

NEWS
WHILE
IT'S
HOT!

FANTASY-NEWS

the science fiction weekly newspaper.

***** SEMI-ANNUAL NUMBER *****

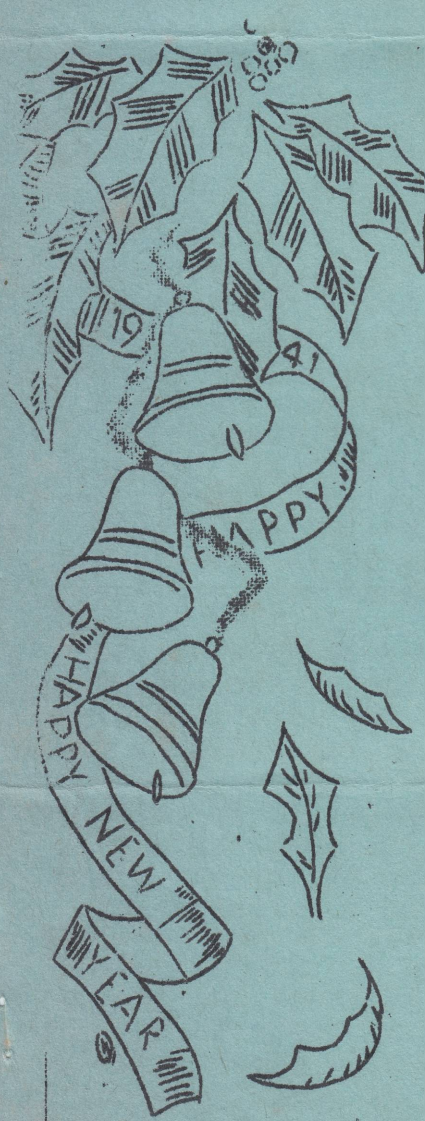
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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 1941

WHOLE NUMBER 132

HEADLINES OF 1940



JAN: WEIRD TALES GOES BI-MONTHLY!
WILL SYKORA OFFERS \$25.00 REWARD!
NEW YORKER REPORTER AT QUEENS SFL!
WEIRD TALES AND FARNSWORTH WRIGHT PART COMPANY!
FEB: JAMES V. TAURASI TO CONDUCT S.F.L.
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MAR: FARNSWORTH WRIGHT JOINS QUEENS SFL!
PARENTS MAKE JIM AVERY QUIT STF!
FANTASTIC ADVENTURES GOES SMALL SIZE & BI-MONTHLY!
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TAURASI DONS UNIFORM JAN 8TH!!!

A HAPPY AND
PROSPEROUS
NEW YEAR TO
ALL OUR GOOD
FRIENDS.

MY EXPERIENCES WITH WONDER STORIES

by Donald A. Wollheim.

(reprinted from "The Bulletin Of the Terrestrial Fantascience Guild"

April, 1935)

It was around July of 1933 that I first began to write science fiction. I wrote a couple of short stories that were soon rejected as most amateur first trials are. Then, on August 19th, (1933) I submitted a very short story, entitled "The Man From Ariel" to WONDER STORIES. A month went by. On September 23rd, there came from Charles D. Hornig, managing editor of WONDER STORIES, a letter, stating that "The Man From Ariel" had been accepted for publication. Anyone who has ever tried to write, can imagine my elation. At last, my first acceptance! To the young writer like myself, that comes as one of the supreme moments in his life. It fills one with satisfaction and self-confidence. A feeling of good will pervaded my being.

On the first of December, 1933, I received an advance copy of WONDER STORIES for January, 1934, containing my story. And now, I thought to myself, I shall have the pleasure of being paid for my work. True, the amount owed to me was insignificant, being only ten dollars, at their rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ per word. But still, in these depression days, ten dollars is ten dollars. Especially so for myself. I was not employed at the time.

I waited a few weeks for a check to arrive in the mail, but none did. I decided then, that payment would come only after the date of publication had arrived, namely January, 1934. But yet that day passed and still no check had arrived. I wrote Mr. Hornig requesting payment. He answered:—"I do not know whether the checks for the January issue have been sent out and will hand your letter over to the accounting department for attention. May I suggest that you address all further communications of this kind to this department, where such matters are settled". That was on January 9th. After that, I waited but still nothing came. I wrote a couple of more letters, one to the accounting department and another to Gernsback, himself, but those were not answered.

Then, on January 24th, another story of mine was rejected. The letter accompanying it seemed to me to be so quibbling in its excuses for rejection, that I wrote to Mr. Hornig about it. My last paragraph reads as follows:—"---If however, the real reason for returning my ms is that you would be ashamed to accept what you feel you cannot pay for, then don't let that worry you. I don't need the money. It is only that you are supposed to be a paying magazine. If you feel that it is the sole objection, then I am willing to let you have it, or any other thing I may write, gratis. But please say so, and don't quibble."

