



# DISCORD

EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY REDD BOGGS

Number 13 / July 1961

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## cogito

### A STIR OF HUGOS

This day my co-editor Marion called me a retch. I wonder what is a retch? You are an ungrateful retch she said if you intend to let this issue go by without saying to everybody I am glad Discord was nominated for Hugo. I said but Habacuc or Who Killed Science Fiction? or Yandro or Shaggy or Fanac will win. Oh mygod mygod she said what do you care? The big thing is to be nominated for Hugo. I will have bad anger she said if you don't tell thanks to all. Will you hang from ceiling and drip green if I don't I said. No she said I will stand here and tell you go hang boy.

Marion is a pretty I know. A pretty stubborn female. She would do as she said and I would have to do as she said too. And she is right all times. So I say thanks to all people. I am so happy at nomination of Discord for Hugo I run on the walls and laugh loud and screech hip-hooray. And Marion thanks you too.

### DAVID'S DAUGHTER ANN IS TWO

Two years ago this month Discord was founded (under the title Retrograde), but this seems hardly the occasion for an anniversary. After all, nine months intervened between the publication of the first and second issues, and the magazine was not established on a regular basis till April 1960. However, since a number of policy changes have been made and will be made, this may be the proper occasion for writing one of those tiresome editorials concerning the magazine itself which I prefer to avoid as often as possible. Here's the way it looks from here:

Subscriptions: Reader response to issue #12 was very good, though still below the level I think it should attain on a fanzine exchanged for letters of comment. It seems likely that Discord has reached the point where readers take it for granted and feel that it will continue without much further encouragement, and Marion and I foresee that reader response -- barring the advent of some furious controversy -- will never again reach the level it reached last summer and autumn.

Therefore, we have decided to make Discord available for cash from now on, though not on a subscription basis. Letters of comment will still be acceptable, but readers who wish to receive next issue but do not want to write a letter of comment may send a dime to pay for this issue. This Pay After Reading plan will, I hope, minimize the bookkeeping required, and also avoid the desperate necessity of returning money if Discord cannot be continued. If the PAR plan doesn't work, subscriptions will be offered next issue. Your views of PAR are solicited.

Under the PAR plan, old Skyhook subscriptions will be honored. I have been repaying Skhk subs s-l-o-w-l-y, but about 16 or 18 Discord readers still have outstanding Skhk subscriptions; these people will find a small red X marked below the masthead on this page. If I receive no instructions to the contrary, I will charge these people 10¢ against their old Skhk subscriptions each time they fail to write a letter of comment or send a dime to Discord. Of course they will also be informed when their old subscription is used up.

The foreign readership is a problem. Response from abroad has, unfortunately, been rather meager, and postage rates on foreign mail (except to Canada) went up on 1 July; these are good arguments for ruthlessly curtailing Discord's overseas mailing list. However, while I do intend to cut off a number of readers from whom I haven't heard since the Second Punic war, I value most of Discord's readers in 12 furrin countries and want to retain them on the list as long as they are still interested. If such readers are able to send dimes and wish to do so, that of course solves the problem; meanwhile the masthead below suggests other means by which overseas fans can continue to receive Discord.

Discordant colors: Future issues will, I'm afraid, appear in less colorful -- and less expensive -- dress, but I hope the change will not prove too distressing. A number of changes in format are also contemplated; I've got to win Ted White back to reading Discord somehow.

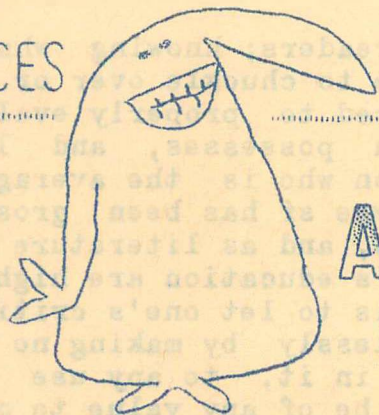
"Outside" contributions: In the past I have rejected or discouraged manuscripts from some of the best writers in the microcosm because of lack of space to print them. Only eight pages or less are available in each issue, and Marion and I can fill these pages without trouble most of the time. This issue, however, Ayjay Budrys offered the article you see beginning on the next page just at the moment when I was hoping someone would come along and fill some space in this issue while I was working on another project. From time to time, perhaps, we will listen to other "Voices of Discord," and I hope Jim Harmon will write a column for Discord again in the future, but otherwise, I'm sorry to say, we just haven't got room to print "outside" contributions at present.

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My headlined

● VOICES OF DISCORD



# AFTER 1929 — WHAT?

BY ALGIS BUDRYS

THIS ONE IS PRETTY GRATUITOUS. I just want to take this occasion to say that I am tired of being told, by Hugo Gernsback and his disciples, that modern science fiction is a degenerate and attenuated form of the real stuff.

I told you it was gratuitous. Maybe the thirty-fifth anniversary issue of Amazing set me off -- I like the magazine, within limits which will expand as soon as it can afford to pay for better stuff -- and maybe it was something else, but it seems to me as if I have heard the old refrain once too often, either expressed or implied.

I've been a science fiction fan since 1938, and a science fiction writer in the period 1952-60. My acquaintance with the field is not encyclopedic, but it is reasonably wide, and I've thumbed through my share of back issues. I have a sketchy knowledge of the history of the field. I'm always willing to learn more, too, so if someone wishes to step forward and correct the following remarks, I do wish you would do so, subject to discussion when you do so.

