

# POOKA



Mike Hinge

published by

Don Ford  
 Box 19-T  
 RR #2  
 Loveland, Ohio  
 U S A

Cover - Mike Hinge

The 10th Annual MIDWESTCON will be held June 27 & 28, 1959 at the North Plaza Motel, 7911 Reading Rd. Cincinnati 37, Ohio

This summer I had the pleasure of having a number of visitors stop by —1st one after the Midwestcon was Bob Leman of the Vinegar Worm fame. Nice guy. He'll be back for the Midwestcon this year, he says.

Then, stopping off on their way home from the Solacon were: Bob Pavlat, Sylvia Dees, Ted White & Ron Bennett. Ron turned out to be a few years younger than I'd surmised. Pavlat & White I've known for some time; Sylvia was the good looking member of the quartet. I'd received Flafan #2 only a short time before her visit. We had a quickie gathering of the CFG & I showed a few slides that were of interest to the gang. The stereos evidently were new to Ron, Ted & Sylvia as they seemed quite entranced; so much so that they could hardly tear their eyes away from the viewers.

I feel Ron will make a good TAFF administrator & also that he'll be setting a mark when it comes to writing up his TAFF-Trip.

Pavlat & White gave us the pitch about Washington in '60 & we countered with our non-Labor Day proposal.

This being written in December, leaves me two months to go to finish up my term as Program Chairman for the camera club I belong to. In March I expect to thus have a bit more free time for some projects in the S-F field. I intend reducing the size of my vegetable garden to  $\frac{1}{2}$ , which alone will save me time. This fighting weeds all summer long is a problem. I'd rather have a little more grass to cut, instead.

My fan activity will always be below that of the nobles, BNFs and ghods in the field, but I'll aim for the level that's fun, not work. One thing younger fans often take little heed of, with fans in my age group & older, is the requirements of family life, other interests, earning a living, time available, etc. I've always felt it to be an unhealthy thig to live in a vacuum; and if you're not careful any hobby can lead you down that trail, whether it be photography, sports, hi-fi, s-f, or what have you. Many who have the time cannot be more active due to financial limitations & vice versa.

One trend noted in the current fanzine field is the chit-chat type of writing (Pooka included) instead of articles about the field. I wonder why? Is it because we can now read what used to be science-fiction in the daily newspapers?

AN INDEX OF  
SELECTED FANTASY  
from the later years of  
TOP NOTCH MAGAZINE

compiled by Darrell C. Richardson

FIRST. A BIT OF HISTORY

TOP NOTCH was a Street and Smith publication. It originally appeared in dime novel form, with three columns of type, 32 pages and a colored cover. The first issue was March 1910 and it kept its dime novel format through the September 1910 issue. In October 1910 it changed to regular magazine format and size and became bi-monthly, issues being dated the 1st and the 15th. May 1, 1914 was the last twice-a-month number. On May 10 there appeared the first of the three-a-month issues, dated the 10th, 20th and 30th. The last of these issues was Dec. 30, 1914. With the Jan. 1, 1915 issue it reverted back to the twice-a-month publication.

WIDE AWAKE MAGAZINE combined with TOP NOTCH in June 1916. This magazine was originally the TIP TOP WEEKLY whose first issue was April 18, 1896. For 850 weeks it continued its dime novel format under the same title. The title changed to NEW TIP TOP WEEKLY with the August 3, 1912 issue and started numbering over again with No. 1. With No. 136, the title was changed to TIP TOP SEMI-MONTHLY and the format was changed to regular magazine size. This issue was dated March 10, 1915 and the magazine began to appear on the 10th and 25th of each month. With the issue of Dec. 10, 1915 the title was changed to WIDE AWAKE MAGAZINE. The last issue of WIDE AWAKE was June 10, 1916 after which it combined with TOP NOTCH.

TOP NOTCH continued its twice-a-month schedule until October 1932. However, there were periods when the magazine was dated 1st Jan and 2nd Jan rather than Jan 1 and Jan 15.

The schedule of bimonthly publications with issues dated the 1st and 15th continued again from Jan 1, 1915 through Sept 15, 1928. In November 1928 issues started to be dated 1st Nov and 2nd November. This plan continued until the 2nd May issue of 1931. With the June 1, 1931 issue the dating reverted back to the 1st and 15th. The last bimonthly number was dated Oct 1, 1932. The next issue was dated October 1932 and a monthly publication was maintained through the June 1937 issue. The next issue was dated July-August and the next issue the September-October 1937 number, was the last issue of TOP NOTCH.

SELECTED FANTASY FROM  
TOP NOTCH 1930 - 1937

VALENTINE WOOD

2nd June 1930  
1st July 1930  
2nd July 1930  
1st Aug 1930  
2nd Aug 1930  
1st Sept 1930

Kroom, Son of the Sea                      Novelette  
( a beautiful cover illustrating "Kroom" )  
Kroom, the Conquer                      Novelette  
Kroom, the Wanderer                      Novelette  
Kroom, the Hunted                      Novelette  
Kroom, Breasts the Tide                      Novelette  
The Temple Pearl ( a Kroom Tale )                      Novelette

1st Oct 1930	Kroom the Intrepid	Novelette
2nd Oct 1930	Sign of the Scorpion (a Kroom Tale)	Novelette
1st Dec 1930	Out of the Waves ( a Kroom Tale)	Novelette
1st Jan 1931	The Far Call ( a Kroom Tale)	Novelette
<b>ROBERT SHELDON</b>		
1st Jan 1931	Desolation's War	Serial - 8
<b>VALENTINE WOOD</b>		
2nd Jan 1931	The Blast of Fate (a Kroom Tale)	Novelette
1st Feb 1931	Kroom's Mark	Novelette
2nd Feb 1931	Pit of Darkness (a Kroom Tale)	Novelette
<b>PAUL ANNIXTER</b>		
2nd Feb 1931	The Man That Wanted Nothing	Serial - 4
<b>VALENTINE WOOD</b>		
1st Mar 1931	Phantom Clipper (a Kroom Tale)	Novelette
2nd Mar 1931	Den of the Demon (a Kroom Tale)	Novelette
1st Apr 1931	The Endless Trail (a Kroom Tale)	Novelette
2nd Apr 1931	The Channel Record (a Kroom Tale)	Novelette
1st May 1931	Vengeance (a Kroom Tale)	Novelette
<b>MALCOLM WHEELER NICHOLSON</b>		
Aug 1, 1931	The Voice of the Silver Cobra	Serial - 3
<b>VALENTINE WOOD</b>		
Jan 1933	Ozar the Aztec ( Cover Illustration by Don Hewitt)	Novel
Feb 1933	Ozar and the Plumed Serpent	Novelette
Mar 1933	Ozar and the Jade Altar	Novelette
Apr 1933	The Death Drums of Ozar	Novelette
May 1933	Ozar and the Black Skull	Novelette
June 1933	Ozar's Crown of Victory	Novelette
<b>J. ALLAN DUNN</b>		
Sept 1933	Jaki of the Jungle	Novelette
<b>R. F. STARZL</b>		
Dec 1933	Pit of the God-Beasts	Novelette
<b>O. T. STONEMAN</b>		
Jan 1934	The Elephant God (Cover Illustration by Don Hewitt)	Serial - 2
<b>NAT SCHACHNER</b>		
Jan 1934	The Loot of Bias Bay	Novelette
<b>HAL FIELD LESLIE</b>		
Feb 1934	Time Turns Back ( Cover Illustration by Don Hewitt)	Novel
<b>THOMAS CALVERT McCLARY</b>		
Mar 1934	The Pal Khan	Novel

