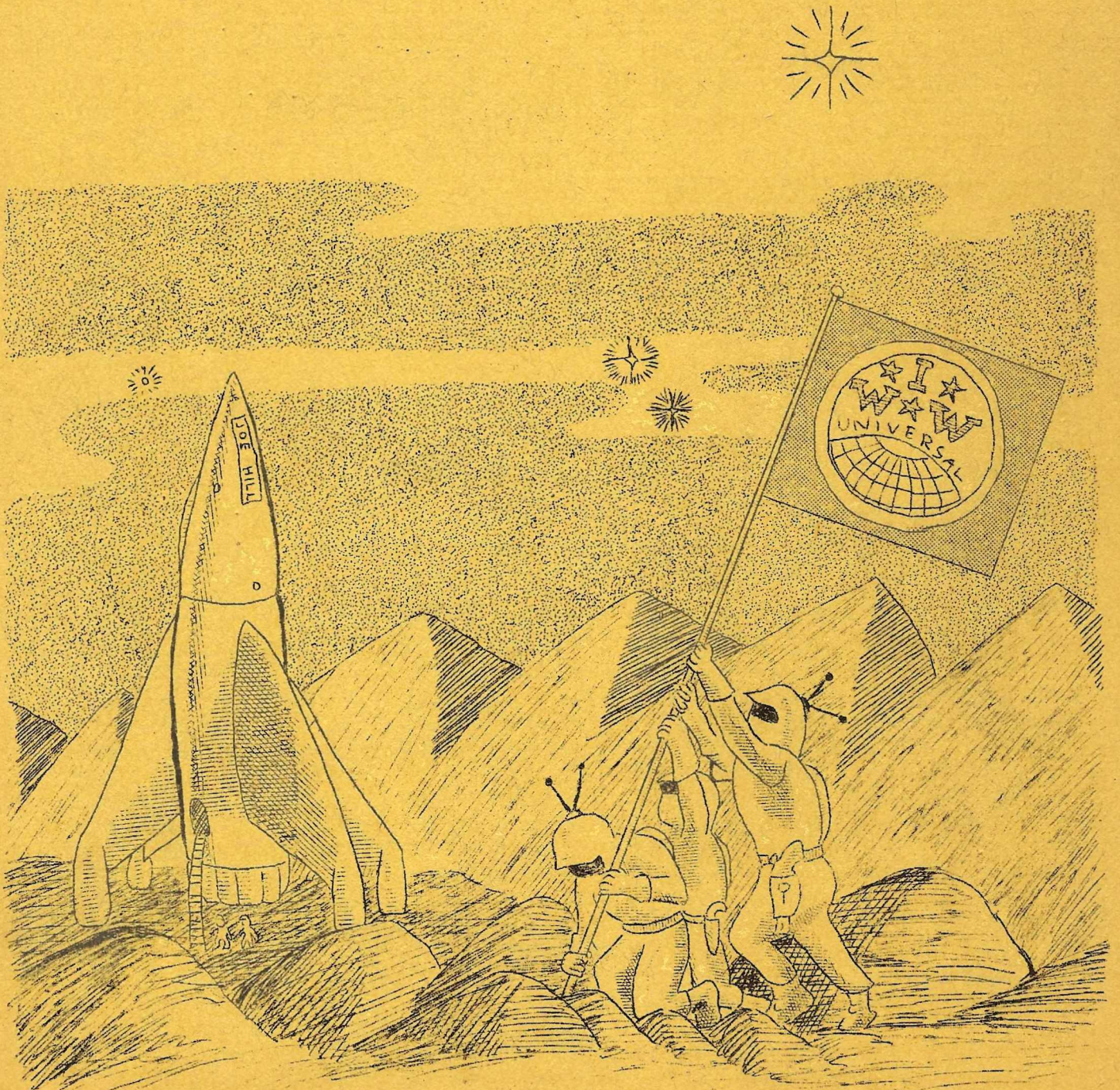


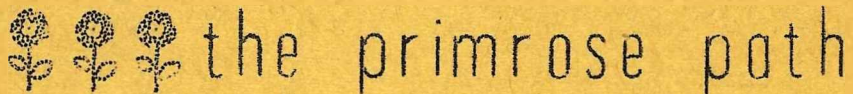
ABERRATION 3



Rike

ABERRATION # 3

This, the annish-minus-one, is edited by Kent Moomaw, 6705 Bramble Avenue, Cincinnati 27, Ohio, and is published by Ted E. White, the Baron of Falls Church, Virginia, as a service of QWERTYUIOPress. ((Write for rates)) The publisher is also responsible for all cutting of illustrations, some of which have been included this time to pacify certain elements of the readership, and headings...how's it look? Copies of this somewhat-less-than-sterling publication may be obtained by comment, by contributing, and/or by sending along a fanzine in trade...money is always welcome, but receipt of same in no way guarantees future issues. The material this issue is by John Berry, Dean A. Grennell, Ted E. White, Vernon L. McCain, Bill Pearson, Adam Ehrlich, and Keith Nelson. The interiors come to you courtesy of Arthur Thompson and Lars Bourne. Cover by David Rike for Dick Ellington. Out.



Department Of Ellison-Type Chatter

Mostly as a result of a pair of somewhat favorable reviews by Robert Bloch, G.O.D. in the pages of that otherwise undistinguished excuse for a prozine, Bill Hamling's IMAGINATION, Abby's mailing list has perked up considerably since the second issue was sent along its way. In fact, the number of requests for copies has been so large that for the first time, I will not be forced to go rooting through the current FAPA membership roster in search of unsuspecting victims, as was the case with issues one and two. A few copies are going out gratis this time, but I doubt if they'll exceed half a dozen. If you do get an issue which you've done nothing to earn, consider yourself someone I'd like to glean a contribution from...especially. Then react accordingly. Yes.

For those of you who requested copies of issue two and received no reply of any kind, my apologies. Suffice to say that there were no extras, and that this is the best I could do under the circumstances.

As for the material in this issue, most of it will speak for itself in one way or another, but I'm particularly anxious to get your reactions on the poem by Keith Nelson which appears near the end of the magazine. I'm far from the most capable judge of such things, having read very little poetry outside of school requirements, but this one completely floored me when I read it for the first time, and even now its sardonic cleverness warms the cockles of my cynical little heart. ((And if you don't think I'm cynical, ask Larry Sokol. He'll tell you...he told Larry Ginn, at least.)) I have more Nelson verse on hand, and unless I'm completely wrong, you'll probably be anxious to see some of it in future issues. Aside from a single letter, and as far as I know, this marks Keith Nelson's first appearance in a fanzine...another Abby First. Ole!

And as for Ehrlich...all right, I'll admit that it's a pseudonym. The question is, of course, for whom? Does anyone care?

Department Of Historic Documents

I recently received a card from Frankfurt, Germany, commemorating an important event in recent fannish history: the meeting of the Insurgents, species North

Americanus, Canadian, and North Americanus, Transplanted. Rather than allow such material to go fluttering down into that eternal wastebasket called Time, I print it here, to wit and to woo:

"Sept. 3, 1857 (oops)

"Dear Kent Moomaw,

"We, the two Benfords and Raeburn, have by much contemplation, fasting, and Yogi breathing exercises, deduced the origin of your noble surname. We opine that it is of Scandinavian origin, specifically Swedish. Correct, no? Yes. ((No. - CKM)) ## Greg. So hooah; we're having great time talking and touring and like that. Letter due soon. Your name has to be Swedish -- due to systematic deduction we discovered this amazing fact. Are you offering prizes? ((Not for incorrect answers, I'm not. OKM)) ## It is amazing the way your name keeps popping up in conversation here..you must be becoming a Well Known Fan. Geo. Will you be swell to a punk neo like me? ((Not with incorrect answers, I won't. - CKM)) ## See? Raeburn looks down on us...he doesn't likeee you! CANUCK GO HOME! ## Gee, I do so too like you. I think you have a sensitive fannish face. ((...)) ## Don't listen to him...the dirty huckster. Trying to sell some pens, is all.

