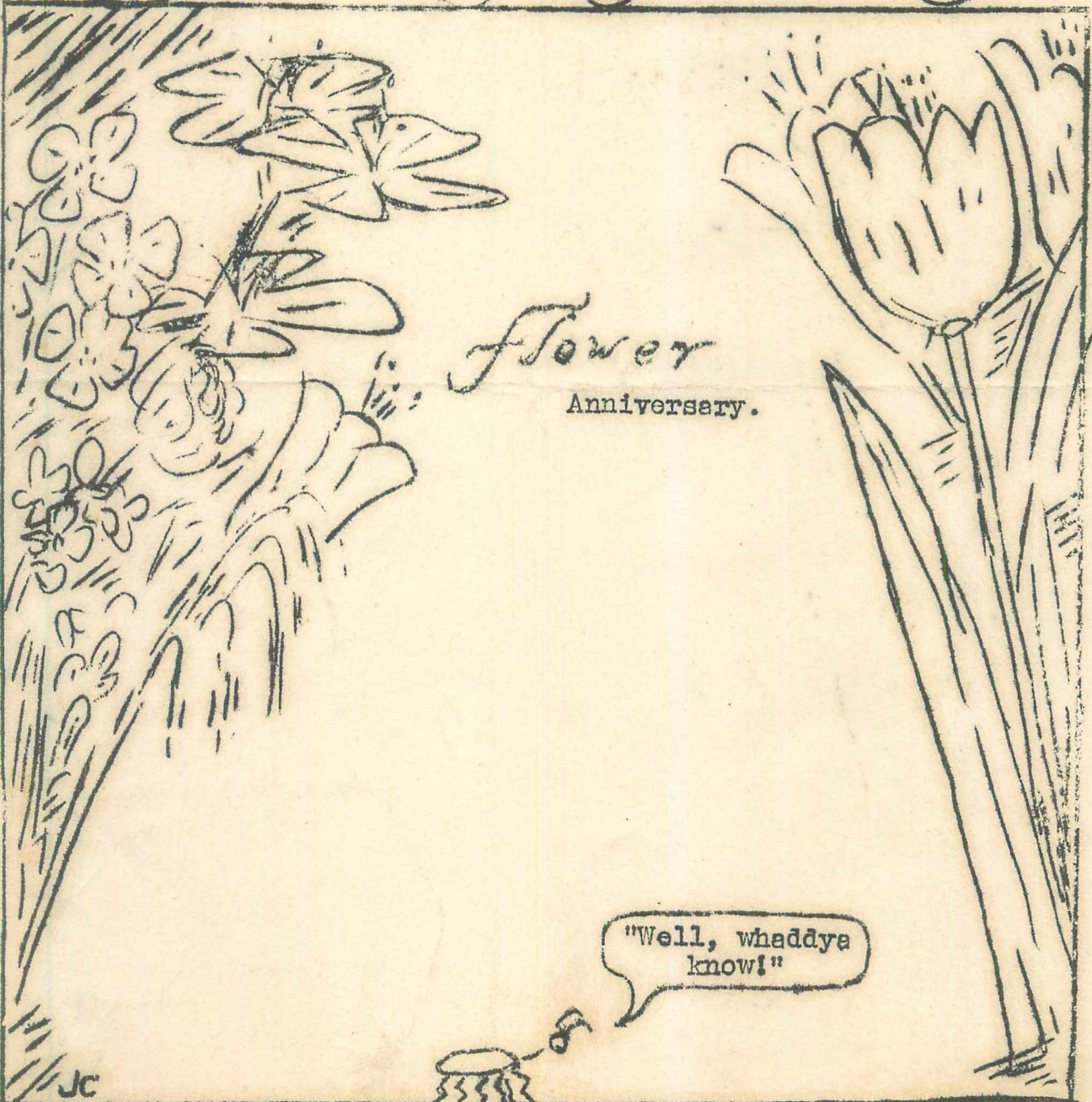


"VAN HOUTEN SAYS"
FOURTH ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE



Flower
Anniversary.

"Well, whaddya know!"

JC

STUFF

I can't believe it! With this issue, VHS goes into its fifth volume; VHS, which started as a one-page, carbon copied give-away back in 1938. Nothing could have then induced me to believe then that people would actually enjoy and pay for what I could give them, but it happened, and we're now a successful subscription magazine.

We have come a long way since that first "dirty sheet of paper", and still we are at the bottom of the ladder. I have realized right along, of course, that one sheet of paper does not constitute a stiff fan mag which many people will read, and those of you who have supported me have not only my sincere thanks, but my sympathy as well. Even the mere technicalities, mimeographing, typing, etc., have been handled in a lax and sloppy manner. The art work, due to the novelty of the medium to Mr. Cadrell, and our lack of proper equipment, has not been so good. Certainly not as good as it should have been, noting that Jack has produced "SPACEWAY'S" best-liked cover to date.

