

REMEMBRANCE
OF
THINGS PAST

VIII

A selection from the pages of Spaceways

An occasional delving into the writings
surviving from the elder fandom

A Weltschmerz Publication

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August 1962

A NOTE ———
and an apology...

Halfway through this project, the ditto was replaced by a mimeo; hence the mixed appearance of this issue. And, next time, I'll use mimeo paper for mimeoing; I'm sorry about the bad offset on some pages.... The typos, in general, are mine; I never could proof my own typing.

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INTRODUCTION

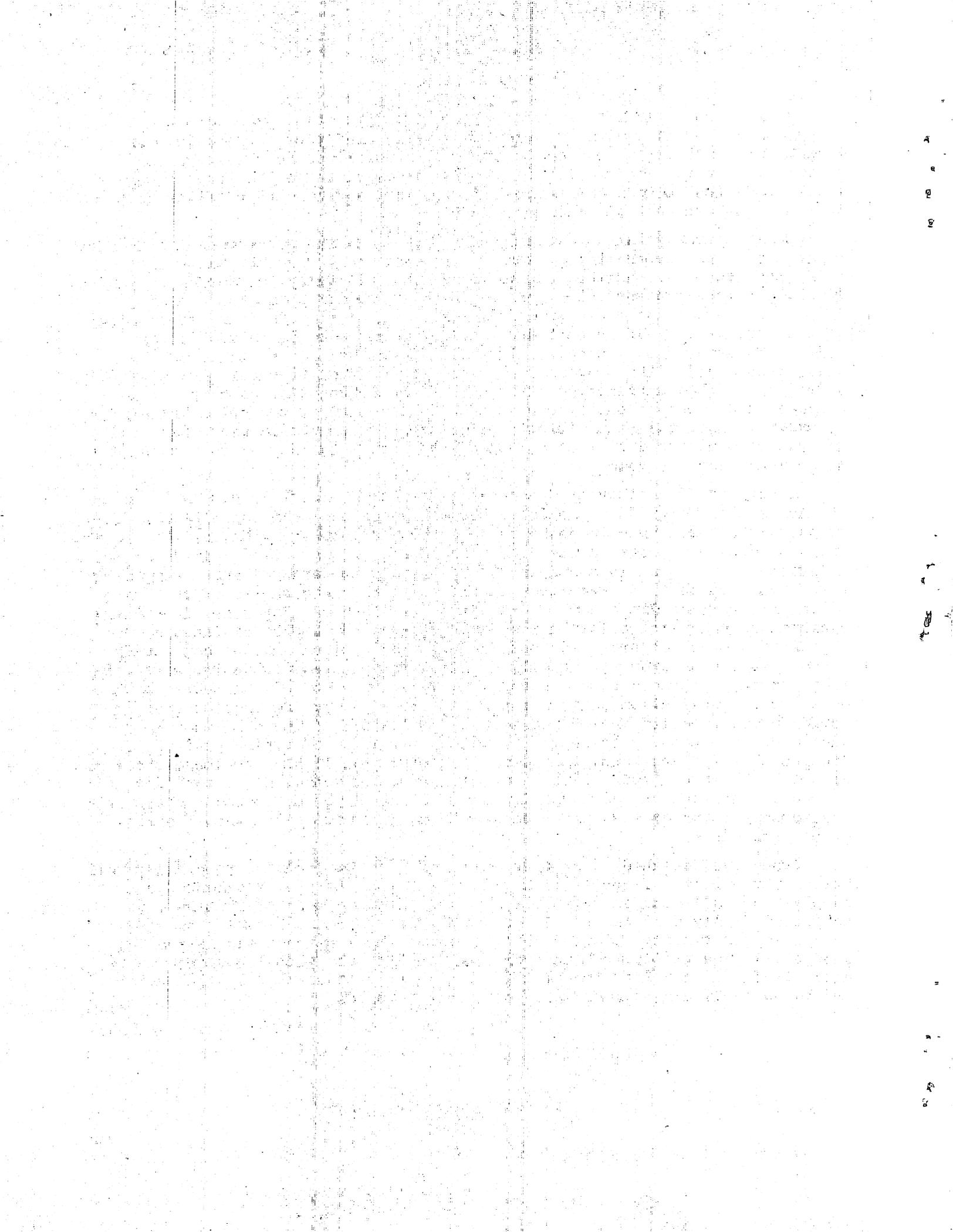
I have been asked to write an introduction to this collection of ghosts that Bill Evans has conjured up from my dead past, in the form of a Spaceways anthology. I don't know which specters he is materializing to haunt me, but I can say a few things that might cause the younger members of the audience to make allowances for the inadequacies and oddities that they are sure to find in such an anthology.

One important thing to remember is that Spaceways functioned during four years, from the second through the fifth years of my fanzine existence. That means that the first issues were produced by a pitifully inexperienced and fumbling person who published any material he could lay his hands upon, didn't do the editing that some of the contributions needed, and repeatedly made a fool of himself in each issue. On the other hand, by the latter half of Spaceways' existence, I think that I was doing a better job. By then, almost all the Spaceways material was written to order, I was able to reject the bad unsolicited stuff, I had the courage to touch up careless passages and amputate superfluous ones, and I no longer thought so highly of second-rate material from professional writers. You should find this change in Spaceways mirrored in this anthology, by higher quality or more voluminous selections from the later issues.

A very brief history of Spaceways might be in order, in case you missed the longer one Terry Carr published several years ago: It began as a hoktographed collaboration between me and Jim Avery of Skowhegan, Maine. The hoktographed version miscarried when the gelatin and Jim got tired simultaneously. I invested five bucks in a surplus church mimeograph and got our a completed first issue on that. From then on, I was in complete charge of the thing, although I carried Jim's name as co-editor to the end. Seven or eight issues appeared annually; circulation ranged from around 60 copies at the start to a peak of 180 copies or thereabouts near the end. The magazine came quite close to breaking even financially until its final stages when the war's effects on supply prices became severe. A combination of circumstances caused me to cease publication quite abruptly and completely: Depression over World War Two, belief that I was soon to be drafted, illness in the family that made it necessary to cut to a minimum the noise of typing, and the conviction that I'd lost enough interest in fanzine publishing to cause the magazine to fall into a rut. I've never given a serious thought to reviving it as a regular publication, although I was all set in 1958 to produce a giant 20th anniversary issue on a surprise basis. This plot was foiled when the mimeograph broke down.

Spaceways finished at or near the top of most fanzine popularity polls during its career. I don't think this was because of its excellence, but simply because I managed to fumble into a policy and type of fanzine that expressed pretty well the spirit of the times in fandom, breaking away from the potty personality material that dominated the fanzine world in the late 1930's. It was pretty much an accident, and I'm sure that I couldn't do it again if I suddenly lost the small amount of good sense that I still retain and began publishing a regular subscription fanzine.

--Harry Warner (3/15/59)



FROM THE CONTROL ROOM

Abject and profuse apologies must be made on the belated appearance of this, the first issue of SPACEWAYS. And perhaps primary to proceeding further it would be well to give a little explanation of the reason for the delay.

Originally, as you no doubt know, the announcements concerning SPACEWAYS said that the first issue would be in the mails Nov. 1—but Nov. 1 has come and gone, and the magazine appears close to two weeks behind schedule. But the reason for this is simple: SPACEWAYS was originally intended as a hectographed magazine, and when our first issue was about half complete the hokto broke down completely, leaving us with a half completed magazine on our hands, and no means of completing it apparent. A week followed in which we had to mark time, waiting for something to turn up—and turn up something finally did, in the form of a mimeograph. The portion of the magazine which had already been hektoed had to be scrapped, and, due to the fact that the mimeograph was only available in Hagerstown, many editorial duties had to be shifted about. Finally, though, work was again started—on the extremely late date of October 22, which may give some idea of the reason this issue was so tardy in appearing.

In the future, however, SPACEWAYS will appear on time every issue, barring unforeseen circumstances. As long as we remain a bi-monthly I think that I am safe in saying that we will definitely appear on time every issue, and if in the future SPACEWAYS becomes a monthly, everything possible will be done to publish each issue on the dot also.

This monthly is one of the things that I want to see—but there is only one way in which it can be accomplished, and that is for the circulation of SPACEWAYS to increase. With our present circulation I think we can manage a bi-monthly, but if you, the readers, want a monthly magazine, the circulation must take a radical jump upwards. So tell all of your correspondents and stf. friends about SPACEWAYS, and urge them to try a copy.

SPACEWAYS is always open to exchanges of ads and subscriptions with other fan magazines—if you edit a fan magazine, or any kind of a stf. publication, write for details. And, of course, we want, and need very badly, material for publication. No matter what you have, send it along, and it will appear in an early issue. We set no definite limitations on length of material; however, try to keep articles down to not more than 2,000 words, stories to 4,000, and poems to sixteen lines. Also, we would like to have the readers submit any news about stf. which is timely and authentic, and almost anything else, such as stf. book reviews, illustrations, etc.

Our only limitations on the type of material that we will publish are as follows: no article, or any other kind of material, must deal with religious or political controversies, nor will we publish anything that is in any way slanderous. Anything that we receive such as this will be returned.

The printing, I think, in this issue is a bit above the average, despite occasional typographical errors which could not be avoided, due to the rush in getting out this first issue. Next time I think that we will do even better with the typography, though. And even now, I'm sure that you will find it better, and freer from mistakes, than 75% of the fan magazines today.

And I think that you will be very splendidly surprised by some of the material that we have scheduled for you in future issues. Besides that listed in our forecast department we also have possibilities of receiving some from such fine writers as Jack Williamson, Eric Frank Russell, and Leslie F. Stone. Also, future issues will be illustrated—the rush in publishing this one prevented it this time.

Finally, in future issues we are going to publish a large section of readers' letters—and it's up to you to fill these pages. Write us as soon as you've finished this issue, telling us what you think of it, and as many letters will be published as space will allow. However, try to keep your comments as brief as possible, for we want to publish as many letters as possible, and short ones will receive preference over the longer ones. If you wish answer, send stamp.

THE DIMENSION DRUG

by

AMELIA REYNOLDS LONG

In two parts--part 1

"Your room will be 347, sir," the desk clerk said, and handed Patric Vance a key. Vance was in the act of accepting it when his glance wandered to the sheet of the hotel register which he had just signed. Written not more than a half dozen spaces above his own name, he read:

"Professor Theophilus Dickenson, M. D., Ph. D., F. R. S. City."

"My word!" he exclaimed. "Old Dickenson staying here! Imagine!"

The clerk, who was accustomed to reading up-side down, read also.

"What will be the gentleman in 342," he said. "A friend of yours, Mr. Vance?"

"Rather!" Vance replied enthusiastically. "He taught me chemistry back in the Stone Age when I went to college. I say, call him on the phone and tell him I'm coming up to see him."

And so the trouble started.

"Will you be in town very long, Patric?" the professor inquired when their first salutations were over.

"Only a few days," Vance answered. "My firm sent me up on a business trip to see the head of Wharton and Company."

"In that case," the other smiled, "I would probably not have had the pleasure of seeing you if I had not chanced to come to this hotel a few hours before your own arrival."

"Oh, no," Vance denied. "I had intended to look you up tomorrow as soon as I was at liberty. But I had expected to find you at the Chemists' Club rather than at a hotel."

"And so you would have, my boy," Prof. Dickenson replied, "except that there is at present a scientists' convention in town, and I gave up my rooms at the club in order to help accommodate some of our famous out-of-town guests."

"A convention?" Vance repeated with polite interest. "Will you be reading a paper, sir?"

Prof. Dickenson shook his head sadly. "Not this time, I'm afraid," he answered. "The galling part of it is, I probably have the most remarkable discovery of the century to lay before the convention; but I can't present it because I have been unable to find a subject upon whom to complete my experiments."

"What is your discovery?" Vance asked curiously. "The professor's work in his chosen field could always be depended on to be original, at least."

"It is a means," the professor replied, "of demonstrating the fourth dimension, just as the third dimension is demonstrated by sounding, and the first and second by measurement."

"The fourth dimension," he went on, warming to his subject, "is not merely a speculative hypothesis, as is commonly imagined, but an actuality. Up to the present, its existence has never been proven other than philosophically; but I am now prepared to give a tangible demonstration of it by enabling objects to move back and forth in it."

"I didn't know you were a mathematician, Professor," Vance put in.

"Nor am I, primarily," his host smiled. "The fourth dimension does not depend for its demonstration upon a complicated mathematical formula. Nor does it, as some of our more imaginative fiction writers seem to believe, require a cumbersome piece of machinery. It is all a matter of vibration, Patric. Change the rapidity of a man's vibrations, and you change his position in the fourth dimension."

"It sounds very interesting," Vance admitted. "How do you do it?"

"Chemically." The professor crossed to his closet, and returned with a square-faced bottle. "I have compounded here a chemical formula which acts upon the vibrations of the etherous of which all matter is composed, enabling the subject to move forward into the fourth dimension. When the effect of the compound has worn off, he returns automatically to his starting point."

"Have you ever actually demonstrated the power of this formula?" Vance asked.

"Upon dumb animals, yes," Prof. Dickenson replied; "but never upon a human being. In spite of the fact that I know it to be absolutely harmless, I have never been able to induce anyone to undergo the experiment. I could, of course, experiment upon myself; but that would not be conclusive evidence. In order to present my discovery to my fellow scientists, I must have the corroborating testimony of a wholly disinterested party."

Vance looked sympathetically at his old friend and instructor. It was unfair that the poor old man's life work should come to nothing, simply through the timidity of the human race.

Vance's sporting blood began to rise. He glanced at the square-faced bottle. Its shape, at least, was reassuring.

"If you like, sir," he said boldly, "I'll undergo the experiment tonight."

The professor all but fell on his neck. The day would yet be saved! Vance would go down in history as the Columbus of the Fourth Dimension!

When Vance rose to leave, he took with him a wine-glass half filled with a colorless liquid from the square-faced bottle.

"Drink it just before you get into bed," the professor directed. "I have not made it strong enough to carry you far into the fourth dimension, since this is your first experience with it. The effects should wear off within a few hours, when you can report to me your sensations."

Vance returned to his room with the glass, and set it upon his bureau. He did not think of it again until he was about to get into bed that night.

"Oh, yes; the old boy's medicine!" he exclaimed, and picked up the glass. Removed from the influence of the professor's presence, he felt a little skeptical regarding the mixture's powers. Still, a promise was a promise; and it probably wouldn't kill him.

He raised the glass, and drank off its contents at a draught. It tasted uncommonly like a well known preparation whose remarkably salubrious effects he heard lauded twice every week on his favorite radio program. Then he got into bed.....

When Vance awoke, the morning sunlight was streaming into his room. At first he did not remember Prof. Dickenson and the experiment; then something recalled them to his mind, and he grinned.

"The old boy's medicine couldn't have been strong enough," he murmured half aloud. "I still seem to be in only three dimensions."

He swung his feet to the floor, and put out his hand toward the chair on which he had left his clothes the night before. But he paused with the posture only half completed, and stared in helpless amazement. The chair was empty!

"What the duce!" he exclaimed. He sprang up and looked on the floor beside the chair. There was nothing there.

He began to search the room frantically, looking into closets and under furniture. And it was while engaged that he made another even more alarming discovery: not only the clothes he had been wearing the evening before, but his traveling bag and all his other belongings had disappeared as well!

"Either this is some practical joke," he exclaimed, "or Dickenson has made a silly mistake, and sent my duffle into the fourth dimension instead of me!"

The latter part of this thought was distinctly disconcerting; for Vance was in many respects a rather shy young man, and did not at all relish the idea of his very personal effects swirling wantonly about in four-dimensional space, to turn up eventually Heaven alone know where.

He crossed to the bell button, and administered to it a rightously indignant jab. In due course of time, the door opened, and a bell boy thrust in his head. He seemed at once surprised and relieved by Vance's presence.

"I know that call came from this room!" he announced triumphantly. "But what are you doin' here, Mister?"

"At the present moment," Vance replied dryly, "I am looking for my clothes."

"Yes, but why in here?" the boy wanted to know. "And you've been sleepin' in that bed!" The last was an accusation.

Vance began to lose patience. "Will you," he asked with ominous gentleness, "kindly go down the hall to Room 342, and ask Prof. Theophilus Dickenson to come here?"

The boy withdraws. In a few minutes he was back.

"The party in 342 ain't a him," he reported. "It's a her; and when I told her about you and that you wanted her to come on over, she got mad and slammed the door shut."

Vance was staggered. "Do you mean to tell me," he demanded, "that Prof. Dickenson isn't occupying Room 342?"

"Perhaps," the boy offered helpfully, "you've got your numbers mixed up. This ain't your room, either, you know."

"Not my room?" Vance sprang up as if he had been electrified. He stared about him. But there was the furniture just as he remembered it; the windows were in the same position; so were the pictures on the walls.

"Isn't this 347?" he demanded.

The boy nodded. "Sure this is 347," he admitted. "But it ain't the room you were assigned to."

"It most certainly is," Vance retorted indignantly.

"Couldn't be." The boy was positive. "347 was vacant last night. I had to get the key off the board before I came up here." He held it up in evidence. "Didn't you hear me unlock the door from the outside?"

"Good Lord!" Vance gasped. "then I was not only robbed; I was locked in!"

"I think," the bell boy said, "I'd better call the manager."

The manager came; but instead of answering Vance's questions, he had questions of his own to ask. First of all, what was Vance doing where he was? And second, how had he succeeded in getting into a room that had been locked for over a week?

"But I tell you I had a key," Vance insisted. "The clerk gave it to me when I registered yesterday afternoon."

"Not to this room," the manager denied firmly. Then a thought struck him, and he looked the other over critically. "Tell me," he said; "did you—er—ah—To put it bluntly, did you have anything to drink before turning in last night?"

Vance opened his mouth to voice an indignant denial, but choked himself. The professor's medicine! So it had translated him through the fourth dimension from one room to another! The explanation was so ridiculously simple that he wanted to laugh.

"It wasn't what you mean," he said a little foolishly. "But if you'll send for Prof. Dickenson, I think he can explain."

The manager made no comment; he had held his position too long for that. "What room does the professor occupy?" he inquired.

"I thought it was 342," Vance admitted dubiously. "But he—he doesn't seem to be there this morning."

The manager went to the wall telephone, called the desk, and made an inquiry. When he turned back to Vance, his expression of polite tolerance had vanished.

"The clerk tells me," he announced, "that there is no Professor Dickenson registered at this hotel."

"Dickenson—not registered?" Vance cried. He felt stunned. "There must be some mistake."

But the manager was firm. "I think not, Mr.—ah—What did you say your name was?"

"Vance," supplied the unhappy young man. "Patric Vance."

The manager returned to the telephone and made another inquiry. This time the reply he received rendered him openly hostile.

"Mr. Vance," he began coldly, "not only is your friend, Prof. Dickenson, not registered at this hotel, but you are not, either?"

(To be concluded in the next issue)

EDWARD E. SMITH--A BIOGRAPHY

Lumberer; railroader; miner; teamster; surveyor; doughnut specialist-- that, in short, is the story of the author of The Skylark of Space; Skylark Three; Spacehounds; Triplanetary; Skylark of Valeron; and Galactic Patrol.

Edward Elmer Smith was born in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, on May 2, 1890. His lineage can be traced to way back when, his great-great grandfather being a captain in the British Navy under Nelson. His great grandfather--both were Edward Elmers--was also a captain in the Navy, and his grandfather, still another E. E., came to America as a whaler, making it his life work. His son--the present E. E. S.'s father--had the distinction of breaking the line of Edward Elmers, being yoloed by Fred Jay, but after marrying Caroline Mills, F. J. reverted to form by naming the present Smith--you guessed it--Edward Elmer.

When a year old, E. E.--and also F. J., of course--moved from Sheboygan to Spokane, Washington. From there they went to Senequoteen, Idaho, in the midst of the wilderness, when Smith the younger was twelve. For three years E. E. worked clearing land, lumbering, and farming, until at fifteen he went on his own.

There followed a long period of rambling, during which he did almost everything that could be done in those days--more lumbering, railroading, jack-of-all-trades miner, everything from mucking to running a two-fifty Sullivan slugger, street-car conductor, shipping clerk, asphalt formen, freight checker--until at last, tiring of work in towns and cities, he went to surveying. After climbing up the ladder of surveying, from axeman, stake-artist, and rear-flag to head-flag and levelman, his elder sister and brother corralled him and got him into the prep school of the U. of Idaho. For several years he crammed, until he became a Freshman, and immediately went out for athletics. However, it was no go--too light for football, not so hot at baseball, and no flash at basketball--mainly because of ankylosed joints in the arms, wrists, and legs, now slowly improving, resulting from his days as a miner and woodsman, and the inevitable smashes. But finally, he won the Engineering Scholarship for the three year highest standing in College of Engineering, and graduated in Chemical Engineering.

His first job was in the Bureau of Chemistry in Washington, food work, and in the meantime he began a course in organic and food chemistry in George Washington University, and eventually became a cereal technologist; then, after resigning to take a job with Corby Co., he returned to the Bureau as a research specialist in wheat flour, when the war came. Though he wanted to be an aviator in it he was refused, and so turned to the Food Administration, and tried to discover how to make bread without flour. For some emergency work at Harvard and Johns Hopkins he had received his M. S. degree, and got his Ph. D. at C.W.U. for "The Effect of the Oxides of Nitrogen upon the Carotin Molecule--C₄₀H₅₆O"

In 1919, after the war, he once again travelled half-way across the continent, this time to take a position with F. J. Stock & Sons as chief chemist. A great deal of work he did more or less as a sideline on fully prepared flours grew into a really important business, until the firm took him out of the main laboratory, gave him a research lab, and called him "Director of Research." At the end of 1935 he left Stock's to become a part of, and chief Donut Weevil for, the Dawn Donut Co., of Jackson, Mich. He has now reduced specialization to the irreducible--a donut specialist! In fact, he is now in line for the honorary D. D.--Doctor of Doughnuts!

In the meantime, on Oct. 5, 1915, E. E. Smith had married Jeannie Craig MacDougall of Boise, Idaho. They have three children, Roderick M., 20; Verna J., 18; and Clarrissa M., 17. And he's a grandfather, too, but as he says, "there's no need going into that."

Dr. Smith had been writing a little for a long time, and had "always wondered about things," but had never done any serious work until one summer in Washington.

The Skylark trilogy came to be written, as are most science-fiction stories, from a trifling incident. Those who know will tell you that only in Washington on a summer night can you know what heat really is, and the incident which caused the stories to be written came on such a night. E. E. Smith, his wife, Carl Garby, Smith's closest friend, and Mrs. Garby were seated in the sizzling living room of the Smith apartment, when E. E. began to discourse on how nice and cool it would be in the absolute zero of Space. Mrs. Smith and Dr. and Mrs. Garby followed along the discussion and it was during the ensuing hours that the germ for The Skylark of Space was sown. Finally, Mrs. Garby suggested that Smith write a book on the subject, but he declined—"Got to have a love story to write a book, and I don't see how a love story would fit in with that kind of stuff." But Mr. Garby suggested that she write the love and Smith the "wild stuff"—and the Skylark of Space was born.

Aided and abetted by Dr. Garby, the story was worked over off and on for months, but it was gradually forgotten, and finally abandoned and laid away. However, in the first year at Hillsdale—1919—Dr. Smith stumbled on the outline for it, and regained interest. Despite the fact that Mrs. Garby was some ten or fifteen States of the Union distant, by dint of much correspondence the story was finally finished in 1921. Then began the rounds of what was probably the most rejected manuscript in history, lasting for some five years, and in the meantime work was begun on Skylark Three. At last, however, Dr. Smith learned of AMAZING STORIES, and submitted the manuscript to them, and it was accepted—even more, the publishers of AMAZING STORIES wanted a sequel. Of course, at the time neither the author nor the publishers had any idea of the tremendous enthusiasm that was to greet the first Skylark yarn—but when readers threatened dire things if a sequel wasn't forthcoming, Skylark Three was the answer. Collaboration is difficult enough when the co-authors are beside each other—when a thousand miles apart it's impossible, and so the second in the Skylark epic was the work of Dr. Smith alone.

Decided that the Skylark idea had been completely played out, and another yarn in the same series would be too much on the order of a fairy tale, work was next begun on Spacehounds of IPC. It was completed in the fall of 1930—and soon after published, of course—and its author considers it his best piece of work to date. However, the readers still clamored for another Skylark, and so, managing to find an opening for one and evade the epilogue to Skylark Three, Dr. Smith started on the third in the series as soon as Spacehounds was completed. But in the meantime, he decided to try a yarn in which scientific detail would not be bothered about, and in which his imagination would run riot—the result was Triplanetary, published in AMAZING in 1934. It had been finished earlier, but had not been published due to the failure of the old [Clayton] ASTOUNDING, for which it had been originally intended. But at last, Skylark of Valeron appeared, after over two years of work. Of course, all of us have read Galactic Patrol—but let us again quote E. E. Smith: "...and later, Galactic Patrol, about which the fans can't quite decide whether to kiss me or kill me. Now at work on another Patrol yarn, which may or may not be called 'Gray Lensman'."

One of the reasons that the yarns of Dr. Smith—notably the Skylarks and Spacehounds—have lived, and will continue to live, is because of the characters in them, who are drawn from real people—Mrs. Smith is the Dorothy of the Skylarks, Nadia of Spacehounds, and Clio of Triplanetary, and it is simple to find counterparts of Dr. Garby and his wife in the stories. Perhaps this is one of the reasons his stories are the great literature they are.

H. W.

Nov. 1938 [1, 1]

7

AMONG OUR NEIGHBORS!

FANTASCIENCE DIGEST: Sept-Oct, 1938. One of the better grade hektographed publications. The current issue consists of 16 large sized pages; but the next issue which will be the first anniversary of the magazine will probably be nearly double this size. The hektographing throughout is excellent; very even and very few words even difficult to read. Typography fairly good, average but one or two errors to the page. The current issue contains, as the feature, Skylark Versus Thought, by Milton A. Rothman, and very good. It is a sequel to the Skylark stories and "Invaders from the Infinite". Also included is a department by Willis Conover which is usually excellent; two excellent articles in the Dale Hart style (by Hart, of course); poetry by Farsaci and Cloukey; informative and excellent news about AMAZING STORIES by Mark Reinsburg; and the customary readers' department. The cover and full-page illustrated feature are excellently done by Rothman, despite a juvenile-istic scene for the feature, and inner illustrations are by Rothman and Giunta. Editor is Robert A. Madlo; associate and contributing editors are Agnew, Baltadonic, and Conover. [I'm omitting address; they've moved by now]

FANTASY NEWS: Usually a two-page weekly publication, selling for thro copies for a dime. Often, however, the number of pages is increased, and more material included. Contains mainly news items; also news department for Moskowitz, Our Overflow. Mimeographed, and on the whole a good job, despite occasional unevenness. Editor is James V. Taurasi.

NEW FANDOM: Sept., 1938. The newest of the fan magazines (until SPACEWAYS came along). Very fine silk-screen cover by Taurasi on a good-grade of heavy paper. Make-up similar to SPACEWAYS: 20 large size, mimeoed pages, no illustrations. Inner material could stand to be more interesting; and occasional patches of "Van Houten Says" become annoying at times, not because of their contents, but the style in which they are presented. Best feature of the current issue is a very comprehensive review of the fan magazines. The magazine can only be obtained by belonging to the organization of the same name as the magazine, NEW FANDOM. For full details write to Sam Moskowitz. Mailed flat in envelope; and mimeographing excellent.

IMAGINATION: Oct., 1938. Unfortunately the last issue (at least for the time being) of one of the best fan magazines, and certainly the best humorous one, that have ever been published. Usually consisted of twenty pages, with the exception of the final issue, which was only 12, and sold for ten cents. According to last reports the last issue is still for sale, and it is well worth the money, despite its comparative thinness. Only contents are Way Out West and the readers' department except for one other short article and the ads. Very well mimeographed in the large size format, same as SPACEWAYS. If you want to try to obtain a copy of this last issue, write to [Forrest J Ackerman]. Earlier issues still available [?], and at fairly low price, with the exception of the earliest ones. Was formerly The Fan Mag of the Future With a Future—is now The Fan Mag of the Future With a PAST!

SCIENTI-SNAPS: Fall, 1938. Undoubtedly one of the, if not the, neatest magazines in the fan field ever published. Features a stiff paper cover for protection, and consists of 26 hektographed pages. The printing is absolutely perfect; in the copy received there was not a single word illegible, which is almost miraculous for the hekto. All illustrations are by Marconette; superb and very carefully done. In this issue there is very excellent material by Hoy Ping Pong, Hunter, Jackson, Spear, Moskowitz, and Louis and Gertrude Kulan, plus a readers' department. Editor is Walter Marconette. Ten cents the copy, and published quarterly. Only needed improvement is greater word count. Has even margins, same as SPACEWAYS.

Nov. 1938 & Jan. 1939
[1, 1 & 2]

"SO THAT'S WHO ANTHONY GILMORE IS?"

by
Hoy Ping Pong

(NOTE:--We hope that the readers will be appreciative of the fact that we have spared no expense in imparting this article--what with all the booming in China these days. And, if response to this article is enthusiastic, we hold hopes that perhaps Mr. Pong may be persuaded to favor us again in the near future. IN)

Picture a scene of woe and misery, of bewildered confusion, of innocent non-understanding, of tiny undeveloped minds standing before a mighty fact of contradicting mumble-jumble designed to fill numberless columns with words and inky type. I am that assaulted mind, O reader, and the awesome Thing I stand debased before is that most detestable and yet most often seen question: WHO IS ANTHONY GILMORE?

Aye, sweet reader, our popular and unpopular columnists are still filling their pillars and pages with that obnoxious interrogation; then guessing with wild abandon at the answer, but futilely. It has been going on for years. To wit:

SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST for Sept. 1932: (By Chr): "...who the creator of Mark Carse really is. We have heard various claims. Here they are:....two old partners....Mat Schachner and Arthur L. Zagat. Another voice whispers in my ear that Capt. S. P. Meek is writing those tales with the help of Harl Vincent Schoepflin. A columnist suggested that the Honorable Harry Bates was collaborating with Arthur J. Burks. Eric Temple Bell is not the type of writer for these epics, but there is a probability. Could R. F. Starzl be responsible....? The combination of S. P. Wright and his famous character John Hanson suggest 'John Sewall', the historian mentioned in the Carse episodes. (See the Point?-says Chr. No, Chr, I don't)."

Friend Chr. then finishes his column by guessing that Drs. Breuer and Keller are too dainty for that sort of blood and thunder. The title of this column is "WHO IS ANTHONY GILMORE" of course, but Chr. doesn't tell us because he doesn't know. Perhaps it was all the material he could think of to fill a column before a deadline. Meanwhile, gentle readers, I stand perplexed. Let us search further:

Dec. 1932 issue of the above S. F. D. (Mort. Weisinger): "Harry Bates says (quote) that only six people in the world know the real identity of Anthony Gilmore. (unquote). Thanks M. W., that's enlightening and encouraging as all Hell. But, by cracky it filled four lines in a monthly column, and four lines help. But let's skip a whole year. Almost a whole year later, we find the Digest boys still at it:

August 1933, S. F. D. (M. W. again): "In my first gossip column in the April 1932 TIME TRAVELLER, I hazarded the opinion that Anthony Gilmore was A. J. Burks and Harry Bates. Mr. Bates denied this....Chr....discussed the various clues.... but made no attempt to offer a solution. 'Bap', in his Spilling the Beans then announced that he was convinced Anthony Gilmore was the real Anthony Gilmore." M. W. then says that Harry Bates told him only five persons knew Gilmore's true identity, that Gilmore was also known as E. G. Winters. after almost a half column of talking, during which Jack Darrow wrote ten authors accusing them of being Gilmore, he winds up with: "the tenth reply said: 'Many thanks for your kind and encouraging letter with reference to my work....' and signed Victor Rousseau. Draw your own conclusions!!" We did, Mort. It wasn't very polite so we won't repeat it.

Well, morbid readers (if you are still reading), let us leave the Digest and look at some of the other prophets:

THE FANTASY FAN, November 1933: (Weisinger again): "Harry Bates.....evasively answers all questions pertaining to....Anthony Gilmore by saying: 'I'll speak only upon advice of my counsel'." Mortimer, old chap, we thought we left you in the Digest. We shall leave the FANTASY FAN at once to get away from you and your stupendous mystery.

So, two years later and it's still going on. Look at the BROOKLYN REPORTER for October 1935 (Vic Shea): "Anthony Gilmore, creator of the famous "Hawk Carse" stories for the old Clayton Astounding....The mystery of 'his' identity is still unsolved, irregardless of what other people say." Well, Vic, you are original in one point. You hint, or do you, that Anthony might be a 'she'. That was 1935. I have now read fan magazines for four years in an earnest endeavor to find the answer. Several times I thought I had it. A dozen times our reliable and interesting columnists announced they had laid the chap in his lair, causing me to dash forth and purchase a copy. I suspect now it was a gigantic circulation fraud.

Well, this is 1938. The question is still being questioned, the boys are still making their hynamakor guesses to fill up space, and Anthony Gilmore and Harry Bates aren't/or much. But at least once a year in each fan magazine in existence, up comes a beautiful column or article entitled: WHO IS ANTHONY GILMORE? But at last I have found the answer. At last my turbulent mind is at rest! For, bored reader, Anthony Gilmore is: Harry Bates, Nat Schachner, A. L. Zagat, Capt. S. P. Meek, Harl Vincent, Arthur J. Burke, Eric Temple Bell, R. F. Starzl, S. P. Wright, Drs. Brewer and Keller, Anthony Pelcher, H. G. Winters, Victor Rousseau, and a half dozen, unknown and unnamed female writers. No? I'm Hoy Ping Pong, first cousin of the Chinese villain who made life miserable for Hawk Carse. But I don't know Anthony Gilmore, do you?

-THE END-

Nov. 1938 [1, 1]

THE UNHOLY DIRECTOR

by
DALE HART

We of this planet so drear
Move at the will of Him,
He who doth laugh and jeer
At Man, a life so dim
That its light is snuffed
Out when He has puffed
Out a foul, toxic breath.

Men are but His marionettes;
They act when strings are pulled.
War is waged when He lets
His lust be mad and felled.
Each Earth-being is played,
Each against the other, flayed
With life until comes--Death.

And life on the planet goes on,
With but a few Thinkers to know
That Destiny is but a word gone
To futility, that He lives, is "so."

Nov. 1938 [1, 1]

THE DEATH-KWELL OF HEROES

by
JAMES S. AVERY

(NOTE: Despite the fact that on page 9 [original] you will find this article scheduled for next month, nevertheless we found room for it this time after all--so here it is!)

On the morning of September 1, Dr. E. E. Smith received an ethergram from a certain Kimball Kinnison, Commandant of the famous Galactic Patrol's flagship "Britannica". A few hours later, Mr. Robert Willoy [Willy Ley] received a like message from the space-cruiser "Dragon" standing off Titan. And still later, Mr. Manly Wade Wellman was the recipient of a call from a private rocket-yacht, then cruising in the vicinity of the outer asteroids.

At the same moment Miss Gerry Carlisle, returning from an expedition on the Jovian Satellite Five, reported via etherphone to her promoter, Mr. Art Barnes. Her report, containing the same information as the above communications, was the first to be made public to the science-fiction world.

To say that it caused a virtual revolution would be putting it mildly! Hardened space captains swore to the high heavens; callused blasters cursed the very sound of her name; rocket pilots stormed and raged, declaring her to be an out and out fraud; her message to be a gigantic publicity stunt perpetrated by the London Interplanetary Zoo. But the facts were there--others reported the same unbelievably astounding news. But it couldn't be true! Impossible!

For a dozen years, and more, ever since the great Gernsback launched his first regular space line, spaceships had been merrily reeketing their monthly or bi-monthly course to and past the 'nine' moons of the huge Jovian system. And each of these satellites from tiny, closest Five to the far-flung Nine had been duly (off-time dully) charted, explored, narrated, and of course, subdued. But yet, here was the daring and beautiful "Bring 'Em Back Alive" Carlisle, and the gallant Kinnison, and a half-dozen other well known and respected space-dogs claiming to have actually seen--yes, actually with their own eyes; not a defect on the visio-plates--two new Jovian satellites!!!! Ten and Eleven so-called.

All charts, all reports, all narratives had been made in vain! The hundreds of yarns spun by space-men through their agents (authors to you) were even more worthless! Never again would they be referred to as history! The horror of this one fact alone shocked many a void-captain to his very core! Think of it! -- names once destined to live for untold ages in the annals of rocketry, would now sink into merciless oblivion! Oh! The utter horror of it all! One went even so far in his untold grief as to blast his creator off the face of the earth!

And all because of two, tiny chunks of hitherto unknown rocks which had chosen to whirl about Jupiter. And to add insult to injury--they whirled the wrong way!

But there they are--and shall remain so. It does not matter now. Now annals will be written, now expeditions will be organized, now Patrol and Space Guard stations will be erected and now heroes will be evolved.

What more could a science-fiction fan want?

Nov. 1938 [1, 1]

THE DIMENSION DRUG
(PART II)

by
AMELIA REYNOLDS LONG

Vance felt the ground being cut from under him. First they maintained he was in the wrong room. Now they were trying to claim that he was in the wrong hotel. They were going too far.

"I think," the manager was saying, "that in order to avoid further unpleasantness on all sides, you had better leave immediately."

But here Vance rebelled. "Unpleasantness be hanged!" he exploded. "I'll not be turned out upon the street in red silk pajamas! It isn't decent!"

The manager considered this. After all, he was not an unreasonable man. "Wait here a minute," he said presently, and went out.

When he returned, he was carrying something over his arm.

"Your things don't seem to be anywhere on the premises, Mr. Vance," he reported. "But here are some clothes that were left behind a few weeks ago by a guest who was unable to meet his bill. You may put them on if you wish."

Vance got into the clothes. They were too small vertically and too large horizontally; but they had the salutary effect of bolstering up his waning self-confidence. It is truly little short of marvelous the psychological effect that the possession of a pair of trousers can have upon a man.

"And now," he said, when he was arrayed, roughly speaking at least, like others of his kind, "I would like to speak to your desk clerk and examine your hotel register."

The manager was not averse, and together they descended to the desk. There, in response to Vance's request, the registry sheet of the preceding day was spread before him.

He ran his eye eagerly down the list of names. When he had finished he returned to the top and went through them again, this time more slowly. But it was no use: Neither the name of Prof. Theophilus Dickenson nor that of Patric Vance was there.

Vance held the page sideways, hoping that the light falling upon it obliquely would expose a roughened spot, betraying an erasure. There was none.

Perhaps the clerk had made a mistake in the date. Hardly daring to hope, he raised his eyes to the top of the page. No, there it was! August 28, just as he remembered it. And as if in confirmation, a large figured calendar stared at him from across the desk: August 28!

Vance put down the register and turned again to the desk clerk.

"You've got to remember me!" he cried in desperation. "I came here yesterday afternoon, and you gave me Room 347."

But the clerk could not help him. "Your face is vaguely familiar, sir," he said, "but I did not give you any key yesterday."

"But I remember you," Vance began, and stopped. A moment ago he would have sworn that this was the clerk who had assigned him to his room; now suddenly he was not so sure. The man was the same, yet not the same. There was the moustache. It had been Vance's impression when he arrived that the clerk had been clean shaven.

He began to notice other discrepancies. The carpet, for instance. He recalled it as brown and rather worn. Now it was green and quite new.

A terrible suspicion began to creep over him. Suppose these people were right after all, and he had not come there the day before? Suppose he had suddenly gone mad, and had not met Prof. Dickenson nor done any of the things—

"But if I didn't come here yesterday," he heard himself saying, "how did I get here? Surely not in red silk pajamas!"

"That," said the manager judiciously, "is for you to answer."

People in the hotel lobby were beginning to stare at them, and some were even edging nearer to where they stood. The manager raised one eyebrow in the direction of a large, heavy-set man wearing big shoes and a bowler hat, and chewing on the end of an unlighted cigar, who immediately started forward. Vance did not know the man, but he recognized the genus house detective. Hastily murmuring something about having to find Prof. Dickenson, he started toward the door. No effort was made to detain him.

Vance found himself walking along the street in a kind of daze. As in the hotel, things were the same yet not the same. He was conscious of no appreciable change, but he sensed subtle differences. It was as if he looked upon his surroundings from a new angle.

As he walked along, he took mental stock of his situation. It was ridiculous to assume that the hotel people were united against him in any sort of conspiracy. But he was positive that his registering at the hotel and encountering Prof. Dickenson had not been an illusion; it was all too real. Then he remembered that crazy people were always positive about the reality of their illusions; and he began to lose heart.

Obviously, the only thing to do was to find Prof. Dickenson and trust that he would be able to furnish an explanation. At least, he would be in a position to settle definitely the point about Vance's sanity. Vance remembered the Chemists' Club, which was the professor's usual haunt. With a feeling of hope in his breast, he set out in its direction.

Ten minutes later, he arrived, somewhat breathless. In the lobby of the club, where he was confronted by a young man whose principle claims to a scientific career were a pair of spectacles and a suit that needed pressing.

"I wonder," Vance began timidly, "whether you could find Prof. Theophilus Dickenson for me."

The young man glanced at him without seeing him. "Prof. Dickenson is not staying here at present," he said briefly.

"Yes, I know," Vance nodded. "This was encouraging, for it confirmed his memory of what the professor had said. "But I thought he might have dropped in today. The convention, you know."

"Convention?" The young man's brow furrowed, and this time he saw Vance. "My dear sir, you have made a mistake; there is no convention."

"No--no convention?" Vance stammered. "But I saw Prof. Dickenson only yesterday, and he told me--"

The young man was staring at him oddly. "Prof. Dickenson," he pronounced, "sailed for Europe two months ago."

It was true, then. He, Patric Vance, was crazy, and had imagined all these things! But if he hadn't done them, then what under Heaven had he done, and where had he been?

He thought of going to the police, and placing himself in the hands of the bureau of missing persons. But he wasn't missing; far from it. It was his background that was missing. Was there such a thing as a bureau of missing backgrounds? He rather thought not.

He remembered the business that had brought him to the city, and a new plan began to take form in his mind. He would attend to it as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened. Perhaps it would help to set him right. After all, he might only be suffering from a temporary mental aberration.

He was in the offices of Wharton and Co. before he realized that he had no card.

"Just announce Mr. Patric Vance," he said a little lamely to the clerk.

"Calling by appointment."

The clerk appeared surprised, but went to do his bidding. In less than a minute he was back.

"Mr. Wharton says he isn't expecting any Mr. Vance," he reported.

"Not--expecting me?" Vance gasped. "But the appointment was made several days ago. I've got Mr. Wharton's own letter...."

He thrust his hand into his inside pocket, but brought it away empty. The letter was in the pocket of the coat that had so mysteriously vanished.

"But you must have my firm's letter asking for the appointment," he persisted desperately. "Burton, Burton, and Vance, dated last Friday. Look in your files, man." The clerk was skeptical, but he looked. When he had finished looking, he was even more skeptical.

"There is no letter from Burton, Burton, and Vance under last Friday's date," he reported. "In fact, there's no letter from them under any date last week."

"But there must be!" Vance had the horrible sensation of being out adrift. "Go in again, and speak to Mr. Whatron."

The clerk smiled coldly. "Run along, Duddy," he advised. "Mr. Wharton isn't buying any bonds today."

Vance never knew how he got out of the office. He felt like a case of amnesia in reverse. Instead of having forgotten his own identity, the world had forgotten it for him. He knew that a being named Patric Vance existed, but he was unable to prove it. He began to wonder whether the ancient Greeks weren't right after all, and all material existence was an illusion.

His thought took hold with alarming rapidity until of a sudden he found himself saying over and over again, "I am Patric Vance; I am twenty-seven years old; I am alive," each time louder and louder.

People were staring at him. A number were following him. Vance began to run. The people ran after him. A policeman joined in the chase. Vance ran faster.

Soon it became a mad stampede, in which an ever-increasing pack of human hounds pursued a single human hare. There were now two policemen, and a dog-catcher.

Vance summoned all his strength for a burst of speed. He shot down the street like a fired rocket. The pavement seemed to flow backwards under his feet. The voices of the crowd sounded farther and farther away.

Of a sudden he had a strange sensation of being in two places at one time. The feeling made him dizzy. Objects began to slide into one another and change shape, like a giant kaleidoscope. They changed with ever increasing rapidity. Then came blackness....

Someone was rubbing his wrists, and calling him by name. Vance opened his eyes. Then he sat up with a start.

He was back in his bedroom at the hotel. So, incidentally, were his missing clothes and traveling bag. And in addition to all this, Prof. Dickenson was standing beside his bed.

Vance turned upon him accusingly. "I thought," were his first words, "that you had sailed for Europe two months ago."

The professor's face beamed. "I've succeeded!" he cried joyously. "You were actually there! Tell me about it, my boy; quickly!"

"Tell you about what?" Vance demanded irritably. He was in no mood for trifling questions.

"Your trip," the professor explained eagerly. "I sent you a year into the future."

"You did—what?" Vance queried. It was beginning to occur to him that perhaps not he, but the professor, was crazy.

"You don't believe it?" The professor seemed to sense his thoughts. "But you have just proven it by what you said. You told me you thought I had sailed for Europe two months ago. As a matter of fact, I am planning to go abroad in about ten months. Therefore, a year from now, I shall have sailed two months ago. Do you follow?"

Vance thought it over. He thought also of other things, among them the date on the hotel register. He recalled now that he had seen only the month and day, and not the year. Then there was the new carpet in the hotel, and the small changes of which he had been conscious as he walked along the streets. Incredible as it seemed, it fitted.

"But," he protested feebly, "how did I get there? I'm not Rip Van Winkle."

"I sent you there with my dimension drug," the professor explained. "You were there from eight o'clock this morning until noon, when the effect of the drug wore off, and you returned to the present."

"But you said your drug would send me into the fourth dimension," Vance said half resentfully. "You didn't say anything about messing up my future the way you've just done."

"But, my dear boy!" Prof. Dickenson was pained. "I thought you understood that you would be sent into the future. Have you forgotten your Einstein?"

"What has Einstein to do with it?" Vance wanted to know.

"And you a Princeton man!" the professor sighed. "The theory of relativity, of course. Time, my dear Patric, is the real fourth dimension."

-THE END-

Jan. 1939 [1, 2]

WHAT TO DO WHEN THE COMET COMES

by

HOY PING PONG

Oh, yes, there is a comet coming. SPACEWAYS said so in its first issue (page 18)[sic], remember? Those pessimistic editors, Avery and Warner said the comet was coming—a giant comet, to bring about the end of the world!

The Pong Observatory cannot give information on how to escape death from the comet! Guess you'll just have to die. But we can give details on What To Do When The Comet Comes. Just about a month before the destruction, start building like mad a space ship or two. Remember, somebody has to build one to save a few hundred people—it may as well be you. Otherwise you'll croak too, When The Comet Comes!

But to the meat of the matter. High up in the midnight sky will hang the fiery doom-bringer! You will even see it in the daytime. Pong's Mutual machines are laying odds of nine to one that the Comet strikes Earth in the daytime. First off the bat, flood New York City and vicinity. That is where the Giant Comet will strike. They always do, you know. Pong's Mutual machines pay off five to one if the Comet strikes anywhere else.

But come, let's get to business! First, stop paying on your insurance right now! You are gonna kick the bucket, and nobody will get nothing for it, so stop paying those monthly premiums and have a good time Before The Comet Comes! For that matter, stop paying all debts. Why pay 'em up? It ain't gonna do your creditors any good. For The Comet Will Get Them Too!

If you live in a city, see the manager of some tall building immediately about renting his roof space. Build long rows of bleachers there and sell 'em to the populace at fabulous prices. Spend this money as quickly as possible, for remember, The Comet Is Coming! Of course, reserve for yourself the most advantageous seat on the roof. You will not want to miss the thrilling spectacle! Just imagine!

There you sit, neck craned, colored glasses on, staring at a huge, rushing, exploding, gaseous ball, as it hurtles down at you! Bigger and bigger it gets! More and more of the sky it fills! The crowd roars with excitement! Where will it strike? It is coming at a rushing speed now! It is almost in your face! Other spectators flee inside, but not you! For The Comet Is Coming, right at YOU!

WHAM! It hits! Yes. Pong's Mutual machines were right. It did strike New York. Wiped out the entire state off the map! But that's all right, whichever way you bet, for remember, you won't be around to collect. The Comet Is Coming!

-THE END-

Jan. 1939 [1, 2]

by

Mary G. Byers

Writhing ants—emotional
 And futile beyond all imagination,
 Striving against the universe,
 Swaggering, bragging,
 Talking much, accomplishing little,
 Stupid—Even ants have instinct
 Where man has none,
 Yet man is great! Or is he?
 Ecco Homo!

Even dogs may lick their wounds
 Or howl in anguish.
 Man can only groan and suffer
 Or cry out in unguarded dreams.
 He visualizes drifting to the stars
 And conquering all time.
 But can he?
 Ecco homo!

Jan 1939 [1, 2]

THE DEAD SLEEP IN SECRECY

by

BOB TUCKER

(With apologies and heartfelt thanks to Lafcadio Hearn)

I seek her; she is dead therefore I cannot find her. Since the reigns of the fourteen Queens of glorious Atlantis have I searched; I have scoured the world since ancient and honorable Mu succumbed to the angry charging waters of the Western ocean; but I find her not, my dead love.

At the opening of every Egyptian tomb I am there before the diggers looking for my lost one amid the splendid relics of incredibly ancient Kings; every Indian mound brought to the light of the Twentieth Century sun has known my diligent eyes. But alas I have discovered her not; I know not where she fled.

Untold ages ago when this world was green and young and Time was yet uncharted we played and danced together on grassy plains now unknown; on sun-kissed sandy shores that have since forever sunk to the bottom of the world; on towering mountain peaks that are now but tiny islands dotting the Western seas. Together we saw Atlantis born of the turbulent waters that now bear its name; die likewise in the place of its birth. Together we watched Mu, a baking Hell even wild animals shunned, transmuted into an artificial Paradise in the space of twenty sunrises, and together we watched that Mu slowly sink beneath the waves unable to bear the sudden weight of the dazzling towers it supported. And then on the warm shores of Jirbu I lost her, even as has the world now lost beautiful Jirbu under the everlasting Centuries of glistening ice.

And never have I found her nor a remnant of the vanished glory that was hers; even the every opened tomb and grave across the globe has known my presence; even the every skeleton come to light has fell beneath my scrutinous gaze. Even have I journeyed to Turin to examine the musty odorous pages of the Book of the Dead but its black and secretive chapters hold not her fair name.

So therefore I am condemned to wander forever down the streets of everlasting Time seeking her whom I love with all my heart but am destined never to find again for I was foolish and let her flaming glory become lost from me forever.

Jan 1939 [1, 2]

THE WORLD CHANGES

by

ALL
SAM MOSKOWITZ

It seems almost strange to begin an article by saying that the science-fiction fan world has a definite cycle of eras, but the facts are evident. History is said to repeat itself, and it is obvious that it does, although the repetition is usually in psychology only.

I said at the beginning of this article that its writing seems strange to me, and here is the reason. To all facts and appearances I am writing to an entirely new fan world. I have written dozens of articles in the past, but in almost every case I could tell just who was going to read that particular article and how they would react to it. I knew in advance what to expect. Now it is different. My work, I am certain, is appearing before a large new audience. An audience whose acquaintance with the fan world of the past era has been short and fleeting. They are not familiar with the long fan history that has preceded them, and, as I do not know my audience, I do not know whether or not they are interested. I presume that they are.

The matter of just how many eras the fan world has undergone is more a matter of personal opinion than anything else. We know that fan mags thrive when professional magazines are at their poorest. We know also that generally speaking, the more fan magazines there are, the poorer they are, and the more fan magazines there are, the smaller their audience. Working from these more or less concrete facts I take my first step and outline the first fan era of science-fiction.

From what I can see it dates back to 1930. At that period fan magazines were few and far between. The most prominent one of the time was THE PLANET, published by the old SCIENCEERS of New York. Forrest J. Ackerman was around even then, and in one of the old issues we come across a fairly complete list of fan magazines compiled by Ackermann. Mort Weisinger was prominent in many circles and a fellow named Jerome Seigel was to publish two carbon-copy fan magazines titled COSMIC STORIES and COSMIC STORIES QUARTERLY, respectively, which are today the rarest fan magazines in the world. No copies are known to exist. At that time the organization which to this day holds the unofficial record for memberships in any fan organization was formed. It is believed that at one time their membership, official and unofficial, climbed close to 2,000. That fan organization was the old International Scientific Association responsible for the publication of COSMOLOGY, a club organ which is quite hard to obtain nowadays. McDermott, Dennis, Ray Palmer were the prominent names heading that particular organization. It is noticed that there was actually only one large fan organization, and its membership roster was very large. There were a few small endeavors which did not amount to much. Generally, though, the fan magazines of that day contained a preponderance of science, with limited fan items.

The year 1933 marked the dawn of the second era. THE TIME TRAVELER marked the encore of that era and the SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST was its actual beginning. The SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST digested the entire field of the past. It carried over Mort Weisinger, Forrest J. Ackerman, ISA. Ray Palmer was the only one of that organization to survive the turn of the era. The SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST gained in power until it is recognized, even to this day, as the finest fan magazine ever published. It discarded science as a subject for fan magazines almost into oblivion. It featured information about the professional publications and authors with a very small smattering of fan news. SCIENCE FICTION published by Jerome Seigel (another survivor) featured fiction, some by professional authors. It introduced many of the new fans of that time: Clay Ferguson, Bernard J. Kontor, Henry Hassel, Charles D. Hornig, Conrad H. Ruppert also had their beginning in this era. Such organizations as THE JULES VERNE PRIZE CLUB for the best science-fiction stories of the year and the organizing of the AIRRA PUBLISHERS to pub-

lish such booklets as THRU THE DRAGON GLASS by A. Merritt, THE PRICE OF PEACE by Mort Weisinger, WOLF HOLLOW BUBBLES by David H. Keller, and others made their appearance.

Era three marked the beginning of the decline of the old group. Into the field came dozens of small clubs, publications, what-nots that were JEALOUS of the renamed FANTASY MAGAZINE. They had neither the ability, or resources to turn out such worthwhile endeavors. This group fought tooth and nail against all of the old guard. It admitted FANTASY MAGAZINE as the superior of the field yet hated it because of its excellence. However, the old guard were strong, probably the strongest group the fan world has yet produced. Instead of immediately declining, they had such publications as THE FANTASY FAN still operating, they had brought into existence through William Crawford MARVEL and UNUSUAL. Two of the finest fiction mags ever produced in the fan field. It is really amazing the fierceness of which the newcomers fought against what they begrudgingly admired. Such inconsequential clubs as the TERRESTRIAL FANTASCIENCE GUILD with the first hektographed fan magazine titled THE TFG BULLETIN. The new INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATION publishing THE INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER. The BROOKLYN REPORTER, the 14 LEAFLET (first of the club publications) & numerous others appeared. Such names as Donald A. Wollheim, Wilson Shepherd, William S. Sykora, George C. Clark, began to gain some significance.

Era four was the most active the fan world has ever known. It took place almost entirely during the year 1936 and a few months of 1937. The professional magazines were extremely poor. Fans were driven to fan magazines for some bit of pleasureable reading. Fan magazines popped up by the hundreds. Some good, most bad, few lasting more than a very few issues. During this era the last remnants of the old guard disappeared. FANTASY MAGAZINE combined with the new, fresh SCIENCE FANTASY CORRESPONDENT. MARVEL TALES, UNUSUAL STORIES were both being aimed at the newsstands and appeared no more in the fan field. FANTASY FAN had long since gone under. Prominent at the time were such publications as THE SCIENCE FICTION CRITIC then making its inception. THE SFAA appearing with TESSERACTION. The one, excellent issue of FANCIFUL TALES; the publication of THE PHANTAGRAPH. And hundreds of small publications popping up all over. To mention a few THE SCIENCE FICTION COLLECTOR, beginning of the hektographing era, THE SCIENCE FICTION FAN, FANTASY FICTION TELEGRAM, THE SCIENCE FICTION NEWS, and innumerable others. Such names as Donald A. Wollheim, Morris S. Dollens, William H. Miller, Jim Dlish, Dan McPhail, C. Hamilton Bloomer, Willis Conover, Jr., Walter Gillings popped into prominence.

The fifth scientific era was the one directly preceding the present one. It began with nothing. Just plain nothing. It is remarkable how many fans FANTASY MAGAZINE dragged to oblivion with it at its demise. The field was hollow. All the old-timers had been combed out. It was composed largely of a few (not more than fifty) younger fans who had been just coming in when the old bunch went out. It was a group aided by no one. A group that know it had no audience to speak of, but invented, to satisfy its own insatiable appetite for more science-fiction, the hektographed fan magazine. It was a group marked by no outstanding talent, either in literary, artistic, or mechanical way when it began. But when it closed it had contributed an amazing batch of talent to the fan world, not to mention the professionals. Prominent at the time were the AMATEUR CORRESPONDENT (now shade of SCIENCE FANTASY), THE SCIENCE FICTION CRITIC, THE SCIENCE FICTION COLLECTOR, THE SCIENCE FICTION FAN, COSMIC TALES, HELIOS and numerous others. It boasted such names as John V. Baltadonis, Sam Moskowitz, Donald A. Wollheim, James V. Taurasi, Olon F. Wiggins and others. It was a group that for a time displayed a remarkable sense of fitness and co-operation. It reached its peak February, 1938, and declined sharply thereafter. Its decline was foreshadowed by a number of vicious arguments taking place in the SFAA, THE SCIENCE FICTION FAN and numerous other places. However, it was inevitable. Progress had to be made, and it wasn't being made by hektographed journals.

Now a new era begins. Opened, I believe by the formation of NEW FANDOM (I wonder if the significance of the title is clear now?). Almost all traces of the previous era have disappeared. The CRITIC, CORRESPONDENT, PHANTAGRAPH, HELIOS, COLLECTOR, are to all intents and purposes dead. Such publications as the FAN, NEWS-LETTER, NOVAE TERRAE, seem a little more than wobbly. Fans like Baltadonis, Wollheim, Stickney, Beck, Hahn, Dollons, Kirby, Kyle, have been forced through one circumstance or another to retire from the field. The field is brand new. The only old-timers (comparatively speaking) that appear will be around for quite a while yet are James V. Taurasi, Sam Moskowitz, Jack Speer, Walter Earl Marconette, and practically no others. Yet it is significant that three of the above four were the newest in the old field. Who heads the field now? Well, besides NEW FANDOM, there is Louis Kuslan with COSMIC TALES, Harry Warner and James S. Avery with SPACEWAYS, Taurasi with FANTASY NEWS, and Marconette with SCIENTI-SNAPS. The new batch of fans in the field include Louis Kuslan, James S. Avery, Harry Warner, Dale Hart, Alvin R. Sandlin, William Sullivan, Hyman Tiger, Willard Dewey, Litterio B. Farsaci, N. Gilbert Dancy, Ted Dikty, C. I. Barrett and others. While such old-timers as H. C. Keonig, R. D. Swisher and Dan McPhail, are eternal and unchanging. It is interesting to note that some of the old-timers like Sykora, McPhail, Louis C. Smith, Schwartz, Ackerman, Latzer seem to like the new fan field and have made come-backs of a sort. I'm not one to belittle anyone, but I believe that the new Fandom (the new group of fans) are starting a step above their hoktographing ancestors. A hoktographed magazine is beginning to become a rarity. All of the new publications seem to have adopted mimeographing. The new group of fans looks VERY large to me. I think that there will shortly be about 200 inner circle fans. The editors of the professional magazines, mostly former fans themselves are taking great interest in the fan field, more so than any preceding group of editors. I believe that within the next year the new fan world will fairly scintillate with its own brilliance. Let's all pull together and assure ourselves of that fact.

THE END

Feb 1939 [1, 3]

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ABOUT MYSELF

by

AMELIA REYNOLDS LONG

I was born in a place called Columbia, Pennsylvania, which nobody would ever have heard of if the poet, Lloyd Mifflin, hadn't been born there, too. (Quite a bit before me, however.) At the tender age of eight, I became a science fiction fan. In high school, I was not allowed to take chemistry because the teacher was afraid to take chances with his one and only laboratory; so I turned to writing science fiction stories. While studying for my B. Sc. degree at the University of Pennsylvania, I used our head psych professor as the model for Prof. Boswell in "Scandal in the Fourth Dimension." Last summer I got my biggest thrill in astronomy by seeing Jupiter and three of his moons move the whole way across the lens of a field telescope in a little over a minute. It takes things like that to make us realize the tremendous speed at which the earth is moving. Since receiving my M.A. degree at Pennsylvania, I've been slowly starving to death writing pseudo-science and weird stories, with historical research as a side line to make the process last longer. My favorite hobby is mental telepathy.

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Feb 1939 [1, 3]

STAR MAKER

reviewed by
Jack Williamson

STAR MAKER, By W. Olaf Stapledon, Methuen, London, 1937.

Since the editor of SPACEWAYS has requested some contribution to his hopeful new venture, and left me free as to the nature of it, I can think of nothing I want to write more than an appreciation of Stapledon's STAR MAKER.

Described as a "Cosmological Fantasy," this remarkable book is, I am certain, the most daring work of creative imagination on record. I feel that it has not received the attention, here in America, that it amply deserves.

The author's preface warns of certain limitations of the book. As a novel, it is completely unsatisfactory. As entertainment, it is in the same category as scaling Everest—a bit difficult. But it is tremendous.

The magnificent scale of it, perhaps, is best displayed by comparison with Stapledon's earlier, mind-staggering epic of future mankind, "Last and First Men." That awe-inspiring panorama of the ups and downs of the race, for some two billion years, occupies less than a page in "Star Maker."

A hard book to grasp and to hold. The tremendous ideas that cram it fatigue the imagination. But it is richly worth the effort that it demands. Its wealth of ideas opens endless new vistas.

An article in Harper's Magazine, several years ago, suggested "Last and First Men" as a model for the Bible of the coming scientific age. "Star Maker" is a far more ambitious gesture in the same direction.

The book is really an audacious venture in philosophy—or, if one prefers the word, religion. It is an attempt to discover for mankind a meaningful place amid the spiritual discomforts of a scientific universe. And, doing that, it has a significance beyond anything in itself; it points a direction.

Stapledon is doing here what the myth-makers of the past were doing, when they set gods in the sky and made men out of mud. The difference is that Stapledon, instead of the limited observations of the primitive savage, has for material all the accumulated data of the scientific age. His work, like that of the first myth-spinner, will surely show the way for others.

Personally, I should like to see "Star Maker" become required reading for Fundamentalists, school teachers, Red-baiters, New Dealers, die-hard Tory Republicans, 100% Americans, dictators, liberals, Communists, Nazis, Japanese, and any other groups whose normal activities are apt to make things unpleasant for other people. It would be very painful reading for the most of them. But the world wouldn't thereafter seem so small, nor their pet notions bulk so large in it.

THE END

Jack Williamson

Feb 1939 [1, 3]

AMONG OUR NEIGHBORS

YEARBOOK: 1938. Perhaps the finest publication of its kind ever issued. This practically colossal volume contains listings of every sf. story published in the magazines dated 1938, by issue of magazine and also alphabetically by title. Listings include all sf. stories published in the regular American sf. magazines,

plus those in WEIRD TALES, ARGOSY, TALES OF WONDER, and FANTASY. Also contains brief summary of the year, and prefacing poem. With its colored covers, this volume is one you simply cannot afford to miss. Invaluable as a reference. Only fifteen cents from Bob Tucker, Box 260, Bloomington, Ill. Mimeoed very excellently on only one side of the paper. (HW)

SCIENCE FICTION FAN: Dec., 1938. One of the better small fan mags.....greeted '39 with one of the best of its 29 issues. Feature article is 4 1-2 page Well-helmasterpiece giving full dope on his "Retreat." Whatever else may be said about DAW & Co., they're still the best when it comes to pounding out fine fan articles. This fact further proved in same issue by Doc Lowndes' biog of Fred Pohl; one of the best-written we've seen. Other articles in December FAN are merely mediocre. Higgins, its editor, recently made headline news when he expelled Moskowitz from the FAN's pages and in turn was expelled himself from the COSMIC group...Rating: Slightly above good. Ten cents a copy. Published at 2251 Welton St., Denver, Colorado. (JSA)

COSMIC TALES: Dec., 1938. Very similar in format to SPACEWAYS, being twenty large sized mimeoed pages, and with same general make-up. Specializes more or less in fan fiction, the majority of which is very good. This month's cover is well done by Taurasi, and the issue also contains a story by Taurasi. Other fiction, better than average, is by Garth Giles, Mary Byers, and a serial by Sam Moskowitz. Other features: extremely good article by Speer, and departments by Bahr and Thompson. Also, readers' department, and brief editorial. Well worth buying. Sells for a dime a copy; business offices at 170 Washington Ave., West Haven, Conn. Louis Kuslan is editor. (HW)

VOICE OF THE IMAGINATION: Jan., 1939. MADGE is back! Yessir, the old girl has staged a comeback, in a somewhat different type of material content, but with the same familiar format and lettering on cover. This is more or less of an experimental issue, as 90% of its content is made up of letters; thus the change in name. In other words, the magazine is going to make an attempt to appear with only letters, which were about the most popular feature of the old IMAGINATION. But the same breezy editorial comments are there, and almost all the well known fans are represented by one or more letters. The mag is a little unintelligible to those who didn't know the original '!', but just the same anyone who likes a little humor should get it. A dime a copy, at Box 6475 Metropolitan Station, Los Angeles, Calif. Issued by LA Chapter, SPL, of course. (HW)

FANTASY DIGEST: Jan., 1939. "The First Shall Be Last", for this is a brand new magazine, one that I predict will go places in a hurry. As this is being written, this first issue is just about sold out, so it's useless to go into great detail over it; and as the second has not yet made its appearance I can't be specific. However, Ted Dikty is the editor of this small-sized hecktoed magazine, the first issue of which contained 20 pages. The hecktoing is better than average, and with the second issue the number of pages will be jumped to 32. On the whole, the material is much above average. Fans represented in the first two issues: Moskowitz, Hart, Frederick, Osheroff, Bahr, Van Houten, Roberts, Warner, Tucker, Dikty, Formanek, and a large number of others. Marconette did a swell cover for the first issue, and inner illustrations are by Bernard Maskwitz who is the most promising fan artist today. Send for a copy to Dikty at 3136 Smith St., Fort Wayne, Ind. Sells for a dime. (HW)

Feb 1939 [1, 3]

MARVEL TALES -- PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

by
JACK CHAPMAN MISKE

Late in the year 1933, 4000 readers of the science-fiction magazines received attractive circulars advertising the advent of a new magazine to be called UNUSUAL STORIES. The first page of the four-page folder was a short article stating that the publisher of UNUSUAL believed editorial policies and restrictions were withholding from the readers the best fantastic stories being written. In well-couched terms, the piece went on to say that UNUSUAL would present these best stories, that only the best would be printed, and that all types of fantastic stories, weird, science-fiction, and pure fantasy, including "off-trail" would appear. In other words, the other magazines would print just "stories"; UNUSUAL STORIES would print "literature!"

