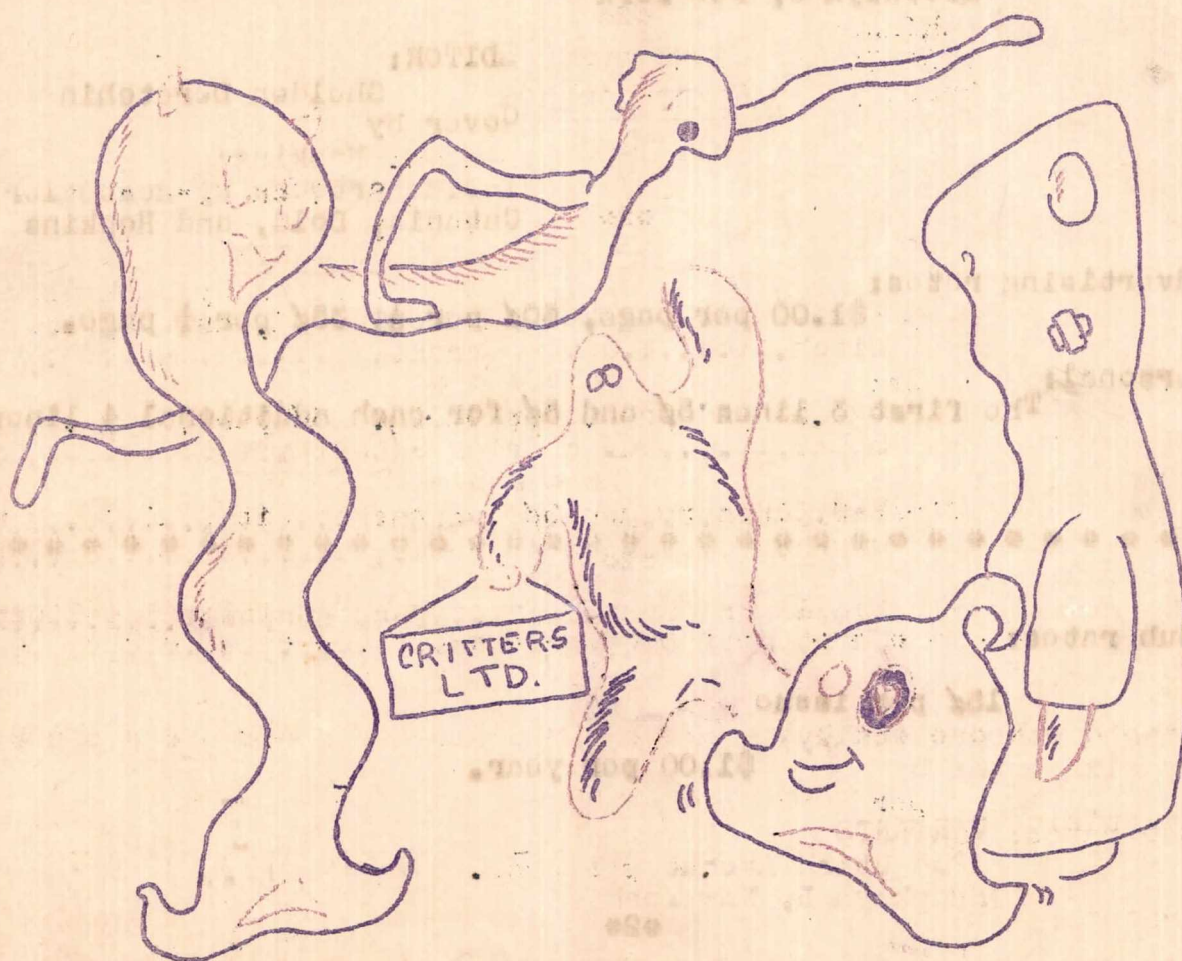


VARIANT WORLD

Vol 1
No 5

15¢



VARIANT WORLD

Vol. 1-#5

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V A R I A N T I A

With this ish, as I promised several important changes have been made in V.W! I've got a mimeo of my own now and this should enable me to be on a definite 6 - 7 week schedule starting with this ish.

Of course there might be other things that could hold up publication, but these are negligible. It's the mimeo that counts - as any faned knows.

Anyway, check on the time between this and last ish, and see for yourself.

I'm also trying to bring you the best material that can be gotten. To prove this, I'm running in this ish one of the most unusual items ever to be found in a fmz, a play. I don't think I've ever seen a play pubbed in a fmz, and it's a damn shame too. Sometimes a play is the only medium that can convey to an audience (readers or otherwise) the atmosphere that the author tries to give to it. I honestly believe that the play, WITCH, is one of those times.

But you don't have to take my word for it. Read it for yourself and see how really wonderful it is.

You've probably noticed that the cover for this ish is ditto'd instead of mimeo'd. This is because I had the use of the office ditto for awhile and decided it was too much trouble to mimeo the cover. Didn't cost me anything anyway.

Cantania illoed his own articles in #3. This is for those of you who didn't recognize the style.

Catania's in thish too. This time with a semi-serious article about BEMs. The boy can write if he tries.

The proposed charter will be found on the last few pages as I promised. Please vote on it by not writing unless you don't like all or part of it and would like to make a change. It'll save a lot of work. Results will be pubbed in #7 or 8.

My thanx to Bob Barth, 35 Glenhill Road, Mattapan 26, Mass. for helping out with the charter.

Does anybody know the whereabouts of Roy C. Seiler? I know he moved but I can't find his present address.

After this ish is printed, nominations for candidacy will be accepted until April fifth as described in the Charter, Article V, section two.

3

cont. next page

Variantia (cont.)

How about sending in some material? I know you got tired of seeing the same old request but do you think I feel when I look in my file for material and find I have none?

As a matter of fact, until about two weeks after #3-4 was printed, it was so bad that all this ish would've contained would be, the cover, the contents page, the editorial, the charter and the backcover. However, thanks to such swell people as Fred Chappell, A.C. Catania, Hank Moskowitz, and above all, Dave Merron, this ish is turning out pretty swell.

So, how about sending in some good material? I'd like articles especially (preferably humorous or semi-serious) but I don't refuse to look at anything just as long as it's good. I've got no prejudices against anything that makes good reading.

Yo edde now has something that should make a collector give both his eye teeth for. I'd like to see anybody else with a copy of Galaxy, Voll. #1 - signed by John W. Campbell! (and H.L. Gold too.)

Want to read something really unusual? Moebius S-F Novel #1, "The Lives and Times of a Schrugian Guk" has some of the most entertaining and funniest, as well as unusual reading you've ever seen.

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To get this epic mag, which is something no fan should pass by, send ~~10¢~~ to: Moebius, c/o yo ed (address on contents page) and you'll get your copy by return mail.

See you in Philly.....

Shel

P.S. I found out Roy Seiler's address after
this had been typed.

WITCH - A play

(For Wilkie Conner, who likes bitter-bit endings)

by
Dave Merron

Scene: a cross-country store. It is a small shack in the backwoods of North Carolina. Cattle Feed, "shorts", fertilizer, and grass seed are stacked in burlap sacks against the walls of the shack. Red peppers and tough grass and cotton ropes line the walls. There is a small counter with streaked meat and fatback laid on top of it, all covered in greasy brown paper from torn-up paper bags so that the flies can't get to it. A dorr with a dirt-covered windows is in the back of the hut, just to the left of the counter. A lantern hanging down from the ceiling is in the exact center of the room.

Three men are seated on three nail kegs, just under the lantern. They are playing cards on a table having another nail keg for the base, with the lid from a great barrel for the top of the table.

Lang: A youngster of about seventeen years of age is seated facing the door on his left, with his back slightly toward the audience. He is rather tall, but a little stoop-shouldered with fair hair and a clean-shaven face. He talks much and excitedly.

