

SUN TAILS

Written entirely by
Arthur Louis Joquel, II

PLEASE NOTE NEW ADDRESS: c/o BOX 5 4 5 1, Metro Station, Los Angeles, Cal.

Volume One, Number One. Whole Number One. And -- we sincerely hope -- the only one!

Los Angeles, California
October 1, 1941

To our friends everywhere:

We wish that it was possible to write everyone a personal letter, outlining what we are going to say here. But since that is virtually impossible, and we are not very good letter-writers anyway, we hope that this will serve.

Primarily, we wish to talk about our publications. All of our subscribers and exchanges have undoubtedly been wondering what has happened to our promised magazines. And we owe an explanation and a sincere apology.

Circumstances have changed radically--almost unbelievably--since we began our career as a fan publisher. Part of this change has been strictly personal, and part has to do with national and international events. But together the two sets of events have contrived to place us in an awkward position in regard to our publications.

First, the matter of supplies. In the last few months, mimeographing supplies have risen in price along with other commodities. Paper has risen over 33 1/3 % in cost, and our dealer cannot now purchase new stock at the price he sells to us. Stencils have risen correspondingly, and here another factor threatens--the filmy base material of the stencils is imported from Japan. If relations in the Pacific become too strained, it means the end of imports--and our dealer reports that there is less than a two month supply of stencil material in the United States. Even laying in a supply is impractical, because of deterioration.

Second, we have recently secured a new position, which takes up considerably more of our time than the job we had when we started publishing. True, it pays better, but it takes time to publish any sort of magazine, and if time is not forthcoming, then the publishing will suffer. And we exceedingly dislike to make promises that we are not able to keep.

Third, we have other activities that we are interested in. Most fans apparently have no other hobbies outside of fandom, but we have. For example, our research work regarding earth's lost continents has suffered badly. So has our music. Our intention to write an orchestral suite based on A. Merritt's "Snake Mother" has remained an intention. We have not even had time to finish our projected orchestration of Tigrina's "Hymn to Satan"! Unless something happens, these and other projects--many of them bearing on the fantasy field--must remain as bare ideas, with no time to develop or complete them.

There are other considerations, but these are the primary ones. With these facts facing us, we have delayed all of our publications until we could take a complete survey of the situation, and then make our decisions.

FMZ DIGEST we have discontinued, at least temporarily. It is possible that we may be able to take up publication of this fm again in the future. But at the moment, the problem resolved itself into--do we reprint material from other fmz at the expense of the original material we have on hand for SPECULA and SCORPIO? And keeping faith with the authors who have sent us their material for these two fmz seemed more important. We regret extremely having to stop publication of the DIGEST but there was no alternative. A final, one-page issue, containing a listing of most fmz now publishing, and all unpublished letters, has been made up, and with it all cash subscribers will receive a refund of their outstanding credit.

Even if the FANNUAL were already compiled, it would be impossible for us to undertake its publication at this time. Therefore, we are turning over all of our interests in it to Forry Ackerman. As the name was his originally, we feel that this is only right. Whatever Forry decides to do concerning it will receive our full backing and approval.

SUN TRAILS, if it sees another issue, will probably be hectographed, and will be distributed only as widely as that medium permits. Since it is nothing but a "sound off" sheet for our pet peeves and manias, its future is extremely uncertain. Under any circumstances, another one will not be issued 'till next February.

The original SPECTRA, as a fanzine magazine, died long ago. In order to keep our records straight, however, the name has been transferred to the chain letter which we are in process of publishing. Our first attempt to publish this—using hectograph—failed miserably, because of the antiquity of our hecto ribbon. Then, after stencilling it, using stencils which were unsuited to our other fmz, we encountered considerable difficulty in securing the type of paper we wanted—our regular cheviot being out of the question because of cost. Two copies of the completed mag will be sent free to everyone having a letter in the chain. To all others it will be 10¢ cash—no exchanges on this one issue. Whether there will be any more issues after this one is for fate to decide.

