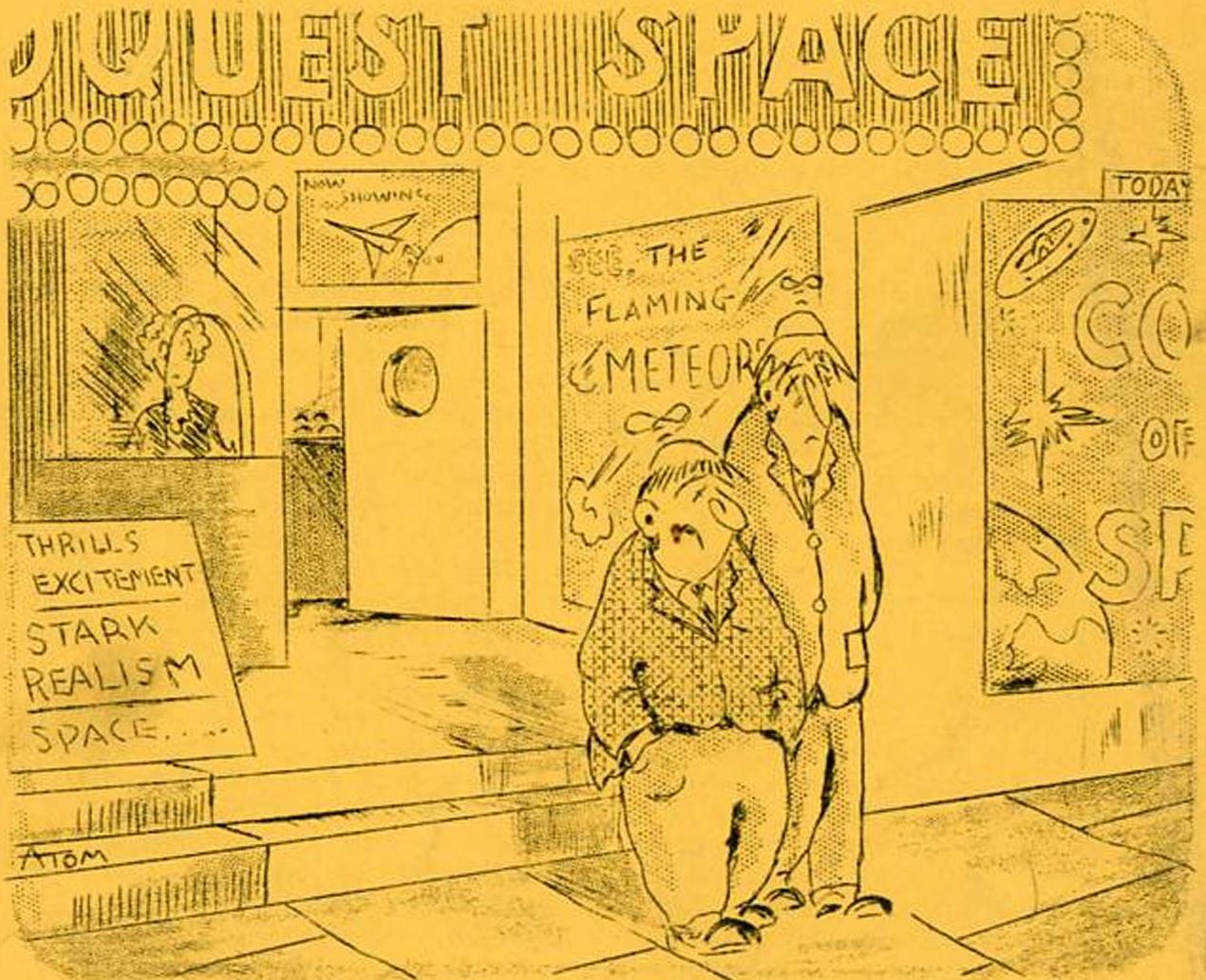


HYPHEN

NO. 15.

NOVEMBER

1955



"Somehow I don't seem to care if we do conquer it now."

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CARTOONS BY ARTHUR THOMSON

INSIDE
COVERAGE
CHUCK
HARRIS

(World Champion Ghoddminton
Player, 1955.)

YES, THIS ISSUE IS EVEN MORE irregular than usual and I'm sorry. I have a very good excuse though. She is twenty-three years old, brunette, and very, very good indeed. Sometimes I despair of ever making a Trufan out of her, - but evangelising is still lots more fun than stencil cutting. Seriously though, we should have been out a couple of months ago, but a lot of things went wrong. When I came back from Ireland, George and Madelcine had to go into hospital: when the paper arrived it turned out to be foolscap instead of quarto size, and had to be shipped back: and, -- hell, I was sitting out on the lawn in the sun when I should have been indoors stencilling or turning the mimeo crank. Go on, drum me out of the N3F and cancel my Operation Fantast membership, but Ghod! Fakefandom could be a Way of Life.

Most important thing in this issue is the insert that Walt is doing about the TAFF. We hope that you'll all be as generous and dig as deeply as you did last time to send Ken to Cleveland. This is a good worthwhile project that should be supported by everybody in fandom.

There should be more evidence of Walt in the magazine proper too, but when he sent over the Damon Knight stencils that he cut, I promptly picked out the con-report ones and threw them in the dustbin. No, not lese-majeste, just an accident. I was clearing out some junk and they got mixed up with it. Fortunately I was able to get hold of the original letter and stencil another condensation. I am responsible for all the grammatical errors, as well as the comments in double brackets, ((....)), the six typos and the horrible grey paper which was supposed to be azure, -- like a baby's purty eyeballs, or the tropic depths of the Coral Sea.

Which reminds me that Arthur C Clarke's next book will be about skin-diving off the Great Barrier Reef, and that I would much rather see another couple of episodes by Bill Temple about the old Ego who had never even heard of Hans Hass. The piece in this issue is the last we have in the file, but we are hoping that there will be more to follow.

The Chuck Harris who wrote "...And Behold" is my namesake in New York. You should like this, but readers familiar with the works of the late, great Charlie Fort are going to get much more of a kick out of it than the rest of the circulation. And rightly so, -- no faan worthy of the Sacred Name should be ignorant of the Fortean books. I only wish I'd read them 16 years ago, -- then, maybe, it would have been me who wrote "Sinister Barrier" (as well as "Omega." VSM Vol 1 #3)

Our ace newshound Willis, the man who scooped fandom with the news of the Varley nuptials, and then repeated his success a month later by being the first to discover that it was all a mistake, is again handling the news-bulletin. It's on the back of the TAFF insert, -- I hope. Complain to him about errors in your obituaries, not to me.

Arthur the Art Department had two pages of illo's in the last NEBULA including a very fine bacover reminiscent of Eld Cartier. I bought a copy just to look at the pictures, but I was pleasantly surprised to find the fiction was pretty damn good too. You might try it, -- it's quite pleasant to read science-fiction again instead of Authentic. (Continued on Page 39).

HYPHEN #15. November 1955. Co-editors, Chuck Harris, "Carolyn" Lake Ave, Rainham Essex, and Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, N. Ireland. Associates: Arthur Thomson and Bob Shaw. Other fingers found in this pie should be returned to Madeleine Willis, John Berry, George ATW Charters or jolly James White. Subscriptions: 1/- or 15/- a copy in coin of your realm.

REVENANT

A Cleveland Con Report

DAMON KNIGHT

We took the Erie RR -- which, we learned by enquiring too late, was washed out west of Port Jervis. So we had to catch a train about 50 miles in the wrong direction, to Ridgewood NJ, and catch the Erie's one Cleveland-Chicago train there, at an ungodly hour in the morning. (We also had to pay for this preliminary dogleg and now have to find out by writing to some vice-president or other whether the Erie will refund the overpayment.)

The trip took 23 hours, livened only by the presence in the same car of another convention delegation. They were having a night-long party, -- all cheerful, all boisterous. They were going to Cleveland, but not to our convention: they were members of the FROC, which -- to relieve your mind right away -- is the young people's organization of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Well, by an odd coincidence, we had a small bottle of Ohio vodka for train drinking, and whenever I went into the men's room for water in paper cups, I'd be greeted by cordial shouts from the Russian contingent sitting there (the women always yelled "This is the Ladies' Room!"). About the third time, there was a ragged chorus of "Give him a drink!" and one of the Russians was handing me a perfectly good shot glass full of rye, which I accordingly drank. A little later Judy and I decided to return the compliment, so we took down our bottle and joined the party. This was the first sound idea of the trip, because we had already gone through our miserable two sandwiches apiece, and the Russians were loaded with food. Hard-boiled eggs mostly; it was the Sabbath, and they couldn't eat meat till midnight.

The climax didn't come until the next day, when the car was still resounding with the sounds of Russian hilarity. We found a copy of CORONET on a seat, and opened it to an imposing article entitled, "IF THE RUSSIANS WOULD ONLY LEARN TO LAUGH."

We arrived about 4 p.m. Cleveland looks exactly like any other American city and has, as far as I could find out by reading about it in the Encyclopedia or by a limited personal examination, absolutely nothing of interest in it.

The first thing I did after showering and changing was to yell for help. ((This is beginning to sound just like an English convention.)) I had rinsed out the pair of nylon socks I'd been wearing before I discovered that the second pair had not been packed. So I sent a bellboy out for socks, and, suitably attired, went down to the Purple Tree to look for Judy and the Leibers. The Purple Tree is the hotel's ginmill, too dark, too plush and too expensive; I did most of my later drinking in ordinary bars down the street. I met Boucher and a few other familiar faces, including some ghosts from the past. There was a sojer named Coger whom I had met at the Buffalocon (or the Buffalochip as Shaw and I prefer to call it), back in 19whatever the hell that was and who provided the only ray of sunshine

(*Condensed from a letter to Walt)

THIS IS THE MORNING AFTER I GOT home from Cleveland, and I'm still stunned and confused at the whole thing.

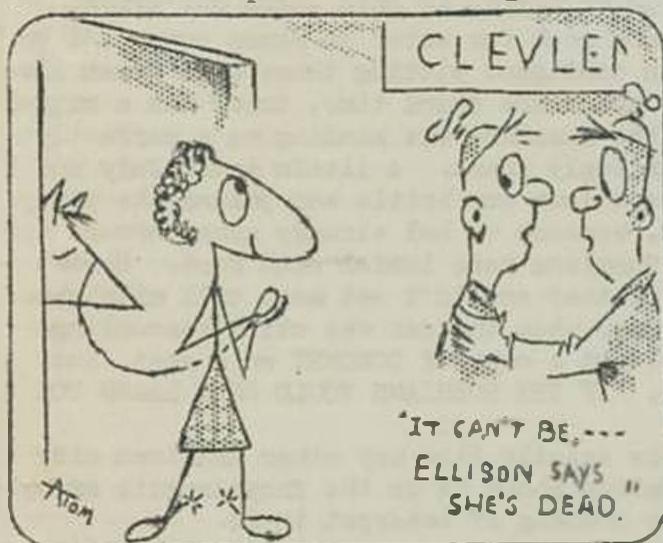
Judy Merrill and I looked around for a ride to Cleveland, but couldn't find anybody going Friday. Larry Shaw could have taken us in his new '53 Willys, but he was leaving on Thursday -- no good at all for Judy who had a dentist's appointment, and I stuck to my guns out of general inertia and stubbornness. This was a mistake so enormous that the word will hardly stretch far enough to cover it.

"He's a fanatic-depressive type."

there by producing a flask of sloe gin. A little later, I ran into two phantoms standing side by side at the bar; Winterbotham and Miske, -- J Chapman Miske. He was just before my time, -- he ran an acrimonious fan column as "The Star Rover", and was more of a mystery in his day than Atheling is at present. I also met James Gunn, a quiet lynx-eyed about my age, very erect and composed, whom I liked; he's a teacher in a Kansas college -- I meant to ask him of what, but never got around to it.

Came the banquet. I sat with a bunch of very bright and likeable guys whose names, dammit, I forget. Bloch spoke and was funny as hell; so did Asimov, likewise. Boucher was very good as toastmaster, and bore up wonderfully well, I thought, under the indignity of having to announce an unbroken string of achievement awards for stories published in ASTOUNDING. Afterward, I introduced myself to the Bulmers (Ken, you have no doubt heard, has grown a truly revolting beard: Pam is much prettier and even slimmer than her picture). I wandered around talking desultorily to a few other people -- this is the thing I remember most about the convention, the loneliness of wandering around aimlessly between meetings -- and finally went up to Asimov's suite where there was a singularly dull bottle party. There were some people that I liked -- Tucker and his demurely pretty wife; Gunn; a few others, but they weren't grouped right, or it was too early in the evening, or something, and the conversation wasn't moving. Or maybe it was just me. Anyhow, I left and went looking for something livelier. Couple of floors down, Lee Hoffman got into the elevator; I'd seen her at a distance during the banquet, and of course she was one of the people I wanted to meet, but she had disappeared while I was talking to the Bulmers. We went down to somebody else's party, but there was no ginger ale for Lee's bourbon -- her standard complaint so I took her down to the Purple Tree and bought her one. Then it seemed to me we ought to do

something fannish, so we went looking for the lake (I may have been a trifle squiffed at this time; at any rate I remember I had a highball glass in my hand, but can't imagine why; I finally got tired of it and left it on a shelf in a sidewalk phone booth) but it turned out to be too far away and too cold. We had hamburgers in some miserable hash-house... I remember seeing Ken Bulmer's beard floating in the far corner like a monstrous vision. I think possibly I was a little squiffed at this point. There's a whole episode involving me and a gang of other people who never came down in an elevator -- Evelyn Gold told me about it the next day -- which I



can't fit in anywhere, and in fact I don't remember a word of it. Anyhow, the appropriate thing seemed to be to go up and sit on the roof, a la Harp, so we climbed an ungodly amount of stairs, only to discover that the Manger Hotel has no roof. We sat on the stairs and talked. I was looking at an odd bracelet of Lee's that was set with square baroque imitation pearls. "Where did the square pearls come from?" I asked. "From very old-fashioned oysters," she said.

The next morning I had a hangover. This rarely happens to me -- probably it came of drinking flossy cocktails with powdered sugar around the rim. In this condition, not much improved by food or tomato juice with tabasco, I checked in at

at a panel Noreen Falasca had asked me to take part in. It was a whither-s-f kind of thing, to which I contributed effectively zero, but Frank Robinson and a couple of others were lucid and vocal, and de Camp mortared up the gaps.

The afternoon session opened with Gunn's speech, which I particularly wanted to hear. I trust somebody will publish this: it seemed to me strikingly sensible in an area where so much nonsense has been talked. I was especially struck by one phrase and made a note of it -- "Entertainment is a bottle" -- into which you can put any number of things, or nothing. Bottle sans contents or vice versa, he implied, is equally foolish.

Ley was next, but I had to go up to Boucher's room to sit in on the skit discussion. Judy and I had talked about this on the train, and I wrote a scrawled, one page synopsis, which she expanded into a couple of pages of typed notes. In this state the script arrived at Cleveland the day before it was supposed to be performed. Judy, Tony, Bob Bloch, Mildred Clingerman and Randy Garrett were there when I arrived. They had been arguing about Judy's notes, which nobody understood except Judy. She could talk some of them down, but not Bob, who kept saying he didn't understand the symbolism. We went around and around this. A little later Moskowitz showed up, having agreed to play the central role of Scroogeowitz. Bob shrewdly began questioning him about fandom in the Good Old Days, and Sam willingly obliged. He described what an event it was when somebody put out one of the early fanzines -- just a few pages long and entirely done by hand. This was enough for Bloch: from his brow sprang the first scene entire -- Early Fan, played by Randy Garrett, is discovered reading ASTOUNDING. Fanetta, played by Mildred Clingerman, comes home; they embrace, while Fan goes on reading ASTOUNDING over her shoulder, and so on, until Fanetta blushing and haltingly makes an announcement. She and Fan are going to have a little fanzine. They embrace: "And I did it by hand!" cries Fan triumphantly. Blackout.

We had a song "Pore Stef Is Dead" which became the meat of the third scene, but we discovered nobody but me could sing it, which I refused to do on the grounds that I can't sing loud enough. Astonishing how few people can carry a tune; you never realize until you need one. I went down at Tony's suggestion and asked Noreen to announce out need. We got one volunteer, and later on two more and a pianist turned up.

Anyhow, Bloch undertook to write the first third of the skit, and the rest of us met again in the afternoon to do the rest. I volunteered to do the sitting-at-the-typewriter part, but nearly all the ideas came from Randy and Tony, -- especially Tony, who invented fabulous things while pacing up and down.

