

# OPERATION FANTAST

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## CONTENTS

### ADAMANT EVE

*V. L. McCain* . . . 2

### PERSONAL BOOK PLATES 6

### WHERE MONSTERS DWELL

*Roger Dard* . . . 7

### TALKING POINT

*Kilian Houston Brunner* 9

### FANTASY ART SOCIETY . 10

### BOOK REVIEWS . . . 12

### MAKE THE FIRST ONES

SHORT! *Mack Reynolds* . 17

### GENERAL CHUNTERING . 19



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## Operation Fantast

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## Editorial

The Army has a regrettable prior demand on our time, with the result that things are apt to get off schedule with O.F. The cover of this issue, for instance, was designed for use in the Spring, when the thoughts of young gals and men and, apparently, even young "Leekaroos" turn lightly to dreams of love. A neat idea of Peter Ridley's, we think you will agree, and we are sorry that Spring has been a little late this year.....

Spring, apart from cuckoos and crocili, brings out the Income Tax Man, and with the turn of the fiscal year one's thoughts also turn to -wards finance.....not so lightly. We examined our budget a couple of months back.... Printing of the '52 HANDBOOK put us back £46:10:-1, add to that four issues of O.F. at an average of £25, and six or seven other oddments in the way of Newsletters at an average £5 each; and it comes to a round figure of £175. Allow postage at 1/- per head, 600 people, cost of envelopes - say another £45; minimum expenditure, £220 (£616.00, we think).

Around 550 paying members gives about £138 income from subscription sources. Deficit - £82 !! One answer is easy - put up the sub rate ! But we don't want to do that if we can avoid it. And we can - with your co-operation. The alternative answer is more members, and you can help get them, and at the same time earn yourself a free sub. We will give a four issue extension to everyone who brings in five fresh members.

That is the best answer - if we can get up to that 1,000 membership target of ours, the income from subs becomes £250 a year, which will cover present costs. If you want a supply of membership application blanks, just write and ask us.....

It is at this point that someone says "What about dough from advert -ising ?", and another bright fact-facer says "What about the Trading Bureau ?"

Adverts in the HANDBOOK did help to the tune of some £15, true, but that only just about took care of the "incidental expenditure". The amount of advertising (other than our own) included in O.F. and News -letters wouldn't pay for postage. The figures we've given you above cover just printing and mailing costs only.... nothing else, and the 'else' is quite a chunk !

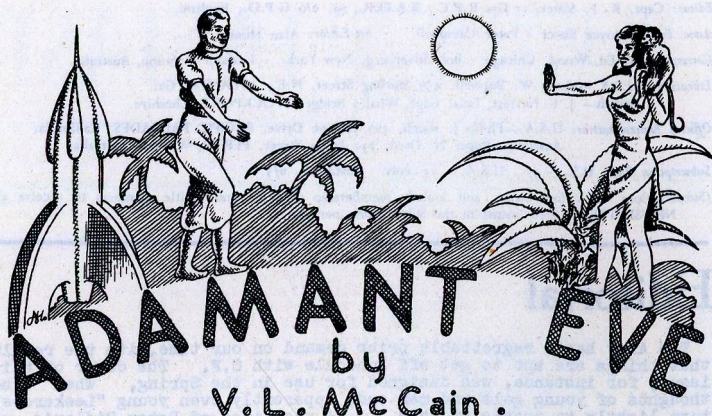
Over the last six months the Trading Bureau did not break even, we are sorry to say (Six months Oct - Mar), partly due to some rather un -productive advertising, and a lack of between what we received from one half of the membership, and what was wanted by the other half. We are working on the latter matter, and trying to straighten it out. At the moment, we are about £20 in the red on that business, tho !

Lets hope brighter days are ahead - we'll do our best, and with the help that you can give us, we will be able to pull through a not very sound period. The help we want from you is - MORE MEMBERS !

Fantastically,

*Joyce & Ken Slater*





M-2206-63 ploughed through the rank green wild shrubs painfully. As one prickly plant connected thornily with his left shin, he stepped backward with an oath, only to have a low-hanging branch from a deceptively fragile looking bamboo-textured tree bruise his right leg. M-2206-63 cursed fervently.

It wasn't enough that F-2206-63 seemed to be a champion procrastinator. It now appeared that she was also adept at devising methods for causing him the utmost annoyance and discomfort in trying to please her.

He struggled on, doggedly. It had seemed such a wonderful thing, at first. Awakening from the space-sleep, he and F-2206-63, his predestined mate, had found themselves coming in for a landing in this lush tropical jungle.

The jets had burned the area clean of life as they had landed, and the force-screen which was automatically erected 500 yards on each side of the spaceship when it landed would protect them from any dangers native to the planet.

He had looked over at the girl who had accompanied him on the flight; the girl whose face he had never before seen. She smiled sleepily at him, a dimple showing in her left cheek.

His eager eyes devoured her sable black hair, the rosebuds in her cheeks, the pouting, full mouth, the demure but suggestive body. This was his dream girl. She was as near perfect as anything he could imagine. Of course he knew that they had been adjusted to each other. Before birth, their chromosomes had been matched, and a predilection in favour of the type which the other would someday become had been installed in their subconscious brains.

But it went beyond that, he felt. This could develop into true love, of the type the ancient poets had written about. Especially on a world with no competition, where there would be no other man to compete for the prize.

It was exactly as his favorite professor, M55060, had predicted in the Settlers Educational Development Project, where M-2206-63 had spent his entire previous life along with several hundred other fut-

ure planetary settlers. He knew that his opposite number had been attending a similar school for girls.

This was the climax of their lives. For the next six months would be a paradise, devoted to their honeymoon, and the few slight tasks involved in the early stages of a planetary settlement. It was later that the hard work would come; after they had started a family it would be necessary to gradually reclaim the land around them so that eventually their descendants would be self-supporting.

But things hadn't quite worked out that way. They had no sooner landed than she insisted they start erecting the permanent shelter.

It was logical, he had agreed. The only sensible thing to do. Certainly, it was far more practical to have the shelter erected before their mating, than to have to take time for the tedious process later, when there were far more interesting things to do.

It had taken him the better part of three days to do the job. According to the manuals, it should have been finished within two, but while they had both set to with vigor at first, somehow he had found himself continuing alone, while she spurred him on with soft, approving sounds from the side, where she reclined, her body limned in a single piece of pinkish material, cuddling a small monkey-like animal which she had discovered among the unburned section enclosed by the force-field and which she had adapted as a pet, christening him Pedro.

The giving of names was an archaic and impractical custom long since abandoned but M-2206-63 smiled indulgently as he perspired at his task. It was a sign of the femininity in her, which he already adored, he had told himself.

Then, after erecting the shelter, that had not been enough.

"We must burn away all this horrid alien growth," she had insisted. "I can't bear to be near the stuff, and I certainly couldn't enjoy being mated in such surroundings."

He had ruefully acquiesced. No sense in being unpleasant and disagreeing. After all a mating was a two-way partnership. One had to give in some on the little things, occasionally, although he personally considered the background of shrubbery, however alien, added a homy touch to their dwelling.

This time she made no pretense of helping him in the task, spending most of her time feeding Pedro tidbits and teaching the willing animal tricks.

