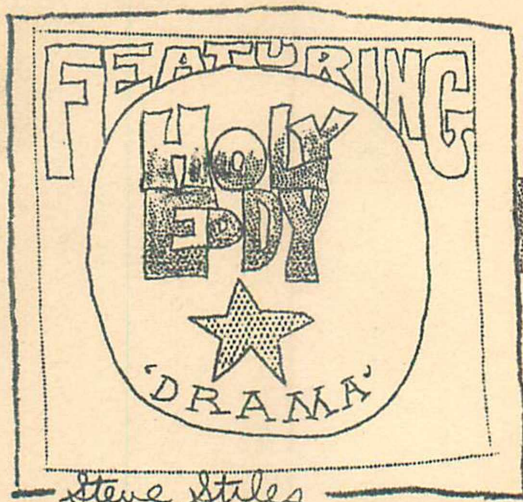


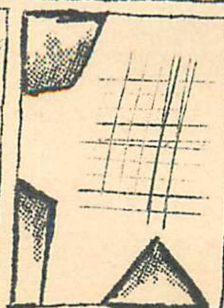
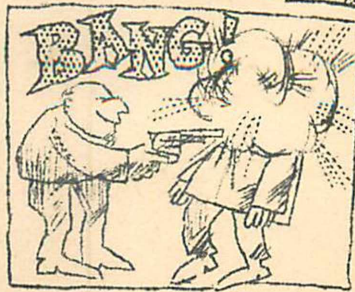
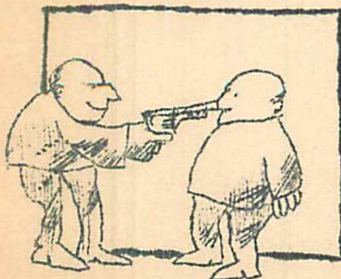
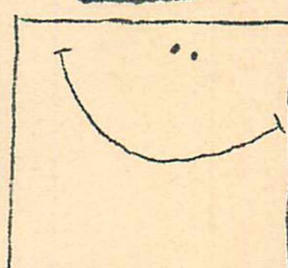
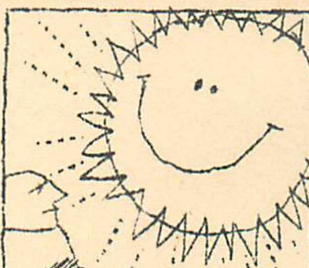
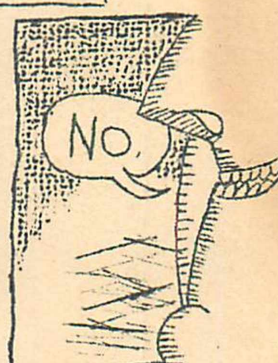
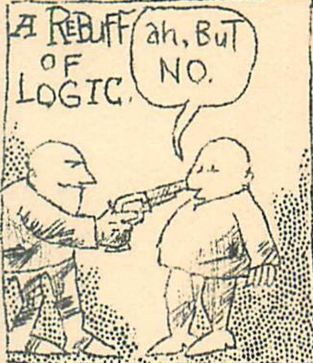
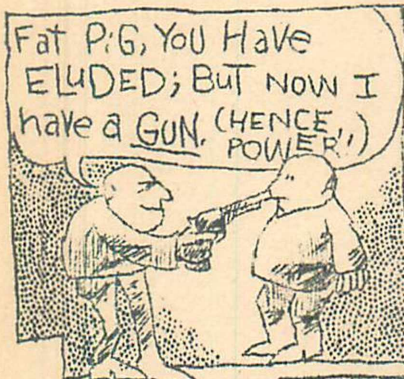
# NULL-F 413



OUR STORY THIS YEAR:

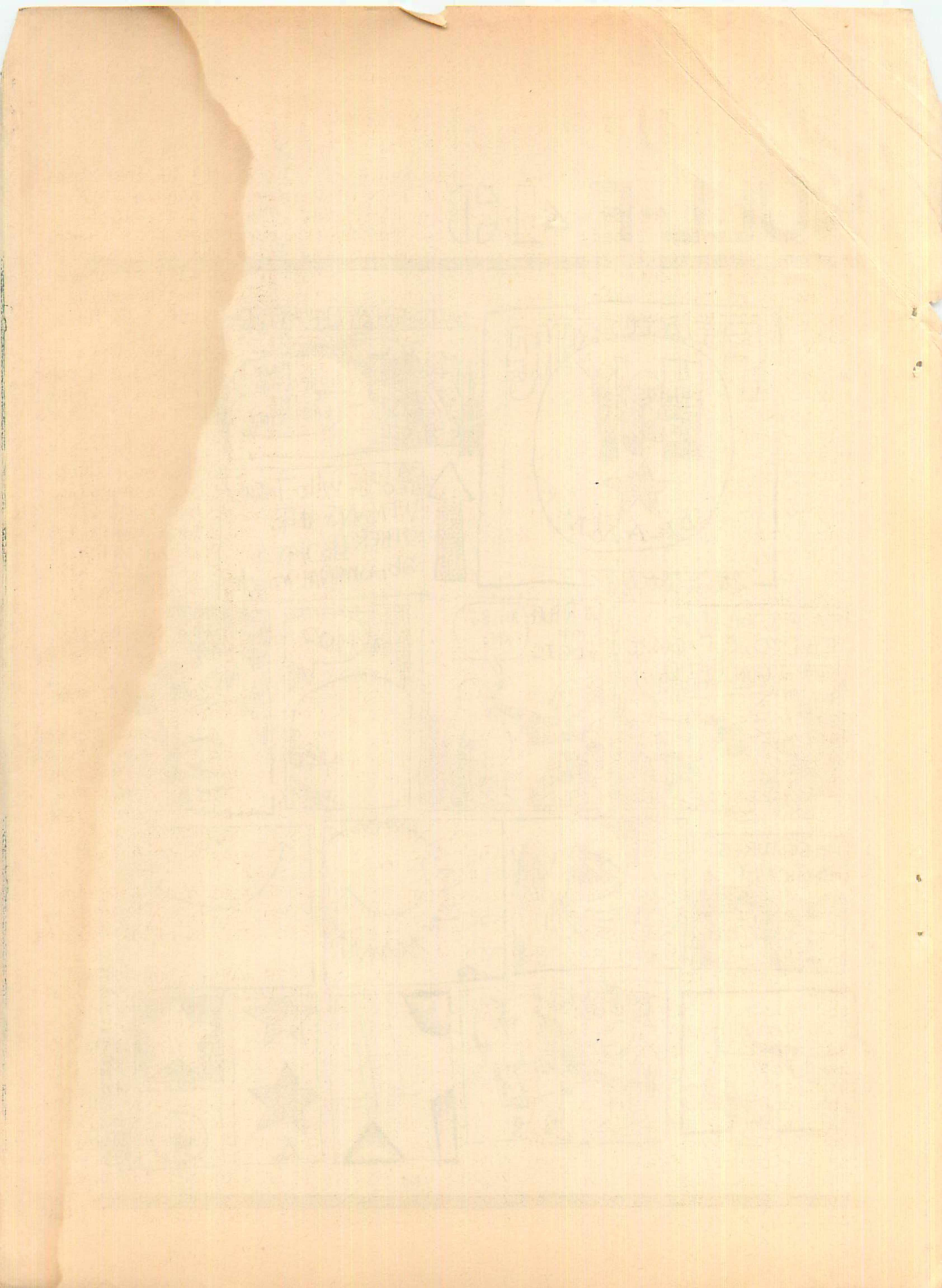


PEOPLE WHO THRUST  
WEAPONS INTO  
OTHER PEOPLE'S  
abdominal MUSCLES



THE END.







# UFFISH THOTS

ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER DOLLAR... This issue of NULL-F will be the first in a long time (maybe I should stop right there...) not to have any mailing comments. There is no single reason for this; already I have written twenty-one pages for this issue, some of which are in reaction to the last mailing and might be considered "mailing comments" in the broadest sense. Most of the mailing seems to me to be rather uninspired, and since I usually do not begin making mailing comments until I've read the whole mailing, and since I do not feel inclined to read the whole mailing...QED: no m-c's.

If I was going to do m-c's, however, Harry Warner would get quite a few. I liked the change in HORIZONS, and was moved to checkmark a number of the margins. However, I misplaced the issue. I would also want to comment upon Bob Silverberg's story of his professional working schedule, which so impressed me that I read it aloud at a recent Fanoclast meeting, and used it as the basis for my NyCon interview of Bob (which seemed well-received). I have admired Bob for a long time -- even when I could not admire his fiction -- for his disciplined writing schedule, and the prodigious results it produced. The news that he had been ill was a surprise to me, and I think his handling of it was characteristically sensible. The fact that he is now writing science fiction which I can and do admire (I was very unhappy that F&SF chose not to accept his The Time-Hoppers, now a Doubleday book) only adds to my appreciation of the man.

Buz was wondering, I believe, if the The Avengers Battle The Earth-Wrecker book from Bantam had anything to do with my Captain America book. The answer is yes, but they are two separate books.

When my agent first caught wind of a proposed Batman tv series, several years ago, knowing I had been a comics fan he asked me if I'd be interested in doing a Batman novel. I was, very much. And Bantam wanted to do it. But negotiations involved the tv producing company and National Periodical Publications, the DC comics people. It developed that due to distribution arrangements, Signet Books had first rights on books resulting from DC comicbook characters. Signet and National dithered with us and put us off until finally admitting they'd made an agreement for a Batman book elsewhere. The book is, as one might expect of a hack who had no interest in his characters, an abomination.

Bantam still wanted to do something with a novelization of a comic-book character. "How about the Marvel Group?" I suggested. I knew Stan Lee, the editor-writer at Marvel, and I admired his work in reintroducing a little intelligence into the comics field.

My agent and I spoke with Stan, and he liked the idea. But Lancer Books had already started issuing black & white pb comics reprinted from the original Marvel Group comics, and had an option on novelizations.

Simultaneously, Bantam approached Martin Goodman, Marvel's publisher, directly, apparently at the behest of Otto Binder, who had circularized most of the major publishers about writing comics novelizations or scripts for new pb comics. The result was that the first Lee heard was that one of the properties Lancer hadn't picked up, The Avengers (no relation to the tv series, \*sigh\*), had been contracted for novelization for Bantam Books by Otto Binder. (This is the book that was published this summer.) Stan was very unhappy. Binder has never worked with Marvel, and his work for DC has betrayed his lack of sympathy for the Marvel approach. A second work was also contracted for, but had not been assigned a writer: Captain America. "Listen," Stan told Bantam, "I wish



you'd get Ted White for this one. He's worked with me and I recommend him." That was a fib; I've never actually worked for Marvel. But Stan and I by this time knew each other fairly well, and Stan had a good idea I wouldn't abuse the Marvel backgrounds and approach.

