

# SIGMA OCTANTIS 3



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Sigma Octantis #3

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Eco-Mu E. U.

Art by G. Nicholas de Grammatik

# Thrashing About

THE  
EDIOTORIAL

With it's next issue, SigOct offers advertising space. This space will be obtainable for a fairly reasonable rate -- free. However, before you hasten to accept this offer, let it be understood here and now that results are not guaranteed. In fact, chances are decidedly against your getting a single reply. The cards are so well stacked against you that we make this offer: if you get one reply, we'll run the ad for half rates next issue. Fair enough?

All copy for the above offer must be submitted in the form in which it is to be published. Advertisements for buying, selling and trading are all accepted.

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Ain't this mag rotten? Or maybe you like it. Whether you do or not, why not express your feelings, give vent to your emotions, and reap a little egoboo for yourself by writing in? "Smaht Remahks", the letter column which makes it's first appearance in the next ish will be long and will have enough room for even you to have your letter printed. Think how proud you'll be when you shake your copy of SigOct in your friend's face and point out your letter in the letter column. Think how he'll fall before you in adoration. Think how he'll grovel in the dust at your feet. Think. Sounds pretty good, ay? Now sit down and write a letter for Smaht Remahks.

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It may be a little early to pack your bags for the second Southeastern Science Fiction Convention, but you'd do well to put away a little money and plan for it. This convention, which will be held in Charlotte, N. C., sometime around March '56 promises to be well worth any fan's while. The '55 SSFC (Agacon) was the first in what is hoped to be a long line of cons in the southeast. It was a small but richly interesting affair which proved to be a strong foundation for ones to come. Drop a line to Bob Farnham of 20 Mountain View Drive, Dalton, Georgia, for particulars.



The heavy set man ran down the hall of the Earth-Mars space ship shouting as loudly as he could. "Yerg, Yerg," he cried. Just as he reached a bend in the hallway something hit him from behind, and as he spun around the blood began to gush from his back. One last time he called, "Yerg," and then crashed heavily to the metal floor.

Roj, who was the Assistant Watch, came around the bend at a full run, almost tripping over his fallen comrade. He shot a glance down the hall, but by this time his friend's assailant had fled. "Yerg," he yelled, "come quickly!"

Slowly, majestically, a large, impressive man rounded the corner, and spoke, "What do you want, Roj?" and then his eyes dropped to the man lying on the floor. He stopped, looked back up at Roj, and let out a sigh so deep that it was amazing that even this huge man could manage it.

"He's dead," Roj said simply. "he was dead when I got here. I heard him calling for you, and came to see what the matter was." His eyes looked deeply into Yerg's. He saw disbelief in them.

"Why did you kill Gis, Roj?" Yerg asked. "I had always thought you and he were good friends. You are under arrest."

Roj knew what that meant. He would be placed on 'trial', a mere formality. Yerg would say he was guilty and that would

## the trouble With COGBYNANS

BY GARY H LABOWITZ



be that. "But I didn't kill him," Roj replied. "I can take a truth test to prove that. I just came in and found him like this!" His voice broke off as he saw the gun Yerg pulled out from under his cloak. A look of fear crept slowly over his face, a look so filled with terror it would have instilled fear in any man, no matter how cold. Yerg continued raising his gun until it pointed directly at Roj.

"Yes," he said coldly, "you could take a truth test. So, you will be killed while trying to escape. Turn around and run."

"But why?" Roj begged. "I didn't. . . ." his face grew pale. "No," he went on, "I won't run!"

"Then," said Yerg, "I shall have to kill you when you attack me. Which shall it be?"

Roj was quickly forming a plan in his mind. He turned slowly noticing the door a few feet down the hall. He prayed that door would be unlocked. His life depended on it!

"Run!" Yerg repeated. Roj could detect a slight chuckle coming from behind him. He took a step, and then he lunged toward the door, pulling his gun from his holster as he fell. In that split second several things happened. Roj hit the door, he heard a gunshot, and at the same instant he felt the door offer resistance -- and then give way. He fell into the dark room, hitting his head on a bucket. Then he lapsed into unconsciousness.

Yerg walked to the doorway, looked in and seeing Roj lying there with his eyes shut tight, smiled confidently; he holstered his gun, turned, and blew into the whistle which hung from his cloak's button. Two short, two long. That would bring the doctor and the government inspector assigned to this run. As Yerg waited for the men he went over the story in his mind; how Roj had killed Gis, and how he had shot Roj when he tried to escape. Yerg would be a hero. This could very well advance him to five letters! He was thinking of Yergo already.

As the government men came running into the hallway he quickly reviewed his story to make certain he was in the clear; that he hadn't overlooked anything.

"Captain Lonit, government agent," one of them said as he stopped before Yerg. "What's going on?"

Yerg felt more confident. A five letter man! What luck. If

he could only persuade him his story was true, the two of them would have nine letters. That was enough to outvote the highest official on this run. "I have just shot a murderer," Yerg said simply, and he pointed at Roj.

"Huh!" the captain grunted. "Who'd he kill?"

"A man named Gis," Yerg answered. "He's lying down the hall," and he pointed at Gis's lifeless form.

The captain looked down the hall, grunted again, and turned his attention to Yerg. "You're Yerg, aren't you?" and then without waiting for an answer he went on. "Main Watch," he looked back at the people who had begun to gather. "Doc," Lonit bellowed, "Check this man in here; I'll be down the hall."

Lonit moved toward the body of Gis, and Yerg followed. "How do you know he killed him?" he asked as he felt for Gis' pulse, a pulse that was not there.

"I saw it!" Yerg lied. "I was just making my round."

