



Number 5 / July 1960

## COGITO

### I WITNESS AND WAIT

My brief account of the picketing of Woolworth's in Minneapolis ("The Meal Equally Set," in Retrograde #3) inspired a freshet, if not a veritable flood, of mail. This made me happy, but I wasn't so happy about the almost universal confusion as to my purpose in writing the small article. Mike Deckinger, for example, seemed to speak for the majority when he expressed himself as "rather surprised" at my attitude after I "freely admit that (I am) a contributor to CORE." He went on to declare that, while the picketing of the Woolworth stores in the north does not seem to accomplish much, "a lot of people were given a jolt to realize that even in...a northern state...we cannot remain complacent and let the acts of racial intolerance go by." Joe Kennedy and Donald Wollheim, who are quoted at length in the letter department, were among many others who commented in much the same vein.

A few others such as Ray Nelson confessed that they were uncertain as to my motives in writing such an article but expressed a gratifying confidence in my basic liberalism. "If you have some belief or opinion to express on the subject," wrote Ray, "you have put it so subtly that I can't figure out what it is. I suppose you are in favor of desegregation like all the rest of the nonconformists, me included, so you thought we would all take it for granted what side you were on."

\*Richard Bergeron was the first person, and one of the few, to finger the possibility that "The Meal Equally Set" was a piece of objective reporting, but I'm not very flattered at his remark: "I can't decide if it is objective reporting or a page from a presentation to Time magazine." Only a few readers -- Ted White, for example, quoted in "Chorus-potence" -- seemed satisfied with the piece as personal observation.

Since nearly everybody misread the article so thoroughly, I suppose I had better state clearly that most assuredly my sympathies were, and are, with the sit-in demonstrators in Dixie and with those who picket Woolworth's in the north. I endorse wholeheartedly Joe Kennedy's views, as expressed in a letter quoted on page 10. I went to see the picketing of Woolworth's in Minneapolis with the hope that I would see something encouraging but with the determination to report anything I saw as objectively as I could. I would have been pleased to find it possible to report that the pickets were doing an effective job of keeping customers out of the store, but that wasn't the case, and I believe that I would be doing the sit-in movement a disservice if I reported otherwise.

The only criticism implied in "The Meal Equally Set" was not of the Woolworth pickets' purpose, but of their zeal in carrying it out. I do not think that sympathy picketing in the north is necessarily a futile gesture. I tried merely to indicate that the picketing was performed in an ineffectual manner in Minneapolis one rainy Saturday noon in May.

TWO-GUN GRENNELL AT MANITOWOC GULCH

Last issue Hal Shapiro snorted politely (a mere snort from Shapiro is polite) at the notion of keeping any books or magazines permanently, except reference works. At the same time, however, Hal was broadcasting an appeal in Suzy and Shelvy's Tired Feet for copies of various fanzines, including Ice #2, that he published during the mid-1950s. Which illustrates the reason I seldom dispose of anything except bent staples. I never faunch powerfully for anything except a thing I've just burned up.

As a kid I collected a vast number of Street & Smith's old pulp magazine Wild West Weekly -- 52 issues a year heaps up in a hurry -- but over the years, due to parental pressure, moving, and 3W gafia, I tossed away at least 27 wheelbarrow loads, though I still have two big cartons crammed full of them.



At various times nostalgia topples through me like a blue wave and I start faunching for the issues of Wild West Weekly I'm missing, and cursing myself for letting them go. They are hard to replace; the old pulps are vanishing fast, and they are often ludicrously overpriced when they are available in a secondhand store. Recently, however, Dean A. Grennell, that good man, found two copies of Wild West Weekly in a Manitowoc store. He bought them for a song ("Hallelujah, I'm a Bum") and a soft-shoe dance, and sent them to me as a gift. This caused me to doff my helicopter beanie, slant a Stetson low over my left eye, and start palavering in a Texas drawl so ripe that nobody can understand me east of Mobeetie and Langtry.

They are the July 11, 1936 and October 30, 1937 issues, and they are in excellent condition -- much better than most of the copies in my collection, which had to survive perusal by my brother and our pals Howard (Hizzer) Gesterling and Donald Kuehn, as well as other kids in the neighborhood of 229 Eighth street south, Breckenridge, Minnesota, in the days of the mid-1930s.

