

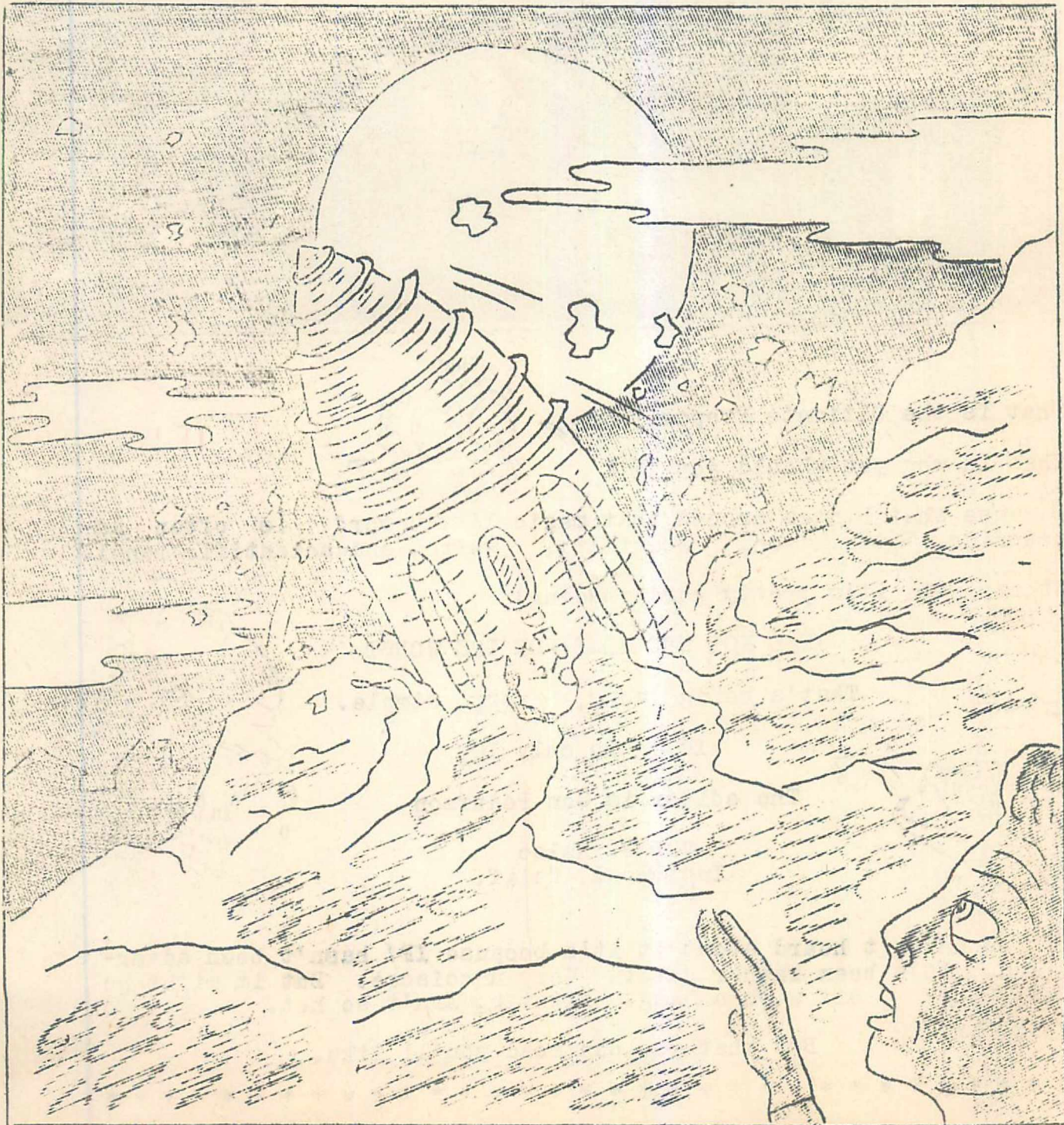
fandom's top monthly

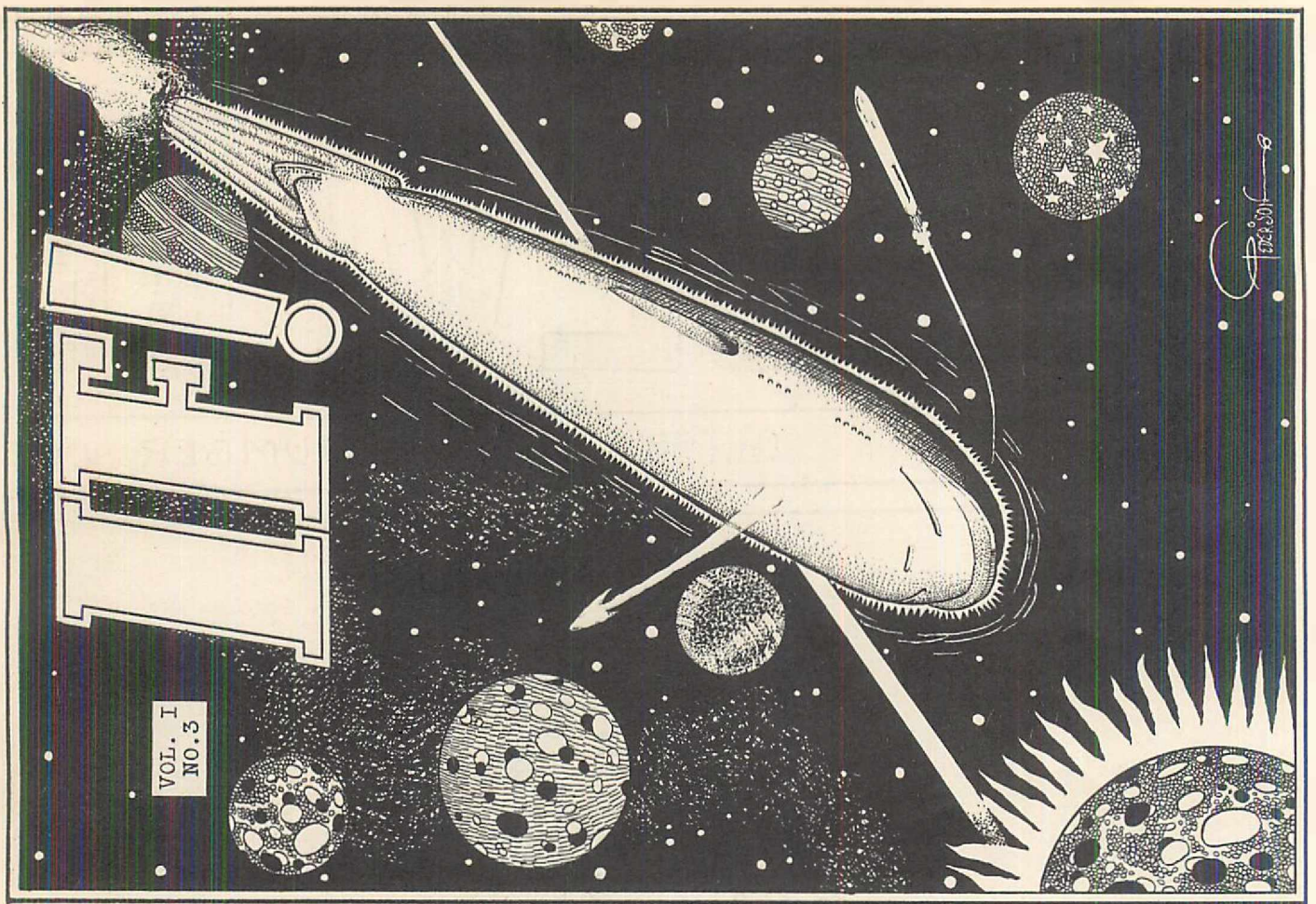
SPACEWARP

VOLUME FOUR

OCTOBER, 1948

NUMBER ONE





VOL. I
NO. 3

That is the Ultimate Preposition.

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But what you can read you'll like.

 * A *
 * AAA *
 * H *
 * H *
 * *****

TIMBER !

(Bubbles from the editorial bathtub)

Yep, this ish is a bit late. My apologies. There are several reasons. The main one (which will continue to plague me for months to come) is college. My schedule this semester is such that I get home about five p.m. most days; the rest of the time I get home at eight p.m. Together with homework, this cuts down drastically on the time I can devote to producing SPACEWARP. Especially since there are many MANY other things to do of an evening besides cranking a mimeo.

Secondly, my sister got married a week or so back. This, as those of you who have gone through such events well know, kept me from having any time at all for stf for several weeks. A wedding is the most efficient method ever devised for disrupting household routine. Yes indeed.

Consequently, this WARP runs only 22 pages instead of the 26 I'd planned. By cutting down on interior artwork, I managed to get everything else in, except my promised analysis of the Macomb arson case. That'll come next month, as will several other readable articles and stories already on hand.

The BEERSON produced not only a swell time for those of us who attended, but enabled me to get more hectoilles from Stein, as well as a supply of gelatin films. Only the aforementioned lack of time kept the WARP this time from being its usual colorful self.

Incidentally, if you are one of the 29 people (by actual count) to whom I owe letters, this column gives you an idea of why I haven't written. The way things are now, you'll probably hear from me by Christmas. If ever.

Apologies to Ray Nelson for overlooking his cartoons when I wrote the footnote to Steve Matchette's article. I was half asleep at the time.

I found a source of supply for 20-lb Hammermill hectopaper, which is what I used for most of this ish. Is it better than the 10-lb stuff I've been using?

Several fen seem to be trying to stir up a campaign to kick Paul Cox out of fandom because of his racial views. While I heartily disagree with Paul, I maintain that he has a perfect right to say what he thinks, and I hereby state that if such a totalitarian scheme succeeds, I will resign from any organization backing it; and if necessary, drop out of fandom altogether. I refuse to be associated with any form of "thought policing" and stand by the words of Voltaire: "I do not believe a word you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

You've probably heard by now that SUPER SCIENCE STORIES is being revived by Popular Publications. Best wishes for a long and successful career! Incidentally, the UNKNOWN WORLDS anthology was worth waiting for, too.

For a more detailed account of the BEERSON than is given in this magazine, write Ben Singer or George Young for a copy of UNITED FANDOM.

FANTASY TIMES scooped the rest of fandom on the SSS news, I believe. At any rate, that's where I first heard of it.....

THE disappearance of Roger Akner has never been satisfactorily explained. There is only one person who knows what actually happened on that dark night two years ago -- myself -- and I chose then to keep silent. However, the fact that Akner's huge library of dark knowledge has been broken up and sold piece-meal to more than a hundred collectors -- over my vehement protests -- forces me to break silence.

