

STARLING

FOUR



STARLING

no. 4

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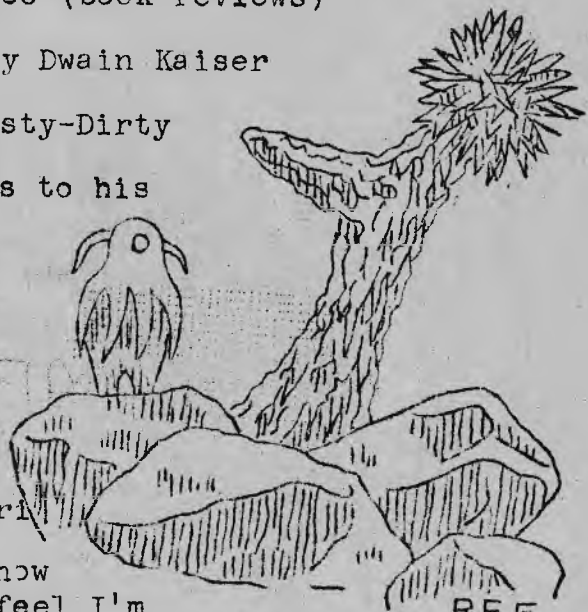
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you are out there somehow. I hate to feel I'm
publishing in a vacuum.



YOUR
MAN
IN
MO.

This issue may almost be right on time. That is, with luck, this issue may get to you people during January. Doing this, however, may mean that the parts of this thing not yet on stencil may be somewhat rushed, and perhaps not as long as I might have otherwise made them. This is no great loss, though, as the only thing yet to put on stencil is my own prose, which includes this editorial and my article-of-sorts on pulp magazines I have been reading recently.

You may notice, as I have, that this issue is rather one sided. We have Clay Hamlin's piece of pro-adventureism, Roger Cox's book reviews, all of which praise highly adventurous book, and my own thing about pulps, which doesn't exactly sneer at adventure, etc. Before someone points this out to me in a letter, I would like to make it clear that I feel there are other important factors in science fiction and fantasy.

Others may disagree, but I think one of the most important of these is imagination. After all, one might have a very good adventure book, and it still wouldn't be fantasy or science fiction. And while a good adventure book is a Fine Thing, I prefer science fiction and fantasy--that's why I'm here in fandom. For me at least, a sense of wonder is often something in a book that makes me stop and think, "Gosh, I wish I had thought of something like that."

I think that's why I like A. E. van Vogt so much. Mr. van Vogt may not be the most perfect writer of stories we have in our field, but I think he is imaginative. And his stories do, by the way, contain at least their fair share or more of the more adventurous elements.

Um--but back to the subject at hand. Many feel that the best science fiction and fantasy should contain social significance. They should be Comments on the Time. They argue that this is best made thru sf and Co. I suppose this might be true, but I hope not, because I dislike most of the novels written for ^{the} sole purpose of making said comments.

If the only thing someone wanted out of a book was adventure, I think he might look other places than in science fiction and fantasy. If he wanted social significance, there are other places to look--poetry can comment in much the same way a sf novel would--perhaps even in a more effective manner. Then why do people read science fiction and fantasy? Another time I suggested it might be because they were crazy--certainly different. Perhaps this difference, which is all that being crazy really means, most of the time, in this world is that they enjoy using and seeing imagination used.

Say people, guess what? This is an anish. Seeing as how this is the case, it is a bit longer than the last. Also, I have gone a bit overboard in the art department. This has left the cupboard rather bare in that department for next issue. Also--I sort of hate to ask Robert Gilbert for anymore real sopp--I'm sure he has quite a few others that would like some of his work. So why don't a few more of you out there give it a try? And I'd be happy to look at any non-and/or just plain fiction you would like to see published.... Hank Luttrell

FICTION

by David Hall

Larry Yogl, the well know outlaw, rode into town on a bright afternoon and immediately went into the town bar.

"I'm looking for the man who killed my buddy Hank Sherman."

"I'm him," said a sad faced young man at the poker table.

Yogl was taken back. "You?"

"Yep," said the young man. His hand shook a little as he dealt the cards.

"You killed Hank Sherman? Now why did you want to go and do that for?"

"I didn't. If only I'd been a little kinder, a little more considerate. I just saw him coming through the pass, and he acted kind of gruff. Just like you'd expect him to, and I took out my shotgun and fired away."

"A shotgun," said Yogl. "I bet that was messy."

The young man's lower lip trembled. "I didn't mean to do it, honest, I don't like to kill people. And I didn't mean to kill him-- he was such a nice outlaw. I don't know what got into me."

Yogl said, "There, there, that's all right."

The young man looked at him, "I didn't know he was your buddy, honest, mister."

"That's okay. We exchanged Christmas cards was all," said Yogl.

"Then you're not going to kill me?"

"I guess not," said Yogl.

The young man smiled and said, "Then would you care to play some poker?"

Two days later Yogl left town. In a coffin.

The young man crossed the street to his hotel room after the funeral, thinking deeply. This was getting irritating. First Sherman and now Yogl. What did he have to kill Yogl for? Yogl had been so nice about it.

Some one touched him on the shoulder. "You the guy that put that hole in Larry Yogl?" he asked.

"Yeah," said the young man.

"Rather messy job, wasn't it?"

"I didn't mean to do any job at all."

The stranger looked surprised. "You didn't mean to? You shot him right through the heart and you didn't mean to?"

The young man turned his head away and ran to his room, pulling down the curtains and sitting on the bed with his shotgun in his lap.

He wasn't afraid of becoming known as the fastest gun in the west-- whoever heard of a fast gun with a shot gun? It was just that Hank Sherman had had Larry Yogl as a friend, and Larry Yogl was sure to have friends too, and they were sure to come after him sooner or later.

About midnight there came a knock at the door. He didn't answer. A minute later the party on the other side kicked it in.

"You the guy who killed Larry Yogl?" he asked. He was a big mother this one was.

"Yyyyes." he said, calmly.

The big party smiled. "Good, I just wanted to thank you. He was a stinker, Yogi was."

He started toward the bed, his hand outstretched. "I want to shake your hand."

The young man let him have it with his shotgun.

The sheriff shook his head as he and his men picked up the fragments. "Know who this was?"

The young man shook his head.

"Then what'd you go and kill him for?"

The young man shook his head hopelessly.

The sheriff sighed. "Oh, well, he was armed so I guess it was a fair fight. But I wish you would quit making messes for us to clean up." He started to walk away.

"Oh, sheriff?" said the young man, "do you have any idea who he was?"

The sheriff looked at the body. "Hard to tell what he was from the mess you made of him. But I think he was Lou Carlos." The sheriff took his men and the remains of Lou Carlos and went away.

It was two nights later that wehn Lou Carlos' buddy showed up.

The townspeople directed him to the room where the young man now stayed constantly. Some of them held their hands over their hearts as they did it, others smickered, still others kept book on how much of him would be left when the young man put down his shotgun.

He got to the door and kicked it open. He had his gun in his hand --but then he put it down. The young man lay there on the bed, a bulls-eye on his chest. His gun lay over in the corner.

"You must be Lou Carlos' buddy," he said.

"Sort of," admitted the man.

"And you've come to kill me for killing him."

"Well, go ahead."

The man looked confounded. "Aren't you going to fight back?"

"No."

"Aw, come on, take you gun and at least aim at me with it. It's no fun unless you fight back."

"No."

The friend of Lou Carlos looked at him, shocked. "Well, why not?"

"Because if I do I'll kill you after you decide not to kill me."

"Why should I decide not to kill you?" asked Lou Carlos' friend.

"The others did. They decided that their people weren't worth avenging."

"Well, as a matter of fact, I was just about to decide the same thing."

"Don't!"

"Well, why not?"

"I'll kill you!"

"Why should you do that?"

"I don't know. I don't want to. But I did the others."

And then the young man told Lou Carlos' friend the whole story. He seemed to be interested.

"Where's the gun? Can I see the gun?" The young man pointed to the corner. Lou Carlos' friend put on his glasses and carefully examined the gun. He looked rather intelligent with glasses.

"Friend," he said to the young man, "have you ever thought that your gun might be enchanted?"

"What?" said the young man.

"Enchanted," said the friend of Lou Carlos. "It just so happens that I am an expert in magic spells." He began to dig around in his jacket, then pulled out a little book with a gold and blue cover. "Let me see, spells--gnus, gulls, gum machines--ah, here it is--guns." He glanced up at the gun. "Shotguns...ah, here it is. First we'll have to paint the gun white."

"Why?"

"To exorcize the curse."

"Why does that do it??"

"Damn if I know, but that is the established method."

He read on. "Next, you will have to take a bath in lye."

"Ugh."

"Yeah, but it will help to get rid of the spell."

"Then?"

"It says here the next thing to do is to find a hand of a hung criminal and put the gun in it."

"Oh?"

"Yah. It says that the hand will pull the trigger until the gun is empty."

"Gee." said the young man.

"Simple magic," said Lou Carlos' friend. "After the gun is empty, the curse is broken."

The next day the young man and Lou Carlos' friend rode out to watch a hanging. "Can we have the hand?" asked the young man.

"The what?" asked the hangman.

"The hand. The hung man's hand. We need it to work a magic spell on my shot gun."

The hangman looked at him oddly, but he had heard of the young man's reputation, and quickly surrendered the hand.

They took the gun and put it in the dead man's hand, bending his fingers around the trigger, quickly, before rigor mortis stepped in.

"Now, get behind that rock," said Lou Carlos' friend.

They ran behind the rock and watched. For a long time nothing happened.

"Are you sure you loaded it?" asked Lou Carlos' friend.

The young man nodded. "before I came out."

Just then the dead hand began squeezing the trigger. Bang, Bang, Bang, Bang, Bang. Trees, bushes, and an unwary rabbit fell under the bullets. A few bullets struck the rock.

Then it fell silent. "Is that all?" asked the young man.

"I hope so." said Lou Carlos' friend.

They went over, yanked the gun from the dead fingers, and checked it. It was empty.

"Now--we burn it."

It made a lovely fire.

"Well," said Lou Carlos' friend, "how does it feel to be free of your curse?"

"Fine," said the young man, and grabbed Lou Carlos' friend's gun out of his holster. "Fine, old buddy."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

THE ACTION - AGAIN

by
Clay
Hamlin



There is little as pitiful as the wails and laments of the pseudo literary critic when confronted with the strictly action tale of adventure. But the literati have had their years of opportunity to show the true direction and purpose of science fiction,

and have flunked the final exam.

