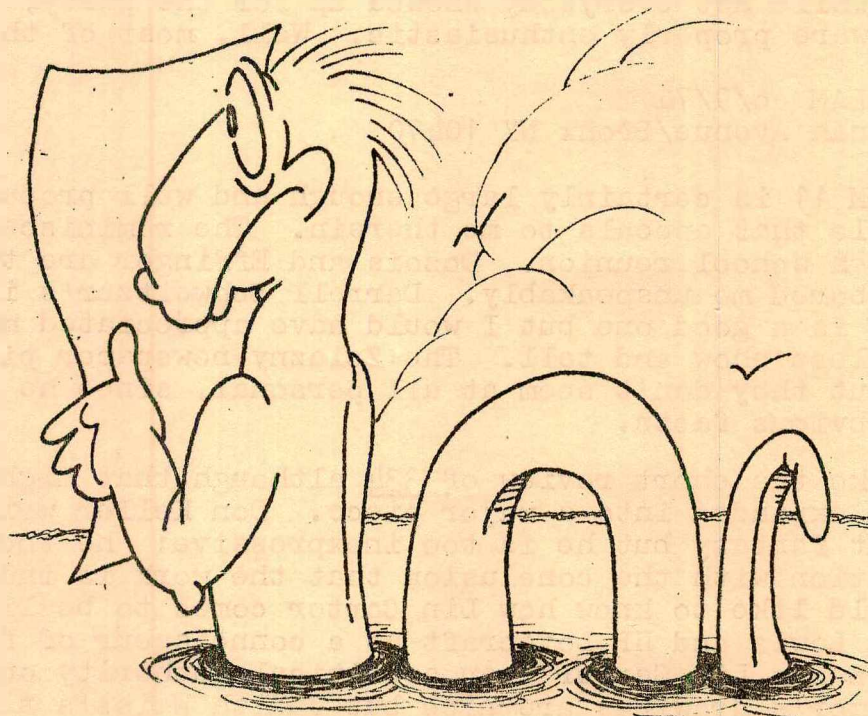


PHANTASMICOM-
MUNSCATIONS
letters of comment on PHANTASMICOM 11



KYBEN 10

edited and published by Jeff Smith/1339 Weldon Avenue/Baltimore MD 21211/(301) 889-1440. Single issue price is 35¢; subscriptions 3/\$1.00. Back issues available at the same price are 2 4 6 7 8 9. Australian agent: Paul Anderson/21 Mulga Road/Hawthornedene, S.A. 5051. Copyright © 1974 by Jeffrey D. Smith. This is the November 1974 issue, and is Phantasmicom Press Publication #34.

DEADLY LETTER
letters of comment on KYBEN 6 through 9

Response to PHANTASMICOM 11 was quite gratifying. 20 of the 63 letters of comment I have built up for this issue are on PhCOM, and while twenty is no huge figure by any means it is more than the dozen-or-so I'm used to. Some of the responses were:

"PhCOM 11 is a most impressive publication...a milestone issue" (Mike Gicksohn); "A monument. Imposing..." (Dick Geis); "It is beautiful" (James Tiptree, Jr.); "...completely readable..." (Darrell Schweitzer); "You're crazy, of course" (Bob Sabella); "I am awed" (Cy Chauvin); "Goshwow, a hundred-page fanzine!" (Richard Brandt); "Wow" (Jeff May); "WOW" (Mike Smith); and even "I wish PhCOM had been a few dozen pages longer" (Al Sirois).

So, while not everybody showed up for the party, those who did come were properly enthusiastic. Well, most of them...

BARRY GILLAM 6/9/74
4283 Katonah Avenue/Bronx NY 10470

PhCOM 11 is certainly large enough and well produced. But I find little that appeals to me therein. The reminiscences sound like a high school reunion. Dozois and Effinger are two writers who have bored me unspeakably. Darrell Schweitzer's idea about Gernsback is a good one but I would have appreciated more discussion and less show and tell. The Zelazny newspaper pieces are nice to have but they don't seem at all personal, since he is simply repeating obvious facts.

I like the short review of 334 although that might profitably have been expanded into a major piece. Don Keller writes reasonably about fantasy but he is too inexpressive: he too often ends an evaluation with the conclusion that the work is indescribable. And I would like to know how Lin Carter comes to be listed with CA Smith, CS Lewis and HP Lovecraft as a connoisseur of fantasy? Since when has Lin Carter been a critical authority on anything? Paula Marmor's drawings are nice but Judith Weiss's title page for "The Wedding Gift" is the only outstanding piece of artwork.

As to my own piece; I should note a couple of typos which reverse the meaning of what I was saying. On page 70, Mulligan's causal pans become "casual." On page 71, the next Lucas film is in pre-production, not production. Those are the only two I've noticed but then I didn't examine it too closely. Oh yes, Ira Hozinsky's name is misspelt (p. 75).

What can I say? I respect the effort that has gone into PhCOM 11, but the contents just don't move me.

jds--Okay, guys; tie him down. That's good. Is he secure? All right, open the cages!

MICHAEL CARLSON
35 Dunbar Road/Milford CT 06460

Barry Gillam and I have been at tangents for too long, and I've never commented upon this before, so I finally will now. I suspect that we share the same roots in film, that we're aware of the same sources, and even that our critical eyes are focussed in the same general directions. But somewhere along the line we diverge, and while I can be impressed with Barry's columns sometimes,

often they infuriate me. I think at root he is too much of a Sarris-school writer for me (actually I shouldn't say "writer" because Barry expresses himself far more clearly than Sarris) and when I see his tastes/opinion take a turn similar to Sarris and his party line of writers at THE VILLAGE VOICE (to which Molly Haskell is notably an exception, why I dunno), I burn.

Actually, that's probably why I like reading Barry's stuff so much....I can relate to it, it's closer to me, and if I want to I can write a loc and it will all be taken well. Once I wrote a bitter letter to the VOICE after one of their writers did an incredible hatchet job on THE NEW LAND, not only missing the point of the movie but also misreading not only Sedish history but American myth. Strangely enough his comments on Trooll's style would be appropriate to ZANDY'S BRIDE but weren't to THE NEW LAND. Anyway I got an answer from Sarris that talked about his persecution by the great unwashed proletariat and his obvious agreement with his writer (or vice versa) and how he's managed to survive, underpaid and all, in the face of all his persecution, and how John Simon liked THE NEW LAND so it couldn't be good. (There I almost could've agreed with Sarris. Much as I dislike his style, I find his taste better than Simon's or *shudder* Judith Crist's, just to name two prominent examples. In fact he's better than probably a majority of film critics, which makes his faults all the more glaring.) God, what a tangent I went off on.

I didn't agree with Barry on SISTERS or THE OTHER, but could see his arguments and it's mostly just a subjective difference. I agree with him a lot on SLEEPER. But I rankle at his neat pass-off of Jack MacGowan as the "only actor of talent" in THE EXORCIST. Realizing that with the upsurge of interest by auteur theorists in the American Cinema (CHARLEY VARRICK was on most VILLAGE VOICE 10 Best lists, where DIRTY HARRY met generally hostile reviews because it was hip to attack "fascist" movies at the time) Bergman's films have suffered, but bad as Von Sydow may be in a bad film (EXORCIST) he cannot be shoved aside as talentless. In fact, I find him a hugely talented actor. You should see some of his early Swedish films, some very dry comedy work that is excellent.

Damiano is probably very anti-erotic...granted; but I found THE DEVIL IN MISS JONES to be exceptional for a porno film, for that very reason. If it were stylish to praise Damiano as an auteur everyone would be talking about the way he plays with audience expectation. I thought the suicide scene was among the very best I've seen. Maybe Damiano is appealing to our Puritan moralities, eh? Maybe people really dig seeing her punished in the, excuse me, end.

Whether or not I agree with Barry I consider him one of the best writers in fandom, because he makes me think without getting me angry--and I think better and live longer that way.

