

OPERATION FANTAST 16

Subscription Rates:

U.K., Australia, South Africa - - - 7/6

U.S.A. and Canada - - - - \$1.00

(Subscriptions cover four issues of O.F., plus the
HANDBOOK and other material issued in the
same period.)



OPERATION FANTAST

VOL. 2. No. 4.

SUMMER, 1954.

WHOLE No. 16.

Editor: CAPT. K. F. SLATER.

'Riverside' South Brink, Wisbech, Cambs. England

Assoc. Editors: A. C. THORNE, JOYCE SLATER.

Correspondents:

ED. WOOD, Chicago; BOB SILVERBERG, New York.

CONTENTS

- 4 There's a Story in Anything *J. T. McIntosh*
- 6 Afterward *Laurence Sandfield*
- 9 Book Reviews *F. G. Rayer*
- 11 A Handbook of Science Fiction and Fantasy
- 13 Third Australian Science Fiction Convention
- 17 Respectable? *Cedric Walker*
- 19 Semi-Civil Chuntering

Official Representatives:

U.S.A.: J. BEN STARK, 290 Kenyon Avenue, Berkeley 8, Calif.

Australia: D. COHEN, Box 4940, G.P.O., Sydney, N.S.W.

South Africa: PEARLE APPLEFORD, 6 Anglo-African House, Smith Street, Durban.

Canada: P. HOWARD LYONS, P.O. Box 561, Adelaide P.O., Toronto.

There's a Story in Anything

By J. T. McINTOSH

Mack Reynolds gave some good advice to would-be authors in the last issue. But I think on one point it wasn't good advice.

Why not aim high?

There's one thing you'll never do in magazine writing—find a magazine whose standard is low, tell yourself “I can do better than this with my eyes shut”, and sell stories to it. No magazine deliberately publishes what its editors believe to be tripe. They *want* it that way. If you can't agree with their standards, you're not likely to impress them with a story written down to their level.

Instead, take the kind of magazine you *like*. When you write, you start off set to produce stories on these lines. You're bound to imitate, at first—why not imitate what you consider to be the best? If you get anywhere near your goal, you'll get helpful advice from Messrs. Campbell, Gold, Boucher and McComas. They want you writing for them. That's where writing for magazines is different from most ways of making money. There's nothing an editor likes better than coming to the end of a story with a sigh of contentment and realising he's found something he can use.

Mack says slant your stories. All right, why not slant them at a *SF*? The leading magazines are just that—leaders. Other magazines use stories of the same type, only not quite so good. Your story written for a *SF* which didn't quite ring the bell is not thereby disqualified from sale in a more modest sphere.

Perhaps you believe *Galaxy* and a *SF* and *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science-Fiction* are individual, different, each with its own style. The answer to that is nuts. A story you read in *Galaxy* looks like a *Galaxy* story because you know it is a *Galaxy* story. Authors don't put on special skull-caps and smoke different cigarettes when they're writing stories they mean to sell to *M of F and SF*.

At the end of 1951 and the beginning of 1952 I wrote seven stories one after the other, in no magazine's individual, distinctive style. They sold to *Galaxy*, *New Worlds*, *M of F and SF*, *Galaxy*, *M of S and SF*, *Science-Fantasy* and *M of F and SF*. The *New Worlds* story was a *Galaxy* story too, only perhaps not as good. The style was exactly the same, the plotting the same, the degree of effort in writing it the same.

But if you *are* going to aim high, heed Mack's advice about not sending your first efforts to the prozines even more. As a new author, you start with a clean sheet. Just think of it. Suppose you spend two years sending stories to every editor you can think of, and gradually learning how to write. At the end of that time, perhaps you sell a story or two. Well, picture your attitude then. Wouldn't it be grand if, knowing what you know then, you could start all over again, a new name, without editors turning green whenever they saw your name on a manuscript?

Don't worry about ideas. There's a story in anything. First trip to the moon? Certainly, if you have someone doing it to get some peace, between playing outside-left for Chelsea and dodging the girl who wants to marry him. The first visit of extra-terrestrials? Yes, if you concentrate on a few items of difference, so that those can be oriented. Make them Alien and you've had it. Get your ideas from Hans Anderson or Aesop if you like, but work on them. There's no idea so corny that you can't make a good story out of it—only don't expect the good story to be in it already.