The burning away of all plant-life was a difficult and long-drawn out job without the aid of the jets and it took him two full days. But he had decided it was well worth it to please her and had lain awake half the night, dreaming of the next dawn, when they would be mated.

But at dawn she had spurned his advances.

"Mated!" she had exclaimed indignantly. "With no witnesses? What kind of a mating is that! I'll do nothing of the sort!"

He had been astounded. "But how can we have witnesses when we're the only people on the whole world and will never see anybody else for the rest of our lives?" he had asked, dumfounded.

She had been brusque. "You'll simply have to erect the three-dimensional recorder and entertainer," she had told him, "and we'll have a full and complete record of the entire thing."

"But that will take hours," he had protested, his mind unable to comprehend her reasons, "and there's no real reason for it. You know we'll be mated, and I know we'll be mated, so what else matters?" He had put on his most winning schoolboy smile, the one that had always melted the sternest opposition of his teachers during the 18 years of his life.

But it hadn't been enough to even thaw her shell. She looked at



him indignantly. "What do you think I am, anyway?" she had asked. "Just because the nearest inhabited planet is light-years away, you expect me to drop all accepted custom and live with you illegally, just because no one else would know better? You know as well as I that an unwitnessed and unrecorded mating is completely outside the law."

Her face took on a woebegone look and tears ran out of eyes that seemed to retain, even so, a steady calculating quality. "And to think I'm stranded for the rest of my life with such an immoral beast as you," she had wept.

This was too much for him, and he had awkwardly attempted to pat one enticingly bared shoulder, but she had pulled abruptly away.

"All right, don't cry," he'd said, "I'll get right at it, and in a few hours I'll have it erected so it can record our mating."

The tears had magically vanished and the velvety pouting mouth had flashed him a dimpled smile. She retired to the shade of the shelter, while he labored at the job of selecting the portions of the bulky machine and assembling them into an ungainly, but efficient whole.

"Now it's done," he had said, sweat dripping from his pores, but well satisfied at the completion of his job. "All set, now it can record our mating."

But she had drawn back from him. "Now?" she asked, her eyes wide with horror. "You don't mean to mate now, surely?"

At his puzzled nod she had let out an indignant squeak. "I won't do it, I absolutely refuse. Why it's almost high noon! Such a thing is absolutely unheard of. Nobody, absolutely nobody, was ever mated at noon. I simply refuse to be mated until tomorrow at dawn." She stood, Pedro clutched against her ripe breasts, as if poised for flight if he made a step towards her.

He had thrown up his hands in defeat. "All right, all right," he had said disgustedly, "we'll wait till tomorrow morning."

He had turned and stalked away, his whole mien denoting frustration and injured male pride. He made no attempts at conversation or friendliness, but his sulking was somewhat unsuccessful due to the small confined area enclosed by the force-screen. And she blissfully ignored him, devoting all her time to Pedro.

"Sometimes I think they may be wrong not to change basic personalities," he had thought to himself, as he scuffed his shoe against a stone. "It's a cinch they'd never have sent anyone that particular out to colonise a planet if they'd once worked her mind over." But he knew the answers. While personality changes were fairly simple for their technology, any interference with the basic ego was considered the capital crime of the day. Man's personality was inviolate, no matter how eccentric. Besides, it had been tried on a few rare occasions with settlers and it had been conclusively proved that an altered person, even when ignorant of the fact, tended to rely on his implanted characteristics, and his basic ingenuity and resourcefulness, a settler's most valuable asset, was lost in the process.

But that was small consolation on a hot lonely afternoon on a virgin planet, when the most luscious creature in all creation illogically refused to mate with you but sat playing with a monkey instead.

The next dawn he had again cautiously broached the subject, and to his surprise she had been completely willing for the mating. She had even started to dress formally for the process when she had stopped, as if a thought had just dawned on her.

"I haven't a coronet," she had wailed. "I haven't a coronet and all female mates must wear a coronet of flowers during the mating."

"It's traditional," she had ended with a winning voice.

He had vainly attempted to dissuade her. But she had pointed out

to him the exact flowers she wanted, growing on a tree which could be seen on a hilltop about a mile away, pushing up out of the jungle.

So now he was struggling through the jungle, outside the force-screen for the first time, to bring back a coronet of bright orange flowers for his mating. He had not even bothered mentioning that the foliage within the force-screen which she had insisted on his destroying had been rich with the flowers she wished, although there seemed to be none outside the screen closer than the hill.

And as he trudged on, beset by small mosquito-like insects, he gradually realised that the hill was much farther away than it had appeared in the planet's unfamiliar atmosphere.

He had jumped warily once or twice at crackling sounds in the underbrush, but so far he had seen no signs of malignant animal life, and finally he found himself at the place where the flowers grew.

But it was with a grunt of disgust that he eyed the yellow globe in the sky. It was fully an hour and a half past dawn and, by the time he returned with the flowers, he had no illusions that she would consent to mate at such a time of day. His mind was conjuring black thoughts, and it was thus that he did not notice the rumble of the earth, nor the rustling of the surrounding shrubs and trees until the squat but gigantic one-horned carnivore was almost upon him. Then it was too late.

The frenzied cry that ended in a sighing gurgle did not quite carry back to the place where the spaceship rested, surrounded by the permanent settlement, the assembled recorder, the girl and the monkey.

But it is doubtful if it would have greatly bothered the alluring creature who was devoting her entire attention to the small monkey-faced animal.

It was several hours before she became aware of the length of time which had passed and the fact that M-2206-63 had not yet returned.

"Pedro," she said complainingly, "see how he treats me. I send him for flowers and he does not even bother to return. And yet he speaks of love and wants to mate with me." She tossed her head indignantly, then resumed playing with the beast.

It was at nightfall that she concluded that he was gone for good and would not return, but she made no move to search for him.

As she prepared an evening meal for herself, frequently offering choice tidbits to the animal, she said, "I guess we're all alone now, Pedro. Just you and me."

She picked up the animal and cuddled it affectionately under one arm. He grunted.

"But we don't care do we, Pedro? I always did say that men were nasty, horrid things."

.....

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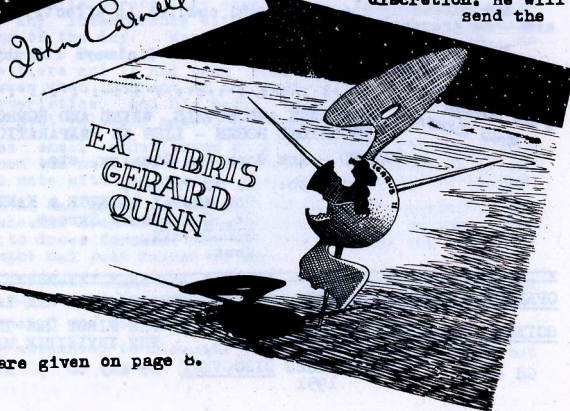
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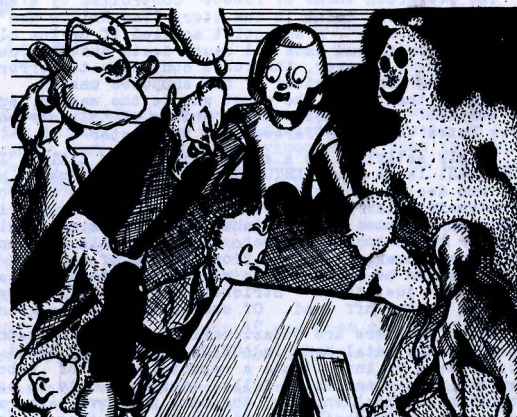
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## "WHERE MONSTERS DWELL"