And while we think of it, we may as well say here and now: WE HAVE NO BACK ISSUES OF ANY OF OUR MAGAZINES. Please do not send money for back issues, as we have none on hand, and no way of getting any. Still available are a few copies of After Armageddon and Others, the pamphlet of prose-poetry by Fywert Kinge, at 10¢.

Our publication of THE STANZAS OF DZYAN, projected for months ago, is still delayed, not because of mechanical difficulties, but because of the nature of the Stanzas themselves. Our original plan called for publication of the Stanzas verbatim, with only a brief commentary. But the more work we did on them, the more evident it became that some sort of complete translation, with the many Senzar and Indian words rendered into English, was necessary. But to do this would lose much of the original scope of the Stanzas. Finally we have evolved a plan which we believe will be satisfactory, and are proceeding with this pamphlet as rapidly as possible.

In regard to SPECULA and SCORPIO, our science-fiction and weird-fantasy pubs, our plans are this: First, to drop a regular publication date, and instead substitute the British system of simply numbering each issue in order of appearance. Thus, SPECULA #3 and SCORPIO #2 will be the next to appear, SPECULA this month and SCORPIO in November (we hope—on both of these). Material is on hand to cover a fourth issue of SPECULA. And after that these two magazines will appear as time and circumstances will permit. If their appearances become too irregular, those editors with whom we now exchange will receive some cash to bolster our credit with their magazines.

And another note: Please do not submit material to either SPECULA or SCORPIO at present. 'Scripts on hand cover our needs, and it is difficult to explain, when returning 'scripts, that there's nothing wrong with the story at all—it's just that you can't use it for such a long time in the future that it wouldn't be fair to the author—he could probably get it published quicker elsewhere. In case we are forced to return any stories or material now on hand, we hope their authors will understand our situation, and not judge us too harshly.

We hope, in the future, to be able to issue some other small pamphlets on the order of ARMAGEDDON and DZYAN. However, that is just another idea, and may never come to pass. But it is nice to think about.

We hope this will explain the reasons for the delay in all of our publications. If we had seen our way clear to go ahead on any of them, it would have been completed and mailed long ago. And if everyone will bear with us a little longer, we feel sure that the situation will resume some semblance of order, and we can once more promise our fmz for a date—and keep that date faithfully.

You are probably wondering why the title of this sheet. Well, quite a bit of the following material was either crowded out of the second issue of SUN TRAILS, or else is stuff particularly suited to that peculiarly bombastic fm of ours. But another SUN TRAILS was out of the question at present, so we concocted the present title. And now—read ahead at your own risk.

Please note our new address: c/o Box 5451, Metropolitan Station, Los Angeles, Calif.

Most of you who received the first issue of SUN TRAILS will remember the article in which we stripped the hide off of Isaac Asimov because of his diatribe against the "old classics". Following the appearance of that article, Asimov and I exchanged several letters. Letters, not bombs and arsenic. He and I discovered that neither one of us was quite the ogre we'd made ourselves out to be in our writings. Asimov the Frankenstein Monster and Joquel II the Draculean Vampire were on the best of terms.

Since we once heartily condemned Asimov, we now want to praise him just as heartily. His story "Nightfall" in ASTOUNDING is, we think, one of the finest stories of its length to be published this year. Certainly, it is one of the most original. Congratulations, Isaac, on a magnificent job. We hope you keep up the swell work.

Yes, we've changed. It's: c/o Box 5451, Metropolitan Station, Los Angeles, Calif.

Maybe we're really anarchists. Maybe we just have a propensity for being on the "wrong" side of the question. But we have a strong tendency to lean toward things that are "anti-". And with this in mind, we want to give our full support to the Un-Intellectual Brotherhood of Anti-Scientists, founded by C. A. Beling.