I never met a science-fiction fan who couldn't give me half-a-dozen perfectly good ideas for stories. I never use them, because he would be inclined to think that the credit is his if the story sells to *Galaxy*. Not so. The days when an idea would sell a story are over. All that matters is what you do with the idea.

Why many tyro authors fail is simply this. They aren't capable, apparently, of reading critically through ten thousand words of their own solid toil, chucking the lot into the fire and starting again. It's so heartbreaking to think about doing that that they don't think about it. They try to fit a good end on to a bad beginning instead of writing a good beginning for a good end.

(Continued on page 7)

AFTERWARD

By LAURENCE SANDFIELD.

The forest is green around me, and the air is cool. Not so cool that one may not move naked through it, but pleasant and fresh to the skin. The long drive is straight and soft with grass and the trees march in file along its flanks. Beyond, the eye is lost among moonlight boles that in no way echo the roadside's symmetry.

There is a call, a longing somewhere deep within me that has brought me here from the depths of space, from the star-strewn voids where fiery jewels of heaven glow in their velvet setting.

Desert was here. Long before I was born. Desert and one great river. Amidst the sands living crystals sang while the silvery dust in the atmosphere made the planet a wondrous thing in the heavens of other worlds.

Almost, I can reach back that hot dusty day when the ships lanced out of a silicon flecked sky and fleshy invaders used the singing crystals as playthings. The invaders went everywhere, and where ever they trod things grew. Coarse rough grass bound the sands in the bonds of its questing roots and beneath the relentless tide of vegetation crystalline melody ended for ever.

Alvin Seccombe, who had tamed Mars, had come in his old age to see his grandson wrap Venus in a living green mantle and had laid his silvery head to rest where people from silver ships had tossed living crystals to and fro and laughed joyfully at their iridescent beauty.

Long, long ago my home nestled down where the lake placidly echoes star flamed heavens. Just where grass is lush and soft, where a stream flows gently bearing black and silver angel fish from tropic Earth.

This moonless night thrills my soul as the orb-filled skies of a thousand worlds have never done.

Once I planted these trees that clothe the rolling hills—all of them, aided only by a droning machine. My people

had prepared the way and I had followed. Now where a mere thousand saplings had reared their heads a forest towers greenly to the stars.

Now the breeze that plays on my back cannot chill me, for the time of that planting is far hence. The winds of the physical universe indeed cannot reach me, for I am a ghost now, with ichor instead of blood in my veins.

Many times I walked this avenue when it was freshly planted and a dear friend was by my side. However, such as he have no souls, and . . . what was that? Is there some special hell then, where in semblance of one's home, one can be tortured by that which is lost?

The sharp, excited bark that he gave when he greeted me home from a journey. That is what I hear. He could always see me from far off. I stand confounded, for he comes bounding through the woods, taking no cognizance of the drive that now means less to him than it ever did, and the mice and tiny things that live beneath the bracken of the forest floor will tell for generations of the great black ghost dog that scattered their dancing parties, their hunting groups.

"Hallo, old boy. Looked after her well while I've been away?"

The words come with ease of habit, and with them memory shocks me. She could not be here, possibly. Not after all this time, all this . . . change. She must have gone, long before, to the place appointed for us.

So I am wrong again, for she stands at the door where she waved good-bye to me that last time. The warm light of humanity streams around her shoulders. (Over

THERE'S A STORY IN ANYTHING

Continued from page 5

There's no secret, and there's no trick. Selling a story is the inevitable conclusion of a job properly done. If the whole thing has to be turned upside down because of something that comes up for the first time when you're writing the last page, you turn it upside down. If you're ready to do that, and *can* do it, you won't be able to prevent yourself selling stories.

"Darling!" Her arms are open wide. Again we are one.

So I am complete again. My wife and my dog and the babbling stream, the masses of brilliant flowers splashed on the grass, their blossoms hooded for the night. Yet there should be something more. Something that was there before in the time lost past.

As always, she divines my thoughts, draws me around the house.

Our son and his bride sit on the veranda gazing across the valley. As we watch, they rise and embrace, then pass through us where we stand in the doorway.

"One more thing," breathes my wife.

