

PEON

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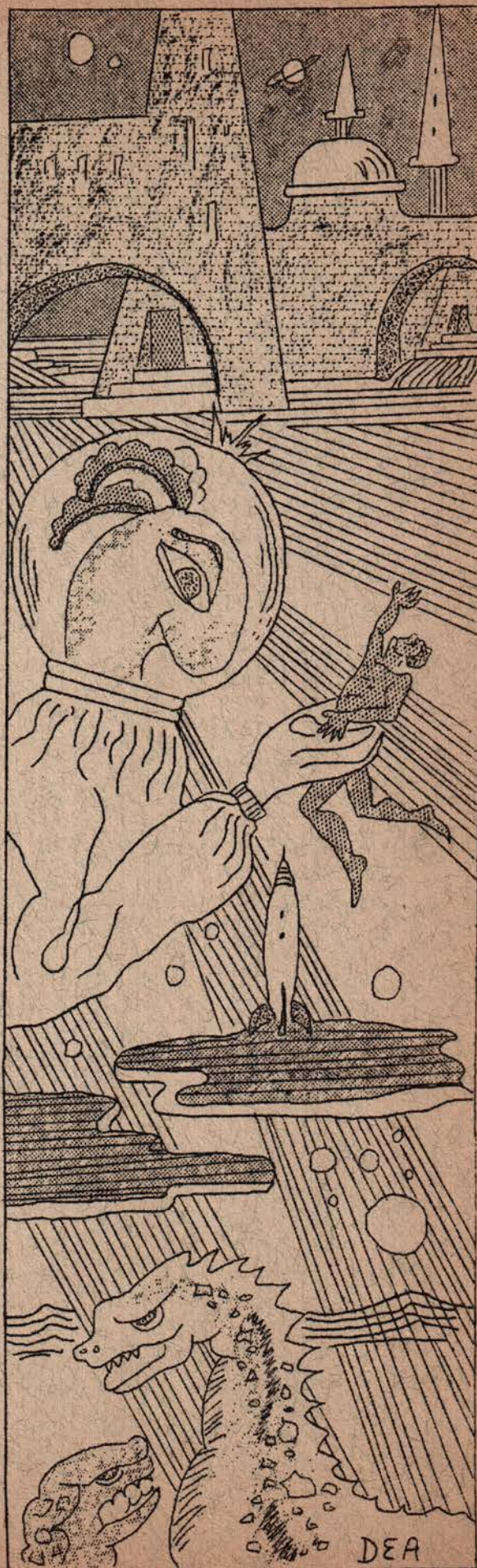
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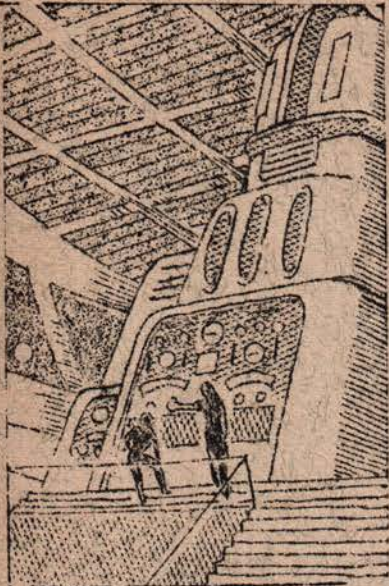
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Volume Ten  Number One



DEA

From



Notes

Without a doubt this has been the most mixed-up issue of PEON I've ever published in the past nine years. I started to work on it last September, hoping to have it in the mails in November after I returned from the Med Cruise. Naturally, this was a mistake in my thinking--for when I got home, I found far more things to do in my spare time than publish a fanzine.

Days went by and before I knew it, December had rolled around, and in came a transfer for me to the Naval Training Center, Bainbridge, Maryland for a normal tour of shore duty. This also caused another month's delay due to the problems of moving and settling down in our new location.

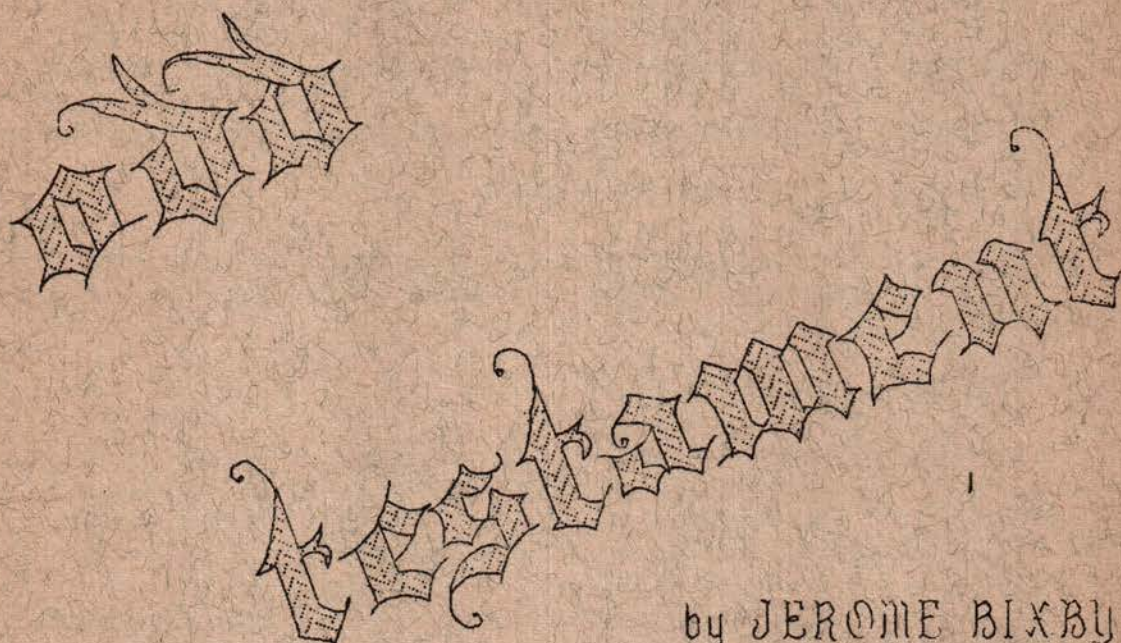
So, here it is February and PEON is just now being finished up with these notes. If you are wondering what happened to the date on the cover, this was due to my being so certain I would be on a bi-monthly schedule. The printer aboard the CASCADE had done such a beautiful cover for me that I didn't want to lose it, so I've just overprinted it with this date--and the same will be done with the next cover used also. One of these days I may learn that it's impossible for me to maintain anything but a quarterly or irregular publishing schedule.

Therefore, once again, PEON goes on a quarterly schedule, and I certainly hope this time that I can maintain it. This delay, of course, means that there was only one issue of PEON in 1956--the October issue--and this is the first issue of the tenth year of publishing PEON.

One final word of apology--due to my moving about so much, several of the stencils prepared aboard the CASCADE dried out a bit, causing several bad impressions when I ran them off. Also, I've used at least four typewriters in this issue, something I never like to do. This issue may not be up to par with older issues in appearance, but I think you will overlook that when you read what I think is some of the best material ever to appear in PEON.

Oh yes...if you've written me recently, and haven't received an answer as yet, don't give up complete hope. At this time of writing, all of our furniture and files haven't been delivered to our new apartment as yet. This apartment has only five rooms, and when you try to stack seven rooms of furniture into five, something has to give. As a result, we've really mixed up the house. The boys' new piano is in their bedroom, my desk and file cabinet are in separate rooms (I've had to put the desk in our bedroom, which bears out the old saying that a s.f. fan's best work is done in a bedroom), and have lost or misplaced several boxes of papers, some of which were letters to be answered. I hope I'm gradually making order out of the mess, so there's some hope that I'll answer you one of these days.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 29)



by JEROME BIXBY

It was about the size of a grapefruit, and about the color of one. From its top sprouted a cluster of thin, ribbonish tentacles--translucent filled with shifting shades of violet and chartruese, far tougher than they looked. Four pedal extremities, oddly like thumbs with long claws, stuck out from the bottom. It had two flat, pink eyes, set very close together.

It squealed as Ray Caradac carried it at arm's length into the control room of the Manta.

"Look what we have here," he said grimly.

Mary Caradac--small, brunette, snapping-eyed, the other half of Extraterrestrial Exploration Team 2-861--looked up from where she had been dialing their course away from Sirius IV.

"What on Earth?" she gasped.

"On Sirius," Ray corrected. "On good old Sirius IV, which we seem not to have escaped quite as completely as we thought we had."

"A baby Sirian!"

"That's my guess, from the glimpses we got of the natives."

Mary stood up, spilling charts and Benton's Computer from her lap, and reached for the creature. Ray relinquished it, looking disgusted. While Mary cradled it in both hands, he moved three steps across the narrow, instrument-cluttered control room to snap on the rear gazer. He focussed the gazer with one hand, rubbed his home-made crew cut with the other.

Behind him, the Sirian infant squealed, a sound like a viola harmonic.

"Where did you find it?" Mary asked.

"Under my bed, of all places. I went to shove my suit-boots under it and change into sneakers, and the critter let out a squeal and damned near scared me through the side of the ship."

"What was it doing there?"

"Ask it." Ray stared glumly out at the dull green globe of Sirius IV, already thirty thousand miles away and retreating at ninety m.p.s. "Maybe it wanted to see the Universe, or just get the hell off its planet. I can sympathize, after only two hours on that godforsaken ice ball."