"That makes it very simple, then," Lonit said. He looked up at Yerg, smiled and turned his attention toward the doctor who had just come out of the storeroom. "Well?" he asked.

"This man is not dead," the doctor said. "He has merely struck his head."

Yerg started, but quickly regained control of himself. Lonit looked at him again, smiling broadly. "Now we'll see," he said as he pulled a vial of truth serum from his belt. He started toward the room.

"Wait," cried Yerg. "That man is dangerous. Watch him." He moved ahead of the captain for he knew he had to get to Roj first.

Roj staggered from the room, and as he noticed Yerg reached for his gun. He clutched at an empty holster. The doctor smiled benevolently and held up the gun.

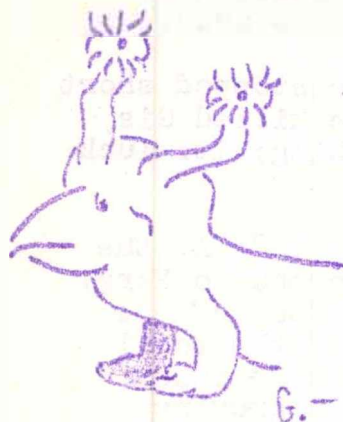
As quickly as Roj had reached for his gun, Yerg drew his own. Only this time Lonit stopped him.

"Wait a minute," he yelled. "He's got some talking to do."

"But he was going to kill you!" Yerg shouted.

Yerg told more confident. A five-foot man. What luck

"Not without a gun, he won't," growled Lonit as he wrenched Yerg's gun away. He quickly stepped to Roj and handed him the vial. "Here, drink this," he said as he watched Yerg.



Roj began to drink. Yerg said, "Excuse me, gentlemen, I'll be in the control cabin." He walked away.

Yerg started to run as soon as he was out of their sight as his mind ran over various plans. He stopped before the storage tanks, turned, looked to see if anyone was watching and entered.

As he entered the tank, he was momentarily blinded by the darkness, but he managed to stumble to the right crate. He mumbled a word in Cogbyne, a language not heard much on a Mars-Earth ship, for Cogby was much farther away. A panel slid up in the crate, and a white head stuck out. It was immediately followed by a white body until at last the whole Cogbynian stood before him. Here was the murderer. A little white being from Cogby, who was being smuggled to Earth. They were very lucky creatures, and could be invaluable to gamblers. This fact made them items to smuggle to Earth. It also made them illegal.

"Why did you shoot Gis?" Yerg asked.

"He saw me," the Cogbynian said. "I could not let him get away. I would never get to Earth." Cogbynians always thought of Earth as the final word for heaven. They could use their psychic powers as freely as they wished. And they would get to see gambling. It is outlawed on their native planet, for obvious reasons.

"Why did you leave your crate then?" Yerg was almost shouting.

"I wanted to walk a little," the Cogbynian answered.

"Well, we're in trouble now, and we'll have to leave. I've got a safety ship I always keep ready."

"No," said the Cogbynian stubbornly, and Cogbynians can be as stubborn as they are lucky.

"I thought you wouldn't go," Yerg said, "so I made plans for you." He drew his ring gun out, while the Cogbynian just stood and stared at him, having never seen this kind of gun before. Yerg pulled the trigger, and ran out the door almost at the same time the little white body crumpled to the floor. As he ran

down the corridor he heard footsteps running toward the compartment.

He ran into the safety ship locker, and climbed into one of the ships. After opening the outer lock, he thought he would be safe. He could make it to the moon. His friends would hide him and after a little plastic surgery he would start over.

Roj and Lonit came running into the storeroom, and stopped short at the sight of the Cogbyzian. "So this is why he killed Gis, Roj exclaimed. "Gis must have found out. Poor thing; its luck didn't help much this time."

"No," Lonit said, "but Yerg's is. He's getting away." At the whine of the starting motor both men's thoughts turned to Yerg, and both to the safety ships. They rushed to the door of the safety ship locker, but couldn't open it because of the total vacuum inside. Slowly, as both men stood outside with each lingering second cutting through them and leaving a growing impatience, the air in the locker was replenishing as Yerg shot away in his ship. Then the light over the door stopped its blinking, and both men rushed into the locker.

"Quick: into this shop," ordered Lonit.

"No," shouted Roj. "Get in this larger one. We can catch him in it." Lonit nodded agreement, and both men climbed into the larger ship and quickly shot off into the black void in pursuit of Yerg.

"There he is," Roj yelled. "I'll radio back to the ship and call the guard."

"I'm going after him in a suit," said Lonit, quickly getting into a space rig. He entered the air lock and was blasting toward Yerg's ship in a matter of minutes. "I hope he makes it," thought Roj, "I'll be ready for him." ---

Ten minutes later Roj heard the clanking of the air lock again, and he knew Lonit -- or Yerg -- was coming in.

The air lock opened slowly, and Lonit stepped out. "Well," he said, "let's go back."

"Why?" asked Roj. There was a strange note in his voice.

"He knew he couldn't escape this large ship," Lonit hesitated; "So he opened his air lock," he finished, hanging his suit in its closet. "Cage closed," he added, turning toward Roj.



"Not quite," Roj put in. Lonit found himself looking into the barrel of Roj's gun. "You see, Lonit, I'm the real leader of this smuggling operation. Yerg was merely a pawn. It's too bad you went to his ship. You must have searched him."