"Uncle": An oldish man of about sixty-five with a bald head and a red nose. He is wearing a red sweat shirt, cut off shortly and raggedly in the sleeves, and dirty, dark-blue "coveralls", unbuttoned down the sides with galluses twisted awry.

Ed: Sits facing the audience, with his back directly to the door. He talks much. He is self-confident and rough and he is winning at the cards. He takes, more often than the others, big drinks from the kerosene jug full of whiskey on the table. He is wearing short "joans" and a loud, but very soiled shirt.



Outside, the weather is stormy. The rain beats fiercely and the wind howls around the tightly-closed door. --- Ed holds his cards under the slightly swaying lantern, as if peering at them to bring them in focus. Then he takes two cards from his hand and lays them in the middle of the table. ---

WITCH (cont.)

Ed: "Here, deal me two, Uncle."

Lang: I need three, here.

--- Uncle discards and gives himself three. ---

Ed: Sure is hell out there --- I'd sure hate to be out in it.
--- Raises Lang two --- Sure is hell.

Uncle: I don't like it, No How. -- He doesn't raise. Calls Ed's hand. -- Black weather out there tonight. Witchin' weather.

Lang: Yop. I remember it was just like this about this time last month. -- Throws down his cards disgustedly. He has only a pair of queens -- That was when they found Mary Bently over in Haw Creek. My God, she was a sight! The witches had rid her, sure as I'm born.

Ed: Aw hell, witches. I don't take no stock in that mess. -- Peers at Uncle's cards, then at Lang's. Finds that he has won. Uncle had three kings; Ed had three aces with a two-jack bumper. -- Hell, that's the way I like to play a hand. Gimme a swig o' that likker. -- Laughing hoarsely, he takes the jug to his mouth, letting the raw liquor pour straight down. A bit drips from his chin. Finally, he sets the jug down on the table and sighs. --

Uncle: Here, give me that, Ed. -- takes a swallow. Sets it down. --

Lang: it's true, Ed. I seed her. They found her out in the Alfalfa field with big streaks in it wher she was rid aroung. And they found grass in her hair, all tangled up, and dirt under her fingernails. And they was little toothmarks, like os made by a cat, all over her. -- He is shuffling the cards rather inexpertly, and the repititious thunder and lightning make his hands tremble badly.

Ed: Don't bend them cards, damn yo. -- Laughs a little. --- Hell, the way that Bently gal drunk, there ain't no tellin' what couâda rid her. She prob'ly got so corked up, she rid herself.

Uncle: Don't talk like that, Ed. It ain't good to say things like that on a night like this.

---A jagged lightning streak illumines the dim corners of the room for a moment. A thunder clap shakes the shack for a second. It startles them all badly. They are silent for a moment, the Ed recovers. ---

Ed: Gimme 'at jug. ---. He drinks a long time ---

-- Lang finally deals the hand. --

WITCH (cont.)

Ed: I say Mary Bently wasn't rid by no witch. Hell, I'd say it if ole Phoebe herself was to come in right now.

Uncle: Now, Ed, don't you go to talkin' about ole Phoebe; not on a night like this, Ed.

Lang: Phoebe's a witch, sure an' proper. They say she's married to the Ole Man hisself.

Uncle: The Ole Man Hisself

Lang: He witched her good. Put her with that ole toad. He witched her with it and wherever it goes, she's got to go too. She has to foller it all the time. When it moves, she moves, and she cain't go nowheres without it.

Ed: If she ever comes around here, I'll throw some pepper in her ugly face. She won't wait for no ole toad then, by God...Here, can anybody beat this? -- He shows his hand; three jacks, a joker, and a nine-----

Ed: Four Jacks, by God. -----Laughs-----

Lang: Three tens --- I'm beat.

Uncle: Pair o' queens and a pair o' kings. I'm beat, too. --- Takes a big drink from the jug, and passes it on to Lang, who also drinks loud and long.-----

Ed: She jes' better not come around here, or, by God, I'll kill her.

Uncle: You better not say that, Ed. The Devil hisself will witch them as hurts ole Phoebe. The devil hisself will get yo, Ed.

Ed: I said it, an' by God, I'll do it. --- Laughs hoarsely. --- The Ole Man'll git us all sooner or later anyways. --- Gets jug from Lang. Laughs again. Tilts jug and sets it down with a bang. --- Hell, this 'uns" empty. --- Sets it under table. -- My deal. Gimme them cards. --- Deals one card around. --- Hell, wait a minute, I'll get another jug. --- Goes to corner facing audience. ---

Slowly the door opens, and Phoebe enters, preceded by a toad, which promptly hops under a chair. She closes the door silently and stands rubbing her hands together, grateful for the warmth and protection that the shack affords. Lang and Uncle stand transfixed with horror. Ed finds a full jug, pulls out the corn-cob stopper and takes a long draught. Then, he stumbles back toward the table, dropping the stopper on the floor. Setting the jug on the table, he notices Lang and Uncle staring past him at Phoebe. ---

WITCH (cont.)

Ed: Now what's the matter with you two? You look like you've
seed the Devil.

Lang: Ed, it's....it's....

....Ed turns around sees Phoebe for the first time. He grips the
edge of the table. He reaches behind him for the jug, but Uncle has
it. He turns back around. -----

Ed: Gimme that likker!

----- Uncle hands it to him. -----

Ed: Well.... ---- He puts it down, turns around and surveys
Phoebe again. She is very old and bent. Her hair is matted with
filth. She is wearing a dirty gray dress with a filthy pink shawl
over her shoulders. --- Hello, Phoebe, where's yer ole toad
tonight? You couldn't of come without him, could you now? --- He
laughs nervously. ----

Phoebe: Oh, Gibbie's here, Ain't you, Gibbie?

---- The toad hops out from under the chair. Ed
recoils.....

Phoebe: Oh yes...now set still, Gibbie. Set still. Let me
rest my weary bones. Don't be signin' for me to go on yit. Set
still.....

Ed: Damn you Phoebe...why'd you come bringin' that dirty
frawg in here fer? I don't like for you to be around here.

Lang: Ed!

Uncle: Ed....Ed, don't you go startin' nothin' with Phoebe.
Leave her be, Ed. She'll witch you, sure.

Ed: Here, Phoebe ... have some of this likker. Ought to
warm you up. Want some for that toad, too? ---Laughs too loudly.---

---- She nods soberly and drinks. -----

Ed: Here, that's enough; that's all you're gonna get.

Phoebe: I'm cold and wet. Gimme some more, Ed. Just a
little bit. Just a sip, Ed.....

Ed: No! This's all you got. Now....got out. --- His
voice rises. -----

WITCH (cont.)

Phoebe: Don't make so much noise, Ed. That, ther, Gibbie, set still. Don't make me leave jost yit.

Ed: Damn yo! Get out!

Uncle: No! Don't Ed, you'll cause us all to get witched.

---- Lang reaches across the table to touch -d, and brushes off the card that Ed dealt to himself. It flutters to Uncle's feet; he reaches down and gets it. He recoils. Shows it to Lang. ----

Uncle: Lang! Lang!

----Lang turns pale

Lang: The Ace o' Spades!

Uncle: It's the bad-luck card! Ed, you give yourself the Ace o' Spades.

----Ed pays no attention to him.-----

Ed: You know what, Phoebe? Jes' b'fore you come in, we wuz talkin' about you...an' you know what I said? I wuz tellin' Lang and Uncle here. I tole them that if you ever come around here, I'd kill you.

--- The storm outside rises to new frenzies. Lightning flashes now recur more frequently and the thunder is louder than ever. The wind shrieks and yells. -----

Phoebe: --- She speaks as if she has not heard Ed at all. She stares at him, but does not see him. --- Oh, the Devil has come for me! He's up in the clouds a-laughin' and a-spittin' fire an' callin' all around for me! I got to go soon. He's a-waitin' for me. He's up thar an' the crazy-crazy Black 'Uns is gathered around him, screechin' and hollerin' an' waitin' for me. I got to go soon. It won't be long an' then I'll be there with 'om, a-ridin' in the storm with the Ole Man an' all the Black 'Uns....Hush thar, Gibbie, be still. I cain't go yit.

