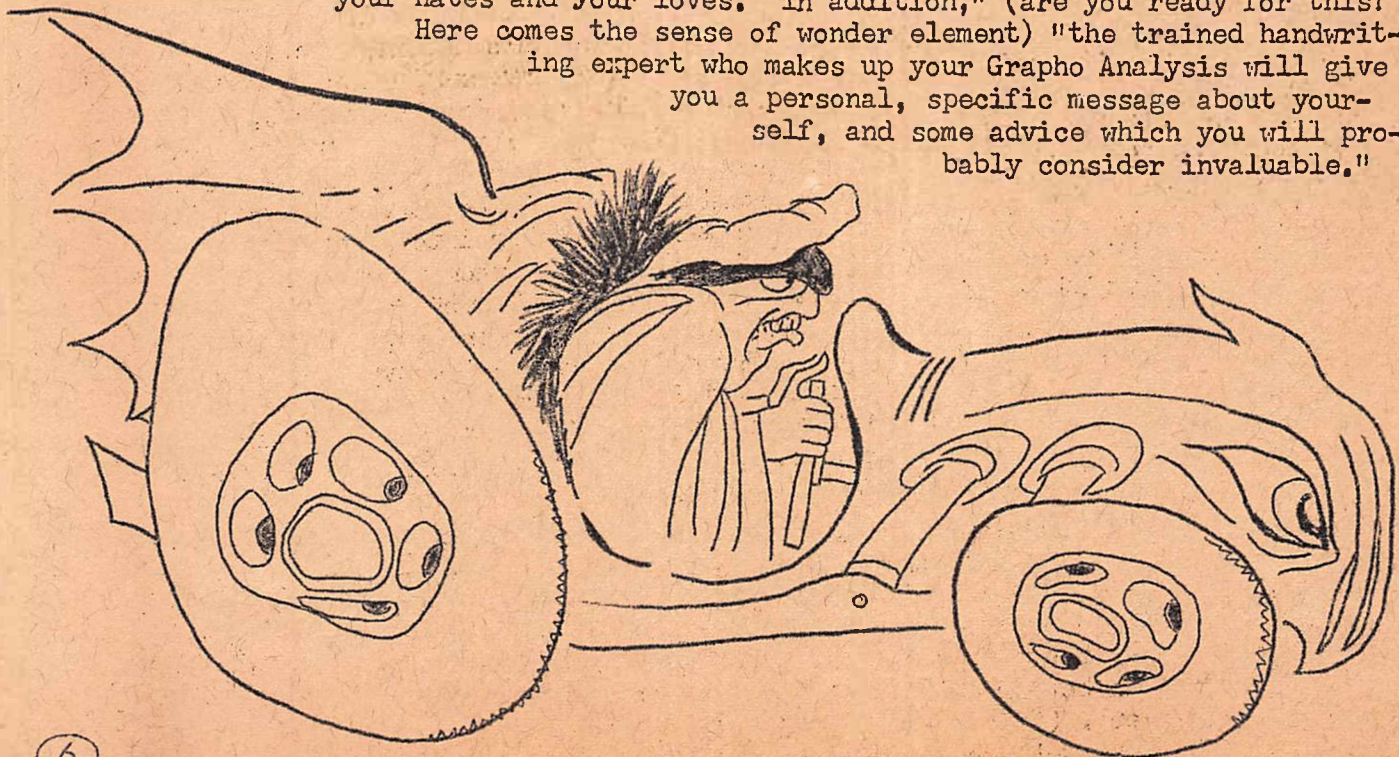
Take astrology, the reading of tea-leaves, the murky divulgements of the crystal ball, the reading of palms, and the astonishing disclosures that can be had from a deck of cards. Please.

I've seen all of these done, and could admonish them all, but with the exception of astrology they're all passe. And there's a newer game in town, friends, and it isn't content to suck money from the unwary individual. The big money is to be had from the organizations, and the organizations are to be had by the grapho analysts.

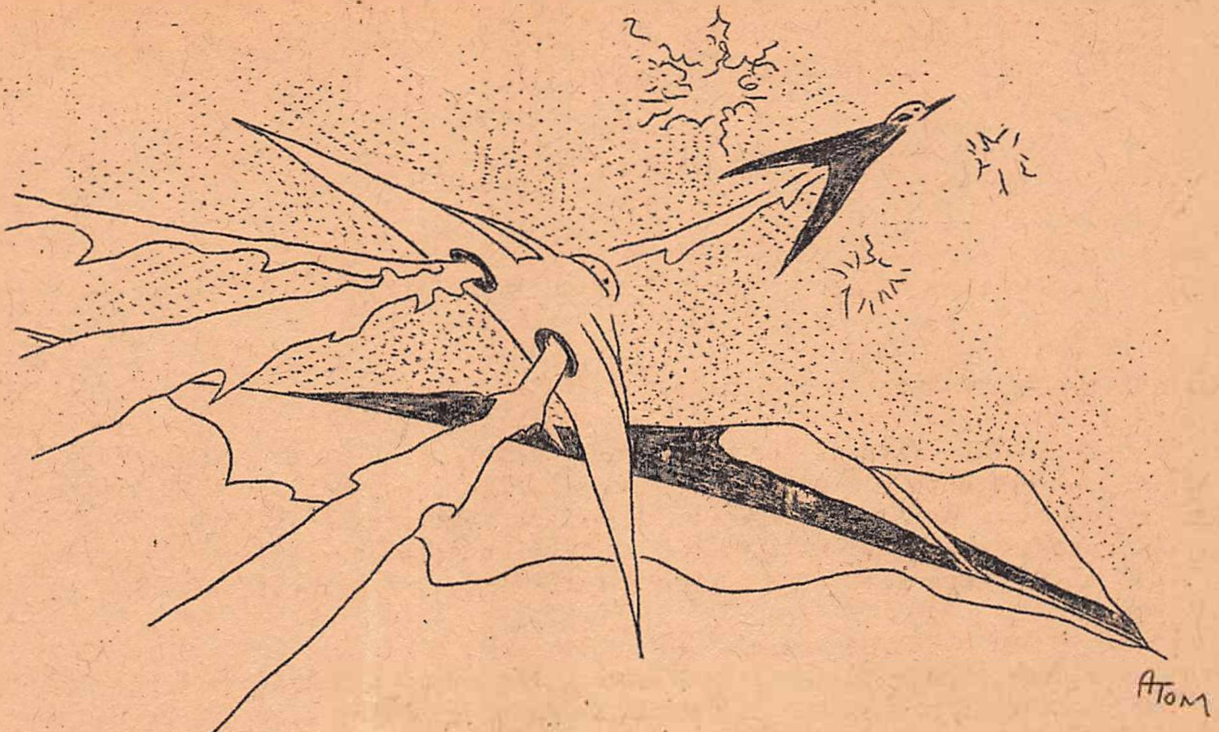
You've probably all heard of Graphology. Handwriting analysis, Grapho analysts tell us that grapho analysis is not to be confused with "outdated" graphology. They tell us that graphology is inaccurate; that is, partly guesswork, and partly fraud. Graphoanalysis, according to its experts, is far superior. I'll have to agree with them.

As a fraud it tromps all over graphology.

"This scientific study of your handwriting will hit the highlights of your character and emotional foundation--will reveal how you think, how you react, your hates and Your loves. In addition," (are you ready for this? Here comes the sense of wonder element) "the trained handwriting expert who makes up your Grapho Analysis will give you a personal, specific message about yourself, and some advice which you will probably consider invaluable."







All quotes used in this article will come from **HANDWRITING ANALYSIS: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF READING CHARACTER BY GRAPHO ANALYSIS**, written by M.N. Bunker. I pick this particular book to quote from because Bunker was the founder of the 'science' of grapho analysis, and also because of the hilarity of the book itself (I wouldn't have dreamed of using any other book; my luck in discovering this one was too good to be true).

I ran across graphology a good many years ago. It was lying amongst the tea leaves and shards of crystal balls, and although it lacked the color and mystique of its older companions it managed to lie fully as well as either of them. But it couldn't last. It was too hokey, and modern hoke lacks the appeal of ancient hoke. Not initiating for itself a good campaign to establish scientific respectability among the great unwashed minds of this world, graphology fell by the wayside.

But grapho analysis learned from the mistakes of graphology, and did indeed set itself up as a 'science'.

A useful tool in detecting forgery and in linking two separate samples of the same person's handwriting, grapho analysis unquestionably has merit. That it can perform an exercise upon the body of your longhand and bare your soul to public display is something else again. And we all know what.

Grapho analysis was based on the idea that individual characteristics shared by groups of people could be directly traced to handwriting characteristics which were shared, to one degree or another, by these people. Over the years writing characteristics were matched with human traits, and a 'dictionary' was developed. The dictionary is 102% black and white; i.e., if you cross your 't' with a downward slant, arrow-like (the top half of the cross-bar being broader than the bottom half, which is more nearly pointed) this indicates that you are domineering.

However, the analysis of a trait can't be considered 100% accurate when applied to everybody, and thus we are revealed two great and wonderful cop-outs. Two genuine grabbers.

You see, each personality trait, as deduced by a particular quirk of your handwriting, is modified by the other quirk-induced traits. This is offset by that, and the aggregate of this belies the enormity of that, and so on.

Thus, by the juggling of apples and oranges, an analysis is performed. And we find that grapho analysis shares the true beauty of astrology, which is that no two experts have to agree. ("No, I think you're wrong. The high degree of egotism exemplified by the large capital letters is tempered to become a moderate degree of pride due to the juxtaposition of Mars and Jupiter with Aquarius.")



The second cop-out is another gem of the first water. An employer, whose firm retains a grapho analyst to screen the handwriting of applicants, may become curious about a seemingly inaccurate analysis and follow up on it. Whereupon he is usually told that the particular trait, which has not as yet manifested itself, is perhaps latent, and being held in check. Or it may not be revealed in the course of a work day, but fully apparent in the person's after-hours conduct. Or maybe it's only a trait the person wishes he had, because if he feels that strongly about possessing it then the trait will show regardless of whether he has it or not. And so on, and on.

Beautiful, Remarkably beautiful.

"...which brings us down to how grapho analysis saved one of the early student's life. This particular lady was charming, highly educated, and a steadfast church worker. She headed committees, entertained the pastor at teas, worked on committees under his directions. She was, if you wish to use a Biblical phrase, 'full of good works.'

"Then the long time pastor was compelled to take a long vacation. A new man came to town, and the good church worker took him into her home, her husband exerted himself to support his wife's efforts to make the stranger feel at home. The man was popular, good looking, conducted himself well. Everyone liked him.

"Then he wrote a note about a committee to the grapho analyst. That night she told her husband, "He can't come in this house again. I'm going to see my sister out of the state while this man is here." She fulfilled her intention, and it was another church member who was raped and strangled. That charming fellow was a sex driven man with good clothes, a fine vocabulary, and graciousness, who was ready to turn into a sex demon when he was refused what he demanded."

I first encountered grapho analysis when I applied for the job I'm currently holding, at bay. Your application went in the trash can if you didn't fill it out in longhand. And you're not hired if the handwriting analysis is not favorable.

Naturally, this got me interested. Did grapho analysis arise from the ashes of graphology, or was there something great and wonderful on the scene that I should know about? So I picked up this book you've been reading portions of, and read it, and studied it.

The president of the company I work for also believes in astrology.

"When you look at the handwriting you do not try to determine the sex of the writer, because you cannot."

Of course not. Grapho analysis only reveals "...how you think, how you react, your hates and your loves". We cannot expect too much.

The book itself is a rare find. At the end of each chapter you're given handwriting samples and asked multiple choice questions concerning the character of the person who wrote them. An introduction to one of the handwriting specimens states: "Study the 'n's' in these two lines and answer the following questions." The two lines of handwriting read thusly: "Beautiful birthday gift of flowers. I,".

Honest.

All the key personnel hired by the company I work for are screened by a professional grapho analyst. Others--clerks, warehouse workers, peons--have their applications glanced at by one of our first-level managers. This gentleman learned grapho analysis through a correspondence course. How else?

As if reading character just by reading your longhand wasn't bad enough, let me now bring out something that will really strike your sense of wonder.

"Only a professional grapho analyst can guide you in making some of the more complicated changes, but **YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR CHARACTER** by changing your writing."

Got that?

"Do not try to change your entire writing with any idea of changing your character traits all at once. If you suddenly change your writing...all at one time in order to speed up your thinking ability, strengthen your purpose and build enthusiasm, and also become more determined you may easily be headed for a psychiatric ward."

This, of course, is followed by a pitch to go and see your trained grapho analyst if you desire professional aid in ridding you of your character flaws and mental disabilities. After all, why should they tell you how to do all this at home? You're not going to get anything out of it either way, so why shouldn't they make something



out of it while you're wasting your time?

The author of this book says he practiced what he preaches. It appears that Mr. Bunker (who is now deceased, and I almost feel sorry for bothering him this way) was at one time enormously self conscious and under the burden of a heavy sense of inferiority. However, with his discovery of grapho analysis also came the revelation that personality could be changed, and naturally he decided to use it to cure his own problems.

And so he did. Or so he says. And so we see, within his book, lines such as these.

"You may be one of those readers who dislikes most heartily to take part in a conversation where one person keeps saying I, I until he wears out the pronoun. If you are we have something in common from the start, but no matter how I have tried to find a way to get away from this abominable I, it seems there is no way."

And a little further along: "However, you will not have to endure any more I's than absolutely necessary to give you the freedom and protection that came to me personally as a result of understanding what handwriting reveals."

And yet further along: "It is not an easy task" (writing his book) "and as I write it there is always the need to omit the pronoun I."

But anyway, I've studied grapho analysis and I now hold the key to the brain of anyone who lets a stray piece of their handwriting fall beneath my analytical eyes. You can even disguise your handwriting, and I won't be fooled.

Except by Dean Grennell, the man with 36 personalities (at last count).

"My god," I said to Dean, who was sitting in my living room drinking something uncouth, "you have no imagination. Can you imagine that? Well, no, I guess you can't. But you don't."

