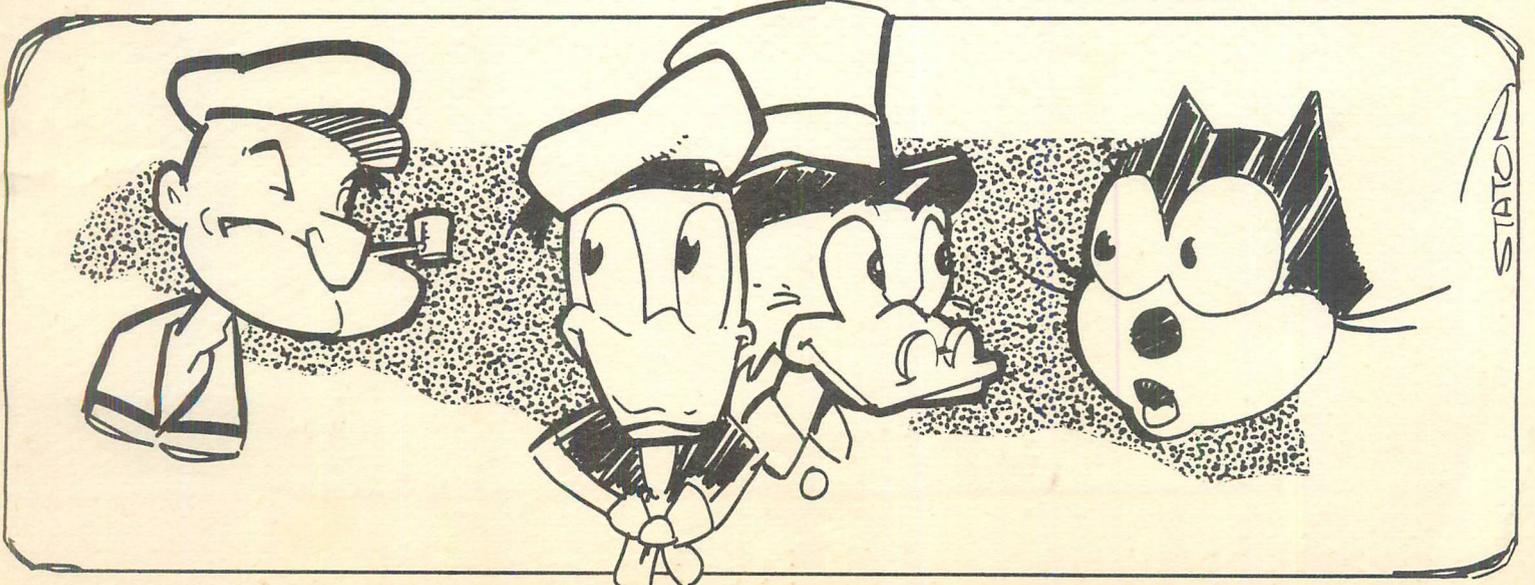


# STARLINK





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Weltanshauung Publication #79

cover -- Joe Staton

Notebooklings (editorial) -- Hank Luttrell. .3

Words from Readers (letter column) . . . . .7

I Dreamed I Was a Television Set  
-- Richard Gordon. . . . . 17

With Malice Toward All (a column about  
books) -- Joe Sanders . . . . . 19

A Thousand and One Nights at the Bijou  
-- Bob Tucker. . . . . 23

Crush! (Work in Progress) -- G. J. Mallard . 29

The Battered Beanie -- Terry Hughes . . . . . 31

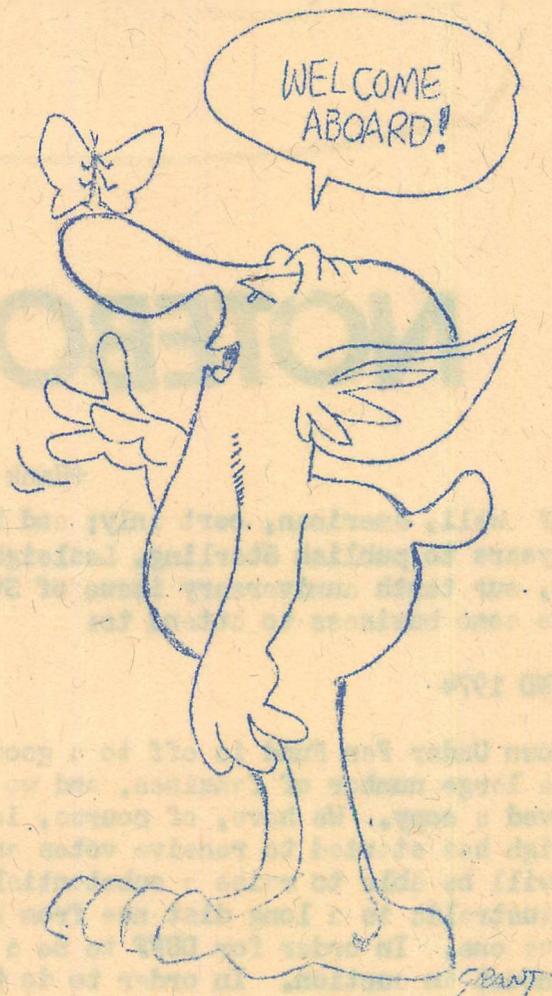
Haber is Destroyed on The Lathe of Heaven  
-- Jerry Kaufman. . . . . 35

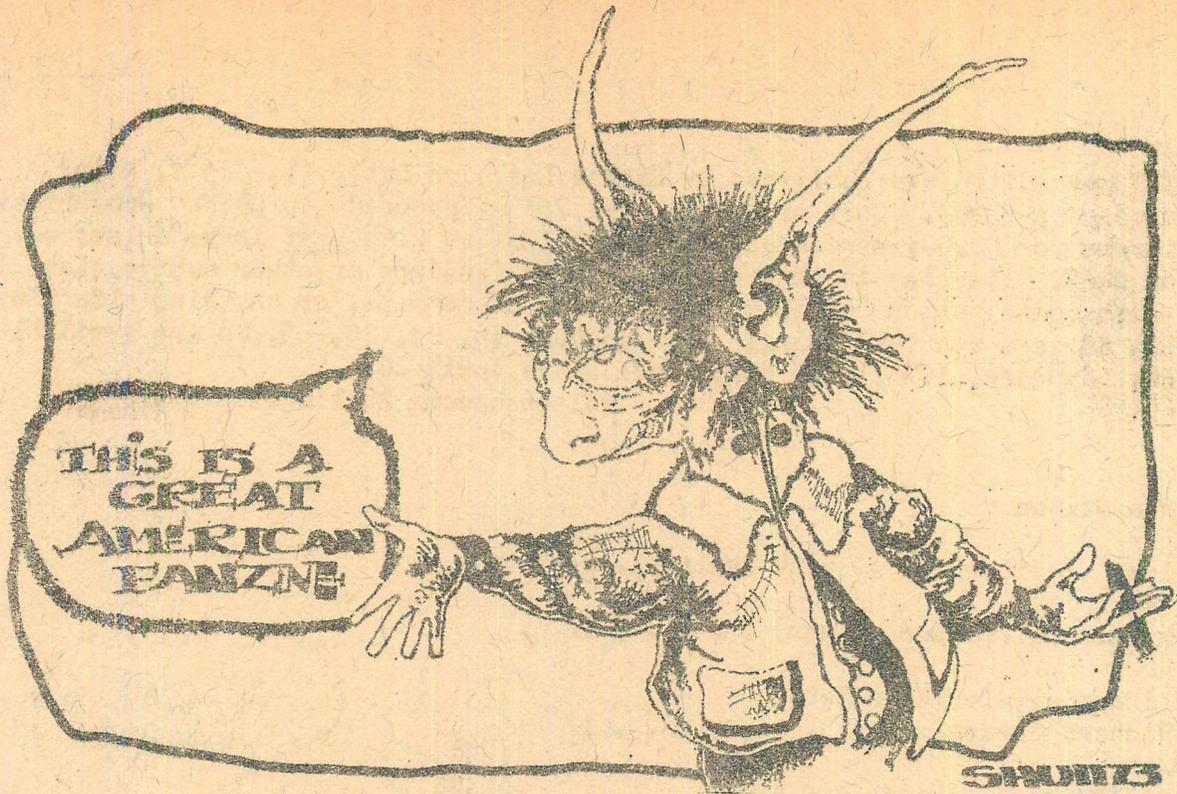
Starling in the 21st Century (editorial)  
-- Lesleigh Luttrell . . . . .41

backcover -- Tim Boxell and Ken Fletcher

Interior Artwork

- Brad Balfour 14, 31
- John Berry 34
- Grant Canfield 2, 7, 16, 19, 22, 30
- Doug Lovenstein 12, 40
- Joe Pearson 43
- Bill Rotsler 6, 9
- James Shull 3
- Dan Steffan 36





# NOTEBOOKLINGS

+Hank Luttrell+

Great? Well, American, certainly; and it has been a great deal of fun over the last ten years to publish Starling. Lesleigh and I are pleased to be able to publish this issue, our tenth anniversary issue of Starling. Before I start waxing nostalgic, I have some business to attend to:

## DUFFUND 1974

The Down Under Fan Fund is off to a good start. Ballots have so far been distributed with a large number of fanzines, and we hope that soon every interested fan will have received a copy. We have, of course, included a ballot with this issue of Starling. Lesleigh has started to receive votes and contributions, and we are confident that DUFF will be able to raise a substantial amount of money from these contributions -- but, Australia is a long distance from Washington, DC, and the trip will be an expensive one. In order for DUFF to be a complete success, it will also be necessary to conduct an auction. In order to do this I will be publishing a brief, regular newsletter during the DUFF campaign, to be mailed to those people who have voted or bid on items. I'll also include information about the auction in Starling, but as you certainly realize, Starling doesn't appear often enough to provide a convenient forum for the mail auction. Some items are already available for bidding, donated by Lesleigh and myself, and I'll list those now:

- 4
- item #1 Jack Gaughan preliminary cover painting for Murry Leinster's Time Tunnel (Parade), Gaughan has included notes about the eventual uses of the cover. \$1.00 minimum
- #2 Ink interior drawing from Amazing Stories, August, 1938, for "The Meteor Monster" by Arthur R. Tofte. Artist unknown, at least by me. \$1.00 min.
- #3 Ink interior drawing from Future #31, for "The Man With Talent" by Robert Silverberg. The artist is Orban. \$1.00 min.
- #4 Good Neighbors and Other Strangers by Edgar Pangborn. Fine 1st Edition, \$2.50 min.
- #5 Sturgeon is Alive and Well by Theodore Sturgeon. Fine 1st Edition, \$2.50 min.

If you are interested in any of this stuff, send in a bid. Or send in your DUFF vote and contribution; or do both. I would also like to earnestly solicit contributions of auctionable materials. This might include artwork, nice books or fanzines . . . or anything else that science fiction fans might be interested in.

\* \* \* \* \*

Starling was started while I was in high school. I had just discovered fandom. One of my first contacts was a kid about my own age named Tim Eklund who lived in Georgia. Eklund suggested publishing a fanzine, and Eklund suggested the name Starling. I didn't like the name, but I allowed him to use it. The first two issues were mostly his work; he rounded up most of the contributions (I wrote a few things), he typed and published and mailed it out. I footed the bill for the first few issues, and I've also suspected that I might have paid Eklund's way into a few movies. . .or whatever way he may have chosen to spend my money. Eklund grew tired of the effort after the first two issues, while my enthusiasm grew, so with the third issue I bought a cheap mimeograph and took over. At first my taking over Starling was a happy arrangement between Eklund and myself, but soon Eklund must have realized that I would no longer be mailing him ten dollar bills (which I was mowing lawns and delivering newspapers for), and he asked me for a loan. As politely as possible, I refused, and I haven't heard from him since.

When Arnie Katz reported that we would be publishing the 10th anniversary issue of Starling recently in his interesting and excellent newszine Fiawol he mentioned that our first issue had contained a dozen one page science fiction stories. Now, that isn't quite true. There were only eleven, and some of them were longer than one page. One thing that Arnie forgot to report, however, is that one of those stories was by Arnie Katz.

That first issue appeared in February, 1964. I took over the production and editing of Starling with the third issue, which appeared in late '64. I've looked over those early issues; trying to think of something to say about them that might be of historical interest in this editorial. They weren't very good. In the 6th issue, Richard Gordon's first piece for Starling appeared. Richard has been a consistent and valuable contributor ever since. In the 7th issue, published in late '65, Joe Sanders' first book review column appeared, and #8 featured a Joe Staton cover and a new typewriter. That last improvement was rather important. Early Starlings were typed with an old Smith Corona Pica portable, and run off with an open drum Vari-color mimeograph. The reproduction was at best sloppy and spotty, though I did do a lot of extra work and indulge in occasional multi-color pages.

Starling 9 was published in early '67, after I had finished high school and started college, and was a very thin issue. Starling 10 was the first of many to be published on Leigh Couch's mimeograph, a closed drum A.B. Dick, which certainly provided better printing. This was also the first issue to list Lesleigh Couch as co-editor.

5  
Lesleigh's first writing for Starling was a collaboration on part of the editorial. It might also be important to note that this issue was the first to contain a little artwork by Doug Lovenstein.

In the editorial for Starling 11, I noted in passing the formation of a science fiction group on the University of Missouri at Columbia campus. At that time, Starling was the only widely circulated fanzine that was published by a student in Columbia, and at that time I certainly had no idea that eventually Columbia would become one of the most active fan centers in the United States. At one time, briefly, Creath Thorne, Terry Hughes, Doug Carroll, Jim Turner, Chris Couch and us were all publishing fanzines; many of us were publishing several.

Starling 13 was sort of a special issue. I had planned to make it special to celebrate my hundredth published fanzine. As it turned out, it was published in early 1969, and it was the last issue before Lesleigh and I were married; the last issue before the St. Louiscon, and the last Starling of any sort for a good long time, because it was some time before Lesleigh and I were settled enough in our basement apartment in Columbia, Missouri to publish another issue.

As I remember it, one day we received a long manuscript from Greg Shaw, who was starting to become interested in fandom again, after a period of being away from it all. We had not too long ago purchased a huge old Roneo 750 silk screen electric mimeo, the first large purchase of our marriage. The time to publish Starling 14 seemed right -- that was May, 1970. There was a lot of stuff about music in that issue. Lesleigh wrote about the Incredible String Band, and I wrote about science fiction and rock music. Greg's article, the first of three parts, dealt with Chester Anderson, who has had much to do with popular music. Also for that first Weltanschauung Starling (for that is what we have called our publications since we were married) we coerced an article out of Jim Turner. Getting articles out of Jim Turner has never been easy, so we were of course very pleased. Since we've moved to Madison, dozens of letters and cards and visits and telephone calls have failed to produce an article from Big Jim, though one continues to be promised.

Starling #16 was able to present the first of what has turned out to be a non-stop series of Angus Taylor extravaganzas for our fanzine; back then his column was called Sgt. Pepper's Starship. More recently, his column has had a different title and by-line with each issue. Juanita Coulson's fine column also started with this issue. Tom Foster made a spectacular debut as a Starling artist with a cover and several interior illustrations, and Grant Canfield's first art for us appeared. Bob Tucker had his first piece for Starling in this issue, and Jim Turner contributed what might be thought of as his first "faanish" article, comparing science fiction and civil war fandoms.

Although we didn't suspect it at the time, #17 contained what was the first article in what was to become a series: Lesleigh's Oh My Stars and Little Comets!, about Carl Barks and the Disney Ducks. Since then, Lesleigh has written about Little Lulu, Basil Wolverton, John Stanley's comic inventions other than Little Lulu, and plans several other articles.

