



DISCORD

EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY REDD BOGGS

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COGITO

LEST ONE GOOD CUSTOM --

So many dimes showered down as a result of the PAR system announced last issue that I had to be restrained from responding by going into a buck-and-wing or rendering "The Same Old Shillelagh" while beating time with a pewter tankard of nut-brown Pepsi-Cola. Nearly everyone who sent a dime also sent a letter of comment, thus making the dime superfluous (but I pocketed it anyway), and from these letters I obtained the definite impression that the PAR system was generally disapproved of by the Discord readership. As one disgruntled reader remarked, "I had hoped that I might subscribe, and thus be freed from the worry that I would miss an issue when I am too busy or too lazy to write."

At any rate, after much prayer, I have decided to accept subscriptions henceforth -- but only to the amount of 50¢ and only at the exorbitant rate of four issues for 50¢. (An outrageous rate, friends! Surely it would be better to write regular letters of comment than to subscribe!) Skyhook subscriptions will again be honored, and Skhk subscribers who, for one reason or another, have not been on the Discord mailing list may receive Discord upon application.

The austere quality of this issue comes largely from the granite white mimeo paper, I should imagine -- quite a change from the russet hue that Discord used for a dozen issues or parts of issues. I have had this granite-white Masterweave on hand since 1957, and I thought I'd better use it up before it starts turning brown at the edges. I don't much like it myself -- though blue on granite gives a pleasant silvery effect -- and protests will have to be ignored. To add wordage, I have omitted running heads and adopted this format which, I note, Bastion stole from Discord before I could rush it into print. About 600 to 1000 words per issue can be added by this means; however, protests in this matter will be listened to.

LAST REFUGE

While I can think offhand of men and breeds of men who richly deserve extermination, if such drastic justice can help free the spirit of

2 man, I cannot believe the trade of assassin is an honorable one. The Hindu sect of Thugs, who strangled strangers they had first befriended, deemed themselves virtuous men, for they served Kali, the Hindu goddess of destruction, but in Christendom we have no Kali. Properly, I think, one should be forced into the ranks of professional killers against his will. One should have to be dragged kicking and screaming from under the front porch.

"O murderers!...Still, this is how it's done: This is a war." What virtue accrues from serving one's country in time of war or national emergency? Simply that one does his duty, performing a dirty job that someone must do, even while it damns his soul. One accepts the will of the community in the matter; one accepts more than his share of the guilt that is the whole community's, the whole of mankind's, and having done so, learns how to blast, stab, burn, and batter his fellow man to death efficiently, pausing only in the ten minute break period to bitch and denounce. "Men wash their hands, in blood, as best they can."

In Axe #11, Larry Shaw charges that "American fandom is crawling with draft dodgers these days." Various fans have bragged to him, apparently, that they have "outsmarted the draft board psychiatrist" to escape conscription, and without wanting to "moralize about it," Larry says he doesn't like it. Well now. In the first place, while I have relatively small use for witch doctors, I give them credit for having the wit to know when they are being put on. The man who tries his damndest to outsmart the draft board psychiatrist may be rejected, not because he fooled the officer but because the officer knows that a man so dead-set against entering the service will not be an asset, but will spend most of his service career in the stockade or the hospital.

But in the second place, Larry prefaces his remarks about "draft dodgers" by recounting his attempts to enlist in the armed services during the second world war. "Maybe I was stupid and naive to be patriotic -- but I went so far as to memorize the standard eye chart and try to fake the eye test at one point," Larry recalls, adding, "They rang in non-standard charts when they saw how thick my glasses were." How Larry expected to serve his country well, even after he had kidded the eye doctor into accepting him, is beyond me. Larry would not have been able to see the whites of their eyes till a bayonet was tickling his belly. Larry's misguided patriotism seems to me as hard to justify as the alleged attempts by unnamed fans to outsmart the draft board headshrinker, and for the same reason. He was refusing to abide by the rules, to do his bit in a role best suited to him.

"Maybe I was stupid and naive to be patriotic -- but I went so far as to fool the draft board psychiatrist into suspecting that I am a hebephrenic schizo." Is that any less patriotic than Larry's remark? Go tell it to the starship troopers!

(More COGITO on page 8)

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LOG OF THE HONEYBEE

DISCORD DIDN'T WIN A HUGO at Seattle, and it's a good thing, too, as I realized a week later when Ted and Sylvia White and Andy Main trundled through Minneapolis en route to Fond du Lac and points east. If Discord had won, they would probably have brought the Hugo with them, along with the Hugos for Analog (for god's sake!) and Emsch, and one more Hugo would have been too much. A pood or two too much. In my pocket I had a letter for Walter Breen which I intended to ask them to carry with them if Walter was still in New York. Fortunately, he was in Berkeley ("Temporarily," said Ted White. "Any man who uses the airlines for a shuttle service..." His voice broke and he looked distraught) so I had to entrust the letter to the post office. As I watched the overladen Weiss Rak pull away and scrape off down the street, waddling unsteadily and followed by a stream of blue sparks from the dragging tail-pipe, I realized that even one extra ounce would have been too much; my letter would have been the reef of Norman's Woe. Load another Hugo into the trunk next to Andy Main's taper and duper, and the car would have sunk to the hubcaps in front of the Hyatt House hotel.