I have said 4000 fans "received" announcements. Such is not exactly the case. 4000 announcements were mailed. Probably only half reached their destinations, for the names were taken from the readers' sections of the pro magazines, and with the passage of time many had undoubtedly moved. Of the remaining 2000 recipients, probably 1500 had no great interest in fantasy, thus leaving about 500 possible subscribers. About half of these did subscribe.

With these and others who trickled in in one fashion and another, the editor and publisher, William L. Crawford, decided to publish the magazine. The original size of the magazine was to be the same as that of the circular: 8 1/2 by 5 1/2 inches. In fact, the circular contained on pages 2 and 3 full-page examples of the type and size of illustration to be used, a sample first page of the story the illustration was to accompany, and, of course, the size of type used there was to be used in the magazine itself. The story illustrated was "The Titan" by P. Schuyler Miller, and it later began (it was a serial) in the third issue of the magazine that ultimately appeared, and was continued, but not concluded in the fourth and the fifth (last) issues. The illustration is good and the first page of "The Titan" is almost lyrical!

The kind of type used is small and clear. Although the size was a little smaller than the pro mags', a page of UNUSUAL would have contained at least a third again as much as they. Small type accounts for this. Original plans called for a monthly of 96 pages, printed on book paper. Each story was to have a full-page illustration. UNUSUAL would have presented, in any manner one might mention, the best magazine available if it had appeared as originally planned. Unfortunately it did not.

Mr. Crawford sent the material to be printed. The printer failed him. He had sixteen pages done at deadline-time; he quit. These were mailed out as an "advance issue" and Crawford himself took on the job of printing it. First he tried to complete the issue already started, but he only got as far as six additional pages, thus making a total of twenty-two, when he decided to make a new start.

His original plans had called for 1000 copies of the magazine to be printed. Instead he dropped all plans and started on an entirely different tangent. He first changed the name of the proposed magazine to MARVEL TALES. In the twenty-two page advance issue (very few people got copies of the last ~~six~~ pages) he had used the story "When the Waker Sleeps" by Cyril G. Waters (seems to me the title should be "When the Sloopster Wakes," but I don't own an advance issue and can't be sure. Anyone know?), and several pages of "Tharda, Queen of Vampires," by Richard Tooker. Both stories had full-page illustrations, as had been promised. The new mag, MARVEL TALES, was only 7 1/2 by 5 inches and contained but forty pages, in much larger type than originally planned. Five pages of MT would equal about two in the originally planned mag! Although a few copies are on book paper (these have a

heavy blue line running down the left-hand margin of the cover), most are on cheap pulp stock. Cover, dated May, 1934, is light blue with dim illustration (probably linoleum block) in dark blue. Stories are by L. A. Eschbach, August Derloth, H. P. Lovecraft, and David H. Keller. All are good but Eschbach's and HPL's are best, especially latter. Also contained is a poem, "Antaros," by Natalie Wooley. Instead of 1000, only 500 copies were printed! There are two illustrations, both by Guy L. Husy (unknown to me). One for Keller's tale and the other for HPL's "Cecophais," a tale of pure fantasy. Both are full-page drawings.

Second issue of MARVEL is July-August, 1934. First should have been dated May-June as mag was bi-monthly. Sixty pages this time, and better printed. Cover is white with a splendid drawing in green ink done by Clay Ferguson, Jr. Best story by far is Robert E. Howard's "Garden of Fear," which is great, among his very best! It has a small, excellent drawing by Frederick Van Cortlandt (I wish I could say more about this, but I can't. Suffice it to say that Crawford himself can't remember who drew it!). There are two linoleum drawings, one by Bazioten (also unknown to me) for Frank B. Long, Jr.'s "The Dark Beasts," and the other by "FVC" (yes, Frederick Van Cortlandt, but not the same fellow who drew the "Garden of Fear" illustration! That's all I'm at liberty to tell) for the late Joseph Skidmore's "The Torch of Life." Cover illustration for Harl Vincent's "Synthetic." Other stories by Robt. Hyatt and Wilfred Blanch Talman. Poems by Manly Wade Wellman and H. D. Spatz. 800 copies of this issue were printed.

Cover of third issue, dated Winter, 1935, is of heavy, yellow paper. Most issues had cover drawing in black, but a very few are in red ink. This drawing was originally used in the 22 page advance issue of UNUSUAL to illustrate "Tharda." Sixty-eight pages this issue, very neatly printed (same type as was used in first issue was used in every one). Paper varied, in each copy, from semi-slick to pulp, most being former. Because of expense of buying a new press, only illustration used was that which appeared in the announcement circular--for the "Titan," of course, as it started in this issue. Other stories by Robert Bloch, David H. Keller, L. A. Eschbach, and Orris Keller. Probably "Titan" is best, then Keller's "The Golden Dough." Poems are by Timothy Loft and Duane Rimel. About 2500 (possibly 3000) copies of this issue were printed.

Fourth issue, dated March-April, 1936, had white paper on cover, and drawing is purple. It was originally superimposed in blue on face of announcement. It pictures a splendidly and uniquely cone "diving" space ship with roaring exhausts. It's exceptionally good. Cut for title of mag is changed too. Featured story is "The Creator" by Clifford Simak, and it concerns creator of our "universe." It is daringly done, the very title conflicting with existence of "God." Well-written, with prologue especially magnificent and epilogue only slightly inferior, it is a great science story. Crawford says he likes it best of all he published. It has a splendid full-page drawing by Clay Ferguson, Jr. Second part of Miller's "The Titan" is present with same drawing as before. Also, reprint of George Allan England's classic "The Nebula of Death" is started. H. P. Lovecraft has "The Doom that Came to Sarnath" (since reprinted by WEIRD TALES). John Beynon Harris (better known as John Beynon) has a daring story, "The Cathedral Crypt." Amelia Reynolds Long's "Masters of Matter" appears too. It is illustrated by cut used with green ink for cover of MT No 2. All stories but England's and Long's are superlative, and even they are good. Poems by Wooley and Lovell Hart. This issue is 112 pages and the size of page is increased, too, to 8 1-2 by 5 inches! Well-printed. 2500 copies were made.

Fifth and last issue is dated Summer, 1935, and magazine becomes large-size, 10 by 8 inches and contains 56 pages. Each page is half again as large as present pros! [1939] This issue contains 3 1-2 times as much as did the first!

Cover is slick white paper and has two small drawings in red ink. One is a new one for "The Titan" and the other is for part II of England's story. These are each used again inside. "Mars Colonizes" by Miles J. Brouer is also illustrated. All are by Ferguson and all are good. Lettering for name of mag changes again. Variations on cover of title of England's story are made on some copies, also omission sometimes of word "by." Miller's "Titan," though, has title, etc., as part of drawing and can't be changed. Other stories by Ralph Milne Farley and Carl Jacobi. Another is "The Elfin Lights" by Anders W. Drake, and it is first prize winner of a contest announced in the second issue. Could tell something here, too, which was originally told me by Bob Madle and later verified by Mr. Crawford himself...only I'm not permitted to. [Bob?] Story, though, is great! There is a very good poem by Emil Petaja. Also included is a biography of Forrest J Ackerman, in English and Esperanto. A readers' department which began in fourth issue is present again and has a cut this time. About 2500 copies of this issue were printed.

In the even anyone wonders how a magazine whose circulation never reached 1000 could pay its authors, the following will be of help. Rather than pay cash, Crawford gave each author who had a story appear a 10-year subscription. However, he still managed to maintain an exceedingly high standard for his material. First, though, let it be known that all authors owed copies of the magazine are still on the subscription lists and will receive them if the magazine is ever revived, about which more will be said later. However, about the high standard, Authors were asked to submit stories that they would never otherwise sell because they were too good! That is, they were of too high a quality to ever be accepted by any pulp magazine. They were stories to appeal to intelligent readers, not pulp magazine enthusiasts! And, the authors came across with that type of story, Keller, Lovecraft, and Simak notable among them.

These five issues comprise the total numbers of MARVEL TALES itself, though Crawford has published several other items such as books, a pamphlet, and two issues of the originally planned UNUSUAL STORIES. These were published after No 4 (and coincidental with appearance of No 5) MARVEL. Lack of space forbids my going into detail, but I will give at least these essentials. Both issues were same size, 8 by 5 inches, containing 50 and 52 pages, respectively. Cover was same in both cases: Heavy white cardboard, absolutely blank. Not drawings or even name of magazine. No interior drawings. First issue has stories by Robt. Wait, Duane Rimel, R.H. Barlow, and P. Schuyler Miller. Miller's story, "The White Gulls Cry," is great. Poetry by F. J Ackerman, Konrad Leister, and D. A. Wollheim. Second issue has stories by Lowell H. Morrow, Robt. Bloch, Lionel Dilbeck, and E. T. Pine. Poetry by R. W. Lowndes.

Now that the past has been cleared up, we enter the present scene. After publication of the fifth issue, Mr. Crawford awoke to the realization that he had been losing comparatively large sums of money with each issue, and that the planned sixth issue promised even larger losses. Since the ready money he had had to begin with was exhausted and he was even going into debt, he decided there was no other alternative than the stopping of publication. Too, the job of printing the magazine had been terrific. He had done every copy of every issue by hand! Sixth issue, though, was set up on a newspaper press....only the presses have never started rolling. He stopped then and started to work all over again. He arranged for newsstand distribution of the magazine - as was announced in FANTASY MAGAZINE for Sept., 1936 - but after thus raising the hopes of every fan, he was forced to drop his plans, for it developed that the cost would be prohibitive for a private individual. However, as I have intimated, in the meantime he set up the sixth issue (which, incidentally, will appear as No 1 if and when MT ever reappears) and had the newspaper mats made for most of the issue. Those are still ready to start rolling copies of MT off the presses! Crawford could afford, too,

to publish the first issue in numbers large enough for national distribution, but he has no market; that is, no distribution methods. And if the first issue failed, it would mean the end of MT for ever. I'll go into detail about this in the third part of this article. In the meantime, here are all data about the issue already set up.

It would have been (or would be) large-size, the size of the old AMAZINGS [Gernsback], etc. It would contain 80 pages. This makes it the equivalent of any pulp magazine being published today at any price, whether it is fantastic or not! It equals the 160 pages of WEIRD and ASTOUNDING and the projected UNKNOWN; for 80 large pages equals 160 small ones. MARVEL would sell for 20¢ and if favorably received, the magazine might make it 15¢. Cover would be three-color, done by Ferguson probably, if he's available. As the old fans know, there's no better sf. artist than he. There would be illustrations for every story except possibly a couple of brief shorts. All these, too, would be by Ferguson with the exception of one story, about which more in a moment.

Although Crawford found it difficult to remember just which stories he scheduled for this particular issue (it was four years ago, and he had dozens of stories on hand), this is as accurate a list of them as is possible. First is a complete novel by H. P. Lovecraft; it is "The Shadow over Innsmouth." It has four splendid drawings by Frank Utpatel, who illustrates most Derleth yarns in WT. These are possibly his best work. Story is not too long. Next is a novelette by ten famous authors including, Crawford says, A. Merritt, Eando Binder, Harl Vincent, Stanley Weinbaum, Edmond Hamilton, C. L. Moore, Murray Weinsten, Elmer E. Smith, and Clark Ashton Smith. [I believe this is "The Challenge from Beyond" from the FANTASY MAGAZINE. Really two stories - one sf, by five authors (Binder, E. Smith, Weinbaum, Vincent, Weinsten) and one fantasy, by five others (Moore, C. A. Smith, Merritt, Hamilton (?), and ?) - under same title. WHE] Among the short story authors, Raymond Gallun will be present. Louis Smith (any Smiths connected with fantasy who are not represented?) [George O.] has a story. Stanton Coblenz with "The Sixth Sense" would be another. A prize contest story by Tooker. A short by Miles J. Breuer, and one other author whose name is temporarily forgotten. Finally, Miller's great serial, "The Titan," would start all over again for the benefit of new readers.

That is the originally planned issue, and it is the one which would appear if MT is ever revived. And, worthy, I think, of any fan's money - for size, stories, or any other features. Incidentally, the magazine would be saddle-stitched to permit easy reading....in the fashion of the old 15¢ WONDERS.

Now then, the possibilities of MT's reappearance - and here I tread on dangerous ground. The appearance of this article does not necessarily mean that the magazine is scheduled to appear, nor do I desire in any fashion to give that impression. If anything, the prospects are darker now than at any time since the magazine's discontinuance. However, at the same time, I don't wish to imply it will never appear, either, because that is far from being the truth.

There are various facts which must be remembered. First, when Crawford first published MT, he was a young fellow just out of high school. He lost a good deal of money in the venture and naturally he shies away from repeating the performance. He could publish one or two issues, but under the present conditions he would inevitably fail because of an inability to reach the potential market. The cost of newsstand distribution is almost beyond the reach of any individual, and Crawford is, in reality, but another fan, only a little better off than most, and imbued with a desire to get into the publishing business. If the distribution could be arranged, publication would be a certainty.

Just previous to the writing of this article, Crawford had two plans in mind, the achieving of both of which would have meant publication. First is the matter of having as many fans as possible become agents for the magazine, making as high as 100¢ profit on all they sell, and obtaining certain privileges, too, that I am

not at liberty to divulge at the present. The success of this plan is problematical and only a test could show its true worth. The second depended upon Crawford's ability to produce the entire magazine at the price a magazine like WONDER would pay for their paper alone (were it not for this ability, the whole plan would have to be dropped, for although the unit price is lower, thousands of copies, or units, would need to be printed, and thousands of these never being sold, would be dead loss!). He planned to sell at least five thousand (5000) copies of each issue to a Cleveland wholesale back-number distributor, at a price enabling him to make a cent per copy, thus giving him not only that profit, but also returning the cost of printing that 5000 magazines...all of which would otherwise be simply lost! Most big companies sell remainders at a price that loses about 50% of the mere production cost, not even considering making a profit on them!

It was in connection with this idea that I tried to "sell" the wholesaler in question. At one time he actually agreed...and then the so-and-so backed out and he's still backing! If he had not done so, MT would be being printed right now, and possibly within the near future Crawford would have forced the newsstand distributors to recognize him. Not only would we have MT, but we'd have it on the newsstands to boot! Thus, however, unless some one can be found to replace this distributor, the biggest danger is that Crawford may become disgusted and quit the whole affair for good. I, for one, certainly hope that never comes to pass, for, as all old fans know, MT is the fan's magazine, presenting the fan's best-liked stories. It would not be merely another of the hordes of "Fantasy" magazines appearing so sporadically today. It would be to them and the others as Barkers is to True Story!

That just about clears up MT. From what I've told you, your guess as to the future is just as good as mine. If anything develops, I'll try to clear it up and keep the fan-world posted. If anyone else learns anything, don't keep it to yourself!

THE END

March, 1939 [1, 4]

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STARDUST

by

THE STAR-TREADER

This column will be presented regularly hereafter, as one of the features of each issue of SPACEWAYS. I wish to request that no one harbor the thought of using the name STARDUST as the title of a magazine, for I may wish to do so myself. This department will contain just about everything conceivable as long as it does not conflict with "WON!". I'll even try to get news that slips by the weekly magazines.

I wonder how many people who saw the following excerpt on p. 69 of WEIRD TALES for March [1939] realized that Derleth was telling the truth? "...a mystery which has been carefully guarded and hidden since then, though I have learned of a paper purporting to give the true facts of the Innsmouth horror, a privately published manuscript written by a Providence author." The "paper" spoken of is "The Shadow Over Innsmouth." The "private publisher" is Wm. L. Crawford, and the "Providence author" is none other than H. P. Lovecraft! According to last reports, copies of the book are still to be had. Only 400 copies were printed. Incidentally, the story is pure fiction, of course. Innsmouth is a creation of HPL's, just as are demon-ridden Arkham and ancient Kingsport. In fact, all three are supposed to be near to each other.

Something else about HPL that is made timely by the last number of WT is this item about his fantasy "The Quest of Iranon." HPL said of the story that it is "mawkish." Although it appears in the March, '39 WT, it first appeared in a 1935 issue of L. A. Eschbach's private (non-fantasy) magazine, THE GALLEON. Or "Celephais" which appeared in the No 1 MARVEL TALES, he said "not so hot." I don't agree with that one, incidentally. His first professional story, "Herbert West," which appeared in 1922 in six parts in HOME BREW, was, he told, his "only attempt at hack writing." He was so dissatisfied with "The Tree" that he was considering scratching it from his list of acknowledged stories. This tale was first supposed to appear in FANTASY MAGAZINE. After that magazine folded it was scheduled for FANTASMAGORIA. Instead of appearing there, however, it was ultimately printed in WEIRD TALES!

Possible people (very much "possible!"): Could "Kent Casey" be E. E. Smith? Does "Polton Cross" seem reminiscent of John Russel Fearn? And (very doubtful) could "Robert Moore Williams" be John W. Campbell, Jr. himself? Or couldn't they? The FAPA certainly is looking up. Tucker is planning a new mag. Miske has CHAOS coming up. Merojo and Ackerman are at work on NOVACIOUS, and Hodgkins and others too have announced their intentions of having new magazines in the mailing. It would appear that here's one fan group with real possibilities. I'm so sorry for those who neglected to join till too late. With all the mags being mimed, the, perhaps the membership limit will be expanded.

And here are a couple of examples of the masterful writing of those premier hacks, the Binder Boys. In their No 2 DYNAMIC SCIENCE STORIES novel we find on page 14: "Gasoline soaked sand rapidly evaporated in the hot sun." Quite spectacular, when sand, gasoline-soaked or not, evaporates! And in the same paragraph, "Well, he must accept the little finger of fate." this strikes me as being distinctly odd, to say the least. Is "fate" (should be capitalized) generous because it gives him its "little finger" or miserly for not giving him its, ah, say its thumb? Too bad it didn't give him its fist...clenched! And there are many more similar examples, including grammatical errors galore. I wonder if the BBoys bother even to do more than one draft of a story any more?

Harry Warner is planning a bi-annual supplement to SPACEWAYS.

Has anyone else noticed the obvious "resemblance" between Edmond Hamilton's "Child of the Winds" and "Bride of the Lightning"? The stories are so similar as to be identical. Editor of WT Farnsworth Wright must not even bother to read Hamilton's "stories" any more.

I suspect that Henry Kuttner has three stories in the second issue of STRANGE STORIES. He had one splendid one under his own name, of course. Secondly, I have been told that he and "Will Garth" are the same person, so that's two. And last, "Bells of Horror" by "Keith Hammond" I believe to be by him. Much mention is made in it of the "Book of Iod," purportedly another of the volumes of elder, evil lore. There is even a very long quotation supposed to be taken from it. Now then, this mythical tome is an invention of Henry Kuttner's and I don't think he has used it in his WT stories (at least, not to any extent), or that an absolute newsman such as "Keith Hammond" would be acquainted with it even if he was (were?) real. And even if he did know of it, he'd use a more famous one such as HPL's Necronomicon. Therefore, Kuttner has once more sold three stories to a magazine for one issue.

Kuttner has been devoting all his time lately (January [1939]) to the writing of weird material. Finished early in January were "A Dream of Death," a tale of the transmigration of souls, and "The Lamp," a ghost story about the reappearance of a drowned husband. Partially finished is "Strange Zodiac," another story of "Blak of Old Atlantis and his bibulous friend Lycon.

THE END

March, 1939 [1, 4]

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THE MOON CHANGES, TOO

by
RECORDER H. P. PONG

(Not to be confused with "The World Changes", published here last issue. Editor)

Joe, but it's a fenny feeling to start this here ar-tikle by debunking convention and gravity and exclaiming that electricity travels in cycles, but it's dee truth, so help me! On our light fixtures and things, it says: "For 50-60 cycles only", so I guess dat proves it. Of course history repeats itself! Moskowitz has written another ar-tikle on old times, that's history repeating itself!

And as for the audience I know I am lecturing to—Je, nuttin' to it! Knowing the circulation of SPACEWAYS, I know derved well that at least five hundred fans, old, new, and some buried are readin' dis! And none of 'em gives a pot of Martian gold about fan history, but I'm gonna give it to 'em anyway.

Of course, the first fan mag dates back to 1927, Moskowitz to the contrary. On February 29, 1927, the first fan mag blossomed: "PONG'S PHANTASY PANTAGRAPH" we called it, and Doc Sloane was assistant editor. Names? Shux, look: Charlie Hornig was copy boy; Mort Weisinger was city editor; Ray Palmer looked after the club page, and dug up the advertisements; it was here that Bates, while rejecting MSS for us, got the idea for Hawk Carse; Danny McPhail, then a lad in knee-breeches, kept a path worn from our back door, across the alley to a speakeasy— for us, you understand, not for himself; Ackerman was writing reviews of the latest silent stf. movies; Campbell sat in the back-room most of the time scribbling on the backs of envelopes. (We later learned that he put all the envelopes together and pretty soon "The Mightiest Machine" was published.) Ah, that was an era! We called it the first era.

Then came the second era. On the 31st of June, 1928, I started "PONG'S PHANTASY PARTICLES", and merged the PANTAGRAPH with it. By this time Sloane had left us to take a job with AMAZING. Its publisher valued him for the experience he gained while with us. Harry Bates was upped to editor's position, McPhail was now old enough to smear ink, so he became printer's devil. Charlie Hornig looked after McPhail's former duties. It was at this time that Ray Palmer started the most successful fan club the world has ever known: "PONG'S PHANTASY PANCEERS". Our membership reached nearly three thousand, over half of our total circulation. Julius Schwartz was our ACE reporter. It was he who got for us the news that scooped the world: a new pro mag, named ASTOUNDING STORIES, was to be published! Sure enough, it was, but it was also our loss. A Mr. Clayton, who published the mag, discovered Harry Bates on our staff and lured him away from us with higher pay. That was the end of the second era, for the old afternoon domino games weren't the same without Harry.

There was a stalemate at this period. The 1929 crash was due any week now, so we didn't start another fan mag for awhile. Then, along about the turn of 1930, I gathered together Hornig, McPhail, Campbell, and the rest of the boys that weren't busy or doing time, and launched my third fan mag: "PONG'S PHANTASY PALIPH-LET". This was an immediate success, despite the fact that Schwartz and Weisinger left to start a mag of their own (they got a peep once into my bank account and found out that there was big money in fan mags). A guy named Allen Glasser was publishing the "TIME TRAVELLER" in competition to my own, and they formed "THE SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST" and merged with him, or vice versa. However, the P. P. PAMPHLET held out, despite all odds, until Hornig broke away to start the FANTASY FAN, and Campbell turned to the detestable practice of writing stories for a living, and we just didn't have the heart to continue without the old gang. Ah, fond memories! I figured this would be a good time to quit, so pleading the excuse that I didn't want to unfairly compete with my own friends now publishing other mags, the P. P. PAMPHLET silently folded its presses and rumbled away.

McPhail migrated to Oklahoma to fight the Infuns. Claimed it was more exciting than answering letters of dopey readers. Jim Babcock went up the river for a stretch. Ray Palmer shipped out to Milwaukee where hardy pioneers were building homes for themselves in the wilderness. Charlie Hornig was wandering around the banks of the Hudson one day, and a man named Gernsback stopped him and asked him how'd he like to be an editor? Hornig answered that he guessed it would be okay, anything was better than writing stories. He'd hate like sixty to have to stoop to doing that for a living. So Charlie became editor of a thing called "WONDER", and spent all his wages publishing a fan mag called "FANTASY FAN".

Come to think of it, two or three more era's passed while all this was going on. Gadzooks, but era's were thick in those days!

So, we come to the sixth, and final era of Pong's magazines, and of course, fandom, for it rose and fell with Pong. FANTASY MAGAZINE, FANTASY FAN, etc., had given out. It was now in the gloomy days of 1935. A downstate situation was at hand. Something startling was needed to perk the fans up, save them, band them together. I came gallantly to the rescue, my blood filled with sympathy for my science fiction brothers. The upshot of it all was, I started my last fan magazine: PONG'S PHANTASY POPYRUS. Other fans saw the plight, came dashing to my rescue.

McPhail left college, came to be my copy boy and beer-runner. Schwartz, now a literary agent, saw to it that all the best MSS came to me. Hornig stopped in on every trip across the country to give me the latest dope and help out wherever possible. Campbell came back to haunt the back room, and scribbling on envelopes again. (This time, "Who Goes There" was the result.) Babcock came back from his stretch, and took to snitching dollars out of the incoming envelopes to play poker with. We had a devil of a time figuring out who had paid for their subscriptions and who didn't. But it all came out right in the end.

Street & Smith became so dazzled over the P. P. POPYRUS they promptly hired yours truly, H. P. Pong, as editor of their new "UNKNOWN". Thus closes the era to end all eras.

THE END

March, 1939 [1, 4]

FROM THE READERS

From ROBERT W. LOWNDES: Congratulations are in order for your third issue of SPACEWAYS which was received yesterday and investigated today. Regrettable to at least one reader besides Miss Long is your abandonment of the even margins, but, as you say, it does consume considerable time and entail not a little nerve-strain. So, all in all, if you feel that it were better to spend equivalent energy in obtaining worthy material for the mag, and improving your editing and proof-reading, then objections to lack of even righthand margins, from these quarters speaking, are heroby withdrawn. ""Moskowitz" article, I note, has the usual combination of fairly-interesting subject, sloppy writing and generous misinformation and hearsay evidence presented as fact. Jack Williamson's review of "Star Maker" is easily the best item in your current issue. 71 Carroll Street, Springdale, Conn.

From ROBERT A. MADLE: Somehow Moskowitz' article in the current SPACEWAYS didn't hit the spot with me. In the first place, he has no right penning articles similar to that one (and Ghu knows, he's written the same thing over and over about a dozen times!) because he, one of the four fans who he believes will be the only ones to stick around for some time to come, didn't enter the field until 1937!!!!

I was editor of a hektoed fan magazine before he even entered the fan field! And his statement about old-timers; i.e.; Moskowitz, Marconette, Taurasi, and Spoor is ridiculous. Spoor is the only oldtimer of the bunch, and Marconette just entered the fan field in 1938!!!! Moskowitz and Taurasi came in in 1937. Spoor, admittedly, is an oldtimer, but the other three—ouch! Moskowitz should take Tucker's article to heart; the one in the current FANTASY DIGEST I mean (The second issue of ID. HW) Sam is not an old-timer, is not even a middle-timer (if you get what I mean) so should discontinue writing about "what happened", as if he were there. And what the hell ever gave him the idea that the fans were "jealous" of FANTASY MAGAZINE? Of all the ridiculous statements, that takes the cake! So wake up, Sam. You're not kidding anyone, except some of the new fans who think you've been in the fan field for ages. And by the way, aside to Sam: so you think you four are the "only ones who will be around for some time to come."? Are you willing to back up your statement with cash? I'll bet that I outlast all of you, with the exception of Jack Spoor! I've been subscribing to FANTASY MAGAZINE since 1934, so you can see that I'm an "ancient", if you're an "old-timer"! Also, I hope there are no bitter feelings, as I am only giving my true opinion of the article. Sam is one of the best fan writers, and often turns out magnificent fan material, but please, in the name of holy Chu and Foo, stop writing about things that you have no right to talk about! "Three cheers for Jack Williamson! He certainly said something when he said: "Stapledon is doing here what the myth-makers of the past were doing when they set gods in the sky and made men out of mud." 353 E. Belgrade St., Philadelphia, Pa.

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March, 1939 [1, 4]

UNDER THE RADICAL SIGN

by

RALPH MCUNE FARLEY

I was less than nought, worse than nothing; in fact, I was a minus quantity. My name was Minus One. For years, scientists doubted that I existed, and claimed that I was a mere meaningless symbol.

But that is now all a thing of the past. What I wish now to relate is the account of my terrifying experiences under the radical sign.

When I first found myself in that predicament, I was not much concerned. My friend Plus Four (he of the baggy breeches) had gotten out of a like fix with no difficulty whatever, although he shrank to half his former size in the process.

But I was not large enough. So I tried hard to duplicate his accomplishment. By redoubling my efforts, and thus my size, I became Minus Four -- only to find that the larger I grew, the smaller I became!

Anyway, as a result of these efforts, a part of me got out. And, from the outside, I now looked just like my shrunken friend. But the original me was still inside, exactly as before.

Oh, what agony!

Finally a thought came to me: This fate of mine was punishment for not being square. Be square with yourself, I said, and you'll be square with the world.

So I squared myself. And out I came!

But now a worse fate! Although out of my dread prison at last, I was now a dual personality, a sort of Jekyll-Hyde. For I was not that ambiguous individual Plus-or-Minus One!

And, even if I now square myself again, I can never become my former self. I'm positive of that,

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May, 1939 [1, 5]

THE LAST CITY

by
JOHN HOLLIS MASON

The sere and ancient surface of the earth
Is torn and jagged from invaders of the outer ways,
For long the atmosphere has gone
And only left are there nights, where there once were days.

But, out upon a dim and darkened plain
There is a something, yea---a city,
Man again!

The eons have not left it unscathed,
Though proud its minarets still bear their way
Through cold and steallight of the never ceasing night,
What heritage of power and might are therein bequeathed?

Yea, man still lives, though millenniums have passed
Across the parapet of Eternity.
And though his number are but few,
He has to him a mighty science amassed.

Yet man grows weary for rest and peace,
'For in his immortality
He can no'er achieve the true sarcose.

On and on he will go
Inebriated with his power
Until he meets what zero=hour?

May, 1939 [1, 4]

A DEFENSE FOR FAN FICTION

by
LOUIS KUSLAN

There are several prominent fans today who insist that fan fiction is punk, that it is nothing but tripe, and that fan magazines should not carry anything but articles, etc. No doubt they're right in many cases. All of us have read stuff that should never have seen the light of day, let alone a magazine. Take, for instance, the "Bob and Koso" stories by James V. Taurasi, or even a poem which I once wrote for Fantascience Digest in a moment of abberation, irrationality, and hallucination. (Ugh! I still shudder to think of it and how I was razzed!) To return to the "Bob and Koso" stories, they are turned out by the author in carload lots (much like Cummings' and Schachnor's work) merely as something to fill up space for a hard pressed editor, or to fill an occasional publication put out by himself. They have never been intended to be good, they were never intended to do more than fill up the aforementioned space, and, if possible, to afford entertainment of a sort to some of the more naive fans. Taurasi will bear these statements out. (Don't shoot me now, Jimmy! Wait until I finish!) As for my poetry, (rather call it verse) it should never have been accepted, no, not even if the editor was pressed for material.

However, not all fan fiction is bad, in fact very, very little is unfit for publication. Take, for instance, some of the best poetry I have ever read, the poetry of Robert W. Lowndes, "Doc", as he is called, has published a portion of his work in a hcto'd publication called Strange in the FAPA. He has had other excellent work, fully deserving of publication in the pro magazines, in various other fan publications.

How could anyone read "The Last Fan" in Helios by Sam Moskowitz or "Tarunguro" in Cosmic Tales without realizing that Moskowitz had ability and was using it? Or read "The Dead Sleep in Secrecy" by Bob Tucker in Spaceways. Of course, the material in the printed fan magazines is high in quality, almost without exception. For instance, "The Sniper" in The Amateur Correspondent, or "Legends of the Race" by F. Arnold Rhodas in No 3 Unique.

Naturally, I have picked some of the stories and poems which have been especially remembered as outstanding. But, a story does not have to be remembered for years and years in order to be good. Practically all the stories in Astounding Science Fiction ARE GOOD; that is, they are readable and entertaining to some extent. How many of these are remembered for 3 months? For 1 year? A very small percentage. Yet, these stories are not mediocre in any sense of the word. So with fan stories, there are a few outstanding ones, many deserving of reading and praise, and a few which should never have been published.

And, if my previous arguments have had no effect on the hardened hater of fan fiction, let you who are such remember that fan fiction should be, and is, the finest sort of training for embryo authors. Such well known fans as Oliver Saari, Fred Pohl, Don Weillheim, and Mort Weisinger (the editor of Thrilling Wonder Stories, Strange, and Startling) have had stories and poems printed in the various pro magazines. Mort Weisinger, especially, has been helped by his writing, for he became a member of the staff of Standard Publications thru Fantasy Magazine. Most newcomers to the pro field never did any writing for the fan magazines, but, probably, they never heard of the fan publications. By having his material published in the fms, the amateur author is able to present his work to an audience of critical fans who can and do point out faults in the story, poem, article, etc.

Writing for the fan mags does not, in any way, assure success in the pro field, but I firmly believe that it helps, and anything that helps, should not be discouraged. Therefore, don't criticize fan fiction by describing it as "lousy". If it is, give reasons for the author's edification. If it's good, give credit and lots of it.

So, fan, don't characterize fan fiction as "unreadable". It's not. GIVE IT A BREAK BY READING IT!!

THE END

May, 1939 [1, 5]

HEY! STOP! PLEASE!

-or a desperate, back-to-the-wall, unmalicious, good-natured defense-

by

Sam Moskowitz.

I've just dusted myself off after the hiding accorded me by various gents in the latest SPACEWAYS. Mostly, Messrs. Madle and Tucker with a few accomplices thrown in for good measure. It seems the boys are determined to add still another fan era to my already too-numerous versions. That era might be titled "THE BELITTLE MOSKOWITZ ERA", ushered in the February and March of 1939 by Mr. Tucker, and immediately followed by compatriot Madle. This offusion is an attempt to end such an embarrassing era (embarrassing ain't he word) before it gains too much headway.

First let's analyse the case scientifically. The boys must have a motive. That seems obvious. We'll start with Madle. What motive could Bob possibly have? I've been like a step-father (the good kind) to that particular gent. Ah! I've got it! The utter, scathing horror of it! I ACCIDENTALLY LEFT MADLE'S NAME OUT WHEN SUMMING UP THE REMNANTS OF THE OLD FAN WORLD! Such a crime, I know, is inexcusable. I hang my head in abject shame, if not misery. What more can I say than beg, most humbly, for forgiveness, and to say that Robert A. Madle and his excellent FANTASCIENCE DIGEST, are unquestionably one of the old-guard, and will, I have no doubt, remain with us for a long time to come. Let Ackorman also bear grudge I hastily mention that I left his name out because he seemed a virtual fixture, everybody expects him to be around, and it's silly to remind them of it.

Now that I have lowered myself to asking for forgiveness I will do an about face and rid my fair name of some of the ignomy it now bears. You are, Mr. Madle, quite all wet. If your Philly bunch doesn't take a course in reading shortly, and quit misinterpreting statements of mine written in precise, understandable English, I don't know what is to be done. I did not call myself, Taurasi or Marconette an old-timer in the pure sense. I quote: "The Old-Timers (comparatively speaking) that appear will be around for quite a while yet are Taurasi, Marconette, Speer, Moskowitz." I admit I should have added Madle. "Yet it is significant that three of the above four were the newest in the old field." Now aren't you ashamed you spoke so hastily, Mr. Madle? You knew damn well when I referred to the old field, I was referring to the "Hektographing era in science-fiction". I think I made that very clear. As to my not having a right to write about the old days of science-fiction fandom, I might pertinently ask just how did you get that way? Because H. G. Wells did not live in prehistoric times does that mean that he has no right to write about it in his book "Outline of History"? Does that make his statements/less accurate as far as is known by present day facts? The only requirement being of course that everyone regard Mr. Wells as an authority on the subject, which I believe they do. I also believe that I can speak as an authority on science-fiction. Because I was not a fan in 1930 does not mean I don't possess any knowledge of that time. I wasn't alive during America's revolt against England, but I can tell you plenty about it. And you, of all people, should know, that I possess considerably more than a casual knowledge of all phases and events of science-fiction. Your contention that the fans were not "jealous" of FANTASY MAGAZINE and the group it represents might be consigned to the role of opinion, but it can't be. It can't be because it was an actual fact! You, in your honorable antiquity, should possess knowledge of the numerous fan battles against FANTASY MAGAZINE, culminating when the groups shook hands at the second science-fiction convention. Finally, "The World Changes" was certainly not too similar in idea to any of my previous articles. In "The World Changes" I attempted to show as best I could every distinct era science-fiction had passed through. I also attempted to show that we were passing into

a new era of science-fiction (at the time I wrote the article, last week in November, 1938). I never attempted that in any previous article I have written, though I have gone into detail a number of times over one specific era. I guess that's all, as far as Madle is concerned, and I'm not peeved as you evidently were when I left your name out of "The World Changes." It shall never happen henceforth, see "One to a City", probably next issue of FANTASY DIGEST.

I laughed like blazes over "The Moon Changes, Too", it was really funny, in parts. However, knowing Tucker's views from previous occasions, I must search for the Tuckerian Motive. Found! Loki's second article in NEW FANDOM! It seems that Loki was not quite polite enough in his views contained in that article (which, incidentally, were certainly not mine). If Tucker remembers, I wrote him, warning him that such an effusion was to see print. In advance, that is. In my postal I inferred that were he peeved enough, beforehand, I would withdraw the reply. I got neither, so I assume Tucker was peeved, but didn't want any one to know it. My belief on this point is exemplified by that fact that Tucker seems to have picked Mr. Moskowitz for the leading role in too many of his burlesques. Now I don't really care about that, as long as the burlesques are funny, and they usually are—I ought to know since I laugh at them myself. However, I think Tucker is making too conscientious an effort to run me down. His main argument seems to be, "what right has young whippersnapper Moskowitz to write articles about the old days—'vas you dare sharlie', and we old timers don't want to read them anyway."

Who in blazes is writing articles about the old days for the old timers anyway? There's only a half-dozen of "real" oldtimers active today anyway. The rest are mostly younger fans, who don't know a thing about the "elder days", but would like to learn. Those are the fellows I write the articles for, not you. Paradoxically enough, few of the old timers could write an article on the the old-times yourself. You don't know enough about it, and that's a fact! Who was there in the old days who attempted to encompass the entire fan and professional field the way fans do today? Very, very few, and they've retired. These old-timers haven't taken an interest in more than certain small portions of events that happened about them. Tucker for example could tell you darn little of what happened between 1934 and 1938 in the fan field yet he has the audacity to take the know-it-all attitude and reprimand yours truly for tryin' to inform newcomers of past events, AND STILL NO ONE HAS PROVED ANY OF MY STATEMENTS AS BASICALLY INACCURATE! The chief idea being that I've one helluva nerve writing about the old days when I'm a comparative newcomer (vintage of 1935, to be exact). But in four years, a very active fan can learn one heck of a lot, and especially if he has a passionate desire to learn of events in his field. I had a darn good working knowledge of the fan field even before I entered it. Any conscientious reader of the fan departments in pro mags couldn't help but have. Finally turning to Tucker's caricaturing the fact that I claimed to be writing for a new audience. Well, since when have the names as Dikty, Mason, Boyer, Wilhelm, Hamling, Sell, Bristol, Byers, Castellari, Chauvenet, Pauley, Lee, etc., etc., been nauseatingly common in the readers' departments of fan mags? How many subscription lists of past fan mags boasted similar names? State facts please. I hope this bit doesn't exclude me from future humor-esques on Tucker's part. I wasn't attempting to do more than change erroneous impressions some of those pieces may have furthered among the newer clientele. I never tried to pose as an old-timer of 1930 vintage intentionally. I might have pretended for the sake of the article, that I was, but the inference was clear that I was not. Remember, boys, I didn't start this! You did! And you know darn well everything said here is said good naturedly, as I believe your statements were. To clear up doubts, I might publically state that I consider Tucker and Madle two of the finest fans extant today, and damn good fellows, so there..... .SM

THE ETERNAL VOICE

by
THOMAS S. GARDNER

O little cloud that hangs in space,
Where time is no more,
O little atoms that race,
About yon nebulas forevermore.

Spin us a story while twilight gathers,
Of worlds birthed, bloomed and died,
Tell of the fair races that rose or fell,
To whatever heights of heaven or depths of hell.

Tell us what time is, what space is,
Give us the secrets of life,
Weave for us the cycles of fame,
Envelop us in your ever-burning strife.

Faintly as the knell of a dying bell,
Came a voice that was sweeter than tongue can tell,
Came a voice that set my blood to pounding,
Came a voice that brought to my mind understanding.

Like distant echoes down the corridors of time,
Like the murmur of the sea in distant climes
Thus spake the voice of the nebluae.
With the melody of a song that is forgotten.

I am time, for nothing was before me,
I am space, because I encompass all,
I am life, for in the depths of me,
Life and death are as one.

Understanding like a lightning flash,
Broke on me with a crash,
My soul leaped up to answer the voice,
The voice that came out of the nebulae.

May 1939 [1, 5]

S T A R S

DON ROBERTSON

Look up to the stars from your daily bread earned;
Look up to the lights you so often have spurned—
Tall buildings may bound you, close in and surround you,
But you've only to look at the dots in the blue;
Watch cares disappear, your troubles fly by,
If you find your peace with the stars in the sky.

May, 1939 [1, 5]

STARDUST

by
THE STAR-TREADER

Claire Beck's Futile Press is planning a volume to contain Clark Ashton Smith's longest poem, "The Hashish-Eater." It is to be illustrated with numerous cuts by CAS himself. The drawings were finished years ago, but at last reports, at least, they were in possession of Samuel Loveman of New York and something prevented their being returned. Thus, although all arrangements including buying of paper and making of cuts have been made - were made a year ago - printing of the volume is delayed. The poem is about 500 lines of blank verse, and is extremely fantastic. If necessary, Smith may reconstruct the drawings. Also planned by Beck is a volume of Smith's unpublished poetry and the completion of H. P. Lovecraft's "Fungi from Yuggoth," a project started but never finished by R. H. Barlow's Dragonfly Press.

News about Kuttner projects now. Something to look forward to is a collaboration he and C. L. Moore are working on. This, their second collaborative story, is tentatively titled "Ragnarok", and is a time-traveling epic about the end of the world. Among Kuttner's latest sales to fantasy sources are "The Body and the Brain" to STRANGE. This one is a collaboration with Bloch. To THRILLING ADVENTURES he has sold an historical adventure novelette, "Crusade." Also to STRANGE are "Curse of the Crocodile" (in collaboration with an unnamed person), and "The Hunt". He and Barnes have collaborated and brought together Carlyle and Quade in "The Energy Eaters," to THRILLING WONDER STORIES, of course. Also in collaboration with Barnes and sold to TWS is "Roman Holiday." To WEIRD TALES he has sold "Towers of Death" which he thinks is very good.

Remember the bit in this column last time about his having three stories in STRANGE No 2? Among those stories was "Cursed Be the City." This story was first written as a story of Elak and Lycan of Old Atlantis, one of the series which has been appearing in WEIRD. Farnsworth Wright, Editor of WT, rejected the story calling it "Hackneyed, and chase-the-villain." Kuttner rewrote it and sold it to STRANGE. He will probably bring the new characters back in a series to appear in that magazine.

Kuttner has written some stories which he hopes will sell to UNKNOWN. There are three of them. One is "Proteus," about a fellow who was haunted by the sea-god of the same name. There is "Just a Dreamer," about a chappie whose dreams used to materialize in the most embarrassing ways. Thirdly, "The Misguided Halo," about a man who acquired a halo through a heavenly error.

Apparently university training is not a requisite if one desires to become a famous fantasy author, etc. At least, among those without it are the late H. P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard, and Clark Ashton Smith, Robert Bloch, Henry Kuttner, Charles Hornig, and A. Merritt. Plus others.

For the guillotine this time, Edmond Hamilton has been chosen, as the Binders were last issue. Weisinger should be ashamed to have bought and Hamilton to have written "The Prisoner of Mars." Beginning with the proverbial famous scientist and his beautiful daughter, the story takes the hero to the wreck of a spaceship from Mars; of course he is transferred to that planet and there he finds the worthless king who looks exactly like him and who has a fiancée who does not love him...and who couldn't write the story from there? [Graustark] The only word to fit the situation is "disgusting." When stories like it are accepted, one wonders that any are ever rejected. In addition, John Hollis Mason brings to our attention the fact that just as "Child of the Winds" and "Bride of the Light-

ning" are merely one story rewritten, so are "Six Sleepers" and "Comrades of Time", both of which appeared in WEIRD TALES, in '35 and '39 respectively. The stories are both bad, to begin with. And they are precisely the same. Of course the plot has been old for years, but Hamilton has a group of people from different ages brought together in an age strange to them all and from there on writes an adventure story. It isn't enough that he writes such juvenile, hack stuff, but he's gone so far as to re-write it...and Wright hasn't enough sense to reject it. It would be interesting to see how many times he's used the idea of a dying Earth where cities are always black and the sun is always a blood-red ball hovering behind them, casting crimson light over their black walls. Offhand I can remember "World of the Dark Dwellers", in WT for August, 1937, "In the World's Dusk", in WT for March, 1936, "Comrades of Time" and "Armies of the Past" in WY for April and March '39 respectively. There are probably others, but I can't think of them at the moment. In all these stories he's used the above locale. He also used the black city idea in "The Lake of Life," I remember. In addition to all these, I remember his nebula, comet, cosmic cloud, extra galactic, etc., dwellers with the idea of destroying our galaxy...I wonder how many times dear old bighearted Hamilton has saved us all from doom. Someone should give him a medal. Despite the modern competition, he's still our number one hack.

END

May, 1939 [1, 5]

FROM THE READERS

From FREDERIK POHL: This is to announce the formation of a new organization in science fictions: The Futurian Federation of the World. It's an unusual organization, and the enthusiasm of its members indicate that it's a good one. "It's unusual because it has already, even before officially in existence, over a score of members all over the world; because it offers more for the money than any other science fiction organization ever has and more than most can; and because it has the support of every active fan approached in a time when the fan field is split and cross-split in a dozen ways." "Membership in the Federation confers many benefits, the most concrete of which is The Futurian Review, the official organ of the Federation, which is an eight-page fortnightly magazine which will contain accurate news and informed comment of ALL the activities in science fiction and the allied fields." "Dues in the Federation are only \$12.50 per year, payable in monthly instalments of 25¢; the subscription to the Review alone is easily worth that and more. Any fan, whatever the race, creed, sex, age, or political affiliations may be, is free to join the Federation; every alert fan will. The Federation might well paraphrase the slogan of SPACEWAYS for its own and call itself "The club for the interested fan." "Address your application to Frederik Pohl, provisional President, 280 St. John's Place, Brooklyn, New York. The time to join is now; you will regret having missed the first and second news-packed issues of The Futurian Review if you delay. (The first issue appears April 7th, and every second Friday thereafter.) "On the latest SPACEWAYS: I liked most of all Miske's article on MARVEL TALES. Seems to me that a few more like that would be more acceptable to the fans; it was an agreeable contrast to Moskowitz' foul gushing, which was your lead article in the issue before. Roy's article (In the Chinese, the first name is the patronym) was also excellent. But I thought the fiction was uniformly lousy. 280 St. John's Place, Brooklyn, New York.

"FRISCO FOG

by
THOMAS P. KELLEY

I met him in the ghostly "Frisco Fog--the tall dark man in evening clothes who wore the long black cloak?

The park was cold on that bleak fall night, much in fitting with myself who had neither funds nor shelter, and was far from home and much too proud to write for aid, or to tell of my predicament. Occasionally through the swirling mists I could see the shabby forms of other poor unfortunates, searching pathetically for some place to sleep.

Several of the benches were already occupied, but at last I found an empty one upon which a single lamp-post cast a pale beam like a spot-light, on all sides of which the fog hung as a ghostly curtain.

The air was damp, the bench both hard and cold. I pulled my shabby suitcoat tighter around me, raising the collar. From the distance came the jingling of a piano from some waterfront dive, together with the high laugh of a woman, for this was the heart of the famed "red light" district. Then footsteps suddenly sounded on the gravel walk, and the next instant the tall, dark man in the evening clothes came through the fog.

In height he must have been a good six-foot four, with the long lithe body of an athlete. The face was that of a bronze statue--clean-cut, aquiline. The black eyes flashed and glowed like fire. Yet somehow one instantly felt, magnificent as was his polished person, that here was one who was bad to the marrow--his smile a sneer, his laugh a mockery.

"You are alone?" he asked in a soft, cultured tone; and though he spoke in excellent English, the voice had a strong foreign accent.

"Alone as the bones of Menes," I answered with a faint attempt at a smile.

"Ah, one of learning," and he seated himself beside me. "Surely it is not everyone who knows the name of the first King of Egypt's First Dynasty."

"Three years at Harvard," I answered bitterly. "And I have come to this--and listen to that," and I gestured towards the distant laughter and music. "Well, at least there was no such sin in Menes's day."

The tall stranger gave a low laugh.

"You are wrong, very wrong," he answered quietly. "Such carousals were known then, and long before the First Dynasty. Far, far back even beyond the pre-dynasty reign of the Hawk, Kengi and Gishban Kings, to those dim and distant days when the world itself was young.

"Of course it was known down through the ages. Sin played its part in every dynasty of Egypt, as well as in ancient Ur, Akkad and Shumar. Lust was prevalent when old Ninevah fell, and Sin-har-Ishkum and his concubines perished in the flames. The black head of evil gloated and smiled when Nebuchadnezzar's armies conquered Jerusalem. And vice and debauchery reigned supreme when the great gates of Babylon fell before Cyrus and his howling kill-crazed hordes."

I dug the well-worn toe of my shoe into the gravel of the path. "You talk as an authority," I answered, turning towards him with a smile; but the tall dark man was staring straight ahead into the night, the smoke wisps of his cigarette floating gracefully upwards.

"I was there," he answered quietly, and I felt a chill creep up my spine, for somehow the words rang true. "But do not be so blind as to look upon an eternal existence as something wonderful. To you death may appear as that greatest of horrors, but I warn you that perpetual life is infinitely more so. To see kingdoms fall; to watch nations rise and crumble; to sit ever at the wayside of history and see it go on and move past till you alone are left behind, is surely a horror greater than any beyond the veil."

"Yes," he went on after a pause. "I have seen sin through the ages. The orgies of Sodom, the rape of the Sabines; have watched the beautiful Cleopatra swim the Nile in the starlight; witnessed the wild dance of Salome at old Nachaeus castle, hile Herod, the Tetrarch, and his drunken followers howled their approval. And amid the shouts of the revellers and the screams of the dying I have beheld the unspeakable debaucheries of the mad Emperor who played on his lyre as Rome burned around him, and caused the arenas to swim in Christian blood.

"Through time I have gone hand in hand with iniquity. I was with the Goths at the sacking of Rome, and heard the screams of the Vestal Virgins in the arms of the conquering soldiers. I was with Atilla at Chalons, with Martel at Tours, and laughed as the Saracens, under the guise of religion, put to the sword all who gainsaid them. Why, I was even abroad on Bartholomew's night, and stood on the butchered bodies of Catherine's foes."

And on and on went that wonderful voice, and I seemed to be present from the very birth of sin down to the evils of today. And yet all the while he spoke I could but sit there---wide-eyed, fascinated by the utter enormity of it all.

"But of course you know both sin and wisdom are only in their infancy," he was saying presently. "And that just as surely as the latter progresses the former will expand. After all, man is but some ten thousand years from the stone age, and the world might well yet endure a million centuries with his knowledge ever expanding as he gradually explores and employs the vast resources of his brain. When once he has learned to use his entire twelve thousand million brain cells, and for a dark and sinister purpose---"

The stranger gave a throaty chuckle.

"Then," he said, rising, "then we will really see exquisite sin and vice."

The tall dark man was now on his feet, and with an elaborate gesture drew the costly cloak more closely around him. A crisp new hundred-dollar bill lay on the bench beside me, but the stranger made no mention of having left it, nor I of its existence.

"I have enjoyed this little chat," he concluded, and began to draw away. "Perhaps in some far distant age we may meet again---a glorious age when vice will reign supreme. Yes, perhaps in some distant reincarnation of your life we will again be face to face, though you will be unaware of any former meeting. Good night!"

All around us was the swirling whiteness of the fog, broken only by the glow of the park lamp beside the bench. In silence I watched his retreating form--- the silken hat, the costly clothes, the black, gold-headed cane. And then in that last glimpse I beheld that which shot me to my feet with a scream of horror.

For just below the trouser cuff of the right leg, and grating against the pebbles on the little path, I caught a fleeting glimpse of that which turned my blood to water. No shining sandal, hoot or shoe --- BUT A BESTIAL CLOVEN HOOF!!!

THE END

June, 1936 [1, 6]

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NEWS FROM AMAZING

by

W. LAWRENCE HAMLING

First of all: Palmer is going to save all his original cover drawings and illustrations for a contest which will break in the near future. Instead of giving them for the auction block at the New York sci Convention, he plans an essay contest, in which both fans and authors may participate. The winners will receive the original drawings. This will probably be kept up for some length of time. By the way, did you know that the circulation of AMAZING now exceeds that of ASTOUNDING? Palmer has the figures, and according to him, AMAZING's circulation has jumped 5000 by the issue for the last six months!

June, 1936 [1, 6]

LEGIONS OF LEGIONS

by

WACKY JILLIAMSON

Young Ster turned to his companion, Smiles Babbledroola. "Who is that stunning girl," he asked. "What brings such dainty ethereal beauty to this grim spaceport on Mars?" Old Smiles regarded the girl doubtfully through the bottom of his wine bottle. "Eh, lad," he wheezed, "which girl?" "There's only one," retorted Young Ster. Smiles set down the bottle with a sigh. "Ah, well," he groaned, "perhaps you're right. They---she looks like Saro Leeth, the Commandant's daughter, who," his voice sank to a whisper, "guards the secret of the most frightful weapon in the universe---the dread Cackle-Cackle!" The old man reached for a fresh bottle. "Ay, I remember," he began, but Young was no longer listening to him.

The girl turned, and they looked at each other. Young felt his head swim with her breath-taking loveliness. She smiled. Instantly he rose and joined her. "Oh, I've heard of you," she said when he introduced himself. "My father thought you did commendable work in saving the Solar System last August---or was it July?" "September 8th, 13:41 Mars-Earth standard," corrected Young. "But it was really nothing. Every legionaire is required to save the solar system at least three times before he can be promoted to a Captaincy, and I've only done it twice yet." "Cheer up," murmured Daro. "Dad says your form is improving, and I just know you'll do it again!"

Two hours later, just when they were getting interested in each other, an orderly brought them a spacegram. "Invaders approaching solar system," it ran. "Armed with unknown weapons they have apparently destroyed Uranus and are slanting in towards Earth. Young Ster is hereby ordered to destroy the invaders with his spaceship, "Leaping Frog II". He may, if he so wishes, take with him Saro Leeth, but the Cackle Cackle is to be used only in case of emergency." "Quick," shouted Young, "we must go." He seized Saro Leeth by the arm and they dashed out, leaving there dessert on the table. "Curses, clinkered again," muttered their waiter, who had poisoned it. Had the plot of the Purple Prunes society, bent on overthrowing the Leethian Pea-Green dynasty, failed? The spy dashed furiously after the retreating pair. But it was too late. Smiles brought him down with a pea-shooter before he could draw a prune gun. Six spaceguards threw him into the clink, so his prophecy came true.

Out in space, Young set his controls for Earth. "My, you look wonderful," he told his companion. "Aw, be yourself, big boy," she retorted snappily. "Now look out the window for a few minutes while I put the cackle-cackle together." Young obeyed, and Saro hooked up a few odds and ends she carried with her until they assumed a formidable appearance. Then she gave a gasp of dismay. "Anything wrong?" asked Young, turning back to her. "Yes," she answered, "I can't find that piece of scrap iron I had with me. I gotta have a piece of iron to make this dingus work." "But there isn't any iron on this ship," said Young. "I had it made of phonium, so I could cruise in time, and all the instruments and things are of that new synthetic metal, tuffstuff." "Oh, dear" moaned Saro, "what will we do?" "I tell you what," answered Young, "we'll form a Legion of Valor to combat the new menace."

"Look!" cried Saro a few minutes later. Young turned to the visiscreen, where the spaceship of the invaders was dimly visible, hurtling on towards earth. "They're beating us!" he exclaimed. The hostile vessel plunged into the earth's atmosphere and was lost to view. "I can't use my disintegrator so close to earth," Young fretted. "But I could use the cackle-cackle," Saro offered. "We'll land on earth and---" she broke off abruptly as the earth disappeared.

Nothing remained---not earth, not the space ship of the invaders, not even the moon. "I know!" cried Young. "They've turned the earth and the moon into a different time path!" He adjusted dials and pulled levers. Instantly the "Leaping Frog" plunged into time. "Ah!" chuckled Young. "I was right. I'm picking up their gyrochronic lines." They rushed through time. Soon they arrived at the intersection of the vibratory traces, and there they found, not the earth, but the moon! And on Luna's barren surface rose the black, ominous form of an alien stronghold, towering above the airless plain. Even as they looked, a space-port opened in the top of the grim structure. Young brought his ship to a perfect landing, as the roof closed over again. Air rushed in, as valves in the sides of the vast room opened. Young and Saro climbed out of their ship. Young was weaponless, but Saro still held the useless cackle-cackle.

They had not long to wait. Through a portal at the far end of the hall came a strange green creature. His form was that of a perfect dodecahedron. On every point there danced a thin blue flame. His skin seemed oddly translucent, for he emitted a strong green glow that surrounded him for some distance. His mental commands reached them. "Make no resistance. Follow me." They obeyed. He led them into a small room, evidently an office of sorts. He closed the curiously shaped doorway with a screen of light. Then he turned to his captives. "I, Eechahah, Commander of the Legion of Death, and viscercy of eastern Geethia," his thoughts impinged on their minds, "have captured you as specimens to take home for examination. You," addressing Young, "will kindly give me such puny knowledge as you may have." "I refuse," thought back Young determinedly. "Oh, very well then," said Eechahah, "Oochiise!" An attendant appeared. "Bring the streix." In a few minutes the attendant reappeared, bringing a peculiar instrument. Young was forced down, and the attendant began to torture him. Young resisted with iron fortitude.

"At last!" Saro shouted joyfully, as she seized the iron fortitude and inserted it in the cackle-cackle. "My iron!" "What do you want iron for?" asked Eechahah, "and what is that funny gadget in your hand?" "It is a weapon of ours," Saro explained, "which will kill off anything we don't like." "Well, well," returned Eechahah impatiently, "how does it work?" "Like this," said Saro, thinking into the cackle-cackle. Instantly Eechahah and Oochiise disappeared. Saro had wiped out all of the insidious Legion of Death at a single blow!

In a short time she had Young on his feet again, and feeling better. Together they went to the secret stronghold of the Geeth, and there they found two thin poles---one white and one blue. "What are those?" asked Saro, dismantling the deadly cackle-cackle and giving Young his iron fortitude again. "I know!" said Young. "The white one is the North pole of Earth, and the blue one is the north pole of Uranus. When the Geeth took the poles, it threw the planets into the wrong maneto-oscillo wave path, and they disappeared. We'll just dig around in time a little and find the planets and put the poles back. That will fix everything when we pilot the moon back too. Then we'll find that the Geeth never existed at all so that I will have done something unique---saved the solar system from an entirely imaginary, yet deadly enemy!" "You make it all so simple, darling," cooed Saro. "You are so wonderful!" "Well," admitted Young, "now that I've saved the Solar System three times, maybe I can get them to raise my pay enough so I can get married. Would you---" "Sweetheart!"

They had decided to form a "Legion of Love."

THE END

June, 1939 [1,6]

WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT
 or, extracts from a Bibliophile's files, by
 J. MICHAEL ROSENBLUM

TOURNALIN'S TIME CHECKS, by J. Anstey (T. A. Gathree), pub. Appletons, 1891. Other editions than first called "The Time Bargain." A queer mid-Victorian fantasy concerning a gentleman who keeps returning to a life in another time, by "cashing" some "time-cheques" behind any clock. Nothing faintly scientific in it but still quite an interesting little story.

THE PEOPLE OF THE CHASM, by Christopher Beck, pub. Pearson. Supposed to be a juvenile story but would compare favourably with much magazine stf. An expedition to the Antarctic discovers a steam-heated valley in the far south where life has evolved on its own, developing both some terrifying monsters and a strange civilisation.

ONE SAME MAN, by Francis Beeding, pub. Hodder and Staughton. Primarily a detective story, it develops an extremely interesting theme. Leading minds of the world are kidnapped and forced to develop a plan for world co-operation, which is to be forced on to the world by means of a weather-controlling machine, eternal snow for countries not submitting, etc. Unfortunately British Secret Service Man finds out everything, and "doing his duty" wrecks the whole scheme--and even he has doubts whether he should have kept silent!

DEATH ROCKS THE CRADLE, by Neil Bell, pub. Collins. Neil Bell is normally a gloomy writer and this is one of his gloomier works. His hero visits a world in another dimension and finds a horrible state of affairs, the inhabitants having developed their favorite vice of sodism to a fine art, keeping reserves of victims who undergo public mutilation etc. But the book leaves one wondering if this horrible condition is so different to ours? As usual the work is a tragedy, but is quite well written if it were not for the awful pessimism engendered by it.

DAWN OF ALL, by R. H. Benson, pub. Hutchinson. Quite the worst work that I have ever had the misfortune to read. In 1964 the whole world has become Roman Catholic (even the Chinese and Indians!) and is back to a "glorious" medieval times complete with heretic-burning and similar refinements, and the wicked socialists have been eliminated. Monarchy being the natural form of government every land is a kingdom, yet they still have armies and wars. Supposed to advocate this religion, it must repel all decent minded people for its insane philosophy, narrow intolerance, and a hideous lack of progress.

WORLD OF WOMEN, by J. D. Beresford, pub. Collins. Unmistakably Victorian in conception, the book deals with the almost total elimination of men by disease and the consequent disruption of civilisation (women couldn't do anything!) together with the enthronement of the handful remaining. And the poor hero alone in a town of women, doesn't know who to marry. Probably this author's worst book.

PLANET PLANE, by John Beynon (Harris), pub. Newnes. One of the better-known stf. works. Serialised in "Passing Show" as "Stowaway to Mars" and in "Modern Wonder" as "The Spaceship." First interplanetary flight takes British scientists to Mars, en route discovering girl stowaway who turns out to be scientist's daughter and know about Martians. On Mars they discover a dying civilisation which must not be contaminated by Terrestrials. Russian rocket appearing adds to the excitement and a love interest is also developed. A sequel dealing with the adventures of the Russians appeared in TALES OF WONDER no. 2. Reasonably written by a competent modern author.

June, 1939 [1, 6]

STARDUST
by
THE STAR-TREADER

In midyear, 1936, Julius Schwartz thought he might have some of H. P. Lovecraft's stories printed (and reprinted) in England. In order to exhaust all possibilities on this side of the terrestrial mudpuddle, HPL sent Editor Farnsworth Wright of WEIRD TALES his only two unsubmitted manuscripts, fully expecting to have them both rejected instantly--for at times Wright used to shoot HPL's stories back as fast as they were sent. Why he did so, I wouldn't claim to know or attempt to explain. However, he is now printing all those once-rejected (two or three times in some cases) mss. and is darned glad to get them. But I digress; to resume. To HPL's immense surprise, Wright took both of them! They were "The Haunter of the Dark" (WT for Dec., 1936) and "The Thing on the Doorstep" (WT for Jan., 1937). Each one was the most popular story in its respective issue.

Incidentally, tho I don't know if the same practice is now being followed, WEIRD used to pay their authors in installments...usually two for long, complete stories, and with separate payments for each installment of a serial. (They still do, at least for serials. HW) Short stories were paid off in a lump, I suppose. Although the magazine is supposed to (or was, at least) pay on publication, the second installment usually was forthcoming only several months after publication.

Looking over my files the other day, I read in an old FANTASY FAN a letter by Forrest J Ackerman. In it he said H. P. Lovecraft's "From Beyond" (first printed in FF for June, 1934, and second in WEIRD for Feb., 1938) was the first HPL story he ever liked. Just to be naughty, I'll have to tell what HPL said about this particular story. He thought it to be one of his very worst and, he said, "an unintentionally hack story." To sooth Acky's feelings, however, I'm on record as saying it still reads as if HPL were the author, hacky or not.

In the second issue of SCIENCE FICTION, that very, very bad "magazine," there appears a story called "Telepathy Is News." This story was rejected by every other magazine in the field, and SFN was the last possible market. The reason is rather apparent, I think. It's a rather outspoken story for a pulp magazine. The author is not "Paul Edmond" as the byline leads one to believe, I can't tell who it is, for my informant made me promise not to, but if you'll read carefully the April WT....

After ASTOUNDING printed HPL's "At the Mountains of Madness" in three issues beginning with Feb., 1936, HPL declared there was such an unbelievable number of mistakes that he considered the story unpublished!

A pertinent, bittersweet, memory-provoking item is this one. At last count the late HPL had been horribly killed in at least four stories. In case you don't know, WT writers take great pleasure in killing off their contemporaries....but only in stories, where they use thinly veiled disguises, etc. The stories in which HPL was killed by the authors are F. B. Long, Jr.'s "The Space-Eaters," Robert Bloch's "The Shambler from the Stars," Bloch's "The Dark Demon," and in an unpublished story entitled "The Necronomiconist," authored by J. Vernon Shea. The punch to this story is that in Henry Kuttner's "Hydra" in WT for April, HPL was again killed, in the original version. "Kenneth Scott" of Baltimore was originally Howard Phillips ("H. P." Lovecraft) of Providence, where HPL lived. Robert Ludwig is Robert Bloch (Bloch is the creator of "Ludwig Primm," sixteenth century delver into black magic), and the other of the three principal characters is Kuttner. As in the story, both Bloch and Kuttner corresponded with HPL. In fact, Kuttner sent him the story so that he could pass on it and correct any errors in the parts referring to his more of life. HPL made several corrections as to the kind of house he lived in, etc., and also gave Kuttner a new name for the pamphlet mentioned in the story. It originally began "How to...." On HPL's

advice this was changed to "On the Sending Out of the Soul," because the former beginning was too modern. Other interesting things about this story are the mention of "Russell J. Hodgkins, California's most noted bibliophile," the fact that the story was written on Hallowe'en, 1936, and that Farnsworth Wright held it till 1939 so that the resemblance to living persons would not be noticed ...he did so because of HPL's untimely death, of course. Lastly, it develops that Kuttner had to argue Wright into accepting the story in the first place.

June, 1939 [1, 6]

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SONNET OF A DREAM

by

PAUL FREEHAFKE

I slept, and dreamt of wondrous cities fair,
Of towers thrusting bravely toward the sun,
Of lacy bridges gleaming in the air
Like spider webs of steel and copper spun.
Ships rose and fell like birds of brilliant hue
Which spurn the ground and then again return;
About were things of beauty old and new,
The work of arts which man has yet to learn.
And yet I seemed to hear a cry of pain
And feel the bitter tide of human woe.
Beneath these towers, still, oppression's chain
Was forged by lust and hatred blow on blow.
What good the goals toward which our findings lead
If man still fetters man in bonds of greed?

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June, 1939 [1, 6]

DREAMER 5

by

C. S. YOUD

And I am haunted by the memory
Of those who went by other ways to find
The stricken loveliness we leave behind
Although we search for it eternally.
...This one was wise, and loved the paths of truth
And now he knows the glories men disdain ---
Here was a warrior who fought in vain
But found defeat was kind, and death was ruth.

