

Moebius Trip



HERE MEN FROM THE PLANET EARTH
FIRST SET FOOT UPON THE MOON
JULY 1969, A. D.

WE CAME IN PEACE FOR ALL MANKIND

Neil Armstrong
NEIL A. ARMSTRONG
ASTRONAUT

Michael Collins
MICHAEL COLLINS
ASTRONAUT

Edwin S. Aldrin, Jr.
EDWIN S. ALDRIN, JR.
ASTRONAUT

Richard Nixon
RICHARD NIXON
PRESIDENT, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

What's Wrong
in Hagerstown,
Md. — Re-
porters from the
Hagerstown, Md.
Morning Herald in-
terviewed a
man-in-the-street
Monday and dis-
covered that
only 58 of 100
could identify
as the first man
to walk on
the moon.
The number
Buzz Aldrin as
identity Aldrin
second moon-
walker in history
was less impres-
sive: 15 of 100.



"...all our yesterdays..."

Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death. Out, out brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. [MACBETH: ACT V; SCENE 5]

#1

PLEASE ADDRESS ALL
CORRESPONDENCE,
SUB-MONEY, INSULTS,
etc., TO:

EDWARD C. CONNOR
1805 N. Gale
Peoria, Illinois 61604
U. S. A.

WHY I COME TO YOU

- ~~_____~~ We trade. . . .
- ~~_____~~ For Review.
- ~~_____~~ LoC anticipated.
- ~~_____~~ You too are N'APA.
- ~~_____~~ Subscription?
- ~~_____~~ You are one of the Ancients.
- ~~_____~~ You might be "Mervin" the Rat.
- ~~_____~~ You deserve a break.
- ~~_____~~ You are a cat lover.
- ~~_____~~ We are aware of your secret vice.
- ~~_____~~ We owe you a favor.
- ~~_____~~ We owe you an insult.
- ~~_____~~ For blood.
- ~~_____~~ You are our Mission Impossible.
- ~~_____~~ You need a replacement for Star Trek.
- ~~_____~~ You wear filmy negligees.

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M O E B I U S T R I P # 1 ---- September 1, 1969.

BI-MONTHLY

SUBSCRIPTIONS: .25¢ or 5/\$1.

HARRY & PELF

How many science fiction (or other, for that matter) stories can readers remember as having had their titles borrowed from the familiar Shakespearian passage reproduced upon our cover? We can't forget "Tomorrow and Tomorrow." Have there been more? Harry Warner, Jr.'s magnificent "All Our Yesterdays" recalled these words to mind. (Not verbatim, of course--we stopped memorizing Macbeth after the first scene or two.) We now speculate as to whether or not Mr. Warner had this quotation in mind when he, years ago, originally coined the title for his fanzine history column. We might mention that Harry has an excellent article, telling something of the background struggle to bring his book (and possible additional volume) to fruition, in PELF #7, April 1969 issue. This really excellent genzine is edited by Dave Locke & Dave Hulan. (They mention that they're pruning their mailing list, so we won't--heh-heh--insert an address.)

BOOKS

Amazing, isn't it? Well over half of all the people over 21 in this country, according to a Gallup poll of early '69, had never read a single, entire book (except school texts, and quite likely not all of any of those). The exact figure was 58%, well ahead of the 42% who had read and presumably continued to read books intermittently or contiguously. The situation seems to be improving, for in the last few years the percentage of "readers" has begun to climb, going up about 1% per year.

That undoubtedly adds a large number of new readers each 12 months, for book consumption seems to be soaring at an even faster rate. Schools are accomplishing something worthwhile just by producing a higher and higher proportion of bookworms.

G.B. & SPACE

Great Britain has just as many--probably more, per capita--creeps along press row as the USA. We are prompted, as a result of reading some comments from there which accompanied the Apollo 11 moonflight, to use an outhouse full of the language approved by Dick Geis for S-F Review or used by Harlan Ellison in one of his anti-J. J. Pierce mis-sives. (But we use restraint in our own 'zine which, we admit, goes to a few prudes.)

