

CONFAB

someone looking to write?

I don't know if many hardened old ex-fans get Confab but I know of one who's like to hear

has willis recorded into paper on a roll of film

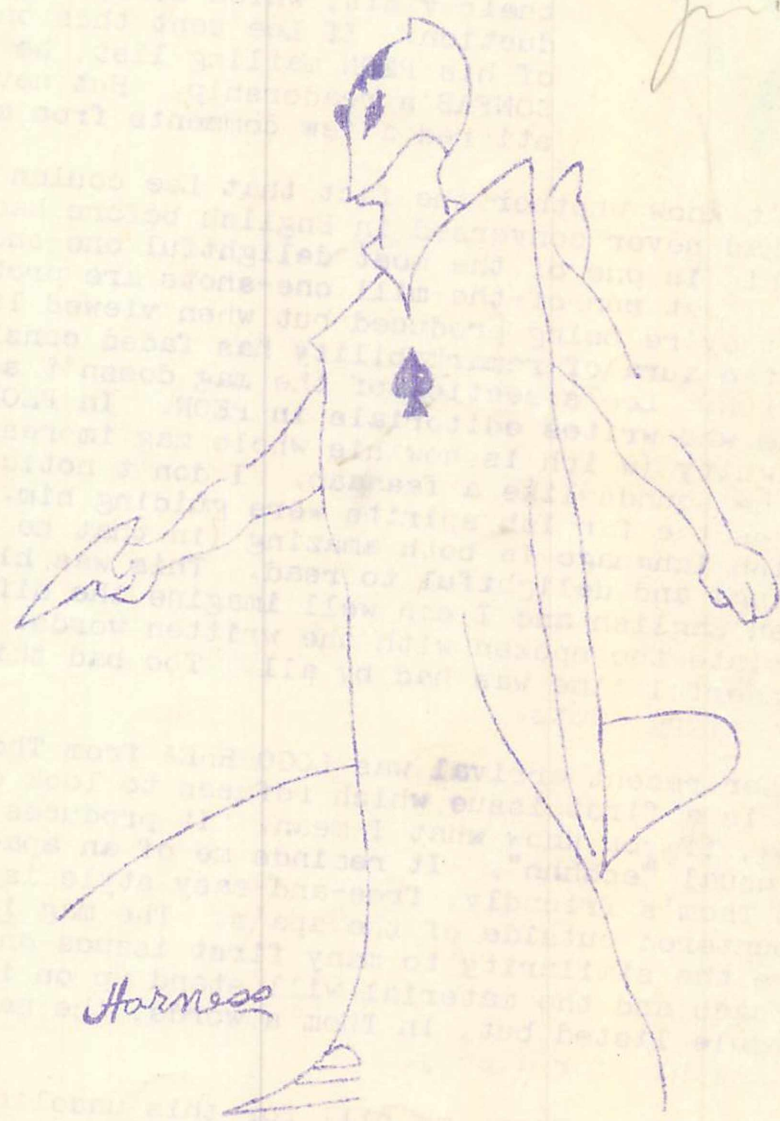
Industry?

Tommy?

Encyclopedia

Mermin

Flower
O
Cocis
Big O



and whatever happened to
Sam Mermin
Jr.

NUMBER 13

FORE-THOTS

FROM THE EDITORIAL HEAD.....



IF you're like most fans (myself included), you've already read the letter section and have read in Lee Riddle's letter of his visit with Jean Linard. Up until now, I hadn't had the pleasure of meeting Jean through the fannish mails, but Lee sent along a copy of MEUHPEON, a one-shot which was produced during their visit, which served as a very adequate introduction. If Lee sent this one-shot out to very much of his PEON mailing list, he probably covered most of CONFAB's readership. But nevertheless, MEUHPEON has stirred a few comments from me.