As it was, the Weiss Rak IV, though loaded to the gunnels, was evidently enjoying calm seas and a prosperous voyage, and appears to have pulled into New York, puffing a little but still in good shape. I wish I could say the same for my once-redoubtable Rambler, but Ella Parker put a hex on it.

To reduce weight to the irreducible minimum, Sylvia was wearing abbreviated shorts on the trip home; luckily, the weather was warm and humid when they were in Minneapolis, but I hope they weren't overtaken by the cold wave that was lapping at their dragging tail-pipe, else Sylvia must have looked like she was auditioning for the female lead in the Unicorn Productions' version of "The Blue Men of Yrano" by the time they reached Fond du Lac. The Weiss Rak was hardly out of sight, slopping stray crudzines at every jounce, when the weather turned around. Two evenings later, I stared out of my window into a scene from Sherlock Holmes: chilly, drizzling, and -- as I like to describe it -- foggy withal. (I'm not quite sure what that means; I got it out of Dickens; but it certainly is a wonderful thing.) I dispossessed a colony of spiders that had taken refuge in my teapot sometime since last April, and decided to settle down for the evening, guzzling hot tea, nibbling Zwieback toast, and reading "A Lodging for the Night," "The Sire de Maletroit's Door," "The Pavilion on the Links" -- I'm on a Stevenson kick -- and such stories full of the sharp, chill, tempestuous weather that Stevenson evokes so perfectly. Just then the phone rang....

It's more fun to go out and feel the cold rain splatting in your face than just to read about it, I told myself bravely, stepping back into my shoes and fumbling in the closet for my raincoat and jacket. Sure it is, I added confidently, as I dashed out into the cold rain and mist to crank up the Honeybee. Defrosters wheezing and windshield wipers flicking, I headed the car for exotic old St Paul. The phone call that had lured me forth on such a night as this came from the Lakes and Pines

4 motel on the eastern edge of that city, a mean distance from here. St Paul is a suburb I'm not too familiar with; the last time I was in St Paul was in 1948 on the way home from the Torcon, and here I was splashing down dark thoroughfares and squinting desperately at street signs and such landmarks as loomed out of the rain.

Gradually I became aware that the streets were darker than they should have been, despite the rain and fog. My headlights were dimming. They poured out a sickly yellow beam about as strong as the glow of a luminous watch-dial. My turn-signals stopped working, and my dashboard light was so weak that I had to light a match to be sure that the gas gauge was showing "empty." With some trepidation I wheeled into the nearest gas station and filled the tank. But as I feared, when I tried to leave the place, the starter only groaned weakly. The station attendant found a flashlight and a screwdriver and raised the hood with the brisk professionalism of a mechanic, but after squinting and prodding around for a half hour, he confessed, "I don't know anything about such things." We looked at each other through the thinly falling rain. "Where's the nearest garage?" I asked. He considered awhile and then shrugged. "Well, there's a Skelly station a couple of blocks north," he said, "but the mechanic goes home about 8." "Lucky boy," I said.

After staring at each other a while longer, he kindly offered to give me a push, though he was alone at the station and didn't want to leave. He maneuvered his car into position and gave me one sharp butt that moved me off the apron and safely out of his way but not enough of a shove to start the engine. I drifted slowly out into the street, a lightless and motorless car in the middle of traffic. Luckily the street sloped a little just beyond the gas station, and after a few anxious moments I picked up speed and was able to start the car again. My headlights were still dim and my turn-signals were inoperative; I kept an eye out for cops. I was still a good distance from the Lakes and Pines motel, and I decided I'd better phone. At one intersection I spotted a phone booth down a side street and turned in that direction. As I drew to the curb beside the booth, I discovered that the engine wouldn't even idle properly. When I stepped out of the car the engine went into Cheyne Stokes breathing and died on me. I debated whether to call the motel or a tow truck. I finally phoned the motel.

I talked with Bob Pavlat. I talked with Ella Parker. Bob thought I ought to try to make it, despite everything, and Ella was certain of it. Charles De Vet, St Paul's leading science fiction author, was visiting them at the motel, she said, and he would gladly head a rescue party if I would stay where I was for ten or fifteen minutes.

And that is how I first met Ella Parker -- and Charles De Vet, too, for, as I explained, I visit St Paul almost as infrequently as London -- on the corner of Pleasant avenue and Chestnut in St Paul on a dark and rainy September night. "It's the most unlikely place in the world to meet Ella Parker," I said to her as I crawled into Charles' car and discovered her in the back seat. "It certainly is a wonderful thing," she said. I renewed acquaintance with Bob Pavlat as we drove back to the motel; I hadn't seen Bob since the Cinvention, "back in our younger days," as Bob expressed it.

Ella remarked casually that she personally had put a hex on my car. I shook my head. "No, hexes don't work on machines outside of 'Waldo,'

and besides, no hex is strong enough to disable my sturdy little Nash Rambler." "It certainly is a vulnerable thing," said Ella.