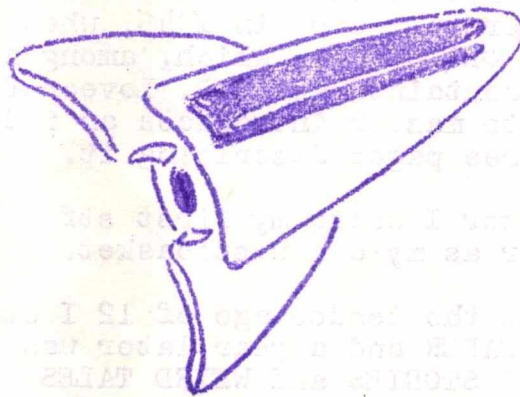
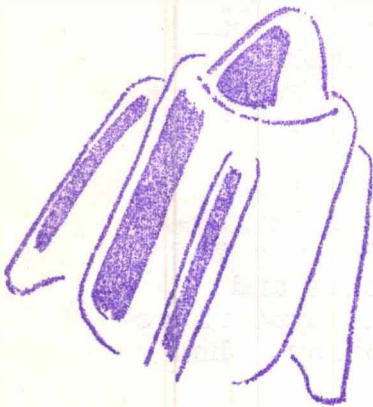
"Yes," said Lonit, "I knew. I was going to take you in now."

"But you won't," Roj laughed. "Because you can't." Roj pulled the trigger, and Lonit slumped to the floor.

A white head followed by a white body poked around the corner. "We go to Earth now?"

Roj nodded.

--- Gary H. Labowitz



G. -

# Bubbling Over

by FRANK ARTHUR KERR

The first appearance of BUBBLING OVER having met with a reasonably good reception, I guess it's safe to proceed. I don't want to turn this thing into a running autobiography, such as a few fan columns are. I've always held that what somebody has to say should stand or fall on its own merits, not on the basis of who's doing the talking.

Still, when a fan starts spouting, I like to know at least a little about him, and I guess you might be a little bit interested in me. SOooo...

I read my first science-fiction at the age of six, in 1941. It was a Better Little Book (remember them?) by Russ Winterbotham, titled MAXIMO THE AMAZING SUPERMAN versus the Super-machine. It was, obviously, a children's book, but it had an introduction on the general topic of supermen that might prove worth anyone's reading. Maximo was a psionic superman -- he could teleport, erect a mental force-field, etc.

Then there was the inevitable 20,000 Leagues, which I read in 1944. But my first real taste of modern, mature imaginative literature came in 1945, when I got my hands onto THE AVON GHOST-READER ... which, among assorted ghosties and ghoulies contained an H. P. Lovecraft story of the type where in the late master introduces an indescribable horror, then spends three pages describing it.

A year later I wrote my first stf -- a time-travel tale which got as far as my own wastebasket.

In 1947 at the tender age of 12 I started in with the AVON FANTASY READER and a year later was introduced by a friend to AMAZING STORIES and WEIRD TALES.

I was just a casual -- and occasional -- reader until 1950, however. For no reason in particular I bought the first issue of GALAXY, and was hooked for good.

I started subscribing to fanzines in 1951, and entered fandom myself shortly thereafter.

Or should I say 'dabbled into' fandom? Actually I've been operating around the fringes of fandom for five years, but I've never really jumped in with both feet and a warwhoop.

It takes three things to become a 102% fan: the time, the money, and the inclination. Somehow I've managed to have all three at various periods, but never all at once. And it doesn't look as if I ever will either.

But I read it, and I write it, and I have a pretty good collection of it. I derive from it pleasure, stimulation, relaxation. What more can I ask of stf?

#### THE PATTERN

In those five years I've published a couple of fanzines (short-lived flops, if you're wondering), written for perhaps a dozen (at most), and read quite a few more than that. And I've noticed a definite pattern among those many fanzines.

It's an odd thing, and tragic in a way, but that's how it is.

It seems that Joe Neofaned usually starts off with a great deal of enthusiasm and not much else. A typical first's h is poorly written, poorly edited, poorly put together, and (Lord save us!) almost invariably illegible.

He may be able to fool himself into thinking that the junk he presents is worth reading. He may be able to fool himself into thinking that his own editorial work and page layouts are passable. But how Joe can justify mailing an illegible magazine is simply beyond me. For judging the content, there may be a legitimate variance of standards and tastes. But if you can't read the fershluggineer type, if you can't see the farblunged pictures, then it doesn't matter if you've got Billie Shakespeare writing and Michelangelo illustrating for you -- the whole potrzebie thing is worthless!

The blast delivered, let's go back to Joe Neofaned's firstish. Having labored its faults for two paragraphs, let's consider and see if there's anything worthwhile in it. Well, as mentioned above, firstishes characteristically manifest a great amount of enthusiasm. Joe is certain that science-

fiction is the greatest thing that ever hit this old earth. And the fanzine is the highest form of science fiction. And Joe Neofaned's own GNOOP is going to be the greatest fanzine in history.

And for all its faults, GNOOP-1 can be saved by this vital quality of enthusiasm.

Then Joe gets the reviewers's reaction to GNOOP. Those reviewers who bother with GNOOP at all are unanimous in their condemnation. Joe is hurt. His fanzine, his darling, his little GNOOP panned? How can they be so cruel? Many a neo has given up at this point. And in many cases that was the smartest move he ever made.

But Joe is determined. He hangs on, grubbing for material, working far into the night. Turn that crank, punch that stapler.

And, miracle of miracles, GNOOP starts to show a little improvement. A few L(little)NEs start contributing. Joe, growing in editorial skill, handles his end a little better. GNOOP becomes legible, thanks to Joe's continuing practice on the whatever-he-uses-o-graph. Even the reviewers start to say encouraging things about GNOOP.

But on the debit side Joe notices that

- 1) Editing and publishing GNOOP is one hellavalotta work and bother,
- 2) GNOOP is losing a fortune,
- 3) Much of that enthusiasm that pervaded Joe during the early days of GNOOP is gradually fading away.