So too did the proponents of the psychological tale, and the chance was also extended to make-believe sociologists. Yet, is it mere coincidence that the general collapse of science fiction accompanied those days? I think not, the dozens of magazines folded until the remainder could be counted upon one hand.

Engineering had its opportunity, and did proudly for itself. Analog survived the slings and arrows that assaulted other magazines. The realistic dreamer reached a certain degree of excellence under the tender touch of Arthur Clarke. Heinlein made the Moon his own, and this Alpha met its Omega on the sands of Bradbury's Mars, and its literary unrealism. Yet these required genius, and few others came forth, so no directions were changed.

So here comes action--again!

Yes, the action romance had held its own in those lesser days, and its prophet was Merritt. This was the left jab that kept the opponents off balance until the time came for the right uppercut named Edgar Rice Burroughs to administer the final blow. And the time came, as it must, with any champion. The cute and clever frills of the would be champion gave way, as they have before, to the brute force and power of these.

Once more the evil genius Doctor Fu Manchu plots the destruction of civilization, and meets his match in Nayland Smith. The airways again

knows the voice of Lamont Cranston, The Shadow, who alone knows, "What evil lurks in the heart of men." Anthony Rogers, familiarly known as Buck, has been rescued from an undeserved oblivion, and Doc Smith's Skylark's have again taken to the intergalactic trails in search of excitement.

Flashing swords, and ancient sorcery had know their Conan, and little was lost when Leiber took the style and made it his own. It now enthralles a new generation as it did an old. Once more the bells of The Blind Spot chime out their call to dreamers of all ages, and few will be those to refuse its call to high adventure.

The call went forth, be it merely a call to profits, or a call to adventure, and forth from his retirement strode another champion, Clark (Doc) Savage and his small band of aids, to battle for the right and the good.

The victory is near won. All that can remain to make it complete is for the well remembered beacon at the north pole to once more shine forth, to signal that again the services of Curt Newton, with his faithful band Grag, Otho, and the Brain, are needed. Then they will board their Comet, and again blast off on the starways to glory. Evil scientists, watch out, you may soon (speed the day!) have a Captain Future to cope with.

Then the victory will be complete. Hail to the King!

end

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

FICTION by David Hall

Banc. Lou Carlos' friend looked at him, and at the red on his shirt, and without a word, fell face forward in the fire.

"Oh, hell," said the young man. "Here we go again."

end

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38
only sub-standard one.

A Bertram Chandler's short novelette was the best story in the issue, other than Brackett's. THE DEATH FROM ORION by a W. J. Matthews, while somewhat trite, moved well. Ray Cummings had a fair novelette. (The planet people called this and Brackett's story novels, but they apparently couldn't count too well.)

end

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We are going to start out with some letters I didn't get to publish last time.

HELEN AND (JIM) GOODRICH, 5 Brewster Dr. Middletown, New York 10940

Dear Hank,

Sorry to have taken so long to write your STARLING #1 and 2, but I am not only family secretary, but also housekeeper, cook, mother and so on and on.

Thanks for the copies of your zines which have marvelous potential. It is obvious that you guys are putting much time and effort into making STARLING better than average. As in any zine there were some stories which we enjoyed, tho we must admit that on the whole fan fiction is not our greatest delight. Roger's stories are quite good, and we hope he won't give in to family pressure, but will continue to create more and better stories. Your reproduction is excellent and easy to read, which is often not the case in fazines.

All in all you boys have a fine start. I would only object to some of your fillers which are irrelevant and needless. You certainly have an adequate amount of material without anything pointless being added.

Keep up the good work. Best of luck.

EEEVERS Apt. 4-C, 268 E. 4th Street, New York, N.Y. 10009

Dear Hank,

Goshwow, a(nother!) neo-zine. But I liked it. Actually folks, I did. As a buddy of mine used to say about college girls as compared to prostitutes, "The professionals might have the skill, but by God, the amateurs have exhuberance!"

Oh, STARLING has it faults, and glaring ones they are, but a year or so of experience in fandom should cure most of them, and one of those "five minutes a day to perfect spelling" courses should cure the rest. I won't catalogue your numerous neoish blunders; they've already brought you enough totally unnecessary pan reveiws and bomb letters. (Won't fen ever realize that all beginning faneds make the same mistakes and 99 plus per cent outgrow them after a few issues? I only realized this myself when, as a fan at least a step or two beyond neodon, I pubbed my first zine and produced a mess worthy of the brashest fourteen-year-old beanie-brigader.)

But on to your good points, by which I mean your fiction. Your writers aren't pros, but they seem to be talented amateurs who aren't afraid to think, experiment with style, try dialog and characterization, imitate, and generally try to improve their skills. In other words the sort of writers who show promise, not only of crashing the pros(though not this August,^othis September, as I know)

but of doing something for the field when they get there. I've seen a lot of fan fiction this year, and a lot of it was more smoothly written and fully developed than STARLING's, but very little of it had any real impact on me regarding style, originality, or mood. When you read a story, "get" the author's intent, pick up pen and notebook to write your LOC notes, then have to re-read the thing because the whole theme's slipped your mind, you suddenly realize why most fans condemn fan fiction. STARLING and very few other fzm has, to use a tired old phrase, some fresh viewpoints.

"Your Man in Missouri"--I won't, Hank, if you're not taking too broad a view when you say Ed Hamilton's and other space opera contains "military science." I'm sure Irvin Koch was referring to SF writers who show real military knowledge, not all of them who touch on the general subject of armed conflict. You might as well say any author who describes a fist fight is writing about "fighting skills" when he probably wouldn't even define or describe judo, Karate, or any other skilled method of hand-fighting. SF seems to be as full of war stories by authors who know almost nothing about military procedures as college writing classes are of love stories by virgins. But, on the other hand, most of the later Heinlein goes over and in the opposite direction. His description of the MI training in STARSHIP TROOPER has nothing to do with SF and reads like an account of Marine boot camp with the names changed. And if that's the sort of writing you want, VALHALLA and FROM HERE TO ETERNITY have more frankness, length, detail, and immediacy than any SF writer or publisher is likely to give you. They also aren't quite so crude, though much more effective in their propagandizing.

"Why Worthington Didn't Come" was an original, if ineffective, little sketch. Of course most people would react to capture by aliens by rationalizing it away, then break down completely when they could no longer protect themselves with delusions. The only trouble is, this hero reaction kills your story before you have a chance to really develop it and say anything effective. Which is why SF characters are as a rule have seemingly superhuman powers of adaption to unearthly situations. Now if a character in a predicament similar to the one Bill Schieft puts Sloan in was to rationalize the nature of his captivity and keep right on deluding himself in the face of gradually accumulating evidence, then you'd have grounds for a pretty good story. Better yet, use several characters with differing backgrounds and theories about their plight. Say run them through such stages as meeting strange service devices and robots, seeing alien stars through a porthole, experiencing acceleration or gravity changes, and finally meetin the aliens face to "face". How about it Bill?

//Yes, Bill, you lazy, how about it?

//WRITE

HL

I'd write it myself, except I just wrote a captured-by-aleins story. (My hero



didn't delude himself, he just came to all the wrong conclusions.)

"A Discovery of Importance" is an old theme adequately handled, but without either professional polish or a new twist to lift it above fannish average. The last three lines stick in my mind, though, and I guess that's enough to justify writing and printing the story.

"The Thing Below" is both good and bad. Good taken as pure sword and sorcery/terror tale, bad taken as the Tolkien imitation it so obviously is.

//I thought it was a Howard imitation...HL

Roger Alan Cox is an excellent writer, but his style is too fast moving to acquire Tolkien's sense of centuries and not elaborate or dignified enough to capture Tolkien's feel for the force of history. Even the Lovecraft elements seem a little out of place because of the directness of Cox's writing. I have nothing against straight forward fantasy, in fact I rather prefer it (except for Tolkien who is, and doubtless will remain in a class by himself), but Cox should be patterning his work after Howard and Leiber and Lie Camp rather than JRR and BPL.

//Gosh--I think Roger kind of thought he was... HL

But maybe I'M wrong, and Cox will end up with a successful Tolkien-esque novel in his own style. He seems to have enough talent to possibly violate the ground rules of writing and theme treatment and get away with it. And this is how new schools of writing are started and reputations built.

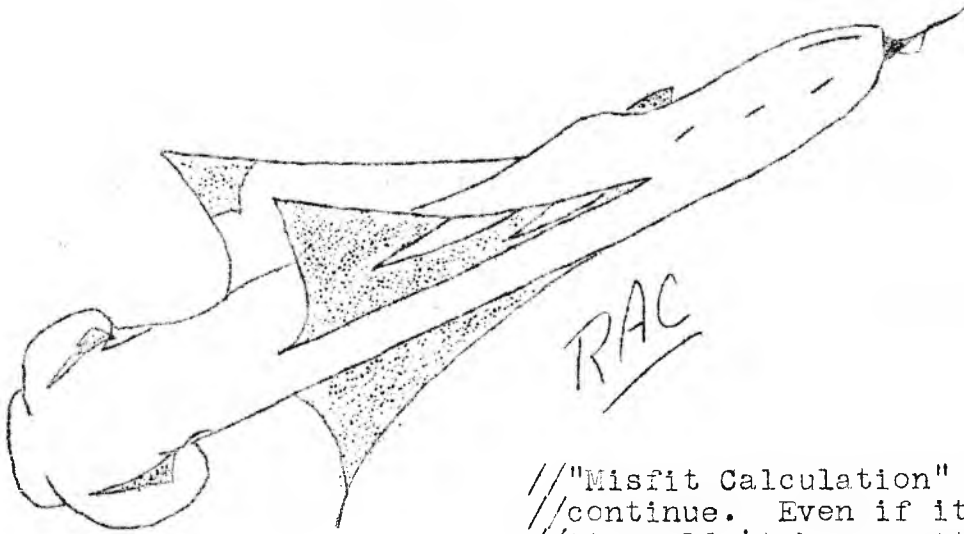
I'd like to comment on Cox's book reviews--they're well written, sound well thought out, and seem like I'd disagree with a lot of his opinions if I'd read the books. But I haven't, thanks to Uncle S. (and if you think S stands for Sam you've never been in the army). Sorry Roger, but I've, for once, is unable to disagree with your review opinions...



