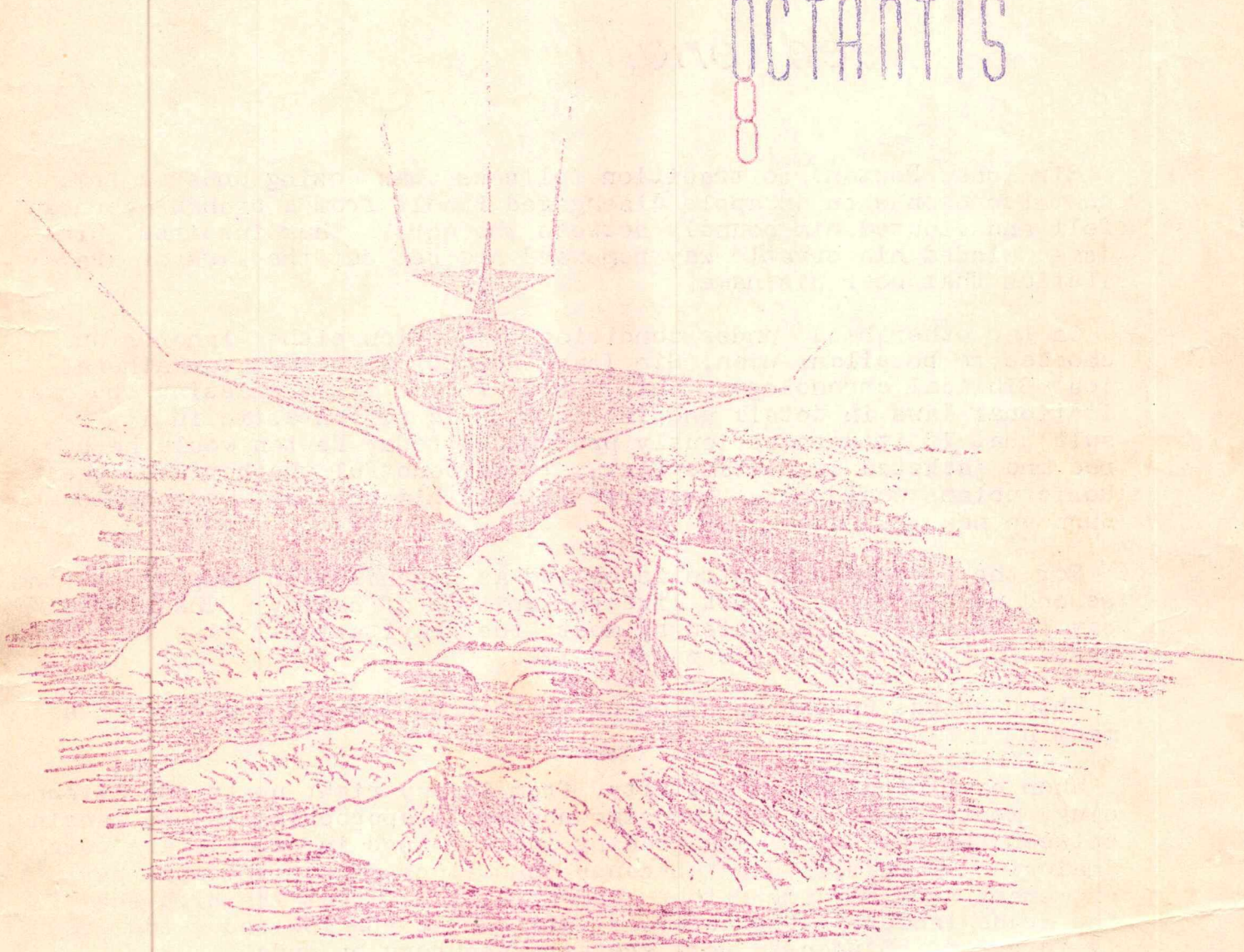


SIGMA  
OCTANTIS



Simpson '57

# bubbling over

...editorially

Sir Isaac Newton, so tradition tells us, was dozing under a tree one afternoon when an apple disengaged itself from a branch overhead, fell and clouted him soundly between the ears. Thus inspired, Sir Isaac wended his erratic way homeward and set out the laws of gravitation that bear his name.

On the other hand, under conditions tradition either ignores or chooses to be silent upon, Sir Isaac worked out a massive mathematical-Biblical chronology. This mental feat - far surpassing the gravitational laws in detail and intricacy - is so fantastic in its result that if it were seriously propounded today Newton would be barred and jacketed in no time flat. It is doubtful whether even the Resurrectionists would have the nerve to call him brother, were he to turn up now.

For the first act, Newton is hailed as a genius; in comparison, the second makes Rasputin look like the epitome of sanity. The chronology is mercifully forgotten by most; the gravitational laws form the basis for many of today's physics laws.

Which brings up the question of whether Newton was a genius or a madman.

When examining mental activity, from idiocy right up to the astounding, mental acts tend to be pigeonholed in appropriate slots ranging between the extremes. The grading systems used in schools are rough analogies of this. (Rough because schools grade for the most part on memory and learning rather than creativity.) At the high end of the grade ladder is the superior rating; at the low end, the grossly inferior. Students' work are arranged rung by rung.

There is little doubt at all that Newton's gravitational laws are works worthy of the term applied to them. In the first place, they are objectively valid. They conform strictly with reality.

---

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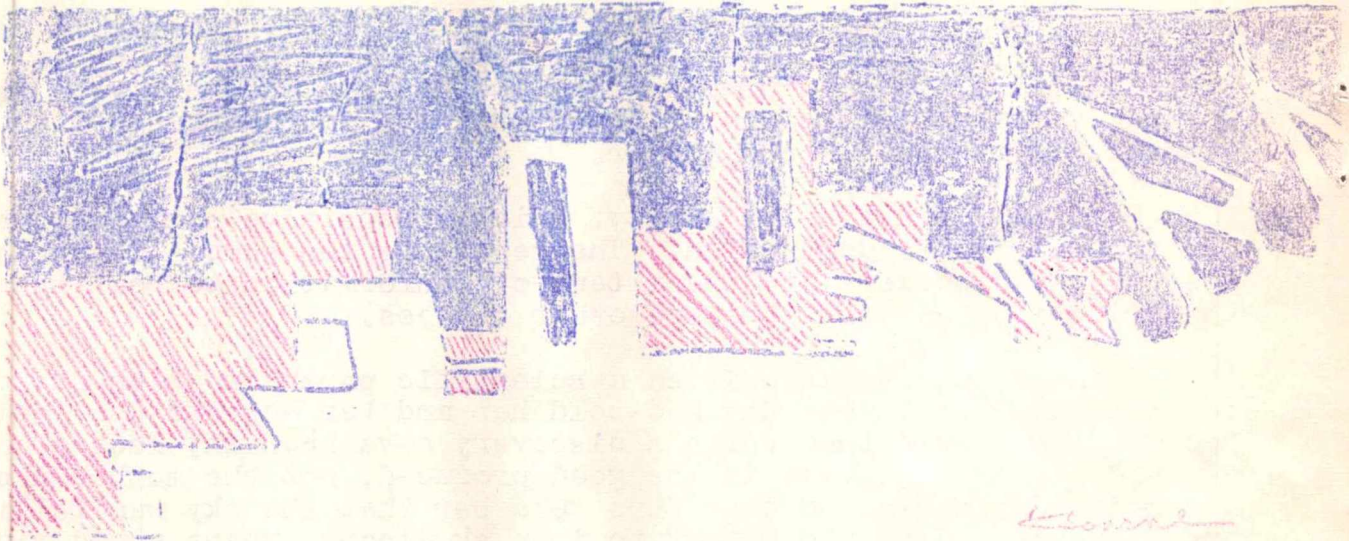
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In short, they work. In the second place they are natural laws; nature in no instance flaunts even one of them. But on the other hand his chronology carries all the objective authority of three inmates' all claiming to be Napoleon.

The individual act itself, then, is the test of mental stability. does the work result in a reasonable, valid discovery? If not, it is per se the result of unbalanced reasoning.

This same conclusion can be reached from another direction. A factor which separates man from animal is man's rationality, his ability to reason from a problem to the solution of that problem by way of the mental concept of means. Thus an Aborigine ejected into a rain-storm with a couple of slabs of lumber would have little difficulty solving the problem of erecting a shelter. Any lower animal - primates included - would drown before putting one board against another, unless previously trained.

Sanity is nothing more than the proper use of mental powers. Insanity, on the other hand, covers the very enormous field of their improper use, including emotional imbalance, conscious rejection of reality, etc. (A physically damaged brain may be termed insane: that is, not responsible for its action: apart from the concept of sanity.)

Sir Isaac, in the formulation of his laws of gravity, couldn't have been acting more sanely. He obeyed the evidence of his senses - i.e. objective reality - and he solved his problem logically, using mental means to an end.

In his chronology, however, he demonstrated the same degree of logic, but emerged with a grossly less valid conclusion, the rea-

son being that he began with an illogical promise. Ask the mathematician what the answer to his calculus problem is when he begins with the objectively invalid premise that two and two equals five. Ask him how much help his banks of computers were in coming up with an objectively valid - sane - answer.

Genius is a degree of sanity. Highly sensitive sanity if we've got to grope for a definition. The tests are the same. The uniqueness of the discovery and the extent of conformation to reality are the criterion that set it above other degrees.

If Madam Curie had written a scientific paper in which she claimed Zeus had dropped in one day and told her and her husband the facts about radium, would the Curie's discovery have been any less a one of genius? Again, the test is the good produced, not the method used. Had Madam Curie claimed that Zeus told her that the sky was falling and that mankind should revert to iron skullcaps, there would rightly have been a swift phone call and out she would have been ushered, quietly.

History, in fact, is peppered with geniuses who attributed their their inspiration to 'voices' and spiritual beings. Martin Luther was one. Blake was another. Socrates claimed he was sent by the gods to instruct man on the subject of proper thinking, yet our processes of reasoning are based in large part on the clarity of expression Socrates inaugurated. St. Joan of Arc attributed the decisions for her acts to St. Catherine. In every case the truth thought to be revealed by these supersensory beings were conclusions which could have been reached by unaided natural intelligence. And in each case the person explaining his acts as being carried out as per orders from superior beings was under severe mental strain, usually fighting for his ideals alone, invariably in the minority.

And this brings up two drawbacks of most mental giants. The first is the attitude of extreme innocence characteristic of almost all of them. Napoleon is perhaps the only outstanding example of a genius who realized the world would rest much easier at news of his death. Socrates' speech to his accusers clearly shows him as a man unable to comprehend why it was necessary to the Atheneans to have him out of the way. St. Joan went to the stake thoroughly without knowledge of why she had been condemned.

The second, and most important, limitation of most geniuses is that they are so mechanically, so damnably consistantly right. And no one, even the comparatively intelligent - and especially the comparative dullard - likes being regularly proven stupid. It is both a humiliating thing and a fearful thing to have an enormous intelligence around who gives no assuring guarantee of benevolence. And fear of what might be done drives men faster than what has been done. Shown someone so inexplicably superior as Christ and a violent collision is bound to take place. Christ is furnished his cross, Socrates

his herlock, Joan her stake and countless other martyrs to their own superiority their respective methods of purging mankind of their presences. It is a tribute to Napoleon that he managed to die in bed.

Not all geniuses are whacked down so violently by mankind, of course. Many are born, live and die without being more to their fellow man than a name or a photograph. The difference lies in the amount of nuisance the particular individual makes of himself. Most working in the arts and sciences find little trouble in getting along with the great majority of their contemporaries. Those who work in areas closer to the sore spots of mankind - religion, the military, etc. - find progress a great deal more difficult.

Probably because of this ingrained fear of mental superiority, genius has come to be synonymous with a different breed of man. Humanity has a long history of setting above and apart from itself that which it cannot understand. But Genius has nothing to do with size of the brain or extra nodes in the brainpan. In fact, one of the largest brains on record is that of an idiot, and one of the smallest that of a French genius. The factor that sets some above others in mentality is the state of mind, not fundamental physical differences.

We all of us have the germ of genius. Everyone has had the vague but distinct feeling of having himself experienced the thoughts and emotions he sees conveyed in a work of genius. The truths he half discovered he finds set and polished by sensitivity. Most see life vaguely; genius catches its overtones with clarity.

## contributor notes



One of the most remembered items received here last year was a poetry chapbook from Henry Penny Press. This was Carl Larsen's 'Notes from a Machine Ship.' It was a 19 poem delineation of man and mechanization and contained some of the staccato blank verse written on the subject. Carl Larsen, who has won the Rosemary DeCamp Award, appears twice this issue. He continues his work both in his own journal EXISTENTIAL and in other little magazines. Frank (continued page 43)

# A Weaponic History

THE TANGLE GUN, as we all know, was invented by Ivan Lockner for Federated Earth Forces in 3064 A.D. It was used with great success in putting down the uprisings of the blue-streaked Peytons, without a single lost life, in the War of Secession of the Jovian Moons. Virginanna Korgelessky, Co-starring General of the Third Russian Star Batallion, tells in his memoirs of a hilarious incident that occurred during the insurrection. It seems that two Peytons were frabbling during a black-out period on Callisto, and quite near an eight man scout-post. These two Peytons synoped up a nude energy form of Gina Carasel, beauteous sex-star of television fame. The form drifted into the scout-post area, quite startling the men on duty there.

The extreme jollity of the whole affair is that three of the guards were seduced before a quick-witted lieutenant realized, while standing in line that it was not a true flesh form. Needless to say, a report of this never reached Wash-Cow.

In Dr. Yergman Bradlock's collection of very ancient writings there is a tattered remnant of a record written in 1953 A.D. that speaks of the use of a 'tangle gun.' It was written by one F.L.Wallace, believed to be one of the leaders of a fanatic cult of those most ancient times. Our histrionics experts are at a loss to explain this remark-



ADKINS -



able reference to such a weapon. This ancient record bears the heading 'Galaxy', but does not tell us which galaxy.

**THE FREEZER HAND RIFLE** came into existence through the efforts of Harold Brassman, a fourteen-year-old engineer. In his spare time he enjoyed designing weapons, and in 3723 A.D. he built the hand-rifle out of some spare parts in his third-sub-level home laboratory. The 'freezer has been modified many times and is still used by our law enforcers today. It is particularly useful in this pursuit because it can be used, if so dialed, to paralyze only a small part of the body without permanantly harming the person. Brassman received the Blue-badge Award for his invention in 3730 A.D. and a modest token of thanks (\$10,000,000) from Governmental Head of Earth-sector Five.

He later entered the academic life and for forty years was a distinguished lecturer at Wakefield College. Unfortunately, in his late years Brassman was denounced and dismissed by the Board of Graft of that illustrious institution for his stand on the Palmerian influence upon "I Remember Lemuria" by the immortal Richard S. Shaver. Brassman dared to make the accusation at the 698th Congress of Intellectuals that Palmer hand actually written a minute part of the Lemuria classic. Brassman was indicted and sued by the Shaver Jelly-Bean Industries, Confederated Shaver Tabernacles, Shaver Comic-Book Combine and the Shaver Missionary Societies for two million dollars each. Local 907 of the Eastern Prostitute's Union promptly elected the long-dead Shaver Proxy-President and sued Brassman for an additional two million dollars. Poor Brassman died in poverty and dishonor.

**THE VIBRO BEAM** was the product of research of two galactically known studiologists, F.M.B.Z. Stophenhaufensteffer III, B.A., M.A., Phd., and J. Krantz. This most deadly weapon was created for the Peace to the Planets Foundation in the fifty-fourth year of the 42nd century. Each of the two gentlemen received three and a half credits for their invention (small remuneration it is true, but the Foundation had had a frightfully bad year). Unfortunately both men were later dematerialized for the armed robbery of a fishmonger. However, a few years later, in a wild bid for power of the Foundation, Herman Fen, Peace-Promoter Third Class, supplied his supporters with vibro-beams and waged a bloody battle against ruling head, Jonathan Neo. Three thousand died in this encounter and Fen was severely repremanded by the Foundation. The final condemnation of his act was shown by his being demoted to Peace-Promoter Fourth Class.

7 Philos-lector Wilbur Arnell claims that an aged record in his possess-

by al andrews

ion shows a mention at one point of a 'vibro-blade'. This document is by a person named 'Henline' (as close as the name can be decyphered), and seemingly is a journal of a revolt in 2100 A.D. But this writing holds little credence with our histrionic experts, because the writing also mentions a person known as Huxley; it is believed that this reference is to Aldous Huxley, who we know to be a monk in the pre-ancient Dark Ages. This person, Henline, is believed to have been associated with the afore-to-mentioned Wallace, both writers of most nefarious tomes.