MAT SCHACHNER Apr 1934	The Dragon of Iskander ( Cover illustration by Tom Lovell )	Novelette
J. H. ROSNY May 1934	A Clan is Born ( Cover illustration by Gayle Hoskins )	Novel
CHARLES WILLARD DIFFIN July 1934	The Forest of Fear ( Cover illustration by Gayle Hoskins )	Novel
HAL FIELD LESLIE Sept 1934	The Shadow of Atlantis ( Cover illustration by Tom Lovell )	Novel
CHARLES WILLARD DIFFIN Oct 1934	Man of the Dawn ( Cover illustration by Gayle Hoskins )	Novel
ROBERT E. HOWARD Oct 1934	Swords of Shahrayar	Novelette
Dec 1934	The Daughter of Erlik Khan	Novel
THOMAS CALVERT McCLARY Dec 1934	Dr. Pickle's Hobby	Novelette
E. J. DERRINGER Jan 1935	Heritage	Novelette
CHARLES WILLARD DIFFIN May 1935	The Feast of Rah ( Cover illustration by Gayle Hoskins )	Novel
L. RON HUBBARD May 1935	The Drowned City	Novelette
ROBERT E. HOWARD June 1935	Hawk of the Hills ( Cover illustration by Tom Lovell )	Novel
July 1935	Blood of the Gods ( Cover illustration by Emery Clark )	Novel
RALPH MILNE FARLEY Aug 1935	The Man Who Met Himself	Novelette
HUGH B. CAVE Oct 1935	The Green Gorgon	Novelette
NEIL MARTIN Mar 1936	The Casket of Li Gow	Novelette

R. A. EIBERG	Apr 1936	The Land of the Fan-shaped Flame	Novelette
ALEXANDER JAY	Apr 1936	The Jade Amulet	Novelette
	July 1936	Brother of the Didi	Novelette
NAT SCHACHNER	Nov 1936	The Men That Time Forgot ( Cover illustration by John Dray )	Novel
ALEXANDER M. PHILLIPS	Dec 1936	The Thing on the Afterdeck	Serial - 2
CAPT. HAVESLOCK-BAILIE	Feb 1937	The Maze Master ( Cover illustration by ? )	Novelette
DOUGLAS DREW	June 1937	Omar the Great	Serial - 2
		Editorial footnote: I would like to add -	
CHARLES WILLARD DIFFIN	Sept 1935	The Ultimate Adventure ( Cover illustration by Emery Clarke)	Novel
HAL FIELD LESLIE	Sept 1935	The Curse of Atlantis	Novelette

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

Ever since I joined OMPA in 1955 I've been rounding up back mailings until I am now at the point where I need the following to complete the set.....

OMPA Mailing #1 ---Vignette #1 by Bulmer 8 X 5 15 pgs

OMPA Mailing #2--- Off Trails #2

Postmailing to OMPA Mailing #2 ---  
Through Darkest Ireland by Chuck Harris 29 pgs

OMPA Mailing #3 --- In Re: Yours #1 by Ken Slater 6 pgs

Anyone wishing to part with their copy of any or all of these, please write. I can offer either cash or trade.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

We go on fancying that each man is thinking of us, but he is not; he is like us; he is thinking of himself. ---Charles Reade

## COORDINATION OF DISCLAVE DATA

by

ZN. Falasca

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Problem

A tendency has manifested itself in the last two years that clearly indicates the propensity of science fiction fans to gather together in different sections of the United States at conferences called "regionals". These regionals are usually held in a motel (i.e. motor hotel) near some metropolis. They are from one to two days in length and draw an attendance of not less than 20 and not more than 500 fans.

Another paper<sup>1</sup> has pointed out that these gatherings are characterized by a tendency on the part of the attendees to consume alcohol in large quantities. The reasons behind this are too well known<sup>2</sup> to merit further discussion, however, another aspect of the situation attracts the scholar's interest. It has been noted<sup>3</sup> that the thirst of the fan always exceeds the provision of alcohol, and it is this curious situation that we propose to investigate herewith. In simpler term then, this is our problem; Can a group of 40 fans find happiness at a motel in Virginia, or will the liquor run out?

#### THE TEST SET UP

A group of Washington, D.C. fans\* kindly lent themselves unsparingly to this study. They promoted a regional convention named the "Disclave" on May 11-12, 1958 in Arlington, Virginia, near the capitol of the U.S. The motel chosen was the "Arva", an establishment of some 300 rooms, complete with restaurant, ice cubes and sound-proofed walls.

From the eastern and mid-western parts of the United States, some 40 odd fans gathered to take part in the experiment. They represented New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey and Washington, D.C.

For a period of two days they were observed by your investigator and her report is herewith made.

#### PRELIMINARY WORK

#### THE TRIP DOWN

Your investigator, (hereafter referred to as I) husband Nick, Ben Jason, Steve Schultheis and his fiancée Virginia Rycroff left Cleveland the Friday night before the Disclave. On the Ohio Turnpike, we were joined by a vehicle containing 3 natives of Detroit, Michigan, namely; George Young, Bill Rickhardt, and Jim Broderick. We then proceeded on together toward Washington, D.C.

Route 422 stretched before us, winding through the Maryland hills like a great coiled snake. It was a modern highway, notably free of traffic.

\* Bob Madle, John Magnus, Bob Pavlat and Ted White.

Onward and onward plunged the highway, and the occupants of the car struck up a conversation touching on many topics, but most specifically the position of the rest of the world with respect to fandom.

"Take the postoffice, for instance," said George, "it exists only to deliver fanzines. It would go out of business tomorrow, if fans ceased to mail zines and letters. Or consider the auto industry. They make cars so we can travel to cons."