*Back*  
 RETROGRADE is edited and published monthly by Redd Boggs, 2209 Highland place N. E., Minneapolis 21, Minnesota. Associate editor: Marion Z. Bradley. This is issue number five, July 1960. This fanzine is available for letters of comment or by trade but not by subscription. Artwork credit: page 9 - Dick Schultz. The Gafia press.

I've been reading these magazines with the avidity of SaM devouring "Out of the Sub-Universe" by R. F. Starzl. I haven't even stopped to wonder why I read such stuff as a kid when I could have been reading The Wind in the Willows, or why I read it now when I could be decoding another page of Finnegans Wake. All I know is, Sonny Tabor, Flash Moran, the Oklahoma Kid, Shorty Masters, Silver Jack Steele, Bud Jones, and all the rest of the 3W outfit ride again!

O TEMPORA! DEPARTMENT

Or, Survival for Fun and Profit. Being the reprint of a half-sheet enclosed with a card marked with a Civil Defense emblem and entitled Survival Facts in Case of Attack, Tornado, or Disaster:

INSTRUCTIONS!!

1. Read the enclosed SURVIVAL FACTS card carefully.
2. Post your card near your telephone.
3. Prepare your family survival plan.
4. Make all necessary purchases.
5. Carry a copy of your award number with you.
6. Patronize the sponsors of SURVIVAL FACTS.
7. Check with sponsors for ways to win prizes with your award number.
8. Listen to WPBC ADULT RADIO for additional survival facts information and extra-special ways to win valuable prizes with your award number.

The Secret Museum of Fankind

1/29/51  
Dear Redd,  
Would sore like to hear from you about FILE #13. QUANDRY is a good zine for it. Your column can reach readers within 3 weeks of the time it is written. What other fanz can offer such service?

Lee Hoffman

EXHIBIT #4. Postal card from Lee Hoffman of Savannah, Ga., postmarked Jan 30 1951. This is one of a series of invitations which led to the appearance of my column "File 13" in Quandry. Gestefax copy of the original, published to mark the tenth anniversary of the founding of Quandry, July 1950.

# THE SOUNDS

# OF DREAMING

Little Orphan Annie + American Charm + Vic and Sade + Major B. the All-American Boy + Lux Radio Hollywood Hotel + Jack Benny + Information Please + Amos 'n' Andy Scrapbook + Jackie Heller + The Missing Heirs + Easy Aces + Capitol Hall Tonight + Ford Sunday Evening His Ralston Straight Shooters Penner + Those We Love + John's



+ One Man's Family + The Hour of the Day + The Barn Dance + Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy + Seth Parker + The College of Musical Knowledge + Shell Chateau + Ted Malone's Merry-Go-Round + Court of the West + The Westeners + Town and Country + The Gospel Singer + Tom Mix and Jane + Boake Carter + Joe Maxwell House Showboat + Cheerio

A SERIES BY

JIM HARMON

EVERYBODY WHO MEETS Jim Harmon for the first time stifles a scream and whispers to someone nearby, "Whatever happened to him?" It may not be common knowledge as yet, but among those of the inner circle it has been well understood for several years that what happened to Harmon was that he spent his boyhood with his ear glued to the loudspeaker and his mature years with his eye glued to the picture tube. Try spending a decade or two in each of these positions and see how you look afterward. The experience has warped Harmon's personality to a profound extent, and instead of talking about normal boyhood experiences like derailing express trains, setting fire to insane asylums, or reading R. F. Starzl behind his geography book in school, he tells about listening to radio programs like "I Love A Mystery." I asked him for an article on the symbolism in Moby Dick, and he turned in this article. I told him that an article like this one has already been published. George Jennings' Spectrum for August-September 1959 contained a brief but enjoyable article about "I Love A Mystery" by Noreen Shaw. Harmon hid his other eye under a rug (the eye is on a stalk as a result of adaptation or heredity) when I tried to show him Noreen's article and insisted that his article originated as a half-page feature called "An Echo of the Past" in Harmon's (his fapazine) for spring 1957. It did, too. And one way or another I found myself cajoled into publishing this article -- actually several small bribes did the trick, in case anybody else wants to appear in Retrograde. Not just this article, either: Harmon promises other articles, which will appear from time to time as Harmon slobbishly dunks his madeleine into a mug of Nuclear Fizz. — EDITOR.