"It probably likes minus ten just fine. It's probably roasting right now, poor thing."

Ray turned from the gazer. Mary was cuddling the Sirian infant to her breast and fanning it with one hand.

"Look out," he said dryly. "It might bite."

"So do human babies. Besides, it hasn't got any teeth."

Ray looked at the tiny pink mouth, opening and closing horizontally under the eyes like sliding doors. He'd seen enough cockeyed life-forms not to shudder.

"Why look, it couldn't have wandered in," Mary said, twiddling one of the stubby legs. She set it on the chart file, where it immediately went plop on its rounded bottom, legs sticking out like a newborn kitten's. "It can't even stand up." She flashed a hand in front of the pink eyes, and filmy eyelids blinked. The tentacles waved. "I'm no judge of Sirian age, but I'll bet it's darned young."

She looked wise and extended a finger, and two tentacles curled around it, tugging it gently toward the mouth.

"Uh, uh," she said. "Not a nipple, son. There, Ray-- you see?" She picked it up again. Another squeal.

"I wasn't arguing," he said absently. Then, plaintively: "Just what the devil are we supposed to do with a Sirian infant? And how did it get here, if it can't walk under its own steam?"

"Under someone else's, obviously," Mary said practically. "Somebody brought it in." Then she paused and cocked her head. Her eyes widened. "Good God! I wonder... Come on, Ray, let's go look where you found it. I have a perfectly ridiculous hunch!"

##

They went single-file down the narrow corridor that led to sleeping-quarters, Mary carrying the infant. There she waited for Ray to slide open the door-- as she would have done even if she hadn't had her hands full. The Caradacs had decided long ago that such little pleasantries should be carefully and lovingly observed aboard the Mante, half a hundred light years from nowhere-- things like love and sex can get awfully pedestrian in a sixty-foot spacer, if you don't care for them right.

Inside, Mary put the Sirian on Ray's bed and said, "Hold it there."

Ray sat down beside the creature and put one hand on its back-- the surface 180° from eyes and mouth-- and pressed gingerly. Squeal. "I wonder what it eats," he said sourly.

Mary was head and shoulders under the bed. She said, "Ah, hah!" and emerged with a handful of dried, crinkly-looking leaves. They smelled faintly like cinnamon. The Sirian's tentacles went Zing! and it squealed and octave above any previous effort.

"Feed it," Mary said, going under the bed again.

Ray put a pinch of the stuff on the blanket and released the creature, keeping one hand poised to see that it didn't roll off the bed. It dug the claws of its front feet into the blanket, hiked itself toward the leaves, flopped on its face and crunched away. Ray watched, eyes a little glazed. "What--?"

Mary's head appeared again. In one hand she held more dried leaves; in the other, a crude basket about a foot square, high-sided, woven of some broad reddish fibre.

She squatted there, holding the basket, and looked Ray right in the eye.

It took Ray about six seconds to get it. He looked down at the creature, happily chewing leaves, up again at Mary's face. At the basket. His jaw dropped. Mary was beginning to grin.

Ray clapped a hand unbelievably to the side of his head. So hard his ears rang. "God in Heaven," he said. "A foundling!"

"Basket and all," Mary said. "Only the pathetic note is lacking."

"Oh, no, it's crazy!"

"Crazy or not, it's here." Mary touched a hand to the tentacles, and there was a squeal-- a happy-sounding squeal.

"But why?" Ray gasped. "Why should a Sirian mother-- dressed in a thread-bare Sirian shawl, no doubt-- abandon her baby in our ship?"

"Why do mothers in thread-bare shawls usually bandon babies?"

"M'm... because they can't support them. Or because they're illegitimate or something."

"Well, in this case it's probably just something. I don't think it could be a matter of supporting it-- a B-4 culture's too darned primitive for that. They live right off the soil. This stuff--" Mary pinched at the handful of leaves she'd put on the blanket-- "was everywhere we walked and as for legitimacy, that's never an issue in the pre-M series--"

"Tut", said Ray, academically aroused. "You need thirty digits after B-4, or anything else, to really classify forbidden fruits all over the place. Besides, maybe our little friend here isn't a waif at all. Maybe we were taken for gods, and it's a sacrifice."

"In a basket? Brought right into this big old terrifying ship?"

"Oh, hell, I don't know. Motive X for alien. That B-4 status drove us off the planet so fast.... Scram! Hands Off! Clear Out! Don't Influence! and all the rest of Article 12, Section 9, paragraphs 3, 4, 7, and 16 of the Extraterrestrial Explor--"

"Not a nipple," Mary said, disengaging her finger again. "You know, Ray, I think it's thirsty."

Ray glowered at the creature. "I wonder what it drinks?"

"Try water-- but be careful."

##

Ray filled a glass of water from the tiny basin in the corner and held it close to the vertical pink mouth. The mouth wrinkled. The little Sirian scabbled backward and pressed into the pillow.

"So water's out," Ray grunted. He put the glass on the low table between the beds, knocking over two Pawns and the Black Queen. "So now what? My God, didn't whoever or whatever left the critter here have sense enough to realize that a handful of leaves wouldn't last forever? That we might not have whatever they drink for water?"

"Of course not," Mary said placidly. "What can you expect of a B-4.... a cosmology? Food and water-- or their equivalents-- have always been around: therefore, food and water are everywhere. A B-4 couldn't have the slightest idea of what this ship is, or what we are, or where we're from or going and how and why--"

"Then why was the food left?"

"Maybe to keep our friend happy until we found it-- oh, I don't know either! I'm just as puzzled as you are. But I do know what we've got to do now."

"What?"

"Take it back. It'll die if we don't."

Ray sat down on the other bed and glared at the two who sat on his-- Mary and the Sirian infant, which had ceased eating and was now cleaning the waxy skin around its mouth with a tentacle.

"Sure," he said. "Take it back. Violate every damned rule in the book. Take a chance on influencing, by letting them see us again. One time is okay-- the B-series have short memories. Pretty soon it's all corrupted by legend, and after a couple of centuries the legends are belittled by more recent events and interpretations. But a second time? That's the time that clicks. It settles arguments. The legends grow..."

"We have to, anyway. Maybe you're wrong. Maybe it isn't a B---"

"Honey, I studied forty years not to be wrong. I can look at three artifacts, two flora, the dials on my spy-eye and write a history."

Mary looked stubborn. "We take it back. This isn't in the books."

"Maybe they'll tear it to pieces if we do," Ray argued. "Maybe it's a freak-- a sport. Maybe that's why it ended up with us. We might be killing it--"

"Well, we'll certainly be killing it if we don't, so you get right on up to the board and get us back to that planet. Look how thirsty it is... hey, not a nipple, damn it!"

The infant squealed, eyeing the finger.

"Nobody'll ever know, Ray... we can't let the poor thing die."

Ray sighed and raised his brows. Then he lowered one and winked at her. "What do I get?"

"A lot of nothing if you don't."

Mary grinned at his back.

#

My mate dead. She die having little one. I sorry. The best mate. But I sorrier for little one. Soon priest kill him. Why kill little ones when mother die having them? Priest say so. Priest say because they kill mother and now no mother drink from. So they die anyway. And other mothers with dead little ones. No-mother little ones could drink them. Why not... why not...do for each other? But priest say no. He say they bad. Must die because kill mother. He say he must drink from others with dead little ones to keep magic power. He get fat. This go on for long time. Mary

thousand suns. I wonder if he really have magic power or just want to stay fat? Soon priest come to take little one away and kill him. I sorry. Then I think of big shiny thing that come down by village out of sky. Everybody afraid. Priest tell us to stay away. Tell us gods angry. Tell us to stay in huts. Things come out of shiny thing. Tall and different. They walk through village. Everybody afraid. I afraid too. But they no hurt. No kill. No break huts and eat like animals. I more sorry for little one than afraid. I no let priest kill him. While tall different things walk in village I go out with little one. Nobody see. Everybody afraid to look out. I take little one out of village to shiny thing. Cave in side. I afraid but nothing happen. I take little one into cave and hid him. Leave food so he not cry and priest hear. I think maybe tall different things kill him when find him. But they no hurt when walk in village. And priest take long long time to kill little one if find him. Hurt him a lot. So I hope tall different things treat little one good. Let him drink. I go back to village. Tall different things coming. I hide. They pass. I go into village. Everybody coming out. We see shiny thing go into sky. Everybody afraid. Priest most afraid. He say tall different things bad gods. They angry. I make up story. I say tall different things good gods. I say they take little one away to village in sky because killing little ones wrong. They come to save him. I say good gods kill priest if he kill more little ones when mothers die. Now priest afraid. Everybody listen. They say tall different ones no hurt. No kill. Maybe I right. Maybe tall different ones really good gods. Priest say not true. He make up story. He say bad gods come because he call them to come take little one away and eat him. He say he call gods to take little one. But I don't say or they know I lie. I stick to story. I tell everybody tall different ones good gods. Come to save little one. Priest say they bad gods. Come to take little one and eat him. Come to take us and eat us if we not believe priest. Everybody say wait for sign. Priest say kill me but everybody say wait. Lots of fathers think like me. They no like priest killing little ones for long time. But they afraid. Maybe priest just want to be priest. Keep fat. Everybody afraid of priest. Give him most food and best mates. We wait for sign. I cry that night. Little one gone. Best mate dead.

##

The airlock hissed. Ray Caradac came in, wearing his spacesuit against Sirius IV's icy cold, but not the helmet--the planet was breathable.

