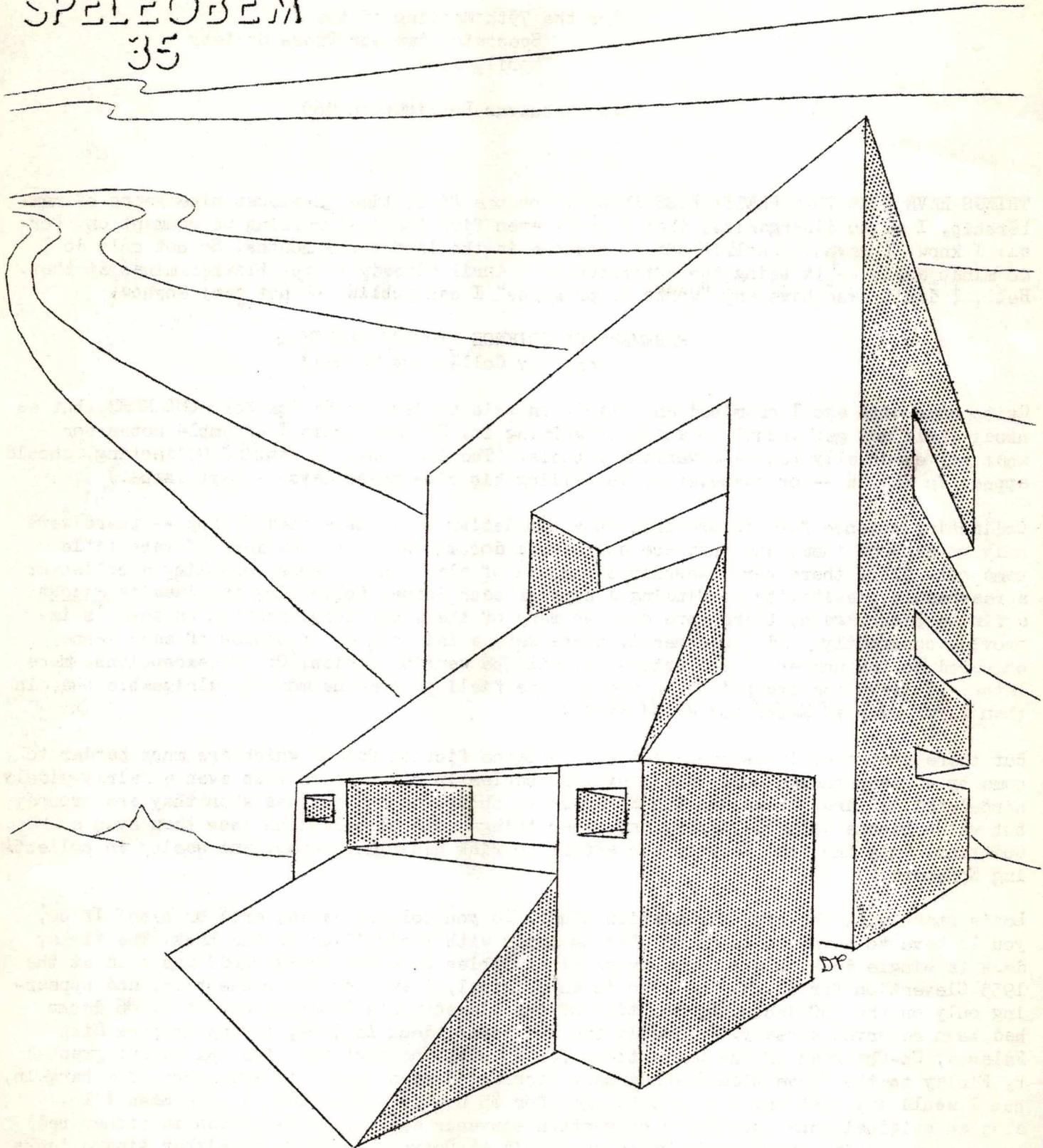


SPELEOBEM

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THINGS HAVE COME TO A PRETTY PASS INDEED. For the first time in almost nine years of membership, I am so disorganized that I can't even find the last mailing to comment on. For all I know, I may have sold it off to someone in the last three months! So not only do I do minac again -- it being the afternoon of 8 April already -- but blather minac at that. Hell, I don't even have any "works in progress" I can publish -- not yet, anyhow.

EPHEMERA OF SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM
 (or, Why Collectors Go Mad)

Quite some time ago I promised an article on this subject to Ed Cox for AUSLANDER, but as usual I did not get around to actually writing it. So once again I assemble notes for what may eventually become a genzine article. (The last one, on Fanzine Collecting, should appear in ZENITH -- or whatever he is calling his zine these days -- next issue.)

