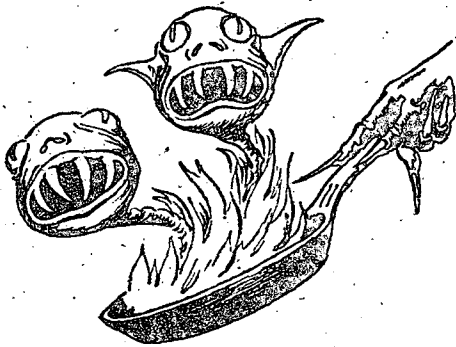


# The FRYING PAN



## A Fanzine Commentary

ONE of the stand-bys of fandom is the open letter. Why no one ever seems to write a closed letter is a mystery whose depths we have yet fully to plumb. But come fan organizations, come fanzines, go both with the passing of time, the open letter remains.

We have come to wonder recently if hoary fans, aware of their dangerous dotage, don't gather about them the acolytes, neophytes and tyros of their respective groups and, speaking never above a whisper, pass on in various sancta sanctorum the causes, methods and mood of the open letter.

We say "mood" in the singular advisedly—for open letters have but one mood, that of anguished and astonished resentment. View with alarm, point with pride, demand with or-elses? Not fandom's open letters. They just go on resenting and resenting and resenting.

A fine fruity and occasionally quasi-literate example has just turned up upon our desk and we are reprinting it in toto—save for suitable disguising of the name and places involved. If only for the record we think the open letter, after so many and unvaried apparitions, deserves this prozine reward. Here goes—

### OPEN LETTER

to members of the Otterid Science Fantasy League and to members of the Calcimine Insurgents

Several months ago three people, all from East Swayback—A. Trapp, Al Flute and L. L. Goober—resigned from the

[Turn page]

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Ganichim Science Fantasy Society because, so they said, there were too many "juvenile acting" members in that particular organization. Since most of the remaining active members were in Otterid and since there already was a very active fan club operating in Otterid, the OSFL, the GSFS was dissolved. At that time the East Swayback fan stated that at such time as the Otterid people could show that they were grown up, they would then consider rejoining the group.

Some time after this, these same East Swayback fan organized themselves into a group they call the Calcimine Insurgents. Even though they seemed to think that the Otterid group was beneath their notice we see that they are coming down to a good many of our meetings, regardless of the weather.

At the last meeting which they attended they brought with them a publication that they had written and printed. To say the least, this said publication (term used for want of a better word) contained material that was untrue, indecent and libelous about persons most of whom they didn't even know. Apparently they had gotten their names from the club paper, "The Otterid Siftan" which we had been sending them.

It seems incredulous to us that a person of A. Trapp's caliber could have had a hand in such matters. A. Trapp, who many of us have rated as Ganichim's number 1 fan and who holds the position of chairman of the NFFF Directorate, has always been a steady-going clear-thinking fellow helping fandom grow. We who have considered A. Trapp our friend and had thought he was ours are beginning to wonder. The only thing that seem possible is that he must have been influenced by unsound advice and actions of other members of the Calcimine Insurgents.

We are thankful that our constitution is so written that it protects us and allows us time to become acquainted with the prospective members before they are admitted to the League and to eliminate those whose conduct is detrimental to the well being and/or the name of the League.

We would like an explanation from A. Trapp of his part in the juvenile antics of the Calcimine Insurgents as it seems unlikely that he knowingly and willingly took part in their last escapade. Until such time that the other members of the Insurgents can show us that they are becoming mature fan and are no longer "juvenile jerks" (their own terminology in regard to the GSFS) they will not be welcome at any of our meetings.

Let us examine this magnificent missive and/or closely. Obviously it has been carefully conceived and shrewdly balanced between justified resentment, veiled threats, subtle aggression and forgiveness, culminating in an ultimatum which surely is calculated to send any true and/or untrue ex-GSFS-er screaming and rending his zipper jacket out into the thirsty Otterid salt flats.

First, in dignified (not to say downright stuffy) prose the drafters of this momentous epistle with no envelope on top state the cause of the recent schism, the inexorable course of events that brought about civil war in Otterid, the angry parting words with their concealed multiple-fire olive branch.

In item No. 2 coals are heaped on the

## FEATURED IN THE NEXT ISSUE

# SHADOW ON THE SAND

A Novel of Twin Worlds

By JOHN D. MacDONALD

fire, which is already in danger of getting out of control. First the maverick East Swaybackites have organized themselves into a splinter group. And then neither snow nor rain nor dark of night seems to stay these scurriers from coming to the meetings of the parent group.