**THE SHOCK MASTER** was developed by Yolandis Balbisco, the noted sportsman and wild game hunter. In fact, so great is Mr. Balbisco's fame that he is referred to in McMannuiees's "Who's Who in Killing" as 'that Marvelous Martian.' Balbisco developed the weapon in 4743 A.D. enabling him to be the first man to bag a Plutonian frosted-iggu. Although this gun has been turned to military uses it is still held in highest esteem by sportsmen the universe out and over.

Mr. Balbisco, after two hundred years of hunting, retired to become a writer. And in 4945 A.D. he was awarded the Stone of Merit by the Martian Writers of the Sol System for his short story, "The Day the Triffids Took the Hero's Walk Through the Undying Fire Into the Long Tomorrow with a Time Bomb." It was a truly short-story, consisting of only five words: fruggle, fleggle, flupple, fluttle and moo. (Reprinted here by permission of Gold, Hamling, Browne & Lowndes of the Know-Knothing Press.) Although only five words, these motion-instructions fingered on the noded hand of a Martian would convey a scenic story of, comparatively speaking, 20,000 words in the Earthian tongue. He later wrote a short story in Earthian of some 70,000 words entitled 'Oh', which was anthologized in Boff Knoklin's 'Why', being a reprint, of course, from the magazine 'Who'.

Mr. Balbisco's most original and magnificent novel is 'The Green Hills of Earth.'

## **THE GORGIN DISENTEGRATOR BEAM**

was invented by Max Gorgian of the Larger Magellanic Cloud, Planet One Billion Sixty-Four. Mr. Gorgian was Right Honorable Professor of Dianetics at the Magellanic Seminar. He is probably most well remembered as the 57th Savior of Earth, since it was his magnificent work on the metasomatic convertor for robotic cows that saved the Earth from almost certain defeat by the invasion of the Pillotrods of Scorpii. In the ninety-sixth year of the 49th century the Earth was invaded by the Pillotrod hordes, and were undetectable because of their ability to osmose their non-formatic E-forces being into the bodies of cows. The executive order went out to slaughter, at once, all bovine animals, but since the Armies of Unified Earth were controlled by the Dairy Farmer's Amalgamate, there was a violent demand for rescission of the Bovine-Slaughter Act. At this crucial point it was the genius of Max

Gorgian that saved the Third Planet. While on a visit to Earth at that time, Gorgian in his East Poughkeepsie laboratory developed and designed the metasomatic convertor, which took the elements of Earth's air and transformed them into a pleasant facsimile of milk. The cows died for their planet, and the Pillotrods, being thus thwarted, fled. Great was the jubilation of Earth.



Gorgian announced his beam-weapon only last year, 5006 A.D., but was disappointed when the United Galaxies outlawed its use on Jupiter 6th, 5006 A.D. (Earth-date). Professor Gorgian later met an untimely end when he was prosed by an excitable co-ed, while trying to apply one of the basic axioms of Dianetics with her.

As one looks back down the long road of history, cobbled with the stones of centuries, there are many names in its hallowed pages that joy the heart and stir the imagination. Some names almost legendary in their greatness; some as fresh and piquant as your morning fac-sheet. The mighty tomes of history lists them in an almost unending parade: Verner von Braun, inventor of the airplane; John W. Campbell, jr., the Father of Science; Fredric Brown, inventor of the stitching-mechanism space-warp and Phillip Cabbageton, the man who brought lucky-strike-green back from the war. (Little is known about the daring exploit of Cabbageton, but we are assured that it was a noble deed indeed.)

In 4998 it was thought that the name of George Harvey Balssom would surely be added to this honored roll of illustrious names. Yet to date there have been written thirty-five biographies of his life and thus far they agree upon but one thing: that George Harvey Balssom is an idiotic bum.

In the year 4998, as will be remembered, Balssom brought forth upon a startled world the announcement of his invention, the Chrono-matic; the Chrono-matic, strictly speaking, is not a

weapon, or, at least, not one of deadly or harmful intent. Balssom said that his invention could through the mechanical application of his tenets of temporal-morgial-reversal return any event, happening in a hundred square feet, to three hours prior to its happening. One can readily see what an ultimate boon to crime-prevention this would have been: stoppage of a crime before its commission and possibly in many cases a removal of the motive of the crime. There was one unfortunate stipulation. Complete information concerning all phases of the crime must be computed and converted into mathematical symbols, then to be fed into the chronotomic mathematon within twenty minutes after the completion of the crime. This unfortunate hapoanstance made the Chrono-matic utterly useless, since it took anywhere from two hours to ten years to gather complete information concerning any crime, not to speak of symbolic-math computing, which would usually require several days.

Only last week I visited Professor Balssom at his Venus estate, and over a chilled cup of the blood of a Plutonian margarot, I inquired about his feeling concerning his invention and the subsequent uselessness of it. "Tempus fugit," he giggled modestly in a most scholarly fashion.

:Al Andrews

artwork by Don Simpson and Dan Adkins:

## footnote reviews

An ingenious theory is put forward in Paul Capon's INTO THE TENTH MILLENIUM, though perhaps it is more dream than theory. A dream of a future Utopia in which everyone lives in multi-story tents and travels by captive balloons hauled along by winches.

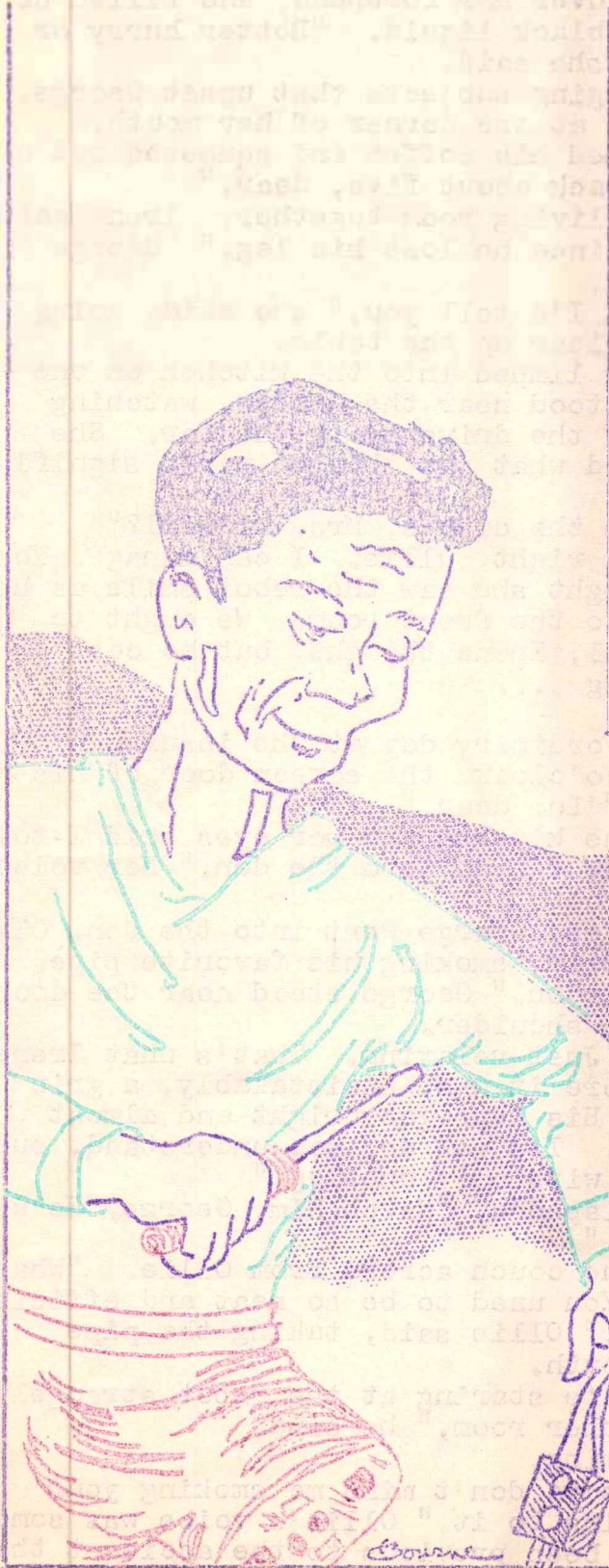
Here, again, is the world after atomic catastrophe, but perhaps a slightly better world. Atomics have changed the structure of all the world's metals so that they have become more brittle than the most fragile glass and everything made of them falls to tinkling little pieces.

The criminal 'stiffness' has been removed from men's souls too, and everything is run by "F'weeloi" a kind of super conscious feeling that one must 'play the game' all the time.

The kind of ideal situation that could exist here nowadays.

You see--we're such a lot of crooks!

:Alan Dodd



Frene Kidwell picked up the rumbling coffee pot and turned to her husband. "He's not a robot, George," she said, "he's human."

George lit a cigarette and wished she would pour his cup of after breakfast coffee. "Take it easy, honey. He's nothing but a heap of wires and tubes, covered with plastic. He may seem human sometimes, but you know modern science."

She raised her eyebrows and poured. "It's not that I don't like him. Infact, he's kind of -- nice. But, it's just that he doesn't help me anymore. And today, this very morning, I saw him smoking. Imagine -- smoking!"

"Really, now."

"It's true." She straightened the sagging curl of light-

brown hair that hung down over her forehead, and filled her own cup with the steaming black liquid. "Better hurry or you'll be late for work," she said.

She had a way of changing subjects that upset George. He saw the hint of a smile at the corner of her mouth.

George Kidwell finished his coffee and squeezed out of the breakfast nook. "Be back about five, dear."

They walked into the living room together. Irene said "He's been this way ever since he lost his leg." George put on his coat and sighed.

"Well, I just thought I'd tell you," she said, going back into the kitchen to clear up the table.

As George left, Ollie limped into the kitchen on one leg and one cane. Irene stood near the window, watching her husband pulling out of the driveway in the car. She pursed her lips and uttered what she thought was a significant "Humpf!"

"You want I should do the dishes, Mrs. Kidwell?"

"Oh -- oh, that's all right, Ollie. I can manage. You just -- rest." Irene thought she saw the robot smile as he hummed around and went into the front room. We ought to trade him in on a new model, Irene thought, but he cost so much, and with only one leg ....

George Kidwell had a very ordinary day at the insurance office, and promptly at five o'clock, the screen door of his home banged behind him. "'Lo, dear."

Irene came in from the kitchen and her eyes said I-told-you-so. "Go on," she said, "go on into the den." Her voice had that tinge of fatal proof.

With ever-widening eyes, George went into the den. Ollie sat in his favorite chair, smoking his favorite pipe.

"I..uh..I beg your pardon." George stood near the door and Irene watched over his shoulder.

"Oh, hello, George. Just relaxing. That's what Irene said I should do." And there it was, unmistakably, a grin on Ollie's plastic face. His lens got bright and almost twinkled. "Well, come in. I'd get up, you understand, but it's kinda hard, ya know, with only one leg."

Irene giggled and whispered, "Watch him, George. He's playing for your sympathy."

George sat down on the couch across from Ollie. "What's happened to you, Ollie? You used to be so neat and efficient."

"Well, I'll tell you," Ollie said, taking the pipe from what served as his mouth.

George noticed his wife staring at the robot strangely. "You'd better go in the other room," he said.

She swished out, humming.

"First of all, I hope ya don't mind me smoking your pipe. I kinda took a liking to it." Ollie's voice was somehow different than it had been previous to the accident that took his left leg.

12 George nodded his head numbly, noticing that Ollie's

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# THE ONE-LEGGED ROBOT

lower face was a little darker than the upper part. Almost as if he -- needed a shave.

"For the past couple of weeks I been out in the garage in my spare time, while I was recovering from--" he looked sadly down at his cane, "--this."

"And what did you do out in the garage?"

"Well, you know lots of my reflex-workings was in my left leg. You know, my self-sublimation brain, and all like that?"

"Yes."

"I just have been tinkering around with a few wires. Fixed stuff up fine. Even opened up my central workings. Didn't even need an anesthetic." Ollie laughed out loud, slapping his knee. Somehow, George failed to see the humor.

Before Ollie could go on, the doorbell rang several times, harshly. "I'll get it, dear." Irene's voice came from the front room.

Ollie and George sat quietly. The voices in the other room mingled and drifted into the den. A wild-faced man appeared at the door of the den. "There you are!" he shouted.

George recognized the man as Mr. Hicksby, their next door neighbor. Mr. Hicksby wasn't given to theatrics, but there he stood, pointing an accusing finger at Ollie.

"Hello, Hicksby." George rose, "what seems to be the trouble?" Hicksby's face got wilder. "That's the one -- that robot of yours. I caught him in MY back yard, tampering with MY romaids!"

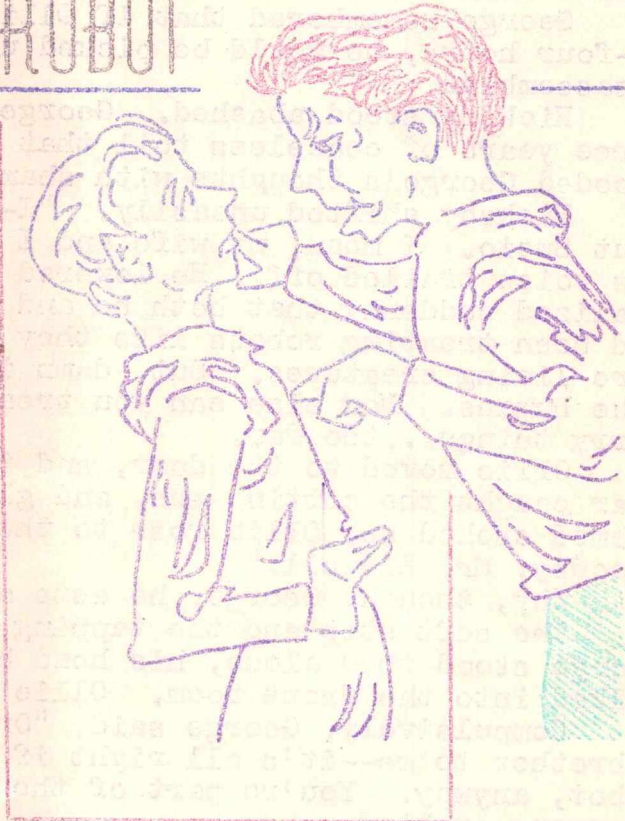
Irene came in, uttered a small, "Oh," and left. George and Hicksby stared at Ollie. Slowly, the plastic skin that covered the robot's face deepened into an embarrassed red. He looked away, unable to face the terrible truth.

Quietly, George faced Hicksby. "What happened?"

"Happened? Why, she's been running around the house dolling up. Even used my wife's lipstick. I don't know what he did to her, but if I have to I'll call the robot commission and put a stop to--"

"Now, don't be rash, Hicksby."

13 "Rash? My wife is frantic! She asked Susie to get dinner, and



do you know what that hunk of junk told her? 'Phoocy', that's what-- 'Phoocy'!"

A shocked silence filled the den, and crept under George's collar. Slowly, Ollie got up. Leaning heavily on his cane, he stood next to the chair. "All right," Ollie said, very humbly, "I'll go. I know when I'm not wanted."

George remembered that if Ollie was out on the streets for twenty-four hours, he would be picked up for delinquent robotics, and be disassembled.

Hicksby stood abashed. George tried to speak, but couldn't. The three years of ceaseless toil that Ollie had given him and his wife flooded George's thoughts with shame.

Hicksby shifted uneasily. "I--I guess maybe it's not so bad about Susie. I mean, my wife and I never had any children, and..." his voice trailed off. He lowered his eyes and left the room. George realized suddenly that both he and Hicksby, and probably Irene, too, had been treating robots like they were part of the family, like they were living creatures. But, damn it, he thought, they're so much like humans. How else can you treat them? And as long as they don't carry things...too far.

Ollie moved to the door, and turned around. A tiny, sparkling tear caught the setting sun, and glanced off. Although his throat seemed choked up, Ollie rose to the occasion, almost smiled, and said "Goodby, Mr. Kidwell."

