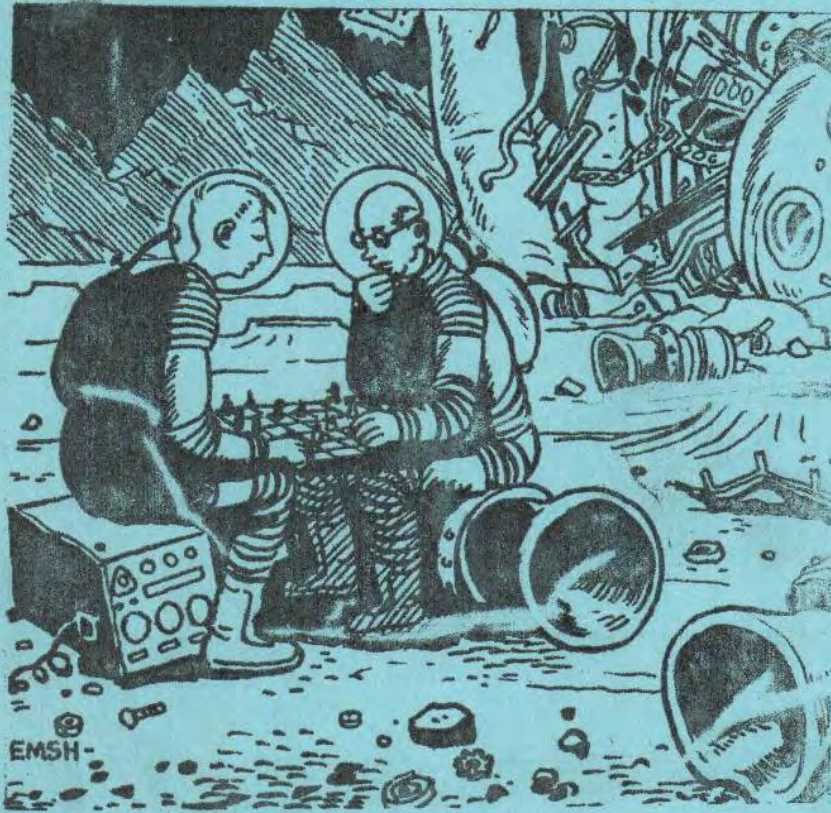


LEER



SEPTEMBER 1955

The Vizigraph and I

Jerry Bixby

Lee Riddle has asked me to spin a few thousand words on the subject of my editorship of Planet Stories. I will begin by saying that my editorship of Planet Stories is much like my love affair with Lana Turner--it never actually existed. Malcolm Reiss, whom you will find listed on the masthead as General Manager, is and has always been the man behind PS; the other editors--Whitehorn, Peacock, Payne, and myself--were, in reality, only assistant editors who had no authority to buy stories on our own nor any control over policy. Our activities in that direction were limited to reading the stories as they came in and either recommending or not recommending them to Mal; and if he disagreed with our opinion, to pleading and swearing and stamping around the office until he either became convinced and bought them, or told us in a certain tone of voice, to shaddup! We also served as art-editor, layout and makeup man, manuscript editor, proof reader; and (in my case, at least) as athletic director for the office girls...I kept 'em running.

With this in mind, and with a fond nod in the direction of Mal Reiss, who endured so much of my browbeatings in his attempts to convince me that we were NOT publishing Galaxy, we can now proceed to a discussion of my "editorship" of PS.

Nothing special comes to mind.... The satisfaction of buying an unusually good yarn; the helpless shrug that accompanies the purchase of a stinker simply because you happen to need the length; the pleasure of working with artists (I enjoyed this particularly inasmuch as I like to draw a bit myself and always burdened the artist with detailed sketches of exactly what I wanted). Also enjoyed fooling with styling and layouts, and spent lots of time after hours at it. And I disliked intensely blurbing the stories in the traditional PS manner, i.e., "Grimly, his terrible eyes flaming like ice-cream cones, Rakk-k Durble lanced his little spacer into the heart of the Crab Nebula. Could he defeat the foul Itch-men and save the beautiful Queen Oowotapairanockers?" I, myself, prefer the more elusive, or Campbellian, blurb: "A culture that is founded on

the intrachange of tangentials can topple under its own weight, unless it has the right kind of foundation; and that's liable to rise under its own bouyancy."

