

HURKLE

is the informal publication issued occasionally for the Spectator Amateur Press Society by Redd Boggs. This is the third anniversary issue, number 11, and is intended for the twenty-second mailing, winter 1952-3. "The prettiest of the hurkle are blue." -- Theodore Sturgeon.

A Gafia Press publication.

STILL A SAP

As the masthead tells you, this is the eleventh Hurkle and it is being published for the twenty-second SAPS mailing. If you are up on your calculus you may be able to corroborate my statement that Hurkle has appeared in exactly half of the SAPS mailings. That is a fact I infer from the situation reported in the first sentence, but I'm no mathematician. I'm no historian either, so I'm not going to plod through the mailings to check this statement: no other sapszine edited by one person and of single title (other than generic title) can match this record. There are a few sapszines with more issues than eleven, but I believe all of them have accumulated these by appearing several times in a single mailing, while Hurkle has always operated on the persuasion that one issue per mailing is enough, and often one too many.

As Hurkle enters its fourth year, still a pretty blue but not quite so happy as it was in its puerility, you may as usual expect no particular changes of policy from this front -- at least none that will shake SAPS' foundations. I have recently entertained the pleasant notion of kicking Hurkle into the Ganch dimension and eking out my activity requirements by contributing to other sapszines. But I have come to the conclusion that it's easier to stencil and mimeograph a magazine of this size than it is to browbeat a SAPS editor into publishing a Boggs manuscript twice a year. Sooner I'll quit SAPS altogether.

So for the present Hurkle will continue as before. Guadeamus igitur.

REJECTED -- SECOND AIR DIVISION

The Christmas season reminds me of a story that has reposed in my files longer than Marley had been dead to begin with. This story has none of the Yule's tinsel, glowing lights, or good will among men about it, but I have always wanted to publish it, and the season gives me a suitable excuse. The incident took place on Christmas day 1944.

I wrote this story while I was assigned as a public relations man for the 467th bomb group in England, and I was sorry when the story was suppressed because it was one of the few out-of-the-ordinary stories our PRO had a chance to file. Most of a PRO's work consisted of sending out routine descriptions of awards of air medals and oak leaf clusters. I have two versions of this yarn in my files, one marked for general release and the other for use in the Brockton (Mass.) Enterprise-Times. I'll print the second because it's shorter.

AN EIGHTH AIR FORCE LIBERATOR STATION, ENGLAND. The pilot, co-pilot, and two other crewmen had bailed out, and the B-24 Liberator "Bold Venture III," with her No. 2 engine spurting flame, was flying on automatic pilot in wide circles over enemy territory.

That was the situation that faced Staff Sergeant Leo F. Feeney of Rockland, Mass., and five other members of the crew during a recent Eighth Air Force bombing attack on Germany. First Lieutenant Challenger Whitham Jr of 10 Bright av., North-

ampton, Mass., saved the day by taking the controls and flying the severely damaged Liberator safely over France before the rest of the crew parachuted out.

The B-24 of Col. Albert J. Shower's 467th bombardment group had run into deadly flak as it neared the target, a railroad bridge at Gerolstein, Germany. High velocity shrapnel damaged rudder controls, but the plane continued with the formation and dropped its bombs.

A few minutes later, eight enemy fighters, Messerschmitt 109s and Focke-Wulf 190s, struck at the formation, and "Bold Venture III" was blasted again, this time by machine gun fire, which ripped gaping holes in the wing and seriously damaged an engine.

With that engine blazing and its prop out of control, the pilot told his crew to prepare to bail out. Climbing out of their flak armor and removing their interphone equipment, the crew stood by to leave the plane. Four minutes later, Lt. Whitham, who had climbed out of his position in the nose of the bomber, noticed that there was no one in the pilot's compartment.

Apparently the buzzer system, on which the bail-out order was sounded, had failed to operate, and the men on the flight deck, including the pilot, co-pilot, flight engineer, and radio operator, had parachuted out while the rest of the crew, including Sgt. Feeney, waiting in the waist, listened for the order that never came.