THE EYES OF ROGER AKNER

by WILLIAM JAMES
Big Bay, Michigan

For two reasons I have remained silent about that horrible night: the skepticism with which the story will naturally be greeted; and fear that vengeance may be visited on me by certain nameless ones. But now an even greater fear forces me to re-

veal the tale.

I had known Roger Akner for the better part of ten years, the night I received that frantic telephone call. I had never been able to completely understand him. He was a scholarly man, given to moods of deep depression at times. He had little interest in the affairs of the world, preferring the company of books -- strange and fearful books even to me, who have studied many strange volumes, and have seen with my own eyes the dark worship of savage deities. I have always had the feeling when in Akner's company, and particularly when in the high-ceilinged, oak-paneled library of his ancestral home, that I was close to another world; that clustered beyond some thin barrier were the shadowy shapes of nightmare that watched with evil, hungry eyes for an opportunity to break through.....

I hadn't seen Akner for several months, when the phone in my bachelor apartment rang that stormy night and his voice crackled thinly over the wire.

"Hollo. Hello, John?"

"Yes. Hello," I said. "Who--?"

The connection was poor. Akner's voice came thinly through the hum and crackle of the receiver. "John? John North?"

I shouted: "Yes! This is John North."

"John....." The voice sounded infinitely weary, but I thought the poor connection responsible. "This is Akner. Can you come--right away?"

"Why -- what is wrong?" I asked. "Hello--Roger!" as I received no answer.

Then, thin, fading:

"Right away, John...Important...Explain when you get here....."
And a very final click from the receiver.

I did not know, then, what that weariness meant. He must be ill, I thought as I struggled into coat and hat. The wind howled and rattled the windows, and rain smashed against the glass with battering ram force. I shuddered as I thought of the fifty-mile drive to Akner's home on a night like this.

I DROVE that fifty miles in a little over an hour, and congratulated myself on making excellent time. He had been waiting for me, and opened the door the moment I set foot on the porch.

"Come in, John," he said, and slammed the door the moment I was in, cutting off the banshee wail of the wind. I stared at him, shocked, as I saw him in the light.

"I'll take your hat and coat." His voice had the same weary, hopeless tone I had attributed to a bad telephone connection.

As I struggled out of my wet coat, I thought: He is ill! His face was drawn and pale, and there were heavy dark circles under his eyes. And his body, which had always tended to plumpness, was actually skeletal. The hand he lifted to help me with my coat was almost thin enough to see through.

He led the way into the dark, shadowed library; and as I sought words with which to inquire the nature of his illness, he anticipated me.

"No, John, I'm not ill," he said.

There was a fire blazing in the fireplace, and he waved me to a chair before it. He seated himself in another, before which was set a cocktail table bearing a huge silver coffee urn and a cup half-full of black coffee.

"Would you care for coffee? Or would you prefer a liqueur?"

I shook my head.

"Then I may as well explain," he said.

He lifted the cup and saucer in one hand -- and it trembled as if with palsy -- and leaning back in his chair, slowly sipped it.