Bill Evans and a Chicago fan named Martin Moore were waiting for us at the motel, avid tendrils looking. I took a FAPA roster from my pocket and carefully checked off Bill's name; he is the fifteenth member (counting joint memberships) I've met. The Chifan expressed enthusiasm about some sort of a fan gathering to be held in Chicago next Labor day, as I understood it. Various fans will be present, perhaps including Lee Hoffman, Claude Degler, and Jack Darrow; also a specially invited fan and his wife from Belfast -- Belfast, New York, I presume, although he didn't say. It's barely possible he meant Belfast, Prince Edward Island, Canada (pop. 145) -- and wouldn't that be a wonderful thing? I am not too sure about some of these facts, but I'm sure that to become a member of this gathering one needs only to send \$2 to George Price, treasurer, 20th World SF Convention, Box 4864, Chicago 80, Illinois.

Ella surprised me when I saw her in the light for the first time. Sylvia had conditioned me to suppose all girl-fans dress in abbreviated shorts and wear their blond hair down their back. Ella neither had Rapunzel hair nor shorts. She was dressed in lumberjack sweater, checkered slacks, and Indian moccasins -- all bought in Canada, a country she had more trouble getting in or out of than anybody since Ben Singer -- but I could tell she was a fanne by the way she chattered. I found myself sitting on the bed next to her with a whisky highball in one hand and a big stack of fan photos in the other, listening to tales of British fandom that curled my nerve-ends. She exhibited pix of all the great and near-great of Britain, and a few pix of American fans besides -- I tell you it was a shock to see the evil, lecherous faces of Burbee and Bloch staring up at me after the parade of sweet innocent faces of Anglofen: ATom, Ashworth, Bentcliffe, Patrizio, Lindsay, Locke, Miller....

Around me I heard Pavlat, Moore, De Vet, and Evans talking about the Dean drive, Campbell, Kuttner, Heinlein, Van Vogt, but each time I cocked a tendril at that conversation, Ella would say something like, "It's still DNQ, of course, but Ian McAulay..." or "Did you hear what happened when Ron Bennett..." and I listened to her like a three years' child. You could put Brigitte Bardot at one end of the room and Ella at the other, and inside of 20 minutes, GMT, everybody would be clustered around Ella. It was the heaviest gale of fan-talk I've encountered since Nan Gerding fed me scrambled eggs for breakfast, started talking while I had my mouth full, and didn't stop talking till I finished lunch. Ella turned out to be a very witty observer of the American scene, and if she carves half of her observations into stencil-wax her Stateside journal ought to live up to the Willis-Berry standards of the null-TAFF report.

After two or three hours of this, Charles rose and suggested that if the Pavlat crew figured on driving to Fond du Lac next morning they'd better get some sleep. I crogged at my watch, which said 1 a.m., and remarked that I was still hoping for a chance to converse a little with the rest of the bunch, just as soon as Parker finished telling me the truth about Alan Dodd. "Well, Redd," said Pavlat, "we can resume this conversation next Labor day. Ella won't be there."

As Charles and I left, I had a glimpse of Ella looking mysterious; she may be planning to return, disguised as Ethel Lindsay. Charles drove me back to Pleasant avenue and gave me a push. I drove home without incident, but the Honeybee is still feeling poorly. Dehex it, Ella!

WORLD OF A LOWBROW HIGHBROW

A FAN'S LIBRARY

BY MARION Z. BRADLEY

NEWTON'S SECOND -- OR WAS IT THIRD? -- LAW OF MOTION states that every force gives birth to an equal and opposite force in the reverse direction. This applies equally well to such nebulous sciences as sociology as to concrete ones like physics. Long ago Sinclair Lewis poked a needle into the paunch with his portrait of George Babbitt, and the respectable and quiet-living (who should be, and seldom are, distinguished from the vulgar and unthinking) have been feeling the sting ever since. In some circles it is a confession of treason to say a good word for small towns, American cars, television, or conservative politics.

But when any movement becomes prominent enough -- and the nonconformity that began in the Roaring '20s has achieved almost the status of the Moors in Spain, a small but definite and unassimilable nucleus -- it too begins to attract its satirists and critics. Those who moved in first are ready to move on, like the old settler who saw smoke ten miles away and said the country was "gettin' too durn crowded." After a long period when it is popular to jeer at suburbia and the complacent mediocrities, it becomes proper to peel a jaundiced eye at the nonconformist intellectuals who have been doing the jeering.

Morris Freedman, in a slim and quickly read little book called Confessions of a Conformist,* has done just this. A scholar and college professor -- he teaches English at the University of New Mexico -- Mr Freedman stands on his own merits. No lesser intelligence, and no smaller self-confidence, would have dared so forthrightly to blast some attitudes that are almost a matter of morality in intellectual circles.

As with all iconoclasts, he likes to exaggerate for shock value. He begins one chapter as follows: "I like American movies, jazz, television, radio, including soap operas and disk jockeys, popular songs, animated cartoons, Broadway and Hollywood musicals....I say all this both defensively and aggressively because in certain circles you all but cut yourself off from civilization if you make such a confession." He is not, however, an apologist for popular culture, one of those pretentious oafs who seek vast symbolism in comic strips and attempt to equate cowboys with Ulysses and street gangs with puberty rites. In defending, temperately and without apology, several facets of popular culture whose defense is unpopular among the washed, he states a curious problem:

To put it generally first, there seems to be no available way for middlebrows and highbrows, even assuming their willingness, to respond to popular culture on its own merits and shortcomings. I squirm when I read a patronizing highbrow interpretation...of baseball as a mythical struggle among lovable natives, symbolizing something or other about the American Way of Life....Middlebrows and highbrows need an excuse for liking a vastly popular sport.