Collecting science fiction prozines on a completism basis is a finite task -- there were only so many of them, and they are quite well documented as to how many of each title came out. Also, there were reasonable numbers of almost all issues, enabling a collector a reasonable possibility of finding a copy of each issue. Collecting fanzines is almost a finite task. Again, there were only so many of them, and documentation on them is improving constantly. And, in general, there were a fair number of copies of each issue, compared to the number of collectors who will be wanting copies. Of the exceptions, more later. (I leave the exceptions in the prozine field to someone more knowledgeable therein than I. /~~Or refer to Moskowitz or Ed Wood.~~)

But there are other items connected with science fiction fandom which are much harder to come by -- even though some have many more copies in circulation than even a fairly-widely circulated genzine. These are the Ephemera -- things no one notices when they are around, but which become valuable later, and other things with circulations less than even a Cultzine. Only the real Fanatic can afford to risk his time, money, and sanity in collecting Ephemera.

Let's start with the high-circulation stuff. Do you collect Finlay art? Or Emsh? If so, you'll have to have the decks of playing cards with their illos on the back. The Finlay deck (a single deck, black fantasygirl with bubbles on a red background) was sold at the 1955 Clevention for \$1.25. The illo is an original, drawn for the convention, and appearing only on the 250 decks. By the time of the Clevention's Progress Report 4, 86 decks had been reserved already. I finally tracked down a deck in 1964, buying it from Nick Falasca, Co-Chairman of the Clevention, for \$5.00. (The fact that the box is autographed by Finlay to the Clevention Co-Chairmen, Nick and Noreen, makes it even more of a bargain, but I would say that any deck you can get for \$5 now is a good deal.) The Emsh illo, also an original done just for a convention souvenir deck of cards, comes in either red or blue on a white background. These were sold at Detroit in 1959, as either single decks or a double-deck set (one of each color). Cost: \$2.75 for the double deck, \$1.50 for the single. A few of these decks may still be available -- no mention was made in the Progress Report as to how many decks were being printed. If so, Big-Hearted Howard Devore will know

where and for how much. According to the ad in the Progress Report, both bridge and pinochle decks were available, but since I have never opened my double decks I have no idea whether one of each was in the double, or just what the score was on that account.

There are other bits of ephemera that were available at worldcons -- Clevention sold steffnic jewelry, made to order, but that can probably be ignored by collectors as either non-standard or non-fandom. Then there were the sets of "Moon Postage" stamps -- also from Clevention. And the Beer Bucks Detroit gave away during their campaigning in 1958 (and also in a Progress Report, I believe), redeemable at Detention for a free beer.

Fanzine oddities include hordes of Very Low Circulation stuff, especially the carbonzines. For the most part, carbonzines were very unimportant and ran only a couple issues, until the perpetrators got access to a ditto or mimeo. There are some exceptions: In January 1957 Bill Meyers of Chattanooga published a list of his SF collection, making several carbons and sending them to a few friends. In February he brought out several supplements to the list, again making carbons. By the fifth supplement, his carbonzine had a title (BEM) and was adding letters of comment, art, etc. It went 20 issues, until the end of September 1957, then died for a while. When it came back the following March, it was as a forerunner of the Carbon-Reproduced Amateur Press, wherein the four members published Carbonzines in rotation every two weeks (Cult-style) instead of Bill doing all the work. The CRAP went from April 1958 through August 1960, replacing two of the original four (Meyers and Es Adams) and adding a fifth member eventually (Lichtman). In September 1960 the CRAP went mimeo-ditto, and ceased being such a rarity. (However, several (3) Secret Carbon Reproduced Amateur Presses were begun by Lichtman at this time, each with 4 members.) As far as I know, only one complete set of CRAP and Pre-CRAP exists -- mine, thanks to Al Andrews who sent me his copies of the first 20 BEMs. And even I don't have all the SCRAP zines; only Lichtman had all three sets -- I have #1, but members of #2 and #3 seem not to have saved their copies. And so it goes...

Also in September 1960, Donald Franson began issuing a carbonzine called TETRAHEDRON. Originally limited to five copies, a sixth was added after the third issue. Original recipients, other than Franson himself, were representatives of the four corners of U.S. Fandom: Elinor Busby in Seattle, Ted White in New York, Norm Metcalf at Tyndall AFB, Florida, and myself in Los Angeles. Number 6 was Harry Warner, for the sake of Fanhistory purposes. Franson did all the publishing, although comment letters from the others were sometimes sent in sextuplicate carbons, to make things easier on Don. It went 15 issues, Greek-lettered instead of numbered, and folded in December 1961.

It would take an entire article to detail the problems of collecting Cult, APA L, APA F, and ValAPA, where the primary difficulty is catching stuff not Officially part of the APA. More on these some other time.

