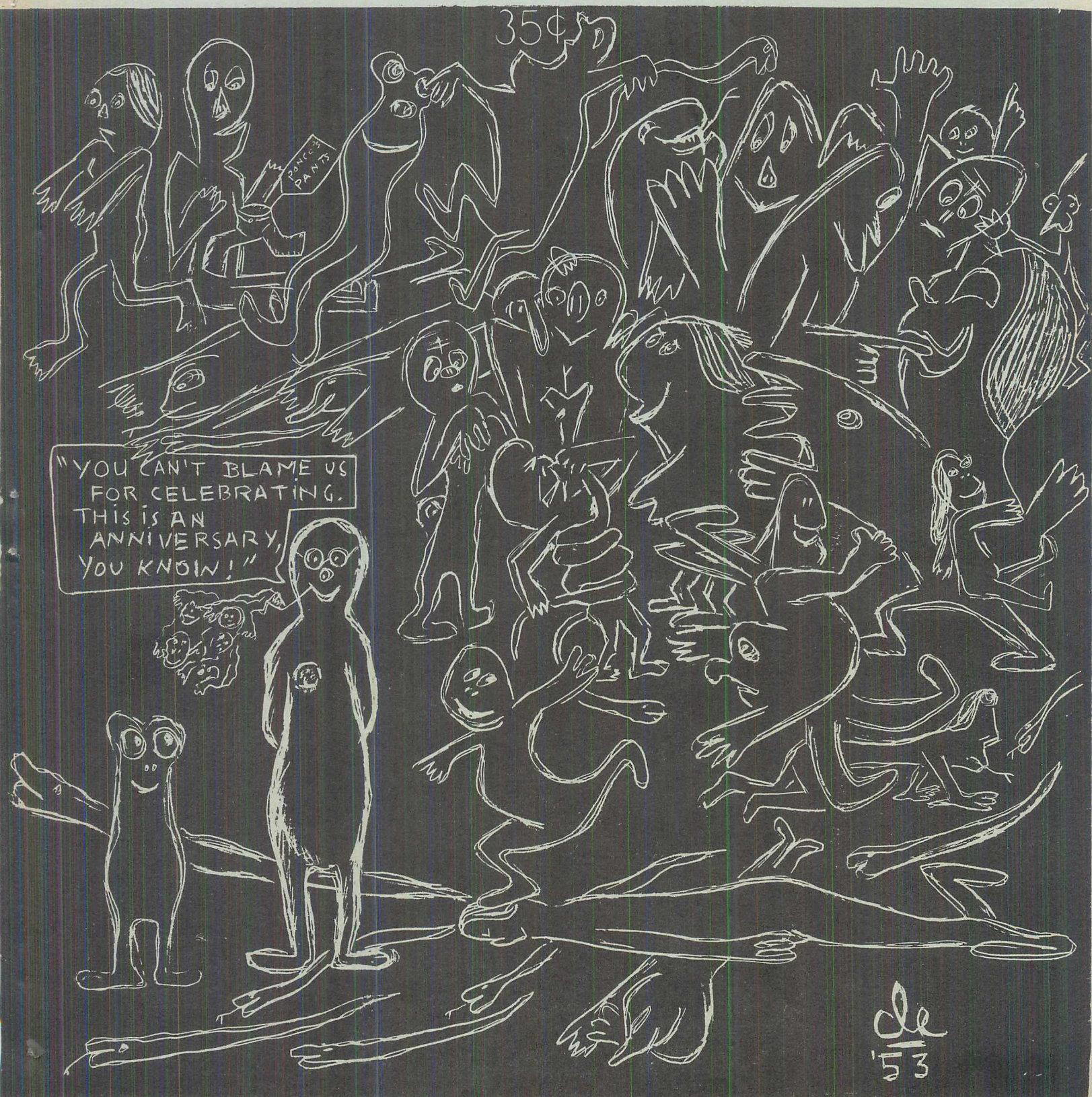


DIMENSIONS 16



BEGINNING OUR FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION ----- ISSUE 16, JANUARY 1955

In This Issue: "Ponce De Leon's Pants" a fantasy by-- MACK REYNOLDS

Walter A. Willis, Randall Garrett, Hal Shapiro, David Ish,
Harold Van Dall, Marion Z. Bradley, Dean A. Grennell, others

This is DIMENSIONS 16, and the editor is Harlan Ellison, who wishes it known that the entire contents are copyrighted 1955.