I don't know whether the fact that Lee couldn't speak French, or that Jean had never conversed in English before had anything to do with it, but this is one of the most delightful one-shots I've read in a long time. Most run-of-the-mill one-shots are probably great fun at the time they're being produced but when viewed later in the cold light of day, the aura of remarkability has faded considerably. But not so with MEUHPEON. Lee's section of the mag doesn't sound like the same Lee Riddle who writes editorials in PEON. In PEON he gives an impression of dignity (which is how his whole mag impresses me) but in this one-shot he sounds like a faaaaaan. I don't notice any mention of it but perhaps the fan-ish spirits were guiding him. Jean's handling of the English language is both amazing (in that he learned it only from reading) and delightful to read. This was his first contact with spoken English and I can well imagine the difficulties of trying to associate the spoken with the written words. Altogether, sounds like a wonderful time was had by all. Too bad things such as this must only be one-shots.

* Another recent arrival was LOGORRHEA from Thom Perry of Lincoln, Nebr. This is a first issue which refuses to look or sound like a first issue, if you know what I mean. It produces an "ahhhh" instead of the usual "echhhh". It reminds me of an apa-mag, or maybe it's just that Thom's friendly, free-and-easy style is the type not usually encountered outside of the apa's. The mag is all Perry-produced but there the similarity to many first issues ends. The mimeoing is above reproach and the material will stand up on its own too. No publishing schedule listed but, in Thom's words, the mag is "priceless", so why not ask him for a copy.

Incidentally, Thom, my bill for this unsolicited testimonial on LOGORRHEA will be in the mail on the first of the month.

CONFAB 13	October - 1956	Bob Peatrowsky Box 634 Norfolk, Nebr.
-----------	----------------	---

*out to have a list of the
people who did write in.*

Among other fanzines coming in since the last CONFAB appeared have been UMBRA #15 and PEON #37. Ordinarily, I don't connect the two mags but these two particular issues brought up a thought which I too have expressed; that is, each editor seems unhappy with the type of mag he has been producing and announces that there'll be some changes made, or else the mag will be dropped. Each editor (and remember that I'm including myself in this too) expresses a desire for humor and/or fannishness in future material. Each seems to feel that he's slipped into a rut, and a rather undesirable rut at that, and is determined to get out of the rut or get out of the fanzine business. This isn't the exact expression of each editor; it is more of a composite picture. But I believe the same general feeling exists, to one degree or another, in all three cases. Each expresses forthcoming changes in his mag....more "fannishness".

This point came under discussion at a recent meeting of the NSFS (Norfolk Science Fiction Society---that's Ray Thompson and myself, if you must know) and the question was brought out whether it was so much a matter of changing the actual mags as one of changing the editor's viewpoint--his attitude toward his mag--without really involving any great changes in the mag itself.

After about so many issues of a fanzine, the editor begins to wear down a bit. The fannish fire of the first issues has burned down somewhat and the business of putting out that monthly issue has become more methodical. Ye olde edde discovers that he isn't getting the same kick out of pubbing that he used to get. If the feeling is strong enough, he'll probably discontinue the mag and drop out of fandom. Or maybe he'll decide that the type of mag he's been putting out isn't suitable any longer. He might drop his previous fanzine and start one of an entirely different type. Often, after several issues, he tires of this mag too and either drops pubbing altogether or reverts back to his former type of zine.

To say the story a bit shorter, the fanned either tires sufficiently to drop out altogether, or he decides, sooner or later, that his mag isn't as bad off as he thought it was and continues along in his same old happy rut.

What the faneditor needs is a periodic freshening of his attitude toward his zine, a psychological shot-in-the-arm, to give him the strength to carry on. Maybe his readers could supply it; maybe it could be self-administered. But either way, it would save many a good fanzine from extinction and those that are with us would be saved from an occasional falter.

Only future issues will tell if any actual changes are made in PEON and UMBRA and--yes, even in CONFAB, or whether the editors will decide that they are, after all, each in their very own rut--and not such a bad rut as they had thought.

I don't know how Lee Riddle or John Hitchcock feel about this. I haven't even decided how I feel about it. But be sure to be with us next month for another installment in the life of Bob Peatrowsky, Boy Fanzine Editor.