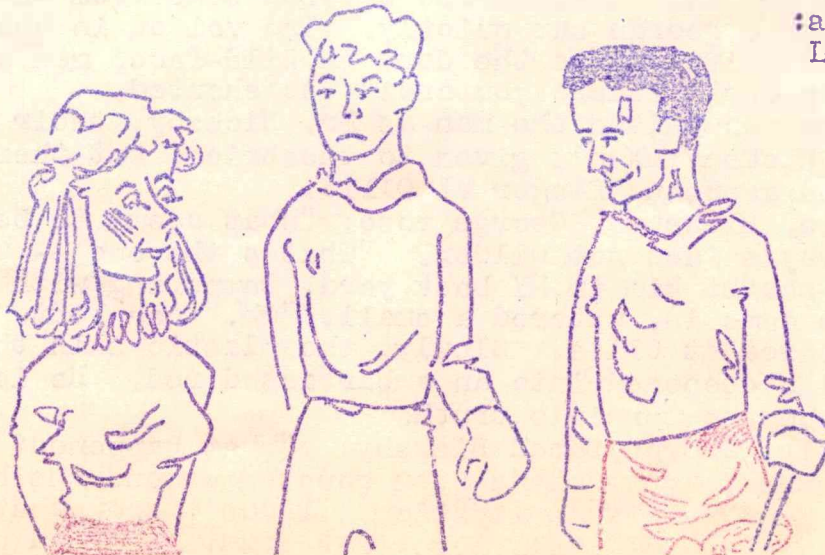
Why, thought George, he acts as if he almost loves us!

The soft step and the tapping of the cane faded from the den. George stood there alone, his head bowed. He drew a deep breath and walked into the front room. Ollie was opening the front door.

Compulsively, George said, "Oh, Ollie, why you'll be just like a brother to me--it's all right if you stay. Hell, we don't need a robot, anyway. You're part of the family already. George felt an enormous relief.

Ollie straightened up to his full height and smiled at Irene. Irene blushed. And George wondered.

:Carl Larson



:artwork by  
Larry Bourne



# portrait of the author as a young fan

Back in the exciting days of the boom, when every day in every way stf was getting bigger and better and only a few voices crying in the wilderness urged the caution that might have prevented the bust (mine was not one of them), it was a biweekly ritual, each Tuesday and Friday, for me to make the rounds of the three large newsstands in Coral Gables, Florida, looking to see what goodies the news distributor had brought.

Depending on the weather, the friendliness of drivers, and the state of my finances, I would walk, hitchhike or take the bus from my last class (I was a college freshman at the time) into the Gables...then proceed on foot until I had visited the newsstand in the bus terminal, the one



*bubbling over*

*frank arthur kerr*

a couple of blocks east of the main street, and the one a few blocks west, just on the chance that something had been included in one dealer's bundle and not in the others'.

Sometimes the bundles would arrive Monday or Thursday night, other times Tuesday or Friday morning. I remem-

ber the Thursday night that the distribution containing the first issue of del Rey's FANTASY Magazine arrived. I was in the Gables that night; I don't recall what for...but I saw the bundle, with the tantalizing spine of those magazines showing, and the dealer refused, all pleading on my part notwithstanding, to unwrap the bundle before morning.

Then there was the night I espied the first issue of the Avon SF&F Reader. I was so enthralled that I missed a pledge meeting and was nearly blackballed from my fraternity

But the day that will long stick in my memory was the June afternoon that I walked from my dorm into town. I had exactly seventy cents in my pockets, and somehow had a feeling that there might be two new magazines on the stand, so I walked instead of taking the bus. Sure enough, there they were: UNIVERSE SF and the similarly named FANTASTIC UNIVERSE SF. Thirty-five cents for one and --fifty cents for the other! I couldn't make it. Usf was less expensive and offered color illos; FUsf had no illos but was 200 hundred pages thick, and featured all the big names in the field. Further, Usf was edited by the unknown-to-me George Bell, while Sam Merwin, then recently departed from the TWInSS, was at the helm of Fu. So I picked up the latter.

Well, the boom got bigger and bigger and then --pow!-- but there's no point in discussing it here and now. The point, other than idle reminiscence, is that it looks as if here we go again. The distribution pattern is now changed to Tuesday-Thursday; the locale, to Indianapolis; and financial situation, though shakier than ever in the big picture, at least not hinging on pennies any more.

The first thing that caught my eye in the newsdealer's the other day was the new PLAYBOY, featuring a story by Dick Matheson and a and a letter from Will Rotsler. In the same section was the new ROUGUE, with an article by Bob Bloch.

The new pb rack showed Jack Vance's TO LIVE FOREVER and a non-fiction work on the atom by Heinz Haber. Also, a new pb from BB, THE Wild Reader, apparently titled to take advantage of the popularity of THE MAD READER. And I, LIBERTINE, by Fred Ewing (Sturgeon) with a cover by Kelley Freas, who also did the interiors for The Wild Reader.

There was the new (ugh!) SEARCH and (eccch!) TOMORROW and the first issue of a journal called AFRICA SOUTH, which I highly recommend to the more serious-minded and older (older than who? older than the younger ones) readers of this column.

AFRICA SOUTH presents highly intelligent discussions of the problems of Africa...although there are a few such interesting tidbits as the footnote that reads "See revised voters' list, Western Nigeria, 'Daily Times,' May 5, 1956." Sure I will; I'll just buzz right out and pick up a copy of the Western Nigeria Daily Times for May 5, 1956.

But to get on to the stf magazines (oh?) there was the latest issue of Merwin's dandy new SATELLITE, and the new GALAXY and several others. Ohboy. Ohjoy. Ohgollyghoshawowboyoboy.

There it was, though just for a few minutes, a starry-eyed

16 swelling-hearted, enthusiastic, excited, happy neo again.

Stf was once more the bright, wonderful thing it was a few years ago.

We're gonna sweep the detective and western and love mags from the scene.

Soon everybody's gonna be reading stf, which will be better than ever, and we fen who've been around from the old days will be the prophets at last appreciated in our own land.

Wanna bet?

In SIGMA OCTANTIS #5 I discussed what I considered to be the all-time greatest prozine edition, the tenth-anniversary THRILLING WONDER.

Unquestionably, there were plenty of readers who disagreed with this nomination, and each had his own reasons, many of them probably more valid than mine. Of course one can always fall back on the non-rational attitude of 'I don't care what your reasons are, I just like this one better.'

This attitude is irrefutable. But this very irrefutability makes it useless to discuss. If one's attitude is reduced to a simple like-or-dislike matter, all we can do is form a circle and sit and drool over our own particular favorites.

But there is one edition of a prozine which impressed me even more than those 'greatests', and I think most fen will be able to think of corresponding numbers.

That's my first prozine.

Although I've been reading stf magazines only since 1947, my reading had always been more or less casual until a friend gave me a bunch of prewar zines which simply fascinated me. Among these was the October 1939 AMAZING, which I now rate as my 'first' prozine.

In 1939 AMAZING was a monthly 20¢ pub. It contained only 150 pulp pages, shortly to increase to 244. The editor, Ray Palmer, was still fairly new at the big-time, but his star, and AMAZING's were rising fast.

On the cover a plastic-encased brain directs plack pyramidal flying boxes which shoot out death-rays. One man lies dead near the brain, a beautiful, exotic-looking girl flees, while the Hero charges in, ready to do battle with this super-scientific villain with one hand holding a monkey wrench, the other clenched into a fist.

The editorial deals with the recent NYCon (recent in 1939)



AN! THAT GOOD  
DR. FOOL MAN YOU  
MIXTURE!

## LOOKING FOR A TAPE-RECORDER?

Good buy! - V-M Model 700 Tape-O-Matic Tape Recorder - almost brand new and in perfect running condition - complete with all attachments - a tape recorder combining the finest engineering with modern manufacturing techniques to give you numerous "extra" features for your convenience and pleasure - such features as push-button controls, fingertip "pause", precision automatic shut-off, tape index timer, two speakers for extra hi-fi -- originally costing approx. \$159 prepared to sell at \$95 plus mailing costs.  
Peter Walsh  
12 Robin Road  
Wakefield, Mass.

and numerous other matters, including TIME's coverage of the NYCon.

The lead story was HISTORY In Reverse by Lee Laurence. It was presented in radio-script form, as "the incredible story CBS dared not broadcast. The complete script, unexpurgated, exactly as written."

Translated from Palmerese, this means "CBS wouldn't buy it, so I did, cheap." The story deals with the filming of Wells' OUTLINE OF HISTORY, not on sets but via time machine, actually photographing great events as they took place. The standard gimmick (but remember: this was nearly twenty years ago) was the loss of modern equipment in pre-historic times and their puzzling recovery thousands of years later.

The next story, Robert Moore Williams' RETURN OF SATAN, was the one illustrated on the cover. Satan was not a supernatural creature, but a superscientist in a pre-Mayan civilization. When his world ended, he did not die, but was preserved as a liv-

ing brain (anyone seen Simon Wright lately?) buried in the jungle. When modern times uncover and reactivate his brilliant malice... watch out! Much violence and destruction, but of course a happy ending, with Girl in embrace of Hero.

Eando Binder's THE MISSING YEAR dealt with a machine that suddenly erased a whole year from everyone's mind. What a mess, when to you, to me, to everyone it is suddenly a year ago, but all newspapers, bank records, and other physical evidence of the transpired year go unchanged. Denouement: machine is destroyed, Hero discovers that during the missing year he married the Girl.

Next came an ad, featuring a picture of a gentleman in a wing collar, captioned: SAYS EVERYBODY IS HYPNOTIZED. The copy starts: "A strange method of mind and body control, that often leads to immense powers never before experienced, is announced by Edwin J. Dingle, F.R.G.S., well-known explorer and geographer..." I think that's enough of that.

In THE ICE PIAGUE, Frederic Arnold Kummer, jr., predicted a.) that Japan would attack the United States, b.) that the attack would start at Pearl Harbor, c.) airplanes flying 600 miles an hour in the war, d.) aerial television. And --oh, yes-- as the

United States went forth to victory, the Hero got the Girl.

Next came a convention report by Mark Reinsberg and Erle Korshak, winding up with the immortal words See you in Chicago -- 1940!

Nelson S. Bond's 'The Priestess who Rebelled' was an excellent early post-destruction-of-civilization tale. The title comes from the heroine whose mission is to pay homage to the gods who live atop Mount Rushmore. What will future peoples think of those great carven faces when our civilization is gone? Anyway, the story ends -- you know how: Girl in Arms of Boy. A clever touch was the extrapolation of the language: "linder --to kidnap, (derived from Lindbergh?)"

'Judson's Annihilator', by John Beynon Harris (John Wyndham) had previously appeared in the English FANTASY, as written by Harris. It dealt with a screen, passage through which made anything disappear. It was used as a weapon in the war against the Germans, although both sides lost planes, men, and equipment. The secret of the screen, although not known then, was that it projected these all into the far, far, distant future.

The story closes: "He reached swiftly for the switch. The red light winked out. The screen was down." Ah, machine stops. "He picked Sheilah up in his arms, and walked to meet the men who were running from the house." Ah, Girl in Hero's Arms.

In addition to the stories and editorial, there were several science features, including a 'Science Quiz' and a question-from-the-readers department. A letter section, 'Correspondence Corner,' readers' preference ballot and report on the August issue, and 'Meet the Authors' (on Beynon, Williams, and Kummer) rounded out the contents of the issue.

The bacover painting ('suitable for framing') was a Paul, entitled 'Atomic Power Plant,' and that's what it was a picture of...at least of Paul's 1939 idea of what one would look like.

How does the October 1939 AMAZING stack up with today's magazine? Well, money-wise and physically, it was a lot more magazine for 20¢ than today's digest-sized AMAZING, or anything else for 35¢. But considering the lessened value of money since 1939, the difference is far less than it would seem at first blush. In fact, considering inflation, the current magazine may actually be a better value. I'm not certain.



Story-wise there was less subtlety; the adult approach was not only absent. It was nowhere even in sight. There was a lot more science than is found in today's magazines.

But the biggest difference I find is in the atmosphere of the magazines. Today the magazines just appear; they try to make money, they offer entertainment, yes, and a little philosophy maybe, but there seems to be no particular goal.

Today's magazines continue not because they have any real purpose in going on, nor because it is easier to live than to die-- quite the opposite is the case. There is just a blind striving to survive.

Perhaps Palmer alone among today's editors is really trying to do anything but make a buck. And he is so mixed up that I don't think even he knows just what it is that he's trying to do. And, judging from OTHER WORLDS, he's surely not doing it.

But in 1939 AMAZINE STORIES had a spirit of enthusiasm and accomplishment, a feeling that it was going some place and doing something worthwhile...whether this feeling is what some people call the 'Sense of Wonder', I'm not sure, but it was surely present in my 'first' prozine, and you can't hardly get them kind no more.

To the Future, the Future, ever to the Future. Excuse my looking now and then to the past. Progress is the keyword.

But is progress steady? Is everything better that is new than everything old? Is today always better than yesterday, and tomorrow always better than today?

Or if today is sometimes inferior to yesterday, should we not strive to make tomorrow just a little more like yesterday than today?

: Frank Arthur Kerr  
artwork by Bourne and Phillips:

DEPARTMENT OF FAMOUS LAST WORDS:

Occasionally, among all the golden verbage flung to the catechumen, there are some mighty flat-sounding clinkers. Readers are invited to contribute their favorites from the latter category. Striking fo pas will be printed each issue.

From Willy Rickhardt: "Stories based on dreams stamp the writer as the rankest kind of amateur." Howard Browne, June '55 Fantastic. Tell me, Howie, who was behind the two special 'dream' issues of Fantastic, and what company sponsors the new effort Dream Worlds. Uh, you just left Z-D recently, didn't you? (the above quote was also submitted by John Butterworth)

"Small type will eventually kill the digested magazine." Sam Moskowitz, Spring '52 Fantastic Story...Cosmic Encores. Still think so, Sam? If so, you might want to talk your theory over with John Campbell, the Ziff-Davis people, the Standard folks or any of the new editors. They might even print it.

(- (ed's note: a fellow of the Tappa Kegg and Graba Thi fraternities, John Michael Winner attained his B.A. and M.A. in bird watching. His master's thesis, 'Watching the Bulbous-Breasted Tassel Tosser', caused quite a furor when presented in ornithological circles. In private life, Mr. Winner is a human fly. In his spare time, he collects obscure Moan poetry and tribal songs. Mr. Winner has transcended. --jdm.)-)

There was a statue in the woods. A nude statue. There were four oak trees around it. Gnarled, but still oaky. No one knew the statue was there.

Why? Why? Why did no one know about the statue? And how did it get there? But before we answer this question, it might be advantageous to describe this marble metaphor.

Sylph-like goddess  
Breasts pointing to heaven  
Arched back  
Fire-filled eyes  
And melancholy of countenance...

Was it a memorial to an unrequited love? aaah. Was it a remnant of some Hellenic age gone by? aaah, don't be silly.

It was Mrs. Murphy's first attempt at soap carving. And why was it so secret and unknown? Who'd ever think of looking in the potato patch behind the outhouse for a statue?

john michael winner

Milos Revisited



MARV BRYER: "Bourne's cover (#7) looks as if he were trying to define things as simple structure. In this case the cube seems to play a predominate role. He ought to experiment more

smakt remahks

with this idea though I realize that rocks lend themselves quite well to a simplification of their structure. Different subject matter might prove itself more difficult if not impossible for Bourne to make basic and solid. Anyway, a good job on the cover.

"Thrashing About' proves itself to be an outstanding contribution this issue. I

like the idea of taking a subject and discussing it to great lengths -- defining it, tearing it apart and scattering it to the four winds for anyone interested.

" Speaking of Rock 'n Roll and rhythm in blues, I heard something on the radio (before it blew three tubes and short circuited) that made me sick to my stomach. Some young negro came on singing (?) with the usual blaring background one would expect with such type music, that this was time for "news 'n blues, news 'n blues." Then Rodney 'the Mad Lad' would give an account of a disaster where, say, twenty were killed or fourteen died in an airplane crash! This while the music was playing in the background somewhat muffled but still unbearable. When the Mad Lad finished an item the music would sell up and the young negro would shout with all his magnificence, 'news and blues! news 'n blues.' I guess nowadays when hearing of someone's death we should all stand up on our chairs and yell GO, GO, GO, MAN, GO! I find myself looking at a warped sense of judgement straight in the eye." : 1396 Hamilton, Apt. 7, St. Louis 12, Mo.