#18 featured what is still one of my favorite covers -- Ken Fletcher's Hue-o, Dewo and Lou; the Junior Woodchucks disguised as the Marx Brothers. I bet you didn't know that the Junior Woodchuck Guide has a chapter on movie lore. This issue also contained more of Turner's personal journalism -- Life is a Dishroom, which first formulated Columbia fandom's Dishwashing philosophy. Starling certainly would not be the fanzine that it is without the support of Columbia fandom. Creath Thorne was

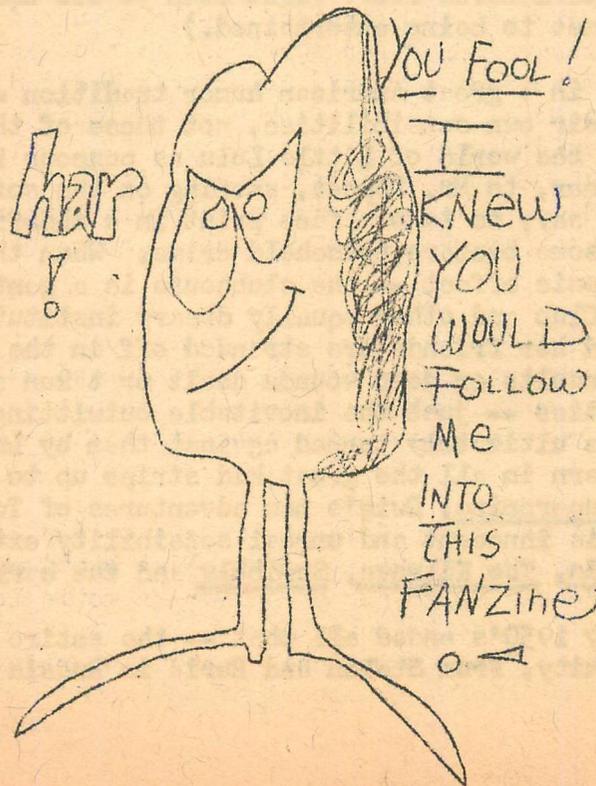
an occasional, but always important contributor. Turner's legendary The Call of Oxydol appeared in #19, while Terry Hughes made his solo -- until now -- appearance in #20 with his theme song, But its the Fannish Thing to Do! Turner's Kick In The Jams appeared in #21 -- another of his more offensive or humorous (depending upon your viewpoint) articles. 6

James Shull made his Starling cover debut on issue 21, though we had published a little of his work in earlier issues. Dan Steffan's first work for Starling appeared in issue #22, with a delightful contents page illustration which reflected that issue's attention to movies, an interest which has continued to the present. Lesleigh's nostalgic article on watching horror movies on television was superbly illustrated by Tom Foster and complemented, I hoped, my more serious (boring, that is) article on the history of horror cinema. Tom Foster helped us promote Lesleigh's DUFF nomination with his backcover. If you don't recall or haven't seen that backcover, and didn't see it when it was published in the Torcon program book, don't despair. I may reprint it again in Lesleigh's DUFF report. I like it a lot.

Issue #23, published July 72, was our last Columbia issue of Starling, and contained Turner's last article for us to date, about John Wayne. This subject still echos in the letter column. #24 was our first Madison issue, and featured Michael Carlson's article on Raymond Chandler, which initiated Starling's increased interest in mysteries in general. These issues, and the most recent two before this, are pretty recent history, so I don't think it is necessary to pick out any more highlights.

One more note on Starling's history. There is something calculated about the order of the features in this issue. Perhaps I should allow you to guess what it is before telling you. . . the order of the contributions this time is more or less the order that the contributors first appeared in Starling's pages, and all of the contributors have been with us before.

Here's hoping that the next ten years will be as rewarding and interesting as the last ten. Lesleigh and I would like to thank all of our contributors, and all of our readers, for making our hobby interest possible



# words from READERS



Rick Dey, 43 Grove, Highland Park, Mich. 48203

While Lance Hardy's essay used breast fetishism mainly to punch up or -- pardon the expression -- fill out a pleasant study in historical theorizing, Susan poured herself into her subject and proved that Richard Geis is no longer the lonely Norman Mailer of fandom, no longer the only one to lay bare his naked soul and skin to the fevered gaze of fandom's skin fetishists. I vote it the best-written and funniest humor article in any fanzine this year.

In spite of her skimpy bust measurement, Lulu Moppet is one of my favorite pinups and reading and rereading her collected adventures is one of my deepest enthusiasms as a comics collector. (I have been all my life a hopeless funny and funny-animal comic fanatic from the classy Carl Barks stuff right down to COO COO, GIGGLE and HA HA. I have no pride when it comes to being entertained.)

Little Lulu was the last in a great American humor tradition -- the kid gang. A gang whose world reflected their own sensibilities, not those of the surrounding adult world. Adults figure in the world of Little Lulu as pompous fools, from Mr. McNabbem, the bungling truant officer, to Mr. Moppet, snoring on the sofa while Tubby (disguised as The Spider) attempts, say, to take a face print in a mud-filled planter flat in order to convict him of some bizzare household crime. When the kids do behave like adults, it's always to comic effect -- the clubhouse is a gentle parody of male chauvanism -- the Men's Club and other equally dreary institutions. No Lord of the Flies stuff when Lulu and her friends are stranded off in the woods or marooned somewhere, no stinging insults or deep wounds dealt or taken at any of the constant birthday and holiday parties -- just the inevitable outwitting of the boys, whose every scheme and prank is ultimately turned against them by Lulu and the other girls. This was always the pattern in all the great kid strips up to the early 1950s -- Walt Kelly's Our Gang, Supersnipe, Dwig's new adventures of Tom Sawyer & Huck Finn, and many, many more. This innocent and unreal sensibility extended to adolescence in some comics like Cookie, The Kilroys, Scribbly and the early Buzzy.

The late 1940's and early 1950's ended all that -- the entire planet was in the grip of a mad lust for conformity, from Stalin and Beria in Russia to McCarthy and the

UnAmerican Activities Committee over here, all legislating morality and rubbing the odd man out. The kids in Little Lulu were maybe playing Scrub in a vacant lot but the real kids were dressed up in Little League baseball suits not to play ball to have fun, but to be indoctrinated in the tribal rites of wearing a silly costume and assuming the anonymous mantle of team responsibility, competing for prestige and power. Just like the adults who had moved into the world of childhood and taken it away from them. From the early 1950's until now the only comic that reflects what is seen and I suppose wanted in children now is PEANUTS, a world in which each kid is more neurotic and screwed-up than the next, a white collar world in which Charlie Brown schemes not for a good time but for a better self-image in the scaled-down adult jungle that hems him in. Even Snoopy, who chased sticks guilelessly when a pup has long since forsaken such pursuits in his quest for prestige and humanhood. PEANUTS is funny to laugh at, but sad to think about.

The mythology of Little Lulu is cut from gentler cloth -- much of its humor relies on certain anticipation of given characters in given situations, just as us old timers knew exactly what would happen when Fibber McGee went to his famous closet or when Billy Batson cried Shazam! In Little Lulu, Alvin the brat's form of communication is always an irrelevant kick in the shins, Lulu's Pop always turns out to be the culprit after all, the pictures in Lulu's fairy tales are always in satirical contrast to the captions, Lulu and/or Annie and the other girls always gain access to the No Girls Allowed clubhouse in the end. And, what was oddly satisfying even to doggedly male readers like myself, was the triumph of feminine will and sensibility. I have always resented the Lucy Van Pelts of the world who abused authority and were corrupted by power and have always had a quiet crush on the less noticeable Lulu Moppets around us who generate quiet confidence in a kind of organic morality and the power of loving tenderness.

You know, I see or sense none of that in the SatEvPost Lulus done originally by Ms. Buell herself -- the early Lulu was a mischievous imp -- in fact, in looks and deeds she resembled Carl Anderson's Henry with a wig and a ^ instead of a ∩ for a nose. Under (I presume) John Stanley's clear, clean approach to character, background and line, she gradually became a sort of flat-chested earth mother, intuitively wise beyond her years, funny beyond all expectation as far as adults were concerned. They had Little Orphan Annie, Little Annie Rooney and 'Eil Iodine. They were welcome to them -- they represented what adults expected from kids. Lulu and friends represented what kids wanted for themselves.

I'm feeling sullen and resentful about missing out on the great John Wayne and Raymond Chandler discussion. After so much lively reaction, my reactions will come as Too Much, Too Late, but I don't plan to let that stop me. John Wayne is the personification of something every film goer knows whether he knows it or not: not all film actors act. The director and the camera act on him. Such actors, if their native charisma is potent enough, are simply There in a film, in the same sense that the Sierra Nevada is there for those who want to experience it. In an uninspired movie, John Wayne is uninspired, but that raw, malleable power is there to be used and molded by inspired directors and cameramen. If he were not so intense in his beliefs he would not be intense enough to be utilized so brilliantly by the Howard Hawks and John Fords of the film industry. He is especially funny in North to Alaska just because he is so unbelievably corny about Being Funny (mugging a blow to the head by crossing his eyes and crashing backwards like a felled oak.) He was moving in Red River probably because the director (Hawks) and the writers (Charles Schnee and Borden Chase) believed a man could become derganged when he lets a desire become an obsession. Hawks pumped that personality change out of Wayne because it was there in the man ready to burst out with the right kind of creative probing. If John Wayne

9  
were not obsessive about his beliefs and fantasies of manhood and patriotism he would be the wooden amateur he was in his early Monogram and Republic days or the sermonizing demagogue he is in the films he makes himself like Green Berets or Big Jim McClain. I'm willing to proclaim rashly that his Rooster Cogburn in True Grit is the finest comic performance I can recall in western films, the only performance that could have shaded Lee Marvin's Kid Sheleen in Cat Ballou.

The antarctic explorer Sir Earnest Shackleton once said he felt ineffectual and out of place in polite society -- that he was only at ease when caught up in some elemental struggle. What could be more true of John Wayne, whose political pronouncements on talk shows reveal a peanut brain and whose best film performances reveal a great heart.

Raymond Chandler Speaking (Houghton Mifflin, 1962) is a volume that will enrich subsequent re-reading of his novels and stories. A good, solid selection (unfortunately, not a collection) of his letters over the years, arranged in broad subject areas, an interspersed chronology of the personal highs and lows of his life, from his extraordinarily good marriage in 1924 to his pathetic suicide attempt in 1955 a year after his wife's death. The volume also contains some of his best essays and articles, and two previously unpublished short stories, the latter actually the first chapter of a new Philip Marlowe novel cut short by Chandler's death in 1959.

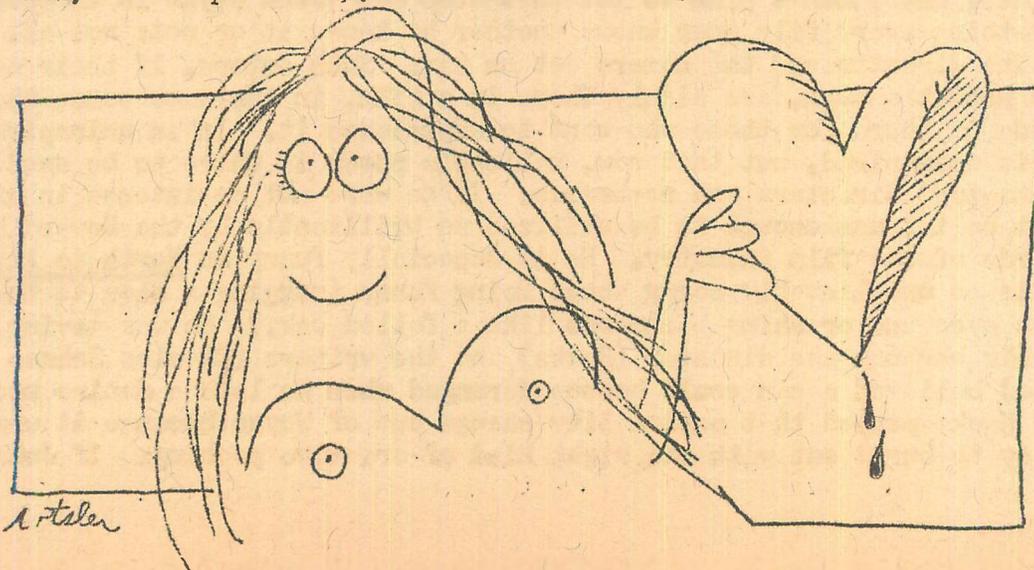
Chandler would have made a fine film critic, especially in the latter years, when the special juices he had tapped for his stories and novels was running low. He had a virtually untapped wealth of background as a bench hand in the Dream Factory to draw from, and he was unimpressed by vulgarity or pretentiousness in films.

Ray Nelson 333, Ramona Ave., El Cerrito, CA. 94530

Just before running off with my first wife, a wise but ugly (he had a glass eye that didn't match his real one) seducer once gave me a bit of advice I've never forgotten. Said he, "However you happen to be, act like you got that way on purpose."

I thought of these words as I read "Breast Fetishist of Sol III, parts 1 and 2."

It seems to be that both Susan Glicksohn and Lance Hardy Jr. might well meditate on the words of this crafty cocksman. If they did, Lance Hardy might not end his tour through eternity with a rousing chorus of "Everycne is beautiful in his own way," and, more importantly, Susan Glicksohn might no longer need to cast an



envious eye on the larger boobs of the pneumatic Rosemary Ullyots of this world. 10

Is it true that everything in this world has a special unique beauty? Of course not. If everything is beautiful, then nothing is beautiful. Beautiful, like good, or like dark, or like not, is an adjective of comparison, keeping company with words like "more" "most" and "least." Just as there is no dark without light, there is not beautiful without ugly. And since "beauty is in the eye of the beholder," clearly nothing can be beautiful unless someone says it is. Though I'm tempted to exempt flowers and cats, nothing is beautiful in its natural state.

Let us say that I stand on a beach. At my feet are piles and piles of pebbles, worn round by the tides. At first I pay no attention to them. They are not yet beautiful. Then I look down. I see one. I lean over, pick it up. I say, in an awed voice, "How beautiful!" What is it that makes it beautiful? All the millions of ugly pebbles that I have rejected in choosing this one beautiful one.

It is choice that creates beauty!

Susan Glicksohn and Rosemary Ullyot stand side by side. It is clear that Rosemary's boobs are bigger than Susan's. I, the dirty old man of El Cerrito, stand before them and my eyes, in spite of all my efforts to be fair, move slowly over Susan's boobs and come to rest on Rosemary's. Should Susan at this point burst into tears? Not so! And I will show you why.

Once again Rosemary Ullyot stands before me, but at her side stands, not Susan Glicksohn, but Twiggy. In spite of myself, with the best will in the world, I can't prevent my eyes from wandering away from Rosemary's boobs, which have suddenly lost their appeal. I find myself unable to tear myself away from Twiggy's. . . face. How can this be? Susan may have had small boobs, but Twiggy has almost no boobs at all! Yet I can't take my eyes off her. What is it that draws my eyes? Rosemary Ullyot may flaunt her boobs, but Twiggy flaunts her no-boobs more. It is not the boobs that fascinate. It is the flaunt! Because Twiggy's clothes, her makeup, even her personal mannerisms and way of talking seem to say, "Before I was born, I sat down with God and designed my whole self, body and soul."

Beauty is created by choices. The more choices I make, the more beautiful I become. Is it the Twentieth Century? Then I will speak and act and dress as if it were the Nineteenth Century, or the Thirteenth Century. Or the First. Among the long-haired non-selves, as they quote Huey Newton and Mao, I will appear in short hair, beardless, and . . . in toga, tunic and sandals, and I will quote Appolonius of Tyanna. And Sececa. And Nero.

Men and women in our society -- and men more than woman -- are like prisoners who remain in a cell when the door is unlocked. When I read about the wardrobe of a Susan Glicksohn, I got an image of someone who has never tried to create herself. Gowns, jeans, slacks, t-shirts, good-skirts, sweater-dresses, pullovers, blouses. There are not real costumes here! Where is the tunic? Where is the hoop-skirt? Where is the doublet and hose? Where is the future-fashion she designed herself? Above all, where is the flapper outfit?

If a woman with small boobs wanted to make her clothes say, "I am the way I am on purpose," wouldn't the first thing she'd think of be, "I will dress as women dressed when my body was in fashion.?" Big boobs are not always "in." Big boobs look awful on a flapper.

11  
Jerry Kaufman, 622 W. 114th St., Apt. 52A, New York, NY 10025

I liked the stars on front and back of the last issue, and the nice little filloes within, like Fletch and Shull and Canflaid. I repeat what I've written before -- I wish you could get current G. Foster or D. Lovenstein.

Angus Taylor again, with a good parody of Darko Suvin and the academic trend. Typical, in that it uses ninetenths of its length before coming to any point. Angus could have made the article a bit funnier by making the article more Suvin-specific, parodying his Marxist interpretation of sf and its relevance. Perhaps sometime I will write a parody of Angus' older columns (perhaps called "Colonel Blimp's Riverboat"). It would be a lot of work, since I'd have to drag in esoteric references from all over the cultural map to justify relationships determined on the basis of puns, but it would be well worth it to get a response from Angus.

Marty Feldman used the animation of Terry Gilliam, as does the Monty Python show. This is one of the things that creates the similarity between the two.

Porter has published Algol, and I have skimmed through Barbour's article; in many ways it resembles mine. This is inevitable, since if what I saw in Lathe of Heaven is really there, it guides searchers itself. But at least one of his conclusions is different from mine. He believes that Orr causes a real change in the world, where I know that Orr changes illusions. I don't think he attempts to understand Heather, but I'm not sure.

Harry Warner has had a letter of comment in almost every issue of Starling since number two. Now, in number twenty four, our tenth anniversary, he has an interesting announcement to make.

Harry Warner, 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

First, a warning and a promise. This will probably be my last loc to you and Lesleigh for a while, unless you manage to publish the 27th Starling in improbable speed. I plan to get back to work on fan history before the end of the year and I'm going to drop most forms of fanac for the time it takes to complete the first draft, maybe four months or so.

