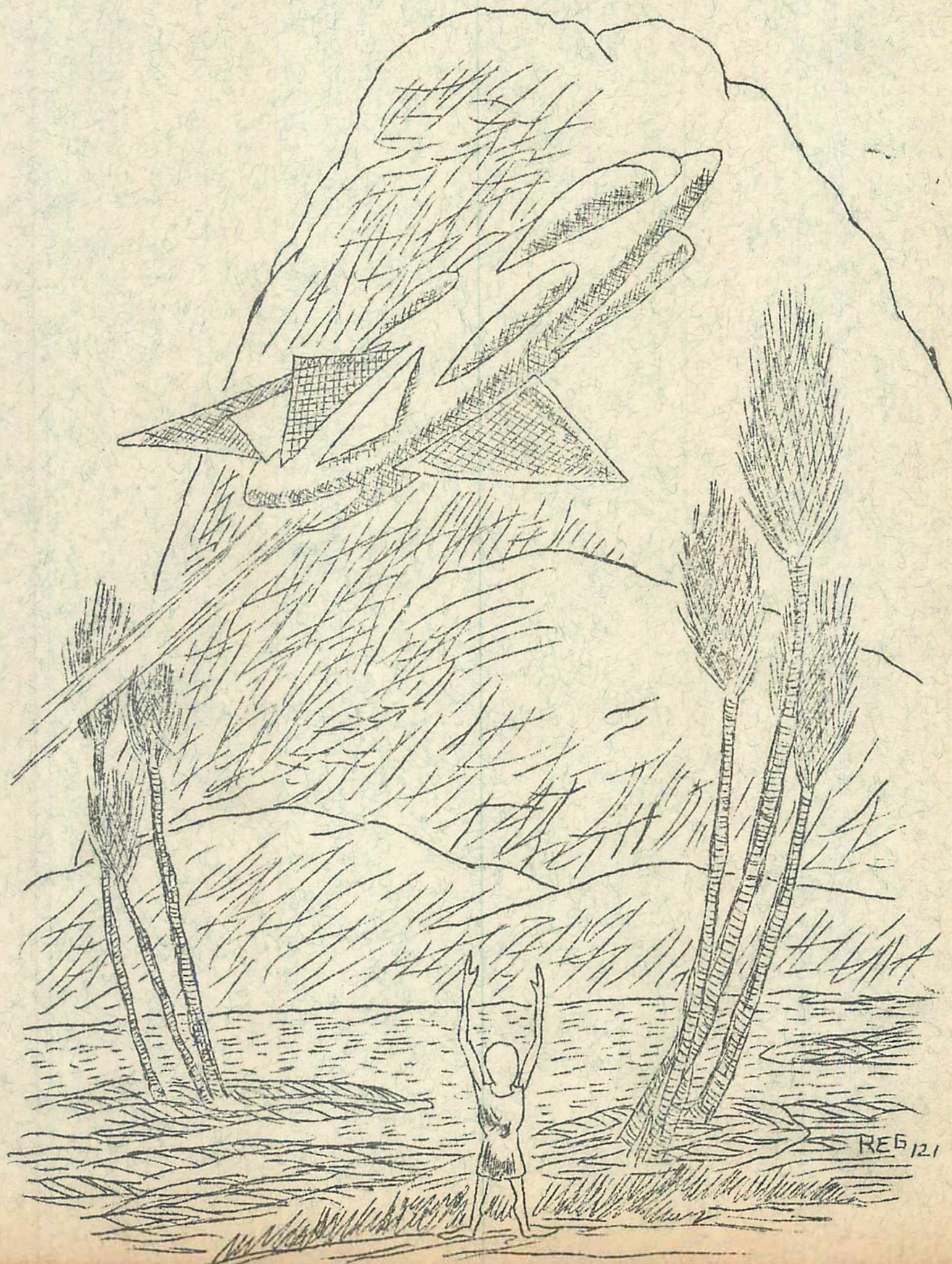


EXCALIBUR 8



EXLIBRIS



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TWILIGHT OF THE GHODS DEPT.

The United Presbyterian Church has done it. They have topped such past achievements as the sign on a Long Island church that spelled out "Jesus Saves" in neon lights. They have, in a word, scored a breakthrough. By the time you read this, their advertising campaign should be in full swing. The UPC has had a series of commercials produced extolling the virtues of God. This is not one of those "the family which prays together stays together" scenes, either. The thing opens with two gys, one of whom I recognize as Stan Freeberg (Who no doubt did the writing) ((Yes-LB)) having a snappy conversation along the lines of the chatter in such other Freeberg commercials as the Chung King series. Then, the audience attracted, the chorus launches into a song whose snappiness of lyric and tempo would not shame Merideth Wilson. It ends with a great line. "Don't you feel lonely, out on a limb without Himmmmm?" Then, the chorus done, a voice yells, "The blessings you save may be your own!" Then comes a little more music and finally the sponsor is hurriedly named in the grand manner of the Piel's Beer Commercials.

Since I was born a Jew, I suppose I should give equal time to them. The Jewish religion, you see, doesn't believe in such things, so I have taken matters into my own hands and written at least part of a Jewish commercial.

I: Hey, Harold, how about going down to the Shule

H: Nah, Irving. Let's go over to the church and whistle at the Shicksas

I: But Jewish girls are prettier. Liz Taylor is Jewish.

H: Let's go down to the Shule and see what's doing.

CHORUS: Be a Jew! Be a Jew!

Be a Jew through and through, through and through!

Be a Jew! Be a Jew!

Nothing evil can happen to you!

If you pray, If you pray!

If you pray every day, every day!

Join the craze, Join the craze!

Stay home on all the Jewish holidays!

Don't be a weeper or a crier while you wait for
the Messiah

Be a Jew! Be a Jeeewwww!

* * * * *

On the other end of the spectrum is a story from Mexico. A group of archeologists have at last succeeded in freeing the statue of an ancient Mexican rain god which had been lying on its back in some deserted area. The huge statue, it weighs over 100 tons, has been set up in one of the city's museums. It has the citizens quite frightened. It seems that Mexico has been suffering through the worst rain storms in history, and many people are blaming the idol. Some even went so far as to suggest that the idol be removed and replaced where they found it. This idea was countered by a group who feel that that might only further anger the God. A number of the local newspaper columnists in Mexico City have laughed off this episode as superstition. I feel it is my duty to mention that it continues to pour in Mexico. As a matter of strict fact, it continues to pour in New York, too.

by

ARNIE

HAPPY HOLIDAY DEPT.

Recently(all right, so it will have been about four months when you read this) Indonesia celebrated National Education Day. Yes, these forward looking people, realizing the important place education holds in our modern world, held a special holiday to honor it. I am told that the festivities were very exciting, and I particularly wish I could have been there to see the cheerful fires from the book burning that was held by the Ministry of Education. It was pointed out by the Ministry of Education that in burning the history books, they were ridding the nation of dangerous menaces. I salute you, Mr. Minister of Indonesian Education, where ever you are.

* * * * *

As long as we're going to talk about off beat holidays, Babylon, Long Island held what they called a "Fire Festival". I am afraid to inquire further into this celebration, but I'm pretty sure it was a bring your own matches deal.

WORLD TRADE FAIR IN N.Y. DEPT.

Note the title carefully. It shows that I am a basically truthful person, unlike the people who run the "NY World's Fair". Anyway, the fair is so weird, I had begun to think it was a crime against Nature. I was proved correct when Nature Struck Back. Suddenly, one fine day, a freakish air current sprung up next to the Oklahoma Pavillion. It moved down one of the World's Fair streets and scattered a bunch of people who were eating at one of the outdoor restaurants. The tornado then lifted one of the heavy table umbrellas and lifted it high in the air. Apparently content, the twister moved back up the street and dispersed. For those of you who don't know about New York weather, we never have tornados. Never.

I've noticed that there are several unofficial exhibits not listed in the guide book and for the benefit of EXCALIBUR's readership, I'll enumerate a few.

The Schaefer Bheer exhibit, I am sure many fen will be delighted to know, has expanded vastly. Instead of merely having just a pavillion such as other, more mundane companies do, Schaefer's exhibit has expanded into the streets of the Fair in order to get closer to the people. Yes, wherever you walk in the Fair, all you have to do is look down and you are sure to see an amber colored beer can that means Schaefer Bheer. Unfortunately, the people at Schaefer have not seen fit to put full beer cans in the street yet, but I'm sure you will all be content with the empties.

The Florida Pavillion sports a truly majestic informal exhibit, There is an orange juice bar near the pavillion, and right near it is one of the most impressive monuments to the Sunshine State that I have ever seen. There, gleaming in the warm New York sun, is the largest pile of orange peels that I have ever seen. Mr. Moses is to be congratulated for bringing such an attraction to the World's Fair. I say, without fear of being contradicted (Unless Len pokes his nose in here in which case I shall kill him. ((You and what army?~LB)) that the Peel pile is something you'll be able to spare tell your children ~~with~~ about for years to come. (If you have no children, the World's Fair lost and found might be a good bet.)

KATZ

WITCHCRAFT DEPT.

I really wasn't going to use this item because there are somethings that are not meant for fen to know and must be whispered in the dark in the dead of night. The paper reports that there is a young woman who believes herself to be a witch, the authentic spell casting kind.

Her success as a witch began with her boss. I quote. "I couldn't do anything right for him....he made my life absolutely miserable. One day I got a big Irish potatoe, stuck toothpicks in it for arms and legs, put some raisons down his front, stuck in with straight pins, for a button down suit. I put 'Mr. Liverpool' on the back porch and watched him get more shrunken with the passing days. One morning his head toppled away from his body completbly. That very day, the real Mr. Liverpool got sacked from the company," The article contains at least two other such stories.