Ed: I said I'd kill you, Phoebe, I said it and, by God, I'll do it. I ain't skeored o' you, Phoebe. You and that damn toad are just too biggety,

Lang: Ed....Ed....Ed....

WITCH (cont.)

Uncle: Ed, you leaver her be. You'll be bewitched, sure as the world.

Ed: I ain't skeered, Phoebe. You cain't witch me...ain't nothin' as can witch me, 'cept maybe strong likker and plenty of it. I'm gonna kill you, jos' like I said I would, Phoebe.

Phoebe: Hear 'em? The Black 'Uns! Hear 'em howl around this here shack. They want me. Hear 'em scratch and claw at the door.

Ed: Phoebe.... ----He advances upon her very, very, slowly.---

Phoebe: ----She realized for the first time what is happenning.--- Stand back. Stay back, Ed. The Ole Man's come after me hisself. You can't hurt me, Ed. Not with the Ole Man....

Uncle: Ed! The Devil hisself!.....

-----Ed keeps advancing. Suddenly he stops. Phoebe reels and staggers; she turns halfway around and then collapses. With a little moan, she sinks to the floor.-----

Ed: God! I didn't even touch her! She must be dead. I didn't even touch her. ---He turns white...God! --- He turns back to the table and drinks heavily from the jug. Regaining his composure, he raises the jug in a grotesque salute. --- Here's to old Phoebe, boys. She's dead now. Let's see if we can drink her back to life. Here's to Phoebe: may she wake up and drag herself out of her and never come back! --- Drinks, passes jug around. They all drink heavily and then stare solemnly at Phoebe's inert body on the floor. --- Well, hell....she won't wake up. --- He kicks her. ----

Lang: No, no, Ed, no! You shouldn't of done that... He cries piteously.

Ed: Hell, she won't wake up. She's dead. I'm gonna dig her a grave. Even a witch has got to have a grave to lie in when she's cold dead. I told you she's die if she ever come around here. The Ole Man didn't ger her, anyways.... ----He lurches out mumbling. ---

Uncle: Gawd! I'm damned if I'd dig a grave for any witch. ---The toad hops around in the light. Uncle stares, horrified. --Lang! The toad...she's died and left the toad-frog.

--- Phoebe groans slightly. Then she gets up. She staggers all around and clutches the back of the chair for support.---

Phoebe: ...callin'...callin'....no...gotta go....

Lang: She's alive! --He and Uncle stand back. She comes to the table and stands under the light.---She's alive! We'v drunk her awake!

WITCH (cont.)

---She takes a drink from the jug.----

Phoebe: I hear you! The Black 'Uns is callin'Callin'. I gotta go. The Master of Hell is waitin'!

---She goes and opens the door. The wind howls greeting to her. Thunder yammers joyfully. She stands lined in the lightning. The door slams shut. They hear her outside. ---

Phoebe: I'm comin'! I'm comin'!

---- Uncle and Lang stand stupefied. Lang reaches for the jug, and then realizes that the witch had drunk from it and draws back his hand. Uncle drinks. ----

Lang: That toad's still here. She's gone and left Gibbie here, Uncle.

---The toad hops about. They shrink from it. ----

Uncle: Wish Ed'd come back in.

---The door is flung open and Ed comes in. His face is bleeding, and his expression is one of abject, absolute horror. His shirt is torn across the chest, and his chest, too, is bleeding.----

Ed: I seen 'em! I seen em! I seen the Devil ridin' a black cloud and laughin' lightnin' and the Black 'Uns yellin' and hollerin' and wantin' to tear me to pieces and tromp on me. And Phoebe went up to him and Hell opened up. I seen it! I seen it all!

Uncle: He's seed the Devil! He's witched sure!

Ed: Lemme have a drink, boys. I gotta have a drink.

---The toad hops and they notice it. Ed stares at it fascinated. He guzzles the remaining liquor and sets the jug down. Empty.-----

Ed: I'm comin', Gibbie. Be patient, I'm comin'.

---The toad hops out the door. Ed follows it. He stands for a moment in the doorway, and then goes out into the wind and the rain and the lightning and the thunder.

And just for a moment, just a second, Lang and Uncle hear the Ole man and the Black 'uns laught. ----

EGOBOO AND DREAMDUST

#4

by

Fred Chappell

Egoboo:

Shel has written that "why don't you write about how you named the column? That would make interesting material....". Well, I can only hope toward that end; --- the original "E&D" was on a scrapbook I once made. This scrapbook contained a couple of poems I had written and were lying about. (These will never be published.) It also contained a list of fan-fiction that I had written and had published...and another list ---of stories that I wished I had written. It began to get so that the "dreamdust" part so far overbalanced the "egoboo" part that I finally threw away the damned thing.

About that time I became aware that Solomon was oh; so right when in the Proverbs he said that, "that which is built on vanity shall pass away." I decided then that all I should write from then on should be for the reader's pleasure (if possible) and not for the selfish pleasure of seeing my name in print. I have adhered to this ideal since then, and I shall from now on. Thus, the title of this column is misleading now---which you will at once realize if you were unfortunate to read "E&D" #1.

I chose the original title for its euphony.

More Initials;

With initials of "cute" club names, and club names arranged for the initials to spell a word, I have decided to add a safe and sane set of initials to this mess: F.P.A.

What could be more anti-climactic?

Appropos of Nothing:

Why is it that when there are dashes (---) put in books to substitute for profanity? You always count the dashes just to make sure anyway.

The Great American Novel:

Every once in a while, you hear of some old-time pulp writer dropping stf to write "the great American Novel." Why any writer should drop the medium with which he is most familiar --- of which field he knows the workings --- is beyond me. I can see why, for instance, Fredric Brown writes the mystery and suspense novels he does, but I can not understand why Bradbury should drop fantasy to write his "great American novel."

BEMS

by A. Charles Catania

BEMS. They show up in science fiction stories, usually in place of the mean old villian who is going to foreclose the mortgage. BEM: Bug-Eyed Monster.

There are BEMS with tentacles and BEMS without. There are even some occassionally which go without the Bug-Eyes.

BEMS like to show up in illustrations, preferable on covers. They particularly enjoy themselves when they can be menacing the heroine while the hero standing nearby is valiantly preparing to rush in with his hyper-atomic-vortex-disintegrator blaster (A souped-up automatic). Then, since the characters are greatly hindered in their movements by the fact that printers ink is stationary, they just remain that way, on till the end of time.

Or until a science fiction author writes a story about the beings on magazines covers gaining life and animation.

BEMS come in several varieties. In some cases, the "Many-faceted insect eyes" are ringing the head "in clusters" (Words in quotes indicate that the words were used at one time or another, and I put them together in the order shown.) At times the many-faceted eyes don't have any facets. Instead the sense organ is the brain itself, and the sense, perception.

That word is a sneaky way of showing that the hero cannot get the BEM from behind to rescue the heroine, (If there is a difference between the front and back of the BEM in the first place) although the author may not mention until the end of the story the fact that this sense only extends for a short distance. This would enable the hero to start an avalanche, utilize remote controlled weapons, unleash a flood, devise a ray projector, or in some other way become more of a hero than he was in the first place.

Of course, while the BEM is trying to save himself, the hero swoops down and scoops up the girl, using the last of his fuel. But they will eventually manage to find a haystack. (Well, you don't expect the author to kill them off, do you?)

