

The MONDAY EVENING GHOST



THE MONDAY EVENING GHOST

A science fiction slanted fanzine that appears on the scene (much in the manner of the Abominable Snowman) once every month, or once every two months, if ye ed happens to feel like it. Mainly though, it is a monthly. You can get this by buying it (15¢ for single copies, \$1.50 for twelve issues), trading fanzines, having material printed herein, or having a letter of comment printed in the letter col. This is sent to you from the cages where Robert Jennings, 3819 Chambers Drive, Nashville 11, Tennessee, presently resides.

THIS IS THE
FOURTH ISH

THE MONDAY EVENING GHOST MAY 1960 Vol.---1 No.---4

A listing of the existing staff---

Robert Jennings-----editor/publisher
Mike Deckinger-----columnist and frequent contributor
Clay Hamlin-----columnist and frequent contributor
Linda Kay Jones and Joyce Hurt---helpful and infrequent contributors

ART STAFF ----and----

Lynne Manday---15, 16
KEN Gentry-----cover and p 20

ART CREDITS

Ralph Rayburn Phillips---6 The Evil Eye---
Steve Stiles-----7,9 3,5,6,9,14
Al Andrews-----12 Bob Jennings---
Bill Cornell-----12 4,8, 11
Doug Clark-----13

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The GHOST still needs material. What happened to that article from YOU? Send it along TODAY!!!!

Next issue

Mike Deckinger's column will resume, it unfortunately was forced out this round, due to his long article. An article by Len Collins on FFM, the Fan will make a return appearance to appease some of its enthusiastic fans (a Fan fan????), a poem by Ray Nelson, illustrated by Ralph Rayburn Phillips, and an article by Peggy Cook. Plus the usual columns, the final installment of the debate, and some humorous KEN cartoons. A good issue.

perhaps a snarl for you---

Our cry of the year---

"help bring SF back to the fanzine"
HELP SPREAD CIRCULATION, LOSE FRIENDS
AND ALIENATE PEOPLE, PASS ON THIS COPY
OF THE MONDAY EVENING GHOST, SPREAD
CIRCULATION.

EDITORIAL (Robert Jennings)

1.



I used to work as a horror helper...

At last I get around to writing the editorial. For once I'm going this different...I'm writing it after I've finished the rest of the zine.

Being that GHOST is a monthly, I just happened to think, the issues really ought to be monthed too. So this issue will carry the month on the contents page.

One thing that stands in the way of any really perminant monthly schedule is the natural lack of material. Most of you reading

this have had things printed in zines before, if not, this is a good place to begin. Send material. Even though I have enough for the next few issues ^{that} is certainly no sign that situation will remain. Especially I am in need of artwork. The artwork this issue, I'm

afraid, didn't come out very well. The stencils I'm using this time are extremely oily, and many of the illos ^{already} printed look spotty and very faint. This I learned the hard way. The remaining illos I've put on the stencils with a sharp stylis, and made sure a dark, clear impression registers on the backing sheets. The cover, fortunately, was done on ~~stencil~~ ^{stencil} left from last time. I think I can promise that future artwork will be printed more clearly and neatly than some

2.



I had a steady job with WEIRD TALES, until they folded.

3.



Then I took over as The Shadow, but that didn't work out either

of it is this ish.

Speaking of artwork, and covers and such as that, the cover this time was done by KEN Gentry. Through editorial stupidity, I forgot to put his name on it, but now you know that it was done by KEN Gentry. Next issue KEN's little space thing will return.

To last issue. It was a good ish, generally. Art was still needed tho, and some layout work. Everyone thought well of Mike's column, most everybody liked Bob Farnham's humorous advice article. The dover was very well liked, Ralph has some other work coming up soon. Only three people didn't like Clay's column. Art Rapp's article attracted much comment. Sometimes I think I am the luckiest person in the world. When the article was run off I did not know that FU had folded. But the fact that it had just folded, just as the zine reached the readers, sparked life into some fine discussions on the subject of magazine sizes. If the article had been printed any later, it would have been simply outdated, as it was it came at the oportune moment.



I tryed several other jobs, but nothing like I'd been used to

The poems received mixed reactions, Everyone agreed (nearly everyone) that while Horace is a VERY GOOD PEST he is a ROTTEN WRITER, and so, gladly I announce that his column will NOT be carried in future issues.



But I think this one is going to be perfect... Jennings writes some pretty horrible stuff.

As usual, the debate received the most comment. New readers, of which there are a fair number, and old ones felt inclined to continue the cross fire of ideas and comments on the old vers. the new stf. The debate will be formally ended next issue, with closing arguments beging presented by Clay and myself.

As I said, it was a good issue. There were many requests for a longer letter col, so this issue carries one fix pages long, with ten space margins, and no illos. This will be just about as long a letter col as you'll find in GHOST. An effort

The Pre-Hysterical Monsters received mixed reactions, however, generally most people agreed they were not very good. The Deckinger poem was a very popular item, and might prompt Nameless to write another one.

will be made to have a longer letter column than has been normal.

Now comes that spot with all the blank space left for me to fill with ramblings. I'm about dead at the moment. So rather than ramble along about something uninteresting, you the long suffering reader, I'll explain a natural phenominia.

Remember back there first issue when I used memo instead of mimeo? Remember what kind of comments that brought on? Remember how I disregarded it all with merely saying that I liked memo instead of mimeo, or even mimeograph? Well, I bothered to further explain it in a letter to Rich Brown, and he brought out an interesting point. It took me 328 letter to explain it, and no doubt there were other people who didn't know of my REAL use of the word, and they'd have to be told too. So, in an effort to spread the word out to a large number of people at one typing, I will tell you all why I write memo (pronounced mem-o, as in, "take a memo"). The word memo is actually easier to use. It's easier to spell and remember, Just think now, the word 'mimeo' takes up five letters, while good ole memo just takes four, saves me that extra letter. And since I'm the pepetuall lazy type, that extra letter means extra time and energy saved. And all that time I can apply to other things, the energy I save is actually used to help me remain sound and fit. So you can plainly see that by using the word memo instead of that long winded, outdated term, "mimeo" I actually safeguard my health, and prevent myself from overworking. Other people can be healthy and happy too, Just shun the use of that hated extra letter in mimeo. (of course that could lead to translation problems) Or better yet, just adopt the use of the more modern, up-to-date, time saving, healthful word, memo.

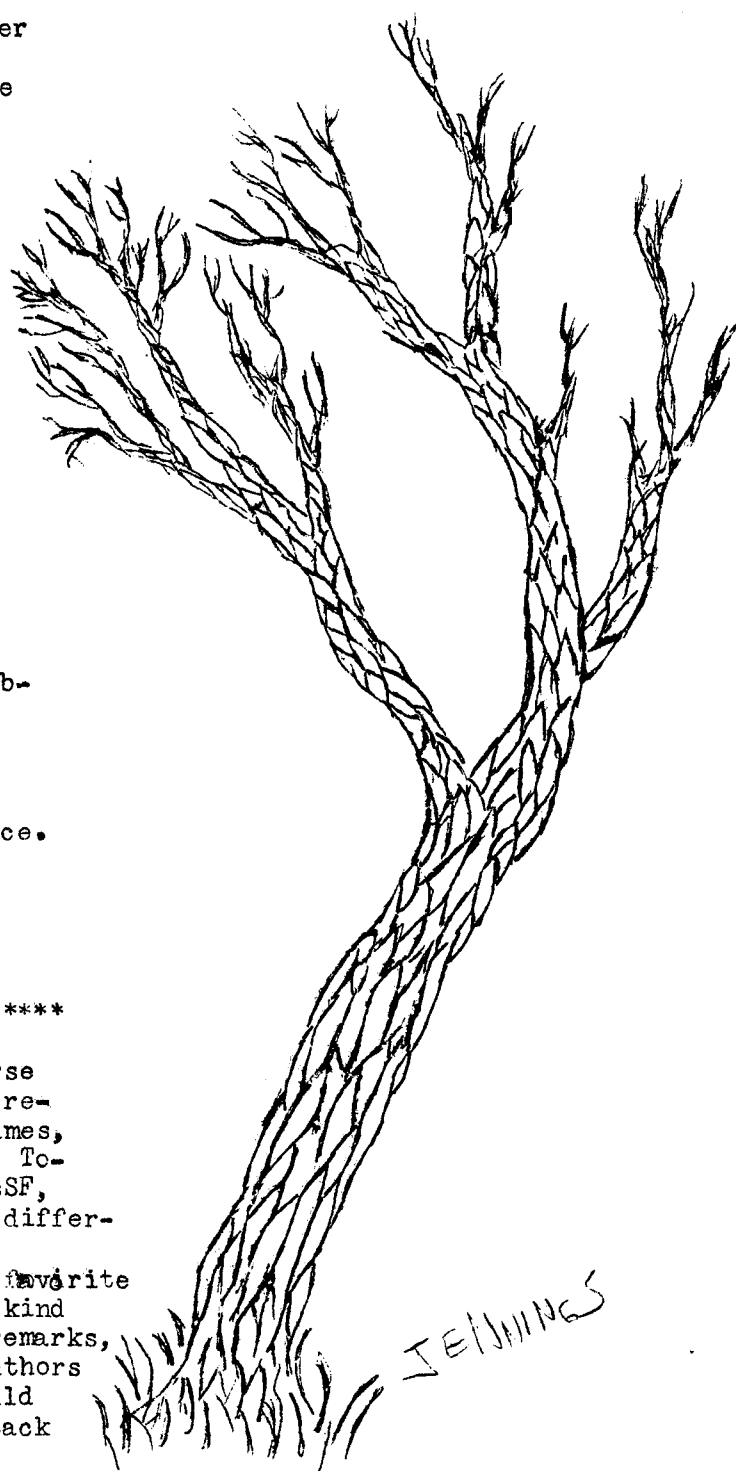
By Horace, I've still got space. Just enough room to say---

address all mail to-
Bob Jenning
3819 Chambers Drive
Nashville 11, Tennessee

continued from page 18--
to make an era what it is. Of course there is usually one magazine that represents the focal point of the times, such as ASTOUNDING of the forties. Today I would say that magazine is F&SF, because it represents a variety of different styles and adaptions.

As to your choise of Shaver as a favorite author..I could rattle on about to kind of writing he does and make snide remarks, however, your choise of favorite authors and stories is your own, and it would be playing the fool-complete to attack you for that.

Next issue will bring the final articles in this debate, and the matter will be formally closed, as per agreement.

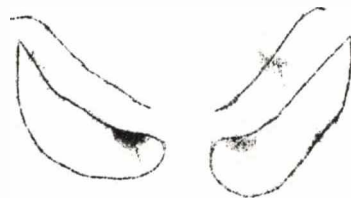


JENNING'S

THE POSITION OF THE PRO-ZINES (Mike Deckinger)

With the advent of 1960, it appears that the science fiction prozine field is in an even more precarious position than in previous years. Science fiction suffered a sharp decline in the 50's, with a number of magazines being born, lasting a few issues, and then folding, as well as several old favorites dying out.

