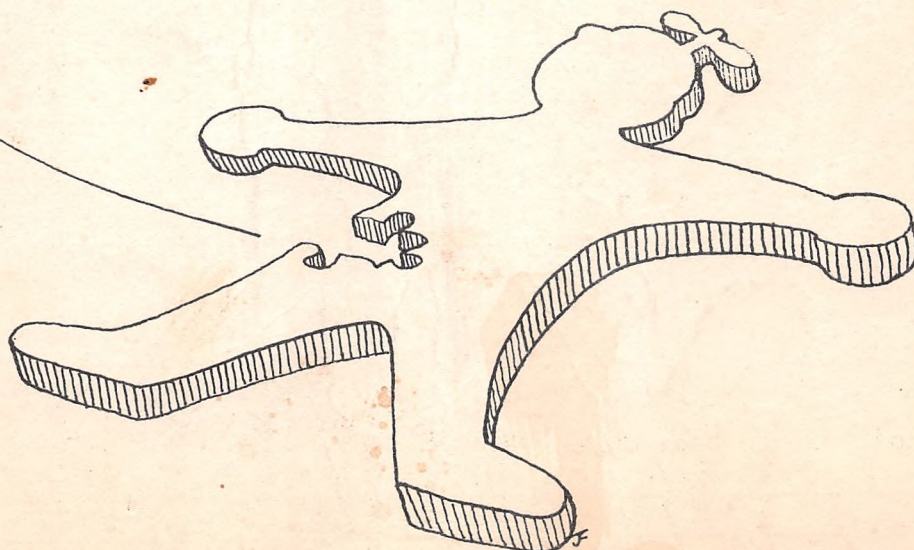


THE Really INCOMPLETEAT BOB TUCKER



The Really Incompleat Bob Tucker

October 1974



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THE REALLY INCOMPLEAT BOB TUCKER, officially subtitled THE HOY PING PONG SAMPLER, is published both to humbly honor Bob Tucker's 40 years of fanwriting and to financially assist THE TUCKER FUND in its endeavor to export Bob to the 33rd World Science Fiction Convention being held in Melbourne, Australia in September, 1975. The selling price of this publication is a minimum of \$1.00 (cheap) if you pick it up from someone selling it at a convention, or a minimum of \$1.50 if obtained through the mail (from Jackie Franke, Box 51-A, RR 2, Beecher IL 60401). As all proceeds beyond mailing expenses will go into the Fund, amounts higher than those stated will gladly be accepted. Bob Tucker will personally autograph your copy in Melbourne, provided that you buy him a drink first.

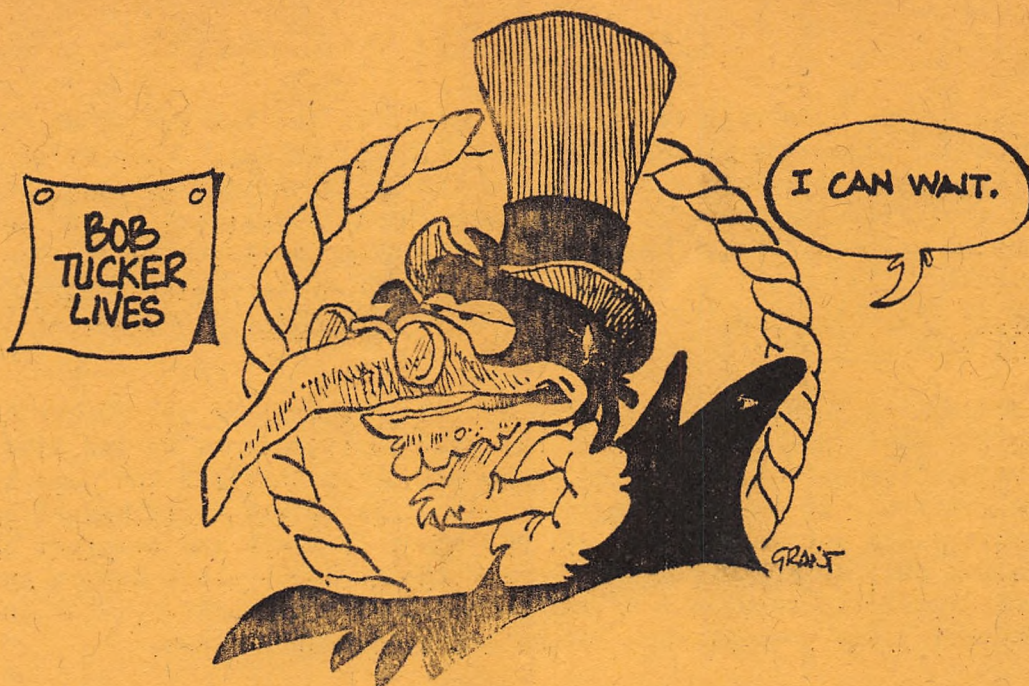
We would have liked to publish 40 of Bob's articles, one from each of the past 40 years. With time being at a premium, not to mention resources being likewise, we have settled for the "sampler" approach. The quality and variety of the articles presented herein are more than suitable to the purpose of acquainting - or reacquainting - you with the fan, the writer, and the man. They also speak to the fact that here is a person who has enriched fandom for 40 years and will continue to do so until all the Beam's Choice in the universe has been poured over ice.

Welcome to the world of Arthur Wilson Robert Bob Tucker,



Artwork

- Cover Art by Jackie Franke
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- Dave Jenrette
..... 2 (both)
- Bill Rotsler
..... 13 (from A BAS #11, 2/59). 32 (from KARASS #4, 4-5/74).



A FEW WORDS ABOUT TUCKER

-- and the fewer the better, say I.

Over the past forty years an amazing amount has been written about Bob Tucker -- most of it by himself -- and little really remains to be said.

Not that this will stop me from saying it.

For more than twenty-five of those years, Wilson "Bob" Tucker, as he is also known (among other things which I won't repeat in the pages of a fanzine which might fall into the hands of innocent young FAPA members) has been my alter ego, my bete noir, my doppelganger, or in plain English, my psychic twin.

Now plans are under way to send him to Australia. This I find most appropriate, inasmuch as Australia started out as a penal colony.

But in this instance, of course, it's Australia that is being punished, not Tucker.

At any rate, the purpose of this fanzine, I am told, is to help raise sufficient funds to send him to the '75 Worldcon Down Under. They told me that if I'd write an introduction to the 'zine, it might help to send Tucker away for a month.

I immediately offered to write twelve introductions and send him away for a year.

If you find that attitude difficult to understand, you either (a) missed the remark about him being my psychic twin or (b) been even more fortunate and missed seeing or hearing about Tucker entirely.

But I haven't been so lucky, and that's why I'm anxious to see him go. As anxious as Jekyll was to get rid of Hyde, or Dorian Grey to paint a mustache on that picture he

had stuck away.

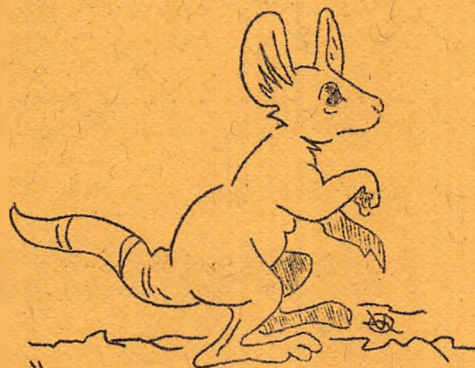
You see, over the years, it's been too easy for people to get the two of us confused -- inasmuch as Tucker was himself already confused, anyway. When we've attended conventions together, it's Tucker who has the fun and I who get my face slapped. When we show up at a literary seminar, it's Tucker who is identified as the author of Psycho and I who am pointed out as the model for its central character. Worse than that, adding insult to injury, I am sometimes accused of having written The Long Loud Silence or Year Of The Quiet Sun, or even of editing Le Zombie. Whereas, if truth be told, I wouldn't know Le Zombie from Lee Hoffman.

Please do not attempt to insult my intelligence with a recital of all Tucker has done for fandom over the past four decades -- of his vast contributions to the field, his international reputation as a fan humorist whose wit often contains the hard kernel of truthful observation. Do not waste my time with talk of his achievements as a professional writer; his score of novels and his spate of fresh and original short stories. And above all, do not try my patience with anecdotes about Tucker the man, who has endeared himself to thousands of fen on hundreds of occasions. Not only do I know these things; I was present when Tucker invented most of them.

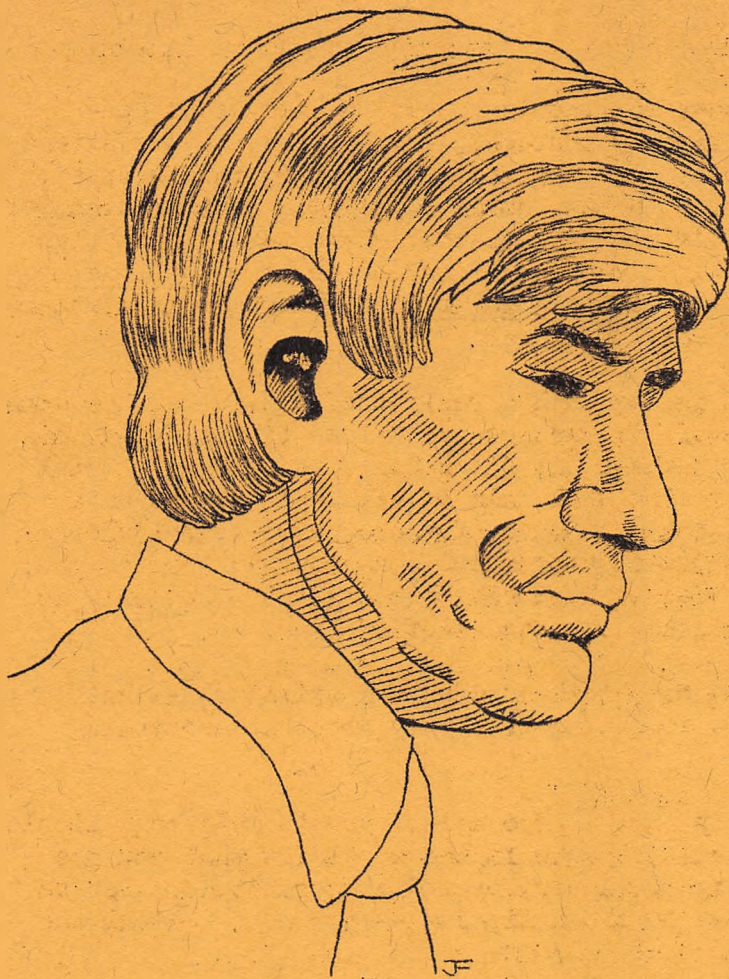
Through the decades, our relationship has been both mundane and spiritual -- half symbiotic and half astral. There is also something brotherly about it; something which reminds me of Cain and Abel.

So it is with this deep feeling of kinship that I urge all of you to read this little fanzine -- grit your teeth, grin and bear it, secure in the knowledge that you are furthering a worthy cause. To say nothing of winning my undying gratitude. Let us spare no effort to speed Tucker on his way to the Antipodes -- nor must we feel the slightest guilt in so doing.

Just remember -- Australia's loss will be our gain!



"Coming HERE?"



MY (UPDATED) LIFE AND TIMES*

*(not a Lancer book)

Arthur Wilson Robert Bob Tucker (who is entitled to only three of those names, the other two being spurious and stolen from Robert Bloch) is seated glumly at his ancient desk (Montgomery Ward, 1941), absently playing a tune on his second-hand Olympia typewriter while awaiting an inspiration. The tune is unrecognizable and stridently off key, which is strictly in character. The house is quiet, the other occupants long since retired, the lights are low and a number of household cats have been put out for the night. Suddenly there comes a timid knocking at the window. Enter, through that window, Hoy Ping Pong, a wily Oriental.

Hoy: "Hoffwoman sent me."

AWRBT: "Why? I don't owe her money. Just the opposite, in fact; she owes me about four dollars worth of grits and hominy. Do you have them there in your pocket?"

Hoy: "Please, sir, I'm on a serious mission; let us not speak of dollars or grits. Hoffwoman sent me."

AWRBT: "You said that. Again, why?"

Hoy: "To interview you, to obtain your autobiography."

AWRBT: "Whatinthehellfor?"

Hoy: "To print in her fanzine Quantum, of course. She has some crazy idea in her head, some notion to parade your sinful past before the tender eyes of her readers."

He laughed nastily. "She stressed the importance of obtaining a factual autobiography. That means you'll have to omit your usual lies."

AWRBT: "I'm blamed if I understand all this."

Hoy: "You and me both, chum. To think of all the decent upstanding fans she could immortalize in Quadrant!"

AWRBT: "Watch your tongue, wily Oriental! But I suppose we BNFs in the public eye must submit to this folderol; the public must be served. Where shall I start?"

Hoy: "With your birth, of course -- and please, let's have none of that coy nonsense about being born in bed beside your mother. Furthermore, I don't believe in storks, bullrushes, and cabbage leaves. Factual is the operative word."

AWRBT: "You're a hard man, HPP. I had a dandy anecdote for you about drifting down the Nile rowing my own reed basket, but if there is to be no bullrushes, well --- I was humbly born on a humble farm near Peoria, Illinois. The structure didn't happen to be a log cabin so I don't suppose I can ever be President. The time was shortly after midnight on November 23, 1914, and I happen to know those facts only because Hannes Bok once did my astrological chart and scared the living hell out of me. Do you want to know a funny thing?"

Hoy: "No. Hoffwoman said this was to be factual."

AWRBT: "But this is factual, by Hugo! Until a few years ago I was never officially born at all. When I wrote the county courthouse to get a copy of my birth certificate for Hannes, I was found to be only a blank space in their records. It seems the attending doctor forgot to send in a birth certificate or something, and I didn't really exist. The courthouse people asked me to submit an affidavit stating that I really existed, and the document had to be signed in blood by an older relative in a position to know. I don't mind admitting the affair had me worried for a time. I might not really exist, you know."

Hoy: "That, indeed, would be a terrible blow to fandom. There could be dancing in the streets. Now, what's all this nonsense about your five names?"

AWRBT: "Two of them aren't genuine. I am neither Bob nor Robert. Somewhere along the way I picked them up and they've stuck to me ever since. I suspect that my younger brother and sister began by calling me Bub, which became Bob as they grew older. And I don't care much for Arthur, so I use Wilson."

Hoy: "We'll get back to that in a moment. Hoffwoman said to search the hoary records to dig out the facts on your fan career. Let's start digging."

AWT: "Oh, come now, not that hoary. I'm not a great grandfather, you know, although I suppose I will be soon. My eldest granddaughter is seventeen, and you know how it goes."

Hoy: (leering lecherously) "I know, I know!"

AWT: "I began fanning in 1931. The year before that I had inherited a stack of old Argosy magazines in someone's closet and started reading the Ray Cummings serials. BRAND NEW WORLD was my first science fiction novel and it converted me, instantly. About that same time (1930) I was serving my apprenticeship as a theater stagehand, and the actors were forever leaving old copies of WEIRD TALES lying around (they were a queer lot). By the summer of 1931 I'd found the other SF magazines on the

newsstands, and was buying them fitfully as finances permitted -- even at 15¢ a copy it was frequently difficult to part with the money. (Check your history book for an event known as Mr. Hoover's Depression.) That same year I submitted my first letter to ASTOUNDING STORIES, and gained a handful of pen pals, my first contact with fandom. I don't remember who sent me my first fanzine, and I've forgotten the name of it as well, but when Julie Schwartz and Mort Weisinger mailed out announcements of their forthcoming THE TIME TRAVELLER I went running with money clutched in my hot little fist. I was so impressed that I published my own fanzine a year later."

Hoy: "I've heard about that. Something of a stinker."

AWT: "In all candor, it was several degrees lower than the worst first issue of an illegible fanzine today. Unfortunately for me, it was legible. I called it THE PLANETOID and the first issue was dated December 1932. The effort was received with overwhelming silence (well, not complete silence -- the critics spoke up) and the second issue, January 1933, was the ever-loving last. For a while after that I confined myself to writing for other people's fanzines, the SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST, the FANTASY FAN, and the like. But in the Spring of 1935 I felt the itch again and published THE D'JOURNAL, which was a club organ."

Hoy: "I'm supposed to ask, what club?"

AWT: "The Society for the Prevention of Wire Staples in Science Fiction Magazines. You've heard of it, no doubt. Don Wollheim and I battled together for several months, pro and con over the staple matter, but the club and I both died a rather sudden death in 1936. ASTOUNDING STORIES printed a letter written by a Bloomington girl (we had parted company rather unharmoniously) stating that I had died following surgery, and I imagine her revenge was sweet. I'm fairly sure I did no such thing, but have you ever attempted to stop a snowball rolling downhill? Most of 1936 fandom thought me dead to the world, and that was that. My fan activity almost ceased; I almost quit fandom and science fiction. Beyond a very few letters to maintain contact with old friends I did nothing more in fandom until 1938, when Jimmy Taurasi suckered me into FAPA. I started publishing a two-pager called LE ZOMBIE which he circulated for me, and in 1939 I once again issued a regular fanzine called D'JOURNAL, a humor fanzine. Ray Bradbury wrote for it, for me, but I wasn't his first publisher. I missed my chance to everlasting fame."

Hoy: "I was born in there somewhere."

AWT: "oh, much before that. You were born in 1934, in a letter written to WONDER STORIES. I submitted a futuristic convention report (the kind Buck Coulson loves) and signed your name to it. Presto, you existed."

Hoy: "Thank you, I think."

AWT: "Don't mention it -- you served your purpose. But in the meanwhile D'JOURNAL folded for the second time, after its third issue, because I was interested in other things. I published the 1938 and 1939 Yearbooks, which were indices to the science fiction magazines for those years. The first indices ever, I guess, and I sometimes wonder if the MIT gang is getting rich today."

Hoy: "Aren't you forgetting LE ZOMBIE?"

AWT: "Indeed, not! I postponed a further mention of it to make you ask that question. You're still serving a purpose. LeZ was my pride and joy, and remains so to this day. It began in 1938 as a two-paged supplement to Taurasi's FANTASY NEWS, but after the seventh issue it branched out on its own as an independent fanzine, poking

fun and criticism at fellow fans, editors and publishers; it was published "irregularly" in the strictest sense: as a weekly, a bi-monthly, a monthly, a quarterly, an annual, a five-yearly, a ten-yearly, well -- every time a zombie awoke. One issue, number sixty-something, was published in Canada for Torcon One. Dirty old Robert Bloch was the pro GOH while I was the clean-living fan GOH, and someone on the committee thought it would be a keen idea to publish an issue for the con. Which we did. The most recent issue was published in December 1968 and was called the "Jiant 30th Anniversary Issue". The jiant 40th anniversary issue will be due in just four more years, so it may be time to start gathering material."

Hoy: "You also published other fanzines."

AWT: "I have, but I don't remember how many, or remember all the titles. Twenty or thirty or forty of them, I guess. Like may flies."

Hoy: "Hoffwoman said to ask about your dirty huckstering."

AWT: "A mere sideline, I assure you. Cigar money."

Hoy: "Some cigars. All right, let's have it."

AWT: "I bought a used typewriter in 1931, and promptly wrote a story for ARGOSY. They promptly rejected it. And that discouraging business continued for the next ten years until 1941, when I finally suckered Fred Pohl into buying a story for SUPER SCIENCE NOVELS."

Hoy: "Was it?"