THE READERS RAMPANT

WALD BOWGS, 2209 Highland Place N.E., Minneapolis 21, Minn.

For the first time in a fennish epoch, fanzines arrived in the same mail from both the publishers of Norfolk, Nebraska. Is

Documenting your story about routing the spiders from the towards of your typewriter, when I opened my copy of Confab I found a little insect or spider of some sort walking down the very page you wrote about spiders on. He was one of those motor-ized things that Robert Frost once wrote a poem about, and before I could put a lens on him, he went off the page and fell to the floor, but I think he was a little brown spider.

Your plans for Confab are so ambitious that I wonder if recovery from gasia causes the same sort of delusions that beset neofans. But with the field so depleted of good fanzines as it is today, I guess I shouldn't way a word -- merely pray for that you are able to follow your plans.

Of the letters in this issue, I liked best Dean A. Grennell's letter about skin-diving. Swimming out-of-doors is closed to me on account of I sunburn instead of tan when exposed to the sun. Anyway, the Mysterious Green Depths have only vicarious allure for me; I guess I lack the spirit of adventure. I don't intend to visit (willingly) a lake bottom any sooner than I visit outer space. The kind of sailboats that interest me most are the kind that sail on ice.

I think Bill Courval is right when he says realism is replacing idealism in science fiction, but what's this about realism presenting "universal truths" and idealism "universal untruths"? I think both are ways of looking at the same truth: a woman may be a "vessel of all the tender spiritual qualities" and still "go the head like anybody else." Bill says he learned the creed "thou shalt not suffer bad writing to be read" from Huxley, Wolfe, Joyce, Proust and a few others. Does he mean all these are good writers or bad writers, or what? Williamson and Gunn collaborated on a book, didn't they? Can Bill tell us who wrote what passages or chapters in that book?

*G. M. Carr's remarks on the NFFF, especially her characterization of it as "the fruitless vine," sound like she has seen the light at last, after all these years. That's what some of us tried to tell her in 1951. Terry Carr's letter was interesting. Just when I thought I'd caught him ("I've been

constantly slanting my fan-writing thereby acquiring a pretty good eye for how to do it professionally"), he swung around and admitted, "I could have learned slanting methods faster by plain study of it." Sometimes I think it's second thoughts that save us all from fugghead edness; first thoughts are too often bred of prejudice and misconception. Tentative definition: Fuggheads are people who never have second thoughts. (That is a first-thought.)

ed Cox says what most fans end up believing about the NFFF. A good statement. I also liked the editorial assessment of the NFFF that followed. I don't remember whether I ever advised you in regards the NFFF's value to the neofan and to the older fan, but if I had, that's what I'd've said also. Probably not so temperately, however.

((Glad to hear that at least one of those spiders survived their trip. Don't think I didn't have a time getting the critters to stay on the proper page until I could get the magazine assembled.

You may be right about gafia-produced ambitions being akin those of the neofan. I wonder how many fanzines would actually get published if it weren't for these delusions though. If the neofan knew beforehand of the blood, sweat and tears that would be poured into his brain-child, I think more of them would be taking up chess or skin-diving or something. Please don't ask what my excuse is though.

Don't believe you were the one who advised me regarding the NFFF's value. I think it was either Gregg Calkins or Vernon McCain, but sometimes my memory fails me. What puzzles me is how the NFFF has gone on as long as it has, with so many fans being so outspoken against it. Perhaps it won't continue now that fandom is smaller and recruits are not so plentiful.))

DAVID HIRE, Box 203, Rodeo, California

I have a flatbed ditto and have had all sorts of troubles with it. While I was cursing and slaving over mine, I was thinking that you and Wegars (Don has a flatbed, also) must have gotten real good models while mine was a stinker. However, upon talking to Don, I find that his flatbed did a lot to bring on gafia and now you confess to having troubles. My suggestion to you is to follow my lead and get a \$40 Tower ditto. Despite my dismal effort in the person of Clunque #5, the ditto now works fairly fine.