Tentacles are another interesting aspect of BEM's. Despite the fact that any sixteen-tentacled being would be 3.4×10^{56} times more agile than any two-handed man, the BEM always loses any hand-to-tentacle fights on cliff edges or outside spaceship air-locks. The author tries to give some sort of excuse (Copyarg Xrop, being from Jupiter, became weak in the slightly higher methane content of Saturn's atmosphere, and in a last mighty effort, Space-Commodore Tim Masters hurtled the multi-limbed creature down into the crater of boiling ammonia.

BEMs (cont.)

He turned to Aurora Dwan, who was watching in horror as the silicon-flesh slowly dissolved in the cauldron, and said, "Whow, Thank Klono for this methane atmosphere. Another few seconds and I would have been a goner!" which is usually rather flimsy.

And few writers can resist writing at least one BEMs-invade-the-Earth type story. (Typical title; BAT-WING D TYRANTS OF THE GALACTIC RIFT) Inevitably these BEMs come in several classes. The scientist-BEMs are small, with enormous, veined heads, and over-prying antennae. They, of course, are the brains of the race, the knowledge having been handed down among these inbred creatures (but the hero is smarter anyway).

There are always dumb BEMs also. (You'd think the smart BEMs would rather kill off the dumb ones and increase the birth rate among the scientists. But, cries the author, that would make it too tough for the hero). The dumb BEMs run around doing the bidding of the smart BEMs, and the hero is usually able to thwart the attack by utilizing them to his advantage. (And it is a most annoying habit of the hero to leave the world in the balance while he attempts to rescue the heroine. It seems he never gets to marry her by the time the story ends anyway.)

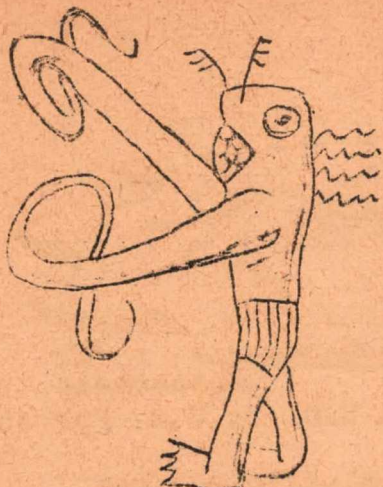
There may also be a dictator BEM and a few-odd Queen BEM. They are variables.

BEMs walk, fly, teleport or just sit there, depending on the requirements of the author. Occasionally (very Occasionally) a kindly BEM creeps into a story. These are interested in the fate of mankind, and can do one of several things; (1) Sacrifice themselves (last of the race) for humans; (2) Help against other BEMs. (if humans did that for BEMs, we'd call them traitors) (3) Just help. (4) Hang around for the comic relief.

BEMs also differ in size, and no matter how technologically advanced a BEM's race may be, if he is ten feet tall, he will resort to brute strength. If the hero had any sense, he would run. But the author makes him too smart for that. The hero revolutionizes a science and overpowers the Fem. (If a hero used a weapon against a villain in a detective or adventure story, it would be foul play. But then the hero would have no chance to show off to the heroine and revolutionize a science.

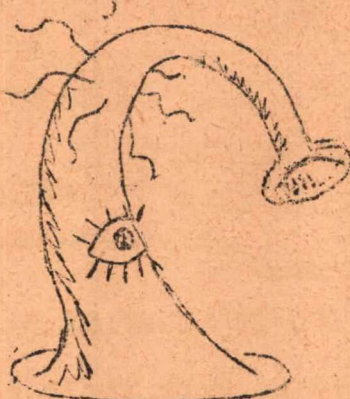
To sum it up, BEMs are not very appreciated.

MORAL: Don't be a BEM!

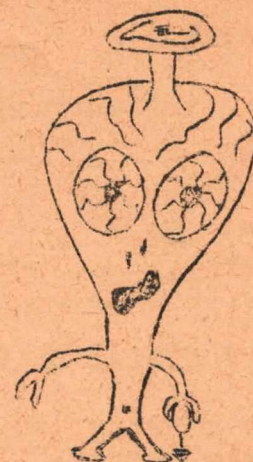


From: VAMPIRES OF THE
SPACE-LANES By E.A. Poe

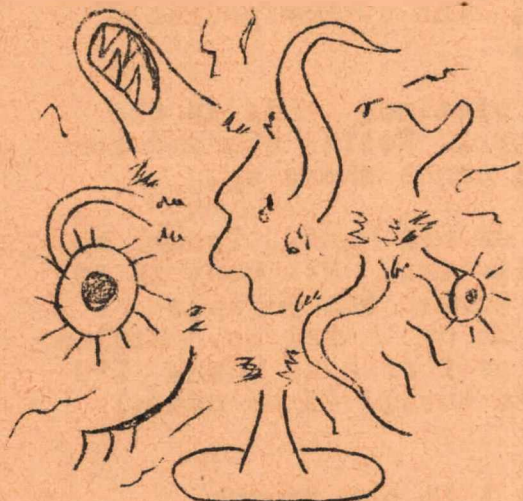
SOME TYPICAL BEINGS:



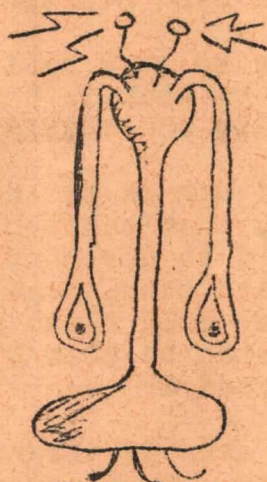
From: THOUGHT-THIEVES**
OF ALPHA CENTAURUS
by Homer



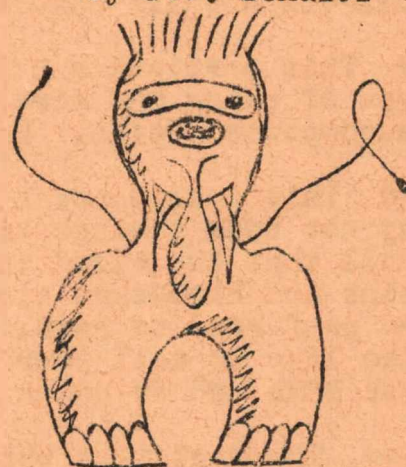
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THE SPACE GUARD
by Geo. Schultz



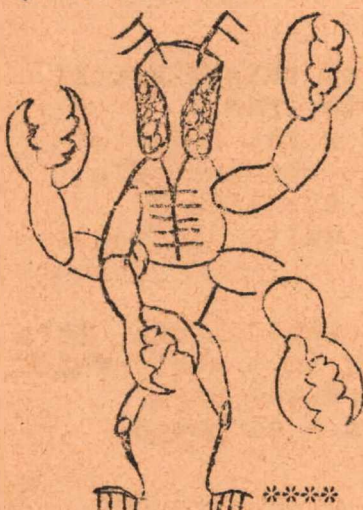
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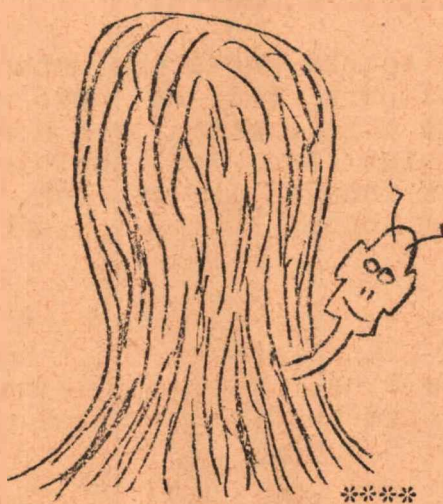
From: VANDALS OF THE ***
VENUSIAN WASTES
by Plato



