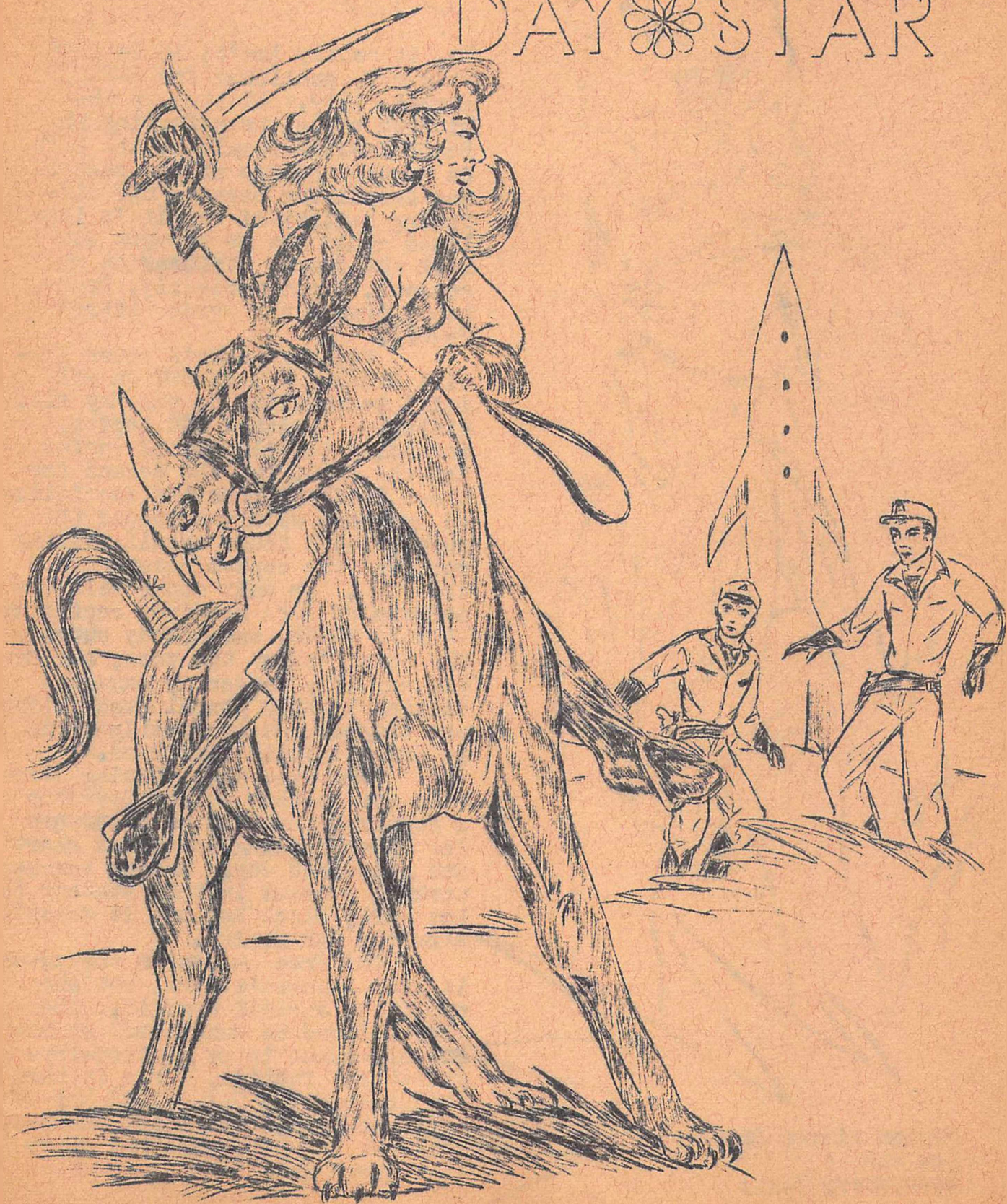
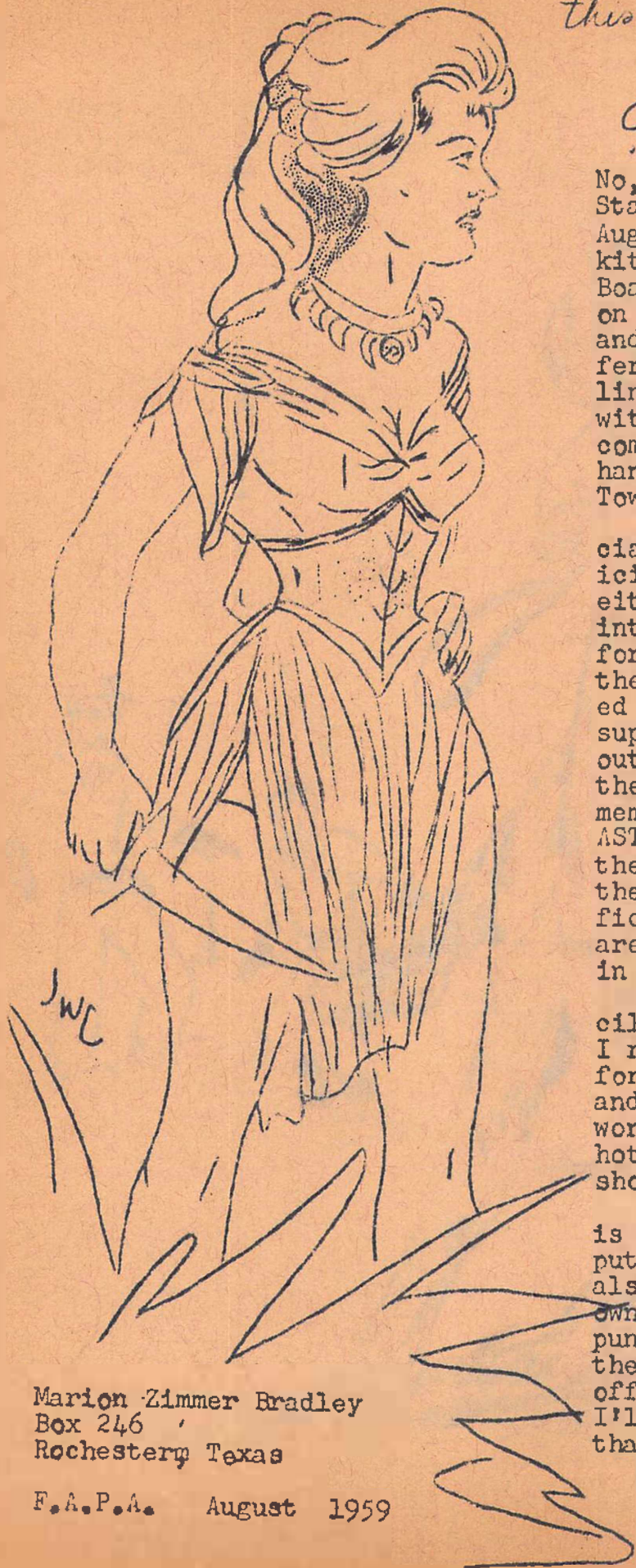


