

FAN DANGO

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F A P A
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THE STF HERETIC

It is a source of wonder to me why fandom so universally praises certain prozines to the stars, and so universally damns certain others. It seems to be almost a fad for the average fan to rave joyfully over anything published by Street and Smith, snort angrily at anything with the Ziff-Davis tag, and blandly ignore all the others. While it is quite true that Amazing and Fantastic Adventures are aimed at the younger readers--and that as a consequence the older, more discriminating fan may not find so much of interest--it is painfully obvious that Palmer has no monopoly on puerility. An impartial survey of a year's output of the entire field will show so slight an edge in favor of Astounding and Unknown Worlds that it is scarcely worth talking about.

Many of the best of the Campbell-edited stories suffer from an unnecessarily involved and complex structure. Mere complicatedness does not make a good story. An element of suspense is of course necessary, but the "mystery" should be what the author is going to say, not what he has said. And as far as "fine writing" is concerned, Campbell's men don't always do so well--of the recently concluded Gather, Darkness, with its scores of subordinate phrases and clauses used as complete sentences. This type of sloppy writing mars any story for the discriminating reader, no matter how fine it may be otherwise. I might also cite as a horrible example the Unknown Worlds type of story--brittle, flaccid, insincere, and unconvincing--a far cry from the literate fantasy of Lovecraft, Smith, Howard, and Derleth.

This is not to be taken as an attack on J. W. Campbell and his magazines. Not only do I buy (and read) both regularly, but I feel that all serious fans should do the same. What I am objecting to is the widespread tendency of fans to accept their stf on the strength of the name on the magazine cover rather than on a basis of intelligent reading. Unless a person's taste has become so narrow that nothing but the Campbell "type" will suit him, the two Street and Smith mags are ahead of the field, markedly at least, only in typography. A reader whose tastes are catholic will find nearly as large a percentage of top-notch tales, issue for issue, in nearly any of the other prozines.

I particularly fail to understand the perpetual snub given to Startling Stories. While I hold no brief for one prozine against another, I can't help feeling that the fan who by-passes Startling is gypping himself out of some extremely good stf. I will grant that much of Startling artwork is below average. I admit its typography leaves much to be desired. I'll join you in snickering at its juvenile "science" departments. And above all, I gag at Sgt. Saturn's corny jive about the Xeno jug, et al. But in spite of all these flaws, I consider Startling to be one of the top prozines, and deserving of far more mention than it receives. In the first place, the Hall of Fame series is gradually reprinting many of the best stories from the Gernsback Wonder, a signal service to the newer addict. I'm free to admit that I started buying this mag solely on the strength of the reissues, but after reading several numbers I found even the new stories to be much better than I had expected, particularly the book-lengths. Startling usually uses a rather conventional type of stf-adven-

ture tale, but there is rarely anything obviously obnoxious, and the majority of the book-lengths are good enough to be well worth rereading.

Moreover, what other prozine treats fandom as well as Startling? Since early 1939, this magazine has printed reviews of all fanzines sent them for this purpose---four and one half years of fanzine reviews. I doubt if fans comprise more than one or two percent of any pulpzine's readers, yet Weisinger has consistently devoted this space to us. I'm grateful for this, if other fans aren't! The Startling blatt column is unusually long. If the letters aren't always as good as one would like, that's our fault. (I notice that one JWC does not hesitate to leave his readers out altogether.)

I do not wish to convey the impression that I am a Startling fan in the sense that many are Asf fans. In case you were wondering, I buy all prozines except Fantastic Adventures and Captain Future. But I did feel that Startling was a splendid example for me to use here.

John W. Campbell is a brilliant writer and a highly successful editor. But fandom displays a damning lack of perspective when they permit Campbell's good qualities to blind them to the merits of other editors and other magazines. Any prozine which goes out of its way to help fandom deserves not only fan recognition but active support from all of us. After all, NONE of the pulps make their profits off our limited little circle!

