Dear Billy, BJP, Bill...

Letters from Lloyd Biggle, Jr.
1959-1982
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Illos:
Paul Frame: Front cover, March 1960 issue of Fantastic SF Stories (Ziff-Davis),
Promoting “The Botticelli Horror”
Bill Plott: 1, at 1960 Pittcon.
Lloyd Biggle: 18, newspaper clipping with college football anecdote; 28, photo from 1960 Pittcon.
Introduction

In 1959 the full-time writing career of former music professor Lloyd Biggle Jr. was going along swimmingly. Stories were appearing in *Galaxy, If, Fantastic* and other popular digest-size magazines. Then, he made a mistake. He had a story called “A Taste of Fire” published in *Amazing Stories*. The resulted in a teenager in Alabama writing a praising letter to the editor.

Biggle answered the letter with a simple thank you postcard. The lonely fan in Alabama could not be contained when he received mail from a real author in his favorite genre. And despite admonitions to the effect of “I cannot promise regular correspondence,” Biggle found himself unable to shake the kid.

Correspondence did follow, often intermittent but occasionally timely. From that first postcard in November 1959 until late 1965 we exchanged more than 30 letters. We did not become Best Friends Forever or even buddies, but a friendship did develop. We met at Pittcon in 1960 and again in 1981 when Biggle was invited to an Auburn University Science Fiction Club gathering 1981. One of the organizers was Jim Grimes, the son of Millard Grimes, a 1950s fan and later journalistic colleague. Lloyd apparently asked that notified of his appearance. We renewed our acquaintance at a post-reading reception.

Over time, I think our relationship moved from a successful author tolerating the overtures of a naïve, overly enthusiastic teenage fan to a couple of adults exchanging letters that touched on a wide range of subjects far beyond science fiction. I know Lloyd took a particular interest in my tenure as a liberal, pro-integration *Crimson White* editor at the University of Alabama during the civil rights era.

And like my correspondence with Al Andrews, shared in the *Remember Al Andrews* one-shot that Larry Montgomery and I produced recently, these letters somehow survived decades of moving and gafia. I think they are worth sharing. Topicality notwithstanding, I find them as fresh and lively today as I did when I first eagerly opened them. A couple of times I found myself momentarily formulating replies in my head! As with Al’s letters, I don’t have copies of my letters to him to provide a thread of continuity. Again, I have selected those which can be read and understood with little or no annotating.
Although his comments on writing and SF are of most interest here, it is amazing how some things are still topical after 50 years – the quality of television program and the cry for a college football playoff system.

And even though we don’t have my letters to see exactly what generated some of his comments, it is obvious that sports and the civil rights movement, which was at its peak during those years, were regular topics. Lloyd gently chastised me for some of my naïve, struggling–to-become-the-white-liberal views while nurturing my innate opposition to racism. Looking at his remarks now, I realize how naïve and uninformed I was in those years. Our conversations today would have been dramatically different on some issues.

Anyone wading through all of these missives will note several instances in which I was asked to keep certain things confidential. One of them was the story behind the writing of *The Botticelli Horror*. I assume that now, decades after they were penned and nearly 12 years since his death, Lloyd would have no problem with me sharing them. Besides, he made *The Botticelli Horror* story public himself in 1972 in a delightful introduction to the story in his collecting, *The Metallic Muse* (Doubleday, New York).

But the fact that he was willing to entrust a teenager with that anecdote suggests that he didn’t find my enthusiastic response to his original postcard too tiresome. As noted, from that brief exchange in late 1959 evolved a casual friendship.

Indeed, he was supportive of my first fanzine *Maelstrom* to the extent that he gave me the first piece of science fiction he ever wrote with full publication “rights.” It was a poem called “A Tall Man”, written at the age of nine:

A man once came to the earth,  
He came to the earth from Mars.  
He stood in the traffic,  
And looked so giraffic,  
That people got out of their cars.

He was not overly proud of that pre-pubescent creation but it was a big damn deal to me to have it for *Maelstrom*.

I will assume, also, that at this late date Lloyd would not object to my violating his 1960 request not to be quoted in my fanzine unless specifically authorized to do so with certain passages in advance.


Lloyd used a peculiar medium for his letters. He wrote on personalized postcards, using back and front. Some of the correspondence was just one post card but others involved multiple cards, running 500 to 700 total words frequently. That’s a fair amount of time and thought for a writer to take out of his days and I’m sure he was corresponding with other fans, not just me.

I think these letters are worth publishing simply because they offer a lot of insights into science fiction at the time, the craft of writing and even fans, fandom, and fanzines. I hope at least some of you will, agree and find them informative if not entertaining.
A Biographical Sketch

This sketch of Lloyd Biggle, Jr. has been pulled from a variety of internet sources, not the least of which were Wikipedia and the obituary published online by the Science Fiction Oral Historians Association.

Biggle was born in Waterloo, Iowa on April 17, 1923. He was a World War II veteran, serving communications sergeant with the 102 Infantry Division. He was wounded in action twice, the last time taking on shrapnel near the Elbe River in Germany. The wound to his leg was said to have left him disabled for life but I have no recollection of a limp or anything to make me aware of such a disability.

After the war he earned his bachelor’s degree from Wayne State University in Detroit, graduating with honors. Later he earned a master’s degree and a doctorate from the University of Michigan. He was a musicologist and taught music at both UM and at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, where he lived most of his life.

He started writing professionally in 1955. When his novel, All the Colors of Darkness was published in 1963, he stopped teaching and became a full-time writer. I once told Lloyd that I considered a lot of his writing to be social science fiction because his themes revolved more around, say, sociology and the arts rather than physics and chemistry. It was not a bad observation at the times. The SFOHA obituary credits him with introducing “aesthetics into a literature known for its scientific and technological complications.” Songwriter Jimmy Webb and SF novelist Orson Scott Card were said to have been influenced by his story “The Tunesmith.”

He was married for 55 years to Hedwig Janiszewski Biggle. They had two children, Donna Biggle Emerson and Kenneth Biggle. His death on Sept. 12, 2002 was said to have resulted from a 20-year battle with leukemia and cancer. Interestingly, he would have contracted that illness just about the last time we communicated in March 1982.

Over his career he published more than 20 books and was writing almost to the end. “I can write them faster than the magazines can publish them,” he is quoted as saying and I can recall that almost every letter from him referenced something he had written or was working on.

Indeed, an email from his son Kenneth reported: “We are still publishing his works, and have published 4 novels since his death, including an older Sci-fi work called World that Death Made. Two more may be done by the end of the year.”

He created several memorable series characters. They included Jan Darzek, Grandfather Rastin and Lady Sara Varnley. Darzek was a late 20th-century private eye who became involved in fighting off alien invaders of the earth; Rastin was the detective in a series of stories published in Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine; Varnley was the detective in a series of Victorian era stories published in Alfred Hitchcock’s Mystery Magazine. From the obituary I was surprised to learn that he did some Sherlock Holmes pastiches and historical fiction, endeavors that came after we lost regular contact.

He was a major player in two science fiction organizations. He was the first secretary-treasurer of the Science Fiction Writers Association and founder of the SFOHA, which
accumulated hundreds of cassette tapes on speeches, interviews with authors another documentation of the genre.

“Occasionally hear from an acquaintance or friend of his,” wrote Kenneth Biggle in his email. “[I] am still surprised as to how many people he corresponded with. I’m also amazed at the number of Heinlein, Asimov, Clarke and similar names he had letters from.”

Indeed. Biggle’s manuscripts, correspondence, etc, was donated to the University of Kansas. A cursory search showed that the collection has been indexed and is apparently available to researchers. In a quick online search of library databases I ran across two short letters Lloyd had received from internationally known musicologist and Mozart authority Alfred Einstein (possibly a cousin to the scientist Albert Einstein) while a music student at the University of Michigan. On March 26, 1950 the musicologist wrote, “we will be pleased by returning to Ann Arbor and working with you again. Go ahead with your work on Brumel…” And on Nov. 17, 1950: “glad you’re working on Brumel (Anotine Brumel), ca. 1480-ca.1520); if I personally had to choose between the Fragmenta Missarum and Cipriano de Rore, I’d take de Rore…”

I didn’t spend a lot of time in the index, but there appeared to be hundreds of items.

Further correspondence from Kenneth Biggle as I was winding up this project provided more information on posthumous publications. The following have been published:

- *The Grandfather Rastine mysteries* (Crippen and Landur publishers)
- *The World That Death Made*, the only SF book in that group (Borgo Press)
- *Ordeal by Terror* (Wildside Press)
- *Murder Applied For* (Borgo Press)
- *Byways to Evil*, Lady Sara novel, due out soon (Wildside Press)

“I might also add that last year (and it took most of that) I took his major Sci-fi novels and converted them to the e-book format, so most are in the book form now. I Know have an expertise in proprietary publication formats. The print on demand electronic copies were not relinquished and I had to have the manuscripts scanned. Note the numerous thanks to David Datta….

“My sister Donna Emerson and I are not, or will we ever be, authors of my father’s quality. This even applies to proofing. We are not up to his meticulous standards and probably a the type count in these books show it. Be Kind. At least the works will not be lost like those of some other past Sci-fi authors. Joan Hunter Holly comes to mind.”

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EDITORS NOTE PREFACE TO THE LETTERS: Lloyd’s letters to me were all written on a typewriter with the obvious limited font applications of the time. Sometimes Lloyd would put book titles in all caps; at other times they were underlined, in quotations or perhaps just caps/lower case. For the sake of consistency and readability I have converted all such titles to italics. I have also decided to correct all obvious typographical errors. If you wish to see the original typescript, it will eventually be available through archival resources.
12/9/59
Dear Billy - - -

I enjoyed having your letter. The Xmas rush is upon us, and I am approximately this far behind on everything.

I do not regard myself as primarily a writer of science fiction, though I had had well over two dozen stories published—in Galaxy, If, Fantastic Universe, Satellite, Super Science Fiction, Saturn, Imagination, etc., in addition to Fantastic and Amazing. A professional writer has, alas, to write toward the profitable and SF has deteriorated sadly in this respect in the last couple of years. There are fewer magazines, and they pay less. The significance of this situation will be brought home to you with impact if you aim at writing for pay. At any rate, I have been branching over into the mystery field, Alfred Hitchcock, a couple of recent stories to Ellery Queen that have not yet appeared, and so on. And I am sketching a mystery novel.

Sometime next year there is due to appear in Fantastic a novelette of mine with the dubious title, The Botticelli Horror. The circumstances of this creation may amuse you—they certainly did me. I received from the editor a Photostat of a rather grotesque cover illustration, with the request that I supply 15,000 words that would in some way ‘illustrate’ the cover. I understand—now—that this procedure is followed occasionally, if not frequently. At the time I had never heard of such a thing, and it startled me. You see the humorous angle, I’m sure—these letters to the editor complaining that the artist has not done a good job of illustrating a story, when it could easily have been that the writer did not do a good of illustrating the picture. Droll, isn’t it?

Anyway, I knocked out 15,000 mediocre words in a story I regard as strictly so-so, but they illustrated the cover rather well, and the piece was snapped up. Unfortunately life is like that. Better stories, mine among them, go unsold because they don’t happen illustrate anything.

