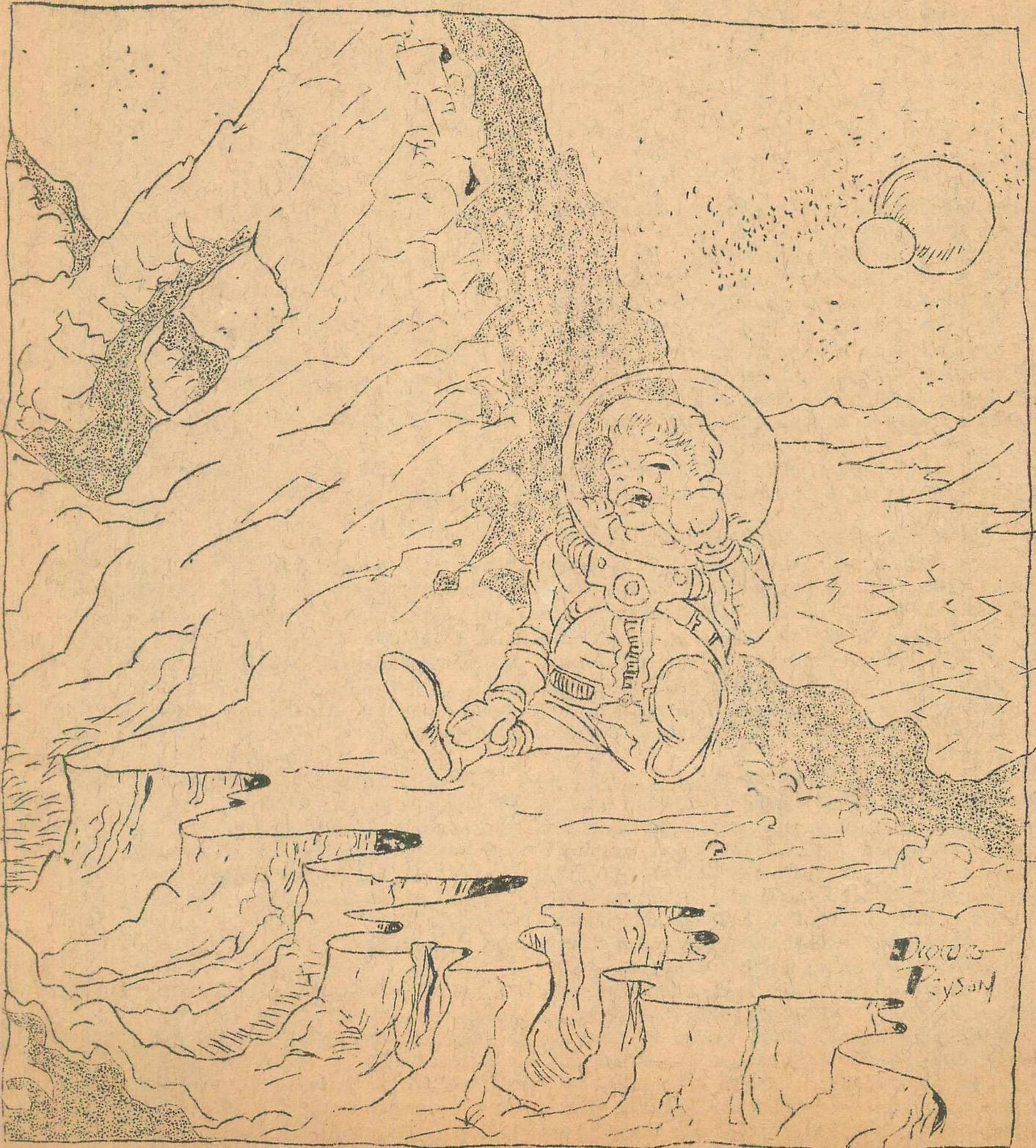


FANTASY ASPECTS

15¢

3. NOVEMBER
1959



THE EDITOR JAWS



Before proceeding, let's get our Identification out of the way.

This is Fantasy Aspects #3

This is a Galactic Press Publication.

This is a Fancy-footed F/R #71-3333495

This is a Sweet of Snow publication.

And, this is a labour of love, like.

Besides which, despite what G.M. Carr

says, this is Fandom's only reprint fanzine.

Reprint subscription (what's thens?) fanzine.

This being taken care of, I shall proceed and hang the consequences! In the interests of clarity and such, I shall entertain a question and answer period.

WHAT'S THAT FUNNY MAN DOING UP THERE?

He's staggering home from his 71st Convention. He's headed toward his liquor cabinet and then for his typer. He's also there to remind everyone, including myself that I was at the Detention and had a riotous time, including Bloch's speech, P. 19.

WHAT'S ALL THIS "WE HAVE A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE BUSINESS"?

It shows when I listen to Harlan Ellison at Conventions, I really listen.

WELL THEN, HOW COME IT'S PRINTED UP THERE?

Mainly because I change the heading there every issue; only nobody notices.

WHICH IS THE REASON YOU'RE MENTIONING IT HERE?

Exactly!

WHAT HAPPENED THERE ON MUSIC FOR THE FAN? THE PAGE SEEMS TO BE ALL GOOFED UP. I THOUGHT YOU THOUGHT YOUR MIMEOING WAS PRETTY HOT, OR SOMETHING.

I did. But that page was done way last May, after the last issue. At least, the heading was done. But I didn't get around to finishing the issue until November, and by that time the stencil had gotten all dried out and it tore more easily than usual when I worked on it. So you see, there was nothing I could do. Well, was there?

YOU COULD ALWAYS PUT YOUR ISSUES OUT MORE FREQUENTLY!

Go wash your mouth out with soap! Any other questions?

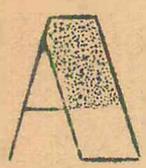
SURE. WHAT ABOUT TEMPER PARATUS.....

Oh that...haha. Art Rapp stenciled his own stuff so any typos there aren't to be credited to me. I will admit to the others, though.

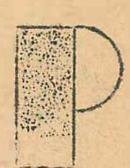
THAT WASN'T WHAT I WAS GOING TO MENTION AT ALL. I WAS COMMENTING ON THE NICE FORMAT. NOW, OF COURSE, I WON'T MENTION IT. BUT WHERE DID YOU FIND ART RAPP?

Art? Oh, I found him in S&P and sent him a couple of Postwarps, the N&F letterzine and when he commented, I asked him to do a column. Why, I even got him more active. He's in the N&F now, and turning stuff out by the ton for the manuscript Bureau. At least, that's what I'm told. 2

we have a social conscience

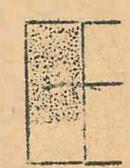
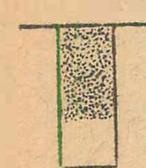


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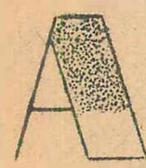
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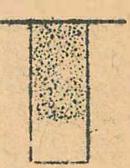
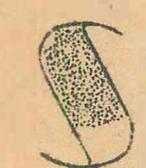


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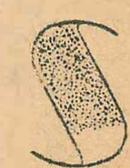
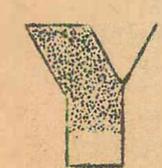
Column

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Detention, 1959

illos by Bjo

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--ooOoo--

This is FANTASY ASPECTS #3, edited by Alen J. Lewis. FA is issued by whim and caprices, and mainly when I get enough money together, plus the necessary amount of enthusiasm. Subs are 15¢ and 8@ \$1.00. You are urged to take the latter course of action. Send to 4550 West Maple Road, Birmingham, Michigan. Bob Lambeck wants me to say that this is being put out by the vanguard of Ninth Fandom, but I really don't believe him--do you?