The Daily Mirror came through with a really cute moron-pleaser in the words, "mammoth perversion of energy, thought and other human resources." The slob responsible for such an expression is deliberately perverting facts through a patriotic need to sublimate the British inability to undertake a space program of any import whatsoever. The U S success is looked upon by a sizable segment of the English newspaper hierarchy as an intolerable situation which will forevermore rankle them to the very depths of their souls.

Perhaps, gentle stfen, you were unaware of this. We learned of its verity during an English sojourn of around a year-and-a-half when we had occasion to assimilate every headline of every London paper--every day. Such prejudice was perhaps justifiable then, but is not now. Such publishers and writers now think that they are playing up to such feelings in their readers. But we feel their readers, almost without exception, know better, that they would rather

the U S succeeded in space than financially-shaky Britain, knowing that they simply cannot begin to afford a comparable program. And the people--most of them, anyway--cannot be so naive as to think that space spending is taking food out of anyone's mouth, or depriving anyone of shelter, or of anything; after all, is the huge sum their own gov't spent (along with France) on the development of a giant jet plane (the Concorde)--of questionable worth or utility--keeping any of their own slums alive?

Ol' Bertrand Russell spewed forth a similar obscenity for the Times, while a bloke of TV and pen-called "Lord Arran" bluntly brayed, "a bloody waste of time. . . . The lives of three men--all with families--are being gambled on this incredibly risky venture."

This is only a sampling. And from a country which once led all others in scientific research and achievement. *Sob*

CAPEK & STAMPS

Any of you recall "Rossum's Universal Robots," the play which gave us the word robot? (From the Czech terminology meaning compulsory service.) Look again at our cover, where we've included a repro of a recent Czechoslovakian stamp honoring Karel Capek (1890-1938), author of R.U.R., a brilliant satire of society and the mechanization of man. The Czech film of his "Krakatit" was, the last we heard (credit Locus), scheduled for showing in the classical movie parade, of all nite sessions, at St. Louiscon. If we remember correctly, R.U.R.'s film version has English blurbs and (for its historical value alone, if for no other reason) should not be missed. If we are wrong on this and have this confused with some other classical film, we want to hear from the particular reader who knows all about it.

The play itself was reprinted some years ago in Groff Conklin's anthology, "Science Fiction Thinking Machines" (Vanguard). As for the stamp, if you're a topical collector with STF as a theme, this item is a must.

Incidentally, the "closed mind" of the mundane is not a phenomenon observed only by stfen in practically all other persons. Stfen themselves can be as--let's face it--narrow-minded as anyone else, when presented with a concept alien to the capacity of their receptors. We bring this point up at this spot in connection with stamp collecting (philately), which, to some fans, seems a subject unworthy of thought, discussion or worth. A pity.

We collect, trade and sell. It is an enormous chore but we take it as it comes, never quite catching up to washing stamps off paper, filing, cataloging, etc. We have many of the better "space" issues. One of the top S-F sets is from Monaco, issued 1955, showing scenes from novels of Jules Verne; the airmail stamp of this set illustrates "From the Earth to the Moon" and is already a tidy little piece of property. Good show.

SPUTNIK

We've just looked over a recent issue of the English-language edition of the Russki monthly digest magazine "Sputnik." Sort of like a combined Reader's Digest and Pageant, it has superslick covers, is profusely illustrated, is printed in Finland. Why in Finland? Perhaps to ensure copyright compliance, altho why they'd

want to limit their propaganda we can't imagine. For the magazine, once absorbed, can be said to exude bias. It is supposed to contain the pick of 11,000 Russ pubs. There are pages of letters from over the world of persons (most English-speaking) seeking correspondents, trading, etc.

There are excellent articles on chess, the restoration of the Emperor Paul's palace, art, Soviet art on a stamp set, films, the weather, ballet, jewelry, cooking, overpopulation, etc. Just, you might say, what one would expect. We can sum up the magazine and its entire contents in one word: Insipid.