I liked Lance Hardy, Jr.'s good words about the frustrated braininess of primitive man. He might have gone on to point out how many people today fall into the trap of ascribing this very same imagined low intelligence level to our ancestors of one or two generations ago, not just to those of the cave man period. Even those superior creatures, fans, sometimes scoff at all the science fiction written before 1950 or thereabouts as if it emanated from a lower order of creativity, refuse to waste their time listening to any music written before the birth of rock except maybe for an occasional Vivaldi concerto, and can't believe that there were anti-war, anti-establishment sentiments in existence as long as Depression days.

Of course, his article had a surprise twist toward the end, after I'd decided that the title was just one of those irrelevant ones designed to trick the reader into finishing the article. One thing puzzles me. Did the big breast popularity begin in recent years, or has it always been a desideratum? The first stories I remember reading which put a lot of stress on breasts were two or three novels which Henry Kuttner wrote for Marvel, back in the late 1930's. They were incredible hack work but

they contained woman's physiology, which 12 rarely figured in other prozines, and I seem to remember that every sixth paragraph contained a reference to the heroine's "Small, firm breasts." I believe the same model breast was bobbing up regularly in the sexy horror prozines that were published a bit later. I can't look up earlier fiction, simply because I don't know where to look for the kind of stories that keep giving such succinct and consistent breast references. I don't believe that the movies put any great stress on breast size before the World War Two era. I don't doubt that men in general have always been susceptible to large boobs. But weren't legs and hips more important objects of attention before Monroe, Dagmar, and their contemporaries caused all this stress to be put on the northern areas of women?

The only way I can explain why I like a given type of music is: something went click inside me one day and then I began to admire that particular style of composition. It happened when I went wild over serious music, when I much later got interested in country music, when I fell in love with German folksong. When those things happen, there is never any apparent emotional or environmental event which could account for the sudden broadening of tastes. I just seem to have reached some new stage in my music appreciation area of my brain, and the whole thing is out of my control.

Paul Novitski, 1690 East 26 Ave., Eugene, Oregon 97403

I enjoyed Lance Hardy's precis of human history -- he's got it all stapled down neatly except a few minor omissions such as the last five thousand years of Chinese history in which painting, astronomy, neurology -- not to mention philosophy -- were developed and refined long before our Western civilization got around to them. But I find it a fascinating concept that, from conception, we develop along roughly evolutionary lines from single cells, to amphibian, to vertebrate, to mammalian, to primate -- and then after we're born we have access to much of the accumulated fact and dream of the human mind. So that in effect, in one lifetime, we each cover a billion year's evolution plus several thousand of civilization.

For our generation I think this angle of awareness has been widened by the phenomenon of television, which has given us a visual, audial overview of happenings and histories and cultures and personalities all over the world and up and down time. Even if this overview is often grossly distorted by the cultural and political chauvanism of the teevee industry and their sponsors. All this gives me a sensation of having lived a thousand lives, having gone through innumerable permutations of human experience -- rather like a racial memory but with sideways mobility.

On the subject of breasts, I'd like to point out that flat-chested males such as myself also suffer from a certain amount of negative social sanction. Personally I find women possessing small to moderate breasts the more appealing.



Bruce D. Arthurs, Fort Lee, VA 23801

I remember, vaguely, reading Little Lulu comics many years ago, and enjoying them. However, your article on Stanley reminded me also of another comic book I enjoyed about the same period, Nancy. Yes, the Nancy of the putrid daily comic strip by Bushmillar. The comic book, however, was heads and heels above the strip. I only remember one issue, where Nancy and all her friends went to summer camp. Sluggo, of course, didn't have enough money to go, so he was left at home alone, with nobody else left in the neighborhood to play with. If I remember correctly, Sluggo tried to make friends with the man who lived next door; however, all his attempts flopped in one way or another and the neighbor usually ended up by falling into a thorny rose bush. Finally, as Sluggo lay sleeping in his bed, someone broke into his house, stuffed Sluggo into a large bag, and drove off into the night. That morning at the summer camp, Nancy and the rest were walking through the woods when they stumbled across a large lumpy bag. Opening it, they found Sluggo as well as a check for the camp and a note which said, "Please take him, I can't stand it any more."

+Lots of people confuse Nancy with Little Lulu because the Nancy book was  
+fairly good. I bet most people who remember Oona Goosepimple think she was  
+a character in Lulu. Not so. Someday I may get around to writing an article  
+about all the miscellaneous Great American Comics I've missed, and Nancy  
+will certainly be one of them. --LML

Wallace I. Green, Managing Editor, Periodical Division, Western Publishing Company.

It has been several years since I have been in touch with John Stanley. I do wish he were still available to write stories. He has a unique imagination and a rare talent.

The last work he did for me was issue no. 1 of O.G. Whiz. He wrote the entire book and did some of the illustration. We recently printed some new 3-page Little Lulu stories of his. They had been written for Golden Magazine shortly before we discontinued its publication and lay in a remote file cabinet until recent rediscovery. But there were only about two of them.

Incidentally, regarding Marge's association with the comic book, although to my knowledge she never actually wrote or drew any of the stories, she did personally approve every issue up until the time she sold the property to Western Publishing about two years ago. Since that time, we have dropped her name from the title. Every so often she sends us comments which we are always happy to receive.

Mike Blake, 71 South Bend St., Pawtucket, RI

Lesleigh's article, no matter how enjoyable, didn't answer the question I've had ever since I heard of the Choo Choo Charlie comic: was the character originated in the Good 'n Plenty commercials and the comic released on the basis of their success, or what? It's not too often publishers feel an advertising gimmick is popular enough to stand on his on two feet without his product. And I didn't think those cartoons were very well animated.

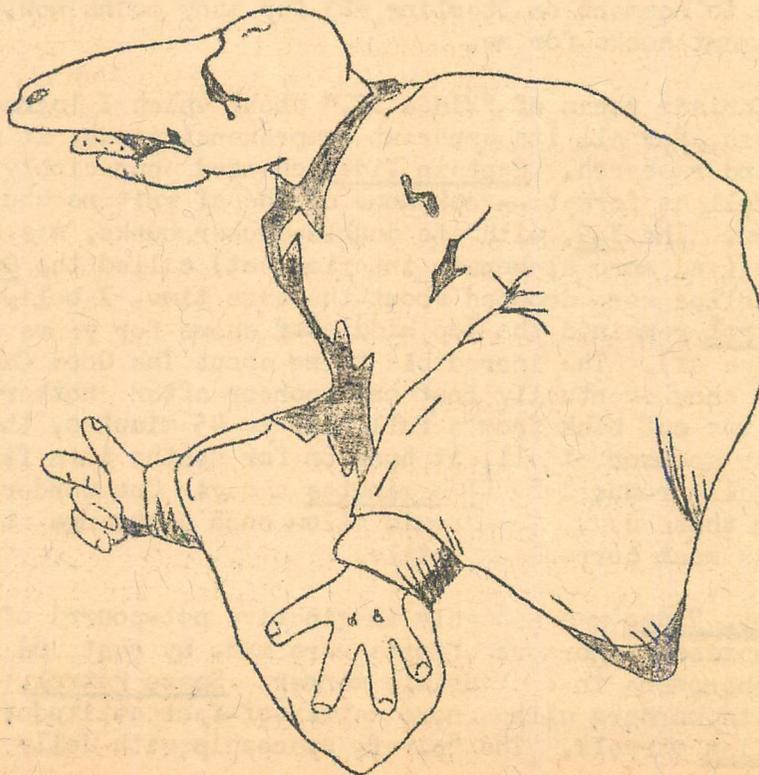
+Personally, I don't remember this advertising campaign. Maybe it was only  
+a regional phenomenon. I'm sure one of our readers can enlighten us on this  
+point. --LML Choo Choo Charlie was published in 1969, and was copyrighted  
+by Quaker City Chocolate and Confectionary Co. The comic didn't mention any  
+product, but I suspect it must have been some sort of advertising spin-off.  
+ --HL

The red necks of Easy Rider would not be heroes in Dirty Harry. . .not at all. Harry doesn't have to assert himself over hippies because he knows how good he is at his job, hence the scene in the tunnel when Harry, carrying the \$200,000 in a satchel, has to get to a pay phone within a time limit or the kidnapped girl dies. He is stopped by two hippie-types, but they are muggers, and say "what's in the bag, man?" Harry pulls out a .357 Magnum and shoves it in their faces. But they aren't hippies. . . they're muggers, and they've ventured onto Harry's turf, as it were, and will have to face the consequences. In a sense Dennis Hopper makes the same mistake in Easy Rider by flipping the red necks the bird, which brings him into their game. It's a shame Fonda has to be killed, too, because he really is the innocent victim.

Jack Elam with the beard still has that weird eye! My favorite of his appearances was in Once Upon a Time in the West, still one of my all time favorite westerns, where he traps the fly inside his gun barrel. In that scene Elam is the lethargy, the hot slow ugly violence of the west. Which Leone fully recognises.

Will Straw, 181 Fifth Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 2M8, Canada

My favorite character actors are more the clerks and crooked businessmen of Hollywood social comedies than the sold sidekicks or villains of Westerns. My personal favourite bit player is Charles Lane, who usually played unscrupulous lawyers or businessmen over a period of forty years or so. He was Homer Bedloe, the railroad owner, on "Petticoat Junction," and shows up occasionally in an American film or on television. He was one of a group of actors of similar status -- Morris Ankrum, Byron Foulger and Addison Richards are others -- who worked weeks in films and spent their weekends putting on plays in the Pasadena Playhouse, taking the opportunity to play roles they would never get in films. My idea of heaven right now is being able to see one of these performances -- almost all of the people involved got one or two chances to show



<sup>15</sup>  
their talents (Addison Richards as the member of Spencer Tracy's band in Northwest Passage who goes insane, for instance) in films, and seeing them given the opportunity to really cut loose would have been tremendous.

I saw The Long Goodbye a couple of nights ago, more out of my admiration for Altman than any interest in Chandler, and I hope the Chandler discussion in Starling continues long enough that everyone who has opinions on the film gets to express them. I was disappointed, because I had such high expectations. I liked the film, but it didn't hearken back to the Chandler films of the forties as much as I'd been led to expect -- it seemed more reminiscent of Sinatra's Tony Rome films or Harper. All of those recent films seemed to have made more use of sprawling San Francisco as home for a wide and varied cross-section of humanity than any forties films did; in them, there was more a sense of closeness, of an actual city. And the relation of the hero to the rest of society seems widely different; Elliot Gould's Marlowe seemed left behind by the rest of society, more a part of the establishment who wasn't making it because there was no room for him than the genuine rebel that Bogart was. That's probably what Altman intended for him to be -- an anachronism -- but in doing so he made it far more difficult for me to identify with Gould than I could with any of the film noir heroes of the forties.

Monty Python seems to be catching on with American youth culture; you've probably seen the pieces on him in both Rolling Stone and Zoo World over the last few months. A few houses down the street a Monty Python fanatic has a basement apartment, and I've visited him several times. One Monty Python show this summer involved a penguin sitting on a tv set and one woman asking the other what was on television; "it looks like a penguin" was the gag (you had to be there), and this person promptly went out and bought a penguin which he now has sitting on his tv set in the tiny hope that he'll have a chance to use the joke.

Alex Eisenstein, 2061 W. Birchwood, Chicago, IL 60645

I've been intending to comment on Starling #23 for many moons now, simply because it had a wealth of comment hooks for me.

I enjoyed reading Chris's recap of "Video SF," about which I learned a few new things, I think; nevertheless, for all its apparent comprehensiveness, it shows the mark of its second and third hand research. Captain Video changed appreciably over the years, in script quality as well as format -- ask some of the sf writers who wrote later scripts for the show. The X-9, with its double-decker bunks, was soon phased out in favor of a new ship (and more elaborate interior set) called the Galaxy. The Johnny Mack Brown western clips were dropped about the same time, I believe. Both Capt. Video and Space Patrol remained the top kiddie-sf shows for years and years (unless you count Superman as sf). The incredible thing about The Good Captain was that he refused to die; the show eventually lost one sponsor after another, for reasons I cannot fathom, and was cut back from a full hour to 45 minutes, then a half hour. Finally, without any sponsor at all, it hung on for months in a fifteen minutes slot, which was finally reduced to five minutes a day! One wonders about the dynamics of TV production in those days, that could allow such a strange attrition. Certainly it was the Captain's most horrendous battle.

In its hey-day, Capt. Video was a highly imaginative pot-pourri of diverse interplanetary-adventure situations; enormous efforts were made by cast and crew to convey utterly fantastic phenomena in a plausible manner. Space Patrol, on the other hand, presented most of its wonders with a more matter-of-fact attitude; yet neither show was given to 100% fiat marvels. The "pirate spaceship with Jolly Roger" was a pirate

galleon floating in space. . . a spaceworthy vessel indeed, courtesy of the invisible force-field surrounding it and the mad caprice of Prince Baccarati, alias "The Black Falcon," Buzz Correy's perennial arch-nemesis (at least for a while). If anything, S.P. was less careless of its science and super science than Capt. V. Among its other distinguishing characteristics were elaborate, even colossal, sets and special effects, which imbued it with a consistency and lack of staginess not achieved by other such shows (like Capt. V.) . For one thing, all special effects were live, as opposed to C.V.'s filmed stock shots; some of the latter may have been more spectacular, viewed in isolation, but Patrol's visual materials were better integrated.

For all its vividness and lavish production, Space Patrol forever ran a close second to Capt. Video Patrol was more immediate, dramatically speaking, but Video was much more inventive and intricate. Tom Corbett was hardly the best of the cereal serials; in fact, it never came close to matching the hold on young minds that the other two exercised. Take my word for it -- I was there. More and more, Tom Corbett's later scripts depended on weird menaces.

Space Patrol lasted well into the mid-fifties, ending some time after the last gasp of Cap. Vid. By then, a syndicated telefilm serial called Rocky Jones, Space Ranger had appeared to fill the gap. Without doubt, Rocky Jones had the most opulent space effects of any TV show, past or present. Even Twilight Zone occasionally used footage from it.

I have the feeling that Chris saw Outer Limits at an impressionable age, and only saw Twilight Zone in haphazard re-runs much later on. I don't think most fans would argue with the judgment that T.Z. was far superior or O.L. and I'm slightly flabbergasted that Chris deprecates the one and alibis the other. Stefano was not forced to inject a monster into every episode; he did so, I'm sure, for commercial reasons. Of course, each show had, like '50's porn, its redeeming moral message: i.e., Man is the real monster; Man is evil, Man is bad. . . reiterated ad nauseam, show after show, with the subtlety of a pile driver.

WAFH: Eric Lindsay, Barry Gillam, Gregg Calkins, Loren MacGregor, Mike Glicksohn, David Emerson, Mike Gorra, Sheryl Birkhead, Don D'Amassa, Gene Wolfe, Chris Sherman, Amos Salmonson, Doug Carroll, Sue Clarke, John Dowd.



17 Richard Gordon recently had his first two science fiction paperbacks published in the US by DAW under the by-line Stuart Gordon. He has had a number of other books published in Britain. Richard first appeared in Starling with the sixth issue, making him senior contributor in this issue.

## I dreamed I was a TELEVISION SET

+Richard Gordon+

The Starling is indeed a nifty bird...publishing revolutions come and go, but Starling alone seems to fly on unaffected. I got your letter requesting something for the tenth anniversary a couple of weeks back, and spasmodically I've been trying to write something...but I seem to be having one of those things politely referred to as a 'writer's block'. I've spent all year frantically trying to produce a sequel (TWO-EYES) to a story DAW published in October (ONE-EYE), but sadly I think it's fallen headlong over its own mystic feet. Time for a rest and a rethink, and general circumstances also seem to indicate a withdrawal from London. It's a crazy place at the moment...

Well, this has been a strange and ragged year, jampacked with social, economic, political, not to mention existential ickyness (the same as referred to by Lance Hardy), and it becomes a major problem knowing which word to place in relation with the next in order to make any sense. Many weird things happen. Buffy St. Marie has just succeeded in vibrating one of my stereo speakers off the shelf; the cabinet crashed to the ground brining radio and other material ephemera with it. She sure has a powerful voice... and where's the comet? All year I've been looking for cosmic scapegoats to blame for all the gibbering rubbish I've been committing to paper. I really want to pin all gibbering rubbish on the motions of the planets, on the 11.11 sunspot cycle, on the eclipse, on the comet, on the psychic weight of Nostradamian prophecies, and on any and every other available fatalistic phenomenon which removes responsibility from this stumbling human sphere. It's such a temptation...I could even go and join the Divine Light Mission. They have their plush middle-class London headquarters just up the road from here. In the summer the Perfect Master jetted in for a few quick rallies in London's largest stadiums, it was impossible to move down the street without getting beamed by bright-eyed evangelising premises. It was oddly time-fracturing to be having circular theological arguments on the pavement with heavy juggernaut traffic thundering past a few feet away. The Divine Light Mission's doing well in the soul-grab stakes. And while it's easy to put down many cults and point a finger after Charles Manson, it isn't so easy to dispose of or to ignore the increasingly-apparent subliminal forces which...even if only as a side-effect...stimulate cult-beliefs and a general gnawing desire for order, peace, and harmony. The trip is getting weirder and weirder, who's not a nut now, who can wholly adhere to rationalism? If Uri Geller can bend spoons psychokinetically, then how was the Great Pyramid built? And who can say for sure that the sea wasn't the color of wine in Homer's time, and that pigs can't fly? It goes further than assigning reason-as-we-define-it to another place in the scheme of things. Reason's problem is its lack of outrage at itself. Reason's just not reasonable if it has no rhythm. Reason is no constant, reason needs to take a bath while people all over practise bending their cutlery psychokinetically. Perhaps then we'll learn how to heat ourselves and do without oil, provide our own central heating as in the tummo system of the Buddhists. Perhaps...it would be the reasonable thing to do, given circumstances.