CHRIST:

AN AUTOBIO- GRAPHY

rodger p. graham

There was a man in Canada who claimed seriously to dislike Roger P. Graham, and to be in almost constant telepathic contact with Rog Phillips; a woman in Los Angeles who proved by letter and verse from the Matrix stories that Rog Phillips was perhaps the greatest "adept" of modern times; a man in Virginia who published an announcement that Rog Phillips is the incarnation of an Archangel; and a man in St. Paul who was genuinely surprised that any of the stories by R. P. Graham were anything but straight science fiction and fantasy.

There was a young man in a southern state who thought he was taking his life in his hands in writing me, and took careful precautions to prevent my killing him. He had penetrated the secret message in "So Shall Ye Reap", and was demanding to be included among those who went into the radio-active-proof artificial caves being constructed to house mankind. He had written all this down and given it to an unnamed friend to hold, to be turned over to the police if he met with some mysterious death instead of getting a ticket to the caves. There was a young lady in Michigan who wrote after the announcement of a Russian atom bomb being exploded in Siberia that she and a few others now knew that "So Shall Ye Reap" was true, and when I answered her telling her that I, who wrote the story, didn't believe it was true, she answered thanking me for trying to reassure her, but she still knew it was true -- facts were facts.

Those are a few, a very few, of the letters I have received, or that Ziff-Davis has received and I have read, that my stories and articles have given rise to. They have nothing to do with the Shaver Mystery. From the very start of my writing I have consistently steered clear of sounding like Shaver -- not for any personal reason, but simply because a second fiddle, no matter how sweet, is always a second fiddle.

By far the majority of my mail, mail from people who have never written me before, has been sensible and ordinary. I've made many friends through that mail. A good many of you reading this article have written me at some time or another, and some of you have letters from me in your files. A few of you know me personally or have met me in person. Or maybe more than a few. Probably at least 50 of you. So I'm quite sure I won't be starting a feud or creating a misunderstanding in this article, in which I am going to tell about some of the more unusual contacts and experiences I have had on account of my writing.

The most unusual by far was a young lady who lives near San Francisco. A letter from her came to Ziff-Davis two years ago. At that time I wasn't so snowed under with correspondence, and was answering most of my mail. I wrote her a thank-you letter for her kind words about my stories, since the letter had been sent to me personally. I received another letter from her immediately. I would have scratched it off as "crackpot", but that night I had a very vivid dream in which I saw her face. The next morning when I woke up I had the conviction it had been she.

I wrote and frankly told her of the dream, and said I was interested in such phenomena that might have evidence of supernatural things such as esp, and would she

send me her picture so I could compare it with the face in the dream. She refused, but countered by asking for my picture. I happened to have two snapshots of me in my office, one sitting at my typer, the other of me lying on my davenport. I took them out of the drawer and studied each, trying to decide which one to send her. I looked at the one of me sitting at the typer. My eyes went to the legs, and a thought entered my mind that they were the legs of a cripple. I frowned at the thought, stretched out on the davenport and the thought returned. "Those are the legs of a cripple." It wasn't so, and the thought was irrational. But I've had a good many experiences with esp, and this thought had the "feel".

The trouble with genuine esp is that more often than not it comes disguised by one's own thoughts, and it's a problem for Freud to get underneath the symbolism of one's own mind and get to the real impressions. I reasoned, "Since I am definitely not crippled, could this mean that she is?" I took the gamble and wrote her, saying I thought she was an invalid in some way, perhaps unable to walk. She answered that I was correct up to a certain point. By this time she had apparently fallen for me, and was comparing the two of us to Browning and his invalid girl-friend. It was about this time I was preparing to spend a winter in Los Angeles. I decided I would drop up and see her -- not for the romantic element, it says here, but in an investigation of this pay dirt in esp that I had stumbled onto. I had another dream in which I saw her. I also saw a strange face that looked like it might belong to a Filipino.

To make a long story shorter, I did go up and visit her, staying for several days. Her features, so vividly etched into my mind through those two dreams, were exactly as I had seen them in every detail. The first time I saw her in the flesh she was looking out a window as my taxi drove up, and I recognized her. It was genuine esp, over a distance of 2400 miles.

And here are where the subtle changes in esp come in. Instead of her legs being cut off or paralyzed or anything like that, she had heart trouble in an advanced stage that prevented her from staying out of bed more than a few minutes at a time. She was not given more than a few months more to live.

But the moment I arrived I "felt" that something wasn't quite kosher. I couldn't lay my finger on it. I had already discovered that she believed that all dreams were genuine psychic experiences with an objective existence on spiritual planes. She was all mixed up, and there wasn't much that could be done on that score.

I went to town alone one day, just to get away and think things out. In town I had my second surprise, and one that I can't explain. I got into a poker game, lost a few bucks, and then wandered down the street. I met and passed the Filipino I had seen in that dream in Chicago, as authentic in every facial detail as this girl's features had been.

I went back to her house still undecided about things. Then she really let her hair down and I discovered what had been bothering me. She had a certain ability at esp, but the combination of that and unrestricted dreaming with the belief that they were all the same and objectively real, had led her to a pretty absurd goal.

She believed I was the incarnation of Christ, and that I had chosen her as the instrument to prove my Identity to the world. She was going to die and be pronounced dead by the doctors. In three days after she died I was going to raise her from the dead, and she was going to be my disciple, and all the world was going to accept me as Christ.

Under my breath I said "Christ!" and made a graceful exit. A fortunately timed letter was my excuse for hurrying back to LA. She was a die-hard, and for a year after I got letters from her in which she imagined I was still talking to her via the astral planes. It was a close call. One thing I must not do is let the world know I'm Christ. That business is too competitive. There are fewer good writers in the World today than Christs, and more demand for them. John L. Astley-Cock, one of the associate editors of the Chicago Tribune came out and had lunch with me a couple of months ago. During the course of our conversation he mentioned that an average of a Christ a week walks in and demands the Trib announce his Presence to the world. Some of them get quite bitter about all the imitators that gum things up. I thought of my experience and said "ha ha" quite hollowly into my coffee cup.

The second most remarkable experience brought to me through my correspondence was a letter from Dick Shaver when he lived at Barto, Pennsylvania, and I lived on the west coast. The letter's contents weren't unusual. I was home alone except for my dog, a wire-haired terrior, since deceased. I don't know how to explain what happened and I can't make head or tails of it, so I'll tell it just the way it happened. I brought my mail into the kitchen and laid it down on the drainboard. Pepper was standing there wagging his tail, looking up at me. I opened Dick's letter. Something seemed to jump out of it. Pepper backed up, then ran into the front room like the devil was after him.

I "sensed" that something came to a pause in front of me about two feet off the floor. I focused my eyes carefully where I "knew" the something to be. My eyes could see absolutely nothing at any time, yet I followed this something from the kitchen into the front room, studying my "impressions" of it. It either had no size or was no larger than an insect, and invisible. I "sensed" a shrill whining like a high speed machine. When I went into the living room Pepper tried to hide behind a chair, whining in intense fear. He ran about the room like he was having a fear fit. I followed this something around, bending over and trying to make out at least some visible evidence of it, always "knowing" its exact location, as did Pepper.