"((signed)) Boyd & Greg & Jim (signed by Eversharp!) & Pete"

It's little things like this that make fandom fun, no?

Department Of Wha-Wha???

So I flip open the little wooden door on the mailbox and pluck out this little manila envelope with a British postmark on it, and I says to myself, says I, "Uumph. Another Anglozine. Damn foreigners." But lo and behold, it isn't a fanzine at all...it's a little half-size thing printed on a hand-press and it's called TRACE, with this subtitle: "A Chronicle of Living Literature." Huh, it's one of those avante-garde literary magazines, I thinks...now who ~~xxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ has Dick Ellington given my name to this time?

So it turns out that TRACE is a glorified checklist of "small literary magazines appearing throughout the world", along with dusty-dry articles on poetry and the creative man. Ech. The clincher, however, is yet to come...what in blue blazes do you think is leading off the checklist of current magazines??

"Aberration, 6705 Bramble Avenue, Cincinnati 27, Ohio, USA. (G, D, I, science fiction, but with stress on literary intentions. 10 c, '57."

Ghaa. And I've never even seen their mag before, much less sent them one of mine. Literary intentions? They can't be serious...

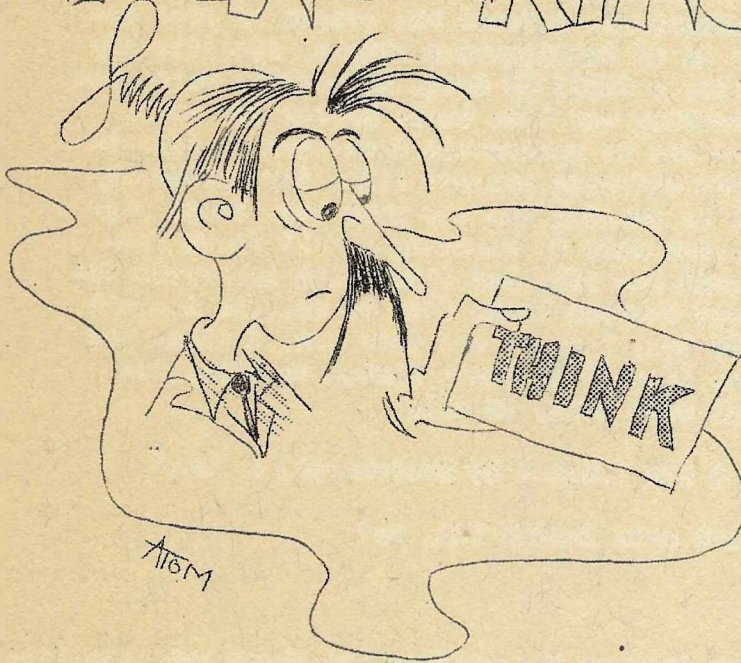
So far I've received two or three submissions from poets who read this guff and decided that they had finally found an understanding publisher. You know the kind of poems I mean: star-struck, awed couplets, with blazing suns and the moon and the fire and Man and Eternity and...ptui.

Who's the wise guy behind this?

Department of Goodbyes

Goodbye.
Kent Moomaw

POWDERING



By JOHN BERRY

I. PERSONAL VALUES

Several years ago, in my capacity as an innocent police constable, I was stationed in a little village called Waringstown, in County Down. Every three or four days I had to endure 25 hours of continuous duty in the confines of one small room, answering the telephone, typing out summons, etc. Naturally, such was the quietness of the sleepy village that very little work accrued, and it was difficult to find enough to do in an attempt to make the time pass quickly. My sole recreation for most of the time was to try and will the hands of the clock to go round the quicker.

Then, one cold and miserable day, I suddenly had the urge to write. It seemed the only sensible thing to do. I didn't rush the job. A swift mental calculation assured me that I would spend about three months of every ensuing year in the room. So I carefully thought out a plot. It was to be a Secret Service story. My hero was named Larry Mitchell. The essence of the plot was that sabotage was being performed on aeroplanes at an aerodrome of the RAF in England, and Mitchell was sent to clear everything up. He worked in co-operation with a gorgeous female spy named Penelope Carruthers whom he seduced as early as the first chapter, and discovered that he had 700 suspects to work through.

First of all, I scribbled the story out roughly, and it took both sides of 200 sheets of foolscap. I left it for a few weeks, then reread it. It was good. Very good. Brilliant, in fact. I found it hard to believe that I had created such a literary masterpiece.

The thing I was most proud of was my clue. It was a superb clue. It occurred early on in the story, and rather naturally, Mitchell missed the significance of it until the very end. I spent many days in meditation working out the clue, valancing it, nuturing it, until it represented the very essence of subtlety. Although I anticipated that the potential reader would pass over it, blithely ignorant, it was such a powerful clue that when the climax came at the end of the story, and the villain was exposed by Mitchell, after having, practically beaten up the other 699 suspects, the reader would sink back in admiration, awed at my skill, and the whole blinding significance of the clue would vibrate before him, blatantly asserting itself, yelling out loud how stupid he and Mitchell had been.

Then and there I commenced to type the story out properly, correcting my phraseology, spelling, and punctuation. When I had successfully reached the bottom of page 66, which was almost halfway through my story, I was transferred to Belfast. I stacked my mss, both the typed pages and the notes, in a large envelope, and safely tucked it away in a big chest until such a time as I could complete it.

Yesterday, over six years afterwards, I found this bulky envelope. I opened it. I flipped through the 66 typewritten pages and the other pile of rough notes. "My story," I breathed nostalgically, and right away sat down and commenced reading it. As I progressed, I preened myself at the racy dialogue of the story. I whistled at the superb technique employed by Mitchell to seduce Penelope. I panted with excitement at the tense way I had guided Mitchell through several attempted assassinations, sundry brutal assaults, and numerous horrible accidents that waylaid him en route to the climax. At the bottom of the last typed page, I read:

"...and as Mitchell lay back in the seat and adjusted the splint, he allowed the whole sequence of events at the aerodrome to flahs through his mind. He dragged himself upright and forced a Turkish cigarette through his battered lips. Suddenly he swore and stubbed out the butt with his bandaged hand. 'My God!' he shouted aloud. 'I've missed something! Something happened at the aerodrome that doesn't fit in with the sequence of events. How can...'"

That was as far as I had typed. So completely absorbed and thrilled was I at the one portion of the story I had completed that I made up my mind then and there to type the remaining pages and submit the complete story to a lucky publisher. I avidly read my other notes, which formed the conclusion, and my hair nearly stood on end on the final pages as Mitchell...

"...and raising his crutch, Mitchell crept up to the dark figure, and dealt it a telling blow across the nape of the neck. With a cry of triumph, Mitchell knealt down by the still form and turned him over, flashing his pocket torch into the twisted features. 'Christ!' breathed Mitchell. 'The communist spy is none other than...'"

And I couldn't find the last page.