"John," he said finally, "I've not slept in a week."

"But then why--" I began, indicating the coffee urn.

"Because I dare not sleep! I dare not sleep ever -- until I die!"

I thought then: He is insane. His studies of elder lore have affected his mind. And as he continued to talk, I became more and more certain of it.

"I dare not sleep," he continued, "for with sleep will come vengeance!"

"Vengeance?"

"Vengeance -- yes!" His voice was fierce, and for a moment all weariness fled from his eyes -- to steal back ten-fold strong! His eyelids drooped; I could see him struggling to keep them open, battling sleep. Hastily he refilled his coffee cup from the urn.

"That is why I called you, John -- the closest friend, the only friend perhaps, I have. They would give me no easy death. Therefore, I beg the greatest favor you can grant me; when I sleep -- death! Swift death! There is a gun in the drawer of the desk."

I SAT staring at him, struck dumb. Something in my gaze must have spoken my disbelief.

"John!" There was terror now in his eyes, abysmal fear in the voice that spoke my name. "You cannot fail me in this!"

I arose slowly and walked the length of the room to the desk, opened the center drawer, and withdrew a heavy blued-steel revolver. There was no thought in my mind of using it. He was insane; I was certain of that now. I would humor him, and when he slept, summon a psychiatrist.

As I sat down again, with the revolver in my lap, I said: "I'll not fail you, Roger."

God! That I spoke those words, knowing in my heart I meant them not!

A weary smile lighted Akner's face. He sipped his coffee slowly.

"Tell me, Roger," I said; "who are 'They'?"

He looked at me and his smile was gone.

"'They'?" Horror was in his eyes. "They are the real rulers of Earth -- perhaps of the Universe! I'm sorry, John, but I cannot tell you more for you would then become victim of their vengeance."

"Tell me at least a little," I begged, hoping that in forcing him to talk I could wear his energy down the quicker, cause him to fall asleep. Covertly, I eyed the telephone across the room.

He shook his head.

"No, John. Knowledge of Them is useless, for Man cannot hope to combat THEM; and as Man destroys the beast that threatens him, so They will destroy me, who have too much knowledge. No, I could not expose you to such danger."

I was about to speak further, when his head nodded; his eyelids began to droop. Sleep was overtaking him, and I held silent. Suddenly he jerked upright in his chair; momentary terror flickered in his eyes. He leaned forward and refilled his empty cup; then he looked direct at me.

"You will not fail me?"

"No," I said, feeling a slight twinge at the lie. His obvious fear was horribly convincing.

He smiled then, and for the first time the haunted look was gone from his eyes. Then his lids drooped again; his head fell forward. Cup and saucer slipped from suddenly lax fingers and crashed in fragments on the rug; coffee spread in a dark, widening stain.

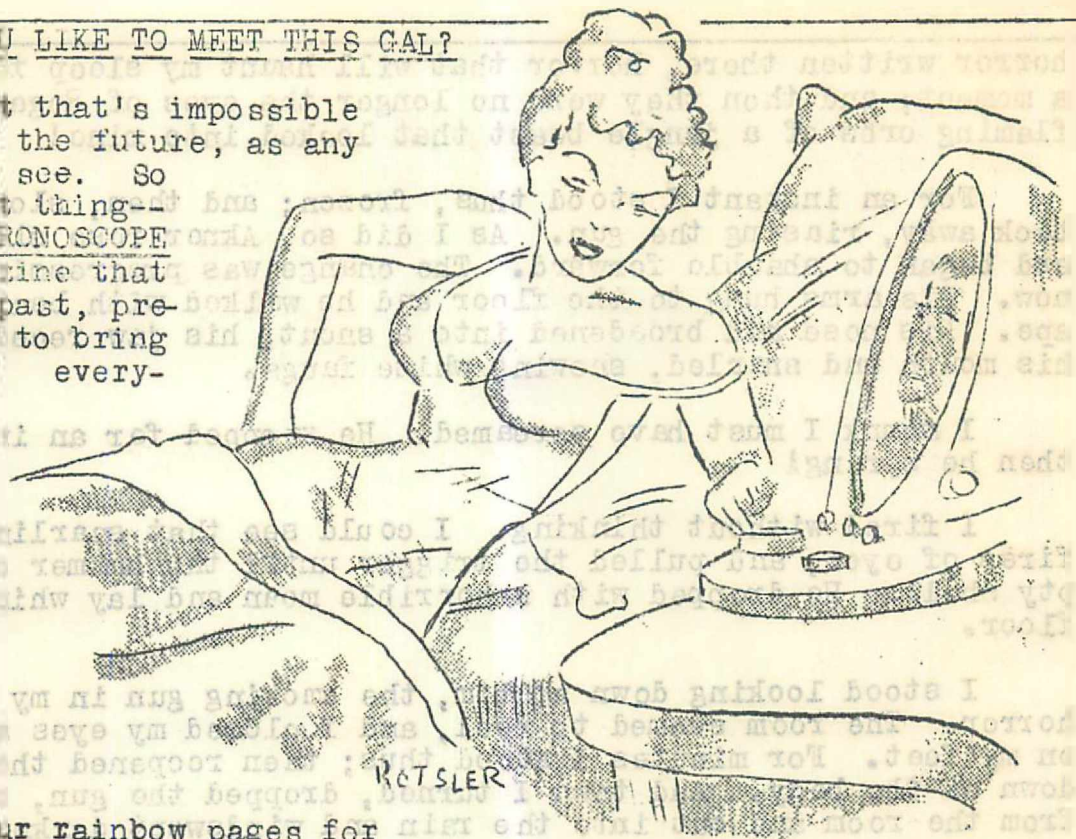
He slept!

I WATCHED HIM. I felt a sense of great relief that sleep had finally come to him, for it had been a fearful strain on my nerves, humoring him in his madness. For a moment I had misgivings, and it was an



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effort to shake the feeling. Such had been the power of Akner's belief, something of it had been transmitted to me. It was, I told myself, the effect of the semi-dark library, where shadows seemed to solidify in the deep corners, seemed to coil across the room.

And then I started to my feet in sharp terror.

Shadows that coiled about Akner's sleeping form in the bright light of the lamp!

The shadows withdrew. I stood gripping the revolver in slippery palm.

Even then, I thought it my imagination; the product of my tortured nerves. Akner breathed heavily but still slept. I turned toward the telephone; stopped.

A change was taking place in Akner's features. Again, I tried to tell myself it was imagination; that Akner had moved in his sleep, and the change was in the fall of light on his face. But slowly I realized that his position was the same as before; and as I watched, I could see the transformation taking place. So slowly as to be almost imperceptible, Akner's face was becoming -- bestial!

As I watched, horror ran in a freezing current through my veins. Akner stirred, and his eyes opened; looked direct into mine.