"I don't?" he croggled.

"Of course not. You have no inflated lower loops."

"I see," he saw. "Should I stop in at a garage and have something done about that?"

"Immediately."

The next time I saw Dean Grennell was over at his place, where he and Art Wilson and I were sitting around the dining room table, glomming. Dean had transported a bottle of Margaritas from his freezer to the center of the table, and we were waiting for it to thaw. While we were waiting, Dean was dashing off handwriting specimens for me to analyze.

"My god," I said to Dean, who was sitting in his dining room looking at something uncouth melting, "this shows that you have truckloads of imagination, and that you're all kinds of extrovert."

"Ummm." He whipped off another specimen.

"Good heavens," I said to Dean, who was working on another handwriting sample, "this could have been written by God Himself. Just look at the pure force and wonderfulness of it,"

"Ummm."

"Well, this one is obviously the handwriting of a sex maniac. A dangerous person, definitely."

"I resent that, Dave Locke."

"This one here is the personality of an extremely self-conscious man. Extremely self-conscious."

"I resent that Dave Locke."

"And here we have another sex maniac, only he's the type I wouldn't hire to babysit for my son."

"I resent that, Dave Locke," he said, rising from his chair and standing over me in a menacing way. Then he sat down and whipped off another sample.

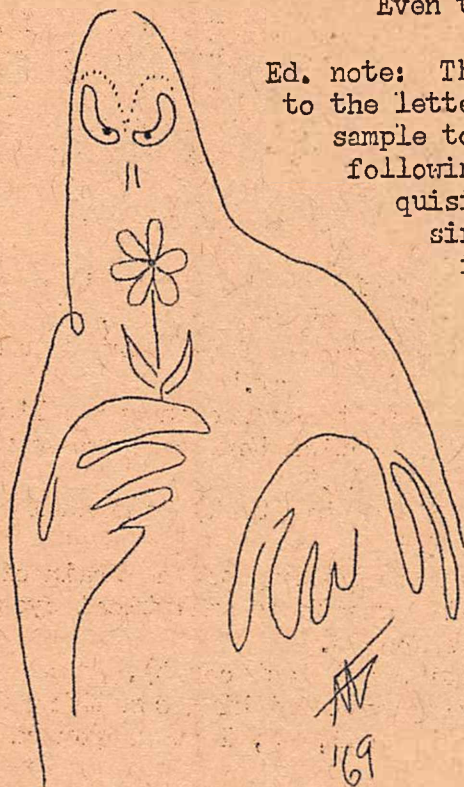
"This fellow is an extremely relaxed type of individual. No worries. He has an enormous inferiority complex, but he doesn't worry about it. He knows he's inferior."

And by then the bottle of Margaritas was partially melted. We didn't use ice.

And we all toasted the march of progress. The big push into outer space. The great discoveries in medicine. Dean Grennell's new personalities. The changes in society. Well, some of the changes in society. Such a hell of a number of things



being opened up, expanded, explored, developed, and updated.  
Even the crystal ball.



Ed. note: The author was so careless as to handwrite a postscript to the letter accompanying his column. Naturally, we took this sample to our local friendly grapho analyst and received the following information: Mr. Locke's handwriting exhibits acquisitiveness and tenacity, possibly that of a student desirous of knowledge and capable of hanging onto it. (Or it could apply to other things.) Mr. Locke is also proud--or possibly vain--and tends to suppress his emotions. He is sensual but also conservative (which I consider a neat trick). At the same time, he has a lack of long-range ambition and vision. His accomplishments will more likely be short-term projects (such as writing fanzine columns, presumably). He tends to be a somewhat caustic type. For what it's worth the analyst does not know Dave and did not see the article; just the letter. Does this accurately describe Dave? I don't know; how about it, out there in Smog Harbor?

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Unhappiness is a can of watery ink...

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#### STRANGE FRUIT

by RSC

HOW TO SURVIVE COMICS FANDOM (Don & Maggie Thompson, 8786 Hendricks Road, Mentor, Ohio 44060 - one-shot - 20¢) Ten pages of vital information for new comics fans. Similar to NEO-FAN'S GUIDE, but with less emphasis on history (comics fans have less history to emphasize) and more on the social amenities (because comics fans need this type of instruction more). Well, not really; in fact, the advice is quite applicable to stf fandom as well, and young science fiction fans might well find this useful. (And I've known a few who could have benefitted from it.) Rating.....9

LOCUS #33, 34, 35 (Charlie and Marsha Brown, 2078 Anthony Ave, Bronx, New York 10457 - biweekly - 6 for \$1.00) This is fandom's prime news mag, but I detect traces of weakening. In addition to news they're beginning to tack on columnists, fanzine reviews, ads and in #35 the editors promise a letter column and book reviews in coming months. (I predict LOCUS will become a genzine by 1970, cop the fanzine Hugo in 1970, and fold in early 1971 due to overwork of the editors.) But right now it's an excellent fan news mag, and if fan news seems overly full of convention notices and lists of apa mailings, that's not the fault of the editors. Rating.... 7

OSFAN #50 (Hank Luttrell, 1016 Van Loon, Ballwin, Missouri 63011 - monthly - \$2 per year) Your money also gets you a non-attending membership in the St. Louis club. More convention notes, though there is also some legitimate news, fanzine reviews, and a short history of St. Louis fandom. Rating....6

UCHUJIN #135 (Takumi Shibano, 1-14-10 O-okayama, Meguro-ku, Tokyo, Japan - monthly - price undecipherable) This is a neat, printed, digest-size fanzine, written in Japanese. Recent issues have included a short summary in English for anyone who wants to know what it's all about. This issue has numerous photos of the Baycon, and presumably a report on it. I see that attendance at Japanese cons has been running from 150 to 400; Toyko in '72, anyone?



# THE DEPTHS OF CRITICISM DEPARTMENT

CORMORANT THE VOLUMINOUS:

or,

HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE NORTHERN BARBARIAN

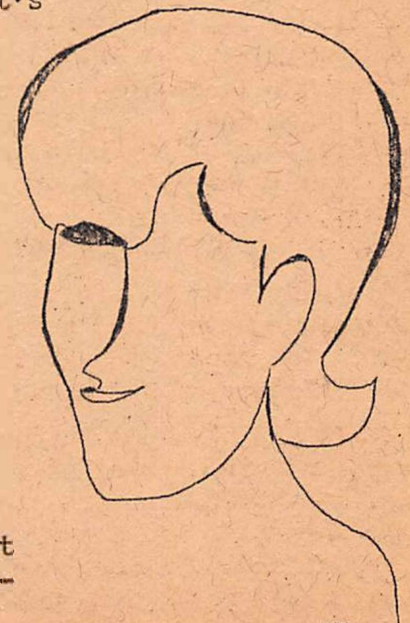
Book Review: Cormorant the Spurious by Roger E. Howdah, J. Wellington Wells, and John Carter (Lamprey Books, 1969). This attractive paperback is the seventeenth volume released by Lamprey Books in its "Cormorant the Boobarian" sword and sorcery series, and hence the eleventh chronologically (work it out). The price goes up to \$1.25 with this one, since there are only eight more volumes to go and buyers are too deeply in hock by now to fail to complete their sets.

The present offering includes seven stories, only four of which are straight pastiche by Wells and Carter: "Black Bloodshed," "Bloodstained Blackness," "Dead Black Shadows in the Moon," and "The Bloody Black Hand of Shadowy Death." The other three were all completed by Wells or Carter or both from material discovered among Howdah's personal papers, making this one of the most authentic of the Lamprey Books since King Krud. "Beyond the Black Pit of Shadows" is based on an actual Cormorant fragment consisting of two sentences, the first word ("The") of a third, and a rough draft for the remainder of that paragraph. It makes for a thrilling short novel. "Shadows of Bloody Death" is expanded from a fifth-grade theme by Howdah, "What I Did on My Vacation." What the young Howdah apparently did on his vacation was to exterminate an ancient cult of devil worshippers operating out of Hot Cross Buns, Texas.

The seventh story, "Deadly Black Shadowy Shadows of Black Death," is based on a valentine Howdah once contemplated sending to one Miss Elspeth Goodpasture, who appears thinly disguised in the plot as Lustrena, Naked Queen-Priestess of the Virgin Witch-Goddess. (In a sense the origin is unassimilated; to note just one example, it seems rather improbable that Cormorant manages to lure into his bed the Naked Queen-Priestess by reciting to her "Roses are red..." Still, it's nice to have all the authentic Howdah material in print.)

For the chronologically minded, this book follows Cormorant the Sullen, in which the Northerner visits the black kingdoms of the south (the magazine title was "Cormorant the Carpetbagger"), then, tiring of such life, takes over the leadership in Tyrann of his old Free Company, which is soon wiped out in a massive raid by King Yngvi. In this one, Cormorant wanders through the Hypodermic Kingdoms as a mercenary, soldier of fortune, and encyclopedia salesman, then, tiring of such life, takes over the leadership in Tyrann of his old Free Company, which is soon wiped out in a massive raid by King Yngvi. (In the next book, Cormorant the Corpulent, the aging hero finally becomes King of Aquavelva, then, tiring of such life, tries to take over the leadership in Tyrann of his old Free Company, which holds a Board of Directors Meeting and votes him out as the sort of jinx they can do without--see the long novelette, "Cormorant and the Proxy Fight.")

As early late middle middle Cormorant stories go, these



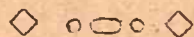


are at least average, and many are even readable. Our hero has come a long way from his early days in Zither as a fourteen-year-old rakehell and thief, specializing in jewels and hubcaps (see the forthcoming twenty-second and nineteenth volumes, first and second chronologically, Cormorant the Lout and Cormorant the Teeny-Bopper.)

Those who are keeping score will be happy to learn that Cormorant beds seven maidens and eleven Women of the World in this one, bettering his previous record for a single volume by two. (Cormorant the Insatiable still holds a slight edge in the maidens-only division with eight, not counting the doubtful case of Gazelda the Glib, Witch-Priestess of the Naked Goddess.) His kill ratio is down, however: fourteen soulless priests, eleven wicked sorcerors, twenty-four gibbering Things, and seven innocent bystanders are the only ones worth noting separately from the one hundred and fifty-seven mercenaries and savages wiped out in passing. (Five civilizations are also destroyed, three of which had survived unnoticed for an average of 7,413 years each before Cormorant happened to discover them while wandering off into the bushes of his camp seeking the latrine.)

Cormorant the Spurious marks a serious disappointment in one area, however, being the first volume in which the Cinnamonian does not kill a man-eating gorilla with his bare hands. The scene in "Bloodstained Blackness" in which he Indian wrestles with a chimpanzee just isn't the same, somehow.....

- Dennis Lien



### BIG JACK BALLOON

BIG JACK BALLOON by Norman Sinner. Published by Avon Books (.95) and Walker Press (\$5.95).

This new novel, by a popular favorite, has been awaited with the keen anticipation that was present in the announcement that GONE WITH THE WIND would be filmed. GONE WITH THE WIND it is not, but in its own right BIG JACK BALLOON is a lusty, significant, impressive book that belongs in the collection of every serious reader of science fiction.

Mr. Sinner's credentials clearly establish him as one of the few living writers who could properly create this intricate and complex novel, doing justice to the diverse elements of its tangled but not confused plotline. Currently making his home in a remodeled ghetto outside the city limits of Hollywood, California, Norman Sinner is deeply involved with the communication and entertainment media, most specifically the potent fields of television and motion pictures. In addition to having written several others books of mixed commercial success, Norman Sinner has created nearly a hundred televised commercials for detergents, cigarettes, toilet paper, and breakfast cereals. A firm believer in individualistic rights and responsibilities, or to put it in the vernacular, "doing your own thing," Mr. Sinner's cereal commercials are noted for their gutsy, uncompromising social awareness. He has expertly transferred this quality to BIG JACK BALLOON with such assured skill that no reader can finish this novel without being profoundly moved.

Among other things, BIG JACK BALLOON tells of a Presidential race fought with the assistance of the ultimate television interview show, race relations, immortality, body-freezing, and sex in the very near future. Jack Balloon is the moderator of a vicious interview show that carefully scrutinizes the vital issues affecting the citizens of that day. He is an amoral, ruthless, aggressive public figure, intent upon imposing his formidable character upon controversial figures in order to elicit responses to personal and intimate questions. Opposing him is Benedict Howards, operator of a mysterious body-freezing foundation, who is determined to push favorable legislation through Congress before Jack Balloon is able to probe his operations too closely. Howards is as ruthless and savage as Jack Balloon, and pitted against him via the television screen, he fights fiercely and bitterly to maintain his hold on his body-freezing foundation. During the prolonged debate, Howards responds with unexpected antagonism which leads Balloon into uncovering a hideous secret that Howards is concealing.



The writing alternates between sharp, crisp dialogue exchanges and long, bleak stream-of-consciousness reflections. Norman Sinner has a trained ear for setting down plausible dialogue, as in this conversation between Balloon and Howards, delivered before the television arena:

"Howards ruefully eyed Balloon comfortably seated across the room from him. He nervously tugged at his left ear lobe, which was 3/8 of an inch lower than the right one, and pondered how to express his extreme displeasure over the verbal grilling he was receiving. It would have to be a subtle jab, delivered to the pit of a stomach like a well placed kick, which would not be revealed to the millions of viewers.

'You know something Jack baby,' good that's the way he wanted it to sound, pleasant, neat, conversational, real buddy-buddy, 'Jack baby, if you really try hard enough, you can be pretty snappy...pain the ass.' Bingo, ha, look at the bastard squirm, really puts Mr. Bigmouth in his place.

Jack Balloon studied Howards closely as he exhaled. The sudden puncturing thrust was not unexpected; he sensed it was coming. It was just like Howards to try and crucify him before a bloodthirsty audience that didn't care who won as long as a little blood was spilled." ....

The conflict between the two men exists throughout the entire length of the book, alternating between flashing exchanges of wit, like the one just quoted, to more lethal physical combat that nearly proves fatal for Jack.