I shuffled through all the pages to make sure that it hadn't hibernated. I even looked in the envelope, but it was no use. The final page was missing, and I had forgotten who the spy turned out to be. I recalled somewhere in the sojourn I had the Ablutions Corporal writing messages with invisible ink on toilet paper, and also on page 56, Mitchell whilst on a reconnaissance in the

WAF's quarters in the early hours of the morning, had stuck his hand in a mouldy slice of Russian gateau under the bed of the new physical training instructor who had only arrived that morning.

Then I remembered.

My clue.

My clue!

I said to myself that in the natural exuberance at finding my epic again, I had read the first few pages too quickly, and had thus missed the important clue. I settled down and reread it...reread it twice...and could not discover what the clue was!

It is by far the most frustrating thing that has ever happened to me. Such a superb story was destined for libraries and bookshelves the world over from the very beginning, and to think that my appearance as a pro was stifled only by the dormancy of my clue.

So I'm appealing for someone to come to my assistance. Someone of great intellect (no, I've tried him, but Walt says he gives it up), someone with much above-the-average foresight, adept at working out complicated atomic equations, someone with an IQ of round the 200 mark, to sum up, a second Einstein.

I want this person, if he or she exists, to read my story and find my clue.

I promise 50% of my royalties.

II. MOTOR IMPULSE

The other day I got to thinking about motorcycling. My career as a motorcyclist was brief but notable. My name is chisled permanently on the Little Snittering Trophy... "J. Berry 1944 79.03 mph," it says. The interesting aspect of this phenomenal triumph is the fact that I wasn't in the race at all. Not at the beginning, I mean. Naturally, I won it fair and square -- by that I am referring to the fact that I passed the finish line first. That sounds a mite complicated, I know, so I'll tell you all about it from the beginning...

In 1944, I was eighteen years old. I was in the army. Much against my will, I was sent on a two-week course of instruction on how to ride a motorcycle. As I found out then, I haven't a mechanical mind. (In fact, in passing, I feel sort of modest in admitting that the climax of my mechanical career is the fitting of two tins of baked beans on my typer roller, forming an effective gravity feed.)

I arrived in Little Snittering, somewhere in Kent, England ((plug--ckm)) and was introduced to my motorcycle, a 500 cc BSA. For the first two days, a sergeant took me on one side and tried to explain how the engine functioned. On the third morning, he had a brainstorm, so a much younger corporal announced he was going to teach me how to ride. Under his expert eye, I rode round in circles in a large field, manipulating the gears until, whizzing along at about 5 mph, I could change gears without looking at them. The corporal said with, I suspected, a slight trace of sarcasm, that I was doing pretty good at gear-changing, considering I'd only had two gear boxes fitted. He confessed that at this startling exhibition of my ability, he'd had a conference with the officer in charge, and they decided to risk letting me go on the public highway.

A further week passed by, during which time I became a capable motorcyclist. Only one incident of note occurred. That was when I saw a traffic light immediately in front of me suddenly turn red. I was in second gear at the time, and I wanted to change into first gear and/or stop. A haze clouded my mind...a throbbing aura of indecision surrounded me. Self preservation asserted itself with a split parsec to spare, and I instinctively turned left, mounted the footpath, and entered the swinging doors of the local branch of the Woolworth Company. I turned left at Haverdashery, left again at Kitchen Utensils, pushed my way through the other set of doors, and reached the road just as the light turned green again.

Otherwise, that week's riding was blameless.

The climax of the motorcycling course, to test our proficiency, was the motorcycling cross-country ride. Soldiers who had run it spoke in wide-eyed wonder of the obstacles, big banks, muddy slopes, a series of switchbacks, and a 1 in 2 gradient hill climb.

I felt very nervous as the day of reckoning approached. It was a Saturday morning, I remember well. There was a slight drizzle. I and the other trainees were conducted along minor roads to this horrible place.

Before continuing, I must place on record that there was one other trainee of whom the instructors despaired. I heard one of them say in awe that "he's even worse than Berry." This soldier's most memorable feat was when he was seen chasing his motorcycle along a main road, when we'd all stopped for a rest.

Well, this sucker started off the rough riding course immediately before me. Thirty seconds later, I followed. All went reasonably well until I came to the series of switchbacks, consisting of continuous mounds of hard soil 20 or 30 feet high. On the summit of the seventh hump I was confronted with the horrible apparition of this fool sitting astride his motorcycle with his hands over his face. Trouble was, he was heading in my direction.

I very blindly swerved left to avoid him, and entered an area of waist-high bracken.

I feverishly worked the accelerator on the right handlebar but I seemed to go faster and faster. The shouts from the remainder of my squad grew much fainter as I ploughed through a hedge. The cornfield proved a minor obstacle, and the harder I manipulated the accelerator in an attempt to stop, the faster I went. I crossed the main road, much to the consternation of a pack of Boy Scouts, and all the while the mystic words "valve lifter" reverberated through my mind. I sensed that if I manipulated the valve lifter, I would stop, but unfortunately I didn't know quite where it was. I forded a stream and ascended a hillside, and attempted to dislodge some of the vegetation that had accumulated in front of me.

It was then that I heard the revving of motorcycle engines, and as I breast the hill, I saw that immediately in front of me was a large crowd of people, and a bunch of motorcyclists in a straight line.

As I passed them, someone waved a flag and I heard a roar of motorcycle engines behind me. I found that walls of people bordered both sides of a concrete track. I appeared to be going in a cricle, because I speedily overtook several motorcyclists who, from the way they swerved to the left to let me pass, seemed

rather envious of my speed. After the third lap, some fool stood in the way waving a chequered flag and I roared past, instinctively using my right hand to remove the flag from my face.

When I finally succeeded, I noticed the crowd dispersing in all directions, then, strangely, I turned the accelerator for the umpteenth time and teetered to a halt.

It struck me immediately that my cross-country tour had been caused because I'd been twisting the accelerator the wrong way.

I staggered off the bike, and accepted a large trophy that some idiot thrust in my hands. The Little Snittering trophy, it was called, and months later I received a postcard from the committee congratulating me on my record, informing me that my name had been added to the cup, and hoping they'd see me again the following year.

I never rode a motorcycle again, and only recently have I had the nerve to possess a mechanically propelled vehicle of any kind, my infamous 49 cc motor-assisted pedal cycle.

But you probably read all about that in a recent VOID.

--- by John Berry

FILLER-TYPE CHATTER, ETC. So I pick up the paper one sunny afternoon and find my eyeballs assaulted by screaming banners: Russians Launch Earth Satellite. Strangely enough, I wasn't too excited. Perhaps this is due to the fact that, for once, the Russians did do something before anyone else, and that I've been so brainwashed by USA propaganda that I sneer at such a monumental technological achievement merely because the "enemy" was responsible. Don't think so, tho, and at least I certainly hope such isn't the case. Frankly, I think it's all due to reading so darn much science fiction...after flitting to and fro among the stars in countless stellar adventures, the wonder in me is all tuckered out. A 185 hunk of machinery only 500 or so miles up seems sorta insignificant after all that, huh? Anybody else out there feel just the slightest trace of apathy in this matter also?

It's easy to see that El Sputnik has had a profound effect upon the average non-stf-reader, tho. Space travel is no longer as outlandish as JQP has been picturing it; suddenly every bum in the local barbershop has an Andy Young type opinion on Outer Space, whereas a few weeks ago they left that realm strictly to the Little Green Men, gratis. The moon, to be trite, is a heck of a lot closer to most people than it was prior to the satellite.

