



DISCORD

EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY REDD BOGGS

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COGITO

THE COLOUR OUT OF TASTE

Maledictions on the Gestetner Duplicator corporation of Yonkers, N. Y., for apparently discontinuing the manufacture of russet hue paper, which Discord has used since issue #2. The logo for this issue and the next have already been printed on russet, but I have been unable to discover any further supplies of this paper in the Twin Cities. The beige paper is being used as the nearest equivalent; the same combination will be used next issue, unless I am able to import some russet paper from elsewhere. After that, the logo on russet having been exhausted, I will probably switch to a different color (and brand) of paper entirely.

SUPERMAN AND CLARK KENT: PARTNERS IN CRIME

However necessary a spy organization is to a nation -- and I sometimes suspect that the hypocrisy, deceit, and treachery spying engenders makes it a liability in the long run -- one can hardly help feeling perversely elated when spies of any country, even our own, are revealed to be the damn fools we always hoped they would be. The lordly and mysterious Central Intelligence agency formed a tiny group of Cuban exiles and sent them off to conquer Castro, thus pulling the prize cropper of the twentieth century. The CIA agents obviously had read too many comic books in their youth, and actually believed that Good Guys always conquer the Bad Guys. Worse, they actually believed what they read in the newspapers, a melange of outright lies and wishful thinking, that Castro would be overthrown by the Cubans themselves as soon as armed forces took the field against him. Can the corrupting influence of the mass media in America be made any more plain than this? Our super-spies turn out to be super-fools who know only what they read in the papers.

But the mass media themselves: they may disseminate lies, misinformation, propaganda, and deceit, but surely nothing could be more highly efficient than these organizations, bossed by the keenest minds in America and manned by the most skilled of American engineers and technicians. Hah. I managed to watch America's man-into-space shot from Cape Canaveral on 5 May by sternly repressing a powerful urge to kick a hole in the picture tube. Of course TV was guilty of wildly over-

selling the shot -- so obviously small potatoes compared with Yuri Gagarin's orbital ride -- and of attempting to wish away Russian success by hinting that the Russians were lying. But one might forgive TV for being patriotic. I felt like smashing the TV set because of the hopelessly inept, foolish, vulgar quality of the TV coverage of the big event. Trying to keep a closeup focus on the rising rocket, the TV cameras lost the image like a fat matron trying to aim a box camera, and meantime two (count 'em) TV commentators would not keep quiet, but worked their unstoppable mouths spreading ignorance to all corners of the world while drowning out the voice of the man in direct contact with the astronaut and relaying information through a loudspeaker. The big TV networks pooled their equipment and "talent" to cover this event, and could not scrape up sufficient resources to cover a hair-pulling tiff in "Romper Room." American TV is fortunate that the Russians are secretive about their space shots; had Russian TV been permitted to follow the Gagarin adventure the USSR would have outshone the USA on the picture tube as well as in outer space.

THE GUY WAS FULL OF SHIPS

Martin Levine wrote that I missed "the high point, fuggheadedness-wise," of the Amazing annish when I failed to mention the remark that "Paul's proudest boast is that though he has drawn tens of thousands of spaceships he has never drawn the same design twice!" In a letter to Martin I replied: "What an odd thing to be proud of! I can just picture Paul around the office. All the other guys are displaying wallet pix of their wives and children and such. But after they've done their boasting, old Frank R. remarks casually, 'I have drawn tens of thousands of spaceships -- and never the same design twice!' That ought to shut them up." And Martin wrote back, "Realism and action in your scene with Frank R. Paul, but you faded out just a bit too soon. After he says 'I have drawn tens of thousands of spaceships -- and never the same design twice,' Paul pulls out his wallet, and damned if it doesn't hold 38,000 pictures of spaceships, all different. 'This one,' he says, starting at the beginning, 'looks like a dropsical banana, and this one...'"

MEENIE MINIE MO

"Who are you supporting for TAFF?"

I felt my face break into the smile that (I have been told) seems to fill the farthest corner of the room with a warm radiance. "Why not Ethel Lindsay? Or Mal Ashworth? Willis and Ella Parker are coming over on special funds. Fred Hunter? Joe Patrizio? Chris Miller? Arthur Thomson has got to come over soon. Ken Cheslin? Alan -- "

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"No no. I mean what American fan are you in favor of sending Beyond Thirty?"

"Well, I'm in favor of sending somebody who knows how to write. Of course we've probably run out of TAFF candidates who lack that ability, since so many have already been elected. But I think we ought to look for somebody with 50 per cent more wit than either Madle or Ford. The thought of suffering through another 'Fake Fan in London' scares me."

"What about Ron Ellik?"

"A very fine fellow. But I was thinking of another chap, a fellow who studied the art of fan writing under all the Old Masters, Speer, Warner, Willis. Indeed, I remember that DAG and I took this youngster under our collective wing some years ago and taught him how to write witty interlineations. After being tutored two or three days, he turned out some rather good phrases. He is a Good Man and very funny, too. In fact, I've seen people smile as soon as they behold him. Those are the polite ones, of course. The rude ones burst out laughing."

"Say, this fellow might turn out to be a worthy TAFF man, especially if you or Grennell would deign to edit his report. Add a few gags and interlineations. But what's his name?"

"Oh, plague it, I can't think of it at the moment. He's such a fine young chap, too. Jim? Fred? George? (Hell no.) Tell you what. Write and ask Willis. He'll tell you. The fans over there have been faunching to welcome this fellow to Britain for years."

ALL ABOARD FOR MONKEY ISLAND

The lucky citizen possessed both of a gusto for low comedy and an unfinicky stomach will always find a giddy pleasure in the grotesque capers of the professional censor and reformer. Such blathering bedlams are so highly esteemed in some circles that one may soberly envision the day in more enlightened times when no zoo will be complete without a prancing vice crusader in a cage to show off to the Sunday throngs.

