

LEER

DECEMBER '56



The Ballet

REED

1875

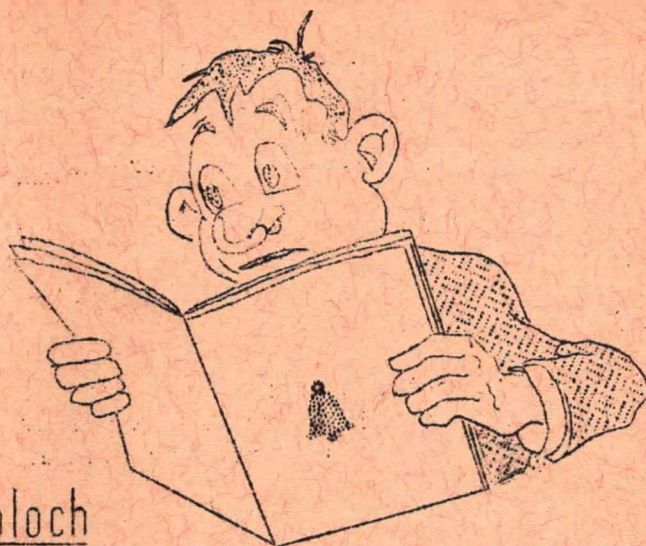


CONFESSIONS OF A

FANZINE

REVIEWER

robert bloch



A year ago, I was a plain, ordinary monster.

Today I am a bug-eyed monster.

And I owe it all to reading fanzines.

One year as conductor of FANDORAS BOX in Imagination has done the trick. My eyes have bugged out after perusing the contents of several hundred hectographed, mimeographed, multigraphed, and printed periodicals. Some were big, some were small, some were issued regularly, and others were so irregular they seemed in need of Lydia Pinkham's Compound.

It has been my duty to comment upon them in my regular department, and comment I have. I cannot pretend to have applied the standard techniques of reviewing and/or criticism. Nor have I even "rated" them with stars, asterisks or numerals.

Frankly, I'd deem such a task impossible, to say nothing of unfair. Because there are no abstract standards or even components to characterize a fanzine.

In order to clarify that statement, just ask yourself the simple, unvarnished question, "What is a fanzine?" Or, if you prefer, varnish the question first. Varnish it, paint it, cover it with shellac, gild it as you may -- the question has only one answer.

A fanzine (science fiction variety) is a magazine prepared by a science fiction fan and addressed to other fans.

Beyond that, there is no least common denominator.

Said fanzine can consist of a single hectographed sheet of paper -- or it can run into scores or even hundreds of pages, elaborately invested

with typeset, color reproduction, and coated stock for photographs. Said fanzine can be produced by a 14-year-old or a septegenarian.

And, most significantly, there is no uniformity of content.

Our definition -- and deliberately so -- says only that a science fiction fanzine is prepared by a fan and addressed to fans. There is nothing which stipulates that the content of same have anything to do with science fiction.

And if you're a confirmed reader (or a bar-mitzvah-ed reader) in the field, you'll realize that in many instances fanzines do not necessarily concentrate on fannish topics or even include them.

In fanzines today, you'll find feuds and nudes, hot rods and cool cats political arguments about religion and religious arguments about politics. In some fanzines, the accent is on the editorial ME and in others the accent is on the editorial MEOW. Some fanzines reflect the tenor of a Debating Society; some, a Ladies' Sewing Circle; some a session of the Gag Writers of America, and still others sound like a recording of a barroom brawl.

So, how are you going to compare them?

Lacking comparison, critical evaluation is impossible, save on the basis of personal preference. And this in itself doesn't lead to sound, objective reviewing.

I am just a naive little boy, 39 years old. And when some jaded sophisticate of 16 comes along with a witty dissertation on sex, alcohol, and philosophy, the chances are that our opinions may not coincide. It would be both unsound and unfair for me to set up arbitrary standards of judgment.

So I make no pretext of actually "reviewing" what I read. All I can do and try to do, is indicate what appeals to me personally. And to encourage efforts which I think hold promise of future improvement.

