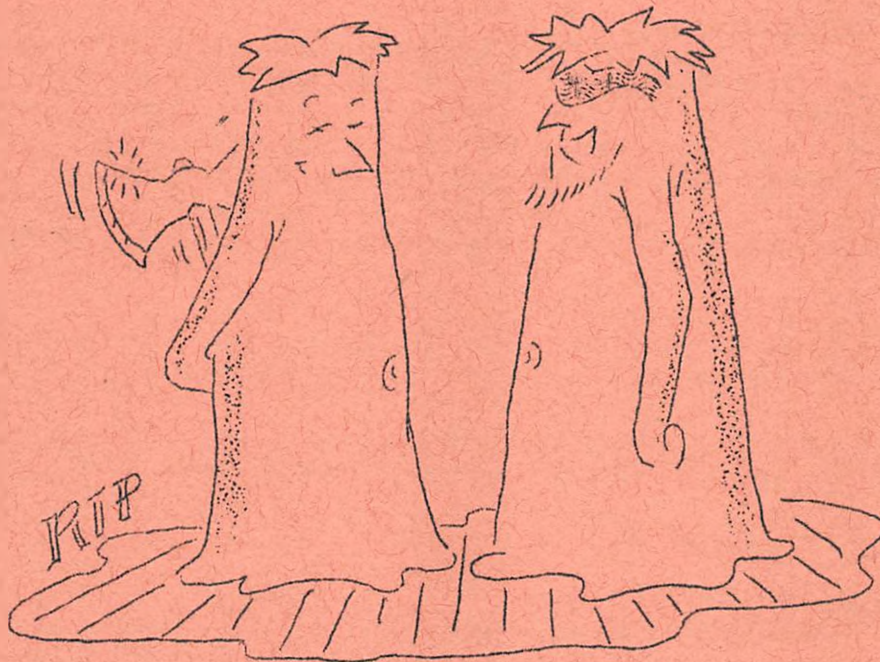


IDLE HANDS #2 from Norm Metcalf, P.O. Box 336, Berkeley 1, California and temporarily (until the USAF decides otherwise) at Box 1262, Tyndall AFB, Florida. This second edition is intended for the Nov 60 shadow-FAPA mailing under the auspices of Russ Chauvenet. Crudpub #10

If your zine isn't covered herein rest assured that you weren't slighted by me. It's merely that Uncle Sam's P.O. has goofed again. And let me thank Dick Schultz for the illo which appears below through the courtesy of Suzy Vick.



"Why yes, I am ahead of you on the FAPA waiting list. Why do you ask?"

AND THE FIRST SHALL BE LAST AND THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST

Spinnaker Reach - Russ Chauvenet

If you create these non-participating memberships it seems from this vantage point that they could be very easily abused. Or do you plan something like WAPA where a large number of subscribing members helped keep costs down? Furthermore there's quite a bit of deadwood in FAPA as it is. Most deadwood are excellent writers. And the old argument about whether or not to kick them out is a tough one. And they do help to keep the size of the mlg down. But when a person consistently demonstrates that he isn't interested in pubbing 8 pages/yr or paying his dues then it's about time to exile him from the ranks. Perhaps the amendment to increase the required number of signatures on a petition will help if it passed.



Idle Hands - Norm Metcalf

Well, Radio Swan is really on Swan Island, mecca of amateur radio DXpeditions. The station is owned by the Gibraltar Steamship Co. of New York. And it seems that Castro hates the station for having Spanish-language newscasts directed towards Cuba. The truth seems to hurt. But, sob, they have gone r&r.

Dept. of No Honor In One's Country

Alan J. Lewis, Brown, Lichtman, Budrys, Durward, Gerber, Bergeron and Wick, where were you? It would be a turnabout if the shadow mlg became larger than the FAPA mlg.

The Lurking Shadow - Chuck Hansen

You're on dangerous ground running down SAPS. This is particularly true since quite a few are members of both groups and are thus in a better position to judge. Nobody seems to have dropped FAPA for SAPS in late times, though the reverse has been true. And while comparing the two they have seeming different and complementary appeals. This is no doubt the way others feel and is probably why there is such a large membership overlap. There is something to enjoy in both. And non m-c's aren't necessarily to furnish a hook for m-c's.

What is the derivation of the title? The (Lurking) Shadow Over Innsmouth or The (Lurking) Shadow Out of Time seem to be the most probable sources.

