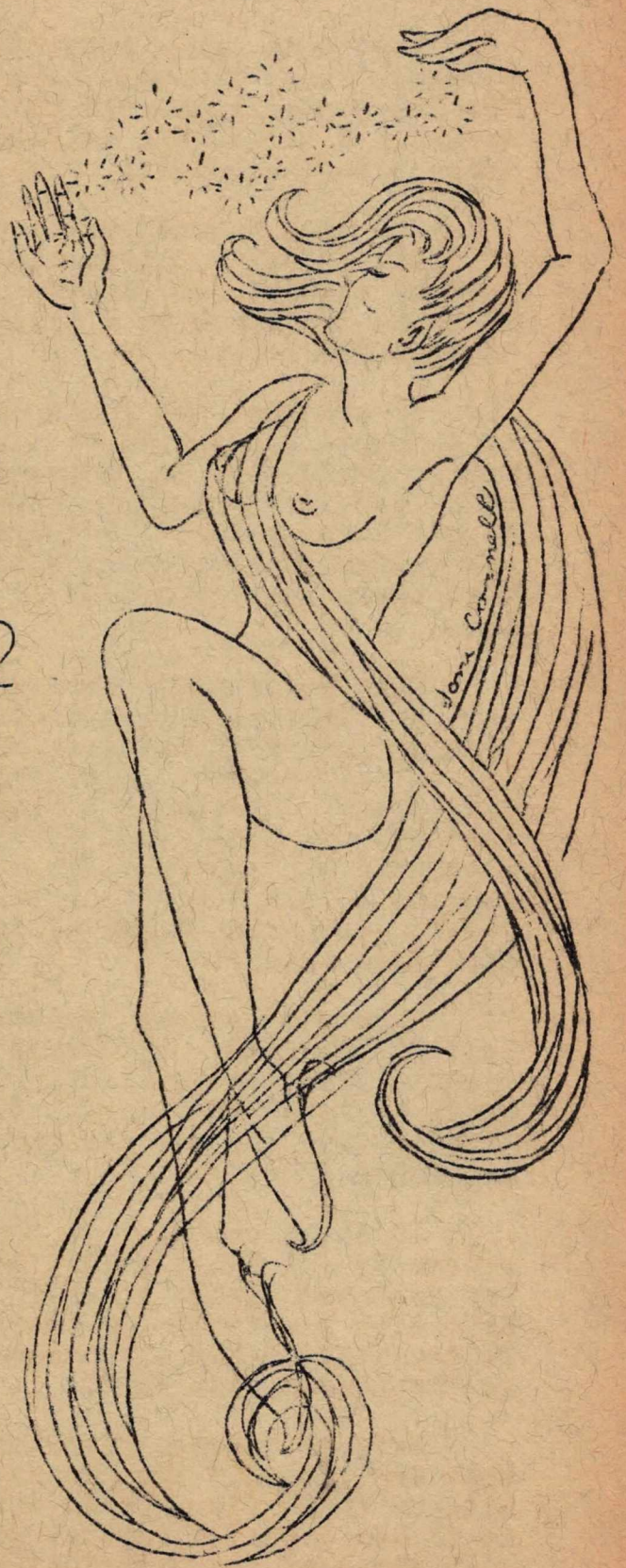


WAF TAGE 2



2

feud for thought

Yes, this issue definitely should be larger; I'll be the first to admit that. It would have been, too, had I been on the stick, for Bob Tucker consented to write some reviews of some of a SAPS mailing; I might have collected this time, but never got around to sending the bundle. Maybe this time though, if he has the time.

Now that I have been a full-fledged SAP for such a long period of time, I feel qualified to speak; you see, there are two disturbing elements in fandom, and SAPS can serve as an illustration of each. The first is a trend towards conformity; the second, one towards non-conformity.

Of the two, the conformity is by far the greater transgression of thought. (As you might have guessed, I'm sorta middle of the road.) Conformity in fandom takes several forms; the first is sort of a hero-worship, for a fine writer or fanzine. There is nothing at all harmful in this, unless, of course, you bubble over with neofannish enthusiasm--and the declining SAPS mailings indicate that there isn't too much of that, in this particular organization.

Then we have the obvious conformity--that of imitation. A new phan arrives on the scene, and what happens to be the most popular fanzine? A letterzine. So what does he publish immediately, if not sooner? Right. A letterzine. And so it goes; if the "new trend" fanzine is the thing, then the market is soon flooded. What new fan might need is sort of a friendly pat on the back, and a word of explanation; see here, sonny, that fanzine isn't popular because of its format, necessarily--the editor is just quite competent (or he has a lot of friends who can really write well, or some such thing).