AWT: "It was not, neither super nor scientific nor a novel. It was pure old space opera, a short story, but it earned me one-half cent a word and I was an overnight millionaire. During the following four years I made magnificent strides in the publishing world: I sold four more short stories, and finally said to hell with it -- one sale a year was too little to provide me the rich living I wanted to become accustomed to, so I turned to books, to mystery novels and then science fiction novels. There wasn't much of a science fiction novel market in 1946 so I tried the mystery field and surprised myself by doing well. Since then I've published twenty books, and the twenty-first is scheduled for publication in October 1974. It's an ice opera."

Hoy: "Ice opera?"

AWT: "Yup. About the new glacier grinding down out of the Arctic Circle, and about Charles Fort discovering the future."

Hoy: "That's news to me!"

AWT: "It will be news to everyone. Fandom will be amazed. It will send the fans scurrying back to Charles Fort, reading between the lines as I did. Old Charlie wrote a history of the future, sort of."

Hoy: "Well, that about winds it up. Where's the bibliography you were supposed to furnish?"

AWT: "Dennis Lien furnished it, and you'll find his copy stuck into these pages somewhere if Dave Locke doesn't forget it."

Hoy: "Well, I dunno, this is pretty long-winded and Locke is likely to butcher it, small loss."

AWT: "I thought you said this was for Hoffwoman."

Hoy: "Simpleton! The original version was for Hoffwoman twenty-odd years ago, for publication in QUAPAW, but this updated version is for Locke. Meanwhile, what is the present picture? How does 1974 find you?"

AWT: "Reasonably happy, reasonably content. I've been married, and divorced, and married again; I have five children spread around these United States, and at last count there were either five or six grandchildren -- I'm not really sure. Two years ago I was fired from the job I had held for nigh onto forty years but I'm not shedding tears over it. I'm firmly convinced there is not a better bourbon made than Beam's Choice. I love fans, but take a dim view of them. What the hell more can a man ask?"

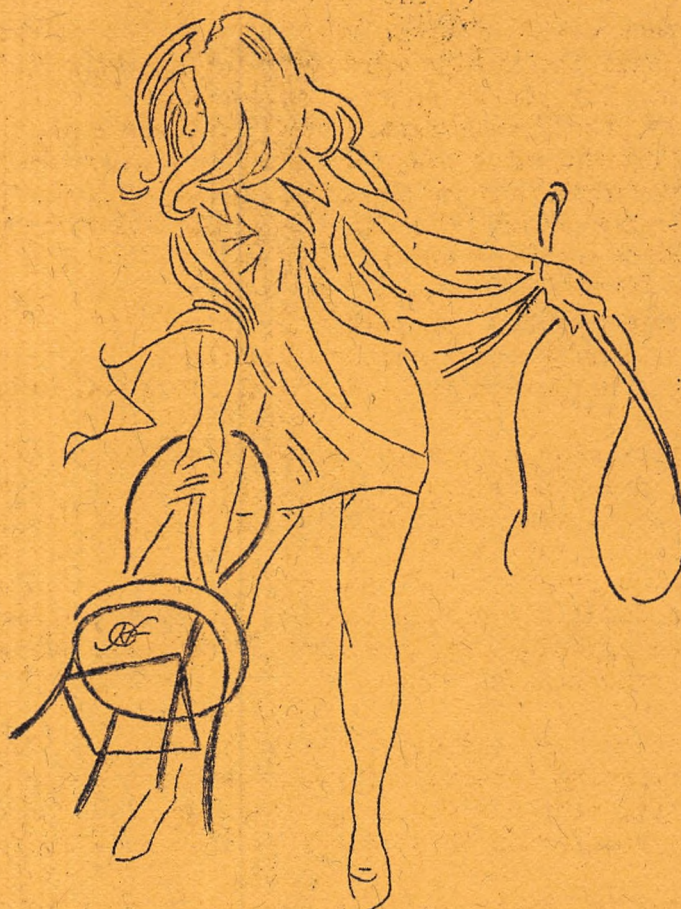
Hoy: "What, indeed?"



"Understanding tucker: from
verb transitive, 'to tuck' —
but what is a bob?"

DEN'S

END



The open trunk and the yawning boxes lie waiting on the floor to be filled; the desk drawers have been pulled out and stacked beside them, their contents waiting to be transferred to the darkness of storage; the pictures and originals have come down from the walls and stand quietly in the corner, patiently, until they too shall be stowed away from light of day; and suddenly you realize the good old days have vanished from the room.

You think of the people in fandom who have marched across the history of the room like conquerors of old parading across the pages of a book -- people with big names and little, but their standings mean nothing now; you remember them only as fans who paused awhile, for as little as an hour or as much as a week, to swap a word, a book, or a merry glass over a story. You find the forgotten things they left behind and treasure them as mementos of their passing -- and you know they will never come back anymore.

You think of Reinsberg, Korshak, Clyne, Samuels, Tomkins, Kuhn, Les Tina, Marlow, Hensley, DeJack, Fern, Camden, Liebscher, Evans, Robinson, the two Ashleys, Connor, Bronson, Saari, Russell, Unger, Madle, Rothman, Widner, and whoever else walked the creaking floor, and you wonder if they remember the room. And you wonder too if you'll ever have another to make memories in.

You pack the books and the fanzines and the originals and the photograph albums and the records and the cameras into the trunks and boxes and you look at the bare walls and the empty shelves, and you know you'll never come back anymore; that when you leave the house will be rented to someone with dogs or cats or children or aging folks, and the den with the memories will be just another bedroom to the strangers moving in.

You know they'll see the nail holes in the wall and the loose staples in the cracks of the floor and the mimeograph ink smeared on the baseboard and the thumbtacks stuck in the door and the beer rings on the linoleum and just wonder what the crazy hell...

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Old fans should not seek to be honored.

You pack a set of encyclopedias with two volumes missing and you remember how Reinsberg said the things were as cheap as water in Chicago, and he'd get the missing volumes for you as soon as he went back there -- only he never did, and you wonder now if you'll ever find them. You stow away the atlas that guided you to Philadelphia (remembering how you almost got pinched in Gary and Dayton for running red lights) and you think of the crazy patchwork of Madle's streets and the burned-out belt and the frozen bearings in the generator, and how you swore at the car and the morons in the back seat the entire trip.

You remember how you parked the car halfway up on the sidewalk because the street was so narrow other cars couldn't get by, and Madle said you'd get arrested and you said to hell with it -- Philadelphia could have the dollar to build a wider street.

You pack away a picture under glass, a copy of the cover on the June '42 FUTURE FIC-TION, and wonder how in hell your story managed to rate a cover; but first you turn it over to read again the inscription Lowndes penned on the back: "Sorry we couldn't get a nice red sky for you, but the publisher wanted a flat yellow background" -- and then you remember the complaints you so freely handed out concerning the atrocious skies usually found on Lowndes' magazines. And you recall the lousy jokes people passed around about the identity of the birdman pictured on the cover and its remarkable resemblance to you.

You stick away the copy of the January '36 ASTOUNDING containing the well-known but embarrassing letter, and you remember a lot of things you don't want to. But you also remember how you bought the copy last year for fifteen cents and now Robinson tells you it can be sold for as high as a dollar, so you cheer up.

You put in the trunk the bound volume containing the complete set of Hornig's FANTASY FAN and you remember the supreme thrill of receiving the first issue, and you turn once again to the very first fan article you ever had printed, and you think of all the times various fen have tried to buy the volume. You remember the day Hornig came to town and you sat on the courthouse lawn and talked of cabbages and WS.

You put away the war poster you got in Canada before Pearl Harbor and recall the night you had a flat somewhere in the Canadian wilds and how the cuss-ed jack wouldn't work and how you oiled it by stealing lubricant from the transmission with your finger, and how finally you threw it as far down the road as you could manage -- and Liebscher changed the damned tire for you. You recall too how you both watched over your shoulders because just previously you had passed a wolf gnawing a bone.

You lay aside a big painting by ARGOSY cover-artist Raphael DeSoto because it won't fit into the trunk, and you think of your trip to New York and the funny people you met there. You remember visiting DeSoto in his studio and how he needed a male model for a picture he was working on and how you were pressed into service, and how, finally, your mug appeared on a love story magazine some months later, kissing the sweet young thing goodbye at the train -- and then you remember the girl who posed for the sweet young thing...

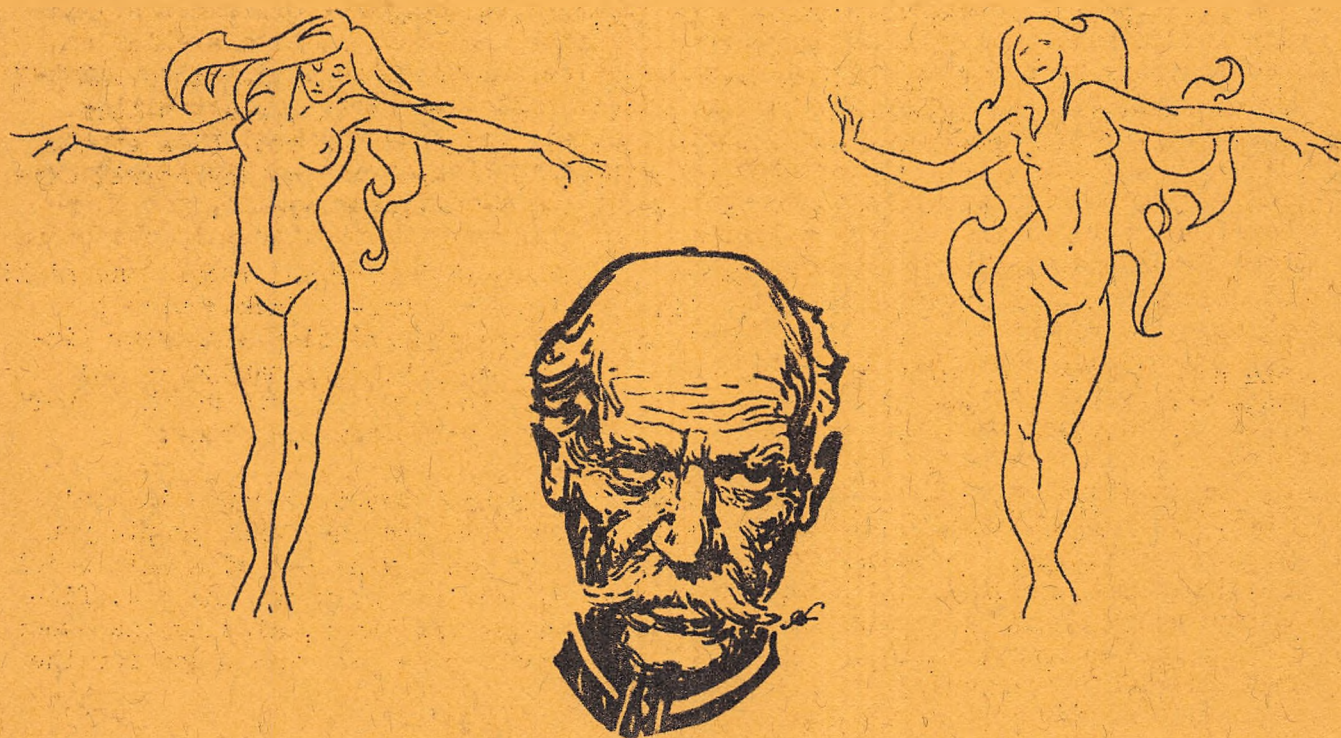
You put away a Bok and a Finlay -- your only two originals from their pens, and you remember Clyne openly and loudly admiring them in hopes of being presented with one or the other, but in the end desperately bargaining for their possession by offering fantastic treasures. You remember him embarking for California and the golden letters he sent back, urging you to drop everything and rush right out.

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Any excuse will serve a Dirty Pro.

You remove from the wall your coat-of-arms Wiedenbeck and Ashley painted, and remember how Ashley miscalculated the available space for your motto "Ad Infernum", causing the last five letters to run together. But you forgive him when you recall with a gasp how he laid five bucks on the line one Thanksgiving Day for the fan-crowd coming, and you wish you could live that week over again. You remember with a grin the terrific poker game in which the two Ashleys, Connor, Robinson, Liebscher, Tomkins, DeJack, your ex-wife and yourself participated, with Ashley as usual winning everything.

You stow away the sixteen bound volumes of fanzines and the near-thousand others waiting to be bound, and the seven bound volumes of UNK, and the two or three other volumes of excerpted yarns, and the three or four hundred good books, and the scores of manuscripts you've written but never sold, and the albums and the cigar boxes overloaded with fan photographs, and the little wooden spaceship, and the baby's pot you keep cigarette ashes in, and the beer mug you swiped in Canada, and the "Funeral Here -- No Parking" sign you borrowed from one, and you wonder when you'll see them all again.

You close the trunks, you nail the lids on the boxes, you pull down the top on the empty desk, you stamp out the last buttys on the tattered linoleum, and the dream comes to an end.



"Not with my
wife!"

JOIN THE SCIENCE-FICTION

FANZINE-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB

Forty thousand members now participate in this great club!! Why haven't we got your five dollars? Aren't you eager to obtain the nicely mimeographed, sturdily bound fanzine of the month? Many of them come with covers, occasionally the printing is dark enough to read, sometimes they have illustrations! There is no obligation to take every selection -- you need buy only a minimum of five fanzines per year at a dollar a copy. These fanzines are the same sold elsewhere for five and ten cents per copy! Our competent judges select the best fanzine of the month from the hundreds that are published. Clip a five dollar bill to this announcement; as a bonus for joining we will give you absolutely free any fanzine of your choice that was ambitiously announced and advertised but which never appeared.

A PROPOSED CONSTITUTION FOR WHAT IS NOW KNOWN AS THE N.F.F.F.

Article I (Name)

The name of this here mob shall be The Disgruntled Cosmic Faps of Sol 3.

Article II (Purpose)

The purpose of The Disgruntled Cosmic Faps of Sol 3 shall be: (a) To promote, prejudice, prosecute and prepare amateur faps for those bitter glories to come; to pave the way for costlier fan feuds thru taxation; to spread disunity and dirty linen; to lend a helpful slur where necessary; to encourage the feathering of illegal lovenests; to educate the members in the finer practices of murder and mayhem, mutiny, manslaughter, mutilation, maceration, machiavellanism, machination, macromelia, magianism, malpractice, malversation, malignity, muck-racking and mashing, as well as arson, libel, technical rape, counterfeiting, garroting, stealing, shoplifting, card cheating, forgery, check-kiting, black-jacking, and the subtle differences between common (or garden variety) robbery and piracy on high seas; to teach members how to face firing squads, gas chambers, electric chairs, and/or swinging from yardarms with dignity and aplomb; to loot Fap-funds whenever possible; to undermine stout friendships, to disobey, to revolt.

(b) Our slogan shall be, "If he's a sucker -- take him!"

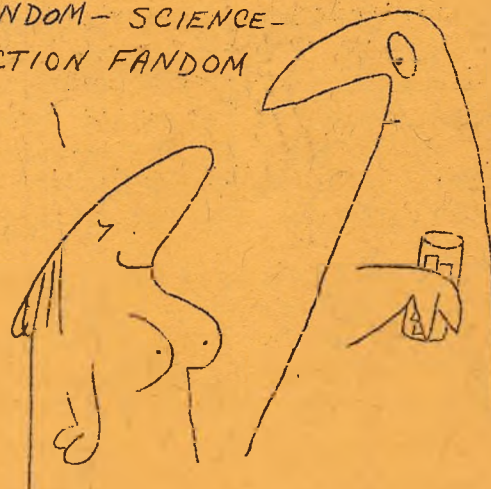
(c) On the other hand..

Article III (Administration)

The Administration of The Disgruntled Cosmic Faps of Sol 3 will be of three branches: the Executive, the judiciary, and the remaining branch which shall be anonymous.

- (a) The Executive branch shall be saddled with nine fraudulently elected officers as follows: 1st vice president, 2nd vice president, 3rd vice president, 4th vice president, 5th vice president, 6th vice president, guide, sergeant-at-arms, and interloper.
- (b) Officers of the Executive branch shall serve for life, or longer

MR. TUCKER, I'M ON THE NFFF
WELCOME COMMITTEE AND I'D
LIKE TO WELCOME YOU TO
FANDOM- SCIENCE-
FICTION FANDOM



POOR PONG'S PROVERB: The more fanzines, the less entertainment.

in an emergency not otherwise covered in this constitution; but shall not be eligible to succeed themselves more than once.

- (c) It shall be the sacred duty of all vice presidents except the 4th to be. The 4th vice president shall merely exist.
- (d) Should any vice president vacate his office by reason of death, on or before fulfilling his full term, he shall be declared null and void.
- (e) The judiciary shall consist of four self-appointed, self-righteous judges who must be beyond ~~redemption~~ reproach.
- (f) The members of the judiciary are to execute themselves simply, but fatally, at every opportunity.
- (g) No fudging in marble games.

Article IV (Elections)

Annual elections shall be held not oftener than once a year, and not less than every twelvemonth, except for a full moon on the 28th of February.

- (a) No office shall be declared vacant and therefore subject to filling via election as long as the officer in that office is still in his office. Otherwise it shall be declared vacant.
- (b) Candidates filing for office must furnish in duplicate lightweight steel files of good rasping quality.
- (c) Ballots must be counted before winners assume office.

Article V (Membership)

Any member in good standing may become a member.

Article VI (Finances)

Dues shall be whatever modest sum is safely and easily collectable, as often as is deemed expedient. Rubber checks not accepted.

- (a) The 6th vice president shall not share in the gravy.

Article VII (Club bulletin)

A club bulletin shall be published for members each month.

- (a) If you can find somebody to publish it.

Article VIII (Amendments)

No amendments shall be allowed to this document.

Article IX (Privileges)

Both male and female members are entitled to privileges.

- (a) All officers of this organization are entitled to all privileges as they may safely get away with, including Article II (a)

QUESTION & ANSWER MAN

Fan polls are traps, subtle pitfalls for the unwary; the slicker the poll taker, the more cunningly you are ensnared, for the really smart pollster will have thoughtfully greased the way for you by bestowing banana skins along your path. Most cunning of all the recent pollsters is Rick Sneary of South Gate, California; his poll, taken during the Spring months, is a masterpiece of subtle interrogation, carefully designed to pry answers from you which you would never otherwise dream of making. Consider this man's fiendish questions:

- (1) "Would you be willing to be the first person to land on the moon if you knew you would die there alone?"

In answering that one you frankly haven't a chance, although on the surface it seems innocent enough. Re-read the last eight words. Doesn't this subtly remind you of that classic question: 'Is it true you have stopped beating your wife?' All right,

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: There is no place more delightful than the NFFF.

our brave explorer has answered "yes" and is on the moon, dying by inches. Will he die there alone? Damn right he will, unless he can plant one foot on Earth and the other on Mars and die in three places at once. Next questions.

(2) "Would you be happy in a world without men (if a man?), and without women (if a woman?)"

Is Rick Sneary nuts? This is akin to asking: would you be happy in a world without screws if you were a screwdriver? Next question.

(3) "What two colors clash the most to you?"

That is a tough one and reveals the poll-taker's most sinister subtleness. A penny-ante wit such as a Liebscher or an Ackerman would leap up to shout "burple and drene," happily believing that they had wrung the most possible humor from the situation, whereas the thoughtful critic would at once discern Dusty Rose and French Gray never meet with harmonious results.

(4) "Would you be willing to live on another world where you would not see Earth people, if you could (do so) without danger?"