This report from the past is very much appreciated. Now if only Speer could be persuaded to take the time to give us a complete rundown from the year one.

AND NOW BACK TO THE ELITE

Celephais - Bill Evans

What's this about you'd rather have a complete Shakespeare than a Bible in your hotel room? Would you be so unkind as to rob Perdue of one of his simple pleasures on this mundane sphere? Or do you expect him to metamorphize into Wm. Shakespeare and autograph the book for you?

If you want odd intersections try Tyndall AFB. In the barracks area the streets are laid out in pretzel fashion so that by following any one street you can intersect nearly every other street.

The Boulder labs have some microwave antennas north of town, they're probably engaged in more than their 20 & 100 KC experimental transmissions.

I'll certify Chuck Hansen as real as can Stan Mullen, Olon Wiggins, Lew Martin, Roy Hunt, Bob Peterson, D.B. Thompson, Forry Ackerman, Roy Squires, Robert Heinlein, Chuck Freudenthal, Bob Leman, etc. Chuck's reaction was, "Who's Dean Grennell?". D/G, look under The Alchemist & Damballa in the Fanzine Index.

Even as a w-ler I'm against raising the membership. Can't you imagine what would happen if 75 people decided to put out just 25 pages in one mlg. 65 is bad enough, 75 is even worse.

SaM says he reads each and every bit in the mlg, extracts the stf material



and files the rest away.

Donald Wandrei is still alive or was a few months ago.

Salud - Elinor Busby

Being drunk is no crime in itself, but when you lose all sense of responsibility, self-control, etc., where you are hurting others, then it becomes a crime against your fellow men instead of against yourself.

There are some murderers to whom neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment are a deterrent. They believe that they'll never be caught and so no threat of punishment, whatever its type, will stop them.

Canadian paper money is useless in Florida. I finally got rid of some of it to an airman from Selfridge AFB, Michigan. The remainder was used to pay tolls on the Ohio Turnpike. The guy I was riding with was sure that they wouldn't take it but the toll collectors were glad to have it.

"The Quest for Saint Aquin" was in Healy's New Tales of Space and Time from '51.

Have you read Courts of the Morning? It seems to be among Buchan's better works, though not his most popular. But then I read Buchan's works over a period of years and so comparison is difficult. I was looking for my Buchan want list the other day and couldn't find it, there's about five or six books to go before I own a complete set. Once this is accomplished I want to read all the series in the order of their events. This would start with Hannay in The 39 Steps and go to the death of Leithen in Mountain Meadow (which is another candidate for his best novel).

Bandwagon - Dick Ryan

Even some non-limited monarchies haven't had violent political upheavals in 170 years. Absolute monarchies such as Egypt, etc.; republics, Iceland, etc.; democracies, hah, there aren't any examples of them, anywhere, anytime; and so on have managed to remain stable for hundreds of years. What you must mean is that the U.S. is the only prominent sovereign nation in the last 170 years which hasn't had a violent political upheaval.

The Biblical concept of "an eye for an eye" was outmoded when Jesus gave us a new covenant, Matthew 5: 38-42. Of course, many people prefer to overlook such passages.

As for Heinlein being unable to write fantasy consider "The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag", "The Elephant Circuit", "Our Fair City", etc. Bradbury has written some borderline sf and go back and re-read "Doodad". At this late date I can't remember how sfinal it was but it was certainly more sf than fantasy.

Good stereo can be justified and good recordings are on the increase. It was the attitude of "Let's Rush This Into Production and Make a Killing" that provided the poor recordings.



Sercon's Bane - Buz

Nice, satirical cover there.

In line with your station boosting radio one of the funniest commercials was on KAKX (FM), San Francisco when Cisler had his AM outlet (which was a separate corporation) padlocked by the Federal government for non-payment of taxes. Cisler would get on the mike and urge everyone to listen to FM and specifically KAKX. It never seemed to enter his head that everyone listening was already doing so. The last I heard he had sold the station to a religious firm. (The AM was previously sold to rarer David Segal.)

On keeping the w-1 down Warner has suggested activity requirements in the shadow mlg. With credentials, response to every FA and activity requirements the w-1 would probably become smaller. Furthermore this would ensure that only those interested in FAPA would stay on the list.