One might assume from this that Freedman is one of those complacent chaps bent on convincing us that we live in the best of all possible

* New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961.

worlds. Such is, emphatically, not the case. He is attacking the posing and the lack of introspection involved in nonconformist attitudes -- the readiness to accept a standard of values as rigid in its way as that of the original Babbitt. He is, unfortunately, quite fond of one word that recently sent Berkeley fandom into an uproar: "conformist-nonconformity." At one point he comments that "Colleges have become populated with...anarchistic mediocrities who blackmail their fellows and their professors into accepting them at far more than their worth because of the current high value of nonconformity." As a college professor he must have come up against numerous examples of these gentry; one can feel the sting of his annoyance when he states, "There is no more self-righteously, high-mindedly closed a mind than that of a nonconformist... challenge him and he will dismiss you as a peasant not worth his attention." I sympathize with him when he quotes one of these people as saying haughtily, "If you don't know what's wrong with American civilization, it's no use talking to you at all."

He rightly states that the spirit of the Salem witch-burners lives on in these people who demand free speech for themselves but not for their opponents. Freedman's tolerance and insight comes out when he adds wryly that, while uncontrolled nonconformity could ultimately damage the world as thoroughly as continuing conformity, it would "take a long time before they could rack up such a score of damage."

Freedman centers his fire at one point on the people who suppose that civilization in America is never found outside New York and San Francisco. He stoutly defends smaller cities, upholding their mobility and freedom, and showing how in big towns personal contacts tend to deteriorate into sparkling talk without action. He concludes:

It is true that one cannot hide from oneself so easily in the smaller cities. Larger cities offer one the illusion of depths and unknown territory in the variety of enchantments and escapes; you can lose yourself in dozens of museums, movies, theatres,...bars, beaches, adult-education courses...it almost seems as if your own resources are endless. In small cities, one must cultivate the rarer, more delicate, the lonelier recreations; reading, conversation....

Some of his shock-value exaggerations -- for instance, the chapter title "I Like Advertising" -- annoyed me so much that I hurled the book into the wastebasket...or would have, if I weren't at heart conformist enough to care what the public library would think of such nonconformist anarchy. I read on, and discovered the chapter titled "Insolent Critics, Wonderful Chariots," wherein he takes the author of the recent book The Insolent Chariots very thoroughly over the coals. "It is not enough for the critics to boycott Detroit products," mourns Freedman; "they don't want anybody else to buy them either. Detroit, like drink, must be totally prohibited." Nothing in a year's reading has delighted me more than this chapter.

Freedman examines the shame some of us feel at living in a society so varied and productive, the guilt complex that forbids us to enjoy it without lengthily proclaiming the decadence of our civilization. He feels that "conspicuous rejection" has become the intellectual hallmark which opposes the "conspicuous consumption" of the newly rich. 7

The book devotes much space to the struggle in the field of education between those who passionately defend "modern" education and those who with equal passion oppose it. His attitude is "A plague o' both your houses." Like the honest and sincere man he is, Freedman does not pretend to know the road through the jungle, and he heaps his most caustic scorn on those who attempt to force their patented panaceas down the public gullet. Though these chapters are not very relevant to the purpose of the book Freedman's literate and knowing attitude shines through -- he seems to be a thoroughly conscientious teacher who loves his work -- and they stand as clear evidence of his right to place himself among the intelligentsia whose shibboleths he so violently denounces.

For Morris Freedman, behind the aggressiveness of his chapter titles, is himself a fierce and penetrating intellect, and a man who refuses to conform to any standard of values in either direction. His book is aimed dead center at the proposition that each person should examine his world for himself, formulate his own standards, and create a steady, self-made base from which to examine and appreciate the wonders of the subjective reality. He wants to create a new and healthy nonconformity which is not just another mass-produced fad, but the result of a critical appraisal of society and of himself. His message is an old one, but he states it with taste, literacy, intelligence, and a measure of sincerity mounting to passion. His book makes damn good reading.

COGITO CONCLUDED

THE ROUND FILE

The other night I wrote a novel in my sleep. Waking, I could not remember its title nor anything else about it except the name of one of its characters. Having brought it back from the realms of sleep I bequeath it to any novelist in the audience in need of a character with an exotic name: Tokrasillo. Isn't that lovely? It has a touch of Hungarian, a dash of Spanish, even a level smidgin of ancient Egyptian. And certainly it is the happiest invention since Rhamda Avec. # Rousing up I find everybody else writing novels, too, but wide awake. I feel like Ben Adhem would have felt if he had found himself surrounded by a whole squadron of angels, all scribbling busily. I hardly know whether to utter a deep scream of pique or to speak cheerily still of the books of gold that have resulted from this industry. It is a Parnassus on jets. Marion Z. Bradley, heretofore chiefly renowned from here to Zaragoza as Discord's co-editor, debuts as a novelist with The Door Through Space, published by Ace by the time you read this. Putnam's announces that The Star Dwellers by James Blish will be published 10 October at \$3.50. Jim Harmon's mystery novel, The Man Who Made Maniacs, is already on the stands, but due to spotty distribution, not in Minneapolis. I'm not sure of the imprint or the price, but from Jim's description of it I should think it would be worth 50¢ the copy. Unlike Harmon's publisher, Gold Medal foresightedly sent Discord a review copy of Canary in a Cat House, a short story collection by Kurt Vonnegut Jr, now on sale. This book will be reviewed later. # Safely in print, too, is The Marvelous Land of Oz by L. Frank Baum, from Dover Publications. This is a paperback reprint of the complete first edition, and containing "all the original John R. Neill illustrations in their true colors," something you won't find in the current Reilly & Lee hardcovers. The edition contains 120 line drawings and 16 color plates, is printed on good paper, and has a sewn binding. It sells for \$1.45, surely a bargain worth cheering about. # My copy of William E. Neumann's fanzine, Probe, arrived postage due. Surely this is a classic example of adding insult to injury!