And lo! they wait, the merry company,
Beyond the cloisters of the Pleiades
While from their minds fade swiftly now the scars.
O hear their whispers o'er galactic seas,
Weep not to leave this world of misery;
Here lies your wond'rous destiny - the stars.

August, 1939 [1, 7]

FROM THE CONTROL ROOM

Well, I might have known that something would have to happen. The era war has about died out; the controversy over "The Unholy Director" lost in oblivion. So, someone had to start the ball rolling once more. First, read the following epistle, please, from John W. Campbell, Jr.:

"I would dispute Ray Palmer's claim that Amazing's circulation exceeds Astounding's. I'd appreciate it if you would set forth these facts for your readers, as I feel it is only fair in view of the statement appearing in the June issue. "'Ray Palmer does not know what the circulation of Astounding is. He cannot. I do know what the circulation of Amazing is. The reason for this is as follows: "'Astounding's advertising is sold en bloc with space in a number of other Street & Smith magazines, and the company therefore informs prospective advertisers of the actual circulation of the bloc, as attested by the Audit Bureau of Circulation---the ABC figures. These figures are the only authentic figures available outside of the Street & Smith offices. "'Since Amazing is Ziff-Davis' only pulp of that size, advertising is sold for that magazine alone, and its actual circulation figures are reported to ABC as a unit. Astounding's figures, as I say, are reported only en bloc with some seven other books. "'The figures Palmer has on Astounding's circulation are obtained from road men of the Ziff-Davis distribution department, and apply only to those distribution agencies used in common with other publishing companies, such as American News, etc. Street & Smith, however, has in addition its own distribution agency, which handles a large number of Astoundings. Figures on this distribution outlet are wholly unavailable to Mr. Palmer. "'Thus, due to the peculiar circumstances of Amazing's solitary position in the Ziff-Davis house, the authentic ABC figures on its circulation are available, but the actual circulation of Astounding is known only to Street & Smith. It is established magazine practice, further, to keep those figures on individual magazines of a group secret, and I am therefore not at liberty to reveal them, any more than Mort Weisinger can reveal the figures on Thrilling Wonder. Sincerely, John W. Campbell, Jr."

Well, there you have it. I sent a copy of this letter to Palmer, via Hamling (it all started over a statement in W. Lawrence's column last issue, you recall) and the dope you find on page 25 came back. You can judge for yourself. Unfortunately, I had to cut the come-back unmercifully, since there was n't room for all. I'd not intended having anything on that last page at all, in fact.

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August, 1939 [1, 7]

NEWS FROM AMAZING

by

W. LAWRENCE HAMLING

It seems that I have unconsciously drawn up a hornet's nest from ASTOUNDING in the person of John W. Campbell, Jr., by the comments I made in the last issue of SPACEMATS concerning the circulation of AMAZING and ASTOUNDING.

First of all, let me present Ray's answer to Mr. Campbell. Quoting:

"Mr. Campbell and I seem to be involved in a circulation dispute. "ut really, we do not dispute about those things. However, reputedly, Mr. Campbell is said to have informed one of his writers that ASTOUNDING's circulation was three times that of any other science fiction magazine, including AMAZING! Therefore, if Mr. Campbell sees fit to dispute, so do I! ASTOUNDING just couldn't have three times the circulation of AMAZING. If this figure is based on the last ABC report of AMAZING's circulation, (and we must assume so) then ASTOUNDING has---well, more than ARGOSY, Daisy Bacon's LOVE STORY, and maybe Standard's G-MAN, and nobody denies all three of those books are possessors of really neat circulation figures.

"Mr. Campbell is in a position to refer to AMAZING's circulation every six months, and no sooner. If so, he has noticed a jump as of January, 1939. Since that date he has no report on our figures? He is absolutely correct, in saying that I have no access to his ABC rating, beyond that of a group, but giving each magazine in that group an even break by dividing the sum total to the ABC listing, still does not give ASTOUNDING a rating higher than AMAZING. And assuredly, ASTOUNDING does not lead the circulation list at Street & Smith, for this group includes such books as LOVE STORY and a few more pulps that any editor will admit he'd like to be editing!

"Yes, our circulation department has figures from road men. Naturally they are not entirely accurate. But those same men bring us AMAZING's monthly progress, using the same system, and it invariably has proven accurate to a degree allowing confidence in future moves!

"Mr. Campbell has a fine circulation,--so have I! I might admit, (from reports from road men) that UNKNOWN is showing heels to either of the two magazines, proving that Mr. Campbell is a good if not better editor. But FANTASTIC ADVENTURES is doing the same thing!" (This proves that you're not such a bad editor, either, Ray!)

"Really, though, I've never met Mr. Campbell personally, (though I've attempted to scalp Weisinger in poker, along with Julius Schwartz and Otto Binder) we have no dispute. Our rivalry is keen and friendly although it would seem from the fan magazines that we hate each other. So for the benefit of all, let me say that AMAZING has a very good circulation! (By the way, John, remember that gal who wrote to ASTOUNDING and requested the autobiog of Raymond A. Palmer, and enclosed a nice pressed pansy? Well, I've still got the pansy, and I sent the autobiog! Wonder which one of us got the subscription?)"

The foregoing comments are self explanatory. But we might go a little further. Either Ray is wrong or Ray is right. From the looks of things Ray must be right. Why? Because Mr. Campbell does not actually say that ASTOUNDING has a larger circulation than AMAZING. It is a fact that AMAZING's circulation jumped 19,000 on the June, 1938 issue, and that it has jumped 5,000 every issue since January, 1939. These are facts, and facts are what we want, not mere words!

Ray says that he admits that Campbell is a better writer, but who is the better editor has not been decided yet, but he says, "We both know!" Ray says that Charles D. Hornig is the best editor in stf today, and that Mort Weisinger is the most efficient, because he can take a vacation!

Well, I guess this about settles all for a while. I sincerely hope that John W. Campbell will not take offence by anything stated above. So I hope we are all still friends. So let me say that it's all been done in fun and we've all had a good time. So, until you hear the ringside bell, if there is to be another round, I will close this chronicle....

August, 1939 [1, 7]

YEARLING

by
W. LAWRENCE HAMLING

To Exist! Oh, would that I could be!
To cross the gulfs that hold me from the free!
Forever chained in nothingness to dwell!
To see forever all, I cannot tell --
But, yet, I hope to live - some future day,
Till then, I watch and wait - faint far away. . . .

August, 1939 [1, 7]

VANISHED PARADISE

by
LARRY B. FARSACI

I will try in this article to reveal the year 1934 in scientific fantasy in a hitherto unseen, I believe, and important light. How many fans realize that they experienced in this year something they will never see again? In these twelve months science fiction was at a balance that was too good to last, apparently.

There were just enough publications being published, both professional and amateur, for one to keep up with, sanely and contentedly, for in addition to having just enough of it, the stories as a whole were of suitable excellence to be really enjoyed. This is one reason why the year 1934 is unique in my mind. During this period there was seen a standard of s-f writing that surpassed all others before. True, there was no masterpiece that would stand head and shoulders above the greatest scientific fantasy of the past, nor a marvelously conceived symphony in prose as colorful as "The City of the Singing Flame." But what appeared---taken as a whole and compared to the average pulp standard---was of unsurpassed quality. Just think, issues with three and four uncommonly good stories were taken as a matter-of-course, just part of the usual! Is there any other year in which the publications of the entire period could match up to this quality? What I cherished so much, however, was the length of time between issues. There was just enough "in-between" to keep alive the pure flavor of newness. In those days a reader could be a fan and a collector and at the same time be a sane and normal individual. Science fiction was a dessert that was in complete harmony with one's daily meal. But what has happened since then? The stf. atmosphere which pervaded 1934, at the time too little appreciated and taken for granted, has become lost in the past, irrevocably. As a contrast, there came with 1935 the beginning of the chaos of fan-mags to be, and after a lapse of years, there has come now such a great number of s-f magazines being published that to keep up with them all is utterly ridiculous. It is as if one were to attempt reading all the magazines on the newsstands every month. The only sane way today to keep in touch with the professional s-f magazines is to go at reading them as one would adventure stories. Of course, one can still buy them all, and go through the departments in them. But does he read thoroughly everything published? That is no longer possible unless he is a hopeless recluse who is bound sooner or later to land in an asylum. The day when that was possible has gone into the past forever. For no longer, though the very number of magazines published, can a fan have the sense of completeness that was evident, and so little appreciated in 1934.

Let us take every issue of the professional s-f magazines which appeared in 1934, reviewing the highlights. An outstanding feature of each of these was the reader's department, which had just the right length and quality to keep harmony between magazine and readers. In addition to the three professional magazines there was of course the three semi-professional amateur magazines: Marvel Tales, Fantasy Magazine, and The Fantasy Fan. It is surprising the complete lack of any other fanmags in this year---a lacking which only emphasizes the purity of 1934 in this regard. The only possible exception is the booklet by Clark Ashton Smith, "The Double Shadow," which, if it was published in 1934, would certainly not detract, but rather, add, to the year's merits. The success of these three semi-professional mags can be seen from the fact that they are still considered the best amateur stf periodicals to ever appear. At the least they had the quality, if they did not have the hoped-for support, Marvel Tales in particular---the quality of the other two being surpassing when compared with the majority of fanmags since.

It is amazing how much with a bang 1934 really began. There was Astounding Stories which skidded sky-high with "Colossus," superbly illustrated on the cover by Brown, and Amazing, not a jump behind, with the first installment of E. E. Smith's "Triplanetary," and in the January Wonder Stories, which had on the cover a colorful lunar scene from Callun's "Moon Plague," the first and most classic chapter of Richard Vaughan's "Exile of the Skies." In the realm of fannags the newness was felt--the newness that characterized 1934. The S. F. Digest became Fantasy Magazine with the January issue, this number having the first installment of "The Vortex World," and the first real cover, illustrating the beginning of "Scientific Hoaxos." Lastly, we see its effect at the borderlands of science-fiction, Weird Tales. This issue, which had the much-clamored-for reprint of A. Merritt's "Woman of the Wood," had the first chapter of the three-part serial, "The Solitary Hunters," by David H. Keller, which was voted as the best story in every issue it appeared in!

But let us review each issue for memory's sake; and for the soothing influence that 1934 may impart to the years following.

Amazing Stories Quarterly: Fall, 1934, the last issue. All-reprint number. Barton's Island...A good yarn from Harl Vincent's early days. The Sunken World... Coblenz satire. A novel of Atlantis surpassing Doyle's "The Maracot Deep." The Malignant Entity...A story by Kline, from the May-June-July, 1924, issue of Weird Tales.

Amazing Stories: January. Triplanetary...The first chapter of an epic serial by E. E. Smith, Ph. D., with cover illustration by Morey. Master of Dreams... A good one by Harl Vincent. The Lost Language...The usual unfailing Keller merit. The Atom Smasher...An excellent short-short by Miller. Gold...A good theme, well written, by Nathanson. February. This issue I don't remember very well. But I do know it had a good backward time traveling yarn by Phil Nowlan called "Time Jumpers." (Remember his "Airlords of Han?" [and "Armageddon, 2419"])(Also featured were "The Regenerative Wonder" by W. W. Hawkins, and the beginning of "Terror Out of Space" by H. H. Hill. EW) March. Peril Among the Drivers...One of the best small-size adventure stories by Bob Olsen. Ms. Found in a Bottle...A reprint 'tis true, yet worthy of its many reprints. Read it over: One of Poe's very best in my opinion. April. The Mentanicals...Sequel to Flagg's "Machine Man of Ardathia," the written before it. Cat's Eye...A Harl Vincent inter-dimensional. The Gold Bug...Another Poe worthy of rereading. May. A really good issue is this one, showing "The Aristocrat" in one of his best moods. Cover, suitable for framing, depicts the stature of Jules Verne at Amiens, France, in pleasant blue tones by Morey. There is "The White Dwarf," a very thought-provoking story by J. Lewis Burt, one of the very, very few whose scientific fallacies I could overlook, and "The Ultra-Gamma Wave." June. Peace Weapons...By Gelula, imparts a lesson worth digesting. Hastings 1066...very good, I thought, when I first read it. Subjugating the Earth...A memory awakener. Remember that cold, cold atmosphere? Then the invaders! Cover yarn. July. Beam Transmission...To the other dimension where the universe is building up, instead of running down. (It's funny how memory works.) The Fourth-Dimensional Auto-Parker...One of Bob Olsen's laughs, humorous. Life Everlasting...It was hard to wait for the next issue, wasn't it? August. Life Everlasting...Has cover this issue, the first story by Keller which received cover painting. He Immortality did not work after all; the ways of the Madonna are the perfect when all is said and done. Photo Control...The second story by Bernard Brown. An adventure in future metropolis days. North God's Temple...In Kostkos style giving a reason for the magnetic poles. September. The Masterminds of Venus...A simply great story by a new author, W. K. Sennemann, which gave the reader the sense of well-spent money. The Moon Pirates...The first chapter of a 2-part serial by Neil R. Jones, linked closely[!] with Jameson's adventures. The Barrier...In keeping with the above-average standard of Harl Vincent. The Plutonian Drug...A story which made the reader wonder how it was that he was reading what amounted to literature in a pulp magazine. October.

The Pool of Life...A very good story, comparatively speaking. By P. S. Miller. 85 and 87...One of the Binder brothers' earliest efforts, written before they developed the genius of quantity hack-writing. November. The lowest ebb for 1934. Feature novelette was based entirely on scientific fallacies. There was however a good short by Bob Olsen, "Noekken of Norway," and chapter of "Through the Andes," by A. Hyatt Verrill. December. Rape of the Solar System...A good interplanetary yarn of the far future taking in the aeons-distant past as well, by Leslie F. Stone. The Sunless World...One of the more interesting Jameson adventures, ranking with "The Hydrosphere World." Men Created for Death...Synthetic gun-fodder. Beyond the Universe...Poem and prose by thinker-satirist, Stanton A. Coblentz. The Million Dollar Gland...Without question a left-over from early days, when A mazing printed such yarns of his (W. Alexander) as "New Stomachs for Old," etc.

Wonder Stories: January. Conclusion to "Evolution Satellite" by J. Harvey Haggard and the beginning of "The Exile of the Skies," the really classic interplanetary story, by Richard Vaughan. Cover, by Paul, is a scene from Gallun's "Moon Plague." In addition to fairly good translations from Germany there are two short stories of suitable vintage: When Reptiles Ruled and The Man from Ariel. February. Again there is a colorful Paul cover, this time illustrating The Spoor Doom by Eando Binder, a novelette of the future when an oxygen-devouring fungi has overrun the earth and man is forced to live in the bowels of the earth, with tripod-cars for surface travelling, which however ends happily, man claiming back his rightful heritage. The Sublime Vigil...Literature sfn., again bringing a Canadian author to the fore; Chester D. Cuthbert, the other Canadian being Richard Vaughan. Vengeance of a Scientist...A story of invisibility, by Gelula, originally accepted by Amazing Stories. March. Another wonderful cover tops this issue, illustrating the, of course, not only improbable but impossible, red-spot story by Haggard, "Children of the Ray." I can still see that crystal sphere falling at breakneck speed under Jove's monstrous attraction, into the fantasies yet to come! Xandulu...First chapter of a fantasy-science fiction story by Jack Williamson, fit to rank with Merritt's very best. Caverns of Horror...A "Stranger Club" story. Brain-Eaters of Pluto...Fannag fiction in a prof. Literary Gork-screw...Same, but the Marvel Tales type of fannag. Would know it to be Keller if he hid himself under E. E. Snook's first name! Martian Madness...A passable story by an authority on rocket-travel, P. E. Cleator. April. A collection of fair and above-average stories, some of which have been reprinted in England. What appealed to me, somehow, was the 2-page short-short by Milton Kaletsky, "The End of the Universe," because of the many thoughts it provoked in me. May. Earthspot...Morrison Colladay's theory of earth's "Sun-spots" causes N. Y. to topple again. (It should have learned lessons by now!) The Green Cloud of Space...The Binder brothers' peak. (It's amazing how many authors begin with really good stories, hinting of godlike things to be, and then how they slowly--sometimes quickly--go downhill...For example: Ray Cummings. Compare his work in the "Golden Atom" days with the trash he now consistently turns out for Terror Tales and the like. A Merritt. From classics like "The Moon Fool," "People of the Pit," to "Creep, Shadow, Creep." Not such an awful deterioration of work, but it's down. Ralph Milne Farley. It's a far cry from "The Radio Man," first of the much-famed series of stories, to the brainstorm in TWS called "A Year in a Minute." Victor Rousseau. From classic stories like "The Messiah of the Cylinder," "The Eye of Balamok," to pointless and fallacious yarns in the Clayton Astoundings. But why go on? Suffice it to say that many of today's trash-writers were once worthy of comparison to Poe--whom at times they were said to surpass--and other masters of literature. This is already rocketing far away from the brief review of the May WS I started out with.) June. Into the Infinitesimal...Impossible science-fiction, of course, but good fantasy. Adrift in the Void...The familiar friendly (?) void again.

July. Voice of Atlantis...A Stranger Club story, utilizing what seems to be the most plausible method of visiting the past. The Last Shrine...The author of "The Sublime Vigil" back again with as meritorious a story. A Martian Odyssey...No comment needed on this. Who has yet forgotten Tweel, that most interesting—likable Martian? Druso...Concluding chapter of a serious sf. novel from Germany. Too bad Wollheim didn't read it. August. A Visit to Venus...Story by Britisher Pragnell, reminiscent of the old Amazing Stories tale of the feline-people on Venus. Good reading. The Return of Tyme...the fanmag humor again. Very enjoyable and better even than the first. September. This issue has two very outstanding stories, "the Man from Beyond," by John Beynon Harris, and "The Living Galaxy," by Lawrence Manning. The first has one of the best cover illustrations ever painted by Paul. It is the kind of art which one would like to get more often with scientific fantasy. October. This issue marks the low-ebb for Wonder Stories this year. But "The Thieves from Isot," by Eando Binder, is not too bad. I enjoyed it immensely when I read it. November. Twenty Five Centuries Late...The first of a series of unique stories of the future by Philip Bartel. Funny people we're going to be, according to this! Valley of Dreams...An undisappointing sequel to "A Martian Odyssey." One Prehistoric Night...Cover story. Telling of a Martian expedition visiting the steam-laden earth of the Juassic period, and finding it a suitable world for their race, but overcome during its short stay by the gigantic monsters and reptiles of the period who, attracted by the spaceships, crush the Martians attempting to erect an impenetrable electrical barrier, thus saving earth for man to come ages later. December. The remnant stories that marked 1934: The Alien Room...Cover tale, whose plot is obvious from the illustration. Interesting nevertheless. The Time Tragedy...By Raymond A. Palmer. "Why did he not realize that the (time) machine would no more travel with him than a cannon travels with its projectile?" The Moth Message...The best of the Stranger Club stories in Yours truly's opinion. Sleep Scrouge...A different theme, well handled. Adventure in the harnessing of the cosmic ray. Kostkos. The Waterspout...A new author; a new idea. We leave Wonder Stories on the brink of 1935, in which year, if you recall, it became a pale shadow of itself, and turn to the last of the trio:

astounding Stories: January. Colossus...his different, and better "Man from the Atom" story heralded the newness of 1934 very well, I think. On to Valadon, Wandrei! Redmask of the Outlands...One of Nat Schachner's better stories. Flame from Mars...Williamson's colorful style puts romance into the Arizona meteor crater. February. Lost City of Mars...the last of the trilogy of the Drylands, by Harl Vincent, begun in Amazing Stories. The Living Flame...A good subterranean adventure by Arthur Lee Zagat. Rebirth...The first chapter of an excellent story. Short Wave Castle...the strange little creatures bred by Dr. Conklin through actinic rays have powers and qualities he does not suspect! A story of two worlds of different time-speeds. March. The Man Who Stopped the Dust...The ultimate in cleanliness means death, is the lesson taught by this scientific escapade, from John Russel Fearn's better days. Manna from Mars...A brief satire by Coblentz, poking fun at greed-filled men. Born of the Sun...Weird fantasy. Wings against the Cosmos. Retreat from Utopia...The same kind of lesson as brought out in The Man Who Stopped the Dust. Utopia is nought but dreariness: Wallace West's utopia. April. The Legion of Space...Jack Williamson combines into one story his two favorite types of s-f, represented by "The Skylark of Space" and "The Moon Pool!" He from Precyon...A Nat Schachner story of a super-nal being effecting earth-affairs. A Matter of Size...A story, by the former editor, in which a Doctor Allison is split up into 1728 little ones, "each identical with the original except in the matter of size," by the science of an outworlder. "Do you not know that theoretically it is possible to divide in half the various molecules which make up an object and reassemble them to make two of that object, exactly like it, only smaller?"...A great light burst over Allison's mind. He saw again that fearful recurring image of the doll faces, Interminable of them. Each face his face, and every one somehow himself." May. The Brain of

Light...Thought-variant hokey. The Blinding Shadows...Better, seriously. The 100th Generation...Matches up to "Short Wave Castle." June. Sidewise in Time... Fairly good fantasy. But sfn??? Crater 17, Near Tycho...It take a hero to sacrifice himself, so that others may live...The World Wrecker...Lighted candle transmitted to alien world causes a new star to flame. A story of "beam transmission." He Never Slept...Sweet dreams and thought-variant nightmares! July. The very best all-round issue. Model s-f mag of 1934. Before Earth Came... A thought-variant. One of the very few stories deserving of its labeling. Cover illustration and interior drawings by Howard V. Brown. Spear of the Bat...An excellent interplanetary novelette involving three worlds, by Arthur Leo Zagat, with an outstanding full-page illustration by Elliott Bold. Dr. Lu-Mie...By Clifton B. Kruse. "A story of the termites with a philosophy new to science." Not over-rated by the blurb. The Legion of Space...A most enjoyable chapter of the story of Medusae-Yarkand. Illustration by Marchion captures suitably the atmosphere of the story. Poor Giles Habitula! Guns of Eternal Day... Howard W. Graham, Ph. D. (Pseud. for Howard Wandrei). August. The Skylark of Valeron...The first chapter of E. E. Smith's most ambitious effort. The sequel to "The Skylark of Space" and "Skylark Three." Dr. Conklin, Pacifist...The humorous doctor back again with some new ideas. Stratosphere Towers...A fairly good Schachner story. Warriors of Eternity. The projected essence of J. U. Giesy's "Palooza of the Dog-Star Pack." September. The low-ebb of Astounding Stories for this year. Tims Haven...A very good short story, utilizing perhaps the only method of "time travel" which could be possible. The Skylark of Valeron...The second chapter, where the story begins to gain headway, and where DuQuesne is given everything he wants, "right on a silver platter," by the Norlaminians a duplicate of the Skylark Three built for Seaton! October. The Bright Illusion... A masterpiece in more ways than one. "The science of a strange godlike being could not tear down the impregnable morale of a man!" Inflexuro...A calamity resulting from the intrusion of a 4th-dimensional star upon the solar system which leaves its attributes to the planet earth: the fourth-dimension of space and "Sidewise in Time" happenings. Man of Ages...Feels the curse of immortality. Cosmic Rhythm...Cures the planet Dovar, a "sick cell in the vast organism we call the universe," making it a pleasant, habitable planet once more. November. The Mole Pirate...Who says there are no new ideas? Twilight...A symphony in prose which brings the reader to the far-distant futuro, where time and space seem to blend together and the cold of oblivion caresses the last of men. John W. Campbell, Jr. as Don A. Stuart. The Lost Planet...Frank Bellnap Long, Jr., shows himself as a good writer of sfn as well as the purely weird. The Hormone...He thought he had discovered the elixer of youth, until, too late, he found it was an accelerator of life. Milton Kaletsky as Dane Milton. December. Beginning the "Lightiest Machine," borderline story between 1934 and 1935, which hints of the coming pale. The Irrelevant...A fit subject for scientific debate. Old Faithful...A successful attempt at showing an alien entity in a human light. Atomic Power...The uncommon atom which refuses to break up into energy...Is this atom an inhabited world of a super-race which has found a means to prevent its death? Colossus Eternal...The end and closing key to 1934, marking finis to the "Vanished Paradise."

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August 1939 [1, 7]

A LITTLE LESSON IN TUCKEROLOGY

by
BOB the T.

The gentleman who once said: "O, but to see ourselves as others see us!" obviously wasn't a science fiction fan. If he had of been, he would have put it this way: "O, but that others could see us as we see ourselves!"; or perhaps this way: "O, but that others could see us as we wish them to see us."

For ever and anon we - us fans - are being constantly taken in the wrong light from which we intended to be taken...for one reason or another. One reason is that some fans have not the all-embracing intelligence necessary to grasp the unwritten lines between each printed line of the authors. These unwritten lines are the thoughts of the author as he wrote the piece in question. Another reason is that the reader may be so dimwitted as to utterly fail to grasp the meaning of anything, and twists the written lines to conform to his own understanding of things. (Much as when Campbell describes horror - he actually doesn't describe it, he merely eracts it and each individual reader does the real describing as far as his (the reader's) intelligence and scope permits.) A third reason, and a minor one, thanks to something or other, is that a reader may distort lines for his own personal satisfaction, greed, envy, maliciousness, or what have you.

MOSKOWITZ is a fitting subject to be gin on; I do not know how Sam wishes the fan to look upon him because no one can get into Sam's mind and read his thoughts. But it is easy to see how he is taken. There are some who are his enemies and pass no opportunity to discredit his written and spoken word at every opportunity. There are others who merely read his articles and take what is very easily apparent on the surface: that Sam has a very bloated ego. Others, his closest friends, who are in contact with him daily, and almost know his personality, can probably read the true meaning from his words. But this group is small. Too small to counteract that large group that does not know him and pick up the surface impressions. Ask anyone living west of the Hudson what they think of Sam. The answer is: "a big-headed little punk trying to act as if he knows what it is all about."

Now in all probability, this is not Moskowitz as he sees himself at all. It is merely the impression he gives off in his writings, his actions, and his dowings; by those who can't, won't, or are unable to see himself as he desires those to see him, or as he sees himself.

WOLLHEIM is another grade A subject. You have heard more cussing and dis-cussing of Wollheim than any other fan. For almost the same general reasons as surround Moskowitz and all the others named herein. It is just that the reader of his written word, the reader who reads of his doings in other publications (twisted and otherwise) simply cannot get a straight picture of him, most of all, cannot get a picture of him as he thinks himself to look, or as he wishes to look.

ACKERMAN is another. In FJA's ten or fifteen years of fan activity, he has probably been accused of every fan crime under the sun. (By the newcomers, please note, who were in diapers when FJA first started reading AMAZING.) It is very very doubtful if Ackerman is, if he even pictures himself as others see him.

TUCKER is the next and last subject. And now we are getting to the point of this matter. I know only too well that hardly anyone else sees me as I wish to be seen, or even as I see myself!

It is astonishing how few people realize that I am trying to be funny. Yes, that's it. I know that I am not a Joe Miller, or any other famous wit, but I am trying to be. Articles and stories by me, appearing under the name of Pong far outnumber any non-humorous or "straight" articles and stories I have written. Simply because I recognize the scope of my writing ability. I do not need to be told that there are literally dozens of fans who can write better non-humorous stuff than I do. I try to write vey little of it.

Instead I concentrate on humor (or what I am please to term humor) because time and again it has been brought home to me that my humorous material is quite passable, that fans like it (the majority, that is) and that therefore, that is the field to stay in! I decided upon that some time ago.

Now, this particular brand of humor of mine is injected into almost everything I write. D'JOURNAL, naturally, drips with it. I put it into LE ZOMBIE, with the usual mistakes on the parts of some fans that I was indulging in personalities, tossing barbs, etc., under the guise of 'humor.' Such is not the case. Moskowitz and his NEW FANDOM has been ribbed over and over in LE ZOMBIE and dozens of other articles. Moskowitz should please understand that this is ribbing only. It never was, never will be anything else. If it hurts, or causes bad feeling, I will be only too glad to stop it, for it is the farthest from my wishes to stir up any mere bad feelings in fandom. I do rib Moskowitz, NEW FANDOM, Wellheim, and everything else in the fan eye, however, for the laughter it will afford those who read it. I mean ill of no one or no institution I speak of.

Moskowitz is extremely easy to rib because of the existing picture of him in fandom. He is giving away gratis, reprints of some of his old hectographed works. Therefore, what is simpler than to have him the Captain of the first space ship, carrying along a bound volume of his works to give to the natives of the first planet he lands on? You will admit it makes for keen fun, whatever your views on Moskowitz the fan. That Moskowitz would actually do such a thing in real life is absurd, and no one knows it better than I.

He is also easy to rib because of his numerous articles on "old-timing" (yes, that horrible subject is up again!) Nothing will provoke more smiles from readers than to hook the name Moskowitz up with the term "old-timer." As he practically states himself, all his knowledge of old times comes from fan magazines of those periods and the letter columns of professional magazines. Yet, because he writes of old time as if he were part of them, he is accused of adopting "artificial age." And because I rib him of this aura of "age," I am accused of being peeved, and what-have-you.

So here is the picture of myself as I see myself, and I wish to hell you fellows would look at me that same way and stop this short-sightedness of my ways and doings! I am trying to develop into another Shaw, I am trying to out-Miller Miller, I am doing my damndest to provide fandom with a big bucket full of that humor it so sorely needs, and above all, I am not trying to bait, tease, ridicule or besmirch anybody! It just so happens that some few cannot understand the humor that I am trying to put across, cannot read my thoughts between each line of printed type, cannot see the lighter point I am aiming at, and ~~take~~ take me all wrong.

Believe it or not I laughed all hollow over the Loki article in NEW FANDOM that Moskowitz mentions... simply because I thought it uproariously funny. I believe that Loki is a better humorist than I, when he is trying to be serious. I never bothered to answer that poke at me because I don't expect Moskowitz to get mad and answer all the pokes I have taken at his expense in my stories. I understand a few friends of mine, who did not see the Loki article in the same light I did, have done all the answering necessary. Well and good.

There will even be some few who will distort this article in the manners mentioned in paragraph two.

the end

Thanks.

B. T.

A LEGEND OF LANTHE

by
ROBERT W. LOWNDES

THUS IS IT TOLD: In the golden city of Tharla, which lies far to the east of Castle Seritanis, above the underground river of Gurene, whose waters furnish provender for the walls thereof, there dwelt a certain merchant, by name Nyar-Eleon. In his heart was but one desire, now that all his ventures had prospered exceedingly, making him prince among the merchants of the city whose wealth and mildness of government was a proverb throughout the land -- to consummate a happy and fortunate marriage for his only daughter, Mirianne. And to this end he vowed to spare neither expense nor time, seeking throughout all Lanth for one who would be entirely suitable for the protection and satisfaction of his beloved child. This he did, forgetful of the fact that Mirianne and the son of an old friend had long had their desires centered on each other, having played, sung, laughed, and sorrowed together from earliest childhood.

Of a truth, much of their companionship had been kept secret from Nyar-Eleon, in these later years, for they feared his displeasure of their intimacy. Of a certainty, he would not have proceeded with his plans so diligently had he known of the tender glances and whispered psalms passing from Khalidus and Mirianne, one to the other, whenever they met during the day, or of their frequent nocturnal meetings in the forest, without the walls of Tharla, where Mirianne gave herself freely and without compunction to the man she loved.

But of these things, Nyar-Eleon knew nothing, so completely was his entire household pledged to Mirianne's slightest wish, so that the days came near when Mirianne would be wedded with the son of an equally prosperous and cultured merchant of Kakharronne, some hundred leagues from Tharla.

Great was the consternation of Mirianne when she learned of her father's determination to give her in marriage to another than Khalidus, and it is to be presumed that many were the wild plans that entered her mind, but at length she reconciled herself to reality, and seemed willing to please her father in his plans. Therefore, on the night before the festal day, Khalidus quietly made preparations to depart from Tharla, Mirianne having told him with equal tenderness and quiet determination of her decision. To no one did Khalidus speak of his intended flight, thus great was his surprise, as he rode by that place where in days ago Mirianne had awaited his coming, when a slim figure emerged from the shadows and made herself known as his beloved.

Explanations she made none, nor did he ask her then or later why she had suddenly changed her mind. Out of the city they rode together, into the distant lands without, and many moons were born and died again as they wandered on, visiting strange and unguessable lands, knowing only that each today was sweet.

So passed seven years, and at long last Mirianne expressed a desire to see her father again, for throughout all this time they had heard nothing of Nyar-Eleon. And, though he liked it little, Khalidus consented to return to Tharla, where he would await her until she sent word to him that it was well for him to come.

Three days went by, as Khalidus awaited word from Mirianne, but none came, so that at last, fearing tragedy had occurred he went alone to the house of his father-in-law asking to see Nyar-Eleon. How vast was his amazement, then, when that person ran out to embrace him, and welcome his return as a long-lost son, ordering that a festival be arranged in his honor at once.

Sea-ree could Khalidus believe this good fortune, but he assumed that Mirianne had, indeed, succeeded in her mission of reconciliation, and he awaited eagerly her appearance. But the hours went by, and she came not, nor did Nyar-bleon make any mention of his daughter, so that at length Khalidus inquired of her.

At this Nyar-bleon grew grave and fell silent, sighing profoundly, but at length he spoke sadly, with much circumlocution, saying how well he knew of Mirianne's affection for Khalidus. At length, when Khalidus felt almost he could not bear it, Nyar-bleon told of how they had found Mirianne the morning of her bridal day, fallen into a strange and inexplicable coma, from which neither leech nor sorcerer could arouse her. From the farther corners of Lanth, and Sarucene, and Altashe had Nyar-bleon summoned sages and doctors renowned for their restorative marvels, but all in vain. Mirianne slept undisturbed, so that at last though all agreed that she yet lived, she was placed in the vaults of the house of Nyar, her chamber guarded by night and day, so that succor would be present were she to awake.

Then truly did Khalidus marvel, for all his grief, and he told Nyar-bleon of all that had transpired since the night he had departed from Tharia.

And the two descended unto the vaults of the house of Nyar, to behold Mirianne, robed in her bridal garments, seemingly as one who sleepeth, nor was there any visible manifestation that death had caressed her with his icy hands. Next upon here were any tokens of time such as Khalidus had known, seeing her grow more mature and desirable in the years of their exile.

And Khalidus bethought him that he had been mad these seven years, and had been the victim of a strange and marvelous delusion; yet, never could he truly believe that such was fact, so that again Nyar-bleon sent out to the distant reaches of Sarucene and Altashe, seeking some sage who could resolve the enigma.

Many came and heard and pronounced their opinions, and among them was one sage who declared that such a marvel had been known to occur before in the distant past, whereof it was told that the shadow may follow the lover while she lies in explicable slumber.

So the days of Nyar-bleon and Khalidus passed their appointed course, and they in their turn were placed in the vaults of Nyar to rest with those of that house who had lain there from time immemorial. And the tomb of Mirianne became a place of pilgrimage for lovers throughout the land, so that many centuries after Nyar-bleon was forgotten, the lady Mirianne was beholden even as she was the day of her intended betrothal. And the tale of Khalidus and Mirianne became a legend, passing from time to time, as a never-to-be-forgotten marvel.

Thus it is told.

August 1939 [1, 7]

* * * * *

JET AND RUBY

By

KENNETH ANDERSON

Etched in occult crimson shadows,
Black rocks rise against the glow.
Scarlet mists of death are swirling
To conceal what none can know.

Swirling, silent as the darkness,
Servile tongues of crimson fire
Dance their endless, slow, caressing,
Weaving rhythms of desire.

October 1939 [1, 8]

WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT
or extracts from a Bibliophile's files, by
J. MICHAEL ROSENBLUM

MENACE FROM THE MOON, by Bohum Lynch (Jarrolds). A really glorious work, and one of the best written action stf. stories I have come across. Mysterious and menacing messages are received on the earth, discovered to come from the moon where descendants (degenerate) of medaeval "magicians" who constructed a rocket are living. Earth is threatened unless they are rescued, by means of machine constructed from hidden plans. And the plans are lost. Denouement is a complete surprise to everyone I know who has read the book.

UNTHINKABLE, by Francis H. Sibson (Methuen). An elaborate story of south polar exploration introduces us to a world of a few years hence. The hardy explorers finding themselves not relieved after two years fit out their little boats with the remnant of their stores and make for civilization. Providentially after many adventures they reach South Africa only to discover that the world has been practically drained of human life by some sort of scourge let loose by mankind at war. The few survivors lack all initiative and are mere creatures of habit who will rapidly die out. The curtain sets on the realisation of the survivors of the exploring party of their immense responsibility in a world without leadership or common sense. Very gloomy and hardly cheering but well written and made quite plausible.

WILD HARBOUR, by Jan Macpherson (Methuen). —the next war in 1944 and a young married couple retire to an isolated cave in Scotland with hastily gathered equipment. Here they live on the country whilst "civilisation" falls to pieces, only to become more and more despondent. In desperation, seeking food they come across a wild gang of men, and first the girl, then the man is shot. Thoroughly dismal ending, as the theme demands, but vivid description throughout redeems the book.

August 1939 [1, 7]

FROM THE READERS

From LARRY B. FARSACI: I would like the readers to know that when I wrote and in the same enthusiasm sent the article, "Vanished Paradise", I had little thought for technical details. For that reason, a couple of slight errors crept into the original draft; so I have found after looking through my annotated indexes. Other than TFF, FM and MP, there were two other fanmags which saw issues in 1934: a little hekted leaflet known as "The Bulletin of the TFG," and the early numbers of the I. O., at this time purely a "science" club organ, which it is just as well I overlooked. The other error appeared in one of my comments, in revised form to have read as follows: Amazing Stories; April, 1934. Cat's Eye...A Harl Vincent inter-dimensional in which we are brought to the "Blind Spot" world of Idilna—our own planet millions of years hence. The Menticalist...An excellent story by Francis Flagg, written as a direct contrast to his first, "The Machine Man of Ardathia." They were unavoidable, however, unless I had let the article "age" a bit, in which case you would not have read it when you did; and the changes would hardly have made any difference at all. Before closing I would like the readers to know also, that "Vanished Paradise" is but one phase of my standing opinion...I too look forward to the future of science-fiction! But a future which will someday also be the past, with its own mountains and valleys, failures and triumphs, in one respect or another, on a higher plane let us hope. And from all appearances, s-f is experiencing a grand rebirth—but more of this later, perhaps in a sequel. Incidentally, my comment on the July chapter of "Legion of Space" for V. P. was: "A most enjoyable Chapter. The illustration by Marchioni captures suitably the atmosphere of the story of the three Musketeers of the Void on the horror-planet of the Medusae—Yarkand."

October 1939 [1, 8]

FROM THE READERS

From ROBERT W. LOWNDES: "'Best in this issue is doubtlessly Legions of Legions which is a lovely burlesque on Williamson's epics. If you were to read one of them, almost any one, the impression would probably be that it was nifty, as they are well-written and such, but for the fan who has been following Williamson since the days of "The Metal Man" they (these latest) are just slightly stinko. Still, they all have their moments..."' "Frisco Fog was quite obvious from the start, but well done so that the expected ending did not ruin it as might have happened ordinarily..."' "As usual, the Star-Treader manages to get across some nice-sounding mistatements and general misimpressions. I refer to his dig at Michel and Michelism. If just a few of our opponents would take the trouble to be accurate! But none of them do. To correct for the Nth time, Michel is NOT the leader, either nominally nor actually of the Michelist faction in stf. either of the New York Michelists, or of the larger, generally unassociated section....

From AUGUST DERLETH and DONALD WANDREI: After two years of careful editing, the works of H. P. Lovecraft are beginning to take shape in readiness for the eyes of a printer. At this writing: June 1939; the first volume, "The Outsider and Others" is ready to go to press, providing that enough subscriptions to it are forthcoming to justify our personally guaranteeing the cost of printing. Because "The Outsider and Others" is an omnibus volume containing, with a few minor exceptions, all the stories of Lovecraft, together with his complete, and recently revised "Supernatural Horror in Literature," and an introductory biographical sketch of Lovecraft, printing costs make it necessary for us to ask \$3.50 per copy for "The Outsider and Others," if ordered before publication, \$5.00 if ordered after. "'We plan to publish so that the book will be ready for distribution in December of this year. But, frankly, we must have subscriptions first; if we have a sufficient quantity of books on order by September or October first, we will instruct the printer to go forward. And when we write subscriptions we mean cash in hand; in other words, we are asking those who want copies of this book to send their checks to August Derleth, Sauk City, Wisconsin, as soon as possible. These checks will be deposited against the expense of publication; and net profit, of course, will go to Mrs. Gamwell---but there is little chance of net profit.'"' "....If, after two or three months, insufficient funds have been pledged or sent, and we find it impossible to go on with plans at this time, all money will be refunded. But such a situation will certainly not arise if we have the co-operation we have every reason to expect. Let us hear from you just as soon as possible. We are planning an edition of only 1000 copies, but in case of orders in advance of this number, our print order will be raised.

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August 1939 [1, 7]

FROM THE CONTROL ROOM

Circulation, circulation, who's got-the-circulation dept., with J. W. Campbell, Jr., speaking: "Hm-m-m--so that's what got Palmer started on that circulation figure revelation? Somebody told him I claimed Astounding had three times the circulation of Amazing? I didn't, don't, and never did say that; I did say to some of the fellows back before Amazing went monthly that Astounding "printed three times as much as Amazing". That was true at that time, if you remember. We came out twice to Amazing's once, with 160 pages and a very compact type-face. "'That statement---quite easily checkable by anyone who took the trouble to count a bit in both books---was not at all the same thing as saying we had three times the circulation of Palmer's Amazing. I don't blame Palmer for feeling slightly warm around the collar if that distortion were reported to him.'"' "So far as actual figures on Astounding goes---I still am not allowed to give 'em." Your turn, Mr. Palmer, And why don't you enter into this, Mr. Weisinger? Let's have some real fun...Wonder if Charlie Hornig is jealous?

October 1939 [1, 8]

PERK, MELPOMENE!

by
FREDERIK POHL

Every science fiction fan has very definite ideas on how science fiction should be written. Most science fiction fans, at one time or another, actually sit themselves down and write a bit of it. Many science fiction fans sooner or later win an editor over to publishing one of their brainchildren -- then sit back content, because very few science fiction fans graduate into the ranks of the really professional writers.

Why? Well, because they don't put into practice the theories they have developed, for one thing. They realize the mistakes and shortcomings of the authors that do appear, but, when they come to write a story of their own, it's a rare bird indeed that doesn't make those very same mistakes in an intensified form.

Examine your own science fiction stories, Fan,--if you've been a fan for any period of time you're bound to have one or two of them around. Read them over once or twice, and see what makes them inferior to the stories that do appear. Have you written them the best way you know how? Have you made your characters into human beings? Do you pay realistic attention to detail? Or, at the other extreme, have you wandered into boring and plot-obstructing soliloquies which slow down the pace necessary to the story?

These are common faults. You'll find them in many of the stories that go into the newsstand mags, in most of the fan-published fiction, and in 99 44/100% of the yarns that are too definitely inferior to see print anywhere. If you've tried to sell and failed, they're probably in yours too.

From an analysis of the work of some twenty authors and would-be authors who've made me their agent, I draw the following conclusions, which ought to be of value to anyone who wants to try to use his typewriter as a source of revenue. So:

Tricky writing in the manner of James Joyce, Saroyan, or Feodor Dostoevsky is out of place in a science fiction magazine. It makes good literature, but stf readers won't read it and stf editors won't buy it. A straight, fast-moving, simply written yarn sells ten times as fast as a psychopathic study of three lesbians and an introverted schizoid discussing the probable effects of life on an asteroid, however well written the latter be.

Stories in the first person singular, stories in the form of letters or diaries, and stories which are poorly presented mechanically (i.e., badly typed or handwritten stories), immediately stamp the author as an amateur. A good story of any of these types will sell, but they make editors to squint at the eyes and think twice before buying.

Stories which commence with three paragraphs of verbosity designed to get the reader into the proper mood for further perusal are likewise amateurish. Begin your story where the story begins: don't waste time with description before getting down to the thread of narrative: you're likely to never get to it.

Slant your story for a particular magazine. If you can't imagine it in one of those being published, it's probable that the editor won't be able to either. If you can, select the magazine it fits best and make it fit that one magazine as well as you can. Generally speaking, you should try to picture it either in ASTOUNDING or in any other of the mags. Campbell eschews the heavy action type; the others eat it up. There are other differences, too; but usually a story meant for AMAZING or THRILLING WONDER can find a home in almost any of them, whereas a story meant for ASTOUNDING, if it come anywhere near the pretty strict editorial requirements, is nearly always unsuited for anyone else.

Success in writing, for any person literate enough to write a letter, is principally a matter of hard work and willingness to learn. If you would be a writer, you need only two things: enough free time so that you can do writing, and a supply of valid criticism, which is of no value unless you apply it. There are a few good authors who will take time to help a beginner -- the late Lovecraft was one such -- most of the editors will supply it occasionally, though they're pretty busy men, or -- the suggestion is good though far from impartial -- you might take an agent.

Authors and editors have other work to do, but an agent's business is to criticize and suggest. There are three agents who specialize in fantasy. First and biggest is O. A. Kline, who gives valuable service but like any good business-man charges accordingly. If your story is saleable he'll sell it for you -- but requires a reading fee whether the story sells or not. Then there's Julius Schwartz, who may or may not charge a reading fee (I don't happen to know), but who does tend to concentrate on established authors. And finally there is myself, who charges no fees of any kind until and unless your story is accepted and who welcomes the work of beginners.

As I said earlier, many fans have sold one or more stories professionally (Ackerman, Wollheim, Rothman, Weisinger, Glasser, Asimov, Michel, Hahn, Lowndes, etc., etc.) and there's no reason why you can't do the same. Why not try it?

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October 1939 [1, 8]

STARDUST
by
THE STAR-TREADER

In a short article in the first issue of AD ASTRA, E. B. Smith mentioned he was working on a comparatively short story about termites. "So what?" you murmur. Precisely. It's like this. News has just come to my attention that makes the item one of the funniest of the year. It seems that over a year ago Smith was horror-stricken to discover that his house was being devoured by termites. It cost him \$300.00 to have it repaired, and left his finances in the long, or red (if you follow me), end of the spectrum. Smith happened to mention the matter to John W. Campbell. Campbell facetiously suggested that Smith write a story about termites and make 'em pay themselves for the damage they'd done--and apparently that's just what Smith is doing!

From Fomalhaut to Antares,
From Mercury to Mars,
An S. O. S. is vinging,
To beyond the farthest stars.

Are you coming, Richard Seaton,
Can you hear me, Kinnison?
Better hurry fight the termites,
Or the battle they'll have won!

Far be it from me to attempt to explain Editor Palmer's idiosyncrasies, but I think it is worth noting that though the Oct. AMAZING ostensibly features five different artists, Julian Krupa is obviously the creator of all the artwork. What Palmer expects to gain by having Krupa sign five names to his drawings is a bit obscure, but it does serve to show once more that Palmer is the most blatantly commercial, not to mention contemptible, editor in contemporary fantasy fiction.

This column now goes very literary and presents what is supposed to be the shortest ghost story ever written....

While sitting alone in his club one day, a man was spoken to by a stranger. The stranger asked if he might sit down. "Not at all," replied our hero. The stranger seated himself and for several minutes there was silence. Finally the stranger asked, "Do you believe in ghosts?" Our hero was a bit startled by the incongruous question, but was nevertheless civil. "No," he answered, and then inquired, "Do you?" "Yes," the stranger said--and vanished.

H. P. Lovecraft's "The Statement of Randolph Carter" is a virtual trans-
cription of a nightmare he experienced in December, 1919. Another of HPL's
dreams was used by Frank Belknap Long, Jr., in his two part story, "Horror from the
Hills." Others of HPL's stories were inspired by dreams, too. "Celephais," for
example. He used to jot down all singularly vivid and unusual nocturnal adventures
for possible future use.

And now, a bit of poesy, dedicated to your friend and my friend, Edmond
Hamilton (what, no applause?).

Asteroids and nebulae,
Comets, planets, stars—
All are saved by Hamilton:
His brav'ry knows no bars!
Know you of a galaxy
Whose people are in danger?
Call for good old Hamilton,
The cosmic Texas Ranger!
Down with Richard Seaton,
And Campbell's heroes too.
It's Hamilton you're after
When a Man from Mars says "Boo!"
Each star and all its planets
Can be happy all year 'round,
'Or Hamilton will guard them,
His brav'ry knows no bound!

October 1939 [1, 8]

FROM THE READERS

From ARTHUR L. WIDNER, JR. The last issue of SPACEWAYS was not the best
yet, but good withal, mainly because of Doc's refreshing little fantasy, A LEGEND
OF LANTH. "DREAMER 5 tops the poetry. In fact, it didn't have much competition,
but that detracts nothing from its excellence." "Who's been picking on poor
Tucker this time? No doubt the monstrous Moskowitz snapped a hunk out of the seat
of his pants. Seeing he couldn't lick his wounds, as he probably couldn't reach
them, the next best thing was to write an article about it. I know he's
trying to be funny, and some of his efforts succeed, so I wish he'd continue,
instead of writing stuff like A LESSON IN TUCKERNOLOGY....." "Say, would any-
body like a feud? I feel sort of left out up here in the woods, and a nice feud
would help out a lot. I'm perfectly willing to feud about anything. Any takers
among yo' onery polecats?" "And with that, I'll slither back into my hole and
do some plain and fancy lurking until another unwary farmag happens by.

From LOUIS RUSSELL CHAUVENET: Was glad to get 1:7 today, and as per promise
will comment at once. I liked the cover, for a wonder. "On the big "circulation
row" I've little to say. I cannot conceive of any sciencefiction fan reading
Amazing's stories with pleasure, and even Astounding's not impeccable. "Vanished
Paradise"—funny thing, but I have all the 36 monthlies and the quarterly in my
collection. I'm not positive '34 was all LSF thinks it was—I believe I will
go into a huddle over my collection and write you an article selecting the peak
periods of Amazing, Astounding, and Wonder. As Farsaci's article stands, the
comments are now and then interesting, but almost invariably too brief to be worth
much. "Tucker and his "psychology" are both funny—some vague element of truth
seems effectively hidden in the article." "Yes, I like Lowndes. Legend of Lanth
is OK, too, except that the past participle of sing is sung (last line, 1st para-
graph [Corrected. ME]) and that I find the idea of lovers whispering "psalms" to
each other quite amusing, rather than impressive." "Dreamer 5" is the best poem
Spaceways has ever published—much better than Lovecraft's. It has everything
most of your poems lack—not only mechanically, but idealistically. Sam Youd has
talent enough to choose the right word for the right place. (Very rare in sf poetry!)

DAUGHTER OF MOONLIGHT

by

ROBERT W. LOWNDES

Softly over the rim of the desert the moon lifted her ruddy face and the ghosts of a million years awoke as caressing fingers of moonlight stroked their brows. Faintly on the tufted night air, floated the sound of lute-playing and a girl's singing. And on the crest of the ridge stood the oasis and the dwelling-place of Abdullah, who, it was whispered, was favoured by Tanit. . .

He awoke with a start and found himself within the oasis, by the gates of the dwelling-place. And the gates opened, and out came two to welcome him and lead him inside. Then, when his immediate needs had been alleviated, they withdrew, leaving him alone in the garden, filled with strange music.

So followed he the music and came at last to the fountain and to the dark-eyed girl whose voice accompanied the lute-player. And the girl rose, greeting him affectionately, and bidding him recline beside her. In his ears her voice was as chimes as she said: "Thou art he of whom my father has dreamed that I be not alone in this forsaken ruin." And those words filled him with strange foreboding so that he must sit up and look well around him, yet nothing seemed amiss.

For faintly in his memory there lingered a tale he had heard long past; from a forgotten camel-driver, of one Abdullah, the dreamer, upon whom had smiled Tanit, goddess of the moon, and unto whom had been bestowed strange powers while the moon was in the sky. But of the daughter of Abdullah there had been no mention.

But the girl's arms were around his neck, and the scent of her filled his nostrils, so that he ceased to wonder and crushed the sweetness of her in his arms and kissed the ruby of her lips until she lay faint beside him.

And upon them from on high smiled the full moon with that curious enigmatic smile known to the moon only.

So they lay beside the fountain and she told him of her father's strange powers and of his many curious deeds and of the enemies who nightly stole up to the oasis without the walls seeking Abdullah. But her voice was one of reassurance as she stroked his hair, for were not the powers of the favoured of Tanit great?

Suddenly he felt her soft body stiffen and her fingers clutch him spasmodically, and he looked into the dark pools of her eyes and saw terror lurking there. So that quickly he looked up into the sky, and lo! the face of the moon was covered with clouds. And from within the dwelling-place came a cry.

Quickly he arose and followed her into the dwelling-place, but as they entered, the moon again showed forth her face, so that those surrounding the walls, and one within the dwelling-place fought blindly, madly, at something they could not see and thus they died.

But the old man by the window was fatally wounded, and, even as the moon dipped toward the horizon, as the girl clung to him sobbing, his eyes glazed and his head fell forward on his chest. . .

Softly the moon disappeared below the horizon and the ghosts of a million years returned once more to their immemorial graves. As from a spell awakened, he started and gaped in amazement at the desolation he saw. For here were crumbling walls, and from the shattered window he beheld the ruined fountain and garden. And here on the floor by the window, where a moment before had played the fingers of moonlight, lay a single desiccated skull.

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October 1939 [1, 8]

WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT
or extracts from a Bibliophile's files, by
J. Michael Rosenblum.

THE COMING RACE, by Lord Lytton (Oxford Classics). A Victorian work, checkful of original thinking. The discovery in the interior of the earth of an enormously advanced race living in a Utopia of their own with a form of civilised government and morals entirely different from our own. Many interesting theories advanced. A prophetic view of electricity is encountered in the natives' use of "Unil"—the life force. Of course, the style is somewhat pedantic but the book can be heartily recommended.

BACK TO BETHUSALAH, by G. B. Shaw (Penguin Books). This well-known work need hardly appear in such a series as this, but its appearance in full at a cost of 6d (12c) is certainly worth note. As you probably know, it is a play dealing with human life in several episodes—Biblical times, the present day, near future, far future and very far future. There is very much to admire in it and it succeeds in being completely different from any faintly related work. Must be read to be believed to paraphrase a well known saying and heartily recommended to all fantasy enthusiasts.

THE CLOCKWORK MAN, by E. V. Odle (Heinemann, 1922). Out of a future century comes a queer sort of robot. Laughable and loveable he finds great difficulty in attempting to adjust himself to our age in a little English village. His try at playing cricket is wondrously inspired. Something 'different', the book is well worth reading particularly as the scarcity of fantasy around that date makes its appearance a welcome treat.

VOYAGE TO PURILIA, by Elmer Rice (Gollanz). Probably published in America as well, but I don't know about that. A fine satire on films although rather out of date as it is the early silent variety which are hung, drawn and quartered. The heroes fly to a strange world—unspecified but they had to leave our atmosphere. Farcical in the extreme, the story deals with their adventures there, the curious inhabitants and their habits and the final tragic ending as marriage consists of a gradual fadeout. It made me chuckle heartily throughout and I don't laugh easily—can one say more?

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURE, by A. Macmillan (Hodder & Staughton). An Englishman visits Syracuse, goes swimming and lands to discover that he is in ancient Greece. Mental rapport has something to do with it, but on this slender peg, a fine story of adventure has been hung. The usual blood and thunder episodes are somewhat better written by a man who has some idea of what he is talking. Definitely enjoyable.

October 1939 [1, 8]

It's coming! A companion magazine to SPACEWAYS! For a long time you've been asking, why don't you print more fan fiction? Well, now here's your chance to get something that's never been done before: a long fan story complete in one fan magazine! The first issue of this new magazine, titled HORIZONS, will contain a 7500 word novelette by a new fan writer, Jayne Ellis, "Thunder of the War God"; a yarn I confidently consider to be nearly up to the professional standard of many of the professional magazines' stories.

About the magazine itself: it will be hecktoed, neatly, in this large size format. The first issue will consist of 12 pages, ten of which will be utilized for the above mentioned story. There will of course be a cover by hekto's finest artist, Walter Earle Marconette. And the other page will contain a poem by J. H. Mason.

However: to obtain this first issue, you must buy both this issue and the second as well, for a total cost of fifteen cents—not for one, but both. This is the lowest feasible price for such a magazine; and I positively guarantee that you will receive both the first and second issues. And, PLEASE HURRY AND SUBSCRIBE AT ONCE!

This is the first announcement of this magazine, so if you send your fifteen cents at once, you will be sure of getting a copy. But, as the edition will necessarily be limited to fifty copies, of which only about twenty-five will be for sale, it is essential you send at once. If you're too late, I will of course return your money.

Never have I failed to meet my fan obligations in the past, and no one has ever considered himself gypped on one of my magazines. Therefore, please give HORIZONS a trial. Send fifteen cents to Harry Warner, Jr., 303 Bryan Place, Hagerstown, Md., and the first issue will reach you on October first. However, please do not ask to have your sub to S. used for HORIZONS. It simply cannot be done.

October 1939 [1, 8]

FROM THE CONTROL ROOM

Ending up: most liked features in first year of Spaceways: covers, best thought of was Taurasi's for Clouds, with Widner's hot breath on his heels. In the line of articles, "Marvel Tales—Past, Present, and Future" stands out head and shoulders above everything else; then come the biography of Smith, Williamson's review of "Star Maker", and "Paradox Plus". Fiction you thought rather commonplace, mainly, since "The Threnody of Brua", "The Dimension Drug", and Doc Lowndes' two yarns were about the only ones well recieved. Stardust is the most popular department, and ever has been. Poetry, opinion says, was outstanding, mainly "Sonnet on a Dream" by Freehafer, "Clouds" by HPL, and Youd's "Dreamer 5".

November 1939 [2, 1]

ON VIRGIL FINLAY'S INTERPRETATION OF THE 'RUBAIYAT'

by
C. S. YOUD

Here there is moonlight on that rocky steep
Where flows the water-fall that all men dread,
The ancient Styx whose waters gleam with red
And on whose rocks the Gulls of Madness sleep.
Loud clangs the Night-Bell o'er the tragic mob
Who toil despairing on their narrow path,
And hoping for a wond'rous aftermath
Scale the last heights and die with but a sob.

And lo! The One that holds our Lantern up
Is no great effigy of gleaming gold
But, truly viewed, a mad, unhuman ghoul,
Watching the market where men's souls are sold,
Watching sardonically the vampires sup
And the slow changeless burial of a fool.

November 1939 [2, 1]

by
THE STAR-TRADER

I'm very sad as I begin this paragraph. Ed. Warner informed me Lowndes threatened to "expose" me unless I apologize--for what I'm not quite sure. Since a good number of persons, including fans, pro authors, fanmag editors, and pro editors, were aware of my identity, an "exposure" would have been difficult, I feel. However, merely to dismay Mr. Lowndes, I was going to announce my name myself, when I was personally dismayed to receive the 3rd Anniversary SEC, wherein Bob Madle gloatingly informed the world who I am. 'Tis true, I'm Mike. Who ratted?

ANYTHING GOES: Having disposed of the more pressing matters, we are now free to proceed to the true business of the column...I sent STARDUST in a couple of days late last issue, and Harry Warner went to the trouble (I'll assure you it is that) of writing out a three-page substitute himself! Then mine came in...and I'll bet Harry was raving...Thanks to the several persons (Burke, Youd, Rothman, Warner, etc.) who've helped me with material. It's a big help...M. Crawford is in California, where he attended a select meeting of several LASFL members at Hodgkins' home...I submit that with its second issue FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES becomes at least the equal of any fantasy magazine on the market. In one issue we're given such things as smooth edges, monthly publication, an editorial, three Finlay drawings (including one for "Conquest of the Moon Pool!"), promises of "The Blind Spot" and similar classics, a readers' dept., small yet clear type, and semi-slick paper. And the stories are great...The Oct. [1939] Harpers contains a truly stfl poem that is, needless to say, magnificent.

While browsing through the Sept. Harpers, I was given one of the greatest surprises of my life. In his regular dept., "The Easy Chair," Bernard DeVoto devoted himself (under the subtitle "Doom Beyond Jupiter") to a discussion of stories, also nameless, but which I recognized by the outlines of their plots. Among them were "Greater than Gods" by C.L. Moore, "The Black Destroyer," by Van Vogt (both of these from ASTOUNDING), "The Mogu of Mars," by John Coleridge (Lando Binder), "The Jewels from the Moon," by Ephriam Winiki (John Russell Fearn)(both from S-F), "Warriors of Mars," by Arthur Tofte (from AMAZING), and several others I can't recall at the moment. I'd suggest you read the article. The author mentions, among numerous things, the stories as being "besotted nonsense," the readers as "weak, titilating minds," and is rather sure the readers' columns are entirely written by the editors. Finally, he derives a moral from the mags. They attempt on a much lower scale to follow the same pessimistic course evidenced in contemporary "literature," he babbles. In fact, he's nuts. Imagine Binder or Hamilton worrying about anything except their checks!

A new fantastic novel that appeared recently is "White Ben," which tells the tale of a scarecrow who comes to life and inherits the intelligences of the several persons who once wore his clothes. He becomes a dictator, easily recognizable as Adolph (Long Live Stalin!) Hitler. Pleasant, but too obvious.

A number of stories and poems published in WT in recent years were originally intended for the old MARVEL TALES, which had accepted them. Among them are the very popular "Horror in the Burying Ground," by Hazel Heald, and the two splendid memorial poems by Emil Petaja. Of the latter, the one which appeared dedicated to HPL was really written (previous to HPL's death) for HPL and CASmith. The one dedicated to REHeward was really about Conan originally, and had been read by REH previous to his death. He said that more than anything he had ever read, it caught the spirit of his stories. The two of them were part of an apparently discontinued series about matters of fantasy, the whole being called "Echoes of the Ebon Isles."

H. C. Koenig has an interesting item in the third issue of his splendid FAPA publication, "The Reader and Collector." It concerned my two paragraphs about Edmond Hamilton's stealing his own stories. Koenig gave a table showing similarities between Hamilton's "The Other Side of the Moon" and "The Hidden World"-- "similarities so great that the biggest difference was the renaming of characters! The point that tops it all is that they appeared simultaneously, in the Fall, 1929 AMAZING and (Science) WONDER QUARTERLIES, respectively!

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November 1939 [2, 1]

WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT
or extracts from a Bibliophile's files by

J. MICHAEL ROSENBLUM

THE GREAT STONE OF SARDIS, by Frank Stockton (Harpers, 1898). An early attempt at science fantasy containing some really amazing theories. An enormous amount of meaty action packed into a somewhat dry rather Victorian type of story. I like the idea of an old-fashioned elderly woman accompanying intrepid polar explorers in a submarine. After which we prove that the earth is an enormous diamond, and discover a super X-ray. And a nice little romance is thrown in as a makeweight, not to mention a Polish rascal of a villain.

THE WORLD ENDS, by W. Lamb (Kent, 1934). A university professor is on a rambling tour of the wilder parts of Yorkshire when a catastrophe puts practically all of Britain under water. An isolated farm and its inhabitants survive and there the professor finds himself a useless encumbrance until--Reasonably well written, this book is scarcely known to the fantasy world and can be recommended for its psychological insight.

1944, by the Earl of Halsbury (Thornton Butterworth). Another tale of the coming war, but written in the twenties of this century when the world was still comparatively innocent. This time it is Russia & Germany combined who attempt attack the western democracies. The story deals with a modern Noah who attempts to use his "ark" to escape, but there is a glorious inconsistency about the story which makes one wonder why on earth it was written. Torturous in style, I can hardly recommend it, but it does contain one or two good ideas.

SELL ENGLAND, by Dacre Balodon (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1936). A jovial and fine satire in which few things are spared. The working classes of Britain have emigrated to Central Africa and formed a race with the original inhabitants. In many years' time this nation comes under a dictator's hip and proudly vaunts its British ancestry whilst condemning all who possess American blood. Meanwhile the aristocracy in Britain have had the country to themselves. Nothing scientific in it, yet the book is extremely enjoyable and recommended to all who would enjoy a good laugh.

THE STOLEN CONTINENT, by Francis H. Sibson (A. Melrose). Really a sequel to the same author's "Survivors" but capable of standing on its own feet as a story. A new continent arises in the Atlantic and is claimed by both Britain and U.S.A. who come near to war over it. A third and hidden force attempting to bring the war to pass is a grand combination of outlawed American racketeers. Vivid description, reasonable characterisation and a decent plot combine to make quite a good story of a very unusual type.

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November 1939 [2, 1]

From CHARLES D. HORNIG: I find SPACEWAYS---the whole mag---interesting---you certainly know how to select fan material. I think the thing that entertained me and amused me the most is the argument between Palmer and Campbell as to whether Amazing or Astounding has the largest circulation. Sort of reminds me of the two little boys who stoutly contend to each other that "My brother is bigger'n yours!" "Come, come, fellows! Neither of you know each other's circulation, and probably not even your own, very exactly. I don't know the circulation of SCIENCE FICTION, either. All I can surmise is that it must be pretty good, or I wouldn't have the new companion, FUTURE FICTION. Suppose we quit bragging about circulations, the four of us, until one of the books outsells Colliers [?], anyway. I'm sure we're all doing our best possible, and as long as the books keep selling, they're successful." "In the current Spaceways, I notice that Ray Palmer says that I am the best editor in science-fiction today, and believe me, my face is very pinkish. I must decline that honor, and I'm not trying to be politely reciprocal when I say that, in my opinion as a fan of long standing, Raymond A. Palmer cops that honor. He's done a lot of pioneering with Amazing since it's changed hands, all for the best---and he is so successful because he is so utterly sincere in his efforts." "I've met all the editors, and here's how they appear to me (seeing as how freely we speak in fan magazines): Palmer, most capable; Weisinger, most ambitious; Campbell, most proud; Hornig, he's nice too.

November 1939 [2, 1]

THE RULE OF THE WITCH

by

W. LAWRENCE HAMLING

The shadows deepen o'er the cold gray walls
As darkness settles, over shrouded stoop;
Then rises high on the pale new moon,
A trail of mist, of a ghostly group.
They flicker and wan, and fade and spawn,
As a loon means by a ditch.
And the pearl of the moon scintillates to a tune,
By the laughter, of a witch.

Like a lone gray cloud in the heavens o'er,
From the wound of a devil's spleen;
They flicker and flow at friend and foe,
In the dance of a Halloween.
As the dust of the stars they spread and rule,
On the hours of a pensive night;
And they laugh in glee at their ghostly spree,
In the trail of a plummeting flight.

And the Moon laughs too in his hollow glow,
As the terrors crescent the scene;
And they chant and rant, while the near ghouls pant,
In the dread of a Halloween.
From dusk to dawn ere you find them gone,
Perched on a stick or a broom;
But the festive ray of a newborn day,
Heralds all, the change in groom.

So on nights so dark as a vault in death,
When the loon comes out to scream;
Hear the call of the witch, as she transfurly flits,
On the eve, of a Halloween!

