

FANTASTMAGORIQUE

1



SPECIAL REVIEW: "The Lost World"

AD N AUSEUM

by Scott Neilsen

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You might be interested in how this fanzine first came to be published and in where the name came from. In the June, 1960 issue of Amazing, one Scott Neilsen had his first letter printed in a prozine. Soon after this, he received numerous sample copies of fanzines. As soon as he saw his first fanzine, he knew he wanted to put out an even more monstrous crudzine than he saw in his hands. The first name that we decided upon for this fanzine was Hyperzine. We were advised against this by Seth Johnson, who told us that someone else had based a whole series of titles on "Hyper." He suggested "The Kneeling Scot" as a sort of parody. It was immediately decided that this fine name would become the title, but there was one small difficulty: our assistant editor said that he wouldn't pay one cent for the fanzine unless we changed the name. We decided upon InFANity, but we couldn't use this because it came too close to Profanity published by Bruce Pelz. We decided upon Ad InFANitum next. By this time, we had grown tired of our assistant editor's refusing to pay, so we fired him. We then found out that Ad InFANitum had been used too. Getting desperate now, we went to the French-English, English-French dictionary to find a French word beginning with "f-a-n." We came up with the present title, FANTasmagorique, which, in French, means "weird." The name fits, huh? Since "fantasmagorique" is such a mouthful to pronounce (fan-taz-muh-gore-eeek), Lenny Kaye suggested that we use a nickname, such as FANTASMA. We gratefully accepted the suggestion, and "FANTasma" is hereby declared the nickname of this fmz. Our thanks to Lenny Kaye for thinking it up...and our thanks also to the French-English, English-French dictionary for giving it to us in the first place! A mimeograph, which is almost thirty years old (an ABDick 77B), but will still do a good job was purchased for thirty-five dollars and we were in business....

The article by Marion Zimmer Bradley in this issue was originally a letter. Marion asked us to print this notice because, "...I really don't go around giving fanzines all sorts of articles on How to Become a Great Writer." We had originally titled this article "So You Want to Be a Writer, Huh?", but New Frontiers beat us to the punch: they currently have an article from Marion titled "So You Want to Write S-F, Huh?". She advised us to title the article "Advice from the Next Rung" because she considers herself as, "...maybe, just one step up the ladder."

Peter Maurer asked us to print the following about his column because it is his belief that "...people should be told what they are getting before they get it.": "The purpose of my column will be an attempt to share some of the pleasures (and pains) of a very critical s-f and fantasy read with his (I hope) equally critical readers. Reading is a pleasure which yours truly takes very seriously and anything written which doesn't give pleasure will be roundly condemned. Anything which does please me will receive due credit. The Devil will also have his due on this page."

It is our belief that fandom and fanzines should do something to combat the current slump of s-f. For this reason, we are printing articles in each issue on the subject: "What do you think of the current state of s-f and/or what can be done to combat this slump?" The articles this issue are "The Senility of S-F" by David H. Keller, M.D. and "Solution!" by Bernard Deitchman. You will notice an abundance of reviews in this issue. This review program ties right in with the above-mentioned practice of printing an article on s-f in each issue. We feel that constructive criticism will help us realize what is wrong with today's s-f. Are you listening, reviewers?

The use of "we" in this editorial is intentional. There is only one of me, but "we" intend to be literate!

FANTASMAGORIQUE

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EDITOR/PUBLISHER—
Scott Neilsen

ASS'T TO THE PUBLISHER—
William Hitchens

STAFF ARTIST
Gordon Bland



COLUMNISTS—
Gordon Eklund
Michael Padgett
Peter Maurer
Richmond Wannan

FEATURES

Ad Nauseum.....	Scott Neilsen	1
FANTASY.....	Peter Maurer	16

REVIEWS

The Book Shelf.....	Michael Padgett	4
The Box-Office.....	Richmond Wannan	7
The Newsstand.....	Gordon Eklund	12

ARTICLES

The Senility of Science-Fiction.....	David H. Keller, M.D.	3
How Not to Be a Fanzine Editor.....	Lenny Kaye	10
Solution!.....	Bernard Deitchman	14
Advice from the Next Rung.....	Marion Zimmer Bradley	17

ART CREDITS

Gordon Bland.....	Cover, 4, 5, 7, 14, 15.
Al Jones.....	2, 6, 8, 9, Backcover
Ginny McCain.....	11, 18.

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We need your help: ART SOLICITED!

THE SENILITY OF SCIENCE-FICTION

By David H. Keller, M.D.

Science-fiction is very old. Early in history, story tellers entertained audiences on the sands of Arabia with tales of flying carpets and magnetic ships which caused ships to sink by pulling the nails out. Later, two Greeks attached wings to their backs with wax; flew so near the sun that the wax melted; and they died in the ocean. A Jewish prophet went to Heaven in a chariot of fire. Bacon, in his writings, predicted the automobile.

Much later Jules Verne and Wells wrote science-fiction. Many of their novels fortold with amazing accuracy later inventions. During this period, fiction was ahead of science and inventors simply made the imagination of authors reality. Then we had space opera. No sky journey, no isolated planet, no inter-space warfare was overlooked. Much that was written was impossible fantasy. Finally, this form of fiction ended; there was nothing new to write about.

During the last ten years, science has advanced far beyond the dreams of science-fiction writers. Airplanes are flying four times faster than the speed of sound. Satellites speed around the earth taking photographs sent to earth by television. Communication is maintained between these satellites and earth stations by radio. Animals have been carried in these satellites and returned alive to the earth. Soon men will replace animals [they already have!--ed.]. A space capsule is reported as being on its journey to Venus.

The loss of interest in science-fiction magazines is due to the fact that the daily newspapers and radio give the public far more interesting data than contained in the magazines. The story teller has nothing new to offer; they can only repeat the old themes; read the facts of science; and tell of them in rather uninteresting stories.

There is still one part of life that has not been thoroughly explored. This is the reaction of men to modern living. Question can be asked and answered: How can Jones make a living when his work is done by a robot? How will clerks find work when computing machines do the work of one-hundred clerks in half a day? If New York is destroyed by a cobalt bomb, will the Smith family survive? How will a mother feel when she gives birth to a monstrosity caused by mutation? If China and Africa sweep over the world, how will this affect the life of a laborer in Philadelphia? Stories written on these themes would represent the science of the mind instead of that of the machine.

Finally, if Gernsback's prophesy is correct, there will be no work for the author. He predicts an electronic calculator capable of writing any kind of story. All a man will have to do is press a button and out will come a tale of science-fiction, weits, romance, poetry, or western. These will be given to the public via the radio. The man or woman can simply sit and listen, or dulled to a stupor, simply sit....

The old style of science-fiction has become senile, mainly because there is no more food for it to feed on. Modern science has so far surpassed science-fiction that the public is rapidly failing to support the magazines. Like the Essay, so popular in the last century, science-fiction is rapidly winging its way into the Limbo of Dead Literature.

--David H. Keller, M.D.--

THE BOOKSHELF

BY MICHAEL PADGETT

INTRODUCTION

After I dutifully filled about 2½ pages with book reviews, Ye Ferocious Editor informed me that an introduction of sorts was in order, and this just might be the shortest one in the annals of literature, because I don't have a thing to say. So, on with the reviews....