Everyone notices non-conformity; after all, that's usually half its purpose: attention for the fan. There have been people genuinely enthusiastic over a new idea or dreadfully distrusting about some "normal" social behavior. But quite frequently new fans--or even fans who haven't made it too well--like to gain attention in this manner.

It seems cynicism is the thing nowadays. Young Joe Neoeditor writes to all the top fanzines: "Waly, your material isn't too bad, but damn your repro stinks!" or some such thing. It is the fad to criticize the faults of everyone else's fanzines, even if they be faults that he himself possesses. "Everything in the issue stank" is the common call word.

But, of course, there are both conformists and non-conformists that are entirely lovable as is, and would be next to worthless without their fire, their differences of opinion. Where would GMC be if her views of capital punishment, sex, religion, etc., agreed with those of the majority? Not in the PAPA elite, by any stretch of the imagination. But, on the other hand, what would you think if Art Rapp's mailing comments on your fanzine went something like "Crummy fanzine; get out of SAPS."? That just doesn't sound like Art.

Generally speaking, then, a fan fits where he belongs; if he is naturally cynical, and his whole personality bespeaks this, then writing or editing some work that glows with benevolence is entirely out of character.

But just in case some of you are wondering how to recognize some of the various types: well, the non-conformist lives in California or moves there from New York (unless, of course, he attends college); he publishes large fanzines, mostly with serious discussions of some sort or another: dope, sex, etc. (naturally, these fanzines are all good).

The non-conformist is easy to recognize; the conformist, not so much so. He is clever in his pilfering of ideas from other fanzines. The neo-conformist just sits back and absorbs (or, it seems at times, adsorbs.) You must be sharp to detect him; practice. The grizzled old potential gaffiate is easy to recognize. First he writes articles in his SAPSzine (onstencil, and only vaguely coherent) criticizing the organization and fandom in general; then he drops SAPS for FAPA or general fandom; he then sells his fanzine collection, avowing all the time that he will, indeed, remain on. You know the answer to that one.

+ + + + +

On the recent advice of such erstwhile critics as Mr. Redd Boggs and Mr. Robert Coulson I recently read a book--a science fiction book, noless--and came out of it feeling that the time spent was indeed worthwhile. The name of the book is Venus Plus X, a 35¢ Pyramid offering by Theodore Sturgeon, whom you may have heard of.

There are two atmospheres radiating from this book: the first is one of credulity; the second, meaning. Sturgeon's pretense --that of a "normal" man being dropped into an advanced world whose only inhabitants are bi-sexual--isn't too different, too imaginative, or overly believable. But he is such a master story-teller, such an expert at the turn of the phrase, that it all seems quite logical and interesting. From Sturgeon I get the same enjoyment as from a good British essayist: a clever phrase here or there, and a coherent whole. Such phrases as "self-fornicating sewing machine" and a particularly brilliant bit about a rock-and-roll dancer-singer I found delightful.

The second atmosphere almost escaped me. Not because it is subtle; far from that, but because I've encountered it so rarely before. It's a touch of aestheticism in a world of Philistinism. Today the writer writes what he is told, to please one or another of the Gods in the editorial chairs, and meaning is sacrificed. But Sturgeon neglected this impulse; he said something, and I was, frankly, shocked: shocked at his "bravery", and surprised at just what he had to say (why are all good writers pessimistic?).

True, sex is an integral part of this novel, but don't let that deter you; integral here means that the story naturally revolves about sex, in contrast to two other forms: that in which sex is an absolutely necessary part, but only by the whim of the author or editor, and that in which sex is merely a side-attraction, included for the bleary-eyed.

Seriously, you can't miss this; it's the best this year.

NOTED - saps 53

WAITING UNTIL DECEMBER TWENTY-FIFTH is not a practice conducive to large SAPSazines; this bit of wisdom I've just discovered, for, shame, I have neglected the task that long. Therefore, something had to give--in this case, the whole issue. But I'll still try to get these mutated mailing comments, as well as some outside material, done in time.

GOING BACK SOME: Shelby Vick, I can remember The Whistler; hell, he was on radio even during my day, along with the Shadow and the Green Hornet and all that ilk. There were even some Whistler movies made, some of which have been showing up on television with the rest of the mediocre. Every one would begin, with the Whistler speaking, "I know all--because I walk at night." That's kind dangerous anymore.

