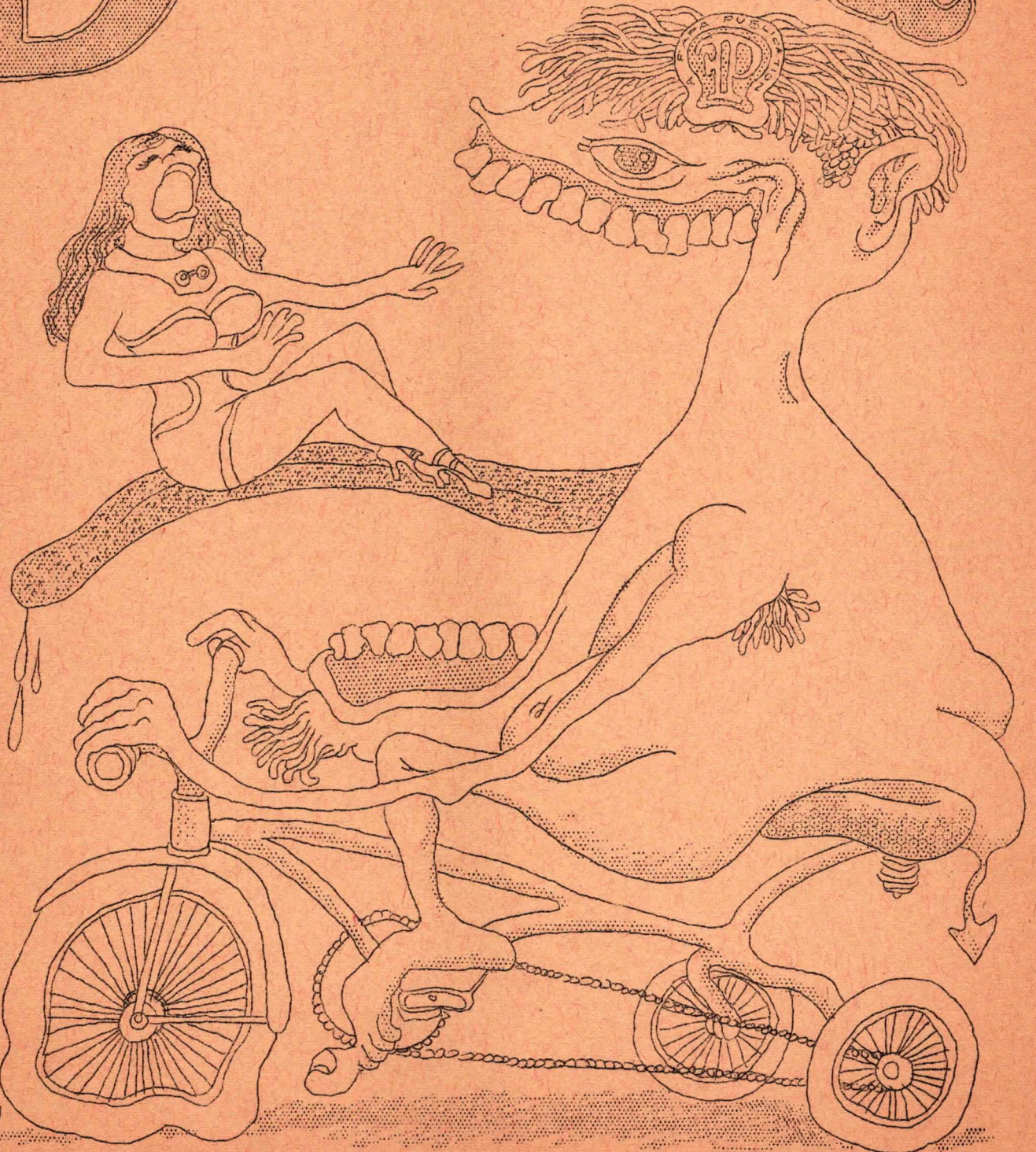


Different

NOV. 1970



Jay
Kinney

LEO MARGULIES LEGEND AND LEGACY

SAM MOSKOWITZ

To the science fiction bibliophile the magazine titles Thrilling Wonder Stories, Startling Stories, Captain Future, Strange Stories, Fantastic Story Quarterly, Wonder Stories Annual, Space Stories, have become part of the legend of science fiction. There are individual editorial names that have come to be associated with those titles--names like Mort Weisinger, Oscar J. Friend, H. L. Gold, Sam Merwin, Sam Mines, Jerome Bixby--but they have flitted past like images projected by a magic lantern, and the overriding personality associated with those titles by readers who remember the era is that of Leo Margulies.