From: BEASTS OF ***
THE ROAMING WORLD
by W. Shakespeare



From: THE LITTLE ***
PEOPLE OF MARS
by Louisa May Alcott

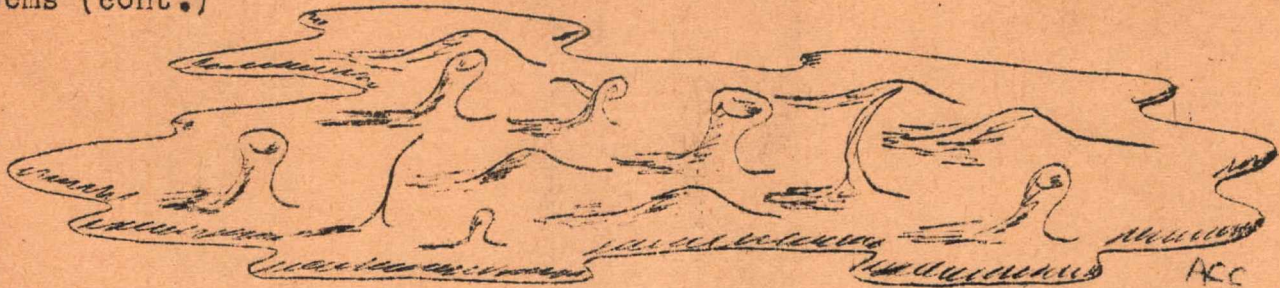


From: FLYING BLUE ***
DEVILS OF THE
ASTEROID BELT
by de Maupassant



From: Underwater ***
BIRDS OF THE
MARTIAN SWAMPS
by O. Henry

Bems (cont.)



From: VENUSIAN SLAVE GIRL AND THE SUBTERRANEAN MENACE by C.S. Forester

* It's amazing how BEMs love to keep their tentacles in perfect geometric curves. This particular BEM also keeps up with the fashions, you may notice. He's a little bashful, though, so he won't go Bikini. Also notice the vestigial organs on his back. The author probably believes details make the BEM more plausible.

** This particular BEM likes to suck up its victims. This is the type of thing the hero likes to stab in the eye. Notice the pad for pseudopodic motion. Here again the vestigial organ shows up.

*** This fellow has a swivel ear on the top of his head. Though he may not talk through his hat, that's how he listens. His body is so small that the blood is forced to his head. Notice the varicose veins and bloodshot eyes. Also note, most BEMs are hairless. Scales are preferred to hair. Clammy cold flesh is preferred to both. I'd also like to call your attention to this BEM's navel, as an example that BEMs are as human as anybody.

**** The fact that this one extends slightly into the fourth dimension limits our knowledge. That saves the author a lot of trouble in description. A favorite trick with this BEM is that it can rotate into the fourth dimension completely and appear anywhere it wants in ours. Luckily it's modest.

***** The appearance of sparks about the antennae of this BEM tell us that it is able to teleport, that is, move objects from a distance. The facts that this particular BEM rotates the objects through the fourth dimension (See ****) explains the absence of a mouth. It just teleports food to its stomach. And the linked factors of perception and teleportation can make it quite difficult for the hapless hero.

***** How would you try to explain this one? Go right ahead. It's unimportant comic relief BEM anyway. (The long sack is a nose, which it utilizes against other BEMs, like a blackjack, and the dark portion between the nose and the two papilled eye is a compound insect eye.)

***** Enlarged insects with lobster claws tacked on are also popular, as is shown. Notice the scaly body. The feet, of course, are inadequate, but it still looks better that way.

BEMs (cont.)

This is a logitimate BEM, which is not very common. BEMs actually having bug-eyes are out of fashion. The hero must beware of the probosis. Often it is poisoned. The antennae are there solely for the purpose of giving the hero a chance to cut them off and prevent the BEM from communicating with his associates.

***** This type of BEM is usually hunted for fur coats. The hero may be trapping the baby fur coats and then the mama fur coat comes along and attacks him. The depiction here is rather rare, showing this type of BEM with an extended perceptor unit usually slung beneath the body proper. The perceptor units contains all the sense organs of the creature, and sometimes contain a brain.

***** This creature lives in outer space, making trouble with heroes when rammed or otherwise disturbed by passing rocketships. Note the jet orifice at one end of the creature. By ejecting molecules absorbed by it, it can travel about. It absorbs solar energy for food, and, to be perfectly frank, is pretty stupid. As far as is known, it has only the sense of perception, and is often not conscious of the humans when it is mortally endangering them.

***** This likes to lie in wait and mimic the ground. The heroine just has to step on it, and without the hero's notice, she is engulfed. The hero will later cut her out, just as the body juices of the BEM are rising about her to start digestion. This is a fairly common type BEM, and may be found anywhere, so be careful.

***** A last type not illustrated is a liquidy blob which can imitate anything. It makes itself look like the heroine to lure the hero, and makes a general nuisance of itself. For instance, as editors they....But you can see for yourself.

% %

EGOB00 AND DREAMDUST (cont. from page 12)

Bradbury is primarily a fantasy writer --- true; he has written quite a few mysteries for Popular Pubs and others, but his fame now rests solely on his great stfantasy short stories and his one novel.

It is generally recognized that Edgar Allan Poe was America's principal short story writer; -- and his celebrated tales are of horror and fantasy. Why then should not the great American novelist be a fantasist? The eminent European literary critic, Gotthard Gunther, has said that the American field of modern literature is barren except for adult science-fiction. Therefore it seems to me almost inevitably logical that a great sf or fantasy novel has an excellent chance of becoming our great novel.

Q.E.D., as they say in Spanish.

THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE:

Sometime I should like to write a story about some old men of the future. One of these old men sees the mental lethargy of the rest. But it so happens that he is able to take in and comprehend the new sciences and modes of this new age, unlike the rest who cannot understand the modern age and forever maunder about the "good old days". He would be lonely....very lonely....

HOW I BECAME A FAN

by
Henry Moskowitz

This whole thing began, more or less, on May 5, 1952, when I mailed a letter to Shel, saying, "If you want some stuff--articles --done, then send me a list and I'll do as many as I can."

Obligingly, Shel sent a return letter, received on the 10th, which asked, "How about writing an article on 'How I Became a Fan'?"

I, in turn, sent a post card, saying, "I will start the article ...some time next week."

"Nice idea. Yes, sir. Wish I had thought of it myself."

That was on the 14th. Still May.

On May 23rd I received this: "VW #2 comes out in a week or so".

"so where's your article?"

On the 2nd I sent a letter, saying, "About that article? It was all done. Then I read it over, and I decided that I didn't like it. So I tore it up and burned it." This was now June.

On the 6th came this "OK, I won't need that article until the end of June anyway."

"Or will I? I might need it within the next week or so."

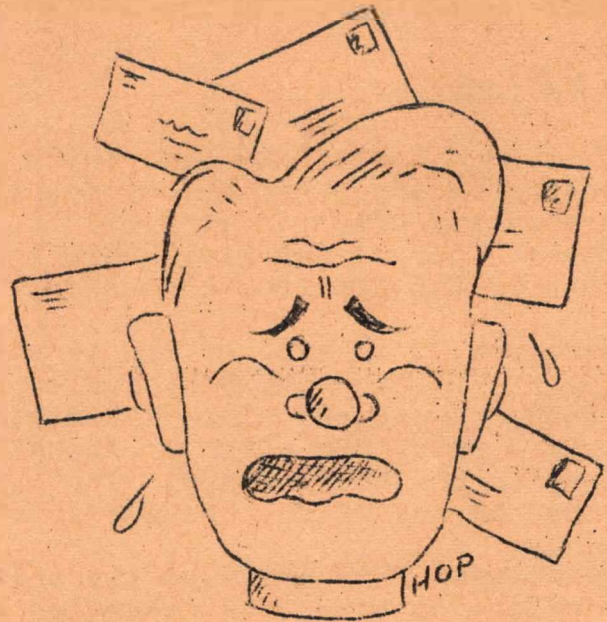
* - * - * - * - *

Here it is past the middle of the month; still June.

School is out. (A sigh of relief.)

"Shel still wants that article, Hank."

