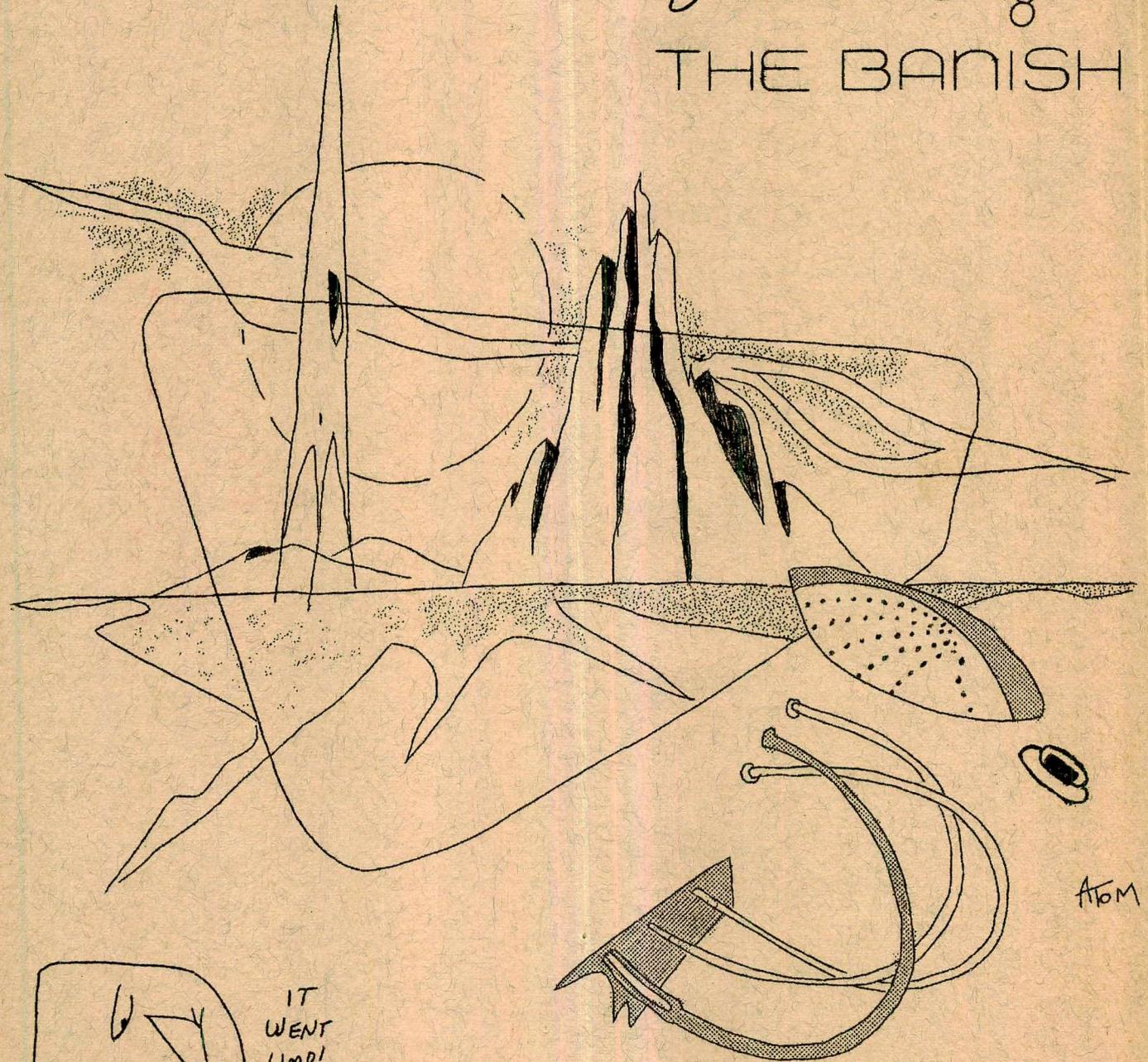
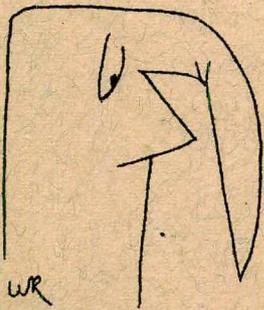


# BANE<sub>8</sub>

## THE BANISH



Atom



IT  
WENT  
LIMP!

WR



This is the second anniversary issue of Bane, a seldom-published and seldom-missed science fiction fan magazine. It's edited by Vic Ryan, Box 308, 2309 Sheridan Road, Evanston, Illinois, USA, and is available for respectable letters, trades, contributions and subscriptions (25¢ apiece, or a dollar for the year's output, including the generally larger anniversary number.) All letters to the editor are subject to publication unless specified otherwise. Mimeography by Juanita Coulson.

CONTENTS:

Homily.....Vic Ryan..... 4  
 I Went to a Playboy Party for the FBI  
 and Found -- Charles Beaumont?...Bob Bloch..... 9  
 Wheel of Fortune.....Buck Coulson.....12  
 For Our Great Folly.....Ryan again.....18  
 On Censorship and DemocraticGovernment..J.E.Pournelle.....26  
 Chopped Beefs.....Letter writers.....29

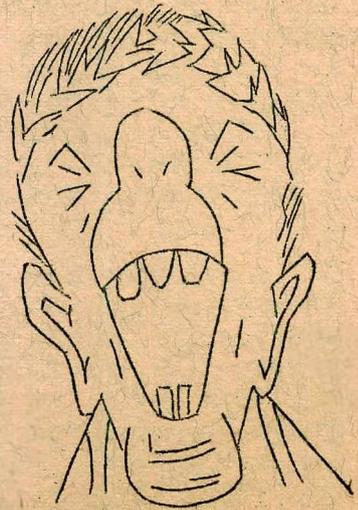
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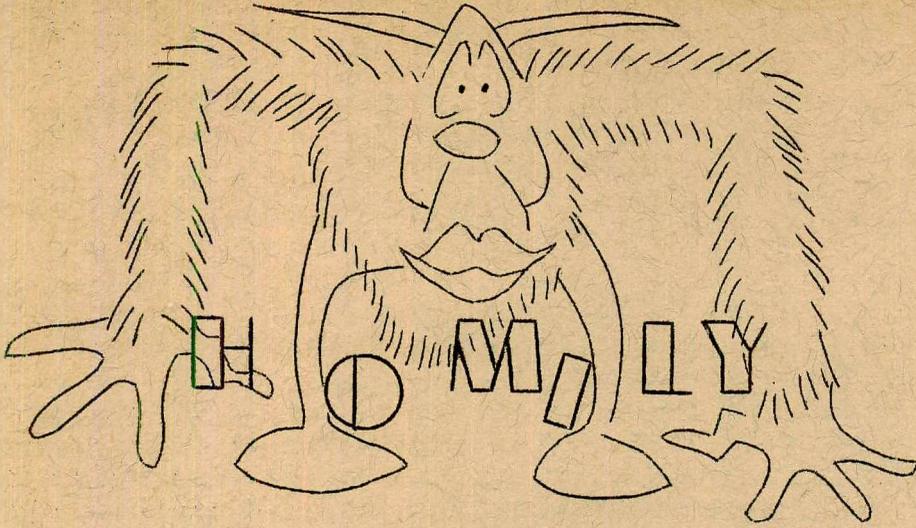
Cover: Arthur Thomson and Bill Rotsler

- ATom: 26
- Dominguez: 29
- English: 31
- Gilbert: 15,21
- Jeeves: 6
- Kracalik: 3
- Mattson: 4
- Rotsler: 9,12,18,24
- Schultz: 34

As of last issue, we've ceased casting pearls before swine. You might remember we gave you the opportunity to subscribe booster ads to congratulate us upon our second birthday, but only four good faaans came through. They're such good people their quality very nearly makes up for the rather startling lack of quantity. Our grandiose plans of devoting whole pages and sections merely for the publication of the anticipated messages has given away to this modest section:



-----  
 Now why don't you act 2 yrs.old?  
 ----- Don Melton -----  
 Len Moffatt Loves Bane  
 ----- Len Moffatt -----  
 Congratulations on your recent  
 child and forthcoming marriage.  
 ----- Ted Pauls -----  
 Now you act 2 yrs old! Bob Tucker  
 -----



LET'S RUN A FLAGPOLE UP IT: No one can rightly accuse the Latter-Day faaan of being a lazy sort. His fanzine productivity may have fallen, and his family may be growing all but imperceptibly; but he's apparently as eager as ever to serve on those occasional committees which idealistically, yet unpragmatically, attempt to save fan-

dom from its own rather incorrigible self. Such a movement is the Neo Fan Fund, which, by all indications, deserves the Buffalo Chip Award as the most incredibly unworkable project since the days of Daugherty's diarrhetic brainstorming.

The project's initial publicity appeared in Pilikia 7, where Chuck Devine devoted his editorial to some rather inarticulate effervescing over an idea cast his way by Philadelphia's Harriett Kolchak. To quote Devine:

"The idea is to have some cash on hand to help out neos who can't afford to get to a con, or to help out fen at cons who lose their wallets, have their pockets picked or who otherwise end up without enough cash to get home on or to pay their hotel bill."

Apparently there wasn't any further public mention of the matter until the distribution of a flyer under Art Hayes' frank. The writing was strictly Harriett's, however, a masterpiece of that confused rhetoric for which she's so well-known and fondly remembered. Here the fan could cast his eager orbs upon the very heart of the project: its specific proposals, and its imagined virtues. Harriett now was happily "speaking in long-range terms of progressive thinking," but the idea was still bogged down with its internal inconsistencies and simple fuzzy-headed thinking.

The motivation behind the Neo Fan Fund is rather singular. Harriett had sent out her usual Christmas greeting cards, with the usual "meager return." She learned from a number of people that they preferred to donate to charity that money which they would otherwise use for the distribution of their own cards. This impressed Harriett; she decided to organize her own charity, a fan's charity, for her heart had been sadly rent by a Pittcon vision of "many fans" who were "in dire need of help." There's hardly anything more pitiful than a faaan in need, unless it's many fans in need.

After spending a few frustrating moments casting aside the more obvious errors in grammar and the numerous redundancies, I wrote a personal letter to Harriett, and received a reply dated 12 September. I sometimes find Harriett's writings to be anything but clear-cut, but here I managed to decipher some vague mumblings about corresponding with 1200 fans ("Can you do as well?") and a resounding reluctance to deal with anything of substance, save my obvious stupidity. Apparently a correspondence of such

gigantic proportions does not permit much in the way of individual responses, and I suppose we can all admire the tremendous -- err -- courage involved in such hyperfanac.

I'll be the first to admit that my translation of the flyer is probably far from perfect, but since Harriett's made no attempt to enlighten me, perhaps someone else can. There seem to be five major proposals. The first stipulates that the "subscriber" remit a minimum of \$2 to the treasurer, who will turn it over "to the committee as needed." There's the distinct possibility that I'd distrust anyone who held that financial authority, but I very definitely suspect that word "committee." In this second flyer it's hinted that "Neo Fan Fund committee" should be assumed, but the information in Pilikia was very specific in that the convention committee is the one in mind. Need I outline the very obvious disadvantages in adding to the work-load of convention workers? They have far and away enough to do otherwise, and ample opportunity to collect enemies elsewhere.

My lonely heart is warmed by the prospect of receiving a greeting card from the Fund at the beginning of each and every year. This is the second proposal, a slightly sticky one, but hardly objectionable in itself; if someone is willing to pay \$2 to receive a greeting card, that's very distinctly his business. However, there are apparently materialistic, as well as emotional, rewards for subscribing: this card is to serve as a "handy checklist of addresses." (Proposal Three.) It seems superfluous of me to point out that Ron Bennett, among others, publishes a fine directory of this sort, but, as Harriett suggests, lots of important people (like Smedley Twink) aren't encompassed by the usual fannish delinquencies.

The fourth proposal strikes perhaps closest to the heart of the matter. The funds are to be used to help those in need at conventions, "with a promise of future repayment." I'm sure even the Catholic group that held its convention concurrently with the fans in Chicago would look askance at the assumption that so large and heterogeneous a group as fandom is populated by nothing save ultra-responsible angels. Who is to determine the amount of the loan? Are there any practical proposals on hand for actually collecting the debts? Do the administrators realize how many \$2 subscriptions they'll need to send even one fan home by bus, let alone "many fans," presumably by the methods of conveyance they choose. I submit that this smacks of more naivete than a conversation between Bloch and Tucker.

The fifth proposal is as laughable as the fourth is foolish. "This fund cannot be dissolved except by a maximum vote of all fans or in the event of the complete death of fandom." I'd idly query what a "maximum" vote is in any instance, but we'll assume the intended word was "majority," and proceed to cease laughing over the malapropism and question how the quantity "one-half plus one of all faaans" can be determined when no one has a very accurate idea of what a fan is, let alone how many there might be in the whole world at any given time.