They were the eyes of my friend for but a moment. Yet in that moment I read knowledge of my failure to keep my word, and sorrow such as a man may suffer but once in a lifetime; and I read the depth of

horror written there, horror that will haunt my sleep forever. For but a moment; and then they were no longer the eyes of Roger Akner, but the flaming orbs of a jungle beast that looked into mine!

For an instant I stood thus, frozen; and then, slowly, I began to back away, raising the gun. As I did so, Akner rose slowly to his feet and began to shamble forward. The change was progressing more rapidly now. His arms hung to the floor and he walked with bent knees, like an ape. His nose had broadened into a snout, his jaw receded. He opened his mouth and snarled, showing white fangs.

I think I must have screamed. He stopped for an instant, crouching; then he sprang!

I fired without thinking. I could see that snarling face, the red fires of eyes, and pulled the trigger until the hammer clicked on an empty shell. He dropped with a horrible moan and lay whimpering on the floor.

I stood looking down at him, the smoking gun in my hand, sick with horror. The room seemed to reel, and I closed my eyes and stood swaying on my feet. For minutes I stood thus; then reopened them and looked down at the body. And then I turned, dropped the gun, and ran screaming from the room and out into the rain and windswept darkness.

For where Akner's body had been was only a protoplasmic mass, evaporating slowly, and from it two eyes stared for a moment into mine -- the sorrowful, suffering eyes of Roger Akner!

- THE END -

PSALM FOR THE BLIND

By M/Sgt RICHARD E. AVERY, 6913284
Hq & Hq Sqn, Alaskan Air Comd.
APO 942 P.M., Seattle, Wash.

A Song Of Singer



Lo all ye miserable stfen cluttering up the pages of fanzines, Harken well and heed yo my words.

Believe not in the senseless doggerel of the ununiformed and superstitious bourgeois.

They speakest with a splitted tongue and hidevth hypocrisy in their hearts.

Trust not thy soul to an omnipotent God, for this is madness.

A wise man spouteth off at the mouth, but only a fool believeth his heart.

Look thou with disfavor upon the religious, they deceiveth themselves and you.

Believe in thyself only, and maketh thy motto, "Cogito Ergo Sum."

Take as thy bible the script of Descartes and thy hymnal the Songs which are Singer's.

Make thee a temple to thine honor and inscribe o'er the portal,

"Lasciate Ogni Speranza Voi Contrate."

by STEVE METCHETTE
3551 King Street
Windsor, Ont., Canada

assisted in spots
by
MORGAN BOTTS

Prozines, as the professional stf magazines are known to the science fiction aficionados, have come and gone. Some have lingered but momentarily on the fantasy scene, like Miracle Science and Fantasy Stories and Wonder Science Stories. Some have even lasted for a period extending over years, with corresponding reputations having been built up during their lifetimes: Unknown Worlds illustrates this category nicely. Still others have been on the scene since the inauguration of science-fiction into its own, exclusive magazines. Amazing Stories and Wonder Stories fit this type.

Some prozines have famous and notorious reputations; those which are famous are wrapped in a cloak of glory; the others are shrouded in a somewhat benevolent obscurity. Astounding Science Fiction and the 1945 to '48 issues of Amazing Stories are outstanding examples.

But, there are forgotten prozines. The average fan can rhyme off a half-dozen at least: Berie Tales, Strange Stories, Cosmic Stories and Stirring Science Stories. Yet even these are enjoying world renown in comparison to the professional science fiction and fantasy publications that I am about to discuss. My only regret is that I cannot supply the magazines to collectors -- not even I can boast of owning, or having seen, a copy! -- and my one consolation is that on this basis all fans are equal. Not even Ackerman has a copy, nor has Triple E, nor just plain Joe Stephan.

Herewith, devoid of all but the bare essentials concerned with the magazines, is an alphabetical list of.....the 'forgotten pro-files':

1. Amusing Stories - Edited by Raymond A. Handley. In the 1950's this mag rocked fandom by presenting the notorious "Barber Enigma" of Richard S. Barber. Ref.: "The Barber Enigma" in SPACEWARP Oct 47.
2. Bloodcurdling Tales - Editor, Keith Winton; Publisher, Borden Publications, Inc. Ref.: "What Mad Universe" by Fredric Brown, STARTLING Oct 49.
3. Cataclysmic Cosmic Classics - Little is definitely known about this magazine. Ref.: "Whiffingham's Revenge," BEMBOCK Jul 47.
4. Cosmic Classics - Perhaps same as above(?) Ref.: "Probability .28" in MUTANT Sep 48.
5. Dynamic Tales - No definite knowledge of DT is available. Ref.: Anson MacDonald in "Goldfish Bowl" ASF Mar 48.
6. Extragalactic Epics - Editor, Morgan Botts. Ref.: "Mastermind" in TIMEWARP, Fall 48.
7. Extraterrestrial Tales - c.2000 AD, featured a series of Col.Space-log epics. Ref.: "How To Write STF" SPACEWARP Nov 47.

8. Fantastic Stories - Edited by Richard S. Beecher c.1950. A running feud transpired between this publication and actifandom because of the stories of Raymond A. Tremble. Ref.: "The Case of the Schizophrenic Promag" SPACEWARP Dec 47.
9. Flabbergasting Adventures - Same data as Amusing Stories, listed previously.
10. Frankly Incredible Tales of Science (FITS) - Editor: John Upperberth. Nothing known as to publisher or schedule. Ref.: SPACEWARP serial, "The Great SEF Broadcast," 1948.
11. Gaaaaahhhh Stories - c.2000 AD. Ref.: "Vindication" in SPACEWARP Feb 48.
12. Galactic Adventures - Contained a letter-column called "The Reader's Opinion." Ref.: "Joe Carson's Weapon" by James R. Adams, PLANET, Spr 45.
13. Galactic Stories - reprint mag published by Henderson & MacNamara. Ref.: Hocket To The Morgue by E.H.Holmes, 1943.
14. Ghoulish Science Stories (GSS) - No definite info available. Ref.: "The Man Who Murdered Fandom," BEMBOOK Jul 47.
15. Impossible Stories - No definite knowledge as to editor, etc., available. Ref.: Redell Nelson in UNIVERSE #1, 1948.
16. Inconceivable Incidents (Eye-Eye) - Morgan Botts, editor. Ref.: "Solubility" in SPEARHEAD, 1948.
17. Scientific Techni-Tales - (ST-T) - flourished c.1952. ASF-type mag featuring heavy science. Ref.: "Anniversary" SPACEWARP Sep 47.
18. Sickening Stories - Again, no definite knowledge. Ref.: Ray Nelson, SPACEWARP Jul 48.
19. Stellar Stories - Cameron, editor. Ref.: "Special Knowledge" by A.B.Chandler, ASF Feb 46.
20. Stellar Sagas - Morgan Botts, editor. Folded after its offices were destroyed by earthquake. Ref.: "Vindication" SPACEWARP Feb 48.
21. Stupefying Stories - Only 2 issues, dates unknown, are extant. Contained "Death In The Fission Chamber" and "Lost In The Space-Time Continuum." Reviewed by Norman R. Jaffray in "Post Scripts" department of SatEvePest.
22. Stupendous Ecstasy Tales (SET) - Morgan Botts, editor. Featured such radical innovations as micro-filming, sensitized aluminum-foil pages, three-dimensional illos, extra staples. Three issues are definitely catalogued:
 March, 1950 - a blus sky on cover!
 August, 1952 - trimmed edges, extra staples, all illos by Finlay. This ish broke all circulation records.
 September, 1952 - Circulation 30 copies.
 Ref.: "The Man Who Murdered Fandom" in BEMBOOK, July 47.