"Gumflacch and The Big Yellow what-ever it-was" was entirely pointless, which of course was the point of it. I think you've made a major break though in F Feghoots--no pun! Now if you can carry this Great Revolutionary Development a few steps further and omit the body of the Feghoot as well...

"MISFIT CALCULATION" isn't much as it stands, a clumsy attempt to hook the readers with an unrevealed plot-problem and a dull, tired build-up to a cliff-hanger, but I have a feeling the story may get better when Ayers' hero starts trying to achieve his as yet unrevealed goal.

//So much for your pre-science, Sir,



// "Misfit Calculation" didn't even
// continue. Even if it had, however,
// it wouldn't have gotten any better.

Thats why it wasn't continued in these pages. HL

Letter-Col--I don't want to start a Big Fannish Debate in here, but Irvin Kock's flat statement that Tekkites are of Lunar origin rubs me the wrong way. While the lunar theory is usually mentioned along with others, I've never seen a single authority who made a flat statement that tekkites come from the moon. But let's not start a big debate. 1). I don't much care if Tekkites are moon rocks or the excrement of space flying goony birds. 2). If we start a Big Scientific Argument, especially in a quarterly fanzine like STARLING, we'll still be at it when someone gets to the moon and answers the question the only way it can be answered. Besides, fiction and fandom are a lot more fun.

"The Element" was the worst story in th ish, nothing there and no promise of anything to come. At least the writing was clear and clean, and the story was short and to the point. But the theme. . . Echhh! I once saw exactly the same plot in a comic book, but they at least added a twist or two at the ehd. And if I remember, the magazine folded a few issues later.

"The Shadow of The Golden Age" is good, what there is of it.

Paul Gilsters Editioal presents an extremely practical attitude toward intergration, one which I agree with on most major points. Of course you can't legislate hate into love, though I see no harm in having the lawson the books as a sort of "official sanction" to intergration. Enforcement, which is generally left to state and local government, could then be adjusted to keep the laws from being oppressive to individual freedom. By the same token, I feel all state and local laws ordering segeration should be repealed.

Such laws are contrary to both the spirit and the letter of the Constitution as it now stands for one thing, and for another if intergration is to be a personal matter, so must segregation.

I do think Paul Gilster is evading the main issue by not stressing the responsibilities of the individual if intergration is to succeed on a personal basis. Namely that everyone who wants intergration has to work for it himself, by himself. Abd this means accepting people who are not always easy to accept, and leaving yourself open to many whom it may not be easy, or safe, to be hated by. It's a lot easier to pass a law and sit back waiting for miricles.

Got to tie up a few loose ends and mail this thing before it reaches even more monstrous proportions. Bet you never thought STARLING would recive a 25 page LOC! Of course they're pretty small pages and handwritten, but right now the Army doesn't allow me access to a typer very often, and this is the largest size of lined paper the PX sells.

I really wish you'd change your title. "Starling" may be close to STARTLING and it may contain the word "star," but a starling is a drab useless, unpoetic little dicky-bird without even a voice.

//and you don't think that's a good name for this thing?HL

David Hall, who never puts his address on his letters. You can look it up in the N3F roster as well as I can

Dear Hank,

Sorry it has taken me so long to comment on STARLING one and two. I have been out of town and just got my typewriter back from the repair shop. You sent me both STARLINGS for 30¢, I obviously owe you 30¢, which I am sending.

I'm not sure about Bill Scheigt. Apparently the boy can write, but he is/obsessed with melancholy that it is hard to take his stuff. If he polished his style and got some better ideas he could probably work for prozines; THE CONQUORCRS AND THE CONQUORED and DAMNED were pretty bad, kid; STRANGER was well written but didn't have much story; his best so far is WHY WORTHINGTON DIDN'T COME. Keep this fellow but clamp down on his moroseness.

//The two stories you mentioned were bad because they weren't happy? Or because they were just bad? HL



THE BIBLICAL EPIC and A DISCOVERY OF IMPORTANCE were both amusing, but could have been condensed into one line gags.

Roger Cox writes good blood and thunder stuff, but this is not as much my taste as more subtle stuff. He might be interested, however, in contributing to the sword and sorcery, all fiction magazine I am trying to work up, called FIMBULWINTER III. I won't say more because it is in the planning stages and may not work out.

//Your a Tolkien fan, Dave. What say you about Mr. Evers' comments on this subject as with regards to Mr. Cox's fiction? This is a rather old letter, so I don't know what's going on about Dave's magazine. HL

The best thing you have printed so far is JUST LIKE I SAID-- IMPOSSIBLE. It is a bloody shame this fellow has Gafiated.

You need a proof reader; your spelling is worse than mine. The second issue was better than the first, though.

//The spelling in the first two issues wasn't mine, it was Tim Eklund's. The bad spelling in #3, and this one, however, is mine. And I still need a proof reader. HL

Your fanzine and prozine reveiws are very good. Far better than I could do, I fear.

Get rid of those ratfink things.

I hope to see the next copy of STARLING; might I ask what the title means? It sums up for me a vision of the bird of that name but it more probable you mean a small star. A good title, in my opinion. "I walk in a daze, I talk in a daze, I can not get out, said the starling." That quotation from LOLITA can somewhat sum up my experience with fandom, except that I don't want out. Your magazine is a bargain at 30¢; the reproduction is about as good as I have ever seen, and the sheer number of pages and stories and the quality of art work (hummm? In the first few issues???HL) make it worthwhile, "ratfinks" and all.

GARY NEAL HUBBARD, who gets his mail, last time I looked, at RA 16806841, CoF, 2nd Bn, Fort Devens, Mass USASA-TR

I was lucky enough to recive in the mail yesterday the first two issues of your zine. Your generosity is appreciated and much thanks is given.

I also appreciate the folder it came in. I can use it.

The repro on the blue cover of STARLING one was better than the repro on the cover of STARLING two. Maybe you ought to stick to blue covers. Actually I liked the illo on cover two than I did on cover one. (Sic, Damnit. Not every mistake in this thing is my fault HL)

The contents of Starling one: BEST DAMN ISSUE I'VE EVER READ
Really, the stories were good (which is a bit odd for fanfiction),

THE CONQUEROR AND THE CONQUERED was so-so. It was done much better by Walter M. Miller in THE BIG HUNGER. THE SHADOWS OF THE GOLDEN AGE was well written and one of my favorite type of stories. Fast action and mystery. THE FABLE OF THE RED RATFIN was funny. More. JUST LIKE I SAID--IMPOSSIBLE was a shot in the arm to a tired old plot. THE BIBLICAL EPIC was nice

THE THING BELOW was fun. More Vastari please. And by the way, is this a private game or can anyone join?

//Private game, I think. Roger? At any rate, you can of course write something about a character of your own. I would suggest you try to give your character some life of his own--we don't want him to be a Conan and/or Vastari with the name changed. I can't promise to use anything you write, but I can promise to look at it. HL

Nate Buklin, P.O. Box 4, Dockton, Washington 98018

//While the last few people haven't put their address on the letters, Mr. Buklin didn't put his name on it. Come on people, it's hard enough for me to just cut stencils, let alone try to find out from who/where the letters came. Let's try to put such things on the LETTERS, shall we. I don't keep the things they come in..what they called..aa..envelopes! HL

Dear Hank,

As I write this James Wright is out sprawled on my bed reading an old Astounding and enjoying himself thoroughly. It isn't every fan who can get another one to come over for a weekend's visit over 300 miles, is it? He also brought the first two issues of STARLING THE GREAT; like, goody for him. Not to mention three KIPPLES, DOUBLE BILLS 6, 5, and 7, BANE 8, AMRA 26, and maybe some others. So I decided, just not to miss out on any more STARLING the greats, I was Gwine to shend a Lett'rocolmet. ((Alias LoC. Actually, my opinions are so much comment dust.)) I also may send a Story; all of my best are Out someplace, except for one which is Out elsewhere being rewritten by a pro friend.. this one is PREFECTION which you read in Round Robin B-1, whose second round you may have received by now.

Your zine wasn't bad. It stank to holy hell of We Are A Neo, We Are Infallible And Publish A Great Fanzine But Want It To Be Better, Fiction Is Great And Especially Ours, Goshwowoboyoboy, Etc., but other than that it was all right. Your repro was far above what I expected for an early zine; and you had the ethusiasm/energy to run it up to 60 pages--congratulations on Said Energy, goody for it becuse I Favor Energy, I couldn't live without it, myself--and you managed to get a very good-looking and sensible contents page. I congratulate you; STOPTHINK got its title page left out completely.

I don't recommend blank pages; they waste cash. To save money, condense the format considerably; use wide margins and loads of "filler"

artwork (something you didn't do) but skip those immense blank spaces and "dummy type" etc. Also, have you ever seen a fanzine called CRY? It's my ideal fanzine, or it was until it folded a few months ago; if it printed all it does print plus twenty pages of fanfiction, I would recommend it unreservedly as the sort of zine you should print. Plan ahead; your omitting of pages and cutting stencils randomly in typing class--oops, that was Eklund, wasn't it? Wothehell --doesn't strike me as examples of foreplanning. You need more than one artist: recommend you write Bill Glass (on N3F roster) and ask him to persuade his brother Dick to send you some artwork.//Done HL// Or, Dave Locke; you can mention my name if you like, and DON'T make any rash promises, tell him you'll be making the same old crud look much prettier //THAT sounds pretty rash to me HL//--he likes honesty. (His artwork is good) You can build your own mimeoscope if you have a glass picture frame to rest on your knees and to set the stencil on; stick a lamp under your feet and artwork under stencil and get a good stylus (burntout ballpoint will work as well as any I've found; best go over with a sharp one first, then a much duller one to broaden the lines and shade them slightly to avoid supersharpness) //Don't think so. Stylus made for cutting stencils seem to work much better HL// One page illos for short stories, no; the stories should be single spaced and called fillers. Also, pages should be numbered after stencilling, so you can make last minute changes.

I can print for you cheaply, at 20¢ per 50 copies per stencil, on green, blue, pink, and canary paper only; on white, the price shoots to 30¢, on goldenrod, to 40¢. Other colors are available, but the paper quality is much the same--merely that one supplier lacks white and some others, another has white only and a third has all the rest plus goldenrod at too-high prices. (Both sides of 50 copies: 30¢, 45¢ or 60¢.)