One of the truly remarkable editorial figures in the history of magazine publishing, Leo Margulies virtually single-handed, created the pulp empire of what was known as Standard Magazines. Tailored to meet the needs of the depression, virtually all of the titles sold for ten or fifteen cents and publication frequency could vary from monthly to annual depending what time span was best calculated to show a profit.

The magazines were edited almost bull-pen style, with an editor at one time or another working on as many as a score of different magazines with no consistency as to what titles he might be handling. The Standard Magazines were mass-produced products, and the regular newstand scanner could identify the publications of that changing group at a glance. The covers were as bright and colorful as those of any other pulp group, but there was a certain preciseness, standardization about the magazines that became their trademark.

It had to be that way, because when a publishing firm was turning out up to 30 titles in a given month with a limited staff, the operation had to be systematized and the methodology had to be unerringly followed.

The man who created the formula for that successful publishing operation, and saw that it was meticulously followed was Leo Margulies, and so impressive was his performance that in the 1930's he was dubbed "The Little Giant of the Pulps", and that phrase became a sub-title to his byline.

As a teenager, it appeared that Leo Margulies career would be to assist his father in the development of the novelty store business he ran in Norwalk, Conn. The young Margulies made a half-hearted stab at it, but he was intrigued by the publishing world and in 1920 made the acquaintanceship of Robert H. Davis, the great old-time editor of the Munsey magazines. Davis had left Munsey and formed a literary agency to handle some of the authors he had bought as editor. He gave Leo Margulies his first job as a reader of incoming manuscripts, and the very first manuscript to be read was "The Chessmen of Mars" by Edgar Rice Burroughs! Margulies was enthralled, and convinced that the literary world must become his career.

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When Davis returned to Munsey, Margulies went with him to handle a subsidiary rights division called Service For Authors. Science fiction collectors who wonder how Hugo Gernsback secured reprint rights to a number of Munsey classics he ran, may be informed that they were negotiated by Margulies.

In the twenties Margulies went into the Literary agency business with Jacques Chambrun, headed the research division of Fox Films in the east for five years and finally linked up with an old friend, Ned Pines, who was forming a magazine publishing company. The impetus for the creation of Standard Magazines was the depression. The American News Company had been losing many titles either to other distribution set-ups or economics and they needed replacements. They made an arrangement with Ned Pines for the guaranteed outright purchase of a given number of copies of any magazine he might publish, so as to ensure his financial viability. With that arrangement the incredible flood of titles began: Thrilling Adventure, Thrilling Detective, Thrilling Love, Thrilling Mystery, Thrilling Western, Thrilling Sports, Thrilling Ranch Stories and eventually each of those titles was supplemented with the adjective "Popular" forming an almost identical series of companion magazines.

They entered the super-hero field with The Phantom Detective, The Lone Eagle and Masked Rider Western Magazine, Rio Kid Western and various others.

The font of all new-title ideas was Leo Margulies. If he sold a profitable number of a new title it was continued. If he did not, he tried another. Captain Future magazine was born at The First World Science Fiction Convention in New York City in 1939, which Leo Margulies attended. Imbued with the enthusiasm of the occasion, he sat down with one of his editors, Mort Weisinger, at a table in back of The Caravan Hall, 110 East 59th Street, on July 2nd, and outlined his plans for the new character and publication.

As early as 1938, his salary had already reached the figure of \$25,000, which in terms of purchasing power was conservatively worth three times today's dollar. The incredible thing was that he technically did not receive a "salary" but a flat rate per issue of each magazine he produced, his income dependent upon the quantity of successful titles he established.