Norman Sinner has correctly assessed that sex is absent too frequently from contemporary science fiction. (In a recent interview, Mr. Sinner remarked that Otis Adelbert Kline would be more widely read today if he had just packed some honest screwing into his stories.) In order to correct this cumulative omission, Norman Sinner has given Jack Balloon a thoroughly plausible and explicit relationship with a devoted mistress, a possessive mother, and a prostitute with a heart of gold. He believes in complete candor, concealing nothing, and utilizes so-called obscene words, as well as racy descriptions to modify Balloon's frenzied sexual character.

In an early sequence, Jack Balloon suffers an intimate experience with a shameless tramp; Norman Sinner describes this potentially unwholesome incident with uncommon delicacy and sensitivity:

" 'Give it to me Baby, c'mon now...just sock it to me...' Balloon mumbled through gritted teeth, 'c'mon sweets, you know what I like.' He continued his incoherent moaning as he futilely tugged at Esmeralda's hob-nailed boots. Reduced to the pitiful state of an obsessed animal, his desires were focussed upon the girl who haughtily teased him by swaying her luscious body before his bleary eyes.

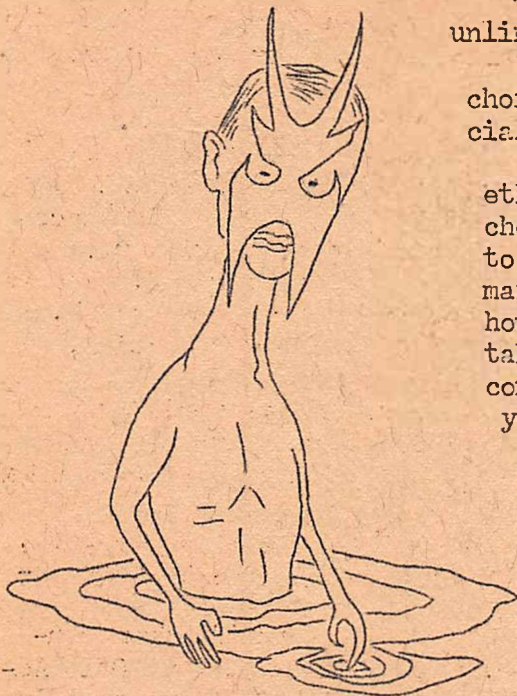
'That's it baby...so good, so good...', he suddenly clutched her shoulder, bent her face towards him, licked dry lips, 'please, please be gentle.' In answer she smiled enigmatically and continued to massage the bottom of his left big toe with a dried orange rind.

Then as passion smoldered within him like a corked volcano he grasped her \*\*\*\*\* and proceeded to \*\*\*\*\* while at the same time he also \*\*\*\*\* her \*\*\*\*\*."

This is a small example of Norman Spinner's honest attempt at portraying vigorous human sexuality, familiar in some degree to every reader. Sex has never been treated better in the science fiction genre and even the more accomplished mainstream publishers (i.e., Grove, Evergreen, Essex House, Brandon House) would be hard put to match BIG JACK BALLOON's total lack of sensationalism and pronounced fidelity toward relating understandable emotions.

But BIG JACK BALLOON is concerned with other topics; disquieting political trends are examined closely. Jack Balloon's closest friend is the Negro governor of the state of Mississippi. In an unexpected move, he discovers he has been nominated for the Presidency of the United States by his party. Shaken by the news, uncertain as to his qualifications, awed by the tremendous work involved should he win, he seeks out Jack Balloon at a clandestine location, and together they discuss this disturbing possibility. Marshall, the governor, is a capable but humble man, lacking the power to unify the country. Jack Balloon is more realistic, he understands how voters are motivated. In a slashing brilliant passage, Norman Sinner exposes the ever-present racist element that is found in most, using Jack Balloon as his tool to exert and expose the evils of prejudice:





"Marshall slowly considered the table, linking and unlinking his slender, ebony fingers.

'Bout the only thing worrying me now, Jack, is the choice of a Vice President. I guess it should be a crucial decision.'

'Vital,' Jack Balloon agreed. 'We understand how ethnic groups will align themselves to some favorable choice, and be repelled by another. We not only have to play on this bag, we also have to remember that the man's ancestry or skin coloring is unimportant; it's how well he can do the job that counts. We have to take all these factors into consideration, and then come up with the candidate who would be most helpful to you, and most beneficial to the country. It's not a half-way deal. Have you any suggestions?'

'Well Jack, I kinda thought Abraham Goldberg might be a suitable choice.'

'Burrhead,' Jack angrily slapped him on the shoulder, 'what the shit's the matter with you? Put a kike in the White House and the first thing he'll do is close it down on Saturdays.'

Norman Sinner's facile writing talent breathes life into the characters of BIG JACK BALLOON. By the book's ending they have assumed the status of real persons. Their desires and aspirations are vitally real. Mr. Sinner's own amiable personality can be glimpsed in a few lesser figures, but the two protagonists, Jack Balloon and Benedict Howards, are unique creations encountered by few persons.

It's too early to suggest this book be nominated for a Hugo. It will undoubtedly receive the Nebula, as the pros are much more acute and critical than we fans, and bound to discern the inestimable wealth of this volume. Read it, and ponder.

- Mike Deckinger

## RETURN OF STRANGE FRUIT

by RSC

WSFA JOURNAL #67 (Don Miller, 12315 Judson Road, Wheaton, Maryland 20906 - monthly - this issue 50¢, 3 for \$1.10) And here he says "bi-monthly"; sorry about that. This is a club newsletter that got out of hand. This issue has 54 pages, plus covers, and includes an article on mythology by Thomas Burnett Swann, one on the fringe-fantasy mags (TERROR TALES, HORROR STORIES, etc.) by Bob Jones, science by Bob Vardeman, a look at NEW WORLDS by Banks Mebane, Alexis Gilliland tries to inject a little sanity into the liberals' cries of doom, Doll Gilliland has good fanzine reviews, everybody reviews books and writes letters. One of the top magazines of today. Rating.8

CROSSROADS #4, 5 (Al Snider, Box 2319, Brown Station, Providence, Rhode Island 02912 - monthly - \$3.00 per year) This comes from the Brown University Club. Issue #4 gets downgraded because it reprints 10 pages from a Mike Montgomery fanzine without credit. Even if a fan editor gives permission, it is polite to notify readers when reprinting. Otherwise, these are well-written, well-produced issues, with lots of material which any letterhack worth his salt simply must write in and refute (or occasionally agree with). Which makes for an entertaining letter column. In fact, up until now the letter writers have been making things interesting all by themselves; now there are other targets and they can widen the scope of their activities. Rating..7

TOLKIEN ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER #1 (David L. Burton, 5422 Kenyon Dr., Indianapolis, Ind. 46226) No price or schedule. This is a one-page item, devoted to keeping track of several Tolkien Alliance round-robin letters. Write to the editor for more information if you're interested.



# OBSERVATIONS

BY

roy  
tackett

## ON A DINOSAUR

There are not enough reviews of the professional SF magazines these days. Lots and lots of reviews of SF books but the prozines rarely get mentioned, and, I suspect, this reflects one of the changes taking place in the field.

Harry Harrison, in discussing "The State of the Art in the Magazines" at Westercon XXII, declared that the situation in regards to prozines is very bad--the trouble is mostly financial (with the continuing problem of distribution and newsstand display contributing to that) and that the prozines continue to exist mainly through the dedication of the publishers. And the publishers, while hesitant to discontinue the magazines, are quite happy to unload them when the opportunity arises as indicated by the sale of the Galaxy line and the earlier sale of Amazing and Fantastic.

Sol Cohen, who bought the Ziff-Davis zines, hopes to make money, it seems, by a flood of reprint magazines which cost very little to produce. It remains to be seen what course the new owners of the Galaxy line take.

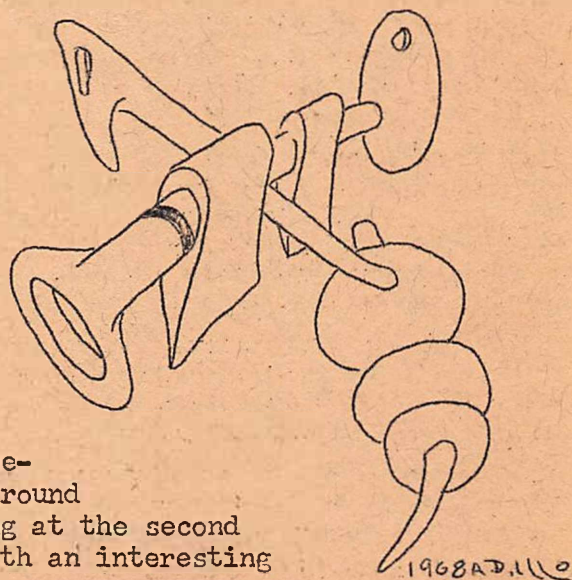
Most of the magazines have a set format that is generally standardized throughout the field: a number of stories, a fact article, and book reviews. One or two carry a letter column and an occasional other feature.

Ted White, in taking over as editor of Amazing and Fantastic, is now putting into practice some of the ideas he has written about in various fan publications: the ideas of making the prozines more reader--and fan--oriented. Ted feels that letter columns and the like will help to get the reader more involved in the magazine and contribute to the success of the magazine. To this end, then, he is expanding the letter columns and introducing such features as fanzine reviews and reprints of fanzine articles.

These new features should please the fans who have been clamoring about the lack of fan features in the prozines for years. They should please the publisher because they do not cost anything. They are guaranteed not to please the professional writers who see space that could be used for another story being taken up by fanzine reviews (but look at it this way, old pro, that extra story would probably be another reprint, anyway). Whether or not these new features please the general reader remains to be seen.

Let us consider the October, 1969, issue of Fantastic. The cover is rather interesting. The artist is not identified and I am not that familiar with sfantasy artists that I can put a name to him. I don't know, either, if this is a reprint or not, but presume it is since it has nothing to do with any of the stories in the issue at hand. The general background is one of a badlands areas with eroded rock spires and desert. Towards the back stands a spaceship that is almost Paulish in concept. The foreground is occupied by two spacesuited figures, one peering at the second which is lying in the snow, helmet removed, and with an interesting hole in its skull. Rather effective, at that.

In his editorial Ted White writes about the sad state of television and the sexual



1968AD.1110



revolution among the younger generation. (Well, with TV programming as bad as it is the kids have to have something to do...) Actually, Ted's comments on the current generation gap are meaningful and should give the older generation pause to think--those of the older generation that still have that ability, that is. I think another Ted, surnamed Pauls, gave the best explanation for the generational conflict when he said the older generation wants their kids to grow up as ignorant as they are.

The lead story is "It Could Be Anywhere" by Ted White and is billed as "Ted White's Greatest New Short Novel." Think about that wording --- a fine example of Madison Avenue English. "Greatest New Short Novel." Not a claim that this is Ted White's greatest work (which it isn't), but a claim that it is his greatest new short novel. Since, at the time Ted submitted it to himself, it was probably his only new "short novel" I use quotes around "short novel" because that's also a puff. 18,000 words is not a novel in my book--not even a short one. Ah, well, that is quibbling.

"It Could Be Anywhere" is sort of an alternate dimension story. Not really an alternate reality or a parallel universe but sort of a "Yesterday Was Monday" story.

Private Investigator Ronald Archer, dead tired, riding home on the subway, suddenly finds himself and Robin Foster as the only two people in a stage mock-up of New York. The whole city, except for the Empire State Building, is nothing but models and false fronts.

At the Empire State Building, Archer and Robin encounter Aurmel who explains that "The Emperor" creates mock-ups of probable realities to study the results of the alternatives whenever he must make a decision. He does this through the use of a psi-onics crystal. It so happens that Robin has one of these crystals in a ring--origin unknown--a family heirloom--and had accidentally projected herself into one of the alternatives, taking Archer along because of his physical proximity to her at the time.

Aurmel accuses them of illegal use of the crystal and decides they will get their punishment shortly as this particular universe is being dismantled. The emotional stress generated by having the world come apart around them shifts Archer and Robin back to their own reality. All goes back to normal and seems well until one day Archer sees Aurmel going into the Empire State Building.

"It Could Be Anywhere" is a rather unsatisfactory story--curiously old fashioned. The pace is fast, Ted White knows how to move his story, but he leaves a number of things unresolved. The idea of world leaders being able to study the alternatives of their decisions is good. Juvenile/readable.

The illustrations for "It Could Be Anywhere" (two half pagers) are by Mike Hinge, who has been absent from the stf scene too long.

There are three new very short stories: "A Guide to the City" by Lin Carter, "Ten Percent of Glory" by Verge Foray, and "Man Swings SF" by Richard Lupoff.

The cCarter is straight science fiction (what's it doing in Fantastic?) about a problem that might come up tomorrow when Megalopolis is continent-wide; imagine the job involved in trying to provide a guide to the city. Readable--very good, in fact.

"Ten Percent of Glory" is a humorous treatment of the application of Madison Avenue techniques to some parts of Christian mythology. Faintly amusing. Readable.

Lupoff's "Man Swings SF" is off over there somewhere in a category by itself. It is a satire on the more meaningless type of New Wave story. But, of course, this particular type of story is so completely meaningless in itself that it is difficult to satirize. Give Lupoff an A for effort, but with only a few changes he could sell this to someone like Judith Merrill as a serious story.

Terry Carr is next with "Fantasy Fandom: A Modest Manifesto", a short discussion of his view of the current cultural revolution. It is reprinted from Warhoon #26.

And we have arrived at the reprints. Yes.

First there is that "famous short novel classic" "Secret of the Serpent" by Don Wilcox. Wilcox borrowed from Circe and Dr. Moreau and Ghu knows what else and came up with a story that is absolutely unreadable. I couldn't get through this sort of thing in 1948 and I couldn't get through it in 1969 either. This space pilot turns into a huge snake on a "space island", you see... Forget it. Juvenile.