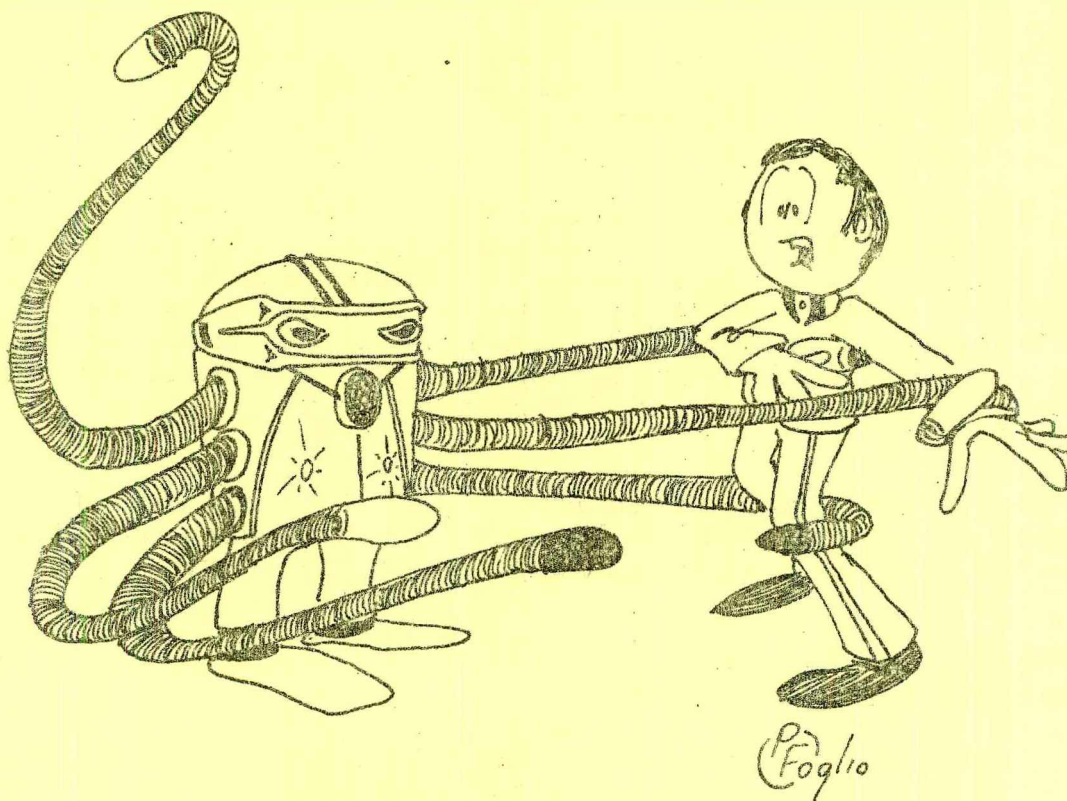
RICHARD BRANDT 6/7/74
4013 Sierra Drive/Mobile AL 36609

I was interested to discover that Jeff Clark once had a passion for film to equal my own, only to abandon it. I watch an awful lot of movies. Or I watch a lot of awful movies, or whatever.

The trouble is, I like movies, all kinds of movies. Even when I know a movie is bad, and when I'm sitting there picking it to pieces and examining all its faults, I can't help enjoying the experience, because I'm obviously hung up on celluloid. Who else would sit through THE CURSE OF THE LIVING CORPSE twice simply because the Roy Scheider who drowns in quicksand at the end is the same Roy Scheider who got an Oscar nomination nine years later for THE FRENCH CONNECTION? My problem is that I'm always looking for the good things in a movie, which is why I may never make a satisfactory critic. I reviewed and tore apart DUNGEONS OF HORROR, but said to catch the final shot. I can't help thinking that an awful movie is worth watching if it has any good stuff in it. Which is why I'd give a good review to THE SHUTTERED ROOM, but that's another story. Anyhow, one begins to wonder if he will follow the erratic course of Jeff Clark. I am seriously considering film as a career--besides, people who make movies can be writers; look at John Steinbeck and Francis Ford Coppola and Robert Bloch and whatever. Thus may I reconcile my cinematic eye with my yearning to break into print. But I love movies.

But this is all beside the point. To wit, on PhCOM 11. Barry Gillam says THE EXORCIST was poorly written, photographed, acted and directed. Nonsense. Most of the photography was merely mediocre, and some of the shots--well, a couple--were very nice. Right now, for example, I can think of the shot of the girl waving her arms eerily through the backlighting while the demon appears (in statuary form) behind her, and that famous shot of Von Sydow's arrival. These are from photographer Owen Roizman, who also did FRENCH CONNECTION; another good shot is Billy Williams' shot of Von Sydow facing the demon in Iraq. Like I said, I can pick out the good stuff in a movie.

If Gillam thinks Blatty wrote a bad script for this schlock,



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another letter, and more important, a new bottle of corflu

I'd like to ask him what a good script is, because there's a lot of stuff implied in a little bit of wordage in that script. Really, I must have had hundreds of conversations on that bus up to Washington on what some of the lines meant (fortunately, some experts on demonology were riding along); if Gillam replies that the script is muddled, let Gardner Dozois tear into him. As for the direction, maybe he's right about the value of the vomiting and related sequences, but William Friedkin handles a lot of symbolism in the picture that isn't obvious at first glance, and I would like to know where he got the idea that the acting was bad. Okay, so at the end of the movie maybe you're waiting for the girl to throw up all over the priest, or whatever. There have been less believable transformations in movies, I can tell you. Anyhow, Blatty wrote the story as a triumph of good over evil. So maybe Friedkin was a little clumsy. Friedkin's sole purpose in the business is to get a gut reaction. (Judging from newspaper reports, he has certainly succeeded in a most literal way.) I never said THE EXORCIST was the best movie of the year (let me say right now that it isn't) but don't pick it apart just because you're unwilling to suspend your disbelief a little. If you've bought that this little girl is possessed by a demon and can throw up fifteen feet through the air, you can buy her getting dispossessed.

Gee, I like movies.

I have developed a theory for why old people go "What?" all the time. I strongly suspect that not all old people are as deaf as we suspect. It is simply that we all get so embarrassed around old people that we mumble all the time, and they keep going "What?" cuz they can't hear us, until they finally give up and don't listen to us. All I know is my mother keeps telling me to quit mumbling and claims not to pay any attention to us some of the time. What?

So maybe if I look through cameras all the time, I won't notice I'm old. Just someday fall off the crane with a heart attack and have my body print on the sidewalk. But that's life, after all.

CHRISTINE KULYK 10/17/74
15407 80 Avenue/Edmonton, Alberta T5R 3M1/Canada

In reading Barry Gillam's movie report I discovered that the main reason for my disagreeing with many of his evaluations is that I tend to judge movies by entirely different standards from those I use in rating a piece of literature. I will rarely force myself to continue reading a book if the writing quality is poor, however profound the author's ideas may be. But I often endure weak or hackneyed scripting in a film if the ideas expressed therein are impressive and the scenes sufficiently well-designed to support these ideas. This is because it is so much easier to believe in the validity of scenes which are displayed for you in undisputable "living color" than it is to be convinced by a written work, in which the author must build his universe entirely from scratch.

ALAN SANDERCOCK 8/27/74
1 Michael Street/Lockleys, SA 5032/Australia

Since I'm quite a film fan I especially enjoyed Barry Gillam's

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first loc on kyben nine in

column on the year's fantasy flics. Unfortunately we are suffering here in Australia from rather poor distribution of films; especially the good ones. It seems that porn films no matter what the quality get shown immediately and the distributors sit on the good sf or mainstream films. It's a pity, since they are only cutting their future market for porno films, since everyone will eventually be thoroughly bored with seeing poor ones and will miss the occasional good one through apathy; and in the meantime we're missing such films as SLEEPER, THE OTHER, ZARDOZ, FANTASTIC PLANET, etc.

One film that got very quick release, however, was THE EXORCIST. This film really got the publicity treatment with the director flying down here for the premiere and all. I really don't think the film deserves such contempt from Barry even if it did just catch the right wave of publicity. It did an effective job of boggling my mind when I saw it and I suppose that's all you should ask from a horror film.

We seem to have been lucky here in Adelaide in that SOLARIS was shown. I thoroughly recommend it as an interesting contrast to 2001 --to which it bears some structural resemblance. I realize that many people would find it boring, however. I also enjoyed DON'T LOOK NOW, and was intrigued to recently read that the love scene between Sutherland and Christie was cut out for US distribution. That was a pity since it was a rather unusual editing job thus stretching out the love-making over quite a period of time and managing not to make it tedious. I notice however that Barry mentions the scene so maybe my source can't be relied upon. (S(The scene, which I thought was very well done and very relevant to the story, was cut before initial distribution, but not cut out.)S) I saw the THE DEVIL IN MISS JONES when I was in New York and didn't think it worth the \$US5 I paid. Much better value was (BEHIND) THE GREEN DOOR and THE RESURRECTION OF EVE seen in San Francisco at one session for \$3.50. I still reckon someone should show (BEHIND) THE GREEN DOOR at an SF convention, since it's way out fantasy. I also saw Paul Morrissey's FRANKENSTEIN and managed to eat my dinner afterwards!

jds: Before continuing with the letters, let me take care of an obligation. Last week Avon sent the first three of their 5 1/2"x8 7/8" Equinox science fiction titles. One is THE FOUNDATION TRILOGY by Isaac Asimov, a one-volume, \$3.95 edition. The others are the first two in the "SF Rediscovery" series.