Hollywood, quick to capitalize on an event such as this, released two George Pal stf films for the second time, billing them as "stories as close as tomorrow, as real as today's headlines"...Conquest Of Space and War Of The Worlds were merely spatial operas first time around, of cuss. I took the double feature in today for want of something more intellectual to do, and noted that there were no longer loud giggles and guffaws at the sans-gravity scenes and such, as had been the case when I had seen COF a couple of years earlier. Perhaps this was due to the different audience solely, but I kinda think not. What do you bet professional stf booms just a little more in the near future? Whatever, bet it with somebody else. I just can't seem to give a damn. --- CKM

THE OTHER SIDE A REBUTTAL IN TRIPLICATE OF THE

BY

TED E. WHITE
BILL PEARSON
VERNON L. McCAIN

COIN

((Editor's Beardmuttering: Last issue, I ran an article by Bob Silverberg, he of the voluminous professional stf output, which proved highly controversial, to put it mildly. This symposium more or less sums up the general reader reaction, which was...well, see for yourself. My thanks go to Ted White and Bill Pearson for their articles, and to Vern McCain for allowing me to use a rather lengthy portion of one of his letters. If anyone has a rebuttal to the rebuttal, feel free to send it along. -- CKM))

FANDOM AS A HOBBY by Ted E. White

It was with some interest that I read Bob Silverberg's "Fandom As A Stepping Stone." I'm always interested in watching someone prove his point by slapping down a straw man, and Bob did an excellent job of it. Don't get me wrong; I'm not trying to pick a fight with Bob. But it seems to me that not only did he not prove his point, but that he is trying to prove a point which does not exist.

As I see it, Bob is saying that 1) fandom is an apprenticeship to prodom, and 2) fandom has gotten away from its primary interest: stf, and thus has not furnished enough pros in the past several years.

I'm inclined to disagree all the way along the line. While it is true that fandom does serve as a primer to prodom, as a developing place for young would-be pros, this is hardly fandom's sole purpose. Fandom, to be fandom, cannot have any single purpose. In saying that fandom's initiates must graduate into prodom, or die in the attempt, Bob is excluding many worthwhile fans who have no desire to make a living in prodom. Fandom is a hobby into which a person can submerge himself to any degree he desires. Total immersion makes fandom that nebulous Way Of Life. Certainly fandom can supply many social contacts, and even pave the way to one's life work, but all this must be incidental to fandom itself.

Fandom is as diverse as its members.

To prove that fandom is no longer supplying as many pros as it used to, Bob cites graduates of past fandoms like Chad Oliver, Algis Budrys, Ray Bradbury, Larry Shaw, Milton Lesser, Judith Merril, James Blish, Arthur C. Clarke, and the Futurians, and then says that only two fans from the 1950s have made the jump: Ellison and himself. He qualifies this by stating that he and Ellison support themselves exclusively like other grads of the 50s such as Jim Harmon, Marion Zimmer Bradley, and Dean Grennell. (He overlooked Ron Smith and several others, but no matter.)

What he has not stated is that of the above list of older fans-turned-pro,

few support themselves exclusively in prodom; most have other jobs which pay the rent. If we narrow the list of the older graduates of fandom down to those who make their living as pros, we shorten the list tremendously. In fact, I doubt that there are more than twenty from all time. Divide these into the number of years fandom has existed, and you'll find that two full time pros from the past five or so years is a pretty good average. Of course if we count the pros who have gone on into the mundane fields, I think we can narrow things down a bit more. I'm surprised Bob didn't mention one of fandom's most illustrious fans-turned-pro, Bob Tucker. But then Bob doesn't support himself with his writing, so I guess he doesn't count as a "real" pro like Silverberg.

A few other inaccuracies: Mrs Bradley has done fairly well recently in the pro field; Harry Warner Jr has been quite active professionally, and is regularly employed as a newspaper man, a "pro" job; Algis Budrys is, I think, actually a graduate from the 50s -- his name didn't start appearing in prozines until the middle of 1950.

But let's forget all this quibbling. Let's see what Bob actually wants us to do when we "graduate." First, if we are to support ourselves by writing, we must make a business of it. This means being able to pound out a quick story whenever an editor needs one; at the last minute, if necessary. You must gain a reputation for always being able to deliver the goods. You must try and do what both Ellison and Silverberg have done: get on the Ziff-Davis lists as a regular. This means that you will be required to supply so many words a month for so many dollars a month. You must be able to write anything around any illustration you are shown, no matter how improbable the situation might be, and make the story readable.

Really, that's all that's asked of you: make your stuff readable. Nothing superlative is needed, you must merely be able to hack out something for the deadline. Lord knows, Z-D wouldn't know a good story if one were by some mischance submitted to them.

It means purely and simply, not writing what you want to write, at a level you're proud of, but writing what an editor wants at the last moment. It means never climbing the ladder to sit beside the Heinleins, the del Reys, the Asimovs, and all of the other "greats". It means simply grinding out hack work each month. Sounds like fun, eh? Well, if you want to support yourself and a wife and kids on what stf mags pay, that's what you do. Maybe once in a while you get off a story you're proud of, but it's an exception. If you're cagey, and have real talent buried in there, you can supplement your stf writing with slick writing. Like Ellison, you might be able to sell to one of the Playboy-type mags like DUDE or GENT. They pay real money, and allow you to get some of the finer things in life, like that \$200 coffee table your wife wanted...

But unless you're a bundle of nervous energy -- as Ellison is -- you'll find the routine getting you down. And you'll wonder where you're going in this rat race. Will you be remembered in future years as a superior, gifted author or as just another one of the hacks in the Ziff-Davis stable?

If you want to be in the former category, you'll get a regular job and write in your off hours, devoting considerable time and trouble to each story, and maybe you'll be another Heinlein. Silverberg won't be.

And as far as fandom goes, don't feel obligated to follow some fool's footsteps just because he tells you to. Do what you want to do. Fandom is your hobby, your recreation, and exists for your enjoyment.

STEPPING STONES ARE NICE FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO
TRAVEL THE SAME PATH AS EVERYBODY ELSE by Bill Pearson

Mr. Silverberg is a pro!

Wow.

In full view of the fact that I am not too true a true-blue trufan (this is a confession), and readily acknowledging that Bob Silverberg has been around fandom a lot longer and undoubtedly knows a lot more fans than myself (this is a cowardly bid for sympathy), I'd like to disagree with a few of his observations.

Life is what you make it, and so is fandom.

A lot of people are active in fandom because they're lonesome -- this is the old bit about the neurotic, introversive individuals. And, true enough, these people account for a good percentage of fandom.

Then there are fans who slave over fanzines and such for personal satisfaction. Egocentric people. They like praise, respect...you know a number of these fans.

And there are those who scramble and scamper through fandom in hopes of one day turning pro. Bob was obviously in the latter group. That's fine. There's nothing wrong with that. But from what I can gather from his article, he seems to think that's what we're all in fandom for.

It just isn't so.

Since I know me better than anyone else, I'll use myself as an example. Some people think I don't know anything at all about myself, but we'll disregard that. Some people think I don't know anything at all, but we'll disregard that too.

Besides, I'm the egocentric type. I like to talk about myself. And ever-present enduring months long periods of complete indifference, I retain the obsession to publish the most beautiful amateur magazine possible. To satisfy myself. To prove to myself that I'm capable of it.

Not a professional mag...not even if I got the chance, because then I would have to cater to the public, and then it wouldn't be a personal creative accomplishment. It would be work.

I'm a pro. I really am. I'm a professional draftsman. I've always liked to draw, and I sure do a lot of drawing at work. I've met a number of nice people, acquired many good friends, and have fun often at my job.

