

SCIENCE FICTION

NEWS LETTER

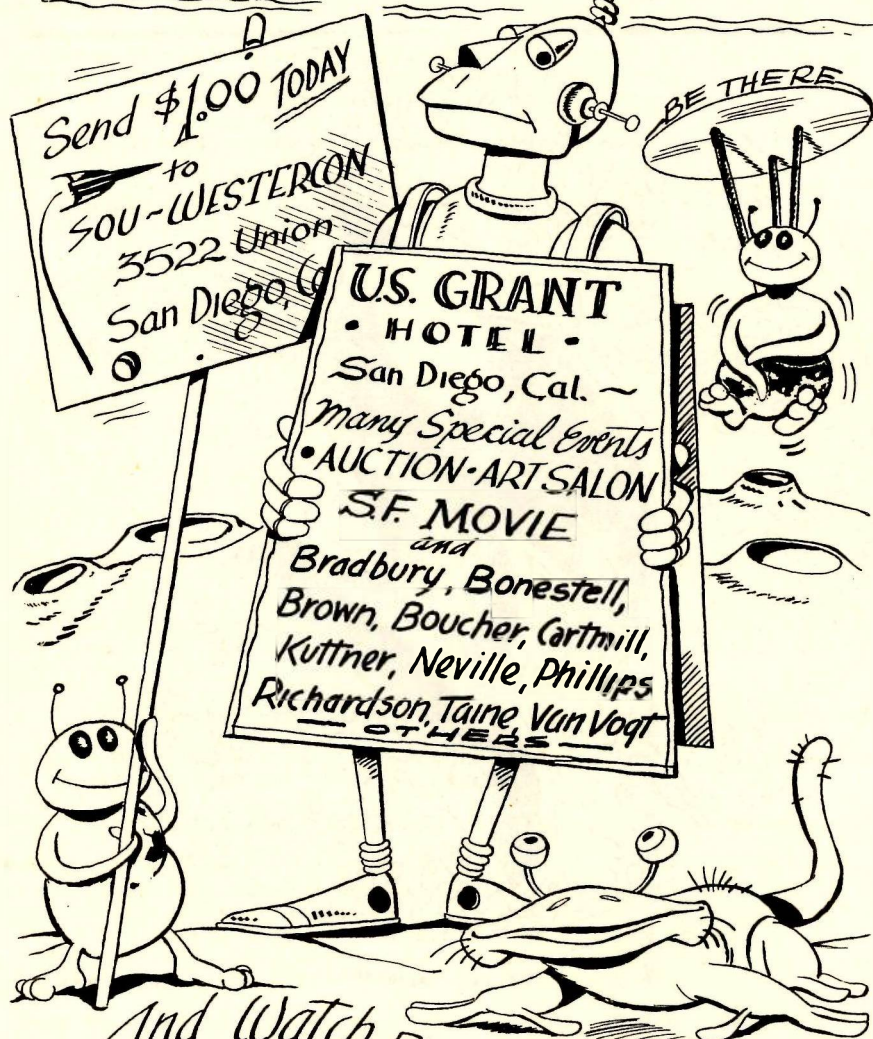


RICHARD BERGERON

MAY 1952

the leading newspaper of the science fiction world

JUNE 28 and 29
THE
SOU-WESTERCON



MISS SCIENCE FICTION of 1952

The Reporter

THE QUESTION: Do you read science fiction in the bathtub?

THE PLACE: Indian Lakes, Ohio, conference.

Gregg Calkins: "Hell no!" I've got other things on my mind."

Robert Bloch: "That all depends. What I mean is, sometimes. Or no, as often as not. It's a rule of the thumb."

Poul Anderson: "I find it an extremely difficult place to properly hold or suspend the average pulp publication devoted to science fiction while immersed in hot water and too the light is not properly located in any bathroom conducive to casual browsing."

Roy Cummings: "Yes."

Nancy Gerding: "In Roseville? Don't be silly!"

J.T. Oliver: "There was a drummer through here some time ago, he tried danged hard to sell me one of those glimmicks but I wasn't born yesterday, nosiree!"

Dick Ryan: "Not until they bring out a magazine that reads under water."

Lynn Hickman: "I'm afraid I have no opinion."

Richard Elsberry: "Which magazine? A lot depends on that you know. What I mean is, you just can't walk into any old bath room with any old magazine. Oh, bathtub? Well, that's different, buster."



Betty Sullivan: "I used to read in the tub all the time, until the day my BEDSIDE ESQUIRE fell into the water. But that's a rather heavy book and I did have the soap in my other hand you see."

Don Ford: "No, but I saw a flying saucer there once."