New Worlds is cutting down on U.S. reprints and it's not too expensive when you consider the quality.

Driftwood - Sally Kidd

In line with your remarks on the rights of atheists a friend of mine had some difficulties. The draft board wouldn't accept him as a conscientious objector unless he declared belief in some supreme being. He called in the ACLU and the last I heard was slated to spend two years in jail as a CO. (Where he no doubt received time off for good behavior, something frowned upon by the Army.)

It all goes to show how fuggheaded some people in government can become. Effectively it is abridging our constitutional guarantees pertaining to freedom of religion to deny rights to atheists. And the people who make these decisions against humanity are rather incompetent. It's a pity that government service devolves upon the unfit by attracting the mediocre and inefficient. Various congressional committees have recommended clearing out the riffraff from their positions. But probably nothing will be done until Congress is made to see that it will be more economical in the long run to clear out the "deadwood".

Perhaps the above seems to be a digression from the rights of atheists but I climb up on my soapbox and insist it's an example of how rotten our society has become. The incompetent are increasing in power and trampling the mass of the people underfoot. Frederick Lewis Allen's The Big Change (among many other books on the same subject) showed the symptoms of today's decay a decade or more ago. Since that time many view-with-alarmists have shouted their Jcremiads. I think they're right, how about the rest of you?

Perhaps what is needed is a fresh outlet for present day malcontents such as the western hemisphere provided in past centuries. And fortunately we're on the threshold of space. But being a cowardly malcontent I'd rather stay here.

Regarding your remarks on the U.S. turning communistic and the USSR capitalistic it's too late. Right now the Soviet Union is more capitalistic than we are. A much smaller percentage of the people (i.e., the Communist Party) control a larger percentage of the wealth than in this country. With apologies to Lincoln they have a government of the people, by a few, for that few.



The Fantasy Amateur

Phyllis, FB on Quagliano. It doesn't affect me, but curious-  
ity was aroused.

Eney, nyaah, to you also, phoney traveling giant.

Waiting, waiting, waiting for Fhlotsam, Horizons or any other zine which  
might have been sent.

-----  
LE SHADEAU SAIT

-----by Bob Lichtman

Exalted members of FAPA and fellow dwellers of the waitlist, greetings! Through the kind offices of Norm Metcalf, this columnity comes your way. I'd publish it myself, but the rigors of college have prevented any further expansion in publishing during the school months. As most of you know, I'm already in five apas and publish for all of them as required, so for the moment I'll have to do my best through someone else's magazine. Norm seems a good choice, so long as he doesn't intrude on me while stencilling my comments. During the summer months, however, I'll try to move out of his magazine and publish something of my own for your consumption.

Five other apas, you're wondering. You mutter, "SAPS, yeah, he's in that... OMPA, hm, I'm pretty sure he's a member...NAPA, probably...The Cult, well, they do claim to be the secret masters of fandom, so he's probably there...MFA, there is a fifth, but he's only on the waitlist! What gives!?" What gives, indeed? Is there an apa group that all you people might not have heard of? The Cult contains the secret masters of fandom, but there's another, more exclusive group that controls The Cult, the secret secret masters of fandom. I refer to the CRAP more politely known as the Cruddily-Reproduced Amateur Press. Only a few in our midst who shall remain nameless here (though you know I'm one of them), belong to the group.

Each of the ten members is supposed to publish a zine once in every cycle of roughly twenty weeks (it would be exactly twenty weeks, but there are occasional lapses). It may be easily figured from this that the time between publication of each consecutive CRAPzine (which title is in no way meant to reflect upon their contents, thank you) is two weeks. The CRAP has at the time of writing a waiting list of somewhat more members than the apa itself. You may apply if interested, to me at my address in The Fantasy Amateur. I warn you, though, the membership turns over extremely slowly. Since the time the group started, over two years ago, only three people have dropped out -- and these were people who were leaving fandom for the plupart.

-----  
iwenttotheanimalfairallthebirdsandthebeastsweretherethebigbaboonbythelightofthemo

Though not a member of the MPA, I somehow manage to get over half of each mailing's contents. This has been going on for about four or five mailings now, and I would publicly like to thank all those who have done such a swell job in sending me their magazines. Of course, I've already thanked them privately, but such farnishness, up and above and beyond the call of duty, is really commendable.