But I hate it. I hate it because I've got to do it. No matter what I happen to want to do each day, I've got to go to work. And when I go to bed at night, I know that whatever I feel like in the morning; I have to be at my desk at eight.

A couple of the guys I work with were commercial artists. They aren't anymore. They had always wanted to be artists but it's a funny thing, when they became artists, they found they didn't like it. And why? Because it was work, just like everything else.

I go home at night tired and tense from that room full of pounding typewriters and ringing phones and noisy, chattering people and start working on fannish mat-

ters. I work well into the night, usually...the same kind of work I do all day. Why? It certainly isn't because I'm just bursting with energy. I'm about the laziest lout you're likely to run into.

It's because it's fun. Yeah. I smile to myself as I'm working. I laugh. I sing and whistle. You should really see me...I'm a riot.

Have you ever wondered why Bloch sticks with fandom no matter how many Playboys he can appear in professionally? Hell, if money somehow just happened to be in his pocket every time he reached for it, Bloch would never send a mss to the pros. But he's just like everybody else: he has to feed a wife and a couple of barrel-headed kids. Which takes dough.

No inference to the mentality of Bloch's offspring, of course...merely implying that all kids are barrel-headed. Most adults are barrel-headed as well, but I get an argument from them. In which respect kids are considerably less barrel-headed than their elders.

So while you were bored with your fannish contemporaries, Bob, those poor, misguided souls who couldn't seem to use fandom's facilities in the most efficient way, as you could, I can well imagine there were some who just couldn't see taking your route.

Yes, fandom can be a steppingstone to prodom, if that's what you want it to be. Fandom can be a lot of things.

But tell me Bob; be honest now...didn't you get a bigger kick out of writing for fanzines a couple of years ago than you do ~~now~~ -- writing for Mr. Joe Schmoe, USA?

FLIP SIDE by Vernon L. McCain

Bob Silverberg makes an interesting case, but not a convincing one. He and Harlan were not unique in their examination of sf on a serious, critical plane. If that were all that were needed, Redd Boggs would be a long-established pro. Actually, so far as I know, Boggs has made no attempt to sell, at least in a good many years. And there are quite a few others, some who, like Boggs, don't care to sell, others who try and fail, and still others who've tried and succeeded a little, but not to the professional level. Actually, while this attitude undoubtedly is a contributing factor I think it is only one of many. I can think of at least one factor shared by Bob and Harlan which does not exist in any of the other cases he mentions. It is also shared by 13 or 14 of the 17 other names he cites as successful pros.

I'm a long-time foe of fiction in fanzines but Bob's statement that all fiction in fanzines stinks is just a little too dogmatic. Has he forgotten two well known Sixth Fandom names...Clive Jackson and Marjorie Houston, regular contributors of fiction to SLANT and NEKROMANTIKON, respectively, both of whom wrote wonderfully well and flatly refused to submit their stories to prozines despite urging by their editors? Two of Jackson's SLANT stories were picked up, paid for, and reprinted by prozines. Another story submitted to SLANT and rejected (this by another author) was later sold to MARVEL. A couple of years later a story was submitted to PEON which Lee Riddle thought so good that he sent it on to Horace Gold who bought it for BEYOND. There are probably one or two similar examples which slip my mind. The statement "If it were any good to begin with it would be sold, not given away..." is obviously just not true. Admittedly it is a good rule of thumb and applies to probably 99% of all cases, but there

are too many exceptions to let that sort of blanket statement go unchallenged. But, admittedly, almost all fanzine fiction stinks.

I'm reminded of a statement by Howard Browne several years ago (I think it was Browne, though I've heard many other editors make similar statements) that if a story is any good, it will sell on its first or second submission. He allowed that he wasn't interested in stories that had been rejected a whole mess of times because they obviously weren't good enough to print. He obviously didn't know, or didn't care, about the case of Ted Sturgeon's "Bianca's Hands" -- rejected by every possible American market over a period of years and which actually caused one agent to refuse to handle Ted in disgust at the idea of dealing with a mind which could create such a story. Yet "Bianca's Hands" went on to win a big contest put on by a British slick, with a large cash prize. Runner-up in the contest was an obscure hack by the name of Graham Greene. And anyone who's read it must recognize "Bianca's Hands" as among Sturgeon's best work. This is an extreme example but almost every professional writer has at least one similar instance in his history which he's fond of relating...the story rejected over and over and finally, after years, selling to a much better market than most of those which had rejected it. Obviously, when editors say that a salable story will sell without difficulty, they are talking from their vanities, not from experience. Occasionally we find an editor with unusual honesty, such as Boucher, who once acknowledged that rejection of Ray Bradbury's "Way In The Middle Of The Air" (which later appeared in OTHER WORLDS) had been a boo-boo of mammoth proportions.

Actually, all my points made above are pretty academic. I'll agree with Bob that, in sf, there are no taboos that can't be broken if a story's good enough. But I think the record demonstrates that there are instances of editorial narrow mindedness which no amount of skillful writing can overcome. As I said, it is academic, though. Ideally these stories would be appearing in fanzines. But neither "Bianca's Hands" nor "Way In The Middle Of The Air" or any of the other examples I mentioned showed up in fanzines. The only exception I can think of was actually written by an editor, Boucher again...a story that even he, himself, was unwilling to print due to its censorable subject. It was a beautiful little short-short entitled "Khartoum" which appeared in Bill Danner's STEFANTASY a couple of years ago. But, as I said, most fiction in fanzines does indeed stink, and I certainly would not recommend writing fiction for fanzines to anyone as anything but most temporary of pastimes...not that my own example is much of one to follow.

--- by Vernon L. McCain

IDLE THOTS BY WHICH TO WHILE AWAY TIME & SPACE: Can anyone tell me why the Four Freshmen have such a tremendous following, while the (in my opinion, of course) vastly superior Hi-Los are seldom given the accolades they so justly deserve? As far as vocal improvisation (yes, I know it isn't really improvisation, but it does sound that way, like all good jazz) and weird sounds are concerned, the Freshmen just aren't in the same league as Mssrs. BuFroughs, Perling, etc. Could the answer to the riddle of their popularity lie in the fact that they began with Kenton? Eh?...Department of Eternal Frustrations: the only strictly jazz radio show in the Cincinnati area goes on at two in the afternoon, Monday thru Friday, at which time I'm stuck in a poorly ventilated class room, yawning my way thru Senior Health. On the weekends, nothing. Wonder who's bright idea this is? They figure the housewives are weary of soap-operas? Nuts...I'm currently doing a series on jazz for the high-school newspaper. In the first installment, I was given 250 words to explain what jazz is, and when my article was printed, they'd managed to cut it down to 150. Needless to say, it was beyond hope. Heck, I don't guess any of these rock 'n roll fineds noticed.

THE PSYCHOSIS

The setting sun slinks behind the hills above Sausalito, then on down into the blue Pacific with scarcely a hiss. Night falls with a casual ease bespeaking long practice. The glow over the horizon fades, vermilion to scarlet, magenta, deep mauve, fading finally to the watery prussian blue of night horizons everywhere.

The light loses its stinging actinic tincture of sunlight. As the sun's light fades, the yellow flare of streetlights seem to grow brighter as though some offstage electrician is turning up a rheostat.

Once again the steep sidewalks of the city by the Golden Gate are fit for occupancy by the people of the night. One by one, they sally forth to be at the evening's business, stumping up the stair-stepped walks, jogging down them on their heels past the ubiquitous San Francisco apartment houses which cling precariously to the sides of the endless hills...architecture's answer to the side-hill dodger.

