

Shangri-LA
Fall '52 No. 32

SHANGRI-LA

#32
FALL '52

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Our cover was painted by the brilliant young San Diego artist Tom Gould, whose work may also be seen in the Souwestercon booklet; it was lithographed through the courtesy of Ed Clinton and Gene Adams. Mimeography by Kenny Bonnell.

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EDITORIAL

At a recent meeting, one of our members made the hilarious statement that "I'm disappointed in Einstein." The disappointment lay in the fact that our greatest theoretical physicist refuses to support or even comment upon that interesting sociological phenomenon known as the flying saucers.

Actually, of course, there is no reason beyond his personal fame that Einstein should be consulted re the flying saucers, they being well out of his field. The mistaken impression probably resulted from the ignorant classification of all engineers, research chemists, biologists, mathematicians, psychologists, and even a few religious quacks, as 'scientists,' and the careless muddling of their narrow fields of study into one broad pool of information--'science.'

But that disappointment should be expressed when any self-respecting astronomer, engineer, or aerodynamicist refuses to theorize upon these phantoms, which have grown in numbers as fast as their story grows in popularity, is baldly ridiculous. These men are well paid and highly respected for being right; not for being adventurous or screwball or highly imaginative, and only occasionally for being quick with the idea. Your engineer or scientist of solid reality is unrelated to the Thrilling Wonder hero who, faced with an earth-shaking calamity, strides confidently into the back room and, in a few hundred words' time, fashions himself a deus ex machina from his crazy pal's notes and a few pounds of germanium, crying, "Follow me! It just might work!"

No, he sits over a lab desk, or paces up and down before a wind tunnel, and runs the same experiment over and over and over again, thinking, In ten tries the probability of error from the average is thus-and-so, but if I run it fifty times it drops to so-and-so. He carefully records his data, checks them, rechecks, ad infinitum, and then, if his work is not classified, perhaps he publishes a report. Then, in months or years, perhaps he gets a letter: "I duplicated your results to 0.5 percent." Then he can sit back and grin, and be glad his six months weren't wasted. And science will march on, not by the leaps and bounds of fictional science, nor the jagged curve of prosperity, but by an almost infinite number of infinitesimal steps, each backed by the million others that preceded it, and each one a step forward. It may not be the quick way or the glamorous way, but it's foolproof--and a method that avoids fads is a grand one indeed.

--JHW

the DWELLER in the GARAGE

by forrest J Ackerman



SINCE the recent earthquakes, I'm referring to California as the Quaker State! You should see the cracks in the concrete of The Garage: so b-l-g you could stash away those 1944 Amazing Quarterly rebinds in 'em. You remember, the ones as big as the Encyclopedia Fanatica, with the big bosomed babes on the covers? Now I can indulge in my secret passion: to run barefoot thru bare fat.

ENUF of that, and down to angelic auctorial reports. The big news hereabouts is that SJByrne--the same Stuart James Byrne who first appeared 'way back in the Aug 35 AmS with "The Music of the Spheres"--has turned out a scope opera of 78,000 words so complex in its interplanetary ramifications that previewers of the script are hailing it as "the rich man's van Vogt!" Incidentally, S-2 got the vote of the quarter hundred professionals present down San Diego way at the 5th Westcon (and there were plenty fifts in evidence) for Executive Vice-Presidency of the now-forming SCIENCE FANTASY WRITERS OF AMERICA.

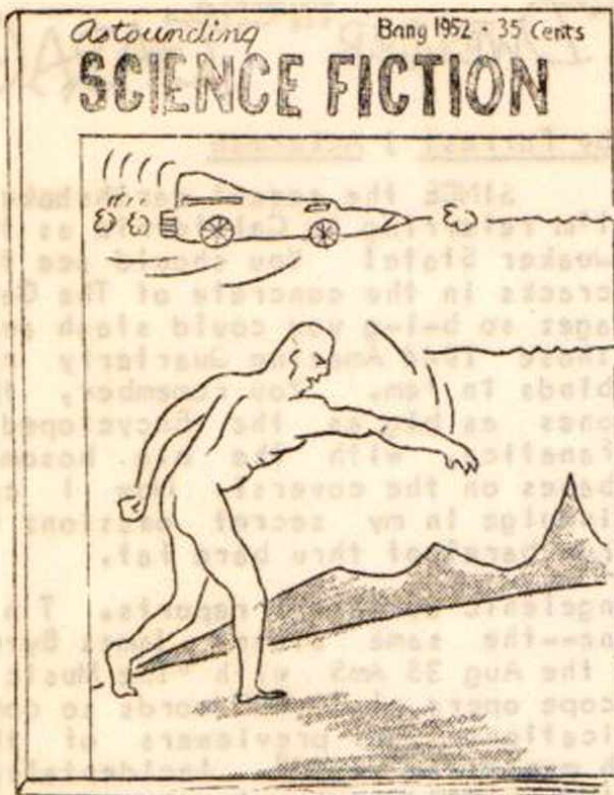
Frank Quattrocchi sells again, with a check from IF for "Sword". At the same time publisher Gulnn announces he's going in heavier for quality in future issues, wants nothing but the slickest writing from the top names.

It's a FIRST SALE for Alex Apostolides, pal of Kris Neville - who, in collaboration with Mark (Bright Star) Clifton, has crashed Galaxy with "The Duty, The Destiny".

September sees E. Everett Evans in print again for the you-count-it-eth time with "Was Not Spoken" in the British Science-Fantasy.

RAY BRADBURY has sold his "Beast from 50 Fathoms" as the basis of a new scientific film, "The Beast from Beneath the Sea", to be animated by that Mighty Joe Young fan, Kay Harryhausen.

Van Vogt's "Enchanted Village" (al- ready published 5 times) is now being translated into Italian....Richard Terzian has filled a prescription for "Doc" Lewndes of Future with "The Last Robot"....Fred Brown's "Letter from a Phoenix" and Kuttner's "Don't Look Now" have been requested for the first s.f. anthology to be produced in Israel....L. Maj. Reynold's "Food for Death" looks like a sale to Avon....Weaver Wright has sold "Sabina of the White Cylinder" to Other Worlds....Mel Sturgis' "The Grid-Irony Touch", a football fantasy, is in Fall '52 All-American Foot- ball....Sherry Springer has just completed "Slave New World"....and Chas Beaumont is undecided whether to have the seat coverings in his Jaguar made of editors' or producers' skin. ("At any rate," he declares, "they won't be bound in human skin!") Richard Mathe- son has gotten married and completed a novel. FJA has (without ben- efit of obliterine and in an obscene hurry) finished another column!



VER

ANALYSIS in
WONDERLAND
-II-

Galaxy magazine has now been published for twenty-three months, has climbed to second place in fantasy magazine circulation, and has supplanted or shared in the affection which many readers held for Astounding Science-Fiction. That this is significant there need be no doubt, for it is generally acknowledged that ASF, under John W. Campbell, reigned for many years in solitary supremacy atop the fantasy field, developing fantasy's most brilliant authors, and introducing to its readers many of the new approaches to what had threatened to become a hackneyed, over-pseudo-scientific field.

While John W. Campbell has maintained comparative silence on the relative merits of the two magazines, breaking silence only through the medium of P. Schuyler Miller, ASF book reviewer, Horace Gold has pursued a less sphinxlike role, to say the least. Two years having now passed since Galaxy's inception, it seems time to make a comparative evaluation of the record of the two publications during this period.

Our first task was to classify every story in both magazines as either an 'A-plus', 'A', 'B', or 'C'. Here is what the ratings mean: To qualify for an 'A' rating, a story had to provide one or both of the following features. Either it had to be well written, or it had to contain a scientific concept which was sufficiently thought provoking as to make it enjoyable reading. 'A' stories did not have to be world beaters. But they did have to seem to be of such caliber as to assure their favorable reception by a presumed majority of readers.

'B' story was the designation applied to potentially good stories that fell down either because of the pedestrianism of the authors' ideas, or because--and this happened far more often--the quality of the writing was poor. 'B' stories we charitably regarded as filler material, used because the editors had little other recourse. (A curious research observation: 'B' stories were often so short as to be ephemerae or had a penchant for prolixity. Very little good, solid,

\$ U \$

By Eph
Königsberg



in-between-type 'B's'.)

'C' stories should never have been printed. There were very few of them in either of the magazines, although it is possible that, had we applied more stringent standards to our rating system, there would have been appreciably more of them.

'A-plus' stories were based on the old Astounding 'NOVA' classification. Started soon after Campbell became Astounding's editor, it was awarded to stories which had such excellent treatment of subject matter that they constituted a departure from the previously accepted standard. In addition, it was always implicit that the NOVA designation was awarded for originality of concept as well. It is, indeed, a rather ironic coincidence that the first NOVA designation was for H. L. Gold's story "A Matter of Form" for Gold is now 'the opposition.'

Both Galaxy and Astounding had approximately the same number of stories. (No attempt has been made to distinguish serials, novelettes, or short stories.) Galaxy had 118, while Astounding had 117. Both had the same number of different authors: 72.