JAN JACOBSON: "Commercialised Stanislavski bugs me, too. However, I don't dig realism, period. I figure it as a sort of novelty which will pass (along with Elvis, I hope) sooner or later. And I am far from an expert on it, I assure you; my drama coach does not teach it so much; we concentrate on the drawing room type of comedy - I



guess that's what you'd call it - and, of course, on musical comedy. Anyhow, I don't like this fake realism - to me, it's no fun to go see a movie or a play and come home and find the same thing; I don't know about you, but the only reason I patronise entertainment establishments is escapism, pure and simple. With something like "Streetcar", it's no escape for me: I have a brother like Kowalski (in only a few respects, I hasten to add).

"However, the main point of Stanislavskii's method is to enable you to get the feel of the character - if you know how the person feels and why, you have half the battle won. In my class, the coach merely helps us to know what the character is feeling and why; once we get that down, the rest is fairly simple - all you have to do is project that feeling, and we all of us can do that, or we wouldn't be in there in the first place. I'm not very good at the projection bit, but I pass, I pass. Like Elvis, I imagine." : 2430 Garth Ave., Lons Angeles 34, California.

GARY LABOWITZ: "I seem to agree with you on the idea of what makes a fanatic. It's funny, but I have similar ideas buried within me. As to the individuality that a fanatic achieves and the amount of society he wants to be accepted by, the matter is not only how much he is satisfied with but also how much he is supposed to be satisfied with. The pressures of the society in KC are not as great as in New York City and therefore a fanatic here may just be another mixed up New Yorker.

"I was wondering what happened to Finlay. Thought something had happened to his hands or eyes or something. Guess not, though his new work isn't as good as his older stuff. It'll probably get much better." : 7234 Baltimore, Kansas City 14, Mo.

JOHN BUTTERWORTH: "I'll agree that the EC's did overplay the blood and guts, but this was at a time when every other medium of entertainment did the same. I can remember 'Suspense' in that year (1953-4), when they did 'Frankenstein', 'The Tell-Tale Heart', and a lot of other gory shows in the EC manner. Rare was the show that did not wind up with a masterful twist ending, and did not include some advanced blood-letting. That was also the time that 'House of Wax' came out, to be followed by more 3-D horror whows. At that time a fabulous R&B record came out, called 'Death of an Angel' by Donald Woods and the Bel-Aires. While it was immensely successful, many stations refused to play it, because they thought it would make the listeners depressed. It would've, too. Here's the ending:

"That was the death (here someone gives a good, hearty scream) of an angel. Don't know what or why. I want to be beside her, but I'm afraid to die. Ohhhohhh... I want my baby back home... no, no, no... I want my baby own, I want her back home, ohhhohhh... (here the song lapses into sobs. At the time, that was a morbid as you could get on a record.

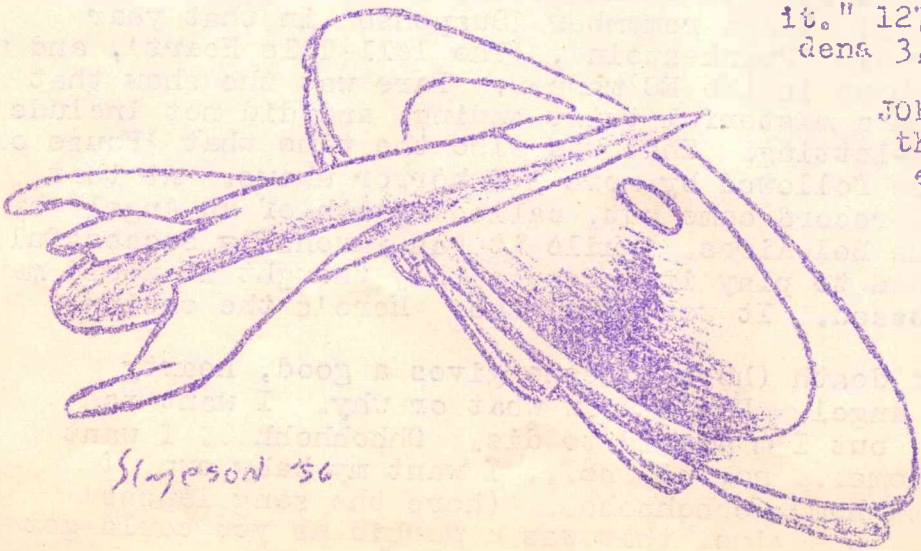
Personally, I loved it. There were a lot of other records out at that time, stressing violence, sadism, wife-beating and all sorts of hell. The entire country was going through a blood-bath. At least the younger section was.

"Getting back to the subject, I was arguing about whether they could give a child wrong ideas, not the amount of blood they managed to cram into each issue. And unless a child has bat's wings, claws and two pointy little teeth, he can't get much of any bad ideas from comics. You say living in a dream world where vampires, zombies Ghouls and things that go bump in the night isn't healthy. But then living in any kind of dream world is unhealthy. And do you think that if the EC mags went over to the rather sterile stuff which Atlas features they would have lasted six months? Uh, uh. Their readers would have given up in disgust.

"PAK's column was the high point of the issue, as usual. His statistics worry me, all right, but what can we do? Tell all the new mags to cease and desist publication? Or buy up every new mag in sight? Neither alternative offers much hope..."

RICH BROWN: "I had best defend myself. First, I am entitled to my own opinion, no? I don't like Bourne abstracts, and no one can defer me from that opinion. However, I do like his more humanistic drawings. In fact, I think most of them quite original, a delightful quality in this Sahara of cliché work. In his particular field, I would classify him with Rotsler and some illos of Arthur Thompson's. But I don't like his abstracts, or, as you term them, 'whimsicals'. Of course, Dan Adkins said Bourne sends you his best stuff. And he, like me, is entitled to his opinion. On page 25 is the Bourne illos I like. Guess that makes me a clod, eh?

"Liked the new 'Capsules and Comments'. Already I respect Rob's tastes. He isn't rushed and reads as though he took the time to think before he wrote. a fine virtue. Wish I had it." 127 Roberts St. Pasadena 3, Calif.



JOE SANDERS: "I liked the Walsh satire, even though I haven't seen the movie. Those who have don't seem to like it. As one said: "it wasn't even sexy!" I went into a pocketbook store to buy the thing and saw that it was next to a

Truman Capote book. I stared at the cover (a picture of Baby Doll in her crib) and then at the picture of Capote. The resemblance is remarkable.

"Artsybasheff did the illustrations for the 1945 edition of Finney's THE CIRCUS OF DR. IAO. He also did an excellent drawing for a recent LIFE article on Mars. And he's done many covers for TIME." :R.R.#1 Roachdale, Indiana.

RICH LUPOFF: "The editorial was interesting - far better than your usual. But you seemed to be leading up to something, leading, leading, up, up... and then the editorial was over. You never got to the point it looked as though you were headed for.

"The ending of THREE NURSES was one of the nicest surprises I've had in a long time. There I sat, expecting the inevitable bombs to drop, or horribly diseased individual to come reeling through a door, or newspaper, or other cliché of the when-the-bomb-drops story. But Cashen exercised the rarest of auctorial virtues, restraint.

"My sincere admiration and gratitude for this.

"I'll disagree with Champion on leading a horse to water and making him drink. Let me tell you of an experience I had when I was about ...uhhh...I gues seven or so. I was sitting there reading a comic book of the Criminals-never-win-cause-they-always-make-a-mistake variety. Did I draw from this reading the lesson One-should-not-commit-crime-because-it-is-wrong? Or even One-should-not-commit-crime-because-crime-does-not-pay? Nope. I was sitting there reading and thinking and all like that and suddenly I Learned My Lesson, which was:

"These guys are all dumb. They are all trapped by their own errors. WHEN I BECOME A CRIMINAL I WILL BE SMART AND WILL NOT MAKE MISTAKES!"

"I underline the word when because I remember so clearly and not without horror the thought. I didn't think of it, but when I become a criminal.

"Fortunately, the wind blew the right way at the right times, and here I am, reasonably safe from such a career. But there were turnings in the road, things that depended on chance, not on me.

"'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free' applies only to adult and competent individuals. Children, insane and feebleminded, moral degenerates -- must have their freedom restricted, and this involves a partial withholding of information." :Ed.Dev.Dep. TAGSUSA, Ft.Benjamin Harrison, Indianapolis Indiana.

CLAUDE HALL: "As usual, Adkins carried the issue. It seems as Adkins is really turning out tons of fan art -- all of it damn good. The Patricia Mauldin item, "1957-58 the Year of Geophysics," seemed to be the most comprehensive and something not only interesting but valuable. I think it was the best feature in this issue. Rob Williams tries earnestly to do a good job on the reviews but somehow, I feel that he just isn't saying anything of real value. Naturally saying something worthwhile is extremely difficult. One can



*No silhouette stuff for me but body beautiful!*

can get. In terms of salary, anyway. I've seen Artzybasheff's work in LIFE several times recently, especially among the article on Mars earlier this year.

"Re the fmz reviews...I've got only one comment, and that's on what may turn out to be my favorite kick nowadays: JWC and the Heir-onymous machine. I don't intend to go into a lengthy defense of Campbell right now, but it seems to me that if some of these people who take so much offense at Campbell's admitting he knows not how the gadget works, would go back and read some of his editorials about the subject, they might stop this inane blathering about what a crackpot JWC is turning out to be. Pat Mauldin's article takes top honors with me this time, I think. The two deGrunswald illos impress me most favorably, also. How about having this boy do one of your heavily illustrated short stories?"

26 :Route 2, Box 75 P, Pendleton, Oregon

"Rag Doll" wasn't a very satisfiable satire. Nor was it stf. Not that it had to be, of course, though such is more agreeable with my nature. "Three Nurses" by Eric Cashen suffered from plot, style of writing, smoothness, continuity -- among otherthings. Over all the story just didn't seem to make sense, and I've just reread it to relive my first impression.

"If you won't take offense, may I state that the three names, Tom Maylone, Eric Cashen, and Peter Walsh all seem as fictitious as Aga Yonder. Only I think I know for sure who Aga Yonder is and I have only the suspicion that you are all three." 2214 San Antonio, Austin 5, Texas. (I can state with complete certainty that I am neither Tom Maylone, Eric Cashen nor Peter Walsh, as can Tom Maylone, Eric Cashen and Peter Walsh. jdm)

JOHN CHAMPION: "Re stf artists in mundane mags (Marv Bryer) -- Mel Hunter has been selling to LIFE lately. I imagine that's as high as you

JOSEPH PEKETE, JR.: "'Paradise' reminded me of 'June 2001:' and 'The Moon be Still as Bright' from Bradbury's THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES. Ask Maylone if Barlow doesn't remind him of someone named Spender."  
:Cooley Road R.F.D. #2, Grafton, Ohio.

(Several other readers noticed the similarity between Maylone's story and Bradbury's. I don't know if I should apologize for having printed a story with so striking a likeness to a well-known professional one. The similarity got completely by me when I accepted the story, and while there is a moderate obligation on an editor to see that his magazine does not encroach on the rights of others, he cannot be expected to have every short story's plotline tingling at the edge of his consciousness. But more important than this, all that an author experiences is shoved away into his subconscious, stored away toward the time when he will write. When that time comes, he pulls all relevant to his theme forth, molding it to his purpose and personality. Thus in a way everything that comes in through the senses - in the case at hand, the reading Tom has done - influences what the author writes. And this is not plagiarism, unless done consciously or unless it results in obvious replica.

Tom's story was not written with intent to merely modify Bradbury. Nor is it completely without originality. As to the style: be Mr. Bradbury successful, talented and established, he cannot corner the market on a manner of putting words on paper. Particularly when his style is not wholly original. jdm)

ALAN DODD: "To me the best little item was Peter Walsh's 'Rag Doll' parody of the BABY DOLL film. I didn't see the film myself since I'd seen so many excerpts of it on television I didn't think I'd bother to pay to see them all again. But I still thought it highly funny.

"If I were Winsler Devoe of Eric Cashen's story I think I should have to meet three such ill-mannered wenches as the three nurses his story is titled after. For a sole surviving man you might have thought he'd have received a much better welcome. After all, the only man in town is as good as the only man in the world isn't it?

"The International Geophysical Year of Patricia Mauldin's article has been much in evidence here, too. I think the best comment on it was made by a comedian on television, Michael Bentine who, discussing Sir William Penny's atomic research at Woomera, is illustrating the IGY by use of a globe of the world. He points at Australia and wonders what Sir William is doing in the IGY. A mushroom of smoke roars up from the globe where he points at it. No further comment needed.

"'The Way of All Flesh' - well, I actually like the sport known here as all-in wrestling but can never see enough of it. It isn't shown on TV and you can keep all ball games ranging from cricket, baseball and football to tennis. There's only one spectator sport I can bear watching and that's wrestling - but I'm damned if I could get interested in it in print. Rob William's fanzine review was quite good though nothing outstanding - and I'm mad 'cause he spelled my name with two 'l's instead of one." :77 Stanstead Rd.,

27 Hoddesdon, Herts., ENGLAND.

:spotcuts by Bourne & Philips  
& Simpson.

The man on Mars let the ladder down. He said, "Joe?" Joe stood on earth, with his shirt open, and said, "Ya." The ladder came tumbling down, rung on rung of stardust, but firm like gold bars, in the middle of the night. "Joe," the man said, "I'm coming down."

And Joe, looking up, saw the man with antlers, as he descended. "The night is ripe," the man said. "It's a good night to talk, to say things. I wonder if you agree."

"I agree," Joe said. He had his hands in his pockets. He did not help the man get off the ladder. He said to him: "What do you want, really? Just to talk? Or do you intend to invade, when the moon is dark?"

The man said, "Oh, no. I'm all alone up there. There's no one else but me, not even a dog."

Joe, who watched the green antlers, said, "You're a funny man." He stood up, still. He did not sit down.

The man told the story of his life, or lives, since he had many of them, and Joe sat down. He listened, and wondered how he could compare this man's life to his own. "I was born in the era of the Archer," he said. "I was born, and grew...." Joe thought to himself, "What a strange man." "I am much stranger, though," he thought. "I have committed murder; this man has never done that. I have eaten too much, and gotten drunk and this man, he lives on ambrosia. I have been cruel and mean and petty. This man has been nothing but a man on a planet."

"And I died," the man said, "in an ecstasy. You see, I knew, I would become one with the planet Mars, and would not be a warrior, as everyone supposes, but an umpire."

Joe stood up, stretched his legs, and said, "Ya."

The man began to climb his ladder. Joe, slinging his gun again, went back on guard duty, to last the night.

DE FRANCHES

MARS

Eric Cashen



# BARROW'S PHOBIA

by TOM MAYLONE

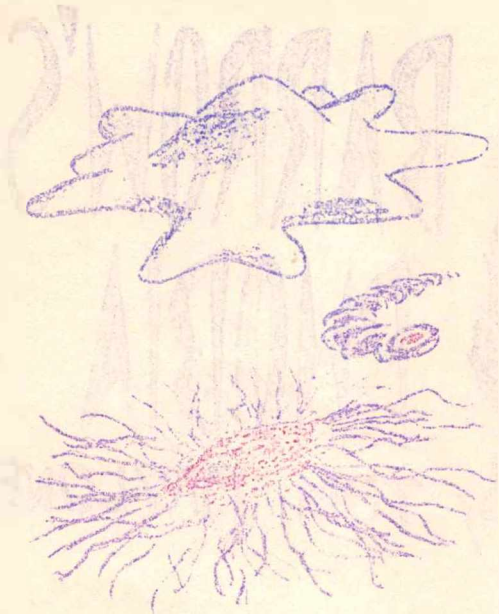
When a spaceman thought of Mike Barrow -- anybody who knew him for that matter -- a large smile or even a loud laugh would follow. Barrow wasn't exactly the type of person you'd expect to have a phobia. But he did. Mike was a jetman with 23 years of experience behind him, and like the average person's conception of a man who had spent most of his life in space, he was well-built, space-tanned to a deep brown, scarred, and completely bald. He also had the mannerisms of an old spaceman; he drank like a sewer, chain smoked, swore every second word and liked to talk about the old days when space travel was young.

When Barrow cornered a new jetman, he could spend hours talking about times when a jetman's work was dangerous.

I was an apprentice jetman when I met him. As soon as I'd introduced myself, he began his speech. Barrow primed himself by showing me the large scar covering half of his forehead. Then he unbuttoned his shirt and proudly revealed the ones on his chest. After that he showed me the scars on his arms and legs. He had 13 large scars, scores of small ones, and three pieces of shrapnel still impaled in his body.