"Yes," said Nick, "you're right. Even this fine highway was built just to take us to the Disclave, you know."

"I know," George replied, "but I wonder why that should be. Have you given it any thought?"

"Yes, I have, and I'll tell you why it is," Nick said. "I thought about it for years. It's clear that all these things are for us and the reason is simply this. We're just a bunch of god-damned star-begotten kings of the universe!"

"When you put it like that," said George, "I see your point perfectly."

We entered the township of Hagerstown, Maryland, and Bill, who was leading in the first car, suddenly pulled over to the side of the road. A woman behind, pulled up next to him, instead of driving on. We stopped about 10 feet in back and watched for a moment. The effect was that of a herd of sheep. Finally she drove on.

A law enforcement officer (i.e., cop) was parked across the street and yelled something to Bill. We drove on past Bill and down a block or two. After waiting for five minutes, we decided that Bill had been given a ticket by the cop. I hate cops.

We determined that we would effect a rescue and save Bill from Maryland justice. We turned around and drove back, but Bill and the others had already disappeared. The only possible conclusion to reach from the evidence presented was that Bill had been arrested on the spot.

Unfortunately, as with so many conclusions one reaches, it was completely erroneous. In another moment Bill appeared and informed us that the others were eating breakfast in a nearby restaurant.

"How about the cop?" we said. "What did he want?"

"Oh, him. He just said I couldn't park there," Bill replied.

We inspected the restaurant and after a brief look through the fly specked window, decided we weren't hungry just then. We began to explore the town on foot.

"You know," George said, "I seem to recall that somebody lives here."

"Of course somebody lives here, stupid," Nick replied. "Do you think it's a false front movie town?"

"I don't mean people. I mean a fan lives here."

"Now what fan could possibly live in a Bloch-forsaken place like Hagerstown?" Nick asked scornfully.

"As a matter of fact," Bill put in quietly, "Harry Warner, Jr. could possibly live here."

After dropping this bombshell in our midst, Bill began to walk around the town square and call softly in loud tones, "Harry, Harry, where are you?"

"Mrs. Warner," called George, "Can Harry come out and play?"

"Harry," I said, "We've come for you."

A local citizen gave us a rather fish eye and slammed the door.

"We'd better be quiet," I remarked, "or someone will come for us."

Deciding that this was an ineffective means of communication, we went in search of a phone book.

One was located at the local railroad station, an establishment that hadn't seen too much use since the War of 1812. It did, however, have a phone book and we

\* Personal, un-scientific opinion.



located Harry's address.

Our group returned to the cars and began to drive around town in unsystematic circles. We found several dead end streets and saw a great deal of local scenery, but never located Harry Warner, Jr.

After an hour of this, we returned to the restaurant and picked up a trio of hopping-mad, well-fed fans who were wondering where we'd gone. We then proceeded to Washington.

#### ARRIVAL AND EARLY MEETINGS

The Arva is located at the top of a hill and commands an excellent view of Ft. Myer, which is located directly across the street. We entered the driveway and attempted to check in. Our reservations were not to be found and, in any case, our rooms weren't ready.

At this point, we luckily met one of the prime subjects of this report, Dan Curran of New York. Telling Dan of our experiment, he lent his enthusiastic support and, it is safe to say, without him the study would not have been valid.

Dan also informed us that Dave & Ruth Kyle had already arrived at the Arva and were thus making their first appearance in American fandom since the NYCon. We digested this information and went in search of breakfast.

This time Nick led the way and, cavalierly passing up a diner one mile down the road, drove into Washington itself, only to discover that Washingtonians never eat. At least, they don't eat in restaurants, because they don't have any. After an hour of driving, we located a cafeteria that was being picketed and entered, ignoring the cries of union men among us. Stomach won over principles and we had a breakfast that can best be described as sleazy. They had a reason to picket.

We located a liquor store and purchased part of the beverages which would provide the basis for our experiment. These were alcoholic in nature and, for the most part, seemed to be the type of beverage that would be found at any convention large or small. That is, they were powerful and cheap.

#### AFTERNOON AND TEST NO. 1

We returned to the Arva and were informed that our reservation had been located. We entered our room and Nick took a shower while I unpacked. There was a knock at the door and Larry Shaw, carrying beer and ice cubes, entered, trailed by ten or twelve New Yorkers.

He went into the bathroom and put the cubes in the sink, tossed the beer on top of them and began to pour drinks for the crowd.

I watched carefully to see if the beverages would be adequate for our group. They proved to be so and the initial stage of the experiment can be considered a success. See: Conclusion No. 1.

Nick emerged from the bathroom, fortunately clothed, to find the party in full swing. He soon joined in the experiment with great gusto and I began to compile copious notes.

George Young had brought a gigantic yellow satin banner with him that spelled out DETROIT 1959 and he hung this on the balcony in front of our rooms. Soon the drive was crowded with lonely ex-Michiganers who had a burning desire to talk to whoever it was that came from Detroit. Most of these people asked such questions as "What high school did you go to?" and "How are the Tigers doing?" George and Bill were hard put to give answers that were friendly, but at the same time, could not be construed as an invitation to join our party. We had tried to figure the experiment

down to the last drop for the last fan and any outsiders would have upset all our calculations. I had already worked out a preliminary equation and was loath to introduce another variable. See: Appendix A.

Dick and Pat Ellington were next door to us and consistently referred to their room as a sanctuary. It did not seem to be so, not for what it contained but for what it didn't contain.

George had purchased a bottle of white Rhine wine at the liquor store and left this with Pick for safekeeping. This wine is figured in the original equation.

In our room, the bottle we had bought in the morning was rapidly disappearing, but still seemed adequate for the crowd. Bob and Barbara Silverberg and Lee Shaw, along with some other New Yorkers were listening to a local folk singer and Dave Kyle was making a tape recording for England. None of these people required excessive lubrication and therefore, it seemed as though we could consider Step 2 a success, too.

#### EVENING AND A MAJOR TEST CASE

The afternoon slipped away, filled with conversation and the evening was upon us. The Washington group provided a large suite over the lobby of the motel, and supplied many bottles of mix and soft drinks. Soon most of the crowd was assembled there and set out liquor many had brought with them.

The room was large, but unfortunately, not airy. It began to get rather stuffy and there seemed to be a little unrest. Bill Rickhart and Tom Condit found a bottle of Jim Beam that had not been included in the original calculation and removed it to their room, where they could observe it more closely. Soon word spread like wildfire that there was a mystery party going on in 108.

One at a time, people began to leave the con suite and seek out this mystery party. The move came just in time for our experiment, because the liquor was rather low and it looked as though we wouldn't be able to get all the data.