Perhaps this is, in theory, the best idea since TAFF, and it needs nothing other than an administrator with some rudimentary ability to communicate. I doubt it. Trying to apply a saintly honor system to a group such as fandom is foolhardy at best. If you decide, as I have, to completely ignore the project, you'll be ignoring the likes of Forry Ackerman and Harriett Kolchak -- but you'll be saving your money, and reserving the right to laugh.

PUSH AND POLL: For the first time in lo! these many years, all things at last appear to be in healthy alignment. Most notably, no less than two fanzine editors (Walter Breen and Ted Pauls) have publicly avowed that they'll be conducting polls shortly, and your overworked Descartes calculates the odds that the results will ever see the light of day to be about twice as good as they've been for some time. One of the poll-takers -- Breen -- has stolen a bit of my election-eve thunder, by promising to publish a list of the eligibles; but even though it's a dangerous practice, one hardly likely to cement weak friendships, I'd like to propose a little food for thought.

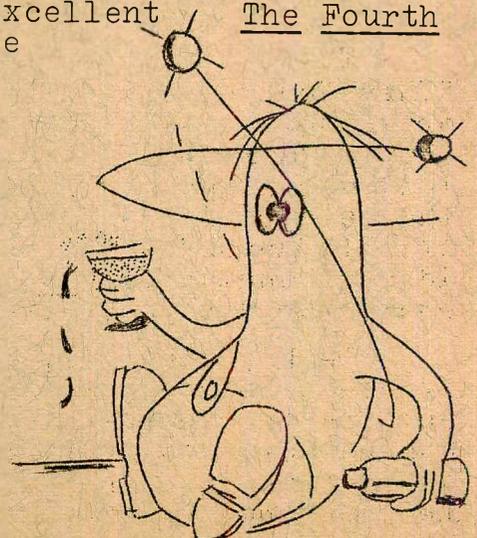
The "Best Fanzine" category probably carries the greatest prestige, and this year there are a number of fanzines eminently qualified for the Top Ten. My personal choices will probably come from among a group of "regulars" (Amra, Axe, Cadenza, Fanac, Gaul, G<sup>2</sup>, Hyphen, Kipple, Orion, Shaggy, Warhoon, Yandro and Xero); personal favorites (among them Cinder, Comic Art, Day-Star, Fantasmagorique, and Introspection); special projects (such as Eney's very fine A Sense of FAPA); newcomers (The Rebel, Rhodomagnetic Digest, Salamander); a few reasonably well-circulated apa magazines (Horizons, Lighthouse, Scottisshe, Stefantasy and Viper, in addition to Warhoon, my personal #1 pick); and some very good offerings that may or may not be eligible this year (JD-A, Habakkuk, Opsla!, Retribution, The Vinegar Worm and Void.) The jokers who seriously vote for A Trip To Hell simply aren't with it.

Proud papa that I am, I hope some of the material from Bane receives consideration in other categories. Everything listed on the accompanying ballot is eligible, but the really outstanding items in a good year were probably the Breen article, still the finest bit of material I've yet seen in any fanzine, and the Coulson and Tucker columns.

Consider, consider.

GENIUS' LOCUS: We're rather indignant, you know. Those snotty critics have once again seen fit to snub dear old stf. They've been very loud and very vociferous in their praise of Pulitzer Prize winner John Hersey's Child Buyer, but they've been equally unwilling to admit that it's science fiction. This narrow-mindedness is typically annoying, but, in this instance, it's probably very easily justified. Without the connotatively-bad label, the book will be read, and it should be. It's a wonderfully fine tract on educational stupidity, without the sticky sentimentality of George O. Smith's otherwise excellent The Fourth R, or the pervasive and slightly unbelievable horror of Huxley's Brave New World.

I hesitate to relate the plot, since its very simplicity belies the depth of thought which makes the book the fascinating thing that it is. To the conveniently stereotyped little community of Pequot comes Wissley Jones, an official of United Lymphomilloid. His purposes are "unspecified (and) patriotic," but his means incense the townspeople; he is there expressly to purchase a child genius, Barry Rudd. It is through the testimony before a properly consternated state senatorial subcommittee that the story is unravelled.



Hersey's science fictional techniques are irritatingly coy. Dates are always presented as "19--", apparently a standard practice among dabblers, and one that smacks of some vague descriptive inadequacy. U. Lympho's educational practices are revolutionary, but hardly beyond the scope of today's theory, and the only solid concession Hersey will make to technological advance is a lightweight motorcycle that folds in the middle, perhaps the most startling innovation since the battery-powered toothbrush. Yet, his conventional characterization is brilliant, often funny indeed in its exaggeration and very pointed in its implications. There is Barry Rudd, the ten-year-old genius, so very obviously the product of his mother's thwarted ambitions, so very obviously the conventional "brain" with only a minimal dexterity and the standard pyknic constitution. There is Wissley Jones, who brilliantly exploits personal ambitions and dreams to "buy out" everyone who exerts some influence on the boy. There are the magnificently pompous and often downright illiterate Senators. There is Dr. Gozar, the school principal, perhaps one of the best-drawn characters in all literature, with that highly unorthodox personality and the unshakable conviction that Barry can resist the U. Lympho scheme. It's a great and unforgettable bunch of characters.

If the book has any major fault, it's perhaps that the balance is sometimes improper. Most people are aware that there is an educational crisis, yet Hersey's themes, almost without exception, are overly-generalized. The concern of most people, unfortunately, is in the "well-adjusted," average kid, while Hersey deals only with reforms for the gifted. His views on "enrichment" aren't emphatic enough, by contrast; it simply doesn't suffice to present stupid people espousing the view that educational opportunity is "undemocratic" or rather that it smacks of privilege; these are straw men, and it would have been a far better move to destroy their belief on pragmatic grounds, rather than laugh it down.

Similarly, Hersey overstates what might have been a telling blow against the hierarchy of psychological testing. He presents a character named Cleary who tests for "creativity, leadership, aggressive maladjustment and potential alcoholism," and claims to cure such widely diverse character disorders as insubordination and sexual promiscuity, gold-bricking and "want of moral anchorage." His chief objection to IQ tests seems to be that many people simply don't know what they are or what they presume to measure, which, unfortunately, is probably true of every subject on Earth from politics to the propagation of the race.

It's unfortunate that much of the book is wasted on the startling revelation that our educational system is sometimes at fault. Fifteen years in school have rather firmly convinced me that there is an urgency to it all. Fifteen years with no real accomplishments, other than numbering to a million and memorizing the better part of the Dick and Jane mythos. Fifteen years in which something like making 200 book reports in a single year seemed remarkable to instructors who simply failed to take into account the utter juvenility of the books or the complete stupidity of the reports.

To Hersey's credit, his pathetically weak institutions are replaced by some vivid and suitably horrifying alternatives. The children "bought" by U. Lympho go through a five-step program, based upon the highly debatable theory that "no education is better than a bad education." In step one, the children are placed naked in a

six-foot cubed chamber, entirely deprived of sensory stimuli and drugged to the point that memory slips away. In Brave New World fashion, they are indoctrinated with the U.Lympho line, taught utter devotion and self-sacrifice. In step two, a long process of relearning only the "right" items begins. Step three finds the presentation of specific data which the subject will employ in his area of research. Step four is perhaps the most frightening: the tying-off of all but the most immediately necessary sensory receptors. Hersey contends that this will destroy emotionality, and, given the learning which the subject possesses, his case is a good one. Finally, the person is put to work, a devoted slave, functioning to a high degree of specialization with an IQ "in excess of 1000," whatever that means. Some souls who'll never realize their luck will be the vehicles of selective breeding.

It's a personally distasteful concept, of course, but it probably has merit if it does nothing other than to drive the conventional thought on educating the gifted a little further towards the lesser left-wing proposals. My own, personal viewpoint on educational reform is naturally limited and subjective as hell, but I'll present the ideas, for what they're worth. First, and perhaps most important, I'd suggest that there's a very real and very urgent need to supply some incentive to the student who simply can not draw sustenance from society's conventional achievement orientation. Allow the student a greater freedom of course selection, earlier specialization and some good counseling; come to grips with the fact that the well-rounded person isn't society's backbone, but rather a cocktail-party novelty. Start earlier, continue longer and apply more thoroughly whatever exists in the way of accurate "tracking" procedures, to separate the gifted from the more sparsely endowed. And, for God's sake, worry less about the present inadequacy of grammar and spelling; it's been with us a long time, and there's no indication that the situation will ever alter appreciably. Concentrate instead on some very elementary principles of entertaining writing, if only to the extent where an occasional sentence begins with a word other than "the", and book reviews don't always commence: "In Such-and-Such, So-and-So shows that..." We'll always have people who can correct grammar and correctly spell, but the person who can sustain an audience's interest may be a member of a fast-disappearing breed. I mourn his passing.

ODDS AT ENDS: If you're the type ~~that~~ scans the contents table or peruses the entire issue before turning to the editor's blatherings, you may have noticed columnist Tucker's absence. He's been granted a short leave in which to complete the re-write of a novel, even though his purposes are disgustingly mercenary. He should be back in #9, an issue that may mark the appearance of a third fine columnist. He prefers to remain anonymous for the time being, but he's an excellent writer, and I'll heartily recommend his efforts, sight unseen. ++ Thanks to a third print-run by Juanita Coulson, there are again a few copies of Bane 6 for sale, available on a first-come, first-served basis. For the late arrivals, that's the issue with the Breen censorship article, among other goodies. These copies are rarities, too; only fifteen have been printed on this "dog-vomit yellow" paper. Get 'em while they last. ++ Was I perhaps the only faaan in the world to appreciate a Time reviewer's designation of Shirley Jackson's work as "seance fiction"? ++ (Continued on page 17.)

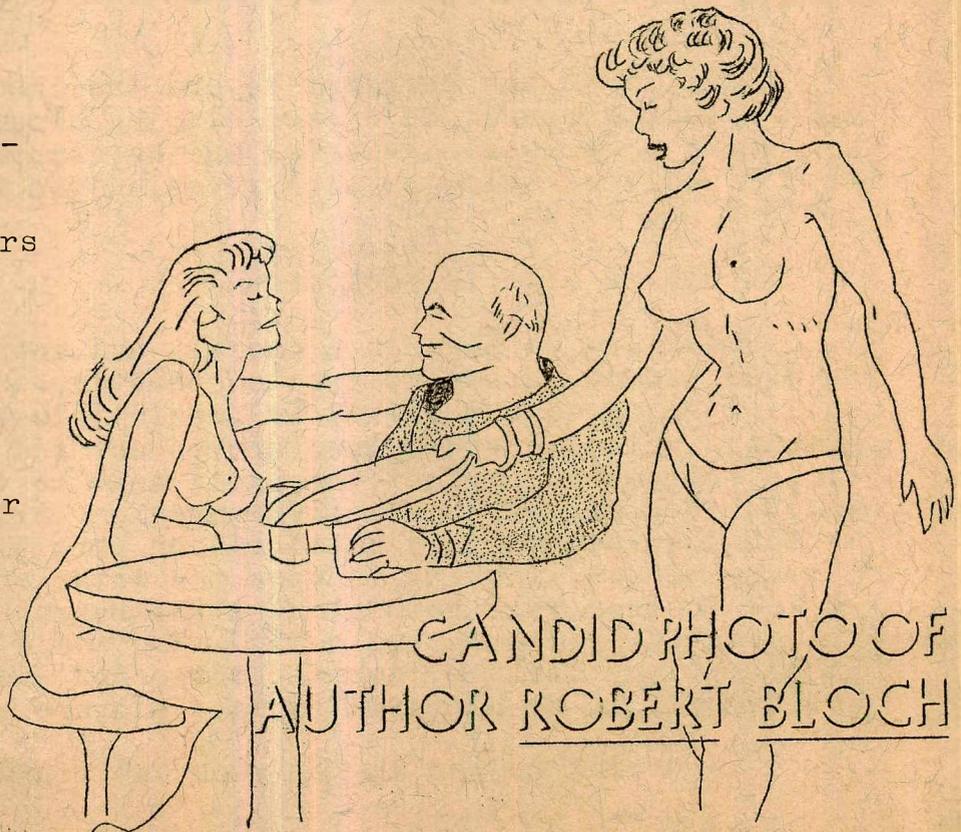
# I WENT TO A PLAYBOY PARTY FOR THE F. B. I. & FOUND -- CHARLES BEAUMONT ?

During the convention in Chicago, I attended the banquet, and while listening to Bob Tucker's witty remarks as toastmaster, someone woke me up.

The someone proved to be a naked woman, who was circulating, unnoticed, through the crowd. She was, she told me, an emissary of Hugh Hefner, publisher of Playboy magazine, and she was there to invite me to a party at his home. Since I come from the sleepy little village of Hollywood, where everybody is in bed by 9 o'clock, one way or another, I was intrigued at the prospect of a party which was to begin at 2 a.m.

Revvng my propeller beanie, I took off for the Hefner mansion at the appointed hour, arriving in the company of Philip Farmer, his wife Bette, and Clifford Simak. Hefner's place proved to be on north State Street, within a stone's throw of the Ambassador Hotel. (I know, because I threw a stone at it. When two men came running out of the hotel, brandishing flaming swords, I quickly entered the house.)