Milton Lesser's "All Flesh Is Brass" is a chilling little story about the final war. It started with battles between the Russians and Americans and ended with battles between men and robots. From 1952 and still readable.

Mack Reynolds' "Isolationist" dates from 1950 and is an anti-science short story



about what happens to an interplanetary expedition that meets up with a reactionary North Dakota farmer. Readable.

"The Unthinking Destroyer" is a short story about intelligent cabbages written by Rog Phillips in 1948. Juvenile.

Finally, there are some better than average book reviews by Fritz Leiber and Francis Lathrup.

And that is Fantastic, Volume 19, #1, October 1969. 148 pages of which 62 are new material including editorial, letters, fanzine reprints and book reviews. There are five pages of ads plus the cover and Table of Contents. That leaves 78 pages of reprint material--more than half the magazine. There is one new novelette, three very short new stories, and only two new illustrations. The new material is all pretty good. Two of the reprints are readable and two are bad. On the whole, the readable material has the edge in this issue and Ted White says he hopes to increase the amount of new stories used. I hope he can come through on that. Reprints, particularly from the old Z-D zines, tend to be pretty bad.

There is no question that both Fantastic and Amazing are in bad shape. None of the prozines are really healthy. It is one of life's mysteries why, when we seem to be in something of a boom with SF paperbacks selling extremely well, the magazines are doing so poorly. Perhaps it is a slight tinge of non-respectability carried over from the old pulp days. Books: good. Pulp magazines: bad. This was never true about the stfzines and not completely true about the pulps in general, but the reputation was there and still is. Perhaps it is because the stfzine are dinosaurs and their day is done. Maybe they should have died when the rest of the fiction magazines died. But they didn't, and because there are dedicated people connected with their publication, people like John Campbell and the Fermanns and RAWLowndes, I expect the stfzines to be around for a while. How long a while is arguable, but a little while at least.

One thing is certain, though: some changes have to be made. A new, larger format would help, but it may be that is too uneconomical to try. John Campbell tried it with the large size Analog, which was a beautiful magazine but didn't pay. Maybe Ted White's experiment in "reader involvement" will help. What would probably help more than anything else, though, would be for the editors to quit slanting their magazines for 14-year old kids and their mothers and to start buying good, modern SF stories. The SF field has changed, readers have changed, ideas have changed and writers have changed. But like the dinosaurs, the stfzines haven't. And like the dinosaurs, if they don't change, they will disappear. It will be a sorry day when that happens but it is a strong possibility. And for me, at least, the world without any SF magazines at all is not one I care to contemplate. Life's pleasures are small. Stfzines are one of them.

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SON OF STRANGE FRUIT

by RSC

HECKMECK #22 (Manfred Kage, Schaesberg, Achter den Winkel 41, Netherlands - no price or schedule listed - co-editor, Mario Kwiat) English-language publication. Manfred and Margot Kage do con reports of Britain's Oxford con. Kage then presents his own version of an idea by Dave Kyle, for a "Board of Governors" to receive suggestions for the improvement of conventions, and advise con committees. Quite frankly, Kyle has done so much politicking in fandom that I am automatically suspicious of any idea he presents. But I suppose it might produce some results, eventually. There are letters and fanzine reviews, with an international flavor to both.

THE MENTOR #16 (Ron Clarke, 78 Redgrave Rd, Normanhurst N.S.W., Australia) The editor is dropping the mag in favor of another publication, EOS, which will be available for contributions or letters of comment. This issue includes fiction, reviews (Aussie fans regard their science fiction with extreme seriousness), articles, letters, verse. There is, unfortunately, a faintly stuffy air about it; I tend to shy away from anyone who is profoundly serious about a hobby. (One interesting item is that article-writer Pat Terry was born in 1883, which may make him the oldest active fan in the world.



# THE CHEMICAL POWERED RAY GUN

by

ALEXIS GILLILAND

One of the old reliable stand-by gimmicks of the sfnal future is the ray gun, lately--in a dismal conformity to scientific jargon--a laser gun.

Keeping a touch of the libertine attitudes towards mere details, most s-f writers and readers never worry about the energy source for the device. That energy source is "atomic", which means unlimited in output and infinitesimal in weight. Far be it from me to say such a power source would never happen, or that it would need nasty old shielding or mundane stuff like that.

However, there are chemical sources available which might be entirely adequate. Like batteries.

"D" batteries? Not hardly. Take a plastic matrix containing an electrolyte, stretch it out thin, under an electric field, and suddenly rupture the uncapsulated sodium and fluorine. The reaction is sudden and violent, going to Na F and heat...and electricity. A great hairy surge of electricity.

The expanded battery you eject from your ray gun, and it writhes and smokes on the ground. For a semiportable you have the "battery" on a roll like tape. Take aim at the approaching Lensman in his durium inlaid armor and let him have it at 660 cm/sec. You and six goons. Hal He must not have been the Lensman, you got him!

For the heavier stuff, for the primary beam, there is a lot to be said for plain old high explosive.

Did I hear you ask: How does a laser work on high explosive?

Yes.

Well. It's like this. When you detonate an explosive, you get a reaction wave front passing through the mass of the explosive and you produce two things: light and heat. The heat is what expands the gasses that made up the explosive, but one can also design a system to use the light.

As, for instance, a block of explosive (the new photoexplosive X-386, especially designed for illumination) is exploded at the focal point of a replaceable plastic mirror or lens. The light is colimated and sent into the collection tube for the laser before the shock wave blows the thing to bits.

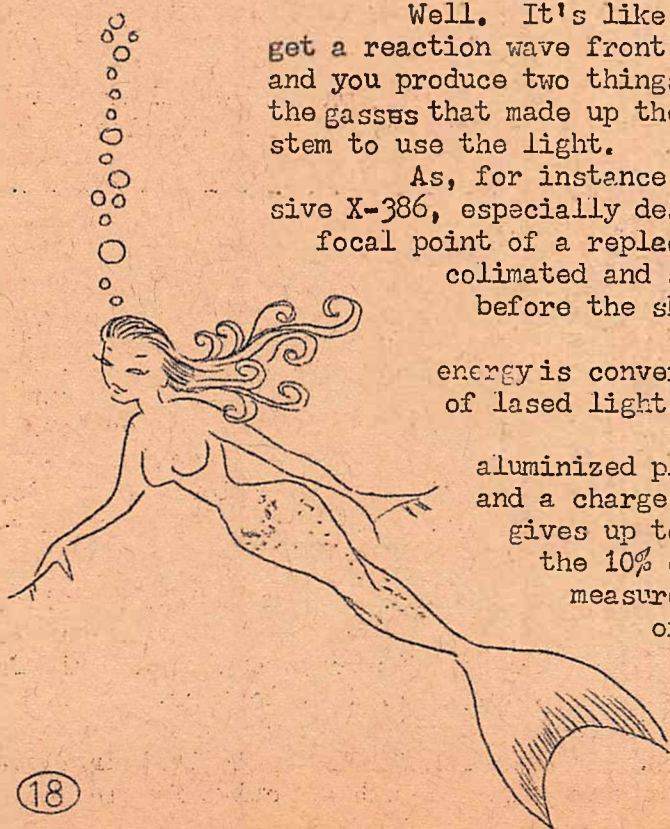
And if 10% of that tremendous jolt of light energy is converted into coherent energy, you have a pulse of lased light that is pretty fierce.

Let's say, for instance, that you have an aluminized plastic balloon, with a diameter of 30 meters, and a charge of explosive weighing 100 kilograms. X-386 gives up to 25% of its total energy as light, and with the 10% efficiency, you wind up with a laser pulse--measured in microseconds--having the gross energy of 2.5 kilograms of explosive.

That should burn through quite a bit.

Of course, our ship looks strange.

Barf Snigbee, gunnery officer,





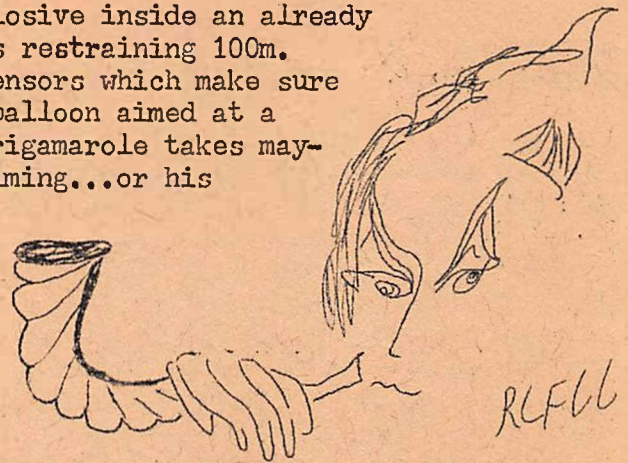
touches a button and a 100 kilo charge of explosive inside an already inflating balloon slides out to the end of its restraining 100m. cable. The balloon swells to 30m., engages sensors which make sure it is properly aligned, it being a parabolic balloon aimed at a fresnel lens 100m. away. All this automatic rigamarole takes maybe 5 or 10 seconds, during which time he is aiming...or his machines are aiming...and then he fires.

BOOM!

And another reactionary battle cruiser of civilization bites the dust.

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BRIDE OF STRANGE FRUIT

by RSC



HAVERINGS #39 (Ethel Lindsay, Courage House, 6 Langley Ave, Surbiton, Surrey, Great Britain - bi-monthly - 6 for \$1.00 - USAgent, Redd Boggs, Box 1111, Berkeley, Calif. 94701) Devoted entirely to reviews (or comments, as Ethel prefers to call them) of fanzines. 10 pages in this issue; 42 fanzines reviewed. Excellent reviews, too; one of the few columns of fanzine reviews that I ever bother to read. (Doll Gilliland's is another; maybe I should improve YANDRO'S reviews by turning them over to Juanita.)

PEGASUS #5 (Joanne Burger, 55 Blue Bonnet Court, Lake Jackson, Texas 77566 - no price or schedule listed) This has all sorts of wild things. It started as a checklist of new books, and still contains lists of science-fiction and borderline titles published each month. This issue also contains a grand assortment of engineering humor. Some I had read before; in ASTOUNDING, in the M.I.T. fanzines, in other places. But this seems to include just about all of it in one fell swoop, from Finagle's Laws to German-English Glossaries ("Contract administration: Das tabelgepaunden Gruppe"). Then there is a con report, student verse (but I have to admit the M.I.T. group did better on that, fan fiction, letters; just about anything you want. Rating.....7

T-NEGATIVE #2 (Ruth Berman, 5620 Edgewater Boulevard, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55417 - irregular? - 50¢) Primarily for "Star Trek" fans. There are a couple of short articles, then two stories set in the ST universe. (Both collaborations; there must be something in the aura of ST...) As before, the fiction is not commercial quality, but pretty good by fan standards. (They're as good as those dumb summaries Blish did for Bantam, certainly.)

PENONCEL Vol.II#1 (Marion Breen, 2 Swain Ave, Staten Island, New York 10312 - no price listed - monthly? pretty frequent, anyway) The newsletter of the East Kingdom of the Society for Creative Anachronism (which is fancy and official language for tournament fandom). Members enjoy dressing in costume, holding mock tournaments (and by "mock", Marion, I merely mean nobody has been maimed or murdered in one yet - or at least, not that I've heard about), make up fancy names and titles for themselves, and discuss medieval lore. (Much of this reminds me of what I went through at age 12 or so; in fact my nickname of "Buck" is a relic of this period, preserved thru various coincidences, and is taken more from Buck Jones than from Buck Rogers. Apparently some people never outgrow that period - for which, I guess, more power to them.)

LUNA MONTHLY #3 (Ann Dietz, 655 Orchard St., Oradell, N.J. 07649 - monthly - 25¢ - publisher, Frank Dietz) A new magazine, this sticks pretty close to professional type news, and features somewhat more "in-depth" reporting than most newsletters do. There is a list of "coming events"; conventions, meetings, etc. a column on European fandom, book reviews, author interviews, lists of new books, etc. Offset; digest size, 32 pages. Rating.....5

THE ELEPHANT GAZETTE (Cory Panshin, Open Gate Farm, Star Route, Perkasio, Pa. 18944) A one-pager announcing that Cory and Alex are married, and have sensibly left the city to reap the pleasures of country life. Great, huh?

COGNATE #10 (Rosemary Hickey, 1616 Greenhaven Dr., Richardson, Texas 75080) Published for FAPA; three pages of Hickey family history. Interesting enough if you know Rosemary (and I don't suppose she sends it to strangers, anyway.)



Dennis Lien, c/o Graduate English Dept., Modern Languages Building, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona 85700

We're leaving for Arizona the morning of Sept. 2nd, probably meeting everyone coming back from St. Louis on the way. Can't be helped.

(There should be some sort of I.D. system whereby fannish cars could identify other fannish cars on the highway. Maybe a propeller beanie on the roof, or a hood ornament in the shape of a bottle of corflu? Might be worth throwing to the N3F as a project.)

Ah, come on. Can't one be a "militant peacenik" (why isn't anyone ever called a "warnik"?) without having a horror of guns?

I've owned a gun since I was about 12 and used to shoot varmints with it (or shoot at them, anyway, sometimes I got lucky) and as I've indicated before, I agree with you completely on gun control (so-called) legislation. Perhaps by definition I am not "militant", but I still think I'm a living refutation of your evil, stereotyped, corrupt conservative emotionalism, you.

(Took a break and wandered upstairs, where my eyes lit upon a choice morsel I've been meaning to share with you: "Did you know that...Buffalo Bill was only 16th buffalo!")

Agree that damned few people under 21 have enough sense to be trusted with the franchise. Trouble is that damn few people over 21 have, either. So I'm in favor of lowering the voting age; "old enough to fight, old enough to vote" isn't really logical, but so few people are "old" enough to vote that I go along with it. (Of course, if I'd have had the vote at eighteen, I would have been a Republican, a ghastly fate.) I do believe in the "Alter reality through politics, not psychedelics" catch-phrase and think lowering the voting age would help a bit toward lessening intra-generational hostility--not much, but a bit. (Besides, McCarthy might have had a chance....)