//Damn it, damn it. I wasn't watching what I was doing and ran over that poor helpless illustration. Sorry, Robert.HL

THE CONQUERORS AND THE CONQUERED isn't bad, but it's been done much better, much earlier, in a del Rey story in the Oct. 1951 ASTOUNDING. Get out your copy and check.

Military sf: THE FALLING TORCH was nothing but military sf; Pyramid Books, Algis Budrys, I forget the number. //I never knew it in the first place, and no, I'm not going to look it up. You people must remember that I'm just as lazy or more so as you are.HL Christopher Anvil has had story after story of it in ASF; it's his main hobbyhorse. PANDORA'S PLANET was by him, in Oct. 56 ASF (I think--I know it was the cover story,



and the date was 1956.) Heinlein's IF THIS GOES ON could easily classify as military sf.

SHADOWS OF THE GOLDEN AGE wasn't bad, but anything with no conversation in it bores. I recommend that Roger try to get in touch with somebody from Project Semi-Pro, because I'm a lousy critic and only slightly better writer. I dislike the idea of serials in general in any zine but a prozine, because a prozine has a definite pro-quality story with a definite maintenance of interest of interest throughout, and its length is much, much greater--so you begin to see more of the stories potential. In a fanzine, the argument "The best stories are too long--too long to run complete in one issue" doesn't hold, because a fanzine's size is flexible. For instance, a pro-correspondent of mine wrote an sf novelette, 12,000 words. If it keeps getting rejected (ANALOG commented, "It would have been a magnificent tour de force if you'd succeeded") I want him to send it here, and I'll print it as a special issue with a cover illustration, etc.

//Okay, but there are reasons for ^{NOT} publishing a long story complete, you know. A. If its long enough to crowd everything else out of the issue, there are going to be people who don't like it--maybe more people than we would like to think, seeing as, after all, it was not of pro quality, or it wouldn't be here. For those people, there is nothing else to turn to. They are just out of luck. With a continued story, we can find room for other stuff. B. A fanzine's size isn't THAT flexible. A really big issue would put me in the poor house. And I really would like to publish this thing during the month it should be published--if I had to type out a novelette I would never get done. HL

Bill Scheidt's Guest Reviews beat his fiction to pieces. They were actually Good, a quality I like //Please, Bill, write something for me, will you. They love you. HL

"Just Like I SAID--Impossible!" was by far the best item in either of the first two STARLINGS; the ending, however, was somewhat of a let down. I like stories that take place completely with impossible happenings with no Sudden Explanation of the impossible; THE RATS OF LIMBO by Fritz Leiber (August 1960 FANTASTIC, and a good yarn) is typical. You're suppose to remain wondering to the end--and beyond.

Your book reviews, Hank, seemed a trifle pointless as too many fan would have read the books; however, this doesn't invariably apply. The one of "The Day The Earth Died" is the one I'm thinking of; perhaps a lousy review, but a detailed description of a little circulation crudbook.(?) (I've not read it) and worth printing.

STRANGER was waste space, going noplac, being noplac, not even giving decent background (such as trying to get to the Story Bookshop by running over ground, instead of being there already; this story runs up and down in front of the story--only worth about 500 words.

ONE LAST LOOK: a pointless well-written non-story. PRIMEVAL : short joke, lousy. DAMNED ditto, POOR JOEY ditto, none of them worth a full page illo. You realize that the only full page illo STINK 1 had was the cover? And this goes for many fanzines, and justly so (on to #2)



A DISCOVERY OF IMPORTANCE wasn't too bad. It was close to Heinlein's GOLDFISH BOWL, but not very; it's originality was present, though not incredible. The writing still wasn't too lousy...disappointment. Nobody but Irvin Kock likes STARLING. I should have sent him a copy of STINK 1, and if I'd had an extra after my mailing list of 51, would have. (A short mailing list is a good way to keep down costs; the whole thing cost me \$14.00 and I got \$3 of it back on subs. Not, of course, to mention tradezine after tradezine after..)

I may condense the 15-page report of the Pacificon that I had planned for STOPTHINK into 3 pages and submit it to you as well (NOT "instead" you guys) under the title "First Con--First Sights" or something.

The Crudletter opening your letter col must have been from a guy who had never seen Fred Haskell's COMM'L; it's far worse than STARLING. (though STOPTHINK was far better...ghod, I'm conceited, but maybe you'll agree //That your conceited? Sure. HL// The way I agree DOUBLE:BILL and STRANGER THAN FACT beat STOPTHINK //Oh//You guys look conceited, too.// Oh, yes, I'm conceited. Ask anyone that knows me. But--I don't think I'm conceited about STARLING yet. Perhaps someday HL//

Here's hoping that the story I've enclosed will make your crud percentage somewhat lower in your nextish//..or when ever I use it HL//

John Boston 816 South First Street, Mayfield, Kentucky, 42066

Greetings and salutations:

This letter is being written as I read Starling # 1 and #2. At the moment I have read all the nonfiction, so I'll get it out of the way, read the fiction, and comment on it.

In #1, Irvin Kock article is a nothing. All he has done is cited a couple of instances of use of military science in sf stories. This is somewhat incomplete, to say the least; looking over at my bookcase I see Hubbard's FINAL BLACKOUT, many of Phillip K. Dick's short stories ("Second Variety", etc.) Heinlein's PUPPET MASTERS, Doc Emith's CHILDREN OF THE LENS, L. Sprague de Camp's Viagens Interplanetarias novels, van Vogt's Clane of Linn stories (published as EMPIRE OF THE ATOM and THE WIZARD OF LINN.) Hal Clement's MISSION OF GRAVITY, Cyril Judd's GUNNER CADE...and I'm just casting my eyes over book and magazine backs. By the way, "Pandora's Planet" is in the September '56 ASF, reprinted in PROLOGUE TO ANALOG.

The trouble with book reviews is that they are too sketchy. I prefer reviews that are evaluative rather than synoptic; it's not important to someone who has read the book who shot whom, or whether the good guys won. Science fiction, being a largely ephemeral item in the publishing scheme, is usually read by 90% of the fans before a review can reach them. In such a case the main interest of a review is the opinion of the reviewer and the case he makes in supporting his views. Hence all the discussion of Glory Road.

The reviews in #2 are a slight improvement, but they are not improved by references to a book as clunk. We don't care whether or not you liked the book; what really matters is why. (Those were Cox's reviews. Yours are rather boring.)

Paul Gilster's guest editorial is tiresome. I am fed up with those arguments. I am reminded of a poster carried by a Negro during a demonstration in Maryland over employment practices: WE DON'T WANT TO MARRY YOUR DAUGHTERS. WE JUST WANT JOBS. The Negro doesn't expect to be accepted by the hidebound jackasses who are making him a second-class citizen. He wants to be able to get a meal, or go to the rest room, or have a drink of water, without having to walk twenty blocks. He wants to be able to vote. He wants to be considered for a job on his merits, not his skin color. "Acceptance" will come later. It cannot come while the Negro is a second-class citizen. The argument about the sanctity of private property is somewhat spurious. It is a conflict between two rights: the right to own and use property, and the right to be free from racial and religious discrimination. Of the two, I think the latter is the more important.

"The Conquerors and the Conquered" was tiresome and a steal from Lester del Rey's "The Years Draw Nigh". //Does it make any difference if the author had never read said story? He hasn't HL//

"Just Like I Said--Impossible" was tiresome, derivative of Nourse's "Nightmare Brother", but productive of this gem, "The sky was still yellow a third time." "One Last Look", while hackneyed, was better written and plotted. "The Shadows of the Golden Age", again, is tiresome, and there are no jungles on Venus.

"A Discovery of Importance" is a rewrite of Isaac Asimov's "Breeds There a Man" //..which I don't remember having read. I might have, however.HL//I refuse to read bad pastiches of Conan in fanzines. The rest of the fiction in #2 is mediocre to asinine.

Altogether, this magazine has the larrest ratio of size to quality of any I've seen. If I hadn't signed the N3F Pledge I wouldn't have read it. I hope you improve. Oneway is to cut out some of the fiction and try to get hold of some competently written and thought-out articles. And please learn to spell.

Good Luck. I'll write you if you send #3; if not, I won't worry.



Creath Thorne , Savannah, Missouri 64485

It seems that Roger Alan Cox has a rough time. Like nothing like this has ever happened to me or to any of my other fans //sic. You have fans, Creath?// Instead my parents more or less encourage fanac though they don't like the amount of money that I spend. I thought that the Cox serial was pretty good, but I wish you wouldn't print serials. I went into the reasons in my other letter.//..which I don't have. Think Eklund has.HL//I realize this is a problem, but with a sixty page zine//not ANY more//it seems that you could eliminate some of the fillos and artwork that is just there to fill up space and print the story whole.

It's your zine, though, and these are just suggestions.

Scheidt had a fairly good review of the Soviet SF series, better than most reviews, but it was spoiled for me because PS Miller said the same things in Analog. Did Bill see the review in Analog and thus had his subconscious acted upon, or did he just do the same kind of job that Miller did? //Bill doesn't read science fiction magazines. What ever he wrote was his own, even if PS Miller did happen to be thinking the same things HL//

I had heard a bit about Randall's work //he's the guy who wrote "Just Like I said--Impossible", people. HL//--like he bragged an awful lot about it in some letters and robins, and when I read it I thought there is a good, even great potential there that needs a lot of polishing. The story reads like a first draft. Then, I don't like the gimmick. The end wasn't related enough to the first part of the story. A gimmick ending should be tied in strongly enough with the first of the story and still be a surprise. Then, the story seemed a lot like the one that Norse did in his short story collection that came out a few years ago. It looked almost like an exact imitation, though Mike used different circumstances. At any rate, it was still one of the best stories in the issue. It's too bad that Randall gaffiated--he might have become a pro if he had stuck at it.

Seth's article is basic but enjoyable, and reads just like one of his letters. He wrote one along the same lines for me, only entirely about robins. Apparently this is all that he does in the way of articles. A real nice guy.