DAY STAR





this is NOT
ASTRA'S TOWER

No, it really isn't; it is Day*Star #9, published for FAPA, August, 1959. Sitting at the kitchen table, transferring the Boadicea-like female at the left on to the texture of the stencil and despairing because the differing quality of Juanita's ink-lines could not be brought out with the coarse styluses at my command, I automatically, free-hand, traced the words "Astra's Tower".

No; the Astra's Tower Special Leaflet # 3 is NOT an official postmailing to the May mlg. either. I printed 200 copies, intending to hold out 68 copies for the FAPA, but the demand for these leaflets from the specialized audience wildly exceeded the supply and I found myself mailing out even the copies reserved for the FAPA. So only about half the members of FAPA received copies of ASTRA'S TOWER, and nobody outside the USA; I'm not too sure, but from the way they censor my magazine fiction I think postal regulations are tougher and censorship worse in Great Britain than here.

Some time ago, cutting stencils for another summer Day*Star I remarked that the only costume for mimeographing was black shorts and got asked why. Shorts because working a crank in this weather is hot work; black because it doesn't show the ink stains.

The Free Amazon on the cover is also Juanita's work, but she put it on stencil herself. She also offered to run it off on her own mimeo, but in my glutton-for-punishment fashion, I ran it thru the mimeo. —THE DAY BEFORE her offer arrived! You wait, Juanita, I'll get you yet...see how sharp that skean is?

Marion Zimmer Bradley
Box 246
Rochester, Texas

F.A.P.A. August 1959

a letter from

Robert Bloch

Yes, Virginia, there is a Henry Kuttner.