Remember when you, tongue in cheek of your typer, accused Fred Haskell of being a hoax created by me? I'm still not sure you're not right--like, the one time I visited Minn-STF, Fred was out of town--and from his editorials, we have a lot of opinions in common--and like that. Anyway, a week ago today, the ultimate happened. I'd mentioned in a letter to Jim Young that I was getting married on August 23rd. So Fred called me up (ventriloquism, perhaps) from Minneapolis to inform me that he was also getting married on August 23rd. Of course, he's marrying fan Karen Johnson and I'm marrying non-fan Doris Hess, but I'm still suspicious. Damn it, Coulson, so you're the Secret Master--stop showing off!

Fred says that Linda Eyster is also getting married on the 23rd, as are a couple St. Louis fans (Luttrell and Couch? I don't know St. Louis fandom much). I suggested that the 23rd of August be declared Ponn Farr Day, or however you spell it. But I still think a simpler explanation is that the six fans and two non-fans of our little group are all really one person running seven hoaxes, and I'm beginning to be afraid that maybe I'm not the person...

On to other topics. Remember my offer of \$1.50 for a copy of Yandro #149? Nobody bit, though George Wells loaned me his copy to read. So, after weeks of struggling with myself, I gave in and Xeroxed it. You have now produced the world's first \$2.70 genzine. Feel smug, you bastard. At this rate, my Yandro collection is now worth close to \$200.

Too bad you didn't do an STPhile #3, if only to provide completists like me with a list of episodes for the third season (granted, we would have liked to forget many of them). I have about three lists for each of the first two, and only my incomplete own for the third. Crap.

In reading the Conan story "The Slithering Shadow," I've just run across one of the funniest single lines of the year (p129 of CONAN THE ADVENTURER):





"All the obscenity and salacious infamy spawned in the muck of the abysmal pits of Life seemed to drown her in seas of cosmic filth."

(Sounds like Billy Joe Hargis's opinion of Playboy.)

/Actually, I'm willing to go along with lowering the voting age to 18; I just want it understood that this won't put any higher-minded political candidates in office. (But it can't hurt things, so why not do it?) I am not stereotyped, conservative, or emotional. (I'll accept "corrupt" and "evil".) Politically I am a moderate--an immoderate moderate, perhaps, but still middle-of-the-road. RSC/

Dave G. Locke, 915 Mount Olive Drive #9, Duarte, California 91010

If I write up the Synanon Games like I did grapho analysis, and you send a copy of that issue to Ellison, he might send you a hell of an interesting letter. Are you prepared for that? I've got to get even with him for what he did to everybody at the Westercon.

Briefly, what he did was declare that for the first time we're really going to see some SF on television. He's sold a series, and this is going to be the real thing. He won't cop out on us. (Does all this sound like something he once said about STAR TREK? Must be coincidence.) Anyway, he gives us this hell of a buildup for his series. Gets us all excited, our breath coming in short pants and people applauding and jumping up and down and--guess what he did then?

He read part of his first script.

I've got to get even with him.

Would you believe that spaceships are attacking this planet, shooting down heat beams, and that the planet fissures and goes out of orbit and thus causes the other planets to go out of orbit and all this causes the sun to go nova, and...

It was rather anticlimactic.

/Yeah, I'd believe it. Sounds a bit like the script of "City" before Roddenberry got his hands on it. RSC/

Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Rd., Hemel Hempstead, Herts., England.

My hotel room in Copenhagen, by the way, was 5 floors up and had sloping ceilings; I won't say it was small, but when you closed the door the doorknob got into bed with you. There was a selection of instructions in various languages including English regarding fires. I was rather taken by this one which said "Signify your presence to the fire brigade through the window in a composed manner"--like--"Heiiiiipp!!?"

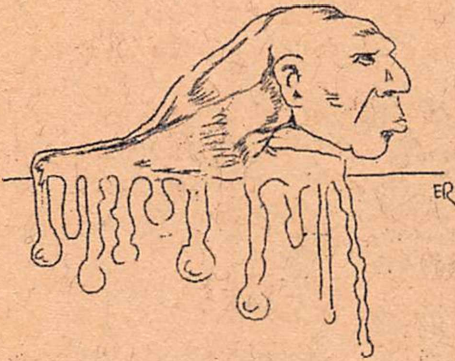
Finding my way to the hotel in Copenhagen was not too difficult; when you got to the railway station you followed the road opposite down as far as "Leo Madsen's Sex Shop" and then continued on till you got to "The Weekend Sex Shop" and crossing over the other side until you reached a 20 ft. neon sign marked "Porno", walk past one side street with "Six Film Shop" and another which said "Mystic Sex Shop" till you came to another called "Sax Shop" and my hotel was opposite that--there is no censorship of any kind there as from 1st July. I arrived on the 2nd July...

STAR TREK started here the first episode last Saturday--"Where No Man Has Gone Before", and I was horrified at the sheer "ordinary-ness" of the series, badly painted backcloths to resemble other planets, colourless actors like William Shatner spouting pseudo-scientific language, and Leonard Nimoy who leaves no impression at all. This is the kind of science fiction the BBC discarded ten years ago. Surely this isn't the series that inspired a cult, support from countless fans--but why? It's the biggest tv disappointment in years.

/I keep telling you that British tv has better science fiction than ours; didn't you believe me? But I'm a bit confused about your complaint that Shatner spouted pseudo-scientific language; do actors in British sf shows spout pseudo-sociological language, then? Or what? RSC And I would add that if JOURNEY INTO THE UNKNOWN was a fair sample of British horror-fantasy on tv, that's one place where our



friends across the Atlantic haven't surpassed US tv. Dulldulldull. JWC/



Richard Delap, 532 S. Market, Wichita, Kansas 67202

Won't quibble too much with your placement of Hugo choices--after all, they are your placements--but I do find your preference of Curtis' "The Steiger Effect" in the short stories particularly appalling, especially since your reason is "that struck my sense of humor". Blah! Also, you left Walt Willis out of the list of fan writer nominees.

Panshin's article on defining 'science fiction' is merely another re-hash of what has gone before. If he has something new to say, fine; if not, as here,

I take it this was written merely to acquaint new fans with the difficulties of explaining sf.

Was pleased to see that you also found Roberts' PAVANE an "outstanding" book... Carr tells me it is to be issued as part of the Ace "Special" series. I was quite unhappy to see it left off the Hugo list this year. I tried, anyway. Your reviews, as usual, are fine, even though I still manage to disagree with you on about every third book.

If Andrew Phillips ("Grumblings") sees, in 2001, "the transformation of humanity into baby stars by a friendly guardian" that's his problem. I fear his suggestion for "psychiatric help" would be better followed by himself. If I didn't feel he was such a clod, I might take some more time here to straighten him out. I feel, however, that he is a clod. 'Nuff said.

Interesting to note that Brunner mentions DOUBLE, DOUBLE was originally a screen-treatment. I mentioned such a possibility in my review, and it's nice to have it confirmed. Nice, also, that it appeared instead as a novel; it would have been an awful film.

/I copied my list of Hugo nominees from a list sent to me from the Con Committee. Said list included Ted White and omitted Walt Willis. The ballot included Willis and omitted Ted White, so I assume Ted withdrew. RSC/

Andrew Platizky, 129-67th St., W.N.Y., N.J.

Just wanted to tell you about a new book I just bought.

HORROR!--Collier Books #01227 - \$1.50. It is a very good book about the different monsters: "Vampire", "Werewolf", "Phantom", "Mummy", etc. I recommend it highly to you. It is written by "Drake Douglass, a pseudonym of a gentleman who has been deeply involved with horror throughout his life." It is good easy fun reading.

/And try and get it around here. Well, maybe I can pick up a copy at the convention. RSC/

Andrew Zerbe, 3154 Dupont Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36106

Glanced through a copy of A PRIVATE DISGRACE on the newsstands. Don't think I will buy it unless I can pick up a used copy. The author seems to be another one of those who think Lizzie Borden was guilty. I never thought much about her guilt one way or another, mainly because I never knew much about the case. Then picked up a copy of LIZZIE BORDEN - THE UNTOLD STORY by Edward D. Radin. Radin goes deep into the legend of Lizzie Borden. He also does something almost no one else has ever bothered to do. He examined the original court records of the trial. Once you do that there is no difficulty in understanding why she got off. Her attorney utterly demolished the case against her.

/As a matter of fact, Victoria Lincoln made quite a thing about also having examined the trial records--and she came to a totally different conclusion from Radin. RSC/



Donald Martin, West Main Road, Little Compton, R.I. 02837

Very sorry to read of the death of Seth Johnson. I never met him but we did correspond for a couple of years--he made me feel very welcome to fandom. His letters were always fascinating.

Lots of the stamps issued all over the world are strictly aimed at collectors, of course. I wouldn't disagree on the size of Poland's navy, but at least she does have an extensive merchant marine and has long been a seafaring nation. Joseph Conrad was a Pole by birth, for example. Incidentally, the wrecked clipper "Joseph Conrad" was recently stripped by the crew of a Polish ship off Australia.

I always use your book reviews as a guide to my paperback buying. Don't always agree after reading, but the percentage I do like is high--our tastes in s.f. must be similar. One small quibble--Whitten's PROGENY OF THE ADDER was a vampire yarn, not werewolf. To me, MOON OF THE WOLF is a far better book. DRACULA is the only good vampire novel I've read, while I've read 7 or 8 fine werewolf yarns.

/Yes, I wondered who was going to catch me on calling MOON OF THE WOLF "another" werewolf story; I didn't notice what I'd done until the thing was printed. According to THE WORLD ALMANAC, Poland ranks 21st in the world in gross tonnage of its merchant fleet. (Leaders, in order, are Liberia, United States, Britain, Norway, Japan, Russia, Greece, West Germany, France, and Panama.) RSC/

Rick Brooks, Box 1057, Huntington, Indiana 46750

Yandro 189 is a good issue. The artwork was all good but none outstanding. I liked the Alexis Gilliland cartoon "Now cracks a noble heart" and Devra Langsam's cartoon on the opposite page.

I only remember Willy from the Pittcon, but I was rather fond of him. It does seem to me that fate played a dirty trick on him. He was quite tolerant of us neos as I remember, which isn't easy. And I did get something out of most of his articles in Galaxy.

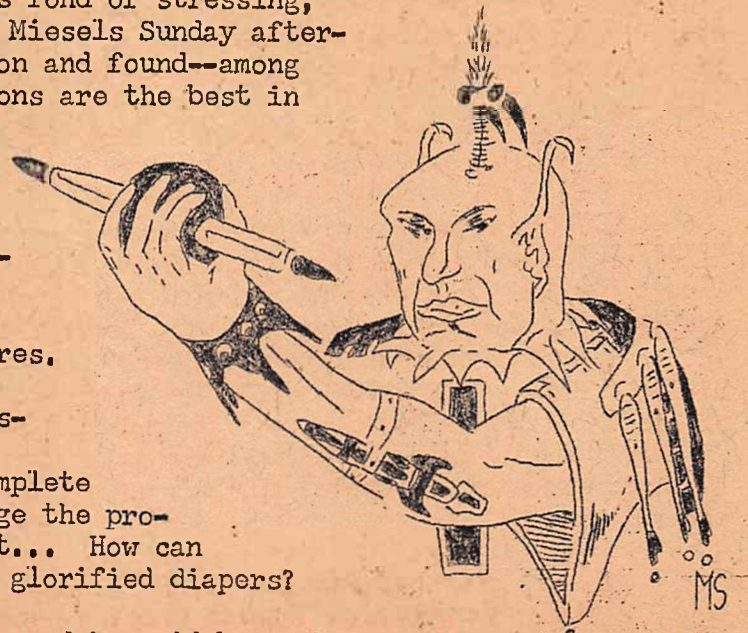
Loved Dennis Lien's "A 'For Sale' List", especially the first item. I suggest after helping on the N3F's Bf Title Changes that it be dedicated to Don Wollheim. "Without whom most of this book would be impossible." But they didn't agree. A pity. I would have.

I do wish to enter one criticism of "Golden Minutes": Can't you give the book number in the paperback reviews?

Just saw Clarke and Heinlein on CBS. ABC had Asimov and an sf writers panel that I would liked to have seen. Locke's point on your art was wasted on me. As my favorite history prof was fond of stressing, honest people disagree. I visited the Miesels Sunday afternoon on the way back from the Midwestcon and found--among other things--that they think the Dillons are the best in the pro artists category. I think the the Dillons are cruddy, I wonder if if the trouble is that people tend not to separate their opinions and inferences on fact from the facts themselves? I do know some theory on artistic composition, and I really can't see much wrong with the Dillons' pictures. I just dislike most of them. And what sense is there in arguing likes and dislikes?

James Burke of BBC explained the complete spacesuit. I wondered if he would dodge the problem of waste products. He didn't, but... How can the youth of America look up to men in glorified diapers?

/I asked why the need for numbers and he said because





dealers like Witterude them instead of titles. But dealers like Witter also list both title and number in their catalogs, so...? RSC/

Mike Deckinger, 25 Manor Drive, Apt. 12-J, Newark, N.J. 07106

On the question of loaning personal items, whether they be books, money or magazines, the safest method to adopt is a strict non-lending policy, applied equally to all friends, acquaintances and anyone else who considers you a soft touch. If not, you will inevitably encounter the deadbeat who crows insistently about something of yours which undue generosity on your part has led him to believe can be borrowed. Then, when you finally reluctantly relent, and convince yourself the guy can be trusted, he will gratefully accept the requested item and that's the last you'll see of it. Frequent inquiries will result in lame excuses, attempts for recovery will be overlooked with supreme indifference by your former friend who will be unable to account for the item seven months later when you question him about it, after deciding that by failing to promptly return it his share of social graces is vacant. The final result is that you've been rooked out of a valuable item, but you've also learned a priceless lesson, so the expense may not be too high at that.