This evidently got on the managing editor's goat, for the next day he sent me a three page letter, explaining that they did not quibble, how the editor has had years of experience (he was 17 then) and how my objections to his quibbling were all in staken. But in reply to my last paragraph he wrote:—"We feel that your last paragraph is unmerited. We certainly are not ashamed to accept a story because we cannot pay for it. What kind of a magazine do you think this is? We have had several unfortunate errors in our records which have made authors wait for payment for a short while, but otherwise have had no trouble. How long do you think a magazine would exist with such a policy?---Your remark was made in total ignorance of the situation and was made with no consideration." In answer to this, I sent a letter apologizing for my misjudgment and expressing hope that the errors would be cleared up and I would receive the check that was rightfully mine. But, I received nothing.

On March 10th, 1934, I received a letter from Henry Hasse, concern-

ing some magazines he had for sale. Mr. Hasse, I may add, was the co-author of a short story called "The End Of Tyme", in WONDER'S November, 1933 issue. But in this letter, he diverged from his topic to say: "The real reason for this letter is something else. Ever since your story appeared in the January issue of WONDER, I have been wanting to ask: "Were you paid for it, and if so at what rates? The reason I would like to know is this: the story by A. Fedor and me in the November number hasn't been, and from all appearances wont, be paid for. We have written a polite inquiry and received the answer that Gernsback has turned the matter over to his advisory board, or some such answer. You may even be a friend of Hugo's; I don't know, but if the state of affairs is such that he can't or wont pay for stories, something drastic should be done.

I answered this remarkable letter by saying that I had not been paid, and telling him what I had done so far.

I came to the conclusion that the less said about pay the better. It was a bitter pill to swallow, but as I had other stories written that I felt were good, I did not care to spoil my market by insisting further for pay. I felt that if by keeping quiet, they would think that I had forgotten, then perhaps some of my other stories would be printed and I might gain the right to consider a well-known author. As for payment, I was willing to let it slip in order to build my name up. For having a "name" is an essential to authors. Nevertheless, a bitterness rankled in my heart for what had been done to me. I had been given unfair treatment from the start, and that hurt as nothing has ever hurt me before.

Then, finally, on September 4th, 1934, I received what I have regarded as of my best achievements returned from WONDER STORIES with a form letter of rejection to which a P.S. had been added. They liked the story, but found some fault with the composition. "However," they said, "we are prepared to offer you ten dollars for the plot upon publication, which we would submit to one of our more experienced authors for development. We have a copy of the plot in our files". This was the last straw. Not only did they not pay me the ten dollars that was coming to me, but they had the audacity to offer me another ten dollars in order to take my plot, let another author get full credit for the story and I would be supposed to receive ten dollars, which in view of my previous experience it was reasonable to assume I would never get either! I had a lawyer send them a letter requesting the return of the plot in their files, refusing the offer and stating: "I understand that Mr. Wollheim was not reimbursed for his story "Man Of Ariel", which you have published, and I therefore make demand for payment." Mr. Hornig answered by stating that they always kept a copy of all plots submitted to them for their own protection, and also saying: "Concerning our neglect to pay Mr. Wollheim \$8.50 for his short-short-story, I am sure it is an oversight of our accounting department. I am handing your letter over to our comptroller for immediate attention." We corrected the understatement of price promptly. This was on September, 13th, 1934.

I determined to do something then. I made up my mind to collect ten dollars or know the reason why not. I wrote Henry Hasse again, a letter intended to provoke an answer by begging him to tell me if this kind of rotten deal was for me only or if there were still others in the same boat. He answered: "Fedor and I haven't been paid for either of the two stories. After the first Tyme story was accepted and printed, I wrote him two letters. No answer to either. --- but since he did print it, he's going to pay for it. I shall collect from him, sometime in the near or far future.---(Hasse then says he is now handling all his stories through the Solar Sales Service, composed of Julius Schwartz and Mortimer Weisinger. He had a new one that he asked Weisinger not to show Gernsback, but apparently, this advice was not heeded, for shortly Hasse received the following note from Hornig: "Mr. Gernsback

has advised me to inform you that we would appreciate it if you would send your future contributions to WONDER STORIES directly to our office, rather than through literary agents. We prefer direct contact with our authors." Henry Hasse also authorized Solar Sales Service to collect from Gernsback the money that was due him. This last letter was dated October 5th, 1934.

I determined then and there to start in quizzing other authors about whether they had been paid or not. I would then try to pool our claims and hire a lawyer to collect. I had little faith in Solar, since they are not barristers and could do naught but bluff. I therefore sent out letters to as many of WONDER STORIES' new writers as I could find addresses for. My results were interesting. I have continued to do this steadily since then. And here I shall deviate from my chronological course to tell of the experiences of each writer as I heard from them.