November, 1939 [2, 1]

by
SAM MOSKOWITZ

Ever and anon I find my august self being pumped full of very absorbing blarney. I have to sit back patiently and be bored all hollow by some infant editor's rendition of what the readers really want, just how the fans stand, and his won't mighty brain-work. 'Tis useless to affirm that I believe his majesty to be wrong, for if I do, the next time I hop up there for a news item I may have one of them pull a line on me like this: "So you think 'Unusual' is dry, ah? Well, just for that I won't tell you about the greatest thing in illustrations the pro mags have ever contemplated in their 15 odd years of existence." And you can't blame me, if sometimes, instead of some habitually good-natured reply, I'll retort: "Please, Mr. Editor, tell me what your great change in illustrations is. Please, you don't know what this means to me. If you don't tell me, of course I won't be able to give you a headline in 'Fantasy News', and free publicity in any of a dozen fan mags. Of course," I continue, "I am fully aware of the tremendous favor you're doing me; you must know how badly I need news this week, and I can't get over the favor you're doing me when you give me a news item so that I can give you free publicity in a couple of dozen fan mags. And of course your competitor will ruthlessly turn down the headline advertising I was going to give you. He will, I am certain, say, to hell with headlines in 'Fantasy News', a write-up in 'New Fandom', and a spread through any number of other fan mags. I can get along without it, you're asking me too much of a favor when you expect me to give you a news item so that you can give me 20 or 30 pages of free publicity."

Yeah, he'll say that, like hell he'll say it. Not all editors are alike. A few of them have had the startling idea dawn upon them that the fans are trying to help them. Perhaps the fans would get a little more appreciation for the remarkable faith and cooperation if they refused to print any notice whatsoever concerning a pro mag unless it were paid for at ad rates.

But even the above item fades into insignificance when I hear the great intellectuals whose weary dogs rest despondently on the desk tops tell me, "We editors are wise to you fans. You represent a minority, a tiny minority of about 2% of our readers. You simply make all the noise. You've deluded publishers too long. Look how successful we are now that we refuse to listen to your childish meanderings." I remember when Hornig made a similar statement at a Queens SFL meeting, and I replied: "It is interesting to note the things the editors talk themselves into."

So the editors have finally decided that the fans' opinions are not worth considering. This is a commendable achievement, after 15 years of fantasy publishing to find that you've been deluded all the while. That's why "Weird Tales" is 17 years old, because the fans disliked her for 17 years. That's why "Amazing Stories" is 14 years old and Astounding and Wonder over 10 apiece. They've been living on delusion all this time. That's why "Amazing Stories" was deluded into a circulation of 150,000 back in 1928. They listened to the fans. It's interesting to note that Farnsworth Wright, who has only been an editor for 17 years [Not of ~~WTF-WILE~~], still doesn't believe that he is being fooled by the fans, while such editors who should know, such as Campbell, Palmer, Hornig, really think that such is the case. Campbell, editor less than two years, Palmer, editor a little more than a year, Hornig, editor a total of three years, and of course Erisman who has also been editor of a sf mag for a year. These four have gained an insight on the fantasy field never attained before. Argosy published fantastic stories for fifty years [!] and never attained that remarkable

insight. Weird Tales published quality for over 17 years, and has yet to attain that astounding insight. Amazing Stories kept going for 11 years without its 89 year old editor once suspecting the horrendous fact that he was little more than a pawn in the hands of the sinister minions of fantasy fandom who recklessly gambled the life of fantasy on their hairbrained ideas. I really must congratulate Messrs. Campbell, Palmer, Hornig, and Brisman. I readily admit that their knowledge of the fantasy field is infinitely superior to mine. I am but a child attempting to push open the door of fantasy knowledge. I've only dabbled in this business 7 out of my 19 years. I've only compiled and read a trifling collection of fantasy whose total numbers roll up into may thousands. I've only met about 1,000 readers of fantasy in person. I've only directed the two largest stf. conventions ever held. However, all this dwindles into nothingness beside the knowledge of those who have edited a pro mag for in some cases as long as 3 years.

It is too bad that the fans have such a villainous nature. Why, the dirty hounds, they have the effrontery to purchase a copy of your magazine, even despite the fact that the fiction is vile, the illustrations putrid, the entire make-up and quality of display lousy, and despite the alarming fact that you told them on more than one occasion to go unceremoniously to hell. It must be because they plot the downfall of all fantasy magazines with their scatterbrained notions.

And of course the editors are continually doing fans a favor. Oh, how they love to do favors. After begging "Astounding" for six years to give us smooth edges, they suddenly break down and give it to us, and an alarming thing happens--their circulation goes up 20%. How editor Tremaine must have writhed in agony as he was revealed this horrifying fact. How he moaned to all who cared to hear, for he immediately was handed three other mags to edit and then let "Astounding" go to seed. He could never wipe out the terror of the moment when after giving the fans first class stories, more pages, good artists, a big readers department and smooth edges, he not only attained the highest circulation of any stf. mag, but drove his two competitors out of business as well. Of course, the reason Tremaine was purged from S&S is because he listened too much to the fans. He listened to them so well that he instigated "Science Discussions" in place of "Brass Tacks" so that he wouldn't be able to print any of the torrent of kicks that were pouring in at the poor quality he was hitting. The reason Tremaine was purged was because he gave us too many good stories in 1937 and the resultant drop in circulation because he printed such superb fiction. Of course that was the reason. It was impossible that S&S let him go because he stopped improving the mag. Neglected to print a decent story in all of 1937 and so won the undying gratitude of the fans that his circulation dropped to the lowest point in the magazine's existance. I've always been certain that the main reason why "Astounding"'s circulation hit rock bottom in 1937 was because Tremaine listened too much to the demands of the fans. Beware Campbell, Palmer, Brisman, and Hornig. Don't listen to the fans, whatever you do. Don't forget you must please your great invisible audience that doesn't write in. I'm certain you'll keep them a long, long while as long as you avoid original writing, good stories, and anythin' that the fans want.

In 1934 Argosy gained a new editor. This new editor didn't like "fantastics", he thought they were trash. It was beyond his comprehension how a magazine like Argosy could subsist and still please the fans by publishing such unspeakable stuff as A. Merritt, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Otis Adelbert Kline, Austin Hall & Homer "on Flint, Garret Smith and the rest of the motley crew. It was also beyond his comprehension why the readers should desire four serials instead of two certain "character" stories. So he instigated a new era. He published one or two short fantastics a year, two serials and some run of the mill trash. Of

course the circulation increased. It increased to the point where the Munsey Company believing the editor to be too good fired him and hired a new one. His new one was more clever than the other. He disliked fantastics too, but he was canny. He promised to print them in every issue, and made sure that the ones he printed were so lousy as to discourage readers for asking for any successors. Boy, was that guy clever.

I was one of the first to learn of Munsey's "Famous Fantastic Mysteries". Together with Julius Schwartz we dashed over to their offices. There we were greeted by a new editor of Argosy. He showed us some proofs of "FFM" and arranged to place an ad in the convention program. While we were waiting for him to transact things with the business manager we had an engaging conversation with the editorial manager of the place, a man who has been with Munsey for over 40 years. I was enthusiastic about the entire idea and showed it. I asked him one question, though.

"Why," said I, "did Munsey wait until the market was flooded with fantasy to start a new fantasy mag and a new policy of fantastic stories in every issue of Argosy?"

He explained the entire case to me. Elimination of fantastics had been an experiment. And it proved a flop! The reason Chandler Whipple, the old editor of Argosy, had been replaced in favor of G. W. Post was because Whipple heartily disliked fantasy. The non-fantasy policy had been so unsuccessful that in November, 1938, Munsey was contemplating dropping Argosy after 56 years of existence. Circulation was the lowest it had hit in many a year. However, they printed a short fantastic called "Karpen, the Jew", and another, the famous "Ship of Ishtar" by A. Merritt. Every copy of Argosy containing these two stories was completely sold out! The editor of the magazine when he wanted to obtain a copy of "Karpen, the Jew" for reprinting had to make a new typewritten copy from the file copies—there were no extras!

Now of course the regular editors of stf. know that the reason for this is because the fans have never asked for Merritt, and they have always disliked good quality stories like "Karpen, the Jew". There are so few Merritt fans that Argosy was able to sell out a complete edition to the last copy when she re-printed one of his novels.

As all smart editors know the fans have never asked for reprints. Whenever the editors asked the fans' opinions on the subject of reprints the fans were always unanimous in their condemnation of such a policy. That's why "Amazing" sold 150,000 copies of their mag in 1928, because they strictly avoided the using of any reprints, except a few, say 90% of the contents of every issue.

Now of course it's easy to see that Argosy stands to lose a great deal of money on "Famous Fantastic Mysteries". Especially since she doesn't have to pay for authors or artists, except once in a while. And I wouldn't be at all surprised the magazine didn't sell more than a measly 80,000 copies; of course, regular stf. editors snore profusely at such trifling sales.

But out of the four editors mentioned there stands out one who for daring, originality and sheer brain power outranks any other editor. This personage is the remarkable Robert Crisman. He is more convinced than anyone else that the fans are no-goods. He firmly believes that the reason "Marvel" enjoyed such nice sales for its first three issues was because they printed such outstanding sex novels as Kuttner's. Of course, "Survival", "Exodus", "The Thirty and One", "Faster than Light", might have had a little to do with it, but not very much. His final condemning proof is the poor sale of the issue containing Taine's "Tomorrow". When fans ask for novels they want good novels. When "Marvel" attempts to foist 70,000 words of bilge over on us as being good, people conveniently forget to purchase the magazine. And when "Marvel" also appears on the dot every three or four months fans become so disgusted that they don't even look for the magazine on the newsstands. I predicted in February that if "Marvel" continued

her erratic "Don't give a damn" method of appearance she would be in the bone-yard within six months, and you can't blame me for spraining my hand patting myself on the back when I now observe the prediction coming true.

As for "Dynamic", it was damned from the first issue on. It was not only a surplus commodity in the science story field, it also carried a title that no person glancing over the newsstand expected to be associated with science-fiction. And when the second cover emerged looking just like any other dime novel magazine on the newsstands it was finished. Also when they got a Coblenz novel that was originally 60,000 or more words and cut out all the satire into a hammered 30,000 word version, the effect will be felt not only through letters but in the sales, for what value has a Coblenz novel deprived of its essential--satire?

Also, the fans have been continually told in the past few years that Paul was punk, he couldn't draw anymore, that superb illustrators like Orban, Isip, Koll, Wolfe were infinitely superior. Yet it seems to me that Paul was given far from a mild ovation when he returned last year, and I don't see any mag losing circulation because they use Paul illustrations. In fact, fans think so little of Paul, actually, that they merely arrange a banquet in his honor, simply to inform him how much he is disliked.

Of course, when it come down to facts, who are we fans, anyway? We don't rank anywhere near in importance to the editor, author or artist. We only buy the magazine. We only make it possible for there to be an editor, an author and artist and a profit! However, our position is of such humble calling that we are less than offal to be trod upon by non-capitulating baby editors.

Another thing that greatly aggravated the editors was the persistant demand for a large size publication. Palmer, who is one of the tyrannous quartet, proved specifically how much fans dislike large size magazines when he convinced Ziff-Davis of the feasibility of "Fantastic Adventures". He must be certain of it now that "Fantastic Adventures", with nothing but large size and Paul back cover, outsold "Amazing". However, FA won't last long if they don't perk up the quality. I note that the latest issues are sticking to the newsstands like glue. You can't keep going for ever on a good cover and nostalgically likeable large size, brer Palmer. You got to break your heart and slip in a good story once in a while. Also, it is evident that Palmer has been running "Amazing" on the old "Clayton" "Astounding" system of blood and thunder, and so is Hornig. But these two gents forget that Clayton published "Astounding" when competition was at ebb-tide. Clayton paid two cents a word, a rate that "Science Fiction" never touched and that "Amazing" rarely approaches. "Astounding"'s stuff was well written, something that these two editors cannot boast for their own stuff, and "Astounding" with all those advantages lasted but three years. "Amazing" may expect the same death if she does not change her policy so that it includes a few decently written and plotted stories per issue. You can't convince me that Frederic Arnold Kummer is a "great" author with a "great" story. Maybe I have nê sense of story appreciation but I also find it impossible to imagine Ed Earl Repp as a "great" author with a "Great" story, and the hundred or so people I've queried concerning this seem strangely in accord with my views. We must be misfits for certainly the public must acknowledge the greatness of Kummer and Rep, else the editors would not continually feature their stuff.

I haven't stamped very much on Mort Weisinger's toes because it is my impression that Mort has always been open to and often utilized suggestions of fans. Mort was a pioneer when he edited "Startling" which is little more than an oversized fan magazine. Mort must have shocked the other editors when he actually instigated his now-popular fan mag review department, and his "Hall of Fame" reprint department. Started to print pictures and biographies of the authors and some good novels.

When Mort was told by a few hundred people that the Feb. and April issues of TWS were way below par he did something about it, and now the last three numbers of TWS are as good or better than any stf. mag on the market. It was against Mort's

policy to use a previously printed story like "Dawn of Flame", but the members of the Queens SFL jumped him one day and the story appeared in the 10th anniversary number. I've still to become aware of the great amount of protest it aroused because it was previously published. Another fallacy ground into the dust. And this new amateur author policy of TWS. Some of the writing in the stories is below pro par, but Mort is giving them a break. He may be amply repaid by some especially good writers in the future.

What I am roundin' up to is this. The fans want essentially two things. Good stories and good departments. Secondly they would like to have good illustrations, a nice format, and if possible smooth edges and at least a fairly decent grade of pulp paper. That is all their suggestions add up to. Here is what I personally, want from the following magazines:

Amazing: Better stories. The departments are good, the illustrations are passable, all I want is a few decent yarns. I must be a glutton to ask for so much, since Palmer knows that if he prints a few good stories he is going to lose circulation without question of a doubt.

Fantastic Adventures: I want the same thing. Some better-grade fiction, nothing more.

Astounding Science-Fictions: I want some good illustrations, a better type style, one easier to read, and a few good departments. Also a lessening of the Campbell trait in almost all stories and titles, and a little less smugness, also more flare and less conservatism.

Unknowns: I want the same thing.

Science Fictions: The departments are fine, but I would like a much better quality of yarn.

Marvel: Go back to 128 pages, no sex, use Paul on the covers, appear dependably bi-monthly, and print some more yarns the quality of Survival.

Weird Tales: I completely satisfied.

Startling: Stay as sweet as you are.

Thrilling Wonder Stories: A new artist on the cover, do away with Brown, maintenance of their present story value and department interest, better paper in time.

Strange Stories: More and better departments, some longer yarns.

Famous Fantastic Mysteries: Larger type-size, colored artistic cover, no cutting of reprints.

Those are practically all the things fans have ever asked of these mags. Doesn't every one of them look impossible? We fans are certainly the lowest crawling vermin to ask a magazine to improve itself so it can make more money.

And in conclusion. If the fans do not represent the opinion of the reader in the street who does? Aren't the fans readers? Aren't they nothing but the reader in the street before they became more avid? Certainly their tastes have not changed. They want the same things that everyone wants, good stories, good departments, good illustrations, etc., etc. If the editors think they can blissfully cast aside the views of fans by stating that the fans do not represent the views of the majority of their readers they are in for a rather rude awakening when competitors who do think so stifle them out of existence. The fans are stretching their pocket books to the limit now. The addition of a few more mags will mean that fans will pick only the mags that please them and let the others go hang. And fans being only human and typical of all science-fiction readers they will not be alone in this process, but will be accompanied by 100,000 others who are of a mind. You'd better not wait and see but compromise by disregarding an insane editorial attitude now.

WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT

or extracts from a Bibliophile's files by

J. Michael Rosenblum

THE IMPREGNABLE WOMEN, by Eric Linklater [Cape, 1938]. You have probably heard of this book before, and if you have not, you ought to have done so. There is no pure science in it; it is just a well thoughtout prophecy, very well written of a future war. And then it doesn't concern itself with the war but only with the "home front". The women of Britain decide that they will try to stop war by declaring² the only sort of strike available to them. They refuse to have anything to do with men. Numerous incidents are dealt with in the book--in fact, a common criticism is that there is too much in it--but the "revolt" culminates in the seizure and subsequent defense by the women of Edinburgh castle, Edinburgh then being the Bristol capital. And the war just ends because all the soldiers come home! In essence, the book is just a modernized version of Aristophanes' immortal comedy, but these bare bones are competently clothed with an amazing versatility of incident. Definitely a book to be recommended.

MINIMUM MAN, by Arthur Marvell [Golland]. One of last year's semi-classic stf. stories and a real fine work. Two stories in one, the first being the tale of a mutation in human stock leading to small, highly intelligent and short-lived men who begin to develop their own civilization. The second story is of Britain under a fascist government which the narrator persuades the "minimum men" to help overthrow. The two themes are cleverly interwoven with the narrator's own life and one gets a comprehensive picture of times to come. Can be thoroughly recommended from every angle.

January 1940 [2, 2]

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DREAMER 2 -- "Loneliness"

by

C. S. YOUD

Never a friend in this workaday world,
 Never a one to love;
 Only the gleam of a dreamer's dream
 And the pitiless stars above.
 Only the far-off whisper of voices
 Heard in a silent hall
 Where no one sings, and no heart rejoices
 And the blossoms of April wither and fall.

Heed not their scorn, O Crowned with Roses,
 Scorn thyself their childish strife.
 Sing thy songs for thyself alone,
 Guard as a jewel thy fleeting life -
 So, when the tired flower wearily closes,
 The sorrows - and triumphs - are all thine own.

[+]

January 1940 [2, 2]

STARDUST

by
THE STAR-READER

I think there can be no doubt that Miss Catherine L. Moore is one of the foremost writers ever to appear in the pages of the fantasy pulps. All the way from "Shambleau," her first story, which is one of Weird Tales' greatest classics, to "Greater Than Gods" and "Nymph of Darkness," her latest two, she has maintained a splendid standard. "Nymph of Darkness," incidentally, is reprinted from the May, 1935, WT dedication number of Fantasy Magazine. "Those of you who, as I, have been berating the various editors of late because of their failure to secure more of Miss Moore's fascinating tales, may now cease to do so. The much-maligned editors are blameless. Miss Moore simply hasn't been writing lately. She had been working upon an epic Northwest Smith novel for a year until last August, when her mother passed away and CLM stopped work on everything temporarily. However, if everything goes well she may finish it in another year. But, she says, "I intend to take all the time I need and it may be years before I'm satisfied with the way I'm handling it." "There have been rumors to the effect that this novel would appear in The American Weekly, A. Merritt's magazine. The rumors are not true. Miss Moore corresponded with Merritt about a year ago with regard to her writing for the Weekly, but nothing came of it and the matter has not been revived. Miss Moore says of the novel, incidentally, that "It's a perfectly stupendous Arthurian opus which overawes even me. The idea I am perfectly sure is a magnificent one, but I'm not nearly so sure of my own ability to do it justice." "As far as the possibility of her appearing in the fantasy pulps is concerned, she has this to say. "Meanwhile there are a few vague ideas stirring in my mind about stories for WT and maybe Unknown. My mind is so out of the habit of short story writing that it doesn't work very well any more, but the ideas may bother me enough to force me to write them. That's the only way I ever get anything done, anyhow."

I wonder how it feels to have a pseudonym become more popular than one's self? That's the position in which John W. Campbell, Jr., finds himself. While he can write and sell stories done in the Campbell manner to whomever he pleases, he has a contract with Street and Smith which forbids Don A. Stuart type stories to appear outside an S&S magazine. Not only that, but even Don A. Stuart ideas he doesn't care to or can't write up himself must be given to an author to be written up for an S&S magazine! "The Coppersmith," 'by' Lester del Rey is such a story.

In 1938 Clark Ashton Smith published a 9 x 12 inch booklet containing six of what he thought were his better (and unpublished) tales. Since then four of the six have been printed in WT, but the two longest probably will not appear there or anywhere else. 1000 copies were printed, and I believe most of them have been sold.

Henry Kuttner plans to write a humorous fantasy novel as soon as he has the time. I asked him what he planned doing with it, and I think his answer is worthy of being preserved for posterity: "When I finish it, I shall have it bound in monkscloth, limited to three autographed editions, and burned by Hitler. After that I shall sell it to the movies and retire to write for Marvel."

While re-reading EPL's "Haunter of Darkness," I saw something I hadn't realized the first time I read it--mainly because I couldn't have. However, Robert Blake in the story is meant to portray Robert Bloch, as we all should know--but the address given in the last paragraph or so of the story is actually Bloch's!

THE READERS ALWAYS WRITE

From JOHN W. CAMPBELL, JR.: Just to straighten the record: "Robert Arthur" is actually the penname of Bob Arthur. Some of your diligent researchers may, by this time, have discovered that he had a story in the old Amazing, "The Theft of the Washington Monument," I think it was, back in the late 20's or very early 30's. (October, 1933. HW) If you feel some lingering doubts on the subject, you might ask Bob Swisher, who's a long-time friend of Bob Arthur.

January 1940 [2, 2]

THE WORLD IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT

by

Donald A. Wellheim

So you're going to fly to Mars? I'll bet you think you are! If you read science-fiction avidly, I know your thoughts on that. You think you're going to fly to Mars someday. Maybe you hope to pioneer, eh? You know the first person to fly to the Moon or to Mars is going to be a greater figure than Columbus. You know that, don't you? Maybe you don't admit it to your friends, but you know it. You think of course that is what you are going to do, and then, then you'll show them!

You fancy yourself sitting in the controls of the first space ship with the plaudits of the world ringing in your ears. Then you pull that little metal lever there (you know where it is) and bang swoosh you're off. Off through the empty void to land on Mars where you'll see what really makes those canals and whether or not the Martians are intelligent.

Ha, you're going to be a big brave adventurer, a pioneer. Oh, maybe, maybe, but I'm saying you probably won't have the guts to pull that little lever.

Why? Why, simple, my friend, quite simple. It takes courage to pioneer. Courage I rather suspect you won't have.

Courage to pioneer. Do you know what that means? I know you think it means being like Galileo, or Newton, or Edison. You will stand silent while a lot of fools laugh, and the papers twist your words and distort your plans. Of course you'll stand silent you say because you will know you're right and they will see that after you pull that little lever. Eh, it'll be a long, long struggle to get even near that little lever. To build a space ship, to plan one, to talk about one, even, takes more guts than you think. I don't mean talk about one to some other fan. I mean talk business about one to a cold-blooded mechanic. You'll probably turn pale and faint.

How do I know that for the most part you won't have the courage? Because only a relatively small number of you have the courage to get out of a rut now, few of you dare even now to pioneer. Even when there are hundreds and thousands and yes millions of people who will pioneer with you, who ask no more than that you join them in pioneering for a better world.

Thousands and millions are forcing themselves to stand up and yell again at the things that are beginning to upset our hopes and our dreams. People are beginning to demand to know what is the matter with the world today, why we are slipping backwards in our daily lives while science keeps pointing to great goals possible if we would only apply it. And to stand up and demand to know requires guts. It's easy to defend the old, that's in the rut. It's not quite so easy to get out of the rut and ask for improvements, changes, and ends to evil. People might laugh at you, or try to drag you down. That would be unpleasant, wouldn't it? You wouldn't want to be pointed out or attacked, would you?

No, of course you wouldn't. You just want to go on living your life without being bothered until - of course - you suddenly surprise everybody with your space ship and your heroism. Ha, you'll never get the courage to do it if you've never had the courage to pioneer changes in the little things. You're going to pioneer all alone, are you? But you're the one who was afraid to venture into the nasty field of politics when you could have had thousands and millions on your side. But then - politics - small stuff for a real hero like you. You're going to fight the inertia of the whole world by extending the boundaries of man's thought, history, and action into infinity. Oh, yers, that will take real courage. You'll save your energy for that supreme one-man vs. 2-billion battle. Why should you, the New Columbus, go out and demand changes in the world today? You'll change it alone with your rocket ship. But you won't.

You see, courage grows. If you haven't the courage to raise your voice to make the world just the least little bit better today, you will never have the courage to make man's boundaries the cosmos and not just the earth. A little action today, a great reality tomorrow. No action today, no tomorrow. Have you the guts, science fiction fan, to join in today to lay the foundations for tomorrow? Or will you conserve your energy so as to fill some dusty dead-end to the grave? The world is what you make it. And if you don't make it, you'll take it. If you are going to make it something, you'd better start helping to make it now. Because if you don't, you'll never do anything but take it tomorrow.

THE END

March 1940 [2, 3]

A CHUGHUIST PASSES

by

RAPHAEL J. STINSON

Again death awaits me, but no less eagerly do I await it: for now, dying a second time, as must all Chughuists, I depart hence to Iogo, abode of ChuGhu.

Once was I Archfiend of the Holy Footstools, these marvelous objects, which stand on one leg by the all-perwading grace of ChuGhu, and, in the ignorance of life, I knew naught of Htras, the seven vorbic stages through which the soul of the Chughuist passes, to return to their cadavers ere a second release.

Hearken: I passed and came to Alphe, and I was as wind in the night, blowing drearily down the road of worlds, and there was in me naught save the purple spark of ChuGhu.

Sight alone was mine, and I beheld an infinity of blueness, unbelievably extensive, as is any self-respecting infinity; for all on this world was blue, and I dwelt amidst an eternity of blueness, a purple shadow on this world which was desolation and waste. Let he who has ears hear.

Hearken: I passed and came to Bera, and I was a tongue running along the contours of all things and I tasted every conceivable taste, but in everything lay the subtle undertones of light, sparkling wine.

Sight, nor sound, nor ether feeling I knew not, but no more than a gigantic taste-bud was I, and I reamed the multitudinous hills and valleys of this world, tasting all things, some of which were better undescribed. Let he who has ears hear.

Hearken: I passed and came to Gasa, and it was as if my entire being were fingertips, and that end of the tongue which feels only, but tastes not. All was either warmth or coldness to me, either softness or hardness, either smoothness or roughness, either curves or angles.

Feeling, exquisite sensation was mine here, and, though at times I was burned or unutterably chilled, or scraped and torn by jaggedness, here I found such ecstasies as would make the most lush curves and warmths of other worlds seem in comparison coarse and dank and unpleasurable. Let he who has ears hear.

Hearken: I passed and came to Danara, and I was an ear listening to melodies that came out of inexpressible distances. Here I heard all sounds, disassociated and harmonious, and all discords, and the sensation of purpleness pervaded all.

All my being vibrated to unimaginable bursts of sound, and some were excruciatingly repellant, and some were as the music of the spheres, and some were swing-rhythms that would make Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, and Guy Lombardo take notice; and some made me wish I had listened more carefully to the music of Debussy, Sibelius, Chopin, Wagner, Chausson, Brahms, Strauss, Tschai-kovsky, Scriabin, and Cesar Franck while on earth. Let he who has ears hear.

Hearken: I passed and came to Enna, and there was I a nose reaching out to the far corners of the cosmos.

Oodours of delectability and of foulness unspeakable came to me, and alternately I writhed in disgust and revulsion and trembled with rapturous delight. Let he who has ears hear.

Hearken: I passed and came to Giro, which was strangest by far of all the seven vomitic stages of Htroo.

For here was a sense of equilibrium, unsurpassed, and I engaged in the most prodigious feats of unbalance, yet always did it appear to me that I was upright, nor did I fall. Here did I attain the ultimate of remarkable and contortionistic positions yet never did I feel cramped nor awkward. Let he who has ears hear.

Hearken: I passed and came to Hidiro and mine was understanding and knowledge.

Then knew and understood I all that is or shall be, and likewise did I learn of the reasons for all these things, and with this intelligence came to me a sense of cosmic mirth and grandeur, passing swiftly through me, so that I smiled in the purple of my soul when I felt the magnetic attraction that drew me now back into my earthly shell. Let he who has ears hear.

Thus and thus did I awake, as it were, knowing well of my previous demise, and found my body encased in winding cloth, lying in the morgue at Robrath Hospital, awaiting the morticians.

And I lifted up my toenails and with them ripped a hole large enough to air my feet and admit my body; this did I and slipped through just as the morticians were entering:

And the mirth of Ghushu was in me, and nearly did I burst with laughter when I realized all that should be;

But all things must end, so after demoralizing the hospital completely, and causing a minor panic wherever I went, at last my time was over; now await I my second death.

That I may depart hence to Iego where, deep in the purple heart of all things, is Ghushu

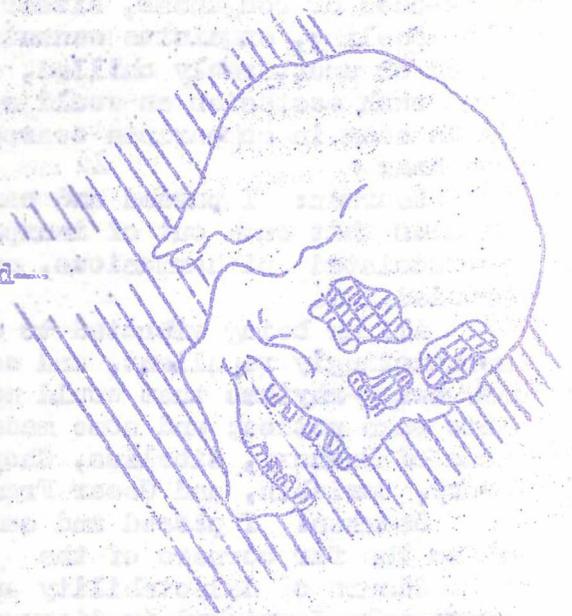
THE SECRET OF THE TOMB

by

W. Lawrence Hamling

The wind howled and the trees moaned--
 The aisles rolled on and the eaves groaned;
 And I stood by the graves,
 And the shadows hung over the tombs.
 The skies were bleak and the moon laughed--
 The devil sang as spectres clapped;
 And I stood by the graves,
 And the shadows hung over the tombs.
 The breeze whispered softly, the darkness mocked--
 And Death passed by in his gruesome frock;
 And I stood by the graves,
 And the shadows hung over the tombs.
 And I heard the hisses and I heard the sighs--
 The weird damp stones shrieked to the skies;
 And I stood by the graves,
 And the shadows hung over the tombs.
 The mist rolled in, the fog rolled on--
 The devil kept singing, while Death walked on;
 And I stood by the graves,
 And the shadows hung over the tombs.

The ghouls came to dance--the fog rolled back--
 And Death sat and watched, in his cloak of black;
 And I stood by the graves,
 And the shadows hung over the tombs.
 The thunder rolled, the lightning sprayed--
 The wind howled on and the dancers swayed;
 And I stood by the graves,
 And the shadows hung over the tombs.
 Then the dead came to rise and the trees looked to see--
 They joined in the dance and the moon laughed in glee;
 And I stood by the graves,
 And the shadows hung over the tombs.
 And I saw them dance to the devil's song--
 For years they danced while Death looked on;
 And I stood by the graves,
 And the shadows hung over the tombs.
 Then Death arose, and the music ceased--
 The dead reposed and the darkness eased;
 And I stood by the graves,
 And the shadows hung over the tombs.
 The aisles now are bare, the trees cease to moan--
 The wind dies away, and I wonder alone;
 As I stand by the graves,
 The shadows arise from the tombs.



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March 1940 [2, 3]

by
LOUIS RUSSELL CHAUVENET

The fan who has exhausted the limited number of "classic" sf and fantasy stories can always fall back on the fascinating pastime of trying to unearth "forgotten masterpieces," stray bits of sf information, and like material. This is one of my favorite amusements, and although the results, naturally, are few success is occasionally attained. The discriminating may choose at will from the following miscellaneous collection.

"The Worm Ouroboros" by E. R. Eddison. I will always be grateful to R.D. Swisher for introducing me to this romance. In this book (after the inept prologue, which may be ignored) there is an atmosphere once experienced, never to be forgotten. I have never known fantasy as well written.

"Deluge" by S. Fowler Wright. No 'scientific' gadgets, but a straight 'future' story of life in what's left of England when most of Great Britain sinks under the Atlantic. Notable for the fine and sensible handling of the triangle theme.

"Full Circle" by John Collier. Another non-scientific view of the future--the reestablishment of tribes and the development of the "Chief's" authority are well brought out, and the personal equations competently taken care of. Many who wouldn't care for "Deluge" and its love themes would like this book.

"The Martian" by George du Maurier. Although "Trilby" is far better known, "The Martian" interested me much more. The history of Barty Jessely, with his vivacious spirits and his queer "magnetic sense" which enabled him to "feel the north," would be dull over the first two thirds of the book, unless you read leisurely (I read it while convalescent). But toward the end du Maurier introduces a most interesting story of life on the planets. (Written in 1900, remember!)

"The Last Judgment" by J. B. S. Haldane. The orthodox view of man's future destiny--but here exceptionally well told, perhaps because of the absence of chest thumping (Man the great! etc) and the simplicity of the style. Viewpoint is Venus, 40 million years from now.

"Jurgen" by James Branch Cabell. This is, on the whole, amusing fantasy--Koschei the Deathless One is a valuable addition to the list of science fiction notables.

"Napoleon of Notting Hill" by G. K. Chesterton. The boys who read H. G. Wells and hope for a "World State" should be amused by this little game of "cheat the prophet" in which G. K. C. draws an anything but orthodox picture of the future state of society!

"Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven" by Mark Twain. One of my favorite sketches of our "future life"--it takes a genius to put pep in Heaven, but Mark Twain does it!

"The Brushwood Boy" by Rudyard Kipling. Hardened materialists may sneer at this romantic and naive short story but for some reason its element of fantasy has always allured me.

"The Door in the Wall" by H. G. Wells. The riddle of this short story's ending is a greater one in all ways than Stockton's famous "Lady or the Tiger?"

"Father Malachy's Miracle" by Bruce Marshall. A lot of quiet fun at the expense of those who believe only what they see and sometimes not even that. (I fall into that category, but I enjoyed the book just the same!)

"Black Oxen" by Gertrude Atherton. Anyone who has read Weinbaum's "Dawn of Flame" and/or sequels should read this book and learn what the psychology of rejuvenation really is.

"A Houseboat on the Styx" by John Kendrick Bangs. This book of encounters between the shades of our "illustrious departed" is not without its moments of comedy and amusement. Included is one of Baron Munchausen's superlative defying stunts more than worth the trouble of getting hold of the book.

"They Return at Evening" by H. R. Wakefield. I'm no lover of weird or occult tales, but H. R. W. can make almost anything sound convincing. Among the few short stories I have liked are listed those in this book.

"The Milesian Chief" by Charles Robert Maturin. You will have to dig this one out of a big public library, and wade through old print and an antique style, but it's worth it. Plot revolves around a girl who thinks she is a boy because her mother has told her so. When she falls in love, she imagines she must be perverted because she loves a man!

"White Magic" by Jasper Maskeleyne. This book is noted here only because of one interesting paragraph. Remember, in "Skylark of Space" how Seaton got heated up by the enemy infra-red rays? He should have used Maskeleyne's preparation--Maskeleyne says that in the battle of Jutland the crews of the 16" guns were so badly burned by the flash that they could not carry on. The British Admiralty, however, obtained the secret formula this magician used to enable him to play with fire, and after that the crews were undamaged by flames when they coated their hands and faces with the preparations. Great improvement on the "red paint" Seaton tried!

"By the Waters of Babylon" by Stephen Vincent Benet. This short story is on a theme familiar to sf fans--a sketch of conditions after the destruction of civilization. But it is written by a truly competent author--one of the acknowledged first-rank short story writers of our day. As a result it is incomparably different from and far better told than the average pulp fiction. It appears in the recent collection of Benet's prose--"Thirteen O'Clock"--most of the other stories in which are also worth reading.

All, for now.

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March 1940 [2, 3]

A REPLY TO MOSKOWITZ

by

John W. Campbell, Jr.

I don't know whether this is a letter or an article--probably the latter. In any case, it is something of a reply to Moskowitz, whose feelings have evidently been hurt. We editors, he evidently feels, not only ignore the fans, but set out determinedly to do the converse of whatever they request.

I bring up three basic questions: Do the fans speak with a unanimous voice, which can be followed or ignored consistently and wholly? If so, is Sam Moskowitz, Donald Wollheim, Ackerman, or any other fan officially and actually that voice, to speak with both authority and true representation? Finally, do active-fan tastes correspond precisely with general-reader tastes?

My answers to all three questions--and hence my reactions to fan requests--is that it's considerable of a question. All fans speak with one voice on some things. They all want "good stories." But, dang it, they don't agree as to what is a good story. Some yell loudly that Smith's epics stink. Nearly all agree on him, however, and say he's good. That, my friend, is balm to an editor's soul. Lord be praised! They almost agree!

Sam Moskowitz doesn't like Donald Wollheim--and the respect is mutual. Wollheim wants stories with social significance. Does he speak for all fans? If he does, he doesn't speak for all readers, because magazines that go significant go flopp. People don't like their fiction dressed-up propaganda, or "socially significant" if you want to call it that.

Finally, active-fan tastes differ from general-reader tastes. They're bound to. The active fans I've met agree pretty well that there are only about 100 real fans who count, who are really active. Perhaps there are 500 who rate the designation of fans in a more liberal sense.

Not all people read and enjoy science-fiction. Why? Because they have somewhat different tastes. Strange, but it's true--something we, who get genuine enjoyment out of it, find hard to understand. There's something lacking in their personalities. Be that as it may, they don't--we're a little different from them.

Not all readers of science-fiction join, or enjoy, fan activities. Strange, but it's true. Maybe there's something lacking in their personalities, but, be that as it may, they are just a little different from active-fan personalities. Their tastes, one would guess, might be a little different.

That, I think, is something rather beyond argument. The non-fan-reader just doesn't react quite the same. One of his characteristics is that he doesn't write letters. You have to contact him personally to learn his likes and dislikes.

But the curious thing is, he constitutes the bulk of the readership. He not only helps you active-fans to get your science-fiction magazine, but without him, you plain wouldn't get any at all. They'd cost you about \$500.00 a copy without the non-fan-reader.

The active fan is extremely valuable and helpful to the editor; his cries of protest as useful as pain symptoms to a doctor. But sometimes the pain can be what medicine knows as a "transferred symptom." The intense pain of angina pectoris sometimes manifests itself not in the heart, which is in trouble, but in the lower abdomen. A careless surgeon may recommend an immediate appendectomy--with disastrous results as an overloaded heart is further shocked by the anaesthetic. Similarly, a reader's reaction to a story which he feels is unsatisfactory may be transferred to the illustration and artist, and vice versa.

I don't intend to say that that always happens; I merely point out that comments should be analysed, weighed, and acted on en masse, not directly, immediately, and without further consideration.

Incidentally, re conservatism, I might point out that Moskowitz is bitterly accused of being a reactionary himself. As to Moskowitz' specific points: The type in Unknown has been changed. That in Astounding is being changed with the February number. It would have changed sooner, but that I wanted Smith's serial to be consistent in type-face throughout, for those who like to bind it separately.

Illustrations are at present the thing we're working on most. Definition of "good" requested. Taurasi, I know, likes covers with violent color-contrast--reds, greens, yellow and blues strong. He must be disappointed, I'm afraid, because the vote of the non-fan-readers I've contacted has been unanimously against him. Good artists are much more difficult to find than authors, because the artist's job is much arder. Artists must visualize details minutely; the author barely word-sketches machines he can't picture. The artist must work to a time limit. The author sends in his stuff when he's ready. We're working on that department.

Departments: No more coming up. Reason applies equally well to Moskowitz' comment "that the magazines display Campbell trait." I do not see any reason, need, necessity or sense in competing hotly and heavily on the one-dimensional line of science-fiction, when science-fiction is a field, not a road. It's broad. There is no reason or sense in making all science-fiction magazines as much alike as possible, because tastes among science-fiction readers vary. Some go in for departments. That is their field, their specialty, their development. I do not, myself, think it's the best. That's personal. But further, since they originated it, I do not intend to copy it blindly.

Why do I not think it's best? Because active fans, largely, are most interested in departments. Having the backing of Street & Smith's great reserves, I could put out a series of departments that would make any fan magazine extremely sorry. It could employ the best writers in the country. Naturally, it would be a form of competition no fan magazine could match or withstand.

You boys want it?

Neither do I. There aren't enough active fans in the country to make it pay me, and I'd be doing the faithful and interested, hard-working fans a handsome turn with that sort of thing. Moskowitz, incidentally, points out the new-author contests being run, though not, he suggests, by Astounding. Remember the editorial, "Contest," we had about eighteen months back? Man, we run a contest every month that's open to anyone who cares to try—with prizes running up to \$1,000. But it's an "open" contest. An amateur who can't keep up with the professionals isn't a valuable addition to the magazine. I'll help any amateur who wants to try and shows promise. Ask some of those like Asimov, Fyfe, Petersen. And it doesn't shut out the new writers like van Vogt, del Rey, de Camp, Heinlein, or the others who've popped up.

Moskowitz says I'm wrong not to follow every item of active-fan advice. Astounding has, four times in eighteen months, established new all-time highs in circulation.

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March 1940 [2, 3]

SONG OF TRAVEL

by
C. S. YOUNG

The hills are very near today,
I shall go a-voyaging;
The larks are high, the clouds roll by
And all the wild birds sing,
Lightly voyaging.

Your love shall be as mine has been
For green hills and the rocks;
And we shall go where hills are green
And where the dark bird flocks,
Close by the wave-lapped rocks.

Then farewell, nymph, for I must go
Alone and cheerly voyaging,
While thundery skies a challenge fling
And all the sleepy song-birds sing
Peace in voyaging!

* * *

March 1940 [2, 3]

FANS ARE THE BRIGHTEST PEOPLE!

by
DERN S. LAKEWOOD

It's true, isn't it? We scientificion fans are above the average in intelligence! Oh, it's been proven, and you know it--and moreover, you are proud of the fact that outsiders have recognized you 'as such. Nearly every one of you has or has had some distinction not connected with your fan activities, and yet which was more or less responsible for you becoming a fan. You, W. Lawrence Hamling, you have been editor of the largest school paper in the world; and you, Jack Spear, were the valedictorian of your class, I'm told. And Jim Avery was another high school editor, as well as a recipient of practical journalism experience, serving as a local representative for a large near-by daily; Louis Kuslan was once a winner of the Bausch & Lomb chemistry award--but why go on? Nearly all of you other two-hundred-odd fans are similarly qualified in some endeavor unrelated to your hobby.

But what makes a fan what he is? What is the creative urge that compels him to write, criticize, edit and publish, and discuss his merits and demerits? Why, out of an estimated 500,000 readers of science fiction, does a mere handful, really less than 1/2%, become the fan authors, artists, editors, and publishers with no thought of monetary reward? There must be some good reason; and that reason is that the fans are actually above the average youth in intellect and ability. They are the thinkers, dreamers perhaps, but the doers, the ambitious, the enthusiastic, the successful young men and women with an objective to attain: the cream of half a million average Americans. We all know it; other people are only beginning to realize the fact. Publishers are choosing fans more and more as editors of professional ventures because of their ability to create and do. Even the eminent upper strata authority, Bernard de Voto of Harper's, who hasn't what can be called a love for the merits of science-fiction, at least concedes that its readers are far above the average western, mystery, love, or horror-thriller addict. And Jerry K. Westernfield, until recently assistant editor at the Ziff-Davis house, positively glows over the cranial capacity of the fans. He says, in part from the January [1940] issue of Writer's Digest, ".....is usually a boy in his late teens who has more than an ordinary interest in science..... he readers are loyal and are far above the average pulp reader in IQ."

So beaming into our mirror and echoing "how true, how true," we now retire to partake of our daily ration of brain stimulants!

March 1940 [2, 3]

A FAN'S PRAYER

by
DALE TABR

I like to think of other worlds and of Unearthly places
And does it do me any harm to visualize inhuman faces?
In stories forged by Smithies, I would traverse universes
In a fraction of the time you will take to scan these verses.
Still, though, I wouldn't do without my realistic tales
When even Neptune's out of bounds to captains and as nails.
And finally there's things at home which maybe could come true.
I like to read about those things, so authors, I ask you
To get my fancy out to roam and give it something new.

March 1940 [2, 3]

I

We who with trips beguile your pilgrimage,
 And swear that Martians live and pigs can fly,
 We backsters of the Gernsback lineage
 Who surely write your purse-strings to untie.---

What shall we tell you? Tales, marvelous tales
 Of space-ships, stars, and communistic glory,
 With P. S. D. and strong young Yankee males
 And German villains to round out the story.

Of places where the Atlantean kings
 Have lived for ages till some silly clown
 Messes around with dynamite and things,
 Pinches a girl and leaves the rest to drown.

II

And how beguile? Not even Wollheim knows,
 Despite his history of happy blunder,
 A lunacy as great as that of those
 Who take the Golden Road to Thrilling Wonder.

And there they wait, decaying peacefully,
 These modern giants of the new delights,
 They know, alas, that some day you and I
 Will softly rise and slay them in the night.

And then those space-machines that reach the stars,
 By rockets, atom rays or gravitation,
 Will, haunchwise squatting on the road to Mars,
 Sadly recall the '39 inflation;

And those bright editors who pinch our cash
 Will stand in bread-lines that stretch on and on,
 Ah, brave the days when everything goes smash
 And Marvel's but a star that once had shone!

(At the Rocket Field, Utopia, in Thrilling Wonder Time)

THE MECHANICS (together)

Away, for we are ready to a man!
 Our rockets sniff the lamp-posts and are happy.
 Lead on, O Wielder of the Oily Can,
 Lead on some Martian beauts and make it snappy!

THE CHIEF PILOT

Have we not under-jets and T-bars, too,
 Space charts to lead us onwards through the void,
 Ten crates of whiskey (strictly entre nous)
 And "How to Conquer Emptiness" by Freud?



* Pretty Scientist's Daughter

THE GRIEF SCIENTIST

We have some space warps of the latest types,
 (Martian and other foes wherewith to diddle)
 Which do all things from giving earth the gripes
 To playing "Dinah" on a one-string fiddle.

THE PRINCIPAL JEWS

And we've a parting gift from Mr. Goebbels,
 A fine of several million marks or so;
 But why should we bewail our erstwhile troubles?
 We're off to Mars to rule the blooming show!

THE CAPTAIN

But you are nothing but a pack of Jews.

THE PRINCIPAL JEWS

Sir, rockets are expensive, and we pay.

THE CAPTAIN

Bounce backwards, Ace! But Cosmos, who are youse,
 You half-wit loonies blocking up the way?

THE FANS

We are fanatics, master, we shall go
 Always a little screwy; then the moon
 Is full a padded cell is all we know,
 And some kind warder feeds us from a spoon...
 Maybe when magazines are bound with putty
 And Hitler breeds an Aryan down under
 We shall go sane; but surely we are mutty
 Who take the Golden Road to Thrilling Wonder!

CHIEF MECHANIC

Our geodynes grow rusty. Skipper, away!

BOOFUL MAIDENS

O please your grave decision to re-ponder!
 Is not New York the beautiful? O stay!

COMPANY

We take the Golden Road to Thrilling Wonder!

A MICHELIST WITH AN ADMIRABLE NERVE

Sweet to launch forth in article or story
 And tear opponents' characters to sunder,
 In mighty battles, terrible and gory,
 Along the Golden Road to Thrilling Wonder

A VERY ENTHUSIASTIC FAN

We do not want to read the lover's mean,
 Jungle romance or exploits of the tundra,
 For lust of knowing what should not be known
 We take the Golden Road to Thrilling Wonder.

A NASTY OLD MAE

Have you not got Astoundings in your homes,
 And on your shelves/other blood-and-thunders?
 Seek not excess, or I shall bat your dome!

DOZ COMPANY

We take the Golden Road to Thrilling Wonder!

THE CAPTAIN

Set off the fuse, O Holder of the Light!

BENEVOLENT EDITOR

Ho, Travellers, I light it! (Aside:) But I wonder
 Whether they will have quite so fine a flight!

COMPANY

We take the Golden Road to Thrilling Wonder!
 (A blinding flash and a deafening report---the machine blows up)

BENEVOLENT EDITOR

What would ye, ladies? It was ever thus,
 And they'll come useful for our propaganda.

FEMALE RATIONALISTS

They have their dreams and do not think of us.

ANGELIC VOICES (in the distance singing)

We take the Golden Road to Thrilling Wonder!

THE END

April 1940 [2, 4]

)(

VISIT TO LASFL

by

WALTER SULLIVAN

Being as I am, a good fan, I like to get together with other of my kind and cuss and discuss things common to our species. I was, however, ever since April of last year, in a position in which I could do this only with a great deal of difficulty. To make myself plaine: I was in Oklahoma. During the first three months, I had seen only two fans. They were Jack Speer and Dan McPhail, whom I met in a two-by-four hotel room in Oklahoma City in June. I was fortunate, however, in being able to attend the World Convention with Dale Hart and four Texas friends of his. To be sure, I should have received my fill during that week of putting them up at our place in New York. I was even fortunate enough to be able to visit Harry Warner (that is a long and interesting tale best told by him). That was followed by a month and a half in the seclusion of Oklahoma.

As if that were not bad enough, I entered the University at Albuquerque, New Mexico (that land that fans forget). Mile upon mile and not a fan to be seen--beautiful New Mexico! I knew that if I did not meet a real fan, with whom I could talk, something terrible would happen. Of course, there was Jimmy, but he was only a poor substitute (and I do mean poor). Early in October, Cy (my roommate) remarked about going to L.A. for Christmas. He was not any too sure about it, but after I mentioned a few things I knew, in order to prevent any embarrassing complications from setting in, he decided to go.

We worked very hard in order to get our work done before we left. We spent nearly the whole day before we left working in the library on term papers. Naturally, I accomplished very little as I persisted in looking for things connected with stf. Finally, we completed all arrangements about ten that night. While going over my resources, I discovered that all my money was tied up in a money order which I had failed to cash. That was embarrassing to me the least, but I finally got around to it, and went to bed about eleven. About ten, Cy had gone out to have a few beers that were to help him sleep, and came in about eleven-thirty. Just as I began to dream about the palm trees of California, my door burst open and in staggered the poorest excuse for a human it has ever been my misfortune to gaze upon. I peered from beneath the covers and discovered that it was Cy, who informed me that it was five o'clock and time to leave. For a while, I didn't give a damn about fans, Los Angeles, or anything that necessitated getting out of bed at that time. I said to myself, "You know that you want to go to L.A., besides it's not cold out". I looked myself in the eye and responded: "Sullivan, you're a damn liar. Besides it's colder than Hell out." This conversation kept up for some time, and I finally managed to get up, and get dressed. As I stood in the middle of the room with my suitcase in my hand, Cy came strolling in with as disgusted an expression on his face as I have ever seen, and said: "Don't look now, but it's only a quarter to one. When I looked at the clock, one hand was on twelve and the other on five. How did I know it was only twenty-five after twelve?" I leaped for the bed, Cy leaped for me, and the next thing I knew, we were driving down the street. To make things more interesting, Harry had taken a sleeping pill and was not scheduled to rise until five the next morning.

Well, to make a long story longer, we started out at two in the morning, and drove till the same time the next morning, covering the astonishing distance of five hundred miles (an average of about twenty miles an hour). I suppose the fact that the car froze up at Gallup (the land of sunshine) and that we looked at everything within fifty miles of the highway had something to do with it.

We hit Wickenburg about two in the morning, a bit tired. If you have never seen that thriving little metropolis, you cannot appreciate the situation. We attempted to find some place to sleep, but were very unsuccessful. We were finally directed to the nearest bar (one of many), upon which were draped a number of the citizenry slightly under the effects of bottled refreshments. The bar was attended by a gal who seemed to have been around a bit, judging by the tear in her dress which exposed her person to the utmost advantage. After viewing the scene, it was the consensus of opinion that to all evidence eighty per cent of the population we re inebriated (crunk to you, Tucker) and the rest well on the way. After much discussing and cussing, we prevailed upon her to show us a room. The rest of the story is best left untold, except for the fact that Cy slept with his gun within reach all night after barring all the doors with chairs and tables. We were a bit uneasy, since the only available exit was by way of the balcony, which was quite high.

We drove as hard as we could in order to get to L. A. the next night at six. We arrived with about ten minutes to spare, and after much confusion obtained a room at the YMCA, after which I immediately dashed over to Clifton's Cafeteria; and after getting past about a dozen people, arrived at what I thought was the Brown Room. It was not the Brown Room, but the LASFL was meeting there anyhow. I mumbled something in my beard to the first person I met (who I think was Russ Hodgkins) and immediately spotted Ackerman, who introduced me to Russ, Yerke, and the others, whose names escape me. Before long, Morojo came in, accompanied by Pogo, of whose existence I was almost completely ignorant. During the next hour, mags were passed out, things were said, and questions answered. Before long, Bradley came dashing in. He did not seem to recognize me immediately, but nearly floored me when he did. While the others were being waited for, Russ, Yerke and Roy Squires became entangled in a discussion of Technocracy, which was quite hilarious at times. At last, the meeting was called to order, and Yerke read the

minutes. As I remember it, he was complaining about not knowing the number of members at the last meeting because of the inability of the members to conceive the simple operation of placing their names on a piece of paper. After expounding upon this for about ten minutes, something was said about an election. Unfortunately, the meeting proved to be a small one with only about twelve or fifteen members present (I might mention that I was only about half awake.) In order to raise money for the chapter, an auction was held. I don't recollect just what kind of auction it was, but it was certainly long and drawn out (recommended for an uninteresting evening). If it had been held at the Convention, we would still be in New York and Moskowitz would be using his tenth set of vocal cords. As I remember, a small, poor illustration was sold for about four dollars. After about four hours of this, hostilities were called off and everyone went home. Forrie was to leave for San Francisco on the next morning, so I made an appointment to visit him at his house at nine.

Being quite tired from the trip and from the ordeal of the auction, I slept until about eight-thirty the next morning. Dashing from the Y, I boarded the first street car marked N and leaned back to rest a bit. After about half an hour, I discovered that although I was on the right street car, I was going in the wrong direction. That necessitated returning to where I started and continuing on to Forrie's place. Not being very observant, I rode past the street I was supposed to get off at, and had to walk back about three blocks, where I met Ackerman. We exchanged greetings, and I apologized for my tardiness as we continued down an alley to his abode, which we entered from the rear.

We visited first his room, which I really need not describe in detail, in as much as the room of nearly every fan is its almost exact counterpart. The only difference between his room and mine was that it was smaller. It contained two or three original finlay covers from Weird, an excellent oil painting by Ferguson, a complete collection of the pro mags, and many books and fan mags new to me, not to mention stills to the right and to the left. He then took me into another small room which contained the bulk of his book collection. Just how many there were, I don't know. And still again, he showed me more books in another room. The next step was the garage where Mr. Ackerman keeps stf material which he has hopes of selling. As we left there, he pointed to another door and told me that there was more behind it, but he could not get it open. There followed a discussion of many subjects, after which I left in order to give 4E a chance to get ready for his contemplated trip. He accompanied me to the corner where I caught the street car and where we parted with hopes of meeting at the next convention.

After returning to the Y, I called Russ Hodgkins and made an appointment to meet him that afternoon, after which I dashed out to look over a few magazine stores just out of curiosity, since I could not buy anything. About three, Russ showed up and I checked out of the Y. I might mention here that Russ was not exactly that which I expected him to be, but I was not disappointed in the least.

We then picked up Pogo, charming Pogo, who did not disappoint me either, and continued to the Hodgkins residence where we killed time until six when we were to be the guests of Morojo at dinner. This time was spent in viewing Russ' collection, reading Stf and Nonsense, and discussing the Convention, recent events in the East and Technocracy. About six, we cruised to Morojo's domicile in Russ' sedan, where once again a collection was surveyed and a place of eating was debated upon. An Italian restaurant was selected, and off we went in Russ' buggy once again, happy though a bit crowded. Although everyone was hungry before the meal (at least I was), all were quite satisfied long before it was concluded. Between and during the numerous and varied courses, many subjects

were brought under discussion. I remember arguing with Pogo on the attributes of pickles and other spicy (read on quick, Tucker) foods. There was also a discussion with Russ on music, classical and popular. I might say that Mr. Hodgkins' taste in music is quite poor. Russ also explained to me the merits and ideals of Technocracy, and I returned by airing my political ideals when I should have kept my mouth shut. After dinner, we returned to Morojo's where it was decided that Pogo would sleep with Morojo and I would spend the night in Pogo's room. We then returned to Pogo's apartment where I was left alone but happy, and Pogo continued on to Morojo's.

My memory of the next day is a bit hazy. I do, however, remember meeting Pogo on the street while on my way to Morojo's. I can't remember if I met Morojo before she left for Phoenix, but I have a faint recollection of such a meeting. It was on this afternoon (Saturday) that I got in touch with Harry and Cy for the first time since we parted on Thursday night. For all I knew, they might have left town. We finally got together and drove around looking at the homes of stars and studios--recommended for a boring afternoon. Cy and I spent the night viewing a show on Main Street. ~~Was~~ Good old Main Street.

If I am not mistaken, Pogo woke me up the next morning to look for a Christmas present Morojo had left. After that was found, we said fond goodbyes, thinking that we would not meet again soon. I was supposed to have dinner with Cy and Harry that afternoon, but was not able to find them until about six, so was forced to spend most of the afternoon in bookstores. At seven that night, we were going to leave for Albuquerque on Tuesday morning. At seven-thirty, we were going to leave on Monday morning, and at eight we were undecided. While this was going on, I got in touch with Pogo and talked her into showing Cy and myself around L.A. that night. After getting directions from three people, we started for Pogo's. With the help of a map of the city, we became hopelessly lost and wandered around for about an hour. By the time we finally arrived, Morojo and Pogo had given up all hope and had gone to bed. After getting Pogo out of bed, the three of us started out to cover the metropolis. All I remember is visiting some Mexican street and a Chinese labyrinth and ending in a Brown Derby where Cy could not get a glass of beer.

After we left Pogo, and returned to Morojo's room, Cy decided that he did not relish the idea of chancing the trip back to where he was staying. In view of this, we spent the night at Morojo's discussing all that had happened since we left Albuquerque. We pulled out of LA the next morning, happy and contented. Before I conclude, I would like to thank 4E, Morojo, Pogo, Hodgkins, Bradbury, and anyone else who helped to make my stay in L. A. as enjoyable as it was.

THE END

April 1940 [2, 4]

WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT

by

J. Michael Rosenblum

OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET, by C. S. Lewis [Bedley Head, 1939]. One of the best fantasies I have ever come across. A comparatively simple story of a visit to Mars involuntarily made by a professor of philology which develops into a revelation of the backwardness of earth as a planet. On Mars are three completely different creatures, ruled by a planet entity, and who have never known discord or war. All are civilized in their own way, some beaver-like creatures as agriculturists, lizard-like ones as mechanical workers and artists, and some queer elongated hardly material beings as philosophers and thinkers and therefore scientists. Beautifully thought out and containing a sensible message--I recommend this book, as one of the classics-to-be.

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April 1940 [2, 4]

TALE OF THE TORTLEWITCH

by
Guy Amory

Mr. Smirch was feeling miasmal. At ten second intervals, he paused as he walked down Park Avenue and burped from back of a carefully shielding hand. He glanced nervously from right to left and smiled weakly. His wife, evidently embarrassed by Smirch's sordid burpings, walked three or four blocks ahead of him.

Mr. Smirch, needless to say, needed a remedy. He had tried soda, holding a bag over his head, ducking his noodle into a bucket of water and inhaling fifty-two times, but it was all to no avail. He still felt bloody beastly.

But all of a sudden, Mr. Smirch noticed that he was being followed by a Martian. Not a big Martian, of course. That would be fantastic. But a little Martian.

"Hey, bud," called the Martian. "Don't you feel well?"

Mr. Smirch belched none too gently in reply.

"Well, try one of my little atomistic disrupter pills," suggested the Martian. "They'll get rid of that feeling for you. Good for halitosis or heavy stomach, gall stones and worry."

"Thank you," said Mr. Smirch taking out a million dollar bill and handing it to the Martian.

"That is quite all right," said the Martian. "Toodleoc."

So Mr. Smirch caught up with his wife and showed her the pill the Martian had given him, between belches.

"Just think," said Smirch. "No more gastronomic explosions!"

There was a benevolent smile on Mrs. Smirch's face as she said, "Thank god, Joe." His name was Joe. And they both strutted home like a couple of drum majors.

Joe went into the closet where a mirror hung and looked at himself. Immediately, reactionary, he burped.

On the next burp, Joe hit a high C above high C. The house shook warningly.

"For heaven's sake," cried Mrs. Smirch, "take the pill and stop that noise."

"Yes, dear," said Joe.

"Yes, dear," said an echoing burp.

He took the pill.

Mrs. Smirch was amazed. My, how silent it was all of a sudden. NOT A SOUND IN THE WHOLE HOUSE. Those marvelous pills!

She went to the closet and looked in.

Mr. Smirch was not there. He had vanished.

And there was a little puddle of flesh on the floor.

Mrs. Smirch's eyes looked like slots in the Automat.

She looked at the mirror, giggled --- and then ---

--- She burped!

It was then that she noticed she was being followed by a Martian. And they got married and lived happily ever after.

April 1940 [2, 4]

WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT

by

J. MARGARET ROSENBERG

PRELUDE IN PRAGUE, or The War of 1938, by S. Fowler Wright. I am not sure whether this book is science-fiction or history. As it was written in 1932 perhaps the former category is still correct. A "warning" book, it deals with the rise of the Nazis, their secret rearmament and sudden attack on Czechoslovakia. An intelligent forecast, it has not come absolutely as Mr. Wright saw, but any further discussion takes us into the realms of present day politics. An interesting might-have-been.

L'SS

by

Norman F. Stanley

At length everything was in readiness for the great experiment, and Gregory Flindersholt moved tensely about, intent with last moment inspection and adjustment. Nothing must fail him, he thought, as he stopped to gaze reflectively into the opalescence of the sphere upon which the complex maze of apparatus converged.

For it had been nearly a quarter of a century that he had spent with his researches to wrest from space its secrets, and it was five years to the day since first he had succeeded in weakening the transdimensional barrier. Then, as he would today, he had driven his powerful radio beams through, and found the world of Gaea — and L'ss.

L'ss was a gaeon, native of a world so like earth that Flindersholt in a moment of fancy had named it synonymously. Gaea was the third of the nine planets in the system dominated by the yellow sun which Flindersholt had called Ra. In this and many other respects it was indeed a second earth. Yet Gregory Flindersholt had never seen the lush greenness of this amazing world, nor beheld its sun or its lone dead moon; only through the word-pictures of the incomparable L'ss had he gained an insight into his discovery. L'ss, like all of her kind, had sensory equipment capable of responding at will to a wide range of etheric vibrations. And so it chanced that on the day when Flindersholt's signals first came through, she had detected them, and sensing intelligence behind them had been quick to reply. The result, an indefinible combination of radio and telepathy, had burst from the instruments of the astounded Flindersholt as — seemingly — English words! And in this manner L'ss of Gaea and Gregory Flindersholt of earth came to know each other.

The five years that intervened had passed swiftly enough, it seemed. Gregory, the recluse, had kept his discovery from the world of men to sit daily for many hours at his instruments, where once en rapport with L'ss he absorbed the lore of Gaea.

In this custom of his, then, lay perhaps the explanation of his nervous expectation as he made ready for this new experiment in communication. For Gregory Flindersholt, ascetic, prematurely aged savant that he was, had fallen in love! Yes, — unbelievable thought! — during those hours spent in mental contact, Gregory had come to love her, L'ss, denizen of an alien yet hauntingly familiar world. Nevertheless, there was, perhaps, a reason for this mad love of Flindersholt's. The voice, the very personality of L'ss brought back the sweet and the bitter of his memories of more than two decades past. Then she seemed almost the reincarnation of the Lisa of those brief months of happiness he could never forget. Yes, the association was a strong one, and the mental picture that Gregory painted of L'ss had come to be that faded one which was the only adornment of his severe quarters. The illusion persisted, for, strangely enough, any attempt that L'ss made at a description of herself or the inhabitants of Gaea failed utterly. The results were unintelligible.

With this reawakened love, there had come also an intense desire to Gregory actually to look upon L'ss and her world of Gaea. To this end, then, he had applied his every scientific talent; and finally there had emerged from his experiments the complex device in which the two-foot vapor-filled sphere served a most central purpose.

But all was in readiness, and with a final hasty glance over the entirety, Gregory stepped to a high-tension switchboard. First, colossal forces must be exerted to break down the trans-dimensional barrier that had been erected when space itself was born — he quickly depressed a small lever. From an adjoining

room came the dull thump of a massive coil switch. Simultaneously the transformers grouped against the farther wall moaned dismally, while bus bars on stilt-like insulators coronaed hissing as twice a million volts surged through the apparatus. Flindersholt tensely eyed a flaring red column as it began a slow climb up a barometer-like neon indicator. An atmosphere of intolerable strain was becoming manifest. In some extrasensory manner the impression gained was that of titanic force straining to the utmost against unimaginably stubborn resistance. But even the foundations of the universe must yield when certain limits are exceeded -- with a bone-cracking snap the neon column dropped from the top to within an inch of the bottom. It was not, however, the apparatus that had failed, for on the panel there now burned a clear, cold pilot lamp. Though no other effect was visible, Flindersholt knew that once again the barrier was down. Swaying and gasping for breath, he clung to a table top. The sudden collapse of forces such as these could do inexplicable things to a man.

A moment sufficed for recovery and with ill-concealed impatience Flindersholt turned to his communication equipment. A low hum pervaded the room as banked tubes clowed dully. Gregory dropped quickly into a chair beside the globe.

"L'ss -- L'ss!" he called into the microphone. For a moment all was silent and then --

"I am here, Gregory." A low feminine voice whispered from the speakers.

"L'ss," spoke Gregory, "all is in readiness!"

"I, too, am ready, Gregory." What meaning those simple words expressed! If there was the barest chill of foreboding in them, Gregory did not notice it as he eagerly reached for the control panel newly set in place beside his desk. For a moment his hand hovered on a switch handle and then swung downward.

From triple tubes, three glowing electron beams flashed down corridors of Pyrex and Jena, past deflecting coils and anodes, to converge to a point of blazing incandescence within Flindersholt's sphere of fluorescent vapors. Three dimensional television it was, this latest triumph of his science: triple beams of cathode rays building up a stereoform image within the fluorescent sphere! Swiftly Gregory's hands moved over multiple focus and sweep controls and the beam fanned out to scan the entire volume of the globe. For a moment the fluorescent vapor roiled about in a riot of glowing color, and then with startling suddenness became crystal clear. Success! For within the sphere was mirrored a scene almost earthly in appearance -- close-cropped greenward and in the distance stately structures gleaming with pearly iridescence in a morning sun. Nowhere evident was complex apparatus such as filled the laboratory of Flindersholt. They of Gaea, adept at all manner of mental phenomena, depended but little on such material aids.

"L'ss!" cried Flindersholt joyfully. "L'ss, I can see! Where are you, L'ss?" As if in answer to his query, there moved into the field of vision a -- a beast! For a long moment Gregory's horror was masked by a refusal of his mind to believe.

"L'ss!" he cried in panic. "Where are you? I cannot see you!"

"I am here, Gregory," came the soft reply as into Flindersholt's unbelieving brain the monstrous truth seared. It was impossible, unpermissible, his mind vainly shrieked. "Not L'ss! Not L'ss, the kind, the gentle -- this reptilian monstrosity -- No!" But in the background, the subconscious, his scientific intellect, for the moment subjugated by emotion, knew and assimilated the merciless logic. Two worlds so utterly alienated could not be alike in every respect. Even under almost identical conditions there still remained many unpredictable factors governing the course of organic evolution.