While at Fiction House, I also handled Action Stories, Jungle Stories, Two Western Books, Two-Western Action Books, and Frontier Stories, in addition to Planet Stories and Two Complete Science-Adventure Books; and every week or so, an occasion of great importance would arise--the "cover-title conference."

Cover-titles (which are the story titles featured on the cover, Junior), you may, but probably don't know, are considered to be extremely important; according to the big brains of the pulp business, cover-titles, along with the cover illustration itself, are what sells the book. It's the package that counts.

The theory is: a potential reader, dead bent on making his train, is scurrying past a newstand when sudenly a swatch of color knifes the corner of his eye and he skids to a halt, staring at it; he extends a hand, and begins to tremble as the colors resolve into hero-saving-babe-from-creep; then.. the muscular cover-titles leap upon him, and he's hooked.

To this end, Mal and I would sit across the desk from each other and stare moodily into space; cigarette and pipe smoke could cloud the air.

Suddenly, from the cloud of smoke surrounding Mal, would issue: "Witch Queen of Venus's Ookey Jungles"?

"Nah." I would say.

Silence.

From my cloud of smoke: "Purple Princess of the Voluptuous Void?"

"Nah."

Mal: "Red Priestess of Dimension $X\frac{1}{4}-52/25\frac{1}{2}$ Plus?"

"Nah...red's no good; political."

From me: "Brawny Babe of Bollixed Binary \$16=(H2O)=+3?"

Mal, leaping to his feet, and emerging head and shoulders above his cloud of smoke: "That's IT? That's IT!"

I remember one western cover-title that everyone was happy about..until the thing was just about to be engraved. Then someone...I forget who...leaped to his feet like a cat full of Metaxa and hollered, "Jesus God, stop the presses! We can't use that title!"

The title was "Blood On Her Saddle."

¶ § ¶

Herewith, a few random remeniscences...which is the easiest way to write this sort of thing...

There was the morning Fred Young, the foreman of our print shop, called up to tell me that the first three pages of a Poul Anderson novelet had fallen into some machine or other before they could be set up in type, and had gotten mangled somewhat beyond legibility..."Can you send me some stuff to fill in," Fred asked plaintively, "so we can set the thing?" So, I sat down and batted out a beginning for Poul's story, working from memory...except that I did it in two pages...these wordy authors...

Speaking of which, there was the time Ted Sturgeon came visiting and saw a new cover Andy Anderson had just brought in. Ted clasped his hands and wanted to do a story around it. "Sure," I said; "give us about 7,000 words on it." So, Ted, bless his novelist's heart, showed a while later with 27,000 words...what that did to our schedule that month!

Then, there was the time, two little fans came up to Fiction House, swept grandly past startled secretaries and receptionists and somehow found our office, planted themselves behind our desk and yelled, "Hiyah Jerry!", almost scaring me right out of the window. I mention this only because it was my first experience with fans...now, I don't scare so easily.

And the guy who called me one morning...an out-of-town author, he stated, with a manuscript he'd like to peddle, and could he take me to lunch? I deliberated a split millisecond, wondering what the chances were of getting stuck with the check, and then said sure. I met him downstairs. He was an intense-looking beanpole of about sixty, looking about ready to take a bite of the nearest police car if he felt like it. He showed me his manuscript. It was as thick as an Los Angeles phone-book, and it was math, math, math, math....pages of it, with a little text thrown in for the morons like me, and maybe you. I looked at the first line. It read something like: "From Einstein's elementary (and not entirely correct) $E = MC^2$, we can now proceed to..."

Difficult luncheon, that.