In August I signed the contract with Bantam to deliver a manuscript in two months. Unlike most contracts in which the writer does not own the property, my contract guarantees royalties, and does not sell the ms. for a flat fee.

I wrote the book in September. In structure it is a blend of Doc Savage and James Bond. It is the first thriller I've written, and I am rather proud of it. I guarantee that fans will find some Tuckerisms for their enjoyment, and I think the basic crime (the robbery of the Federal Reserve Bank in lower Manhattan, whose vaults hold more gold than those of Fort Knox) is a solid one no one else had thought of.

Both books were to be published in January. But in January we were told it had been decided to delay publication until the following September. Binder's book came out in July; as I write this (early September), mine is not yet out. I bought Binder's, and was pleased with the cover package (similar to the Doc Savage series; that justifies my use of Lester-Dent-style plotting), and found upon opening the book that it was unreadable.

I am sorry they chose to release Binder's book first; I am afraid it will badly hurt my book's sales, although I hope it won't. At a recent meeting of the New York Comic Art Group (a group which includes many comics pros, and of which I am a charter member), I took Binder to task for the inexcusably sloppy job he did on the book, but to no great consequence. As things stand, I'll just have to hope my book survives his.

AND THEN I WROTE... I have not written half as much as I expected to thus far this year. The reason, of course, was the NyCon3, which at least is now over.

By early in this year I had six books contracted: Quest of the Wolf for Lancer, The Game of Life and Death and By Furies Possessed for Banner, Spawn of the Death Machine for Paperback Library, The Invaders from Tomorrow for Holt, Rinehart & Winston, and Trouble on Project Ceres for Westminster, to be written in roughly that order.

I'm already scheduling further contracts, with Lancer, Doubleday and Crown, for 1968, but I have yet to finish Quest of the Wolf, which has been half finished on my desk for the last three or four months.

However, since last writing in this August journal, I did write The Jewels of Elsewhen, which Belmont released this spring. And my first hardcover, Secret of the Marauder Satellite, came out from Westminster this spring to exceptionally fine reviews.

Recently I also succeeded in selling my first solo short story. It is a peculiar thing, but until I sold Wednesday, Noon to F&SF this summer, all my magazine sales had been in collaboration with others. I'd written this story last year, given it to my agent, and thought no more about it. It was rejected by SatEvePost, and made it to the top enchaalon at PLAYBOY before meeting rejection there. And so it went...and I forgot about it until Roger Zelazny was visiting one evening in late spring, and I pulled out my carbon for him to read.

"This is a fine story, Ted," he said. "On the basis of this story, I will defend you as a fine writer to anyone who says you're not." I was moved. I had an extra carbon, and I gave it to him. Then I called my agent. Had the story been seen at F&SF yet? No, it was with CAVALIER, caught in the shuffle of an editorial changeover.

"I'd like F&SF to see it," I said.



"It's a short story," my agent said. "If F&SF buys it, you'll get \$100 tops. CAVALIER would pay \$250."

"That's not important to me," I said, even though I needed the money. I recalled Bob Silverberg telling me he wanted his The Time-Hoppers in F&SF because of the prestige attached to such an appearance, I felt very much like that. Roger's reaction to my story had galvanized my own pride in my story. I wanted it showcased in a good sf mag where it would be read by those whose opinions I valued -- not a higher-paying but largely ignored men's mag. "Please let Ed Ferman see it."

Ed saw it, and his father, Joe, saw it, and Bob Mills saw it. And when I got back from the Midwestcon, in my mail was a contract. (F&SF is the only sf magazine to provide actual contracts spelling out rights purchased.) It brought \$100, but the story will appear in F&SF, some time after the first of the coming year. That made me happy.

That story will not be my only by-lined appearance in The Magazine. For some months I had argued with Ed that Judy Merrill's book reviews were trending further and further from what I felt good sf book reviews should be. Finally, in June, he suggested that every third month guest reviewers should do the column. The first such column is in the October issue, and contains reviews by Terry Carr, Joanna Russ and myself. Because Judy had snapped up most of the good books (or those she suspected to be good books), we had mostly duds for review, so it's an acid column. However, Terry has given my Manaunder Satellite its first (and perhaps only) sfmag review, and a very pleasant one to read. Miss Russ mistook Blish's Warriors of Day, his first novel, to be his latest (I don't know why she didn't at least glance at the copyright date if she was as upset as all that over "what's happened to James Blish"), an error I caught when I read the galleys, and Ed managed to correct by footnote. But it's a good column, I think, and it pleases me. If any of you share my distaste for Miss Merrill's reviews, I suggest you write Ed and tell him so; thus far, he tells me, favorable mail on her column has heavily outweighed the unfavorable.

My one other professional activity this year has been to act as U.S. agent for Bob Shaw. Bob and I discussed this when I was in Ireland in 1965, and shortly thereafter he began sending me stories. Thus far I've been responsible for "Light of Other Days" and "Burden of Proof" in AN-ALOG and "Call Me Dumbo" in IF. "Light of Other Days" was a runner-up for both the Nebula and Hugo awards this year, missing its Nebula win by one vote, and a Hugo by eight votes. It was in this year's World's Best anthology from Ace, and in the just released second volume of Nebula Award Stories. This year I also sold three novels for Bob, the first two, Night Walk and Shadow of Heaven, to Banner, the third, The Two-Timers, to Terry Carr's Ace Specials series. Night Walk has just come out, the first of Banner's sf books, and with a handsome Frazetta cover. I'm quite proud for Bob; it's a good start for his first year at trying books.

What else is new? Well, we bought the Weiss Rak VI, a '61 Lincoln Continental. I knew the owner, whose low price struck me as the bargain of a lifetime, and my mechanic was also familiar with the car and agreed with me. The car had been babied, had a low mileage and was in excellent condition. Two royalty payments just took care of it. Sometimes I wonder what a bearded nut like me is doing with a Lincoln like that, but then I usually smile and recite my liturgy: "It's not money I want; it's the good thing money will buy." I don't mind poverty if it's genteel poverty...



A CON REPORT: As I write this, the NyCon3 has been over for only two days; and the reports aren't all in, but if I can believe verbal comments, it was a good convention. I wouldn't know -- I couldn't evaluate something of which I was so completely an integral part.

"Somebody ought to tell the people that it's really Andy Porter's convention," Seth Johnson said. "I would myself, but Ted White would bite my head off."

When this quote was relayed me, the credit line wasn't on it, but the phrase "bite my head off" was familiar, and when the speaker in question was pointed out, it was indeed Uncle Seth.

In actual fact, however, in many respects it really was Andy Porter's convention. And John Boardman's. And Dave Van Arnam's. And even mine. But when it comes right down to it, it was both too much and not enough mine.

I was the motivating force behind the bid, and I was the motivating factor in the convention, but I wasn't the hardest worker. In August, 1966, I told Robin, "We're going to get this convention. I mean that." It was a goal I'd set myself, and one I intended to get. I knew we were up against plenty from the outset. I've always been outspoken, to say the least, and plenty of people have resented it. I've made several highly vocal enemies, and perhaps many more who haven't said so much about it (Richard Eney once told me that fandom hated me and was waiting for me to fall flat on my face, but Richard Eney exaggerates). Winning the bid was no easy task, because I had to push past the Ted White Legend that had grown up around me. But we did it, and that was the easy part. (Easy, despite the information given me a few days ago that indeed there was ballot stuffing at the Tricon session; one of the Syracuse Committee -- the same one who'd counterfeited fanzines in our name -- had confessed to doing a lot of stuffing on the sly. This year, as a result of that information, we rigidly controlled entrance to the room during consite voting.)

We had the image of the second NyCon to live down. While the most remembered parts of that image are the over-guaranteed banquet and the infamous line, "Dave Kyle Says You Can't Sit Here" (revived this year by Dick Schultz's not-very-amusing place-cards distributed during the banquet reading "Ted White Says You Can't Sit Here" -- high humor, eh, Dick?), the actual problem at that convention was two-fold. First, all NYC fandom had "pulled together" on the con. This had placed people with serious personality conflicts elbow to elbow, and ultimately resulted in the WSFSInc lawsuits. Second, Dave Kyle had tried to do everything himself, and had not been equal to the task.

I knew damned well that if the con was as big as expected (I forecast about 1,700 members, hitting it on the nose), I could not handle it entirely on my own, and I did not expect to.

To begin with, Dave and I split the chairmanship between us. I notice this has been increasingly common among con committees, and it's easy to see why. Then, Andy, as Secretary, handled 90% of the correspondence, while John, our Treasurer, handled the money. In actual fact, this resulted in John running the registration desk most of the time, while Andy did the lion's share of pre-con paper work.

But every Indian can't be chief, and I was not enough the sole chief. Although I was solely responsible for such items as the Program & Memory Book, I could not and did not stay on top of all the details well enough. Delegation of Authority -- my plan all along -- became government by committee, with all attendant red-tape and confusion.



The aforementioned Program & Memory Book was without a doubt the single most demanding and expensive job connected with the convention. Counting covers, it runs to 120 pages, 68 of which are advertising. (By contrast, last year's Program Book was 64 pages in length...) We featured better than 50 pages of editorial matter -- as much as you'll find in many fanzines -- including articles by Bob Silverberg, Alex Panshin, Lee Hoffman, Terry Carr, Dave Van Arnam and myself.

A lot of people, while admiring the results, avowed that it represented unnecessary work. "You don't need all that in a program book," they said.

True. All we really needed was the four-page Pocket Program we printed separately. We didn't need to print all those articles -- nor did we need any of those ads. They're traditional, perhaps, but not necessary.

The fact is, if all my plans for the book had gone through, we'd undoubtedly have run closer to 150 pages! I'd wanted a folio section of previous Art Show winners -- partly to plug the Art Show, partly as part of the theme I wanted to use (more of that in a moment) -- and had asked for a request that I be sent black&white copies (stats, photos, etc.) of winning art by the owners in PASTell. It seemed to me entirely to the Art Show's advantage that I publish a section on the show. But I received nothing: no queries or offers of interest at all. I dropped the idea and ran a four-page folio of Steve Stiles art instead. Steve, at least, was interested enough to prepare something. I also wanted to run contributions by the Guests of Honor, and had asked both Tucker and del Rey if each would be interested in doing an original item for me. Both were, but the press of other commitments kept anything from coming of it. Both told me they'd made several false starts without completing anything that satisfied them.

My purpose in all this multiplicity of material -- my theme for the book, if you will -- was to create a true Memory Book: a book that would create some of the feeling of the convention and evoke the convention experience. I wanted to give something of the con to those who were not going to be at the con. And I wanted to make the book more than simply a vehicle for ads. (I numbered nearly all the pages, too, because I was tired of Program Books where nothing can be found amongst the ads and un-numbered pages.)