The Trilogy is set directly from the Doubleday hardback plates on high quality paper, though the ink (at least in my copy) fades slightly into grey on some pages. While a resetting of type for uniformity would have been nice, this is a very good edition and may prove to outwear the Book Club version.

The SF Rediscovery series is one for which I wish Avon the very best of luck. The object is to keep books available, in quality paperback format, primarily for school use. Avon hasn't the rights to a lot of real or potential classics (I wish Thomas Disch's 334 had been published this way) but the books are mostly good ones. (Announced titles run from Christopher's NO BLADE OF GRASS and Pangborn's MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS to Spinrad's IRON DREAM and Gernsback's ULTIMATE WORLD.)

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two more notes -- I'll never catch up

The first two are STRANGE RELATIONS--Philip Jose Farmer's first collection--and C.M. Kornbluth's THE SYNDIC. STRANGE RELATIONS has the classic "Mother" and four other novelettes. THE SYNDIC is an oddball I reviewed in KYBEN 6 when it was out of print, so I guess it would be appropriate to briefly restate that review now:

It concerns a Mafia-run country--the Eastern US--which is a utopia, not a dystopia. Most of the story takes place in the dystopias of the displaced US Government and the part of the country run by the Chicago Mob. It's a spy story, and is so strikingly original I first thought it to be a satire of science fiction. Maybe it is, in a way, but basically Kornbluth took his crazy ideas and played them out quite logically, in their own weird way. It took a great deal of originality and thinking to write this book, and I definitely recommend it. The love story in it is standard fare, unfortunately, but nothing else in the book is.

Well, that's a little shorter than the original review.

Next month Avon/Equinox will publish Algis Budrys' long-unavailable ROGUE MOON and John Sladek's THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM (published as an Ace Special under the title MECHASM). I hope the series is a resounding success.

The quality-paperback format is one to keep an eye on. Many people feel it would be an ideal way to publish first editions. I tend to agree. These books are durable, they will last, and at two-to-four dollars (SF Rediscoveries are \$1.95) they are more economical than the six-to-eight dollar hardback.

Now, back to the letters-of-comment, these on Cy Chauvin's criticisms of Dick Geis's Hugo-winning fanzine THE ALIEN CRITIC in KYBEN 8:

FREFF 8/12/74
c/o Cochran/424 Kiolstad/Placentia CA 92670

I tend to make the distinction that things you do for money are professional actions. Taken from the root-meaning of "profession," which tends to mean "action-by-which-you-support-yourself" or "calling"...and I just can't consider Geis's mag a fanzine anymore. Nor Andy Porter's. The act of payment changes your orientation, like it or not. It is something like the difference between poker for fun and poker for nothing. Tempers sore in both, but in the latter the pressures are a hell of a lot greater. (I agree with you on article submission and subsequent selling to another editor. Unkosher, to say the least.)

I tend to agree with Cy Chauvin's criticism of Geis' policies. But then, I am generally disenchanted with TAC anyway. There is something in Geis' personality that rubs wrong. Partially it is chauvinism. Partially it is the playing to controversy and the pros (or, rather, "pros") over unestablished people. Partially it is a simple loss of courtesy. For example, he quotes from a postcard of mine, but never sends a copy of the issue. (S(From my experiences with Geis, I would say that was probably an oversight or something, not a deliberate denial of the issue to you. Did you write and ask him?)S) Admittedly a postcard is not a great deal of verbiage, even in my tiny hand, but it still grates. I wonder how I

stand now that I am a published SF illustrator? I definitely agree that no TAC has been up to the best four or five issues of SFR. (Which had a real slump there just before the end.)

Your quote from THE LONELY PEOPLE hits me hard, because of the wandering nature of my life/character. Fandom partially alleviates the problem, as do the friends I stay in letter and visit contact with. They provide an overriding continuity--a sense of "community," if you will, even though it is schmeared across the globe--lacking for most other wanderers, or just plain folks. I point out that many people like having their much-sought privacy sundered, at least by acceptable representatives of anarchy like clowns and streetmimes. (Some stories I could tell, and someday will.)

Schirmeister's stuff is very funny, and lovingly stylized--though I wish he'd attempt to branch into more experimentation with shading. By the by, after months of quandry I finally remembered his probable sources of inspiration--the very, very early Loonytoons. Some of the early Porky Pigs shine as the best animation work of all time, and perhaps the most rampantly imaginative. More Schirm!

BARRY GILLAM 9/11/74

I reacted positively to Cy Chauvin's piece since I also find Geis' writing and editing on the downhill side. Sure I'm still paying that outrageous \$1 an issue. The fact that so many fans and pros read it makes it important in a way that Geis' own writing never could.

And I agree emphatically about how dull the layout is. Unfortunately it meets its match in the text. The lack of interior illos is just one more factor adding to the hollowness of TAC.

MIKE GLICKSOHN 9/22/74
141 High Park Avenue/Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3/Canada

Cy Chauvin, usually a perceptive and incisive critic, seems a bit near-sighted in these pages. (And I'm not referring to his remark that your fanzine reviews were better than mine..."easily"...ouch...anyone might have such an opinion, if he was as lacking in taste, intelligence, critical acumen and insight as Cy.) I refer to his attack on Geis for TAC.

Cy must surely realize that Dick isn't in the fanzine game for the reasons that Jeff Smith, Mike Glicksohn or even Cy Chauvin is in it. Dick's in it for purely commercial reasons, and he's quite open about that. Therefore any reviews, critiques or analyses of TAC must be based on that rationale. It's no use attacking TAC on the aesthetics of fanzine production because Dick doesn't give a damn about those. Of course his fanzine reflects laziness; if you were producing three thousand copies all by hand you'd take all the short-cuts you could as well. Comments about the appearance, graphics, artwork, etc., in TAC aren't germane in the slightest. I'm sure as a book reviewer of some note Cy has written that a reviewer ought to try to discuss a book on the basis of what the author's aims were and how well he achieved them. This standard must also be applied to fanzines, and when it is most of Cy's comments about TAC become irrelevant.

The same applies to the contents that Cy disapproves of. Dick is publishing material that will attract readers, paying readers, mostly from the non-fan sphere. Exchanges of insults between big names will do just that. If Cy doesn't like it, and I don't blame him in that, he needn't read it, but it's silly to say Geis ought not to have printed it. Or even to wonder in print why he did print it. Surely Cy is more perceptive than that?

So TAC isn't SFR: doesn't have the natty appearance, the editorial personality, the higher quality of reviews and contents. Geis isn't publishing SFR anymore. We may regret it, but we're not going to change it. As long as Dick reaches an audience willing to pay for what he's currently doing, and it appears that he has done so, we'll either have to accept the direction he's chosen to go in or get off the bandwagon. Bemoaning the loss of a great fanzine won't help any, I'm afraid.

Open your eyes and greet 1974, Cy. It may not be as good as 1970, but we're stuck with it.

Along the same lines, Jeff, I'm surprised at your own lack of perception in the matter of TAC. You pooh-pooh people who are concerned with the effect of the semi-pro fanzine on the rest of fanzine fandom, then turn around and point out one of the most insidious effects they can have, that of siphoning off the best material to those markets that are willing to pay for them. I'm not saying there's anything we can do to prevent paying markets getting the best of some people's output, but should we also give them the ego-boo of a Hugo as well? Can't we, in all good conscience, keep the Hugos as awards for those who remain amateur in the true sense of the word, in that they're doing their creative bests out of love of the field, without regard for financial return? Geis isn't going to stop publishing if he's declared ineligible for a Hugo, but it gives Glycer, Luttrll, Brazier, Bushyager and, yes, Jeff Smith, a better chance at some honest recognition they'll otherwise have little chance of getting. Or do you disagree?

jds: Anybody can publish a high-circulation fanzine; the act is not limited to a chosen few. Those of us who choose not to have no cause to criticize those who do merely because they do. The appearance and text of TAC can be criticized, as can the appearance and text of any fanzine. But I don't think the 3000-circulation of TAC can be criticized any more than can the limited circulation (50?) of Arnie Katz's WOODEN NICKEL.