Walter Willis: "All the time--I like to make use of every minute of the day. Madeline holds the magazine for me."

Frank Robinson: "I wouldn't be caught dead in a bathtub!"

Len Moffatt: "Confidentially, that's the only time I do read it. But you see my trouble, don't you? There's so many magazines coming out nowadays that I'm way behind on my reading. I've just about finished the early Ziff-Davis AMAZINGS ... around 1938. You can't get much done on a couple of baths a month, can you?"

Art Rapp: "If you sit down in some creek with a magazine in your hand over here, your reputation is ruined!"

Ray Beam: "What was the question?"

Judy May: "Now that's a wonderful idea! Let's do it at the convention. We'll start a clean-fandom campaign."

MAGAZINES

PALMER DIDN'T GET TEN THOUSAND, BUT he's switching to monthly schedule anyway. Two months ago, editor Ray Palmer of OTHER WORLDS asked two thousand fans and readers to pledge him five dollars each, that he might raise the necessary cash to put his magazine on a monthly basis. In a letter to the angels, dated March 12, Palmer said that although the full ten thousand goal had not been met, enough pledges had been received to enable him to swing the deal. He plans to begin monthly publication with the October issue (---just possibly with the September issue if printing arrangements can be made). The June, July and August issues will appear at the usual six-week intervals, while the September number remains in doubt.

Meanwhile the June issue, now out, contains five stories by editors: Keyes, Merwin Jr, Fairman, Boucher, and Bixby; plus articles by Carnell, Taurasi and Palmer. Also included in the issue are photographs of twelve editors and sketches of two others: Taurasi, Keyes, Bixby, Merwin Jr, Gernsback, McComas, Boucher, Gnaedinger, Sloane, Lowndes, Mines, Knight, Campbell and Gold. Four of those fourteen are ex-editors, but tempus fugit.

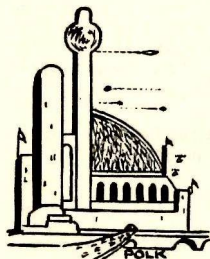


The first issue of SPACE SCIENCE FICTION, dated May, went on the newsstands in mid-April. Edited by Lester del Ray, the book is priced at 35¢, contains 160 small-sized pages, and the usual bosomy girl on the cover (while those in the background wear helmets and spacesuits.) The magazine is bi-monthly, and published by Space Publications Inc., 175 Fifth Ave., New York. The first issue contains yarns by del Ray, Asimov, Kuttner, Sohl, Walton; and a review department by George O. Smith. Also included is an announcement of a forthcoming companion magazine, ROCKET STORIES.

Still another new magazine due: VORTEX SCIENCE FICTION, to be edited by Chester Whitehorn.

The March 22nd issue of COLLIERS devoted its cover and some seventeen pages to feature-article, "Man Will Conquer Space Soon!" Contributing to the editorial matter were Dr. Wernher von Braun, Dr. Fred Whipple, Dr. Joseph Kaplan, Dr. Heinz Haber, Willy Ley, and Oscar Schachter. In addition, eleven full-color illustrations are provided by Chesley Bonestell, Fred Freeman and Rolf Klep.

LIFE, after years of gleefully laughing at flying saucers, and people who claimed to have seen saucers, did an about-face in its April 5th issue and almost admitted they (or something) does exist. Article presented factual studies made by US Air Force.



Another first issue appearing last month was FANTASTIC, the long promised "slick" quarterly from Howard Browne and Ziff-Davis. Priced at 35¢ digest-sized, the magazine sports a pulpy-plus front cover and a photo-reproduction of a painting on the rear. Over-all treatment in the 162 pages, including editorial handling, is above the usual pulp standard. Represented in first issue are: Miller Jr, Martinez, Fairman, Asimov, Bradbury, Gold, Hickey, Outlaw, Neville, and a novelette by Raymond Chandler.

"THAR SHE BLOWS . . ."

A Film Review

A detailed study of the new and fine art of rocketry is perhaps the second best reason for the existence of a color motion picture produced by Monogram Studios under the title, "FLIGHT TO MARS". The primary reason for viewing the opus is Marguerite Chapman, playing a Martian miss, in short tunic and l-o-n-g hose.

The plot of the picture isn't worth mentioning and the same might be said for the "acting," but in those scenes dealing with the swift, clean flight of a rocket ship lies buried gold. Rocketry as a fine art is here given the greatest impetus since Robert Fulton invented the steamboat and proved to the good citizens living along the banks of the Hudson that when you place a "push" behind, something will move forward. The Monogram spaceship is constructed and flown on that same honest principal. It has but one tube, the master-tube at the stern of the vessel, and that overworked exhaust pipe does yeoman duty at the hands of the heroic pilot. The pilot himself is no cadet.