The science fiction published in the Gernsback magazines has been characterized, by Mr Gernsback and others, as having devoted itself to a popularization of hard science, and accurate extrapolation of that science into the future. (Today's sf is "fantasy" by comparison.)

I want to see some examples; I never have. In my casual meanderings through crumbly old Amazings, I never once found it possible to learn anything dependable from a single issue of the magazine. Bits of genuine technology are jumbled in with scientific howlers a high school student could put his fist through; stories with some attention to the facts of the physical universe appear side-by-side with tales about giant ants, solar-system atoms, unmodified human beings chemically accelerated past the speed of sound, and so forth. The only way to tell fact from fantasy in those "accurate" stories, in those "worthwhile" issues of those magazines, is to already know enough science to be able to distinguish matters for oneself; neither Mr Gernsback nor his fancy board of scientific advisors do so for the reader who is supposed to be educated by this melange of half-truth and outright hokum.

Yes, it is possible to go back, now, and pick out "predictions" that have come true. They are surrounded, however, by similarly-put "predictions" that have not come true, and by stuff that is as bad as anything out of Planet Stories, except that it is not as well written. In general, my impression of early magazine science fiction is that it

is more fun for the authors than for the readers; knowing what is fact and what is fiction, the authors are free to chuckle over or admire the latter. The degree of information required to properly evaluate such stories is higher than the average person possesses, and I mean the average better-than-average-educated person who is the average sf reader. The pedagogical value of Gernsback-type sf has been grossly exaggerated; its status in that respect is low, and as literature it is on a level as low as its demands on the reader's education are high. For the average reader, the only way to enjoy it is to let one's critical faculty drift -- to absorb misinformation harmlessly by making no attempt to put it, or the genuine information buried in it, to any use whatever. In short, the one way Gernsbackian sf can be of any value to most people is to treat every word of it as fantasy. It is on that functional point that Gernsback fails his own definition.

Of all the forms of magazine sf that have been tried, Gernsback's is the one with the poorest sales record. He was not able to keep Amazing solvent -- and when Science-Fiction Plus was brought out, Sam Moskowitz thought it necessary to assure prospective contributors that Mr Gernsback's payments would be made promptly. He was not able to keep the Wonder series running. He was not able to keep SF + out of the water, and this is most curious of all, because that magazine's failure was a clear failure in Mr Gernsback's estimate of the audience. Unless he deliberately set out to publish a failure -- this seems unlikely -- not only the content but the packaging of the magazine were planned with an eye to sales. It is invalid to point to SF +'s high break-even point as an excuse for its failure, in this connection, because that break-even point was planned. It is Mr Gernsback's appraisal of the audience that is in question here, and the question has its answer: Mr Gernsback is not in contact with the realities of the situation; Mr Gernsback has never understood the science fiction audience.

It is no good saying that the audience for Gernsback-type sf must be there. If it is -- and I doubt it -- Mr Gernsback has nevertheless never reached it. I doubt, as I say, that it is there in any great number; by its nature, Gernsbackian sf limits its appeal to the scientifically trained -- it cannot train its own audience because the thing that makes it appeal to a trained audience is the degree of skill with which the balderdash is mixed into the occasional thin compound of truth.

There are people who look back on this type of sf with a great degree of fondness. There are people who automatically assume that if a man has a great deal of scientific training -- or an appearance of it -- his science fiction is of great worth, unequalled by the efforts of people who are merely writers with a high regard for science. But it seems reasonable to me that a trained scientist, when he writes fiction, is relaxing -- he is playing, indulging himself in pipedreams he would not entertain for a moment in his serious work. On the other hand, a science-prone individual, setting about his serious work of being a writer, is liable to have too much reverence for science to play fast and loose with it deliberately.

I'm not trying to tell anyone that modern sf writers make no mistakes when they try to use science accurately, or that there are no modern sf writers who don't give a damn, or are actively anti-science. I'm not even sure that modern sf is any more useful as a science-teach-