AN EDITORIAL PROMISE:

When Dimensions first started, over four years ago, we vowed to ourselves (and here I use the editorial "we" advisedly) that it would be the very best amateur journal of science fiction we could put together. Not for one moment have we ever shaken that resolve. There have been times when the material we printed was not superlative, but that can only be blamed on the prejudices--small, but present--of the staff. There have been even more times when we have done things improperly, but in those cases the blame falls to experimentation without experience.

Now on our birthday, we re-state our promise: Dimensions will strive in the future to present the best material in the best format, with the least amount of ballyhoo, and to that end we will continually strive. We trust those of you who have been with us this long will continue your support and interest, to a better magazine.

— he

an amateur publication for those who enjoy science fiction, fantasy, and a wide range of allied subjects, including fandom

Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the staff, unless so stated. Material submitted for publication to this magazine MUST be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope, if not previously solicited. Material submitted is done so at contributor's own risk as no responsibility is assumed, though a reasonable amount of caution will be exerted. It is to be understood that all letters submitted to this magazine are eligible for publication unless stated otherwise therein.

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MY LIFE AMONG THE CAT PEOPLE

BOB SILVERBERG

Until one coolish day last December, I had only had a passing interest in cats. As I recall my attitude in those days of innocence, I did prefer them to dogs, but didn't care too strenuously for either and certainly wouldn't want a wild animal around the house. During the days when I lived in a Manhattan residence hotel forming secret and mystic cabals with Ron & Cindy Smith, Ellison and other rascals, I borrowed a small kitten from a friend on the first floor, chiefly to annoy a neighbor-woman who despised wildlife. I kept the kitten two days, at great physical hardship (the little thing kept crawling over the typewriter while I tried to write, and over me when I tried to sleep) and then the neighbor-woman snuck in my absence, collared the kitty, and took it back to its rightful owner.

There was the time my wife and I visited the Blishes, whose apartment is continually overrun by cats of all sizes and shapes, and they offered us a small unhousebroken kitten of a wobbly sort. My wife was much taken by the idea, but somehow I talked her out of it and Jim kept his cat. Our contacts with cats were fairly infrequent after that; we visited Bob Lowndes at his country place and admired (at a distance) his fursome of cats, and made the acquaintance of a formidable but stupid Persian belonging to John Campbell.

Then came the weekend of December something-or-other, 1956, when we were trundling upstate to the Lowndeses and were told, eight minutes or so after we arrived, that two of the cats on the premises were for immediate disposal. "No," I said at once, forestalling any reply on my wife's part. But Bob Lowndes is a cagy old codger, and he just grinned in his special off-center way of grinning, vanished into the kitchen, and came back with a pitcher of Manhattans. Couple of hours later and a few dozen drinks afterward, I had agreed to relieve him of a cat -- a black-and-white eight-monther named Thais.

It wouldn't have been sporting to back out, though I admit I was sorely tempted to do so when I sobered up. At one point that weekend I picked up a black-and-white cat, fondled it, and decided it looked most unfriendly; Bob Lowndes then told me I wasn't holding Thais but her grumpy old uncle, Finnegan.

Came Sunday, and to my horror I found myself clutching a vast box containing a cat, plus some cans of catfood, a book on how to raise cats, a box containing catnip, and other such sundried. The Lowndeses wished us well, we boarded the bus for New York, and I did my best to pretend I was carrying nothing but a bundle of old Science Wonder Stories as I handed the driver my ticket. Much later, we reached our apartment. Barbara unpacked the cat; I unpacked the instruction book. First thing that struck my eyes was the sentence, "Cats are not allowed on busses."

Well, Thais moved in. We decided we didn't like her name; we called her Cat a few days, then settled on Antigone. She doesn't usually answer to Antigone, or to anything else except Siegfried's horncall from the Ring cycle, and why she answers to that only Bob Lowndes and Richard Wagner would know.