Mary was waiting. "I saw you coming through the gazeer. How'd it go?"

Ray grinned sourly as he zipped down the chest of his suit. Frost chipped off the metallic cloth. "I didn't leave it out in the brush as I'd planned. Afraid an animal would get it. I waited until dark and then went to the village. They pull in their sidewalks early--not a soul stirring. I snuck in, quiet as I could, and right in the middle of it the damned critter started squealing its fool head off. Familiar smells or something, I suppose. So I just set it down and walked dignifiedly out of the place. Don't know whether anybody saw me, but I suspect they did. Damn! After all the trouble we went to landing way out here. I looked back from the edge of the brush, and there was a crowd around the kid.

He stepped out of the suit and turned to rack it by the airlock, wearing only the standard padded diaper affair. "Funny thing..I thought I saw a light flashing. A white light. But, hell, that's impossible-- unless they have wood that burns white on this clod. Maybe I was seeing things."

"Well, I certainly hope it's all right," May said. "Shame if they did kill it, poor little thing."

Ray stood a moment at the gazer, looking out at the moon-lit brush. "I hope so too, honey. Well--" he turned to the board-- "let's get out of here, and fast! Before Article 12, Section 9 fights its way right out of the book and jumps down our throats." He looked thoughtful as the A. G. unit caught, hummed loudly, then softly and steadily as they rose from Sirius IV. "I wonder if it will affect them?"

It wasn't until next planet fall eight months later, that Ray noticed that his pencil-flash was missing from his spacesuit breast-pocket.

He asked Mary about it, and she thought startledly: "Not a nipple!" and said, "Oh, it'll turn up, one place or another."

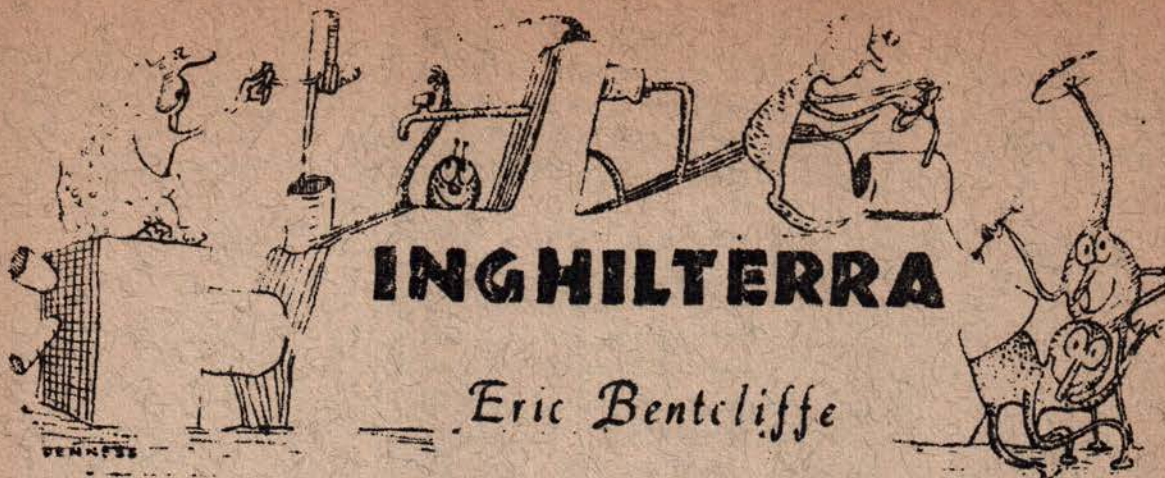
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Next darkness we hear noise. We find my little one outside hut of priest. We see tall different one go away. The good gods bring my little one back! Priest come out. Everybody say you wrong. You lie. Gods not eat little one. They good gods. Priest afraid. He say they BAD gods. They bring little one back for sacrifice. Little one has cold fire in hand. He throw cold fire at priest. This a new strange thing. God thing. It is sign. We kill priest. Take him out for animals to eat. I happy now. Everybody like little one. He friend of good gods. Other mothers take care of him. Let him drink. Let other dead-mother little ones drink. Do for each other. Other villages in valley kill priests and do for each other. All because of little one. I happy because good gods bring him back

to His people, and the First Night did ring with rejoicing; for He had returned from the Land Beyond the Sky and He said unto those who waited, They are Good Gods, and I Am Their Messenger, and Lo! They have given to me a fragment of the Sun that I may shed light over darkness and open your eyes to good and gentle ways. And the false priests said unto Him, prove that you speak Truth; and in wrath He smote the false priests with the great light He carried, and Lo! the false priests were unmasked and they fled into the wilderness where they were devoured by wild beasts. Then all the people cried, Welcome, and bade Him lead them; and He said unto them, Care for me, my Children, until I am able. So He was anointed, and fed, and in a single day had grown to manhood; and then He led His People from the valley and taught them brotherhood...

#

"Always," mused the young Galac Federation student. "Always they come to fill a need. But where do they come from? What really are their acts? Where do they go? He closed the Sirian IV Bible and put it aside, and picked up another.



Come with me now to that arctic land across the sea - England - Europe - home of Mrs. Miniver - Sherlock Holmes - and the English, from whom the little country gets its name.

It's become rather traditional when starting to write a column for a fanzine, to preface the first potboiler by a short statement on what you intend to Try to Do with the column and What You Will Do to anyone who writes in saying he doesn't like what you did. This column is going to be different. The reason for this being that I don't know as of now just in which direction it is likely to go. This will be a column that Went Thataway, I think.

Lee asked me for a regular "Letter from England" and said, "Give all the fannish details." Personally, I'm not too sure what he means by this, especially "all the details"--should I write about Blank who is currently living in sin with Miss Blank? Or confine myself to the more legitimate (sic) activities of fanning?

I think what I'll try to do is keep you reasonably up to date with the news and views of Anglo-fandom, and, try to help you to get to know the fans over here better.

Looks as though I got myself a preface after all!

Towards the end of 1951 a Liverpool fan by the name of Jeff Espley had the idea of asking the Milcross Book Service (which at that time was being run by Frank Milnes and Les Johnson) for the addresses of other s-f readers around the city. He proceeded to circularize the addresses he got and a meeting was arranged of those interested. I'm not too sure just how many founder members there were but among them were Norman Weedall (who was also a founder member of the British Interplanetary Society a decade ago), Norman Shorrocks, John Roles, Dave Gardner (who has been writing professionally for some time now and who was to be the editor of a second magazine from the Scottish Nebula stable...may still be when the market allows), Frank and Les. Lewis Conway, Stan Nuttall, Ina Shorrocks (Norman's wife), Jim Mooney, and Tom Owen were also early members, but I'm unsure of whether they were at that first meeting.

Living as I do from Liverpool some thirty odd miles, I've paid frequent visits to the gang since the inception of the Liverpool Science-Fiction Society, otherwise known as LaSFaS. I first met them when they

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paid a mass visit to the Norwest Science Fantasy Club in Manchester, of which I was chairman at that time. A few weeks later, a return visit was paid and I became acquainted with the then LaSFaS headquarters, the SPACE DIVE. This was a miniscule cellar rented for the use of club members and at the time of this visit was decorated with s-f magazine covers and several model rockets. A -sf movie had been playing that week at the local cinema and the gang had distributed leaflets to the cinema patrons inviting them to the Space Dive. I don't think they gained any new members but they certainly had some highly diverting arguments with people who came around expecting a bottle part or something similar. The name, Space Dive, was a little misleading to the uninitiated.

Soon after this, the group began to publish a fanzine, SPACR DIVERSIONS, with Norman, John, and Dave as its editors. This hit pretty big standards and was quite successful, one issue ran to 108 pages and the editors never really recovered from this. The magazine folded fairly soon afterward. A pity, for it had run some really worthwhile material. A Symposium on Sex and Sadism in S_F by Dave Dardner hit the fannish headlines of the times and this was later published in one volume. The art was mainly handled by Don MacKay who was and is a very accomplished artist but who has done little other work for fmz. He's since become well known for the posters he has done for British conventions, illustrating the LaSFaS Tape-Recorded plays.

About the time SPACE DIVERSIONS first came out, Jeff Espley became a victim of gafia. Jeff was one of those characters whose terrific enthusiasm bounds from one field to another. Soon after the club got started, he became interested in spiritualism and started seeing ghosts all over the place. It is believed that he is now living on a higher plane.

For a time, the club set a routine and kept to it...they met each Monday evening for a natter, first at the Space Dive and later at the Stork Hotel when the expense of putting out a fanzine, living a normal life, and renting a cellar began to clash. Towards the end of 1953, Norman Shorrocks saw an ad in the local paper for a tape-recorder for sale at the very low price of £25 (about \$75.00) and proposed that it should be bought for the club's use, and this was done. At that year's major London Convention, the London fan had presented a play which was partly on tape and which was written by Walt Willis. This gave LaSFaS an idea, and at the Supermancon, the major convention of 1954, they presented "Alien Arrives". This was also by Walt Willis, with additional dialogue by Don MacKay.

The LaSFaS went from strength to strength and introduced a new word into the fannish vocabulary, TAPERAS (Tape-Operas). At the first Kettering convention in 1955, they presented the MARCH OF SLIME. A half-hour play, this went over with a big bang and introduced BLOG, the all-purpose purgative, preventative, and detergent, to Fandom. Blog is still around.