Soon the entire con was in 108 and the mystery party turned out to be Bill and Tom and the orphan bottle. Sandy Cutrell brought his guitar and entertained the group with "Songs Of The Bosses\*". This caused some consternation among the other guests at the motel, who had never heard any songs with the words "Soviet Union" and "Karl Marx" in them. Every so often, one of these people would stop outside the window and peer in at us.

In spite of noble efforts by Art Saha, Dan Curran and Bill Donaho, it seemed as though the evening-night phase of this case could also be considered a success. The liquor was still holding out when we went to bed about 1 a.m.

\* Available from Dick Ellington - 25¢

#### MORNING AND FINAL RESULTS

The next morning was the usual "have coffee with us" type con morning. The New Yorkers were having breakfast in the restaurant in the motel and people kept leaving the table and others would take their place.

We went over to Ellington's room just in time to see Dan Curran wander in, unshaven, looking for all the world like a man of 80. "Bill," Dan said to Donaho, "you'll have to go over to the drugstore and get some more beer."

"Why don't you go?" I said.

"I can't," Dan replied, "I'm not 21."

"Believe me, Dan," said Ellington, "they'll never guess."

"Wait a moment," I said, "is this the end of the test? Has the liquor run out

entirely? The con is not over yet."

"Here, here!" cried Ellington excitedly, "Here's that bottle of Rhine wine that George left with me, untouched! Drink, Dan!"

He handed it to Dan, who took a drink and passed it on to Saha. The bottle was soon empty and we had to consider the experiment closed. The con had about an hour and a half to run and the liquor was completely gone once again.

RESULTS

Our question was: Can a group of some 40 odd fans find happiness at a motel in Virginia, or will the liquor run out? The answer, obviously is yes to both. The fans will be happy and the liquor will always run out. See Table #1; Appendix A.

CONCLUSIONS

1. In the initial stage of any convention, the liquor will be adequate.
2. Toward the end of the convention, the fans will drink anything.
3. It is impossible to provide enough liquor for the entire con, but you can make a good estimate (using the Equation in Appendix A) and will probably be able to get through the first 18 hours.
4. Fans have a good time, no matter what the liquor situation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank the many fans who made this experiment possible, these include: Dick & Pat Ellington, Lee & Larry Shaw, Bill Donaho, Dan Curran, Bob Madle, Bob Pavlat, Ted White, John Magnus, Chuck Frelingthal, Hans Steffan Santessan, George Young, Bill Rickhardt, Tom Condit, Jim Broderick, Ben Jason, Steve Schultheis, Art Saha, Belle & Frank Dietz, George Nims Raybin, Dave & Ruth Kyle, Bob & Barbara Silverberg, etc etc etc

REFERENCES

"They Guzzled It Down", by Christopher Mulch (American Journal of Fandom, Vol. 108, 1934, p. 64)

"The Fannish Environment", by Bloch, Tucker, Grennell, et. al. (Fandom Speaks, Vol. 4, 1911, p. 6)

"Is That Bottle Empty Already?", by Howard De Vore (Journal of Society of Completists, Vol. 90, 1949, p. 1009)

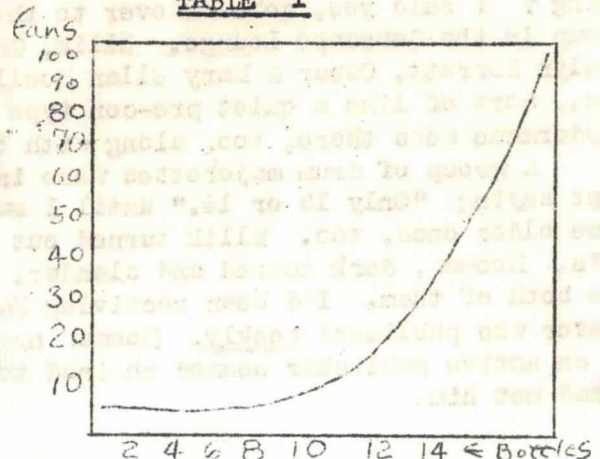
APPENDIX A

$$L_t = \phi t \frac{e}{N} \quad \text{or} \quad L_t = t(4.7) \frac{e}{N}$$

NOMENCLATURE

- N = Number of fans
- e = Number of bottles
- $\phi$  = coefficient of reliability
- $f(t) = \phi = (4.7)t^2$  (t = time in hours)
- $L_t$  = time liquor runs out

TABLE 1



## THE LONG CON

by

Don Ford

The 9th Midwestcon was held the last week-end of June, 1958

It was a good con.

For me it started the Wednesday before when Doc Smith showed up in front of my house at 4 p.m. with a 32' house trailer attached to his Cheverolet Carryall. Then the fun began. The road is narrow & just about the time Doc would get started backing into my driveway, traffic got heavy. Wards Corner Road with maybe one car an hour going by, suddenly seemed to be the most popular road in this entire area. I suspected maybe it was a detour route from U.S. 422.

There's a retaining wall on each side of the drive as you near the house. They are about 5' high & one side is buckled from the heavy freezing weather of last winter so there's only 8'-8" of clearance to put an 8' wide house trailer into. Doc started bitching. I reminded him that he'd put Kimball Kinnison all over the galaxy & surely he could do this earthly task. He did a good job & was soon at the chore of un-hitching, setting up house, as it were; & by 5 p.m. we all sat down to supper.

That night the CFG gang came out for a visit & we all exchanged gossip, news; views, etc. from the fan world. Dr. Mary Martin (Plastic Surgeon), a newcomer to our group, was introduced to Doc Smith for the first time & they soon were talking over the old stories from way back when. She'd never seen the magazine version of "Skylark Of Space", so I dug out the 3 part serial from the stack of Amazing Stories, 1928 - 30 years ago. Then Doc did a very nice thing for me...he autographed all 3 installments of his serial. I was 7 years old when they were published.

Next he told us that he had 3 chapters to finish on a new novel he has written, titled: "The Girl With The Green Hair". We then were taken on a tour of inspection of the house trailer. Two outstanding features are two paintings; one a Rogers cover from Astounding illustrating the Gray Lensman & Lawrence which was commissioned by Doc & took 5 years to paint, of the Queen of Lyrane, from his "Second Stage Lensman". The Lyrane was a matriarchy & this original portrays a striking nude queen, with her court. I photographed both covers before the week-end was over.

The weather should get a mention about here. For 14 consecutive week-ends it had rained. The skies were still gloomy & we had our fingers crossed for the coming week-end. As it turned out, it was a beautiful hot week-end; making the pool seem most attractive. Since Tucker, Bloch & Asimov did not show up, it must be one of the with the "Joe Bflspk" personality. Doc said he braved the tail end of a tornado over in Indiana while driving in.