Reminds me of the note which John W. Campbell is supposed to have framed on his office wall: "Dear Mr. Campbell: I hear you pay money for stories. You send me some money, I will send you some stories."

Enough? I think so!

O U R H E R O

As our drama begins to unfold,
We see the lovely, curvey fem;
And what is that monster behind her?
Egad! It's the horrid, nasty old BEM.
Hark! And who is this to the rescue?
It's none other than Captain Dashing.
Lightning flashes from his cool gray eyes,
And his teeth are grinding and ghashing!
The monster gives a soul-piercing shriek,
And our blood begins to jell and curdle;
But Captain Dashing fights grimly on,
While the fem calmly adjusts her girdle.
Then suddenly, the battle is over,
And the silence is that of the dead.
Our hero refuses the maiden's kiss--
For the monster has torn off his head.

---JACK CORDES

THE
PSYCHOANALYST
AND
THE FAN

t. e. watkins

You think you're a science fiction fan? Have you circled the galaxy? Well, Kirk Allen did, and he is the fan to end all fans.

If you happen to be a science fiction author, you have heard of reader identification. If not, this is when the reader identifies himself with the hero of the story. You are just about to hear of the greatest science fiction author and the top reader identification-job in history. The shame of it is, we don't know who this author is.

This is the story of "Kirk Allen", a top research physicist on atomic energy, as told by his psychoanalyst, Dr. Robert Lindner of Baltimore, Maryland. Dr. Lindner wrote a two-part article, "The Jet-Propelled Couch" in Harper's for December 1954 and January 1955, and a book, "The Fifty Minute Hour", yet to be published.

"Kirk Allen" is not the scientist's real name, and this is a shame because if we knew his name we would have an important clue to the author of the science fiction series that tipped the physicist off center. The U. S. Government sent Allen to Dr. Lindner to get straightened out. He was a whiz-bang research scientist, but he was spending too much time "off the planet". Most of the time he was alright, but in his spare time, Allen believed that he could travel

through time to the future, and was a famous space pilot in a future galactic empire.

Dr. Lindner could hardly believe this unusual delusion. When Kirk Allen walked into his office, he turned out to be a "young executive" type in his early thirties, blond, clear eyed, average height. Allen was very embarrassed about his "difficulty" but quite willing to talk about it.

As a psychoanalyst, Dr. Lindner was quite interested in Allen's background. He had to probe this to find the clue to the special delusion. Allen was born in Hawaii, the son of a naval officer. His mother died when he was a small boy and he was raised by Hawaiian nurses. His father was a hard unimaginative type and was assigned as Commissioner over a mandated island. Allen's life was a lonely one during his boyhood and young manhood. When he was eleven, his father employed an attractive young woman as a governess. He was well developed sexually and Miss Lillian noticed this the first time she gave him a bath. She took to undressing in front of him and when she saw he was aroused she was insatiable. There were times when he had to run away and lock her out of his room. After a time, Miss Lillian ran away with the school teacher's husband, but she had given Allen a life-long block against the sex act.

Dr. Lindner, who studied under Theodor Reik, a noted Freudian, suggests that this early sex experience is the basis for the development of Allen's peculiar fantasy. His sex drive finds outlet in day dreaming about space travel. This is supported by the fact that Miss Lillian was the only sex experience Allen ever had.

There were few books to read on the island. These were mostly books of sermons, children's books, essays, biographies, etc. One day, a whole crate of new books was delivered to the mission house and it contained many novels, including a set by a "highly imaginative and prolific writer" (Hint? Lindner does not say who this author was. He identifies none of the authors of the books read by Allen.) It gave Allen a shock when he found one book by a famous English author in which the hero had his own name. He felt completely disoriented. He found another book several days later by an American author which had a character with his own name. Then came the clincher. He found a whole series

of books by an American science fiction author, which contained a Superman, an all-conquering hero, by the name of Kirk Allen. As he read these stories of the far future, he began to realize that he was reading his own biography. His everyday life receded, the books became his own reality!