Michael Viggiano 1834 Albany Avenue, Brooklyn 10, New York

--THE ELEMENT was very poor. How could Dr. Scott know by a formula that the substance would disintegrate everything but Sgerium? Impossible. Chlorine and Sodium are both poisons, but would anyone know that together they would form the non-poisonous compound salt, unless they tested it on animals? The story was also very poorly written. //It can be done, Mr. Viggiano. Yes, Sodium and chlorine are poisonous--but most sodium chemicals are not. Most Chlorides

aren't all poisonous--just those that have very poisonous heavy metals, like lead and copper. From looking at the formula, and knowing this, one might think that table salt was harmless, and one would be right. Another thing that can be seen by looking at the formula is how acid or base a salt is going to be when dissolved in water. NaCl is made up of a strong base and a strong acid, and is thus a neutral salt. Copper sulphate, on the other hand, has a weak base and a strong acid, and thus has an acid water solution. Many things can be seen from looking at a formula--what good would they be if this wasn't so? If there is a substance that could take the fabric of matter apart in a rather violent manner, which I doubt, it might be quite possible to tell this from its formula.

Clay Hamlin (who doesn't put his address down either, but I remember it. Like, I think it's something like this: Southwest Harbor, Maine, 04679.)

I appreciate the two issues of STARLING. Since I promised to Do Something for faneds who sent their zines to me, I shall do so, but you may not like it. //Better what you have done than what many others have: nothing. And anyway, nothing in your letter was meant to make me mad, nor did it. HL//

Forthwith, then, a letter of comment. You have rather good repro of writing, rather poor repro of illustrations. Or maybe, the illustrations themselves just are not good enough, not detailed enough, to do better with. //I would really like a few comments on this issues art, friends. I'm sure the artists would be happy with a little bit, too. HL//

You have no controversy, a must for a new fanzine to stir up interst. //Do we have controversy now? I can't remember. Its getting late HL
Though maybe your guest editorial will create some of this. Oh, it is a trivial statement of the subject, nothing that probably most of us have not seen before and with the same old slogans substituted for worthwhile reasoning. But, maybe, it is detailed enough for the level of your readers, young teen age fan mainly.

Your fiction is just fair fanzine fiction. Not TERRIBLE by any means, but certainly not even remotely close to even low grade pro writing either.

Now this is something I have seen a lot of, running the story contest plus being involved in other similar activities. And every blasted one of the stories you have offered suffer from one or another of the flaws of beginner's writing //Well, they were beginners. HL//
One of them is summed up with this quotation I have made myself personally several times by Lloyd Biggle, to wit, "You have a nice idea for a story, too bad you didn't write it."

The ideas are good, though seldom especially original. But take a good look at many of them, and see how many pages they run before there is even a single line of dialog. Some don't have any dialog, only narration. It is not a story, merely an idea for a story.

If it can be reduced to a single page, it is not a story anyway, only an incident. After all, we don't have any Fred Browns around here. Interesting without a doubt, for all the ideas in it, but certainly they are not pro writing.

So please, and this is directed especially to Irving Kock, none of this stuff about being almost professional. That story, "Just Like I Said--Impossible" was rather good, but one could cut a full half of the writing out without it being missed, and anyway, there was a story called "Nightmare Brother" which did the same thing ever so much better. // I guess I'm going to have to read that Nightmare Brother--I seem to be the only one who hasn't. HL//Paul Gilster, like I have seen from him before //..in YANDRO and DOUBLE:BILL, among other places HL// He is likely to start with one story, and go on to another, and another, before he ends. Also, all narrative. "Shadows of The Golden Age", a fine idea, but all narrative, no dialog. How can you establish characters that way? "Discovery of Importance." Fine idea, but write a story about it, establish the character more, and then it may cease to be a mere incident.

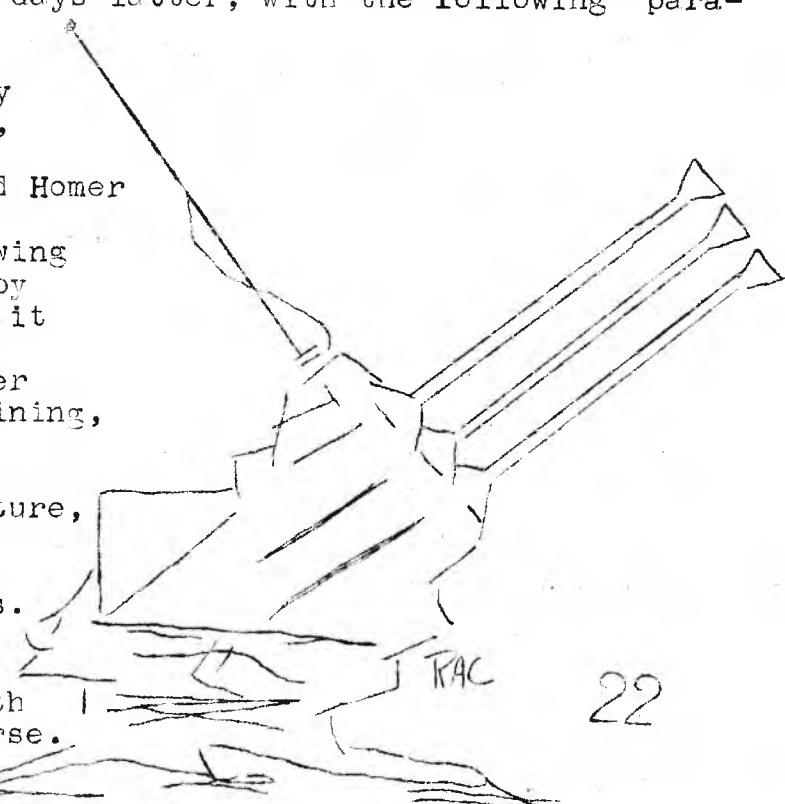
The article of NBF by Seth is interesting enough, probably, but I have seen it so many times before.

Book reveiws are just fair. Your reviewers prejudices get in the way of writing. //Yah? Humm--well, I alwaysknew that I was prejudice in favor of science fiction and/or fantasy--but other than that..HL//

(Clay wrote a note to me a few days latter, with the following paragraphment for this column.)

The first story using military science I recall was my first, and back in 1930 or so. THE BLIND SPOT by Austine Hall and Homer Eon Flint. Offhand, I think one of the better jobs of showing strategy, is "Taste of Fire" by Lloyd Biggle. You might know it better as "The Angry Espers". Admitted, Heinlein did a rather good job of showing basic training, and tactical stragegy in his story, and there are only a few recent stories of this nature, but any fan of ten years or more should be able to name literally dozens of the things.

Worth 40¢? Nonsense! No fan-zine is worth forty cents, with only a few exceptions, of course. There are always some, naturally, but STARLING is not one of them. I doubt that it ever will be either. But it is,



of course, a bit of fun.

Roger Cox is not either even close to being pro. Noe editor would read more than half a page before reaching for that rejection slip. It takes DIALOG.

So LUNATIC is getting worse, eh? Ah me, I guess we always have to have a minority, in this case, a minority of you and Tim Eklund. Cause neither Frank nor myself heard others saying so lately, in the past two issues. Those half dozen subscriptions are offered as proof, plus a pair of renewals. // I should have mentioned this earlier: This whole thing here, that is, these paragraphs Clay sent me in addition to his other LoC, are directed at Irvin Koch. Thus, the 'you' in this last paragraph isn't me, rather Irvin. Me, I've never seen any issue of LUNATIC. HL//

Ah well, it is still a fair first issue, and the second issue does not go any lower in the standings, though I don't really think it improved either. // My English teacher would kill me if I turned in a theme with that sentence in it. In the paragraph above, we were talking about Lunatic, and now in this one we are talking about "it." What, prey tell, are you talking about, LUNATIC or STARLING? Yah, I know, you were talking about STARLING. But how could I tell? Pronouns can be dangerous. HL//

But enough of this now, I have about eight letters to write, more to do on a story, and definitely more to do on a couple of collaborations I am working on, with both Robert Margroff and a newcomer named Don Wick. High potential as authors, both of them along with a rather small number of other fans, Frances Hall, Bill Warren the main ones. But even fan fiction, such as yours here, has its own special appeal, even though nothing I have seen here yet is remotely what is needed for pro work. Ah, well, they ^{HAVE} got to learn some way, after all, and that is what fanzines are for.

Ahmen. That is all of the letters that were meant as comments on #1 and #2. Gee--only 15 pages of 'um. Now, I wonder why I wasn't able to get them all in last issue? Onward, now, to the letters that were sent to me about #3 (what I can fit in...)

Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740.

Dear Hank: It comes as a sort of anticlimax to learn after all that address that you live in St. Louis. But it's a pleasant sort of surprise ending to the string of names and numbers, because I feel quite at home in St. Louis, through faithful listening to KMOX. It appeals to my subsidiary fandom, baseball fandom, quite lavishly, and I like its habit of programming all sort of unexpected things.//Like the rather basic joke that slipped in a bit ago?// Besides, Starling represents not the first but the second St. Louis publication in my home. I'm a faithful subscriber to The Sporting News, but unfortunately that doesn't have the personal and friendly touch of yours.

Presumably that English teacher saw something in you that is capable of development. If your school is a good one, they don't assign students on the basis of what they've done, but on the basis of what they can do. Maybe you'd get a teacher's job there before the end of the year if you worked a little on the spelling. It's pretty bad in some places in this issue of STARLING, the only really annoying thing about the issue, and the errors appear to be mostly the result of carelessness rather than ignorance: you spell a word correctly several times and misspell it once. As far as format is concerned, one much easier way to improve would consist of getting the gunk out of your type before cutting stencils. It's easy to read the pages but the typography would be really first-rate if it weren't for consistent failure of some letters to reproduce clearly. //There isn't any gunk in my "g" really, there isn't. It just doesn't work. I have to remember to hit it really hard, or the bottem doesn't come out clear. g, like that. HL//

This is my first encounter with the fiction of Roger Alan Cox. I get the impression that he's quite young, considerably talented, and in the midst of an imitative period. It will be most interesting to see what happens some fine day when he suddenly gets tired of following the examples of other writers and decides to write the way his own interests and instincts impel him. The conclusion of Shadows of the Golden Age promise that this day might not be too distant.

"Wehn Darkness Lifts--" suffers mainly from lack of any really personal fresh, creative evidence. The first few paragraphs come straight out of Lovecraft of some Lovecraft imitator, then the rest settles down to a very good reproduction of a typical sword and sorcery story. It's close to professional standards, as far as quality of the writing is concerned. Roger still has some things to learn about building a plot steadily to a climax and he doesn't have the willpower to cut out sentences and paragraphs that have no real purpose and were obviously written because he couldn't think what to say next and just kept on writing until inspiration struck. But these are mistakes of inexperience, not proof that the writer is untalented, and I imagine that they'll vanish if his parents don't do whatever frightful thing they've threatened to do. Maybe you explained what this action was in a previous Starling, but inadvertently, you've placed an awesome aura of unspeakable threat about these parents and their unmentionable intent, from the references to them in this issue.