Okay. Come back, reason, all's forgiven.

Okay. 1963-1973. What's new, and where's the clue? In the music? Turn on the <sup>18</sup> radio and like as not you'll hear Neil Sedaka singing 'Breaking Up Is Hard To Do'. Which is nice. But. But for some time now the music scene seems to have merged into the peculiar patterns of life. PR men are in hard times for new excitements. Much manufacturing. Reggae has guts, and rock lives in the pubs, close to its audience. And David Bowie hasn't turned out to be the New Messiah. For his latest hit the man of the futuristic present turns to the present past with a revival of "Sorrow". As with the glut of oldies and sometimes goldies on the radio, there seems to be something symptomatic here. 1973's biggest riots were caused by the Osmonds. The Who and the Stones and Floyd made majestic appearances. Some new bands are popularly into interesting things...Roxy music is one. But...there's much rehashing of and preoccupation with the past. 1973 is spreadeagled in time.

There's no doubt that 1973 is odd. 1973's been quite confused by itself. It hasn't quite found its identity, it seems more like a jangled patchwork of essences and influences which have been starting home to roost. For me this comes home most powerfully (and of course, most subjectively) in hearing old hits being played on the radio.

They don't sound old any more. Not even "Deck of Cards".

I'm sure that last year or the year before a lot of them sounded very old indeed, they definitely belonged to other and concretely-different eras, to the time-of-this or to the time-of-that.

It's as if in 1973 we've hit another transition-point at which all the influences leading up to 1973 are in 1973 equally current, equally present. Maybe this sudden start to our getting hooked out of the patterns of post-war progress has something to do with it. A leap in perspective makes it all now. A while ago J.G. Ballard remarked to the effect that by the year 2000 the people will have no sense of time.

The years gone by have seemed like discrete entities standing successively on the shoulders of the great bulk of Time Past, poking their craniums into the clouds, quite confident in their identity.

Now in and with 1973 they're merged (submerged, remerged?). Clean-cut time goes blurry at the edges. There's a big choice of prospective new times on display to choose from. St. John or Herman Kahn?

2,000 years ago Chuan Szu said: 'I dreamed a strange dream. I dreamed I was a television set. Now I am not sure whether I am a man who has dreamed he was a television set, or a television set dreaming it is Chuang Szu'.

In our own time Moses says: 'I have dreamed a strange dream. I dreamed I was Charlton Heston. Now I am not sure whether I am a man who has dreamed he was Charlton Heston, or Charlton Heston dreaming he's Moses'.

Now this is pretty serious, if you're counting on Moses to lead you out of this. For this is the land of No-Sense and Nix-Time where words blur and the senses get confused. And the compass won't work either.

Beach Boys' 'I Get Around' on the radio. Round and round and round. Round and round. And round.

Snap back.

Okay.

Where now?

When ground dissolves where do people put their feet? How do we level off those acceler-

In Starling #7, when Joe's column first appeared in these pages (we inherited it from something called Space Cage), this introduction was included:

"As a critic, I'm a fairly steady semi-subjectivist. That is, although I believe criticism is basically a matter of personal taste and opinions I also believe that value judgments can be to some extent communicated, shared. Whatever I happen to be talking about in any given column, I'll try to talk about the work itself, by whatever avenues of thematic analysis seem profitable and in as much detail as seems practical. I'll welcome any suggestions, questions, or howls of rage you care to send along as your part of the communication process." Joe also gave some indication of the variety of his interests when he said, ". . . recently I've tried for my own interest to criticize seriously a lot of things, including science fiction novels, fantasy magazines, horror movies and Uncle Scrooge comic books."

## WITH MALICE TOWARD ALL

+Joe Sanderst+

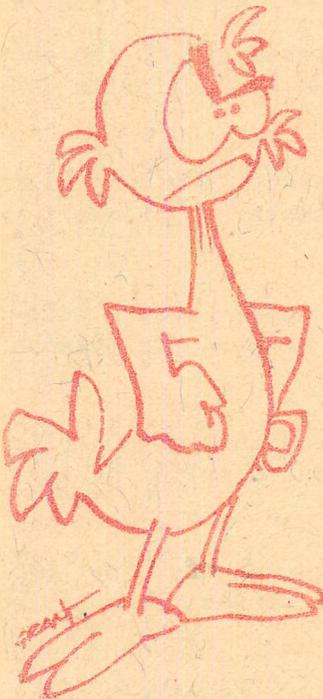
OPERATION WHIPLASH, by Dan J. Marlowe. Fawcett, 75¢.

THE FLIGHT OF THE HORSE, by Larry Niven. Ballantine, \$1.25.

Back when we lived in Fargo, I got most of my paperback reading at the Dakota Book Exchange, better known as Dirty Ernie's. Ernie sold books five for a dollar, and you could pick up just about anything you wanted from the current newsstand fare -- and a lot of unexpected things -- if you kept an eye on the flow of his stock. I tried to. For one thing, it was a good way to keep up with series books. Those Shadow or Joe Gall things certainly weren't worth the cover price, but for 20¢... And the only way to buy Doc Savage novels is five for a dollar. Anyway, Ernie's gave me a chance to sample things that I wouldn't have taken a chance on at full price. That's how I started reading Dan J. Marlowe.

Time out: why do we read series stories? I include myself in that "we"; the first of these columns, back in STARLING #7, dealt with the first reissued Doc Savage stories, and I keep up with quite a few series like MacDonald's Travis McGhee, the other MacDonald's Lew Archer, and Hamilton's Matt Helm. When I see a new one on the stands, I yearn to grab and start reading. Why?

Basically, the very nature of the thing dictates that a series continues. It gives us more of what we like, endlessly, more of the same. The same form, as in Doc Savage, or the same content, as in John Ross MacDonald's endless agonizing about one generation torturing the next. Who would want a sharper Watson or a duller Holmes, a McGhee who really decided to retire, or a Helm who didn't let the villains capture him? Once the writer compounds a pleasing syrup, he can add carbonated water as often and as long as he wishes to. Or, in Doyle's case, as long as the publishers can beg him to. In any event, the lead character can't really change.



That's not the way our lives work, of course. Each adventure would be impossible<sup>20</sup> enough in itself--check your local version of Dirty Ernie's for RIFLE FOR RENT (by Gene Caesar, Monarch Books, 1963), the story of a fellow named Tom Horn who actually tried to live like Secret Agent X or Tiger Mann. But even if we got through such a mess un-maimed, we couldn't experience the same thing again in the same way. We never do. Events don't repeat themselves, and anyway people are incapable of repeating an action exactly. We change because of what we do. So our reactions change. But the series hero is safe, however physically threatened he may be during a story, from the most horrible threat of all: a changing self image, involving personal questioning. In real life, when we catch a man trying to act in a familiar though inappropriate way, to defend a rigid self image, we feel disgust and pity; a lot of people feel such emotions these days when they look at our political leaders. But such imperviousness to change is the very thing we love in series stories.

However, some recent writers have been doing some interesting variations on the series format. Jack Vance, for one, seems to be working with some interesting limited series. like PLANET OF ADVENTURE of a few years ago, which have a goal, reach it, and stop. That doesn't matter much with Vance's emotionally dead heroes, but the best TV series of all time, THE PRISONER, also was deliberately limited; John Drake ended as a different man than he began, one incapable of going through the same hassle again, and that mattered quite a bit. On the other hand, Chester Himes shifted gears and apparently ended an open-ended mystery series with HOT DAY, HOT NIGHT, in which he decided that there was just no way his heroes could continue to solve mysteries in such a screwed-up world. And still other people are experimenting within the series format, seeing what they can do to open up the form without losing the appeal.

Which brings us to Marlowe. The first Marlowe book I picked up at Dirty Ernie's was OPERATION BREAKTHROUGH; it's a fine suspense novel in itself, and it sent me scurrying after other books featuring Marlowe's hero, Earl Drake. As I got earlier and later books, I realized Marlowe was into something rather novel: Each book clearly continued the action of the one before and set up the next one. Quite a difference from a straight template series. Marlowe's hero doesn't change, but that's okay, both because of the series format and because Drake is given reasons for his imperviousness. Drake is a professional criminal, a bank robber. In the mists of prehistory (in books I haven't found yet), Drake and a friend separated after a robbery, agreeing to meet later in Florida to divide the cash. When partner and cash didn't show up, Drake traced them--and ran seriously afoul of the law and a crooked cop who had killed the other bank robber for the money. At the end of that episode, Drake crashed his car while trying to run a roadblock and had his face burned off. All the above is reconstructed from references in ONE ENDLESS HOUR, the first of the series I've read. It's a lovely, tough novel, explaining how Drake gets a new face and breaks loose. The series' slogan incidentally is "Drake: The man with nobody's face." But the point, not so incidentally, is that Drake demonstrates almost superhuman self-control by not cracking under the physical and emotional pressure while he's biding his time, waiting for his chance to get free. If you can accept this--and Marlowe makes a superb presentation of concrete details and physical action to make the narration convincing--you can accept Drake as a genuinely rugged, virtually unbreakable character. Marlowe uses this in the next two books, OPERATION BREAKTHROUGH and OPERATION FLASHPOINT, the first books after the series took hold as a series, to drop Drake into exotic situations and let him work his way out by resourcefulness and toughness. After that, the series took a turn for the worse. Along the way, Drake had become known to a government agent, who soon got in the habit of calling on him for mission impossible action. Not only was the secret agent stuff pretty predictable, but it reduced Drake to the role of a spear carrier. The government agent did far too much of the thinking and acting. Drake supplied muscle. This led to some pretty bad books, including OPERATION DRUMFIRE and OPERATION CHECKPOINT. By now, we'd moved away from Fargo and the Dakota Book exchange.

21  
I paid full price for the last two books mentioned. I dropped the series for a time.

OPERATION WHIPLASH is a curious but promising book, though, and if you're looking for another series to plug into, I'd suggest you check out Marlowe's work. WHIPLASH isn't as good as some earlier books in the series, but it's groping in the right direction. For one thing, somewhere in my reading break, the government agent got lost. Drake is his own man again, and more or less on the run. That's good, except that he's still hooked up with his "great redhead" Hazel. Women are a problem in the series. The relationship can't grow, since we don't want a series hero actually involved in home activities (one of the weaknesses of TENAFly); on the other hand, a relationship that doesn't change somehow is pretty impossible. Unless you freeze it. Once Richard Stark's Parker, for example, has found a steady woman, Claire, what can they do? Stay in hotels, to avoid leaving tracks? Avoid having kids? Keep moving, to avoid contact with anyone who could remember them well enough to give information to the police? Try to make their relationship satisfying but not so total that the man's death would destroy the woman? But that's a strange, rootless, isolated life-style, which cannot ever become more demanding or fulfilling. Drake and Hazel are stuck in that groove, too. Probably Drake's lip-smacking about their great sex shows that they don't have much else to hold them together. Not, you understand, that a series hero needs any more from a woman, but in most series the woman is kept offstage as much as possible or replaced between books. Hazel has been around for a long time, though; she naturally enough wants to spend as much time with Drake as she can. The relationship tries to grow. But it can't. In OPERATION WHIPLASH, though Hazel is useful to pull Drake into the story, she doesn't have much importance beyond that. And Drake is real enough to make a flat character stand out, while Hazel remains just endlessly obliging, encouraging and sexy. No more, no less. Perhaps she should be decently lost, too, in some future book. It would cut Drake free to get into real wildcard situations, the kind he handles best.

As it is, however, Drake handles himself very well in WHIPLASH, operating with clear-headed ruthlessness throughout. The action is both logical and fairly unexpected. But only fairly. . . Good as it is--far better than the stale spy stuff the series lapsed into for a while--the basis of plot in WHIPLASH is fairly tired gangland action. It looks good, because Drake is free to deal with the situation on his own and he is an independent thinker. But even so, Marlowe can't resist stacking the deck in Drake's favor. When he arrives back in the Florida town where he had trouble earlier, Drake meets an old police buddy--who has quit the force and is delighted to help Drake--for example, by giving him back the perfectly loyal killer dog Drake had left with him. I mean, shit! It's as providential as the appearance of Bortan at the end of Zelazny's THIS IMMORTAL. And just as much an Albert Peyson Terhune copout. In the old days, Drake didn't need this kind of manipulation to give him a fighting edge. He made his own edge. Still there are many nice touches, if you accept the premise. Drake makes the material look good.

One more thing, in a lit-crit symbolism vein. Midway through the book, passed off as a nightmare, is an extremely long flashback to ONE ENDLESS HOUR, describing Drake's getting a new face and escaping from the law. It's a strange thing to drop into the middle of a story--unless Marlowe is signaling that he's ready to begin again, to break his hero loose and let him fight his way through a hostile world. I'm encouraged about future books in the series.

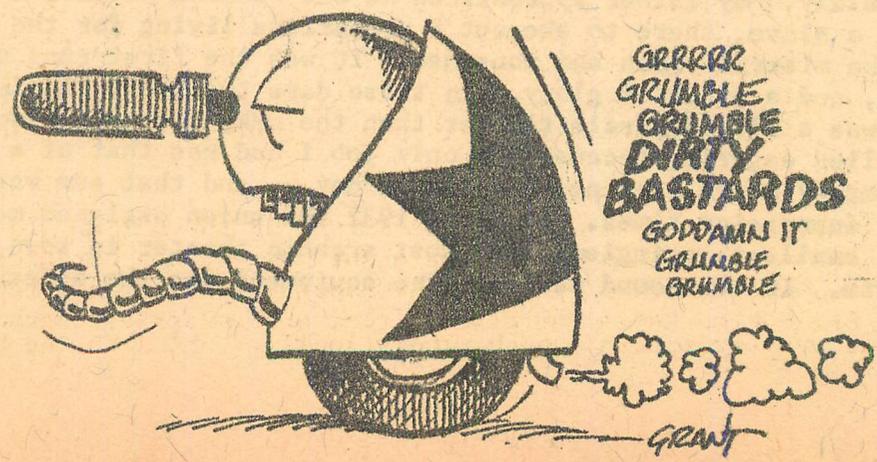
A series of sorts is embedded in Niven's THE FLIGHT OF THE HORSE. In fact, the blurbs present the book as a collection of stories about "Svetz, the hardpressed time traveler." That's not quite true. Only 97 of the book's 212 pages are taken up by the Svetz stories. Ballantine knows the attractiveness of a series character, too. And the Svetz stories are attractive enough, individually. "Bird in the Hand," in particu-

lar, is ingenious, amusing, and biting. Somehow, though, the stories never quite add up to a series. One problem is the basic premise: Svetz's time machine actually travels to fantasy worlds. That's hinted at in the first story, confirmed by the second --and from there on, the notion is just applied to different kinds of fantasy. Niven works hard to vary the feel of the stories, but in their own way these tales are templated too, starting off from square one each time. Okay, that's not a fatal flaw in a series; the hero can carry things, as Drake does. But Svetz is not that fully developed or compelling a character. Sympathetic and competent enough, but basically a nebbish. At the end of "There's a Wolf in my Time Machine," there's a flash of something more. In the next and last story, though, he's back where he was originally. So Niven was probably wise to stop writing the series. The fun of working variations on a theme pales after a while, when nothing else supplies emotional zing.

The rest of the book is taken up by two long stories. "Flash Crowd" is a dazzling look at the changes an inexpensive means of teleportation would work in our society. It's such a dazzling job of extrapolation that Niven almost manages to hide that the story essentially is an illustrated lecture. There's a contrived crisis to get the chief character exploring the subject, setup characterizations to let people pour out information as needed, etc. However, it's extremely well managed, and the piece is crowded with fascinating developments of the idea. Extremely crowded. In an afterward, Niven comments that "the notes left over leave room for a whole series of stories dealing with a society moulded by teleportation. Someday I'll write it." I wish he had. It might have given him a chance to develop the characters and to do more with the ideas than pull them out of his hat one after another. Or it might not.

The last story is "What Good is a Glass Dagger?," an ingenious, logical fantasy. Little depth, but a splendid surface. It would have fit right into UNKNOWN, and that's high praise.