EPIDEMIC by Dr. Frank G. Slaughter
(Doubleday, 286 pp., \$3.95)

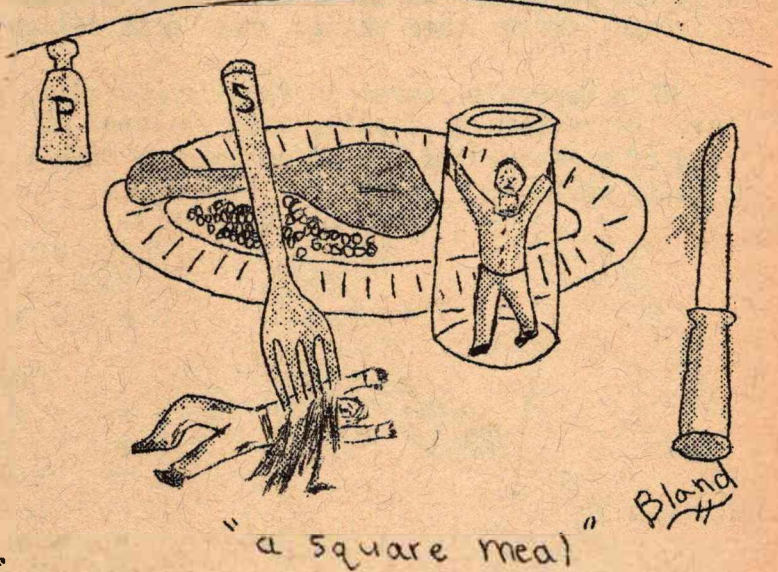
According to one of the leading news magazines, Erle Stanley Gardner and Erskine Caldwell are the only two American authors who outsell Frank Slaughter. This must undoubtedly include paperback sales, because I can't even remember how long it's been since one of these names appeared on the best-seller list.

With **EPIDEMIC**, Dr. Frank G. Slaughter sticks his toe into the sf stream for the first time, and we can only hope the water's too cold for him. It (the book) would shy many a potential sf reader away if the readers of this book draw the conclusion that all sf was just as bad.

Among the book's many plots, the predominant one is that of an outbreak of the Black Death in New York City, carried in with some infected rats on a tramp steamer, in the year 1965. A few other plots are thrown in for good measure: who is going to end up with the nurse heroine, the young surgeon who worked his way through medical school or the world-hopping doctor of the Schweitzer variety?; the city garbage collectors are on strike, which is as good an explanation as any as to how this book got to the publisher; a local Communist-led j.d. gang is on the warpath, a gruffy philanthropist is thinking of cutting his support of a new health center; and Commie saboteurs are all over the place. One small bit of interesting material comes up in the organization of fighting the plague, but this cannot change the fact that **EPIDEMIC** is absolutely uncommendable!

SOME OF YOUR BLOOD by Theodore Sturgeon (Ballantine, 143pp., 35¢)

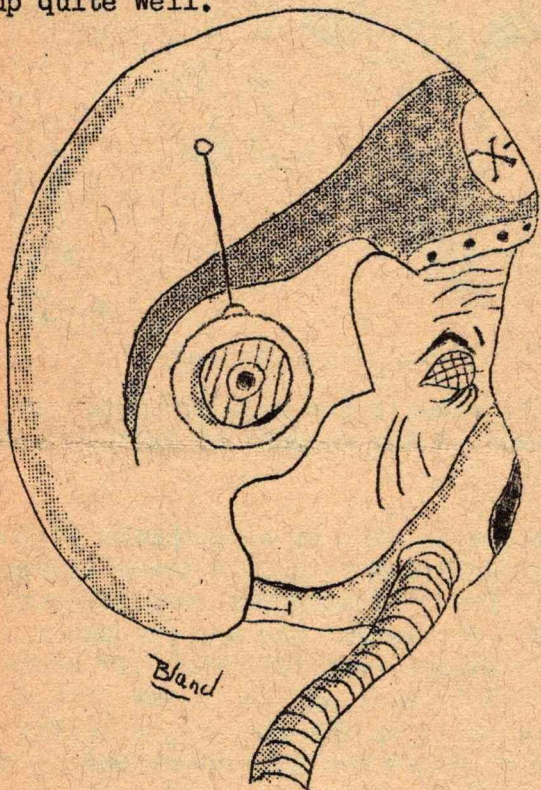
For reasons unknown, Theodore Sturgeon has always delighted in shocking his readers with the attitude that he is letting them in on something they really have no right to know. However, Sturgeon has written one novel and quite a few short stories that will still be remembered when most of today's crop of fantasy is forgotten. And this latest effort, even though only mediocre Sturgeon, approaches excellence.



(con'd)

The plot is a simple one. During his hitch in the Army, a young backwoods boy named "George Smith" writes a two-line letter to his girl back home, the contents of which are not revealed until the end. The letter perks up the ears of the Army censor, and George is called in to meet an officer and answer a few questions. After being asked just what he gets out of hunting, George becomes violent and ends up in the psycho ward where he is to be examined. An Army psychiatrist asks George to write the story of his life up to the present time, and this chronicle makes up the first half of the book. The autobiography is extremely fascinating, but not nearly so as the remainder of the book, which is composed of correspondence between two doctors, who, among other things, make some delightfully funny quips.

When George's secret is finally revealed, it comes as no great surprise, but gives the reader the feeling that at least he is safe in his own home. This is something of a measure of the effectiveness of a book of this sort, and Sturgeon measures up quite well.



THE BIG TIME & THE MIND SPIDER AND OTHER STORIES by Fritz Leiber (Ace Double-Book, 129 & 127 pp., 35¢)

This is one of Ace's better offerings, and about their best so far this year. The terrible covers, which have become somewhat of a trademark for ACE science-fiction, make this book look like something no intelligent 12-year old would look at twice. Guess you can't have everything, though.

The novel you'll remember as Leiber's Hugo-winning GALAXY serial, where it appeared in the same form in the March and April 1958 issues. The book concerns the ceaseless war between the two time-travelling opponents, the Snakes and the Spiders. The two factions, of which the Snakes are the more unsavory, just keep changing the past so that their side can win the big armageddon in the end. The locale of the story is never made quite clear, and occasionally the plot shows aspects of van-Vogtian complications. And even though it's

not nearly as good as Leiber's other novel, CONJURE WIFE, it makes for pretty enjoyable reading in parts.

On the flip side are six short stories which, as a whole, provide more reading pleasure than the novel. There are three from FANTASTIC, and one each from ASTOUNDING, F&SF, and GALAXY. "The Oldest Soldier" is an eerie little tale of a man who tells tall tales that turn out to be true. Tied for first place is "The Haunted Future," which was published as "Tranquility, or Else" in FANTASTIC's all-Leiber issue. It presents a picture of a nasty future in which all excitement and alarm have been kept from the earth's population, and people begin heading for the nut houses. "The Number of the Beast" is a neat guessing game from GALAXY, which I won't give away. In "The Mind Spider" the world's only telepathic family is discovered by a mind-being from space. The other two stories concern the Spiders and the Snakes. "Damnation Morning" tells of a man on the verge of mental breakdown who is recruited into the Change War. "Try and Change the Past" is the least of the lot, and the only one told from the viewpoint of a Snake.