I am not going to promise you that VHS will henceforth appear with 20 pages per issue, super-mimicing, and all the rest of the trimmings. But I will say this --- whatever improvements I can make, I will make. Heretofore (and probably at times hereafter) the purse has been quite empty, and I have been glad to put out even a two-page affair. In such cases, you will have to bear with me, and hope for better days. Most of my troubles can be traced back without much trouble to a budget balanced precisely upon the zero mark.

Which brings us up to date. This issue, I hope, will come as a pleasant surprise. Let's hear what you think of it in any case.

Don't forget that the membership list of the INTELLECTUAL BROTHERHOOD OF PRO-SCIENTISTS is open. All you need is your confidence in science and a thin dime. While we're not going to change the world overnight, or anything like that, we certainly do not intend to sit back any longer and watch science and science-fiction be twisted to say things which are against themselves. If you have the courage to back up your PRO-SCIENTIFIC convictions, we want you in the IBP.

P.S. - The dime is not a membership fee, but a fund which will be used to defray pre-organization expenses. No attempt to elect officers or adopt a constitution will be made until we have at least 50 members. If you plan to add your name to the membership role of the IBP, NOW is the time. Do not hesitate to BE A PRO-SCIENTIST!

Subscriptions which expire with this issue are: Lee Blatt, Jos. Gilbert, and Harry Schmarje. Prompt renewal would be appreciated.

Art work in this issue was done by Paterson's fan artist, Jack Cadrell. Jack's drawings are an issuely feature of VHS and the SCIENCE FICTION FORWARD, the fan mag with a purpose.

VAN HOUTEN SAYS, published sporadically by Ray Van Houten, 26 Seeley St., Paterson, N. J. 3 issues for 10¢. No literary material required. Exchange subscriptions respectfully solicited.

Congratulations to Editor Reiss for the new artist for "Planet", Rosenthal. I enjoy his work fully as much as the inimitable Bok's, and I am of the opinion that his style of illustrating is more suited to science-fiction than the more macabre presentation of "Astonishing" protege. Bok's place is in weird fiction (and without a doubt there is a place there for him), but science-fiction is out of tune with his super-imaginative character.

While handing out the credit lines, it would certainly be appropriate to mention that Ray Bradbury was the boy who talked the editors into giving Bok his chance. The fact that Bok would have emerged into the field willy-nilly does not detract in my mind from the commendable spirit shown by Bradbury in his crusade for a fellow fan. More fan talent would fructify if the fans themselves were a little more spirited in their praises of fan fiction, illustrations, and fan mags. It hurts no one to give the other fellow a boost whenever you can.

I know for a fact that there are several fan mag editors who are very anxious for an editorial post on one of the pro mags, but none of them can get a look-in. Also fans by the hundreds have been submitting material for a good many years and have failed to click, not because their stuff was not good enough (it couldn't have been as bad as some of the "professional's" work), but because the editors believe that a story written by a familiar name will be accepted beforehand as bona-fide, where a nobody will fall flat because he is a nobody.

The editors will tell you, and their dupes will sagaciously verify their words, that "all manuscripts are judged solely on their merits, and 'big names' do not influence the decision". They neglect to mention the fact that the "big name" constitutes 51% of the "merit" in their eyes.

It is not accidental that four authors write one third of the science-fiction which appears from month to month. These authors do not appear so fluently because they are the four best authors in the field. Editors are notoriously the poorest gamblers in the world. They must have what they consider a "sure thing", so they buy all the stuff that these "masters" turn out. On the basis of past performances, these four authors are most apt to turn out an average story, and that's all ye ed asks for.

And that, of course, with notable exceptions, accounts for the general scalliness of science-fiction today. If science-fiction editors were doing the best they could, and judging manuscripts solely on their merits, it would be editorial suicide to print such tripe as "Volcano Slaves of Mu", and "The Triumph of Captain Future".

The solution of the difficulty lies as I see it with the fans. They are the articulate audience and should be able to do much toward the ousting of the kakistocracy. But they must do it, and not let things just ride. The fan field can be scored deeply for its lack of ambition. Many of the evils existing today would never have reached the peaks they have if we fans had concerted in denunciation of them. We all want better science-fiction, we all know what is wrong with the science-fiction we get each month, and we all know what must be done to gain our ends. So why not do it?

The overtures to the PRO-SCIENCE campaign have been quite as good as could have been asked. The IBP has 14 cohorts signed and sealed away with more mail arriving every day. Seemingly the fans realize the paramount importance of this thing, and are planning to get behind the movement in toto. Statements of accord and support have come from all

sides, and it would seem that science-fiction has at last awoke to its own importance. Nothing short of a blitzkrieg can possibly stop us, and woe to the errant blitzkreiger who tries!

As was expected, walls of plush-lined protests were heard from professional quarters. They didn't dare to antagonize us too much for fear of having the deadly label of ANTI-SCIENTIST slapped across their pussies, but you could see 'em wriggle, all right.

It's funny how things suddenly light up when the issues in a muddled-up affair finally emerge from the chaos. People you would have traded with your life abruptly become your worst enemies, and guys you have always looked upon as hare-brained numbskulls become paragons of wisdom. It has been like that in the case present. My scientific perspective has shifted many degrees since the Dark Ages of 1937, and not all of the change has made me happier. The near-treason of one fan in particular gave me probably the greatest shock, because it was so damn unexpected. A respected correspondent, on whom I had counted as "in" from the start, wrote me the following line: "The truth is, Ray? (he wrote) that I can't support you in this movement."