The Stf Heretic xXx His mark.

jointhepoopoopeeayenotaninterlineationinacarloadaintthe?fapasillybillies?

THE FANZINE ANTHOLOGY.

My madden issue had brief details of a mighty scheme I had scum, dealing (in case you don't remember) with the possibility of an anthology of the first ten years of fan magazines. The definite dope was, I had hoped, to be aired somewhat in this issue---but too many indefinite dopes precluded any definite dope... (Hey, what is this?) In any case, I still would like to have an anthology, and would be delighted to hear from any gullible souls who would be willing to lay either work or finances on the line. All comment thus far has been in the nature of moral support, and that doesn't turn mimeo cranks.

Howsomever, there may be mention of this project elsewhere in this mailing. Oh well,

ifharrywarnercandothiasocanibutitseeemssillyassillyassillyassilly

WARNING TO THE UNINITIATED:

In case anyone had any doubts about this FAPazine, all remarks, insults, comments, cracks, and stuff contained herein is/are the parthogenetic brain-brats of one Francis T. Laney, and no one else is to be considered in the least responsible for any of it. In fact, there are those who consider that the said FTL is not in the least responsible for any of it; but this, I hasten to assure you, is an unfounded libel!

theaboveinterlineationwastooobsceneandilostmynervepantywaistpantywaistpan

FILLER:

I want to start my next article on the top of a page, because it deals with Al Ashley and his Slan Center, so here I sit, jamming with myself. Funny to be wasting space this way too, for with THE ACOLYTE, I have a hard time to get everything I want included.

LANEY VIEWS THE SLAN CENTER

Ashley's brainstorm is no less than wonderful! What a conception! Being Missourian on my father's side, there are a few details that would have to be threshed out before I abandon hearth and home, trek east a la Okie, and camp on Al's back porch. But I concur heartily with the main idea, and hope that a large and workable project can be gotten under way.

A few points which occur to me.

What assurance is there that a group of such highly organized, sensitive, semi-neurotic people--Slans or no--would be able to stand each other for a life-time? In other words, the shack or center will have to be huge enough so that the inmates (I use this word advisedly) would not see too much of each other. Furthermore, the selections of dwellers in Al's mirage would have to be made with extreme care--both on a basis of personality and on financial and moral standing. (I use moral in the sense of honesty, rather than in the way certain church goers have debased the original meaning of the word.)

What about non-slans inmates? My wife, for example, though a charming and rather personable red-head, can see nothing in fanning. She tolerates THE ACOLYTE and all such like paraphernalia, but considers me utterly touched for delving therein. I dare say many of the lads will have wenches, permanent or temporary, culled from the ranks of the Great Unenlightened. And how about backsliders? If the B-Ser (don't be crude, dear reader) had his investment in the center, merely giving him his brick back sounds, to say the least, impracticable. (Unless the brick was returned to him with such force that we could inherit his estate.)

What about children? It seems to me that one of the greatest advantages of having our own community would be that we could circumvent the ghastly and archaic school system, and raise them up in our own inimitable way. I suggest that ten slan-couples with children could perhaps afford the hire of a very competent nurse, and provide an utterly stupendous playground, nursery, and school system for their brats.

imnotdoneyetdearfriendsbutithoughtthataninterlineationwouldnotbeamisnow

WHY NOT GO COMMUNISTIC ON A LARGE SCALE? I visualize a big super-apartment building, rather than Al's group of isolated housing units. It occurs to me that we could do very well with a communal kitchen and dining room, and a full-time cook-housekeeper.

Here are some phony figures which may illustrate what I'm getting at:

LIVING EXPENSES FOR A SLAN-APT COUPLE

a. Monthly salary for house-keeper/cook - - - - -	\$175.00
" " " Brat Herd - - - - -	175.00

(one-tenth of this is only \$35.00)	\$350.00
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b. Even slans must eat. My own grocery bill (including meat and milk) runs between \$55.00 and \$60.00 per month and feeds two adults and two children. Cooperative buying should peel 10% off this. So, one month's food 52.50

c. I can't make a very intelligent estimate of Battle Creek's heating, lighting, and water expense; but \$11.00 per month (figuring 12 months expenses divided by 12)

handles this phase of things for me here in Clarkston.