...not having past issues of Confab, I'm unsure as to what started 'ol Wetzel off on his spiel, but perhaps a bit of facts can be injected at this moment to clarify matters as to why E. E. Evans would term disparagingly "...Ellison and the Detroit teenage fans..." Unless I am greatly mistaken, this is in reference to what EEE said at the SFCOn in 1954 in regards to the Detroit bid for the 1955 con as opposed to that of Cleveland. First off, the fans Tripoli referred to as teenagers, George Young and Bog Sims, were well into their 20's at that time, at least 23-24. However, one must admit that looking from the vantage point of so great an age as Evans, one is inclined to consider

even managed to get three days off and went up to northeastern France to visit France's only fanzine publisher, Jean Linard. Had a grand time except for riding those France National Railroads. Know the difference between first and second class (not counting about 2000 francs difference)? Second class is cattle cars; first class is cattle cars with rugs.



I was interested in GMC's reader response and the answer you gave. I've not kept good records on this, but I can speak from nine years publishing experience--the more issues you publish of a general zine such as PEON the less letters you get. I'm lucky if I get ten or fifteen letters of comment on an issue, and considering that I mail out approximately 300 each issue, that's about 5%. I have found also that they are usually from the same old dependable readers who, with very few exceptions, have been with PEON since the first issue or so. Occasionally I get a blast from H. L. Gold when I print something that he doesn't like (at least it proves he reads it) and from Tony Boucher who proves a point in opposition to some of the views expressed by one of the authors, but that's about all. You should get a better response since yours is a letterzine primarily, and that's why I hope you continue to place emphasis on that type of a zine.

continue to place emphasis on that type of a zine.

((That monthly schedule is a big item with me in this revived version of CONFAB. While it might not get as large or as diversified in material as I'd like, it will be monthly...for a variety of reasons which I won't go into here.

That 5% response you mentioned is the vicious old law of diminishing returns at work, I guess. I think most faneds have noticed that it's usually the same old faithful readers who do the bulk of the commenting, whether the total response is large or small.))

CLAUDE RAYE HALL, 3228 McCart St., Fort Worth, Texas

Excepting the cover, I don't suppose that you had much reason to send CONFAB to me, but I want you to know that it was the most singularly enjoyable fanzine I have received in a long time, Bob. I even got quite a big chuckle out of the cover. ...

Archery caused your stage of gafia, eh? I get lured away from fandom and fanning on the average of a hundred times a year via football, basketball, writing, swimming, knife throwing, etc, etc. Matter of fact, I gafiated all summer. That's one of the reasons Dean's letter

9

((Seems to me, Thom, that you're off on a tangent in your interpretation of Gen's sentence that "People who pay for a fmz have no obligation to comment on it", by accenting the word "pay". If you were to read it as "People who subscribe to fanzines have no obligation to comment" (which is what I got out of the sentence) your argument would have no connection. I certainly agree with you that the subscription price of fanzine doesn't cover its cost---doesn't "pay" for it, just as the subscription price of the Post doesn't cover the cost of that mag. The Post sells advertising to make its money; the fmz pubber doesn't. He absorbs the publishing costs and calls it a hobby. But the subscription price in both cases is the same--a "token" price, so to speak, not intended to actually cover the publishing costs. If I subscribe to a fmz, I feel no further obligation to its editor. He asks a price for his mag; I pay the price he asks. I feel that my part is done. When I buy a copy of the Post I pay the price asked. Just because the money I paid doesn't pay the cost of publishing that copy of the Post, I don't feel obligated to write the publishers a letter of comment. If the fan mag arouses me, I'll comment; if it doesn't, I probably won't. But I don't feel obliged to comment if I have a cash sub.

Happily, not all fans feel as coldly about it as this. Nor do I mean to infer that I will not comment on a mag if I have a cash sub. Actually I've only subscribed to about three fanmags while I've been in fandom, and oddly enough, it was usually these mags that did rouse comment from me.

If the mag is deserving, the comment (and accompanying egoboo) will be forthcoming without making it a matter of obligation.