He grew up with these stories. Most of his spare time was spent working with the fantasy. He convinced himself that the stories were written in the future and had been sent back to instruct him. He believed in the coexistence of time dimensions and thought that the past, present, and future could exist together. Most of the time Allen could remember his life in the future time and could even piece out the intervals between books. One day, he was trying to remember a detail about a map of a new galaxy he had explored. It wouldn't come clear. He was drawing a map of this galaxy project in his room at X reservation where he was employed as a research scientist. He remembered that the original photographs of the project were in a secret room in his palace in the future. He was frustrated and impatient at not having them available. If he could only get to his palace he could get the photographs and solve the problem. No sooner had he thought of it than he was there. He was Lord Allen, inter-galaxy hero.

As soon as Kirk Allen found out that he could move into the future at will, his visits there became frequent and extended and his work at X Reservation suffered. He was an important scientist and his work on the project valuable. So the Government wanted him cleared, if possible. Dr. Lindner realized two things about Allen. First, he was completely mad and did not realize it. Second, his life depended on the madness. To cure him without killing him would be very difficult.

The first thing Lindner did was to get Kirk to turn over all his records. There was half a life time of work on this stuff. It would take most of the column just to list the items that composed Allen's records. For example, there was 12,000 pages of typescript of Allen's forthcoming biography. There were 2,000 more pages of hand-written notes on more biography. There were maps of star systems, 82 full-color maps carefully drawn to scale of planetary bodies, land masses on planets which Kirk Allen had explored. There was a 200 page history of Kirk Allen's empire. He even had

306 drawings of people, plants, insects, weapons, articles of clothing, vehicles of the future world.

It was Dr. Lindner's idea to digest this vast mass of material, the above is only a partial list, and enter fully into Allen's fantasy. To do this he had to have Allen's cooperation. To do that he had to capitalize on Allen's outstanding characteristic, curiosity. Allen, though he was normal, had a wild talent, and Lindner got him to help him to explore the extent and nature of this wild talent.

A great deal of the article is an explanation, based on Freudian principles, as to the cause of Kirk's madness. To enter into the psychosis with the patient and pry him loose from the inside is a well-known technique in psychoanalysis. It had a certain danger, however, as we shall see.

Allen had a fine mind and Lindner knew that in his fantasy there would be certain errors in logic as one will usually find in any fantasy. The first thing he found were mistakes in distances on a star map. He pointed this out to Kirk who was horrified. Lindner remarked that the matter was not very serious, but Allen went to work at once to correct the star maps. It was very serious, Allen contended because star pilots used those maps. No wonder he had lost so many ships! Then Lindner suggested a solution to the problem which seemed to clear the whole thing up. Then Kirk realized that Lindner was with him in the fantasy and for the first time he began to question it.

Lindner worked hard on the records, finding all the errors he could find for Allen to recheck at the "institute" and as Lindner's interest waxed, Allen's interest waned. The psychologist, like the camel, squeezed the physicist out of his own tent. The thing worked so well, that Allen was cured three weeks before he let the doctor know it, because Lindner was so obsessed with the fantasy. And Lindner admits he was almost "gone" in the world created by Kirk Allen.

It's a shame that we don't know Kirk Allen's real name. Then we would know the name of the hero of the books that started him on his future journey. And we would know the name of the author who cooked up such super reader-identification. In the last of the article, Lindner admits that

LEERINGS

From the Editor

Well, unless you are one of those who turn to the back first before reading the rest, you have just about finished this issue of LEER. I certainly hope that you like it and would be very pleased to hear from any of you regarding this issue of LEER.