A quick rehearsal and Foosh! That patched up skit went off like a house afire. Nobody forgot any lines, not even Moskowitz who had had to learn his without a script; every place we had planned for a yuk, we got one; everybody was audible, there was only one small bobble in the complicated lighting, and so on. Everybody was good: Bloch, Judy, Moskowitz, Boucher, Leiber, Randy, Mildred, Ackerman (who walked onto the stage to take the tenth penny of the 10¢ Scriber got paid for his story), Evelyn Gold, and the four fans who played and sang the song. Everybody deserves the credit, but I was particularly awed by Moskowitz, who threw himself into the job of parodying himself, invented nearly all his own lines, and carried it off beautifully; Bloch, for pulling a disorganized plot together by going to the heart of the theme; Tony, who kept pulling rabbits out of his hat right up to rehearsal time, and then turned in a perfect performance to boot; and Judy, who was everywhere doing everything, -- she not only provided the framework, but set the scenery, directed and introduced the skit, and played two of the three ghosts.

"I offered it again at 10/- a thousand words, but he still turned it down"

Afterwards a gang of us went out for food and beer; at least I think there was food in it somewhere -- Coger and an army buddy of his; Lee and Larry Shaw; Frank Robinson; me; and there was a girl whose name I didn't catch. I regret this; I wish I had been properly introduced to everybody and learned all their names; but what the hell. Next Year. Frankie is an engaging guy with his own unique brand of spontaneous, self-deprecating humor. I liked him fine. I remember him best choking with helpless laughter when he tried to tell us about Al Ashley's physical anomalies. ((Al was blessed with four nipples. It seems a terrible waste.)) I was pooped at about 2 o'clock, and didn't try to fight it; I went to bed.



The last day (dismal phrase!) I woke up at 8, tried to get back to sleep, got up and telephoned a couple of airlines and bus depots. Judy and I had hoped to get a ride back with Larry, but he had turned out to be full up. I had an idea from somewhere that checking-out time was at noon, and I wanted some place to store baggage (my one suitcase and Judy's six) before we had to leave. [No, THREE, dammit! Plus typer, plus suitcase full of books checked at station. And any woman who can go to a convention featuring Pam Bulmer and containing Evelyn Gold and Mildred Clingerman, with only three suitcases, is doing damned well; Judy Merrill]

The afternoon business session was dull to begin with until Randy Garrett goosed it with a resolution to name Asimov "Permanent Guest of Honour Emeritus." This was just solemn-sounding enough to get debated and voted down -- de Camp pointing out that "emeritus is Latin for has-been." (Laughter.) Then came the voting on next year's convention site, usually a high point of the convention, with all kinds of politicking, bad feeling and excitement. This year it was a pure formality. New York had the hotel blanketed with leaflets, displays, lapel tags and whatnot, and there was no other serious bidder. Ken put in a token bid for Lond on, but it didn't even come to a vote; Ken withdrew beforehand. Tucker in his seconding speech explained that there is one word in the British half of our common language which is not in ours, and one thing London has that we haven't got: "British femme Fans," he said, "snog." (Sensation.) He later defined this for an eager friend as "anything you can do behind a hotel door, and I propped a slogan, "Snog in the Fog" for London in '57.

This brings us to the masquerade. I was hoping we could stay for some of this, but two seats had materialized in Larry's car, and he wanted to get away by 1 o'clock. Shaw gathered up me and a piratical-looking fan and hustled us out in a desperate kind of way to the lobby, ordered us to stay there, and went tearing off after more passengers. About three-quarters of an hour later, he had us all rounded up at the same time -- no mean feat -- and we all said good-bye to various fans who happened to be loitering in front of the hotel at the time. I tried to kiss Pamela good-bye, like any red-blooded American boy, but she ducked and I got her on the chin. ((She ducked? Just where do you red-blooded American boys aim?)) Fern Tucker, however, kissed me. Glory. Lee also obliged, and I only wished all this friendliness had started earlier.

There were six of us in the car: Larry, Phyllis Scott, Randy Garrett, Judy, myself, and the piratical fan. I do not remember his name, but it's his own fault; he had come to the masquerade as Calvin Thomas Beck, and still had burnt cork in his adolescent moustache, and Beck's name-card in his lapel, to show for it. He assumed his own name later, but by then we were all hopelessly confused. I think he said he was the executive secretary of the N.Y. SF Circle, about which he had some scarifying stories to tell later on. I was under the impression that New York was a desert, nearly everybody I knew having moved to Red Bank NJ or somewhere, but apparently the vacuum is filling up. I continue to be astonished by the way life goes on in my absence.

In the bluish dawn mists, the sun came up like an orange wafer. We were then hurtling through some mountains or other (the Cumberlands?); I can't say we saw much scenery, going or coming. Then awake and not roaring at Garrett's stories, I was mostly preoccupied by the novel sensation of driving at 70 mph -- the limit on vast stretches of the Turnpike -- for hours at a time. A fantastic road, absolutely empty except for a gas station and a drug store every hundred miles or so.

Feeling peaceful in the early daylight, we began thinking over the convention and talking about it. When Judy asked me if I'd had a good time, I honestly didn't know what to tell her. It's taken me most of the subsequent time to put all the pieces together and make up my mind. (Conclusion: I did.) I was pooped nearly the whole three days, and dull as dishwater half the time when I ought to have been bright; I was lonely and depressed (but too tired to feel it acutely) more often than I like to remember; I saw only a handful of the people I wanted to see long enough to do more than say hello; some I never met at all, and probably others I didn't even know were there.

But I found that Judy's two reasons for going were valid for me: one, the obvious professional advantages of meeting other writers, editors and fans: two, the vital lift that you get from the egoboo. This second was a revelation to me:



"All I object to is his fingers."

this was my first convention since Denver in 1941, when I was an awestruck fan myself, and it never occurred to me that anyone would crack his spine getting off a chair to meet me. This happened though; we passed an open door, and Lee turned her head to say, "This is Damon Knight." The fan inside, whose name I forget but to whom I'm everlastingly grateful, was sitting tilted back in a straight chair. The Name brought him upright, and I swear there was six inches of sky under his rump before his feet hit the floor.

Well, this kind of thing sounds comical, and Judy's gratitude toward the people who troubled to bring copies of her books, all the way from wherever, to ask her to sign them, is prosaic enough: but it's necessary. Living as we do, in the loneliest occupation and with none of the visible stigmata of success, we sink into a low opinion of ourselves, and that saps our energy.

Still, that isn't the heart of the matter. I used to wonder what it was that gave the best con-reports their oddly religious tone. I see now there is no oddity involved -- a convention is a religious event, a love-feast. Programming is merely an excuse for congregation; you get the same mystic feeling of brotherhood and I suppose for similar reasons, as you do in a convalescent ward or in a ship's company. Nearly all the mundane things that preoccupy and divide us have been left temporarily behind; we're suddenly made aware of the closeness between me and thee. This is religious or it's nothing, and God knows we need it.

Bits and pieces keep floating up. Like Randy's wonderful quatrain, with which he closed the first scene of the skit. I may have paraphrased the first two lines slightly, but they're only buildup:

Thus our tale is ended;

Your pardon, sirs, we beg:

John Carter laid a princess

And the princess laid an egg.. .

And two last things I forgot to say; --- probably because I've said them aloud to so many people: 1) The convention committee and Noreen Falasca in particular did a beautiful flawless job; 2) Bob Bloch is a real sweet guy.



MICROTOME

DAMON KNIGHT

At this writing, my novel 'Hell's Pavement' has received 13 reviews that I know of. Now, I admit this is a curious notion, but I can't think of any reason why I shouldn't review the reviewers. In the notes that follow, I've used the same system I use in rating the stories in an anthology—A for near-perfect, B for good to fair, C for unacceptable. (The letter in parentheses at the end of each entry represents the reviewer's approximate rating of the book, and is there for contrast.)

A William Blackbeard: Fantasy-Times Book Review. This two-page essay is one of the longest and most enthusiastic notices the book got; it's also one of the most careful. Blackbeard anatomizes the novel expertly, quotes with discrimination, calls attention to the story's concern with problems of morality, and points out two of the most serious flaws: the fragmented plot, and the hurried writing* of the last third. (A)

*This phrasing is not meant as an excuse. If hurried writing were an excuse for anything, we should have to excuse most of the hackwork done in this field.

B Anthony Boucher: Herald Tribune Book Review. Boucher, who takes second place to nobody in the field for critical acumen and integrity, seldom has the space for a full dress review. Brief as it is (about 150 words), this notice shows that he has read the book intelligently and his harsh judgment is to the point: "...somewhat spectacularly fails to create an organized novel, in terms of either character-development or story-movement." (B)

Anthony Boucher: Fantasy & Science Fiction. This, even briefer, is a capsule of the foregoing. (B)

J. Francis McComas: Times Book Review. This is a yes-but review, in reply to Boucher's; as victim it pleases me more, but as novelist I think it is less illuminating. (A)

Robert W. Lowndes: Science Fiction Stories. Three pages, earnest but overblown; heavy with synopsis and quotation. Lowndes's analysis of the political side of the story is tautologically thorough and correct, but very general: he has little to say about the book itself. (A)

Noah W. McLeod: Psychotic. This wonderful old bird has no praise in him, but can be counted on for accurate, sour appraisals of the worst parts of anything. His deadpan synopsis of the book exposes its mechanical plotting in a truly hair-raising way. It gave me a sharp, and I think a useful, shock.

The Rev. C. M. Moorhead: Hyphen. This gentleman did his best, very good-naturedly, to tear the novel to bits at my request. Most of his review is a protest against the book's impoliteness toward organized religion (an irrelevance: as Col. Ingersoll used to point out, religious spokesmen will unload the most astonishingly intemperate language on the head of any visible agnostic, and then in the next breath complain that their feelings are hurt by his questioning of their beliefs); but he raises one crucial point, too obvious perhaps or too embarrassing for anyone else to mention: If I am wrong about religion, I do evil by promulgating my error. (I take this to be a real and serious risk, which you have to take in order to hack your way anywhere near the truth, whether in the pulpit or at a typewriter.) (C)

(Editors' Note: In fairness to Hyphen I would point out that the Rev. Moorhead is not the reviewer we would have chosen.)



Anon.: Westport, Conn., Town Crier. This brief review is expert in its synopsis, at least. (B)

Anon.: Coup. This fanzine review recommends the novel highly but in uncritical terms; boils down to: "I like this book. Read it." Pleasing to the victim, but of no use to the novelist. (A)

Anon.: Norfolk, Va., Pilot. This two-inch newspaper review is no more than a mechanical synopsis. (A)

Gregg Calkins: Oonsla. Calkins read the book hastily, recommended it on the run. Critical pay dirt, zero. (A)

P. Schuyler Miller: Astounding. Miller has occasional spells of brilliant analysis, in between which he is a carpet critic. He likes to pile up his review books one on top of another to see whether they reach his navel; or, for variety, spread them out on the floor from kitchen to john. A colleague of mine with a gift for unkind phrase-arranging once said, "He likes everything, but not very much." The root of his trouble seems to be diffidence: Miller evidently feels at home only in the early period of sf, ending c.19-35. His present review is predictably lukewarm and uninformative.

Groff Conklin: Galaxy. Conklin has no more critical method than a crawfish, but unlike Miller, he isn't even aware that there is or ought to be such a thing. This innocence makes him a lot more fun to read, but no more helpful. (B)

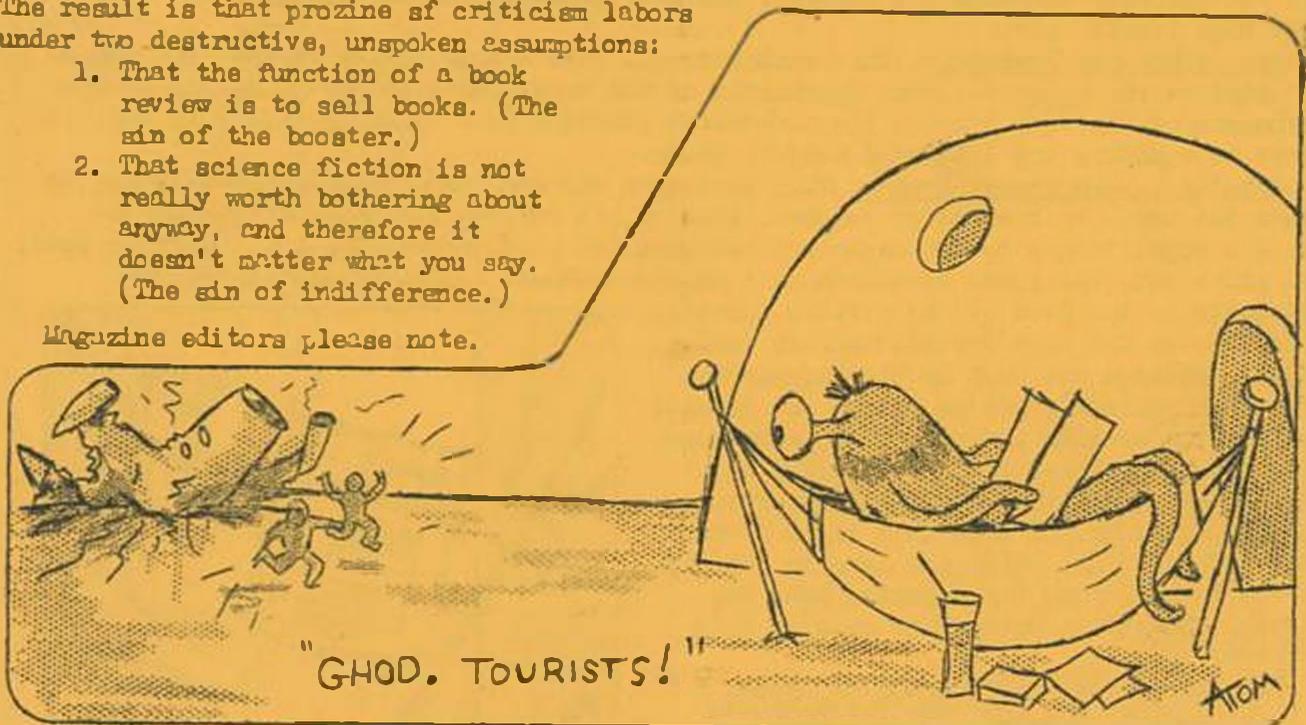
Abstracting from all this data, for what it may be worth, we get the impression that fanzine reviewing is in pretty good shape; that newspaper reviews could be worse, considering their cramped space; and that prozine criticism is deplorable. I think this is a fair summary and that additional data would be likely to confirm it.

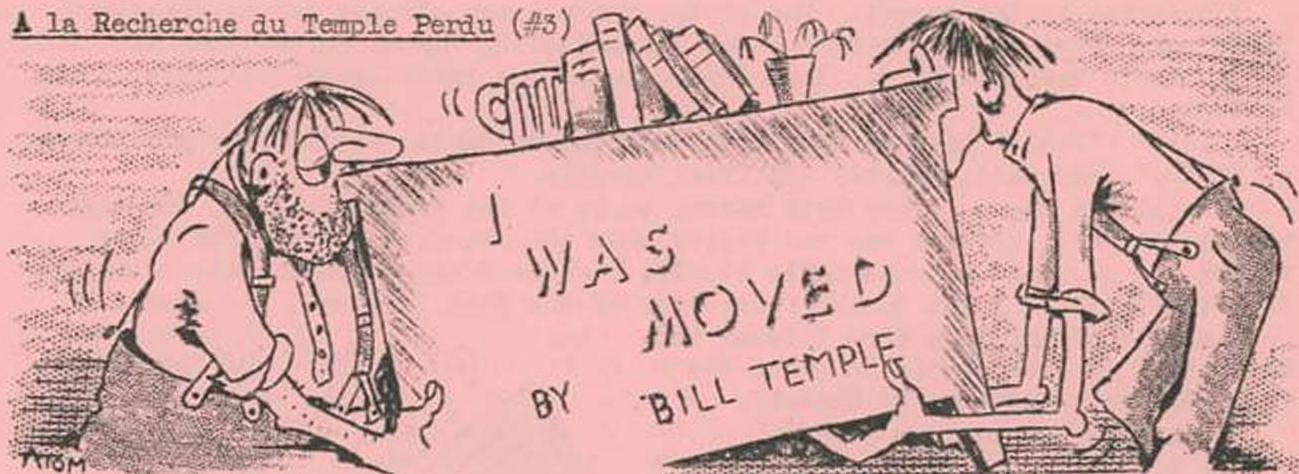
Probably this has come about principally through magazine editors' inexperience and lack of concern with book reviews. Those with pulp backgrounds still tend to think of reviews as an inferior class of filler copy. Even among editors who now give the reviews more prominence, there's a tendency to think of book reviewing as a kind of dilettantism, and to look for reviewers among the leisured upper class of the book world—anthologists, editors, book club judges and the like.