(Includes electric range, refrigerator, water tank, washing machine--and furnace operation). I think that under joint operation, we could easily peel 25% off this bill. (Or could we?) Anyway - - - - - 8.25

d. Again I'm stumped. Battle Creek taxes are an unknown quantity. Mine run \$34.00 per year--or per month - - 3.00

e We should retire our funded debt at \$400 00 per month - - - 40 00

RECAPITULATION

One month's living expenses for a slant center couple.

a.	Salary account - - - - -	\$ 35.00
b.	The inner slant - - - - -	52.50
c.	Heat, light, water - - - - -	8.25
d.	Taxes } (rent) - - - - -	3.00
e.	Debt } - - - - -	40.00

\$138.75

Add 10% for ??? - - - - - 14.00

TOTAL - - - - - \$152.75

Do you suppose we could figure on \$250 00 monthly income (man and wife both working)? Gad, this is only \$125 00 per person--even I top that. On paper, at least, this looks like the life of Riley--nearly one hundred dollars a month just for clothes and pleasure.

figurescantliebutliarscanfigurefigurescantliebutliarscanfigurefigurescant

Now just what sort of apartment shack could we build? I personally need lots of space and feel that a minimum for one couple would be three large rooms as follows: 18x25' living-room and den, 12'x14' bed room, 16x18' nursery. (Let the architect figure how to get ten of these into one building!) As much "beloved trash" as I have, I'd need still an extra room for a combined den and olde curiositie shoppe. Others might perhaps wish less space than the minimum unit.

But we would need ten 3-room units, plus about five "extra" rooms. These last need not adjoin any given apartment, and might be rented to members, or used for over-night guests. To save space and plumbing expense, I suggest communal toilets and shower rooms. It might also be well to furnish extra living units for the nurse and cook.

In addition to private apartments, there should be a number of community rooms. Most essential, I think, would be a large and thoroughly equipped nursery and playroom for the children; and second (as Al suggested) a well-equipped woodworking shop--(if I join the Center, my \$600 00 worth of tools are at the gang's disposal). Then we will need a dining hall, a kitchen, and an up-to-the-minute laundry.

I visualize a fireproof, brick and concrete building with full basement. It should have enough land with it to give us a good-sized, private park, with tennis courts, recreation patio, garden plot--perhaps even a small poultry farm and cow barn. (All of these outdoor facilities could be built by the inmates--perhaps by furnishing the labor we might even be able to afford a good swimming pool, in time.)

The main building should be air-conditioned, automatically heated, and in general equipped with the best of everything. (Furnishings for the individual apartments would of course be up to the occupants.)

Where I think my idea beats Al's all hollow is in the quality of accommodations we could have for the same money. His center calls for detached and semi-detached buildings---which would be unable to take advantage of central heating or communal living. Individual buildings duplicate each other so greatly in construction, plumbing, and in the laundry and kitchen facilities (and if you think a modern electric kitchen doesn't cost a king's ransom just you equip one). Instead of working the respective tails off our respective wives in duplicating house work and child care, why not centralize, hire this work done, and send the gals out on commercial jobs (where they'd work much less than they do at home? We'd improve living conditions and make money on it too!

favorite jazz musicians (Ellington, Armstrong, Lunceford, etc.) appearing in them. Phooey on Hollywood. If the movies have brought us one show which is 100% satisfying to a person of moderately adult tastes, I have never heard of it. Even the relatively mature piece insult you with some rank Hollywoodiana.