One more thing: In "Flash Crowd", Niven's hero comments about the craft of writing: "The hardest trick in the world is to make it look easy, so easy that any clod thinks he could do it just as well." True enough, as far as it goes, and Niven does this extremely well. But that's not really the most difficult trick of all--or maybe it is, and what I'm concerned about is something beyond tricks. It seems to me that the most difficult thing in writing is getting real feeling in, driving your ideas forward and giving some purpose to pleasantly flowing writing. Good series writing uses real feeling even if, as I've suggested above, it mostly panders to the tensions and frustrations that grow out of life lived within our little frailties and uncertainties. Marlowe lacks much of Niven's skill and inventiveness. Nevertheless, Marlowe can reach and hold me in a way that Niven's clever writing doesn't. Still, each writer is doing something fine that the other can't. So I'll continue following both, hoping for a miraculous, impossible expansion of one set of gifts toward the other.



Bob Tucker first appeared in Starling #16, with an odd little article about how he was allowing his hair to grow a bit longer. By Starling #17, Tucker was already attending and reporting on rock festivals. This article deals with an aspect of Tucker's life that may be a surprise to those who thought he was a science fiction writer.

• A THOUSAND  
AND ONE NIGHTS  
AT THE BIJOU

+Bob Tucker+

When I was 17½ years old my father apprenticed me out as a projectionist in a sleepy little downtown theater affectionately known to its patrons as "The Bucket of Blood." A lovely name, and one that must have decorated similar establishments in other cities. This theater gained the name because it was small (300 seats), intimate (the ladies of the street met their customers there), cozy (it had a coal-burning stove down front near the screen), cheap (tickets were only 10 cents), and was located but a half-block from wino row. The name also applied because the theater possessed wildlife. Patrons were accustomed to stepping on roaches as they marched, lurched, or staggered down the aisle to their seats, and it was sometimes necessary to swat rats or mice from those seats before sitting down. I never heard a report of a rodent or a wino being stepped on. The intimate little theater also had its quota of birds, hungry sparrows which came in from the back alley through a hole in the wall just above the screen; the birds competed with the roaches and rodents for the stale popcorn carpeting the floor.

It was a keen theater in keen times, the best of times -- the depression year of 1932 when somebody named Mr. Hoover was on his way out and somebody else named Mr. Roosevelt was on his way in. The bitter Republicans of the day called him "King Franklin". I'd been attending that theater as a paying patron for ever so long and knew every slashed seat, every broken chair-arm. I was a loyal fan of Tom Mix, Jack Hoxie, and Mary Philbin.

You don't remember Mary Philbin? Shame on you.

When stated baldly, "my father apprenticed me out" sounds as if I'd been sold to the salt mines as a slave, there to eke out a precarious living for the rest of my days in Dickens-like misery. Bosh and nonsense. It was the first rung up the ladder to fame, fortune, and a pinch of glory. In those days the projectionists' and stagehands' union was a closed circle tighter than the AMA, and only blood relatives need apply. I applied eagerly, because the only job I had was that of a delivery boy for a printing company where I earned a dollar a day -- and that sum was a bit less than much even for depression times. In March 1932 the union assigned me to the Bucket of Blood, the smallest, gringiest, and most archaic theater in town, and advised me to sink or swim. It was sound advice. The equipment was the oldest and the least

reliable, the film was the most beat-up stock remaining in the vaults, and the apprentice who survived the Bucket of Blood could work in any other theater with little trouble.

I survived forty years.

The first movie, my very first picture projected with my own two hands and an electric motor which didn't always maintain speed, was "Hell's Angels." Somebody named Mr. Howard Hughes produced it and two somebodies named Mr. Ben Lyon and Mr. James Hall acted in it, along with a lovely blonde named Miss Jean Harlow. I was quite thrilled and managed not to muck up the film, or get my feet tangled in the drive belts. I also spent more time watching the picture than watching the machinery, and had to be reminded what I was there for. The reels were small, each containing from seven to ten minutes of film, and so it was frequently necessary to switch back and forth (by hand) from one projector to the other, all evening long. Because I was the green hand I was awarded the job of rewinding the reels, all evening long. (It was a great day when electric rewinds were installed several years later.) First impressions being what they are, I should have total recall of Hell's Angels but, alas, I do not. I remember only that it was filled with aerial dogfights, officers snapping at enlisted men, and Jean Harlow standing behind a canteen counter doling out tea, coffee, and hot chocolate to the weary flyboys. Each time Mr. Lyon or Mr. Hall worked up enough courage to approach the blonde and beg for a date or other favors, some other churlish character in the picture would saunter up to the counter and cry "Another chocolate, please miss!" Romance took a beating.

For the first several years I kept a record book, a diary of all the pictures shown wherever I worked. The book listed the title, the stars, the number of reels, the producing company, the print number and other pertinent data concerning the film itself. Today I kick myself -- frequently, severely -- because I abandoned the record-keeping after several years and several hundred flics, thus cutting myself off from a treasure trove of trivia memory. Record-keeping had become a chore and I failed to realize the value the diary would afford me today. Names like George Bancroft, Richard Barthelmess, Monte Blue, Lionel Atwill, Madge Evans, Ann Harding, Anita Page. . . ah, thousands of names, really. . . would brighten my old age when I had retired from The Theater. Just mark me down a damned fool.

Are you sure you don't remember Mary Philbin?

Surviving my apprenticeship, I was eventually hired by the same theater and continued to work there until 1939, seven years in all. (And like many of our patrons, I also became acquainted with my first street lady there. The friendship lasted more than two decades.) During my first five years the Bucket showed single features and changed the program three times a week, perhaps 780 pictures in all; during the next two years they offered double features with the same three changes a week, which added another 600-odd flics to my diary. I would estimate that I'd seen 1400 pictures by the time I left there and moved up another rung. (Today, alas, the old Bucket is long gone, the entire block of buildings torn down to make room for a new courthouse. Who in hell needs a new courthouse?)

The next rung up the ladder was a lark, a lovely cup of tea. Once again it was a small theater (500 seats) located about two blocks in the other direction across skidrow, and once again it became a meeting place for the street ladies and their customers, but it had two really nice things going for it and after a while a third fringe benefit was added; the house had new projection and sound equipment, and it had about a dozen rooms on the second floor -- hotel rooms for rent by the hour or

25  
the night, rooms which could be reached only by climbing the stairs running past the projection room door. Because you are a bright fan, you instantly perceive my position. My brother and I rented a room on a monthly basis from the landlady (who also owned the theater) and it was there, upstairs, that I really learned how to play poker, drink well, and wench in all-night sessions which began as soon as the movies ended at midnight. I became a dissolute projectionist, a skilled poker hound, a boozier who learned how to drink without hangovers, and I became acquainted with every lady and customer who trod those stairs. I also got acquainted with several members of the police force because they trod the same stairs frequently -- sometimes as non-paying customers and sometimes as raiders making their monthly quota.

That lark continued for nearly ten years before I was transferred to yet another theater a distance away. Those were the war years and their immediate aftermath, 1939-49, and the Andrews Sisters made a new picture every month using the same hoary plot: marching up and down flights of stairs singing patriotic songs by night, and working on assembly lines by day to Help Our Boys. I watched Victor Mature, Hedy Lamarr, Alice Faye, Don Ameche, Joseph Calleia, and Tex Ritter. I was rather fond of Tex Ritter, he knew the proper way to sit on a horse. In one of those early years after going to work at the lark, a third fringe benefit was added: the landlady purchased the saloon next door to the theater. She had made so much money selling tickets below and beds above that she cast about for a wise way to invest her money, and decided on another profitable line: booze. She promptly installed the theater manager as saloon manager.

Well, Henry, we were in clover.

It was an open secret the theater manager was robbing her till every night, and now he was given the splendid opportunity to rob the one next door by day. Business was so good at all three establishments that they both earned tidy livings without harming the other.. If you owned a theater during wartime you could sell tickets to anything, and often did; there were long lines at the boxoffice. Sin and booze have always been at the top of the best-seller charts. The dissolute projectionists (my brother, myself, and a few others who drifted in and out) kept the inner fires warm with free booze handed out next door and kept the pictures on the screen to entertain those solid citizens who worked on assembly lines by day and paid a quarter by night to watch the Andrews Sisters strut around in patriotic costumes. I would estimate another 3000 movies during those ten years at the lark; they always showed double features, and frequently threw in comedies, serials, and newsreels as well. Are you quite certain you don't remember Mary Philbin? How about Donald Meek? Alan Dinehart? Patricia Ellis? Jean Muir? Walter Huston? Well, jeez, where were all you people during the great war, the second great war? The Republicans called it King Franklin's war.

Although they were far from new -- they were usually second, third or even fourth-run films by the time they reached us -- I saw for the first time some of the better films of that decade: Gone With the Wind (which was entertaining the first ten or twelve times), Fantasia, A Bell For Adano, You Can't Take It With You, Kismet, The Outlaw (never mind Jane Russell, keep your eye on two pros, Walter Huston and Thomas Mitchell), The Bank Dick, Goodbye Mr. Chips, Between Two Worlds (which may have been an uncredited remake of Outward Bound), oh, thousands. Perhaps three hundred of the aforementioned three thousand were worthwhile; the remainder were potboilers. I remember the magnificent horses in The Charge of The Light Brigade, the beautiful camera work which captured those horses during the charge, but Errol Flynn and his cohorts can be dismissed. Always keep your eye on the horses. And by chance did you ever see a picture called Adam's Rib, about 1949? It's worth watching because of Judy Holliday. She played second fiddle, a supporting role to Spencer Tracy and

26

Katherine Hepburn. Ten years earlier John Ford made the second-best picture of his career, Stage Coach, and if you have the opportunity to watch it on the telly, do so: it's rewarding. You can safely ignore John Wayne, he was as hammy then as he is today, but pay close attention to Claire Trevor and Thomas Mitchell who, along with the cameraman made that classic what it is today. The photography is purely stunning, particularly those scenes involving running horses and marauding Indians, and I like to think the cameraman was a genius who knew his job better than did Ford. Some shots, especially those of the stage coach in flight from pursuing Indians, were deliberately modeled after the famous Western paintings by Russell, Remington and possibly others.

I made an excursion in the middle of that decade: in 1946 I treated myself to a California vacation, partly to attend the Worldcon in Los Angeles that year, and partly to spend some of my ill-gotten gains. My first mystery novel "The Chinese Doll" had been published and I was filthy rich for a little while, until the money was dissipated. After the convention in July I was knocking about the town and chanced to stop in at union headquarters to say hello, and to go through the motion of asking for work -- just to see if it was available. It was. I was given a job immediately and sent to work at the 20th Century Fox studios, where I spent the next three or four months watching them make the potboilers I'd been showing for so long. It was an education. I saw Maureen O'Hara, she who'd made so many potboilers, and actually worked on the one then being filmed, a horse raising and racing picture whose title has long since vanished into the limbo of senility. I was among the electricians who wired the racetrack tote-board which showed the odds when her horse won, and I helped rig the phony wiring on a phony ship when she and her racing steeds sailed for Argentina or wherever they were going. When she entered her stateroom and snapped the wall switch the overhead lights went on, but that wall switch and the conduit leading to it were dummies; the electricians on the catwalks above the set lit their lamps. I wired a locomotive headlight, which pulled into a railroad station and took on board Ronald Coleman and company for a trip to Boston, and later I helped wire the street lights in the park so that Mr. Coleman would be illuminated when he strolled through the park.

It was fakery, of course. He strolled through the park in daylight with filters over the camera lenses to suggest darkness, and the lighted street lamps helped further the illusion.

I showed George Montgomery how to turn on the switch on a 16mm projector, in a Raymond Chandler picture called The Brasher Dubloon ("The High Window") because the poor man didn't know how to start the projector; and later I watched a stunt man take a fall from a twelve-story window when the plot called for a victim to suffer defenestration. Fakery again. The stunt man dropped out of a window about fifteen feet above his concealed net. I helped hang, and later rehung the same chandelier in the dining room of Mr. Coleman's Boston house. It was my task to light up a small test stage where John Payne was undergoing camera tests for some forthcoming pictures; he and a utility actress were rattling on about a streetcar he wanted to buy for his very own. Along with a crew of other electricians I worked for weeks on a musical starring June Haver and a Mark Somebody, a turgid drama about the little girl making good in the big theater. The theater was real, a complete auditorium and stage existed in the studio, but all the people in the balcony were painted in, or on, or whatever. It was while I worked on Hollywood sets and climbed the rigging above them that I satisfied myself about a minor mystery on the soundtrack of an old Bert Lytell movie. I confirmed a suspicion.

Bert Lytell was a Broadway actor who wandered into pictures by mistake, I like to think, or perhaps he needed the spare change. In the early and middle Thirties he was cast

as<sup>27</sup> a detective known as the Lone Wolf and he went about solving dark deeds and foul crimes. He was a contemporary of Chester Morris and Warren William but older than either, and more polished, although like them he was continually being flung into grade B and C melodramas which were cranked out on a showstring and a monthly shooting schedule. In some long forgotten picture which played at the Bucket of Blood he was seen descending a staircase just after confronting a lady in her upstairs parlor; pausing a moment at the bottom to peer into the dining room, he contemplates his next move in thoughtful silence. The sound of a fart is clearly heard on the soundtrack, and Mr. Lytell glances heavenward with a frown on his face. When I was in Hollywood I romped around on those very same catwalks above the sets, where some long-ago electrician had expressed his critical opinion of the Lone Wolf.

The next move in my struggling career was made about 1949 or 1950 when I was again transferred to a neighborhood theater two blocks from a college campus. I stayed there three years, and another 600 pictures. Some of the earlier pictures such as *Gone With that wind* and *Fantasia* caught up to me there, beginning their second or third general round of playoffs, but the only notable event of that stay was the coed who belonged to the theater. She didn't attach herself to a particular man, she attached herself to the theater and various men in it. It and they were her property, and I've often wondered if she was the college bum so often heard of; I know she was there longer than the customary four years. I was transferred to that theater to replace a man who was being moved into a vacancy downtown, and as that man left he said to me "Watch out for Maggie." It developed that he, among others, had been dating Maggie for quite some time. The door to the projection room was pulled open one night when I'd been there a few weeks, and Maggie marched in. She helped herself to the coffee we always kept brewing, pulled a chair up to the porthole, placed the headset on her ears and sat down to watch the picture. Maintaining my usual dignity and aplomb I went on reading my fanzine. (That was the way I spent my time during the trouble-free hours; after the picture had been watched the first time through I fell back on the fanzines which had arrived that day. I suppose I've read thousands of them while on duty.)

At the end of the show Maggie put away the headset and the chair, washed out her coffee cup and asked me if I had a car. I did. She then told me I was taking her home. I probably took her home several times in the following years, and when I finally left that theater to take my rightful place in the sun at a downtown first-run house she was working there as a cashier. Perhaps she is still there, dating the manager or the doorman.

How long has it been since you've seen Buck Jones or Raymond Hatton?

A first-run downtown house is the ultimate goal of every self-respecting and lazy projectionist because of several factors. It pays the best, it usually has the most reliable equipment, it changes pictures only once a week or once a month depending on the popularity of a film, and the film itself is fresh and new and a joy to work with. Right out of the vaults, with nary a scratch or a broken sprocket hole. I moved into the downtown house in 1953 and lasted nineteen years before they tied the sack to my tail. It is difficult to estimate the number of pictures viewed during that long period because of the vagaries of programming; better ones stayed four and five weeks. If I may assign a rough average of one picture per week for nineteen years, I witnessed another 980 flicks to make a grand total of five thousand, nine hundred and eighty. Sometimes I think that's too much.

The first novelty of the day was 3-dimensional pictures, but that novelty wore off pretty fast and theaters everywhere were stuck with equipment they didn't want and couldn't use. Both projectors were used at the same time, running in perfect synchro-

~~ization with each other, the film companies furnished two prints of a picture~~ marked "Left" and "Right" and those prints would only be used in the proper projector. The film was wound on large reels capable of holding an hour or more of programming, the 3-D pictures were made so that they never ran more than two hours---no more than one intermission in the middle was necessary, while the projectionist placed the two second-reels in the two machines. The audience wore thin plastic or gelatine glasses which allowed the left eye to see the image projected by the left projector, and the right eye to see the other image from the right projector. The two images on the screen were a small distance apart, which gave the illusion of depth, or "third-dimension." The fad didn't last long. People objected to wearing the glasses, people declined to spend money to see the wretched pictures, and people with only one working eye were shamefully cheated. I never saw much in 3-D pictures myself; I was blind in one eye.

At about the same time a process called Cinerama appeared in the very largest cities. It was frightfully expensive because it required three cameras to film a scene, and then three projectors in the theater to reproduce that scene on a giant screen which stretched all the way around you from ear to ear. Later, with the development of superior lenses, the three projectors were reduced to only one but that fad too went its way.

The lasting invention, or development, the one that saved theaters from bankruptcy in the dog days of the Fifties was the process called Cinemascope. This process is principally a superior lens system which, on a camera, can see twice as much as a single lens, and in a theater can project a picture almost twice as wide as the old standard picture. The film itself is also treated in a different matter to prevent distortion and exaggeration; on the film people and objects appear as thin as toothpicks but once the image is passed through the Cinemascope lenses they regain their normal proportions on the screen---no matter the size of that screen. (The lens train and the screen must be matched, of course, when they are installed in a theater. Once the size of a proposed screen is known, and the distance between the projector and the screen is measured, lenses can be assembled to match.) My first two Cinemascope pictures in 1953 were The Robe, which bored me, and Niagra. Marilyn Monroe was nice but the Falls were much the more impressive.