The result is that prozine sf criticism labors under two destructive, unspoken assumptions:

1. That the function of a book review is to sell books. (The sin of the booster.)
2. That science fiction is not really worth bothering about anyway, and therefore it doesn't matter what you say. (The sin of indifference.)

Magazine editors please note.





Unfortunately, I remember far too much of the day we moved into the Flat in Grays Inn Road. (I might just as well give it now the capital letter of notoriety it soon attained.)

I arrived late, but first, at the Flat that morning. I was sitting beside the driver of a pantechicon which was designed, I suspected, to transport pantechicons. It was little short of a travelling warehouse.

I did query why the firm thought this monstrous vehicle necessary for my few odds and ends. The driver said: "To allow room for expansion."

I had a bed, a wardrobe, a dressing table, a typewriter, a gramophone, some chairs, a kitchen table, some books. In my parents' house they had seemed to occupy a lot of room. In this pantechicon they were lost. Perhaps it was because the men thought they looked lonely in there that they loaded half the furniture belonging to my parents as well.

This wasn't discovered until they took the sheets off my father's bed and he sat up in his pyjamas and exclaimed: "But I settled that account!"

They had to unload it all. Not because they had put on the wrong stuff, which they regarded as unimportant, indeed, irrelevant. But they'd walled in alive one of their number, and had to extricate him because they thought it was time for mid-morning tea.

I counted four of them, but I believe there were five, because there was always one missing, though it wasn't always the same one. One couldn't complain that they didn't work hard: they worked very hard indeed at creating work for themselves. I should say that they were natural individualists. None of them seemed to be cognisant of the principles of harmony, the division of labour, socialism, the team spirit, or anything of that nature. They'd only dug out the bricked-in one because they wanted to make sure it was time for mid-morning tea --- he was the only one with a watch.

That was why I arrived late at the Flat.

We pulled up with a jerk outside. My furniture wanted to continue travelling and tried to get out through the front: sitting in the driving cabin, I felt it. I postponed inspection of the damage both to my wordly possessions and my spine, and crawled up all the stairs to the Flat and opened it.

Compared with my journey from the outer suburbs, Ego and Maurice* lived only just around the corner from here. But if in consequence of that I found they'd arrived first, I should in consequence of that have fallen all down the stairs again. As I expected, the Flat was empty.

*Arthur C Clarke and Maurice Hanson.

I returned to the street. Two of the removal men already had my dressing-table out. They wasted no time. One was adjusting the mirror so that the other could see to comb his hair. They looked smart and intelligent. As water looks like gin.

I said: "Just follow me up with that dressing-table -- I'll show you the way."
"O.K.," they said, smartly and intelligently.

They picked it up. They both wanted to be at the front at first, but they sorted that out, because one was bigger than the other, and staggered along behind me. I went up, reasonably slowly, because I had a considerate nature (at that time). When I got to the front door of the Flat I found I was alone.

A couple of landings down I found the smaller of the men trying to heave the dressing-table upstairs by himself.

"What happened to your mate?"

"He went down to get the typewriter," he answered, smartly and perhaps even intelligently.

"He gives up too easily. Let me help you."

I found myself pall-bearer at the rear end. It was, I imagine, six times heavier than the front end. When it came to smartness and intelligence, I was number three on the list. I was about to suggest that I went down to help the other fellow carry the typewriter, when I had an idea. I expressed it in notable words. Notable for fatuity.

"Wouldn't it be better just to take the drawers out and carry them up first?"

He made noises of pleased assent and took one of the wide drawers. I took the other, mounting behind him. I kept treading on soft things on the stairs but I couldn't see what they were because of the drawer across my chest. When we arrived in the Flat I noticed the drawer my predecessor was carrying was empty. It hadn't been. I asked him why he was carrying it upside down. He smiled, and said it was a fifty-fifty chance, and had just worked out that way.

I went down again and somewhere on the way met the big fellow coming up with the typewriter.

I was never a practical sort, but comparing myself with these removal men I began to feel like the clerk in the advertisements for almost anything who used to be afraid of his boss, but now sits at the big shiny desk in the Managing Director's office with nothing to do but wear new suits and pose for photographs.

"Look," I said, "go on up with the typewriter. On the way you'll find half a dressing-table on the stairs. All you do then is follow the trail of my socks and underclothes. That'll lead you to my Flat and your mate. Dump the typewriter, bring him down, and then the two of you can carry up the rest of the dressing-table. Right?"

"Right," he said, brightly.

I went on down to the street. The remaining available two men were sitting on my chairs in the pantechinon discussing the possible whereabouts of the remaining unavailable man. It seemed that he had the newspaper.

I got them in tow carrying the bed. We bumped into the drawerless dressing-

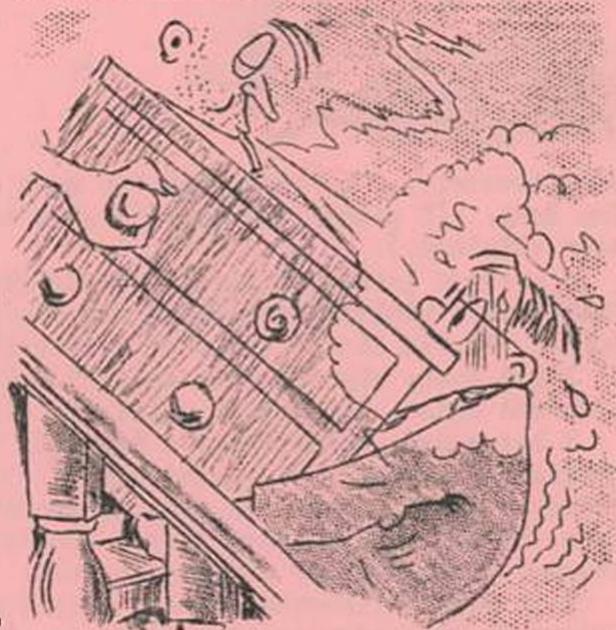


table still exactly where I'd left it on the stairs. It was alone and unattended. I sighed.

We couldn't get past with the bed, so I told this pair to wait while I nipped up and got the other pair down to clear the gangway.

Up in the Flat I found, alone and quite happy, the small man who had confused my drawer with a cornucopia.

I asked him the perennial question: "What happened to your mate?"

"He went down to get the typewriter," he answered, smart as paint, and I had that haunting I-Have-Been-Here-Before feeling.

"But he came up with the typewriter," I said. I was too awed to be irritable.

He looked surprised. He gazed around the room, peered up the chimney, drew a blank, stared out of the window to see if his mate had jumped out, saw no body, looked hard at me, but I hadn't got him. So I gave up. I recalled the "Marie Celeste," and shivered.

"Something's happened to the poor guy," I said, urgently. "Let's get help."

We clattered down the stairs, conscribed the others, went on down in a stampede. We overtook the missing man at the bend and all but trampled him to death beneath our hoofs. We dusted him down and asked him where he'd been.

He said: "I've just taken the typewriter up."

Something occurred to me. A presentiment was born. "Show me where," I said.

It was as I'd suspected. He'd missed the tricky turning on the second floor, gone up the wrong branch to the flat next to ours. He said he'd given the typewriter to a lady there.

"All right, I'll go on and recover it," I said. "You go and help the others with the dressing table and the bed."

I went up to the other flat. The name-plate announced that Miss Woolenough lived there. I rang the bell. The door was opened by a middle-aged female who plainly had just tossed down a double vinegar, neat.

I said: "Good morning. I believe my typewriter was delivered here by mistake."

She said: "What?"

I repeated myself.

She said: "No you're quite wrong. The typewriter which came just now is mine."

I said: "What?"

She repeated herself. And added, for free, that today was her birthday, that her aunt had promised her a typewriter for her birthday, and this was undoubtedly it.

"Undoubtedly it may be your birthday, madam, but undoubtedly also it is my typewriter."

Her face became like a prune, only more so. She'd pursed her lips at me so tightly that I thought she'd have to whistle her next piece. She got out "It certainly is not," but she had to do a bit of unpursing first, recognizing her limitations. "My aunt -- "

She went on about her aunt. I tried to get a word in here and there but it was like trying to insert a bath-bum in a slot machine. The biography culminated in the statement that the aunt was fabulously rich and generous and had always given Miss Woolenough the best of everything, and that therefore Miss Woolenough was entitled to the best of everything, including this argument.



I said: "Then she certainly wouldn't give you a secondhand, battered typewriter?"

"Of course not, young man. I've told you, only the best --"

"Then please have another look at that typewriter. You'll find that the spring has been replaced by an elastic band, the letter 'x' is practically worn off because I use it to cross out mistakes, and the letter 'L' has short-circuited with the tabulator key so that each time you touch it the carriage slams to one side. There are twenty-seven other things wrong with it, but that should be sufficient to identify it."

She hesitated, but she went and looked. I got my typewriter back and a dirty look thrown in with it. I'd made my point -- and an enemy. After that she never missed a chance to complain to the landlord about us, often about the most trivial points, like our playing "1812" on the gramophone at three o'clock in the morning.

I was glad to find the dressing-table and bed gone from the landing. I wasn't so glad to find them both jammed in the doorway to the Flat. For quickness' sake, the men had tried to get them both through the doorway at the same time. I had to admit that nobody could have made a better job of stopping up a hole. It was hard to believe that there'd ever been a doorway there. It was so neat a job that I'd had left it that way if entry to the Flat hadn't been one of the more necessary conditions for living in it.

No one was on this side of the barrier. I couldn't see beyond it.

"Anyone there?" I called.

"Yes, we are," came the voices of the original pair of removal men.

"Where are the other two?"

"Gone down to bring up some more things."

I put the typewriter down and counted slowly to ten. It wasn't enough so I made it twenty.

Then I said, with controlled casualness: "Of course, I don't know much about the removal business, and no doubt you've had more experience than I --"

"Twenty years," laughed the small man.

"Really? But suppose the doorway was cleared first. I mean, I don't see how anything else can be got in, otherwise."

The point hadn't occurred to them. They considered it, and finally decided I might have something there. I felt flattered. After all, it wasn't everyone who could teach new tricks to workmen with twenty years' experience.

The situation had befallen them only once before, they said. Then it was a grand piano they jammed in an elevator. It had to be taken out key by key, and sold separately. But this time, of course, it wasn't a piano, so they hadn't a precedent.

"I'll go down and get the other two," I said. "Three of us this side and you two that ought to shift it."

I was getting tired of the sight of the stairs, but I went down them to the street because there was no other way down.

And the pantehnicon had disappeared! Utterly. And the two workmen with it.

I peered up and down the long, busy road. Buses, trolleys, taxis, vans, an ambulance, and even a hearse -- but no pantehnicons. I'd held up and been brave for a long time, but the breaking point was near. One can't use hundreds of calories chasing one's own tail for ever.

A beetle-browed fellow with an umbrella button-holed me. "Are you the new tenant upstairs?"

"Yes. Have you got my pantehnicon?"

That shook him. He said no, he'd sold his collection. But he could insure me against the loss of any further pantehnicons, and while we were at it he could

insure the Flat for me against fire, burglary, bottle parties, woodworm --

"Can you insure it against furniture removers?" I asked.

He blinked and said: "Yes. Of course, you understand the premium will be twice the insurable sum --"

We were both arrested by the sight of my wardrobe coming round the corner from "The Crimson Cow." It seemed to have grown four legs, but as it came closer I saw these belonged to the removal men underneath.

They straightened up and put the wardrobe down gently. I suppose it's a knack removal men acquire or inherit, but in this simple act they cracked the mirror and pulled the handle off.

The insurance man said it was a pity it wasn't insured.

"We've had to move the van down the side street," said one of the men, handing me the handle politely. "The police said it was an obstruction."

A swarthy man pushing a barrow came along the street and parked it at our entrance. There was a yard-square photograph of the Moon stuck up on the front of the barrow like an advertisement. For a crazy moment I thought that here was a street hawker peddling moons. Then I remembered seeing the photograph hanging in Ego's bed-sitting room, practically covering a wall. There were books and assorted junk heaped on the barrow. Ego had said that he was going to get a man to bring his stuff round. This, plainly enough, was the man.

Maurice came down the road carrying his typewriter. One of the spools had come off, and it clattered along behind him on thirty feet of black record ribbon. He seemed oblivious both of it and the cats chasing it.

He crossed the road, and a bus ran over the ribbon. It didn't even check him. He marched slowly on.

Things were getting a bit blurry at the edges. The calories were running out. My head swam. I'd been trying too long to believe this was all real. Of course, these were figures in a bad dream, nothing more.

A lot more figures began milling round me, importuning me, thrusting papers under my glazing eyes.

"Clean yer winders...."

"Delivered daily...."

"Full cream...."

"Best flour...."

"Any magazine...."

"You want a noo...."

"And when you're sixty-five...."

"Just sign here...."

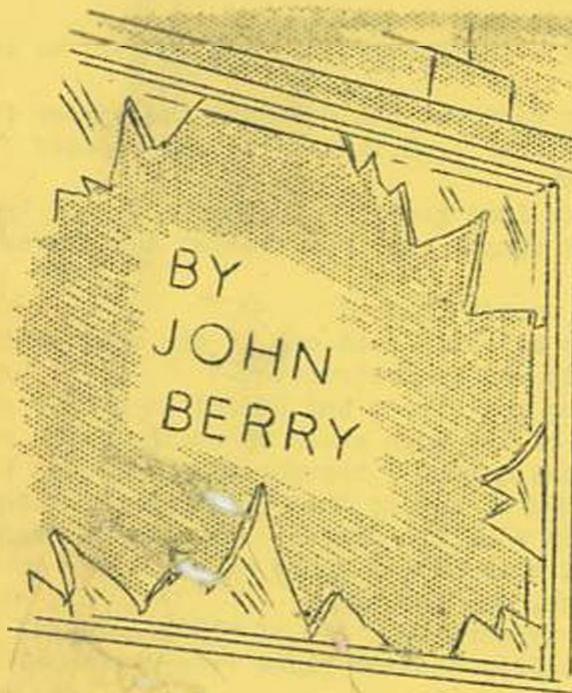
I signed here. And there. Everywhere. To get rid of them. What did it matter? They weren't real. I moved in a delirium. I was carried upstairs, still signing, on a tidal wave of faceless people. I sat on the stairs and watched the removal men using my wardrobe as a battering ram to break down the barricade at the Flat door. Furniture and people surged back and forth. Out of the moving mass heads poked sometimes to get air, and disappeared again, or disembodied arms waved pads and pens at me: if they came near me, I signed.

And then suddenly the cock crew, and they all vanished. A wonderful silence fell. I dared to look around, to look life in the face again. All my furniture, including the bed, was heaped up around me. Apparently, the removal men had thought this was the only room in the place.

The door of the wardrobe creaked and swung open. Maurice, still carrying his typewriter, stepped out. "That's the most uncomfortable elevator I've ever ridden in," he said. He cleared a space among the printed forms which lay ankle-deep on the floor, and set his typewriter down. "That's that. Now I'm going back for my books."

I nodded faintly, and watched him go.

"It isn't dirty but it has Freudian connotations."



"HIGH WIDE AND TRANSOM"

ALTHOUGH I WAS aware that Walt and Madeline were away at Kettering representing us at the Convention, it would in any case have been obvious to even an apprentice neofan that they were not in residence. The flag was at half-mast, massive blinds were pulled down over the windows, the usual crowds of sightseers were absent, and the prozine kiosk was padlocked.

Of course, Bob and Sadie were in charge of 170. Walking up the path, I

noticed a large three feet square pane of glass missing over the front door, and when James opened the door to my urgent knocking, I sensed that the afternoon was going to be different.

Bob rushed up and shook my hands, tears in his eyes. "Accept my apologies, John," he panted. "You once wrote an article about Oblique House, and you said the front door and hallway resembled an air-lock. Although I scoffed at the time you have been proved correct. I closed the front door last night and thus created a vacuum. The resultant pressure of air from outside caused the weakest part of the structure to give, which was, as you have seen, the large, expensive pane of glass bearing the inscription...."

WALTER A WILLIS, IRELAND'S GREATEST EXPONENT OF THE
FANNISH ART, ORIGINATOR OF SLANT, CO-AUTHOR OF THE
ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR, PUBLISHER OF THAT REMARKABLE
FANZINE,

"I want to catch the 5.30 pm trolley bus tonight," observed James.