Now comes the comparison:	Galaxy (total 118)	Astounding (117)
'A' stories	48	47
'B' stories	57	60
'C' stories	13	10

Are you surprised at the similarity of the two ratings? The results were equally surprising to us, as we had kept no running total, and were prejudiced

generally, in Astounding's favor. (By the way, if you think we were too generous to ASF, keep our bias in mind.) The significant thing about the results was that there was such a high percentage of 'A' stories in both magazines, and so few 'Cs.'

Of course, we had heard about the respective claims of the two magazines that they had somewhat unique methods of selecting writers. Galaxy has reiterated its point many times that they print practically the cream of the authors in the s-f field. Astounding, on the other hand, has made quite a point of the number of new writers which appear in its pages. Is this so? Let's see.

We took a count of the number of authors who appeared in both magazines. Result: thirty-seven and one-half percent of the authors in both magazines also wrote for the competition. Now this in and of itself would not indicate too great a duplication of authorship, unless one goes further. Fifty-two percent of the stories in Galaxy were written by authors who had appeared in ASF during the same period. Forty-four percent of the ASF stories were written by that same writing crew. Thus it can be seen that roughly half of the stories in both magazines are written by the old reliables, and that neither editor has much of a monopoly on writing sources.

Of course, the claim can be made by partisans of either publication that the 'best' stories of those authors are offered to either Campbell or Gold. Again, referring to our rating system, we find the following: fifty-five percent of the 'A' stories in Galaxy, and fifty-three percent of the 'As' in Astounding are written by that same crew. Apart from the obvious conclusion that the prolific writers also tend to write better stories, it seems apparent that the lack of talent monopoly also extends to a lack of monopoly over the 'better' stories.

We have been speaking at great length over this 'group' of writers who contribute so much to both magazines. There is a still more exclusive group: a group of editorial favorites who, though few in number, contribute a phenomenally large proportion of the stories that appear in the two magazines.

Each editor has his favorites. Let's look at Galaxy. Five authors, Fritz Leiber, Damon Knight, Isaac Asimov, Richard Matheson, and Frank M. Robinson, contributed one quarter of all the stories that appeared in that magazine.

Campbell's Astounding hasn't been much different, for H. B. Fyfe, Walter M. Miller Jr., Eric Frank Russell, Jack Williamson, Raymond F. Jones, and Gordon Dickson, six of them in all, have contributed one quarter of all Astounding stories during the same time.

Why such a concentration--for surely it is such. Let's look at the quality of the work these men have turned out. Galaxy's Stupendous Five have turned out 13 'A,' 14 'B,' and 1 'C' story. Astounding's Terrific Six have produced 14 'As,' 15 'Bs,' and 1 'C' story. One can readily note the remarkable similarity of distribution of the 'A,' 'B,' and 'C' stories produced by these men, and the distribution of all authors as a whole. They are competent men, who can be relied upon to produce a top story about half the time, and who rarely, if ever, fail to the level of a 'C.'

Space does not permit the printing of the ratings assigned each story, but an examination of the work produced by the more prolific of these men will, I think, show in detail just why they are so frequently printed, and also enable

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the reader to judge for himself the relative validity of the ratings which we have so blandly assumed to be correct.

First, Galaxy. Fritz Leiber heads the list of repeaters with eight stories. They are: "Later Than You Think"-10/50 - 'A', "Coming Attraction"-11/50 - 'A-plus', "Nice Girl with Five Husbands" -4/51 - 'B', "Appointment in Tomorrow"-7-51 - 'A', "A Pail of Air" -12/51 - "A", "Dr. Kometovsky's Day" -2/52 - 'B', "The Moon is Green"-4/52 - 'B', and "Yesterday House"-8/52 - 'B'.

Damon Knight has done fairly well for himself, mostly in the lighter vein, it must be admitted, yet his stories have sufficient substance to merit praise. He has written "To Serve Man"-11/50 - 'A', "Ask Me Anything"-5/51 - 'A', "Don't Live in the Past"-6/51 - 'B', "Cabin boy" -9/51 - 'A', "World Without Children" -12/51 - 'B', "Catch That Martian" -3/52 - 'C', and "Ticket to Anywhere"-4/52 - 'B'.

Isaac Asimov, who's done five stories for Galaxy, published "Darwinian Pool Room" -10/50 - 'B', "Misbegotten Missionary" -11/50 - 'A', "Tyrann"-1/51 - et. seq. - 'A', "Hostess"-5/51 - 'B', and "The C-Chute"-10/51 - 'A'.

Turning now to the Astounding side of the ledger, let's see what their three most prolific authors have done. For some unexplainable reason, H. B. Fyfe has written eight stories for them for the last twenty-three issues. He can write well, of that there is little question, but he has turned out a proportionally greater number of 'B' stories than most of the other members of the prolific elite. His stories are: "In Value Deceived"-11/50 - 'A', "Compromise"-12/50 - 'B', "Protected Species"-3/51 - 'A', "Key Decision"-5/51 - 'A', "Star Linked"-2/52 - 'B', "Bluff-stained Transaction"-3/52 - 'B', "Thinking Machine"-10/51 - 'B', and "Implode and Peddle"-11/51 - 'B'.

Eric Frank Russell, with five stories, has produced an impressive array: "Follower"-11/50 - 'A', "And Then There Were None"-6/51 - 'A', "Ultima Thule"-10/51 - 'B', "Fast Falls the Eventide"-5/52 - 'A', and the sentimental, illogical, non-science-fictional, yet wholly wonderful "I Am Nothing" -7/52 - 'A-plus' which probably doesn't deserve the rating it is given but gets it, for my money.

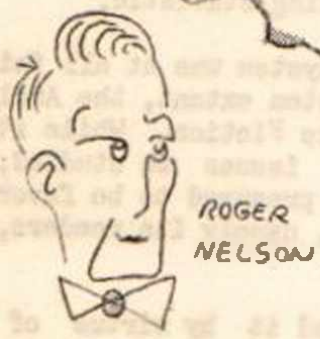
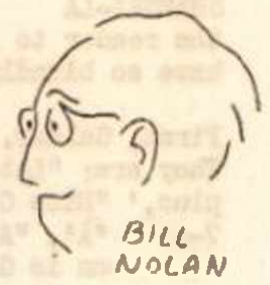
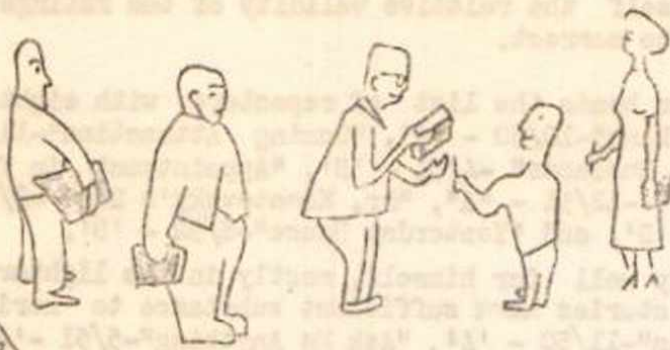
Walter M. Miller Jr., a relative newcomer to Astounding, also wrote five stories for them in this period. They were: "Izzard and the Membrane"-5/51 - 'A', "Dumb Waiter"-4/52 - 'A', "The Soul-Empty Ones"-8/51 - 'B', "Blood Bank"-6/52 - 'A', and "Cold Awakening"-8/52 - 'B'.

This listing of thirty-eight stories may have been tiresome, but it does demonstrate what the magazines have been printing. Read carefully these stories, and you will find the subtle difference in approach of the two editors. Of this more will be said later. Now for the last remaining statistic.

In an attempt to determine whether or not our rating system was at all fair or not, we checked it with the only available rating system extant, the Analytical Lab which appears regularly in Astounding Science Fiction. While it, of necessity, covers only twenty of the twenty-three issues we studied, and though it reflects the opinions of people who can be presumed to be favorable to the type of fiction which is printed in Astounding, namely its readers, it did offer us some measure of objectivity.

Whenever we graded a story, we automatically ranked it by virtue of that grade. An 'A' story obviously would be ranked above a 'C', and so forth. We

CONTINUED ON P. 28



SOUWESTERCON

BY ANTHONY MORE

The Souwestercon, like most s-f conferences and conventions, will be remembered best for what it was in spirit, and for the wonderful interplay of personalities that it made possible, rather than for the specific program it offered. Westercon V, unlike previous west coast conferences, lasted two days and thus involved an overnight period—something which always increases many fold the interchange of ideas and the feeling of kinship.

Naturally, certain events of the weekend stand out particularly. Certainly the utterly unique 'session' of the entire conference, however, was one which was not listed on the program and which came as a complete surprise to most fans.

Those fans who arrived in San Diego Friday, in response to an invitation from the Souwestercon Committee indicating there would be some pre-Conference activities, were informed in the waning hours of the afternoon by Roger Nelson, Conference Chairman, that all were invited to a real live cocktail party to be given that evening at her home on Coronado Island by a Mrs. Alice Green.