It was there for half an hour, and then suddenly was gone, and never returned. The instant I "felt" it leave, Pepper quieted down and wasn't afraid any more, though apprehensive for an hour or two afterward. His reactions preclude the possibility of this being my imagination; but of course this is a personal experience of no value evidently to myself. I've often wondered what it could have been. Some phenomenon connected with Shaver and his caves? Probably. Whatever it was, it arrived inside an ordinary letter that contained nothing unusual and was purely friendly chitchat from Shaver.

Once several years ago, Ray Palmer and I almost got into some trouble over a guy who had spent his life concocting a theory about the origin of planets and solar systems. We listened to his theory. It had many sound things in it and many not so sound. We couldn't do anything with it though, and several months later a story that appeared in Amazing had some stuff in it vaguely similar to his. He threatened to sue Ray, and although he didn't it taught me a lesson never to read supposedly original stuff from strangers. So when I got a letter from someone all hot to become my partner to solve all the mysteries of the universe I felt very uncomfortable and spent several days wondering what to do about it. During these several days he wrote several dozen pages expounding all his theories -- which I didn't read. Finally I returned the to him with a brief note saying that since I was also engaged in research parallel to his I couldn't either read his unpublished stuff or discuss my own unpublished stuff with him, because ownership would be infringed if any of it coincided. I mention that because it was a good idea, and some of you might benefit by it yourselves if you ever get in a similar situation.

My third most unusual letter came to me without being mailed. It was back in the days when the deCourcies were in Seattle cultivating my friendship so they could sell Ray Palmer stories. They were dangling their "bait" in front of my eyes -- a mysterious spirit that talked through Jack deCourcy and made all sorts of claims. Later Jack and Dot asserted in an open letter to fandom that this spirit Joe was a hoax they had used to sell stories but - well, listen to this:

I had dropped over to their place in the housing center at White Center in West Seattle. Dot said to Jack, "Maybe we should - " and Jack said, "No, we should wait. Joe doesn't want us to." Dot said, "But if we wait until it happens how could never be sure we hadn't written it then instead of now." Jack said, "He didn't write it. Joe did. But you have something there. Maybe we should give it to him sealed, to open when we tell him." Dot said, "But if we let him read it now he can have that encouragement." To which Jack said, "You're right."

He went into the bedroom and brought out a sheet of paper. It was signed "Joe", and said my wife would be released from the hospital on a certain definite date that was about three months away at the time. (I was married then but not now.)

On my next visit to the hospital I asked the doctors if they had any idea when

she could be released from the hospital. They hadn't. I mentioned this date. The doctor said, "Most emphatically no. Her improvement would have to be miraculous."

On the exact date predicted by this hoax "Joe" she was released from the hospital. To make it ever cuter, her recovery had been so good that the doctors had planned on releasing her a week earlier than that date, but at the last minute decided to keep her another week to make sure there would be no relapse.

Some of my most interesting mail has come from the female of the species. There have been outright proposals of marriage, but more often just nice letters with a (Miss) before their names. Usually, of the ones I've answered, they turn out to be young ladies who have no thought of marrying Rog Phillips. The female mind is adroitly "transparent" in that respect, and can find more ways of saying something without saying it than any null-A I ever heard of.

In spite of the fact that my mother and father married after having only corresponded, the idea doesn't particularly appeal to me. (My dad was in the Spanish-American War, and one of his buddies had a sister. Since my dad didn't get any mail, this buddy talked him and his sister into writing each other, and when the war was over my dad went up to Christmas Illinois respendant in his army uniform and handlebar moustache, so naturally Mom was a pushover.) A girl that falls in love with me from reading my stories is falling for a different man than she'll ever meet in the flesh. He is a part of my mind that hides, for the most part, when others are around. Even noise or troubles cause it to pull in its head. It manifests itself only through my fingers on the typewriter. So any girl that falls for that part of me is in for a sad awakening when and if she meets me. Knowing this, I feel it's like carrying on a romance by proxy for a guy who will run and leave me holding the bag - get it? I just got it myself; that's why I asked.

For the most part letters are extremely pleasant to get. I have received two letters that made me extremely uncomfortable. They were over the CLUB HOUSE. The first was from a postal employee in Canada who took me to task over a statement I made in my column about Canadian discrimination against US magazines. He accused me of deliberately and criminally trying to upset diplomatic relations between Canada and the US, which had been amicable up to then.

The other upsetting letter was from a Britisher who from his wording was writing for his Great American Public, although the letter was addressed to me. Its essence was that when I said in the CLUB HOUSE that "the statue of liberty was the only thing we ever got from any European country" I was alienating the affections and loyalty of all Europe -- and we Americans would need all the loyalty we could buy when Russia started in. He demanded that I publish his letter in the CLUB HOUSE. Naturally I didn't. All Europe including England (which I have never considered in the same breath with Europe in my own mind) will just have to keep on having its feelings hurt, and embrace the slavery of communism when the time comes, just to spite me, rather than fighting to maintain what freedom they have. (Rah, rah, rah our side!) ((it is blasphemy, no doubt, but I'll bet that some of the less semantic, or more sensible, Europeans have never heard of our boy Rog. -- Fran Laney))

I even got a letter a few years back from a fellow writer who was having marital troubles. He didn't love his wife, he said, and was in love with a wonderful girl in Denver whom he had never met but had been corresponding with. He wanted my (Rog Phillips') advice. It was tense. I just asked him, "Why don't you stop being a son of a bitch?" He showed my letter to his wife who agreed with me, or so he said. My reaction made him admire me so much he wanted to meet me in person - and my reaction to that was to move. (I had been thinking of moving anyway.)

Every once in a while I get a letter from some fan who seems to have the belief that I am the leader of stfandom and exert a tremendous influence, being able to use the CLUB HOUSE to exert pressure on fans. Two of these letters have been from fans "being run out of fandom by some sob" asking for my help to save them. Another was from a "fan" who had decided fandom was too tame lately and wanted to get another feud of some kind started, asking my help. He would write a hot open letter to fandom if I would write a hot reply. Obviously I have neither the ability nor the desire to exert any kind of pressure or disciplinary movement against any part of fandom. The

only exception to that is when I have exposed the reading public to possible mulchting in what seems to be a fraud. If and when that happens I will publish in the CLUB HOUSE just enough of a statement to warn the public against sending any money to the thing, to correct my previous boasts. Even there I can't do it if Howard Browne cuts it out. The particular case in question is the A.R.A. of Washington D.C.

Fan mail is the answer to my being able to so consistently sell my work. I've had rejections from publishers, but I have never written a story I haven't sold. I hear that other authors have their sacred pile of rejected stories that have made the rounds and been given up, their current half-dozen hopefuls that might be sold yet in the expanding market. I don't have a single reject hanging around, nor do I have any stories out "making the rounds". When I write a story it's sold. Fan mail has done that. There are two ways in which it had done it, besides the fan mail that comes in on a Rog Phillips story.

The first and most important way that fan mail has helped me is this: a great deal of my stuff is published under pen-names invented by the editors. The stories are apparently the work of brand new and unknown writers. Fan mail comes in giving the stories high rating and asking for more of that new author's stuff. That's the type of thing that boosts my stock with editors. There have even been times when fan letters have placed the "new" author way above Rog Phillips -- and by fans I know, who would be very surprised to learn I was this other author too!