When not recording, the group give parties, real-gone convention type parties, for which they have a definite flair. A Liverpool party is like a convention, only more so. The person who has the strength left the next morning to carry back the empties is liable to get enough to live on for a week from them. I've had the pleasure of attending most of them and a grand time I've had there. At the last party, held at Whitsuntide, I was honoured by being made a Hon. ex-Chairman of LaSFaS (together with Eric

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Jones). Although I've only read of the initiation ceremonies of the American college fraternities, I imagine that the atmosphere on this occasion was somewhat analogous.

The Liverpool Group are a bunch of fans who have become better known for their joint efforts, than for any individual member's contribution to fanac. Because of this they are not well known to fandom at large, which is rather a pity. Currently active members are Norman and Ina Shorrocks, Stan Nuttall, John Owen, Don MacKay, Rene MacKay (Don's wife), Lil MacKay (his sister), John Roles, Dave Newman (an ex-London fan who has become a convert), Gerry Clarke (an atomic physicist at Harwell), Bill Harrison, Frank and Pat Milnes. If you ever meet or hear from any of them, you'll find they're very nice people.

Incidentally, the sentence leading off this column is paraphrased from the opening of the March of Slime. What of the club's future? At the moment, they are working on something special for the WORLDCON to be held in London next fall.

The Convention will be held at the Royal Hotel in central London (ten minutes walk from Piccadilly Circus -- if you run), the date, September 6th, 7th, and 8th. You can get further details from H. Ken Bulmer, 204 Wellmeadow Rd., Catford, London SE6. I'll be covering the convention preparations and reparation more fully in future columns when details will be more firm. For now, I'd better bid you all adieu before I get myself cut off by Lee.

END THOUGHT: If this column didn't last you half an hour, read slower!

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MOONLET

ISABELLE E. DINWIDDIE

Because one I loved once had a dream
I shall be lonely night and day.
He dreamed of an earthly satellite
Glowing two thousand miles away.

A station in space where few men dwell
To guard the world from stellar foes;
Refuel a ship, radio news,
Grant to nostalgic men, repose.

He is held in bondage by the stars
That strange madness that spacemen feel.
The cold and empty steppes of Luna
Have an omnipotent appeal.

Freedom in voids spoiled him for Terra
He needs space to expand his soul;
To my erstwhile love I bid farewell
As he leaves for his far patrol.

CONFESSIONS OF A FANZINE REVIEWER



Robert Bloch

A year ago I was just a plain, ordinary monster.

Today, I am a bug-eyed monster.

And I owe it all to reading fanzines.

One year as conductor of FANDORA'S BOX in Imagination has done the trick. My eyes have gugged out after perusing the contents of several hundred hectographed, mimeographed, multigraphed, and printed periodicals. Some were big, some were small, some were issued regularly, and others were so irregular they seemed in need of Lydia Pinkham's Compound.

It has been my duty to comment upon them in my regular department, and comment I have. I cannot pretend to have applied the standard techniques of reviewing and/or criticism. Nor have I even "rated" them with stars, asterisks, or numerals.

Frankly, I'd deem such a task impossible, to say nothing of unfair. Because there are no abstract standards or even components to characterize a fanzine.

In order to clarify that statement, just ask yourself the simple, unvarnished question, "What is a fanzine?" Or if you prefer, varnish the question first. Varnish it, paint it, cover it with shellac, gild it as you may -- the question has only one answer.

A fanzine (science fiction variety) is a magazine prepared by a science fiction fan and addressed to other fans.

Beyond that there is no least common denominator.

Said fanzine can consist of a single hectographed sheet of paper -- or it can run into scores or even hundreds of pages, elaborately invested with typeset, color reproduction, and coated stock for photographs. Said fanzine can be produced by a 14-year-old or a septegenarian.

And, most significantly, there is no uniformity of content.

Our definition -- and deliberately so -- says only that a science

fiction fanzine is prepared by a fan and addressed to fans. There is nothing which stipulates that the content of same have anything to do with science fiction.

And if you're a confirmed reader (or a bar mitzvah-ed reader) in the field, you'll realize that in many instances fanzines do not necessarily concentrate on fannish topics or even include them.

In fanzines today, you'll find feuds and nudes, hot rods and cool cats political arguments about religion and religious arguments about politics. In some fanzines the accent is on the editorial me and in others the accent is on the editorial meow. Some fanzines reflect the tenor of a Debating Society; some, a Ladies' Sewing Circle; some a session of the Gag Writers of America, and still others sound like a recording of a barroom brawl.

So how are you going to compare them?

Lacking comparison, critical evaluation is impossible, save on the basis of personal preference. And this in itself doesn't lead to sound, objective reviewing.

I am just a naive little boy, 39 years old. And when some jaded sophisticate of 16 comes along with a witty dissertation on sex, alcohol, and philosophy, the chances are that our opinions may not coincide. It would be both unsound and unfair for me to set up arbitrary standards of judgment.

So I make no pretext of actually "reviewing" what I read. All I can do and try to do, is indicate what appeals to me personally. And to encourage efforts which I think hold promise of future improvement.

What appeals to me personally? Again, no common denominator. I like some fanzines which are strongly editorial -- items such as GRUE and SKYHOOK, for example. Can you possibly imagine an issue of GRUE which did not reflect the personality of Dean Grennell?

On the other hand, I also like some fanzines in which the editorial personality seems quite submerged: examples being PEON and INSIDE. This does not mean that these magazines aren't expertly edited (indeed, they owe their success to editorial skill and selectivity) but the influence of the editor seems unobtrusive and the material is more objectively presented.

On the other hand (I happen to have three, you know), I also like some magazines that reflect the spirit of a group or a clique: HYPHEN, CANADIAN FANDOM, A BAS, etc. Or -- a variant of same -- letterzines such as HODGE-PODGE which seem to operate in an artificial milieu or frame of reference depending entirely on correspondence.

What don't I like in fanzines?

Sloppiness. Sloppiness of physical production, sloppiness of presentation, sloppiness of content. I have never (and remember, this is my personal opinion) seen a good fanzine in an atrocious format. When an

editor can't lay out material and reproduce it legibly, when he cannot correct errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, chances are he cannot select good material either. Or get it in the first place.

But again, you won't find this view reflected very strongly in my comments. And there are several reasons why I do not choose to "blast the crudzines" in my column.

Now anyone who has ever taken on the role of reviewer or critic knows this to be a fact: it's much easier to sneer than it is to praise. One can ever be so 'clever' and 'amusing' in name-calling, and one can easily gain a reputation for 'caustic wit'. Moreover, in many circles, one acquires a concurrent status for being 'honest' and 'forthright' and full of 'high standards of critical integrity'.

The easiest way to attract attention to one's self is to yell "It stinks!" and then go on, with a series of ridiculing remarks, to tell why.

But I do not believe that it is the function of a reviewer to call attention to himself; not in his reviews, anyway.

Furthermore, twenty-odd years of fanzine-reading have taught me the danger of issuing such opinions. For I can recall all too many instances where I have read crudzines, and apparently hopeless ones, edited by youngsters who grew up to be talented adults. I have read vile contributions by feckless youths (myself included) who eventually emerged as polished professionals (myself not necessarily included). I have also seen downright lousy fanzines blossom into top-rank publications over the course of the years.

The important factor in such changes was not, I am convinced, outside criticism. It was the emergence of mature self-awareness on the part of the individual involved.

Now even the worst crudzine requires a lot of effort to produce. Even the shabbiest contribution must be sweated over in the writing. All too often -- when a neo is involved -- a volley of harsh, superior criticism or snide ridicule is enough to tip the balance and cause the editor or contributor to give up.

The editors and contributors who learn through trial and error, through their own objective comparison of their work to that of others, will improve voluntarily and inevitably. The others will fall by the wayside, because nobody will subscribe to their magazines or read and print their material.

But the fanzine reviewer who elects to be a Supreme Arbiter runs the risk of either stifling potential progress or some day looking like a fool when the object of his contumely confutes him. Some of the learned, omiscient fanzine reviewers of the past may just possibly feel a little silly today when they remember how they spent the latter years of the '30s ridiculing the puerile fanzine contributions of a sniveling little neo by the name of Bradbury. And -- much more important -- it is just possible that there were a couple of more fans in the field with equal or even greater potential who didn't persevere as Bradbury did, but dropped out because some Fearless Critic told them their work smelled and that there was no hope for them.

As it is, there's enough of such criticism, within the pages of the fanzines themselves, to serve as goad, check, stimulus or retardent.

Again, overall objectivity is impossible. How can you "rate" the first efforts of an adolescent by the same standards as those of an adult? How can you assess the quality of a fanzine addressed to neos in the same way you assess the content of a 'zine by and for adults? How can you encompass the divergent interests, attitudes and goals of an English fake-fan, an earnest Continental, a Dedicated APA member, a saucerian believer, a rocket enthusiast, a frivolous femme-fan, a dianetician, a kid who worships Campbell and an idiot who believes in Tucker?

All I can do, personally, is to say what appeals to me--personally. And to attempt to convey some of my approbation to potential readers and/or subscribers. At the same time I attempt to avoid mention of the illegible or the ill-natured efforts which crop up. I don't want to damn them but at the same time I don't want to falsely recommend them to a trusting readership.

But I do believe it is a mistake to play Jehovah, complete with thunderbolts, in the fanzine field.

And I'd like also to say -- but I can't, there's no time, another batch of those \$&&'()*#@# zines have just come in from Hamling's office and I've got to start reading.....

-o-

The Abyss

ISABELLE E. DINWIDDIE

The door swung open and you stepped within
The room you thought to never enter more,
There lies an air of hushed expectancy
As you walk slowly on that oaken floor.