What appeals to me personally? Again, no common denominator. I like some fanzines which are strongly editorial -- items such as GRUE and SKYHOOK, for example. Can you possibly imagine an issue of GRUE which did not reflect the personality of Dean Grennell?

On the other hand, I also like some fanzines in which the editorial-personality seems quite submerged: examples being INSIDE and PEON. This does not mean that these magazines aren't expertly edited (indeed, they owe their success to editorial skill and selectivity) but the influence of the editor seems unobtrusive and the material is more objectively presented.

On the other hand (I happen to have three, you know), I also like some magazines that reflect the spirit of a group or a clique: HYPHEN, CANADIAN FANDOM, A BAS, etc. Or -- a variant of same -- letterzines such as HODGE-PODGE which seem to operate in an artificial milieu or frame of reference, depending entirely on correspondence.

What don't I like in fanzines?

Sloppiness. Sloppiness of physical production, sloppiness of presentation, sloppiness of content. I have never (and remember, this is my personal opinion) seen a good fanzine in an atrocious format. When an editor can't lay out material and reproduce it legibly, when he cannot correct errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, chances are he cannot select good material either. Or get it in the first place.

But again, you won't find this view reflected very strongly in my comments. And there are several reasons why I do not choose to "blast the crudzines" in my column.

Now, anyone who has ever taken on the role of reviewer or critic knows this to be a fact: it's much easier to sneer than it is to praise. One can ever be so "clever" and "amusing" in name-calling, and one can easily gain a reputation for "caustic wit". Moreover, in many circles, one acquires a concurrent status for being "honest" and "fortright" and full of "high standards of critical integrity."

The easiest way to attract attention to one's self is to yell "It stinks!" and then go on, with a series of ridiculing remarks, to tell why.

But I do not believe that it is the function of a reviewer to call attention to himself; not in his reviews, anyway.

Furthermore, twenty-odd years of fanzine-reading have taught me the danger of issuing such opinions. For I can recall all too many instances where I have read crudzines, and apparently hopeless ones, edited by youngsters who grew up to be talented adults. I have read vile contributions by feckless youths (myself included) who eventually emerged as polished professionals (myself not necessarily included). I have also seen downright lousy fanzines blossom into top-rank publications over the course of the years.

The important factor in such changes was not, I am convinced, outside criticism. It was the emergence of mature self-awareness on the part of the individual involved.

Now even the worst crudzine requires a lot of effort to produce. Even the shabbiest contribution must be sweated over in the writing. All too often -- when a neo is involved -- a volley of harsh, superior criticism or snide ridicule is enough to tip the balance and cause the editor or contributor to give up.

The editors and contributors who learn through trial and error, through their own objective comparison of their work to that of others, will improve voluntarily and inevitably. The others will fall by the wayside, because nobody will subscribe to their magazines or read and print their material.

But the fanzine reviewer who elects to be a Supreme Arbiter runs the risk of either stifling potential progress or some day looking like a fool when the object of his contumely confutes him. Some of the learned, omniscient fanzine reviewers of the past may just possibly feel a little silly today when they remember how they spent the latter years of the '30s ridiculing the puerile fanzine contributions of a sniveling little neo by the name of Bradbury. And -- much more important -- it is just possible that there were a couple of more fans in the field with equal or even greater potential who didn't persevere as Bradbury did, but dropped out because some Fearless Critic told them their work smelled and that there was no hope for them.

As it is, there's enough of such criticism, within the pages of the fanzines themselves, to serve as goad, check, stimulus or retardent.

Again, overall objectivity is impossible. How can you "rate" the first efforts of an adolescent by the same standards as those of an adult? How can you assess the quality of a fanzine addressed to neos in the same way you assess the content of a 'zine by and for adults? How can you encompass the divergent interests, attitudes and goals of an English fake-fan, an earnest Continental, a Dedicated APA member, a saucerian believer, a rocket enthusiast, a frivolous femme-fan, a dianetician, a kid who worships Campbell and an idiot who believes in Tucker?

All I can do, personally, is to say what appeals to me--personally. And to attempt to convey some of my approbation to potential readers and/or subscribers. At the same time, I attempt to avoid mention of the illegible or the ill-natured efforts which crop up. I don't want to damn them, but at the same time, I don't want to falsely recommend them to a trusting readership.