The "pulp" magazines suffered the greatest loss. By early 1950, the only pulps were the Ziff-Davis duo, PLANET STORIES, FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYST., FANTASTIC NOVELS, SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY, and others of less importance. Gradually, one by one, they begin to either convert to digest size, as did AMAZING, FANTASTIC and WEIRD TALES, or else simply succumb quietly. Ray Palmer made a gallant attempt in 1955 to partially revive the field with the advent of OTHER WORLDS, which was large size (though not pulp), and contained 98 pages, while selling for thirty five cents. This held reign for a little while, but the editor had an annoying habit of neglecting to pay his writers. The last worthy thing Palmer published was THE TIMELESS MAN, a too part serial under the byline of Roger Arcot. There was more to this particular work than Palmer let out, however. Roger Arcot is the pen name for a more well known writer who quit all ties with Palmer in disgust, after a letter never being paid for his story. Succeeding issues saw the work of old Ziff-Davis regular, Robert Moore Williams and with due respect to Mr. Williams, who is a fine writer, it seems as if the only way Palmer was able to snare stories from him was because of their prior friendship.



It's a habit I acquired at the con

By 1957 things were really bad. WEIRD TALES has died a few years earlier, and the editor, Dorothy McIlwraith had left to seek a better field. In an effort to spark interest Palmer went so far as to reprint two Shaver stories, QUEST OF BRAIL and PULLARS OF DELIGHT (written under the pen name of Stan Raycroft). The latter story was 18,000 words long when published, however Palmer wrongly stated on the contents page that it was 30,000 words long, as well as neglecting to give the previous publication date of both stories. In my opinion, these were deliberate errors on his part, and represented the work of a man who is trying everything he can out of pure desperation to get more readers. After this, Palmer decided to give Flaying Saucers and general UFO's a swing (as if he wasn't doing it already with his mag, SEARCH, formally MYSTIC), and I completely lost interest in his publications.

At the moment, the only "pub" I can think of is Hans Santessan's now gone FANTASTIC UNIVERSE, which was not even a pulp, but was distinguished because of it's size (128 pages, thirty five cents) and the fact that Hans had gotten wise to the fact that fans are not so much in the minority as editors may think, and installed a fanzine review column. I'd also been told that a lettercol would have been installed in a future issue, and from the looks of things, FU was on pretty even ground. Hans was going out of his way to prove that he did not deny the existence of organized fandom, which, while it lasted, was a heartening thing to note, especially so after traces of fandom have all but disappeared from the pages of other mags.

Hans is now editing an American edition of the British NEW WORLDS, which is definitely worth getting. The fanzine review column has been carried over into this fine magazine, another reason fans should pick up copies. There are only two English-language overseas mags being printed now: NEW WORLDS and SCIENCE FANTASY, with the Nova; SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES ready to fold. AUTHENTIC and NEBULA have folded. There are reprint editions of GALAXY and ASTOUNDING of course, and an all Swedish zine, HAPNA which has GALAXY reprints, as well as original stories, but beyond these, the foreign market has vanished.



I dunno---must be southern fandom

For a while there were rumors that Ziff-Davis was offering AMAZING and FANTASTIC for sale, but after checking, I've found this is not the case. In fact, they are doing better now than they've ever done before.

When Norman Lobsenz first took over the editorial office (Cele Goldsmith has it now) he knew practically nothing about editing, and unlike Paul Fairman, he did not incorporate a "staff" of New York writers. The Fairman staff included Bob



He said you just have
to take two bent metal
rods and...

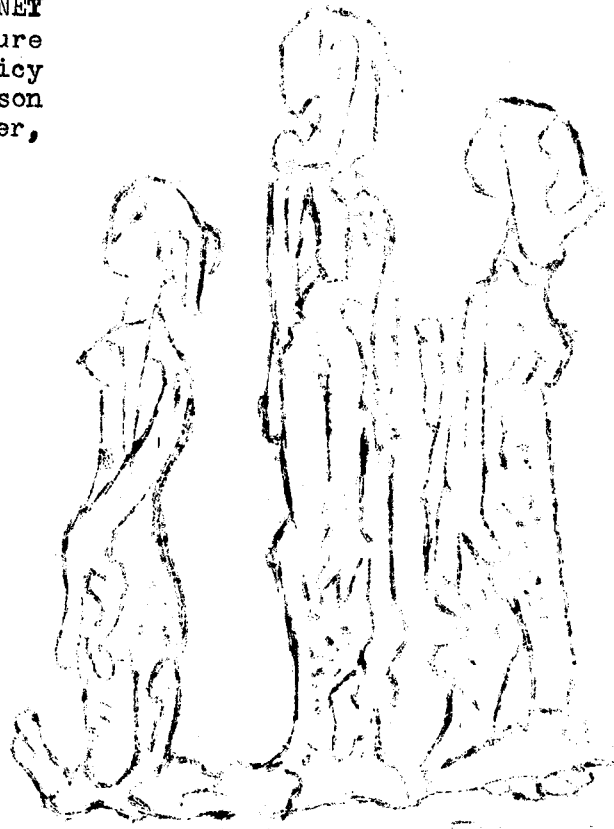
Silverberg, Randall Garrett, etc., etc., and their numer-
ous pseudonyms. Harlen Ellison was in the group too,
though the only pseudo he used was "Ellis Hart", which
is a not-too-clever rearrangement of his own name. Bob
Silverberg was Clyde Mitchell and (along with Randall
Garrett), Leonard G. Spencer. He also wrote the Gerald
Vance and Ivar Jorgenson stories, both of which are
now house names. Fairman even went so far as to have
Silverberg (under the name of Robert Arnette) do a
sequel to a popular '51 novelet titled Empire of Evil.
The sequel was called Cosmic Kill. Probably the reason
Fairman compiled this staff was that it was the easiest
way of running a magazine, and it still satisfied the

readers.

But today things are different. AMAZING now runs a feature novel (40-
75,000 words) an issue by top name writers, which has done much to boost circula-
tion. FANTASTIC at first proclaimed that it would be all fantasy, but has stray-
ed several times from that premise. A newer writer, Jack Sharky (who is not a
pen-name, I've found out) has created quite a stir in the zine lately. Both
Ziff-Davis publications still continue to pretty much ignore fandom, but they have
retained a short and desired lettercol. If both magazines continue at the present
pace, I don't believe there's much chance of their demise. Ziff-Davis has pain-
stakingly fixed it so AMAZING and FANTASTIC appeal directly to one particular
segment of the reading population, and rarely vacillate from this.

I don't believe
the staff of AMAZING and FANTASTIC are interested in either of those magazines being
part of the legendary big three, and maybe instituting a "big four" or even a "big
five". They have always been the ones de-
voted to action, adventure; though not as
much as unabashed space-opera as was PLANET
but simply the slightly juvenile adventure
tales. A few departures from this policy
have been recent novels by Poul Anderson
Ward Moore, and Murray Leinster. However,
the odds of finding an ASTOUNDING type
story in AMAZING is as small as find-
ing a fanzine review column in ASTOUND
ING. Most editors can realize that
the action tales are appreciated most.
Bill Hamling found this out the hard
way, with IMAGINATIVE TALES, when
he was forced to change the poli-
cy of it from light, humorous,
(or satirizing tales, as repre-
sented by Bob Bloch tales, to the
action and adventure tales, which
marked the return to Greenleaf of
Dwight V. Swain and Gephf St. Reynard
(Robert Krepps), both had
done much for AMAZING and FANTAS-
TIC in the forties.

Probably the
biggest scoop Ziff-Davis was res-
ponsible for was the publication
as a three part serial of E. E.
Smith's THE GALAXY PRIMES, which
had actually been written sever-
al years before under the title
THE GIRL WITH GREEN HAIR, and lay
in wait these years. I believe
the final transaction for it was
completed at a convention where
Doc Smith was present. At the



PHILLIPS

HELLORIC GROUP

moment, E. E. Smith is at work on a new novel which will probably appear in ASTOUNDING when it's completed. He's had several conferences with Campbell on it, and has been working on it for over a year.

And that brings up the problem of ASTOUNDING (though by the time this sees print it will probably officially be ANALOG SCIENCE FACT AND FICTION). Now ridiculous things have been done in the past, to be sure; there was Richard Shaver who took Ziff-Davis by storm, there was Dianetics, which Campbell introduced to the readers via L. Ron Hubbard, and which fell flat on its face after a few years, there is psionics currently in operation... And now comes Campbell's latest brain-child. He's decided that the title ASTOUNDING is not a good one, and the mere fact that it's been in operation for over thirty years does not faze him in the least. When Long John says it's got to go---it simply has to go. In the February issue he even admitted that all the replies he had heard on the title change were against it. Well this fact apparently does not deter him from his plans.

When you think it over, ASTOUNDING does sound a little amateurish, and on par with the "adjective" titles. (Probably the ultimate of this was THRILLING WONDER STORIES) But fans have learned to associate the name of the magazine with high standing, good reputation, and a wide range of outstanding stories. In fact, if it were not for the ASTOUNDING of the forties, it's doubtful that Robert Heinlein (Anson Macdonald, Lyle Monroe, etc., etc.), L. Sprague deCamp, Issac Adimov, and many others would be what they are today. And Campbell is out to completely ruin this fine record by his idiotic plan to change the title so it will appeal to more readers. Yes,--it's perfect. Campbell will pick up 1,000 new readers, and lost 2,000 old ones. Just the thing he needs. Furthermore, he says there will be a gradual title change, thus giving a novelty to it. At least the spine remains undecorated, but in the future months the ANALOG on the cover will get even brighter, and the ASTOUNDING will fade. Now isn't this wonderful? Isn't this what fandom has been looking for? Isn't this the "sense of wonder" that Sam Moskowitz has been bemoaning the loss of? Why, here we have a genuine novelty cover. Can you see the long queues at the newstands just waiting to see how far the "disappearing act" has progressed?

But I don't advocate that Campbell simply stop here when the cover says ANALOG SCIENCE FACT AND FICTION, when no vestige of ASTOUNDING remains. Now why not have it work in reverse? Imagine the novelty as the fan crowd the newstands to see what new things Long John has come up with. Let's have the ANALOG and the rest gradually disappear, to be replaced by PSIONICS STORIES. That way Campbell can be certain that No One will buy. The only thing to do is sit back and watch Campbell's Folly, and see if he wises up before it's too late. As the Detention song went: Oh, No John, No John, NO!! (I may be able to get the complete words to this from Karen Anderson.

GALAXY seems to be going along pretty well. The recent abrupt



Wh--Mel, when I said this was going to be a big ish I didn't---

reversal in price and size did not hurt it any, nor did the typesetters mistake in putting thirty-five cents on the cover instead of fifty cents. GALAXY novels are still being issued by Beacon books. But the smartest thing Gold could do is to completely drop the GALAXY NOVELS, and concentrate more on GALAXY. In the past they served a purpose; when reprinted book length novels in convenient, inexpensive editions, were hard to find, but now the abridged STARTLING novels, and the poor originals are practically of no value, and does more harm than good to the name of GALAXY. It's interesting to note that in England a similar plan was undertaken many years ago where Nova publications begin to publish two novels a month, usually reprints of American editions, selling at 2/6 apiece. This continued for a while.