In a room next my son's stands a small white bed, dim in the starlight. A tuft of golden hair, a chubby fist.

Now I know how wearisome long the time has been.

The infant moves, not at my involuntary cry. This is my grandson. And in the trees that clothe the farthest hill which I had not touched, in the flowers and fruit-bearing trees that border the lake I see the work of my son.

So contentment has come to me. The restlessness that has driven me from star to star since the ship blew itself to dust out by Epsilon Aurigae, has evaporated and has gone as that very dust was gone.

My fathers made a world out of a dustbowl and I planted trees in the hills to hold the precious water. My son has made this home of ours bear fruit for his sustenance.

We are one with the nothingness of the past.

Venus the evening star has lost its silver beauty in Terra's skies.

While men could build like this, the race would never die. As I had.



Book Reviews

By F. G. RAYER.

ATTACK FROM ATLANTIS. (John C. Winston Co., \$2:00. 207 pages. Lester Del Ray.) From the adult point of view, a weak story, when compared with most of the Winston *SF* Series. A submarine, the *Triton*, is captured by the "bubble men" of Atlantis, and the hero and crew are taken to an undersea city. Possibly 14-16 year-olds would not find everything so stereotyped. The story is complete with the usual antagonists, clever electronic gadgets fixed up by the hero in the nick of time, etc. It is difficult to see how such a story could hold any adult reader's attention, unless he is almost wholly new to *SF* and has not read any *Lost Atlantis* stories before. It would not be fair to the Series to look upon this as representative of the other *SF* novels; or fair to the author to suggest that it sets the level of all his work.

Actionful and ably written, making the best of what there is . . .

DANGER: DINOSAURS! Richard Marsten. (\$2:00. John C. Winston Co., U.S.A., 1953.) This story, which is one in the series of "juveniles" published by Winston's, opens with a party going back into Jurassic times by means of the "time-slip". One of the party, Masterson, is so determined to have things his own way that he brings the whole party into grave danger. Deprived of the protection of their force-field, they have to exist for a full week in this Age of Reptiles, as only then will the time-slip be ready to take them back to the present—if they can find it! The story is actionful, dangers from the creatures of that time being continuous and varied.

The leader of the expedition, Owen Spencer, is killed in a stampede—and could therefore never have existed in his own day—would, in fact, never have been born. Other members of the party go the same way. The resultant difficulty, one always present in time stories, is made good

use of and dealt with much more convincingly than is sometimes the case. The author adopts the premise that if they were dead in Jurassic times, then they could not be alive in present-day time, and works out a neat ending from this. (Lack of space must preclude any examination of the possible arguments for and against such a premise.) Remembering that this book is intended for "juveniles" it is to be praised as a good introduction which may one day lead such "juveniles" to read more advanced Science Fiction. Could one hope that the Winston series might eventually grow up with the reader? Such books would certainly be more sane than some!

UNBORN TOMORROW. Gilbert Frankau. (Macdonald, 1953, 12/6d. 302 pages.) This is not science-fiction, but a fairy story about a man who is unconscious as a result of an accident and imagines himself living a good many centuries hence. Here, folk wear clothing resembling 18th century dress—many pages are descriptions of this, and of the food eaten. This man endeavours to elope with a girl who is apparently one of his grandchildren many times removed, but is pinked in a duel and reawakens in the present time. In all, the story is weak and unconvincing, and everything ends up by long explanations apparently intended to assure the reader that everything was only a dream. In no way comparable to Wells' *The Sleeper Awakes* no reader of S.F. need feel disappointed if he misses this story.

"THE STAR SEEKERS". (\$2.00. John C. Winston Co. 212 pp.). This story is by Milton Lesser, who contributed "Earthbound" to the series—and "The Star Seekers" lives up to the standard there set. Man is voyaging to Alpha Centauri, but not until the sixth generation will he arrive. The descendants of those who set out forget the purpose of their voyage; Earth and things outside the great ship become mere legend. The ship (if ship it can be called) has become divided into four sections which have ceased to mix. Only when one of the Engineer's sons begins to make a trip of exploration does the true state of affairs emerge: the food-growers, in their own great section, do not realise there is a

world outside; those in the entertainment section do nothing but amuse themselves and are known as the Revelers; the third section of people, in Far Labry, have the knowledge and learning only, while the last section of people, the "Engineer's" have forgotten how to control the ship. Planet-fall is imminent, with the danger of total destruction unless something is done.