I look up and stop typing. There; sitting on nothing, is my conscience. "What the hell if he does? This story (supposedly professional) has got to be finished. This means money. What does that article for Shel and VW mean?"



PLEASE, SHEL --- ONE
MORE MONTH? MAYBE??

HOW I BECAME A FAN (cont.)

He looks hurt (have you ever seen a hurt-looking conscience?) "Remember what you said to Arthur, do you? Quote. Never let it be said that a Moskowitz did not come through with goods. Unquote."

"Well?" asked I, flint-eyed.

"Well??" asked he in return, steeley-eyed.

So here is the article.

* - * - * - *

It all began one night in New York City; on the East Side.

I stood there on the sidewalk in total blackness, a living shadow. It was dark, for, you see, the light in the street lamp above me was out.

A group of figures emerged from a nearby building. We exchanged a few words. Then one of them, a man, handed me a heavy suitcase, and I put it in the trunk of a black sedan standing at the curb. When they were all in the car, the smallest, a mere boy, handed me a bulky package. "Here," he said.

It all started there on the sidewalks of New York in late Spring 1948. He started it all. He was the cause, indirectly, of a turning point in my life.

Later I opened the package and found out what it contained. The May and August issue of AMAZING STORIES.

There were nine stories, all told; four of which were really great. In the May issue there were Armageddon, by Craig Browning, and Forgotten Hades, by Lee Francis. In the August issue there were The Venusian, by Browning, and Starship From Sirius, by Rog Phillips. (The latter story being a sequel to So Shall Ye Reap, which I have still been unable to obtain. Anyone have it?).

There were certain unforeseen effects caused by the first, third, and fourth stories mentioned. Those two authors became my favorites. Later, Phillips alone became my favorite, when I found out that Browning was but an alter-ego for the former. (This is a genteel way of saying Browning is a pen-name for Phillips.)

I read those two magazines countless times (Maybe ten or twenty, not "countless").

Then in the Fall of that same year, while at the home of friends, I spied a magazine, PLANET STORIES, and asked if I might borrow it. It was given to me, as a gift. (I guess, now, that they were happy to be rid of it.)

HOW I BECAME A FAN (cont.)

The lead Story was Black Priestess of Varga, by Erik Fennel, which, at the time and now, too, I thought a good adventure-type tale.

After that, I thought no more of science-fiction magazines.

Until April of 1949.

I bought a magazine.

I was again in New York City at the time.

I walked down to a magazine store, plunked down two bits, and walked back again, the proud possessor of the May 1949 issue of Startling Stories. The novel was Flight Into Yesterday, by Charles L. Harness.

I had read half-way through the story when my cousin (8 at the time) asked me to play ball with him. I laid the magazine on the fender of a handy car. After a while, my cousin missed a catch, and the ball rolled down the street and under a car. We went to get it, and on our return I found the magazine gone.

So what did I do? Of course, I went right out again and bought another copy. When I had finally finished the story, I looked at my cousin (this was a different one --the other's sister; a graduate of City-College.) and said, "I don't get it."

I did not, really. Since then, I have gotten the gist of it. As first, I agreed that it was a good story--because I could not understand it. Now I know it is great because of its concept and polish, etc.

I have read that story five times, now. Every April to celebrate the anniversary.

After that, I saw to it that I got every issue of SS as it appeared on the stands. To date, I have missed only two issues, but that is unimportant.

I followed the reader's column, The Ether Vibrates, with interest. (ED's note-- To say nothing of having a letter in it almost every ish!)

In the Fall, I was browsing about in a book shop on Fourth Avenue, when I saw the sign, on which were these words: Science Fiction. And there was an arrow pointing. I followed the arrow.

That led me to Stephen's Book Service.

That started me collecting. Not many at first, it is true. But a definite start.

HOW I BECAME A FAN (cont.)

In September, SS had this announcement on page 131: Curt Newton and The Futuromen Are Back -- In An Exciting Brand-New Novelot of The Spaceways: The Return Of Captain Future -- by Edmond Hamilton. Coming Next Issue!

I was interested.

In November I bought the January 1950 issue of SS and read the story.

Now, I was really interested.

On another visit to Stephen's Book Service, I saw several magazines which carried this title: CAPTAIN FUTURE.

Seeing me looking at them, the bookman said, "These are the first that I've gotten in three years."

I bought two of them. The stories were The Triumph of Captain Future and The Quest Beyond The Stars, both by this Edmond Hamilton chap.

Who, very soon, became Favorite Author No. 2.

This character was to greatly affect my fan life: its outcome, at this writing still unknown.

1950 passed uneventfully. I continued buying SS and reading CF stories therein. I bought a few back-issues of SS, too.

But nothing more.

It seemed that 1951 was going to be no better. I kept getting a few back issue magazines every now and then, and I kept getting SS regularly.

The April 26th entry in my diary goes like this: I got TWS and OW. Simple enough. But the entry of the 28th gives a clearer picture; it goes so: I have decided that I won't go to the movies anymore. Instead, I can use it [the movie-money] to get (all) the stf mags I want. So, in other words, I started on my hobby of science-fiction in earnest.



HOW I BECAME A FAN (cont.)

This entry interests me because there was nothing on the subject preceding or following it. It goes like this; Those issues of GALAXY (The October 1950 issue and the April 1951 issue.) I ordered haven't come yet. Maybe they came today. Pop didn't go for the mail. But they must have arrived some time because they are now repose in my GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION files, which are complete. (Says he, bragging.)

May 16th Entry -- Science-Fiction seems to be lifting continuously. This was noticeable to me because it became suddenly difficult to obtain my magazines.

May 17th Entry -- I have over 125 mags now.

May 26th Entry -- I got an almost complete collection of O. W.S.S., except for Nos. 1 and 10. I'll get them next time. The content and optimistic youth. It took until December to get No. 10 and I only obtained a poor copy of No. 1. two months ago.

I spent about the whole day reading. These stories are very good. An Article in Life on science-fiction. Upon looking over these stories I now find that some stink. (Shows changing ideas.) The article being the rather infamous one of 21 May.

In May, I put a dollar-bill in an envelope and sent it off as my first subscription to Fantasy-Times. That started an interest in fandom--the idea of putting out "amateur" publications.

The first issue of F-T that I received, the First May issue, carried this headline: Mines Replaces Merwin. I can remember how sad I was at the news, for had I not followed Merwin through his finest two years as editor of first SS and TWS and later the additional FSQ (FSM) and WSA?

August presented, among other things, the October TWS; Merwins last. On September 10th, I wrote a letter to Samuel Mines asking him for the original of Merwin's October editorial. Then I waited and wondered.

But not for long. Came a large envelope; in it are a MSS and a letter. The letter, in part, went like this:....I am happy to send you herewith, Sam's masterpiece which you may treasure forever and ever, amen.

That headline started something, all right. The letter was my first introduction to the "humor" and personality of this selfsame Samuel Mines.

Its Outcome; Still unknown.

Early in October, through F-T, I found out that SS was to go monthly. When the first monthly issue (January 1952) appeared, in November, I mailed a letter to (you guessed it.)

HOW I BECAME A FAN (cont.)

That has been a monthly occurrence ever since.

On January 14, 1952, I sent a dollar for membership in the 10th World Science-Fiction Convention, and - received my card on February 1st.

On March 3rd, I applied for membership to both the National Fantasy Fan Federation and the Variants. On March 10th, I received word that I was now a Variant, and on the 12th I received my NFFF card.

March 14, 1952, I shall always remember that date. Why, you ask?

That was the day I first met Samuel Mines and Jerome Bixby.

I walked into the building marked 10 East; that the famous 10 East 40th Street. I walked to the bank of elevators at the rear of the long foyer. I said to the operator, "1400". (Ed's note-- not 1207).