## 1: "I LOVE A MYSTERY"

"I LOVE A MYSTERY" seems to have been the favorite radio program of nearly everybody I've ever talked to above the age of 20. Of course, I've not talked to the population at large. Evidence seems to prove that actually "I Love A Mystery" was never an extremely popular program in the way of "Gang Busters" back then or "Gunsmoke" on today's TV, for instance. It was shuffled around all over the dial, frequently cancelled only to pop up again. No, "I Love A Mystery" was never popular with the nation at large, but there was a hardcore of people who absolutely loved it above all other radio programs, and with a kind of love and intensity of love that was never bestowed on other radio programs.

I was an ardent Tom Mix Ralston Straight Shooter as a boy, but yet, I couldn't feel the same way about the Tom Mix show as I did about Jack, Doc, and Reggie.

"I Love A Mystery" was better written and more convincing, and the one long take per episode gave it a feeling of reality that other shows lacked. But the thing of it was that "I Love A Mystery" gave us exactly the kind of wonderful, exciting, terrible life that every child and every man secretly wants to live. (Girls forget and grow up to become wives and mothers.) It was perfect. It absolutely could not be improved upon. The opening train whistle, the funereal music, the striking clock. Above all, the characters: the nasal Texas twang of Doc, the worldly Empire accent of Reggie, the stern, no-foolishness Generalized American of Jack (but this sternness of Jack was only a pose; you knew he would join in the next barroom brawl with a whoop.)

I don't think I ever "identified" with any of the Three Comrades. They were too real to me. I wasn't any of them, but they were all my friends. I think I liked Doc best -- impetuous, often foolish, girl-crazy. Yes, he was my favorite.

I suppose women didn't like the free-wheeling adventurous spirit of the program. Most of the successful radio heroes were safely tied to women's skirts: Lamont Cranston, the Shadow, had Margo Lane, his "friend and companion" (and just exactly what does that mean, anyhow?); Nick Charles, the Thin Man, had Nora; and Nick Carter, Master Detective, had Patsy.... There was a Woman on "I Love A Mystery," of course, usually played by Mercedes McCambridge, but she was a free-wheeling soul herself, brash, self-sufficient. No, the fans of Carlton E. Morse's other program, "One Man's Family," probably resented "I Love A Mystery."

I don't know when the program started -- sometime in the early or middle 1930s. Along about 1939 it was on CBS, Monday nights at 7:30 CST, as I recall. Later, the show went daily on CBS twice a day, at 6:15 and 10:15. I often listened to both broadcasts (the story was the same, of course -- although once in a while there would be a marked difference in the episode; Jack and Doc would take a couple of minutes discussing something on the rebroadcast they hadn't mentioned on the first broadcast). The sponsor was Ivory soap. Then about 1945 they replaced "I Love A Mystery" with a daily Jack Kirkwood comedy show. I have resented Ivory soap and Kirkwood to this day.

This was not the end of Jack, Doc, and Reggie on radio, although many people do not seem to know about the later series. They were pretty well hidden.

Circa 1948 I saw in the Sunday radio log a listing on ABC of a program called "I Love Adventure." By an almost psionic insight I knew what this program would be, and it was. Tuning in, I heard the announcer say over the familiar screaming train whistle: "I Love Adventure -- a new Carlton E. Morse production, featuring Jack, Doc, and Reggie."

These programs were wonderful too, but not quite as good as "I Love A Mystery" itself. They were complete half-hour stories, told in a number of short scenes. There were only 13 of them, all with Jack, and half each with Doc and Reggie. Doc and Reggie did not appear together

with Jack in any one show. The first few stories had the boys working for the Twenty-one Old Men, a secret organization working for world peace. The opening story concerned a helicopter landing men on an airliner and robbing it in flight. But finally the boys returned to the A-1 Detective agency in Hollywood. A few episodes were written, not by Morse, for the first time in the career of Jack, Doc, and Reggie, but by Sidney Marshall, who wrote all the scripts for Herbert Marshall's radio program, "The Man Called X," and who in fact adopted one of these "I Love Adventure" scripts for Mr X later on. The summer was over all too soon, and even this substitute for "I Love A Mystery" was gone.

But about 1949 "I Love A Mystery" came back on radio for the last time. It was on Mutual, and it was originally spotted on the network schedule following Gabriel Heatter's newscast at 8 p.m. CST -- which was kind of a funny place for a newscast, right in the middle of the evening entertainment. For a while they had had a Nick Carter serial at 8:15 to fill out the half hour till "The Mysterious Traveler" came on, or the other evening shows. Then they tried following Heatter with more news. Now they put on "I Love A Mystery."

