

HURKLE

"The Happy Beast"

This is the informal publication issued occasionally for the Spectator Amateur Press Society by Redd Boggs, 2215 Benjamin Street N. E., Minneapolis 18, Minnesota. Volume I, Number 4, intended for the January 1951 mailing. "The prettiest of Hurkle are blue." -- Theodore Sturgeon.

A Gafia Press Publication

A HUMBLE APPEAL

We've had fanzines named Sirius, Procyon, Arcturus, Polaris, Cygni, and a few other star-designations, but some of my favorite stars have (to my knowledge) remained unimmortalized by use on fanzines. Vega, for example. Canopus. Regulus. Spica. Capella. Nobody's ever titled their fanmag after them. Formalhaut would make a lovely title, too. So would Betelgeuse, for that matter, or Achernar, or Aldebaran, or Denebola. For exotic sound, Mizar, Alcor, Albireo, Algol, would be hard to match -- strange Arabic names, all of them. And if some fan editor really wanted to splurge, he might appropriate a whole damn constellation for his magazine title. Why be content with one little star? Aquila, Draco, Cassiopeia, Virgo, Sagittarius, Pavo, Lyra, Orion, and even Coma. Berenices, are good eligible names. Do I have to issue magazines with these titles myself or will someone help me out? Naming fanzines after these neglected stars and constellations is such a worthy project I'm going to get the N3F to work on it.

THE FLYING CHILDREN

I haven't been in New York for much the better part of six years, so I have missed seeing the Broadway production of Sir James M. Barrie's "Peter Pan," which at this writing, at least, was still attracting crowds to see Jean Arthur as Peter, Marcia Henderson as Wendy, and Boris Karloff as both Mr. Darling and Captain Hook, in this latest revival of the play The New Yorker feels calls for "a somewhat indulgent attitude." As an alternative, however, I attended a recent University Theater production of the Barrie classic, which featured Marion English Watson in the lead, a delightful ingenue named Nancy Rigler as Wendy, and two guys named Joe as Mr. Darling and Captain Hook. These people and the others in the cast caught the fanciful spirit of the play very well, I thought, and if an indulgent attitude was called for the audience answered with a promptness Mr. Philip Morris might find surprising.

Sir James' play is a fantasy of childhood, and it must be obvious how dangerous a tendency such a work has toward simpering cuteness on one hand, and condescension and stuffiness on the other. It is pleasant to note that Sir James erred not one whit in either direction. "Peter Pan" is as successful an excursion into the pure realm of the Never Land as any grownup is likely to make.

A note in the program remarked that "J. M. Barrie makes no pretense of being profound....Anyone searching for obscure meanings will not find them here." Though "Peter Pan" is first of all a play that

mixes excitement with whimsy in a manner to divert young and old together, it seems obvious there is a message or two unobtrusively blended into the concoction. There is no missing the twin truths Barrie presents: that imaginings and daydreams are all right for a while, but in the end one must come back to the workaday world, if for no other reason than many of one's friends live here; and, contrapuntally, that it is good occasionally to let imagination take wing and transport us away from humdrumness and routine. Thus, Peter Pan himself is equally a symbol of healthy rebellion against monotony and unhealthy flight from reality. Peter's refusal to grow up is at once evidence of psychotic behavior and an ideal which most of us would sometimes like to emulate.

The compromise of moderation between escapist imaginings and monotonous realities is happily suggested in Mrs. Darling's plan for Wendy to spend a week every year back in the Never Land with Peter Pan.

The tempo of the play, swept on by the thrilling-fanciful menace of the pirates, was well kept, climaxing in the rousing sword-fight aboard the pirate ship and the appearance of the crocodile. The sets themselves were delightfully fantastic and beautiful. And, once Peter had shown them how, what wonderful flights the children made about the nursery! My only hope is that "Peter Pan" did not reap a hospital harvest of fractured limbs as the small fry who saw the play attempted to emulate Peter and Wendy by flying from bedpost to windowsill. I don't blame any kids who tried it. I think I could do it myself.