On the subject of the NFFF, we seem to be seeing eye-to-eye. Perhaps we should start a "Let's Kill the NFFF" campaign. Judging from previous comments so far, we should be able to rally quite a group.

Yep, seven percent is what the man said. Response to #12 was better, though. About 14%, which is actually better than I expected from a revived-type issue like #12. And I have hopes of doing better on future issues. Like Redd Soggs says, I have delusions--but happy ones.

CHARLES LEE RIDDLE, PNCA, USN, U.S.S. CASCADE (AD-16), Fleet Post Office, New York, N. Y.

...I hope you can keep up your monthly schedule, but I'm afraid that you are biting off more than you can chew. But a monthly or even bi-monthly at the most is the best schedule for a letterzine to keep the letters from going out of date so quickly. That is the only criticism I have concerning this issue of CONFAB.

As you know if you have received PEON #37 by now I've been roaming out here in the Med now since the middle of June and have until about the last week of October before we head for Newport and home. We have been having a grand time touring the coastal cities of France and Italy. I

6

3-5 years as inconsequential. The reason why Evans spoke of Young, Sims, and Ellison disparagingly was, I believe, simply because he wanted Cleveland to win instead of Detroit and he was going to try his best to have this come about. If a teenager happens to bid for the consite that Evans wants to have it, he will support that fan no doubt. At the 54 Westercon, which occurred the day before the SFCcon in the same place Don Donnell made a bid for the 55 Westercon and there was no protest from Evans at that time. At the 1955 Westercon, when it came time to chose the next con site, Evans saw nothing wrong with Marilyn and Paul Tulley ("teenagers" by the way Evans defines the term, and younger than Sims or Young) making a bid for the 1956 Westercon; in fact, he talked them into it. (Source of information: Marilyn Tulley.) And this year, Evans tried his damndest to talk Cliff Gould (who's not over 18) into making a bid for the 57 Westercon. He chased him all over the place and told how Mark Reinsberg and Melvin Korshak, two 18 year old Chicago fans, put on one of the best cons ever back in 1940. When he couldn't get Cliff to make the bid, he didn't speak up against letting the C-Dgroup bid and get the con for next year. (And none of the C-Ders are voting age yet.) Somewhere, there is no doubt one or two of you mummering about how the Westercon is a small regional con and not comparable to the big World Cons. Oh yeah? This year's Westercon attendance was over 400, a figure which has been equalled or surpassed by few World Cons. The Norwescon was called "big" and yet it only had 375 attending. Thus, I believe that one might infer that Evans really had nothing against teenage fans, on the whole, except when they happen to be for something he isn't. I'd like to add here that in the foregoing, I haven't intended to connote that I'm of the opinion that Detroit would've put on a better con than Cleveland (much the opposite, if I'm to judge from the statements of the Detroiters after the bidding for the consite was thru) or that the Westercons are as good or better than the world cons (again, much the opposite, since the Westercons attract very few of the fans that I like to meet, while they are generally in ample supply at the world cons.)



There is a bit of interest in sail boats around here, in fact they have a 11'1 race from S. F. to a place around Hodeo every year. However, my interest in things mechanical has always leaned toward black, menacing objects like .357 Magnums, Lugars, typewriters, mimeographs, sports cars and submarines. Now, a submarine would be a boat I'd be interested in. A 11'1 five man job, like was illustrated in Life a few years ago. One nice thing about subs is that you don't have to get wet like one is liable to on sailboats and the like.

Ray Schaffer, Jr. tells me the N3F has a total membership right now of the great figure of 75. And very damn few of them are active fans of note, also. With such a setup, I wonder how Eva Firestone can figure that an N3Fer or an ISFCer can "help the neo fan". The neofans won't turn to the likes of those to get oriented in fandom, they swim for themselves or learn the tricks from other fans. The successful

national-international fanclub needs an enforcer to make its members active, or kick them out. Besides that, there should be some definite and material return for the dues and the time spent in being active. Thus, you see that the apae, especially FAPA, are riding high in activity in comparison to previous years. True, the dues for FAPA and SPS are \$2, but you get something in return for it and the sense of getting something in return is even increased the more you participate by contributing to the mailings. The NFFF was conceived back in a time when most fan's outlook on things were different and has been a weighty monkey on fandom's back ever since. Down with it, I say!!