I can tell you about my only contact with Carol McKinney, Wrai, since you were wondering, in Out just what has happened to her. Using the Provo address in a review column in SFA, I had written to her soon after entering fandom--say, January '59--asking for a copy of Deviant. It was months before the letter caught up to her, she had moved so often, and, even then, her only interest was in selling her stf collection. If you--or any California fen--are interested, the last address I have is: 4239 Oak Knoll Drive, Carmichael, California.

You might recall a movie called Five Against the House, Earl Kemp; that's been my only contact with Las Vegas, but an interesting one. Can't place the movie exactly, but it was rather a superior product screen-wise. Jack Finney, I believe, wrote the book on which the screenario was based--one of his SEP type stories, but sound, nonetheless.

Don Durward, you must remember the stirring space opera, "Rocket Rangers", with the cadets in bright uniforms and the unpitted, phallic rocketships? My memory places the show on a Saturday morning schedule; but perhaps I'm confusing this with the old, reliable Space Cadets or Space Patrol or the Black Hand or whatever.

I'M SURPRISED, Wrai Bellard, that you didn't go into the matter of the right of owning guns. Actually, the right is guaranteed by the Constitution as a protection only against the national government, and not, I don't believe, against the states. Therefore, your state could restrict or prohibit your owning firearms, and usually does, as you'd find if you were an alien, a parolee, interested in buying a sawed-off shotgun, etc.

That you overlooked the obvious reason that soldiers vote at their legal residence, Art Rapp (in Serenade); the President, as Commander-in-Chief, or anyone under him, could order a predominantly yankee platoon to a Southern state, to perhaps swing a close state election or disputed electoral votes; and the same situation could be reversed. Soldiers are too easy to move.

That you found the time and inclination to do the most non-MC material in the mailing, Ed Cox; 'twas also a pleasant surprise to note that what you did was so good!

Don, Durward, that you make so light about the evacuation of L.A.; seeing people panic isn't at all pleasant. One evening just outside town the patrons at a drive-in theatre were surprised to see the picture stopped, and hear a message informing them that a dangerous hurricane was on the way. They had half an hour. So what happens? They panic, and everyone tries to get out the gate at once. Four cars at a time was the uncomfortable capacity of said gate, but one particularly frightened person pushed one car ahead of him out of the way, shoved another into its neighbor, and then tore through the gate, leaving his fender, and half the paint, on a post. What the hell would that sort of person do in a real emergency?

IT MIGHT NOT BE A GOOD IDEA TO GET ME TALKING ON POLITICS, Toskey, but I do have some very definite views on the Democratic platform/idle promises (thank God they'll never pass any!). The facet I most opposed was that of Old Age Insurance, for under Kennedy's program, same would be financed through the Social Security system. Not only would this be unfair--passing off yet another burden on the wage earner, whether he wanted it or not--but impractical. There are still many jobs uncovered by Social Security, and these workers would therefore be unprotected; also, what about the aged, now? Those that aren't under the wing of SS would be out in the cold.

I also dislike the business of Federal Aid to Education; this necessitates direct payment to teachers, which would put them far too much under Federal hand. (Though at the moment, with the legislature of you-know-which state acting up, perhaps government salary provisions are needed.)

That fine cover on Spy Ray, Dick Eney, should be shown to our Department of State, so that perhaps our interplanetary relations might get off to a better start than our Terran affairs.

But that affinity you have for Stevenson, Bob Lichtman, must be curbed in the bud, while you still have your head about you. He's a brilliant man, and there's no denying that; but while he was governor of Illinois I learned a bit about him. He's weak-willed, a sissy politically, and ready to give in on any concession. Ambassador to the U.N. should be the best high post for him, as almost all his work is out in the open; as SecofState he could do too much damage undercover.

Arv Underman, but since we share much the same view on socialized medicine, why don't we talk about Kennedy's plans? At least, his old age insurance plan seems a reasonable first step. Unfortunately, we'll probably get that bit some day, since the pressure groups, controlled by the older meds, want it--and why not? They've made their dough, and want security now. Also, starting a medical practice has become such an expensive thing, can you blame young doctors, just finishing their internships, who want the immediate semi-prosperity offered by government subsidies?



REG

FANZINES ARE ANOTHER THING, Dick Bergeron, since I know very little about them, and can therefore be considered a critic. It seems that Chauvenet's ideas are not the same as mine, particularly in respect to all-letter fanzines. As he says, they can offer entertaining reading; however, if the market isn't flooded with them, they can be topical and a matter of intense interest to fans--witness the letter returns. (I wonder what Louis thinks about single author collections, like Burbee's, or "theme" collections, like the Stormy Petrel? Will people notice the "absence of other fare?")

