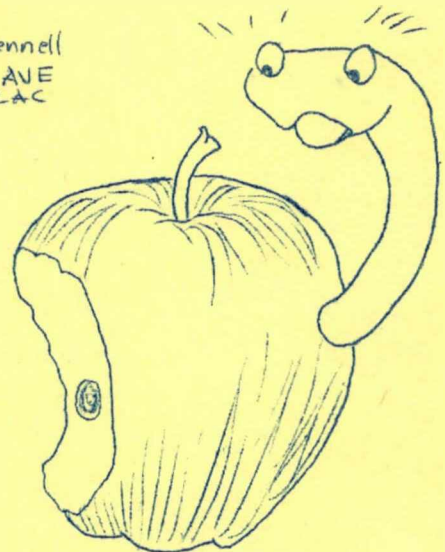


THE GOLDEN APPLE

from Dean A. Strenell
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WIS.



This is by way of being a sort of cowbirdzine--if I may coin the term--designed to soak up the excess postage of DISCORD. Several microseconds of thought were expended in the choice of title and, in case you are wondering, yes, I did consider "DATCORD," but I discarded it with a wry grimace of distaste. This reaches you free of all obligation, so far as I am concerned. The Good Boggs steadily assures me that it will reach everybody who is anybody and I confess myself a bit smote-down with stencilfright since I don't think I ever addressed such a large audience before.

THE YEARS OF OUR DAYS This stencil is being hand-hewn upon the 12th of January, 1961, and if I do not make haste it may be completed past the witching hour which would cast the pall of Friday the 13th upon the closing paragraphs. About a year ago I had a big hairy notion to publish a small booklet of comment upon the decade of the 'fifties but several things conspired to keep me from doing it. Chief among these was my own notable supply of procrastination plus the fact that Jack Speer noted in his own comments via letter that technically the fifties did not end until the end of 1960 and that they had begun in 1951. Give a veteran putter-offer like me an excuse like that and it takes little else.

At one time or another during the year I performed a lot of research and took voluminous notes, few of which can now be found. Many people, hearing about it, sent along their own contributions and once more, now that the 'fifties are indubitably one with Ninevah, Tyre and Lucky Strike Green, I am tempted to reconsider the project. Certainly there was enough stuff in the decade to fill a large book and perhaps one day it will be filled.

About 1961, the year at hand: of course you've heard by this time that it's the last year since 1881 that reads the same upside down as right side up and the last until 6009. With this in mind, I fear many of us will not live to see another such year, eheu.

You may be interested to know that if you happen to have an old calendar for 1950 kicking about you can hang it up and use it all year, good as new, except that the Easter may be off a bit...or you really crave to re-live the good old days, a calendar for any of these will serve as well: 1939 (hi, damon knight), 1933, 1922, 1911, 1905, 1899, 1893, 1882, 1871, 1865, 1854, 1843, 1837, 1826, 1815, 1809, 1797 or 1786.

And if you want to hang onto your 1961 calendar, it may be used again in 1967, 1978, 1989, 1995, 2006, 2017 and 2023 (the year of the writer's centennial). Or you may be a mad spendthrift who wants a fresh calendar every year. If so, fousch.

POCKET BOOKS, ANYONE? Ever on the q-v to snip off the odd buck, I hit upon the idea last summer of having the local scrap dealer, to whom we sell our old newspapers and expendable magazines, put aside those paperbound books and resaleable mags so that I could sell them to a secondhand store up north where I am wont to browse for the occasional choicie that turns up there. I told him I wanted him to save all the

Pocket Books that came in, all the comic books, Popular Mechanics-type mags, photo mags, men's mags and a few of the others that the northern entrepreneur (christened with a tongue-wrenching Polish name, he calls himself "Casey.") will take for cash or trade. The first thing that turned up was several hundredweight of old comics, some dating back to the dim dawn of the breed, around 1938. By the time I culled through them a few times I still had enough left to glut the market for months into the future. Even now when Casey sees me he howls, "No more comic-books, for cry-eye!" But at the time I picked up the comics, the scrap dealer said, "I wasn't able to get very many pocket books but I got three or four here. You want 'em?" I told him sure and he went back into his little sanctum among the old Spiegel catalogs and emerged with four ancient, scuffed, battered, scurvy-looking ladies' purses. He also gave me a somewhat odd look, as though he thought I was some weird sort of far-out fetishist and I can hardly say that I blame him. Gently I tried to rectify the semantic shemozzle (glory, I haven't heard anyone call a purse a pocketbook in generations) and finally I could spy the dim dawn of glimmering comprehension in his eyes. "Don't you want these at all?" he asked wistfully. No, firmly. He shrugged faintly and flung them back into his office.

PARANOMASIATIC 'FLU Excuse, pliz, while I unload a few odd bits from the spindle file, here...bits such as the item about the highly conceited German chap who positively worshipped himself and was always being asked questions about fish because people thought he was an Ich-theologist and the bloke in the press-clipping service who couldn't even work his scissors any more because he'd snipped out so many British releases that day that he'd contracted a severe case of Reuter's cramp and the eccentric old cowboy in West Dimple, Montana, who'd gone to great pains to hire a mulatto and break him to the saddle, carefully explaining that he did it not out of racial prejudice but merely because he was fond of going off on a tangent and the group of amateur players who bought an old cow-barn for a song (Carolina Moo'in', perhaps) and fixed it up as a place to hold their performances in and painted a huge two-humped camel on the front to let passers-by know it was a drama-dairy and...did I hear someone groan "Uncle?"

CROTTLED GREEPS AT CHEZ ECONOMOU New Year's Eve fell on Saturday evening last year and we spent a fine fannish evening at the Economou's in Milwaukee. Among the various appetizers--perhaps that should be in quotes--was an imported delicacy from Japan labelled "Octopus on skewers." Who, after all, but PHE, would think of serving bits of tentacles as hors d'oeuvres? Among the 60 pix I snapped is one, as yet unprinted, of Gene De Weese holding a skewerful in one hand and regarding the label on the can with the sort of sick-horrified expression with which a person might look at a neofan who swears his favorite magazine is FATE. I sampled a trepid bite of the goodies and can report to those of you who've never lived to quite this extent that it tastes vague like a bit of the liver from an ancient goat, said liver having been aged for some weeks in warm codliver oil. Apart from that, they were delicious ("Next year," says Phyllis, "Chocolate-covered ants!") and I was suddenly struck by the fact that here, surely, was the ultimate embodiment of that legendary fannish viand,

Crottled Greeps...or, at any rate, if it was not really crottled greeps, it would serve as an admirably accurate facsimile until the real thing comes along. Someone offered one of the squiddy tidbits to Brinker, and no Back Bay Boston dowager ever high-nosed a social-climber with a regal sneer to equal his. Unfortunately, at the time, I was going through the fussy formality of filming up the Rolleiflex and I missed what would certainly have been the shot of the evening. A good time was had by all and at 12:05 I asked Arthur, "Well, how does business look to you, so far this year?" He crogged.

