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DROSS FOR GOLD: Roger Elwood is a name probably most familiar to stf fans for the paperback stf anthologies which have born his name as editor. I have never met the man, but I've heard little about him which might make me want to. His anthologies are actually put together by people like Sam Moskowitz, and his other projects are similarly ghosted. For that reason, despite his credit line for the script of the ALL NEW CAPTAIN MARVEL, I have no idea what his actual connection with the comic may be.

Be that as it may, the reappearance of CAPTAIN MARVEL is one which might be expected to have the old comix fen raving -- but which will probably cause them to tear their hair out. And, despite my own lukewarm sentiments on the original Big Red Cheese, I must say that my sympathies are with them this time.

In some forty pages of actual continuity, Elwood, Carl Burgos, and someone identified only as "Francho" have managed to present one of the most ineptly written and drawn comic magazines I've seen in years. In many respects (unexplained powers, abrupt action, thinly sketched background details, et al) the job resembles that of those comics which sprang up around 1940 in hasty imitation of Superman. The level of sophistication lies about there.

The comic, published by "M.F. Enterprises" (are they trying to tell us something?), runs only fifty-two pages, counting covers, but sells for 25¢ -- the cheapest foist yet attempted in a cheap racket. While Elwood receives the dubious credit for the script, we are told the comic is "based on a character created by Carl Burgos." Burgos is the guy who originally created the Human Torch, as old Marvel fans will remember, whose return to draw that strip when it was briefly revived in the mid-fifties proved he'd lost his touch, and whose more recent brief jobs for Marvel underlined the point. While "Francho" is credited with the art here, I suspect he simply inked Burgos pencillings, since the Burgos style does creep through in spots.

The basic "conception" of this new Capt. Marvel has nothing to do with the original; the new character is a supposed robot who can say "Split" and split his body into fragments which all act under his control. When he says "Xam," they return. \*Sigh\*

Not content with this, Elwood has revived Plastic Man, by name, in the course of the final story, in a totally pedestrian version which does a positive disservice to the late Jack Cole.

If you can manage to miss this abomination, I suggest you do so.

CATCHING UP: I have the three latest mlg's at hand for comment; the older ones I missed will have to remain that way since I can't find them. However, one person asked if I was Ted Mark, of the Lancer O.R.G.Y. and Pussycat series. No, I am not, although I'd like to be, from the financial point of view. Ted Mark is actually Ted Gottschalk, or something like that. Isn't that wonderful?

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GOOVN #3: McFarland - "Is it any more pointful [?] to be successful in the Real World ... than to be successful in fandom?" Speaking as one with some modest success in fandom, and thus

not from sour grapes, I'd say Yes. It's a matter of the Big Pond vs. the Little Pond, of course, and it's easier to be a Big Frog in the Little Pond -- but it means correspondingly less. I know of few BNFs who are conceited about the fact; they realize how little of their effort actually went into shaping their status.

As others have pointed out, fandom is really only a part of the real world, and should not be treated as a substitute for it. And while fandom offers many social and creative amenities for those who wish to take advantage of them, all of these can be found elsewhere. This talk about the "rat race" of the Real World is absurd, of course. One can find or create a rat race just about anywhere -- including segments of fandom. Conversely, Life In The Real World need not be a rat race if one Does Something About It.

Fandom has occupied a decreasing amount of my time in recent years (as a check of my fanzine publishing will show -- L is about the only active title left), but I find that daily life is as much a ball as ever -- and I even seem to be improving my financial status, as well! Fooop on compartmentalization, says I.

Why do established fans gafiate? A general answer would be their increasing involvement in the Real World -- and a specific answer that would cover at least 50% is the discovery of Girls.

I don't think your parallel between the "successful organization man" and a "BNF" holds true. True BNFdom is a status one earns from others; striving doesn't count for much. Walt Willis or Bob Tucker are BNFs not because they tried, but because other fans considered them such.

"My objection to the Real World is that much of it is stultifying, constricting; it propels man one step closer to the plant. :: Fandom has value because it can be mind-stretching." And I think I could make a valid case for the reverse, as well -- which only goes to show that in just about anything at all, you get out of it what you put into it.