The trouble was, most of the local stations had sold this time locally for other shows, and therefore few stations carried "I Love A Mystery" at its network time. It turned up at 4 in the afternoon on WGN Chicago; on other stations at 6:15, 6:45, sometimes as late as 11:15 at night. Many stations didn't carry it at all; it was almost entirely unsponsored. I used to have to drag it in from New York at 10:15, Mount Carmel time, after WGN dropped it. Sometimes I could barely hear it, but I listened. In spite of all this, the Mutual series lasted over two years, until about 1950.

The Mutual series was significantly different from the earlier versions of "I Love A Mystery" and even "I Love Adventure." Always before, the show had come from California. For some reason the program on Mutual had to come from New York, maybe because Mutual originated all its dramatic programs in New York. The cast was changed.

In Hollywood, Michael Rafetto was Jack, Barton Yarborough was Doc, and in my day Tom Collins played Reggie. An earlier actor in the role (name not known to me) committed suicide about 1941. Rafetto, Yarborough, and Collins were also Paul, Clifford, and Nickie of "One Man's Family." Their New York replacements sounded a great deal like them, at least for Jack and Doc. Russell Thorsen played Jack, and he sounded so much like Rafetto that he was brought to Hollywood to play Paul in the daytime TV version of "One Man's Family," and later replaced Rafetto on radio when he retired. (Actually, towards the end, Rafetto's voice had cracked badly and when Thorsen took over the role Paul suddenly sounded ten years younger.) Jim Bowles' Doc was almost indistinguishable from Barton Yarborough. At the same time Bowles started doing Doc, Yarborough back in Hollywood died of a heart attack, and in "One Man's Family" Cliff moved to Scotland, and in the radio and TV versions of "Dragnet" Sergeant Ben Romero died of a heart attack and was replaced by Officer Frank Smith.

Reggie, strangely enough, was played by Tony Randall, now better known as a comedian in movies and television. Mercedes McCambridge was usually the girl (whatever girl) in the New York series. Thorsen, who

aged rapidly, now plays character roles in TV -- a supporting role in Robert Taylor's "The Detectives," for instance. Jim Bowles, who looked like a western type, long and lean, still does radio roles in the few remaining radio programs like "Suspense," CBS, Sundays, and has occasional small parts on New York dramatic TV like "The Steel Hour."

One peculiar thing about the New York series was that for a time Jack Packard lost his last name. During this time, the Ford Motor company sponsored two nights one week out of every four -- two broadcasts out of twenty. (Ford saturated the air that one week, picking up every other sustaining show on radio.) Ford didn't want people reminded of the then rival Packard, so Jack lost his name for this niggardly amount of sponsorship. He didn't regain it till months after Ford dropped off completely, perhaps in the hope that they would come back. This, and an occasional seasonal advertiser like balloons that could be made up into animals at Christmas, was all the sponsoring "I Love A Mystery" received in its last stand. Radio was already dying.

Something else that many people don't seem to know is that there was a series of "I Love A Mystery" movies. They came out about 1946 or 1947 when the radio series was off the air. They were "B" pictures released by Universal and produced, I believe, by Morse himself. Jim Bannon starred as Jack, and Barton Yarborough recreated his original role of Doc. Barton didn't look much like Doc should, I'm afraid. He was a rather odd-looking man with a forehead that bulged like a telepathic mutant's. Still, he got some fair parts in pictures, once as the hero of a western serial, the Scarlet Horseman himself. As I said, he was Ben Romero on "Dragnet" for years on radio, and in the very first few telefilms -- he made only five or six before his death.

The "I Love A Mystery" movies included the title film, which was based on the radio story "The Decapitation of Jefferson Monk," and there was at least one more feature film, title unrecalled, concerning an old southern mansion and a family crypt. It was like the radio program, but I had never heard the particular story. These pictures were about as good as their budget would allow and done faithful to the radio program, but the visual medium could not match the magic of imagination. Finally, there was a 13-chapter Universal serial about Jack and Doc called "The Mystery of the Dancing Devil Dolls." I didn't see it; it played in a nearby town and it was reported to me.