I wept bitter tears when Sir Arthur was tweaked out of his Washington tabernacle on 20 January; his frisky didos were greatly admired by all connoisseurs of agreeable rattle. And I found myself sniffing into my Kleenex again a few weeks later when his successor, General Day, was reported in the papers to have quietly snatched the tin swords away from his snooper corps and sent the whole pack of them sneaking back to the mouse-hole tedium of spying on their fellow employees.

Just in time -- almost as if in answer to prayer -- a new and promising troupe of entertainers has cavorted onto the Twin Cities scene of late. The Citizens for Decent Literature, as this repertory company is called, has already captured the fancy of everybody who dotes on flub-dubbery of high quality, and once their act is polished and perfected, the group may provide us with a moral Mardi Gras that is more fun to watch than an auto-da-fe.

At least one member of this troupe, one Paul Bussard, has already grabbed some newspaper space with his merry pranks. Obviously this fel-

low is just warming up, and if properly goosed may burst into real activity. Speaking before the Midway Civic club Bussard declared that a revised St Paul ordinance designed to curb "obscenity" and a new South St Paul ordinance would "drive salacious printed matter under the counter and remove it from public sale." Obviously such absurd repression will only intensify the "vice," thus keeping people like Bussard hopping ever more vigorously. The self-perpetuating aspect of vice crusading may be the closest thing to perpetual motion ever conceived, and much entertained, I hailed Bussard's pronouncement with a hoot of mirth that shattered windows two and a half blocks away.

But this salvo of merriment was as nothing compared with the one I let go when I reached the end of this news-item reporting the Bussard speech. Paul solemnly pointed out that prosecutions in other cities are increasingly successful. Out of 19 arrests in St Louis recently, there were 17 convictions. "One of the convictions was for distributing Playboy magazine." This remark reminded me, as I rolled around on the floor bellowing heartily and beating the rug with my heels, of the pressure some churches exert to keep TV off the air during the hours of Sunday church services. (After all, how can Jesus Christ compete with Captain Kangaroo?) Paul Bussard, a Catholic priest, is a magazine publisher -- the publisher of Catholic Digest.

Learned opinion has it that people of Paul Bussard's stamp ought to be summarily hanged -- and not necessarily, as I understand it, by the neck. I forget the part of the anatomy that was suggested. The thumbs, perhaps. But I'll have none of it. Paul and his dervishing disciples should be cherished and preserved like the whooping crane and the buggy-whip manufacturer as a national resource. The glorious frolics of such fuddled reformers should be encouraged at all costs; in these drab times who else have we to laugh at?

THE ROUND FILE

I sent a tearsheet from Discord #11 (pp 3/4), showing the topsyturvy tortoise, to John W. Campbell, and received it back a few days later with a new caption scribbled beside the pic: "U. S. tortoise observing Gagarin -- who did not keep his feet on the ground. (signed) J. W. Campbell." Hah. # The May Analog struck me as the best issue in years of that venerable periodical with the new handle. All three novelets -- by Anvil, Clarke, and Schmitz -- were very nearly first rate, any one of them worth rating #1 in the AnLab. This unlikely happenstance renews my faith in the future of Analog and of science fiction. # And I hope you didn't miss Fritz Leiber's new Fafhrd-Gray Mouser novelet, "Scylla's Daughter," in the May Fantastic. It's an amusing story that inspired me to write Leiber a fan letter. # The December 1960 Analog had a story by Donald E. Westlake; the January 1961 F&SF had a story by William Eastlake. This is a note that was crowded out of umpteen issues. # Here's another: No less than four Minnesotans or ex-Minnesotans appeared in the January F&SF: Simak, De Vet, Dickson, Anderson. And Vance Aandahl sounds like he should be a Minnesotan too. Anyway, Aandahl will probably lead the alphabetical-by-authors parade in future editions of the Day index. Robert Abernathy leads in the 1926-1950 edition. # The most fascinating magazine cover I've seen lately was the one for Ever-

(Continued on page 10)



A FAN'S LIBRARY ● FOR THE REFERENCE SHELF

THE UNLIKELIEST PLACE ON EARTH for a scholarly work on science fiction to appear would probably be the South Pole. The next least likely place would be the last stop before Antarctica, which I presume would be Tasmania. And from Hobart, Tasmania, has come A Handbook of Science Fiction and Fantasy (second edition, revised and enlarged, April 1959), by Donald H. Tuck, a two-volume work which is probably the most impressive bibliographical job ever done in the field. As a feat of bibliographical research and devoted scholarship it quite eclipses such better known projects as the Index to the Science Fiction Magazines by Donald B. Day, and Fancylopedia II by Richard H. Eney. Unfortunately it falls short of being as useful as the Day index or as amusing as Cy II.

In the Handbook Tuck aimed to compile "a bibliographical survey to the fields of science fiction and fantasy (including weird), covering the magazines, books, pocket books, personalities, etc., of these fields up to December 1957." While he has succeeded more spectacularly than anybody out there on the edge of the known universe ought to succeed, Tuck has ended up with a work that was conceived too ambitiously to carry out to anybody's entire satisfaction. The wonder of it is that he carried it out as well as he did.

The whole package -- nearly 400 pages of it -- is bound up in two paper-covered volumes, and mimeographed on legal-length paper. Like grandfather's clock, it stands too tall for the shelf -- or most bookshelves. These pages are well-crammed with information, but so much of it is extraneous and uninteresting that one tosses the work aside almost convinced that it is a tour de force rather than an indispensable reference work.