"Sorry," said Bob. "Anyway, you know what was inscribed on the pane. Unfortunately, as I have just explained, the glass disintegrated due to the tremendous pressure from outside. Upon making enquiries, I discovered that a new piece of glass of the required dimensions will cost £3. 8. 7d. Besides that, there is the inscription to be painted on, although if I take three days holiday, I may just be able to conclude the job before Walt returns. The point I am trying to make is this.....Ahem.....John, don't think this is flattery, but I think your articles are terrific. I take no offence at the Shavian Mysteries. Your style of playing Ghoddminton is sensational. Your budgerigar can talk. You can make puns.....er.... I've put you down for a twenty-five shilling subscription towards the cost of the glass.....O. K.?"

He got up from his knees, wiped the polish from his lips, and smiled hopefully.

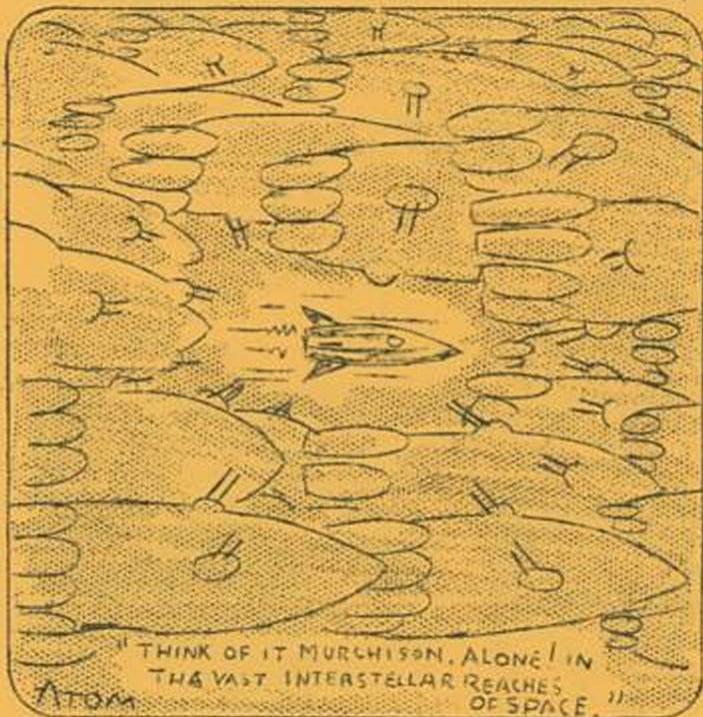
"As a matter of fact, Shaw," I said. "I smashed a Willis window a short time ago, and I paid the full amount unaided. But wait, I have an idea....listen...."

Get all the pieces of glass, put them in a box, and suspend the box above the hall door by a length of cotton. George hasn't arrived yet; when he opens the door, the cotton will break, the glass will fall, and he'll think he is responsible. We can all blame him, and then offer him a few shillings each to help ease the strain."

Bob sighed in admiration. "Brilliant," he breathed, "brilliant.....I'll, -- I'll give you a science-fiction plot for this."

"I have discovered a flaw," announced James, who, typically, had gone over the whole plan with his analytical mind, "supposing George looks up and sees that the glass is smashed whilst he is walking up the path?"

The gleam in Bob's eyes dimmed. "I know what to do," I cried. I wanted to help Bob, you see. I wanted to repay him for having sold me his typer. "Bob must go outside and scatter a few coins. Drop a penny by the front gate. On the steps, put a couple of threepenny bits. Drop some shillings on the grass to make it look plausible, scatter a few half-crowns on the doorstep, and allow the corner of a ten shilling note to protrude slightly under the door. The cost will be much less than having to pay for the window. I'll help you.....here is the penny for the front gate."



Bob's eyes shone. He snatched my penny. "John," he announced, "consider yourself the owner of not one, but two of my plots."

"Better hurry," said James, "he will be here any minute now."

Five minutes later, all was ready. We took up a position near the stairs, a few yards away from the hall door.

We heard the front gate click, a pause, then the sound of shuffling footsteps. The front door was pushed open, the cotton was broken, and the glass cascaded downwards.

"Get the right facial expressions," said James. "Think of Berry's last science fiction story."

We all assumed expressions of horror and indignation.

Then an amazing thing happened. The hall door opened, and George crawled in on his hands and knees, his nose inches from the ground, his fingers groping in front of him. He crawled past us. "Where's the pound note?" he mumbled.

"Hey, George," we shouted. "See what you have done...smashed the fanlight." He turned.

"I did not," he said.

"You did just," answered Bob. "and pull that crescent-shaped piece of glass out of your scalp. You look like a Creole."

James snapped his fingers. He pulled out an indexed pocket-book, thumbed through it.

He held up a hand. "George, stop creoling about the hallway," he shouted triumphantly.

We ignored this.

Suddenly, realization hit George. "What have I done?" he sobbed. "I've smashed Walt's autobiography."

Bob stepped forward. "George," he said, "I am sorry to see a fan in such a dire position as this. That window will cost you at least £3. 8. 7d to repair and that doesn't include labour. All I ask is that you get the job finished before Walt comes back."

We all handed him a few coins to show that fans stick together, no matter what happens.

"Yes, I must get it fixed before Walt gets home again," said George. "First of all I'll...!....."

Sadie burst in. "Just finished your best suit, Bob," she said rather sharply. "It has taken me all this time to mend the tears and brush out all the little splinters of glass. The next time you come home late and forget the key, don't dive head first through the fanlight."

There was a stunned silence.

"Cheerio," grinned George, and flashed through the door.

"'Bye," muttered James, with a sickly smile as he followed George.

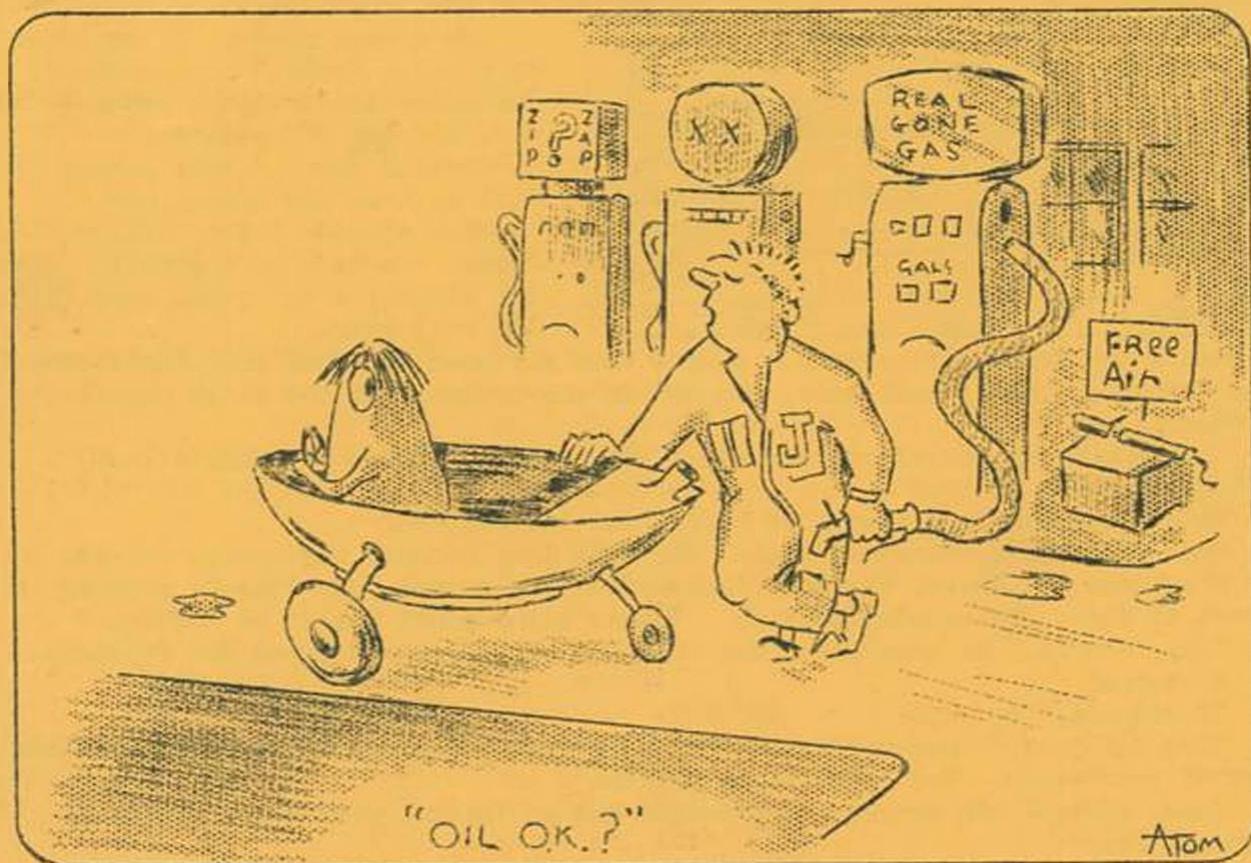
Bob looked at me sort of frustrated.

"My plot, Bob," I pleaded, "my plot."

"I'll give you a plot," he screamed. "Sadie, bring my spade."

I fled like a swallow through the fanlight.

People just don't appreciate me.



11 TOTO

An insert of reprinted material from fanzines of the past. This issue intended for inclusion in HYPHEN #15.

An all Burbee issue.
EDITED BY KEN BEALE.

EXCERPTS FROM BURBEE EDITORIALS

Al Ashley told me last night that LA fandom was going to hell and he wasn't a bit surprised about it. Somebody told him, he said, that LA fandom would go to hell after the Pacificon, and by God, Al said, that's just what it's doing.

Well, I said, you may be right.

I know I'm right, he said. It came over me in a flash. I was playing a game of

experimental chess the other night and using my other brain for random thoughts and it came to me like a flash. LA fandom is -- why the whole bunch of guys that used to collect books have become book collectors and while this does not shock me it does not surprise me either because I had my suspicions of this long ago. There was my other brain, the one with the high I.Q., ruminating on this subject and that, and all of a sudden it struck me like a bolt from the blue.

These so-called fans are not interested in fandom any more, Al said. They are taken up with such mundane things as sex and beer and vodka and chess and other stupid things and thoughts of stencil-cutting never enter their heads. They're all going to hell, in short. The same thing might be said for the whole of LA fandom. It's all going to hell. And somebody told me it would, right after the Pacificon.

You agree with him? I asked.

Well, he said, I looked at it from all angles. I abjure the use of psychology in all my thought processes, you know. I looked at it from all angles without the use of psychology and I came to that conclusion.

That was with your other brain, I said.

Yes, my #2 brain, that is. And then to make sure I called in my #1 brain and had a consultation, and the consensus is that LA fandom is going to hell.

Don't you think it rather significant that all your friends are female impersonators?

E. E. Evans is our new director. We voted him in the other night. Gus Wilmoth and Tigrina were on the ticket, too, but Evans won.

We sat there in the clubroom and the Xmas party was going on, and I turned to Elmer Perdue who sat there beside me on the inverted crud box and I said this is what the club has needed all this time, Meyer. A strong man with a strong back.

What about the mind? asked Elmer.

Let the mind go, I said.

We need a man like Evans, I said. A man who gets an idea a minute must of necessity get a good idea once in a while if the laws of chance are still in force.

Elmer looked up again from EXILE OF THE SKIES which he was re-reading for the fourth time and listened to me politely.

It is a fine thing, I said. We haven't had a good director since Kepner was director. Those were wonderful days, Meyer, I said. Every meeting was a thing of vital interest and divertissement. Each meeting had a program worth coming in from South Gate to see. They had spirit and verve and lift and -- what is the word I want?

"Sure I'm a good analyst, -- look at my sword cane."

Zip, said Elmer.

Yes zip. The meetings had zip then. They were tops. They reached an all-time high.

That was before my time, said Elmer.

Mine too, I said.

Look at the series of directors we've had since then, I said. Fine people all, Meyer. But they lacked that certain-- what is the word I want?

Zip, said Elmer.

Yes, zip. They all lacked zip.

Well, Meyer, said Elmer, do you think this character Evans has zip?

Well, no, Meyer, I said. He hasn't got zip.

But, I said, I think he'll be good for the club.

You're glad he's in, then, Meyer, said Elmer.

Yes, Meyer, I am, I said.

I suppose, Meyer, said Elmer, that in the months to come you'll be glad you voted for him?

Oh, I said, I didn't vote for him, Meyer. I voted for Gus Wilmoth.

This is God speaking.

...I've used up so much space now that I can't reveal Al Ashley's plans for surviving the Bomb, Atom, M-1.

How, in such a limited space, could I tell of his plans for ruling as an absolute monarch (beloved by all) over a group of hardy people in which the women outnumber the men 7-1? And how could I describe the Ashley Plan for Beating Off Well-Organized Attacks? And where would I find room for the Ashley Plan for Outmanoeuvring in an Indirect Manner Political Aspirants to the Place of Power? There is no room for this revelatory material. It is a pity, in a way, not being able to sketch out one of the finest pieces of mental engineering Ashley has ever turned out. It is the Ashley Program for Diverting a Sufficient Supply of Water and Power to Slan Center. Pity. I could go into detail on things like the Ashley Plan for Repopulating Devastated Districts, but come to think of it, you may be able to figure out that one yourself.

Most people are dull eyes, but some of us are bright eyes.

....Perdue came on. Said the April FAPA mailing would be late because he was getting married April 6, and I said that if he was going to let his honeymoon interfere with fan activity he should have his honeymoon now and get married April 6 as per schedule. He grew thoughtful and I suppose he is considering it. ((From SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES #32, Sept '46: #34, Dec '46: #35, March '47:#38 Dec 47))

My biggest regret is that I am physiologically incapable of being a lesbian.

THE DEEPER SIGNIFICANCE OF SCIENCE-FICTION

by

F. Towner Laney

(from WILD HAIR #3 Feb '49)

Here in our midst is one of the leading authors of science fiction of our time-- Roger P. Graham ((Rog Phillips)), who has written and sold more science fiction than most fans have read.

"Roger," I said, "what is the deeper significance of science fiction?"

"Science fiction," he said pensively, "is an escape used by escapists who are trying to escape from what they have escaped to."

.....

In response to numerous requests and in return for many Big Purple Ones, here is my first article...



SPADES
ARE
TRUMPERY
BY
SADIE SHAW

I HAD GOT a new hair-do especially for the occasion, after a lot of blotting my lipstick was just right, my lemon dance dress fresh from the cleaners made me feel wonderful, and I was ready for an evening out dancing. As I waited for Bob in the dining room I looked myself over in the mirror to make sure there were no flaws in my ensemble, and at last I heard him on the stairs. I posed smilingly, belle of the ball fashion, so that when he came in he wouldn't be able to wait to get dancing with me.

Somehow, when he opened the door I sensed that Bob hadn't been preparing to go dancing at all. Maybe it was because he wore his peep-knee ghoddminton trousers and mud-caked boots and was carrying a rusty spade on his shoulder.

"Is the dance fancy dress?" I asked sarcastically.

"Dance?" he said in astonishment. "Did I not tell you that we are going to dig James' front garden tonight?"

"Who taught you to use a pneumatic drill?" I said.

"Don't need one," he replied, "I can use this spade."

"Spade!" I moaned. "James says the earth is so hard that even the worms carry pickaxes. Well, I won't go and that's final."

A few minutes later, on the way to James' house, we were crossing to the bus when Bob, as usual, made a bee-line for the rubbish receptacle. I should explain before you run away with the idea that he is an eccentric idiot, that he once found a pound note in a used ticket box and never quite got over the visions it gave him of a new, easier way of making a living.

As I caught up with him, he looked at me and said bitterly, "Nobody ever throws anything into these things but a lot of rubbish." He picked up the garbago carefully and replaced it in the bin.

Finally, the bus came along. I suggested we went upstairs, -- I was afraid people might not understand Bob's outfit if we sat on the lower deck, and there was a chance that there would be a few farm labourers already on top.

Hopefully I squeezed Bob's hand and suggested he might like to put the spade below the seat, but no, he preferred to hold it before him. Suddenly, he changed his mind and he and the spade disappeared below me. By one of those peculiar coincidences that seem to follow Bob, the conductor came and collected the fares whilst he was out of sight. He looked quite surprised when I told him about it.

Anyone who has ever walked a countryman's mile will understand the way I felt

"The distance he keeps is justified by his halitosis."

as we walked and walked after leaving the bus at Riverdale. I just kept going, alternately fretting because Bob had lost the way, and rejoicing in false hope everytime we turned a corner to see a rock formation in front of a house. Unable to stand the agony any longer, I decided that I was not going to let Bob's pride in his sense of direction stop me from asking the way from the next person we met.