Robert Lownders has folded SCIENCE FICTION STORIES and FUTURE. He had started reprinting stories from his old mags of the forties (even one under a pen name of his own, Wilfred Owen Morley) and practically concealed the fact that the stories were reprints. I expected to see one of the mags to fold before long, and then Bob continue to work more directly with the other, however they both were dropped.

In the science fact field, Otto Binder (one half of the "Eando Binder" writing team of years past) plans to bring out a fact publication devoted to articles on the space and rocket age. The first issue has a line-up that will include Wernher Von Braun, Willy Ley, G. Harry Stine (Lee Corey), Isaac Asimov, and John R. Peirce (who also writes science fiction under a pen name). The magazine will contain strictly fact articles, and should be a major contribution to the fact field.

In a sense, this decade will be the most important in the science fiction field. It is almost a threshold through which SF may continue to prosper and grow, or collapse, as science fiction becomes reality at an alarming rate. What was science fiction in RALPH 124C 41+ and WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES can be reality today. In a sense it is a precarious position in which SF rests, toppling either way will cause a profound reaction. I would like to see it continue, perhaps we might even get new mags that will outlive VENTURE, INFINITY, VANGUARD, and others of short life, but excellent quality.

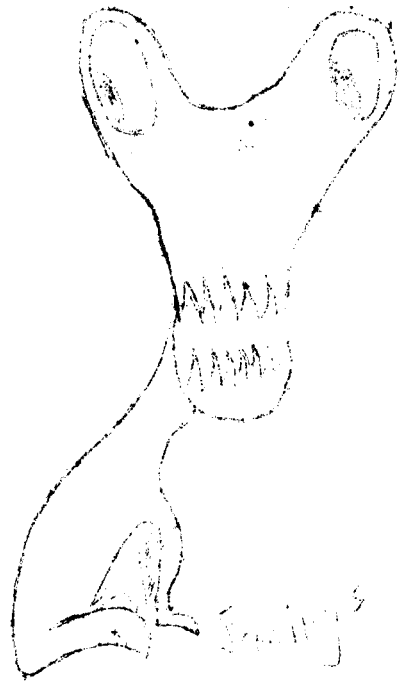
Who can say what the future accurately will hold? One can make predictions, but the outcome of the future is known only to those persons fortunate enough to own a time machine, or time viewer; the rest of us must wait and see.

~~~~~  
**HORRORSCOPE FOR APR. AND MAY**

- Birth Sign.....skull & Cross Bones
- Lucky Number.....13
- Lucky Color.....Crimson
- Lucky Day.....Friday 13th
- Favorite Months.....December & January
- Flower.....Dandy Lying
- Jewel.....Onyx
- Key Word.....Blood



Skull & Crossbones being your lucky sign, ruled by Hades, known as the Joker, you are unreliable, untrustworthy, unfriendly, unhelpful, unkind, unjust, underhanded, understood (??) and unmost everything. You have contradictory qualities, you hate everybody, but you hate yourself most. You are doomed to horrible luck the rest of your unnatural, unlucky life. Those born under this sign, make very good marriages, and may marry without regrets any of the six opposite sexes. Famous people born under this sign include..Wendy Werewolf, Randy Rascal, Vanda Vampire, Horace Ghost, and me, the author???





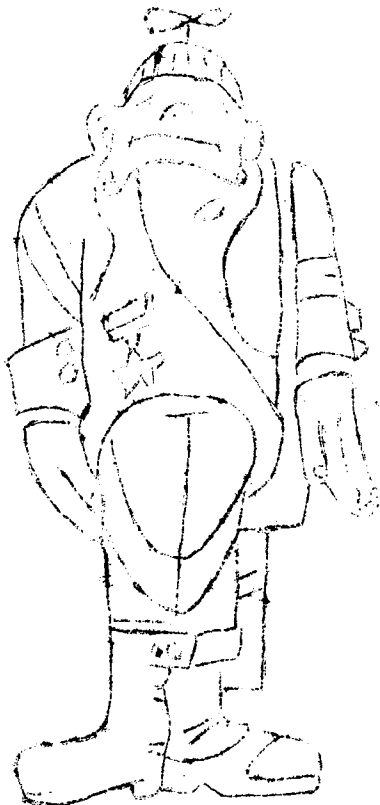
THE CREAKY ROCKET or MEN INTO SPACE (Phillip Harrelb)

Perhpas the biggest batch of producers errors and tectioal mistakes to come along in TV history is being presented on the TV screen every Wednesday night on CBS. It is a pertentious mess and a garble of "facts" laughingly called MEN INTO SPACE. Name an error, and they've got it. Anything from A right down to Z. The part that really gets me about the whole mess, is that section where they say "We wish to thank the Air Force and the Department of Defence for their part in bringing you this dramatic (notice that word dramatic) New Television Program." If I were in a high position in either the Air Force or the Dept. of Defence, I'd sue them for slanderous use of the title, at least.

The show concerns itself with the ludicrous follies of one Col. Edward Mcauley, and his crew of highly trained, hand picked, idiots. You may think I'm joking, then let me sigh an example. On the first show of the series, Man is about to take his first venture into space, After the rocket takes off, are the men plastered into their chairs by the force of the acceleration G's? Not on your life; they seem to be only experiencang about as much pressure as you would in an amusment park ride. So, what happens, they get half way into orbit, when the first stage won't disconnect. So, Brave, Helpful, Obedient, Cool-headed leader McCauley says in his best dramatic school voice, "I'll go out, or we shall all perrrrish," or some words to that effect, and dons space helmet, To the proper accplement of music (of course), he then opens the air lock (and even though we are susposively in space, we hear the air lock hissing open), and from out vantage point about a thousand yards from the rocket in outter space, we watch McCauley bang (well, it's more like clumping, which doesn't make a heck of a lot of difference, as we're SUSPOSED to be in outter space, and will someone please tell me how sound is able to pass through that vacuum? Maybe they carry their air bubble around the ship, since nobody's space suit everfills out from the lack of pressure.) down at the end of that rocket, trying to free the first stage from the second, so they can



I am Brother  
Frunk Jarus



STILES

get back down to Earth. After he gets on his hands and knees to use the oxyhydrogen torch to burn through the remaining lock that didn't release when they set of the explosions to free the blasted thing. So here he is, burning through the lock (and also his lifeline, which is somehow draped across that lock). The heat from the torch sets off the charge in the lock, and with a great roar (in space mind you), the lock explodes, throwing the second stage one way, and our dauntless hero in another.

Comes the climax with Col. McCauley floating madly around in space, calling out his name so every minitrack station on Earth can keep tabs on him (as if they had nothing better to do than listen to one man gibbering his name insanely for all creation to hear). So for the next five minutes all we hear is that name, McCauley, and see pictures of him floating round in little circles. Finally one guy gets the brilliant idea. (this would have occired sooner, except it would cut the show short, which the Sponser Wouldn't Like) The brilliant idea consists of using an oxygen bottle as a minature rocket, and letting one man use it to rescue the floating Col. Then they proceed to waste another five minutes argueing about the person to go. (here they miss an Ideal Story Line; they should have handed out bottles and drag raced to the floating spaceman) Finally they pick a man. (I'll go, I'm not married, and I have the least to lose---real tear jerker).

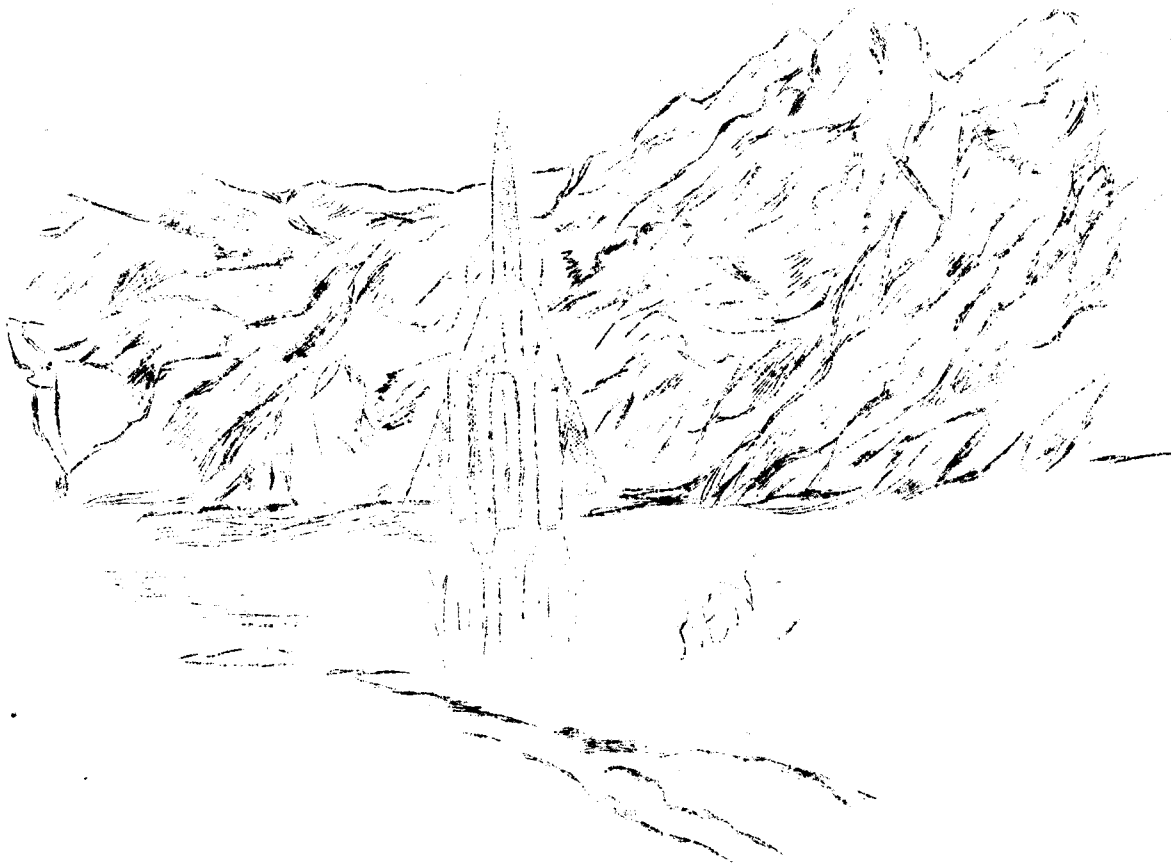
He mounts the rocket almost hobby horse style, and leaves in a burst of white steam. The fellow nears the hero, who by this time, has become so bored by the sound of his own voice, that he has fallen sound asleep, or so it appears any way. The hero is retrieved, and it's off to Earth, and a final word from the sponser.

That, tho, was the first show, and I figured, 'what-The-Heck', they're bound to improve...Nothing could actually stay that bad. But it seems that I was wrong.

The tecical boo-boos run from having Earth normal gravity on the moon (which they seem to be able to trun on and off at will) to making explosions that echo around the craters. Well, let me list a few in confused order. (there are so many you know) There was the night one fellow was sick, and this other guy decided the only way to save him was to put some ice on hos forehead, to bring down the fever. But--where to get ice on the moon?(You could suggest, of course, their fefrigerator units, but that's apparently not in the script) So one other guy sees the meteors falling, says, "I'll bet", rushes out, picks one up, and brings it back in. By some amazing freak, it just happens to be made of ice (and how very convenient if he had found just at that moment that spaceice is susposed to be -243° F) So he wraps it in a towel, puts it on the sick man's head, with "this will cool his fever" (Darn right it will, I still don't know why his head didn't turn to ice or at least have him freezing todeath) ~~Whn~~ they take off in a roar that shakes my TV set, moon and outter space non with standing.

Not only that, but they leave the air lock on the moon in no time flat, one step in, one step out, apparently they never have heard of neutralization of pressure. And they never bother to checkeither. Then there's the one where they take a tegular twin lens reflex camera with regular film out into that -243° F cold without even cracking the glass, or ruining the film. Oh they have a thousand like that. About the only good point the show has is the marvelous Bonestell art work (when they use it) That is about the only thing that makes it worth looking at, except for laughs, of course.

Well, I've got to wrap this up now, so I can watch that showpiece of stupidity, the true case of man's inhumanity to knowledge, MEN INTO SPACE.



# FORGOTTEN CLASSICS

By  
Clay Hamlin

Dear Devil by Eric Frank Russell. Published in OTHER WORLDS SCIENCE STORIES May 1950. A slightly revised edition anthologized in SPACE, SPACE, SPACE. No data available at the moment. Book will probably be listed under juvenile section.

Can you imagine a short story so good that those who have been fortunate enough to read it are instantly sceptical about it being used on a TV show, or maybe made into a movie; for fear that the special magic of the story would be lost? This is a story that may bring forth just that reaction.

From the first appearance of this short gem of prose, it was instantly acclaimed a classic, and rated with those other greats of much longer length which comprise the heritage that SF has given the world. Many still consider it the finest short SF story written. Although it is not actually forgotten; that could never be; the difficulty of finding a copy make it imperative to bring it to the attention of any fans who make pretensions of being stf fans at all.

This is a gentle masterpiece, yet telling the plot of the story would make it seem that its fanatic fans had completely lost their sanity. One cliché replaces another to the point of absurdity; at least it would be in the hands of a less capable writer than Mr. Russell.

It's about a Martian, a true blue-eyed monster straight from the most boring of the better forgotten old pulps. A big blue-eyed monster, complete with tenacles. It is also an end of civilization story, and how the race started back up. Naturally this is caused by a final war. Sound familiar?