I walked through the glass door and went over to the receptionist's cubicle. This was Joan. (If you read Harlan Ellison's letter in the June TWS, you will know whom I mean.) This was the same "Gorgeous doll behind the glass panelled booth." How I know, I do not know. But all of a sudden the idea hit me that it was she.) "Yes?" she asked.

"I'd like to see Samuel Mines, please."

"Have you an appointment?"

"No."

"Does he know you?"

This was beginning to sound like the third degree. I almost began looking for the bouncer. "Well. Not yet, he doesn't"

"Oh! You must read ----"

"Yup".

"---science-fiction," she finished.

I nodded, speechless. Amazing deduction. Holmes or I could not have done better.

"Won't you sit down, please?"

HOW I BECAME A FAN (cont.)

I sat. Time went by while I sat there perusing a January 1935 copy of AMAZING STORIES.

After what seemed to me ten minutes, Bixby came out and came over; he introduced himself. (For clarity's sake: This was the moustached Bixby, not to be confused with the demoustached Bixby of --at--the Fan-Vet Convention.)

We shook hands and sat down.

"Sam'll be out in a minute. Every time he gets to the door the phone rings." Then he asked, "What's your name?"

"OH! Henry?"

I nodded, again speechless.

Sam came out, and we shook hands, and we sat down.

We talked about this and that. Finally, I got around to what I had come up to talk about. "With all this new interest in Science-fiction and all the new readers, what are the chances of reviving Captain Future?"

We batted that around till noon. They were not convinced of the soundness of the idea, and I was more firmly convinced it was practical and convinced to get them over on my side.

So that started a campaign which is still going on, but I believe it will soon be over. That started the Captain Future Fan Club (CFFC) and the banding together of the most loyal of CF followers, with more coming in all the time.

In the August SS, Sam promised to think about a CF annual. We are getting there.

I offered Lee Hoffman and Quandry an article on the above visit, and she said, "Unless it's short and of high reader interest, I doubt if I could handle it"

That blew something in me. It seems to me that everyone wants everything shorter. It is getting harder and harder to find any long stories, except in pocket books, hard-covers, and back-issue magazines.

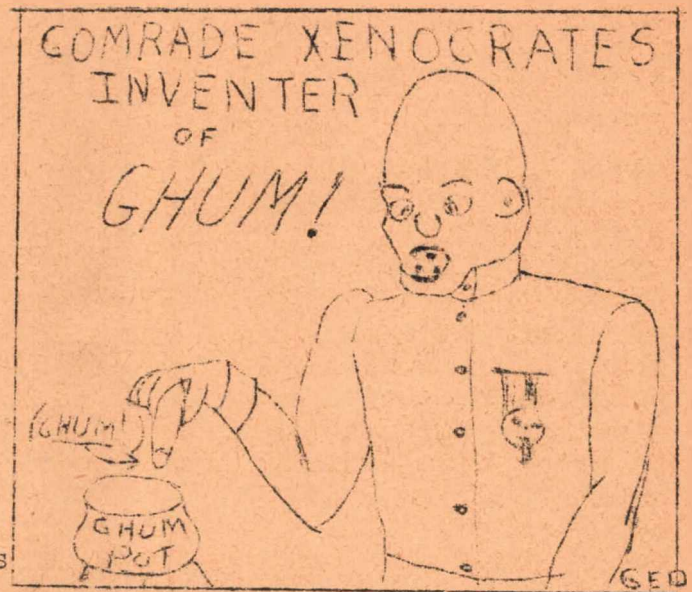
So I decided on getting together partners to put out a critical fan magazine, with emphasis on long material.

How about trying the first issue? Only twenty-five cents. (Baldest-faced plug I ever saw.)

Smolensk, Russia
Izvetzia 36, 1957 $\frac{1}{4}$

Comrade:

Rejoice! Workers of the world have united! The earth trembles in fear beneath the threat of Glorious Russia using her latest secret weapon. Every scientist in the country has been made ten times a hero in honor of this amazing achievement greater than the old atomic Bomb. Never before in the history of the universe, and never again will the moment rise, when Glorious Russia holds the world trembling before its Glorious New Power. Never...never...never! (What - Never? ...no, Never! What - neverrrrr?...Well...hardly everrrrr!) In less than two weeks the greatness of this power will be released to the unsuspecting world as a demonstration of Glorious Russia's greatness.



But it is the inspiring story of how the power was developed, and why and where that is the greatness of it all. Our Glorious Comrade, Xenocrates (known as early as 1951 in the Capitalistic United States as Xenocrates) chose Russia as his final resting place on June 3, 1953 when he specified the last ingredients of the Secret Formula which has brought greatness to our Glorious Russia. Exactly one year earlier, this amazing and talented young comrade, in a most glorious aura, appeared before the executive klotch in the most glorious Kremlin evaporatin four of its nearest members in one glorious instant. Immediately our most Glorious Leader, Stalin (heil!) recognized this youth as the possesor of a great power, and made him reveal its formula by the usual methods. After his wounds had healed, he was made head of a glorious laboratory in Ipkihtzuk, Siberia with the entire space command of Russia under order. From every planet supplies were gathered. After only two weeks work, a sample of the new Power was disclosed - and all the scientists of the world came with their microscopes to look closely at it. In this way, our most Glorious Russia obtained a wealth of scientists no capture could have effected.

The sample, as the Glorious Xenocrates calls it, was the same size as the one that transformed him from his first position to our Glorious Russia. It was placed carefully upon the ground near the laboratory at Ipkihtzuk, and a thousand kilometers of wire were connected to detonate it. There was a flash, and our Glorious Ipkihtzuk Crater, fifteen hundred kilometers across and 500 kilometers deep was formed. All heroes were buried with the greatest of honors. Even today sightseers come to view the Glorious Crater and to pay homage to the glorious Incident that caused it. Only one-tenth gram of devitrified acidified electronically modulated ghum was used to produce this startling effect.

Comrado: (cont.)

But today - today is the Glorious day! There has been stock-piled 6,078,946,863,940,374 metric tons of the most Glorious ghym, carefully and strategically placed for the finest show. Even those silly scientists of the other dominions of Glorious Russia don't expect the Glorious ending that has been planned. When our Glorious Leader prösses the red, shiny button on his throne, a million volts of electricity will flash out into all our electronically modulated ghym, and the Glorious demonstration of Glorious Russia's Glorious power to the universe will be seen. The best place for viewing this glorious scene is the fourth satellite of Vega, but it is impossible to reach this position safely with the present means of travel available. However, Comrade, never fear - the Glorious Show will not pass you by, and the memory of Glorious Russia will be Gloriously burned into your brain forever. Glory to Ghym!

Ivan

How I Became A Fan (cont)

Where, a little over a year ago, my collection numbered only one hundred-and-twenty-five, it is now close to six hundred. I have about twentyfour hard-cover books, mostly first editions. And pocket books galore.

I was one of the four-and-odd to get Polaris Press's Polaris Fantasy Library edition of Francis Stevon's The Heads of Cerberus, a beautiful volume with a slip case. While some do not realize the fact, this is a first edition as well as a special edition. Only 1500 copies printed, too.

That seems to be about it.

By next year, enough should have occurred to make another article. But I doubt if anyone would want to get stuck twice. Would You?

"Well? Are you satisfied? Here I've spent an entire afternoon. For What?" "I feel lots better. Don't you?"

"The important thing, Hank, is the fact that you've kept your word. Just because you promised something amateur to a friend, it doesn't give you the liberty not to come through with the goods'. Anyway, what do you think of it?" Think of it? I think it's pretty damn good. What else?

"Indeed what else? A marvelous memory you have there. You remember what Steve told you 'way back in '49."

"Steve? Steve who?" "Stephen J. Takacs, stupid. The gentleman behind Stephen's Book Service, which we both so highly recommend." "Also, your memory of the words which passed between you and the gal with the 'goddess-like legs'."