THE ASSAYER'S CORNER

Come now, Coswal, the SAPS has too a constitution. A constitution consists, in the broadest and most correct sense, of the entire body of rules, both written and unwritten, legal and customary, that provide for the organization and procedure of a government. We have no single written document like FAPA's Constitution, but the rules on page 2 of Spectator -- which by the way is the magazine I'm reviewing in this paragraph -- are part of our constitution through custom and usage, as are our other customs, such as listing members in each OO, and so on. To say that SAPS is "well neigh [sic!] anarchistic" is to deny we've got an OE. We're little more anarchistic than Great Britain. It, too, has no written Constitution. # Enjoyed seeing Rotsler's supermammary female in the OO, but was surprised to see her here. # Why should the volume number change with each change of OE? Much less confusing to change it with the year. # How'd you know Stupefying Stories arrived at Box 6 on 1 Sep? Weren't you at the Norwescon on that date? Did Nelson give SS to you at the con?

As might be inferred from Assayer's Corner last mailing I am very happy over the SAPS Index; however, as with the case of Coswal's listing of mailing contents in the OO, I find the lack of proper column headings very confusing. At the very least, the key should be given on each page. # The section of slogans, etc., was lovely, and almost took the place of the history section I suggested. # Looking back at the titles of mags in the first three mailings, I realize why I resigned from SAPS afterward. The unpleasant memory of those bundles is strong enough to overwhelm the brighter aspect of recenter mailings and tempt me, almost, to resign again. But I won't.

Snake Pit's frontpage columnist, Mr. Craddock, comes back at me with a second-line defense of L. Ron Hubbard as a writer. He says he "extrapolates" from Funk and Wagnall's definition of "hack" -- "a literary drudge" -- the qualifying adverb (?) "consistent", thus making it "one who always writes hack." I don't follow this reasoning; possibly I'm confused by "extrapolate" (which Chas admits is probably the wrong word). I don't understand how one extracts "always" from the adjective "consistent." For my part I'm willing to rest my case on critic Craddock's admission that "Final Blackout" and "To the Stars" are "about the only exceptions to the appalling mass of crud that's gone to finance Dianetics research." Except that I'd substitute "Fear" and "The Room" for the named yarns.

And speaking of "Fear," I believe that is by all odds the finest Unknown novel. In that I disagree with the poll in Sapsides. Before I talked with Korshak last spring and heard his gloomy disclosure of pure fantasy's fate in the stf market (based on the comparative sales of his edition of Slaves of Sleep and his strictly stf offerings), it was a big mystery to me why "Fear" hasn't been hardcovered. It's worth issuance by a publisher in the general field. # I'd pick "Mislaidd Charm" second best Unk novel; "Enchanted Weekend," third; "Lest Darkness Fall," fourth; "The Devil Makes the Law," fifth; with "Darker Than You Think," "Sorcerer's Ship," "Bit of Tapestry," "The Wheels of If," and "But Without Horns," following in that order. Was anybody interested? # "MS. Found in a Spaceship" reminds my stomach of the first three SAPS mailings (see above). My god. Sample quote: "Racy Rocketales -- or is it 'tails'? Who knows ((Who cares?))" This is funny? Sam Merwin would call such "humor" sophomoric.

The title of gnurr's article should have been "Dryanetics." The article itself missed being good satire, but not by much. Parts of it I liked. # You didn't foul up Ultra-Weird's cover pic, Sid. In the mirror it looks worse. # A prozine review containing only exposition and no criticism isn't very interesting. A synopsis of a yarn in itself isn't a reliable guide to the yarn's quality. It's about like inferring Ingrid Bergman's vitality and charm and beauty from an X-ray picture of her skeleton. I'd rather look at the full, complete entity -- both of the reviewed stories and of Mrs Rosselini.

SAPS Preview's advance glimpse of Walt Miller's cover for "I Tell You Three Times" would have been better, don't you think, in full color? Lest I sound like an egg-in-my-beer man, I hasten to point out the preview in several fanzines of Galaxy's first cover was in color! And lest I sound snide, Henry, let me compliment you on your stenciling technique. You're shaping up as the likeliest stylus-wielder since Howard Miller left for navy duty.

With its lithoed cover and affective bulk Sirius appeared to be a major contribution. Maybe disappointment resulted in my underrating the contents after I managed to whip myself into scanning those badly mimeod pages, but I discovered little in the text I thought was more than passable. # It's surprising how that Planetary Press section resembled Telis Streiff's Martian News-Letter in messy format. Can't burlesque newszines be anything but sloppy? Are burlesque and satire so low that they don't deserve as careful presentation as seriously

intended work? # Hoe Avenue is a distinctive address. Is Hoe paralleled by Rake, Shovel, and Flitgun avenues?