YOU, TOO, CAN BE HAPPILY INSANE! - SUBSCRIBE TO spacewarp NOW! 2 FOR 25

23. Surprising Stories - (a) Keith Winton, Editor; Publisher: Bordon Publications, Inc. Letter column, "Rocketalk Department," run by "The Rocketeer" def.: "What Mad Universe" by Fredric Brown, STARTLING Oct 48.

(b) A stf publication edited by Don A. Stuart. Ref.: Rocket To The Morgue by H.H.Holmes, 1943.

24. Unbelievable Galactic Horrortales (UGH) - Editor and publisher unknown. Letter column, "Misbegotten Missives," edited by Morgan Botts, considered the best of its kind. Instituted a radical cover policy c.1950 -- cover illos to portray scenes from the stories. Folded after the mysterious death of its Managing Editor. Ref.: "Whiffingham's Revenge" in BEMBOOK, Jul 47.

25. The Worlds Beyond - a fantasy publication edited by Don A. Stuart. Ref.: Rocket to the Morgue by H.H.Holmes, 1943.

((Footnote by r-trapp: What strikes me about this compilation of Stewart's is that in two years of reading every fanzine I could lay my mitts on, I've come across these "forgotten" prozines nowhere but in the pro-mags themselves and in SPACEWARP and other Technopolarian publications. Am I fandom's only satirist?)) THE END

.....and speaking of fictitious pro-mags, here's the concluding episode in that mighty saga of Frankly Incredible Tales of Science:

THE GREAT STF BROADCAST

Part Nine - by

JIM HARMON

427 East Eighth St.
Mt. Carmel, Illinois

ADDRESSING the fen, Upperberth repeated: "Yes, we'll give Earth a sample of the only true government -- a STFOCRACY! We shall--"

A shrill scream broke thru the odd atmosphere of that queer planet, Sol III, sometimes known as Earth.

Starr was on the sending end and the fen were receiving it with the volume on full. And wonder of wonders, JaClem was chasing her! This was no unfamiliar sight to the fen, but since JaClem was dead it did seem somewhat odd.

Ben Singer brought out his folding soapbox (which had been invented for him by Morgan Botts) and stepped onto it, explaining that since no soul existed, there could be no ghosts. However, when JaClem bumped into him, hot in pursuit of Starr, Singer brought out a small bible (invented for him by King James).

"A ghost! A ghost!" shouted the fen unanimously.

"You damn fools!" The fen responded instantly to this familiar epithet, often bestowed on them by members of the non-fen race. Starr (For it was she who had shouted the familiar phrase) continued: "Don't you realize JaClem is alive? He grabbed one of the rocket tubes when we took off, and breathed, while we were in space, through a small air leak in the ghu-tac hull."

Ghu-tac: A special alcohol-base plastic invented by O-George Schmitt.

"The what, my dear?" asked Upperberth.

"The ghu-tae hull.....ghu-tae hull.....ghu-tae hull!" screamed Starr, dodging a JaClem tackle.

"My, my, such language!" murmured Upperberth.

r-trapp, at this point, made a rather emphatic statement. To wit: "JACLEM! ALIVE!" Two fen standing next to r-trapp never heard the last word; the first one burst their eardrums.

"I gotta cut down the number of characters!" babbled r-trapp, fitting his hands around JaClem's throat and applying pressure eagerly. In his rage he puffed mightily on his pipe. That did it! The fen dropped like flies as the lethal fumes swirled about them.

Fortunately, or unfortunately (depending on whether you are the fen or r-trapp), the fumes weren't fatal after all. As soon as their comrades dragged them out of range, the unconscious fen recovered.

The fen glared at r-trapp. r-trapp glared at the fen. Having four eyes, he was doing a better job of it. But other, unseen, eyes glared at all.....

"We strike now!" said the Leader. "They drove us near mad with their broadcasts. Now we can cut them off from their ship of dreadful weapons, and kill them. I will lead you!"

"Yes! Yes!" shouted the Angry Mob as they charged, trapping the fen outside the protection of the ship.

"Der transmieder!" cried von Heine. "I took it der schip from to experiment mid! I can get us away from here mit it! Like ven ve made uff it der time-machino!"

"To another time?" asked Upperberth, fighting off several members of the Angry Mob.

"Nein!" answered von Heine, adjusting a few wires and flipping the power switch. "To another dimension!"

The Angry Mob charged in furious bewilderment across an empty field.

* * *

The fen stood on a broad, brown plain. In the distance, like something from a Dali painting, they saw a strange object. It seemed to be a monstrous, towering typewriter, with enormous hands typing on it.

Upperberth hastily borrowed Singer's telescope and began to study this phenomenon. There was a long silence.

"Fellow fen," said Upperberth at last, "This is AMAZING, ASTOUNDING, and FANTASTIC. Also STARTLING. I have read the words on the sheet of paper in that gigantic typewriter. It tells of OUR adventures, and how we escaped the mob by fleeing to another dimension. There is only one possible interpretation of this -- we are mere characters in the tale of some super-dimensional stf-writer!"

.....Renttuk took a long swlg of cold reeb, his favorite beverage. It was a hot day, but he had to get back to work on that piece of science-

fiction for Llebmac. Corny it was, to be sure, but Llebmac, the great editor, was demanding stuff like that nowadays. All about science-fiction writers and fans. Must be preparing fandom for some kind of propaganda campaign.

Renttuk started to tap the keyboard of his rettirwepyt. Then he saw upon his desk a group of tiny figures.

"Oh Dohg," Renttuk screamed, "I'll never touch another bottle of reeb! Take 'em away! Take 'em away!"

Upperberth was, true enough, only an editor, but he had once been a fan, and part of his great fan intellect remained. Using this portion of his brain, Upperberth shouted, "Do as I command! Type this:

'The fen got safely back to their own dimension, and there they lived happily forever after.'

Renttuk understood. Raising his hands once more to the keyboard, he began to pound away at his rettirwepyt.

The fen disappeared.