Everybody wondered who Alice Green might be, and consequently everybody went to the cocktail party. It soon became apparent that Mrs. Green and her coterie were writers, too—in the true-confessions and silver-screen field, and that they were exceedingly curious as to what sort of critters these science-fiction fans were. Forry Ackerman remarked later that they probably expected something on the slightly lunatic side, but that it was instead the fans who were treated to a spectacle. For one of the few times on record, science-fiction fans found themselves symbols of conventionality. As the evening and the liquor flowed on, more and more fans found themselves cornered by increasingly drunken hysterical female and questionable male personalities, the objects of endless questions regarding what the devil it was all about, etc. One gentleman, claiming to be a doctor, cornered LASFSer Ed Clinton several different times, asked the same questions each time, and summed up his feelings each time with the remark that "someday I'll have to go to one of the e conventions."

In spite of this not inconsiderable diversion, the Conference did get under way officially at 8:00 am the following morning, with but one hitch: guest of honor Ray Bradbury was late and thus could not make his introductory speech. This was the beginning of recurrent schedule troubles for the convention management; it soon became apparent that they had scheduled too tightly and too optimistically. The first official event that did come off, to some extent as per schedule, was an impromptu debate, Is modern science-fiction outgrowing the fans? Participants included Forry and oldtime fan Aubrey McDermitt.

The stellar attraction of the morning, however, was the speech by "Doctor X" on Cosmic Energy. Everybody who saw this listed on the program was, understandably, filled with curiosity and suspicion. As a result of this the hall was pretty nearly packed.

"Doctor X" proved to be a very old gentleman with a very old line. The program timed the speech as of half-hour length; by the time he had spoken for forty minutes he still had not mentioned cosmic energy except in passing, and in fact was still involved in what he had prefaced as a brief autobiography. His opening remarks had gotten a few laughs, and after awhile everybody began to suspect some sort of monstrous shaggy dog story, until one of the Doctor's assistants passed out suspicious cards with spaces for names, addresses, and other pertinent data. The aroma of old fish began to fill the hall, and convention managers soon confiscated the cards and prodded the still orating octogenarian off the platform. Twice, now, in the space of twenty-four hours, fans had found themselves standards of normality.



When the Conference reconvened for the afternoon session, conventioners were treated to a fantasy play, Interin, by Jeanne Clark. While the play itself and the performances were rather good, its effectiveness was hampered by the fact that the actors' voices were virtually inaudible in many portions of the hall. Whether the acoustics of the Venetian Room were the cause of this, or whether it was poor delivery on the part of the players, is difficult to say. The production itself, however, was excellent.

The ubiquitous flying saucer then wheeled into view, and a scattering of fans listened to a 'Dr.' Adamski, who competes from the foot of the hill with Palomar Observatory, tell about that unusual form of iron known as carbon. Then A. E. van Vogt talked for a few minutes, in very general terms, in the course of which he announced that he was actually in the process of an active return to s-f writing. Sidelight on van Vogt's presence, incidentally, was the conversation, Sunday afternoon, between the author and his biographer, LASES s-f expert Arthur Jean Cox, with Van's wife Mayne Hull looking on admiringly as her husband complimented Cox on his perspicacity.

After van Vogt sat down, the Souwestercon took itself to task as the Sour-Worstercon. Cleverly, if a bit too lengthily, the Conference and all similar fan gatherings were satirized in a routine written, produced, and starring conference co-chairman Bill Nolan.



After this came one of the genuine highlights of the entire Conference, a speech by Anthony Boucher on West Coast Professionalism, in which he attacked the situation that permits a tiny area on Manhattan Island totally to dominate publishing in the United States. He then made a case for a west coast reaction to this, as typified by the success of his own magazine, that of agent Forry Ackerman, and by the exceedingly large grouping of professional authors, from all fields, of the coast. The real significance of his remarks, however, became apparent late that night, after the Conference had officially gone in-

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to recess, when the professional writers present convened to form a writers' guild, the Science Fantasy Writers of America.

The afternoon's affairs concluded with the reading by Forry of a prepared speech by Morris Scott Dollens on the development of art in science-fantasy. The conference then adjourned for the banquet, which commenced at 6:30, and was enjoyed by 231 persons, the largest such affair in fan history. In addition to the excellent food, the evening was notable for the reading of a new story by guest of honor Ray Bradbury, a talk by Jack Seamann on Hollywood and science-fiction, and the presentation of awards to such individuals as Bob Clampett of Time for Beany and Roy Squires of Science-Fiction Advertiser.



And—oh, yes, Miss Science-Fiction. Just before dessert, the charmingly unclad—well, almost—young lady was introduced with great fanfare and marched down between the long rows of banquet tables to receive her own award. What was most startling of all was the news, leaking out later on, that she was a second choice. The intended Miss S-F had not been able to appear. The males sighed.

The second major event of the conference which was not announced on the program occurred in the wee small hours of Sunday morning, when the right conditions and the right amount of stimulant prevailed upon Kris Neville to deliver one of his rare and much-sought-after sermons. Unfortunately, the house detective cut this one short, when he dropped in on the party to remind all and sundry that some people in the hotel might want to sleep.

Sunday was in many respects almost anticlimactic, although several new faces showed up for Dr. R. S. Richardson's interesting lecture on the formation of lunar craters and Martian canals. Dr. Richardson had brought with him a profusion of lantern slides to illustrate his talk. This, plus a debate featuring Anthony Boucher on Will s-f replace the mystery story?, comprised the main Sunday morning fare.



The one business session of the Conference was held early in the afternoon, at which time Los Angeles, in an uncontested bid, became the host for the 1953 Conference. After a brief recess, the traditional auction was launched and continued throughout the remainder of the afternoon, with Roger Nelson as auctioneer. A great number of original manuscripts were offered, among them a pair of John Taine novels (in longhand!) and the carbon for Lawrence O'Donnell's Fury. These prizes, however, were withheld when the minimum bids were not to be had. The unquestioned prize among the artwork was a magnificent and perfectly preserved Paul original cover from the dear dead days, a work which had top bidder Ackerman's eyetracks all over it from the moment he first spied it in the art exhibit.

WESTCON V

The evening session, a sort of farewell get-together, was on an entirely informal basis, with a theme of "Bradbury-on-the-spot." Affairs commenced with a brief talk by Ray, a kind of work of advice to would-be writers in the audience. "You must," he said, "bring into the field something that is uniquely you." Casually delivered and coming at the very end of the conference, it was one of the high points of the weekend. A few questions from the floor followed, and succeeded in bringing Bradbury further onto the spot.

The Conference left four distinct memories:

First of all the feeling of camaraderie, the wonderful rapport established between the fans and the professionals. Since it was the largest fan group ever assembled, and included the largest professional collection ever brought together at one time at a fan affair, this was an almost unavoidable but nonetheless remarkably thorough result.

Secondly, the art salon, which was unquestionably the most impressive single effort of the Conference managers. Arranged and presented with dignity and taste, it covered the field wonderfully from the talented fan artist through the most famous of the professionals. A separate room, connected to the main hall, housed the display.



Thirdly, among the professionals in attendance, IFCSF editor Anthony Boucher was a real presence. His remarks in casual conversations at between-sessions get-togethers, his entirely professional enthusiasm blended with a genuine sense of what oldtimers would call "fanship," his official speech, and his solid competence whenever he said anything, plus his engineering of the SFMA, left a most lasting impression.



Fourthly, the real star of the show was fabulous Roger Nelson, who, for all his youth, put on a conference the like of which has rarely been approached, much less surpassed. Early arrivers such as this writer were immediately fascinated by this young man with such a wealth of talent and such ceaseless energy. It was a pleasure to see a young fan give the lie to the oft-repeated complaint that "that's been tried." This was a young fan's convention in spirit, and that is why it was the fantastic success it was. More specifically, and notwithstanding all the help he obviously had from Bill Nolan and others, it was also Roger Nelson's convention.



A NOTE ON

'TELEK'

By Arthur J. Cox

"Telek," a short novel by Jack Vance, appeared in the January 1952 issue of Astounding Science Fiction. The story's theme is the growth of tyranny. Several decades before it opens, telekinetic power—the ability to move objects and oneself at will and by the will—has sprung forth in a small number of people. Now, there are four thousand Teleks. Fabulously wealthy, they live in floating crystal palaces in the sky.

The story opens with Will Shorn attempting to persuade Goshamp into joining a conspiracy to destroy the Teleks:

"...consider the trend. At the outset they were ordinary citizens. They lived by ordinary conventions; they were decent people. After the first congress they made their fortunes by performing dangerous and unpleasant tasks. Idealism, public service was the keynote. They identified themselves with all of humanity, and very praiseworthy, too. Now, sixty years later. Consider the Teleks of today. Is there any pretension of public service? None. They dress differently, speak differently, live differently. They no longer load ships or clear jungles or build roads; they take an easier way, which makes less demands on their time. Humanity benefits; they bring us platinum, palladium, uranium, rhodium, all the precious metals, which they sell for half the old price, and they pour the money back into circulation....and meanwhile the old ones are dying and the new Teleks have no roots, no connection with the common man. They draw ever further away, developing a way of living entirely different from ours."