I like to consider that the zines I get from each mailing compose the better half of each mailing, too. I shan't name names, in order not to embarrass some members and bring the others to pique, however. Those of you who aren't sending me your zines, I would appreciate very much if you would put aside a spare and send it my way every time you publish. I can promise to retaliate with a copy of either Psi-Phi or one of my zines from SAPS, OMPA, N'APA, or The Cult or CRAP, or to torture you further, I might write a letter of comment on it.

Note that as I said above I consider that the zines I get compose the better part of the mailing. Do you want your zine to be amongst the better part of the mailing? Send it along today. Act without reconsidering my statement.

---

onwascombinghisauburnhairthemonkeyhegotdrunkhesatontheolephant'strunkthcolephants

For the remainder of this column, I propose to deal with mailing comments. I don't mean comments on the regular EAP zines I've received, for while this might be interesting to you, I've already commented to their editors. I mean comments on the Shadow Mailing. With that in mind, let me commence:

Idle Hands #1 (Metcalf): Yes, I did receive the letter Shelby Vick wrote about the last issue of cf. but it didn't help too much because I never followed through and wrote Pavlat about it. It wouldn't do any good to check in the Fanzine Index either, for I know full well cf. was still being published in 1953 and possibly even in 1954, and the Fanz Index cuts off at the end of 1952. If anyone in the audience will drop me a line and tell me what the last issue of cf. was numbered, I'd be greatly appreciative. You might tell Shelby, too, while you're at it, in case he still doesn't know.

I imagine that the applications to EAP waitlist status are determined by the order in which letters are received. Even though one letter from, say, a person who lives close to the current sec-treasurer might be dated later than a letter from someone who lives on the other side of the country, this is too much to quibble about. Your notion that they might be accepted in the order the letter is dated is interesting. If this becomes the case, I think I will re-apply for EAP membership, dating my letter sometime in early 1937 and become a charter member.

We here in Los Angeles are blessed with the radio station, KMAC AM & FM, which seems to be one of the only stations left on the coast that actually presents a good music program daily. This is very odd in an area like Los Angeles, which on the other hand from KMAC entirely, boasts more noxious stations concentrating on formula rock and roll than you dare imagine.

Your allusion to the pseudo-mailing comments in F.M. Busby's SAPSzine does not seem fitting in a magazine that goes primarily to EAPans. Though perhaps, two-thirds of the membership of SAPS either is in EAP or on its waiting list, you ought to stick to EAP allusions.

It really seems too early, Norm, to tell what members of the waitlist will choose to participate in this activity. Of the ones you list, I'm certain that Lewis, Brown, Durward, and Vick won't participate, for various reasons (Lewis is in the Coast Guard, Brown doesn't seem the type that would up and join another apa at the moment, Durward is gafia outside of SAPS, and Vick has been silent since the tragic loss of his children). The remaining people might participate,



and here's a few OTHER likely prospects: Pelz, Donaho (who is already putting out a zine through Dave Hike and distributing it in the mailing proper), Deckinger, Main, Schultz, Breen and Henstell. What a (mostly) gung-ho group!

The same procedure that was carried out for Jimmy Taurasi by the WC when he joined the N3F was, I am given to understand, done with me. Instead of the burbling, ebullient, "Welcome-to-Fandom" letters I had hoped to receive, I got a bunch of notes from WCers that sounded almost awed in my presence. A big ego-boost, but hardly as funny. (But now I'm waiting for Chuck Hansen's N'APazine, if he's gone through that project he planned.)

I like that title, Idle Hands, it sounds as one with the famous Wild Hair of the past, at least in tone.

The Lurking Shadow #1 (Hansen): You bet I look down the requirements column of the membership roster in TFA. Then when I see someone needing activity badly I look back at the zine listing to see if they've something in the mailing, and mentally thrash them if they do. I'm equally anxious to get into RAPA, and even from my relatively elevated spot of #17 it's at least another couple of year's wait.

---

neezedandfellohiskneesandthatwastheendofthemonk--howmanyofyourememberthatonehuh?

