



UMBRA

NUMBER
4
SEPTEMBER



NUMBER
of
pages



RENEWED RAMBLINGS

ah, that pun will march down all time--when international strife ends, it will be up there; when the first human visits outer space and lives to tell the tale, he will come back to it; when the world ends it will still be an everlasting memorial. And RENEW, too, will probably march right along. I don't know how long, but I'm afraid I can make a good estimate.

UMBRA 1 came out February 1. I announced I was pubbing month-and-a-halfly. UMBRA 2 was one week (you know what I mean) late. Still on the 8 1/2 year schedule. UMBRA 3, under a hideous disguise was two weeks late. Therefore, by extrapolation, it was only fair to put UMBRA 4 three weeks late. How it extrapolated itself to three months is a sad story indeed. (Excuse me.)

June: After graduation June 2, I was all set to start on Um. Mullog had given me 49 stencils to do that week (after telling me there were only thirty there), but my mimeo got cantankerous and only let an average of two a day flash (!) by. Time was creeping up for Um 4. So I put the stencils aside and started on it. Now, to become a part of this chaotic world, as Geis has mentioned before, one must have a Father (party of the first part) and a Mother (party of the second part). Only too often the latter grows up to be a kind and righteous individual. Such was this case; the upshot being that I had to mimeo all of SR before I could touch a master.

July: I got SR done July 1 or thereabouts. Next day I was running a respectable fever. This temporal contiguosity is merely a coincidence and any relation between SR and measles is emphatically denied, by the gentleman(!) from Pikesville. While I was moping out the measles, the Enchanted Duplicator arrived, and my mother read it to me. This way, I was a bit luckier than if it had arrived later when I could use my eyes again; I shall explain. At the very end of the book, the author, realizing that he has a flow of thought going like a Yankee rally in the ninth, attempts to project it beyond the end of the story by using the ellipse (...) after the last word. Since the flow was (what a typo--waw for was) created and sustained by construction of words, the punctuational projection had a detrimental effect on the style--it defeated its own purpose. Fortunately for myself, the last sentence blended with all the rest, so I had a view of the full effect. In my opinion, one can find no other fault in the writing outside of becoming ludicrous.

August: gafia. So here we are in the present. Sorry for being so late.

I certainly hope the hurricane didn't do any damage to New England fan--especially Lee Riddle. Today is the second--I may hear from him in time to put a note into UMBRA later. Dennis Murphy and Dave Norman were in the path of the cyclone, too. I know I forgot to mention someone--can't remember who. Murphy lives all of ten miles east of my father's birthplace, and Norman is on the very well flooded shore of Narragansett Bay. Come to think of it, all of Rhode Island is on the very well flooded shore of that bay.

And now I come to a very uncomfortable subject--that of reproduction in UMBRA. Let's be specific. For UMBRA 3 I used Dittmark master units and Ditto carbon paper. The typer is Underwood, vintage. I got the fluid (no fluid?) and the machine, if it may be called that, at luck: the ditto being a Tower and Vari-color fluid. (It really is.) The Tower (an old model; the Threer is more popular now) Tower has an imperfect curvature on the drum, producing faintness in a very well-known area of the sheet; the fluid takes too much carbon off the mc, so that the bottom begins to fade at about the 60th copy. Therefore, I betook myself down to Lucas' (where I get my other supplies) and spend \$4 on a gallon of Ditto fluid; for the disgusting results see the second page of my fanzine reviews. The Ditto fluid didn't fade at all; all the copies were the same damanta eyerippers. So I decided to use the Sears fluid. It isn't too bad, since I'm only printing eighty copies of Um4.

But here's the catch, and it really caught the seat of my pants. I'm putting out 15 extra copies of Wetzel's article, and I don't think the fluid will last that long. Good, what a mess.

On the 22nd I barge into Orientation Week at Hopkins. If all of Um isn't done by then, looks ahead trouble. I'm no Vorzimmer.

As to the future of this lowly touted fanzine: Um 5 will come out as soon as possible. I hope it'll be over the Christmas holidays. If it doesn't, you'll probably see an ish of RENEW at that time to take care of the first issues. I don't know how much spare time I'll have, but I'll try to take all of it up with Um.

I want to thank George Wetzel for his patience, Noah McLeod and Sam Johnson for answering Susan's letter for me, and everyone who appears in here. I want to apologize for the poor repro; I think that by Um 5 I'll have everything ironed out except that flat area on my ditto. Hmm, maybe that's what happened to it--it got ironed out. In that case everything will be ironed out, but not that you'd notice it.

While Lee Riddle was down here, he mentioned something about an electronic device belonging to the Navy that he has use of. It reproduces drawings on stencil; as I remember, there are only a very few on the Eastern seaboard. Could you think of better hands for such a thing to fall into?

SAND

I stole from Terra much gold
to spend liberally before I grew old.
I could have gotten away as planned
but for the grinding, goddamn sand.
I stole and killed, raped and plundered;
but by stopping on Mars I truly blundered.
For it was as if I had landed in a hive;
the whole creeping sand had come alive.
Now before I can blast off and flee,
it will break through the portals and demolish me.

BURT BRENNAN

McLEOD: WITCHCRAFT ON THE CAMPUS

FRITZ LEIBER is editor of Science Digest, and as such one would expect him to write extrapolation of the type associated with Astounding. On the contrary, both of the novels by him that this reviewer has read have dealt with witchcraft and sorcery. Gather Darkness was a good natured parody of the medieval witch cult; Conjure Wife is a not so good natured attack on the privately financed small college disguised as a fantasy story of witchcraft in the twentieth century.

The first supposition of Conjure Wife is that all women are witches; the second is that the campus of a privately endowed college is a hot bed of intrigue which takes the Kremlin look artless and innocent. With the first axiom we have little quarrel; any observing man who has been married or has kept a mistress will agree that the women one knows best are all witches. The second is more doubtful; perhaps Comrade Beria was liquidated because his wife was a less potent witch than Mrs. Malenkov.

The plot of the story is as follows. Norman Saylor is a rising professor of sociology at Homgnell College. He has been successful beyond the reasonable expectations of a skeptic in a college dependent for its financial well-being on reactionary business men. One evening he finds his wife Tansy has been practicing witchcraft of the voodoo variety. He persuaded her to stop it and burn her charms.

Immediately afterwards, misfortune strikes repeatedly. The family cat is killed in a singularly shocking manner; Saylor is falsely accused of seducing a co-ed; then is nearly murdered by a student disgruntled over his grade s. He loses out on the chairmanship of the Sociology Department. Tansy runs away and tries to drown herself. Finally, however, Saylor licks the combination of the three faculty wives which has been causing the trouble. The leader of them, Mrs. Carr, although old enough to be his grandmother, is in love with Saylor and jealous of Tansy.

The idea that all women are witches is a sound one. Most men can remember occasions when they did things flatly against their judgment because their mother, wife, or sweetheart wanted them to. The idea that women are innocent angels, pure as driven snow, is cockeyed. Most women are civilizing influences on their men, because an atmosphere of law and order serves their interests. No woman can raise a family on a battle field, and it is difficult to do so in a wide open town or a slum. And the primary interest of most women, like other female mammals, is in their children. Many a top sergeant giving basic training can testify that he has received stinging letters from outraged mamas because he made their "angel faces" do K. P.

The other basic idea of Conjure Wife, that privately operated colleges are noxious hell-holes of reaction and intrigue, deserves more careful examination. It is not because they are privately operated. Consider what would happen to the professor at the University of Moscow who praised J. P. Morgan; the professor at the University of Peking who told his students that American missionaries were a good thing for China.

The trouble seems that American business men are in many cases economic wizards, but infantile about other things. That this is not an essential part of capitalism is shown by Holland and Switzerland, which have been

ruled by commercial oligarchies for years, but are much more broad-minded than this country about sex and art. Recall also that Lorenzo de' Medici (the Magnificent) was an Italian banker, as well as a patron of artists and a protector of courtesans. There is nothing about being a business man that makes it necessary to be a blue nose. But the American business man, uneasy about his qualifications outside the economic sphere, demands that every one else conform to the strictest small town Puritanism. It does not occur to him that Puritanism is as much against human nature as Communism.

He is childish in many other ways, too. Even when strictly honest himself, he cannot bear to have the false claims of advertising exposed. Let anyone question the honesty of the city government run by old friends, and he is as hurt and enraged as a two year old told that a favorite uncle is a horse thief. All academic economists are subversives; all employees of the federal government are loafers, if not worse.

It seems to this reviewer that there is little chance of the privately endowed colleges in America improving until the American businessman grows up.

Conjure Wife is well worth the two bits asked, but I have no doubt that Senator McCarthy will be after Fritz Leiber.

NOAH McLEOD

GLVE CITY

Through the earth dark tunnels glide
Toward a pale, pin point of light
Down dark paths strange creatures slide
From many a distant height.

A weird city comes into view
Surrounded by granite walls
Which builders did artfully hew
Pierced with many cavern halls.

Buildings carved from hard rock
Far down beneath the upper air
Loaded with foreign stock
Unearthly objects, strange and rare.