After he showed me his scars, he began his speal. He described the life of a jetman in the early years as being one of tense moments upon tense moments. In the early days





a jetman had to sit on the bucket seat facing the dials and wait for one to move from its usual position. It was a game of watching and waiting, hour after hour, for something to happen, with a prayer on his lips and a tool box in his hands. There was usually a sudden fire or something needing repair (the instruments rarely gave enough time to repair the damage). He had to put out the fire or fix the broken object immediately even if he had to expose himself to the flames or pieces of metal flying about. And that was how he got half of his scars.

After that were the stories of the scars. He always had a new story of his odyssey on Venus where he barely missed death half a hundred times. He sounded like a zoologist; he knew the names of every dangerous animal

on the planet. I bet he could set all of them into phyla, orders, families and species without half trying.

At first I listened to him with tongue firmly perched in cheek. I watched him wildly wave his arms and perform all sorts of imaginary movements as he described the incidents. But after talking to the other man of the crew, I found that Barrow didn't get those stories out of his whiskey bottle. I even heard stories by the men who flew with him in the old days: according to them, Mike had forgotten most of the things that happened to him.

I also learned something else about him, although I did --and still -- find it hard to believe. He had a phobia. But why a man like that was afraid of Martian lizards, I'll never know. Now Martian lizards weren't really lizards; they were a weird combination of mammals, reptiles, insects, birds, fishes, protozoa, plants and any other kind of being you can think of. And they were all different from each other; there were no two alike.

Why they were all different, the scientists couldn't explain. There seemed to be no reason or rhyme about them; there was no known method of prediction to determine what, if anything, would come from the mating of two Martian lizards. They might be born alive or from eggs, their numbers might range from none to a thousand or they might be born only partially developed or a fully developed adult. They might be vegetarians, meat eaters or mineral eaters, they might be born too ignorant to eat or be able to think.





Here, Mendel's laws of heredity seemed like a fools dream.

Anyway, they were weird beasts. When I was on Mars a few years back I made pets out of a few of them. My favorite was a cute black worm with one large eye covering most of his head. Another one was similar to a giant amoeba, just a mass of protoplasm. I didn't keep him long, though. After devouring my black worm, I noticed an incredible increase in size, and feared that it would one day be large enough to eat me. The last one was built like an octopus with a hundred thread-like tentacles. I couldn't keep it long; it liked my blood too much.

We weren't allowed to keep them on board as pets because of Mike. We couldn't even mention them in his presence. Even the mention of them would make him sick. Barrow had such a fear of them that he would rather float around Mars like a satellite than land on it. He did that once I've heard, though I wouldn't call it the Bible truth.

The reason I'm telling you about him is that I want to explain the real reason he took the ship Sirius. You see, he really didn't mean to steal it, although he has been called a thief. This is what really happened...

After returning from the Earth-Venus run, Mike and I were ordered to be guards at the Suer Testing Station. It was a small place purposely made inconspicuous located about five miles from the spaceport. We received the order in the form of an ordinary letter, were met by ordinary plainclothed men, and were driven to the station in an ordinary car.

All during the trip, Mike complained about the secrecy. We didn't even know what we were guarding. He also complained that he was honest and that it was a pity that the government trusted him. If he were a security risk, he wouldn't have to stand guard.

We tried to prod our driver into telling us what was going on, but he said nothing; he kept his mouth shut and stared at the road. He drove the car up an old dirt road to a weathered barn; with ready Z-guns, a couple of guards ran out of the barn as soon as the car stopped. Our driver showed them his creden-



tials. Then the guards ushered us into the barn and gave each of us a Z-rifle.

Inside the barn were rows and rows of machines with white-coated scientists and guards busily moving between the rows. We strolled around and found a spaceship standing in the center of the barn.

Barrow tapped the shoulder of a white-haired scientist who was checking the dials on one of the machines and asked him what was going on. But one of the security men told him not to tell us anything. So Mike and I just walked around looking important.

About an hour later, a bell clanged. Suddenly silence fell on the barn. A dozen men walked out of the ship. The last man locked the door. A blastoff shield was rolled from a corner and placed around the ship. The scientists went to their instruments. The roof opened up.

Barrow looked at me with a stupid expression on his face and shrugged. I looked at him and shrugged back.

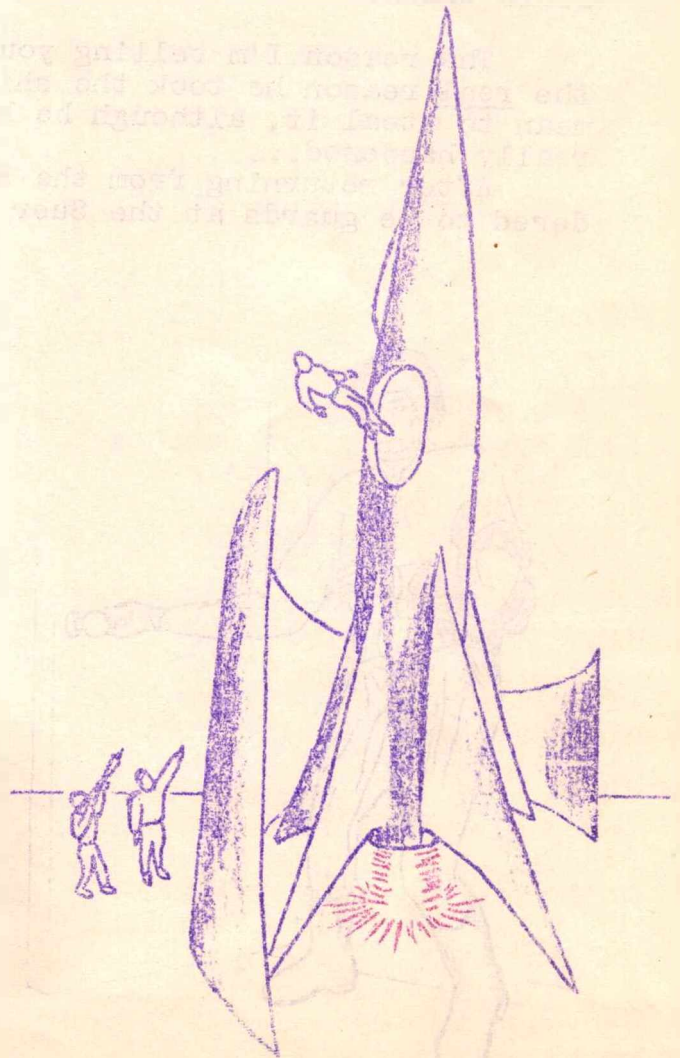
A man came into the barn. "Hey did you see what my brother sent me?" he asked, breaking the silence. He had a Martian lizard wrapped around his arm. It was translucent and pink. It had two arms that held on tightly to the man. I could see a blurry view of its brain in the bright light.

"Sh!" said one of the scientists. Barrow stared at the thing for a moment. His eyes seemed to bulge from their sockets. His jaw dropped. His whole body shook like a leaf. "L-l-l-izard!" he blurted somewhere between a gasp and a choke.

I was about to tell the man to get that lizard out of there when Barrow shouted, "Let me out!" and made great bounds toward the ship. His large body leaped over the shield and traveled into the ship.

"Get that guy out of there!" Someone shouted and the people in the room looked at each other with bewilderment in their eyes. A dozen men started running toward the ship, but stopped abruptly when the rocket engines rumbled.

Seconds later, the ship  
32 blasted off into space, and



the ship gained speed, time didn't even touch it.

So Mike made history, has been called a foreign agent, has marked the beginning of a new era, The Era of Hyperdrive, can't perceive time, will live to the end of time.

And he don't even know it.

What's more, I don't think he cares!

: Tom Maylone

artwork by Don Simpson:

Over 200 Ec's dating back to 1947 available. Send a list of your wants to Esmond Adams, 432 Locust St., Huntsville, Ala.

SPECTRE. From Bill Meyers, 4301 Shawnee Circle, Chattanooga 11, Tenn. Promises to be a fanzine of general

....A new fanzine: TERRA FIRMA. Interested parties write Joseph Fekete, jr., Cooley Rd. R.F.D. #2, Grafton, Ohio. Needed: artwork, reviews (movie, radio, T.V. and fanzine) and fiction. Samples of work is requested.

interest with emphasis away from the sercon. Parties interested, please write.

#### THE INCREDIBLE DRINKING FAN:

...being an advertisement

I noticed that he had just finished his fifth sombie. He didn't look like the drinking type to me. But I always mind my own business, so I decided to go over and see what was bothering him.

"Say, buddy, that's no way to lose your troubles," I said.

"I deserve to die! I deserve to die!" he moaned.

"Tell me about it, I'm a good listener." I didn't want to have him go crawl off somewhere and kill himself. Had I only known...

"My name's Paul Stanbery. I am the publisher of a fanzine called ETERNITY. We were going to pub a great big 60 pager, EQUATION."

"I saw the ad for it in LeeH's column in SFA," I told him.

"You a fan?" he asked. I nodded. "Anyway, we flubbed. EQUATION is a complete flop. So you see, I deserve to die!"

"Come now, There are probably a

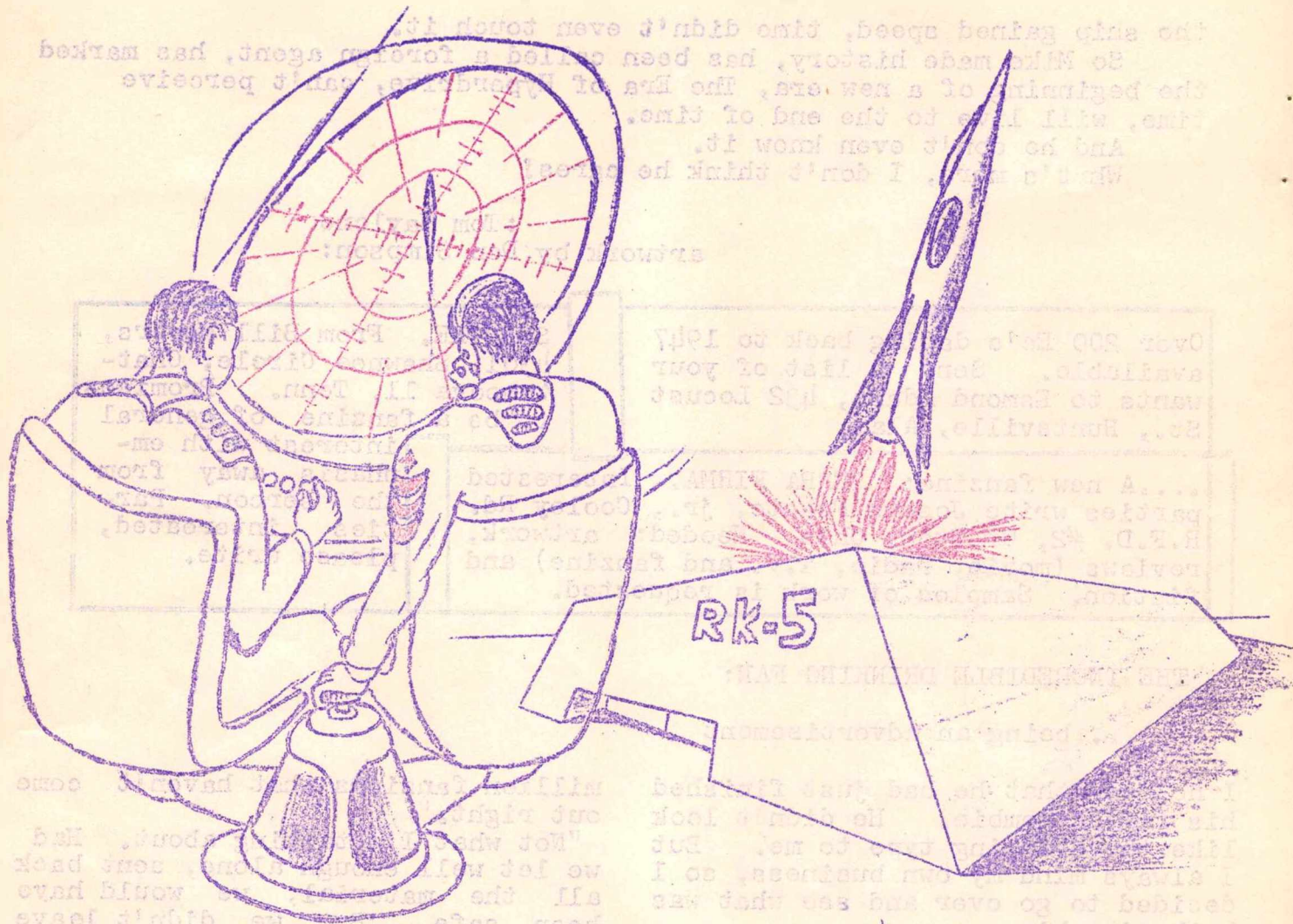
million fanzines that haven't come out right."

"Not what I'm talking about. Had we let well enough alone, sent back all the material, we would have been safe. But we didn't leave well enough alone. Instead, we pubbed a little old 20 pager; Tiny, ETERNITY to be complete. We just turned the first issue lose."

"How much did it cost?" I asked.

"Cost? We wouldn't dare charge money for it! We'll be banned from South Gate in '58 as it is! But if you want a copy, just write Richard Brown at 127 Roberts St in Pasadena California...you see, I do deserve die!"

At that moment a friend of mine came in, and I went to greet him. When I returned, the incredible drinking fan had left. But I remembered the address, and I got a copy. You know? He was right. He did deserve to die.



everyone rushed to the radar screen. I followed them and stuffed my head between two men. On the screen I saw the ship. But something strange was happening to it. It's sides were shrinking. It shrunk and shrunk until it was as thin as a straight pin and disappeared.

"A success!" shouted a thin, old scientist with long white hair and a large mustache.

"But an enemy was the ship," complained one of the security men.

"But what can he do?" the scientist asked. "He has no time."

I tried to explain that Mike was only trying to get away from the lizard, but they shrugged it off as a clever plot to steal the ship. I asked one of the professors to explain why the ship shrunk. He explained that they had developed a device which would prevent time from changing into mass when it approached the speed of light. The machine made time mass across and around the ship instead of hitting

it directly. And that caused the sides to shrink. You see,

33 time pressed on the sides of the ship like a force. But as

ABBERATION #2

Kent Moomaw  
6705 Bramble avenue  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
(available only for  
comments, contributions  
or prearranged trade...  
no subs accepted by the  
s(ur)ly editor.) ir-  
regular.

Repro: good  
Format: good  
Material: good  
Artwork: ---  
General: good

The cover is the only  
piece of artwork. It's  
by Marvin Bryer and is  
alright as far as fan-  
art usually goes. But  
he can do so much bet-  
ter, (and has -- for  
YANDRO, INSIDE, and CRY  
OF THE NAMELESS.) It's  
a shame that there isn't  
more of him in fanzines.  
He's one of the very  
best when he feels the  
urge.

Bob Silverburg, all  
serconish, gives out  
with "Fandom as a Step-  
ping Stone." When he  
was young and belonged  
to 6th fandom he wrote  
critical essays on s-f.  
Now he's a big name  
writer. The same thing

can happen to you, Silverburg assures us, if you'll just quit messing  
around with so many immature endeavors such as what he calls 'writ-  
ing fannish yakkety-yak.' Set your sights higher. Try the prozines.  
Who knows but that you may be the next Bob Silverburg...? And so  
on, like that there. Only slick. The message is candy-coated with  
a casual off-handedness.

No matter what topic Dean A.Grennel has chosen to write on in his  
fanzine appearances, and he seems to write about whatever pops into  
his head, he's never failed to be interesting and entertaining. Not  
here, either, in 'The Murky Way.' But very much in the 2½  
pages of fiction by Dick Ellington, with a one page story idea.

CAPSULES AND COMMENTS



rob williams

There's funny-fiction by Greg Benford -- solidly rested in fact, I'll bet. It's called "The Wheels of Chance" and details the problem of trying to get a fanzine mailing to the post office on time.

I like long letter columns, and there's one here running to 20 letters; mostly comment on the contents of issue #1.

In 'The Primrose Path', Kent promises "never to hack out another boring, uninspired, sophomoric editorial" such as the one under that title. Oh, come now...it wasn't that bad.

ABERRATION #2 is answer given to the promise of #1. A thoroughly readable zine.