Actually, it wasn't all that easy to get into Mr. Hefner's home. I have a vague recollection of approaching the huge mansion, set behind iron gates, and ringing quite a lot of buzzers; proceeding through various foyers and anterooms; signing my name a number of times; producing a birth certificate and a letter from my pastor, Elmer Gantry. Then there was the little matter of fingerprints, and taking off my shoes, and walking through this footbath. But perhaps I exaggerate a trifle. At any event, I ascended a stairway carpeted in red velvet and



CANDID PHOTO OF  
AUTHOR ROBERT BLOCH

emerged upon a second-floor corridor leading to a bar at the head of the passageway. This bar overlooked a sixty-foot living room, magnificently panelled in light oak or walnut, as befitted a Gold Coast mansion of the early 1900's. At the far end of the room, a side doorway led to a complete buffet and serving kitchen; on the opposite side another doorway led to further rooms beyond. Between them was a marble fireplace. The room was furnished in a bewildering mixture of decors -- the panelling was, as I say, circa 1900, but bordering it at the ceiling was a huge bank, a complete battery of modern lighting equipment. A mere touch by a union state electrician could dim or brighten the entire room, change the color of the lights, switch down to a bank of floods or a single spotlight at any corner. Some of the furniture was massive and in period; other pieces were functional modern. Midway across the room was a bar-like arrangement of stereo and hi-fi equipment probably twenty feet long. Dangling from the ceiling in various spots were huge abstract paintings, hanging like mobiles. And hovering over all, quiet and gracious servitors, ready with hors d'oeuvres and various indelicattessen, to say nothing of bottled cheer. The whole effect, under a thirty-foot ceiling, was that of a museum: one would almost expect a placard reading "Mrs. Potter Palmer Got Pot-  
ted Here."

Our little group was quite alone. We knew that Messrs. Sturgeon, Boucher, Pohl and Budrys, among others, were upstairs, somewhere, taping a discourse for Playboy audiences; others of the sf pro-letariat were scheduled to arrive, but hadn't made an appearance yet. Of our host there was no sign. So we sat in hushed silence -- a silence frequently broken by the sound of mysterious buzzers in the background, of bells ringing discreetly offstage. Servitors padded to and fro in response to these subdued summons. We investigated the buffet; eggs, turkey, ham, Canadian bacon, coffee. But all was as quiet and proper as a picnic in any museum at 2 a.m.

Then, from the corridor beyond the landing, Charles Beaumont made his appearance. He'd been staying here during the convention, finishing up some assignments, and he sauntered down the stairs with a smile of welcome which revealed the Martini olive stuck between his teeth.

Would we like to look around?

Chuck led us through a doorway and down a flight of stairs to an underground, greenlit grotto, boasting a huge indoor swimming pool. Turning to the right, we passed into a garage, housing a gleaming white Mercedes-Benz sports car and -- so help me -- a bicycle propped up against the wall; next to the sports car, a fire-pole descending through a floor opening. Sliding down the fire-pole, we found ourselves in a subterranean bar, blue-lit. One wall was a picture-window, looking in upon the water of the pool on the floor above. Another wall held glass-plate reproductions of Playgirls, illuminated from a recess behind. The whole place looked exactly like what any healthy, normal redblooded American boy would build for himself if he happened to have a spare million dollars.

Returning to the living room, we found that various members

of the convention group were drifting in, together with a white-shirted A.C.Spectorsky and a red smoking-jacketted Hugh Heffner. The music played, the wine flowed, the food circulated, and the conversation began. Mr. Heffner proved a charming and knowledgable host; both he and Spec know the sf and fantasy field, and many of us present had contributed to Playboy, so there was neither stiffness nor formality. (There were no Playgirls, either.) I was told that the affair would end with a huge collation and orgy around 7 a.m., at which time Anthony Boucher would emerge, naked, from a gigantic cake, but it was now 4:30 and I was beginning to droop. Our little group extended its compliments and departed, just as the party really got swinging.

What went on between the time we left and 7 a.m. I cannot report; whether Tony ever got out of that cake or not I'll never know. I saw him the next day and he looked rather crumby.

Make no mistake about it; it was a nice party. But I had to leave and get in shape for the following evening, where in a smoke-filled room on the 14th floor of the hotel -- but, that was a convention brawl, and much wilder than Playboy's.

- - - - - Robert Bloch

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( "On Censorship and Democratic Government," Contd. from p.28 )

I believe that it does. Censorship is a two-edged sword, and may ruin as much as it saves; but its most vicious effects appear only when one community imposes it upon another. In my opinion, there is no more right for one community to tell another "you may not protect yourself from the material we choose to send you," than for the other to say, "you may not decide for yourself." So long as each community may set its own standards, and men are not rigidly bound to live within that community, then the dangers of censorship are minimal, and the benefits are maximal; and the alternative has always been this or a censorship imposed in other ways over a much broader area. Men are not angels; a democracy reflects the passions of the hour; and there always comes an event so charged with emotion that men will "do something." It would be best that they soberly consider what to do before that moment comes.

- - - - - J.E.Pournelle

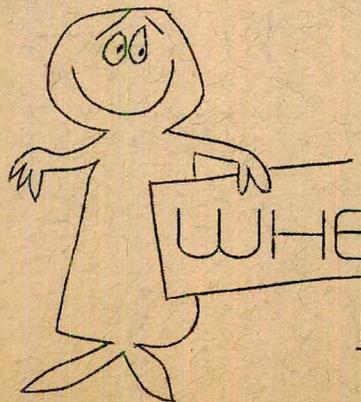
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May I recommend a fascinating book to the Bane readership? It's The Book of the It, by Georg ("no 'e'") Groddeck, and it ranges from the chucklesome to the downright fascinating. Were you aware that sexual intercourse is merely a temporary substitute for masturbation, presumably the greatest of physical joys? Did you fully realize the extent to which sexual imagery governs our lives? Read this book, gentle fans, and I promise you'll never be able to walk through a door without remembering dear Momma. ++ Historically, there have been two biological hinderances to a too-high population: low fertility or high mortality. Only man, that lucky creature, has his choice.

Just recently I succumbed to curiosity and spent 50¢ for the Ace edition of The Book of the Damned by Charles Fort. Considering all the science fiction of the last thirty years which has been based upon Fort's books, the least a serious collector can do is own a copy. Of course, I haven't actually read the book yet, but I have it; I haven't read it largely because I keep getting bogged down -- three or four pages at a sitting is my limit, and, at that rate, it takes a long time to get through 280 pages. My chief objection to Fort's writing is that he literally never begins or ends anything. He starts in the middle of the subject (constantly referring to material which allegedly appears farther along in the book), gets sidetracked, rambles around several more or less (mostly less) related subjects, throws in a ridiculous (by his own admission) hypothesis or two, gets sidetracked again, and finally decides to leave the subject deliberately for now and come back to it later -- in another book, for all I know. What Fort needs very badly is editing, but I suppose to suggest it would be sacrilege to a Fortean. Fort is also a highly unreliable guide for anyone interested in "supernormal" events, since he deliberately accepts almost all accounts of the supernormal as being equally valid, whether they were observed by dozens of reliable witnesses or were simply the brainstorm of newspapermen with columns to fill.

A similar charge of unreliability can be levelled against Frank Edwards, whose Stranger Than Science was published some time ago by Ace. In addition to a short article on meteors (these are stranger than science?), Edwards lists the Oregon Vortex ( a tourist trap ) and the Keely motor (exposed as a fraud) among his marvels. At least one of Edwards' phenomena -- though not one described in this particular book -- dealt with a mysterious occurrence in South Bend, Indiana, which Betty Kujawa proved to be pure fiction. I don't have any debunking information on the rest of Edwards' stable of miracles, but I'm suspicious.

Actually, there are quite a few books which deal with the sort of super-scientific occurrences so beloved of stf authors and readers, but most of them seem to appear in books with "Hoax" or "Fraud" in their titles. The best of these is probably Martin Gardner's Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science. I bought my copy from Dover for \$1.50, but Ballantine later reprinted an abridged version for 50¢. In addition to the more or less standard articles on flying saucers, Atlantis and medical cults, Gardner's spotlight of disbelief also falls upon such stf favorites as Alfred Korzybski's General Semantics (after my struggle with The World of Null-A, I was relieved to discover that the theory upon which it was supposedly based made no more sense than the story itself), L.Ron Hubbard's Dianetics, the sticky machine of Thomas



WHEEL OF FORTUNE

BOOK REVIEWS BY BUCK COULSON

G. Hieronymous, dowsing, Bates' eye theories, etc. (I understand that the mere mention of the book is enough to set Campbell twit-ching...) Most of all, this book is more entertainingly written than any of the other debunking tomes.

Dover has published two companion works to Fads and Fallacies. One of them, Illusions and Delusions of the Supernatural and Occult, I've never obtained. The other, Hoaxes, by Curtis D. Macdougall, covers literary, artistic, political, religious and other deceptions, with some delving into their origins and causes for credibility. Some of the more interesting items include the facts behind the popularity of "September Morn," Cook's "discovery" of the North Pole, H.L. Mencken's bathtub hoax, which is still appearing in print and will undoubtedly be accepted as a historical fact despite the author's attempts to quell it, the Keely motor (in case you're inclined to believe Edwards' account), and the numbers of people who believed in George Barr McCutcheon's fictional Graustark. The author mentions "five-hundred-odd anecdotes" in his book; a few of the more famous scientific hoaxes, such as the Piltown man and Kammerer's toads are included. The sheer quantity precludes any attempt at a detailed explanation; like Fort, MacDougall throws a vast number of incidents at the reader. However, his arrangement is far better, and his book contains an index which should be of considerable aid to anyone trying to find reference to a specific incident.

Bergan Evans' Natural History of Nonsense (Vintage, \$1.25) covers all sorts of human superstitions. Unlike Gardner and MacDougall, Evans aims primarily at the popular superstitions which "everyone knows" rather than at deceptions perpetrated by any specific individual for a specific purpose. Most of his debunking, as might be deduced from the title, concerns animal behavior. His ridicule is heaped upon stories of animal devotion (he's quite hard on Ernest Thompson Seton), the myth of the "death march" of the lemmings, the wolf packs which pursue Russian peasants in sleighs (and wolf packs in general), the simple, idyllic life of the savage, and so on. A few deliberate hoaxes which have moved into the realm of public belief -- such as Mencken's bathtub -- are also included. Believers in the educational abilities of science fiction may get a rude shock to learn how often the science in their stories is based on folk superstition rather than scientific observation. Evans is deliberately flippant in his comments, and this enhances the readability of the book. ("Perhaps the night air has something to do with it; hair never seems to turn white over day." "Sometimes one wonders why any self-respecting wolf would want to adopt a human being.") However, in his attempt to discredit everything which lacks a rational, scientific explanation, he misses a mark or two. Thus, in refuting the belief that bodies change weight at the time of death, he states that some people have claimed that "dying men, at the very moment of their decease, have been placed upon delicate scales that have recorded their mortuary degravitation. But these persons have never been able to specify in just what ghoulissh laboratory this took place, or what private home was so interestingly equipped, or the names and addresses of the relatives..." No specification? Hah!

Forgotten Mysteries: True Stories of the Supernatural by R. DeWitt Miller, covers about 100 well-documented accounts of

mysteries "unexplained by science." One of these is an account of a doctor who "weighed the soul," complete with names, dates and a reference to a published report. This, of course, doesn't establish the absolute truth of the experiment, but it does establish that Dr. Bergan Evans didn't look very hard for cases that couldn't be fitted into his thesis, since Miller's book was published well before Evans revised his for the Vintage edition. My copy of the Miller work is a Grosset and Dunlap edition which cost \$1 several years back; however, the book appeared in paperback not that long ago, and under a different title, if I recall. This book is, for my money, the outstanding "pro" work on the supernatural. Unlike Fort, Miller sticks to well-documented accounts, arranges them in some sort of logical order, provides data which can be checked, and, most important to the casual reader, writes convincingly. As an extra, a large number of his cases have yet to be explained or debunked. A few of them: the "phantoms" of World War I, the supposed translation of the Aztec code which referred to a calamity, and one or two others, have pretty thoroughly been discredited, but most remain genuine mysteries.

Next to Fads and Fallacies, J.P. Chaplin's Rumor, Fear and the Madness of Crowds (Ballantine, 35¢) is probably the most entertaining account of humanity's remarkable willingness to believe almost anything. Chaplin presents ten examples of mass hysteria, followed by a short dissertation on propaganda, brain-washing, and how to make honesty triumph. Probably no fan is unaware of flying saucers, Bridey Murphy, the Orson Welles War of the Worlds broadcast or Senator McCarthy, but it's handy to have the facts for easy reference. The other examples are less well-known. Liberals who complain about the "steadily increasing" oppressiveness of our times should read Chaplin's account of the Bolshevik scare of 1919 and the measures adopted then. We aren't so bad off. The anti-Catholic disturbances in the early 1800's seem to refute the alleged "tolerance" of our forbears. The Valentino craze is well-known enough, but the Millerite fanaticism of the 1840's has been less well-publicized. I happen to remember the daily (or nightly) villanies of the "Mattoon fiend" from the newspapers while they occurred, and I imagine Tucker does, too. Most faaans seem to have missed this amusing episode; and I'd never encountered a description of the "Great Airship of 1897," which seems to be ideal material for the saucer fanatic; after all, it was seen by hundreds of people and reported in all the best newspapers.