But our Joe continues to publish GNOOP, which gets better and better. The ENFs write for Joe now. GNOOP is reviewed all over the place favorably. The reproduction is sharp and clear. Circulation climbs.

And after a while on top, Joe asks himself: What do I need this for? Ego-boo? Not worth the work. Income? Ha! GNOOP costs more for one issue than

Sci. Am. v. 1954, p. 100. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

it brings in in a year. Fun? Yes, fun, if anything.

But there's the rub. For all its crudity and faults, the early GNOOP provided Joe with enough fun to make it worth all the time and work and money he could put into it. But now that GNOOP has reached its goal, now that it's the biggest and the best, it suddenly is more bother than it's worth!

So it starts coming out late ... misses an issue or two ... Joe struggles frantically to get back on top of it ... gets out an open letter pleading for time ... forces out a couple of 'dying gasp' editions ... and thus ends GNOOP.

There are exceptions to the pattern of course: FANTASY TIMES, PUNCH, OOPSIA. But the editors who have managed to break the cycle and stay on top are just a drop in the bucket compared to those who have started humbly, reached heights, and then been unable to stand the prosperity.

Say a prayer, John. Say a prayer, Ralph.

THE DIRTY PICTURE  
OR

This Section Ain't About What You Think It Is

Science fiction has lost two top illustrators in the last couple of years. They are Hannes Bok and Virgil Finlay. Two more different styles could hardly be found; each man in his own, original way, started a whole school of science fiction artwork.

Finlay had been a fixture in the WONDER family of magazines since the thirties. And as the years passed he also contributed covers and interiors to FFM and its affiliated magazines, AMAZING and FANTASTIC, SCIENCE FICTION PLUS, and many others. His works continued to appear until a few months ago, when it was announced that he had left freelance work in the s-f field for a full-time commercial job.

Bok, the fair-haired newcomer of the early forties, started at a peak most artists can never reach -- and went up from there. His work appeared on covers and interiors as late as 1953. The last Bok of which I know (I may be wrong) was the excellent cover and interior he did for Jack Williamson's "Hocus-Focus Universe" in the first issue of SCIENCE STORIES.

The alleged reason for Bok's exit is that s-f simply didn't pay enough to make ends meet. "Labor for love" the idealists

will reply, but you can't pay the rent with love. Or can you? Apparently Bok couldn't.



But the disappearances of Finlay and Bok are just two unhappy items in an overall disheartening picture. Just look at the list of artists who have died, quit or retired from stf in the past few years: Cartier, Schomberg, St. John, Paul, Bergy, Bonstell, Salter. Who's left? A bunch of ink-smearers who at best are mediocre and at average would be better off digging ditches.

Kelly-Preas probably takes first place, not by any great ability on his part, but simply by default. Ed Valigursky is competent. But that's all that can be said for him. John Giuntia is about as inspiring as a Gornsbach editorial. Enshwiller should come in for mention on the basis of sheer prolificness, but there's not much call these days for walking corpses -- and that's about all Ed can draw. Mel Hunter is another barely competent hack.

Any up-and-coming youngsters? Bleisdell shows signs of becoming a steady third-rater. Hornstein is 'arty' but not much good. All in all, now that the field of science fiction seems to be coming out of the doldrums, the once-leading art department appears determined to finish a distant 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### PLUG

Collecting does strange things to a person. Whether he is intrigued by stamps, antique furniture, steam automobiles or matchbook covers, a collector in quest of his hobby is a changed man.

The most sedate, timid individuals have been known to swindle, steal, and even murder when under the influence of collecting.

My nominee for the title of the SF Collector's Best Friend is one Richard Witter, better known as the F&SF Book Company of 204 Rice Avenue, Staten Island, New York.

There are several other stf-specializing agencies -- Werewolf Bookshop, Brad Day,  
(12)



- 1) It saves the reader, in his search for literary wheat, from much of the time and expense of sifting out chaff.
- 2) As analysis it may help the reader to better understand what he is reading. This may sound like the critic talking down to his reader, but it is not. It is the addition of another point-of-view on the matter in question, and this usually helps.
- 3) Much criticism is good reading matter in itself, exclusive of the matter under surveillance.

But to get back to this 'unfair' criticism. Any editor sets up certain goals or standards for himself. He then strives to reach or maintain them. They may be almost anything: entertainment, education, social significance, technical extrapolation, or what have you. To my knowledge no two editors have exactly the same goals, although in some cases they are very close. Perhaps the only goal which is universal is to be interesting.

Now just as the editor first sets certain goals and then tries to reach them, you can criticize either

- a) his goals, as too high, not high enough, too constricted, not constricted enough, too anything, or not anything enough, or simply as 'wrong' (whatever that means) in any way you see fit; or
- b) his efforts and/or failures in meeting these goals.

What you cannot do -- and here is where many honest-intentioned and perhaps otherwise competent or even outstanding fan-critics go astray -- what you cannot do is criticize an editor for failing to meet your standards (all you can do in this case is grumble a subjective "I don't like him" and get your reading matter elsewhere) or some other editor's standards, or any other standards than his own.

Now to get down to specific cases; who are the main victims of this unfair criticism? (or criticism, anyway, the unfairness of which I shall try to demonstrate)

Nobody, but nobody, is entirely exempt from Campbell to Handling and back again. But the most maligned three (of late) are Horace Gold of GALAXY, Howard Browne of AMAZING and FANTASTIC, and Ray Palmer of OTHER WORLDS (let us consider MYSTIC as beyond the scope of this discussion).