RUSSKI ED.

Heard about Russia's experiment with the no-grading system in education? Primary schools in one area of the empire have ended grading and let students have a say in deciding the curricula and in eliminating mistakes in their own work. Apparently this is an attempt to explore the theory of a batch of their educators that kids in such a setup make better progress, age for age, than those in the long-established variety.

This idea is being explored here in the U S, and elsewhere, we've no doubt. But we predict that it'll turn out to be no great shakes. The proper combination--whatever that might be--of the two methods will in all probability prove, eventually, to be superior to either alone.

VAT.-69

There is a quite vociferous school of thought in Western Europe which looks on "material" progress with a jaundiced eye. (Uncle Sam is a frequent whipping-boy in this respect.) This is nothing new; it has been evident for decades, at least. So "scientific advances" are often greeted, by otherwise well-educated persons, with something approaching fear. We happen to believe that scientific advancement is the heart and soul of all progress, that the leisure provided by "material" things is a boon to the "humanities," and that this was never truer than today--when so many goons are exhibiting themselves on college campuses in an orgy of mental self-abuse and extolling the un-truth, the rule by force, the triumph of negativism. (We're not referring to the rational, reality-oriented, genuine collegians. You all know whom we mean.)

Vatican radio noted recently that the moon must not become man's idol, throwing in the old bugaboo about the dangers of mechanization and de-humanization. (The radio did admit, though, that Apollo 11's costs were justified.)

We really can't imagine that such a thing will happen, ol' Vatican Radio. Surely, old chum, you can figure it out for yourself by checking the ol' population figures, which mount hourly. Just think, Vat-Rad, of the several millions of babies coming alive every week, just as an increase. And these on top of the hundreds of millions of mundanes running around who haven't even been exposed yet to the humanities, let alone to materialism. Frankly, little radio pal, we see your sponsor these days as contributing to the delinquency of the "mentally constricted" who pay heed to those who ban the pill and its bedfellows. And maybe it's contributing to the mass murder of future wars, by providing the up and coming cannon fodder. Anyway, you can see, chum radio, why we smile at your pronouncements: the ones of no account absorb the admonitions, the propaganda, only because

they are immune to or resistant to change; their very offspring--yes, the very ones whom you nurture, so ironic are the twists of fate--may very well turn from the pattern to embrace the awakening to reality that has been difficult for older generations to recognize. And the ones that matter--why, they are the ones already aware, and they laugh with us.

The pope (Paul, that is) is undoubtedly a kindly, reasonably open-minded mundane. It is well known that he is highly intelligent. Perhaps some of his press quotes suffer in translation, but during the Apollo 11 mission his image came through as an aware, sympathetic individual who probably knows what the real score is as much as we, you, or Dick Geis.

Among his pronouncements at that time were the words, "Science fiction comes true," and a couple of days later (in referring to his boyhood perusal of Jules Verne's "From the Earth to the Moon"), "that was the kingdom of fantasy, a prophetic fantasy, perhaps, but gratuitous, unreal. Today, however, we are in the kingdom of reality."

Yes, certain types of reality can't be avoided. Let's hope, with the universes of those who couldn't care less about an expanding universe growing ever more crowded, that things don't get too real.

SURPRISE?

Don Elyly remarked recently in the first issue of his genzine, Avesta, that it was hard for him to understand how older people could get so excited over the moon landing; he himself had long accepted such an occurrence as inevitable, the only question being just what day in what year it would come to pass.

Of course the moon visitation was even less of a surprise to me than to him, an indication, perhaps, that maybe (since I'm "several" years his senior) age hasn't quite as much to do with the surprise element.

I'm sure that Don was referring to mundanes, though. But even so, why should there be so much surprise among mundanes, when the space exploration has been building up for years, in the last twelvemonth getting closer and closer to a lunar touchdown, all, one might say, almost to the point of boredom?