This is a fine cat, though, and I don't know how I survived without one for so long. A writer's working day is a pretty lonely affair, really, once the wife is safely trundled off to the office. Now, though I can have the proper solitude and still not be alone, since the cat generally sleeps in my office during the day. Occasionally she sits on my desk and reads the opus-in-progress as it emerges from the typewriter once in a while she'll make a criticism or two, usually by nibbling the manuscript. "Cats are great paper-sitters," Dorothy Lowndes warned us, and so they are. This one prefers novelets to short stories; the latter aren't thick enough to provide proper comfort.

We had a certain housebreaking problem, since Antigone had lived her life in the Great Outdoors until now, and suddenly found herself required to operate out of one small basin and no place else. She didn't take kindly to this, and still doesn't. We have her down to a pretty fair schedule by this time, and know when to hunt her down and keep her from ducking into closets or going under the sewing-machine. (Once we were too late, but we forgave her. She used the toilet bowl.)

The change in my way of life has been extraordinary. Three weeks after Antigone arrived I submitted a yarn to that aech ailurophile Tony Boucher, and he bought it. I had never sold to that market before. I'm convinced the cat had something to do with it. We stop in the streets now to cluck sympathetically at stray alleycats; once Barbara found one downstairs that was "too cute" to leave alone, and she called for me to come down and collect the cat as a companion for Antigone. I came, too, but balked when I saw that the cat, besides being filthy and laden with every manner of unmentionable virulent bacteria, was considerably great with child. We have a large place, but that many companions seemed unnecessary.

Still, we do many strange things. Not long ago we paid a visit to some friends on Staten Island. The head of the house is a prozine editor of some repute; his wife is a charming and witty fanzine publisher. But did we go to peddle stories to Larry Shaw or to exchange in gay fannish badinage and reminiscences of W. Max Keasler with Lee Hoffman? Far from it. We made the weary trek primarily to see the small gray kitten the Shaws had acquired. The trip was worth it, too; it's an excellent kitten.

There are drawbacks. As young-type married folk without offspring, we had rejoiced in our freedom to drop everything and go charging off to Virginia or Philadelphia or Westfield, New Jersey of a weekend, without plaguing parents for favors or hiring baby-sitters. Not so anymore; now we have to board Antigone at the vet, and our weekends are clouded with thoughts of a lonely betrayed cat sitting in a miserable little cage in some cat hospital, probably wondering if she'll ever see home again.

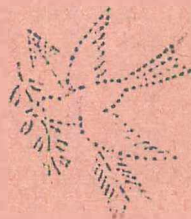
Silverberg (3)

There's also the problem of furniture and carpet. Antigone loves to sharpen her claws on the couch, and from time to time we discover her enthusiastically ploughing troughs in the carpet. We invested a dollar or so in some alleged cat-repellent and sprayed it all over the library couch. It worked fine -- on us. We gagged and ran for the exits. By the time the air was fitten to breathe again, Antigone had readjusted her metabolism to cope with the poisonous stuff and was happily asleep on the treated couch. So much for cat-repellents.

There was also the time she thought she saw a mouse lurking behind the manuscript of a novel I had just finished and was collating (this is done much the same way fanzines are collated, in case you're wondering). She took dead aim and sprang, scattering pages all over the place. I got them ~~back~~ together again, eventually, but if Chapter Eight should precede Chapter Seven in the Ace Double Books edition of MASTER OF LIFE AND DEATH you'll know why.

I'm definitely converted to the ranks of the ailurophiles, though, in the face of such happenings. Cats are sensitive, intelligent, dignified creatures. They make ideal companions for slender sadfaced writers with budding careers. There is no truth whatsoever to the ugly rumor that it is Antigone who actually writes those stories of mine which are bylined Calvin M Knox. She has written a few under the Robert Bloch penname, and last I heard she was negotiating for a turn as Ivar Jorgenson.

---Bob Silverberg



NEW YORK IS A NICE PLACE TO LIVE, BUT I WOULDN'T WANT TO VISIT HERE:

It is summer, and the tourist traps are in full bloom. And is the Village ever full of tourists. What little parking is available here is cluttered with our of town cars, for instance. Oh, well I remember when the average person (my father, to be exact) would drive ~~to~~ some nearby point (like Philadelphia) and leave his car, completing the journey to NYC by train. But now that cars are bigger and more expensive, and streets are smaller, the average person is apparently more willing to face the famed Manhattan traffic, and add to its confusion. A shame, really.