The second way in which fan mail has helped me follows the same pattern but with a different angle. As often as not Ziff-Davis and Clark buy my stories without reading them. They know they can do so safely because if a story were to prove too poor for publication I would make it good with another story of the same wordage without protest. And when I say too poor for publication, I mean in the editor's opinion. There was one story bought without reading it, and when the magazine was being put together it was behind schedule. They took a chance and sent the manuscript to the typesetters without reading it until they got the page proofs to correct. Then they read it and were horrified. It violated every rule of writing. It was definitely no good. They got me on the phone. I rushed right down and read it myself. I had to agree with them. It was absolutely no good. But there was nothing that could be done. It was set in type; there wasn't time to replace it, let alone stand for a bawling out from the front office for wasted typesetting. I was set to work on the problem of "saving" the story in some way by minor cutting out and equally minor corrections that could be rushed through the typesetters. I couldn't find anything that could be cut out and improve the story. One of the editors and I cooked up a couple of paragraphs, one in the middle of the story and one at the end. Also the name of the author was changed. Fan mail rated the story excellent, and objected only to the two paragraphs we had inserted!

Speaking of that, I got a big kick out of the fan mail published in TWS on my story "Quite Logical". That story had originally been 11,000 words. Sam sent it back saying he wanted it if I could cut it to 9000. I didn't see how it could be done, but did it and sent it back to him. I got it back with a note saying they would buy it if I cut it to 6500. I had already done all the cutting in the first half. I still refused to change a word in the last half, the descent on Washington and the White House. I cut the damn thing to 6500. Sam bought it. One of the fan letters published said it was cut too much in the first half!

There are two more letters I think will amuse you. One came to Ziff-Davis from a large radio and TV production agency in New York. It said that this agency was desirous of entering into the stf field, and in surveying the market had settled on two authors they wanted to contact first, and requested their addresses. The authors' names were Rog Phillips and Craig Browning.

Howard Browne called me on the phone and read the letter, suggesting that I answer. My answer was very short: "Dear Sir: Inasmuch as I am both of these authors your task is much simplified. Yours truly, R. P. Graham.

They called me long distance the moment they received my letter. And at this writing it seems fairly certain I will be having a half hour TV stf show before long. I've written the first three stories for this series, the first of which appears in

the first issue of "Imagination" on the stands August 1st. A Fog Phillips story.

By nature I'm a skeptic, so I'll not really believe this show will go on the air until I see it --and when I see that show it will be my greatest thrill since my first cover story "So Shall Ye Keep".

I've spoken in this article of a couple of mysteries in connection with the letters I've received. The biggest mystery to me is why my writings are popular. I think that is the big mystery to all writers who sell. At the start I recognised a definite cycle to successful writers: (a) the period of learning to write and finally selling, (b) the period of success during which stories create favorable reader response but the writer doesn't know why, and (c) the decline, during which the writer is doing better work than ever before but it's unpopular or creates no response. I've realised I was vulnerable so long as I didn't know why my stuff was popular, and have tried to isolate that factor which made a story popular. Not having ever found it, I'm still vulnerable. I may often sound like an egomaniac, but with each story I write I pause to frown and consciously realise my vulnerability, and to admit to myself that with this story my decline may be starting, with me helpless to prevent it.

Consequently, when I receive a letter like the one I'm going to quote verbatim, I feel very good about it. It came with my latest check from Z-D, and was written by Howard Browne. It was:

Dear author:

Christ, if I could only write as good as you!

Your sincere admirer,

J. Wellington Flutch
Editor

And as soon as Howard finds I've made public his letter I will be fired.
Roger.

←(Underlined quotations are H. C. Koenig's.)→

QUOTATIONS AND COMMENTS

by

"The Outsider"

* FROM "A SONG TO LESLIE" IN "FUTURART"

"Lady: I do not sing
I string a tangle ---
Leslie: I do not stare
I trip and strangle".

It's not a bad idea

* FROM "SEX IN STF" IN "THE FANTASY FAN" VOLUME 3, NUMBER 11.

"We need sex. We have sex. Sex is us. We are sex. We are sexual."

Migawd; we have a Gertrude Stein in Science Fiction.

MUSIC

FOR THE

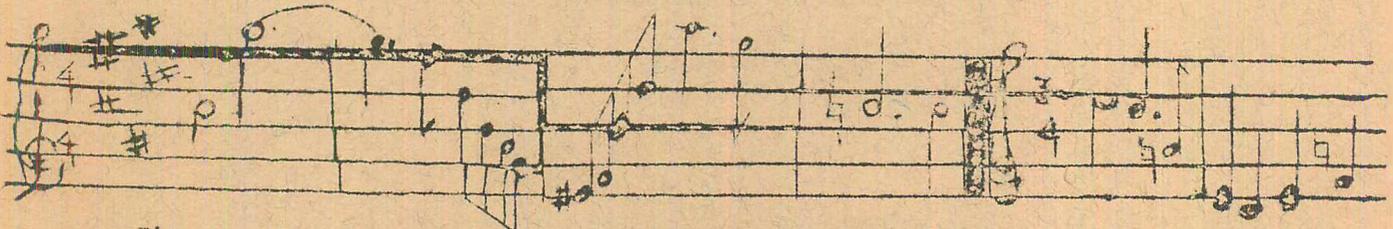
Harry FANN part warner the jr first

"The real possibilities offered by radio haven't begun to be explored yet.The musically minded fan can find some unique way of running in his pet pieces with fantasy....." from the published writings of Robert W. Lowndes.

And so, if I don't meet with too tremendous indifference, I shall discourse now and then on some music. I can't promise to talk only about pieces that have honest and truly fantastic programs, but shall try to stick to them for the most part, and of course shall steer clear of chestnuts like "A Night on Bald Mountain" and "Danse Macabre".

(1)

(2)



I'm no authority on American Opera, but of those I know, "Aone" by the late Horatio Parker, is my favorite. It won a ten thousand dollar prize offered by the Metropolitan Opera Company for the best native opera, thirty years ago, was performed a few times the first season, immensely liked by critics and audiences, and has not appeared in the opera house since there, and rarely elsewhere. This caused a great deal of scandalized comment: some said the Met's management just didn't like American music, and others insisting that the singers sabotaged the performances. Irregardless, you just don't hear it today.

The plot is simple. The time is nineteen centuries ago, in Britian under Roman rule. In a forest hut live Mya and Arta; their son, Gloom; their foster-daughter, Aone (whom they found in the forest as a baby, and adopted because she bore as a birth-mark the sacred sign of the Great Name); and Ariel, a changeling. Gwynn, in reality son of the Governor of Britian, living here disguised as a Briton in an effort to quell revolt, is in love with Aone. She loves him, but