Realizing that the plane was at that moment over enemy-held territory which was the scene of fierce ground action, Lt. Whitham, who was pilotage navigator of the crew, decided to take a chance that the mutilated bomber would remain aloft for a few minutes longer. He climbed into the pilot's seat and, aided by First Lt. John Beyer of Ramey, Pa., turned the heavy bomber around, despite damaged rudder controls, and headed it toward France.

Half an hour later the faltering bomber arrived over allied territory. Lt. Whitham set the automatic pilot, and ordered the crew to jump. As they prepared to drop from the open bomb bay, four P-51 Mustang fighters appeared and hovered near the crippled Liberator as one by one the crew leaped to safety.

All six men landed in allied territory. However, Lt. Whitham and Staff Sgt. John V. Salen of Pottsville, Pa., waist gunner, were injured on landing, and are recovering in army hospitals. The other crew members are flying again in Second Air Division attacks on enemy installations.

The other crewmen are Second Lt. Kenneth M. Ryan of Brooklyn, N. Y., navigator; and Staff Sgt. Roland F. Person, Brookfield Center, Conn., aerial gunner.

Sgt. Feeney is the son of Mr and Mrs James M. Feeney, 33 Cary st., Rockland, Mass., and is a graduate of Rockland high school. He entered the service at Whitman, Mass., on July 30, 1943. He wears the air medal with two oak leaf clusters.

Similar stories on all the crew members were sent out, through regular PRO channels. The whole bunch came back a few days later, accompanied by a memo from the Second Air Division's public relations officer: "This is a good story from the standpoint of Lts Whitham and Beyer. But it is not good from the viewpoint of the pilot and co-pilot. Unless it can be explained justifiably why the pilot bailed out without his entire crew, from an airplane which was still flyable, we do not want this story to go out."

SKY HOOK'S LUSTER

In my possibly prejudiced opinion William Atheling Jr, author of the new "Pro-Phile" column in Sky Hook, is one of the best qualified and most informative science fiction critics ever to write for a fan magazine. The first instalment of his pro-zine review appears in the current (autumn) Sky Hook; the second will be a feature of Sky Hook's fifth anniversary issue. William Atheling Jr is but one of many Big Names, fan and pro, who will appear in that 40-page all-star number.

Subscribers who order at least one other issue, past or future, can obtain the ann-ish for 15¢. Single-copy purchases: 25¢. The current issue, at 15¢, features "The Okies -- and Others," by James Blish, "Lost World of Mu," by Phil Rasch, "Whimsy" (a poem) by Lee Hoffman, and three regular departments in addition to William Atheling's "Pro-Phile."

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BERTIE

Who, or rather, what is Bertrand Russell? That was a question I heard voiced a number of times after his American television appearance last summer, and it's a hard question to answer. After all, there have been many Bertrand Russells over the years. It is dangerous to generalize about him, to put a label on him, without dating it in the Korzybskian manner.

In a fanciful obituary which he imagines The Times might publish upon his death Russell declares that his outlook was "reminiscent of Bentham." In his facet on encouraging social reform, as in his notorious attitude toward marriage and free love, he somewhat resembles Bentham. But in his essay "An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish," collected in Unpopular Essays (1950), Russell says that he does not believe that man is a rational animal: "Throughout a long life, I have looked diligently for evidence in favor of this statement, but so far I have not had the good fortune to come across it." He has no truck at all with social Darwinism, as he makes abundantly clear in the same essay, with his discourse on Franklin's lightning-rod.

