
maLaise #33

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"Meet me at the NYCon III, LeeH,
Meet me at the con..."

ments, however, starting with JACK HARNES (GALLANT.GALLSTONE/31): I rather suspected the possibility of some sort of trick to your poetry fragment, because it seemed rather more uneven than usual for you; I forget what I actually did say, but I think I found a few good things in it (which were there) and hedged on the rest... When a poet writes Fake Poetry, it's surprising if he doesn't accidentally let some good stuff in, in spite of himself... (it's how I discovered I was a poet, as far as that goes...) [] "Mentor, speaking for Boskone." Is Hannifen going to be around at the Westercon? Tum-tum-tiddley-um-tum-doodledey-oodah... Gee, it's hard to mask a cold hard killing rage, in print... I suspect it's a world's record for breaking the 20-word mark. BRUCE PELZ (HET BPEMR/31): Nossir, we've got nothing against Baltimore; two vigorous young clubs fighting it out is all in the game. We are, however, very unhappy about the Syracuse bid, especially since if they fail to spoil things in '66, they are going to (most likely) try again in '67. As to setting aside the West Coast at the '66 Syracon, I don't think either NY or Baltimore cd really be sure which wd get the actual majority; we'd first have to join cause to get that 3/4 vote. As to whether we would, even if we thot we cd get away with it and also win it for New York, well, I dunno if we've decided that yet. [] Sorry to see JAY FREEMAN depart fandom; he was probably the most promising of all the CATS. [] I've just run off pp 2 & 3 of this issue, and I see that there is very little set-off. I guess that's the only good thing about hot sticky weather -- it pretty well kills the static that lives in old mimeos.

FRED PATTEN (RABANOS RADIATIVOS!/31) Musta been rough, putting out a Cult FR on Monday and putting out "Tom Gilbert's" TAPS TT the next day, huh? [] If you officially raised the requirements to 40, then I'd have to start sending 46 instead of 41; for some psycho reason I always send in 6 extra copies to the weekly apas...tch. [] If you're still determined to have separate sections, I do think you're wise to consider scattering the poetry around as fillers. [] Historical Note: It takes longer to write one page when I haven't read the whole mlg than it does to write three pages when I have read the mlg. Hopefully, more and better comments next week; but I've been drafting lengthy SAPS mc's over the weekend (on a mlg borrowed from Mike McInerney -- hey, JACK HARNES, wanna sell your copy of SAPS/71?..), on the offchance that 3 people drop this time and catapult me into Membership...

In a little over three weeks, Mike McInerney, Arnie Katz, and I will be meeting at Ted White's early of a cheery Friday morning, preparatory to setting off on the Great Circuit of regional cons. Ted now seems to have worked out a way that we may be able to get to the LASFS meeting just before the Westercon itself, and I hope it works out. Hopefully we will have a couple of surprises in store for you if we do... In fact, you might do well to be hoping we are still the sane...

-- dgV

Null-Q Press

Undecided Publication #123

maLaisian flu

by Ted White

It's been a banner week for me; three new Louis L'Amour westerns came out; one of them a brand new one, The Sackett Brand. L'Amour's Sackett books are perhaps his best, and this one is one of the best of his best. The series concerns the doings of various members of the Sackett clan, all originally from the Tennessee hills and now scattered throughout the west. Blood runs thicker than water, and the Sacketts have a sense of Family which dwarfs the old German traditions on the maternal side of my family. Tell Sackett, newly married (to a woman he met two books back in the series), is "moving" for a place where he can ranch. While he's off scouting, a man accosts his wife, and when she resists, kills her.

The Code of the Old West was pretty firm about women -- white women, at any rate. You didn't touch a Decent Woman. It was the worst crime possible.

Our unknown villain, having committed this very crime in the heat of, ahem, passion, is stuck. So he burns and destroys all evidence of the wagon, hides the woman's body, and tells his men he was shot at by Sackett, whom he wants killed. If he can kill Sackett first, no one will ever know.

He doesn't, it goes without saying, and Sackett manages to get the story told around. And word goes out across the land that forty men are hunting down Tell Sackett, while that worthy is himself hunting his wife's murderer.

And Sacketts start coming out of the woodwork. Many -- most -- were introduced in earlier Sackett books, either as protagonists or secondary characters. A few are new. The Sackett clan is one hell of a family, including as it does the Hills Sacketts, the Lowlands Sacketts, and etc.

It's one hell of a fine idea, and my only creeb is that L'Amour is writing such short books for Bantam these days -- 120 pages, or about 40 or 45,000 words. It shouldn't have ended so soon.

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Mlg.31

RABANOS RADIATIVOS #31: Patten - It should be pointed out that while The Whole Man was based on those two novelettes, the first, "City of the Tiger," has been vastly cut and altered to fit it into the book. I respect Brunner for that: for not just cobbling the two novelettes together and adding a third novellette as the opener. Instead we have a coherent novel. I may vote for it; I haven't decided.

I suggested Final Blackout to Terry, and he said Don Wollheim rejected it as being outdated, but not sufficiently to include it in the "Classic" series. I'll mention it to Shaw next time I see him. I doubt Hubbard would have any objection; Fear was issued as a GALAXY NOVEL, only a few years back.

HET BPEMR #31: Pelz - Syracuse's tactics have not been entirely above-board, and recent developments have brought a good deal more warmth of feeling between Baltimore and New York. I am getting pretty damned tired of hearing about how West Coast fen "would vote for almost anyplace but New York" though. Only a handful of you

attend east coast cons in any case, and I can think of no reciprocal prejudices.

