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 THE SCIENCE 11*JUNE*11 FICTION ECHO
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 Issued by.....1111111111111111.....Ed Connor

RECENT STABILIZING DEVELOPMENTS IN STF FANDOM

1942 will go down as a red-letter period in science-fiction fandom. Why? Well, that is rather simple to explain.

This year many signs of fandom's growth are becoming evident. Things that can only come into being when there is sufficient background to support them. That means that fandom has grown to the point where it can truthfully be called grown-up. I have been informed that this was first noticed to an important degree at the Denvention; in addition tremendous events have taken place in the realm of fandom since that gathering which show that the observations of certain fans in regards to the grown-up business are correct. Of course, we all know that stf fandom has always had a more serious viewpoint than other "groups" of homo sapiens.

As for background, the most important contributions to this are the fairly large number of successful conventions that have been held. We could scarcely say that the tremendously increased backlog of science-fiction stories furnished any appreciable background for determining the growth of fandom. Our attitude is the thing that counts in determining our growth--not the objects which create our attitude (i. e., the promags, or science-fiction stories from any other source.) There could be a hundred promags, and still, if our reaction to them were not just right, they would contribute nothing to our advancement.

With the background furnished by the conventions, several specific products of 1942 are made possible. I refer, of course, to the Nycon and Chicon (and possibly Denvention) Booklets produced, or being produced by Julie Unger.

Then there is Walt Daugherty's "Directory Of Science Fiction Fandom." Even without obtaining a copy of this highly complimentary work, you can easily understand how helpful it would be. Fans who publish fanzines will doubtless benefit by it more than others; but all will have a use for it at times. True, if it had never been produced we could get along without it, but gradually, if revised editions continue to appear--in much the same manner as our telephone directories--we will come more and more to depend upon it for reference. The very fact that fandom has reached a point where a directory of some five hundred names can be published shows that we have reached solid footing.

Another item that has been sorely needed, and which now is a reality, is the "Fannual", a project, and a very worthy one, of the Nat'l Fantasy Fan Federation.

"Suddsy" Schwartz's "Who's Who" fanzine ("THE ROGUE'S GALLERY") of 100 fan autobiographies is another sign of the achievements being made, and yet to be made, during 1942.

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The proposed "History Of Science Fiction Fandom" may have a predecessor in the "Introductory History of S-F Fandom", which Charles Tanner and Dale Tarr are prepared to produce. As reported by Joe Fortier in the May issue of Calif. Mercury: "This is a stop-gap measure pending inter preparation of the full history, a project shelved pending outcome of the Yearbook project undertaken by Columbia Camp." It would be published as a "highlight" pamphlet primarily for new fans. We hope this is a reliable report.

In the same number of CM is a report that Speer has submitted to the NFFF a formula for an "Encyclopedic Dictionary of Fandom."

You can see that the NFFF is accomplishing something. It is bringing about unity of a type that has rarely been seen before in Fandom. Fans can now plan for an entire organization--instead of for themselves or their own small group. It is now evident that the NFFF is worthwhile, and it has gained that classification by the efforts of the officers, The Planning Committee, etc.

So---despite the WAR, STF Fandom seems to be doing quite all right. It is accomplishing as much or more than it ever has. We hope that all of the above mentioned projects are carried through to their successful conclusions.

The "March Of Ideas" was started by Bob Tucker with his YEAR BOOK, but it is only now, 1942, that everyone seems to be awakening to the possibilities of stf fan publishing. We notice in the first anniversary issue of THE FANTASITE that Carl Jacobi proposes another item of this type. The gist of it is this, if you are not already aware of it: Compile a HANDBOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION, containing "an accepted order of terminology and geography which in the future would govern all science-fiction. That it describe and list the number of imaginative cities on the various planets and give to each an accepted name." It would give a general list of life on these planets, and number the various governmental positions, etc, found in the solar system.

When the publication is entirely completed and accepted by fandom, it would then be sent to the editors of all Promags and their writers with the underhanded warning that any publication which failed to accept it would be BOYCOTTED. Jacobi further states that he thinks such a book would be welcomed by all sane editors with open arms.

We have thought this over carefully, and have concluded that the proposal is silly in more ways than one. In the first place, the idea of a boycott by fandom would have not the slightest effect on an editor; he does not look to us for circulation. Then I think that after a while the same background would become utterly boring. Sort of like the way a lot of fans (myself NOT included) are getting to feel about ASTOUNDING. And we wonder what Palmer would say if someone shoved the book under his nose with the threat: "--or else!" We think, friends, that a lot of people would tell a lot of other people to go straight to hell.

In conclusion, we might say that this Handbook would, in our opinion, serve a useful purpose if it would list the information outlined by Jacobi for the benefit of writers who wished to steer clear of material and ideas that had been used previously. That would be just the opposite of what CJ proposed, wouldn't it? Oh, well....

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AND AFTER READING---

Now that fandom has grown up, it is time for all fans to stop and take stock of the situation. Where do we go from here? What further achievements can we seek?