As expected, the ship takes off from earth gracefully and in good form as that stern-tube bellows thunder. Nearing the moon, the ship's passengers fear they may accidentally run afoul of the satellite, so our heroic pilot leaps to the control board, face taut, and depresses the plunger. The stern-tube bellows thunder and the trim Monogram rocket curves safely away from the moon. (The pilot neglected to put out his hand to signal a turn.) As may be expected, the hardy explorers encounter and safely endure a swarm of meteorites but the trusty ship does not come off so well --- after the deadly drumming of the meteorites on the hull, one of the crew crawls back into the tail of the ship to discover the landing gear has been wrecked beyond repair. Naturally, this bad news casts something of a pall over the adventurers, but up pops the doughty pilot to bid them good cheer --- he will do his utmost to put them down on Mars in a crash-landing.



He does. Everyone buckles down for the worst; the taut-faced pilot glares at the uprushing mountainous landscape and poises a cool index finger above the stud. This is the moment, the delicate balance between life and death! The ship is charging directly at a mountain! Our heroic pilot grits his teeth and plunges the mighty stud home -- the stern-tube bellows thunder -- and adds at least a 5G thrust to the ship as it crashes into the mountainside. (The fool had neglected to turn over in mid-space, and brought his ship in nose first.) At a conservative estimate, we figure the studio, the script writer and the taut-faced pilot set back S-F movies by no more than ten years, so all is not lost.

In only one category does Monogram Studios faithfully portray science: the human anatomy. We beg to report that every man in the picture accurately resembles a man, and every woman perfectly portrays a woman. The heroine, in the person of the Martian girl, is most remarkable in this respect and shows off her long legs to lengthy advantage. Martians raise fine women. -BT

FAN-NEWS ROUNDUP

To Horse and Away
In Merrle England;

Arthur C. Clarke sails for New York on April 24th, for a three-month business vacation. Harpers is publishing his new book, *EXPLORATION OF SPACE*, this month, and the volume has also been tagged for distribution by the Book of the Month Club. Clarke will be found shuttling back and forth between New York and Washington DC on business, including a projected television series. He may appear at the Ohio Midwestern Conference.

Meanwhile, his next book will be a juvenile, *ISLANDS IN THE SKY* (Sidgwick & Jackson, London). *NEW WORLDS'* artist Quinn is illustrating the volume. Quinn, by the way, is likewise illustrating a John Christopher (Youd) yarn scheduled to appear in a Christmas Annual now being edited by William Temple.

The International Fantasy Awards Committee (see News Letter number 23, January) have announced the names of the Adjudicators (permanent): author J.M. Walsh, editor John Carnell, bibliophile Fred C. Brown, and fan-critic Walter Willis for Great Britain. For France: editor & publisher Georges Gallet, editor Igor Maslowski. For Sweden: bibliophile Sigvard Ostlund. For the USA: editors Boucher & McComas (as one unit), editor Groff Conklin, editor & publisher August Derleth, editor Everett F. Bleiler, reviewer Basil Davenport, and writer Judith Merrill.

Also on the list of Adjudicators but not eligible to participate this year because they now have books under consideration by the Committee are: John Beynon Harris (Britain), Willy Ley and Wilson Tucker (USA). Mr. Ley is covering German publications for the Committee.



London's Second Convention (the old "International" tag of last year has been dropped) will be held on May 31 - June 1, at the Royal Hotel in London.

AUTHENTIC SCIENCE FICTION, now monthly has added several fan departments.

John Carnell's first anthology, *NO PLACE LIKE EARTH*, will be published by Boardman (London) in August. The all-British contents include: "Time to Rest" and "No Place Like Earth" (Beynon) combined into one story, "Breaking Strain" (Clarke), "Balance" (Christopher), "Castaway" (Whitley), "Unknown Quantity" (Peter Phillips), "The Two Shadows" (Temple), "Machine Made" (M'Intosh) "Chemical Plant" (Ian Williamson), and "Robots Don't Bleed" (JW Groves). Carnell has begun work on a second anthology.

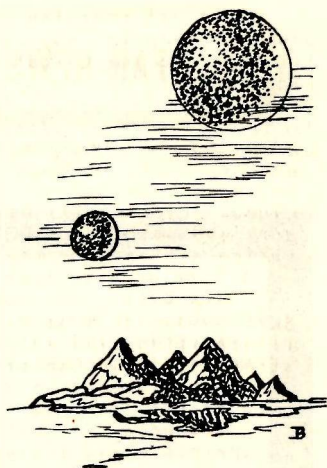
Sterling Macoby, of Australia, reached Vancouver B.C. in early April and despite bus-strike difficulties, began a grand tour down the westcoast to Portland, San Francisco & Los Angeles.