Your comments on the RAPA of which you were a member are quite interesting. I find I disagree with your comments on the early SAPS, however. I don't know what period of SAPS you refer to when you say that "people who insisted on doing original writing in SAPS mailings were regarded with disfavor", but am presuming that you mean the period from the founding of the group until late in 1950. Let me assure you that you are wrong. I have read the first 13 mailings of the group and if this attitude you mention developed in SAPS, it had not become apparent then. I think, but do not know for sure, that it started several years later, when Gordon Black was OE. But the early SAPS mailings, though they did of course have some mailing comments (fewer than at present, of course, in relation to the size of the mailings then), were composed primarily of general material...articles, stories, poetry. Not much of it was readable, I'll aver, but at least it was there. SAPS was a very, very neofannish group as you say. At the time of the 13th mailing, they had voted to send review copies of the mailings to each of three prozines...Amazing, Super Science and Startling. Though this might seem like a foolish practice, and I would agree with you if you thought so, the mailings were actually reviewed several times. I believe Rog Phillips once devoted an entire instalment of "The Club House" to SAPS, and Merwin, of course, had slighting remarks to make on most of the zines. There was a lot of stf-reading content in the mailings, too, because most of the members were relatively new fans, and therefore they hadn't lapsed out of the stf-reading habit.

And I shall be looking forward to your magazine in the next mailing. A most excellent publication, with much of interest to me in it. I am a fanhistory buff you see, and the more of this you include, the happier I'll be.

Spinnaker Reach #2 (Chauvenet): When do you propose to begin using standard lettersize paper? In view of the expansion I expect in these Shadow Mailings before very long, it would be a good idea if you did so. Then so you wouldn't have to use envelopes, you could use your final page as a mailing wrapper and send the zines either flat (stapled together in all



Four corners) or folded length-wise. The latter would probably be best, but I don't know that the capacity of your stapler is sufficient. Mine could handle about fifteen sheets of paper folded in half (which would be like thirty sheets flat), and there are other staplers (the Swingline #13, for instance) that will handle up to 100 sheets of paper. However, one of these Swingline costs \$11, an all-too-large investment in a stapler for most fans.

The idea of a non-active group of FAPA members has been forwarded before at least several times, but it never has come to the vote. I doubt if it will ever, either, for FAPA exists to circulate magazines created by its members, and the idea of members not being required to produce their own magazines is alien to this cause.

I'm afraid these comments on you are rather on the short side. I thoroughly enjoyed the fiction and articles, but they're on something foreign to me, so I am unable to comment further. Keep up the good work, though.

---

He laughs best who laughs least.

-- The Devil's Dictionary

---

That will have to be all for this time. As long as I'm doing this in another's magazine, I don't want to overstay my welcome. See you in the next Shadow Mailing.

-- Bob Lichtman

---

LETTER DEPT.

---

Les Nirenberg:

Dear Norm,

The Shadow FAPA mlg arrived a couple of days ago. It's a bit small. Somehow I thought there were at least a dozen w-lers in on it. Anyway this is a start.

Racy Higgs isn't the only guy who turns out a crud zine in FAPA. Just thumbing through an old mailing will show you that about  $\frac{1}{2}$  of it is absolutely unreadable, it's so cruddy. This is the only bug I see in FAPA (or any apa for that matter). It's quite a job shuffling through all that stuff to sort out the good from the bad.

It seems to me that all the apas (especially SAPS) take great pride in the great amount of pages in each mailing. What good are a lot of pages if it's all filled with crud. Less quantity but more quality would be a better goal to work towards, I think.

Now comments on Idle Hands:

This is a nice little zine, but I dig very little of your m/cs because I got very few FAPAZincs. Maybe I'll be getting more as I sneak towards the top of the list. I see you're a C.C. nut (is that the right expression?). I have a little short wave radio set in the store. I don't listen to it very often but last Sun-



day morning I caught the Bob and Ray show from a U.S. army station in L.A.. I listen to it once in a while, it's fun. Can't find much else to comment on except to say it's a nice little zine and I hope you can put some original written stories or something in it next mailing. Try editorials.

Later...

Les

-----  
Don Franson:

Dear Norm,

I once thought of a joke about waiting list apas that I'm not sure is true any more (or funny): "FAPA has got a waiting list apa - it's called SAPS." Did not some people only join SAPS because they couldn't get into FAPA, intending to quit SAPS as soon as they become FAPA members? Of course, there could be another reason for SAPS members on the FAPA waiting list -- some fans wanted to join every apa, and were admitted to SAPS first.

When is the Devil going to find work for this fanzine to do?

