

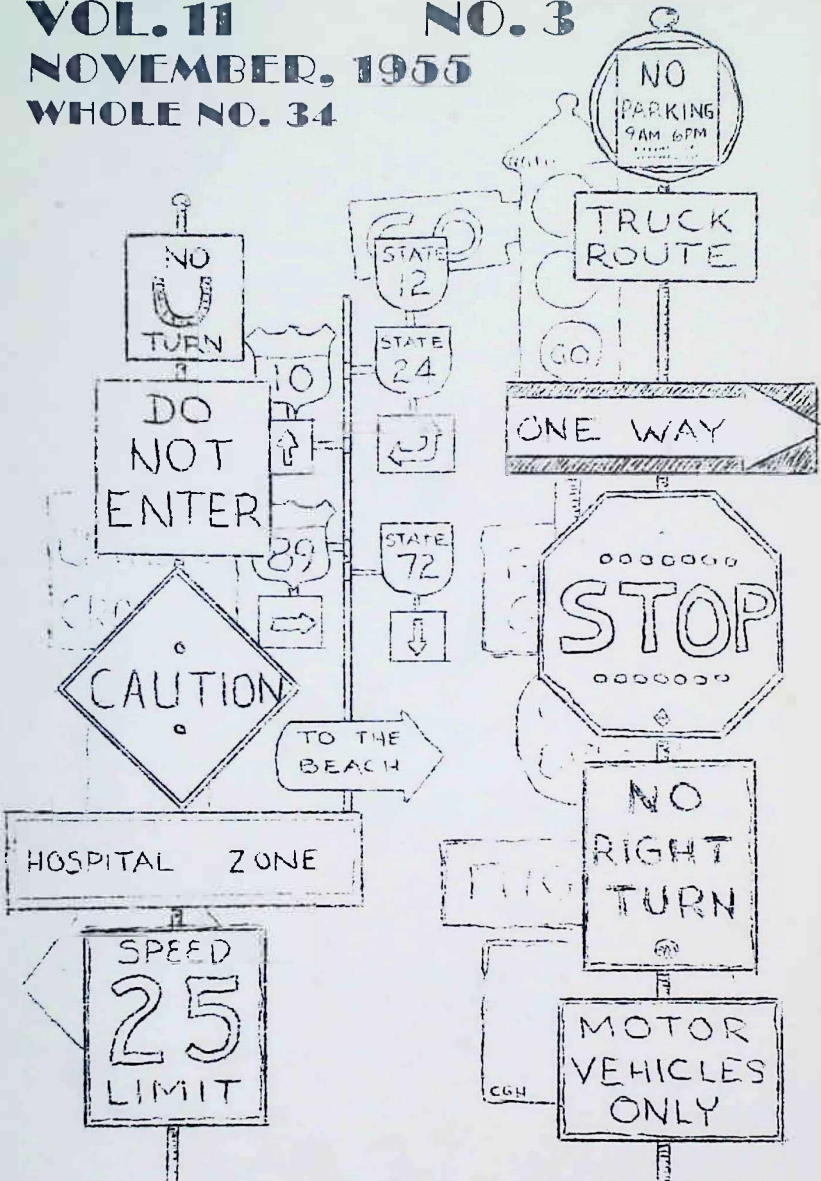
STEFANTASY

VOL. 11

NO. 3

NOVEMBER, 1955

WHOLE NO. 34





Stefantasy



Volume 11

November, 1955

Number 3

Whole Number 34

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"Everyone's queer but thee and me, and even thee's a little queer sometimes."

THE FIRST PAGE

"You can fool some of the people some of the time, and you can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool some of the people some of the time."—ALBROSE J. WEEMS

MORE JUGGERNAUTS

RUNAWAY TRUCKS are getting to be such a common occurrence around here that at last both the state legislature and congress are beginning to talk about investigating the matter.

A couple of weeks ago one of the monsters, overloaded and without brakes, ran wild down a long hill in West Newton and, at an estimated speed of 80 mph, crashed into a slowly moving freight train. A number of cars were derailed and/or smashed and flying wreckage demolished a concrete block building. Score: five dead, many injured and great property damage. A few days ago a similar wreck occurred near Cumberland, Md., with five dead. Yesterday there was another at Kitanning with no dead but three injured and eleven automobiles smashed.