((Yes, the old flatbed has been bucking and rearing some lately. In fact, after I'd written that editorial piece last issue about discovering "slip-sheeting" to be the remedy for my troubles, I had just as much trouble as ever running off the last few pages, despite the slip-sheeting! I guess the thing is just getting obstinate in its old age. Or maybe it just hates being roused from its gafia period. I've been eye-balling some second-hand rotary dittos at one of the local office supply stores. Maybe I'll be able to swap the old flatbed off soon.

75 certainly doesn't sound like a very impressive membership for NFFF. Weren't they talking about a membership of somewhere around a thousand a few years back? Or am I mistaken?))

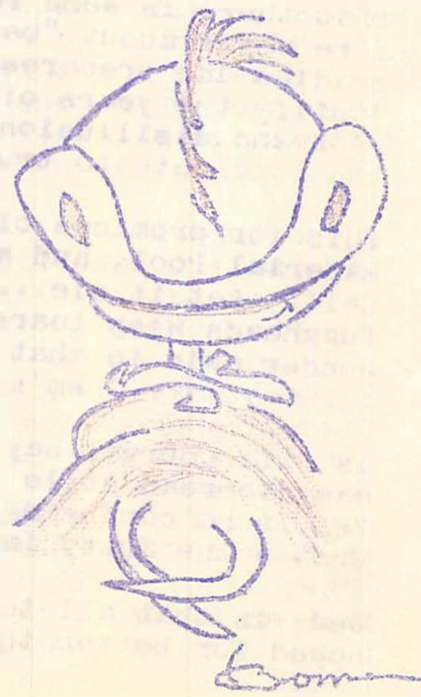
LARRY S. BOURNE, 2436 1/2 Portland St., Eugene, Oregon

...I do not agree with Ed Cox on the N3F what so ever. I have the privilege to be a member and find the Org. a good thing. I have obtained many benefits and will undoubtedly obtain more before my membership is up.

So the N3F doesn't do anything for anybody, hey? Well, if I hadn't joined it I wouldn't have gotten the Day checklist or the fantasy Pseudonym booklet both of which I have put to very good use. I have also gained many new correspondents from the org. which I wouldn't have gained otherwise. I will be getting many more benefits as the year goes on so I don't see where Cox has the right to say the N3F doesn't do anything for anybody.

The N3F is a better knit org. tho since Ed Cox wrote that particular letter so I suppose he was right then.

((I fear you're in the minority regarding the NFFF's worth, Lars. At least everyone else who expressed an opinion was against it. Seems to me that the NFFF doesn't do anything for fan that said fan



Bourne

couldn't do for himself if he really wanted to.))

PERRY & THRUST, FANSMEN, Thom Perry, Pres., 4040 Calvert, Lincoln 6, Neb.

I like that cover. And them layouts--man, them layouts are right purty! And that repro is superb. Yes, superb--nothing about "for a ditto" or like that. I'm a heretic; I LIKE purple writing.

And the contents: I can't help but disagree with la Carr. This time it's her statement that "People who pay for a fmz have no obligation to comment on it." Hell, you hardly ever really pay for a fanzine; fifteen, twenty, twenty-five cents of it maybe, but it generally costs the faned more than that per copy. I view the subscription rates of a subzine much the same as those of the large advertising pamphlets like the Post, Time, Life, and such: they exist to assure some interest on the part of the subber. The magazines mentioned derive their income from their advertisers; it is entirely feasible for them to give the magazine away, except that the advertisers would object--circulation figures mean nothing in a giveaway magazine, and circulation figures are what ad rates are based on. Similarly, no faned but an out-and-out neo expects any profit from a subzine--his reason for pubbing is to reap the wild egoboo, and the reader hasn't paid the faned back for the time and money and work invested unless he makes with a reasonably long and interesting letter of comment. And what of the contributor? He can't get a piece of that sub money.