A MEETING OF MINDS

WALTER BREEN

"...And this is the stop on your route that I was warning you about."



On #11: I don't agree that such people as Father Buzzard, Summerfield & Co. should "be encouraged at all costs." No. Not while they have any political power enabling them to decide what we can't read. Not while they have any educational influence enabling them to impart their doctrines

to young people incapable of recognizing or effectively protesting against bigotry. Harmless crackpots are welcome to continue to provide sources of laughter; but the reverend and the politician and their heirs and assigns are not harmless.

It's probably appropriate that the cover of Evergreen Review you mentioned showed an envelope postmarked in the city of the Watch and Ward Society -- Boston. # Headline, New York Journal-American, 10 May: Fear For 69 on French Plane. # Marion was even better than usual this time.

Blish misread me, I think. I was not concerned about law-breaking as such in my "Bolt the fourth" [Discord #9]. I was concerned about teaching a dogmatic quasi-religious system (roughly comparable to the Jehovahs Witnesses but infinitely more rigid, authoritarian, and antihumanistic in practice) which can be refuted but which kids wouldn't have the necessary equipment, in our present educational system, to rebut. Major Mayer's well-known speech on communist indoctrination (Freedom Foundation, Searcy, Ark.) goes into detail about Soviet brainwashing methods. I submit that this is, if true (and it seems to confirm the Sargent book Battle for the Mind and subsequent researches), ample reason to regard the communists -- and the Roman Catholic church, for that matter -- as ideological opponents of a different breed from, say, the Mormons or the Christian Science people, and as far more dangerous. The Soviets have put into effect the well-known Jesuit saying (echoed by the behaviorists) "Give me the first six years of a child's life and you can have the rest, for all the good it will do you to try to change him thereafter." As anti-censorship as I am, here and at the point of allowing technical information on torture methods to reach sadists are the two points where I find myself having sober second thoughts. It isn't an easy question I am throwing to your readers. I hope there will be some new insights in the lettercol -- not just expressions of emotion according to Which Side Are You On. (Berkeley 6, California)

ROG PHILLIPS

I want to thank Clayton Hamlin for his nice words about the story "High Ears," and thank you for printing them. That thirty-fifth anniversary issue of Amazing was either thrown together at random or put together by people who hadn't read very many of the stories. Probably both. But another factor also enters in which I have come to know better since I quit writing science fiction and switched to other mediums. That factor is the answer to the question, "What is a story?"

Ray Palmer did not bother himself too much with answers to this question, and as a result the Palmer Amazing and Fantastic were the freest flow of science fiction in the field. The best of these were, quite rawly, development of theoretical speculation thinly disguised as fiction. They were not stories. "So Shall Ye Reap" is not a story. I didn't know what a story was when I wrote it -- but I knew what science fiction was. That doesn't mean I didn't write STORIES quite often in those

10 days. I did, but when I did it was by instinct or by accident. I didn't consciously shape my writing into story form in the same way that I'm teaching my class of inmate writers in San Quentin to do today, and teaching myself along with them.

Later when Palmer left Z-D and started his own publishing firm and started playing with his own poker chips, he started concerning himself with stories, and went broke along with most of the other sf magazine publishers. The reason for that is simple. People who know how to write stories either move into better paying fields or they write stories thinly disguised as science fiction -- and there is a vast difference between science fiction thinly disguised as a story and a story thinly disguised as science fiction.

What you say about vice crusaders, Redd, is quite true. They should be kept around for their entertainment value and so that the newspapers can publish the names of the latest sex novels so that the sex fiction fans can know what titles to look for. In fact, you might help along those lines yourself by publishing the names of two of the best writers in that field, Arlene Longman and John Dexter, heh heh. Sex fiction is not pornography. Teenagers and adults alike would be benefitted if an expert like Bussard would select and publish a five foot shelf of sex novels that covered the full spectrum of human sex problems, giving the reader an insight he cannot obtain for himself. (Berkeley, California)

SCOTT NELSEN

It is quite disgusting today to see kids from 12 years on up walking around as they please, and smoking, and reading Playboy, and -- ad infinitum. I don't know the cause of all this, but I wish I did. There is a law in Missouri that cigarets can't be sold to minors, and yet a minor can walk right up to any drugstore counter and ask for a pack of Winstons or whathaveyou, and without any question the clerk will hand them their pack of cancer sticks. There should be a crackdown on the sale of cigarets and other things to minors.