Those scientific facts (which thank god were not labeled in the customary manner as "amazing!") from the Encyclopedia of Popular Science elicit the response So What? from this corner. So what do they signify? According to the info here, "primitive man may have seen more [stars] than we do." Well, does this mean primitive man had better eyes than we, or that there were more stars in this region of the galaxy in those days? And what means it by "primitive man"? Can the Semang of the Malay peninsula see ten stars in the Pleiades where we see six? The item on why the sun shines is surely an oversimplification: "the 'shine' we observe is...the heat or flame." Indeed! But all radiation produces heat when absorbed, and we perceive only a very small portion of the sun's total radiation. In other words, the sun could be "hot" and we couldn't see it if some of its radiation didn't fall within the visual spectrum. # Haw, I liked the cover, captioned an "oldfashioned flat photograph." # I forgot to mention that this has been a review of The Intergalactic News.

I disbelieve what Ray Higgs says in Sapian about Gerry de la Ree taking a 1950 poll on space flight. Did I miss something or is Ray's observation about as ancient as some of the other stuff in this issue? Perhaps you'd like to explain how the Nolacon will resemble the first trip to the moon, Ray? (At this point I expunge from the dummy a certain wisecrack that could only appear in Light or Fanvariety.) # Is there really somebody named B. Strong? # "Mother Goose in Fantasy," by Olive Morgan and Joyce Grissom, had a mutant idea, but twas poorly executed. # Some of the quiz questions in the Coslet-Wegemer feature appeared before in a Coswalzine -- it might have been Meteor Shower. And by now some of the answers are out-of-date: for instance, the Weapon Shop series now includes a fourth yarn.

When I see something like Stupefying Stories' cover I have a suspicion there's a spark of genius in that 150 lb. kid with tall, dark complexion and naturally wavy hair, that answer to a maiden's prayer, Radell Nelson. Then he spoils it with something like his comments on Stan Kenton. Look, Ray, your description of Kenton's stuff is strongly subjective and if we're to admire "Kentonian" you'll have to present us with a more objective, more technical description of his stuff. Music is hard to treat objectively, but it can be done to a greater degree than you've done here. # I read "The City of Woman" before -- rejected it for Chronoscope, probably, on account of the nonfiction policy there. But I liked it then, and now. # F. Towner Laney would have a good adjective for your comments on the Song of Solomon. I wouldn't be so unkind, but I think you know from nothing about poetry or you wouldn't dismiss it in such fashion. # Your preceding statements to the contrary, I suspect your remark, "Emotions, of course, almost always win," is an example of deductive rather than inductive reasoning. # Where'd you get the ackytyper? The contrasting type-faces might be more effective if you'd use them more thoughtfully.

Since I've a hard time remembering who edits which WSFS title, I am only reasonably sure it is to you, Briggs, that I should address my comments on Zap. Re your Hurkle review: from your mumbling about Genghis Khan -- you say, "I trust 'the good of humanity' refers exclusive-

ly to the white race and 'misery upon mankind' refers to the bruising of our Anglo-Saxon egos" -- I assume you believe I wanted our temptant to wring Genghis' neck because the doughty Mongol slaughtered a few Europeans. Not so. My nomination was based on the Mongol invasion of China. Though Genghis himself never lived to see the Sung emperors driven from Hangchow, he set into motion the forces that, for the first time in history, put aliens on the throne of the Middle Kingdom. The Yüan dynasty brought nothing of value to the Han Jên, and had Genghis never lived, China would have profited. It's impossible not to thrill to the exploits of a real hero like Genghis (though I've no doubt Americans would have debunked him as they did Hitler, had he lived in the present century) but I think mankind could have struggled along very well without such conquerors as Genghis Khan, Alexander the Great, Caesar, and Napoleon. # But Genghis wasn't my final choice. Certainly I've a reason for selecting John Calvin as #1 candidate for our time-traveler's "mercy killing," but I think it's as obvious as your reason for selecting Lenin.