WALT'S WRAMBLINGS. Hm. Is this guy an FAPA? He actually seems to be interested in sf/fantasy! Hooray for you, Walt--wish there were more like you. The Esther Forbes MIRROR FOR WITCHES which you mention is a superb piece of work. Restrained and artistic, it builds up a tremendous atmosphere without finding it necessary to spring a horrific denouement complete with ululations. It is most unusual to find a solid horror novel without a lot of superfluous melodrama. In the original edition (Houghton Mifflin, 1928) Forbes is ably helped by an unusually sympathetic typography, including several effective woodcuts by Robert Gibbings. I hope the reprint you mention uses the original plates.

BROWSING. Another exceptionally good item. I personally would prefer bibliographical single-sheets like this one to elaborate, 24 page extravaganzas made up of non-fantastic bullfisting.

FUNGI FROM YUGGOTH. Best item in the mailing.

IMAGI-INDEX. Why'd I BUY one of these? But this is worthwhile. How'd it be for someone to reprint the original INDEX for us FAPAians?

YHOS. At last! A use for backing sheets. Why not draw out your board full size with various colors of hektograph and pull off copies for all of us? It would take several 8x11 sheets, but it shouldn't be difficult to piece them together and cement them on a board. (I'll pay extra for a set, and I'll bet other members would also.).....Yhos commits what is my idea of a fan editor's most unpardonable sin--interpolating arguments in his letter section. I maintain that letter excerpts should be printed as is, with no interruptions, with comments (if any) separate from the original letter. This interpolation idea really raises hob with the writer's (and reader's) train of thought.

SILVER DUSK. Hope this is the first of a long series.

EN GARDE. Slan Center has already been mentioned in "an-Dango. Barbarian Invasion? You take into account only one side of this situation. The whole trouble is that under our present system labor saving devices are used to build profits for the well-to-do, rather than to improve the lot of the wage-earner. Technological unemployment is a very real and menacing threat to our civilization. Judge St. Sure probably ruled wrong in this case, but look at it from the painters' angle. Those guys work so many hours a day for so much an hour. If spray guns halve the time it takes to do a given job, these men are actually receiving a 50% cut in wages. The painters aren't objecting to 20th century technology; they are protesting against 19th century economics. In other words, why should half the painters starve to death in order that the capitalists (or whatever you wish to call them) may get their painting done 50% cheaper? A labor saving device, instead of throwing people out of work, should enable them to work fewer hours per day for the same total money. How this can be done under the profit system is beyond me, but this problem needs to be faced. Boy, I'll bet you'd squall if they introduced self-operated, robot taxicabs.

FAN-TODS. What, if any, is the point of artificial impregnation? I've been under the impression that Mother Nature had furnished us with a definitive method.

POGORUS. This paragraph was originally much longer and much nastier; I have deleted and expunged only because of my stand against fan feuds. However, this alleged fanzine was the only item in the mailing that I disliked---and in the case of POGORUS, "disliked" is a masterpiece of understatement. My dear fellow, if you are so all-fired noble and patriotic, don't you think you'd look well in khaki? I think I'm safe in saying that every single member of FAPA is every bit as loyal and every bit as patriotic as the general run of the population. Many of the members are already in the service, and many more are subject to call. But somehow, the rest of us manage to do our part, either in the army or in war work, without a vast fanfare of boasting and chest beating. Without the faintest trace of name-calling, I should like to draw your attention to the self-evident fact that when a CIVILIAN gets so worked up about "good Japs are dead Japs", he is laying himself wide-open to a charge of hypocrisy. Think it over.

GUTETO. Morajo, would you be so kind as to publish a few of your "ideas on bringing up young slans"? I've a couple of my own, you know, and the raising of these kids is definitely the main problem of my life. I know a few things to avoid, and a few things to emphasize, but somehow the ideas in the conventional childcare books, or the suggestions of ordinary parents, seem calculated to raise typical, poured-from-a-mould, dumb average people.

RAHUUN TA-KA. Raymond A. Ackerman, the successor to Burroughs!

LOVE, ELMER. Congratulations!