Last night Larry and I were walking down Greenwich Avenue (not Street) and on one of the intersecting side streets we saw a small but tense drama. A typical narrow Village street, it had cars parked (legally!) on both sides of the street. A huge beer truck had tried to come through and was jammed just short of exiting, with an old battered Buick on one side, and a spake-new Ford Fairlane on the other side. A group of sidewalk navigators were gathered around shouting directions to the harrassed driver, who had already hooked the Buick, in preference to the Ford and who was trying to do anything...anything..

With great maneuvering he backed free of being hooked to the Buick, and the Fates brought the Ford owner to drive rapidly away, sweating profusely and thanking his lucky stars he'd gotten there in time.

But immediately behind the Ford was a '57 Chevvy stationwagon, which the truck managed to rock somewhat in the course of its travels. I didn't see the damage there, but I suspect one headlight was a little crumpled.

The truck did finally get free, and when Larry and I left, the driver was busy writing notes to the owners of the damaged cars.

We walked away speculating on the problem. Not the truckdriver's fault, I'm sure. And while neither of the cars were butted tight to the curb, neither was really out from it much. The Chev did have its nose further out than its rump, but still it looked close enough in to be perfectly legal. The truck was just too big for the lane.

So it would seem the city should ban parking on one side of such a narrow street. But NYC can barely spare any parking room. There are too many cars already.

Anyway, let this be a warning to any of you who intend to drive in to New York City. If you're gonna park on our narrow streets, pull your nose and rump in as close to the curb as you can.