Books exposing medical quacks and books by medical quacks both seem to be eternally popular. I noticed a pb edition of Arthritis and Folk Medicine on the newsstand recently, but I didn't buy it. The history of quackery is touched on in Fads and Fallacies and several other books, and is the central theme of The Golden Age of Quackery by Stewart Holbrook (Collier, 95¢.) Holbrook recreates the medical climate at the turn of the century, when Lydia Pinkham's Compound, Swamp Root, Peruna, Hostetter's Bitters, Kickapoo Oil and Moxie Nerve Food did their bit to improve the national economy, even though failing to do much for the national health. A few of them -- Peruna, Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery and Perry Davis' Liniment -- are still around, though their claims have been modified, and both their alcoholic content and their profits lowered. (The sale of Peruna was once forbidden on Indian reservations under the law curtailing the sale of alcohol to the noble red man.)

However, before you congratulate yourself on living in an enlightened day and age, pick up a copy of The Medicine Show, written by the editors of Consumer Reports and published by Simon and Svhuseter for \$1.50. This takes up the use and usefulness of such things as laxatives, vitamins, tranquilizers, reducing formulae and the like, as well as devoting a chapter to the outright quacks who peddle "cures" for cancer, rheumatism, etc. In addition to providing amusing (and occasionally horrifying) accounts of the beliefs that humanity is heir to, it gives sound advice on what can be done for common afflictions.

More odd beliefs are displayed in Love Cults and Faith Healers, by Arthur Orrmont (Ballantine, 50¢), which is devoted to some of



America's more colorful religious prophets. Also, Ballantine put out a whole series of books reprinted from hardcovers edited by Alexander Klein: Grand Deception, The Magnificent Scoundrels, The Fabulous Rogues, and Rebels, Rogues and Rascals.

Confidence men, impersonators, scientific and literary hoaxes, business frauds, spiritualists and about any other sort of swindler you care to name are included. Taken together -- which I don't recommend -- they make up a picture of human gullibility which is truly amazing. You begin to marvel at the fact that science has advanced as far as it has, in the face of such universal stupidity. If you have the stomach for it, you might add It's a Racket, by Maurice Beam (MacFadden, 50¢) to the list. The choice of publisher for this particular book strikes me as being amusing, inasmuch as Bernarr MacFadden's own health theories, while not exactly labelled "rackets," are given a good going-over in Fads and Fallacies. This book, however, is an excellent guide to the current line in swindles. Among other things, it exposes one particular racket that I almost bit on several months back. (I can't even claim to have been saved by native shrewdness; I didn't send off my dime because I never got around to it.) There's another pb on swindlers published by Ace, but I don't have a copy.

To round out this review of gullibility, a recent Ballantine selection entitled The Impossible, by Dick Gardner and priced at 50¢, looks like a treatise on the supernatural, and is usually placed in with the science fiction by newsstand proprietors. Mostly, though, it concerns the trickery behind stage magicians and carnival acts, with glimpses of an occasional imposter and an even rarer glimpse of an occasional "supernatural act," such as the Fiji Island "fire walk" (which Gardner claims is not only genuine, but can be -- and has been -- performed by Europeans, and that anyone "can walk a bed of red-hot coals eight to ten feet long with bare, unprotected feet, provided he takes no more than four steps and takes them at a steady pace, putting each foot down for exactly the same length of time and with exactly the same amount of pressure." Probably he's right -- but I'll let someone else try it.)

Getting to science fiction, there have been some interesting paperbacks appearing recently. Ben Orkow's When Time Stood Still (Signet, 50¢) is quite interesting -- but note that I said "interesting," not "good" or "entertaining." A major factor of interest

is how this cross between a 1930 Amazing and a 1962 True Confessions ever got published. Every so often Signet hits a new low in their science fiction; it seems incredible that the same company could have published Heinlein, Aldiss and Asimov as well. Hero Ned Creighton makes even Richard Seaton seem believable by comparison, Scientist Leo Wallach would be right at home alongside the fictional inventors of the 1930's, and the cliché-ridden dialog is enough to make you want to go out and fwoop up. It will probably be called "woman's-magazine-science-fiction," which will be an error: the major women's magazines in this country print far better and less "precious" material than this.

A better buy is a recent Ace Double, Times Without Number by John Brunner and Destiny's Orbit by David Grinnell. The Brunner novel appeared as a series of three novelettes in New Worlds; it's an alternate-worlds story, the determining event being the victory of the Spanish Armada over the English. Brunner's handling of time paradoxes is as logical as time paradoxes are likely to be, and each of the three stories is entertaining, with the third being by far the best of the three. On the other side, David Grinnell tries a broad farce, which isn't particularly good but is at least acceptable and will probably be enjoyed mightily by the younger crowd. This is by far the best thing by Grinnell that I've read, mediocre though it is. At least I didn't give up in the middle, which I have with Grinnell's other work for Ace.

I have a feeling James Blish enjoyed himself immensely while writing The Night Shapes (Ballantine, 50¢). I've never read much of H.Rider Haggard's works, so I can't be certain whether to call this a parody or a pastiche. The exaggeration of certain characteristics tends to convince me that it's a parody, but then Haggard's own writing gets pretty wild at times, and it's possible that Blish just wanted to see if he could write a modern version of Haggard and sell it. I'm pretty certain that regardless of how I look at it, devotees of Haggard and Burroughs will snap it up as a modern masterpiece, and I keep wondering if Blish's humor will extend into a series, perhaps: The Return of Ktendi, The Beasts of Ktendi, The Son of Ktendi, and so on. Anyway, here we have mysterious Africa of the early 1900's, populated by the embittered White Hunter, the faithful Native Friend and Animal Friend (the latter a twenty-five-foot python, which also inclines me to view this as parody), the beautiful English girl, the Mysterious Expedition, the Lost Valley (complete with a Lost Tribe ruled by a White Queen and the Prehistoric Monsters Which Still Exist in This Remote Fastness.) You can probably figure out the plot yourself, except where Blish twists its tail a bit to make it both more logical and funnier. The book is written completely straight-faced; Blish never descends, as Aldiss did in The Male Response, to overt burlesque. Viewed by itself, it's a rather improbable African adventure novel. Viewed in the light of earlier African fantasies, it's hilariously funny. I think it's going to be one of my favorite books; I've just finished it and I already have a considerable urge to read it again.

The first six books of Pyramid's "Worlds of Science" series were mentioned here earlier. Six more have now been released; all are priced at 75¢ and continue the uniformat. Raymond L. Ditmars' Snakes of the World is a basic work on reptiles, for the layman. It deals primarily in classification, though it also goes into some

detail on the record lengths of various snakes and -- for some inexplicable reason -- on the relative merits of the various species as pets. (You want to keep a pet dwarf python, you go ahead; I'll stick to dogs.) Man and Dolphin, by John C. Lilly, I'll heartily recommend to all science fiction fans, as it deals with a matter dear to their hearts: communication with an alien race. (It isn't as easy as it's made out to be.) Being a scientist, Dr. Lilly doesn't state dogmatically that dolphins are as intelligent as humans, but they have brains of approximately the same size and complexity, and their observed actions seem to indicate that an attempt to communicate with them is worthwhile. At the very least, reading this will make you think twice about that fictional gimmick that automatically translates English into Martian and vice-versa.

Other books in the Pyramid series include Giants of Science by Philip Cane, The A B C of Physics by Jerome S. Meyer, Computers by Stanley L. Englehardt, and Kingdom of the Octopus by Frank W. Lane. Since I haven't read these I can't review them, but you might want to keep an eye out for any titles that interest you.

The Old House of Fear by Russell Kirk (Avon, 50¢) is an adventure-suspense novel masquerading under the alias of a "Gothic tale." It's not at all bad as an adventure novel, though the back-cover blurb, taken from a newspaper review, should subsequently be taken with a large grain of salt. Kirk's characters are possibly "vivid" when compared to those of Ian Fleming and John D. MacDonald, but they're a long way from being "three-dimensional." Still, it's an entertaining book; don't be deluded into expecting any fantasy and you'll probably enjoy it.

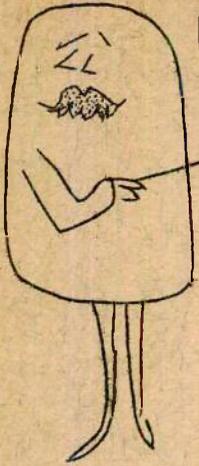
A couple of stf classics are back in print; Lancer has reissued Jack Vance's The Dying Earth, with a 75¢ price tag, and Pyramid has reprinted Hal Clement's Mission of Gravity at 40¢. Vance's book was previously available only in the relatively rare Hillman edition, so this edition is a real service to fans, even with its overly high price. Mission of Gravity has appeared in both magazine and hardcover editions, but the only previous paperback was a Galaxy Novel and is practically as scarce as the Hillman book. Both novels should be in the library of any fan.

- - - - - Buck Coulson

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(Odds at Ends, continued from page 8 ).

Andy Offutt (233 Savoy Road, Lexington, Kentucky) has a "large number" of pbs, a near-complete file of Galaxy, a lot of F&SF's, ASF's and a few others, mostly Vol.1#1 stuff. He wants to buy or trade for old Marvel's (from the thirties), Terror Tales, Horror Stories and Planet's. For some strange reason, he'd also like to know where the hell he can find old comic books like Phantom Lady. You'll enjoy dealing with the guy, if his language doesn't bother you. ++ Have you noticed that the television emphasis seems to have shifted from the adventurous and uneducated cowboys and private eyes to the more responsible and learned doctors and lawyers? Or does it just seem that way?



TODAY'S LECTURE CONCERNS  
THE ETHICS OF FAN-EDITING

FOR OUR  
GREAT FOLLY — PART 2

Much in the manner of a Robert Bloch turned loose in the Sultan's harem, I can't help but fear overextending myself. The subject at hand, you might remember, is "ethics," but it's a broad one, and, like Bloch, with minimal rationalization I could easily branch into a number of vaguely-tendered associations. Thus, while the specifics of presentation and production might seem somewhat out of the scope of fandom's bucolic Emily Posts, they have a very definite bearing on our investigation when they impinge upon what we've been casually terming the "fannish contract."

Back -- Way back -- when postalcards cost a penny and mimeo paper a nickel a ream, the neophyte editor was far less likely to fall into financial straits than to succumb to "burnout." There were simply more temptations. The apas that now have waiting lists longer than Tucker's beard then admitted the newcomer with only the most nominal of delays. The professional magazines demanded their regular letters. And, with the Standard Twins as a shining example of the broad vistas illuminated by companion magazines, no faneditor worth his salt saw fit to split his publishing efforts. It was rather loosely estimated that the average faaan would be sick of it all in two years' time.

Today, we might make more accurate predictions, given a certain knowledge of the editor's finances. The trend among neofans seems to be to spend prodigious sums on lavish early issues, gaudily bedecking them with all manner of folderol; inevitably he witnesses two closely-related phenomena: the gradual disappearance of funds once earmarked for other pursuits, and a readership that, try as it might, simply cannot say nice enough things about the material to justify its elaborate presentation. It's truly a pity that most fans apparently missed the greatest lesson in amateur publishing that's ever likely to be offered them: the awarding of a Hugo for "Best Amateur Magazine" to Cry of the Nameless. From the standpoint of production and presentation, Cry had -- and, to a somewhat lesser extent, still has -- little to recommend it to the esthetically-inclined, save some exceptionally sturdy staples. Yet, it won a Hugo, which one might logically assume to be an appropriately graphic demonstration of the superiority of fanzine text over fanzine appearance.

Yet, whether the problem is overproduction of overexpenditure, the results are the same: the fanzine that folds suddenly simply cannot fulfill the "contracts" which its editor has made. Subscriptions remain in the editor's hands, though as often through inertia as simple dishonesty. All those manuscripts are lost, their publication to be delayed where the carbons still exist, and ruled out where the editor held the lone copy. Very few artists can recoup the losses thus suffered. Even in this light, it seems that the method and manner of production and presentation are important in only two ways: in the fulfilling of special promises, particularly to artists (whose techniques vary with the supposed means of duplication), and in some sort of financial stability which makes the sudden cancellation of publication a reasonably unlikely occurrence.