There's a simple way to eliminate this senseless slaughter and destruction: Put all heavy and long-distance freight back on the railroads, which are equipped to handle it safely, and limit trucks, for local delivery only, to single units with not more than six wheels.

The cover on this issue, like that on the last, was done by Chuck Higgins, who points out that we have come full circle from the days of *no* road-signs to such a confusing riot of them that we must again stop to inquire the way.

To All Whom The Matter May Concern:

BE IT KNOWN THAT

1—The undersigned has no investments or other material interest in any corporation, company, partnership, joint venture or any other type of business undertaking of any nature whatsoever which manufactures, assembles, distributes, leases, rents or sells hats, caps, helmets or any other coverings or contrivances, irrespective of shape, design or character, for the shielding, protection or adornment of the human cranium, or any components thereof, ingredients therein, or accessories to the same or to the production, distribution, sale or renovation thereof.

2—The interest of the undersigned in the instant matter is, therefore, wholly, completely, unequivocally and entirely altruistic and is centered in particular upon headgear for the modern human male, or man, the term "man", as employed herein, connoting the commonly understood and accepted implications of masculinity, virility, competence, self-confidence, self-assurance, self-sufficiency, authority and dignity.

3—The undersigned submits that it is probably beyond dispute or the possibility of persuasive controversion that the close and comprehending scrutiny of archæological and historical sources would conduce to the inevitable conclusion that such headware as has been adopted, assumed or affected by men from aboriginal times onward has served not merely as a protection against the vagaries of climate and the caprices of weather, against invasion by pediculæ or other infestations, and against lethal assault by enemies, human and otherwise, but also to disclose, advertise and emphasize the wearer's station in contemporary society and to indicate the nature and extent of his authority.

4—The undersigned submits, further, that an enormous range of social, political and military distinction is discernible in the ascending gradations of headgear from the primitive and elemental, conical head covering of the coolie who toils in the rice paddies under a blazing sun, to the massive, bejeweled crown which symbolizes the might and majesty of empire.

5—The undersigned, moreover, submits that the ranks of the fighting forces of the nations throughout history have been constituted of large numbers of ordinary men whose headgear, if any, has been and still remains basically inconspicuous, but the superiority of those who lead or direct them has been and currently is evidenced by headgear of comparative magnificence; in the present age by visored caps adorned with metallic braid and badges which glitter and coruscate, and, at the very highest levels, are further burdened with braided golden ornamentation upon the visors themselves to which vulgar and irreverent elements allude as “scrambled eggs”, these to betoken planes of command so exalted that no question of infallibility concerning them may be brooked.

6—The undersigned, further, directs attention to the parallel which may be observed in the world of modern industry where the nobodies, the individuals of slight consequence, go hatless, thereby underscoring the credibility of the ancient Irish concept to the general effect that the empty barn requires no thatch, and where the man among them who wears a hat is unmistakably recognizable as the one in charge, or, in colloquial terminology, is the “boss”, in which case, again, the hat is the insigne of ascendancy in the chain of authority and personal importance.

NOW, THEN—

In view of the foregoing valid and compelling considerations,

the undersigned extends this counsel, free, gratis and without charge or the expectation of reimbursement, reward or even acknowledgement, to all those up-and-coming young men of action who aspire to eminence and the exercise of unchallengeable authority: a) buy yourself a hat and b) wear it.

al Franck

A. J. FRANCK

FILLERS AN' STUFF

HISTORICAL NOTE

(Translated from a Sumerian clay tablet by N. L. K.)

And it came to pass that there was once an obscure country ruled by an hermaphrodite. The subjects of this monarch referred to their king as IT, or Its Majesty.

It was very scholarly, and spent all of Its time delving into the books in the royal library—to the total neglect of the affairs of state.

Wherefore it came to be said by everyone throughout Its kingdom, “It never reigns, but It pores.”

“... instead of the printed exhortations to THINK which some employers distribute where the serfs can see them, the management of *The [Territorial] Enterprise* had strewn the editorial and business offices with cards advising the staff to SMIRK, SNEER, CONSPIRE, PLOT, DECEIVE, GLOAT, CONNIVE, LEER, and DEFAME.”