believes herself destined for greater things--an independent Britian. She tells of a dream she has repeatedly: she walks between a forest and a raging sea, driving back the waters with a sword; a faceless figure comes, attempts to wrest the sword from her, she slays it, and the waters overwhelm her. She cannot decide what this means: the forest is clearly Britian, the sea Rome--but how does the faceless figure fit in? Arth has killed one of the Roman army of occupation, and displays the sword. It is the one she had dreamed of! She wields it enthusiastically, and accidentally wounds Gwynn slightly--"By that same blade, it is thy doom to die", Gloom prophesies to Gwynn. A Bard (the term had religious significance then) enters, tells that Mona has been chosen leader of the rebellion, and all including Gwynn swear an oath of secrecy. His attempts to quell the rebellion are futile. He meets his father, who wishes to nip the rebels in the bud, and persuades him to wait a little: perhaps bloodshed can yet be averted. Gwynn finds Mona alone, overwhelms her by his physical self and being and at the crucial moment, as she has decided to forget dreams of glory and be his, mentions Britian. Her patriotism inflames, she causes him to be taken prisoner, and the attack is to be made at once. She has learned of his Roman birth and fears treachery. The revolt is completely wrecked by overwhelmingly powerful Roman forces. Arth is killed, Gloom wounded, and in the excitement Gwynn escapes. Mona wails that she has failed to fulfill her destiny. Gloom pierdes the hypocrisy: he tells her what she has done was merely a girl's vanity and dream--God and Britian really had nothing to do with it; and he has not followed a Cause; he wanted Mona for himself. ".....we dress ourselves In decencies of motive, day by day, Til our own hearts hide from us and we march On proudly, leading God. Oh, we believe Our high words while we speak them! No desire For praise in Mona, nor in me for her-- All was for Britian!" Gwynn rushes in, urges them to save themselves, and reveals himself as the son of the Governor and not the traitor Mona believes him to be. She will not listen, believing his words merely more lies. At last she cunningly stabs him--the two prophecies of the first scene of the opera are fulfilled as Gwynn dies. The Governor comes on and finds his son's body; furious, he confirms Gwynn's words as the truth, while Nial sees Gwynn's soul shimmering high in the air, as if waiting and watching. The defeated are taken prisoner, and Mona realizes the whole truth. She rationalizes the situation: "I have done only what I must have done, Being myself, holding by my own sight And my own blindness. I have sought beyond Love, and above beauty, turning away From God to point what way the world should go, Scorning my life because I found it fair, Following the white fire of endeavor down Under the last horizon, where stars fall, And the sea takes me, and the night ends all, And the brave deeds I was too brave to do Slumber, forgotten..... I have had dreams, Only great dreams! A woman would have won!"

First of all, the opera has a good libretto. It contains no truly great poetry, but it was obviously written by someone who knew opera and its problems.

But most important, of course, is Parker's music. The opera has been compared favorably with Debussy's "Pelleas and Melisande". Not being acquainted with that work, I can be of no help, but do insist "Mona" sounds like none of Debussy's music that I have heard. It might, rather, have been written by a Cesar Franck who did not spend most of his life as a church organist and composer. The most characteristic thing about the score is its absolute freedom from conventional harmonic treatment. It becomes atonal only for a page or two in the last act; elsewhere there is always a sense of key. But that sense of key is always shifting, changing. The opera might just as well be written in the key of C major throughout, and accidentals added wherever needed, for the changes in key come so fast that the signature would have to be altered every few bars to retain the traditional method of indicating key. (A compromise is instead effected, the signature changing only when the accidentals become numerous enough to be clumsy..) There are not a half-dozen full cadences in the entire work.

Parker adheres pretty closely to the leitmotif system. There are a dozen important themes, and numerous others of less significance. These are treated with the utmost freedom. On the preceding page I quote two. (1) is associated with Gwynn

and his workings for peace, and really has no basic form--it's a series of notes, altered and worked over in every conceivable way, much as Liszt's "Les Preludes" is constructed. This particular version occurs most frequently. (2) signifies doubt or uncertainty in general, and Mona's choice between Gwynn and Destiny in particular.

The main problem is to find a way to hear the music. If you aren't able to play the piano and so use the vocal score, published by Schirmer's, I don't know what to suggest. No excerpts from the opera were listed in two or three record catalogs I checked, and the only portion of the opera I've ever seen programmed for a concert is the short opening prelude. This, I suppose, is partly because there are very few passages effective for separate performance. There is a wonderful duet between Mona and Gwynn, perhaps equal to the love music in Tristan, which smoulders throughout with a restrained passionate, almost voluptuous ecstasy. Unfortunately, there is absolutely no point where it can be ended for concert performance. The prelude, before mentioned, though, would make an effective short number. The final ten or fifteen minutes of the opera belong to Mona, in a long musical peroration that inevitably is compared with the final scene of "Die Gotterdammerung", and suffers by the comparison. A full symphony orchestra and a soprano soloist with a tremendously powerful voice are needed. The only other thing in the opera remotely resembling an aria is a scene for Nial at the beginning of the second act; it might do, but I'm afraid would be ineffective out of its proper place in the opera. There are no long orchestral passages, or suitable choruses. It's a music drama, actually, and not an opera in the Italian tradition. (I forgot to mention some paragraphs back that the libretto was written as a protest against, of all things, suffrage for women!)

It isn't, naturally, a perfect opera, or the greatest ever written. There are faults. Parker's recitative, which at the climactic moments is superb, often descends to depths of mediocrity. The opera is so long as to be tiring, I believe, if presented uncut; however, there is no apparent redundancy or padding and cutting would be difficult. One scene between Mona and Gloom could be cut down without much dramatic or musical loss; that's about all. The music, especially Gwynn's, is written without much regard for the powers of vocal endurance--I don't know of a single living tenor who could sing his part ideally. Nial is a very ticklish problem; whoever sang his part would need to be a fine actor to prevent the role from being ridiculous.

In other words, try to learn more about the opera, and hear some of the music if you possibly can. Next issue, I shall attempt to prove that Offenbach's "Tales of Hoffmann" is something far more important and much better than the tinkling little light opera it's usually considered to be.

THE EDIPOR JAWS ** Continued from page 2

YOU'RE PRETTY PROUD ABOUT GETTING HIM INTO THE N3F, AREN'T YOU.

Why sure. Shouldn't I be?

ONLY A FOOL ~~OR~~ AND AN N3FER WOULD ASK THAT.

Quiet you, or I'll cut you off my mailing list.

SO WHAT? I DIDN'T PAY.

Quiet then. I'll pay your dues into the N3F. Now then, any other questions?

SURELY, MY GOOD FELLOW. WHY AM I CURSED WITH THIS?

Well, that comes for various reasons. I'll enumerate below.

issue

.....You paid, and your sub expires with/number..... If it's with this issue, please renew.

.....I trade with you for.....

.....Let's trade or something

.....You write religeously every issue, or something like. You are, tho, requested to subscribe. Watch out, tho; next issue I may start up a lettercol.

.....I want you to subscribe or write -- prefensably both. If you don't, the hand of fate may cut you off my list.

.....This really isn't anything except to tell you to turn to page 14

Homer

O A N D

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When I was considerably younger, fifteen cents would get me into the Saturday matinee at the local Grade B movie house, where the bill was invariably Buck Jones or Tom Mix or sometimes Hopalong Cassidy. Around the same time I came across a book in the public library titled Picture Stories from the Odyssey or some such. The author of this book had taken several of the juicier episodes from Homer--Cyclop's cave, the voyage to Hades, the Sirens, and retold them in a style shrewdly calculated to appeal to adolescents, each story being liberally sprinkled with pictures.

At first I was skeptical of the book, for I wondered why anybody in his right mind would care what happened to a bunch of Greeks who lived three thousand years ago. However, when I started browsing through it, I found that it was pretty nearly as good as Hopalong Cassidy. I had a feeling that between the epics of the wandering king and the adventures of the six-gunslinging plainsmen, there were certain identical elements. It was not until ten years later, when I was in college, unsuccessfully trying to write cheap fiction and doing some serious reading including E.V. Rieu's translation of the Odyssey when it first came out in a Penguin Edition, that the similarities became a little clearer to me.