Similarly, only the extremes in fanzine "policy" logically fall under our consideration. I'd like to think no one would be so stupid as to publish a magazine devoted to nothing other than libel and prevarication, but the appearance of A Trip To Hell has firmly convinced me that it isn't entirely impossible, given a sufficiently egoboo-hungry publisher. A number of other editors -- myself among them -- will freely admit to emulating other fanzines in certain personally admirable particulars, so the policy probably isn't harmful; but downright copying is likely to lead to at least two embarrassed editors and an amused readership. The amusement turns to scorn if the neophyte takes it upon himself to borrow freely from some prozine; he may or may not be a pseudo-Campbell, but if his fanzine reads like Analog, he can't rightly expect to garner the Hugos that Davidson and Bergeron would otherwise earn.

It wouldn't seem I'd need to mention that, should you accept the aid of the N3F, the local club or church or that wealthy Texan, that you acknowledge your benefactor. The press which you're loaned may be broken-down, and the money received counterfeit, but you're duty-bound to recognize that "generosity." Do him that small favor; we all like to feel productive, don't we, Dean?

The problems of beginning a fanzine from scratch can be nothing less than stupendous, so it's a constant source of amazement to me that so many newcomers enter the field through a co-editor situation. The sort of arrangement probably comes closer to squaring the difficulties of the single editorial state than it does to doubling them, even though such matters as the division of expenses and labor are often settled easily enough. Theoretically, two fans good enough friends to edit a magazine together shouldn't have any major difficulties, but I can testify from embittered experience that this simply isn't the case. Where the editor should be worrying about whether he'll be able to get one trade copy from Buck Coulson, a pair sharing the editorial chair -- symbolically or otherwise -- puzzles over the weighty if not impossible task of inveigling a brace of Yandro's.

I won't presume to suggest what sort of material you gather, since we all have ideas which differ at least in degree. Print that material which best suits your individual tastes, and don't cater to the unreliable tastes of that uncouth proletariat readership, which somehow knows even less about it all than you do, if you can imagine such a highly unlikely situation. However, there are a few very definite individual considerations that need to be given the varying types of material.

For instance, you'll find that columnists are the most taken-for-granted people in all the world. It might truthfully be said that they are more mistreated, misused and misunderstood than husbands. Their's is a sorry lot, torn between a readership that usually fails to comprehend the difficulties in both building a column's personality and yet varying the material from installment to installment, and an editor who bullies them mercilessly, dictating everything from subject matter to the type of paper on which the manuscript must be submitted. In return, though, the editor can and should make one very elementary concession -- that of "exclusive contract." This means, very simply, that where an editor has a very competent book reviewer, for example, he shouldn't be in the market for further outside reviews, solicited or otherwise. The exceptions are those that fall well outside the normal scope of the columnist's duties and activities.

I suspect that every conceivable type of fiction has seen print in fanzines, and, almost without exception, it's been rather sorry stuff. It's often plagiarized, seldom original, usually overly-pretentious and only rarely worth the effort of printing and reading. There are two types of fanzine fiction: "fan" and "faaan;" the distinction is very elementary. "Fan fiction" is science fiction written by faaans, and, on the whole, it's pretty bad. It's existence is seldom justifiable on the grounds of quality, so the usual excuse is that "Bradbury got his start this way." I'd have to agree with that, but some of us don't give a faint damn for Bradbury anyhow, and I might insert parenthetically that Orville Pubescent similarly began his literary career by writing fan fiction. Believe me, his early efforts were every bit as good as Bradbury's. "Faaan fiction" is another thing indeed. The writers tend to be more familiar with their subject matter, and the characters tend to need less delineation and more simple description. This is usually pretty popular stuff, but the enthusiasm wanes from time to time, as the emphasis shifts from telling a story to simply dropping the names of all one's acquaintances.

Convention and trip reports are always in vogue, but certain flagrantly bad examples have dampened the response on occasion. Parents of tender youngsters seldom take too kindly to the latest in convention reports, which follows the highly questionable writer from one bed to another, through an epileptic fit, a night in jail, a battle with the piles and, eventually, ends in a colossal drunken stupor. This sort of thing is probably interesting to only the writer's wife, who was curious as to what hubby did at those "fiction conventions." Trip reports are fully as bad, and usually longer; the sordid accounts of visits with various fans along the way may be fun for the reader, but this sort of candid reporting -- you'll remember that Marion Bradley, in these pages, called it "betraying the salt" -- is likely to earn the writer little more than a cool response when he sees fit to visit elsewhere.

There are as many types and kinds of reviews as there are sorts of materials ripe for "evaluation," and similarly, there exists a proportional number of difficulties. One involves the ass who thinks of a review as little more than a vehicle for his personal attacks. He's a particularly obnoxious sort when he directs his invective against a simple neofan, one who can probably be expected to alter his original stupidity, given half a chance. As Chuck Wells has said, "(The reviewer) can save his temper tantrums for the rare fan editor who, through his own snotty disregard

of the ethics of fandom, earns an attack." Some people go this sort of ass one step further, by cutting into some personality, and then neglecting to send a copy of the "review" the victim's way. This is a handy way to postpone a knock-down, drag-out fight, of course, but I still can't believe the saving in blood is worth the oversight. There are very obvious limits to a fair policy. You may rake JFK's latest book (Things My Father Taught Me, Yale Press) over the coals, but, even though the Kennedy clan keeps a remarkably sensitive ear tuned to the nation's press, I suspect that this doesn't extend to the fan press, and you needn't proffer a review copy. However, the stf writers are closer to fandom, although it occasionally might seem otherwise, so they should probably be given an opportunity to see the reviews.

It's a singularly rare and highly fortunate editor who escapes the rather knotty problem of dated reviews. Schedules simply ain't what they're cut out to be, and, even though your reviewers will no doubt take this into consideration, there'll undoubtedly come the time when your heartfelt pleading for an immediate column will precede its publication by anywhere from weeks to months, and more. As a simple rule of thumb, I might suggest that there's never any justifiable editorial excuse for not printing reviews whose material is no longer topical. This material was submitted to you in some semblance of good faith, represents a certain amount of work on the writer's part, and now rests in your hands on the promise of publication. Consult with the writer, if the two of you agree that the material's publication is now pointless, then appreciate the "generosity" and be doubly obsequious if you can ever talk him into writing another installment. If he fails to reply, or asks that the material be printed regardless of date, then your original obligation stands intact.



Cherish that opportunity for editor-written material, friend. It affords an opportunity for revision and presentation that you can't rightly impose upon outsiders' works; the sheer ecstasy of cutting paragraph upon paragraph from that precious manuscript must surely appeal to those with even minimal interest in self-flagellation. Of course, the most common type of editor-written material is the simple editorial, which is usually the first text in the issue. In the past we've seen editors ramble on everything from their latest conquests to the parallels between Redd Boggs and Gilgamesh, and they sometimes do so entertainingly. The most remarkable deviance, needless to say, is that between the young editors who can't spare any words in their descriptions of how terribly bad their magazines are, and the experienced fen of the world who glow with confidence. (The same youngfen, from issue #2, onwards.)

One of the most popular institutions of fandoms past was that of the editor's auto-analysis, but it's apparently something that's never found its particular niche in modern-day fandom. It can be vastly entertaining stuff, both as background information,

and as humor, where the editor concedes that he's indeed a handsome bastard, while you know for a fact that he'd frighten the smile from the Mona Lisa. Unquestionably, this sort of thing can be carried too far; I'm as uninterested as the next fellow in knowing which of my compatriots are the pederasts and which are the homicidal maniacs -- it's simply a distinction for which I hope I'll never have the least need.

Only two types of editorial material strike consistently sour notes: the editorial interjection and the feuding. The tendency to play God with one's own magazine can be very tempting indeed, and many's the contributor or letterwriter who's seen his works continuity destroyed by an editor who simply cannot hold his say. Harry Warner has rather effectively likened this to interrupting a speaker on the convention floor, and, while some people see fit to do even this, the least such a boor can expect is a similar degree of disrespect. It isn't too much to ask that you restrain your comments until the speaker has had his full say on that particular subject: and that you rather humbly remember your tremendous advantage of hindsight.

May I quote our friend G.Willick, on the subject of feuds? "Can you imagine what a boring thing fandom would be if everyone was busy patting everyone else on the back?" A feud is a "healthy sign," and "a feud is also entertainment...it belongs in a fanzine." The concept of a world in which the only alternatives is hardly less believable than a fandom where a person must be either a backslapper or a rough-and-tumble fighter. I'd be the last to suggest that fuggheadedness go unrewarded (see the editorial pages), but to consciously look for trouble, as a means of entertaining one's readership, strikes me as being incredibly stupid. The details of one's sex life may also be "entertaining," for one of a variety of reasons, but that doesn't necessarily mean they properly "belong in a fanzine." A feud rarely brings anything but trouble, almost inevitably draws into the fracas people who have only the vaguest notion of what's going on, and generally isn't something to be undertaken for the sheer fun involved.

I've heard certain people voice the opinion that the only editorial decision involved in artwork is its selection. This very definitely isn't true, since artwork often demands some decisions fully as individual as does text. The method of duplication one has at his disposal will naturally determine the medium in which the artwork will be mastered, but there are certain considerations which hold regardless of the means of reproduction. One particularly annoying bit of layout involves printing an illustration in the middle of a page of text, with the material scattered about on either side. That the eyes must skip from one column, across the BEM's tentacles and hopefully recapture the text on the other side is an abomination. Just as there's nothing wrong with planning the presentation of artwork, there's nothing particularly evil about editing it, either, provided there's an extra element of caution where the editor is less familiar with perspective and artistic balance than with syntax. If that complicated background is going to take away from the effectiveness of the illustration, ruin the stencil or simply drive you mad, then by all means ignore it.

Just as with material, I wouldn't presume to suggest what sort of artwork you employ. However, a word of caution: there's little to be said for the aphrodisiac qualities of even the

starkest of fanzine nudes, so in the absence of any hope for a real effect, the editor might as well look for both estheticism and circumspection. Phallic and kteic symbols are fine, but please exercise particular care that they're indeed symbols.

An editor may gather the best material and artwork in fandom, present it lovingly and with imagination, and yet his efforts are not complete until he finds a readership that will respond to his opus, and a vehicle for getting the magazine to the readers. Long ago fans gave up the idea of circumventing the post office as a means of fanzine distribution, and it seems as though we're bound to live with our differences and difficulties. Tucker, as a vigorous youth, found that a friend in the post office (like young Samuel Osgood) might be expedient, and if you want to run the risk of hypocrisy, you might follow suit.

Most of us are left in the rather uncomfortable position of fathoming the local postal inspectors' opinions and prejudices. It obviously isn't safe to accept the Supreme Court's "obscenity ruling," as that employed by every postmaster in the United States, even though a lengthy court battle would almost certainly decide any justiciable issues in your favor. It's always wise to go easy on the nudes, the obscenity and the cheap pornography, since it's seldom worth anything, and certainly isn't worth the anxious moments you might suffer at the hands of some inspector who firmly believes that you're the greatest threat to human morals since the Marquis de Sade.

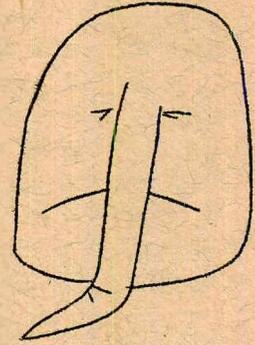
Needless to say, I've had my troubles with the post office, from the usual torn magazines and returned copies from addresses that prove to be perfectly operable, to one full-scale interrogation. This latter event was the result of Alan Dodd's "You, Too, Can Be A Post-Office Robber," an utterly satirical and fatuous but eminently suspicious article from the first issue of Bane. My objections that the article was pragmatically worthless seemed to be beside the point, and, not at all surprisingly, none of the postal men had read the article itself. I wasn't spared a tour of the post office building with the chief inspector, calling upon such notable individuals as the United States Attorney. All I got was a warning, so my harrassment was light.

Assuming that, with the exception of convention distribution of one's fanzine, the "how" is the post office, we come to the problem of "whom." It can't be any real source of difficulty for the neofan to come up with a reasonably intelligent mailing list, given the directories, membership lists and review listings that currently flood fandom. However, there is a certain confusion which arises in the maintenance of a mailing list, and it's probably a function of the variety of ways in which modern editors make readers earn their keep.

The subscription is still a popular device, even though the most startlingly obvious trend in modern fanzine publishing has been the gradual de-emphasis on cash payment and the subsequent awakening of interest in letters of comment. It's probably the product of the rather obvious state of affairs concerning fan finances: while an occasional fan can make his magazine pay for itself, yet to appear is that genius who can make the books balance while insisting upon a minimal \$1.15 wage for his own efforts. It's no great wonder that the emotional rewards of an interesting letter have often come to be valued over arbitrary subscriptions.

If there's any way in which subscription policies may be pigeon-holed, it's probably along the distinction between those which are designed to pay part or all of the magazine's cost, and those designed to discourage subscriptions. If you should decide to offer your brain-child for filthy lucre, then forget the slide rule and the invoices and merely pick a figure from thin air; no one expects you to heel to some cost/price system, and if you don't horribly overcharge, your hedging will probably go unnoticed. Get yourself an overseas agent to collect all that sterling that can't easily be shipped to the states.