THE UNEXPECTED edited by Leo Margulies (Pyramid Books, 190 pg., 35¢)

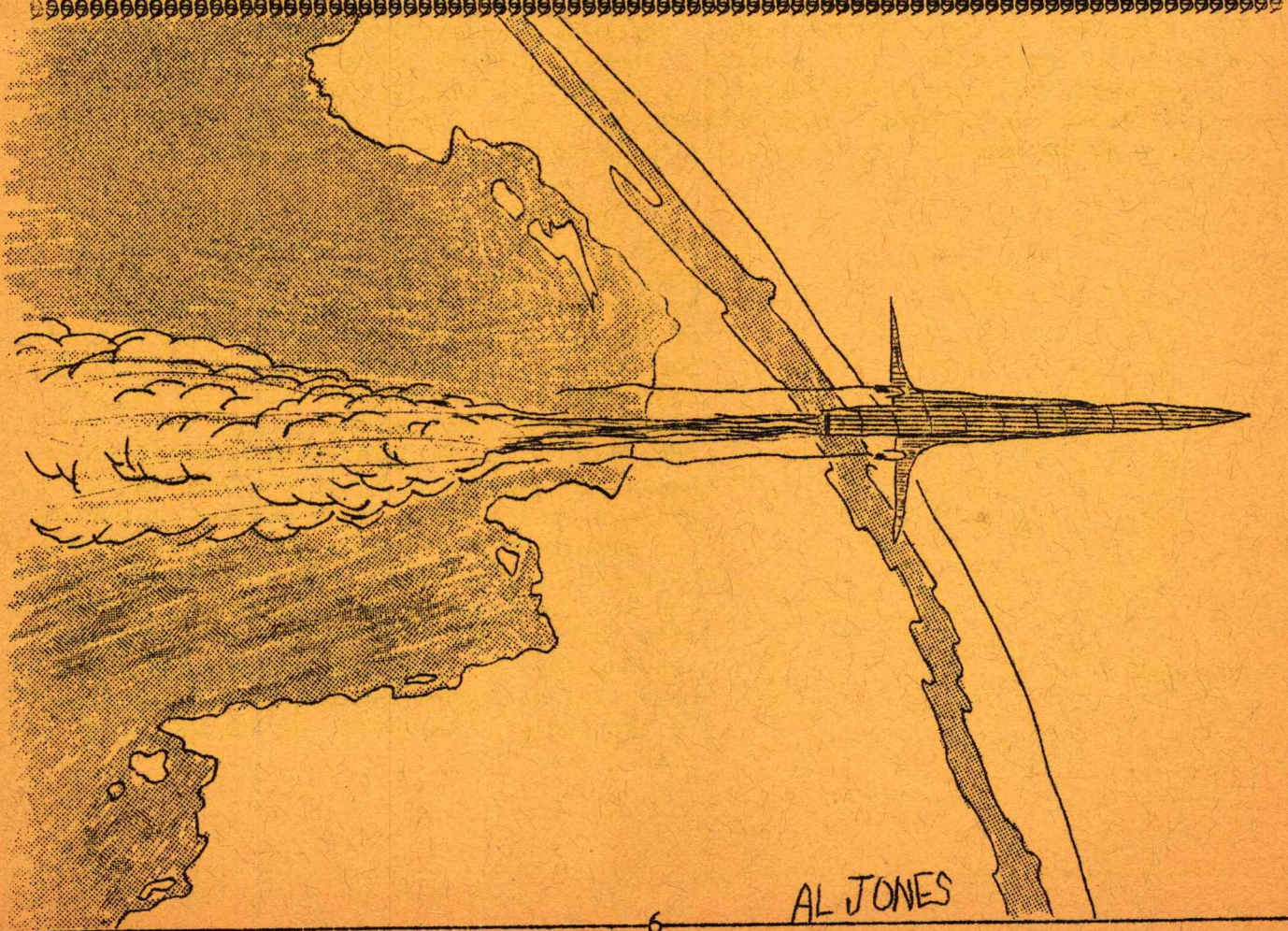
Pyramid has published some excellent science fiction recently, including a reprint of de Camp and Pratt's fantasy classic, THE INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER, and an original Sturgeon novel, VENUS PLUS X, which I consider to be one of the best s-f novels of 1960. This collection of eleven stories from Weird Tales adds nothing to its reputation, but neither does it detract from it especially.

Margulies states at the beginning that this is not meant to be a selection of the best from WEIRD TALES, but as a tribute to the part the magazine played in keeping alive the popularity of the supernatural shocker.

The best of the group is Robert Bloch's "The Strange Island of Dr. Nork," concerning events in the island group known as the Medium-sized Antilles and their connection with weird comic books. Running a close second is Manly Wade Wellman's "The Valley Was Still," in which a dealer in black magic gives the South a chance to win the Civil War. Theodore Sturgeon and Ray Bradbury heap the gore in a nice pile in "The Professor's Teddy Bear" and "The Handler" respectively. The remaining stories don't show their authors in a very good form. "Legal Rites," a Pohl-Asimov collaboration, is a would-be-funny ghost story that just isn't. Leiber's "The Automatic Pistol" is fair, but I'd much rather have read a Fafhrd and Gray Mouser story, if WT ever printed one. The remaining stories really aren't worth mentioning.

I have read only a very few issues of WT, but if it was as good as most people seem to think it was, this collection is not a fitting tribute!

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THE BOX—OFFICE

BY RICHMOND WANNEN

INTRODUCTION

This is the first of my movie review column for FANTASMAGORIQUE, so it deserves some sort of an explanation. For each issue, I will have one feature, or special, review of some s-f or horror movie, which has, for some reason, good or bad, stood out from all the rest. In these reviews, I will take the plot, and piece by ugly piece, pick out all the good and bad parts, and present them to you for consideration. These reviews ARE MERELY MY OPINION, and are not intended to direct you to see a movie or shun it. Now, on with the reviews, and for my feature reviews this time — THE LOST WORLD.

THE LOST WORLD—20th Century-Fox—1960—Produced and Directed by Irwin Allen

The LOST WORLD is another one of Hollywood's so-called movie "classics" based on some famous book, in this case Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Lost World, which retains nothing of the same except the basic plot. In this case we can read the plot off as: "a group of people discover a lost plateau inhabited by dinosaurs, cave-men, etc." Outside of that basic plot, the viewer will recognize nothing else about the book...except some of the names.

Conan Doyle wrote the book in the 1800's and set it in the 1800's. However, Irwin Allen got the idea that no one would like the 1800's, so he thoughtfully moved the setting up to 1960. When Mr. Doyle wrote his novel, he made the expedition stag, but in these days "stag" is apparently considered as an obsolete word, at least to Irwin Allen and his crowd. Therefore, they thoughtfully added Jill St. John, a girl, to quote Hedda Hopper, "...loaded with beauty, talent, and a rich husband." About the husband I know nothing, but unless Allen's make-up men and scrip-ter were as incompetent as he was, I'll have to disagree with the first two state-ments.

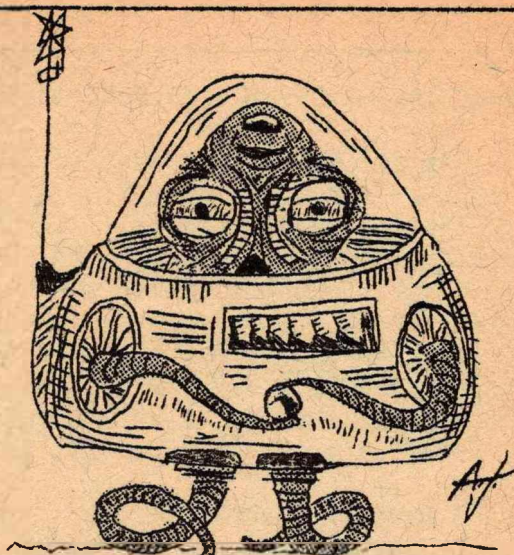


Enough of this; back to the movie. In it Miss St. John plays the spoiled daughter of the head of the newspaper for which Ed Malone (the hero—played by David Hedison) works. She learns of the expedition to the lost plateau (headed by the Drs. Challenger and Summerlee, Claude Rains and Richard Haydn respectively) and decides to go along even if they refuse to have her. She flies down to the native outpost with the pilot of the helicopter who is going to fly them all to the plateau (and who dubs as a villain on the side, Fernando Lamas), bringing her little brother a-long for the fun of it (Ray Strycklyn). Before the Drs. can hustle the girl and her brother back onto the seaplane with which the others came down (you guessed it, they had to use a second plane or a logical excuse for the girl's presense would be lacking), it has left, so she has to go along with them.

(con'd)

As I mentioned before, Fernando Lamas is added as a villain to liven things up. He is out for revenge on the explorer John Ruxton, who helped kill his brother (Fernando's) on the plateau on an earlier trip. This earlier trip was led by one Burton White (Maple White in the book, played by Ian Wolfe) whom the party discovers on the plateau. Lastly, besides those already mentioned, a second villain (Jay Novello) whose motive is rare diamonds on the Plateau; and a cave girl (who later falls in love with Strycklyn and saves the group from her father) are added.