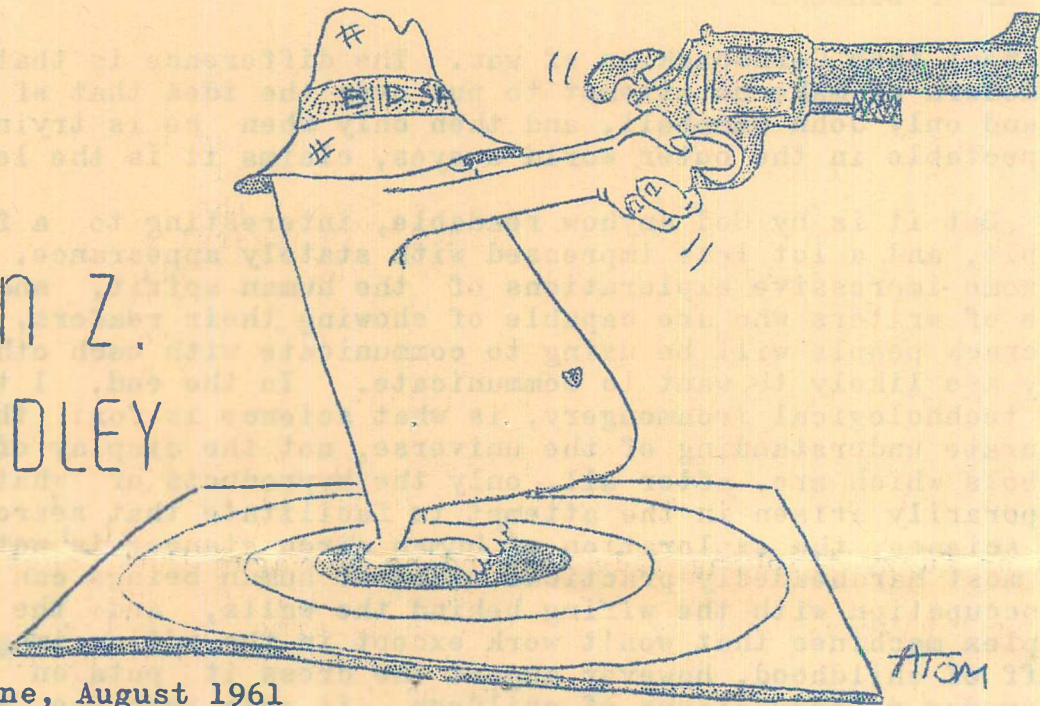
ing tool than Gernsbackian sf was. The difference is that practitioners of modern sf make no attempt to put over the idea that sf is educational -- and only John Campbell, and then only when he is trying to make sf respectable in the outer world's eyes, claims it is the least prophetic.

But it is by God anyhow readable, interesting to a fair number of people, and a lot less impressed with stately appearance. It has chalked up some impressive explorations of the human spirit, and raised up a core of writers who are capable of showing their readers, not what fancy gimcrack people will be using to communicate with each other, but what they are likely to want to communicate. In the end, I think that, and not technological ironmongery, is what science is for: the orderly and accurate understanding of the universe, not the display of technological symbols which are, after all, only the byproducts of whatever need has temporarily arisen in the attempt to facilitate that search. Plumbing is not science; the exploration of human circumstances is not "fantasy" but the most hardheadedly practical endeavor human beings can engage in. A preoccupation with the wiring behind the walls, and the invention of complex machines that won't work except in the idling imagination is the stuff of childhood, however august the dress it puts on when, in the rainy-day preoccupations of children, it gets into the adult clothing from the trunk in the attic. Modern science fiction has numerous faults. Modern magazine science fiction is in difficulties, perhaps because it has failed to separate itself from either the technology of hard science or the shibboleths of college-undergraduate-level social scientosophy while the books have happily failed to maintain that connection with the past. But by and large modern science fiction is healthy, and mature to some degree.

I think the anniversary issue of Amazing was a mistake on two principal counts: (1) because no reader solidly attracted by it will be satisfied with subsequent issues not heavily loaded with similar material; and (2) because in its small way it perpetuates this notion that modern science fiction, which has been painfully evolved by a good deal of work over a long period of time, is somehow inferior to the kind of science fiction people ought to read. Well, the world ought to be flat, too, and no doubt a very amusing and interesting story, full of the sense of wonder, could be written about a flat world, containing as sidelights such predictions for the future as human flight without sources of life external to what can be strapped on the body, plus a Negro character saying "Yassuh, Boss" to his noble young scientist Massah and Massah's golden-haired, elfin fiancée Norma Vestal, who renders Palestrina on the mouth-organ while in flight to Uranus at speeds faster than light. We throw in a thuggish villain, a comic policeman, a redheaded Irishman who rides his pet giant ant into battle, and we're away. Away where? To the receiver in bankruptcy?

My father -- a European gentleman of the old school -- taught me respect for my elders. But he also taught me that more difficult item of good behavior: the return of respect for respect. I have now had it up to here with bowing low to people who bridle because what they wanted was their hands kissed; who are trying to turn back the clock not because it will be useful but because it will be comforting; who have spent the last quarter-century in trying to undermine that which stayed on its feet when they faltered. We are asked to preserve the proprieties toward them; do we deserve no respect of our own?

By  
MARION Z.  
BRADLEY



Galaxy Magazine, August 1961

A goodly proportion of the still-readable science fiction of today seems to be written by J. T. McIntosh, and "The Gatekeepers" stands head and shoulders above most of the recent crop. The basic theme is one which has not yet been overdone: During an interplanetary war both planets refuse to destroy the matter transmitter linking their worlds, and attempt to provide perfect safeguards against its use for military purposes. In a tense and suspenseful story McIntosh tells of two separate attempts -- one at either end -- by ill-advised patriots, to disregard these safeguards. The story ends, perhaps, too hopefully, but with something of a real point and possibly even a message for today: Is victory enough, or is there something more important than victory for either side? By his very refusal to use the cheap tricks of bitter satire and downbeatness, McIntosh raises a valid question and, for once, genuinely fulfills the requirements of "problem" sf as opposed to the "fun" kind.