As for the Hugo--go ahead and worry about whatever you like. I won't. I continue in my firm belief that people should be free to vote for whatever they want to; complete anarchy. And anyway, ENERGUMEN beat LOCUS (remember, Mike?); maybe BLIND FAITH will beat THE ALIEN CRITIC. If not, so what?

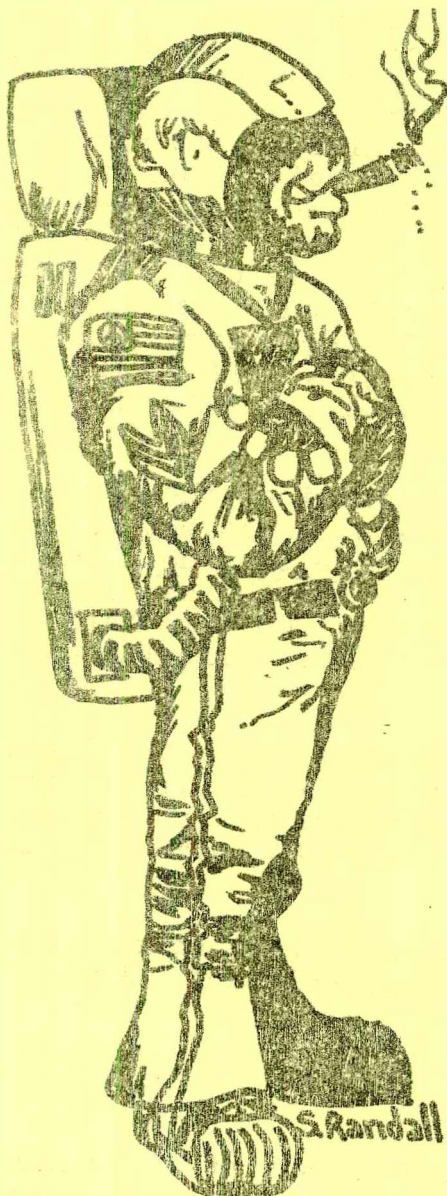
Might I point out a parrallel to this whole foolishness? Remember when electro-stencils were a Bad Thing, cold and inhuman?

DAVE GORMAN 8/11/74
337 North Main Street/New Castle IN 47362

I agree that THE ALIEN CRITIC has its faults, but it is hardly over-rated. Geis uses the mimeo production and the lack of visual

layout and artwork because of the ultimate purpose of the fanzine-- to turn a profit, one big enough to support himself. He once said that TAC is a service zine for the readers and a forum for the professional sf writers. That's why he runs mostly leaders from the pros, does extensive book reviewing, and publishes the Alien Archives. When he published the Harry Harrison and Ted White exchange in TAC 8, I thought "Oh God, next issue there will be Phil Farmer and Brian Aldiss and Harlan and Norman and all the letterhacks beating this into the ground." But in TAC 9, Geis ended the whole controversy with a letter from Silverberg and a couple of paragraphs of his own. That is the mark of a good editor, better than the Geis of SFR, and much more professional than the professional sickness that has taken over the latest OUTWORLDS, which has Bill Bowers acting like a pre-acne Frank Lunney. (Note: this is not a slam. OW is my second or third favorite fanzine, right after KYBEN, STARLING, and something called PHANTASMICOM.)

The point I'm making is that Geis is following his ambitions and goals and doing a damn good job editing in the meanwhile. I also wish that he would contribute more editorial personality to TAC, and run a more extensive lettercol. Whether he deserves a Hugo, I don't know. Whether he produces a good fanzine, I'm surprised that Cy Chauvin has doubts.



AL SIROIS 9/4/74
233 County Street/New Haven CT 06511

I liked Chauvin's article (but then I usually like his stuff) and your own editorializing. I have to disagree with Cy on a point or two; I enjoy TAC because I enjoy Geis, and the fragmented contents don't bother me a bit. I rather like the way REG sets TAC up, in fact; one never knows what is coming next. True, it does make reference work a bit harder, but again, I can only say that I don't mind. The only gripe I have against TAC, and it is a major one, unfortunately, is the lack of interior artwork. This bothers me because I'd like to contribute to it, but I have a feeling Geis won't be accepting any covers off the likes of me for a while (at least until more people know who I am, or until I improve my artwork). (More likely the latter.)

BOB SABELLA 8/19/74
32 Cortright Road/Whippany NJ 07981

I disagree strongly with Cy Chauvin. His main contention seems to be that THE ALIEN CRITIC is inferior to

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW. So what? They are two different entities. Obviously TAC is not intended to be another SFR or Geis would have better layout, more artwork, more contributors, etc. Does Geis have to compete with himself the rest of his life? Because KYBEN may or may not be as good as PHANTASMICOM, does that mean the weaker of the two should be discontinued? Of course not; they each serve a different purpose, one as a personalzine, the other as a genzine. Geis' two magazines are as different, although possibly his differences are not as pronounced.

Cy also complains about the layout in TAC. When SFR was popular layout was considered all-important in fanzines. That was a bad idea then, and it's still bad. Artwork is nice, as are fancy headings and lots of blank space, but all they really do is make for a big, empty magazine. I get more enjoyment from TAC because it is almost lacking in art and it does have small, compact printing with little space between articles. Layout is only as functional as the packaging of a record album. Certainly I prefer excellent music in a drab package to an open-out extravaganza featuring music that reeks to high heaven. (S(However, I feel more comfortable reading something attractively printed than something cluttered. You don't have to look at the record jacket while listening to the music.)S)

I disagree with Cy's assessment of TAC's written material, too, but that's mostly personal taste. The fact that Geis does all the reviews is a plus, I think. A book review is only as good as the reviewer. Having a half dozen different book reviewers in a single issue can be confusing since that's six different tastes a reader must adjust to before he can extract any meaning from any particular review. When I read a review in TAC I know I am dealing with Dick Geis' taste, with which I am already familiar (the same as I'm familiar with Jeff's taste in KYBEN). I suspect the ideal situation would be for a fanzine to have two regular reviewers who each review the same books each issue. Then the readers would only have to be familiar with two peoples' taste, as well as having two opinions on each book reviewed.

One last comment: I do agree it is shoddy for any fanwriter to submit an article to one editor, then re-submit it to a paying market without clearing it with the original editor. But fans are people, and people are greedy, and the result follows by the transitive law.

HARRY WARNER, JR. 8/28/74
423 Summit Avenue/Hagerstown MD 21740

You didn't mention one reason why fanzine editors and writers might be expected to hesitate before paying or accepting pay for material. The continuing grumbles over what constitutes a fanzine might create any year now a tightening of the Hugo eligibility rules. A writer or a publisher could find himself permanently ineligible to be nominated, even though money in a small sum had passed hands only once, just as a college athlete can't play for his team any more if he accepts money for just one game with a semi-pro or pro squad. A Hugo is worth so much in prestige and circulation and egoboo that the small sums currently involved in fanzine material would hardly compensate for its loss. (S(That would be a dumb bit of over-reaction, and I can't foresee such a rule being passed. I do feel that things will be changed soon, somehow, though. But surely not that way.)S)

12 -- 10/25/74

I can't agree with Cy Chauvin's estimate of THE ALIEN CRITIC. Even if it were as confusing to the reader and as inferior to earlier Geis fanzines as Cy alleges, it would still appeal strongly to me in one vital way: its differentness. Very few fanzines dare to be different today. Fans are worse than television executives, when it comes to imitating.

RICHARD E. GEIS 8/17/74
P O Box 11408/Portland OR 97211

Now, me, I kinda like the mosaic form of TAC, and I'll keep it. It allows me to pace the material as I like, to accent the impact of material....But there are those personality types who feel uncomfortable if all the letters aren't grouped "in their place" in a letter section, and if the reviews aren't similarly locked up in a special labeled enclosure....I prefer the unstructured TAC format, for now. (Of course, there is a lot of structure in the magazine, but it isn't obtrusive.)

And I must say that Cy's personal fears of never appearing in TAC again are without foundation; I'll be happy to buy a good article from him. Why, I'd buy one from Vonda or Joanna, even. But while McIntyre and Russ aren't likely to submit to me for low-rate reasons as well as WomLib reasons, Cy might send something after all, eventually.