Parslan editor Maslinski reports S-F dropping off in France, with five of seven prospective publishers dropping magazines.

In the USA, life went on:

In Berkeley, California, the Elves' Gnomes' and Little Men's Science-Fiction Chowder & Marching Society filed notice with United Nations headquarters that they laid claim to several properties on the moon --- and promptly got themselves a chunk of publicity, as newspapers and radio stations relayed their claims.

Meanwhile, as expected, in Chicago the "Moon Commission" of the coming S-F convention just as promptly objected. In their March bulletin, the convention officials state, in part: "Initiating the squabble were members of the Elves, (etc.) who laid claim to mining rights in the territory around the craters Ritter, Sabine and Manners ... (and they have) demanded that the UN recognize their claims.



"Rising up in protest ... was Alexander F. Victor, inventor of the Victor Talking Machine, who shouted, 'Their claim is illegal! Don't be surprised if I take this to the Supreme Court.' Victor went on to say that he reserves exclusive rights to dispose of moon property -- at \$1000 per acre.

"... the Moon Commissioner maintains the UN has no jurisdiction. ... all members holding title to moon craters (because of their convention memberships) can be assured that the Commission will do its utmost to insure that their rights will not be encroached upon. ... "

In mid-April, NEWS LETTER was advised that at least 3 known groups were already making plans to capture the 1953 convention-- the Baltimore Science Fiction Forum, an unnamed New York group, and of course the Elves' Gnomes' and Little Men's Science-Fiction Chowder, Marching and Ballot-box Stuffing Society.

(Did they ask if fandom wanted a respectable convention?)

Also in Chicago, Robert L. Farnsworth, president of the U.S. Rocket Society, entered the elections as a candidate for Congress from Illinois' 14th District. He didn't win. This is the first known time a science fiction fan has stood for Congress.

The science fiction writer's colony in Taos, New Mexico, has bit the dust. Fredric Brown and wife departed for California; John and Dorothy DeCourcy departed for nobody knows where; and Mack Reynolds is packing up wife and goats, to move east.

August Derleth, Sauk City, Wisc., is engaged to a local girl and will be married this year, or next. The newswire and telephoto services spread it around the country last month, balling it up more than somewhat in the telling.

Lee Hoffman and parents made a trip to Cuba in March. Cuban revolution broke out just one week later.

(continued:

At least four fan magazines have announced special issues to push the campaign now being conducted by Shelby Vick to import an Irishman to the Chicago convention. Vick (Box 493, Lynn Haven, Florida) has for the past several months been promoting donations to buy steamer passage for Walter Willis, Belfast, Northern Ireland. The four magazines, MAD, CONFUSION, OOPS! and SOL, will devote their entire issues (and cash returns from same) to the campaign, the Irishman, and the fund.

I like an atom bomb
the best
Because it doesn't
stop to rest;
No whistle, boom or
other sound;
Whenever it comes
around.
(Pardon while I say
this jest)
It lifts Man up to
his crest.

- Stan Woolston

Ben Singer is now editing the Grosse Point (Mich.) REVIEW, a weekly newspaper. Nancy Moore is on his staff as women's editor.

Roscoe Wright is abandoning his printed fan magazine, EUSIFANSO, in favor of a new art publication to appear in the near future. The coming issue of E will be final. Wright is seeking one- and two-color pix of good quality for the new magazine. (146 east 12th St, Eugene, Oregon.)

E.E. Smith and Mack Reynolds have announced intentions of attending the Midwest Conference, as well as a group from New York.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: the Baltimore Science Fiction Forum captured a full-page publicity spread (rotogravure section) in a recent Baltimore SUNDAY SUN, but the editor did them wrong. The illustration heading the article shows a handsome cowboy, blaster in hand, deserting the horse-girl-and-ranch to go zipping off on a rocket. News-story reveals that the reporter relied on LIFE magazine for his research: the fans like to read "sfulps" (whatever they are), like to attend "fanferences" (whatever they are), and attend theaters to watch "sfilms" (whatever they are). Meanwhile, the various clubs about the country have been tinkered-up. Portland, Oregon, fans will be astonished to learn they are now "The Atomblies," while San Francisco Elves and Gnomes will likewise be astonished to learn they've lost their organization -- it is now the "Los Angeles Chowder and Marching Science Club." How does it feel to have the rug pulled from under you, gents? One question: are you Baltimore members seriously considering changing your name to "Balsciforum" ??