The action consists mainly of tramping through the jungle either towards or away from dinosaurs (big photos of small lizards), spiders 10 feet tall (show me one in a science book and I'll eat it), pterodactyls, man-eating plants, and cannibalistic cave-men who plan to shishkabob them. It finally ends up with the villains being eaten by a fire-breathing dragon and the whole island plus its inhabitants being blown to kingdom come....



THE TINGLER—1959—Produced by William Castle

This is one of those so-called "shockers" which employs little gimmicks and devices in order to play up their releasing and scare the yell out of you (this idea never has, and I doubt ever will, work). The picture, as it says above, was produced by William "Macabre" Castle, the master gimmick user. His previous triumphs have been ILLUSION-O and EMERGO, and now he has come up with a newer and sillier one—PERCEPTO. This gimmick is supposed to fool us all into thinking that the tingler is the real thing, but I know different: PERCEPTO is merely a group of motors fastened to the bottom of several different seats around the theater, which, at the cued moment, are activated and all in these seats scream of fright (?). Judging from the make of the picture, however, PERCEPTO must have cost more than the whole picture plus its advertising.

But I have been getting ahead of myself. First of all, I'd better explain what a "Tingler" is. A tingler is a little thing resembling an overgrown hellgramite (it's in the dictionary) which supposedly lives serenely on your spine until you are frightened, at which time it will break your back unless you scream and relieve the tension. Really silly, huh? And, as you can guess, the tingler was discovered by Vincent Price. His curiosity is aroused when he sees something on the back of a patient who has died of fright, and hasn't had time to cool off. Enter Judith Evelyn, a deaf-mute, who is married to a theater-manager friend of Price's. And, as you can guess, she eventually dies of fright, because she couldn't scream (being mute). She winds up on Price's operating table, and Vince uncovers the tingler. The thing escapes from him, almost killing him in the process, and heads back to the theater where its "mistress" lived. It breaks out in the audience at the reel theater, and then turns up at our own theater. Then the motor starts; ho hum, how boring and silly can they get? There is one good part where we learn what frightened Judith Evelyn to death: blood-filled bathtubs, decayed arms holding axes, spidery corpses, and a skeleton man. This is the only good part and the rest is tripe, not worth wasting money on!

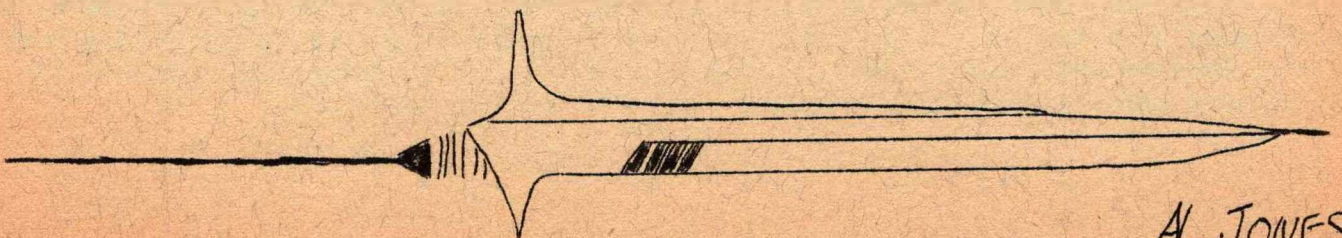
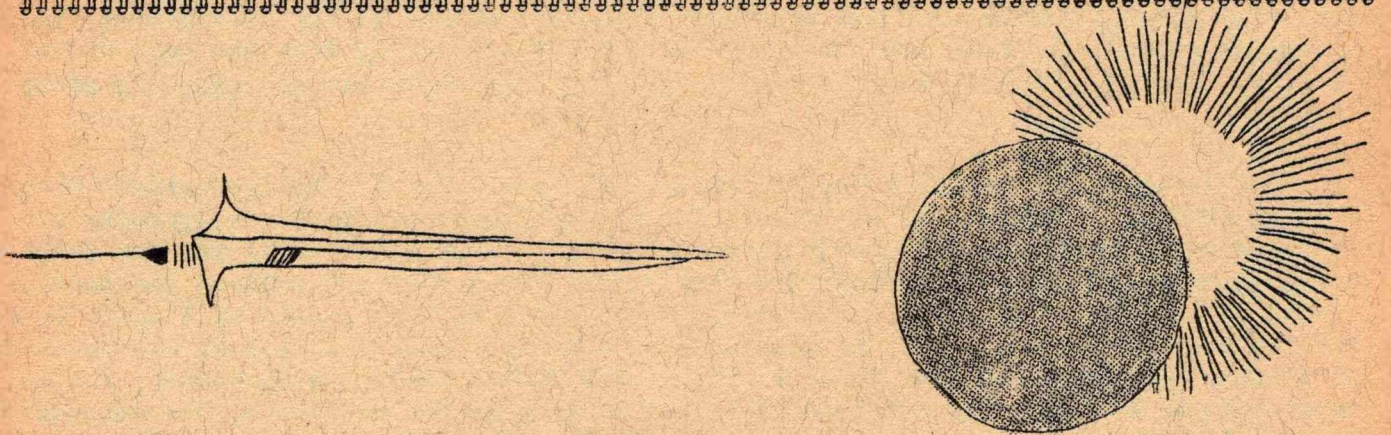
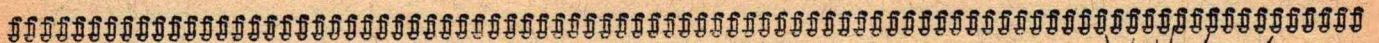
(con'd)

COSMIC MAN—1959—Allied Artists—Produced by Robert Terry—Directed by Herb Greene

I'm not quite sure what to say about this picture. I can't make up my mind as to whether it's good or bad. It was cheaply done, but yet it had an honest way about it. The technical effects, I'll have to say, were rather cheap. In the daylight, or any light for that matter, John Carradine, as the Cosmic Man, was represented as a semi-visible phantom, which was clearly just an undeveloped picture (a super-imposed negative over a developed film) of John stalking around. The "space-ship", which was at least different, being only a shapeless ball instead of a saucer or needle device, was clearly made of paper-maché or something like that. The picture did not have much in the way of action, and was rather dull, but it was a welcome change to see an sf picture which did not have blood and creatures running out of every corner.

I have one complaint about the plot: it was horribly confusing! They couldn't make up their minds as to whether John was to be a good guy or a bad guy. It started with the appearance of the ball-ship in a valley outside of a town. No one can figure what it is or who (what?) is in it, as it has no door and is invulnerable to shells. At the same time, a day-hating scientist (Carradine) arrives at a motel near the valley and locks himself in his room. He is finally uncovered by the hotel manager's (Angela Greene) crippled son, Scotty Morrow. He claims to be a scientist from another planet who is studying Earth's gravity to find out if the Earth is going to lose said gravity or not. This confuses me, however, as throughout most of the movie he wrecks scientific laboratories, scares the wits out of the local populace, and makes a general nuisance of himself. I'm not sure what to say for this confusing picture, so I'll leave it to you to decide for yourself! /Can anyone straighten out our confused movie reviewer on this confusing movie? - sn/

SPECIAL REVIEW NEXT ISSUE——THE CREEPING UNKNOWN!



AL JONES

HOW NOT TO BE A FANZINE EDITOR

By Lenny Kaye

There comes a time in the life of every fan when he has a wild, inexplicable urge to publish a fanzine. He hasn't the faintest idea on how to do so, but he's all ready to get on the road!

At first he plans on having around 70 pages; then he decides that maybe 70 pages is a bit extravagant for the first issue. That'll have to wait for the second ish. So, he plans on having around 40 pages for his initial issue.