The first I heard from was again Henry Hasse. He agreed to the pooling of claims, and stated his fears concerning Solar's ability to collect. Next, was W. Varick Ne ins, author of two or three very short stories. He wrote on October 11th:--"As it stands, I have received nothing so far. I wrote concerning it to Mr. Hornig and received an answer from him two days ago in which he said it was an oversight and payment would be made sometime this week. I am now waiting for it." I answered his letter by relating my own experiences and those of Hasse, suggesting that he pool his claim. On October 13th, he replied:--"I would like to wait a week more to make sure that I do not belong to the WONDER STORIES' Inner Circle.---Seriously I am very glad that you have rounded this thing up, because something should be done about it. There is no reason why we should not get our small amount for our labors. It is the principle of the thing." In answer to this letter, I wrote back, Mr. Nevins wrote on November 21st:--"Of course, I have received nothing yet and do not expect to until we go after them. I would like to hear about "The Emotion Meter", as I know definitely it is in the January issue." In a letter Mr. Nevins received from Mr. Hornig, dated October 3rd, Hornig writes:--"I have handed your letter over to our accounting department for immediate attention. I am sure that the delay in payment is some oversight."

The next to be heard from was Kenneth Sterling. He was the first to state that he had been paid. But in letters to me, he says:--"I had to call up the office several times before they sent me my check-I came near deciding on pooling claims myself, but as I finally was paid(after spending on telephone calls to the WS Office, an amount equal to that I was paid for my story) I decided to let the matter drop."

Next to answer was Chester D. Cuthbert, author of "The Sublime Vigil" and "The Last Shrine". He wrote:--"I was promised a check for "The Sublime Vigil" which was to reach me shortly after the first of July. I did not receive this check, but since the other story was published in the July issue, I assumed that payment for both would reach me shortly. No check has been sent me." I have some of his correspondence with WONDER STORIES. On the 20th of April, he wrote requesting payment. Hornig answered:--"I am sorry that payment has been delayed you for your story and have referred your letter to the accounting department, putting in a word for early attention. I personally have no connection with the payment of stories. I work here under a salary the same as the secretaries and office boys. Therefore, I would appreciate it if you would make any requests for payment directly to the accounting department in the future." On June 22nd, Samuel Scheff, the accounting department, wrote:--With reference to your request of June 15th, I shall send you a check for your first story shortly after the first of the month." On October 30th, Mr. Cuthbert sent a registered letter saying:--"This letter will constitute a formal demand for payment in full of the balance due me for my stories; in default of payment in full on or before November, 15th, 1934, I shall instruct my attorneys to take action for recovery, and shall see that this action is made public". He received no answer. The two claims of Chester D. Cuthbert

were therefore pooled with mine. I may say here that had Mr. Cuthbert desired, he could have collected alone without difficulty because of his position in business. But he chose to help out the other authors who were handicapped. For which we owe him a vote of thanks.

Next to be heard from was Stanley G. Weinbaum. But he did not divulge his experiences. He merely stated that as his work was handled through an agency, he could scarcely be a party to our action. He evaded answering directly, whether or not he had received any payment for his stories by merely ignoring that point. However, he did write:-- "I am quite in sympathy with your interesting case and your intentions and believe you're entirely justified in the course you indicate."

On November 7th, I received an answer from Arthur K. Barnes. "Not only have I never received anything for 'The Mole Men of Mercury', but W.S. owes me for 'Guardians Of the Void' printed in the Quarterly of Fall, 1932 and for 'Challenge of the Comet' printed in February, 1932. Previous to that I received one or two checks from them a week or two after publication.--To sue or not to sue---if I play along with Gernsback, he has promised generous treatment, if and when the magazine begins to make money again. So far, I have let the matter slide." I wrote him urging that for the benefit of the others, he ought to take action and join us. He answered on November 17th by deciding to join up with us. He was afraid, as I was, that the two older stories published under Steller might prove hopeless to collect on. But, I volunteered to try anyway. In a letter of December 8th, Barnes wrote:-- "I spoke to the Secretary of the local chapter of the American Fiction Guild last night about the matter and he's entirely in sympathy with it---he even offered to help, if necessary, though I refused the offer, feeling that you have things pretty well under control. So if any of the claimants have been worried about the ethics of the situation, they can rest assured that we have a moral right, as well as a legal right on our side." I also have some of his correspondence with WONDER STORIES. On August 18th, 1932, David Lasser wrote:--"I have turned your letter over to the accounting department, from whom you should have an early word."

On November 14th, I heard from Russel Blaiklock, who wrote "Today's Yesterday" under the pseudonym, Rice Ray. He had not been paid either. "In June, a friend of mine called as my representative on Mr. Scheff of WONDER STORIES, who informed him that there would be no reason why early payment would not be made and that a check would be mailed to me on the next payment date. That date has evidently not yet arrived---I propose to start a campaign of adverse publicity against WONDER STORIES and other magazines of their ilk, through the medium of the writers' trade journals and also through an adult educational journal with which I am connected." Later, he wrote that he did not desire to join in the suit as his claim was too small, but he added:--"I am more interested in seeing that others do not fall into this trap. It might interest you to know I have filed a complaint with the New York Postal Inspector, charging the use of the mails to defraud. If it successful they will be forced to suspend publication."