Great columns support a tremendous weight
The roof, a mass of heavy stone
Under which travels a lot of vital freight
To a distant provincial zone.

Light is provided by phosphorescent lamps
In this industrial land of night
Green, oblong trucks run on queer metallic ramps
Hauling odd merchandise out of sight.

-- William D. Knapheide

CONJURE WIFE

Fritz Leiber

Lion Books, Inc.

270 Park Avenue

New York City

paper bound

twenty-five
cents.

NATURAL HISTORY IN WATER PIPES

WHEN THE WATER in a certain Baltimore hydrant ceased to flow, mysteriously, it sounded the death knell of the temperance movement in the U. S.; and more people than ever then took to bottled spirits. This was in 1881. The horrors of delirium tremens, brought on by excessive alcohol drinking, was pointed out to those who worshipped Bacchus. But the drunks in turn pointed to the nightmare found in this hydrant and the reason the aqua ceased to run therefrom; and stated that water too had its delirium tremens as does alcohol, but at least alcohol could give a pleasant glow, a quality not possessed by water.

The object of shuddering and revulsion found in this hydrant was an eel, 25 inches in length. A single such intruder in the water supply so to upset people seems folly. But this was not a single instance, or one of just a few such instances.

In 1812 there was a monster of an eel found in another Baltimore pipe. And another place in this city, in 1884, mirabile dictu! larval eels squirted out of a public drinking fountain; their size--2 inches--gives a creepy sensation, because one might easily have swallowed them. And curiously enough this sort of thing did happen at times, as I will show later.

The water motors of Baltimore church organs were likewise susceptible to troubles from eels and other marine life, as compiled data shows, even as late as 1914.

Several accounts of such water pipe invaders have a disturbing Fortean character, like the "winged eel" that blocked the drinking water spigot in 1902 in the Baltimore City Health Department.

For some days the water pressure lessened, until a mere trickle came from that spigot. A plumber was called and after the usual false trails, he ripped up the flooring and the pipes, loosened a certain joint, and then--

Something from an Aztec nightmare was springing all over the room on a glittering tail and flapping wings that seemed untried for years. There was an undignified stampede for the door, and the plumber was cautioned to "kill it!"

The thunderous knocks of monkey wrenches and other warlike implements nearly finished the intruder. In the end it flopped into a corner and gave up the ghost.

The city chemist looked at the eel, which was over 2 feet long and extraordinarily thick; and declared it was bad enough to see such horrors under the microscope, but when one came out of a water pipe, he (the doctor, not the animal) would drink no more city water. This sounds as if he took the Alcoholic Pledge in reverse. But if he knew what swam in a brewing tank at Denmead's Malt House back in 1879, I believe he would have slowly dehydrated and abstained from all liquids. This "swimmer" was a 30 inch water snake that undoubtedly entered via the water pipe. Yet there are some -- who may be right after all -- who affirm said snake was spawned from that poisonous brew. This is no personal surprise; I have often seen them myself.

Most of the accounts of eels jamming the plumbing (and I only note but a few here; the bibliography at the end of this article gives a large number of them) were usually separate individuals. Every now and then I would

BY GEORGE WETZEL

chance across an item where several were discovered. But there was one account where, in 1898, a man turned on a spigot and filled a bucket with seventeen of them. This is not the most remarkable account, though it does edge close to that of the "winged eel," obviously a mutant specimen.

It is in the sizes of some of these so entrapped eels that causes study and which will stun any marine biologist or filtration engineer who checks my findings. For example, there was an eel 33 inches long taken out of a Baltimore water pipe in 1874; another 39 inches long also extracted from local plumbing in 1891; a third, 36 inches long, and a fourth, 28 inches long, in 1900 and 1914 respectively. I have other data of such eels.

The length of an eel gives a close approximation to its age. In the Bulletin of the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries, Vol. XVIII, 1927, Part I, p. 112, it is stated: "(eels)...have an average length of 7.5 inches when 5 years old, and at the age of 9 years, the average length of the male is 14 inches and that of the female, 15.5 inches."

According to that basis, quite a number of large eels found in Baltimore water mains at the dates given were 12 to 21 years old. That conclusion has no startling inferences--yet.

It was stated in the Baltimore Sun, May 20, 1874, that a 33 inch long eel just taken out of a water pipe could only have gotten in when no larger than a darning needle, as the strainer across one water main intake from the reservoir had holes in it only about .5 inch in diameter. The eel, therefore, had inhabited the water main for approximately 18 to 21 years! As other later accounts of monstrous size eels are compiled in the bibliography, one can see this was no exception but rather a common occurrence.

Mr. Thomas Donnell of the Maryland Inland Fisheries Commission, when informed of the data gathered here, told me that this is the first compilation ever collected; also that he had heard of such eel and fish infested water mains years ago, and that such incidents happened in many Atlantic Coast cities. Several elderly people from Philadelphia told me of like circumstances in that town. And an aunt of mine said she can remember years ago in Baltimore when they put a piece of muslin across the kitchen spigot to filter out the sediment clouding the water. One other thing I recall is my mother's, trying to break one of my brothers (when very small) from drinking with his mouth to the spigot, telling him he might swallow a snake that might be in the pipe, adding such had happened to someone years and years ago.

Such word of mouth stories about stuff in the water pipes used to interest me slightly. Now that I know the truth about them and have documented them to my own satisfaction, I am terrifically astonished that more word of mouth stories on such are not current. This is all the more remarkable when one notes my appended biblio, which is not only damning and but a fraction of such data, still reveals a year in, year out recurring of such incidents in, in this case, Baltimore.

Consider the most frequent of complaints about Baltimore's drinking water--that of a recurrent fishy flavor. I will not give all my data on it, but I will elaborate on some to show the continual existence of such a fault.

For years before and after the Civil War Baltimore residents complained of the fishy taste of the city drinking water, and were of the opinion it was caused by eels and fish in the mains, which marine life they frequently found blocking up the plumbing or squirting out of a spigot.

During 1874 the public raised a row greater than prior, so that the city water engineer had the reservoirs drained and cleaned out their watery inhabitants.

Despite the presence of marine life in the water mains and reservoirs, the city water engineer blamed the fishy taste and smell of the drinking water on the sudden change of temperature of the weather. The chemistry of such a change was never given, and I doubt his explanation, which was more, really,

of an impromptu guess. This he remarked in June 1874. But a year later, May 1875, this condition recurred and the selfsame water engineer said the bad water could be traced to defective plumbing in the individual's house rather than the fault of the city's reservoirs or water mains. (The change of temperature explanation was missing as was any suspicion it was due to entrapped marine life.) The water engineer went on to say that "it is most uncommon to hear of any complaints when a change to the winter temperature is taking place..."

Now that is curious, as he had in 1874 said it was a change of temperature that caused the bad tasting water. Even more damaging to his explanation of 1875 is that during January 1877, in the winter, the disagreeable fishy taste and odor returned to the city water.

Besides marine life, hydrant water often was filled with a muddy sediment of decayed grass or wood-like substance which they thought the change from wooden water mains to iron pipes would eliminate. One such complaint occurred in 1846, for example; at this time it is to be especially noted that it was said that this decayed matter did not cause any unpleasant taste or odor in the water. Blaming the bad water on vegetable matter in later years is a matter that I shall document. The contradiction there leads me to think that again misdirection was used to get away from the eel-fish theory of bad-tasting water.

In May, 1884, more bad water; in November, ditto.

In May, 1886, the bad water was again intolerable; and the city water engineer (a new man) was unable to account for it, though he remedied the situation slightly by flushing out the mains through the fire plugs.

When the trouble recurred in May 1887, this same water engineer theorized that it was caused principally in sections where there were "dead ends" -- branches of the main where there was poor circulation and hence an accumulated sediment. The blight seemed almost city wide. When such "dead ends" were blown out, the water was bettered. However, one reader wrote the newspapers that he put two grains of opium in a jar of hydrant water and the next day found "a dark substance had settled at the bottom, which under a microscope resembled thousands of diminutive dead fish."

The accumulation of sediment at "dead ends" I believe one cause of the trouble, but the contamination by marine life still is not entirely disproved.

During September 1887 another letter in a local paper made quite an intelligent case for contamination by powdered horse manure on the drives around the reservoirs.

But to show that it continued to be a mystery I shall quote part of the statement of Water Engineer McGraw in January, 1923, about the recurrent bad water. He said, "...Harmless vegetative matter from the watershed no doubt has washed down and has been acted upon by the chlorine added at the filtration plant, with formation of small quantities of tannic acid."

In May, 1924, a new water engineer, Mr. Siems, blamed the bad water on "dead ends"; and algae likewise was cited as a contributory cause. A few days later Mr. Siems said: "The trouble may be caused by fish that are forced into 'dead ends' or pipes and die." At last it seemed as if some truth was coming out.

The evidence that I gave prior, that eels and fish got in to the water mains when small and grew to maturity during years of such imprisonment, would seem to be the explanation of the bad water mystery of Baltimore.