If it was not all I wanted it to be, the book was still a back-breaker. I put better than two weeks of solid effort into assembling it for the printer. This included doing all the layout, the pasteups, the setting of artype, and the design of the cover. I bought over \$20 of artype and used most of it. Each ad had to be pasted up, and many were not of the size or dimensions listed. (We had specified the exact size, sans margins, in our Progress Reports, but an amazing variety of fans cannot read simple directions. From Jay K. Klein came an out-size ad with a note, reading, "Here is my ad, prepared to the dimensions given in your Progress Reports 1 and 2." Dick Lupoff also sent in an outsize ad. So did the Baycon Committee. However these annoyances paled in significance beside instructions from both Doubleday and World that we were to set the type for their ads; World even specified size and style. I wonder what they thought they were buying for eight bucks? They found out, when we billed them for additional labor...)

If other comments we received are meaningful, our labor did not go unrecognized, however. I received a number of compliments on the beautiful appearance of the book, including kudoes from professional artists, and quite a few people commented on their surprise and pleasure in the quantity and quality of editorial contents. So I accomplished what I set out to accomplish on the book.



Only a relatively few incidents marred the con for me. One of these, a drunken lout of perhaps twenty who threw himself upon a couch where Robin and Jo Meisner were sitting with Lee Hoffman, Bob Tucker and Don Meisner, forced them to vacate, and then threw up all over himself, was about par for the course.

Two others were not. The first of these occurred when Larry Janifer approached the registration desk while John Boardman and I were closing up for the evening. Larry was a member, but he came back to hover over the desk while John counted up the money. There was a large stack, and Janifer reached quickly over the desk and pocketed a five. John caught the flicker of motion and looked up, saying, "What was that for?"

"Just making a contribution," Janifer said, misleadingly.

"Put it back," I said. "Now!"

Janifer returned the bill and then said, "Use that tone of voice on me again, Ted White, and I'll break your back for you."

I was sceptical. Janifer has had a long bout of illness -- both physical and mental -- and I doubted he could do anything of the kind.

"Steal anything else, and I'll do more than use my voice on you," I said in the tone he objected to. "I'll have you thrown out."

"Don't pull that on me," he said, offended. "You know I don't steal, and you know you can't throw me out of anything."

"I know your reputation damned well," I said. "Or had you forgotten that bouncing check...again?"

He turned away distainfully and was not in much evidence thereafter.

Another incident was the Dirce Archer Scene. Mrs. Archer has apparently become a Professional Invalid, but I didn't find this out in time. My first dealings with her occurred when she wrote to say she had a number of fine Freas paintings and drawings for the auction. She was acting as Freas' agent in this regard, she said. Any proceeds from the auction would be divided 25-75, in her favor.

This struck me as only marginally worthwhile, since other artists are now donating their works on 50-50 and 40-60 splits, but since 25% of something is more than 100% of nothing, I accepted.

The Friday before the convention, August 25th, she sent out three packages by express from Pittsburgh, according to her story. At this writing, none have yet arrived. Friday evening of the convention, Dirce herself arrived. I told her the paintings had not come, although I'd kept people in my apartment waiting for them Tuesday and Wednesday (the days she'd said they'd come) at some inconvenience for them. She nearly had a fit, and insisted they were probably at the express office and that I should immediately go down for them. She was broke, she said, and she needed the money desperately, just to pay for the trip and the hotel bill. "Larry Eisenstein came all the way from Germany to bid on these paintings," Dirce said. "He pays big money. You could get thousands of dollars from him on them." I did not believe this, but I promised to call the express company the next morning when they were open, and see what I could find. Sucker that I was, I also said that if she was broke, we'd see to it that she was tided over.

I'd been running low on sleep all week, and I was shot by the time I got to bed. I hoped I'd be able to sleep until 9:30, when I'd have to get the money from the hotel vault and open registration. At 8:30, the phone jarred me from my sleep. It was Dirce.

"Have you gone down to the express agency yet?" she asked.

"Dirce," I said, fighting through the fog in my mind valiantly. "It's eight-thirty in the morning. You woke me up."

"Oh. Well, I've been up all night. I slipped and fell, twice, in the bathtub. I've just gotten back from St. Vincent's Hospital. They had



to sew my whole face up. I've still got blood in my hair. My face is just full of bruises. I feel terrible. I've been up all night. And," here her voice grew into a wail: "and I can't take novocain!"

I was shocked, and I tried to make sympathetic noises while visions of lawsuits against the hotel grew in my mind and I wondered how we could take care of the woman.

"I really need that money, Ted," she went on. "You can see that."

I called express when its offices opened. I was told that if the paintings had arrived, they would be in the Brooklyn warehouse, which was not open and wouldn't be open until Tuesday. I said that if I didn't get them before Sunday, there wasn't much point in getting them at all. I gave my name, address, the hotel, and other salient details. The gentleman on the other end was sensible and intelligent, and said he'd do what he could, but that he couldn't offer much hope. "Normally, it takes a week or two by rail from Pittsburgh," he said. "They should've been sent earlier."

I called Dirce back and told her this. Intturn, she told me she'd been experimenting with the bathtub again and had finally figured out how she'd fallen twice before. "I was reaching for some towels," she said, "and you have to reach across the tub. Do you know, when I reached this time I also fell again?" I thought that was remarkable, and kept my thoughts on fools who repeat accidents to myself. For ten minutes she kept me on the phone, whining about herself and telling me over and again about how much she needed the thousands of dollars Alex Eisenstein or maybe Larry Eisenstein would spend on the paintings, and of how she'd been trying the bathtub again and almost fallen again. It dawned on me finally that she had no intention of hanging up. Like my father's senile sister who called him incessantly in her last years, she was lonely and feeding on self pity and she wasn't going to let go of anyone she could grab to listen. Finally, I hung up.

I saw nothing more of Dirce until Sunday night when Ed Wood brought up a pile of over twenty Freas paintings to the auction Harlan was running. "These are from Dirce," he said.

I have no idea where Dirce had been hiding them, but they did not sell, in most cases, for much more than the \$25 minimum bids, and bidding on them was apathetic. I doubt Eisenstein spent much money on them.

However, the total must have brought in a significant amount of money. I say "must have" because we saw none of it. Dirce copped 100%. Payments were made directly to her.

She was sitting on the front row. She was wearing a pink hat which concealed most of her hair, but her face was totally unmarked. No stitches; no bruises. She told Harlan later she'd taken in \$300. But we agreed it had been much more: perhaps twice that.

"We were conned," I said. Later on, I was told we hadn't been the first.

The other incident relating directly to a convention member was the presentation of the Annual First Fandom Award. Sam Moskowitz is the would-be traditional presenter of this award, and in the past he has taken up to three-quarters of an hour to eulogize the recipient before presenting the award itself. This year, we were told at first, he would not be the one to make the presentation. Then Bob Madle told me Sam would be, but that they'd extracted his promise to limit his eulogy to five minutes. "We had him do a preliminary run-through," Bob told me. "It was under five minutes." Vastly cheered by this, I foolishly agreed to let Sam make the award during the Awards Banquet.

It wasn't five minutes. It was three or four times that. Deliberately, insolently, Sam told a bad joke poorly in four of his first five



minutes. Then he began a boring recitation of the publishing history Ed Hamilton -- the recipient -- had enjoyed. This was good for better than ten minutes. When Jack Williamson, accepting for Ed, came up, Sam announced he'd read the "terse six-hundred-word inscription on the award," which turned out to be no joke. While Jack fidgeted, embarrassed, Sam read all six hundred words. They were really there.

By the time Lester del Rey, our Guest of Honor, could rise and speak, there was precious little time left before the extended hotel check-out time of 4:00 pm. He stripped his speech to its bare essentials and delivered it in fifteen minutes. "It was warm, and people were looking at their watches," he told me afterwards. "I decided to hit them hard and fast and then sit down. Otherwise I'd have lost them." Nevertheless, it was the shortest such speech on record (an irony after Lester's jokes beforehand that he'd try to pare his four-hour speech to two hours or maybe three), and it was forced upon him by fandom's biggest boor, probably deliberately and maliciously.

I seriously suggest that Sam Moskowitz not be allowed to give any further awards during future awards banquets.

Aside from this, I thought the programming moved well. I cannot say if the program items were interesting or good, because I cannot judge them, but I had several specific plans which I put into effect successfully, and I am happy about them.

During previous conventions there have usually been delays of up to fifteen minutes between program items, during which time people walk out. The programs usually have run behind schedule, and lost more potential audience as a result. And finally, auctions have driven people out in the middle of program sessions.

We resolved to begin our program at 12 noon, and continue without break until 4:30 or 5:30, closing the session each day with the auction.

Friday morning John Boardman set up a pentagram and black candles, and, at about 11:30 began chanting in Latin from musty old leather-bound volumes. At almost noon, he conjured up a demon -- his toddling daughter Daidre, dressed in a red devil's suit. It was a cute culmination, drew lots of applause, and set us up to open the convention.

We made a bad mistake in both our handling of introductions and the time we allotted it. The net result was that we didn't introduce everyone we should've, we were left with an incredible 45 minutes to fill. We were ahead of schedule.

We put Terry Carr and Dick Lupoff, fans turned pro, on immediately, and ran out to find a fill-in item. Since this was to be the fandom-oriented session, we wanted something connected with fandom. What we came up with was an interview of Ted Johnstone/Dave McDaniel, as author of the Man From Uncle books, as conducted by Len Bailes. It was an excellent idea, and came off well. And it restored us to schedule.

I spent much of the program time running about, chasing after the people on the program to make sure they'd be ready to step up as soon as the preceding item was over. The results were fast-paced items each of which did follow on the heels of the one before it.

We held to the line throughout the program until Sunday, when the 10:00 am business session ran through noon and ended at 12:15. I pushed the noon item, an interview with Bob Silverberg, back to 12:30, and squeezed several other items in order to put us back on schedule by 3:00.

To judge by the size of the audience, the most popular program items were those with Harlan on them (the Harlan TAFF auction, and his dialogue with me), the Spinrad-Pohl dialogue, the Zelazny-Delany dialogue, the



Asimov-Coleman dialogue, and the Brunner-Leiber dialogue. The idea of dialogues and interviews was apparently popular with both the audience and the participants.

As the days progressed, it became obvious that the common topic of discussion was the New Wave, pro and con. In one way or another, it surfaced in nearly every item. And if much was proven, this was the size of it: the authors resent the label when it is applied to them, no one can agree upon exactly who is included in the wave, and the label is one manufactured largely by critics and editors.