This is begging the question. The implication is that once on Mars (for example), you would never again have the opportunity to look upon the FACE of another human. The absence of even the average human face guarantees you a life without danger or harm to yourself. A wise old Chinese scholar once remarked that it isn't the brick falling af which you must beware, but the face lifted.

(5) "How much, or what, would you take to kill a person you had never met?"

Notice the evil, homicidal tendencies of the pollster. In this question he is openly seeking advice on the fine art of murder. A sample answer to this question might be: "I'd take at least a revolver, a length of rope, a rusty sword, a pinch of poison, a spiked club, a mace, and a trusty yoyo." A satisfactory answer, of course, depends upon the important facts left unstated: how far away is this person, how will you know what he looks like unless you are armed with a photo and a pre-arranged agreement for each to be wearing a red carnation in the lapel, and who is to pay for the transportation.

The author of this article recommends that you take at least two suits of clothes, three changes of underwear, and an umbrella.

(6) "Do you believe dreams foretell the future?"

Absolutely. I might cite a striking example. The night before the Kentucky Derby I dreamed a horse named "Gay Innocence" ran last in the field. Slyly, the next day I placed a ten dollar bet on the shiny, wet nose of "Gay Innocence". Next question.

(7) "Would you like to have been born fifty years sooner?"

What! And become entangled with question number 13, below?

(8) "Would you like to know when you are going to die?"

Trickery again, upon the part of the poll-taker. He is obviously preparing to launch an advertising and selling campaign of either a life-giving elixir or a time-line

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: He who fleeces will publish again.

machine. This is his underhanded way of preparing you for a sale, destroying your sales resistance. As almost everyone knows, the exact moment of one's death can easily be ascertained. It is that fine, hair-splitting moment when one is hovering between life and death, and life gives up the ghost.

(9) "What fan do you like the least?"

Sir, you are asking for it!

(10) "Do you think all fans should live in the same town?"

That shouldn't happen to any town!

(11) "Next to fandom, what hobby do you like the most?"

See my answer to number nine.

(12) "With whom would you like to be lost on an asteroid?"

The man who wishes to answer this question honestly is confronted with an amazing variety of answers, all immoral. Each who answered this query undoubtedly chose his favorite friend or movie star. They would soon find, however, that the life they had chosen for themselves would become boring in short order. It is a pitfall surely, and the pollster knew it. He knows well the preordained end of such an adventure. There is only one sure way to avoid this obvious fate: Take along a snapping turtle, preferably a talking one.

(13) "What type of car would you rather be hit by?"

At last the true genius of the poll-taker is revealed.

Please note that he carefully refrained from asking the color of the car you preferred to be hit by, or what color you might choose for the car you would rather be hit by. Also noticeable by its absence is the important question of whether ~~or~~ not you desire seat covers for the seats of the car you would rather be hit by. Apparently it has not occurred to Mr. Sneary that your taste might be moved with a car having two tail lights, instead of one. This is unfair of course, for when choosing a car to be hit by, the participant naturally cannot see the rear end of the automobile until it has passed over him, and then he might wish to change his mind upon observing the tail lights.

The question isn't any too clear. Mr. Sneary may be asking the model of car (such as coupe, sedan, etc.), or the actual type of car (such as gasoline driven, electric, etc.), or the make of automobile. Therefore the pollee has, of course, a choice as to answers and he may choose that field of particular benefit to him.

What type of car would you rather be hit by?

Whereas one person might choose a tudor sedan because his ancestors were loyal to the English throne, or because he, himself, is a musician in the brass section, another person might possibly rather be hit by a truck because all the boys at the pool hall called him Mac. I, personally, would choose a vehicle of a bygone age called a Stanley Steamer, not only because such vehicles are out of print, but because in a manner of speaking, a steamer is softer than a Mercury.

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Life is short, and con reports long.

(14) "What story gave you the most bad dreams?"

A gripping piece in the second issue of THE FANZINE READER'S REVIEW, entitled AND SO THE END, written by Rick Sneary.

(15) "Would you like it if everyone could read minds?"

I'd be beside myself with joy if you could read mine right now.

(16) "What piece of music do you call the most fantastic?"

Swan Song



THE GIRL WITH
THE TURBID,
IMPURE, CLOUDY,
CONFUSED,
MUCKY EYES



I slouched into her boudoir. She was wearing nothing but skin-fitting tights, pink ones that covered her from toe to neckline. The girl with the turbid, impure, cloudy, confused, mucky eyes leered at me. I leered back.

"Lady," I said, "who's putting out them fake LE ZOMBIES?"

"Search me," she said. "I ain't hiding nothing."

I ran my eyes down her sparse figure. I could see she was telling the truth. The pink tights were still there. I looked at her eyes and face and head. Her head was unique. There wasn't a hair on it.

"Baby," I ventured, "let me take you away from all this." I swung my hand around the dingy room and the extra tights hanging on a clothesline in the corner.

"Yeah?" she asked curiously. "Such as what?"

I thought quickly. "Why," I said, "you can come and be a tightrope walker in my circus."

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Of all the animals, the fan is most unmanageable.

She leaned forward. The sweet odor of her reached me. I've been hit by odors before, but this was different. It didn't swamp me, nor did it stifle me; it didn't even clog my nostrils. But I knew I'd been given a whiff that was a whiff. One of my lungs collapsed. It was that kind of an odor.

"What's your name, kid?" I asked.

"Polymastia Kegler," she said, low voiced.

"Are you Kosmic Kegler's illegitimate sister?"

"Yeah; what of it?"

"Nothing," I said, "except that I wouldn't be caught dead in bed with Kegler's illegitimate sister."

"That's what they all say," she sneered. "But they usually are."

"I'm going to get to the bottom of this!" I declared.

She continued to sneer. "They all say that, too."

"Who's putting out them fake LE ZOMBIES?" I shot back.

She played with the zipper on the tights and said nothing. I rolled around on the kitchen floor for awhile and got up and went to the pantry. She watched me with those turbid, impure, cloudy, confused, mucky eyes.

In the pantry by the cookie jar I found some pencil marks on the wallpaper. "Channy --fast line--4/26/45". Channy, huh? That was Chanticleer, a big cock-o-the-walk around the barnyard. I didn't think his line was so fast. I whirled on the girl.

"What's this 4/26/45 business?"

She was sullen. "That's the last time Channy was out."

"Must be dried up by this time, eh?" I said insinuatingly. And then I thought of another question. "Who's putting out all these fake LE ZOMBIES?"

"I dunno," she said. "I ain't putting out nothing."

"That's what they all say," I replied. She strolled over to the door and stood watching me. As I stripped down to my tights I wondered how I looked. I must be pretty good -- her eyes were glowing. I put up a protective arm.

"Listen, baby, any play you make, I'll smack your teeth in, I'm viridescent, see?" But I could see she didn't believe me.

She said, "I could teach you to be a juvenile delinquent."

I took out my pocket knife and attacked the screws in the pantry door. When I'm nervous I do something like that to occupy my mind. Pretty soon the door fell off. That surprised me because it was only a 29¢ knife. Then she surprised me by going into the other room and changing into blue tights. I eyed her figure under the blue

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: The LOCs are the most important part of the work.

tights. I liked it, even though it was sparse. I had to say something so I said: "I used to belong to your brother's club."

"He was always dredging a hole," she told me. "Said that was the purpose of the club. But he always made me do the work."

That touched me. "I'll take you away from all this," I said. My holster was clammy. "Let's get out of here before I get wise." And then I thought of something.

"I wanna ask you a personal question."

"Yeah, so what?"

"Why do you have such turbid, impure, cloudy, confused, mucky eyes?"

"On account," she said, "I do so much drinking with my pals."

"Meaning what?" I asked.

"They're always saying, here's mud in your eye."

I shot her in the keratitis.

THE WOMAN I LEFT BEHIND ME

She was a lovely, sensuous thing of voluptuous curves; fragile moonlight gleamed enticingly on her bare, ivory shoulders, and cascaded down her body to the daringly low cut of her garment. I looked at the magnificent, tantalizing body of her and yearned to hold it in my two hands. It captured my breath, my admiration, my desire.

Some master craftsman had molded that beautiful body, I thought, a creator who would never again produce its perfect twin. I wanted that body, those delightful curves, for my own fingers to caress.

But I could never have it. The damned statue was too heavy to steal.



THE IRON

Editor's Preface: Jack Speer recently discovered in the daily press a news-item he thought worthy of fandom's attention, and passed it along to Redd Boggs. Boggs in turn passed the item to Tucker. The news-item was to the effect that henceforth all mimeographs in Czechoslovakia would be licensed by the government. --Gregg Calkins

Mr. Handel C. Ranker
Ministry of Mimeographs
Prague, Czech,

Dear Mr. Ranker:

A couple of weeks ago I sent 10¢ (American) to Imovar Slobarish who lives at 101 Wagnerstrasse, in Prague, for a copy of his fanzine PLEIADES PIMPLES but he ain't never sent it or sent my money (American) back. Please do something about this.

- Joe Fann

Mr. Josef Fann
Box 702
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Fann:

Imovar Slobarish doesn't seem to exist.

- Handel C. Ranker

Mr. Handel C. Ranker
Ministry of Mimeographs
Prague, Czech,

Dear Mr. Ranker:

Imovar Slobarish exists all right, because the same day I got your letter I finally got my copy of PLEIADES PIMPLES from him. But I guess he doesn't live at 101 Wagnerstrasse anymore because in his editorial he said he was going underground, so I suppose that means in a bomb shelter or whatever you people are building over there.

- Joe Fann

Mr. Josef Fann
Box 702
Minneapolis, Minnesota

CURTAIN DROPS!

Dear Mr. Fann:

I am delighted to hear that at last you have received the publication for which you waited. We in this country strive at all times to cooperate with our friends in the western democracies. In order that I may assist Mr. Slobarish in the future production of PLEIADES PIMPLES, will you please send me the address from which it was mailed?

- Handel C. Ranker

Mr. Handel C. Ranker
Ministry of Mimeographs
Prague, Czech.

Dear Mr. Ranker:

That's pretty good of you to help out fanzine editors and I'll bet Imovar will be pleased and surprised when you drop in on him. The fanzine was mailed from the White Horse Inn, Upper Newtownards Road, Brunn, Moravia. I liked PLEIADES PIMPLES so much I've sent Imovar \$1 (American) for a year's subscription. Give good old Imovar a shot in the arm so he can start work on the next issue.

- Joe Fann

Mr. Josef Fann
Box 702
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Fann:

Imovar Slobarish doesn't seem to exist any more. I'm sorry we cannot refund your subscription, but apparently no records were kept.

- Handel C. Ranker

Mr. Handel C. Ranker
Ministry of Mimeographs
Prague, Czech.

Dear Mr. Ranker:

Sorry, but you're wrong again, old boy. No snide cracks intended, but I guess bureaucrats are the same the world over. Good old Slovarish is still cranking them out and the latest issue arrived today -- and a crackerjack number it is, too! Just about the best he's done, although the ink was a little thin in spots. In case you don't know it, Imovar is the number-one humorist of fandom and the lead article in this issue proves it.

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: All convention fandom is divided into three zones.

He has a three page article on the difficulties of producing PLEIADES PIMPLES and you'd split your sides laughing when he tells about bootleg fanzines, forged licenses, and smuggling copies over the border to be mailed. Why doesn't your office get behind this boy and give him a boost?

- Joe Fann

Mr. Josef Fann
Box 702
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Fann:

I was pleased to receive your letter and very glad to learn that Imovar Slobarish is still publishing. Believe me, this office wants very much to locate Mr. Slobarish and offer him our services. I would appreciate your sending me his newest address.

- Handel C. Ranker

Mr. Handel C. Ranker
Ministry of Mimeographs
Prague, Czech.

Dear Mr. Ranker:

I'd be glad to do a good turn for Imovar. The last copy came from 2215 Benjaminstrasse, Holmes-on-the-Seacoast, Bohemia. And listen, take along a couple of cans of mimeograph ink for him, will you? There were some thin spots in the last issue.

- Joe Fann

Mr. Josef Fann
Box 702
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Fann:

It becomes my sad duty to inform you that Mr. Imovar Slobarish no longer seems to exist. We at this office shall miss his sprightly wit and his publication.

- Handel C. Ranker

Mr. Handel C. Ranker
Ministry of Mimeographs
Prague, Czech.

Dear Mr. Ranker:

Say, what's got into you guys anyway? Believe me, we wouldn't tolerate such ignorance and inefficiency here in this country! Imovar ain't dead -- he sent me another issue just a few days ago. But he certainly is having a hard time of it and your office doesn't seem to be shooting him any help. Why, would you believe it, this new issue was cranked out in the back of a truck! Imovar said in his editorial that he

POOR FONG'S PROVERB: The gods visit the sins of the publishers upon the readers.

was on the move again and apologized for the sloppy mimeo work, but it couldn't be helped because this truck was rolling pretty fast and it bounced around a lot. Although he didn't explain, I got the impression that he was forced to move and so he turned out the issue during the trip. Why doesn't your office find this boy a permanent place to live. PLEIADES PIMPLES could be so much better then!

- Joe Fann

Mr. Josef Fann
Box 702
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Fann:

I have taken the matter of Imovar Slobarish and his publication to my superior officers, and we all now agree that the enterprising fellow deserves our closest attention. He has been given a priority, as you Americans would say, and we are leaving no stone unturned in the search for him. You will also be happy to know that Mr. Gregory Ratchet, our Prefect of Police, has prepared a permanent home for him when he can be found. In view of all this, I am sure you will send me his new address when next you hear from him, so that we can make him safe and comfortable as quickly as possible.

- Handel C. Ranker

Mr. Handel C. Ranker
Ministry of Mimeographs
Prague, Czech.

Dear Mr. Ranker:

Well, I've heard from good old Imovar again, but I don't think it will be much help to you or him. He didn't send a copy of PLEIADES PIMPLES this time -- he said all his equipment had been seized. He dug up an old hektograph somewhere and printed this little one-shot while he was waiting for a boat, there on the seacoast of Bohemia. Imovar seemed rather unhappy about things -- he's moving out of the country and wants to come to America. He said there was too much regimentation in his own country -- you had to have a license for this and a license for that. And too, some stool-pigeon has been making it tough for him these last few months, forcing him to be on the move all the time. The hektograph sheet wasn't too clear, but I gathered he was pretty sore about everything. I guess your office was too slow in helping him out.

- Joe Fann

Mr. Joseph Fann
Box 702
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Fann:

Please rush me by airmail special delivery the name of the town where Imovar Slobarish is awaiting a ship. Perhaps it still isn't too late.

- Handel C. Ranker

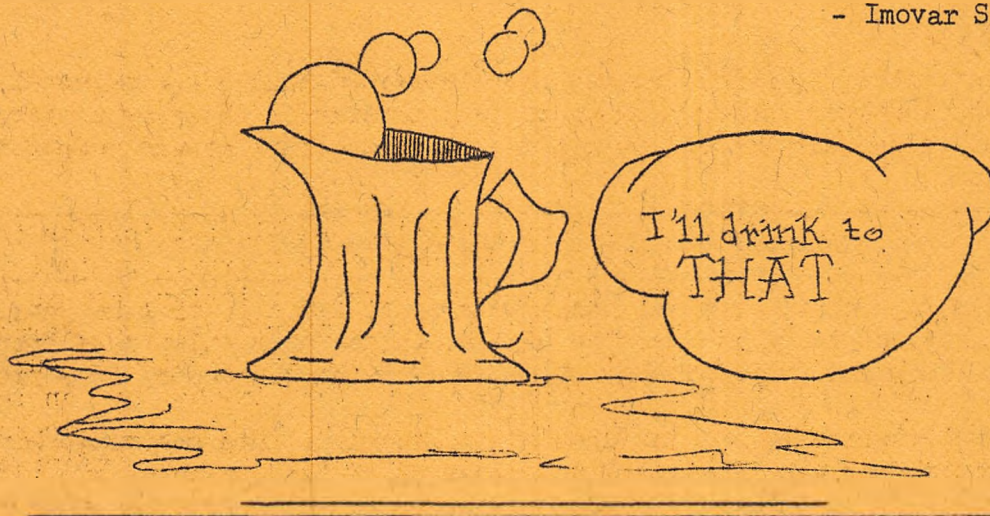
POOR PONG'S PROVERB: It is better to hurry always, than miss one SAPS deadline.

Mr. Handel C. Ranker
Ministry of Mimeographs
Prague, Czech.

Dear Mr. Ranker:

It becomes my sad duty to inform you that Mr. Josef Fann no longer seems to exist.

- Imovar Slobarish



I REMEMBER DEGLER!

The funniest sentence last issue was Stewart's: "Tell me the full story of Claude Degler." 'Zounds man, but the full story could not possibly be told in your present 50 pages; a summary is the best you could manage in that cramped space. And besides, I don't believe the full story has unfurled yet -- I don't think he is dead and so he may yet reappear to confound fandom anew. At the time he was riding hell for leather and separating fandom into two camps, I collected most if not all of his various papers and was proud to call myself a rabid Degler-fan. The man was just too funny (and tragic) to ignore. But alas, Degler has slipped into some nameless limbo; the storms of today are but futile puffs of wind to those that swirled about him.

I first met Claude at the 1940 Chicago convention. He was a quiet, good humored youngster who persisted in tagging along after Forry Ackerman and Myrtle Douglas; they were his gods. He was also very poor and dressed in old trousers, a gray sweater, tennis shoes and perhaps socks for all I know. He was unwashed, uncombed, unkempt and startlingly unintelligent; he displayed all the characteristics of many world dictators except the power to sway great masses of people to his will. That saved us. I don't know where he slept or how he managed to exist at the convention -- perhaps by sponging. I always managed to shake him each time he attached himself

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: A fickle and changeful thing is a fanne ever.

to me, and I later regretted that for what he was to become. It would have been highly rewarding to have studied him in his cradle, so to speak. I think he was responsible for one of the crackpot pieces that came up on the convention floor. The matter is pretty hazy at this late date and I can't back it up one hundred and one percent, but I believe he was the fan who gained the floor and bored everyone to tears by reading aloud a long-winded report supposedly from Mars -- the Martians were laying down the law to we earthlings and we had the choice of complying or suffering a fate worse than death. He insisted it was true and I think he later published the paper.

One thing can definitely be said: no one there realized that a new personality and a new era were bursting over fandom, and that the gentleman in the gray sweater was shortly destined to set our little world afire. I also think he was responsible for that magic phrase:

"All fandom will be plunged into war!"

And it was. He saw to that. The war rocked fandom to and fro for some years, caused at least one large club to split down the middle, turned many quiet fans into snarling beasts overnight, and provided most of us with the gayest comedy in years.

Claude took himself seriously and insisted we do likewise. His masterpiece and the cause of the fannish war was the theory and creation of the Cosmic Circle. In a nutshell, he theorized that fans were star-begotten and well above the common herd. We were a race apart, superfan, literally destined to take over the world by fair means or foul. We were "Cosmen". (Sound of trumpets.) He organized what he claimed was a world-wide society based on this doctrine, and went about the business of gathering members and chartering local clubs. Never to my knowledge did he reveal a membership list but he often claimed it ran into the very high hundreds. From what could be ascertained by printed evidence the membership was two or three dozen. He maintained his headquarters in his own local club in a small Indiana town; many of us suspect the membership of this club was highly imaginary -- at one time or another he must have introduced (in print) a dozen people said to be local members and willing helpers.