This is a good story, and a worthy addition to the Series. It moves swiftly but without confusion, and suspense is well maintained. It is not marred by the unnecessarily horrific, or by excess violence, and I would place it upon any list of "preferred volumes" for these reasons. (To avoid any possible confusion, it should be noted that this volume is in no way related to *The Star Seekers* published by Newnes & Pearsons somewhat earlier, by myself, the same title merely being co-incidence.)

This book would be a good gift.

REVIEW

A Handbook of Science Fiction and Fantasy

Compiled by DONALD H. TUCK.
(Hobart, Tasmania, January, 1954.)

Tuck's *Handbook* was a labour of love, one imagines. It was certainly a labour. The outside dimensions are $12\frac{3}{4}'' \times 8''$ and its 151 pages of references make it $5/16$ ths thick. It is bound in a fairly heavy grey stock, but I feel that this could have been heavier—I doubt if the jacket will last as long as the book.

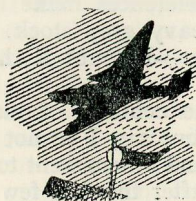
To say whether the contents of the work are accurate is beyond me. I can but say I've not found an error yet, and I know that Tuck and others went to considerable trouble to check the entries. After the first few pages (contents list,

abbreviations used, method of cross-referencing, etc.), come the basic entries. These run to the first 107 pages, and range from *A. Merritt Fantasy* to *Zost!* To give you a brief example of the sort of detail you can discover, the entry for *Adventures in Time and Space* tells you who edited it, who published it and when; the fact that the second U.S.A. edition (1953) omitted four stories, the original containing 33 stories and two articles; the stories are detailed, and those reprinted in the British edition are noted. Number of pages, prices, etc., are all given.

With the details of a magazine you find a cross reference to an index which lists the issues of that magazine by date and vol/no. The index of author's pseudonyms lists first the pseudonym in a numbered alphabetical order, with the "real name behind it; then follows a list of the real names with numbered reference to the pseudonyms used by that writer. A fifteen-page appendix gives a list of pocket books and paper-covered material, by title, and cross-referenced numerically to authors and publishers. Details of price, date, and number of pages are given.

Back to the "basic" section, we find Carnell, Edward John, given a fourteen-line potted biography; right after him comes Carr, Robert Spencer, and then the fictional Carse, Hawk, Pratt, Fletcher, is followed by Prelude to Space. Slan; Slater, Henry J.; Slater, Ken; and Slaves of Sleep lay in that order—strange bedfellows this system of listing makes, but at least it makes for rapid uncovering of the information you may want.

Although I'm agenting this over here for Don Tuck, I'll give you an honest opinion—if you are an enthusiast, a collector, this book is a worthwhile acquisition. If you are just a reader who throws things away, it isn't. You'll have no need for it.



Third Australian S-F Convention!

By I. J. CROZIER.

After a series of "at homes" given by various fans on the Good Friday, Convention attendees staggered in on the Saturday morning in various stages of wakefulness. The main activity at this session was the arranging of displays, and a general get-together. There were excellent displays of early US magazines, fanzines, and two floors below, Dave Cohen of the Blue Centaur Book Co., had a very fine collection of original covers from the Malian Press series, plus an almost complete set of the BRE editions of US magazines. The North Shore Futurian Society had a display on in the same room as Dave, while the Futurian Library had one in the main hall. AFPA had a display of all issues of their publications in the main hall also, and free copies of the special Convention issue of *Etherline* were handed to all those who attended.

The main session got under way at 2.15 p.m., and was opened by the Chairman, Mr. Rex Meyer, who formally welcomed all those attending, and introduced the first speaker, Mr. Neville Cohen, who delivered an address prepared by Graham Stone, *Science Fiction Cavalcade*, which touched briefly on the early history of stf. Mr. Don Lawson spoke on *Science Fiction and the Film*, detailed the early stf films, and carrying through to the present day.