You might try amusing yourself, when you see that cover, by studying the thing and seeing how you would have illustrated it. Before you read the story, that is. And let’s keep this background story of The Botticelli Horror confidential between us, even if it may be better than the published story. The editor might think I’m giving away trade secrets.
I cannot promise regular correspondence. As you no doubt understand, a writer may over the years receive letters from hundreds of readers, and he must at an early date decide whether he is to write stories or letters. I believe you will find, though, that most writers enjoy a sincere reaction to a story, favorable or otherwise. And most writers will make an honest attempt to reply to every letter they receive, even if they reply may be no more than a line or two on a post card.

Merry Christmas and all that sort of thing
(s) Lloyd Biggle

[I sent Lloyd a copy of Maelstrom #4, with an article by Harry Warner Jr. called “Don, But Not Forgotten.” Harry’s review of the NBC Opera Theatre production of Don Giovanni generated this response from Lloyd.]

7/15/60
Dear BJ:

Though I am an ex-musicologist, I had never thought of Don Giovanni as SF. Such classics stand apart from classification breakdowns – definitely so in the mind of the general populace – which may be unfortunate. A young lady telephoned me the other day. Her husband, she said, is a writer, and she wanted to know how he should go about selling his stories. (This is an easy question to answer: He should send them to editors who are in a position to buy them). She didn’t explain why he didn’t telephone himself – perhaps he is shy, like the rest of us writers. Anyway, in the course of the conversation she mentioned that her husband did not write science fiction. She didn’t think he would like it; at least, as far she knew, he had never read any. I mentioned a few classics of literature that are science fiction, and she retired in confusion. Now we have Don Giovanni, and it would perhaps be proper for me to retire in a similarly penitent state of mind. If it has not been done, it would certainly be a worthwhile project for someone to cull the classics and prepare a list of those items that are undeniably SF – just as a reminder for those who read them with the mistaken impression that they were literature. My congratulations to Mr. [Harry] Warner for a fine piece of work.

And the same to you for Maelstrom #4, which looks to be a real significant step forward. Now – for the next one, why don’t you go pro, and put all of your editorial comments into the editorial? ONWARD AND UPWARD!

Best wishes,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

7/21/60
Dear BJ:

I have made tentative plans to be in Pittsburg [sic], though it will probably be late August before my plans are definite. After reading your letter I am wondering if it would not be wise for me to remain at home and allow you to keep your mental picture unshattered. You are 100% correct that I smoke a pipe. Beyond that, I am short, fat, closer to 40 than 30, married (with 2 children), and need I continue?

Pronounce Ypsilanti Ipsilantee. I heard Damon’s lecture and had a brief but pleasant talk with him afterwards. And no, my ego was not fractured. Damon is a SF authority of long standing. He sold his first SF story back in 1940. Mine dates from about 1957. Further, few local people are aware that I am a writer. I think I mentioned, once, that few magazine readers pay attention to the names of the writers. I wasn’t being modest, I was simply stating a fact. And again further, I am not a professional lecturer (or any other kind). Damon gave a very good talk. The audience was not large, but it was made up of probably 98% non-readers of science fiction, and we can wistfully hope that he made a convert or two.

Best wishes,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

[I had asked permission to reprint a poem, “Homing Song,” from one of his short stories, comparing it to Robert A. Heinlein’s “The Green Hills of Earth.” The poem ran in Sporadic #1 without me ever bothering to contact the good folks at Ziff-Davis.]

9/19/60
Dear Bill - - -

Between us, this “Homing Song” is pretty corny poetry. It must be the short lines and the somewhat uncommon metrical & rhyme patterns that appeal to you. The original is enclosed, and if you check I’m certain you
will find all of it in the story, though it is scattered about and is not always quoted as poetry.

To use this, you should get permission from Ziff-Davis, publishers of Fantastic, since they have the story copyrights. On the other hand, they haven’t copyrighted the thing in its poetic arrangement, and anyway, I doubt that they’ll sue you. Why don’t you label it, “Reconstructed from quotations in the story…” taking all the credit for yourself, i.e., for the reconstructing, and of course, very carefully giving proper credit to the magazine, name date and publisher. Send Cele Goldsmith a copy. She might even thank you for the publicity.

And then if they do sue you, I’ll testify on your behalf.

I have a copy of [Mike] Deckinger’s HOCUS here, with something of yours in – which I haven’t read yet. A Taste of Fire is going to be published by Ace in paperback – sometime – and I am now rechecking the magazine version against my carbons, in the hope of getting some cuts restored and mayhap a few changes made. Editors being what they are – editors – one never knows.

You will find a number of my stories in Galaxy & If, ’57-58. There are a couple of long pieces in If, one of which was reprinted the Ditky anthology, The Best Science Fiction Stories, 9th Series, that Advent published. I have written only a couple of science fiction stories since ’58, and these things appearing now were all written in that year or earlier. Could it be that I’ve lost my sense of wonder?

Incidentally, writing poetry at 1-2 cents per word would be even less remunerative than writing science fiction. Poetry is usually bought at so much per line, and though I’ve never sold any, I can readily understand why poets therefore prefer to write short lines.

This collection business is a serious malady. A couple of the younger fans deserted the convention one afternoon to attend the baseball game. That struck me as rather funny, and when, later on, I was browsing through the display room and happened on the issue of If that has a SF story of mine about baseball (Aug. ’58—I think) I thoughtlessly bought it and made one of them a present of it. I had intended it as joke, but what happened? I was immediately asked to autograph it, and behold—another collector was born. If I were a catholic, I suppose I’d have to go to confession over that. Or, in the langue of the old priest in Kim, an evil deed cast at large into the world as infinite ripples. Or something. I do not approve of collecting. (My excuse is that I am a professional writer, and therefore have to read these books.)

I have a formal request to make: Please do not quote my correspondence in your fanzine unless I specifically authorize the same – quote—you may quote this – unquote. I hear several discussions on this point at Pittcon, and evidently no two people – pros or amateurs – think alike on the subject. I have given some deliberation to this, and also to the letter columns of fanzines and ultimately reached that decision. I would like to see a lettercol with organization. For example, instead of running a letter with interspersed comments, why don’t you do through your correspondence, pick out all the commentary on one certain subject (say, an article in your last issue) and lump it all together. Then take another subject. This could make an interesting arrangement –if your correspondents have anything to say. It may be old stuff but I’ve never it done this way. You could also let everybody play without having the lettercol take over the entire issue. (And don tell me that doesn’t happen.)

Best wishes,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

9/29/60
Dear Bill - - -

Yes, it is probably best that you ask permission about the poem. Incidentally, etiquette demands, when you write an editor for information, that you enclose a stamp, addressed envelope.

I doubt that “Homing Song” is remotely in a class with Heinlein’s piece, but thanks just the same. It would be most properly called a circular poem, since it has neither beginning nor end. The arrangement of verses that I gave you is probably the most logical, but it could be done another way.

The problem the pro has with regards to fanzines and faned is one that even now you are no more than vaguely aware of. I think I have finally resolved my attitude into a definite principle of action. I try to answer any correspondence I receive, even if it is no more than a line or two on postcard. Where fanzines are concerned, I find that I am just unable to undertake for each the kind of comprehensive analysis that some of the fan correspondents do. What I shall do is write some kind of commentary on an individual article or story or what have you – but only when I feel particularly moved to comment. For example: I sent Mike Deckinger a reply to your interpretation of Mother Goose — taking issue with your interpretation of the same – because I found the subject amusing. So – if I do not comment on a particular issue of your fanzine, it will not mean I have not read it, but because nothing in it stirred me as far as the typewriter.
No I’ll see how this works out.
And don’t feel that you have to take my suggestions RE your magazine. I merely offer them for free, as something I might try if I had a fanzine. Incidentally, Dr. Hicks was suggesting that he and I might try putting out some kind of publication. Only thing was he had an idea about making money with it. Which demonstrates his ignorance of Fossen Kemper’s First Axiom: You can’t make no money with a fanzine.
(You can’t hardly do it with a prozine, but that’s another problem.)

Best wishes,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

11/1/60
Dear Bill - - -

Ouch. It’s November.
You may quote me:
1) Fossen Kemper’s First Axiom: You can’t make no money with a fanzine. (You can’t hardly do it with a prozine, but that’s another problem.)
2) Fossen Kemper’s Second Axiom: You can’t make no money writing for a fanzine. (You can’t hardly do it writing for a prozine, either, but that’s exactly the same problem.)
3) Fossen Kemper’s Third Axiom: The main trouble with science fiction is that the people interested in it aren’t rich.

End of quote.
I don’t suppose it would be ethical to inquire why you want to.

Since I last wrote to you I have actually written a SF story. A friend of mine recently purchased a violin made by an obscure English violin maker (17th century), and after some meditation I made the violin a character in a story. And incidentally, you are perfectly free to make whatever use you please of anything I say about your fanzine or its contents. This is the Divine Right of Editors. This has nothing to do with the rights of readers which are Civil Rights except when they become unruly, in which case they are uncivil rites.

Best wishes,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

Le 4 fevrier 1961
Cer ami Plott - - -

[With total youthful arrogance I signed off on my previous letter to him with au revoir.
Lloyd knew it was a kid’s pretentious affectation and responded with a dose of humorous reality. Basically, all in French, he wrote, “I didn’t realize you were such a linguist. Oh yes, I enjoyed the latest issue of Maelstrom.” What a funny comeuppance without being demeaning to a kid.]

2/15/61
Dear Bill - - -

Thought I’d reply before you waste 35 [cents]. The book version of A Taste of Fire, The Angry Espers, was taken directly from the original manuscript, meaning that several cuts, one, I think, of some length, were restored. In addition, I rewrote the last chapter (or part, since the divisions are hardly of chapter length.) None of this changes the story, and you very likely could read through the book version without noticing that anything is different. The divisions of the book are my original ones; in the magazine version ye eds adopted a procedure of consecutive numbering throughout, which violated the basic organization o the thing: Three main parts, each part subdivided. I believe that my original organization helps the reader to understand what’s going on. But enough of that. Yes, Ace donated some free copies – but only, I gather, because I made an issue of it. Distribution is very erratic in these parts ( I still haven’t seen the thing on sale) and I wasn’t going to put myself in position of having to forage for file copies.

To pick up a couple of points from your last letter, that I didn’t answer because I got tired of writing French: Analog and Galaxy pay, not just better, but three times as well as Ziff-Davis. In addition, Analog has a bonus system based on reader response, and that bonus can amount to as much as the story would have brought from, say, Fantastic. Such differences are not easily ignored. Of course, I have no quarrel of any kind with ZD – I
rather admire the editorial astuteness that keeps the two magazines flourishing, and long may they do so. But when I sit down to turn out SF, it isn’t likely to be with ZD as a primary objective. No, no more pictures. I would accept another assignment like that one unless the thing had an immediate, striking appeal to me.

So much for economics. Except, perchance, to remark that Ellery Queen pays better rates than any SF magazine, and so on.

I think probably my best stuff appeared in Galaxy and If back in ’57-58, with the exception of a couple of long novelettes that John Campbell has taken for Analog. they haven’t appeared yet, but should be along some time this year. The Well is only very so-so, and television needs more than a stab, it needs a kick in the teeth. I can look through an entire week of TV listings without finding anything I want to exert myself to see – and in this area we can get six or seven different channels.