Similarly, there are two distinct trade policies: the "all for all" and the "one for one," both of which are rather pointless in their strict application. The former relies more upon good faith than anything else, assuming that two fans with a trading arrangement will produce magazines which will balance each other out over the course of time. This would be as ridiculous for someone like Ted Pauls as it would be for Donaho to trade Habakkuk on the latter basis with every little crudsheet that comes along. Most of us find ourselves in neither extreme, but the problem is as perplexing, since there isn't any really satisfactory middle-ground, either. Try to be generous, and you'll soon be disgusted; try to elaborate on some cold and precise scientific system, and you'll soon be squabbling over whether to match page-by-page (British fanzines have smaller-sized pages, by and large) or word-by-word (remember, pica and elite are hardly equivalent.) It's particularly stupid where the editor decides to make some distinctions on the basis of quality of material offered, even where the distinctions, in extreme cases, might be painfully plain.



Among fanzine editors the letter is probably the most popular of the conveyances by which a reader may earn his literary keep; but here, too, there are very striking divergences in policy. Some people credit only the "good" letters, which usually rules out only the most obvious instances of postal cards or wide-margined notes; others only those letters printed; and still others, everything received. It's utterly pointless to suggest any "best" method, since it'll vary from editor to editor, with the quality of the letters received and the emphasis on lettercolumn. Like most everything else, it's best to avoid the extremes, adopt a flexible policy and never worry about excesses of justification.

Contributions of material and art, understandably, are worth more than the casual communication. My policy, generally, has been to accept material, send the writer or artist all the issues until his material appears (since it's certainly not his fault you have a backlog), the issue in which it appears and all the ensuing numbers in which the letter comment waxes strong. This may sound like quite a few, but generally it boils down to a mere pair of issues, which certainly isn't too much to ask.

It's a strange sort of mental tug-of-war that you may find yourself immersed in. On one hand is the hopefully ethical consideration of doing only those things which you can justify for very practical reasons, and, on the other, a very practical and very demanding need for abstinence from explanation altogether. For, in the end analysis, the poor editor's position is rather

indefensible anyhow, and all the masses can rightfully demand is that the editor have a full command of the alternatives. I hope this article has suggested some, and that your comments both add to the enumeration and follow some of the conclusions to their logical ends.

It was Vernon McCain who said that "each fan works out his own adjustment." Just as the world itself would probably be a significantly better place to live were everyone "well-adjusted" to a degree -- and I take "well-adjusted" as it's meant in the inter- and intrapersonal sense, not as Lindner's synonym for "conformist" -- so would fandom. This needn't be any restriction upon either individualism or the simple bad taste of which some people are so obviously fond. Rather, it's nothing more than an adjustment to this particular sub-society as you've hopefully adjusted to the world about with such nuances as language and toilet-training. In Horizons 36, Harry Warner said: "It's the way you behave in fandom, not fandom itself, that determines your experiences."

Tell me, what sort of experiences do you want?

- - - - - Vic Ryan

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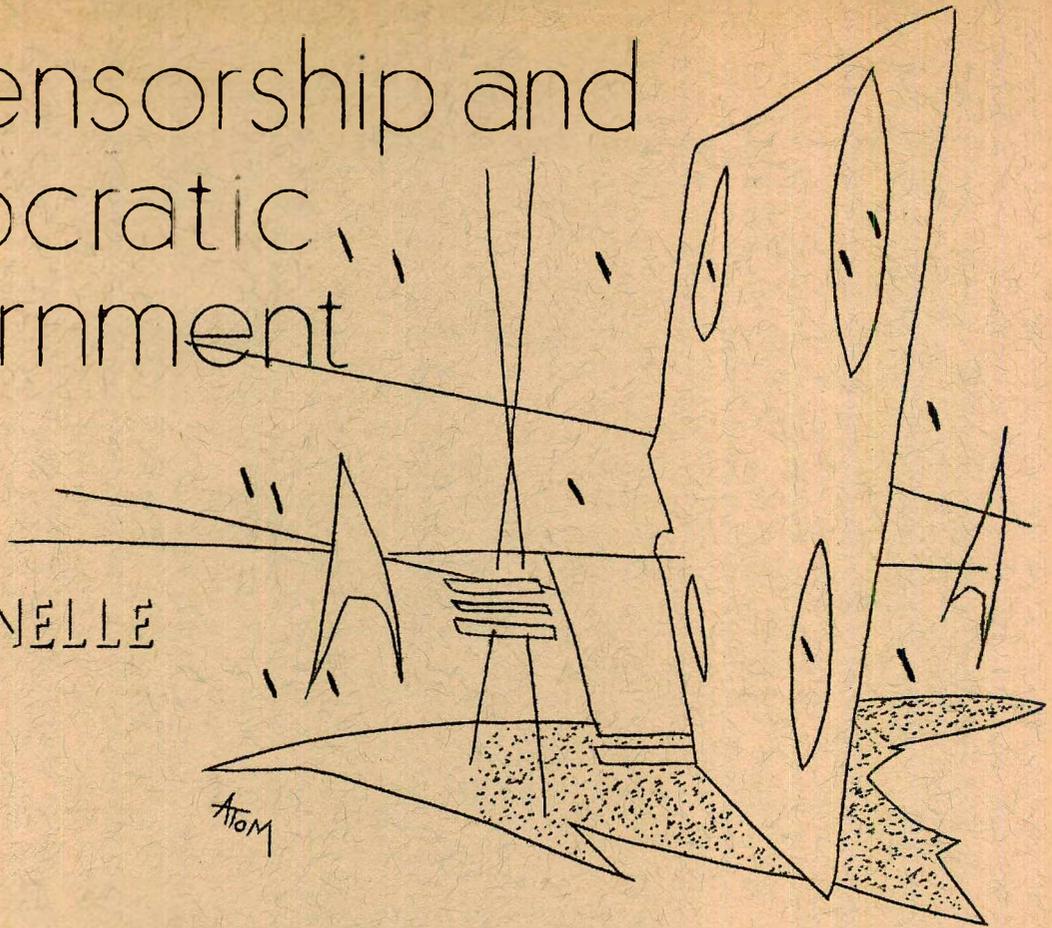
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.....With some special thanks for services or inspiration to  
Dick Bergeron, Marion Bradley, Dick Eney and Harry Warner.

# on censorship and democratic government

J. E. POURNELLE



One of the oldest problems in Western political theory is that of censorship. From the time of Plato, who urged an almost total censorship of the arts, to the present, men have debated the wisdom and expediency of allowing the State or community to determine what shall and shall not be read, seen, and heard.

In spite of the fact that great men have argued on both sides of this question, it has become fashionable to dismiss the entire issue with some puerile comment to the effect that "censorship of any kind is ridiculous and lousy," or "it stinks." The quality of language used in these comments is perhaps a good indication of the depth of thought reflected by it; for, in the final analysis, the problem of censorship is so basic that it cannot be separated from other great political issues of history. It is a power asserted somehow to belong to government; and the query is, ought the government to have that power, and if so, to what degree?

We must begin by distinguishing censorship imposed by a non-representative government, such as a monarchy or aristocracy, no matter how legitimate that government may be, and censorship imposed upon a community through common consensus, approved by a duly constituted representative body. In one case, we may say that a non-representative government is *per se* a government of limited powers, and ought to be so, and the burden of proof falls upon those who would say that censorship is an inherent power of government; but in the case of a Republic or Democracy, where the people are sovereign, why should they not have the power to restrict the printing and showing of matter which the community -- or Nation -- feels ought to be rejected? Why should not a man, in his sober

moments, be able to protect himself from temptations to which he believes he might, under other circumstances, succumb? And why may not a community suppress material which has been demonstrated to be, through its power to inflame the passions, dangerous to peace and order? We may rephrase the question, and ask what limitations are possible to the powers of a truly representative government -- i.e., a government which truly represents the feelings of nearly all citizens of a community, not a mere majoritarian assembly.

For the modern liberal and ethical relativist, it seems to me that there is no answer to this question. If one believes that there are no absolute standards, that all values are made by man, then to what principle may one appeal an expression of the General Will?

For the conservative, however, and for those that believe that there is a fundamental order in the Universe as applicable to humans and human values as to physical objects, the question is a knotty one, involving the whole problem of the sources of sovereignty. It cannot be dismissed with a shrug; and I suspect that the modern liberal, faced with the question of the opposition of the will of his beloved, sovereign people to his quasi-absolute standards, must also wonder if there is not something more to the problem. He had, however, best be careful; or he may find himself saying that the people cannot have censorship, no matter how much they desire it, for their own good -- thus inserting himself firmly into the ranks of the aristocratic theorists.

## II.

Let us immediately concede two points: that in the long view, censorship has never been very successful at achieving stability, and that in many, many instances the effects of censorship on the life of the community have been undesirable, producing lawlessness, bigotry, and intellectual sterility. It is not sufficient, however, merely to say this and dismiss the problem. There remain the instances in which easy access to various material has proven to be highly detrimental, producing lawlessness, bigotry and intellectual sterility, as well as rapine, murder, and general unpleasantness; and there remain the instances in which a community, denied the powers of censorship by legal means, has resorted to extra-legal methods, either through abuse of the legitimate powers of elected public officials, or by direct vigilante action. After all, whatever may be the true philosophical sources of sovereignty, it is very difficult for elected officials to act against the will of any large number of citizens, and impossible to act against the genuine consensus of the community. When one wishes government to do highly unpopular things to a community, one is advised to choose a system other than Democracy for their enforcement.

The pattern of abuse of authority by public officials -- illegal harassment of bookstores and cinemas by the elected district attorney, etc. -- to produce extra-legal censorship is too well-known to describe in detail. In addition, I am sure most of the readers are familiar with extra-legal actions by private citizens, who will not be prosecuted because the public officials fear retaliation by the electorate. I believe we may all agree that this is a highly undesirable situation, which undermines all

limitations on authority, and encourages disrespect for the law and its servants. Certainly no community prefers this sort of thing.

### III.

In any community, then, we have the potential for extra-legal censorship at any time that a sufficient number of citizens become enraged at the results of total license. It is a powder-keg, and awaits only a spark to set it off.

Such a spark is always forthcoming. Either a particularly disgusting crime will be traced to some inflammatory product of a pander, or there will appear in print or on the screen some work that the community feels is particularly dangerous, and the hue and cry will be out. There may be several false alarms, but with the inevitability of sin, the day will dawn when a group of people, enjoying the support of most of the community, will decide to do something. When that time comes, either there will be legal machinery which can be used to introduce some rational standards to censorship, or there will be an orgy of destruction and purification, with more and more groups and individuals participating in the decision to ban what they do not like; and then it inevitably goes too far, suppressing what would never even be questioned by a more formally constituted body, as each group seeks to keep the support of others. It is a classic pattern, and an ugly one.

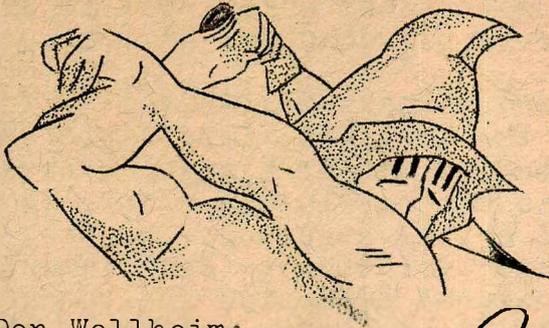
This is not the only danger; because as groups scattered throughout the nation become more and more disgusted, and are denied the power to act locally, they will seek national power to Prohibit; and, at some point in time, they will probably gain it. A national censorship cannot, by its very nature, be responsive to the needs of individual committees, and must make rules and codes which fit the least common denominator -- producing, probably, a tasteless mess such as is apparent in nations which enjoy a national censor.

### IV.

To argue for censorship powers vested in local governing bodies on the grounds of expediency may be sufficient for some persons, but for many there remains the eternal question of principle -- is censorship justified, and can it be? In other words, ought there to be censorship anywhere, regardless of whether or not it exists where I live. This problem has plagued the great social thinkers of history, and certainly will not be answered here; but it seems obvious that there can be no answer applicable to all times and places, unless one not only accepts the tenets of Natural Law, but derives from the principles thereof a conclusion seldom reached by those who adhere to the doctrine. I can add little to the literature on this subject, but I should like to point up a few questions not usually asked.

For example, if one believes that no man is justified in acting in a totally irresponsible manner, that the right to make money through the exploitation of others is not unlimited, whence comes the unlimited right to exploit the passions. If it is wrong to be a whoremaster or a dope peddler, why may one be a pander? A community may protect its youth from pederasts -- why not from panders? Do not the victims of the noxious posions poured out daily have rights as great as those of the "artists" who produce this material?