Does it seem derogatory to compare Homer to those moderns who admittedly write only for money? It is not meant to be. In every age there is going to be a mass audience which demands an adventure story about a heroic wanderer who passes through the clutches of several women but who remains faithful to his One True Love, who travels with a band of usually faithful companions, who battles stormy seas (or dusty deserts), who is lavishly feted by royalty or aristocracy--and somebody is going to supply this demand. Homer, at any rate, has no monopoly on the plot. I have read this very story by Somerset Maugham at least twice, and once apiece by Nordoff and Hall, Jack London, and Edgar Rice Burroughs.

And is not Cassidy himself a wanderer, roaming with his faithful companions across the western plains, boosting whatever is good and squelching whatever is evil, and possibly searching for some lost, half-remembered home? At the end of every Hopalong picture I ever saw, there is a pink-checked prairie belle who grabs Bill Boyd by the arm and unsuccessfully tries to persuade him to stay.

Calypso couldn't hold her man either.

In the Odyssey, the goddess Athene serves as a device to rescue our hero from the opposing forces that threaten to crush him; and however excited we may become while Odysseus is facing Scylla and Charybdis, we know deep down inside that he is going to triumph just as we know that Hopalong--to consider the modern epic figure--is not going to cash in his chips before the cattle rustlers (or suitors, in Homer's version) do. Yet the storyteller must provide obstacles galore for the hero to overcome. These obstacles must come flying at the hero with the regularity of bullets from a carefully oiled Garrand; i.e., no sooner does Odysseus lose a lot of men at Ismarus than contrary winds come up and blow him off his course, his men eat Lotus and have to be dragged back to the ship, and on and on.

Every time one of these obstacles comes up, the hero must either quash it or be quashed himself--at least temporarily. As everybody who has ever tried writing a long plotted narrative knows, it is a good idea to have your hero lose out once in a while, or else your reader will say to himself, "Aw, this guy is too good--he always wins", and go back to watching television.

While, of course, the great Greek bard did not have to run competition with the roller derby, he nonetheless possessed a keen story-sense and knew how to use it to advantage. And so Odysseus inadvertently fails to prevent his men from eating the sacred oxen of the sun; all his men perish with the ship; he is stranded

on Calypso's island for seven years. One can imagine Homer's listeners sitting around their tables, their winecups forgotten, as they listen intently to the strumming of the lyre, captivated as the story unfolds, perhaps nodding their heads and wondering to themselves whether perhaps Odysseus isn't going to lose out after all.

It seems likely that our present-day magazine and movie writers have learned a good deal more from Homer than they care to admit--including that valuable storytelling device, the flashback, as employed in the Odyssey's narrative at the Phaeacian banquet. This device is, of course, extremely common in the current popular mystery or western. And personally I find Cyclops a far more believable human being than the wax-moustached saloonkeeper of the movies, who is really the varmint that's stealing the gold.

The difference, it seems to me, lies not so much in the elements of which both the Odyssey and its modern imitations are made, as in the fact that Homer--unlike whoever hacks out Universal's oat operas--was a consistently good writer. He sympathized with his characters, sympathized deeply. He even pities his villains, as Mr. Rieu points out in his highly readable introduction. Witness the compassion of the storyteller for the blinded Cyclops, alone and helpless, sadly fondling his last remaining ram.

Above all, the epic figure with whom the reader/listener can identify himself is highly important. It is no accident, I think, that the literatures of varied cultures have produced Beowulfs, Siegfrieds, and Perry Masons. Without the hero embodying everything that the frustrated reader would like to be, an epic becomes something else again. This even holds true for a modern adventure story, as a highly-paid pulp magazine editor explained to me one time as he mailed back a bright-eyed hopeful story of mine. For after all, an Odyssey without Odysseus would not have lasted twenty-nine hundred years.

THE EDITOR JAWS -- Continued from page 12

.....You're a Cultist.

.....I met you at the Detention, and was impressed enough to want to do this. Please subscribe.

.....I have a reason, which is:.....

.....You're the West Coast Al Lewis. Hi, Al.

FASCINATING, I'M SURE. WHAT NOW?

Okay, I'll ask the questions for a change. Why haven't you subscribed?

I'LL REPLY WITH ANOTHER QUESTION. WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS CRYING ABOUT SUBSCRIPTIONS WHEN ALMOST NO OTHER EDITOR DOES? ARE YOU PRIVILEGED?

As a matter of fact, yes. I have a very good reason. You see, I have a hidden expense with FANTASY ASPECTS. Besides that of publishing, I have that of getting old fanzines. There are very few fans who will send fanzines for the postage price. It takes money to buy them, and subscriptions are needed to take care of it.

I SUPPOSE YOU CAN GET OLD ISSUES. MAYBE YOU'RE PAYING TOO MUCH FOR THEM!

I don't think so. If I had the money I could buy 28 SPACEWAYS @ 20¢; 51 LE ZOMBIE for \$6.35; 31 SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRS for \$3.45; 9 FANFARE @ 20¢; 13 SCIENTI SNAPS @ 15¢, and many more like that. You see, I've been able to find an old fan who's selling out. But I need green stuff in order to buy these fanzines. This green stuff would come from subscriptions.

AND JUST WILL I GET OUT OF SUBSCRIBING?

Plenty! If I have these fanzines, I can reprint from them. Thus, for only \$1 you'll be able to read plenty of fanzine articles and stories that you'd never be able to see. Good stuff, too. For example, next issue there's a brilliant article by Ray Bradbury from SWEETNESS & LIGHT. That's what you'll get. I'm glad to see you're convinced. Now, give a few final words to our audience, okay?

SURE. GO THOU AND DO YE LIKEWISE. SUBSCRIBE TO FANTASY ASPECTS!

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t e m p e r p a r a t u s

...a column conducted by Arthur H. Rapp...

INTRODUCTION When, six months or so ago, I agreed to do a column for AI, it seemed like a minor chore; all I would have to do is sit down once every three months or so and dash off a few stencils full of opinionated chitchat. But as so many other columnists have discovered before me, the need to say something significant and/or sprightly is the surest way to dry up inspiration altogether. Consequently, rather than yield to the common impulse to ramble on about nothing, I will use this space to demonstrate how to write a fanzine book review. Or rather, I'll let Redd Boggs do the demonstrating.

The following first appeared in SPACEWARP for Feb 1949, & was subsequently reprinted in FAPANTHOLOGY (a FAPAzine) in Feb 1950. I've a vague impression that I first got my grubby claws on the article thru the NSF Manuscript Bureau, which at that time often came thru with some real prize items.

Lady of Flame

A BOOK REVIEW BY Redd Boggs

This guy, Thomas Marshall Connor, killed a man, see? He did him in with his Bare Hands. In an insanity of crimson wrath Thomas Connor slew his fiancee's lover -- and was executed for the crime.

This lovable character is the hero of Stanley G. Weinbaum's The Black Flame (Fantasy Press, P.O. Box 159, Reading, Pa., 1948, \$3.00), which is the story of what happens when Mister Connor fantastically regains consciousness a thousand years after being strapped in the hot-seat, to find himself in a New World that doesn't qualify for the adjective Brave. Somehow, a millenium hence, the people have lost the Babbitt energy and ambition that made America Great, and the murderer from the 20th Century discovers that he is a wolf among sheep, a plumb cultus lobo against whose brawny chest the pain-rays of the authorities bounce off like 88-millimeter shells off the noggin of Superman.

Sounds interesting, doesn't it? It isn't, very. You form a mental picture of rough, tough Thomas Connor rushing around, doing deeds of great heroism, oblivious of pain-rays and atomic bombs launched at him, slamming the autocrats of that era and generally setting the world to rights with supermanly savoir-faire. On the contrary, Tom Connor actually does exactly nothing about the deplorable state of 30th Century civilization! What a ghastly betrayal of science fiction tradition!