E. E. Evers' story isn't as easy to read and as communicative as the Cox story. But it has the originality that the longer story lacks: little matters like the way of keeping tinder dry under the chin and the big matters like the tie in between the immortality and the hero's religious impulses. In a sense, this impresses me as the start of a story, not as a story, but it's good in its present status, anyway.

The letter column was oddly placed but maybe it's a good position for the loc's, giving the reader a mental break partway through the more

formal material in the issue. I'd like to see James Ashe expand his remarks about getting fans more knowing about science. It sounds as if he has some ideas on how this might be accomplished. I believe that one reason that most fans have little interest in science is the erroneous name given to the stories we read. Most of them aren't really science stories but rather future fiction stories, and it's speculation about what men will be like and the things that they will do in the centuries to come that is more interesting to most of us than the latest news about the internal temperature of Alcol. I can see only two ways to accomplish the Ashe Dream. One would consist of dignity-swallowing by fans in the form of purchase of boy's chemistry sets and similar educational toys, and using them to get a good grounding in practical experimentation that school courses may not provide. The other procedure would be the more systematic one of devoting the next 20 years of one's life to advanced education to get acquainted with today's status of science. After all, the rocketry experiments that fans indulged in during the 1930's have lost their savor for young people today.

I enjoyed reading the book reviews. Of course, they just add additional overload to the burden of good intentions that I'm staggering under, every time I pass a paperback rack and see dozens of science fiction books that I'd promise myself to read as soon as possible. Years ago I had the time and money, and now I'm in just the opposite situation. If that's what Emerson meant about the operation of the law of compensation, he was a greater cynic than the literature courses teach us.

Clay Hamlin, still more:

I see by Mike Deckinger that your Starling is hardly worth the effort. You know, that review in TNFF. Well, it would naturally be impolite for YOU to mention that the first issue of Hocus wasn't worth the effort, the second was little better, and the third (I had a silly thing for that one) was well nigh illegible, he still was not used to running a mimio. Your first three have been better, and if it is not for you to say, I'll say it. It did not stop the thing from becoming popular, by any means.

I'd like to hazard a guess (and a wild guess it surely is), and say that I think Starling might turn out to be the next champ. Hocus such once, Monday Evening Ghost turned out to be the next, and Double:Bill is the most recent one that will be familiar to your readers. Excalibur looks like it might have a chance to go over big, but among the second rate unknowns right now it looks like the choice will have to be made between yours and Comm'l. The point is, never judge the potential by the first four issues, or even the first five. It is about the seventh issue that separates the winners from the also rans. Maybe you won't last that long, but I have hopes.

So it will be fully understood this is not just ridicule at Mike's review of your first two issues, be it understood that along about his fourth or fifth issue he discovered and presented that superb artist Dave Prosser, and from there on he had no place to go but straight up. Which he did, with vengeance. Who is your superbly talented discovery

going to be, Hank? If you should in some weak moment, suggest it will be Roger Cox, or Bill Scheidt, or even (laughable thought) me, you will be laughed right out of fandom. But there is surely someone around, there always is. Put out some effort to find them, it will be worth it for sure.///My discovery? Um--how about me? Ah, don't laugh, that isn't nice. HL//

Michael Viggiano, 1834 Albany Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, 11210

Dear Hank, One way to judge a fanzine is by using the 4f system; the features, the format, the fiction, and the fact articles of the aine. These are usually what one bases his judgement of a fanzine one basès his judgment of a fanzine or in this particular case, STARLING3, on. //Usually those are the only things in the fanzine that one CAN judge it by. Unless, of course, one hates the editor, or something, then that would enter in.HL//

When I first get a copy of a magazine in my hands, I first look at the format. Your cover was good, repro also good, and the material was nicely arranged. The only disappointment was the artwork. Drawings were few, and the few you had were poor. //Comments on that department about this issue?HL//

There are no articles in this issue so I'll bypass the fact and go to the features, which consisted of an editorial, two book review columns, and a letter column. Fans enjoy reading the editors comments but you apparently had nothing to say. // If I had nothing to say, I sure took a lot of space to say it, didn't I? HL// If so many people sent you articles how come you didn't have any in STARLING #3? // Because everything I did have there I wanted to publish right away, and it was quite long enough an issue without anything else.HL// I think Mike Deckinger's postcard was the most valueable peice of mail you received. I think you should take his advice.

I enjoy reading book reviews, both by pro-reviewers, and fans like myself. There is more to a review than telling all the stories in a particular collection and telling us where they first appeared. I am speacking of Hank's reviews. Your only comment was that all of the stories "were at least quite good." Cox's reviews were a little bit better, but not much.

As to the fiction, you are right, Shadows of the Golden Age does deserve furious LOCs. The other two short stories weren't too hot.

Most of my comments seem to be on the negative side so far. But just one thing in STARLING made the whole issue worthwhile, and that was, of course, Roger Alan Cox's ten page story, "WHEN DARKNESS LIFTS--" I have not read much fan fiction that was better than Cox's story. It was excellent! Please, let's have more of the Vastari series. If Cox continues the way he has been writing he may be a pro one day. I'm getting tired of Norton's Witch World stories, so I hope Cox tries to make the pro circuit soon.

Ben Solon, 3915 N. Southport, Chicago, Ill. 60613

Thanks a lot for STARLINGS no. 2 and 3. I wish I could write a favorable LOC, but I couldn't honestly do it. Really hate to say this, but STAR is one of the worst fanzines I have ever seen. The reproduction is lousy, but this could be over looked if the rest of the zine wasn't so bad. The fiction, with the exception of E. E. Evers' just plain stunk.

I don't know how old Cox is, but I would say he is about sixteen, right or wrong//wrong, but pretty closeHL// Anyway, his pastiche of Conan is even worse than Jakes' Brak stories in FANTASTIC. Vastari not only lacks character, but he also lacks any type of personality. Conan may not have been the most well developed character in the realms of fantasy fiction, but he at least he was human and reacted in a human manner to situations he faced. Vastari does not.

The series could be improved if Cox would drop the "Conan stereotype" and try to develop an original character of his own. An example of what can be done with a heroic fantasy is Mike Moorcock's Elric series. Elric is what may be termed the non-traditional hero, that is a hero who does not treat all women like a polished courtier, kill all villains, etc. Conan is slightly non-traditional, Holger Danske, the hero of Anderson's THREE HEARTS AND THREE LIONS is even more so--as are Frhrd and the Gry Mousdr. The traditional hero does have an attractive quality about him if he is handled properly and is not too Victorian.

In summation, Vastari does have possibilities, but Cox must develop them. I suggest that he put more detail in to his backgrounds, round out his character by making known his interests, and stop trying to create action by leaping from scene to scene. Action must develop naturally, it must not be forced into a story or else the story seems trite and implausible. Fantasy can be defined as realistic action in unrealistic situations.

Your letter column isn't too bad and neither are your book reviews. One thing about your book reviews, at least you try to find books that haven't been reviewed by every faned in the country.

Teri Moore 2701 Smith Creek Rd., Augusta, Georgia

Dear Hank, I just finished reading STARLING #3. It was passed across the room to me in English class by our mutual acquaintance, Roger Cox. At the end of the hour, I had gotten as far as the second page. (I read "Funk's Fable" six times). Needless to say I thought it was terrific.

I noticed a great deal of criticism in letters printed in your magazine. Humph. How dare they?! Although coming from one with such a lack of literary talent it may not mean much, I think your publication is great.

//And on that note I close this thing. All of you write me. You might tell Teri all about your right to be Very Critical with Such Publications As This. Hank Luttrell



A HANDFUL OF WONDER

by
Roger
Alan
Cox

AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MAD-
NESS & OTHER NOVELS
by Howard Phillips
Lovecraft, Arkham Books,
c. August 1964, 432 pp.
\$6.50, 3,000 copy edition;
cover by Lee Brown Coye

Since Arkham House was
founded on the idea of
bringing all of H.P.
Lovecraft's prose and

poetry into permanent book form, and into the public eye, it is no wonder that after two decades, material from the long out of print *OUTSIDER & OTHERS* and *BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP* should at last see print once more.

Last year, as you may know, August Derleth began the work with the printing of *THE DUNWICH HORROR & OTHERS*, priced at \$5.00, and containing much of the best shorter works of HPL. Now, he has put out a companion volume, as I now understand, second in the series bringing all of HPL's prose back into print. Here are the best of Lovecraft's longer tales, three of them novella-novel length, and a few entertaining fillers as well.

Next year shall see the publication of the final volume of Lovecraftiana, entitled *DAGON & OTHER MACABRE TALES*, to contain "Moon-Bog", "Dagon", "The Festival", "The Tomb", "The Cats of Ulthar", "The Hound", and other of HPL's lesser, shorter stories.

H.P. Lovecraft has been called many things, among them "the American fantiase" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*), and "Master of the Macabre" (August W. Derleth). Both are, in a way, true. He was indeed a master of the weird, the strange, the disquieting, and the manifestly terrifying.

He was a man of vast and nearly boundless imagination, whose morbid but fascinating writings spanned the stars to find horrors beyond the imagination of man (before HPL, that is). As Fritz Leiber puts it, he transferred man's fear of the devil and his legions of the damned, to the expanding realms of science, and the more understandably possible. His opening lines of the "Call of Cthulhu" are quoted by Leiber, but they are too often used elsewhere to repeat them here.

Perhaps his best element is in the leading parts of of his story, where only hints of abnormalities are dropped here and there, to lead eventually to the final terrifying climax. A great deal of knowledge and research was necessary for this part of the tale, which resulted in a admirable under HPL's efforts.

Most of the tales within AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS &C. are in the Cthulhu mythos, and even "The Statement of Randolph Carter" and "The Shunned House" will fit into the series, though no names of gods or such are mentioned.

The title novel of the collection is by far the best, and the most absorbing. On an Antarctic expedition of the Miskatonic University, a vast and unexplored mountain range is discovered, and to a certain point (when things get too horrible for the heroes to stick around) explored.

AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS is a fascinating story, expertly carried out. It is nearly impossible to tear yourself away from the novella, once you get involved with the plot.

THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXIFER WARD is every unusual tale. About eighty of the first pages are taken up with tiresome histories of Ward's ancestor's and it requires a really patient person to wade through it all. Still, the end result is good, and I think you'll enjoy it if you can bring yourself safely past those first eighty pages.

"The Shunned House" is a psychic residue type, about the ridding of a vampire thing's spirit from a deserted house. "The Dreams in the Witch House" is a novelette of surprising impact and potential; it has different effects on every reader. But whatever you are, I think you'll like this tale of a man's encounter with a damned house and its heritage of horror that attacks the hero in his sleeping hours.

THE DREAM QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADETH, "The Statement of Randolph Carter," "The Silver Key," and "Through the Gates of the Silver Key" are all dream-fantasies of the Charter series; the lesser fraction, I believe, of HPL's prose efforts. Although I don't really like them, they do have a certain rhythmic beauty. You might like them, still.

Lee Brown Coye did an admirable job on the jacket. Against a green background, a blobbish creature is shown, with a monolithic city on the skyline. I thought it was expertly done, with just the right touch of weirdness.

THE SECRET OF SINHARAT by Leigh Brackett

Ace Books, M-101, 95 pages, 45¢, cover & interior illustration by Ed Emshwiller

PEOPLE OF THE TALISMAN by Leigh Brackett

Ace Books, M-101, 128 pages, 45¢, cover & interior illustration by Ed Emshwiller

At last, friends! A new title by Brackett! (Two of them, in fact.) Have you had restless nights since Matt Carse last held the sword of Rhiannon? Have you felt run down and out-of sorts since the last time Rich Urquhart or Eric John Stark went thundering over the sands of Mars?

Well then, here is your deliverance! Dredged from the moldy pulps of a decade and a half ago, Don Wollheim has brought forth two shining new novels of battle and intrigue on the Red Planet, Brackett Style.

Staunch science-in-science-fiction fans, please skip this. This is a book for those who want to taste the air of worlds of pure imagination--worlds that never were, never will be, and never can be. This is a book for lovers of pure adventure.

THE SECRET OF SINHARAT is a swashbuckling, but oddly moving and pungent tale of a duo that lived for milleniums; and a barbarian that wanted to drench the Border towns and Low Canals with blood. Kynon was the barbarian who offered the false promise of eternal life to those who would follow him in war; Delgaun was the leader of the Valkis who would follow him; Berild was--unclassifiable. In her dark eyes brooded the mysteries of centuries--or the deceiving treachery of an aspiring young Shunni women? And finally, we come to the catalyst...Eric John Stark, half animal, a brute whose cunning and sheer muscle power enabled him to live among the aliens longer than most terrans. With the price of a moonprison sentence on his head, he had to stop the mad war of Kynon.

But the irony of a dying race was that that sowed the seeds of Kynon's defeat, though the Ramas vowed to aid.

This is a vastly expanded version of "Queen of the Martian Catacombs" from PLANET STORIES, Fall 1949. If you like fantasy, I doubt that you'll find this poor reading fare,

But the flip side of the double is real aficionado's meat! PEOPLE OF THE TALISMAN concerns an odd quest for vengeance by Stark, a dying, ancient race in the Norlands, a city called Kushat, and a horde of barbarians under the leadership of the mysterious Ciaran.

There is enough swordplay, skullduggery, and alien terror in TALISMAN to satisfy the most ardent Conan devotee. This is a must for any fantasy fan! If you miss it, you have my great regrets. You'll be missing a lot.

Both Emsch covers are great. They have a very semi-realistic, sense-of-wonder touch that really throws life into the scenes.

You probably note the five cents increase in price for ACE double novels now. Rising production costs led to the increase, but they are still cheaper than almost any other on the stands by a nickel!

THE BLOODY SUN by Marion Zimmer Bradley

Ace F-505, 40¢ C. 1964, 192 pps. cover by Jack Gaughan

I don't want this whole review column to sound like I'm raving crazy or something, but I actually love everything I'm reviewing this go round.

This is real sense of wonder stuff; you can almost smell, feel, and touch Darkover while your engrossed in the novel.

If you liked THE SWORD OF ALDONES (Ace F-153), THE DOOR THROUGH SPACE (Ace F-117), or THE FALSIANS OF NARABEDLA (Ace F-273), you'll not just enjoy this; you'll relish it to the last word.

A man without a past--that's a pretty old sf theme. But MZB uses it with the touch of a master, and makes this a top-notch piece of interstellar science fantasy.

ALMURIC by Robert E. Howard

Ace F-305, 40¢, c. 1964, 160 pp., cover by Jack Gaughan

I bet you thought I raved about the preceding titles, huh? Well, this one is another gem of the month! Conan fans, rally round--Wollheim dredged another goody up from his musty mag files of yore.

My reactions to this book were manifold...WOW! TREMENDOUS! GREAT! etc., and also, not as good as REH has done before, but better than anything EFB ever did.

There is less sorcery and more brawn in this than would you would expect from old Havic "Gore" Howard. Believe it or not, all the action takes place on another planet! No alternate dimensions, or anything. UnHowardish, you gasp! No, not at all...just a different twist to the usual thing.

Again this is a story of pure primitive action, and few things stand very long in the way of our hero's victory. It concerns a winged race of beings, a whole new world, a..but why bother to tell you any more about it? Why ruin your fun? Go read it!

DWAIN KAISER — on

FORMING A SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY

Ever since I founded the Las Vegas Science Fiction Society, fans have been asking me how they can do the same thing in their town. There really isn't any great secret, or even a little one, on how to form such a group. It is a lot of work, but after you are done, and the society is rolling along, you can sit back and enjoy your city sf society.

Of course, this article isn't going to help you fan who live in L.A. or Seattle, or even Las Vegas, but still it might prove interesting to you anyway. The other readers, the ones who don't live in cities with any sf groups in it should find something of interest in it. If your city has any size population, and does have some fans (or even a fan, you) it could have a sf group in it. You could start it.

There are many sf clubs and societies in this nation, one in almost every big city, and even a couple in a few of them. But, there are still a good number of cities, with 50,000 or more people, which don't have any kind of sf club in or near it.

The easiest (tho sometimes this isn't quite so true) place to form a sf group is at a college, any college. It seems that students are The Backbone Of Science Fiction readers, and make up a good part of fandom. At college you will have anywhere between a few thousand and fifty thousand students, as large a group as you need to work with. A healthy per cent of these "students" are sf readers, and will join the group when and if you find them. Of course, if you are the average fan, you already have friends who are fans, or who at least read science fiction. This does help you a little, but just a little because you don't want to form a club with just your small circle of friends as members.

If the cost isn't too high, the best thing to do would be to place an ad in the college newspaper. The kind of ad is up to you, but it must make the sf reader (who will make up most of your membership, readers, that is, not fans as such) interested in joining. Don't put something like, "Are you a Slan? If so, you will want to join my club." That doesn't tell anything, as the science fiction reader won't have any idea what a "Slan" is. The only person who would know what "Slan" meant would be a fan, the one person you could depend on anyway to look you up when he heard about the new sf group at the college. Right now just try and get readers to join, if there are fans in the area you will find them, or they will find you soon enough. If you have fan friends they should be able to help you find members, as often as not they will know of or have a friend who also has interest in sf. Besides, it always helps to have someone to do part of the work for you.

The membership of a College stf club will, of course, vary, just as the number of students going to different colleges will vary. It isn't impossible that you only have 20 or less members, just as it isn't impossible to have as many as 150, like MITSFS. But even if you have 20 or less members, it is often the number of active members which counts. If you have 148 inactive members in the Society, with only 2 really interested members, you are in worse shape than the group with only 20 active members. The more members you have, the longer the club will tend to stick together, because in a small club if only a few leave your membership is almost gone. The kind of membership you have does count a lot, often more than just the "number" of members.

It is needless to say, I hope, that is good to have a society constitution and some by-laws. If need be, you can just steal them from some other society, the LASFS Constitution and By-laws are almost perfect for doing that. The LASFS Constitution will fit into the form of almost any society, the same with its By-Laws. The number of times one person can hold office in a row should be limited, even though you did found the club, and it would be nice for you to be President for the first five or so years of the Society's existence, but it isn't that necessary.

The forming of a City Science Fiction Society is harder, harder than forming a college stf society, if for no other reason than the fact that your city fan, and stf readers, are not a captive group like that of a college membership. And the city is bigger, though it needn't have more people. And it is harder to get around to your meeting place way out of town, or even in town, than it is to get to another place on a college grounds.

Bookstores are perfect places for putting up meeting notices, and info about the newly formed club (never put up that the club will be formed because in truth the club started as soon as you began working on it, even if you are its only member.) A stf fan or reader would tend to visit these places quite often, so the ad will get new members for you. Libraries often have boards where you could put up this information too. Newstands will sometimes let you stick up ads, or even put one inside each stf book, prozine or pocetbook that they carry. That way every person who buys sf at that stand will be reached.

By using all of those methods, or part, you should be able to reach a good part of your future members. Then you can start writing to all the prozines with a letter column. You could say that a new stf club is working in such and such area, and that anyone living in that city or in that general area is welcome to attend a meeting and perhaps to join. Of course, your odds of getting your letter published will go up if you say something about the issue you are "locing" in your letter. If your letter is good enough, the editor will publish it, also, you hope, your free ad at the end of it. By that time you should have enough members, that if you need you can flood the editorial office with letters, each one plugging the club. One of them should get through.

The meeting place for your club is important. It must be a place where both teenagers and adult members can go. That generally leaves out Teen Clubs and the back of Bars, two places stf societies have held meetings in the past. It is often possible, though not often used, to hold meetings at a local Church hall. A stf society is not a Boy Scout troop, and that one place doesn't seem to be a proper place for meetings. The YMCA is a better place, as it is often right down town, generally an easy place to get to by car, or bus. If your local park has a building on it and the club can use it, I would advise you to do so. It is a good place for a meeting, doesn't cost anything, and is often easy to get to. It works for the LASFS, anyway, so why not your group?

If your group is like LVSEFS, and your meetings are often only ten or so people, a good place is one of the members home. If the member who "offered" his "house" is a teenager, I would suggest you check with his parents about it too. A meeting can be broken up awful fast by parents who just found ten "Fiction Society" members are going to have a meeting at the same time they are planning on a Bridge Party.