The Symposium was then started. Titled *The World of Tomorrow*, it was in three parts. *The Future of the Machine* by Mr. S. Dunk, who painted a very gloomy picture for our descendants, predicting the early disappearance of all inorganic substances used for manufacture and fuel. Mr. H. Brunen carried on in similar vein in *The Future of Man*. Mr. Brunen appeared to be vastly influenced by Messrs. Huxley and Stapledon. The last speaker was Mr. Molesworth, who prefaced his remarks with the statement that Mr. Brunen had in many cases cut the ground from under his feet. His address was titled *The History of Culture*, and proceeded to carry out this title. He finished up with the prediction that in his

opinion, culture would not change so very much from the present day.

After a short intermission, the Forum, consisting of Mrs. N. Gore and Messrs. P. Glick and L. Crane took over. Mr. Glick opened, challenging several of Mr. Dunk's statements quite successfully, in my opinion. Mr. Brunen also came in for scathing, typical Glick, remarks. Mr. Crane delivered a short address, in which he disagreed with the earlier speakers, while Mrs. Gore emphasised the woman in the future.

Mr. Meyer wound up the Symposium, and threw the addresses open to debate. Several attendees took advantage of this, and provided the best entertainment of the afternoon. The session closed at 5.30. At this point, I would like to ask why the hell all these ponderous, and often boring, addresses seem to be a necessary part of a science fiction convention? As a science fiction fan, I can assure you that they are of no interest to me. I would much rather see a discussion on the effect of various authors on sf as a whole, or the rise and fall of some famous magazine. If we want to go through this other stuff, then we can go along to the local Philosophical debate, or Semantics group.

After tea, a taped message was played from Robert Heinlein, who expressed his regret at not being able to attend, and wishing the Con every success.

The film session started without a screen, as it was locked in the clubrooms. It appears that meetings at the new clubroom are started with a hacksaw. The film show was really terrific, and I extend my congratulations to Don Lawson. Some of the best film footage I have even seen was shown, the experimental Canadian reels by Norman McLaren titled *Fiddle Dee Dee* and *Begone Dull Care*. These are painted direct onto the film to the tune of a piece of music. If you have never seen them, then I suggest you do. The main show was the MGM film, *The Beginning of the End*, starring Robert Walker, Brian Donlevy, Tom Drake, Beverly Tyler and Audrey Trotter. The theme of this was on the first atom bomb, and should be familiar to all fans. Another short, *Across Arctic Ungave*, a Canadian film, was also screened.

The auction started late next morning, again being opened with a hacksaw. After it got under way, fairly brisk bidding

was experienced on all the US items, some going as high as 8/6, with 5/- to 7/- being common. BRE's brought an average of 1/-, depending on the issue and magazine. American PB's brought a high average price, as did US books, despite the fact that most of them will be out shortly as British editions.

The Business Session started on time on the Sunday afternoon, being chaired by Vol Molesworth. Reports were delivered by Mr. B. Finch for the Futurian Society of Sydney, a taped report by Mr. Arthur Porter of the Futurian Society of Canberra, Mr. McCubbin of the Melbourne Science Fiction Group, Mr. Lyell Crane of the Australasian Science Fiction Society, Mr. Lyell Crane for the Adelaide Science Fiction Group, Mr. Ted Butt for the Newcastle and Hunter Valley Science Fiction Society, Mr. Hubble for the North Shore Futurian Society. After the reports had been accepted by the session, General Business took over.

In his report on ASFS, Mr. Crane dropped a bombshell when he indicated that he and the president, Mr. G. Stone wished the session to indicate the future of ASFS. It was felt by them both that ASFS had served its purpose, that of registering fans, and a new purpose would have to be selected. After much heated discussion, the chairman applied the gag, and indicated to ASFS that enough suggestions had been made from the floor for a course to be selected.

Another bombshell was dropped when it was moved Haddon, seconded Bos that the NSFS be appointed to run the Fourth Convention in Sydney next year. Apparently everyone had the idea that Melbourne would run it, and it was all ready to drop it in their laps. There was a queue of speakers already to get up and move it to this effect and the motion stunned a few of them. After much heated discussion on both sides, the gag was applied, and the NSFS got the 1955 Con by 22 votes to 14.

The Melbourne delegation arose and asked that the 1956 Convention be awarded to Melbourne, as they had plans to put a really good show on, in view of the Olympics being held there. This was approved by the session.