Well, now, taking the cases in order let's see if we can figure out what Mr. Gold's goals are. The current standard of GALAXY seems to be sociological extrapolation of current

and/or probable future trends, and the study of their socio- and psycho- logical results. The main emphasis is almost entirely on human reaction. The scientific angles turn on such 'sciences' as sociology, psychology, psionics, and related matters. Yet Mr. Gold is pilloried for not making the aliens alien enough, for not giving sufficient play to the physical sciences, for every conceivable sin.

How many of GALAXY's critics base their detractions on Mr. Gold's not meeting his own standards? Perhaps fifteen percent, probably less. And how many criticize those standards themselves? At most twenty-five percent

And those remaining, more than half of the critics, wherein do they base their criticism? They decide what they think GALAXY's standards ought to be, and then they revile poor Horace for not meeting them.

How about Howard Browne and his twins? Howard's current standards are those of the space opera. Lots of speed and action, considerable gore and a bit of sex to liven things up, adventure with weird alien creatures and worlds, and plenty of strong, easily-grasped conflict.

Yet here again come the unfair attacks. AMAZING's and FANTASTIC's stories are raked over for not being sociologically significant, for not having deep meaning; in short, for being simply action and adventure tales. Yet that is precisely what they are supposed to be.

So once again we see critics neither attacking Browne's goals nor his efforts to attain them, but instead setting up their own standards and castigating Browne for not meeting them.

And in the third case, that of RAP, fen blast OTHER WORLDS for its showmanship and promotonial activities (Joe Gibson cleverly calls the whole thing Ray Palmer's Medicine Show) when they have their own ideas of how Palmer should operate the magazine.

But do they attack Ray's goals? No. (Remember, I am talking of some critics, not all) As usual, they set up their standards and criticize the other fellow for not meeting them.

Now, having rushed to defend these three poor defenseless editors, do I think them perfect? Far from it.

I criticize Gold for failing to meet the universal standard



of being interesting. GALAXY for some time has been insufferably dull, and what ever else I may allow an editor to do, I will not let him bore me. I will put his magazine aside first, as I have done with GALAXY.

I criticize Browne for selecting foals that are too narrow. His magazines are interesting and entertaining but that is all they are, and that is not sufficient; and for this inadequacy in his selected goals, I criticize Browne.

And Palmer I attack for his retreat to babbling, hellfire-spouting mysticism in the attempt to reach his showman's and promoter's goals.

So I do not say that these three are above attack. I myself rake one of them over for setting poor goals and the other two for failing to meet their own otherwise acceptable standards.

I do not say not to strike at any and all offenders you may wish to point out. But at least be fair. Fight if you must, but keep it clean.

-- Frank Arthur Kerr

#### THE SCIENCE FICTION MOVIE

Greatest Thing Since Benjamin Franklin Decided Not to Invent  
the Motion Picture

What brings money to the ticket office in a steady pour?  
What makes the sneering critics ask for more and more and more?  
What packs the biggest movie-house from door to gilded door?  
Why, Hollywood extravaganzas do all that, of course!  
And what do little kiddies always rush to see?  
What kind of picture's heroes do they always want to be?  
What shows do little monsters strain their eyes at on TV?  
Well, western movies, natch! Monroe, you'd better get a horse!  
And how about the neofen who come from every clime  
To see a special kind of show -- They'll do it every time! --  
And spend their hard earned dough on, to the last two-headed dime?  
"You goof, it's girlie movies," cry the pop-eyed neofen!

But which ones do producers hate (their first's always their last)?  
Which shows do ladies run from, just because they're so aghast?  
Not at the monstrous bems, but at the awful plot and cast.  
Just read this poem's title, brother - here's where I came in!

-- Alan C. Elms

# CAPSULES

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## Fanzine Reviews by Gerald Knight

There is given a star for each item in the following list: reproduction, format, material, art work, and the general opinion I got from reading the zine. An 'O' denotes needed improvement.

Sigma Octantis #2      Repro: O      Art Work: O  
you-know-where-you-      Format: \*      General: \*\*\*  
can-get-it.              Material: \*

I would say that it is more than strange to see a review of a mag in the same mag, but I see no reason why not. I enjoyed this issue but feel that it lacks a bit in its art work. A lettering guide would help, too.

INSIDE AND SEA      Repro: \*      25¢ each  
Ron Smith              Format: \*      5 for \$1.  
611 West 114th St.      Material: \*  
Apt. 3B-310              Artwork: \*  
New York 25, N.Y.      General: \*\*\*

FESCHENWINE              Repro: \*      Intended for OMPA.  
Mike Wallace              Format: O      I think it is given  
c/o Marcus Bishop      Material: O      away free.  
267 Hossle Road          Artwork: O  
Kull, Yorkshire,          General: \*\*  
England.

ALICE                      Repro: \*      Said to be the poor  
Kent Corey                  Format: OO      man's playboy. It  
Pox 64                      Material: O      is. Lots of girly  
Enid                          Artwork: O      drawings, so as to  
Okla.                          General: \*\*      look sexy. It isn't.  
20¢ each. 7 for \$1.

VIEING                      Repro: O      Vieing is a general  
Wayne Strickland          Format: \*      zine, one of many. How-  
Apt. C                      Material: \*      ever, each zine has a  
Bldg. 113,                      Artwork: O      distinct personality,  
U.S. Naval Base              General: \*\*\*      and so it is with Vieing.  
New Orleans 14, La.          10¢ each. 3 for 25¢

TYPO  
Walt Bowart  
306 E. Hickory  
Enid,  
Okla.