—LUCIUS BEEBE: *Comstock Commotion, the Story of The Territorial Enterprise*. Stanford; Stanford University Press, [1954]. p. 127.

—Submitted by CHUCK HIGGINS

THE SKEPTIC TANK

by DEAN A. GRENNELL

FOR SOME TIME NOW—since April 3, 1955 to be exact—I've been saving a clipping from *The Milwaukee Journal*. It is enhanced to no great degree by a half-column cut showing the dour visage of one Dr. Robert E. Wilson, chairman of the board of the Standard Oil Company of Indiana. Dr. Wilson is quoted as sounding off on a few pet grotches of his. If you don't mind, I'll re-quote here and there.

"In an address prepared for the American Chemical society's national meeting, Wilson, a chemist and chemical engineer, asserted that television 'has made us a nation of spectators instead of participants,' and he added:

"The bright young boy who used to play with a home-made crystal radio or a chemical kit is now twirling the knobs on a TV set, watching terrible programs that distract him from constructive activities. Instead of reading really educational magazines for boys . . . he is attracted by comic books and lurid science fiction."

"Saying that 'inadequacies in our educational system, especially at the secondary level' have played a role in bringing about a 'shortage' of technically trained people, Wilson declared that one example of 'waste' in the school system is 'the failure to encourage and speed along the really superior minds, either in science or other fields.'

"In my day,' he declared, 'a bright boy frequently skipped two or three grades. He was stimulated by association with his intellectual equals.

"Freezing him in his age group tends to deaden his interest by holding him back to the learning pace of the dullards.'"

I suppose I should agree with Dr. Wilson—in part at least—but I can't quite see a truly superior mind becoming hopelessly atrophied through addiction to the sludgy fare of kid's TV programs. Nor can I go along with his thesis that promiscuous grade-skipping is the sovereign remedy for this troubled world.

It's true that pupils are no longer permitted to skip grades (at least they're not allowed to in Wisconsin) and I personally think it's just as well.

It sounds fine in theory to say that if you push a child ahead in school a couple of years he will be "stimulated by association with his intellectual equals." In practice, as I can personally testify, it doesn't work for sour apples.

It might work if the pupils from two grades ahead *were* his intellectual equals. In actuality, they're not. The type of boy that Dr. Wilson has in mind isn't apt to encounter a clump of intellectual equals at any level above or below his normal grade. What he does encounter, to the embroilment of his psyche and corporeal being, is a new group composed largely of his physical superiors.

The boy needn't necessarily conform to the popular conception of a child prodigy: a scrawny, precocious weakling with thick-lensed glasses and irritating mannerisms. Even if his physical development is normal or above-average for his age, the norm of two classes up will tower over him. Moreover, being human and—for the most part—not particularly sensitive, they will resent the presence of the shrimp in their midst with the implication that he is bright and they are stupid, or both. This resentment takes the form of innumerable incidents of aggression or exclusion. The net result is that, by cutting the brighter one from the herd and forcing him to run with the bigger calves, you are very apt to endow him

with a substantial inferiority complex and a sort of "what price intellect?" attitude which, in its way, throttles academic ambitions just as effectively as too much Captain Video might.

Maybe what the country needs is a cheap kit for making crystal TV sets, eh Doc?

"... and over the sprawline Heinz works at Pittsburgh in a tin famous pickle-flag, or Dill Banner."—dag

THINGS THAT BOTHER HELL OUT OF ME DEPT.

You must be familiar with the way that breakfast food has long been sold by means of the clubs and premiums it fosters rather than by its tasty and nutritious qualities. When Tom Mix was alive—and perhaps for a while after his death, I don't know—the Ralston people pushed their pap with a club called the Tom Mix Straight-Shooters. It was complete with all the usual appurtenances: buttons, secret codes and passwords, hats*, belts, etc. Personally I have a towering aversion to Ralston products which I intend to carry to the grave, ever since I was eating some of their bite-size shredded Ralston while reading a book and unwitting took a mouthful that contained, along with the Ralston (no bargain itself), a well-chewed cud of discarded gum. Somehow, I've always felt that giving away pre-chewed chicle was carrying service to the consumer a bit too far.