Thursday, Ron Elik called me up & said he was in town & was anybody doing anything? I said yes, come on over to the motel tonight. So, Thursday night saw a group in the Seascape Lounge. Elik, Christianberry, Doc & Jeannie Smith, Doc & Evelyn Barrett, Oscar & Mary Ellen Moeller, Stan & Joan Skirvin, Lou & Carrie Tabakow etc., Sort of like a quiet pre-con type of gathering. Oh yes, Joe Hensley & Der Fledermaus were there, too, along with the late Kent Moomaw.

A group of drum majorettes were in the motel & Elik kept saying, "Oh boy!" I kept saying, "Only 13 or 14." until I saw a few who made me realize that there were some older ones, too. Elik turned out to be a blond, well built lad in his early 20's. Moomaw, dark haired and slender, with dark shell rimmed glasses. I was glad to see both of them. I'd been receiving FANAC for some time & wanted to see the eager beaver who published weekly. Moomaw had been invited around for 3 years running, but as an active publisher seemed chained to his editorial desk. This was the 2nd time I had met him.



North  
Plaza

MOTEL

VACANCY

TELEVISION  
&  
PHONES  
IN ROOMS

NORTH PLAZA

*The Best For Your Rest*  
**NORTH PLAZA MOTEL**

*"Cincinnati's Finest"*

ROOMS and SUITES

Air-Conditioned by CARRIER

Telephones, Free 24" Television in Every Room

On U. S. Routes 25 and 42

7911 HEADING ROAD Within the City Limits

Phone: PCplar 2200

—CURTEICHOLOR— REPRODUCTION FROM KODACHROME OR EKTACHROME ORIGINAL—

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

4C-K235

**POST CARD**





Member of the Diners' Club

**NORTH PLAZA MOTEL**

*"Cincinnati's Finest"*

97 Air-conditioned Units

**ROOMS - SUITES - KITCHEN UNITS**

Telephones, Television in every room

**7911 READING ROAD - Within City Limits**

on U. S. Routes 25 and 42

**Phone: POplar 1-2200**

Ektachrome by James Mancuso



PLA  
3  
STA  
HE  
DAS

# GIANT POST CARD

*Address*

Pub. by James Mancuso Studio, Cincinnati, Ohio



This card certifies that the bearer is a full fledged  
(no pinfeathers) simon pure sanctified member of

## **FALASCAFANDOM**

Members shall hew (Axes only) to the party line as directed by the edict from the Fountain Head. Holders of this card shall be entitled to all privileges of Tru-Fans; even though they may not have published for one week.

Cell No. ....	Pecking Order in Cell .....
APA No. ....	W. S. F. S. No. ....
Parkinson Index .....	B. S. S. Yes ... No. ....
S. S. No. ....	Army Serial .....
	(Summer Soldiers Only)

**FAKE FANS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!**

Ellik and I swapped fan gossip for a long time and he conveyed the startling news that Vernon McCain had recently died. We got to talking con news & he said Sneary doesn't think he'll live until the con. I said it just seems that way when the work piles up near the convention date.

Friday, I took off work & so did Lou. Stan was going to and managed to show up at 11 p.m. that night. I forget which number on the list he used. We loafed outside near the pool & got to meet everyone when they checked into the motel. Lou, Dale Tarr & Stan Skirvin were selling banquet tickets & I was trying to interest people in the Dollen's paintings. We had these Dollen's for \$10.00 each and most of them were knockouts. They measured 15 " X 20 " and at that price were a good buy. At Cleveland, his paintings were auctioned off at nearly double that in some cases. I got a good laugh to myself. One fan, who shall be nameless, thought the banquet tickets were too high at \$3.00; but bought 3 Dollen's paintings.

We made plans to meet with Doc Barrett, Edmond Hamilton, Doc Smith & myself at the "junk yard". This is out in the boondocks about 20 miles beyond my house. There are about 5 acres of junk—some in sheds; some just piled up. I first ran across the owner about 8 or 9 years ago when I was tracking down jazz records & s-f mags. He's read s-f for 20 - 30 years & has always claimed to have 3,000 mags in a loft in the house; but he'd never get them out and showed little inclination to do so. I finally set Doc Barrett on to him. Doc nearly had a fit the first time he went out. Here was a man who was an even greater collector?...he collected everything. Old cars, china, pottery, silverware, music boxes, antiques of all kinds. You name it; he's got it. 1923 16 cylinder Cadillac; a pile of chamber pots; bells; christ, I can't begin to name it all!

Throughout the years, Doc has fell prey to my fiendish scheme. He's bought an ancient music box that plays brass discs; an Ediphone which plays cylinder records; etc etc. Anyway, he wanted to take Hamilton & Smith out there. They got in a shed & Barrett got to pawing through piles of records. He sounded like a rat in a corn crib. He did get a crate full of cylinder records and we went along a tortorous trail to the owner's house, mentally picking out landmarks among the piles of junk so we could locate the car when we were ready to leave. The owner got out some mags for Hamilton & Smith to autograph & I snapped a few flash pictures. Some of the slides & stereos turned out quite fabulous. I could do an entire series (photo & written) on this place.

One more valuable purchase was made...a chamber pot from the "thunder mug" pile. This was presented to Lou at the banquet. He being the man who was always complaining about not having a pot—much less a window to throw it out of.

We got to the motel about noon & I talked & photographed various people like, the Hickmans, Detroiters, Ralph N. Holland, the Niel de Jacks, Scortia, Ellisons, Raybin, Dietz's, Kyles, Jean Carrol, Bill Donaho, Dave MacDonald. There seemed to be sort of a truce with the U.S.F.S. controversy this week-end. Everyone seemed content to have a good time. In fact, at the banquet the M.C.'s asked Kyle, Raybin & Dietz to all stand up together and they drew a good round of applause.

After meeting MacDonald, I'm going to take the square root of anything he has to write up. I realize Inchmery Fandom will take a dim view of this, but MacDonald strikes me as being a clod. George Young wanted to have a get together in his room to discuss Detroit politics at L.A. Dave kept wanting to come along & George kept telling him he'd rather he didn't as it was sort of a private meeting. I think it ended up with Dave listening in the hallway.

Nick & Noreen Falasca were passing out "Son Of Fandom's Burden" and I talked with them a bit on U.S.F.S. They're all for changing it via electing new directors; while I'm all for doing away with it. Either that, or creating a new one & letting

the old one die off by being ignored.