Do they teach you to aim at original research in your papers? That is, in the normal type of research paper that young people write, they read a lot of writing by others who have research the topic, and compile a paper. In original research, you would with considerable effort and ingenuity search out original sources and base your paper on them and only on them. For example, with Fire of London, you would not look up a few histories of said fire, but you would dig up comments by contemporaries who were eye-witnesses, and you would use documents of the time. I recall an extensive treatment of the fire in the diary of Samuel Pepys – his moving his family & money out of town his own role in the affairs. This would be an excellent example of primary research material. Here is the rule for scholars: In doing research, you read secondary sources for only three reasons: 1) general background; 2) for the bibliography—assistance in finding primary resources; and 3) to find errors you can pridefully point out when you write your (flawless, of course) paper on the same subject.

Best wishes,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

3/18/61
Dear BJP - - -

If your parents knew that you were signing letters “Plott the Pensive,” they would probably amend the signature to read “Plott the Expensive.” I have read this touching final paragraph eight times, done eleven hours of research in Freud, Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, Spengler’s The Decline of the West, Schopenhauer’s The World as Will and Idea, and the Family Home Medical Adviser, and meditated on the problem for nearly a month, and finally I have arrived at a diagnosis. Spring fever strikes early down there in O. Ala., doesn’t it?

Best,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

4/26/61
Dear Bill - - -

You’re forgetting that I’m a writer. I can imagine problems you wouldn’t dream of having. And when I took that stiff paper out of the envelope I thought you were sending me either a summons, or your last will & testament [sic] to witness. One more novelette coming up in Analog. And if you like the things, don’t tell me – tell J.W.C. This is one instance when letters to the editor help the writer, because JC pays a bonus on the eth two stories the readers like best. See his “Analytical Laboratory” – or does he call it something else? I can’t remember, now. The other novelette is, I think, better.

Your commentary on Of Mice and Men is timely. I have just captured a field mouse, which the kids choose to consider a pet. I can’t see it that way, since it has built a home for itself in the cage, and it hides all the time. Anyway, this is a somewhat different species from the common house mouse. Very cute, stands on its hind legs kangaroo style, has prominent front teeth which it is using to reduce its cage to sawdust (I put screen all the way around the cage, but it hasn’t figured that out yet) and which just incidentally gnawed a gash in my thumb when I caught it. What we parents suffer for our children! (Ask you own parents some day)

Best wishes,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

[I enrolled at the University of Alabama in the fall of 1961 and quickly became involved in the Crimson White, the student newspaper. The CW was already moving into a pro-civil rights posture which continued throughout my years at Alabama. At the same time, Bear Bryant was]
9/12/61

Dear BJP

So you’re going collegiate. Well, bon voyage, and all that sort. I suppose, on the basis of my own some eight years of college, plus college teaching, I should deliver myself of some profound advice. Okay – I will. A few basic principles:

1) The measure of your success in any college course is, to a substantial degree, the measure of your ability to take examinations.

2) The measure of our ability to take examination is not necessarily a measure of your knowledge of the subject mate of the course. There may, in fact, be only a tenuous relationship between the two.

3) As a development of the above: many students do poorly in college, not because they fail to learn, but because they fail to master the technique of taking examinations. This is a skill quite apart from the subject matter of any course.

4) The best way to prepare for an examination is to study in terms of the examination. For objective exams, ask yourself for spot facts along the line of objective answers. This is the way most students study.

5) As a result, most students fall on their faces if confronted with an essay exam. An essay exam requires not only a basic command of facts, but also a statement of opinion about them. To study for an essay exam, ask yourself broad questions, and formulate detailed answers of the kind that would take a couple of pages to write out. If you ask yourself a number of questions of this kind, by way of preparation, covering the general subject of the examination, you will find that you have prepared the answers to the questions in the exam, even if you have not asked yourself those specific questions. You simply adapt the material you have already worked up.

You’re welcome. I think I was a senior in college before all this dawned on me. I had done very well up to that point, but once I started applying that principle to essay exams, my exams became so superior that the teachers were awed. One of them, in fact, was suspicious. The exam read, he said, just as if I’d known the questions and prepared for them in advance. Perfectly true, except that I didn’t know the questions in advance.

Of course to apply this must have a pretty good idea as to what sort of exam you will encounter. Most teachers will tell you, and if they won’t you soon learn what sort of thing a teacher will spring on you.

There is a famous story about college exams. There was a professor – let’s say teaching a course in the History of the Renaissance. Every semester he gave an essay exam as the final exam, and every semester the exam had one question – the same question: Name the French kings of the House of Bourbon, and tell something about each.

This went on for years, and of course every student in the course knew about that exam and was ready. The final examination papers got positively brilliant.

Then one year the inevitable happened: the professor changed the question. He asked instead, for a discussion of the achievements of the Italian Medici family.

One student struggled for a time to bring forth something – anything – about the Medici family, and finally he wrote: “I do not know anything about the Medici family, but the Kings of the House of Bourbon were…”

One semester I was teaching a course in 18th century music, and I sought to help out my students by positing a list of essay questions – eight or ten. I told them that the final examination questions would be taken from that list. Then, on the sound assumption that one of the most severe problems a student has in writing an essay exam is in organizing his material, I prepared a detailed outline of each question I decided to use. All the student had to do was follow the outline and discuss each point in turn. This resulted in an essay exam which also called forth factual knowledge normally developed by an objective exam.

The students in our department had a cheerful little habit of giving nicknames to faculty members, the nicknames taken from the various characters of the Wagner operas of the Ring series. There are a lot characters in those operas, and it gave the students ample scope to suitably characterize each faculty member.

After that particular exam, I became Fafner the dragon.

Best wishes,

(s) Lloyd Biggle

10/23/61

Dear BJP

If this reaches you without forwarding, you have survived a month of college. Congratulations.
Now shall we try for two?

Now about those registrations lines. This is your first semester. Assuming that no obstacle pops up along the way that you can’t hurdle, and assuming that you are not enough of a glutton for punishment to undertake graduate work, you’ll only have to run that gamut seven more times. About the fourth time you will begin to see numerous instances where the procedure could easily be improved or streamlined. Please do not bother to point such instances out to the authorities, and by no means lose sleep drawing up new procedures for the university. The registration procedure will never, in your lifetime, change, except for the worse.

The University of Michigan had, when I was there, a terrifying set of forms to be filled out at each registration. This was a sheet of cardboard about the size of a desk blotter, perforated so that various filing cards could be attached and sent to various offices. Since one’s vital statistics change but rarely, the student found himself filling out, semester after semester, the same cards, with the same questions, destined for the same offices: alumni affairs, health center, office of religious affairs, etc., etc. Each semester every one of the twenty plus thousand students asked himself if it were not logically possibly for the particular office concerned to merely keep on file the cards he has so laboriously filled out the preceding semester. Not a chance – in that case someone at that office would have had to go through the files and pull the cards of those students not returning, and the work into the files cards of new students. By having all students fill out new cards, all the old ones could be thrown out. This, bay some process of reasoning I never fully understood, was considered less expensive and less time consuming. The set of forms to be filled out was referred to, not affectionately, as the “railroad ticket.” I have heard a rumor in recent years that the university has at least devised a system that eliminates this, but I have not had the courage to investigate.

Is it true what the papers say, that is, that Alabama also, in addition to having BJP, has football team? First thing you know that place will be a tourist attraction.

Best wishes,

(s) Lloyd Biggle

12/1/61
Dear Bill - - - -

Eh bien, so good old Ala. is the number 1 football team. Cheers, man cheers!

And pay no attention to the snickers that arise throughout the middle west.

These ratings lack infallibility, of course, but Ala has to be pretty good to get that high. So do the other 9 teams. Too bad we can’t have a round-robin playoff, now!

I would like to see the southern teams play in these parts occasionally: ‘tis indeed unfortunate that varied circumstances make this totally impossible. As one who has been a football fan for more years than you remember (though I may not look that old, or at least I hope I don’t) I can only say it’s too bad Ala. doesn’t schedule a few powerhouse along the way, and thus make its status unassailable.

In these parts there’s the Big 10, or Midwest Conference, and this conference will have from 4-7 teams that at some time during the season are rated in the top 10. This year: Ohio State, Michigan, Michigan State, Purdue, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin. Not many of them stay there, of course — during the season they knock each other off — and out of the rankings. A team that ran run through that schedule undefeated is not only a very good one, it has to be lucky. There are a couple of soft touches, usually (but even they spring upsets!) and beyond that, anyone can beat anyone, and usually does.

This results in some peculiar comparative scores. Example: Minnesota edged out Iowa by a touchdown; Iowa positively clobbered Wisconsin; Wisconsin beat Minnesota. Or figure this one: Michigan beat Purdue; Purdue edged out Michigan State; Michigan State annihilated Michigan. You get the full impact of the quality of these teams when they go outside the conference. Notre Dame has a sound team this year, and for a time was rated in the top ten. Iowa was strictly a tough-luck team It lost an All-American half-back and a potential All-American quarterback to injuries in the first game of the season. It won its next three games without them,

and then the roof fell in – it lost four in a row, and every break it got was a bad one. From 1st in the ratings it dropped down among the unmentioned and better left forgotten. But note: the four games it lost were all conference games – to Ohio State, Michigan, Purdue and Minnesota. Then, in its last game, it played Notre Dame. I heard that game on the radio. The way it took ND apart, it might have been playing Vassar. The Iowa coach --not ND -- held the score to six touchdowns by emptying his bench and letting the reserves play more than half the game. But you get the point. A Big 10 team has a normal schedule that includes 3-6 conference teams that will make the top 10 at
some time during the season, it will usually schedule one or two of the top west-coast teams, it will often play Notre
Dame, and it will, if it has room, work in a top team from the east.

There aren’t any breathers in a schedule like that. Ohio State declined a Rose Bowl bid; reason, among
others it has already played the team that will represent the west coast and beaten it.

Too bad we can’t arrange a system whereby each team leaves a couple of open dates, and these dates are
scheduled by an impartial selection board. The top ten could then be paired off to play each other, and that, fiend,
would give us some weekends of football! It even happens within the conference – Big 10 again – that a team will
miss playing its most potent rivals. Ohio State did not play Minnesota or Michigan State this year; if it had, I think
chances would have been 50-50 that it would have lost to one of them. Michigan did play Georgia, once (I think); it
played Duke this year. But such contacts are unfortunately infrequent. So much for football. If Ala. doesn’t beat
Auburn, Cuba won’t be far enough way for you. Better defect to Tibet.

I have received the Who’s Who in Science Fiction Fandom from Lloyd Broyles, whom I had not previously
heard of. Very handy book. You mention Dave Hulan; I can look him up and see what manner of bem he is.

Bu all means further your cultural educational – strain yourself at it. You think you’re busy, now, but in
later years it will occur to you that you had more time to do such things at college than you’ll have again in this
timeframe, anytime short of retirement.