Up such a walk, on a street in the district once called the Barbary Coast, a gaunt figure hobbles. Each step upward is plainly a bitter battle fought and won. He is tall and lath-lean. Beside him, Shelby Vick would seem roly-poly.

Beneath the frayed brim of a rusty blackopera hat, sunken eyes squint in the streetlight's glare. He hugs the folds of a threadbare Inverness cape about his bony shoulders. The night air is bland, almost tepid, but the prominent teeth, startlingly white in the mummy-colored cheeks, chatter with a sound at once pathetic yet subtly revolting.

Here and there among the apartments, dogs set up a clamor. Shrill yips of pekinese melds with husky wurf of boxer and insistent rarf of spaniel into a canine cacophony.

Over the crest of the hill comes the cause of the commotion. A substantial figure of a man, burly, almost rotund, there is a jouncy spring to his walk. You'd think him a prosperous merchant, bustling home to an evening of beer, pipe, and television.

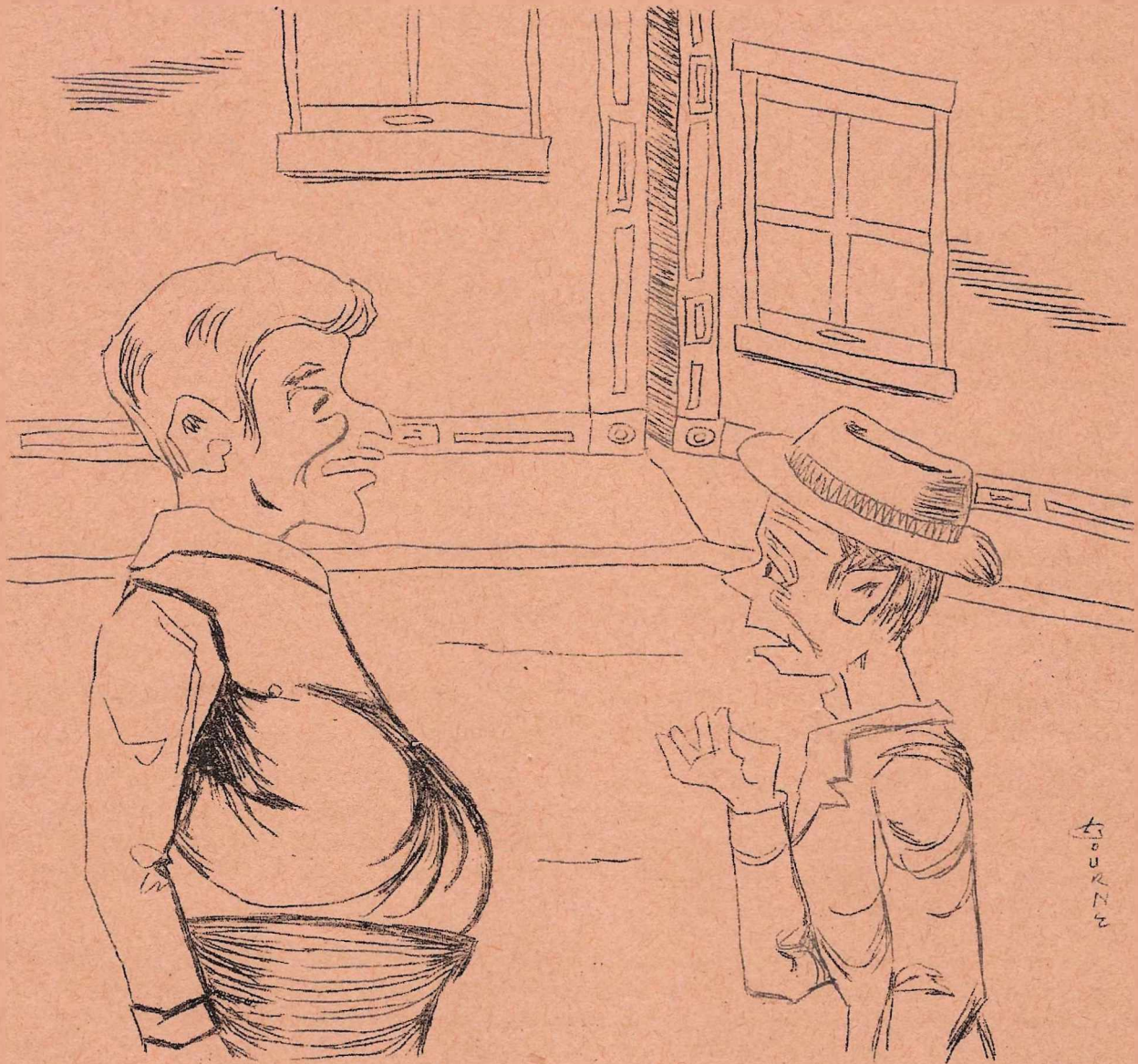
The thin man pauses, short gasps hissing between those too-white teeth. He regards the stout one with an interest at first professional, then social as an acquaintance is recognized. As they meet, the scarecrow speaks, the other answers in his jovial boom, and they stand there talking shop.

"I wish you good morning, my dear Loboth!" The gaunt one observes the convention of the night shifter. "Hell to Betsy -- I've never seen you looking so well fed. These must be prosperous days for the necrophagist."

dean a grennell

"Necrophagist?" The stout man's florid complexion purples a bit, and a faint frown creases his heavy brows. "Sir, I must ask you to remember that I am a werewolf, not a werejackel. Anthropophagist, if you have a penchant for fancy terms, but please -- never a necrophagist! I don't eat dead meat!"

Then, seeing the hurt look which overspread his companion's face, he attempted in his bumbling fashion to salve over his gruff tones.



"I'm sorry I can't say that you are looking prosperous too, Doctor Grotescu. Has the ancient and honorable profession of hemophilic fallen upon hard times?"

"Let's call a spade a spade, Loboth -- you mean hemaphile, or blood lover. A hemophilic is a person who bleeds profusely at the slightest wound and I doubt that I'd bleed a drop if decapitated. No, my friend, if you mean to say 'vampire' then say vampire, by all means!"

And then he, also seeking to keep the conversation on an amiable basis, added a few mollifying words.

"But tell me, I incant you, what is the secret of your prosperity? Have you found a secret entrance to an orphanage or what? This is the first time I can recall seeing an overweight werewolf!"

Loboth stretched luxuriously and grinned, a bit self-envious of his sleek look which Grotescu was eyeing so enviously.

"Dash it, man," he said, "will you please stop staring at my throat like that? For one thing, you know that one drop of were-blood would kill you as surely as an oaken stake. For another, I could out-run you or out-fight you as my fancy chose."

"No, it's quite simple, really. You see, I went down to Hollywood recently to work with Lon Chaney Jr. in a couple of cinemas, and -- well, you know how the pay scale is in Hollywood -- I managed to save up quite a bit; bought something I've wanted for years...a lovely, white, 15 cubic foot Westinghouse home freezer."

"That took care of my biggest problem. Before, I'd have good nights once in a while, but a fellow can only eat so much and then, when I went back the following night, the remains would either be removed or at best they would be too high for me to stomach."

He paused to probe in his mouth with an abnormally long index finger, dislodging something which he wiped from his nail with a linen handkerchief, muffling as he did so, a delicate belch.

So now I've taken to ledging with a pair of trolls who live under the Golden Gate. I have my freezer there with a pair of wires running up to tap the lightning circuit for power. I only have to replenish my larder once or twice a fortnight."

"I suppose you could even buy a quarter of beef now and then." Grotescu settled his hat square on his head with a droll dry drool.