Suddenly a little girl materialised out of the twilight. Ignoring Bob's hurt whimpers and his frantic plucking at my sleeve, I asked her the way to Riverdale Gardens. My heart began to glow with anticipation, and my feet ceased to throb in my sandals as I thought that soon I would be sitting on a chair, --any chair at all. My hopes collapsed when she mumbled that she didn't know of such a place. I was horrified, -- firstly because I was no nearer to my cosy seat, and secondly because this poor defenceless girl was growing up in the district without her mother having warned her to run away when she saw James White SF approaching.

We walked on. Bob, with his spade on his shoulder, gave me a glowing description of how his animal instinct would unerringly lead us to James. Three quarters of an hour later he was still telling me the same thing when we turned into a short alley. There, in the gathering dusk, we saw James toiling away in a tiny front garden.

The next thing I saw was Bob bounding along the street, waving the spade above his head, and screaming to James not to dig all the garden, to leave a foot or two for him.

Suddenly he stopped dead. "James, you beast!" he sobbed. "You just didn't want me to have any fun. You have played here all day, digging and digging, making yourself tired trying to get it all done before I came, and I could have done the whole thing in a few minutes. I HATE you, James."

Poor James! He's so tender-hearted. The sight of Bob's tears moved him so much that he promised that if Bob came the next day he could re-dig the whole garden.

Bob would have gone up the next day, even if only to get some more of Peggy's cakes, but in the middle of the night he wakened me.

"What's the matter?" I asked him, thinking that he might want me to go down again and reassure him that there were no burglars in the house.

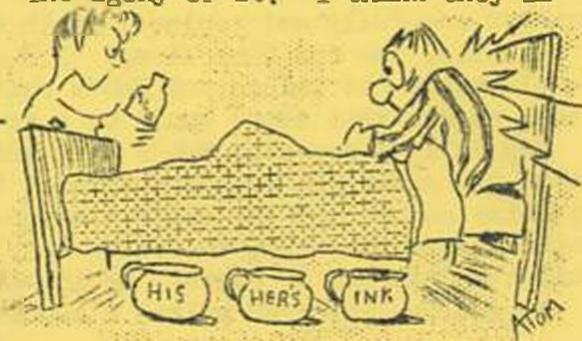
"Promise me one thing," he moaned. Promise me that you will at least think it over before making George your second husband."

"Promise," I said patiently. "You dying again?"

"It's real this time. I knew I should never have gone out into the wilds around James' district without getting inoculated. I've contracted some fatal disease. Ohhhhhh.....my shoulder and back! The agony of it! I think they'll have to amputate my chest."

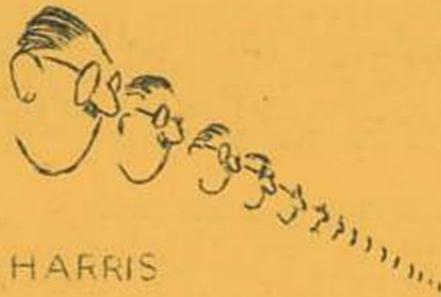
The doctor was very kind when he called the next day. He said that Bob should have lots of rest and sleep, and that his shoulder was strained with carrying some heavy object.

I don't like to think that it was the spade that did it, but I sometimes wonder if all the resources of medical science could have saved Bob if he had actually got digging that night.



... AND BEHOLD

BY
CHARLES HARRIS



Amber, memento of a time when ferns were giants.....frogs' legs, a gourmet's delight.....a kite, childhood's expression of the primordial urge to flight.

The ultimate of relationships: Unrelatedness!

An obscure teen-ager prints a story in his amateur magazine-- an obscure author reprints a newspaper account in his book-- a letter by an obscure English science fiction reader is printed.

The ultimate of relationships....

Dissimilar tissues co-operate to form an organism -- dissimilar letters co-operate to form a word -- dissimilar observations co-operate to form a conclusion..

Unrelatedness?

Amber. Frogs' legs. A kite.
A Greek. An Italian. A British-American.
Electricity.

A story. A newspaper account. A letter.
An obscure teen-aged author of English descent.

Time-travel!

Copslo, Vol 1. No. 6. July 29, 1952: On pages 19-20 is printed "Vicious Circle," by one Norman G. Browne -- "...The cleaning woman found it three days later. She glanced at it and sniffed something about crack-pots and finally burned it with the rest of the waste paper. The card read: 'Walter A. Willis, President, Proxyboo Ltd., 1950.' Of course it must have been a crack-pot. The date on the calendar in the office said it was 1936....." This incident is ostensibly presented as fiction, --but see page 183, THE SCIENCE FICTION HANDBOOK by Lyon S. de Camp -- that "every piece of fiction ever written can be broken down into bits of the writer's experience." (Authorities' correction that the author of "Vicious Circle" intended to write 1926--not 1936--is unnecessary.)

Lo!, by one Charles Fort. On page 208 is printed an excerpt from the London "Daily Mirror," August 5, 1920 -- "...Belfast police are in possession of the sensational news that eight girls, all under twelve years of age, are missing since last Monday week, from the Newtownards Rd, East Belfast." (These girls would therefore have been just under eighteen in 1926, the year in which a cleaning woman may, or may not, have found a business card dated 1950.)

Cosmag, Vol.2. No.1. September 1951. On page 16 is printed a letter--"There is little market for fannish humour so the fannags get the cream as well as the

"He's full of guts, like a hog."

2
3

crud. All the best, Yerz, Chuck Harris."

Chuck Harris writes a letter. Chuck Harris reads the letter.

More Than Human, page 100 -- One Theodore Sturgeon says: "I don't think a man could get a nastier shock than to find he has someone else's memories."

Unless it is to find that he has lived in England and written a letter, while his memories tell him that he did not write the letter and has never been in England.

But memories record only the past...

More Than Human, further down on page 100 -- "All your thinking is done in code....So you run into a stretch of code which is abhorrent to you..."

Charles S. Harris, living in the United States, finds evidence that he is living in England -- a part of his brain records his reaction in its own special code --he finds the stretch of code abhorrent...

A metal-smith tries to file down the burrs on the edge of a bowl -- wind and rain try to file down the mountains on the surface of the land -- a teen-ager tries to file down the splinters of disconcerting evidence on the smooth plank that he calls "reality."

The Story of Our Names, by Elsdon C. Smith. Page 25-- that "Charles" is the third most common name for males in the USA. Page 95 -- that "Harris" is the 17th most common surname. Page 96 -- that these figures also apply, approximately, to England. Fanzine Material Pool Newsletter, Vol 1 No 4, Jan 1954, Page 1 -- "Bob Stewart, 274 Arlington Street. San Fran." Same publication, further down on page 1 -- "Bob Stewart, Rt 4, Kirbyville, Texas." Gemtoncs, Vol 4 No.3 -- G.M. Carr says (page not numbered): "Terry Carr is a boy to watch for BNF-potential. In fact, if I don't watch out I'll soon be the "other Carr" in fandom..."

A Bob Stewart in California -- a Bob Stewart in Texas. A Carr in California-- an "other Carr" in Washington.

Charles Harris in New York fills the knot-holes in his plank of reality with Stewarts and Carrs.

By the so-called "laws" of Chance, in a group of 30,000 to 50,000 persons, one will be named Charles Harris. Science-fiction fandom is made up of mere hundreds (some say dozens) of persons. The Reach of the Mind, by J.B. Rhine, page 34 --- "Ordinarily, odds of 100 to 1 or better are accepted in science as warranting the conclusion that the results are not due to chance." But the possibility that the existence of two Charles Harrises in a limited group may not be due to pure chance is an irritating splinter -- it is filed down to be destroyed along with other worthless sawdust.

A stretch of code is abhorrent, so it is declared meaningless.

For thirty-three months, Charles S. Harris in the United States makes no effort to contact Charles "R" Harris in England. But every once in a while he is pricked by a new splinter, until he notices that the splinters all originate from the same spot on the plank --

A story. A newspaper account. An English sciencefiction fan.

Proxyboo Ltd. Newtownards Road. Hyphen.

A teen-ager's personal plank of reality is snapped in two, and the raw edges of the fracture, --- Walter A. Willis.

Professor J. B. Rhine of Duke University is an authority. Other authorities belittle his researches and deny the existence of the object of these researches. They do not realise that Professor Rhine has made a great contribution to that which is commonly called The Scientific Method. His contribution surpasses even that of the great scientist, Copernicus, who pointed the way by filing away the

plank of the obvious and leaving the splinters of abstruse Theory.

Professor Rhine had his subjects state the order of the symbols on a pack of cards which the subject cannot see. The subject's order is then compared with the actual cards to determine the extent of correlation. See "New Frontiers of the Mind," "Extra-Sensory Perception," "The Journal of Parapsychology," for further details. He then divides the scores of correlation into two groups: high scores and low scores. He infers that high scores indicate extra-sensory perception --- pure guess-work would not produce so many of them. But low scores are also considered evidence of E.S.P. --- pure guess-work would not produce so many low scores either, almost equal to the number of high scores. Obviously, says Rhine, the subject was purposely giving wrong answers.

A conventional Scientist -- and what is a Scientist but one who follows Science's arbitrary conventions?-- files down the annoying splinters on his plank of Abstract Theory and burns them. Rhine files down the splinters, leaving his smooth plank of conjecture, and uses the splinters to make plywood even stronger than the plank he has hacked out! The unfriendly authorities should realise that Rhine is not merely a troublesome splinter on their planks, but a valuable burl.

Professor Rhine believes that ESP and psychokinesis exist -- he finds evidence that proves they do. Conventional scientists believe that such things do not exist --they find that Rhine's evidence was improperly obtained, misinterpreted, and just a series of coincidences anyhow.

Let us believe that extra-sensory perception does exist.

We believe the authorities when they say that two and two are four -- until we mix two quarts of alcohol with two quarts of water and find that less than four quarts of liquid result. We believe the authorities when they tell us that two objects cannot occupy the same space -- until we stuff a large wad of cotton into a glass brimful of water. By coincidence, two and two sometimes are four, and two objects sometimes cannot occupy the same space. When the coincidence fails to appear, the authorities file down the annoying splinter with incorrect procedure files and misinterpretation sandpaper.

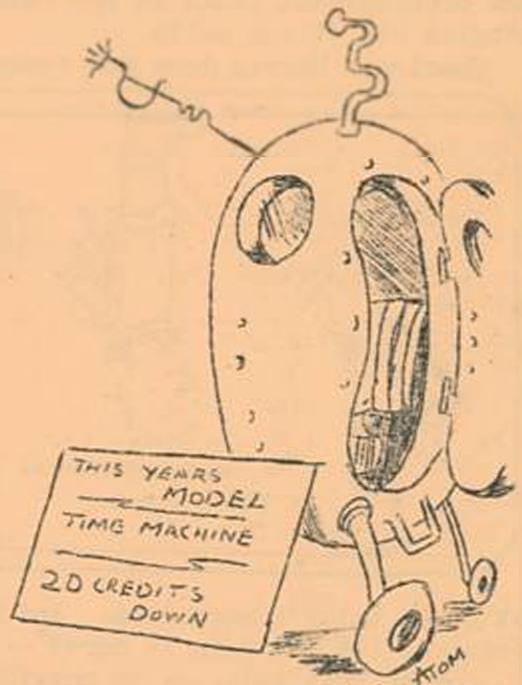
We shall believe in ESP -- or in the carefully selected coincidences that prove its existence.

"New World of the Mind," page 16 -- that scores were just as good (or bad, if potential plywood) when the subject was located at differing distances from the object cards, or dice if the test was for psychokinesis. Page 20 -- that scores were equally good when the position of cards or dice did not exist until after the subject made his statement or did his influencing. Page 158 -- that ESP and PK operate without reference to the space-time-mass continuum.

Clairvoyance operates outside the boundaries of time -- and becomes precognition. Psychokinesis operates outside the boundaries of time and becomes ---

Time-travel --

Seemingly unrelated facts point to the existence of time-travel. These same



Surely they're not going to nationalize Shirley?"

facts also point to Walter A. Willis. The obvious conclusion --

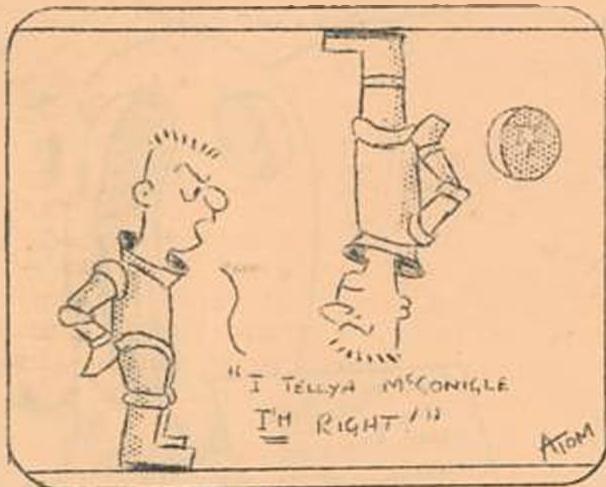
Walter A Willis employs time-travel.

In committing a crime, a criminal usually has a motive. In a story a character's actions must be plausibly motivated.

What motivated Willis to use time-travel? What was his motive in introducing Charles R. Harris to fandom?

Spaceship, Vol. 1. No 24, Jan 1954, Page 18 -- "Charles Harris of the Essex Harrises has also become a Professional Author." Breaking into the science-fiction field often requires years of effort, years of rejection slips. With the growing development of the genre, it will be even more difficult to break into the professional ranks in the future. An agent can collect a commission only on stories his client sells.

Charles S Harris does not remember writing a letter to Cosmag. He does not remember becoming a Professional Author. Memories record only the past--



I propose that Charles R Harris remembers these events and every event that Charles S. Harris remembers --because Charles R. Harris once was Charles S. Harris!

Walt Willis somehow achieves time-travel. He visits 1926 and encourages a leading publisher to print the first SF magazine. He travels into the future --how many years into the future can only be guessed -- and brings back a struggling author named Charles Harris. The author finds that it is no trouble at all to hack out material for public-

ation in today's magazines. And Willis, who brought him back to the present time receives 10% -- or is it more? -- on each sale.

Out of gratitude, -- or possibly due to other inducements, -- Harris aids Willis to publish "Hyphen" -- a magazine which achieves some popularity in fandom. Perhaps Harris also is persuaded to ghost-write much -- or all -- of the material appearing under the Willis by-line. #

Well?

Now that Willis's motivation has been clarified, you may ask, quite reasonably, what my motive is in setting down all this information at such length.

A well-known fannish maxim states: "There is no ghod but Egoboo." --

I have pointed to Willis and said "Time-travel exists!" Every detail I have set down is hypothetical, -- apart from those detailed elsewhere. Though some may be accurate, it can hardly be expected that they all are....

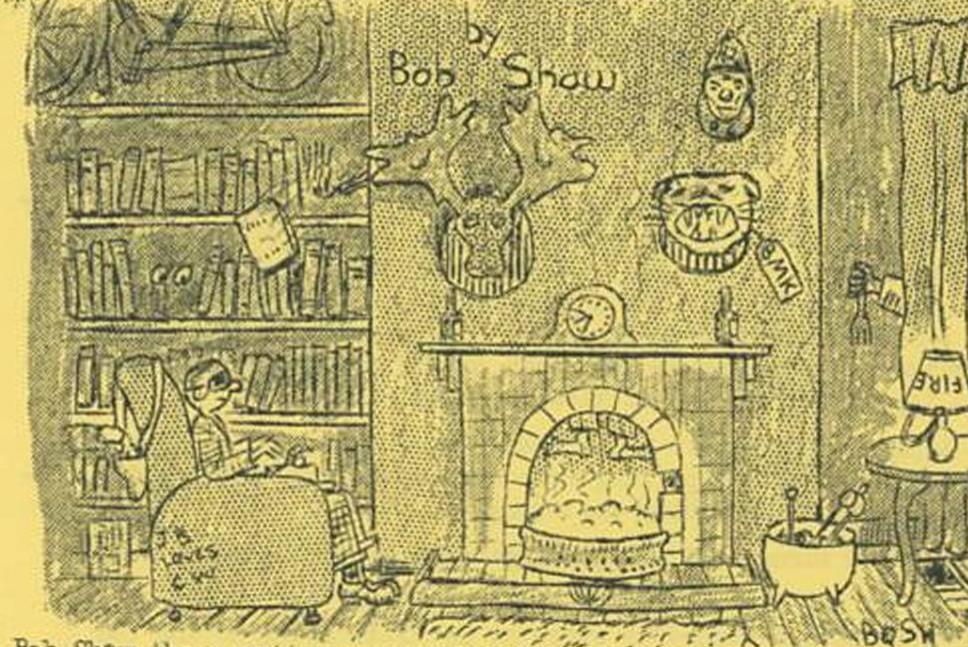
But, even so, perhaps time-travel will someday become a reality. Then, secure in my niche in the Hall of Fame, I shall look down whilst people cite this document and say: "Lo! Many years ago, Charles S Harris pointed to the existence of time-travel." Me, Charles S. Harris, of the Great Neck Harrises, the first, original, and true discoverer.