When he left the company in the early fifties he left also a "job description" for his successor, on how to efficiently produce an incredible quantity of pulp magazines each month. It is published here for the first time anywhere, and is an unusual document.

Editorial Department

★ PROCEDURES ★

AT Standard Magazines

by Leo Margulies

Every morning all the mail pertaining to the pulp magazines is placed on my desk. This includes all manuscripts submitted to the pulp magazines, letters from readers on stories appearing in magazines already on sale, letters from authors regarding stories in the office, or in the process of revision by authors, questions on matters of Western or detective routine for answer by editors who are conversant in the field. And the usual assortment of miscellaneous mail that must necessarily come to the desk of an editorial director handling over 40 magazines. All of which must be answered and is answered.

The manuscripts of stories that have been read the previous day are also included with the readers' comment slips, so that I will have some basis for judgement on the merits of the individual stories.

I first go through the manuscripts that have been read very carefully, and sort them out. Rejected manuscripts are marked for return. Stories that have little or no merit are returned (as indicated by me) with the printed rejection slip by Miss Komarow and her assistant at periodic intervals. Stories by important authors are marked for more than one reading. In the event that the readers' comments after two readings show a division of opinion, I read the manuscript personally. In the few instances when a "first" story is recommended for purchase, I always read the story. I do this to familiarize myself with the author's writing ability. No stories are ever purchased from new writers who are making first sales to us without supplying letters of recommendation attesting to the honesty and reliability of the author.

Letters of rejection are always sent to regular authors, to authors whose work has appeared in other magazines and whose names we recognize, and to new writers whose work shows promise. Ordinarily we do not send letters of rejection to literary agents. They have regular pick-ups, and come for rejected stories at certain specified intervals. On occasion where we are turning down the work of a well-known author who is represented by an agent, I insist on letters particularly where the authors have sold us regularly, and the agent has indicated that such specific comments in a letter will prove helpful to the regulars either in rewriting the story, or in understanding why it was rejected, so they may avoid similar weaknesses in future stories.

In the case of the various types of letters received as outlined above: - the letters from readers on stories appearing in magazines already on sale, are routed through

to the editorial secretaries to be filed in folders for individual magazines. The group editors compiling departments for various magazines when each issue comes up, draw upon these letter folders for our "Mail Bag" and "Readers' Mail" sections in each magazine. Letters from authors on stories in the office, or in the process of revision by authors, are routed to associate editors who have read the stories in question, and are familiar with the revision plans of the authors, and can give constructive help and guidance. These letters are answered promptly and fully so that the author will not be delayed in his work, and all such letters are cleared through me.

Letters from readers on questions of fact in the detective, Western or other fields are answered by associate editors, supplying the information where possible. If the problem is developed by a department editor from outside the office, such as Syl MacDowell, Fog Horn Clancy, etc., letters are forwarded to them, personal replies and a copy are secured for our files. Occasionally the more interesting of these letter questions and their answers are included in the letter columns of the individual magazines.

During the last year and a half, letters of rejection have been sent out by Alexander Samalman for the love story magazines; Samuel Mines for the Western story magazines; David X. Manners for the detective story magazines; Sam Merwin, Jr., for the science-fiction and sport story magazines; Charles S. Strong for Phantom Detective, Thrilling Detective and Giant Detective; Donald Bayne Hobart for the Western romance magazines. In all of those fields I usually send letters of rejection to our "top" name authors who might feel slighted if they came from associate editors. For many years Charles Strong has assisted me in preparing these letters, (I very rarely read rejected stories) and is now, and has been for some time, handling the correspondence on outlines in preparation, letters of okay, letters suggesting revisions in our series characters, particularly book-length characters like The Phantom Detective, Black Book, etc. He has also handled all letters on rejections, revisions, etc., and inquiries regarding new stories from foreign authors.