Each step you took had raised a cloud of dust
No one had been within this room for years,
Yet the aromatic scent of roses
Brought to your soul a sudden rush of fears.

Potent the spell she had cast upon you,
She dominated all your thoughts and dreams,
No draught was held up to your thirsty lips
Even your hair-shirt had some ragged seams.

Until that day you woke and found her there
Lying supine upon the floor you trod,
Never to know what happened in your sleep,
No one had entered, yet, you found her dead.

HOW TO HATCH A HASSEL

Theodore Sturgeon

Some years ago, the redoubtable Fletcher Pratt drew a bead on (as it were) a thorn in our side. He had, I think, heard too many comments and criticisms of speculative fiction running like this:

"It's good, but it isn't science fiction."

"That isn't science fiction; it's fantasy."

"He's running a strictly sci-fantasy magazine."

"There hasn't been any real science fiction since Clayton's Astounding."

So he researched the matter, and an engaging research it was. To a series of klatsches, he invited people in and around science fiction -- writers, editors, even an agent or so. From time to time he included people who were not specifically science fiction: people who didn't give a damn one way or the other, people who ardently and cordially did. They had in common one thing: opinions; and you just wouldn't believe how many were bruited about, and how hot some of these bruitings became.

At first blush, it's easy to say what science fiction is. It's the stuff published in science fiction magazines. Or, it's stories about the future. Or, it's fiction based on known and recognized science.

EDITOR'S NOTE:::This was to have been the foreword to Walt Cole's CHECK LIST OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, published this summer by Gnome Press. At the last minute, it was decided not to use a foreword, and through very fortunate circumstances, PEON was able to get permission from both the author of the foreword and the CHECKLIST to publish it. Our congratulations to Walt for his labor of love, and our thanks to Theodore Sturgeon, for letting us have this manuscript for your entertainment. Incidentally, this was supposed to appear in the last issue of PEON, but got crowded out.

Likewise, one can blurt out what science fiction isn't. It doesn't have ghosts or goblins in it, or witchcraft. It doesn't deal with unextrapolated (i.e., real) problems of the here and now. It is always about ideas and devices, never about people.

Anyone who has read more than four science fiction stories can attest that all these attempts at delineation are specious, or partial, or nonsense, or all three. The interesting thing is that anyone who has read forty, or four thousand stories will go at the argument as heatedly and heavily as the rest.

But back to Fletcher Pratt's research. One evening, the discussion had got itself to the stage of trying to find the demarcation between science fiction and fantasy. And suddenly, Fletcher Pratt leapt to his feet, thrust a sharp forefinger at the top of his head, and said, "All fiction is fantasy!"

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Now, I shall not go into the conclusions reached by the discussions and their interlocutor; they have been adequately expounded by Mr. Pratt elsewhere. And I surely don't have to explain that I know his remark was jocose. Yet in a lifetime of playing this game of definitions -- and what else is a writer's life but that? -- I cannot recall having been quite so electrified.

All fiction is fantasy.

It is worth bringing up in terms of this book, because Mr. Cole is about to receive on the top of his capable head such a cargo of shards and ashtrays, bricks and bullets, that he will wonder (if the labor of the lists hasn't already made him wonder) why he bothered. He is going to be cuffed and castigated six ways from Sunday for stopping where he did; for going as far as he did; for including, and for excluding, what he has.

All the man wanted to do initially was to compile an index of anthologies. That sounds as simple as completing this sentence: Science fiction is-- But look what he's gone and done -- never even mentioned The Book in which Ezekial saw the flying saucer. And what about Dorothy Sayers' Lord Peter Wimsey stories: wasn't one of them about a girl whose evil husband made her a monster by denying her thyroid extract; isn't that science in fiction? Over here's a collection of six out-and-out fairy-tale fantasies and four science fiction stories; should he include it? Over there's a collection of western stories plus one science fiction; how about that? What about the juveniles, foreign language, or British-only volumes?

And anyway, in a world which reviews Philip Wylie's THE DISAPPEARANCE and Vercors' YOU SHALL KNOW THEM as mainstream fiction and Pangborn's A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS under Spaceman's Realm in The New York Times ... what is science fiction?

The only conceivable safe way out would be to reason thus: If all fiction is fantasy, and if science fiction is a branch of fantasy, then let's get up an index of all fiction. Then we'll have an index of all science fiction and the critics can stop their particular carping and go back to fishing in generalities.

Failing that, the only thing to do is to draw the line somewhere. What, to being with, is a science fiction anthology? Is it a book consisting of soley "pure" science fiction (and let the pure among you cast the first definition? If a book contains one fantasy, should the whole-book be excluded? A third? Half? Should the presence of one uncavilable science fiction opus qualify any collection of stories? And again (because it must always come back to that) what of the stories that some people just don't think are science fiction?

These, then, are the limits Mr. Cole drew. Yours might be laid down differently, but if they were, they would still be arbitrary. Then so are his. The careful reader will, however, allow that Walter Cole's limits are wide and his compromise, in this perplexing task, a rational one.

The earlies book in the CHECKLIST is ADVENTURES TO COME, edited by J. Berg Esenwein, and published in 1937. The latest is Geoff Conklin's SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES IN MUTATIONS (1956).

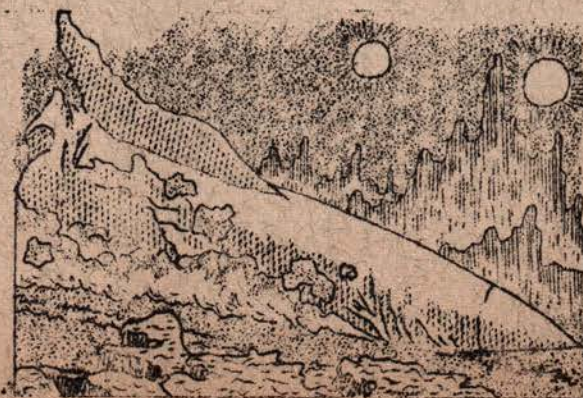
The CHECKLIST does include one-author collections, but does not include British, juvenile, foreign-language anthologies.

No anthologies of pure (i.e. fairy-tale, or Gothic, or hobgoblin type) fantasies are included; but where a book contains stories of a real science-fiction coloration, it and its contents are listed. Hence the presence, in a science-fiction checklist, of such titles as THE AVON GHOST READER and THE MOONLIGHT TRAVELLER. August Derleth is present with THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOON, but not with THE SLEEPING AND THE DEAD.

Mr. Cole has made some interesting discoveries and has also developed some towering peeves. Among the former is a pinpointing of the percentage of stories anthologized more than once in the period covered by the CHECKLIST. These stories have been a sore point to certain reviewers and editors, and a good many readers who, the book dealers tell me, glance through their stock, see just one story in collections which they've read before, and refuse to buy. Well, it's 11%. Whether that's only 11% or I told-you-so 11% depends on how you feel about it. Then, there's the matter of which magazine has had the greatest number of anthologizations. Adjusting the figures for the varying lifetimes of the Big Three, and not counting what might be called "house" publications (ASF ANTHOLOGY, BEST FROM F&SF, THE GALAXY READER), Galaxy seems to have the highest percentage. Go pick up your bar bets. And one more: What was, quantitatively at least, science fiction's biggest year? 1954.

The peeve department is something the well-mannered Mr. Cole wouldn't write about, so allow me. Splittingest of all his headaches were the anthologists who veiled the sources of stories, giving only by-line or magazine credit. Tracking down over 1700 stories from more than a hundred volumes was made much harder than it had to be, this way. Then, there's the editor who changes the title of a story for his book, and doesn't say so in the credits. And the author who does what I did to Don Day five years ago, to my lasting shame -- ignores queries as to which stories appeared under which pseudonym.

The other side of the peeves, of course, is the kudos. These are covered by Mr. COLE in his acknowledgments. A number of people have certainly gone far out of their way for Mr. Cole and this labor of love. Let me add my thanks to his; if you haven't gathered it by now, let me say here that I'm pretty impressed by the size of a task so well done by a man who is, after all, not a publisher or editor or writer in the field, but just someone who cares much more about it more than most professionals.



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- Jul 1950 Larry Saunders, Donald Eaker Moore, A. Aaron Aardvark III, Curtis L. Butler, Anthony Boucher, Roy Cummings.
- Oct 1950 Erik Fennel, Roy Cummins, Toby Duane, Anthony Boucher, A. Aaron Aardvark III, Ed Ludwig.
- Apr 1951 Gene Hunter, Roy Cummings, Jack Cordes, Bob Silverberg, Arthur H. Rapp.
- Sep 1951 Dave Mason, T. E. Watkins, Nicholas Hurd, Isabelle E. Dinwiddie, Gene Hunter, A. Nebi, Alice Bullock, Lyman Hake, Neal Clark Reynolds.
- Dec 1952 Donald Cantin, Ed Wood, John Ledyard, T. E. Watkins, Terry Carr, Jim Harmon, Hal Shapiro.
- Aug 1954 Lawrence Stark, Jim Harmon, T. E. Watkins, Terry Carr, Carol McKinney, Vernon L. McCain, Ian T. Macauley.
- Nov 1954 Joe L. Hensley, Terry Carr, Dave Mason, Harry Harrison, Jim Harmon, Stan Woolston, T.E. Watkins, Dick Clarkson, Isaac Asimov, Ian Macauley.