Three million years later, Upperberth heard the news on the morning edition of the Great STF Telecast:

ASF would increase its size as soon as the paper shortage eased. r-trapp predicts that within a few more months, WARP circulation will hit the 200 mark.

Jim Harmon has published the second issue of ASTEROID X.

Sadly, Upperberth switched off the telescreen. He realized, then, that he'd gotten more than he bargained for when he requested that the fen should live happily FOREVER after.....

- THE BITTER END -

* * * * *
* by **REDD HOGGS** *
* **FILE THIRTEEN** 2215 Benjamin St. NE *
* Minneapolis 18, *
* Minnesota *
* * * * *

FOREWORD: The purpose of this new WARP column is to discuss, reminisce, speculate, and generally gab about subjects purportedly of interest to science-fiction fans. I will not guarantee that stf itself or fandom will be the take-off point for each discussion under that "File 13" head, but I do promise that -- unless some mighty lively feud occurs over one of them -- those worn-out bones of controversy, religion and Palmer/Shaver will not clutter these hallowed pages. Other than that, anything is liable to turn up here at any time. I reserve the right to be nasty, bigoted, plain-spoken and unregenerate when I feel in the mood. Readers are admonished not to blame r-trapp for any evidence of such in this column, for I am demanding carte blanche within the bounds of "File 13", and if the Sultan of Saginaw starts making with a blue-pencil amid my glowing rhetoric I'll likely tell him to stick his head (hockah and all) into a cyclotron and then I'll bestow rights to this column on Fantasy Commentator. Don't nobody say they

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ain't been warned. (Put down that pencil, Art! I'll damn well be colloquial where I please.)

* * * * *

CRUISING THROUGH CRUD. For the first time in months, I've managed to read an installment of that pillar of inanity, "The Ether Vibrates", in Startling. The experience was quite painful even though I had Beethoven's "Eroica" whamming out of the radio with all stops pulled (on the theory that whenever the letter became depressing the music would elate me enough to continue.) There were parts in the column that had me grinning and chortling. La Zimmer's candid stand against "pornography in all forms" was one; Rick Sneary's heart-warming defense of Tympani was another (I fairly beamed at this one -- I checked with a mirror); but all in all, it was a shattering half-hour. Outside of the obvious fact that Astra is uncrowned princess of the letter-hacks, what gives? This letter department, which says nothing very well but at tremendous length, contains only one or two suggestions commanding serious consideration (one of them was the proposal that Standard publish a paperback stf anthology). Scanning "The Ether Vibrates", I am left with a question that long has haunted me, "Why do magazines print letters?"

The traditional answer to that query is that letters help the editor decide what sort of stories to print. Well, that makes some sense. But Mr. Merwin of Startling is obviously a superman mutant if he can ascertain what his readers want from perusing the semi-literate effusions he publishes in TEV. It might be possible to evaluate the popularity of a story if it receives an outstanding panning or especially big applause, but the great majority of yarns get a modicum of each, couched in such noncommittal phrases as, "I rather liked this yarn" or "That story wasn't very exciting."

Besides, no hep editor will fool himself that the letters he receives are an accurate cross-section of his readership. Wasn't it Campbell who pointed out that at least 500 readers must be represented before accuracy can be approached? That only goes to show you. In addition there is the fact that letter-writers are usually juveniles out for egoboo. (I realize this doesn't accurately characterize some of them). With their patently ad captandum arguments, these letter-hacks reveal little talent for honestly criticizing a literary work; forced wisecracks are instituted to cover up this lack, thus turning TEV and its counterparts into a showcase for fen of wit. A certain talent for cracking wise is no asset to a critic on whose word the editor purportedly depends.

Among the pulps the stf mags are the only ones featuring large, regular letter sections. This is significant. Life, Collier's and other slicks maintain reader departments for the use of sharp-eyed readers who protest that the foto on p. 67 was not of Shirley Temple but of BeBe Shopp, Miss America 1948, or who note with glee that the two-gun hero of Ernest Haycox's latest epic has the same name as their butler. The stf mags use their letter sections for orientation.

Orientation! That's what I said. Very few readers, familiar with mundane literature only, are equipped to appreciate fantasy or particularly stf. The fine points of Ego Clarke's "Against The Fall Of Night", for example, are utterly beyond the comprehension of one who heretofore never looked futureward beyond the ensuing weekend. The mind-wrenching conceptions of a yarn that takes place millions of years in the future are enough to stump even an intelligent (but uninitiated) reader.

That is where the letter department comes in. Just when the new reader begins to grumble, "This stuff is crazy!", he sees TEV, and reads with growing amaze that there are a helluva bunch of people who actually like the stuff. Muttering something about 50 million French

men, the reader goes back to the fiction, and maybe he finds one not-too-fantastic yarn that interests him. The influence of the reader department is still working, meantime. Some months later the reader picks up the issue containing comment on the magazine he saw originally. In TEV he reads the glowing praise for the yarns he couldn't stomach -- and he reads letters loudly panning the story he did enjoy. Then, if the fates are benign, he returns to the original issue, re-reads the stories he didn't like, tries to understand their merit as opposed to the story he liked. He begins to realize that here is a new type of literature with a fascination that, once understood, begins to grow on you. A fan's selective taste is born.

That, brothers, is the way it worked with me. When I first discovered Astounding, slam-bang interplanetaries were my meat -- influence of Buck Rogers, my only previous experience with stf -- and "thought-variants" were completely over my head. It was a shock for me to discover in the letter department that the "crazy" yarns I had disliked were really the type of stf that most Ast fans enjoyed and that the "wonderful" space-battle tales I loved were really trashy.

Orientation of new readers is the only legitimate function of a stf letter department. Let no one tell you differently.

* * * * *

RANDOM TEN. I think it was Harry Warner, Jr., who once suggested the game I propose to play right now. It is a very pointless game, especially when the only participant at the moment will be myself. However, I am quite confident that I am supreme in this little contest and invite all to attempt to better me when you try it. Here is the pitch: Write down the first 10 stf titles that come to your mind -- and do it as fast as possible.

Here are the 10 I named: Vault of the Beast, Line to Tomorrow, Whispering Satellite, Star Crash, Rule 18, By His Bootstraps, The Time Annihilator, The Water World, Set Your Course By The Stars, and Alas, All Thinking! Those 10 titles whisked into my mind and on to paper in the space of 45 seconds. Can you do as well -- without landing on the works of one author and mining 10 of his pot-boilers in a row?

Why those 10 titles above should be the first I would think of is a minor puzzle. With the debut of football season, Simak's "Rule 18"

has been in my mind off and on for some time. And "Alas, All Thinking! coozed out of my subconscious in response to some mental comment to the effect that "All this furious thinking isn't doing much good!" But why such a hacky thing as "Whispering Satellite" or "The Time Annihilator" should turn up, I've no idea!"