Perhaps it has something to do with awareness of what one's fellow creatures are doing, what a particular element of society is composed of and what it is accomplishing. This awareness is probably greater, more extensive, today than ever before because of TV, since this news medium provides data to so many who otherwise would not get it. That last point is one factor underlying the whole business; in spite of increased enrollment in colleges a large portion of our population doesn't even read newspapers or magazines regularly. Many persons leaving school never read another publication at all, and most are proud of it.

Do any of you who read this have any real conception of just how hung up most people can get with certain things? Sex--as you might suppose--is probably at the top of the list. Drinking, socializing in the boozeries, is another prominent subject for a "self-hypnosis" jag. Bowling, dancing, golf, rockhounding, a well-loved or an enslaving job--a million others, even just telephone yakking--are incredibly important to many. A person can be practically totally wrapped up in his "specialty." It can often occupy whole years of an individual's thoughts--to the exclusion of anything

else.

So an event occurs which is so unusual that, if it is given enough publicity of the right kind, it can shatter a large portion of the individual shells--or at least penetrate them, which is no mean accomplishment. Such an event was the JFK assassination and funeral. And now Apollo 11.

Me? I said I was even less surprised over the moon conquest than Blyly. But that's only one side of the complex matter. I am still shaking my head in disbelief over the fact that a space program such as we have could come into being. It just couldn't happen in Washington, with so many nincompoops in the congress, all going about their normal business of porkbarreling, or boondoggling, or whatever.

I can see that Russia was raised to power in some weird, inexplicable maneuvering over several decades, with our legislators subsequently being aroused by Sputnik and all that, but I'm still flabbergasted and astounded. It just isn't like the boys in Washington. Unbelievable.

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Frankly now, chums--you old-timers, especially--did you really, in speculation about that future day when man would visit the moon and return, picture our society as being so--so mundane? Certainly before about 10 years ago most extrapolations of such a time envisaged a "futuristic" society of some kind to go along with the conquest of space. (Futuristic isn't the right word, obviously, but it's the one that was always applied. "Different" is a little more to the point, but all of you get what I'm driving at.)

The only thing "futuristic" I see about today's society is that there are a whole bunch more of "mores," "sores" and "bores." There are more cars, more lights, more "countries," more big league baseball and football teams, more stf books being published, more sorespots and soreheads, and more masses of asses pushing, pushing. There used to be a theory about the "survival of the fittest." It isn't true when applied to mankind, although for a long while there have been people who thought that it was. Today even they are beginning to have second thoughts, like "What do you mean by 'fit-test'--the ability to survive in a cutthroat concrete jungle? The ability to be constantly on the alert--even in your own home--24 hours a day? The ability to find 'peace'--which can never be more than transient?" When on this subject I can never help but think of the "fittest" who perished by the millions in World War I. Or were the ones who survived the "fittest?" I don't know; can one of you fellows who hightailed it to Canada tell me?

ANCIENT NARRATORS

I still have the first fanzine I ever owned, "Fan-atic" for Sept. 1941. Would you believe? An article by Harry Warner, Jr.! It's entitled "Bug-eyed Monsters for Britishers,"

and is highly informative. It tells of wartime paper and currency restrictions in Britain and how fans there and in other affected countries couldn't get U S promags, etc., except through trading. All "how to" details are given. Warner has served a long "apprenticeship" leading up to "All Our Yesterdays" and his probable St. Louiscon Hugo.

And there's D. B. Thompson's column, "As the Wind Listeth . . .," which tells something about Robert A. Heinlein and Edmund Hamilton. Something of a comparison between the two (the details, apparently, being garnered at lunch during the Denvention). Hamilton: solitary worker, a plotter, must know start and finish of his story before commencing, always revises, etc. Heinlein: Just starts, rarely knowing where his story is heading, and before beginning discusses the idea with others; his first typing is his last; is very careful of details. Thompson adds a point: Hamilton at that time had sold Weird Tales 60 stories in a row without a reject (more than all those Heinlein had then written).