Goshamp said, half-truculently, "But do you expect? It's natural, isn't it?"

Shorn put on a patient face. "That's exactly the point I'm trying to make. Consider the trend, the curve. Where does this 'natural' behavior lead? Always away from common humanity, the old traditions, always toward an elite-herd situation." (p.50)

Geskamp is a big, gruff and honest man. In him we find the first statement of the story's counter-theme: the doubt that violence is an ethical way to resolve a social conflict, no matter how desperate it may seem. He knows that the Teleks have set themselves apart from and above mankind, but they pay deference to its laws and transact their businesses in legal ways. Geskamp is a contractor; he is building a gigantic stadium for the Teleks, in which they intend to hold telekinetic athletic and esthetic games. It is Shorn's idea to plant a powerful explosive, nitrox, beneath the stadium and destroy the Teleks at a strategic moment. Geskamp is appalled at the blood-thirstiness of the idea. However, a tragic and violent happening places him, half-unwillingly, in Shorn's camp. He is seized, questioned, and murdered by the Teleks.

The situation grows grimmer for the small group of conspirators. But then, a rare opportunity presents itself. Shorn resembles closely enough a paid informer for the Teleks, Clucho Kurgill, to take his place. He arranged a meeting with Kurgill's employer, the Telek, Adlari Dominion. (Many of the characters in the story announce the nature of the roles they will play by their names: lordly Dominion; strong-minded and curt Will Shorn; the round, pudgy man of knowledge, Circumbright.)

The Teleks are able to 'grant' telekinetic power to others. Shorn demands this in exchange for some information vital to the Teleks. Circumbright feels that if they can study telekinetic power at first hand they may gain some advantage. Circumbright and Shorn have discussed the nature of telekinetic power in a sardonic, half-serious manner. Circumbright concluded:

"...I incline to the Organic Theory. That is, the concept that all the minds and all the matter of the universe are interconnected, much like brain cells and vascular tissue of the body. When certain of these brain cells achieve a sufficiently close vinculus, they are able to control certain twitchings of the corporeal frame of the universe. How? Why? I don't know. After all, it's only an idea, a sadly anthropomorphic idea." (pp.66-9)

But the notion isn't far from right. Telekinetic power is conferred upon Shorn. He is sat down in the open facing a block of stone reposing on a table. He is told to move it by his will from the right to the left, then back again.

"...Mind now, the cube is a part of your organism, part of your flesh, like your hands and feet."

There was a murmuring and rustle behind Shorn; obedient to Dominion he fastened his eyes on the cube. (p.79)

Behind him a group of Teleks have gathered. As he goes through the effortless action of 'trying' to move the cube of stone from one position to another, they do it with him; and--



SFWA:

Stef Scribblers'
Society Seeks
Sapient Solidarity

...
Jack Bloodstone
alias S. J. Byrne

Those of you who have not heard recent Forrest Murrings may (or may not) be interested in the news that a new guild known as the SCIENCE FANTASY WRITERS OF AMERICA is beginning to evolve.

It all came about as the result of a secret cloak-and-dagger meeting of 26 science-fiction authors, one editor (Tony Boucher), and one agent (guess who) after a banquet on the 28th of June last, in San Diego...witnessed by three or four rocketloads of diehard, stay-up-late fans who weren't partying (yet.) It was an unscheduled event of the fifth annual Westcon, but already it has elicited murmurings out of the forests of the nation.

Of course you can belong to the AGA, IMA, ASCAP, AA, and the SPCA, not to mention Repubs, Demos, and the Daughters of the American Revolution; but in spite of all these the SiWA came into existence for reasons all its own. Science fiction writing and marketing both present special problems today, and the geometrical progression of general public interest in this field gives a distinct promise of more and special problems tomorrow.

Tomorrow begins particularly when TV and the motion picture industry officially recognize SF as a really dependable source of brand new ideas -- brand new, that is, to the uninitiated public. We, of course, hold the truth to be self-evident that science-fiction cannot be written by any studio's staff writer unless he has been whacked on the head at just the right angle at a very tender age.

In this respect, it must be recognized that there is a subtle difference between writers who transplant their cowboys from a bucking bronco to a buckling, cardboard spaceship hopping through fields of popcorn and trailing a stream of cigarette smoke behind it -- and that far more noble school which is interested in the impact of future environments on human beings. (The former make more money.)

SFWA

One of the principal aims of the SFWA is to make science-fiction better known to John Q. Public, and to increase its prestige by nation-wide organization, general publicity, and formal awards to authors, editors, and producers in the field. Another aim is to better the conditions under which science-fiction is marketed; however no dictation of policy to buyers will be practiced. In other words, this is a guild, not a union. The only pressure which could be brought against an unfair practitioner in the publishing field would be indirect -- in the form of impersonal listings of chronic malpractices in SFWA bulletins, or, as is anticipated, in an SFWA magazine. By malpractices we mean unconscionably long silences on the part of editors who hold manuscripts for consideration, further silences after a story has appeared in print, and especially the unannounced policy of buying up all subsidiary rights to a story. (This one we'll fight for like a Mason-Dixon line.

Far from erecting a Great Wall between author and editor, the SFWA hopes to create bilateral benefits. As a matter of fact, if the constitution is to contain an Authors' Bill of Rights, there should certainly be an Editors' Bill of Rights too. (This is really an unofficial idea of my own, but I believe such a principle will be practiced by the SFWA.)

Another contemplated activity of the group is to bring stiff writers together and offer them the opportunity to improve by means of discussions and comparisons. A subsidiary growth may be an associate membership for fans desiring to write science-fiction, which will involve author contact and constructive help and criticism if requested.

The first local meeting of the SFWA will take place soon, at which a constitution will be framed. This is to be circularized and voted upon by members all over the USA, and it is hoped that from this point onward the organization will have acquired escape velocity to carry it beyond the cloying field of lethargy which has so often contributed to the high mortality rate of some of the best laid plans of mice and men.

We think we're going to reach our star.

Incidentally, Ray Bradbury is the President of SFWA. Officers elected at San Diego on a pro tem basis are: Cleve Cartmill, VP; Forrest J Ackerman, Secretary; Dorothy de Courcy, Treasurer.

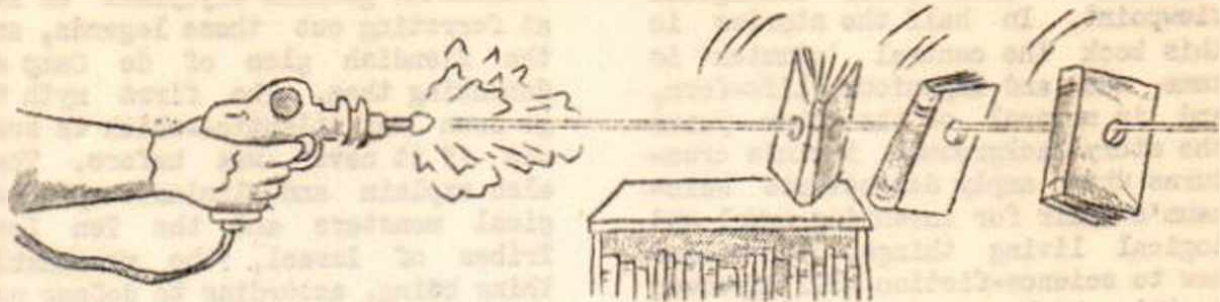
Oh yes, and the Exec VP, pro tem, is S.J. Byrne, author of that red-hot, revealing yarn, 'The Naked Goddess.' Don't fail to get your copy of Other Worlds. Hurry! Hurry! Hurry!

* * *

Seriously, if you should want to know more about the Science Fantasy Writers of America, or wish to become a member of the guild, you are advised to write--briefly--to the pro tem secretary. An official circular of the SFWA will be sent you, including a short questionnaire.

You should address your inquiry to:

FORREST J ACKERMAN
SECRETARY, SFWA
915 S. SHERBOURNE DR.
LOS ANGELES 35, CALIF.



Books of the Quarter

compiled by
Russ Hodgkins

De Camp & Ley	Lands Beyond
Negley & Patrick	Quest for Utopia
Fletcher Pratt	Double Jeopardy
John Taine	The Crystal Horde
Kurt Vonnegut	Player Piano
Stanley Weinbaum	The Red Peri

As an added service to fans and collectors of science-fiction and fantasy, Shangri-LA takes pleasure in announcing an annual "Books of the Year" list. It will be printed as an integral part of the magazine, and will contain the title, author, and publisher of every hard cover & pocket book which appeared in the preceding year, together with a concise summary of its contents. The annual department will be compiled by Russ Hodgkins, the book summaries being written by the staff.