I just received the latest Galaxy in the mail, the first to be issued from the new publisher. Frankly, it's a mess. Gaughan's cruddy illos abound--at their cruddiest. The layout could not be more unattractive. Headings are crudely drawn squiggly spot illos and ugly lettering. The printing is unclear in spots. The paper has the consistency of toilet paper and judging from the overall appearance could be used for a similar purpose. And to top it off, mailing wrappers or envelopes are not being used. The address sticker was neatly pasted on the front cover, which did not escape its share of wrinkles from clumsy postal handling. It took me fifteen minutes to get the sticker off, and with it came a portion of the cover. If this keeps up, Galaxy may yet qualify for the Irwin Allen Award for supreme disservice to science fiction.

I also received an incredible rallying memo addressed to STAR TREK fans, presumably because at one time my wife ill-advisedly joined a Leonard Nimoy Fan and Worship Club. This sheet is sent out by a Mrs. Ann Wilson of Statesboro, Ga. Mrs. Wilson urges that July 28 be designated as Deluge Monday. On that day we are to forward letters to NBC demanding that STAR TREK be renewed and (get this) phone our local NBC station and pester them with requests to renew STAR TREK. Mrs. Wilson and her zealous cohorts are obviously unaware that the next season's line-up of programs is decided well in advance and no amount of imbecilic howling will bring back the show. She also doesn't know that Nimoy has made several MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE episodes and is set as a regular for the cast, that Shatner is doing summer stock and live theatre, and that other cast members have received movie offers. A line at the bottom makes it clear that this half-assed scheme is being pushed forth without the knowledge of the STAR TREK crew, and I'm sure the respective members would disassociate themselves with it if they knew about it. This is just the perfect way to convince the Network Nitwits that trekkies are a bunch of capricious juveniles.

Personally, I enjoyed STAR TREK in its vintage season, but the past year has been abominable, and I've rarely been able to stick with it more than ten minutes. It's like observing a loved and respected friend slowly succumbing to a fatal illness.

Since you are against any provision that would restrict gun ownership (I presume) how would you feel about a requirement that anyone owning a gun must take a rigorous and rigid test course in the proper method of caring for his weapon?

Irv Jacobs must be joking when he refers to OUTER LIMITS as being a good series. OUTER LIMITS was an inept, juvenile monster show, on the same level as an Irwin Allen series. With a few exceptions, each story involved some flabby monsters that hopped and flopped and made funny noises and scared all the three and four year olds out of their diapers. It linked science fiction's already television-tarnished name with witless ghoulies and childish effects.

You may have seen SPACEMAN by Stuart J. Byrne recently issued by Powell Press. This is a re-written version of Byrne's serial PCWER METAL which ran in Palmer's Other Worlds May-July 1953. It has a very attractive cover but also contains the most miniscule print I've ever seen in a paperback. If your eyesight isn't 20-20 don't strain your eyes trying to read it.



/I'm against any provision that would restrict gun ownership to the general citizenry. I'd go along with a law that denied gun ownership to anyone who had been convicted of any crime involving a gun. And while I don't believe that a test of gun handling would do any more to prevent accidents than driver's tests have done, I'd certainly be willing to accept one. What we really need--in both cases--is a test for responsibility. No irresponsible individual should be trusted with a gun, automobile, or packet of matches, but how do you test for it? My eyesight isn't perfect, but my memory is pretty good and you won't catch me reading anything by Stuart J. Burne, reprint or original. RSC I think the efforts of Deluge Monday, ill-advised or no, were (if you read the fine print in the flier) much less of a serious attempt to reinstate the show against impossible odds than a last bitter protest at Nielsens and the perpetual inability of the interested viewer to really have any say with the network biggies about what he really wants to watch. JWC/

Ron Smith, 644 S. Court St., Medina, Ohio 44256

I'm glad John J. Pierce has finally admitted it. In Yandro 188 he baldly states "I...am openly a propagandist." Damn right he is. I think the fourth definition of "propaganda" given by Websters fits the bill very well.

PROPAGANDA: Any systematic, widespread, deliberate indoctrination or plan for such indoctrination, now often used in the derogatory sense, connoting deception or distortion.

I know that when Pierce wrote this he had another definition in mind, but I think this definition fits the bill quite a bit better.

Pierce is a self-proclaimed extremist on the issue of New Wave writing. Having read some of his material it all seems to be made up of some wild distortions of some basically solid points. Regardless of what Barry Goldwater said, extremism is never a virtue. The answer usually lies somewhere between the two poles in debate on any issue, most commonly someplace near the middle. I think this is basically where it lies on the New Wave issue. I am not going to get into an elaborate explanation of my views on New Wave. It will do to say that I too have been critical of New Wave many times, but do find prominent redeeming points as well. Pierce and many of the others start with evident flaws in much New Wave as their basis. But often he goes off the beam so that his basic points are distorted and made ludicrous. Many times his arguments prove illogical.

New Wave is a very real issue in sf and fandom today, but extremists on both sides are going to do nothing more than create feuds and hostilities between fans, and quite possibly might create a rift in fandom if common sense does not prevail. This reminds me very much of the odor of another self-proclaimed prophet of the "true-way" by the name of Stephen Pickering. Pickering caused great controversy and eventually got himself ostracized from fandom by his opponents and those who resented such extremism in fandom.

/Not at all. Pickering was ostracized from fandom because he stole a couple of suitcases of collector's items from Forry Ackerman. His opinions didn't make him any friends, but if he'd restricted himself to opinions he probably would still be around. I agree that the answer to most problems lies somewhere in the middle, which is why I'm there so often. RSC/

Andrew Phillips, 128 Oliver St., Daly City, California 94014

Buck: You have a conscience? And you would feel guilty about acting selfishly?? Incredible! I would say, in my capacity of amateur psychoanalyst, that your social conscience is poorly integrated with your personality, and I like your personality (from a distance, at least). What I think of your social conscience can be implied from that statement.

I can't quite make Alexei's thirty-word limit, but try this definition for adequacy: SF is fantasy fiction in which the fantasy element is the result of natural



forces, presently unknown or undeveloped science or technology, or the application of contemporary science or technology on a scale or in a manner in which it is not presently used.

A definition of the term "fantasy fiction" is obviously a necessary supplement to the above, so:

FF is a genre in which an essential element of the story is the existence of one or more unusual conditions, not implied by its being fiction, which the author does not believe to have any present, or have had any past real existence.

I am, by the way, using "science and technology" very broadly in the original definition. For example, magic is quite clearly treated as technology in Avram Davidson's THE PHOENIX AND THE MIRROR, which makes that excellent novel SF. Try to apply the definition yourself, say to Moore's BRING THE JUBILEE, Garrett's TOO MANY MAGICIANS, Doyle's THE LOST WORLD, Verne's JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, McCaffrey's DRAGONRIDER, or similar borderline cases. I think I'll reserve my opinions.

Is the Bible science fiction or fantasy?

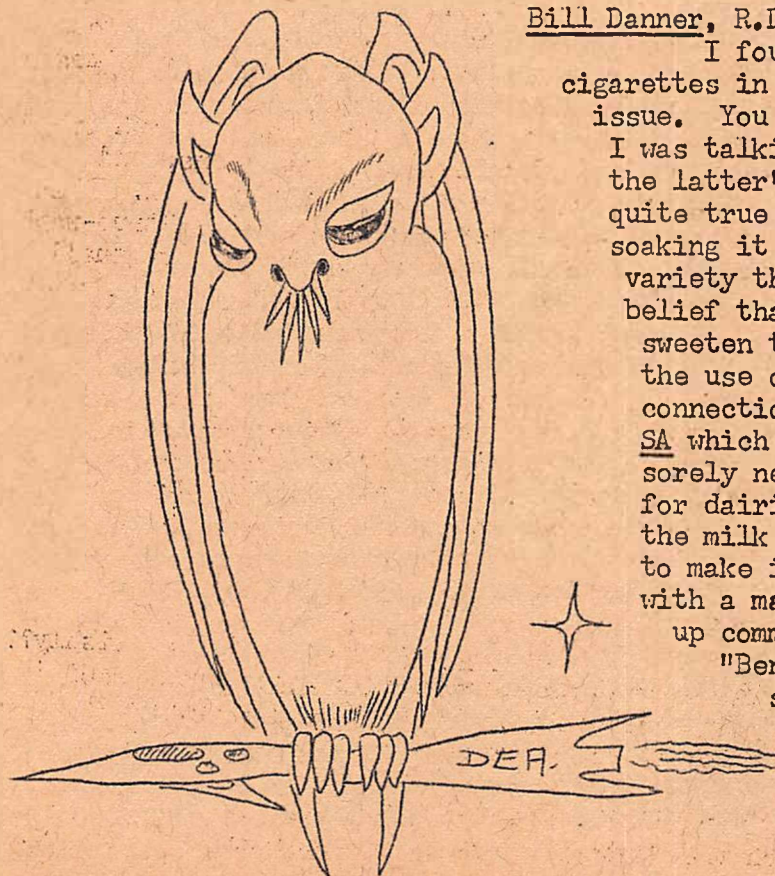
Who is George Willick?

Juanita, you picked a particularly inappropriate analogy to smoking. If a man is driving at 90mph over wet and slippery roads it isn't just his own risk, Just ask the people he "meets".

/Sorry; my social conscience is perfectly integrated with my personality. I think a close examination of my opinions on both personal and social situations will find them to be middle-of-the-road; it's just my expression of them that isn't. You think smokers are risking only themselves? Read the statistics on fires sometime. Science fiction is that branch of fantasy in which phenomena are explained in scientific or pseudo-scientific terms. (They were explained in magical terms in THE PHOENIX AND THE MIRROR, which makes it fantasy. However, James Blish treated werewolves pseudo-scientifically in "There Shall Be No Darkness", making that excellent novelette science fiction.) RSC/

Bill Danner, R.D. 1, Kennerdell, Penn.

I found another and longer piece about cigarettes in the SA which may appear in the next issue. You may like to know that just yesterday I was talking to a friend of George Shaw's at the latter's place and he told me that it's quite true that chewing tobacco was cured by soaking it in urine and that it is the horse variety that was used. He also confirmed my belief that "molasses dirt" is still used to sweeten the stuff, but I rather imagine that the use of piss has been outlawed. In this connection I ran across another item in the SA which shows that the pure food laws were sorely needed. Back in the '80s it was common for dairies to separate all the cream from the milk and to color the resulting skim milk to make it look richer. The coloring was done with a material called "annato" which was put up commercially and sold under the name "Benefit". Annato is the yellow pulp surrounding the seed in the pod of some tropical tree, and it is extracted by soaking in water. To keep the pulp moist "and to improve the color" urine was added from time to time, and I imagine it was not from horses. Sad part



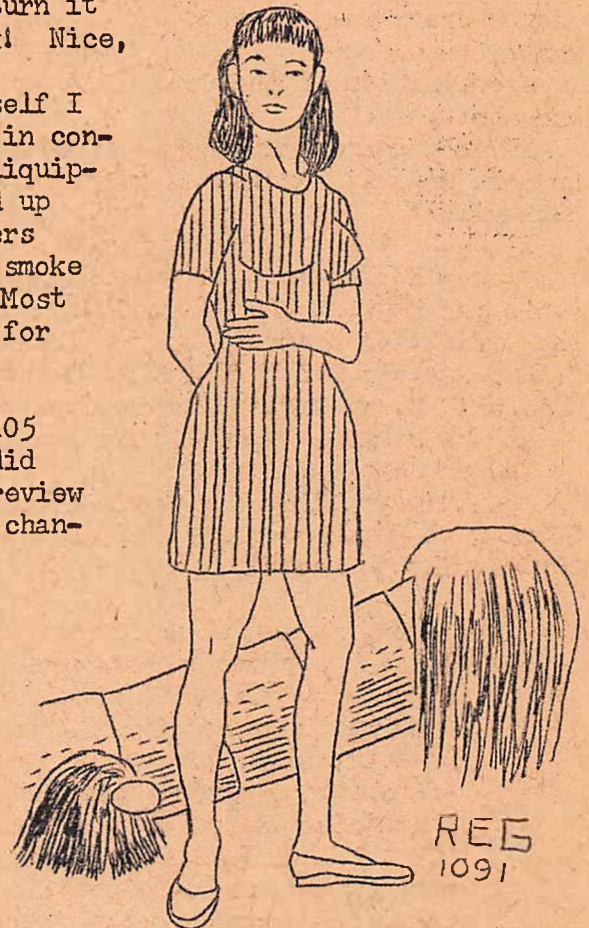


is that people were so used to the colored junk that when a dairy offered pure whole milk customers would turn it down because it didn't look so "rich" as the junk! Nice, huh?

Even years ago when I used to smoke a pipe myself I had reactions much like yours to cigarette smoke in confined places. For over a year I worked at the Aliquippa plant of J&L and had four riders whom I picked up on the way. Several of them were cigarette smokers and during cold weather I had to ask them not to smoke the things because the smoke was so irritating. Most of all it made my eyes sting and water, not good for a guy doing the driving.

Claude Saxon, 658 Alabama #4, Memphis, Tenn. 38105

If you're interested in silent movies (and I did learn about Classic Film Collector through your review column) there's a new program on the educational channels you should check out. It's called THE TOY THAT GREW UP; and is probably the best presentation of silent films available to the general public outside of various museum exhibits. The films are complete, uninterrupted by commercials and presented properly with background music. There are about fifty programs in circulation, with more in the works. If your local ETV carries it, try it out. From the way the fall schedules are shaping up, it may be the most entertaining show going.