by  
Roger Dard



One of the charges most often made against comic book science fiction and fantasy is that it has never progressed very far from the juvenile stage, and is still obsessed with mad scientists and alien monsters. To a great extent this charge is all too true, but before we contemptuously dismiss the comics as being of no value or interest to the science fiction fan, let us look at the last word in the preceding sentence. Monsters. What fan can claim that he has not chilled and thrilled to stories of weird, alien monstrosities? From Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" to the invisible entities of Ray Bradbury's "Asleep in Armageddon", there is a world of fascination to be found in the world of the monster, a fascination often lacking in more mature science fiction. Writing in the AVON FANTASY READER, editor Donald A. Wollheim once said: "We have always felt that something has been lost in the transition of science fiction from its pioneer phase to its modern streamlined form. Just what that something is is hard to define, but we might begin by saying it is the touch of the breath-taking, the sense of wonder, the hint of the saga ... " With these comments of Mr. Wollheim's this writer emphatically agrees.

By-passing such obvious examples as werewolves and zombies, it is interesting to study the type of monstrosities to be found in the comic books. In ASTONISHING (December 1951) in the story "Out of the Darkness", the descendants of the survivors of an atomic war, coming to the surface after 2000 years of living in underground shelters, find a strange and carnivorous race of monsters which have been evolved by the radiation-poisoned atmosphere. Atomic weapons are useless against these creatures, as they naturally thrive upon the very thing which helped spawn them. They are eventually destroyed when Earth's atmosphere is cleared of atomic radiations. Deprived of their poisonous atmosphere, the monsters die.

Somewhat similar to this is the story "The Sewer Monsters" in WITCHES TALES (July 1951). Set in medieval France, it tells of political fugitives who take refuge in the Paris sewers. Generations later, their descendants have become completely un-human: "Their skin became greenish, and their eyes became small and weak from lack of use. The dampness caused an imperfection in speech, and a fungus growth on the body..." Thirsting for revenge, these horrid creatures burst out of the sewers determined to destroy Paris, but their fetid lungs used to breathing the putrid air of the sewers cannot assimilate the rich air of the upper world, and they die. Here, as in "Out of the Darkness", we have an exploitation of the same basic theme, i.e., the monsters conveniently die when subjected to a change in atmosphere.



The evergreen theme of robots controlled by a mad scientist, is given a different twist in the story "The Hollow Men" in MYSTIC Magazine (March 1951). A scientist accused of having allowed a robot of his invention to run amok and cause death and destruction, is thrown into prison. However, the robot continues to terrorize the town despite having been deprived of his supposed master. It is eventually discovered that it is the robot who is the master, and the scientist the servant. One suspects the writer of this cartoon-story has read Harry Bates' classic "Farewell to the Master".

Ornily satirical is a story deceptively titled "Joe" in the December 1951 issue of ADVENTURES INTO TERROR. Joe is an inviolable monster who decides to grant every wish the story's hero, Larry, makes. Unfortunately Larry does not know this, and is perplexed and frightened when his most casual wishes - sometimes made only as a figure of speech - begin to come true. When he tells a friend to "get lost", his friend forever vanishes from the ken of men, and when in a moment of irritation he snaps at his wife "drop dead", his beautiful young wife does just that. Stricken by all this, Larry mutters that he would be better off dead. Of course the wish is granted...

Alien monsters are occasionally treated sympathetically, as in "World of the Metal Men" in ACTION COMICS (May 1951). An earth space ship is sent to investigate a reported world of robots. En route, however, the space ship falls through a hole in space into the 5th Dimension. Coincidentally, the same fate overtakes a space vessel of the robots. Terrestrial and robots find that by their own individual endeavors neither can leave the alien dimension they are trapped in, but by pooling their resources and cooperating, both parties successfully escape back to their own planets. Back on Earth, the humans falsely report that they found no world of robots. Could there be a moral here?

Vampires abound throughout the comic books, being by far the most numerous (and one presumes the most popular) of the galaxy of monsters. Perhaps the best of the vampire stories is "Vampire" from THE HAUNT OF FEAR, July-August 1950. A series of mysterious deaths throughout the countryside convinces the story's hero, Dr. Reed, that a vampire is responsible. He investigates and finds a sinister castle, an eldritch-looking man, and a beautiful girl. Further investigation convinces him the eldritch creature is the vampire. They fight and Reed succeeds in driving a sharpened stake into the supposed vampire's heart. Weak from his struggle, Dr. Reed staggers back to the castle to tell the girl she no longer has anything to fear, and that the vampire is dead. Amused, the girl tells him he has killed the wrong person, and that it is she who is the vampire: "Yes, Dr. Reed, I am the vampire! I feasted last night, and tonight I shall feast again - on you!" Young Dr. Reed who had anticipated ending the story in the lovely girl's embrace, found himself in a somewhat different and more deadly embrace to the one of his anticipation, as the vampire-girl's sharp teeth sank into his neck... An occasional ironic twist like this redeems the most hackneyed of comic books.

The monsters are fast vanishing from our mature, sophisticated science fiction and fantasy magazines. But to those who still desire to feel a "sense of wonder", the horrific parade of blood-spattered monstrosities shambling through the gory pages of the comic books, offer an interesting - and sometimes fascinating - escapism. For of such things are the dreams - and nightmares - of men made.

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Cost of the personal bookplates is 17/6 or \$2.50, (payable thru accounts by OF members so desiring), and payment should be made when returning the approved rough sketch.

Printing of copies of the BOOKPLATES may be made under your own arrangements, or thru O.F. Channels. Write the Trading Bureau for quotes.

## TALKING POINT

by Kilian  
Houston  
Brunner

TEAM KX-51 found the sheet of newspaper in a room which sheer chance had buried intact. There was sifted dust all over the contents, naturally, but the team supervisor noted that it was no ordinary layer of rock, and gave orders for it to be investigated; so the sinking of the shaft had to wait.

However, the paper was so old that it crumbled into a very fine dust and blew away when the suction pump cleared the room, and all that was finally retrieved and examined consisted of two fragments. One bore a meaningless date - meaningless because continuous chronology went under in the Big Blowup - and a set of symbols which read:

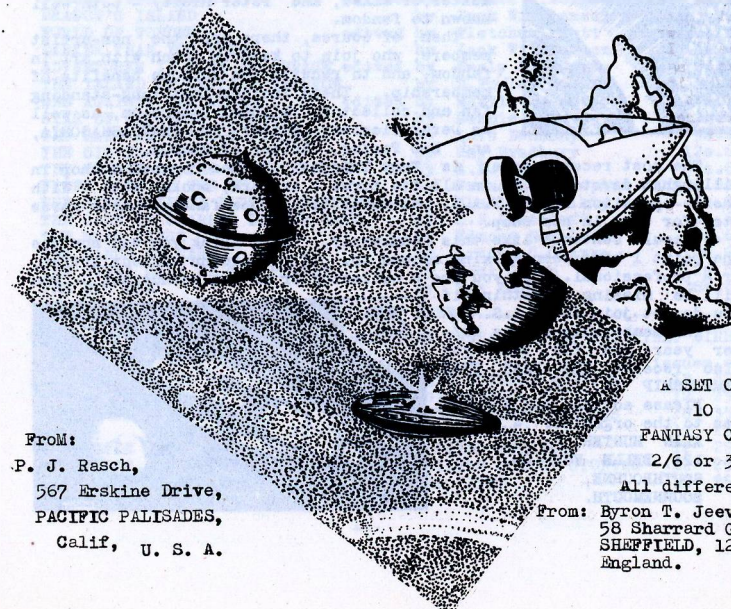
"....'Of what use is science if man does not survive ?'  
The Duke of Edinburgh before the British Association..."