SHORT TAKES: Damon Knight has deserted Los Angeles, returning to New York. Cpl. Lee Jacobs has been transferred to Camp Gordon, Georgia, and is now the possessor of a ham radio license: W3SZM. 2nd Lt. George Earley shipped overseas last month, in a westerly direction. Hannes Bok has deserted science fiction, due to a recent manhandling from a convention committee, and may move away from New York soon. Randall Garrett has left Battle Creek, taking up residence in Cincinnati. Norman G. Browne, of Vancouver BC, is announcing a new fan magazine, but neglects to mention its name in circular matter. Master-Monster Lynn Hickman to be married in June -- to another monster, we presume. Newest "fanne" to turn author is Anna Sinclair Moffatt, placing a short story with new science fiction magazine.



THE BEST FROM FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION edited by Anthony Boucher and J. Francis McComas. (Little-Brown, Boston, 1952. \$2.75.)

THE ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION ANTHOLOGY edited by John W. Campbell. (Simon & Schuster, New York, 1952. \$3.95.)

For those fans and readers who follow the magazines closely, and who have followed them for many years, these two anthologies may evoke mild surprise. There is no doubt that the two magazines are at the top of the heap, and that their editors are likewise. Logically then, the book buyer would expect nothing but the cream from the very top of the respective bottles. Such is not the case.

Boucher & McComas come the nearest to accomplishing their objective; they were determined to print nothing that was already in print elsewhere, and of course their magazine publishes more fantasy than science fiction. Within these bounds they have done a good job and this reviewer enjoyed their selections. Had they decided to publish the really best, regardless of availability elsewhere, we think the contents would have been much different.

Campbell is a more difficult case to understand. His book includes stories already published elsewhere, so exclusiveness did not hamper him; and he had a far larger inventory to choose from, so what happened? One of his choices, Isaac Asimov's "Nightfall" is, we think, top-grade science fiction --- the kind of science fiction that comes only once to any magazine. "Nightfall" deserves a review all by itself, richly deserves to be preserved and read a century from now. But not all of the remaining yarns in the volume deserve a reprinting at all. Perhaps someday we'll find out why Campbell chose the questionable stories that he did.

Contents of FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION: Huge Beast (Cartmill), John the Revelator (La Farge), Gavagan's Bar (de Camp and Pratt), The Friendly Demon (Defoe), Old Man Henderson (Neville), Three-penny Piece (Stephens), No-Sided Professor (Gardner), The Listening Child (Seabright), Dress of White Silk (Matheson), The Mathematical Voodoo (Nearing, Jr.), The Hub (MacDonald), Built Up Logically (Schoenfeld), The Rat That Could Speak (Dickens), Narapola (Nelson), Postpaid to Paradise (Arthur), In the Days of Our Fathers (McClintic), Barney (Stanton), The Collector (Heard), and Fearsome Fable (Elliott).

Contents of ASTOUNDING: Blowups Happen (Heinlein), Hindsight (Williamson), Vault of the Beast (van Vogt), The Exalted (de Camp), Nightfall (Asimov), When the Bough Breaks (Padgett), Clash By Night (O'Donnell), Invariant (Pierce), First Contact (Leinster), Meihem in ce Klasrum (Edwards), Hobbyist (Russell), E for Effort (Sherrard), Child's Play (Tenn), Thunder and Roses (Sturgeon), Late Night Final (Russell), Cold War (Neville), Eternity Lost (Slovak), The Witches of Karres (Schmitz), Over the Top (del Ray), Meteor (Powers), Last Enemy (Piper), Historical Note (Leinster), and



Protected Species (Fyfe). Frankly, we were somewhat disappointed.

If Mr. Gold or his publishers will kindly oblige, we'll be happy to review his new anthology, GALAXY READER OF SCIENCE FICTION. (Crown, New York.) -BT



JACK OF EAGLES by James Blisch. (Greenberg: Publisher, New York, 1952. \$2.75.)

A full two-thirds of this novel was found to be refreshing as well as entertaining; only toward the end was there a sense of disappointment, when the problem shifted from the protagonist's struggle to save himself, to his struggle to save the world.

A very frightened and bewildered newspaperman named Calden suddenly finds himself possessing wild talents -- telepathy, teleportation, and telekinesis; his efforts to discover the why, the how-come, and the what-next? makes fine reading. He finds himself taken over by a predatory, money-hungry woman, gets himself in a first-class muddle with the government, and is making exciting steps toward the discovery and proper application of his powers when the villains move in -- gangsters, secretly master-minded by other telepaths and possessors of assorted wild talents. This is an original novel, never before published. We liked it. -BT

THE WEAPON MAKERS by A.E. van Vogt. (Greenberg: Publisher, New York, 1952. \$2.75.)

