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E D I T O R I A L

In response to the overwhelming number of requests (the exact digit was 1, ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~being~~ which was really overwhelming) to jump up the circulation of VHS, I have decided to turn this sheet into a subscription magazine.

This change brings many others in its wake. Firstly, it will henceforth be mimeographed. Secondly, it will keep a regular bi-weekly schedule. And thirdly, the editorial policy will not remain what it was. The issues that have already appeared were integrated with no thought of reader interest and less of public opinion, but in the future, as the life-blood of money now courses thru the once-free veins, every care will be taken. I will dispense with slam-bang criticism a la Duncan, and turn to a much milder form of grubbing after the hidden truth, with an occasional nugget of fiction and poetry if the mood happens to strike.

VHS will, however, remain primarily an organ of criticism, and will not hesitate to carry in plain type my opinions and outlook on the stf world in general, and the fan field in particular.

Needless to say, I will welcome any and all letters that you may care to send me about material that appears on this page. My personal correspondence is small enough so that I can accomodate almost any number more correspondents. And in line with this, I will also welcome exchange subscription propositions; in fact, I will give any fan editor 2 issues of VHS for 5¢ in payment of a long term subscription to their amateur effort.

And lastly, let me caution any reader not to expect news in VHS. Definitely, and let me emphasize this, definitely I do not intend to attempt to enter into competition with the leading stf news sheet, FANTASY-NEWS. No "scoops" will appear in this sheet unless I happen to be very, very lucky, or make the news myself.

That much wind under the bridge-work, I will continue. -----

VAN HOUTEN SAYS-----Chicago, ah, Chicago! Once a land of flowering fans and sprightly SFL chapters; now a wasteland with the chalky bones of oblivion and the IFF sticking out of its smoking sands. Reineberg's Rough Riders vs. the Hounds of Hamling, and the country round is pitted ray blasts and H.E.shell holes. And the beaten slink about the ruins -scraping ooties and thinking about their faded glories.

Not that Hamling didn't have it coming. On good authority I have it that he is not a nice person to know, being afflicted with a monster of a superiority complex, which drives him to oppose any and all plans that are not the brainchild of the Hon. Hamling.

But that isn't important. What really counts is that it puts ~~them~~ for the 1940 convention on a speculative basis once more. If the IFF is to have dissention within itself, how will it be able to cope with the tremendous task of planning a world convention? Is this merely a preliminary streamlining prepstory to throwing itself into action without hampering voices in its ear, or is it a blow, death tellingly right at the start of its rise to fame?

I nor anyone else I trow, wouldn't like to hazard a guess right now, but I'm afraid that this puts the IFF, and the convention committee in a compromising position, indeed.

VAN HOUTEN SAYS - - - Thru snaky and clandestine channels, which did not entail any sort of purchase on my part, I had the opportunity to read the November UNKNOWN this week, and I must say it's pretty frowsy. "But" said Editor Campbell when I said I didn't like weird fiction, "do you know why you don't like it? Because you haven't read any really good & different weird fiction. And that's what I intend to print in UNKNOWN. You'll like it, never fear."

At the time, I risked being drawn and quartered by shaking my head in a dubious manner. Since then I have passed thru the successive stages of wrinkling my nose, sneering quietly, sneering very loudly, and throwing the magazine across the room. This last is what I did with the said November issue.

In its way I suppose it had its merits, but I didn't like it. It stank Super heroes and plots made out of thin air, impossible wish-fulfillments and grotesque quirks of situation. Written purely and openly as "escape" literature, something for the frustrated ego to turn to for solace. Well, I guess I haven't a frustrated ego.

Anyway, here is how it stacked up for me.

COVER- good. The best thing about the whole mag. INSIDE ILLUSTRATIONS- bad, either cartoons or just----bad.

1. THE MONOCLE by H W Guernsey. This story takes place, not on the strength of its hoary plot or the superman, Ardent, but for its courageous ending. While not strickly refreshing, it was certainly better than having the two principles united in the end.

2. THE BRONZE DOOR by Raymond Chandler. Old plot, garlish and unbalanced character, pat ending. Not my formula for a classic, but it was well-written.

3. THE QUESTION IS ANSWERED by Steward Todd or Toland, or whatever happened to be the gentleman's name. Maybe, just maybe, it is a pathological possibility, but I doubt it. Nothing weird, nothing unknown----nothing.

4. SONS OF THE BEAR GOD by Norvell W Page. Of all the super super-heroes, Prester John is the most nauseatingly perfectly boring. His endless cutting off of heads and arms and halving of bodies is nauding tripe for my taste, and shows an intrinsical juvenility of the author. Much too obviously meant as a wish fulfillment.

5. DAY OFF by H L Gold. One of the just plain bad things.

VAN HOUTEN SAYS - - - I wonder what happened to Michaelism (pronounced Michaelism)? Its idealistic perpetrator, John Blythe Owen Michsel, and his abortive brain-child seems to have dropped out of the public fever very quickly. His frightened attempts to lard things over by crying that a Michaelist was one who thought science-fiction could be a force for world good (which drove many celebrities to sponsor the view that it couldn't) didn't gull the poor fans as much as he hoped. Michaelism is idealistic Communism, or Technocracy, or Socialism, as the case may be and does not mean merely that a person believes that the spirit of stf is a good force and will accomplish something. This definition includes nearly every fan, and some of them resent being associated with a group who are admitted Communists.

Hence, I see now, the resistance I encountered when I stated that science-fiction was for something more than reading material. They thought I was a Michaelist; a Communist. No, friends, Dr. Clark in particular, you are laboring under a delusion. You were hooked, to a small extent, and I got the dirty end of the stick.