Equally excellent, though standing at the opposite pole, is Jack Vance's novelet "The Moon Moth." Vance's best works carry a vague and magical glimmer of the kind that vanished when Startling and Thrilling Wonder Stories discontinued their policy of printing 50,000 word novels in every issue. "The Moon Moth" glows with the old magic, conjuring a world of strangeness and beauty, yet is worked out to such logical ends that one feels such a world might, some day, come to pass. The plot is simple: an intelligence agent seeks a fugitive on a world where men go masked and communicate with each other by song. The twists and turns are less important than the sense of sojourning briefly in a world with alien smells and sounds which are real to the imagination. Current editors, with their ironclad word-length requirements which mean that everything except a bare story-skeleton must be trimmed away, have surgically removed atmosphere and beauty from much sf, leaving only, now and then, the bones of an idea, but here, Vance clothes those bones in a shimmer of beauty.

The domestic sf story is never a favorite of mine, but most of those which are endurable at all are written by Judith Merril. "The Deep

## REVIEWING STAND

"Down Dragon" explores the problem of a fantasy test as psychological screening for colonists on a future world, and displays all Miss Merrill's skill at exploring the worlds within. The story is sound, and fine of its kind -- which is not mine. Margaret St Clair, on the other hand, seldom succumbs (at least, not since the ill-fated Oona and Jick nonsense of long ago) to the temptation to write "woman's" science fiction. "Lochinvar" tells the story of a cuddlesome alien monster -- a small green bem, no less -- but successfully navigates the tightrope between cuteness and saccharinity. I liked it.

Jim Harmon, in "The Air of Castor Oil," evokes a nostalgic past, where a man from some undefined future (or present?) keeps slipping back into a world of pulp magazines and old wars. Unfortunately, editorial cuts or fuzzy thinking made the ending so vague that I got lost; I never did find out what it was all about, or why, or who the chap really was -- and I have a sneaking suspicion that Harmon didn't either. Yet the story rates a large red plus on the grounds of real feeling and exceptionally graphic recapture of atmosphere.

In "The God Next Door" Bill Doede (a new name to me) manages a curiously powerful evocation of a wanderer on an alien world and the strange forces he meets there. There is nothing new in any of these elements, but they are combined with considerable skill. R. A. Lafferty's "Aloys," about a beat-up genius who manages to disappear and turn up again twice as good as before, is doubtless a story full of significant ideas, brilliant writing, and A Message for Today, but unfortunately I couldn't quite figure out just what was supposed to be going on, and by the time I had conscientiously waded to the end, I decided I couldn't care less. Henry Slesar's "The Stuff" is a rich, full little piece of story which manages, in a few pages, to pack as much kick and power as any four or five tepid novelets, and it has something remotely resembling an original idea. But reviewing it is like reviewing an O. Henry short story; the review either spoils the yarn, or runs longer than the yarn itself.

Lester del Rey has been a master of science fiction for more than 20 years. In "Return Engagement" he touches on the very point I made in reviewing "The Moon Moth." Our world today is drab with the lack of a certain magic, the presence of an occasional painful beauty. And with the passionate sincerity which characterizes all his work, del Rey puts his plea for its return into the mouth of his leading character, a man who sees the ugliness of his world, desires the lost magic, and suddenly is transported to the world where all this magic is hidden.

"Come home to Earth," he cries, "We need you." And I do not think del Rey will mind if I echo the cry, addressing those who can evoke this magical beauty again: "Come back to science fiction! We need you." Because the display of a Horrible Warning, like the picture of Big Brother watching you, may well frighten the weak; but what, except the lure of the beautiful, can inspire the strong and the worthy?

(Concluded on the next page)

If Science Fiction, July 1961

Jim Harmon's lead novelet, "The Planet With No Nightmare," explores an oft-reworked theme in science fiction: the Earthman whose private conflicts and difficulties are mobilized by a particular alien environment. In this case, a man with a pathological inability to sleep and faced with the necessity of concealing his difference, is brought to a planet where beasts sham death. Jim writes with a facility which is constantly improving, but possibly the paper-tiger quality of the situation made the story essentially a failure. I remained unconvinced that a problem of that kind would be handled that way or that such a world would "solve" it. And, while a predictable "happy ending" may make stories tedious, I find that too many grim-desperation downbeat endings leave a bitter taste in the mouth.

William W. Stuart's "The Real Hard Sell" and Gordon R. Dickson's "A Taste of Tenure" both exploit fantastic extrapolations of the less savory side of today's business world. The former postulates a world where everybody exists to sell to everybody else, with the familiar rebel who wants to escape to a primitive "preserve"; the twist at the end is quite predictable. In the Dickson story, the problem revolves around a future businessman's struggle to rid himself of an undesired secretary with -- you guessed it -- tenure. Neither the protagonist, the problem, nor the solution are worth even as many words as I have wasted on them in this review. The sting of bitter empathy, which is about all that the story provokes, is not the "pity and terror" which should be the only excuse for telling such a dreary tale.

"The Stainless Steel Knight" by Jack Rackham raises the ghost of the Hokas by postulating planets that exist for the purpose of bringing human fantasies to life; here is one devoted to the Arthurian saga. The story is fun to read, and in a fanzine might strike one as a fine parody of a certain sort of adventure sf. But when writers find their inventiveness running so low that we get what I have christened "spooft sf," I think it's time for us to stop wondering who killed science fiction and start wondering why they didn't kill off a few of the would-be writers instead.

J. T. McIntosh, unsurprisingly, manages to find a genuinely new twist on another overworked postulate: that after everyone with any enterprise goes to the stars, Earth will be inhabited by: morons:idiots:sickly degenerates: you-name-it. In "Doormat World" he tells with concise and chilling power the story of a town terrorized by a returned colonist, and proves once again that power corrupts even a hero.