Now how about Convention Banquet photos? Most Worldcons have one -- or used to. Pacificon II "forgot," and Ghu knows why Tricon skipped one. I have them from Detroit, Pittsburgh, and DC, and rejected ones from Chi and Seattle for various reasons. (The former cut out the SAPS table, the latter was just plain bad. And a copy of the Chicon II (1952) Banquet photo showed up in the Fanzine Foundation stuff. I'd be interested in finding out which previous cons -- previous to 1959 -- took Banquet Photos, though I don't exactly collect them as a Completist.

And that, of course, is the secret of collecting ephemera -- drawn your own lines as to what you will collect and what is beyond your interests or capabilities as a collector. For a final example: I have a small collection of fannish gag newspaper headlines -- you know, the kind you buy at an amusement park. Two were Coventry gags Owen Hannifen had done up proclaiming takeovers by his country of several others; one isa proclamation by M. Fleischman that N. Share had resigned as SAPS OE and he was appointing himself OE. I'm delighted with these, obtained with fanzine collections in the latter case and when

the owner no longer cared to keep the former pair. And there are only one copy of each... .
Collecting Ephemera is quite a job.

POKER FOR LASFSIANS

Part 3

Last December 8, after participating in several weeks' worth of mediocre poker games -- winalittle losealittle sort of stuff -- I started keeping track of our games to see who won, who lost, and how much either way. Records were limited to our usual penny-nickel-dime games after LASFS on Thursday nights and at open parties on weekends. So far, we've recorded 35 games, with 32 fan participants (1 non-fan lost \$5). 11 have played one game only, 13 have played between 2 and 8 games; we also have one each at 13, 14, 23, 26, 29, and 34 games, and two at 33 games. The statistics show that the winners -- all 8 of them -- have taken \$102.58 out of the game so far. Top winner has \$32.41, next in line \$31.35, third \$28.32, fourth only \$3.50... . Losers vary from 27¢ out after 26 games to \$18.53 out after 29 games. So much for statistics.

I promised to introduce some of the players. OK... . Let's start with the "Regulars." On dealer's left is Gail Thompson, who will play any card game you mention -- poker, brag, bourree, hearts, oh hell, etc., and either for money or not. Since the present game is Dealer's Choice Poker, Gail generally deals Anaconda (see Chapter 2 last mailing) or P.O.P., with Black Maria a third choice. Gail will bluff, but it's a recently acquired trait, so she doesn't do it overly well -- or often. She bets pennies on a mediocre hand, nickels on good hands and bluffs she has decided to force, and dimes on sure wins. Gail is currently losing, but she is sporadic and has been in the winners' circle several times. She is a good winner and a good loser, and unless circumstances are exceptional she will play as long as there is a game available.

Next to Gail is Chuck Crayne, who has had several bad games lately which have dumped him temporarily into the Avis position of the Winning Eight. Chuck knows a lot of Poker Theory and sometimes uses it. He usually deals Seven stud high-low, or Escalator, with Buy-a-Card his third choice. If Five-stud is dealt and Chuck has the Board beat with his up-cards, he will bet the limit to drive out anyone he can. He has an excellent poker face, and does bluff frequently.

Next comes Lee Jacobs, who usually arrives at the game announcing boisterously that he has brought more money to lose. And though he is currently losing he frequently wins, leaving when he works out of the hole to even or winning slightly. (Figuring out why Lee leaves when he does is a task I've given up -- it isn't exactly based on winning or losing, but seemingly on loss of interest, which is fairly rapid.) Lee deals Murder and Escalator, and is occasionally given to scare-betting in order to try folding people out. He has also perfected the most annoying phrase and the most annoying tone of voice in which to deliver it. Said after a player rakes his first or maybe second pot of the evening, and he's still out a buck or two (the pot he raked is maybe 25¢), "Bruce wins AGAIN!?!?!?" (or whoever) invites assassination of Lee Jacobs. So far he's escaped... .

Dian is next. Playing just for enjoyment -- most of us play at least 50% for the money -- she is out 27¢ in 26 games. Dian deals Escalator and Jacks Back most of the time. Although she is another good winner or loser (as is Chuck, by the way; Lee just gets dour, win or lose, as the evening progresses), Dian will fold out of the game if anyone else gets troublesome at the table. She bluffs, but she too has a good poker face. She has little theoretical knowledge of the game, and may even forget ranking of hands occasionally; primary problem is working for one kind of hand and not seeing something else as good or better developing. But as she does not take the game seriously, it does not matter too much.

More next time -- including me.