BRILLIG #9

Lars Bourne

2436 1/2 Portland St

Eugene, Oregon

15% comment or trade (Irregular)

Repro: good

Format: good

Material: fair to good

Artwork: good

General: good

Can this really be BRILLIG? But it looks so neat. Oh, I know all about it being an impeccable publication and all that, but that was just a joke, wasn't it? I mean...well, it's usually kinda ~~unconcerned~~ unconcerned about its appearance. This can't be BRILLIG. Let's start all over from the cover and go through this zine again. Perhaps we weren't looking closely enough. Perhaps this is BROLLOG, edited by Star Benour and not BRILLIG at all.

There are two front covers. This second one is signed 'Rocky' so it must be by Roscoe Wright. It's a likable abstract-type thing -- dark blue ink on pale green paper. Nice. I don't quite understand this top cover, though. It's by Bourne and it doesn't do a whole lot to me. But what are these words printed so boldly across the cover? TEAR THIS SHEET OFF. Perhaps he realizes that it isn't doing anything to us. Of course we're not going to tear this sheet off. At least I'm not. Why mutilate a copy in perfectly good condition?

Let's look further into this issue. It starts off with 'Echo', the editorial meanderings of Bourne. Wonder what he's up to these days... Trouble with the post office. They think BRILLIG has obscene nudes in it. Why, what a mean thing to say. I've never seen them. Can it be that Bourne inserts special fly-sheets into certain copies that go out to particular friends of his with erotic slated minds? And not send us any? Why, what a mean thing for him to do. Why, I hope they punish him to the full extent of the law. Imagine him depriving us of... What's this? Recipes for Potrzebie. 5/16th's pound of three week old ground beef (inferior quality)... well, I don't know about you, but I can see right now that this is not a true Potrzebie recipe. One of the MAD READERS gave its readers recourse to the MOLLY GOLDBERG COOKBOOK for the real recipe. Look and you'll find that it's nothing but Pot Feast Beef. Another shattered illusion, ah well... And here's a bit about Lars Bourne; boy soldier, he calls himself, to fill out the rest of the editorial pages. Well, there was nothing cosmic about any of that but it was fun to read. Now I wonder what he meant by TEAR THIS SHEET OFF.

Here's an article by Kent Moomaw and he's been watching TV. Not too happily either. He likes the programs, but he doesn't like the commercials. Somebody should talk to him. Doesn't he realize he has a bad attitude here? Most people sit through those dull, old programs just to be sure they catch those clever commercials. Not like the commercials, indeed! Watch it, Lars. If the post office sees this, you've really had it. They advertise on TV. They show the one of the poor old postman of sixty-four laboring under the load of mail contained in seven sacks, all jacked up on his shoulders. "Mail early," an announcer intones, "and this pathetic sight will be no more." Then they show a shot of a spry, handsome young postman just out of college and enjoying life. He is seen in the act of throwing three letters, two postcards and a light package into the back of a three ton mail truck and happily bombing off down the street. Maybe we'd better leave Kent's article and go on to the next. It seems almost unpatriotic to be reading this.

John Champion gives us his account of a visit to Seattle Fandom where he met the Busby's, Otto Pfeiffer, Wally Weber, Alan Nourse and wonder of wonders: G.M. Carr.

Bourne makes some suggestions in literature. There's a letter column immediately followed by a poem of Rockwell Shaefer's design. I don't understand it at all. It demands studious concentration or something. And then, 'Re-echo,' more of Bourne's editorializing. More information on the post office crisis. Very fuggheaded people, these mail officials.

And that's all. Well, that was BRILLIG, and I liked it. But tell me something. What did you do with your Lars Bourne cover? I finally tore that damned thing off and threw it away.

CRIFANAC #5  
Tom Reamy  
4332 Avondale  
Dallas, Texas  
25¢ 5/¢1

Repro: good to excellent  
Format: good to excellent  
Material: bad to excellent  
Artwork: ridiculous to excellent  
General: good

And if you think the above capsule is a bunch of double-talk, then you haven't seen this issue. I arrived at 'good' for the general average of CRIFANAC by putting together the atrocious and the excellent. Perhaps you'll think that this should only average out to 'fair' but excellent entries are so seldom found in a fanzine. And the atrocious may not be hard to come by.

Former editor, Orville Mosher, uses his half of the editorial space to turn the reins of CRIFANAC over to its new editor, Tom Reamy. Reamy informs us that this issue was prepared to snag subscribers and that he's tried to make it pretty good. Her offers visions of color covers, photographs and far better material in future issues: all the better to ensnare us with. (He's a brazen lad.) He also apologizes for the fiction content of this one, and further says that he would be willing to PAY! for material if an author were to request it. (An author would be pretty silly not to, 37 in this case.) Then he apologizes because his zine is only

lithographed (a la INSIDE) and not printed. He says that he's trying to develop CRIFANAC into a pretty high class fanzine...the best fanzine yet!" And with these delirious words, he concludes this awe-inspiring editorial: "I might even make money!"

That snickering you hear is me. That last statement, especially, sounds so absurdly improbable. But don't let me discourage you, Tom. They laughed at Samuel Paulson, too. He was the village idiot.

Following an asinine foreword by Orville Mosher, comes something good: Lyn Venable has her say in a short biographical sketch of herself. A highly interesting feature. I hope CRIFANIC is planning to do more of these. This article is accompanied by a full page photo of Lyn. I found both the subject matter and the layout attractive.

There are two stories in this issue that are verbal gems. Two of the best pieces of fannish literature I've ever seen. The first is by Ray Thompson and called, "Headache." It is one of those oozy, creepy horror things that hit me full impact. This was accomplished by a brilliant display of style that Matheson could be proud of. So what if the story wasn't logical, would never be touched by a pro-editor in his right mind, etc? The story has Mood. Good mood.

The second story, "Lonesome Wind" by Leif Ayen is an example of what marvelous effects can be wrought by words when they are strung out in profusion and used to poetic effect. Adjectives, metaphors, simile, apostrophe: all put to a wonderful use to produce this poetic prose.

These both are Mood stories. But the difference! Thompson's mood is achieved by understatement and condensation. Everything direct, simple and concise. Perhaps half the narrative has been deleted; every other sentence. The story moves jerkily, quickly and is gone... leaving a feeling of dread.

Ayen, on the otherhand, uses a style that I think could be described in Al Andrews' words once written about someone else (Bradbury). "He lays on a welter of words with such deft craftsmanship (though it appears to be abandon) that you are amazed at the clarity and depth the story assumes."

Reamy gives us movie and





T.V reviews of things sciencefictional, a letter column (2 letters) a rocketry article that left me cold. It's of the do-it-yourself variety and is going to be continued in the next issue. This is called adding insult to injury. Tom Reamy has a story of his own called 'To Hell on a Roller-Coaster', and surprisingly enough, after the nightmarish editorial, it isn't as bad as I expected. But definitely not up to the standard of the other two. Sort of run-of-the-mill, you know. Some of the artwork is preposterous. The cover, for example: a photo-montage affair, I believe it's called. Looks like a cross between Strength and Health and Other Worlds. There are a couple of Bourne fillers. Reamy himself handles the rest of it. Some of it surprisingly (he really did floor me with that editorial) fine.

All in all, I don't know what Reamy is doing all that foolish editorial apologizing for. CRIFANAC seems to be on the right road. When Reamy learns how to write a half-way decent editorial ... who knows, he might make money after all.

ETERNITY #1  
Richard Brown & Paul Stanberry  
127 Roberts Street  
Pasadena 3, California  
Free (irregular)

Repro: bad  
Format: bad  
Material: bad  
Artwork: ----  
General: bad

I guess that ETERNITY considers itself a fanmagazine. Yet I suppose it might just as soon be considered a fanzine. From what little I could make out of its hastily manufactured contents, I felt relieved that the rest remained blessedly illegible. This was due to the editors' ignorance of how to handle a mimeo. They say that they are learning to do so gradually and the readability of the zine does sort of improve toward the last few pages. But, somehow, by then it doesn't seem to matter.

SATA ILLUSTRATED  
Bill Pearson  
4516 East Glenrosa Avenue  
Phoenix, Arizona  
25¢ or trade (quarterly)

Repro: excellent  
Format: excellent  
Material: fair to good  
Artwork: good to excellent  
General: good to excellent

Marvelously clear reproduction, a thoughtful layout plan and lots of fine artwork. (Lots of lovely-to-look-at semi-nudes, too; if you're so inclined.)

Alvar Appeltoft opens this issue with a bore of an article inspired by an Atlantis-Mu myth book.

Pearson's 'Multiple Merritt' follows in a more readable vein. It's a long story that is also long on illoes by Adkins; very good.

Then there is a pin-up girl by Adkins called Miss Sata. A charming girl with a backward typo face and a forward typo body. She clutches a sheet and is in the process of either covering up or exposing her Maidenform clad bosom and what-all. I can't decide which it is she'd be likely to do.

DUE SHORTLY: IMPROBABLE  
from Colin Cameron, 2561  
Ridgeview Dr., San Diego  
5, California. A wide  
market promised. Fiction  
artwork, articles, re-  
views should be sent by  
interested parties to  
the above address. Ar-  
rangements also made  
there for subscriptions,  
trades, etc.

Also due are apologies  
to Rich Brown of ETER-  
NITY, who's address was  
improperly published  
last issue. Rich can be  
reached for subs, com-  
ments, information at  
127 Roberts St., Pas-  
adena 3, California.

An Advertisement:  
Beautiful printed copies  
of Barebabe on heavy pa-  
per size  $4\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$  may now  
be obtained from me for  
25¢ each...

Ralph Rayburn Phillips  
1414 S.W. 14th Ave  
Portland 1, Oregon  
(for sample, see page 26  
this issue...jdm)

FROM SWEDEN: FHAN #1  
All types of material  
are wanted and all cor-  
respondence should be  
sent to either George  
Sjoberg, Dalagatan 31,  
n.b., Stockholm Va.,  
Sweden or Alf Johansson  
Radmansgatan 50 III tr.  
Stockholm Va., Sweden

SATA breaks off here and divides itself  
into another section called 'Fandomwise'.  
A two-page editorial is saved from be-  
ing a complete loss by a set of illo's,  
one to a page. The first is Adkin's  
heroically idealized version of a space-  
man. The second is the same subject,  
only as seen through Pearson's realistic  
eye. Imagine Ernest Borgnine's 'Marty'.  
'Hash Harbor', a fanzine review  
column by Adkins, a poem by your review-  
er and nine pages of letters complete  
this ish. The letter column is a beaut;  
letters from Alfred E. Neuman -- no kid-  
ding -- Bob Coulson, Claude Hall, Kent  
Moomaw, Sophia Loren -- who are they  
kidding? -- and others.

TWIG #5  
Guy E. Terwilliger  
1412 Albright St  
Boise, Idaho  
10¢ 6/50¢ (bi-mos)

Repro: good  
Layout: fair  
Material: good  
Artwork: fair  
General: good

The editorial, 'Shavings,' reads rather  
like a case history out of Havelock El-  
lis, what with pants being pulled down,  
girls seeing rear ends and screaming and  
all.

Juanita Coulson in a new column  
called 'What Do You Say' says sex is  
nice.

Dave Jenrette says that nudity is  
still legal in shows over in England.  
This scintillating piece of information  
is part of his article, 'Every Fans'  
Guide to London.'

Lars Bourne writes about himself in a  
short piece called 'A Natural Bourne  
Tale.' He says that he likes girls...  
especially girls. Good for him. The  
way he renders a nude in black stockings  
a few pages later leads me to believe  
he really doesn't.

John Champion, in a movie review  
pitting the book versus the film ver-  
sion of 'The (Incredible) Shrinking Man'  
comes to the conclusion that shrinking  
and inch or two every week and not being  
able to do anything about it is upsetting.

He's right. Bill Meyers says that sf can be mature, scientific, logical, suspenseful, fantastic, literal, beautiful, horrible, gory, descriptive, sociological...he also wants Hawling and Fairman to read VENTURE.

Larry Sokol doesn't like Council Bluffs.

Terwilliger wants some art by Adkins.

Herbert E. Beach sent in a listing of all the main stories to appear in FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES and FANTASTIC NOVELS and A. Merritt's FANTASY BOOK; Guy E. Terwilliger did not print it.

(all magazines for review

should be sent to your reviewer

at 5831 Cabanne

St. Louis 12, Mo.)

:Rob Williams

spots by Adkins and Phillips:

## footnote reviews

alan dodd

IF GRASS SHOULD DIE. Just think that title over for a little while. Just supposing grass should die. Not just ordinary common or garden grass with its scrubby tufts sticking out in fields and gardens here and there but all the hundred and one varieties of grass to be found in the world.

If grass, wheat, corn, oats, barley and even rice were to die-would this be the end of mankind? For all mankind depends upon grass for its survival. Even the great carnivores live on smaller creatures which in turn live on grass. Whichever way the circle turns grass is always at the center.

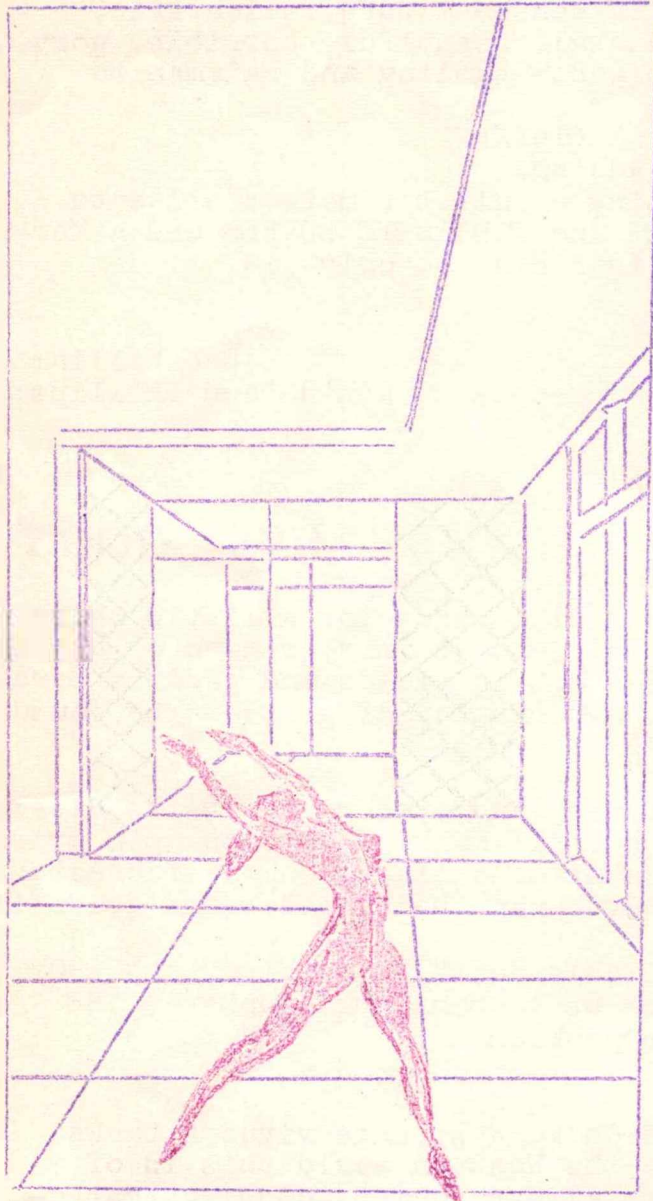
With its death comes the inevitable death of mankind, too. Or does it? The theme is placed before us in John Christopher's THE DEATH OF GRASS. It is a formidable problem.

In a remote region of farthest China a strange virus attacks grass, withers it and kills it. To the Western world this is of little interest; after all there are always so many other catastrophes which the Chinese have to suffer and the resulting famine is too far distant and too unreal to be of much interest to you or I.

But the plague travels-remorselessly round the world meeting a barrage of counter-irritants, crop spraying, destruction of the grass in belts before the disease reaches, but all are in vain.

In Britain the Government as criminally stupid as ever decides on a terrible, merciful course of obliteration for the cities by atomic bombing. but since the men who will do the bombing cannot be expected to destroy their loved ones without at least an attempt to warn them, the secret leaks out and there is panic and a complete collapse of all order.

One of the men who has warning of this is the hero of our story, li who for the remainder of the book tells the story (can't page 48



*carl iarsen*

THE  
BEAUTIFUL  
PEOPLE

The beautiful people were always there. It was something strong and fine to believe in. There were three of them, two male and one female. And on Sunday afternoons the others came to look at them.