I am one of these "serious science fictionists" you mention in the comments to Boggs. I am even (much rarer, these days) anti-fantasy. Not that I don't like it, but that I like SF more, and hate to see fantasy taking over both the prozines and fandom lately.

I nominated Brian Aldiss for best new author of 1958, because I was first aware of his work at that time in Star and several other U.S. magazines. He seemed to be sort of a British Bradbury (even sometimes as unpleasant to read). I don't see why an author has to be first published in 1960, say, to be proclaimed best new author of 1960. This requires a meteoric rise which not even Weinbaum, meteor of meteors, could accomplish.

I also mistakenly wrote in A. Bertram Chandler's name, because of his prolific entertaining output in 1958, forgetting that he had appeared in ASF years before. In fact he must be really an old timer, because I have just come across a letter in the July, 1927 Amazing, from A. B. Chandler, Beccles, England. Could it be the same? If so, this would settle the "Whitley" controversy, as to which is the pen name, which the real.

I'm interested by your plug for longer novels. I always thought short stories were the coming thing. I'd like to find out what lengths regular SF readers do like. I'm not convinced by the "Analytical Laboratory", because the usual votes for long stories may be due to "weight" considerations ("a good big man can beat out a good little man" -- but not two good little men, perhaps), and to the obvious fact that most writers don't do their best work or use their best ideas in short stories (exceptions, of course: Bloch, Weinbaum, Keller, to name a few diverse ones). I mean what is the preferable length, when quality is equal? It used to be that I was dissatisfied with a short story because it ended before I could "get into it". But now I can only find time to read short stories, and long ones never get finished, or never started. How widespread is this practice, considering SF types are usually busy people? It would make an interesting questionnaire, in NF or the apas. However, there have been several questionnaires in



fandom recently, but I have yet to see the results of any of them, for some reason. They are only a nuisance if the participant fills them out and never sees the results.

Yours,  
Don Franson

-----  
Brian Aldiss:

Dear Norm,

Getting Idle Hands is like receiving one piece of a big jigsaw; not getting many fanzines, any one is likely to leave me fazed over wide areas. Here it refers to 'us evial w-lers'; now could that be a misprint or isn't it anything so simple?

But your references to picking up weird stations rings a bell. I only have a little 7-transistor portable, but about six in the morning when the air is comparatively peaceful it picks me up a Karachi station broadcasting Western jazz played on Indian instruments to Indian orchestration. It's sweet strange music!

Naturally I read your review of my "X For Exploitation" with interest. May I say how smack on the target I feel you were -- the note of kindness throughout only making the overall verdict the more damning. Your general remarks about more length being needed for an author to expand may be fine as general remarks, but I think they don't apply to me. Even a short novel has me sweating blood. I'm much happier with a short story where I can manage everything and keep the atmosphere condensed. With "X" it got too diffused. But I think I'm learning, though nobody is more conscious than I that there's still a long way to go. Given a bit of kindness and patience from readers (and by and large sf readers have lashings of both qualities because look at the crud they put up with for much of the time) I hope to improve as I go.

I hope you like Galaxies Like Grains of Sand better. (Just out from Signet) That I really worked over for years, publishing the separate bits as short stories and rewriting some of them several times, though I had the thing planned as what Signet calls a chronicle novel almost from the start. That really was a long manuscript! I got carried away, and when I submitted it it was 200,000 words long - almost twice its present length. The Signet version contains eight episodes and linking commentary; the English Faber version (Canopy of Time) contains twelve episodes and no linking commentary - or next to none. Put the two together and you get a vague idea of what I was aiming at. But the American version is the one I prefer.

With regards,  
Yours,  
Brian

-----  
"Drunkard's Walk" - Frederik Pohl, Galaxy, Jun-Jul, 60.

Pohl has written another clunker. We are shown a world through very darkly smoked glasses. Society is supposedly divided between "townies" and "gownies". Now our society and the one supposedly depicted in the story require agriculture



and other pursuits which take place outside of towns. This same "blindness" characterizes most of Pohl's stories. He only extrapolates one line of thought without regard to all the consequences or to the necessary adjuncts of his new situation.

Furthermore he seems to be indecisive as to whether or not this is an extrapolation or a satire. Learning is conducted by mnemonic jingles. At times they are made to appear ludicrous, at other times he seems to take the whole monkey business seriously.

The hero actually stumbles into the problem, stumbles through and trips over the solution. The man who accomplishes salvation is killed off when it becomes convenient.