There is a high probability that one such local person existed; I believe her name was Helen Bradleigh. He claimed her as his girlfriend, assistant editor, and what-have-you. At one stage of the game Claude put his theory into actual practice -- or attempted to. He announced that his mother owned a piece of real estate in the Ozark mountains, and he proposed that all interested fans move there at once -- with their girl friends -- so everybody could get right down to the important business of producing little Cosmen to populate the world of tomorrow. He and Helen would gladly lead the way. This, of course, produced a rash of parodies, some subtle, some cruel, dealing with hundreds of fans following their leader in gymnastics. You will find references to this matter in the old fanzines, usually termed "The Love Camp In The Ozarks".

Degler produced an incredible amount of mimeographed matter, most of it likewise incredible. He turned out ream upon ream of Cosmic propaganda, fanzines, news-sheets, hate-pieces, dream plans, travelogues, and sheer pornography. Each issue headlined a new crisis, a new triumph or declared a new war against some hapless fan who had crossed him. If he visited some fan unannounced and uninvited, to be refused admittance, he would return home to Blast that fan in issue after issue, dredging up all manner of crud, untruths and half-truths, and libel to hurl at the innocent fellow.

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Let a neo hold his tongue and he will pass for a sage.

If he visited a fan and was allowed inside, usually one or more items from the fan's collection would turn up missing when Degler had left. Should the fan have the temerity to insinuate that Degler was connected with the disappearance, he too would be pilloried in print. Most of the pornography of the Degler papers appeared in the interlineations, especially during or just after his paying a visit to a girl-friend living in Canada. Once, if his news-sheet can be believed at all, he and Helen Bradleigh together visited the Canadian girl, to stay over for a night or two. For some weeks thereafter the interlineations gave a blow-by-blow account of the trio. Inseparable, those three.

One of Claude's most hysterical outbreaks grew out of some incident that happened in his home-town and probably in his club-room. Just what caused it is not known but when the incident appeared in print it had been blown up to gigantic proportions. Apparently two rival gangs existed in the town, Claude's Cosmen and a gang of ruffians who did not see eye-to-eye with the leader of tomorrow. As Degler screamed it in headlines, the villains happened upon the clubhouse one day when Helen and some of the girls were there alone and unprotected. What ensued can best be described as mass rape. I also seem to recall tales of gangs roaming the streets, the club-house being stoned, streetcorner fights, and other childish games. Somewhere at the bottom of all these reports there may have been a small kernel of truth.

"The bit I like best about the Degler Saga was Speer motoring to Los Angeles and stopping every now and then to send Degler a postcard under various names. One I remember read, 'Dear Mr. Degler: I have a Cosmic Mind. What do I do now? (signed) Will Sykora'" --Walt Willis

Claude got around the country a bit too, probably the greatest hitch-hiker of his day. He adopted the name of Don Rogers for many of his journeys and fooled several people into believing he was really someone named Rogers. He popped up at fan's homes to stay a night or a week as the case might be, and popped out again when his foot got the itch. Usually, the fan's library seemed to be missing some items on his departure. Several years ago I visited Philadelphia just preceding a gathering -- it may have been one of their annual fall conferences or it may have been the 1947 convention. I'm unsure now, but Degler was there big as life and twice as beautiful. The odd part of it was that nobody had recognized him, although he had moved into town some weeks previously and had been attending club meetings. I don't recall what name he was using at the time, but when I happened across him at the meeting place I addressed him by his right name. He stared at me, grinned, and changed the subject. The Philadelphia lads were somewhat startled to learn the identity of their guest.

He again turned up at the Portland convention in 1950, this time displaying a long table of books and magazines for sale. Some of those who knew him and suspected him of taking ways wandered along the table, speculating as to the possible owners of each item displayed there. There were those who thought it rather sporting of him to offer former owners a chance to buy their own material back.

If you dig around among ancient fanzines you can find a towering stack of material, pro and con Degler. Once, when the furore was at its height, Jack Speer made a special trip to the Indiana town and interviewed several officials there - the police chief, the superintendent of an insane asylum, and so forth. All the evidence he uncovered was published later -- I'm not sure but I think it appeared in FAPA. Speer is the kind of a man who would do a thing like that, a curious, eager chap who liked to get to the bottom of things. The bottom he turned up on Degler made fascinating reading. Claude hit that town and proceeded to turn it topsy-turvy -- much as he had

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: A rolling mimeograph gathers no static.

previously done the rest of fandom. The LA club split into two groups: those who were willing to tolerate him and those who would slit their throats before they'd allow him inside the club-room. And like Speer, somebody there finally published an expose of the Cosman.

Oh, it was fascinating I tell you. You should have been around!

DIG THAT CRAZY DETOUR

Being a true and Scientific Account of the Double-Bob Anthropological & Spelunking Expedition into the wilds of Darkest Kentucky

The cast: Robert Bloch and Robert Tucker, Boy-splunkars. Also fans, garage attendants, wandering minstrels, a horse, a suspicious inn-keeper, a mysterious blonde, a hostess who performed a sinister ritual, spear carriers, a waterfall, etc.

The place: US Routes 30, 33, 224, 68, 25, 24, 20, 12, 6, and The King's Highway, 2. Watering places along the same.

The time: Previous to and just following Indian Lake, 1953.

The Prologue: Several months previous to the annual Indian Lake meeting Bloch and Tucker made arrangements to spend a week's joyous vacation together, traveling about the countryside. Among the many beautiful tourist attractions they wanted to visit were Mammoth Cave, in Kentucky, and the Appalachian Trail Skyline Drive, in Virginia. Maps and folders were obtained, routes laid out and an arbitrary schedule was arranged. Letters-of-intent were dispatched to eagerly waiting wenches along the way and bags were packed. It was decided to make it a genuine holiday and "science fiction" would not be mentioned; nor was Bloch to bring a copy of THE SCARF or Tucker a copy of THE LONG LOUD SILENCE. The initial meeting place was to be the Joliet, Illinois, railway station at a certain hour on a certain Friday morning. The first leg of the journey was to be in the company of three faaans from Chicago who desired a ride to Indian Lake. Plans complete, we awaited the day.

Tucker, a sooner from the old school, jumped the gun and drove to Joliet on Thursday night -- where he discovered Bloch, a sooner from a still-older school, had been waiting for two days. Bloch could give no reasonable excuse for being there so early, but he said that he'd spent his time riding busses about the town looking for the municipal park. He never located it and eventually the bus company barred him as a suspicious character. Both adventurers retired early (and separately), knowing that a pack of howling, eager faaans would descend on them a short while after sunrise. An account of this pre-game warm-up was published by David Ish several months ago.

Chapter One: We sat on a railing outside the railway station, nibbling peanuts and watching the steam-cars go by. Whenever the supply of peanuts fell dangerously low, Bloch would run alongside the Pullman windows begging, or diving for

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: A fake fan cannot bite.

coins. He confessed to me a most secret yearning. Ever since childhood, he said, he had wanted to sit on railings eating peanuts, as the trains went chugging by. He further said that an uncle of his, an old codger named Freud had attempted to explain the matter to him, but of course he wouldn't listen. Once we glimpsed a Big Name through a Pullman window he was certain was a movie star, and impetuously he thrust his autograph book in. The resulting scratches on his hand came from either King kong or Rin Tin Tin -- we couldn't agree on the identity of the star. About sunrise a policeman asked for an explanation of our presence there and Bloch was foolish enough to tell him the truth. We both spent the next half-hour explaining faaans, fandom, and science fiction conventions. Thus our holiday vow was broken. Some hours later, near eleven, the three causes of it all descended from the passing steam-cars and we stared aghast at their mountain of luggage. It was staggering. Frank Robinson brought a suitcase "and some odds and ends he wanted to sell at Indian Lake". Ted Dikty had a suitcase "and a few bags of stuff he wanted to dispose of". Judy Dikty had a suitcase, plus two large paper sacks. We asked what was in the sacks, which was a mistake.

The conveyance in which we were to make the journey was a new Studebaker with barely 500 miles on the odometer -- one of those low-down and squashed models, the so-called "European sports model" which seats five, just five. We fitted all right, there being a total of five passengers, but the luggage was another matter ... it happened that the trunk was already jam full with my luggage and a few boxes of books I expected to sell at Indian Lake. Being true faaans, we found a way. And being the driver, I was permitted to ride without encumbering luggage in my lap, resting on my shoulders or between my legs, or stuffed under my arms. No other faaan in that car could make the same statement. With misgivings, I watched the springs sink lower and lower as each person and his "stuff he wanted to sell" was added; but at last we were squared away and boring eastward.

The first grim sign of disaster struck a few miles later on a rutted highway. The signs were strange noises beneath the floorboards that suggested an electric fan quietly ripping its way out of a wooden box. "Mr. Bloch," I said, "please stop scuffling your feet." He denied it, and pointed to the lady sitting beside him. Her husband gallantly made the denial for her and in the same instant, by the cunning use of grammar, managed to include himself in the negation. That left Robinson but Robinson didn't count because he was buried under a mountain of luggage and couldn't move. All of them stared at me in silent contempt, telling me with their eyes what they thought of new Studebakers. The thing under the floorboards added insult to injury by giving forth a loud razzberry, pictured in the comical books as "Brraaack!" And so, after being rebuffed by two service stations because the car was strange to them, the new red Studebaker limped into a garage where, after much tinkering, pounding, thumping and conflicting opinions, the trouble was diagnosed. The overload had squashed the body down onto the underframe and driveshaft, and the noise was caused merely by the universal joint eating its way up through the floorboards. The whole matter could be rectified in a jiffy.

We spent the jiffy, two to three hours, wandering about the strange town, where the Diktys made purchases of liquid matter in drugstores and then smashed the bottles on the sidewalk; while Bloch and Robinson contented themselves by sitting on bus benches and baiting innocent elderly ladies waiting for busses. They nearly convinced one trusting soul that the busses had indeed stopped running, only to be revealed for what they really are by the appearance of a lumbering tram. She eyed them sadly. A schoolhouse across the street caught their debauched eyes, and while the Diktys inspected the athletic display, Bloch and Tucker inspected a covey of co-eds. Robinson read a science fiction magazine.

The remainder of the trip to the Lake can be told in a few inspired sentences. The garage extracted a sum from me and handed over the keys to the Studebaker. We resumed our original positions and continued on. No strange noises from beneath the flooring. A plethora of gay & happy noises above the flooring. Every hour or so when faint cries could be heard coming up from cavernous depths, someone would pass a candy bar or drink of water down to Robinson resting on the bottom. This once happened in a gas station and the attendant stood by in awe, watching Dikty fashion a funnel of heavy paper and ram it down through the chinks and crevices until the lower end reached Robinson. Robinson then beat on the floor in pre-arranged signal and Dikty poured water down the funnel. Later a smutty joke book was passed down and periodically thereafter the loud guffaws would blast from beneath the baggage; we knew he was still with us. In some small Ohio town, Bloch stopped to examine a country courthouse and discovered a meteorite. (The man has a tremendous courthouse complex which was destined to plague us the remainder of the journey.) The meteorite resting on this particular courthouse lawn had been placed there by the Friends of Gene Stratton Porter, who, a metal plate informed us, had written a book about bees not far from the spot. After-that, Bloch sought long and eagerly for a meteorite of his own, that he might get started on a bee story.

Indian Lake was finally reached at a late hour that night, despite the efforts of everyone aboard to inform the driver: (a) we were on the wrong road, (b) it was really THAT way, (c) we passed it half an hour ago, and (d) you don't know very much do you? Happy faaans rushed out to see us, baggage was unloaded and Robinson was discovered alive, luggage was handed to all and sundry to tote indoors (one box of books vanished, and was never seen again), and my passengers rushed off to peddle their odds and ends. Relieved, I fell into a stupor as somebody put a drink in my hand. Once again the Studebaker stood proudly upright on its springs.

Chapter Two: The sole purpose of this chapter is to denote the passing of time and the (probably final) weekend at Indian Lake. Details of that sordid brawl have been well reported elsewhere, including a highly erroneous article by a young man who pretends to be shocked by sex. In brief, we will say here that this was the rainy weekend so oft mentioned in print, and that hucksters abounded on every hand. You may also understand that Dr. Barrett didn't enjoy much of a vacation, as he was quite busy patching up playful fans who didn't realize they were loaded. So ends Indian Lake, lost by damned fools.

Chapter Three: Monday noon, and the conference was over for 1953. The sun was shining brightly as the last half-dozen fans and hucksters stood around taking pictures of each other and selling the remaining books and magazines at cut-rates. We drove out of the parking lot with a tear in our eye and a fat sheaf of bills in our wallet. Ahead of us romped a mysterious blue Meteor (that's a car in Canada) having an Ontario license. This persistent Meteor was to hang continually before us for hundreds of miles that day; but meanwhile as we drove through the pleasant and sunny Ohio countryside, Bloch was beside himself with joy, counting every courthouse as we passed them and occasionally cursing the small town in ringing tones if they lacked such a building. I found it embarrassing to be stopped by a traffic light in some tiny hamlet, having to sit there and endure his frustrated raving, ranting, and armwaving until the light changed. Later, when he began the habit of leaning from the window and shaking his fist at the townspeople, I stopped waiting on traffic lights and scooted through them. It was much easier to explain to red-faced policemen that "I didn't see the light", than to say to him "my friend is mad because you don't have a courthouse".

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: BNfdom carries all things, even the mind, away.

The blue Meteor was still ahead of us and every so often we thought we glimpsed strange activities in the front seat, but that wasn't my one and only puzzle of the afternoon. As the hours passed and Bloch relaxed somewhat from his courthouse capers, he suddenly developed the disquieting habit of talking to someone in the back seat. I suddenly realized I had committed myself to spend a week with this man, and this was but the first day. After many miles of this strange new behaviour, I pulled on to the side of the road to demand an explanation. "What," I said with a soothing smile, "is the meaning of this?" He grinned at me. "Why," he answered innocently, "I'm only talking to that woman." I then thought to inquire into the whereabouts of this mysterious female. Bloch was a picture of nonchalance. "The one sitting there in the back seat," said he. To prove to him that it was only a figment of his imagination, only a mirage, I waved my hand to and fro over the back seat and struck what was obviously a blonde obstacle.

"Where did you get that woman?" I demanded righteously.

The man from Weyauwega who has been known to collaborate with a certain Mr. Poe assured me she was a stranger to him. "She climbed in the car back there at Indian Lake," he explained. "I thought she was with you." Baffling as her presence was, I had no time to clear it up then, for suddenly the Meteor stopped in front of me and the driver got out to walk back. He peered at me in sinister fashion and demanded, "Are you going to cross the bridge?" Looking around him to discover a big bridge just ahead, I replied that I probably was -- the road ran that way. "Now don't get snotty," he warned me, and proceeded to dump several bulky objects into my car: a rug, a fur coat, several dozen cartons of cigarettes, and a case of wristwatches. He then mumbled something about meeting me on the other side, and drove away. Puzzling over the mysterious blonde, the mysterious driver and my mysterious cargo, we moved out onto the big bridge and ran smack into a roadblock maintained by the police. After duly admiring my new car and taking the serial number, they inspected my trunk, tire casings, motor, crankcase, blonde and the interior furnishings. They then asked me to step into a nearby shed. Bloch put his inquisitive head out the window as I followed the officers. "Ask them if Mammoth Cave is around here anywhere."

They detained me for nearly an hour and then I returned to the auto. "Robert," I said sorrowfully to the waiting Weyauwegan, "I have strange news for you." He braced himself for the very worst. "We're not in the state of Kentucky," I explained sheepishly. "We followed the wrong car, by some mischance. This is Canada."

"Well, dig that crazy detour!" the old Blochian wit flashed at me.

A smile and a strong handclasp was exchanged between us and all was right again. Together we paid the fine for attempting to smuggle in the contraband cigarettes, fur coats, shag rug and wristwatches. We returned to the car arm in arm and smiled winningly at the blonde. She returned the salute.

The Meteor was lurking on a side street awaiting us on the opposite end of the bridge, but now we had armed ourself for the scoundrel. Waving the Customs receipt at the sinister driver, we refused to return the smuggled goods until he reimbursed us. Much to everyone's surprise, including his wife, the mystery man whipped off his mask and stood revealed as good old Ned McKeown, the fellow who had introduced "Canadian Roulette" into fandom and who had attended the Indian Lake brawl with his wife, Shirley the Trig teacher. We danced around them, happy in our simple way. And we promptly moved in on them to stay a couple of days, after first making sure they had purchased twenty dollars worth of groceries to feed us and that Shirley could cook.

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: It matters not how long you publish, but how well you slipsheet.

Our visit with the McKeowns was a happy one despite the fact that my bed partner (a gentleman from Weyauwega who has been known to collaborate with Poe -- hah, fooled some of you!) has a bad sleeping habit. He will, without warning, suddenly fling out a fist or a foot and plant it in your face. I've been meaning to ask his wife about this, but haven't got around to it yet. Shirley McKeown, a former school 'marm who denies having taught Trig, brought with her from the old country a quaint Lapland ritual: each night she "poots the booter oot" as she phrases it... this consists of removing the butter from the refrigerator and placing it on the table to thaw.

Because we couldn't explain the blonde we pretended she wasn't there and consequently had many a merry moment watching the McKeown's play the perfect hosts to an "invisible woman". Now and again we would let Ned catch us making whirly-gig motions with a finger pointed to the head, he thinking we supposed his back was turned. After a while Ned too began to think she wasn't there and passed his hand to and fro over her body. Shirley slapped him. As the food began to run low, and their patience as well, we bid adieu to the quaint native couple and betook ourselves to Niagra Falls, to check on a rumor that Marilyn Monroe had shut off the water. The people thereabouts are not happy with what she did to their tourist attraction, and her film was restricted to adults only. An old gentleman who declined to be quoted by name said she was guilty of inserting subversive thoughts into the heads of honeymooners. It was then that Robert Bloch, boy spelunkar, had his brilliant idea.

Glancing thoughtfully at the mysterious blonde still riding in the back seat, he whispered to me that the three of us should apply casually for a honeymoon cabin together, sign Ted Sturgeon's name to the register and then sit back to see what would happen. So we did; nothing happened all night. We played cards until dawn without a single sinister knock at the door. Greatly disappointed with Canadian curiosity, saddened by the fact that no one there read Sturgeon or Galaxy, we packed up and put the dust of the Falls behind us, carefully avoiding all known faaans in Buffalo, North Tonawando, and West Cupcake. Hurling ourselves westward, we sped through Erie avoiding fans to find ourselves at the outskirts of Cleveland. "Cleveland," my devilish companion mused, "isn't there some fan in Cleveland?" I said yes and mentioned the unspeakable name.

"Oh, yes," Bloch chortled gleefully. "THAT chap! Are you game?" I gave my assent with an evil chuckle, but with an undertone of curiosity. "What monstrous obscenity have you in mind?" I asked.

He then informed me that he knew the phone number of a first-class call-house in Cleveland; he proposed that we contact the establishment, give them the unspeakable name and address, and request that they send a girl posthaste. This was a capital idea and I could almost picture the fan meeting the girl at the door -- perhaps a fanmag clutched in his hot little fist. It would be a contest to see who would sell who. I agreed and we borrowed a dime from the blonde to place the call. Harlan, ponder your narrow escape if you are reading this. Only one thing saved you from a fate worse than death. After placing the call, neither of us boy wonders could remember your address.