Then he writes letters to every BNF he knows of. Not a one is left out. The letters are mostly form letters and read as follows: "DEAR BNF, My name is Johnny H. Neofan. I plan to publish a fanzine called CRUDDY. I'd like some material, be it art, fiction, etc. All will be welcomed (and most likely accepted). The first ish will have a circulation of 250 and will gain you much egoboo! Thanx; Johnny H. Neofan." Of course, our hero is muchly disappointed when he gets exactly one contribution from 57 letters mailed out. This contribution is in the form of a small piece of filler art.

Getting desperate now, our boy decides on a drastic measure: He'll have to ask "Well Known Fen" for contribs. His form letter is now radically changed: "Dear BNF, notice how he flatters My name is Johnny H. Neofan. I plan to publish a fanzine called CRUDDY. I need material desperately. How about it?? Anything, art, fiction, etc. will be welcomed (and probably accepted). You will be appearing along side of the distinguished BNF, 'Joe's Thimble.' She will have art in thish. Gotta go now. Bye. Editorially yerz, Johnny H. Neofan."

He is overjoyed when a poem from one of his addresses comes in a week later. He is also saddened when nothing else comes in.

By now he is getting a wee bit discouraged. Finally, as a last ditch measure, he resorts to asking all his correspondents for contributions. He is amazed when the week after he wrote the letters, an article and a story come in. Overjoyed, he starts cutting stencils, expecting to cut the rest of the stencils when the rest of the material comes in, not knowing that you should lay out the zine first and never cut the stencils until all of your material is in. But...our hapless hero stumbles on.

Meanwhile, his material has taken up 8 whole pages, and here he had planned on at least 40, give or take 2 or 3. Our boy doesn't know what to do, until a happy thought strikes him full in the face: GHOSTWRITE FOR HIS OWN FANZINE!!!! So Johnny H. Neofan sits down and pounds out two stories, four articles. He uses six different pseudonyms.

He now has enough material. He types up the stencils, draws a cover that looks like a refugee from a modern art factory, and buys himself a mimeo. This last is a long-drawn-out process in itself. He selects the highest priced mimeo as possible. Cost: 190 smackeroos, cash, long green, moola, etc. He withdraws his life savings from the bank to get it.

(con'd)

He hasn't faintest idea how to use the thing (he burned the instructions along with the wrappings), so he tries the "hit and miss" procedure. He pours the ink into the cylinder, places the stencil in place, and starts cranking. FWOOSH!: all the ink flows out in one big gob. Oh, now he sees: he forgot to put the ink pad on. Oh well, if at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

So, he puts the ink pad on, again types the stencil, puts it in place, pours some more ink in, and once again starts cranking. No ink comes out. He adjusts a few minor things, and again cranks. It works...or does it? One look at the paper dispels that idea: the paper is all one big smear.

Finally the mimeo is working right, and the remaining paper is run off nicely. The paper is all assembled in neat stacks, and because he is muchly exhausted from the great labor of stacking the paper and running it off and is a little hot, Johnny opens the window. The wind blows in and....

The paper in neat stacks again (and the window closed), he starts stapling the pieces together. What does it matter that he stapled it backwards? After all, the Chinese read backwards; why are fans so different? The fanzine all stapled, stamped, and mailed out, Johnny sits back and waits for his LOC's. When they arrive, they virtually all read the same: "...Best new fanzine of the year. Neofan scores a hit!"

Of course, this warms his little neofannish heart, and immediately, he starts assembling material for the second issue. Material is pouring in from WKF's as well as BNF's. Our hero lays the ish out when all the material is in. He's determined to make this one better. He finally sends them out and...."We are sorry to say that the promise of CRUDDY #1 has not been lived up to in #2. Before, it was new and different. Now it has conformed to the numerous other crudzines around. It was nice while it lasted...."

Oh well, that's the way the mummy crumbles!

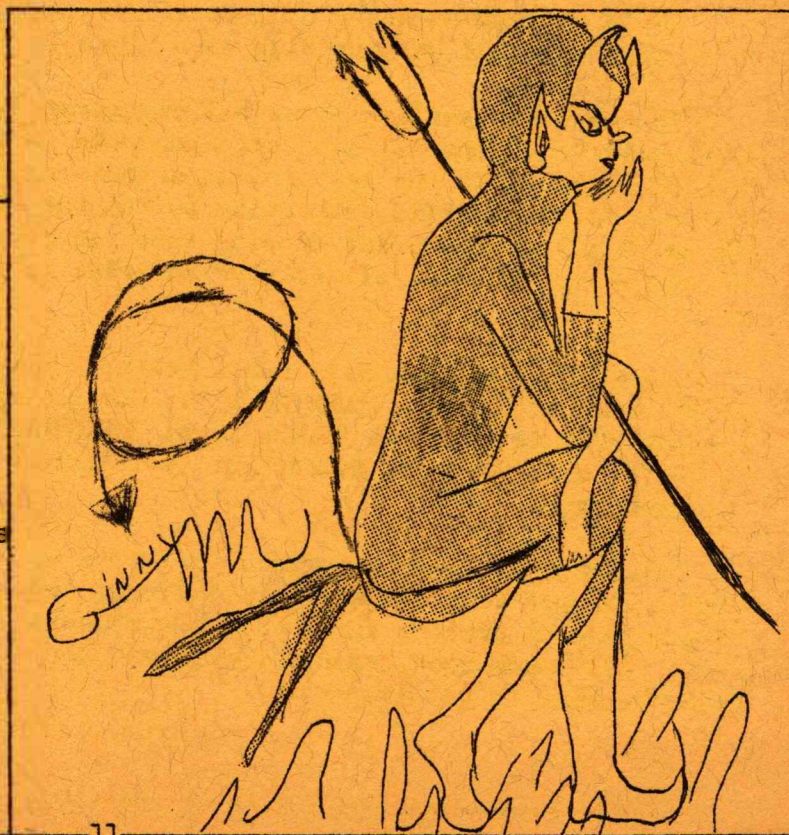
—Lenny Kaye—

(Editor of such well-known fanzines as...uh...well, ...anyway, watch for OBELISK #1 in your mailbox)

There was a young lady of Byde,
Who ate a green apple and died.
The apple fermented
Inside the lamented
And made cider inside her inside!

There was a young lady named Perkins
Who just simply doted on gherkins.
In spite of advice
She ate so much spice
She pickled her internal workin's!

/The above were placed there for amusement...and for filler! - sn7



THE BY GORDON EKLUND NEWSSTAND

INTRODUCTION

This is, as the name implies, a prozine review column. I will not make an attempt to review every single magazine each time around, but only a select few. As a special feature, each issue I will review an older magazine,

at least ten years of age. This is not meant to be a review of a "classic" issue of a magazine, but merely an item of general interest to magazine readers. So, on with the reviews....

AMAZING—April, 1961—35th Annish

SaMoskowitz should be congratulated, I think, for coming up with some real good stories from the past issues of AMAZING. Of course, there are "sans doute" many better stories in the files of AMAZING, but to make an issue complete, stories of all kinds and periods are needed. Some writers were conspicuous in their absense; a good example of this is Don Wilcox. It would have been nice if they would have reprinted something by Don, but alas! No such luck....

Frank R. Paul's two covers were simply terrific, especially the bacover. It shows that he is still the greatest of the illoers. Some of Leo Morey's interior drawings didn't show up too well for me. [What's the matter, Gordon? Need new glasses?--sn] Whether this was due to the fact that he had originally drawn them for a pulp size magazine, or that they were just downright bad drawings in the first place...I can't say! [Oh!--sn] Morey reminds me somewhat of Leo Summers on interiors; they both are rotten! However, the Paul and Fuqua drawings made up for the Morey scratching we were forced to view!