But I digress: some time back I found one of those old Straight-Shooter buttons and that's what bothers me. The obverse side shows a picture of Tom Mix's palomino horse who was apparently called Tony. But on the reverse side, neatly printed on the concave inner surface of the button, there is a single word, printed in majuscule Gothic, blue ink. There it sits, baffling my best efforts at any sort of far-fetched logical explanation, the single word: GUILTY.

*See page 4—wmd

Now, for the love of God Montresor, WHY do they have that word printed on the back? It required extra effort and expense to put it there. What possible purpose could it have served? Did it appear on all TMSS buttons? Were there others that said INNOCENT on the back? Did it figure in some sort of game the Straight Shooters used to play? What sort of subversive, Un-American group were they anyhow and why hasn't McCarthy done something about it? Or were the buttons made up by some manufacturer who used metal that had been printed up previously for some other purpose (Heaven alone knows what!)? Does it have some religious significance, perhaps as a reminder of the hopeless load of Original Sin? Can anyone shed any light on this perplexing matter?

Only this morning I passed a parked car while walking down the sidewalk and I noticed a cardboard carton on the ledge behind the back seat. It was a plain gray box, roughly four inches cubical, and it bore, on two opposing sides, the simple legend:

One Supernova Kit

Good Lord—are they releasing *those* to the Do-It-Yourself crowd now? I was sorely tempted to wait till the driver returned and accost him with the question, “Hey, bud—wot-tinell’s a Supernova Kit and what do you plan to do with it?” I really regret now that I didn’t because I know I’ll fret about it, perhaps for years to come, as I have over that damned Tom Mix GUILTY button.

FILLERS AN’ STUFF

If we had time we’d visit an insane asylum to see what crazier things can be done than those that are done on the outside.

—TYPO GRAPHIC

A LETTER FROM J. J. LANKES

Nov. 2, 1955

Dear Bill:

I was going to write you a little piece for *Stef* on the Goose, an animal we like to use as a symbol of foolishness. "You silly goose" exasperated mothers tell their willful daughters when they want a hat that looks even sillier than their own. Well, I set out to show the tremendous superiority of the goose over mankind but I must confess that I bogged down. The difference is too, too great. It could not be shown in the short piece the size *Stef* imposes.

Take just the matter of a bit of food: A goose can tank up with a belly full of grass (all right, a crop full) and fly all over hell and back. A man can't fly at all, no matter how he stuffs his guts even with the highest concentrated and caloried foods. He could swill aviation gas until it ran out his spigot and still he couldn't fly an inch. Now-a-days he calls himself healthy if he can walk down to the corner and lift one can of beer and get home again without having to go to bed and rest.

Well, take the matter of a sandwich, assuming our Hero wants to fly and he does need sustenance in the process. You might think of the efforts that had been expended to make the plane—the thousands of company presidents who dedicated their lives in contributing parts to make the plane—the nail factories, screw factories, buttonhole factories, etc.; the secretaries who had to be beautified before they could punch a typewriter, etc., and so forth, und so wider, auf wider sehen, ad infinitum. No, don't think. It is a strain. Hell with it.

But take just the sandwich, to get back to it, our Hero feels he must indulge in to fortify himself against the rigors

of flying: How many operations were needed to get a miserable boughten san'wich? Consider all the people involved to create that damned san'wich! Don't consider it. Hell with that, too! I don't mean mean just the man or boy or innocent girl who fed a loaf of alleged staff of life into a slicing machine which was then fed into a wrapping machine and wrapped so artfully in gaily colored papers, decorated with fairy tales to induce naive children to eat the miserable excuse of a food. Stop there on "bread". Now for ham that had chemicals added too, "to retard spoilage". This retarding business is so that digestion will be slowed down too, for when you digest food you "spoil" it; it changes into something else than ham or cheese or whatever filler is used. The cheese of course has been corrupted too by chemists. That too ain't what it useter be. Chemists got at it with extenders. If you eat much of it you will probably have to call on another group of scientists to furnish you with pooty pills to unload it.

You can go on and on with no hope of untangling yourself from the mess that Progress has got us into. But of one thing you may be sure—that a man cannot fly unless he has had the cooperative efforts of about a million people. And how many people would a goose need to land him in a wilderness, one thousand miles away? All by himself?