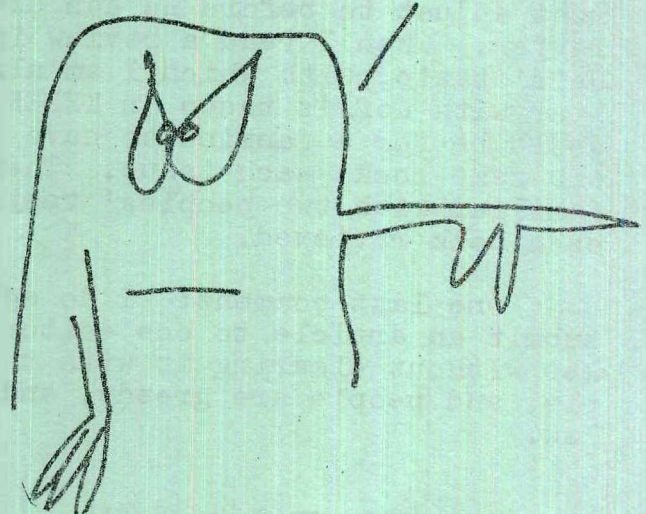
I long ago accepted that there'd be fans and pros and editors and publishers and women and aliens who would not like me and not like my work. As long as most sf readers approve and are entertained and interested and perhaps educated a bit by me and mine, I'll come out ahead in the 'strokes' department.

What the hell, I don't expect to get out of living on Earth alive, anyway. So I don't get snarly (in a hot, serious way) about much of anything....

jds: And while we're on the subject of fanzines...I should mention that PHANTASMICOM 11 is sold out (or did I already say that?), so if the letters on it you'll be reading this issue and next intrigue you, tough. You missed your chance.

The next issue of KYBEN will be quite different from this one and all those previous, I expect, but that's all I can tell you. I don't know too much about it yet, either. I do plan to run fanzine reviews more often. As for my other 1975 fanzine...

IT WILL BE A COLD
DAY IN HELL BEFORE
I'LL SEE ANOTHER
LETTER LIKE THAT



AL SIROIS 9/17/74



jds: Yes, true, interior illos will be few and far between in BF. Bob Sabella won't mind, I guess. Maybe a couple others... BF will be a fanzine to read, like SF COMMENTARY.

An even more unpopular decision, though, will be our decision not to trade with other fanzines. Or rather, with just a very se-

lect few. I'll be glad to trade KYBEN with just about anybody, but BLIND FAITH goes to contributors and subscribers. I hated Glicksohn for doing this with ENERGUMEN, but now I find myself in the same position. I expect I'll get flak similar to that I gave Mike, but c'est la guerre.

BLIND FAITH, for those of you who just tuned in, is the dreadfully serious journal Dave Gorman (send for his excellent GORBETT, 75¢, 3/\$2, address back a couple pages) and I will unveil next February. If you like lots of indepth book reviews and stuff you might want to be one of the 250 or so subscribers. (We're only printing 300 copies.) \$1.25 (*gasp*) or 4/\$4. So far we've had four people subscribe on blind faith, which is nice.

Before leaving the subject of fanzines, let me make a bit of an appeal, to those of you considering cleaning out your fanzine collections. I would very much like a complete run of Bruce Gillespie's SF COMMENTARY, but I'm a long way off. Any of you contemplating disposal of issues 1 through 14 (and, inexplicably, 24), get in touch, okay? Also, there are old issues of PHANTASMICOM and KYBEN that I need--not for myself, but for people like James Tiptree and Dave Gorman. If you can help, again, let me know.

Incidentally, don't ever throw old fanzines out. That's a complete waste. Recycle them. Donate them to one of the many colleges that are building collections, or to the N3F (I believe they want them), or sell them to a collector--or even a dealer if you can find one. Or something. Ship them off in a box to me, if you don't know what else to do with them, and I'll try to distribute them. There's a lot of crud floating through the mails, to be sure, but also a lot of people willing to read it (or go blind attempting to).

Before getting back to the letters of comment, let me give you some info from Tip. I asked him about his new collection, which will be published by Ballantine in February. The title will be WARM WORLDS, probably something like WARM WORLDS AND OTHERWISE. The contents he gave me from memory, not research, but we can assume it's probably right:

"All the Kinds of Yes" ("Filomena and Greg and Rikki-Tikki and Barlow and The Alien," NEW DIMENSIONS); "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" (NEW DIMENSIONS); "Love Is the Plan the Plan Is Death" (THE ALIEN CONDITION); "The Last Flight of Dr. Ain" (GALAXY); "The Milk of Paradise" (AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS); "The Women Men Don't See" (F&SF); "The Night-Blooming Saurian" (IF); "And I have Come Upon This Place by Lost Ways" (NOVA); "On the Last Afternoon" (AMAZING); "Amberjack" (GENERATION); "Through a Lass Darkly" (GENERATION); and "Fault" (FANTASTIC). Introduction by Robert Silverberg.

I don't think this is quite as good as his first collection, TEN THOUSAND LIGHT YEARS FROM HOME from Ace, but it does have some fine material in it--and you get dropped from the mailing list if you don't buy a copy, of course.

Now let's go back to some PHANTASMICOM letters. The article that received the most comment was Darrell Schweitzer's "Was Hugo Gernsback Really the Father of Science Fiction?" It received so much, in fact, that it would take the five or so pages I've got left for letters this issue to do it justice. So I'll run those comments next issue, and try to wrap everything else up now.

We'll start with the comments on James Tiptree's "Going Gently Down" and just run from there for a few pages; then try to do some more "Deadly Litter."

Dick Geis said, "Tiptree is devastating; I hate him; I'm getting old." Harry Warner said (unfortunately) that he wasn't up to the effort of commenting on it. Bob Silverberg and Jodie Offutt and others have just kind of muttered "superb" or something. Okay, now let's start moving.

ROBERT A. BLOCH 6/6/74
2111 Sunset Crest Drive/Los Angeles CA 90046

There is so much in PHANTASMICOM 11 that I hesitate to start commenting lest something be inadvertantly slighted. I kept reading with increasing interest, but must say that the topper, for me, was the essay by James Tiptree, Jr. I've read a great many commentaries on the aging process, but never one to equal this. Somehow I suspect, given the lower chronological average of your readership, that Tiptree's piece may not attract a great deal of attention: I know that when I was in my teens and twenties the geriatric field didn't interest me particularly. But if younger readers will put this article aside and come back to it again twenty years from now, I predict they'll appreciate its warmth and wit and wisdom. Matter of fact, the whole issue is well worth preserving in anyone's fanzine collection. And I do thank you for it!

JEFF CLARK 7/23/74
45 South Lawn Avenue/Elmsford NY 10523

My favorite article by far is Tiptree on old age. This is such a loaded subject, capable of wringing an easy response--but Tiptree and his style make it unusual and sharply focussed. I've not myself been able, yet, to think so vividly on the subject; the closest I've come to this area is in confronting (even fleetingly) the awesome block which seems to appear when one tries to conceive of what it's like to be dead. Even if you're religious, it can catch you for a moment.... (Ever wonder that this pre-occupation might be central to HAMLET? --C.S. Lewis did, and I'm beginning to think he's right.) But old age is something I've generally had to approach in a more abstract manner, had to observe other people's reactions and thoughts toward...or, more often as Tiptree notes, lack of thoughts. His data on genius in the sciences is very interesting (never occurred to me before, but seems obvious now), and I admire the stance toward that last, unrealized stage of life which he attempts to conjure gracefully, hopefully... "Migrating inside": I suppose my sentiments lie naturally there, old age or no.