HOUSE OF GAMES #38: Kaiser - My copy of the Westercon oneshot arrived here on January 17th, postmarked December 30th, and sent 3rd-Class.

It should be pointed out that the unwitting collaboration between Stine and myself was not a parody of Harlan Ellison -- at least not on my part -- but that my section was simply a parody of the opening, by Stine. It reads poorly now -- like something written hastily during a party, and nothing more. But I object to your titling it "Harlan Ellison." That was both inappropriate and insulting to Harlan, who is an old friend of mine.

EXPLETIVE: Bjo - Talk about barn doors and horses...I have now copied down every serial number in the house, against future thefts. Too bad I didn't think of that earlier...

I think we're slipping out of phase again. I wasn't so much directly replying to your exchange with J.G. Newkom (I more or less agreed with you) as simply commenting in a tangential fashion on loneliness. I certainly don't think that a lasting marriage can be based on the need to escape loneliness (hell, I've proved to myself that it can't!) -- and while I no longer recall the point I was making, I'd suggest that until a person can learn to live alone without loneliness, he/she isn't ready for marriage.

Since I had no way of knowing the background of Don's comment on truth in humorous writing, and the context did not suggest the background you have since explained, I was offering what still seems to me a valid explanation for the remark as it was presented in APA L. It seems to me, however, that I did not offer this explanation "as if it were fact,"

one or several selections from YANDRO, and etc. FAPA should be thoroughly scrutinized. So should the British genzines. Len had a nice article on Other Fandoms in QUIP #1. And so forth...those being off the top of my head and without research. I think if some of you more experienced LASFS members (Bruce? Fred?) acted as a supervisory panel, it might help, too...

One thing I don't care for: Dwain's statement that contributors will have to pay for their copies. This practice was apparently launched with the BEST OF APA L volume -- with the idea behind it that probably only the contributors (most of APA L) would want copies anyway. This is less likely true of a more general BEST volume, and I think it is insulting to the contributors to single their work out for such an honor, and then charge them for the privilege. Think it through again, Dwain.

DEGLER #105: Porter - "...from the forties into the nineties: some 50 blocks, or about five miles..." Or, as we say, "about two and a half miles". There are twenty "short" or "street" blocks to a mile, Andy.

OIUBT AKWATS #94: DVA - Your poem moved me only moderately, but your backpage comments on it and the act of creation hit me where I live. This is, along with your piece on Romantic Love, one of the best things you've put into FIRST DRAFT.

You and I differ remarkably in one thing: the extent to which we revise our first drafts. In my own case, my first draft (in fiction) is all but finished; it requires a little polishing and nothing more. Subsequent attempts to redraft will net me little unless I decide upon a different approach or turning. You, on the other hand, use your first draft as the skeleton upon which you will build your story, and require several redraftings to reach the level you expect of yourself.

Thus, for me, "analysis-in-creation" has little meaning. I write what I write. I have taught myself certain elements of craft, and from there on, the process is not conscious.

I've been thinking, recently, of attempting to teach the craft of writing. I recently told Robin that if she was willing to make the effort, I could teach her to write salable fiction in a year's time. I think I could teach anyone who had the basic talent. Lee Hoffman agrees. I've been sounding out a possible place where I might hold classes, and we shall see...

MORDOR #2: Dupree - "It is pretty silly to comment on a distribution which is three or four weeks old." Nonsense. Delayed feedback is better than no feedback at all.

THE GOON GOES WEST is one of the better TAFF-type reports (yes, I know -- John did not win TAFF; but nonetheless...), but I suggest you see if you can dig up a copy of Willis's memorable THE HARP STATESIDE, for what must still serve, after all these years, as the model trip report of all time. While often funny, it does not exaggerate, and is often insightful. Walt has the talent of visualizing the scenes he writes about, and then putting his reader into them. Unlike Berry who says, repeatedly, "And then So&so said some funny things and we all laughed," Walt tells you what So&so said, and lets you laugh.