I could write several pages of my own thoughts on this subject, including the non-confrontation of Mike Moorcock and Lester del Rey, but I think I'll save it. This is a con report.

We had trouble with the hotel. The basic trouble concerned the elevators.

I'm told that my slur on the Tricon's elevator service and hotel cut Ben Jason to the quick and was responsible for his testiness after that convention. Any criticism of the hotel was a criticism of his con, and of him.

As far as I'm concerned, criticism of our hotel is valid and I will be first in line to endorse it. The Statler-Hilton is a commercial hotel which caters to conventions and competes with newer hotels by offering better service. This is what we were told, by both our representatives on the sales staff and by friends who'd attended conventions like the IEEE convention in the hotel.

But during our convention the hotel seemed to be run by complete amateurs who seemed unaware that about fifteen hundred people were in attendance at our con alone, and two other groups, the Assyrians and the Scientologists(!) were also on the premises.

Let me clarify that. We had complete cooperation from Dick Lidz, our representative in the hotel, and from Mr. Gilbert, the banquet captain. Our facilities were as ordered, and every effort was made on our behalf. The only foulups here were those created by the attempts of too many people to run their own segments of the con, which caused confusion with the hotel people, who expected to deal solely with Andy Porter and me. And these were largely ironed out.

But those elevators! After we'd waited around half an hour Saturday night for an elevator to stop for us on the seventh floor, Dick Lupoff called the Assistant Manager, I spoke to him, and he himself brought up a service elevator for us.

Afterwards I found out why so few elevators were running. First, the hotel is in the process of automating the elevators. This has probably not made the operators happy. Second, five elevator men did not report for work over the weekend, forcing those who were there to put in long overtime. And third, union rules, which hamstring every hotel in New York, forbid replacing elevator operators with bellhops, so that no substitutes could be made.

But understanding the situation doesn't make it better than it is. It was a blot on the convention, and an embarrassment to our representatives. I was asked to write a letter detailing such complaints against the hotel, and I wrote a three-page letter giving specifics. Dick Lidz hopes to use it to apply pressure where he can, but the hotel has already lost future business because of it.

The house detectives were in evidence for the first time in years, too. The one I encountered struck me as officious and obnoxious, and when I demanded to see his identification showed it to me with ill grace. It grieves me to report that his name was White.



The reason for the crackdowns, I discovered, was that Saturday evening some twenty rooms held by our convention members were vandalized, and more were on successive nights. Phones were ripped from the walls, light-bulbs stolen, beds ripped apart (not just pulled apart; ripped open), etc. It embarrasses me to report this. It would be nice just to say that the lousy hotel had it coming, but of course it cannot be excused. The hotel will be billing the people responsible.

The hotel is severely embarrassed about our service problems. We constituted big business for the hotel. We had 1,500 people in attendance, and accounted for over 300 room bookings. We had 583 at our banquet, and if labor could have been found to wait on the additional tables, we could probably have sold 700 tickets. During a slack period for conventions like Labor Day weekend, this is good business indeed, and the hotel owed us its best service.

When we accepted from Gene Roddenberry the film of Sturgeon's "The Amok Time" for showing Saturday night, we expected that it would be found vastly entertaining by Star Trek fans. Because Roddenberry could apparently not get an NBC projectionist or projector, we asked the hotel to supply them, at standard union rates for which we would be billed. We had not expected that the entire showing was designed as a come-on for an auction of Star Trek items for TOFF, nor that TOFF would pick up \$800.00 and not offer even reimbursement for the projector and projectionist (which cost us over \$50.00).

It seems to me the fannish charities are getting out of hand. When we agreed to let Silverberg auction Harlan for TAFF, we expected a good show, and did not ask for any cut of the money. When the girl who won Harlan offered herself for auction, we agreed to her stipulation that 50% would go to TAFF and the other 50% to the Columbus bid (which, since it is being bankrolled by Dannie Plachta, hardly needs extra money...). And we didn't stop Dirce from picking up the full amount on the auction of her Freas paintings. But sooner or later a convention chairman is going to have to put his foot down. He is going to have to draw the line and say, "If you want to conduct an auction for your own benefit as a part of our program, you'll have to give us X%." Inasmuch as the conventions have bankrolled most of the fannish charities anyway, I think it's time the conventions looked first to themselves. Excess profits can and will be disbursed freely, but every convention must first get into the solid black -- and this can't be done when others want to get the money and stick the bills on the convention.

As long as I'm talking about such things, I'm glad to see the Baycon has raised the ad rates. Ad rates in this year and past years were unrealistically low. Ads in the Program & Memory Book earned around \$525.00 but the production of the book cost in excess of \$1100.00.

Overseas memberships are unrealistically low, too. Airmail on our third Progress Report alone was \$1.20 to Europe and \$1.50 to Australia. That's 20¢ and 50¢ more than the memberships cost.

The business meeting was scheduled to appear after the next year's site was selected so that the new chairman could chose the business he wanted to propose.

The session was well-chaired by Scithers (he did a better job than I could've), but bore out my feelings about the worthlessness of business sessions.

The first item of business -- Fred Lerner's -- was to restrict on-site voting to "more experienced" voters. Gobbledygook, in other words.



It was referred to committee after a lot of discussion, and I imagine that's the end of it.

The next proposal was to change the rotation plan to allow non-North-American bids every fourth year, beginning with 1970. After much wrangling, this was voted through. It was the only worthwhile piece of business enacted, and, as Scithers pointed out, it can be repealed in 1968 or 1969. We'll see what effect it has.

The final item of business was the Fan Achievement Awards. It was voted to call them Science Fiction Achievement Awards, a clear piece of semantic sleight-of-hand which apparently delighted some people. It was then voted to leave the Fan Writer and Fan Artist awards up to the discretion of the Baycon Committee -- they can continue the awards or drop them as they choose. But they are "permitted" to make the awards.

The final voting on this was curious: among those voting against any awarding in these categories (even though they'll be called Hugoes) were three fan artists: Eisenstein and John and Joni Stopa. Earlier, Stopa had again suggested that I wanted to take the Hugo away from the fans because I am a pro and hate fans. This piece of garbage so annoyed me when I read it in NIEKAS that I told off Ed Meskys to his face at a Fanoclast meeting, whereupon he admitted he'd known it wasn't true, but that "it sounded good." Make of that what you will...

For fifteen years I've resisted the urge to join the fan vs. pro nonsense, and to indict me as a pro who hates fans now strikes me as the final irony. One might as well say Tucker hates fans because he's a dirty ol' pro. It is insulting for a fan with less than half my experience as a fan to level that charge at me, and I hereby serve notice that the next time I am presented with the accusation I won't ignore it.

Oh well. No point in losing my temper at this point.

The convention is over. That's the real and dominant fact in my life now. It's over and done with. We have a few advertisers to bill, and we have some bills to pay. We have funds to disburse (we did not run into the red -- that's one New York jinx broken), and a final report to get out (it will go out with the next Baycon progress report). Until all these things are done, the convention will not be entirely dead. But it's over, nonetheless.

Thank ghod.

This summer I have not been able to do any professional writing. I presently have three books overdue, and another three due by December. My only income this summer has been from my agent's fees on Bob Shaw's work (three novels sold, the first -- NIGHT WALK -- now out from Banner) and from the sale to F&SF of a short story I wrote a year ago. It's been a thin summer, friends, and if I really was all that much a pro, I'd have let the con go and done my writing. Keep that in mind, Ed Meskys, and Jon Stopa, wherever you are...

But now the convention is over, and I can get back to work again. Why in hell am I writing this instead?



## A FEW NOTES FOR REDD BOGGS:

I: Every so often I hear the doleful complaint that fandom embodies various undesirable, terrible, hateful, or perhaps juvenile characteristics. The author of this complaint is usually either scandalized or virtuously triumphant in his denunciation. The two most common sources of such tired and banal diatribes are non-fans (wives, perhaps, or someone from TIME Magazine) and fans quitting fandom, attempting to go out in a blaze of Laney-like glory. Ranking somewhere below and to the left of these are the disillusioned neofans whose eyes have belatedly opened to the realities of what had been until then, for them, a rose-colored never-never land.

None of these people have ever given any serious consideration to the notion that fandom is simply a collection of people. It is probably true that the average IQ in fandom is above 100 (or the true population average), but I doubt very much that fandom differs much from the outside world in any other significant respect. Fandom is a microcosmic cross-section of society at large. And if we are perturbed at the occasional outbreaks of fuggheadedness and viciousness in fandom, what are we to make of the headlines in the average daily paper? Only the exceptionally naive could reproach fandom for echoing in its behavioral patterns life in the mundane world.

It would appear that Redd Boggs must be numbered among the naive. How he has survived over twenty-five years of fandom without once opening his eyes and looking about him must be considered a minor marvel. But it is sad to watch him as the scales fall from his eyes and he reacts with shock and horror to manifestations of the aberrations of the real world in fandom and in his panic turns his accusing finger upon fandom itself.

II

If there was anything significant to come of the Breen Matter, it was the revelation that a significant body of fans (as in the real world) are incapable of regarding their fellow human beings as real individuals. For such people, most of the world consists of non-entities and walking name-tags marked Good Man, Bad Man, Communist, Democrat, Bircher, etc. It is probably more comfortable to regard those outside a very narrow circle as types rather than as people, and to conveniently pigeon-hole them and forget them. Probably very little of the Breen Affair would have come into existence if everyone involved had insisted upon regarding and treating all of the others involved as real human individuals. Certainly the Breen who was chosen as victim was not a real person: he was a collection of odious labels exaggerated to such proportions that no sympathy could be harbored for him, no understanding could be felt for him, and no attempt made to communicate with him.

The cover of the fourth NEHWON REVIEW contains a significant quote: "...as for Boggs, Gerber, and the rest, they are simply bad jokes -- what they 'think' ... is as irrelevant as what tadpoles think." The author of this remarkable statement, Richard Eney, would appear to believe it; it is consistent with his other public statements. If indeed he does, he stands convicted by his own words as being incapable of regarding his fellow human beings (or a number of them) as anything more than "bad jokes", or "tadpoles." This disregard for the validity of another person's thoughts, ideals, or even existence is at the bottom of most communication breakdowns -- one does not bother to listen to what a bad joke, a tadpole, has to say, and as a result one becomes increasingly out of touch with the portion of reality that person encompasses.

Certainly this intollerance, and this convenient label-pinning which allows one the luxury of ignorance is reprehensible. Worse, it is de-



humanizing. It is something one must always guard against, and which none of us is entirely without.