Ted White is probably appalled at the actual use of tinker-toy thinking in the story, both as actual verbal illustrations and in the deus ex machina tradition. Rabbits appear and disappear out of hats and the idiots march on to conclude the plot.

-----  
"...And All the Stars a Stage" - James Blish, Amazing, Jun-Jul 60

Blish is an author who takes sf seriously. He is consciously striving to perfect his grasp of technique. How well he achieves his goal is another matter. Certainly, Blish has written some memorable stories, "Solar Plexus", the Okie series (even if they began to disintegrate towards the end), "Beep", and perhaps a few others. But none of these are remembered for their characters, it's the situation as in "Bridge", the idea as in "Beep", the concepts in the last two books of the Okie series, etc.

The present work is a lifeless pastiche of a varied combination of stories. Scenes have been rewritten from "One In a Thousand", the movie version of When Worlds Collide with its crippled millionaire, Methuselah's Children, etc. Not that Blish has stooped to plagiarism but that various scenes have the same motivations and general plot outlines. The takeoff from the home planet can be found in "One In a Thousand" and When Worlds Collide. With Blish's crippled director and the movie version of WWC's crippled millionaire the similarity becomes striking. The endless cruise through interstellar space and the eventual resolution are also found in Methuselah's Children and Seed of Light. This would be fine if Blish had given us people in these situations, instead we have thrust before us a set of lifeless puppets.

Events just happen around the nominal "hero" but he could care less. None of them happen to him and therefore he is content. And this thesis was put forth by Damon Knight who characterized Blish's stories as having been written by 'a friendly Martian observer'. This same detached attitude dominates the "hero".

Motivations are never revealed, we are told that Jung Wester hates Jorn Birn, that Ailiss O'Kung hates him also but never why. O'Kung does a later about face and marries Birn, apparently out of boredom.

And in a supposedly alien culture "lunar", "legal-length", and other such adjectives are in use. Granted that a writer can't describe another culture without some use of our vocabulary, still terminology which is peculiar to our



society and or special situations and which isn't in universal use should be avoided. This is a small point, true, but it's destroyed many "historical" movies and books.

And while on the subject of trivia Blish has a spaceship steering a great circle route. That's what it is called although the actual description doesn't fit a great circle route which is ridiculous to use anyway.

And Blish's supposedly "alien" society is almost exactly parallel to that of western man's. We find the same attitudes in both societies, the same social structure (with one aberration in the alien society apparently for japing at our own), in short they're almost carbon copies.

"...And All the Stars a Stage" is a rather poor story. It shows signs of cutting, right Jim. Cut stories often lose the illusion of veracity due to the cutter leaving out details which detract from the action but add to the authenticity. But since Z-D has seen fit to say that Signet will pub the story under the title of Crab Nebula we can see if the other edition is different. Perhaps it will be improved, we can only hope so.

-----  
"The Crispin Affair" - Jack Sharkey, Fantastic, Jul-Aug 60, 40,000 words

Sharkey is at it again. He's written another cross between poor space opera and a parody of sf. Spaceships which travel at the rate of  $10^6$  light years/week, wavelength being equal to velocity, ignorance of the fact that magnetism doesn't affect all metals, stupid heroes, "intellectual" heroines who spout pseudoscientific gibberish, the list can on and on.

Let us go back in time a few years and sideways a bit. In this parallel universe lives Yak Shakey. Yak is up in the attic looking through some dusty trunks. Underneath some old family albums he finds a bundle of manila folders. In them are a series of mimeographed pamphlets stapled together with extraordinarily heavy staples. "Old Cry's, a set of old Cry's!" he exclaims. But then he begins to read them. "I was a Ruslter for Pinkderton's" was the typed title of the topmost. Looking through the pamphlet he notices that all nouns have been typed in. Setting "Rustler" aside he comes to "By Aeroplane to Tristan da Cunha". Everything reads very familiarly and then he compares the two. The same stencils had been used for both. A slip fell out and he read as follows:

Adventurous Magazine

July 6, 1913

Dear Mr. Shakey,

We are very sorry but the last two-hundred stories you have sent are very poor. Perhaps you may show future improvement. Along these lines we suggest that you type a new set of stencils.

Respectfully yours,  
Robby Davits

Yak looked thoughtful and put the letter back. Digging down further reveal-



ed quite a few of the unbound sheets with blank spaces. Leaping to his feet he yells, "Eureka!"