I have heard from an English author who had a story published a year ago. He does not desire the use of his name, but states:--Up to the time of writing, I have received no payment at all. I might say that I have written several times in an effort to get the matter settled and although "I have received a reply or two saying it would have attention, nothing has yet been done." But he did not care to join the suit, since he had given up hope of ever being paid and did not wish to antagonize the editor, since he had many editor friends.

Francesco Bivona wrote he had some trouble getting paid for "The Final Struggle", but settled by going down to WONDER STORIES' Office, where he collected promptly. But, I have saved the best(or perhaps the worst) for the last. I wrote Clinton Bryan Kruse, asking as to whether he had been paid for "The Heat Destroyers" in the December, 1933 WONDER.

he answered in part as follows:—"I have been wholly unaware of any yarn of mine being published by Gernsback. So please, will you check again and make sure---absolutely sure--- that the story you refer to was printed as being written by Clifton Bryan Kruse? I've never had any material printed under this complete name that I know of.---Years ago (about four to be exact) I sent a fledgling script to WONDER STORIES. I'd called it "The Battle Of Chang-Da". Months went by. Then, one day I received my big brown envelope from Mr. Gernsback, but it was empty. As I recall it now, I believe one end had been cut or torn. I concluded, naturally, that my patiently typed manuscript had been lost in the mail. And that was that. Or so I fancied until today, I receive this startling query from Mr. Wollheim; Now, do you appreciate my quandary? Is this "Heat Destroyers" my "Battle Of Chang-Da"? If so, what then had been mailed---if anything--- in that empty envelope?--- Will you try to secure me a copy of the magazine in which it was?" I was astonished at this. I sent him a copy of his own story. He wrote:—"Yours is the honor of presenting a long lost script to its author, for which I sincerely thank you.--- The story "The Heat Destroyers" is my own orphan, right enough. There's nothing altered except the title". He goes on to say that he will write U.S. about it to see what they say. At the moment he is undetermined as to his future actions. He awaits reply from WONDER'S Offices. This is the last author I have heard from. Now, what did I do about this case of collecting?

I finally secured a lawyer, Mr. Bernard B. Price, who agreed to take the job of collecting the pooled claims of the four authors, W. Varick Nevins III, Chester D. Cuthbert, Arthur K. Barnes, and myself. I am not including Henry Hasse here, although at first he was listed as one of us. Hasse's story to date is very interesting. In response to my last letter, which was an angry one due to the fact that he had not answered previous ones, and due also to information I had heard, he concluded in his letter that Schwartz and Weisinger had finally succeeded in coming to terms with Gernsback, which was the reason he had neglected to answer other letters of mine. He had only decided to pool his claim with mine after Solar Sales Service appeared to be making absolutely no progress. But finally by the end of November, Weisinger sent word that they had come to terms with Gernsback, so that awaiting more information, Hasse did not answer me. On January 15th, 1935 he wrote:—"I had no reason to keep to myself the fact that I had collected for the very reason that I have not collected yet. If I had received any payment, you would have known it. I only know that Gernsback has agreed to pay, and that payment will be forthcoming soon, before this month is out, anyway, I expect." At the time of writing, it is more than a month since then and I have heard nothing from Hasse. So I can only assume that he has not been paid. I have spoken to Julius Schwartz and Mortimer Weisinger about this and both assured me that Hasse had been positively paid in full. Weisinger saying a month later that he was being paid on the installment plan, Schwartz a month before stating he had been paid on the spot, in full. But Hasse would not write as he did, if he had been paid, so there is certainly something wrong here.

I have heard all sorts of rumors and remarks about Mr. Gernsback and WONDER STORIES, the main of which are either too unreliable to print, or could not be proven easily, were they published. Charles D. Hornig, himself, said that Gernsback meant to pay eventually, but that the magazine did not make enough money to afford it. He added that this business has been going on since 1932 to the best of his knowledge. This was said at a meeting of the New York Science Fiction League, at which others were present who can vouch for it. Philip Jacques Bartel, whom I met, told me at that time he had not collected for "Twenty-Five Centuries Late", but he later phoned that he had gone down to their office and arranged for payment.