### III

Inasmuch as generalizations tend to defeat a proper awareness of specific situations, by virtue of hanging labels on aspects which should be individually examined and regarded, Redd Boggs is as guilty as is Eney of his unthinking and blanket set of condemnations in this current review of the Pickering affair. In reading him, I am constantly brought up against the fact that Redd is not willing to examine the situation on its own merits. With monotonous regularity previous affairs are brought back to life -- Laney, Breen, et al -- as though Boggs was less concerned with Pickering and his situation than with using this situation to score his own, debatable points.

In so doing, Boggs has made himself a major participant in the very mockery of a soul which he so vehemently protests. Not only is he exploiting Pickering to his own ends, he has undoubtedly sparked sufficient discussion with his article to keep a dying discussion alive: the very discussion he is protesting.

### IV

In his dicussion of the Pickering affair, Boggs drags in red herring after red herring. He states that "Pickering has not deserved being tried, found guilty, and even punished in the fan press for an alleged crime that the police declined to notice at all." One is reminded of the old saw, "Innocent until proven guilty" and its false corellary, "in a court of law."

The fact of the matter is that there is no point in speaking of Pickering's "alleged theft;" he admitted it openly and in print. A court of law is not needed to prove the existence of the act. It happened, and is not in dispute.

Boggs states that he knows little of Pickering. "I have read a few things by Pickering in fanzines, but they impressed me neither one way nor the other." In so saying, he betrays the fact that he is incompetant to judge either Pickering or the treatment Pickering has received in fandom. Because certainly no one could read much by Pickering without being aware of his virulant attacks upon fandom (fannish fandom in particular) for "anti-intellectualism," his impossibly prolix and often indecipherable prose style, his inability to follow a single line of logic for the duration of one paragraph -- and the wave of scorn which fandom deluged him with in reaction. Pickering -- before theft -- appeared a ridiculous figure in fandom, tilting at non-existant windmills, writing pompously empty essays, and posturing about pretending to a great deal which he was not. (He lied about his age, his profession and his social position.)

Anyone but Boggs would have noticed these things, if indeed he was as aware of the situation as Boggs pretends to be.

The obvious result of Pickering's various activities in fandom was at first to provoke a certain amount of amusement, and then to earn himself one of fandom's favorite labels: fugghead. He behaved like a fugghead.

The label, "fugghead", probably always gets pasted upon the immature, the mentally deficient, or the severely disturbed. The first grow out of it in time, the second tend to their ice-cream trucks, and the third -- this time he proved his disturbance so clearly, so obviously, that fandom woke up to its seriousness and stopped treating him as 'a bad joke.' Fandom stopped laughing. The fingers of ridicule were dropped.

The "ostracism" to which Pickering was subjected was in no small way a minor blessing. Fans stopped picking on him.



## V

There is this to be said for fandom: most fans are basically decent. While they can enjoy their sport with a posturing figure of ridicule in the paper world of fanzines, few find it sporting to attack someone in obvious difficulties.

Sandy Sanderson and Inchmery fandom were embroiled in half a dozen feuds when, in 1960, Joy and Vince Clarke suddenly broke up, Vince wrote his agonised open letters to fandom about it, and Joy came with Sandy to the United States. The feuds stopped, suddenly and completely. It was not simply that all concerned in Inchmery soon gafiated completely: fans did not press their fights in the face of an obvious real-world tragedy of some proportions. No one took advantage of the situation to strike any of the three while he was, figuratively at least, "down." And, to the best of my recollection, no one took sides in what was obviously a private affair between Sanderson and the Clarkes.

Similarly, when news spread that Pickering had not simply stolen a considerable number of items from Ackerman but done so in a transparently obvious and emotionally unbalanced fashion, fans reacted first with shock, and then with silence. The attacks on Pickering for his fanzine articles ceased, cold. A few already written and run off beforehand may have been published, but no more were written. Several editors declared they would cut all mention of Pickering from their letter columns. This might be considered ostracism, but it also might be considered kindness.

I can speak for my own reactions. After I rebutted a remarkably uninformed and illogical piece of his, Pickering singled me out as an "anti-intellectual", author of "pulp trash", and the ruination of F&SF in repeated attacks in various fanzines. "Speaking as a sociologist," which he was not, he went to considerable lengths to smear me with his sick and illogical invective -- without ever, once, rebutting anything I had said of him in criticism. He telephoned me, told me a number of lies about himself and what he had written, made several promises about new leaves which he did not keep, and then went on about his usual affairs.

I wrote a piece, in the summer of 1966, in which I suggested, not entirely facetiously, that fandom needed fuggheaded scapegoats lest it turn on its own more valued members (as in 1964). I suggested that such a fugghead must, in order to qualify, not be an object of pity. He should be the sort of person, like G.M. Carr, who could hold up his own end and fight back courageously, if without much evidence of intelligence. And I nominated Stephen Pickering for that role.

The piece was not published until this year, because ALGOL, for which it was written, was held up for over nine months. I regret that. Indeed, I regret the piece. Because in it I was having fun with someone I had labelled and then dismissed from humanity. Even last summer it was becoming increasingly obvious to me that Pickering was mentally instable. The structure of his illogic, his posturings, all pointed in this direction. They suggested an extremely neurotic adolescent who was probably a misfit in mundane society, who sought to find a pond small enough for him to appear big in, and who would lie (often and unconvincingly) in order to enhance his status.

But Pickering was also obnoxious and irritating, and it was easy in my dislike of him to vent my irritation with him in sarcasm and ridicule.

Shortly after the New Year, Terry Carr told me he'd heard of the Ackerman robbery, and we agreed that the signs had pointed in this direction, as hindsight clearly showed, and that this appeared to be the extreme end-product of the behavior only hinted at earlier.

After Ackerman's letter was published in SF WEEKLY (then DEGLER!), Pickering wrote an amazing reply in which he suggested that the only



mistake he had made was in getting caught (he certainly didn't try much to avoid being caught), offered in his defense that he was a Young Socialist and active in civil rights ("The Negroes in . . . Bakersfield all know me"), and suggested that if anyone criticised him further, he'd sue.

It was a sad letter, full of bravado: the sort of things a kid will say when he's trying his last-ditch attempt to save face.

I wrote him an open letter (it appeared in a subsequent issue of SF WEEKLY) suggesting that he seek psychotherapeutic help. It was obvious to me then that Pickering's problems were not fan-oriented in nature. This was a severely neurotic person who was groping for contact with others in a very crippled way. My suggestion was not intended lightly.

## VI

I admire anyone with guts enough to face up to himself and admit, against all his fears of social stigma and the admission of defeat of his own resources implied, that he needs outside help and then to seek it. I admire Stephen Pickering for the guts to commit himself to Camarillo, and to tell others of this fact.

I know nothing about Camarillo. There are enlightened mental hospitals like Mennangers and Hillside and there are the dungeons left over from medieval times, like St. Elizabeths and Belvue. If Camarillo administers shock treatments I am saddened to hear it, and sorry for Pickering's sake. Shock treatments are like minor temporary lobotomies: they deaden the emotions and a portion of the intellect, and reduce one a little towards becoming a vegetable. They have been discredited to large extent. They have no curative value and no permanent beneficial aspects (shock-treated patients will slowly regain their former mental and emotional disturbances within six to eighteen months after treatment).

I can share Redd's distaste for seeing any person sent to Camarillo if this is all it is good for. But I wonder. Pickering lies fluently. Has he stopped? Is he still saving face, still making a bid for favorable attention? In his letter much of this seeps through. He seems to expect a pat on the back, a "you're a good boy now!" "Five Shock Treatments? You poor boy!"

But in a recent IF he had a letter, under the pseudonym of "Leslie A. Reece" which was the same old Pickering, speaking "as a sociologist," praising "the fan sociologist, Stephen E. Pickering."

## VII

In the end, a person is what he chooses to be. And we must choose those with whom we would associate. Pickering's problems are real problems and should be considered sympathetically, but they are his problems. If we owe him anything, we also owe ourselves protection from people like him. It is not enough to 'understand' someone when he is preying upon one. His acts may be aberrated, but they are also predatory. We may hope for his 'cure' and look forward to welcoming him back into our society as a valuable person, but we must cope with what is, not what may be. And, at the same time, we must not so simplify people and issues from their complex reality into black-and-white platitudes.

There are no easy answers. Easy answers are the products of lazy minds. We strive to understand as fully as we may, and then to make our personal decisions.

We won't always be right.

But we too are 'only human'.



SOME NOTES FOR BOYD RAEBURN: It was during the Tricon. A bunch of us were sitting around a long table in the greasy-spoon across from the hotel. Paul Williams had just handed out copies of CRAWDADDY, his rock magazine.

"Have you heard the new Beach Boys album, PET SOUNDS?" Boyd asked. "Yes," Paul said. "It's really groovy."

I hadn't, yet, but I had one of their earlier albums, and a couple of 45's, including "I Get Around," the first rock record I'd bought in years.

"They sure have a lot of albums out," someone said.

I agreed. "It's impossible to know which are the good ones, there are so many."

And there it stood.

I am pleased to report that I now have all the Beach Boys albums but one -- a special Christmas album which doesn't seem to be available at other seasons. The following set of reviews is for the purpose of enlightening Boyd and others who may have an interest in the Beach Boys, and who don't feel like getting everything in order to weed out what they really like.

The Beach Boys as a group consist of the Wilson brothers, Brian, Dennis and Carl, Al Jardine, and cousin Mike Love. Various others have been in the group for a limited time. Dave Marks was in the original group, but was replaced by Jardine, and recently Brian Wilson has stopped performing with the group and has been replaced for public performances. He continues to be the group's musical director and producer on records.

The early records launched the group as a west-coast surfing and hot rod group. The first album, SURFIN' SAFARI (Capitol 1808) is full of songs like "Surfin' Safari," "409" (a car song), "Surfin'," "The Shift," etc. The songs are all very much alike and easily confused. Brian Wilson and Mike Love wrote most of them, and while a certain amount of melodic talent is revealed, it would appear that it was confined to a single set of changes and little else. The second album, SURFIN' USA (1890), is a clear follow-up, with the title tune, "Noble Surfer," "Surf Jam" (an instrumental), "Lonely Sea," and car songs like "Shut Down," "Stoked," etc. The car songs sounded exactly like the surfing songs except that the lyrics extolled the virtues of cars instead of surfing. Big deal.

The third album is a chizz. SHUT DOWN (1918)/With The Beach Boys, is also "with" Robert Mitchum, The Cheers and The Super Stocks -- dreadful groups all. While the album is plugged on other Beach Boys albums, and was followed by SHUT DOWN Vol. Two, an all Beach Boys album, later, and is advertised in Capital Record Club advertisements as a Beach Boys album, in actual fact the Beach Boys have only two cuts on the album. These are "Shut Down", from their second album, and "409", from the first. Nothing else on this album is even listenable.