And so the career of Yak Shakey, writer, is born.

---

#### A FEW THOUGHTS ON FANDOM'S SURVIVAL

Harry Warner's article in a recent Horizons on the future of sf fandom and some correspondence with him have resulted in a few thoughts on the survival of fandom in this day of dying prozines.

Let's not argue about the death of sf, that prozines are dying is a demonstrated fact, take a good look at your local newsstand. Perhaps sf is leveling off and we will be left with three or so prozines. To those who associate good days with a large number of cruddy prozines this means that sf is in the doldrums. But as Bob Tucker and others have pointed out, the thirties got along very well with its usual three prozines.

Fandom was comparatively small then to judge by the circulation figures of most fanzines. But this was a matter of production capabilities and poor marketing, not demand. Warner has found a circulation figure of 2,000 copies for Fantasy Magazine. However, as Moskowitz pointed out in The Immortal Storm this was on a one-time basis only and most of the copies were given away. But this points up the fact that with the right customer appeal and the right marketing technique fanzines can survive.

And this was in the days when all three prozines ran letter columns. The lettercol was another form of outlet for the fan and served as the focal point for quite a few fans who weren't interested overly much in fanzines. (Another outlet was personal correspondence but a proper consideration of its importance is obviously impractical.)

So what we had in the thirties was a fandom limited by the number of copies a faned could squeeze out of his hekto and the number of letters that could be squeezed into a zine after Darrow and Ackerman's letters were pubbed.

The lettercols reached their peak in the forties and early fifties with Standard and Planet. Fanzines came out by the dozens, cons got larger and larger to culminate in the Chicon II, prozines reached their peak the following year and the fan was swamped with additional hardcovers and an increasing number of pbs. It became increasingly difficult to find a large group of fans who had read the same stories.

And as a substitute they turned to themselves. Fans formed into cliques around various proz, fmz, and organizations. People letterhacked to the Standard zines, Planet and unsuccessfully to JSF (a few people managed to appear fairly regularly but not many), they formed clubs as per Hickman's TLM or they joined the NZF or FAPA or SAPS. Particular fmz such as Quandry, Spacewarp, Opsla or Hyphen gained their loyal circle of readers. (There was considerable overlap between participants and all of these events didn't occur at once.)

At the same time the apas were increasing in popularity. Compare how FAPA



and S.I.P.S were begging for members for several years with the present enormous w-ls. One big advantage to an apa is the membership limitation. This lets everyone know everyone else and therefore facilitates discussion. You are less likely to misunderstand a person you know fairly well and you are more familiar with his outlet to begin with.

And I suggest that apas will continue to increase in popularity. Presently pro lettercols are practically dead. The chance of getting a good letterhack discussion going isn't too good in any of the five mags that still feature letters. The chances seem to be best in the Z-D mags. So therefore I suggest that people with the fannish twist of mind are turning to the fanzines in general and the apas in particular.

But then someone brings up the question of how to recruit these fans. With the death of the fannish prozines the gloom merchants are prophesying the death of fandom. But fannish prozines aren't necessary. Leaving aside personal contact and other such methods recruitment through the prozines is still possible. Ask Gus Willmorth, Roy Squires, James Taurasi, George Scithers or myself. And despite Art Rapp's assertion in the Jun 60 Polhode circulations in excess of 100 can still be built up with the first issue. It merely takes a product which will appeal to enough people. And one necessity, once you have such a zine, is a fanzine review column letting the reader know what's in the other fanzines. With this kind of tactics fandom can survive the death of the last prozine and probably much longer.

The prophets of gloom are holding a wake for the wrong corpse.

---

MAILING COMMENTS		page 1
LE SHERIDAN SAIT	Bob Lichtman	page 5
LETTERS	Les Wirenberg	page 8
	Don Franson	9
	Brian Aldiss	10
REVIEWS	Drunkard's Walk	Frederik Pohl
	"...And All the Stars in Stage"	James Blish
	The Crispin Affair	Jack Sharkey
A FEW THOUGHTS ON FANDOM'S SURVIVAL		page 13

---

Idle Hands #2 from

Norm Metcalf  
Box 1262  
Tyndall AFB,  
Florida,  
USA

TO:

PRINTED MATTER ONLY:  
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED: