

正氣の回心







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Interior art credits - Bill Gibson, 4; Joe Staton, 18. More next time, but the stencils just wouldn't do right and I didn't have time to get more.

The box checked indicates why you are getting LOKI: You are a member of SFPA getting a postmailing . You bought an SFPA bundle and since this is an official postmailing you get a copy of LOKI too / /. We trade / /. I've heard of your fanzine and would like to trade / /. I like the way you write and would like to get an article or at least a LoC from you / /. You have a sub. Since I lost my records in the move to California, please notify me as to how many issues you think you have coming or this will be your last one / /. I'd like to get your FAPAzine / /. Your name is L. Sprague de Camp / /. If none of the above are checked, you must be getting this through SAPS or else you stole it when my back was turned. Shame on you.

НИЧЕГО



This issue of LOKI marks the inception of a New Look, with a shiny brand-new Policy and all other such goodies that one customarily expects to see in practically everything as the new year begins. Since it's been 10 months now since the last issue of this fanzine, the discontinuity in policy should no longer shock anyone. The only people who may be shocked are those who thought LOKI had folded - not so, as you can see.

However, there have been a good many changes, some of which may not show up for another issue or two to those who simply read the zine, but which will nevertheless be operating behind the scenes.

One thing that has changed, which isn't news to anyone in SAPS or SFPA but which may be to others, is my residence - I'm now a member of ill-famed Los Angeles Fandom, even (as of last night) of LASFS itself. Vastly more frequent fan contacts naturally are a result, with the effect of swaying me more to the fannish side than I perhaps was formerly. This is part of the reason for the first change: LOKI will no longer feature exclusively material of a literary nature. Fannish pieces, either faan-fiction or fannish articles, are welcome if they are such as to interest me. I still draw the line at "New Trend" socio-political material - it's not that I'm not interested, but that there are already enough fanzines to cover the ground as thoroughly as I think it needs to be covered in fandom - if I have a political opinion to express I can letterhack it to KIPPLE, and I suggest that others can do the same - or similarly if your own favorite new trend zine is something else. Articles about literary subjects are certainly not forbidden, though - I hope that Bill Plott and Sharon Towle will continue their columns, "From Unknown Worlds" will continue to be a fixture, and I will occasionally print fiction if I like it.

Change 2: LOKI, beginning with this issue (#7) will be distributed through SAPS as well as SFPA. The body of the zine will be the same for both apas; "Molot" will be MCs on SFPazines and will go only with the SFPA copies; NIFLHEIM will be the MCs on SAPSazines and will go only with the SAPS copies. NIFLHEIM will be classed as a bound-in rider rather than a section of LOKI; it will generally be run off later and will have a separate Jötun Pub number. I have several reasons for doing this. For one thing, most SAPS members get LOKI anyhow; it's cheaper to run it through the mailing than to mail them out separately (since I see Bruce frequently and can hand him my SAPSazines). For another, I'd like to put something in SAPS besides MCs, but I haven't time for two major fanzines (haven't had time for one lately, in fact) and LOKI has been a part of SFPA since the inception of that apa and I don't want to withdraw it. So from now on LOKI will have first distribution through SFPA with SFPA MCs; then it will circulate through SAPS a month later with NIFLHEIM added (I won't get SAPS activity credit for anything but NIFLHEIM, but I hope the members will enjoy the rest) and shortly thereafter the general fandom copies will go out.

Which brings us to change #3: LOKI isn't being so easy to get in the fu-

ture. All long-term subs presently in effect will be honored for however long they run. However, except for that I am instituting a new policy of limiting my press run to 100 copies. This includes 25 for SFFPA, 43 for SAPS, and two for my files - so that very simple arithmetic reveals that there will be only 30 copies left for general distribution. From this 30 copies will have to come all my trades - at least ten or so that I can think of are regular, and there will probably be ten or so more each quarter that I'll decide to trade for. That leaves about ten copies for general fandom other than faneds I trade with; there are quite a lot more people than that on my mailing list. The best way to be sure of getting a copy is to contribute something I can use - written or artwork. Otherwise, it sort of looks like you'll have to get on the SAPS or SFFPA waitlist and buy surplus stock if you want LOKI after your current sub runs out, doesn't it? I hate addressing and mailing fanzines; this will limit me to 30 of those a quarter. Sorry, subbers, but there it is.

I trust you will forgive the poorly cut artwork on some of the pages - I can't be sure yet that it's poor, but it looks like it will be from the looks of the stencil. If you won't forgive, the boy to blame is Black-hearted Bruce Pelz, who sold me the stencils; they type fine but I don't think they'll do for artwork. I'm going to have him get me some others when he gets back from Florida; meanwhile some parts of this zine will be without artwork. At least I'm not so stubborn I don't know when to quit.

I've been reading quite a bit lately, all sorts of things, and I can think of nothing better to do with my editorial henceforth than to give expression to some of my thoughts regarding same. For instance, I've read several of the Narnia Chronicles - THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE; PRINCE CASPIAN; THE VOYAGE OF THE DAWN TREADER, and THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW - in the past month. After mulling them over rather thoroughly in my mind, I have decided that they aren't really very good. This may be fannish heresy - at least in LA - but I still say that on a scale of children's fantasy from 1 to 10 I would rate them around 6 or 7 at best. For comparison, I would rate the best few Oz books, THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS, A.A. Milne's fantasies, THE THIRTEEN CLOCKS, the "Alice" books, and maybe the first two Dr. Doolittle books at the 10 level; most of the rest of the Oz books and the better fairy tales of Grimm and Andersen as 9; HALF MAGIC at 8; and the Narnia series below that. I am, now, rating children's fantasies for adult consumption; rating for children I would change some of these considerably. Milne and Grahame and Baum retain their charm, but it takes a particularly bright child to care much for Carroll or Thurber (though I'm not sure Thurber really intended 13 CLOCKS for children anyhow; most libraries put it on the adult shelves. But it has the flavor of the best of children's fantasy.). But I don't think that the Narnia Chronicles are any better for children than they are for adults, if as good.

What, I wonder, is all the fuss about? Why have certain fans gotten so enthusiastic over what are really rather ordinary books? C.S. Lewis is an attractive writer, but the Narnia Chronicles are distinguished by vague plots and an almost complete lack of characterization. The first book chronologically (though the sixth to be written) is THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW. It tells about a boy named Digory and a girl named Polly who are the first humans in Narnia. Digory's uncle is the last of a long line of magicians, and is a typical scientist of a Lewis story - i.e. vain, arrogant, science justifies doing anything to lesser mortals, etc. etc. - one of Lewis' favorite stereotypes. He has discovered a means of travelling between continua, but is afraid to try it because he isn't positive it will work. He tricks Polly into trying it, then Digory must needs go after her. They manage to awaken the queen of a dead world who is even more evil than Digory's uncle, as well as being more powerful, and bring her back into this world. She raises a good bit of commotion before they get her back into the between-worlds continuum, and from there into a new world in the process of creation. The creator is Aslan, the Lion - who is a Christ-figure, incidentally, Lewis being a strongly orthodox Anglican who throws masses of re-

religious apology into everything he writes. I'm an orthodox Anglican myself, so I don't have any particular objection to the symbolism's nature, but I do think that it's a bit overdone, especially in this book and in *TLTWTW*. In fact, there is precisely a Garden of Eden scene here, only in this case there is no Fall (cf. *PERELANDRA*). But a great part of the book is taken up in nothing-type action (meaning that there is nothing after the action that is different from what it was before the action, for all practical purposes), and the occasional passages which take the story forward are rather lost in the irrelevancies. It also suffers from the fault of the other books in the series in that it is a very sketchy book, leaving you with the feeling that there was a great deal that went on behind the scenes that you didn't see, while all that other claptrap was on center stage. At least, it left me feeling that way.

THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE is even worse - the worst of the four books, I think. It is a book with a message (one told much better and more clearly by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John...), and the message gets in the way of the story to such an extent that as I think back on it I wonder if there really was a story or just a vehicle for the message.

PRINCE CASPIAN, on the other hand, is a fairly good story, marred only by the sketchiness that I mentioned in connection with the others. The message, if any, is pretty well hidden, and there is a reasonable amount of action going on all the time. There is still no characterization and the plot is still not what I'd call tight, but it's the best of the four I've read by far, and may rate an 8 rating if it just weren't tied down by the others.

THE VOYAGE OF THE DAWN TREADER is one that I've had more trouble making up my mind about than the others. It is not a novel, really; it is a succession of sketches after the manner of the picaresque adventure tale, where our set of travellers are looking for several things and find them one at a time, each one being involved with a different adventure of some kind. I have a soft spot for this type of story; this isn't a particularly good example of its kind, being rather watered-down for children's consumption (some of the ideas are bloody good, but they aren't played for best effect), but I liked it fairly well nevertheless.

But I don't think that I'll bother to read the last three books unless someone can convince me that I'll like them. I'd also like to hear from those of you who like the Narnia books just what it is about them that you like. The only thing I can see is the creation of a consistent fantasy world which is made the subject of several stories - something which seems to turn some people on like a Christmas tree whenever they run across it. I'll admit, I like it too. When it is handled by a Tolkien, it is exceptional, and even Robert E. Howard and Edgar Rice Burroughs brought their fantasy worlds to life in their books. But Lewis doesn't, for me; I find myself just looking at them as stories, unable to suspend my disbelief.

I mentioned Thurber a while back - one thing that I have been faunching for since the inception of *LOKI* is an article on Thurber's fantasy. I don't want to do it myself because I write quite enough of *LOKI* as it is, but surely there are other Thurber fans in the microcosm who have both the knowledge and the writing ability to do a fairly comprehensive article on the subject. Space is no object; for a good job I'd throw out everything else in the issue if necessary. Larry Combs promised me to do such an article about two years ago; however, it appears that he isn't going to come through, so would someone else like to try? I don't even know who's a Thurber fan - though from the frequency with which I have seen the phrase "Guggle to Zatch" quoted I would judge that *13 CLOCKS* at least is familiar to certain fans.

As long as I'm sending out feelers for articles, I might as well suggest some other topics that I'd welcome articles on. One is a comparison of *THE*

WORM OUROBOROS and THE WELL OF THE UNICORN; another is a comprehensive biblioc of L. Sprague de Camp's work, preferably with an article about him too, though Sam is doing one for AMAZING shortly so that it would be difficult to get anything too new into it; another would be an updating of de Camp's 1953 list of most productive SF writers - I'm sure that Garrett, Silverberg, and Poul Anderson would be included in the top 20 now, and probably there would have been other changes because of the death or inactivity of some of the ones on the earlier list (as I recall they were Asimov, Bradbury, Brackett, Hamilton, Kuttner, Moore, Heinlein, Long, Williams, Williamson, Leinster, Leiber, G. O. Smith, E.E. Smith, van Vogt, Russell, del Rey, and Sturgeon - but I could be wrong, especially on the last couple). Those are good shots to take if anyone wants to make sure of hitting a subject I like for a contrib; your writing style is your own problem, of course.

This issue re-institutes a feature of the first couple of issues: "I've Been Reading...", reviews of current books and fanzines by myself. For a while there I had so many outside reviews coming in that I had no room for my own reviews; this issue I have only one article and a short story other than the regular columns, and I feel that I can afford to spend some pages doing some reviews. Fanzine reviews will be continued indefinitely; reviews of books will be included as I feel like it.

"Katya's Korner" may be making its last appearance in LOKI this issue; she's going to need the credit in SAPS and if it appears in LOKI it won't count. So only after APS minac for NIFLHEIM has been done will she get anything into LOKI. I hope she can do both, but from past experience I wouldn't bet on it. Either way.

Next issue I may include a 5000-word short story by Joe Staton; it's a pretty good story for fan-fiction, but I'm still debating whether anything that's not professionally salable is worth 12 pages in a fanzine.

This is, in a manner of speaking, the 2d Annish of LOKI. That is, it would have been if it had come out in September as it should have. There was a slight delay... Actually, it is appearing almost exactly two years after the first issue of LOKI - but more than a year after the first Annish - and those of you who've been reading LOKI all along know what I'm talking about, and those of you who haven't probably don't care, but I have the rest of this stencil to fill and am clutching at straws for something to write about. I could try a Witty Interlino...

"Katya doesn't have but one sexy outfit - she just keeps putting different clothes on it." - Bruce Pelz at a party in Berkeley.

And then there are Elephant Jokes...but I'll spare you them. Enough is enough, and a Pelz quote is as close to an Elephant Joke as you'll get in LOKI. Even if some of them did break me up the first time I heard them.

No, I just think I'll sign off for this portion of LOKI. You'll see me again a few pages over in "From Unknown Worlds", and then a few more pages over in "I've Been Reading...", and then again in the lettercol, and then again, if you're in SAPS, in NIFLHEIM - so why run the editorial past four pages? Why even strain to fill the fourth page? Live wild! Waste stencil space!

Being things perhaps topical, perhaps not, but things most certainly from a female's angle.

First off, I gave up sewing for other people. (Oh, you had no idea of my little side operation?) "Aha," some of you say. "I knew she wasn't just a Fringe Fan. She felt compelled to quit by Fannish Duty." You're wrong. I just can't keep David's fanac picked up and sew, too. (Which obliquely adds \$2.00 a day to the cost of his fanac, Sat. and Sun. included //Gee, I better get more fanning done if it's costing me that much... - dgh//.) Seriously, it was just too much for a housewife-student. Not only did I no longer have time to enjoy life; I had forgotten what I was missing. And I'm too young to be that old (21 come January 25). Besides, I caught the flu.

Y'know, the longer I lay in bed, envisioning the mounting stacks of dishes and diapers, the sicker I got. When David started bringing me water in crystal (stored in the topmost cabinets) //I NEVER!!! - dgh//, I figured I'd better get out of bed and back to the kitchen. So Roy promptly caught the bug. This is always good for my nerves. I'm too mean to die, but Roy just seems to strike up a cozy acquaintance with germs of all sorts. He caught a staph infection once; it was resistant to everything but (a) cantrax, administered intramuscularly (I hope I never have to give him shots again!), and (b) prostaphlin, a drug so nauseating to smell that if the capsule, 500 mg size, dissolves before hitting the stomach, the person will automatically, ah, well... I "liked" giving the shots better. Anyway, this time he snapped out of it in about a week and things are almost back to normal around here.

You say you have a sniffle, David????

My own personal Santa Claus gave me a Lasfs suit for Christmas. That's kind of like a birthday suit... It's knitted ~~and is a little too small~~, taupe, a straight skirt, sleeveless top, and "jacket". Now if he would just take me to Lasfs..... It isn't that I'm an exhibitionist, honey, but these beige walls are driving me mad, mad, mad! I crave the sweaty, dusty, acoustic monster known as the Silverlake Recreation Building. //So it's not me that has the Thursday class, my sweet - dgh// Besides, next time I become a member. Then I can vote and make noise and throw my weight around, all 170 pounds of you. Lasfs is just funning over with good cheer now, with marriages and a baby cropping up in unexpected places.

There seems to be a sliver of glass under my fingernail... You see, we broke open Roy's piggy bank the other night. Just to count it, Mama! We're opening an account for the little one. Seems in one year of life he had accumulated \$22.10. or \$22.09 and a Canadian penny, depending on just how far right you lean. For Christmas Santa brought him (among other things, of course) a blue plastic bank...that can be opened without a hammer. I still haven't gotten all the glass out of the living room carpet. Don't anyone come here barefooted.

At that point she was interrupted in her writing and is now at school, but I have to finish up the stencilling, so that concludes the general natterings. The following article and book review were written for other purposes, but I thought they might be of some interest to fans so they're included. Anyhow, she needs the page credit for SAPS...

"Xmas Tree, Vinyl, Green, 6 Ft."

Each blustery December about the time of the third snowfall, Grandfather Bridges, muffled in winter woollens, set off for the "lower 40". He stopped at the snow-peaked wood-pile to tug the axe from the chopping block. He gingerly tested its edge with his thumb, remarked to his son that he knew "just the tree",

and marched off again, whistling "Tannenbaum". From the warm security of the farmhouse kitchen you could hear oach "thunk" as the axe bit deeper, and not too long afterwards the "men" proudly returned carrying a tree of no mean height and one as full as an over-stuffed Christmas goose. Santa Claus decorated the tree while all were smuggled beneath the feather comforters, and Christmas Day dawned on a glittering, scintillating pine.

Dad was a doctor, and we never counted on him for anything as time-consuming as tree-hunting. But every year "Charlie Roy", a Negro orderly from the hospital, organized an expedition of me, my brother and sister, and a few stray cousins. When he had huddled us into the family Ford, he asked with the smile of a Cheshire Cat how big the tree must be, for, he said, that would determine where we must go to find it. I can't recall what we shouted at any time, but the day was always an outing, and we always found ourselves eventually at Dad's dairy farm. The tree we selected was always too large - years of experience didn't teach us to shave our visions by, say, about a foot. Still, we managed to get the green giant home, and by judicious pruning, to erect it in the living room. It brushed the ceiling with the wings of an angel older than I, and filled the house with the aroma of cedar. In the early years, the tree was decorated on the secret, magical eve of Christmas by the Adults, but my mother sprained her back one Christmas season. That year and thereafter we kids helped string the tinsel and place the lights and ornaments.

Now I've a son of my own, and it's December. But Christmas for me has changed so much in a few short years. In sunny California the stores are bustling from Thanksgiving on, and there is no crisp winter day, and no "free" pine or cedar. Trees are shipped into the city via railroad and truck, and you choose by the thinness of your pocketbook, not the height of your ceiling.

In an effort to enliven the commercialized Christmas I just tramped through a forest of advertisements, seeking the largest tree for the least expenditure. Scrooge-like, I even read the "want ads" for "used Christmas trees". Recoiling in horror at my own materialism, I decided forthwith to go to the nearest dime store and bring home the tree. (I had grudgingly agreed with my husband that an artificial tree was much more practical in the long run, but I had refused to be talked into an aluminum "tree".)

So, I donned capris and coordinated blouse, dressed my son in stretch crawlers, and, with price and height firmly in mind (the store was running a sale that week) strolled to Almar's Five and Dime. A quick glance around revealed the display model, decked out in purple and gold bangles, with flickering lights and not one stray needle on the cloth beneath. I shanghai'd a clerk, who assured me that the tree came complete with stand, but not with ornaments, and that it was flame-proof (a virtue no real tree ever boasted, but a handy one, in case we can ever afford electric lights). For \$8.20 I purchased a four foot long box, stamped "xmas tree, vinyl, green, 6 ft", and trundled it home.

That night my husband and I assembled our little jiffy tree. It was rough going, for the box contained no instructions, and unlike the Lord we had never made a tree. But eventually it resembled, rather closely, the Christmas tree of our dreams, and we were pleased. Then we began to decorate.

This is the first Christmas in my memory that half the joy of creating a beautiful tree wasn't dulled by the pricks of an ungrateful cedar. Our vinyl tree loves to be decorated. When we were only half finished it looked good, and when we were finished, it looked splendid. In a mellow spirit we added the last strand of popcorn - - oh, didn't you know? We managed to have an old-fashioned Christmas. I made almost all the ornaments, and the rest were made by family members. They are bright and shiny, and long loops of popcorn frost this, our family tree. We hope hand-made decorations will become a family tradition, but we'll leave the lighting, when we can afford it, to GE.

And to show that there's more than one reviewer in the family, Katya reviews:

THE MIRACLE OF LANGUAGE, by Charlton Laird (Fawcett Premier Book d51, 50¢, PB)

In THE MIRACLE OF LANGUAGE Mr. Laird presents a reasonably thorough, yet never dry, dissertation on many aspects of the miracle of language. The chief and most outstanding miracle is that language requires a body of human agreement. Millions of humans must know and agree upon the meaning of millions of words in order to be intelligible to each other, to communicate, to advance civilization. And English, a distributive language with an enormous storehouse of words, provides the most comprehensive means of explicit expression yet known to man. Because language is responsible for the spread of culture, for thinking (we think with words, and the more words we know, the more easily and better we think), for communication as no other animal knows it, man may be said to be a "languagized animal," says Mr. Laird.

Yet language is also the possession of individuals. Language always reflects, in each person, the individual vocabularies and dialects. This strange dualism - the possession of language by the mass and, simultaneously, by the individual, is responsible for the vitality and growth of our language.

English as we know it is descended from the Indo-European, a theoretical language inferred from the many roots and words common to various languages. English and German are both descended from West German, which came from Proto-German, which came from Indo-European. West German, before it became English as we know it, was successively Anglo-Saxon, then Middle English. English is now the most widely spoken language, and may someday become the world language. How does Mr. Laird explain this?

Our vocabulary consists of words from (1) Anglo-Saxon, which gave us most of our everyday words, such as cow, hiss, run, etc; (2) from French, which gave us check (cheque), lingerie, and many more; (3) from Latin, directly and through French; (4) from Old Norse, which provided us with many of our prepositions and pronouns; and (5) from many other languages in lesser degrees.

From this enormous stock of root words, Mr. Laird says, we have enlarged our language even further by seven means. First, sometimes we take a general word and make it specific (specialization), such as glossary from the Indo-European root Glos. Sometimes we take the specific and make it general (generalization), such as "tap", which originally meant to unplug a beer barrel, and came to mean "tap as with a hammer", "Knock lightly", and a host of other things. Third, we change words by the addition of prefixes and suffixes, as "inhibit", "exhibit"; "induce", "deduce".

Shifts in respectability are responsible for changes in vocabulary. Where we once said "toilet", we now say "powder room". If a word becomes "better" due to social pressures or just the current usage, as "jazz" has lately done, it undergoes amelioration. If it becomes worse, it is in the throes of pejoration.

Many words cannot trace their usages to these six causes, but are the result, instead, of broad jumps in logic, such as "teeth" of a saw.

In addition to these various alterations performed on the body of our English language, we borrow freely, says Mr. Laird. We borrow from Spanish (corral), French (chapeau), Polynesian (tabu), etc., and various technical fields use a specific language in discussing things. Biology, for instance, uses Latin terms, or Latin endings on English words and proper names, in naming plants and animals. Many of our "adopted" words have come from immigrants to our shores, including the "immigrant" Indians of North America.

Language, by and large, is a spoken language, and grows and fluctuates as the people speak it, not as some antiquated grammarian says we speak it. Mr. Laird gives a short course in voice mechanics, and literally armed with a now knowledgeable reader, proceeds to tear traditional grammar apart. His chief thesis is that English is a distributive language - that is, our meaning rests on the order of words in a sentence, - not an inflected language, where meanings are determined by word endings, as in Latin. And yet our grammar is based on Latin grammar.

Yet, although English changes, it changes according to linguistic principles, and though we are impeded by thinking we have one sort of grammar when we actually have another, still English is a fine and immensely flexible language which could and should, perhaps, become the world language. Man cannot think without words, says Mr. Laird. Perhaps if we all thought in the same words we would tend less to international misunderstandings of dire consequences.

Mr. Laird makes, in THE MIRACLE OF LANGUAGE, a telling point: language is an astoundingly complex thing which enables us to think, communicate, grow. In a spirited fashion he tears away old rules of grammar which we have learned by rote, and points toward a living, growing language, unhindered by pedantry. He does not advocate no controls, but I agree with him that language is much too intrinsically a part of us to be regulated in the present manner.

I wish my 9th grade teacher had used this as a text-book. I just now learned how and why I speak the way I do.

My husband says that in "Xmas Tree, Vinyl, Green, 6 Ft." I used almost every rhetorical figure listed in Fowler's MODERN ENGLISH USAGE. These have big long names such as hendiadys, oxymoron, metaphor, apostrophe, hysteron proteron, meiosis, etc. etc. Honest, I didn't write them as exercises in flowery rhetoric; in fact, my teacher deplores it. Anyway, she liked it rather well, and that's all I ask. I hope you can at least plow through them.

Remember, if you see a "No Smoking" sign, they usually mean business. It is considered bad form blow up a plane-load of people or to send a hospital sky-high. I'm just as glad David quit smoking; corflu smells like ether and I always worried lest an explosive mixture should accumulate.

By the way, Dave, you need a haircut. //By the way, m'love, when are you going to cut it? - dgh// //For the benefit of bystanders, I am typing and Katya is dictating to me. Usually she writes her stuff out in longhand and I copy it, but this is the last page and I wanted to make sure it came out even so she's working on keeping it the right length. -dgh// I just know I didn't say all that much! Anyway, can't we leave a little white space and go cut your hair? //No, but we can wait till tomorrow to finish this. - dgh//

Ha! Mad Katya is finally at the keyboard. This is undoubtedly a mistake, for now he will expect me to type all my stuff. Then, like all fannish husbands, he'll have me typing the whole blinking thing. Eh, Juanita? Oh well, the die is cast. Might as well get in shape for a scheduled FAPA one-shot session. I have a sneaky feeling that this is not going to be any too evenly cut a stencil as far as letters go. For one thing, my nose is about on a level with the bottom row of keys. But we've progressed thus far without need to resort to Corflu, and surely that is at least passable fannish typing. (Guess what? I'm just blithering. I'm pretty good at that. Sometimes, getting a word in edge-wise with me is like trying to thread a sewing machine needle while the motor is running.) That's all, folks.

LOWER LEVEL

by
Frederick Norwood

"Of course, there have been countless fantasy shows devoted to the younger generation... These are fantasy shows, true, but fantasy shows of a lower level than the true devotee would care to concern himself with."

-Mike Deckinger in LOKI #4

In the futuristic costume of his people, Jor El stood before the council of elders and announced that soon Krypton would plunge into the sun. The council laughed, as all councils are prone to laugh at prophets of doom, and Jor El returned to his laboratory where a small test rocket waited. Suddenly, the ground began to shake, and chunks of plaster rained from the ceiling. Already the doom was upon them. "Hurry," Jor El called to his wife, Laura. "There is just room in this test rocket for you and our son. It can carry you to safety on the planet Earth." But Laura placed the infant in the rocket and then closed the hatch, refusing to leave her husband, and together they died as the rocket left the planet far behind. Soon, the spacecraft would crash on Earth, where John and Mary Kent would find it, and John would snatch the baby from the flaming wreckage before the craft exploded. And thus, Superman was launched, into a series that would carry him through more than a hundred television adventures.

And thus series television took up the sputtering torch from the old movie serials, the cliffhangers, to provide nostalgia for the coming generation. Once again the screen was full of weird machines and electronic magic. The producers realized that kids believed in things that a more sensible grown-up would laugh at, things like rockets and space stations and heat rays, and so the writers exercised full freedom without worrying whether the audience would understand or believe.

The plots of the average adult television show may have been a shade more "mature" than those of the juvenile thrillers, more sordid, less moralizing, but imagination made the children's shows stand out when compared to adult fare. Tom Corbett, Captain Video, Rocky Jones...it is easy for some fans to take the same attitude toward these as the rest of the world takes toward science fiction, but these shows had a firmer grasp on the makings of Wonder than not only adult TV (a low standard), but than a good deal of modern magazine science fiction.

The late Charles Laughton, a fan of science fiction and friend of Ray Bradbury, once confessed that people trained for jobs in the entertainment industry were taught that the average audience was twelve years old. Almost all television and movie scripts must be acceptable to that age level, as far as complexity of plot is concerned. And yet where shows for children are involved, a strange reversal occurs. When scaling down an adult show for a twelve year old mind, the shows must be made simple, unimaginative, and to formula; but when writing for children the writers realize that the average child is bright, imaginative, and pleased by originality.

Thus the more talented young actors, those who were not grabbed by the movies, rocketed to stardom, and discarded just as they might be developing some ability, were offered steady work and a chance to learn on the job. Writers without enough prestige to get a job with the best shows, and too much imagination to work for the Westerns, turned to the kiddie shows...writers like Jack

Vance, Henry Kuttner, and other big-name science-fictioneers who wanted more money than science fiction had to offer. Captain Video grabbed most of these, and they turned out stories about machines that did anything: turned one object into two, shrunk, enlarged, heated, froze...but which no one knew how to operate. They wrote of a planet of lava seas and floating islands where an evil scientist invented a ray which left men totally selfish. The budget was small, but the special effects men were the best, and consistently achieved ingenious and spectacular results.

In Superman the effects were more sophisticated. I believe that Superman was the first character to fly directly into the camera, with buildings in the background. The Superman on television differed from the comic book character in a number of minor details, but the main difference was that he looked real, not like a series of cartoons. The stories were the same, but here the characters spoke rather than bubbling word balloons behind them. George Reeves bore an amazing resemblance to Clark Kent, and was really a first rate actor, though no one would believe it after he had taken the Superman role. Unfortunately the quality of the Superman scripts declined sharply after the first few dozen. It is easy to imagine someone in the studio first complaining that too many pains were being taken on a mere kiddie show, and then when the audience dropped congratulating himself on predicting the failure before more money was wasted. The people directly involved with these shows seemed to take pride in their product, but when those in authority had no respect for their audience the results have been worthy of the low opinion held of children's shows in general.

"Space Cadet" is an example of a series on the decline. After an exceptional radio career, and a series of books well worth reading, "Space Cadet" on television rapidly broke with the format of heroes in the making, Tom Corbett, Astro, and Roger Manning, and turned the lead characters into one full-fledged Hero and two straight men, replacing human interest with comic relief. When the original "Space Cadet" team broke up, the group was as good as dead...and did die soon after, in spite of years of entertainment which had made "Space Cadet" a familiar term.

My personal pick of the juvenile science fiction shows is "Rocky Jones, Space Ranger". A straight imitation of Tom Corbett, with a stock cast of Hero, young sidekick, pretty girl, and old scientist, it was on the climb when Tom Corbett was rapidly declining. With the more workable format of three serial chapters, each a half hour in length, and the best special effects department in the business, it was easy to ignore the acting and get caught up in the thrill of the story. There is something about the serial format that a fan forgives it anything but dullness, and this was not only a serial but, to my knowledge, the only television series that used the serial technique of flashing back to screens of previous episodes to give the series continuity. //Ever watch "Bullwinkle", or "Crusader Rabbit", or "Ruff & Reddy"? - dgh// In "The Trial of Rocky Jones" most of the action was in the form of testimony by witnesses, shown as scenes from past episodes, which when the villain took the stand were spliced to give an entirely different impression than they had originally.

Rockets sped across the inky depths, and space stations wheeled majestically, but more important were details, which were never spared. Buildings were alien with triangular doors which slid back at the wave of a hand. The wall decorations were jagged streaks of lightning, and the corridors were lit by globes of crackling fire. Most impressive of all was the spaceport, where a gantry rolled out to the ship, airlocks opened, and the warning siren beeped, the electronic bursts of sound growing closer and closer together as the countdown neared zero. Then, at the last possible moment when the gantry pulled away and its ladder slid up out of reach, Rocky runs out, grabs the bottom

rung, , hauls himself up to the loading platform, leaps the gap into the closing airlock, and then the warning signal is drowned in the explosive noise of rockets blasting.

And so they went. Flash Gordon, poorly done compared with the movie serials; Howdy Doody came and stayed and went, along with several other puppets which may be someone else's nostalgia; a few animated cartoons such as "Space Angel" who never captured the excitement of live special effects and actors; and, of course, the perpetual reruns of movie serials which thoroughly and stupidly killed the Saturday matinee tradition.

While even the fantasy shows for adults look stubbornly at the present or the past, the future can still be found every weekday afternoon and Saturday morning. Somewhere in this lower level of entertainment is a more universal level, a purer entertainment, unhampered by reality. Only reality can be truly rewarding and satisfying, but a vacation, if only for a few hours, is a pleasant change. Where do you go? To live in the wild and woolly West? To visit a family torn by inconceivably complex domestic problems? Or would you rather have slashing ray guns? Would you rather fly through the air, faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, able to leap tall buildings at a single bound? Kid stuff? The word is escape. In television, movies, comic books or pulp PLANET STORIES you find the carnival of the literary world. Fantastic? Fun!

--Rick Norwood--

I might note here, as long as I'm just filling space, that a publishable letter of comment counts as a contribution to LOKI. But since, as this time, the lettercolumn may get squeezed out, it is safer to have something else in. A letter will get you only the ish it appears in; other contribs will get you all issues till the contrib appears, and all after it that have comments on it. Fair enuf?

PLATINUM PICOSECONDS; or, I just gotta get a book review in here somewhere...

A TALE OF TWO CLOCKS, by James H. Schmitz, escaped me completely when it came out in 1962. Apparently it managed to escape a great many fans, or else I'm one of the few Schmitz fans around, because I don't recall seeing it mentioned in any other fanzine. Lewis' Book Review Index for '62 lists it as being reviewed in ANALOG, but I must have overlooked it. Maybe the fact that it was a hardcover book which didn't get into any of the book clubs (Torquil pubbed it) caused its nearly universal ignoring. But it didn't deserve such a fate; it's probably the best bit of space opera that I've read in some time. Schmitz is certainly one of the top action-SF writers around; it's a great pity that he doesn't write more. The first magazine SF story I ever read was his "The Witches of Karres" in the December '49 ASTOUNDING, and it has remained one of my all-time favorite short stories. The "Agent of Vega" series also was a favorite of mine. Schmitz, along with H. Beam Piper, Poul Anderson, and Everett B. Cole, is a master of what might be called "sophisticated space opera". Keith Laumer is a new author who does most of his writing in the same vein. Rather than the bigger and better gadgets, gigantic battles in intergalactic space, etc., which distinguish the old-line space opera of EE and GO Smith, Campbell, Hamilton, Williamson, et. al., the new style calls for a Graham Greene-ish novel of intrigue set in an interstellar community. Great things are at stake, but the heroes are usually dependent on their brains and natural talents, with a few minor gadgets, rather than anything cataclysmic. Those of you who have read the "Agent of Vega" series by Schmitz, the "Paratime Police" yarns of Piper, the "Philosophical Corp" of Cole, and the numerous examples of the genre (Wing Alak and the Space Patrol, the Time Patrol, Dominic Flandry, the Polesotechnic League, etc.) by Anderson will know what I mean. If you like that sort of story, this is a rousing good one. If you don't, you wasted your time even reading this review... - dgh.

From Unknown Worlds

The cover of the September 1939 issue of UNKNOWN is a rather poor job by H.W. Scott depicting Lucifer guiding the hands of a man who is moving stacks of coins about on a map of North America - actually on the North American portion of a globe, now that I look at it more closely.

The cover is poor, but the story it illustrates is, in my opinion, the best UNKNOWN novel that has never appeared in hard covers. The story is "None But Lucifer", by H. L. Gold and L. Sprague de Camp. What part de Camp played in the writing is difficult for me to determine; this novel bears none of the typical earmarks of a de Camp yarn. The story has little humor, and what there is is the Goldian rather than the de Campian style. The distinctive turns of phrase which characterize all the rest of de Camp's writing, both fiction and non-fiction, and his collaborations with Pratt and P. Schuyler Miller as well, are notable for their absence. So is the tremendous attention to detail that characterizes his other work. On the other hand, it definitely bears the strong stamp of Gold; it is the sort of story that GALAXY became famous for before it became notorious for them, with the exception that this is fantasy and not science fiction. But it has the same grim, fatalistic mood that so much GALAXY material had; in fact, it expresses this mood explicitly. "...anything that you do, irrespective of your intentions, will increase the misery and torments of the people..." - thus Lucifer turns his job over to his successor, for it seems that Marlowe was right when he makes Mephistophilis say "Why this is Hell, nor am I out of it." "None But Lucifer" is an exceptionally good story, and with slight revision to take out references to the incipient 2d World War would be quite as appropriate today as when it was written. I wish that Pyramid, who seems to be pubbing quite a bit of old UNKNOWN material these days, would get Gold or de Camp to revise this and reprint it for the benefit of those fans who don't have a chance to read it in the magazine version. It's several cuts above most of what you can get in new stuff, and I doubt if 1% of the paperback market has ever seen it.

"Danger, Quicksand", by "H.W. Guernsey", is a rather routine suspense story about some people trapped in a swamp with live quicksand. Well enough done, but not particularly original.

"Caliph of Yafri" is a novelette told in the manner of an Arabian folk tale, which indeed it purports to be. The author gives his name as "Silaki Ali Hassan", which I have recently heard is a pen name for someone here in LA. I think it's someone who hasn't done any writing under his own name, though, so it doesn't matter much. Anyhow, the author is not really an Arab but an Angeleno. However, he writes an authentic-sounding Arabian legend, and this is a good story.

"The Coppersmith", by Lester del Rey, has become something of a classic in its field, and deservedly so. It is a delightful little tale of an elf who is a coppersmith, who went to sleep many and many a year ago and awakens to find that no longer do we use pots and pans of copper, but of aluminum and stainless and enamelware which his solders and fluxes will not work on. But he finds work finally in a garage repairing car radiators, and we'll meet him again in the Jan. 1940 issue in "Doubled in Brass".

"Portrait", by old hand Ray Cummings, is a well-done little tale of a man who acquires some magical paints which will produce absolutely life-like portraits - at the price of having the model disappear. He uses the last of them for a self-portrait...

"Over the Border" is the first article to appear in UNKNOWN. It is sort of a back-up for SINISTER BARRIER; Eric Frank Russell, an avowed Fortean, here rehashes some of the things that appeared in Fort's books and some new material of the same nature. It's enjoyable enough - FER is a good enough writer to make almost anything interesting - but not really outstanding.

"Of Things Beyond" comments on the lead novel and the Russell article, and forecasts for the next issue "The Elder Gods", last work of "Don A. Stuart"; "The Enchanted Weekend" by Canadian author John MacCormac; "Anything", by "Philip St. John"; and the first of a new series by Dorothy Quick, "Blue and Silver Brocade".

"...And Having Writ..." has letters from Sturgeon, Asimov, and Langley Searles, and an explanation as to why the July issue had untrimmed edges.

The cover of the October issue is by Edest Stein, and may be considered good or bad depending on your taste, I guess. The overall effect from several feet away is rather good; the color is tastefully done in shades of blue for the most part, and the composition is good; three of the Elder Gods watching as Daron the sailor staggers up out of the sea. But it has a great lack of detail when seen close up, and I happen to like a lot of detail in pictures. It's better than the one before it, though.

The lead novel in this issue is "The Elder Gods" - as mentioned before, it is the last story by "Don A. Stuart" ever to appear, and a fitting swansong to a distinguished career it was. Those who want to read it can find it backing up his realistic SF novel THE MOON IS HELL! in the book of the same name; I think it's still available from Pick-a-Book. It is a rousing adventure story which makes several rather good philosophical points while the adventure goes on unhindered. This is a good example of a story with a message in which the message doesn't get in the way of the story; the message is that it is better not to know the future in detail, because only if you don't know the future can you be free. It seems that this story is set in the far future, though it may be a pure fantasy world - but most likely it is in our own future, after a war destroyed all of our civilization except for a handful of scientists who had achieved immortality and helped in subtle ways to get the new civilizations started on the upward road. These are the "Elder Gods" - more than human, yet in human form and of human birth. Arrayed against them are the Invisible Ones, non-anthropomorphic gods who predict the future for any who ask, and who are gaining control of the island where the action takes place. Into this comes Daron the sailor, whose fate the Invisible Ones cannot predict and who therefore is a variable factor in a formerly determined universe. (Philip K. Dick used a similar concept in "The Variable Man", a novelette that appeared in an Ace collection some years back.) How this works out in detail is well-told in this novel.

"The Dawn of Reason", by James H. Beard, is the first poem to appear in UNKNOWN, and deals well enough with the question of witches - are there or aren't there? It doesn't answer it, but it asks it in a skillful manner.

"Dreams May Come", by H. Warner Munn, says, essentially, that whatever you do, you'll end up the same - dead. And doesn't say it particularly well, in my opinion.

"A God in a Garden" marks the first appearance of Theodore Sturgeon in UNKNOWN (exclusive of LoCs), and it's an auspicious enough beginning for the author who was to sell more stories to UNKNOWN than any other in the course of its history. The god was extremely ugly, the man a liar, and his wife wanted him to be truthful. So the god gave him the power to tell nothing but the truth, and...the complications read more like Kuttner than Sturgeon, but it's a good story.

"Anything" is by "Philip St. John", a pen name of Lester del Rey based on the fact that among his numerous names you can find Felipe San Juan. It isn't greatly different from "The Coppersmith" in concept - this time it's a brownie instead of an elf - but the results resemble more closely those of Guernsey's "The Hexer" (See FUM in LOKI 6). It's an amusing little yarn in the style of the best of UNKNOWN humorous fantasy, and well worth reading.

"Blue and Silver Brocade" is the first of a series of stories by Dorothy Quick which deal with the dreams that come when one sleeps under an old patchwork quilt. The patches are cut from famous garments - not necessarily famous, but having some connection with famous events - and if you sleep with your hand touching a particular patch, you will dream that you were the person wearing that garment when the famous thing happened to it. So in this instance, it is worn by the servant of the Marquise de Montespon to one of the Black Masses which that great lady participated in in order to try to retain the favor of Louis XIV. It's quite a good story, the description of the Black Mass being particularly well done.