Any teenager can walk into a store, pick out the sexiest book he sees, and buy it (or just walk out with it under his jacket -- black leather, of course). There is really no law about this, but something ought to be done about it. What American youth of today needs is good clean literature, like f'rinstance, science fiction!

Philip Jose Farmer: I like Father Carmody, and keep the stories coming! (Webster Groves 19, Missouri)

EDWARD WOOD

For years I have read the work of Algis Budrys with interest and many times with enjoyment, but his article "After 1929 -- What?" in Discord #13 shows a certain inattentiveness to facts. If I read the article correctly it is another of the series in how terrible the old science fiction was and how wonderful and mature the "new" (i.e. post-1940) sf is.

It is not necessary to go over every point in his article, but certain of the more obvious points need additional discussion. Mr Budrys says Gernsback "was not able to keep Amazing solvent." Where is the evidence for this, Mr Budrys? This is not what one reads in Sam Moskowitz' "Mr Science Fiction: A Profile of Hugo Gernsback" (Amazing, Sep 1960), where the creditors are reported to have received \$1.08 for each \$1 due them. Even Budrys will admit that an honest man finds it difficult to escape bad laws.

As to the failure of Science-Fiction Plus, we have here the brilliant syllogism: Unknown Worlds folded: SF + folded: Only bad or poor magazines fold: Therefore, Unknown Worlds and SF + were bad or poor magazines.

You said this, Mr Budrys: "Of all the forms of magazine sf that have been tried, Gernsback's is the one with the poorest sales record." Now damn it, prove it. Give us circulation figures and not words. If SF + folded in 1953, so did 12 other titles. Shall I list them? Avon SF&F Reader; FFM; Fantastic Adventures; Fantasy Magazine/Fiction; Other Worlds; Rocket Stories; Space SF; Space Stories; Toby Press Novels; Tops in SF; Vortex SF; and Wonder Story Annual.

You said this, Mr Budrys: "But by and large modern science fiction is healthy, and mature to some degree." By God, I'm glad you're not my doctor. With six American sf magazines left today, with something like 76 titles dying during the 1950s, you call it health? And as for maturity, do you recall the group of magazines that said "taboos were out, anything goes"? Weren't they the Thrilling group that once had five or was it six titles at one time in sf, and are now out of the field? SaM showed that their best seller was their reprint magazine, Fantastic Story.

You said this, Mr Budrys: "But it is by God anyhow readable, interesting to a fair number of people." I assume you meant that the old junk was just unreadable. I shall list ten stories from Gernsback's sf magazines which I found interesting, and I'm sure others did too: "A Martian Odyssey" by Weinbaum; "The People of the Pit" by Merritt; "The Colour Out of Space" by Lovecraft; "The Moon Pool" by Merritt; "The City of the Singing Flame" and "Beyond the Singing Flame" by C. A. Smith; "The City of the Living Dead" by Manning and Pratt; "Dweller in Martian Depths" by C. A. Smith; "The Mad Planet" by Leinster; and "The Man Who Awoke" by Manning.

Let me clarify my own stand. Some of the old stories are excellent stories and stand up to anything the modern field has, and will, put out. Some of the new stories are as good as anything the field has ever seen. Many of the stories, new and old, are poor by any criterion and are a blemish to the field.

If you want respect, Mr Budrys, earn it. It is the only way. (Idaho Falls, Idaho)

RICHARD KYLE

I'll go along halfway -- maybe two thirds of the way -- with Algis Budrys' remarks on Gernsback and Gernsback sf, but further accomodation is not possible. I, too, believe Mr Gernsback's policies were defective, and I'm inclined to agree with Budrys' estimate of their deficiencies. But I also believe Mr Gernsback's failings were not wholly editorial ones, and I'am convinced that modern sf is "a degenerate and attenuated form of the real stuff" -- not the Gernsback real stuff; the Campbell '40-5, and the Gold '50-2 real stuff, rather.

After all this time, without actually having been there to see what the early issues of Amazing looked like in the newsstand display of their time, it's impossible to say how effective the covers and interior layouts were. Looking back, one would guess that the interiors did not help the magazine at all and the covers were of little positive help: contemporary-fiction magazine artists were Paul's superiors even then, and it is barely possible that his style, unique as it was, had already dated. It is possible to say that the art and layout of Science Wonder and Wonder were vastly inferior to their competitors'; they must have looked like freaks sitting beside Wesso-illustrated Amazing and Clayton Astounding and then the later covers and interiors of the Tremaine-era Astounding.

Certainly all the money that was dumped down the drain on Science-Fiction Plus' format was completely wasted on the slick-paper issues; the typeface was all wrong for a coated surface paper, the layout was antiquated, and most of the artists were unsuited to the kind of science fiction they were illustrating -- not to mention the Popular Mechanics covers. Five-color covers and two-color interiors mean nothing other than expense if the publisher does not know how to use them, and Mr Gernsback did not. It's always unwise, except for sweet nostalgia's sake, to try to return to the past; but only a minority of SF +'s stories did that; all of the layout did.

Mr Gernsback's editorial weaknesses (and probably the gravest of them are his adherence to a nineteenth rather than a twentieth century philosophy, and his failure to fully understand fiction as an art form) undoubtedly contributed largely to the loss of his sf magazines, but I suspect that if he had been capable of packaging them competitively, the strengths he does have might well have carried the day.