RABANOS RADIATIVOS #65: Patten - Actually, the tv Batman is a throw-back to the days of the forties in most respects -- the revival of the Riddler, the use of the Penguin, neither much cared for by Schwartz -- but his "nuclear car" and "nuclear vat" were more, I think, than even the comic book faithfuls could swal-

low. Likewise, leaving his "hot line" telephone out there where even Aunt Harriet could pick it up, and having Alfred -- whom Commissioner Gordon knows -- answer it are unpardonable idiocies.

The plot of the first two shows was manifestly absurd, and without a shred of interior logic. Reflect for a moment: if the Riddler had Batman successfully trapped in a lawsuit, why go out and commit more crimes? Why not sit pretty?

Likewise, if the point of the lawsuit was to unmask Batman and ruin him as a crimefighter, once the Riddler had trapped Robin why not use him for the same ends? Why didn't he unmask Robin? And, most absurd of all, when Batman picked up Molly, masquerading as Robin, couldn't he tell the difference? A female body does not feel like a male body when lifted.

The Penguin episode was better conceived, but if the Penguin wanted Batman to plot his crime for him, shouldn't he have figured a better way to get around the simple knowledge that Batman would thus be forewarned?

I think the acting in both shows was uniformly terrible except for Gorshin as a superb Riddler, and Meredith as an even better Penguin. As a friend and I agreed, after watching the first episode, it'll probably appeal only to the comic book nuts and the homos...but that may be quite a large audience in itself.

Personally, I have every hope that the tv series will be a smashing success, since I may stand to profit hugely from it...

The trouble with the promo on "The 10th Victim" is that it's James Bond oriented, rather'n stf-oriented.

THE MUSIC MAN #15: Whitledge - I've seen your list of "Twelve Cardinal Principles" somewhere before, and I consider it of a piece with the rabid Republican fight against mental health. Item number 6 is particularly offensive for anyone who believes in freedom of the press and has a realistic idea of the damage so-called "garbage" can do a child's mind. But, others, in the next mlg., have commented quite effectively on this already.

APTERYX #3: Helen Smith - Superman's 'Fortress of Solitude' was an innovation of the fifties; Doc Savage built his in the mid-thirties. I suspect it was a simple case of someone at National remembering Doc's and expropriating it. As has been pointed out, Doc Savage came first, having been launched by Street & Smith in 1933 as a companion for the very successful The Shadow, launched in 1931. Doc may even have influenced Siegel and Shuster, the schoolboy fans who dreamed up Superman.

An autogyro is not a helicopter. An autogyro has short, stubby wings, and a propeller in the nose. The overhead rotor is not powered, and turns freely. The forward motion of the plane as it taxis causes the rotor vanes to turn, and supplies most of the lift. Autogyros are a bastard version of the conventional plane and the helicopter, as efficient as neither. But they paved the way for the true helicopter.

QRM CITY #1: Newkom - Sorry to hear that about KNOB. Wasn't that originally Sleepy Stein's station? I recall when KNOB was launched, in the mid-fifties, as the first all-jazz station. It got a lot of play in DOWN BEAT. Sad, sad, sad...

RABANOS RADIATIVOS #66: Patten - Don Franson is Wrong. He has also

been to precious few WorldCons...

You're quite right; you had no way of knowing that I wouldn't have another L along for the following week. I was groched, but I hadn't thought things through from your point of view. In the future, though, I'd prefer you space L's out, one to a mlg., unless I specifically ask you to double them up. Okay?

I'd say offhand that I prefer Snow's Magical Mimics to any of Thompson's Oz books. I thought his Shaggy Man was much weaker, however. But Mimics took me back to the real mystery of Land of Oz and The Wizard...back before everything was worked out so patty by Miss Thompson.

DER HOLLANDER #42: Hollander - Fans have always had a hard time gathering material before their zine became popular -- and sometimes even afterwards. We often had to solicit contributions for VOID, because fans tended to assume we had our pick of material and didn't think we'd want theirs. Today, however, there seem to be very few established genzines remaining; YANDRO stands out head and shoulders over any of the others regularly published. However, another HYPHEN may be coming out soon...I cut some stencils for it when I was in Ireland, and a note from Bob Shaw mentions, "there are occasional rumbles which suggest that HYPHEN is not completely dormant..."