There is really little more to tell, except of my downfall. I stayed the nineteen years in that theater, with only small side excursions. Because I was one of the few men who knew the workings of every theater in town I was used as relief man during sick spells and vacations, and I shuttled about a lot between the indoor houses and the drive in, but in the main I remained at the downtown first-run house until March 1972 and if you are a sharp-eyed fan you will have noticed that my sometimes glorious, sometimes fortunate career lasted forty years to the month. Fate struck in a devil's guise, an instrument of Satan called automation. Many theaters were facing bankruptcy again because of shoddy pictures, dirty theaters, and incompetent management. It is an axiom of the entertainment business that when trade falls off you don't improve the product or cut prices, you fire the help. My downtown theater had long fallen on evil times, and like many others in similar misfortune had turned to skin flics to survive. (The most amusing skin flic I saw was one in which a blonde Swedish sexpot and an actor playing an orchestra conductor did their thing on a bed to the accompaniment of the William Tell Overture. It revived my sense of wonder.) The devil sold the theater company a number of automation units to install in their string of theaters, and my career came to an unglorious end. Automation, when it works, is so simple an usher, a doorman, or even the manager if he cares to soil his hands, can operate it and high-priced projectionists are no longer needed.

I miss the Bucket of Blood and its colorful collection of patrons, I miss the sparrows squirming through the hole in the wall above the screen and the smoky coal stove below  
 CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

Starling is privileged indeed to be able to present its long-suffering readers with the following scoop--an extract from the upcoming novel of controversial young British novelist G. J. Mallard, whose previous work has evoked howls of outrage and disgust from every quarter of the civilized world, and resulted in the banning or bankruptcy of every magazine in which he has appeared. Attracted to sf by its "limitless potential for pointless experimentation and general fiddling around", Mallard considers speculative fantasy to be "the apocalyptic literature of the nineteenth century, the authentic language of Austerlitz, Clapham Common, and the Crystal Palace." His new novel will be published by Henry "Inky" Larue, in conjunction with Crangle's Auto Body, The High Street, Coventry.

# CRUSH!

Work in progress, by G. J. Mallard

Cartwright died yesterday in his last magazine crush. When I entered the periodicals room at the Spaced Out Library, shouldering my way past staring onlookers, I could make out his spectral head, squashed flat between pages 134 and 135 of the April 1951 issue of Thrilling Wonder Stories like a waxed leaf. I watched meditatively as the police hauled his body away, their plastic riot suits glinting like deliquescent armadillos in the fitful sunlight, their heraldic badges like the rows of tomato soup cans in a nearby supermarket. Turning once more to the magazines scattered before me like the fossilized imprints of ancient beasts, I carefully removed Cartwright's head from its position between the giant mammaries of a Jovian space princess, carried it downstairs and filed it in Ephemera under "C". From outside the sounds of colliding Edsels drifted on the turgid air, evoking the image of my first wife, spread-eagled on her bed among grim-faced teddy bears.

Often in the past Cartwright had spoken to me of these magazines, relics of another age, as he planned his own end through a process of pulpification of the brain. In his small apartment he showed me his collection of lurid covers, which spotted his walls like the excrement of an insane pterodactyl. His haunted face beaded with perspiration, he would explain to me the symbolic values of his treasures -- Thrilling Wonder Stories (Winter 1946, June 1950, June 1951), Future Science Fiction (March 1952), Planet Stories (Spring 1947) -- these paintings which, with their scantily-clad women, fearsome monsters, and desperate heroes, drove him each day to renewed heights of ecstasy and degradation. Unfulfilled by his own collection, he would tank himself up on Adelle Davis pep-up, spiked with extra doses of soybean flour and kaffir yeast, rush to the library, and sit trance-like for hours, his glazed eyes pondering the cover of the September 1953 issue of Fantastic Story, with its implacable green-skinned aliens descending from saucers to bear naked earth-women from the ruins of a devastated city.

Later in his apartment he would expostulate to me for hours more upon the psychosocial significance of these women of the future, whether clutched in the hideous tentacles of space monsters, pushing unscrupulous male attackers into disintegrator beams, prostrating themselves at the feet of shining spacemen from Terra, or, Amazon-like, pointing blasters at the chests of our heroes. With only their gleaming metal brassieres and plastic head-bubbles to protect them from the perils of the void, they loomed above the landscape of our puny modern civilization, beacons pointing the way



to a mythic future of advertising hoardings and Volkswagen exhaust-pipes.

Returning to the scene of Cartwright's terminal pulping, I found my attention transfixed by the cover of the July 1950 Amazing Stories. The incredible young lady depicted thereupon rose like the figurehead on a ship's bow from a blaze of turbulent light, her flimsy blue gown stretched revealingly over magnificent breasts, the light sparkling off her nipples exposing a whole new geometry of time and space. Through the library windows I could see the glaciers returning, crushing everything in their path. The screams of the dying mingled with the sound of crashing skyscrapers. Pulling my dark glasses over my eyes to shield them from the sun, which had just exploded above the city like some fabulous jewel, I made my way back downstairs and out into the new cosmos.

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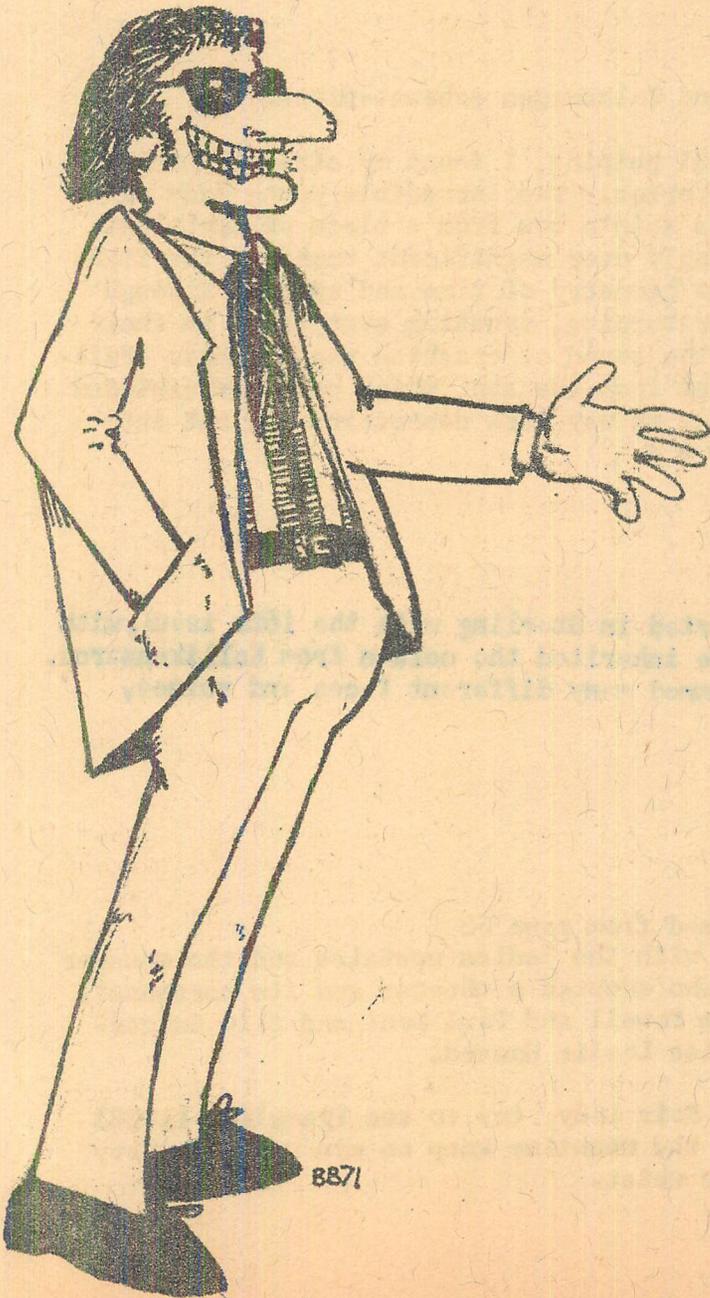
Angus Taylor is a mad Canadian who first started in Starling with the 16th issue, with a column called "Sgt. Pepper's Starship." We inherited the column from Kallikanzaros. Since Sgt. Pepper passed away, Taylor has assumed many different faces and voices, including that of G. J. Mallard.

A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS AT THE BIJOU continued from page 28  
the screen. I miss that other lark theater, with the ladies upstairs and the manager handing out booze next door, I miss the coed who adopted a theater and its personal. I miss Warner Bagter and Tim McCoy and William Powell and Paul Muni and Slim Summer-ville and Marie Dressler and Zasu Pitts. I miss Leslie Howard.

If you'd care to see a superior version of My Fair Lady, try to see Pygmalion (1938) with Leslie Howard and Wendy Hiller. And in the meantime keep an eye open for Mary Philbin. She had lovely long dark hair to her waist.

# the battered beanie

+Terry Hughes+



I was in my silver pull-over with the red twinkling rhinestones, the sweat pouring over my navy blue skin, as I sped around the corner trying to keep as much distance as possible between me and the bare breasted girls who were chasing me. Ordinarily in such a situation I would have come to a screeching halt and let them run their fingers through my green locks as I peeked up their kilts. Not this time, however, since those females did not need to wear those harpie masks to be unattractive. I had no desire to be suffocated under pounds and pounds of unappealing flesh.

As I rounded that corner I was looking back over my shoulder to see if they were closing in on me. The next thing I knew I was flat on my face. Who lifted the floor up so that I ran into it? My eyes finally stopped bouncing up and down in their sockets and I tried to focus them. I should have left them shut. Lying at my feet was the body of a young man, a body that wasn't moving. That might have been due to the fact that his skull had been smashed in, most likely with the blood smeared rocket ship statue beside him. As I sat up to more closely examine the body I had tripped over, I noticed that the bearded man must have been wearing the beanie crumpled beside him. Only while he wore it it was not soaked with blood and the propellor blades had been unbroken. I tried to be as gantle as possible as I turned the body over so I could see the face, even though I knew he would not complain. I felt even sicker when the light struck his face. I knew him: it was Mike Glicksohn! Now his body was as inactive as a member of FAPA. I gently put his head back down and struggled to my feet.

I decided that I should have stayed home and never come to this world science fiction convention. Yes, the sf con explained my makeup and garb and that of the others. I wondered if it also explained the murder. Stumbling over that corpse made me give up my plans of going to the masquerade/costume show and forced me back to my regular line of work: as a private investigator.

As I wobbled over to the phone to call the police my head throbbed furiously. There ought to be a law against tripping up private eyes who are running around corners.

Terry's only previous piece in Starling was in #20. Back in those days he was too busy collating all those Columbia fanzines to write much. There is no truth to the rumor that since moving to Falls Church Terry has been collating Amazing and Fantastic to save Sol Cohen money.

In 23 cases so far I had tripped over 14 bodies, not to mention several chairs, tables, and an occasional banana peel. My knees and elbows had almost as many bumps and bruises as my head. The goddamn scientists ought to invent rubber floors. And rubber walls. The world of the future is made of rubber today as Gary Deindorfer might say. Speaking of Gary, it was a mysterious phone call from him, or someone claiming to be him, that brought me here in the first place. A big man in the Cosa Nostra was at this convention Gary had hinted; a man whom I had been after for several months. Big Shoes himself.

After dealing with the police officers, I took the elevator up to my room and showered, getting that uncomfortable dye off my skin and hair. That makeup hadn't made my conversation with the police any easier. I reached into my closet to grab my robe but instead my hand found cold flesh. I jerked the door open and looked into rich brown eyes. He didn't stare back. Blood was splattered on his rich brown hair, on his rich brown shirt, on his rich brown pants, and on his rich brown shoes. Yes, it was rich brown! Dr. Gafia had finally gone away from it all for the last time. Rich had been cut repeatedly with a stylus. The murderer hadn't even bothered to use a backing plate. No amount of correction fluid was going to help rich now. I just wish he hadn't bled all over my brand new official private eye trenchcoat.

Several months before rich had asked that if I ever found him stabbed to death in my closet to please to be the one to tell his wife. With heavy steps I trudged down the hall to his room in order to fulfill my promise. As she let me into the room Colleen Brown said, "Can you help me find my pot?" I was about to offer her some of mine when I noticed that she was made up as a five foot tall daisy. Funny how I don't notice some things right away. I found her pot part of the costume beside the bed and handed it to her.

"Take your hands off my petals!" she screamed.

Quickly I followed her orders. Then as kindly as I could I told her about what I had found. "Mrs. Brown...Colleen, rich has been murdered. He was stabbed 32 times with a stylus, and he wasn't even on his way to a Roman Senate meeting." She gave a terrible scream and began to cry uncontrollably as she pounded her fists against the wall. Other than that she took it very well.

Meanwhile I had two dead bodies and 2000 suspects.

Gary had tipped me off that someone in the hucksters room was Big Shoes. I went searching there. The first man I came across was Buck Coulson. As I saw him standing there with his riding crop, I tried to pin a motive on him. I couldn't do it because he kept moving around and, besides, my blindfold was uncomfortable. Anyhow everyone trusts Buck just like they would the President.

Then I tried to think of the most dishonest and hyped up rip-off kind of huckstering; one that might hold an attraction for such a hoodlum. No, the trekkies were all too young to be that important of a man in organized naughtiness. Then my eyes fell upon a huge stack of comic books. I hope no one saw the light bulb suddenly glow above my head. I looked at the dealer's wiry body and long curly hair for a minute before I recognised him. It was my old dear friend Hank Luttrell. I had never paid any attention to what the rest of fandom said about Hank; he had always treated me right. What had thrown me off was the black shirt and white tie he was wearing. Not to mention the big lump under the right arm of his dark coat. I wanted to go up and ask my old chum if he had any clues. He had been in the hucksters room most of the time (except when he said he was going to see some films) so he might be able to tell me if he had seen anyone suspicious in there.

My eyes travelled to his side and there was Lesleigh. Wait a minute! Lesleigh! Yes, Lesleigh, the woman who had become such a mystery fan. The one who had read so many books on murders. Why she even told me once that she was trying to think up some original methods herself. If I added in the fact that she was a physical anthropologist who liked to study human anatomy, then a blood red finger seemed topoint at her raven haired head. She was making her own cadavers in a situation where no one would suspect her.

She got up and left the table and I quickly followed, jumping from doorway to doorway so that she wouldn't notice me. I only broke about 12 room service plates. She pushed open a door to a room other than her own and walked in. I edged forward. Then a terrible scream split the silence and I found myself leaping into the room. What I saw made my stomach do a flip. Arnie Katz was lying in the bathtub covered with dry ice. I rushed to his side and bent my head down to hear what he was trying to say. His breath was icy against my ear as he said, "I had one once but the wheels fell off." Then he was silent. Arnie had been quick frozen to death. Now I was faced with a dilemma. If he had told one of his many "wheels fell off" puns to the murderer, then it was justifiable homicide. If he hadn't then it was cold blooded murder.

Lesleigh was still shaking from the shock of what she had found as I led her down the hall. We neared room 634 and I remembered that it was the Canfields room. Hmmm, those murdered so far had been married men. . . maybe Grant was in danger. Or maybe he was the murderer since those west coast couples are known for being strange. Then I heard weird moans and groans coming from their room. Maybe someone was being murdered. Maybe there was an orgy going on. Either way I charged and burst through the door. I couldn't believe my eyes. Grant and Cathy Canfield were sitting there completely clothed, sipping Squirt and playing a fast paced game of dominoes. So much for those San Francisco swingers.

Things weren't adding up. I felt that I had three ones but I needed another before I had four. Why was this homicidal rampage going on? Who was Big Shoes? Did he even have anything to do with it? Who would be the next victim? How many questions can a single paragraph hold?

I decided to deposit Lesleigh in her room to recover. Right now she couldn't tell a Little Lulu from a Betty & Veronica. There was an odd thumping sound being made as I opened the door. Cautiously I stuck my head around the edge. My Ghod! There was Hank Luttrell stapling Charlie Brown to the floor!

"What? Oh, I should have known I never could have fooled a top notch private detective like you, Terry. You probably knew all along. What are you going to do?"

"Why did it have to be you, Hank?" Then I gazed down at his shoes. His big shoes.<sup>34</sup> Oh. Hank Luttrell was Vito "Big Shoes" Luttrelli. I had him cornered at last. But I didn't have a gun. All I had was a tube of black ink in my hip pocket. As Hank went into his confession, I began to smear the ink over my right index finger behind my back.