Geology is something I bypassed, somehow. The kids were interest in rock collecting, a year or so ago, so I
bought a beautifully illustrated book about rocks. Everything looked nice and cozy, but whenever we went out and
kicked up a rock for study, it never appeared anything like any of the pictures in the book. So as a family we
dropped rock collecting. I have the same trouble identifying leaves. The ones I pick up in the woods never look like
the pictures in the book. And then there’s the insect problem. Insects some in stages, with various impressive Latin
names. Books about insects never illustrate more than one of the stages – usually the one you are least likely to
come in contact with. The kids baring in handfuls of caterpillars, and say, “What’s this, Daddy?” So we get out the
books. There are lovely colored pictures of all the moths the caterpillars will dome day become (nocturnal moths,
naturally, so that the kids never catch any of them) but nothing as to what sort of caterpillar becomes what sort of
moth. If you think it’s tough trying to please college professors, wait until you have some children to impose a strain
on your sagacity.

Best
(s) Lloyd Biggle

12/17/61

Dear Bill - - - -

You are indeed fluent and in good voice these days. I am considering dropping a line to the University’s
English Dept. suggesting that they work in a few 20,000 word research paper requirements, and divert there
freshmen’s energy into more desirable channels.

Le me have the last word on football: any major college team that goes undefeated has got to be good – and Alabama was the only major team without a loss, wasn’t it? (Excuse me – loss or tie. OSU also was undefeated. But 2 or 3 tough teams do not a tough schedule make. It is possible to point for the big game when there are
breathers along the way. Oklahoma ran up some impressive winning streaks, and the only tough opponent the school
had was an annual game with Notre Dame. ND was down those years, but still gave Oklahoma some tough games;
but once Oklahoma got passed [sic] ND they were practically in free. Then ND and some of the schools in the Big Six
got tough, and you haven’t heard much of Oklahoma for a long time.

It is necessarily a school’s fault if most of its schedule is of the soft touch type – in the Big 10 anyway,
schedules are made up as much as five years in advance, and a lot can happen in five years. A giant can turn into a
midget, and vice versa. The breather scheduled five years ahead of time can be the number 1 team by the time the
game is played. The same thing even happens in Pro football, where schedule aren’t made so long in advance. The
Detroit Lions had a beef for years – they played a couple of teams from the other division of the league, and one of
them was always the Cleveland Browns – who almost always were the best in that division. The Lion’s competitors
in its own division were getting soft touches. Also, the Lions always opened the season with Baltimore, and
Baltimore was really tough, winning the title three times running and always in contention. It took the Lions half the
season to recover after that game. Two valid complaints – so…Schedule changes. Instead of powerful Cleveland, the
Lions drew perennial also-ran second division Philadelphia Eagles – and the Eagles picked that year to have their
best team in history. The lions got beat, and the Eagles won the title. Also, instead of Baltimore the Lions drew Green Bay as their opening game – and got clobbered. Green Bay went on to win the division championship. So…As one sports writer put it, these national polls really don’t mean a thing, but they’re excellent for starting a lot of arguments.

I don’t think a system of playoffs would work in football – not in addition to the regular schedule, anyway, because football teams have difficulties in playing more than one game a week. But I like the idea of a couple of universal open dates, so the leaders could schedule each other.

I suggest you get a complete recording of Romberg’s The Student Prince. You will no doubt appreciate the touches about student life. (A student’s is a happy lot, his troubles never mean a lot… and poor old father pays the bills.) Plus as fine a collection of beautiful melodies as you will find in light opera anywhere.

Just got a novelette back from John Campbell. He likes the idea, he says, likes the treatment, wholly agrees with the philosophy, and would very much like to see it in print – but thinks it isn’t science fiction. (It’s a view of the educational system in the year c. 2050. Now, then, if this isn’t science fiction…!!)

A writer’s is not a happy lot, and his troubles always mean considerable.

Concerning the various racial fiascos: See that one of the governors (S. Carolina, I think) has commissioned a college professor to do a research project to prove that Negro intellect is inferior to white intellect. The problem is probably phrased in this way on the assumption that it would be easier to prove than that white intellect is superior to Negro intellect – especially with specimens like this particular governor around for handy comparisons.

Here is light on this particular problem that probably is not circulated extensively in those parts: A many years ago (as the say in HMS Pinafore) a young negro came up these parts from Alabama. He went to college, putting himself through (this was not even easy then) and in time he emerged as a dentist. He settled in Ypsilanti. Years went by, and he became established as the best dentist in town. A substantial percentage of his patients was white. He became a leading citizen, and served for many years on the board of education. He could not have achieved this without substantial support from white voters. This was Dr. Perry, dentist, and a local elementary school is now named after him. His son, Lowell Perry, was an all-American end at the University of Michigan.

I do not think that Alabama or any other state can well afford to lose men like this. (As an afterthought – even with the number 1 teams, I rather imagine that U. of Alabama could have found occasional use for an all-American end.)

A little patient research could magnify this story thousands of times. The cost to the south is beyond calculation – as is the gain to the north. I might say that if you have any more potential Dr. Perrys down there, send them along – but my invitation is not necessary. They come, and in the balance of the thing we up here probably owe your White Citizens Councils a perpetual vote of thanks.

So much for everything. Assuming that you’re still welcome enough at home to spend Xmas vacation there, I’ll mail this to – what was the name of that town?

And all best holiday wishes,

(s)Lloyd Biggle

1/31/62
Dear Bill - - -

Enjoyed Maelstrom No. 7 (You are absolutely correct in that there has been commendable progress made since the early issues. I notice another interesting fact: the more time that elapses between issues, the better the issues are. Why don’t you cut it out altogether and win yourself a Hugo?)

I sampled all the bowl games via TV. I enjoyed one of them, though I now I can’t recall which one it was. The Rose Bowl game was dull. Alabama was impressive on defense, disappointing on offence. None of which proves anything because they were playing a team that was also impressive on defense and disappointing on offense. The surprise of the bowl season, to me, was what Detroit did to Philadelphia in the runner-up pro play-off game. Philadelphia had already beaten Detroit twice this year, but the turn-about was just about as decisive as the Green Bay-New York game. Detroit didn’t lose a road game all season (had one tie, against San Francisco) and lost out of ht title by losing five games at home.

And now it’s another year. We’re deep into the hockey season here. Hockey is one of the sports to watch on TV, though I suppose you don’t get any there.
I was telling Dean McLaughlin about my adventure with John Campbell, when Campbell told me my story was not science fiction. He said immediately, without even pausing to reflect, “Ask him if Black Man’s Burden is science fiction.” Dean doesn’t care much for JWC – That is, I reach this conclusion from some things I’ve heard him say, and don’t quote me. JWC seems to be one of those people whom almost no one is neutral about – but I’m neutral on his side. His Achievements certainly cannot – should not – be minimized, and I find myself regarding his wild forays with affectionate amusement.

A basic rule for the beginning writer is – finished everything you start. Only a pro of considerably higher stature than myself can get paid for an unfinished story.

I extend my sincere congratulations to you on your expression of sentiments RE segregation. It would not have surprised me had you taken an opposite position – naturally one tends to expect the opposite from a southerner. And I would not have condemned you if you had (the sentiments, certainly, but not you.) It is surprising how many young people in the south are able to think rationally on the subject in spite of a lifetime of what might be conservatively called brainwashing to the contrary. Likewise, no rational person could claim that we are without prejudice on the subject in the north. I don’t claim to be without prejudice myself, though I make a continuous effort to control. Prejudice is just about universal, in differing degrees; but segregation is prejudice overwhelmingly supported by law. If I were a writer, I’d write a book about it.

It’s much too early to worry about Chicon. And how are things in Opelika (from the song of the same title)? What that town probably needs is a science fiction con.

Best wishes,
(S)

4/6/62
Dear Bill - - -

I don’t approve of infants calling adults by first names (and cheers to your parents for making an issue of it – I know some who are so mentally warped as to encourage it) but college students, despite what your Dean of Men may think, are not infants. Call me anything you like. If I don’t like it, I’ll call you something worse.

Your poem on the last page of Sporadic reminds me of a technique in musical composition in the use in 16th century Italy. It has been referred to as “eye music” – you could not get the significance of it by listening, but only when you saw the actual musical notation. For example: a composer setting a poem which contained a reference to “seven jewels” set those words with several whole notes. And a phrase from the Song of Solomon, “I am black but beautiful”, was set entirely with black notes. (This would not impress today, but at that time music used mainly “white” notation; so a passage all in black notes stood out.) So your effort might be called “eye poetry.” Your elevated ups and downs, and your circular arounds, have no ear significance. One must see – to see – and the effect is entirely one for the eye. A valid point for discussion is whether such eye-technique actually contributes anything to the poem. I make the point only to bring it you’re your attention, not to argue it.

Best wishes,
(S) Lloyd Biggle

4/25/62
Dear Bill - - -

Well, I just finished up past-due correspondence, so I’ll answer this now rather than start anew pile. I recently obtained, via a sale of publisher’s remainders, The Quest for Utopia, ed. Glenn Negley and J. Max Patrick (New York: Henry Schuman, 1952). This is an anthology of writings on utopias, from ancient times to the present. The selections used may or may not be of use to you, but I think you would find the thing invaluable for bibliographical purposes (The list of Utopian works 1850-1950, for example, is four pages long, and this is called a “selected” list.) If you can’t get ahold of a copy let me know and I’ll loan this one.

I did not have any particular fanzine in mind with that article (I’ve never seen Cinder). It was merely an expression of uncontrollable amusement I have felt over the way fanzines change names. Examples are too numerous to mention.

One of my fellow students at Wayne University (too many years ago) wrote poetry in two columns which were, he said, to be read simultaneously. I was never able to do it (I doubt if he could either.)

Now this Hugo business is downright generous of both of you and Dave. I don’t see any way at the moment to return the compliment to you, but I’m going to write my congressman about Dave. “Hulan for captain!”

Best wishes,
8/15/62
Dear Bill - - -

Just back from vacation, with the usual rush and accumulation. Thanks for Malestrom 8, not yet entirely
digested. [sic] I may have further comment, though the way things have piled up I won’t guarantee it.
Still have that safari planned for Chicon? It is likely that I will be there, though I haven’t committed myself
as yet. Probably will send off the necessary reservations in the next few days. I just returned via Chicago, and the
prospect of driving back again is painful.

Thought the enclosed editorial from the Ann Arbor News might interest you. It is rare indeed that local
doing in a remote state receive editorial comment around here. It indicates, if anything, the extent to which the south
is in the national spotlight.:

Best wishes,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

8/24/62
Dear Bill - - -

Well, I have my hotel reservations, I’ve paid my banquet fee, and I guess I’m Chicago bound. I’ll drive
over late Thursday, spend Friday interviewing reluctant businessmen in connection with an article I’m doing which I
plan as a flaming expose of the mortgage industry, and if I get through Friday unmaimed I’ll stay through the
convention. (One executive wrote firmly but politely refusing to see me. I wrote back assuring him that his refusal
was just as valuable to me as interview, and asking permission to quote from it. There are times when writing is,
indeed, a delightful occupation.)