None. He doesn't even ask one question.

From this you can see—just this little bitsy—why a big book is needed only to show how superior the goose is to man in the matter of going places. Then when you consider the sane life a goose leads and the hell of a mess man has made of the world—well, who wouldn't wish man had as much hoss sense as a goose?

Of course the hoss is another animal mankind would do well to emulate. Consider for example how much better a

congress of hosses could run a country! All you have to do is to look a hoss in the eye and then at your average politician. Well, that's another story. The difference would take a set of books, to do mankind justice—the catalog of his unspeakable follies.

Let's quit and go down to the corner and have a can of that ersatz beer.



AND I QUOTE

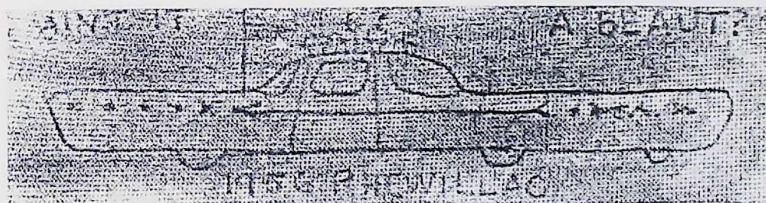


The Catholic Church from the outset adopted the standpoint that it [baptism of the Newts--wmd] was not possible because the Newts, not being Adam's descendants, were not begot in original sin, nor by the sacrament of baptism could they be cleansed. . .

They [the Protestant churches] also discussed whether they should compose for the Newts (analogous to Basic English) a kind of Basic Christian, the fundamental and simplified Christian teaching; but the attempts made in that direction provoked so many theological controversies that finally it had to be dropped. . .

—KAREL CAPEK: *War With The Newts*

WATCH FOR IT!



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STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE.

Dep.—they're from TYPO GRAPHIC art in.

A friend of ours noticed a blind accordion player while visiting Minneapolis and approached him, fishing for some coins. Plying about the accordion player were six or seven children, and their collective resemblances encouraged him to ask a question.

"Pardon me," he said to the blind man, "are these your children? They all look like you."

"Yes, all of them," said the beggar.

"Well, do you think it's sensible, I mean for a man in your position, to bring so many children into the world?"

The blind man shrugged his shoulders. "Can I see what I'm doing?"

A farmer from the deep south was introducing his family to the governor of the State.

Proud Father: Seventeen boys, all of them Democrats but John—the rascal, he got to readin'.

Frosh: I want a girl who is beautiful, intelligent, quiet, capable, thoughtful and who doesn't smoke or drink. Where will I find her?

Senior: That's easy. Just stand in front of that bronze lion and when the girl you described comes by, it will stand on its hind legs and roar.

The word "tax," we are told, comes from the Latin "tax-are" meaning "to touch sharply". No further wisecrack is needed.

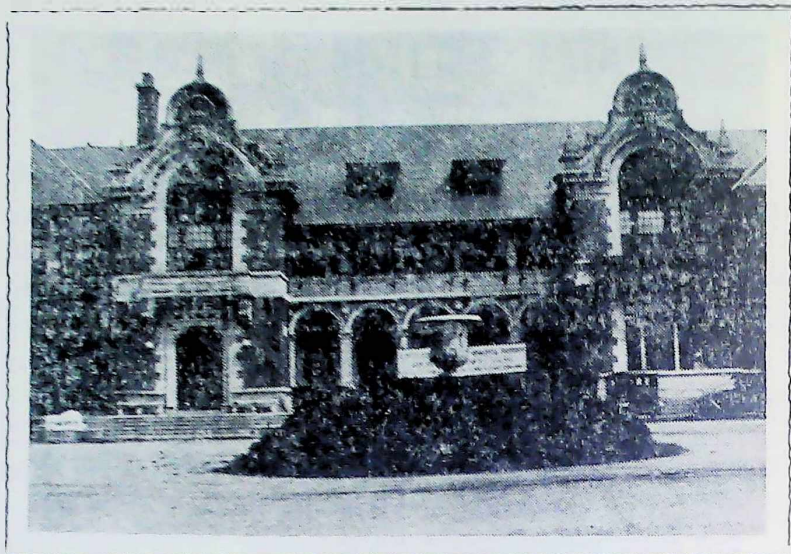


Fig. 1775 Some shack, isn't it?