But I do believe it is a mistake to play Jehovah, complete with thunderbolts, in the fanzine field.

And I'd like also to say -- but I can't, there's no time, another batch of those ~~zines~~ "zines have just come in from Hamling's office and I've got to start reading.....

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PEON#12-MAR '50

A DIFFERENT ASPECT TO UTOPIA

Jim Harmon

What is Utopia? Why, any fan can give you the answer. That's a place where everybody reads science-fiction--where everybody gets a couple of fanzines in every mail--where everybody talks bems, mutants, and Astounding. Would it be wonderful to live in this Utopia? Well, let's see....

You wake up in this new world. You open your big ugly face. You see it hang that way. Your wonderful collection has been touched. Touched is hardly the word for it. It has been fairly let go at with one hell of a haymaker. You leap out of bed and run over to it. You see small rather insignificant portions have been torn from the covers. What could they have had on them? Your great mind works fast. Of course, it's those small, fairly sexless lads, the heroes! Sobbing into your bosom (a neat trick) you go downstairs. Then, you give an agonized scream. Those sections of your mutilated covers are pasted around the walls of the kitchen. Is this some mad plan to drive you mad, thought up by the other fellow in your latest feud? Then the woman in the house says, "Aren't all those boys in those scientific costumes cute? They make a lovely border!"

"Yes," you stammer, "But, why my stf..er, science fiction collection when you could have cut some pictures out of some Buck Rogers comic strips?"

"Really, Dear," she replies, "after all, comparing STF with, agh..Buck Rogers!"

"Stf? STF? What--what about it?" you ask in astonishment.

"Stf is significant!" is the reply.

You collapse into a nearby chair. "It is?" you ask, weakly.

"Of course," she answers, "and, dear, since you're the oldest fan I know, I've arranged for you to give a talk before the girls."

"The girls?" you mutter. "Those old..alright, alright. I'm going out for a walk."

Once outside, you prepare to relax. Then you see IT! You give a horrified scream, and clutch the coat sleeve of a passerby. "Dear God," you whisper, "what's happened to that woman's head?"

"Huh?" he asks. "That's a Lensman hat, of course. It coils and uncoils and changes color."

"Oh.." you say as you look at the man's newspaper. "The Chicago Fantasy News Tribune? A combination of the Tribune and FN?"

"Of course," is the answer. "Nobody reads the Trib anymore, so..."

You stagger away from the stranger, and head uptown. On the main drag, you see one sign glaring from everywhere: FANTASY BARGAINS!

You wander into one of the book stores, and pick up a 1947 Astounding. You ask the price, only to hear, "That's \$10.50 in cash."

"But," you say, "this used to be no more than 50 cents."

"You nuts or something, Pal?" the clerk asks kindly. "Everybody buys stf these days. The prices are way up. Anyway," he indicates a sign, "these prices are approved by Jasper T. Honeyfinger."

"Who's he?"

"Why the number one Fan, of course."

"What happened to Ackerman?"

"Who's he?"

"Tell me," you gasp, "who are the next B.N.F.?"

"Well, there's Fritzdingloovich and Mortonhavenhammerhadson."

"Mortonhavenhammerhadson?"

"Yeah, good ole Mort."

"But what about Willis, Bentcliffe, Riddle, Sneary? I used to know all the big name fen personally. They were my pals, my buddies!"

"Haw-haw," he laughs feindishly, "they ain't now!"

"No," you sob, as you leave.

Once home, you turn on the radio to a soap opera to take your mind off your troubles and onto someone else's. But what do you hear? "Now, we present Just Oona and Jick, the story of two people living in the future, the program that asks the question..."

You stifle a scream and turn the dial and swiftly get instead of Young Doctor Malone, you get Old Doc Methusleah. It's hopeless.

A movie, you think desperately, of course. Moments later, you are talking to a girl in the ticket booth as the signs are being changed. You say, "Is there a good murder mystery on?"

She stares at you. "Aren't you a fan?"

"A murder mystery fan."

"Ha-ha," she laughs. "You read detective stories? You must be nuts."

"What?"