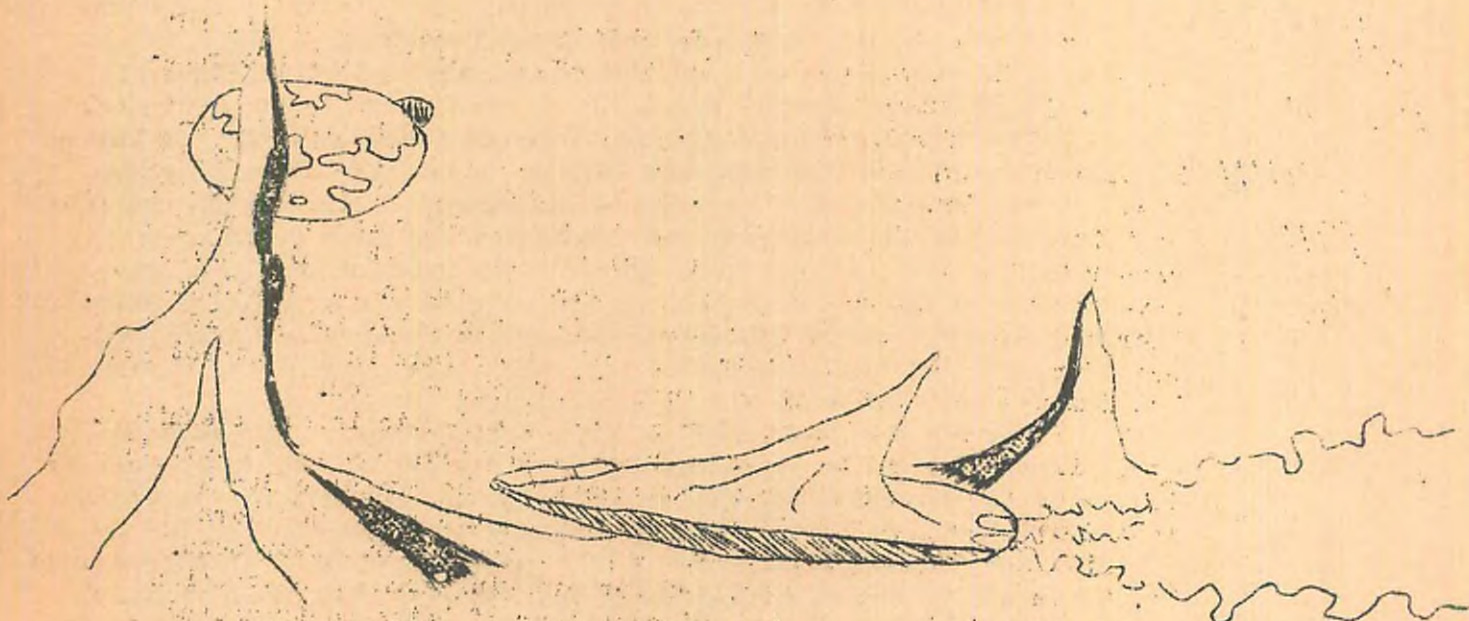
Being a farsighted (actually, I'm nearsighted, by you know how these poetic descriptions go some times) fan, I can see a scene that might have been.....

Man: Can you do it for me?

Witch: Yes, first I get an Irish corn, then I dress it in a suit. I then place two pins in a second ear of corn for eyes, a pin for a nose and a piece of lemon for a mouth. Then I place a plastic bag over the whole mess. The person will not be able to communicate with the world via the written or spoken word. What did you say the man's name was?

Man: Willis, Walter Willis. (he leaves, muttering) Now let them vote against me for #1 fan.

See all of you fen next issue- AtheK



EXPONENTIAL

THAT INSANE DIPLOMACY JAZZ

Diplomacy, for the unenlightened, is a wargame after the style of TACTICS II and GETTYSBURG only with the element of chance removed. It is played on a map of Europe for the year 1900. I've heard several possibilities discussed for expanded versions or fannish take offs on the game. I've come up with one myself which I like better than Coventry Diplomacy or US Zipcode Zone Diplomacy. It is based on THE WORN OUROBORUS, a fantasy by L.R. Eddison which a press release most of you are familiar with. The game starts in the year 190 AGC (Anno Carces Condite) which is right after the Great War. The combatant powers would be Witchland, Demonland, Gabiland, Pixyland, and Jopland. The possibilities for intrigue are much greater and writing press releases would become much more fun. What's more, with the murders of several Mercurian heads of state, like Gorice XI, La Fireez, etc. Players would have real revolutions to work with and to spin ~~the~~ propaganda with whereas in regular Diplomacy most of the revolutions have to be concocted and sound totally implausible. Of course, the appeal would only extend to those who are familiar with the Lessingham saga, but most of the current rabid Diplomacy fans are. Imagine a press release something like this:

KROTHERING- Gorice XII was happy to announce today that a major victory had been scored against the foul kingdom of Demonland. General Corinius with a handpicked army of Witchland's finest was able to take Krothering Castle with the support of the first fleet located in the bay of Carce. It is rumored that the Lord Brandock Daha has set up a government in exile with Juss, his brother in the Marchlands of Moruna. The annexation of the powerful supplycenter of Owlswick was accomplished only with the help of our good friends from Fax Fay Faz. Spitfire has moved his command to Galing the last rebel province.

We wish to deny at this time the rumors that La Fireez the erstwhile King of Pixyland has been secretly made prisoner in Carce. The Lady Preznyra expressed shock when she was informed of what she called "The beastly rumor" We hope and pray that the regimes in Galing and Zaje Zaculo will realize the futility of this bloody war and join us in seeking peace.

/s/ Lord Gro
for Gorice XII of Witchland

Admit it gang, wouldn't Jack Harness make a perfect Lord Gro?

EVERLASTING GOOD NEWS

Since the inception of this sterling publication the editors have endeavored to fight a never ending battle for truth justice and decent duplication. We may never get the first two, let's face it, but with this issue we proudly strike a blow for the third. I have replaced Owen, my portable Royal (so named because it couldn't do a damn thing right) for a Smith-Corona standard. True, it's a 1938 model, but it stencils beautifully and has the best touch of any typer I've ever used. I rather like the elite typeface too. This page is being stencilled with it, but due to various things (and procrastination on the part of Certain Co-Editors) the majority of thisish is being stencilled at Arnie's house. Now if I can only learn to stencil art right, we may



really have a fanzine going. Although you'll have to admit that Tower stencils aren't the greatest for stylus work. Tough, isn't it, but on our budget it's all we can afford.

WHY NOT INSANITY

I'm beginning to get worried, I don't mind telling you. At first, when Barry Goldwater announced his intent to run for the Presidency, I sort of laughed it off with the usual Goldwater type jokes. Later, when he gained the Republican nomination, it got a little less funny, but I still assumed that with the proper excerpts and quotations from his various books printed up and circulated by the Democrats and with the speeches on some of Goldwater's more reactionary ideas that even the dullest mind would realize what it was letting itself in for should it chance to vote AuH₂O. It seems that none of Mr. Goldwater's theories on running this country are being talked about, however, and this changes the picture considerably. Sure, there's been a lot of cackling about dangerous

extremism, but no one has taken the trouble to explain what consequences this extremism could have on John Q. As is, the extremism issue is merely anodda one of dem crooked Politicians schemes.

There seems to be a sort of hazy myth growing up about Goldwater, one which I'm sure his demonically efficient campaign managers aren't discouraging. On the one hand, Barry seems to have tried to shift his image more to the center to allay the terrors of the moderately informed voter. But on the other hand, here in the South, with an almost religious fervor, a certain delusion seems to have become entrenched in the minds of the populace. It's difficult to put this in words, but it goes something like this:

When Barry is elected, the Civil Rights Bill isn't going to count anymore. Not that many people when asked directly actually think that congress is going to repeal it, most seem to realize that the President can't just nullify a piece of legislation that has been signed into law. The illusion is that some sort of magic wand will be waved. All of a sudden, the NAACP, CORE, and all those nasty people are just going to dissolve. Voting for Goldwater will "give the South a fighting chance"...Will someone please tell me, a fighting chance for what? Goldwater seems to be associated with cleanness. Somehow when he's elected, it's all gonna work out. That SOB at the office is going to get canned, The Mets are gonna cop the pennant and life is really going to get underway. All the bad guys will just disappear. What has started out as sympathy for the underdog is spreading and is gradually transforming into "A BATTLE FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE, AND RIGHT!" All the rotten people, the TV Commentators and that intellectual snot up the block are impeding this glorious campaign for freedom either because they are unenlightened tools or because they're "in the pay of the evil corrupt Johnson administration." This thing is a trend that not too many people have commented on or put into words, but it's growing.

It doesn't really matter what students of Political Science and NY Times readers think. The decision is going to be made by Charley who runs the gas station and millions like him. The matter is worsened by the fact that Johnson is a political conniver and sharp. The strongest factors in his favor are the speeches

he made in signing the Civil Rights Bill and in the Viet Nam crisis. They had a Rooseveltish air about them, and Johnson even looks a little like FDR.

I suppose that in the final analysis, the Battle of the Myths will determine who will be our next President. As I said, I'm scared.

THE OLD BALL GAME

Well, it's finally happening. Baseball is now an official part of the showbiz world. The Columbia Broadcasting System has purchased a controlling interest in the New York Yankees. Already, many facets in the rules of the game have been modified for the benefit of TV audiences, but now we can expect all sorts of lovely complications. Have you ever noticed how many of the Yankees are too tall or ugly? Batting averages and slugging won't count anymore. We can probably expect CBS to ship some of its more handsome actors in to replace them. And don't you get sick of those long dull drawn out American League games. Possibly, the next time the Yanks play the Orioles both teams will come to the stadium early to rehearse. Mickey Mantle can practice looking kingly and graceful as he circles the bases, Luis Aparicio can practice the incredible stop in the last half of the eighth which saves the ballgame, and I'm sure things will be much more efficient. The innings can be timed so that the commercials and station breaks fall at regular fifteen minute intervals, and the whole World Series will have to be videotaped at the studio before it can be played to eliminate all the bad camera angles etc.

Anyone for a game of stickball?

* * * *

Unfortunately, it looks like I'm not going to be able to make it to the Pacificon this year. As if just raising the money wasn't enough of a problem, The Charlotte School system announced that classes will start Monday August 30, Cheez. I'll just have to content myself with a week in NY bugging Arnie, I guess. There's a DeepSouth Con, but fate has scheduled it for while I'm up Nawth. That's the way the Corflu tumbles.

Last ish of Ex, in case anyone's interested, was delayed by a set of fantastically unbelievable occurrences. I'd reprint them now, but this seems to be the end of the page. See everybody next time.