THERE was something very interesting about that question. The supervisor of Team KX-51, after vainly trying to make out the function of the artifacts found with it in the room, knew enough vibrational semantics to tell that. Therefore he passed it to higher authority.

Relays; wires; vibrational reproductions of the words; till finally the question went coruscating and flashing down tubes & tunnels into the mighty crystalline vistas of Central Core itself, the ultimate heart of the Master Race's home.

A particularly interesting question, that, and one that defied answer. No, not the question on the fragment of paper - that was easily answered. A more difficult one. Three words, on -ly.

"What were 'men' ?"



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Two accounts of the organisation of the F.A.S. have already been written - in the O.F. Newsletter and Handbook - so I would like to digress a little from official matters and mention instead some of the people who comprise the F.A.S. membership.

There is, of course, a nucleus of professional and semi-professional artists, including Bob Clothier and Gerard Quinn of NEW WORLDS etc. Gerard, who is a full-time commercial artist, runs the Art Bureau, which criticises members' artwork.

Now I want you to look at the two drawings. They are by David Wood and Denness Morton, two of the three youngest members - all 15 years of age. The third is Kenneth Potter who, with David, runs the Magazine Section where folders of artwork etc. are assembled for circulation to all members. Denness, besides his more serious drawing, also does some excellent cartoons, and I predict that you will be seeing a lot of this young man's work in future.

Then there is Staff Wright, who does some promising black and white drawings. He also produces castings of fantasy subjects. At the moment these castings are available to members only, but he hopes to produce them, eventually on a much larger scale.

Quite a newcomer to fandom is Joe Bowman, late of the Submarine Service (he says that in a submarine one can easily imagine that it is bound for the Moon). Besides creating amusing or terrifying REMS, he also runs the F. A. S. Art Library.

Other artist members include Bob Shaw, Ass. Editor of SLANT, and Peter Ridley - both well known to fandom.

Then, of course, there are the non-artist members, who join to keep in touch with art in fandom, and to receive the various benefits of membership. These include that long-standing fan and collector, Michael Rosenblum, as well as Derek Pickles, Editor of PHANTASMAGORIA, and Bob Foster, Editor of SLUDGE.

The most recent member is Tony Thorne. He has opened a shop in Gillingham devoted to SF in all its forms - artwork, books etc. With the co-operation of the F.A.S., he hopes to produce fantasy photo-cards etc. for sale in his shop.

I could continue like this endlessly, but I think you can now see the point I have been working around to. If you are an amateur artist, or a professional. If you are a collector or an art enthusiast - you will be missing something if you do not join the F.A.S.

The membership fee is 10/- per year, and for this you also receive ONE YEAR FREE MEMBERSHIP in O.F.

Please address all enquiries to the organiser :-

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## BOOK REVIEWS

## POSSIBLE WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION

(Gr. 8vo, 256 pp. 9/6)

## ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE

(Gr. 8vo, 10/6)

## THE BEST SCIENCE FICTION STORIES: 2nd Series

(Gr. 8vo, 240 pp. 9/6)

With Asimov's I, ROBOT, the above three anthologies are on the Spring-Summer schedule from GREYSON & GREYSON. The first is the anthology edited by Groff Conklin, fourth in the series he edited for CROWN of New York. This British edition contains but thirteen of the original 22 tales in the work, but a reduction of nine stories in quantity, and something near 12/- in price, makes it a bargain for a British fan, at least! OPERATION PUMICE by Ray Gallun, and RECHANTED VILLAGE by vV remain, whilst the Heinlein yarn, BLACK PITS OF LUNA is out. Jameson's LILIES OF LIFE, Bradbury's ASLEEP IN ARMAGEDDON, & Asimov's NOT FINAL are three fine tales that still show on the content - its page, and personally I do not regret the omission of Long's CONES, MOON OF DELIRIUM, James, and THE PILLOW, St. Clair, have been included - not to my taste, but I suppose they widen the range; I should imagine that I would have preferred to see Sturgeon's COMPLETELY AUTOMATIC and Fyfe's IN VALUE RECEIVED in their place. Other tales included are: PROPOGANDIST, Leinster; HARD LUCK DIGGINGS, Vance; SPACE RATING, Berryman; LIMITING FACTOR, Simak; EXIT LINE, Merwin; and Anderson's THE HELPING HAND.

The fourteen tales in the second series of BEST SCIENCE FICTION - Everett Bleiler and Ted Dikty - are all taken from BEST SF STORIES, 1951; fourteen out of seventeen, this time, and a saving of ten shillings. Three titles dropped are Temple's FORGET-ME-NOT, Bester's ODDY AND IDD, and THE NEW REALITY, by Charles Harness. As this work includes Miss McClean's CONTAGION, dropped from POSSIBLE WORLDS, I do not think I can complain. I am extremely pleased to see that the editor, of Greyson & Greyson's, was sufficiently wise, or appreciative, to remain what I consider to be one of the finest fantasy shorts that I have read for many a year - and that is Bretnor's THE GNURRS COME FROM THE WOODWORK OUT!

Unfortunately I have not been able to check the number of tales in the original version of the Ray Healy and J. Francis MacComas anthology, but in this edition there are ten. The only unfortunate inclusion to my mind is that of vV's BLACK DESTROYER, the tale which formed one quarter of VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE, - one of Greyson & Greyson's own 1951 publications! The other yarns are: Heinlein, THE ROADS MUST ROLL (Future History Series, and included in the first volume); Gallun, SEEDS OF THE DUSK; Padgett, TIME LOCKER (a delightful bit of Gallagher nonsense); and THE TWONKEY; Maurice A. Hugl, THE MECHANICAL MICE; Bester, ADAM AND NO EVE; Miller, THE SANDS OF TIME (when will a bright person anthologise the sequel, please?); Bates, A MATTER OF SIZE; and Asimov, NIGHTFALL.

These three works contain typical representation of every variety of science-fiction, I think. Not all of them are the best of their individual kind, perhaps, but they are all good, and personally I cannot see any purchaser - fan and expert, or casual reader, having any reason to deplore his purchase. Except for the 'newspaper critics' - and they will doubtless deplore every story - unless they have at last opened their eyes to the fact that s-f is a new form of literature in popularity - and that it is here to stay!

..... ..Steve Gilroy

CITY AT WORLDS END by Edmond Hamilton (Fell, 2.75) 239pp.

This story originally appeared in Startling Stories July '50, as the lead novel, although no credit is given in the book for previous publication.