CHARLES LEE RIDDLE

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THE FAN PRESS



CALIFAN #5. Dave Rike, Box 203, Rodeo, California. 12 pages. Free for contributions, fanzines, and letters.

THE CALIFAN schedule is an irregular one, also; in fact, it is currently an annual. Dave hasn't assembled an overpowering lineup of outside authors, but has instead, concentrated on extensive and unpretentious comments of his own. In some cases, the comments are humorous and entertaining but in others they simply bore. The editor's off-beat sense of humor is like most others of that type: it strikes just the right note at times, but too often it is musically deficient. There is one interlineation that I can't pass up, though, and here it is:

The Space Station Will Travel At 80 Times The Speed of Pain.

The first outside contribution in this issue is a deep, extremely Ser-Con, and extremely dull article on Project Vanguard by deep, SerCon, and (do I dare?) dull fan, Andy Young. This is such an abrupt change of pace, and so out of keeping with all that Dave has published in the past, that it's completely out of place. This is the kind of thing you expect to see in FRONTIER or MAGNITUDE, but I can't imagine why a frivolous sort such as Dave accepted it. That Dave IS frivolous is attested to by the wacky illos he couldn't resist inserting.

As a filler, Dave reprints a 1946 N3F Bulletin, fuggheaded as the very devil, and that one paragraph is the high spot of the mag. Dutch Ellis complains of faneds who don't care how their fanzine looks, and never seriously attempt improvements because they don't think their hobby is worth that much labor. The article is "Sour Gripes" and oh-so-true, but it's also rather paradoxical, for in CALIFAN, we have... Cartoons by the editor and one of my personal favorites, Dave English, round out a better than average job of layout.

Conclusion? Well, CALIFAN certainly can't compare with some of the larger and more polished fanzines, but it does have personality and a certain amount of appeal. Dave is a bit choosy about who he sends out his mags to, so if you don't already know him, it's about time you did.

SATA #4. Dan Adkins, AF15540088, 3625th CCRTAWG, Stead Air Force Base, Nevada. 32 pages. 10¢.

A while back, you may remember, Dan made an economy-sized announcement over the fact that his crew was filled with the usual type of fan-publishing, and was going to turn SATA into a kind of mag never seen in fandom before. Shortly thereafter, SATA folded.

But, being a trufan at heart, Dan couldn't get pubbing out of his system. Ergo, SATA #4. Dan's big idea was evidently for an all-out

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fanzine, but he realized soon that instead of fresh and original, an all-art fanzine would be lifeless and rejected by readers. And without at least pleasing a few readers a little, what's the use of publishing at all? So, Dan has developed this idea as fully as he could, and included it in this issue, in combination with "The Martian Bauble", a story by Charles Morris.

Listen here, amateur writers: if you want your fiction presented in the most flattering manner possible, here is the place to send it! In this issue, Dan has given "The Martian Bauble" complete illustration, so completely that the artistic adaptation far outshines the fiction, which was a dry and shrivelled version of a pair of stories by Ray Bradbury. To see, for perhaps the first time, the full potentialities of the ditto machine put to use, get this magazine; the delicate shadings and multi-colors are really fine. Words can't match the art itself, so I'll move along, but don't pass this up.

The only other feature is Bill Pearson's "I Say Hell!" which, at long last, takes up Elvis Presley and rock 'n roll in general. Bill assumes the non-hysterical approach, and straddles the fence intelligently. Geis is bound to spout off on Presley sooner or later, so let's wait and compare. There are some Lawley silhouettes of Presley in action to illustrate and they look as good/bad as the real thing.

I leave you with one question: who in fandom has developed a better than average imitation of Presley in action, complete with bumps and grinds? Think hard, now!

VOID #8. Greg Benford, % Lt.Col. J. A. Benford, G-4 Sect., Hq. U Corps, APO 79, New York City, N. Y. 28 pages. 15¢.

VOID, once a rank neozine concentrating on the doings of German fandom and getting nowhere fast in the process, has seemingly forsaken the shackles of the neos and fringers in what I like to call GermFandom (and will continue to do so as long as Greg spells my last name Moona). In the two issues since this Great Emancipation, VOID has shown very definite improvement. The editor himself, along with his silent counterpart, twin brother Jim, has matured considerably in the past two years.

Greg has begun to receive contributions from well-known fen on both sides of the pond. The cover this time is by a British artist, Eddie Jones, whose reputation has been built in a few short months. Britain is present elsewhere as well, with the kind of really downright hilarity that only England (and Ireland, of course!) seems able to provide with any consistency. The providers in this case are Ron Bennett and John Berry, with tales of the instrument known as the clarinet and the fan known as Ghod... er, I mean, Walt Willis.

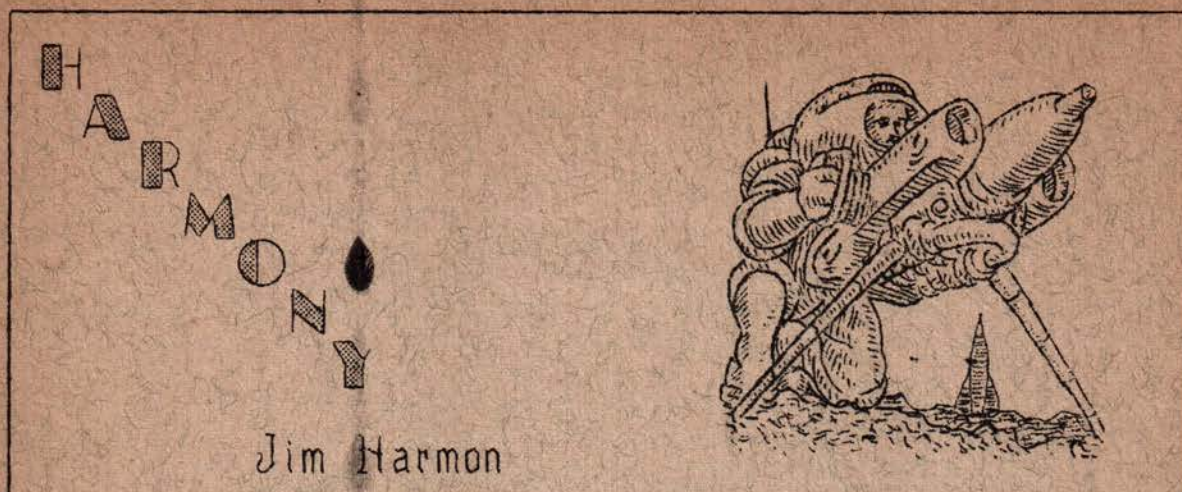
Greg is off on a new kick to replace that of boosting German fandom, and is evidently attempting to set himself up as the poor man's Boyd Raelburn. There is a new jazz column, this time dealing with Stan Kenton, plus plenty of jazz information in Greg's editorial. What the hell, tho, the Insurgents have no monopoly on jazz in fandom, and Benford writes well on this new subject.

Reading some early issues of VOID and then comparing them with the latest, one sees that the calibre of contributors has come up, but one is also given the impression that Benford is no more certain about just what he wants to do in fandom than he was in the beginning. Impressionable is the word, I believe.

VOID has potential.

-finis-

---KENT MOON



I remember comic books.

I don't suppose they will ever completely disappear but the Comics Code censorship has maimed the entire industry, if not killed it. I've noticed a number of slick magazines gloating over the number of comic publishers going out of business. Of course, we can hardly expect sympathy for the writers, artists and editors put out of work but one might expect some sympathy for the unemployed printers and pressmen from the national publications.

There's been a lot said about comics censorship -- mostly by people, with their eagle eye on the First Amendment, but never on the colorful comics page. I've said part of it. The difficulty is the same one they are trying to impose on the television industry. Ding Dong School is a very good program -- I saw it once -- but they are holding this up as the standard for all children's TV programs. They used to do this with the late Nila Mack's fairy tale radio show "Let's Pretend." The social workers overlook the fact that these programs are of absolutely no interest to any child over seven. To a healthy, active twelve year old, they are as intolerably babyish as a game of patty-cake.

Anthromorphism has become the by-word of the present comic books. Gorillas are grateful to lions for saving them from the wicket hunters (evidently these writers have never read the original version of what happened to the thorn-pulling mouse). There is growing propaganda for racial inferiority complex -- the human race is not ready for Space, for the Secret Weapon, to know the Truth. The war comics have become dangerously jingoistic. I suspect letting children reading of wars that are exciting and where literally no one is killed or even injured is far more dangerous than having them read the War-is-Hell E.C. books. Damn it, I know it is!

But there was another day of lurid adventure, naked heroes and heroines, and lusty violence. This was a day before the era of the juvenile delinquent, the crazy mixed-up kid. This was the era of Jungle Comics, Planet Comics, Flash, Green Lantern, Captain Marvel, Tom Mix Comics, and of Superman--who alone, remains in faded fashion.

Jungle Comics, with its variations on the Tarzan (or Mowgli) theme had the standard ape man, Kaanga, the ape boy, Wambi, the voodoo ape man, Tabu. It also had an ape girl, but I can't remember her name. The same publisher (Fiction House) had another ape girl, Sheena, in Jumbo Comics. She survives on television. The stories in this one were tight action, but it was the pictures that were of the main interest. Nearly every page and nearly every frame contained a gorgeous woman dressed in nearly nothing, and that skin tight. It's too bad such an educational magazine no longer exists. It was a pleasant way to study human anatomy -- a subject that today's kids are learning in a distorted manner since comic book women no longer have legs or breasts.