In any case, he does believe in the ultimate perfectibility of man, mostly through the good offices of science, though he is not a dogmatist on this point. In "The Functions of a Teacher" he declares, "Civilization...is a thing of the mind, not of material adjuncts to the physical side of being." If the dangers of war are removed, he foresees the day when modern technology may conquer poverty even in China and India, as he writes in "The Future of Mankind." In "Ideas That Have Helped Mankind" he adds that "Disease, which has been very rapidly reduced during the last hundred years, will be reduced still further....There will be a new freedom from economic bondage to the mere necessities of keeping alive, and the great mass of mankind may enjoy the kind of carefree adventurousness that characterizes the rich young Athenians of Plato's Dialogues. All this is easily within the bounds of technical possibility." He believes that a world empire is "preferable to the results of a continuation of the present international anarchy."

Over and over Lord Russell reiterates that the prime necessity for the future is the development of tolerance. "Within the herd we are more friendly to each other than are many species of animals," he says, "but in our attitude towards those outside the herd...our emotions are as ferocious as those of any animal." Elsewhere he writes, "The qualities most needed are charity and tolerance....At the present time moral defects stand in the way of clear thinking, and muddled thinking encourages moral defects."

Because he steadfastly believes in progress, Bertrand Russell is a philosopher of the old breed, out of the age of enlightenment of the nineteenth century. It seems that not even world war II has turned him into an Existentialist or an unreasonable facsimile. Maybe Russell at last is sailing with his prevailing winds, of which the other air currents were only little eddies. Maybe it is no longer necessary to label and date in his case, at that.

AND PROMETHEUS WAS A HOMELY MAN

I hugely enjoyed Collier's symposium on space travel in the 18 and 25 October issues, but panel member Willy Ley is lucky that the death penalty is not mandatory for treason against science fiction. The moon ships, according to Drs Wernher von Braun and Ley, will be "clumsy-looking" rocketships, 160 feet long, 110 feet wide, topped by a "personnel sphere" and festooned with numerous other tanks and spheres, some discardable after departure, that carry fuel, combustion agent, etc. Sticking out from this lumpy mass will be various arms and booms and a "curved sheet of highly polished metal" that is a "solar mirror." Von Braun says the passenger ship will look like "an arrangement of hourglasses inside a metal framework."

What about those gleaming grey ships, sleek and full of portholes, that Hubert Rogers painted all those years for aSF? What about cigar-shaped Luna, the spaceship of "Destination Moon"? Willy Ley is shamelessly repudiating 30 years of science fiction when he allows his name to be used upon a report of such shattering bent. If the space cowboys ride flame to Mars on such ridiculous-looking mounts as these "space vehicles" I guess interplanetary adventure won't be so glamorous after all, and I'll be content to stay home. I'd as soon think of taking Marilyn Monroe riding in a 1907 Studebaker as fly to Ares City in such a silly contraption. Why, I'll bet the pilot of the ship doesn't even wear aviator's helmet and goggles, let alone the standard Paul knee-pants.

But if such a shapeless spaceship is accepted by science fiction, we'll have one consolation, even if science fiction is irreparably deglamorized thereby. Nobody can accuse us, Freudianwise, of reading science fiction just because spaceships have penile shapes. Various psychologists have made such hypotheses, you know. When Braun-type rockets become standard in science fiction, the only esoteric reason such Freudians will discover to account for our interest in science fiction will be that Braun-type space vehicles look like ampallangs.

ONE OF OUR DEPARTMENTS IS MISSING

As I stencil this page it is Thanksgiving week 1952 and I have not yet thoroughly perused the autumn SAPS mailing. I'll get around to it between Christmas and 1953, I suppose, but I hope to ship this issue off to Gordon Black soon after 1 December. Therefore, there will be no mailing comments in this issue. If when I do read mailing #21 I'll note down still-pertinent matters to be impertinently discussed next issue, so that any of you waiting apprehensively for my demolition of your flimsy arguments on various current topics need only hold your breath another three months. See you in the spring. Till then, practise your beauty before it fail.

Anybody who solves that cryptic remark wins an nfc copy of Amazing Stories for November 1952.

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 "It is a proud and lonely Thing."