But there the resemblance to anything ordinary ends completely. Not since Stanley Weinbaum wrote A Martian Odyssey has a more appealing alien creature been created. It is tempting to call Fander, the Martian, a true human in spite of his shape, but it isn't true. Humans simply don't have the special qualities this being does, and are the poorer for it. He goes beyond being a fascinating character, it is nothing less than the truth to state that this reader can completely identify with this being. The story begins as entertainment, but before long you find it tugging at your heart strings, and in several places you may actually get a lump in your throat from sheer overpowering emotion. It's that kind of story.

The story is also an essay on the greatness of the race of man, and how even the worst of catastrophes cannot completely destroy the thing that makes man what he is. Through the delicate manipulation of the minds and feelings of the human children he finds, the poet and philosopher Fander brings to full flower the greatness of a race that had been buried under fear and horror of what it had done.

But this is no true essay, it is a story with qualities that are seldom, if ever found anywhere. There is a gentle humor running throughout the story, that has never been more than equalled in print. But the characterizations are also the best. Not along the Devil but also the memorable Graybeard.


This is not a story to be read, but one to be lived and felt. It has more sheer humanity in the 12,000 words than any story ever written in the genre. The title tells the whole story. Dear Devil. This is one you must read.

THE END

HELL'S NOTEBOOKS (Robert Jennings)

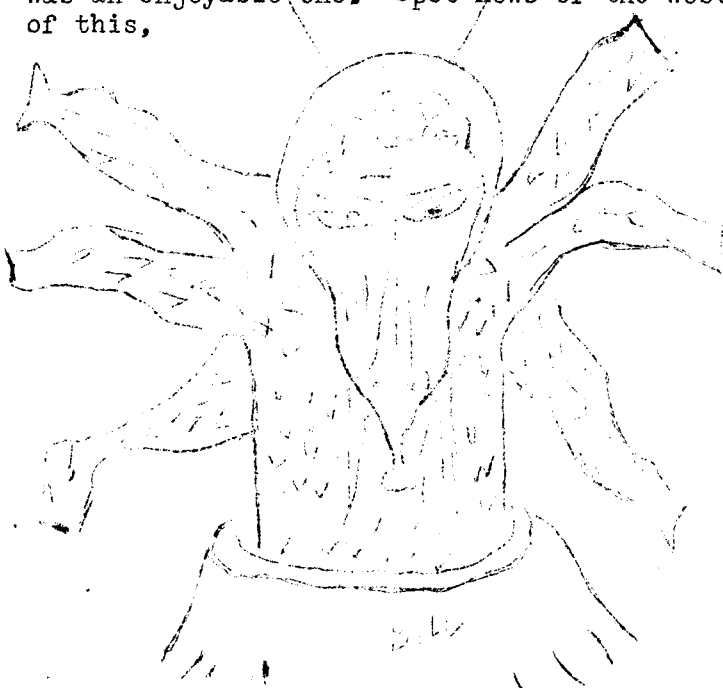
This column is long this round. Included here are a few zine that arrived too late to be included last issue. The rating system is 1 for the best, down to 10, for the worst fanzine. Other zines are found inbetween. I'm sorry that I haven't been able to write comments on some of the zines, I'll try to comment on those as soon as this issue is mailed out. Thanks to those five people who kindly sent me copies of their SAPSzines, they were interesting reading.

SPECULATIVE REVIEW V2N2/Free/Richard Eney, 417 Ft. Hunt Rd., Alexandria, Va./Can't find any frequency/ This is a small paper type zine devoted to serious reviews of SF and fantasy. This issue carries a review by the editor of some books written by T. H. White, and some magazine reviews. Bill Evans bothers to give his definition of SF in his reviews, which can prove to be good material for an argumentative letter. Good, but it needs to be longer. rating---4



MAELSTROM #3/ Billy Joe Plott, P.O. Box 654, Opelike, Alabama/25¢/At first sight this seems to be fandom's answer to pulp paper. The thing is printed on news script, much show-through, but not as much as you would expect to find. The memo work throughout is not good, and the illos, the ones that came out visible, aren't very good either. Alan Dodd has an article on all the films Hammer Films of England ever made. Shortie poems of varying quality throughout, something on UFO's by Tony Rudman, John Pesta on comic books, and John Pesta again with an interesting interview with a MAD MAGAZINE worker. Interesting in regard to MAD, the scandals and feuds of same, and the situation of EC toward comics. By far the best piece in the issue is a short fiction story by Mike Deckinger, which, while it isn't particularly outstanding, interested me enough to create excitement and such. Very nice story. The good material in this, the interview, the Dodd piece to some extent, the Deckinger story are all presented with a muddle of not very good stuff, which makes the whole zine seem not up to the standards it could be. rating---7½

FANAC 54, 55, 56/Terry Carr and Ron Ellick, 1909 Francisco St., Berkeley 9, Calif./4 for 25¢/This is my first encounter with the bi-weekly news zine, and the meeting was an enjoyable one. Spot news of the west coast fan social world make up most of this, but other type news is also featured. Very nice.



rating---4½  
HOBGOBLIN #5/distributed free with FANAC 54/Terry Carr, 1818 Grove St. Berkeley 9, Calif./This is a fanzine to review fanzines. This one reviews VOID, Though you never actually learn much of what's in the VOID's, you learn something of what the editor thinks of Ted White. rating-----5

There are some other things here that came with FANAC 56, but they are more in the nature of one photo, a letter column for the comments on the FANNISH II and a progress report on a clearing house.

SPACE CAGE #2 & #3/ Lee Tremper, 3858 Forest Grove Dr. A3, Indianapolis 5, Ind./memoed, monthly, or thereabouts/ comment, trade, submitted material, or joining the ISFA/ This appears to be

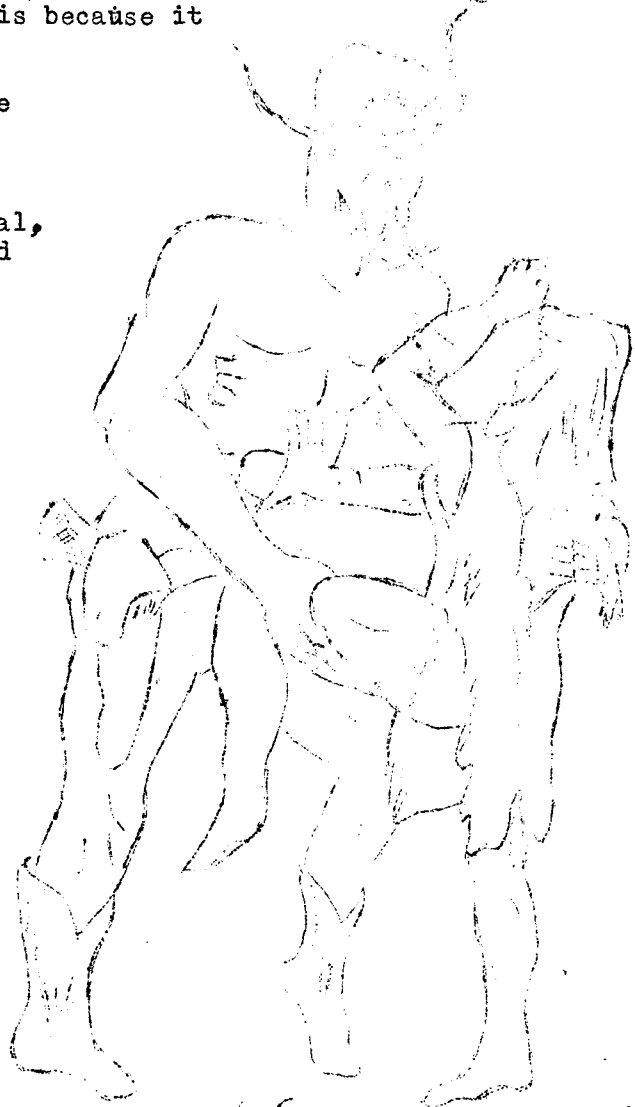
an expanding club zine. Perhaps expanding is a bad choice of words, the second issue is only four pages long, and the third manages to get in fifteen. The artwork in the third issue is good, except for the cover, unfortunately the material is not so good. Columns mainly, the second issue isn't worth bothering with, and the third issue doesn't contain much of interest either. Half hearted book reviews that are way out of date by Jay Crackel, various columns attempt to ramble, and manage to be superbly uninteresting. Boaring, like. In fact, the only thing you might bother to read in issue three is a thing by Mike Deckinger on post offices. This is definitely one of his lesser works, but after plowing through the rest of the thing, this provided something to keep my eyes on the page and off the blank wall. If this thing ever gets going it might become a nice zine, it's workers seem willing enough. However right at present, it's not. Mainly because of the Deckinger article a rating of--- 8 instead of 10

INSIGHT #2/Jack Cascio. 211 N. Fourth St., Benld, Ill./25¢, five issues for a buck/quarterly/ This issue brings more pages. Also more artwork. Unfortunately the art isn't good artwork, the best being the cover. In fact, the inside art is remarkably poor artwork. This is a zine devoted mainly to fiction. A short editorial followed by a long story, begins things. The story is about usual for fan fiction, perhaps a trifle better in spots. The editor follows with another sexy-crime bit of which there are enough selling on the stands without having them crowd into a fanzine. The editor has kept straight margins, and has even double columned his story. But besides that, it still lacks the quality to make it readable. 8

THE VINEGAR WORM #4/ Bob Leman, 1214 W. Maple, Rawlins, Wyoming/ yours for \$22.50 a copy, OR a letter of comment/ irregular/ I believe this zine reaches me late, the main reason I suspect such thoughts is because it carries a con report from 1958, but this is supposed to be irregular... This begins with a humorous editorial, with some minor almost funny pieces following. There is a con report that interests me not, and I consider it poorly done. A nice review of a book, to keep it official, Then comes the very enjoyable "A True and Complete Explanation of the Present Parlous State of Science Fiction Together with an Account of the Discovery of the Dreckmeyer Formula." After that is a nice fan story, rounding off the issue. A very nice zine. rating---4½

THE FANTASY COLLECTOR/714 Pleasant St., Roseville, Calif./10¢/Several people have suggested that since this is a zine devoted especially to collecting, I mark it special interest and not review it as a zine. So, this is a good magazine for collectors.

Special Interest  
YANDRO #87/Robert and Juanita Coulson, Route 3, Wabash, Ind./15¢ or trade/monthly/I seem to have missed issue #86, this I think can be attributed to our beloved postal offices. This issue features a fairly long letter col. And though I generally dislike long letter columns, YANDRO is one good exception. Their letter col is usually interesting to read and often carries the zine through, when the material, as often happens in YANDRO, otherwise presented is a deathly bore.





However this year's bunch of YANDRO's haven't been so bad. This issue provided the usual editorials, another one of those Fredghoot things. I think most people have about had their fill of these things. I missed the humor in this one. One article, a long zine review column, a science filler, if you call ghosts science. More art than usual throughout. rating---4

ME? Jennings, do I impress you as a faaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaan?

BHISMILLAH #2/ Andy Main, 5668 Gato Ave., Goleta, Calif./ irregular/15% trade, letters of comment, contribution/ This zine happens to be dittoed on yellow paper. I hate yellow paper, and I'm not over enthusiastic about the ditto process either. The ditto work in this issue is below par, not good to say it bluntly. The contents are almost as bad. A messy little thing by Bob Leonard on the latest in dope jokes, onward into another "saga" on a fannish visit, a rambling column by a British fan, Dot Hartwell, Then there is an editorial and short short letters. The second installment of the editor's fannish visit doesn't prompt me to rush right out in search for the first part, I get very tired of these things, and this one isn't even well done. The rambling Britisher rambled right out of interest, in fact, the only thing I found to enjoy was a Fredghoot by Mike Deckinger (how that fan gets around). If you come across this zine, skip everything else, but read the Deckinger pun. rating---8 1/2

TERRAN DAILY GAZETTE/ Sture Sedolin, P.O. Box 403 Vallingby 4, Sweden/ yearly/ No, I', not importing foreign fanzines. I received my copy from Clay Hamlin, who happens to be co-editor of it. I don't know how you'd go about getting one though. This is set up like a newspaper of the future. The events aren't really what would probably happen in that year, but it is interesting, even for the wildest improbabilities it mentions. Many people have many things in this, no listing, just as well, since a good many of them are unclaimed. rating---5

RETROGRADE #2/ Redd Boggs, 2209 Highland Place N.E., Minneapolis 21, Minnesota/ it says monthly, even though this ish came out nine months after the first/ letters of comment or trades only/ The editor provides some ramblings, next another rambling article patched together from letters/ A thing called the Secret Museum of Fankind didn't impress me as much. A listing of books, none of them SF or fantasy that I can tell, and letters to finish off eight pages. I don't think much of it right at the present. rating---9