Once you get your members, and your meetings are set up, you still have lots of trouble left to ruin your health. Is the Society going to put out a fanzine? If so, by whom, and who is going to pay for it? But, you ask, didn't I say, A "club Fanzine"? Then who else but the club would pay for it? It isn't as easy as that, for once you will have too many people willing to help out (Tho you will find not so much real help as just a lot of people telling you what to do.) Twenty editors spoil the fanzine. And what if the club hasn't enough money? If it doesn't, then the editor might end up paying for most of the costs, and then you really have troubles. For, in this case, the fanzine isn't really the club's, it is the editor's, and he might one day leave the club and take the fanzine with him. And there is nothing you can do about anything he publishes, either, after all, he is paying for it.

Before the club zine comes out, figure out who has control! This can save lots of future trouble.

And, of course, someone, sometime will try to split the club. Ill feelings do come up between members once in a while, and that boy who was running against you might not be the good sport you thought he was. Don't say this can't happen, just look at New York fandom right now, or should I say New York fandoms. This you should take care about.

That's all the advise I have for a future stf club starter. Oh yes, good luck. You'll more than need it.

COME WITH ME THRU THE SHEADING, NASTY-DIRTY OLD PULPS

by Hank Luttrell

Some of us weren't born long enough ago to have read the science fiction pulps--or any pulps, for that matter, at the time they first came out. This doesn't mean that we can't read them, though, and I do.

Not only do I read them, but for no other reason than I want to, and because I sort of hope that some of you might be interested, I'm going to tell you people what I think about some of these pulps as I read them.

Those of you who have read some of these can snicker at this new generation's ignorance, and those of you who haven't can snicker at that stupid Luttrell's tastes.

The first pulp I read was WEIRD TALES May 1953, Vol 45, #2. I read this about half a year ago, I guess. For a time afterwards, I didn't read any more of them--I didn't have any. But recently--a few months ago--I started in again. I've read a couple dozen now, and I think they are great fun. Especially, for instance--but I'm getting ahead of myself. Back to WEIRD TALES.

The first story presented here, "Wisper Water" by Leah Bodine Drake, wasn't really an impressive one. Certainly not bad by any means, but is still nothing that sticks in the memory. The name of one rather minor character did stick in my mind, however. Doc Luttrell--impressive name, that! This is the only time I have seen that name used in a story of any type. "Wisper Water" was illustrated on the cover by a mediocre painting by Joseph Eberle.

Nothing too memorable in the rest of the issue, tho nothing struck me as being quite bad. Donald Wandrei, August Derleth, and Clark Ashton Smith, among others, have mildly interesting stories. Virgil Finlay has a fine illustration for a poem by Stanton A. Coblentz.

THRILLING WONDER STORIES Vol. XVIII #1, October 1940

Nineteen-forty... Astounding's Golden Age was just begaining. Heinlein's stories had just begin to appear, Asimov hadn't started his Foundation Series, Poul Anderson had yet to sell his "Tomorrow's Children", his first story. Science fiction had just begin to make itself into something like we think of it today.

Still, most of the names of the author's on this Wonder's contents page are familiar to us today. Manly Wade Wellman--Melvin Kent (who turned out to be Henry Kuttner)--Robert Moore Williams--Gordon A. Giles (who turns out to be Otto Binder) and Ed Hamilton. Slightly less familiar is Arthur H. Barnes, although you may have run across him once or twice.

All pen name information was taken from Donald B. Day's INDEX TO THE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINES, 1926-1950.

Unfamiliar to me and perhaps to you are Frank Johnson and Gerald Evans.

The "Complete Novel" in this issue was by Wellman, called THE WORLDS OF TOMMORROW. The plot is a simple one, doubtlessly used many times before and since. It is set in a future World's fair ground, a huge asteroid. This story is hackwork, giving little if any indication of the fine work this author would be doing later. I have nothing against hackwork, however...this story was written well enough for me to read without either laughing out loud at it or choking on it, and it was sort of entertaining. If you are looking for classics, don't look here--if you aren't, and if, like myself, you enjoy reading pulps even if they aren't great literature, you just might want to look it up. Don't spend too much time of it, though, it wouldn't be worth it.

"Waters Of Wrath" by Barnes shows quite well, I think, why so many science fiction readers and/or fans in the letter columns of those old pulps didn't want "mushy stuff" in their stories. Said "mushy stuff" was handled by many writers in that era, quite badly. Almost always, if it was used at all, it was thrown in at the last minute, to make the happy ending complete, I guess. Of all the bad things that were common to science fiction in these days, that was one of the worst.

At any rate, I suppose it got to the point that even if an author used sex in an honest and well written form, it touched a button in the average readers mind (conditioned by hundreds of stories with poorly handled "mushy stuff") that said "Ugh!"

I guess this wasn't the only cause of science fiction one time

TURN PAGE

EQUAL TIME DEPARTMENT:

by David N. Hall

While indulging in my favorite hobby (arriving without notice) I happened to intercept Starling in the process of creation -- you know it is hard to type with an editor looking over your shoulder -- and I got a free chance to write my rebuttal. Stand back.

My address, as Hank knows full well, is two oh two 202 two hundred and two Taylor (elizabeth) Ave., Crystal City, Mo. Okay? Everybody write.

As a Tolkien fan, (what a thing to be typecast as!) I think this Evers is out of his mind. (He may argue, says Hank.) If Cox is writing an imitation of Tolkien then I personally am Bilbo Baggins.

FIMBULWINTER folded a long time ago, without ever going to press. That is what always happens to my fanzines. It isn't that I'm lazy; it's just that I'm not on speaking terms with my mimeography.

Come one come all! We are planning a Missouricon! As a matter of fact, it starts right now. We are all moving in with Hank. You don't even have to be a fan. Just come on up and join the fun..... I better hurry up with this before Hank finds out what I'm saying, or he will murder me and feed me to his monstrous dashhund (daushchund? what dauchhound, maybe. To hell with it.)

The next time I get a STARLING with a ratfink in it, I am going to feed Hank to the maneater. Cereberus is his name.

sexlessness. Much of the magazines were sold to minors, and the parents of these kids would never let dirt into the house. Er...no, that couldn't be it, because the covers of the self same magazines had what might have been considered by some suggestive pictures on them.

At any rate, "Waters of Wrath" was rather interesting, despite the mushy stuff. The most so of any story in this issue, in fact. No matter what Roger Cox says in his reviews this issue of STARLING, plot is not the same thing as theme, and the theme, not the plot, of this story might be said to be pro-conservationism of the world's resources, specifically, of the oceans'. The plot (not the theme) is alright. Paul had some fine illustrations to go with the text.

I had hoped that Kent-Kuttner's "Man About Time" would be funny. Hank has written some funny stuff, you know. He wasn't at his best here.

"Via Mercury" by Giles-Binder is part of a series of stories about the same characters. This was some of the best writing in the issue, though the plot was nothing special. There is a cliff hanger here, yet.

Ed Hamilton's short short story is interesting in that it makes me wonder whether or not Ed really believed the scientific gimmick he used. (this is a sense of wonder?) See, this old asteroid miner-type lands on a Real Smallasteroid, and bumps off his partner, so he won't have to share a claim with him. He then takes off, thinking that no one will ever be able to find the body among the millions of hunks of rocks in space. Okay, fine. Then he lands, and the cops grab him. How? the reader asks. Well, see, the ship's gravity was more than that of the asteroid, therefore, the body had been attracted to the space ship, and rode it home. Neat, hum?

AMAZING STORIES May 1948, Vol 22, #5

The novel¹ in this issue is by one Craig Browning, who is supposed to be Rog Phillip under another name. I sort of wonder if, like Kraver, Phillips expected us to believe the basic gimmick the story was built around. A footnote on page 30 seems to almost suggest this. I guess not though.

The characters are amazingly stereotyped, and the plot itself sometimes silly. It was easy reading, however, didn't take too much time, was sort of entertaining, so I guess there wasn't too much lost in reading it.

The three short stories might have well been by the same person, Chet Geier. The names given as by-lines were S. M. Tennshaw, Warren Kastel, and Guy Archette. The first two are house names, and were used from time to time by Geier, and the last one is a Geier pen name. All three were pretty terrible.

The novelette is "Forgotten Hades" by Lee Frances, who could have been
1. I forgot to mention the name of this thing is ARMAGEDDON 37

Howard Brown, later to be editor of AMAZING. This story, like one in FANTASTIC a few months ago, is about the Jackson Whites. While some of it is a bit silly, it was almost at times a halfway good fantasy. The best, in fact, in the issue, with a well done illustration by J. Allen St. John.

Palmer's comments on the stories in his editorial are some of the funniest things you'll ever run in to, even if he didn't mean them that way.

This was AMAZING'S SHAVER ERA, (whoops, didn't hit the capital letter release.) and there is a "proof" of the "Shaver mystery" in here. Ho-hum.

FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES Oct. 1940 Vol. 2, #4

This issue featured an A. Merritt novel, THE FACE IN THE ABYSS, A novelette; "Fungus Isle" by Philip M. Fisher; and a short story, "Out of the Darkness" by Amabel Redman.

Burroughs moves me very little, friends. But I like Merritt--I liked THE FACE IN THE ABYSS...and I loved Virgil Finlay's interiors. He did some of his best work for these pages.

THE FACE IN THE ABYSS has a sequel--which might explain its less than satisfactory ending. I can't wait to read THE SNAKE MOTHER, the sequel I mentioned.

"Fungus Isle" was surprisingly good, considering when it was written. It was rather effectively disgusting in several places--and it was meant to be.

The short story is better left unmentioned.

PLANET STORIES Winter 1948, Vol IV #1,

This magazine was amazingly good. If one doesn't demand deep literary significance, I think they might like this.

Friends, I'm a Leigh Brackett fan--as I mentioned before, Burroughs leaves me almost cold. Merritt I like. I enjoy Howard. But above all of these, and many others, I enjoy Brackett.

She has a novellette in here, and it reads well. Called "The Beast Jewel Of Mars". On the cover, it says of this story. "Could Fand, beautiful and base, bewitch the tall swordsmen from Terra?", which is pretty silly, seeing as how the hero never once in the story even picks up a sword.

While I had read Bradbury's ASLEEP IN ARMAGEDDON Before I found it here, I read it over (it isn't long), and liked it all over again. Bryce Walton and William Brittan turned in trite but readable stories, with the almost always predictable Frank Belnap Long turning in the