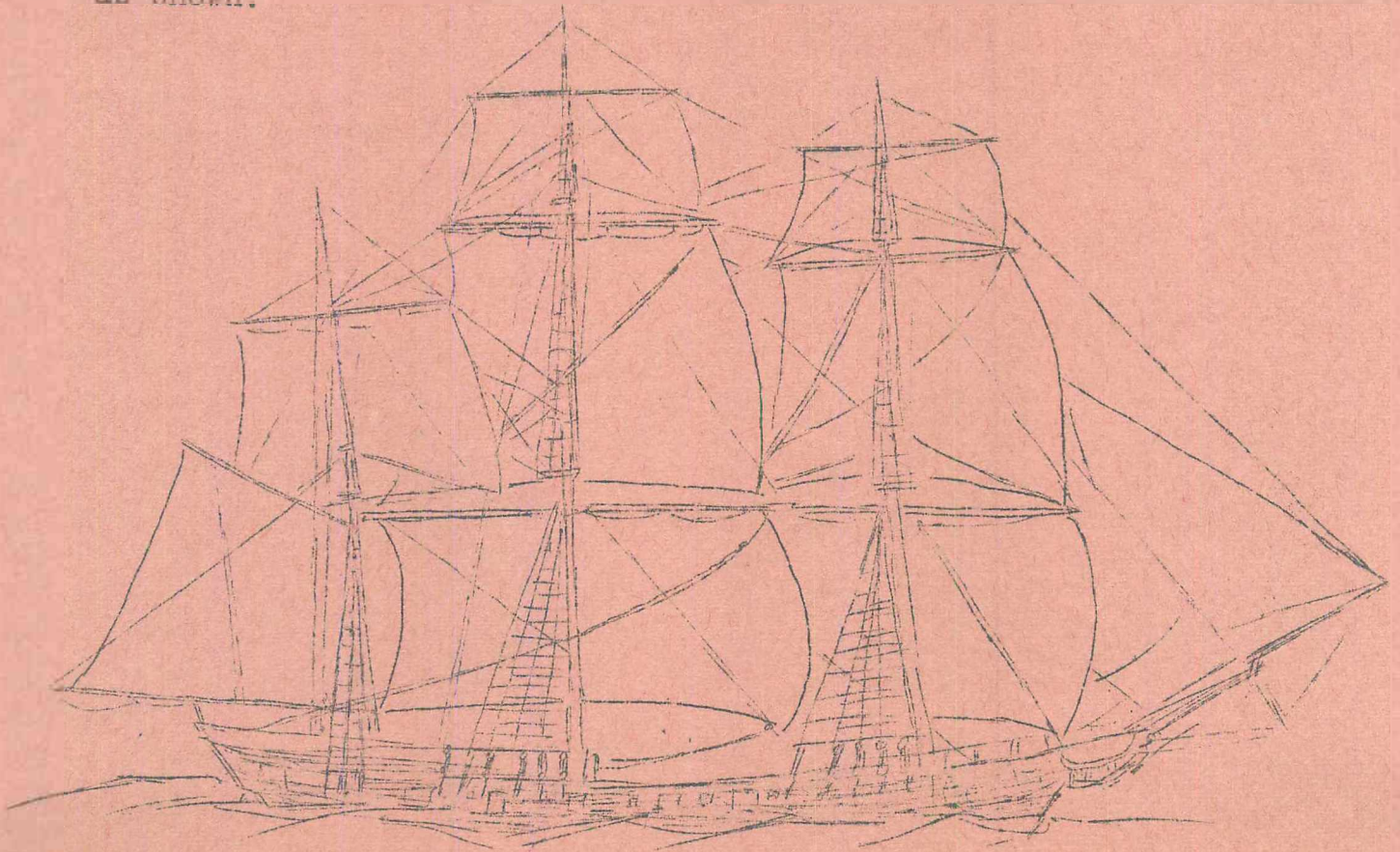
Sail Craft

an illustrated lecture
for (by) the landlubber

Much to the delight of many of us, there is at present a SHIP in the port of New York. And by ship, I do mean a full-rigged three-masted sail vessel. She's the Norwegian training ship, Christian Radich under the command of Captain Yngvar Kjelstrup. She's 205 ft in overall length and 32 ft in the beam, was originally built in 1937, sunk during WWII, and then rebuilt.

In line with her visit, we are bringing you another of our popular educational lectures, this time replete with illustrations, on the subject of sailing vessels.

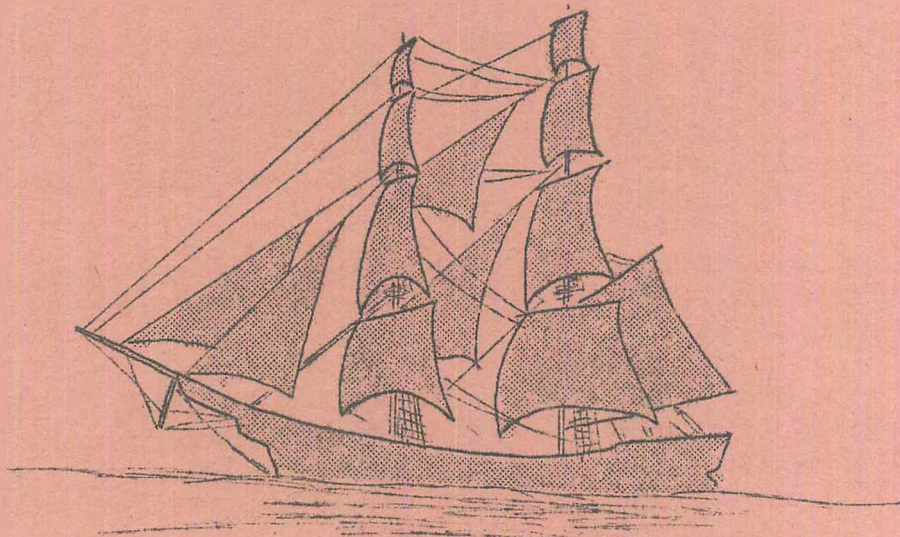
First we have the "ship". This term is bandied about quite a bit, but during the period we're covering (roughly, the 18-19 Cent.s) it applied specifically to a full-rigged square-rigger of three masts as shown.