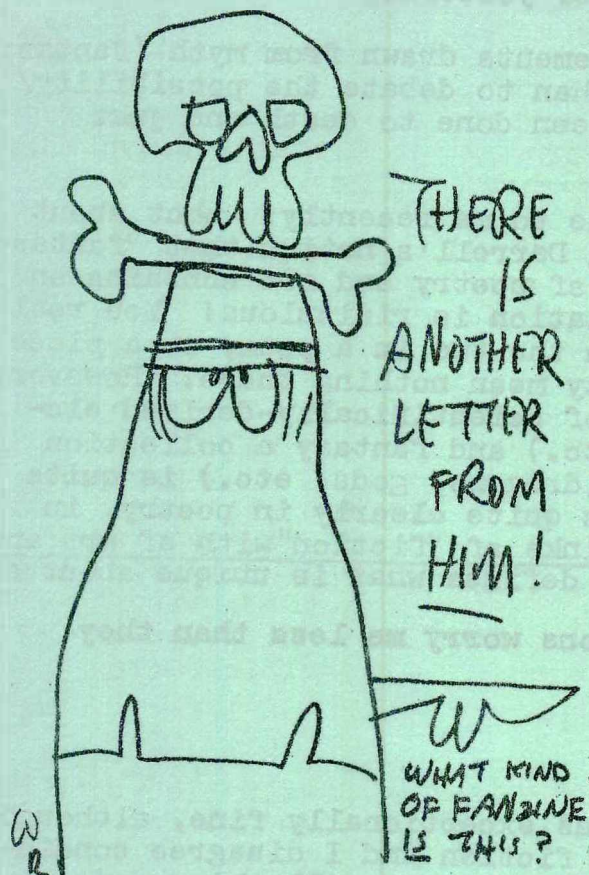
A negative note, though: while I believe basically that perhaps a "preparation," conscious or not, for old age is required, as Tip points out--especially in our culture--I'm also pessimistic enough to doubt that many people can ever pass the prep. Our culture seems to mitigate against it. Even if one is not an overwhelmingly gregarious and social animal, the general orientation of our society, regardless of class, seems to allow little introspection in one that is more than superficial. (Unless you're a total misfit.) I think we tend to process experiences more than to feel them, or even to have the capacity to let them happen, plain and simple. To

have an old age where all the substance of life begins to resonate within even while the exterior is in decay (and to hell with it), you've got to have some substance of substance. Not necessarily unusual life experiences, just something of depth that's provoked some thought along the way in life, perhaps. I know at least one person who is totally social: restless alone, cannot do without people... Ever wonder about such situations? What can occupy the mind and spirit lastingly, vitally, of a being who flashes constantly on the evanescence of social interplay?...

I wonder; I'm a prejudiced introspective. But I've observed corroborating details in thought and behaviour patterns. Perhaps the most terrible thing of all occurs when one is left finally alone with oneself, looks inside...and finds nothing. Nada. But maybe it's just an inexplicable hurt, as the person who sees nothing in himself has as well no capacity to see it in this way. Or else, one is left with all those occasionally highlighted, disjointed events, grasping and repeating, repeating them, with no way to put them all together in an enriching pattern...even if it's only your own comfy theory. Enough said: a good article from any perspective.

And a last thought on some ruminations by you, old man: You and Mark Muxper on writing "hooks." Though you distinguish somewhat between hooks and "devices," trying not to view the former as mechanical writing ploys...I tend to think they are limited to a certain kind of writing. The examples you quote seem to bear this out as well, though I'm hard-pressed to explain myself very clearly. I suppose there is one personal story I can tell, which may illuminate the problem indirectly. The last story I completed struck me as very indifferent in certain areas. It's about an animal preserve in the near future where a person is unprotected by anything but a sedative gun. He becomes adventuresome at his own risk. So one man, a zoo-keeper who feels more at home with animals than with people, enters the preserve amidst Siberian tigers (well, one, anyway) and whatnot. Nothing really melodramatic, however. At any rate, I never considered action-plotting to be my strong point, or surprises, and so I viewed my work as indifferent here, did not try to stress that aspect of the story. Also, the idea seems pretty normal to me, almost run-of-the-mill for SF; and perhaps as a result I didn't concentrate on the story as SF. Even the opening, which may have some of the flavor of the "hook" (I'm not sure), is pretty subdued.

Anyhow, I wanted a critical opinion on my intention and achievement from a professor of mine. Now, this man teaches a course in contemporary literature, is an honest-to-goodness (and, I sense vaguely, good) poet, and has even read some SF (but isn't greatly impressed by it...though I don't know what he's read). So, one of the things he tells me, the thing pertinent to this not-so-little anecdote, is something about the arrestingness of the story's mechanics, the strong plunge the concept puts the reader through... you know, here's the preserve as postulate; you know, the man's in among wild animals---this is inherently an exciting situation. Something like that. I was caught by this--the thing didn't really excite me (but who am I to tell?). Yet, do you see, the man wasn't looking at this from an SF reader's viewpoint; not blase at all, or even within the context of a "genre reading culture" or somesuch. The poet was looking at it purely in terms of



what it presented and its own internal dynamics...which may be what most of us try to do with stories, but can't always do properly. Of course, comparative/"larger-context" literary criticism is still important, especially to our budding field. But the point here is that the seeming necessity for (or even adverse reaction against) the writing "hook" may be a part of that impure context we can't always see clearly. It all depends on the kind of story, what it is trying to do and how consistently it goes about this. But consistent to itself while utilizing what it needs of the writing craft....Pure and simple(?).

AL SIROIS 7/26/74

I agree with you about the discussion of hooks, but I remember something my writing teacher once said to me. After you write a story, he told my class one day, reverse the first two paragraphs. As a rule of thumb, he said, this

will serve to make your opening provocative. It doesn't always work, but it sometimes can help an otherwise limp beginning. (S(Now that's a device. A true hook is just good writing.)S)

Robert Bloch writes unusually good opening sequences to his stories. Any aspiring sf or fantasy writer would do well to study Bloch's techniques carefully; he's a true master.

CY CHAUVIN 6/18/74
17829 Peters/Roseville MI 48066

I think Darrell misinterpreted the main point of my article, since he said there is a lot of material published nowadays that is mislabeled "science fiction" and mentions THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION. Now, the whole point of my article was that we should try to discover some definition or whatever that explains why people call the things Bradbury and Delany and Zelazny write sf, not think of a definition that excludes them, and only lets those works we perhaps like to be considered legitimate sf. I sort of tend to agree with Darrell that a sf writer must take his premises (say, time travel) "seriously"--or at least to the extent that he must consider them "real" in the story, and not just symbolic or allegorical. (We can't say "seriously" because that implies that there is no such thing as humorous sf, such as Harrison's TECHICOLOR TIME MACHINE.) But why is Darrell so certain a fantasy writer does not take his premises "seriously," or as "real" within the confines of his story? Dragons and elves and whatever can be treated in a realistic way even if they aren't scientifically possible--what is important is that they are mythically possible. Really, it is much more sensi-

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one (freaky) letter yesterday

ble to draw a distinction between elements drawn from myth (fantasy) and those drawn from science (sf), than to debate the possibility/serious speculation bit, which has been done to death and just doesn't work.

Also, an interesting notion came to me recently: what about sf art and poetry? Surely, applying Darrell's notion that "fantasy" art or poetry is "impossible" while sf poetry and art contains an element of serious scientific speculation is ridiculous! You really can't tell the difference between the two in a poem, or a piece of art; possibility and impossibility mean nothing there. However, the notion that sf is a collection of scientifically-derived elements (spaceships, time machines, etc.) and fantasy a collection of myth/religious-derived elements (dragons, gods, etc.) is quite sensible: we can see these elements quite clearly in poetry, in art. This is the only thing that links sf "fiction" with sf art and poetry; and that's why I think this defines what is unique about sf.

But I must admit that definitions worry me less than they once did....

HARRY WARNER, JR. 8/13/74

The Gardner Dozois interview was exceptionally fine, although I have read little of the subject's fiction and I disagree considerably with his concept of good story-telling. All this conjecturing on what secret messages the author deliberately put into his story and what additional subtleties his subconscious may have put there without his knowledge may be fine for certain readers, just as an occasional famous photographer will decide to spend six months photographing the same tree or red pepper. But both types of behavior put severe limitations on the individual's ability to experience a wide range of the good things in the world, by causing him to spend so much time on the one object. There's certainly nothing wrong with extracting every available smidgin of information and conjecture out of a story or a pictorial subject, but I don't think it's the right way for most people.

ARTHUR D. HLAVATY 9/26/74
250 Coligni Avenue/New Rochelle NY 10801

I'm afraid that Gardner Dozois' remark that he likes to make the reader think has reinforced my prejudice against him, although it may be just an unfortunate choice of words on his part. The prejudice comes from guilt by association; he writes for ORBIT, and ORBIT stories make the reader think. In other words, I get the feeling that the writer is saying to me, "I'm going to make you sweat to understand what's happening," whereupon I reply, "O no, you're not." On the other hand, the writers I like best--like Tiptree, Silverberg and Le Guin--invite me to think; they tell interesting stories that make me want to think about their deeper implications. As a reader, I would rather be seduced than raped.

jds: WAHF Mike Glicksohn, Jerry Kaufman, Jeff May, Ray Nelson, Bob Sabella, Darrell Schweitzer, Mike Smith, Sheryl Smith and James Tiptree, all with very nice compliments and congratulations. Thankee, thankee. Several of these letters will be in

19 -- 11/1/74

KYBEN 11, but that's it for PhCOM 11 this issue. Now let's go back to KYBEN 6:

MIKE GLICKSOHN 2/23/74

The college newspaper was mind-boggling all right. Reinforces all those cliches about the quality of American education.