The last story is a short novel and one of the best-liked stories from UNKNOWN. As far as I know its only reprinting was in the anthology FROM UNKNOWN WORLDS that Street & Smith put out after the wartime paper shortage was over to see if there was sufficient market to warrant reviving the mag. Unfortunately it didn't sell well enough, and the best fantasy magazine ever ceased for good. But it should be reprinted somewhere; it is an utterly delightful piece of fantastic nonsense. It seems that a young scholar who is without any athletic ability whatever becomes enamored of an English girl whose family thinks of nothing but athletics. He rouses Merlin from a sleep of centuries (quite by accident) and is granted a favor. He asks for athletic ability and is given a ring which grants its wearer the ability to win any contest. Of course, it was developed in the medieval days when the loser of a contest was generally food for the crows, so it tended to be a bit drastic. Like when he played bridge he always knew exactly what was going on in every hand and held hands that were cold grand slams every time; when he played tennis his serve was so hard it knocked out his opponent; when he played golf he got a hole-in-one on every hole...you get the idea. Not at all the sort of thing to endear oneself to a sporting English family. It's told in a delightful style, and everyone who gets the chance should read it.

"Of Things Beyond" editorializes about some of the strange things that can happen to people strictly by mental efforts, no physical means involved - and promises that the next novel, "Sons of the Bear-God", will tell of some examples of this. It's a sequel to "Flame Winds" (See FUM in LOKI 6).

"...And Having Writ..." has letters from Robert Moore Williams and L. Sprague de Camp among the pros (Sprague is answering the grotches at his comments on Yoga - see FUM, LOKIs 4 & 6) and T. Bruce Yerke among fans whose names are still remembered. Nothing overpowering is said by any of them, though it's all interesting enough.

I'm going to cut this column short this time; I am not in the mood to write any more about UNKNOWN without having a chance to sit down and read some from the mags, and I haven't time to do that before the deadline. Next issue I'll take up the November and December '39 issues for sure, and maybe the January '40. That will include the best novel ever to appear in UNKNOWN for my taste - LEST DARKNESS FALL. And the usual features and short stories, and a couple of articles too. We're getting into the Golden Age pretty soon - the days when everything in UNKNOWN was great, before many of the good authors went off to war. Stay tuned...

Black Light



SHARON TOWLE

VOLSUNGASAGA

Translated by Wm. Morris; Collier Books BS66 \$1.50

I shall discuss the Volsungasaga - or at least this translation thereof - stylistically, and shall attempt to discuss it thematically. It is always presumptuous to assume that one understands the legends of another culture, as it is presumptuous to assume that one understands anything one has not experienced. Yet I think we of the twentieth century may be able to understand this legend, at least in part. For we are beginning to face spiritually, with much fear and trembling*, an outlook which the Norse accepted spiritually and physically without equivocation. For the Norse, our quavering approaches toward existentialism might well seem the first signs of strength in the long history of a cowardly race. I am very wary of this, for I realize that every culture tends to interpret past beliefs in the light of its own. Yet it seems possible to me, and I offer it for what it is worth.

The Volsungasaga is not, strictly speaking, a collection of myths. It is an accumulation of historical incidents and legendary exaggerations thereof, drawn by an anonymous writer in thirteenth-century Iceland into a unified literary work. But there are very few mythical, or supernatural, elements in it. An occasional reference to the Aesir, the Norse gods, yes; and a few appearances of Odin. But the Norse myth of Valhalla as an abode of mortal heroes immortalized by the gods for their bravery in battle does not appear here at all. There is no direct reference to immortality of any sort, except for a few references to Hell for villains that may very well mean no more than profanity to atheists. On the contrary, there is much evidence that death in this saga is considered simply and finally as death. I am not suggesting that the author abandoned the Valhalla myth intellectually, or even that he consciously abandoned it at all. I do not know if this myth was still current at the time the Volsungasaga was written, though this saga seems to imply that if it was known it was not deeply believed. //Ed. note: 13th-century Iceland was Christian, although the old legends were known in the same sense as we know them. - dgh// I am simply implying that the author of this saga recorded the world as he saw it, and that the world he saw included no elements of paradise. Valhalla itself, for that matter, is a rather austere conception of paradise by our standards, though it apparently seemed luxurious to the Norse.

Life in early Scandinavia (and Iceland) was, as we are all intellectually aware, quite hard. I do not think any of us can really imagine how hard it was. To live through winters at least as cold as those in northern New England, with only wood-burning fireplaces for heat, with the outdoor trades of hunting and agriculture the only sources of livelihood, and with the plague of incessant inter-tribal wars - no, I don't think we can imagine it. Courage is the absolute requirement of such a life; all other considerations are quite secondary. And it is this sort of life that was the basis of Norse ethics and Norse beliefs.

What ethics, then, and what beliefs? One was loyal to one's kinsfolk and to those to whom he had sworn alliance. These he might not harm without just cause, such as murder, theft, or the like. Within the tribe, the ethics practiced were much like those we profess, though much more severely enforced. One might also, if he wished, be kind to an innocuous stranger such as an abandoned woman or child, though he was not required to do so. The rulers of different tribes might exchange favors, and alliances which bound kinsmen of each ruler to each other as to their own.

*I will buy an issue of *LOKI* for anyone who catches the reference I have in mind here. - ST.

But alliance was often a tricky business, for without the tribe law disappeared. It seems to have been considered somewhat dishonorable for a chieftain of one clan to invite the head of another to his home on pretenses of peace and then attack him, but it was often done. The advantage of this in warfare is obvious, as a lord who travelled must leave part of his army at home to protect against invasion. Therefore his host would have available a much larger force at arms than he. In warfare noncombatants and prisoners might be killed or enslaved; there seems to have been no ethical censure against either. The clan was considered more or less a unit, with requirements lying most heavily on one's next-of-kin. When a man was killed, his next-of-kin was required to avenge him; and if the killer died before this could be done, his son or brother or nearest relative might be killed in his stead. Often revenge took the form of a war in which the killer's entire tribe was slain - if the avenging tribe happened to be victorious. Women were not considered fit victims of vengeance. They might be slaughtered, though they were more often enslaved, in an all-out war; but/seldom were they attacked as individuals. However, the women of Viking legend sometimes took upon themselves the task of avenging their own kinsfolk, or of aiding their men to do it; Signy was one such. There seems also to have been no censure of brigandage, even of the robbery of unarmed men, so long as it was done outside the tribe - though of course the victim's tribe would be required to avenge him.

Beliefs? In the Volsungasaga man has freewill control over his own actions and absolutely nothing else. Man cannot avoid death, nor any other ill he is destined to bear; he can only choose whether to meet it with courage or with cowardice. "Then spake Volsung the King - once alone must all men die, and from that season shall none escape; so my rede it is that we flee nowhither, but do the work of our hands in as manly wise as we may." This is as austere and realistic as any statement of atheistic existentialism; and the man who spoke it, unlike today's theorists, was en route to an actual physical war in which he fully expected to die. To my mind, this is almost courage incarnate.

Stylistically, I cannot really discuss this saga itself but only Morris's translation thereof. I suspect it is accurate, because style and content are made of the same elements; but as I cannot read the original I cannot be sure of this. But in this translation, just as the events narrated are austere and often brutal, so the language is as terse and understated as, though far more vivid than, that of modern journalism. Event follows event with almost incredible swiftness. There seems no time for characterization; yet Brynhild and Gudrun are at once both as human and as archetypal as any character in Greek tragedy. There is no attempt to explain the characters; they are simply presented. Therefore, they are far more convincing than if they were explained; we cannot explain ourselves and if others are explained they are not quite real people. Therefore, also, the artistic impact is not cluttered up by intellectualizing. Many writers forget these things; the Volsungasaga is made of and by them. But then, the Volsungasaga makes no effort to explain anything. Life simply is, and one's own life within it, and one lives his life by what truth he knows and that's that. Anyone for Sartre?

I have deliberately avoided revealing the story, as I hope the readers of this review will proceed to the book.

-Sharon Towle-

Ye Mauldy Fidge

Bill Plott

Anybody out there remember "the Voice of Doom"?

The caps and quotes are mine so their authenticity is possibly a matter of debate. The Voice of Doom I have in mind is not a Fu Manchu, a movie serial, a comic book villain, or anything of that nature. He is a real honest-to-Ghu person. His name: Gabriel Heatter.