Next in line are SURFER GIRL (1981), LITTLE DEUCE COUPE (1998) and SHUT DOWN Vol. Two (2027). Each offers an improvement over the previous, but continues to concentrate upon rodding and surfing. There is also a minor overlap in cuts from album to album. "Little Deuce Coupe" is in both SURFER GIRL and the album of that name, while the latter album also uses "409" again, and shares "Our Car Club" with the former.

The division is most noticable between LITTLE DEUCE COUPE at SHUT DOWN Vol. Two. The latter still has a couple of car songs, like "This Car of Mine", but it has begun featuring the ballads and rock classics like "Don't Worry Baby" (the flip of the "I Get Around" single, and a very good ballad) and "Louie, Louie" which will form the staple fare of the Beach Boys in later albums. In fact, this is probably the first al-



bum I'd recommend to any but the completists.

This group of albums, the first six, give increasing evidence of growth on the part of the Beach Boys. Because the whole group sings, and, increasingly, sings well, it is possible to follow the evolution of both style and execution, from adolescent boys into a polished, professional group. The group sings flawless a capella when it desires (and did so stunningly on *Shindig* on tv a couple of years ago), and the control over voicings and the group sound is excellent. As later concert recordings prove, theirs is not a "studio sound." It is not the result of overdubbings and careful editing.

Brian Wilson gave a lot of credit to the Four Freshmen for the Beach Boys sound, and if you've heard the Freshmen, that's understandable. They featured a very warm quartet blend, and stuck largely to pre-rock ballads. The fact that the Beach Boys can sing as well as shout is probably the result of this.

ALL SUMMER LONG (2110) features "I Get Around," a stunning tour de force which took the Beach Boys forever out of the rodding/surfing bag, even though it is essentially another car song. But the complex harmonies, rhythms, and voicings are something new and even three years later the song is exciting. I did an analysis and a breakdown of the odd bar-scheme for Joe Pilati's *ENCLAVE* in 1964, and I won't bother going into it again, except to say that the construction of the song is unique and in none of the standard popular forms.

BEACH BOYS CONCERT (2198) is one of those double-fold fancy-package jobs with lots of pictures and not much else to explain the space. But the music is solid, including a lot of the contemporary hits of other groups, "Monster Mash," "Little Old Lady From Pasadena," "Papa-Oom-Mow-Mow," "I Get Around" and "Johnny B. Goode."

By now the Beach Boys were in their ballad and contemporary-rock phase. They weren't innovating, but they were turning out catchy new hits with fair regularity. *THE BEACH BOYS TODAY* (2269) is a compendium of various hits, of the "Help Me, Ronda" period. For some reason, it's not one I play often.

Another album of the same type (but one I prefer) was *SUMMER DAYS (AND SUMMER NIGHTS)* (2354). This includes cuts of the "California Girls" vintage, and the first recording of "Then I Kissed Her," a tune which was apparently released as an interim single by Capitol this summer, to become a big hit in England. Also included is a devastating satire on pimple music, "I'm Bugged At My Ol' Man."

BEACH BOYS' PARTY (2398) is something of a put-on, and the party atmosphere is said to be phoney, but when "Barbara Ann" was released from the album it became a hit, and much of the other material is well-done. This includes three Beatles tunes, "I Should Have Known Better," "Tell Me Why," and "You've Got To Hide Your Love Away." They sing the early Beatles tunes better than the Beatles did, and with the same feeling. I'd kind of like to see a *BEACH BOYS SING THE BEATLES* album, but I don't know whether Wilson would be interested any more.

The reason is *PET SOUNDS* (2458). After serving their time as a not-unstandard rock group, west-coast style, the Beach Boys have moved ahead. It could be seen in *PET SOUNDS*, and it is much more obvious in their two singles since, "Good Vibrations" and "Heroes and Villains."

Brian Wilson is probably one of the most talented men writing rock music today. With Lennon and McCartney and John Sebastian and John Phillips, he is one of those who is today pushing rock into art music, extending its perimeters with pure-music values that go far beyond popular entertainment. It's a credit to the sophistication of the new pop audience that he has not advanced the Beach Boys out of their market. Instead, he seems to have pulled it along with him. With *PET SOUNDS*, the Beach Boys have buried their past forever. We're all waiting for the next, ::



INCIDENT AT SHOHOLA: It was night. We had left Gray Morrow at Frank's Diner, about to return in his own car to Angelo Torres' place in nearby Greeley. In my Lincoln with me were Robin and Lee Hoffman. We'd spent the afternoon with the Torres and Gray Morrow in the mountains above Port Jervis, not far from fabled Milford. It was now somewhere near ten o'clock at night. The outside air was crisp and cold; snow was still on some of the shadowed slopes. Inside, the car was warmly comfortable, and nearly effortless to drive back along the twisty two-lane road to Port Jervis, along the banks of the Delaware.

The speed limit was 50. I found my speedometer inching easily up to sixty, but the curves of the road precluded faster speeds.

A pair of headlights appeared in my rearview mirror. They were distant, but bright. As they closed the gap between us, they became blindingly brighter. Edgily, I reached up and snapped my mirror from "day" to "night" position, a device which damps the brightness of reflected light.

The lights hung close behind, even as I swerved the big car through curves that brought squeals from the tires. Indeed, the lights of the second car were a little too close. I felt them like a hot breath on the back of my neck, like a man behind me pushing at me to hurry me along when I did not care to be hurried. The car was tailgating me at sixty miles an hour, on a curving blacktop back road. And it did not let up.

Perhaps three miles were travelled in this fashion. Then, deliberately, I began easing my foot down on my brakes. They're power-brakes. They require little more pressure than the accelerator. Gently but firmly I pushed down on them. My speed fell to fifty, forty, thirty...twenty-five, twenty, fifteen...I was rolling at a near-stop when the car behind me cut across the double-yellow-line in the center of the road and accelerated quickly ahead of me. I'd dropped my window to yell at him, but he was past too quickly for that.

As soon as his car was in front of me, I leadfooted the gas and flicked my headlights to highbeams. The transmission dropped into low and the engine roared. The acceleration was gratifying. Within a very short distance, our roles were reversed: it was I who was following, with my brights shining.

He was driving a three-year-old Valiant stationwagon, with Jersey plates. His car was light and stuck far better to the curves. I made no attempt to tailgate him -- it would have been far too dangerous -- but stayed not far behind. He averaged between sixty and sixty-five.

There were few cars on the road; we came upon none going our direction. But after another several miles half a dozen cars, spaced out a good bit, came along the road in the other direction. For each of them, I dimmed my lights, raising them again when the on-coming car had passed.

This, more than anything else, seemed to worry the man in the car ahead. Slowly it was sinking in: I dimmed my lights for other cars -- why not for him?

A turnoff appeared in the road ahead. He slowed, and pulled over. So did I. He accelerated again and pulled once more onto the road. So did I.

He began driving more slowly, rarely faster than fifty. I remained several car-lengths behind him. "You've got him worried," Lee said.

Another mile...two...and his turn-signal came on again. He pulled into the gravelled parking area beside a closed roadside store.

I pulled off the road behind him, coming to a stop perhaps thirty



feet behind him.

He sat nervously in his car, silhouetted against the light of his car's headlights on the building beyond. After a few minutes, he reached across his front seat, either to lock his other door or to check that it was locked.

I sensed I had him sweating. We were joking about what we should do. The obvious thing was to let him sweat a little longer and then pull out and leave him. I'd made my point. But I remembered the time a man had run me off the Jersey Turnpike and threatened me with a knife. I remembered that and in a way I wanted to reverse the roles. I wanted to do the right things this time, instead of thinking of them afterwards. I didn't want to drive away and think of the things I might have said, might have done.

"If he opens his door and gets out, what'll you do?" Robin asked.

"You could always run him down," Lee suggested, not seriously. We laughed, but I wondered...what if he did get out?

"We've got him worried," I said. "He doesn't know who we are. We might be punks from the area, half-full of beer and spoiling for sport. We might hold him up. All he can see is a big expensive car."

He opened his door and climbed out.

He was young-ish, mid or late twenties, maybe even early thirties. My headlights washed out his features. He was wearing a suit, a white shirt and a tie as he started toward us, squinting.

I eased down on the gas and turned the wheel just enough to point the car directly at him.

It stopped him cold. He began sidling to my right. Again I turned the car.

I played him, like a fish on a line, stopping him cold in the center of my headlights, standing against the wall of the building. He was scared. It was like a scene from out of "The Wild Ones," as I remarked later.

I touched my control and my window whirred down. All my doors were locked; I have a control on the dash. The window could be raised, and if an arm was in it, it would not stop. I felt safe. The man was playing with something in his righthand pocket. Keys, I thought, or coins. Not a gun. Not big enough.

"Do you have your driver's license, registration?" I called out.

It hit him like a sledge-hammer. "Y-yes," he stammered. "I -- I do."

"You know the law about tailgating at high speeds?" I asked.

"What about you?" he wanted to know. "You're not supposed to drive behind a guy with your brights on." He had nerve, despite his fear.

"Exactly right," I said. "And what do you think you'd been doing?"

"Were my brights on?" he asked, plaintively.

"Damned straight, they were," I said.

"I--I didn't realize that," he said. "I'm sorry. I won't do it again." He was pleading.

"Okay," I said. "I'll leave you alone, then." And, while that final shock was still hitting him, I cut the wheel over, spun the Lincoln's wheels in the gravel, and roared out onto the road. In the clouds of dust behind, I saw him still standing by the side of the building, unmoving, while his car's headlights carved empty beams in the night. I watched in my mirror until a curve cut the scene apart.

I felt adrenalinated, half frightened by what I had done -- by the power I had wielded over a stranger -- and half proud that I had done exactly what I felt, in retrospect, I should have done.

"You should write Donald-Hamilton-type books," Lee said.



MAKE WAR FOR PEACE: "If you're not opposed to the war in Vietnam, please leave the room," Kate Wilhelm said. "And if you're not interested in forming a group of sf writers to take action against the war, please leave. This is not a meeting for the discussion of our ideals, our political opinions, our points of view about the war. It is a meeting for organizing a group to take action. And I'm going to limit all discussion to that set of aims."

It was Saturday night, the 26th of August, 1967, and the place was The Anchorage, the Knight home in Milford, Pa. The time was somewhere between 11:30 and midnight -- I wasn't keeping notes.

I had driven up with Robin that evening; we'd arrived shortly after 10:00 p.m. My purpose was to canvas various among those at the Milford Conference about program items for the upcoming NyCon. I'd phoned Damon earlier in the day and he'd suggested I arrive in time for the evening session, which began at ten.