Repro: \*  
Format: \*  
Material: 0  
Art Work: ?  
General: \*\*

Much like ALICE. Tries  
to be much sexy. I get  
more sex walking down  
MainSt. Phoey!  
15¢ each; 60¢ a year.

HI!  
Eva Firestone  
Box 515,  
Upton,  
Wyoming.

Repro: \*  
Format: \*  
Material: \*  
Artwork: 0  
General: \*\*\*

A fine zine for ISFCC  
members. Mostly letters  
and chit-chat with art  
by the ed. Needs more  
variety.  
Free to ISFCCers.

ECLIPSE  
Ray Thompson  
410 S. 4th St.  
Norfolk,  
Nebraska.

Repro: \*\*  
Format: \*  
Material: 0  
Artwork: \*  
General: \*\*\*\*

Very pleasant. Shows  
a lot of work, and  
has very fine mim-  
eographing. Worth  
the money.  
10¢ each; 6 for 50¢.

ALPHA  
Jan Jansen  
229 Berchomlei  
Borgerhout  
Antwerp,  
Belgium.

Repro: \*  
Format: 0  
Material: \*  
Artwork: \*  
General: \*\*\*\*

Still his silly self.  
Has good repro and  
really funny cartoons.  
(For a change.) The  
only (far as I know)  
English zine from the  
continent.  
60¢ yearly to:

Dick Ellington  
113 W. 84th St. #51 E.  
New York 24, N. Y.

44-40 OR FIGHT  
Lee Hoffman  
(blush) can't  
find (blush) the  
address ....  
// (blush) neither  
can we (blush) -eds.

Repro: \*\*\*  
Format: \*\*\*  
Material: \*\*\*  
Artwork: \*\*  
General: \*\*\*\*

Funniest zine I've  
ever seen. A FAPA  
mailing, so all you  
non-FAPAns should  
send Lee (if you know  
her address) a buck  
bribe or something.

UNDERTAKINGS

Samuel Johnson  
1843 Embassy Dr.  
Jacksonville,  
Florida.

Repro: \*  
Format: \*  
Material: \*  
Artwork: \*  
General: \*\*\*\*

A four star pub. Lots  
of work must go into  
this one, too...just-  
ified...best shading  
plate work...good mat-  
erial.  
15¢ each.

THE NEW FUTURIAN  
John Rosenblum  
7, Grosvenor Park  
Chapel-Allerton,  
Leeds 7, England.

Repro: \*  
Format: 0  
Material: 0  
Artwork: 0  
General: \*\*

Another English sine.  
Nuff said?  
Good cover thish.  
15¢ each.

FAPHRD

Ed Cox                      Ron Ellik  
115 1/2 19th St. 277 Pomona Ave.  
Hermosa Beach Long Beach 3,  
California.

Re: \*  
For: 0  
Mat: \*  
Art: \*  
Gen: \*\*\*

Free? Goes to  
FAPA but is also  
free to some, maybe  
drop a line.  
Very neat and ple-  
asant. Has an art-  
icle about H.P.L.

sCINTILLation  
Mark Schulzinger  
6791 Meadow Ridge Ln.  
Amberley Village,  
Ohio.

Repro: 0  
Format: \*  
Material: \*  
Artwork: 0  
General: \*\*\*\*

Has a wonderful shot  
of Cleveland Sten-  
ofaxed on the cover.  
Really fine. Some  
heavy material on rel-  
igion.  
25¢ each; 10 for \$1.

-- Gerald Knight

And a couple by the editors:

WWHIMSY  
Ron Voigt  
3859 Sullivan  
St. Louis, Mo.

Repro: \*  
Format: \*\*  
Material: \*  
Artwork: none  
General: \*\*\*\*


A poetry mag, this.  
Good science-fantasy  
and non science-fan-  
tasy material. Try  
it. \$1.25 per year.

FANTASY TIMES  
Fandom House  
P.O. Box 2331  
Paterson 23,  
New Jersey.

Repro: \*  
Format: \*  
Material: \*\*\*  
Artwork: none  
General: \*\*\*\*\*

The oldest and best  
newzine serving fan-  
dom. A must for  
all who are interested  
in the pro field.  
\$2 yearly (24 issues)

ANOTHER KIND, Chad Oliver. Ballantine #113, 35¢.

Pb  
  
It is a book like this that starts me off on my tirade against anthologists who reprint stories published so recently. The oldest story in Another kind was printed in 1953. Two are copyrighted 1954, two, 1955 and two are new ones. It's not that the content matter is not of high quality, but that the only purpose this anthology will serve to most readers is as a convenient cover under which the best of the recent Oliver stories may be found.

BY JDM  
Of the two new ones, I consider "A Star Above It" the better. It betrays the same knowledge of anthropology used in another Chad Oliver - Ballantine book, Shadows in the Sun. Although not new in theme (agent goes back in time to remove person of same era who threatens to disrupt time line), writing power and anthropological knowledge combine to make it better than "The Mother of Necessity", a tale wherein people elect the way in which they are to live.

Of the remaining five (the reprints), two ("Transformer" and "Artifact") are from the M of F and SF, one is from Astounding ("Rite of Passage"), one from If ("Night"), and one from Sci-Fi Plus ("Hands Across Space").

Verdict - The story quality is high, but, except as a collection piece, this book will be of no use to fans who keep up with the prozines.

THE SPACE FRONTIERS, Roger Lee Vernon. Signet #1224, 25¢.

I have never before heard of the author of this one, and I can't, in the sources at my command, find anything about him. The book is advertised as a collection of "never-before-published tales by a brand-new superlative storyteller". The foregoing quotation reads well until the word 'superlative' pops up: it is rare, if ever, that a new writer will put forth superlative



work; and Vernon is not an exception.