(cont. page 15)



Briefly the story is of a small mid-western (U.S.) town excitedly named Middletown, that receives a direct hit from a 'super-atomic bomb'. Instead of becoming a smear, Middletown, and part of the surrounding countryside, is hurled via space warp to a dying Earth millions of years in the future. Discovering a deserted city the Middletowners contact 'the folk of the far future', and find that Man has long ago spread across the Galaxy, discovering other races and forming a Galactic Federation in the process.

Conflict then arises between the people of Middletown who wish to remain on Earth, and the Federation who desire to move them to a younger world. All problems are resolved in the last chapter by a rather facile solution.

A competently written book which, if the initial premise is swallowed unquestioningly, can be thoroughly enjoyed, although I question that the Middletowners would receive the news, that they can never see the Earth of 1951 again, in quite the manner Hamilton imagines. .... ..Derek Pickles.

DOUBLE IN SPACE, by Fletcher Pratt. (Doubleday, 2.75) 217pp.

This book contains two stories from Thrilling Wonder Stories, 'PROJECT KIDNAPING' (originally 'Asylum Satellite') from October, '51 issue, and 'THE WANDERER'S RETURN', from December '51.

Project Keeslor is another of those regrettably too numerous 'red menace' stories. It is concerned with espionage and counter-espionage in Brazil (complete with Beautiful Female Spy), and the competition between the Allied Satellite, and the Russian Satellite; the latter happens to be a few thousand miles beyond the former.

Unfortunately the Russian station is on a collision course with an asteroid, whilst the crew of the Allied station are going down right and left with Radiation Sickness. In a burst of generosity the Allies destroy the asteroid in return for the cure for Radiation Sickness. A leavening of romance is thrown in, and is treated in the usual hackneyed manner, making the story even more stereotyped than the plot suggests.

In The Wanderer's Return we are taken on a conducted tour of the Galaxy, starting with the destruction of a pirate planet, and progressing via various hostile, and otherwise, planets back to the Earth.

It seems the reason for this Baedeker is that Lortud, Commodore of the Space Squadron, besides being a superman at tactics, astrology, leadership, etc., by chance happens to own a squad of plutonium mines on E. Centauri. This latter fact is a disadvantage as 'large corporations' on Earth are intriguing to steal the mines away. With the aid of the ship's psychologist, who spends his time rescuing the Commodore from the results of the gaffes he has made, it is discovered that Lortud has been post-hypnotically forced to relive Ulysses' Odyssey amongst the stars. However, all ends happily.

These two stories are readable and enjoyable, although not especially memorable. Can be recommended as good entertainment.

..... ..Derek Pickles,

TOMORROW AND TOMORROW/THE FAIRY CHESSMEN, Lewis Padgett (Gnome) THE WEAPON SHOPS, A.E. Van Vogt (Greenberg).

Here is an unprecedented thing. I have two books to review, and like them both - find it difficult to say which is the better. Probably for the very good reason that they are both as good as each other. The only difference between the books, as apart from the stories, is that TOMORROW AND TOMORROW/THE FAIRY CHESSMEN has an unfortunate cover. But you can always throw that away. GNOME PRESS have put out these two novels between the same boards for £2.75 and it's a bargain. The first part - TOMORROW AND TOMORROW - is all about the unlucky man whose job it is to guard Uranium Pile No. 1 and the clever bunch of people who are trying to make him detonate it.

Extrapolating current phenomena in the grand manner of science-



fiction. the author has Joseph Bredon discover that his own wife is an integral part of the plot against him. But that doesn't make it any better or worse for him. The poor fellow is in a terrible dilemma for most of the story and the suspense, the poised action, the inexorable grinding of the gears keeps the book in your hands until you've finished it.

THE FAIRY CHESSMEN, the second part of this book, captured my heart when I read the first sentence. "The doorknob opened a blue eye and looked at him." That's the kind of thing that gets me. But don't think this is a fantasy, it isn't. It is one of the nicest s-f stories I've read in a long while. Here, Padgett has given us so-real characters that the whole thing flows quite naturally and captivatingly. Peg of the story is an equation that will put a stop to the decades-long war between what is obviously America and the European 'Palangists'.

The trouble is - whoever tries to solve the equation goes quite mad. All, that is, until the psychometricians, whose job it is to find someone who can solve the equation without going bats - until the psychometricians stumble on a fairy chess player. This form of the mating game allows you to invent your own men, design your own boards and lay down your own rules. More, you can have unreal men and change the rules, the board and practically everything else half-way through the game. Players of orthodox chess will admit that a man who can play a sensible game under these conditions has 'a thoroughly elastic mind' ... one that isn't bound too much by familiar values ...

He can in fact look you straight in the eye and tell you that "if mutually contradictory truths exist, that proves they're not contradictory - unless they are, of course." In short, the ideal man for the job. He does indeed prove ideal and the equation is - well, you read it; you'll like it.

I'm wondering if many science fiction fans will recognise the title of the second book under review here. THE WEAPON SHOPS by A.E. van Vogt! The bells are ringing; I must have been mistaken. Everyone seems to have heard of it. Well, if you've only heard of it, and not read it, here's your chance. Greenberg has issued it at \$2.50.

This is a book about, among other things, a callidetic who buys up the world in a few days and keeps things going on an even tenor. Here and there, the book strays a little from the straight and narrow path, of credible accuracy - especially in the properties of the Weapon Shop - and their devotees. But it's a good story and, as Arthur Clarke has said, it doesn't really matter if a good story is not strictly accurate so long as it does not pretend to be.

There is a good deal here to excite the imagination and to pander to personality-transference, if you go in for that sort of thing. VV seems to have got out of his, to my mind, usual groove of rather ponderous expression and given us a smooth story, without any bumps or halts for plot repairs. One of his best, I'd say. .... H.J. Campbell

THE STRANGE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD: Howard Phillips Lovecraft (Gollancz, 9/6) 160pp.

An abridged version of this yarn appeared in WT May and July, 1941. Whilst I am not a devotee of Lovecraft, I have enjoyed reading - and rereading - many of his stories. This is not one of them, I am forced to state. In simple, a student of the occult, back in the eighteenth century, arranges thru demonic means, for his re-embodiment in a conjured carcass by one of his descendants. This descendant happens to be Charles Dexter Ward. In his efforts to trace his ancestry, Ward is lead a long the path that ends in 'accling-up' and rebirth - ment of Curwen, but then, sickened by Curwen's activities, he revolts and is destroyed and replaced by Curwen, who resembles him in appearance. The story contains much of repetition, much of inferred horror - inferred in such a way that to me, at least, it produced not a shudder. For modern taste, the action is slow - what action there is. For the Lovecraftian, it is an essential. For the modern s-f fan...uh uh! K.F.S.