Here's another story telling about Conspicuous-Consumption-Carried-to-the-Nth: Albert R. Teichner's "The Junkmakers." Where, where, where did they send all the color and wonder in the world of tomorrow? Is everybody convinced that the world can be saved only by predicting a new view of the horrors of today? Fritz Leiber recently suggested, in fun, that there might well be a new line of magazines: Downbeat Life, Downbeat Sex, etc. Downbeat Science Fiction already exists; its name is If.

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THE ARTFUL ROGERS. I'm looking for sample episodes of the current "Buck Rogers" comic strip; I'd be grateful for a clipping or two enclosed with your LoC thish. -- Redd.



DAPHNE BUCKMASTER

Discord #11 arrived this morning, so I'll write while it's still hot. The first thing that caught my eye was that "(A Serious Discussion)" against the title on page 1; this drew a big smile from me, not to mention a delighted giggle or two. It's about time someone had a subtle dig at those people who will keep on about "discussionzines" with endless arguments as to whose is and is not a discussionzine and whether they ought to exist or not. That little phrase of yours is a perfect comeback.

Please don't take any notice of Elsberry's request to cut back on letters. To my mind the letters in any fanzine (well, not any, perhaps!) are as interesting as the articles; in fact, I quite often read the lettercol first.

## ● A MEETING OF MINDS

Richard's comparison of letters with ads seems quite uncalled-for. Of course, I'm not suggesting that a lettercol should be kept to its usual length at any cost -- comes the day you don't have any interesting letters (highly unlikely) I'd rather see none than mere hack-letters.

One thing which caught my attention particularly this time was the last paragraph of Andy Young's letter. I have read this paragraph about four times and am still not quite sure what he means. At first I thought he was pointing out the difference between man-made (social) laws and natural, physical laws. But he says "distinguishing...between the manmade formulation of the regularities of the universe and the regularities themselves." Although Andy may be right when he implies that the lettercol of Discord is no place to go into a discussion for such a subject, I for one would be grateful if he'd enlarge just a little on this rather obscure statement. (Kirkcudbright, Scotland)

SETH JOHNSON

Certainly enjoyed Marion Z. Bradley's review of Search the Dark Stars. Only a shame it wasn't printed in a prozine where it belongs and where the general public would read and enjoy same. And do you know one of the pleasantest things about the review? She reviews a book I haven't read yet, but hope to get. Funny thing about most reviews in both pro and fanzines is that they are written about books I've not only read but long since swapped for British magazines and books.

As for the anniversary Amazing, I can only say that I had almost forgotten all the stories in it. I wonder, though, whether Burroughs actually wrote "John Carter and the Giant of Mars." There was a rumor long ago that he had a ghost writer doing his later works, and I suspect that this story was the work of that writer.

Andy Young's comment about breaking physical laws reminds me of an old science fiction story -- in Amazing, I think -- about congress repealing the law of gravity, whereupon centrifugal force sent everything on earth flying off into space. I wish I could remember who wrote it and its title. (Vaux Hall, New Jersey)

MAGGIE CURTIS

At this (sob) late date I shan't comment on Discord #11 and The Golden Apple #3, except to say that the thought of losing DAG because of a crummy Colt (or for any reason) is.... Well, tell Dean to be more careful. And where's TGA #4?

Discord #12: Castro, after all, learned a couple of tricks after taking office. Among these was that people in jail find it much harder to take part actively in a revolution than people out of jail. So Castro clapped almost all of those who could have aided the revolution into jail. Sneaky? You bet. It is one of those

proverbial moot points whether the invasion would have succeeded otherwise, but it is at least debatable.

Not to contradict Walter Breen, but monotheism in the Mediterranean world was there with more power than that expressed through "a microscopically small group of bickering DPs." Apuleius (who, though second century A.D., was not a Christian) gave an example of a mystery religion -- one of several of the time -- which worshipped Isis as the combination of all gods. The poets brought out the fact that monotheism coexisted with polytheism in the minds of many; you could speak of individual gods or tie them all up in the term "God," and nothing much was thought of either practice. If this paragraph doesn't mean anything, don't worry; I'm just quibbling. (Oberlin, Ohio)

JOHN P. TUCKER

From the first moment I could hear the plane I knew something was wrong. Jose just never flies my plane with the engine at that speed unless he is terribly upset. When it came into sight over the top of the mesa with the undercarriage just clearing the top of the last mountain, I had an idea of what was about to happen. From the disgusted way he flopped the plane to a landing on the strip behind the house and from the half-hearted post-flight check he made, I was sure what was wrong. Jose had made the mistake of going to the post office while he was in town!

He hangared the plane and brought his Jeep up to the house, stalked in and threw the mail on my desk, muttered, "No one ever heard of Gunsport magazine," and lumbered off to the kitchen. Behind him trailed a string of Spanish that roughly decoded meant, "I might just as well heat the beans myself -- you are going to be Boggsed-down." I promptly went through the mail, filing all the bills in the wastebasket for future reference to the incinerator, and found Discord #12. In one slight way it was less of a plum than usual -- there was no Golden Apple. I missed DAG.