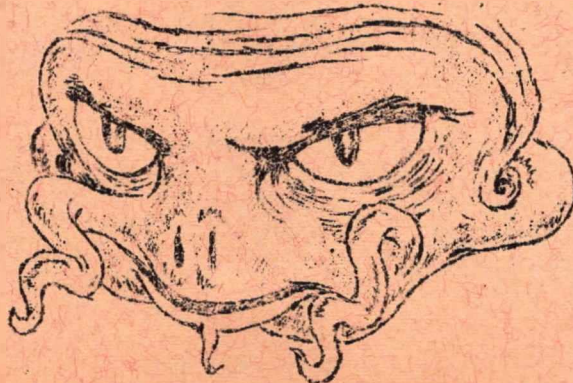
"Well, don't you know everyone reads science fiction?" she begins, but you aren't listening. You are looking up at the sign they've just erected which reads: "Samuel Goldwin presents 'The Grey Lensman' starring: Erol Flynn, Greer Garson, Montgomery Clift, Susan Hayward, Rita Hayworth, Ann Sheridan, Ann Sothorn, Borris Karloff, Lionel Barrymore, Vincent Price, and 2000 Beautiful Goldwin Girls in Technicolor!"

This is too much! You slide silently to the sidewalk.

After a while, you hear a voice from far away, saying, "My, he's certainly taking a long Null-A Pause."

When you awake, it is late night and all is quiet. You sit on the curb and silently reflect on the situation. It is no more exclusive to be a fan--everybody is. It takes the kick out of it for everyone to be a fan. No one thinks you're crazy anymore. You don't know all the fans and you couldn't possibly get all of the thousands of fanzines published. Prices on fantasy are way out of your reach. Science fiction is being perverted in all forms. It has become the thing to do to become a stf fan. Somehow you feel very lonely.

But relax! It isn't really happening; it's a pure flight of fantasy. But, did you ever stop to think that science fiction is becoming more popular everyday and someday this picture could come true?



SCRAPING THE BARREL

P. Kruis

Science fiction fandom in South Africa recently got the shock of their lives when the Government restricted the import of books from overseas countries. South Africa has always relied on her supply of science fiction books and magazines from England and America. Now that the import has been restricted the South African fans are having a hard time in obtaining their favourite literature. A specific permit from the Customs Department is necessary for the import of these books, and the possibility of obtaining such a permit is very poor indeed.

Recently, in Johannesburg, a man was fined fifteen pounds or ten days imprisonment for being in the possession of a publication liable to forfeiture under the Customs Act. A Johannesburg Queens Councillor expressed the view that possession of a banned publication which was not wilfully received or invited by the possessor does not constitute an offense. If, however, the banned publication is retained by the receiptant--whether or not he knows that it has been banned--he would be committing a punishable offense. Ignorance of the law in this case of whether or not a publication is on the prohibited list, would be no excuse. That should give you fans overseas an idea of how we fans in South Africa are struggling to obtain science fiction and news from other countries.

In South Africa, a Science Fiction Club seems to have no attraction for the general public. It seems that the people do not want to believe in the possibility that man will someday conquer space. The Interplanetary Society of South Africa recently held a very interesting exhibition with models of Dr. Wernher von Braun's Space Station and the Moon Ship. All the interesting lectures and demonstrations by the Society's top experts including Dr. H. van den Bos of the Union Observatory seems to have been wasted on the public of Johannesburg. The lack of interest is amazing, and it seems that no one can give an explanation why the idea of space travel does not appeal to them.

With some luck and very hard work we managed to start a small club in Johannesburg. The club deals mainly with the distribution of Science Fiction books and magazines (the few that we have) between members of the club and other enthusiasts. We fans here in South Africa are scraping the bottom of the barrel, and it looks like we'll be scraping it for a long time yet to come.

A Conventional Tale

Maurice Lubin

Rising early after drinking,
Till an hour after dawn,
We discover we're still stinking,
And our appetite is gone.
Though our nerves are in a mess,
We proceed to try to dress.

The above are the opening lines to Randall Garrett's comic-type operetta, "A Conventional Tale."