THE WRONG SIDE OF THE MOON: Francis and Stephen Ashton (BOARDMAN, 8/6, 191pp. 75,000 words)  
 DRAGON'S ISLAND: Jack Williamson (SIMON & SCHUSTER, \$2.50, 75,000)  
 WINE OF THE DREAMERS: John D. MacDonald (GREENBERG, \$2.75, 57,000)

(Reviewed by F. G. Rayer)

Before going on to these three volumes of very varied type I wish to set on record a plea for the avoidance of unnecessary technical jargon in S.F. stories generally! In some cases it is excessive; if the crime (or any other) novel had developed along such lines we might have, instead of:-

"Paul switched on the radio. 'This is the 7 o'clock news,' it said"....

something such as the following:-

"Paul depressed the mains-circuit contactor. Induced current of low voltage began to flow in the paralleled tube heaters; ten seconds passed ... fifteen ... twenty. The red-hot cathodes began to emit; deep within the heart of the receiver a local oscillation commenced, beating with the incoming radiofrequency signal, setting up surges through the intermediate amplifiers and being modulated by a double-diode triode of a complexity unknown to eighteenth-century man.... a conical air-agitator began to vibrate, following in faithful synchrony the audio signals fed to it. 'This is the 7 o'clock news,' it said..."

There may be folk who like this type of thing, of course. If so, they will find plenty of it in one of the following.

WRONG SIDE OF THE MOON is apparently intended for juvenile readers. The plot is very slight - ex-aircrew Northwood and Newman fly in an experimental rocket craft powered by a wonderful secret fuel, and invented by the Clever Scientist in a conventional "clever scientist and beautiful daughter" opening. Sheila is "wizard looking", we are told. A spy in the group provides some complication. Much of the book is an essay on the effects of lack of gravity, etc., and there are many pages of such explanations, so detailed that there is even a footnote stating certain bolts can be unscrewed from the inside! It is occasionally a matter of opinion whether these details are accurate, as when it is suggested that nothing is suitable for use in exhaust gases, for steering. (Surely V2's used graphite vane -s, here?) For some unclear reason horseracing is drawn in. The jacket says "...Close to the tradition of Jules Verne" which is an apt description. To avoid a meteor the craft goes into an orbit taking it near the moon. Some of the writing, though generally good, is repetitive: "My heart raced madly", p.116, "My heart raced madly", p.117. We wonder why anyone needs to "cook in space" on such a short trip! A good book for boys; but rather lacking in originality and interest for adult science-fiction readers, who are not very likely to feel enthusiastic about this kind of thing.

A good gift for nephew, son or young friend, who is likely to be thrilled by stories of stratosphere flight.

DRAGON'S ISLAND, by Jack Williamson, will suit those who want tough action and are not too critical about other things. "Not a typical science fiction story" the jacket says; it is a matter of opinion whether it can be classified as science fiction at all. The main S.F. interest is that mutants are being created in New Guinea.

Much of the story revolves round the discovery of this, and could equally well have been centred on any other non-S.F. theme. Dane Bel-fast is told he is in danger from secret enemies - "monsters" created by a man with whom he has once worked. Sundry incidents hinder his investigations, including the murder of a man called Venn, who apparently had important information to disclose. Dane is then made to believe he is guilty of a murder, and is taken to New Guinea, where he remembers he is innocent, and sets about disclosing the crooks' plans. The ending I do not propose to give away, since this would spoil the story.

Such other S.F. interest as is present is not very convincing. An



actual, working space-ship which grows like a nut on a tree is an example! (This, however, plays now real part in the story, and could as well have been left out.) The opening chapters seemed flat. Analysing possible causes of this, it seems that too many words are used with too little material; there is also a continuous striving to ascribe to people (Dane in particular) very strong emotions, with no apparent causes. Dane is continually sweating with fear, his back is crawling with danger, etc., but except for this it is a good story recommended to those who like an "adventure" type of story.

**WINE OF THE DREAMERS** is real science-fiction of originality & merit. In brief, the projected building of a space-ship is apparently being sabotaged, but the man responsible pleads compulsion, from an external source.

The scene then skips to the viewpoint of a boy, Raul, who lives in a city which, so far as they all know, is the whole world. He discovers that there is an "outside" and that the inhabitants' "dreams" are excursions into the minds of other beings — really the cause of the compulsions from external sources which make people on Earth sometimes irrational, and termed possession by devils in bygone ages. Eventually Raul contacts Bard Lane, who is building the space-ship, and after further complications the matter is cleared up, and Lane cleared of the charge of insanity, by Raul bringing one of his people's vessels (left rusting outside the city) to Earth.

Those who care about such things as presentation of a story will find this generally good. Occasional phrases such as "a group of lame-duck congressmen were sublimating political frustration by taking a publicity-conscious hack at the top-heavy appropriations for space conquest" may bounce off English readers. The opening is rather overloaded with an attempt to create atmosphere; occasional words of noun or adjectival type made to act as verbs have a queer effect — "The sun gaunts the men...fades colors and drabs the women."

Towards the end, the presentation becomes somewhat chaotic. But on the whole this story is good, interesting, original, well-written and likely to find favour with most S.F. readers.

**EARTH OUR NEW MOON:** P.G. Rayer (Authentic S-F No. 20, 1/6)

War, and the threat of war, has divided mankind into more than two sections. Apart from the opposing forces there is a semi-slave culture of workers, in "protected" underground cities, with a supervisory "boss" grade who live on, or have access to, the world's surface.

This forms the scene of the story, but acts only as a blackboard on which Mr. Rayer chalks his now familiar (but only too true) indictments of mankind. Any other scene would have served equally well for the basis of the yarn but would not have permitted Mr. Rayer the opportunity to point out some of our nasty ways.

The early treatment is however interesting, and such inscriptions as "Unwillingness to work is a crime against yourself and your fellow-men" indicate the author's ideas on freedom, and warn us against the mob-hypnotism of such slogans.

The basis is a shower of "seeds from space" which settle on the earth, grow with enormous vigour, and completely destroy this grotesque of a civilisation; only a handful of people surviving by means of hibernation, until the botanical extravaganza has matured, seeded and departed. I do not consider myself competent to discuss the possibility of seeds developing "anti-gravity" by mutation, which method this ferocious foliage departs the earth, but the production of a drug for "suspended animation" smacked more of magic than science, coming more or less out of thin air at the right moment.

This was necessary for the yarn, however, and will be overlooked except by the most critical of readers. Not a yarn likely to become a classic, but a very enjoyable one, nevertheless. ....KFS



# Make The First ONES short!

by  
Mack Reynolds

I've come to the conclusion that if I've achieved any popularity at all among the fans in the year and a half that I've been doing s-f stories, it is largely because in me the average fan sees a kindred spirit. He sees a guy that after avidly reading stuff for years finally buckled down and tried to write it and eventually started selling.

My first stories were just a tiny wee bit better than those you find in the better fanzines, and evidently my luck in breaking into the profield is evidence to a good many fan writers that they too have a pretty good chance.

At any rate, during the past year I've got a good many letters from fans, a large percentage of them asking for advice on writing and marketing their own stuff. I've got a good many manuscripts, also, with requests to offer criticism. Unless I'm particularly pressed with my own work at the time, I do what I can with these, almost always making the same suggestions, since the manuscripts almost invariably have the same shortcomings, and send them back with as much encouragement as I can.

So with the idea of saving wear and tear on my Civil War model typer, and paper and postage, I'm trying to sum up the advice I most usually give to the fan writer who is trying to make his first sale. And, Wode knows, I've never yet met a fan who isn't trying to go pro.