For a brief moment the monstrous frame housing the soul of L'ss stood in hesitant bewilderment, somehow sensing the turmoil in the mind of Gregory. Then the swaying neck reared back as the image in the sphere apparently gazed out and upon the horror-stricken Flindersholt. An almost human frown of concentration crossed her features, as by power of mind alone she peered across the gulf.

Gregory, drawn to the sphere by some horrible fascination, saw a shudder of untold revulsion overwhelm the image of L'ss.

"Oh, horrible! Horrible!" came her voice laden with ineffable sadness, as, with typical femininity, she turned to hide from her gaze the staring Flindershoft. With that the spell was broken. Giving vent to a hoarse, sobbing cry, Gregory flung himself back from the television.

Broken in spirit, his beautiful illusion shattered, he stumbled unseeingly across the laboratory. It was tragically simple, the accident. Blundering aimlessly into the massed apparatus he slipped and grasping for support found only the gleaming buses. The transformers shrielled in a dirge of death as Gregory tensed and stood rigid and pale-faced, a thin curl of smoke trickling from his tight-clenched fingers. For a moment he stood, his countenance frozen in its mask of horror. Then came the clatter of an overloaded circuit-breaker and he slid to the floor, his features relaxed into the barest suggestion of a smile.

"Within the sphere, the image of the grief-bowed Lass faded and died.

June 1940 [2, 5]

HAP

by

Mark Heinsberg

(While this article is more or less of an "advance rebuttal" to the "long critique dealing with Palmer and his two magazines", mentioned by Mr. Miske in his "Stardust" column for April, 1940, as to be among among the contents of his next column, the reader should bear in mind that I am not merely antagonizing the views of him, but also that I am now writing a long-contemplated defense of the "new regime", of Palmer, Amazing and Fantastic Adventures; an article I knew I would some day have to pen, for the benefit of that large portion of the fan field which seems to have formed very definite opinions, one way or the other.)

"I maintain", the editor was telling his interviewer, "that two hundred fan can not be taken as a cross section of the general reader-public. That what fans express themselves as wanting in a science fiction magazine is quite often just the reverse from what the average reader of pulps will pay fifteen or twenty of twenty-five cents for."

Those words were spoken a long time ago, as fan history goes, but they hold even more true today. I remember that "interview" well. The "new" Amazing -- the June, '38 -- had just "hit the stands" and exploded like a bombshell in the midst of a snug, self-contained, self-satisfied science fiction fandom. Noting the Chicago address, I immediately seized the heretofore non-existent opportunity to meet an editor, and rushed down to Ziff-Davis' offices. And thus I first met Raymond A. Palmer, by chance securing the first Chicago interview, which was later to be the stimulus for my "Amazing News" column in Fantascience Digest, marking the dawn of my career in fandom.

Palmer was cooped up in a two-by-four office, then, his desk piled high with manuscripts, all of which had to be read by him, and all but two or three of which were foredoomed to rejection. His worries included the immediate necessity of finding artists who could draw at least passable science fiction scenes. Every move he made was closely watched by the "big boss"; every

story accepted had first to run the gauntlet of uninspired "higher-ups", who knew neither science fiction nor its traditions. Nor cared a whoop about fandom, other than in terms of circulation. In short, Ziff-Davis had a "dud" on their hands, and if the magazine wasn't an immediate success under its new ownership, it was to be dropped--positively and conclusively. Palmer would be out of a job; the field would have been minus first one magazine, and then, as time wore on, Marvel Science Stories would have--as it did--disappeared, leaving TWS and Astounding the dubious honor of sharing the minute niche in the pulp field known as the pseudo-science or science fiction circle.

The fan field would have continued its parasite-existence, deriving whatever support and new blood the two pros were wont to permit. In all probability, there would still be those two s-f mags today! It is no secret that publishers are in the business to make money, and the success of one magazine in a field previously thought unfertile, is a "come-on" signal, a green light for increased magazine traffic. But had there been no success signs among the s-f mags, would publishers have risked real money in the issuance of more magazines devoted to that type? No! They wouldn't have had the courage to try something different. Would Thrilling have had the courage to put out Startling, and later Captain Future? Would Street & Smith have attempted Unknown; would we have Science and Future Fiction today? And Dynamic, yes, and even Famous Fantastic Mysteries?

But, I've digressed. I mean to point out the probable results if Amazing hadn't been the success it became in four issues. A success which paved the way for the "great avalanche" of 1939-40.

During many long discussions following that original interview, Palmer outlined his theories regarding the formula for a successful publication. "Why," he began, "was the original Amazing under Gernsback so popular? Well, for one thing, there was no competition. But neither was there a field. What did Gernsback do? His early issues fell back on the accepted classics, which no one could object to. Then, after a gentle introduction to the mysteries of Wells, Verne, Poe, and Cummings, his policy changed. Gradually, he gave the public a newer type of s-f. Creating the demand first and then satisfying that demand.

"Through 1927, he fed the public milk and honey, but less and less honey as time went on. By 1928, he had educated around 90,000 readers into reading, liking and accepting the type of science fiction he wanted them to read. Moreover, his authors had been able to develop with the slowly changing standards of Amazing, until they were entirely capable of writing exactly what Gernsback knew the public went for.

"Wonder Stories and Astounding were outgrowths of that original successful Amazing, as were the Annual and the Quarterly. But progressively, the editors of these new magazines, and even Gernsback, became less the pioneer in the field and more the editor who strove to get the best results out of the already-existing field. As a result, the new field of readers, who had brought about three new magazines during the Depression period were over-catered to. For a new magazine doesn't necessarily create a new group of readers to buy it; it draws heavily on the already existing field, correspondingly weakening the other publications also drawing on that field."

Those weren't his words, but they summarize his views. And it was just this situation Palmer realized when he took over Amazing. Teck Pubs' AS had failed simply because it wasn't good enough or popular enough to divert the readers necessary to the support of itself, away from TWS and Astounding. In other words, only 22,500 of those readers would buy the magazine every month, in addition to one or both of the others. A great number of the sum total of readers of science fiction bought all the s-f mags, but the majority, being restricted in either pocket or taste, were content with Astounding and/or Wonder.

Don't forget that Astounding under Clayton had faced that situation, which, to a lesser degree, caused its discontinuance. And Wonder had folded up in early 1936 because of that situation. But the editors of the new forms of these magazines had remedied the ailment by making their magazine good, so good as to swing the balance of readers into their fold. Tremaine, to be sure, did a little pioneering. But he didn't start from the bottom.

Palmer did; and he also went out of his way to please the fans. He's a fan too—but fandom chooses to forget. His first move was to satisfy that inconsequential group numbering 200, but making more noise than 200,000!

What of the back cover—the "gift" to the fan that eliminated a big source of revenue and entailed artist expense as well as cost of making another set of color plates? The Correspondence Corner, almost a free advertisement to every reader for the asking? The "Meet the Author" section—the photographs therein? What of the first large size format since Wonder gave it up in favor of the cheaper, more popular "pocket-size," in Fantastic? (A side-light on that: fans who "know so much more about putting out a professional publication than do the editors"! Fans who unanimously declared themselves for a large-size magazine, who "just knew" every other reader would agree, would have a hard time explaining the public's rejection of the large size Fantastic. The fans let themselves be heard through noisy voluminous letters, but the average reader doesn't write; he just doesn't buy. and that's a far more reliable barometer for reader-opinion than any number of fan like and dislike notes.)

And that isn't all Palmer's done for the fans. What of the publication of "New Adam" at the insistence of the select and elite? A venture that has yet to sell 100 copies to fans. How about the Paul Back and front covers; the cash contests, benefitting both author and reader? The gifts of free drawings to fans. The support of the New York convention in 1939, the even greater support of the Chicago 1940 S-F Convention.

Sure, Palmer's printed a lot of hack stories. Every day he rejects yarns simply because they're "too good" for his readers. But the policy he's been carefully adhering to is sound. It's bearing fruit today. He gave the magazine a distinct juvenile appeal in the early Ziff-Davis numbers, because he wanted to? He printed pulp trash—knowingly—because he wanted to? He introduced the "ordinary" story titles because he knew what he was doing; published simple science fiction tales, overladen with menace—and story.

Why? Because he was and still is introducing a whole new field of science fiction readers. Attracting them by lurid covers and "menace" titles away from the Mystery and Western and Love and God-knows-what-else fields. These fields can spare a 100,000 less readers, and science-fiction can use them.

So, if you're a fan and you're dissatisfied with the stuff printed in Amazing and Fantastic, read some of the real old-timers in the early Wonders and Amazings. The chances are, you'll turn away in disgust at the simple plots, the corny situations, etc., in those early s-f yarns. But you loved it then! And your tastes have matured through long familiarity with every possible plot or situation encountered in the average story.

This new group Palmer is "educating" into advanced science fiction, is eating the stuff he is giving them with relish. It's simple stuff, but they probably couldn't stand "advanced" s-f at this stage of the game. Yet, little by little, the quality of his stories is increasing. The average reader is unaware that what he's reading is advanced material over the tripe he was first introduced to, but it is. At the rate Palmer is going, in another year they'll all be "caught up" and ready for whatever new type of science fiction the trend indicates.

That is why I advocate the "Palmer regime." His is the hard and thankless task of carrying out a long-term policy, designed first for immediate results to his Amazing and Fantastic, and second for a bigger, better science fiction field. He hasn't brought science fiction down to the common masses, he's brought the masses up to science fiction. And they're still on the way up.

Behind the scenes, Raymond A. Palmer is conscientious, hard-working, yet always ready and willing to take time out to visit with some fan on a pilgrimage to his office, even though it often means a corresponding over-time session in order to finish up the day's quota of work. He regards fans and fandom highly; he advocates and supports all their constructive activities; he's a fan himself. But he refuses to accept a few letters from disgruntled cranks as a cross-sectional opinion. And I, for one, believe he's right.

And now, Raymond A. Palmer edits three magazines, has a special New York representative, a first reader and a second reader, a private secretary. He drives around in a 1940 Buick. All these things attest to the soundness of his theory--now an established fact--and his great abilities in editorial work as well as in writing capacities. And personally, Ray is very human. He likes praise, sincere praise; he doesn't love criticism, but if it's constructive, he'll give you the best audience a fan could find anywhere. And, if necessary to defend his policies, he'll argue any point to its bitter end to prove he's right. If it's one of those rare instances when he's wrong, the fan often leaves the office with an original drawing as a prize of war. In spite of Ray's rocky career, he hasn't lost his ability to laugh at and with the world.

Yes, I advocate Palmer because he, if anyone, gave the pro field a new lease on life, by introducing the desperately needed "new blood." Moreover, he predicted the flood of new s-f mags that followed the return of Amazing. He's indirectly made the fan field stronger through making the pro field what it is today. For a larger pro field means a bigger field for fandom to draw its new blood from, also. This has contributed greatly to the independence fandom enjoys today, of its ability to continue without being a parasite on the z pros.

This article will probably go against the grain in fandom, but I believe the days are over when a celebrity has to die before all his achievements and contributions to the field are recognized. Homage to Palmer now, when it'll do him some good!

June 1940 [2, 5]

SOME NOTES ON THE VOMBIS

by

Robert W. Lowndes

Inasmuch as of late the term "vombis" and associated terms, such as "vombicism," "vombitation," and "vombic" seem to have crept into vogue, perhaps a few stray notes on this little-known entity would not be amiss here.

The vombis has been known to adepts, occultists, and un-numbered victims for many centuries before the dawn of recorded history. Alhazred makes mention of them in "Al Azif," known to lovers of weird fiction as the terrible "Necronomicon," and still further mentioning of them, by name, may be found in Von Junzt's "Nameless Cults," though in this case the distortions of the pirated translation are more than apparent to anyone who has read the original. As to the Golden Goblin edition, perhaps some of my readers can tell; I have not seen a copy, but it is possible that the vombis was not expurgated. The "Song of Yste," however, is quite definite, although it suggests far more than it states. (That is the trouble with these books. One reads them thinking to glean a great mass of chilling and unholy knowledge. One does, but in so doing, you find constant references to other works, and other characters, most of them entirely unknown, and where you started, desiring knowledge of one thing, you finish thirsting for more data on a dozen. Even the student is sent from source to source, and there is no end. I thought I would be content with the "Necronomicon" and even more so when I found a copy of the "Song of Yste" before I had read the former; now I find that, with a long row of forbidden

books and mss. across my shelves, I have only begun my collection of the unknown and forbidden books. There is much more truth than poetry in a sonnet I read some time ago in an amateur publication: I think the title was "Les Livres Damnees," but the name of the writer escapes me at the moment, unfortunately.) Other sources which give more or less detail are "Thingee of Evills" of Tyr Jalnaak, "A Dissertation Upon That Which Stalks in the Night" by Pere Ereville, a really delightful, and quite priceless little volume, and the outright sensation-mongering "Night Book" of Jaques Mosqueau. I shall attempt to give a brief summary of the essential factors about the vombis and will also give a brief definition of the more commonly-used terms among the devotees of vombicism. Perhaps some of my readers have further sources of information and can round out this article with more definite statements than I can make at the present time.

The vombis is an entity of intelligence fully equal, if not superior, to that of man. Of a composition as yet quite unknown though some have made guesses, and possessing the ability to change form at will. So excellent a likeness can the vombis assume to any object or living thing, that, except in cases of active malignancy, it cannot be detected. One might scoff at this, and say, by virtue of this statement, the very typewriter on which I compose this article may be a vombis. The truth is, that, for all I know, this typewriter is a vombis; my only reason for doubting it is, that in all the years I have known it, it has never acted contrary to the mechanical nature of typewriters.

It is, of course, much more romantic, and offers a great field for spine-tingling fiction, to depict the vombis as aping only life-forms, rather than inanimate objects. But the facts will not agree with the writer of weird tales, for the vombis may just as well be the table upon which the unsuspecting farmer places his evening meal, as the lovely stranger who comes to his door, or the unseen thing scuttling around in the dark of night between the walls. Pere Ereville tells of a vombis which passed as a tree, as well as vombi in the form of rocks and swords. And one writer whose works have come down to us tells a tall tale of an old Roman swimming-pool, the water of which was in actuality a vombis. Despite its humour, deeper study into the subject will show that it is not impossible.

It is this which has led students to make such a high estimate of the intelligence of the vombis, for it is difficult to believe that pure instinct could make a creature assume the forms, and not merely the outer forms, of artificial objects, in place of aping only natural animals, birds, or fish. That the vombis has often caused great terror and havoc in entire villages, and that, during the Dark Ages, it was often known to pose as a vampire, may not necessarily prove it is by nature malignant, as far as man is concerned here.

And there are a number of things which lead one to ponder: as far as is known, no vombis has ever been killed. The form which it took appeared to have been slain, at times, but in every case this form has disappeared before the natural period of manifest putrefaction and dissolution set in. In the great majority of cases of vombicism, the murderer, or murderers, have merely vanished as suddenly and inexplicably as they appeared. For the most part, people have thought them demons, ghosts, elementals, goblins, etc., which were properly exorcized and the Church, in those days, always fostered this belief. It is only upon very rare occasions, such as in Pere Ereville's book, which was brought to light some twenty years after his death, and printed and circulated privately, that the question of vombicism in these demonic cases has been raised.

The "Song of Yste," however, takes precedence for the scope, magnitude, and grim, cosmic horror of its suggestions. Reading these, one ceases to wonder why the Church so bitterly hounded the Kirkas, who translated it from the original into the Bizantine Latin, for the concept of the vombis strikes at the very heart of religion. It is no less than a suggestion that the vombis are superhuman entities, well aware of man's existence, who are using man merely as a means of amusement or experimentation. It is they who have been the sources of all of man's legends and fairy tales, and they are what man have described as demons, ghouls, werewolves, vampires, elementals, and wizards. Demonic possession, they suggest, is merely the intrusion of the vombis upon a living mortal; wizards actually evoke vombis, rather than what are called familiars; those unhuman humans who were the most dreaded and cruel sorcerers of the olden days were men into whose minds vombis had entered, so that their thoughts, desires, and outlook were no longer entirely human. Further things that the "Song of Yste" mentions are too soul-shattering to describe here.

(I might mention, that the "Song of Yste" is, roughly, the writing of some nameless man, or men, handed down from the preglacial ages. Whether one man composed it, or whether it was the work of many, the philosophy of an entire culture, we do not know. Nor do we know just what "Yste" stands for. It might have been a word to signify a certain type of knowledge, or person; it might have been the name of a particular individual, or group, or culture; it might have been the legends of a nation come down in fragmentary form. At any rate, these writings are entailed in what is called the "Song of Yste," but the book consists of, in addition to these, commentaries and parallels added by the Dirkas. The actual "Song of Yste" is in one type of print; the Dirka commentaries in another. One might add, too, that without the Dirka commentaries, most of it would be entirely vague and ambiguous, and some totally un-understandable. The style of both the translation and the commentary, despite the oftentimes revolting matter, is vivid, charming to read, and mystic in tone. Some places where the subject matter is more palatable it becomes a thing of beauty; it is always a thing of art.)

As I stated above, I shall close this note with a brief dictionary of well-known terms in relation to the vombis. Here they are.

vombic	weird and sinister, pertaining to the vombis, unpredictable
vomb	to impart a shuddery feeling, to fill with nameless dread, to arouse terrifying suspicions, to make one feel as if one were in direct contact with a vombis
vombitate	to go around doing weird sinister things
vombitation	the act of vombitating, actions without apparent human motives
vombulation	a vombic manner without action
vombulate	to put on a vombic attitude, without actually doing anything vombic
vombification	the act of vombing, or vombifying; "vombify" being much more commonly used than "vomb"
vombocia	an indescribable malady, seemingly without cause, and having vombic effects upon the victim
vombitoria	a vombic collection or repertoire
vombitude	the degree to which any person, place or thing is vombic
vombesis	an examination into, or evaluation of the vombitude of any vombitoria, evombification
evomb, or evombify	to determine the vombitude of anything described as "vombic," to hold a vombesis
evombulate	to give a vombic meaning to anything not heretofore considered as vombic
deevombulate	to divest of vombic meaning

- provombic referring to a conception of horror; a strangeness; before the vogue of vombicism
- vombique precious, a term of contempt for would-be vombicism, puerile attempts at horror, etc.
- vombitor a devotee of vombicism
- le vombiteur (for those who prefer the French; see vombitor)

(Note: "Los Livros Damnees" was originally published under the title of "Forbidden Books" in D. A. Wohlhoim's The Phantagraph, June, 1937; a revision was printed in the first issue of Strange, under the title of "Los Livros Dammoos.")

June 1940 [2, 5]

* * *

SONG OF THE GODS

by

G. S. YOUD

High in the air they hover, the masters of the sky,
 Watching the earth below them, watching the clouds go by;
 Watching the apes in the forest,
 And the birds at their fluttering play--
 Counting the twilight shadows
 That fade and vanish away.
 In close array they cluster, with pinions beating slow,
 Singing their song of triumph where the winds of evening blow,
 And mortals beneath them hear it,
 As they toil their lives away;
 Hear it, and breathe a blessing:
 "The gods are merry today."

June 1940 [2, 5]

WHEN STHANEE WAKES

by

Robert W. Lowndes

First was Lorgi, coming out of the darkened night sky, riding on the back of a gigantic bird-thing such as no man had seen before. And, standing alone on the desolate crest of the huge rock upon which his steed deposited him, he took from his finger a ring and from his bosom a locket; from his right hand took he the serpent-shaped ring and struck it sharply against the luminous locket he wore close to his flesh. And, behold, a weird glow filled the grey rock-crest, such was as seen by mariners far out on the sea (for this was before Sthaneer fell into enchanted slumber) and they were filled with fear and wonder. Then did Lorgi chant in strange accents such as no other wizard had ever used before his coming; nor has any mortal learned what were the words he chanted.

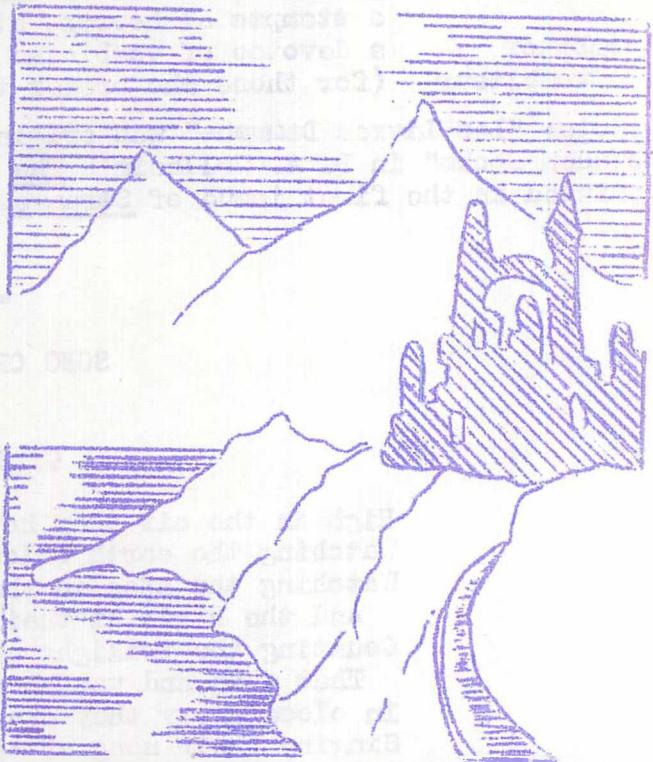
All night the weird glow hung over the crest of the grey rock, and those wizards in the lands beyond who had the temerity to spy upon Lorgi through their mirrors and vision-crystals saw naught but gigantic black shapes weaving in and out of the haze. And when at last the dreadful night expired and dawn rose from her couch beneath the sea, there was the dwelling-place of Lorgi with all its magnificently-wrought furnishings upon the rock crest. And there

were the thousand and one steps carved deep into the stone, running down to the shore of the sea, and the tunnel gouged through the bowels of the rock, leading to those lands and cities beyond its massiveness, the spires of which latter could be seen on clear days stretching out like toy kingdoms.

Of the life and workings of Lorgi and of his triumph over all the cities and kingdoms of Lanth, this tale does not tell. Nor is this tale concerned with the passing of Lorgi, even though legends of this have come down the road of thousands of years. Nor, again, is this story concerned with the great glacier that came out of the polar night, to cover all Lanth and for untold ages to rule unchallenged. Nor, finally, does this tale deal with how and why it was that Sthane fell into enchanted slumber and what were the phases thereof, nor what things must transpire ere Sthane could again awaken. Enough to say that Lanth, while old in the eyes of men, was still very young and that Sthane was mightier than the glacier or all the wizards and necromancies of the olden days.

There lived in the dwelling-place of Lorgi, in the days not long after the glacier had passed from the memories of living men, a certain necromancer by the name of Gharu. Long lived he here, but at length death took his shoulders and he was gone; then did the sons of Gharu prevail in the silent halls their father had once peopled with demon-folk, elementals, and a multitude of slaves, both living and dead, which he had stolen from the kingdoms of Lanth by nefarious incantations. Second only unto Lorgi himself was Gharu, but the sons of Gharu were but shadows of his memory. The elder son, Rugn, had learned some of his father's magic from the books of Gharu; not enough, however, to withhold his eye-sight from the hands of Time, who, daunted by the spells of the departed master, and unable to ravage the dwelling-place, contented himself with letting those who now lived therein know his presence. And Rugn, though straight of shoulder and sound of limb, was quite blind, his eyes no more than burnt-out braziers in his skull. Still, this calamity was not overly grievous to him for he knew every inch of the dwelling-place, likewise every foot of the grey rock-crest, and every stone of the thousand and one steps leading down to the shore of the sea and the tunnel to the cities and kingdoms of Lanth beyond the grey rock. Wherever his blindness was a hindrance, there were the bright eyes of his brother, Sigur, to help him, for the younger son of Gharu, by virtue of spells laid upon him at birth, was still nascent, though his years were already thrice the life-spans of ordinary mortals, and the fires of youth coursed through his veins ceaselessly.

It was in the mind of Rugn, now to procure a leman for Sigur, for Rugn knew full well that the lad had long since grown tired of the dwelling-place, so solitary and desolate upon the rock-crest, despite its furnishings. He knew that Sigur looked often and longingly toward the cities and kingdoms of Lanth, and upon the forest beyond Castle Soritanis, where dwelt the kings of Lanth, in which forest could be found the supple-limbed and fair-bosomed wood-nymphs.



More than this, the presence of a woman in the dwelling-place of Lorgi would be most agreeable now. Although Rugn's flesh had not felt desire for some centuries now, still the soft hands of a comely young maiden would do much to make his declining ages pleasant, for Rugn knew very little of magic; outside of his longevity, now beginning to fail him, and a few spells which any sorcerer's apprentice could have duplicated with ease, he was entirely an ordinary mortal and the assaults of Time bore heavily upon him.

Thus it was that he sent his brother on a journey to the forest near Castle Seritanis, there to obtain a lock of hair from whichever maiden he found most to his liking. This was necessary for spells and chants which would transform an exquisitely-sculptured statue into a soft, breathing maiden, in the likeness, partly of whose hair was used; the beauty of this creature would never know decay: this planned Rugn for his brother. For he knew that a mortal leman would soon wither and die upon the barren rock-crest; moreover, even the loveliest would soon grow less fair with the passing of years, while this one would be as young and delectable when he, Rugn, was but dust as she was the day his chants first gave her life.

Rugn was more than a little surprised, therefore, when he heard the sound of Sigur's footsteps approaching, no more than a few hours after his departure. It did not seem feasible that the lad could have carried out his errand in so short a time. Still, Rugn had laid a geas upon him to depart from the dwelling-place and return not until he had secured a lock of hair from whatever maiden pleased him most. Rugn recalled, now, that he had made no specifications as to what type of female his brother was to seek, nor where he must go to find her. But where else could Sigur find a maiden save in the cities and kingdoms of Lanth, or in the forest about Castle Seritanis where dwelt the kings of Lanth?

In a moment Sigur entered the room, and Rugn heard his brother say: "I have found her. Lo, I have found the loveliest of lemans, oh my brother; it seemed to me that my heart has flown away from me, nor do I wish that it would return." And he sighed a sigh that left in Rugn no doubt as to his sincerity.

"You were most swift," he observed, "and, by Lorgi, I did not know it was the way of youth to execute such a mission so quickly."

"I did not go far," answered Sigur. "Nay, I had taken less than a dozen steps from the landing on the seashore when mine eyes perceived her form upon the sand. Ah, but my heart well nigh burst with rapture when I saw her; almost did I swoon with pure joy." He fell silent, breathing rapidly.

"The lock of hair?" inquired Rugn.

"It is here."

He dropped it into the other's outstretched hand. Rugn frowned as he felt it; it was soft and damp, and from it arose the unmistakable perfume of the sea. And there was about it a certain leathery feeling, unlike the hair of any mortal damsel or wood-nymph.

"Ah, but she is beautiful, my brother. Is she not beautiful? I have gazed upon her until my blood is turned to fire and my entire being writhes in torment. Such beauty is like the kiss of a scimitar; almost is it unbearable.

"But I forget; you cannot see her. Wait, wait but a moment until my breath returns to me, until my heart stills a bit that I may describe her to you.

"She is tall as the lolling lily of the swamplands and formed as fine as is formed the lily. Her hair is soft and damp and darker than polar night; her hair is fragrant as the lily of the valley, it cascades over her exquisite shoulders more beautifully than a fountain of silvery water and lies so gracefully curling upon her thighs. Her face is pale as marble in the moonlight; her eyelashes are silken strands resting upon the pallor of her cheeks; her eyelids are delicate and lightly veined. Her mouth is red as the pomegranate or as heart's blood, swiftly flowing, and her teeth are polished pearls. Her throat is curved gently as the lip of a tall urn; her breasts are full moons, high and majestic, with coral eyes that smile at you; virginal as the moon are her breasts and her thighs are superbly moulded as birch trees.

"She is lovely as the crescent moon riding naked above the trees, my brother; her loveliness is the loveliness of spring night over trees awaking. Could you but see her, my brother; could your eyes but behold her beauty, you would be enrapt even as I."

Ruga said only: "She is dead, my Sigur."

"But that cannot be! I tell you she is beautiful. The dead are not beautiful. The dead are not beautiful; they are loathsome. I have seen dead maidens many times and the sight of their bodies brings only horror and sickness to the beholder. Did I not see dead maidens many times in the days of old when our father brought slaves from beyond the grave? Did I not behold them walking about his halls like hideous statues with their rank, green flesh and horrible, staring eyes? And did not, many times of old, my father play fiendish jests upon me, sending some loathsome cadaver he had discarded to my couch in the guise of a voluptuous maiden, naked and desirous, so that I would be drunken with love and ecstasy, only to wake and find later a putrescent corpse at my side? She cannot be dead."

"Yet, she is. Her breast is icy cold and moves not, nor does any breath come from her parted lips. Those whom you saw in the olden days had been dead long before our father called unto them. This one has parted with life just recently—perhaps less than an hour before you found her."

"But you could make her live again, could you not, Ruga?"

He did not answer for a moment, then: "There are others, Sigur. There are others as lovely and desirable, nay, far more so, than she. Do not ask me to do this."

"But you could make her live again if you wished."

"She is of the sea," whispered Ruga, "and she belongs to the sea. Her hair is soft, but it is the loathory hair that betokens the sea's fatherhood. Were she not dead her hair would move and curl and creep like innumerable tiny serpents. Only one utterly evil could command her, for the evil in her face is as the bottomless pool in the sinister forest. And one night her lover would feel her living tresses tighten around his throat and thus would be the end. Have you not noticed that her hands and feet are webbed?"

"What then?" he cried. "What if her feet and hands are webbed, and if her hair is like unto seaweed? She is still more beautiful than any wood-nymph or mortal maiden—have I not seen these in the vision crystals? If she is unlike other women in some ways, then that but makes her more desirable to me. Let her live again."

"Sthane is master of the sea and father of all that swells therein. By his will move the tides with their terrible power and by his will come storms and typhoons and hurricanes. Behold how the tides have waged war upon this rock for thousands of years before the glacier came out of the north, and more thousands of years ere Lorgi came and made here his dwelling-place. Yet, the sea has not tired. Now Sthane sleeps the slumber of enchantment, but who other but Sthane caused Sthane to sleep? The enchantment is of his own making, and for what purpose, no man can tell. Is that not proof that Sthane is to be respected?"

"Behold how this grey rock is worn and wounded, see the caves where the marauding tides rushed in and out ere Sthaneo slept and the sea warred and the children of Sthaneo played therein; once all was solid rock. Lorgi's tunnel is but a small thing compared to the wounds made by the tides. Once this grey rock defied Sthaneo and sneered at the power of the tides; once it stood towering over the face of the sea laughing in pride and contempt. It does not laugh now; it is afraid. Behold how grey it has grown with fear and hatred for that which it once defied. Some day it will fall; when Sthaneo wakes, and the tides again begin their relentless war, then will that day of falling begin to draw nearer. That day when this great grey rock shall fall on its face before Sthaneo and the sea will overwhelm the rock and all that lies thereon. The tides will sweep over its crest and the children of Sthaneo will play and swim in and out of its broken body, for Sthaneo forgets not.

"It is not well to offend Sthaneo; what necromancy sent this dead daughter of the sea here, I do not know. But I know that we have never defied Sthaneo. Nor did our father. Nor did Lorgi, mightiest of wizards. Lorgi was courteous to that which lay far below the rock-crest, and made many sacrifices in honour of Sthaneo, ever remembering that there was one mightier than Lorgi. Our father was courteous to that which lay at the base of the grey rock and ever respectful; never did he undertake anything that might offend Sthaneo. This is wisdom, Sigur."

"What does the sea and its master care for us?" cried Sigur. "Sthaneo and the sea are vast and deep and unthinkably old. We are notes and less than notes upon Sthaneo's consciousness. Does the eagle chase flies? Oh, my brother, is it so much I ask of you: that you cause this maiden to become alive again that she may be my lover?"

"Sigur, listen to me. Listen ere you demand that I do this. You are very human, most unlike the breed of wizards, and your heart is the heart of a mortal such as dwell in the cities and kingdoms of Lantl. Destiny caused you to be the spawn of a wizard and placed upon you certain enchantments so that you are not like other men, but withal, you are the same.

"I can chant spells that will cause this maiden to awaken, and her breast will rise and fall, and the breath of life will come from between her lips. Her flesh will not be warm, for she is of the sea and her touch is damp and chill; yet, in her way, she will be desirable. But I cannot bring back her soul, my brother, evil as it is. You will never be able to love her, even were you capable, as was our father, of being enamoured of pure evil, for there will be nothing to love. At all times will she be the same; at all times will you see in her eyes the blankness of empty space, like . . . in the eyes of one whose mind has slipped away in the night. She will do as you bid in all things, but never will she do anything of her own volition, for a will of her own she will not have. If you desire her to smile, thus must you command, and she will smile. Her lips will part and form the expression you command, but never can her eyes smile for you for there will be no soul behind them. If you wish her to dance, then must you command her and she will dance. She will sway her body and writhe and moan as you desire, but her eyes will not dance, nor will there be anything of triumph, eagerness, or ecstasy when you catch her in your arms. When night comes, she will perform whatever love-rites you desire of her, but never can you be swept away by a wave of voluptuousness, for she can do no more than you explicitly command. What joy can such a mistress bring you?"

"She is beautiful," he whispered. "I shall name her Larani, and she shall be mine. You cannot deny me, Ruga."

And he knew that Sigur had heard none of what he had just said. Heavy with in him lay the knowledge that this was the machination of some strange doom, of which he could not read the secret and ending, nor could in any way alter. Yet, he put his hand upon Sigur's shoulder and spoke thus:

"Sigur, you are mad. You are mad with loneliness and desire unfulfilled and the beauty of this dead thing. Mine is the fault thereof and I shall make amends.

"I will give you maidens, Sigur: the dwelling-place of Lorgi shall be filled with the brightness of youth and sounds of laughter and revelry. You shall but need to think of what manner of leman you want and she shall be yours. And I will bring you strong handsome companions for your feasts.

"Hearken, my Sigur: In our father's books are secrets I have never used, runes that will open portals of time, chants that will unlock the doors to other worlds. Nymph, dryad, faun, satyr, flower-maidens, all manner of beauties from the cities and kingdoms of Lanth shall I bring here. You will look with me into other worlds and select any that suit your fancy therein; you shall look back into the days when Lorgi ruled and held court with his favorites, and any of those who please you will I call across the veil of time.

"You shall have golden-skinned houris from Saracene, maidens from the swamp-lands of Sugj whose eyes are green or fiery red, courtesans from corrupt Altashe with hair softer than silk and blacker than midnight, or redder than dawn, or silvery as fountains in the moonlight, golden as honey, or brown as the earth after rain; I will give unto you baroque maidens from the dawn kingdoms whose bodies are nettled like worms and are grotesque mosaics which swirl and writhe before your eyes, lemans whose bodies are covered with soft eider-down, and cat-women from the forest-cities of Zemd Altan.

"All these shall be yours and more, and some will be so alien that never will you be able to solve the mystery of their being. You shall know love and slow voluptuousness as no man has ever known, and I shall gird you with sorcerous strength so that you tire not. The least of these, my brother, will far transcend the ecstasy you could find in the arms of one brought back from the tomb.

"Which shall it be, Sigur, this I now offer you or my curse. For if you choose that I pronounce such spells that will bring Lurani to you from the silence of death, then will you never look upon a living woman, for I shall so curse you even as I chant the runes you desire.

"Choose, Sigur."

"There can be no choice!" he cried bitterly. "Curse me as you will, lay upon my head a thousand penalties, but give me Lurani."

He flung himself upon the breast of the sea-maiden and wept.

"I repent me my words," whispered Ruga, half to himself. "I repent that I ever felt anger against you, even though but for a moment. I shall not curse you, Sigur; I shall curse the sea and the master of the sea. I shall curse Sthaneo who has sent this dead thing to you and made you mad. By Lorgi, and the bones of Gharu, this is not to be borne."

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With solemn rite and ritual Ruga cursed Sthaneo and the children of Sthaneo, by Lorgi, by the bones of Gharu, and by all those nameless ones who carved and were served by the wizards of olden days.

But Santhoc lay sleeping.

Then Ruga performed the necessary enchantments to awaken the dead Lurani. Withing a circle of braziers burning strange herbs and oils, he placed Lurani on a couch, the silken coverlets of which made a curious and symbolic pattern. And, as he chanted, there rose up incense-fumes which made a veil around the circle which the eyes of Sigur could pierce not. And this was all as it had been in the days long past far before the coming of Lorgi.

As the last accents died away and the incense-fumes rolled back to part the veil of enchantment, Sigur saw that Lurani was indeed breathing. Her breasts slowly rose and fell. And if she had been beautiful to him as she lay dead upon the sand, she was a hundredfold more lovely now. Scarcely could he contain himself for joy as he rushed into the circle and clasped Lurani in his arms. If Ruga could have seen, he would have wondered at the sea-maiden's eyes, for they were not pools of blackness as he had predicted they would be. They were filled with strange light, those eyes, and evil desires lurked in them as Sigur crushed her body to his; and the hair of Lurani curled and crept, stealthily tightening about her lover as he caressed her.

And still the mist hovered over the face of the sea.

But Ruga had left the room and gone out of the dwelling-place that Sigur might be alone with his brimming cup of joy; and Ruga walked to the edge of the grey rock overlooking the sea and the mist that hid its face from sight;

And it seemed to him that a voice cried out in terrible accents, crying: "Sthaneo, Sthaneo!", but he was not certain.

But if he had not been blind, he might have seen the strange prodigy that now came to pass, the like of which had never been known before or has been known since. For Sthaneo had awakened and the sea was climbing the grey walls of the rock upon which stood the dwelling-place of Lorgi.

Higher still higher and yet higher it rose, until its surface was almost level with the rock-crest and the feet of Ruga. Then from the waters rose fingers of seaweed that crept along the rock and stealthily approached the feet of Ruga, who stood unaware of what was happening. Swiftly moved the tentacles of seaweed, and they wrapped themselves around the living body of Ruga, stifling his cries, and carried him over the side of the grey rock, into the depths whence they came.

Then arose from the sea a bevy of maidens, like unto Lurani, beautiful as she; soft and leathery was their hair and their feet and hands were webbed. Out of the sea they rose and ran quickly into the dwelling-place of Lorgi to the room where Sigur and Lurani lay together. And in the hands of the sea-maidens they bore a singular net, fashioned of fish-scales and strands of their soft, leathery hair. This they flung over the pair that lay together on the couch, oblivious to all save each other. And the maidens imprisoned Sigur and their sister, Lurani, in this net and hastened back to the edge of the rock whence they leaped into the sea, bearing their captives with them.

And finally there arose a great beast from the sea's depths, the terrible head of which reached far into the sky. With twelve monstrous, sucking arms it reached out and crushed within their grasp the dwelling-place of Lorgi with its black tiles, its sandalwood and teak, its strong-alloyed gold, silver, and beryl, and its magnificently-wrought furnishings. And the beast dragged the shattered dwelling-place from its position on the crest of the rock into the depths whence it came.

Then the sea sank down, down, down, past the thousand and one steps, until at last it came to its own shores. And the tides rose and flung a huge mass of stone that choked the great tunnel in the grey rock by means of which Lorgi had gained quick access to the cities and kingdoms of Lanth. Only then did the face of the sea become placid and did Sthaneo rest content.

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July 1940 [2, 6]

THE ADVENTURES OF A. SKELETON

by

James A. Tillman, Jr.

One evening last summer my father and I were loafing in our back yard, as we often do, and as usual, the conversation worked around to science-fiction. Edgar Rice Burroughs' "Pelucidar" stories came up for discussion.

Said I, "Well, it's a good plot for a story, but it so happens that gravity doesn't work that way. Rocklyne was right about everything falling to the center, in, let's see, what was it...oh yea, 'At the Center of Gravity!'"

"That was that cop and robber thing, wasn't it?" he asked. On being assured that it was, he went on, "Burroughs wasn't the first to make that mistake. I remember reading a yarn back about thirty-five years ago, with a hollow inner world. Its name was 'The Adventures of A. Skeleton'."

"Sounds like a side show freak", I said.

"So he was," returned my father. "He was the thin man from a circus, out of a job, and got to wandering around an oil field. He was six feet eight tall, and measured just six inches through. Anyway, he got up on a derrick, and a plank broke, and he fell down the thing."

"And conked his noodle?"

"No, the pipe they were sinking was just six inches across, and he plunked right into it. He sorta slid to the bottom and wound up in a cave. He saw a big pool of oil off to one side, and realized that the well was going to miss it. But he couldn't figger any way to tell them, or to get back himself."

"Same old hash," I murmured, "here marooned in strange world, and can't get out. Go on."

"Well, he wandered thru the caves, and at last reached the surface. There was the description of a lack of a horizon, and strange vegetation, and all. The way the sun of the inner world was handled was good. It was a ball of burning gases. The gases rose out of cracks in the ground, and of course rose to the middle, where they caught fire and provided light."

"Um, yes, and pray tell where all the carbon dioxide, and water vapor from such steady burning went? With something like that going on regularly, the dump would be rained out, let alone the percent. of CO₂."

"As usual, that wasn't explained. The story went on, about his finding a strange tribe, sorta furry, of course--"

"Of course."

"And helping win the war with the wicked tribe in them that hills, and then falling in love with the chief's daughter, and--"

"Wedding bells chiming."

"Of course, it ended with him getting a message to the surface."

"And how did he accomplish that? Build a fourth dimensional machine, and send it through rocks and all?" I queried.

"No," my father answered, "he made a gun, and set it up under the pipe he had fallen down, and fired a shell with his story in it up the pipe."

"Some gunnery," quoth I. "What say we go over to the drug store, and have a limeade?"

He went.

July 1940 [2, 6]

THE STANDARDIZATION OF SCIENCE FICTION

by
Raymond A. Palmer

[Note: This article was published in The International Observer for January, 1937, at which time Mr. Palmer was a fan who probably did not have any expectations of achieving editorship. In view of the discussion now going on in Spaceways over the Palmer magazines, it is quite appropriate to reprint Palmer's views on the subject, made when he was still a free unit. D. A. Colheim.]

To my mind, science fiction is something vastly different from the ordinary brand of pulp fiction. The old Amazing, and the early Wonder, typified it exactly. We can't compare those tales with science fiction of today, of course, since they are feeble and far outmoded. But neither can we call present day stories as typified by the three magazine carrying them, as the new mode, and at the same time call it science fiction. It has lost the newness, the originality, the daring, the personal touch, that made the old Amazing so great. Today, science fiction is hackneyed. Editors have laid down a set of rules, and the men who formerly wrote science fiction because they loved it, and wrote what they dreamed, are no longer writing with their heart and soul in the work. They now have a formula—a fatal formula, I shall say. So, my definition of science fiction is not the fiction published today. I've managed to publish four yarns, and I pride myself on the fact that they were not written according to a formula. That is, except one. "The Time Tragedy" was written against a formula; against the rule Gornsbach had for ten long years—"you can't kill your grandfather or you won't be born!" And therein is the factor that is wrong with science fiction today; we have a can't where none should exist. We have a may not, a prohibition, a boundary that irks. And no writer puts his heels into anything he squirms under.

As to the future, I feel that there will be none, for science fiction writers who write from the heart. No more than western story writers today have any originality. The "west" of fiction is a set, mapped, and hide-bound tradition that can't be changed. Science fiction is headed toward those same futile walls. When P. Schuyler Miller wrote his famous "Alicia in Blunderland" series, he wrote one episode that hit it exactly, and that was the one concerning the omnipotent "formula."

As for what's wrong with science fiction, nothing. The trouble is with the editors. They have found a certain type of fiction which sells their magazines. They are interested solely in profit. And they will not change. Why change a good thing? they argue. Well, you can't ask a man to gamble with his livelihood, you can't ask him to risk his bank account, his job, his future, just for a principle. And so—we'll have a formula. And readers will say, "What's wrong with science fiction?" That is, the older readers—the new ones will never know the difference.

How to remedy this?

You can't.

July 1940 [2, 6]

STARDUST

by

THE STAR-TREADER

It is June 20th [1940] as I write these words; and very distasteful ones they are. It is my sorry task to tell you that Farnsworth Wright, late editor of Weird Tales, died last week. The cause of death was coronary thrombosis, after an operation.

Mr. Wright's untimely death brings to an end the career of the man who brought to fantasy such colossi as H. P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, Robert E. Howard, Miss C. L. Moore, and many others of the greatest contemporary artists of the weird tale. He piloted Weird Tales through many lean and dark years, but never once lowered its literary standards for the sake of commercialism. That high resolve was his ultimate undoing, for shortly after Weird changed hands in late 1938, he was forced to resign because he refused to cheapen the magazine. Weird Tales was unique among pulp publications for many reasons. It formed a granite wall of readers who could always be depended upon, and, strangely, a similar group of authors. Its contributors formed a circle similar to those existing about literary magazines of the nineteenth century, and Weird founded many a strong friendship. In fact, at least one marriage can be traced to it, as I shall tell you in a moment. Stories from its page received the highest literary commendation, year after year, and all praise belongs to Farnsworth Wright. He made many mistakes, and many of us often disagreed with him, but fantasy will feel badly his passing. We lose both a friend and a fellow fantasist, as well as a familiar figure in fantasy. He had been in it the longest.

I am happy to have more cheerful news for you, too. I am sure the congratulations of all fans are due Henry Kuttner and Miss C. L. Moore, who were married recently and now, no doubt, are very happy indeed. Kuttner and Miss Moore were both proteges of Wright and H. P. Lovecraft, who took great interest in their literary development. Miss Moore, in case you don't know, is one of the most beautiful women I, for one, have ever seen (in photo facsimile). Hank... well, without the mustache he's a nice guy. Congratulations to two of the swiftest persons I've met in tandem.

One reads with interest the Reinsberg article demanding "homage" for Palmer? Pretty funny stuff. To begin with, about those "deliberately bad stories". I have and can produce letters from Palmer raving about the super-stories he had awaiting publication—that constitutes a slight contradiction. Secondly, if this policy of Palmer's were to be believed, Fantastic Adventures' large size was the only cause of its adopting bi-monthly appearance. So obviously it now should both get back all old buyers and attract hordes of new ones as well. When is it going monthly, Reinsberg? And how is Amazing's circulation rising? Or is it? Third, the obvious fallacy is this: Palmer has, naturally, appealed to a most moronic class of readers, and consequently they're moving on to the new cycle: funnybooks. As opposed to this blindly absurd course, John Campbell has, especially with Unknown, appealed to the highest class of pulp readers. The results of each course now become apparent. Palmer is in hot water, with Fantastic Adventures slipping badly, and, I'll bet, Amazing no longer what she used to be. Campbell, on the other hand, has built up such an audience of solid, dependable, intelligent readers that Unknown is able, even if the attempt fails (as, frankly, I think it will, tho I hope not) to essay leaving the pulp field. Astounding, of course, is going along strong as ever. Both Campbell's magazines will feel somewhat the passing of the fantasy cycle in fiction...but watch what it does to Palmer's magazines!

Rumor has it that Amazing Stories (quarterly, shortly to appear, will number some 420 pages, and feature the reprint of "The Skylark of Space." Also, that Palmer plans to reprint the three other Smith yarns over which he held control, and many of Campbell's stories. It's quite possible, though, that this information is another of Rap's "jokes", and there's no means of checking definitely.

After reading Campbell's wonderful editorial about "But Without Horns" (June '40 Unknown), I could scarcely wait for the story itself. What a disappointment! Norvell Page, I've heard, is the lad who writes The Spider, a pulp messy mag, and how Campbell ever bought such an obvious imitation of the Spider formula, I don't know. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if the story wasn't an originally rejected Spider story. Miller would have been a super-criminal instead of a super-man, and Kildering would have been the Spider, rather than a G-Man. And there would have been a happy ending: virtue triumphant, the Spider the victor, etc. I'm not kicking, however, since it inspired that editorial. What a sweet fan mag article that would have made! I've already decided the only way to explain me is to assume I'm the first of the new race.

THE READERS ALWAYS WRITE

Damon Knight writes: I should like to point out that Miske has made an ass of himself in that paragraph on fanmags. [In vol 2, No 4. HW] His assertion that "Poorly duplicated, carelessly assembled" mags "with 50% poor material" take the bread out of the mouths of such sterling publications as Spaceways, Stardust, et al. strikes me as needing no comment other than a hearty snicker. Further, Mr. Miske overlooks the fact that some people are so low-brow, actually, as to like the mags he censures. Quite a lot of people, for instance, have expressed a decided preference for Pong. Another item that should be considered is the fact that most fans, on limited budgets, buy a fan mag--any fan mag--because they want to read it or collect it, or both. There are a few, like 48J, who send out five-dollar bills recklessly in all directions, just to help the new fan pub along; but not many. Hence, a magazine which goes on existing does so, either on its merits as a magazine or as a collector's item, or at its publisher's expense. What could be fairer? And in conclusion, fandom is not the exclusive club Miske, Monkowitz, and others assume it is. You don't have to take an entrance examination to become a fan; your name on a list of members is not required to prove you are one; and, thank God, you can't be expelled from fandom by any royal decree. And the publication of a fan magazine is a matter among the publisher, his readers, and the postal authorities. Nobody else, not even Miske, has the right or power to "clean house".

Donald A. Wellheim writes: I found the views of Mark Reinsberg and Miske very interesting. I must say that I am inclined in this instance to agree very definitely with Miske's views on Palmer's magazine. Certainly it is difficult to believe seriously that Palmer rates two readers when he so often publishes his own stories or orders a story written around a cover (as was the case with "The Fish Men of Venus"). What, one might ask, are the readers for? What do they read? Certainly not science-fiction manuscripts with any idea of buying any. For if that were the case, how did "The Fish Men" get past? Not to mention the works of Stebor and others such as the reprints of Palmer's old yarns in Science Fiction Digest. But then publishing your own works was always a nice way to augment your salary. "I disagree with Miske's pessimism in re the future of science-fiction magazines. I think the flood is actually still rising and we won't see the crest of science-fiction until October or November." "I find a small inconsistency in Reinsberg's account of his first visit to Rap and seeing his desk piled high with mss. I recall being told by some Chicagoan last May that the only reason that story by Hamling and Reinsberg Amazing published was accepted was because Reinsberg rushed it to him after finding out that Rap was desperately in need of a story. That doesn't sound much like a pile of manuscripts on his desk.

Robert W. Lowndes writes: An added note of interest on the subject of the vombis is that it is highly possible that most of the copies of "Song of Yste", "Al Azif", "Nameless Cults", etc., are, in actuality, vombas. When the owners of the various copies die, in one way or another, the dark volumes scuttle away in one form or another, to re-form in the shelves of obscure second-hand bookstores. This accounts for two heretofore inexplicable phenomena: (1) the disappearance of volumes of dark lore upon the decease of given possessors and (2) the fact that quotations of paragraphs from volumes (the same paragraphs) never seem to agree when coming from two or more separated occultists and students. Obviously when a vombis reforms as a volume of "Al Azif", it revises itself. "This hypothesis further explains the odd phenomenon--often noted by Lovecraft and CASmith--that the print in these hellish books seems to crawl along the pages, in many cases changing from one language to another. Pore Mandoville notes that later editions of the "Song of Yste" have no appendix; apparently it was bred out as a superfluous organ. "The protovombis is a vombis incompletely evolved; it lies between the chaotic maze-vortex and the shuggoth, which latter is but one stage removed from

the true vombis. The shuggoth, as is well known, can change shape under certain limitations, but is unable to ape other forms to the disastrous degree as can the vombis. Hence, the shuggothi now extant will be vombae. (It might be noted that the word Vombis, Vombae is an irregular Latin noun; the correct plural nominative has never been definitely determined as both "Vombi" and "Vombae" can be found in varied books on the subject referring to the plural of "Vombis".)...

Note: Pere Mandovillo is not to be confused with Pere Mroville. The latter is the author of the book "A Dissertation of that Which Stalks in the Night". Pere Mandovillo is the author of "On the Shape of Things Unseen".

Sam Moskowitz: Further Clarification for Campbell: "Were fans and readers' desires when it came to requesting large size magazines?" "First of all, the fans themselves were divided on this question. Witness old readers' columns. Some fans wanted large size mags, some small size---and both had their reasons for the same. It is safe to assume then that the readers were also divided on the question. I did not list large size as one of the essentials readers and fans expected of a magazine. A nicely trimmed small size mag like Astounding is just as dignified as a large size magazine." "There was no clear-cut distinction which said that fans wanted large size 100% or that readers didn't want it 100%.

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July 1940 [2, 6]

ROUNDEL

by
EARL SINGLETON

A beautiful girl is a dream I dreamed one night,
As I stood on the stars, and harked to the rhythmic whirl
Of spheres in the Milky Way, there stepped in sight
A beautiful girl.
A bouquet of orchids, a spray of blue lilac, a swirl
Of chiffon were her heralds; her handmaidens, laughter and light
And tondrest music. Over her breast blow a curl
Spun of silvery starbeams; her winged feet gleamed white
As she came to me. The moon was a tear-drowned pearl
When we kissed and awoke; and I sighed, for the dawn can olight
A beautiful girl.

July 1940 [2, 6]

FROM THE CONTROL ROOM

By Way of Introduction

For Quite a while we've been contemplating such a step as this—using an editorial, or rather a series of editorials, that really say something, in preference to the old established plan of jabbering on for a page, and saying very little in the long run. So, as an experiment, we're trying out a new plan this issue. The editorial has been expanded to two pages, and will be devoted to a few topics discussed at some length, rather than a page of everything under the sun. Just

where we'll put all the stuff that formerly went on this page is rather problematical at the moment. Also, we're dropping into the safeness and security of the editorial "we". We used "I" for a long while, but the place out in the sun doing that was too blinding; once more, we bow to tradition.

This is just another indication of the trend: that every fan magazine editor, and probably every fan for that matter, eventually has to find a place where he may say what he wants to say. As Speer points out, he has his FAPA magazines, do Ross Rothman, Marconette has "Kaleidoscope", Miske uses "Stardust" and so forth. So this department will be devoted each issue to some comments by me (as "we") on various things—the pro and fan magazine field, perhaps material in Spaceways itself, forecasts of what's coming up in this magazine, a bit of sugar-coated publicity for persons, places, and things, disguised advertisements, and anything else we think of. Whether we continue this new idea depends on you readers—you make yourselves known through the ratings, and we follow. If this rates as high as, or higher than, the old plan, it'll be adopted indefinitely. If it doesn't—well, we'll know we weren't afraid to try it, anyhow. Let it be understood that all opinions expressed herein are mine—Warner's—and not necessarily those of the rest of the editorial staff.

About Palmer

By now, everyone seems to have stuck in his two-bits' worth on the argument regarding the merits, or lack of merits, of Amazing and Fantastic Adventures—except us. We can't resist any longer, and so:

Let's look at the thing this way: consider what we know definitely. There are three main factors which by now have been pretty definitely established. One is: that Palmer realizes that a lot of the stuff he publishes is poor, and is quite willing to admit it. At least, that's more than certain other editors will do. Verification for this will be found in Mark Reinsberg's "RAP", and some other places.

Secondly, most fans agree that Amazing and Fantastic Adventures are not so hot. Tucker's recent poll, and articles in the fan magazines, make that clear. (By fans, we mean the 200-odd who are considered the most active ones.)

And finally, Palmer has himself said that he believes science fiction is headed for the same kind of a rut that Western fiction is in today, and there is nothing anyone can do about it.

There's a slight variance there. Palmer claims he is educating a new field of readers into the sciencefiction traditions by giving them poor, simple stuff to start off with. He will then improve the quality of Amazing, as the readers gradually become accustomed to science fiction. That's hardly staying in a rut. However, the more important questions are these:

If Palmer is sincere in his ambition, and not merely trying to keep some respect of the fans, is it worth it, and will it work? If the situation is going to stay like this indefinitely—a few good stf magazines, and a lot of horribly bad ones, it were better to return to the 1935 market, when there were only three stf magazines and all of them decent. For if there must always be a lot of bad magazines to educate a new big field later to read a few good ones, it would be best to go back to a small reading public and keep at least some respect of the general public for the pseudo-science field as was held in the past.

And just as important: will it work? In other words, is Palmer's basic premise correct or false, that it's possible to "educate" readers of science-fiction? We have to wonder about that. There's no way of telling the ages of the readers of the poorer magazines today, of course. If they're 10, 11 and 12 years old, their tastes are very likely to change in later years. But if, for the most part, Amazing's reading public is in the age group from 18 to 25, will they ever want anything but hack work? If they aren't mature enough at that age to appreciate good stf, it's quite possible that they'll never want it. Furthermore, they might not want any better class, but they might tire of the present class, and then there won't be any readers. For the serious-minded men who constitute a large part of Astounding's buyers certainly aren't going to buy the poorer magazines that younger readers may get a bit of pleasure. In other words, reading preferences don't necessarily alter for the better; if they did, The Atlantic Monthly and Story would sell twenty million copies per issue. The question is: do those of the fantasy fan? It's too early to tell, yet.

We have spoken. Discussion is welcome.

September 1940 [2, 7]

TO DON A. STUART

by

EARL SINGLETON

(These lines contain the titles or references to titles of all Stuart's stifies.)

When dusky Twilight sprinkles all the sky
With jewels Borrowed Out of hovering Night,
And in a shimmering Cloak of dreams bedight,
Sinks softly into sleep with but a sigh--
When vast Machines about me sound their cry
Of Blind Rebellion at kind Friction's right--
When cyclotrons Invade the Atom's might,
And court there Knowledge that can never die--
Then I Escape--Eliminate today,
And follow after in the realms you bless;
A star shoots by: and Who Goes There? I say--
You are not gone, Don Stuart; for unless
The Elder Gods should someday fade away,
Of you there can be no Forgetfulness.

September 1940 [2, 7]

THE BOOK OF WERE-WOLVES

by
BOB TUCKER

Written by Sabine Baring-Gould, M. A., and published in 1865 by Smith, Elder & Company of London.

What strange and awesome tomes come to the light of day! Volumes mentioned only in the weirdist works of the darker writers! Volumes that caused you only yesterday to assure yourself they couldn't exist--and yet they do! Volumes you fondly believed were born only in the fantastic imaginations of compelling writers: but...???

Recall that last year I articulated an account of the strange "Book of the Dead", which was published in the Madge Prize Mss maglet? Such a book actually exists, altho it is the privilege of but a few to see it. And now there comes to my attention, and my hand, a second dread book! A blood-red bound book with the startling title: "The Book of Were-Wolves"!

I have never been able to see or touch "The Book of the Dead"; but this other time rests in eerie silence upon my desk. There...I reach out a timid hand to pat it softly, reassuringly; yes, it is actually there, under my cautious scrutiny, my eager yet trembling fingers. Not under glass, not buried in some collector's den, but here, on my desk! Do I glance fearfully around the room at the flickering shadows dancing on the wall at my unprotected back? Do I seem to detect a strange light, an unseen flame, emanating from the book? No. Not yet, but let the night grow older...

This book, containing 266 pages of blood, gore, victims, and strange incantations, must have been a sensation in its day: 1865. Imagine if you can such works being published and circulated, of such a nature, in that day, a day we moderns like to term a "dark age". Imagine the superstitious peoples avidly reading the book, ready to slay any starved and mangy cure that happened to beg at their door for food. The Author does not treat the subject in any light vein; the book is deadly serious its whole length. I am not attempting to pass judgment upon the author, but the book, naming names, dates and landmarks as it does, impresses the reader that the author isn't exactly a doubting Thomas.

One chapter...but wait, first let me give the chapters in their order, and titles of same:

- Chapter One: Introductory
- Chapter Two: Lycanthropy among the Ancients
- Chapter Three: The Were-Wolf in the North
- Chapter Four: The Origin of the Scandinavian Were-Wolf
- Chapter Five: The Were-Wolf in the Middle Ages
- Chapter Six: A Chapter of Horrors
- Chapter Seven: Jan Grenier
- Chapter Eight: Folk-Lore Relating to the Were-Wolf
- Chapter Nine: Natural Causes of Lycanthropy
- Chapter Ten: Mythological Origin of the Were-Wolf Myth
- Chapter Eleven: The Marechal de Retz: I: The Investigation of Charges
- Chapter Twelve: The Marechal de Retz: II: The Trial
- Chapter Thirteen: The Marechal de Retz: III: The Sentence and Execution
- Chapter Fourteen: A Galician Were-Wolf
- Chapter Fifteen: An Anomalous Case--the Human Hyena
- Chapter Sixteen: A Sermon on Were-Wolves

...And from these sixteen chapters are to be found the following sub-titles:

Definition of Lycanthropy; Behaviour in a Monastery; A Russian Receipt for Becoming a Were-Wolf; A Hungarian Bather in Blood; Sympathy between Man and Beast; The Connection between Soul and Body; Cemeteries of Paris Violated; Ghouls; Laws Affecting Outlaws; "To Become a Bear"; Cannibalism in Scotland; Transmigration of Souls; Eyrbyggja Saga; and perhaps a hundred odd more dealing with this and that saga, so-and-so's "confession", were-wolfism as practised in many countries - including America - how some of these nasty gentlemen were caught and executed, and so on.

The author seems to have had some difficulty in separating were-wolfism from plain cannibalism--in fact, I doubt whether that good person detected any difference at all. The book is over-run with cannibalism, evidence of same, people being caught, tried and executed for same, when the book was supposed to deal with were-wolfery exclusively.

And now that chapter I started to tell about a while back. It is named, quite aptly, "A Chapter of Horrors". I found this the most interesting chapter in the volume, not to mention the most bloody. Unwound here is the story of two men who had become were-wolves, and as such wandered about the countryside and forest killing and terrifying. Their adventures are recounted in detail: how they killed, what they killed, why they killed, what they did with the bodies during and after the... uh...repast, and how they seemingly delighted in "sweet virgins of a tender age", pouncing upon any stray child who had wandered too far from fireside and father, rending and tearing the body for the vibrant warm blood, sometimes even "dissecting" the body for some particular inner organ that appealed to their slightly radical taste at the moment.

A frontispiece (the book's only illustration) is done by one Linton, and depicts a frightened and as-good-as-dead man lying flat on the ground just inside a forest, an evil-looking were-wolf standing over him, forepaws on chest, wickedly gleaming eyes glued to the pulsing throat of the man. Behind a tree in a lower corner are to be seen the skull and bones of a former victim. In the background the wolves are running. Aside, and personally, I would give just about one already-licked penny postage-stamp for the man's chances at the moment.

Quite a lovely and bizarre poem is to be found on its pages; many of the so-called weird poems found in Weird Tales have affected me much less than this one. It seems that one Pierre Vidal, something of a man-about-town in his local French province, is in love with Loba, or the were-wolfess, and his poetical tongue spouts to the world his love for Loba (who is a princess) and how she prefers his love instead of the ordinary men at court. According to a footnote, the poem has been taken from Bruce Whyte's "Histoire des Langues Romaines", tor ii, p. 248. The name of it is "A Tal Donna". Look it up if you are skeptical enough to be ambitious.

Now for the most interesting section, probably, to you, reader; how to become a were-wolf. I feel fairly safe in passing on the following information, knowing that this will appear before the eyes of intelligent persons, who, because of the literature they pursue, are fully aware of the dangers and pitfalls of heedless dabbling in black arts, and can conduct themselves accordingly. Following is the receipt as given by those clever persons, the Russians:

"Let him seek in the forest a hewn-down tree; let him stab it with a small copper knife; and walk around the tree repeating the following incantation:"

(Note: I shall not waste space and time to give the "incantation" here, but suggest that the reader, if he wishes to try this method, do as bidden to the hewn-down tree, and then stand and repeat aloud the first five columns of yesterday's Congressional Record, and then:)

"...Then he springs thrice over the tree, to run into the forest transformed into a were-wolf."

The author of this article can foresee that the above receipt will give the city experimenter no end of trouble, for no longer are forests to be found near large cities, and doubtless many of you will wish to experiment in the art of were-wolfery; so for those who have not a forest available, I repeat an old Serbian formula:

"The power to become a werewolf is obtained by drinking the water which settles in the footprint left in clay by a wolf."

Perhaps city dwellers will find this method much easier than the long and tedious Russian method. However, let me again warn you of the dangers that accompany such escapades.

I...but wait...I thought I heard something at the window. Perhaps I had better peer under the stove too; no, no bowls of blood to be found there. In one of the "confessions" detailed in the book, bowls of blood were found under the kitchen stove of the suspect, not to mention odds and ends of entrails and other human appendages bundled up and stuffed in secret hiding places about the house, put there no doubt by the were-wolf and/or cannibal fearing a long hard winter ahead.

In reading these "confessions" I often shuddered. Not over them, nor the gory details they brought to light, but by the un-mentioned methods with which they were obtained. The thought often occurred to me that here was a poor devil, perhaps a were-wolf and perhaps not, made to "confess" to boost the preferred stock of some pompous village official in the eyes of his superstitious townspeople. Such "confessions" are linked in some vague manner with the reports of children burned at the stake for "seeing elves, brownies and such. At least they link themselves together in my mind, and are classified under the heading "The Dark Ages". Imagine the beautiful romp some of our present-day dictators could have had, had they lived in those "dark ages": political enemies who professed to see "horns on the heads of the fushers could be burned at the stake as cohorts of the devil!

Obtain, if you can, and read the book. But be sure to do so on an empty stomach, unless your will and constitution are quite strong. I loaned the book to near-by fan Roberds, and he returned it looking quite ill. I remarked to him that he appeared as if he could make use of some of the blood the book overflows with, in his veins or course. Of course, if you are already a were-wolf, this book has a fair chance of becoming your bible.

.....
Afterlogue: (Written some hours after the above) The author begs to report that both of the receipts for becoming a were-wolf are false, as he has just tried both methods, and cannot even conjure into being a sharp-clawed forepaw to scratch an irritating flea behind his left ear.

THE END

September 1940 [2, 7]

WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT

by

J. MICHAEL ROSENBLUM

Ulitantum, by Mictor Maclure [Harrap]. Known to you probably as "The Ark of the Covenant" under which title it has twice been published in U.S.A., by Hugo Gernsback. Last time was in Air Wonder Stories in 1929. The story of how the world was made civilized by a band of desperate men under a courageous leader, by means of a super-airship and sundry other inventions utilized to create a true peace between nations. Very interesting indeed.

September 1940 [2, 7]

THE FISHERS

by
Damon Knight

Along the ways that once were streets we rowed,
Between the crumbling walls, night-dark and drear;
And fished in silent waters, murky-clear,
For relics from the ancient ones, a hoard,
With sluggish, stealthy grace the waters flowed
Around our net as from its sunken bier

We raised, in bony arms tight-clasped, a spear,
We tore the prize from outraged hands, and rode
In silence, on the agitated waves,
Far from the shore and row, with all our lust
For riches gone, the memories will never fade.

A little thing: a smell from damp sea-caves--
Upon an empty road, a puff of dust
In air--And suddenly, we are afraid.