Loboth's face turned slightly greenish and he bristled defensively. "Are you meaning to suggest that I'd eat animals? Ugh -- how revolting! I'd have you know I've become a veritable lycanthropoid Lucullus; nothing but the finest specimens, the choicest cuts, sir! I let the trolls clean up my leftovers and they take it off my rent."

Loboth felt so sorry for Grotescu, despite his gauche mannerisms. One expects a vampire to look skinny. It is an obvious occupational trait. But Grotescu was grotesque, as though moth-eaten parchment had been haphazardly stretched over a skeleton filched from some medical school. Loboth longed to take him out to his comfortable bachelor flat and put some good solid food into him. But he knew all too well that one morsel of solid food would ruin the blood sucker's delicate digestive system beyond repair.

"Surely," said Loboth, "the vampiring racket -- I beg your pardon! -- profession can't be as bad as all that. What's your trouble, old man?"

Grotescu's eyes took on a more haunted look. He drew aimless cabalistic designs on the sidewalk with a shoddy toe, then looked up and blurted it out.

"For a time there I was doing all right. I even landed a job as a night man in a skid row blood-bank. Everything was going fine, just fine, until I had to

go and develop this...this blessed psychosis. It's the worst possible -- the very worst -- thing that could happen to a man in my profession. It's ever so much worse than the stake!"

Overcome with chagrin, borne down by the weight of his woe, Grotescu turned away and resumed his painful progress up the sidewalk.

Loboth stood there, torn between etiquette and curiosity. Finally he called after the tattered back.

"What, under the moon, kind of psychosis do you have?"

Back floated the answer, dripping with wormwood, steeped in the gall of utter despair.

"I've gotten so I faint at the sight of blood."

--- by Dean A. Grennell

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ANOTHER PAGE, ANOTHER FILLER, ETC. ETC..... A note to would-be faneds: take this issue as an example of the kind of thing you have to go through when you don't bother to dummy your issue out completely prior to the stencil cutting sessions. Well, this time I've got some recent fanzines on hand which, for one reason or another (and mostly due to plain laziness, I must admit), I've failed to comment on. A few capsule reviews seem to be in order.

QUIRK #3 (Larry Ginn, Route 1, Box 81, Choudraht, Louisiana): Although QUIRK is still no contender for the top ten, or the top twenty, for that matter, this issue is certainly welcome after the first two. Dittoing is complete and wholly readable, both sides of the paper are used for the first time, and the "art" is not quite as atrocious as that showing up in most fanzines as young as Larry's. In fact, much as I hate to admit it, there is some really fine illo work by Bob Gilbert. No material of particular value, unfortunately. This one would improve rapidly if the editors would ditch their preponderance of straight fiction. I'd rate the issue as a whole, C-.

MOTLEY (Mike Gates, % Lt. Col. Jack R. Gates, Headquarters, NACOM, APO 57, New York City) is a first issue, and is evidently the successor to VOID now that the Benford twins have returned to the states. It's legal-sized, like VOID, and generates the same type of personality, though slightly less refined than Greg's, who's had more experience. Sloppy layout and mimeo work mar the mag physically, but I found the material pleasing, particularly a bit by John Berry and a fictional biog of the current German fan clique after twenty or so years. The results of the VOIDI poll are also included, which should interest the winners. Potentially a top fmz, I believe, but it'll take work. Give it a C.

BRILLIG #9 (Lars Bourne, 2436<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Portland Street, Eugne, Oregon) is another fine issue, full of atmosphere and personality. BRILLIG never boasts an overpowering lineup of names, but Lars never, or seldom, at least, fails to come up with a fmz in which one can find something of outstanding interest. The repro is excellent, and the art-layout is distinctively Lars, whose style is not readily comparable with anyone else in fandom that comes to mind. This issue features an article by me ((sshhh)), a very interesting column by John Champion, Bourne book observations, some good letter material, and an editorial full of sound and fury. But it does signify something! Lars deserves a B.

# JEUNESSE DOREE

((Excerpts from the letters of one Adam M. Ehrlich, reprinted by permission.))

xxx

Recently, through a few devious devices, I have been getting some fanzines other than ABERRATION. One of these fanzines quite bewilders me, and possibly you can clear up some questions in my mind. The one in question is MEUH, published by somebody named Jean Linard. I suppose by now everyone in fandom has been flooded with these things if I get them (tho of course he didn't send it directly to me... note the devious methods a few lines up there), and all this raving I see going on raises some questions.

Now, I'll admit readily that Linard has personality, and this "creole" of his has charm and at times can be very amusing (not meaning laughable) etc. etc. So. From this viewpoint, some of his mag is good -- but to me, viewing it as a fanzine, with the "zine" part being foremost, MEUH is an entirely different matter. In his letter column (those horrid sixty-page things in the microscopic type) Linard is constantly printing letters from people, and, quoting directly from the magazine, their main cfy seems to be "MEUH is wonderful!:" Now, using my definition (fanzine), it seems to me that Linard has lousy layout, horrible repro, and generally a very sloppy editorial manner...when he's editing, that is.

If these qualities make a wonderful fanzine, I know some fanzine editors who would fold up right now. Of course, someone will say that Linard's writing style and personality is the heart of MEUH, and that all the rest is merely secondary, but if this is so why is he requesting material with his "sign of the three balls"?

These "Innavigable Mouths" he puts out (I received a number of them, too) stone me. For one thing, there is the ever-present air of gimme gimme gimme that turns up on every page. He wants this and that and the other, and naturally these other people are going to rush at him, showering him with gifts and everything. But what frosts me is that Linard, no matter how many people send him stuff and comment on his fanzine, doesn't (from all appearances) answer their letters. Quite mysterious. If I were publishing a fanzine -- heaven forbid -- I would certainly not expect fans to send me letters of comment if I didn't reply.

But perhaps I'm making a mountain out of a mole hill. At any rate, I suppose there are altogether valid reasons for Linard doing this, but at the moment they escape me.

xxx

Once, as seems to be the fashion, I went to a summer camp. This was no ordinary, mind you, camp. No, I had to go to a Boy Scout one. If you've ever been to one of these farces, you know exactly what I mean.

Anyway, it came to pass that our counsellor was suddenly plucked from our group while we were out in the wilderness, and no one ever saw him again. He was drafted, or something. So came the morning of the Big Hike. We had been in camp about ten days, with feru more to go, and I swore that I would not give up my safe position in my bunk to go tramping off into the woods somewhere. But I did, sooner or later. Several guys came by the tent I was sharing with another part-

ner, waving hiking sticks and things, and I (silly fool) was attracted by their jaunty adventure.

It was a good thing I was so attracted, too, because everybody else in the camp went on this hike and if I'd stayed behind alone in the camp with wild bears and rattlesnakes and God knows what all about, no doubt they would have returned to find a very still corpse on their hands. Or something. We set out, I with a canteen filled with cool mountain water. It was a hot day -- must have been somewhere around 100° at least, and we rose dust as we walked along the back roads. I had forgotten to ask just where this hike (supposedly a ten-mile one, but I swear at least half of those miles were straight up) was going, so after about an hour of this marching more-or-less in formation, we stopped for a rest.

A counsellor came around, waving his handkerchief for attention. "Boys," he said, "I want you all to try and conserve water on this trip. Remember, the less you drink the less thirsty you'll be." The patent illogic of this statement didn't strike me at the time, so I just sat there by the side of the road, watching the others gulp down great quantities of the stuff.