Mr. Hubble was suggested by the meeting as the Organizer of the 1955 Convention.

A vote of thanks was given to Mr. Wally Judd, Organizer

of the Convention, for the smooth way in which it went off, and I would like to endorse this.

A move was made to heal the serious breach which has split the Sydney group, and the Melbourne delegation moved out of the room in a body whilst this was being attempted. Apparently it was not too successful.

The meeting adjourned at 5.15 p.m.

The final session was the variety night, which consisted of a very good play put on by the Sydney fans, and a short film session.

On the whole, a much better show than last year, except for the Symposium, and the organization only slipped a couple of times.

We can only hope that the Sydney group mends its differences.

Attendances: Total registration was 123, inc. 20 Compl.

Saturday afternoon: 61.

Saturday night: 61.

Sunday morning: 31.

Sunday afternoon: 45.

Sunday night: 40 odd.

HAIMOGOLBIN? HEAMOGLOBIN? HEMOGIBLON?

Spell it any way you like, but this printed fanzine contains a quality of fiction and articles which the discerning fan will want to read and keep to read again.

To further our policy of printing the best in the fanzine field, *Haemoglobin* offers prizes of £2 and £1 for the best contributions in each issue, decided by readers' votes.

Our rates are 3/6 for four issues (U.S. \$1 for six issues). A few copies of our first issue are still available at 1/-, or 20c.

If you are a student of the best in stfantasy, order *Haemoglobin* now.

Send your subscription today to:—

Alan Mackie, 80, East Road, Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland.

RESPECTABLE?

By CEDRIC WALKER.

So science fiction has become respectable nowadays, h'm? So it's almost becoming literature? Do we not get praise from such staid organs as *The Observer* and *John o' London's Weekly*? Thus it's somewhat of a shock to our fannish smugness when an article appears that harks back to the old, sneering, pre-war days when all science fiction was tripe, no matter what. This is: *The New 'Science Fiction'* by Hella Jaspert, subtitled *Lush Fiction but Queer Science*, and appearing in the stately columns of no less than the *Manchester Guardian*.

She starts off by remarking that most "Pseudo-scientific fantasies . . . have until recently been associated with the lurid covers of pulp magazines or with adventure stories for boys". True enough—though among those pseudo-scientific fantasies one remembers the work of Taine, Keller, Weinbaum, Verrill, to mention a few greats of the twenties and thirties that come readily to mind—to say nothing of Astounding. But in the same paragraph she concedes, one feels, reluctantly, that "during the last months there has been a remarkable change in the status of 'science fiction'; it seems to have acquired a certain literary prestige . . ."

Just why this prestige is anybody's guess. Miss Jaspert suggests man's mastery over nature, his longing for new worlds to explore, the scientific bias in education. This may explain the increase in output, but why the prestige? In support she cites the increasing numbers of s-f books that "now bear the imprint of reputable publishing houses". Does the prestige lie in the hard covers themselves? Don't sundry, near-the-bone stories appear in hard covers?

After this rather grudging admission Miss Jaspert proceeds to tear our favourite fiction to pieces—though with odd little compliments inserted here and there. Thus: ". . . far from being based on scientific observation . . . science fiction generally serves as an excuse for the wildest fantasies. Any

addict will quickly discover that real scientific knowledge on the part of the author is the exception rather than the rule and that the majority of the writers indulge in pure fantasy". Wonder what the two Campbells would say to this . . . Personally I think Miss Jaspert has a point there, though she would probably be surprised to learn that a fair proportion (a majority?) of readers prefer it that way and do not regard it as derogatory. Then comes one of the compliments: "A profound dissatisfaction with life as it is and a consciousness of the unreality of being (however crudely expressed) underlie the best of these stories".

Maybe I'm naive (I often have a disturbing suspicion of this) but I don't quite follow what she means by "the unreality of being". Perhaps when we understand this we'll really be literary . . .

In one brief subsequent paragraph we encounter such phrases as: "lamentable failures science fiction produces", "no scientific pretensions whatever", "threadbare plot", "feeble fancies", "With very few exceptions they (s-f writers) are incapable of any real imaginative vision or even of effective make-believe." Well . . . As regards the "threadbare plot" I've always thought that plotting was one of the strongest aspects of magazine science fiction. If she'd knocked the characterisation I'd have been more than willing to go halfway with her. But this doesn't get a mention.