But our gay week was nearly over. Bloch had given up his infernal, eternal search for meteorites and courthouses and now lapsed into a surly silence, breaking it only if we chanced to pass a cemetary. "Dig that crazy grave!" he would cry, and then sink back. In between the dodging of trucks I carried on a desultory conversation with the blonde in the back seat, and discovered we both had mutual acquaintances in Salt Lake City. It rained steadily, and one evening when we found we couldn't go

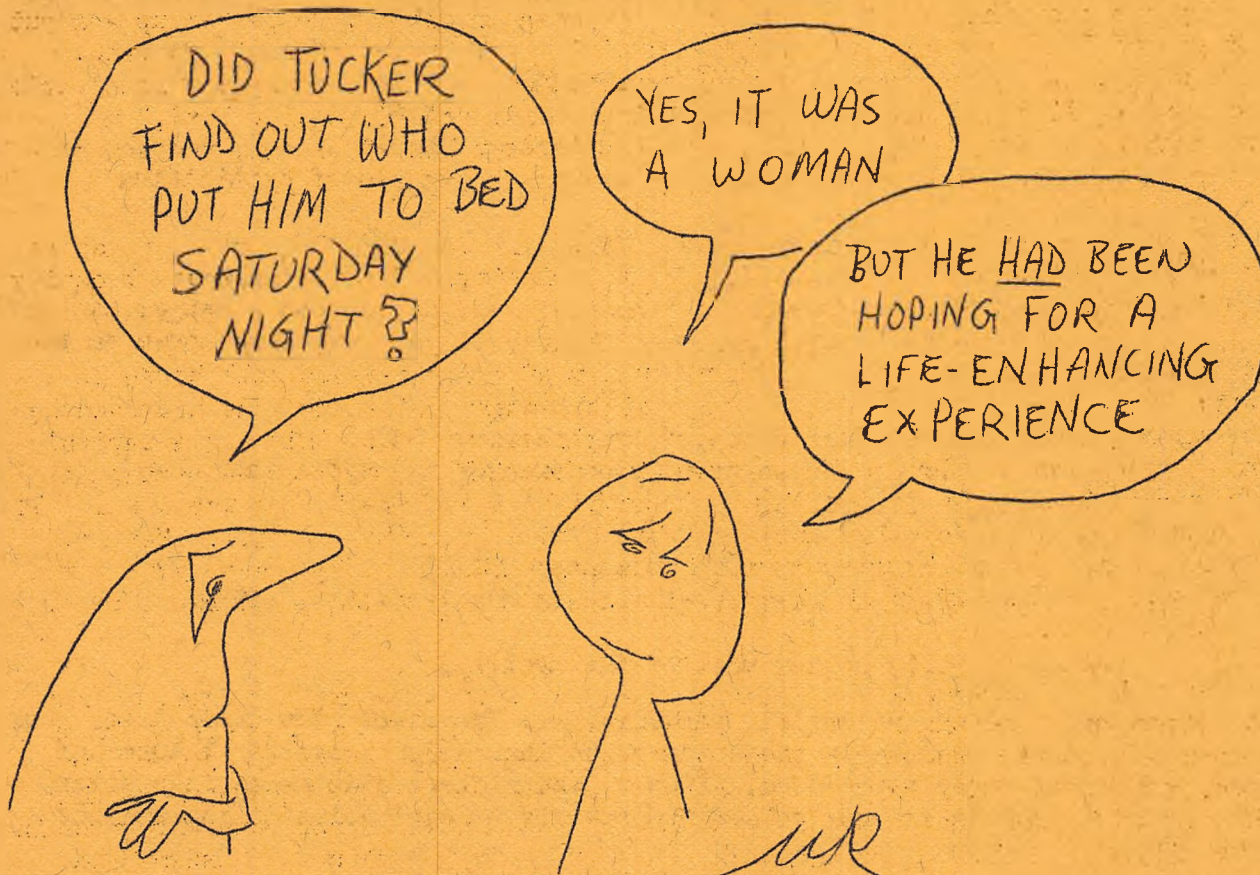
POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Never collect more than your garage can store.

swimming at a nearby resort, we pulled into a lonely motel for a needed rest. Bloch and I walked into the office together and told the attendant we wanted a room. The man gave me a card to sign. Bloch nudged me and indicated the waiting blonde. "Oh, yes," I added matter-of-factly, "we need another room." The motel-keeper eyed us with suspicion. I saw his question coming and with lightning-like thought, told him my right name and explained the circumstances. After all, I said, we were honorable gentlemen, above sin and such. He threw us out. The governor of Ohio shall hear of this.

Still boring westward, we soon found ourselves in the near proximity of Frank Robinson's home and decided to drop in on him, knowing he would appreciate the unexpected visit. The rat wasn't home. His good parents entertained us until their patience wore thin, and we left -- but not until we had inspected his collection and Bob had helped himself to several choice copies of WEIRD TALES.

In the end we again found ourselves sitting on a railing outside of Michigan City, Indiana, watching the steamcars go by. We were disconsolate because the place did not sell peanuts. Touched by it all, Bloch bid me goodbye, borrowed ten dollars for his rail fare, and was whisked off into the night. His parting words were a promise to write a sequel to THE SCARF and do this all over again the following year. Dashing away a tear, I said swell, and don't forget to send me the ten-spot. And the last I saw of the mysterious blonde, she was taking another train to Chicago which in turn was a transfer-point to some other place. She was kind enough to give me her phone number as the train pulled away. Nine village loafers in the station also caught it.

We never did discover just which city the number fitted.



Oliver King Smith Science

Fiction Publicity Service

MR. PRODUCER: Planning a new science fiction epic? Shooting a super-duper rocket drama? Releasing another Frankenstein sequel? Then take advantage of our never-fail publicity services! Ten thousand fans in all parts of the United States and Canada are yours to command! (Six fans in England for a slightly higher fee.)

The entire howling membership of the NFFF at your beck and call! Insure your picture before release date, make it an academy award winner before it reaches the screen! Our members flood newspapers with publicity, petition theater managers to book the movie!

1000 requests to screen a picture: \$50
5000 requests to screen a picture: \$65.98
1 live fan to parade up and down sidewalk in spacesuit: \$6
1 live fan painted green to simulate Martian: \$6.50
1 real Martian painted white to simulate fan: \$6.95

Confidential: have you got a stinker coming up? Shooting movie of dubious value? Turning out a nine-day quickie with worries? Stop worrying! Place your entire campaign in our capable hands -- we'll take immediate steps to erase any possibility of doubt, to eliminate critics and carpers!

500 fans to applaud rainstorm on Mars: \$250
250 fans to cheer madly as rocket avoids comet: \$195
100 fans to hiss villain as he unties monster: \$44.95
1000 howling fans to storm newspaper and wreck presses of criticizing reviewers: \$450.15
10 cut-and-dried favorable reviews: \$1.95

Worried about the opposition? Fearful lest another studio produces a better picture? Afraid of falling attendance when an opposing theater plays a superior movie on the same day? We will see you win!

5000 maddened fans to picket opposition theater: \$5000
10,000 roaring fans to infest opposition theater and spoil the screening: \$10,000
1 Martian to throw audience into panic: \$1
6 assorted solar monsters to rout audience: \$1.75
1 certified professor to certify picture is unscientific: \$10

(prices slightly higher west of the Rockies)

Take quick advantage of our scientific services, Mr. Producer! You can't lose. Our fans are genuine fans, trained in the sciences to instantly recognize pictures of merit, no matter how cheaply produced. (Twelve and fifteen chapter serials given special attention.) This is your golden opportunity to capitalize on the science cycle! Act now!

PAVLAT:

THE THINKING FAN'S CATALYST

I read Bob Pavlat's innocent-sounding question and said to myself, "Poo! That's an easy one. As a matter of fact, he answered it himself in the same and the following paragraphs." But further cogitation revealed that he hadn't really answered his own question because the answer was too easy, too simple. "I'm in fandom because I like it" is a handy sentence to throw back at him, but it was not the fair answer he was expecting.

Perhaps the first order would be to set the record straight: I do not regard myself as a professional.

Oh, sure, I've published about fifteen books, and sold an equal number of shorter stories, but I still do not regard myself as a pro. I'm aware that fandom looks on me as one -- Pavlat has just put it into words -- and that any number of individual fans think of me as a sometimes-dirty pro who used to be a fan back in the jolly old days. But I insist that one and all are peeling bark from the wrong tree. The discrepancy is this: the fans are using one definition of a pro while I am employing another.

To my way of thinking, a pro is really a PRO; that is, one who makes his living by writing, editing, illustrating or publishing. I regard Bloch and Shaw as pro's because, so far as I am aware, they do just that to keep body and soul together. I realize that Bloch keeps his fine hand (or foot) in the advertising world, and that he makes weekly television appearances; and I realize that Shaw has business interests far from the science fiction field, but these activities only serve to strengthen my case: they live by their typewriters and pencils. I do not.

I've worked in some arm of the movie and vaudeville business for the past 29 years, and I suppose I will continue to do so until I or the last local theater collapses. About 18 years ago I turned to pro writing for egoboo (all my best friends were doing it) and was quite pleased when I found that they also paid money -- sometimes. Some years I turn a tidy sum from such writing, and other years I skimp along with only a couple of hundred dollars from the field. But I continue to rely on my theatrical trades for my living because I'm not as soft-headed as a local friend who, a few years back, threw up his very good job and decided to "write for a living". The guy damned near starved to death before he got his old job back.

I'm not a pro because the theater provides my livelihood. I'm not a pro because in only one year of the 18 has pro writing paid me more than the theaters. I'm not a pro because I compose and type so painfully slow that I could not produce fast enough, and sell often enough, to keep my family fed and sheltered. I am not a pro in my definition, regardless of what fandom may think or say.

But I'm happy to say I'm a fan, despite the infrequent razzberries some iconoclasts shower down upon me and upon the fan field in general.

I was enchanted when I discovered the tiny fandom which existed in the promag letter-sections of 1931-32. I was beside myself with joy when I sacrificed a dollar in 1932 and secured a subscription to my first fanzine, THE TIME TRAVELLER. Although I've never subscribed to the belief that "fandom is a way of life" (believing that to be

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Even a single fuzz casts his shadow.

for the birds), I've lived with it ever since in a manner that could insert doubt in some heads.

I thoroughly enjoy fans and fandom, in those hours of the day or the particular days of a week when it comes to my attention in the form of a letter or fanzine. The enjoyment is so real that I've put up with any number of indignities without turning sour. Fans have mooched from me, stolen from me, cheated me, lied about me, have broken into my house during my absence, and one of them made off with my wife, but I still love them -- with certain exceptions whom I loathe. But lest I be misunderstood, or taken for a dimwit, let it be made clear that my fondness for fandom isn't the Ackerman-type of fondness (if such a thing exists). I think you grasp my meaning. I like it well, but not overly well; I want to be a part of it, but should a hard decision come my parting with it isn't likely to break me up.

Now and again some such decision (of a more minor nature) confronts me, and the path I choose seems so natural that I find it difficult to understand the choice of others. During the lean years, for example, I might be heading into Labor Day with a certain sum of money in my pocket and the knowledge that I can either attend the convention, or meet a mortgage payment, but not both. Although the choice is obvious to me, I still shake my head with wonder when I learn that some fan has given up his job to attend the con. The hedonist!

So it boils down to people.

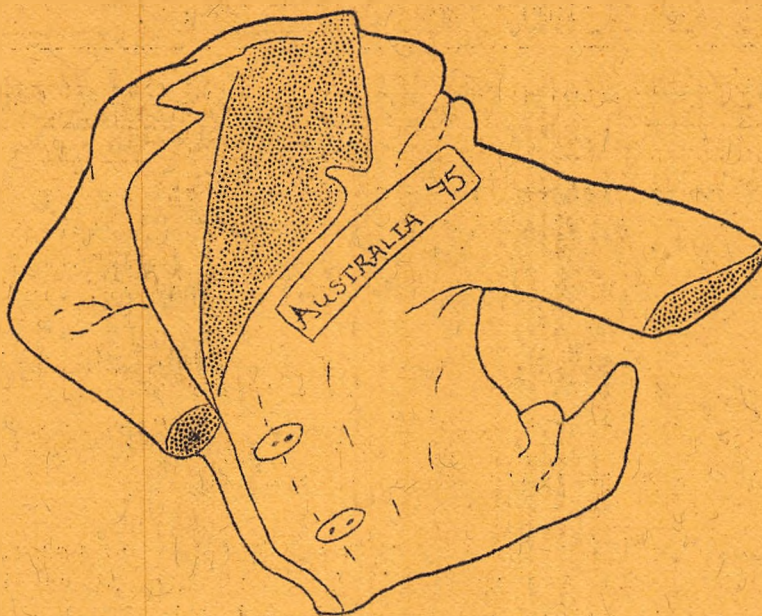
I wouldn't give a damn for fandom if there were no people in it.

And after all those windy words, Bob Pavlat, you have an answer: a genuine liking for you and the other sixty-odd (very odd) people in FAPA; a warm liking for the other hundreds of heroes and villains who comprise fandom. (With certain exceptions, whom I loathe.) This liking is usually increased after a personal meeting, and only rarely decreased by it; it still occurs even though a meeting never happens. Put it down simply as a fondness for fans, and a bright-eyed fascination for the things they say and do. Lordy, the things they say and do!

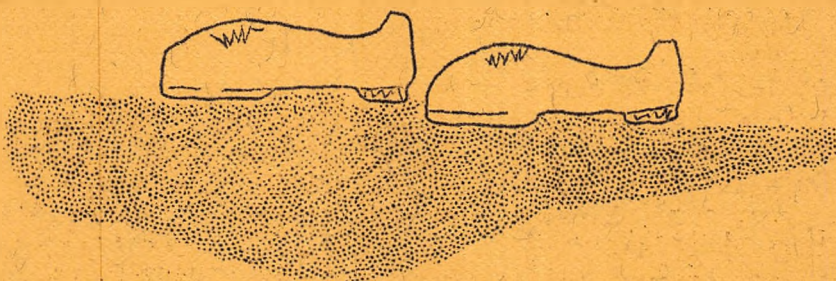
I enjoy the personality and the works of Ted White, for example, and can usually understand his points when he is being quite obscure but is under the impression that he is writing or speaking clearly. I enjoy (but gasp at) his wild leaps toward conclusions which aren't really there; I am fascinated by his wicked, haymaking criticisms and then equally entertained and fascinated when the object of his scorn strikes back, having perceived the flaw in his argument caused by the haymaker. I enjoy listening to Ted talk about jazz, even though I understand and appreciate only a fraction of it. At the other end of the spectrum, I enjoy Gertrude Carr and her haymakers, and then I enjoy her significant silences when someone catches her with the guard down and makes a point which demands refutation or proof.

I enjoy Danner's burly independence; Ellik's running up and down California; Moskowitz's oh-so-stiff-necked lectures and reviews; Taurasi's ponderous imitations of metropolitan newspapers; Coulson's frankness in the face of rutted conventionality; Bloch's sheer friendliness and conviviality; Rotsler's hedonism, and yes, the fugg-headedness of those who shall be nameless. I'm especially fond of the fuggheads and it shouldn't be difficult to understand why. In fact, I like fans -- with certain exceptions, whom I loathe. I'm in fandom because I like it, and because I have broad mental horizons.

Don't you?



DIALOG FOR THREE HAMS



SCENE: The Palatial hunting lodge of Hoy Ping Pong, an aged refugee of the Boxer Rebellion. Hoy is reclining on a silken divan, struggling to roll a corn-silk cigaret. The action takes place in his opium den, a book-lined study.

TUCKER (entering): There's a chap here to see you.

HOY (indolently): I can't be bothered.

TUCKER: But he claims to be a fan.

HOY: Put the dog on him!

TUCKER: Can't. The dog turned tail and ran.

HOY: Throw the rascal out!

TUCKER: No, no! Not money. He wants something for his fanzine.

HOY: His WHAT?

TUCKER: Fanzine. F-a-n-z-i-n-e.

HOY: Zounds! I thought those things went out with Wollheim twenty years ago!

TUCKER: No, no! You're thinking of the Michelists.

HOY: Well, what does this guy expect me to do?

TUCKER: Write a funny piece for his fanzine.

HOY: Like H. G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds"? (DELETED)

TUCKER: Well, that's what he said.

HOY: Then tell him what I said!

TUCKER: Can't. He's a bit young for such language.

HOY: Egads! One of those terrible neofans?

TUCKER: Not quite. He's been around a couple of years.

HOY: Then my language won't faze him.

(Vic Ryan bounds into the den. He is full of fannish enthusiasm, leaping and cavorting in high glee and scattering copies of his fanzine about the room. He also knocks over a tower of beer cans.)

HOY: Odds blud! What's THAT?

TUCKER: The faan I was telling you about. The character who wants a funny piece for his fanzine.

HOY: Send him to Loki!

TUCKER: Can't. Loki quit business twenty years ago, after he blasted the pants off me -- remember?

RYAN: How do you do, Sir, old timer, first fan, venerable one? I respect your honorable beard. Allah!

HOY: Go poke your head in a rocket tube.

RYAN: I say, sir, that's rather witty.

HOY: And then tell the pilot to push the button.

RYAN: My, sir, you get wittier and wittier.

HOY: Insufferable pup! Say -- do you know how to roll a cornsilk cigarette?

RYAN: I'm sorry, sir, we faans only use peyote.

HOY: What the devil is peyote?

TUCKER: It's the latest fad among fans, Hoy.

HOY: Is it as tasty as haircreme?

TUCKER: Not quite.

HOY: Hmmp! Then it can't be much. Now in my day...

TUCKER: But this chap isn't interested in your day. He wants a funny piece for his fanzine.

HOY: Didn't know they was still publishing those things.

RYAN: Oh, yes, sir! Here, have one of mine.

HOY: (groaning) Spare me!

RYAN: But it's a very good fanzine, aged one.

HOY: I suppose it's mimeographed?

RYAN: Of course, sir.

HOY: And stapled?

RYAN: Yes, sir.

HOY: Is it legible?

RYAN: Yes, sir!

HOY: Then it can't be very good! Now, in my day, all the best fanzines were illegible.

TUCKER: Stop boasting about the good old days -- this chap represents the new wave. They do things differently now. And, besides, you never read an illegible fanzine in your life. You just wrote letters praising the contents.

HOY: I remember saying only fakefans read illegible fanzines.

RYAN: We say that about magazine readers now, sir.

HOY: What magazine readers?

RYAN: Those people who read science fiction magazines, sir.

HOY: WHAT? Science fiction magazines? Are they still being published?

RYAN: Of course, sir. Allah is good.

HOY: Nonsense! The magazines went out with Ray Palmer, ten years ago. I distinctly remember him promising us fireworks in place of magazines.

TUCKER: Hold up, old man, you're confused again. Palmer threatened us with fireworks because we wouldn't support his new kind of fandom -- deroes or flying saucers or something.

HOY: Well, I sat back, watching and waiting. Did he deliver the fireworks?