Now as to the progress of the suit itself. The first act was to have the other authors sign their claims over to myself. This was neo-

essary in order to facilitate collection. I am flattered to say that none had any doubts as to my complete integrity and honesty. Soon therefore, I had in my possession papers making the sole owner of nine stories:--"The Man From Ariel", "Cosmic Calamity", "The Sense Twister", "The Emotion Meter", "The Sublime Vigil", "The Last Shrine", "The Mole Men Of Mercury", "Guardians Of the Void", and "Challenge Of the Comet". Mr. Price, our attorney, thereupon drew up a complaint, which was duly signed and notarized, and served upon the officials of the Continental and Steller Publishing Corporations. This was done at the end of January, 1935. On February 7th or 8th, Gernsback's attorney called up Mr. Price about the settlement. What ensued was interesting. Mr. Winston, Gernsback's counsel, at first offered to settle for $\frac{1}{4}$ of a cent a word. This we could not even think of. He then raised his price to $\frac{1}{2}$ cent per word, to be paid in installments. We consented to think this over.

Finally, deciding it would be practically impossible to collect in one lump sum, I accepted the offer that had been made. On February 20th, 1935, Mr. Price received three checks, two of them dated ahead, to cover the total claim at $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ per word. I have already paid out each author's share of the installment. Furthermore, we have stipulation from Gernsback enabling us to take judgment in case he should default on any of those checks. Within a few days after the opening of negotiations, W. Varick Nevins received back from WONDER STORIES an outline of a new story he had submitted to them with the following note:--"I am sorry to inform you that our comptroller has ordered me to return your enclosed manuscript, 'The Education Incubator', without consideration. Very truly yours, Charles D. Hornig." This note can be considered as an outspoken statement of policy. The mention that the story was returned by order of the comptroller, indicates the strict financial basis their "new policy" is run on.

To what conclusions can anyone come after going through all this? I have found out of twelve authors of whom I enquired, nine had not been paid at the time of answering, two had been paid after a little trouble, and one evaded answer. Since then, four received the first installment of their claims, one gave up hope, one is undecided, one collected in person, one did not see fit to take action, and one is still engaged in collecting. Of the total list of WONDER STORIES' authors since 1932, have been able to contact a very few. There are at least fifty or sixty more whom I have never been able to write to, or who have never answered my letters. In addition to that, countless rumors. Philip Jacques Bartel told me that he had received letters from two other authors, independent of each other and of myself, requesting him to join them in a suit. Unfortunately, he would not give me their names. Julius Schwartz and Conrad Ruppert have made all sorts of hints of things they could tell but wont. The reason Fantasy never prints anything of this stuff, is because if they did, they would no longer have access to WONDER STORIES. In closing, let me remark that I do not see any reason for thinking that my case will be the last of this sort. There will be others if this sort of thing keeps up. And it is exactly this thing that has driven all the worthwhile authors from science fiction and keeps them away. I do not see much chance for any sort of real progress for science fiction, while this manner of unpleasant occurrence and information are possible. It gives the field of science fiction writing a bad name, so bad perhaps that it may never recover from the disgrace.

I call for every true enthusiast to signify their feelings in this matter by writing to those who have done these things.

IMPORTANT NOTE!!! The Wonder Stories mentioned in the above article is NOT the THRILLING WONDER STORIES now owned by STANDARD Publications, who pay for stories promptly on acceptance. Editor.

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NOTE: Please make all checks and money-orders payable to Wm Sykora.

BOOST SCIENCE FICTION

EDITORIAL by Will Sykora.

With this issue the entire staff of FANTASY NEWS, your science fiction weekly newspaper, wish you all a happy, prosperous, fruitful, science fiction new year!

This semi-annual number marks another milestone in science fiction history. Our newspaper has now completed two and one half years of unbroken weekly publication. Aside from a few issues during the Fall of 1940, FANTASY NEWS has never been seriously late. But even so, no issue has ever been skipped, and no issue has ever failed to contain at least one important item of late news.

For the continuous appearance of FANTASY NEWS we have to thank only you, our loyal readers. Without your subscriptions this newspaper could not continue for one week. Some of our subscribers have purchased this newspaper ever since the first issue appeared. Some others fell by the wayside, but only for a time, only to renew when least expected. For FANTASY NEWS holds subscribers, a remarkable achievement for such a modest publication.

In the future, as in the past, we hope to serve you with the latest news in science fiction, the field of endeavor we all love so well. As in the years past, so now, we welcome news from science fiction fan clubs and magazines as well as from the professionals, and will extend each reporter's subscription at the rate of 1¢ per column inch of published material.

Here's to 1941! May it be an ever greater stf year than 1940!

GUEST EDITORIAL by Jimmy Taurasi.

In exposing to the fan world the fact that STIRRING SCIENCE and COSMIC STORIES were not paying for stories, FANTASY NEWS did more than publish scoop news, it obtained payment for a well-known stf author. The story is this: An author who has sold quite a number of yarns and who may someday be a top-notch writer, had a story published in one of the "non-paying" mags. An stf editor of one our first class N.Y. stf mags saw the item in FN and this author's yarn in SS. He called the author in question up on the carpet, and in no uncertain terms, told him that "Amateurs" who donated stories to "pro" mags had no place in his publication. The upshot of the matter was that the author in question went to Jerry Albert, demanded payment, got it, and now the irate editor of the top rank mag feels better.