At the present time we are not certain as to the manner in which the material will be arranged. Three possibilities present themselves: 1) alphabetical listing by author, 2) alphabetical listing by title, 3) alphabetical listing by title, grouped by publisher. Please let us know which you prefer.

Book Reviews

Player Piano by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. is billed as another 'Brave New World' and '1984'. It isn't, but is, nevertheless, a rather intriguing work which explores the possibilities of the development of electronics to such a high degree that production is virtually automatic, with the resultant effect of idling and spiritually domineering the great majority of the populace. The effect of this society upon a sensitive, thoughtful member of the managerial class, and his attempts to change the system provide the action of the book. The writing is swift-paced, and Vonnegut has himself a fine time throwing sharp barbs at the foibles of that future world. Of course, there are rather similar trends which may be observed in our own society, which someday may.... Eph Konigsberg

The Crystal Horde by John Taine is a mild rehash of one of the better adventure yarns of the old-time science-fiction. In spite of several rather antiquated cliches here and there, and some of the corniest philosophy I have yet had to suffer through, the story still remains a minor masterpiece of violent physical phenomena on a grand scale. Fantasy Press, \$3. --Earle Princeton

The Red Peri by Stanley G. Weinbaum. Fantasy Press' second Weinbaum anthology, is, like its sister volume, 'A Martian Oddysey,' a collection of tales almost all written with Mr. Weinbaum's essentially biological viewpoint. In half the stories in this book the central 'gimmick' is some odd and ingenious life-form, and in several of the other yarns the story backgrounds include creatures which amply demonstrate Weinbaum's flair for inventing novel and logical living things. The reader new to science-fiction will discover in this book a group of stories remarkable for their inventiveness, and their all-around readability, while the older fan will re-explore a world of wonder such as few authors in the field have had the skill to depict. --Dave Fox

MOVIE REVIEW -- Red Planet Mars

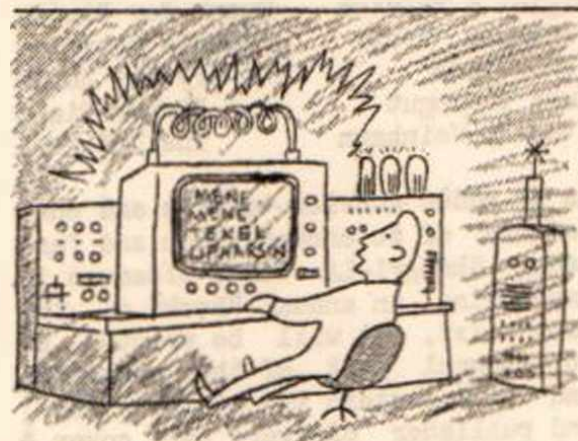
But the President, stirred to his heels comes up with a couple of "thou shalt's" and ordains that the message must be released, which it is. Thanks to radio and TV, the world unanimously votes in religion again—even Russia, where forbidden Voice of America broadcasts cause the proletariat to literally dig out its ancient robes and crucifixes and joyously resume worship, accompanied austere by the chatter of machine gun fire.

The plot takes some fantastic loops and swirls that put an end to patience. The German inventor escapes from an avalanche and shows up in California nine days later, and astounds radioman Cronyn with the news that he had sent the 'Messages from Mars' all along, and had lifted the world "high up to the sky so I could crash it down to hell," since he is evidently the Antichrist. He says he will expose the whole thing, but Cronyn's wife, with her usual hysterics, pleads for the newly acquired peace of the world. She decides to end the nonsense by lighting a cigarette in a room craftily filled with hydrogen gas, doing in the monster and saving the world at the expense of her children's parents. Just then a new message comes through on the screen from Mars—"Well done, thou good & faithful..."—thus spiking the German's argument with no further folderol. But the Antichrist nēe. brilliant scientist shoots in defeat at God's TV pattern and sets off the hydrogen anyway.

Never did see Mars, so I have told you all this to spare you the picture.

Lands Beyond by L. Sprague de Camp and Willy Ley is interesting reading for two other reasons than the excellent material it contains. Both of these reasons appear between the lines—the genuine enjoyment of Ley at ferreting out these legends, and the fiendish glee of de Camp at debunking them. The first myth to go down was Atlantic—which is sunk now if it never was before. They also explain and eliminate mythological monsters and the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, the remarkable thing being, according to deCamp and Ley, that the other two—Judah and Benjamin—have retained their status as a separate cultural unit.

This is not recommended reading for those who hold dear the ancient misconceptions—but for the rest of us, it should provide an entertaining way of passing a few evenings — recommended highly. —Leigh Randall





Red Planet Mars

Reviewed by Con Pederson

The first half of this picture is quite competent science-fiction, considering most scientifilms. A young scientist named Cronyn establishes radio contact with Mars, which five years hence is at perihelion and is found to have intelligent life (merely because Lowell's canals suddenly reflect light and the ice cap dwindles significantly.) But Cronyn lets his young son beat him to figuring out a basis for interplanetary communication. It is simple enough; pi, or 3.1416, without which civilizations are helpless. So they immediately send "31415" shrewdly off to Mars; if they receive additional decimal places correctly, they are understood. Clever! Martians being good eggs, they turn out to use the same textbooks we do and start telling us how wonderful life is on Mars right then and there. It seems to be a Red planet. At any rate, they get food for 1000 people from $\frac{1}{2}$ acre--I'll leave the relative sizes of Martians and their acres up to your imagination--and use cosmic energy (sic), having discovered how to "split hundreds of elements," which is no mean accomplishment.

But on earth, everyone is afraid this will cause total technological unemployment, so they all stop working, withdraw their money, and let Western civilization collapse. By this time, Dr. Cronyn is very unpopular.

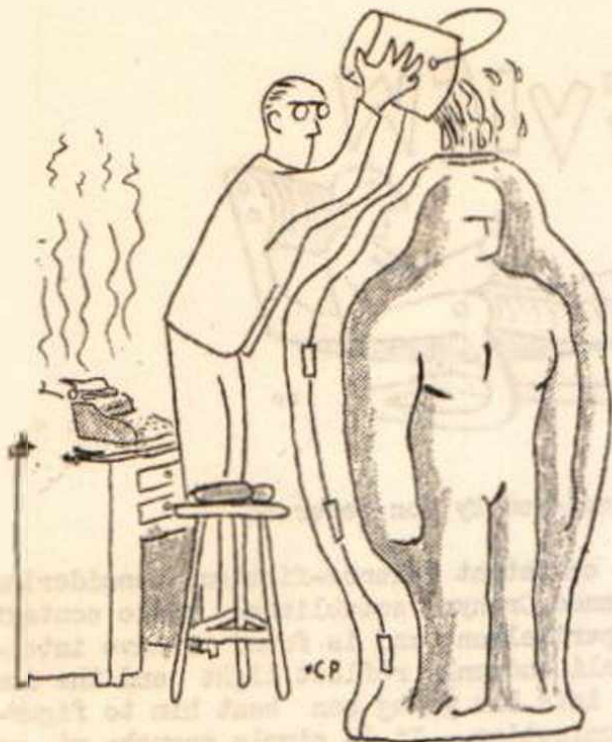
Meanwhile, the well-accented German inventor of the 'hydrogen switch' that enabled all this is hiding out from the Russians in a high hut in the Andes. They find him and ask him subtly how his progress in contacting Mars is proceeding, and by the way, has he noticed the Americans have already done it?? He leans pluckily, toasts the sinister emissary back to Moscow, and gets back to his interplanetary eavesdropping, thereafter shortening reports to the Kremlin.

Then, after we've gotten rid of Western civilization and Russia is preparing to dine sumptuously on the remains after forty years of lurking, the second half of the picture comes just in time.

Here everything flies apart. Amid the turmoil on earth the question "Since you have cosmic energy, why do you not have wars?" is sent to Mars. The answer is: "Seven lifetimes ago you were told to live in peace and unite against evil, which you have not done." Since Martians live 300 years, this takes us back to the time when a very spectacular philosopher was being misused in Jerusalem. The plot sickens. The communique is rushed to the discreetly anonymous President. Can they release it to the public? Cronyn screams no in the name of science, in whose name he's just finished demanding that all messages be released.

← CONTINUED THAT-A-WAY ON P.18

PAGE NINETEEN



the HUMANOIDS

David L. Fox

For the last ten years or so I have been watching, with much interest and more exasperation, the changes taking place in science-fiction due to its increase in general popularity. The total effect of these changes, either by design or chance, has been to produce a type of 'science-fiction' attractive to the non- or anti-scientific mind, in fact, a literature in which science plays about the same part that sex does in some of the cheaper pocket books—it is flamboyantly advertised on the cover, in word and picture, but when the eager reader dips into the book, he finds little or nothing to justify his rapturous expectations. The flabby hand of censorship, or editorial policy, has done its work.