Can we meet the membership requirements? You bet we can! First, a 100,000 word Anti-Science novel. We wrote one the other afternoon while waiting for a telephone call, didn't like it—it wasn't sufficiently Anti- —and tore it up. We'll turn out another 100,000 word job soon, maybe not tomorrow, but sooner than you hope. Second, mail one of Bradbury's ears & \$500 to Yngvi. Heh. Bradbury is wondering why everyone looks at him so funny. But don't anyone tell him to look in the mirror. The \$500 (in confederate money) is ready, and Yngvi is reached in care of Elmer Perdue. Third, jump in the lake. We did. We went down three times and only came up twice. If the ink on this page has run or the paper is a wee mite damp, you know the reason why. There's a friendly carp (not a fanzine critic) to keep us company. We like it here, and see no reason to leave.

The first Bulletin of the California Division of the Un-Intellectual Brotherhood of Anti-Scientists was sabotaged—we suspect the fiendish scientist who concocted the hectograph ink we used. Down with Science—the Enemy of man's happiness and well-being!!! Whether we will try putting out another is doubtful. It's simpler to tell about it here. And if anyone calls our mimeographing scientific, they've never seen us in action! It's a sight to behold!!!

British and Aussies too!: c/o Box 5451 Metropolitan Station, Los Angeles, California

One of fandom's favorite guessing games seems to be "Who is A. E. van Vogt"? Several favorites seem to rule the field, but it is still anybody's choice as to who is behind the name appearing on such stories as "Slan!", "Black Destroyer," and other super-yarns that have appeared in ASTOUNDING.

Of course, it is possible that there really is a van Vogt. But the veil of mystery which Campbell Jr. keeps drawn around one of his ace writers refuses to let the problem be solved as simply as that. And it is our opinion that, if van Vogt is a pseudonym, the person hiding behind it is one who has never, thus far, been even remotely suspected. And we make our guess. We think that A. E. van Vogt is really—

Edward Elmer Smith, PhD. Yes, "Doc" Smith himself. We know it's rather hard to grasp this idea. The myth that EESmith writes only one super-colossal novel every two years is so firmly ingrained in the minds of most fans that the very idea of the eminent PhD. writing other stories is practically sacrilege. But—we think it might be so. Call it a hunch, if you like. A slight hint, a little deduction, some reading, and a bit of inquiry seem to have led us to this.

Always assuming that van Vogt is not a real person, there would seem to be only three writers in the science-fiction field with ability and intellect great enough to write van Vogt's stories. They are Heinlein, Campbell Jr., and Doc Smith. Heinlein is out—he hasn't been writing very long. Campbell Jr.—well, he denies it, and we don't believe Campbell would tell lies to his fans and admirers. That leaves Doc Smith, and no one ever bothered to find out about him. They just took it for granted that he didn't. Well—we wonder.

(Since we wrote the above we have heard that certain persons think that perhaps Doc Smith is Norman L. Knight. We wouldn't know about this. But people seem to be getting suspicious about Doc's writing. Surprising things may develop!)

Please note our new address: c/o Box 5451, Metropolitan Station, Los Angeles, Calif.

Those of you who received the first issue of SCORPIO doubtless have found that the cover, while having a very nice finish when new, rubs off after some handling. This has been a source of some worry to us, and the only solution we could think of was to run off some copies of the cover on legal size white paper, to be wrapped around the magazine like a book jacket. We used regular black ink, and the demon shows up very nicely. If anyone wishes a copy of this, just drop us a 1½¢ stamp at our new address, and one will be promptly forthcoming.

We "live" in a box now. It's: Box 5451, Metropolitan Station, Los Angeles, Calif.