My comment is in FANAC!!

HOCUS #13/ Mike Deckinger, 85 Locust Ave., Millburn, N.J./ 15% trades/ irregular/ Mike's first annosh is a monster of a zine, being fifty six pages in length. Material consists of a long editorial, Mike does a review of a film, a few reprint articles. I thought the reprint by Bob Silverberg was the best thing in the issue. It provided the best laugh I'd had in three weeks. A piece of fiction by Ed Ludwig, excellently illustrated by Prosser, a few rambling, and a twenty page letter column. I dislike long letter columns, so I didn't much enjoy the last twenty pages of this HOCUS. This issue is not up to the usual standards, but still a nice issue rating--- 4

That's all this round. Address all zines to Bob Jennings, 3819 Chambers Drive, Nashville 11, Tennessee.

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FANTASY COMMENTS---THE FACE IN THE ABYSS was first run in ARGOSY Septemeber 8, 1923 as a novelet. It takes up roughly one third of the pocket-book and hard back editions. THE SNAKE MOTHER started as a serial October 25, 1930 in ARGOSY and takes up the remainder of the book and paper backs. The two stories were combined to form the book THE FACE IN THE ABYSS. Only in ARGOSY, and in FFM and FN reprints are the stories separate.

Len Collins

## FANTASY DRAMAS ON RADIO (Gene Tipton)

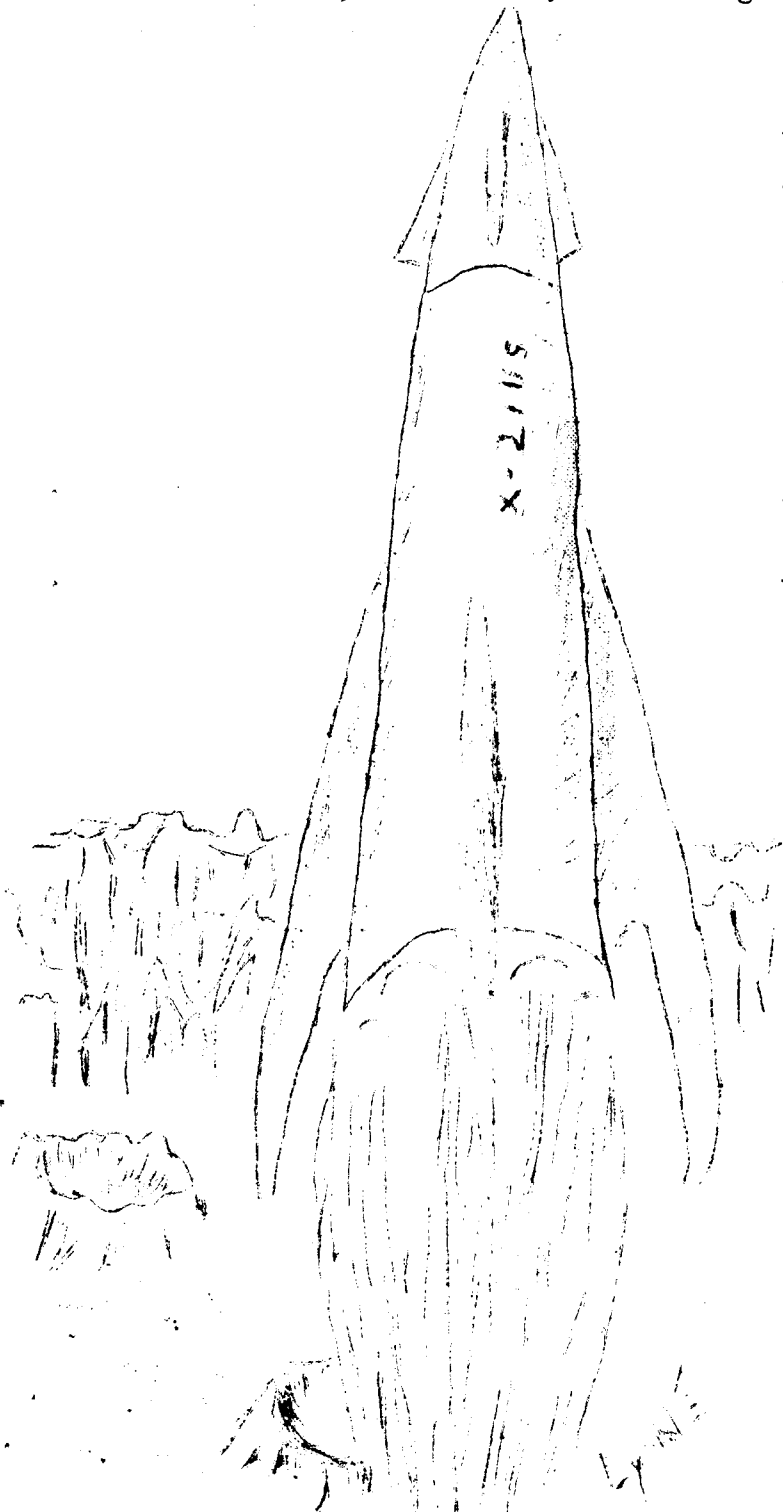
Nowadays many people, obsessed with TV, tend to regard radio with a sneer of contempt. Others ignore the medium altogether. Radio, as a means of entertainment, is looked upon strictly as a "has been"; it is completely overshadowed by its prosperous and haughty relative, television. But if many persons consider radio of negligible importance, the fact remains that this "forgotten child" has done, and can do, a thoroughly competent job in many of the entertainment areas which TV has freely taken over as its own. Radio, for example, has often shown itself to be an effective outlet for out-of-this-world dramatic fare---ranging from ghost stories to space operas.

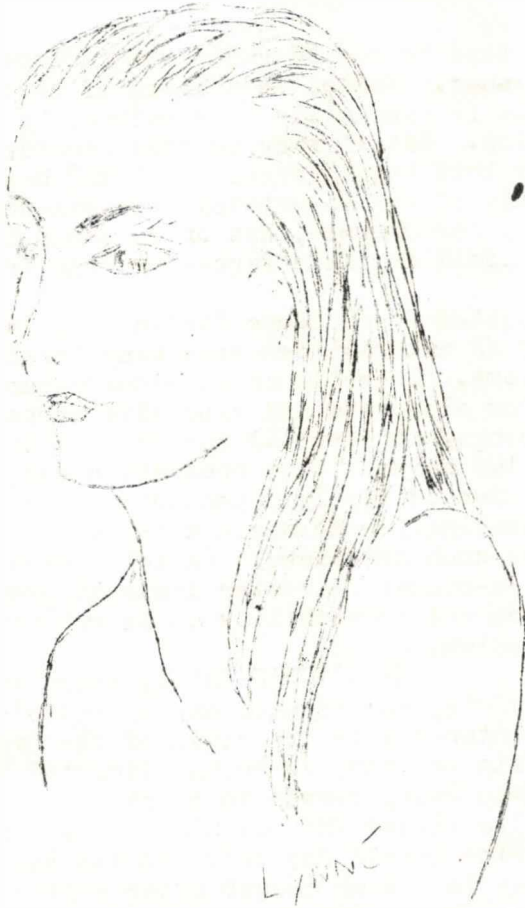
Radio is ideally suited for science fiction stories in particular. In movies and TV, the filming of SF material can pose many technical problems. There is an all-too-frequent need for elaborate and expensive props and settings, for special scenic effects that can play havoc with a production budget. Radio, which is highly dependent on the listener's imagination to begin with, is less hampered by such drawbacks. Radio's one-dimensional, non-visual character lends it greater freedom and adaptability as an entertainment medium.

THE WITCH'S TALES, heard during the 1930's, constituted one of radio's earliest ventures into the realm of the fanciful. This program, which was directed by Alonzo Dean Cole, served to inspire a magazine, also titled THE WITCH'S TALES. The magazine lasted for only two issues, and today is a much sought after collector's item.

The 1940's gave rise to several noteworthy radio shows devoted to the weird and macabre. LIGHTS OUT was among the most popular of these. The scripts for LIGHTS OUT were penned by the highly talented radio author, Wyllis Cooper. The program was later to have a brief sojourn on TV, but with less success.

Mr. Cooper also wrote the plays for QUIET, PLEASE, a later radio presentation which made its debut around 1947. QUIET, PLEASE brought a fresh, unhackneyed, and diversified approach to the broadcast of imaginative fiction. Its program material varied widely in mood and content, ranging from stories of fragile beauty, to stark horror. Even the occasional non-fantasy dramas possessed an off-beat, highly refreshing quality that set them apart as something more than routine radio fare. Figuring prominently in the presentations of these stories was Earnest Chappell, who has been active in the broadcasting field as an announcer for several years. Chappell portrayed the principal character in each of the QUIET, PLEASE dramas. The show was first heard over the Mutual Network, and later moved to the American Broadcasting Co. While QUIET, PLEASE was still on the air, THE WRITER'S DIGEST announced that some





notable series called ADVENTURES IN TOMORROW, presented over the Mutual Network. The host for ADVENTURES IN TOMORROW was none other than John W. Campbell himself. Naturally the stories selected for broadcast were from ASTOUNDING.

Five or six years back, the American Broadcasting Company aired a group of fifteen minute programs titled STRANGE BUT TRUE. The tales related here were supposedly based on fact. True or not, they were sufficiently chilling to satisfy most weirdists.

More recently NBC sent out goose pimples over the air waves via SLEEP NO MORE, a low budget offering which lasted only a few months. This was practically a one man production. The host, Nelson Omstead, adapted the stories for radio, served as narrator, and portrayed all the characters as well! Algernon Blackwood, Nelson Bond, and John Collier were among the authors represented on SNM.

Another fairly recent radio venture of this type was OUT OF THIS WORLD. This fifteen minute hair raiser originated in Canada over the CBC.

CBS Radio's SUSPENSE, which is still on the air after more than fifteen years, has frequently presented tales of interest to the fantasy enthusiast. Charles Dicken's THE SIGNAL MAN has been dramatized more than one on SUSPENSE. In recent years SUSPENSE has also broadcast stories by Bierce, Gilman, Wells, Poe, A. M. Burrage and others. SUSPENSE was honored by a magazine in 1951. During its short life the mag published a wide variety of excellent fiction, including fantasy and SF.

Radio's ability to terrify was probably best exemplified in 1938 when Orson Welles created nationwide panic with his broadcast of H. G. Wells' WAR OF THE WORLDS. This purely fictional account of an invasion from Mars was misinterpreted by millions of listeners, who thought Martians had actually invaded this planet.

Radio's excellent adaptability will certainly cause the creation of many more series devoted to excursions into the unknown, to delight the science fiction and fantasy listener.

THE END

of the plays written for the program were scheduled to appear in hard cover form. However, if the book was ever publish, this individual has not yet seen a copy of it.

There was also produced for radio during the 1940's, a series titled THE WEIRD CIRCLE, which dramatized such classics as Mrs. Shelley's FRANKENSTEIN and Poe's THE TELL-TALE HEART. THE WEIRD CIRCLE was a non-network production, and was heard over many independent stations throughout the country.

Another such radio thriller that came into being during the same decade was STAY TUNED FOR TERROR. This featured Robert Bloch's adaptations of some of his own stories that had been published in WEIRD TALES magazine.

Also listeners could occasionally embark upon excursions into the supernatural by entering CBS'Radio's blood-drenched INNER SANCTUM. However, more often than not, the mayhem dispensed on INNER SANCTUM was of a natural rather than supernatural origin.

During the early 50's, SF begin to emerge as a full-fledged and competitive form of literature. The growing popularity of SF was reflected in several radio shows. Among the best of these was X MINUS ONE--heard over NBC, which dramatized material taken from GALAXY. Of more recent origin was a short living, but



THE WRITINGS OF A CONFIRMED CYNIC

by  
Robert Jennings

Again our current debate continues with an article by Clay Hamlin.

From my letters lately it seems these arguments about the relative merits of the old versus the new stories is arousing a bit of interest. So, being one to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves, this installment contains several rather pointed arguments culled from those letters which I most regretfully did not think of myself. Bob is allowed to do likewise, in the distant but possible event anyone has agreed with him. Kind hearted, am I not?

The most difficult argument to counter is that which he has said that he didn't want to be constantly told how much better those stories were. A legitimate request surely, until it was pointed out to me that he is doing himself exactly what he deplores in those others, actually starting a "golden age" of his own. It may be different in dates, but it is exactly the same thing. In years to come, won't he be constantly retreating how much better the old days were (meaning today of course) than what they are publishing then?

My thanks to Ann Chamberlain for suggesting this. It's a good point.

You know tho, I must admit to having goofed in one place. By accepting Bob's dates as the true "golden era", without examining closely those dates for accuracy, it rather limited practically everything I wanted considered. Can't have UNKNOWN discussed, wrong years, and anyway, that was fantasy. Eliminate WEIRD TALES for the same reason. So the only thing left was ARGOSY and a few other Munsey zines of that period.

OK Bob, I admit it, you gained a point on your side there. Still, it is hardly hopeless. There is still Merritt and the others. Who needs more than that? But I will let Bob tell you himself his own experiences when first exposed to the writings of that one.

This is getting too pleasant for an argument. Sollet's rip into some of his latest assertions. Merritt was good. We agree. But, you ask, if everyone imitated him, is that good? All the others must have fallen short of him, you suggest.

True, in some ways. However they did not imitate the plots themselves, but only the style of writing. Everyone one of those others had a distinct personality of his own. The similarity in the using of lots of description to convey a mood of grandeur to what was always recognized as fairly weak plotting and limited characterization. There was Francis Stevens. As Len Collins points out, her real name was Gertrude Bennett. She didn't write too many stories, but some of what she did were so comparable to Merritt, that it really was widely believed she was only a pen name for him. For anyone who cares to get all the information on her I would suggest the introduction to the Polaris Press edition of THE HEADS OF CERBERUS. Actually here fame can be counted on just two stories, Citadel of Fear and Claimed. Both worth reading in spite of their archaic styles of writing.