Besides the fact given that a mesh with .5 inch diameter holes in it would prevent the ingress of an eel any larger--thus proving my remark that eels lived years in our water mains--there is another piece of evidence. In 1888 an eel was found wedged in a pipe section which was larger than those sections bother fore and behind it, proof it had entered when smaller and had grown in its narrow prison until its girth effectively stopped the flow of water past it.

There is the matter of an eel found in a water pipe in 1886, over in London, England. The taste of the water there had been disagreeable. The official explanation was that a few eels got into the mains during a collapse of the filters (I know better--filters keep out only the larger ones) and had "multiplied considerably." The larger eels (those who had lived there sometime) were said to be white and quite blind. Apparently the British water works had the same problem.

The extent of such occurrences is not fully known; but the datum of a water tank, in Philadelphia in 1884, serving as a fish pond maps some of it. This water tank, atop a newspaper plant, was being cleaned out by an engineer who was startled to find in it several eels, one 9 inches long, besides a 4 inch long catfish. The explanation was that they came from water mains. What is curious about this data is that this present year--1953--I read in the papers of minnows found in a water tank atop a gas company in Oklahoma City. And in the Toronto News for May 19, 1952 is further proof that fish are still getting into water mains; according to the account the tail of a perch came out of a Canadian homeowner's kitchen tap into a glass of water. One would think that by this time filtration engineering would have perfected a system whereby no marine life can get in the water mains of a big city.

The news story of a 7 foot rattlesnake taken from a pipeline in Porterville, Calif., in 1935, causes a disagreeable shudder and is the most disturbing datum so far presented. But others are to come.

I have one note on the amount of fish cleaned out of a New York reservoir in 1878--nine thousand of them, such as pickerel, bass, sunfish, eels, and so forth. What numbers resided uncaught in New York water mains, I wondered.

One Baltimorean found in 1909 a 1½ inch long fish in his bath tub; whereas another was disconcerted in 1911 to find in his tub snails and eels. (Bath tub gin of the Prohibition era and the "seeing of things" in rot gut liquor may have some genesis here, but the connection is obscure at present.)

When this researcher read of two catfish spewed out of a water tap, in 1896, in the National Marine Bank, he was tempted to make a very bad joke. However, the account of a sunfish washed out of a fire plug in 1885, did cause me to consider its ichthyic nomenclature to be awry, considering its recent habitation in a pipe's watery darkness. Catfish seemed the most frequently discovered of fishes. No matter how aggravated this state of affairs could make one, things could have been worse in those times. The *acanthias vulgaris* -- dogfish -- had never been found simultaneously in a water pipe inhabited by a catfish.

The snake in the tank of brew was not the only such case. Two large snakes, in 1882, clogged the pipe of a city park drinking fountain; and way back in 1838 an 16 inch long snake was taken from a hydrant in Philadelphia; and more provoking is the bat found in a Buffalo, N. Y., water tap in 1896; but it was presumed to have worked its way there from the room itself, though an alternate belief was that it had gotten into the pipe elsewhere and had been forced by water pressure along the pipe line.

Worms, cyclops, and various other unpleasant small creatures were likewise ejected thru water taps. But a description of them can only serve to deplete the lessening ranks of the Temperance Movement, for which service no nationally advertised whisky dealers have repaid me.

To those disciples of Bacchus I will offer additional justification to swear off water in the compiled accounts of the creatures swallowed accidentally in loathsome, unsterilized water which lacks the germ-killing, purifying qualities of 100% proof hootch. In fact, some of the following are fish stories, but not the kind that phrase usually implies; the whale could swallow Jonah, so I guess the reverse is just as possible.

A workman, in 1888, felt something go down his throat when he drank with his mouth to the spigot. In the morning he suffered pains in his stomach

and sent to a doctor who, after a week of unsuccessful diagnosis, tried an emetic. Up came blood followed by a 3 inch lizard, alive and kicking.

In June, 1852, the 10 year old son of Charles Davis was seized with a spasm which he had suffered with repeatedly, over a 3 year period. Doctors were baffled.

This time he retched and a live frog, 2 inches long, came out of his throat. His father felt the boy had swallowed it in drinking water 3 years ago, when his spasms first appeared. The X-ray machine, if then in existence, might have made a quick discovery of the cause of the spasms.

The Troy Mail, which I think is a British paper, spoke of a foot-long garter snake taken from a man's stomach in 1837. In 1905 a similar case was noted here in Baltimore when a little girl complained of a tickling in her stomach. And emetic brought up a dead baby snake, 2.5 inches long and stout as a toothpick. Opinion held that she had swallowed it in drinking water from a nearby spring. Curiously enough, I am reminded of Nathaniel Hawthorne's story Egotism, wherein a character had likewise engulfed a serpent.

In 1906 a nine month old baby was seized with a violent illness and while vomiting, threw up a living object. It seemed to be a catfish--it had two "feelers" protruding from its head, a mouth like a catfish's, a one inch body, and a white skin underneath. This fish, too, was concluded to have been swallowed in drinking water.

Doubts as to this fish's proper identity enter my mind, though it is a fish, I feel certain. But this next datum, of as weird a creature as can be imagined, could be anything. A shoemaker in Philadelphia in 1838 had a creeping sensation in his stomach for a long time. He consulted a physician who gave him an emetic, and the man vomited a strange looking animal "about 3 inches long, with a head like a dog, and a body like a snail, but legs there were none..." Fortean overtones enter this description but I will resist from theorizing else I get too far on another path.

That a creature can live in a human's stomach for years still is hard to--shall we say--swallow. This next datum is of a fish that caused suffering for ten years to a woman in Scranton who did not know the cause. She had come from Wales, and was affected here as therewith a puzzling stomach ailment. During one such sickness a dose of brandy and tea caused vomiting and produced a live fish 7.5 inches long. It was agreed that it must have been swallowed when she drank from a spring in England.

The ability of fish to be found in strange places probably will never be exhausted by a mere compilation of such places. While not entirely germane to the general discussion, the data that follows nevertheless does bolster my contention that fish like eels can get into a small orifice when small themselves and outgrow the size of such a habitation.

Rightly, the following is a fish story. In 1882, an oyster was opened, and crammed tightly within it was a living 5 inch toad fish. It was impossible to repack it into its former position.

Another fish story: in 1884 an oyster when shucked exposed a small catfish swimming in it. In 1897 an oysterman was grappling in 25 feet of water with his tongs and pulled up a bottle in which allive fish, too big then to escape through the mouth, swam about.

More unusual is what a Virginia fisherman found in 1879 when he saw his cork disappear; he pulled up his line and gasped. He had caught a fish, to be sure; but it was within a jug from which it could not escape, having entered it when much smaller. This is one of the best fish stories to date, which superiority few will deny.

The datum of the Philadelphia shoemaker who vomited up a dogfish in 1838 has a parallel. In 1845 in St. Petersburg, presumably Florida, a negro woman threw up a one and a half inch doglike, hairless creature. Next day she vomited four more; all were alive.

Westfield, Massachusetts, 1845: a 5 year old child complained of stomach pain for some time. Finally the child vomited a living 2.5 in. toad. Such

cases are sad and worthy of sympathy.

To round out my sketchy survey of fish stories, other than in Baltimore, let me mention this: a man was cleaning out the furnace well at Knoxville, Tennessee, and was surprised when he found not one but 386 catfish. They averaged 2 pounds each. Their means of ingress was a 6 inch pipe from the canal.

This research has solved, indirectly, one mystery that has long puzzled me. A neighbor I knew had a cat, which had a habit of sniffing at street corner fire plugs, attempting to crawl into sewers, and gazing fixedly at the plumbing. If your cat acts this way, consult a plumber.

POSTSCRIPT

All data herein was compiled and found by the author in old newspapers at the Peabody Library, and a smaller part at the Pratt Library, both in Baltimore. Four items were found in the old newspaper file of the Hagerstown Daily Mail. To all of them my thanks.

DOCUMENTATION

EELS

Baltimore Sun: 1842-Nov 15; 1858-Nov 3; 1861-May 11; 1874-May 20; 1883-June 29; 1884-May 21 (supplement), Sept 12; 1885-Nov 3; 1887-July 30, Aug 3; 1888-Mar 3, Mar 7, Apr 11; 1890-Aug 26; 1891-June 24; 1894-Sept 18, Nov 13; 1897-Mar 11, Mar 15; 1898-July 9, Nov 9, Nov 30, Dec 27; 1900-Apr 25; 1901-Mar 21; 1902-Nov 7; 1903-Dec 25; 1911-July 21; 1914-Apr 6.

Baltimore American: 1883-June 29.

Baltimore Morning Herald: 1902-Dec 24, Dec 26 (with photo).

FISH

Baltimore Sun: 1883-Apr 25, June 23; 1885-July 17, June 23; 1892-Sept 10; 1895-May 10; 1901-Aug 23; 1909-Aug 26; 1916-Aug 14.

Baltimore News: 1953-Oct 6.

Bonduro (Maryland) Old Yellow: 1872-Jan 26; 1876-July 18.

CREATURES SWALLOWED

Baltimore Sun: 1838-Oct 2; 1837-Sept 11; 1859-June 10; 1888-Feb 8; 1906-Oct 18.