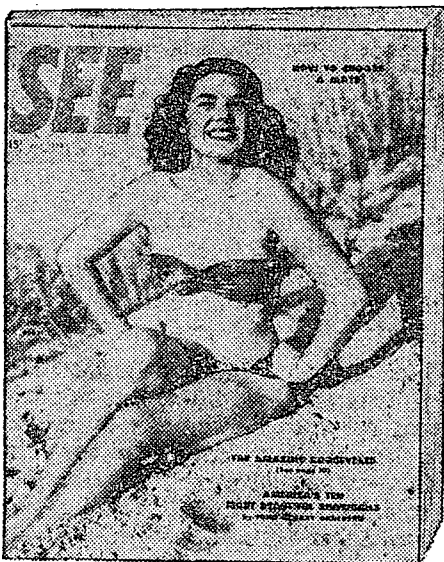
Comes item No. 3—and/or the onrushing golgotha-climax. The Insurgents use (or rather abuse) such a meeting for the passing of a "said" publication containing false, lewd and/or slanderous crud about the parent group. Including "persons most of whom they didn't even know." Heck, maybe they didn't want to.

Now, with the outrage on record, our letter-opener—pardon, open-letterer—moves obliquely to the attack. Coily sidling (or/and seideling) up to the VIP among the Calciminors, one A. Trapp, he proceeds first to feed him ego-boo—then with subtlety to hint that maybe he doesn't know that his Insurgent pals of East Swayback are busily working on his back with a buzzsaw.

This is known as the "divide and/or rule" theory, exemplified by L. Sprague de Camp in the book of the same name (or/and approximately the same). Mr. Trapp is offered a shapely and not-too-fatted calf if he will come back to the fold, leaving his fellow East Swaybackians in the outer

[Turn page]

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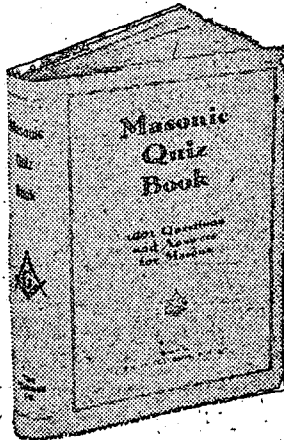


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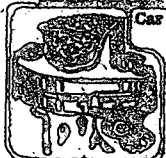
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darkness where—it here implies—they belong.

Judging by the past events as expressed in the open missive, someone must have been doing some hasty rewriting of the Otterid Science Fantasy League constitution—which also implies protection for Mr. Trapp against any further buzzsawing by his erring East Swaybackians should he desire to take up the proffered calf, etc.

Finally, so as not to look overeager, the author or/and authors of this epistle demand an explanation from Mr. Trapp (surely he should be able to tell them it all happened while he was out on location or/and he didn't know it was loaded). Then, in a magnanimous gesture, the parent group offers to take all the Insurgents back, provided they will reverse their own tables on the "juvenile jerk" issue.

This is casting the shoe on the other hoof with a vengeance. The gauge is also cast and/or the gauntlet is down. Someone is going to have to eat seagull. We wait, breathlessly, for the next episode to occur.

Seriously, if one can get serious about such a three-dimensional doodle, we wonder if more closed and fewer open letters might not make sfandom a much more generally respected body. But don't get us wrong—we love 'em.

—THE EDITOR.

## **THE READER SPEAKS**

(Concluded from page 156)

rhymed. So long.—5107 Delaware Avenue, Los Angeles 41, California.

Okay, okay—so we're stuck with another hunk of verse right in the tired old finale. Well, let's crank her up and get wheezing to wit—

*You didn't like our April ish?  
You thought the stories smelly  
E'en with MacDonal'd, Brad and Blish?  
We'll hang one in your abdominal cavity,  
bub!*

Which is very definitely that. This column's done and so are we. But thanks, all of you, for contributing the letters that, more than anything else, make the column possible—or should we say impossible? At any rate, thanks, and we'll be seeing you in the September SS and back at this stand come October.

—THE EDITOR.

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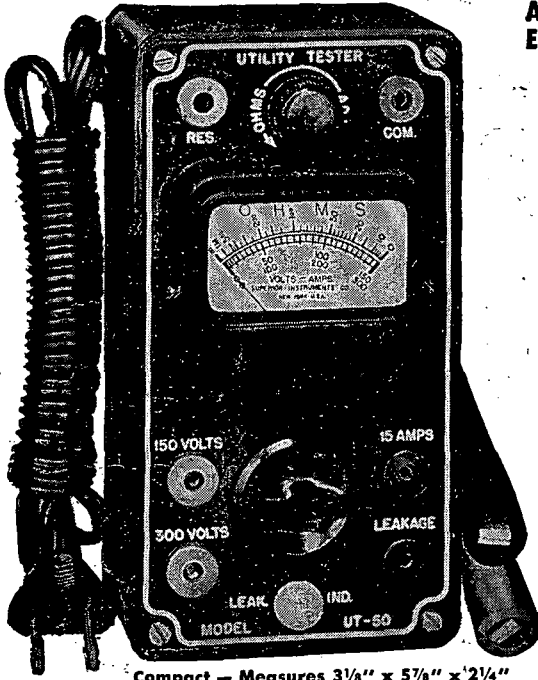
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