((More Boggsian meditating nextWarp. Meanwhile, you non-servifen might it amusing to ferret out the derivation of the title. By the way, the first ish of Redd's CHRONOSCOPE just came, and it's really a honey!

* * * * *
* The PEERCON; * by HAL SHAPIRO *
* BURP BY BURP * 2689 Clemente *
* Detroit 6, Michigan *
* * * * *

PRELUDE, Saturday, September 4

This story really began yesterday when George Young called all Michifen to inform them that he, at last, had found transportation to Milwaukee, the site of the BEERCON. Yes, he did have transportation for all, courtesy of the Greyhound Bus Line. Arriving at the depot and purchasing my ticket, I found no fen. Finally a huffin' and a puffin' and a shovin' his way through the crowd came someone who resembled Ed Kuss. I stepped up behind him, gave him a hearty slap on the back. He turned around, and I saw that I was right; it was Ed. Five minutes before bus time comes George Young towing a Ben named Singer.

We made it. On the ninth bus of an eight-bus convoy we were, at last, headed for Chicago. There was the usual scramble to get a seat as far away from Ben as possible. Who should we meet at the Chicago depot but brer'r-trapp. On the final lap of the journey some slept a few moments, the rest were kept awake by Singer. We arrived in the city that made beer famous at about 1:17 $\frac{1}{2}$ a.m., and joyously headed for the mansion of Robert L. Stein Esq. for room and board.

No one but his father was at home, but Mr. Stein must have been used to fandom, for he calmly invited the five of us to pile in with our baggage, as if midnight invasions by swarming hordes were the usual thing. When Bob at last arrived, we set about the business of the con, that is, beer, wine, soft drinks, and for me milk. (That milk is powerful stuff.) Happening upon Stein's stf collection, we started in purchasing stf-stuff that we had no earthly use for, if only to add to the RLS fund to purchase an enlarger. About 3:00 a.m. we finally decided it might be a good idea to grab a bit of sleep.

MISCELLANEOUS ANTICS - Sunday, September 5

Bright, if not early, in the morning, we coozed out of bed, off cots and couches, and wherever else we had been parked for the night. Sleepyheads were awakened by jazz loudly played on the vic, although Singer still insists it was church bells. After a prolongad search for an open restaurant, and ultimate success in finding one, we returned to the home of the one who had made his home our home (the sap). We once again messed up his carefully-sorted stf collection. Leaving for lunch, we found a different restaurant than the one where we'd eaten breakfast. Stfen take this natural precaution for obvious reasons.

After lunch we wandered about the downtown area arguing with Ben Singer the improbability of going to a burlesque show. Hearing that the United Amateur Press Association was holding their convention in Milwaukee, we crasted their marshmallow roast, and probably made fan

history by being the only fanvention ever to go wading in Lake Michigan en masse.

Although Bob'd left a note on his mailbox reading "Out to lunch. The key is in the mailbox. Stfen come in and make yourself at home. We will be back within the hour." we found no more stffers upon returning to Stein's. So everyone swarmed down to Bob's cellar studio and dived into the nearest scientifiiction, this time varying the procedure by purchasing works of art. (There were none by Art Rapp, but there were plenty by Bob Stein, Nelson, and others. And as the sun slowly set behind the purple and yellow hills of Schlitz, we wandered wearily off to bed.

OFFICIAL BEERCON - Monday, September 6

This, the official day of the Beercon, saw fen tumbling out of beds, couches, cots, and cracks in the woodwork. This was the day for which we had been waiting! Came brushing of fangs. Came washing of tentacles. Came the dawn. Came one fan from Chicago. ((Bob said he sent out 150 -- or maybe it was 250 -- announcements of the Beercon. Personally, I expected half the midwest to be there)).

Then came the event which all true fen will treasure to their dying days. We saw, not one, but TWO H.G.Wells motion pictures, THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME, and THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES. Besides being excellent stf pix, they were also object lessons in what could happen, as was So Shall Ye Reap by Rog Phillips.

Bidding farewell to Ed Kuss and to Carr, the Chi fan, who had to leave early, we decided to humor Singer and look for a burlesque show, although no one else was interested. (It says here). Finding none, we returned to Stein's shack to go to sleep early (no one did) to be fresh for the morning's journey. A Milwaukee fan, however, changed the outloo when he showed up with one of those ancient motor vehicles which use petrolsum. We cruised Milwaukee looking for Donn Brazier and insulting females. Then we returned to Stein's residence to once again take care of the alcohol supply, but when Singer wrote a song entitled "Somewhere In This Big Wide World, There Must Be A Big Wide Girl For Me" we decided to fetare for the evening.

AFTERMATH - Tuesday, September 7

Tearfully parting from Robert L., we got started on our way to Michigan, but our route led thru Chicago, where several things transpired. Upon arrival we checked our bags and set out to see the town. Spotting a bookstore we dashed in, as should all true stfen, and were all set to buy out the store, except that we suddenly discovered we'd spent all our dough already.

Heading for the Museum of Science and Industry, we captivated ourselves with the gadgets and pushbuttons there until closing time. But before visiting this fascinating place, we paid another visit.

We wandered along Wabash Avenue to that fabled address: 185 North. Then up to the 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ floor (no kidding!) and into the office of the legendary Raymond A. Palmer.

RAP turned out to be a very trusting fellow, for when he heard we were from Michigan he invited us into his office without even searching us for concealed a-bombs. We heard about his secret panels for slip-

ping out when he didn't want to be seen, and about his secret door leading to an elevator shaft. This, I presume, was to take care of people he never wanted to see again.

On his desk I noticed a letter with a very familiar return address. Yes, it was one I had written myself and I mentioned that fact. But as Rapp says, "Isn't it going too far to mail a letter and then come yourself to make sure that it is printed?"

As we stepped out of Palmer's office (he was taking us downstairs to buy us coffee) who should we meet but Berkley Livingston. We drank said coffee, gabbed with RAP, Livingston, and J.Allen St.John, the illustrator. Among the tasty facts that were dropped by said people was that Alexander Blade is a pen name, not an actual person. Then there was the refusal of Livingston to relate all his pen names, and the refusal of St.John to autograph the check for my milk. I asked him to do this in a weak moment when I forgot that RAP was paying. I did, however, obtain both Palmer's and Livingston's autographs on two nude photographs in the magazine Pageant. These now adorn my walls.

Also spilled was the fact that Rog Phillips believes he jumped, via parachute, from Halley's Comet the last time it passed Earth. But he couldn't have -- I was watching the comet, and I didn't see him. Palmer was very vague upon the subject of whether he believes in Shaver's stories.

But we almost began to believe in Tero ourselves, when Palmer presented to us a package containing ninety illustrations from Fantastic, Amazing, and Mammoth Western. (The latter, of course, we ignore).