The Making of the Musquite Kid

Appropriately enough, the Making of the Musquite Kid began with a SAPS mailing. The 51st SAPS mailing, to be exact, which arrived in Los Angeles around the 20th of April, 1960. This mailing contained Part III of THE BALLARD CHRONICLES: "The Musquite Kid Rides Again," by Lee Jacobs. The Fan Hillites read it as one of the first things in the mailing, and were almost rolling on the floor with laughter. We were all very surprised to see it -- especially I, who had read Part II as an entry in a SAPS mailing of Long Ago, and Bjo, who had done the cover without knowing what the cover would be on. The unanimous opinion was that It Was Good.

On the night of Thursday the 21st of April, the Fan Hill Mob -- Ernie, Bjohn, and myself -- plus Al Lewis sat in an Italian restaurant called Marjo's, a couple blocks from the LASFS meeting place, eating dinner before attending the usual weekly brawl. The conversation turned to the rather dormant Unicorn Productions, and the fact that it ought to get busy and do something if it wanted to have a movie for the con -- or if it expected to stay out of the clutches of Inertia. The problem was to get something reasonably easy, yet challenging, to film; a projected space opera had been pigeon-holed from lack of initiative on writing the script (and lack of agreement as to what the script should contain). And someone mentioned THE BALLARD CHRONICLES. The idea was intriguing; several of the "original cast" were in the area, and others could be inveigled down from the Bay Area with an opportunity to get in a movie as bait. The remaining characters could be cast from locals whom fandom would like to see; there are all sorts of ham actors among the LASFans.

The casting was roughed out at the table: Bjo and I could play ourselves, the Carrs and Karen could come down and play themselves (Karen's part was small and would have to be beefed up a bit). Who could play Killer Kemp? Ernie Wheatley looks nasty enough, without his glasses. How about the two heroes? We could get Rotsler for the Kid, since WR is supposed to be the fastest gun around here, but the Kid is supposed to be the clean-cut, All-American type; Rotsler wouldn't do. Ron Ellik!! The perfect bit of typecasting. All we had to do was teach him how to draw; close-ups would take care of the speed. How about Cyclone Coswal, whose part is probably a bit bigger than the Kid's, even? Aha! Here we can use Rotsler -- the grizzled side-kick who's also a fast gun. And what a lovely bit of irony: Rotsler, who is such a fast-gun buff, playing a character who looks up to the Kid because the Kid is the Fastest-Gun. And Ellik playing the Fastest-Gun Rotsler is supposed to look up to. Heh-heh-heh.

The rest of the casting was done fairly easily. Ed Cox could play Toskey (we might have to threaten him to get him to do it); Stranger Stone could be Ted Johnstone; Rebel Lee could be Bruce Henstell; Ingrid or possibly Barbara Gratz could play Li'l Eva; the Jacobses could be hooked in to play the Busbixii (after all, it was their story...); Doc Eney we weren't sure about, but that could wait.

The next problem was locale. We could try to get Knott's Berry Farm, maybe go out sometime one morning before it opened and get our shooting done then. They'd once given an OK to an amateur movie company, which had never had a chance to take advantage of the OK -- maybe it could be obtained again. Bjo would find out. They even had a covered wagon we could use -- though we could also cast Bill Donaho as the covered wagon, if necessary. Target date would be the Memorial weekend, when the Bay Area mob could come down for the Burbdy Party and stay for the filming. Unicorn Productions was in business -- even if it was Monkey Business -- again.

During the following week we passed the word about the idea. Bjo wrote the characters involved and got permission to use the names. Lee gave Bjo the movie rights



BJO and WRAI BALLARD,
THE MUSQUITE KID



DOC ENEY'S OFFICE



PECOS PELZ REBEL LEE
KILLER KEMP

to the story, but he was unenthusiastic about acting in it. (Bjo had been talking to him for about a half hour on the phone before he realized that he wasn't kidding about wanting to film the story.) The casting got revised somewhat. To get a couple other SAPS into the thing, since the movie was so SAPS-slanted, Rebel Lee would be played by either Bob Lichtman or Don Durward -- probably Durward, because of size. Ted Johnstone was quite enthusiastic about the project -- he even began writing a theme song for the movie. It was finished by the time we held the SAPS-tape session on May 1st, and we had to forcibly restrain Ted from singing it on tape.



LI'L EVA

BIG
DADDY
BUSBY - - - -



HISTORICAL NOTE:
The foregoing was stencilled in 1960, and intended for a projected booklet on "The Making Of 'The Musquite Kid.'" The latter died, so the article was never finished. The photo page was also run in 1960, and neither pix nor text have appeared anywhere prior to this SAPS mailing. (The last page was run right from the 6-year-old stencil; text above was recopied from the only other fragment written.)
Bruce Pelz 10 IV 67