But the pay-off is this. In spite of all the reports that all authors appearing in STIRRING SCIENCE had known what the arrangements were (no payment) this particular author's agent had merely informed him that he had "placed" his yarn, having omitted to mention the fact that no payment should be expected.

As a result of this, other authors may be paid. (See P.4 in this issue of FANTASY NEWS)

In the opinion of this writer, magazines of the type of STIRRING SCIENCE are a menace to science fiction. They hurt all the other mags and lower the quality of stf. In running his literary agency, this writer has gone out of his way to see that clients got only the highest rates. So far he has sold yarns only to the 1¢ per word markets, but how long can these high price markets last in the face of such manifestly unfair competition. Mags which do not pay for stories have a cost of production from \$500 to \$1000 lower than mags that pay from $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ to 1¢ per word. Payment of $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ per word on publication is bad enough, but no payment at all----

READERS: For every \$1 sub to FN you secure we will give an old AMAZING!

PRO MAG REVIEW by Our Readers.

PLANET STORIES, Fall 1940:

In "Revolt In the Ice Kingdom" Ray Cummings, closely following his familiar formula, sends his hero, no to an "atom-World" this time, but to the little, cold, wandering asteroid, Zura, where after many vicissitudes he rescues the beautiful young queen from the revolting natives, and brings her back to Earth with him. However, it isn't what he writes, but how he writes it, that makes a Cummings story entertaining. Cummings fans will enjoy this. (DBThompson)

FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES, Feb 41:

The long-awaited "Spot Of Life" by Austin Hall, sequel to "The Blind Spot", is featured in this issue, copping the fairish Finlay cover, and with three interior pix by the same artist. This is a fine, gripping novel of scientific mystery and inter-dimensional travel, though to readers of "The Blind Spot" it may seem too much like a rehash of the original story. If you missed the first novel, this must not be passed up; otherwise you can take it or leave it.

Also included: "Snail Of Silent Men" by Philip M. Fisher (this is a hair-raiser), a poem by Doc Lowndes based on Merritt's "People Of the Pit", and an interesting article on Austin Hall and Homer Eon Flint.

FANTASTIC NOVELS, Jan 1941: "The Radio Beast" by Ralston Milne Farley, this month's feature novel, continues the adventures of Miles Cabot on the planet Venus. The evil Prince Yuri seizes the government of the Venus-Kingdom Cupia, and Cabot finds himself in exile, a hunted man. During his harrowing adventures in search of his wife, the princess Lilla, he stumbles on a lost race beneath the planet's surface, and with their aid and that of the gigantic, intelligent "whistling bees", everything of course comes out all right in the end. The story is swift-moving, told in simple but engaging style. If you liked "The Radio Man", you will like this. Another highlight of the issue is the famous Merritt tale, "The People Of the Pit", a haunting fantasy with the touch of pure mystery and wonder (next column)

PRO MAG REVIEW Cont'd: and not a little of the grotesque.

STARTLING STORIES, Jan 1941: Edmond Hamilton contributes this month's book-length novel, "A Yank At Valhalla", originally accepted by WEIRD TALES under the title of "The Twilight Of the Gods". It is an attempt to explain scientifically the ancient Norse mythology, and while as such it is not without decided flaws, there is plenty of thrilling action with a good deal of authentic Norse legend embodied in it. It forms an interesting contrast with the Pratt-deCamp UNKNOWN novel of some months back, "The Roaring Trumpet". On the whole, we will take deCamp, but this present yarn is up to STARTLING'S average. Besides a couple of mediocre shorts, an outstanding Hall of Fame reprint is included: Clark Ashton Smith's brilliant "City Of the Singing Flame", a beautifully written, imaginatively inspiring science-fantasy which alone is worth the price of the magazine. (Paul H. Spencer)

ASTOUNDING S-F, Jan 1941: "Sixth Column"--This whole instalment used to make the set-up for the active part of the story, which will be that of applied religious psychology. The yarn is typical of one present trend in stff, that of stories dealing with other than mechanical, physical, or chemical sciences and their future application. "Sixth Column" may turn out to be one of the best stories of the year.

"The Day We Celebrate"--Just a mistake in holidays, but it makes a good story.

"The Mechanical Mice"--Another "episode" story and very good, that is, a story interesting as an episode.

"The Traitor"--The best story of the issue, particularly if you have been following this series. These stories should be developed into a real series. Brains and Training win over Brute Force and Stupidity.

"Lost Rocket"--Good action, mystery, accident type of space-travel yarn.

"The Opportunists"--(P. 6, C. 1)

'STIRRING SCIENCE' ALTERS NO-PAYMENT POLICY

JERRY ALBERT ANNOUNCES ALBING PUBLICATIONS WILL PAY BUT DOES NOT MENTION RATES

DIRECT QUOTES FROM MR ALBERT'S
LETTERS TO FANTASY NEWS!!!