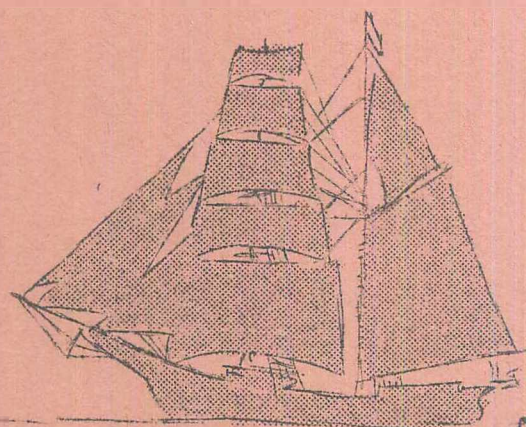
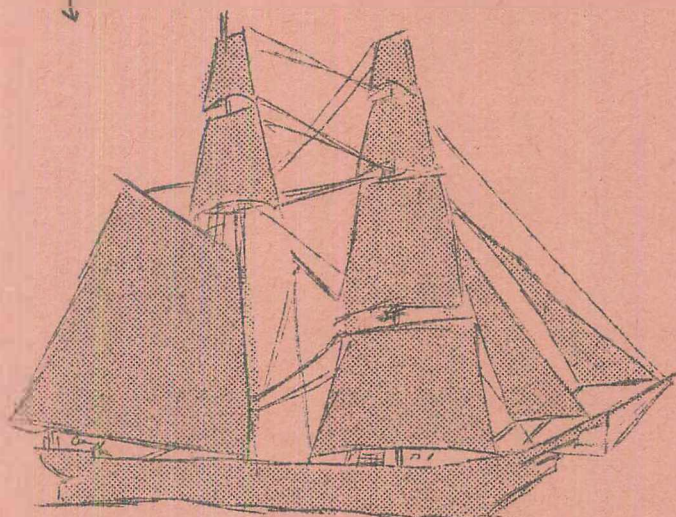
Sail Craft (2)

The full-rigged ship carried square sails on yard on all masts, and jibs and staysails, and ofte, a spanker. The clippers usually also carried stunsails.

Rigged somewhat similarly was the BRIG. She would carry two masts, square-rigged, and also jib, staysails, and often a spanker.

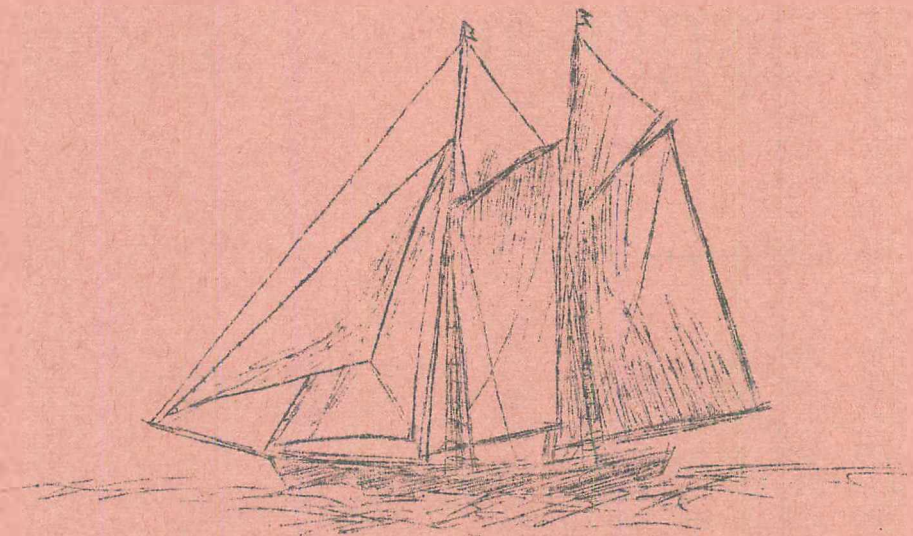


The brigantine also had two masts, with its foremast square-rigged, but its mainmast carried a fore-and-aft mainsail, under square topsland topgallants.

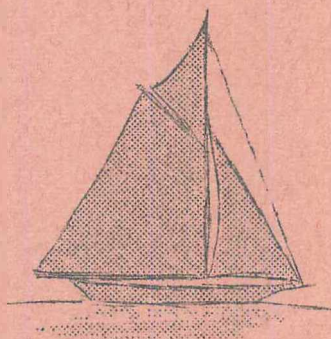


A similar vessel is the Hermaphrodite Brig which carried a square-rigged foremast, and a fore-and-aft rigged mainmast, making her "half-brig and half-schooner".