The Banquet started at 6:30 p.m. and the food was good. Following the meal, Doc Barrett introduced Tom Scortia & Harlan Ellison, who were to both act as M.C. They did very well at introducing various notables and excelled at cutting remarks thrust at each other. Detroit & Chicago each made a pitch for their city as the '59 con site and then numerous "awards" were passed out... DeVore got a statue as the "biggest liar" from Sid Coleman. Lou got the chamber pot (now being used for flowers). I got a medical book, "Diseases of the Rectum"; this was because I asked Ben Keifer to do an article for POOKA on flatulation.

Harlan then auctioned off 3 cover originals that Ted Carnell had donated. The money from this was going back to Ted (\$15.50) for the London Circle, who had loaned money to the Londoncon. Since the Londoncon went into the red, the loan had never been repayed. (Editorial note: an additional \$63.50 to make a total of \$79.00 was sent to Ted. This represented a donation from the Cincinnati Fantasy Group & the Midwestcon. This was for the London Circle and should help them; as well as reduce the Londoncon deficit.) Next, Harlan auctioned off a variety of manuscripts & interior illustrations for TAFF. Madle had brought these along & it seemed like Nebula and Lowndes were the two contributors of this material.

We had a slide show, followed by a movie that Ted Carnell had taken at the Londoncon. Both were well received & the exodus continued to the North Plaza Motel, where festivities reigned the rest of the night.

There, I kept room-hopping and I think I managed to see everyone who attended this year. 95 were at the banquet, with about 20 more showing up for the program that followed. In retrospect the week-end conversations blur into one disorganized mass of confusion. Harlan seemed much more mature and certainly cannot be compared to the hot rock 7th fandomite of a few years back. At one Midwestcon he received an award as the "most obnoxious fan". His stories of army life made good listening: if not fully believable. He'll be out next year & I imagine the parting will be mutually agreeable. He said he's got a deal lined up to write the continuity for the Buck Rogers cartoon strip.

Edmond Hamilton said that while he and Leigh (Brackett) were in Hollywood he turned into a jazz & camera fan. Bought himself a polaroid camera and a set of the Jelly Roll Morton Library of Congress series. I kept telling him he was really going to hell, now. He was quite active in attending the room parties this year, something he'd not done in the past, and said he'd found out he'd been missing a lot. That, combined with the other two, puts him well on the road to ruin.

I gave up about 3:30 a.m. & went home for some sleep. Next day I found Lou, Frank Andrasovsky and Bea Mahaffey looking pretty well beat...they'd stayed up all night; going from one room to another until they finally ended up sitting outside by the pool. Lou's voice was almost gone, he was so hoarse. It gave the rest of us a chance that afternoon and evening.

It was an afternoon of saying goodbye as the majority left for home & the mundane world. We gathered up a crowd of 22 & made the journey into downtown Cincinnati for a dinner at a Chinese restaurant. This was one of the highlights of the week-end. I kept thinking of Ellis Hillis as we ate a hearty meal. I'd not eaten any noon lunch & was well prepared. Not only that, sitting in the hot sun all afternoon left me dehydrated enough, that the first quart of tea went down in nothing flat.

Harlan kept up an unceasing line of jokes & chatter that was amusing & funny. Marion Mallinger caught the brunt of an essay into women's clothing styles, as she was wearing a sack dress. Her green stocking reminded Harlan of Dutch Elm Blight, etc

Going back to the motel, we stopped off in Mount Adams to let the visitors get a look into downtown Cincinnati from one of the 7 hilltops. Jean Carrol filled us in on the news from N.Y.C., also news of Moscovitz's coming marriage.

As I left around 10 p.m., Joe Hensley & Harlan were writing a story together, each typing every other page. It was a detective story. About 20 were sitting there kibitzing. After a bedtime snack of watermelon with the Smith's, we called it a day. Day? A week-end!

Monday morning started my vacation. I needed one. Another deal was coming up, though. Lou Tabakow sells a tubeless tire repair kit. He and his partner are distributors for Ohio, Kentucky, and southern Indiana. He invited me to go along with him & sell as well as make it a "vacation trip". I said goodbye to the Smiths, who left an hour later for: Indiana, Oregon, Solacon and winter at Boulder City, Nevada in the desert, which they like so well.

Lou & I headed for Toledo, working the gasoline stations along the way. We'd made arrangements at the Midwestcon to meet Frank M. Robinson & his friend, John Murray in Toledo. They were both on vacation & would be in Toledo a few days & then planned to go to New York, where Frankie wanted to attend Mescowitz's wedding. It was miserably hot that day & we telephoned ahead from Lima for motel reservations. The only name Lou could remember turned out to have a 1/3 ton air conditioner in the bathroom window. As it was 10 p.m., no other motels had any vacancies & we stayed in the place with the coolest bathroom in town.

Tuesday, we changed motels before breakfast & later in the day telephoned Frank. Directions were given us to meet them at a certain restaurant. These later proved to be inaccurate & we arrived a half hour late and found Frank & John well entrenched at the bar.

They were curious about the tire repair gimmick and we went into explanations over our drinks. The deal is to pull into a gas station & ask for the boss. Ask him if he's got time to watch you punch a hole in your tire and repair it right on the wheel while he's watching. This usually gets their attention & often times the whole crew & the hangers on & customers will come out as well. So you whip out an ice pick & stick it in your tire; thread the rubberized cord through the repair needle; pull out the ice pick & quickly insert the needle with the repair cord. The entire operation can be done in less time than it takes to type this out.

We'd been on the go all day long in the hot sun and were dehydrated, besides not having stopped for lunch. The drinks disappeared fast & we decided to make our dinner orders. They had the printed type menus with a permanent selection. Lou & John decided to go for the steak dinner for two and Lou made the order, only to be informed they were out of this. I took out my pencil & drew a heavy black line through that item on my menu. Frank's selection was out, too. I drew 4 or 5 heavy lines through that item. My choice was swordfish steak. Out. Also out came the pencil again, but before I could get a chance to use it, the waitress jerked the menu out of my hands saying they cost money to print. I settled for fresh Lake Erie Pickerel.

The rolls, butter, salad and salad tray were set on the table, and I kept her busy pouring ice water for my ever empty glass. Normally I like about 6 or 7 glasses of ice water with my meal. This time I was thirsty. We got extra rolls & butter & started devouring everything while waiting for our meal to arrive. This salad tray was a three-tiered lazy susan affair with cottage cheese, carrot strips & celery hearts, pickled beets, marinated herring, olives, etc. The usual set up. They just pass this around your table once & you're supposed to be polite and take only small samplings of the various selections. The waitress got busy elsewhere (trying to avoid my empty water glass) & we started going through that salad tray like army ants. By the time our dinners were ready, the only thing left was the hot peppers, which only Lou had liked. She said, "Oh dear!" & took the empty tray away, looking sick. That tray was probably meant to serve a dozen tables that night. The meal was good & I'm sure they didn't make any exorbitant profit on us.