Jerry Albert, Editor of ALBING PUBLICATIONS, in a letter to FANTASY NEWS dated Dec 24, states:

"At the present time, we are ***** paying regular rates to all". He also states: "The first two issues of STIRRING SCIENCE and the first issue of COSMIC STORIES were arranged for well in advance. And even on these first issues, we paid regular rates to the more established contributors."

This is a definite about-face in payment policy, for Mr. Albert, in a letter dated Dec 6, said:

"Our two magazines are unable, for the present, to pay for stories."

Mr. Albert's letter of Dec 24 follows in full:

"With reference to the comments of Mr. Raymond A. Palmer concerning our publications, COSMIC and STIRRING SCIENCE STORIES, we wonder whether anyone else noticed how much they sounded like lurid phrases from a somewhat second-rate story: "a strangler's noose squarely around the neck of all that is good for science-fiction...a succubus to prey upon the books they love to read...the author is asked to slit his own throat by donating stories..."

Fairly abusive, somewhat libellous, and quite inaccurate. Could it be that Mr. Palmer fears competition of a good magazine?

The facts, very simply, are these. The first two issues of STIRRING SCIENCE, and the first issue of COSMIC STORIES, were arranged for well in advance. Certain authors and artists were voluntarily helpful, (next column)

This they will have no cause to regret. And even on these so deplorable (to Mr. Palmer) first issues, we paid regular rates to the more established contributors.

At the present time, we are emulating the virtuous Mr. Palmer and paying regular rates to all. He will not, therefore, be able to use us as an excuse for not paying for stories, or art.

Mr. Palmer also grabbed at some inaccuracies in the original news item, triumphantly set 'em up and knocked 'em down. First, we never offered or paid \$15 for any cover painting; we did pay the rather generous amount of \$20 for a plain black and white line drawing for our cover. (We dare to be original.) Second, Mr. Wollheim is not under contract with us for any specific number of issues; we hope and expect that this distinguished science fiction expert will be with us for a long time. We dare say that within a very short time he may even be earning as much as Mr. Palmer! Dare we say even more? (At that time we shall expect Mr. Palmer to stand by his promise to pay Mr. Wollheim's income tax.)

Finally, in our dull way, we feel that our actions have been faintly less reprehensible than a certain other act recently committed--the re-issuance of back numbers of a certain magazine under new cover and title, as if it were a completely new magazine. What do you think, Mr. Palmer?"

IMPORTANT NOTE: The news item headed "Albing Spikes Rumors" in our contemporary, "Fantasy Fiction Field", was in the form of a personal letter from Mr. Wollheim to Mr. Unger, publisher of FFF. The items in FANTASY NEWS concerning ALBING, are by Mr. Wollheim's boss.

THE PROS WRITE LETTERS TOO

(Being excerpts from letters to Scott Feldman, Secretary-Treasurer of the Queens Science Fiction League)

"You fellows are molding thought and science for the coming years for out of discussions like yours there may arise an idea that will revolutionize activity of the future. My whole course of life was changed one night while in the trenches of France during the World War. I discussed with a Captain of engineers the subject of life and electricity—that the human set-up, conscious or sub-conscious is capable of producing various physical phenomena as attraction and repulsion, luminous and heating effects, shock to other bodies, chemical decomposition, which like electricity were originally thought to be caused by a kind of fluid energy, but are now regarded as being due to strains in the luminiferous ether or to the presence of electrons.

Thus began my investigations into so-called metaphysics in view to interpreting the strange phenomena I experienced with dying soldiers and the extraordinary powers I observed among men who were energized emotionally by the excitement of battle. I say men so emotionalized that they were able to jump barbed wire fences higher than the world's record for the high jump. I saw a soldier lift a 200 pound enemy and toss him twenty feet as though he were a bag of flour. In such cases they had boosted the so-called mental voltage until they were supermen with super power. It proved to me that the human brain is a dynamo capable of energizing the body to perform action that electrical power can perform—such as knocking a man down by a mere touch, levitation ten times one's weight; light (which some sects call aura or ghosts); radio pulsations which some call telepathy; heat, which accounts for natives in New Guinea and Tibet able to warm naked bodies in zero temperatures; decomposition which is utilized by the Kahunas of Hawaii in destroying an enemy by causing decay of his body through mental force of concentrating kahunas. (next column)

THE PROS WRITE LETTERS Cont'd:

I offer my theory of "Life Is Electricity" for a subject of discussion."

Sincerely

Ed. Bodin

"Thanks for your kind invitation to attend next Sunday's meeting of the Queens Science Fiction League. I regret however that I shall not be able to be with you, and for a very good reason, namely there are two covers which must be out by Monday, one for SCIENCE FICTION and another for COMET.