MAYHEM ANNEX #34: Felice - For Californian post-disaster stories, try George R. Stewart's Earth Abides. He stacks the deck, but you'll enjoy his choice of locale.

F&SF rejected your story, but I'm going to try it on a few other editors before I send it back to you...

TYRO #2: Schumacher - There are at least three, perhaps more Batman rock & roll recordings regularly plugged on the ABC radio stations as, \*sigh\*, "Batman A-Go-Go". They are introduced by Batman's voice saying, "Stop the car, Robin -- they're playing our song!" All but the Jan & Dean are instrumentals, among those I've heard, and based on Neal Hefti's tv theme.

GOOVN #4: McFarland - This idea of having an "American con" when the WorldCon is out of the country is not a new one; a group of fuggheads at the 56 Con were agitating for a "rumpcon" in the event London won the bid for 57. There are a number of reasons for squelching the idea. First, it would tend to reduce the American attendance at an overseas con, setting up an unfair competition which would surely be resented by the WorldCon hosts. Second, we do not lack for regional cons anywhere in this country. Starting with March, and both the ESFA Open Meeting and the Boskone II, there will be at least a con a month through the November Phillycon, and including the Westerncon, the Midwestcon, and the Lunacon-Eastercon. Attendance of one or more of these cons should satisfy those who can't make it overseas.

Your annotation system is remarkably like DVA's way of annotating fanzines, to the detriment of subsequent readers...\*sigh\*...

Good to hear the Midwestcon has been restored to its usual date. This year two cars from NYC will be making the Westward Trek, to Cincy and then San Diego. Practically the whole Fanoclast group, including Lee Hoffman and Ross Chamberlain, will be making the trip. Rejoice, rejoice!

A BUCKET OF PLAID: Trimble - I'll have to disagree with you. The first Batman half-hour was extremely fraught with homosexual overtones, even aside from lack of jock-steps to hide tell-tale outlines in the costumes of Batman, Robin and the Riddler.

Batman "dancing" in the "What A Way To Go-Go" was bad enough -- it was embarrassing, is what it was -- but when he broke down and cried about Robin being kidnapped, it was Too Much... I always thought Wertham was full of ~~sh~~ hot air with his charges of homosexuality in the comic book, but the tv show really accents them, especially since, by its use of live actors, it is less removed from the makebelieve world of the comics. Oh, "camp" it is, John...

Yes, APA L has changed, and I feel it too. It was an effort to pick up the threads again, with the last L. Increasingly, the mlgs. have held less interest for me. I think the influx of "joiners" is, as you point out, part of it, and the loss of Hulan, Mann, Stevens and Gilbert hasn't helped. Then too, people who were contributing interesting and lengthy comments directly to the group, like Harness and DVA, have been minacking it for the last several months, Al Lewis has written little, and... And so forth. I think APA L is succumbing in its own way to the bug that got APA F: more and more single-sheeters, written by people who don't take sufficient time to think of what they intend to say, if indeed they have anything to say at all. The quality of response from such people, no matter the amount in terms of quantity, is unsatisfying. Yet, APA L has too many regular members for it to wither it as APA F did, and a revival may yet occur, as newer members of potential come in.

"In-the-stick writing" is a disease which falls upon us all. I used to second draft most of my fan stuff; now I never do. I'm not convinced my writing has suffered from this, however. I think the long years of practice in expressing myself has usually resulted in my finding that expression First Time Out. And, as a one-finger ("stink-finger") typist, I am simply too impatient to retype anything of mine which remains substancially the same.

EXPLETIVE: Bjo - The Ellick stories are priceless, and I trust that now that he is moving "close" by you will have a new fund with which to regail us each week.