The second order of the morning is looking through all the NEW manuscripts submitted that day. These usually fall into three classifications. (1) stories by recognized authors which are marked up immediately for reading. (2) stories submitted by agents which are marked up for immediate reading. (3) stories submitted by free lance writers. These latter stories obviously fall into two sub-classifications: (A) stories of professional calibre, and (B) the obviously so-called "slush." I look through these rather carefully and arbitrarily decide whether they get a reading, or are returned with a rejection slip. On occasion some of the stories I select for reading are returned with a rejection slip if the reading indicates that the stories are bad stories. Many times when there isn't much material in the house to read, the so-called "slush" goes through for a reading. There have been instances, - rare, perhaps - when stories from the slush will come through this reading for purchase.

The assignment of stories, both new manuscripts and those which have already been given one reading, is determined on two logical elements. Group editors, (those associates who are working with specific types of stories as outlined above in the rejection letter paragraph) are given types of stories that are especially adapted to their magazines, ie, Alexander Samalman, love stories; Merwin, science fiction and sport stories; Mines, Western stories; Manners, detective stories, etc. Consideration is also given to the backlog of reading being handled by each reader, and his other editorial responsibilities at the time in allocating material.

After I have decided that stories are to be purchases, they are turned over to my secretary, Marion Komarow, and I mark on a slip, WORDS AND RATE. This means she or her assistant will check the word length and the last word rate paid to an individual author. I then mark on another slip of paper the price to be paid, and for what magazine it is

to Miss Marion Komarow for the preparation of the cover-title list for a specific month from the Cover Title Book.

2. The cover-title list is checked by Charles Strong, then turned over to Alexander Samalman for insertion of blurb lines where necessary, and for submission to Mr. Ned Pines for okay. Copies of this cover title list are then distributed to Robert Manners, Marge Hay (for use in making layouts), to Charles Strong and Alexander Samalman. All lettering prepared by Mr. Manners, and layouts prepared by Marge Hay are submitted to me or to Charles Strong and Alexander Samalman for okay. Some material, particularly the lettering, is okayed by all three of us.

3. Original cover paintings, blue-prints of covers showing placing of type, etc. are submitted to me for approval. Blue-prints with type actually set up, and all information to appear on the cover are then shown to Charles Strong before going to the engraver and a copy of the print is kept in the Printers' Book for reference. When completed covers are prepared and proofs are available, one proof is turned over to Charles Strong for okay and an additional proof is placed in the Printers' Book for reference and use in closing the issue of the magazine.

4. Every month Charles Strong picks out material indicated on the page assigned to specific magazines in the Printers' Book--and the stories are placed on my desk. They are sorted out in accordance with the assigned printers on a list supplied by Sayre Ross or Mr. Slater, and in the order in which they are supposed to go to the printers, based on on-sale dates secured through the Production or Circulation Department. I then give out the manuscripts to the various editors for editing. Samuel Cardenhire does most of the editing, with Virginia Brightman (on the outside) doing most of the long material. Everybody in the editorial department does editing before the month is over. On or about the fifteenth of each month, Charles Strong compiles a list of the magazines for the next group of publications, and the Departments which will appear in these magazines. This list is checked by me, and house-written departments are assigned to the associate editors who regularly handle certain magazines. The list of outside departments is then returned to Alexander Samalman, and he dictates notes to Marion Komarow for such Departments that are not already on hand. These Departments, both house-written and outside, are then gathered during the last week of the month and are edited and sent out to the several printers by Alexander Samalman.

5. All edited material is turned over to Charles Strong, who keeps a careful check and sees to it that it comes in on time. After the Art Department attaches picture proofs to each manuscript (also enclosing actual cut in jacket) the story is turned over to Charles Strong, who then sends it to the required printer. Charles Strong marks the date sent to the printer in the Printers' Book.

6. Whenever possible each magazine has a cover short short story or a straight short short story, all of them house-written. These stories are written by Donald Bayne Hobart. At the time blue prints are supplied to Charles Strong, they are also shown to Donald Bayne Hobart who compiles a list of magazines for which stories built about the cover can be written; in the case of magazines such as The Phantom, Black Book, etc. where the cover scene depicts action in the book-length novel, an independent short short story is written. These stories are built around old cuts, and Donald Bayne Hobart is careful to see that both the cover scene, and the old cut scene are blended into dramatic and entertaining little short shorts.