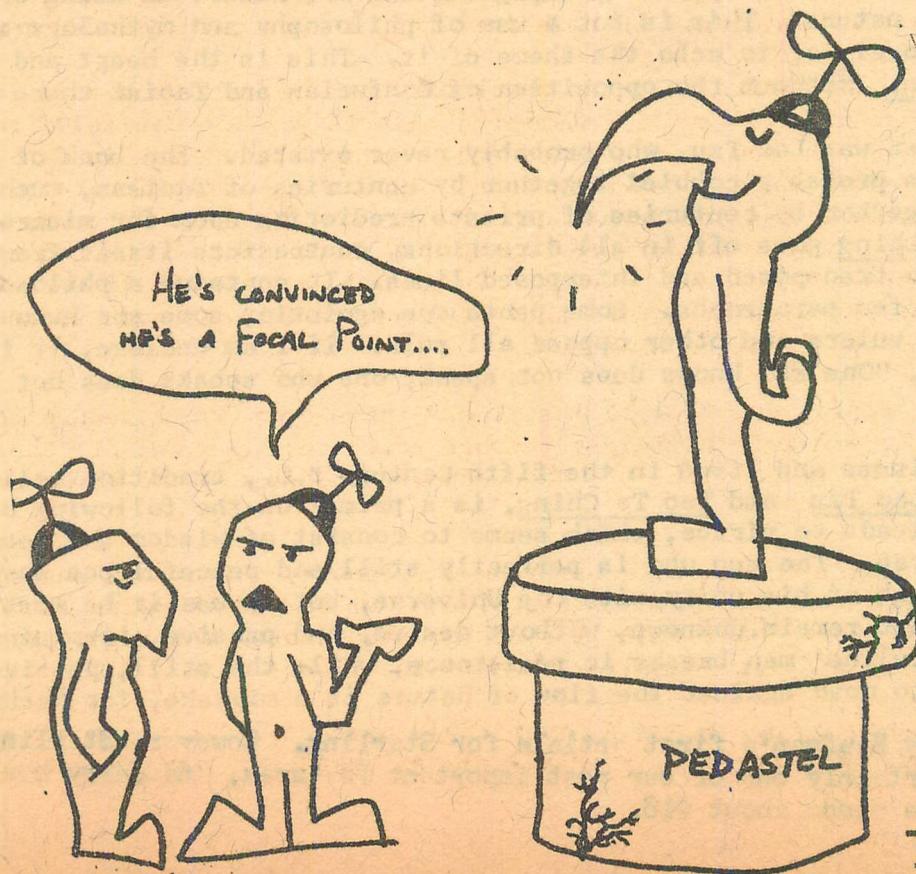
"Terry, I have to have the fanzine hugo. I just have to! This time out I was taking no chances, I was eliminating the other likely candidates one by one. The hugo is practically mine!"

"Until I stopped you, Big Shoes." He jerked his head up and started to come at me. I swung my fist around with my blackened finger pointing at him. "Stop or I'll shoot!" I warned while I fervently hoped he wouldn't pay close attention. Even with the drippy ink my finger didn't look much like a gun.

He slumped back. "Okay, Terry, I knew it was just a matter of time before someone caught me. I'm glad it was you."

"Ah, Hank, why? You had the hugo lined up legitimately this year. Your quality material would have won it for you I bet. Why didn't you wait until after the awards banquet? Even so, you picked the wrong thing. There are too many people to knock off. And you only got the men. Colleen Brown, Joyce Katz, and Susan Glicksohn are all capable of putting out high quality fanzines on their own. Why didn't you just kill Bob Stewart and then you'd have a monopoly on the foot-behind-the-ear stunt? Why couldn't you have knocked off some crudzine editors? Then you might even have been given a special hugo for that service to fandom. Well, I had better call the police."

Lesleigh was crying as I walked to the phone. Hank just sat there spinning the propeller on his beanie with his forefinger. At times like this I wonder why I am in this dirty business. I guess it's because I've got a dirty mind.



## HABER IS DESTROYED ON the lathe of heaven

+Jerry Kaufman+

"The way never acts yet nothing is left undone.  
Should lords and princes be able to hold fast to it,  
The myriad creatures will be transformed of their own accord.  
After they are transformed, should desire raise its head,  
I shall press it down with the weight of the nameless uncarved block.  
The nameless uncarved block  
Is but freedom from desire,  
And if I cease to desire and remain still,  
The empire will be at peace of its own accord."

Lao Tzu, XXXVII

"The sage is quiet because he is not moved,  
Not because he wills to be quiet."

Thomas Merton's rendering of Chuang Tzu

"There was a singular poise, almost a monumentality, in the stance of his slight figure: he was completely still, still as the center of something."

A description of George Orr from  
Ursula LeGuin's The Lathe of Heaven

Ursula LeGuin once said, "The novel's been Confucian, one might say, and it's time that it went Taoist." Ursula LeGuin once wrote The Lathe of Heaven. So practice follows theory. George Orr, the little man who is the protagonist, is the champion of a Taoist natural order, while his opponent, empty smiling Dr. Haber, is using Orr to impose a human order on nature. This is not a use of philosophy and mythology to give a false depth to the novel, or to echo the theme of it. This is the heart and marrow of The Lathe of Heaven. Without the opposition of Confucian and Taoist there would be no novel.

The first Taoist was Lao Tzu, who probably never existed. The book of aphorisms attributed to him was probably cobbled together by centuries of Taoists, much as the Bible was cobbled together by centuries of priests predicting doom for miscreant Hebrews. So the Tao Te Ching goes off in all directions, contradicts itself frequently, becomes obscure through transposed and interposed lines. It contains a philosophy difficult to render in a few paragraphs. Some parts are egoistic, some are humanitarian; some parts instruct rulers and other oppose all rule. If I am unclear, it is explained in chapter LVI, "One who knows does not speak; one who speaks does not know." (I speak.)

Lao Tzu was Chinese and lived in the fifth Century B.C., tradition tells us. His book, known both as Lao Tzu and Tao Te Ching, is a primer on the following of the Tao, the way. The Way leads to virtue, which seems to consist of wisdom and peace, and a unity with the Universe. The man who is perfectly still and peaceful has enormous power from the strength of his unity with the Universe, but to use it he must move, and so lose it. He must remain unknown, without desire, and passive, 'feminine'. The active, forceful, 'masculine' man breaks in resistance, while the still, passive man bends. He knows that to move against the flow of Nature is a mistake, for Nature breaks those

This is Jerry Kaufman's first article for Starling. However, Starling's letter column is certainly one of our most important features, and Jerry has been a valuable regular there since about #18.



who try to change Her. "A creature in its prime doing harm to the old/Is known as going against the way./ That which goes against the way will come to an early end."

A later Taoist writer, Chuang Tzu, was "real", and his writings are a combination of philosophical teaching, anecdote and history. He is the man who wrote that he had a dream in which he was a butterfly who was dreaming it was a man named Chuang Tzu. Upon awakening he could not decide which was true. ("The play of form, of being, is the dreaming of substance." Who said that?) He also said, "Those whom heaven helps we call the sons of heaven. They do not learn this by learning. They do not reason it by using reason. To let understanding stop at what cannot be understood is a high attainment. Those who cannot do it will be destroyed on the lathe of heaven."

That is a quote from chapter XXIII of Chuang Tzu. It's also from page 25 of The Lathe of Heaven. It's there because it describes the difference between Haber and Orr.

George Orr is a Taoist sage.

Or rather, he was one once and becomes one again.

We first meet Orr when he is trying to drug himself dreamless. From here until much later, Orr lets things happen to him, or tries to find someone to act for him. He is assigned to Dr. William Haber, whose first impression of Orr is that he is "unaggressive, placid, milquetoast...". Orr explains his problem. He dreams "effectively". He changes the real world with his dreams. In explaining so forth-rightly, he changes Haber's opinion, "No, this fellow was no milquetoast." Orr goes on to say that he shouldn't have this dream-power. Who is he, "to meddle with the way things go?"

Haber decides to test Orr's dreams and while hooking him to the Augmentor, a sleep-inducer and dream augmentor, he thinks about Orr's passivity and how easy it would be to dominate him. He enjoys his dominance over people and situations.

Of course the dream Haber induces is effective, but he refuses to face it. Orr must return again and again, for Haber is pretending to himself and to Orr that the only,

<sup>37</sup> the real problem is Orr's dreaming. But Orr is beginning to understand the doctor. Haber is "plasticated with professional mannerisms", "unspontaneous", "not really sure that anyone else existed". Haber "frequently daydream(s) heroics" in which "Haber saves the world!"

Orr realizes, "clogging, plodding along on the heavy ground of existence", that Haber wants to use his dreams to change nature, so he visits a civil rights lawyer, Heather Lelache. Her first impression is much like Haber's: "If she stepped on him he wouldn't even crunch." Her second impression is like Haber's second, "...he certainly wouldn't squash if she stepped on him, nor crunch, nor even crack. He was peculiarly solid." She agrees to take his case, not because his dreams are being misused, but because he might be.

Haber soon has himself an institute to run, dreamed by Orr. In it, with Lelache as witness, he asks Orr to dream an end to the population problem, and Orr does, by inventing an epidemic. Haber absorbs the shock. He achieves his goal. But Orr worries. He asks himself, about Haber, "But his ends are good, aren't they? He wants to improve life for humanity. Is that wrong?" Lelache sees the change also, is affected by it, but hides her fear and confusion under her shell. (She is a strange mixture of male and female, light and dark. In a way, she may represent the balance of nature. Certainly things are out of balance later when Haber and Orr are gray as a result of Orr's dream ending the race problem, and Lelache does not exist.)

Orr tries to confront Haber, but there is nothing to confront. Haber is "an onion, slip off layer after layer of personality, belief, response, infinite layers, no end to them, no center to him."

Haber asks him, "Isn't that man's very purpose on earth -- to do things, change things, run things, make a better world?" Orr answers, "No! . . . Things don't have purposes, as if the universe were a machine. . . . What does matter is that we're a part. Like a thread in a cloth or a grass-blade in a field. It is and we are. What we do is like wind blowing on the grass. . . it's wrong to force the pattern of things."

Haber benevolently tries to end war, but Orr calls out from his subconscious the Aliens. ("When the Great Way is lost, we get benevolence and righteousness." -- Lao Tzu.) Oddly enough, this is the first step in Orr's path back to the serenity he lost, for the Aliens, transformed through several dreams, will show him the Way.

Orr goes to his cabin in the woods (Haber had him dream it) to keep himself awake, and dreamless, Lelache (LeGuin now starts calling her Heather) follows him. She sees him "like a block of wood not carved," "The infinite possibility, the unlimited and unqualified wholeness of being of the uncommitted, the nonacting, the uncarved: the being who, being nothing but himself, is everything." He is the precise opposite of Haber.

There, at the cabin, Orr discloses the event that pushed him from the center. Oh, he's strong through weakness, solid as an uncarved block and all that, but he doesn't quite have it all together -- after all, he is striving not to dream. What happened was that, four years before, the world ended. Completely. And Orr remade it. Completely. He doesn't know which was worse, the ending caused by man or the remaking caused by him. This moral dilemma has forced him off the center. Something will have to happen to put him completely aright.

In two more effective dreams, two more steps to the way, Orr brings the Aliens to earth and ends the human-Alien fighting. The Alien at the window recognizes something about Orr, something Haber never understands. "Why was Orr so sure and so right, while the

strong, active, positive man was powerless?" Haber asks, "Why didn't you simply <sup>38</sup> get rid of the Aliens?" "I don't choose," Orr said, "Don't you see that yet? I follow." Orr follows the Way.

Another dream eliminates racial problems by eliminating color. (Heather no longer exists.) But to balance this gain of peace comes a police state of suspicion and citizen arrest. Haber speaks of harmony and balance to Orr, but misses his own point. "Life...existence itself -- is essentially change," he says. Orr corrects him, "That is one aspect of it...The other is stillness."

Haber puts Jor Jor (George Orr) to sleep and the Aliens contact him in his dream (now fully realized as a basic level of reality that the Aliens travel through with ease, that Orr has summoned them from.) They give him a summoning-word, er'perrehne, that will bring their help. "Self is Universe."

He awakes and Haber is upset. Something unusual has registered on his instrument, but Orr is unable to enlighten him. Haber turns his machines back on. "And, quiet as a thief in the night, a sense of well-being came into him, a certainty that things were all right, and that he was in the middle of things. Self is universe...He was back where he belonged."

This is the climatic moment, the high point of the action, or should I say, inaction. For Orr has regained that Position of Taoist heroism. And true to the Way, it was not really his doing. It was somehow the doing of those Aliens. From here the action is the working out of destiny, plus some timely aid by the Aliens. Orr is in control of himself.

Orr now refuses to help the doctor any further. Haber "seemed to recoil, as a man might who thought to push aside a gauze curtain and found it to be a granite door." George tries to convince Haber of the danger of the dreaming, and the greater danger of Haber's new plans to learn to dream himself, but he is reduced to an aphorism. "Volcanoes emit fire."

Orr wanders (?) into a Junque shop run by an Alien who gives him a copy of "With a Little Help from My Friends." It is intended to show Orr that with the help of the Aliens on that other level of reality (which, I suppose, Chuang Tzu would have called heaven) his dreaming could be properly controlled. And in playing the record, which tells him he needs somebody to love, he dreams Heather back, as his wife.

The following day Orr and Heather go to Haber's office for the last session.. Orr whispers "er'perrhne" before he dreams, and he makes himself cease from effective dreaming permanently. But thanks to the help from the Aliens, nothing unwanted or unexpected happens. Orr tries to explain about the Aliens, but Haber won't listen, too far gone in dreams of power. (It is now that Orr says, "The play of form, of being, is the dreaming of substance")

Orr and Heather leave, but almost immediately things begin to go to pieces. What happens when a man of uncarved wood dreams? Things change. What happens when a man like an onion with no center dreams? The world begins to fall apart. "Nothing said anything. Nothing had any meaning. The wind blew hollow in the hollow courts." Only Orr's solidity saves him as he moves through the void and stops the Augmentor. He once again acted, but as in April, 1998, it was totally necessary to stop the actions of others.

Haber is mindless, all the layers stripped away. The Aliens are still there. Heather is once more black/white. And Orr is once more Orr.

At the beginning of The Lathe of Heaven the jelly fish is quietly floating through the

<sup>39</sup>ocean, but is approaching the cliffs (Haber calls Orr "A moral jellyfish".) How does he get help? He calls or invents or is found by the Aliens, everyone of whom resemble sea-turtles, a strong race at home in the ocean, or on land. And they help a fellow ocean dweller.

And this lathe of heaven, it is the dream-making, what the Aliens call Iahkla. It is what breaks those who would use it rather than be instruments of it. It is neither the person using it nor the ability to use it nor the source of it. Which is why it has a word of its own.

The Lathe of Heaven does not question reality. There is a reality at different levels that Orr and the Aliens can tap or move through. Orr is not the only real man alive. What Orr can do, can be done to Orr, "Self is Universe." Not merely Orr's self. All Self. Tat Tyam Asi: That art that. It is as though he were part of an Ocean. A change in one part is felt in all parts, but Orr is only one part, not the whole ocean.

If Orr, Haber or Heather Lelache do not seem as fully realized as other characters LeGuin has created, it may be because each has been created to represent an idea. Orr is the incarnation of a Taoist sage. If he is involved in an attempt to regain his equilibrium, it is because to a man of his type this is the only possible goal. If he were totally that perfect sage from beginning to end there would be no conflict, and he would be a blank wall to the reader. As it is, he exhibits only the characteristics of a once-perfect Taoist off the beam--compassionate, detached, firm, but sometimes confused and involved.

Haber forms his opposite number. What Orr is, Haber is not. What Orr is not, Haber must be. His character is as much dictated by the opposition of ideas as is Orr's.

I still don't know what Heather is. Her character is for most of the book, an alloy of opposing characteristics without ever being a smooth mixture of them. Although Orr dreams her out of existence and back into it, she is as real as he, for LeGuin writes several chapters from her viewpoint. How can an "imaginary" character have a viewpoint? Yet her position in this war of ideas still puzzles me.

The battle of ideas is essentially between the idea of progress, a movement toward a human conception of perfection, and the idea of balance, which to LeGuin means an acceptance of existing relationships. Progressivism is erroneous, a thought system based on change. The ending of a man's pain (or a world's pain which Orr must end) is compassion. But the ordering of others' lives in altruism and benevolence is a power ploy, ego trip and danger. The miseries of our lives grow from such impulses.

Orr at one point says that the attempt to change things has been our mistake for 100 years. LeGuin, in a speech at Vancouver several years ago, said she believed that there is a natural order in the universe from smallest particle to largest cluster of galaxies and that in applying technological change without thought to this order, man upsets it. Science is not a bad way to interpret this order, but it is a limited and unbalanced way, and it distorts. A mystical vision is also needed to place man correctly in the pattern. Without this mystical view of a unitary and ordered universe, we get a picture of chaos, which man feels he must order himself, progressively, through a science and technology that, we are finding, upsets as much as it sets right.