All the material in the main text of this work is arranged under a single alphabet, but the only entries that count are those for "Authors or compilers and their works." Most of the other entries, for books, magazines, and such "miscellaneous items of interest" as societies, films, fanzines, etc., are what Tuck calls "one-line entries," which refer back to the author or compiler, "under which all publishing and other data can be found." In other words, these are index entries, and material which might better be removed to the back of the book clutters the main text. For example, page 133 is 50 per cent devoted to one-line entries -- book titles from Great Short Stories of the World to The Green Queen. Such entries are wasteful of space, and far overbalance

the space conserved by the use of a cryptic shorthand ("The PB contains 25s (selected from the H ed) of which 11 can be called Fy...").

The book's strong points include the listing of complete contents of numerous collections and anthologies, and the noting of complete publishing data about original and reprint appearances, both British and American, of well known books and stories. The Handbook is the source to consult when you are doubtful as to what stories are included in the first six series of The Best from F&SF, Philip K. Dick's British collection, A Handful of Darkness, or M. R. James' Ghost Stories of an Antiquary, or when you want to trace the publishing history of John Russell Fearn's Liners of Time or of Ray Cummings' Tarrano the Conqueror.

Biographical information about authors, editors, and others connected with the field is of much less value. The authors listed here are for the most part those who have appeared in books; thus there are entries for such Smiths, unimportant to the field, as Langdon Smith (author of the verse "Evolution"), Lady Eleanor Furneaux Smith (author of a collection called Satan's Circus), and Dale R. Smith (compiler of a bibliography of space travel), but none for Cordwainer Smith or George F. Smith. There are biographies for such people as Barrett H. Clark, co-editor of the above-mentioned Great Short Stories of the World (about which, after all, Tuck is unable to supply any information), and John Steinbeck, of marginal interest because he wrote The Short Reign of Pippin IV. Such biographies are probably included merely because the information was too handy to waste; no one is likely to consult Tuck to learn that Steinbeck "has traveled widely & is noted for East of Eden."

Incidental information as to birthdates and full names of various writers and editors is at least amusing. Festus Pragnell was born in 1905, A. Bertram Chandler in 1912, and Judith Merrill in 1923; it's John Wood Campbell Jr and Alfred Elton Van Vogt, and the big O in George O. Smith's name stands for Oliver.

The brief histories of the various science fiction magazines range from adequate (Amazing) to quite inadequate (Air Wonder), and while the coverage often is surprisingly detailed the prozines are not as well encompassed as books. Probably the necessary information was not so readily available to Tuck; in any case, in this area alone the Handbook falls short of being a prime reference work. Notes on British, Canadian and other foreign editions of American prozines are valuable.

Too much space in this Handbook of Science Fiction and Fantasy has been devoted to non-fiction. Many of the popularized scientific works listed much be outdated, and the coverage is haphazard. Flying saucer books and various other occultish items are also listed for no very good reason, and of even more dubious worth are entries for material such as Charles Addams' collections and the Pogo books. Tuck makes an effort to list important sf and fantasy movies, but while the dates and casts are of interest, his annotations are often too generalized. Of "The Conquest of Space" (U. S., Paramount, 1954), he remarks, "Screenplay derived from Ley's The Conquest of Space, but plot actually weak..." That figgers.

Tuck's writing style was never, I'm afraid, much better than adequate, and when it is reduced to the terseness and shorthand he deemed

necessary for this Handbook, it becomes nigh unintelligible. Two short stories of Jack Snow in his book Dark Music are said to be "Simply written with best"; Cleve Cartmill is "US Sf author who made fame through predicting the atomic bomb"; and E. M. Hull's Planets for Sale is said to be "Old-fashioned space-opera giving the last 5 of the 6 Artur Blord series." Tuck is addicted to the verb "moot," and I'm not sure whether his use is characteristic Australian jargon or is truly idiosyncratic. The Skylark of Space, says Tuck, "was even tentatively mooted for reprint in '33." While his thumbnail judgments are sometimes slightly astonishing (George O. Smith's Operation Interstellar is "High-class space opera," according to Tuck), he exhibits good taste for the most part, and his familiarity with obscure books and stories can be described as vast and comprehensive.

The work is pocked with errors and omissions, but these are fewer in number than one might expect for such a large and far-ranging work. Some of these errors are corrected in an "Errata" sheet stuck loosely into the book. Many are simple typographical errors, such as the one which has Ignatius Donnelly dying 30 years before he was born (perhaps that's an amazing fact, and not an error after all), and "King Kong" appearing as "Film written up as book" in 1932, while the film itself did not appear -- according to the data given here -- till 1933. But there are other errors, such as the common one of calling Clifford D. Simak a Milwaukee (rather than a Minneapolis) newspaper editor, and the curious misinformation regarding FAPA.

As it stands, the Tuck Handbook is a croggling achievement even if it is not the Encyclopedia of Science Fiction that some of us have been sitting here, piously praying for, all these years. If Tuck in Tasmania can compile and publish such an excellent work, what might one do who had, say, the resources of the Library of Congress and of Newark 7 within easy driving distance? But let's not feel sorry for Tuck; despite his handicap of being 10,000 miles from the center of publishing activity he is attempting to cover, he has done a more thorough job than anybody else is likely ever to do, and he should be encouraged to publish further revisions and editions in the years to come till the Handbook does expand into an encyclopedia. I hope that eventually the Handbook will be published in volumes of a size to fit easily on a bookshelf and that the main text will be pruned on all the "one-line entries," and filled solidly with more meaningful summaries and annotations, with a comprehensive index at the end.

Till then the Handbook can be recommended, but only with the reservation that it is worth \$6.75 American money only to the fan who has a genuine scholarly interest in the field; it is not a book fascinating enough to keep on the nightstand for browsing on sleepless nights. The book nevertheless deserves more recognition than it has received so far.