Egoboo, buster, egoboo.

((* Actually, Walt's take has been 100% of my earnings so far.))

((# No comment. CRH))

THE GLASS BUSHEL



THE OTHER DAY I said to John Berry, "John, have you ever had any close contact with the supernatural?"

He bounced out of his chair and went something like this: "Suffering catfish! Have I ever....? What a question. Oh crikey! I wish I had. ~~Mmmmm~~" Here he made a circle out of his forefinger and thumb and held them up like a French chef enthusing over somebody's tomato ketchup. "Oh, I wish I had! Honestly! I say, Bob, there's a bit of grass in your trouser flap. What an idea for an article!"

Bob Shaw the squatter—crawling through long grass to spy on courting couples. I could have it in the next Orion, all about the police and special constabulary being called out to find you cos you frightened George out of his wheelchair when he was out with Carol."

"Sit down, John," I said, gently pushing him into the chair.

"The supernatural," he babbled. "~~Mmmmm~~. Lovely! I wish I had. Suffering catf— Hey Bob. That was quite a push you gave me. What an idea for my next article in Oopala! Bob Shaw: the bruiser who goes around terrorising Irish fandom. I could have it that you beat us all up to make us write articles in your name.....oh, I must write those two on my way home tonight. Ah yes! The supernatural! Close contact! Hee hee hee. Honestly, I'd give my right arm....."

Quietly I sneaked away, appalled at what I had heard. It was quite clear that when somebody said "the supernatural" to John Berry he thought they were talking about Marilyn Monroe.

Later it occurred to me that I should say something to fandom about my life with the supernatural. After all, I reasoned, very few of us have been given The Gift, that second sight which makes its possessor aware of things that the common run of humanity does not even know about. Sometimes as the veil is lifted aside for a moment I wonder are there regions into which Man is not supposed to venture? I believe that a limit was placed on Man's domain and when he goes beyond he is incurring the wrath of someone who watches... It is dangerous to pry into things that are not meant for the human eye to see.....

How do I know? Well, you see, the supernatural has a spite against me.

I first became aware of this at the age of seven; in fact I was almost ten, but then I was very slow in growing up. I remember when some of my chums were eleven and twelve I was only eight, but in later life I overcame this handicap and managed to reach 21 years before my kid brother who was only ten at the time. It must run in the family.

"Yngvi saved Courtney's boat."

Anyway, it was in the middle of the afternoon and I was in school receiving a singing lesson. The whole class was tiredly standing there singing some uninspired jingle which dealt, in great detail, with the reactions of some bird of the robin family to the onslaught of winter in general and the northerly winds in particular. I was bored because the only song I liked was one about a mermaid with a comb and a drink in her hand and we wouldn't reach that one for some time yet.

I began to yawn so I put my hand over my mouth because it is polite and because nobody likes to see your tonsils but mainly because the teacher would have whaled me for lack of interest if she had seen it. Bearing this last in mind I decided to play real safe. I put my other hand over my mouth as well.

This is where the unseen forces that have the power to strike fear into the hearts of ordinary men made themselves felt. We were all singing softly and sadly, the teacher was watching us and I had both hands cupped over my mouth. Suddenly, echoing through the classroom there came a horrible cry! It was a loud, eerie, frightening ululation which in several seconds reached a horrifying crescendo before gradually fading away into a low gurgling sob rather reminiscent of the death cry of an ambidextrous sea serpent being dropped into a blast furnace full of glowing mutty slack.

I assure you it was an awful and memorable sound and I stood unmoving, in that same pose, hands over mouth, until the last despairing echo had faded away. I blinked several times in surprise; then I noticed something was wrong.

Everybody in the classroom had turned and was staring—accusingly—at me!

"Shew!" the teacher bellowed, her face contorted with shock and rage, "Why did you do that? Come up here." Dumbfounded I turned to stare at my classmates, hoping for someone to explain; then I felt hands pushing me in the back and forcing me to stumble up the aisle. My friends had turned on me.

Several feet away from the teacher's desk my voice suddenly returned. "I didn't do it. It wasn't me. Don't slap me. I couldn't do that—it was somebody in the street. Don't hit me, I didn't do it, I tell you. Honest! Honest! It was a murder out in the street," I screamed, quietly and bravely. Miss Beauchannon despatched one of the others to the window; he scanned the street outside and returned with a negative report. There was no one there. I got six of the best with a whippy cane and the pattern for my supernatural experiences had been set.

My next encounter was several years later when I had grown up a bit and joined a flute band. I was returning home from band practice one night along with a friend when They struck again. We were trudging along the Beersbridge Road in a moody silence when the other chap, who was much bigger than me, turned on me with a savage cry and punched my jaw so hard that I fell flat on my back.

"What you hit me for?" I whimpered, getting to my feet. He pointed mutely at his right eye.

Somebody had spat in it.

I stared around the deserted road in the gathering dusk feeling the old hopelessness stealing over me. This time I didn't even try to blame it on some expectorant mother leaning out of an upper window. I walked away with quiet dignity and left him there mopping his eye. I never spoke to him again.

A few years went by and I had lost a lot of my friends due to my newly acquired habit of alinking about like somebody out of 'The Black City'. I was returning home from an unsuccessful attempt in Smithfield bookmarket when I noticed my bus sitting at the City Hall. I was hungry and wanted home so I ran for the bus which was just moving off.

Now, anyone familiar with the topography of Belfast will know that when the Castle-reagh bus moves off it has just time to pick up a good speed when it reaches the lights

at Arthur St. I made a tremendous effort and caught up on the bus...you know the way it is. You are straining every muscle, it is no longer a matter of merely catching a bus, it is the most important thing in the world to reach out and grab that bar, only a few inches beyond your fingers and, relatively, almost at rest. That's the way I was when, with eerily impossible rapidity, the Arthur St. lights turned to red and the driver stamped hard on his brake pedal. The bus stopped within a few feet, probably assuming a rhomboid shape in the process, to the sound of screaming tyres and creaking joints & the bumping of numerous foreheads against seat backs. If the reader can be diverted from contemplation of this vivid word picture of the effects of sudden, violent deceleration on the huge bus, could I mention something else?

Remember me?

Making pathetic little noises of pure fright I went through the door of the bus, dented the used tickets box, bounced off it into the conductor, off him into the lower deck of the bus and stomped through a scared crowd of old ladies with shopping baskets some of whom almost had hysterics. I finished up just behind the driver, covered with perspiration and incipient bruises. I bestowed a sickly smile on all the startled faces turned towards me, slunk down the bus and up the stairs.

The supernatural had scored over me again.

Strangely enough buses and trams seemed to be a sort of focus of psychic activity although the above is the only instance in which they manipulated traffic lights. Usually they would let me risk my neck in hopping onto a moving bus and then, during the time my senses were concentrated on getting aboard, change the destination, so that I had to get off at the next stop and limp back.

The last important incident took place on one of the old-fashioned trolleys which until recently ran along the Shore Rd., where I worked for a time. We came out of the office and saw the yellow lights of a tram lumbering towards us, so we ran to the stop just in time to make the driver halt. This is important; I could ~~swear~~ I saw lights and people in the upper deck out of the corner of my eye as I was running.

Anyway, I scrambled onto the platform of the tram and charged up the steep stairs, closely followed by the other two. Halfway up the stairs I was feeling good, laughing the way people do when they are forced to run in a group for a bus or tram, and I was moving at a very good speed. Suddenly I felt a vicious and crushing blow on top of the head which drove my hat down over my eyes and smashed me back down against the other two. The three of us landed in a heap on the platform below.

My first thought was that an insane criminal armed with either a baseball or a cricket bat had been lurking on the top deck and, on seeing my head appearing upstairs, had gone berserk and tried to murder me with one blow. When we had risen to our feet again I risked a cautious glance up the stairs and found that the lights and people I had been sure I saw did not exist!

The little sketch on the right represents a plan view of the upper deck of a tram. In order that the tram shouldn't have to turn right round at the terminus they were made with driving gear and stairs at each end. The two areas marked 'A' indicate the hinged sections of flooring which could be used to block the stairwell when the driver was at that end. In this case the tram had reached the terminus and started the homeward journey with the driver at the other end, but the conductor had forgotten to fold up the floor over the end where we had got on.



Simple, isn't it? The supernatural needs very little to work with.

I did the only thing I could do after that—I retreated from the supernatural. I pretended that I knew nothing about it. Nowadays when somebody asks me if I have had any experiences with the supernatural I go: "Me? Hee hee hee. I wish I had! Oh crikey! What a question to ask! Hee hee hee. Suffering catfish...."

MY CAREER AS A THIEF One time when I was living in London I decided that I was cut out to be a master criminal, one of those sinister characters who sit at the core of the underworld and manipulate the grapevine or whatever it is they do. I pondered for a day or two on what would be the safest way to break into this new field of endeavour. I didn't want to get rich quick or anything like that, I just wanted to do a bit of mild larceny...a 'Make burglary your second income' sort of thing.

As a prelude to commencing operations I took to skulking about with my coat collar turned up, my beret pulled down and a sardonic twisted smile on my lips. However this attracted so much attention from August holiday crowds who kept dropping pennies into my hand, that I gave it up. I soon realised that it would be foolish to tackle anything like a bank without getting a bit of experience, so I got a piece of curtain material for a mask, determined to pounce on someone in a dark alley and make them hand over. I gave this up when I heard the sentence for robbery with violence.

Hence it was, that one evening I slunk up to a post office in Greenwich High Street with one hand in my overcoat pocket. I halted outside it, locked left and right to make sure that my stiff neck was cured, then whipped the penny out of my pocket. I dropped it into the stamp machine and watched as the stamp appeared from the slot. My heart was pounding heavily...this was the part I had planned so carefully and I wanted no mistakes. I gripped the stamp firmly and instead of tearing it off oscillated it from side to side. After a minute or so of this the roll inside the machine had tightened up a little and part of the next stamp was beginning to protrude from the slot.

Breathing heavily, I jerked on the inner corner of the first stamp and—lo and behold—I had two stamps. Two for the price of one! Success! I was in—no more work for me. Flushed with the heady excitement of easy money I whipped out another penny and shoved it into the slot and waited with an evil smirk on my face. It took several seconds for me to realise that I had already received the next stamp and no more would appear without more cash.

I had lost all my loot!

Holding back tears of frustration I posted my letter and went back home determined not to make the same mistake twice. A week later I had scraped together the necessary capital to try again. This time I made no mistake.

I wiggled the stamp, gripped the inner corner, jerked out two stamps and sauntered away casually, quivering with excitement. Over to the pillar-box I went, determined to put my ill-gotten gains to immediate use. I posted my letter, giggling hysterically, and turned to march away, full of grandiose plans of working out techniques for cigarette and chocolate machines. Then I noticed something.

Standing at the stamp machine was a sweet little old lady in a shabby but very clean coat & an old-fashioned straw hat trimmed with artificial violets. In her wrinkled but very clean old hand she was clutching a letter, probably for a soldier boy in Malaya or her aged but very clean husband twitching on a hospital bed. She was gazing at the machine, which had just accepted her coin without fulfilling its part of the bargain, with an expression of mingled dismay and bewilderment on her kindly old face. She was pathetic.

"Tough luck, mother," I snarled inwardly. "There's no room for sympathy in the underworld. It's the weak to the wall here. You shouldn't have tangled with the Machine. Get out before it's too late—this is a tough racket, kiddo." I turned up my collar, raked the street with steely, hardbitten eyes and sidled towards the nearest pub. When I had gone a few sidles I looked back.

The old lady was going through her handbag and it was obvious she had no more money. She looked even more pathetic. She was too surprised to do anything more than tremble gratefully when I clumped up to her, shoved a penny into the machine and rammed a stamp into her gnarled but very clean hand. My conscience drove me to it.

Nowadays I work for a living and am satisfied with it. There's more security.

POST SCRIPT



ROBERT BLOCH
(Wisconsin)

I have just received the new **HYPHEN** and it's surely a landmark in the history of British journalism. Amateur reporting such as this

bears out the old saying that the race is not always to the Fleet Street.

I salute you, sir. You have taken an old, tired, rundown, juvenile neofanzine and transformed it into a mature and brilliant effort. As I suspected, Willis was always the weak spot in the deal. Now, thanks to your masterful

editing, even his feeble contributions read smoothly. Keep Willis out of this in the future if you possibly can. If you can do so, the world will be your oyster. But then, I don't have to draw you any blueprints.

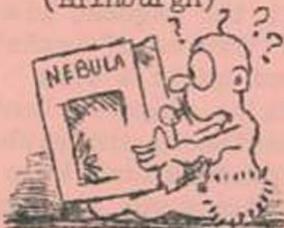
It is my intention to keep out of controversy, but in this matter of Bob Shaw and the budgies, I'm tempted. You see, my wife once raised budgies. At one time we had 40 baby budgies occupying our kitchen, and you couldn't hear yourself for the mating cries. If budgies don't talk, I wonder what the neighbors thought when they kept hearing "Don't Charlie - you're crushing my eggs!" and "Where's the bloke who's been fouling my nest?" and "Who's been licking the bottom of my cage?" We had one bird that kept saying "First Fandom is not dead," but it turned out to be a raven.

One of the recent bright spots has been the news of the Bulmer's arrival, and their reception by Larry Shaw. Larry Shaw just happens to be one of the nicest guys in the business (the White Slaver business, that is) and I'm sure they couldn't be in better hands unless they could inveigle an invitation from Calvin Beck's mother. I am hoping that I will be able to make the Cleveland trip and see them there. Too bad I didn't know about the arrival plans.... it seems embarrassing that both Shaw and the Baltimoreans should both be expecting them, and it occurs to me that there was an obvious and sensible solution: Ken could have stayed in Baltimore, and Pamela could have gone to New York with Larry. In situations like this, I think these younger fans need the advice of a cool head. One with holes in it, that is.

DEREK THOMSON
(Edinburgh)

Dear Walter Willis, I have just come across a copy of **NEBULA** No 2 Vol 1 in a second hand bookshop and would be grateful if you could send me a list of the pen names of John Russell Fearn.

On page 110 you state that Fearn who is also Vargo Statten is some fourteen others. The only other I know of is Volsted Gridban. Would you please be good enough to let me know the others. ((I don't know how that got in with the "-" mail, but I loved the idea of being a completist of the pseudonyms of John Russell Fearn.))



"It doesn't follow that he's human because he's not down on all fours."

TRUFAN OF LEEDS



The whole business makes me feel rather sad...dear old "Hyphen", the stanchion of fandom, the humorous fanzine with a difference, (one difference was its happy price and the way it ignored the laws of economics), and now they call it a twist in the spiral of inflation, which is definitely not a nice thing to say about anyone, or thing. But I would have you know this, -- I defended you earnestly. To the very utmost of my capabilities in fact. I said, and still do say that "-" is not a twist, definitely not. At its former price it was the best value for ninepence that I knew. Of course, a shilling is a different matter, three pennorth of difference to be exact, but who is to blame you if you want a holiday in South America this year? Perhaps you'll be able to dig up some more bull there.

It will all come out straight in the end and if, like all fine editors, you have worked a few rackets here and there we all know that there was never anything as serious as an out and out twist intended. After all, there is a wide gulf between rank, utter plagiarism and a mere indirect inspiration. On the whole I am inclined to sympathise with you. I can guess at the longdrawn conferences and the many bitter heartsearchings, (or do I mean heartsearching bitters here?) that must have preceded the decision to raise the price of "-".

It must be a comforting thought to realise that the alteration in charges will make very little difference to Hyphen's circulation figures.

Except, that is, for the impecunious infants of fandom who are never sure from one day to another where their next copy of "-" is coming from. (Not only because they, like me, have never quite made up their minds when the thing is actually published, but also because of horrible financial necessity.)

Think of them... Those poor orfen and waifen who face the desert of emptiness that is life with only the remembrance of their last copy of "-" to aid their faltering steps onward. They whey of an orfan, hard, terrible hard, and cruds have been at a premium ever since Little Miss Round she hated spiders and throw her breakfast on one. Now that the price of "-" is beyond his reach what will the poor little orfan do for his ration of crud?