The Stories: "I, Robot" by Eando Binder takes the prize of 1st place in this issue. This very humane story of a hunted robot is one of the real greats from the Palmer AMAZINGS. I hope that we will soon see the sequel to this story in the regular reprint section: titled "The Trial of Adam Link, Robot," it continues the story where "I, Robot" left off. Ray Bradbury's "I, Rocket" was a well-done piece and deserved to be reprinted. It draws upon the gimmick of a rocket narrarating the story of its existence and of the crew that flew it; despite this gimmick, 'twas a good item. The Burrough's piece was average fare for ERB. If you like Burroughs, you'll probably like "John Carter and the Giant of Mars." If you don't like Burroughs, this story will probably do nothing to influence your opinion. Most of the other stories were about fair in quality. The "Buck Rogers" piece by Nowlan was very good, even on my second reading of it. It's a little flat in parts, but after all, it is 33 years old. One poor story mars the whole issue: David H. Keller's "The Flying Fool." I have a phobia against stories that end up as dreams.

AMAZING will be back to normal again (so claim the editors) for another 15 years. This issue was very enjoyable; much better than AMAZING's 30th Annish under Howard Browne back in 1956.

Aha, I spy the ANALOG—April, 1961 as my next victim—

The main item this issue is the start of a new Clifford Simak novel titled "The Fisherman." It has a rather old plot: psi and the problems of psionic people. Despite this, I does start out rather good. It's a four-parter (the 2nd straight, by Ghu!), and I hope that the four-part serial doesn't become the rule rather than the exception. Four months is a little too long to wait for the conclusion of a good novel. Lloyd Biggle follows with a credible long novelet titled "Still, Small Voice," which is the best in the issue.

(con'd)

(ANALOG con'd) The rest is rather "ho-humm," if y'know what I mean. Robert D. Locke gave us "Next Door, Next World." The ending was easy to guess, and the descriptive passages sounded like something out of PLANET STORIES rather than something in s-f's aristocrat. Christopher Anvil has his usual "message" story, "Pandora's Envoy" which tries to imitate E.F. Russell, but has not the humor of a Russel Story. Other contents: "A Prize for Edie" by J.F. Bone (very bad), and a very, very good editorial by JWC, in fact, one of his best!

F&SF—April, 1961

This is an about average issue. Ed EMSH has his usual top-notch cover on the front, and Asimov has his usual excellent article inside, but aside from that, there really isn't much to this issue. The stories are good, I'll grant you that, but 2 weeks after reading the magazine when I wanted to review it, I couldn't remember a thing about some of the stories without almost reading them over again.

Evelyn E. Smith starts off the issue with "Softly, While You're Sleeping," a rather trite little vampire yarn with nothing to really recommend it, but interesting nevertheless. Next come "Hills of Lodan" by Harold Calin and "The Ship That Sang" by Anne McCafferty, neither of which is very good. Best in the issue is a reprint, natch, by Robert Graves titled "Dead Man's Bottles". It's all about a pencil and a matchbox thief and a haunted corkscrew: that should be enough description.... We then fly through Asimov's article, Bester's book reviews, and a lovelorn column for robots by Nils Peterson and come upon "Daddy's People" by Richard Banks. This is a trite fantasy which I just couldn't take at all. Brian W. Aldiss has a long nov-let, "Nomansland," which finishes the issue off, and how! This is a sequel to the earlier "Hothouse" and is much better, too. This tops the s-f in the issue. The series is faintly reminiscent of Murray Leinster's ancient "Forgotten Planet" saga which first appeared in the old Munsey ALL-STORY.

"Oldie Review"—AMAZING STORIES—March, 1948

This issue sported a poor Robert Jones cover. Inside we found a hulking 84,000 word stf novel by that infamous and notorious destroyer of youth, Richard Sharpe Shaver. This story was NOT a "Shaver Mystery," but it was pretty awful just the same! It has about as much plausibility to it as one of his cave stories. It is made even worse by such stock characters as a leering group of Venusian vampires who live forever by drinking kiddies' blood; a big strong tough guy named Big Jim Steele who kills pretty near everyone; and a big old monster called Yin-Yan who engulfs mortals who displease him. And, oh yes, there are also some goodie-goodie gods who save the day for Hero Steele here and there. We were put thru the further agony of having footnotes sprinkled thru the story showing how certain incidents tied into the "Shaver Mystery." To completely destroy any interest or enjoyment I might have gotten out of it, the ending is exactly like that of ERB's THE GODS OF MARS; in fact, the last couple of chapters are just like it! Shaver's jumpy style didn't help matters either! At least the illustrations by Rod Ruth made the purchase of this back-number not altogether unrewarding.

There are three minor short stories in the issue, too, one of which is by Shavery under a pseudo, and not too bad at all considering some of the other things he's done. I hope this issue isn't a typical example of the late-fourties' AMAZINGS. I've read some from the War-Years which I really enjoyed, but this one?—Eccch!

In conclusion: I'll have another "oldie" review next issue plus the May or June prozines. I hope I haven't scared anyone away from reading me next time!

BY
BERNARD DEITCHMAN

SOLUTION!

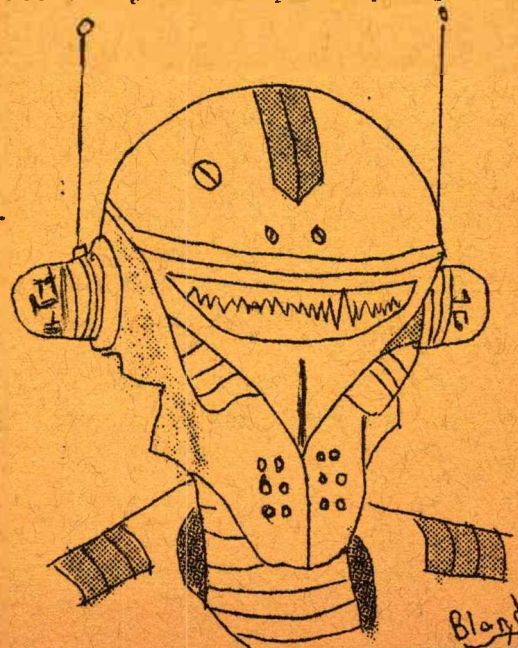
The current state of science-fiction is pretty poor. In fact, most of the writing today stinks! I have all but given up on GALAXY; seems H.L. Gold gets writers with good ideas, but apparently it's a standing rule that they must put them down in the drabest, flattest style they can imagine. I pick up an issue of GALAXY, and then quickly put it down as nausea overwhelms me. What of ANALOG?: In the past few issues, its quality seems to have improved somewhat, but not to the extent where it is really worth commenting on. Perhaps the serial by Simak foretells good times to come. I can wish, I guess. F&SF?: Their fantasy is second-rate, but their s-f has always fascinated me. I have always been fascinated with the way that F&SF can win Hugos with slop. Someone should take a survey of fans to see how many others share my fascination [FANTASMAGORIQUE is hereby taking a survey; let's hear from you - sn/ The Ziff-Davis twins are next, and it is with them that I place my greatest hopes. AMAZING has been dishing out plenty of the ol' green stuff lately, and has been coming up with the goods. Again, their material is nothing really new or sensational, but the writing is more alive, more interesting, and more entertaining than before. I think AMAZING has the best chance of leading us out of the wilderness of tripe, hack, general boredom, nauseum, and staleness that we find ourselves in.