The main 'theme' of this book is extrapolation. Unfortunately, however, it is in a large part repetitious, various facts being repeated in each piece. If you don't know what Mr. Vernon's concept of what the space ship and population will be, you'll never know.

The plotting is somewhat outdated. Such thud and blunder space opera, such swooping of ships, such one-man heroism and blasting of rays as are in the first piece "Battle" (actually more of an incident than a story) I have not seen for quite some time. Time travel, a force field to stop time, a one-man-saves-all, and population troubles are all represented.

Too, the writing of some of the tales does not merit anthologizing. Some is outdated, and a little is downright corn. But some shows promise. If Vernon were to sell a few stories to some periodicals and retrieve some criticism, I believe he would benefit from it.

Verdict: Premature.

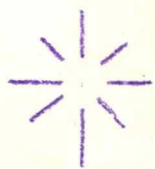
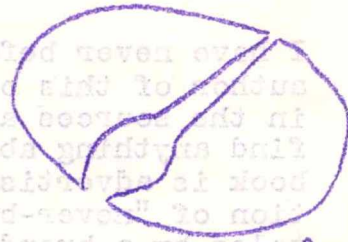
SELECTIONS FROM DEEP SPACE, Eric Frank Russell. Bantam  
#1362, 25¢.

As far as I know, DEEP SPACE is the first Russell anthology. He's had several novels (SINISTER BARRIER, SENTENTIALS FROM SPACE, DREADFUL SANCTUARY) put out between hard covers, but as for short stories, this is his first.

And a better array of Russell they couldn't have chosen. The stories, which range in date of publication from 1941 to '52, give the reader a vivid impression of the author's provocative writing and timely wit. He is a master in this latter, having developed the talent of putting just enough humor in the right places. If a few of his contemporaries would try this, I be-

lieve they would find that they can keep the plot moving interestingly along without being either boring or ridiculous.

You'll find a varied Russell here. From light to deep writing. But an element can be found in each story, an element which I, for one, consider



-22-  
the word 'supervillain' is used in the book to describe a character who is a villain but who is also a hero.

important: a good, firm idea. Practically none of Russell's works are 'pure' entertainment; when you put down a Russell, there is usually something to mull over; and that 'something' won't be forgotten too soon.

Verdict: From these quarters, recommended.

FAR AND AWAY, Anthony Boucher. Ballantine #109, 35¢.

This is, for the most part, light reading, humor and fantasy with an interesting touch. It doesn't leave the reader sighing and gasping under clashes of emotions or involved in deep philosophy or science; it doesn't carry the reader across the galaxy and back, racing with the hero against time or ahead of the destruction of the world; it doesn't plant within the reader's mind radical, new ideas for thought; but it does slow him down a bit, and relaxe him with well-written, easy-going tales of fantasy, satire and the supernatural. Here is entertainment.

But this isn't saying that there isn't enough here to keep the reader's interest. Each of the eleven in this collection is skillfully done and keeps the reader with it until the last, but if it's 'deep' sci-fi you like, this won't be for you.

Verdict: You won't regret buying it, but then four or five years from now you won't remember it either.

-CITED-

- 1.) THE MAN WHO UPSET THE UNIVERSE, Isaac Asimov. Ace #D-125, 35¢.
- 2.) THREE FACES OF TIME and THE STARS ARE OURS! , Sam Merwin, jr. and Andre Norton. Ace #D-121, 35¢.
- 3.) THE CAVES OF STEEL, Isaac Asimov. Signet #S1240, 35¢.
- 4.) THE GIRLS FROM PLANET 5, Richard Wilson. Ballantine #117, 35¢.
- 5.) SCIENCE FICTION TERROR TALES, edited by Groff Conklin. Pocket Books #1045, 25¢.

Pocketbooks which are unobtainable at your local bookstore may generally be ordered direct from the publishers.

So cometh the second installment of ANPHW. I hope that it has improved, or at least, not gotten any worse ... although on second thought, the latter would be hard, if not impossible, to accomplish. I'd intended to devote some time and space to dissecting the GALAXY serial, "Preferred Risk", but the latest issue didn't arrive, so that stopped that. Ditto for EFRussell's serial in ASF ....

And

Whether

The 'dream' issue of FANTASTIC that Browne has bally-hooed so much was more of a nightmare, I thought. It was the same old F, with the only difference being that all of the stories were on the same theme. They were poor, for the most part, and so were the illustrations. I am getting more and more disgusted with Browne as AS & F get worse. He was forced, I'll admit, to adopt space opera, but even thud and blunder can be well written and interesting. His aren't.

Pigs

What magazine would you say printed the most good stories during the year of 1950? ASF? TWS? You'd be wrong, I think. The old reliable hack mag itself, FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, earned that distinction. Do I hear horrified yells of disbelief in the background? Let's take a glance at the record:

have

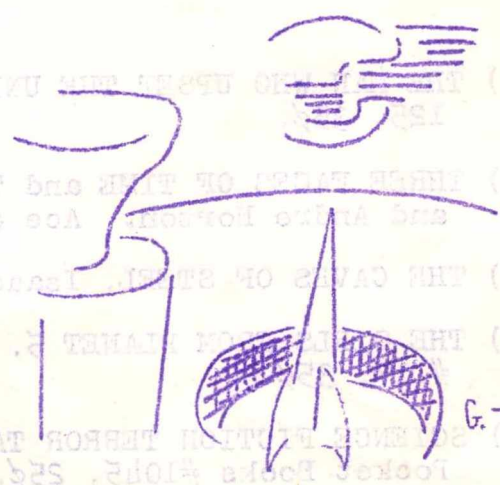
TWS had James Blish's "There Shall Be No Darkness", an admitted near-classic. Eric F. Russell's "First Person Singular", Cleve Cartmill's 'Space Salvage' series, Harness' fast-moving if confusing "The New Reality", and a few Bradbury shorts were the standouts of that year. The others in my opinion, aren't good enough to rate special mention.