First of all we can look behind us to determine if we have neglected anything. We will find that we have done just that. It has been unavoidable--fandom in the past has been more or less a struggle for supremacy; a campaign by each individual to cut a niche for himself in the minds of other fans so that he might become famous. Fan organizations have been attempted; they have failed. Without the unity of a successful federation of fans, it was well-near impossible to pick up the loose threads of opportunity that were left dangling in our wake. Now is the time to regain some of those lost connections--and while doing so find the equilibrium that we have long sought.

A breach of sorts has been unconsciously established between ourselves and the pro stf publications. True, it will not spell our doom, and most assuredly we can do nothing about it and still survive decadence. In my humble opinion, the least any lover of stfiction can do to show his interest in the pros is to write to them, commenting intelligently on each issue of each book that he receives. Oh, we know that you have listened to others blowing on this subject--in the last issue of FUTURE Lowndes offers quite a spiel about the matter. Of course, most of you know that this is the policy of NOVA--closer cooperation between fan and pro. Ashley, and we believe Evans, are champions of the idea. But there is no need to go into the extreme about it--really, if more fans would discontinue opposition to it it would appear to be a considerably more moderate plan than is generally believed.

In saying that we should strive to regain some voice with the professional magazines we don't mean strive to wrest some kind of "control" over them by our united effort---good Ghodde, no! We can never tell the pros what to do. The fact of the matter is that we have no appeal to them whatsoever as a whole. But we can write to them as individuals--consistently, with good, constructive criticism--and thus gain more prestige for our entire group.

Perhaps the most interesting article on this subject that we have ever read was "Critique" by Clifford D Simak in the same issue of FANTASITE as Jacobi's previously mentioned effort. He offers the statement that the fans have failed themselves by neglecting to contribute in a constructive manner to the field in which they are most interested---science-fiction. Naturally, we agree with him whole-heartedly. Of course, his statement that "The fans are in a position, if they wish to take advantage of it, to make science fiction what they want it to be," may seem a little strong, but it is essentially correct. It would only be necessary for the editors to receive our sincere and regular criticism to obtain stf of the improved calibre. Of course, it would take time to get results, but that would seem to be the most obvious way to show an editor that we are sincere.

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WHAT WILL IT BE?

I

What will the reaction be
A thousand years from now,
When hordes from space invest our race
And chain us to the plow?

III

What satanic overlord will rule
The destiny of our race,
And what heroic band shall rise
To smash his sneering face?

II

What twisted foibles of creation
Will grind us under boot,
What will be "The Duration,"
And how much be free from loot?

IV

How brave will be our counter-blow,
How fierce our tools of war?
How long to be ere we are free
To roam space as of yore?

REVERBERATIONS

The stuff you are reading is in the nature of an editorial. Since fan editorials are as varied as heaven and hell, no one should have cause to complain about what I write here.

First of all, I'm glad the PACIFICON has been postponed. The various "regional" conferences, will, I believe, be quite successful this year, and when another "world" con is held there will be no question but what fandom will be united behind it; this obviously could not be true if the PACIFICON were held this year. The comparatively recent announcement that rail travel, etc., would be curtailed can only mean one thing---that the matter must be dropped.

In a recent "Linked Communication" (which is now in its 2nd round), Lew Martin said: "I think it would be foolhardy to try to swing a full-fledged con because a great number of the fans are either in the service or tied down with war jobs. I do believe some sort of psuedo-con or unofficial con should be pulled this year. Say everyone that could afford it would make a trip to L.A.--Frisco--Chi--N.Y.--or some agreed-upon city & everyone put up at the same hotel. However---close study might prove that idea inadvisable---I dunno." I think this is a fairly sensible idea (Joe Fortier did also) and that a sort of semi-con in the heart of the U-S might be successfully pulled off. Incidentally, Lew also said that instead of his interest in fandom being lessened by his being in the navy--as might be expected--he has been surprised to find that his interest has been sharpened. (His address is: Lew Martin, A.S., Co.42-167, U.S.N.T.S., San Diego, Calif)

Leonard J. Moffott of Ellwood City, Pa. has started a chain-fanzine, hand-printed; one copy was whipped up by "Leon" and sent to a fan, who in turn sent it to another fan--and so on. Each person receiving the mag signed their name and were to send issue No.2 (the fanzine is to be bi-monthly) to the same individual to whom they mailed the first. This 'zine, in my opinion, is an amazing creation--if only for the idea. The 1st issue contained a couple cartoons, a verse, articles, etc. Ljm asks for contributors; it is just like a real fanzine! I call it the poor-man's fanzine. You may call it anything you like--just so it doesn't include cursing. (Len is a Christian.)

THE STF ECHO is the F.A.P.A. sheet of Edward C. Connor, (ECCo), 929 Butler Street, Peoria, Illinois, U.S.A., Earth. We wrote the stuff, which is obvious, but that's all. Mimeo work, etc., performed by 4e & MOROJQ, to whom go our thanks. This is the first issue; there probably will be no more. Ah!