Sorry, but I can’t go along n the notion that such incidents as that of Albany, Georgia “set back” the cause
for racial equality. The history of what happens when locals make modest demands for themselves is too long and
too thoroughly documented. They are too susceptible to too many kinds of retaliation. Further, when have demands
modestly and personally presented by locals ever achieved anything? The bus strike that gave Martin Luther’
King’s career its

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impetus started in that way (and he was a local there!). The initial request, if I remember correctly, was simply that
colored people be permitted to fill the busses from the back as long as there were seats available. They objected to
standing in their segregated section when there were empty seats in the white section. The request was indignantly
rejected, and you know what followed. The last thing I have noted about Albany is that the city closed its libraries
rather than permit their use by negroes, and this action is not calculated to hurt the outsiders. It is calculated to keep
the locals from using the libraries, and it would take a very astute piece of analysis to convince me that the city
government has resorted to this only because of the outsiders. Ever read Richard Wright’s autobiography, Black
Boy? I recommend to you the chapter there dealing with his own attempt to educate himself by obtaining books from
a “public” library. These northern hacks are not infrequently better informed than you might suspect, and not a few
of them are former southerners. Also recommended: A book, South of Freedom, and other writing by a Minneapolis
newspaperman, Carl Rowan, former southern – and negro. And enclosed, a syndicated piece I clipped from today’s
Detroit News. Its author should be familiar to you.

So much for so much.

I haven’t had a recent tissue of Fadaway, so I don’t Know if you’re referring to the letter I wrote to
Jennings concerning his spelling my name “Briggle,” or one written after that appeared, concerning his spelling my
first name “Lloyf,” and commenting on various typographical errors in Fadaway. I have wondered how Jennings is
personally bearing up under these onslaughts. He’s probably afraid to write me again. Maybe he’s afraid to send me
any more issues of Fadaway.

I must regretfully inform you that your claim for 10% of eth anthology rights to Monument came too late.
The rights were purchased earlier this month for an Analog anthology scheduled for publication early next year; and
I’ve already spent the advance. Better luck next time.

Incidentally, one authority on mystery stories includes Rebecca on a list of all-time great mysteries. (Of
course, another includes Pride and Prejudice on a similar list, the theory being that Who will may who? can be just
as much a mystery as whodunit?)

A recent survey of Big 10 football prospects indicates that Purdue and Minnesota (or was it Michigan
State?) will fight it out for the honor of being the 4th best team in the conference. he first three teams will be the 1st,
2nd and 3rd teams of Ohio State. That’s what the man said, anyway. The Big 10 being what it is, with a long record of the favorite almost never winning the title, I wouldn’t bet on it.

I didn’t see the All-Star game, though I heard a little of it on radio. I was happy that the All Stars at least made a game of it. Too often they don’t.

I suppose there is a grave question as to whether Washington can make a game of it for Green Bay.

The educational yarn is still in the files, along with a couple more fascinating letters of rejection. If I can’t ultimately do something with the story, I can always make a fascinating piece out of the rejection letters. Matter of fact, I could do something like that with Monument, too. If it should win the Hugo – which one veteran observer of such doings assures me is highly unlikely – I’ll contribute the original carbon to the auction next year, along with a note on its history, and copies of a letter from my agent showing what magazine(s) rejected it, a rejection note from Horace Gold, which praises the writer and dames the story.

Such occurrences are legion in the writing business – some famous best-sellers having been rejected by practically everybody and sometimes more than once before someone took a gamble and got rich on them. These histories please writers mightily, but I haven’t noticed that they ever made an editor less damnably assured in his misjudgments.

Best,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

P.S. Then there were the two Chinamen talking.
“Where are you from?” the first asked.
“Opelika,”’ the second said.
The first replied, “I ‘ope ‘ou likea, too.”

9/5/62
Dear Bill - - -

I expect to give up my P. O. box at the end of the year, so I’m beginning to train all my correspondents to use my home address. Please do so from now on.

I suppose the avalanche of con reports starts any moment now. Theodore Sturgeon, in his speech, remarked that there were three conventions – one for the fans, one for the pros, and one – I forget. Anyway, it has always seemed to me that there are innumerable conventions, one for each person present. I did secure a collector’s prize at the convention. I was drafted onto one of the convention panels, and sat next to Sturgeon. At the conclusion I asked him for his autograph (I collected some for my daughter). We were talking, and he absent-mindedly wrote my name instead of his. He was quite confused and apologetic when he notice (I thought at first he was getting off a joke, but it turned out he wasn’t); so he wrote after it, “per Theodore Sturgeon’); and now I have the only Lloyd Biggle autograph in existence written by Theodore Sturgeon. Rather, my daughter has. Do you think that is enough of a start to make a fan out of her?

Recommended reading: Kenneth Roberts’ I Wanted to Write. Roberts started out as a newspaperman, and recommends that approach to a writing career (many people disagree, probably because so many newspapermen do not achieve writing careers, except as newspapermen. Naturally this doesn’t prove anything, but I suspect the truth of the matters is that anything can lead to a writing career, and sometimes does.)

Just to satisfy my curiosity (my mind takes leaps lie this) would you sometime look in the catalog of your university library and see what it has by Richard Wright and/or Carl Rowan. If there are only a few titles I’d like to know what they are. If there are many, that information will be sufficient. Frankly, I just was struck by an impudent question: Does a southern university censor the reading material made available to its students? Failure to provide important or pertinent books would be a form of censorship. This could easily be a wild idea, but I’ve had wilder ones pan out in staggering fashion. So –check those two authors for me, will you? (At the same time you might see if Martin Luther King’s recent book is available.) All of this shouldn’t take more than a couple of minutes, and it’ll you good practice in using the catalog.

Shirley Jackson’s husband, who is a university professor, gave a lecture here in Ypsilanti (at Eastern Mich. U.) last summer. Can’t think of the guy’s name. (It isn’t Jackson).

I actually wrote a science fiction story over the weekend; Rather, I finished one that I started a couple of years ago and then laid aside. Probably would have been better left
unfinished. Immediately after finishing a story I usually have the impression that I’ve wasted my time. The distressing thing is how frequently I’m right.

Best wishes,

(s) Lloyd Biggle

12/10/62
Dear Bill

I’ve happened upon a book you should read: *Neither Black Nor White*, Wilma Dykeman & James Stokely, Rinehart & Company, 1957. It’s gone through several printings, and is available in paperback. This is a survey of the current scene in the south – current to 1957. It misses the striking recent developments, from Little Rock on, but might be considered very good background material even for the that. The authors are southerners, incidentally, and most of the numerous quotations are from the south. The book doesn’t try to settle anything, or to pass judgment – aims rather at understanding. I feel that my own views on the problem are more mature for having read it. See if your library includes this item.

And RE the library: Bravo to your librarian. Beyond that, let’s not say anything. As the above-mentioned books shows a number of instances — if I were to write, and publish, a widely-circulated article congratulating your library for properly fulfilling his function by placing those books in the library, there is a distinct possibility that I would get the man fired. This situation comes up again and again – various aspects of integration doing fine until someone wrote a glowing account of the progress -- whereupon the reactionaries took over and destroyed what had been done.

I didn’t notice anything going up here over Alabama’s football defeat, except perhaps a few eyebrows. I mentioned before the natural attrition in the Big 10. In the course of the season perhaps half the Big 10 teams will be rated in the top 10, at one time or another – but they knock themselves out of it. Look at this one: Wisconsin demolished Iowa, 42-14. Ohio State edged Wisconsin, 14-7. This makes Ohio State some five touchdown better than Iowa – right? So we have: Iowa 28, Ohio State 14.

Here’s a tip: take a good look at the Rose Bowl this year. With the Number 1 and Number 2 teams it’s a natural, but there an additional angle. Since the Big 10 teams started to go to the bowl, they have lost 3 games to the Pacific Coast. 2 of those losses were by Wisconsin, on its previous 2 trips. The people in Dairy State brood over this. It rankles. Matter of fact, if the Wisconsin team doesn’t win, it might as well head west and defect to Red China.

RE *Maelstrom 9*, speaking of one-and-two- party systems, some vital research could be done on one-party systems in the north. I happened on some statistics recently that showed that a certain county in northern Michigan had voted Republican in every presidential election since the one in which it voted against A. Lincoln.

And this talk about Sex Drive in a SF fanzine – makes me wonder why no writer has used that drive to propel a space ship.

I can’t agree with the Dietrich quote. Difficulties encountered in the removal of clothing are likely to be mental, rather than physical. Let us say, then, that nakedness should be less embarrassing to the beautiful.

(typed) lb

3/30/63
Dear Bill

I put the novel in the mail this morning; and though I am in a mild state of shock from the ordeal I am courageously taking on the accumulated correspondence.

If you survive Carl Rowan you might look around for a book by a fellow-Alabaman(?) of yours, James Graham Cook’s *The Segregationists*, which I just picked up at the library. If Rowan makes you ashamed, this book by a white southern will make you ill.

I suggest you change the title *Sporadic* to *Nomadic*. And if you like a good source for quotations, pick up the Dover paper-back *The Wit and Humor of Oscar Wilde*. There you will find such gems as: I sometimes think that God in creating men, somewhat overestimated His ability***Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing***Give me the luxuries, and anyone can have the necessaries**Twenty years of marriage make her look like a public building**…in married life three is company and two is none**There’s nothing in the world like the devotion of a married woman. It’s a think no married man knows about***Religion is the fashionable substitute for Belief***A little sincerity is a dangerous thing, and a great deal of it is absolutely fatal***We (the English) have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language**Perhaps, after all, American
never had been discovered. I myself would say that it merely be detected*** I dislike arguments of any kind. They are always vulgar, and often convincing***Don’t be led astray into the paths of virtue***I have made an important discovery…that alcohol, taken in sufficient quantities, produces all the effects of intoxication***I can resist everything except temptation***Football is all very well as a game for rough girls, but it is hardly suitable for delicate boys**Work is the curse of the drinking class*** -- bull cull your own.

I have no plans for Discon. Doubt very much that I’ll be there. Still recovering from Chicago. How can you expect be visited by a fan when you never stay at home. Or, to put it another way, in which of those nine cities in five states would one visit Plott?

Best,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

9/16/63

Dear bjp - - -

Your last is dated 8/15 – a torrent of water has slipped under the bridge since then including the convention. I gather than you managed to stay afloat there.

I am ignoring your question concerning the Book of the Month Club and my novel. This is much politer treatment than it deserves, but I’m ignoring it.

If you will send me a bill-of-sale as proof of your purchase of this novel, I will immediately send a certificate that entitles you to purchase the next one at the usual rate.

Enjoyed watching the Bears flatten the Packers yesterday. Next to a perfectly-executed long pass play (or the rare long return of a kick) nothing is quite as exciting in football as a good rush on the passer. Especially when it isn’t your passer. The Packer loss has stated the drums beating around Detroit, but so far the Lions have not looked any better than passable also-rans. Next week: Detroit and Green Bay. Should prove something, if only that the Packers are also passable also-rans this year.

Ah well – things are building up towards a good hockey season.

And the late surge of the Cardinals (for whom I am fervently if impotently pulling) has salvaged a little from a baseball season that was about as uninteresting as any I can recall.

I read the family in your statement as to what a hilarious man Mr. Biggle is, and now they sit around watching me to see if I will do something funny. Watch those things!

What’s so remarkable about seven courses in one semester? I’ve handled more courses than that in one meal.