But clipping unused comments from letterhacks, to send to contributors, is nothing new. In past days, Dick, Dick Geis, Vernon McCain, and Cliff Gould all did it, and, in more recent times, advocates have included Calkins, as you mentioned, as well as Mal Ashworth, and myself. For some comments on how this is regarded today, see George Locke's column in Bane 3.)

Yet difficulties with contributors will go on forever, Art Hayes, as your "pro" suggests. This business of re-writing is rather a touchy one, for anything sent back for that purpose might not be returned. As an example: one SAP sent me some fan-fiction for Bane; the idea and ending were good, but the characterization rather faulty. I asked for a touching up on same, but he chose to submit it, with some slight expanding, to a British fanzine. The fact remains that you either take what you can get, and revise yourself, within the limits of decency, or return, and possibly never see again. (Incidentally, this fellow is not a cruddy writer, as you might suspect; he's quite good.)

COULD BE, Wrai Ballard, that the person to help you with your formation of the Deringer Shooters of America Club has been dead for awhile; his name was Booth, and he proved quite proficient with the weapon, as history so admirably records.

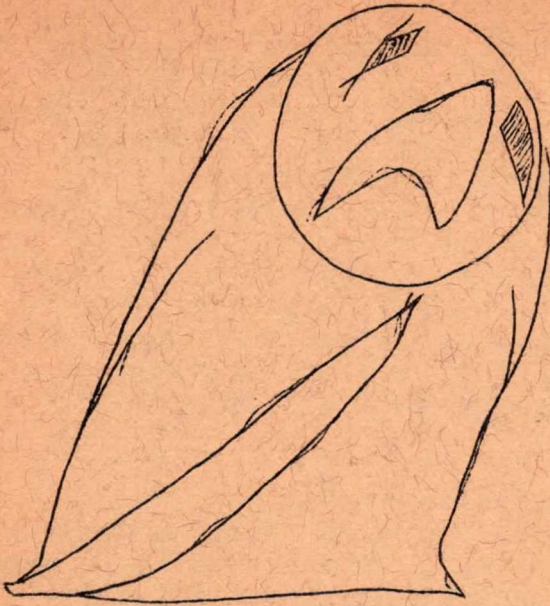
That SAPS doesn't really have any reason to make money, Bruce Pelz; eliminating dues and relying on waiting-lister bundles is unfair to members who have paid dues, as well as to wlers, who are supporting a group in which they probably are not as yet active--to say nothing of the fact that removing dues is one of the better ways to trim the waiting list; the necessity for paying dues causes members to drop out, and listers to drop in, and without this incentive...

Of course, we could always save our money and have a picnic or buy a racehorse or a share of IBM or stock in the Dean Drive or something.

I'll have to meet you some day, Ted Johnstone, and hear you sing, to see if you are really and truly as good as you say.

Coswal, that Bruce Pelz will sell you his SAPS bundles; I know he has little interest in such things. (Incidentally, may I be the first to congratulate you on the trouble you've had gafia-ting; most people find it quite easy.)

That our amateur athletics need something of an overhauling, after our latest Olympic efforts, Arv. For one thing, the ease with which athletes of other countries can find places to work out, to practice, points out a contrast. Over here, our athletes must pay to rent gyms, or athletic fields, or whatever, perhaps buy their own, expensive equipment, etc. That encourages practice? Also, it might be about time that we cut out this trial business, where an athlete makes the team or is cut on a single day's performance; why be democratic?



I've been lucky with dogs, Don Durward, but I've never had one bite me yet. (Or me anything else, for that matter.) Perhaps your bad luck with Canis Familiaris is due to a bit of bad manners; when one meets a dog for the first time, he should slowly crouch down in front of the dog, about three feet away, and extend his hands, palms up, slowly, out in front of the animal. The dog will then sniff. If you are lucky, help will have arrived by this time; if not, a male dog is susceptible in much the same manner as a human male, and this is the only advice I can offer. (Running like hell is frowned upon.)

A TAFF meeting would be just the sinecure we need, John Berry, for clearing the air about the mess.

SO MANY PEOPLE BRING UP SUBJECTS RELATING TO MY SCHOOL; FOR INSTANCE:

Terry Carr, who commented on multiple choice tests; the ultimate in same that I've seen is the teacher who had a paranoid obsession for patterns; one needed to know the answers to only five or six of fifty questions, and you'd have her pattern; the rest of the test could easily be filled in from there. (We won't mention open-book tests, I don't believe.)

That comment by Art Rapp on college study habits. High schools today seem to be making steps toward study schedules similar to those in college. In fact, many students come back to visit, and say that life is a helluva lot easier for them in college than it was in high school. No Harvard, Yale, or M.I.T. students included there, but most others. (Including the University of Chicago, Earl Kemp.)