Two writing clichés in particular have aided the movement to make science-fiction decently pure of any embarrassing references to physical phenomena. The first was the trick of setting a story in some future time, and writing it as if it were to be read by people of that era. Done carefully and cleverly, this resulted in many fine tales. Unfortunately it was also welcomed as an open sesame to s-f by a number of gentry whose only intention was to pick up a fast buck. Spell your characters' names a little oddly, announce that the story was laid in A.D. 25,000,000, conspicuously avoid any detailed description or logical explanation, and presto! you were writing science-fiction! Of course, there was still the difficulty of thinking up alien critters for your heroes to annihilate, this being the backward custom of the time, but any smart bird with a high-school biology course background could throw together something scary enough to be convincing. Not as good as Weinbaum, maybe, but it'd sell!

However, the recent development of the second cliché has done things to s-f which must make the pioneer pseudo-science-fiction hacks blush for shame at their own naivete. This is the discovery that the galaxy, nay, the entire reachable cosmos, is inhabited solely by human beings, or at least by 'humanoids' so closely resembling good old homo sap that no author need feel embarrassed at letting his simon-pure characters associate with them in friendship or conflict. This astounding, and convenient discovery is explained variously

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with the "galactic Empire" concept leading the field. Either Terran explorers, setting forth from our system in the near future, find that man has long ago conquered the rest of the galaxy, with Earth a forgotten backwater where the descendants of a lost colony have but lately emerged from barbarism and solved the secret of space-flight, or the tale is set in the far future, when man has colonized the universe, either killing off all alien opposition long ago, or never having found any alien intelligent life in his interstellar wanderings. Not quite so popular is the idea that, since after all, the human form is the ideal one that any truly intelligent being would want, why of course, that is the only form that any intelligent life in the universe takes. That this last is not so popular may be due to the fact that in depicting a man-like character, the author is occasionally forced to deviate from the standard human which is the only type which most contemporary 'science-fiction' writers are fitted, by education and interests, to describe.

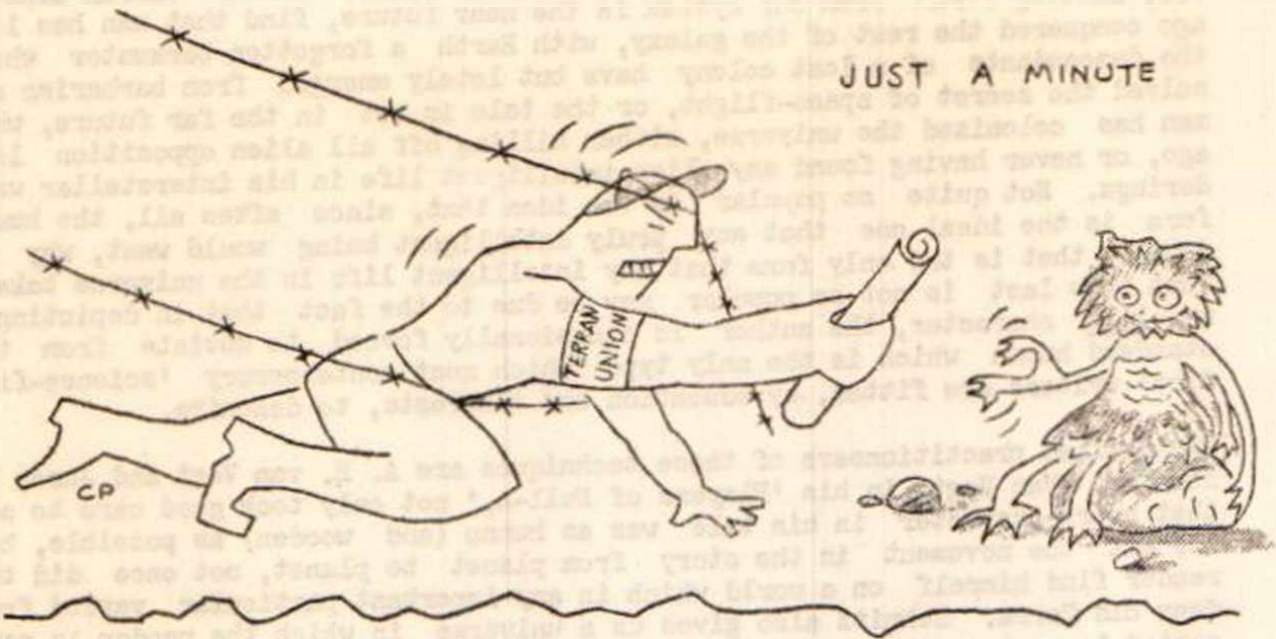
Two skilled practitioners of these techniques are A. E. van Vogt and James H. Schmitz. Van Vogt, in his 'Players of Null-A,' not only took good care to see that every character in his tale was as human (and wooden) as possible, but for all the movement in the story from planet to planet, not once did the reader find himself on a world which in any important particular varied from dear old Terra. Schmitz also gives us a universe in which the reader is permitted to meet nothing but 'folks' of various sizes, ages, and sexes. True, Schmitz uses the alien menace theme, but these creatures are all carefully killed before the reader ever gets close to them.

Another effect of the humanization of the universe has been a general abandonment of the solar system as a story background. Science has pretty well proven that the other worlds of our system are unsuitable for life as we know it, and the up-to-date 'science-fiction' author, disinterested in or incapable of imagining life-forms to fit these worlds, blithely sets his tale on the fourteenth satellite of Aldebaran which, for all anyone knows, is just as he pictures it--another little Earth.

Nor should the present trend be confused with the crudities of the old-style 'space opera' where every planet sported at least one very humanly desirable princess. This was an immature literary form, but little separated from its near cousins the cowboy yarn and the south-seas adventure tale, and suffering from many of the literary sins of these genres. Today we are faced with a planned, deliberate movement to quietly remove all the science from science-fiction while still retaining the profitable name and the popular cliches.

this may well be the final and greatest step on the road to producing a genuine denatured 'science-fiction' suitable for consumption by John Q. Mystery-fan, his Journal-Post-Companion reading wife, and their dull-normal son, who "allus had read westerns, but I thot I might try one of them Mars stories." Before this, the science-fiction author was sometimes faced with the need to put a little science in his story, but no more! The Humanoids have landed! In fact, the universe is infested with them! No longer need a 'science-fiction' author waste the slightest time or energy on some nasty non-human thing, no more will the sophisticated fan wrinkle his delicate nostrils at the loathsome EEM, never again need a writer resort to the gross impropriety of putting any science at all in a 'science-fiction' story. It's all over now, the Humanoids have taken over, and it looks like they're here to stay!

JUST A MINUTE



775th Meeting.....June 26, 1952: The minutes of the previous meeting launched an abortive argument on whether Frank Quattrocchi's putty was nutty, silly or otherwise questionable. After general agreement had been reached that it was silly, Ackerman declared it apparent to him that it was nutty, about which time most of those present began to feel that the whole thing was putty nutty....Eph Konigsberg gained the floor to present Sharry. Wife June kicked him sharply in the shins and Audrey Clinton declared that a rousing hand should be given to June.....Jim the boy director Wilson was elected.....

776th Meeting.....July 3, 1952: Director Wilson made the first error of his administration: he asked if there were any old business. James Kepner gained the floor and resolved that the club should unresolve its position favoring an eastern site for the 1953 convention.....A vote was taken, which decided nothing....
.....Everett Evans announced that Los Angeles would host the 1953 Westercon.....
H. L. Gold was dubbed 'Woodcut Gold'.....

777th Meeting.....July 10, 1952: Dear Diary: Tonight we played our favorite game: putting off everything until next week....Walter J. Daugherty got up and spoke on getting the Westercon Committee going....Our poor secretary declared that he didn't know whether or not he should write to the Little Man that LASFS was for them in 1953. Somebody dragged out from under the table, or wherever it had been cringing, last week's neutrality proposal, and it was passed.....

778th Meeting.....July 17, 1952: Chill thrill of the evening was provided by Treasurer Albert Hornhuter, who announced that "after spending \$400 there was \$42.82 in the treasury. Albert finally cleared things up when he said that he considered banking a form of spending....Agreement was finally reached on painting Freehafer Hall, and \$7 paint cost was authorized....Stu Agne declared that he could provide the projector for the Science Fantasy Amateur Cine Society premiere showing. This was the cue for Bill to Mosleigh into the discussion with a comment that he had seen some of the company's shots and at least "some were in focus".....Ray Bradbury went on doodling.....

779th Meeting.....July 24, 1952: Ah, yes, there was bad news tonight....There was something significant when there was no response to the call for old business. In an organization that had always had old business, the lack of old bu-

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business can only be a foretelling; no business is bad business at Freshafer Hall
.....It was not the first time that Walter J. Daugherty, who, it is said, had
been there when the clubroom was built, has had to stand up and plead a case for
LASFS. It will probably not be the last. He had, said Daugherty, received a
notice from the management of the hotel. It was, he said, an eviction notice
.....Even the authors stopped talking.....But, plead Daugherty, I will save this
clubroom. I ask only that I be given absolute authority.....That motion passed
.....Daugherty then unveiled a fantastic display of tropical fish.....

780th Meeting.....July 31, 1952: Souwestercon films. Gee, maybe something ex-
citing will happen next week.....