Harness

Congratulations you lucky lucky fan, you get thisish because:

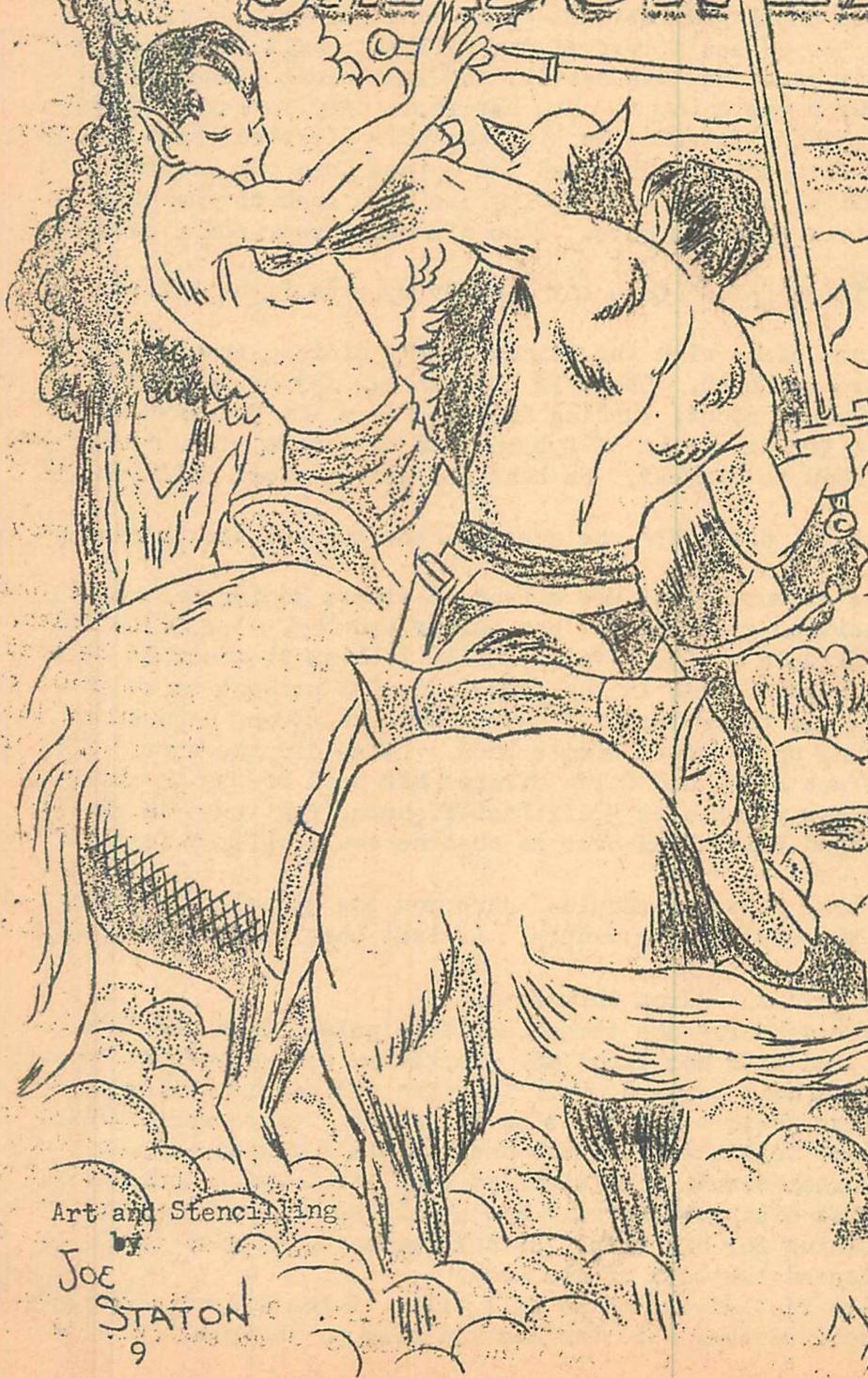
- you're a subscriber, sub expires with #
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- You LoC'd
- You contributed
- You're a girl
- YOU'RE A BNF(GOSHWOW)
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- Would you contribute Art? An article? Fiction?
- Want to LoC?
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- We traded
- This is a sample copy
- We like the sound of your name
- We don't like the sound of your name
- This is your last issue till you do something
- Other

YANDRO FOR THE HUGO

EX#8 for Sept. '64

The ROAD TO SHADOWLAND

by
ARNOLD
KATZ



Art and Stenciling

by
JOE
STATON

The girl's jet black hair curled and flowed down her back as she galloped along beside her husband. Muron looked down at his wife from his larger steed, White Wind. He smiled at his beautiful companion.

"Are you tired, Calea? We can stop if you like. We are not expected at Cybrona until noon, and see, the sun is just barely risen" he shouted above the thunder of the horses' hooves. Calea shook her head, not even slackening her horse's pace.

"No, Muron, I am not yer ti-" her mouth opened in an involuntary yawn, "-red." Muron nearly laughed himself out of his saddle.

"Yes, Calea, my darling, you only open your mouth to get more air!" he bantered. "You would probably ride until you fell asleep in your saddle. Come, let's stop here and at least give the horses a rest if you will not admit to being tired. He began to pull White Wind's rein, and the heavily muscled animal slowed to a trot. Calea, seeing that Muron was going to make her rest, despite her protestations, slowed her horse accordingly. Side by side the pair directed their horses to the side of the road and dismounted. They led the horses into the grassy road they had just left. Calea, yawning and rubbing her eyes sank to the ground and took off the bow and quiver that she wore. Thus disencumbered, she stretched out on the grass.

"Oh, Muron, the grass is so soft. Come lay down by my side," she coaxed. Muron squatted beside her.

"No, Calea, in these dark times with the Shadow King's minions about it is well not to relax one's guard too much. There is time enough for me to rest at Cybrona." He stood up and looked about, shading his eyes from the sun with his hand. Far up the road, from the direction of Cybrona, he saw puffs of dust. "Many riders at great speed," he said to himself. He bent and gently shook Calea out of her sleep.

"Have I been sleeping long, darling?" she asked as she brushed her hair away from her face.

"No, only a few minutes at most but I see a band of riders coming up the road." She rolled to a standing position grabbing for her quiver and bow. "Hold, Calea, we do not know if they are friends or foes, yet. Still, I think it would be best if we mounted. There is nowhere to side in the grassland, but perhaps we could out-ride them if they prove foes and too powerful." Muron put one strong hand on the pommel of his saddle and swung up on White Wind's back. Calea did the same. Her horse, Spirit, tossed his black mane, and Calea stroked his head to try to quiet him. The riders, they were now visible as 5 distinct figures, continued to advance at a gallop. Muron edged White Wind over so that he could whisper in Calea's ear.

"Be ready to use your bow, dearest, should I give you the signal." he said. He gazed ahead intently at the approaching riders. At last they were within shouting distance.

"Hail!" called the lead rider. Muron whispered,

"Calea, the three in the center." She turned a little pale. With her left hand she brought her bow up and with her right she plucked an arrow from her quiver. Thwang! The one who had called hail toppled over. The two end riders galloped forward at full speed, drawing their broadswords as they came. Calea shot again. The rider next to the dead one fell a shaft stuck deep in his forehead and deep red blood gushed from the mortal wound. The sight of such gore, which would have caused a frail maid to faint disturbed her aim not at all as she took careful aim at the rider who was fleeing for his life. He had retreated no more than 20 paces when Calea's arrow cleaved the back of his neck.

The two remaining riders kept advancing at full tilt. Calea did not even attempt to shoot them down, because they were the men who cast no shadows. These

Shadows as they were called could be wounded by neither blade nor arrow save Nemesis, the enchanted sword. Muron rode up the road to return the challenge. The riders rode down the opposite sides of the road. Muron became worried when he saw their strategy. He would have to fight one, and the other would slaughter his wife, who carried no sword to stay her end until Muron could dispatch his adversary. With a wild yell, Muron bore down upon one of the Shadow men. The Shadowman thinking he was invincible swung his sword in a mighty blow but one which left him unguarded. Even as he was swinging the sword, he recognised Muron and checked his swing just as Muron was delivering a strike of his own. The swords clanged as steel met steel. The combatants moved their horses around to get a better position. Used only to one-sided carnage, the Shadow man was not an outstanding swordsman. Muron easily outmaneuvered him, and drove Nemesis deep into the Shadow warrior's side. Not allowing his enemy to recover, Muron withdrew his sword and plunged the sword into the Shadow's neck. Even as the Shadow was falling off his horse, an earsplitting cry of animal pain rended the air. Muron, fire in his eyes, wheeled White Wind around and charged down the road to aid his love if there was still time. White Wind nearly stumbled over the second Shadow's horse, which had an arrow between his eyes. Muron sprang from his horse and fell upon the Shadow. His sword flashed once, twice, and the Shadow was dead. Muron leaned against White Wind and tried to catch his breath, which came in great uncontrollable gulps. Calea swung down off Spirit and walked up to Muron. She threw her arms around him and nuzzled her head into his manly chest.

"Oh, darling, you were so brave," she said. They kissed, passionately.

"How did you come to shoot the horse, Calea?" asked Muron as he fondled her.

"As I watched the Shadow coming past you, - I noticed that his horse cast a shadow. I knew, my darling, that you would defeat your Shadow, and would just need time to come to my aid. It was really an easy shot. Did I do well?" she asked.

"You know that you did, my love." he said as he ran his hand through her hair. Suddenly he patted her buttocks playfully and said,

"Calea, I could spend forever caressing you, but we must make haste, for I perceive that we may be needed at once in Cybrona." They remounted their horses and rode off towards Cybrona.

II

They rode with renewed haste toward Cybrona. As they both realised only too well, it was a sign boding no good to see Shadow men upon the roads of Westveld. The wind, a well-travelled one to be sure, flew by beneath the hooves of White Wind and Spirit.

As they reached the top of the last hill before reaching Cybrona, Calea let out a cry of horror. "Oh Gods!" she said as she reined Spirit to a halt. She



put her hand to her mouth and her pink cheeks paled. Cybrona lay before them a smoking ruin. Muron sidled White Wind to his wife's side. He put his arm around her shoulder.

"Calea, I can investigate the ruins alone if you wish," he said. She buried her head into his chest. After a little while, she drew away from Muron. Holding her head high, she said,

"No, I shall go with you. I fear that I shall have to endure far worse things than this." They descended from the hill crest to the city at a trot. When they reached the spot where once the gate had stood, they dismounted. Slowly, ever alert for an ambush, they walked the streets of Cybrona.