For all I know he may be dead now - I haven't heard him in a mighty long time. But he used to scare the hell out of me when I was a little kid. I'd listen to his news broadcasts filled with dire warnings and gloomy predictions and just know that none of us would live through the night. I could vividly picture hordes of bushy-faced Huns and screaming Tojos and even waves of Chinese Communists (during the Korean conflict) sweeping into the house and taking over.

I especially remember him during Korea because of one little incident. I was sitting on the back steps of our old house one morning when a convoy of transport planes flew over, probably bound for Maxwell Field in Montgomery. Our colored maid and one of her friends were standing there in the doorway, and one of them made the remark, "They may kill all of us this time." You can imagine the effect that statement had on me the next time ol' Gabriel lashed out with a Horrible Prediction. I don't know who tagged him with that "Voice of Doom" moniker but ol' Gabriel could really blow that horn, just like his namesake. As Dave Gardner would say, he layed it on strong, man, strong.

There was something else that enhanced my fear of - and attraction to - Gabriel Heatter. I remember seeing an advertisement in the newspaper for a roofing firm long ago during the days of my Awesome Fear of the Voice of Doom. In this particular ad there was a photo or a line drawing of a man shown from about his waist up. He had black Dracula-like slicked-back hair, evil sinister-as-Hell eyes, and his right arm was always pointing out of the page (at me naturally) whenever I looked at the classified section of the newspaper.

I dunno why, but being unable to read, I naturally assumed that drawing to be Gabriel Heatter himself. I would listen to those broadcasts, think of that picture, and suddenly feel weak, naked, and alone... Those were the days when I used to hide under the bed during lightning storms. I picked up that little habit from our colored maid, who raised me during the war while my dad was overseas and my mother was working. She was a typical fat "mammy" just like the Hollywood and Teevee stereotypes. And she was just like a second mother to me and even now seems like a part of the family although she has been retired for two or three years now --- but all of that is another string of stories. I used to hide under the bed from lightning storms as I have said...

There is nothing, absolutely nothing, like the imagination of a pre-school child.

And there were those rare as hens' teeth days when that solemn voice would rumble through the loudspeaker and say, "Ladies and gentlemen, there's good news tonight!"

Oh well, reminiscing (that's an interesting word; I've been using it for years and still have to look it up every time I go to use it.) will hardly fill up a column with substantial material, so on to other things. I'm going to stick to radio for a while longer, though, as I have a few things to say that may be of

interest to you all.

At the risk of sounding like a Norse God in a tavern, I shall venture to say that I probably have the most complete SF record library of anyone in fandom. I make this assumption on the simple premise that I've never heard anyone else mention such a collection except Phil Harrell several years back when we were corresponding regularly.

Currently I have some fourteen albums and a handful of single 45 rpm discs of a sfnal theme. The most recent addition to my collection is Arch Oboler's DROP DEAD! AN EXERCISE IN HORROR. For one who is so keenly and frequently nostalgic over old radios, I must blushinglly confess that I never heard of Oboler until I bought this album. Consequently the following biographical comments are taken from the material on the album cover.

Oboler was apparently the author of the old "Lights Out" radio series. "He was the first playwright to have his own series on a national network, and he is acknowledged as the innovator of many ingenious techniques and devices in the field of radio drama, for which he has received, incidentally, nearly every coveted award."

He has also written several screenplays for movies including his own production in 1950 called "Five", which was "the first motion picture that dealt with the survival of humanity after an atomic war". And there have been other flicks that I won't go into. (By the way, my collig edycation hasn't been completely in vain. I did do some research on Oboler but was unable to uncover any information other than that on the record jacket...)

DROP DEAD! is not a serious record like the Vanguard "Spoken Arts" and "Theater Showcase" albums which have offered readings from Lovecraft, Poe, and Bradbury. It is more humorous, even sick humor at times, and might be correctly termed a party record.

It can be a lot of fun to listen to in a crows, especially if Oboler's opening remarks are taken seriously. In the initial cut entitled "Introduction to Horror", he suggests that the listener sit with his back to the speaker, have all of the lights turned out, and listen, listen, listen... It can be quite effective that way, particularly when that "clammy hand" reaches out to tap the listener on the shoulder.

The second cut is what Oboler terms "movie-type horror". It is a take-off on PSYCHO, HOMICIDAL, and similar efforts of Hollywood producers. Oboler's comments are extremely good regarding this type of thing: "...the man stabs the girl through the shower curtain, and the blood runs down the shower, and the money runs into the box office, and everyone is sicker in our sick world. You actually want to try out some of this psycho type of horror? All right, here is some of the sickest..." And it is sick.

"Taking Papa Home" is a suspense-type horror concerning a car that is stalled on the railroad tracks. The husband is drunk, too drunk to move, and the wife doesn't want to leave him; he is too heavy to move and then the train strikes the car with a terrible grinding crash of tearing metal and human screams. There is the tinkle of blood and the smell of glass and then silence.

Side One ends with "The Dark", a radio-type horror story. This one is really science fiction of horror/fantasy to be more exact. It concerns a shadow-like mass that turns people inside out and gets to be pretty gruesome near the end. The effects (sound effects, that is) are remarkably good in this cut as in all of the others.

On flipping the disc, we come to what Oboler calls comedy-type horror. "A Day at the Dentist's" is a love triangle yarn in which the dentist gets his adversary strapped into the chair and reaps his revenge. After hearing this, you'll never trust your family dentist again.

"The Posse" struck me as being hilariously funny as well as painfully realistic. This is teevee-type horror about a bunch of cowhands lynching a Mexican wetback as a warning to cattle rustlers. There is nothing funny about a lynching, but the way in which it is handled, and the lines that the leader of the "posse" comes up with make for a rather humorous, in a definite sick vein. bit of listening.

"Chicken Heart" is science-fiction-type horror. A chicken heart being used in an experimental laboratory suddenly begins to grow uncontrollably. Its size doubles every hour. Soon it has split the sides of the building, it covers a city block; soon it will engulf the city, the state, the continent... Of course, humanity eventually loses out and is destroyed, but there is an interesting sidelight to this. The methods used to attempt to destroy it are rather good inasmuch as they show up the lack of cooperation and the petty differences that human beings so frequently exhibit.

The last cut on the album, "The Laughing Man", is what Oboler calls the untimate in horror, and that it could very well be. It isn't sick or terrifying, but it is strikingly realistic and typical of our society today. In fact it is too typical to be humorous when you really think about it.

It is a story of a future society thousands of years from now. A book has been discovered, a remnant of our civilization, accidentally and miraculously preserved over the centuries. The narrator of the story is telling the people of his world about the contents of the book which have been revealed to him by the old man who discovered it. The narrator is laughing uncontrollably. It seems that our civilization fought wars over things such as land and race. Women and children were killed and maimed. Great flying machines were used to wreak hot flaming death on the masses in the cities below. What madness, what humbug history this is to a civilization that knows no war...

This isn't a particularly good summary, but it should give you a general idea of what "The Laughing Man" is about. Although it is enjoyable to listen to, it is paradoxically unenjoyable also. This is too real to be a pleasure. It's a shame that some of the people in control of the various governments and ideologies can't sit down and listen to this in a darkened room with their backs to the speaker...

The album as a whole is fun to listen to, especially at a gathering of people. Fans would find it a lot of fun, I imagine. I don't really recommend it unless you're a collector as I am. Still, if you can hear a few cuts beforehand you may want to buy it just for a party. It is not a serious literary work; it is a party record and should be purchased at your own risk with that thought in mind. I liked it.

Speaking of radio drama, General Electric has initiated an excellent series called "GE Stereo Drama". I'm not familiar with all of the intricacies of AM/FM radio (although I do listen to both networks), but this is a OXR broadcast - whatever that may be.

This past Spring they presented four programs in this series. I was fortunate enough to catch two of them. I missed the first and last performances, "The Turn of the Screw" and "Visit to a Small Planet" respectively. The two I did listen to were Herman Melville's "Billy Budd" and Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher".

"Billy Budd" was performed by the Helen Hayes Equity Group, and the job they did was masterful. Peter Ustinov played Captain Vere as he did in the recent movie adaptation of Melville's classic. I won't go into the plot and theme because I imagine most of you are already familiar with them. And if you aren't you should be.