They were kept in the perfectly conditioned room where the light was as constant as the temperature. The room had three walls, and a two-inch plate glass for the others to see through.

Atom stretched, feeling the perfect lines of muscle move silk-like across his back. His eyes opened, and he turned naturally

to the window wall. It was early yet. No one was there. Atom smiled, breathing luxuriously. Beside him lay Eve, her breasts moving rhythmically, tasting the air of sleep.

Atom looked around the room. Ham stood at the book case, thumbing through a magazine.

"Ham," his voice was quiet.

Ham turned. "Your're up. They'll be here soon. Better wake Eve."

Atom nodded, touching Eve's hand. She was awake. She yawned, as Atom had, perfectly. She sat up.

Atom got to his feet and went to stand beside Ham. His eyes moved to the plaque on the wall. He traced the writing for the millionth time.

"The great essentials of happiness," so the

plaque said, "are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for. You are something to love."

Atom smiled, thinking it was nice to be something to love.

"Ham," he said, "Tell me again."

"Tell you what?"

"Tell me about us-- do they really love us?"

Ham nodded, his hand going to the hair over his ear.

"Yes, they love us."

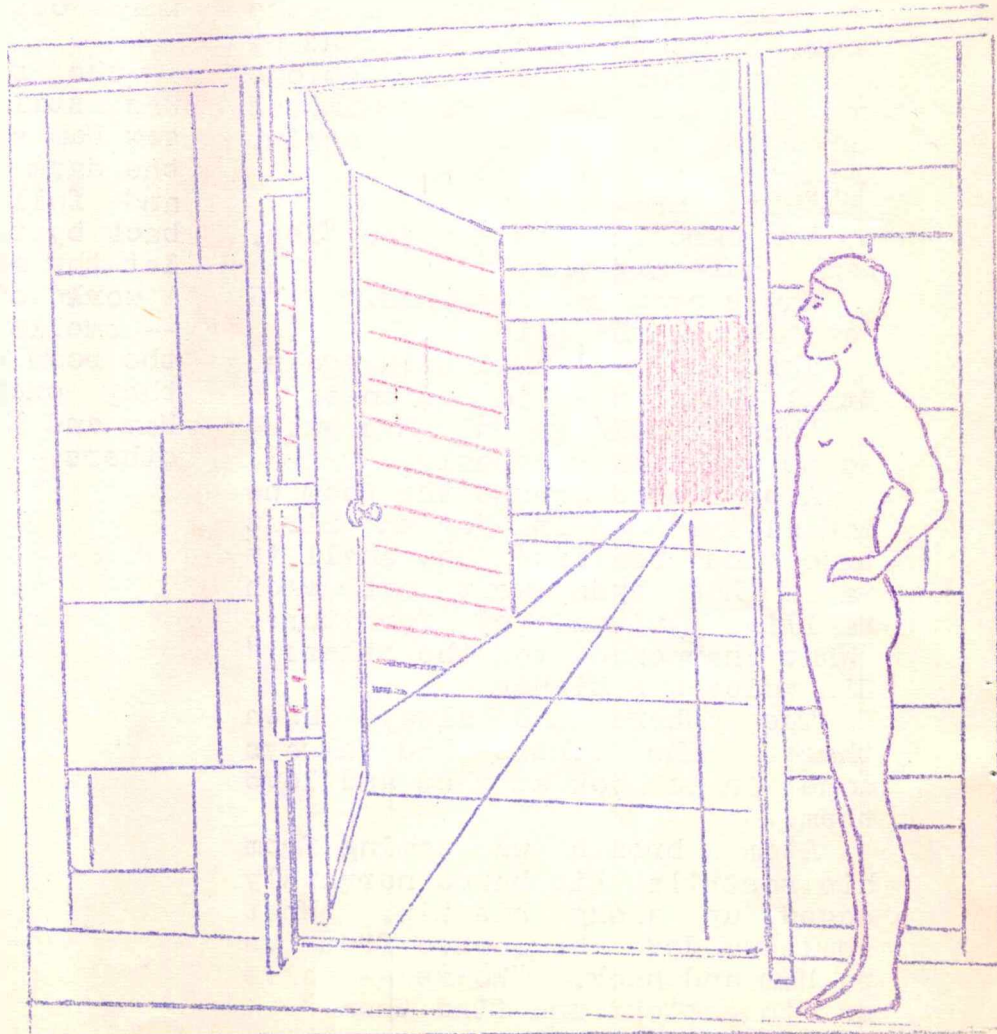
"Where did our names come from?"

"Legend, I suppose."

"And we're not like the others?"

"No. Not at all. But they suppose we are. Don't worry about it, Atom, get ready. They'll be here soon."

Eve sat on the floor, combing her hair while Atom and



Ham straightened up the room.

The time came, and the outer doors opened automatically to let the first herd of the others into the silent room to see the beautiful people.

Atom stood, staring at the door. Twenty seconds ticked by and the door slid shut. No one was in the room. Four minutes later the door slid open again. A pause, then it shut.

"Where are they?"

Eve came to Atom's side. "Yes, Ham, where are they?"

Ham's brow was furrowed. "I don't know," he said.

The door clicked open again. Still the others did not come.

"What should we do?" Eve walked to the wall nervously.

Atom looked around the room he had always been in. For the first time, he realized how small it was. His eyes went over each familiar piece of furniture. "What happened to the others?" His voice was higher.

The others had always been there. The others had always come in to look at them and love them.

Atom's breath was coming from his nostrils. His hands nervously edged up along his hip. "What shall we do?" he looked from Eve to Ham and back. "We've -- we've got to get out and find them."

Eve looked at him. "Out? You mean out there where they are?"

"Yes."

"I don't know," said Ham, "I don't know what we've got to do."

Atom coldly walked to the book case and picked out a large book. From the back of the room he hurled it at the glass that had separated them from the others for as long as he had been.

The room filled with the crashing of shattering glass. A tide of overwarm air eased in over them. Eve and Ham stood staring.

It was there. It was not a dream or a film as Ham had sometimes suspected. There was a world out there.

The sound of breaking glass was still in Atom's head when he saw Ham step out of the room into the dark museum hall. Eve awoke and followed him. Atom stood back by the familiar bookcase and let the air move around his head. A world of new smells came to him -- smells that made the scent of the room something dead. Somehow they excited him. He followed Ham and Eve into the world of the others.

They stood before the door. Atom could hear the gentle clicking of the machinery in the wall. The door began opening.

Light.

More light than Atom had ever seen or imagined. It spilled sideways, cracked into the room, filling his eyes, hurting the inside of his head. His hands went to his face.

When he opened his eyes, Ham had already stepped out into the world.

"The light," Atom said. Eve smiled. He took her hand and they followed Ham.

There was a sting in the air from the world outside. It was no longer so warm. Atom shuddered, rubbing his hands on his naked thighs. Ham was taking in the air in deep draughts. Atom took up a handful of dust and smelled it. Everything had a smell. Everything outside. Everything except -- himself. He looked at Ham.

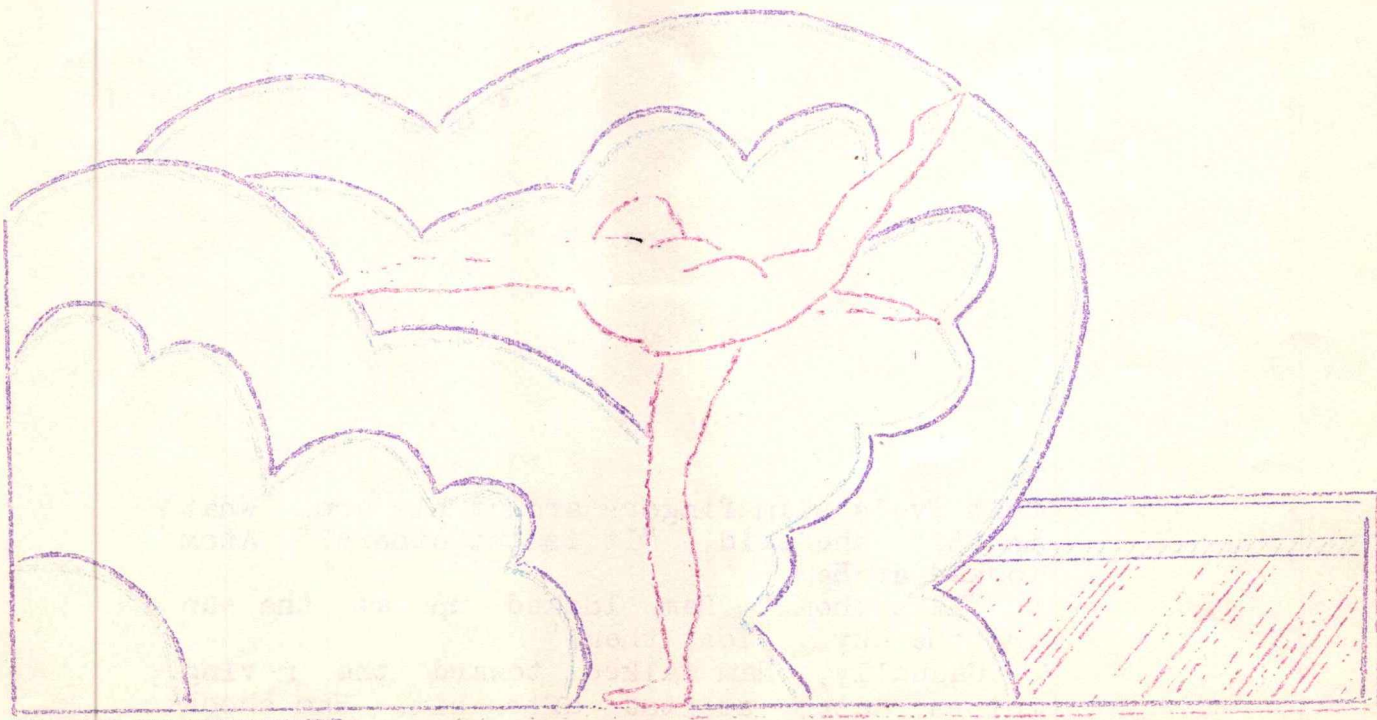
"Why?" he said.

"What is it, Atom?"

"Why don't I have a smell."

"Because, Atom, we are perfect."

Atom stood for a moment in the unperfect world. It was a place with green and with trees. With cement paths. He looked to the right of the museum. A large building was there, with many entrances. He read the words on the side of the building.



"Los Angeles Coliseum," he said. "What is Los Angeles Coliseum?"

"A building. Where is Eve?"

"Over there," Atom pointed to a place among the trees. Eve was sitting on the green things, trying to look at the sun.

She stopped and looked off through the trees. She stood up, pointing, her body went tense. "Look!"

Off through the trees, something was coming.

Something, moving, skittering through the trees, moving toward them. Eve came to Atom and they stood beside Ham.

The thing stopped. Fantastic patterns sprinkled down over the place of green trees. They could not see the thing clearly.

Then something else moved. And again, then two, and three, and five, and a hundred. Atom



felt Eve's slim fingers around his arm. "What is it?" she said. "It is the others?" Atom looked at Ham.

"It's them." Ham looked up at the sun and the sky. "Yes, them."

Casually, Ham walked toward the moving things. Atom started after him. Ham shook his head.



Eve's arms went around Atom's neck and he felt her body convulsing in a cry. A sudden fear boiled up in him. "Ham! Ham!" he yelled.

Ham, off on the green, stumbled. He hit the ground and rooled over. A pole was rising from his stomach, with red marks around it, staining his skin.

"Ham!" Atom screamed, throwing off Eve and staring to run. The shapes were coming closer, and he could see them, then, in the sun. He stopped and felt his mouth opening. Vaguely, they seemed like the others.

His eyes moved to the broken pavement in the paths to the crumbling walls of the coliseum. There would be no way out, no way except back to the museum. Back into his own world. He turned and ran, screaming to Eve. She started for the door.

A rock struck Atom on the shoulder, throw-



ing him off balance. The humans came pouring over him, from around the side of the building, from everywhere, squat ugly running things.

Something struck his leg and a pain shot up through him.

He could see into the museum, see the shattered glass and his world, as the museum door

automatically slid open. Atom screamed and struggled as something as sharp as glass was inside his back, and he could smell the human breath of them.

"Ham!" he screamed, as the museum doors slid shut.

:Carl Larsen  
illustrations by Richardson:

#### FOOTNOTE REVIEWS (con't from page 41.)

of his flight to freedom to kill, betray, plot and destroy all those who get in his way and prevent he and his party from reaching safety in the North.

This is one of those stories of survival which after you have read it makes you realize just how wonderful the mundane things of life are around you. Whether you'll agree with the author in his bloodstained decisions is another thing -- and it all stemmed from a few blades of grass.

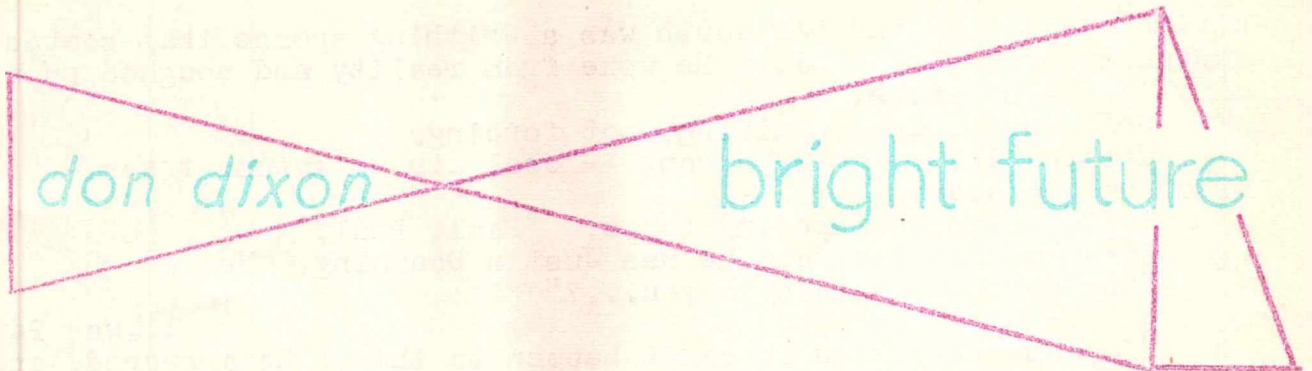
Alan Dodd:

From Bob Pawlat comes news that a conference on science fiction will be held in the Washington D.C. area early in May. Date and location are not yet firm, but details may be obtained from Bob at 6001 43rd Ave, Hyattsville, Maryland.

An unnamed fanzine is being prepared by Vince Rosch, 3443 South Sadlier Rd, Indianapolis 19, Ind. and should appear sometime in February. Information should be asked from and contributions sent to that address. The magazine will be monthly, so a wide market is promised.

#### CONTRIBUTOR NOTES (con't from page 5.)

Arthur Kerr teaches at the Ft. Benjamin Harrison Adjutant School in Indiana under his real name: Richard Lupoff. This issue's column rounds out his second year of writing for SIGMA OCTANTIS. Larry Bourne, an art student, is responsible for BRILLIG, a diversified and impeccable magazine published from his home in Oregon. (See reviews, this issue.) Al Andrews is another long-time contributor. He lives in Birmingham, Alabama, where he corresponds in large quantities and is trying to follow his first professional sale with others; he is associate editor of SPECTRE. Alan Dodd's 'Footnote Reviews' is an innovation it is hoped others will contribute to in future issues. Reviews of main stream as well as science fiction and fantasy books are solicited. Alan Dodd is responsible for CAMBER and CAMBER ART FOLIO which are published at Hoddesdon, Herts., England. Mrs. Esther Richardson makes her debut here this issue. A grandmother living in Seattle, Washington, she has just discovered the amateur magazine field. Dan Adkins has just completed his stint with the Air Force and looks forward to moving to New York later this year and he hopes professionalism. His work profusely decorates science fiction amateur magazines, and he has made (continued, page 55.)



When he woke it felt like someone was scrubbing the fatty tissues off his nerve axons with a wire brush.

The diffused light that served as a focal point for his returning consciousness contorted into a definitely shaped bulb swinging urgently back and forth, and the shadows it lengthened distorted and seemed to throb with the same urgency.

"You're wasting time, Doerning. Snap out of it."

His name was Justin Doerning.

The flat outline before him grew -- it was closer, with the disproportion of a badly posed photograph. He turned his head to see if the bulb were still there or the two were one and a rocking slap sent it thudding against the floor.