Amazed, I learn that "a large percentage of these tales is either coyly or unashamedly pornographic . . . their real themes are often fairly unsavoury sexual fantasies". Shades of pre-war Kuttner! Again my impression has always been to the contrary. Could it be that Miss Jaspert's research has been confined to *Amazing* during the Shaver Era? Certainly there were some dubious stories in one or two of the mushroom mags that appeared just prior to the war, but are we to class these ephemerae as typical of the general run of s-f mags? In *Astounding* for instance one is sometimes hard put to find a lady at all—even a female secretary with a brief line or so.

Says Miss Jaspert: "There is a great deal of the henpecked husband about some of these authors . . .". I dunno . . . This seems to be my day for disillusionment. The picture I had was of a hard-drinking, hard-swearing, thirtyish, athletic

young man being cynical to his beautiful girl-friend, and forever turning her out of his untidy, mess-strewn apartment so's he can get on with more important things. Maybe I'm wrong again . . .

Apparently, too, "even the more intelligent (of us fans) do not object to the trite plots and tasteless illustrations or the unsuccessful efforts."—and we read "avidly and indiscriminately any science fiction on which he can lay his hands and find a thousand excuses for its follies and shortcomings." Really . . . It would be interesting to know what the editors of our mags think of this remark. No doubt they could display a certain amount of concrete evidence in refutation . . .

And hitherto I had not been aware that: "A real *fen*" was "the recognised shortening for Science Fiction Enthusiast". Perhaps this intelligence gives some indication of the authority of Miss Jaspert as a critic of science fiction.

Semi-Civil Chuntering

By K.F.S.

A few comments on this issue, first. Needless to say it is not the "original" O.F.16—the one that went to our late printer last November. The article by J. T. McIntosh was rescued from that, however, and one or two minor items were also included in the draft material I sent in. The balance of the material in the issue is "new"—and if anyone is offended because I promised to print their item in O.F.16 and it does not appear here, the reason will, I hope, be obvious—this is not *that* O.F.16. When I get settled down in this country I hope to rescue more of the material.

However, I think that most of you will be satisfied with the selection of items offered to you. Still not art-work, I fear, but the pages have been increased, and although we are using a larger type-face the net result is a big increase in wordage.

For the next issue I have only one thing scheduled. That is a reply by Mr. Harold T. Wilkins to Phil Rasch's "Open

Letter'' which appeared in *Fantast Sidetrack* No. 1. Mr. Wilkins has very kindly consented to give his viewpoint, and allow me to print it. What else appears in the issue will depend on what the postman brings me.

More personal matters next. I arrived back in U.K. on July 2nd, and found a stack of mail awaiting me. Some—in fact, most—of it still remains to be answered at the moment. Don't despair if you have still not received a reply when you get this; I'm doing my best, but there are a lot of things I have to do which take precedence. Finding a home for one, and getting organised on a new job for another. I think you'll all agree that it is not easy to sit pounding a typewriter for hours when one is living with relations, as Joyce and I are at present. Nor can I spread my files out, sort over the incoming books and mags, and so forth, when I'm not in my own home.

And now to a little proper chuntering . . . O.F.'s revised *Handbook* is delayed; due to my leaving BAOR a month before I originally expected it proved impossible to get the copy prepared for the first section, hence no binders and no first section have been issued. . . . John Gutteridge has sent me some 35 mags, all to be distributed free to folks who I consider need them. Well, that makes it awkward for me. I've tried this sort of thing before and generally succeeded in offending someone or other. Either by sending something to someone who writes back and says if he wants anything he is quite prepared to pay for it, or by missing someone who could use the material and having several other people write and point this out to me. So this time it is *your* responsibility to elect the lucky people. Here's how—you write me and give me a name and address of some fan you feel should get a free mag. Enclose a two-penny stamp to show you are in earnest. I'll mail the person a mag, and the two-pence will go to the Transatlantic fund . . . *Cosmos*, I hear, folded after its fourth issue . . . Ace pbs have issued *Cosmic Manhunt* (Queen of Zamba) by de Camp, and *Ring Around the Sun* by Simak in the back-to-back format . . . other new US pbs include *Beyond Human: Ken, Adventures in Time and Space, My Best SF Story, Beyond Infinity*: Robert Spencer Carr, *Brain Wave*: Poul Anderson, and *No Time Like the Future*, an anthology of Nelson Bond's yarns. . . . no new mags