They are to be found in the Journal for the 14th World SFCon, to be known henceforth as the NEWYORKCON.

After having spent the Labor Day weekend at the affair I find myself wearier but wiser, and in the few paragraphs following, I'd like to pass on a little of the flavors and smells which were experienced to you. It was something like this....

A fellow Worcester fan and myself were both surprised and pleased to find that there was some mix-up on our room reservations, and that although we got an air conditioned room, it was only to cost us for two nights. The extra moolah came in handy at the record shops on Time Square and allowed both of us to attend the banquet Sunday night.

No comment here on Saturday as we got in late. But the Costume Ball held late that evening was terrific. Some of the female costumes can only be described in the immor(t)al words of Bob Bloch: "Goshowowoboyoboy!"

Sunday morning, we got up in time to have breakfast and also attend the afternoon sessions. The most interesting feature of the day was, without a doubt, J. W. Campbell's PSIONICS lecture, complete with a PISONICS machine. Campbell's magnetic personality had the entire audience intent on every word. Later on, Mrs. Campbell adjourned to the Hotel Bar with the machine and a horde of fen descended upon her to "try their luck" with it. All in all, the Campbells were the most sought-after people at the Con, a fate more than amazing.

Following Campbell, a panel discussion entitled "The Infernal Triangle" was to be given. J.W.C. was on the panel and all the other pros were so wrapped up in his previous speech that before they got through

arguing about Psionics, their time was up and the next panel was in progress. I might add that E.E. Smith had tried the machine earlier, and hastened to add his testimony to the already growing numbers of those people who had "felt something."

Suddenly, without preamble, we meet up with Mr. Campbell
Who is telling Isaac Asimov how culture should be steered.
From a group of fans emergin', we discover Teddy Sturgeon,
And we think he's H.J.Campbell, because he has a beard.
Then we see that time is fleeting, so we go down to the meeting.
There we stay for half a hour, and some knowledge we receiving.
Then we meet with Gordy Dickson and we find he is fixin'
To adjourn down to the bar -- and it's noon before we leaving.

Oh, the public always pans all the science fiction fans,
For they think we're adolescents and we haven't any sense,
But we pay no attention, for when we're at a Convention,
All the talking is delightful, and the pleasure is immense.

Sunday evening, and I'm down to my last clean shirt. The banquet does not start on time; as Hank Moskowitz remarks, "32 second late." Food does begin flowing in, however, and we all make the most of the stuff because it's costing us \$7.10 per plate. Lots of dinner talk ensues, and we are lucky enough to have at our table, Dr. Thos. S. Gardner and his charming wife. This most certainly enhanced our enjoyment of the affair.

The clinking of crockery subsides and we prepare ourselves. At the last moment, we all get free samples of a Wisconsin cheese. Then Robert Bloch is introduced.

He, in turn, introduces the first guest speaker, Al Capp. Capp's opening statement tells us that's he's one of us: "Yknow, this sample cheese is impossible to extract from their containers. Reason is that they're protected from venereal disease!" Later, Capp tells us that he notes an alarming amount of humor directed upon s.f. by the s.f. people themselves. He told us to leave the humor to Chester Gould, and get back a little of the awe and sense of wonder we used to have in our stories. Then he winds up by thanking us for allowing him the privilege of attending and receives the longest ovation of the whole evening.

After Capp, some more very witty comment by Toastmaster Bloch and then the most significant faux pas of the whole evening. Someone had evidently asked Randy Garrett to stand up and say funny things, even though he was not on the program, and had not the time or energy left to write a speech comparable to those of Clarke, Asimov, et al. But they called him up after Capp and poor Randy was faced by 300 leering people who expected too much of him. After floundering about he somehow got off the stand and vanished until later in the program. As he passed Tony B ucher, Boucher asked, "Randy, what happened? I had such faith in you." Garrett, replied, "My faith ith red."

Another high point in the evening was the next speech by Isaac Asimov (or, as Boucher calls him, Ahs-he-muf). After the opening few lines, everyone was in tears from laughing so much. Ike was merciless in his onslaught and gave us no time to catch our breath as he continued. Garrett on the scene again as he and Ike sing with much zest and gusto, "The Conventional Tale", a performance which will, I am sure, be inscribed upon the hearts of all who attended for all times to come. I don't have enough space here to describe Asimov's speech because after all this time, I still break out into spasms upon the recollection.