Doubtless some of you remember the similar situation in Planet Comics. Here the standard of story was somewhat higher. A year or so ago, The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction ran the text version of a Star Pirate adventure that had been used in the Fiction House sports pulp, Fight Stories. Besides the Raffles-Saint of Space, there were Flint Barker and Reef Ryan, Space Rangers. Then -- Lost World. This was undoubtedly the dullest of the Planet Comics stories -- Hunt Bowman (who was an archer) and his girl, Lisa, fought intermanably against the lizard-faced Voltamen, ravagers of terrestrial civilization, who spoke English sentences with Germanic construction. That is: With construction Germanic, spoke they sentences English. On the other hand, a short-lived series, Futura, was not much better plotwise but it had some of the most beautiful science fiction artwork I've ever seen anywhere -- the artist was similar to Wallace Woods of E.C. and some Planet Stories illustrations, but his style was looser which gave an etherial quality to the scenes.

In those lusty days, Superman D-C National gave out with something more than, with all respect to Julius Schartz, the wishy-washy pabulum they now offer. All-Star Comics brought all of their super-heroes into one long story -- rather like the monsters in a Universal horror picture of the forties. For a long time, the rule of the Justice Society was that a member could not remain in more than a honorary fashion if he appeared in a comic-book all his own. With all that extra income, obviously Superman, Batman, Flash, and Green Lantern did not have to work so hard for justice. But various members dropped out of the society when their regular comic-book slots were dropped - Hour-Man, Starman, etc. -- and the honorary-members trooped back; Superman and Batman for one issue, Flash, Green Lantern and Wonder Woman for good. As a matter of fact, long after the day of the masked crimefighter passed, All-Star remained (like FAPA) the last home of the tired warriors, unwanted and unloved. Over the years, some of the members were:

HAWKMAN, masked with a hawkshead helmet, adorned with giant wings, sometimes, companion of the similarly garbed Hawkgirl (also in Flash Comics.)

DR. MID-NITE, able to see in the dark, blind in daylight without dark glasses, posed as the blind Dr. McNighter (All-American Comics).

THE ATOM, originally so-called for his small size, but after 1945, because he tapped atomic energy for his strength (Adventure Comics).

HOURL MAN, a very early comic character. He obtained one hour of super strength by taking a powder (non-habit forming, I presume); this drug-user

suggestively appeared in More Fun Comics.

STARMAN tapped stellar power with a Starwand (Adventure Comics).

JOHNNY THUNDER, comedy relief, could call on a Geni-like Thunderbolt by saying the ancient Celenese magic words Cei-U (Say You) which he only done by accident, i.e., "Say you guys can't do this to me!" (Flash Comics)

THE SPECTRE -- now, here was a character! He was not just a demi-god; he was God! He could do anything --bring the dead to life, visit Hell and Heaven, change size, be everywhere, do everything. His only trouble was that he was in love with a girl called Clarence and since he was a ghost (of a policeman whose identity he still maintained) he couldn't hope to marry her. I don't know why -- I bet this boy could do anything. However, finally, he talked to God in person (a memorable comic-strip sequence) and God decided to bring his body back to life for the Spectre who nevertheless retained his supernatural powers. But he never did marry that gal.

DR. FATE, somewhat similar to the Spectre. (More Fun Comics)

GREEN LANTERN was one of my favorites because he used "will power". I suppose this strip appealed to the future Rosicrucians and psionics-experimenters. Alan Scott was an engineer (incredibly he switched from a railroad engineer to a radio broadcasting engineer, as if the writer of the book thought any kind of engineer was essentially the same as any other one.) He found an ancient green lantern and fashioned a ring from it. The lamp had been made from a meteorite in ancient China that had the ability to materially project his will with beams of green light. This mounted up to letting GL walk through walls, set up a force screen to protect himself from bullets or knives -- but not anything organic in nature like human flesh or wooden clubs. He could also fly and shoot out rays from his ring to burn, lift, attract, repel. Scott had to charge his ring against the lantern every 24 hours by chanting: "In brightest day, in darkest night/ No evil shall escape my sight/ Let those who worship evil might/ Beware my power -- Green Lantern's Light." Frankly, the whole thing smacked of superstition.

In later (and declining years) GL traded in a derby-hatted cabbie named Dorby Dickles for a red-haired wench called Harlequin with glasses to match -- she was a criminal whose whole career was devoted to pulling crimes so fiendish that the Lantern would "marry" her to save the world from them -- her price. But GL never did give this broad what she was itching for. I am tempted to suggest that the relationship between Dickles and Scott may have not been all it appeared to be. But then again, now that both GL and the Harlequin are retired, they may be snogging together and recalling that happily monstrous past.

THE FLASH was a play on only one of Superman's qualities -- super-speed. Flash could run through solid objects because "they didn't have time to stop him", spin fast enough to make him invisible (but, never dizzy) and generally move like a jackrabbit after a jillrabbit. I particularly remember the involved time-travel stories this series spawned, especially in book-long stories in All Flash Quarterly.

WONDER WOMAN was -- and still is -- patently feminist propaganda. Diana Prince sprang from a race of Amazons who lived on an island and raised their generations of girl children without ever seeing a man. (Brief Pause). But Diana saw an aviator -- Steve something or other -- and decided there was no future in the Amazon Princess business -- a dead-end job, and joined the Army to be near her man. In her Wonder Woman costume, she was as strong as an ox, able to catch bullets on her bracelets, spin a magic lasso that compelled obedience from the captured -- including herself, operate a Mental Radio (with a TV screen) and fly an invisible airplane. In spite of her "love" for Steve (which she hid very well) I still think those Amazons were a bunch of Lesbians.

Superman and Batman are still around. DC has smoothed out some rough spots in the Superman character (like explaining his costume is made from super-cloth--I remember when Seigel and Schuster showed him fastening his cleak on with a safety pin) but Superman has lost all touch with reality. Today, Superman appears from the first panel to the end performing a never ending series of miracles. In the old days, he kept his feet on the ground as Clark Kent to believable scenes of newspaper life to back his appearances as Superman, giving them meaning and verisimilitude.

Tom Mix Comics were given away for Ralston box-tops via radio, comic books and newspapers. They were half the size of the regular dime comics. They were 32 pages or the size of today's comics. What was probably a one shot effort lasted twelve issues. Like the Tom Mix radio program, they dealt with life on a modern ranch -- the TM Bar -- as it hasn't really been in fifty years. To the old west was added science fictional super weapons, airplanes, spies and gangsters. They had a certain charm, these comics, though never the quality the radio program obtained as written by George Lawther.

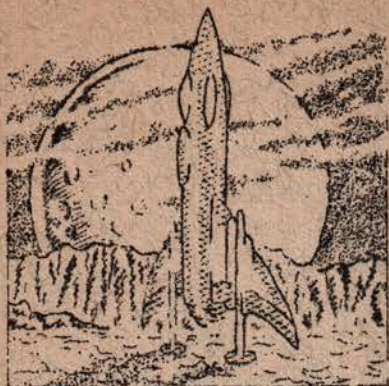
Probably the greatest comic-book character of all appeared chiefly in newspapers--THE SPIRIT by Will Eisner. He created what might be called the E.C. style in comics--both the science fiction horror story type and the MAD satire. Eisner drawing and narrative techniques undoubtedly revolutionized the whole industry. I firmly believe that The Spirit was vastly superior to Pogo, Li'l Abner, Mad, Steve Canyon, Peanuts, or any other comic with an ardent clique of supporters. To my mind, it had absolutely everything you could ask of the comic-strip media. Naturally, it is no longer published.

The Spirit was good.

But as for the others, I suppose they seem better than today's effort only because they are seen down the long funnel to my childhood. They were brighter and gaudier. But that's probably all.

It must be a year since I've sat down and read a comic book. These days when I reach for a copy of Superman, it's the third word in the title of a play by G. B. Shaw.

I must be growing up, and I'm not at all sure it's a good thing.



FANTASTUFF

TERRY CARR

WORDS FROM THE PAST:: "...scientific fiction, as a core for our various activities, is being buried deeper and deeper in layers of other interests, and I look for the time when we will abandon altogether the pretense of being 'stfans and be just amateur journalism fans."--Bob Tucker, in SCI-FIC VARIETY #3, a FAPazine circa 1941.

OH OF COURSE NOT DEPT.:: "The truth is that time may be old, but he is still sprightly and can kick up his heels when he feels so inclined. He does plod but he also skips. He dawdles but he also runs. Don't let anybody fool you with tricky talk."--Ray Schaffer, Jr., in "The Fiend Speaks," SCINTILLATION #5.

THAT'S RIKE, YOU'RE WRONG:: Being a subsection dedicated to David Rike, without whom there would be no such subsection (which is logical enough I think). From CLUNQUE #4, Dave's SAPSazine: "I'm sorry I'm unable to review all of the SAPSazines here--but college and fanac just doesn't mix too well, at least to the extent for me to be able to put out fanzines of the size and scope that I'd like to; both in SAPS and elsewhere. Suffice to say that the mags, whether they were reviewed herein or not." Well, that's fun to know, anyway. # Typos, Inc: "Besides the talks and panel discussions, some bickering is going

on in order to obtain a stfilm for showing."--from an item on Wester-Con preparations in Rike's OPIUM TRIBUNE #4.