First of all, I'd suggest you not try to aim too high. Unless you're a genius I doubt if you're going to sell your first story to COLLIER'S or the SATURDAY POST. In fact, I doubt if you're going to sell it to astounding, GALAXY, or the Mag of P & SF. If you are a genius, you might as well stop reading this now, because I doubt if there is going to be much in this little article that will interest you. I'm writing this for just plain ordinary guys — like me.

No, I'd suggest the markets that don't require the excellence the above magazines do. I'd suggest you slant your story towards PLANET (which took my first story), OTHER WORLDS, IMAGINATION, or the Ziff-Davis publications. The rates aren't as good, but you have a much better chance, and the editors of these publications are more than sympathetic.

And I do mean slant, by the way. I find that the usual tyro makes a policy of writing a story, sending it to the best-paying market first — when it bounces to the next best paying, and so on down the line. There are some good arguments in favor of a writer's just sitting down and doing the best story he can and then worrying about the market later, but I suggest strongly that if you are anxious to make your FIRST sale with all the egoboo and satisfaction that goes with it, you deliberately write a story for one of the above mentioned mags.

Slanting isn't hard. Pick your magazine and study the last half-dozen issues of it carefully. Dope out just what the editor likes best, and then write him a story as nearly like the stories he's been running as you can.

Now this goes against the grain to many, but don't try to be original. Most tyros are bursting with a new type of story, something different. Good. If you have such ideas, jot them down for future reference, but if you haven't made any sales at all as yet don't use those unique ideas now.

Take one of the well-worn themes, time travel, the first visit to the moon, or the first visit of extra-terrestrials to Earth, the threat of destruction to the human race because of its scientific development — that sort of thing. Try to get a new story idea, a new gimmick,



some new bit of business on one of these old themes, and write it up as best you can.

**MAKE THE FIRST ONES SHORT.** Time after time fan writers will send me novelette manuscripts. Frankly, I think it very unlikely that your first sale will be a longy; you have a much better chance of selling something three thousand or less words in length.

The established pro writers write the longer story lengths and very seldom waste story ideas on short-shorts. Why should they? The experienced writer can take a short-short idea, add a sub-plot or so, and expand it into a novelette. With word rates what they are, few pros want to waste their ideas on short stories.

That is what gives the tyro his best chance. All editors need shorts and short-shorts to balance out their magazines. If the established pros don't write them, then they must turn to the tyros for these shorts. By the way, don't expect to make any money on your first sales. Rates in the lesser mags are low. As a matter of fact I just got a check for a story the other day, which came to exactly \$12.60.

Now this suggestion is going to be the hardest to take. I despair of convincing all you writers-to-be of the importance of it:

**DON'T SEND YOUR EARLY EFFORTS TO THE PROZINES AT ALL !**

You should write story after story, and story after story, before you ever inflict any of them on an editor. It's very poor policy to get an editor in the frame of mind where he holds his nose every time he sees something with your name on it. Don't send him anything until you're pretty sure he is going to like it.

Take those first stories you write and stash them away in a dark corner. Six months later take them out and reread them. If you still like them do a rewrite job and polish them up to the best of your ability. Then stash them away for another six months.

A good many fans know at least one or two pros. If you can, ask one to read over, before you send it out, the manuscript that you think has a chance. He'll undoubtedly have some pointers to make that might make the difference in whether or not it sells. I don't mean that you should expect a pro writer to go over everything you do and spend his time giving you a free course in writing. But most writers I've met are pretty nice as far as giving a newcomer a lift. Wait until you think your stuff is good enough to sell, and then ring in your pro friend to give you an opinion.

**A word about agents.**

Forget about them. A good agent doesn't want to be bothered with you until you've made your first sales; and a poor one is only interested in getting reading fees from you. Send your first stories directly to the magazine. After you've made a few sales, then ask one of your pro friends, or one of the editors you've sold to, to recommend an agent.

As a writer without an agent, you'll get your manuscripts read by the editors. They're always looking for new writers. For one thing they can get stories at lower rates from agentless newcomers. The first two stories I sold to Sam Merwin brought me a penny a word. Shortly afterward I acquired an agent, Harry Altshuler (very good, by the way—particularly in the sf field) and my Standard magazine rate immediately went up to a cent and a quarter.

Let me see, is there anything else I should pass on to a would-be professional?

Yes, there is. I've found there are three requirements for being a writer. A tweed coat, a pipe, and a wife that works.

("MAKE THE FIRST ONES SHORT" is reprinted from SPACESHIP 14 by kind permission of the author, and the publisher, Bob Silverberg).



## GENERAL CHUNTERING . . .



I hear Doc "Skylark" Smith has completed the first forty thousand words of his next book....this will be the story of "THE VORTEX BLAST -ER"....which aged fans will recall from the pages of COMET and ASTON -ISHING, '41/'42...three short stories...with the Galactic Patrol in the background.....from CROWNPOINT PUBLICATIONS of Glasgow comes a new brand-new British 'zine, scheduled for first issue in July...and bi-monthly thereafter. Title - NEBULA SCIENCE FICTION, edited by Peter Hamilton, Jr. ....8 1/2"x5 1/2", 96pp., 2/-, no sub rates fixed....cover on -ly will be illoed, one long novel, several shorts, editorial, letter section, science articles, and a "Know Your Author" department are on the list of probable contents...authors with material already on hand include Rayer, ERJames, Peter Ridley, Robert Moss, and Kilian Houston Brunner; the latter named being the source of information....many, thanks - and best wishes KHB...in your 'National Service' stretch.... (and I don't want any comments on the spelling of that word, folks... take another look and you'll get the implication, maybe....)....ROGER IN BLUNDERLAND...Aussie rep Roger Dard has had more trouble with the Customs, and lost no less than 62 mags and pbs seized and destroyed...but the joke (not in Rog's view) that under the heading of 'prohibited imports' on the list sent him was - Lewis Carroll: ALICE IN WONDERLAND !! ....when he recovers, Rog will continue his present programme, which includes getting married....congrats, Rog....another fan from 'down under', Miss Laurel Hyde, is visiting UK in '55, and will study the British fan in its wild state at some of it's more noted assembly points....Don Tuck, residing in Australia for some long time, has now returned to Tasmania, and so "Tuck of Tasmania, Tasmania's No. 1 Fan" is once again his correct title....CROWN can usually be relied upon to present a good book to the reading public...I was there -fore somewhat shaken when I picked up my copy of THE GALAXY READER, & pages ix to 14 fell half-way out. Poor binding...at \$3.50...although the book does have 566 pages...reviews of this item have been something varied, from the TIME Apr 7 scream to the more normal previews... from Oct '50 to Sep '51, not counting serials, GSF has published fifty-eight yarns, and this opus contains '33' of 'em ! ....Mr. Gold at least does not claim that they have stood "the test of time", but in his introduction he claims about everything else possible - except the Nobel prize...his usual editorial style....well, GALAXY is GOOD, yes - but, really, science fiction did exist before Gold and Galaxy happened along - and good s-f at that....most O.F. members have read GSF. Unless they are inordinately wealthy, they have no reason to purchase this book.....LYELL CRANE, visiting ROME (Italy) found a mag on sale there....SCIENZA FANTASTICA, subtitled - "avventure nello spazio, tempo, e dimensione", No. 1, Vol. 1, dated Aprile, '52...five tales, mainly from ASF and GSF...authors: Arthur Clarke, Fyfe, Norman L. Knight, del Ray, and Massimo Zeno (who Lyell is certain must be a local character). Good front cover, illos from original yarns, and the price is 150 lire....I have a letter from PROPAX "Bureau voor publiciteit en reclame", saying they intend launching a professional s-f mag in Holland....no further info to hand....but we wish them better luck than Ben Abbas had with FANTASIE EN WETENSCHAP....FANARTSOC '53 Calendar is now available, and was on sale at the LONDON CONVENTION...six sheets, two months to a sheet, 2/6, a good first item from the FANARTSOC....Staff Wright, OF and FAS member, now has on sale paper-weights, or ornaments, in the form of model rocket ships in plaster....CURRENT SCIENCE FICTION, new newszine, scooped the field with word of Bob Tucker's proposed closing down of SCIENCE FICTION NEWSLETTER next year....what about Box 702, Bob ?.... mention is made in FANTASY TIMES of a mag titled VORTEX SCIENCE FICTION....information is not clear, but it would appear to be a mag devoted to short-shorts....rumour has it that Walt Willis, editor of Ire-