Equally mind-boggling to me, and rather depressing, was the commercialism of your attitude toward gift-giving. Not being at all religious, Christmas means to me a time of sharing love, and

perhaps gifts, with one's family and friends. A time for eating and drinking and good company. But you come across as overly concerned with the cost and number of the gifts involved. Is it important that you spent \$250 on presents? Is it important whether the cost of gifts exchanged was the same or not? Does it matter how many things you got from your mother? It shouldn't, but it certainly seems to from the way you write the piece. Some of the most deeply meaningful things I got as presents last Christmas were inexpensive gifts that had been hand-made for me by someone who cared about me. Would I have thought they loved me more if they'd given me a new stereo set? I would hope not. I'd rather have something inexpensive that shows that the person who gives it has carefully chosen it with me in mind than something fancy and expensive and impersonal. Sorry, but this whole bit left me with a bad taste in my mouth. Or in my mind.

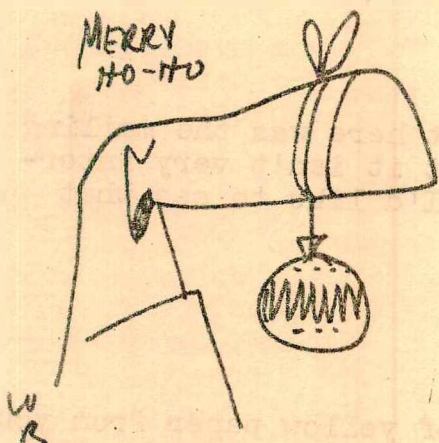
jds: We are products of our environments. I was raised in an American middle-class family in which Christmas gifts were very important. They still are. All kinds. I have a rather funny-looking little note-pad that my sister made me years ago, that I keep and use because she made it. And the only reason I wear a scarf in winter is because Ann made me one. But our regular, store-bought Christmas giving is the culmination of months of looking for the right gifts. It is not "impersonal"--at least, not in the immediate family. (I can't claim a tremendous interest in my great-aunt or my true father, so their gifts are pretty standard fare.)

This is my family's way, and I see no reason to go against it. When my parents seperated, back when I was ten, and the three kids lived with my mother, she went without supper several times a week to save money for Christmas. It mattered that much to her.

I agree with you that the materialistic aspects of our Christmases are overblown. But my mother remembers when we had nothing, and she is determined not to let that happen again. It was the loss of love that left her in a cheap apartment with no money and three uncomprehending children. Her extravagant gifts are a symbol of the love she feels but cannot otherwise express. They are not so much for us as from her.

You take love as it comes to you.

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four more -- next issue!

ROBERT SILVERBERG 10/15/74
Box 13160 Station E/Oakland CA 94661

The only piece of the new KYBEN that got here was the mailing wrapper. The PO gave it 48-hour service, but it isn't very interesting reading. If you have an extra copy, I'd like to see what was inside.

MIKE KRING 10/22/74
PSC #1 Box 3147/Kirtland AFB, NM 87115

Did you send me a fmz? I got a sheet of yellow paper from you with a cover for KYBEN on one side, and bits of tape stuck to the bottom part of it. If it once contained a fmz, it's now gone forever, I guess, since the Post Office didn't send it out my way. So ...if you're wondering, that's what happened. Nothing much else to say, so I'll let you be.

BOB SABELLA 10/25/74

Either the Post Office has goofed yet again, or you've got a strange sense of humor. The other afternoon in the mail I received a wraparound mailing cover for KYBEN with no magazine inside! Hmm. Please send me a copy of KYBEN although, if you wish, you can keep the wraparound mailing cover this time since I already have one.

jds: So, if you were wondering why I arranged this issue to be sent out without a mailing sheet, now you know.

BRUCE TOWNLEY 10/27/74
2323 Sibley Street/Alexandria VA 22311

KYBEN 9, pretty fine issue altogether. Actually I've always looked on KYBEN as something none too satisfying. You were trying to do a perzine but not really. I mean, you could always (sure!) schlep out 100-page wads of PhCOM, but a 24-page smaller thing, could you lower yourself that far? Apparently not. You never seemed loose enough to hit the mark on sloppy (but fun, real perzine, enjoyable status. And even featuring articles by other people instead of personal blatherings...well! Anyhow KYBEN 9 changed all that. Swallowing Live Frogs! That alone made the whole ish. And you even put down andy offutt (what is he anyway, a fan, a farmer?) for all that garbage at the Worldcon Banquet. Also neat: your mouthings on THE RETURN OF TARZAN and THE LOCKED ROOM. Tip-tree's pretty good this time too. Likes MOMENT OF ECLIPSE. Good man. Incidentally, I've found a way to keep books out of the library forever. They have to have those little cards in the back with the date due on them. Just check out some shit book before the one you want to read is due and exchange the due date cards and keep the books you want FOR ALL TIME. I'm testing out this method with MOMENT OF ECLIPSE, what better book, huh?

jds: No, Bruce. They'll get you. They'll know that that book hasn't come back. You could switch cards to keep books out maybe one extra period, but they know what books are out. It's more trouble than it's worth to try and keep ahead of them.

AMERICAN GOTHIC

Mrs. Molly Jenkins
Sells her wares in town,
Saturdays in the evening
When the farmhands come around,
And she sees all their names in her gown.

Ah, but is she happy?
No, no, no.
She wants a better home and a better kind of life,
But how's she going to get
The things she wants, the things she needs,
As some poor wretch of a farmer's wife?
He trades the milk for booze,
And Molly wants new shoes.

So, as she snuggles down with a stranger
In some back-of-the-barroom bed,
It's much too dark to see the stranger,
So she thinks of shoes instead.

Old Man Horace Jenkins
Stays at home to tend his schemes,
Sands for pictures of black stockings
On paper legs with paper seams,
And he drinks 'til he drowns in his dreams.

Ah, but is he happy?
No, no, no.
He wants to be re-born, to lead the pious life,
But how's he going to shed
His boozy dreams
When he has to bear the cross of a wicked wife?
She claims to visit shows,
And he pretends that's where she goes.

So, as he snuggles down to his reading
In a half-filled marriage bed,
He's so ashamed of what he's reading
That he gets blind drunk instead.

Sunday breakfast with the Jenkins,
They break the bread and cannot speak.
She reads the rustling of his paper,
He reads the way her new shoes squeak,
And pray God to survive one more week.

Ah, but are they happy?
You'd be surprised,
Between the bed and the booze and the shoes,
They suffer least who suffer what they choose.

My aim in this is not just to "review" the records I own, but to try and remember back to why I bought them in the first place. It's been interesting to do; I hope it proves interesting to read.

David Ackles: AMERICAN GOTHIC (1972)

This album was so well-received critically that the full-page ad in ROLLING STONE for it was almost entirely rave reviews in small type--and for an "intellectual" album, at that. So I had to buy a copy. What a waste. The music is a soundtrack for dramatic reading/singing; there are only a couple real "songs" on the album. ## One of them, "Love's Enough," was released as a single, and bombed. ## I made the mistake (I often do) of reading the lyrics before playing the album. The lyrics are excellent. The music disappointed me greatly--if it had truly matched the lyrics this really would have been a great album.

1310
1/14

21 -- 11/4/74

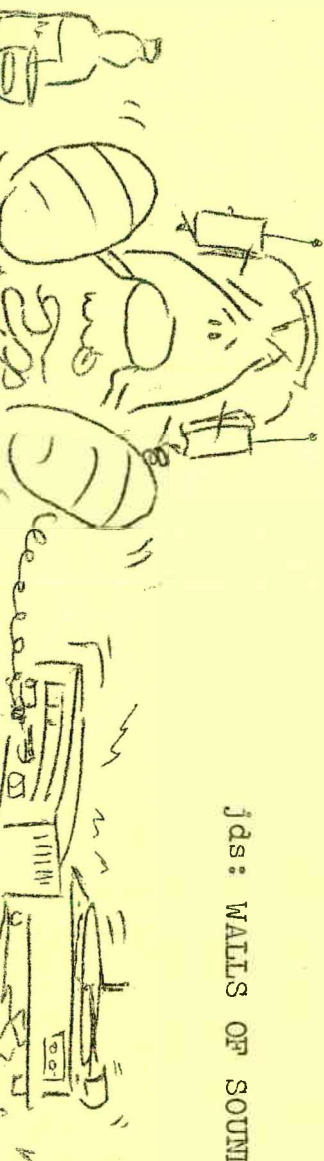
jds: We went out last night and saw THE KING OF HEARTS, a truly strange film. It's about a French town evacuated during World War I, and subsequently inhabited by the residents of the local asylum. It's a truly insane film, switching moods from comedy to tragedy, tenderness to brutality, with dizzying speed. You'll be laughing at some hysterical bit and be caught short, the laughter dying in your throat at some horror or another. I doubt that any one single mood is retained for more than five minutes or so. The film is not dubbed too well (it's French), but is otherwise quite recommended. And see if the shots of all the crazies running around the town don't remind you of a worldcon or two of recent memory.