We're rather surprised that several items, either of fantasy or concerning it, have apparently passed unnoticed by any fan publisher. Among these is a shortshort story by Lord Dunsany, "Pundleton's Audience," which appeared in THIS WEEK Magazine for August 24, 1941. And the July, 1941, WRITER'S DIGEST had an article by Robert Bloch, "Yoo Hoo! Mr. Delacorte," in which this fantasy writer discusses the fantasy market, and declares that what is needed is "a bright intellectual, a man unburdened with pulp tradition, unburdened with the fear of rejecting 'name,' and, above all, a man of artistic taste..." He comments on the present magazines' common denominator—none sell over 125,000 copies. And tells what would be necessary to create a fantasy magazine to sell to an estimated 8,500,000 Americans interested in fantasy. (Interesting, yes? But the LASFS refused to have the article read at, not one, but several of their meetings.) CORONET has for several years been running three very interesting pages—"Forgotten Mysteries," "Not of Our Species," and "Your Other Life." The first of these is compiled by R. DeWitt Miller, and consists of material on "Fortean" happenings—items which disturb science in its placid round, and are best forgotten. And WRITERS' MARKETS & METHODS for October, 1941, has an interview with Robert A. Heinlein, in which Heinlein describes his own writing and the science-fiction field in general. And incidently gives the lie to the plug in FANTASY FICTION FIELD #51, where an ASTOUNDING blurb says "Heinlein, let it be know, has sold every word he has ever written." For Heinlein says "I wrote a novel of 75,000 words... The novel bounced—I've never sent it out again, and don't expect to. It isn't salable." Not that it matters, really. But with a coming generation of stiff authors taking Heinlein as their guide and ideal, it might help, when their stories come back, to know that Heinlein had a story rejected once too. But we doubt that he will ever have any more rejected—not for a long, long time, anyway!

The "complete collector": How many of you have a copy of "SHADOW FORMS," by Manly P. Hall? Hch. We thought so! Pure fantasy of the best. Write us for info.

Al Capp, creator of "L'il Abner," must be a science-fiction reader. Not very long ago L'il Abner made a rocket trip to the moon, and right now he seems to be in a very confoozin' situation—the world has lost a day (Page Edmond Hamilton!). We can hardly wait till next Sunday to see what happens!!!

Here 'tis again. New address: c/o Box 5451, Metropolitan Station, Los Angeles, Calif.

At last we've got something to hang on Bob Tucker. Somewhere HPF wrote, concerning a letter he sent to Jack Chapman Miske, that he left the "Chapman" out of Miske's name to save seven typewriter strokes. Heh. You also saved one space-bar stroke, Tucker—one-eighth of the labor saved, and you forgot it!! Tsk, tsk.

Please note new address: c/o Box 5451, Metropolitan Station, Los Angeles, Calif.

Heinlein's "Coventry" was a place where people who were dissatisfied with the milk-fed social system of their time could withdraw to. In "Brave New World," Huxley wrote, when "condemning" one of his characters to an island: "He's being sent to an island. That's to say, he's being sent to a place where he'll meet the most interesting set of men and women to be found anywhere in the world. All the people who...have got too self-consciously individual to fit into community-life. All the people who aren't satisfied with orthodoxy..."

Orthodoxy, in the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, has apparently come to mean using the club as a convening-place from where to start out on an evening's binge. The phrase "IASocialFunSociety" fits too well. The last meetings we attended resembled a battle-field scene too much to suit our pacifistic temperament, and our efforts to find a thread of discussion about science-fiction or fantasy were unavailing. We have therefore retired into COVENTRY—voluntary isolation from the general system. With the exception of maintaining our publications, we are going to return to being a science-fiction reader, rather than maintain the strenuous activity of being a fan.

The name ASTRA PUBLICATIONS was a makeshift at best, dragged up when our growing publications list required a convenient handle. We are dropping that rather saccharine title, and henceforth our publications will be labeled—Published in COVENTRY.

Sometime soon we hope to have a regular open house, in which the gate to COVENTRY will be open for the evening for those science-fictionists and fantasts who wish to really discuss science-fiction and fantasy. It will not be a club, will have no dues, no officers, and only one purpose—a meeting-place for those sincere, but all too few, individuals who still read and enjoy science-fiction and fantasy in Los Angeles.

New address: COVENTRY, c/o Box 5451, Metropolitan Station, Los Angeles, California

Quite recently two violent and flagrant violations of both personal and journalistic etiquette have come to our attention. The first is the column "Hellfire" appearing in Phil Bronson's FANTASITE. It is not our intention to discuss whether the statements made and comments given are accurate or not. But the writing and publishing of such a column anonymously is a cowardly trick which should not be permitted by any editor with an iota of professional pride or a thought for the feeling such a column might create. It is human failing for certain immature, uneducated persons to have violent dislikes for other persons, for reasons sometimes undefinable. But to hide behind an unsigned article and sling dirt upon anyone who crosses their path is not condonable conduct under any circumstances.

The other item is a pamphlet produced by a person whom we would never have suspected of going to such measures because of a personal matter. We wish to address to this person the following open letter:

To Charles Derwin Hornig:

Recently you sent to us, and we understand to a number of other sciencefiction fans, a small, poorly mimeographed 'fm' the fantastic pagination of which contains what you call "In Defense of Pogo." With honeyed words and glib phrases, you present what you undoubtedly truly believe are facts about the past and character of one of fandom's most popular individuals.

However, a close reading of this little pamphlet reveals it to be nothing but a sly and malicious personal attack, with dubious basis in fact, and with entirely irrelevant conclusions drawn in such a manner as to do the maximum of possible damage while still seeming to be nothing but a harmless and wellmeaning appeal.

We find it difficult difficult to believe that you are the perpetrator of this libel, Mr. Hornig. Heretofore, almost all fans had in impression of you as a likeable, serious person who loved his friends and wanted to do good for them. And doing good did not include causing them personal anguish; or driving them into seclusion, fleeing from the people and things they formerly most enjoyed; or causing them to lose their jobs because of the ill-chosen words you directed at them.

It is hardly necessary to condemn this act of yours. The act condemns itself in your own words. For you brazenly state that Pogo requested you not to publish this article. Yet you published it, undoubtedly knowing the embarrassment it would cause her. Is this an example of journalistic etiquette, Mr. Hornig? Would you have done such a thing when you were editor of the third best science-fiction magazine then publishing, or in more recent days when you were bestowing lavish praise on Pogo in your personal columns in your magazine—praise and publicity, incidentally, which is largely responsible for Pogo's vulnerability to your present attack.

You admit your own infatuation with Pogo. This is no secret—all of fandom knows how you have dashed madly on cross-country trips attempting to convince her that she was the only girl in your life. But because you, and one or two others, have pursued a quest which you must have known from the very beginning must be in the end fruitless, is no reason to assume that every male fan in the country is following the same frantic and publicity-strewn course as yourself.

Pogo is by nature a likeable and friendly person. It is only natural that she should attract a good deal of admiration, and that many fans should express a desire to know her better. But because a miniscule few of weak-willed, addle-headed, egocentric individuals have mistaken Pogo's normal friendliness toward everyone for a demonstration of burning, unrequited love for them and them alone is absolutely no reason for the writing and publishing of such a slanderous, maligning and distorted picture of a girl whose only fault is that she likes people and science-fiction.

We are surprised at your restraint in writing, Mr. Hornig. For what you undoubtedly meant to write was "Charles Hornig" instead of "Joe Fan" whenever that concealing pseudonym appears. Like other amateur analysts, you take your own distorted feeling to be typical of that existing unanimously throughout fandom.

You state, Mr. Hornig, that "I wish to clear the name of one of fandom's top feminine fans." This statement is hardly compatible with the rest of the article. For you have, apparently with deliberate intent and malice aforethought, insinuated any number of slanderous and untrue things, subtly and guilefully designed to do one of two things—either force Pogo to withdraw from fandom; or else bring her to you begging you to stop writing such abuse, offering whatever you wish in exchange.

Personally, our sympathies are with Pogo one hundred percent. We hope that the sympathies of every genuine fan in the country are with her, in the time of this vicious and unreasonable attack. And if you find yourself ostracised by fandom, Mr. Hornig, it should not be difficult to discern the reason.

Arthur Louis Joquel, II

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