He wrote to me as a fan in 1935; I have twice visited him on the Coast and he has twice visited me in Milwaukee. In 1947, in South Laguna, he and Kat and I spent a good deal of time analyzing and discussing the incredible confusions which had already arisen regarding the Kuttner-Padgett-O'Donnell-Keith-Hammond mixup. In fact, we spent days and days on it. I can only give you a brief smattering concerning our conclusions, but it should be enough to convince you that Henry Kuttner and those various other writers have little in common. Here are some of the things we decided.

LEWIS PADGETT lives in a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio. He is a bookkeeper, middle-aged, rather on the short side. He does not drink or smoke, and he eats Ry-Krisp every morning. He has saved every letter he has ever received, and he has put five copies of every book he has published aside for future sales as scarce o.p. items. His wife is fat and has a canary. After hearing the late news together (10:15 pm) she makes them each a cup of hot Ovaltine. Padgett hates writers like Lawrence O'Donnell and the rest of that New York crowd. He has never attended a convention, and never will. His stories are all carefully and painstakingly outlined and rewritten half a dozen times. He makes three carbons.

LAWRENCE O'DONNELL (and how he hates to be called anything but "Larry") lives in Greenwich Village. He is blonde, curly-haired and inclined to be fat. His sex-life is sporadic and nondescript, but then so is his entire existence. He drinks muscatel and gin. He never washes any dishes. He is always broke. He has a cat, and the cat hates him. When Larry comes home drunk and falls into bed, he forgets to feed the cat, and the cat revenges itself by defecating in the washroom--knowing that next morning Larry will get up with a bad hangover, forget to put on his slippers, and walk into the bathroom across the cold tiles only to encounter unpleasantness. Larry thinks up his stories when he's loaded and he does business with editors in bars. He has a hell of a time remembering his plots, or who he promised them to, and he never makes a deadline. Once he got a check from John W Campbell Jr and he left it on the table while he went out and got loaded. The cat ate it.

KELVIN KENT is a crotchety old geezer who stays with a married daughter in upstate New York (Troy, to be exact). He dips graham crackers into his cocoa. He hates all these younger writers, like Heinlein and Sturgeon. When he gets mad at his

more Robert Bloch reminiscing.....

daughter, he leaves his false teeth standing in a glass of water in the bathroom.

KEITH HAMMOND is nineteen years old and lives in Reading, Pa. He recently sold his bicycle and is trying to get his parents to let him buy a car. They disapprove of the idea, but then they disapprove of everything he does, including writing. Keith wants to save up enough to go to New York after his Junior year. He is a great Science Fiction fan, and crazy about the old UNKNOWN. He doesn't get along with girls very well, but he thinks that he would do better in New York where they appreciate authors. He would like to put more sex in his stories but his mother won't let him. She insists that he wear a muffler from November to April. If she knew the kind of books he reads she'd have a fit.

PAUL EDMONDS lives in New Orleans, in a bachelor apartment not far from the LaFitte Bar. It has swords on the walls, and a lot of West African sculpture. Paul wears a velvet dressing-gown when he entertains, and he buys all the men's magazines. He once owned a sports car but couldn't keep up the payments. He's in his mid-forties and worried about his hairline and waistline. He is also worried about other things; his mulatto mistress, for instance, who gave him the gate, and some of those boys he invites up for visits when he's really drunk. He knows that somehow he'll never make it as a name writer because he missed his big chances ten years ago. Now he would like to marry a wealthy woman and move to the West Indies. For years he has been trying to get in on a real Voodoo ceremony or a Black Mass. He uses Bath salts and when he gets a young girl as a visitor he always tests her out by playing the 78 RPM recording of This is my Beloved.

...well, that should be enough to prove to you that none of these writers is lovable Henry Kuttner. He is six of my favorite people: and Kat is another couple of them....Mank and I have exchanged ideas, tried out plots on one another, criticized one another's work and even, back in 1937, collaborated on a few yarns; only one ran under mutual by-lines, but several appeared under house pseudonyms in STRANGE STORIES. We share many interests in fantasy, old movies, psychotherapy, bad puns, etc, and I suppose (in response to your question) that there are times when we unconsciously imitate one another. All to my advantage, because he is ten times the writer I'll ever be; and sometimes, with Kat's assistance, twenty times.