September 1940 [2, 7]

THE READERS ALWAYS WRITE

Jack F. Speer writes:....A Skeleton thingus interesting. However, I'm not certain that Burroughs' plot of Pellucidar as surrounding the hollow center of the earth. You remember that Innes never circled Pellucidar; also that the ground became steeper as one went toward the edges, and that overhead was a great sun, apparently set in the solid rock of the other side of the bubble. I get the impression that Pellucidar was supposed to be a colossal round bubble within the earth, but all lying beneath the surface and the center. I may be wrong; I rather doubt that Burroughs had a quite clear idea of the thing...I rather question Miske's analysis of the stf craze as passing to funnybooks. They began to rise at the same time that the stf pulps went into increase; their long-continued advance upward is due to the incredible market for them, which publishers have scarcely been able to believe. I predict a down-drop of them soon. As for me being in heaven, tho, I can't attempt to keep up with the comic magazines; it's no fun when it becomes a job of gigantic proportions, involving much expenditure of time and money. I think the "social significance" that Campbell objects to is its social significance that contradicts the pre-existing prejudices of the readers. It seems to me that his socially significant stories up to now have in general agreed with public opinion: down with dictatorship, stay out of war, keep the roads rolling, etc. The same is true of "Trends", for that matter; the essential idea was one that the readers agreed with without trouble....It looks like the cycle of robot stories has now passed and the new wave will be future-man. Already we have the New Adam, and Without Horns, and the new story forecast for next Unc, not to mention the various supermen that are thrilling the comics readers....

Robert W. Lowndes writes: "L'ss" was fairly good, but has Erle Korshak and others forgotten the immortal "Bright Illusion" of C. L. Moore? I agree with Star-Treader on Farnsworth Wright: despite his oftentimes shabby treatment of Lovecraft, and eccentricities in general on the question of authors, Weird Tales under his leadership was perhaps the finest fantasy pulp ever. However, the magazine was not entirely free of commercialism--or rather, commercial advertising, injurious to truly weird fiction....I cite the many detective tales featured and the catering

to the sex-sensation readers. (This may sound odd to Miske to be coming from me, inasmuch as we have had so many arguments in the past on the subject of eroticism. But, believe it or not, Jack, I do maintain that sex-sensationalism has its place, and object to it out of place. We disagree, of course, on the precise locale of the boundaries. To be more specific: while I enjoyed the erotic covers on the old Weird for their own sake, I deplored most of them in that they were not weird. Brundage's anatomy might be termed irregular, but it isn't weird the way we lovers of the fantastic enjoy weirdness.)....

W. Lawrence Hamling writes: To Don Wollheim: First of all, it might interest you to know that until very recently, Amazing & Co. had no less than four readers. Sometimes even five... Even though you don't believe, I happen to know! And you ask why he needs any readers since he uses the yarns he himself writes, and thereby fattens his purse. For your information, RAP does not get paid for the yarns he puts in Amazing, etc. He writes the stories on Company time, and thereby comes under his salary (which I have reason to believe is substantially 2 of the 60 per week mark), so you are wrong on another score... Continuing this reader business: you say that Amazing needs no readers because a lot of stories are done on order. Very true about the order part, but not about the other. The readers are kept busy, and a lot busier than some of the other pro-stif magazines... Now to the climax: You say that War with Jupiter was rushed to Palmer's office by Mark because RAP was sadly in need of a story and subsequently would buy anything. Well, my dear fellow, I don't know where in Hell you ever got that information from! If you would like the true story, here it is: I wrote the yarn during the Christmas holidays of 1938. I revised it over New Year's (the original edition is much different in length, etc., from the published version) and sent it in myself through the US mails the first week in January of 1939. For six and a half weeks I heard nothing. Then one day Mark called me up on the phone and told me Palmer had just bought the yarn! The check came to me on the 18th of February. A very big rush order, don't you think? Incidentally, this yarn was bought at the end of a long debate. It seems that Ralph Milne Farley had a yarn similar to mine in RAP's office at the same time. The question revolved around which story should be bought. The answer is obvious. This proves incidentally that RAP cares nothing about names; a fan has as much chance as a pro! So I have this much to say, Don, whoever told you the things you say is a damn liar. Palmer has all the manuscripts he wants. He can have more if he wants them. I might add that the only reason Vera went to New York as a special rep. was that Palmer wanted to keep the tiers of bum yarns from coming to hi. from N.Y. Now that a rep. is in N. Y. handling the cream of fiction Ray can concentrate as he wants on Mid-West material.

September 1940 [2, 7]

WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT

J. Michael Rosenblum

Martha Brown M.P., by Victoria Cross [Lauria]. An horrible hook probably produced to relieve the pent-up emotions of a purveyor of purple passion. In the future women have completely ousted men from all 'manly' positions and the book is simply a portrayal of England of today with women occupying the places of men and vice-versa; even to the possession of 'masters' (is that a suitable term?) by successful ladies. Very little that could be considered thoughtful in any way. Let this be a warning to you!

September 1940 [2, 7]

FROM THE CONTROL ROOM

A Few Statistics

In the lead editorial this issue, we'd intended having some wailing over the touchiness of pulp magazines on various subjects. But the book we need for the purpose isn't available at the moment, and so that will have to wait until next issue, if our mind still has the same viewpoint on the subject. In its place, a few notes about last year's mail might be of interest.

On Sept. 21, 1939, we began keeping a record of all mail that comes in and goes out of 303 Bryan Place dealing with fantasy and fan activities. In other words, just what mail wouldn't have been received and sent if we weren't a fan. By Sept. 21, 1940, we find this record has taken up almost forty pages of a small double-entry ledger, and the grand sum of items is almost precisely two thousand.

This includes incoming and outgoing matter, and is complete except for copies of Spaceways and Horizons mailed out. They would run the sum up to too astronomical figures. At least two-thirds, and probably nearer to three-fourths of the entries are from incoming mail; the difference is caused by the large number of subscriptions, fan magazines, and so forth which require no answer. We wrote during that year something like 350 letters; technically, we write one letter per day, no more, no less, but sometimes we get lazy. Almost all of the other outgoing stuff was postals, with a dozen or so packages of books and professional magazines to various individuals.

Of the incoming, about 250 entries result from fan magazines received. Of the rest, the majority are letters, with plenty of postals mixed in. And also a few packages of books and magazines, in trade for the ditto sent out. It would be very interesting to break down the entries and see just what percentage is letters and which postals, but it's a task to great for us even to begin.

Of all these pieces, not a single one was from Hagerstown, and not more than a half-dozen from the state of Maryland. Perhaps one out of fifteen letters was sent air-mail; there was not a single special-delivery letter, because fans believe in doing things up right and sending air-mail special-delivery letters when in a hurry. There were two of those. Luckily, neither arrived in the middle of the night. No telegrams. Mail was received from the U. S., Canada, England, France, Australia and Costa Rica. At a guess, about forty out of the States of the Union were represented, but again the counting-up is too much for us. An odd thing about it is the relative absence of communications from more than one member of the same family, or related fans. The only ones we can remember off-hand from whom we received separate communications are Marvis and Vincent Manning, Louis and Gertrude Kuslan, and E. E. and Clarissa Smith. We heard from half of a good many relationships, but the other half was always missing. Names didn't duplicate so much as might have been expected; worst is the Russell set, who number Samuel, Eric Frank, and Eric. That's not double-talk; one's the British author and the other isn't. The latter has a brother who could have messed things up in the Russell group a bit more, but he didn't write us.

Also might be included three phone calls; two from fans passing through and one long-distance. Or rather a series of long-distance ones, until we showed up.

All of which proves that if you're going to become a fan magazine editor, you'll get a lot of mail. And also spend enormous quantities of postage, time, and energy trying to answer a decent proportion of it.

October 1940 [2, 8]

THE FANTASTIC FILM

by
Richard Kraft

There are, in the great quantity of films made since "The Great Train Robbery", a limited few which we, for the sake of this article, will call fantastic films. These films encompass the offerings of all of the various nations of the world. In proportion to all the films that have been made, they are in a distinct minority. Overcrowding them are the musical film, the love film, the good old western, the detective film and many others.

But there is a space reserved for the fantasy film. There have been some superb movies of this type and some lousy ones. Let's discuss them.

The first real fantastic films were made in Europe, principally Germany. After the first World War, the German people in the lowest of moods went to the pictures chiefly to see that which was unworldly. No sordid realism for them; eagerly they greeted the deluge of fantastic films the German producers poured on them. In this post-war period, there were two really notable pictures of this type presented: "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (reputed by many to be the greatest of all films) and Fahrman Maria - Ferryman Maria - which could be classified as a little later than "post-war" - being shown in 1929. It was a talkie.

"The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari" is the best movie, bar none, that I have ever seen, and a masterpiece of fantastic film-making. Though it received tumultuous applause from the critics, the publics of the world failed to support it. It is eerie in theme, being a dream by an inmate of a madhouse, in which he visualizes all the other inmates as characters in his dream, which is a terrible story of a traveling circus and the doom it wreaked in a small town.

Besides the bulwark of a strong plot the picture is acclaimed for the weird sets, which as a miasma of the madman's brain are fantastic and other-worldly. Then too, the direction of Robert Wiene and the acting of all the principals is nothing short of superb. Truly the picture is a masterpiece of horror! When I saw it, some months back, the audience sat as in a trance, mouths open, eyes dilated, until "The End" flashed on the screen.

"Fahrman Maria" is of a different vintage. While there is no humor in "Caligari", only stark abysmal madness, "Fahrman" contains a distinct trace of humor. The scenery is beautiful; the camera catches some wonderful shots. Here the theme is noticeably less repellent - fantasy is substituted for horror. There is a happy ending; Death is defeated by Love. Yet this film is not without its terror. One scene for example: when the vast hordes of Death in black-like shrouds atop snow-white horses go trumpeting wildly along the riverbank at night - and the pulse-piercing moment when Death rings the ferrybell. "Fahrman Maria" is a classic.

Before we turn to the American film of this type we must take notice of "Beyond the Law", a Russian silent of about 1925. Taken from Jack London's most psychological story, the picture rates with the best of them. Briefly, the plot is that of five people stranded in the Gold Rush. One of their number kills two of the little party in a fight. The remaining two, who are man and wife and deeply religious, hold a trial by themselves and convict the murderer to hang. Here there is some wonderful character study: three souls alone in the Arctic wastes. The murderer is convicted. Solemnly he is hung. The film ends on a strong note of the macabre. The two executioners are sitting gloomily in their little cabin when the door bursts open and the dead man comes in, grinning mockingly with the rope that killed him in his hands. Thus ends "Beyond the Law", a picture one should not omit in a study of the fantastic film.

Now for the dear old U. S.

Probably the first indications of films of this type were in the cinemas made by Theda Bara, who was known as "The Vampire Woman", etc., back in the dawn of the movies. Appearing in heavy, melodramatic roles, Miss Bara's films appealed more to our sexual natures than any other type; and yet she and her movies should be remembered. For, though the traces of horror and terror in her pictures were small, there were some, and as this was the first sign of the supernatural at all, in our country, it is to be regarded as a milestone.

Time passed. In this country seemingly the "horror" pic was ignored. Then in 1926, or 1928, there appeared in new light on the fantastic film horizon. That personage was Lon Chaney. Appearing in roles such as Phantom of the Opera, and Hunchback of Notre Dame, Chaney revived the lost art. Though his pictures cannot compare in quality with the German product, they awakened the American public's interest in this type. Chaney achieved his effects by a ghastly outré makoup, by carrying fainting women upstairs, or leering diabolically at the camera.

Chaney died. Came the talkies and with the coming of the talkies probably the two most well known of the fantastic crop: Dracula and Frankenstein. Two new luminaries were born, Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi. A hungry public ate them up, figuratively speaking.

Both films were theatrical, aiming obviously at the startling - and yet both are to be praised, especially the latter: Frankenstein achieved its purpose well. Inaccurate in its tempo it, at the same time, chilled the people of the U. S. Women screamed as the monster glided along the screen. Money poured into the box-office. Praise Allah... Universal made money; at last the fantastic film became a big success. Dracula, more insipid, more obvious, was also financially a hit; though when we compared it, as to quality, with Caligari, we are obliged to laugh.

Following on the trail of these two actors, we come to a long line of pictures aimed at "box-office", some fair, some lousy. Karloff, besides these, however, made two pictures that are definitely above the average.

Right after "Frankenstein", Karloff completed a film called "The Old, Dark House". It was surprisingly good. The story was taken from a novel by J. B. Priestly and a powerful one. Five people caught in a storm come to sanctuary at an old, dark house; they find strange characters in this house... behind a locked door on the third floor is a madman... brrr... and it was well done; a strong cast (Boris Karloff, Charles Laughton, Raymond Massey, Melvin Douglas, Gloria Stuart) and all doing excellent work.

"The Mummy" was a dull, run of the mill picture; but it contained one striking bit. Karloff is an age-old mummy in an archeologist's cabin. Slowly... so slowly, he comes to life, the horrible makeup creases into life. He moves! The audience gasps... excellently done!

Now that this medium of film-making was firmly established, many fine films other than those made by the two "originals" came into being. Lionel Atwell made one or two "naturals", Lionel Barrymore made "Devil Doll", which was "different".

Then came "King Kong". This should righteously hold a level of its own. It too was different. It crackled with action and improbability. But it was a great picture of its type.

There was a picture at this time produced which is forgotten by most people and yet it has stuck vividly in my mind as a movie that nearly scared me out of my wits. I was only about 10 at the time but... The picture was "Freaks"; the star: Lillian Tashman. Shades of Caligari! I honestly think that the above was the finest American horror film ever made. It dealt with a terrible retribution that

took place in a circus. Avenging freaks cutting the arms and legs of a beautiful trapeze performer who had mocked them...and that last breath-catching scene... when the object of their jealous surgery ~~is~~ not beautiful now, but a cackling horrible deformity...shrieked inanely into the camera...

In Europe Peter Lorre, a funny-looking little man, made "M" which many consider supreme. Though it is striking in theme (a man who roams the streets violating little girls) I found it drawn out. After coming here Lorre made "Mad Love", then got the Moto roles and disappeared from the fantasy horizon.

An Englishman, Claude Rains, also visited Hollywood and made "The Invisible Man"; very good, and causing much favorable reaction. A fine actor, Rains was assigned non-horror roles, and he too has now forsaken the chillers.

Robert Montgomery, long associated with playboy roles, was given the leading role in "Night Must Fall", a gruesome story of a murderer who murdered because some ungovernable will forced him to kill. I hope you saw that fine picture for it was practically on a level with "Freaks" and "Caligari". Montgomery gave a sensational performance, ably assisted by Rosalind Russell. The critics were heartily for it, but the public gasped and said "No". They would rather go to see Karloff and have on some occasion to laugh! After all, Karloff was sooo fantastic and silly. The sincere portrayal by Montgomery was wasted.

In the last four years many sequels have been made from the former favorites. Without exception, almost, all have failed to reach the heights of their papas. "Son of Frankenstein" was a typical Hollywood fantastic; machine made and mechanical; effective after a sort - and yet presenting nothing startlingly new. Recently I saw "The Invisible Man Returns"; same criticism.

Then there are such pitiful excuses for horror films as "The Man They Could Not Hang", a horror "quickie". Pretty awful.

And so I could go on. I should have praised Charles Laughton and his "Payment Deferred". I do so, humbly, now. There is a horror cycle (going on at present, I hope Harry lets me go on criticizing. And thanks for listening.

October 1940 [2, 8]

WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT

by J. Michael Rosenblum

Rinehart, by Thomas F. Tweed [Arthur Basher, 1933]. This book is the original story of "Gabriel over the White House" and deals with a new President of the United States of America whose name forms the title of the work. Almost immediately on assuming office, Rinehart suffers a motor accident and is affected mentally. From a normal human lovable humbug politician, he becomes a superman, who, after a period of mental digestion of facts, puts U. S. A. on a sound basis in every way, becoming a benevolent dictator in order to do so. Not satisfied with this he brings about world-peace and universal disarmament and the book finishes with his faithful secretary who loved him as an ordinary human allowing him to die, rather than return to his original mentality and undo his great work. The author, who shows great insight into political affairs in general and American ones in particular, was at one time secretary to David Lloyd George. The book is a good example of sociological science fiction applied to our present-day world.

September 1940 [2, 7]

MEMORIES OF A CHICONEER

by
Bob Tucker

The complete story of the Convention can be summed up in three words: we had fun!

From the time the first fan seeped into Chicago (presumably Wiggins and Martin), until they finally shipped a pickled Shroyer home COD, a week or two later, the pass-word, keynote and main symbol was fun. We had it in boxes, in packages, in gallon jugs and ten-cent steins. We had it in White City (the Coney Island of Chicago), at the museums, in both Convention Halls, on all floors of the two hotels, and along the streets of Chicago, overflowing into the railroad stations.

As far as this reporter could ascertain, Olen F. Wiggins and Lew Martin of Denver were the first in town. They came by boxcar, for a long and cold, miserable thirty-hour journey during which time, I understand, they witnessed one of those horrible accidents so common to boxcar transportation. And after them fans came by droves in about every means of transportation except the airplane. Undoubtedly the longest journey was made by Froehafer, Ackerman, Morojo and Pogo who Santa Fe'd in, the only representatives of the West Coast.

From New York City came Hyman Tiger and Julius Unger representing the Queensies, while all the Futurians and their friends were there except Pohl and Perri. Amidst cheering approval and thundering applause, Doc Lowndes, representing the Futurians, and Human Tiger, representing the Queensies, shook hands in grinning comradeship, burying that well-known hatchet.

Press publicity was both encouraging and plentiful. About two weeks before the Convention the Chicago Daily News carried a full-column write-up on the affair, supplied by Reinsberg and Korshak, the Herald-American following up with a few column inches. One week previous to the big event, the Daily Pantagraph (home town paper of Roberds and me) published a four-column write-up, complete with headlines and a photograph; the gist of the article gave more information on fandom in general and Tucker in particular than it did to the Chicon. Saturday night, August 31st, about a dozen fans in Convention costume (including EESmith) trooped down Chicago's Madison St. to the Herald-American building where group photographs were taken. The theme of these pictures, as posed by a Her-Am photog in typical metropolitan manner, was what the press terms "cheesecake". Doc Smith in his "Northwest Smith" regalia was posed shooting Morojo full of raygun holes; Morojo in her short red futuristic outfit showing the "cheesecake". In addition, a representative from the newsmagazine Time spent many many hours at the Convention, interviewing dozens of fans, taking volumes of notes and leaving with a copy of Dikty's fan dictionary, Who's Who in Fandom. As last year, both Amazing and TWS have indicated willingness to run stories and pictures on the affair in forthcoming issues.

The Convention Hall was a "plush" thing; tables and chairs made of what I took to be blonde maple, and for the tired fanny, the chairs offered deep red-leather padded bottoms. Matching, was a deep red rug on which many a snoozer, to tired to finish a night's session, took a beauty-nap. About the walls were many beautiful Paul, Morey and Krupa cover-paintings from Amazing, some of these covers going for as much as five dollars at the auction later.

Annexing the Hall was a smaller room of the same variety, which was used first as a dressing room for fans getting into and out of their costumes, and later as the Banquet Hall. In addition, Morojo's room, Doc Smith's suite, and Millard's room, all in the same hotel (Chicagoan) were smaller "convention halls"

and gossip-booths, as many as fifty fans once crowding into Morojo's room to talk things over. They were preched on the writing desk, the dressers, the beds, and probably hung from the light fixtures by the time the 49th and 50th pushed their way in. Or perhaps they overflowed out the window.

At the party, the costumes were colorful and eye-appealing, but not so plentiful as had been hoped. Kyle won first prize as the "Emperor Ming of Mongo. Doc Lowndes easily took second prize in a pale orange robe (but the character he represented is still a mystery to me!). And Ackerman copped third with a modernized edition of his last year's futuristic costume: green outfit with shorts, exposing hairy legs.

Tullis made a hit as Johnny Black, several fans later copping the bear-head and prancing about. Speer, Korshak and Reinsberg were three editions of Duck Rogers. Honey Smith (EE's Dotter) in nurse uniform was Clarrissa MacDoughal; while Rothman was the average scientist in long white smock and "mad" expression. Morojo in crimson futuristic dress, and "cheesecake"; Pogo in flowing lavender robes more of a Greek princess than girl-of-the-future; Elmer Perdue as Jurgen, plus wild hair. Surprising many who expected the "Grey Lensman", Doc Smith turned up as Northwest Smith, a tiny compass on the rear of his belt attesting to the name. Author Tanner became simply "Ali Den Yogi", bedecked in a red turban and crystal ball (the latter a blue balloon), said costume being whipped up on the spur of the moment by Morojo, at my suggestion that Tanner "come as sumpin...". Cy Kornbluth making a visible impression as the Invisible Man, no puns intended. He actually was in attendance, with concealing bandages in the proper places, a la Universal Pictures. As for myself, a brown Chinese peasant (or coolie?) outfit, with "Pong" written in orange across the front and back.

A hilarious skit was presented, a travesty on the movie plots you have witnessed so often: Morojo as the sweet young heroine seated before her mirror making up - when crawling leeringly through the window came the Monster Ackerman, bent upon attack (we presume). In due time the leering monster attacks the heroine, amid horrendous screams from the latter. Off in the distance her cries of terror are heard by Duck Rogers Reinsberg who comes galloping to the rescue on his rocket-horse (pun?). Many a re the difficulties he encounters en route, such as losing his rayguns, becoming entangled in his own trappings, falling over chairs, and generally getting himself lost. In desperation, the heroine finally downs the leering monster herself and is busily engaged in kicking him to a leering death as Duck Reinsberg gallops through the bedroom window, to place a triumphant foot on the downed chest and emit a Tarzan cry. During this horseplay, Duck Rogers Speer (who was not in the script!) sneaked into the action and began shooting up the play, heroine, monster, Duck Reinsberg and spectators, to the mirthful confusion of all.

On the other side of the picture, near tragedy occurred. Near Cairo, N. Y., the car carrying about five Futurians overturned, smashing the windows and body of the car somewhat, and giving Lowndes a nasty cut over one eye. Elsie Balter, the driver, became confused by a sudden shouting of contradictory advice on "which way to turn" - at a fork, and whipping the car into too short a curve, upset it. Passers-by set the auto back on its wheels, an examination proved it still "seaworthy", and the Futurians calmly climbed back in to drive nonchalantly away. Later, "fun" was added by a driving rainstorm coming in through the non-existing windows. Perhaps half the Futurians came in this car, and the remainder followed in another, presumably Wilson's.

Most everyone visited Ray Palmer's office. Regardless of what one may think of Palmer the editor, Palmer the fan is a regular fella! 4SJ and myself rated a private "preview" showing of several cover paintings coming up in the near future, among them two beautiful St. John paintings that carry you right back to the old

Durroughs days. We made the suggestion that they be used in connection with some of the Durroughs yarns now coming up in Amazing. Paul, RAP revealed, is shortly to make a return trip through the planets on the back covers of Amazing, this time depicting the planets' cities. The Martian city was finished, and includes such detail as "the buckle on a Martian's shoe". Fantastic Adventures, as you probably already have heard by this time, is slated for oblivion. RAP, through Ziff-Davis, donated something like three hundred copies of Amazing and over one hundred interiors from the two magazines, to be given away at the convention.

We met trains and busses for incoming fans. Anywhere from three to a dozen fans, carrying printed signs: "Welcome! Science Fiction Fans!", and "Chicago Greeting Committee", would be on hand at every bus and railroad station where a fan was expected. Many were the interested and/or amused glances at the committee and their signs as they rushed into a station, waited anxiously for a fan, and once he arrived, to pounce upon him and announce to the world (and the writing people) that here was a science fiction fan, by golly! A number were escorted out of Chicago after the Convention in somewhat the same manner. About 50 saw Rothman to his Washington train, starting at the YMCA hotel, to walk fifteen blocks for a college "snake-line" to the station. These, as his train pulled out, they sang to him and shouted: "So long, Senator - don't forget to vote on that Farm Bill", and "Hooray for boondoggler Rothman!"

Highlight of the first day was the movie swapt up off a cutting-room floor and stuck together by Roberts and me. Even Ackerman didn't recognize the picture when we were finished with it, because of certain "Pongish" touches. A title that read: "The earthmen find they are not the first to conquer space" is followed by a strip showing a band of cowboys galloping across the plains, shootin' irons smoking - this was borrowed from a western epic. In another scene, earthmen and Martians are staring into a huge round televisior mounted on the wall, and what pops into the scene of visior but a girl doing a strip-tease. This was borrowed from a sex picture, and worked into the continuity of the movie almost perfectly. In Hollywood terms, this short Chicen movie was a "smash-hit".

EE (or "Doc" as everyone called him) Smith is probably the most popular man in science fiction today. At one point during a session he arose to make known his views upon a subject under discussion, and before doing so, asked the assembly if he had the right; if he was a "fan". The answer was a tremendous ovation! His speech during the first afternoon session was well liked; even those who disagreed with some of the political views expressed therein, agreed later that the speech itself was magnificent, the philosophy deep and rich. Doc is also a comedian - this he proved by his "speech" at the Banquet in his honor, at which he kept the diners in gales of laughter by jibes at Reinsberg's expense, and many references to a notebook, being "absent-minded" in his fashion.

In my opinion, and I have found reason to believe many others think likewise, that Banquet proved to be the most popular "session" of the entire Convention. There were nearly sixty present, grouped around a U-shaped table, with Doc Smith, his wife, and daughter at the "head", flanked by Meyer, Korshak, Reinsberg and myself. After dinner the usual speeches and talks were in order and many were the stale jokes dragged out and re-polished. Wilson worked in a plug for his fanmag, Escape. Walt Leibscher was mistakenly introduced as "Leayyear", Philip Morris Cigarettes sent up a hundred small packages with their compliments, someone ordered Reinsberg a glass of milk and a bottle of red pop but the latter never arrived, silent respect was paid to authors and fans who have passed on, Doc Smith was introduced as the creator of "Adam Link", and one of those phony newspapers - the "print your own headline" type - was introduced; screaming black type announced: SMITH SUPPER STINKING SUCCESS!!! Everyone present autographed this paper and it was presented to Smith with our very best wishes. In conclusion, everyone arose, joined hands and sang Auld Lang Syne.

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Several fans were taking photographs, including Speer, Rothman and Millard who were equipped with flash bulbs. Nearly every scene and phase of Convention activity were covered by these lads, and I believe all of them have announced prints will be available soon, for a small sum. (If I may be permitted to work in a plug of sorts here, let me say that if all who have Convention photographs for sale will advise me of the data and prices on same, I shall be glad to "advertise" the pictures in future issues of Le Zombie, gratis. And, by the way, there will be no LeZ for Sept. Instead, that issue will be combined with the Oct. one, which will contain about 22 pages.) A popular subject for snaps was "Oscar". This bony gentleman (assuming of course that it once was male) is the skeleton belonging to the Literature, Science & Hobbies bunch of Decker, Indiana. At the special request of the Chicon committee, the Decker dillies brought along Oscar as a delegate, and placed him in a chair behind the speaker's platform, profoundly reading a copy of Amazing Stories. As a somewhat hazy memory, I seem to recall posing for some photographs, draped across a chair with the skull of oscar across my shoulder.

Personalities:

Charles R. Tanner, the author: probably the goofiest and swellest author I have ever met. A great kidder, always laughing, joking, or pulling a good pun on a timely topic. A hit as crystal-gazer Ali Den Yogi.

E. Everette Evans, an "old timer" in every sense. Perhaps fifty, he was sent down by his son who could not attend, and triple-E knows his onions about science fiction. Stumped Doc Smith on a few points of behaviour of the Grey Lensman.

Dr. Thelma Shull, a lady fan from Evanston, Ill. Laying myself open to possible bricks, I shall say that perhaps she, of all present, was able to meet and match Doc Smith in fast and accurate thinking. There was a continual group of fans around these two, every time they got together to argue philosophy, Grey Lensman characteristics, or???

Ray Palmer, who turned out to be human after all, and not a robot. He could only repeat Margulies' words: "I didn't know you could be so damn sincere!"

Earl Singleton, the fan poet and a lady-killer from the Texas panhandle, now attending MIT in Boston. Earl grabbed off pretty Trudy Kuslan early in the game and only Ross Rocklyne the author was later able to win her away.

Robt. Thompson, known as "the jeep". Thompson hit down in the midst of things, with all hotels full, and demanded a room. None were to be found. Korshak finally locked him in the Convention Hall overnight, so that the bellboys would not find him and toss him out.

Jack Chapman Miske, who isn't "just a brain and a typewriter", as someone pointed out, shaking hands all around, with many hatchets buried. Jack pointed out to me that I am ignorant, and was greatly chagrined to find I already knew it!

Ask anyone who was there: we had fun!

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October 1940 [2, 8]

STARDUST

THE SCAR-TREADER

How I'm going to sort the great mass of material gathered at the Chicon into anything resembling a state of coherency is a bit baffling right now, so hold your hats while I break it down.

I met no one who didn't call the Chicon far and away the best of the Conventions. Tucker, Reinsberg, Korshak, Meyer, etc., deserve lots of applause for the splendid job they did. As one entered the Hotel Chicagoan, a poster, by Krupa, I think, announcing the Chicon was the first thing he saw. The Convention itself was held in absolute privacy on the second floor in a luxurious hall of exactly the right size. Virtually everyone present was a person familiar to us all - a total of 125 attended at one time or another, and they came from everywhere - Futurians, LASFSers, Tiger (Director of the QSFL), Wiggins and Martin from Denver, Miske, Tanner, Tarr and Rocklyme (from Chic), Shroyer, Dikty and M. Manning & wife from Indiana, Rich Frank & wife (on their honeymoon) and Bob Madle from Penna., Doc Smith from Michigan, Donn Brazier from Wisconsin, Singleton & Widner from Mass., Unger & Oshinsky from New York City, Speer, Perdue and Rothman from D.C., and dozens more. Ralph Milne Farley, Eando Binder, Ray Palmer, Don Wilcox, David Wright O'Brien, Mort Weisinger, Robert Moore Williams, Julius Krupa, Jerry Siegel, and many more pros were present.

Proof that real fans made up the attendees lies in the fact that practically the same number were present the second day as were the first - whereas last year, at N. Y. C., about 50 of 100 returned! And so much for the bare facts. If in the following paragraphs, I perhaps seem to figure too prominently, it is because I'll be speaking of my experiences, rather than giving a stogified account of the meetings - you'll see plenty of that elsewhere.

Doc Smith is one of the most likable, friendly persons I've ever met. I spoke with him several times for periods ranging from a half to two hours, and it would be difficult to imagine a more pleasant way of passing time.

On the second day, the IFF was being dissolved as a national organization, and as non-members, Earl Singleton, Bill Hamling, Donn Brazier, and I were ousted, so we decided to retire for refreshments. In the lobby we met Doc, who promptly offered to treat us all; so we left for a while, sorry, Tucker. Returning, we found seats in the lobby and discussed stuff. We spoke at length of Weinbaum, and Doc mentioned how Palmer angered him by writing a sequel ("Black World") to "The Red Peri", which he thinks is one of SGW's worst yarns. He then went on - "and published his worst story, 'The New Adam'."

That's where the battle began.

Because, of course, I think it's Weinbaum's best story. For two hours the fighting raged, with Singleton aiding me usually, supporting Doc occasionally, and with Hamling offering a point now and then - I'd like to describe the fray, but it would take thousands of words. I think I can say Doc agreed his feelings related to his opinions (about the possibilities of observing a superman) rather than literary worth.

During the first day I was with Doc and Farley and a Chicago chemist (who couldn't attend the second day because he'd just received a telegram notifying him he was eligible to take an F.B.I. examination to become a spy-chasing G-man), and Farley spoke, among other things, of the semi-invisible bombing planes used by the British and the wholly invisible U. S. planes. Remember the Farley story (under the name of Lt. Pease) in Amazing two years ago which dealt with invisible bombers?

Jerry Siegel, who writes Superman, attended the meeting and said he was coming to all subsequent Conventions. Some one asked him why he wasn't dressed in a Superman outfit. He looked pained and patiently explained that we should know it was beneath his clothes. Chalk up one for Siegel!

They Linger in My Memory:

Charles Tanner unable to believe he'd bought a Paul cover (for "Blue Tropics" in Fantastic Adventures) for a measly buck.... Gertrude Kuslan alternately pursuing Earl Singleton (handsome, six feet two inches, Texan with gun) and Ross Rocklyne (the artistic type).... Art Widner giving an amusing imitation of Jack Williamson's great character, Giles Habibula.... Fred Shroyer singing "Silent Night"--and the Futurians "God Bless America".... and fifty of us giving Milt Rothman a celebrity's send-off when he left at 2:00 A.M. or so Tuesday.... Elmer Perdue's hair.... Jack Speer's knees.... Miske going direct to work upon getting back to Cleveland Wednesday morning, and being ten minutes late.... Kornbluth imitating a ten-year old, playing with one of those palm-shockers--and never finishing his boring story of the Legend of Lock Lomond....

At the moment of my leaving Chicago, there seemed to be a strange peace reigning in fandom. Everyone seemed willing to be fair and above board, desiring only to have a good time, so dozens of petty feuds were forgotten, for ever. Taurasi and Sykora seem to have left fandom, and a merger of the QSFL and the Futurians will probably occur soon. Hyman Tiger, the new director, and Lowndes expressed their willingness to cooperate. Even I have no one bent on murdering me--Tarr, Reinsberg, Korshak, Lowndes, Michel, and all the rest of them, pals, one and all. Possibly.

At the masquerade, Doc Smith's daughter, Clarrissa MacDougall Smith, attended as Clarrissa MacDougall, K. Kinnison's red-headed bundle of sweetness.... Delivering a monologue about K.K., she brought the house down with one crack. Speaking of the terrible injuries Smith inflicted on the poor guy she said, "First he lost an arm, then a leg, then the other arm, then the other leg--pretty soon all he had left was his personality!" Hmmm.

Smith was on his first vacation in ten years and left immediately after the Convention for a trip to the West Coast - California, Washington, Oregon. If he can get a vacation next year, he'll attend the '41 Convention most gladly.

Smith also spoke at some length of a series of short stories he is planning. Mort Weisinger asked Smith if he'd do some short yarns for Standard, and I don't think he knows yet that Smith is almost ready to start the series. I could give you the idea Smith is basing them on-- a good one, too-- but I don't suppose I'd better. He's only looking for something that will give a purpose to these stories before he begins writing them. He doesn't care to turn out pure blood-and-thunder, even if it's good blood-and-thunder.

Some of Smith's favorite stories are Merritt's "Ship of Ishtar", which he thinks is perhaps the greatest novel, of any kind (!) ever written, C. L. Moore's "Bright Illusion", Don A. Stuart's "Forgetfulness", and Stanley Weinbaum's "The Lotus-Eaters". He also likes the latter's "Flight on Titan".

He thinks R. F. Starzl outranks Weinbaum as the originator of the type of story we are now accustomed to calling Weinbaum's creation. After reading that beautiful 1934 Starzl story in FFM about the "radiant" creatures, I can agree with him.

BEHIND THE SCENES AT MUNSEY

by
Mary Gnaedinger

I think the most interesting difference between the old and new fantasy is the build-ups. The old stories seem to me to have the groundwork very deliberately taken care of--for instance, one approaches the moon in a rocket ship by slow and careful explanatory stages in an old story. In a new one we land right away on the weird place. Of course writers couldn't continue to explain everything over and over again--hence the difference. To me the old way is more interesting, and I've noticed that one of the charms of the great Merritt is that he makes much of anticipation. Some of the new stories are superior to older ones because of their lively pacing, however.

As for picking material--you all know we have literally hundreds of stories. The finest are known, rated, and demanded by science fiction fans--so they are easily rounded up, even by a brand new editor. Some of the older ones of the best quality are not so widely known. "Finis" by Frank Lillis Pollock was recommended by Larry Farsaci, but I did not get in touch with Larry for quite a while. Abe Merritt remarked that "Claimed" by Francis Stevens was a fine story, but he had forgotten the title. He identified it by the "white horses" and it was some time before I found those horses while reading assiduously between getting out issues. The story, as you fans probably know, is a knockout. It was recommended by title later, and it will appear soon in F. F. M. Mr. Merritt also spoke of "The Citadel of Fear" by the same author.

Hannes Bok told me about "The Middle Bedroom" and I ran into "Out of the Dark" while leafing through the books at random.

Readers' letters provide mines of information. As soon as I hear of a new title I hasten to find out what the charm is that has made someone remember it, perhaps since 1897. Sometimes there is no accounting for it.

As for the future--I find myself all dated up with the readers for the sequels to the stories I have already run. Then the Merritts have to be released every so often, and a few musts like Garrett P. Serviss, Giesy's "Palos of the Dog Star Pack", etc. There are some nice short stories earmarked, and many more to be read. Eye on some "outsiders" not published by the Munsey Company.

The artists are swell fellows. They are all "fans" and they enjoy putting the right pics to the stories. We don't give them a slip of paper saying "draw two dinosaurs fighting". We give them the story to read and study, and you know the results. "Paul and Finlay are tops--don't ever lose them!"

His editor was not strictly a science fiction fan when thrown into the Moon Pool something well over a year ago. Liked "Arthur Gordon Pym", "First Men in the Moon", etc. Had a little science fictionist in her home and heard all about the special charm of certain stories and authors. She is now a full-fledged fan, member of the Queens Science Fiction League's Women's Auxiliary and the Futurians. Has met many of the writers, and they are swell people. Has a lively correspondence with all of the fans.

Editing is a problem mostly as regards out-of-date remarks that could spoil the story for new readers. Some are so far out of date that they have to be considered antiques and as such not to be tampered with. Very little changing is done.

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December 1940 [3, 1]

by
John W. Campbell, Jr.

The mechanics of running a magazine, like the mechanics of running a drug store or a filling station, involves almost as much paper work as the author's manuscripts. That's one reason why at least 80% of all stories sent in go back with rejection slips rather than rejection letters. The author may think it's a cruel and heartless way to treat his currently-favorite brain-child; the editor knows darned well he can't afford to do anything else.

Editing's a lot like mining, in some ways. The authors who can write are the pay-ore; the others are the tailings. Some ore-bodies look rich, give good returns for a little while--then pinch out abruptly. Some authors shoot up like white hopes--and go blooie, leaving the editor saddened as much as the author. Because the editor then has to go looking through more waste paper for some pay-dirt.

And brother, you've no idea how utterly lousy some of that waste paper can be. When Unknown started, all the old maids in the Midwest who'd had nightmares during the last ten years sent 'em in. We're just finishing up the task of rejecting them now; apparently that mass of dead-waste has been gotten through. They came in for months.

That's all right; we've the world's crack-pots now. There's a constant and enormous supply of them, judging from the material Unknown gets, and from some of the things people try to squeeze into Astounding.

I don't really mind that; it can be disposed of by reading a page or two. The manuscripts that come in with penciled hentracks, covered with a five-year accumulation of dust. The typescript sent in single-spaced, typed with a faded red ribbon on yellow foolscap. (I need my eyes too much to struggle with that sort of thing for even a full page.)

It is only those completely and utterly hopeless things, recognizable at a glance as beyond the pale, that do not get a full and complete reading, however. Everything that looks reasonably readable (in a physical sense; I need eyes!) is read through, and read by me.

The process of handling manuscripts starts at the manuscript department. All envelopes are opened there, except for personal letters. One of the girls up there tries to make out which of the many Street & Smith magazines the author had in mind when he sent it in. (Surprising how many authors simply don't bother to say.) Occasionally the girl makes a mistake, but she's had experience. Now and then something like "The Power of Night" is sent down to Unknown and turns out to be something meant for Love Story Magazine, or "The Case of John Thindin" arrives in Astounding's office via Mystery Magazine or Detective Story.

But the manuscript department usually does a surprisingly good job of directing them. The manuscripts are taken out, and to them a manuscript tracer is attached, the stamped, addressed return envelope added, and the tracer filled out. The tracer has spaces for a uthor's name, address, agent's name and address, manuscript title, and name of magazine for which it is intended. Below, there are two spaces; on one side, headed REJECTED, is space for the dates, and to note whether it was rejected by letter or printed slip. On the other side is the heading ACCEPTED, and space for word-length, rate, total payment, and editor's signature.

That bit of paper-work is to take care of those cases where manuscripts go astray; the thing is filled out in duplicate, and one filed by author's name, one by story title, and one by final disposition is made. If somebody's brain-child doesn't show up, and no word is heard from Street & Smith, we get a query.

The manuscript department is in a position to say exactly where and when they did what to which. If our records show it was mailed out, we can send out a post-office tracer. Since they are filed in a pending file temporarily, the manuscript office can--and does--check on any manuscript held by an editor more than four weeks, and generally forestall complaints.

When the manuscripts reach me, they come down in an interdepartmental envelope--a dozen or two at a time. They're assorted as to Astounding and Unknown types, and I start reading. Aside from author-conferences, discussions with art, advertising and promotion departments, make-up, and composing room details, making out the paper forms, writing letters to authors, and interviewing fans I have only the reading to do. It amounts to about the equivalent, on the average, of four novels a day. Sometimes--particularly a month or so before Christmas--it runs to about five or six. In late July and August it falls to about two a day.

Normally, a manuscript clears through my office in from one to two days; occasionally I'll be doubtful about accepting or rejecting and hold it for a week or more. Sometimes I succeed in getting out of town for a week or two, and they wait. Then I have to catch up; a vacation on this kind of work is a period in which you let the work go so you can do three weeks' work in one when you get back. The result is that I use an overnight bag for a briefcase. It will hold six novels in manuscript, and goes home packed solid after every vacation.

When a decision's made on the manuscript, one of four things happens; it gets "bounced" with a rejection slip, it gets returned with a special type of form letter designed and selected to describe the particular type of fault that particular manuscript displays (I have over a score of letters representing the most common story-errors), it gets returned with a special letter--or it is bought.

In the latter case, the ACCEPTED side of the manuscript tracer is filled in, and it goes back to the manuscript department. There, a purchase order is made out, and it is sent on to Accounting. Accounting makes out a check, and sends down the manuscript to my office again. Now an art-order form is made out, and the manuscript, with suggestions for illustration, is sent over to the Art Department. They make out a loan voucher, which the selected artist signs when he takes the manuscript, and which is destroyed when he returns the manuscript.

The manuscript and art work is eventually--a week or two later--returned to me; the manuscript for editing, the art for approval. The art then goes back to the Art Department for reproduction. The manuscript, after editing, is sent to the composing room, and returns with galley proofs for checking.

When make-up time comes, the galleys must be measured as to length, the art-work measured, and the total number of pages and inches of type needed determined. If the story runs to 6 pages and 3 inches over--it gets trimmed three inches. If it's 6 pages 8 inches, say, it needs a filler. The filler may be one of the stock cuts ('you know 'em all, but we try to select the ones that fit) or it may be one of the short items bought for the purpose. I write some of them; if the space is too short, I write a short ad to fill.

The lengths of all the stories being measured, then we try fitting them into the inflexible magazine; it must contain 160 pages, some of which are consumed by ads, letters, etc. When we've finally wiggled it together (leaving out that short I'd planned to use this month, and taking that other one, two pages longer, I'd intended for next month, because that way it fits), the whole mass of material is ready to go up.

Manuscripts, galleys, art-work proofs, dummy pages, lay-out sheet, blurbs and all are bundled together and taken to the composing room.

Presently page proofs come down, are checked, corrections made as needed, and the pages sent up again.

There my work on that particular issue ends. Having read every story in it from three to five times, in about two months, I'm heartily sick of almost any story. I can generally decide, by that time, which ones are going to be in first places in the Analytical Laboratory. If I still kinda like it, it's no. 1. If I don't mind looking at it, it'll be well up. If I'm just heartily sick of it, it's just another pretty good yarn.

Then I go back to picking out the readable stuff from the tripe, the unutterable tripe, that some people consider stories. While I've been engaged in make-up, naturally, the authors have been engaged as busily as ever in making up stories. It happens every two weeks. Editing is slightly uproarious, requires a calm disposition, and bicarbonate of soda with aspirin. You ought to see the fun a advertising department can cause when they announce they have another ad to go on page 153 after the jig-saw puzzle of the magazine's made up.

Anyway, that's why we don't write personal letters on every story that comes in - or even on most of them. It takes at least ten minutes to write a letter, and twice that means a not-so-hot novelette can be handled. And most of them are not-so-hot novelettes.

December 1940 [3, 1]

THE BIRTH OF THE TIME TRAVELLER

by
Julius Schwartz

Every once in a while some enterprising fan writes an article on the history of the fan magazine movement. It inevitably starts off with the first of these magazines, The Time Traveller, but I've read so much misinformation about the origination of this publication that I'd like to set everyone straight about the true facts.

In October, 1930, I joined The Scienceers, a New York fan club for readers of science fiction. Wait, I'd better amend that: just as I was about to join The Scienceers the club broke up (one of its many dissolutions). However, I did get to know one of the members, Mortimer Weisinger, and as we had many mutual science fiction interests, we became fast friends.

We both prided ourselves on our vast knowledge of science fiction, and we liked nothing better than to send postcards challenging one another with some tough question on the subject. We both had a fairly wide correspondence with many of the science fiction writers and fans of the day, and when we met we first liked to trade what news we had. We found this vastly exciting.

One of us (I forget who) thought it'd be a good idea to get out a "Who's Who in Science Fiction", and with this in mind sent dozens of letters to all the authors we could. The project was never completed; guess we just didn't have enough money.

Then we thought it might be a good idea to issue a little paper containing one of these author biographies in each issue, together with various other science fiction items we had on hand. I personally became so enthusiastic that I got out a one page, one copy, typewritten affair with a biography of Edward Elmer Smith and sundry bits of science fiction news and information. When I completed the job I suddenly realized I had no name. The title, The Time Traveller, popped into my head and I typed it on the top of the sheet. (Note to fan collectors: this original copy of TTT has been irretrievably lost, so please don't ask me for it.)

Mort was just as excited with the possibilities of TTT as I was, and so we determined to get out a regular mimeographed magazine, modeled after the Science Fictioners' bulletin, The Planet. Although we felt capable of issuing the magazine by ourselves we wanted to have a big fan name as editor to impress our potential readers. We asked our good friend, Allen Glasser, then one of the best known letter-writers, to accept the editorship, which he did. We rounded up several other of the big name fans of the day to supply us with news and gossip. These included Forrest J Ackerman, Linus Hogenmiller, and Jack Darrow.

We secured our first subscribers by sending out a circular to readers who had letters published in the various science-fiction magazines. In a short time, we received 30 subscriptions. We were well satisfied and went to work on the first issue. Philip Rosenblatt, who had mimeographed The Planet, agreed to do work on The Time Traveller. (And please observe that we always insisted it be spelled with two "l's"!) When completed it consisted of six pages, with Glasser stencilling the first two, me the next two, and Weisinger pages 5 and 6. It was dated January, 1932.

It featured a biography of Capt. S. P. Meek, a brief-interview with Bob Olsen, a list of scientifilms, the first installment of "The History of Science Fiction", a science fiction contest, an article giving the inside dope on O. A. Kline's "The Planet of Peril", and dozens of news items about authors and their forthcoming stories. It also acquainted the fan world with the mystery that was to baffle them for many years to come, "Who Is Anthony Gilmore?"

All of us felt the first issue was a success and decided to keep it going. Some other time, perhaps, I'll tell you about its hectic life and how it eventually evolved into the foremost of all the fan publications, Fantasy Magazine.

December 1940 [3, 1]

WEINBAUMANUSCRIPT: DAWN OF FLAME

by
Forrest J. Ackerman

Almost a year has elapsed since I purchased the typescript mentioned in the title of this article. Now, for the first time--on the train, Chicon-bound--I have found the opportunity to read the original.

Which I have just done.

24,000 words in length, it was typed double-spaced on an even 100 sheets of standard-size paper. An aggregate of about 20 sheets--or 1-5 the story--was edited out.

3 Tarvish dawters disappeared during the deletions.

When Hull Tarvish, on his way to see the world, asked the farmer who gave him a lift why Joaquin Smith's half-sister was called Black Margot: "The farmer shrugged. 'Who knows? It's what her enemies call her.'--'Then so I call her,' said Hull."

In an unpublished footnote we learn: "During the Dark Centuries, released from the strictures of printing, the American language changed rapidly until five major dialects were used. It became almost impossible for a non-student to read the ancient books."

Old Einar, telling Hull of history, speaks of 300 years before the end of the 20th Century: "Black and White and Yellow and Red, all embroiled in a titan struggle."--'Yellow and Red?' echoed Hull. 'There are a few black men called Nigs in Ozark, but I never heard of yellow or red men.'--'I have seen yellow men,' said Old Einar. 'There are some towns of yellow men on the edge of the Western ocean, in the region called Friscia'. (Friscia: The present Urban district of

Enisco.) The Red Race, they say, is gone, wiped out by the plague called the Gray Death, to which they yielded more readily than the other races."

Weirsum spelled "gray" thruout. Spelling was editorially changed on foregoing before entire reference was stricken out. Chapter 3, "The Master Marches". "The Chiesecons were good enough fighters, too, and heart and soul in the cause, for if the Master took Selui, his Empire would reach dangerously close to the saltless seas, spreading from the ocean on the east to the mountains on the west, and north as far as the great confluence of the M'sippi and M'souri. (M'sippi and M'souri: The present Mispa and Musra rivers.)"

Underpencil were the underlined words in the following: ...the Princess, her glorious green eyes luminous as a cat's.... And again: ...she spoke now in a voice low and liquid, yet cold, cold....

The Princess! "Satanically beautiful," the old man had called her, and so she was. Hell or the art of Martin Sair had so fashioned her that no man could gaze unmoved on the false purity of her face, no man at least in whom flowed the red blood of masculinity."

Margaret of Urbs reveals why she was named Black: "Yess, so called because a poet (Cornel Hute, who committed suicide in N'Orleans in the year 101 of the Enlightenment) once amused me, and because there was once a very ancient, very great French poet named Francois Villion, who loved a harlot called Black Margot." She sighed. "But my poet was no Villien; already his works are nearly forgotten."

No info was publisht on Joaquin Smith's war strategy: "It was not the policy of the Master to permit so large a rebel band to gather unopposed in conquered territory; within the Empire, despite the mutual hatred among rival cities, there existed a sort of pax Romana—an enforced peace."

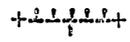
Tense triangle as Vail, Hull and the immortal evil Flame face each other. "Don't," he (Hull) groaned. "Don't insult her."—The Princess laughed. "Insult me? Do you think I could be insulted by a bit of creeping dust as it crawls its way from cradle to grave?" She turned contemptuous green eyes to Vail as the terrified girl backed through the door."

Black Margot ground out her cigarette with her left hand against the polished wood of the table top, but her right rested inexorably on her weapon. "Hull knew beyond doubt or question that he was about to die, and for a moment he considered the thought of dying fighting, of being blasted by the beam as he flung himself at her. Then he shook his head; he revolted at the idea of again trying violence on the exquisite figure he faced, who, though witch or demon, had the passionless purity and loveliness of divinity. It was easier to die passively, simply losing his thoughts in the glare of her unearthly beauty."

When I ran across this scene—"The screen, indeed, shielded the Princess from the sight of the guard in the hall, but not from Hull's eyes. He stared utterly appalled at the sight of her lying in complete indifference in a great tub of water, while a fat woman scrubbed assiduously at her bare body. He could not avoid a single glimpse of her exquisite form, etc"—I couldnt help thinking What a role for Hedy Lamarr!

"The Princess?
Adjective & verb turn feeble.
Glorious? Superb?
None of these can name
The splendor of
The Ebon Flame!"

Cette est Hedy, certainement!



by
Mort Weisinger

Shame on you guys! That goes for all of you--the letter-writers, the fan-mag contributors, and the fellows who own every copy of all the professional mags, from the first copy of Weird Tales to the latest copy of Thrilling Wonder Stories. Shame on you, because despite one of the most sincere campaigns to unearth new scientific talent ever sponsored by any fantasy magazine, less fans than you can count on the fingers of two hands have rung the bell.

It all began more than two years ago, when Leo Margulies, the editorial director of Standard Magazines, and myself, were scanning the month's crop of amateur fan mags. We surveyed them all: mimeographed jobs, hectographed journals, printed bulletins, etc. Some were good, some were fair, some were bad. But all were pretty uniform as to contents: fan-gab, interviews, editorials, features, poetry--and fiction.

"These lads like to write scientific fiction, even if they have to publish it themselves, eh?" commented Margulies.

"Sure! It comes out of their ears," I said. "Me too. Why, the very first story I wrote was published by the very first fan magazine--the old Time Traveller. Later, Amazing Stories bought it."

"Well, that gives me an idea," Margulies went on. "Science fiction certainly can stand some new blood. So why don't we do something about recruiting new talent, encouraging amateur authors? Let's announce it in the next issue of T.W.S.--a national contest for amateurs only. We'll invite the readers, the fans, to send us their stories. No restrictions--any length, any theme is okay, as long as it's scientific fiction. And we'll pay regular rates for prize-winning stories. Tell you what, if a story has a good idea, even if its writing is not up to par, we will encourage the writer, suggest to him how a revision would put it over. Or we can even doctor it ourselves. Let's see if we can discover a brand-new writer for each issue!"

Well, the very next issue of T.W.S. announced this novel national hunt for scientific talent, and a similar announcement appeared in every consequent number. Since that time more than two thousand manuscripts have come to us, competing for a prize. But, out of all those hundreds of scripts, only seven scattered fans have scored a bull's-eye. That's a poor showing from you birds.

Two thousand manuscripts by hundreds of fans are an awful lot of scientific fiction--and a lot of it was awful. We saw hammy scripts, corny scripts, tales written in pencil, in ink, neatly typed stories, yarns from England, from Africa, from Canada.

Well, we didn't mind. We'd asked for it. Only we wondered why it was we had to wade through about three hundred yarns before we discovered anything fairly decent in the way of honest entertainment.

So we went into another huddle and analysed the n. g. submissions. Finally, after conducting our own private poll, Margulies pushed aside a pile of manuscripts six cubic feet high, looked at me wearily.

"I think I've got the answer," he said. "The trouble with these amateurs is--they're too sophisticated! That's why their stories are dull, unconvincing, and unentertaining."

If the three thousand manuscripts that passed through our portals--and out again--could talk, I think they'd howl aloud in unanimity, agreeing with Mr. Margulies' statement. For most veteran scientific fiction fans, saturated with the lore of a decade's novels, novelets and short stories, take their fantasy too much for granted. A trip to another planet is negotiated in the bat of an eyelash.

The very first sentence of their stories projects the reader dizzily into a vague and unfamiliar future, millions of years hence. Other yarns blurredly catapult a reader into the fifth dimension. Still others begin on microcosmic or macrocosmic worlds. And so on. Those are the mistakes of many of you would-be scribes.

Remember that you're competing with professional authors. They have a clever knack of luring the reader's interest on toward the climax of the story. Examine the stories of Edmond Hamilton, Don Tracy, Oscar J. Friend. Their stories are down-to-earth. They use the approach of creating a story that starts with a natural, normal, everyday premise. Then, after the reader's confidence is won, comes the introduction of the startling, the projection into the future, the contrast between normal and abnormal. The result is an extension of an ordinary adventure from into the realm of the imaginative. If you want to be an author you also have to be a salesman, selling your wares after first disarming the reader of his prejudice that it is all incredible from scratch.

But this method of transition, of easing the reader into a wonderworld, is neglected by you sophisticated scientification scribes. You're all in a hurry, speeding through a contracting universe at the speed of light. Waste a few precious hundred words telling the reader how some distant world was reached? Never. Your first lines hurl him out into the next solar system, or on some comet in a nebula billions of miles away. No, sir--only short-cuts for your science scribes.

That's why numerous stories that begin something like this get promptly sent back to their neophyte authors:

"X-B-468 was worried. His galvanic tentacle was running down. Then it was true...the Council's physicists were right...entropy!"

Or: "Dostev Ker braked the ship's jets, slowed down the rocket's velocity to five G's. His tele-vibrator wasn't function. That damned Heaviside-Layer and its sonic disturbances!"

Get it? This all sounds like double-talk, and the insouciant way in which futuristic accomplishments are presented make it seem as if the thrill is gone. And the thrill isn't gone! There are plenty of good scientification stories to be written around earth and its eight neighboring planets. Good, entertaining, warm, human interest stories. You don't have to explore the nethermost outposts of infinity to rustle story material. You don't have to race a billion miles for a plot. Readers, as well as editors, like to come up for air--and you'll always find air on earth, not in space.

Don't tell us you guys are space-struck. There's still time to unscramble your orbits. Stop yearning for new worlds to conquer. Be content with writing about the fourth dimension--the devil take the fifth, sixth, and seventh ones. Don't begin your yarns milleniums in the future. Begin it today. That's what Jules Verne, the ace of them all, did.

And take a tip from the movies. You've seen scientifilms like "Dr. Cyclops" "Shape of Things to Come", and "Dr. X". They all begin today, familiarizing their audiences with situations that ring true and dramatic because they are about things and people close to us. Stories that begin on other planets, stories told from the point of view of robots, filterable viruses, corpuscles, etc., aren't.

So, if you've tried to win in our amateur contest before, but failed, now you may know why. Try us again. And if you write about today--you may see one of your yarns in print in a future issue!

THE READERS ALWAYS WRITE

From Bob Tucker: Kraft's piece on fantastic films is worth every bit of 9, inasmuch as it makes an informative article, and recalled to mind some memories that I had forgotten I had forgotten. (The Gertie Stein in me.) I am speaking of the picture "Freaks" he mentions seeing when he was about 10 yrs old. And with Lillian Tashman. "Here our memories vary, and I have a bit of files of sorts to help re-cut. I cannot remember the name of the picture as "Freaks". True, I cannot recall what the title actually was, but it seems to me that it wasn't "Freaks". This, however, is understandable when you know the film racket. If a picture is titled "Spinach" in the East, and flops, it will be retitled "Green Grass" when it hits the Midwest, so it may be we saw the same picture under different names. It also occurs to me that a blonde by the name of Leila Hyams played the picture, not Tashman; altho as I recall it, Hyams was not the girl who was worked over into a freak, so Tashman may be the villain in the plot. It played at a theatre in which I was working roughly about 1932. And this date doesn't seem to coincide with Kraft's date...that is, unless he is about 18 now. Could be, huh? (Is. HW) Otherwise we remember the same thing. The dirty lady-villain was really given a working-over by the freaks in the side-show, because she cut a guy-roped and a performer crashed to his death. The end of the picture shows her billed as a human something-or-other, and you get a flash of her kicking and squeaking on the ground like a human chicken. In the film they used some neat props, and had her buried in the ground up to her hips, so that the camera showed her "amputated" at the hip line, and wearing some sort of costume that pretended that that was where she really ended. I seem to remember, too, that the lovable little gentlemen who had given her the old one-two had amputated her arms, and the circus had fixed up contraptions to resemble the wings of a hen, to further the illusion that she was half-chicken, half-woman. "But I still can't picture Lillian Tashman in that role." Concerning my Chicon article: if you follow Time, you know by this time that they didn't print the story of the Convention. Somebody in Chicago hunted up the resident reporter of the newsmagazine to find the reason why. It seems that the reporter had submitted five or six different "Chicago" stories to Time that week, and they printed but two of them, our Chicon piece being among the four omitted. The reporter didn't seem to think anything of this, as he was of the opinion that two stories out of six submitted was a good average for him. So, one can but sit back and speculate on the story he wrote.

Chris. E. Mulrain Jr writes: I liked Richard Kraft's "The Fantastic Film", but I think he forgot to mention some of the best motion pictures. First of all, how about Things to Come, the English picture adapted from H. G. Wells' book? That was tops of all the fantastic films. And there was Trans-Atlantic Tunnel, another English picture starring Richard Dix and Madge Evans. How about The Clairvoyant with Claude Rains, another English picture? And I wonder if Kraft remembers Just Imagine, produced around 1930. It was a musical comedy of the future and has been the only picture ever made in the U. S. that has dealt with interplanetary flight. And then there was The Girl in the Moon, produced by UFA of Germany. Also Twenty-Four Hours to Live starring Warner Baxter. Also there was a version of Verne's "Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea", which starred Lionel Barrymore. "Don't get me wrong; I liked Kraft's article but I think he just forgot to mention some of the films."

Walter E. Marconette says: Richard Kraft's article on fantastic films was particularly interesting to me, for the movies are one of my favorite forms of entertainment. I found a certain number of statements that I violently disagree with, and several picture that had no right to be included. Or, to be very definite, I found two such productions: "Night Must Fall" and "Freaks". "Night Must Fall" was an excellent study of a criminally abnormal mind...but fantastic? Hardly! "Freaks" was also non-fantastic; and it was not, strictly speaking, even a horror picture. It went beyond that. This sort of leaves us out on that well

known limb, for the darn thing was obviously something! Just for the sake of an argument, I'll originate a new term and call it a "repulsive picture". The average horror movie is produced in the hope that it will cause a gasp or two and send an occasional chill down the audience's collective spine. Those who saw "Freaks" found themselves retching slightly, then gulping loudly, and finally wishing that they hadn't eaten so damn much dinner. Just how Kraft came to the conclusion that a disgusting, sickening display of that sort made a motion picture fantastic is a little too deep for me. (Gee, maybe I'm stupid!) I've seen some rather hideous war movies--men lying about blown to shreds and things of a like sort--that could probably be considered good weird or science-fantasy by the same reasoning. As for the rest of the article, it's mostly personal opinion and is consequently fairly safe from criticism. "Dracula" and "Frankenstein" certainly aren't classics to me; in fact, I think they were both "stinkers"! "Dracula's Daughter" was superior to her old man, while the two sequels of "Frankenstein" were better than the original. (The plots of all three "Frankies" were very similar, but the latter two were staged in a more elaborate manner.) And while Kraft was on the subject of horror films, why did he fail to mention "The Werewolf of London" and Frederic March's two excursions into the field? And what about...Oh, to heck with it! Wind a fan up on his favorite subject, and he never runs down!

December 1940 [3, 1]

HOW TO WRITE A STORY

by

Lyle Monroe

The first thing to do is to be sure that you have plenty of white paper, second sheets, carbon, etc. If you're short on any of those it's best just to stop everything and run down to the corner to buy what you need--mustn't let anything interrupt the flow of inspiration once it's started. But don't stop to look over the magazine stand--that's fatal.

Okay now--got everything? Let's see; paper, carbon, eraser, ashtray, cigars, matches--wups! No glass of water. Step into the bathroom and get it. That brings your face up close to the mirror. Son, you're getting bald. No doubt about it; you can't call that a high forehead any longer. And your waistline isn't looking any too good.

All right, all right! What I need is fresh air. Why not just drop everything and take a run over to the Grand Canyon? Too much time spent at the mill isn't good for a man, makes him stale. It would really be professional work anyhow, gathering material for a western. You remember what they said about "Outlaws! Code"? Well, what if they did? What do they expect for pulp word rates?--Dret Harte?

Anyway, how about a little drive over to the Canyon? You could be back in three days, say four, and your work would be all the better for it. Clear the city fumes out of the head--good line that, better write it down. Wait a minute, you read that line, somewhere. Well, what if I did, one phrase isn't plagiarism. I wasn't going to use it anyhow.

Okay, get back in there and get to work.

Better start some coffee. Great stuff, coffee. Did Shakespeare have coffee? Maybe you could do an intimate essay on that--or a wacky article for Esquire. Couldn't be worse than some of Hemingway's stuff--what's Hemingway got that you haven't got? Aside from a good agent?

You can't afford a trip right now, Grand Canyon, or anywhere. Better write this yarn, then you can do it. Maybe it had better be a novelet rather than a short; there's a car payment coming up—don't forget that.

Back at the mill—funny what a hypnotic effect a sheet of white paper has. Writer's insomnia, that's what it is. Can't sleep except when facing a typewriter. What's it going to be this time? Western, whodoneit, science-fiction? Science—that's a hot one! Anything more involved than a knife and fork would be just too much machinery for you, chum. What would you do if you were stranded on a planetoid with nothing but a broken-down fourth-order atomic ultraconverter to help you? Remember what you did when you tried to fix the hot water heater? Remember?

Well, how about a horror story? That ought to suit your mood. Add a sex angle and you could throw your heart into it. Pleasant subject, sex. No, the word rate is too low. Better make it science-fiction, then nobody can criticize your technical knowledge of the howly steers, or guns, or something. Better not be too specific, though—some of those fans can be pretty unrelenting, and they've had high school physics to good deal more recently than you have.

A man practically has to stand on his head to make a living in this town. I wonder if anybody could use a good press agent?

Anyhow that idea about being cast away on a planetoid isn't bad, isn't bad. Could call it "Castaway Cairn", that's got a nice ring to it and suggests action. Sounds familiar though, Weinbaumish. No, that was "Redemption Cairn". Too much alike. Maybe not, it's not identical and Weinbaum didn't own the English language. No, but he could use a little help. Might better than some guys here in this room.

Maybe the title ought to suggest interplanetary, the cash customers are suckers for interplanetary. Look what they get away with in Buck Rogers. I'll bet poor old Phil Nowlan is known as "Spinning Phil" wherever he's gone. Too bad about Nowlan. Well, we got to die sometime, I suppose. Nowlan, Weinbaum, Farnsworth Wright—

Yes, but we got to eat now. You could bring in the cairn idea by having it be left by another explorer, a guy that the historians don't know anything about and then what he learned—the first guy—saves the second guy in the end. Sounds familiar—wasn't there something like that in the old astounding, when Clayton published it? There was a mag!—two cents a word and up. Anyhow that was a long time ago and there aren't any new plots—it's all in the writing.

Well, how did he happen to be eastaway? Don't worry about that now; get the title down and a good fast hook—you can take that up later.

A hook really ought to have dialogue, better start out with two characters. Two men? A girl maybe, and give a little love interest? Restrained, of course. Or how about a parrot, a parrot that he talks to because he's so lonely. No, not a parrot, a—Venerian avivox. Now you're getting somewhere, kid. Screwy animals are always copy. Particularly when they are kinda human but strange—outré. Good word, outré. It's got body. Too bad these hack writers have worked it to death.

Maybe it would be a good idea to spend a couple of hours digging through Rogé for some color words. List 'em—pep up the old style.

Naughty, naughty. Write down that title—you're stalling. Center the paper, backspace one, two, three, four, five, six, seven—

CASTAWAY CAIRN

by

Hmmm—this ribbon is getting sorta grey. Better change it—editors like nice black copy they can read easily. Do you suppose that they can read without moving their lips? Stow it, chum, stow it—you've been treated well enough. All you have to do is write it, they have to read it.

I wonder when somebody will invent a ribbon that can be changed without calling out the militia. Better go wash your hands. Now--retype that title. Looks better, doesn't it? Say, maybe this is going to be a good one. What name should it go under? Monroe? You remember what they did to the last one under that name? All but Asimov--good guy, Asimov, knows writing when he sees it. Must drop him a line some time and thank him.

All right, Monroe it is. Now for the hook--

"Think we'll ever see Terra again, you black-billed scamp?" Larry Marston scratched the bony topknot of his four-winged pet.

"Nevermore!" A rrrrk--"

All right, all right. Now you've done it. Now you've got to finish it. You know damned well that if you ever fail to finish a story you've once started, you'll never finish another one.