7. When material is returned from the printers in page proofs or department galleys it is checked and collated by Charles Strong, and the page length and date of return is entered in the Printers' Book. One copy of the marked proof is used for proof-reading and dummy paste-up. A second copy is filed with the edited manuscript for ready reference

intended, and place the story aside for purchase on the regular once-a-week payday, which has always been on Friday.

A couple of days before payday, manuscripts marked for purchase are turned over to Marion Komarow and she makes up vouchers, attaching comments. I always insist on three readings on long stories -- our so-called novel length yarns, and only two comments on short stories. The manuscripts and the vouchers are turned over to the business department, and are given a "key" number, and checks are then made out.

The checks, together with voucher cards and comments, are then given to Mr. Ned Pines for signature. The manuscripts are turned back to Marion Komarow. After the checks have been signed and returned to Marion Komarow, she attaches the comments to the manuscripts and they are placed on my desk.

At the time the vouchers are drawn, Marion makes up a list of the stories -- including authors, titles, agents if any, word length, purchase price, and magazines for which purchased. From this list, early Friday morning, assignments are given for letters of acceptance. We never send out a check without an accompanying note. I send check-letters to the more important writers -- and the rest of the check-letters are sent out by the boys -- Alexander Semalman for the love books; Sam Mines for the western; David Manners for some of the detective books; Sam Merwin for sports and science-fiction; Donald Bayne Hobart for the western romance books, and Charles Strong for Giant Detective, Thrilling Detective, the Phantom Detective, and many of the series stories.

I then go through the purchased manuscripts and mark them for assignment to individual magazines. They are then given to Alexander Semalman who indicates the size of illustration for each manuscript. They are returned to me for okay, and then turned over by me to the Art Department. The Art Department -- after looking at our schedules -- turns them over to the artists for illustration. All art is shown to the various editors for okay before acceptance. In the case of series-character lead novels -- such as the Phantom, Texas Rangers, Black Bat, Masked Rider, etc. -- the spots to be illustrated are selected by the editors before the stories are given to the artists.

All new stories purchased are entered in our records in two places promptly before being turned over to the Art Department. Long stories which will be cover-features are entered in the Cover Title book and assigned tentatively to individual issues of magazines. All stories, regardless of length, are entered in the Printers' Book and tentatively assigned to individual issues of magazines.

All of the details mentioned above as being handled by me personally will form the routine to be handled by the Editorial Committee made up of Charles Strong, Alexander Semalman, and David Manners.

ROUTINE AND PROGRESS OF PREPARATION OF COPY AND ARTWORK

1. Periodically throughout the year, Charles Strong consults with Mr. Slater on the magazines to be included in specific monthly groups, secures information on frequencies, number of pages, printers who will handle the printing job, etc. This information is collated on a chart which coincides with similar charts maintained by Mr. Slater and Mr. Herbert and cross-checked with the Production Department record books.

When the complete final list for a month's issue is made up, the information is turned over to Mr. Bob Manners of the Art Department for his cover title lettering. He compiles a memorandum to the Editorial Department, and through me this is turned over

and check on future occasions. The proof is then turned over to Gita Lenz, Marion Ruport or Ruth Lubell for proof-reading. In the event that proof comes in too heavily because of pressure of other work beside the pulp magazines, proof-reading will be done by all members of the editorial department.

8. At the time that the advertising make-up is being prepared, and long before the closing dates have been set, where possible Charles Strong and Alexander Samalman determine from the Advertising Department what "inside" ads will be used in the body of the book. Spaces for these ads are left in the make-up before copy goes to the printers so that author's alterations for remaking to fit in these ads will be held to a minimum. When the complete front and back ad sections are made up they are turned over to Mr. Strong by the Production Department after being okayed by Mr. Herbert, and Charles Strong prepares an advertising chart showing the comparative pages in books of various lengths, text space open in front and back, etc. This is turned over to me. Up until just recently I used to make up all magazines, but in recent months this has been allocated to some of the associate editors.