It is easy to say that Gernsback faltered 25 years ago, but it is hard to show that his successors, although they stayed on their feet, are much to be admired. Until Sam Merwin became editor, Thrilling Wonder was an abomination. It is possible,

12 now, to reread many of the stories from Gernsback's Wonder: the Laurence Manning stories, Binder's "Dawn to Dusk," Taine's "The Time Stream," Campbell's short stories, and many others. Aside from the Penton and Blake series and an odd short story or two, what has the pre-Merwin TWS to offer? At the least, Gernsback's magazines always showed respect for the medium, something the Pines magazines did not do for many years -- and if we are to be concerned with explorations of the human spirit, I would rather occupy myself with Manning's "Man Who Awoke" than with Plaisted's "Zarnak."

It is surely true that Gernsback did not understand what Tremaine was trying to do with Astounding in the middle 1930s. It involved a whole area of science fiction that Gernsback does not seem to comprehend philosophically, for he still does not grasp what Tremaine's collateral descendants are attempting to accomplish today. Nevertheless he has paid at least lip service to most of the prominent sf writers who even roughly correspond to his tastes. I do not know what more Budrys can expect. If the kind of sf Budrys seems to be advocating had more to show for itself (I am excluding Budrys' own stories) perhaps I could offer more sympathy.

When the readers can figure out the substance of a plot by reading the Coming Next Month department of a magazine, it seems to me that magazine and the fiction it publishes have reached a pretty low ebb. To figure out the endings of most sf stories today is not too hard. All you have to do is assume that the "hero" will ultimately destroy the thing he loves most, betray his principles, embrace the most detestable moral or political perversity, or be killed in an attempt to oppose those who advocate these things. And the stories which do not operate on these particular mechanistic principles generally show the poor misunderstood hero crying away in a deluge of self-pity about how things are ugly now, now that all beauty is gone from the world. When I read these stories and think of the men who wrote them I am put in mind of workers in a slaughterhouse complaining bitterly because the animals are not as beautiful as they once were. And since members of mankind make up the readership of science fiction, it isn't surprising to me that the current magazines are not doing well. Criticism -- especially flagrantly irrational and unfounded criticism -- is seldom wildly popular.

What we need is a new Gernsback or Tremaine or Campbell, someone with an understanding of the grandeur of today and a vision of the greatness of the future -- and a heart-deep respect for mankind. When we get that man, modern science fiction will get respect. It will merit it. (Banning, California)

BOB JENNINGS

There are about three or four reasons why I write letters of comment on fanzines. One is that it's the expected thing to do; fan editors tend to appreciate letters of comment, and being a fan editor I know how important they can be. Another reason is that I write LoCs in order to obtain new and interesting friends, seizing on interesting items of comment to start a long correspondence. Then too I may write because it's a friend's zine and I know he'll appreciate, not to say expect, something from me. All of this is leading up to something. Namely, that my letters of comment to your fanzine have been absolutely barren of results. You never print them, which might be just as well anyway, and you never answer them, which is more serious. I hope and expect the editor to answer letters of comment with any number of interesting type arguments; that is one reason I like long letters -- they provide meat for future correspondence. If and when you ever bother to answer my LoCs you dismiss them with a casual sentence. This is aggravating; it shows me that you either have no interest in your own writing or you don't give a tinker's dam what I say about them.

Your editorial was interesting, but too short. How is a Boggs personal zine to survive without Boggs? I predict your PAR plan is doomed to utter and complete failure. Who in their right mind would even remotely consider paying for an item after having already used it?

Commenting on Budrys' article: While Hugo Gernsback and maybe a few (count 'em on fingers of one hand) hardcore diehards claim that Gernsback's brand of stories

had hard science with much true-life fact in it, the other advocates of the good old days don't. Instead they point out that science fiction has left behind its speculative sense. The science back then was full of holes, but it was based on facts known or speculated to exist as hardcore reality, and the sf writers merely expanded those ideas, developing theories to fit the needs.

If Gernsback sf was for intellectuals (a fact which I doubt heartily) who were nurtured on science and knew it well, it seems that Campbell will soon arrive at a modern Gernsback style. Only difference is that the science is not so sharply accented in Campbell sf, and the stories are far more readable. I think Budrys mis-evaluates the Gernsback era; the mags were cruddy, not because of the science overdoses and misuses, but simply because the stories were literary horrors. Modern sf has forsaken plot and basic physical science, which is bad, but it is better than the Gernsback variety of story.

Budrys implies that social science should take precedence over physical science, which to me is a bad thing. That knocks the science out of science fiction; social science fiction is nothing more than a mundane story set against a handy sf backdrop. Intermingling science, or speculation, with the story so that the two are one and the same makes a story decently science-fictional. Return to speculation; return to plot; and return to basic physical science, and you will have outstanding science fiction again. (Nashville 11, Tennessee)

EC: This letter arrived in the same mail with nine other letters of comment, a postal card, and a fanzine; this illustrates why it's impossible to acknowledge every LoC, let alone reply at length; I agree that I should answer each LoC, but I can't. If you think it's insane to pay for things after using them up, beware of buying gasoline (for example) on a credit card, and avoid eating in Fancy Expensive Restaurants.