Next stop was our motel and as it was a rather nice layout, Frank said, "Oh, you sybarites, you! Living like kings, out on the road like this!"

We drug out the liquor & set ups and settled down to comfortably re-hash the Midwestcon. After an hour of this, we turned to various bits of gossip & rumors we'd each heard at different times and places; comparing notes on these. Finally Frank started in remembering his early days at Ziff-Davis when he worked as copy boy for Ray Palmer. He often kids in saying he used to empty Palmer's wastebasket at Ziff-Davis, and after all who are we to dispute his word?

We got to talking about authors, agents, editors, etc. & then Frank started in. I think the whiskey was taking hold of him about then. He regaled us with choice stories about: Palmer, Hamling, Leiber, Diktys, Leroy Yerxa, Korshak, Shasta, Farmer, Fred Pohl, Tucker, etc. He kept saying, "I really shouldn't be telling you guys this... you will keep it to yourselves, won't you?" We kept saying yes & I kept refilling his glass. This was one time when Lou had the good grace to keep his mouth shut, so you know it was really fascinating material. In fact, if he'd so much as opened his mouth during this session, I'd have shoved a pillow or fist down it.

Frank would get to thinking about a fresh story to tell us & decide it was funny. So funny that he'd laugh until the tears ran out of his eyes. We'd have to wait 4 or 5 minutes until he could control himself enough to talk. A frustrating experience at such a crucial moment. I snapped a couple of pictures of this staid editor of Science Digest 'breaking up'. He'll be proud of the facial expressions I captured in living color.

We finished out the short week in Toledo, now seemingly dull after this session, and worked south towards Cincinnati and home for the July 4th Holiday week-end.

The following week, it was Lima & then on to Sandusky, which is on Lake Erie. While in Sandusky, my demonstration tire kept leaking air one day. I'd have to keep stopping in at company owned stations to get air hoping to tide me over for an hour or so until I could locate another one. The reason I went to these company stations was because they never permit their employees to buy anything except a company product. It looks bad to get air at a place where you try to sell tire repairs.

After going through this process all day long, I told Lou I simply had to do something about it. After supper we drove to a Standard Oil company station & asked to put my tire in the water tank to check for a slow leak. He pulled the wheel off & put 40 lbs pressure in the tire & dropped it in the tank. Wow! The bubbles caused by the escaping air churned the water into a white froth. I think he was thoroughly shocked for once in his life. He kept looking at Lou & then at me—wanting to ask questions, but we weren't talking & he didn't know where to begin. About that time cars pulled in for gas & he left us. I went out to my car, got some samples, and began repairing leaks.

I used up all my samples & had to get some kits & peel off cords out of them... a few from each kit, so they wouldn't be noticed. The tire was a used one I'd picked up 6 months previously & it was now worn so thin that the tire repairs wouldn't hold for too long a time. It was rotten. We had to add more air & fortunately cars kept coming in keeping the attendant busy & from breathing down our necks. By the time we finished, we'd made 26 repairs. Not too bad, really, when you consider I had 100-150 holes in the tire. I got out the needle for Lou and said, "You know, Lou, if we weren't such dirty bastards this'd sort of shake our faith, wouldn't it?"

We telephoned Ben Jason in Cleveland and told him we'd be over the next day. I hoped the tire would hold up until we made it into Cleveland, anyway. Next morning in Vermillion I sold a station a kit & he got to talking to me about Cincinnati. Asked me if I knew of any good motels, there, as he wanted to come down for a few days of vacation. I plugged the North Plaza & suggested some restaurants, bars, etc he would like. Finally, I asked him the price of a new tire & then said if he'd take another

kit, I buy a tire. He did. It seems to impress people more when you stick an ice pick into a brand new tire, and I carry the old one along to show them what the repairs look like from the inside.

We got to Ben's house & decided to wait on Frank Andrasovsky come home from work. He's a boiler maker and was working in Youngstown on a construction job. Ben showed us his magazine collection, containing among other things a complete set of Weird Tales. He and his brother share the family mansion, now, and he's been busy doing extensive remodeling. A new furnace, with the duct work & all has been installed by Ben, the workshop and darkroom bespeak varied activities. The kitchen has the latest in electric wall oven, counter-recessed power unit to operate a mixer, blender, grinder & any other attachment they can think to make. We used the grinder to sharpen our lineoleum knives used in cutting off the tire repair cords after demonstrating. Besides all this, Ben can cook. After the tour of inspection we settled down with our drinks to await Frank Andrasovsky.

As soon as he arrived a verbal exchange began over where to go eat. Every 10th suggestion or so, Ben brother would suggest a place. Lou & I were lost during this exchange, knowing little about Cleveland except for the area surrounding the Manger Hotel, the 1955 con site. After a ½ hour of this our hunger pangs became almost unbearable...we'd skipped lunch on the way over.. Finally we got them into Lou's car & headed downtown, telling them to make the final decision on the way.

It started to rain. Lou, as those of you who have met him well know, wears glasses so thick they look like the bottoms out of two Coca-Cola bottles. After spending two years driving a Yellow Cab in Cincinnati his driving habits changed from a slow, meek, timid soul to one of charging abandonment. The type who either drives an army tank; has full insurance coverage, or figures the hell with the other guy --let him have good brakes.

The restaurant finally selected was Jim's Steak House, which is in the dock area downtown. By this time we were in a driving rain and highway construction area. Lou has the habit of trying to impale his listeners with a forceful look while talking to them; which is supposed to drive home his scintillating wit. This sometimes gets awkward while he is driving & the listener is in the back seat and might not get the full impact of his rich low melodic whisper. (Ted Carnell has said it comes through on tape as a rich brown tone. Stan Skirvin & I think he means dark brown.) So, Lou kept turning around to look at Ben & I in the back-seat, and every time he did so, Frank in the front seat would instinctively ram his foot on the floorboards trying to apply the non-existent brakes. He'd keep saying, "Watch it, Lou!"

Finally I reassured him, "Lou's windshield is ground to his own prescription."

The rain let up & we arrived safely into the area where the "Mad Butcher of Kingsbury Run" has killed & dissected 20 or so victims over the past 20 years, in a series of crimes that has never been solved. The newspapers & crime magazines have written this up many times & I'm sure you've all read stories about them.

Before it got too dark I managed to get a couple shots of the Cleveland skyline and of the ore boats, etc. An excellent location for night shots & a place I want to return, but not alone.