DESTINATION: UNIVERSE by same. (Pellegrini & Cudahy, New York, 1952. \$3.00.)

Nine years ago, ASTOUNDING published a serial entitled "The Weapon Makers" by van Vogt, and five years ago, Hadley Publishing Company (Providence, R.I.) brought out that story in book form. Any similarity between those earlier versions and this one is an oversight on van Vogt's part; for the new 1952 edition, the author has done what appears to be a complete rewrite, almost eliminating a major character of the older work and now allowing another major character to handle both former roles. One hero doesn't fill the boots of two former ditto any too well.

Captain Hedrock, immortal man, founder of the Weapon Shops and the Royal House of Isher, traces leads to discover the secret existence of an interstellar ship. Simultaneously he (1) battles the Weapon Shop governing-body to force them to adhere to their constitution, (2) battles the reigning Empress of Isher to keep the interstellar ship out of her hands, and (3) battles a villain and a race of spider-folk to rescue a scientist. In the old editions, a meteorite miner named Dan Neelan did much of this job, but Neelan is little more than a dress-extra now.

The second volume is an anthology of ten stories, originally published in five magazines; van Vogt says the best of his short stories and novelettes are included here. He could be right --- several other anthologists have agreed with him by previously publishing some of them.



The contents: Far Centaurus, The Monster, Dormant, Enchanted Village, A Can of Paint, Defense, Dear Pen Pal, The Rulers, The Sound, and The Search.



TALES FROM UNDERWOOD by David H. Keller. (Published for Arkham House by Pellegrini & Cudahy, New York, 1952. \$3.95)

Twenty-three of the Doctor's good yarns, divided into three categories: "The Science-Fictioneer," "The Fantastiste," and "The Psychiatrist." The following contents have been more or less set into those three departments:

The Worm, The Revolt of the Pedestrians, The Yeast Men, The Ivy War, The Doorbell, The Flying Fool, The psychophonic Nurse, A Biological Experiment, Free as the Air, The Bridle, Tiger Cat, The God Wheel, The Golden Bough, The Jelly Fish, The Oplum Eater, The Thing in the Cellar, The Moon Artist, Creation Unforgivable, The Dead Woman, The Door, The Perfumed Garden, The Literary Corkscrew, and A Piece of Linoleum. A must for Keller fans! -BT

NIGHT'S YAWNING PEAL selected by August Derleth. (Published for Arkham House by Pellegrini & Cudahy, New York, 1952. \$3.)

A collection of fifteen supernatural yarns, by both modern and older writers. With the exception of the Lovecraft novelette, these stories have never before been published in book form in the U.S.; the Dunsany tale was anthologized in England. Derleth says that when the C.M. Eddy story (see below) was first published in WEIRD TALES, that issue was yanked off the newsstands.

Contents include: Mr. George (Grendon), The Loved Dead (Eddy), The Sign (Dunsany), The La Prellio Paper (Jacobi), The Gorge of the Churels (Wakefield), Dhoh (Wellman), The Churchyard Yew (Lefanu), Technical Slip (Harris), The Man Who Collected Poe (Bloch), Roman Remains (Blackwood), Hector (West), A Damsel with a Dulcimer (Ferguson), The Surpressed Edition (Curle), The Lonesome Place (Derleth), and The Case of Charles Dexter Ward (Lovecraft). -BT



THE WITCHING NIGHT by C.S. Cody (World, Cleveland), is described as the story of a Michigan doctor caught up in modern demonology and witchcraft; he loses his patients when the dark forces interfere.

EIDOLON by J. David Stern (Messner, New York), is a philosophical fantasy, concerning a superman who was conceived by his mother alone, sans male assistance, and who confounds the scientific world.

NIGHT OF THE JABBERWOCK by Fredric Brown, now available from Bantam Books, at 25¢. Ray Bradbury's THE ILLUSTRATED MAN appeared a few weeks ago from the same publisher, at same price. THE REVOLT OF THE TRIFFIDS by John Wyndham (reviewed here in #20) to be published by Popular Library at 25¢.

CORRECTION: Forrest Ackerman is not editing the FPCI anthology, "SCIENCE AND SORCERY," as we stated here last issue. The error was made when we noted in Don Day's INDEX that Ackerman had once used the pseudonym "Garret Ford"; inasmuch as this pseudonym is also used for the editor of FPCI's FANTASY BOOK, and was again put to use as editor of the forthcoming SCIENCE AND SORCERY, we jumped to the conclusion it was Ackerman in all cases. Both Ackerman and Marvin Neumann of FPCI have corrected us, although the latter refused to allow us to print her letters, and we admittedly lack the nerve to print the message from Ackerman.