BOB TUCKER

One possible reason for a dearth of letters following each issue of Discord is not that it is uninteresting or non-thought-provoking, but simply that many of your readers shy away from me-too-ism. Number 13, for example: I agree with Budrys and find that he agrees with me in regards Gernsback; I enjoy reading Marion Bradley but can't enjoy this particular subject matter because I've given up the Gold/Pohl twins as disenchanting; while all the published letters except one find me agreeing, or nodding, or passing along to the next entirely without mental comment. So about the only reasonable letter of comment I could write on this issue would be "Me too. I enjoyed it." Which would bore you. So I'm sending a dime, see?

The one letter I did not agree with was that one from Betty Kujawa. I do not wish to hurt her feelings but I am always amused at people who blame the "Republicans" or the "Democrats" for this or that blunder. In my view, the Cuban Affair was a blunder created by scores of people in Washington (and possibly elsewhere) who were stupid. The political label they wore had no bearing on their stupidity, and their stupidity has no valid bearing on their political ties. The Affair was hatched in one administration and executed in another; I defy anyone to prove that a Republican is less stupid than a Democrat, and v.v. The blunder was created by politicians. I equate politicians with pimps and thieves.

When does the next train leave for Siberia? (Bloomington, Illinois)

PHIL HARRELL

First, while I enjoyed the whole of Discord #13, most especially the A. J. Budrys article, I want to say something while I'm thinking of it. Be it known by One (Betty Kujawa) and All that I think Marion Z. Bradley is one of the finest women I've ever known and probably the most talented. I think she has a wonderful sense of humor (she corresponds with me, too), and does a tremendous job of writing ANYTHING. She is a very human person, and I consider it a privilege to know her.

In reply to Bob Lichtman's bit on rock-and-roll: To me rock-and-roll has

14 all the charm and beauty of the day before Thanksgiving on a turkey farm, and I think I prefer the turkey farm. The last time I heard anything as beautiful as rock-and-roll was when a truck full of empty milk cans ran into a truck carrying a load of pigs to market. I don't know whether it's true or not, but I hear that a farm boy tuned in a leading rock-and-roll singer on the barn radio, and the farmer came out and shot the cow. Said he couldn't stand to hear an animal in such pain. (Norfolk 9 Virginia)

LESLIE GERBER

Seeing my letter in beautiful blue justified print went to my head immediately, and I started going through all the editorial matter in the issue looking for signs that my letter was printed as a hint to your other readers that you'd taken my advice. There was not very much editorial matter, and it was hard going for a while. I don't think "page by Dick Schultz" is nearly outrageous enough. The comment to Bob Lichtman about the duplication of page numbering last issue might have been, but I looked at issue #12 and saw that you probably did it to maintain the 14-page size, even if you had to cheat. Baffled for the moment, I thought and thought and finally realized that you have done something even more outrageous than I could have envisioned. Keen student of fannish psychology that you are, you must realize that damn few fans are going to go to the trouble of sending you a dime after every Discord without enclosing a note, which will grow into a letter of comment, which will wind up replacing the dime. Besides, the pay-after-reading system is completely illogical -- if a fan has a LoC in one issue, and wants to receive the next without sending another letter, he will have to pay a dime for an issue he's already earned.

I remember, back in my earliest neofan days, the superstitious awe in which I held the old Gernsback magazines, mostly because they cost so much from sf dealers. Then I discovered a place which was selling dozens of them for 50¢ each, and I bought a batch and brought them home, greatly excited. I was just beginning to develop a rudimentary critical sense then, and I still remember how keenly disappointed I was to discover that the major difference between Amazing/1927/ and Astounding and Galaxy/1957/ was that the current magazines were much better written. Those old Amazings did have a kind of thrilling pioneer aura around them, but I think that was largely because of what I knew about them, not what I found in them. I have returned to those old magazines numerous times, to try another story and see if they were really as had as I had remembered, and most of the time the answer is yes. Gernsback hardly published anything which could equal A Case of Conscience or Rogue Moon even in scientific interest, and he never approached either story or a dozen other modern efforts in overall literary quality.

Marion's reviews have done something very strange to me; they have made me interested in reading a sf magazine again. I thought I was through with sf magazines. After all, I'm supposedly a Progressive, with an eye on the Future; and everybody knows that paperbacks are the sf medium of the future, so I feel like a reactionary every time I pick up a copy of Analog. But I had a long term sub to both Galaxy and If which just ran out, and both the zines Marion reviews are sitting on my desk back in Brooklyn. When I get back, I'm going to read them; and I know I'll enjoy them because I've been properly prepared so I'll be able to enjoy them. This from me is high praise for reviewing, and I mean it. Wow.

Lichtman is exhibiting his glorification of the mediocre again, I fear. I was a rock-and-roll fiend, too, in my early youth -- until I was 13, in fact -- and much as I hate to admit it, I still retain a liking for some of the stuff recorded back when r&r was an outgrowth of folk music. I haven't heard more than half a dozen new r&r records in the past three years which were anything more than manufactured hyper-idiotic pop crap with a loud drum and an echo chamber, and maybe a semi-human voice reverberating in the background. Remember Chuck Berry? That was a r&r singer.

I suspect that I may have overstated the panning of Bartok in Since Debussy and I made things worse by misspelling Hodeir's name. (Brooklyn 26, New York)