Best wishes,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

10/29/63

Dear Bill - --

I have received with pleasure, the two copies of CW. I was going to send you a copy of EMU (Eastern Michigan University)’s paper in retaliation, but at the moment I have mislaid it. (I would not be sending it for to you admire, but only on the assumption that you enjoy a joke as well as the next person). I enjoyed looking through CW. I even enjoyed the ads, particularly the slingshot dress. And I was
especially please to find that the paper is not edited out of Governor Wallace’s office.

The book reviews, too, by all means. Suggestion: Publish a four-column book review of All the Colors of Darkness. Send a couple of tear sheets to Clipping included with 10-29-1963 letter the Doubleday Publicity Department, with the information that you will be please to provide similarly glowing reviews of other publications if they will send you review copies. You might even get some free books that way.

What else? You’ll forgive my smile over the fact that you are taking a course in Southern Literature. I haven’t checked any catalogs lately, but I don’t think you’d find that course at a northern university, southern literature being variously treated as a part of American Literature. Matter of fact, I would think it might be more interesting to view it in terms of what is going on elsewhere.

Since your letter the World Series has been and gone (let’s leave it that way), football season is half done with (it’s dead around University of Michigan and Detroit) and Detroit’s professional basketball team has started out with its usual fine, one winning one of its first five games. Pro basketball is an odd institution, about which I couldn’t care less. I can remember basketball in high school, when games produced scores of 41-37, and the like, and it was an exciting game. The pros end games with scores of 131-130, with the winning point scored n the last two seconds, and I find myself wondering if I wouldn’t have gotten as much excitement as the game had to offer by just watching the last two seconds, instead of sitting there watching both teams automatically plop in baskets all evening.

Hockey is a good example of a game that has achieved tremendous popularity without a tremendous amount of scoring. A 2-1 hockey game can be very exciting indeed. Hockey is also a game that has not been taken over by freaks. Men of average build – or below – still can do well there. As opposed the seven foot basketball start and the 300 pound football lineman.

By the way – do you receive the Mallardi-Bowers fanzine Double-Bill? If you don’t, you’ll want the next few issues. Take steps accordingly. Once word gets around the line may – possibly – perhaps – be a long one.

Best wishes,
(S) Lloyd Biggle

[The reference above and below to Double-Bill is the fanzine published by Bill Bowers and Bill Mallardi. The Double-Bill Symposium was a series of Q&As with top SF authors. DB won Hugos in 1965 and 1966.]

11/20/63
Dear Bill - - -

RE Southern Literature. There is a short story by O. Henry, “Rose of Dixie,” which appears in the collection Options, and, of course, in the complete works. I’d make this required reading for the course.

The publication notice went to Opelika; I’m sending another, since Doubleday sent the extras to me, and I’ve been trying to figure out what to do with them. The Double-Bill thing is not an article; but the issue is being mailed now (Bill tells me, either a threat or a promise) and you’ll soon be enlightened. We’re all rather pleased with the results.

U. of M. had some great football years, and then faded; and I reached the conclusion that great football years “spoil” a school Look at the abominable machinations of the administration at Notre Dame. The really gallant football team is the one that pulls the stupendous upset; or, as is the case with Illinois this year, comes from nowhere. (Next year it may return there). And, I think, Michigan, this year – the team was kicked around, but stayed with it and came on very strong. Michigan isn’t rated – but Illinois and Michigan state are in the top ten and play for the Big 10 title and a Rose Bowl trip Saturday – and Michigan beat Illinois and tied Michigan State.

After suffering few weeks without my post cards I finally got a new supply. Seems to make correspondence much easier. I wonder if this novel would move more quickly if I put it on post cards.

I don’t believe you ever came right out and mentioned whether or not you went to the Washington D.C. convention. Did you? I’ve been feeling irked at the management because they did not mail the convention program and stuff to those who “joined” but did not attend. This was always done before, since I have been aware of conventions.

Dean McLaughlin has a new paperback novel out from pyramid, The Fury From Earth. haven’t read it, but I admire the title. Good titles are not easy to acquire. I had suggested tentatively One for Eternity for the novel I’m working on, and Doubleday approved; then I was going through a box of old paperbacks, and I found one by Von Vogt called One Against
Eternity, which makes my suggestion sound silly. So, I’m thinking of borrowing a word from Dean, and making in The Fury Out of Time. With his permission, of course. I’ll pour enough beer into him to get him into a mellow mood before I ask. Unless I think of something better. Suggested titles for a time-travel novel gratefully received.

Best wishes,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

12/9/63
Dear Bill - - - -

Honestly, I do not expect my friends to add my novel to their personal libraries. Books are expensive; one’s private collection of books should reflect personal interests and enthusiasms, and cultural growth (if any); not merely the authors one has had the misfortune to come into personal contact with.

On the other hand, I do think that the very least a friend of mine could do would be to buy twelve copies to give to his friends.

I’ll amend your appraisal of the EMU [Eastern Michigan University] Echo. It is like a high school paper that is published without firm faculty supervision.

Science fiction books do not have an elaborate hard cover sale. They aren’t even pushed by the publisher. (Except perhaps those whose author is a “Name”). Dean McLaughlin handles the purchasing for a large Ann Arbor bookstore, and he said when he was going over the fall list with the Doubleday salesman, the salesman paused briefly at All the Colors of Darkness, and remarked, “Now – you probably won’t need this one.” The subsidiary rights are the important thing, and the book is doing all right there. A condensed [sic]version will be published in the Toronto Star Weekly next month (this is a newspaper Sunday supplement that uses a novel each week), and that is almost amazing – a SF novel being chosen for the general Canadian public (the supplement is distributed throughout Canada).

What else? You may have noticed what the lions did to Cleveland yesterday. If it’s worth anything in passing, Detroit hasn’t had a first-string lineup all season. Injuries. It hasn’t been merely a case of substitutes playing – the substitutes have been injured, too. They’ve had men in the defensive backfield who’d never played there before (and, it is hoped, never will again). Several games in a row they won, and then gave away. At one time seven members of the defensive team were on the injured list, and the team didn’t even have a fullback. three first string defensive backs are now considered out for the season – among them [Yale] Lary, the league’ leading punter. But they have at last gotten their second-stringers back into action, it wouldn’t surprise anyone in these parts if the Lions knock off the Bears next week, letting Green Bay slip into the Western Division championship. Assuming that Green Bay beats San Francisco, which isn’t really a radical assumption.

I think something was said about an Alabama-Miami game being on TV this Saturday. If so, I’ll have a look.

The Double-Bill thing isn’t exactly a “contribution”; and of course what you get in that issue is only a beginning. From our point of view it has been a fabulous success – and, believe it or not, I’m still getting questionnaires back from the pro’s invited, or inquiries about same. The response has been better than two-thirds, which I wouldn’t have believed when I stated.

I am meeting people all the time who says – “Science Fiction? I used to read a lot of that stuff – when I was young.” Maybe the significance is just you’re growing up.

PS I still experience a twitch of disbelief when I hear the words, “President Johnson.”

Best,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

1/27/64
Dear Bill - - - -

I may ask you for a favor, one of these months -- a map of a typical Southern town. Think about it. Not a tiny place, perhaps a county seat, 4-5,000 people (it would be a “county seat” in Michigan – or Iowa; what it would be in the South I don’t know. Location of county government.)

I am mulling a novel, of sorts, with such a setting. This is a reckless thing to do, with my limited first-hand experience in the South (I once passed through Alabama on a troop train – at night). But as long as I have friends to impose upon…
How large is Opelika? Not that this fictitious town should resemble your home town – it should, in that it should resemble any town of its approximate size, but it might also be distinctly different. And the important thing, to begin with, would be a plan of the man street or business section – exactly what businesses might found in a town of that size.

You know – the advice always given to beginning writers is to write about what they know. Excellent advice, but what the average person knows about won’t keep a writer occupied for very many years. There have been so many promising young novelists who never lived up to the promise of their first novel. They used up what they knew… and the real test of the writer is to write about what he does not know, to move into new areas of knowledge and make them his. There are always exceptions, John Marquand and John O’Hara doing their most important work about the same people in the same environment (I sometimes have the feeling that it would be a relief to find someone with dirty hands one of their novels).

Anyway, I’ll have a close look at this possibility, and if you can suggest a bibliography, books that seem to offer a fair picture of life in such a town, fiction or non-fiction I would likewise be grateful.

I picked up (paid 95 cents plus tax for) a thick paperback novel that had glowing adjectives plastered all over the cover. Going Away by Clancy Sigal. “A Great American Novel,” somebody said, and it won a certain award and was a leading contender for another, and so on. I don’t recommend it. This is a novel? It starts nowhere, rambles all over the place without going anywhere (the character moves by car from the west coast to the east coast; the writer seems to think that this fact also makes his story move) and instead of ending it disintegrates. The modern novel is sick.

But this writer wrote about what he knew, and he would have been well advised to keep a little of it for the next one.

Let’s see – you’re talking about the bowl games in your last. Its’ been so long that I have to stop and think. After the Army-Navy game, I thought Navy was overrated – was lucky to win that one. Texas underscored that conclusion. Alabama looked goo –looked so good, in fact, and seemed to have the game so well under control that I didn’t want much of it, and thus missed the final Miss Rally. I watched Nebraska-Auburn most of the afternoon, which was a good game, with the issue in doubt up to the end. And, of course, there was the NFL title game, which firmly convinced me that football is not a winter sport.

So what’s left? Basketball and hockey. For the first time in years Michigan has a basketball team. You won’t see them, unless perchance on television – three of the starters are negroes. But one of these, a sophomore named Cazzie Russell, you’ll be hearing about for a long time.

I’d be interested I the general reaction to the Double-Bill Symposium, whatever floats your way.

I have just received copies of the Toronto Star Weekly, which ran a condensed version of All the Colors of Darkness. They did the condensing – from the original 65,000 words to about 28,000 – and I haven’t had the courage, as yet, to look through it and see just what they left out. Or maybe to see what they left in…

This is the time of year when I am hit by my first cold of the winter and begin looking forward longingly to spring.

Best,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

3/20/64

Dear Bill - - -

It is considered atrocious taste for a writer to write a reviewer thanking him for a favorable review – just as it would be ill-advised for him to protest an unfavorable review. But can, and do thank you for the paper. And in return I’m sending another issue of the Eastern Echo. You can post the leader story as an example of how not to write a news story. All of that space, plus photos, as if there were something of critical importance -- but no hint as to what Article VII consists of, what the petitioner objected to, what he wanted to change, and why.

You should have received D-B8 by this time. When I read your letter in #7 I had a hunch that there would be harsh reactions. The real difficulty is that you are, in a general way, absolutely right – and hence, very wrong. Put three families in a one-room shack without plumbing, and ask them why they don’t bathe regularly? And the illegitimacy problem: under the conditions in which too many Negroes live, how can they be concerned with such a minor thing as chastity? Let me quote from a shattering book – Black Like Me by John Howard Griffin. He is the white man who disguised himself as a Negro, to find out how the other half lived. To his eternal horror, he found out. At one point (p. 100 in the paperback) he was given a ride by a white man. The conversation:
“You got a pretty wife?”

“Sure sir.”

He waited for a moment and then with lightness, paternal amusement, “She ever had it from a white man?”