Tony Boucher next, advocating that "we be leaders in comfort as well as thought". However, all through his humorous speech, the only things that were taken off were jackets. A reflection by Boucher on PSIONICS was that after taking the test offered by Campbell and feeling nothing, a person was well off to be accepted into that new society, "Hieronymous-Anonymous"!

Arthur C. Clarke's speech lasted the better part of an hour, and for my money, was the meat and potatoes of the Convention.

A.C. chided the growing myriads who are advocating the existence of flying crockery, colliding worlds and Mrs. Murphy (who, it seems, is still handing around) to a great extent, and then proceeded to lambast the movie makers for their part in making s.f. and its enthusiast the goat for public opinion that "sf is _____" and that those who read it are also "_____." You may fill in the opinions of your own neighbors.

The evening finished off with the presentation of the awards for best writer, author, etc. (For detailed listing, see end of article). About 0200, there were movies of last year's Clevecon and in the midst of this, some goofy guys came riding down the hall of the 19th Floor on bicycles. We lifted the scotch tape from our eyelids and went to our room to collapse till 1200 the next day.

Monday was hectic, saying goodbye to everyone, getting train tickets and checking out of the Biltmore. It was accomplished, though, and we spent our free time talking over the convention with committeeman Harvey Segal, until it was time to go. By this time, the hotel had had enough of fans and was attacking anything that looked like it might be carrying books and magazines through the lobby. The convention was a memory by now and their bites weren't felt.

Oh, the public always pans all the science fiction fans
And the magazines and papers think we're probably insane.
But we pay them no attention for when we're at a convention,
We are having so much fun that we can laugh at their disdain.

MORE CONVENTION TOPICS:

(The following is excerpted from a letter from OMFAian John Hitchcock:)

The con committee went for expensive prestige and got caught, to the tune of \$1300. They got the hotel that probably has the worst service and management and the highest price in the city, the Biltmore, and from there it got worse. The banquet was the biggest fiasco. The fee for getting in was \$7.10, and who's going to pay that? But, Dave Kyle had faith in his fellow human, and he volunteered to commit the banquet to a minimum of 400 attending. He did not even have to. There were 275 or so at the banquet, which was more than anyone but Kyle et al expected. 125 people didn't come. Cost to the Con Committee: \$700. Then, some mannequins from the Air Force display (that was a laugh) were stolen: \$450., or \$150 apiece.

The expected, anticipated-by-Kyle expenses that the auction was supposed to cover didn't get complete shelter, and that added up to a total debt of \$1300. Kyle passed the hat, and got \$300.

In one of the room parties, Boyd Raeburn, who is comptroller for Eversharp in Canada, gave with the advice. Seems that all that has to be done is dissolve the corporation...for the first time, the con got incorporated--and go into bankruptcy. This way, the hotel would be left holding the bag, and the London Organization wouldn't have to carry the thousand dollar debt over into the London Con. Tucker, after the con was all over except the tumult and the sobbing, asked Kyle (or a Kyle aide) if he was going to do this. "Are you mad?" Kyle said. So, apparently, Kyle is still putting the Honor of Science Fiction above simple expediency, and expects the London Committee for next year to do the same. True, when the con returns to the U.S. in 1958, it'd be hard to find a hotel that would take us, but it would be better than saddling several con committess to come with a thousand dollar debt, I think.

THE BEST OF THE YEAR:

Best Novel	Double Star (Heinlien)
Best Novelette:	Exploration Team (Leinster)
Best Short Story:	The Star (Clarke)
Best Feature Writer:	Willy Ley
Best Pro-Magazine:	Astounding
Best Artist:	K. Freas
Best Fanzine:	INSIDE (Ron. Smith)
Most Promising Writer:	Robert Silverberg

LEERINGS

I'm still experimenting with format as you can easily see in this issue. I've not quite found the ideal style as yet, but this looks like it might be the easiest to work with. It is not exactly the same as PEON, but almost--and this way, I can use material directly from the pages of old issues of PEON without having to dummy the copy again. This way, also, the Official Counter Of Pages For OMPA won't have to use a slide-stick in trying to figure my page credits--for this is approximately the same size as is used by most of the British OMPA members.