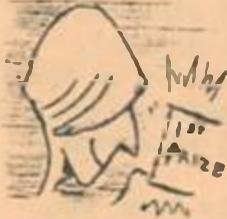
And think too of the unhappy waifan trudging by the waiside searching for cigarette ends and dropped 'Hyphens'.

What about him? Who is going to drop his Hyphen for a waifan now? Certainly not me.

.....And to finish in a pleasing manner: Dear Sir, I THINK YOU ARE A FINE EDITOR. (According to Roget, "FINE" means: "small, thin, rare, not raining, good, beautiful, adorned, proud, mulct" you may take your pick. I can't quite make up my own mind, but I have a sneaking feeling for "not raining" or "adorned.") ((Personally I prefer "beautiful". Neither Walt nor I have the vaguest idea of the author of these "Trufan of Leeds" letters, and we've spent quite a time trying to find out. We've compared handwriting, typefaces, stationery and style, and even enlisted the professional help of Detective Constable Berry who believes it's our old friend Anon writing under a pseudonym. Anybody else got any better ideas?))



JOHN BRUNNER
(Berks)



....I notice you carefully omitted the "titles" which smacked of what is politely called the bathroom. I can't quite understand this -- especially when on the back cover of every issue you make a quite open reference to the lack of sanitary arrangements in the Garden of Eden. Admittedly you use a euphemism, and not a four-letter word, but with stencils at their present price I'm surprised....((No, I picked out the best of the titles, but did not deliberately censor any of them. Anyway, there was enough there to win you First Prize in Our Grand Exciting Contest. Will other readers please note that when sending in box-tops the silver-plated handles should be unscrewed and packed separately.))

PETER RIGBY
(Southport)



It's funny how different people can go to the same festival, do completely different things and both have a good time. You were wondering how new conventioners enjoyed themselves. As one of them I'll enlighten you; I had a whale of a time... Most of Friday was quiet until the evening though I did meet Pete Taylor, Norman Mansborough and Pete Royle.... Next day I met (among others) Bert Campbell, Don Allen, Peter Reaney and Brian Burgess. I happened to be passing the entrance to the hotel just as John Carnell and party were arriving. John Carnell knew John Ashcroft from the Supermancon, so John was first to shake hands with him at the Con. I was second. ((You should have grabbed his other hand and dead-headed for first place.))

.....I'm sorry to see the frankly agnostic view most of you seem to have regarding religious matters. Chuck Harris talks about a Bible, and mentions he does not read fantasy. To dismiss a book like the Bible in that way, even for an atheist, is ridiculous. Even if you are not a Christian, you have to admit that it is historically true that there was such a person as Jesus Christ. Atheists generally believe him to be merely a rather extra-ordinary man, but not the Son of God as the Christians believe. Any atheist who is intelligent ought to realize that, true or false, the Bible is still the best book in the world. ((Are you including "More Than Human"?) Also, whether he was the Son of God or not, Jesus Christ is the greatest man who ever lived. Without Christianity, would the Salvation Army movement have been started? I know that when one talks about the Salvation Army one thinks about second rate bands beating out hymns outside a pub on a Sunday. However, people I know who fought in the last war said that wherever men were fighting ((outside the pub on a Sunday?)) Salvation Army canteens were serving food to anybody; they also helped materially in any way they could. Without a religious faith that movement would never have been started. So let's have no more blithe remarks like dismissing the Bible as fantasy. It's childish. Anyway, I was glad to see you were open minded enough to publish the Rev C.M. Moorhead's remarks on "Hell's Pavement." ((Honest, I didn't say a word about the Salvation Army. I wouldn't care to say whether Christianity or General Booth is responsible for the organisation but I wouldn't argue with you about it. As for me dismissing the Bible as fantasy, how much straining did you have to do before accepting a literal interpretation of Genesis?))

DEREK PICKLES
(Bradford)

Thanks for all the '-s I've received and not commented on, but I have so little spare time during the summer months, hope to catch up next winter. June '-' to hand, I'm afraid I don't like the desparaging ((Huh?)) cover, because some poor little devil believes in going to Church, no need to make fun of him. ((Obviously we weren't making fun of anybody, but thanks anyway for your postcard. Did you see the first word on page 28 in No 11?

Why don't you join the Church so that you can be ex-communicated?"

33

LEE HOFFMAN
(Savannah)



...I take typewriter in hand to write an outrageous letter. I am out in a rage. How would you like someone to spread slanders about you: go around telling folks (or fans for that matter), that you had sold WAW or BoSh or your autographed picture of Max Keasler? In the June issue of your punctuational magazine you tell everyone that I sold Kehli. This is tantamount to saying I would have bartered my own kin for crass cash.

The facts are (ma'am) I had two horses, could only keep one, so Kehli being the older by some six years and much deserving of retirement, I gave him to some friends who own a farm and a number of other horses. They keep him comfortable in a large pasture with others of his kind and use him on rare occasions for easy rides down country lanes..... ((I suppose you realise what this means, dear Lee beloved? My fine fannish reputation as a columnist of integrity is completely ruined just because hasty, impetuous (and that's a fine word fresh from my best Funk & Wagnalls dictionary) you had to rush out and dispose of the crittur without waiting to check the "-" editorial first. Hell, if you think you can treat me like this, you needn't be expecting me to renew my subs to QUANDRY (has this gone irregular?) or SCIENCE FICTION FIVE YEARLY. Pooh to you, ma'am.....and I only hope your new horse Brandy turns out to be carnivorous. I have already had an air-letter from Chas Wells who is foolishly taking your side in this argument, but I can ignore him with hardly any trouble at all. Parochial patriotism has no place in the Universal Brotherhood of Fandom and around here the Age of Chilvary is too dead. It won't do you the least bit of good trying to cover up; I shall ignore all letters from the National Society for the Advancement of Coloured Horses, the daughters of the American Revalation and anybody else who tries to tell me that slavery is abolished. Hyphen is about the only fanzine you can rely on these days and I'd rather trust that than these crazy mixed up kids taking your side. Don't you think it was significant that only you and Chas Wells tried to spread this lie about Kehli being given away? If this was so, why didn't I get letters from Russ Watkins or Towner or the other guardians of fannish integrity? You sold that poor damn horse, Hoffman. I only hope that the thirty pieces of silver were in Confederate currency. And don't try to evade the point by asking if I would sell WAW or BoSh or my autographed picture of Max Keasler. If you're interested, make a firm bid; I need Q #1 - #7.....but I have to tell you that Max made two typos in his autograph, and that Madeleine also owns some of the shares in WAW (I think she needs a few copies of LeZ though.), but I'd trade the whole damn lot along with three right arms I have here for one copy of Q32.

PETE ROYLE
(Berkshire)



.... Congratulations to the Rev Moorhead for having the guts to present his article to fandom, but I do not like his arguments. From what he says it seems that the book is a reflection of life today, -- exaggerated of course, but a book like that has to be to bring its full import home to the reader. And why shouldn't Christianity take a satirical banging? Can't it take it? Religion is a serious thing, but things which seem important to the materialist, the agnostic and the sun-worshipper take a hell of a lot of rockets (if you'll pardon the expression) from the Church. Or is the Church frightened of losing its hold on humanity now that people are beginning (Sorry this typer is a confirmed atheist, -- it doesn't believe I exist) beginning to read, write, and think for themselves.

JULIAN PARR
(Germany)



..... I enjoyed MICROTOME, of course, but think damon knight's talents are being wasted when he turns to the riff-raff of sf. Let him tackle the big novels: the ones we are tempted to buy....Has he (or anyone reviewed "Limbo 94" adequately?

The Rev Moorhead's review sounded like a sermon on the Beverley Nichols lines; as he is not a professional(or practiced)

critic one can readily excuse his leaving the novel's plot most obscure. But even a Reverend, used as he is to talking down to his congregation from a high horse pulpit, should have refrained from a phrase like, "Shakespeare, in Julius Caesar, put these words in the mouth of one of his characters." One can only shake one's head and wonder why he didn't preface his sentence with "An Elizabethan dramatist, -" What would he think of an aside such as "A religious novel based on historical accounts once put these words into the mouth of its hero: "Father, forgive them, for they know not....." But in such a case it is unfair to criticise the style -- it is the content which is of importance. And here I am disappointed to find Moorhead bringing up the oldie about anti-Christianity being "a reaction against overstrong parental authority in childhood" -- how often is this patronising 'argument' used to explain away the gentle Communist; no doubt jazz enthusiasts are too the children of rabid classicists and McCarthy's parents were presumably wholehearted and bigoted New Dealers. St Francis of Assisi was perhaps the village butcher's son, and Jesus himself - as we know - spent part of his youth disputing with the elders and wise men who tried to push the Hebrew religion down his throat... To find a Reverend using these pseudo-psychological 'reasons' to explain away ant-Christ-ianity (or rather anti-organised religion) is most disappointing. I would have taken him much more seriously if he had elaborated his remarks about devil worship and satanic glee. Even we atheists feel ourselves on rather thin ice when confronted by evidence of 'Evil' and 'Sin'.....In fact I could go on for hours picking away at this mess of half-hearted argument; I honestly boggled at the weird concept "this is not necessarily a religious axiom, for it seems to fall upon the godly and the ungodly alike" -- I wonder if he realised the implications of this? I doubt it..... how shamefacedly weak and defensive was his last appeal! - "to some weaker minds 'Hell's Pavement' will exert an influence to sneer at even the good in religion." ((Nearly everyone who wrote in wanted to have a go at the Rev and although we have no objection to throwing him to the wolves we do regret that there's not enough of him to go all round. As far as I know, this piece aroused more comment than anything else we've printed so far with the exception of last year's con-reports. I am agnostic myself, -- I used to be an atheist until I was frightened by an angel with a flaming sword, -- but some of you people even shock me. Ghod knows the effect some of these letters would have on sensitive minds like Gem Carr or Obadiah Bip. We're all in favour of religious controversy, but try to tone it down a little. Disagree with Morehead by all means, but, please, don't get down to personalities.



X "Tell the Rev. Pughhead to take a running jump in the Jordan."

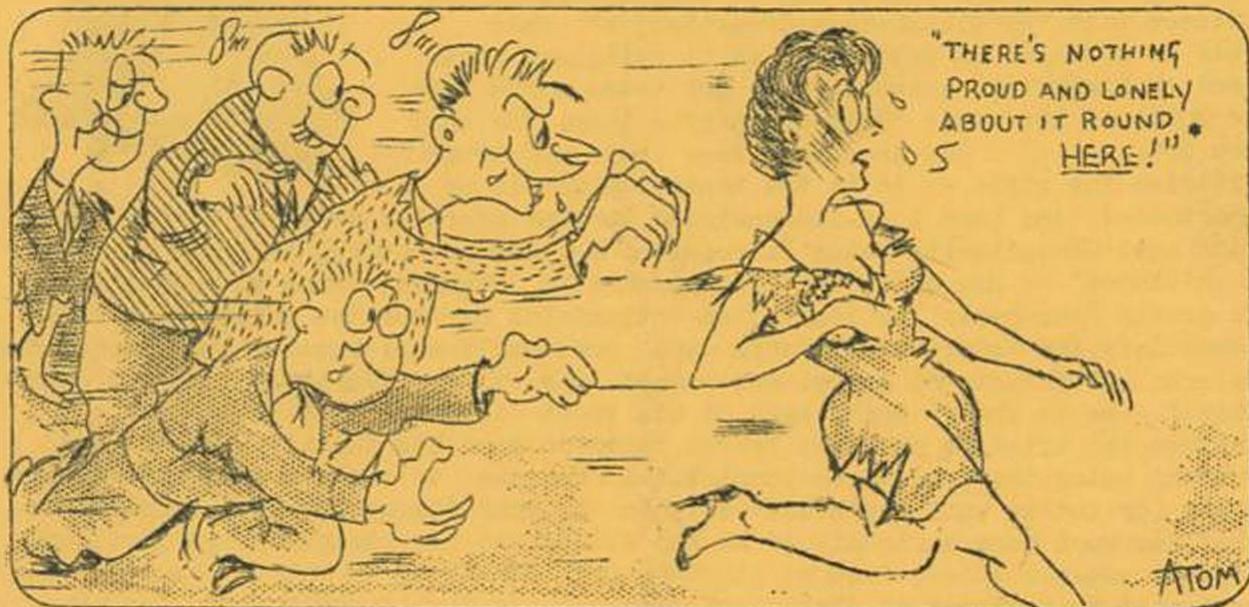
35

ERIC FRANK RUSSELL
(Cheshire)

I think things have got to the stage where
HYPHEN would look castrated without its
illos. Most of the little sketches are
genuinely funny to those of us sufficiently developed to think
that there are things funnier than a squirt from a zap-gun.

Knight writing with bile was as good as ever. Some fellow
called Willis was pretty good too - if he can keep it up he
should become quite a well-known fan. I confess to a slightly
imbecilic fondness for the battle over the question of whether
budgerigars can talk. Right now I'm three-quarters convinced
that they can't.

The mag is gradually building itself up to a necessity, like poteen, mari-
juana or sex. ((Do you think we should elect a solitary Vice President?)) Keep
it up and you'll reach the ideal with a mag that can be read, dissolved and
squirted into the veins. You'll then be able to DEMAND ANY PRICE from slaving
addicts. ((Yes, but what a comedown for a fine avant-garde fanzine like HYPHEN
to finish up as the opium of the people alongside the Army of Salvation.))



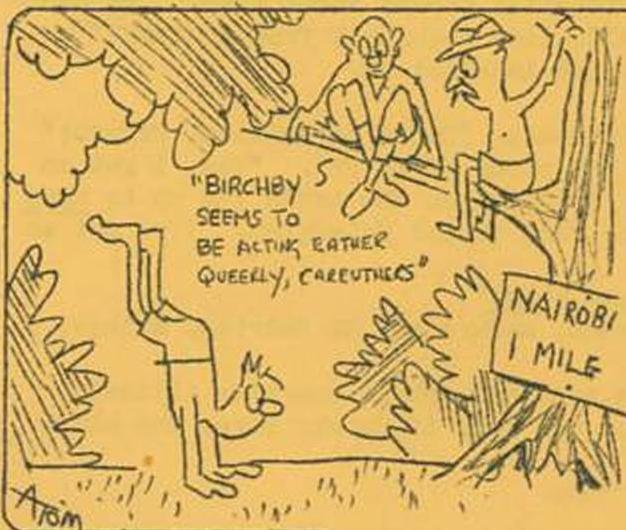
CHARLES WELLS ... You may be sure I checked the calendar to see if March 10
(Savannah) really was Sunday. Let me tell you, sir, that someone Goofed
unless the Con was held in 1947. March 10, 1955 was Thursday. ((That was my
fault, Hawkeye. When Arthur was stenciling the last cover-picture he thought
it would be a good idea to add a calendar to the wall. I told him that the Con
Sunday was March 10 instead of April 10. Sorry, but I'm not infallible. And
goddamn the Ides of March anyway.)) I take issue with Moorhead....Norm Browne
once took a poll which indicated fandom was divided in three equal parts (a
gauling fact), ((and my joke)), atheists, agnostics, and theists. The religious
revival which has gone on since then, plus the large number of new fans, must
have materially increased the number of Christians in fandom. What denomination
is Moorhead a member of?

I see old Anon has been giving to TAFF again. He is awfully philanthropic
(and philfanthropic) you know? But he has some radical political opinions. I
wonder where he gets all his money?

• Caption and situation by Frances Evans
at Kettering.

(still Charley Wells) Great Ghu! You mean Marie-Louise has gotten married? Are you sure this isn't another mistake like Brian Varley? (Everyone knows Brian Varley is a mistake.) How can American fandom live without Marie-Louise? Think how Anglomania would react to Miss O'Donnell getting married and you know how we feel. O Woe!

O Whoa! Oh Ho! I caught Chuch in another mistake. Leeh did not sell Kehli. She gave him to some good friends. She did sell Wrangler, her other horse, and it is true she bought another one, name of Randy. ((This is a gelding, buster. Its name is Brandy, not Randy.))....I imagine that Chuch failed to convince Jas. of droit de seigneur because he had seigneur before.



SID BIRCHBY ...So Stu Mackenzie is emi-(Manchester) grating to Kenya? Well, I hope he knows what he's

doing, because Kenya does things to people. The altitude rises, as one goes up country from sea-level at Mombasa to about 6000 ft in Nairobi and eight or nine thousand further on, and there seems to be an increase in nuttiness the higher one goes. I used to know a man who had worked out a theory correlating altitude with types of behaviour. For instance, in the Rift Valley you get the Gin Palace Weekend Parties, and at 8000 ft. the British Israelites flourish.