Another imitator made quiet a name for himself later on though. Actually the term should be properly, themselves. There was a story called Earth's Last Citadel during the time under discussion. Sure Merritt, and with something a little extra, a something that made Kuttner and Moore about the most prolific and popular authors for a good many years after the appearance of that story.

Those are only two that in some ways imitated Merritt but still had enough difference in them that they could easily stand by themselves in anyone's rating.

And let us not forget that the same thing is going on these days too. We can't overlook the waves of stories in ASTOUNDING where mentions of psionics machines seem to be about all they have to offer, in the way or originality. It happened not long ago with GALAXY where stories seemed to be little more than psychological studies of some totally unadmirable creature. What they tried to call the maudity type of story. I find it much more pleasant to forget. Even if Alfred Bester did manage to come out with a few good stories, and Kornbluth and Poul got a couple of good ones, But there are so many untalented imitators that it seems best you not be so hasty in deploring imitation of the current fad of writing.

Yep, a good point you make there about my admission that stf isn't my favorite form of reading. Perhaps I can explain, and also show just why the GALAXY type of story is far from being my favorite. Here is the whole blunt truth. My favorite reading is textbooks. And above all, books on psychology. One who reads that is

is hardly going to be enthusiastic about the superficial treatment of the subject that finds its way into those stories.

Let's close with a real shocker, that is sure to cause cries of fury and even disbelief in my sanity to reverbrate throughout the reaches of fandom. Who really is my favorite author? Merritt you say? Wrong. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, Eric Frank Russell? No, all are marvelous story tellers, but all are wrong.

The answer---Richard Shaver.

#### THE ANSWER

Well, Clay, what have been saying is that today's science fiction is better than the science fiction of the so-called "golden era" of 1930-38. And it is science fiction, not fantasy, that we are discussing. I think about now you are getting some idea of what sort of thing you have picked to defend. You certainly can't use WEIRD TALES magazines, all the defenders of that era I ever read of stoutly yelped about the science fiction, FFM, UNKNOWN, the Munsey mags, they are all outside of the dates chosen by some as a so-called era of greatness for the stf story. The choice of those years is a foolish one, and before I wrote the original article that kicked this thing off, I wonder<sup>ed</sup> to myself why in the name of heaven people would choose those particular years. But apparently those are popular dates, and so every veteran of that era who bothers to wail his saga on the Wrongness of Modern Science Fiction always begins by telling of the good old days, when stf was worth reading. Now that AMAZING, ASTOUNDING, the Gernsback mags, fantasy, the Munsey mags, except ARGOSY have been eliminated, what actually is left.

Well you seem to depend pretty heavily on Merritt. Now I haven't read much Merritt. What I read I liked, but there is one thing, Clay, that we forget, and that is that Merritt wrote fantasy. (my thanks to Al Andrews for this helping hand) Al also brings out that many of Merritt's stories are not unique and new in presentation of ideas, that the ideas for many of his stories had been well done before. Merritt for description and a story line is nice, but Merritt for originality and characterization is not. (parts of Al's letter are in the <sup>letter</sup> dol.)

Now then, to this one here. In the first place, no, ten or twenty years from now I surely hope I won't be talking about any "good old days". Because, just as today's stf is well above the best of the stf produced in the thirties, I expect that the SF story written in 1970 will be better than any one written today. Time and experience improve everything, and I don't see why science fiction should be an exception. Science fiction writers of today have the past mistakes and good qualities of the field to build on and naturally they can write better stories. In 1970 the mistakes and trends of the fifties and sixties will be behind, one more page to look back to for guidance for the better science fiction story. I don't believe I'll be preaching the good old days in years to come, instead I think I'll be discussing how tomorrow's science fiction will improve over the stuff written then. Which is what we should be doing now, looking ahead instead of backwards.

All right Clay, I don't really know enough about the numerous imitators of Merritt to give you a good argument on it. But I would still say that if you are going to accept Merritt as the mark of perfection, his imitators would have to fall short of that perfection, and would thereby be inferior, to Merritt that is. I wonder though, were a good many of these imitations also made into the realm of fantasy? Here you mention the untalented imitators of Bester, Poul, Kornbluth, etc, what about the no doubt numerous inferior, hackish imitators of Merritt? If Merritt was a leading writer in that era, then surely he had his imitators, and surely there must have been that always large presentage of poor writers who try to get in the lime light on the shadow of someone better. What of those imitators? I'd be willing to bet with you that the number of bad imitators far exceeded the more talented imitators, and that these bad imitators produced more material on the individual average than did the better ones.

You seem to have connected the name of GALAXY with rotten-mautrity-crud-story, and that with all modern SF. So you seem to be using GALAXY as the complete stereotype of modern stf. That's nice. I would consider F & SF to be today's representative, and if you tire of that, try NEW WORLDS, or perhaps you might consider FU before it folded, or pre-Gold IF's. One magazine and one magazine style doesn't necessarily make an era. It takes a number of different magazines, with different slants to

(continued on page 4)

VOICE OF THE SPIRITS  
OR  
THE EDITOR ANSWERS WITH A FIFTH

Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, Maryland

Very many thanks for the third issue of the GHOST. I've read it, less than 48 hours after it arrived, which is considerably better than par during the current freshet of fanzine publishing that seems to have overcome the entire nation. It is refreshing and gratifying to receive a fanzine that contains only two dozen pages and can be read in less than an hour, although page 23 ends abruptly in my copy that I can conceive the possibility of a page or two being left out.

Bob Farnham's article brought back some turbulent memories. Fortunately, I didn't have the plumbing constipation from using hecto, but my jelly gave me enough troubles. On the other hand, I have been in and on the edge of fandom for twenty years, and I can never recall a time when fanzine material was plentiful enough to bring about the rewrite and reject situation described toward the end of the article. Individual fanzine editors have never been overstocked at times and some of them have insisted on a certain topic or style for their publications, but there have always been ten starving for material and swallowing up everything available without chewing it, for every one that is picky.

I enjoyed the Deckinger and Hamlin reviews, and I wonder how long it will be before fans really start to pay big sums for the harder to get fantasies in paperback form. Editions of paperbacks are usually larger than magazines, but the mortality rate is even higher, because they aren't bound as well, and are more apt to be carried around in a pocket, falling apart before even the first reading is complete.

Art Rapp overlooks the real reason that prozines have been making their page size smaller and smaller: it's been done to disguise the fact that the prozines are unable to provide as much fiction for higher cover prices. Publishing costs keep going up, word rates are slightly higher than they used to be, there aren't many large pulp magazine chains that permit quiet a bit of advertising at whole-chain rates, and as a result the magazines have adopted the digest-size to permit a fairly thick issue. A prozine with large page format containing the same number of words as the normal digest size magazine is horribly flimsy because it has so few pages, and that's psychologically bad for the prospective purchaser.

No particular comments this time on the debate between you and Clay, for reasons that I outlined in my last letter. However, Emile Greenleaf betrays pretty badly in his letter that he didn't start to read the prozines until 1943. He wouldn't talk about good-or-bad aliens if he'd had the thrill of discovering the Weinbaum creations as they turned up in the prozines issue after issue in the mid 1930's, and he refers to LEGION OF SPACE in one paragraph, just before claiming that no magazines of 1935 would publish a story with a middle-ground hero; I'm not sure whether Williamson's story appears in 1934 or 1935, but I'm sure that most of us considered Giles Habibula its real hero, and he very definitely was an inbetween.

The humor items are the worst part of this issue. Horace is even worse than you lead the reader to believe, the Deckinger elegy is almost as bad, and only the first of the monsters has much merit.

///You are partly right, the humor last issue was bad. Horace was terrible, however the Deckinger poem proved to be one of the most popular items in the zine. It may even have started Nameless working on another one directed at some unsuspecting staff member.

I suspect Emile will answer your comment, so I'll skip that. Your views on the digest size are thoughtful, and probably to some extent true. However there have been magazines devoted to stuff that made money, and converted. ASTOUNDING immediately comes to mind. I don't believe they ever have to scrape for material, yet the change was made. Other ideas on the article are scattered throughout this col.