Art Rapp, you also entertainingly brought up the subject of first aid; it's required by state law in Illinois, every three years. I was lucky, and hit the course only once--last year; students at high school freshman level that year will have to take it twice, tho. And what a colossal waste of time, when that line you quote sums up completely just what we didn't learn! I don't remember any of the stuff at this date, except that in the case of a bloody auto accident, with a mangled survivor or two, I know what to do: place my head between my kness, to keep from fainting...

The part of the first aid instruction that particularly gave me hope was that of : do not do anything to the patient; that I felt I was capable of administering.

Feghootis s must be spreading, Buz, since one recently appeared in our school newspaper; 'twas poor even for a Feghootism, but I still tried to find out who had been perusing F&S, to no avail. In the nature of an experiment: why don't you S&P try writing backgrounds to these endings: "Do you think we would leave a Turn unstoned?!" and " But I've lost my Scents of Wanda..."; I did, but was afraid to inflict the whole on you. Should be interesting to see how your developments compare with each other's, and with mine.

Both Bob Lichtman and Norm Metcalf brought up matters concerning the functioning of schools. The latter spoke of the formalities of graduation, and I concur completely, though I don't imagine I'll be able to escape graduation. Things have been complicated here ever since all four city high schools--err, excuse me, all three public high schools have been graduating at one service; nice group of a thousand or so. Great fun. Bob Lichtman was speaking of student government; such a farce here! There's little proposed, since the people on Student Council are those who are busy with other school activities, to a large extent, and can't get much done; what is proposed is, ninety-five per cent of the time, turned down as too progressive: "things should be accomplished a little more slowly...".

FLORIDA has always been one of my favorite subjects, Suzy Vick; that's why I croggled to see that you were tramping around in bare feet. I wouldn't dare do such a thing, since Florida is the most bug-infested area on Earth, I'd guess; talk about the cock-roaches in New York--why, they're nothing compared to the endless variety and number of pesky varmints that one encounters under there.

Also possesses an inordinate number of things called "Men-O'-War", as you must have discovered whilst shell-hunting, Dee. For those that haven't had the pleasure, let me explain: a man-o-war is a jelly-like thing that is washed in at high tide, and then infests the beaches. Hidden in any convenient blob of seaweed is its stinger, which can inflict a really nasty wound; one man still has a scar from one, eight years old. A child, also, kept us awake all night, once, crying in pain--and it wasn't an act. (They also provide much enjoyment, however; one afternoon, in the space of some 100 feet of ocean front, I punctured about 120 of the things.)

Was the place, however, that I developed an affinity for serials, not unlike that in BOG (thank God it'll appear only four times per annum!) at the present. There was one in particular, from winter to early summer, some six months, in '49; 'twas about some retired military officer travelling all over the world, helping rebellions, etc. Anybody know of whom I speak?

I CAN ONLY SPEAK LOCALLY, BUT Insurance matters, Howard Devore, go thusly: all women, from the time they get their driving licenses, get by on regular insurance rates; men, however, do not do so until they reach age twenty-five or marry.

Two friends have provided parallels to situations described in this mailing. One was frisked, etc., in a manner befitting the best tradition of Colin Cameron in The Challenge. At the time, he was peacefully sitting in his Peugeot, awaiting his mother's return from the store; the Sheriff's car pulled into the parking lot, came over to his car, and told him to get out. They were looking for liquor, those stalwart defenders of civil rights. At any rate, he leaned against the car whilst they frisked him, then decided to search the car. And what was that object in the back seat that looked like a "bottle," carefully wrapped in paper? They wanted to know too. The deputy dove into the back, ripped off the covering, and was rewarded by the sight of some paint. (He was probably disappointed that it wasn't an alcohol-base.)

The other friend invented a game like that mentioned by someone; you know, a game that goes on forever. It's a train game, played on a huge map of the U.S. It's been going on, now, for seven years or so, but is, I am told, nearing completion.

Vachel Lindsay is a home town boy, Elinor; born and raised a couple of miles from here, as was Abe Lincoln, (raised, at least); Vach even attended my High School, but Abe slacked off there. Alan Dodd now rates Springfield, Ill, the greatest tourist attraction in the world; after all, it's the home of "Abe Lincoln, Vachel Lindsay, and VIC RYAN!!!"

WHERE Can I find out what all this "37 alphabet" business is? It's something grammatical, but that's all I can discover. It drives me mad to read, "Uh uh, you committed 37x in paragraph 16." What heinous sins I might be committing, I'd like to know.