A NOTE ON BOOKS REVIEWED IN "A FAN'S LIBRARY": Donald H. Tuck's Handbook is available in the United States from Howard DeVore, 4705 Weddel street, Dearborn, Michigan, at \$6.75, postpaid. (See his ad circulated with this issue as a rider.) Many readers have inquired how to obtain Search the Dark Stars (London: John Spenser & Co., Ltd., 1961, 2/6), reviewed in Discord #11. Martin Levine recommends W. & G. Foyle, Ltd., ("The World's Greatest Bookshop"), 119-125 Charing Cross road, London, W.C.1, England as a likely source. They supply any British book at list, no postage charge.

REVIEWING STAND

BY MARION Z. BRADLEY

The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, June 1961

Cordwainer Smith is not a prolific writer, but has given us two of the most memorable stories of the past dozen years: the superb "Scanners Live in Vain" in Fantasy Book #6 (1950), and the only slightly less notable "Game of Rat and Dragon" (Galaxy, October 1955). With these two held and cherished in memory, I pounced upon "Alpha Ralpa Boulevard" with joy. I wish now I had been content with the memory. In fantasy or science fiction the only way to make the small domestic story tolerable is to place it against a pattern of all-encompassing horror (as in Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery," where the domestic vignettes accentuate the extra horrors) or against a major procession of extrapolation (as in J. T. McIntosh's One in Three Hundred). In Cordwainer Smith's newest, the glimpses of strangeness-taken-for-granted are present, but the world he envisions this time doesn't quite come off, and is obscured by a grotesque series of phrases (such as the "abba-Dingo"), presumably meant to startle by their incongruity; but it is hard to be startled, or to shudder, when one is giggling. Such small plot as there is to the tale is obscured by a plodding romance of sorts. Very much of sorts.

Two other stories in the issue exploit the overworked "domestic" vein again. John Anthony West's "George" tells of a man attacked by paralysis while his nagging wife sits by and flutters at him helplessly. This story might be memorable in a volume of "modern short stories" for its "sensitivity" and "perception"; doubtless it satirizes with painful accuracy a certain form of marriage. But fantasy or science fiction it most emphatically is not. Once again, in wooing the "general" reader, editor Bob Mills risks losing his major audience. Doris Pitkin Buck comes a little closer to fantasy with "Birth of a Gardener." There's this professor, see, and he has a wife who tries to understand what he's talking about, and so on and so forth, until one day she just up and dies and then her ghost comes back, and -- but why go further? There is not an ounce of inventive imagination in gallons of these cute little domestic things.

It is a relief to turn to Mark Twain's "A Curious Pleasure Excursion," which at once satirizes the overdone travel advertising of his day and gives a wild and wacky look at what life might be like while traveling on a several-thousand-mile-long comet. This brief piece shows the essential falsity of modern concepts of fiction: it has not a single character, no plot nor even an episode; it is not "subtly" or "sensitivity" written; but it stirs the mind, provokes the imagination, and tickles the funnybone more than a whole file-drawer full of "superbly written" little formula stories with nice human characters.

Jody Scott's "Go for Baroque" presents a mildly ho-hum twist on the patient who psychoanalyzes the psychoanalyst. Arthur C. Clarke's "Crime

on Mars" was spoiled for me by the fact that I read it not two years ago in Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine.

Miriam Allen deFord seldom disappoints those who wish for thoughtful entertainment; nor does she in "The Cage." Here is an example of how real story value and a sense of, to coin a phrase, wonder, can be used to give freshness and vitality to the oldest of plot ideas: in this case, the one about the slightly off-balance scientist who is secretly cultivating a dreadful menace out of sheer love of knowledge or some equally un-anthropomorphic aim. When I finished reading "The Cage," for almost the first time in this issue I had a flare of the old enthusiasm of my early teens, and a sense that I had, instead of having my mind routinely worked on, been participating in a vital imaginative experience.

A collaboration is always an odd challenge. It puzzles me how a facile turner-out of formula fiction like Randall Garrett could team with a deft producer of original horrors like Avram Davidson in the first place; but the end-product is, like its title, "Something Rich and Strange." It is hard, particularly after Sturgeon, to say anything new about mermaids, but they have managed it. Any more would spoil this story for the readers, and -- as I tried to indicate above -- a story, as contrasted to a "nice little thing," is a rare and treasured experience these days. Particularly in F&SF.

Fantastic: Stories of Imagination, May 1961

I had never before read any of the Fafhrd-Gray Mouser stories by Fritz Leiber, so I came to "Scylla's Daughter" without preconceptions or halo-effect except for a general liking for Leiber. This story shows earmarks of having been contrived -- and I use the term advisedly -- around a cover by Vernon Kramer* which was nothing to write home about, let alone write a novelet about. The dragged-in dragon episode (from the cover) has little relationship to the story conceived by Leiber for his heroes. This story comes as close as modern-day editors with their reader-identification mania will permit to being part of the great fantasy-adventure tradition; it deals with a strange ship carrying a curious cargo of white rats, and a very unusual girl. The only criticism which one can offer of this very well-written, very fascinating and very absorbing yarn is that it does not quite carry through to be what it started to be, and the fault is probably the editor's rather than Fritz Leiber's.

I had never read Robert E. Howard's "The Garden of Fear," either, and its major effect on me was to make me even more dissatisfied with what editors permit to appear as "fantasy" these days. When Howard was writing, in the golden age of the pulps, there were no holds barred. But fantasy today treads a narrow and dreary path because the editors, wooing the mass audience, are afraid to allow writers to put more than a timid toe into the wild worlds of wonder. Anything more might scare off

* I wonder if this Kramer has any connection with the Kramer who desecrated numerous issues of Astounding during the early 1940s. -- RB.

the dull clod who, the editors suppose, might start buying their magazine by the armload if they feed him realistic tales of other dull clods like himself. The basic fallacy of this theory can be seen in any TV repair shop, which is where the dull clod is, waiting for a new picture tube to be installed in his set. Anyone who reads a magazine these days is seeking something he can't get on TV -- but he won't keep looking in the magazines much longer unless he finds it.