I stared at my black hands, saw the gold wedding band and mumbled something meaningless, hoping he would see my reticence. He overrode my feeling and the conversation grew more salacious. He told me how all of the white men in the region craved colored girls. He said he hired a lot of them both for housework and in his business. “And I guarantee, you, I’ve had it in every one of them before they ever got on the payroll.” A pause. Silence above humming tires on the hot-top road. “What do you think of that?”

“Surely some refuse,” I suggested cautiously.

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“Not if they want to eat – or feed their kids,” he snorted. “If they don’t put out, they don’t get a job.”

And later: “We figure we’re doing you people a favor to get some white blood in your kids.”

Mongrelization, the author comments, has been exclusively the white man’s contribution to the Southern Way of Life. And in a footnote he remarks that he encountered many whites who freely admitted the same practices – and others who condemned it – but none denied it was widespread.

Harry Golden, in a lecture at EMU, remarked that very few negro women of the South reach middle age without some kind of enforced sexual contact with white men.

Make it impossible for a man to obtain decent wages for decent work, and then wonder why his work is sloppy or he is shiftless.

There is a classic comment on similar criticism of negroes when they were still slaves. Something to the effect that you cannot accuse a woman of promiscuity when she is not the master of her own body; nor a man of

without some kind of enforced sexual contact with white men.

You are absolutely right, you see – and impossibly wrong. Your critics won’t have had much first-hand experience of your rightness, so you will no doubt hear plenty on the other side of it.

I wish there was an easy answer.

Just heard a wonderful answer to this old gambit, “Would you want your daughter to marry a negro?”

“Well – it all depends. What’s his religion?”

What else is new? Nomadic – I mean Sporadic – is here. Like the cartoons, but you don’t make it sound as if I missed much is not being at Discon. I am mystified by this assertion that your fanzine needs more fiction. Surely your readers can’t be laboring under the misapprehension that these travelogues of yours are factual! Where in real life could you find such an unlikely assortment of characters?

Lessee – Michigan got to the NCAA basketball finals, though that will be over with by the time you get this. I see the Detroit Symphony played there. I have not heard the orchestra under its new conductor.

Alabama beat Kentucky, and Nash flopped. The same thing happened in the NCAA regional – that is, Nash flopped, and Kentucky looked sick. Michigan didn’t play well either, but was lucky. Or maybe the point is to play just well enough.

Best wishes,

(s) Lloyd Biggle

6/29/64

Dear Bill (and Ann, if I may) - - -

My heartfelt congratulations, not only on your marriage, but also on your choice of a wedding date. You now share an anniversary with us, June 21st being our 17th, which makes me feel almost as ancient as I am. We celebrated by painting the living room.

You can see that it is not necessarily fatal that Anne “seldom ever reads science fiction.” Hedwig seldom reads it either, not even mine.

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I have an accumulation of clippings that I think might amuse you. The one on the Oakland U editor represents the ultimate in something or other. I point out, because it may not be credible to you, that the young man was not fired because he wanted to run a story that the Chancellor had banned (not all of the stories make this clear.) He was fired because he wanted to run an editorial explaining why he wasn’t running the story. If you have a piece of CW stationary handy, you might amuse yourself by sending condolences to the O.U. paper on the fact that freedom of the press is so much less prevalent in Michigan than in Alabama. Send a copy to the Detroit Free Press – you might even get some national publicity. It’s the kind of turnabout that would amuse me no end.

Best wishes
(s) Lloyd Biggle

[By now editing the CW had become the overriding issue in my life, even beyond classes. In the fall of 1964 we editorially challenged the UA administration’s decision to prohibit Louis Armstrong from performing on campus.]

12/?/64
Christmas card with clipping from Detroit Free Press on Louis Armstrong controversy
Cheers! I’ve been reading about you. Keep up the good work.
(s) Lloyd Biggle

[A few days after the state troopers beat blacks brutally on the aborted attempted to march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma.]

3/11/65
Dear Bill & Ann - - -
How you Alabamans do make news!
I’ve been saying for years that the best friends of the various Civil Rights Movement are the vehement racists, but I never expected to have that demonstrated quite as vividly as in the past few days. It would perhaps be facetious to say that your Governor Wallace has done more for Civil Rights than has Martin Luther King; but he accomplished more in a few minutes last Sunday afternoon than King as ever done in six months. I think it could even be said that he accomplished some things that King could never have done with his assistance, and the NAACP should give Governor Wallace a medal.

I don’t think anyone could stop Civil Rights at this point, but the movement could have been kept at a snail’s pace simply by treating Negroes with consideration and politeness. They wish to march; let them march. They wish to “Sit in”; let them sit in, and even furnish them free coffee; they wish to talk; listen politely without comment. Otherwise, ignore them. It’s difficult to work up much emotion against people who seem to be cooperating and doing what they can.

I am, naturally, happy that the racists think with their adrenals, when they bother to think at all. Someone close to the movement remarked a couple of weeks ago that what was needed in Selma was another Bull Connor. The sheriff there, whatever his name is, was making a solid contribution but it wasn’t enough, and it was hard keeping national attention on the town. Something dramatic was needed, like Bull Connor and his police dogs, which turned the tide [in] Birmingham. Otherwise, they were really afraid that the thing might peter out. Governor Wallace rushed to fill the gap with his state police, who are fully as good as dogs when they behave like them. I’ll say it again: the NAACP should give him a medal.

I don’t know what news is reaching you there, but if you aren’t following out-of-the-state developments you’ve gotten years behind in these few days. An absolutely impromptu protest march in Detroit resulted in a procession of 10,000 people. (The Mayor of Detroit and the Governor of Michigan, Democrat and Republican respectively, led the march – while the Detroit City Council was debating as to whether it was legal because it was done without a permit. By the time the debate ended the march was over, so the council decided to call it legal.)

The Michigan Attorney General is planning a suit in federal court to strip Alabama of its congressional representation. Iowa’s attorney general has already joined him, and number of other states are interested. The legal position in this is absolutely sound -- the constitution provides for it explicitly – and action on the point is two generations overdue. It had been talked about for years, but nothing was ever done about it. The NAACP should give two metals [sic] to George Wallace!

If Wallace subscribes to a clipping service, what he reads from around the country won’t help his ulcers any (and if he hasn’t any, he will have before he gets through reading.) Even the Ypsilanti Press devoted all of its editorial space to that Sunday fiasco; but if you don’t know the Ypsilanti Press the extraordinary nature of this won’t impress you.

More Civil Rights legislation now seems certain; as matters stood, there was a tendency to sit back and see what would happen with the laws already passed. But Wallace demonstrated so effectively that more are needed that there will be more.
You know, there are few things in a person’s lifetime that arouse a really national reaction that is unanimous, vehement, and unrestrainedly condemnatory. President Kennedy’s assassination, for example. Pearl Harbor. Things like that. I kid you not, my friend – the current reaction does not reach the level of those things, but is of a kind. The Michigan Senate passed a resolution that is so strong it has words I didn’t even know that politicians knew. The Michigan House of Representatives is circulating a petition demanding federal intervention. Comparable things are going on all over the country. It hardly seems possible that the one incident, outrageous as it was, could have accomplished all this; but maybe it is possible. Maybe the country had had enough, and that was the last straw.

In any event, all due credit to Governor Wallace. Make the three medals, and I’m willing to deliver the presentation speech for one of them myself.

Say, do you think he’d appreciate it if I sent him a note of congratulations?

To turn to your February letter, which I did receive. No, no Crimson &White copies received here. You say your own day of reckoning was February 22 – I trust that it passed without serious inconvenience to you.

Just incidentally, (and by the way, I learned when I clashed with my copy editors over the latest novel that this should be written ‘incidentally’ – but who says it that way?) Post Office Box A in Ypsilanti is the mailing address of the local mental hospital; I hope that this is not true in University, Alabama.

My congratulations to Anne; winning a story contest is something I’ve never been able to manage. (I did once win a national competition for musical composition; which probably made it inevitable that I should become a writer.)

I just finished reading the galleys on the new novel, which will be out in July; and I’ve contracted to do another on the further adventures of Jan Darzek. In the first novel, he saved Earth; in the next one he will save the galaxy. After that it may be hard to think of a topper.

Best wishes,

(s) Lloyd Biggle

7/2/65

Dear Bill & Anne - - -

Congratulations are indeed in order; though I must confess that this projected move from Alabama to Alaska gives me pause. Did you just pick the next state in alphabetical order? The climates are rather less similar than the spellings.

If Wallace could be elected to the U.S. Senate, there would be considerable agitation to keep him from being seat, with a weight of evidence on its side. His well-publicized defiance of the the U.S. Government, not to mention its constitution, are not the best credentials to present when seeking admission to the senate. He probably thinks they wouldn’t dare – that’s what Mississippi’s Bilbo thought.

I picked up a paperback called We Shall Overcome, Michael Dorman, which as “A reporter’s eye-witness account of the year of racial strife and triumph.” Covers several trips to the University of Mississippi, and devotes a chapter to Tuscaloosa at the time of Wallace’s “stand in the schoolhouse door.” You might find the book interesting as an example of reporting. An intriguing thing to me is the tremendous difference in student behavior between Mississippi and Alabama. The U. of Alabama students shine in the comparison. The University administration has come off less well than the students – see enclosed clipping. Also enclosed is a clipping on Ypsilanti segregation. The local reaction to this might interest you.

There wasn’t any. As far as I know, no one cancelled a subscription; there were no indignant letters to the editor, no advertising boycott, no nothing. Personally disagree –strongly -- with this notion of moving children around just achieve desegregation, and ample evidence has accumulate to show that this can produce very bad effects – can, in fact, do a measure of harm that outweighs even the theoretical good.

But the editorial was ignored. Evidently, Ypsilanti’s colored population didn’t think much of it, either. Perry School is located in the Negro part of town, and is, I think, entirely negro – as to students. At the junior high school level, we have two, and the boundary between the two districts was astutely drawn down the middle of the negro neighborhood, so that roughly half of the negro students go to each school My own attitude would be that Perry School should be deliberately made the best elementary school in town. The negro child comes from what is politely called a “disadvantaged” environment, and the lack of advantages at home – educational, cultural, social – has a cruel effect upon their education. By the time these children reach junior high school, they are contributing the bottom levels of each class, with only a few bright exceptions. The idea seems to be that distributing them through the the schools would correct this, but in actual fact (where it has been tried) it doesn’t work. The Negro child is already behind he starts kindergarten, and this form of integration, rather than lessening prejudice, accentuates it.
The white children note that the slowest students in each class are negro, and draw natural but erroneous conclusions. The pre-school program (which they have) thus becomes highly important, but thus far it hasn’t done enough.

But it should interest you to know that this problem, which I would expect to exist in a far more acute form in Alabama, is being grappled with here.

Added note: Our one high school is probably less balanced integration-wise, than the junior high schools because of a disproportionately high ratio of dropouts among negro students.

RE the Worlds of Tomorrow story: Sometimes a story ending is inevitable. I think this one was. Incidentally, I taught a class in writing at one of the state prisons last spring, and read that story to the class. They were fascinated.