We lost a cat New Year's Eve. I have two regular cats, Aphrodite, and her son, Sinbad. Recently Sinbad discovered that Incest Can Be Fun, and last June Aphri had a litter of two small Sinbads and a female. Since Sinbad has been widely admired as an extremely beautiful cat. it was no problem to give away his sons. But the female remained. Then, on December 30, Aphri had a new litter -- one female kitten. The following night, as the Giant New Year's Eve Party here broke up, the half-grown female kitten (usually called Squeaky) disappeared. We haven't seen her since. In the meantime, the new kitten demonstrated precosity after precosity. Her eyes were open at four days, and she was playing and inquisitive at two weeks. At three weeks she has the run of the house. She is monsterously fat, and waddles like a bear. She's cute as hell.

TUNA #1: Shaw - The Riddler first appeared in two consecutive issues of DETECTIVE COMICS, something like #126 or 135 or thereabouts. He lay dormant after that until revived by Schwartz in the "new look" Batman, for two appearances in BATMAN, the most recent still on sale. The "new" Riddler is a pale imitation of the original, however, and it is to Frank Gorshin's credit that he resembled the original Riddler much more than the current one.

Gorshin appeared on the Ed Sullivan show following the broadcast of the first week of Batman, and while he confined his routine to impressions of stars, in the finale he did let loose with one burst of the Riddler's maniac laughter. It probably puzzled Sullivan.

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Friday the 21st was the Chinese New Year, the Year of the Horse. Wednesday evening Lee Hoffman called me up and asked me if Robin and I would like to celebrate the occasion with her and the Meisners in Chinatown. I agreed, and asked if DVA might join us.

"The more, the merrier," Lee said. "That way we'll get to order more courses."

So, around eight o'clock, we all converged upon Lee's 7th St. apartment. It's a basement apartment, with a drawing of a mammoth on one of the walls. When the Meisners showed up, they already had a full car, so Lee, Dave, Robin and I followed them in my Weiss Rak V down to Chinatown.

You could tell when you were approaching Chinatown by two things: the scarcity of parking spaces, and the increasing number of firecrackers going off in the vicinity. Mott St., the street in Chinatown proper, was banned to vehicular traffic, and pedestrians took their chances.

Fortunately, we wanted 6, Mott St., and hadn't far to travel. "You know," I remarked to DVA, "you could get shell shock on this street."

"What did you say?" he yelled back.

There were nine of us, and we didn't have to wait as long for a big table as some of the couples who were there before us. The food was prompt coming, and delicious. The main item was a whole fish -- carp with bean curd in ginger sauce. It was very tender and very spicy. In addition, we had the usual Chinese dishes -- sweet and pungent shrimp, beef with pepper & tomato, lobster, mow goo gai pan, etc. Finally we asked for a chef's special -- something made up especially for the occasion.

When it came, I shrank back a bit. I'd been more adventurous in my eating, up to then, than Robin, and especially more so than DVA, who confessed he'd never tried ninety percent of the delights on the table. But this chef's dish was something else. It appeared to be primarily seafood -- and the sort mostly avoided by westerners. There was squid, abalone, and ghod knows what-all else, most of it varying consistencies of rubber. "This must be all the stuff nobody wanted tonight," Robin said, as she plucked a vegetable from amid the squirming mass. I tasted everything, and decided one taste would satisfy me. It's not the thought of the food's origin that bothers me; I just don't like rubbery, blubbery foods. I don't like tripe, either...

After dinner, we split up and returned to our respective cars. My car-load went to Mike's for a belated entrance to the FISTFA meeting.

Not long after we went in, we were followed in by an apparition with long dirty hair, long dirty beard, a cape, a fourteen-year-old Negro or Puerto-Rican girl, and a ten-year-old with long blond hair which turned out to be named Bruce. The apparition, who behaved as though no older than his companions, turned out to be named Charley Brown, or maybe Charley Artman, depending on his mood, and is a west-coast friend or acquaintance of Ray Nelson's. He has given up the "rat race," Duncan McFarland will be glad to hear; his life is devoted to mooching off his friends and acquaintances, passing on when each is milked dry. He seems to be propounding a pacifistic religion based on the original teachings of Christ, but largely I think he's reacting against his parents.

There was a time when such kooks fascinated me. I must be growing old now; I felt not the slightest urge to make his acquaintance. He didn't stay long, anyway.

-- Ted White

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