The rest of the evening was spent in wandering about Chicago. Singer wished for a flashlight to shine into the bushes in the parks, but the great Ghu and George Young kept it from him and averted murder. Successfully finding a butlesque show, and then discovering we didn't have enough dough to buy tickets, we returned to the nearest park. Seeing a multi-colored fountain in the distance, we trekked to it just in time to see it shut off. Remarked George: "It must have been deros."

So we sat down and discussed many things, including a proposed fall or winter Michicon, GLAPA, Xeno, and who would have first choice of the illos.

Thus endeth the first BEERCON. Bottoms up!

- FINIS -

Why don't you write Bob Farnham, 1139 E. 44th St., Chicago 15, Illinois, and find out about SCIENCE FICTION - INTERNATIONAL ? If your enthusiasm is for letter-writing, this is the club for you!

LET'S TRADE MAGS!

WRITE R-TRAPP

My Surplus

ASF - Mar, Jun, Oct 47

Avon - FR #1

Amz - April 1941

Startling - Win, Spr 46, Jul 47

TWS - Win 45, Sum 46

Planet - Winter 47

WT - Jan 44 (poor), Mar 48

FFM - Jun 45

Doc Savage -
Nov 1934

Spider -
Oct 1941

(poor)

I Want

ASF - May, Sep 45; Jan 46
Apr, May 47.

FFM - Jun 46

Planet - Sum 44, Sum 45

Amz - Dec 44, Mar 45;

May, Jun, Oct 46

FA - Oct 45

TWS - Fall 44 WT - Mar 47

((LET'S HAVE SOME OFFERS!))

* * * * *
* QUIET SABLE ? *
* * * * *

Dear Art:

Conner contends that the elusive criss-crossing lines upon Mars are not canals at all, but long, very high buildings built by highly scientific dwellers of that planet in realization of the fact that their atmosphere was slowly but steadily dissipating into space. Further, he says, these goliath constructions, being moist, are covered with parasitic growths similar to moss as the Martian year advances. That accounts for the 'greening' of the lines as seen by astronomers. Under these conditions they might easily be confused with canals.

(1) Conner assumes a highly advanced scientific civilization created these 'buildings.' If, Mr. C., they were so technically superior, why did they not erect their refuges in the shapes of hemispheres, or at least in patterns closely related? The advantages of this are very obvious. First, this would obtain them much more living space for the amount of external surface exposed to the thinning atmosphere. This, in turn, would make for economy of materials; surely a vital factor to them. Then, it would enable building to be limited to certain key continental areas. Obviously, my boy, it would be very illogical to scatter their resources in the making of elongate, sprawling structures when the type I have suggested would be far superior. Communication between individual hemispheres could be as easily maintained as between the other type -- via radio, television or mental means, or, if personal contact between all members of the race were, for some reason, absolutely essential, connecting underground passages would suffice and be infinitely more practical.

(2) Again, Mr. C., why would such an intelligent species use a maudlin substance such as the Martian equivalent of cement for their precious project? Surely there are much better materials for withstanding eons of destructive outside influences. That would be what they would need if, as they no doubt recognized, they were destined to remain "entombed alive" virtually forever. Of course they may not have known of anything better than their cement, but this would belie your own conception of the great extent of their knowledge.

(5) "So they built long, high buildings.....probably eight or ten miles high." Does it occur to you, Wilkie, that such enormous height would be effective in producing gigantic shadows? Naturally, especially during the early mid-morning and the late mid-afternoon. Consequently there would arise an observable fluctuation in the ease of visibility of the 'canals' as the day on Mars advanced and waned. I have neither heard nor read of such fluctuations attributed to this cause; most differences in observability have been entirely blamed by Terran observatories upon the changes of the so-called "seeing" quality of our own atmospheric envelope. Granted that such shadows would be partly brightened by diffuse light from Mars' air, but not nearly to the extent that they would be on Earth since gasses on the fourth planet are less abundant and relatively transparent except in the violet and ultraviolet. Besides, the shadows' colossal size should compensate for their vagueness, even with the increased distance from the sun.

What, then, are the 'canals'? I don't know. Personally I'll take the original theory. Yes, sir, Schiaparelli had the right idea.

Sincerely,

WARREN BALDWIN
112 Park Avenue
Norfolk, Nebraska

Dear Art:

I've killed off all the dangerous BEM's in the neighborhood but there are still plenty of harmless ones. Maybe we could have target practice on a few?

I hope you guys make it up here for the Cadillaccon. ((Some did)) Maybe you could use a spacewarp and save gas.

How many railroad ties are there in a mile?

$$M = \frac{m}{\sqrt{1-v^2/c^2}} \quad ((\text{Is that supposed to be the answer?}))$$

By the way, you can recognize me by my green hair and pink eyes. The chlorophyll in my hair saves money.

I don't have to eat.

Chirographily yours,

TOM KENNEDY
402 Holbrook
Cadillac, Michigan

hi rat trapp;

have you ever thot that possibly every thing that we can conceive can only be conceived because wed done it before. in other words the person that originated the werewolf had seen and experienced a werewolf then or in some other life. maybe lovecraft did see the horrors that he describes in another life that he lived. the people that love his stories and can imagine once experienced the same thing and, each rose has its thorns you know, try to bring back some beautiful moment with the reading of his stories. and the people that dont like lovecrafts stories didnt have a happy memory to recall and the people that think his stories are silly never experienced them and so, naturally, cant picture them. the above assumption would explain a lot of things i believe.

assuming that the above statement is true; youve probably noticed that many authors have written of animals that are invisible or of a color that we can not see. and why shouldnt there be? why shouldnt nature in her various experiments played with this idea? this would explain ghosts that people used to see. maybe we scared the "ghosts" as much as they scared us, so that now few people see them. and if the ghosts were scaired why shouldnt they naturally live at night at cemetaries where we rarely are?

but enough of this. one department that is sadly lacking in spacewarp is the letter department. a letter department is the one sure thing that an approval subscriber will turn to to see that the editor knows that his fanzine is good and not afraid to print letters. what with more pages lets have at least two pages for letters.

fasinatingly yours,

CHARLES HENDERSON
2146 east 13th south
salt lake city 5, utah

Dear Art:

I haven't heard from Stein since Labor Day, so I'm not sure whether you finally made it to Milwaukee and that shunned house on Vienna Avenue or not. If so, I hope you had a good time and didn't get buried under magazines in that ghastly cellar of Bob's where the Great God Ghu used to sit with a dingy electric light eternally burning over him. Ggd.

REDD BOGGS (21)

fandom's
top monthly

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CONTENTS

Timber !	r-tRapp	3
The Eyes of Roger Akner	William James	4
Psalm for the Blind	Richard E. Avery	8
Forgotten Pros	Steve Metchette	9
The Great STF Broadcast - PART NINE	Jim Harmon	11
File 13	Redd Boggs	13
The Beercon: Burp By Burp	Hal Shapiro	17
Quien Sabe ?	Misc Fem	20

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