There's a book on the market nowadays that I thoroughly recommend for some non-light reading, Redd. It is titled simply Psychology, and was written by Calvin, Scriven, Gallagher, McConnell, McGuigan, and Hanley (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.), The McConnell of the group is James V. McConnell PhD, assistant professor of psychology, University of Michigan. He was the author of a rather large number of science fiction stories in the recently-passed years, published in Galaxy and If. I've known Jim for many, many years and those times we haven't been able to visit in person we have filled in with constant correspondence and taperespondence.

There's a canned root beer that I like very much. In this area it goes under the trademark "Shasta." They dodge the contents problem very nicely by stationing these words at the edge of the lithographing: "Ingredients: carbonated water, sugar, caramel color, root beer flavor, citric acid, ascorbic acid." Somehow it reminds me of the long list of contents on a bottle of Worcestershire sauce that finally ends up with the words "and spices." That's one reason I like to eat the beef we raise -- I know what goes into cattle.

By the way, Redd, you may bow slightly in this direction and take off your hat (beanie?) for just a moment. Then you may call me "grandpop" -- three times. My youngest son, Jamie, who is living in Brazil, has proved to be a real Brazil nut. When his wife went to the hospital to bring forth their first contribution to the next generation she did it up in a big way: triplets. Two boys and a girl. It was the first girl born into the family in over a hundred years. Jamie went nutty; he's so proud you'd think he did it all by himself. His wife has other ideas. (Roswell, N.M.)

BETTY KUJAWA

Honey-pie, I do have to congratulate you on your remarks about that "Cuban invasion" for NOT blaming the awful terrible Republicans for the fiasco -- bless you for that. BUT, Mr Boggs, why no comment that it WAS your deah ol' Democrats who flubbed -- and that admired beloved little egghead Artie Schlesinger who urged Jack to go ahead with it? You-all

were only too eager to leap on Ike and Dick whenever a booboo happened under their administration; how's about playing the game and owning up to the obvious facts of the past months on how the Democrats have been damaging national prestige and all?

Why no comment on Jack's attempt to squelch and control the press recently? Fandom, which has always railed against suppression, has been suspiciously silent on this attempt now that it's a Democratic administration who is pulling it on us. I feel I have a right to gripe about this -- we Republicans took the scorn and abuse of our administration -- now how's about some words of criticism about your own?

This must be my day to feel testy and scrappy. Every so often I get the implication from MZB's comments that TV viewers are dull clods and are to be scorned and barely tolerated. Phooof, says I. Dammitall, there isn't one sf-fantasy writer now or ever that I'd go read when I can watch on my TV screen the NBC Saturday night discussion show "Nation's Future," or most things on "Play of the Week" -- and all sf writers rolled into one couldn't drag me from the set when there's a program like the one last night on "Open End," the Susskind discussion show. And by ghod there isn't one prozine on the market that I'd choose to read over watching a TV series like "Route 66," and if this be treason make the most of it.

At times I feel towards Marion as Jeff Wanshel feels toward Art Castillo -- "If he would accept a few people as his equals instead of everybody as his inferiors ..." Mayhap I'm being far too harsh, but I would appreciate some evidence that the gal has a sense of humor. All these dead serious pronouncements from Mount Sinai are irksome to me. Maybe I'm not sensitive enough to grasp the humor that Marion does possess? Could be. Perfect, I aint. (South Bend 14, Indiana)

EC: The Kennedy administration must veer a good many degrees to the left before it becomes MY administration, but I consider it an improvement over the Ike regime. MZB has a sense of humor: she has corresponded with me for 14 years and remained sane.

A. J. BUDEYS

Discord #12 discovered under my pillow this morning, apparently in exchange for some cracker crumbs placed there the previous night. Shee, what an innocuous issue! I mean, there are no nocs in it. Whom do you lambaste? (By coincidence, the title of a summer replacement husband/wife quiz program, daytimes on your noctiluminescent mind-mirror.) You lambaste the CIA, the PO, the publisher of The Catholic Digest, JWC Jr, the HUAC.... Sitting ducs, all. C'mon, gang -- there must be newer groins than these!

These footling attempts to get anybody indignant against Kramer -- next you'll be going after Kolliker and Williams, fer God's sake, and where does that lead to -- Pete Poulson? Nick Solo? Doolin? (Remember when Planet had two illustrators working under the names of Pious and Vestal?) Here's some more: Hollingsworth. Parkhurst. Skollar. Alfred. Koll. C'mon, now -- every fan's quiz of hateful illustrators, and when we're done with them, we can go after the people who used to squeeze the binding staples too tight. Marchioni. Murphy. Luros. Swenson. Fox. Astarita.... It's nostalgia you want, is it? I'll give you nostalgia. Belarski. Feel those old engrams re-stimulating? Orban covers. The Bonestell for "The Xi Effect." The Timmins for "Slaves of the Lamp." Let's go, gang -- the first person to write in with a notarized affidavit attesting he can visualize 'em all gets a prize -- the lucite skull, a bit splashed with Higgins India Black, direct from the studio windowsill of Hubert Rogers! How's about that, gang? And how about trimmed edges -- up and at 'em, fellas! Second prize is the Cartier original depicting a statue of a beetle brandishing the globe. Here's a cry from a battlefield long overgrown with the poppy: "Why don't you go bimonthly?" Ah, all the lost, lost causes, some of them victories in their day but lost, now, lost and turned brown at the margins! Third prize is the bundled original manuscripts for the Tubby series. Och, the good old days! Ai, the Golden Age lurking at the threshold.