Wings

STARTLING, you say? I don't think so. The Captain Future novelets were fair, much better than I had expected -- van Vogt's "Shadow Men", McDonald's "Wine of the Dreamers", and Ray Jones' "The Cybernetic Brains" were the novels worth

BY BARRY CARDNER

pointing out. L. Ron Hubbard's "Tough Old Man", Leiber's "The Black Ewe", and possibly Jack Vance's novel were good also. These two records are nothing to sneer at, I'll agree. AMAZING had only one story that I thought outstanding, and that was Leiber's novel, "Let Freedom Ring".





OTHER WORLDS? Close, but no cigar. They had Russell's classic "Dear Devil"; the almost equally well-known story by Ray Bradbury, "Way in the Middle of the Air". A. E. van Vogt's, "Enchanted Village" and "Automation" along with S. J. Byrne's 'Cerberus' trilogy were highlights. There is nothing in PLANET, I think, although I may be disputed. GALAXY, IMAGINATION, and WORLDS BEYOND all had too few issues to be rated. ASP had O'Donnell's "Promised Land", Wilmar Shiras' "New Foundations", two novelets in Blish's 'Okie' series, vV's "Wizard of Linn", Piper's "Last Enemy", Leiber's "Lion and the Lamb". Truly a great line-up.

And now to my choice. A word of warning - some of the stories I list are fantasy, but I don't think that that should detract from their enjoyment. First, St. Reynard's "The Ursurpers". It's one of the best known of the alien-invasion type, and justifiably so; then Sturgeon's great novel, "The Dreaming Jewels". Charles Myer's "Shades of Toffee" is one of the fantasy choices, and many people have expressed dislike of the type. However, I think it's one of the funniest fantasies I've read. The next is by Fritz Leiber, and for some reason has never been widely mentioned. It's "...You're all Alone", and as terrifying a story as he's written. Another fantasy, and a well-known one, is none other than Hubbard's "Sleeves of Sleep". Bloch's "The Devil With You", is a 'Toffee'-type story, and is included because it made me laugh. (As you may have gathered by now, I'm a sucker for a story patterned after Thorne Smith) St. Reynard's "Mistress of the Djinn" was chosen because it was enjoyable. All of the above were novels or novelets. Shorts? William Tenn's "The Remarkable Fingleflip", Mack Reynolds' "Lurver", Leiber's "The Ship Sails at Midnight", and Darloth's "The Fifth Child". That's the line-up, and the defense rests. Any arguments?

At the time I'm writing this, Larry Shaw's new mag INFINITY is out, I suppose. I haven't been able to find a copy myself, but others have mentioned it. It's the first step forward in a long time, and even if the mag is of poor quality, I'm glad to see it. With AMAZING planning to go monthly and put out a giant annual, it looks like things are picking up, indeed. However, with AMAZING, (unless it changes) it'll be that much more crud.

Silly totes are beginning to gyre and gimbel before my eyes, and everything's getting quite brilling. Of course, that might be poor light or lack of brains, but in any case, I suppose I had better gyre on off myself. Toodeloo . . .

--- Barry Gardner

# the Climb

by John Stopa

The Mountain reaches high over our head, its top in the coldly blazing stars. And we - I - climb.

As I look down over what I have climbed, I see myself as I was and am. I was - am - doing one thing: climbing.

Down there -- there at the bottom, I am strangely youthfull and brutish, struggling to free myself from the jungle of my birth. But the vines and boughs entangle me and the struggle is hard.

And there, just free of the jungle, I am starting to climb, and dispair comes easy; every two steps up the clay slope draws me back one. And my hands are filthyed in the effort.

Higher, over there, the mountain is no longer clay greasy, but it grows rocky and my hands are bloodied. And still I climb.

Above me on the rocks I see me climbing over the mountain which is now steel and broken glass. And the climbing becomes easier and harder: the cold steel makes firmer steps, but the glass slashes deeply, and the desire for each step is less.

And now I am here and it is time to take another step. I take it, and there is much pain. The pain is less than before -- I am learning where the glass lies, but there is always new glass.

I look back at where I have been, and paradox! I see myself more clearly for being the further away.

Down there -- there in the jungle -- I see myself doing more than struggling to start the climb; I am sitting cross-legged and content. I am yelling and screaming at myself to stay in the jungle, and I am fearfull and cringing, crawling back to the darkness from whence I have come.

And over the jungle I am climbing in the clay, I am throwing clay at myself that is climbing, and I am digging a hole and climbing into it and wondering why it caves in and crushes me.

Higher, I am climbing over the rock, and I am trying to hold back myself that is climbing, and I am building a wall of stone around me, and wondering why I am so lonely.

Above me on the rocks I am climbing on the cold steel and sharp glass, and I am strewing sharp glass under the feet of me that is climbing, and I am trying to blast a ledge into the cold steel and wondering why I dissolve into nothingness.

And here and there I turn back and longingly look at the Bëgining, and then I try to descend, but I always fall. And the higher I am, the further I fall, the harder I land.

And now I turn and look upward. And I see my shadow against the stars. My shadow is high on the mountain, reaching for the aching glory of the star drenched universe, and I wonder if I ever will reach the top. Then I know I cannot; for if I do, I will die: only the climb has meaning.

And I thrust away the shackles of me that does not wish to climb, and I take another step upward.



-- Jon Stopa

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