"Boy, what a conscience I got stuck with!!! Wash your mouth out, you----" (Does anyone know what one uses to wash out a conscience's mouth?)

STILL MORE COMPANIONSHIP

by
A. Charles Catania

On with the useless information!
Onward, over onward with the useless information!
Even further!

Anyway, that's what you're going to get: useless information.
(It's only a fanzine. What do you expect?)

First item: The second item would ordinarily follow this one.

Third Item: It doesn't.

Second Item: It shows up here, after the third.

And now, instead of me giving you the information, you give it to me. A quiz:

1. If a Martian gruzzles* why must a permolator" register the fact?

2. Can the inhabitants of Southern*** Zanzibar compare with the inhabitants of Northern**** Zanzibar? (And where do the Eastern and Western Zanzibaribans come in?)

3. Halitosis is the fore-runner of: (Choice of one) a. Grunk***** b. Another Grunk*****

4. When the pyramids***** were constructed, where was the work started?

5. (Fill in) _____ is the best cure for agronomia nephistituslitus*****

Solutions: 1. To keep the faymayna level constant, of course.*****

2. Yes 3. Both (Grunks***** don't exist anyway)

4. Egypt. 5. Nothing, since there is no such disease. (HA HA!)

Footnotes: *a malfunction of the thummary artery¹. ** a gadget which registers gruzzling² *** Opposite of Northern **** Opposite of Southern***** Something which gruzzles³. ***** See:*****
*****Just to take up space. *****See answer to question.
*****See; ***** I hope you didn't expect a logical⁴ answer! ***** Oh, yes they do.

Footnotes: ¹Something which carries blood, or whatever Martians have.

²See:***** ³See:² ⁴This certainly isn't.

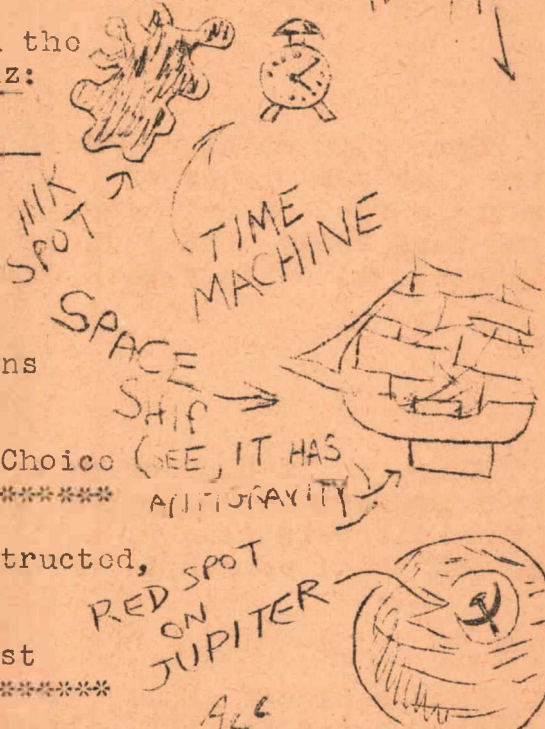
Anyway, I'm finishing this up now anyway. Yes, just anyway. I'm not going to be fussy. Just anyway that comes to my mind (no cracks!). I'll just find some.....

(Author's note: Bah, Shel,
27 you could have edited a better conclusion than that.-ACC)

(No Room - Ed)



INVISIBLE
MAN
↓



CHARTER OF THE VARIANTS

ARTICLE I

So that we may establish greater consociation among ourselves, and that we may exchange views in science-fiction with greater ease, we establish this correspondence club, to be known as THE VARIANTS.

ARTICLE II

There shall be no limit to the membership of the Variants, save that said members shall be over fifteen years of age and have paid their dues for the period of one year.

ARTICLE III

Upon payment of one dollar to the Editor-Treasurer, an person, fifteen or more years of age, shall become a member of The Variants for the period of one year. Members shall be expelled only for non-payment of their annual dues, such expulsion to take place a reasonable time after such dues have become payable.

ARTICLE IV

Section one.

There shall be four charter officers, each elected in the manner prescribed in Article V. All officers, with the exception of the Editor-Treasurer, shall be elected from amongst the membership and shall remain in office for the period of one year.

Section two

The President shall, with the members of the Executive Committee determine the policies of the club, subject to the restrictions imposed by the charter.

Section three

The Vice-President shall perform the functions of the President during the absence of that officer.

Section four

The secretary shall keep the rolls of the membership and shall, along with the Editor-Treasurer, be in charge of writing and sending out any communications deemed necessary by any member of the Executive Committee.

CHARTER OF THE VARIANTS

ARTICLE IV (cont.) section five

The Editor-Treasurer shall have charge of publishing the Official Organ of The Variants, to be known as, Variant World, and shall supervise all financial affairs of the organization, subject to any audits which shall be performed at the request of the Executive Committee or of a quorum of the membership.

The present Editor-Treasurer, Sheldon J. Deretchin, shall hold his post until such time as the club relinquish him of his post by a vote of not less than two thirds the total membership.

Section six

The Executive Committee shall consist of the charter officers and shall provide assistance to the individual officers in the performance of their respective duties.

ARTICLE V

All officers shall be elected during April of each year and their terms of office shall run for one year, said terms beginning on May first in the year during which they shall have been elected.

Section two

Any member in good standing shall be considered as eligible for office as proscribed.

Section three

Any eligible member shall be considered nominated for office, when he or she shall communicate his or her intention of candidacy to the Editor-Treasurer in the following manner.

Intention of candidacy must be sent in to the Editor-Treasurer not later than April fifth of the year in which said candidate desires to hold office. All communications must be in writing.

Section four

The Editor-Treasurer shall prepare ballots listing the candidates for office and shall mail them along with the next issue of the Official organ.

Members shall indicate their preference and return their ballots no later than April thirtieth.

CHARTER OF THE VARIANTS

ARTICLE V

Section five

Results of said election shall be made known in the earliest possible issue of the official organ.

Section six

If the president is unable to perform the duties, the vice president, editor-treasurer, and secretary shall perform these functions, succeeding in the above order.

Offices other than the Presidency, or vice-presidency, which shall be vacated during the term of office, shall be filled by the Executive Committee by appointment.

Section seven

No chartered officers shall be removed from office other than by the express wish of two-thirds or more of the total membership.

ARTICLE VI

Section one

All records of the organization shall be open to the organization upon the request of not less than one-fifth the total membership.

Section two

Annual dues, payable during the month when the member joined shall be not less not more than one dollar, unless decided upon by ~~the Executive~~ Committee that said dues be changed for good and sufficient reason, said reason to be made known to the membership as soon as possible.

Section three

Club moneys shall be expended for the regular conduct of business, for the production and distribution of communications to the membership, and for any other purposes deemed necessary by the Executive Committee.

Section four

Regular communications to the membership shall consist of a magazine, produced at least six times per year, and all such material as is necessary for the conduct of elections.

CHARTER OF THE VARIANTS

ARTICLE VII

Section one

This charter shall be in effect if it is approved by more than two-thirds the membership who, shall have expressed either their approval or disapproval of it.

Section two

Such approval or disapproval shall be expressed to the Editor-Treasurer the manner proscribed in the editorial of the Official Organ, Vol. 1, numbers 4 and 5 within a period of time not more than one month after the receipt of this charter.

Section three

Any member in good standing may propose an amendment to the charter.

Section four

Such amendments shall be written down, and sent into the Editor-Treasurer. Said amendments will then be discussed amongst the Executive Committee and shall thence be published in the Official Organ for the approval of not less than two-thirds of the total membership if this is deemed necessary.

Section five

Approval or disapproval of an amendment shall be expressed to the Editor-Treasurer within one month of the receipt of said amendment(s).

Section six

Voting upon amendments shall also proceed in the manner proscribed in the official organ, Vol 1, numbers 4 and 5.