Herald of Freedom: (Maryland) 1845-June 17, June 26.

Baltimore American: 1896-Jan 20.

FISH STORIES

Baltimore Sun: 1882-Nov 15; 1894-Nov 9; 1897-Dec 11.

Baltimore American: 1879-June 28.

SNAKES AND A BAT

Baltimore Sun: 1838-June 30; 1879-Oct 27; 1882-Feb 17.

Baltimore American: 1896-Apr 5; 1923-May 27.

BAD WATER

Baltimore Sun: 1846-Sept 9; 1874-June 6 (supplement); 1875-May 11; 1877-Jan 20; 1883-May 21; 1884-Nov 17; 1886-May 19, May 20, May 29, June 5; 1887-May 13, May 12, May 18, May 21, May 25 (supplement), May 24 (supmt.), Aug 23, Sept 9 (supmt.).

Baltimore News: 1924-May 8, May 10.

Baltimore American: 1876-April 18; 1923-Jan 23.

THINGS SUCH AS WORMS IN THE WATER

Baltimore Sun: 1883-June 12; 1886-Aug 23; 1887-Apr 18, Aug 11.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This brochure was published on the spirit duplicator by John Hitchcock. All communications concerning it should be addressed to the author at 5 Playfield St., (Dundalk) Baltimore 22, Maryland. Your comment is invited.

WHAAAT?

DONALD SUSAN, 706 Grant St., McKeesport, Pa. I am rather surprised that McLeod should wonder that Huxley did not mention space travel or the atom bomb. First of all, how would this help the story? What does McLeod think the point of the story is? The atom bomb is obviously a socially destructive force; space travel is not so totally but it is quite probably a force for making social changes. Huxley was obviously constructing a "utopia" as a stage for the play in values between the old and the "brave new" world. This "utopia" would have little place for still "newer" values derived from space travel, a proposition obviously for the intellectual Alphas...and for how many of those: just the "poorly conditioned."

Still less would be the expectation of such "mechanistic" flights of extrapolation when one considers the background of Mr. Huxley. Grandson of Thomas Henry Huxley, the famous biologist and supporter of evolutionary theory, and brother of Julian Huxley, another famed biologist, Huxley has been well trained in biology and in the classics. The latter is quite evident by his choice of titles (all too often quotes) and interior quotations from relatively obscure sources and references, e.g., de Sade, Baudelaire, Odo of Cluny, etc. Mr. Huxley's major viewpoint towards life's meaning was that it lacked any vital one. Brave New World shows the weakness of the idealistic view and the hollowness of the materialistic. This frosty view so gelidly presented in Brief Candles has of late merged into a highly erudite mysticism, the usual refuge of those whom William James called the tender-minded.

McLeod's criticism of the Huxleyan scheme for a society is no more praiseworthy than Huxley's social plan. Extra-uterine gestation may not be in our sense economic but an economy depends upon many a social factor. Also, despite what McLeod thinks, the peasant class is capable of much variation; by using certain standard gametes one can succeed in specimens of physical desirability and of much more level standards. Only true mutation could produce deviations from the genetic predetermination. Sexual promiscuity and like concomitants give all that a tyranny needs save the feel of power. Power desires are usually the result of thwarted status feelings and security feelings. All classes in the era of "Our Ford" are conditioned to be satisfied with being that class and all material wants are satisfied quite adequately. Only Alphas are capable of much revolt under the system and they have the power and duty (also conditioned) to maintain it. Who wants a harem even now if any woman is very likely to say yes to "indecent" proposals and mean YES? Only old and somewhat out-moded ideas would lead to "harem" thinking. Why a harem and all that trouble... when there's soma to make you happy, feelies to get you excited, and willing women to "calm" you, and so on?

Re soma: I suspect McLeod means amytal when he talks about a modern equivalent. Actually soma does not have to really duplicate the effects of alcohol. The amazing thing about the wide variety of drug and narcotics, synthetic and natural, is the selectivity of their action on the nervous tissue. One could develop a drug giving a pleasant glow (euphoria) and not deadening inhibitions. (In the "brave new world" there would be only a few social inhibitions and no sexual ones... the alleviation of which is a fairly frequent use of alcohol.) Kava-kava, a Polynesian drug, seems quite like soma thus, except it slowly degenerates the nervous system. Improved kava-kava...? The real criticism of the Huxleyan system lies in how one could break our past and present to bring about this tight, circular social scheme. (Letter continued on flip side)

Some commentary on Johnson's math:

Zeno's paradox: Here we have an "infinite" series of the order:

$$\frac{1}{1} + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3} + \dots + \frac{1}{n}$$

This, however, can be said to approach

a limit and is the basic species of situation from which the calculus derives.

Now in respect to infinities, one had best start making a very basic sort of examination of math. Mathematics of itself need have no application to reality. Can negative roots and all the host of like constructs, quaternions, etc., be said to have a reality? Rather mathematics is the organization of an ideal descriptive system, consistently organized thru logic which can really be said to be identical with math. This descriptive system may have some basis in reality or be based upon "false" concepts of reality. Thus one of the non-Euclidean systems (Reimann's, I believe) was considered by Einstein to be more descriptive of the universe than the schoolbook commonplace of Euclid. Infinity thus becomes a tool of speculation. It can be said to exist and then be worked into a consistent construct; from a hasty examination I'd say this is what Georg Cantor has done.

In the Newtonian days of calculus there was thought to necessarily exist an infinitely small unit called the infinitesimal. In 1845 Weierstrass showed that the useful tool, the calculus, did not depend upon this concept for logical explanation. Now one explains the basic principle of calculus as depending upon being able to get an increment via the function smaller than any arbitrarily given small number. Thus infinity in this scheme becomes a process rather than a really "definite" number.

((It's beyond me as to what this has to do with that article...if you'd have read it carefully, you'd notice that I considered Zeno's paradox as a process. However, I was not concerned with any process there, but was considering the thing which made that process an infinite one; namely, the fact that it did work out and used so-called "infinitely" small numbers to prove that the process was infinite. Follow me? So, a little "twisted logic" was used to show that those very "infinitely small" numbers were actually finite things. So the paradox was false. But one thing to throw in your lap now is: if that paradox was false, it throws everything out of kilter. The numbers become infinite terms, and thereby make the process true! Since infinities are negative--impossible--and the numbers are positive--real or possible--we get negative--impossible--numbers. After all, false numbers can be considered negative, or infinite terms. As you can see, we still get the same results as in the article. Just what you care to infer from this is up to you...I still want to know whether you were trying to pick an argument or just state something. In either case you accomplished absolutely nothing. SJ))

((With regard to my criticism of Huxley for not mentioning atomic energy or space travel, I will say that a science fiction writer has a right to choose whatever postulates he wishes, but that right does not absolve him if he turns out to be a poor prophet. In Huxley's case: many second- and third-rate writers in the early Gernsback pulps had a far better vision of technical developments in the near future than he did. Jules Verne had technical vision of a high order, even though not a highly skilled writer. Verne's novels live today because of their prophecies, not because of their literary merit.

My other criticisms of Huxley are largely based upon the actual performances of closed corporations that have achieved supreme power over a society. Mostly on the Communist and Nazi Parties, and the Catholic Church of the middle ages. The alphas of Brave New World were a similar disciplined minority with absolute power over society. To expect Mustapha Mond

to be a totally different sort of fellow from a contemporary commissar is the height of illogic. George Orwell displayed a far sounder view on dictatorship than Huxley.

Let's take up ~~some~~ of your objections one at a time. Your saying that the epsilon is safer for a dictatorship than the oriental peasant is true, but hardly germane. The peasant is completely helpless against the modern police state. Uncle Joe Stalin proved that one for all when he starved a couple million Ukrainians to death. In the second place, the peasant, because he costs the state nothing, is almost completely expendible. He can be worked to death in slave labor camps, or be thrown into enemy fire in human sea attacks. The epsilon, because he represents an investment, can not be treated as expendible, any more than a southern planter could treat a thousand dollar slave as expendible. Another thing, the peasant's family can be used as hostages.

Sorry, but history doesn't agree with you about the harem business. Even in those societies, like Polynesia, when girls were encouraged to be public property, the big shots had their own private collection. Let's take a case of how Huxley's arrangement might work out in practice. Elias Wubbleduck, an alpha, has sentenced Henry Kutter, a gamma, to lifelong confinement in the labor camps of Antarctica. A few weeks later he picks up a strange blonde. The next morning, Wubbleduck is found dead, his gizzard ripped open. The blonde is none other than Henry's girl Estelle, who has vowed vengeance for his unjust imprisonment. The harem, not only satisfies property instincts, it guards against strange young women with knives in their clothes and vengeance in their hearts. The few cases of societies where promiscuity was developed but hoarding women frowned on belong mostly to relatively wealthy societies with no great concentration of power in any one group, but where leisure is common.

"Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." If Huxley believes the stuff he peddles in Brave New World, he is as bad a simpleton as those Germans who voted Hitler into power. NWMCL}}

DON WEGARS (in a wegarie), 2444 Valley St., Berkeley 2, Calif.