I'm not decided yet if I am going to post-mail this issue or not. I'd like to have something in one of the regular mailings, but since the convention article is in this issue, I might go ahead and send it out individually to each member by myself from Cannes, when we get there next month (October). If so, this will make two post-mailings you will be getting from me.

I wish I could comment lucidly and smartly on the various magazines appearing in the regular mailings like the rest of you do. But I find it exceedingly difficult to do, as was the case when I was in FAN. So, if I don't make mention of your particular fanzine in these pages, I hope you won't hold it against me. After all, some of us are just not cut out for fanzine reviewing--and I know myself that I am one of those who can't. I tried it one time for PEON and quickly gave up the job. Occasionally, I will see one particular 'zine that impresses me enough to write a letter to its editor, and that is what I have been, and will keep, doing.

But, I can't let one magazine go by without at least making some mention of it--and I am referring to FANG published by John Hitchcock. Now, there is a grand guy. Here he was, publishing the whole thing by himself, and offering the entire page credit to save me from being dropped out of the rolls of OMPA. This sort of a gesture awes me a little bit, since I am not quite accustomed to such a spirit in this world today. It was a fine bit on his part, and I want to go on public record as thanking him a lot. It's only recently that I've been able to become active again in fan-publishing, and I hope that I will live up to all the nice words that John wrote about me in this issue of FANG.

Before I forget it, the cover this issue of LEER was furnished by courtesy of Harlan Ellison, copyright 1956. No, not the cover, but Harlan was copyrighted 1956.

From reading the ninth mailing, evidently all of you there in Britain had the great pleasure of meeting Lee Hoffman Shaw and Mr. Hoffman Shaw. I envy you--you know, I am probably the only American fan left that has never met her? It appears that all the conventions I manage to attend, she didn't, and the ones that I can't make, she's there! I'm beginning to wonder if there is some fate above that keeps saying, "No, no, Lee, you two Lee's can't meet this year." When I get back to the states and make one of my periodical pilgrimages to New York City, I'm going to make a special trip over to Staten Island to see them. What do you want to bet that they're not home?

I've been complaining long and loud about the poor service we've been getting out here in the Med on mail. It takes longer for a letter through the U.S. Navy mail service to reach Newport than it does for the same letter mailed from Cannes or Palermo through the French or Italian mail service. I had mentioned this to Archie in one of my letters and in his return, he was telling me that he was going to mail out the ninth mailing in a few days and that I should receive it in about two months (the average time)--well, you can imagine my surprise when I found it on my desk less than a week later, and about four days after he mailed it. I'm still trying to figure it out.

Speaking of John Hitchcock's offering me his page credits to keep me from dropping out, brings up this point. While I appreciated it a great deal, and especially since I was saved from the axe by it, I think I go along with Walt Willis (who, incidentally, was also saved by another similar offer.) Too much of this could get out of hand, and I think some definite rules should be laid down, either in the by-laws, or by presidential edict. I would like to have something set out so that an opportunity of making such an offer could be provided in the future. In fact, somewhere in this mailing (yes, I just decided to send this through the regular mailing), you will find a proposed amendment to our constitution. I hope you will give it your full consideration.

By the time you read this, this USS CASCADE will have completed its tour of duty in the Med and will be back in the United States. I'd prefer that my ship address be used on any correspondence in the future, because I imagine that I will be transferred somewhere next Spring. Magazines and such matter forwarded to my new address from the ship will not require me to pay any forwarding postage on them. It may sound miserly, but when you pay twenty to thirty cents postage a day on forwarded matter, you can well imagine how many beers that takes care of.

I may make a prediction--watch out for Jean Linard of France. He's going to be a name in fandom real soon. I had the pleasure of visiting him in August and I was frankly amazed at his energy and interest in fandom. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he became one of the brightest stars in our field, and very soon at that.

Well, it's been nice being with you this time. Hope you all have a very merry Christmas and a most happy new year! See you soon.....

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