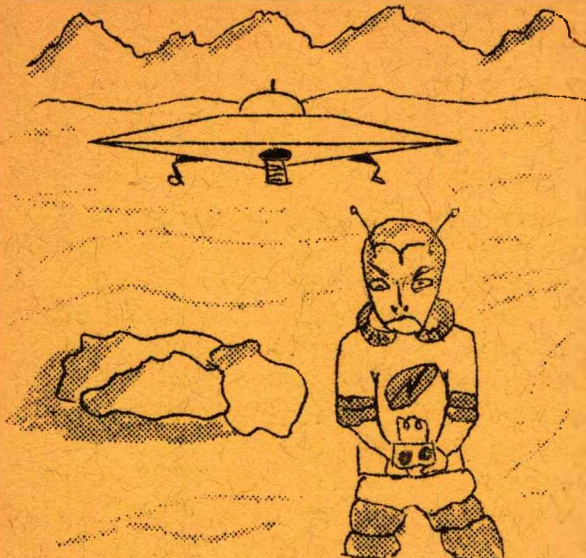
So much for the prozines. I imagine they can get along with what they have been for some years to come with the die-hard fans like me pouring their money down the drains. But it is appalling that a field so vigorous and lively as ours once was should sink to its present depths of oblivion. Something new is needed to add stimulus to the whole mess. In the 1930's the stimulus was the birth of ASTOUNDING. In the 1940's it was the editorship of Campbell. In the 1950's it was the births of F&SF and GALAXY. In the 1960's? Nothing (yet), unless you wish to consider the ASTOUNDING—ANALOG change. I don't think that is stimulus enough. Something greater is needed to prod our sleeping field back into life. In my own opinion, it is up to the fans.

Now that the snorts, snickers, and bellows have died down somewhat, let me enlarge upon that last bit of bombastic monomania. I repeat, it is up to the readers, the active fans, and loafers, all thrown together, to get behind s-f and start pumping some adrenalin around if they don't want s-f to end up as a fruit that withered on the vine. And we'd better get to work, because every time I pick up a prozine, I imagine I smell something like rotten apples.

"Well," say all the fat and fancy readers, "That's great, but you don't mean me, do you, old man?" The (censored) I don't! I mean every reader who cares a darn for s-f. The pros aren't going to help us. Many of them have already left for greener pastures, and others are leaving. No, if we want to salvage anything from the wreckage around us, we'd better move fast! The fans should push for greater amounts of fiction in their zines, and try to develop new authors. They should also do away with that damnable clique which has developed and which is discouraging new members of fandom from joining any large club or group: Big Name Fans, hah! Big Nit-witted Fatheads! A lot of good fans are doing now.....

(con'd)





they should stop this clique-ish, top-secret insanity and mumbo-jumbo which has pervaded fandom, encourage new fans, and try to get new authors! Fanzines should dispense with their usual little circle with its personal notes in every issue, & try publishing something decent once in a decade!

Well, now that I have been damned and double-damned by every BNF from their coast-to-coast network of NBF sponsored outhouses, I would like to put forth an appeal to the people who should really decide what the future of s-f shall be, the readers. By this, I mean the great mass of readers who have been more fortunate than I...in the fact that they are ignorant of fandom. These hundreds of thousands of people should be the ones to decide the fate of s-f, since they support it.

It is these people that the fanzines should encourage to take part in worth-while activities involving fandom.

If 75% of the readers in this country could be made to actively participate in fandom, this would vastly improve the sick situation we find ourselves in now. Many new writers would be found who could probably start a "Second Golden Age." The First Golden Age came about because of a new surge of writers; the same could happen again. And this would be only one of the many effects the enlistment of new fans would have. The entire picture would improve with a new vigor, a new life in the field. This new burst of activity would build up enough momentum to keep us going 'til we hit our next crisis, and that, of course, is inevitable. What goes up, y'know. But we can worry about that if and when we come to it. Right now we have a more immediate crisis, and the only way to solve it is to all work to increase worthwhile fan activities and to increase the number of active fans. We need new blood, for the field is going stale from lack of fresh air. We've locked ourselves up in our little ivory towers to keep the little fans out for so long that the air's gone bad, and now we're wondering why we've got head-aches. We need some new blood to open the doors and windows and let the fresh air in to blow out old ideas and cobwebs. The whole of s-f needs a general airing to rid it of the staleness of age and stasis! The whole conglomeration known as s-f stinks, and it's about time we came up for air to see what the rest of the world is doing! A general house-cleaning is needed and it might as well start with the fans. Fandom has been hanging around for some time now and serving no purpose. It's about time it started paying its way!

The prozines aren't going to clean house for us, but maybe if we start at the bottom, in fandom (which, no matter how conceited you may be, is the bottom), the prozines might take the hint and follow our footsteps. Fandom must have some purpose besides just sitting around and beating its collective gums, and I think it's about time it started serving that purpose! If we want better quality in the field, we'd better shut up and get to work encouraging neophyte fans and new fan authors. Great Ghu John Campbell has forgotten s-f and no other gods have the ability or foresight to help, so it's up to the non-pros to do their darndest to get something done. It's simple, what must be done: wake up,...or die on the vine.

And, here in California, sometimes called the "Heart of Fandom," the stench is beginning to come through in spite of the smog, and if you've ever felt California smog, I think you'll want to get to work right now! Get to work!!!!

—Bernard Deitchman—

Kingsley Amis, in his highbrow study of the sf field, New Maps of Hell, places Frederick Pohl at the top of the list of modern sf writers while discarding Robert A. Heinlein in a few vague sentences. Unfortunately, Mr. Amis is one of those ultra-modern scholars who see literature, and especially fiction, as the exclusive property of the social critic. He expects sf to fall into his one favorite category and refuses to accept all other purposes, including entertainment (which, in my opinion, is the only valid reason for writing fiction of any kind!). Fortunately, his view-point isn't widespread, which in some measure is proven by the admiration of professional critics and public alike for Mr. Heinlein, one of the best story tellers in modern sf. However, his latest novel, Starship Troopers, contains quite a bit of social criticism. It contains some very longwinded dissertations on military life in the past, present, and future along with a lot of other observations on democracy, freedom, etc. which seem pretty radical even from an sf writer! It may be social criticism, but it certainly has many more sides than that: to my mind, Starship Troopers is first and foremost the best story for action, characterization, and plot that has been published for years, and it represents Mr. Heinlein's best effort to date.

FANTASY

By Peter Maurer

Two factors in Heinlein's work make him unworthy of a more important position in the sf field (according to the bright, witty, and almost unreadable Mr. Amis): 1) His characters are not very deep or very carefully drawn. They are normal, cheerful, adaptable human beings who could never exist in the shadow world of Falkner and Tennessee Williams...or anywhere in modern (so called) literature. And 2) aside from seeing people as they usually are, Mr. Heinlein is a serious writer, using comedy only for relief. Sarcasm, the deadly weapon of the social critic, is conspicuously absent from his writing. His approach to a problem is positive, whereas the type of writing Mr. Amis favors is negative and destructive. The more sensible reader will tend to favor the positive writer, which again in part accounts for Heinlein's popularity.

New Maps of Hell leaves at least this reader with the impression that sf doesn't need any enemies -- it has Kingsley Amis for a friend!....

* * *

The 35th Anniversary Issue of AMAZING STORIES captures first place as the most entertaining magazine issue so far this year. However, all of the literary giants of sf were conspicuously absent from its pages. What we were treated to was as fine a collection of juvenile stories as has ever been printed under one cover (and what a magnificent cover!) The entire issue features some typical examples of AMAZING from the past. Certainly the weakest of the lot was "John Carter and the Giant of Mars," which barely managed to live up to even the very low standards of the old masters. Even though ERB had many faults as a writer, his ability to tell a tale of bloody action always shines through the annoying coincidents and predictable melodramatic incidents (John Carter is forever losing his lady love, Dejah Thoris, to a collection of florrid monsters. This usually leads through 250 pages of pursuit, with many pauses for swordplay, to a happy but indefinite ending in the arms of Dejah Thoris.)