Guy Terwilleger, do people get the inclination to read such a damn lot into literature and poetry; you're a teacher, so perhaps you can answer?

Could I locate Boggs' "Craters of the Moon", Wrai or B.H.?

VARIOUS SAPS MATTERS: Best parody award goes to The Tattered Dragon, hands down. Miss Share, both yourself and Mr. Johnstone have been slighted in my comments; will you forgive me?

Good show, with the extree copies required, Eney!

The worst SAP cate ory is rather an arbitrary thing Mr. Richard Brown; it isn't exactly the same as "Least Pillar" and would be awarded only in cases of flagrant disloyalty. (No, Jack Harness, omission of mailing reviews is NOT enough.)

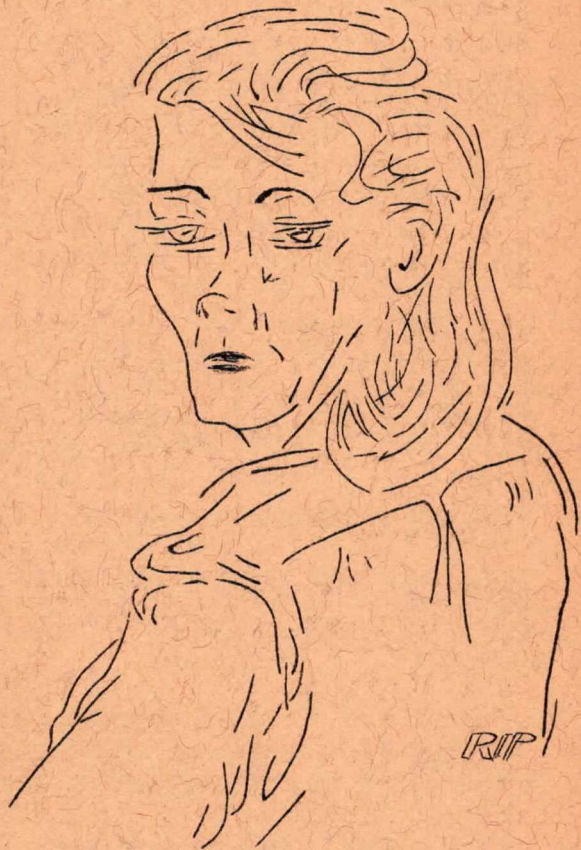
Why don't SAPSmembers double-space their fanzines, for ease in marginal notation? Or, for that, matter, why don't they leave margins in which to note, period.

Well, my first try at mailing predictions was pretty accurate, or so I like to think: only 17 pages--some 2.7%--off. In order to offset this, I'll be conservative this time around, and neglect the probably rash of conreports this time: 649 pp.

WHE EVER a fan dies, Art Rapp, should we write to his wife or kin: "Sorry about Jophan; will you send along his collection. Best, etc..."

THAT ROUND ROBIN SERIAL IN FANTASTIC, Jack Harness, is notable for the fact that not many of the authors used the old serial dodge--having the hero faint in a difficult situation and then awakening him in safety.+++ Buz: A Utopia is an impossibility; it would require complete unselfishness by all, with the "do somethings" taking over and the "do nothings" stepping aside--and not too many people like being tossed by the wayside.

- 30 - (December 26th, 4:00 p.m.)



≠ From letters of comment
on non-SAPS copies of
Waftage 1; my comments
in pica, letterhacks, elite≠

LETTERS

DICK SCHULTZ= Your fannish mononoly was OK as far as it went, but it needs expansion. Riverside Driven, for instancem, was Ellington's old NY flat, and predated the Munnery and was much of the same thing. And for Utilities, to match Assorted Services, use Proxyboo, Ltd. And, surely Project Armageddeon deserves some mention here...

Notice that you ate up whole, without gulping, all the propoganda that the oil companies have given ye about frequent oil changes. The car, provided one hasn't been driving in snowstorms lately, does not need an oil change any more frequently than 2000-4500 miles depending on the age and make of the car. That particular age and model needs it every 2000, most likely. But every 500?

ALAN DODD = Can't imagine you driving a beat-up 1950 Buick somehow--what type is it? Is it the kind that had very protruding shark's teeth at the front practically draggin on the floor in front or is that another model? Current price here for such a car would be about \$800...

It certainly wasn't John Barrymore Jr. in the 1920 film in SILENTS PLEASE; that was the Senior--the junior is still very much alive, chasing Italian starlets.