We tend to think of Jack, Doc, and Reggie as inseparable, but that isn't the case. About 1940 Reggie was written out of the script as returning home to fight for England. He did not return until the short-lived "I Love Adventure" series. Only Jack was constantly on stage. There was a fourth significant Comrade -- an Irishman named Terry. He emerged to take Doc's part in many of the rebroadcasts of stories. But there were others that made up the Three Comrades (a name for the group that was dropped after the second world war, for political reasons, I suppose). There was a big Swede once, and another time a Frenchman whose voice and character resembled that of Peter Lorre, strangely enough. Mary Kay Brown, the secretary of the A-1 Detective agency once had the distinction of being listed in the sign-off: "The further adventures of Jack, Doc, and Mary Kay will come to you tomorrow...."

But it is Jack, Doc, and Reggie we remember, inseparable. I can't understand why Morse so frequently deprived us of the joy of having them all together.

It is Jack, Doc, and Reggie you will find in my recreation of "I Love A Mystery" that follows. I have heard the Temple of Vampires story done at least five times over the years, and it wasn't always with Jack, Doc, and Reggie. Once it was with Jack, Terry, and the Swede whose name I can't remember. Once it was with Jack and Doc, Reggie's part written out. But the first and last time it was with Jack, Doc, and Reggie.

I believe much of what follows is absolutely authentic, virtually word for word, even though it has been 20 years since I've heard particular bits of dialog. Actually, I remember more than this, but I must condense my memories -- if I could recreate the whole script for this sequence it would run as long as a full-length novel. I haven't the time to spare for that, and probably couldn't get it published.

I hope by this recreation to crystalize my own memories before they slip away, and to bring back a few memories of pure joy for others. I hope above all that I don't disillusion anybody or spoil their memories of the show. Mere writing can never equal memory and imagination, but mine is the curse of all writers -- to try and make it do so.

"Temple of Vampires" is of course only one of the stories from this wonderful show. Remember "The Lost Plateau of the Andes" where prehistoric creatures roam, and primitive man, and a secluded group of supermen? Remember Jack and Doc climbing the plateau and Doc thinking lustful thoughts about their girl guide and the supermen, the Elders, causing him to go weak by mental wave and almost fall to his death?

Remember "No Husband, No Ring, No Ring Finger" and the boys trapped on the island with the weird old woman who turns out to be a leper who chopped off the finger when a spot showed up? Remember "My Beloved is a Werewolf" and the telephone call that caused Doc to go prowling around the grounds of an insane asylum at night, thinking it was the house of Mary Kay's cousin who suspected her husband of being a lycanthrope?

Remember "The Fear That Creeps Like a Cat" and the mad scientist who wanted to test the reaction of fear by sending out a man armed only with a knife against a starved mountain lion? Remember how Reggie put on an act of being afraid so that he would be sent, but they checked his pulse and found out he was lying so they sent Doc instead? Remember Doc gambling for hours of life represented in poker chips? Remember his asking for one punch, just one punch at his tormentor, getting it, and knocking him cold, saying, "What did you expect me to do? Waltz with him?"

Remember? Remember?

(The further adventures of Jack, Doc, and Reggie -- that is, Jim Harmon's recreation of "Temple of Vampires" -- will come to you next issue.)

---

ALSO COMING: "O and the sea the sea," another of the "Brood of the Dark Mood" by Virginia Blish; and "Blue Wings Over Cathance" by Jean Young.



JEFF WANSHEL

I hide my head in shame, due to the fact that I failed to acknowledge receipt of Retrograde #2, and #3 came closely upon its heels. So here is a LoC, with which you may do what you desire. Retrograde is very attractive. The blue on russet beautifully duplicated gives

an excellent appearance which I enjoy immensely. If you go so far as to change back to salmon pink I shall wring your spiritual neck.

The usage of this vocabulary may sound partially decent, but to me it just doesn't ring true. I shall drop now any semblance of a decent knowledge of grammar and proceed to talk in my natural, disorderly and generally sloppy fuzzleheaded tone. Shwew. Like that stuff up there sounded a bit faked, and I prefer sounding like a slob to sounding like something I'm not. The above may be part of me, but it is not the majority, so from now on you know that this is the real JW you are communing with.

That stuff about The Catcher in the Rye was a bit shocking. For Ghod's sake, I'm 12, and some of the books I read from the library are anything but innocent. Still, I'm not a manic-depressive for it. A downright puzzle, don't you think?

Why, Miriam! Haven't you heard that you're supposed to help gray-haired grandmotherly old ladies across time warps?

Your picketing bizness strikes a sour chord. I am sick, sick, SICK of this bizness, and I wish that bullheaded idiots like Woolworth would get some sense.