I will not mention his name, for I fear to place him in a compromising position. I am convinced that he has let minor issues cloud his vision, and does not really believe that he can't support this movement. I hope and expect his speedy return to the fold.

Dr. John D. Clark also wrote me a letter. He stated that he does not agree with the "Pledge of the PRO-SCIENTIST" in the matter of the scientific slaughter of homo sap by homo sap. He is, he states also, all in favor of selling those destroyers to England, and if it were possible, to equip each with a death ray machine. Just what the connection is between these two statements, I cannot fathom.

Hitler's use of refined methods of bringing about the demise of all and divers opponents on the field and at home was a rank, calamitous, and positively unjustifiable perversion of the sciences of chemistry and aeronautics. England's use of airplanes and explosives in the defence of herself was obligatory. She had no choice. You do not pervert science when you use it to defend yourself against a perverter of science and hence, Dr. Clark, your last objection to the pledge has been removed. I confidently await your dime.

It is very easy to fall into misconceptions of world events such as the one which I have just clarified for the good doctor. Make sure, all of you, that you know exactly what both you and I are talking about before you draw any conclusions on this matter of PRO-and ANTI-SCIENCE. As I have reiterated many times, I am willing, even anxious, to answer all queries to the best of my ability provided return postage is included. If anything is bothering you, won't you please consult me? I am in earnest in this crusade for science-fiction, and nothing will be too great an effort to convince you that I am right. I believe that if fandom accepts whole-heartedly which I have outlined, science-fiction, science, and the world at large will be augmented and benefitted. It's certainly a goal to try for, isn't it?

Sammy Moskowitz has in his possession a manuscript which, if printed, will do fandom no good. It's a screwball thing about the Futurians called "The Immortal Storm" or "Blitzkrieg over Fandom", and relates the story, as yet incomplete, of the great scientific war.

The Futurians start out of the Ivory Tower and capture Brooklyn fandom, mopping up Manhattan by the wayside. They then start a campaign against New Fandom in New Jersey and succeed, against hard fighting,

in dribbling back the NF forces to Philly, where the tattered remains await the coming of fresh troops from the Middle West. Sam read what he had finished of it at the August meeting of the NSFL, and it's certainly a riot.

However, regardless of the amusement which might be had from its perusal, I do not like the idea of starting up again the stale and uninteresting NF-Futurian feud. Nothing in the way of a solution will result, despite the wild talk by certain distant fans of a "reconciliation". I have seen no evidences of such a move from the NF group. Although I am not averse to good clean fun, the reincarnation of this pointless and rather odious dispute would not be to my liking, and I wot not to the liking of the majority of fandom, either.

In the latest ("Christmas") issue of SUN-SPOTS appear several statements which I find myself disbelieving. Since the statements were about myself and P. Duncan, a fan with whom I am well acquainted, I feel sure that I will be able to once more attempt to set the Solaroiders straight and lead their wandering noses back into the mellow light of truth and veracity.

Roderick Gaetz ruminates that he is very surprised to discover that R. Van Houten is not the guiding genius of the IBP, but that high office is held by none other than P. Duncan and the S-FF. I would be very surprised to discover that fact also, roddy, ole pal, for as a matter of fact, the moon might as well be made of green cheese. If you will once more scan the last issue of VNS, you will find that P. Duncan's name is not mentioned in connection with the IBP, and it is not even intimated that he is so much as a member of the organization.

From my personal contacts with you Westwood boys, and from your subsequent writings upon this subject, you appear to think that my personal opinions are the basic tenets of the IBP, instead of what I have said is its basis. I resent your intimations that I am a liar and a two-timer very strongly. I have not the reputation for saying one thing and meaning another, and I do not intend to acquire it, legitimately or otherwise.

So, Gaetz-Dole Ree-Plotkin, let me caution you against further insinuations of that nature. You have joined the IBP, and have declared your PRO-SCIENTIFIC leanings, and for that I thank you. Don't be a traitor to your own cause.

Here is the basic policy of the INTELLECTUAL BROTHERHOOD OF PRO-SCIENTISTS:

Science, as such, is neither a force for good or a force for evil. Only the technology, the use of it affect Mankind. Science has infinite potentialities for good. All uses of science to the detriment of the human race are perversions.

Science has been and is being perverted mercilessly. Advances in machinery cause unemployment, physics and chemistry are being used to destroy human life, and the sciences of astronomy and ballistics are chiefly used to plot the courses of H.E. shells. All this is perversion of science.

Due to the fact that such evils are brought about apparently by the advancement of science, many people have reached the conclusion that science itself is evil, and therefore should be curtailed with no delicate hand. And they say this in many places.

The IBP intends, by presenting the facts in the case, to set the world straight on these matter, to the best of its ability. And we intend to start with science-fiction. We say, BE A PRO-SCIENTIST.