( Continued on p. 11 )



## LETTERS &amp; SUCH

Don Wollheim:

I am of the opinion that most censorship of the press in America is a voluntary thing. Editors and publishers censor themselves to avoid creating

unnecessary controversy among readers and, especially, among the distributors. The key to censorship in America probably lies among the ranks of the distributors, although the distributor himself does not censor; in fact, he doesn't pay particular attention to what he distributes. But when a particular pressure group decides to make trouble for a magazine or a book of which it disapproves, it is the individual retail outlet that gets it. This man, an innocent newsdealer or storekeeper, finds himself confronted by the protesters. He knows nothing himself, but takes the offending item from his racks, calls up the wholesale distributor and says to take it back, he "don't want no trouble." The wholesaler, after he gets a few of these kicks, throws the anger back at the publisher. Nobody passes judgment on the item. It's just a case of "trouble... who needs it?" And that's how most censorship works in this country.

As you can see, a relatively tiny pressure group, if noisy enough, can make more trouble than its size or views call for. It can convict without anything like an impartial trial. Knowing this, publishers often censor themselves to avoid possible irritations from such groups. Thus the system is effective.

I can recall a specific instance in my own business career. Back when I was with Avon Books, some twelve or more years ago, seeking to find a book on juvenile delinquency to fill a spot in our list, my assistant came up with an old title of Howard Fast's, The Children. This was an early novel of Fast's, from 1936 or so, written long before he had any leftist views or affiliations. It had been published by a respectable, conservative book house and it was available for paperback reprint. It was a fine short novel, excellently reviewed and a good example of the kind of thing we desired at the time.

The book was taken up in editorial conference for consideration and was tentatively accepted for publication. However, prior to actual purchase negotiations, it was recalled for consideration and an important official of the company directed everyone's attention to the fact that Fast was at that time under fire as pro-Communist. The argument was made that while The Children might indeed be a fine book and not in any way politically objectionable, the author himself had been smeared. If we published this book, it would be made the object of attack by the McCarthy-type pressure groups terrorizing the public media at that time. Our distributors were going to be irritated, our company smeared without an opportunity to defend itself.

Avon did not publish The Children.

CHOPPED

BEEFS

That was an example of the self-censorship which so many independent American publishers exercise. Perhaps it's not quite as vicious and unfair as some arbitrary government edict, but it is damned insidious and decidedly harder to pin down and combat.

Ted Pauls: I have a half-formed -- and perhaps half-baked -- theory that co-existence is, in the long run, impossible. This sounds terribly right-wing, but the entire matter hinges on several biological principles; one of these is that evolution occurs in man, despite his superior intelligence and social structure. We can, with our knowledge and technology, defy this evolution to some extent, but never permanently. For example, natural selection in its crude form can be thwarted to some degree by our superior medicine, which permits "inadaptive" types to remain alive and spawn off-spring. However, it's never been shown that the Haldane-Muller principle (which states that a lethal gene must ultimately be paid for in a death, either in the organism in which it first appears or in partial disabilities in descendants, all of which add up to one "genetic death") is not applicable to homo sapiens.

Several centuries ago a hemophiliac had little chance of living long enough to marry and leave descendants. This is unfortunate, and it's easy to say that an increase in our medical knowledge and technique which would alleviate this situation is an improvement. But is this true? Hemophilia, like some other illnesses, has not only unpleasant physical effects, but some unbearable psychological ones as well. The hemophiliac goes through life in constant fear of even a minor scratch, which would cause him to bleed to death were medical attention not received immediately. It is a moot point whether or not such an individual is "better off" living sixty or seventy years under such strain, as opposed to the early death one could expect three hundred years ago.

Of course, many hemophiliacs do not marry or have children. Of those that do, many will take the chance, and produce children who don't have the affliction. The point is that we cannot halt the process of evolution -- we simply spread its effects over a greater duration of time and generation.

So man is still the product of evolution. Thus, if its principles are still physically active in our culture, may they not also have bearing on the socio-economic structure? The Competitive Exclusive Principle -- one of the "impotence principles" of biology, as is the Haldane-Muller -- states, briefly, that no two species can continue to inhabit the same ecological niche; one must eventually come to replace the other. Inevitably, when two species seem to co-exist in the same niche, it is found that they only seem to. My theory is that this Exclusion Principle may also be applied to nations, viz., to the current world situation. For convenience, I'll refer to the two "species" in this hypothesis as the United States and Russia, although it should be realized that I really mean the Western bloc and the Eastern bloc.

Now, these two countries (species) are inhabiting the same environment: Earth. They are in competition both for space for their expanding populations and for food. Both sides must meet these needs from the same general environment. But this cannot always be so. There must eventually come a time when the resources cannot sustain both species. When this occurs in a biological environment, one species displaces the other, since one is more fit to survive. This occurred in Australia artificially, when man introduced various non-native animals to the continent. They were better fit to survive (to take sustenance from the environment) than were the indigenous species, and so displaced them? Might this happen to man?

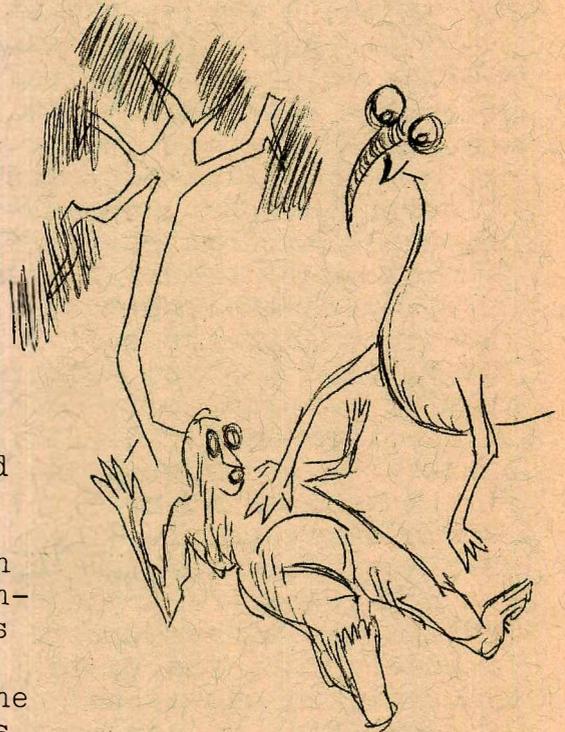
Unfortunately, this is complicated by our technology. In nature, the process, although it sounds like full-scale war, would occur rather quietly, and eventually there would be one species where before there had been two. But in our "civilized" society, this natural process would not be allowed to proceed. Whenever co-existence became intolerable, a new kind of competition -- "war" -- would erupt, and, thanks to our modern weapons, where there had previously been two species, there might be none.

"Once you have the material, as a non-paying market it's your duty to grant the writer whatever special little wishes he might have." The wishes you go on to enumerate are innocent enough, but I look askance at the attitude inherent in that sentence. It seems to be fashionable to glorify the writers in fandom and to ignore those fans who are primarily editors; since I fall into this latter category, I suppose I should say a few words in defense of editors.

Fan writers do not make a profit, as you say; but fan editors (who are usually publishers, too) not only fail to make a profit, but lose a substantial sum of money on each and every fanzine they issue. I recall reading in Fancyyclopedia II a comment by Dick Eney to the effect that the "controversy" over whether or not an editor in fandom had the right to "edit" has never been resolved. Until reading that comment, I hadn't realized that any such controversy existed.

Marion Bradley: I don't believe that legalizing drugs would create any new addicts; the evidence is pretty overwhelming that a normal, non-neurotic individual, trying drugs, experiences either an unpleasant reaction or complete indifference, and rarely goes back for a second helping. The person who becomes addicted appears to be the person who needs some emotional prop. In the world of today, there is actually no reason (except the American Puritan ideal, to legislate into a "crime" anything which we consider unvirtuous) why the emotionally inadequate should NOT live out his life in a comfortable drug-dream if it suits him better that way. Consider; the kind of person who becomes an addict is rarely a person of potential. Case history after case history says: "Withdrawn"; "No real friends"; "Poor contact with reality"; or else "Hostile to the world."

What happens to the ones who do not become addicts? Well, they often get to acting-out their aggressions and hostilities, and end up in society's custody at a cost of several thousand dollars a year, depending upon the security of detention required. Others struggle along to be "normal," frequently marry simply because society expects it, and swell the ranks of the ill-adjusted, under-loved, under-needed children. Society might well subsidize some form of phony contentment for these people, something that will keep them "quiet", tranquilized, and out of the way of society's producers, the active and the needed.



Sure, this is a radical idea. Puritan American says that it's sinful to let people be happy in any way that does not make them productive, well-adjusted citizens. (We ban bear-baiting, not because it gives pain to the bear but because it gives pleasure to the spectator.) We ban drugs, not because it will stop the crime, but because the people who use them enjoy them -- and have no need for mass consuming. But what the hell! We have an affluent society, and it's going to get more so, with automation and overproduction. We NEED some people around who are content to vegetate, without working to take jobs away from others; who will not breed more population. Cure addicts? Let's take the crime out of it and start MAKING more addicts...can you think of a more humane way to solve some of the crime problem than to let the criminals happily snooze their lives away on six cents worth of heroin a day, while the world becomes safe for the rest of us because the aggressive criminals, the rapists and murderers and burglars and thieves are pick-pockets and hatchet men are not locked up fighting the bars, but safely dreaming in an unlocked apartment casually guarded by a nurse?

All I know about marijuana is that it's said to be non-addictive, though some people become emotionally dependent upon it -- some people are very emotionally dependent upon tobacco, too, needless to say -- and it does less harm to the physical organism than the unregulated consumption of such sweet things as white sugar, which robs the body of B vitamins. (Actually, there's some evidence that sugar itself is addictive. People in Europe who live on healthy -- not overly-processed -- foods usually dislike candy as such; a taste for sweets does tend to become a self-perpetrating circle. And, for anyone with erratic blood-sugar levels, sugar acts like alcohol in the blood; a shot of energy, followed by glycogen depletion in the liver, and fatigue.)

Marijuana appears to make otherwise "normal" people behave irresponsibly. Probably if it were legalized, rigid controls would have to be imposed about the equivalent of "drinking while driving," for community safety. Irresponsible use would give it a bad name. I've heard that it heightens the sex drive, so the irresponsibles would probably neglect precautions which intelligent adults would take as a matter of course, just as alcohol causes accidents which cause people. These are the rational arguments...but try to get anyone to discuss them! They'll talk morality all day, but...!

Now they're trying to clamp controls on all sorts of mild relaxers and pepper-uppers. If the Biddies have their way, they'll probably make you go to your doctor for a prescription before you can drink a cup of hot coffee to study by at night, or a cup of hot Ovaltine if you want to sleep!

I'd like to add a tardy postscript to Jack Speer's doubts that "a kid too young to dig pornography will put it aside as a bore." If by "pornography" he means the Olympia Press stuff, I don't know. When I was in my early twenties I went through a period of reading all I could get hold of; after about six months it started sounding repetitive, and then very dull. I still, occasionally, write some for my own enjoyment. (And before you ask the next question, Ryan, when I have finished with it, I tear it into VERY small pieces and throw it into the wastebasket, later to be burned.) I write it for my own edification -- usually to see how characters would behave in such-and-such a situation. But, I've never had any of that "hard-core" pornography around the house, so I don't know how my kid would react to reading it.

I am, however, qualified to state how he reacts to the lurid-sexy-trash novels, since, because of the Checklist, I always have stacks and stacks of them lying around to be reviewed; and I've never kept Steve from reading any and all of them. I also know how he reacts to novels which treat sex realistically (heterosexual and homosexual) because there are always stacks of them lying around, too. Lady Chatterly's Lover lies right next to Twisted Lusts, Edison Marshall's The Viking rubs cheek by jowl with Colette and the Tolkein books, and he has been free, from the time he could spell out one word after another, to read anything in the house which suited him, from science fiction to the latest paperback trash about lesbians. He went through a spell when his favorite book was a thing called Body and Passion; don't ask me why they called it that, because there was damned little passion in it. It was a goofy story about two men who were together in a burning house; one was a criminal, the other a crooked district attorney. One died, the other lived, but when he recovered from the burns he had amnesia and his fingerprints had been destroyed. If he were one of the men, he'd be arrested for murder; the other, elected governor. Each of the men had a girl, but that was all the passion there was. The story gave ME the horrors, but Steve must have read it three dozen times. Then he went through a spell of reading, pretty avidly, novels about homosexuality. Two or three times during this period I started questioning my own permissiveness, wondering if he would get mixed-up ideas or something, but I told myself that the reading was obviously satisfying some emotional conflict, or some unanswered questions, and if it were the questions, and I took the books away, he'd find the answers somewhere I didn't know about. So I put Albert Ellis' Sex Without Guilt unobtrusively among the others, and left it at that. The stage soon wore off.

Tom Dilley: One would infer, from the nature of your comments upon the American National Party, that here is an organization whose precepts and actions, however misguided, are at least sane enough that the group deserves some serious treatment. If so, the ANP is something new in fanatical organizations. During the summer, while working at the St. Petersburg Times, I had occasion to read a few issues of The Thunderbolt, subtitled "The White Man's Viewpoint"; this magazine, whose printed appearance is so shoddy that one thinks even the worst examples of mimeo, ditto and (Heaven forbid) hecto infinitely better, is the O-O of the National States' Rights Party. Every now and then someone mails a copy of this thing to the Times, adding such charming notations as "Read this, you nigger-lover," and it soon makes its rounds of the building. The opinions expressed therein ("WE are white," says Member Number One, "and they are black. That's all there is to it."), the actions recounted, and what can be made of the members' appearances from the blurrily-reproduced photographs all lead one to consider the whole mess nothing other than ludicrous. I believe you'd be hard-pressed to treat the NSRP in anything like the serious fashion with which you dealt with the ANP.