NOTE by Marion. Bob Bloch wrote me this letter almost two years ago, replying to a bemused question on my part as to which of the many Kuttner pseudonyms was the real man. I enjoyed it so much that I wanted to print it then, but felt it might be in

postscript on Bloch....

way embarrassing to the Kuttners; so I asked him ; as their personal friend, to ask if they had any objection, and perhaps elaborate the piece a little.

He agreed; but before he got around to it, the news reached fandom of Henry Kuttner's death.

The aftermath of hero worship is almost as bad as its effect at the time. During my teens I was a slavish adorer and imitator of Henry Kuttner; and when I attained a little more age and poise, I grew ashamed, not of my admiration itself, but of the immoderate letters I'd written to editors about his tales. And for that reason, although I knew dozens of pro and semi-pro writers, I never ventured to write a fan letter to Henry Kuttner. Frankly, my feelings about his work were such that I felt I couldn't endure to approach him as just another adoring teen-ager, or incoherent fan.

And so his death was not a personal loss, but still I can say, in all honesty, that the world is an oddly different place. I regret, not only the writer of the early tales and fantasies, or the precise science-fictionist, not even the writer of perceptive and probing psychological detective stories; I regret, more than these, the books which he would have written when he put aside and outgrew the detective story as he had outgrown fantasy and science fiction. His sense of fantasy and fun, his knowledge not only of the worlds of fantasy but the dark world of the human soul and spirit, would, I am sure, one day have placed his name in a permanent and shining place in American letters. And now they won't.....

But this is not what I meant to say in this article....

When a little time had mitigated, not the loss, but the immediate shock, I discovered this letter and wrote to ask Bob if I might print it. It could not now offend anyone; and I wanted to share it with the rest of the FAPA. Bob courteously gave his consent; but suggested that, since it was not a finished piece, I should explain the circumstances.

And I did.

He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not,
He is a fool; pity him.
He who knows not, and knows that he knows not,
He is simple; teach him.
He who knows, and knows not that he knows,
He is reckless; shun him.
He who knows, and knows that he knows,
He is wise; follow him.



STENCIL GAZINGS

by me, as usual
(What -me hurry?)



It has just occurred to me mez that these merry little critters up above deserve an official, or (to coin a phrase dear to Fapish hearts) a semi-official name. Screwballs? Nutheads? I just realized that that same li'l feller has been appearing on all my fanzines ever since I started mimeographing my own Day* stars. So who is he?

I guess he's just a stencil gazer.....

The DAY is upon us. Saints preserve us, my son Steve just wrote his first letter to an Editor and is on his way to being a letterhack!

No, I didn't commandeered his sensitive neofannish fingers (very grubby, thanks) to pound out a command-performance hack' letter. On his own hook and under his own second-grade steam, he seated himself on the sofa, Brad's typewriter drawn up on the stand before him. Frowning, biting his lip, making many false starts and wasting a lot of scratch paper, he pounded out a question of much moment to the editor of the Metropolis Mailbag, to wit, as follows;

"If Clark Kent's hat is compressible, why doesn't it get crumpled when he takes it out of Superman's cape?"

I believe my ever-lovin' told him how to spell "compressible" and possibly "crumpled".

Achievement tests, for what they are' worth, tell me that this chee-ild, whom I still, God help'me, visualize in faded yellow rompers and cottony blonde hair, has a reading and spelling level of "Sixth Grade".

Having seen the sixth grade readers, I am not especially complimented, nor do I feel him especially precocious.

But ---kids. Does anyone ever really get USED to them?

I can, when I look sharply, see not my be-rompered dynamo, but the shy shoulder-high child with enormous feet, whom I could lift only at the risk of a slipped sacroiliac; the brown scraggly crew-cut, long grubby stubby hands, sudden unpredictable explosions of noise, endless persistent idiot questions about "How high is the sky?" or "What color is the other side of the sun?" His horn-rimmed glasses subside into Sherlock Holmes and Superman with almost equal gusto. He sings off key, repeating one phrase like a file rasp on my sandpaper nerves, then suddenly I swell and explode when he cocks a critical ear at some feckless radio squaller and remarks "That guitar is

more stencilgazings.....



tuned flat," and it is. I wonder if he will prove to have, after all, perfect pitch.

Volatile, changing while I look at him; this young man is a total stranger with thoughts of his own. What were my thoughts at eight? Grasshopper thoughts; whoever penned that feeble cliché that the thoughts of youth are long long thoughts? Their average duration is 1/10th of a second, unless it happens to be something parents would prefer the Offspring to forget.