The way Weinbaum tells it -- and he, being the author, should know -- Thomas Connor is immediately arrested and imprisoned in the palace by Joaquin Smith, "The Master" of the Immortals who rule the world in that age. The Master decides that "killer" Connor's strength and strong will are just the factors needed to revitalize the sheep-like breed of that century. He commands that Connor go about doing his duty -- a lovely order that would please 9 out of 10 males, but Connor turns out to be the 10th male. Meantime, Connor's strength and good looks are admired by Margaret of Urbs, sister of Joaquin Smith, who claims the royal title of Princess and is called The Black Flame. She slinks onto the scene like Theda Bara and proceeds to act like slinky women are supposed to act. One might suppose that Joaquin Smith, anxious to revitalize the race, would welcome an affair between the otherwise-recalcitrant Connor and the Black Flame -- but on the contrary, he frowns upon such an eventuality. This whole interplay of contrariness leads to an impasse any way you look at it.

For some 100 pages this sorry display of stupidity continues. The Flame slinks, Connor sulks, and Joaquin Smith commands. Finally, the commoners revolt and plant an atomic bomb in the palace. There is no mushroom cloud, no particular damage, and apparently not a sign of hard radiation, but there's plenty of atomic fire so Connor has the opportunity to rescue Margaret of Urbs, a splendid he-man exploit -- only she really wasn't in any danger at all. Occasionally Connor also escapes various and sundry designs upon his own life by incredible dumb luck, not so much as lifting a finger, much less a fist. Ultimately, through some high-powered reasoning on the part of the Master, Connor is rewarded for doing nothing by being made an Immortal himself, whereupon he wins Margaret, too. He has come to love her passionately. She kissed him once, you see.

That is the story of The Black Flame. There are various subplots and further developments of the main plot, but these are as insipid as the main thread of the yarn. The book is easy-to-read stuff, characteristic of Weinbaum and, although he seems to take The Black Flame a bit more seriously than most of his pulp output, he doesn't seem to lack a sense of values on the subject. On the absolute scale, the book is tolerably good pulp material which Merwin would crow over if it were submitted to him brand-new for TWS. The writing compares unfavorably with some of Weinbaum's shorter work, but here and there it sparkles, and always it suffices to describe and evaluate the conventionalized future-world he has taken for a setting.

Incidentally, in addition to the story outlined above, there is a novelette included in the book. This story, "Dawn of Flame" describes an earlier adventure of Margaret of Urbs, in which she outwits a backwoodsman who stands against the Immortals' conquest of the Ozarks during the wars the Immortals fought against the barbarians of that age. The hillbilly hero, Hull Tarvish, is a straightforward characterization cut rather close to the Li'l Abner pattern, but he is more believable than Thomas Connor who, as has been intimated, is first revealed as a mentally unbalanced murderer, than as a fighting man among pacifists -- and subsequently shows no evidence of being either violent-tempered or

rough-and-tough. An opportunity for superman Connor to display his brute strength or 20th Century cunning in a smashing climax, or at least, a chance for doing a Jimmy Cagney on the Black Flame's up-tilted chin, would have saved this story.

The Black Flame herself is a gorgeous creation into whom Weinbaum has pumped enough pulpish sex to burn holes in an asbestos copy of Hollywood Detective. Although the author keeps nudging us and hinting that Margaret of Urbs has "unexpected depths" he never reveals much more than her physical side. However, she is easily the best character in these two yarns, at least from the viewpoint of any male who can obtain a vicarious thrill from a woman whose only existence is on the printed page. All of the Black Flame's sex appeal seems pretty low voltage, however, when one compares her with April Bell of Williamson's "Darker Than You Think" (now there was a sexy woman!), or with that nasty-tempered Betty in Pong's To Keep Or Kill, or indeed with most of the historical hussies who show extreme cleavage on the book-jackets of the current bestsellers.

One wishes that Margaret, who being an Immortal has had 600 years to perfect the art of coquetry, would stop making like a 16-year-old high schooler trying to vamp the football hero, and begin using her high-pressure allure. The average circulating-library heroine could have had Connor in bed in 15 minutes; girl-ish little Amber did better on her first conquest than the Black Flame did on her last.