The counsellor (a senior boy scout) came around again, leading a youth by the hand. He stopped in front of me, looking at my canteen and me sitting there quietly while the rest of the troop wallowed, utterly wallowed, in the stuff. "Son, would you mind giving your fellow Boy Scout a few swallows of water?" he said, looking at me with a two-merit-badges-if-you-do-it smile. "Oh sure," I murmured, giving him my three-merit-badges-or-nothing grin. He nodded. I gave the kid a drink.

We got up and started off into the bushes, everyone careful not to get smacked in the face with branches and other things. I noticed that the kid I'd given water was following behind me. All the way up the hill we were to climb, the kid stuck to me like a leech. He begged water, clawing at my shirt, promising all sorts of favors when we got back to camp...anything for a drink of water. At last, almost to the top, I was pretty tired. The counsellor came around again, telling us that there was no water on this hill (he called it a hill, anyway) and we should save all we could, and so forth. I didn't drink any, trusting my steadfast advisor. The kid did, tho...in great gulps.

Again our party went onward. Around four hundred yards from the top, I began to feel dizzy, a little hot. Three hundred yards and I passed out. They revived me, gave me some of my own water, and we still trudged on. At the top I was the fifth man in line. The third man was bitten by a copperhead and carried down the side of the mountain by the counsellor. (Things happened fast in those days.)

I stood on a rock, sipping my water and watching the lunatics in the rest of the troop throw away our food -- hot dogs and marshmallows and things -- and swore that some day I would pay them back for it all. Back down we went, over rocks and down into gulleys. My canteen was empty. I was thirsty. Up ahead in the column, I spied the kid who had begged water from me. He was carrying a canteen. It sloshed back and forth as I watched.

Two seconds later I caught up with him. "Buddy, where'd you get the water?" I panted. "Stream," he replied casually. I asked him if he would give me some water. He said no. I glowered at him. Still no. We kept marching. The sun beat down. On and on and on. Bugs, skeeters, and things bit us. I begged water, but all my friends were in the same spot. What's more, they had all given water to the same kid on the way up! Each one went to him and pleaded for water, but he turned all of us down. Vile mutterings started. A group of us were wearily contemplating an

overthrow of the senior scouts and starting off in search of a pool or stream. One guy wanted to establish a mountain army of deserters and make raids on the scout camp.

After a while the talking fell off and we plodded onward, each thinking suitable thoughts about the dirty sonafabitch with the full canteen. Every few instants he would take the cap off and savor a mouthful of water right in front of our eyes, gloating...

Two days later somebody jumped him in his tent after dark and beat the hell out of the kid. I just laughed.

xxx

Yup, I did so have a good frined once. We were all buddy-buddy and filled with typical adventuresome spirits, tramping around in the forests and things. His name was Keith.

So one day were were tramping around, as was our wont, and we two valiant knights came upon a small stream, all very deep and hidden by the trees growing on the bank. Wandering down this secret waterway, Keith happened to espy a rough, thick vine hanging from a bough. At once his eyes lit up and he rushed at the vine (which was hanging approximately over the center of the stream) and grabbed onto it, swinging over to the other side. I stood there and looked at him as he looped back, all twitching and kicking in the air, and landed beside me on the bank. Now we had an "I do this and you gotta do it too" arrangement, which meant that I had to swing across the stream. Keith leered at me. You may laugh (in your typical crass manner) but I was scared to death of that stream. I mean, it was deep -- real deep, with all sorts of imagined scaly monsters lurking in its green depths. And...to make it short, I grabbed the vine which was swinging back my way and was about halfway back across the stream when the branch gave way, and I fell. Floundering in the water as I was, with Keith laughing at me, it was very frustrating.

So I crawled out, threw rocks at Keith, and never spoke to him again.

xxx

Ah, science fictional dreams. I fondly remember those old dreams. I suppose at one time or another every person has a dream of somewhat the same type and situation...with identities changed, of course. There's the old classic of the Hero Who Rescues Fair Maiden, but that's rather trite. Come to think of it, I never have dreamed this one, even with self identification. Perhaps I am paranoid.

xxx

And what, young Kent Moomaw, do you plan to do with Abby? The brightly shining fanzine you have created cannot just sit there anymore...you can't afford to do that any longer. Teenage fans must always be embarking on fannish crusades. Imitate Vorzimer, found 9th Fandom, or declare faans to be star-begotten creatures of specially high intelligence. Or act like Ron Ellick and make small bubbly noises. But you must do something; it is required of you. Of course, you could always pull one like Joel whoever (publisher of VEGA) and become a semi-BNF in 12 months, then suddenly vanish from the scene and leave your name behind. Today Joel could re-enter fandom and begin publishing on his own and probably glean all sorts of good material from established names. It helps to break off in one's prime. But resuming the topic, surely you will do something? Producing a fanzine is not enough. Teen-fans are always slightly fuggheaded. Don't break the chain. --- Adam

# sur cumlocution, the euphemistic

## SURVIVOR

by KEITH NELSON

"Certainly, we had a fine civilization; ideal in most respects.

What then touched off the War? O sir, 'twas scarcely a war at all; Say rather an unfortunate juxtaposition of incompatible forces, like.

Too stubborn to yield? Nay, sir, not that, but contumacious if you will; And as for any fancied slights or insults? -- well, my notes reveal

Merely an unpropitious contumely, give-and-take, you know.

Agression? Why, bless you sir! 'Twas nothing like that at all. We had

Of course our duty to move in and protect defenseless nations Lying within the perimeter of our defenses -- yes, our Duty sir.

But it was a fine civilization, sir, I might even say ideal.

Racial intolerance? I'm happy to say that our peoples were as one, sir!

Naturally there was present the elements of laudable competition; A frinedly joshing between the races -- a healthy upward striving.

But as for religious dispute, prithee pardon my smiles, prithee do! Assuredly there was a plentitude of learned debate, loquacious discourse;

A harmonious exchange of ideologies; spirited, yes, but always Aimed at exploring the higher levels of sould and truth and beauty.

Sexual promiscuity among our peoples? Oh! I really must Protest! I'll grant a normal indulgence of extra-marital expativity;

And naturally one must admit adolescent experimentation -- even An occasional rendezvous with a Lady of the Evening; perhaps also

A casual exploration of Houses of Biological Implications.

Did we have toilets? Somehow the term is vaguely familiar, but when

Perchance you have feference to Sanitary Conveniences, possibly? Or Mayhap Restrooms, Powder-rooms, and Lavatories? Oh -- we had those.

Syphilis? I believe not, sir; merely Venereal Indispositions;

And as for rape -- tchah! Thank Ghod, we had only Moral Offenses; or,

At worst a momentary lapse into Statuery Indiscretions.

Did all humankind have buttocks, and all our females breasts? Now sir,

Such archaic terms, if words they really be, have little or

No significance, to my knowledge. Possibly you have reference to the Derriere or rear-end of our kind? And, I should imagine,

The Bosom, B ust, or Curves of the upper female frontal anatomy, like?

No, our females did not menstruate, sir, nothing of the kind!

They did indeed have Sick-times, or Periods, as I recall, but as

For panties being worn, I'm sure you must mean Unmentionables, don't

You? Or possibly Intimate Apparel? Really, you amuse me when you ask

If humans were insane -- of course not! Merely eccentric, sir,

Or a trifle odd or queer. Neither do I recall any feeble-minded,

The presumably you mean those who were not so very bright?

WHAT!? Being as how you're a visiting Martian and have undergone a long

But involuntary and unwilling fast, you propose to avail

Yourself of whatever mammalian nourishment is closest to hand and mouth?

Darmit, why don't you jus t come right out and say you're going to eat me!"