SEVERAL OF YOU have evinced curiosity about 720 Rockwood Avenue, so I decided to print this picture. You will notice that it shows a few vintage cars that were brought by their owners for a sort of informal meet.

The 1930 Nash, by the way, is hitting on all six again after having been laid up for a few weeks with another crack in the head. This one, in #4 combustion chamber, was a mirror image of the one in #3 which had to be sewed up a few years ago. I think they were both started by overheating before the water passages in the block were cleaned out; dirt and rust were packed four inches deep around the cylinders. The engine stays quite cool now, and hits more evenly than at any time since I got the car nearly five years ago, so I'm hoping there won't be any more trouble.

A LETTER FROM AL LOPEZ

Part One

10-24-1955

Dear Bill—

Thanks for the August *Stefantasy*, and your card of 9/8. I enjoyed the issue very much—(did you get much of a response to your ad on P 21?)—and I set it aside with the intention of writing you in detail about it, instead of sending just another card. Unfortunately, I can't remember now what it was I was going to write. I have been busier than I like the last few months, and I haven't even been able to keep up with reading stf! One of the projects I planned on (which I haven't done) was to write up in detail the unclassified parts of my Alaskan trip. Like everything else it was put off and off, and now it's beginning to fade away. Fortunately, I have about 100 or so colored slides, so it won't be a total loss. Suppose I just ramble on about the things that I can recall—and if you find anything you feel is worth publishing, okay.

Jan 25—Washington D.C. I pick up my orders designating me as a Scientific Advisor to the Signal Corps. Col.—: “Have you had your appendix out?” “No”, I answer. He shakes his head sadly. “Well, you're only going for a few months, maybe you'll be lucky!”

Jan 30—I fly to Arizona for final instructions, then to California, and then to Seattle, Wash. After boarding a plane there for Anchorage, Alaska, a male steward holds up an object and announces, “This is a life jacket. In case of an emergency . . . etc.”

Feb 5—2:30 A.M. We land in Anchorage in a blinding blizzard, temperature about 10 below. Afternoon newspapers feature headlines on continuation of “Banana-belt” weather!!

(It's up to 10 above in the middle of the afternoon.) A Colonel meets us with a staff car & takes us to the BOQ at the Fort about 20 miles from the airport. Anchorage is one of the few Alaskan cities with highways in and around it. One highway runs North to Fairbanks and that's it. There are no other highways north of Anchorage!!

Almost all traveling in Alaska is either by commercial airlines, or by bush planes—usually single engine planes carrying 2 or 3 passengers. For a few months in the summer (the temperature gets up to 60°) you can travel in boats along the coast.

Anchorage is no place for a teetotaler.

Feb 14—We fly to Nome—over mountains, ice and snow. We see no living thing, not even a tree! I never knew any place could be so mountainous. I am comforted by the thought that at least I wouldn't suffer—there are never any survivors from a plane crash in Alaska. The temperature drops to 30 below.

Nome is a small town—a real disappointment after its famous history. Population—under 2000, counting soldiers & Eskimos. Every other store is a barroom. Every other one is a souvenir shop for tourists!! (Don't ask me how the hell tourists get up there!) Everybody gambles in Nome. The bartenders shake dice, double or nothing for your meal or drinks. I never paid for a drink while I was in Nome. (The Captain I was working with was the luckiest man I've ever seen!)

Eskimos are very friendly people. Young and old alike are always ready with smiles for strangers. Unfortunately the influence of the white man's sweet foods and candy is evidenced by the almost universal poor teeth which are exposed in these smiles. And if Eskimo girls smell, it wasn't noticeable—especially after the first few weeks. Some of the Eskimo girls

were very pretty—even to newcomers!!

From Nome, we go by ski-equipped bush plane 100 miles up the coast to a remote camp. The landing field is ocean ice which has been smoothed out by a bulldozer. Siberia is 70 miles to the west. It is $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the landing field to the campsite. A weasel meets us (sort of a jeep on tracks.) If we hadn't been carrying a sack of mail for the troops, it probably would have left us there, too! (The troops would rather have a plane bring them mail instead of food!)