The paperback editions seem to be generally overlooked by all but the completests. And then too, a popular paperback is almost certain to be reissued by the same publisher, or some other concern, so that it is never actually out of print very long. However someday a paperback will be found that is extremely popular, and is unavailable, and then the rush for paperbacks will be on.

No pages were cut last issue, we just ran out of ink about then.///

Mike Deckinger, 85 Locust Ave., Millburn, N.J.

Now to GHOST. Cover was very nice, undoubtedly the best on your zine yet. Is it

just a coincidence, or are the lower portions of the letters M, Y, and T supposed to look like bleeding wooden stakes?

Rapp's article was interesting, but it seems to me that fans are going to have a hell of a time trying to find FANTASTIC UNIVERSE on the stands, since it has already folded. Only the old reliables are around. However, chances are that if there are anymore zines the size of the "bedsheet" AMAZINGS and ASTOUNDINGS, they'd be put away on the bottom, beneath even the newspapers, as well as the slicks, and then they would be practically impossible to find. Newstands just don't have that much room to display, and as a result always have the biggest sellers out in front.

And the Writings of a Confirmed Cynic are good too. If you haven't read any Merrit Bob, I'd advise you to latch on to some of his books. I prefer his DWELLERS IN THE MARAGE as his best book, but tastes differ. And one of his novels, BURN WITCH BURN was even made into a film in '36 titled THE DEVIL DOLL. Not all the stuff reprinted in FFM and FN came before '30. I think they did readers a great service by reprinting novels which would otherwise be unobtainable, or only for sale at such a high price that they might as well be unobtainable.

Now this poem. Even if I am the main character I must admit I like it very much. Whoever wrote it used excellent rhyme scheme. And that kicker in the last stanza was good too.

///Nameless can hack out an occasional poem, and as I said, there may be another one on some other unsuspecting staff member.

I imagine you are right about the flatbed magazines. I know of a good many news stands that don't have an intellectual shelf, just the sports mags on top. It would be an even bet that the dealer might try to hide the stf mags rather than scare away the "brain" buyers by sticking a "crazy Buck Rodgers" mag up there.

Through help of Len Collins, have gotten some Merritt. I believe that only ARGOSY was left of the Munsey fantasy mags, so that would be the only mag of the thirties FFM and FN could reprint from, inside the golden age, that is.

As for the bloody stakes...Well, I assume Ralph made them that way for effect.///

Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave., North Hollywood, Calif.

I haven't been able to comment on fanzines for nearly a month, so I have received two issues of the GHOST. There is plenty of room for improvement in the fanzine, but there is also a good deal of enthusiasm and desire to improve. Also I LIKE SF discussion--whether mild or hammer-and-tongs, like you ~~discuss~~ discussion with Clay Hamlin.

There is quiet a bit to comment on in these two issues. The covers for example. In #1, the quotation, "Man what lousy artwork" about covers it. On the other hand, the Ralph Rayburn Phillips on #3 is good. He used to draw for WEIRD TALES, I believe. Going back to #2, the editorial is interesting. Mike Deckinger's material is always worth reading. I agree that Randall Garrett's stories are suspenseful, but I don't care for criminal "heros". Who cares what happens to them? I won't get into the argument just now about the "golden age of SF", everyone has his own. I have my own (the thirties), but I've just about decided that there is none. You can point to outstanding or rotten stories in any era to "prove" your case. I think that any given magazine in the old days had only one or two real good stories in it, and a bunch of poor ones--the letter columns always agreed on this--and the same goes for mags of today. Also, the first stories you read impress you the most, and sometimes you read them twice. I don't have time to read everything once, let alone twice these days. The stuff you read first, the stuff you read twice, (and that was only the best) impresses you as the greatest. So much for Golden Ages. It is easy to point out certain stories as crud, and condemn entire eras. It is far better and more profitable to list the best stories of any period so that all may enjoy them. This is what anthologies fail to do satisfactorily--though they do pick up a lot of good stuff, they skip around a lot more through editorial prejudice and commercial considerations. Keep up your debate with Hamlin, though, as a lot is learned from them. However, I boggle at his including Ray Palmer's AMAZINGS in with good stf. Gernsback and Sloane's AMAZINGs, yes, but not with Palmer's. Your own rebuttal is good, but you condemn "space opera" too much. What is more important to the future of mankind than the conquest of space? Oh, there are important problems, but they are not strictly science fiction subjects. I don't condemn "gadgets". "Gadgets" will change the world, in spite of all the people who say they are unimportant. In fact they already have. Aren't TV, the atom bomb, the jet plane, the rocket, all "gadgets"? Old time stf predicted them. What is mod-

ern SF predicting..besides psi, that is? I'd like to see more gadgets and ideas in SF today, not fewer. Good grief, I'm still on MEG #2. The letters are interesting, I'm one who thinks Campbell's ASTOUNDINGS after 1938 were not as interesting as Tremaina's from 1934-38. I think the main fault is that Campbell ~~is~~ always trying to prove something. It's always something different, but it's always something. It gets in the way of his plots. His own space epics (not space opera) were very good, though. MEG is different enough to be interesting. One thing I wish someone would make an effort to standardize: the ratings on fanzine reviews. Some are 1 is best, some are 10 is best.

MEG #3. Mike Deckinger is your best columnist, and sticks to the point. Would like to see more historical stuff by Clay Hamlin, like on the bottom of page eight. Rapp's article is interesting, but unfortunately he's been proven wrong by FANTASTIC UNIVERSE folding. Large size ought to be the answer, as most mags displayed are large size (put it with MAD) but SATELLITE folded too. I'd like to see stf magazines large size again, with room for illustrations and features, but SATELLITE was pulpy looking inside. The best format was the old BLUE BOOK, with its non-glare paper and red and blue illos. (good stories too) Letters in #3 are interesting too. SKYLARK THREE is a better example of Smith than SKYLARK OF SPACE, which was written in 1919. I thought it was amateurish myself, when I read it in 1932 or thereabouts, but SKYLARK THREE and SPACEHOUNDS OF IPC, written in 1930 and 1931, are good stuff. Of course all science fiction is subject to obsolescence of the science, but when reading old stories you should forget this, since it is not the fault of the author, who at least had the courage to say something about the future, even if he knew it would be outdated in a few years. SF authors shouldn't play it safe by saying nothing, leave that to mainstream authors.

The worst thing about MEG is the spelling. So what do people do? They tell you about it, but do not give examples. How are you going to know what words you are spelling wrong, then? This is my pet peeve in fandom, unconstructive criticism. So if you will bare with me, I will point out the words that are wrong. A "sic list" is attached.

///The "sic list" of misspelling from GHOSTS #2 & #3 came out to 118 words...but youe ns weze shore well inpreive aur spalleng soz yhall won't griupa.

I personally favor the pulp size magazines. The large size is too clumsy and hard to handle. The pulp size is ideally suited for placing on the book shelf, or for binding hardback style. The large size mags have to be either layed out flat, or have special cases built. Then too, the large size magazines would probably be thin, with few pages (SATELLITE) even though there would be perhaps better illos. I believe though that any large size mag would have wide illo borders, and in that expanded size the tiny line work and the mistakes of same would show up more than in pulp or digest format.

It seems only natural to me that things should be rated as 1 for the best down to 10 as the last. (after all, you don't remember hearing of any winners that came in tenth now do you?)

Your paragraph on the "golden age" is somewhat dijointed. I boggle at your inclusion of the Sloane and Gernsback AMAZINGS as good science fiction. Usually the very early AMAZINGS were written with Science fiction, and in somewhat archaia style, with bad plotting and no characterization. I can enjoy SO, but the thirties had so much poorly done stuff in the SO line, that the good is flooded under the bad. I condemn the use of gadgets in such baddly written stories. Somehow the use of AA Space Hero's brilliant space discinegrater (which he whipped up just a page ago) to mow 'em down, and then ole AA proceeding to whip up another two or three other gadgets for good measure is not my idea of how gadgets should be handled. I like a well written gadget-problem story, about like the ones presented in the pre-psi ASTOUNDING. Gadgets, or rather gadgety presented and written carefully and done well in a story can be enjoyabbe and even memorible, however all too often the gadget plays second place, and the story and the use of the gadget are bad. As for new ideas and predictions, I advertise F&SF to you, it seems to be coming along rather well. As soon as Campbell ruins ASTOUNDING with psi, and discards it, we can point with pride again to ASTOUNDING for new ideas and good stories too.///

Al Andrews, 1659 Lakewood Drive, Birmingham 9, Ala.

I didn't touch on your column, The Writings of a Confarmed Cynic, but I was saving it till last so I could get in some licks of my own. Actually, you are both wrong. I sold a SF yarn in 1956, so obviously nothing before that time was any good, and I haven't written one since, so obviously nothing after that time has been any good. See how clear