I don't blame Jim Harmon for his reaction. That is probably exactly what I would have done in the same circumstances. (That must mean that Jim is wrong.)

Harry Warner had better watch it. We don't want any hermit ruining our young, do we?

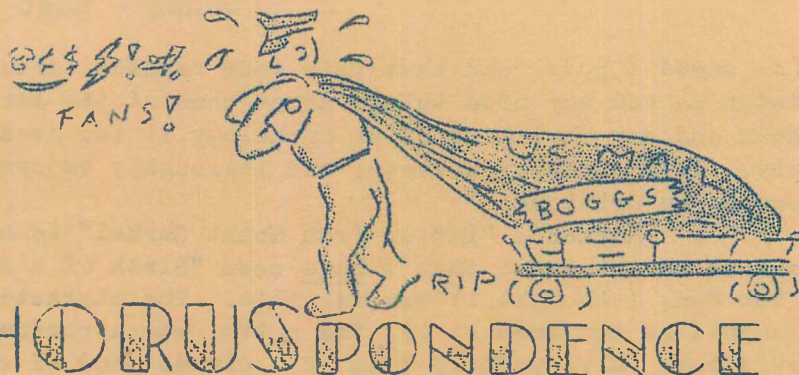
All in all, Retrograde is a pleasant little chatterzine, no great shakes, but worth getting. I hope it develops beyond this; I can foresee it going stale in a few issues if you don't change the format a bit. Well, don't take any wooden mushroomrooms. (Larchmont, New York)

TED WHITE

Retrograde #3 received, and I'd best comment on it now, quickly, before it becomes lost amid the current stack of fmz. In several respects your material here seems atypical of the Redd Boggs stereotype I'd gradually built up in my mind -- in fact, the very zine is so in some measure, inasmuch as it was you who complained a couple years back about how limited Gambit was, and Retrograde is very little less so -- but I'm glad to be able to destroy another false image, and extend my understanding of you a bit.

The stereotype, of course, was the Serious, Critical, Perfectionistic Redd Boggs who, if he didn't actually write in the editorial "we" usually suggested it in tone. The Boggs who only an issue ago commented so seriously upon the abandonment of color and attendant problems of fmz editing. The Boggs of this issue is more the Boggs who contributed (I think) to the first Qabal and wondered why no one regarded him as a humorist. "The Meal Equally Set" is a nice piece of personal observation, without any pretensions to it -- you haven't set yourself above the scene you're describing, but rather in it or a little to one side. It reveals a great deal more of your character than all the editorials in Skyhook I ever read.

The review of The Fantastic Universe Omnibus exposes the lighter, wittier Boggs, as well as your profound lack of knowledge of Hans Santesson in your characterization of him in that beautiful little vignette. My only quibble with the review is that it doesn't seem definitive; rather early you suggest that the book is poor



## CHORUSPONDENCE

(or maybe I just read that into your remarks about Prentice-Hall's "mistake"), and later on you say nice things about some of the stories -- but you never get right down and say what kind of an anthology it is; good, bad, indifferent, or what -- and why. It's a clever writeup, and thoroughly enjoyable as such, but it isn't much as a review or critique.

Harmon's "Letter from Mount Carmel" is as interesting as last time, and inspires me to remark that I have seen "Birth of a Nation," and as an anti-old-time-film fan, I thought it was terrible. The characterization was so ridiculous that I laughed or squirmed at it, the acting was atrocious, and the prejudice very much in evidence. A very Uncle-Tom-much picture, and I suspect its only deserving claim to fame is that it was the first "spectacular" -- and I deplore all such on principle.

Yes indeed (now on letters), Paul Robeson is again making records. One of them carries liner notes by "Alexander Blade," our old friend from Ziff-Davis. I can't help wondering who was wearing the hat at that moment. Logically, Silverberg is the most prominent suspect. (New York 14, New York)

### TED PAULS

While reading the colophon and "The Round File" I came to the conclusion that you, Redd Boggs, are a humorist. This conception isn't too odd until compared with my conception of you a year or so ago. You know, when I first began Dhog in January of 1959 I had the impression that fandom was run by you, Harry Warner, and Jack Speer. You were (if you will forgive the cliché) The Men Behind It All. The United States was divided into three zones, each commanded by one of the previously mentioned fans. They sat high upon a mountain of pure mentality, throwing out tentacles here and there to keep fandom rolling, all the while keeping in the background. You were above mere mortal fan.