Jack Sharkey's novelet, "Are You Now or Have You Ever Been?," though fascinatingly titled, displays the poverty of imagination of most modern-day fantasy. Following the rather sad tradition that the story must begin and end in the here-and-now, and present prosaic, thoroughly unfantastic characters, Sharkey fashions a dreary, routine tale of time-traveling to an Egyptian temple and manages only one bright touch: the suggestion that a date devoured in 3000 B.C. might become a date oasis in the time-traveler's stomach when he returns to the present. But even this possibility is only talked-about and never considered directly.

David R. Bunch's "The Problem Was Lubrication" details, with some spiritless and oh-so-symbolically obscene symbolism, an account of a love affair in an automated factory. Gug. The final short, "The Arrogant Vampire" by Arthur Porges is a rarity: a yarn that combines traditional fantasy with up-to-date science in a whimsical way, and yet manages to keep the reader interested. The only trouble with this sort of tale is that it makes too many writers with less ability than Porges suppose they can do it too, and, encouraged by the success of this yarn, the editors may think they can present a whole slew of them. Well, as we all know, if a whiff of garlic is good in salad, three whole bulbs is obviously better.

COGITO concluded

green Review #14 (1960), showing a U. S. commemorative stamp for "Freedom of the Press" cancelled with "Report Obscene Mail to Your Postmaster." # Rep. Francis E. Walter, chairman of the un-American activities committee, is sponsoring a bill to set up controls on "foreign political propaganda" mailed to this country from abroad. The bill, strongly opposed, it is said, by the Kennedy administration, defines "political propaganda" so loosely that it would exclude from the mails even magazines published abroad that commented on American foreign policy. Even fanzines like Hyphen might be intercepted and confiscated when they entered the country if a fan editor happened to remark on the status of the U. S. missile program. # Uplifted eyebrow department: "Gary Player Hugged By Wife Vivienne After 69." -- Caption in the Minneapolis Sunday Tribune, 9 April 1961. # The Grennell-dominated July issue of Gunsport magazine should be on your newsstand by the time you read this.

S.O.L. BLUES

DAG suggests that The Golden Apple #3 and Discord #11 were distributed by mistake on the sunside of Mercury. He received only two letters of comment on TGA (plus several that came to me and have not yet been forwarded), and reader response to Discord hit an all-time low. Since it appears to be no longer feasible to exchange Discord for letters of comment, Marion and I are discussing the possibility of offering this fanzine by subscription in the future.

A MEETING OF MINDS

JOHN M. BAXTER

I nearly didn't see Discord #10. Our damned dog picked your envelope out of the inwards mail and made off with it in the general direction of his bone-burying patch. The implications of this incident I can safely leave to your imagination. Maybe it's something you put in the ink.

I was amused to see copies of Kennedy's inaugural address printed up into a distinguished little booklet and distributed by the local US Information Service in rather the same way as tracts of the Seventh Day Adventists. The Gospel According to Kennedy. Strangely enough, it was very popular, and stocks ran out after the first few days. Like the immense interest shown by Australians in the presidential elections, this makes me wonder just how much of the old Australia-for-the-Australians spirit remains. At one time, especially just after the war, the United States had an extremely bad name out here, mainly because of the 1942-5 "occupation." Looks like people are starting to wake up to themselves.

I thought Jean Young's little poem, "Thaw," was a very sensitive and beautiful piece of verse. And well presented too. The restrained nature of Discord -- a somewhat inappropriate title in view of the quiet logical feeling you try to engender -- fits in well with this type of poetry. (Sydney, N.S.W., Australia)

RICK SNEARY

Interested to note your approval of Ruth Berman as a writer and editor. My own feeling is that she has been the brightest freshest thing on the fannish scene in the past couple years.

I have just been writing my congressman, but I fear I failed to mention the Boggs plan. Not because I am unwilling to brighten his days with new ideas (as an ass and a dolt, his days could stand something bright). It just seems that your division of the several states is not the only one possible. It quite obviously follows present state lines. Now, if you are going to work miracles you might as well make them as practical as possible. Each super-state should be a grouping with much in common, and the present state lines are not the best. I've drawn up my own hasty division, according to geographical boundaries of note. A more complex geo-political study might suggest still different ones. Areas with common problems or markets.

I have also done a little renaming where there seemed a need. [Midwest state in the Boggs plan becomes Mideast state; Upper Midwest state the North Central state.] I assure you that it is very hard for anyone born out here to think of such far-away places as Illinois, not to mention Ohio, as being in the midwest. Chicago is "back east," and there is no getting around it. (People in Salt Lake City, "the crossroads of the west," will be surprised to find themselves on the Pacific Coast, but we can't be troubled by what a few easterners think.)

I hope to Foo that Ray Nelson was kidding in his letter. In view of the blather he had published in Habakkuk, he might not be. It is sad to see a mind go to pot. But, as Nelson has been seeing the world, he must be kidding about Chicago. No one in his straight-faced mind could mean that last line. (South Gate, California)

PHIL HARRELL

I think it was Heinlein who advanced that idea, but I can't be sure. I am sure that you'd get some objections from Texas and Nevada for obvious and not so obvious reasons. If your plan went through, how would we address mail? You know, various states have cities with

the same name, i.e., in the southeast you have a Bristol, Va., and a Bristol, N. C., and there's a Norwich, Conn., and a Norwich, N. Y. What do you do in such a case?