Then their memory is elephantine.....

My most tenacious memory of myself, nine years old, is practising the piano in shorts; and my sweaty thighs sticking to the varnished piano bench....I still hate shorts.

I just found a scrap of paper on the top of my desk, reading as follows;

"There was a single strong streak of the feminine in Mario; he could not falsify his instincts without, at the same time, doing considerable violence to himself in the process. His current upheaval was not so much that he had done a reprehensible thing as that he had -- for purposes, however praiseworthy, entirely personal to himself -- pretended an emotion which he had long since outgrown. It was for that, rather than for the unconventionality of its expression, that he felt mingled remorse and shame."

Now your guess is as good as mine what it's all about.....I frequently scribble down random sentences this way in a forlorn hope that, re-reading them, I'll recapture whatever impression I felt when I wrote them.

But if they don't mean anything to ME, how could they mean anything to you'all?

On second thoughts, I have just remembered what it means. In context, it might get this publication banned from the mailing, so I'll leave it as it is... unexplained. You may guess for yourself what the unconventional expression of his instincts might have been, and I will dedicate the phrase ~~to~~ the memory of F.T. Laney.

to

He thought the traffic laws were bunk...now he's in bed, the car is junk.....BURMASHAVE!

Marian Bradley

the great

MAX POLEN

mystery

I READ THE "Personal column.

Tucked in with the chiropractic claims, the college students wanting rides to Chicago or Yaphank, the homes for unwed mothers and discreet advertisements for Alcoholics Anonymous, one sometimes finds some very human flotsam of humor or tragedy. This is none the less true for being exploited in countless mystery novels; and last November I grinned with delight to see, in the Personal column of the Abilene Reporter-News, a modest announcement;

Remember Max Polen?

No box number, nothing. At first I thought that some war veteran was commemorating a boddy, or some Lodge a vanished brother, or that Max Polen might be some Texas hero. But as it ran on and on, it began to take on a more sinister complex. After six weeks, during Christmas week, there was, at last, a change, to;

Merry Christmas, Max!

But the week after it was back to the unadorned, original "Remember Max Polen?" By now, this little announcement, bald and bare, was haunting me. Every morning when the paper came I checked the column and was once again admonished to Remember Max Polen. I even had nightmares about it; one night I dreamed a long, immensely complex plot for a murder mystery entitled --of course-- "Remember Max Polen", where this advertisement in the "Personal" column was used to soften up a prospective blackmail victim by reminding her of the hidden scandal in her past --Max Polen being the scandal. And after I woke up I even gave the plot another workout, in which a retired gangster, having beaten his partner and left him for dead, is shocked out of his enjoyment of his ill-gotten gains by this hint that Max is still alive. And then, the third week in January, the announcement read;

WHO is Max Polen?

That, of course, was just what I wanted to know. For a moment I wondered if some other exasperated reader was taking this way of responding. But it ran week after week, and I was beginning by now to suspect a subtle build-up for a television show or some such thing. But how many TV watchers read at all --let alone the personal column? After another month there was still another change; the little space queried bluntly;

WHAT does Max Polen do?

The great MAX POLEN mystery....

I thought by now we were getting near the end, and that the gimmick would soon reveal itself; that a new radio or TV program would reveal itself, or a movie come to town starring Max Polen. But it went on and on; endlessly week after week, all through February and well into March;

WHAT does Max Polen DO?

It obsessed me. One day, indeed, the column carried no mention of elusive Max; and I tore my hair, wondering if I would never solve the mystery. I composed jittery advertisements and madly contemplated inserting them; for instance,

Somebody tell ME who Max Polen is
before I go NUTS!

And then, three weeks ago, I opened the paper, turned to the ads and there, at last, saw the solution lying before me;

MAE POLEN sells Life Insurance.

Well, that's not all he sold. He sold me down the river with his soft sell. As for the Persons column, every time I glance at it I am reminded to

Call Max Polen for a policy.

And I grit my teeth, clench my fists, tear my hair, growl, fling the paper on the floor and mutter

To hell with Max Polen!

The other day my ever-lovin' made a suggestion. "Why," he queried, "don't you write a Roman-Britain western? You could call it

HAVE SWORD, WILL TRAVEL.

Doctors bury their mistakes;
I cannot take the hint.
My mistakes are in the mail;
They sometimes get in print!

Kerry D.