The main body of that session was the administration of the SFWA, and it isn't pertinent to what I want to discuss here. But, as it ended, Kate, Damon's wife, made an announcement. In half an hour, a separate discussion group would be formed to discuss ways and means of protesting the war in Vietnam. Only those interested in joining such a group were invited to the discussion.

Properly speaking, I had no business attending this meeting. As I told Alex Panshin afterwards, "I feel a little like a snake in the grass." And I'm quite certain some of those in attendance reached the same conclusion. I'm told that in informal discussion afterwards I was mentioned as the author of pro-war books -- a classification that stuns me with its inaccuracy.

"I'm a militant ambivilant, myself," Alex replied, and I smiled and said that maybe that was the best term for me. But it isn't. I'm not militant. My own views and affiliations are iconoclastic. I have never felt comfortable with doctrinaire viewpoints; I've never been able to follow party lines. I once said in *WARHOON* that I was a small-"l"-liberal and opposed to capital-"L"-Liberals. I still am.

My basic reason for attending the meeting was that action was threatened for the NyCon, and I wanted none of it. We'd already told Judy Merrill that we would not allow any booths set up for the dissemination of political propaganda -- an answer we were prepared to give anyone of any political stripe. I still regard the presense of an Air Force recruiting booth at the second NyCon a scandal.

But after Kate, as chairman of the meeting, told me that no organized action was being contemplated for the convention, and said about what I quoted above, I should have gotten up and left. I was not about to join an organization of sf writers devoted to protesting or "taking action" against the Vietnamese war.

At the same time I was curious. People like Terry and Carol Carr were there, as were Alex Panshin, Harlan Ellison, Tom Disch, Joanna Russ, the Silverbergs, Jack Williamson, Fritz Leiber, Judy Merrill and Damon Knight. What would these people say? What would they do? Several were personal friends and others I liked or admired. I stayed and resolved to keep my mouth shut.

It developed quite early that no one was too hot about forming an organization of sf writers for the protest. Damon said he felt strongly about the war, but was deadset against such a move. Others said about the same. Harlan said that forming such a 'peacenik' group would lay everyone in it open to bugging and surveillance (presumably by Nasty CIA men or the FBI) and that everyone should realize it. He, he added, was already active in peace-group activities and couldn't be hurt by it.



Norman Spinrad asked why sf writers should band together to protest the war when each was capable of greater protest as an individual writer in his stories. He pointed out that most people join groups, march, sign petitions, etc. because it gives them a voice. Sf writers, he pointed out, already had a voice, and a much larger one.

Tom Disch pointed out that the best propaganda is that which is too subtle to be recognized as such, and that sf which embodied anti-war ideals might be more effective than any specific protest.

Somewhere along here I broke my vow, and raised my voice to make two related points. First, I pointed out, the publication of an advertisement, in either the New York Times or F&SF, with a list of names appended, would apply a label upon the writers who signed it, and this would make their future writing suspect and ineffective. I pointed to Heinlein, whom every reader seems to search for attitudes running from conservative to fascist. No one listens to him any more but those already in agreement. Labels hurt. Writers would be read for messages even if these were absent.

Secondly, and more important, just who did they want to reach? The trouble with the activities of most peace-groups is that they are not effective. Most of the New Left organizations speak only to their own; incestuously, propaganda is read only by those already in agreement with it. Nothing is accomplished.

My points were ignored, as, I realized later, they had to be. No one there was prepared to consider the foundations of his principles, nor effective means of putting them to work. They wanted to "do something." Its effectiveness was beside the point. The major thing was to publicly commit themselves with an idea. As Kate pointed out, "We must break the silence in sf about this war."

Fritz Leiber made two points. One was that the formation of a group such as XX Writers Against The War In Vietnam would only spur writers on the other side of the fence to form an opposing group. "They have bigger guns," he said, in obvious reference to writers like Heinlein and Anderson. He also pointed out that most peace propaganda is badly written, and suggested this might be a place for the writers present to contribute.

A vote was taken. Only four or five were in favor of forming an organization. The idea was dropped, and other suggestions were made. These included the idea of an ad, a press-release of articulate statements by individual writers, and an anthology of anti-war stories. The latter was the first dropped. It was pointed out by several that this would make a dull book, and a publisher might be hard to find. Talk turned to the other two ideas.

Somewhere along this point Judy addressed two questions to three of us: Damon, Alex and myself. The questions were: "Is your purpose here only to react negatively and to discourage action? And if not, have you a constructive suggestion?"

Damon replied no, and suggested circulating the pamphlets of a particular peace group at the NyCon. Alex also replied no, and, if memory does not fail me, suggested the ad.

I replied yes and no. I said that I was a pragmatist, and I was interested only in lending my support to something effective -- a partial evasion, actually. I then repeated my question: what lay at the base of their efforts? Who did they want to reach, and to what purpose? It seemed to me that until this was established, suggestions were worthless. I thought the point demanded clarification.

I was not allowed to finish my statement on this, and my point was again ignored. Only Barbara Silverberg reacted to my suggestion. "I



think we want to reach the kids who read the magazines. It seems to me we should place the ad there."

"In a few years they'll be voting," Damon added, and general consensus ran in this direction. Someone else suggested that through the kids their parents could be reached. He -- like most of those present -- was obviously long out of touch with 'the kids'.

"These are the kids who'll be draft age soon -- who have to lay their lives on the line," Barbara added. She might also have added, ...and to whom the issues are far more real than they are for anyone in this room, already.

"We'll have a show of hands. Who is willing to sign such an ad, then?" Kate asked. Nearly everyone raised his or her hand. I did not. Shortly thereafter the meeting broke up.

I approached Judy and asked, "Do you think this will accomplish what you want?"

"I don't know. We'll try it and see. That's all we can do -- just try it and see, and keep on trying," she said.

That was the end of it. Harlan typed up a draft of the ad. It started out something like "War is bad. All war is bad." "That's wrong," Damon said, Terry agreeing.

"You would be better advised just to say something like, 'We, the undersigned, are opposed to the Vietnam war,'" I said. Barbara and Kate disappeared with the sheet of paper, and later, while I was discussing convention details with Terry, Barbara returned with a sheet which said, simply, "We are opposed to the participation of the United States in the Vietnamese war," or something very close to that. Terry signed. I declined to. "Ted White abstained," Kate told the others, shortly thereafter.

Yes, I abstained. I am far from convinced that the United States should not be in Vietnam. I am not convinced by either hawks or doves, and my strongest conviction is that I know far too little of the issues at stake to attempt to dictate a simplistic solution.

"If it comes to that, I have a certain grudging admiration for Johnson," Alex remarked. "After all, I don't believe I could necessarily run this country and its affairs any better."

"Most of writers are politically naive," Terry Carr said.

"Personally," I added, "I am unable to subscribe to the heroes and villains approach to judging political figures. All this 'Johnson is a murderer' nonsense, for instance."

"But Johnson is a murderer," said Carol Carr, passing through the room on her way to the kitchen.

And there it is: "Johnson is a murderer." How can anyone who thinks in such simplistic terms, who pins labels on people and actions so that it won't be necessary to think about them in human terms, how can anyone like this make a meaningful statement about the war in Vietnam, or anything else?

The people in that room were, by and large, sincerely motivated. Several stated that they felt impelled to "take a stand." They are acting in the best of conscience. And, as far as I can see, without any intelligent thought whatsoever. They are willing to jeopardize their standing as uncommitted writers (whose weight, in their stories, is infinitely greater than that of writers who have been pigeonholed and labelled to be agreed with by those who wear the same labels and disagreed with by those who don't) in order to perform a ritual act which accomplished only the purpose of declaring their stand.



That the most passionate among these writers are women should be no surprise. In retrospect I was most strongly struck by them as a group of wailing aunties and grannies, wringing their hands and crying out, "What can I do? What can I do?" The idea flashes into their minds: "Why, I can sign my name!" And immediately, they feel ever so much better.

But what are they accomplishing?

Nothing, that I can see. None of them are willing to look beyond the labels themselves and ask themselves, "If I am indeed opposed to U.S. participation in Vietnam, how can it be stopped, and how can I help?" None of them are interested in effective means to their declared goals, or even in the search for effective means. Like the man with an axe imbedded in his head whotakes lots of asperins for the pain, they are content to go through the motions which will relieve them of the symptoms of conscience. They are not particularly willing to commit themselves; they simply want to make public the statement, "I am committed."

Very early in the discussion one other point was raised: the identification of protesters as science fictions writers would most likely have a negative value. Science fiction does not enjoy a very good reputation in the public eye, even today. And the peace-efforts of the New Left have largely been identified with unwashed beatniks (the word is still in public circulation and it is just possible that somewhere near Muncie, Indiana, there might be one or two people who consider themselves 'beatniks' even now) and other discreditable elements by the public. (My thought is that the proposed 10% surcharge tax is more likely to raise protest against our participation in Vietnam than any other single item. In fact, I think the most valid pragmatic argument against our continued involvement is the extent to which we are draining our country of needed money and resources: the present difficulties of the cities and the slums are obviously growing more pressing every day, and they demand our attention more than the corrupted ideological war against communism in Asia...)

To identify science fiction with the present peaceniks and their activities would probably not lend dignity to either. In my opinion sf would suffer.

Further, the division of sf prodrom or fandom over this political conflict strikes me as dangerous and not to our best interests.

But, as Kate told me, "The NyCon may be your primary concern, but it is not ours." It is easier to become painlessly involved in abstractions.

Where were these same people during the civil rights battle? Why have we seen no manifesto on Human Rights from science fiction writers? Where were their consciences then?

Or did it seem to them then that an advertisement in F&SF would be a pretty impotent and pointless gesture?

Unless the publishers all refuse it, you'll be seeing the ad in a forthcoming issue of most of the sf magazines. The foregoing supplies both the background and the reason why you'll not see my name on that ad.

As I said, when pressed by Judy's questions, "I distrust pat answers. I want to see some real thought on the question. I can't just throw out a 'suggestion'. But I could help you find the direction to look for suggestions." Perhaps the above will spur a little real thought on the subject.

Or, as Calvin Demmon might say, Maybe Not.



LOGIC & VIETNAM: A Disclaimer: People with an emotional investment in one side or the other of the Vietnam controversy will be best advised not to read further. Something in what I say is bound to offend you.

After writing the foregoing pages, and thinking about them and discussing the various issues therein with Robin and others, I have reached a sort of internal monologue on the subject which I feel like setting down on stencil.

This monologue might be called, "Vietnam -- Why? -- And Whynot?" To take the "Whynot?" first, let's ask a few questions.

If the United States pulled out of the Vietnamese conflict, within the reasonable future, what would happen?

That's a good question. It seems obvious that the conflict would not die. I've been told, "It's their fight; let the Vietnamese fight it out themselves." There's certainly a good argument for that position in the number of lives lost and dollars spent on our engagement there. Why risk our lives, when the South Vietnamese are drafting less soldiers than we're losing?