except Hamling's *Imaginative Tales*, which I understand contains a "Toffee" yarn by Charles Myers—I've yet to see a copy . . . *Space Science Fiction* is to be revived, and according to current report will be 160pp, 35c . . . I've not yet discovered if the BRE will also appear . . . the serial which started in the last issue of the US edition will not, however, be continued . . . and in case anyone is a little confused, the serial's first part was in the last-but-one issue of the BRE because the last BRE to appear was a reprint of the first USA edition . . . the Twerpcon, held in Antwerp on 31st June, 1954, was a real knockout . . . for full information see the next issue of *Alpha*, issued by the Antwerp SF Society, (Jan Jansen, 229, Berchemiel, Borgerhout, Antwerp, Belgium) . . . I managed to attend that Con, but of course missed the SuperMancon . . . no SMC report herein, by the way, as so many have already appeared in British fanzines . . . I gather from letters that the SMC was a social success, enjoyed by all, but suffered the usual snags of the British conventions on the "business" side . . . I hear from Don Tuck that only some sixty copies of his *Handbook* (reviewed in this issue) remain, so if you'd like one, order now . . . Don, by the by, wants copies *Pilgrims Through Time and Space*, J. O. Bailey, and *Modern Science Fiction*, R. G. Bretnor . . . send your offers to me, and I'll pass them along to him . . . but don't send me the books! Tom Cockcroft points out I made an error in the Jan/Feb *Newsletter*, when I stated *Perhaps* contained the "completest Lovecraft bibliography yet published" . . . the bibliography was in fact of Robert E. Howard . . . Tom has not yet completed his HPL biblio . . . there have been a host of new fanzines out in the British Isles, and I regret I've not yet had time to read 'em . . . hence I can't comment on them here . . . as soon as possible I will issue a *Fan Press* and cover as much of the material on hand as I can . . . the *Milnes Project* is a comparative list of BRE and USA editions of magazines, which Frank E. Milnes of Liverpool is undertaking . . . Frank says that, as by its very nature is it doomed to remain unfinished, it will be planned as a regular publication rather than as an index . . . J. T. McIntosh's latest book, *One in Three Thousand*, will appear from Doubleday on September 9th . . . it includes the two stories *One in Three*

Hundred and One in One Thousand which have appeared in F and SF, and a third titled *One too Many* which has not yet but will also appear in F and SF . . . discussing s-f with the manager of a large bookstore, he informed me that sales were dropping rapidly . . . so much so that he no longer stocks copies! . . . this, in so far as the "between boards" material is concerned, appears to be the opinion of other people professionally engaged in purveying the printed word to the public . . . when the first copy of Sidgwick and Jackson's new *British SF Library* series came to hand, I was a little shaken . . . the story, as fantasy, is quite good . . . but to call it science-fiction strains that already misused term to the uttermost . . . however, I can recommend *Hole in Heaven*: Fawcett to the "weird" enthusiast . . . and as usual, if only I could get my mail sorted I'd probably find a few thousand things to tell you . . . but as it is, I'll sign off now . . . K.F.S. F. W. Lawrence, 44, Park Ave., Bush Hill Park, Enfield, Middlesex, is interested in buying Talbot Mundy books.

Club and Society Listing: It is still not too late to send details of YOUR club for inclusion in the first revised section of the O.F. Handbook. Details to Dennis Cowan, 42, Silverwood Road, KETTERING, Northants, England.

Want List Material: There is always a demand for 1939—1944 issues of ASF and *Unknown*, both BRE and USA. If you have copies you don't want, advise the TB.

Contact Bureau: Stan Thomas (47, Calderstone Avenue, Buttershaw, BRADFORD, 6, Yorks., England) is now in charge of the CB and the Greetings Group. If you want to make new penfriends, helping Stan with the GG is one of the surest ways.





Printed for the publisher by: The Westwood Press
224 Westwood Road, Sutton Coldfield