Reproduction good this time except for parts of the green stuff. Red & purple about the best combo.

...And you talk about my mag being hard on the reader. Really, you should be ashamed of yourself. As I see it, (or as I don't see it) UMBRA is much harder on the reader than my thing is. At least I don't make those typos on purpose. Some may think your typos add flavor to the zine but not I.

Glad to hear that Geis is going to assassinate me. That Geis is always trying to help poor fen like me. Humane, that man.

((I'm going soft on the green carbons thish. # Yes, I talked about FOG being hard on the reader. When I review a fanzine, it doesn't do just to say "It's better than mine." Granted Um 3 (and probably Um4) was harder to read than that ish of FOG. That still doesn't make FOG as easy to read as--say--Nock's zine. # I do NOT typo on purpose. This issue I'm correcting (after a fashion) more than my nerves or my time will stand, and I'm interested in what you have to say. If I typo intentionally, you'll know. Even if I have to say so verbatim in CAPS.))

((By the way, where'd I say Geis was going to assassinate you? My file copy of Um 3 came off the bottom of the pile. Think I could read it?))

REDD BOGGS, 2215 Benjamin St. NE, Minneapolis 18, Minn.

Glancing thru Umbra 3 I am reminded of one of many advantages mimeography has over dittography: on a stencil you must leave a margin at each side of the page, whether you know any better or not. And there is nothing

that looks horribler than a page without margins, as I could demonstrate by exhibiting any page from this issue of Umbra. Strange that you should spend so many hours, probably even days, publishing a ganzine that you presumably meant to be read, and then make it almost impossible to read. It is about as sensible as building a wren house too small for wrens to get into-- might be fun to make, but why bother to save the useless result?

I'll admit I didn't read much of Umbra, but maybe you have some other readers whose time and energy are less valuable than mine. If so, I'm sure they'll send you lengthy letters of praise, and I won't feel so bad about this letter, in which I can't say very many complimentary things.

Though I try to be reasonably tolerant of the children and morons in fandom, and thus overlook occasional gaucheerie in some fanzines that arrive here, I can't say I'm very pleased to receive something in the mail that is not only done sloppily enough to be filthy literature but is boldly labeled right on the mailing wrapper, "Daily Toilet." I suppose "toilet" here might be "grooming of one's person," but that isn't the association it would have in most minds, including the postman's. Offhand, I'd say I'm about as proud to be the recipient of such a thing as, judging from the label alone, you are proud of being the producer.

Anyway, the best items in Umbra were McLeod's review of Brave New World and your own fanzine reviews. I'm not sure that McLeod is correct in his first statement that "Brave New World is a science fiction classic which not many American fan have read" -- at least I've seen it reviewed often enough in the past dozen years -- but his other observations are sharp and seem valid. McLeod is surely one of the most important of recently-arrived fan writers. The fanzine reviews are seemingly off-the-cuff, but still good enough so that I wish you would devote more time as well as space to them.

That's all I want to comment on, except for your editorial. Unfortunately your lengthy report of the troubles of somebody with a hekto were too esoteric for me, but in general the editorial personality was quite attractive. I especially liked your caricature -- I hope it's a caricature -- of the Professional Irishman, or Pat O'Brien, type. The synthetic Celt will eventually alienate everybody including -- or especially -- genuine Irishmen.

((There is something about mimeography that impels me to justify; and when I say justify, I mean with a dummy. There is no other way that is pleasing to the eye of the reader. Too often I have seen words at the end of a line about half a dozen spaces from the preceding word and the rest of the sentence spaced normally. This does as much as if I were to draw a purple line with a straightedge up the right side of this page. # Go ahead and rub it in. I thought I had something with this issue. I turn up with the same old repro but this time no money. Damn. # The somebody with a hekto was myself.))

GEORGE WETZEL, 5 Playfield St., Dundalk, Baltimore 22, Md.

Some items in Um 3 are very good; some are very poor. The poor are in preponderance. The reproduction could be better. However, here are my suggestions for improvement and some constructive criticism; to compare your ditto process with say the excellent mimeography of Peon and Deviant would be unfair as the two are dissimilar. Nor will I carp on some of the inferior contents as contrasted with the good fare of Spaceship. Those mimeo zines invariably attract the top notch mss of BNFs because of their more presentable reproduction. ((And some ditto zines with easily legible repro)) Whether or not I am considered a BNF by random I don't know, but I always have championed the underdog fanzines that used hekto and ditto and have had a number of my mss in them to prove it. You should now have my two submitted articles.

In time most of the now big name fanzines acquired a stable of consistent and good contributors, so that now they are the fine zines they are. So I suggest you attempt to gather such a nucleus for Umbra. McLeod is one such; his article writing indicates he already can do this type of ms well.

I have a feeling you will be blasted on Umbra's first three issues, as I well know the temper of a number of fans who are so critical. Funny thing is that such fans rarely, if ever, send the panned zine any of their own work, yet they continue to criticize but do not help to elevate any lack of good material they mouth off about. The letter department of Semenovich's defunct RENAISSANCE proves this 100%. Outside of him (and his aliases authored mss) Richard Billings, myself and one other regular submitter, he could not count on any other contributor consistently for material.

The unusual length of your two features--the fanzine review and letter department--leads me to believe that you are forced to use so long features simply because you lack any additional contributed mss to fill out those pages. Fact is, I note quite a bit of Hitchcock elsewhere in the issue. This is OK, but it does reveal your need for material. Right? Also that you do not have any backlog--right?

I would suggest the NEF mssbu or Graham's fmp, but even there you receive much crud. My conclusion is my first suggestion: solicit personally mss from known good writers and establish your own stable of them.

((The "unusual length" you speak of doesn't mean I'm using myself to fill out the zine: I like a long letter column and a goodsize fanzine review section. # As of now, I do have a small backlog. It consists of some material held over until next issue because I didn't want to expose it in this issue's repro.))

JAN JANSEN, 220 Berchemlei, Borgerhout, Belgium.

Horrible purple, green, red and blue, all mixed up, with the first in clear ((?)) majority! What a sight for a guy when he steps out of bed and collects his mail before having breakfast.

Now if it had been a bit easier on the eye I might have started reading it immediately, but the way it happens, I thought I had better get a shave and wash first, before my sight, none too clear in the early morning, was ruined indefinitely.

Well, I must admit it wasn't as bad as all that, once I had bitten thru. Indeed, with only very few exceptions I could read every word. The exceptions I guessed. But mixing the colors ((you and your British spelling, you mixed me up)) on the same page the way you do doesn't help. That's the main gripe. Let's see if I can find any others.

Dateline for the next has passed, so again for no. 5 I presume. That's nice. Saves me the honor. ((What in the undying claybanks of Anne Arundel County are you talking about?)) Your editorial was rambling indeed. Oh, well, can't blame the fanned. Most of them are mad, or they wouldn't be editing these things. Serial: chuck it out. I might have appreciated it, though I seriously doubt it, if I had started the serial from the first, but as it is makes no sense at all. Or is it merely an excuse for another two pages. Sorry John, but it is lousy. Yours? Noah McLeod, on the contrary, has something to say and puts it down well. The review of Brave New World was worth reading, and his opinions on the possibility of such a worldstate ever existing convincingly advanced. Your trying to get more reviews by him needs acclaiming.

Reviews: I am afraid I have only seen one of two of the fanzines mentioned, so that I can hardly say that this or that was wrong, etc. I'll try not to believe all you say.

Multoggia: Grudgingly classifying this under the good. Those drawings

of his though. Is he nuts too? Oh yes, he's a faned.

Poetry: I already mentioned to a couple of guys that I did occasionally read poetry, but even so, I'll stick to the old masters in the field. Some of those in Weird Tales weren't too bad.

Sam Johnson's article was successful in trying to prove...you might let me know just what he was trying to put over. I did rather get bewildered. Peter Christoph, so so.

Letter column. Seems that Bob whoever lives at Rte 4((Bob Stewart, Tex)) does get the same impression about that serial. Why don't you cut it. That blue you used in the letter column around these pages was very clear --much better than green or purple. Nice to see the figures from Basil, seems somewhere along the line more mistakes are still being made, even now.

Naturally the second best item in the mag would once again be a McLeod story. Quite good fan fiction this. As a matter of fact I even liked Death Rattle a teeny weeny bit.

What, Multog again? Brh!

Umbra shows some promise in its editor's page, if not too often elsewhere.

((From all I've read of Jansen's, he seems to be continually apologizing for being a fan and having intercourse with other fans. Remember, Jan, this IS fandom. You apologize to outsiders. Get it now?))

CHARLES LEE RIDDLE, 108 Dunham St., Norwich, Conn.: Hurricane Carol didn't do any damage personally to the Riddle family except no electricity for three days; however, I am at the base now sweating out the arrival of Edna and got knows what damage that will do to the house. Peon #33 is ready to be assembled now and should be in the mails this next weekend. Hope to get some guys down from Worcester and my assistant editor, Dave Norman, over from Rhode Island to help with it; providing we don't get washed away in the flood and high tides! We had a new baby here th 8th of August, our first girl after 3 boys! ((later card)) No further damage from Edna, but what next? ... Are you going to be able to make it up to NYC to attend the Metrocon on the 23rd and 24th of October? Jim Harmon is coming up to Norwich that week from Illinois and will bring him down there.