When I was in Nairobi I estimated that I was 17% nearer to flipping my lid than in Mombasa, on the assumption that emotional stability was a function of altitude. Ask any of my correspondents of that time whether it showed. Of course, now that I'm back, it doesn't show. ((No, StuM didn't go to Kenya after all. A pity, -- we went to a lot of trouble to fit in that esoteric 'bagpipes for sale' cartoon in the last issue. Joy Goodwin told me that he is collaborating with Eric Bentcliffe on a new subzine, but I never pay any attention to these fanciful rumours.))

ARCHIE MERCER
(Idncoln)

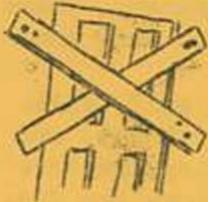


I have nothing in particular to say about Damon, except that it would be interesting to discover an SF book he really LIKES. But his guest review of HELL'S PAVEMENT leaves itself wide open. To start with, the fact that Knight describes a society, several facets of which Moorhead finds blasphemous, doesn't mean that he approves of such facets. In fact, in the story they are not set up for approval, but quite the reverse. The 'customers-religion'

angle is there for the hero to escape from, while the 'cult' at the school, -- though on the face of it "approved," is actually only there because such conditions may well exist somewhere in the postulated world, and the students have to be trained to cope with them. Makes as much sense, if you like, to claim that any story featuring the Devil must therefore be Unchristian. Moorhead goes on to make sweeping statements about Christians and Xtianity in general that don't hold much water. The idea that all Christians are good, kindly, charitable is obviously absurd. The term embraces, for instance, anybody from Quakers to the Dutch Reformed Church in S. Africa, and either of those groups, or any inbetween, would be highly affronted if they were accused of being any less Christian than the next. There are certainly plenty of actual or potential "Dr Ruskos" in the world who profess Christianity.

"Most of this mrb will sell freedom for a full belly and empty testicles."

JIM HARMON
(11.)



I believe I must have warned you a dozen times. So you have me speak of the "centRE" of "-". You miserable unspeakability!

The two handsome men stood quietly in my door. One said, "Just a routine check of Western writers' morals and loyalty."

I write science fiction," I murmured. Mostly. Some detective. I entered a pickle preserve recipe in the

The taller one smiled depreciatingly. "Westerns, science fiction. Let's not get into an artistic critique, but abide by the opinion of the majority."

Humbled and patriotic and yes, kind of proud, I lead them inside. They seat themselves on the edges of chairs, their coat-tails tucked about them. "Mr Harmon," the tall one began, "you receive a publication regularly from Ireland?"

"Do you like Ireland?" the shorter one asked immediately.

"Yes. No."

"They nodded at each other, shaking their heads. "Don't be evasive, Harmon!"

"I'm not," I cringed, humble, patriotic and proud of My FBI. "Yes, I get an Irish magazine. No, I don't like Ireland. To tell you the truth I'm up to here in Barry Fitzgerald, Bing Crosby, John Wayne, and Victor McLauglen. I've got so I really don't just give a damn."

"Are you aware that Ireland is our valiant ally?"

"Little folks, wee drops, laughing colleens, shamrocks, St Patrick, snakes, who the hell..."

"Do you like other countries better than Ireland? Other one-time allies?"

"....cares if Fitzgerald gets back to the old sod, if Crosby saves the old church, if Wayne lays the old..."

"HARMON!!!!!!"

I just felt good all over.

The tall one exhibited a "-" with a thumb and forefinger over each ". "You will observe that this publication is reproduced in black."

"Better than red," Shortie snickered.

With stoic self-control, Tall continued. "What color would you call the paper of this publication."

"Yellow," I suggested. "Gold? Amber? Chicken?"

"Would you say that it was tan?"

"Well no, but I'm not as smart as you two chaps. Why if you say that it is tan, why you surely, I mean, after all, you...."

Shortie lifted me off the floor coolly. Unobtrusively I spat out the shoe polish.

"Then we are agreed that this publication is Black and Tan," Tall pronounced. "Are you aware that the Black and Tan are Revolutionists?"

Shortie was visibly startled. "You mean the Irish are revolting!"

"Isn't that what I've been telling you all along?" I asked. "You see, Sir, ha-ha, I'm a loyal American. Why, I told you right away. I didn't try to hide it. I was just getting ready to phone you. Just found it out myself, not that I didn't always suspect it. They told me I was color-blind when I couldn't tell green from red, but ..."

"In this Revolutionary Publication, you approve the Foreign Way of spelling a word...."

"Faith!" exclaimed Shortie. "And Begorra!"

Tall regarded the other man frigidly. "If you have any complaints we can take this to Mr O'Reilly..." Tall paused, then stood. "It's a pleasure to deal with an honest unprejudiced citizen like you Mr Harmon who loves our staunch allies."

"But watch it," Shortie added as he left.

That goes for you too, Willis. Now I hope you know my true colours.

(Editorial. Cont. from Page 2) As most of you know, London has a very good chance of being selected as the 1957 World Convention site. There was a discussion about this in "The Globe" on the 6th of October and a Con Committee was formed to get things moving. Committee members are: Joy and Ving, Ron and Daphne Buckmaster, Dave and Iris Thurlby, Charlie Duncombe (Con Treasurer), Frank Arnold, Ted Tubb, Syd Bounds, Helen Winnick, Bert Campbell, and Ted Carnell (who also supplied all this information). Other people not present will be co-opted later and there will be a tape available for groups with access to a tape-recorder.

It was decided to hold a Con at Kettering next Easter principally to plan the '57 Con and conscript regional representatives into a National Committee. Joy is notifying Denny Cowen to book "The George" and London will handle the arrangements with Dave Thurlby acting as contact man between London and Kettering.

Sub-committees will be formed to handle publicity, promotion, programme-planning, hotels, etc. for the World Con when the date gets a little nearer.

Ted has already checked The Royal Hotel, where it would be possible for us to take one, two, or even three floors above the Con Hall, thus not interfering with the main hotel as far as other guests are concerned, but still retaining all of the hotel's amenities. Royal rates are from 17/8 a night, -- which is cheaper than Kettering.

Ted doubts if we shall find a hotel more suitable for size than The Royal. The danger of taking a whole smaller hotel in London is that the Committee would have to pay for all the hotel rooms whether they were filled or not, but at the Royal there wouldn't be this difficulty because they cater for a heavy Easter trade and would have no difficulty in filling unclaimed rooms.

Well, there you are. Kettering in '56 and London in '57. See you.

This is the last stencil to be cut and I've been doing some belated proof-reading of those pages already run off. God! crawling with typo's. I'm particularly sorry about calling Marie-Louise Share 'Marie-Lousie' on the top line of page 37, and for trying to disguise Judy Merril as Judy Merrill all the way through the Cleveland report.

Judy, incidentally, will be editing a new series, "S-F: THE YEAR'S BEST", that Dell will commence publishing next spring. It will consist of short stories and novelettes published in 1955, and if you think you can influence her selection you're welcome to try. Address: Judith Merril, c/o Dell First Editions, 200 5th Avenue, New York City.

INFINITY, --Larry Shaw's new prozine is now out and is well worth trying. It features an excellent ACClarke story, "THE STAR" (Ego must spend hours thinking up these titles), and there's a Show Business story by Bloch "HAVE TUX- WINN. TRAVEL" that particularly appealed to me. And, no "-" reader should miss Our Boy damon positively gloating over a book that he approves of.

As usual, most of the letters of comment on the last issue were crammed out even though I tried to squeeze in as many as I could. Our thanks to: Roberta Wild, Maurice Lubin, Paul Enever, Bill Courval, Harlan Ellison, Pete Royle, Dale Smith, Jan Jansen, Ken Beale, Mary Kincannon, Dick Ellington, Gerry Steward, Greg Benford, Ermengarde Fiske, Ron Bennett, Archie Mercer, Mike Wallace, Larry Anderson, Chuck Derry, Ken Potter, Jack Spear, Bill Temple, Anne Steul, Eric Bentcliff, Rick Sneary, Sheila O'Donnell, Mal Ashworth, Sticky-quarters Grennell, Dick Geis, Rich Eney, Dick Ryan, Bob Pavlat, Greg Calkins, Rory Paulkner, Don Ford, Boyd Raeburn, Jan Sadler, Ethel Lindsay, Wee Willie Rotsler, Joan Carr, GM Carr, Joy and Ving, Lee Anne Tremper, Ted White, all those people whose names appear in the letter column, and a dozen more that I have undoubtedly left out. Thew.

3
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"Two weeks ago I bought JUNE THE BUG...
(Cont. foot of col.)



JUNE THE BUG

GUARANTEED OFFER IN BUG

IS THE LUCKY CORNY PISKY

June the Bug SEES ALL, HEARS ALL (useful for bacoover quotes and interlineations). June is a Big Name Fairy (ex-LASSS); send only 1/- (or \$3) for complete history of how June was brought to Earth in a flying saucer by R-y P----r!!!

READ OF JUNE THE BUG'S SUCCESSES!

AS A MATCHMAKER

"I was married before I knew it."

BEV (London)

"At the last Convention I found that I'd accidentally been given a double room"

AS LUCKBRINGER

"I could never get my duplicator to work before I bought June the Bug...and a new duplicator."

CRH (Rainham)

"I have had poems accepted by leading fan-zines since purchasing June the Bug. I would write one to June if I could think of a rhyme for her name."

IGW (Wilts)

AS A HEALER

"I can recommend June the Bug as a hair-tonic and skin thickener"

HJC FRS etc.

"I cleared my system by a dose of June's Lucky Well Water."

ELRON (Wash.)

AS A PRIZEWINNER

For several years I entered a \$5000 s-f novel contest without success. Last year I bought June The Bug, and they stamped the envelope in which they returned my ms."

RB (Wayawoga)

REMEMBER. If you can swallow water from June The Bug's Lucky Well, you can swallow anything! SEND TODAY for details of the easy-payments scheme for a GENUINE June and a bottle of Lucky Well Water to: June's Cottage, Factory Lane, Belfast Industrial Trading Estate.

.....!HELP!" AION.

((Unpaid ad by A Vinz Clarke))

[] An X here means your sub has expired.



HE USED TO PLAY THE HAFMONIUM FOR A FAITH-HEALER SO HE ISN'T ENTIRELY BEYOND THE PALE...HER ONLY FAULT IS THAT SHE WILL INSIST ON TALKING ABOUT SCIENCE FICTION AND YOU KNOW HOW IRRITATING THAT CAN BE IN A FAAAN...I'M GOING TO FEATURE AN ARTICLE BY YOU AND ENCLOSE A FREE CADILLAC WITH EVERY COPY...I WAS SO INDIGNANT THAT THREE OR FOUR HOURS LATER I GOT MY COAT AND WENT BACK TO MY HOTEL...HE CARRIES AROUND A LIFE-SIZE MODEL OF HIS NAVEL FOR CONTEMPLATION IN BUSES AND OTHER PUBLIC PLACES...I ALWAYS THINK A WAC CORPORAL ON TOP OF A VIKING SOUNDS SOMEWHAT OBSCENE...HE SAYS FANDOM IS HARMLESS, CHEAP, AND GIVES A LOT OF PLEASURE? BUT IT SOUNDS RATHER LIKE SEX WITH A CERTIFIED EUNUCH...NO FAN



HAS DROWNED MORE FLIES THAN ME...I WOULD NOT SAY SHE'S FRIGID, BUT IT'S DISENCHANTING WHEN I GET ICICLES ON MY NOSE EVERY TIME I KISS HER GOODNIGHT. SHE HAS RUINED MY FANAC BY GIVING ME PROSBITE IN MY TYPING FINGER, AND IF YOU CAN IMAGINE A SHORT SNOG WITH AN ICE-LOLLY YOU WILL BE ABLE TO PICTURE MY PREDICAMENT...WE HAVE THE STOLEN GUNS HERE IN *eavesdroppings* THE ATTIC, BUT WHEN WE TRIED TO LOAD THEM THE WATER JUST TRICKLED OUT AGAIN...NOTHING WILL CONVINCE HER THAT EIGHT GLANDS CONTROL HER DESTINY...PHRENOLOGY IS THE ART OF FEELING BUMPS: YOU MAY HAVE BEEN A PHRENOLOGIST ALL YOUR LIFE AND NEVER KNOWN

ABOUT IT.....LEE HOFFMAN, KNOWN AFFECTIONATELY IN FORTEAN CIRCLES AS THE GIRL WHO WALKED AROUND A HORSE AND VANISHED...I'M FIFTEEN BUT DON'T LET THAT WORRY YOU...

I AM METHODIST MISSION BOY OF GOOD EDUCATE -PLEASE SEND BOOK OF C. PFOUGHT AND I WILL BE YOUR GOOD FRIEND...I CAN ALWAYS RECOGNISE ONE OF THE OLD GUARD BY THE MAGGOTS IN HIS EYE-SOCKETS...STRICTLY OFF THE RECORD, HER FIRST SALE WASN'T A MANUSCRIPT.

Quotes and sidelines: Correspondents of Eric Frank Russell 14, WAW 6, James White 2 Bill Rotsler 1, Vinz 2, Burbee 1, Chuch 4, Ermengarde Fiske 1, Lee Hoffman 2, Dean Grennell 2, Bob Shaw 2, and others.

PRINTED by Malt Willis at Oblique House, 170, Upper Newtownards Road,
Belfast, Northern Ireland, at great personal risk.



GOON DEARY.

ART THOMSON.

WARNING

A MESSAGE FROM THE BINARY EYES.

Heck. Everyone seems to be in the fanzine racket these days... why not me and Art.

Who's Art ?

Listen folks, don't talk back to the Goon like that . I'm the Goon. I work for Willis, see and Art is my contact man in London . He is, in fact, the English representative of the Goon Defective Agency, centred right here within a couple miles of Oblique House.

What's the Goon Defective Agency ?

O.K, stand back.

Don't move . Makin' fun of me, eh ? Let me put yer straight. People jus' don't laugh at the Goon. I've got a waterproof shoulder holster strapped round my waist, my trigger fingers drippin', and I ain't particular about the bacteria content of my i20. Me and Art spare nobody....not even Charters on account of his age. He don't wear that sou'wester for fun. An you femmes. We cin't got no scruples as regards weemin. I'm tellin' ya, were tough. We've rinsed more than one permanent wave.

Get the setup ?

O.K, sit down while I tell ya the rest.

I SAID SIT DOWN.

Thats better.

Art an ' me have decided to keep ya regularly informed of our activities. Our motto will give ya some idea of our capabilities :-

NO CASE IS TOO BIG FOR US TRUNKS & SPECIALITY.

You may have heard about my first big investigation for Walt Willis. ... 'THIS GOON FOR HIRE '... That was the start. If ya ain't got a copy, write to Chuck Harris. He'll fix ya up. He'd better. Art sent me the Harris file last week. Ooooh. It was sumpin' shockin'.

Hear that, Harris ?

My second case was the Cedric Affair. Sorta slipped up there. Things got complicated, and if things get complicated, I sorta got baffled. My most difficult case was the great Heinlein mystery. Walt holds the copyright for that story, and he'll square ya if ya got the sad.

The rest of the GDI mysteries will be described in RETRIBUTION. Yeah. That's the name of our crud. I'm running it off on Walts duper, ain't I Walt.

What ?

NO ?

Listen Walt, me and Art know all about that ...psss...psss

.....pssss....

Heck, carry 'im out , somebody.

As I said, it'll be run off on Walt's duper at Oblique House.

If ya want a copy, let us know. We ain't chargin' ya nuffin'.

We consider it's our duty to tell ya these things for free. That's why we are only running off a few copies. Course, if ya like the first issue, and would like more, a fanzine or prozine would convince us that we should go agin our better nature and destroy ya dossier.

O.K, away ya go.

No, come back.

If ya want any investigatin' done, let us know. Our fees vary. For instance, at the successful conclusion of the Fanzine Mystery, This Goon For Hire, I got five copies of La Vie Parisienne. I tell ya, we're in the big time. Conversely, for the Cedric Affair, I only got a third hand copy of Vargo Statten No.3. As for expenses... for the Marilyn Monroe Calendar, we pay expenses.

O.K, folks, that's all.

Now git.

Goon ~~X~~ Bloary
mark.

NOTE. This Goon For Hire available in December.

.....Art Thomson.....
RETRIBUTION available soon from :-

John Berry, 1 Knockeden Cres, Flush Park, Belfast, Northern Ireland, or
Arthur Thomson, 17, Brockham House, Brockham Drive, London, S.W.2.