Fortunately, I don't think Syracuse has a chance of getting the '66 con; I doubt very much that a three-quarter majority can be found to support it. And I regard the Syracuse bid as one devoted solely to trouble-making, as is self-evident in Klein's prattling about the joy of convention fights.

"Nick Fury's bleeding horse"? You surely reached into left field for that one. What horse?

CARCASILLA #31: Gilbert - I doubt very much that fan-writing would influence a predeliction towards first-person writing. Inasmuch as a number of pros have been fans, and done as much fan-writing as I, I don't see that theory holding water. I think it's simpler: I'm strongly influenced by mystery writers, where the first-person is almost a rule.

The Mains will probably not settle in LA territory. Andy is most strongly attracted by the Bay Area, and may stop off first for a time with his mother in Santa Barbara. That's about as close as he'll get.

EXPLETIVE: Bjo - All right; let's try that discussion.

My feeling is that ours is a sexually repressive society in which much of the advertising is based upon subliminal (and not-so-subliminal) sex sell. Thus the populace is constantly kept tintillated and in a state of near-arousal, without having any healthy outlets...short of the sublimation of buying whatever it was that used a sex-sell. Nearly everything in our culture is sold on a sexual basis, from kitchen appliances and cars to the directly tintillating mass media. But the success of this system is based on two things: 1) the continued frustration of the tintillated instincts (keep 'em buying); and 2) the basic ill-health of our society which encourages and perpetuates this system. It's a closed, and vicious cycle. It is based upon a "look, but don't touch" attitude towards sex, a very repressive sexual attitude from which can be traced most of our cultural neuroses and psychoses.

Short of a polynesian sort of open sexuality -- which is too unlikely to think about -- we'll never escape this cycle entirely. But we can thwart true and pernicious prurience. This form of unhealthy prurience is exactly that advocated by the censors, to whom nudity and all aspects of the directly human condition are shameful -- and frightening. Our society could take a turn towards lustier health. And we appear to be doing this, although our very success is spurring the Legions of Decency harder than ever to oppose this.

Basically, we must have nudity without shame. This is the first step. When this is possible, the whole culture of peek-a-boo-sexuality (a form of guilt-ridden prurience) will be eliminated. Secondly, if information relating to the sexual act -- descriptions, pictures, paintings, movies, whathaveyou -- are equally common-knowledge much of the "forbidden fruit" aspect will depart, and we might actually be done with furtive sex (if it was furtive, it would not be solely because it was sex; the situation would have to include other factors for furtiveness), and the Sex Is Dirty syndrome which so contaminates today's minds.

Sex is basic to the human condition, and I think it ought to be treated in the same light as eating or sleeping (or -- another shame-area -- elimination; that's a by-product of the sexual mores, of course).

Inasmuch as this relates to pornography...well, porno is what you define it as, and each has his own definition. Sidestepping personal definitions for a moment, I'd say that I can think of only one harmful-effect from pornography, and that is that much of the under-the-counter

stuff perpetuates the very unhealthy attitudes that I oppose: i.e, that sex is dirty (in this case, delightfully dirty, of course).

This comes across a lot more in written porno than visual porno, but aside from this porno has two virtues: 1) it is genuinely instructive (particularly visual porno) in an area where little instruction exists and much is needed; and 2) the usual theme of porno is that Sex Is Fun, a rather more wholesome attitude than is promulgated by Church & State.

It is to be expected that most porno is badly done, by virtue of its illicitness, and I don't think this should be held against porno in abstract. Remember Sturgeon's Law...

Now you state that porno is harmful, but you don't state why you think it is -- only that "males especially cannot accept your reasons or even discuss them rationally." That sounds suspiciously like a cop-out, and I'd like to hope it isn't, and that you'll give us -- me -- the benefit of the doubt and try discussing it with us.

I'm familiar with the "brutally frank" discussions of sex that go on between women -- and I've heard precious few (either first- or second-hand) that didn't sound to me as though psychotherapy was drastically needed. I suspect women are worse traumatized by our society's sexual mores and attitudes than are men -- who are after all originally responsible for them.

SPECKLED RABBIT #10: Knight - This is all but unreadable, Betty. What happened?

WHAT SHALL I CALL IT #14: Glass - I guess I'm in a unique position to comment on your story openers, since I just returned the story the first one opened. In the case of that story I'm afraid your story itself was not a complete story, but rather a prologue and an incident. It was not badly written, but not terribly well written either, and its point was not very original, I'm afraid. As far as the openers themselves go, none were that impressive. The first is simply compressed exposition. The second would be better handled by beginning it with "Kad Deebrai and Loz Ssladel were already there when I entered the Black Soul Tavern in the Alley of the Drunken Spacer. I'd left my ship..." etc. The third builds to a punch of sorts, but opens with that compressed, dull exposition again. The fourth is okay, but points nowhere. The fifth is probably the best, although the story doesn't sound very interesting. The thing to remember is to open with something catchy, and then fill in with whatever dry data is needed. Your first and third openings are dullsville until their last sentences. Better to reshuffle those into the first two sentences.

To give you an example, from memory, I opened one section of a chapter of Phoenix Prime with "The raiders struck at midnight." That sentence is a complete paragraph. The following page and a half backtrack to follow our hero to bed, through a scene of lovemaking, and the following introspection of his thoughts, until at last he falls into an uneasy sleep. The girl who is sleeping with him embraces him, and kisses him, and he relaxes into a deeper sleep. Then all hell breaks loose. The raiders have struck.

This is timing, pacing. One learns it, I'd guess, instinctively -- the ways of building tension and then releasing them, the use of short, punchy, shocking lines for impact -- all these add up to the sort of thrill that Sturgeon's masterful narrative hook can impart. And, by the way, I'd agree that his opener to The Dreaming Jewels is an all-time classic.