The new novel, called The Fury Out of Time, has July 9 publication date. I am struggling to the end of another novel about Jan Darzek. It’s supposed to be finished by August. If it is, I may have to skip a vacation.

11/1/65
Dear Bill - - -

By the time I got around to your last summer’s letter, summer was gone; and so, I assumed, were you. I’ve been waiting for you to check in with a new address. Please do so, and let me know things are going.

I’ve been swamped with work on a new project called Science Fiction Writers of America, of which I am the first secretary-treasurer. Being first, I have no guide lines, and everything – accounting system, record system for members, all kind so policy matters – has to be evolved from scratch. Damon Knight is president. We publish a bulletin every two months, concerning matters of interest to professional writers. We’ve set up a system of awards, tentatively called The Nebula Awards, which will be the Pros’ answer to the Hugo, and we have a contract with Doubleday to publish an annual anthology of Nebula Prize Storeis.

As for myself, I have the MS of a sequel to All the Colors of Darkness at Doubleday, and I’m about to commence a novel which will use material I developed as a novellette, Still, Small Voice, in Analog back in – was it ’61?

Colors has had an unexpectedly long life. It’s still selling – a trickle; and I just received a couple of copies of the English Science Fiction Book Club edition, which is entirely different from the format of the US book club – uncut, but a very neat, slender volume. And it will be published in paperback in England by Penguin next spring. So much for me. What about you?

Best,
(s) Lloyd Biggle

[1 had asked him for help in finding photos to use with some historical articles I was hoping to freelance. By this time I was living in Las Vegas where there had been something like eight homicides in the first two weeks we were there. The “NE” in the last paragraph is National Enquirer. for which I was freelancing briefly.]

12/8/65
Dear Bill - - -

Sorry, I can’t help on the picture problem. I checked an old issue of Writer’s Market; it lists places to sell pictures, but says nothing about buying any – and Bettman isn’t listed in the index.

RE Tolkien, the current issue of the SFWA Bulletin might interest you. The Bulletin isn’t for general circulation, but I give you one free copy on the condition that you join SFW just as soon as you sell a SF story and become eligible.

Tell your friend that there’s only one letter of difference between a fellow journalist and yellow journalist. I’ve even heard it said that "whore" can pose some problems of definition. Anyway, $300 elevates you into the call girl class and makes you practically respectable.

Damn paperback books. The Angry Espers has sold nearly 85,000 copies and hasn’t even earned the advance – that wasn’t so good, either. I don't think so highly of book clubs, either. At least not Doubleday’s.

I was about to look up some facts and stagger you with the number of murders in Alabama as compared with Nevada; however, the books I have at hand don’t give a breakdown by states. Just consider your statement challenged, and start looking for more NE material.

Best wishes,
PS Here’s an afterthought. Why don’t you query potential markets on your article subjects (see the August, 1965 issue of The Writer, both for a list of markets and an article on how to write article queries; and in the query find out if they want you to obtain photos. Some mags might prefer to use their own sources.

PPS A query costs very little money.

[I had made an inquiry about author Bryce Walton. I think, because I had read several short stories of a similar theme and wanted to write a fanzine article about his work. Through the SFWA I thought Lloyd might be able to help me connect with Walton. I have no recollection at all of planning a trip to Kalamazoo.]

8/9/66
Dear Bill - - -

Kalamazoo is a hundred miles or so down the road from Ypsilanti – but the road is a 4-6 lane divided super highway with a 70mph speed limit. As Secretary-Treasurer of Science Fiction Writers of America, a few months back I sent Bryce Walton an invitation to join, via his agent. Agent forwarded; it came back to me marked “Unknown at this address.” Thus it would seem that even his agent doesn’t know where he is. Or his agent goofed. But that’s as much as I know about Bryce Walton. To return to the Kalamazoo project, impossible to predict what might be possible at an unknown future date, but if the trip materializes let me know, and we’ll see what can be worked out.

I’m getting ready for Tricon this weekend; though you might turn up there, since it’s about as close to Alabama as those things ever get.

Anyway, I’m rushed.

Regards,

(s) Lloyd Biggle

2/2/67
Dear Bill - - -

The population explosion has all kinds of reverberations. Recently had a similar announcement from Robert Silverberg. Bob said his wife was delighted, but this unexpected development (they’ve been married ten years or so) had so unnerved him that he felt like running off and hiding. I told him not to bother, hiding would be a waste of effort, a brand new father can hang around the house for days at a time without even being noticed.

You mean you’re so out of touch with fandom that your antennae don’t even twitch at convention time? I actually got to the last one which was in Cleveland. This year New York.

Odd note: Dan Keyes, of Flowers for Algernon fame, taught creative writing at Detroit’s Wayne University for four years (until last fall) and Viola Liuzzo was in one of his creative writing classes. He dutifully marked her absent one evening, and the next morning saw in the headlines where she was.

Horace Gold once did a survey and concluded that the longevity of the average person’s interest in SF was about six years. I’m always meeting someone who says, “I used to read that stuff…” It just seems only yesterday that I heard you proclaiming in Pittsburgh, “Fandom is a way of life!” It still is; I think the Cleveland Convention had more “members” than any convention in history – which surprised a lot of people, including those running the thing. Fans popped up where no one had known they existed. Too bad you didn’t go. You could have collected Andre Norton’s autograph. She was living in Cleveland then, but now has moved to Florida.

Latest books: The Fury Out of Time, and Watchers of the Dark, both from Doubleday. Coming in November: a collection of (previously published) stories; and sometime in the first half of ’68 a novel version of an Analog novelette that as called “Still, Small Voice.”

My second term as Secretary-Treasurer of Science Fiction Writers of America ends in June; I’ll spend the summer felling emancipated.

Best,

(s) Lloyd Biggle

[I do not remember what I had sent Lloyd that produced the comments below, but it may have been a wire service story that ran about 10 feet when stretched out. This letter also had a rare typed name as well as signature.]

11/14/70
Dear Bill - - -
It was good to hear from you again, and, belatedly, my thanks for the press service article. This is not SF so much as similar to the themes of a new type that seems to be developing such as Siege, contemporary catastrophe, that sort of thing.

A lot of people found it fascinating, and my daughter (now a college sophomore) used it for a wall decoration, and in this capacity it proved to be a peerless conversation piece. Then she was prevailed upon to loan it to a journalism teacher for use in a college journalism class, and that clod proceeded to analyze it and interposed all over it with ballpoint pen the remarks he intended to make to the class. She was heartbroken.

So – if you can come up with another ten feet of wire stories, not necessarily good SF but good conversation pieces a suitable for wall hanging, I’m sure she would be most appreciative!

Things perk along here. My new novel will be serialized in Analog starting with the February issue; and Damon Knight and I are negotiating with a textbook publisher with the idea of coming up with a high school literature book in science fiction. Nothing else of revolutionary import, except that I seem to remember reading something about the University of Alabama losing a football game. That must have been an erroneous report, eh.

Best wishes
(S)
Lloyd Biggle, Jr.

[In 1981 the Auburn Science Fiction Club invited Biggle to Alabama for a talk and reading. One of the principles was the son of Millard Grimes, a fellow journalist and former fringe fan in Columbus, Ga. in the 1950s. I did not make the the reading, but I was invited to a reception for Lloyd at Millard’s house in Opelika. This was two years after I joined the staff at the University of Montevallo.]

March 31, 1982
Dear Bill:

Just a year ago, I was getting ready to visit Alabama. I suppose the flowering shrubs are out, the mocking birds are singing, and spring is pleasantly settling in. I hope some day to get back there.

I just finished an odd kind of project. In the late 1960s, T. L. Sherred, a close friend of mine, had a novel published called Alien Island. He then started a sequel to it, got some 70 pages into the MS – and had a stroke. When he recovered, he not only was unable to write, but he couldn’t remember a thing about what he’d planned to do with the novel he was working on. His agent arranged with a writer named Lawrence Janifer to finish the novel for him. Janifer fussed around, did few more chapters, and got bogged down. Then he got emphatically bogged down in personal problems, and the novel was never finished. Worse, he had come apart so completely that Tom was unable to get his incomplete MS back. This went on for more than 10 years. I finally told Tom that I would finish the book if he got the material back, and he finally was able to do so. I just finished it and mailed it off yesterday. It was a peculiar problem because very little sense could be made of some of the stuff Tom had laid out – and he couldn’t help because he couldn’t remember what he’d intended to do with it. I think this probably was where Janifer went astray – he tried to take Tom’s first chapters as written and simple go from there, and it was possible. I simply digested all of it and then backed up and wrote my own novel, using as much of his material as I could.

I supposed there is something to be said for “permanent” address that actually is permanent. This will we will be 31 years at this address. What an overwhelming amount of time that seems like! But my mother lived at the same address from something like 56 years until I brought her here last fall. I hope things are going well with your enlarged family.

I state confidently that your family of three, of whatever ages, doesn’t come close to matching the problems presented when a 91-year-old mother moves in with you. Let’s just say that it’s enormously disruptive. A book could be written, but let’s just say that.

I have a thought to toss at you: We’ve done a series of conferences here for teachers of science fiction. This is good PR for the university – anything that brings high school teachers to a campus is good for a university. It also brings college teachers. There are a number of ways to run this project. We’ve done it as a one-day project and also as a Friday night-Sunday thing. Registration fees cover most if not all of the expenses. (If there is no response, you simply cancel the conference) But we’ve never had to do that.) We simply do a mailing to all high schools and colleges. If there is a spark of interest, let me know and we can consider ways and means.

Pass along my regards to your newspaper-owner-friend in Opelika Just to show you how long it’s been since I was corresponding with you there, I had to look it up to make sure that I’d spelled it correctly.

I like the idea of a “small” university – after my experience with huge universities. I once had a long discussion with some professors and others as to what the ideal size for a university would be. We agreed on
something like, 7,500 – still small enough to be neighborly but large enough to offer a variety of courses and sponsor the cultural events that are an essential part of education. Your UM can grow a bit without taking on the undesirable traits of bigness.

All best wishes,
(S)Lloyd Biggle

[This was my last letter. I am puzzled that I let the correspondence die after we reconnected at the Opelika-Auburn event. Perhaps my life was just too complicated at the time.]

July 13, 1982

Dear Bill - - -

Going through old papers, I came on an envelope with Polaroid shots I took at the 1960 WorldCon. I thought you’d like to have this one. I haven’t heard anything of Mike Deckinger for years and years.

Things plod along. I’ve been shopping for a word processor. A very complex and confusing chore, complicated by the outrageously inept sales procedures and techniques – or the total lack thereof. It’s sometimes hard to get any information at all. Either the salesman doesn’t know or the company doesn’t make anything available – incredible considering the prices on these things. It’s as though one said, pointing to a $10,000 automobile, “I’d like to test drive,” and the salesman smiles and says, “Go ahead. Of course the controls are arranged differently from any other car you’ve ever seen, and I don’t have an instruction manual. But go ahead. Drive it all you want, but don’t take it out of the showroom.”

All best wishes,
(S)Lloyd Biggle

PS I don’t know how long these early Polaroid shots will endure—this one seems to be yellowing. If you want to preserve it, better get it copied.

4. bibliography

illos:
first postcard on 11/11/59
snapshot
book covers
clippings
poem from my fanzine