I believe a word of introduction and a few remarks about the future course of LEER would be in order at this time. LEER is not a new fanzine for me. It was first issued several years ago as a fanzine for the members of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association when I was a member, I believe in 1950 or 1951. When I dropped out of FAPA due to lack of time to engage in any of its activities, I also dropped LEER. It was devoted, in those days, to reprinting material from my subzine, PEON, and since it went over pretty good with the members of FAPA, I have reinstated that policy. In this issue of LEER and also in future issues, you will find that primarily all of the material has previously appeared in PEON. Since most of you do not receive PEON, I believe you will like this way of bringing what I think were some of the better articles and stories from PEON. (Naturally, all of the stuff appearing in PEON is of top-drawer quality, but this is the cream of the crop, so to speak!). About the only original material appearing in LEER will be this column which I hope to turn into a personal page, plus a few remarks about the previous OMPA mailings.

Personally, I have been engaged in active fan publishing with PEON since 1948, and probably will be as long as the wife can stand it. I am a Chief Petty Officer in the U.S. Navy, holding the particular rating of Chief Personnel Man. We have three sons and a brand new daughter. Ira is eight years old, Robert is six, and David is four. Alice, the new addition, will be a year old by the time you read this, and with three older brothers, is rapidly becoming the most

spoiled child in the block! Ira and Robert are fast becoming science fiction fans, and I hope someday to turn over PEON to them.

As is the case with every man in service, I am subject to a transfer once in a while. I have just finished the length of time that is allowed for my particular rating to be on shore, and as soon as the Navy makes up its mind, I will be probably transferred out from this area. I have no idea of where I will be transferred, but am hoping it will be someplace overseas rather than on a ship. I have a pretty goodly idea of getting duty over in Northern Ireland or the British Isles, so if you start hearing from me in the future with a British postmark on the envelope, you will know that I made it. Until that time, however, please address all mail of any description to me at my official address which you will find elsewhere in this issue of LEER, rather than to the home address in Norwich, Connecticut, that those of you who have been writing to me before know of.

Incidentally, now that I am a member of OMPA (and believe me I was very glad to become one), I will be getting those OMPAazines that some of you have been sending to me in exchange for PEON. Don't worry about it though, I'm willing to keep on with the exchange deal. Should any of you wish to subscribe to PEON (after reading the type of material in LEER that appears in PEON, how can you resist?), you can do so by sending 1/-6d to Ken Slater for a single issue, or 6/- for six issues.

I've had a lot of fun with this issue of LEER, experimenting with a different type of layout than I use in PEON. I've more or less settled down on the format of PEON and can almost set up the entire magazine without thinking about it. But in this and future issues of LEER, I'm going to try out several different types. You'll probably never know what to expect from issue to issue.

For example, in this issue, I've used the services of the Stenafax machine to cut the stencil for the cover, and the various headings you've probably noticed. The cover was originally drawn for an issue of PEON by Galaxy's cover artist, Ed EMSHwiller, and seemed to fit in very well with this issue. The Stenafax machine is a wonderful device, I've come across recently. Except for the price (around

\$3000-4000), it should be in the possession of every fan editor. No, I don't have one, but a print shop where I am acquainted, does, and they do a stencil for me now and then. You set up your sheet the exact way you want it (the machine does not enlarge or reduce, but reproduces the exact way the copy is), and place the special stencil on one drum, while the copy is on the other drum. As an electric photo-eye passes over the revolving drum with the copy, it electronically cuts the stencil on the other drum. You can then place the stencil on the mimeograph machine and start turning out copies. It's wonderful for reproducing solid shades as you can see.

I've also tried to reproduce (via Stenafax) two snapshots of the family and at this present time don't know how they are going to mimeograph. If they come out half-way decent, they will be on the page following this one. If not, you won't be able to see how my family looks these days, at least until I am able to get some offset work done.

I would like to very much comment on some of the fine 'zines I have been receiving from some of you older members, but I believe it would be much better if I waited until I got the first official mailing. Until such time as I am transferred, I will attempt to be represented in each mailing, rather by postmailing, as this issue is. I wanted to get this issout out to you in a hurry, so have postmailed it.

Well, that's just about all for this issue of LEER, except possibly for the two mimeographed photographs I talked about before. I am very pleased to be a member of the OMPA and hope sincerely that our association will be a long and happy one. Have fun, and until we meet once again, happy reading!

Sincere / *lee*

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