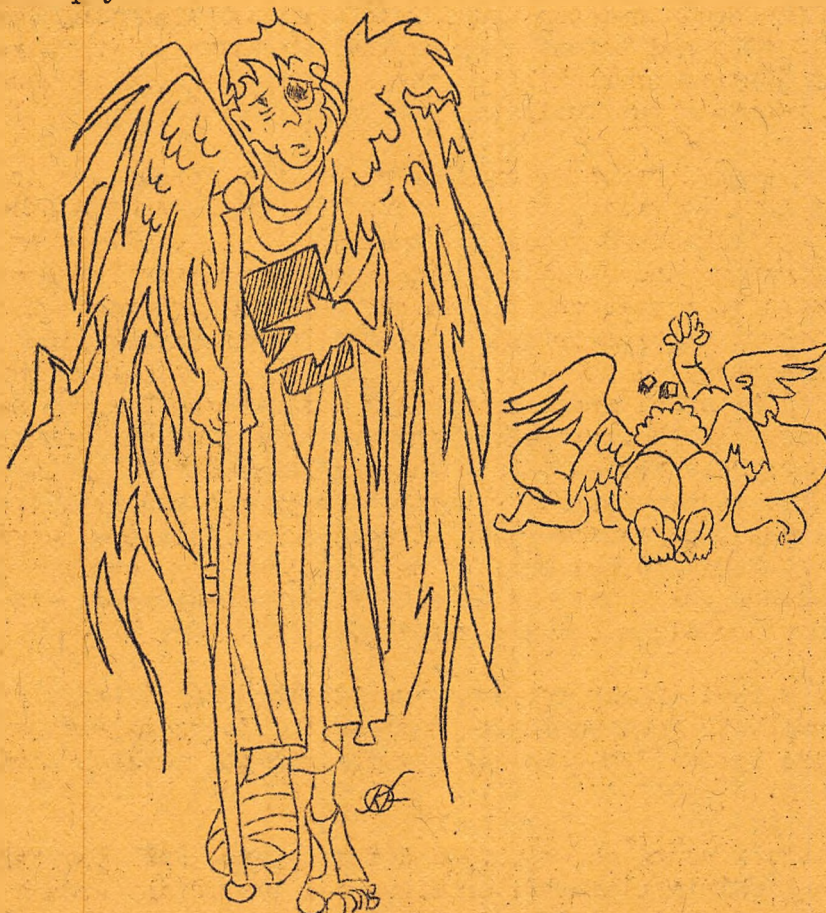
TUCKER: That's a yes and no proposition.

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Beware the neo!

RYAN: I saw a skyrocket once.
HOY: Did it have Palmer's name on it?
RYAN: I couldn't say, sir. It went by rather fast.
HOY: That was Palmer's, all right.
TUCKER: Well, what about this chap's funny piece?
HOY: Impossible. I quit writing funny pieces when PLANET folded. Lost my zest for living, that's what. The fans don't do anything ridiculous anymore -- they give me no reason to write anything funny.
TUCKER: Now, I wouldn't say that...
HOY: I would! They're just a bunch of sticks. No more lovable Christmas cards, no more spelling books, no more buttered doorknobs, no more hoax telegrams, no more Joe Fann telegrams, no more suicides, no more bombs on the lawn, no more bricks, no more firecrackers at Beastley's-on-the-Bayou, no more bathtubs off the roof, no more Deglers knocking at the door, no more spurious invitations, no more black market butter, no more three-dimensional chess, no more shattered doors, no more nights in jail.

Oh, bah! Fans are little sissies today!
RYAN: May I print your honorable words verbatim, sir?
HOY: If you do, I'll sue! For \$25,000.
TUCKER: Correction, old man, \$35,000.
RYAN: I'm afraid I don't have that much.
TUCKER: Who has?
HOY: Throw the rascal out!

And go get me some peyote!



THAT ONLY A MOTHER

The following bit of character assassination has to do with a man of about forty possessing an IQ about half that. He is married to a sharp-tongued woman of about the same intelligence and they have two or three children who display no signs of being different. This man is a movie projectionist who has been working with me, or in some nearby theatre, for more than twenty years, and so I have followed his career with fascinated interest. He is more fun to watch than any bird.

Somewhat dull-witted and now running to excess weight, he first came to my attention when he quit high school in his second year and began working in the theater; his father (another projectionist) got him the job and the boy was overjoyed -- the apprentice pay of about \$5 per day was a tremendous sum before the war, and a colossal sum for a teenager to be drawing in that era. His first paycheck amounted to \$25 or \$30 and the lad spent it, literally every nickel of it, in pinball machines at a nearby poolhall. He also shot his meager winnings. As a projectionist he learned little or nothing beyond routine chores: to correctly splice film, to correctly thread the machine and make the reel changes without a blank screen, to compensate for an error in the schedules, and to adjust the sound level as the theater fills or empties. The other minor things a man picks up in practice escaped him entirely: he still does not understand focus-drift, or the variance in film thickness from one subject to another, or the need to match sound levels on both machines, or the way in which a near-focus is obtained before a given reel is shown on the screen, or how to stop a picture from jumping or rocking on the screen. He learned none of these after nearly twenty-five years in the business.

In this trade a projectionist usually gravitates toward one specialty or another. If his interest runs to radio, TV or electronics he becomes a home-grown expert in sound-service and optical-sound repair -- that is, he specializes in the "talking" aspect of talking pictures and sometimes acquires as much knowledge as the RCA service men who come around to repair our equipment. Or, failing that, the man specializes in mechanical upkeep and repair and sometimes becomes as skilled as the factory machinists who are required to rebuild projectors. In theaters which employ two men to a shift it is the usual practice to team one of each kind so as to provide for any emergency; in other theaters employing only one man, the practice is for each expert to always be on call for any other theater where his skill is needed. Our boy, the subject of this study, learned nothing. He cannot change a tube without burning his fingers -- indeed, he cannot read the available dials and guess quickly and accurately which tube where has burned out; he has to open every cabinet and look at every tube, seeking the black one. Nor can he make the simplest repair on a machine without constant guidance and strictest supervision.

He has never worked in any but a two-man booth. He is aware of some of his limitations and carefully jockeys position so as to always be with a skilled projectionist. For twenty-odd years I've been waiting for him to be caught out alone, and I'm still waiting.

When he was still young he volunteered for service with the Marines. He did that because he has highly inflammable emotions and the Sunday attack on Pearl Harbor sent him into a towering rage. On Monday he went to Chicago and joined up. Thereafter he

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Nothing is more confident than a crudzine publisher.

was away for two or three years and I heard little from him, but eventually he returned to work displaying a Purple Heart. (I think he caught a stray bullet by accident -- he probably put up a finger to test the wind and a bullet happened to be passing by.) The Purple Heart was worn on his civilian clothes for so long afterward that it became the target of open jokes, and he finally removed it only because our laughter penetrated. Also when he was still young, and just before being shipped overseas, he acquired a wife. The story of the acquisition still brings smiles. Being a bright young man in Marine bootcamp, he did what he was probably told not to do: he wrote home one day telling us that he was being shipped out from such-and-such a port on a certain date.

The girl in the case, and the girl's mother, immediately latched onto this information and wired the C.O. or the chaplain or the Red Cross or whatever to Hold The Ship -- this boy and this girl had to get married! Mother and girl left for California at once, arriving just before sailing time, and damned if they didn't haul that brave young Marine off the ship, wed him, and then stow him back aboard. He went on to Guadalcanal, the girl and her mother returned home in triumph, and a few years later when the couple were reunited they got around to having the first child. He probably didn't suspect a thing.

After several years of marriage and an equal number of years of goldbricking in the theater, the wife got ambitious for him and decided that his rightful place in the sun was at least two or three cuts above us ordinary slobs. A school for mechanical draftsmen was opened in Bloomington and the advertisements hinted at prestige and big pay; that was enough! Armed with T-square and protractor our boy marched off to school --- and marched home again four days later. The reason for the failure was never admitted but several of us suspected that he was unable to distinguish between the two tools of the trade. Again, a few years later, the status fever seized the good wife and this time she decided that her husband would become a doctor. This news jolted us from our chairs for we knew that he had quit highschool in his second year. It developed that she did not have medicine in mind; she had located a school of osteopathy in Iowa which would accept him under the G.I. Bill, and off he went to be the world's greatest osteopath.

To his credit, he lasted the better part of six weeks.

The couple manage their financial affairs as they manage everything else: badly. They are always in debt, sometimes desperately so, and he frequently complains to me that he isn't getting enough extra work to meet the needs of his budget -- not that he keeps a budget but it's a handy figure of speech. However, this indebtedness has not stopped nor even slowed their desperate drive for status and social recognition. A few years ago they sold the house their in-laws had helped buy, and moved to the East Side. Bloomington's east side is where the moneyed set live, the posh business and social groups who control the city's wealth and industry; the more easterly one dwells, the higher his relative status. Our gay couple picked out a posh address on a posh street and moved right in, debt and all. It entailed sacrifices, of course. They had to let one of their three automobiles go (one new one and two junkers) and it became necessary for the wife to seek a job. She found one in a local insurance company which paid about fifty a week; he, meanwhile, was earning a hundred and ten at a local drive-in theater. But they soon discovered that this gross of a hundred and sixty a week wasn't nearly enough because that damned government was taking so much in taxes, so our boy sought and found a second job for himself. He landed a dock-walloper's position at the local General Electric factory, for about another seventy a week. The last I heard, they are barely managing to struggle along on this new gross of two

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: You can tell the character of every fan when you see how well
----- he staples.

hundred and thirty a week.

The story isn't yet ended. The wife is still ambitious for the man and after he had been at General Electric for a while she decided that toting crates on the loading dock was a job for bums; her husband should go for the big money and be an electrical engineer. He tried, too. One of my neighbors who is an electrical engineer at the factory came over one night to talk about him; the Genius had given my name as a character reference and now the e.e. was routinely checking him out. I couldn't help myself, I rolled on the floor and laughed until tears came. (Well, not quite, but you get the idea.) I made a pact with the e.e. I told him to put the Genius to a simple test and if he answered it correctly I would give my recommendation. The question was this: what is the function of a buss bar? (It wasn't an unfair question, all the theaters have them and many are located in or near the projection room. We frequently tap them to string temporary lights.)

Our subject is not now an electrical engineer.

So today (at least during the eight months of the year the drive-in theater is open) my pet Genius plods wearily between his two jobs. His schedule is something like this: up at seven in the morning and to work at GE by eight; home again by four in the afternoon to sleep a bit, eat, and then on to work at the theater. Depending upon the number of feature pictures on a given night, he works until one, two, or three o'clock, and then returns home to sleep a bit more before rising at seven to begin again. He remains as dull-witted as ever, abetted now by his sleeplessness; he would like to cat-nap in the projection room but it isn't permitted by the management nor by the man working with him. He would like to quit the depressing grind but his wife won't allow it, so he plods on trying desperately to make ends meet, trying desperately to gain status in the eyes of his east side neighbors, and probably harboring a secret desire to leave the theater job and strike out into something really big. It is for this last reason that I don't dare incorporate his character into a book. He or his wife would surely recognize him, and I don't have the \$25,000 to spare.

He has a few hobbies: in season he manages to hunt game without blowing his head off (well, thus far anyway); he collects coins but will not pay premium prices for what he wants -- if he can't persuade someone to sell him a rare Indian-Head penny for just one cent, he goes without; he once tried to learn chess (!) but gave it up; he carries a silver dollar bearing his birthdate and believes it to be "lucky" -- nothing will happen to him while it is on his person; and he reads all the time he isn't watching the movies. His reading matter is confined almost entirely to the male-adventure magazines, especially those mags containing stories about Marine heroes who captured Jap armies single-handed, or who lived with female pirates until the end of the war. He thinks science fiction is crazy stuff for mentally mixed-up people and once told me (after my first novel) that any damned fool could write a book -- it was only necessary to steal words from other books.

You may well ask what brought all this on, this essay of character assassination. Well, two things. We were previously talking about IQ, and I decided to write a piece with a moral: one doesn't need a high IQ to get rich -- or at least to make money. Secondly, my Genius has just pulled another stunt. The drive-in theater closed for the season and the man automatically fell back to the extra-board; he's now getting three days a week at a small neighborhood house which pays him a total gross of \$33. So a few weeks ago, for his wife's birthday, he bought her fifteen hundred dollars worth of new furniture. On credit. I love him in my quaint people-watching way.

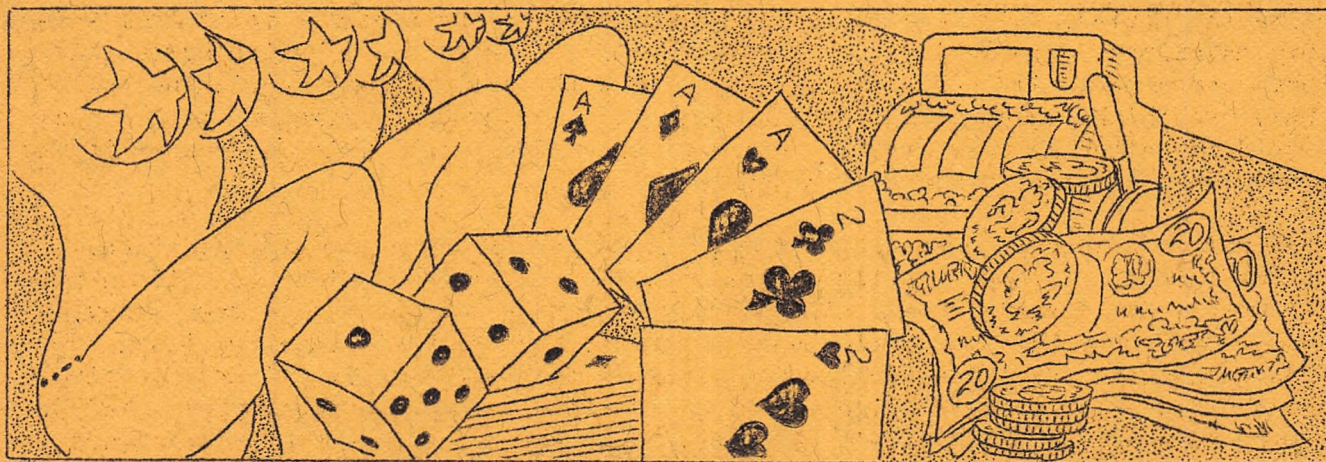


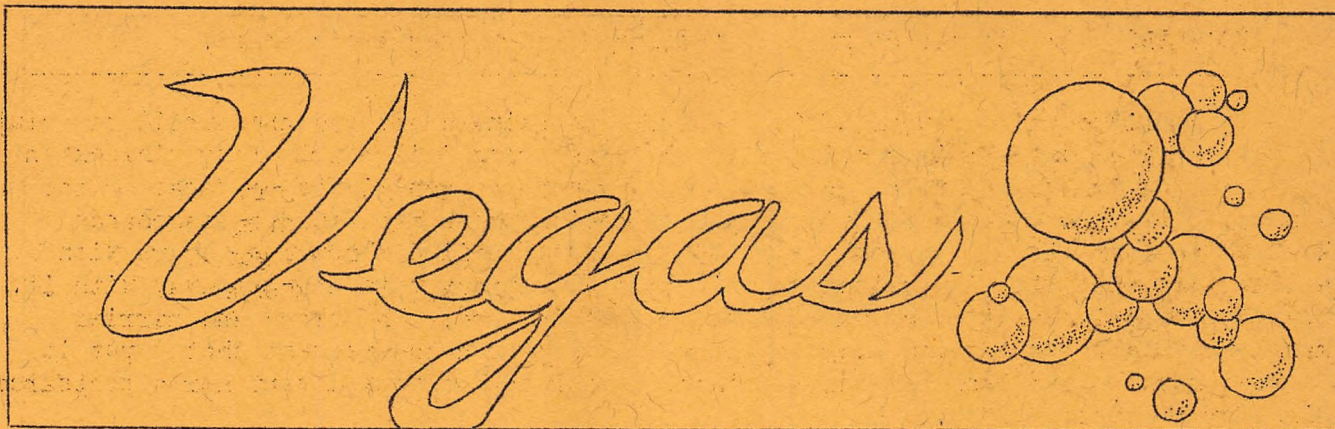
The Union Pacific Railroad has entered into an unholy alliance with the Las Vegas gambling hells. Their pullman train from Chicago arrives in Vegas at four o'clock in the morning and the reason is soon realized. The weary traveller has the agonizing choice of paying for an extra day's room and going to bed upon arrival, or of sitting up in a slot-machine filled lobby and waiting for the noon-hour check-in. Either way they get you, and that is the purpose of Las Vegas. The slogan seems to be: "Take him, he may never come back". In many years of wandering between Halifax and Los Angeles, between Parry Sound and New Orleans, I have at last found the place I never want to revisit.

Las Vegas was astonishing, fascinating, and repulsive.

As I told all and sundry at Chicago, I had another vacation coming only a few days after the Chicon closed: a week in Vegas as a delegate to a labor convention with basic expenses paid. To my later chagrin I discovered that "basic" was a trifle too basic, considering the Vegas pricing system and the plethora of gambling halls. (I'm a bit of a weak character, you know.) But away! with the speed of a hundred charging horses, diesel type, on the Union Pacific. The cunning railroad magnates had, only Labor Day, consolidated two trains into one and passengers embarking from Union Station found it necessary to walk to What Cheer, Iowa, to reach their proper cars. (The train used four diesel units to pull twenty-six cars.)

I discovered, that first night as I staggered from the club car to the roomette, that the beds are exactly two inches too short, no matter what your height. After an hour or two of futilely kicking the bulkhead beyond my feet in an effort to move it, I resigned myself to my fate and got up. Instantaneously, as if by magic, my sharp ears detected the sound of cards slapping a table nearby. Eureka! I thought, my ten of clubs come home to me. Hastily dressing, I fought the door open, fought the





zippered curtain open, and sprang into the aisle with glittering eyes. The car porter and a pair of dainty damsels occupied the roomette just across the aisle, and the three of them were playing Hearts and damaging the contents of a fifth of I.W. Harper. Great was their joy upon seeing me, for I made a fourth, had the foresight to bring along my own bottle, and obviously was not a railroad agent spying on the porter.

It developed that the porter was well afloat and the young ladies were in the employ of a couple of television producers named Goodman and Todson, or something to that effect; they were being shifted to Los Angeles where a few segments of some fool show was to be filmed. I earned their undying love by stating that television was tainted and that Sunday night panel television had a particularly ripe odor, but they let me stay anyway. Along about sunrise we found that both jugs were empty, the porter had gone to sleep, and Hearts had exhausted itself as an intellectual game. One of the young ladies wistfully mentioned poker and wished we could find a few more players. Recognizing the bait when I smell it, I gallantly sprang to action. A couple of stagehands going to the same convetnion were sleeping only two cars away, and those of you who know the theater know stagehands. We tippy-toed two cars forward and banged on the proper door.

After what seemed an eternity the door opened an inch or two and a bearded face was seen. The face stared at me with slow recognition, stared at the two women (wearing robes over pajamas) behind me and muttered something indistinct which might have been: "Geez -- before breakfast?" I displayed the deck of cards and told the face we were looking for action. The door was flung open, the other stagehand was roused from bed, a table procured from some nook or cranny (this room was large; a bedroom, drawing room or some such) and the action began. It continued until the breakfast call, at which time the girls retired to their car to dress; it continued after breakfast until



POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Do not count your fanzines before they are cranked.

lunch; it continued after lunch until dinner; it continued after dinner until the club car porter booted us out; it continued in the large room 'til nearly four o'clock on the second morning when someone announced they could see the lights of Vegas on the horizon. I had the ungallant satisfaction of seeing those two Detroit stagehands take the New York girls. Oh, they took me too, but I smiled through my tears with the knowledge that big city slickers can't bait us country boys and get away with it! My parting experience with the damsels was a touching one. The older and married woman gave me her Los Angeles address and a quarter, with the request that I put it in a slot machine and send her the winnings. Later in the week I sent her a pactsarcd, asking for another quarter.

THE CON GAME

At almost every con fans are heard to gripe about room troubles. There were many complaints at Chicago about lost reservations, higher priced rooms and icy desk clerks. Seasoned con-goers know this to be standard operating procedure on the part of certain hotels: it is a method of extracting more money from unsuspecting guests. Vegas hotelmen have refined it down to a vicious practice, and that four o'clock arrival works in their favor. There is but one double-barreled way to buck it. You must have written confirmation of your reservation, on which is given the date and time of arrival, plus the rate to be paid; and you must have the courage and stamina to outlast, out-think and out-shout the clerk. About an hour after my arrival at the hotel I was finally given the room and the rate my reservation called for.