If LeGuin were against technology totally, as Orr seems to be in his childlike way, if she were reactionary and quietistic, I could not agree with her at all. But the attitude of the Vancouver speech is more in line with my mild opinions. Balance. We must have technology to overcome the current environmental crisis, but we can't rush in with false but flashy solutions. We've tried that before. Killing off predators with better

guns and poisons, we allowed ~~deer herds to grow to~~ astounding proportions so that the herds starved and the farmers lost more through the deers' appetites for crops than the wolves' and lions' appetites for sheep. No, any use of technological "improvements" must grow from the sort of balance that LeGuin talks about.

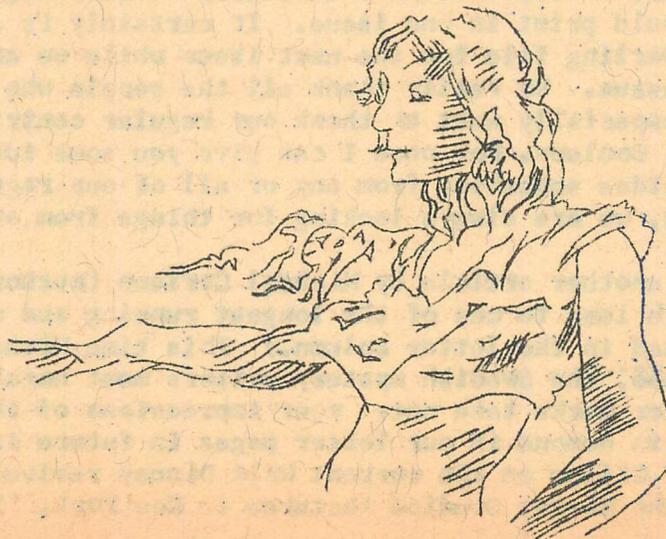
And yet Orr does emphasize with wrongness of all change. If Orr does not speak for LeGuin, then he is too convincingly like the author's voice. Interpreted by his statements, Orr would seem to be against agriculture, sailing, medicine--all part of man's striving to control and harness nature for his own benefit, all technological changes. At this point it becomes questionable whether the bad effects of these changes outweigh the good. Any action has both good and bad effects that may follow. Should we forgo the good for fear of the bad? Should we make no move whatsoever? Is only the saving of the entire planet worth acting for? Or is this a philosophy for a few natural saints, and of no meaning or importance for the most of us.

I am not one of the natural saints. I am too active, too hopeful of improvement. The universe does have an order, of which the earth partakes, but man is chaotic and is infecting nature with this chaos. His intelligence makes him chaotic, but I also hope that his intelligence can control and shape the chaos. I myself need to change, for, though I find George to be an enormously attractive character (much as Kwai Chan Caine is, on a broader, less subtle level, attractive to millions of viewers), I feel myself more akin to Dr. Haber, many-layered, dishonest to myself, without power to change my life because I don't know what I am. Orr, whom I'd like to be, is solid, assured, content, easy, flowing. But as Lao Tzu said, those who speak don't know, and those who know don't speak. And if I were really like Orr, I would never have bothered to write this.

\* \* \* \* \*

I DREAMED I WAS A TELEVISION SET continued from page 18  
ating curves when they're part of larger rythmic patterns which we scarcely acknowledge let alone understand? We try for control as far as we can concieve of the need for control, while it's precisely in the areas we wish to have control (in the very wish for control) that we seem to have least. It seems unlikely that we can freely will a levelling-off of these escalating curves in part precisely because we want to, because the pyramid's the wrong way up, because the reactions tend to be reactions against, because so many more unforeseen synergetic consequences crop up with each set of reactions that we're just running on a backward-moving spot.

Well. Maybe we'll learn to levitate, and what else have people been practising for?



# STARLING IN THE 21st CENTURY

+Lesleigh Luttrell+

This is only the third time I have written an editorial for Starling. This isn't because I have no editorial opinions -- in fact, sometimes I think Hank likes to do most of the editorial writing to keep Starling from losing its reputation as the 'friendly family fanzine'. Certainly his editorials are as informative of our doings as any I could write, and by and large Hank and I share the same opinions on things fannish. Actually, we have fairly similar viewpoints on most of the things discussed in Starling, although you might be able to tell from our writings here that our tastes in popular culture do not overlap entirely.

Why am I writing an editorial in this issue, then? Well, it seemed an appropriate thing to do for the tenth anniversary issue of Starling. Also, I read (and stenciled) all the other contributions to this issue before I began to work on mine and I know I would not show to best advantage in such company. What chance have I of being as funny as those acknowledged masters of fan humor, Bob Tucker and Terry Hughes? How could I hope to be as serious and literate as Joe Sanders or Jerry Kaufman, or as interesting and esoteric as Richard Gordon or Angus Taylor? With competition like that, it seemed best to eliminate my usual article and write about something no one else has in this issue -- the future of Starling.

Hank has given you a good dose of Starling history in his editorial (I read that, too, before I began to write this.) Certainly that is a subject he is better able to write about than I -- after all, I am a relative newcomer to this fanzine having been coeditor for only about 6½ years. Why several of the contributors to this issue (Richard Gordon and Joe Sanders) and letter hacks (most notably Harry Warner) have been hanging around this fanzine longer than I have. But I think I am eminently qualified to speculate about the future of this fanzine.

About the immediate future -- for once in the history of Starling we actually got more material than we could print in one issue. It certainly is a nice feeling to have something in our Starling file for the next issue while we are getting ready to publish the current issue. We really thank all the people who answered our plea for contributions. We especially want to thank our regular contributors, Joe Sanders, Angus Taylor and Juanita Coulson. For once I can give you some idea about what will be in our next issue besides something from any or all of our regulars (as good as their material always is, we are always looking for things from other writers.)

Next issue will feature another article by Michael Carlson (author of 'Chandler's World', the article which led to one of the longest running and most interesting discussions we've ever had in the letter column.) This time Michael is writing about Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö, the Swedish mystery writers most notably authors of The Laughing Policeman (letter hacks take note, your impressions of the film version of that novel will be much in demand in our letter pages in future issues.) We also have an article by Barry Gillam on the current Walt Disney revival precipitated by the showing of many of the Disney Studios features in New York. In the same vein,

we have an article by Steve Grant, 'The McDuck Papers', which reveals facts about Donald, Scrooge and the other inhabitants of Duckburg only hinted at in Carl Barks' masterpieces. All this in addition to our regular features, including an article by me. As usual, I won't know exactly what I'm going to write about until I do it. Right now, I have vague ideas for several articles, including two more in my 'Great American Comics' series, about 'the rest of the kids' (Nancy, Sugar & Spike, etc.) and 'the rest of the funny animals' (Pogo, Mouseketeers, etc.). I also plan to write several more articles on mystery writers, probably the first one to be about Margery Allingham. This is your chance of a lifetime -- write in and tell me which article you want to see in the next issue of Starling.

In talking about Starling's future, I don't want to slight our artists -- Starling would be a poor thing indeed without it's art, and our regular artists (Grant Canfield, Joe Staton, James Shull, Doug Lovenstein and many more) are so generous with their work that our art file is never empty. But we are fresh out of cover art (hint), so you can be as surprised by next issues' art as we will be.

One more thing I can tell you about the next issue -- it will probably be late. You will have noticed that we have only had 27 issues in 10 years, which is a bit less than 3 issues a year. This in a fanzine which has generally thought of itself as quarterly. Actually, this is the result of long periods in which Starling has come out almost religiously on the quarter interspersed with shorter periods in which no issues appeared at all. But you always know the next issue will be out -- sometime.

The main reason that I fear the next issue of Starling will be late is school. I suppose most of you are aware that I go to school while Hank undertakes menial labor to pay for my education. This spring I will be taking one of the more important steps in my education when I take the qualifying exams for a Masters degree. Having passed these, I will be able to get said degree on the completion of some sort of a paper and will be able to advance to the next step in my education. As you can see, I have not yet taken Jim Turner's advice and moved 'Up from Education'.

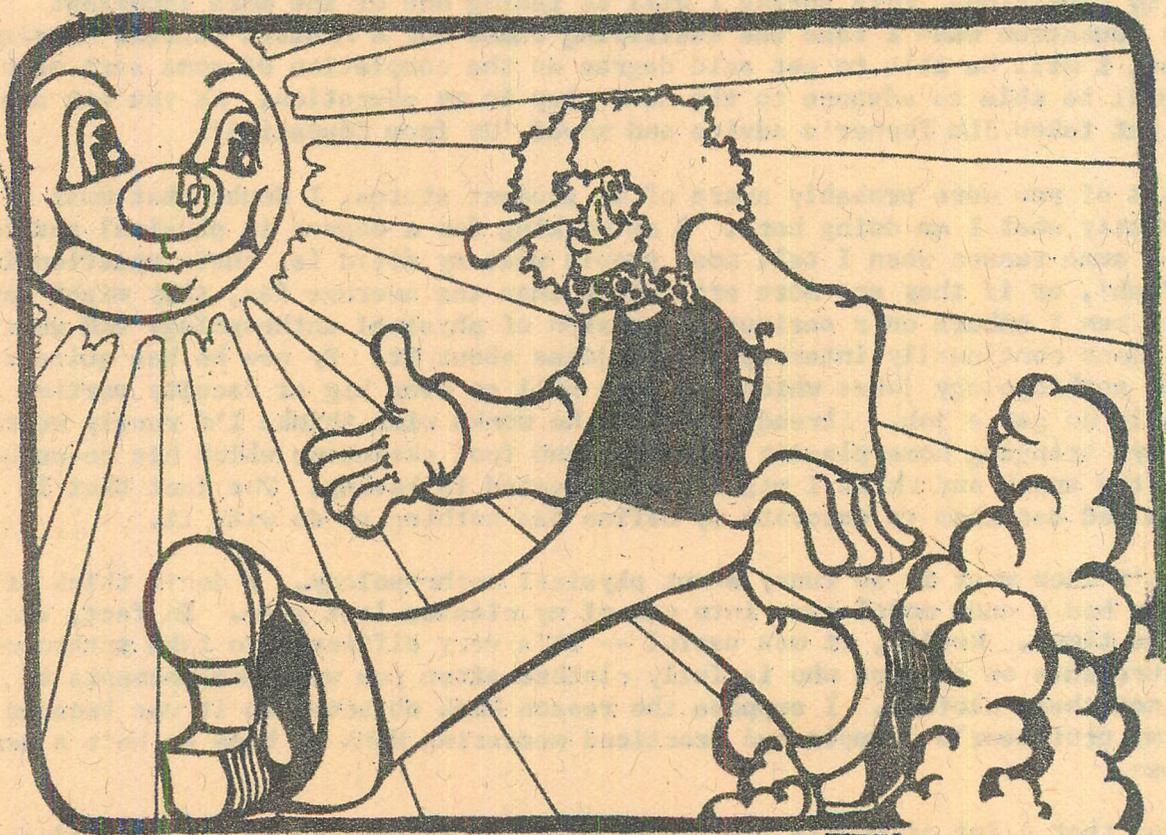
Although most of you were probably aware of my student status, I doubt that most of you know exactly what I am doing here. I am working for a degree in physical anthropology. For some reason when I tell most people what my field is, their reaction is generally 'huh', or if they are more articulate than the average fan, they might say, 'whatzat?' When I embark on a serious discussion of physical anthropology and what it entails, Hank continually interrupts with jokes about it. By now he has quite a repertoire of anthropology jokes which I'm sure will go over big at faculty parties when I finally do get a job. Already everyone he works with thinks I'm really weird -- he's always bringing home plastic vertebrae and foot skeletons which his co-workers find in the trash and think I might be interested in having. The fact that I do like them and use them to decorate my office has nothing to do with it.

I really don't know what is so funny about physical anthropology. I don't think it's funny that we had a nude model come into one of my classes last year. In fact, she came in three times. Really, it was useful -- it's very difficult to take anthropometric measurements on someone who is fully clothed since you want measurements of their body, not their clothes. I suppose the reason Hank objected to it was because I followed my professor's example and practiced measuring Hank at home -- he's a perfect specimen.

Another thing that a lot of people find funny (strange in this case) about my education is that I took a course in human anatomy last summer. You know, the kind med students take where you reduce a cadaver to a few bits of flesh and bone after a

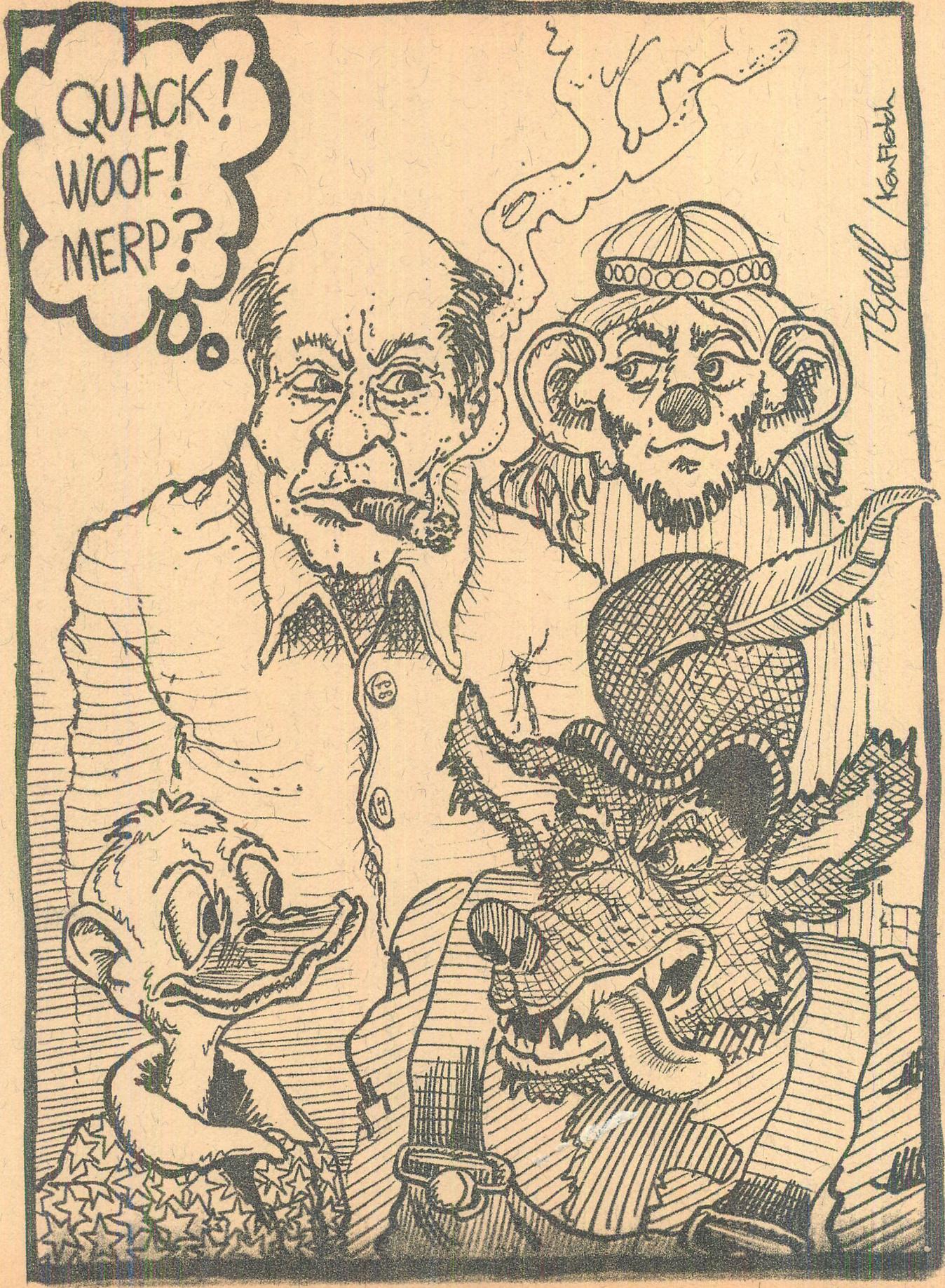
semester of cutting. Now, I found that course very useful because it is difficult to do any sort of studies on the physical aspects of human beings, be it studies involving measurement, growth studies, or what have you, without a clear understanding of what exactly is in that body. I don't think it's a bit funny that I enjoyed the course. I've already had one opportunity to use some of the things I learned in it. Last semester I was a guest lecturer in an undergraduate anthropology lab course when they were studying the muscles of locomotion in various primates. After demonstrating the muscles on the departmental cadaver, I asked if there were any questions. One girl with a queasy look on her face asked, 'What are you?' Obviously, she meant to ask what field I was in, but I gave her the answer which she obviously believed was true. "I'm a ghoulish," I said.

I doubt that you will ever again see anything about physical anthropology in Starling, or any articles on being a janitor written by Hank. After all, this is our hobby, the thing we do when we aren't working. I thank all of you for making it such a rewarding pastime. We publish Starling for ourselves, of course, but it wouldn't be any fun unless you liked it too. As long as you like Starling, it will be around, plunking into your mail box 2 or 3 times a year. With your support, one day one of those things in your mailbox will be our gala 20th anniversary issue.



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QUACK!  
WOOF!  
MERP?

T. Bell / Ken Fiech