I am rather embarrassed to admit this, but now I can look back on the incident and laugh. When Dhog was first begun, I duplicated about 500 mailing wrappers on some poor white stock. One of the categories in "What-to-do-to-keep-getting-Dhog" was "Drop me a line or drop dead." I placed Harry Warner on the mailing list with (I think) issue #9 and checked that square. I chuckled at my own nerve for doing such a thing to a (gulp) BNF (sigh) and placed the matter in the back of my mind.

You are doubtless ahead of me at this time, and I probably needn't tell you that about a week later I got a letter from Harry, and he has been commenting every month or so since. He never asked me why I so impolitely asked him to "drop me a line or drop dead," and I have never volunteered the information. I have been surprised similarly since by letters from Marion Bradley, Bob Bloch, Bob Tucker, and of course yourself, but each time the surprise (though not the pleasure) has been less.

This whole line of thought started when I made the simple comment that you are a humorist, and I seem to be drawing further from this idea as time wears on. I think it was Jean Young who commented that "Boggs is funny; too few people recognize it, though" in Fanjack. The reason for this is that while fandom's concept of humor has changed, you and a few others have not. I have been asking correspondents what they considered the most humorous piece to appear in a fanzine during 1959, and though I haven't received nearly enough answers to be truly representative, most of those I asked replied that they thought such material as Bill Donaho's "Adventures in Fandom" and like material the best. I too enjoy this type of material, but if asked what the funniest piece to appear in a 1959 fanzine was, I'd answer Harry Warner's "Where Did You Eat? Out. What Did You Digest? Nothing." I have read this several times, and it still holds up well. (Baltimore 12, Maryland)

### JOE KENNEDY

I'd suspect, suh, that you continue to put out some of the neatest and intelligentest fanzines in fandom, were it not for the fact that your fanzines are among the mighty damned few I ever see any more. At any rate, many thanks for sending the latest Retrograde. I enjoyed very much the beautifully written account of the picketing of the 5 & 10¢

store, though I sort of deplore the tacit assumption behind the piece -- which, if I read you right, is that the Woolworth company is only sensible to adhere to "local customs established by local people for the conduct of business in their community."

Much as I dislike the gungho attitude of the professional liberal (a type which your article ridicules pretty objectively), I do think that the Woolworth company has within its power a moral force for good, if it has the guts to use it. I simply mean that the south's crusade to keep the Negroes at the rear of the bus is a thing that's gone on more than long enough, and that it's pretty clear that the myth of white supremacy is a piece of fuggheadedness that is going to have to be ditched sooner or later, so why not now.

Not that I place much faith in F. W. Woolworth's power to move mountains. But bigod, the Woolworths like any other citizens damn well ought to sink an ax into the myth of white supremacy, especially if they have one in their hands.

I enjoyed your sterling letter section, particularly the contributions of Harry and of Bob Leman, although in regard to Leman, I don't quite see his regret that Richard Ellmann's biography of James Joyce didn't include more "exegesis and criticism." There is so Blooming much Joyce criticism taking up space in the libraries as it is that it seemed to me noble on Ellmann's part to confine himself to straight reporting as much as he did. (Dover, New Jersey)

DONALD A. WOLLHEIM

I must admit I don't fully comprehend the point of putting out Retrograde. It doesn't quite seem to jell -- as if the editor hadn't a very clear notion of what he wanted to say, as if he was vaguely troubled by certain things which he had somehow not quite worked out or attempted to puzzle through. A very curious publication which could easily be interpreted to mean anything.

For instance, why the long chat about the Woolworth pickets? You gave a public demonstration in opposition to them by crossing their line, yet from your tone one seems to feel that your purpose was the opposite. In any case you put selfish interest (taking your photo) over and above any principles pro or con. So what does this prove? Maybe that this Boggs is a sort of indeterminate fellow -- troubled enough to talk about it and not troubled enough to say anything.

And for your remarks anent John Kennedy -- personally I agree with you on Kennedy, but just to be Boggsian, I also think it applies to the others. Just what qualifications for the presidency have Stevenson, Nixon, Rockefeller, or the others? Really, little if any. Actually I entertain a curious suspicion deep down in my cynical mind that Kennedy is being pushed by Republican powers in the belief that he, as a Catholic, is the only Democrat that Nixon is sure to defeat -- merely on the tried-and-true basis of deep-dyed grassroots prejudice.