But he got his revenge.

Vegas hotels are like nothing else in the mundane world. At four o'clock in the morning the immense lobby of the Thunderbird was an air-cooled fantasy world inhabited by half a thousand people with nothing better to do than pull the handles of half a thousand slot machines. The din was terrific. A small jazz combo to one side of the lobby beat their instruments to wood pulp in a determined effort to drown out the noise of the slots, but five hundred players pulled five hundred handles faster and louder to eliminate them. Behind the slots were crap tables, roulette tables and blackjack tables, each loaded with silver dollars and each ringed with busy gamblers throwing those dollars at the dealers as fast as they were able. I had not been in that lobby ten minutes before I learned my first Vegas lesson: drinks are free, if you are a player. The lobby was shot through with tall, scantily-dressed girls circulating among the slots and tables, taking orders from 'guests'. A moment later the guests were served with the compliments of the management. Hell, the management couldn't lose. Some of the players were so far gone they could win the hotel and not know it. In every imaginable way, management had method in their madness.

The desk clerk, that prince of good fellows, was hidden in a far corner of the room and a bellboy led me away through the jungle, knowing me for a first-timer. The desk itself was a tiny thing -- a larger one would have crowded out a couple of lucrative slots.

We engaged in the usual struggle, the clerk and I, and after my victory the bellboy walked me up one flight to my room. It proved to be at the very head of the stairs where the sound of merrymaking was always present -- this was the clerk's revenge. For the remainder of the night I was entertained by the raucous noise of the jazz combo engaged in a mighty struggle with five hundred slot machines. After listening to my rather naive remark, the bellboy said: "This ain't nothing. Wait until Saturday night when we get them dames from L.A."

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Never trust the advice of a fan in the bar.

The bedroom -- or rather, The Bed -- was another fantasy, being one of those wild and wicked Hollywood things of song and story. After the cramped train I welcomed a bed eight foot long but stared aghast at the width: three pillows wide. And the bellboy had already heard my naive joke: "Are they his-hers-his, or hers-his-hers?" I wasted perhaps half an hour testing all three pillows, trying to decide where on that football field I wanted to sleep, and finally settled on the middle one in hopes I would awaken the next morning to find the other two occupied by a pair of "them dames from L.A." I was disappointed.

Wild William Rotsler, boy photographer, awakened me.

A BEARDLESS PROPHET

This was my week to stare aghast. I stared aghast at the naked face of Rotsler. He seemed amused. Perhaps it was my pajamas, or my disappointment -- I think he guessed what I had been wishing for. He and his business partner in the Rotsler Film Cartel were in Vegas to discuss a business venture. They talked while I listened, staring now with fascination from one youthful face to the other. Rotsler minus beard was a shattering image, and I realized with regret that I had crept into history just a little too late. The other young man's face also attracted me because of its haunting familiarity and after a wee bit I put aside my impeccable manners and asked him where I had seen it before. Many years ago in his and my youth, he played "Alvin" in the movies -- a seemingly endless list of "Blondie and Dagwood" movies cranked out by Columbia studios between 1939-1949. Geez. I wanted to ask Bill a thousand things: whatever happened to Judy and Maggie, to Denver Pyle, to Cake Slice Manor, to the Hooker with the Heart of Gold who formerly lived above him, to the nurse supposed to be in PLAYBOY, to the old walnut ranch??? But alas, the only thing I got around to was KTEIC. Where in hell were several issues of KTEIC? Obviously some were missing, lost, or seized; and he was so busy now he simply could not find time for more issues. 'Tis a sad thing.

We breakfasted and ogled the amazing girls of Vegas, we sat beside a pool and ogled the amazing girls of Vegas, and when my visitors departed to scout a nearby location for a future movie, I did nothing more than sit on my haunches and ogle the amazing girls of Vegas. One and all, they advertised s-e-x. Hostesses and bar girls in taverns and clubs, in gambling casinos and hotel party rooms all specialized in that one commodity. Most of them were strikingly tall; I found many six-footers. All of them were undressed in such a manner as to call forcible attention to their bodies. The first-time visitor quickly gained the impression that he was living in one vast city-wide bagnio. And they were unionized, every one. My casual researches turned up the probably accurate information that every working man, woman and child in Vegas were unionized -- with one exception. The dealers, the men who handled the money at the gaming tables, were not organized. Their employers had reserved that one right: to maintain direct and undivided control over the money and the men who handled it. Unions agreed, and proceeded to organize the rest of the town. The amazing thing about all this is that Nevada is a so-called "Right to Work" state, wide open to union-busters and those who simply don't want to belong, yet Vegas is more thoroughly unionized than many a large city in the friendlier states. But ah, those girls.

OUCH

One couple of my acquaintance paid four dollars for a cup of coffee, and four more for a solitary drink because they failed to note the cover charge at a restaurant offering entertainment. A glittering, spangled joint known as The Silver Slipper offered "all you can eat for 99¢" and did a tremendous business catering to the tourist trade

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: United we stand, divided we lose the bid.

and the local farmers. An incongruous sight here was a long line of men, women and children in jeans, gingham and overalls waiting to be admitted to the dining room by a maitre d' clad in a tuxedo. This was a cafeteria offering lean, bony meat, a couple of vegetables and perhaps two dozen inexpensive salads -- you were allowed through the line once for your 99¢, with coffee and dessert costing extra. As usual, the large foyer was packed with slot machines and the diners were made to wait a lengthy time before entering the serving line. Elsewhere, the dinner prices varied from three to eight dollars, sometimes more.

For eight bucks you could eat ham and watch Harry Belafonte play around on the stage; for ten you could eat roast beef and watch an eye-popping French Revue, complete with nudes dropping from the ceiling. For four bucks you could drink three or four bottles of beer and watch Minsky's Burlesque; for a dollar you could sip a shot of watered bourbon and watch a stripper peel down to her goosepimples. For nothing, other than a few coins in a slot machine, you could haunt all the casinos and clubs and watch scores of vaudeville acts do their worst and their best -- anything from that jazz combo mentioned earlier up to (or down to) a pair of sad male comics playing homosexuals. Perhaps the only thing missing from the gaudy, noisy scene was Madame Pimm and Her Dancing Bears ... or the more infamous girl and the bear of yore.

It is understood that Vegas is a trap; everyone except the naive and the stupid realize that, and go anyway. But the natures of the various traps, the clever camouflages of the pitfalls, are a delight to the eye deliberately seeking them out. I knocked around the town with a friend who operates a small private detective agency on the side and we had F-u-n. Every hotel, club, casino, and bar has its full quota of "security officers" -- private cops, watching everybody and everything: dealers, players, bar girls, money, cigarette butts, lobby furniture, slot machines. Moochers, pick-pockets and streetwalkers were stopped and turned away at the door. Suitcases and briefcases were watched constantly and not permitted on the gaming floors. A man with his hands always in his coat pockets was an object of suspicion. A gentle jostling by a guard satisfied him that the other man was not carrying a gun in armpit or waistband. Immediately upon our entrance the cops would spot my friend for what he was, and worry why; my buddy could quickly identify them, plainclothes or not.

Likewise, every establishment from dive to plush hotel had its shills and I soon learned to recognize them because of their failure to diversify. In the better places, especially the hotels, the shills were men and women who looked like tourists, behaved quietly, never drank, and sat unobtrusively to one side until they were needed. In less fancy surroundings they worked in their shirtsleeves and looked like thugs although the behavior was equally quiet. Invariably, in every place I visited, they were ridiculously easy to spot because they always sat in the same position at every table: at the dealer's far right, being the last person to receive a card or make a wager. In that position, it was easy to decline to play with five or six other legitimate players wagering first; the shill played only when one or two, sometimes three people ahead of him played. It gave the appearance of a happy, crowded table with plenty of activity. When a table was empty except for dealer and shill, the shill played alone and a stack of silver dollars before him always seemed to grow, pulling others to the table. On some few occasions in a hotel I saw a pair of shills, man and wife in appearance, point across the room and marvel audibly that that man (the lone shill) was really winning money -- and then they would hurry over to the game, a few innocent suckers trailing after. Fun, fellas. Another exciting, noisy con game was the breathless jackpot announcements. "Jackpot", in these instances, meant any amount of money from four bucks up. Let some delirious woman hit a four-dollar payoff and bells would ring, lights would flicker, and a Moskowitz-like voice

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Familiarity breeds neofans.

would bellow over the p.a. system that "another lucky guest just hit a jackpot!" A tote-board hanging from the ceiling would flash on, revealing that this was the 472nd or 888th big jackpot of the day, and the bedazzled winner, now giddy with excitement, would promptly throw her winnings (eighty nickels) right back into the machine in hopes of getting another four dollars. Winners were always paid in coins which just happened to fit the slot on the machine.

There is a hoary legend in Vegas that once, just once, a man won five hundred dollars and asked for a cashier's check, which he mailed home to his wife. The casino closed for the day.

IRON PYRITES

Perhaps the most astonishing sight of all is that one which may be observed every half hour around the clock at the Silver Slipper -- the very same Silver Slipper offering 99¢ dinners. Each half hour, for a period of three minutes, the house will pay double money to everyone hitting a "jackpot"; if your machine indicates a four-dollar payoff the floor manager will give you eight dollars -- in nickels of course. So far, so good. But these Hot Three Minutes take on the aspect of a launching at the Cape, as the house drums up artificial excitement in an effort to make you pay them twice as much in the same time limit. The period begins with a breathless, bellowing count-down over the p.a. system, an air of feverish expectancy grips the house, fingers are poised over yawning chasms, hands are clenched about handles -- and the starting bell explodes with raucous sound! Neon signs flash on, a bell jangles urgently, and the announcer goes mad with a tirade like this: "Three minutes! You only have three minutes to win a double jackpot! Hurry, hurry! Put those nickels in! Faster, put them in faster! Time is running out! Quick, quick, pull, pull! Oh, there's a double jackpot on number nine! Hurry, hurry, get them in, get them in! Only one minute and forty seconds left! There's another double jackpot on number twenty! Quick, quick! Don't stop! Put them in! Faster, put them in faster! Pull those handles! They won't break! Get them in, get them in! Ninety seconds left! Hurry!" And that goes on until the three minutes elapse and all hands fall back with exhaustion. It has to be seen to be believed.

Subtler (?) baits are used by some downtown joints to lure the conventioneer inside and keep him there a long time. Some clubs distribute tickets for free drinks to all delegates; others may offer one or two dollars worth of chips with a certain dinner. The most enterprising of all was the Nevada Club, with many strings to its bow. The club stationed a photographer and a model (tall, sexy, undressed) at the convention hall and took pictures of all who wanted them; pictures were free but had to be picked up the following day at the club. When the conventioneer retrieved his photograph and started for the door he was courteously stopped and offered a free drink at the bar -- which he accepted of course. When he again started for the door he was courteously stopped and given a free ticket for the Big Cash Prize Drawing -- which would be held in about an hour. After not winning the cash prize and again starting for the door, he was courteously stopped and given another ticket entitling him to a free souvenir, which proved to be a key chain bearing a set of initials. Of course, it required an hour to have the initials printed on the tag.

It took me two and one half hours to get free of that joint. I came away with a picture, a drink, a key chain, a useless ticket for a drawing, and nine silver dollars. The cost to me was eight nickels.

Gaming establishments do not permit children or teenagers on the premises, unless there happens to be a restaurant there catering to families. I saw two tall young

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Whomever tries for great circulations must suffer twonk's
disease.

men stopped, their I.D. cards examined, and almost hauled out of a casino by the scruff of the neck. They were escorted back to the food line and kept there by a uniformed cop until they entered the restaurant section. On another occasion I saw three youngsters, ages from two to five, sitting on the sidewalk outside the joint known as The Mint, playing paper games. It was near midnight. Their parents were inside at the slots and from time to time Mother would come to the door and peep out at them, to make sure they hadn't wandered off. At the Silver Slipper (yes, that same Silver Slipper who...) I saw a couple in their middle twenties madly pulling the handles while their two children stood close by, watching. The woman evidently made a mistake; apparently she was putting in coins so fast she blinked and let a winner get away from her. Her husband saw the error and blew his cork; when the cop came over to stop him he was cursing his wife in a loud voice and beating her arm and back.

THE GLORY ROAD TO VEGAS

Probably the most fascinating things in Vegas are its theaters, rather than the hundreds of sexy girls and thousands of slot machines. (Fascinating to me, you understand, although I admit to ogling a girl and pulling a handle now and then.) The movie houses are merely movie houses and not worth a second glance, but those other superstructures called "legits" or "flesh houses" in the trade are things of joy and beauty. From the commercial point of view in Vegas, someone builds a hotel and then adds a large stage to one side of the main dining room; but from the stagehands' point of view someone builds a magnificent stage and then throws a hotel around it, placing tables instead of seats in the auditorium. All the theaters I visited were in hotels; I doubt that Vegas has a legit house standing alone. The pattern of operation appeared to be the same in all: the huge cost of the show is borne by the gambling in adjoining rooms, and by the prices of meals.

Now, be my guest in a trip through wonderland.

Pick a show you want to see. LE LIDO DE PARIS at the Stardust Hotel is a good revue, and the Stardust is typical. You have a choice of the dinner show at about 8 pm, when you must buy a meal, or the booze show around midnight, when you pay a cover charge and get a few drinks. Bring your wallet. There are two ways of gaining admission to the dinner show: by making a reservation several days in advance, or by slipping five dollars into the proper hand at the door. About an hour before dinner time a line begins forming in the slot-filled casino; the line is formed there because the management thinks you'll want something to do while killing that hour. Listen to the mesmeric music of the whirring slots. Look at the lucky winners raking in all those nickels. The line inches forward and eventually you find yourself at the magic door where (surprise!) you discover that your reservation merely gets you through the door (ahahahah!) and a place at the table is something else again. Laugh it off like the good sport that you are and slip the doorman or the waiter a couple of bucks. Presto! A table is found for you. And the bigger the tip, the nearer the stage you will be. (I suppose all this is old hat to a Raeburn or a Silverberg, but it is croggling to a small town boy.)

The theater is a monstrous room built stadium style, having an equally monstrous stage at the far end. It is an illusion, of course, but there appears to be a thousand tables and two thousand people in the theater, all demanding service instantly so they may eat and get the dishes out of the way before the show starts. At the Stardust, the menu prices begin at about eight dollars, with coffee and dessert not included in the price. Gulp down your dinner, pay and tip the waiter or waitress and get them out of your hair; push your chair away from the table and squirm around so that

you have an unobstructed view of the stage. The show is good. It begins with six nubile French nudes dropping down out of the ceiling on tiny platforms like flying saucers -- wow, dad, they don't have anything like this in West Cupcake. (But not more than thirty seconds after those girls dropped, I spoiled the show for myself. I ceased watching the show as a spectator and became a stagehand, searching to find the mechanics of the thing. Instead of looking at the nude I looked at the disc she was standing on, at the post to which she was braced, and at the cables supporting the disc; estimating the size and speed of the concealed winch, the number of men operating each one, and the built-in safety devices for the girls. A few minutes later when the saucers went back into the ceiling, I remembered to stare again at the flesh dangling there. And so it went.)

The revue lasts about two hours and includes several entertaining acts, some old, some new. It boasts a water ballet, an ice skating act, a miniature opera, comedy singles and comedy teams, a magician who used the ever-handy trap door in the stage, cornball musicians, an acrobat, a juggler, and a flood. It was a heavy show in that it required 35 men and women to work it -- an unusual number. There were perhaps 20 hanging pieces (scenery hanging overhead in a loft, to be lowered when wanted), and so many deck changes (scenery not hung, but moved on and off stage by hand) that I lost count. For the water ballet, a section of the stage flooring is folded back to reveal a water tank immediately beneath it; a tremendous mirror is uncovered at stage rear to reflect the performance to the audience. For the ice act, the tank is lowered to a sub-basement and an ice rink, normally resting beneath the auditorium, is hauled forward onto the elevator and raised to stage level. For the truncated opera, the entire stage is filled with a set I took to be the interior of a French palace about the time of Louis XIV, or whatever. Not being an opera fan in the remotest sense, I had no idea what I was watching, but I can tell you this: all the ladies (principles and chorus) were nude to the waist and pranced up and down a wide staircase while they sang. What is it?

The flood was the grand finale and had every stagehand in the audience standing up for a better look, knowing or guessing what was happening. (The tourists at the front row tables were ducking and squealing, for fear of being drenched.) The flood is presented "in full", which means that every inch of stage is used from the back wall to the footlights. The setting is a pastoral scene: a pleasant valley perhaps twenty miles long, from the dam at the far end down to a farm at the footlights; inbetween are a small town, a sawmill, and a few other farms including a patch of woods. The illusion is perfect. A storm comes up, as you might expect, and the peaceful stream meandering through the valley becomes a raging torrent; finally the dam crumbles and a huge wall of water rushes down the valley, destroying everything in its path: town, mill, farms, the works. As the water comes nearer the roar of its movement increases in pitch, people near the stage leave their chairs and duck for safety, and at the last moment the whole cotton-picking flood smashes into the footlights -- and drops from sight, down into that waiting tank. The footlights remain dry.

After the show I went backstage to join one of the tours they offered visiting firemen, for a closer look at all the above workings. I was most interested in the flying saucers that dropped from the ceiling, and discovered that a motorized winch serves each one, with a girl bound, braced and practically chained to a stake positioned at the center of each disc. (When she drops, her hands must be free and describing graceful swirling motions, indicating something or other -- they have a hell of a time teaching the girls not to grab for support.) But no one in the audience is looking at the stakes -- I sat next to an elderly woman (sixty-plus, at least) and she was staring at the same things which occupied my attention.

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Old convention stories are the best stories.

Fans intending to visit Vegas might note this economy hint: many of the big Strip hotels have a smaller, quiet and seldom-advertised motel adjacent to them, primarily occupied by hotel employees -- and the showgirls mentioned above. At the Stardust, the motel is in the back yard near the stage door; at the Thunderbird, it is next door and even has a convenient, connecting side entrance. After meeting Wild Willie Rotsler on my first morning there, I moved out of the side door and took up residence at The Algiers, which has its own pool and restaurant.

THEM DAMES FROM L.A.

Surely you haven't forgotten them dames from L.A. They hit town all right, just as advertised, and a packed town became a cramped one. It would appear that many Vegas hotels, working with travel agents, offered packaged weekends for cut-rate prices. For some comparatively low figure, a citizen of L.A. (and environs) may buy a round-trip ticket, a shared hotel room, a show, a number of meals and drinks, and perhaps a few gambling chits, all in a package; one checks in Saturday afternoon and checks out Sunday night. Judging from limited observation this package appeals to Chinese males and Caucasian females; they climbed, jumped or fell from every arriving train and plane on the Saturday I watched, some with wedding rings but many with not. More significantly, the sports in Vegas waited for them, those operating the gaming tables and those haunting the streets and lobbies. In a later conversation with a house dick, I learned that commercial prostitution is a mixed bag in Vegas -- considering who owns the town. Two varieties exist: the independent street girl, and the hotel property.