781st Meeting.....August 7, 1952: The Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society pre-
sented LA TRAVESTY, an opera buffa in one act.....Coloratura tenor Eph Konigs-
berg delivered the great aria, 'Within These Sacred Halls:'

When first we rented this place,
We sat in the very front space.
Now they've moved us behind,
To protest we've declined—
So I'm here to save us some face.

.....That we should go in time,
To the management sublime,
And get some guarantee,
On remaining where we be.

And the confused treasurer, basso Albert Hermiter, crying out:
We've been arguing hot and fast,
Over something never passed.
We're trying our best to get rid,
Of something we never did.

And the great basso aria, delivered by S. J. Byrne, 'O Men of Science:'
I've found you out, I've traced your ways,
I've learned true genius never pays.
.....Oh men of science, keepers of books and lists,
Extractors, editors, writers of words, brain pickers, and
generally horrid materialists!

And mezzo-soprano Ray Bradbury, speaking out of the machine:
So the only thing that bothers me,
Is where the devil will I be,
When in a fit of sheer delight,
I sell to God my final right?

782nd Meeting.....August 14, 1952: Walter J. Daugherty talked for a while.....

783rd Meeting.....August 21, 1952:there were only fifteen people here at
this meeting.....

DRAWN &
QUARTERED



2. Just Plain 4E

Took a little trip out to Beverly Hills the other e-ve-ning, as Forrest J Ackerman would say, and talked to a very important scientifiction personality. This fellow, Ackerman might say, is a very well-known fandividual, scientifilm expert, minor author, bread-and-butter to some seventy-five writers in the fantasy field, reviewer of scientifilms and books for countless publications, high executive in the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society and the Science Fantasy Writers of America, and a general Jolly Cholly.

On the other hand, Ackerman might be honest and deprecating about this fellow, for the fan we interviewed was Forry himself. Approaching the modest Ackerman hacienda on Sherbourne Drive, we were impressed first by the full-size poster of Marlene Dietrich which decorated the doorstep. Then, when Forry opened the door, we were immediately staggered by the spectacle of the living-room wall—about fifteen by twenty-five—one big bookshelf of stef, highlighted by fluorescents at the top. A piano in one corner, phonograph and record shelf in another, and miscellaneous bookcases fitted out the rest of the room, with priceless Bonestell and Frank Paul originals scattered about in profusion.

Presently we recovered sufficiently to see Forry's office, which contains his mag collection, his typer, card file of manuscripts, and telephone; past the dining room—which displayed a real gem, a Bradbury original painting—we were led, through a hall papered with Bok and other fantasy art, and into the jungle! Manuscripts, letters from editors, circulars of the SFWA, and odd illustrations and fanzines crowded the famous Vogue typer practically off the desk. Ranged around the room were shelves of old Amazings, Weirds, Astoundings, British ré-prints—every type of stef mag imaginable, with a few we hadn't even imagined. Paul double spreads, Neil Austin portraits, and other originals were over the door and between shelves; the zinc blocks for the Finlay illos to 'Ship of Ish-tar' stood in front of mags.

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The office was further graced by pictures of various nude women, some of them with a fantasy slant. "Everybody wonders about the naked ladies," Forry said, "how my wife lets me keep 'em, where they come from, why I display some around the house this way, and so on. Why shouldn't I? I like 'em!" He also subscribes to Sunshine & Health, the nudist magazine—where he frequently observes Ted Sturgeon and wife enjoying the sunshine—and in addition keeps up with Sexology and a raft of publications with names like Bizarre, TNT, Tabou, and so on." Just like to keep abreast of the latest fetishes," Forry remarked.

To distract our attention, he dragged down a stack of old VOMs, the Voice of the Imagination. "People never used to understand this mag," he told us. "We printed all the letters that came in. Look there's a misspelling, and here's a typo—these were in the original letters. I used to be a civil service senior typist; I could retype these letters verbatim, character for character.

"The purpose of VOM was simple enough," he explained, "a mirror for fandom. You could look at that mirror on the wall, and find out who was the wisest fan of all." Some of the letters are inane, some brilliant. But they all add to the chronicle of fan thinking of that period.

Forrest J (no period) Ackerman became a fan on November 24, 1916, here in LA, at the age of 0. His first splash in the stef world was in 1929 in San Francisco; he won a newspaper-sponsored kids' story contest with, of course, a first-rocket-to-Mars story. We looked at his picture in the old paper: innocent enough looking little character, hair meticulously parted, old Amazing tightly clutched, studious ad astra expression. Doesn't look a bit like Truman Capote.

He was also associate editor of Time Traveller, the first fanzine. Listed over his name in the first issue are those of Mort Weisinger and Julius Schwartz, who went on to the prozine business in New York.

Forry stayed in the land of milk, honey, and movie stars, though; he was a film fan too. He has a collection of 600 stills from various pictures, and of course he wrote in for signed pictures of all the stars.

His present handwriting is the result of this avocation; it's borrowed from Kay Francis, who was so impressed by the young Forry's adulation that she wrote him quite a message in her beautiful hand across the glossy 8x10 photo. "I had a normal fourteen-year-old handwriting until I saw that," confesses the Compleat Fan. "I set out to copy her script—she'd given me almost a complete alphabet." It grew so completely flashy that even the author couldn't read it—his signature is the only example still in use—so he modified it and printed the letters. Soon this too sacrificed coherence for rococo beauty, and he was forced to print block capitals to be readable. "And even those block caps," worries Forry, "are getting fancier and fancier."

His movie interest won Forry a job, back in the days when he worked for a living. At a Motion Picture Academy special showing of Lang's 'Metropolis,' he organized a party from LASFS to see the show, which over the years he's viewed some 16 times. The emcee at the theater was amazed at Forry's interest and impresario talent; later, they got to talking. Presently Forry was the emcee of these special Academy showings, and in addition he helped bring out the Players' Directory, a catalogue of bit-talent published by the MPA.

When the LASFS saw 'When Worlds Collide' last fall, someone remarked that the disaster scenes were remarkable work. Drawing on his Academy background, Forry

pronounced most of the scenes borrowed from other films: "That oil well scene was from 'Tulsa,' the rushing water from 'Hurricane,' and the other one from ..." His fabulous memory came in handy when the MPA made exhibitions of stills from various movies; he'd ponder over a picture which'd lost its label, and presently announce it was from thus-and-so, which he'd seen in, let's see, '37.

Like most people of the appropriate age, Ackerman was in the service. Ending up a staff sergeant at Ft. MacArthur, he worked up to editorship of the 'Alert,' the base newspaper. Fanzine experience enabled him to grind out countless articles, news stories, and comment columns; he managed a plug for science fiction every issue. In one of the papers, we saw a letter from the future (concealing a Buy War Bonds plug.) A rosy future awaited him (this was pre-Galaxy), Future Forry wrote Sgt. Forry; the latter's war bonds had matured, and he was rich!

After he returned from the army, Forry had visions of being a staff scribe; he wrote some stories and sent 'em around. When they had come full circle (back to Forry) he examined his writing technique critically. "I guess I'm just not the pro writer type," he admits; "I won't slave over a story. I get the idea and write it, and there it is...usually not very long. My ideas are usually simple puns—like Damon Knight's 'To Serve Man,' which I could have blown up to all of 400 words."

We suspect it was originally in an effort to sell his own work by hook or crook that he became an agent. He had a beautiful set-up for it, of course; many writers and editors in the field were old fans, long-time correspondents of Forry's. Van Vogt gave him a couple of stories not written for the Astounding market, and he contacted a few old-time writers and some new ones, and the Ackerman Fantasy Agency was born.

"I was very idealistic at first," Forry confesses. "I'd heard about New York agents who lived off reading fees, reading the stuff submitted to them and spinning fancy tales about how Collier's almost bought this, Cosmo said nice things about that—while never actually doing anything more than collecting five or ten bucks for reading the story. The Ackerman Fantasy Agency, I declared, would have none of this—no reading fee. And on top of this, I rashly resolved to pay my authors' postage. Within a year or so, I was practically broke. I had an agency, true, and I was selling, but I wasn't making a cent. So I had to harden my heart and charge a nominal fee for reading (refundable if I sell the story) and charge for postage."

The agency has grown from its 1947 inception to grasp, as we mentioned, some 75 authors, and to sell, so far as we know, to every magazine except Fantastic Science Fiction. There was a project at one time, incidentally, that agent Ack cooked up, of an anthology to be called 'Forry Stories,' consisting of editor Ack's choice of the best (probably all) of author Ack's rejected work. "That fell through presently," mourned Forry, "when the stories began to sell in the mag market."

Forry has for some time been rumored to be Garret Ford, editor of Fantasy Book. We observed a note to this effect in a circular on Don Ford's SF Index, and asked Ack for his Garret Ford autograph at San Diego. Hemming and hawing, he revealed that he wasn't Ford, but that he invented the name, and had had for a while a part interest in it. So he signed carefully on our program 'FJA, ex-1/3 Garret Ford.'