I stumbled across about 1½ copies (dated 1942) of "The Fantasite," the official organ of the old Minneapolis Fantasy Society (reorganized in 1948). This was one of the best of the period. Even then such fellows as Phil Bronson, Ollie Saari, Sam Russell, Manse Brackney, Clifford D. Simak, Morrie Dollens, Donald Wandrei, Carl Jacobi, etc., were demonstrating an exceptional degree of competence and goodfellowship. The first four named attended the 1942 Midwest Conference in Jackson, Mich. The story of this epic (and wet--internally and externally) journey was told in "Via Stfnash" (Saari's '35 Nash) by Phil Bronson. This was probably the biggest regional con in these parts until after the war. I missed it; as I recall it was before I was transferred by the army to Chicago where, being on rations and quarters for quite a while and later going to school at the U. of Chicago, I had a great deal of room to maneuver. So the only one of the gentlemen mentioned whom I ever met was Saari, later. He's probably sorry: I still owe him a dollar (or would that be two today?), from a trip to Milwaukee fandom made after the war by various Chi-area fan.

There could be no better choice in all the world at this time, in the opinion of an ever-growing number of sfen, for a near-future North American World S-F Con than Minneapolis. All things considered, even the time of year when it's apt to be too hot and humid if you're in the wrong place, the date should be no later than 1973. Just think--a world con costume ball in Minneapolis could very well be attended by Mervin the Rat himself, not to mention the Whistling Rapist. . . .

Another publication (c.1944) which deals with one of the most chaotic periods of L. A. fandom is James Kepner's "Blowups Happen, or Six Months in Shangri-La." This time was a seething mixture of ol' Claude and his Cosmic Circle, the Knaves, the Outsiders, and an assortment (apparently) of personalities of opposite polarities, some of them very abrasive. In subsequent years, living in L. A., I came to know many of those individuals so that now, in again reading over Kepner's article, the underlying reason for the uncompromising feuding is coldly obvious; his title could have included another: Opposites React!

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I recall a remark--an innocent one, let me hasten to add, since it had no part in the above feud or any other, so far as I know--made by a now-departed fan, Francis T. Laney, to the effect that ". . . Upon making inquiry among local collectors, I was amazed to find that few of them read the stuff. . . . While of course it is quite true that many, if not most, pulp stories are scarcely worthy of an extended perusal, I should think that it would necessitate quite an elaborate bit of mental gymnastics to term a mere accumulator a fan."

Mentally, I have to wince. Such a remark could very easily have started a feud. I bring it up merely to illustrate the fact that there is nothing new in fandom, either.

We were just making passing remarks about this phenomenon, as it occurs in today's fandom, at the last monthly meeting of local fandom. "We" being myself, plus Don Blyly (in whose workroom the meetings happen) and W. G. Bliss (known in certain circles for his monumental creation, "The Time of the Ottos"). It seemed to be taken for granted by each of us that no fan of today can hope to read everything. He might be able to consume all of the prozines being issued, but how to engorge all of the books, or all of the fanzines? And if all fanzines are thoroughly absorbed, how can one hope to find time for anything but, perhaps, one favorite prozine or, mayhap, the output of one outstanding author? Ye gods, must fans now, like stamp collectors, become specialists in one narrow category? Comic fandom, here I come. . . .

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Here's a question we must ask (even tho, from either direction, it must seem rather ridiculous): Was Forry at the L. A. "State Dinner" given by el presidente for the Apollo 11 astronauts? Er--we thought that was why it was held in Los Angeles. . . .