IN RETROSPECT:: Once more, we dip into the hoary old fanmags for a couple of items. Lloyd Alpaugh Jr. in TYMPANI, 2 February 1948: "Del Rey stated that he is no longer writing science-fiction because he can make more money writing western and sport stories." Of course, when M. del Rey became editor of Space S-F and three or four other stfms, he didn't seem to have much trouble making money at writing science fiction--he merely sold half the contents of each issue to himself. # Ronald M. Friedman, in SCIENCE FICTION WEEKLY #2, April, 1950: "Mr. Bixby, the current editor of Planet Stories, disclosed that a great new science fiction writer who is bound to become a top favorite among fans, will make his appearance in the coming Fall issue of Planet Stories. His name: C. H. Liddell." The name ended up as Liddell, of course, but then you can't blame editors for being confused by Kuttner pennames. More from the same item: "Another great find of Bixby's is Jay Drexel, who will make his appearance in the Fall issue via "Crowded Colony".. yessir, that J. Drexel Bixby really got out and hunted for new writers!

MOST BLOODY SIMILIE OF THE YEAR:: "I like the Cult. Main thing I like is that everyone sees the workings of the machinery, and has a hand in them." That was...shhh...me, in KAP-AI ONI, the Cultzine of one P. Howard Lyons.

AD INFINITEMS:: Perhaps it's a bit late to mention this, but Pete Vorzimer, who endeared himself to everyone---especially Burton Satz---with his antics at the 1954 SFCon, and his conreport on the affair in ABSTRACT, once wrote a fan article titled "How to be popular at an SF Con." Information from the horses' mouth. # Suggested fanzine title for fans who love to feud: RUNIC, THE RUDE MAGAZINE. # In this day of blatant sensationalism it is most refreshing, is it not, to see a comic book with the austere title of Unusual Tales? # Howard Browne a few months ago wrote an editorial in Amazing Stories titled "Manuscripts We Never Finished Reading." This amusing item presented the beginnings of various stories that he was liable to find in the morning manuscript submissions...a general survey of the worst hack science-fiction imaginable. It was an amusing editorial, yes--but, it did not tell the whole story. Browne, admittedly, doesn't finish reading such stories--he just makes out a check to the author of each and rushes them into print. # O d d Historical Facts Dept.: Did you, dear reader, know that the ghreat

ghod Ghu, undoubtedly the most popular fannish ghod today, was originated by Donald A. Wollheim, who abhorred fandom for fandom's sake?

HOW NOW BROWNE:: The editorial in Amazing for October 1956: "Did you buy the August issue of Amazing Stories? If so, was it because you saw it advertised on a bright red poster in the lobby of your local theatre where they were playing a science fiction picture called "Earth vs. the Flying Saucers"?.... No, surprisingly enough, it wasn't.

A NOTE THAT MISSED MY WASTEBASKET:: The FanFare reprint in the first issue of Infinity S-F uses the plot of an old joke. Which wouldn't be so bad, particularly as it is a good joke, but Jim Harmon used the very same joke as the basis for "The Smuggler" in Spaceways S-F #5.

THE THINGS YOU READ IN LETTERCOLS:: "Dear Mr. Quinn: I have recently carried a figure to the fourth Dimension and am now working out a formula. It proves that time travel is impossible and that the future doesn't exist until we get there. If you would like to have the formula for your letter column, please let me know."--from a reader in the December 1956 If. I've always said that stf readers were the most intelligent, star-begotten people in the world.



"JUST HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET USED TO LAND AGAIN?"

PEON NOTES

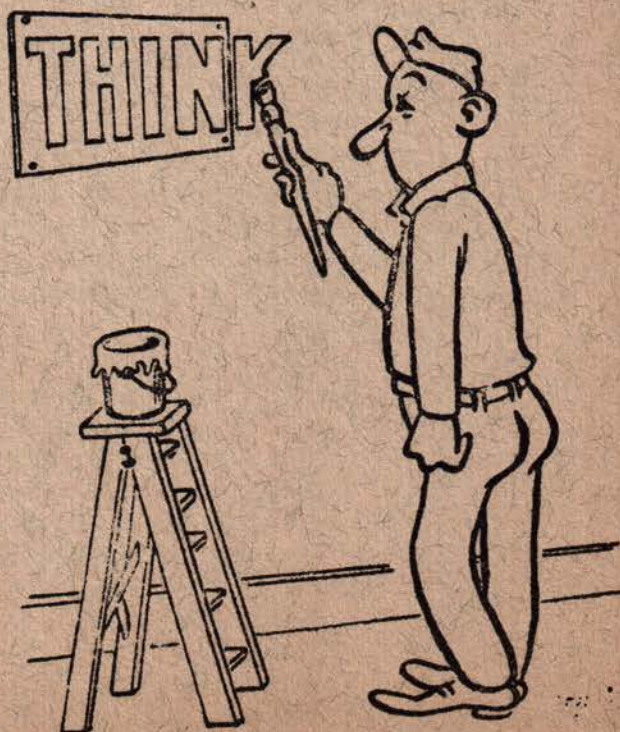
(continued)

How many of you remember the slogan of days gone by--"SOUTH GATE IN '58!"? I can remember it when PEON first appeared, but it hasn't been heard in recent days. However, it has now been revived by a group of Southern California fans who are making an active bid for the 1958 World S. F. Con. They don't want to take any limelight away from the 1957 Convention in London right now, but do want everyone to know that they are planning to make an active bid for the 1958 convention site. Old time names appear on the listing of the various committees, among them being Anna Sinclair Moffatt, Rick Sneary, Lew Kovner, Forry Ackerman, Len J. Moffatt, Stan Woolston, and Ron Ellik. It appears that this group has the situation well in hand, and if you'd like further information, contact either Anna or Len--the address being 5969 Lanto Street, Bell Gardens, California.

Speaking of Forry just now, I want to wish him rather belated birthday greetings. Forry recently celebrated his 40th birthday and had so many well-wishers at his birthday party that he had to hold two of them! But then, when you have been so active in the s.f. field as long as he has and have done so much to push the acceptance of science fiction, then you're bound to have a great deal of friends. I know of no one who has done so much for so long a time as Forrest J. Ackerman, and I wish him the best in the future.

A bit of bad news for s.f. was the newsstory in a recent issue of a Baltimore paper of the death of Ray Cummings at his upstate New York home in January. No more details were given, other than he was one of the most prominent scientific-fiction writers.

Thanks to all you nice people who said you enjoyed the one-shot that Jean Linard of France and I put out when I visited him in August. I'm sorry that I wasn't able to distribute the thing to the entire mailing list of PEON, but we were limited in the number of copies we could duplicate. Needless to say, I did enjoy my visit to Vesoul very much, and hope one of these days, the Linards can repay the visit here in the states. I wrote in a recent issue of LEER that Jean and his wife, Annie, would someday become the leaders of fandom, and I fully believe that my prediction is coming to pass. There aren't two nicer people in fandom today than these two, and I am basking in the reputation of being the only fan who has met them personally, so far. Jean has learned English through his



reading of U. S. and British magazines and books (primarily science-fiction) and has published two issues of his fabulous fanzine, MEUH. He's a man of many talents. I came away with an original oil painting of his that occupies a place of honor in our new apartment. Despite the fact that I was about the first person he had spoken English to -- I can't speak more than five or six words of French -- we managed to understand each other quite well. I had a most enjoyable weekend, and shall long remember Jean and Annie Linard.

Don Adkins, the editor of SATA, has recently broken into big-time with an illustration of his appearing with the lead story in the current Other Worlds. Don has a host of talent and I am certainly happy to see him make the grade. Now, the only problem he will have, is to collect for the artwork from Palmer....I'm also very happy to see Harlan Ellison and Bob Silverberg start to appear more frequently in the prozines. Both are doing very well, and it's indeed rare to pick up a prozine these days without



"JENKINS IS BEHIND ON HIS QUOTA THIS MONTH"

seeing either or both of their names on the list of authors appearing therein.....Incidentally, Harlan furnished PEON with the Bixby story in this issue, as well as the Tucker and Gunn articles in the last issue. They were originally intended for the forever-promised DIMENSIONS, turned over by him to Ron Smith, and arrived in my hands by various and devious means....Quite a move by two of fandom's leading lights may be coming up in the near future. Larry Stark and John Hitchcock are eyeing the climate and air around Boston (particularly Cambridge) with a view to moving up there. I feel bad concerning this, because one of the many reasons I looked forward to moving to Maryland was the closeness to Hitchcock in Baltimore.

It used to be that I looked forward to the arrival of Astounding. I liked the rest of them a lot, but Astounding was the best.

Perhaps it was because ASF was the first prozine I ever read. Now, when I don't get Galaxy on time, I start to worry. Horace Gold has done, in my humble opinion, a wonderful job. Sure, he's run some stinkers, but then, so has the rest of the editors. What's more, he hasn't gone all out for various sidelines and fads like some editors we know, but has concentrated on one job and one job only--editing Galaxy. Gold is Galaxy and Galaxy is Gold. What the majority of readers (especially we fans) overlook is that he sells Galaxy hard. We are accustomed to a new magazine appearing and nothing much being said about it---and when Gold started pushing the thing he loves, some of us got a bit offended, and have never forgiven him for it. I've been guilty of running some pretty bitter things about him myself, but I have come to the conclusion that he's done a pretty damn good job on Galaxy, and it's high time he is commended for it.

And with that bit of sermonizing, let's close up this issue of PEON for time being. Let me know what you think about this issue--if I get enough letters worthy of comment, I may revive the letter columns. At any rate, and until next time--Happy Reading.

hee
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