Go ahead. Get going. Where does it go from there? Or would you rather go back to working for your living?

+

January 1941 [3, 2]

CONFIDENTIAL NOTES ON EDITORS

by

Bob Tucker

(Prologue: The Anniversary Issue of this magazine certainly featured some outstanding items of humor, even if editor Warner did fail to identify them as such and accordingly list them as "humor" on the contents page. Or perhaps it was that he too was fooled, so cleverly written were these particular articles. I am referring to the articles written by Editor Campbell of A stounding-Unknown, and Editor Weisinger of Startling, TWS, and that pink-kneed percival of space, Private Past. How I guffawed and chuckled at their naive wit as they recounted mighty dramas that allegedly took place behind the scenes as a magazine went into the making! How I grinned and leered as their innocent-sounding words stretched across the page to create the illusion of hustle and bustle and work, work, work! But in all fairness to gullible readers who might otherwise accept the words for what they appear to portray, and not realize that these two bankers'-hours play-boys are pulling legs other than those attached to their secretaries, I plan to reveal here, probably exclusively to any periodical in the world, just what actually takes place in the offices of an editor during any given work day. The two mentioned above make excellent subjects, knowing them intimately as I do, and enjoying above all other people their full confidence. --The Author)

Campbell's remarks as to the care and caution exercised over submitted manuscripts is humorous to the extreme. Oh, Mr. Campbell, how your tongue must have been pushing against your cheek when you set down those jolly words! Come, come now, old chap...perhaps "outer-circle" readers may be naive enough to believe that, but not we intelligent fans! Because I hold such a sacred, confidential trust with Campbell, I am in a position both to observe and to experience conditions that are carefully hidden away from the public and fan eye. Let me tell you of a certain Monday--

About mid-morning I found myself near the Street & Smith house so decided at once to drop up to Unk's offices to get the latest fiction requirements. Pushing open the outer door I found no one in sight except Prunella Twitchet, Campbell's nimble-minded but somewhat childish secretary of 22 years. Upon ascertaining who I was, she at once dropped the pretense of being furiously busy, and motioned with a laconic thumb toward a closed

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door. I passed through this door and locked it behind me as Miss Twitchet resumed her pastime of sailing paper airplanes. Inside, under a dim light, squatted Campbell, Ezekiah of Love Book and Grubach of Shadow shooting craps. Trimble of Wild West Weekly was out of the game, broke.

As to money, either they were all broke or they didn't believe in using it with one another. They were playing with paper-clipped manuscripts.

"H'lo, Tucker," Campbell said as I walked in. "Wanna get in the game? What'cha got under your arm?"

"The Ant from Hell," I snaps back, sizing the situation at a glance. "A red-hot serial of torrid passion among the clicking mandibles, in three parts."

"Hmmm" opines Campbell, knitting his brows without losing a purl.

"Well, it's worth about six bucks in blue chips. Put it in."

"Hey, just a minute here, not so fast!" yells Ezekiah from Love. "I just put up 'Tropics in the Moonlight', a scorching epic of passion in the China Seas, in four parts, and you allowed me only \$4.60 in blue chips!"

"This is different," explains Campbell. "If I win I'll have to sneak your serial in without advance notice, because it ain't science-fiction. It's like that 'Typewriter in the Sky' I won from Pirate and Sea Stories last week-- it just don't fit. Whereas Tucker's yarn does."

And so the game progressed. My fortune waxed and waned. I first won a Kummer "Jewels of the Moon", Grubach covered with his newest Shadow novel, and we both lost to Trimble from Wild West Weekly. However, in the process Trimble lost "Six Gun Rancho" to Campbell. Trimble then put up "Ants from Hell" and "The Girl Desires a Ring" in an effort to get back his Rancho story because it is already advertised as coming in his next issue, but loses both to Ezekiah without getting his yarn back. Disgusted, he quits and stalks out to his own office, the copy of "Tropics in the Moonlight" under his arm, already thinking up excuses to push it off on his Wild West Weekly readers.

Campbell either is exceedingly lucky or owns the dice. Pretty soon the game broke up and the other editors filed out, leaving him in possession of all their western and love stories; but he had lost my "Ant from Hell" to Ezekiah's Love Book. All I came away with was a short filler from Wild West Weekly on the design of .22 rifles. I remember complaining to Campbell about this, and I believe he explained that it had been written by a big name in the western field, hence was worth as much as a short story from either of his magazines.

In Campbell's office (and his office is a fair example of others), other various hazards befall manuscripts. Jack Woodford claims that some editors use 'scripts for coasters, of those things commonly known as beer-pads. Many a poor author has recieved back from Astounding or Unknown his 'script burned full of cigaret holes, or saturated with spilled gin. By the by, Campbell chooses a poor gin; of late I always refuse it when he offers it to me. My friend also has a small radio in his office (to help while away the hours) and as he is a rabid baseball fan, often have we kept score on the back of some page of manuscript. During the recent World Series we used up some twenty-odd pages keeping tabs and notes on the games, all on the reverse sides of "The Man Who Died Fifteen Times", a novelette of passion on the upper levels.

However, let me say here that I do not approve of this, and only wish I hadn't let him start the habit, for now I find that he casually uses the back-side of any 'script handy to figure out his household budget for the week, work on soap contests, puzzles, limericks, and how to beat the next installment on his car.

Then too, Prunella the secretary keeps a few embarrassing habits. She simply loves to fold up paper airplanes and sail them about the room. Needless to say, she uses pages from submitted yarns in the game. Once, the three of us spent a whole anxious, feverish week hunting for nineteen pages from the second installment of "Gray Lensman", that she had sailed away and lost. Sad to say,

we never found them. They must have flown out the window. One must admire Campbell's secretary, though, for her pluck. When the desperate situation became known, and it was realized the nineteen pages were gone forever, she sat down and whipped out nineteen substitute pages in a half-hour's time, and to this day even the story's author doesn't know the difference!

So much for the loving care taken of manuscripts. Next to the mention of receiving carloads of allegedly hopeless scripts. Oh, but my friend Campbell lied marvelously there; of course he had to, for it is simply impossible for a man in his position to admit the truth! On Fridays, around the Street & Smith house, a secret gathering takes place, usually in that same back room that serves the crap-shooters on Mondays. Friday has the unofficial designation of "old maid day". To that room will filter many figures--

Snadaker from Thrill Book, Jones from Fiery Confessions, and Campbell with his so-called hopeless manuscripts from midwestern old maids. Miss Twitchet is barred from this gathering, as it is strictly stag. In that back room we read every word of those submitted nightmares and personal experiences of old maids, and to hell with our eyes and the bad lighting! If it is necessary, those editors reject a hundred scripts without even bothering to glance at the opening page, in order to gain time for this Friday session. Why? For what reason can these old-maid submissions be so valuable? Ahhh!

Speaking for myself, during the short time I have been dropping in on these stag story hours, I have learned three hundred and ninety-two new dirty stories... "Slan"s and "Gray Lensmen" can go play marbles while we ooze through these Friday fugitives from Snappy Stories!

Friend Mort Weisinger and his amateur contest.

Ah, for shame, friend Mort, how you hoodwink the fans! Come on, 'fess up! Tell the readers how you hoodwink the fans! Come on, 'fess up! Tell the readers why you really ask for amateur stories. Now just between you and me, you know you don't ask for them because you would like to discover another Weinbaum among the pack...do you? Of course not.

All right. As long as you are reluctant, I'll tip the lads off. You see, readers, it is this way. Friend Mort is an incurable hobbyist. Oh, he has dozens of hobbies, all going at once. He collects stamps, he collects postmarks, he collects paper clips, he collects old envelopes, he collects watermarks (in manuscript paper), he collects different-colored typing (it is rumored that he possesses manuscripts typed in nine different basic colors), he is something of a graphologist and likes to analyze signatures; but the most far-reaching, and fundamentally the greatest reason for asking for manuscripts from new authors is this:

Weisinger is an incurable optimist; he believes wholeheartedly in the future of mankind; and steadfastly maintains that mankind is rapidly improving itself in every manner, especially in intelligence. To prove this, he has sent out call after call for manuscripts and letters from people living west of the Hudson river, for it is rumored that nine-tenths of the population of America west of the Hudson are ignorant.

And so Weisinger arranged all these manuscripts in his office, on display for whosoever cares to pause and look, and beside the manuscripts rests Mort's own statistical chart, proving beyond all doubt that the great mass of people in the midwest and west have learned to read and spell and write; and the manuscripts are documentary proof!

In closing, I wish to comment upon but two more items. In his article, Editor Weisinger spoke of getting into a huddle with big-boss Leo Margulies over matters of policy. Some more gentle leg-pulling, I assure you, dear

readers! It could be but naught else, for have you ever heard of the bookkeeper in the House of Morgan who strutted out with thumbs hooked in his vest and explained: "Me and J. P. just raised the price of Tin Can Preferred!"?

Second item is Editor Gnaedinger's remark on choosing stories for coming issues. She couldn't of course, let you in on the real method of choosing, for that would destroy the editorial illusion of hard work. No, I was up to her office one day and watched her throw darts at a target pinned to the wall. All over the target were names of stories available. But she made me promise not to tell.

"-,-"

March 1941 [3, 3]

TRANSITION

by

Donald A. Wollheim

The transition from fan to professional editor is one which is undoubtedly the secret ambition of most fans and particularly of those who have edited fan magazines and who have written science-fiction stories. Letters to the editor are a give-away of the thought. These letters would not be written if there were not those who did not hold themselves to be as competent to judge fiction as the editor. Which is as it should be.

It was natural that a fan of my record and standing would have wanted to become an editor. I take a certain pride in never accepting an editor's opinion on science-fiction as automatically superior to my own. This is admittedly damnably egotistical and I hope the readers of this article do not take it as meaning that I regard the rest of fandom as a bunch of galoots. I don't and never did.

What I mean is this: After all, I had been an ardent and avid reader of science-fiction for about fifteen years. During this period I had absorbed just about everything of this sort ever written. I had collected hundreds of items, from Argosies and obscure magazines from the nineteenth century onwards; I had acquired a simply tremendous knowledge of all things science-fictional. I had spent countless hours over a period of many years arguing science-fiction, arguing things pertaining to it, threshing out the question of space-flight, of time-travel, of the dimensions, with dozens of fan friends. I had met, made close friendships and close correspondences with at least several hundred readers of science-fiction. I had engaged in arguments with them, had enjoyed the friendship of some, the respect of others, the hate of still others. All in all, I felt that I could say truly that I knew science-fiction and I knew its readers.

In addition I knew what made up a story--at least sufficiently well to sell a couple of yarns 'way back when I first became active as a fan and to be able to turn out presentable yarns now when I write.

Now, considering this, consider the case of the existing editors. After all, a fan is an expert. The longer the experience, the more capable the expert. By what right thus did incompetents edit magazines of this specialized field? I was thinking of such as Robert Erisman, Malcolm Reiss; men who may be experts at general pulp editing but whose knowledge of science-fiction didn't equal that of the 35th top fan. Again, other editors were such as did not make me feel inferior to any of them in my knowledge of fantasy. Palmer is an old time fan, but he had left fantasy for quite a while before he came back an editor. I had never left fantasy. Mort Weisinger stopped being a follower

of science-fiction before I became active. His interest today is still purely a matter of business. Leo Margulies was never a fan in the correct sense. John Campbell was one of the best writers of fantasy ever, but the depth to which I had gone in fan work and the nature of science fiction made me feel that I was still able to speak to him on equal terms. Fred Pohl is an old fan friend of mine.

So then I never had any qualms about my ability to judge science-fiction as compared with the then existing editors.

Early in 1940, I carefully surveyed the professional pulp magazine publishers, trying to determine those who might be likely to put out a new fantasy magazine and who would be likely to hire a new editor rather than throw the work on some existing general editor. I had several discussions with a number of companies, drew up tentative plans for some. As it developed, however, most of the publishers finally decided to sink their dough in comic magazines. Everywhere I went, the publishers were going wild about comics. A report had said that one of them, Action Comics, was selling three million copies. Naturally, this was enough to drive any publisher mad. Science-fiction lost out every time. (As a side-thought, most of those comic magazines were a terrific loss. The publishers usually bet on the wrong horse.)

Early in September I got in touch with the publishers of a brand new outfit, Albing, whose first venture was a daring experiment the old companies had never tried. I refer to Stirring Detective & Western Stories. This was a combination type of magazine unique.

Here I thought was an outfit, brand-new, starting a chain of magazines, and proving to begin with that they were capable of being original and not encumbered by the fearful traditions and taboos of the other companies. I approached them with the idea of a combination magazine to carry both science-fiction and weird-fiction together. To carry out the chain-magazine plan, I suggested the distinguishing adjective "Stirring". It would be called Stirring Science & Fantasy Stories.

I found Jerry Albert, Editorial Director of Albing, receptive. I found that Albing was one outfit that was courageous enough to break every taboo in the business if it could show a way to successful paths.

Albert again had the odd idea that the editor of a magazine should be an expert on it. Unlike the Standard, Fiction House, and Red Circle chains, they did not think that putting out a magazine was just a matter of tossing together readable stories and shoving it at the public. They okayed me as the man they wanted and we signed a contract.

Now, I was faced with an interesting problem. The question was: what sort of a magazine did I want? That is: did I want a magazine carrying action stories, bang-bang adventure, no science? Or did I want a magazine adult in appeal, with a great emphasis on characterization and such? In brief, with whom was I to compete? What place would my magazines (for they had split themonthly we had planned into two bi-monthlies, the shortened titles Stirring Science Stories and Cosmic Stories) seek to fill in the chain of the pulps?

Here's how I visualized the field. At one end there were the magazines striving for action and swift pulp-writing. At the other end those striving for mature appeal, for non-pulpish effects. Where would my new magazines find a support which had not been previously catered to?

Over at one end was Amazing Stories and Fantastic Adventures. Bang-bang writing galore. Then next to it came Science Fiction, Future Fiction, Thrilling Wonder, Startling, Marvel. All these came under the heading of action. Planet Stories fitted in here, too. What was left? Astonishing, Superscience and Astounding. Astonishing and Superscience were not definitely aimed at action;

they are to a considerable extent trended toward the mature thoughtful type of fiction. Fantasy begins to show its head also. Yet these two magazines could not compare with Astounding. Astounding was the acme of the mature type. There was no other that could be compared with it. It was consistently voted best in the field by fans. Authors, too, showed that they would prefer to appear in Astounding than anywhere else. Again, reports of its circulation seemed to indicate that it was doing very well, possibly the best in the field. Palmer, for instance, admits that it is his closest rival and Campbell seems to admit that Amazing is his closest. These two magazines are at opposite poles and cannot be considered rivals.

Between Astonishing and Astounding there was a gap you could drive a fleet of Mack trucks through.

Between Planet Stories and Amazing Stories the field was packed thick and fast. The competition was terrific.

The only place that was gaping wide for a new magazine was between Astounding and Astonishing/Superscience: a magazine trended toward the mature type of writing, trended toward adult fantasy.

That is the place that I am trying to fill with my two magazines. I consider that I am competing with Astounding for mature readers. I do not expect to put Campbell out of business or even to replace his magazine. He is a better writer than I and he does know his writing. His writing staff is unbeatable. The prices he can pay for stories will beat me every time. The make-up of his magazines cannot be matched.

But I can fill a gap Astounding does not fill. That is the need for a fifteen-cent magazine with a not-so-alloof and haughty stance, yet catering to the science-fiction reader of taste and intelligence. The fans have shown that such a magazine will be supported.

That is the way I have tried to guide my two magazines. I have not said so before because I have not been satisfied that my first issues showed that trend. I do not expect really to hit my stride until my third issues appear. Yet already I have received letters from readers which indicate that I am on the right track. Quite a surprising number have told me that they rate Stirring and Cosmic as among the first four or five fantasy titles. And by their other comments, I can see that they are Campbell readers.

Whether I will succeed in filling this great gap in the chain of fantasy is still a problem for the months to come. But I want fans to know where I'm going and I want to ask them to write me and let me know how close to the target I'm hitting. With their aid I may be able to make of my titles, magazines of which fandom may be proud.

April 1941 [3, 4]

DESIGNERS WANTED

by
Tom Wright

Scientific fiction has a good many illustrators, but very few artists, startling as it may seem. We have our Isips, Krupa, Bok, Cartier, Kramer, Finlay, Rogers, Fuqua, etc. But out of the whole bunch, I would venture to say there is only one real artist. This is Hubert Rogers.

I know many disagree on this, for I have had heated arguments with many on this question of art. But analyze their work. Rogers is the only one who can do equally well on interiors and covers. His art is exceedingly well balanced. His people really look human, and his color work is nothing short of perfect. I

don't wonder that all the authors want the cover for their story in Astounding, when Rogers does it. Finlay is the only illustrator what comes near him, as far as art is concerned. But very few of Finlay's covers ever reach the class of his interiors.

Yet Rogers is not my favorite, or the favorite of hardly any fan, as far as I have been able to find out. Finlay reigns supreme on the inside. Why? Because of the enormous amount of detail he puts in his drawings; a very fine cross-hatch that few artists are able to achieve, and dots that must require hours to put in. But this is not true art, it is design. True his humans are very realistic; that is why I put him second to Rogers. He has done two covers that show a great deal of talent; the one for "Darkness and Dawn", and the one for "The Snake Mother". Bok, probably the fastest rising artist there is, is another detail, design artist, and I, as do many others, rate him better on the interior than Rogers. Paul, Krupa, Dold and Marchioni are other artists that are good at design, and symmetry, but whose humans most of the time aren't so hot.

A cover drawing is about the best thing to show just how good an interior designer is, although some like Paul avoid humans on the covers, except small figures, and keep the machinery very symmetrical. Bok could probably be rated third in the artist class, for his drawings show extremely good balance.

If you want a popular illustrator, get one that likes to work on detail, and more detail; keep your Bergeys that know how to draw people, not machinery. Someday, perhaps, there'll be an artist, a real one, that can combine detail and art. But he won't stay in the pulps long, you can bet!

June 1941 [3, 5]

IN OCTOBER: TO CHLORIS

by

Earl Singleton

Vivid upon the heaven's vaulted frame

There hung a velvet canopy of blue

Bestrewn with vibrant stars the night I came

Along these secret ways in search of you,

Roaming the forest where the radiant dew

Blended the moonlight into pools of flame,

I came upon a shafted elm, and knew

It was your home--I heard you call my name!

Again before your saffron-painted elm

In dreams I see you, Dryad Queen, as when

You stood serene, the ruler of your realm,

And gently called to me--and now again

In answer to my wondering: "You are she?"

I hear your silver whisper: "Come to me. . . ."

June 1941 [3, 5]

THE WASHINGTON MANIFESTO

It appears to be to the best interests of fantasy fandom that its annual convention in the United States should alternate between the west of the Mississippi and the east. At the 1940 Chicago Convention, when Denver for 1941 was being considered, it was unofficially and very tentatively agreed that the 1942 convention should be back in the East, and even more tentatively supposed that 1943 might be Los Angeles' year.

We have already had conventions in New York and Philadelphia, so having another one there would be of no great interest to us. Because of the large meetings of active clubs in those cities, another convention in those places would contribute little extra toward bringing in new Philadelphia or New York fans.

An active group exists in Boston that might like to put on a convention, but the Strangers have no hinterland from which to draw additional support for a convention there; any support in arrangements beyond what the Strangers could supply would have to come from New York. Moreover, a look at the map will show that Boston is extremely far east, making for more expensive trips, even to easterners such as the Philadelphians.

The new Southern fandom would like to have a convention. They display the enthusiasm and willingness to work that are necessary in putting a convention over, but seem mainly deficient in experience in fandom. A city in the deep South would meet the same objections of distance that apply to Boston. But Washington, D. C. is a southern city, southern states to north and south of it, and yet is within a day's distance of any place in the east.

Rothman and Speer, particularly Rothman, have had previous experience in managing fan affairs (the Chicago costume party, the OSA Powwow, Philadelphia Conferences), and in addition have a good many years' experience in fandom behind them. Government workers, they are able to bear the little expense of correspondence and traveling around in the vicinity. Lester del Rey is a resident of Washington and can help in the dirty work. Hagerstown, Baltimore, and Esmont, Va., with active fans, are no further distant from Washington than Bloomington from Chicago; fans from these places could assist in the work of getting a convention ready.

If war comes, or the emergency deepens, which seems likely, more fans will probably come to Washington to work, and can help in the arrangements. It must, of course, be assumed that a convention can be held under war or near-war conditions, so that we can plan for it. Should world conditions make a convention impossible, no harm will have been done by planning it.

Such science fiction personalities as Skylark Smith and L. Ron Hubbard have lived and worked in Washington; the immortal Skylark of Space was written here. There are the dormant remnants of a Weird Tales club here, including Seabury Quinn. The city itself has unique attractions for the visitor who can stay longer than the actual convention days.

We recommend that the Convention designate Washington as the site for the 1942 Convention.

Washington, May 11, 1941. /s/ Jack Speer Louis Russell hauenet

Ramon Felipe San Juan Mario Silvo Enrico Alvarz-del Rey

Milton B. Rothman

R. D. Swisher

A COLLECTOR SPEAKS

by

Larry B. Farsaci

One of the most fascinating aspects of scientific fiction to me has been the collecting mania that has been so allied with it and given it such an unholy glamour. One cannot escape this the moment he becomes deeply, vitally interested in the new type of fiction he has discovered, and it's particularly so when one has, from his childhood up, found it a source of interest and mental pleasure as I have. And this is true even though he knows the danger that lies before him--that of being so absorbed that living from day to day becomes only a secondary matter.

The earliest story I recall reading was "The Swordsman of Sarvon", by Charles Cloukey. I remember at the time watching a basket-ball game at Lewis Street Center just across the street, but so intrigued had I been by Cloukey's yarn that my mind was a good many million miles away. It was at this time that I first read such stories as Leslie F. Stone's "The Man Who Fought a Fly" and Walter Kateley's "World of a Hundred Men". I remember these as wonderfully mysterious and even more so when the authors delightfully and realistically explained them! I can't forget the thrill I got a few days later to find in a local bargain store the issue of Wonder Stories with Smith's "The City of the Singing Flame". To me this was truly "A Stellar Publication", as it was labeled. Yet in this period, strange to say, I did not keep any of the magazines or stories!

It was later, perhaps in the rediscovery of these favorites, that I gradually acquired the policy of keeping them. I must have been inspired to recall them as one remembers melodies of years gone by that were enjoyed, then quite forgotten until heard again. But beyond that, the chief reason was, undoubtedly, the development of a bibliographical trend of thinking. I would, for example, be impressed by a story like "Solarite", by John W. Campbell, Jr., and almost immediately begin to wonder what other stories Campbell had written before that or after. And subsequently, I would discover, through a more systematic and specialized search of the various bookstores, his others such as "The Black Star Passes", "Islands of Space", "Invaders from the Infinite" and "When the Atoms Failed." Now multiply this by a score of other authors whose work I liked and you see more clearly what I mean.

There would be the "Thought-variant" stories and authors who consistently wrote stories of this type in which all that was important was a new idea of the universe or of cosmic implications, with just enough build of characters that you might sense the marvel with them. In this category fall such stories as Edmond Hamilton's "The Man Who Evolved", "The Accursed Galaxy", and "The Cosmic Pantagraph", Clare Winger Harris' "A Runaway World", and "The Fifth Dimension", Harl Vincent's "Before the Asteroids" and "The Morons", Donald Wandrei's "Farewell to Earth" and "Colossus", R. F. Starzl's "Out of the Sub-Universe", Francis Flagg's "The Machine Man of Ardathia", John Russell Fearn's "The Man Who Stopped the Dust", and many, many others.

There would be those stories which one instinctively knew were meant to be lived in. These were by the more literary authors and of the human-interest type with a good scientific fiction theme carried throughout. One can still point out as good examples of this type, Lawrence Manning's "Asteroid" and "Man Who Awoke" stories, Stanton A. Coblentz's "The Blue Barbarians", "The Sunken World", and "In Caverns Below", David H. Keller's "Life Everlasting" and many of his short stories as well. "The Swordsman of Sarvon" was also one of these.

There would be the "Don A. Stuart" stories, the atmospheric stories by such authors as Clark Ashton Smith, H. P. Lovecraft, A. Merritt, C. L. Moore, and Frank Owen, and the blend of this type with the "idea" stories as represented by Jack Williamson with such stories as "Kandulu", "The Stone from the Green Star", and "The Moon Era", P. S. Schuyler Miller and L. A. Eshbach, with stories like "The Titan" and "Valley of the Titans". Specific classification of these is impossible since each was individual in its own blend of science, fantasy, and often pseudo-science; some outstandingly so, like "The Blind Spot".

There would be the "Utopia" stories, the famous scientific fiction novels by Campbell and Smith, certainly "different" from anything ever written before and yet close to the readers' idea of real scientific fiction, and such tales as Weinbaum was writing--"The Martian Odyssey"--definitely apart from anything else read before and relieving with their light touch. It's a pity that so very few authors wrote stories for the stf. magazines in such a delightfully humorous way as Weinbaum started out to.

I would go into a very enthusiastic search after this or that author's work, discovering other stories I found to be very much worth reading meanwhile. Excerpting from the magazines was an allied hobby and carried to fantastic lengths. I would, for example, buy a dozen or so Astoundings in order to get "The Mightiest Machine" and "The Skylark of Valeron" complete, disposing of the remnants of the issues, only to buy later duplicates of the same magazines when I found how really good other stories in the same issues were, or overlapping serials such as "The Legion of Space". One serial alone, "Triplanetary", I must have bought four times. I paid 75c for an issue of Weird Tales containing a four-page fantasy story I wanted ("The White Ship", by Lovecraft), which was the only thing in the issue I cared to keep and excerpted. This is but one instance of many similar.

To encourage me, almost every day there was a "find" of some sort or other. Please remember that at this time I was a boy of about fourteen with only a limited amount of spending money, and appreciated to the full such incidents as the purchase of an Amazing Quarterly containing Coblenz's "After 12,000 Years" and Weird Tales of 1928 and 1929 vintage for five cents apiece. With very few exceptions both quarterlies and monthlies averaged near 10c apiece, including rarer issues occasionally found such as the July, 1926 issue of Amazing which is the first of the earliest Amazings I found.

With the discovering of scientific fiction in other periodicals besides those devoted to it and finding, almost simultaneously, Fantasy Magazine and its "Service Department" of out-of-the-way stf., it was inevitable that I acquired the urge to track down, if possible, every bit of scientific fiction ever published, if no more than to list each story under its own classification. This was the conscious awareness of the bibliographical trend of mind that I spoke of, later resulting in the issues of The Fantasy Collector and installments of "The Fantasy Record" already published--which, however, are but small fragments of what should be undertaken with time, in some ideal descriptive fashion.

It was then that I started out after the "out of the way" scientific fiction, genuinely interested, discovering the stf. in Argosy, Blue Book, Tom-Notch, and scores of other magazines. On just these alone I could go on for reams of pages, but I see that this article will be long enough just in talking about a couple of items. There were publications mentioned in the readers' departments that seemed non-existent no matter how hard I tried to get them, and, similarly, stories. It appeared as if no one could tell me anything about them, neither correspondents nor dealers whom I had at this time contacted to aid my various scientific fictional quests. And since fanzines only added fire to my curiosity to learn about the hard-to-get items, they grew to be legendary and things of mythical dream. These included a multitude of items, books, magazines, and stories. Chief among them were The Recluse, The Thrill Book, early Weird Tales, The Black Cat, and such

classically-titled and famous stories as "The Blind Spot", "Palos of the Dog-Star Pack", "Darkness and Dawn", and "The Conquest of Mars". Through my luck in contacting Elmer Weinman, a veteran scientific fiction collector-dealer just four blocks away from my home, it was practically simultaneous with my desire that I came to read the above-mentioned stories, with the exception of "Conquest of Mars", and to discover an almost complete set of Weird Tales which was completed several years later. In an inspired collaboration of collecting we set out on searches among bookstores in Buffalo as well, which resulted in a rapidly growing collection of my own including all the Argosy, All-Story fantastic fiction I had ever dreamed about. It was in Buffalo that we discovered the gigantic hoard of magazines spoken of in "Dust of Years" (see Science Fiction Fandom), a store that was, strangely enough, but a few blocks from the heart of the city!

Corresponding eventually brought us (and to me as soon as I could afford them) The Thrill Book and The Black Cat, or at least enough copies of them to know what they were. A surprising local discovery I made brought at least a hundred different copies of the latter magazine to give a clear picture of the fantasy-fiction it featured. This made me want more than ever to learn about the Recluse. The Thrill Book and The Black Cat had haunted me in my dreams; but they were nothing now compared to the desire-to-know aroused by the mystery of The Recluse. I don't think gold was ever more precious to man than this item upon which I could only speculate and build in imagination. Certainly I wanted it, but it was not merely that; it was a driving curiosity that would have made me give practically anything just to be able to see it or to know what it was about. The Recluse was the item I was after—a challenge, it seemed, nearly impossible, which I accepted.

However, if anything could appear to be non-existent or legendary, this was it. And I knew I would track it down, with joy even if it should be to a ludicrous end with irony, wherein it would share honors with the Necronomicon, kingpin of them all.

Answers to queries, which often were sent by Elmer Weinman, who was helping in my search, were consistently discouraging. From Ackerman, for example, "Don't know where you might obtain Recluse and can you not advert in some prominent fan-pub?" Henry Hasse: "I haven't seen a Recluse yet nor do I know of anyone who has." Bleiler: "The Recluse was a weird story mag published in 1926 by W. Cook of Athol (I believe), Mass. It lasted but one issue, and had stories by Lovecraft and Smith in it." R. H. Barlow: "Sorry I can't supply a copy of The Recluse--it is unobtainable as far as I know." Olin F. Wiggins supplied the following worthwhile information: "Clark Ashton Smith will have to give you information on The Recluse, he was the author I believe of it, and if you will write him, at his home in Auburn, California, he will give you all the information you wish on the matter", while Charles D. Hornig came through with the following interesting facts: "As far as I know, only one issue of The Recluse ever appeared--a large magazine with a heavy paper cover, published in 1927 by W. Paul Cook. I think only about one hundred copies were printed. Early in 1933, when I planned to publish a small science-fiction fan magazine, The Fantasy Fan, I tried to get in touch with Mr. Cook (in some small Massachusetts town), but never succeeded in locating him. Nevertheless, I reprinted about half of one long article from The Recluse, in The Fantasy Fan magazine, serially from October, 1933, to February, 1935, the last issue. This was 'Supernatural Horror in Literature' by H. P. Lovecraft."

Julius Schwartz in Fantasy Magazine had heightened my interest further when he stated that one of Don Wandrei's best stories, "A Fragment of a Dream", had appeared in The Recluse. He couldn't remember anything more about it, however, and I wasn't able to get in touch with Wandrei. Meanwhile some dealer sent my expectations on a wild goose chase (January 12, 1939) by saying: "I have just one copy of Recluse. It's in pretty bad condition but I prize it very highly", and, later: "I am very reluctant to sell or trade my set of Magazines of Mystery. In fact I refuse altogether to sell my single copy of Recluse as I know I could never

replace it. I bought this one from a Mr. Mazzoni of Brooklyn, I forget his address, about three years ago for a goodly sum. So you can write to him, if you find out his address, about the issues of Recluse." But later, thanks to Elmer, who visited the dealer in New York City, I found out that we were just being hoaxed for business reasons. In reality, said dealer had never even seen a copy of my wanted (and much-wanted!) Recluse.

My next step, as a matter of policy, was to insert an ad in Palmer's "correspondence corner" in the Ziff-Davis mazing. It's perhaps a very good thing that I did so. One day, totally unexpected, a friend sent me the following information on a postal dated October 16, 1939 (this must have been the very day following the whirl of activity that was the first issue of Golden Atom):

"Dear Larry B. ..."

"Here's the best news I've yet had to offer you....Today, I received word from CASmith telling me of his pre-natal Lovecraftian entities etc. etc. etc. ...BUT, AND DON'T IGNORE THIS; I quote Smith:....Tell Farsaci that the RECLUSE was a one-shot annual, pub'd in 1927 by W. Paul Cook at Athol, Mass. It contained Lovecraft's Supernatural Horror In Literature, together with contributions by DWAndrei, HWarnerMunn, FBLong, Jr., Samuel Loveman, Walter JCoates, ArthurGoodenough, and myself (meaning Smith). If Farsaci is collecting such items, I would consider a bid for my somewhat battered copy. (That's all, Larry....Fran)"

That was certainly the best possible news I could receive! I recall now, also, that it had been myself who had suggested to Fran that he write to Smith regarding his weird carvings, and had not forgotten to ask him to inquire about The Recluse while he was at it! You may be sure that was enough for me! I was in high spirits as I had never been before. It seemed now that all my worries regarding the mystery of The Recluse were at an end. But I was wrong. The very day after, when I was to have written Smith, I learned by accident that a rival collector of the time had somehow gotten wind of the true state of affairs, and had already dispatched to Smith a special-delivery airmail letter with an offer!

(To be continued in the next issue of Spaceways)

??? August 1941 [3, 6]

THE INSIGNIFICANT INVASION

Fred Hurter and Damon Knight

(Extract from the personal records of Richard Snerg, pioneer of space)
To begin with, I want to say that getting lost was an extremely dirty trick on the part of the Alien Invaders from the Blue-Green Stinking Star. In these latter days, now that we have had time to look at the whole matter dispassionately, we who have passed through the fire of those terrible days when the world waited, waited for the invasion that did not come, believe that any inhuman monsters worthy of the name would at least have shown us the courtesy of attacking on schedule, with the usual rape and bloodshed, bloodshed predominating by a slight margin. We have grown to expect it. But did they even show up at all? No! Why, even today--but I am getting ahead of my story. Silly of me, eh?

Well, to go back to the beginning; my justly celebrated ship, The Bedbug of Space, was the cause of it all. Being only an amateur, naturally I built the whole thing myself, in utter secrecy and a barn. And like the ass I was and am (all we heroes are asses, naturally) I set out secretly and alone for my trial flight to the lower left-hand corner of the Great Nebula in Andromeda. My ship was equipped

with rockets for navigating through the atmosphere, gravodynes for the Solar System, photopulsors for interstellar space, wheels for traffic, and woolen underwear for cold nights. I also had meteor detectors, asteroid deflectors, disintegrator guns, heat guns, vortex guns--and hay fever. In fact, that was my main reason for leaving the earth and venturing into the limitless depths of space--so as to have a place to put all my dirty handkerchiefs.

On the eventful night, I stepped out of the house at about ten o'clock and two feet higher than I should have. "----- that doorstep," I said. Then I gave the broken step a vicious kick and hopped into the barn which stood, or rather drooped, a short distance from the house. The sight that met my eyes as I switched on the lights would have surprised the innocent passerby. In fact, I have been unable to get quite accustomed to it myself. I daresay no cracked inventor in the world's history ever managed to build a contraption so radical in design and revolting in appearance as the Bedbug of Space.

By devious routes I clambered up the side of the machine and entered through a tiny airlock. When I sealed the door behind me, I realized that I was alone as no man had ever been alone before. I was completely isolated from all mankind! Oh, well, what with my hay fever and my halitosis, I had been pretty well isolated for some years anyway. "So who cares yet?" I said in my native Norwegian, and flipped the starting lever.

The ship trembled slightly. I might have known it would. Resolving mentally to be different next time and build a ship that would shake your guts out in the takeoff, I strolled over to a porthole. The greatest voyage in history had begun. I was off for thirteen chapters!

For four long weeks I hurtled through space, spending my time in the uneventful routine of the void--dodging meteorites, chasing comets, locking myself out of the ship and battering my way in again--until I thought I would go mad, mad with the monotony of it all! So I did. I went mad, and found it very diverting for the next week. I built crazy inventions and brewed horrible concoctions and made stink bombs and laid plans for blowing up the earth--but after a week it began to pall. I decided to mop up the mess and become sane again, and today I am the intelligent, refined person everybody knows. No one would ever suspect that only a few months ago I was a 97-pound madman.

About this time it occurred to me that I ought to be getting somewhere near my destination, the lower left-hand corner of the Great Nebula in Andromeda, by now. Accordingly, I did something I had not done since the takeoff. I looked out the window. And sure enough, just whizzing by on the starboard quarter was a large juicy blue-white sun, with seventeen and $3/4$ planets, plus state tax. "Too hot," I said, and scooted on by. In swift succession large quantities of suns of different sizes and shapes passed, but I didn't like any of them. Finally, I decided on a pretty blue-green one with two planets and accessories to match. "Ahh," I said, and spiraled down for a landing.

Nearing the outermore of the two planets, a jagged, airless sphere, I discerned to my surprise a strange dome-shaped object beside a level plain. Puzzled, I dropped lower to examine it. What could it be? An old derby? A plate of Jello? A discarded fishbowl? No, none of these things, I decided, and later events proved my judgment to be correct; for when I skidded to a halt in the greenish-blue soil it became at once apparent that I was gazing upon--careful, dear reader, this will shock you--a city! Yes, yes!

Slowly the Bedbug of Space came to rest on the soil of a new planet! Eagerly I put on my shimmering aluminum spacesuit, with snood to match, and crawled through the airlock. Making my way hurriedly through the maze of machinery on the outside of my sturdy craft, I at last reached the ground. Ah, the feelings that flooded through me in that historic moment! Kneeling, I planted a small flag

in the sandy soil, and solemnly recited these words: "I, Richard Peekaniffle Snerg, do hereby claim this land and all territories adjacent thereunto, to wit and howsoever, for the sovereign state of Globber's Department Storie, and its airs and ensigns. Numquam equum bonum detibus tollite." The simple and touching ceremony completed, I set out with new faith and resolution for the enigmatic city under glass. Slowly I approached the huge dome. It was made of an amber-colored glassy substance, through which the buildings of the great metropolis could be plainly seen. But how to get in? After vainly trying (a) to climb over the wall, (b) to tunnel under the wall, and (c) to manufacture a blow-torch out of spaghetti cans and string and cut my way through the wall, I finally decided to look for a door. Lo! I found one! With a heartfelt prayer of thanks to that divine Providence which watches over us in our hours of need from somewhere beyond the third galaxy, amen, I opened the door and walked in. No sooner had I done so than the light from behind me was suddenly cut off! In a flash I turned, whipped out my deadly little atom-gun, and fired! When the smoke cleared away, there was a neat little hole in the outer door of the airlock. I laughed hysterically at my fears. Obviously, my passing had set off a photoelectric cell, closing the outer door. Obviously. Now then, if I went forward a bit, the other door would obviously also open. But before I could test my theory, the room was abruptly filled by an opaque pink gas. "Aha!" cried I, "Desperate Desmond, foul fiend that you are, you think to trap me with your insidious lethal vapors! But virtue shall triumph in the end," I went on brandishing my gun dramatically, "for I, Richard Snerg, have outwitted you by the precaution of wearing a spacesuit!" I would have said more, but just then the gas began melting away as swiftly and mysteriously as it had appeared, leaving only a flaky pink coating over my aluminum spacesuit. "Strange," I muttered to myself, "methought I saw the hand of mine ancient enemy in this; yet, on the other hand--". With a careless shrug I dismissed the matter from my mind and moved onward, a gay, thin-lipped smile playing about my mouth; the carefree smile that had made uncounted criminals shudder and quake in their boots...as a matter of fact, it frightened little children, too.

As I had anticipated, the second airlock door slid swiftly open as I approached it. As swiftly I slithered through, my deadly gun ready as I surveyed the scene before me. But in all the great city, no enemy showed himself; the place was still, lifeless, airless. "Shucks," I said.

I walked along the paved streets, between the tall, unearthly buildings, pondering on the enigma of this dead city on a lifeless world. What had become of the race which had built this magnificent edifice; what had happened to the atmosphere which it had no doubt once held? How far is up? Why is a policeman? How many doshes make one galcon? On such eternal mysteries I mused as I strolled along the white street among the dwellings of a people that did not live any more anywhere. And then--a flashing light on one of the buildings caught my eye. It was an odd-looking building; small, plain metal, bullet-shaped; it contrasted vividly with the graceful buildings on either side. Interested, I walked toward it. As I approached, a door in its side slid conveniently open. I entered, the door closed, and air hissed into the room.

Then the second door opened, and before my startled gaze stood a large bug-eyed monster. It waved a tentacle at me. "Don't do that," I murmured feebly. "Be still, my stomach."

"Right," the thought burned into my brain. "I say, where are you from?" Mental telepathy, I guessed, and concentrating, answered. "From earth, the third planet in a system of nine, the sixth of which has rings around it."

"I'll check up the records," came the burning thought. The creature slithered in a slimy, nauseating sort of way over to a slot in the wall and peered into it with two or three eyes. "Here it is: Sun no. 128495 1/4--in sector

783862B--nine planets. The second, third, and fourth possess life; the only known system to possess natural life on three planets. The third planet has the least amount of oxygen, less than 2% at the surface; otherwise almost identical with this planet."

"I'm afraid you're mistaken," I thought, looking in the other direction. "Earth has the most oxygen, almost 20%."

"You're not pulling my leg, what?" The creature seemed excited.

"Certainly not," I replied weakly, "don't even suggest it."

"Oh, I say, this is jolly," was the creature's thought. "Now we can stop looking, you know. For thousands of years we've been searching for another planet capable of supporting the people of Sharb. Twenty thousand years ago a bit of a runaway sun blundered into our system and hooked two of our four planets. Not only that, but Sharb was drawn so close to our sun that our atmosphere was scorched away when this old girl got to cutting up a bit. Inconvenient, what? We had to build this dome in a hurry, and get what was left of our population inside. But that wasn't the last of it, you see, because our supply of oxygen was rather limited; and finally we were forced to put the whole bloody population under suspended animation in this spaceship, leaving only one chap at a time to search the heavens for another planet to migrate to. Now we can get started, you know. In a few hours we'll be setting off for the planet you call--what was it?--oh, yes, earth."

"OH, NO, YOU WON'T!" I shouted, forgetting all about telepathy. Swiftly I leveled my trusty automatic; five shots blended together in a continuous roar. To my surprise, the pellets flattened out soggly in mid-air as though they had hit an invisible wall. I stood for a few seconds staring with more than my usual stupidity at the misshapen pellets lying on the floor. Then a rapidly approaching clatter from the corridor to the left aroused me. I glanced up to see a glass-headed, seven-foot, badly-oiled metal monstrosity with four legs clump into the room. "Sorry, old boy," thought the Sharbian to me, and waved a tentacle or two in my direction. The machine moved forward, its many-jointed arms outstretched to catch me. For a moment I was at a loss; but only for a moment. Then the fighting blood of the Pooksniffle Snergs came to my rescue; quickly I stepped backward and fired at the conveniently fragile glass head of the monster. The glass shattered and the robot pitched to the floor, junk. "Oh, I say," came the reproachful thought, but when I looked up the Sharbian had disappeared. Quickly, but with dignity, I walked over to the airlock door. It did not open. From one of the corridors I heard the squeaky clatter of more robots. With instant presence of mind, I dived into the opposite corridor and ran like hell.

The inside of the spaceship was a veritable labyrinth, with cross corridors every ten yards or so. I took advantage of this, and turned and twisted as much as possible; but still the clatter of the robots could be heard coming nearer and nearer. At the next intersection I turned the corner, reloaded my atom-gun, and waited for the robots. At once I saw how they had followed me so easily, for behind me, trailing down the corridor, was a line of pink powder. The coating on my spacesuit, caused by the pink gas, had been flaking off at every step. At once an idea began germinating in the back of my mind; but just then, for such, as you must know, are the mental processes of heroes, I couldn't put my finger on it.

The first robot turned the corner ten yards away, to topple with an atom pellet through his glass brain. The second was more cautious. It dropped to the floor and came around the corner behind the fallen body of the first. I fired three shots with no effect. Then the robot raised a long tube in one jointed arm, and the wall beside me burst into blazing brilliance that half-blinded me; I staggered backward and entered one of the rooms that lined the corridor.

Evidently thinking it had destroyed me, the robot came striding around the corner. I shot it easily. Carefully brushing the pink coating off my spacesuit, I picked up the robot's weapon and hid in a chamber filled with metal boxes. And while I crouched there, I pursued that elusive idea which had been born when I first saw the pink trail behind me. Ah! I had it! Why had I been sprayed with that gas in the first place? Surely it was not simply to make it easier to trail me; could it be—

Suddenly I thought of the reason. They were afraid of bacteria! No doubt they had killed all harmful native bacteria thousands of years ago. Such a race would have no resistance to disease. Drawing a deep breath, I took off my helmet and shut off the oxygen.

The air in the spacesuit was perhaps slightly richer than that of earth, but otherwise it was identical. Mentally I visualized the squillions of bacteria swarming out of my spacesuit to seed the air with death. To cinch matters, I walked over to the wall and carefully sneezed into the ventilator. Even hayfever has its uses, I reflected happily.

Infected by the ingeniousness of the idea, I began walking rapidly down the corridor, stopping at intervals to blow, sneeze, or cough into each ventilator. "If my hayfever doesn't kill 'em," I thought to myself, "my halitosis will."

After a few minutes of this, I reached a corridor which ran along the inside of the ship's hull. As I bent to peer through a porthole, the ship suddenly gave a jerk and began to move horizontally. While I watched, a huge airlock in the side of the glass dome came into view. The ship moved into it; the inner door clanged behind it, the outer one opened, and the ship was pushed out into the airless surface of the planet. The Sharbians were preparing to take off; there was no time to lose! At once I turned my captured ray gun on the wall, slicing out a neat circular section. As the detached disk toppled with a clang, I leaped lightly through, propelled by the escaping air, and fell flat on my parachute. Quickly I scrambled up and ran toward the shelter of some jagged rocks a short distance away.

I was none too soon, for just as I ducked around the rocks, two robots driving a strange tractor-like mechanism jolted around the side of the huge ship. When they stopped to look at the hole I had cut in its side, I shattered their glass heads with two well-placed shots. Then I ran to the tractor and climbed into the box that formed its body. Pushing aside the broken robots, I began to experiment with the controls. Luckily, they were very simple: a pedal which functioned as starter, accelerator, and brake combined; and two levers for steering, as in the terrestrial tractor. I stepped on the pedal; the tractor jolted forward toward the Bedbug of Space, which lay on the level plain about two miles away. Ah, how I now wished I had found a better parking space! As I turned to look back, I saw two other tractors, robot-manned, pursuing me. Swiftly, as they drew nearer, I placed a small box which I found in the tractor on the accelerator pedal; leaving the machine to steer itself, I turned, dropped low in the box, and directed my ray gun at one of the pursuing machines. With a bright, soundless flash, it exploded. The ground shook. I began to swing the beam of raw energy to bear upon the second tractor when it flickered and died. The cutting of the wall had sapped its power. Then one of the robots in the second machine raised its own tube, and the right tread of my tractor burst into a brilliant glare! The machine stopped; I crouched inside the wrecked vehicle and rested my automatic on the edge of the box. I fired twice, and had the satisfaction of seeing the robot with the ray-tube topple out of the rapidly-approaching tractor. Then I waited until the weaponless robot came within thirty feet, and raising my atom-gun, fired. Nothing happened. There

were no more pellets. As I fumbled for another clip, the robot reached out his long arms to grasp me. With an instinctive motion, I hurled the empty gun at his head. The glass shattered; the robot crashed to the ground. I stepped from my damaged machine into that of the robot and drove the remaining distance to my spaceship. There I abandoned the tractor and climbed by devious routes into the safety of my control cabin. As I settled myself with a sigh of relief into the cockpit, I saw the Sharbian ship arc suddenly upward into space. Quickly I followed in the Bedbug.

"Aha aha!" I cried, shaking my fist. "So you think you can escape from the vengeance of Richard Snerg, you misbegotten spawn of an octopus and a plate of spaghetti!" With these words, I aimed and fired with my central vortex gun. Swiftly as thought the ether-borne beam lashed out to its destination, and as swiftly a coruscating, fiercely-brilliant screen of impalpable force sprang up about the Sharbian ship. But need I go on? Suffice it to say that waves, bands and streamers of every conceivable kind of deadly force shattered and recoiled before the firmly held screen of the Sharbians; that material projectiles were turned harmlessly aside or exploded in mid-space; that heat-rays, ultra-violet rays, cosmic rays, and death rays failed to pass the Sharbian screen; in short, the usual things happened, and I was temporarily baffled. But only temporarily! The agile brain of the Pooksniffle Snergs came to my rescue, and, turning on more power, I quickly switched over from the rockets to the gravodynes, and from the gravodynes to the photopulsors. At once the Bedbug of Space began to draw ahead of the ship of Sharb. Faster, ever faster went the Bedbug, and soon the Sharbian ship was left far behind.

For five long weeks I hurtled back through the void, working like mad to force more, and yet more speed out of the straining converters. At last the familiar face of the Sun came in sight. Trembling in every fibre with patriotism and hayfever, I spiraled down for a landing; and came safely to rest on the broad bosom of the Pacific, where a coast guard sutter picked me up and towed the Bedbug in.

Then began days of feverish activity. After a hurried consultation with the President in which I was able to convince that great man of the horrible danger which threatened our beloved earth, I dashed at once into hasty plans for defense. Within a few days, I was able to supervise the emplacement of huge vortex guns at strategic points all over the world. Then, there was nothing to do but wait.

I shall not attempt to picture to you the tenseness of the world's population as, nerves strained to the breaking point, we waited by our guns for the Alien Invaders. During the next week two dirigibles, several cumulus clouds and a sea-gull were brought down by mistake, at tremendous expense to the government. But still the Invaders did not come!

The excitement was intense. All over the globe, panic-stricken crowds besieged government buildings and privies, shouted, "Why don't they come?" Those in power were at a loss. For a time the Glooberian council even contemplated dispatching an expedition to find and bring back a substitute set of invaders, as an emergency measure. This, however, was finally voted down.

...Much has happened since those days. Mars and Venus have been colonized, observatories built on the Moon, interstellar expeditions launched; but the invaders from Sharb have never shown up. Few, nowadays, believe that they ever existed; only I; I, Richard Pooksniffle Snerg, I believe! In fact, I believe you're one! Get away from me, you son of a telephone switchboard! Get away, I say! Aahahahahahahahah!!!

**

August 1941 [3, 6]

A COLLECTOR SPEAKS

by
Larry B. Farsaci

Part II

You may imagine my surprise and consternation upon learning this. I knew then that I was down and out unless I did some quick thinking. And, as if the situation weren't bad enough, a quick inventory of my pocketbook revealed the fact that I had hardly a dollar to my name. It was then that I found out how much a friend can mean to a person, for it was through such a one that I secured a loan of several dollars. So that evening I was enabled to send a telegraphic money order to Smith, a sum that was quite reasonable for the magazine, and an accompanying note worded as follows: "Pardon telegram--Have been searching for Recluse very long time and am almost impatient to see it."

I smile now, to think how little those words pictured my actual feelings as I waited breathless! Next week the letter from Smith came with the priceless information: "I mailed you The Recluse immediately after receiving your telegraphed money order. Your price seemed a sufficient one to me.

"You will see that The Recluse should be classed as an amateur or non-professional magazine, devoted mainly but not entirely to fantasy. One could hardly call it a 'fan' magazine, since it had none of the newsy bits about living authors, magazines, etc., that characterize the present-day publications of the fan type.

"You must have a fine collection of fantasy items. Thanks for your offer to send me something in addition to the money paid for The Recluse. I shall not avail myself of this."

A few days later, the collector whose airmail letter had been beaten-received the following communication from Smith: "I didn't expect anyone else to be bidding on The Recluse, except L. B. Farsaci. His price seemed sufficient, and I mailed it to him promptly. Your letter came afterwards, as a total surprise." The last reference to the matter was in a letter Smith wrote me on October 30, 1939, after I had received the magazine: "Glad to hear that The Recluse pleased you and that xxxxx xxxxx wasn't so disappointed after all in not getting it."

I'm sure that readers are by this time curious to know about The Recluse, especially after seeing what a time I had in getting it. So I'll do my best to describe it now, in the same style used in The Fantasy Record department of Golden Atom, of which the following may be considered an installment:

The Recluse was a large size magazine, "Issued by W. Paul Cook, for His Own Amusement at The Recluse Press, Athol, Mass." in 1927, printed on a good grade of book paper and consisting of seventy-eight pages. Only one issue was ever published. W. Paul Cook, as were also most of the contributors, was a member and a one-time president of the National Amateur Press Association. The Recluse, however, was issued independently, in an only edition of 100 copies as far as is known.

The cover, a pen and ink drawing showing an old recluse pondering over some ancient volumes, was drawn by Vrest Orton. The contents was as follows, in the order given:

Vermont Poets and Poetry--a two page "Study List" outlining the early Vermont poets, by Walter J. Coates.

Early Vermont Minstrelsy--a twelve page essay (following the outline), by Walter J. Coates, with excerpts of many poems. Some fine ones are given, but none that are fantasy or stf.

After Armageddon--fantasy poem by Clark Ashton Smith, which is an excellent one, weird in theme.....

A Check-List of the First Editions of George Sterling--a two-page compilation, about which more will be said later.

A Fragment of a Dream--his is one of Donald Wandrei's very first stories, a short tale, three and a half pages long, on the order of Lovecraft's "Celephais" and Smith's "The White Sybil".....

The Runner--A lyrical poem, by Arthur Goodenough.

Supernatural Horror in Literature--A masterly essay, by H. P. Lovecraft, 36 and one-half pages long. It traces the "literature of cosmic fear" from its dawn to the present day, in an inimitable style, summarizing and reviewing all the important works of this type, from the novels of Mrs. Anne Radcliffe ("The Mysteries of Udolpho"), Matthew Gregory Lewis ("The Monk"), Charles Robert Maturin ("Melmoth, the Wanderer"), Mrs. Shelley ("Frankenstein"), Captain Marryat ("The Phantom Ship"), Lord Edward Bulwar-Lytton ("A Strange Story"), Emily Bronte ("Wuthering Heights"), Nathaniel Hawthorne ("The House of the Seven Gables"), and Edgar Allan Poe--on whom, by the way, an especially interesting chapter is devoted--to the "modern masters", Arthur Machen, Algernon Blackwood, Lord Dunsany, and M. R. James. Among the many other writings included in this study are those of Bram Stoker and Walter de la Mare, Ambrose Bierce's, Robert W. Chamber's "The King in Yellow", M. P. Shiel's "The House of Sounds", and Irvin S. Cobb's "Fishhead". In addition, there is a nice mention of Clark Ashton Smith, Frank Belknap Long, Jr., and Samuel Loveman.

Brumes et Pluies--A poem from the French of Charles P. Baudelaire, by Clark Ashton Smith. A typographical error in the last line, pointed out by Smith: the words, "upon a chanceful", should be, "on a chance-chosen".

Heart Symphony for Dare--A two-page verse, by Vrest Orton.

The Green Porcelain Dog--A seven-page story, by H. Warner Munn, of the Chinese resisting a Tartar invasion, and the last descendant of the House of Chan, a maiden in love, being saved by the huge porcelain statue of the Fu-dog coming to life with her prayer!

Ballad of Saint Anthony--A poem, by Frank Belknap Long, Jr. This was reprinted in "The Goblin Tower", a volume of poems by Frank Belknap Long, Jr., published in 1935, by R. H. Barlow of the Dragon-Fly Press, in an edition of 100 copies.

Hubert Crackanthorpe, a Realist of the Nineties--A 4 and one-half page essay, by Samuel Loveman, concerning a writer of excellent human studies who Loveman hopes will be recognized in the future.

In the Grave--A two-page verse, by Donald Wandrei, describing a corpse's feelings while rotting away (!) as a stolid materialist would imagine them--when "flesh (is) fled" and "Soul (is) dead. Forever dead. Forever dead, dead, dead!"

Intentions--This is the last item, a brief editorial note, from which I quote:

"The Recluse is the realization of a dream, long cherished, of the publication of a magazine to please the producer only....Be assured that everything in the Recluse has met the approval of the editor for one reason or another.

"Its frequency of issue depends also upon the whim of the editor and the securing of material. Nothing will be paid for contributions, and the magazines will, as have former efforts, be issued as an amateur and money cannot buy it. W. Paul Cook."

And there you have it: The Recluse, undoubtedly one of the most difficult items I have ever set out to get. As many of you know, Lovecraft's article, "Supernatural Horror in Literature", has been reprinted in The Outsider and Others, the book which contains, among many others of Lovecraft's stories, "At the

"Mountains of Madness" and "The Shadow out of Time" (from Astounding), "The Colour out of Space" (from Amazing), "Celephais" (from the Crawford Marvel Tales), "The Lurking Fear" (from Home Brew), "Cool Air" (from Tales of Magic & Mystery), "The Silver Key", "The Outsider", and "The Strange High House in the Mist" (from Weird Tales), and "The Shadow over Innsmouth". It also has a biographical sketch of Lovecraft, by August Derleth and Donald Wandrei, and a jacket by Virgil Finlay. The book is still available [1941] from Arkham House, Sauk City, Wisconsin, and I recommend it to all who appreciate weird fantasy-fiction as written by a master.

(To be concluded)

October 1941 [3, 7]

THE LIFE OF THE FOOFOO SPECIAL

or

THE FANTASY BOYS OUT WEST

by

Art Widner Jr

I could never feel the same about an automobile as I did about the Skylark of WooWoo, so I cannot dedicate this article to its successor. The FooFoo Special is just another car.

Instead, this article is dedicated to one of my companions on the Denver expedition. A swell guy; one that I am proud to know. Altho the hardships we endured were entirely new to him, he went thru it all uncomplainingly and with good humor. The easiest guy to get along with that I ever met, but never a yes-man in any sense of the word. A wicked hand with the road map, his aid was invaluable in getting thru large cities with a minimum of effort and lost time.

And so I deem it only fitting and proper that I dedicate this account of our Denveride

To Milty

.....
June 29th --Up betimes, and in my haste did shake hands with my mother, pat my father on the back, and kiss the cat goodbye.

Then did I start the engine of our noble craft and dashed to the Towne of Whitman for first passenger John Bell.

Because of recently installed new Bergenholms we could not attain a speed of more than 40 mph without endangering the motor.

New York was reached without incident, and we circled around Riverside Drive and environs for 15 minutes, before locating L. S. de Camp's address.

We were cordially welcomed in and had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Isaac "Nightfall" Asimov, better known in the fan underworld as I, Asimov. It was most difficult to break away after an hour or so of typical de Camp conversation. We were initiated into many of the mysteries of fonetix, naval equipment and tactics, and yhos became even more of an admirer of his host when LS presented him with two steinies of his favorite brew. In fact, we were just getting warmed up when Time decided we had better leave for Futurian Embassy and then Philly.

Outside of de Camp's we had been unable to find a parking space other than a 90° hill, and all the gas drained back from the carburetor. No start.

Widner hunted a garage, stood around waiting for someone to appear, and was mistaken for the attendant by five other customers who wanted their cars out, and snappy too. Working in a service station for a year must have given him a certain look. He politely told them to go to Hell, and snappy too.

With Unger aboard, conversation assumed a machine-gun quality, started by Julie and adopted in self-defense by the other two. So we ran off ~~our route~~ for three or four miles into the wilds of Moskoville.

We arrived in Philly just in time to witness Bob Madle and Johnny Baltadonis finish off a game of darts and a large pitcher of beer. Several more pitchers were obtained, and a bull session ensued, lasting until 1AM.

Yr correspondent spent a restless night pushing Unger back to his side of the bed (never sleep with a married man), listening to millmen's horses (noisy beasts), and a rousing family brawl a few doors away, complete with breaking windows (no extra charge).

June 30th--Up betimes, and did reach Washington by 11:30 AM. I sneaked up on Milty Rothman (sitting on his front porch, diligently scrutinizing roadmaps) and fondly imagined I scared him most to death by pinching his ankle and making mit de bow-wow. At least he jumped.

After a short period of befuddlement, we headed for the last known habitation of zombie Singleton, and found that he had moved to the other side of the town. The first house had a big sign in front of it with red letters, proclaiming: "EARL SINGLETON SLEPT HERE". We decided the place to which he had moved was too much out of our way, and headed for Hagerstown.

On the way we dropped in on del Rey and Speer. It was incredibly hot. We asked Speer for a drop of mortal beer. No got. We did get a lecture on the evils of intemperance. So we went for a soft drink, and the sly Speer led us back toward the city for at least 50 miles, before coming to his favorite soda joint. Juffus decided to go on a bender to celebrate our arrival. He disgustingly swizzled two grape sodas and went around hiccuping and leering at pretty (and otherwise) women.

But that was not the greatest of his sins. The shameless hypocrite had gone to church when he should have met us at Milty's, and what's worse he stayed for the second show. Finally he got around to leading us out of town in the Spirit of FooFoo, pausing only to recite the Constitution in sign language at every intersection. As we reached the main route, he bestowed upon us the blessings of FooFoo, and we did procede with lightened hearts, knowing we could not fail.

At the Warner domicile there was much talk whilst we (Harry) finished mimeoing our (Widner) Denvention publication, consisting of E. E. Smith's Chicon speech. As soon as the ice cream and cake were passed out we scrambled. Seriously, tho, we enjoyed meeting Harry's folks. They seemed genuinely interested in fans and fandom, which is a rather rare case where fans' relatives are concerned.

It was dark and raining when we headed west again. As we went along, it rained harder while we struggled to get the windshield closed. No close. So we stuffed three tons of Kleenex in the crack that was left, and everybody was happy except Bell, who had to blow his nose on the oil rag.

We holed up just short of Uniontown, Penna. There we gratefully cleaned up and after taking a shower I posed for Milty and John à la Gypsy Rose Lee to suit the finest of aesthetic tastes.

June 31st--On to Uniontown in the morn, and did discover a leaky water pump and weak fan belt. Did replace same with new ones, and also changed oil and had our vehicle greased, which made the kitty mew pitcously.

At Brownsville we did stop so Milty could buy himself a cushion. Widner and Bell did go along to help in the selection and lend moral support. (Oh, the hell with this Pepystuff!) Julius Unger (no "did") asked Widner to purchase

socks for him. Whereupon, in order to teach the lazy galoot a lesson, we listened for the loudest pair in town, then walked to the store and bought them. They were a gorgeous xanthous hue intermingled with lapis-lazuli and a delicate touch of garnet and emerald.

We sweated and coked our way to Zanesville, Ohio, with much filling of the overheated radiator. There we had it drained and flushed, while we invaded a local grocery store for cold provisions so that we wouldn't have to stop again until supper. We emerged eating watermelon and absorbing more cokes and promptly emitting them from our pores.

As we rolled along toward Columbus, Milty received one of his biggest shocks. Everybody had finished eating, but Widner wanted another sandwich. Milty made him one. Widner wanted mustard. Milty complained that the device for transferring mustard from bottle to sandwich had become not. Widner was not to be denied. "Ya got fingers, aincha?" he queried bluntly.

"Yes," said Milty, unable to believe the implied connection.

Widner insisted he have mustard despite an eloquent address from Milty on the evils of consuming said condiment. Milty looked at the mustard and then at the sandwich, trying desperately to figure some way out.

It wasn't so much getting his hands dirty, as it was violating all rules and regulations of table manners. It was completely outside his sphere of ethics. So anti*postish as to be almost revolting.

Finally he sighed, dipped just one finger in the mustard, sloshed some on the ham, and presented it to Widner, who gobbled it avidly in 1:2-5.

Milty said it was a far, far worse thing than he had ever done....

The 96 heat abated as we crossed into Indiana with the setting sun and rip-roaring game of stinky-pinky with no holds barred. In Richmond, I sent an apologetic telegram to Rocklynne for not coming when we had planned, and promising to see the Cincinnati gang on the way home.

Most of the night was spent on the desolate state routes trying to make up for lost time by not sleeping. We got beautifully turned around near West Lafayette, or what some jerk said was West Lafayette. At one point, with detours pointing in all directions, we actually had to get out and get our bearings by the stars. If it had been cloudy, we would probably still be wandering around in South Overshoe somewhere. After traveling in a straight line for some time we came to--Lafayette! Keeping west we came to West Lafayette! Horrors! "All Roads" Continuing, we came to the state border and breathed a sigh of relief. The spell was broken. The only way we could figure it out, was that WL must've been U-shaped, extending on both sides of Lafayette proper, or else the goon who directed us didn't know his elbow from a hole in a ground.

July 1st--Dawn found us gazing awestruck at a peculiar cloud formation over the map-flat surface of Illinois. The cloud, which had been rolled up into the shape of a gigantic tube extending from horizon to horizon, made us feel like we were in the future, standing beneath the pneumatic Chi-New Orleans transportation tube, or as Milty and Jack suggested, Skylark III itself.

At 7:30 we arrived in Tuckertown, and with no trouble at all found the abode of the sly Celestial, and were welcomed in royally, alth Widner spoiled the effect by crawling in on his hands and knees. Everybody knew everybody else but were all re-introduced by their newly acquired (en route) nicknames--"Moneybags" Unger, "Pretty Boy" Madle, "Sourpuss" Bell, "Tree Toad" Rothman, and "The Thing" Widner.

While Widner slept, Pretty Boy and Tree Toad registered for the draft, and PB had his picture in the paper with his head chopped off, and his name mentioned with a plug for the Denvontion.

Tucker has told the story of our visit, so we push on.

Sunset found us looking contemptuously at Old Man River himself. It was the first time any of us had seen the Mississippi, and we were disappointed until we remembered that we couldn't expect it to be such a much that far north. We pierced the heart of Iowa--Centerville, the home town of Henry Aldrich--before we decided to bivouac. Madle and I thought we would try it in the car while the others used a hotel. Bob may have done all right in the rear, but you try sleeping on two bucket seats like I did, and I'll guarantee you seventeen new kinks in your orbit by morning.

July 2nd--Iowa presented a rather pleasing daytime aspect. One in particular noticed the absence of billboards, and the presence of numerous hollyhocks covering culvert posts, or any other bit of roadside construction that might be deemed unattractive and small enough to hide thusly.

This day was the most auspicious of the trip as far as covering distance is concerned. We made 550 miles in spite of numerous stops to fill the beleaguered radiator. If we went over fifty, the thermometer hurriedly went upstairs. We blamed it on the increasing altitude (about five feet per mile) which wasn't observable, the heat of the day, clogged radiator, and whatnot. But none of these seemed like a big enough reason for the extraordinary heat increase over a certain speed. Having worked in a service station, and knowing a little about cars, I should have tumbled, but didn't.

We steamed into Deebethompsontown (alias Lincoln, Nebraska) about time for lunch. The Sage of Salt Creek had already left for Denver, and we tried to locate a more obscure fan, Dale Wissert, whom Don had mentioned to me, but no soap. He was at the movies.

A lively altercation was held between Pretty Boy and myself on one side and the rest of the party on the other, over whether we should eat in a likely-looking beeparlor or elsewhere. PB and I finally went to the beep joint and had ourselves a fairly decent fried chicken dinner and were served by an extremely friendly waitress who looked something like Ginger Rogers, so we called her Ginger. We became so engrossed in throwing the bull with said waitress that we were about half an hour late when we returned to the car, and so found three pairs of disapproving eyebrows regarding us. We felt smugly Bacchanalian.