While you are comfortably seated at the Bohemian Hall, throwing bouquets and brickbats at the poor authors and artists, I shall be millions of miles away on an alien world trying to pacify rather mean tempered mechanical ostriches.

After accomplishing that, (no easy task, I assure you) I'll be catching a super-speed Space-liner to the planet Neptune, where, underneath a miles thick ice sheet, I shall be fighting (on canvas) a terrific aerial battle to wipe out a band of big time interplanetary fifth columnists.

Now you think that ought to be enough for any man in a day's work but if I have any time left, I'll be rescuing a stratosphere liner with its entire crew hopelessly trapped in a "Sky Trap".

So I'll leave it to your judgment where I'd rather be, with a lot of good pals in Queens or where I just told you?"

Cordially yours

Frank R. Paul.

"I greatly enjoyed attending the last Queens gathering, and shall be pleased to receive the announcements you mention.

There is a distinct possibility that Otis A. Kline will be in New York over the holidays. I wish he could come down more frequently, but he likes Short Beach so well that his visits to the city have been wide-spaced. I've known Otis for a number of years. He is, as you say, a pretty swell chap."

Yours very cordially

F. B. Long.

BE A FANTASY NEWS REPORTER! Send in an item and get a PRINTED PRESS CARD!

SCIENTIFILMS by Mario Racic, Jr.

One of the most unusual sets ever constructed for a motion picture has been completed at UNIVERSAL for use in the studio's new horror melodrama, "The Mysterious Dr. R".

Elaborate and complete, the set represents a modern electrical research laboratory in which Lionel Atwill, as a half-mad scientist, subjects Lon Chaney, Jr. to experiments attempting to prove a theory that human beings can be controlled by electricity.

Replicas of such intricate equipment as an electrostat table, high tension insulators, an atomic bombardier, a control cabinet, and an Oudin Coil, were constructed in the studio's technical department under the supervision of Eric Wybrow, noted electrical expert.

Laboratory sequences are calculated to be dramatic high spots of "The Mysterious Dr. R" which is being filmed under the direction of Richard Wagner.

"Hullabaloo", a METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER picture directed by Edwin L. Marin from a screen play by Nat Perrin was presented this week at the LOEW'S CRITERION in N.Y. This new film is based on the famous Orson Welles broadcast of H.G. Wells' "War Of the Worlds" that created a national panic about two years ago. As a scientifilm the picture is a dog.

PRO MAG REVIEW Cont'd: The old plot again. Called mutant, nova, etc. eight years ago, but well written. All humanity except a chosen few lose all memory of their past. Worth reading.

"Doom Ship"-Just a good story. Solution and outcome as obvious as any fairy story, but still I liked it. (A. O. Timer)

STFILM ADDENDUM by Russell Cox.

Last year(1940) UFA, the German film company, produced a film titled, "Spaceship No. 18", which is a fantastic interpretation of the future of our planet. Info suggests it is up to the high standard of these films as made there.

An unknown streptococcus germ killed a junior co-ed at Fordham Law School

FAN MAG REVIEW by Harry Warner, Jr.

Austra-Fantasy: vol. 1, no. 2. 30 small hectoed pp, neatly done and in all one of the best Australian fan mags so far. Price an utter mystery; 25¢ will undoubtedly bring you several issues, though. 183 Domain Road, South Yarra, SE1, Melbourne, Australia.

The Fantasite: vol. 1, no. 1. 24 nicely hectoed pp, with heavy colored covers, for a dime. A lot of interesting fan stuff, some really beautiful illustrations, and neat format make this best-of-the-week. Recommended; from 224 W. 6th Street, Hastings, Minnesota.

Melbourne Bulletin: vol. 1, no. 1. 2 quarto pp of chatter and reviews obtainable from same address as Austra-Fantasy. 7 copies for 25¢.

THE COINNOISEUR by Russell Cox.

"Lost Atlantis" by James Bramwell is a real find. It is the story of the geological legend of old Atlantis and its probable make-up. The book attempts to record philosophically the vital problems that these people faced. It covers facts that are old stuff to students of Atlantis, but the treatment and style make it well worth reading. It is published by Harper's at \$2.75.

The stories of Roy Rockwood known as "The Great Marvel Series" make fine gifts for the younger sfans. The stories are rather juvenile but are interestingly written. The Series consists of the following titles: "Through Space To Mars", "5000 Miles Underground", "Lost On the Moon", "On a Torn Away World", "By Air Express To Venus", and "By Space Ship to Saturn". All of these books may be obtained with illustrated jackets showing a scene in the story from your local Kresge's or Woolworth's five and dime. Jack Darrow, the name of one of the boy heroes of these books, has been used as a pseudonym for many years by famous Chicago fan Clifford Kornoelje.

CHARLIE HORNIG, popular fan and editor of SCIENCE FICTION, a BLUE RIBBON Publication, is back in Elizabeth, N.J., his old home town.