REG  
1091

/We don't have a local ETV, but those of you who do might take note. RSC/

David Gorman, 4022 A-3 Meadows Drive., Indianapolis, Indiana 46205

Juanita, on your editorial about youth and their relation and reaction to death, I have to agree with you, but I would go farther. Most of the activists in the anti-Vietnam protest are really not aware of the tragedy going on. I wasn't. I remember coming out against the U.S. policy in Asia on the speech team in '66. But I think I joined the dissenters because I couldn't get 'in' with the conservative and moderate Republicans who were the ones who made all the school publications and status media. Even when I campaigned for Gene McCarthy, all I really knew was that I was against the war; but I never offered any solutions. I don't think I even listened to the speeches of McCarthy, Kennedy, Spock, etc. But then came the nomination of Richard Nixon, who was a loser who never said anything that made sense. George Wallace was sweeping the people of New Castle off their feet, and Ball State University appeared to have unfriendly relations with the hillbilly. The Democratic con with everybody being oppressed, especially those who realized that the nomination of HHH could be the beginning of the end for the liberal anybods.

I finally campaigned for Humphrey using the excuse that the black people would be sold out again if we let our personal hates turn the country over to nuts like Nixon and Wallace. I remained inactive after the election until a young friend of mine was killed in Vietnam. He was opposed to the war and thought of skipping to Canada. But his parents convinced him that no harm would come to him in the Navy. So he went in, was sent to you know where, and got killed on a patrol boat. It suddenly dawned on me while viewing the sorrow of family and friends that this was going on every day in every country. Frankly, I like to live, and I have a lot of fun along with the bad times. I guess the only way to end wars is to convince people to place personal and individual freedom and life above everything patriotic and material. Not an easy job, but if the United States would clean up its own back yard, hope would be a little brighter.



Yes, Juanita, most young people are cold about the deaths of older people. Mainly because many of them are simply living and breathing and have no mountains to climb and view down from above. The young were really sorrowful at the deaths of Bob Kennedy and Martin Luther King, but because they had ambitions, dreams and held hopes for all of our races. I'm not saying that the death of the blue-collared factory worker is no less tragic, but the man has generally been forgotten as having anything to contribute to society, even if it is only the upbringing of another generation.

/Of course a lot of older people are simply living and breathing, but so what? That's all most of the younger people are doing, only they don't know it yet. RSC. And I am continually depressed by the seemingly universal attitude among young liberals that Humphrey's nomination would mean the utter death of any social progress, a perpetual commitment to the war in Vietnam and all sorts of terrible reactionary consequences that were identical with those predicted if George Wallace should win the election. Perhaps it's because Humphrey was a liberal of my college generation, fighting for some sort of--any sort of progress during the feet-in-lead-boots society of the McCarthy era. When I hear young liberals throw Humphrey into the verbal trashcan as a hidebound conservative, or in effect ask "what has he done for us lately" I automatically think of myself also being pushed in the face and told anything I did for civil rights, freedom to speak one's mind without being blacklisted, and all my good wishes and sympathies with liberal causes now mean absolutely nothing. That I would be of use only if I simply went somewhere and buried myself, and the quicker the better. Don't have the right image, I guess. JWC/

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The news was full of the shipment of phosgene, about how dangerous it is and all the precautions they were taking. And some states wouldn't let them in and all that. It seems silly to me. I don't consider phosgene to be the most dangerous chemical to be shipped in bulk. I am a lot more scared of hydrogen sulphide than phosgene. At least you can smell phosgene, and you know something is there. With hydrogen sulphide, when the concentration is high enough to kill you, it paralyzes your nose and you can't smell it, so you breathe twice and die.

Chlorine is another chemical that is shipped in bulk and it is almost as poisonous as phosgene and more so than hydrogen sulphide. And people don't worry about it.

One note, if you live near a railroad or highway (and who doesn't) and you wake up to a strong ammonia smell one morning, if you don't think you can make it out of the ammonia before it gets to you, go into the bathroom, shut all the doors and windows, and turn on the shower and stay in the shower until the ammonia goes away. Ammonia is very soluble in water and you will be able to breathe.

/If I got a strong smell of ammonia in my sleep, I'd just start dreaming about being at work and go on sleeping. (We have this diazo machine that a fast-talking salesman convinced the higher-ups didn't need to be ventilated. When our eyes start watering we swear at the management, but that's all. Is ammonia like arsenic; can you build up immunity by absorbing small doses?) You just don't understand about phosgene; it's used in war, so it is automatically Evil. And chlorine is automatically Good because it "purifies" our drinking water. (Well, your drinking water; not mine, thank God.) And the New Thing being promoted by artists, young intellectuals and pseudos, etc, is to not even think about realities, but to worry about Images. If you're poisoned by chlorine, it's a regrettable accident and that's all, but if you somehow get a whiff of phosgene it's a sign that America has lost its conscience and we must overthrow the Establishment. RSC/



# GOLDEN MINUTES

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THE WHOLE MAN, by John Brunner (Walker & Co., \$4.50) I was even more impressed with the book this time than I was when I first read it; possibly because this time I have less vivid memories of "City of the Tiger" and no expectation that the book will be something that it isn't. This is the story of a hopeless cripple who is also a telepathist and therefore a healer in great demand. Brunner did not overwork the "physician, heal thyself" aspect, for which I am grateful, but of course it's there. It is, basically, what the novel is about, but it's not thrown rudely in the reader's face. There is considerable emphasis on the idea of gifts which are also (or which become) burdens, which strikes home in our current social milieu. The action is minimal but there is plenty of drama; Brunner has never forsaken tight plotting. A thoroughly fascinating book.

DRAGONFLIGHT, by Anne McCaffrey (Walker & Co., \$4.95) This is a fabulous book. I had fond memories of it, and it's better than I remembered. I'm still not sure what gets those monstrous dragons airborne, but in this case it hardly matters. The background is fascinating, and Lessa and F'lar are among those few rare examples of science fictional characters who can make a hardened reader care what happens to them. Essentially this is nothing more than a love story in an exotic background; it's the way it's told and the occasionally infuriating realism of the characters that make it memorable.

THE SPACE MERCHANTS, by Fred Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth (Walker & Co., \$4.50) This is the one that inspired a seemingly endless succession of bad imitations. The original remains more readable than I thought it would be (partly because the idea of advertising agencies taking over the world is as believable now as it was in 1952). It's a slick, action-packed novel which somehow has obtained a great reputation as a satire, or an attack on our society. The satirical and social elements are purely superficial, but are very well worked into the story. The paean to the virtues of the Common Man is more than a little maudlin, but it's also expected in this type of novel, and can be cheerfully ignored.

A CASE OF CONSCIENCE, by James Blish (Walker & Co., \$4.50) A rarity in sf; a theological novel. (Several readers objected violently to the ending, and I can't see why. Within the framework of the novel, it's both logical and adequately prefaced.) I tend to object to the assumption that pure reason is a tool of the Devil, but I'm sure it's a valid Catholic premise. (Nothing else so neatly explains the history of the church.) There is action present, and some of the more glaring flaws in our society are pointed out as surely as they are in SPACE MERCHANTS. But the major problem is a theological dilemma; are the inhabitants of Lithia creatures of the Devil, or not? Technically I suppose this might make the book fantasy, but it's hardly important, and the trappings are science fictional, not fantastic. A good book; it isn't likely to provide the reader with any profound insights unless he's a Catholic, but it is entertaining for almost everyone, and I suppose the theme that "things are seldom what they seem" is one that can stand repetition today.

BRAIN WAVE, by Poul Anderson (Walker & Co., \$4.50) Another superman novel. Anderson does very little better than anyone else in depicting a superhumanly brilliant individual, but he does have the insight that emotions are separate from intelligence that few other superman depicitors have had. A super-intelligent society will not be either a coldly emotionless one or an automatic utopia. Where Anderson does better is in his depiction of the sub-society of morons, apes, pigs, and dogs grown to the intelligence of current humanity. (In fact, what Anderson had here is the seed of "Flowers For Algernon" - thrown away from a literary standpoint because he didn't make a tragedy of it.) It's a fascinating book and has been one of my favorites since it was first published. Possibly the best of the "superman" novels; certainly the most believable.



THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS, by Ursula LeGuin (Walker & Co., \$4.95) I found the much-ballyhooed "alien sexual standards" in this novel totally unrealized. The author tells you about them and then ignores them in favor of making her aliens just like us. The brilliance of the book lies in the fact that the characters are just like us; these are not just characters in a book, they are real people, alive and breathing. They are not manipulated by the author; they have good solid motives for their actions. Their views of interstellar contact - it's interesting, but should not be allowed to interfere with business - are refreshingly normal. We have another of my disliked passive heroes, but then the narrator isn't really the central character of the book anyway; Lord Estraven is, and he's forceful enough for anyone's liking. This is a splendid story.

NOTE: The above books are the first in Walker's laudable effort to give hardcover permanence to classic science fiction which has appeared only in magazines and paperback. They are bound as a set, with heavy, clean-looking dust jackets. The binding itself may not be quite as good as Arkham House provides, but it's better than what you're used to getting from Doubleday. If you don't want to spend \$4.50 yourself for good science fiction, bug your local librarian to get copies. They're worth the money.

SPLINTERS, ed. by Alex Hamilton (Walker & Co., \$5.95) This seems to be the first US publication of a British anthology of original "macabre" fiction. (Or so the editor says; quite a few of the stories aren't macabre at all. Some of them aren't even stories, for that matter.) The book starts off well with "Jane", by Jane Gaskell. It is more humorous than macabre, but still the story of the narrator's existence contrasted with that of the family's pet python is entertaining. "Ice Palace" by Michael Baldwin is contemporary and literate and possibly allegorical and certainly dull. Hugh Atkinson's "The Language of Flowers" is also good, despite a haunting memory that when I read it before it was by John Collier. The introduction calls Derwent May's "Grace Note" an exuberant anecdote; I'll allow "anecdote" but exuberant it isn't, or much of anything else. William Trevor's "Miss Smith" is the sort of thing one might find in a poor imitation of WEIRD TALES. "An American Organ, by Anthony Burgess, is a fascinating picture of a nice, gentle little homicidal maniac. Beautiful thing. John Brunner's "The Biggest Game" was the one story in the volume that I'd read before (and I can't recall where). Straight science fiction, with a fairly obvious but amusing ending. "The Way The Ladies Walk" by Richard Nottell, is a love story with a thoroughly nasty finish. "Home Again, Home Again, Jiggetty-Jig" by Patrick Boyle, is neither macabre nor a story; it's an incident in the lives of a moderately dull family. "Indoor Life" by Montague Haltrecht is John Collier gone sour somewhere, possibly because the author insists on explaining everything. "Don't You Dare", by John Burke, is a fairly straight and moderately interesting story of possession. "Isabo", by J. A. Cuddon, is a bad imitation of a Jules de Grandin story; the author seems to feel that the idea of being possessed by the devil is a new literary gambit which will enthral his readers without the necessity of his adding any other interest to the plot. "Newed Up", by Peter Brent, is New Wave fantasy; I'm sure it would have been full of insight and sparkling allegories for our time if I'd been able to finish it. I sneered a bit at the idea of an editor buying one of his own stories until I read it; "Under The Eildon Tree" is by far the best story in the book, with its story of intelligence forced into witchcraft in the 16th century. I can't recommend the book, but if your library has a copy you might want to read some of the stories, particularly Hamilton's.

THE NEW MINDS, by Dan Morgan (Avon, 75¢) In some ways, this is similar to Brunner's WHOLE MAN, dealing as it does with a crippled telepath. However, Morgan goes his own way on the plot and the possible dangers of telepathy. The story is interesting enough, but the ending disappointed me. (I kept hoping; "surely he isn't going to pull that," But he did.) However, any book where the reader can get worked up over the actions of the characters, even if it's to curse at them for their stupidity, can't be all bad.

TIMESCOOP, by John Brunner (Dell, 50¢) Extremely lightweight Brunner. I have never cared much for farce, and this comes perilously close to the custard pie genre. If you're desperate for humor, here it is, in crude form.

CAPTAIN FUTURE'S CHALLENGE, by Edmond Hamilton (Popular Library, 60¢) Hamilton isn't getting any money for these anyway, so if you want it, get it secondhand. It isn't really worth 60¢ anyway.



The Guardians: THROUGH THE DARK CURTAIN, by Peter Saxon (Lancer, 60¢) There is  
 The Guardians #2: DARK WAYS TO DEATH, by Peter Saxon (Berkley, 60¢) also a  
 The Guardians #3: THE HAUNTING OF ALAN MAIS, by Peter Saxon (Berkley, 60¢) "Guardians  
 #1" from Berkley, making this one of the few series with two first volumes. I seem to  
 have missed the first Berkley volume. Essentially these are occult adventure novels;  
 a modernized Jules de Grandin. (Modernized even to the point that here we have an or-  
 ganization; the lone battler of Evil is outdated.) The Lancer book involves Druid  
 magic and occult time travel; the historical sections seem quite well done. Writing  
 isn't top quality, but it's a step up from Doc Savage, certainly. #2 contains voodoo  
 and sex, and suffers in comparison to Brunner's BLACK IS THE COLOR. This volume in  
 particular is reminiscent of sexed-up Seabury Quinn. #3 is the poorest book of the  
 series, suffering from repetition of the background common to the series, and a plot  
 which is a mystery only because nobody will divulge any information about themselves.  
 The background repetition may be necessary in a series (though I've seen it elimin-  
 ated on occasion), but there is no excuse for a plot that depends on everyone being  
 a tongue-tied idiot; a little common sense could have cleared up this "mystery" (a  
 simple haunting) in ten pages.

THE GREAT DIVORCE, by C. S. Lewis (Macmillan, 95¢) A book about Heaven and Hell. Un-  
 fortunately Lewis is very much a fundamentalist about the Hereafter, and to my mind  
 his novel is far less interesting than Robert Nathan's THERE IS ANOTHER HEAVEN, even  
 though I'm sure it hews closer to religious tradition. Not your usual fantasy, at any  
 rate.

TEENOCRACY, by Robert Shirley (Ace, 75¢) This one really isn't as bad as it looks.  
 (It would be hard to reach the depths of that cover, in any event.) It isn't just an  
 imitation of WILD IN THE STREETS, though I'm sure it was inspired by the latter. It's  
 not really a bad satire, though somewhat overdone in spots. (I hope we aren't in for  
 a rash of Teen Power books, though; that could get old awfully fast.) The characters  
 never become very interesting, and things like the government's squabble with the  
 Teen-Stars Union irritated me as being overly obvious and not a very funny pun, but  
 there are some good bits.