No, no, no, no, no! Not fewer states -- more! There's already a deep division between northern and southern New Jersey, for example. Long Island ought to be by itself. So should New York City. Staten Island should be traded to North New Jersey in exchange for Hudson county, so that New York City can retain its high moral tone and turn Greenwich Village into a housing development while still embodying an area attractive to sociologists. And so forth. With any luck, a man can live in a state without personal income taxes, register his car in a state that requires no insurance, get his driver's license from a state which requires only 50¢ annually and conducts no examinations, and still be within walking distance of a state with good burlesque houses in it. He can live on the interstate differences between cigaret and gasoline taxes, and if this palls he can smuggle liquor, all without putting an undue strain on his commutation ticket. What the hell are you trying to do -- take the bread out of people's mouths?

Blish's -- or rather Jno. Pfistner's -- soup canner gave up too easily. After all, mushroom soup isn't labelled "Cream of Fungus Campestris." We officers of the newly formed PR organization, Cannery Representatives, feel that all that has to be done is for the public to adopt a new generic name for mycelia, and the FDA will hand over the green light (most recently carried by a member of the Justice Society of America). One of our junior copywriters has suggested "slenders" -- as in "Cream of Slenders." But we senior officers tend to suspect this may be too blatant. Instead, we propose the following:

First of all, that the mycelia be grown in "factories," which will immediately involve the FDA in a useful jurisdictional dispute with the FTC. Next, that the growing process used be such that the bulk antibiotic byproduct can be sold to Jno. Pfistner. Then that the public be educated to refer to mycelia as that great scientific discovery of this modern age, the absolutely non-toxic mushroom, or, in laboratory slang, dena-mushrooms. Finally, the canned product is to be sold as DynaMush (slenders), a beverage. And thus we squish on toward our first million dollars. (Incidentally, we sell stock in our corporation; this is not, of course, an offer to sell, but we all know Mother used to keep a big kettle of it simmering on the back of the stove, and was Mother ever wrong?) Mother's DynaMush. There. That ought to do it. With a lithographed picture of Betty Crocker in a pure-white wig (with blue highlights) and a charcoal-gray cowl. Or is it caul? (What is this thing, cauled love?) Have you heard the one about Betty Crocker being surprised under the sink with Mr Clean? Or was it Handy Andy? In the words of Steve (Not the one you're thinking of) Fisher -- anyone here know the dirty words to "Nearer My God, to Thee"? (Long Branch, New Jersey)

#### BOB LICHTMAN

That beige paper you grabbed up at the last moment to substitute for your russet isn't so bad in itself, but after the first sheet in russet it looks sort of sickly and pale. It was the subject of discussion in the kitchen at 2790 West Eighth last Thursday after the LASFS meeting. Someone said that "Being forced to use beige paper must make Boggs cringe." "Why don't we send Redd a ream of Tru-Ray pink?" one brave soul suggested.

Maybe this color change distracted you more than any of us thought, for I notice that there are two different pages 13-14 in issue #12. Since people delight in pointing out errors in your magazines, I am sure I won't be the only one to point it out to you. But I figured I'd do it anyway. After all, what the hell.

I don't own a copy of Tuck's Handbook, but the UCLA library does and I've had it out once or twice. On the whole, I agree with your critique; I found the book not much help in anything I'm interested in.

Now, now, Jeff Wanshel, aren't you being a bit too Typical in your put-down of rock-and-roll? I think so. Really, I do enjoy listening to some of the stuff now and again, but not repeatedly and not for very long at a time. It really isn't that obnoxious. To tell the truth, though, I don't go all-out for any particular sort of

music. I listen to all sorts, judge them on purely subjective criteria, and though I may miss out on True Appreciation of some of the "better" music, it has never much bothered me. There are too many things in life to sample promiscuously to bottle up oneself by concerning oneself with music, or anything else, too much. (Los Angeles)

EC: B'leev it or not, the page numbering was not a mistake, but done intentionally.

AVRAM DAVIDSON

Thank you for your #12 issue which arrived today, and which we took time out from our numerous neglected duties (we have hardly any other kind) to read. We had never seen or heard of this publication before, although we had seen its name listed. We make a distinction between seen and heard, though there are others who might not. It is our opinion that it is one of the most attractive amateur publications which we have ever seen -- in appearance, that is. We find the contents of a generally superior nature, and if we are not moved by any of them to utter little noises of joy, well, we so seldom are.

Deftly changing persons, I wish to express my thanks to M. Zimmer Bradley for describing me as "a deft producer of original horrors." My two-story-collaborator, Randall Gordon Phillip David Garrett, announces that his mother's seconds (she lives in Amarillo) will call on Mrs Bradley in the morning; he denies that there is anything "facile" in turning out fiction to Jesus Campbell Jr's formulae. Mrs B might keep an eye out for the only other Ranram Garrettson collabo ever written, "The Blaze of Noon," in Analogue, not yet scheduled; a Greek tragedy with an upbeat ending; and if MZB thinks Avdall Davrett found that formula "facile," uh, wull, um....

And in closing, thanks for calling the story, even semi-demi-indirectly, "a rare and treasured experience."