You'll have to admit that Pearson certainly pulled out all stops to give every possible variation to the old Henry Fonda--bull fiddle gag. Just when you thought there wasn't any possible new method of printing that darn saying, up he came again with another method. I rather enjoyed it all myself; it was a fanzine one could "joinin" with, which you can't do so much with the new one.

Otto Pfeifer has a fanzine called Bog? In England that is a slang word for toilets; that's why we've always had a standing joke that Redd Boggs were Commie toilets. Youk youk.

I agree that it probably futile to complain about the sections of Psycho which were thrown away, but the fact that it is futile to complain doesn't make the reason for complaining any less valid, does it? American standards of censorship strike me as being highly hypocritical and the finished result in the film seems so childish when you consider that it was presumably made for adults. Maybe it was made for those with the mentality of morons--the times they explained why Bates was the killer I couldn't count. Living on what Khrushchev called "the well-known English unsinkable aircraft carrier which would discontinue its existence on the first day of war" the horrors of this kind of mass murder seem more frightening to me than seeing one fellow going around with a knife, killing people.

Dick: well, thanks for setting me straight; my information on the frequency of oil-changes was garnered from a purist, mostly; glad such spending isn't a necessity for us common folks.

Alan: You are jaded.

The 42 copies of this issue, intended for SAPSites and fortunate waiting-listers, have something the non-saps copies, for the most part, won't have: an article by Nick Falasca, on Harlan Ellison. This first appeared in my genzine, in a different form, but this particular copy is the older. It's just that I was dissatisfied with this run, and therefore did it over again. If you're interested in the comments, or Ellison's personal reply, just ask, and I'll send along Bane 3.

Thanks to Joni Cornell for the kiver, and Robert Gilbert, Maggie Curtis, and Dick Schultz, for the interiors.

HARLAN ELLISON EXPOSE

Cleveland Fandom, which has often been likened to Cincinnati Fandom, Chicago Fandom, Indiana Fandom, and, more recently, New York Fandom, has had a disproportionately large share of nuts, crackpots, boors, and silly asses. In many fan circles, it has been traditional to think little or nothing at all of Cleveland Fandom. Many people have been heard to remark: "I've never met a Cleveland fan I ever liked." Others have said: "Oh, them.", and a few have even gone so far as to say "Humph!".

Be that as it may, a certain number of Cleveland fans have achieved an almost enviable amount of notoriety, and, I dare say, this most emphatically dispels or supports any rumors that may be floating around. Perhaps the best living example of Cleveland Fandom is the almost legendary Harlan Ellison. Fandom abounds with tales of this young man's adventures: his flight across the country in a driveway, with Magnus and the Detroit Beanie Brigade; his brilliant handling of docil Jim Harmon before and after the dramatic opening of the door at the Hotel Ingalls; the endless punning duel with Tucker and McKewan at that second MidWestCon, where Ellison emerged triumphant; the unending stream of garbage that flowed through the mails from his Shaker Heights address.

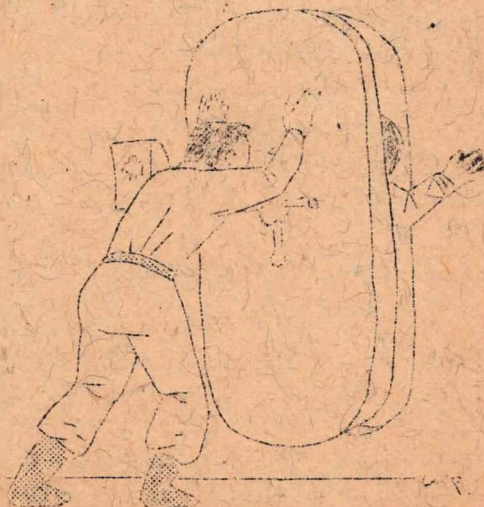
All of this is the known Ellison, that most are familiar with, but there is much that can be said about him (in private discussions and behind his back) which is even more interesting. We won't go into that here. Instead, we'll recall his early Cleveland youth.

I met Harlan at one of the first meetings of the Cleveland Science-Fantasy Club where he was delivering a review of Edmond Hamilton's City at World's End. Amid gestures and cheap dramatics, he outlined the plot, and, wherever he saw fit, improved upon it, by adding a bit here, and making a small change there. This, incidentally, was a practice which he profitably carried into his adulthood. I was immeasurably impressed by his volubility; my first impressions were a) he was a genius and b) he was a midget. Today (if you happen to live in Chicago), you can easily see that he has grown little since 1950.