((Some of the best news I've heard in a looong time.. # I may be up for the con. Hope you have a good time if I'm not there. (Now that didn't sound the way I wanted it to, exactly...)))

DAVE NORMAN, 236 Kenyon Ave., East Greenwich, R. I.: We were very fortunate, being located as we were. Lost our apple crop, much shingles, and two trees need straightening. Thassail. But others were not so fortunate. Many lost everything. Underlined because it's true. A friend of mine told me of something he saw. In our town, there's a Ross Aker furniture store. Behind, he has a warehouse, walls of concrete blocks. A well-built building. So Carol comes along, picks up the eastern end of the roof and wall, and carries it thru the air with the greatest of ease for about 15 feet. So, you don't believe me, huh? Just take a look at the gaping hole. But what bothers me is the looters. As soon as the storm dies down, they're out on the prowl taking anything that isn't nailed down. I've heard of people robbing a blind man, but that's a kid's play compared to what these cruels do.

So, till Shaver Gillettes, then, tovarich, do skórogo vleyegó khoróshiego, Don.

((Allright (and me a pacific fella)... Allright, so the "g's" should be "v's" in transliteration--I like to louse EVERYBODY up. Is all.))

LIFE ON OTHER WORLDS JOHNSON & JARRETT

PART 2-CONTINUED FROM SAM JOHNSON'S DEFUNCT "SFANZINE"

SO FROM OUR BRIEF SOJOURN ON MERCURY, our tour carries us to Venus. Now here on this planet there are some very interesting, and difficult to cover, points of interest, we will have to skip over the exploration of metabolisms. If there are any interested persons among you, information may be found in our earlier writing entitled "Basic Metabolisms of Extraterrestrials." Vol. III will contain such information.

To start in turn, there is a completely alien life form on, or rather over the planet. This is a plant-being of sorts. In fact, it is rather difficult to tell. It is definitely plant in cellular structure, but it has a rudimentary nervous system and limited power of movement, which complicates matters. At any rate, we are not concerned with its classification, but rather with its life process. As a beginner, we find that it is one of innumerable spore cells. The winds of the planet keep these spores aloft. They seem to thrive on air-borne minerals, and sunlight, as they are usually found coated with a thin shell of minerals picked up from the air, and at a rather high altitude. Normally, with such a coating, even with the high winds, such a thing as this would fall to the ground and die. However, the inside of the shell is filled with hydrogen gas, in order to lighten the shell enough so the winds could support it. The cell is centered in the middle of the shell by an elastic material in string form. This protects the young cell by absorbing all shocks. As the cell begins to grow ("Mitosis" to take place later), the strings of material shorten, and gradually the living material fills the shell. This is the most dangerous time in the life of such a being as it is close to the ground then (later we'll tell you about the danger). As soon as the material fills the shell, it begins to split; we mean go into a form of mitosis. After it has split twice (now four cells), it forces the shell apart enough to let itself out. It reseals the shell and is attached to the outside by several more of those elastic strings. About one earth month later, it has formed another, larger, thinner gas shell, and is full grown. It weighs only about two earth pounds when it is full grown, but considering the mechanistic problems of its life, we wonder how it ever evolved in the first place. It lives on atmosphere-borne chemicals and sunlight, high enough so that the sun reaches it, and by a process similar to photosynthesis uses it. We say similar to photosynthesis because it has no chlorophyll. At younger stages it is mottled because of the mineral coating, but later it seems to be devoid of color--it appears to be flying earthian jellyfish, but of course that is just a comparison, and nothing in connection with its real character.

Now as to the other main living group on the planet. The one mentioned above is largely plant. This one we are about to discuss is largely animal. You will note that there is no marked dividing line between plants and animals. Our other friend was a bit grotesque, but this one is the zombie of the solar system! Those with weak stomachs will kindly terminate their reading here, and wait till next issue and read about Earth. Those who... well, if you want to hear it, we'll tell you, but we're not guaranteeing you'll get through it.

The fungoid forest (sounds fairy-like and delicate, hmmm?) is a grave misnaming because the fungoids are not plants! These hideous pale-grey monsters are animals! The young is deposited in one of the airbeings that was caught or drifted too low (this is the danger we were referring to). The young is a mere bi-celled seed, but it starts life by absorbing moisture from its

host. As it grows, it eats away at the surrounding matter. Soon, the thing is in what is left of its host--the "skin" covering. About two weeks after the egg is deposited, and the plant has had a long, extremely painful death (having as we said before a rudimentary nervous system), it goes into a period of hibernation. The air-being being dead loses hydrogen, and drifts down to Venus's soil. Within six weeks (all of these measurements are by earth standards) it is situated on a full grown member of its own kind, and continues the next six months of its life like a leech on the new host. Soon the leech-baby drops off its second host and starts its life as a small but exceedingly fast animal. The rest of its life is spent in catching air-plants and smaller members of its own kind. Its main food is the air-plant, but as we said, it sometimes catches younger or enfeebled members of its own race, and then feasts on them. It is a loathsome creature, and there are tales about early potential settlers being caught and sucked dry, or worse, having a seed deposited in them. Pardon...I have to help my fellow professor here...he gets sick every time we talk of these things because of some horrendous experiences with them before...the thing's appearance is so revolting, I think it best to leave it undescribed...

Now there are one or two more things such as the smaller semi-intelligent beetle-like things, or the flying lice creatures, but since our time is about run out, and my comrade is thoroughly sick from mention of our "vampires" so we must say goodbye. We have touched on some of the things, but the book mentioned in the first paragraph of our discourse will supply additional information. If it cannot be located, be sure to contact either my friend or myself, and we will be sure that you get a copy C. C. D.

Next edition we will go farther from the sun to Venus's sister planet Earth. There are several things of interest there, and we will try to hit the high points of interest. At least we can try to make an unpleasant visit somewhat not so unnerving. Until then...

(Blair Jarrett & Samuel Johnson)

MOTION PICTURES OF THE GENRE

... yed
Magnetic Monster was interesting. No classic, but worth your money if you see it at a second- or third-run theater. And then was imperative if for nothing but the machinery. It also gives one an appreciation of the size of the Los Angeles sewer system, and wrings out this comment--the more the sewers, the more the need... What I would like to discuss mainly is a recent sci-fi horror comedy picture called Creature from the Black Lagoon. I'd appreciate it if you would keep in mind no levity is intended. Not even an intentional type, Don.

This picture is obviously a takeoff on the science fiction/horror film, in much the same manner as Red Garters burlesqued the Western which was half adventure and half musical. If fans (or others) who haven't gotten the joke--probably because it was partly directed towards themselves--have deterred you from seeing it, try to get a look at it. If you don't mind being on the butt end of a joke, this is for you! Of course nobody guarded the dark side of the (boat?)--how else could a drippy, probably wheezing softly, monster get on? A mere enlargement on some of the gimmicks used in the cruddier sci-fi and horror movies to get the hero(ine) in danger.

Naturally the monster swims along underneath of the heroine. Apparently fans are too thickheaded for this scene to drive home what it is--a parody on the cliché used in sci-fi/horror movies. No more space, but you get the idea.

CHICKENSCRATCHES

First I want to review the top five fanzines especially for the neos and semi-interested bystanders, as all you fan know these publications very well.

HYPERION, Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd., Belfast, N. Ire. Monthly, two for 25c. In my opinion this is the top-ranking zine in fandom. It upholds the Irish tradition of well-placed humor in the epitome of compactness and betters itself with more than one reading.

PSYCHOEIA, Richard Geis, 2631 N. Mississippi, Portland 12, Ore. Bimo., 10c, 3/25c. The focal point of American fandom. A must for any fan.

SKYNOCK, Redd Boggs, 2215 Benjamin St., N. E., Minneapolis 18, Minn. quarterly, 15c. Fortunately Boggs does not let his superb mimeography go to waste on inferior material. Every page contains fannish literature at its best.

PEON, Lee Riddle, 108 Dunham St., Norwich, Conn. Irregular, 4 times a year, 10c, 12/\$1.00. In its sixth year of publication and on its 33rd issue, Peon has continually presented worthwhile reading from experienced fans in a neat and compact form rivalling Skynock, and shows no signs of stopping.

SPIRAL, Denis Moreen, 214 9th St., Wilmette, Ill. Bimo., 10c, 3/25c. Moreen gives his pride and joy an effervescence that permeates even into his outside material. The only fanzine I can call really refreshing.

AND NOW THE REST

ANSWERZINE, Orville Mosher. Probably not original, but it strikes me as interesting. Mosher puts out a $\frac{1}{2}$ (?) size booklet containing answers to personal correspondence where the answers may be of interest to more than one person.