And it's you, Eney, that edited Nudity? Why don't you guys put the usual notation of publishing data in your mags? It would be helpful in keeping straight the ephemeral titles emanating from D. C. # Since you're an authority on conditions in southern Europe and Latin America, perhaps you'd care to discourse on how you managed to control such variables as climate and race in order to state so dogmatically that the Roman church is the cause of conditions in any country it dominates. Perhaps, too, you would define "dominate." And finally perhaps you would care to state how you explain away the differences noted between Spanish America and French Canada, a place which under certain definitions of "dominate" might be described as "dominated by the Roman church." # Your cover was a poor attempt at pleasing Sexocrats, as you admit, but, since it aimed to do so, it wasn't very appropriate to your magazine title. You seem under the impression that nudes are pornographic. Naked women, like your cover tried to depict, may be, but nudes are artistic. Compare a French postcard with Giorgione's "Sleeping Venus."

En garde, Henry. In Namleps you describe The Big Eye as "one of the outstanding stf novels of all time." I disagree more thoroughly with that remark than with almost anything else in the mailing. The Big Eye started out rather well, though evoking less successfully a picture of New York in terror than What Mad Universe did, but the descent to insipid philosophy toward the end and the utterly invalid climax ruined it for me. Trying to achieve effect by relying on Christian sentiments he believes the pious will accept uncritically (because they are the Right Things to Think and agreeable to his own ingrained beliefs) was a bad blunder, I think, for stfen are notoriously incapable of accepting stereotyped religious sentiment. Furthermore, it is a display of ignorance of history to expound the belief that mankind will remain permanently united in friendship after a catastrophe is averted. Ehrlich's naive theory that war happens only because mankind hasn't had the experience of working together is pretty silly. A consideration of the economic causes of war is recommended for Ehrlich. I read a good Luke Short western after getting sick on The Big Eye. Mr. Short showed ever so much more wisdom about man in conflict than your boy Maxie did!

To round off this review section, a few comments about Thirteen. I began with a Coswalzine; I'll end with one. Thirteen is one of the few singlesheeters I've seen in fandom that were run off heel-and-toe fashion. Was it a mistake? # Sure, there are probably hundreds of planetariums on the West Coast utilizing what Kenny Gray calls the "cheap projector." There are many of them all over; I know of two in Minneapolis, for instance. But there are no more than three or four fully equipped planetariums in the country, and the Griffith is one of them. # Your little verses separating mags in the mailing review were the awfulest I've seen since those Pluto used to answer letters in their reader department. Please, Coswal.

DIVERGENT TIME TRACK

The following account was written last summer, not long after Coslet became SAPS official editor, and of course before Richard Eney succeeded him. The incidents it describes have not happened here, and must be happening on another time track. At least, they haven't happened here yet. For all you know, however, there may be a lot of prophetic truth in this account:

"There is something evil and accursed in the job of SAPS official editor, something that frosts a man through and through, till, sick with chill such as Lovecraft was from intimacy with the world of Cthulhu, he shudderingly treks off to a warmer clime. Look at the record. The first OE, Ron Maddox, went to Africa. Henry Spelman went to Florida. Art Rapp entered the army and they shipped him to Kentucky. What happened to Lloyd Alpaugh, no one knows. This is ominous in itself. Then there is the sad case of Coslet. Just after he had sent out the only SAPS mailing he handled, the house on the hill collapsed -- Dorothy had just taken the latest Ootwa up to the Fantasy Attic and this was the lastraw that caused the attic to cave in upon Coswal. A stack of Frank Reades laid Walter colder than a collie's nose. He didn't come to till Cosdor loaded him into the Crosley and took him to Ciudad Juarez.

"Rick Sneary took the lethel job. But he had just bought a wire recorder -- he loved to listen to his own voice -- and one day it shortcircuited, giving him a terrific shock. The recorder was rewinding at the time -- the wire was whizzing through the machine backward -- and this caused the shock to affect Sneary quite scarily. Thermally speaking, Rick became topsy-turvy. He felt cold on a hot day; hot on a cold day. Since he was in southern California at the time, Rick immediately moved to Greenland.

"The next emergency OE, Ed Cox, was preparing his first mailing when he learned that a teenager living a street east of Spring Street was planning to write Planet. Chagrined over the possible loss of his cherished title, "America's farthest East fan," Ed went over to suggest to the youth that he forget about writing the letter. The kid turned out to be a big fellow, however, and hot-tempered. He told Ed where to go. And that was the end of the SAPS."

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 Weird tales aficionados! H. P. is on the Worlds Beyond cover!