Walter Breen is a bit in error in saying that anti-obscene literature activity didn't come along until "comparatively recent decades here or in England...." The author of The Diary of a Young Lady of Fashion (commonly known as Fanny Hill), whose name I think was John Cleland, was hauled up before His Majesty's Privy Council -- and the Majesty in question was George II ("Georgius Secundus was then alive / Snuffy old drone from the German hive" -- identify?). He was bailed or bound over or probated or eppis; in fact, one of the Privy Councillors was so tickled at a Latin tag the guy got off that he gave him a small pension.

And does Breen really think that the fact "Even today there are more people outside the toils of monotheism than in them" is any evidence against monotheism?

Whenever atheists and agnostics refer to themselves as "freethinkers" I get a glimpse of the same bland chutspah which is evidenced by the Mormons referring to themselves as "saints."

I just note there is a mouse about my house again. Intruders in the past week have also included a cat and a young woman in blue/green treader trousers. Her explanation (at 7 a.m.) was that she was looking for the lady who had asked her to come early and babysit. Unfortunately I was too sleepy, else I might have had the wit to say, "Mommy des wen out," whilst patting the bed invitingly. The cat didn't say what it was looking for, but, now I see the mouse....

Perhaps one reason why Paul's spaceships all look different is because his people all look alike. Not that I for one moment wish to be thought to knock Paul, really a classical illustrator, one of the four Greats of Science Fantasy (the other three of course being Dold, Finlay, and Bok).

I wish for one moment to be thought to knock Mrs Bradley's review of the June isshy of F&SF. With the exception of one story by Randy Garrett and some other hack, and a not-vintage Arthur C. Clarke, I thought the June issue sparkled, damn it. We agree on Miriam Allen deFord and Mark Twain; both v. good. I am sorry that she was not moved by the soaring, airy sweep of Cordwainer Smith's "Alpha Ralpa Boulevard." I understand that as a woman she may not feel the ingrowing horror of a man slowly atrophying while his wife does not, as MZB has it, "flutter at him helplessly"

but nigger away neurotically; but I thought it was great and I think that "fantasy or science fiction it most emphatically is" -- unless there exists a form of atrophy which takes effect in minutes, what else would it be called? I refer to Jno Anthony West's "George." Doris P. Buck's "Birth of a Gardener" is no more a "cute little domestic thing" than Moby Dick is "a book about a whale." Sheest! In view of Your Reviewer's sweeping condemnations of a fine quartet (including Jody Scott's unfortunately titled "Go for Baroque," a keen piece in the best Bester vein), I count myself fortunate to have received her accolade; but I can't think why.

I also can't think why I have already footled an hour on this letter when I am flat broke and have several money-making projects to be put through the engine. Frantishly goodbye. (New York 25, New York)

DONALD A. WOLLHEIM

It's an interesting thing when a magazine like Discord, which gives the impression of being simply an intelligent but off-the-cuff presentation of a fairly liberal and intelligent mind, rockets up in fan estimation to become a good candidate for a Hugo. All the fancy fanzines, following traditional patterns, worked on lovingly I'm sure, seem to come to very little compared with just a bit of sensible easygoing reportage and comment.

It's a comment, for instance, on the general barrenness of so many of the fanzines, or else the lack of adult perception, or the slightness of the thought involved in the actual text. And it's also a comment that a dozen or so clean and legible pages are worth several dozen messy ones.

Your comments on the CIA and the Cuban fiasco are valid. The horrible thing about all this business is the calmness with which the American public (and I really mean the U. S. press which tells the public what to think) has taken the violation of the U. S. Constitution and laws by the officials of this country. Only a few weeks after publicly swearing before his god and his country to uphold the Constitution and laws of the U. S., the president confesses that he connived in the violation of a whole fistful of them. And so did every congressman and senator who failed to raise a voice -- and they all failed -- and every judge who failed to enter an indictment against the president, his authorities, etc., and every police official low and high. And every citizen, too, on hearing or reading of the Cuban delegate to the UN's list of places in New York and Miami where illegal recruiting was going on, who failed to go at once to the police and get a warrant to investigate.

This is how a nation's guilt is acquired. When the German says, "But I could not myself alone go and swear out a warrant against these Nazis for attacking innocent people and homes," the American can now reply, "Me too. I also share the guilt." It is a comment that the shining white hope of the intellectuals over the past dozen years, Adlai the Great Egghead, managed to cover himself with dung in the UN, standing up and lying brazenly and boldly -- and when doublecrossed by his president and revealed as a liar, had not the integrity to resign or utter peep. (Forest Hills 74, New York)

LESLIE GERBER

I hate the thought of Discord being offered for sale after being set up with such an admirable policy at first; it will seem almost like prostitution of the mind. I'd suggest rather than resort to anything so desperate you start inserting in each "Cogito" one absurdly infuriating statement, such as "People who keep pet dogs are psychologically more abnormal than sadistic murderers" or "Bela Bartok was a secondrate Hungarian tune peddler with some gift for melody but none whatsoever for the greater aspects of musical composition." This last is similar to a statement in Andre Hodier's Since Debussy which so infuriated me that I threw the copy I was reading -- Walter Breen's -- on the floor and stamped on it hard several times, with Walter cheering in the background. By the time your readers finish chewing you out for such statements, they may cool down and comment on other things in the issue as well. (Bloomington, Ind.)