PEOPLE

Wilmar Shiras has signed a contract with Gnome Press for the publication of her Children-Series ("In Hiding" etc.) in book form. Included will be a new, unpublished novelette.

Rog Phillips' first hard-cover book will be **FRONTIERS IN THE SKY**, due from Shasta Pubs.

Helen and Sheldon Wesson are returning to Japan, as news correspondents.

Floyd Wallace's yarn "Accidental Flight" in April **GALAXY** will be inflated for book pubbing.

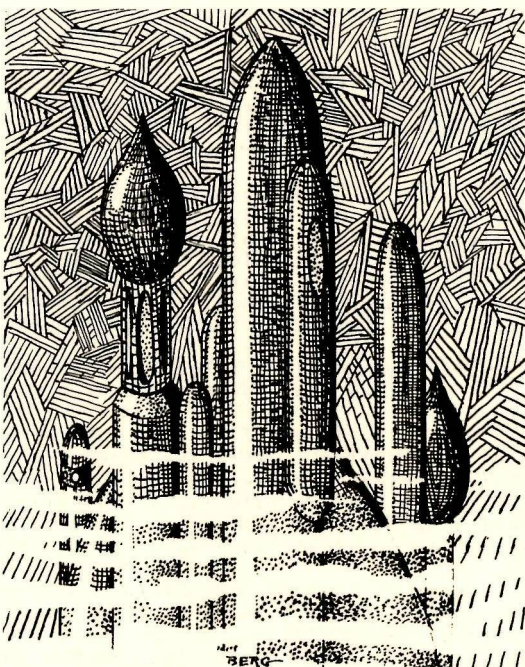
Fredrik Pohl expects to be married this month.

Frank Dietz, Lee Quinn, Bill Nolan, Albert Bender, Robert G. Briggs and the Washington DC S-F association have started a tape-recording exchange in response to appeal here last Issue. Washington's contribution is taped records of two recent meetings.

Charles Freudenthal and Edward Wood have published the second issue of their **JOURNAL OF SCIENCE FICTION** (1331 west Newport ave, Chicago 13), at 25¢. The thirty-two paged planographed journal features photo of Howard Browne on the cover, and a feature article covering the first quarter-century of **AMAZING STORIES**. Also included is an article by Sam Moskowitz discussing old and new science fiction, and stating that, by the publishers' admission, **FANTASTIC STORY MAGAZINE** (reprinting oldies) outsells **STARTLING STORIES** and **THRILLING WONDER STORIES** (having new yarns). The last-named magazine will have a new cover layout soon.

Fritz Leiber, Fletcher Pratt and James Blish will find themselves bedfellows when Twayne Publishers bring out a three-decker volume this spring entitled **WITCHES THREE**. Leiber will be represented with "Conjure Wife," Pratt with "The Blue Star" and Blish with "There Shall Be No Darkness".

THE CONVENTION: Participating memberships in the Tenth S-F Convention have now passed the four-hundred mark, according to the latest bulletin received. Also included with the bulletin is a postcard querying members about reservations and rates: convention committee explains that a price of \$4.25 per plate is necessary on banquet reservations, and are members willing to pay this price or should the dinner be dispensed with as unnecessary? Repeating the choice of 1939, Hugo Gernsback will be guest of honor.





LETTERS to the Editor

incorporating novel devices serve to bring this out quite clearly. SLAN had such devices, but it was also a well-written story and was on that account justly acclaimed as one of the greatest s-f novels. WORLD OF NULL-A likewise had good writing to support its gimmicks, as did the "Baldy" series. Both are considered excellent. When we come to Asimov's "positronic robot" yarns, however, we find that almost all of the stories are wholly dependent on the novelties introduced. Though they are entertaining to read, few people would consider them great.

In more recent years, James H. Schmitz presents an example of this phenomenon. His "Vegan Confederacy" series sparkle with novelties, but is rather weak in respect to sound writing technique. As a result, those who like the particular gimmicks used enjoy the story, while others point out it is only a hollow shell. However, when Schmitz backs up his devices with good, solid writing, as in THE WITCHES OF KARRES, even readers who are relatively immune to the gimmicks must admit that he has done something.