Edmond Hamilton's short story, "Devolution" has the most original plot of all. In fact, I can't recall a better one by the "World Saver." Ray Bradbury has come a long way since "I, Rocket," but any fan should be glad to take anything he can get from the nation's #1 sentimentalist who hasn't been very active lately. Richard Shaver didn't even rate mention (the less said, the better!). Sam Moskowitz, whose short historical introductions were considerably better reading than almost anything else in this issue, made an excellent choice when he finished off a memorable issue with the "Buck Rogers" novel. Characterization aside, this adventure set in the 25th Century had as good a plot, and as much science as any modern story, and I for one would like to read the whole series. The 35th Annish of AMAZING will be remembered with pleasure and will become a collectors' item, I predict. Don't throw it away!

-Peter Maurer-

ADVICE FROM THE NEXT RUNG

BY MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY

There are fields in which everyone is a neophyte or a neofan—and no sooner do you reach eminence in one field than you become a neofan in another. The big name fan is just a rank neofan when he starts writing to seel to the magazines. And the top-ranking science-fiction writer is no better than a rank amateur when he moves into a new field—when he tries, for instance, as I'm trying now, to conquer the field of the detective novel. The same is true, of course, of writing of any kind....

So you're interested in writing? When you ask for advice, though, I am reminded of the story of Somerset Maugham, when asked to address a class of would-be writers. First he asked how many of the class wanted to write; every hand was raised. Then he said, more or less, "Then why aren't you home doing it?" and walked off the platform and out of the room.

And the moral of this story is—that nobody can really teach you how to write fiction. You want proof? Try reading any college magazine filled with their "creative writings." Pretty dull stuff, what? Then try reading any collection of professional short stories, and note the difference.

To write fiction, I'd say, there is first a major choice to make: "Do you want to express yourself, or do you want to entertain others?"

Some people state it another way: "Do you want to be a quality writer, or do you want to write for money?" But that distinction no longer holds. Some quality writers DO make money these days, and some faithful hacks, who write entertaining fiction, go hungry.

So, the basic choice is—"Do you want to express yourself, or do you want to entertain others?"

If you want to express yourself, then write, write, write. Sooner or later, if you are any good, form and discipline will impose themselves on your output, and you will find your audience and your publisher in a more or less natural way.

If, however, you choose to entertain others, and this is the path most commercial writers choose—and incidentally, it is the path I choose—then further choices lie ahead. You must decide if you will write any form of slush the editors will pay for. If you do, then it is simply a matter of facility. You learn the formulas: sin, suffer, and repent for the confession markets; the good guys against the bad guys for television; etc., etc. This is an honest trade, I suppose. I don't care for it; but then I am not forced to earn my bread and butter by writing. My husband has a decent job and I can write slowly and carefully and as I please.

If you decide to retain integrity as a creative artist while still deciding your path is to entertain others, then all I can say is this: Study good writers...the ones you admire. Just as the musician listens to Tocconini, Kreisler, Kathleen Ferrier, & Maria Gallas, find out how they achieve the effect you admire. Then—don't imitate—but learn from their example. Learn how to tell a complete story, so that at the end the reader is satisfied that the story has presented a slice of life. Ask yourself, every time you finish a story: "If someone else had written this, would I both reading it?" Observe people; learn to feel what they feel, and when you experience an emotion, put it into words to yourself—so that later, you can make someone else feel it. Your place is to re-create, for other people, experiences which everybody has—but which only a writer can put into words. So, make it second nature. I think it

(con'd)

Oscar Wilde who, when asked if writing poetry was difficult, replied, "Madam, either it is easy or it is impossible." Expressing humanity should be easy to you, by practice—just as a somersault is easy to a trained acrobat.

Sooner or later you have to develop a philosophy about your work—never bow down and accept, wholesale, anybody else's view of life, or morality, or anything else—even writing. Don't swallow my advice, or anybody's, whole. Because even if you choose to entertain others, you do it with your own talents—your own personality—your own voice. And so, this is the best form of self-expression.

Well...forgive me for lecturing; but you know, tap a writer and you find a preacher-manque!

The End—Marion Zimmer Bradley—

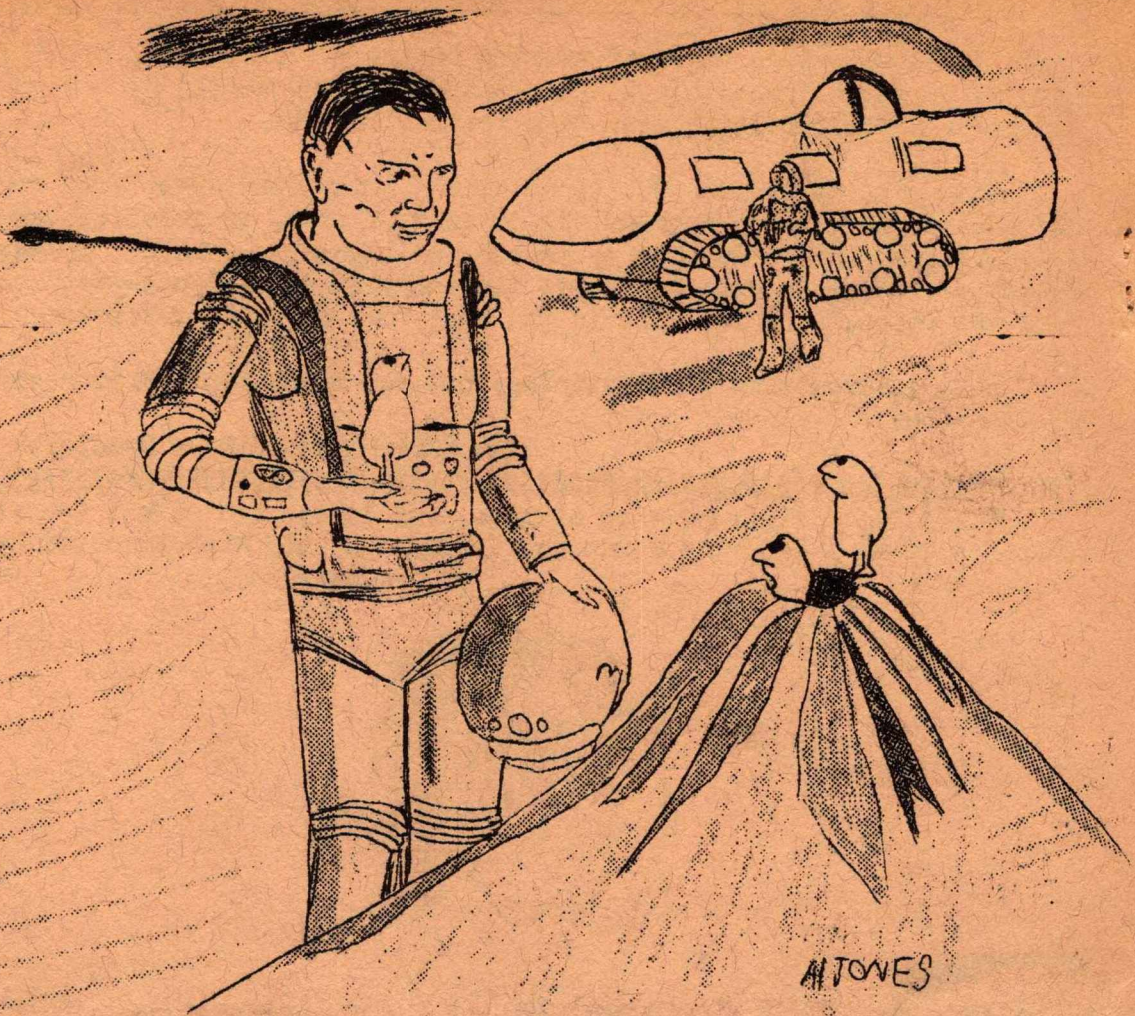
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"...Well, I finished this picture, and I hope you're not too disappointed. It's supposed to be a Venusian woman (on Venus). I only wish to could be colored...."

—Ginny McCain— [me, too!—sn]







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