(And after the last eight years with Ike, surely anyone can honestly claim to be qualified for the presidency, nicht wahr?)

Your reconstruction of the editorial talk which created Santesson's anthology is magnificent. It must have been just that way. (Forest Hills 74, New York)

BILL CONNER

Yes, we have the Woolworth pickets in Ohio, too. Not in Chillicothe, but in Columbus, and naturally in Athens, the home of Ohio university. I noticed that these pickets were continually dodging people who were flocking into these busy stores. Here in Ohio, some of the pickets are white and some are colored. I went into Woolworth's and bought something just for the hell of it. If there's one thing I'm strictly against, it's the NAACP, and all of its machinations. I believe in gradual integration in the south; no radical social change should be suddenly forced on a society. To do so is to invite trouble by trying to force the southern whites to change their way of living suddenly. Another thing I detest about the NAACP is the manner in which they create the

*Get  
his  
address*

image of the Negro as a second class citizen who will not be a first class citizen until he is completely socially integrated. When the Supreme Court tells me that I must have a certain number of Negro friends, and that I must invite a certain number of Negroes into my home, or that I must agree to letting my future sons or daughters date and marry Negroes, then I'll ask for political asylum in Russia!

I freely admit that I find Negroes completely unattractive to me on the physiological level. I would not want to marry a Negro because I want my children to resemble me. For this same reason I would not marry any girl of another race. No, I don't think white humans are superior to other colors of humans; that's not it at all. But since I don't believe in mixing the races, I would not want to have anything to do with colored people on a personal social level. I don't mind if they go to the same schools, eat in the same restaurants, or even work with me, but I do believe that the Protestant churches are making a foolish move when they integrate. Churches are too closely bound to social life. I picture a mixed marriage being performed in one of the large local Protestant churches; this is something I think few white Protestants would tolerate. (Chillicothe, Ohio)

DICK SCHULTZ

I think I liked Renfrew Pemberton's review of The Fantastic Universe Omnibus better than yours. More upbeat; optimistic, if you will. And more accurate too, even though I had to admire the situation that you placed Hans Santesson in.

I must agree with Bob Stein about banning controversial books from the classroom in view of what they can buy in any drugstore, including Lady Chatterley's Lover. Which book, by the way, should be put on the school shelves. As was stated in Yandro a while back, censorship only succeeds in getting rid of honest discussion of sex, not pornography. A few more books like Lady Chatterley would do wonders for sex education. My pastor would rake me over the coals if he could hear me advocating sex education, but I can't help but feel a little more honesty with our kids would end most, if not all, our troubles with sex maniacs and "momism." It seems to me that American kids deserve more than learning about one of an adult's most powerful, pleasurable, and wonderful functions from the gutter.

Bob Leman hit it right on the nose. Beatniks would never have become as popular and respected as they are if some "authoritative" people had not decided that this bunch would have to undergo some restrictions and banning. Howl, for instance, would never have sold like it did if it had not been banned from public readings.

Controls/censorship never works, really, so why not try anarchy? If you're interested I can tell you where you can obtain a complete anarchist's kit, including black slicker, sneakers, black glasses, slouch hat, fringe beard (very tangled), and a manual on how to acquire a shifty sneaky look. You'll have to make your own bombs, though I know where you can obtain some of those old round casings. "Anarchy is just a ghu-damned hobby!" (Detroit 34, Michigan)

HARRY WARNER JR (Hagerstown, Md.) reports a letter in the Hagerstown newspaper in which the American Legion decried "eligibility of merchant seamen to get work after they have been classed as poor security risks by the Coast Guard; the choice of Howard da Silva of 'Fiorello!' to provide entertainment at a Washington political rally; the award of an Oscar to Simone Signoret who couldn't get a visa to visit the U. S.; and the Ford Foundation's commission to Marc Blitzstein to write an opera about Sacco and Vanzetti." HAL SHAPIRO (Detroit 38, Mich.) reports that the "overall picture" in issue #3 was one of "ho hum, nice fanzine," but ROY TACKETT (Laurel Bay, S. C.) thought it was "an example of excellent workmanship and thought-provoking material." He adds that "New York City is about 36 miles in length and about 16½ miles across at its point of greatest width." R & R RUCKER (Oakland 12, Calif.) report: "Really enjoyable this Retrograde offers great reading and delightful entertainment."

yes