But perhaps it isn't her fault. Weinbaum tells us that although the Black Flame is 600 years old she has remained physically a girl of 20. Many women in the northern latitudes do not mature sexually till they are close to 30.

~~~~~  
CONCLUDING REMARKS I think you'll agree that if reviewers used as much originality of approach and devoted as much thought to analysis of why they like or dislike the volume being reviewed as Redd did in writing the above, book and magazine reviews in current fanzines would make far more fascinating reading.

For my next column (providing Al doesn't boot me from his pages after seeing this sample of what I provide him), I plan to show you, by example of others, how to write a column. And then again, I may not, if I run across something more vital to write about. This is a sentence well calculated, as Hitchcock would say, to keep you in...suspense?

TITLE FOOTNOTE It's Fanlatin, and is to be interpreted, roughly, as "about to blow my top." Which is the state a columnist should be in while writing, since it makes for a far more interesting column. Too late, I realize a more appropriate title would have been "Sanus Paratus": almost out of my mind.

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# Detention 1959



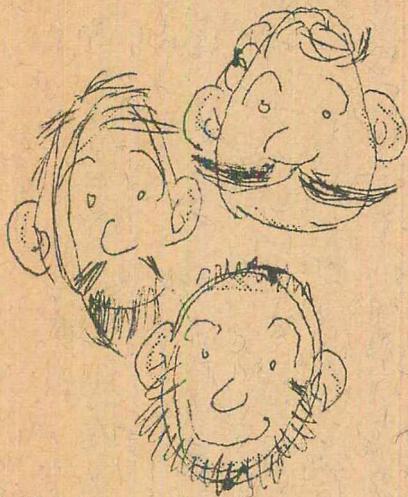
## BANQUET REMARK(S)

Friends - and Dr. Asimov:

Perhaps I shouldn't have said that. After all, I'm not here to insult Isaac Asimov ...even if that were possible. On the contrary, I have a very high opinion of Asimov...though I know him well. Men like Isaac Asimov do not pass our way very often...and for this we should be grateful.

19 ROBERT BLOCK

Actually, it was Dr. Asimov who suggested I say a few words here today. I'd planned to talk about three hours, but Dr. Asimov suggested I say a few words. Notice I wrote them down, because I didn't think I'd be able to memorize my ad libs. As usual, it's a thrill to stand up in front of a science fiction audience and see so many familiar faces...at least, I presume those are faces...most of them. There's Doc Smith...science fiction's answer to Charlie Weaver. And Joan Campbell, who's going to be rich and famous just as soon as the Heironomus Machine puts the Scotch Tape people out of business. And did you notice all the writers here wearing beards? You know why writers grow beards, don't you? It's a form of insurance. They figure if they can't sell stories at least they can sell cough-drops.



Now I don't have a beard...I lent mine to Randy Garrett...who is preserving it in alcohol...and I'm not quite sure whether I'm supposed to be speaking to you as a writer or as a fan. You know, people just can't seem to make up their minds which I am. The fans claim I'm a writer. The writers insist I'm a fan.

Another thing that makes it difficult to speak...aside from the fact that I'm sober...and so are you...most of you...is that I'm wearing contact lenses. I need them to see as far as my glasses. Getting adjusted to wearing these things is a psychological problem. Naturally, we writers are used to dealing with psychological problems...only generally we refer to them as

editors.

Well, before putting the lenses into my eyes, I decided to consult my psychiatrist. He told me that vision is not just a matter of the optic nerve--it involves a mental reaction which translates visual images into perceptible reality. So he said, "I'm going to show you a few things now and try a little free association." That suited me. He'd been charging me \$30 an hour--I figured I'd like to try something free for a change.

So he gets out a blackboard and a piece of chalk and he draws a big circle and he says, "What does that remind you of?" I said, "Sex in a car."

He gives me a kind of a funny look and then he draws a triangle. He says, "What does that remind you of?" and I said, "Sex in a canoe."

He shakes his head and draws a square; then he says, "What does that remind you of?" and of course I say, "Sex in a bathtub."

Well, then my psychiatrist got mad, and he says to me, "What's the matter with you, can't you think of anything but sex?" And I said, "Sure, but what are you bothering me for? You're the one who's drawing the dirty pictures."

Maybe I'd better explain that for the benefit of foreign visitors...like John Berry, from Ireland. I don't think they have any psychiatrists over there in the British Isles...not after reading some of their fanzines.

Actually, it's wonderful to be able to welcome John Berry here and it comes as quite a surprise to me to see him, too. You know, I hadn't really understood that he was being brought over for this Convention. Of course I'd heard of things like the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund, but that's all. Then somebody told me about this Berry Fan Fund, and I was all for it. I thought they were raising a fund to bury a fan. I was so much in favor of it that I gave them a list of 300 fans I'd like to see buried. And naturally, I made a sizeable contribution to the deal. By the time I found out what it was really all about, it was too late to get my dime back.

But it's good to see John Berry, even if I don't necessarily believe all he tells us. For instance, he says that back in Belfast he's a member of the police force. Now, I don't really believe there are any police in Belfast. If there were, how come Walt Willis is still running around loose?

On the other hand, maybe it's better that way--back at the Convention in 1952, Walt Willis was always running around tight. But we were talking about psychiatrists. That is, I was talking about psychiatrists and you were wondering when I'd

shut up. I've got news for you--you don't know when you're well off. If I wasn't speaking, you'd probably have to listen to Paul Anderson.

Now there's a guy who always talking. He learned it from hanging around Tony Boucher. You know, if he ever gets captured by cannibals they're going to have to put him into the pot upside down--otherwise he'll stick his head out and make an after-dinner speech. He'll make one anyway; the cannibal who swallows him is going to sound like a ventriloquist.

If anything, Boucher is worse; his mother sounded like a ventriloquist before he was born. When he was gestating, he didn't kick--he orated. It only took Boucher three minutes to be born, but for nine months before that he was introducing himself. It took the doctors two days before his birth just to deliver the blurb.

But let us return to the subject--if any! Since this is supposed to be a science fiction convention...or at least, they planned it that way, until the Californians arrived...let us get serious for a moment and talk about science.

This is truly the age of scientific miracles...or is it? Not too long ago, the United States Army launched a rocket and sent it over 80,000 miles into space. But today, right here in this hotel, the management couldn't get an elevator up from the lobby floor.

Last night, they couldn't even get me off the floor, either. And I was using liquid fuel, too.

But the rockets will work all right, just as soon as they get the bugs out. I got a couple of bugs out of my room this morning. I didn't really want to get them out, but the house-detective insisted.



Still, it's really wonderful the way science keeps catching up with science fiction. Like this idea of sending a rocket to the moon. Did you know they're going to send a dog up there? They're going to send a dog in the first rocket to the moon. I understand the only thing holding them back is that first they've got to get the dog a membership in the Science Fiction Book Club. Nobody gets on the moon without one of those ticket reservations. It's just like this banquet, only cheaper.

How about those prices? Twenty years ago, at the first science fiction convention, the banquet cost \$1. That's right, \$1. Today, it's five-and-a-quarter for a prime rib of beef. Maybe it's not polite to complain, but the way I figure it, at

those prices I've got a beef coming. The hotel management says it costs a lot of money to cut up a choice cow, but after tasting it, personally, I think it's a lot of bull.

On the other hand, maybe we shouldn't squawk. After all, most of the science fiction magazines have raised prices and some of their stories are pretty hard to digest, too.

Besides, I think it's worth it just to be able to get together with you folks like this every year. And I'd like to turn to a more serious note.

After all, this is a science fiction gathering, and we ought to do a little thinking about science...we ought to consider some of the big questions which face us.

For example....Are there visitors from other planets amongst us? In spite of all the theories pro and con, it's hard to say. After looking over this crowd, it's even harder.

I imagine most of you are familiar with the old hypothesis that we humans are only property...that maybe we're even fished for by aliens, as Charles Fort suggested. This would account for some of the remarkable disappearances we read about in history from time to time. I need only remind you of the classical example...the famous case of Benjamin Bathurst. Bathurst, as you probably all know, was a British diplomat who was returning from Vienna in the year 1809. He stopped at the town of Perleberg in Germany. In the presence of his valet and secretary he examined the horses which were hitched to his coach. Then, according to the story, he walked around the horses...and disappeared.

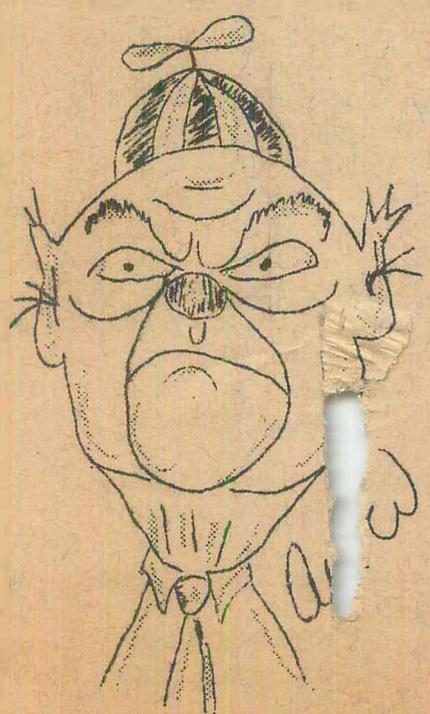
That's all. He walked around the horses...and vanished. Now some people claim this supports the theory of mysterious disappearances. As for me, I see nothing strange in it whatsoever. You see, I live in the country, and I happen to know something about horses. It is my belief that if Benjamin Bathurst disappeared after walking around the horses, it was merely because he had to go inside and change his shoes. So much for science.

Oh, just one thing more. I never used to know very much about science until I started watching the television commercials. It's true--those things are scientific. Have you ever seen the one that shows you a cross-section of the human head, with all those hammers pounding, and a lot of explosions going on inside? Well, I never used to believe I had those things inside my head until I started attending these Conventions. Now my head is like that every morning. Yes, you can learn a lot about human anatomy from television commercials. Come to think of it, you can learn a lot about human anatomy from attending a science fiction convention, too.

Of course I'm referring to the Masquerade Ball.

Naturally, you can't believe all you see. I remember last year, in Los Angeles, there was a little gal at the Masquerade--if I'm not mistaken, she won one of the prizes; I think it was for the sexiest costume. Anyway, she wore her hair in a pony tail. And then in back, growing out of her waist, she had another tail...the same color and everything...must have been about four feet long. Well, I couldn't believe this, so I adopted the scientific method, and investigated.

And you know something...it was just as I thought. That pony tail was false!



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