Carnage was on every hand. The bodies of men and women were strewn across the streets. Blood had stained areas of the streets a ruddy brown. Even the horses had been slaughtered.

"There shall be revenge for this- this slaughter!" said Muron as he stared at the mutilated corpses which lay on every hand. Muron looked at his wife to see how she was bearing the scene. She stopped walking. Tears welled up out of her large black eyes, and she had to lean against him for support.

"I know, Calea, I know. It is indeed a sight to make the strongest blanch. Come, it is bad to remain here among the dead. We must continue on our journey for things go worse than even Oger the Warlock guessed," he said. The pair remounted and spurred their horses to a slow gallop. Neither spoke for many miles, and they both concerned themselves with scanning the road ahead. When they were, at last, far from the devastated Cybrona, they slowed their horses to give the animals a chance to regain their wind.

Suddenly a wild cry rent the air. From out of the surrounding woods came a wave of horsemen. The men quickly surrounded Muron and Calea. Both saw that the odds were overwhelmingly against them so they did not resist. Long arms wrenched Nemesis from its scabbard and others took Calea's bow and arrows.

"Come along quietly, and you shall not be harmed," said one of the horsemen. White Wind's and Spirit's reins were taken from their masters hands and the entire group moved along down the road.

"Where are you from?" Muron asked. "Your accent is foreign to Westveld." The one who appeared to be the leader of the band scowled at Muron.

"You ask too many questions for a prisoner, but I will answer anyway. We are from far across the Bervol Sea, where few have ventured." He replied.

"And what is your business in Westveld?" said Muron. He was trying to discover whether or not the horsemen were mercenaries of the Shadow King. The leader did not answer Muron, but instead started a conversation in a language Muron could not understand with one of his comrades.

A rider appeared on the horizon and quickly covered the distance to the band. "Shadows," he said between deep breaths. "Shadows. Shadows and men. Coming this way." The rider fainted from exhaustion. The leader frowned and shook his head.

"Although we have no hope to defeat the Shadows, we can fight like brave men and perhaps slay the true men of the Shadow King." Shouts of agreement echoed among the horsemen.

"It is ironic, is it not, that one or two Shadows are enough to slay an entire company of men. If the Shadow King did not fear to conjure up too many Shadows lest they usurp his power, the Shadows would easily be able to overrun the world. Even now, the minions of the Shadow King bid fair to accomplish that anyway.

"Then," said Muron, "you too are foes of the evil forces of the Shadow King. Give me back my sword and we may yet defeat the Shadow King's warriors." The leader laughed.

"What do you take me for, a fool?" he roared. "Am I to lose one of King Bhra Dyrn's in our midst?"

"I am also a foe of Bhra Dym. Even if you are unsure of me and my wife, you admit that your company will die anyway, so you might as well take a chance. Return my sword and we shall defeat them." The leader mulled this over. He addressed the entire band,

"You've heard the prisoner. Do we give him back his sword?"

"Yes, he looks trustworthy."

"We have nothing to lose. Give him back his weapon."

"Yes, give him the sword." There were one or two dissenters, but the result was affirmative. The leader handed over the sword.

"Can I have my bow?" asked Calea. "I have found it most useful in fighting the Shadow King's true men."

"What more harm could it do?" said the leader as he handed over the bow. "I am not familiar with this weapon, anyway. I can see no possible use for those short spears."

"You will, you will," said Calea as she took the bow. Even as she notched a shaft puffs of dust were visible far down the road. The men shifted in their saddles, tensing their muscles in anticipation of the combat to come.

The enemy at last saw them and spurred their horses on to greater speed. Bhra Dym's men were still a hundred or more yards distant when Calea loosed her first arrow. Barely was it shot when another arrow was notched and fired. Two true men slid from their horses, dead. Then the Shadow King's warriors retreated to beyond the range of Calea's bow, and the five shadows in the party advanced to do battle.

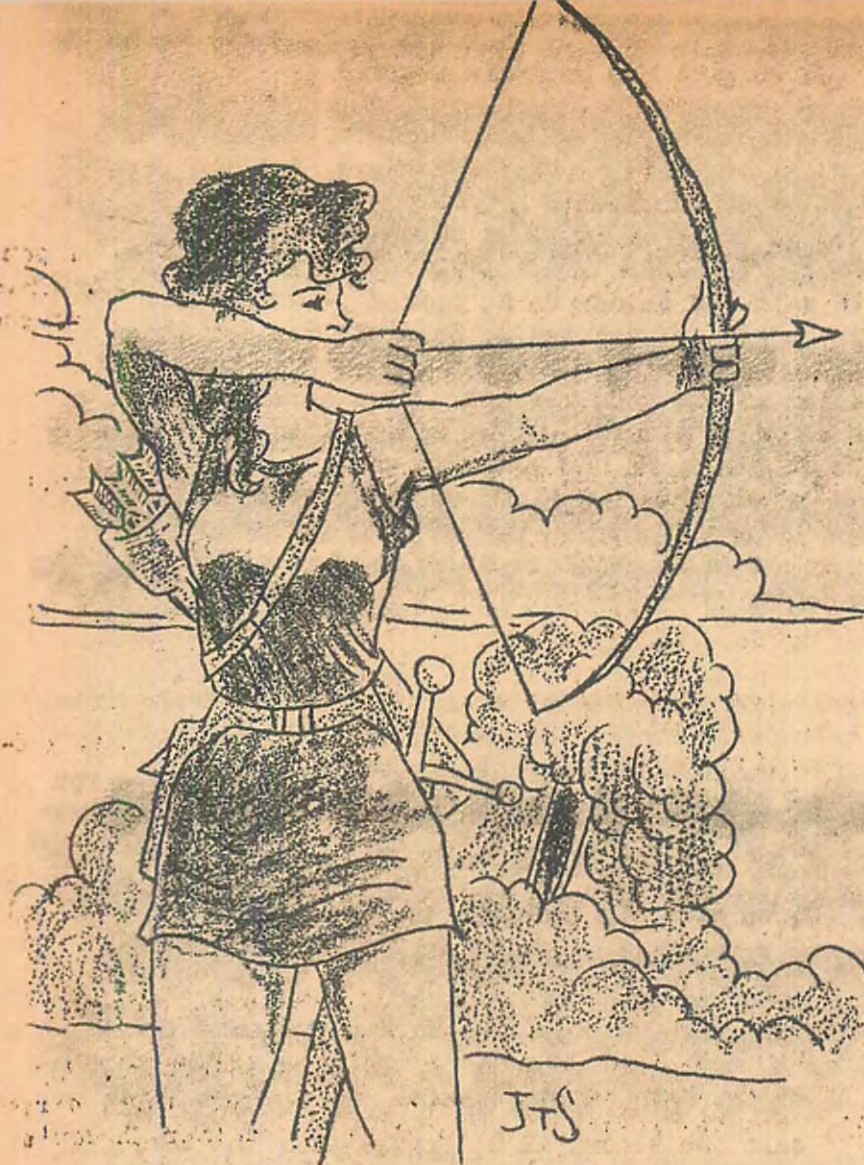
Calea shot the horse out from under one Shadow who continued to advance on foot. Then Calea waited and shot the horse out from another.

"Stay back, all of you!" shouted Muron as he spurred White Wind forward. "My sword, Nemesis can kill Shadows as if they were true men!" There were three horsemen riding to meet Muron. Then abruptly there were just two, as another Shadow's horse was slain.

Both Shadows left on horseback bore down on Muron, attacking from the left and right. White Wind was a more agile and experienced battle horse, and Muron maneuvered him so that he was no longer between his two opponents. For an instant it was one against one. Muron brought his sword straight down. The blow, delivered with all the strength and speed at his command split the Shadow's head before a sword could be raised in defense. Muron shoved the dead Shadow aside and began to battle the remaining horsed Shadow. Their swords clanged loudly as the two swordsmen battled furiously.

"Muron, look out!" shrieked Calea. Muron backed White Wind away just in time to avoid the last Shadow that Calea had unhorsed's attempt to cut off Muron's leg. Changing strategy, Muron galloped to the two rear most Shadows, who were beginning to advance on foot. He charged right past them, beheading one on the run. The last Shadow still on horseback, turned his horse as if to follow Muron, but he had hardly started when his horse met death from one of Calea's arrows. Muron wheeled White Wind around and charged the Shadow who was near him. The Shadow, who had just seen two of his supposedly invincible fellows die, trembled and shook so violently that a blow from Nemesis pushed his sword away and nearly cut him in two at the chest. Muron did not even pause. He sped back to the two remaining Shadows. The Shadow warriors attempted to strike at Muron simultaneously. He blocked one sword, but the other cut through the leather pad and into his shoulder beneath it. He ground his teeth and set them against the pain that surged up and down his arm. He heard Calea's name, but she sounded far away.