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
Shining up in the sky so far;
I see you twinkle there each night,
Oh gosh darn, that's a satellite.

In the passion of the moment I whopped up the above Harrelling poem for you, called "Twinkle, Twinkle," by Phil Harrell, the most discordant person you'll ever hope to meet. (Norfolk 9, Virginia)

HARRY WARNER JR

Apparently the formula for name brand root beer isn't as much a secret as that for Coca-Cola. I note that the list of ingredients given here [Discord #9] doesn't contain the proportions, so maybe that is locked in the minds of only two men on earth, who are not permitted to fly in the same plane simultaneously. The best root beer I've ever tasted was a brand I'd never heard of before. It was available only at a little town just east of here, Boonsboro. I used to drive the 11 miles each way quite frequently, just for that wonderfully unique tang. Then one day the health authorities cracked down on Boonsboro's water system. After two or three months of repairs, I tried the root beer again and it tasted just like any other root beer, thanks to the newly fresh and pure water that was going into it.

It's shocking to see an intelligent person like Ted Pauls believing that there is some mystery about the overalls case [Discord #10]. All the confusion results simply from a mistake in the printing of the song, which may have been caused by someone taking down the words from dictation or by a fear of the libel laws. Mr Thealowder was the guilty person, and the song mercifully ends with the last line of the chorus which occurs just before Mrs Murphy took her vengeance on him. In its original form, the chorus goes: "Who threw the overalls in Mrs Murphy's chowder? / Nobody answered, so she shouted: 'Al Thealowder!'" (Hagerstown, Maryland)

WALTER BREEN

Show Martin Helgesen's first paragraph [Discord #9] to any historian, archaeologist, or anthropologist and you will get the scholarly horselaugh. If "monotheism is more fundamental to man" (whatever that means), why then has polytheism in one form or another always had greater numbers of adherents? Monotheism in Egypt was a brief and unwelcome heresy; in the Mediterranean (until the rise of Christianity backed by the armies of the decaying Roman empire) it was confined to a microscopically small group of bickering DPs who refused to go along with the prevailing Mother Goddess and Olympian and Dionysian cults; it never made any headway in India or the far east. And whether or not one god was regarded (like Zeus) as of higher rank than others is irrelevant; polytheism means worship of many gods, not many equal or near-equal gods. Even today more people are outside the toils of monotheism than in them.

There was no law against obscene literature until comparatively recent decades, here or in England or on the European continent. The honor of being the first to ban books for obscenity seems to belong to the degenerate Ta Ts'ing (Manchu) dynasty in China [1644-1912 A.D.]; after that comes our own well-beloved (by Summerfield & Co.) Anthony Comstock and his British counterparts. And perhaps even Martin Helgesen will find it significant that Comstock [1844-1915; leader of a YMCA campaign against obscene literature, special agent of the post office, founder of the Society for Suppression of Vice, etc., etc.] was an anti-pornographer by profession and a pornography collector by avocation, his collection being one of the largest ever assembled according to written accounts by people who saw it.

Heinlein (leaving aside such gaffes as his pro-bomb manifesto) has, most of the time, been concerned with insuring the survival, not of humanity in the mass, but of the creative minority -- "encyclopedic synthesists" and the like, "homo novus," call them what you will: the type represented by the Leonardos and von Neumanns, the type capable of solving the really BIG problems confronting humanity, problems too big for little men to deal with effectively. With these problems solved as they come up, the world (says Heinlein) will be safer for all mankind.

Without particular attention being paid to identifying and encouraging the types of many who can eventually solve these problems, those types remain rare and usually ineffectual, particularly in an anti-intellectual society. Now the usual soft-~~hearted~~ hearted "liberal" solution to the problem is to encourage humanity in the mass, subsidizing overpopulation, in the hope that somehow the masses will lift themselves up by their own jockstraps. It is too often forgotten that these same masses quickly turn to whatever demagog offers them the biggest loaves of bread and the most spectacular circuses, without bothering to think about how that demagog proposes to obtain either. It is these same masses that keep anti-intellectualism alive under the shibboleth "All men are created equal"; it is these same masses that create the problems they cannot solve, and when confronted with them cry to God or Eisenhower or some equally inefficient idol.

I will not defend the position of Starship Troopers (I haven't finished reading it), but I submit that stated as above the position of many of Heinlein's earlier stories is defensible, even though some of the methods outlined in the stories might have been at once more efficient and more humane -- given other political conditions than those in the stories. (Berkeley 6, California)

JAMES BLISH

Amen to calling quits on the Starship Troopers argument; everything has now been said at least twice. Your letter column in issue #10 prompts me to observe that the guy who has the last word in this kind of discussion is usually the guy who hasn't been paying any attention to what came before. And if (p 12) Bill McMorris' ethics are now to be called into question, I am not the proper person to address on the subject; Bill is. The address is 210 Madison avenue, New York 16.

But I am afraid the Boggs plan for smoorging the states together, worthy though it is, won't prove nearly as incendiary.

Glad to see that "Nothing really worth bothering with happens outside" the part of Chicago described by Ray Nelson. I always suspected it, having spent my childhood there. That's where I encountered my first sf magazine, for instance. Did you feel the earth move?