Besides the outstanding performance, there is another interesting aspect of this particular adaptation of "Billy Budd". They offered (for \$2.00 I believe) an LP recording of the Stereo Drama performance. I bought one but have not listened to it yet, mostly because of a slight bit of truth in that old adage, "familiarity breeds contempt".

Familiarity has not bred contempt in me for the story of young Bill Budd, but after a thorough saturation of the story via television, radio, and movie versions, I find it dull unless I am particularly in the mood for it. But that is neither here nor there. Several friends of mine have listened to the recording and have proclaimed it excellent.

The point I am so round-aboutedly working toward is this: In a questionnaire accompanying the record they asked if recordings of other such Stereo Drama programs were wanted. Also what types of programs would be preferred in the future. Naturally I put in a plug for good SF. What fruits, if any, will be reaped remains to be seen.

Joseph Cotten and his wife (whose name I don't recall but I believe it is Patricia Medina) and their supporting cast did a remarkably good job with "The Fall of the House of Usher".

The Stereo Drama version, like the American-International movie version, was a far cry from the Poe story, retaining only the essentials. Yet, again like the movie, it was highly enjoyable in its own way. The plot itself was a little too complicated to go into here.

Cotten portrayed the friend of Roderick Usher, in this instance obsessed with a fiendish desire to become an Usher himself. The story involves a series of personality changes (schizophrenia, I presume) on the part of Cotten's portrayal, and the usual premature burial of Madalyn Usher, as well as other basic elements of the story.

As I said the Stereo Drama and the A-I movie versions compared to the original story are actually entirely different stories. Yet all three were equally enjoyable to me. I hope they make an LP of "Usher" because it would make an interesting addition to my SF record collection.

I have heard nothing from the GE people since I returned the questionnaire several months ago. I plan to write them sometime this summer and obtain more information on the series itself as well as coming attractions next season (Spring of 1964 as best I can tell). If enough of you indicate an interest to Poppa Hulan, I'll pass on what information I get to you in the next installment of this column.

Ed. Note - this column, like everything else in this issue not by a Hulan, was written and in my hands in time for a projected September issue. The delay is my fault. But in any case, Bill may have already gotten the information from GE; anyone who is interested drop me a card and if more than one or two do I'll pass the word along to Bill. - dgh

This column will normally be used to review fanzines of current interest and recent books that I've read and think are worth calling to the attention of other fans. This time I'm going to begin with a description of a few fanzines that I think anyone who is in fandom should at least try to see if he enjoys their particular brand of material. Then I have a couple of new zines to review, and if I have space a couple of books on hand. So on with the reviews...

YANDRO, edited by Buck and Juanita Coulson, Route #3, Wabash, Ind., 25¢ or trade, is the monthly genzine. The only one, as far as I know, and certainly the best that I've seen. This is the general fanzine in its pure state - material on SF, fandom, politics, you name it. Also fiction, both amateur SF and faanish. Buck's fanzine reviews are the most comprehensive in the game; even if you don't agree with him you can usually tell whether you'll like something or not. He may cut me down for this plug; since he recurrently grotches at the outsize of his mailing list, but that's the penalty you have to pay for being tops.

DOUBLE-BILL Bill Mallardi and Bill Bowers, subs to Bowers, 3271 Shelhart Rd., Barberton, Ohio, trades to Mallardi, 214 Mackinaw Ave., Akron, Ohio, 25¢ or trade - this is sort of an overflow YANDRO in a way, although it has a distinct personality of its own. But the presence of Coulson's fanzine reviews type this as belonging to the YANDRO group, and the general slant of the material is the same - which is to say that it hasn't any. Again you can find almost anything, though perhaps there is a somewhat greater emphasis on SF than YANDRO has and somewhat less faanishness. This is a bimonthly whose editors are still welcoming additions to the mailing list, and those of you who feel sorry for poor old Buck and Juanita can get much the same sort of thing, half as often, by getting DOUBLE-BILL.

SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES, Redd Boggs, 270 S. Bonnie Brae, Los Angeles 57, Calif., 25¢ (or is it 20¢?) or trade, is the official publication of the LASFS and the editor shifts around periodically. Redd has only put out one issue, which was a good one; judging from other Boggs fanzines I've seen, SHAGGY will continue to be good. It's another genzine with all sorts of material, though it is perhaps the most science-fictionally oriented of the major genzines (including fantasy in with SF).

Other good genzines, noted without comment:

CRY OF THE NAMELESS, Elinor Busby, 2852 14th West, Seattle, Wash., 98199, official pub of the Seattle club and has run the most consecutive issues of any fanzine extant; 25¢ or may trade but don't bank on it.

SCOTTISCHE: Ethel Lindsay, Courage House, Surbiton, Surrey, England, but send subs to Bob Lichtman, 6137 S. Croft, Los Angeles 56, Calif. - 4 for 50¢. This is an OMPazine, but is available to genfandom and is the best genzine I've seen from outside the U.S., if you're interested in seeing what's going on elsewhere.

Then there is the political journal masquerading as a fanzine, of which the best by far is

KIPPLE, Ted Pauls, 1448 Meridene Dr., Baltimore 12, Md., 20¢ or trade to get you started, letters of comment will keep it coming. Some people like this sort of thing and some can't abide it, but if you like political and religious and social and philosophical discussions KIPPLE is the best place to get it. The editor is frequently accused of taking himself too seriously, and indeed he sometimes does, though not, I think, as often as he is taken too seriously by his readers. Ted is a fairly stock liberal, but will print almost anything that's intelligibly written in his lettercol; he'll break in and argue, but that's half the fun. To write an argument tight enough that he can't find a place to break in is one of my pet games; some others may like it too. And if you don't, you may like watching him duelling it out with others. Recommended if you like to argue.

There is probably less agreement in the category of humorous fanzines than in any other, simply because there is so much difference of opinion as to what is funny. I'm going to list my personal favorites, and if you disagree you can figure your sense of humor is different from mine.

THE VINEGAR WORM, by Bob Leman, 257 Santa Fe Dr., Bethel Park, Pa., is a FAPA-zine and highly irregular (every year or so), but it's the funniest mag in fandom for my money. I don't know how you go about getting on the mailing list, or staying on it; I got a copy once and ever since have sent every ish of LOKI to Bob and have gotten VW occasionally in return. You can try...

OUTPOST, by Fred Hunter, 13 Freefield Rd., Lerwick, Shetland Islands, Great Britain, is about my second favorite. This is an OMPazine which, like SCOTTISCHE, is available to the general public. I think it's available for the asking; if you have any odd shillings hanging around you might send Fred one, because that's the only price he lists. But a letter of supplication will probably work as well. This has a large amount of dry British humor by the editor and such other British humorists as Colin Freeman and John Berry.

SCRIBBLE, by Colin Freeman, Ward 3, Scotton Banks Hospital, Ripley Rd., Knaresborough, Yorkshire, England (and why do British addresses always take several lines to write?), is similar to OUTPOST except that it's usually almost entirely by Freeman. Who has a marvelous sense of humor, so that's fine. Price and frequency I can't find, because my own copies are buried, but here, as in the case of OUTPOST, a letter of request will probably bring results.

Then there are the newszines, but the only one I get that's worth getting is STAR SPINKLE, and they have a closed mailing list more or less. When one of their subbers drops, they send out a sample to someone else to replace him - if you'd like to get on their waiting list you might try writing Ron Ellik, 1825 Greenfield Ave., Los Angeles 25, Calif. and requesting a sample copy of SS when your turn comes up - but send no money. If you only knew how it hurts Ron to send back money...almost as much as it hurts him to increase his mailing list, but not quite.

I only have room for one more, a neozine that seems to show some promise. Next installment of IBR will hopefully include more like this; I'm not going to re-view "name" fanzines again until some new ones appear. GALACTIC OUTPOST - Richie Benyo, 118 South St., Jim Thorpe, Pa., 18229, 25¢ or trade - repro is adequate mimeo. For the most part this is a fairly typical first issue from a young neofan, with most of the usual over-exhuberance and over-emphasis on bad fiction. But there are indications that it might develop into something better. Most of the faults are readily corrected if someone will point them out, and there are distinct virtues - the greatest of which is Benyo's ability to get contribs from pro stf writers. This issue features two pages of advice to beginning writers from Andre Norton, and the next issue promises a similar column by Philip K. Dick as well as an unpublished Dick short story. This alone makes GO worth trading for; the fiction in #1 is a cut above the usual fmz level and there is a useful biblio of Norton. Rating: 3.

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