Perhaps an explanation of this "beep" business is due to the uninformed. In many of the western cities and towns a rather silly law has been passed, forbidding any establishment to advertise the sale of any alcoholic beverages. Some places get around it by saying "We sell it, but can't say so", or "You want it? We have it" but most of them are considerably less imaginative (and also thrifty, not wishing to buy expensive neon or signs or to pay for altering the old ones), so merely black out the tail of the "R" in "BEER", thus making it "BEEP". These signs amused us no end thruout the trip, and we called it "beep" exclusively from the first sign on.

In case anybody should ride up in a golden space ship and ask you, Nebraska is fab-lat! It is so flat that it is the nearest thing to two dimensions that science can obtain. Driving across it--the mostest thing it ain't nothin' else but, is boring. Two incidents, besides the numberless stops for water, were all that marked our passage.

First was the discovery and a picture of what is undoubtedly the smallest place in the USA in point of population. Out there they have signs announcing the name of each town and the population. We passed many of them with only 100 or so, and a couple down in the two figure class. The record, I think, was something like 73 when we came to the sign indicating that here was Red Willow.

I stopped the car, and we all gaped. Then Bell took a picture of it with the rest of us behind it. There is undeniable proof. Reads the sign: "red Willow, pop. 9". Yes, I said nine, N-I-N-E. There was a farmhouse way off in the distance, and we assumed that there was where the nine people were. Maybe it meant nine prairie dogs, I dunno.

The other incident was running into a ring-tailed, double-barreled, rootin' tootin' high-falutin' whamzowie of a western thunderstorm. We ran into it head-on and were thru it in ten minutes or so, but while it lasted--wow!

The rain came down as if somebody had ripped a hole in the bottom of Lake Superior and held it over us. The lightning jabbed itself into the ground like gigantic white-hot forks being stuck into beefsteak, and less than a second later, thunder would come with a long, drawn-out "c-r-r-r-r-ackkk!" that made me think of a second Grand Canyon being formed in one swell foop. It an ordinary thunderstorm is Wagnerian, that one was positively Stravinskyan.

Soon after, our tires chuckled liquidly on the wet streets of Benkleman, not far from the Kansas border. The sidewalks were neatly rolled up, and carefully stacked by the fire house, but we finally persuaded a fifteenth rate, one-arm joint to drag some cold cuts and potato salad from the refrigerator. The nearest place of any size was in Colorado, so we decided to bed down in Benkleman's only hotel.

Milty and I slept together, and the railroad tracks ran almost underneath our window. This we thot no harm, since what would be coming thru that sleepy little town at that hour? How wrong we were! Around 3 AM, a streamliner came through, doing about 100 per.

About three miles away the thing started blowing an impossibly loud electric blast horn, and from there it got louder and louder. An ordinary locomotive steam whistle is a nice, quiet, genteel affair in comparison. As it passed by our window with a roar and a rattle, and a bawling like a million stampeding cattle, Milty and I quivered in terror, and rose two feet in the air, still in our reclining positions, bedsheet and all. If we could only repeat this remarkable feat of levitation we could clean up in the entertainment field. We were certain that the monster was going to climb in the window and go to bed with us.

July 3rd--Off early, we came within one mile of the Kansas border, so we took a short detour to add one more state to our list.

The morning dragged along with the endless flatness. I know it's foolish, but I sort of expected that when we crossed the border of Colorado, we would immediately tilt up at a 45° angle, and proceed thru snowcapped peaks to Denver. So when the flatness merely continued I was kinda disappointed. Milty must have had the same thots for he started looking on the map for the first mountain we should come to.

Fremont Butte, he said, off to our right. We looked and looked and after a while we saw it. Poocy! Just a little pile of weathered sandstone or something. Very unimpressive.

Then early in the afternoon we spotted them. At first we took no notice, mistaking them for low lying could banks. Then Milty cried "Mountains!" We saw. Oh. Ah. Oh. Ah. or several miles we gaped with our mouths open, as we drew nearer and nearer to that incredible escarpment. Then facetious remarks set in to cover up our reeling of smallness.

An hour later we were in Denver, and the radiator was in bad shape. It boiled almost constantly, fresh water or none. We tried to get it fixed in a couple of places that were all to busy and couldn't do anything over the holiday. So we said the hell with it and went to the Shirley-Savoy. I later found a place that said they would fix it and left it there.....

As did my previous article, this sequel shall not deal with the convention itself, since plenty has been written about it already, and plenty more is to come.

(concluded next issue)

December 1941 [4, 1]

A COLLECTOR SPEAKS

by

Larry B. Farsaci

Conclusion

In the same category with The Recluse falls Leaves, a mimeographed publication of two issues. The first number, dated Summer, 1937, was published at Leavenworth, Kansas, edited by R. H. Barlow. It consists of 80 large size pages, and contains the following material, all of which is reminiscent of The Recluse: "The Story of the Princess Zulkais and the Prince Kalilah", An Unfinished Episode from William Beckford's "Vathek"; the conclusion to William Beckford's "Story of Princess Zulkais and Prince Kalilah", by Clark Ashton Smith, p. 17; "With a Set of Rattlesnake Rattles", a brief article by Robert E. Howard, p. 24; "Cats and Dogs", an essay, by Lewis Theobald, Jr., on the superiority of the cat, which I found intensely interesting, and no wonder—I learned afterward that Lewis Theobald, Jr., was a pseudonym used by Lovecraft!; "Mist", a poem by E. Toldridge, p. 34; "Dead Houses", a story by Edith Miniter, p. 35; "Sandalwood", a beautiful poem by Clark Ashton Smith, undoubtedly taken from his book of the same name, and "The Beautiful City", a sonnet by Frank Belknap Long, Jr., p. 49; "The People of the Pit", a famous story by A. Merritt, p. 50; "Obiter Scriptum", an editorial by R. H. Barlow, p. 60; "H. P. Lovecraft", and "Ephemera", brief poems by E. Toldridge; "The Panelled Room", a short story by August W. Derleth, p. 65; "It Will Be True", a lyric poem by Arthur Goodenough, p. 70; Three stories by Donald Wandrei: "The Twilight of Time", the first of the "Cosmic Dust" series, a tale more popularly known as "The Red Brain", p. 71; "On the Threshold of Eternity", the second in the series, p. 76; "A Legend of Yesterday", the third and last, p. 79—neither of these published elsewhere to my knowledge; "Autumnus— and October", a poem by Arthur H. Goodenough, p. 80.

Here is an excerpt from the editorial: "Leaves is an uncommon botanical bit, modelled, I suppose, after Cook's Recluse of ten years past, which (although it survived to no second number) collected a variety of material, chiefly fantastic, in complete indifference to popular taste. Such stories, together with discussions of the genre and analysis of certain masters in it, will be the contents of Leaves. The reprinting of various Gothic performances, not now obtainable, is under vague consideration, and it will be noted that in the present issue all items are not new to print. For the few other pieces contained no excuse need be proffered: intrinsic merit and the element of variety both figuring in my choice.

"As a sort of colophon, this information might be appended: One hundred copies of Leaves have been published in August of 1937. Certain stories are herein reprinted through the courtesy of Weird Tales, the Frank A. Munsey Company, the defunct Fantasy Fan, the Westminster Magazine, and the Abbey Classics, from whom I appropriated Marzial's translation of the Beckford fragment. Ernest Edkins financed the whole shebang, else it would not have existed."

The second issue of Leaves was published at the Futile Press, Lakeport, California, by the Becks—also publishers of the Science Fiction Critic—toward the end of 1939. This is also a mimeographed publication and consists of 60 large size pages. Its contents are as follows:

"Werewoman"—A "Northwest Smith" story, about the "were-woman", by C. L. Moore.

"Winter Night"—A poem by Vrast Teachout Orton.

"The Woman at the Window"—A two page story, by Donald Wandrei, telling of a strange vigil in a desolate land

"Collapsing Cosmoses"---(1935) An unfinished, one-page, humorous tale.

"Haunted"---A poem, by Howard Davis Spoerl, about one obsessed by loneliness and the ghost of a dead moon.

"The Faun"---(1916) A tale "of Pan, the Hybia Bees, the Satyr, the Centaur, the Harpies, of Persephone, and the nearly-human Faun", by Samuel Loveman.

"Flower of War"---A poem by Henry George Weiss (Francis Flagg).

"Three Fragments"---Prose by H. P. Lovecraft: 1: "Asathoth" (1922), a tale of a time when "age fell upon the world, and wonder went out of the minds of men"; 2: "The Descendant" (1926), a Necronomicon story; 3: "The Book" (1934), the key to other dimensions.

"O, Is There Aught in Wine and Ships"---A poem by Frank B. Long, Jr.

"Futility"---Four lines by Frank Belknap Long, Jr.--"It doesn't matter what we do or when we die we'll rot, And worms will through our livers crawl And of our gizzards trot." Well, everyone is surely entitled to whatever point of view he may choose!

"The Demons of the Upper Air"---A poem, four pages long, by Fritz Leiber, Jr.

"In Defense of Dagon"---(January, 1932) A two page article by H. P. Lovecraft. "Dagon" was Lovecraft's first published story in Weird Tales. The following is an excerpt: "Imaginative artists have been few, and always unappreciated. Blake is woefully undervalued. Poe would never have been understood had not the French taken the pains to exalt and interpret him. Dunsany has met with nothing but coldness or lukewarm praise. And nine persons out of ten never heard of Ambrose Bierce, the finest story writer except Poe whom America ever produced. The imaginative writer devotes himself to art in its most essential sense. It is not his business to fashion a pretty trifle to please the children, to point a useful moral. He is a painter of moods and mind-pictures....He mirrors the rays that fall upon him, and does not ask their source or effect. He is not practical, poor fellow, and sometimes dies in poverty....His statements and pictures are not always pleasant and sometimes quite impossible."

"There are probably seven persons, in all, who really like my work; and they are enough. I should write even if I were the only patient reader, for my aim is merely self-expression. I could not write about 'ordinary people' because I am not in the least interested in them....Man's relations to man do not captivate my fancy. It is man's relation to the cosmos--to the uncommon--which alone arouses in me the spark of creative imagination."

"The Unresisting", and "March"---Poems by Jonathon Lindley.

"The Tree-Man"---A story, by Henry S. Whitehead, reprinted from the Feb.-March, 1931, issue of Weird Tales.

"Check-List of the Published Stories of Henry S. Whitehead"---The list includes the author's twenty-five published stories in Weird Tales since "Tea-Leaves", in the May-June-July, 1924, issue, his six in Strange Tales, and his four in Adventure: "The Intamsia Box", November 10, 1923, "The Cunning of the Serpent", May 20, 1925, "The Black Beast", July 15, 1931, "Seven Turns in a Hangman's Rope", July 15, 1932.

"Origin Undetermined"---A story by R. H. Barlow. This is a "seeds from space" narration, of a glass-eating growth whose smell induces visions of a far-flung land of desolation, the unknown place of origin of the seeds, and source of the final, mysterious doom of the Mayas....

From a letter, by H. P. Lovecraft: "It can be said that anything which vividly embodies a basic human emotion or captures a definite and typical human mood is genuine art. The subject matter is immaterial. It requires no especial morbidity to enjoy any authentic word-description, whether it is conventionally 'pleasant' or not. The question to ask is not whether it is 'healthy' or 'pleasant', but whether it is genuine and powerful."

On this general subject I could go on indefinitely. After all, there are so many sides to the collecting angle of published stf. that it is a world in itself when uncovered. Or, to be more specific, there are innumerable items, meritorious even if obscure, which could be talked about in an article such as this, and given the opportunity would make of this an exceedingly long and detailed bibliographical listing. But life is ~~fast~~ too short for one individual to busy himself in the attempt--especially with the realization that there is original work being written every day and as yet unpublished writing that would make delightful and thought-provocative reading--besides the fact that one has one's own life to live. So I will close this article now by pointing out one such piece--a bit of poetry, as yet unpublished and possibly--tragic thought!--lost, which has caught my idealistic fancy and its allied companion collector's spirit.

The item I refer to is "The Last Martian", "A beautiful poem by the late Stanley G. Weinbaum"--forecast in the Fourth Anniversary Issue of Fantasy Magazine, the second last number. Ever since reading the little three-line forecast I was in a glad suspense over the thought of seeing a poem by Stanley Weinbaum whose stories I had always liked. And, when Fantasy Magazine supposedly combined with the Science-Fantasy Correspondent, I had expected the poem to be included some time in the latter magazine's contents. But this never occurred. Naturally, common sense would dictate that such a triviality--say, a poem, good or bad--is not anything to be concerned over. And so, consciously, my mind weathered the years as it was accustomed to. But finally something in it awoke--a little something long buried in its depths. I had meanwhile been editing Golden Atom, and had been gerring quite enthusiastic in my new-found interest to make of it a glamorous and more alive thing with each number. And it suddenly dawned on me that the reason for my intense activity was to make, if possible, actualities of vague dreams and hopes with might end as sad frustrations otherwise. That little poem by Stanley I realized was in itself a living example of what I feared--a lovely thing, in all probability, which I might never see. I knew then that subconsciously I had never forgotten Stanley Weinbaum's looked-forward-to poem.

So, with definite awareness of the item I wanted to read, I made plans to obtain it, if possible, and to publish it in my own publication, Stars. The following letters are the result of my attempt. My sincerest wish now as a stf. editor-collector-and-critic would be a letter containing Stanley's poem, for an all-original poetry issue of Stars. I hope--as I hope you do, too!--that this is possible and that his little verse is not lost or destroyed. Already, at least one issue of Stars is overdue, and may likely be so for a long time. The explanation for the delay is this: without Stanley Weinbaum's expected and hoped-for poem, I just haven't had the heart to publish a third number of Stars. For, as some of my correspondents know, I did vow to make this number the best ever!

From Helen Weinbaum, January 4, 1941: "I asked Julie Schwartz, who used to publish Fantasy, about the poem you wish to include in Stars, and found that when Fantasy closed he turned over all material to someone who wanted to carry on. The Last Martian was undoubtedly among it. However, he is going to try to trace it for you. " And if you are successful in getting the poem, won't you let me know? I'd like to buy a couple of copes of Golden Atom for myself and my folks. We never have seen The Last Martian, and naturally, anything of Stanley's is of great interest to us."

From Julius Schwartz, in the same mails: "Helen Weinbaum just phoned me and said you were inquiring about Stanley Weinbaum's poem "The Last Martian" that was forecast for publication in the old Fantasy Magazine. When I turned the magazine over to Willis Conover I gave him all the material I had on hand including this poem, so I suggest you query him about it."

From Willis Conover, January 11, 1941: "It must be two years since I last wrote to a "fellow antaisiste"--I've been out of the field for so long. But your letter, which has been forwarded twice to reach me, is obviously of an urgent nature, and so I'm writing at once. " What news I have for you must be rather discouraging, I'm afraid. You see, I haven't been home for nearly a year and a half. I don't know where any of my science-fiction trappings are packed at the moment, and it's hard to tell when I'll get at them again. And the current war between the broadcasters and the music-publishers makes it difficult--impossible, rather--for me to get away from the radio station, since the handling and checking of our music is my exclusive responsibility. Still, I hate to see Stanley Weinbaum's lovely verse go unpublished. " The only thing I can do is to write Mother directions for locating the poem...and that will be some job; because I'm not sure where it is myself! " Best of luck to you, Larry--if I may address you thus, being an inactive member of the science-fiction fraternity. I'll do what I can to find the Weinbaum gem, but don't be too hopeful for an early discovery, and please don't be too disappointed."

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December 1941 [4, 1]

THE READERS ALWAYS WRITE

Jack F. Speer, 3416 Northampton NW, Washington D.C. types: I have noted with alarm your efforts to establish "scientific fiction" as the proper name for the literature we love. Your action in this matter seems based upon the fallacious idea that a modifier of a noun must be in adjectival form: the only objection raised to "science fiction" is that the word "science" looks like a noun, when it is actually modifying one, and is therefore in the nature of an adjective. " Well, what's wrong with that? This is the English language, thank Foo, not one of those Continental monstrosities, and there's nothing wrong with a word in the form of one part of speech being put to any use you like without a change in form. (Sometimes I might prefer "running swiftly" to "running swift", but even the latter is OK for certain uses.) Such usage, however, frequently carries a slightly different meaning from what you would have with the word in the characteristic form for a modifier, substantive, verb, or whatever use it's being put to. And that's one of the strongest arguments for "science fiction". " I'll come back to that in a minute; first let me establish beyond a shadow of a doubt that noun forms can be used as modifiers. Don't we go around saying "corn flakes" instead of "corny flakes" or "cornish flakes", which would be the adjectival possibilities? If you are going to insist on showing by the form of the word that it is a modifier, you'll have to call National Guard divisions "Nationally Guarding divisions". Yeah, and science fiction fans will have to be known as "scientifically fiction fan"--you can't stop with "scientific-fiction fans"; there is a noun form modifying a noun, and an adjectival form (scientific) modifying a modifier, in which circumstances a state of adverbiality exists. Worse, "scientific fiction fans" looks like it meant fictional fans (I could say fictitious fans, but that would be making you weaker than your strongest, which is weak enuf) of a scientific nature, which, by the gospel according to St Wollheim, we aren't at all. " This is bringing me closer to my target. "Scientific fiction" to an outsider might easily convey the idea of fiction written in accordance with certain scientific principles. With "science fiction" no such mistake will be made. I regret that I have not figured this thing out or read up on it as well as I might if I applied myself, but at any rate--Putting a modifier in adverbial or adjectival form greatly restricts the possible relationships that may be understood between it and the word it modifies. On the other hand, with a noun form used, almost any reasonably simple

relation, including practically all prepositions, may be understood between the first and the second of the two noun forms, limited only by the assumed imagination of the reader. Thus our proverbial Martian, with an acquaintance with the English language and its expedients, but by chance not knowing the meaning of the word "shock", might understand a "shock ray" to be a ray produced by a shock, a ray made of a material called shock, a ray invented by a guy named shock, a ray whose building was financed by the sale of shocks, a ray which produced shocks, or any of a multitude of other possible things, and the context would quickly narrow the field of applicable meanings to one or two. A "shock-ish ray", on the other hand, could be little but a ray that resembled a shock, and a "shocking ray", if we except the transferred meaning of "shock" to mean "surprise", could be little else than a ray that produces shocks or does shocking. Which might be just what we meant in this case. But I have pointed out that "scientific fiction", as fiction, is not scientific. It is fiction about science (was originally, anyhow), so the noun form of modifier, with its larger possible scope, is needed. " On the whole, there are many exceptions both ways, a couplet or words which as a couplet have a distinct meaning of their own, like a single word, and frequently not reminding the listener of the meaning of the component parts, will have the modifier in the noun form. One philologist I read saw no essential difference between words like "teaspoon" and "moonshine" and phrases like "wire staple" and "grease gun". In German, and frequently in English, such words are combined into one, as "Volkswagen" and "toothpaste". In the Romance languages, they may insist on expressing the preposition and come out with an abomination like "machin à écrire", or they may get real bold and put the modifier first and join them with a hyphen, as "Haute-Marie". Their distinction in meaning when the adjective is placed before the noun (and not joined with a hyphen) is similar to my differentiation above between the meaning of a modifier in noun and adjectival form, for example, "Un pobre hombre" and "Un hombre pobre". " As the meaning of science fiction is extended to include all sorts of things having little relation to organized science--political fantasy, for example--and as stf becomes harder and harder to define in terms of extrapolations from present day science, it will have less and less relation to the separate meanings of "science" and "fiction". Obviously, then, it falls in the class of terms discussed in the preceding paragraph, and tying it down with an adjectival form like "scientific" can only lead to greater difficulties in the future. " I dare you to print this.

December 1941 [4, 1]

WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT

by

J. Michael Rosenblum

The Hesperides, by John Palmer [P. Martin Secker, 1936]

Subtitled "a looking-glass Ugué" which is not so bad as a description. The not-quite-original idea of putting on another planet the direct antithesis of our present "civilization". The author states: "When one is shown a picture of something which looks somehow wrong the right way up, it is a natural impulse to turn it upside down to see whether, that way, it may not look a little less peculiar", and later, "This book should not be read by anyone who has the smallest respect for things as they are". Concerned with three of our major problems: sex, religion, and war; we see just how ridiculous our treatment of these are, by seeing everything just the other way around. A grand and glorious satire indeed.

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April 1942 [4, 4]

THE LOG OF THE FOOFOO SPECIAL

by

Art Widmer Jr

July 7th--We packed and signed out, and then found that plutocrat Bell was again returning east via the stratosphere. Well, that gave us a little more room, that I, but I reckoned without the personality of Pretty Boy Madle. As soon as he found out there was an empty place, he immediately spoke up for his bosom buddy of the convention, previously unknown Rusty Barron. No one had any objection so we said good-bye and so long and C U N L A to all the fans assembled in the lobby, picked up Rusty, and took off for the Rockies.

But heat-em-up trouble was not yet over. Once again we were in the red on the thermometer, and I thot it was the other water pump gone glooey. After much trouble, and much more heat, we got up in the altitudes where it was so coll that we didn't heat up even tho we lost a lot of water.

The awesomeness and grandeur of the Rocky Mountains has been described many times and many times better than I could do it. I refer you to travel folders, etc. I only wish to say that I marveled and marveled, and would have deemed the whole trip worth while just for them, even if there were no convention.

Oddly enough, no one had popping ears, bloody noses, or even difficulty in breathing, as described by 4e in his account of a mountain sojourn. Of course, violent exertion was out of the question, as we soon learned, and Pretty Boy seemed even dopier than usual. When we glimpsed our first patch of snow, nothing would do but what we must get out and race to it for a snowball fight.

Rusty, Milt, and I were the hardy souls who didn't have enough energy to make a snowball after we got there. We concluded that 100 yards full speed up the side of a mountain at ten thousand feet was a job best left to John Carter. We did have a half-hearted snowfight later on at Berthoud Pass.

Time and space seemed to pass swiftly, although scarcely noticed. In what seemed like no time at all, we were swooping down a cloudy trail, then thru an impressively deep, winding, narrow gorge, finally to shoot out onto the plains once more an hour or so before sunset. Good time was made, and the mountains were lost to sight before dark.

We had invitations from Rocklyne and Chaurenst to stop in Ohio and Virginia respectively, so we had to make time to take in Virginia and still get back on time for work. We decided to get a night's sleep in Ft. Morgan, and then really go to town, or thru towns.

July 8th--We did. In spite of 100° in the shade and no shade, and filling the radiator every 10 or 15 miles, we made the outskirts of Lincoln by dusk. I was so disgusted I was ready to bite anybody who even so much as said "Boo". In addition to all this, something went wrong with the gas gauge, and we pulled in to fill up again to check on it.

The attendant was a garrulous old geezer, and about three sheets in the wind to boot. He paid no attention when I told him it might need only a couple. The tank gurgled a warning, but he stood with his eyes glued in seeming fascination on the dial of the pump, swaying slightly. The gas started to run over. "Hold it!" I yelled. The dope pointed affably to the dial and said, "Get to make an even two gallons." I blew up.

"Two gallons be damned!" I roared in a voice that was heard over in Missouri. From there I made a detailed, decidedly uncomplimentary analysis of his immediate and remote ancestry, with a full character and personality chart thrown in. I was hoping he'd make a pass at me, so I could have the pleasure of stuffing him in the water bucket.

I was still mumbling in my beard--yes, I actually raised a neat, black, Pharaoh-type goatee on the trip--when we reached the center of Lincoln. The fact that the radiator was so hot that no amount of water did any good--it just boiled away immediately--didn't improve my temper any.

I made up my mind to get it fixed once and for all, no matter what it cost. We looked up the Ford-Lincoln dealer, but the regular mechanic was off duty, and his relief couldn't fix anything more complicated than an empty gas tank.

We finally went to a recommended place, and boy, did we take a sticking! The goon there suggested the only thing left to do would be to steam out the radiator to the tune of three dollars and fifty cents. We couldn't think of any way to get out of it, so we said (gulp) okay and sauntered off to find sleeping quarters.

After considering how the steam job and a night's rest was going to maltreat the feline, we shamelessly decided that the best idea was to try to mooch a flop from the genial Thompson. I was the goat who had to do the calling up and hinting around. However, Deeby was wonderfully hospitable, scratching around and somehow finding five bucks for us. We owe a real debt of gratitude to the Sage-Basi.

But after explicit directions over the phone, I proceeded to get the boys tangled up in the maze of non-continuous U Street, and we picked 'em up and laid 'em down for a weary two miles before we arrived.

July 9th--In the morning, we accompanied Deeby to his job at the municipal recreation center. We looked longingly at the cool, green swimming pool with temperature gaining a degree a minute, and even seriously thought of taking a dip, but time would not permit.

Twenty-five miles later the thermometer was again bulging at the top and hollering for mercy. The cursing that came forth at this phenome non must have caused Mr. Steamjob's ears to break out in large and painful blisters away back in Lincoln. I heartily hope they did. In fact, I hope they dropped off altogether! (Schlemiel!)

So to a Ford dealer in Nebraska City we went. He took one look in the radiator, and we finally found out the real cause of all our trouble. Hallelujah! It was merely a busted head gasket. But when he got the cylinder head off--oi wch!--to a dog it shouldn't happen, even a brown one, with black spots yet. So much heating had gone before that the head was cracked and had to be replaced. Total bill--\$7.50. Cooch, ouch! this was just about the kitty's last meow, but at least the car was fixed okay, and we really began to roll.

Since we were going to Cincinnati, we turned south thru St. Joe, Mo., and crossed the upper part of that state, instead of Iowa. Incidentally, we wished we had come that way on the outward trip, for gas is cheaper there than anywhere except Washington, D.C. Just after dark we crossed the Mississippi at Mark Twain's boyhood home, Hannibal.

As we struck into the wilds of Illinois, another rip-snorter of an electrical disturbance loomed up ahead of us, but it was traveling in our direction at practically the same speed, and we didn't catch it until after we had passed thru Shroyer's home town of Decatur. But the--goshwowboyboy, did we catch it! It was just as bad as the previous one mentioned, and it was miles greater in extent.

I had been driving continuously for about eighteen hours, and my eyes felt like two burned holes in a blanket. And when the rain blurred the windshield in driving sheets, and the lightning seemed to come from every point of the compass lighting everything in single tremendous flares, as if a gigantic welding torch were being turned on and off just above the roof of the car--my tortured optics rebelled. Tears flooded down my face, and my lids absolutely refused to

stay open more than a few seconds at a time. So I was forced to pull off the road and quit. After dozing a quarter of an hour, I tried it again, but when we caught up with the storm once more, it was no use. The others awakened at the second stop, and after some consultation, I moved over and Rusty took the wheel. After a few moments, satisfied that he was a competent driver, I went out like a light, and did not waken until the gray of early morning showed us to be in Indianapolis.

July 10th--When we stopped for gas we had a bad turn. The tank appeared to be leaking--dribbling away on the ground at a great rate from between one of the seams.

We were completely baffled at this turn of events. The only thing we could do was to drive on a bit, and repeat observations. This we did, consuming a bit of breakfast meanwhile. Said breakfast consisted of milk or coffee and a doughnut, for we were all harboring our practically non-existent resources.

When we finished, we again inspected the gas tank and everything seemed all X. We concluded that the attendant must have overflowed the tank a trifle, and some gas had evidently dribbled down the outside of the fill pipe to the tank, collected, and dripped off a small projection. So--only 100 miles to Cincinnati! It took us about three hours to get there, and about an hour to find Tarr's place--he was not home--then Ross Rocklynne's.

Ross was the only one home and he welcomed us in royally--and at last we had a chance to compare the much-discussed resemblance between him and Rusty. For a while we sat around looking stupid from fatigue, as Ross plied us with questions about the Denvention and received unintelligible replies filtered thru iced tea and bananas, which was all that happened to be in the larder.

Seeing how bedraggled we were, Ross suggested we take a bath sort of to revive ourselves before we went to see Charlie Tanner. One by one, we trooped into the Rocklynne bathroom and duly deposited five rings in the tub. That helped a bit, but we were still tired and hungry, and asked for the nearest good restaurant, but Ross insisted we have supper there when the rest of the family came home. You see, Ross is an author, and the others work for a living.

Off we went, and after what seemed to be an interminable twistings and turnings, we finally emerged from a woody hillside to arrive at the hospital where "Tumithak" is giving the old 'B' bug a terrific beating. He was pickled tink to see us, and got a great kick out of the story of our trip and the Denvention.

In the middle of all the hilarity and Chicon reminiscences, the hospital smell, lack of food, etc., became too much for Milty, and he slid down the side of the wall like an old dishrag. I had never seen a faint before, and I was afraid for a moment that only four fans were going to leave Cincinnati. I had visions of a shallow grave and a rude cross, carved: "Here lies Milty, scientific's first martyr. Persihed bravely of starvation on the Widner Expeditionary Force of '41." To steal a phrase from Schmarje: "Gee!"

But Ross grabbed a passing nurse, who shoved some smelly salts under the Tree Toad's beezee, and he was okay in a few minutes.

All too soon Charlie's stern-faced nurse came and forcibly ejected us, and back we went to the Rocklynne roost. By that time his brother, sister and mother were home and we were introduced all around. Once more we tried to leave, but Ross told us if we didn't stay for supper we could never darken his bathtub again. That quip stayed us, and shortly the feed bag was put on. Our last good meal had been somewhere in Missouri, more than twenty-four hours ago, but we still couldn't make away with the bounty that was placed before us: one of those picnic suppers that make a full-fledged banquet look like small potatoes. A

dozen kinds of cold cuts, potato salad, lettuce, tomatoes, gallons of iced tea, varieties of cake and cookies--I can't remember half of it, but there was such a profusion of good things to eat that we half-starved galoots didn't know where to begin.

According to Mrs. Swisher, I am the eatingest fan there is, and I tried to get around just a little of everything, but had to give it up with several species of comestibles still unsampled, and my belt unloosened to the last notch.

Things were just getting cleaned up, and Milty and Clyde (Ross' big brother) were taking turns on the piano when the CSFL started to arrive. First there was Director Dale Tarr, then Kay Benton, and after that I lost track, but about five or six more came in, including a couple of fellows from across the river in Kentucky, making seven states represented at the gathering, including Washington, D.C. We gabbed and gabbed and every once in a while our little band would gather near the door and make a rush for it, but we were always grabbed and hauled back to gab some more. After playing cat-and-mouse with us for hours, we were finally allowed to get back in the car after nightfall, and after another half-hour of parting quips and instructions on how not to lose our way, we departed and promptly became lost.

We found our route shortly, tho, and spent some time discussing the marvelousness of fan hospitality. It's really unbelievable.

We left Ohio about midnite, crossing the river into West Virginia, where we promptly paid exorbitant prices for gas. Then we ran into incredibly long stretches of torn-up highway, and a true confession period set in as we amoled along about 25. Milty ended it by shocking us.

July 11th--Dawn found us in the midst of the mountains. Morning mist obscured everything and it was particularly incongruous to be traveling thru the wildest country we had yet seen, and then suddenly come upon a gigantic steel mill, roaring away full blast, there in the middle of the wilderness.

As the sun burned the mist away, the night chill that had kept me awake passed and I became woozier and woozier, finally surrendering the wheel to Moneybags and clambering into the back seat, where I immediately became wide awake and wrestled with Bob and Rusty for a half-hour.

We pulled into Tallwood Plantation late in the afternoon, and Russell popped out of the shrubbery with two beautiful collies to greet us.

With the exception of Milty, who had been there before, we all gawked about with our mouths open and our bare faces hanging out, taking in our first view of a really truly southern plantation "just like you see in the movies."

We were placed in the "cottage", which turned out to be a young mansion of eight or ten enormous rooms, where we cleaned up, and then went to the "house".

Egad. We saw only the ground floor, but that was almost enough in which to get lost. We played ping-pong on the back veranda until supper was ready. To my chagrin, Russell beat me three out of four, but I had a lack-of-practice alibi to fall back on, which leaves me still convinced I am the better player in the long run. My beard was universally censured, altho everybody was too polite to say anything. I can't understand it. It was such a nice beard....

Supper. Yum. Baked Virginia ham, yams, and home grown, extra succulent corn-on-the-cob. Mah mouf air dribblin' lak a houn' dawg roun' a sassenger mill, right now, just thinkin' about it.

More p-p after supper with Nancy Chauvenet and I teaming up against Russ and Milty, whilst Rusty and Bob strained their alleged brains over a game of chess. Moneybags snoozed. Then a gabfest in Russ' room, and a look-see at his collection, then off to bed early in the "cottage".

July 12th--We were up at nine, had a scrumptious breakfast, and after a pix taking session, bid good-bye to Russ and Nancy, who were heading for Ventnor City, New Jersey, that afternoon, where Russ intended to take in a chess tourna-

ment. He had just won the championship of the southern states, a feat of which he is justly proud.

When we went to load up our weary metal steed once more, great was our surprise to find it all dusted and cleaned out, looking as chipper as the day we started. This southern hospitality is all the legends say of it and more.

We made Washington around three o'clock, and had a chance to see more of the sights than when we had come through before. No stops were made, but we rubbeded at the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Capitol Building, and beautiful edifices, as Milty became tourist guide and explained all satisfactorily.

A few hours later, Philly crept up and gradually surrounded us like a colossal, dirty amoeba, and we dropped Milty at his parents' home. After raiding the Rothman ice box, we went to the Madie abode for a repeat performance. Bob proudly displayed a dozen pieces of mail, accumulated during his absence, and was roundly jeered as a has-been by Julio and me, who knew we would have a small mountain to cope with when we returned. Bob's parents wanted us to stay, but we decided to push on. Rusty was to stay permanently and find a job in Philly.

The FooFoo Special seemed strangely light and peppy with the back seat empty and half the luggage gone. We zipped over the ninety miles between Philly and New York in exactly two hours and reached Brooklyn a half hour later. Julie woke up his wife and he and I had a snack before I was bedded down on the living room couch and they retired.

July 13th--In spite of my request to get me up early, they let me sleep until ten, for which I was duly grateful. After careful instruction on how to solve the labyrinth of Brooklyn, I was on my way, and for a wonder found my way to the Morrill parkway without a hitch.

About noontime I stopped at a filling station and phoned Trudy Kuslan that I would shortly drop in on her, and not to be startled at my appearance. Brother Lou was there, with whom I exchanged greetings, and he decided to put off his departure for college until I arrived.

A half-hour later I was in West Haven, and when Trudy saw me she let out a squawk of anguish and nearly swooned in spite of my warnings. Lou stayed long enough to persuade her to speak to me, and then was off in the Empress of FooFoo.

She finally got used to the chin whiskers, and we gabbed all afternoon and evening, in between listening to Gilbert and Sullivan (not Joe & Wal) (ik!) and classical (ah!) recordings. The Kuslans are greatly attached to the music and lyrics of G & S and all visitors are tied in their chairs and forced to listen to whole performances of The Mikado, H.M.S. Pinafore, and whatnot. I agreed to listen peaceably and so was not confined.

I left about eleven and reached home at dawn. At two in the afternoon I was dragged out of the hay bodily, and gently persuaded by mother, with the aid of an iron frying pan, to shave off that horrible looking spinach, and pointed in the general direction of Procter & Gamble's Laboratory. P. S. What was the night I took a bite from an Erlenmeyer flask and squirted acid on a cheese sandwich. It seems that there were also some very peculiar answers to my analyses. But...I don't...remember...hahum...muchzzzz... about...it. . .zzzzzzzzzzzz.

The End

January 1942 [4, 2] wov v310

CHERCHEZ LA FANNE

by
Fantacynic

There's something frightening about the way time creeps up on you. New guys come into the field, and when you start talking about Fantasy Magazine or Fantasy Fan, they just look blank. Things move fast in the fan field, and the name that was on everybody's lips last year is only a dim memory of old-timers today.

Last night, down at the Club, I happened to mention that I met Dick Stanberg on the subway coming over. For a good ten seconds they sat dumb, trying to place the name, and then Pete Burns spoke up from the corner by the stove.

"Dick Stanberg, eh?" he asked. "Couldn't think who it was for a moment--and yet he started the club and was Secretary for a year! Lord, the fun we used to have." He looked into the depths of the stove reflectively.

"Why didn't you ask him over?" one of the new members enquired.

"No use," I replied briefly, "he wouldn't have come."

"What did he do, anyway?" asked Johnny Drew, our thirteen-year-old prodigy. "I don't seem to remember him."

"Before your time, Johnny-boy," grinned Pete. "But Dick Stanberg was as well known as Wollheim or Sykora at one time. Editor FAPA, organizer of the Ironville Fantasts Club, publisher of Solaris--what a drive he had!"

"I've heard of Solaris," reflected Johnny. "'S a matter of fact I've got a couple of copies back in the den. Not at all bad. Why did he pack up?"

Pete looked at me, and raised his eyebrows. I thought for a moment. It couldn't do any harm now. Dick would never come back. I signaled consent. "Go ahead, Pete," I said.

He poked the fire for a moment and then began to speak. "Dick Stanberg was a swell guy--get that straight in your minds. Always willing to lend a hand, though often enough he got precious few thanks for it. There was never anyone more altruistic than Dick in the whole field. He started this club. He got in touch with Rog here, and me, and a couple of others, who've dropped out now or moved away. Between us we got quite a lot done.

A couple of months after our inaugural meeting, Dick bullied the editor of the City News into giving us a notice. Ghu, how I remember the club night following that! The five of us sat there, our eyes glued to the door, waiting to see if anyone would walk in on us. Three people did.

The first was Marty Benny--yes, the same Mart Benny that's editing Fantasy Classic now. He had seen the notice in the News, and was as keen as mustard about the club. Within ten minutes, he and Dick had planned a branch publication, had everything pat down to the advertisement column.

Those two together were flint and steel.

You wouldn't know the second arrival. In any case it doesn't matter as he never turned up again. His vocabulary wasn't so hot, and he thought "Fantasts" had something to do with strip-tease. We soon disillusioned him. It was past ten and we were getting ready to go when the third newcomer turned up.

We were arguing about something, and we didn't hear the door open. It was only when a cool, laughing voice said "Hello" that we realized someone was in the room. Then we gasped. Framed in the doorway was a sight that made even misogynist Roger blink his eyes.

She was about eighteen we guessed, slender and willowy in a sheer blue dress. Black hair crowned a strange, elfin face, and the high-lights in it alone were something a man could watch for years without tiring. Her eyes were

blue and laughing, to use a trite expression. But there was nothing trite about Josephine Ledrine. When she spoke her voice lulled and rippled like one of Chopin's Preludes.

We welcomed her--you bet we did! Our strip-tease connoisseur who had been bored all the evening brightened up so much that Dick and I had to take him out and drop him over the banisters. We didn't get home till after midnight, being so busy telling Josephine about everything.

Meetings after that were never dull, with Josephine, Marty and Dick to warm things up. They would sit for a while after the others arrived, ominously silent. Then one of them would make some crazy suggestion, and the storm would break. The rest of us tried hopelessly to follow them as they slipped from subject to subject, always out of our reach. Old Rog here would often go part of the way with them, but even he was out of his depth when they really got going.

It soon became obvious to everyone but Josephine that Dick and Mart were rivals. I think we all fell, but only these two could match her. The rest of us looked on, and laid bets on the result. Josephine didn't seem to have any idea of the rivalry. She was just as nice to Bill Derman, who was forty, partly bald, and weather-beaten mentally and physically, as she was to Mart and Dick. But then she was nice to everybody. It was only that her intellect was so obviously at home with these two.

Somehow fan activity came to be the criterion on which they based their success or failure with Josephine. Dick was miserable when Mart beat him by three votes for FAPA presidency, and Mart went around in a sulk when Dick pushed Solaris into print, incidentally dropping fifty bucks on the three issues he published after that. Josephine would applaud each of them, without seeming to realize the other's discomfiture. We began to get uncomfortable about it, because we liked both boys and we knew that without Josephine they would have been great pals. The only one who seemed to get any fun out of it was Bill Derman; he would sit hunched over a Haig and soda all night, chuckling to himself at the foolishness of youth.

Things came to a head when we went to the Chicon. There were the five of us--Josephine, Dick, Marty, Rog, and myself--and we had a vague sort of hope that we might snaffle the next year's convention for Ironville. I think we would have done it except for that pair of idiots.

All the way to Chicago they sat opposite in the coach, glaring at each other or out of the window. Even Josephine couldn't help noticing this, especially when she mentioned a coke. They both stood up, sneered at each other, and made simultaneous bull rushes for the door. The train swayed over the points and they slow-motion folded into an untidy heap on the floor. Rog stepped deftly over them, and was back with the drink by the time they had sullenly slumped back in their seats. Josephine's blue eyes became chill, like I imagine light looks through an ice-berg, and she treated us to a snappy monologue on the necessity for maintaining mind over matter. The boys were too far gone to be affected.

While we were registering at the hotel, Rog took me to one side. "Better keep those two apart," he whispered. "I'll room with Dick and you take Marty. And don't let him out of your sight."

I assented willingly, and Dick and I went up to change. He was crawling under his breath, and even the sight of me as Tweel--boy, was that a laugh!--didn't make him a bit pleasant. His costume was a surprise. We had kept our characters a secret even from each other, and Dick's strikingly good get-up as Old Faithful laid me out with admiration. I reckoned it a sure lead for originality.

We had arranged to meet at the Hall, so I led Dick along there, watching him even more carefully than the amazed Chicagoans did. We met 4SJ in the foyer, and he said a few nice words about Dick's dress. This brightened him up a bit and he grinned. "No credit to me for it," he said mysteriously. Just then Kornbluth staggered out of the Hall, cast one mirthful glance at Dick, and crab-walked down the street screaming hysterically. "Crazy as a coot," murmured Forrest. "Let's go."

We walked right into an eyeful of oomph. Josephine had come as Dejah Thoris, and her ideas of a Martian Princess' costume were even briefer than Burroughs'. Forrest wobbled slightly at the knees, and my voice wouldn't work right. Then I saw Mart beside her.

Dick and Mart must have noticed each other simultaneously, for they both growled ominously and moved forward with fists clenched. Wollheim came out of the bar just then and nearly passed out. The sight of two Old Faithfuls, green and leafy, in the pose of a pair of pugilists, was just too much for him.

Josephine had given them both the same idea.

She laughed at her own joke, quick-silver. But her smile vanished as the two Martian apparitions came relentlessly together in a clinch, and the ornate robes began to shed green over the floor. Her lips were tightly compressed when half a dozen of us had dragged them apart. She rode back with us to the hotel, silently, Miranda with two battered Calibans. Then she let loose.

Like a lot of female intellectuals of the period she was a pacifist. The sight of two men doing anything so primitive as scrapping turned her sick. But the fact that these two laid pretensions to intellect made it even more heinous in her eyes. She was merciless, even cruel. The upshot of it all was that she never wanted to set eyes on them--either of them--again.

We got through the convention somehow, with delegates from other clubs enjoying themselves at our expense, and went morosely back to Ironville. On the return trip Dick handed me his resignation as Secretary. "I guess I'm fed up with fandom," he said. Marty looked relieved, but said nothing. He was still keen, and the club obviously couldn't hold both of them. When Mart moved to New York a few months later I went over to see Dick, but he wouldn't come back. Said he'd taken up swing.

"What about Josephine?" asked Johnny.

"Josephine? Josephine married Bill Derman and went farming in Missouri. They sent me a snap of their baby daughter a while ago. Bonny kid."

The End

March 1942 [4, 3]

THE READERS ALWAYS WRITE

Milton A. Rothman, 1730 P, NW, Washington, D.C. types: "Ah, the Log of the Foo-Foo Special. Almost as much pleasure reading it as in experience. Much more comfortable, in fact. Gad, but that was an arduous trip. I don't blame myself for passing out in the hospital. After going without food and sleep for days, practically, and then coming into that place just as they were serving dinner, with all the luscious odors around--I just plain folded up. I faint easily, anyway. I'm always passing out in hospitals and such places. Although I dissected a cat without any trouble. It just depends on the condition of my tummy." Lots of anecdotes I could mention that Widner omitted--nobody could remember them all. There was the way Art kept driving the car to the very edge of the mountain roads so that he could look down into the

valley, miles below, while the rest of us were tearing our hair and shrieking for him to get back in the middle of the road. And how at sunset, precisely, every night, the most weird noises would begin issuing from the car. A materialist would say that we were merely letting off steam, but actually we were turning into werewolves. And those nights--get a bunch of fellows into a car riding all night, and guess what the conversation will turn to. The most memorable of all was when we drove through Indiana on the way out. John Bell was keeping Art awake by the most idiotic arguments on various subjects, and gradually the conversation veered to the reasons behind obscenity, with examples. Somehow, on towards dawn, John became eloquent, and burst forth with a wonderful monologue on reasons and purposes and the future of man. Then we stopped the car for a few minutes and got out, to stand there in the middle of a vast, perfectly flat plain, with the cold grey dawn all around us and that incredible cloud formation above us, and for that moment we felt an awe which was new to us. We were no longer tired. " I wonder how much Widner will give me not to sell nude pictures of him...."

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March 1942 [4, 3]

THE CANADIAN SF, AND FANTASY SCENE

by

Leslie A. Croutch

In reply to a suggestion of Warner's that I write some authoritative facts on science fiction in Canada from the professional viewpoint, I am writing this for Spaceways.

We'll take things chronologically, from November, 1940, when there appeared on Canadian newsstands a small Reader's Digest-sized magazine called Uncanny Tales. It was published by Adam Publishing Co., Suite 403 at 455 Spadina Ave., Toronto. It contained sixty-four pages and sold for 15c a copy. Thomas P. Kelley, the author, was editor and guiding hand for some time. The main offering to start things off was a reprint of Kelley's "Last Pharaoh" which went under the name "The Talking Heads", and which ran for four issues. In May of 1941, UT went large format, size 10 1/2 x 7 1/4". Same price as before. This was the fourth number, the others being dated November, December, January (the last mis-dated Jan., 1940) and then skipping to May. In the main UT has been printing material which has originally appeared in various of the cheaper grades of American SF. prozines. About the time UT went large format, or what you would term middling size, Kelley and Valentine, the other man behind UT, fell out. Kelley's stuff still appears from time to time but he no longer guides the destinies of the publication. At present M. R. Colby is editor of Uncanny, and the present address: 28 Wellington St., West, Toronto, Ontario.

A few months after Kelley broke with UT, he fostered a second magazine which looked good, promised much, but which lasted exactly one issue and then died. This was Eerie Tales, not to be confused with the short-lived U. S. magazine of the same title. It was published by the C. K. Publishing Co., at 184 Adelaide St., West, Toronto. It was same size as UT is now, sold at 15c a copy, and had all original material in it. It was a gallant attempt and would have lasted and grown, I believe. There is quite a bit of mystery as to what happened to it. There are several tales. Kelley himself told me it sold well and made money, but that he just didn't have the time to give it and so had to give it up. Another story from another man who publishes several magazines is that it was a dismal flop. The one and only number was dated July 1941.

Then, dated October, 1941, appeared a giant in the old format of Amazing under Gernsback. It was a nicely got-up publication selling for 25c a copy and published by Superior Magazines, 104 Sherbourne St, Toronto. This was called Science Fiction. On the contents page it sported the masthead of the old American Science Fiction. When Lowndes was asked about it, he didn't explain this--but did say it was reprinting material from Science Fiction and Future Fiction. This magazine went strongly until recently when it skipped two months and the June number, now on the stands, I understand is definitely its last.

In January, 1942, Popular Publications of Canada, which had been reprinting their various western, detective, and love magazines over here, started giving us a Canadian edition of Astonishing. It is illustrated by Canadian artists, has a Canadian cover, and uses fiction from Astonishing and Super Science. It is small format and sells at 10c a copy. So far there have been three numbers-- January, March, and May, 1942.

American News woke up and decided to get in the swim. Out came a Canadian edition of Weird Tales. Containing 128 pages, small format, 20c a copy, and illustrated by Canadians, it is the best of the lot. The cover for "The Shadow over Innsmouth" is better than anything that has appeared on the American WT for many months. The first number was dated May, 1942. It reprinted vol. 36, no. 3, of the American WT.

That is all that is definite from this side of the line. However, rumors in the city have it that Street & Smith will start printing in a big way here this summer and we are waiting to see if perhaps they will give us a Canadian edition of Unknown Worlds and Astounding. This is all to the good. There has also been a rumor to the effect that Uncanny is dickering with Amazing to reprint from that magazine. Now, take all this with a grain of salt. It is only rumor. I offer it without any additional comment.

On the actual side of the ledger of the future is the fact that we will not likely see any more Science Fictions. Colby tells me that Uncanny is going bimonthly and may possibly have to quit altogether. This is due, he says, to some government regulations concerning pulps which nobody seems to know anything about or has even heard of.

In fantasy, sometimes the Toronto Weekly Star in its complete, \$2 novel section, prints a fantasy. We read "The New Adam" in this way--not the Weinbaum yarn--"When London Fell", and one or two others.

Anyone wishing more information, such as indexes of Canadian sf magazines, can get in touch with me at Box 121, Parry Sound, Ontario. I'll be glad to send all available information.

Thanks for listenin', folks.

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July 1942 [4, 6]

THREE FANDOMS IN ENGLAND

by
Doug Webster

All fandom is divided into three parts; at least, in England it is. The fact seems to be little realized on either side of the Atlantic. Which is a pity, since it leads to some interesting conclusions and, I think, a much better conception of just how British fandom works and how individuals are grouped and react according to class. Wherefore step to one side, brethern, and allow me to spread myself.

I shall call them the First, Second, and Third Fandoms, after the method of (I think) Speer. It's not an accurate description, but it is a very handy one.

I believe that it was Michael Rosenblum who first drew my attention to the distinctions, though I'd been mooning about it vaguely for some while before.

First Fandom is comprised of those described--sometimes accurately--as the real Old-Timers. Carnell, Chapman, Gillings, Temple, Clarke, Johnson, Russell, Clarke, and so on. The men who started the SFA, and, what is more important, are so temperamentally disposed as to put in all the work to keep the SFA--and the BIS and so on--steaming ahead. They have been reading stf for God knows how long, I don't know how long. Far too long, I should say. Most of them still read it, and many of them--this is a significant point, for we are considering England, not USA--still read all of every promag they can lay hands on, and regard science-fiction as a sort of ritual rather than as bed-time reading or comic-relief. They are, on the average, in the late twenties in age, they are much given to drinking beer, singing songs, and being merry, which is Good; they do not like fighting or harsh words; the more extreme support this war, as they would support any war, unquestionably; the less extreme think more deeply, and are saddened; they support the war too; many of them write science-fiction stories, or edit science-fiction magazines, or run science-fiction services; most of them do not understand Poetry, and are rendered uncomfortable by any exhibition of consideration about politics or interest in the Arts; which is Bad.

Those are the old-timers, a rough and merry crowd. Here is Second Fandom, and ArtWithACapitalA..

In Second Fandom are Webster and others. The others are much more important than Webster, because I've never been nor had any desire to be a Famous Fan. They number amongst them Youd, Burke, McIlwain, Hopkins, Medhurst, Rathbone, Turner, Smith, Needham, and a few others. These gentry are among the most conceited in fandom, and rightly so, of course. They look with indulgence and almost a secret contempt on First and Third Fandoms: just what the latter think of them would be rather interesting to know. Those in Second Fandom are almost of an age; just now they range from 19 to, say, 22--or perhaps 24, if you include Hanson and Smith.

The history of fandom of all these young men is vary similar. They started reading stf in the early 30's--I, for instance, find that I probably first read magazine fantasy in 1928 or 1929, and the American brand about '32 or '33. On the whole, they fgave it up again about 1939 or '40. Having read it on and off for some years, and sneered at it well-nigh continuously, they were unworried by the lack of war-time stf and only glanced at such magazines as came into their hands.. They came into organised fandom with the SFA in '36 or '37, and among them have edited quite a few fanmags--the best that England has produced. Second Fandom, however, has another God--Art--to which it pays obeisance in many forms. It doesn't worry about what becomes of the SFA or Astounding, but it is concerned with where the world's going, and why, and how better it could be steered on its way. It is composed of serious young men, introverts all, and the serious young men are equipped with hot tempers, not a little command of language, fiery pens, a very great confidence in themselves, a conceit that tells them they are in a small measure acquainted with culture and capable of producing work a damn sight better than their fellow fans. They write novels and poems and all sorts of stories, and they listen to good music and read intellectual books. All of which is a Good Thing or a Bad Thing, according to how you look at it.

Third Fandom, again, is not confined to such narrow limits of age. On the whole, its members have appeared in fandom or even have started reading stf only since the beginning of the war. Ages range from Houston, at 14, to Busby, at 28, the preponderance being somewhere below military age.

It seems to me that they are much nearer in temperament and general character to First than to Second Fandom. They are the ones who would carry on the SFA, if need be, and they would hardly be given to writing novels. They read the magazines avidly insofar as they can lay hands on them, and will cluster round this new society, BFFF or British Fantasy Society or whatever it may eventually be called. I haven't been able to fathom any reasons for its being formed in the first place, other than that it should be a means whereby the newer fans--as George Medhurst sardonically calls them--are brought into contact and given the chance to cooperate; just as others were brought into contact by the forming off the SFA. Which is a reasonable enough idea.

That, then, is the outline. As I said, the conclusions are interesting, for in considering the writing or career of any particular fan you can first slip him into his category, roughly or exactly, and thereby obtain a much fuller idea of why he carries on as he does. Naturally, the members of each Fandom are fairly intimate and there's a good deal of herd feeling and mass opinion.

Of course, it must be emphasised that the characteristics I've mentioned are only means, and group characteristics. Individuals within each Fandom may diverge partly or completely in several instances. Then again, you'd expect a certain number of fans to be borderline cases, or not easily fitted into one or another Fandom. Thus, Michael Rosenblum places himself between First and Second Fandoms, and others, such as Maurice Hansons, DRSmith, Sid Birchby, and Ego Clarke, might be similarly placed. And then Edwin Macdonald, who's some 17 years old and a comparative newcomer, is yet temperamentally more inclined to Second than to Third Fandom. And Ron Holmes, who by virtue of his age and stage of fan experience might be thought to fall into Second Fandom, is really at home only in the Third.

To take an instance illustrating what I say: A couple of days ago, March 21st, Voice of the Imagi-Nation dropped in, and I glanced at portions of a letter from R. George Medhurst, a shining light in Second Fandom.

Says RGM: "On this side of the Atlantic we've completely demolished the legend of 'The Skylark of Space'. This unfortunate opus is universally rejected, from Sam Youd to the Bibliophan, with Donald Raymond Smith maintaining an uncomfortable silence." This is not strictly true. In point of fact, Second Fandom as a mass rejects an EESmith story as something unpleasant, ridiculous and childish. Smith, on the outskirts, has at one time or another spoken in favour of his namesake, but being prudent maintains his peace in the face of unanswerable arguments. But in First Fandom, among Ted Carnell and Ken Chapman, you will find several who gobble up Smith at face value. They take the thing, perhaps, less seriously, and don't ask for adult fare where they know they can't get it. And Third Fandom seethes with Smith fans; for all fans, in the lush of their virgin years, are hypnotised by the great names.

So that here, as elsewhere, you can the more easily explain, and more fully understand, an individual's actions and opinions by reference to his group. A man is known by the company he keeps. After a while it becomes a fascinating game, and you can spend whole days turning out analyses of screwy behaviour. However, should a case ever defeat you, baffled and desperate, you always know my address. Or if you don't, you ought to.

CONFIDENTIAL NOTES ON EDITORS

by

John W. Pong, Jr.

News Item: Because Campbell-the-Editor is so busy editing that he has no time to write, he sometimes "farms out" to other writers various ideas and plots Campbell-the-Author has concocted. Thus it is that his magazines sometimes carry his "own" stories, but written of course by these other authors.

.....

I strolled nonchalantly into Campbell's office one rainy Monday forenoon. Miss Cornelia Twitchett, his beauteous assistant, was casually picking her fingernails and doodling with a pencil stuck between her toes. She smiled sweetly at me, exhibiting all three teeth.

"Hello, little chum," I said. "What's gnu?"

The Great Man looked up from a manuscript and discovered who I was. He hurtled the desk in his eagerness to greet me.

"Ah! Pong, Pong, where have you been?" In his childish enthusiasm he kissed me wetly on both cheeks. The fuzz tickled him. Miss Twitchett giggled.

"I wish I could do that--just once!" she simpered.

Bravely, without flinching or betraying pain, I put my face close to hers, and permitted her to leave the impression of her three teeth on my cheek.

"Well done, old man!" Campbell whispered in an aside. "Stout fella!"

I shrugged modestly. "Something I learned in Tibet. Yogi endurance, and all that. Tut. What was it you wanted to see me about?"

He snapped his fingers. "Oh, yes, I'd nearly forgotten. I have an idea for a neat yarn; it came to me at the breakfast table this morning. I think you can make a novelette of it--anyone else, no. I thought about Van Vogt, but the best he could do would be a short story. Dammit, Pong, all my good authors are in the Navy...except you, of course. I'm losing four more next week when John (censored; military information) joins up. He's a damned good man! Ummmm. Miss Twitchett, make a note of that. Editorial lead: four more authors join up, etc."

"Okay," I snapped, getting out pencil and notebook. "Let's hear the plot."

Campbell looked pained. "Well, I really haven't got the thing plotted, exactly. I just have a general idea, you know, a sort of hazy outline of what I'd like it to be."

"Okay, okay, stop stalling. Give it to me. Never mind how rough it is. I know you by this time, I can follow it. What's the locale, how does it start, how do you want it to end, and stuff?"

He sauntered over to the water cooler by the window, spigoted a drink, and stared down into the street. I caught Miss Twitchett watching me with wistful eyes. She was idly writing a short story for Unknown meanwhile. Campbell continued to stall. It made me suspicious.

"Well," I demanded.

He started. "Well, I really...that is...well, frankly, Pong, old man, I don't have any of those details. What I do have in mind is a...well...an idea--you know...like a...well, an idea."

In exasperation I grabbed his necktie and discovered it was his tongue.

"Now, looky here, Campbell! Snap out of it. My time is valuable. I have to get over to see Koenig before lunch. I've found a hiss for him. Come clean with me. Exactly how much of this proposed story do you have?"

He hung his head. "One paragraph," he confessed.

Miss Twitchett, eager to be of help and ever on the lookout to do me a return favor, ran to the cooler for water, dashed a cup of it all over my clean shirt, and assisted me from the floor.

"One paragraph!" I snorted in disgust. "And I'll bet it isn't even the opening paragraph, but one buried somewhere in the middle of the yarn. Well?"

He struck out defensively. "Hell, it's a darn good paragraph. It came to me this morning at the breakfast table--oh, I've already said that, haven't I? Yes, I must admit it is a paragraph buried in the yarn--damn near the end, to be exact, at the beginning of the climax." Abruptly he changed tack in a startling manner. "Do you know anything about hares?"

"Hairs?" I scratched my head reflectively. "Sure, I have lots of them. But I usually refer to them in the singular."

"Please!" he protested quickly. "No spicy jokes before Miss Twitchett."

That good lady's face fell at his words, and I suggested she get a written guarantee from the plastic surgeon next time.

"Skip it," I objected. "What about the hair?"

"Well, my idea is this: A hare sets out to conquer the world.--What are you gaping at? Oh, never mind; this is revolutionary."

"A re you editing Amazing now?" I queried.

He frowned. "I don't follow that."

"Never mind. Palmer won't either. Go on about the hair."

"It's like this. This individual had learned to stand up, thereby proving it possesses an advanced intelligence. So-- Now what's the matter?"

I ogled him. "A hair that has learned to stand on end all by itself?"

"Ummmm," he frowned. "That's a crude and vulgar way of putting it, but you are essentially correct. Yes. This hare can stand on its hind legs."

"Roots," I corrected.

"Eh? Stop interrupting. He's an advanced hare, see? I said that, didn't I? But all this is merely my build-up to put you in the mood. I suppose you want the paragraph I have ready?"

"I could use it anytime you're ready."

"Very well, here it is."

"The blood-spattered rabbit charged up the stairs. A ray-gun was blazing death in each hand. "Splsfak!" he hissed in a guttural roar. "Death to the Earthmen!"

"There!" Campbell finished triumphantly. "Now write your uarn around that."

Miss Twitchett walked around behind his desk and stared down at him. She clucked her tongue sadly.

"You shouldn't have done that, Pong. Oh, I don't mean that...", as she waved her ahand at JWC vaguely. "lots of authors comⁱ in here and do that to him. But you really shouldn't have put that rejection slip in his hand, or poured that ink in his hair. There's a war on."

The End

September, 1942 [4, 7]

October 15, 1942.

"Bring out the black ribbon, and sing out the dirges, folks. Spaceways is no more.

In other words, the magazine is suspended--perhaps temporarily, perhaps permanently. Read on, and you will know all.

For a long time--nearly a year--one trouble after another have been piling up. Any one or two of them would cause me no concern and little embarrassment; such difficulties are to be expected when one puts out a fanzine, and I've had various such all during Spaceways' four years.

But during the past summer, things had been getting progressively worse, and I've known for three or four months that if improvement weren't forthcoming, Spaceways would have to give up the ghost. That improvement hasn't come, and gives no sign of coming. Therefore--the magazine stops, cleanly and without the death-throes that have been so painful to witness in certain other fanzines.

What are those circumstances? Too many to describe here, and the details of some wouldn't be interesting to most of you. Briefly, I have access to a typewriter for fan purposes only at home and my use of it is restricted to a very small part of the day. This may or may not be true in time to come, but is decidedly inconvenient while it lasts! And the; the war! It shot prices of mimeographing supplies up something like 30% locally, and subscriptions to Spaceways haven't increased in quantity. To balance the budget, I've had to use slightly inferior materials for almost a year, and the magazine's appearance has suffered correspondingly. Then there's the draft. Until the President asked for a lowering of the age limit for conscription, I was free until December of this year. By the time you get this, probably, Congress will have passed legislation which will make me subject to military service at once. I may or may not pass the physical examination, but have no positive reason for believing I won't. The war will also make fanzine publishing tougher in the future, as more and more active fans are drafted and no longer have time to read, write letters, about, and contribute to fanzines. Without a large, interested clientele, there isn't much incentive for publishing a subscription magazine.

Finally, and I'm quite willing to admit it, publishing a subscription fanzine no longer gives me the pleasure it did two or three years ago. It takes a certain amount of will-power for me to state that in print; in exchange for this honesty, I want you to believe that this growing ennui wouldn't have caused the suspension of Spaceways, at any time in the near future. If peace were signed tomorrow, and a good fairy presented me with a noiseless typewriter, and mimeoing supplies became cheaper, Spaceways would be resumed at once, and I'd be happy. Stf. and fandom had nothing to do with the slight growing lack of interest; any hobby palls on one after a certain length of time, or a certain aspect of it does. The stamp collector, amateur weight-lifter, or the fellow who studies astronomy in his spare time, can take a few months off. There'll still be postage stamps, pieces of cast iron, and stars and planets when they decide to pick up again; the vacation doesn't affect the hobby. But when you publish a fanzine--and do it all by yourself--your fanzine stops when you vacation.

There are a couple of other troubles, too, but I'll not go into them here. Before going any further, I want to state this, and state it emphatically for posterity to note: I don't regret a single moment I've spent on fandom in general and Spaceways in particular during the last four years. I've gotten immense pleasure and relaxation out of this hobby, a lot of knowledge (more than I could have picked up spending my spare time riding any other hobby, I believe), and I have been in contact with the finest group of young people, to my knowledge, in this country. That last statement is rather rash, and I'll amend it by saying that you can conceivably find a "better" person than Mr. Joe Fann. But I know of no other group where so much sincerity, enthusiasm, talent, friendliness, and all the other good qualities abound, taking the group as a whole.

Incidentally, this slight fatigue of subscription fanzine publishing is another, and indirect, reason for my suspending Spaceways. I'm pretty sure this

weariness has shown up in the magazine recently, in a lot of little ways. I don't mean by the thinner paper, or a bad article or two, or a lousy cover. The magazine was still no. 1 fanzine, according to the last poll, and maybe I'm just looking at it too close, and those who've been saying that it's slipping (and they have been in the minority; you'll have to take my word for it) are wrong. Be that as it may, I've not been satisfied with the last half-dozen issues.

Until the last, I've hoped to put out one last issue, winding up all affairs and publishing some swell material it breaks my heart not to put into print. But during the last six weeks, I've been able to dummy less than a third of another issue; and I'd prefer not to put out an anti-climactic edition six months late, even if I keep out of the army and am able to do so. I'd have liked at least to get the ratings and letters of comment on the last issue published. Would any fanzine editor care to use them in his publication?

Therefore, this explanation is going to all those who get Spaceways, either through trade, subscription, or by having bribed me into carrying them as dead-heads. All material on hand at this time is being returned to its creators, so please don't ask me for any of it, you fanzine publishers! (There are two exceptions to this: I'm keeping a number of "What They Are About" reviews on hand, until I learn what J. Michael Rosenblum wants done with them; it'd be silly to send them back, and risk their being sunk, when he'll probably want them transferred to some other U.S. fanzine. And a long article by Frenchfan G. H. Gallet, I'm taking the liberty of placing elsewhere. Both he and I might get shot at sunrise for attempting to pass code messages, if censors got a good look at it!

To those who renewed their subscriptions to Spaceways since last issue appeared: your money is being returned in this envelope; terribly sorry! To those who have outstanding subscriptions, or to whom I owe copies of the magazine for other reasons: on the envelope this is sent in, at the end of the address, I am marking the number of copies of Spaceways due you. Drop me a postal, if you want your money back, and it'll be returned promptly. If you prefer to keep it invested in fanzines, your subscription will be transferred to today's finest-- in my opinion--fanzine, Nova; you'll receive as many copies of it as were left on your subscription to Spaceways. If you already get Nova, you may have, this way, your subscription to it extended. Or if you want to use your credit toward completing your files of Spaceways, let me know what back issues you want, and we'll work out a deal of one sort or another.

I want to continue receiving fanzines, of course. To this end, I'm going to ask a favor of you fanzine editors: will you please send me the next issues, of your publications, all of you? I'll promptly pay for these issues, and remit enough extra to cover several future issues. This will save me a lot of difficulty, for so many fanzines' futures are insecure that I don't know which will ever see another issue. Will do? Thank youse all.

And in the second to last paragraph, I neglected to mention that Britishers who have credit due them may get either their money back or its equivalent via Futurian War Digest. Write J. Michael Rosenblum, not me. For you in the U.S.: if I don't hear from you by November 10, your sub will be transferred to Nova.

Finally, please don't consider me as "retiring" from fandom. On the contrary, unless I start to make \$50 a day once a month, I plan to increase my activity in certain directions. I'll keep on publishing my FAPA fanzine Horizons. (Incidentally, if any of you feel that you just can't carry on without a Warner publication bringing sunlight into your home every now and then, there'll be some copies available at a dime a throw; you could even have your Spaceways sub transferred to it. I warn you, however, that the contents are, to say the least, specialized!)

Practically every fanzine that discontinues publication does so with the promise that it'll resume in "a month or so". I can't, just to break a precedent, say that! There's virtually no (hope)(danger)(-choose one-) of Spaceways again until after the war. After that--well, I promise nothing. But just wait and see; I have hopes!

Omit the flowers, please.

Harry Rosenblum, Jr.