9. After the magazine is made up, it is turned over to Charles Strong, who checks and sees to it that all stories have been proof read, and then it is turned over to Alexander Samalman, who dummies the book and sends it to the correct printer. About a week after the dummy goes out, revised proofs are returned by the printers, and are checked by Charles Strong who assigns them for detailed comparison to one of the proof readers. When they have been thus checked, they are further inspected by Charles Strong and Alexander Samalman before being returned to the printers as okay for plating and page proofs.

ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES FOLLOWED BY EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

Charles Heckelmann works with me in the securing of material for the Triple Detective, Triple Western and 2-Detective Mystery Novels Magazines.

Our editorial readers also read material submitted for publication in Thrilling Novels, for Triple Western and Triple Detective and 2-Detective Mystery Novels. They also read books submitted for consideration as Western and Detective Popular Library titles.

With the establishment of 5-Western Novels and the Annuals, our editorial readers were also required to read a number of bound volumes of our back numbers in order to select material. This requirement has considerably expanded in the past few months with the addition of 5-Detective Novels, 5-Sports Novels, and Fantasy Story Quarterly to our list among others. Now that we are using reprint material in such magazines as Exciting Western, Popular Detective, Thrilling Detective, etc., a good deal of additional work in this direction is also being done.

After stories have been selected for condensation or reprint, it is necessary to assign these stories to outside editors and typists for cutting and re-typing. This sort of work has been supervised by Charles Heckelmann until recently, and is now being handled by David Manners.

All of the proof reading on Thrilling Novels, Popular Library and the Crossword Puzzle Books is also handled by our proof readers. They not only do the original job of proof-reading, but must also check corrected proofs to ascertain that corrections have been made properly.

While much of our association with the many authors who do business with us is through the mails, there are numerous occasions when authors will come to the office in

person. On these occasions I have seen many of the authors. In recent years, however, I have assigned the associate editors to the task of conferring personally with authors who are writing in their particular fields.

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A SCIENCE FICTION TAPE REVIEW

Hugo Gernsback, Pioneer of Science Fiction, Cosmos Tape Magazine and Library, Walter Gillings Sound Features, 115 Wanstead Park Road, Cranbrook, Ilford, Essex, England. Length, 45 minutes. Purchase price, \$3.00; Rental \$1.00; Copy charge, \$1.25. No. CSG 214. 1970

Hugo Gernsback's life, publishing career, prophecies and influence on science fiction are narrated with a British accent, but with excellent style, verve and pace by veteran scientificist Walter H. Gillings. This is the first of a series of personality sketches to be made available for purchase or rental, by a veteran editor and enthusiast who was responsible for the first adult science fiction magazine in England, Tales of Wonder; edited the three issues of Fantasy after World War II, and started the magazine Science-Fantasy which ran successfully for many years, finally folding after its conversion to Impulse. If enough interest is shown, tapes on Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clark and John Wyndham are on the agenda. Already scheduled is Sex in Science Fiction which may be in distribution by the time this is read.

While it is Walter Gillings' hope that the tapes will appeal to universities and colleges, they are eminently collectable, being extremely compact and occupying relatively little space. When played on the reviewer's standard home tape recorder, the fidelity was most satisfactory.

It is important to emphasize that the tape is professional in execution. There is a musical lead-in. Points are "illustrated" by brief sound-track frequencies from films, television shows and taped interviews and the material has been carefully edited before being transcribed. Because of this fact, even that material which is general knowledge was worth listening to again, now placed in proper perspective.

The material is attributed to Thomas Sheridan, but we all know that this is one of the facades behind which Walter Gillings has long paraded. No matter, the result is what counts and it is good here.

While the Hugo Gernsback recording was on standard tape, the Cosmos Tape Magazine is available on cassettes. The Cosmos Tape Magazine may be played at public gatherings.

The Library is an outgrowth of Walter Gillings Sound Features, a service which rents science fiction radio interviews and talks, television interviews and talks, radio plays, television plays and science fiction film sound tracks. Some of these may be purchased, and there is an extensive catalogue available and the prices are reasonable.

I don't know whether the money involved is worth the work for Walter Gillings, but the "magazine" and service can be recommended.

-- Sam Moskowitz