land's leading magazine, SLANT, will make the CHICAGO CONVENTION this year...everybody is contributing dollars and used matchsticks....the latter for a raft in case they don't raise the fare....SEVEN DAYS TO NOON received the HOLLYWOOD ACADEMY AWARD for the BEST MOTION PICTURE STORY....Bob Johnson, publisher of fanmag-de-luxe ORB is now a student at the University of Chicago....as is also book dealer and OF member...Evan A. Appelmann....and artist Ray Nelson...Arthur C. Clarke received a -dance royalties of \$20,000 (?) for EXPLORATION OF SPACE from Harper's, and went to USA to collect....Bob Tucker's CITY IN THE SEA will appear in GSPN 11, and his latest THE LONG LOUD SILENCE is now due from Rinehart....MEDWAY S-F CLUB made the headlines in CHATHAM OBSERVER. a very fair write-up, although inaccurate in detail....Tony Thorne, lead-ing light of the MEDWAY, was presented with a daughter on April 21....he says the house is now full of WAW....hi, ya, Willis, don't you get around ?....Bryan Berry, whose RETURN TO EARTH was published in one of HAMILTON'S pbs, has two more novelettes coming up, one in AUTHENTIC 'n t'other in Hamilton's new PANTHER series....he has also made three oth-er sales Stateside....The new PANTHER series opened out with a yarm- - book length, no less, - by none other than Vince Clarke and Ken Bul-mer, editors of SFNEWS....congrats, fellers....title was SPACE TREASON. ....ASPM No. 21 features ALIEN IMPACT by E.C. (Ted) Tubb, British fan with several short published yarns to his credit....Derek Pickles in- -forms me that ASPM now sells more copies than any other of Hamilton's pbs....firm figure not available, but present estimate is 30,000..... illos for Arthur C. Clarke's juvenile ISLANDS IN THE SKY due from Sidg -ewick and Jackson in October will be by Gerard Quinn....Apr 7 LIFE is re-opener of Flying Saucer subject with HAVE WE VISITORS FROM SPACE ?...NEW WORLDS EDITOR Ted Carnell is now working on a second anthology, his first selection of stories by British authors is due from BOARDMAN in October, 10/6, titled NO PLACE TO HIDE....AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY has upped its sub rate to 5/-(A) per annum....Graham B. Stone... pumping out STOP GAP...gives Aussie fans news on mags, books, and such from all over....Mar-Apr issue covers the Australian Convention, which was also reported in HONI SOTT, official publication of Sydney U's Stu-dent Council....SUNDAY SUN MAGAZINE, Apl. 8, gave science-fiction, in the person of BALMORE SCIENCE FICTION FORUM, one of the most sympath-etic write-ups I've yet seen....some leg-pulling is included, but under-lying the humorous comments on the club being open to members from...Mars....etc....there appears to be understanding of fandom, and a realisa-tion that they are not dim-witted maniacs....SFNL (March '52) reported a new semi-promag, FANTASTIC WORLDS, to be issued by Edward Ludwig, of California....planographed, quarterly, 25¢, 32pp, styled after August Derleth's ill-fated ARKHAM SANITIZER....contributors will receive small cash prizes....address is 1942 Telegraph Ave, Stockton, Calif.....we omitted ORB from the fanzine list in the HB, under the impression a halt in publication had been called....but Bob informs us it will con-tinue irregularly...."on the spur of the moment"....Ephraim Zmorah, 19, Trumpeldor Ave., Nave Shaanan, HAIFA, Israel, would like to swap cur-rent issues of AMAZING for any British s-f mags, like NEW WORLDS...Con-tact him direct, folks....speaking of NEW WORLDS reminds me that quite a few copies appeared to have mixed binding - a whole section of pages being reversed - in the May issue....but apart from that, general opin-ion seems to say that it was the finest issue yet....and that reminds me there is no mag review section in this issue, so don't search around for it, folks....femme contingent of the Sydneysites got together, and put out a first issue of VERTICAL HORIZONS, including among other mat-erial a short yarn by Norma K. Hemming, their tame pro-writer.....the MANCON (ladies also welcome) will be at the NWSFC headquarters, WATER-LOO HOTEL, Manchester, where a large sized concert hall has been book-ed. Date is September 28th....and that is another 'vention I won't be able to get to....membership of the MANCON SOCIETY will be 1/6, entitl-ing folk to all con-pubs, and also to enter the DESIGN YOUR OWN SPACE-SHIP competition, but attendees proper will have to pay 5/- for the day which will include a running buffet that the management committee hope everyone will be able to catch....quite a few 'known' people will be attending, including an s-f celebrity (secrecy surrounds his name) who has never yet appeared at a fan-gathering....and so adios.....KFS.

#### WANTED

B&M B286 NEW WORLDS, 1,2,3,5  
Box B145 GODS OF MARS: Burroughs  
MASTER MIND OF MARS: "  
O.F. wants - ASF BRE '39 - '44 !  
UNK BRE '39 - '49 !

Gordon MacDonald, 40 Lees Street,  
McKinnon, Melbourne, Australia. .  
WANTS: UNKNOWN USA '39 Oct. Nov.  
'40 Jul. Oct. '41 Jun.  
'42 Apr. Jun. Aug. Oct. Dec.  
'43 Apr. Jun. Aug. Oct.

Several STARTLING STORIES subscribers noted that their monthly copies continued to show on the wrappers the old bi-monthly expiry date - and so did ours - so we wrote to Mr. Mines and here is his reply.....

YOU LUCKY PEOPLE ...

We don't think

Standard magazines, inc.  
BETTER PUBLICATIONS, INC.

10 EAST 40th ST., NEW YORK 18, N. Y.  
April 30, 1952

Captain Ken Slater  
No. 28 - FCLU Detachment  
BAGR 29, c/o GPO  
England

Dear Ken:

Your worst fears are realized - a subscription to STARTLING STORIES will only bring you 12 issues, not empty-ump free ones to round out a year. Awful, isn't it? But what 12 issues! You will drool over the covers and stories lined up and waiting to go. And the new format, which you will see in July for the first time! In all modesty I admit it's ter-rific.

Thanks for writing. My best to you.

Sincerely,

Samuel Mines  
Science Fiction Editor