it all becomes once you get the facts? However, there have been some who have chosen to doubt this Great Truth (fake-fans, all of them!), so I am willing to consider other possible solutions. Kidding aside, I don't know what dates you have set as the Golden Era ///the years under question are 1930-38///, but there has been good material in all eras. And also you would have to set a fine definition of science fiction to eliminate a great deal of material. In the old days there was a lot of shoddy science and a lot of science that simply became outdated, but I'm not too interested in the careful science in fiction because I read SF for entertainment, not an education. In all fairness I'm not sure one can make an honest comparison between old and new SF. There are too many different aspects. Today we have more careful treatment of characterization, while in the old days the story plot was the thing that counted. I think Merritt should be praised for his works in relation to his own era, and not be stretched into modern times. For example, his characterization in BURN, WITCH, BURN is hopelessly stereotyped, yet for sheer descriptive beauty his THE METAL MONSTERS is seldom matched. Clay states that Merritt is responsible for "two distinct types of stories, as examples, BURN WITCH BURN and MOON POOL." To some extent this is true, but the minute people had been explored long before. Andrew Marvell's THE MINUTE MAN (in FFM) may antedate Merritt, or we could go back to Jonathan Swift's GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, although the latter was basically a political satire with a slight fantasy element. But then, why single out Merritt in the first place, for he didn't write SF; HE WROTE FANTASY, and I doubt if you can even stretch it and call it science-fantasy. Read some of the book reviews by James Blish in SF TIMES on Merritt's works, and you will see that Merritt by modern standards and comparison is a shoddy hack, BUT considering Merritt in his own era, he was a clever and often stimulating writer. I'm reading ALLAN AND THE ICE GODS (H. Rider Haggard) at present and enjoying it, but I certainly am not trying to compare it with, say, some of the works of Chad Oliver. I read Haggard for Haggard and in consideration of his era. It is foolish to do otherwise.

On the otherhand, modern SF has its bad and good points. Take a run of GALAXY (after its first couple of years) and you will find it a dreary and tedious exercise in formula writing and slick, but dry reading. F&SF went through a stage of cute-fantasy that reached a point of sickening, and it is now seemingly in the throes of often incredibly light social-satires. Campbell found psi and went ga ga. AMAZING has come up nicely, with better stories and fine full-length novels. A few years ago Fairman had FANTASTIC carrying delightful light fantasy that was readable and very catchy. Poor ole Damon Knight still can't hold a job; booted from IF in the sale to Guinn, and now Gold is stocking IF with GALAXY rejects. But through it all some fine material comes through now and then. Take the all Fritz Leiber issue of FANTASTIC.

I think the only safe and sane path is read the material of all eras, but read them for and with the consideration of when they were written. I have a rather extensive collection from many different years, and I enjoy it all. But I check the date and read from that standpoint. This is all for now.

///Much of your letter stands alone, however, I disagree somewhat with your opinions of the current magazines. I consider F&SF to be a pretty good mag, improving too, I suspect that it will move in on the no-1 spot while Campbell is playing with his psi toys and will remain in that position. I don't, and didn't think too highly of Fairman as an editor. I think he brought AMAZING and FANTASTIC to about the worst spot the mag was ever in. His sex tales and crud fantasy in FANTASTIC surely didn't improve its popularity, and the hackish tales he ran in AMAZING were best ignored. I think the mags are doing extremely well to pull out of that slump as well and as soon as they have. Pre-Gold IF was a darn good mag, however now I think it's just one more lost GALAXY. Despite these drawbacks, good science fiction is still found in the mags. Even with psi, Campbell can catch some good ones, and GALAXY can put out some good shorts when Gold doesn't stress the format so much. The point of the eras and this argument is that, Clay defends the 1930 as the golden era, while I claim that today's stf is an improvement.///

Emile Greenleaf, 1309 Mystery St., New Orleans 19, La.

Art Rapp has some nice ideas on improving magazine sales. Too bad they never will be tried. But I disagree that magazine science fiction is necessarily doomed, I think the number of magazines may decline until there are three to five specialized mags. The crudzines are probably doomed, for most of their readership are of the TV-moron class. But I maintain that as long as there are individuals who prefer to read, there shall be magazines which cater to their interests. Perhaps we shall have to pay a

lot more for magazines, but if science fiction readers let the publishers know there is still a market, magazines will survive. I know that I am using a far-fetched analogy, but do you think the CONFIDENTIAL crowd puts much money into the pocket of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN? Hell no! The people who read thoughtful magazines are the ones who will continue to do so, no matter how many others make themselves literate in the name of TV. Campbell has built himself a faithful readership by putting out a magazine which is way over the heads of the I LOVE LUCY crowd, and for that matter, over the heads of most of the readership of the supposedly intelligent magazines like TIME. The readers of ASTOUNDING are the type of people who might read SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN for facts and science, and ASF for relaxation and speculation. If Campbell has been able to find and hold a particular section of the literate population, why can't editors appeal to a slightly different portion of the reading public, who would prefer a somewhat different style of science fiction?

///You pose an interesting question, and one that I don't actually know any answer to. Each magazine has its own reading public, and each is slanted to a different segment of the reading public, but I don't know of any that reached the popularity of Campbell's ASTOUNDING and remained popular as long. Perhaps WEIRD TALES, FFM, FN and ARGOSY. I wonder though, if it could happen today, with the higher printing and distribution costs. I had meant to print some other letters on Art Rapp's article, however the pile I had layed out on the table has somehow disappeared. Just enough room anyway to finish with one more letter. No comment will follow it, since it makes sort of a good ending///

Art Rapp, RA36886935, Fb, 1st Msl Bn, 40th Arty, Fort Bliss, Texas

I was somewhat enchanted to unexpectedly receive the GHOST #3 today. And after reading it, I believe I am more enchanted than disenchanting, which, as fanzine comment goes, is indeed praising with faint damns.

Okay...you're now waiting for me to tell you what a fine zine you publish. Being a surly sort, I refuse to oblige. Actually, you publish a fairly cruddy fanzine. But on the other hand, yours is the first one I've seen in months that shows potentialities of becoming a real leader in the fanzine field. In the first place, you're interested in SF; too large a part of the current crop of fanpublishers are interested only in fandom, or even in their own personal clique of fannish acquaintances. A fan-fandom zine can be fun to publish and read, but it's like a newspaper, interesting today and fit only to wrap garbage tomorrow. On the other hand, a fanzine that is aimed at people's share your interest in SF has a more enduring interest, and also keeps turning up new writers and commenters with ideas that would never see print if you depended upon only your own little group of pals.

I'd like to claw my way into this argument about the Golden Age of SF, except that, stopping to consider the matter, I'm more than a little confused about which era I would nominate. (It is very difficult to make an objective evaluation: naturally, when you discover stf, the stuff you read first makes a terrific impact on you, giving you a breathless sense of wonder that seldom occurs afterward, when you are more familiar with the concepts and assumptions of the stf field.) Trying to narrow down the field, I'd rule out pre-1935 and post-1955 SF. True, there were some tremendous tales written in either of those eras, but generally, the early stf was stodgy and crudely written, depending on science to carry the plot, rather than characterization. Unfortunately, since 1955 the pendulum has swung the other way, and most SF written today is an attempt to imitate the "literate" short story technique of the advent grade magazines, with a few stereotyped SF notions thrown in. This is not altogether bad; if SF is ever to become accepted by the general public, it has to more or less adopt the conventions of mundane writing.

Well, I guess I'd award the title to the period of 1938-56, when the writers themselves first realized that SF wasn't just a field for hack pulpzines, and begin taking their art seriously. They and their readers had a vast respect for the traditions of the early days, but they also realized that the fascination of SF lay in how progress and technology would effect people. The "names" were just getting the feel of their craft, and were experimenting with language and technique and ideas. And of course WWII began, and the mood of the readers was receptive to SF, because one effect of the war was to accelerate technology and social change, not to mention inspiring thought about what the future might hold.

Definitely today is not the golden age of SF. In fact, it might even be the twilight age of SF. I hate to be pessimistic, but I think the chances are about 50-50 that in another twenty years stf in magazine form may be as obsolete as the Nick Carter wild west pulps. Oh, there'll still be SF, but it won't be a specialized branch of writing any more. It'll just be a variant form of the novel.

It'll be downright respectable.

But then it won't be near as much fun for us oddball types who go around looking for Golden Ages and a Sense of Wonder.

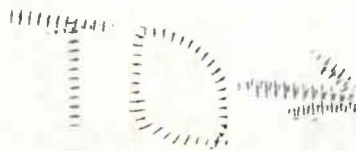
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