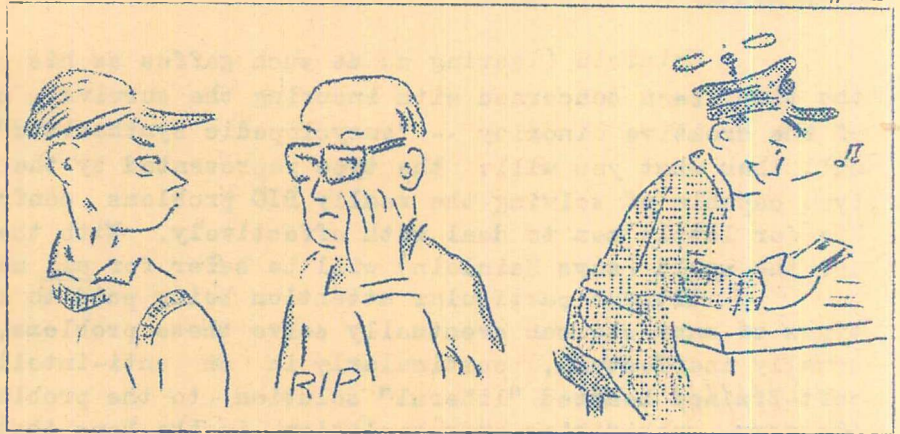
On the question of pornography I belong to the Tapscott/Breen persuasion, except for the foot Breen tries to keep in the door in his "Bolt the fourth." While it is currently illegal to "teach and advocate" the overthrow of the government, I can see nothing ethically wrong with it, putting to one side the question of the ethics of law-breaking, a question usually considered irrelevant when censorship is being discussed.

Tapscott's experience with the imitation bologna reminds me of a hassel the antibiotics manufacturer I used to work for got into. It discovered that the mycelia of the molds they used to make the drugs -- which (the mycelia) they were throwing away by the ton -- couldn't be distinguished in flavor from top-quality mushrooms, and they sold this notion to the country's largest soup-canner. The canner's enthusiasm evaporated, however, when it discovered that the FDA would require the label of the end-product to read, "Cream of Fungus Mycelium Soup."

In your opening gemstone, "complacency" got substituted for "flippancy," no? Very funny; wonder if she'll spot it? (Milford, Pennsylvania)

JEAN YOUNG

Discord #11 came Saturday, and today I finally had a chance to read it. Very brief comments: I caught you in a grammatical error! Page 3: "Ruth's parents made John and I welcome..." Good god, the world is coming to an end. Marion's review was fine, and I might conceivably get and read the book on the strength of it. But what hit you in "Reviewing Stand"? Were you drunk, or am I (quick count: three ounces rum, two ounces vodka last night -- but eight hours of sleep since; I might be hung, but not drunk), or has my ear totally deserted me? I don't think I've ever seen you cut loose with so many figures of speech so wildly thrown together. It's dizzying. The Simile Jungle yet. Not always bad, man, but kind of overwhelming. God, but Larry Harris is a pill. He was a pill in Xero, too. You may quote me too, if you feel the need. (Somerville 43, Mass.)



"I'm afraid he's been on the Boggs route too long."

ROY TACKETT

Gad, Redd, what is happening to Discord? Where are the discussions on politics? Where are the essays on life in these United States and why the dirty Republicans are doing us wrong? What do I find in "Cogito"? A conreport. Well, not exactly a conreport, but a report of a visit to the Twin Cities Fantasy society. Gad! Can this be Boggs? You are getting soft. The first thing you know Ted Pauls will no longer classify Discord as "new trend" and then what will become of you?

Ah, but here is a column by Astra, and this surely will be filled with vast and weighty thoughts. So I read the column expecting to find one of Marion's customary discourses on morality, the narrowmindedness of America's outlook on sex and why it is so difficult for the average working girl to get laid -- and what do I find? I ask you, what do I find? A book review! Not only a book review, but a review of a book which she openly calls "space opera" and admits she enjoyed it. Marion, too, grows mellow. The old order passes. I weep.

Well, there is always the lettercol. British readers, as reported by Mal Ashworth, must be a somewhat different breed from our domestic U. S. type. Mal feels that British readers will soon tire of a diet of pure, unadulterated crap, whereas in our country the general readership has subsisted on this diet for so long that if it were denied them they would stop reading entirely.

Art Castillo points out that both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. are coming to resemble each other and thinks that in about ten years the resemblance will be so close they could pass for twins. And perhaps the one thing he overlooks is that both, in about ten years, could very possibly resemble slag heaps. (Iwakuni, Japan)

JEFF WANSHEL

As I sit here listening to rock-and-roll slop out all over the floor from the radio, I am inspired to write to Discord. Believe me, you have no idea how stimulating r&r is -- I'll do anything to get away from it. I don't care what anyone says, r&r does provide an invaluable thing. Yes, it does do one thing for you: it is impossible to really appreciate good music until you have suffered through a half-hour of r&r. Every two months I listen to approximately an hour of rock-and-roll -- and then go back, happy and content, to my jazz records and anything else except r&r that strikes my fancy.

The only thing that inspires me to comment is the lettercol, this time, other than the short comment that it's another excellent issue of *Discord*, the *Smaller and Better Chatterzine*. Art Castillo is capable of such intellectual and truly perceptive thinking at times that he constantly disappoints me by talking down his nose at everyone he sees. If he would accept a few people as his equals instead of everybody as his inferiors it would make the man much more sufferable.

And now we fade back into the dim dawn of fan history, to take a few pokes at *Discord* #10. Very good, Walter Breen! (Walter is my favorite freethinker; who's yours?) Your remarks about sadistic stuff not being censored hits a familiar point. Some of the characters I know in school are reading crap about juvenile delinquents; instead of the reaction of "Aren't delinquents disgusting?" they go around muttering, "This book has some boss ideas in it!" Said ideas, of course, being new and improved methods of rape, mutilation, etc. A few have taken up some of the juvie traits displayed in the books. It's disgusting, but it's true. You're right, Walter; the only things I as the average 13-year-old know about the communist philosophy (admittedly very little) I've learned through private research; school has nothing to say, it seems, about communism. And that, on face value and second thought, is quite stupid.