No one, of course, can publish a subzine and then cut the parasites who pay with coin sans comment from the mailing list; the howls would waken Tucker and Willis. But that doesn't make it "right".

* It's rather surprising to see Gertie admit, after so long, that the enzeff is what it is. But she STILL seems to think it has a purpose, that there is some reason for prolonging it in its misery. Words and more words about "benefits". And while the venerable organization readies and prepares itself to spew benefits forth so generously as to justify the years of idiotic waste, it continues to take the money of neos and disillusion them about fandom--or at least deter them from the long path to trufandom.

This for promises of a Fanzine Title-Checking Bureau and a Fanzine Material Pool, and a cruddy bimonthly-annual Official Organ. Benefits? Hell! Let it die...let it shrivel up and retch its guts out, and let fuggheads weep tears on the corpse, and let futurefen look back with wonder akin to that of one hearing of Degler and his Circle for the first time. Them's my sentiments.

Is Bill Courval saying that he'll sooner read shallow writing c/w an easy-to-read style than Truth portrayed in a Ulysses-type style? That is, is he confusing writing-that-is-difficult-reading with bad writing? That's the fuzzy impression I get. If so, I disagree. 'Nuff said.

Gee--is that all the response you get? Seven percent? Gee. I had hoped for better things. Gee. Just seven percent. Gee.

swimmed me from my static repose. You see, I swam in the
bunch of sorts and I made it my habitat all summer. I didn't tan, be-
cause I never tan, but I improved my swimming--which was rusty as a

I've never actually gone in for skin diving equipment, though I can
use fins and goggles fairly well. Frankly, I prefer the natural
way, but of course--customs demand very firmly that a person wear a
diving suit. Back when I was seven or eight years old and we used to
run up and down the lady creek, none of us juvenile hoodlums knew
what a diving suit was, but things are sadly different now. I did
have some specially made goggles at one time, for swimming. The lens
were ground by prescription to fit my eyes. However, I broke them
while in Germany and have never had the necessary extra money to get
another pair since. Nowadays, I use a "G" (for glasses) string that
I slip over the horns of my glasses and around the back of my head.
The water doesn't ruin my spectacles and I am still able to see fairly

I've always loved to swim, though never being really a good swimmer.
Through determination or will or something, I became capable of swim-
ming an excellent trial of distance, swimming for distances though.
While a kid, I'd swim very long lengths and turn around and swim
back to the other end without coming up for air. Without exertion,
I was able to hold my breath for three minutes. About two minutes was
my limit if I was exerting myself. But that was generally good enough
to beat the others, who were never better surface swimmers than I.

This summer, I practiced quite a bit. My underwater distance increased
up to about a hundred yards. Actually, this isn't a very great dis-
tance. If you want there in the islands are capable of much longer
distances and longer periods of time. Houdini was capable of holding
his breath for a very long time.

I'm sure that if you wanted about, he could locate a s in divers
club. They generally buy equipment out of their dues and share the
equipment. That's about the simplest manner I know of getting to use
the equipment.

Well I've taken up water skiing. Not such, as yet, but soon. A
friend over in Arlington has a towl jacket with a Johnson motor. Top
speed is supposedly about 32 miles per hour, but with me in the boat,
we can only get 25.

((Glad to hear that you got a chuckle out of the cover
this last issue. I must admit that I was a bit curious as
to what your reaction would be. That wasn't my only reason
for sending you a copy though.

As I've said before, I don't swim, but if I did I
wonder if I'd have it about something like your "G" string to
be able to see where I was going. Otherwise I'd probably
have my head covered with knots from running into the sides
of the pool.

Having been a student of magic and Houdini at one time,
I know that he could hold his breath for a long period of
time, but...3 or 4 minutes?...well, could be.))

Bob Featrowsky
Box 634
Norfolk, Nebr.

Printed Matter Only

Return Postage Guaranteed



Rich Bergeron
R.F.D. # 1
Newport, Vt.