ALPHA, Jan Jansen, 229 Berchemlei, Borgerhout, Belgium. Bimonthly, 10c. On my list of the top ten. Europe's only fanzine until Coukis's **ASTRA** finds enough money to appear. (it's in English, of course) More than anything else, this reminds me of "Z", although as yet it has not proved serious competition. However, it seems destined for a glorious future. Definitely it leads the field that patterns itself consciously or unconsciously after Willis.

THE COSMIC FRONTIER, Stuart Nock, rfd 3, Castleton, N. Y. Monthly but at present delayed, 10c, 3/25c. Half-size, not exceptional unless you have met Stu. I would like to see him put out one or two long pieces and nothing else per issue. As it is, it is a collection of scraps from many fannish hands. Perfect dittoing.

SCINTILLA, Larry Anderson, 2716 Smoky La., Billings, Mont. Bimo, 10c, 3/25c. Scilly 16 is a bad illustration of what I had in mind for TCF. Halfsize and 12 pages as opposed to CF's 28, but containing two features of unfortunately estimable length. And for this Robot Anderson requests a dime, or if you want more, eight and a third cents. No cover credit, and no wonder. Louzier lettering than in old Umbras. After reading this zine I am tempted to send Nock a \$1.00 sub at once.

ABSTRACT. Peter Vorzimer, 1311 N. Laurel Av., W. Hollywood, 46, Calif.

10c, no subs, unsettled schedule.

Before we go any further, let me say that "Baltimore" is by no means original. All my life I have been bombarded with the tag. It probably first arose from the Baltimorean's taking a long time to popularize innovations and clinging to the same institutions. Personally, I'm a little proud of that trait. Sorry, Willis, but I couldn't resist putting a dagger on your pun. You who predicted Geis would fold Psy when its repro went down; you who predicted doom, you to I beckon (!): Hark! Another pop'zine has fallen! Prepare the onslaught! MAY! Vorzimer's CONISH will never appear! Vorzimer will lose interest! ABSTRACT is on its way to oblivion! OBLIVION, do you hear? Seriously tho, I believe there was another "pop zine" which bears analogizing with AB. Its next-to-the-last ish was proportionally like AB 7. And the last ish was SIG. I'm sorry, but I seem to have forgotten the name of it or its editor; let's see--all I remember is that it was born, lived, and died in the wilds of Northern Michigan... Perhaps you remember it.

POORFIDIE, Bob Stewart, Box 4, Kirbyville, Md. (Do you perhaps get a vague notion I can't recommend this?) Irregular, 5c, 6/25.

Deliciously, tho, this ECFan hangnail is enjoyable. I haven't seen another, nor do I know what to do to get one. Look into it. (Yes, it's in Texas; it's not quite that long, altho when you start west from Baltimore it's as if you begin to wonder.)

THEY, Don Donnelli, 3921 E. 4th Pl., Tulsa, Okla. Bimo, 10c.

First story was plink I haven't heard before, not too well handled; they say my column was trait so I'll discontinue it: Donnelli's? I've seen that story on the screen, the stage, radio (SEEN?), TV, and acted a part in it myself. Don should really be rolling in royalties; Hall is Hall; in the latter section Multog praises NC's writers: all in all, NC is slipping. I suppose if the buccover showed blood dripping from the severed hand at the wrist it would be unethical.

SETH, Pete Graham, Box 149, Fairfax, Calif. Well spaced.

Nepro is okay, but QT doesn't represent too prodigious an effort on Pete's part. Why wait?

ZIF, Ted White, 1014 W. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, Va. Irreg., often, 10c, 25c for 6. Excuse me, 10c, 3/25, 7/50.

Hop on this thing. It is going places. Now lettersize, it's getting good, substantial.

COOPSEA? Gregg Galkins, 2517 11th St., Santa Monica, Calif. Bimo, we hope; 15c, 2/25.

Needless to say, I has good material. Grennell, McCain, Willis, Carr, Bloch, and anon Galkins. The latest additions will be accepted. I am sure by fandom at--Who said Who's Bloch? --large. Or perhaps in Harlan's outraged case, small. The line forms in the alley, Reynolds.

DIMENSIONS, Harlan Ellison, 41 E 15th, Columbus 1, O. Quarterly, select. I have never seen SFB except for about 22 minutes at Hal's, but even that short a time was enough to detect the resemblance. Grennell's column by far the most enjoyable to myself; I wish to thank Harlan right here for sending me the copy.

TRFF, August, 1954.

Very, very, very good. But the TRFF label should have been put over the PENOLITH. A step upwards for the magazine.

I hope you all will not hold the typos this page too much to my debit.

GEMZINE 3:3 (that was an intentional one), GMcCarr, 8523 31st NW, Seattle 7 Washington. -- Gem appears confused as to Baltimore publishing. No wonder. I shall attempt to set any of you who are also slightly taken back straight on the subject. (That whole sentence dangles.) Looming before we heard of fandom, Raleigh and I were close friends, keeping up a correspondence while he was in the service. He was discharged November 1951. He sent the first ungodly issue of Star Rockets my way December 1952. What dreadful happenings took place between those two dates I do not know. In '51 he was a discharger looking for some clerical work (he is an excellent typist). Beginning '53 he was what he liked to call a "fan." He appointed me assistant editor beginning with SR 2. My only contact with fandom was SR 1--I am sure you will agree this is not the best way to start. Now Raleigh is a person who works better by himself. As assistant editor I did next to nothing. Star Rockets was Raleigh's to nurture or suffocate.

In September '53, Multog brought out a new idea: ANEW. A one-sheeter. I didn't care much for the content, but I decided to have a try at one of these things myself, and in October RENEW forced its way into fandom. Two more one-sheet Renews and one Anew followed; and on Christmas, I put out a nine-page issue of Renew. The drive was on, and so Umbra was born and Renew was relegated to the status of a supplement to it. This is the situation presently existing with myself. But what about Multog? Yeah, what about him?

At about the time Um 1 came out (1 Feb 1954), I got tired of seeing my name on the staff list of SR (the entire staff is a puppetry) and resigned officially. After a long-winded discourse by Multog on how much SR needed me and my services (General perhaps?), he accepted the resignation and appointed some bright-eyed and bushy-tailed neo near Spring Valley, N. Y. There as now, Hal and I were still close friends.

Perhaps you were further confused by our mailing Renew 5 and Anew 3 together. When I made Bates' article in Um 2 so horribly illegible, I decided to issue a supplement--mimeoed--reprinting it. My mailing list for Renew was 250, and just two cents per envelope? Plenty waste, for at the same time, Hal was thinking of a third Anew on the order of my 9-page Renew 4. So we shared the costs, and the mailing went out. I typed the addresses on Hal's typer on my father's envelopes, not knowing that behind my back Multog was stamping his r. a. rubber stamp on them too. What a mess.

To sum up the situation as it exists now: I put out a fanzine, Umbra. If I need to supplement it in any way, out comes Renew, a sheet, mimeoed, between issues of Um. I am NOT assistant editor of SR; I resigned the beginning of the present year. I published SR 10 for \$4 and not for love. Multog is editor of Star Rockets, which he calls a fanzine. In dead seriousness. Whenever he feels like it, he issues a one-sheeter, Anew. I hasten to add that he is unpredictable; the only safe statement I can make about Anew and Star Rockets is that the former is diminutive to the latter.

In true Drew Pearson style, I further predict that Stu Nock will sooner or later resign as president of Multog's correspondence "club," for the same reason as my resignation, and the club, which consists of SR subbers, will draw consistently away from fandom. I am expectantly awaiting my foolish sub to SR to expire (with the 13th ish) so that I may no longer be listed as a member. If I feel like giving Hal a hand, I will. But I do not want to be on his membership list. Out of the kindness in his heart he has promoted me to a Silent Member--i. e., a veteran who merely looks on (thru smoked glasses).

One other thing I would like to bring up in this review of Gemzine. The general tone of the Nite Cry review in GMC's review column suggests that she puts Chappell's age in the teens. Don is a veteran of World War II, was active in fandom before Tom Piper was born, and works now for IBM. He is, I believe married to the Nite Cry artist who goes under the name Evelyn.

Hylie (didn't he write Generation of Vipers?), a conreport, face critturs, a true inspiration of poetry, and a fantastically good fmz review. Trouble with the review is the spelling; I wonder who's responsible, Johnson or Mittlebuscher, the reviewer. For instance; pseudonym is psuadonon; the play Medea becomes Medusa--yet "denouement" is OK. Spiralities is Spirilities, column is colume--an error made elsewhere by Johnson, I am sure; repeat; is "volumptuous" intentional?; and what does "smal-bang" (used as an adjective--or maybe dejective--here) mean? That last one I can't even hazard a guess to. Personally, I am inclined to believe that Johnson "corrected" Paul's spelling, as I recognize the Johnsonism "colume." The column is worth hanging on to, Sam, so be sure you aren't responsible for making it a little hard to follow. You may be looking for another colum-nist.

THE EC FAN JOURNAL, Mike May, 9428 Hobart St., Dallas 18, Tex. 6/25c. Sorry, Mike, but I just don't consider myself qualified to review an EC zine. I am not an EC fan, altho I do like to pick up an occasional MAD or PANIC. All I can say is I suppose it's fine for EC fen.