LIGHT A LAST CANDLE, by Vincent King (Ballantine, 75¢) This starts out as a sword-  
 and-sorcery epic and ends up as a completely ghastly commentary on the human race,  
 and it's excellent all the way. Some of the characterization seems overdone at first,  
 but you keep reading and it grows on you. One of the best new books of the month.

ORBIT 4, ed. by Damon Knight (Berkley, 75¢) Nine original stories. "Windsong" by Kate  
 Wilhelm, seems to be an emotional piece about the evils of The Establishment, a theme  
 I got tired of long ago because everything pertinent has been said. (I quit reading  
 the story in the middle, though, so I don't guarantee my interpretation.) "Probable  
 Cause" by Charles Harness, covers the legal aspects of clairvoyance and invasion of  
 privacy, and is an excellent story. "Shattered Like A Glass Goblin" by Harlan Ellison,  
 is an old WEIRD TALES story (by some secondrate writer like Arthur J. Burks) with  
 pot substituted for the Nameless Evil, giving it a superficial immediacy but not  
 really improving it any. "The Corruptible" by Jacob Transue, is the old plot of evil  
 outsmarting itself. No particularly interesting twists, but competent writing. "Ani-  
 mal" by Carol Emshwiller, is a short allegory which didn't do anything for me. "One  
 At A Time" features some more of R. A. Lafferty's weird characters, but while charac-  
 terization is important it can't carry a story all by itself, as Lafferty tried to do  
 here. "Passengers" by Silverberg is good readable science fiction, though I'm sure I  
 didn't get all the emotional impact from it that I was supposed to. "Grimm's Story",  
 by Vernor Vinge is a good alternate-worlds story, mixing swords and primitive science  
 with the loneliness of the superior intellect. Second only to the Harness story in  
 length, and my favorite of the book. I didn't read the James Sallis story; I figured  
 I'd done my bit by reading Ellison. Overall, the two longest stories, covering not  
 quite half the book, are well worth reading; some of the shorter works can also be  
 read if you're going to buy the book anyway.

THE MAN IN THE MAZE, by Robert Silverberg (Avon, 75¢) "first publication...in any  
 form" says a little item on the credits page. Which is a flat lie; a slightly trun-  
 cated version was a two-part serial in IF last year. Frankly, I liked the shorter



version better; it said what was necessary, without going into occasional boring detail. But the novel is good enough. I can't say that these in-depth studies of What Makes A Man are particular favorites of mine, but Silverberg handles the theme very well. The story of how and why the searchers get to Muller is entertaining whether you enjoy the psychological study or not.

SEED OF LIGHT, by Edmund Cooper (Ballantine, 75¢) Reprint of a novel that wasn't particularly good the first time. Cooper is too enthralled by his own brilliance to write a good book.

THE SILENT MULTITUDE, by D. G. Compton (Ace, 75¢) Another of the recent spate of stf books which are supposed to provide the reader with a sense of immediacy. This one provided me with a bit too much immediacy; it's supposed to be set in the 1980s, but the British characters make several references to "shillings and florins", which will be museum pieces by 1980. Nothing like too much immediacy to yank you out of the mood of a stf novel. This is another British diasater book, featuring the usual assortment of unbelievable characters, each supposed to illustrate a certain facet of Man-kind. None of them, of course, are remotely interesting; that's against the rules of the game. The author manipulates them across the board to illustrate his comprehension of humanity, which doesn't seem terribly great. But it deals with Society, so of course by present standards it must be good writing. I say it's shit and I say the hell with it.

MECHASM, by John T. Sladek (Ace, 75¢) I can't honestly say I enjoyed this, because I am not interested in farce. But it is well written and if you happen to like farce you will probably like the book. It is simply the story of a machine which reproduces itself, endlessly and unstoppably. All of the characters are idiots, which is why I dislike farce, but if you like your jokes and satire stretched to improbable limits you'll find it here. One of the back cover blurbs compares it to Vonnegut, which seems a valid comparison. Of its type, it's an excellent book.

GOG, by Andrew Sinclair (Avon, 95¢) A big, 450-page satiric novel. The central character is the traditional Innocent, exposing the foibles of mankind by his fresh and unfamiliar views of them. (Well, that's the theory, and in this case it works most of the time.) I found it irritating a good share of the time; as a virtue, innocence is vastly overrated. Actually this is as much allegory as satire, I suppose; at least I assume that the various totally incomprehensible actions were allegory, tho I was never quite sure of what. (But then, the fact that a book is over my head is not necessarily a defect.) This isn't science fiction aspiring to literacy; this is a Literary effort which happens to be fantasy

GUNNER CADE, by Cyril Judd (Dell, 50¢) Here is one of the ones I can't explain. It's not all that much better written than the average adventure-stf, but I enjoy it more each time I re-read it. (Possibly childhood nostalgia; Cade has many of the innocent-but-superior-when-the-chips-are-down attributes of a Clarence Buddington Kelland hero. And at ages 10 to 15 or so, I was nuts about Kelland.) Pure space opera; the authors tell a good story without worrying about whether or not it has sociological implications. I like to re-read it every so often along with SWORD OF RHIANNON and SEETEE SHOCK. It has a sense of wonder, for me, anyway.

THE WOOD BEYOND THE WORLD, by William Morris (Ballantine, 95¢) The front cover shows the virginal Maid kneeling in front of a field of sorghum, which is perfectly in the spirit of the stickily sweet writing. Lin Carter, who writes the foreword, says this is "the first great fantasy novel ever written" (he means heroic fantasy, but even there he's right only by the technicality that things like the Odyssey and the Old Testament aren't, strictly speaking, novels.) However, I suppose the book does have a certain historic interest. It certainly doesn't have any other kind, unless you're desperate for pseudo-Elizabethan writing.

CAPTIVE UNIVERSE, by Harry Harrison (Berkley, 60¢) Harrison does a creditable job on his version of the generations-ship. Once again it's pure space opera, but the plot moves along, Chimal is quite likable, there is plenty of action and no glaring inconsistencies. Thoroughly entertaining, phony Aztec gods and all. An original paperback, as far as I can tell.



TONIGHT WE STEAL THE STARS, by John Jakes/THE WAGERED WORLD, by Laurence Janifer and S. J. Treibich (Ace, 75¢) The Jakes half is his third story in the "Galaxy II" series. Good, action-packed space opera if you can disregard the ridiculous background, which I can't. THE WAGERED WORLD is also the third in a series. I wouldn't have liked it even if it was good because I don't like farce, but I get the impression that the quality is a long way from, say, MECHASM, as well. It does have occasional pieces of fannish-type humor, but too many of them are jokes that I've heard before. Endlessly. If the humor is new to you, you will probably enjoy the book.

CRADLE OF THE SUN, by Brian M. Stableford/THE WIZARDS OF SENCHURIA, by Ken Bulmer (Ace, 75¢) The Bulmer half is also part of a series (the Irunium, or Trug, or Countess, or whatever you choose to call it series). Possibly part of my recent disenchantment with Ace Doubles is the fact that most of them anymore seem parts of series, and I don't like series. This one is better than the previous book, although the philosophical objections to violence strung through one of the goriest novels I've read in a long time tend toward unintentional humor. (The moral seems to be it's all right to read about violence but horrible to do it, and Evan Hunter's world of Vikes is closer every day.) Still, it's at least mediocre action-adventure, as is the other half. Stableford takes up the Quest theme, in a future and presumably exotic society. He's no Jack Vance or Leigh Brackett (or Anne McCaffrey or Vincent King, for that matter), but the story is moderately enjoyable if you don't stop too long to think about it.

THE HOLE IN THE ZERO, by M. K. Joseph (Avon, 75¢) I assume Mr. (or Mrs.) Joseph is British; the cast of characters which is totally without redeeming qualities seems to be a trademark of a certain type of British writer. This is another book in which the characters travel through a series of alternate worlds, changing and being changed by them. Phil Dick did it earlier - and better, for my money. Since the characters are completely unsympathetic, I found myself unable to care a faint damn what happened to them and stopped reading about the middle of the book, though I got an impression by skimming the rest that it was pretentious sword-and-sorcery.

THE DIRDIR, by Jack Vance (Ace, 60¢) The third in his "Planet of Adventure" series. This is totally unpretentious, and therefore (since it is also well-written) quite entertaining. His characters aren't merely symbols intended to show an aspect of humanity - but because they do react as normal humans, they actually provide more knowledge than the exaggerated neurotics of M.K. Joseph. The plot consists of Our Hero making one more try to obtain a spaceship to get him off the planet Tschai, and ends with - not failure, as in the previous books, but a qualified success. The way is now open for Vance to end the series here with the assumption that Reith completed his ship, or to continue it with an explanation of why he didn't. (I would vote to end the series, or write at the most one more book; it's a good series but it could easily be extended too far.)

THE KING OF ELFLAND'S DAUGHTER, by Lord Dunsany (Ballantine, 95¢) The more I read of Dunsany, the less enthused I am by him. I didn't find the passages of "amazing power and unearthly beauty" that Lin Carter promised in the introduction; I found an interesting idea turned into a remarkably dull book. I found no "fabulous" imagery, and unlike an apparently vast number of young readers, I am not thrilled by "exotic names" per se. Stf abounds in exotic names, many of them better than Dunsany's. If an author can combine beautiful prose with interesting characters and plot, that's great. But when, like Dunsany, he becomes obsessed with his prose to the exclusion of other story elements, I object. The idea of the problems of a mortal who marries the King of Elfland's daughter is marvelous; the execution is poetic, but drably poetic.

THE PANDORA EFFECT, by Jack Williamson (Ace, 60¢) Two novelets, "With Folded Hands" and "The Equalizer". The first is by all odds Williamson's most important story; with its direct sequel, "...And Searching Mind", it became the novel THE HUMANOIDS, and at one time its robot motto, "To serve and obey, and guard men from harm" was better known in fandom than Asimov's three laws of robotics. Because there is a trick to it; consider the consequences of a literal interpretation of guarding men from harm. That is what Williamson does. "The Equalizer" is a lesser story, but based on Silas



McKinley's interesting theory that political freedom and weapons technology are intertwined. (When major military weapons are within reach of the average citizen - longbows, flintlock rifles - then there is individual freedom, and when major weapons are available only to the wealthy or to large groups - armored knights, atomic bombs - individual freedom declines. Actually of course there are modifying influences, but it seems obvious that some relationship exists.) Short stories include "Guinevere For Everybody" (the ultimate in vending machines), "The Happiest Creature" (the problems of satisfying humanity), "The Cosmic Express" (a crude but true exposition that Thoreau is better worshipped at a distance), "The Metal Man" (typical example of the 1930s treatment of exotic aliens - since it was published in 1928 I guess this puts it ahead of its time) and "The Cold Green Eye" (an interesting revenge fantasy). All in all, a much better book than I expected when I opened it.

SPACEPAW, by Gordon Dickson (Berkley, 75¢) Another cover artist who didn't read the story; the aliens are specifically described as looking like bears, not gorillas. The story is a moderately funny and quite entertaining account of the problems of contact with a race of moderately friendly aliens. Lightweight, humorous, engaging. The problem is that the aliens are friendly, but just not interested in human technology, and how do you prove its usefulness?

A QUINTET OF SIXES, ed. by Donald Wollheim (Ace, 60¢) Anyone who thinks that the science fiction short story is in trouble should read this volume. This is an official anthology of the Western Writers of America, and so should include the cream of the western crop, right? Well...let's hope not. "The Trailsman", by Allan Vaughn Elston, is abysmal. "Nelson, then, was a cowman. So was Cheeseman. This indicated to Larrabee that the trouble had to do with cows." This is a fair sample of the utterly wooden writing style. "Born To The Brand", by D.B. Newton, and "The Gunsmoke King Calls Quits" by Thomas Thompson, are sheer soppy sentimentality, the first about a tough-talking kid who down deep really just wants a home and mother, and the second about a tough-talking old-timer with a heart of gold - a perfect Wallace Beery character, if you're old enough to remember Beery. (To quote John Greenway, "There is something about the cattle industry that turns its practitioners into sentimental idiots." He was talking about cowboy music in a preface to a recording of "The Dying Stockman", but the quote fits the literature, too.) "Gun Search", by Giles A. Lutz, and "They Hanged Wild Bill Murphy", by Wayne D. Overholser are average, competently-written stories. But overall, it's an extremely low grade of cream.

SLAVES, by John O. Killens (Pyramid, 75¢) Slave novels are very big these days, and reading one will make you feel better about stf novels. This one has even been bought for the movies (or perhaps was written originally for the movies). It's a cut-down UNCLE TOM'S CABIN, with any vestige of authenticity or social importance removed and sex added. (Not very much sex, at that, for a modern novel.) Recommended only if you want to be cheered up about the average quality of stf.

FILE FOR RECORD, by Alice Tilton (Popular Library, 60¢) Another of the Leonidas Witherall detective stories, which I think are funny. The plot is pretty standard; hero must solve case before police, and while being harassed. But the harassments are different from the usual; being dumped in a department-store bread bin, making an unrehearsed speech at a Victory Swop (this was written during World War II), being besieged by various clubwomen types, trying to locate an oil-truck driver who left her mink coat at the scene of the crime, etc. This could be youthful nostalgia; the list doesn't really sound all that superior to a Janifer novel, does it? But I liked the book.

FLYING FURY, by Maj. James McCudden (Ace, 95¢) Another in their WW1 flying series. This one is about average; inferior to the Biddle book in the series, but superior to the others. (On the whole, the series is pretty monotonous, but individual books can be entertaining. It's just that all the books are so much alike.)

TEST YOUR WITS, by Eric Doubleday (Ace, 60¢) Various psychological and mathematical puzzles. Most of them were new to me, but then I'm not much of a puzzle fancier. This one goes to Bruce, who should enjoy it. A good number of stf fans seem to like this sort of thing.