From the ranks of Muron's former captors charged that band's leader. He charged one of the Shadows and began a furious sword fight. Although his sword, unlike Nemesis could not wound a Shadow, it could block the Shadow's sword. The

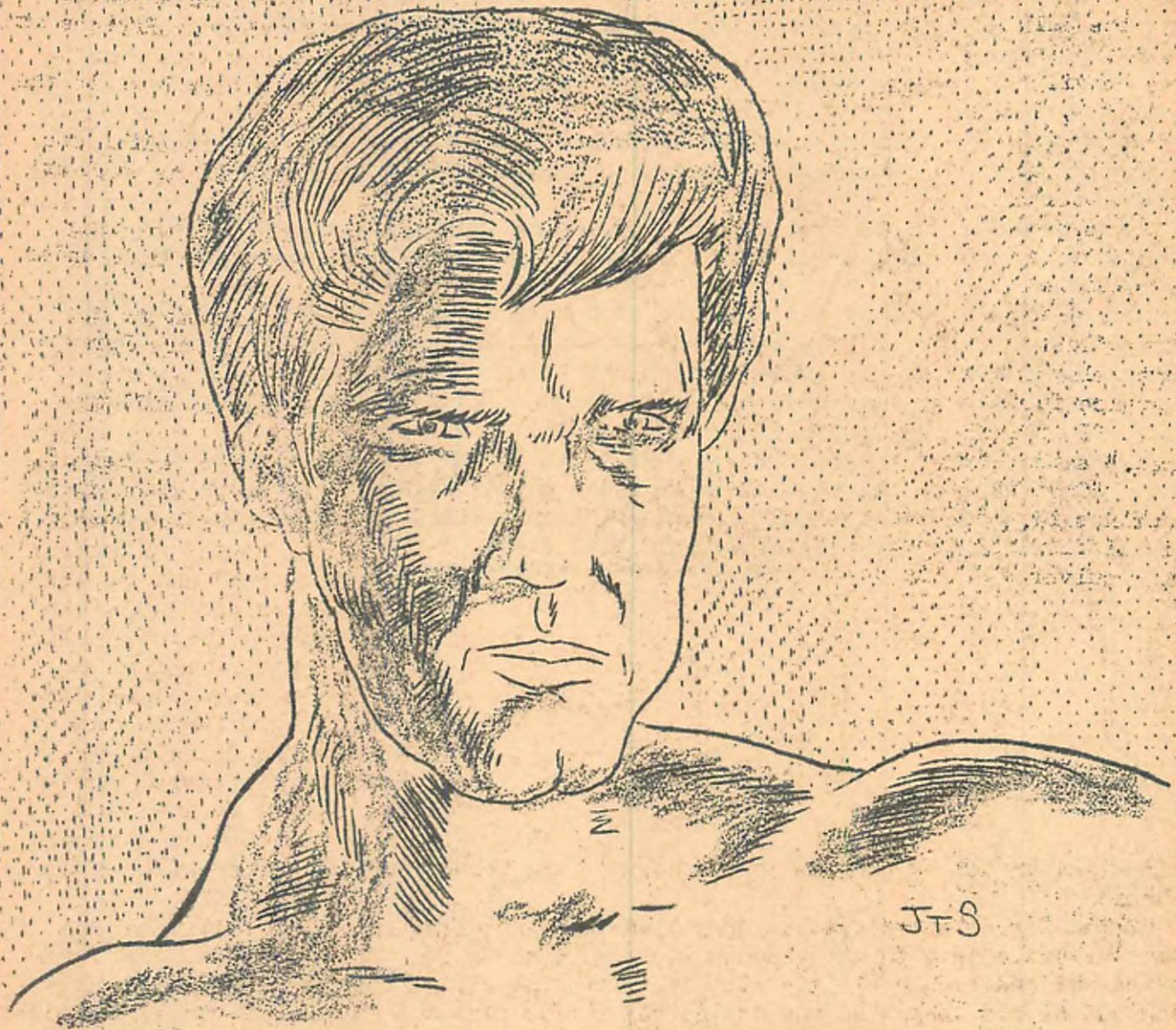


pressure of battling two swordsmen at once lifted, Muron fell to fighting his remaining adversary. He shook off the dizziness that clouded his head, and rained blows of every type on the Shadow. The Shadow kept running around in a circle making it necessary for Muron to continually turn White Wind. Muron saw that if he was ever to dispatch this opponent that he would have to dismount. Muron turned White Wind, and waited for a chance. As the Shadow backed away from a vicious swing, Muron swung his leg over his horse's back and jumped down, landing on his feet. This tactic caught the Shadow by surprise and Muron pressed the attack. He feinted a downward swing, but instead he thrust Nemesis straight forward and impaled the Shadow on his sword. He jerked Nemesis from the dead thing's body and ran to aid the man who had attacked the other Shadow. Nemesis cut deep into the Shadow's arm, but the magic spawned creature could not even be hurt by such a minor wound. A light-

ning like thrust by the Shadow and Muron's new found comrade fell wounded on the ground.

Calea forced her attention away from the fight long enough to notice the true men who had come with the Shadows inching up the road. Calea fired an arrow and a man who had been a bit too slow in retreating fell on his face, an arrow sticking out of his back. He was definitely a true man, the gushing liquid that stained the road a red brown left no doubt of it. Calea turned to the men on horseback who were all about her and asked, "Are you going to let me stay here forever shooting them one by one? After them!" The men needed no further exhortation and they galloped up the road towards the enemy. After a worried look at Muron, Calea followed them, bow at the ready position. They surged past Muron and the Shadow, who stood nearly toe to toe, licked in combat.

Muron tried every maneuver he had ever learned, but at best, he only succeeded in inflicting several minor wounds. Muron on the other hand, bled from a dozen or more injuries. As they dodged and feinted, Muron felt himself slipping. He waved his free arm in an effort to regain his balance, but the blood had made the road too slippery to retain a solid stance. Muron fell over onto his back. Sensing a quick victory, the Shadow lunged at the fallen man, attempting to skewer Muron before he could rise. Shifting his grip on Nemesis, he flung it point first



at the Shadow's chest. At the same time, Muron rolled away, but not fast enough. The Shadow warrior's sword lodged in his shoulder. Then Muron moaned as he felt the sword move in his shoulder. "Ohh", he cried as he felt the pressure on the sword increase. Suddenly it abated and Muron looked up and saw that no one held the sword. Grimacing from the pain, he slowly pulled the sword from his shoulder.

Bracing himself with his uninjured arm, Muron staggered to his feet. The dead Shadow was already disappearing as Muron retrieved Nemesis. Muron nodded. "Dead. It was a lucky toss to cleave him in the chest. I feel so dizzy. My head feels as if there were a fog inside of it." he said as he sank back to the ground.

III Epilogue

His eyes flickered and opened. Instinctively he reached for Nemesis. A hand restrained him.

"No, Muron, it is all right. You killed the last Shadow, and we killed the true man who serve Bhra Dyrn. Revin the Sernalian, the one who came to your aid,

was the only other seriously wounded." As she said this, another face appeared next to him. He recognized the tall blond man as Revin the Sernalian. Revin's arm was heavily wrapped in cloth.

"Ah, I see you are awake. I am sorry that I could not be of more help in the fray." said Revin.

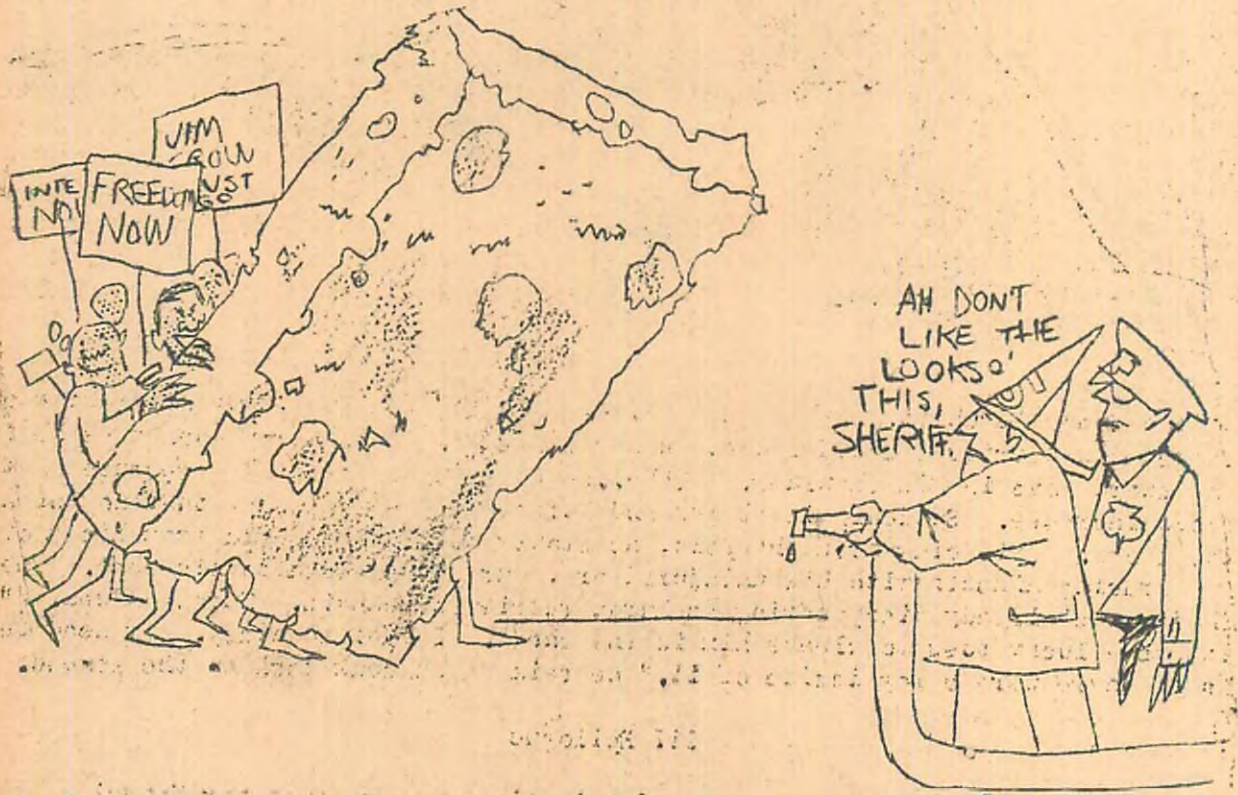
"You did more than most others would do. Only a brave man or a foolish one would duel against a Shadow." He paused a second, "unless he had a blade such as Nemesis."

"After you rest, we will talk of the coming journeys" said Revin, seating himself next to Muron who lay stretched on the ground with a rolled up hide under his head for a pillow.

"Yes, this encounter has shown me even more clearly than ever that we must not delay any longer. If we allow the servants, men and Shadows of Bhra Dyrn to advance further there may be no turning the tide." replied Muron.

"I will obey any commands you give, Muron, Shadow Slayer, and so will my men." said Revin. Muron looked him over again.

"That is good to hear. Tomorrow we go to Cornon the Wizard to seek help." Muron said. "Now we had best sleep, for the way to Esterkine where Cornon dwells is difficult." Revin rose and hurried off to his sleeping skins. Calea took off her quiver and laid down beside Muron. They slept.



CHEERS AND CURSES

LETTERCOL. DAVE

Sir Steve Stiles Speaks

STEVE STILES 1809 Second Ave. New York, 28, N.Y.

This issue is much more readable than the last. As a matter of fact, I didn't read the last issue of EXCALIBUR (I don't know what you used for stencils, but you could've used a better ink than garage pit grease.).