We arrive at the campsite and look around with mixed emotions. Picture 1* shows the westernmost U. S. flag on the North American continent. It is blowing out towards the Bering Sea just a few yards away. However, the Bering Sea is ice-covered all the way to Siberia. Picture 2 shows the communications shack—whip antenna on top—I spent a lot of time here. Picture 3 is another view of the campsite of interest because of the top of the cab of a $2\frac{1}{2}$ ton truck which is showing above the snow. The buildings usually have snow up near the rooftops about 9 months of the year. During July and August it's usually gone. The ground is wet and swampy and breeds mosquitoes like mad, so that the warm weather is more unpleasant than the cold!

For the next six weeks, the temperature stayed between 30° and 40° below zero. Amazingly enough, you don't notice the temperature unless there is a wind blowing. And a 15mph wind will make it seem 20° colder than it really is. As a matter of fact, you tend to get careless about the weather. I got some well frost bitten legs walking from the landing field to camp one time, simply because I neglected to put on my sec-

*If possible I'll include these pictures in the concluding installment next issue. Since they show mainly broad expanses of snow with tops of Quonset huts barely visible I don't know how well they will reproduce.—wmd

ond pair of pants. Another thing—there's a big difference between walking around lightly clad in warm weather and heavily clad in 40 below weather. Just a few miles under the latter conditions might be enough to exhaust a person to the point of collapse!

Also, I'll never sneer at mountain climbers again. On one occasion we were visiting an installation on the top of the mountain. A weasel took us to a point within 800 feet of the top. There was no trail, and the snow was about a foot deep. The slope of the mountain looked like it was at an angle of about 50°. After the first few hundred feet, it felt like a 90° slope!

I found myself climbing 10 feet, then resting. After I'd gone about 500 feet, I felt nauseated and completely pooped out. I looked back down the mountain and discovered to my horror that the weasel had gone back to camp. It would not return for 3 or 4 hours. I either had to make it to the top of the mountain, or sit in the snow and freeze. (I weigh 230 lbs, nobody could have pulled me up the mountain.) The difficulty is that when you exert yourself, you begin to gasp for more oxygen. Air at a temperature of 40 below has a tendency to reduce the efficiency of your lungs, which means you gasp for more air, etc. Well, I made it to the top (vowing all the way to see to it that any other men my company sends out on jaunts like this will be in better physical condition than I!!) I also had a nice case of frost bitten lungs and had to take it easy for the next week.

(To be concluded)

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BOX 12

HELL, N. D.

WATCH FOR VOL. I, NO. 1 OF

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE FICTION

O U T S O O N !

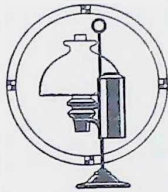
THE LAST PAGE

By W. MILDEW DANNER

THE HEADING on this page is another Plexirubber cut, and if it works as well as proofs have indicated you will find others here and there, for while I was at it I made cuts of 16 standing forms. This page, of course, is the first to be printed.

Those of you who do letterpress printing may be interested in how the mats were made. I can get stereotype mat in the city, of course, but I never go there unless it is absolutely necessary. Ben Hagglund suggested in a letter that I "take a fling at a flong", a flong being a mat made of several thicknesses of newsprint pasted together. I did so, but made the mistake of moistening the paper before laminating it with well-thinned makeready paste. It took too long to dry and was not much good when it did. Then I tried molded egg-carton, but this is too soft and has a sort of wavy benday pattern of tiny dots which the type does not remove. (This suggested its use for Plexiplate cuts; this issue may contain a sketch so prepared.) Then I tried the same material with a top layer of gummed-paper tape before The Idea hit me. I found that seven plies of $1\frac{1}{2}$ " tape make a fine mat. Impressed right after forming it is soft enough for a deep impression without damaging a small press, after which it dries rapidly and perfectly flat. Shrinkage under heat is about the same as for stereotype mat and it is quite hard.

Actually, of course, this is a variant of the flong—a variant mothered by laziness, not by necessity.



A MIDNIGHT OIL PUBLICATION