Later, on that initial evening, we had our first reading of his projected novel, The Adventures of the Aark. We were treated to the first two chapters, and, in the following weeks, we received the following chapters as they were written. This, of course, included re-readings of the earlier chapters, and by the time that Harlan was expelled several years later, for non-payment of dues, most of us knew the story by heart.

Harlan established quite a reputation through the editing and publishing of the Science-Fantasy Bulletin; however, the Science-Fantasy Bulletin was the Official Organ of the Cleveland Science-Fantasy Society. After the publication of several issues, unenthusiastically edited by various club members, Harlan elected himself to the post of Official Editor and promptly changed it into an erupting Vesuvius, crammed full of non-existent doings of Cleveland fans. After a while, he dropped the pretense of making the Cleveland club appear active, and he also dropped the "Cleveland" from the title "Cleveland Science-Fantasy Bulletin".

NICK
FALASCA



Ellison and Harmon at the
1954 MidWestCon....

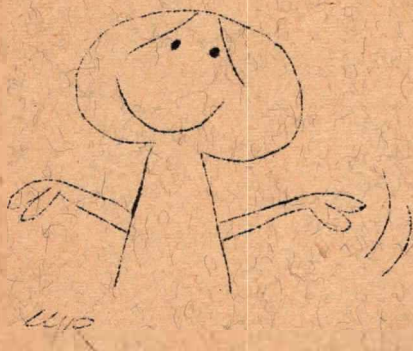
More than a year later, someone noticed this, and he was brought to task for his oversight. It was mutually agreed that he should and would continue to edit and publish Science-Fantasy Bulletin but with his own money, rather than money from the treasury. From this time, Science-Fantasy Bulletin did not appear as frequently.

Although his enthusiasm for science fiction was boundless, he sometimes had difficulty in attending meetings; but after he started scaling two stories in traditional human fly manner, we decided that we might as well open the door and let him come in like the rest of us.

At one meeting, Bill Sponsler, who sometimes pretended to be an agent for the U.N., got fed up with Harlan and drew a knife, forcing him into the hallway. When there were no witnesses looking, Sponsler gave him a shove down a flight and a half of stairs and put the knife back in his pocket. They later became fast friends (Harlan was usually faster and Bill couldn't always catch up with him), and this prepared Harlan for the times when he would be running with kid gangs in New York City.

After some time, many of us became immune to Harlan and some of us even began to develop a liking for him. Others became concerned over his welfare. One day Warren Rayle, an authentic genius, Bill Sponsler, Alan Wilson, a most unusual man, Verne Flinect, and myself decided that Harlan had been leading too sheltered a life. We decided to take him out on the town. We weren't dressed too well, but Harlan was sharp as a dude, complete with handkerchief in pocket. We started at a few local bars, moved later into a reasonably exclusive hotel bar, where Sponsler was a member, and then to Sammy's, a lesbian-homosexual hangout where they were having a drag. Sammy, the proprietor, was deathly afraid of us, especially of Rayle and Sponsler. Rayle always gave the impression of aristocracy, and Sponsler, with his monocle, gave the impression of a degenerate Prussian dueling instructor. Generally, we presented a pretty terrifying picture to someone who ran a queer joint and didn't "want no trouble from the cops". As far as I remember, we never started any trouble, but the possibility that we might always opened doors that were forbidden to the non-gay. That is how Harlan learned some secondary facts of life; namely, that girls don't always go to bed with boys.

As long as I have known Harlan he has wanted to be a writer of science fiction. He was always writing, writing, writing, in haste with waste, but, undeniably, with volume. No one and nothing could retard him. Not even reason. It was but the work of a moment to get someone from Earth to Antares, and no more difficult than stepping around the corner. If the physical universe presented problems, it was changed to suit Harlan Ellison. He knew little and cared less about the intricacies of thermodynamics or Newton. With this open-minded attitude, Harlan began to sell. And, as far as I am able to discern, he has not lost sight of his goal, and still hopes to someday become a science fiction writer.



But, in spite of what others might say, Harlan Ellison has talent. Perhaps he won't shake the world with a Pulitzer Prize grade novel, or make the Book-of-the-Month Club, but he will sell copy. By now Harlan must be approaching his millionth word. I have been watching with considerable interest his recent writings in ROGUE, where he is now associate editor, with more than a casual interest. strips the verbal garbage and multi-syllable excretions from the framework of his stories, some of the latent talent shows through.

Today, Harlan's writing is a good commercial product; it is easily read, NOT great, but GOOD. He is a craftsman who has served a long, hard apprenticeship, and, perhaps, someday in the future we can look upon Harlan as a "writer", but, as it stands today, he is merely competent, and slick, which is indicative that he has, at least, reached one of his goals.

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