Inside, we ordered our drinks & food & were having a good time joking away & talking about the Midwestcon, our meeting with Frankie & John in Toledo, etc. A slightly tipsy man from another table came over & said that today was his wife's 54th birthday & their 30th wedding anniversary. We got into conversation with him; I shot their picture together, and then they ordered a round of drinks for us & he kept saying, "Kiss my wife." , which we did. The photo of Lou doing this should come in handy for future reference.

By the time we got back to Ben's it was after 10 p.m., so while we did mention

a couple of times about telephoning the Falasca's, we didn't press it, as it was getting late. Ben twisted our arms and forcibly made us drink highballs while we sat around and talked some more. Frank made plans to come to Cincinnati for a visit and about 2 a.m. I went to bed, leaving Lou & the other two talking away.

Ben woke me up in the morning as he left for work and shortly thereafter we left. It was 250 miles to Cincinnati and we wanted to work along the route home. It was raining, again, and we drove south for an hour or so before the weather cleared up enough that we could work.

We got as far as Ashland and I remarked to Lou that this was the town where the Myers Co. had their home office. This didn't strike any bell with him, so I said it was the company Lynn Hickman sold for. Half an hour later who do I see but Lou & Lynn! Lou had gone into a Ford Agency & saw Lynn in there seeing about a car. He promptly forgot all about selling tire repairs & the two of them tracked me down in a filling station, where I also forgot about tire repairs.

We had lunch together, on Lynn's expense account, and then he sprang the startling news. The night before, he'd been in Cleveland and the Falascas had met him at the airport. He'd arrived around 10 p.m. We got a report on the Illwiscon & by that time all of us fake fen decided it was time to do some more work & home was still a long ways off.

We worked Mansfield and had supper there. Didn't have time to telephone Stanleigh Vinson as we had to get moving. I got home at 11 p.m. that night and felt like it had really been a long convention.

Don Ford

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

#### CONVENTION DATES

We have been asked to support various cities for the 1960 convention site, which under the rotation plan will be held in the eastern sector of the U.S. As of this writing (December 1958) 3 cities have come forward: Washington, Philadelphia & Pittsburgh. Our reply to them and any others that may come forward is that we feel the Labor Day week-end is a bad time (we, being the CFG) and that some other date should be chosen...not July 4th week-end, either. Our reasons are:

1. Most vacation periods end on Labor Day. Employees get a 3 month period in which to select their vacation time. Thus, you end up on Labor Day with hundreds of miles to travel in order to get back to work the following Tuesday. Missing Tuesday means a loss of Monday's pay, usually.
2. Those with children are forced to leave early in order to get them either in school or registered that Tuesday.
3. Stores are closed this week-end, leaving wives with little to do while the husbands con' away.
4. Many restaurants & bars are closed Labor Day & hotels charge extra for the banquet on this date.
5. All forms of transportation are overtaxed this week-end...highways a death trap. Why make the fans travel on this week-end?
6. Labor pay usually means activity for families.
7. Only tradition says a con has to be on Labor Day. Forson did change it, but the July 4th is just as bad.

We will actively support the efforts of the ICFE to change tradition on this matter of the date. Our own preference is for a week-end before Labor Day, but we're just negative on the matter & say no to Labor Day for the above reasons.

## WHITHER THE WONDER ?

by

Stan Skirvin

It seems to have been Sam Moskowitz whose laments for his lost "sense of wonder" made the phrase a byword among the old fogeys of fandom. I experienced a growing sense of wonder myself at the refusal of many to accept this loss as a natural price for growing up. How long can glamour survive familiarity? Has anyone ever experienced adventure, or does experience become adventure only in the telling?

The "sense of wonder" question has received some discussion within the C. F. G. at both in-town and out-of-town meetings, usually as a concomitance to the current doldrums in which science fiction finds itself. In the course of these discussions, two other factors have emerged as influential in contributing to the death of the sense of wonder.

Indeed, the first of these factors appears to be instrumental in preventing the sense of wonder even in neofans.

The culprit? Familiarity. Everyone exposed to any of the commercial communication media is assaulted with material which, in the not-too-distant past, was the exclusive property of science fiction. This ranges from the comic strips, through newspapers, radio, television, and scientific journals. After being conditioned from birth in such a flood of science fiction concepts, who can ever experience the delight and fulfilment of the imaginative child of yesteryear upon discovery that there was a whole field of science fiction where the imagination was unfettered?

*Sic transit gloria mundi.*

The second factor which has aided in the atrophy of the sense of wonder concerns the old fogeys who have read much s-f for many years. It is, however, more of a historical factor than psychological, as contrasted with the sophistication of maturity referred to in my opening remarks.

To approach the matter slightly obliquely; how long can a new goldfield be prospected before most of the major lodes have been discovered? The time doesn't matter; the point is that if the prospecting is done assiduously, practically all of the major lodes will be discovered in a finite length of time.

There is much historical evidence to support the hypothesis that the goldfield of science fiction has been pretty well worked over. (Anyone who doesn't think that the working over was done assiduously should read or reread the work of Wells and Verne.) The subject is worthy of a rather scholarly study, but I shall leave that to the scholars and content myself with sketching in some of the outlines.

In the early days of science fiction in the magazines, the idea was the thing and the vehicle which carried the idea was often of incredibly shoddy workmanship. Slowly the workmanship on the vehicle improved, although the model often left much to be desired. By the late 'thirties and early 'forties there was some fine craftsmanship abroad in the field. Stories still tended to be thing-oriented rather than people-oriented, though. But how many stories can be written about the same things without starting to sound like the same stories? The number is limited.

Science fiction stories began to pay more and more attention to the things that people feel and think, a trend which has continued up to the present day. But science fiction authors seem to be running out of new things to say, a circumstance which bids fair to kill the field of science fiction, no matter how well the old things are being said again.

We science fictionists are, I believe, much in the position of the professional



philosophers; it's damned hard to find something to talk of which the Greeks didn't think of some two-thousand odd years ago. You may hold contrary views to mine of the success of the philosophers in dealing with their problem. I feel that the impressiveness of the work of the philosophers of the past several hundred years varies inversely to one's acquaintanceship with the known work of ancient philosophers and to one's desire for incisiveness and disgust with obscure language and poorly stated concepts.

Okay, you may ask, what is the answer? I will say to you that that is a very good question.

I don't know the answer or answers to the problem of science fiction's present doldrums. Maybe we have to drop all fans of over ten years' reading in the field, deny access to old collections to neofans, and pretend like it never happened before. I don't know.

I have merely tried to point out that there are good and sufficient reasons why the sense of wonder had to die.

Hey!

It didn't really die; it just faded away.

Stan Skirvin

Don Ford  
Box 13-F, RR #2  
Loveland, Ohio

PRINTED MATTER