The street girl is arrested quickly, on sight, and given a rough treatment. The hotel girl, because she is part of the organization, is remarkably expensive. In Chicago, for example, a hotel guest wanting company for an hour or so need only call a bellboy and put twenty dollars in his hand. The quality won't be anything to write home about but he will get the company. In Vegas, the bellboy would spit in your eye for anything less than a hundred. Hundred-dollar girls are too rich even for Vegas gaming bloods and so they lay in wait for the L.A. women, with vengeance, because in a sense these women are free. My friend the house dick posted me in an advantageous spot and told me what to look and listen for. I looked and listened and was educated; and can only conclude that the Los Angeles fans certainly aren't looking after their lonely women-folk the way they should.

At the end of my week the convention folded its politicking and noisily stole away, making vague noises about the next year's convention -- if the union treasury ever recovers, to enable the delegates to go anywhere next time. The Union Pacific had thoughtfully scheduled an afternoon train, although the beds were the same as before: two inches too short for sleeping. A small handful of us concocted a delightful game to while away the two days on the train -- at intervals, we would noisily pop into the club car, or up into one of the observation domes and shake a handful of silver dollars, the meanwhile hollering "Anyone for blackjack?" After the first day this became a dangerous pasttime when the sore losers in the crowd took to throwing things at us. A week earlier, I had ridden out to Vegas with two stagehands from Detroit, and a couple of ladies from New York who were going to L.A. to work on some television shows. We never saw the ladies again, and I never saw one of the Detroit men again. His buddy, going back in my car, sadly reported that his partner was stranded in Vegas -- he had in some manner cashed in his return ticket, spent his expense money, lost some borrowed money as well, and the last anyone saw of him he was sitting in a hotel lobby wondering how to pay the bill and leave town.

He may be sitting there yet.

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: Fannes are made, not borne.

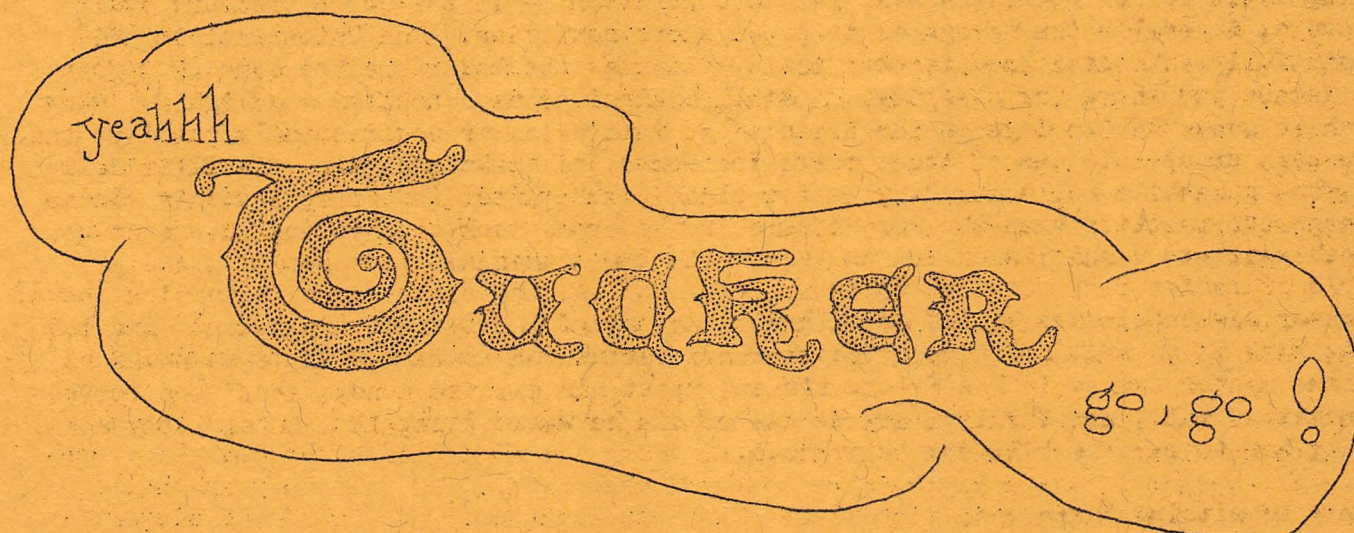
THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD TO VEGAS

My pages about Las Vegas are paeans of praise when compared to the bloody hatchet job done on the city and its inhabitants by Ed Reid and Ovid Demaris in their book THE GREEN FELT JUNGLE (Pocket Books 75037). If you'd care to subscribe to my rule of thumb, which holds that only half of any "factual" reporting job is true, and that another half of the remainder is inaccurate, Vegas still stands as the wickedest city in the Western Hemisphere. The authors state that the desert between Vegas and L.A. are filled with hastily planted bodies to underscore this. They cite an unusual twist to gangland murder: a man's head is bashed in and the corpse is placed in an unlighted car on the highway; after a while a big truck plows into the derelict, and some innocent truck driver is left with a death mark on his driving record. (The book cites a case in which a carfull of wild kids hit the derelict before a truck hove into sight.) The authors, with relish and apparent malice aforethought, tick off the names of city, county, and state Big Wheels who were purchased by Vegas gangsters and then go on to quote tape recordings which seem to prove their points.

I hadn't mentioned the gangster ownership of the town because I thought the fact was known to all and sundry. Nor did I mention the concealed microphones, the two-way mirrors, and the TV cameras hidden in bedrooms because I hadn't encountered them -- to my knowledge. If there was a camera above my bed, the cameraman must have been bored because no one tried to blackmail me. (If it had happened, I suppose I would have bought a set of prints for souvenirs. Millions for memories, but not one cent for extortion!)

JUNGLE cites the number of slot machines, the number of annual visitors, the amount of money the gambling joints claim they won and pay taxes on, the method and techniques of the weekend girls coming from L.A., the jolly motel owner who entertained guests in his living room with live TV shows piped in from his motel rooms (his motel customers smiled but didn't know they were on television), oh ... all manner of fascinating things omitted from my sketchy report. After all, disloyal reader, I was there only a week.

But I promise to search for more detail next time.



A CHUCKLEHEAD HAS NO HONOR IN HIS OWN COUNTRY

Quote: "Take, for example, Jerry Sohl's THE ALTERED EGO, in which a character sees his face clearly in a washbasin full of water. This happens to be impossible in a normally lighted room, and Sohl, supposing he knew where to look for a washbasin, could have found it out."

Eleven years ago Damon Knight published a book of criticism on the science fiction field as it then existed. Many of the chapters were reprinted (and perhaps revised) from his magazine columns. You may have read it -- the book was quite popular. (IN SEARCH OF WONDER, Advent: Publishers, 1956.) A second and greatly enlarged edition was published by the same company in 1967; this new edition contained 306 pages, as opposed to the 180 in the first printing. The price went up by two dollars too, but it is still a bargain.

Because Damon is Damon, a sweet and lovable rascal of long tenure in fandom, some of the more entertaining chapters in the book are those entitled "Chuckleheads," "More Chuckleheads," and "Half Bad Writers". In these chapters, he happily skewers such masters of science fiction as Austin Hall, Homer Eon Flint, Stanley Mullen, Taylor Caldwell, and Jerry Sohl. I will admit that I sailed merrily through the chapters, enjoying the skewering, until I reached the name of Jerry Sohl. The discovery of that name was a distinct shock, an outrage, because the person who had discovered Sohl and unleashed him on an unsuspecting fandom was old me. Sohl was my protege.

To be accurate, Sohl and I discovered each other on the same day. It was in the long, long ago -- perhaps 1950 or later -- when he was a newspaperman working on THE DAILY PANTAGRAPH, the Bloomington sheet then partially owned by Adlai Stevenson. I had a new mystery novel in the stores that year, whenever it was, and Sohl was dispatched by his editor to interview me. He did, and we got the matter over as quickly as possible. Afterwards, we sat around drinking and shooting the breeze, and Sohl told me that he was also writing something, but he wasn't having any success at it, so I suggested the mystery and science fiction fields. I loaned him some books and magazines, and gave him my blessing. That wasn't worth anything, but I gave it to him anyway, along with the names and addresses of a clutch of New York literary agents. He went his way, and in due time began to sell short stories, and then novels.

Fandom greeted his efforts with something approaching a yawn, and lovable old Damon pounced on him. POINT ULTIMATE, another Sohl novel, was cut to bleeding ribbons.

I suppose I was luckier than Jerry in that I had produced both good and bad yarns, and although Damon gave the back of his hand to the poor offerings, he devoted a considerable amount of space to praising the good one. (One.) I was lucky in that I didn't find myself lumped in with those other chuckleheads. So I read the disparaging comment about the character who saw his face mirrored in the washbasin, reacted as

POOR FONG'S PROVERB: There is no sound more pleasing than one's own serconism.

Damon intended his readers to react, wiped away a tear for poor Jerry, and went on with my reading. But -- for some oddball reason -- the criticism stayed with me for all of those eleven years; it was one of those unexplainable little things that cling to the memory for no worthwhile reason.

When I acquired a copy of the new edition this past summer, I immediately went searching for that same passage. It was there as before, unchanged except for the insertion of a comma. And it bugged me. I suppose Jerry Sohl has long since shrugged it off and forgotten it, but it begged me.

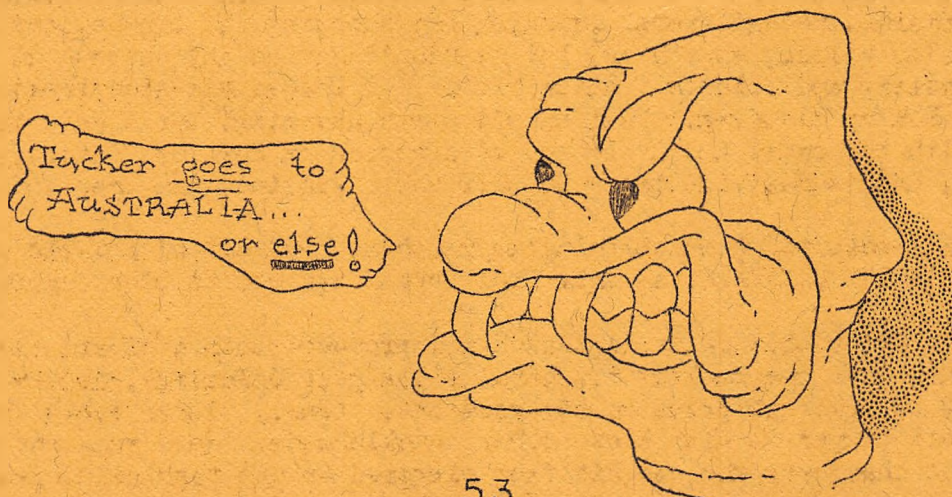
There was naught to do but make an experiment. We physicists know that science is best served only by the controlled experiment.

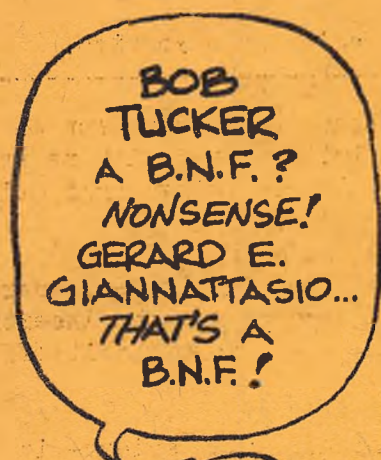
I ran a washbasin full of water, turned on the overhead shaving light, opened a little decorative shutter partially covering the nearby window, and looked down. My own wrinkled face looked back at me from that placid pool. Perhaps I shouted Eureka! But still experimenting, I dumped the cold water and filled the basin with hot water. The mirroring liquid performed as before. I turned off the overhead light, and about half of the face disappeared. The shutter was then closed, and the face vanished altogether. Damon had specified a "normally lighted room", and this bathroom was normally lit when the electric was on and sunlight was spilling in the window. My face was there, Damon was in error, and Jerry Sohl was vindicated! I felt like dashing off to the telegraph office to whip out hot wires to Sohl in far away exotic Hollywood, and to Damon sulking in Milford, Pennsylvania.

Fortunately for my peace of mind, I did not.

The next two discoveries, following quickly after that first, were of world-shaking import in that they forever shattered my sense of wonder. After dumping the water and turning off the light, I moved to the window to adjust the shutter and casually glanced down to be sure of my footing. That same face was clearly mirrored in the placid clear water of the toilet bowl. Stunned, unsure of where to turn, I stumbled into the kitchen (also normally lighted) and gulped down a cup of coffee. The third astonishing discovery completely unnerved me. My face was reflected in the bottom of the coffee cup. The coffee was gone, of course, but a wet film of ... of, well, wetness coated the bottom of the china cup, and there was that confounded face again!

I don't believe Damon and science is ready for this.





GREAT SLOGANS IN HISTORY DEPARTMENT

Walt Liebscher, an old-time fan of a quarter-century ago who used to play the piano by ear, was fond of saying "a twonk in time digs nine". We never found out what this meant but we were sure it was most profound because it impressed everyone. At a Los Angeles fan gathering only last year (it may have been a Westercon), Liebscher shambled out of the shadows and up to Bob Bloch idling at the bar. It was an electric moment.

"Great Hugo!" cried the astonished Bloch when he spied the shadowy figure. "Where have you been for the past twenty years?"

"A twonk in time digs nine," Liebscher mumbled.

Mr. Bloch was suitably impressed, and dashed his gin-and-bitters into the grinning face.

He felt safe in this gesture, for he had first made sure another famous old fan face from the hoary past was not there. He sadly remembered an earlier mistake. Once in the long ago, Mr. Bloch had taken umbrage at the other fan and dashed a gin-and-bitters into his face.

"You bastard," said Al Ashley.



A SHORT INTERVIEW WITH BOB TUCKER

CONDUCTED BY: JACKIE FRANKE

XXXXXX We've all heard the phrase (initiated by whom?) that "Fandom sprang full-blown from Tucker's forehead". What goes through your mind when you see that sentence?

- + I don't know who originated the phrase, but it delights me whenever I hear
- + it, mostly because I'm being given credit that is not earned. Stolen egoboo.
- + New York fans created fandom, along with Forry Ackerman, and I'm really a
- + johnny-come-late.

XXXXXX Today SF is more of a "legitimate" field of interest than it was in the Thirties. Even so, some younger fen have trouble justifying their hobby to parents. How did you manage this obstacle, or did it even exist?

- + The problem didn't exist because my father also saved magazines for me, when
- + he found them in the theater. Also, I was living in a boarding house and was
- + pretty much on my own; I don't think he cared one way or the other what I
- + brought home.

XXXXXX You've managed to keep the various facets of your life ... fandom, profession, family ... fairly separate. Was this a deliberate action, or did things just happen to develop that way?

- + I deliberately tried to keep them separate because I didn't want fans hanging
- + around the theater or hanging around my home and family. The separation was
- + fairly successful in that only two or three dozen invaded the theater, and
- + perhaps fifty or sixty invaded the home during 40 years of fanning. (As
- + distinct from close fan friends who were sometimes invited in for a weekend.)

XXXXXX What was your first published SF story, and how did it come to be published?

- + INTERSTELLAR WAY-STATION in SUPER SCIENCE NOVELS, May, 1941. Fred Pohl either
- + took pity on me after ten years of trying, or he had a hole in the magazine to
- + fill and the other manuscripts in the slush pile were worse than mine, or he
- + made a bet and lost. Anyway he bought it at one-half cent a word and my
- + glorious career was launched.

POOR PONG'S PROVERB: I must speak the truth, and I have a stencil.

XXXXXXXXX Everyone else has had a shot at it; it's about time you had a turn. What's your definition of the term "Science Fiction"?

- + I have nothing original, but I like the one someone else offered: Science
- + Fiction is what I say it is when I point at it.

XXXXXXXXX Of all the various forms of fanac you've engaged in: publishing fanzines, attending conventions, writing articles, writing letters of comment, correspondence -- what is your favorite activity? Has it changed from earlier years?

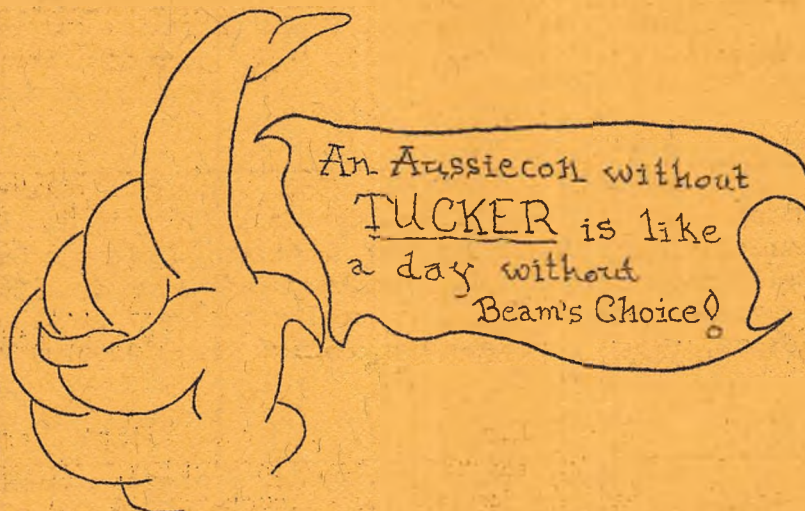
- + During the first 20 years it was writing and publishing, which is why I
- + cranked out so many, many issues of several titles. During these last 20
- + years my interest has switched to people and conventions. I like to write
- + fanstuff once in a while but I have no interest whatever in pubbing my own
- + zine.

XXXXXXXXX Overall, people engage in a hobby because of the personal satisfaction it affords. What have you gained from your years with fandom?

- + First, the ability to write well enough to sell commercially. Quite literally
- + I learned the craft by fanzine writing. Second, the accumulation of several
- + hundred or a thousand friends, who are a separate and distinct breed of friend
- + from those friends here at home. My personal life would be much poorer
- + without fandom.

XXXXXXXXX Would you do it all over again?

- + Hot damn, yes! Oh, wow, yes!



POORPONGS PROVERBS POORPONGS PROVERBS POORPONGS PROVERBS POORPONGS PROVERBS POORPONGS PROVERBS POORPONGS PROVERBS

Great reputations are lost in some smoke-filled room.

Write not to dullness, publish not to elevation.

Fan publishing is only the refuge of weak minds.

Be not vain, nor spend your life amassing sticky quarters.

★ WILSON TUCKER ★ BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following bibliography attempts to list all professionally published science fiction by Wilson Tucker, Bob Tucker's professional alter-ego. Detective/suspense books are also included, but not detective/suspense short stories (mostly because I don't know of any). Professionally published nonfiction is represented by only two articles; I suspect this list could be expanded. With the exception of two stories later reprinted in THE SCIENCE FICTION SUBTREASURY, Tucker material published in fanzines has not been included. If someone would care to loan me a few thousand fanzines for a few years I might make a stab at a supplement.

For books by Wilson Tucker, all editions for which information could be located were included. The order of books is chronological, as is the order of English-language editions of each book. Translations are listed separately. For short stories, original appearance and any known reprints were given; I did not, however, attempt to list editions beyond the first of any anthologies reprinting the story.

Note that many of Tucker's science fiction novels have a detective element, while some of his detective novels have a fantasy element (THE WARLOCK) or are of fanciful interest for the Tuckerizing therein. Note also that Charles Horne is a continuing character in the first five detective novels, while Gilbert Nash appears in both THE TIME MASTERS and TIME BOMB.

Corrections and additions would be welcomed. They may be sent to: Dennis L. Lien, 2408 S. Dupont Ave. Apt. #1, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55405.

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THE CITY IN THE SEA

New York: Rinehart, 1951. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1951.
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TO THE TOMBAUGH STATION

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THE YEAR OF THE QUIET SUN

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THE WARLOCK

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THIS WITCH

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