Colin Freeman: "I can only argue that in my experience, people who have denied themselves sexual experience altogether, rather than accept it without love, have appeared to be much happier than people who have tried sex for its own sake." I think this is drawing too simple a conclusion. It appears to me that the connection (assuming that there is one) lies not in the very action of going without "sexual experience" in the absence of love, but in the causes of such action. It is not likely that people who are or will

be truly in love are those people who are very greatly dominated by the emotional aspects of any impressions they receive; such are the persons who would be happier in love. But such, also, are the persons who would feel most acutely the various social, mental and even emotional restraints which our culture attaches to sex. Much as they might wish to pursue sexual activity merely for the sake of gratifying a desire which surely cannot be termed any less natural than hunger, they are prevented by the emotional press of the preachings of our cultural mores. In this sense, the sensitive individual cannot be said to have denied himself sexual experience; he has had it denied him.

A less "sensitive" person, less the victim of his emotion, will not see as many difficulties in our moral setup. On the other hand, he won't be as happy in love, when and if.

Though I take the risk of undeservedly calling myself an "emotionally sensitive person", I might say that, for all outward appearances, I could serve as one of Colin's examples, for, at the present time, I believe myself to be in love, and am exceedingly happy, yet I have never gone through anything like what is usually considered "sexual experience". But I should decline to serve as an example, for I have not denied myself sex, nor ever wished to; I should have been most willing to take what I could get, but I haven't been able to get any.

← Editorial note: As we've said, all letters are subject to publication -- except where we chicken out. →

James Blish: ← In way of explanation anent "On the Wall of the Lodge", a short and fascinating offering from an early summer Galaxy. →

Way back in 1947, I had the notion that in catatonic schizophrenia the division between the consciousness and the sympathetic nervous system might have broken down, and that the reason why the catatonic's ego couldn't be reached from outside was because it had been launched on an endlessly repeating tour of the body. Since all of the experiences which the ego would encounter on the tour would be new and strange, I assumed that it could handle them only by reinterpretation into more or less familiar terms; hence the inner ear became a complicated highway cloverleaf, the spinal column a tall building housing a communications enterprise, etc. Naturally, none of these comparisons would be really suitable for handling the new experiences, so events would inevitably turn nightmarish as the transformations were prosecuted further.

I set out to write a novel based on a single such cycle, to be ended in a sort of execution as the recycling process is terminated by an electroconvulsive shock treatment. I got about 30,000 words into the thing, adding scenes from time to time when



I had nothing else to do; I didn't feel any sense of urgency because I could see no possible market for it, and, besides, keeping the thing under strict control was almost impossibly difficult.

Then, last year, Virginia suggested that the opening of the book might be made into a fantasy novelette and sold to Fred Pohl, who knew about the work and had expressed a liking for what there was of it. I said I thought Fred would be crazy to buy it, but that if she wanted to try it I wouldn't protest. In the process of turning it into a short piece, Virginia necessarily junked the original rationale and instead handled the piece as a parable, in which the original ego/patient, John Brest, becomes Everyman, whose life is a constant flight from The High Hunter (The Holy Ghost) for the entertainment of some invisible audience represented by Hosmin (The Father.) He can escape only by becoming the Clown (The Son, hence the crucifixion -- pun intended -- at the end.)

Since a good many traces of the original rationale remain, it's no wonder that the story might be baffling. The child novelist, for instance, is the rationalizing mechanism, forever damned to explain and to justify the inexplicable. What he would be in the present scheme, I have no idea; the authors of the Bible, perhaps, or John Milton justifying the ways of God to man?

What I have enjoyed about the whole episode is that it has given me a chance to stand back from something that is partially mine and try to analyze it as if it had been written by a stranger. I wind up finding that, as in the case of a work by a stranger, I cannot be sure what it means. I have at best a rough idea. I propose that it's an example of the "open story," like The Castle or Rogue Moon, where the reader can take out only what he brings in; but not a good example of the type, because it imposes several specifications that the true "open" story would have avoided, and fails to realize them as a "closed" story would.

Virginia says that it's a parable of growing up.

At least the original, old ide isn't totally novel. In 1943 I became a temporary hero among my fraternity brothers by discovering that a book in our chapter library, Vrowenland, which was apparently a dull travel book, was actually a detailed and decidedly racy tour of the female body in terms of landscape. The Castle can be looked at in this light, too, and some one of these days I am going to try to foist such an interpretation on one of the literary quarterlies.

Arne Sjogren: ( A Swedish reader whose opinions are most definitely not those of the editor. )

The neutralisi of Sweden is partly a matter of luck. During the nineteenth century we had a highly-mismanaged war with Russia, in which we lost Finland. In 1855, during the Crimean War, we might have joined England and France in their attack on Russia, but we didn't, perhaps because of Karl XIV, a French general and King of Sweden through a series of highly improbable events.

In World War II we were plain lucky. The Germans were afraid we'd blow up the bearing plants in Gothenburg rather than let them fall into their hands.

Now, it is plain that Sweden wants war with no one, and that Sweden does not want to choose sides. Sweden wants to be left alone. She hopes to survive World War III with an army and an air force that wouldn't be economical to conquer.

( All sorts of good luck to you. )

I don't think that Swedish socialism is a bad thing. We have had men of the extreme right go over to America and return as convinced socialists. My conviction is that time has passed by the ideals of the United States; they seem a little ridiculous. Everyone pays lip service to the Constitution, but a man's allegiance today does not belong to his nation -- a man's allegiance today belongs to Man.

Don Melton: Your readers apparently have some misconceptions about the Supreme Court's decision in Engel vs. Vitale, the "prayer case." The matter of the motto "In God We Trust" was brought up by Justice Douglas in his concurring opinion, as one of a series of such instances of the intertwining of governmental and religious institutions. He also cited the Chaplains in Congress, the legislatively-originated National Day of Prayer, the use of the Bible in the administration of public oaths, the availability of WPA funds to Parochial schools during the Depression, Bible-reading in the District of Columbia schools, the exemption of religious organizations from certain federal income tax and postal regulations, and so on. In Douglas' eyes, the telling fact was that the teacher who "led" the prayer was being payed by the state for so doing, although it would be small portion of the duties.

Actually, Harry Warner's worries are unfounded in a system such as New York's; the teachers either led the prayer or assigned a student to do it. All the taxpayers were informed of the practice, so all they need do would be to write the teacher and ask that junior be dismissed. No one was to comment on the prayer or on any facet of the ceremony, although that'd be about as likely as a child's abstention drawing no comment from his contemporaries.

Larry McCombs might be interested to know that Justice Douglas also argues that Christmas is still a religious holiday.

Bill Plott's point about parents of young fans believing any older visitors their children might have must be pederasts or something nearly as vile is a good one, and probably deserves some concern. Aren't there any socially acceptable ways in which an older faaan can contact a fledgling? ++ Except for the place in which the electronic stencil obviously wrinkled, Bergeron's Picasso-like cover was extraordinarily good.

Fred Galvin: I must object to one sentence in Larry McCombs' letter: "The court ruled that the magazines themselves were not obscene, even though they deliberately appealed to a homosexual readership." The "even though" seems to indicate an anti-homosexual bias. Why should homosexuals' reading matter be any dirtier than anyone else's? It makes just as much sense to say that "Life, Good Housekeeping and the Reader's Digest are not obscene, even though they deliberately appeal to a heterosexual readership. ++ Buck Coulson's paperback reviews are good, but the trouble with paperback reviews is that I've either bought the book already, or else by the time I see a copy on the newsstand, I've forgotten whether he said it was good or lousy.

Harry Warner, jr.: Don Thompson's article indicates that the same eccentrics have representatives in all cities. I wonder if Cleveland is afflicted with the special kind of pest we have in Hagerstown? He will call the newspaper at night and ask a question such as: "Do you have the Yanks-Red Sox score yet?" We'll tell him that it hasn't come in as yet, and he'll reply:

"Well, the Yanks won, three to one. Why don't you guys get on the ball?" Then there are the kids who wait until the library is closed to do their homework, and give us long sessions with the Encyclopedia and World Almanac, trying to find the necessary information. And the persistent individuals that want us to look up an item that appeared eight months ago, don't know the date on which it was published, and can't remember more about it than the fact that it was about the world crisis and awfully well-written. Plus the literal nuts. There was one who sent a letter to the editor and filled it with excrement. And a woman who showed up in person to announce that she was about to commit suicide, and got highly indignant when the reporter to whom she talked thought it was a joke, because that was his first night on the job and he assumed it was a hazing routine. ++ Mike Deckinger has caught with uncanny precision the way that old and tired fans do feel about fandom from time to time. It's the best item from him in quite a long while. ++ I imagine that schools will be forced to stop observing the customary seven day week system and will be required to have classes on Sundays, if they're also forced to abandon Christmas programs. I don't think there's much parallel between a holiday that originated in paganism and has few religious connotations remaining and the crucial religious experience of prayer. No one seems to care about the teachers; the child can abstain mentally, but what about the teacher who can't conscientiously get up and lead in prayers, either because he doesn't believe, or because he still feels strongly about Christ's specific instructions to pray privately, not in public. ++ I found the writing in Time Is the Simplest Thing to be incredibly bad for a man of Simak's ability, with grammar bloopers you wouldn't forgive in a neofan's first issue. Equally unbearable was the illogical procession of escapes from catastrophes which the hero underwent. It was bad enough when he'd get out of a mess through sheer luck, rather than through his own efforts, but unpardonable when he later failed to take advantage of his previous experience and again use the simpler solution when a similar crisis arrived. ++ Len Moffatt's point about slanted newspapers might be expanded by pointing out that even if this is an old journalistic tradition, it shouldn't be any longer. You were once able to get a well-rounded view by buying lots of local publications and letting their prejudices cancel. Now most cities have only one or two publications.

#### AND SHORTER QUOTES...

Bob Lichtman: I recently picked up a copy of Tuli Kupferberg's notable little magazine Yeah, only to later discover that it "incorporated" Kill Magazine #1, the first official organ of the American National Party, a "white man's news magazine...dedicated to the annihilation of the enemies of the white people." It goes on to state that Nazi Germany never harmed a single Jew, and ends with a suggestion that Kennedy be impeached. You can send Kupferberg a quarter for the fourth issue of Yeah; the address is Birth Press, 381 East Tenth Street, NYC 9. ++ Archie Mercer: When Ken Potter (last heard of in an Essex swamp) and Dave Wood (long gafia) first burst upon the fannish scene some years ago, they claimed -- on the grounds that they lived in Marsh, Lancaster -- to be the World's Only Martian faaans. ++ Bob Tucker: Showed the watermark to my cat Heroine, who pretended to recognize it. She looked at her husband with quiet pride. It is a proud and lonely thing to make the fanzine Hall of Fame -- for a cat, that is. ++ Bill Danner: Why are people always sending me religious pamphlets? ++

Andy Offutt: I'm a lover of reviews. In high school, we wrote "book review", signifying only that we'd read the book. On the opposite pole there's the "killer review", written by a "critic". I hate critics and I hate the word -- I believe in EVALUATION...and if the op.cit. was too bad to say anything about, pass it off, quickly. Arthur Schlesinger spent a full page in Show, ostensibly reviewing the movie Advise and Consent, but really delivering a tirade on the book. I already know his Washington connections and therefore feel him unqualified to review the book. Were he honest he wouldn't have. ++ Dick Lupoff: Ride the High Country is every bit as good as Tucker says it is; in fact, the N.B.Stone, jr., fan club met this September in Chicago. ++ Bob Briney: Pat Kearney's remark that "we may assume that the majority of the banned material is the best material" caught my eye. Why on earth should we assume a silly thing like that? It certainly isn't borne out by the ill-censored things that finally get through to us, like Lady Chatterly's Lover. ++ Jim Knotts: Tucker apparently didn't notice Hell, Montana. How would you like to be Hell's Only Fan? ← An unlikely situation. →

AND THANKS ALSO TO...

Ron Banks, Bob Bloch, John Boardman, GMCarr, Buck Coulson, Ray Cummings, Gary Deindorfer, Alan DoddMike Haggerty, Lynn Hickman, Harvey Inman, Enid Jacobs, Al Kracalik, Betty Kujawa, Peter Mabey, Frank Mattson, Len Moffatt, Bill Plott, Jerry Pournelle, Dennis Richard, Alva Rogers, Steve Schultheis, Judi Beatty-Sephton, Rick Sneary, Al Swettman, Roy Tackett, John Trimble, Art Thomson, Bob Underwood.

That's the smallest response in some time, people.



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