Sail Craft (3)



The schooner is a vessel of two or most masts, rigged fore-and-aft entirely, although there were "tops'l schooners" in common use at one time; two-masted vessels carrying square tops'l and topgallant on the foremast, above a fore-and-aft mainsail; and full fore-and-aft on the mainmast.



The sloop is a small vessel with one mast and a fore-and-aft rig.

A workhorse of the seas was the BARK, which carried square-rigged fore-and main-masts, and a schooner-rigged mizzenmast. This type vessel was common as a whaling craft.

Similar to the Bark is the Barkentine, which carried a square-rigged foremast, and schooner rigged main- and mizzenmasts. The Barkentine might carry more than three masts, still only the foremast was square-rigged.

posey corner

No Dulcimer's Voice...

The dulcimer's voice is not mine to cry.
The silver whisper of its strings
Speak not by my hand,
Nor yet other fair things
I wish to voice. Nor song nor word
Nor color nor bell that rings,
Will speak those secrets which are mine.
Still silent secrets which no voice sings.

I know such things that I would tell,
Like silver stars upon the sky.
And yet no voice is mine to sing
Nor hand to make sweet dulcimer cry.

It Was A Friday...

It was a Friday in my heart,
When first my ship of self set sail,
And fled before the fallow wind.

The sallow sky well-filled
The tallow-yellow sails,
Sent spindrift scudding upon the darkening sea.

The yards cried heavily at the start,
The shourds gave out their mournful wail,
As sorrowing souls calling to their kind,

Churning, pounding, waves, self-willed,
Breaking white across the rails,
Sent crashing my ship on the shore to lee.

12 June 57

Two Love Lyrics...

Wash the weeping willow white,
Clean the carpet, sweep the stair,
Tint the tomtit with tips of light,
Wear rosebuds in your cheeks and hair,
Spread stars across the new-black night,
For love is young and love is fair.

Go down with me to the woodwind's lowest note,
Beside the silver river of the chalil's throat,
Where the willows tinkle from the guitar's soft strings,
And the roses are strewn from the lark's morning wings.

More Words For An Old Folksong...

Oh, love it is silver,
My heart is pure gold.
My soul holds a secret
That's never been told.

I'll go into the valley,
The valley below,
To sing my sad love song,
Where no one will know.

I'll cross the tall mountain,
And sail the broad sea,
To search for a lover
Who'll be true to me.



OUR POETRY EDITOR

25 October 57

Lee here:

Time has dribbled sloppily past. It is not "too late". The stencils intended for the last FAPA mailing hang limply at hand. The mimeo is crusty with ink. The typer dusty and cobwebbed. (Not really...I've been using both quite a bit lately...but it makes a dramatic image)

I didn't get this mass of stencils into the last mailing because I was sick...too horribly sick to mimeo them. I have since been informed that the unspellable illness is one that is reasonably fatal. All I know is that there were times when I hoped it was.

Anyway, here is the zine, a quarter late than never.

Re the sailships, yes, I am familiar with the fate of the PAMIR. I was aware of her career through SHIPS AND THE SEA Magazine, and I followed the newscasts of her loss with considerable interest. I think her loss keynotes the end of an era, even though there still are many square-rigged sailships, some operating as commercial ventures, some as school ships and some as pleasure craft. One cannot deny that the sailship is obsolete as a commercial venture, and probably in its other capacities, as well. Only the fore'n'aft ship seems to still have a place in the world, and that mainly as a pleasure craft.

I can't say I'm sorry, either. For all of their beauty and romance, the square-riggers were a mucky miserable lot for the men that sailed them. When they were the finest things afloat, a seaman's life was generally a rough one. Now that there are better ways to do the job, playing with sailships is pointless as well as dangerous.

I've given a lot of thought to this. I like sailships, and I admire that men should be trained for the sea on sailships. But I see no practical need for it in this day of steam, diesel and atomic power.

Ah well...

Sorry to make so scant an offering this time. At least I'm not cluttering up the mailings with my present infatuation. I'm pubbing my folkmusic footer elsewhere. In fact I'm pioneering a whole new field for amateur publishing. Admittedly, I'm not the first to put out a folkmusic fanzine. But it's still a novelty.

Hoping you are the same*,

Lee

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The work of L Shaw
Apt 5P
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New York 14, NY

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2nd big FAPA edition
81st mailing
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