I believe I editorialized about dolls in some issue of Sam, or perhaps in one of those secret apps everybody knows about, but dolls that have menstrual trouble is a bit too far out even for my fantastic (or whatever) mind. Arnie, I think you made that up. I think you're a goddamned liar. ---and speaking of the disapproval of the pious, I can only repeat again & again, that what mankind needs is a Sex Doll, & Womankind too. Think about that.

I liked the way "GARY LABOWITZ" was written. It was straightforward & straightfaced which is the only way such an absurd happening could be handled. That is, if this event actually took place--- If it didn't, you have more genius for the absurd than I gave you credit for. (note: I think it's a good thing to have a genius for the absurd) Is this musical abstract expressionism? I think not, however you & I both know that the current crazy college kid fad is to drive an entire piano through a four inch knot hole (a symbol of barbarism if I ever saw one).

And speaking of barbarism, the news item that you note re the barbers in Britain does not strike me as wildly funny; I mean, if a barber told me "You have not had a haircut in four weeks, therefore you must pay double", I might hit him in the face. Just another stride towards forced conformity, that barber bit. I was going to say "I wonder what they'd charge Walter Breen for a haircut," but I see Lon has already done that; o.k., I wonder what they'd charge J. Christ for a haircut. Would bald headed men be persecuted.

If there is a trend towards men growing more effeminate and women growing more masculine, then everybody will be fruits someday! Perhaps male effeminacy is a symbol of rebellion towards the power-grabbing females in this country. Or, if you can't lick 'em (I understand some classes are against that), join 'em. I make it a point never to give my seat to a woman on the subway unless she's pregnant or heavily laden with packages---inasmuch as women enjoy equal rights with men, it is only fair that they forfeit their special privileges. Once I was sitting on this subway train, and this woman kept on stepping on my feet and saying in a big loud voice, "Are there no gentlemen left in this wonderful country?" (and this was obviously aimed

at me), so I shouted out in a big loud voice "WHY, ARE YOU PREGNANT?", and twenty guys jumped on me and beat the hell out of me for saying That Word, and I'll bet that's the stuff Subway Incidents are made of.

Len Bailes editorializing on discovering old comics newly reprinted reminds me of the time that I was on a subway train and noticed one of our Spanish-extraction citizens reading a Spanish reprint of an E.C. Publication ("The Vault of Horror"). It was brand new with the narrative and dialogue printed in, of course, Spanish. I would've liked to know where he had gotten the issue as it was in mint condition and I could've cut out the art, but I doubt if it's worth the trouble to track the source down. I wonder if the comics code authority knows about this. The concept of hundreds of new Puerto Rican E.C. addicts is slightly croggling.

Your (Arnie) article on "Hymie" brought the memories of my youth when there was a backdate bookstore on this block. It was quite a large place, and there were yards and yards of shelves of comics arranged according to condition ("good", "fair", "poor"). There were also the sex mags and books, but as this store catered to the neighborhood kids those were in the minority. I rather pity the owner, dependent on kids' sticky nickels. I was quite a bargainer, and worked out a comics trade system with the proprietor (who, strangely enough, also used to say "Vhot you want, bhoy?"). He was a gruff old man, dressed in clean pressed khaki, but basically friendly enough. He was a neighborhood institution--- and then one day, when I was bringing down an armload of used comics to trade, I saw two policemen take him out of his store and hustle him into the patrol car. Within a week the place was closed for good.

I wonder if it hadn't been for that used bookstore on my block I would've become a fan. During those days I discovered E.C. comics (Then out of print for years) and in the last days of its history I was burrowing around in the back for old Weird Tales; never underestimate the power of a Hymie.

While Martian Time Slip was by no means as good as The Man in The High Castle, and by no means a pleasant book (but sf is not required to be pleasant), I have no complaint about the style of the book, which is where I must disagree with Bailes' review; the transitions of events which he finds a lousy gimmick was an effective glimpse at subjective (not objective) reality & a damn terrifying glimpse at what Dick felt to be the state of schizophrenia (which was what a major part of the book was concerned). I wouldn't be surprised if we have a Hugo nominee here.

Dick Eney, by Ghod!

DICK ENEY 417 Fort Hunt Rd. Alexandria, Virginia

I suspect that Len's proposition--that the religion of Issus was a driving force in Red Martian Civilization, in the Burroughs stories is wrong, being based on a false analogy with the situations found with Christianity and Buddhism in Medieval Europe and Shogunate Japan. In these cases religious zeal was a strong component of the idealized chivalrous personality. But on Barsoom there's no indication that this is the case; neither Red nor Green Martians invoke divine aid (except in exclamations of the "for ghod's sake" variety.) or appeal to Issus to justify their wars. We never see temples of Issus outside the Valley

Dor, or find people participating in rituals of Issus worship, or even meet a known priest/ess of Issus--even though civilizations which have high esteem for the military virtues usually have plenty of these wights around, especially in the high government and social circles where John Carter and company move. (That's partly from the priest's own ambition and partly because the military virtues, until recently, didn't include include administrative skills; thus Warrior Races had to draw their civil service types from among a group who didn't consider themselves degraded by getting assigned to desk work.)

←The red martians religion is a different sense. Their culture was above the level of employing a mere Shaman to win battles. The idea of the Valley Dor was that when the thousand years were up there was an eternity of peace to look forward to. This outlook on life made the Redmen very philosophical, and they didn't really mind getting it through the ribs with a pigsticker so much because they know where they were going. After Carter exposed the show, to my way of thinking, the simple philosophy of the Martian warrior was null and void. There were temples of Issus in different segments of Barsoom, manned by Holy Therns, who were a Priest sect (see Warlord of Mars) The Black Race did worship Issus and appeal to her for protection.-LB→



A Thorne in Rich Benyo's side

CREATH THORNE Rt. 4 Savannah, Mo. 64485

Fred Patten was right; EXCALIBUR has improved again with this issue. Unfortunately you seem to have reached a plateau with the mimeo; the only places where the mimeo was better were the two covers which were almost perfect. If only you could get the inside mimeo as good as these two covers you would have an almost perfect zine, duplication-wise. Some places the impression roller seems to be out of whack-- in other places it seems as though you need to slipsheet. The set-off was pretty bad in a couple of places. Still, it was all readable, and that's what basically counts. As for the layout, it was good-- would be even better if you would ditch the hand-lettering and use nothing but letter guides. There is still a bit of show through-- why not try mimeotome or thicker paper?

Although the ed section was enjoyed, I think that perhaps, just perhaps, the space could be put to better use. Now that Excalibur is developing into one of the better zines, you surely don't want to waste space as was done in thisish. You could perhaps limit the eds to two or three pages and come out with a better zine. Just a suggestion.

I don't agree with Richie Benyo when he says that any discussion other than sf in a new zine i.e., any other than the top ten, is out of place and boring. I am getting a little tired of these people who go around saying nothing but "Fandom repent, can't you see what you are driving yourselves to," They are the kind of people who end sentences with prepositions without doing it on purpose) If Richie wishes to print amateur sf good for him, but please don't print pleas from these people about the state of fandom.

I can't see your reasons for criticizing Warhoon on the points that you did. Bergeron purposely left out art; he doesn't like most fannish art, apparently. From what I gathered through the lettercols, the lack of artwork makes for a more solid ish. It all depends on whether or not you would call the cover a fillo. Richard has been taking a course in modern art, and he might read more into the pic than you did. At any rate, the cover was well reproed, and certainly looked good. As for the formal atmosphere, that is part of the zine and is what helps make the zine what it is. Read the discussion in the issue more closely.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER. I DISAGREE WITH YOU ABOUT THE WORTH OF THE EDITORIALS. IT HAS BEEN PRETTY GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE THE BEST PART OF THE ZINE. WHEN WE HAVE A LOT TO SAY, THE EDITORIALS WILL BE LONGER; THIS TIME THE TWO COLUMNS ARE A LITTLE SHORTER.

I AGREE WITH YOU ABOUT NON*SF MATERIAL IN FANZINES. I DON'T PERSONALLY LIKE THE IDEA OF EX PRINTING MUNDANE FICTION, BUT I'D EVEN DO THAT IF IT WAS A GOOD STORY. AS I DEMONSTRATED LAST ISSUE, NON*SF FACT MATERIAL IS VERY MUCH WANTED. DON'T WORRY, CREATH, IF THE EDITORS BOTH LIKE A PIECE, THEN IT WILL BE USED, SCIENCE FICTION OR NOT.--AK

Earl can't find anything.

EARL EVERS, Fort Dix, New Jersey.

As usual, your wierd news items in the editorial are the best item in the issue. "Tiny Tampons" indeed. Where do you get this stuff? I know, out of the TIMES, only how come I can never find anything of comperable interest in that August and Dreadfully Slanted organ of the Conservative Establishment....

EX seems to get better with eachish. Just keep on improving and we'll nominate you for a Hugo. Your repro could stand some improvement, though, to put it up with the material. Why is it that a lot of second rate fmz have perfect repro and a lot of great material is only averagely reproduced?

I DON'T FIND ALL THE MATERIAL THAT I USE IN KATZ' KRADLE IN THE TIMES. THERE ARE SEVERAL OTHER PAPERS, SOME MAGAZINES, THE RADIO, AND JEAN SHEPERD THAT ALSO PROVIDE MATERIAL, NOT TO MENTION PERSONAL OBSERVATION. PERHAPS YOU DON'T LOOK IN THE RIGHT PART OF THE TIMES. THE MATERIAL IS THERE. THE WORLD IS SO NUTTY THAT I COULDN'T IMPROVE UPON IT IF I WAS TRYING. THANKS FOR THE COMPLIMENTS ON OUR IMPROVEMENT. AS A WISE SCHOLAR ONCE SAID, "EVERY ISSUE BETTER."

RICH Benyo Has a little feeling of emptiness.

RICH BENYO, 118 South St., Jim Thpppe, Pa.

EX, as a whole, was the best reproed zine I've seen from the Fandom Twins. Whay the gho. However, its lack of prominent feature pieces, like in #6, left a little feeling of emptiness. But then, thish wasn't approximately 60 pages, either. A mere (3) 36.