Well, Tapscott, one reason for not allowing kids to read pornography is the reasoning that if they read about it, they go out and do it. (It not specified....) This may have some basis in fact. If a kid reads about some hero deflowering eight virgins a week, he gets the idea that said action is not bad at all; if he is subjected to a diet of pure pornography he is likely to get the idea that such actions are quite natural.

People who decide what is fit for children and what is not for children bug me. It is utterly pointless to pretend that there are no people who think like Robert A. Heinlein. This reminds me of my English teacher's attitude. She won't allow her class to read Hemingway or Steinbeck on the grounds that they present life as being all gloom, and she thinks life is nice -- therefore, no one should read the books and get a non-"nice" viewpoint. Oog! This, to me, is the ultimate escapism -- the theory that if you ignore something, pretend it isn't there, it will go away. Paranoia is one step in a parallel direction. (Larchmont, New York)

CLAYTON HAMLIN

Hard to say just what they were trying to accomplish with that thirty-fifth anniversary issue of Amazing. If it was an attempt to concoct the best anthology of all those years it was naturally a complete and utter failure. If it was an attempt to show the development of Amazing the only applicable word is absurd. And if perchance no other purpose was intended than to present a contents page with some big names that would sell extra copies, in that case they did succeed, but at what a cost.

You know, that issue simply couldn't be TOO good; such an anthology might prove once and for all just how bad science fiction is today. I wonder if that is why Weinbaum's "The New Adam" (with those magnificent Finlay illos) was not used. Surely there was room to use it in full, and still include Nowlan's "Armageddon."

Do I detect a slight note of dislike in your comments about the RAP-edited issues? Well, Amazing was never famous for the short stories printed in those years, and one certainly couldn't have reprinted the larger works, and that virtually eliminated the forgotten man of those days, Chet Geier ("Hidden City," perhaps), and Don Wilcox. Rog Phillips, too, with the rather fabulous "So Shall Ye Reap" -- or does one have to forget Rog after all? I seem to recall with glee a story with the most absurd title ever to see print -- "High Ears" -- which should have been anthologized ages ago. And of course the Unnameable One himself.

You know, I wonder if such an oddity as "Tale of the Red Dwarf" might not have as much appeal as the recent oddity "Transient" -- if indeed Ward Moore's work might not come off a poor second best in such a comparison. Personal opinion, natur-

ally, but to attempt to discredit Richard S. Shaver as a writer is as ridiculous as one can get. Oh sure, current opinion seems to be that Amazing was lucky to survive him, but a check of circulation figures should indicate that Amazing may not have survived if it had not been for the increase in readership he brought. At the least a fine, if slight, yarn such as "An Adam from the Sixth" might have been presented.

It's easy to see that while this Amazing was not actually a BAD issue it could have been much better and more representative of the 35 years of the magazine. I must concur with your thoughts, though, and that is hard to do when nostalgia gets in the way of common sense. The good old days were perhaps not always good, but they were surely better than this. (Bangor, Maine)

PHILIP JOSE FARMER

Marion Z. Bradley's review of Search the Dark Stars was interesting for more than one reason. It stirred my curiosity about the novel, which I would like to read but won't because I can't get hold of a copy without going to much trouble; it, perhaps, prophesied a new trend -- or the return of an old one -- to the space opera; it helped confirm what I've been thinking for some time, that the old gives way to the new, then the new becomes old, and the author who can't change his thinking and his style must also go under. For some time, I've been thinking about writing a space opera. "The investigations of alien socio-sexual customs" is a vein I've played out as far as I'm concerned. Not that the "investigations" won't give rise to good stories in the future but that I won't be doing them. "Open to Me, My Sister" was the last story I intend to write exploiting that branch of extrapolation. "The reader who is jaded with too much...Phil Farmer" will see a new one, if I have my way, and I don't see any reason why I can't. It is a coincidence -- and a happy one, I hope -- that Mrs Bradley's article and my determination to get far out into interstellar space among almost incredibly exotic planets, weird beings, and tough swashbuckling Earthmen came about the same time. Telepathy? No, just two who are in tune with the Zeitgeist. The tentative title of the spopus is Ramstam. That is the name of the captain of the ship; look it up in the dictionary.

I hope Marion wasn't hinting that she was up to here with Father Carmody, and that other readers don't agree with her, because I've got too many notes and outlines about him to throw them in the can. After all, only about one Carmody story a year, sometimes two, appear. Is that too much? I intend to kill him off some day, but not before I've written his biography.

I would like it made clear that I didn't sit down and analyze the markets, readers, and the new direction and then decide to give the readers what they wanted. I ain't built that way. 'Twas I myself, all by myself, who came to that conclusion, who decided that intergalactic adventure could be fun and that I'd like to have some fun. However, I think and maintain strongly that you can have entertainment, fast action, and also have three-dimensional characterization. And that the story is that much better if you know "what the Bad Guys have done that's so awful, or what the Good Guys have done that's so worthwhile or what the mysterious plots are all about." Action for action's sake only is shallow literature and continues to hold only shallow readers. On the other hand, too much soul-searching sludges the story. So (how's that for alliteration?) the thing to do is not just to skim the surface or plunge into the abyss but to dive full fathoms five where the sunlight penetrates far enough for one to see the alien and beautiful seascape but all is bent by the refraction of water and convexity of the diver's lens. And that doesn't mean that the writer must try to regain the "sense of wonder." Once lost, never regained. You have to keep it. You also have to have readers with that sense.

Has anyone read The Bright Ring of Water? Delightful -- but then, I'm an animal lover. I even put up with a Siamese cat who gets me up at four o'clock every morning to let him out and at six to let him in. (Scottsdale, Arizona)