HORIZONS. With all due respects to Los Angeles, it seems obvious to me that English not only will be the universal language, but already is. A point that I didn't notice in connection with Esperanto is the great danger of using a "dead" or "non-alive" language for matters of universal culture. In the days when all knowledge was kept in Latin, the common people were perforce kept ignorant. It seems to me that Esperanto could, if adopted, lead us into an analogous situation---a limited few having access to culture, and the great masses living in ignorance.

FA. You folks should all compare this with THE NATIONAL AMATEUR, official organ of the NAPA. NA is printed, and probably contains more wordage, but Al's effort surpasses it so far that the "National" should go and hide somewhere. Someday I shall have to compare NAPA with FAPA in these pages, and make all you jerks swell-headed.

AAGH! The article on Cabel made me buy six of his books, plus a biography of the old boy. If this stuff doesn't pan out now, I shall be gunning for you, Budday! Quote (p.2 and 3) Send orders to local telepath unquote. A certain Mr. Koenig is apt to page you, Budday me lad! Seriously, I'll buy some of those books if you'll send me an address, you local telepath! Your cover is a type of thing that fascinates me. How many cross-eyed guys are reading AAGH? Theoretically, I should think that this series might be considered to extend to infinity in both directions.

INSPIRATION. You are completely right when you say that FAPA should mention the war as little as possible. After all, we are all doing our part in whatever capacity the government wants us. Over and above our daily work, bond-buying, etc. I fail to see what more any one of us can do to bring the war to a more successful conclusion. If Uncle wants any one of us in the army or navy, he drafts us; otherwise I believe we are expected to carry on in our civilian capacities (few non-vital civilian jobs are left after nearly two years of war). Too much dwelling on the war and its problems will merely upset us and keep us from doing our best in our jobs, so I say a hearty amen to you, sir, and hope that your idea is adopted throughout the whole gang, particularly by the guy I jumped on a few paragraphs ago.

SUSPRO. Without the faintest hint of animosity, I can't help wondering just what you demand in your stf/fantasy. Your remarks to Gnaedinger seem rather narrow and intolerant from where I sit. Perhaps I lean too far towards "the good old days", but I honestly can't see what Campbell has that Mary hasn't. As a matter of fact, I believe that an impartial survey will show that Mary gives us far greater variety---in any case, I find the Campbellian tales ~~kingly~~ (') highly monotonous as a steady diet. Sandwiched in with other stf and fantasy, they are highly stimulating, but too many in one lump are extremely indigestible. Would there be any chance of getting you to devote a few words in some future SUSPRO to the criteria on which you judge your stf?

MAILING AS A WHOLE. Meaty, copious, and excellent.

 athulhunarlatheprandolphcarteryogeeothshubbniggurathtsatthogwayuggoth

 I QUOTE FROM A LETTER just received from Sid Dean:

"Fans are such intellectual snobs, you say. I could kiss you for that (N.B. HE DIDN'T, GOODY GOODY); it hits home all the way. The average fan--as I have seen and heard and read of him--considers himself on a higher intellectual plane than the hoi-polloi, and considers himself unappreciated. Fandom is an absolutely unorthodox and different way of life, and a fan out of fandom is a fish out of water. We could use a large hunk of psychological and emotional stability, but most of us get disillusioned with fandom by the time we achieve that, then we seek some other avenue of escape from the narrow bonds of normal plodding life. Too bad we fans have to be such vain creatures. Fandom would be a better thing and hold together very nicely if we had better outlets for our vanity and our emotional pressures. Social planning and a little sub-rosa politics do the trick neatly except that fans lose all sense of proportion and rationalize instead of plan. Most fans don't think about intellectual matters; they only argue."

Any of you guys want to take Sid up?-

 thelastonethankgodforsmallfavorsidon'tthinkilldothisinterlineatingagainnone

I should apologise for the exceedingly large number of misprints in this issue. I just didn't have time to go slowly enough to avoid them; next mailing I hope to do better. Best wishes to you all.

FTL