Are you fellows, by any chance, trying to bring about a PLAY-BOY image in your zine? Twp nudes on covers on the last two issues is stretching the imagination a little bit, isn't it? Oh, I'm sorry, the

chick, on #6, wasn't completely nude. Sorry, sorry, sorry. You might have been better off to have used the Bjo bacover, tho, as it really turned out in excellent form. Electronic Stencils seem to have add a great deal to any illo. I'd have hated to have seen the result of any hand done stencil job on that piece.

YOU'RE SORRY, HOW DO YOU THINK I FELT? SEE HARRY'S LETTER BELOW FOR AN EXPLAINATION OF WHY THE BJO COVER WENT ON THE BACK. WE DO WANT MORE GIRLY COVERS, THOUGH. *Arnie

Harry won't scream in anguish

HARRY WARNER 423 Summit Ave. Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

This supplementary index to the Barseom tales produced several meditations of no enormous import but rather perplexing nature. For instance, did Burroughs do something like this? I find it hard to believe that he could remember such an enormous number of names. He must have had to do a lot of leafing through former novels when he tried to write a new one to prevent inconsistencies. I gather from this that very few inconsistencies exist in Burroughs. A much less ambitious writing project, the seven novels that make up Rememberance of things past, has all sorts of mistakes toward the end where things don't jibe out. I've tried to find some method in Burroughs' spelling without success. He apparently thought up a name and tried to spell it phonetically, but he isn't quite phonetic enough. Apparently he uses ph or f arbitrarily to start a name that opens with the f sound. I see no logic behind the occasional use of the hyphen between syllables. Is the h after the initial g supposed to indicate a sound like the German terminal ch, or did he put it there just to make the word look stranger?

Your candy store item will cause some earnest fans to scream in anguish but I liked it very much and think it deserves a place in Ex for that sole reason. Whenever I run across one of these threadbare establishments, I assume that it is just a front for some sort of illegal operation, and if I continue to patronize it, I feel frustrated because I never succeed in discovering the nature of this hidden enterprise. Most of the time it's probably nothing more exciting than a bookmaking business, but I can't get out of my mind the sense that I might have stumbled onto the local outlet of the nation's biggest white slave racket or the only above-ground portion of an underground complex devoted to all forms of drug addiction...

I liked your back cover more than the front cover, although the superior stencilling with its firm lines in the former might have something to do with that preference. But I assume that you were thinking of the blood pressure of the older mailmen when you decided where to staple which cover. If you used nothing but green paper for Ex, you would be accused of imitating Hyphen too slavishly, but you would get less showthrough of the text and pictures.

WAHF's Pete Jackson, Irvin Keeh, James Wright, Rich Mann, Richard Brzustowicz, Dennis Lien, Stan Woolston, and I guess that's all, pick up that pen and write us.

Bacon

by Arnold Katz

I have begun to feel that the notion of a quarterly fanzine trying to cover the entire general fanzine field is a little silly. There are simply too many fanzines that go out of date too quickly for me to do a good job. If you want capsule impressions of a great number of fanzines, I suggest that you get YANDRO which does a fairly complete job. So, instead of reviewing genzines, I am going to review apas. Since they are quarterly, I won't be dropping too far behind. Further, while most of you get most of the genzines, not all of you are in every apa. Also it has been entirely too long since the last time someone took a good look at the apas. To give credit where credit is due, the last one to try this shtick was Bob Lichtman in Salamander (which is coming out any time now). Before I get on with this quarter's apa I think, since the appropriate N3F handbook is out of print that a couple of quick definitions might be in order for the two of you who don't know too much about apas.

APA-Amateur Press Association. These may be loosely defined as fanzine trading clubs wherein the members send a requisite number of copies to an Official Editor. He, in turn makes up a set of identical mailings containing one copy of each apazine and sends a bundle to every member. To avoid the accumulation of fans who do not contribute material, fannish apas have activity requirements.

ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS- The number of pages of material per unit of time (both vary with the apa) that each member must contribute to stay in the membership,

MINAGER-DEADWOOD- apans who contribute the bare minimum to an apa.

MAILING COMMENTS- The toughest thing to describe to a non-apan is mailing comments. Basically, they are discussions held, in print, between the fanned and another member of the apa. They are the chief means of inter-Apa communication. When written well, they should be readable without having to constantly refer to the previous mailings.

The first apa I'm going to give the once over is the SPECTATOR AMATEUR PRESS SOCIETY. Therefore, let us hastily subtitle this review column SAPS IS THE SLAP HAPPY APA.

SAPS is composed of 36 members and has a rapidly growing waitlist. With the July '64 mailing 68 there were 18 on the wl, which means that one would have about a 2 year wait before becoming a Fabulous SAPS

Vice President, the title held by all SAPS members. Activity requirements are 6 pages of your own original material every six months. Mailings come out the 15th of July, October, January, and April. Dues are nominally two dollars a year, but unless things change dramatically, all but those who have been members less than one year have free dues.

To join SAPS you must send a dollar waitlist fee to the sole officer of the group, Bruce Pelz, Box 100, 308 Westwood Plaza, Los Angeles, Calif. The fee is applicable to your first year's dues, but is not refundable if you drop of the wl. To remain on the wl, you must drop a card or letter acknowledging every issue of the SAPS Official Organ, The Spectator. Surplus copies of the mailings are available to waitlisters at the rate of 25¢ per hundred pages, \$1 minimum.

The governmental form of SAPS is a little tricky to try to label. Basically, the Official Editor is an elected despot empowered to make any rule which the rest of the members will stand for. It seems to have worked rather well, and it allows SAPS to make rapid changes when the situation calls for them. Bruce has just gone through a two or three mailing period of being extra nice to all the members. He promises in this mailing, that he is returning to his former policy of "an iron fist in an iron glove."

The quality of SAPS is fairly good, and it rates right behind FAPA in any list trying to rate the apas. There are a whole bunch of interesting people, and not too many bores.

Before joining, one would naturally want to know what kind of a group it is. Well, short of getting and reading a mailing, it's hard to describe. One thing about the apa is that it has a generally light tone, and there are some top humorists like Weber to pull it off. For a while it looked like fiction of the sword and sorcery type was going to take over as the main shtick in Saps, but it seems that the trend has begun to slack off. Dian Pelz, however, has a serial running now based on her fantasy world called Shalar. John Berry has also been writing the adventures of that fine fannish detective, the Goon. Both these series are of high quality, and I'd personally like to see a return to the Fantasy Worlds of the Quarter aspect that SAPS bid fair to assume just a year ago. Any mention of Fiction in SAPS should not neglect THE FELLOWSHIP OF NOTHING. This is the SAPS pun serial written by anyone who volunteers. In this serial, the characters are members of SAPS.

The latest thing in SAPS is heraldry, that is, the designing of achievements of arms. Dick Eney started it in the April mailing, and the current mailing has several examples of the handiwork of the members. The Pelzes, particularly, outdid themselves, and both of their SAPSZINES have full color coats of arms on their covers.

Mailing Comments have traditionally been a large part of SAPS. This is still true, but most of the members try to put something else into their zines. This is not to say that the comments aren't interesting, because they surely are in most cases, but the constant introduction of new material keeps the group from dragging.

SAPSZines are on the whole, fairly nice looking, too. There are several good artists within the membership such as Dian Pelz and Jack Harness, and such as ATom and Bjo are frequently represented. Since the members tend to be fans experienced in fanzine pubbing SAPS has no repro problems to speak of.

Most of the zines that go through SAPS are apa-rather than gen-apa zines. I couldn't advance the slightest idea why, but that's the way it is. The only exceptions are LOKI, which seems to have just become a SAPS-zine and MIRAGE which will go through SAPS whenever it is convenient for Chalker. Since MIRAGE is on a schedule which is, to say the least, irregular, for all intents and purposes, it is not really a genapazine. This dearth of genzines isn't really that serious because with things like Pot Pourri (I guess you'd call it a genzine too) SpeleoBem, Mistily Meandering, Hobgoblin, and Yezidee going through the mailings, such genzines aren't needed.

SAPS has been awfully lucky to have Pelz as OE for the last four years. He has done just about everything a good OE should, including proclaiming free dues. SAPS depends on every one of the 36 members putting out as much in the way of quality and quantity as possible. Due to its small size it is the major apa least able to carry a bunch of deadwood. Up to now, Pelz has been rather successful in getting the majority of the members to follow the example he sets with S'Bem. Unfortunately, the number of min-ncers is rising, and if people on the waitlist all make it to the top, SAPS might be in for a slump. I say might, because Bruce is a very resourceful OE, and I suppose something will be done if the situation gets too much worse. It isn't really a problem yet, though.

To sum up, SAPS is a good apa with a lot of interesting material, especially in the fields of fiction, nattering, and humor. If you're seriously interested in fanzine pubbing, SAPS is a group worth trying.

The line forms on the right.
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TERRY FOR TAFF

Matching set of? harness

THE VALLEY OF CREATION Edmond Hamilton
Lancer Books, 50¢, 159pp

This is a change of pace from most of the space opera that Hamilton turned out in his prime. It is a "lost race" story which throws in magic and telepathy. It is written in much the same vein as Williamson's DARKER THAN YOU THINK. Both attempt to explain supernatural manifestations in terms of science fictional gadgetry.

The plot concerns the adventures of Eric Nelson, an American soldier of fortune hiring himself out in China toward the end of the Korean War. He and several companions are approached by a strange man of apparent oriental descent who offers them Platinum in return for their aid in what Nelson takes to be a skirmish among native Chinese tribes. Gradually Hamilton lets the reader in on the fact that the combatants are a trifle unusual. You see, in L'lenn, the mysterious Valley of Creation, the animals are sentient beings, or at least, Wolves, Tigers, Eagles, and horses are. For centuries, these four bands and Man have lived together in the valley without conflict, but recently, a small Humanite faction has broken away in protest. It is this faction that hires Nelson. During a raid on Vruun, the chief city of the Five Clans, Nelson manages to get himself captured, and is turned into a wolf as punishment. As a wolf, he is sent on a quest for the Clans, the successful completion of which will result in his human form being returned to him. Eventually, the two factions have a knock down drag out battle and become reconciled when they learn that the basic premises which caused the Humanites to split away from the clans were based on faulty assumptions.

The story is told in a somewhat stiff style. The usual number of corny scenes concerning the goodness of one side and the cruel sadistic practices of the other are included. The plot is somewhat hackneyed, but it moves rapidly and there's plenty of action. Hell, I'm a sucker for this kind of thing... Stereotyped and worn out as it may be, Hamilton still manages to pack a good story between the two covers.