But if the conflict did not die, what would happen in our absence?

I see several possible outcomes, and for all I know others are equally possible. The most likely is that the Vietcong would win. They are presently financed and supplied by China and Russia, and I doubt this aid would cease if we got out. I don't know what kind of resistance the South Vietnamese soldiers would put up, but it is classically hard to win against guerilla warfare: it demands an overwhelming number of opposing men -- as we've unhappily discovered.

If the Cong won, would that be so bad?

It depends on your point of view. One point of view is that of the global chessboard. They make a move; we make a move. Korea was a draw, but slightly in their favor. This would be a loss for us. In terms of real values, I suspect it might worsen our relationships with other neutral countries. These tend to support checks and balances which will allow them to retain their neutrality. Right now we are the check against Red China. If we withdraw, they will have little choice but to suck up to Red China. This may or may not be bad in the long run. Certainly China could use some civilizing, moderating influences. But can anyone be this? I don't know.

If you're a South Vietnamese, I don't know whether you'd be happier to see the Cong win or not. I don't think a lot of them know either. But I suspect they'd prove to be unhappy. The revolutionary tactics of the Cong and their counterparts in other countries tend to breed a callousness for terror, and it is rarely relinquished with the successful removal of any need for it. The present Cong assassination of local village leaders and harassment of elections of all kinds would tend to suggest Cong control would be ruthless and totalitarian -- very likely in some respects like China's.

Are we any improvement on this?

On one level, yes. We've pumped a fantastic amount of money into the Vietnamese economy -- and not all of it into the whore-house circuit. Our withdrawal might actually create a depression that would topple the country. Of course the death of people from starvation and privation is not nearly as important to Americans as is their death from war.

How about that? What about napalm and like that? Napalm is said to be useful only for killing people painfully.

Well, we've used it a long time, and without the present wave of protest. We used it against the Japanese in WW2. Flamethrowers, remem-



ber? Certainly our present use is to kill men. The pain is incidental; death is the goal. There is nothing pretty about war, and if one grants the necessity for war at all, one must be pragmatic about the means used to fight that war. The Cong are elusive, skilled in guerilla tactics, and operating in a terrain where concealment is easy. The Apache would have found Vietnam's jungles paradise -- and might have won... The kind of war Vietnam demands is a war of extermination. The Cong must be removed from positions of effectiveness. Or, more bluntly, they must be captured and imprisoned, they must defect to join the other side, or they must be killed. That is the plain and simple of it.

Actually, a host of new techniques should be used if the war is to be continued. A minor nerve gas like MACE would be appropriate. (MACE stuns and renders victims unconscious for half an hour with little side-effects. It has been considered for riot control in this country as a more humane method than shooting or clubbing. For some reason, the NAACP is opposed to this, and seems to prefer bullets.) The strictures against the 'inhumanity' of gas warfare are humorous in light of modern techniques and the atom bomb. They've also been ignored throughout the communist world, and were being flagrantly ignored by the Arabs, who planned to use gas on the Israelis if only somebody had let them. The hypocrisy in decrying new techniques that might reduce killing in warfare and at the same time give us a real edge in a dirty fight is amazing, and understandable only if you assume those who protest are rooting for the other side.

What about that? Aren't a lot of people doing just that?

I'd guess so, to judge from various published statements. It's hard to justify it though. Certainly the Cong and its backers cannot point to anything enviable in their own records. Their stated aims are to kill our men, and they don't seem too interested in prisoners except for propaganda purposes. They are terrorists, and have killed as many civilian non-combatants as they have opposing soldiers. Their atrocities are a matter of record. They are not admirable in their ideals or their means. Certainly, they too are fighting a war, and fighting to win it. But it is nowhere on record that they are observing any rules in the process beyond the rules of pragmatism. To root for them, at the present, is to root for the deaths of many American soldiers. It is hard to reconcile this with any professed horror of war, or of killing.

But why fight a war in the first place? Why commit ourselves to killing and being killed?

Why is the world round? We cannot reverse time, and until we can the question of our involvement in Vietnam is pointless. The situation is now that we are involved, and not how we got that way. But the fact appears that we became involved slowly, in stages. And before we were there, the French were losing their own war. The question is now what we can and should do about it.

What about American atrocities against the Vietnamese?

This is a naive question. It presupposes several things. One is that every American soldier should be a saint. And it assumes that these "atrocities" are committed in a vacuum. As nearly as I can tell, the record for atrocities is held by the Cong. And I should suspect that, as desperate, subsistence-level people, many Vietnamese, regardless of the side they are on, resort to savagery, either for terrorist reasons or from the depths of hatred and revenge. It is hard to remember, as an individual in a war, that the guy on the other side who has already killed a couple of your buddies isn't a complete bastard and worth stomping. And if it isn't your buddies, but instead your family or your village, well, I think a savage revenge is not ununderstandable. American "atrocities" appear to consist largely of accidents involving civil-



ian by-standers -- accidental straffing or bombing of "friendly" villages and the like. There seem to be very few cases of American soldiers who committed personal atrocities, and nothing to compare with the campaign of civilian slaughter conducted by the Cong.

Of course you can consider the introduction of heavy war to civilian countryside an atrocity in itself, and I couldn't argue with you. But until whole acres can be gassed and teams sent in to sort out Cong from harmless civilians (no easy task at times), it would appear that almost any way of fighting a war against the Cong will be difficult and unpleasant for all concerned.

Why oppose the intervention of the U.S. in this war?

I'm not sure I understand all the reasons. Many are emotional and smack of the isolationism that swept the country before WW2. Curiously, the isolationists are the Liberals this time, instead of the Conservatives. Some simply oppose the death of Americans in Vietnam. These people are often the same oft-careless drivers who are unconcerned with the death of Americans in America, on the highways. Another group seem to identify with the Cong, to despise the South Vietnamese, and to despise us for associating ourselves with them. These people often refer to our own soldiers as "murderers" and assume them to be absolute bastards (these are the same guys who, while trying unsuccessfully to avoid the draft are assumed to be good clean youth of America; a schizoid attitude there) and are the ones who call Johnson a murderer. I'd have no objections if they regarded all those who kill in war murderers, but they seem curiously selective.

Others have more rational grounds for opposition, and if I fit in anywhere, I suppose I am among them. They feel that this country is struggling with severe problems of its own, and that the war has diverted needed attention to these problems. Martin Luther King would appear to be among these people, but John Lindsay has also made similar statements about conflicting priorities. Certainly this summer's explosive riots are strongly indicative of the need to take care of our own troubles as well as everyone else's.

What frightens me about the riots this summer is that control of them is slipping into the hands of people who are specifically interested in our defeat in Vietnam and in an eventual race war that will wipe out the whites, all over the world. For these people, the summer riots are only the opening wedge. They regard the riots as guerilla actions not unlike those of the Cong. They are not interested in any genuine solution to the problem of the slums -- they need the slums, since they exploit them. H. Rapp Brown, LeRoi Jones, Stokely Carmichael -- all are racists as virulent and poisonous to our society as was George Lincoln Rockwell. In a healthy society, we could afford them and form antibodies for them. But our society is not healthy, and grows every day less healthy. It needs more than money: it needs the concentrated attention that money can buy. If it had half this year's defense budget, it could work miracles -- always assuming, of course, that most of the money wasn't pocketed in graft as most of the poverty money has been already...

Among those 'black power' advocates whose true aims are racist, are white Liberals who identify with the "war against the establishment." A lot of these follow the Party Line religiously on the war in Vietnam, and at least one of them, a minor sf writer, has been heard to chuckle about the coming conflict in the American streets when whitey's power structure will be gunned down. I have no idea what he hopes to gain from it. I suspect he's just sick.



But I digress...

The more I see of the Peace Movement, the more I find myself supporting the war. And the more I see of the war, the more I wish we were not in it. Vicious circle. No easy answers. But that's the Real World for you: it doesn't divvy up nicely into White Hats and Black Hats -- and it never did.

The United States is the major power in the world today. We did not really ask for this. As a nation we've always been idealistic and naive. And as a world power we've been diplomatically incompetent and surprisingly lucky. But here we are. We are the biggest power in the world. We can't turn our back on this fact. Like it or not, we, in the very fact of it, are a constant influence on the rest of the world. We can either attempt to direct this power consciously and effectively, or we can let it choose its own course, willy-nilly. Thus far, we've pretty much let things happen to us.

We cannot withdraw from the rest of the world as the modern-day isolationists would like. It can't be done. We're stuck with this role until someone bigger comes along. We must simply try to make out as best we can. There's no guarantee we'll be successful. But we probably won't fail completely either.

If you were looking for Definitive Answers in this section of NULL-F, you've been disappointed. If you were interested in my ruminations -- still largely tentative and inconclusive -- then you got about all you could from this. Maybe a year from now I'll have more to say. Or, Maybe Not...

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TABLE-SCRAPS: After I wrote the piece on the Beach Boys, I almost junked it. It says little that I had originally wanted to say -- it's mostly a catalogue-piece. Since I wrote it, SMILEY SMILE has come out on the "Brothers" label -- the Wilson brothers' own. It is one of the best things the Beach Boys have done. It is also very incomplete and fragmentary. And short.

CHEETAH Magazine ran an article on Brian Wilson in its first issue; a good, if disturbing piece. Wilson, it would appear, is now in that stage of his life where he over-edits his work, killing it in the process. He has also been released too suddenly from normal disciplines by his financial success as a composer and producer. Shame. I hope he makes it through to the other side.

I was mildly annoyed by Dick Schultz' FAPazine a few months back on his labor-organizing. It was pompous and assinine. It was full of every reason why I dislike organized labor. It was full of self-confessed toadying, bullying, and snobbish ignorance. It pretty well pegged Schultz for what he was.

More recently he has succeeded in really annoying me. It seems he has taken to spreading a set of rumors about me. The first report came indirectly from the West Coast. A more direct one comes from Toronto.

The rumors go like this: 1. Where is the NyCon3 money? 2. Ted White just bought a 1967 Lincoln Continental. Schultz tells them with a smirk which I would take considerable pleasure in personally wiping from his face.

1. The NyCon3 money is mostly in the NyCon3 savings account where it's been all along. The Statler-Hilton presented us its bill at the end of October, and several other outstanding bills are as yet not in. When they are settled, the remaining money will be used to publish a proceedings and be settled upon the usual charities. 2. See my earlier note on my acquisition of a '61 Lincoln -- last March.

Why don't you try your rumors in New York, Schultzzy? --Ted White  
published by Ted White, 339, 49th St., Brooklyn, N.Y., 11220, for FAPA