In the case of Bester's novel, it would seem to me that by far the greater part of its praise is based on these supplementary minutiae. It is interesting to observe that a novel using a literary technique somewhat similar to, and in many respects better than, Bester's (--Simak's TIME QUARRY--) was relatively ignored by the readers. Why? No gimmicks. Along comes Bester and adds same. Presto! A masterpiece!

I do not wish to convey the impression that I did not like THE DEMOLISHED MAN. In my opinion, both it and TIME QUARRY rate among the very few really good s-f novels to appear in the last two or three years. I just do not believe that Bester's story, when compared objectively to the great s-f novels of the past, deserves the fantastic amount of applause it has received.

What could cause this widespread acclaim of a novel, on the basis of such secondary considerations? Simply that fans, editors and publishers are starved for good material! And a starving man is in no condition to judge the quality of his meal."

Wilmar Sbiras (Oakland, Calif.): "Thanks to your News Letter, I learn that two of my stories appear in SCIENCE FICTION OMNIBUS. Scoop again for you, sir. Nobody told me about it.

One wonders whether bargains like this will continue to appear at the expense of the authors. One wonders whether the authors will ever get a dime-- or even a free copy of the book. In fact, one wonders."

(The volume mentioned was reviewed last issue; it was edited by Bleiler and Diky, published by Garden City Books, NYC. -BT)

Advertisement: OPERATION FANTAST HANDBOOK, 1952 Edition, containing forty pages of information for and about the science-fantasy world, will be available in April. The contents include a full list of currently-published magazines and fanzines, with details of editorial addresses, prices, etc.; addresses of fan clubs, book dealers and publishers, libraries, pocket book publishers, magazine dealers, and many other items of use to fans. Naturally enough, it also contains full information on OPERATION FANTAST itself. Copies will be mailed free to advertisers and OF members upon publication. Others may obtain copies by sending 25¢ to Phil Rasch, 567 Erskine Drive, Pacific Palisades, California.

August Derleth (Sauk City, Wisc.): "THE HOUSE OF MOONLIGHT is not fantasy. It is a novella, coming from the Prairie Press, not Arkham House, in a limited edition of 500 copies at \$3. It is the fifth in a sequence of connected novelettes, the first four of which were published as PLACE OF HAWKS (Loring & Mussey, 1935) and subsequently reprinted in WISCONSIN EARTH (Stanton & Lee, 1948).

Keller's TALES FROM UNDERWOOD and my anthology, NIGHT'S YAWNING PEAL, are both Arkham House books though produced and distributed by Pellegrini & Cudahy. UNDERWOOD is better than 50% science fiction; PEAL is entirely supernatural horror. Pellegrini's (new) van Vogt, DESTINATION: UNIVERSE, is the first half of the old Arkham-announced "Away and Beyond". The second half is due this fall.

Also due this fall: from Pellegrini, my new science fiction anthology, tentatively entitled FRONTIERS IN SPACE; and from Arkham, FUNGI FROM YUGGOTH, the collected poem of H.P. Lovecraft. Our first two collections, A HORNBOOK FOR WITCHES (Leah Bodine Drake), and THE DARK CHATEAU (Clark Ashton Smith), have done well with the former now just about out of print."

Open Letter to all Fan Magazine Editors who send me their scurvy Publications: "If you characters keep on sending me said publications with notes, letters, pleas, denunciations and expiration-notices written on them, in pen or pencil, I'm going to bill you for postage. Post-office personnel are notoriously unsympathetic to such clandestine scribblings, and demand extra postage. So knock it off, see?" -BT



Caldwell E. Reid (Magnolia, Miss.): "Like to eat? Like to cook? Want to cook the science-fiction way and enjoy the favorite recipes of other fans? No telling what'll happen in this line when I get a chance to arrange YOUR favorite recipes with those of other Travelers in Space.

So, send me your version of "what's best around here" in the food and/or drink line and I will put 'em together, mimeograph the result, and your copy of this cookbook will come to you with my compliments and best gourmet wishes for a good tour, ala S-F of course." ((Full address given above.))



I will be travelling away from home nearly the entire month of May. People wishing to send me letters and/or money should withhold their mail until June first. -BT

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SCIENCE FICTION



NEWS LETTER

MAY 1952

No. 23

Published every second month by Bob Tucker. Subscription price: seven issues for one dollar. Foreign subscriptions: 75¢d yearly, to "Operation Fantast" in care of Captain Kenneth F. Slater.

Cover by Richard Bergeron. Interior illustrations by Bergeron, Lee Hoffman, Chester A. Polk, and Harold Cheney.

PLANOGRAPHED BY JOHN S. SWIFT CO., INC., ST. LOUIS, CHICAGO, NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CLEVELAND
(PRINTED IN U. S. A.)



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