THE PORT OF PERIL Otis Adelbert Kline Ace, 40¢, 192 pp

This concluding volume in the Kline Venus trilogy reads much more like Burroughs than do the rest. It seems to be the worst of the three. Kline, like ERB, ceases, once he has his fantasy world set up to use any sort of imagination at all. This is merely a tedious record of captures and escapes by the good guys from typically villainous monarchs of evil Venusian (or Zarovian) kingdoms.

THE

N

BOOK

LEN BAILLES

O

K

Vernia of Reabon, who married the Earthman, Robert Grandon, in the book PLANET OF PERIL, is abducted. After all, what good is a Venus book without a stolen princess. Grandon, of course, grows quite hot under the collar at this development and starts pursuing. First he is captured by a group of Yellow Pirates (that's like skin color, but they're also fairly cowardly) After painting a pretty nauseating picture of this race, Kline has his hero and heroine escape to be captured by a group of Toad People whose habits are described in even greater stomach turning detail. Eventually, Grandon joins a conspiracy dedicated to throwing out the no good Yellow Monarch and putting in someone else. Zinlo of Olba, the man who led three lives, (and who was the hero of PRINCE OF PERIL) shows up in his flying machine to lend a hand, and of course, the good gys live happily ever after.

I stated that "Port" reads like Burroughs. By that I mean it reads like Burroughs at his worst, aka Swords of Mars. The other volumes in Burroughs Venus series are more interesting than this. And I consider the other Kline books superior to the Burroughs ones, so that ought to give you an idea of where this rates in my book. ESCAPE ON VENUS, for example, shows a remarkable amount of wit and clever self satire by ERB. It has more adventure too. Kline's earlier books have the advantage of being written more concisely coupled with the fact that he still has a whole planet to explore. In these earlier attempts he did explore it. Burroughs, wisely, realized that he could only stretch his Venus series so far and began to play it for laughs. Kline, here, tells a straight story and a rather boring one at that.

BEYOND THE FARTHEST STAR Edgar Rice Burroughs,
Ace, 40¢, 124 pp.

Just from reading this column, you may arrive at the same conclusion that I have. My reading matter of late has been far too one-sided. This yarn, however, is science fiction, as opposed to the usual Sword and Sorcery (or rather just Sword, if you want to be technical) Burroughs writes.

Poloda is a planet which is billions of lightyears from Earth, Tangor, the Earthman hero (his earthly name isn't mentioned) gets there a la John Carter, by dropping dead. This seems like an interesting way to travel, but I'm sure it has its disadvantages too. Anyway, the book reflects the tendency ERB had in his later works to allegorize. His own imagination running dry, he began to develop stories out of world situations. This one is a thinly disguised World War II combat nove. Tangor joins the "good guy" country of Unis (Guess what that's supposed to be) in its struggle against the "bad guy" nation of Kapara, a sort of Stalinist Russia combined with Germany.

After a few aerial battles, Tangor is sent on an espionage mission for which he penetrates the upper crust of Kaparan society. There, Burroughs launches some barbs against the Gabo (Gestapo), and precocious brats. He must *mass*



not have liked whining runny nosed kids too much. (I wonder what he thought of fandom) He intended this book, which is composed of two novelettes, to be the beginning of a whole new series. Unfortunately or fortunately as the case may be, he died before he could add to it. I find 124 pages for 40¢ to be a little ridiculous, and I wonder why Ace was so cheap. They could have included "The Resurrection of Jimber-Jaw" or something else to fill it out, since they don't intend publishing any further ERB titles.

Save your money and buy a copy of Analog.

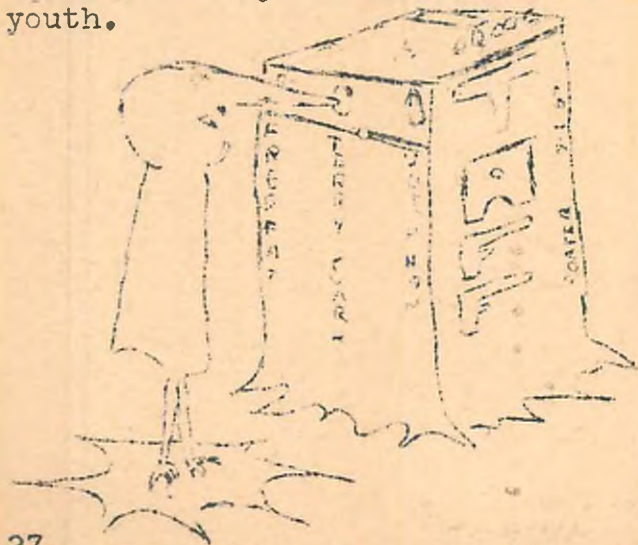
FUTURE TENSE Jack Vance Ballentine 50¢ 160pp

This is more like it. Here, for a change, is some good solid enjoyable science fiction. This is a collection composed of four novelettes. Perhaps Ballentine is going to put out a series of collections. Fritz Leiber's A Pail of Air also from Ballentine has a cover which would seem to establish continuity with the other.

"Dodkin's Job, the first offering, is a competent treatment of a fairly common theme. The time is the future. A planned City has been set up with a rigid class system. The protagonist can't adjust to this Anthem like situation and tells people what he thinks of them. This results in his being placed lower and lower on the scale till he hits rock bottom. He decides to go to City Hall to complain and winds up better off than he thought he'd be. This is the sort of story which is a fictionalization of a joke.

"Ullward's Retreat", the second story, is a commentary on the effects the population explosion might have on man's system of values. In this future world, Living space is the prime status symbol, and a rich man goes out and buys himself half a planet. Even with this vast quantity of space he still manages to have a series of squabbles with his neighbor, who inhabits the other side.

"Sail 25" the only one of the stories I've seen before (the others are from Astounding and Galaxy) was first published in the August 1962 Amazing as "Gateway to Otherness. It's a very humorous portrayal of the Salty Old Space Skipper from the point of view of his crew. Vance also injects some barbs about the cocky "know-it-allness" of youth.



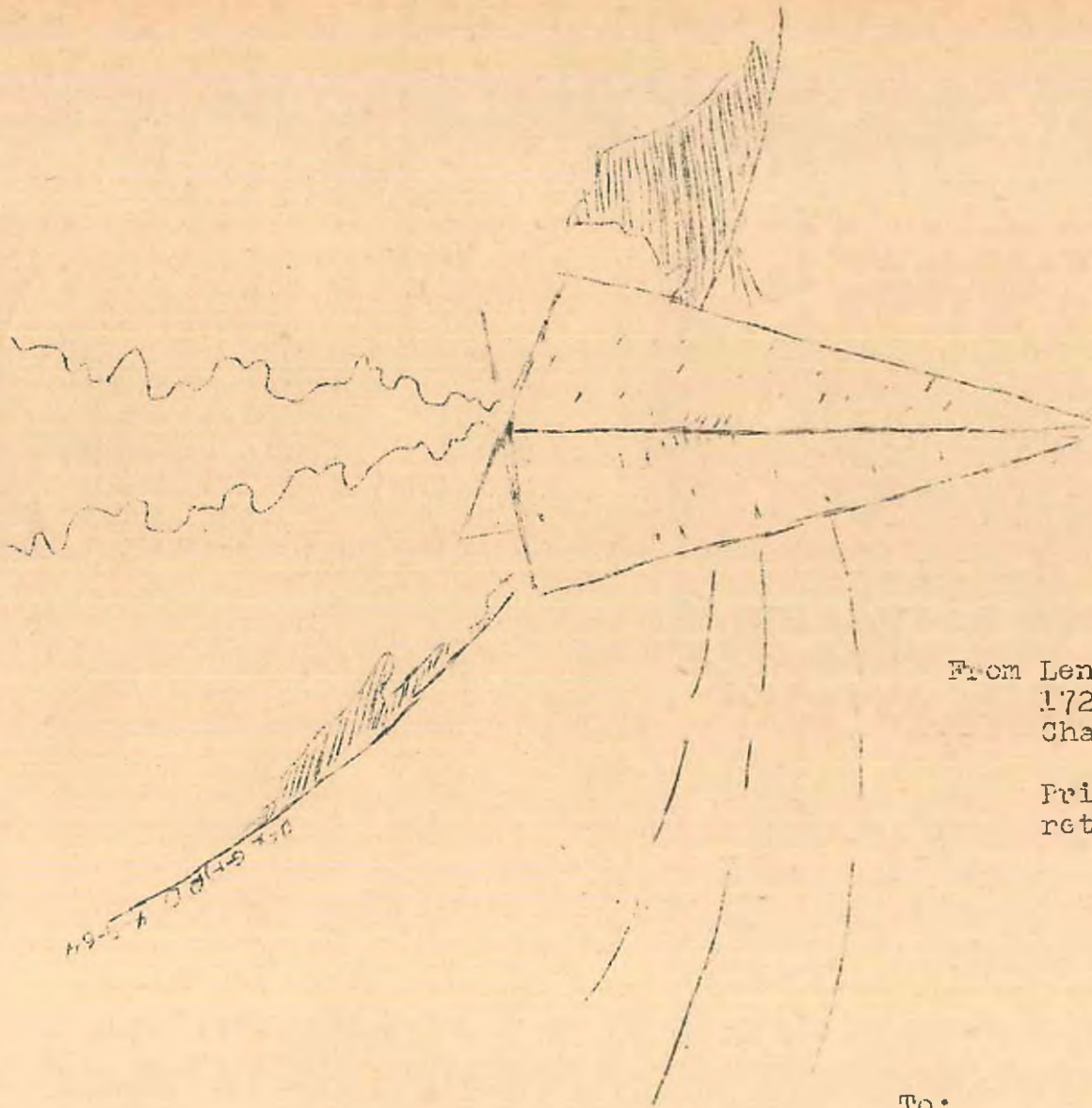
"The Gifts of Gab" is a typically Analogish story about an intelligent alien race which has no form of written or verbal communication. The Earthmen, cleverly manage to give the aliens a language.

All four of these stories are well written, and of the length which rarely find their way into anthologies.

The more fools the anthologists.

* * * *

That's it for thisish. The books are a trifle stale, but the distribution of stf to the south is haphazard to say the least.



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