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Moebius Trip is not going to expand much further, if at all. However, the first issue was originally thought of as a one-sheeter, to make N'APA. That was only a few weeks ago and we had no duplicator nor any chance of getting one. Or so we thought. A chance remark at a stamp club meeting brought the info that the club had a "good" machine--that had never been used since acquired--lying dormant at the last secretary's house (somewhere among his endless hordes of Lincoln-collector's items). Our ears pricked up higher than Mr. Spock's; as current secretary it appeared that we might be able to get the thing, since we'd already gotten fed up with sending postal cards noting meetings to members. Our questioning led to the incredible news that the duplicator was a mimeograph, with the member who'd donated it saying that it'd been left--abandoned (rumble, rumble) by a contractor at his factory some seven years before. Eureka--we arranged to have the Lincoln-addict bring it up from Pekin two days later, as he had to bring his wife up anyway to bowl.

Oh boy, what an abortion. We carried it in from his car, thinking how odd it looked and muttering, "This doesn't look quite like a mimeograph," and "let me get this set down so I can see how it works," and my diminutive friend chirping, "It's a mimeo, all right--a mimeo--a mimaminimeo--" He always gets a little tongue-tied when excited. Before he left we were able to assure him that it was not a mimeo. He cared nought, of course, but we did. We got the thing downstairs and, knowing by now from the imprint that it was a "Ditto," we were going to see if it'd work, turning the crank, etc. Another day, armed with the model number, we dropped in at Bell & Howell, the "factory representative," as the phone book says. Infinite courtesy, helpfulness, etc., even a complete demonstration of the newest model ditto and then of the copier that'd transfer anything to a ditto-master in just a few seconds, and then a show of that being dittoed. Oh, it was marvelous indeed. Of course the amused smiles of the manager and his secretary when they'd first caught the model number we'd muttered (sort of bedazzled by the array of shiny, new, futuristically-advanced models situated all about) had long since given us the bad news. And the chap rooted through old boxes and bins for an instruction

manuel and/or feeder-mechanism but found nothing. Finally, we almost got together--he was thinking of selling us a few masters, etc. (and we were thinking of buying), just enough so's to test the old, obsolete machine, all parts for which had been scrapped years before, when it developed that the fluid (to him "spirit," which we mouthed once or twice, seemed a dirty word) could only be sold in gallon cans at well over \$6.

We agreed to bring the contraption in so he could check it. He wasn't in the next day when it was dropped off but a number of salesmen were; they crowded around to look at the curious relic of a by-gone age. A later phone call brought the news that it'd be too expensive to fix so we passed the buck to our club's prexy--he can shove it. To make a long story short, we abandoned all hope of even paying a brief visit to St. Louiscon by investing most of our available dough in a down payment on an A. B. Dick model 90, plus accessories. By this time we'd become absolutely determined to turn something--say, anywhere from two to six pages--out for N'APA, and time was growing short for the deadline of the next mailing.

But, considering we now had less than two weeks to do whatever we were going to do, we felt that six pages was a minimum . . . and so it went. Our first job was drawing a many-lined form on a stencil and running it off, as a friend had heard us mention the mimeo and did us the favor of giving us the order (his supply of the forms was exhausted, and at least one was a daily necessity in his business). We lost a day doing it, but it did give us a chance to test-run the model 90. We finished well into the night. Everything had gone very well, except the damned feeding-mechanism.

Looking into the near future we could see ourself going nuts trying to hand-feed Moebius Trip. But--after securing the first stencil we thought that we might as well try something that'd been bugging us since running the forms; perhaps we still hadn't secured the paper tightly enough. After all, the feeder arm seemed pretty powerful and should have no trouble freeing one sheet from the stack; possibly it'd been picking up too much before because it hadn't been really tight.

It worked, absolutely and beautifully. And then we found that one put a couple dozen scrap-sheets at the bottom of the pile, so all of the good sheets would go through smoothly Gad, it's too good to be true--a couple pages were run off without one single wasted sheet.

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Next ish may see a lettercol and, if anyone cares to improve the contents by sending a reasonably short article, we could include a few of those. . . .

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This issue is dedicated to the memory of the ol' foo, E. Everett Evans, whose brainchild, the Westercon, has grown from reasonably pretentious beginnings in 1948 to a "really big show" today.

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