BIBBLITY, Ray Thompson, 410 S. 4th St., Norfolk, Nebr. No schedule listed nor subscription rates. During the summer ECLIPSE, Thompson's other mag, folded. He was pubbing EEK for the fans and BIBB for himself, and the inevitable happened. Now BIBB has a fanzine review column (in which he states that Poön should be a staple in any fan's diet) and EEK's letter column. And along with that Ray is publishing it for himself. Therefore, we have a fanzine rather than a zombiezine. (I rather like that expression--it could turn into a slogan. I'll repeat it since it was--ZOMBIEZINE--in the faint part of the page.) Ray is getting used to his mimeo, and at last we have something that begins to rank on all sides with the ECLIPSE of yore.

MERLIN, Lee Tremper, 1022 N. Tuxedo St., Indianapolis 1, Ind. She asks for a review, so here blows. I see no familiar names except Bob Briney. He discusses something which I am entirely unfamiliar with, and have no desire to familiarize myself with--fantasy in music. The cartoon section may be categorized by mentioning that it too has an "I told you there wasn't a living thing in sight" cartoon; this fad, I believe, was originated by a similar cartoon in the Saturday Evening Post, and has survived all tests of abuse. A comparatively lengthy history of Weird Tales ensues. I personally intend to save it for future reference, since I haven't the time now to read it straight through. The stories--I hope they are fictional; true life certainly should be more exciting--run the gamut of names; for instance, EVOLUTION features characters as Lortan, Norla, Volar (a Spanish verb, by the way--it means fly, and I am tempted to indulge in poor humor). The plot I cannot say absolutely that I have seen before, but it sounds very familiar. This weakness, coupled with an attempt to drive the style of writing to the ultimate of fantasy discourages me from praising it.

STAR ROCKETS, Raleigh Multog, 7 Greenwood Rd., Baltimore 8, Md. Irregular 20c, 12/\$2.25 along with the premium of a year's sub to Cosmic Frontier. Well, I'm reviewing SR again, and each time I do so, my words become less honeyed. Unfortunately for us, the editor's style--or lack of it--make it increasingly difficult to appreciate the constructiveness of Multog and his personal Fandom, wthe size of which may be ascertained by counting all the unfamiliar or nearly so names in his Member's list. Then look at the seven admittedly silent members, including myself, Bob Kessler, Male Willits, and Ellison. Then the twenty-odd members who just clammed up...observe some familiar names and some admittedly unfamiliar. This proves that with the members, SRSECC is a fad, something which wears off too easily. Star Rockets itself would be in the last column if it were not that Multog is a steadyworking person. With him, SR is no fad but a hobby of longevity.

VERSE NO LESS

VENETIAN HOUSE OF SHADOWS

The feet of the house rested in water
That gently lapped against the stone.
It told of secrets from the beginning
For which nothing could atone.
It told of the dark trips after midnight
In a boat that was painted black,
Of the moans that issued from the dungeon
Where one was tortured on the rack.
Told of bones sunk beneath the green wavelets
That rippled deceptively on,
Hiding the depths with a mask of beauty,
Here today; tomorrow, gone.
Descent the stairs to enter the archways
Set in stone is many a ring
That shaped a collar for many an advocate
Rusty chains from the wall still swing.
Overhead the cries of the gondoliers
Salute the animated scene;
Knowledge of the storied past swept away
And now all is fresh and zestfully clean.

Isabelle E. Dinwiddie

Usually this last tearful goodbye is titled The Last Breath of Life. However this time things are different.

Today is Monday 20 September 1953. I hope to have all of Um 4 collated, s stapled, and stamped by noon tomorrow. We shall see. Wednesday begins, at the ungodly hour of 3.30 am, Freshman Orientation Week. I have no idea how much time the folks in Homewood will consume getting me Orientalized, but I have an idea it may rob me of a couple hours normally used for that ingenious state of suspended animation known romantically as sleep.

A week from Wednesday regular bull sessions start. God, I hope I'll have enough time to put out Ululume, my CULTzine. Speaking of Ululume, it does seem that my taste in fanzine titles is beginning to fall into a rut with two zines beginning with U. And the only other thing I am currently responsible for is Renew.

Since I do have a disconcerting habit of spending a lot of time on one zine in my reviews, I may transfer them from Um to Rnw, thus allowing for more outside contributions in the former. In that case, Renew would come out on Umbra's mailing list as soon as I got enough fmz reviews thrown together.

Well, the Indians have the pennant. Utter defeat diffuses itself through out the ranks of the Yankee fans with only a faint ray of distorted hope struggling through the all-enshrouding darkness. So take courage, Stuart; the mighty Berra, greatest of all baseball players, is vacating the backstop. Take heed, ye who taunt; for the Yankees will be invincible again next year as last and four ere that.

Oh, Lord! Another whole page to fill out! Maybe I missed a few fanzines.

Ah, yes. Give heed, for Chickenscratches lives on, though only a feeble scratch here and there (fouled up my margins again. This is a right hand page and here I am using margins set for a left hand page.)

FANTASY STORY MAG, Ron Ellik, 232 Santa Ana, Long Beach 3, Calif. Bimo, 10c, 3/25. No, Cumberland, "3/25" does not mean three shillings twenty-fivepence. Ellik says, "You review fanzines; extrapolate." Well, perhaps he used the wrong word, but he says extrapolate, so extrapolate I must for the gentleman. I review fanzines. Hence it follows that I read fanzines. So I must receive fanzines. These fanzines must be edited by someone. In some cases this person asks me to extrapolate. However, I would much rather give with a simple review.

"I WAS BORN IN 1931 IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DEPRESSION--OUR BEDSPRING SAGS VERY BADLY."--Bob Shaw: Q. UANDRY

And then there is a little thing called NUCLEONICS (I took notes from that for my report on the cost of atomic power in Chemistry class year before last--do you smell something rotten in Northern Ireland?), Larry Bourne, 3709 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Portland, Oregon. This is a sketchy start which reminds me somewhat of Walston's be ginning. Bourne says he pub s monthly. I dunno. It shows promise, tho. Halfsize, 16 pages, 10c, 3/25, and optimistically enough, 12/\$1.00. I like that.

Three fifths of a page left to go. Let's see. Maybe I should talk about this issue of Umbra. In other words, start apologizing. Well, I am sorry about that repro. Three fifty down the drain. Oh, by the way, is anyone you know of interested in buying a ditto machine? Mine, as you can see, won't take type, but it's OK for art. If you know anybody who'd want it only for that, let me know, will you?

You'll hear from me again before February, whether it's just Renew or Umbra 5. Already I have a backlog. Curses. My fingers are slipping more than usual. And it's 7 pm already.

By the way, I happen to be the East Coast representative of the fortnightly Aussie newsletter, Etherline. Just wanted to remind you. West Coast representative is Larry Stark. Middle Westerners get the power of choice.

Wish I could find a Rotsler illo around here. Got a whole batch in the beginning of summer, then it faded out and away. I'll probably find them by Xmas. The cover was one illo that strayed away from the rest and stayed on top.

The light is getting rather poor now. I think I'd better end this sojourn now. Maybe contribute one of my Qwn illos. In fact, it's an idea.



The primitive man
feared the lightning.



HOPE IN
THE FACE OF
ADVERSITY

Let me hear from you,

John



Observing the Gestetner.

UMBRA

Terry Carr
134 Cambridge
San Francisco 18, Calif.

10



Printed matter only
Third class mail
Return postage guaranteed
Form 3547 requested
Remove staple(s)
beneath address
label, please.
Fourth issue; autumn.
John Hitchcock
15 Arbutus Ave
Baltimore 28-Md

You are a subscriber ☐
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I would appreciate a review ☐
We trade fanzines (presumably each other's) ☒
I would like to trade with you ☐

I would appreciate your comment ☐
I would appreciate your criticism ☐
(The above are in special cases. Your
comment and criticism are invited in any
case.)

This is a free sample, and unfortunately
the reproduction herein is below even my ☐
heartbreakingly low standards.
This is a complimentary copy, and luckily ☐
for you the reproduction is standard.
This is a contributor's copy, and luckily ☐
for me, I remembered to make good.

ever? Well, so don't sell any dirty post cards to the ant chilluns. Hear? I am I faint?

Personal message (very): I believe I
owe you some monetary amount. Please
let me know if I do and I will gladly
pay up. I can't sleep nights. ☐

Your magazine is reviewed herein. ☐
One or more of the items herein, I feel sure
will interest you in some way. ☐

This is that fanzine thing I was telling you
about. Remember? ☐

Note: In case any of you might want the ad-
dress of one of UMBRA's contributors, con-
tact me and I will gladly give it to you by
return mail, if possible.

This typerwriter is a holy terror on the
fingers, but it's the only good piece around,
and besides it has a 14 inch carriage, so
I can make you dizzier than normal if I
want to. Bow a little lower--oh, you fell
over? Well, so don't sell any dirty post cards to the ant chilluns. Hear? I am I faint?