RICHARD BRANDT 8/16/74

Had a strange dream last night.

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jds: WALLS OF SOUND



Herb Alpert & the Tijuana Brass: THE BEAT OF THE BRASS Since I
GREATEST HITS never get
rid of re-
cords unless they wear out or get lost, you'll find an awful lot of
sixties pop in my collection. (They're never going to wear out.)
My parents bought several TJB albums, and when they stopped I took
over. BEAT is mediocre, but I still occasionally play the HITS
album: "Lonely Bull," "Zorba the Greek," "America," etc.

America: AMERICA (1972) "A Horse with No Name" sent Mike Arch-
HOMECOMING (1972) ibald out to buy AMERICA, and when I
heard his copy "Riverside," "I Need
You," and especially "Sandman" sent me out to buy it. HOMECOMING
gave me only "Head and Heart," and when I took the third album out
of the library I returned it and that was that. The fourth album,
from what I've heard on the radio, sounds like it may be their best
as a whole, but there isn't anything on it not on the earlier ones.

COMPLETE ORGAN MUSIC OF JOHANN SEBASTION BACH The bookstore I
worked in 68-72
sold records. Not recordstore records, but the records you find in
your Bonanza Books catalogue. And Bonanza has a strange policy a-
bout defective sets: Rather than have to pay the postage to have
them sent back, they'd prefer the store just destroy them and tell
the company, which would credit the account. The set I have has
two record 10s and no 11, and instead of throwing it out I took it
home. I much prefer symphonies to fugues, but who could pass it up?

Terry Baxter and His Orchestra: THE BEST OF '70 I don't know if
I actually thought
I might like this, or just forgot to send the selection card back to
the Columbia Record Club, but...three records. The instrumental
sides aren't too bad, but when the chorus comes in--forget it. And
you know, the orchestral version of "Whole Lotta Love" is kinda in-
teresting.

The Beach Boys: SURF'S UP (1971) I can't for the life of me re-
HOLLAND (1972) member why I got interested in
IN CONCERT (1973) The Beach Boys a couple years
ago (it may have been off the
Warner/Reprise samplers), but I'm glad I did. I play these a lot,
and hope to pick up the rest of the ones on the Brother/Reprise la-
bel eventually. I like SURF'S UP best of the three I have, and
"Surf's Up" off that. Beautiful.

The Beatles: INTRODUCING THE BEATLES (1963) I had some Beatles
MEET THE NEATLES (1964) albums, Ann had some,
SECOND ALBUM (1964) but when we put them
SOMETHING NEW (1964) together we still had
BEATLES '65 (1965) nothing resembling a
BEATLES VI (1965) complete collection.
HELP (1965) We've been working on
RUBBER SOUL (1965) that. I did have a
"YESTERDAY"...AND TODAY (1966) copy of SGT. PEPPER,
REVOLVER (1966) but it got lost. (I
MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR (1967) well remember the
THE BEATLES (1968) copy I had. I stole
YELLOW SUBMARINE (1969) it, got caught, my
ABBAY ROAD (1969) parents had to pay
LET IT BE (1970) for it, and they gave

it to me for Christmas. Praise the Lord.) Until recently I had never even heard '65 or YESTERDAY. (The latter was no great loss, but I like the former.) By next year we should have filled in the holes and replaced the worn-out ones. ## I was very snobbish at the start of Beatlemania, having nothing to do with the whole scene. I think it was SOMETHING NEW that I first broke down and listened to, and (of course) enjoyed.

Beaver & Krause: RAGNORAK IN A WILD SANCTUARY (1970) Once when I reached the end of the Beatles section in a record store, I found M.C. Escher's "Three Worlds" (one of my favorites) on an album cover. The back of the album, describing how a couple people were trying to reach nature through Moog Synthesizers, was intriguing. I bought it. I liked it. I bought an earlier album from a bargain bin. Eh. The later albums were supposed to be good, too, but there are a lot of other things I'd rather have. I play "Salute to the Vanishing Bald Eagle" a lot, though.

Bee Gees: BEST OF BEE GEES (1969) Incredible, isn't it? "The new Beatles." And look at them today. Incredible. I have the BEST OF because I have a lot of BEST OFs, and it's an excellent album. I bought their new album when they reformed and liked two or three cuts (notably "Man for All Seasons") but TRAFALGAR was awful, and I've avoided them since.

Leonard Bernstein: FIREWORKS I am not a connoisseur of classical music. Putting a classical station on the radio makes more sense for me than investing a lot of money in classical records, because it doesn't matter that much to me. I like dance music best (the Bacchanale from Saint-Saens' SAMSON AND DELILAH is on now). When I do get around to buying a few more classics it'll probably be Ravel and Copeland. FIREWORKS is a pops selection--too much so in some ways. I can't hear the March of the Toreadors from CARMEN without hearing "Automobile/I kiss you on the wheel/You look so beautiful/But how do you feel?" Or the Dance of the Hours from LA GIOCONDA without "Hello, Mudder/Hello, Fadder/Here I am in/Camp Granada." Etc.

THE LONDON CHUCK BERRY SESSIONS (1972) I heard "My Ding-A-Ling" on the radio one night and bought the album the next day. The studio side does nothing for me; this isn't the kind of music I really like. But I wonder if any audience has ever enjoyed a concert as much as that Lanchester Arts Festival crowd enjoyed Chuck's set there. That's why I like this album--the "kids" are great!

Blood, Sweat & Tears: CHILD IS FATHER TO THE MAN (1968) When I was working the registration rush at the college bookstore in fall 69, one of the people brought in his tape player and a selection of 8-tracks. It wasn't a wide selection, and I never have liked Hendrix, but he did play the first Santana and the first two BS&Ts. I've stuck with both since. ## I like BS&T where I've never liked Chicago (up till CHICAGO VII, anyway). The albums

BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS (1969)
BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS 3
B,S&T; 4
NEW BLOOD (1972)
NO SWEAT (1973)

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three more for the files

are all different, something not readily apparent. The first, the Al Kooper one, is excellent. The second is the one all the hit singles came off, very commercial except for a long, floating jazz bit. (I've always hated "Spinning Wheel," incidentally.) The third has only a couple good songs, but the fourth is excellent, very understated for the most part. It was unimpressive at first but has grown on me considerably. NEW BLOOD is my favorite, but NO SWEAT is easily dismissable and the new one - MIRROR IMAGE, which I don't yet have-- sounds very similar.

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1974 hasn't been a bad year for JeffSmithzines, I don't think. One PHANTASMICOM and five (five!) KYBEN. With two of the six fanzines going into my own personal hall of fame (PhCOM 11 and KY 9). (Joining PhCOMs 6 and 8, and KYBEN 3 and 4.)

This issue has gone faster and easier than just about anything I've yet done. That undoubtedly means that on my way to the post office to mail the copies out I'll trip and toss everything down the sewer. Or the truck taking them down to the main post office will be blown up by Arab guerrillas. Something is bound to happen. If you have received this, do me a favor and drop me a line telling me so, and how much you enjoyed this portion of what is practically a year's worth of letterston comment.

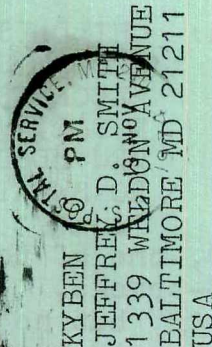
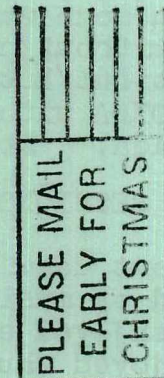
Next: BLIND FAITH. If you miss it, you'll be sorry.

ART CREDITS THIS ISSUE:
Philip Foglio -- 4
S. Randall -- 10
Bill Rotsler -- 12, 17, 19
Marc Schirmeister -- 1
Bob Smith -- 21

Chow.



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