"Doerning."

A second figure presented itself to claim the voice, but it was a part of the background and he didn't bother to assimilate it. He only lay back and waited for his head to clear.

The light was blue and the rays were the same, but misted. For a moment he thought he had fallen asleep at a seance but he heard a whining and was suddenly afraid that he was dead and had been called to one.

There were more rocking blows. He didn't feel them sharply. It was as if he were vibrating away from them faster than they were coming -- a material doppler effect -- and the faster he went and the further he got the more the slaps felt like the furry pawing of a bear.

#

He was tearing himself apart when he screamed.

The forms, the men and the bulb, were shrinking. That was logical and rational and he realized this. What horrified him was the fact that they were growing also. He was looking astigmatically into both ends of a telescope at the same time and he screamed once more, this time in rejection.

-2-

A viscous liquid and his mouth was a writhing sponge that soaked and sopped and tried to vomit. He woke from reality and coughed up an olive and a splinter.

Soft, white arms, guiding, not forcing.

French windows -- a balcony -- cool air -- autumn trees -- fifty-nine hundred stars.

Soft, white, whispering tones: "Paul, Paul!"

His name was Paul and he was Justin Doering. He...

"Why do they do this to you...?"

...was Paul.

"Because they know it can't happen to them," he answered, and it was true.

His arms and chest and face on the cold balcony wall, with fifty-nine hundred stars overhead and his head floating somewhere.

He took his arm again and they walked down to a goldfish pool where he rinsed his mouth.

Then, because he was Paul, he took her hand and led her back into the storm's eye.

"Eat, drink and be hoary. Time is a fuzz on your beer."

"'O young ambition, all moral greatness is but disease.' "

###

Six hours passed and the party was six hours dead.

It was five a.m. Fragments of the night's phantasms littered the suite. One of these had been dried verily substantial. He was thick and copious with a coronet of red hair.

He clacked an empty martini glass on the piano.

"November, Paul. Have you decided to use the machine?"

"As of this moment I haven't decided anything," (Farnsworth), the thought came as he spoke. The man's name was Farnsworth, but he didn't feel certain enough to use it right away.

"The machine is calibrated in relation to natural, local radiation to the exact number of years, month, and seconds you have stipulated. If your figures are right the machine will remove you from the present to that time in the past when the planet was occupying this part of space. The position you occupy will be in one-to-one correspondence with the position you will occupy in the past, as fixed at the time of departure. There will be, perhaps, a momentary lapse in your own lifetime, but according to figures certainly not more than a few millionths of a second. If..."

"My figures are right, Farnsworth," the name came easily, now, as easily as the knowledge that his work was errorless. Somehow this made him uneasy. He was having the sensation of being fixed, like concrete.

The big man abruptly assumed an attitude of insecurity.

"I hope so, Paul; I..." Farnsworth rubbed the fat of his neck,

"I'm only a mechanic. I may not look like one, but that's all I am."

"I only hope you haven't made some bumbling mistake," Paul replied, feeling sure of his words. "I'd find it decidedly ugly,

Farnsworth, to have the machine pop me out into the middle of space a hundred years after the planet passed by."

"No. My calibrations are all right, Paul. You'll be the first man to set foot on the planet of another star. It will also be the first time a man has moved at a disproportionate rate into another era. Symbolic in a way -- successful travel to another planet is dependent on travel to another place in time. We'll never know if life exists on planets of another star in our own millenium -- time and distance prohibit that -- but you, Paul, will know. It's rather unfortunate that you cannot return, but..."

"Just get me there, Farnsworth. I've given you all the data I have but God help you if you've loused up your end."

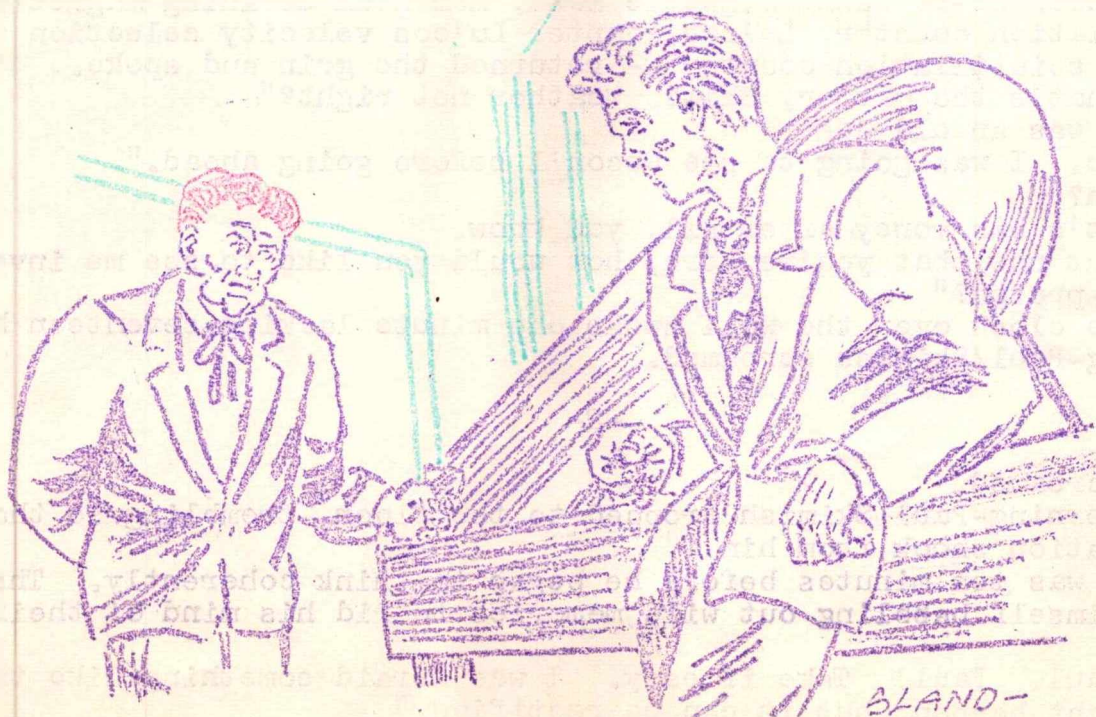
"God help you, Paul. I'm not going on your jaunt."

###

After Farnsworth left, Paul lay down on the couch to think. This helpless attitude, though, made him nervous, and soon he was pacing the white-diamonds-on-black-background carpet, though not at all worried, which unnerved him more.

Millennia ago a star had existed in the part of space where the earth was, and that star had planets. Paul (difficulty: he didn't know his last name) was to travel back in time to that star and a planet of that star.

He knew he was the man Paul as he knew he was Justin Doerning; Paul a reformed dipse, inventor and statistician, and Doerning...



what? The two seemed to overlap. He knew what he was, but the past and all those years that made him seemed non-existent. As the eye cannot simultaneously view pure red and blue, similarly he swung alternately between the two personalities, trying to find a perspective.

At one minute before five p.m. the light over the time cocoon was red. Beneath the seven foot high control board ceiling, Farnsworth signalled for power.

Paul 'Justin-Doerning' lay numbing under drugs administered to facilitate reorientation on the planet x.

At five o'clock for one instant Paul/Doerning hybridized and Paul as Doerning was sure Farnsworth was the figure beneath the swinging light that had blinded Doerning universes away and before.

He never saw the red light blink out.

-3-

Skimish Skodder signalled to an assistant to turn off the tevatron and a trillion electron volts which would have bombarded a copper target in the next moment, did not.

Skim revolved a second before he heard the voice and grinned as he saw his brother-in-law Ik'nash, the circular, piebald figure rolling through the door.

Ik'nash -- antennasing the eighty-odd feet of momentum-defining magnet prism, quadrupole-focusing magnetic lens, scintillation counter, quadrupole-focusing magnetic lens, momentum-defining magnet prism, scintillation counter, Lu'cos counter Lu'cos velocity selection counter, and scintillation counter -- returned the grin and spoke.

"What's the matter, Skim? Weather not right?"

It was an old joke.

"No. I was going to see Decon'l before going ahead."

"Oh?"

"It's his money after all, you know.

"But now that you're here, how would you like to see me invent an anti-proton?"

The clock over the wall spoke one minute lacking seventeen hours. Doerning-Paul/Skimish screamed.

-2-

Laura screamed.

Doerning-Paul-Skimish dropped to the floor, trembling so that perspiration shook from him.

It was ten minutes before he began to think coherently. Then he heard himself babbling out wild memories to rid his mind of their burden.

"Paul. Paul! Take it easy. I was afraid something like this might happen, but it can be rectified."

52 The fat man's hands shoved his face up and began slapping it with

unexpected strength.

"Paul, listen to me. We may not have much time. When a weed --"

"Weed?" Paul/Doerning/Skimish giggled and tried not to drool.

"Paul. Understand me. When a weed is pulled from the ground, the vine it sprouts from is broken and from each end a new weed grows.

"You broke the temporal vine trying to bridge the past, and from the two ends of this vine two new universes sprouted. From the future break a new past grew and from the past side a new future grew, the new past that is Laura's and mine, probably completely different from the one we remember, and the future which you can never reach. The time you broke away from is now two separate ones, Paul. You can never live beyond that one moment when you broke the time line. As soon as you reach that point you slide off on a tangent and create a new past to substantiate your already existing mind. For you there will be a million pasts. Laura and I are lucky to be on this side of the break. We have the future."

The time cocoon. Paul/Doerning/Skimish saw it as Paul-Doerning, then the triumverate saw itself as before a large panel, and try as hard as he could, Paul

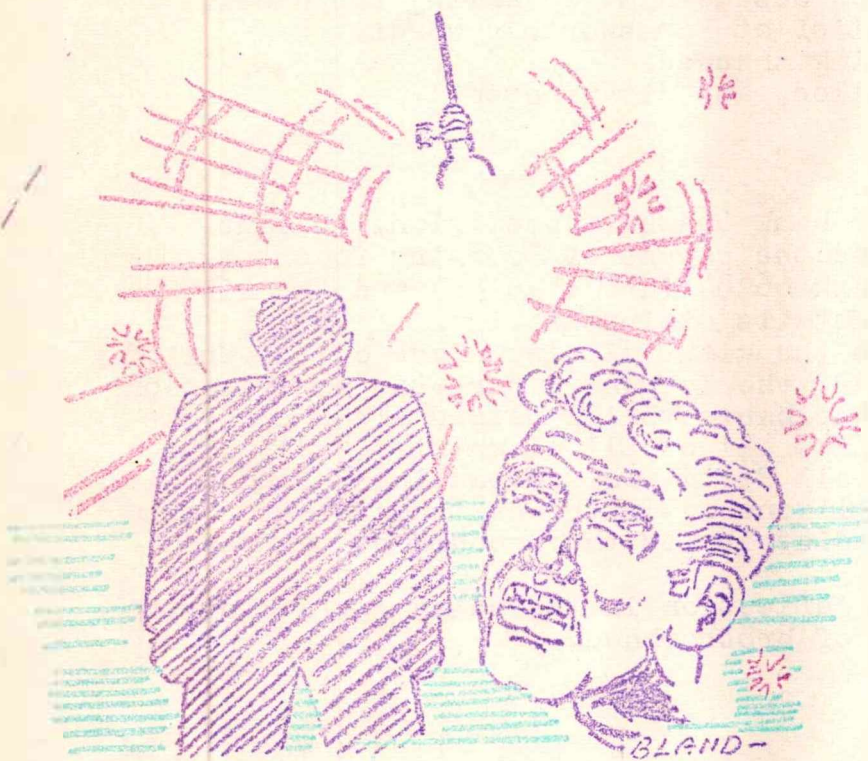
could remember no transition. But the alienness of Skimish Skodder was there and he knew the alienness in him was himself.

"Someone named Spengler centuries ago spoke of two people, Cromwell and Mohammed I think there names were, who lived ages apart as being contemporaries. The point was that all cultures follow the same evolution, so that a man of one culture might understand a man of another if they were products of corresponding parts of their cultures.

"Each time you reach the point of breakage, Paul, you're shouldered aside and your ego ...no, that's not the right word.... your soul? .... your basic self creates a new foundation of past experiences. The personality you possess in that past, no matter how alien it is, is a cultural contemporary of your basic self. There's no limit to what outer form you can take as long as a modicum of intelligence is inherent.

"All we have to do, now, is to break this time line before the hour of previous breakage, but send you only a moment into the future.

Your existance -- your continued existance -- will then be secured."



Paul grimaced inwardly. He recalled the swinging light and soft whiteness, and search as hard as he could he could find no transition.

He thought of telling Farnsworth that he had time-jumped before and Farnsworth and his universe were part of a greater past he had created in his abyssmal ignorance. He thought of telling Farnsworth that there could be no end of diminishing in this time or the next.

They stood between him and the clock; Farnsworth and the girl -- (Laura) the thought sprung uncoiled.

Laura dropped to her knees beside him, revealing the clock.

"Paul!" She sighed in relief at Farnsworth's words.

It was five p.m. Something snapped.

"Laura, catch me," he yelled, and disappeared.

-3-

Doerning-Paul-Skimish/computer bank 66384 (association) thought.

Within transistor confines the psyche of Doerning fought Skimish fought Paul fought computer bank 66384 (association) and the All Star Electronic Amalcomp Brain fought its disintegration.

Ellollamatet stood before the giant platinum face of the United Stars Pool personified in ASEAB, the largest cybernetic amalgamation in galactic history. As indescribable thrill passed along his telepathic nerve, radiating itself to all of Ellollamatet's race. The moment of true brotherhood of all Being was approaching through this collection of artificial intelligence. In the next hours after all cultural ken had been equally distributed there could be no reason for dissension.

Ellollamatet watched his reflection in the shiny surface of the Amalcomp, dreaming of the day of brotherhood.

-2-

"It was obvious from the start.

"I'm sorry, Laura, but there's nothing to be done."

The big man huddled in his shadow.

"It was stupid to think that with statistics and machinery we could have any effect on time, the essence of statistics and machinery.

"Paul knew it. He must have; that was his end of it. I know nothing about... except what happened. Why Paul never admitted it to himself... not even Paul can know now.

"We made such preparations -- took such precautions that Paul would not materialize within a mountain, a hill, or space itself. He could not. It would be like walking toward a concrete wall and taking precautions not to walk through it.

"And atoms of air are as concrete as atoms of rock.

"Paul left this point in time and there was a split second lapse nowhere to go. Perhaps it might have been different if he'd tried to materialize in space; but there are atoms there, too."

He paused, wondering if he could go on talking while the girl cried.

54 "But when will he..."



This was the hardest.

"Only when he dies, Laura, can it stop."

-4-

Paul/Doerning/Skim/Computer bank 66384 (association) materialized on a hill.

The explosion hit him while he was still remembering, and he felt the dirt lying soft and warm against his face.

A second before the shrapnel hit him he thought he knew.

###

In Arlington National Cometary the tomb of an unknown American soldier, killed in France during the First World War, overlooks the Potomac and beyond the city of Washington. A tree-lined avenue leads from a balustrade to the flight of stairs which approach the tomb...

:Don Dixon  
illustrations by Tom Bland:

#### CONTRIBUTOR NOTES (con't from page 48.)

two professional sales. He is founder and now associate editor of SATE. This issue sees SIGMA OCTANTIS' second publication of a short story by the very prolific Eric Cashen. His short semi-sketches/semi-vignettes have appeared in many little magazines. Another second this issue is the taciturn Tom Maylone's hort story. This is a distinct change of pace from his last, "Paradise". This month's cover is done by a new (to SIGMA OCTANTIS) artist, Don Simpson. His illustrations for "Barrow's Phobia" and spots demonstrate a talent which is hoped will be very much in evidence in the future. Don Dixon appears here for the first time. Uncle Sam having just rested a heavy hand on his shoulder, he completed a number of scripts which will appear in future issues. Seeing Uncle from another direction, Rob Williams presents here his second review column. He lives in St. Louis where the nights are cool, life easy and pen scratches paper in comfortable amounts. Tommy Bland's work is another first time appearance in SIGMA OCTANTIS. He has had work printed previously in SPECTRE. SIGMA OCTANTIS is published at 4 Curve St., Wakefield, Massachusetts. Associate editor, Ralph Butcher. Sample copies may be obtained for the asking. Subscriptions are 1/15¢; 2/25¢; 3/30¢. Editor and publisher: John Mussells. A boo-Mu E. U. publication.

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