Last year the Ackermans took in a trip to Europe, of which Forry's favorite experience was a flight to Eire to visit Walt Willis. They'd been staying with Arthur Gibson (an Esperantist and correspondent of Forry's) in Edinborough, and Forry had dined too well the night before. Presently it was discovered that in fifty minutes the plane left for Ireland, from Glasgow. Pushing around madly, he managed to get to Glasgow a few minutes before flight time, and managed to get aboard. Doubts began to swim up in the Ackerman mind as last night's dinner, in his vitals, and the airplane, in the rough Scotch atmosphere, did the same. "First, to cheer me up, the pilot taxied three times past an old graveyard. Then he winged forth. My first flight! Ooh! Then Willis and his friends met me at the field with a---well, not quite a hearse, but one of those solemn long black limousines used in funeral processions." There was a transit strike on and this was all he could get, Willis explained in a rapid gaelic dialect that made Forry's speech a Western drawl by comparison. "It was a wonderful time," Ack remembers, "but a shame that of all my fourteen-week trip I was ill on the one day I saw the great Wally Willis."

Forry hasn't always been a Beverly Hills highbrow. We believe it was Wendy who galvanized the move from New Hampshire St. "You must have more room for the books," she declared, when the original Garage began to bulge. And, with typical Wendy purposefulness, they moved.

We suspect Wendy's determination and singleness of purpose derives from her Alsace-Lorraine background. We observed the driving force at work one evening, when, feeling the need for repast, Wendayne raided our (personal) icebox with all the murderous dispatch of a Comrado.

After the mansion was found, Forry and Wendy made several trips with the car full of books. "After a few loads, our arms were falling off, and still there was no dent in the Garage's vast collection." LASFS pitched in, providing more help than a herd of wild elephants, and a truck took the rest of the five thousand books and ten thousand mags (plus or minus several hundred) that fill the Garage to capacity even now.

Awhile ago, Forry announced at LASFS that "for the benefit of any true fans around the club...let's see, are there any in the room? Len Moffatt, myself..." After Rick Sneary had turned purple, Forry finished the announcement--to the effect that tomorrow was Jolson's birthday. He is a tremendous Al Jolson fan. Along with some Bing Crosby, Frankie Laine, and a few others, his record collection consists of all the Jolson he can get ahold of. When the great man died a few years ago, Forry got together all the true fans he know, and had an 8-hour Jolson record session, playing some 76 sides.

In fact, what with movies, Jolson, and making a living, we find it incredible that the guy can keep his hand in fandom. But, of course, the other two are only avocations--Forry's business is fandom and stef. We guess he likes his job.

--JHW

NEXT ISSUE:

There will be another D & Q, probably another ANALYSIS IN WONDERLAND, and of course reviews, Minutes, and Forry's GARAGE; perhaps an article on sports in space, or an article on Spillane. Also there might be a scholarly, witty, significant critique of something or other by YCU. Let's see the brainchild--we haven't any prejudices or requirements (except for a manageable length); it just has to be good. Our address is on page one.

ANALYSIS IN WONDERLAND CONT. FROM PAGE 7

tabbed the number of times we had disagreed with the Analytical Lab. We checked. Result: we had agreed eighty-seven percent of the time.

Of course, this doesn't necessarily mean anything. We have some further checking to do, and we mean to do it in a subsequent article. For there are some other, rather definitive ways in which the comparative quality of the two magazines can be checked. One obvious source of information is the anthologies. It can be presumed that when a story is selected for republication it is a superior piece of work, and the comparative standing of the two publications might be gauged by the number of stories which each one of them has had reprinted in an independent anthology.

Another question which has been left unanswered in this article is: what type of stories have tended to appear in each of the two magazines. While the answer to this question must be held in abeyance till the next article, one indication of this may be found in the so-called 'A-plus' stories which have appeared in these magazines. There are very few of them.

There have only been seven of these super-stories in the two publications, five of them in Galaxy, and of the seven there were only three which, in our opinion, truly deserved the rating. (We couldn't be too persnickoty--after all, things might be rought all over.)

The three Galaxy stories we found to be of unquestioned 'A-plus' caliber were "Coming Attraction" by Fritz Leiber, 11/50, "Beyond Badlam" by Wynan Guin, 8/51, and "The Demolished Man" by Alfred Bester, 1/52 et. seq. In addition, we felt that there were two other Galaxy stories that were far superior to even the better 'A's', and thus deserved inclusion in the 'A-plus' category. They were "Conditionally Human" by Walter M. Miller Jr., 2/52, and "Surface Tension" by James Blish, 8/52.

Astounding did not fare so well in the Nova-type classification, for both of the stories which, in our opinion, were above the level of the good 'A's' were somewhat below what we conceived the 'A-plus' type stories to be. They were "The Necessary" by Jim Brown, and "I Am Nothing", by Eric Frank Russell, both in the 7/52 issue. (That was quite an issue, by the way. Two A-plus, two A, and one C.)

Thus, for the present, it seems enough to state that Galaxy and Astounding, upon the application of mild analysis, seem to possess about the same level of quality, have most of their stories written by the same people, tend, each of them, to develop their own coterie of writers, and, in general, offer the reader surprisingly good value for the money.

What more do you want, blood?

...His mind seemed to break through a tough sphincter into a new medium, cool and wide: he saw the world in a sudden new identity, something part of himself.

Shorn is now a Telek, 'by courtesy.'

Here, I think, we've come across something which might be termed unusual: Vance presents telekinetic power--the ability to move objects at will and fly--as growing out of an act of participation with others. We would more naturally expect an interest in the idea of being able to fly to be an expression of a feeling of extreme independence from others. In his book, Childhood and Society, Eric H. Eriksson touches upon this subject when he mentions that individuals who, in their childhood development, don't acquire a sufficient feeling of attachment to their parents often have a feeling of being 'self-moving.' And C. Legman, in his little book On the Cause of Homosexuality, discusses at some length the theme of flying as an escape from reality and the father, mentioning, in this connection, science-fiction.

But Vance clearly feels himself to be a part of, not apart from, the world. It's true that Vance-Shorn twice refers to the telekinetic ability as giving a feeling of "power and freedom," but this isn't a disproportionate emphasis. It might be seen as being part of the symbolic presentation of the conflict between the Teleks, who possess this feeling, and the earth-grubbing normal men and women. Shorn speaks of the Teleks as having "no roots, no connection with the common man..." (p.50); and this lack of "being tied down" is a keynote in the descriptions of the Teleks. Relations between the common people and the Teleks are often presented in terms of elevation and "airiness": when conversing with ordinary men, the Teleks are in the habit of 'standing' several feet off the ground so that whoever is talking to them has to look up to them; the particularly distasteful Hollirude is described as being "...a young man, rather more lofty than the average..." (p.47); another Telek is spoken of as having a face which was "...mercurial and light-hearted..." (p.40); Hollirude's clothes bring to mind "...the gaudy natural growth of a butterfly..." (p.52); when Shorn visits Adlani Dominion, he is offered as a seat a red leather ottoman which is so low he cannot sit on it without craning his neck in order to talk to Dominion--he refuses (p.77); the home of the Teleks, Marietta Pavillion, floats high above the earth among the clouds.

Shorn returns to earth. But, it might seem, only partly. For now Vance begins to develop a strange theme: Shorn has telekinetic power; in this respect he is like the Teleks. His attitude, his anger towards them, seems to soften. His friends are disturbed--no doubt being reminded of revolutionaries who have been seduced into becoming members or tools of those very groups against which they fought, for a revolutionary is, by his very nature, power- and class-conscious. In this connection, it might be noted that Shorn seems to be more concerned with power than the usual Vance protagonist.

We haven't been entirely unforwarned about this change in his attitude though. Earlier in the story, Shorn has had some thoughts which, while not opposed to his previous attitudes, did not grow out of them. Vance writes:

He frowned. Perhaps it was important. Perhaps some quiet circuit of his mind was at work, aligning him into new opinions...(p.73)

TELEK

Incidentally, mechanical metaphors (such as 'circuit') are uncommon in Vance. He usually chooses analogies of a dramatic or organic nature, rather than of a physical or mechanoid order. I have a suspicion, perhaps unjustified, that this story was slightly 'written to market;' that is, that it was given what might be termed an Astounding bias.

From this point the story gains dramatic impetus, but its movement carries us back to the setting of the first scene; the giant stadium, constructed by Geskamp, for the athletic events of the Teleks. It is the day of the event itself. Thousands of Teleks arrive, and two hundred and sixty seeming Teleks. Shorn brings the imitation Teleks in, fifty at a time, dropping them lightly from the sky along with himself. By ruse and direct action, he takes over the master of ceremonies' control booth and initiates a mass activity at the close of the festivities. He spells out names and messages in the air (such as "Thank you and good luck, Adlari Dominion") with a little white ball; the entire congregation of Teleks follows its movements with a large bump-ball. In this group action, the non-Teleks participate. Shorn's friends 'attempt' to move the ball through the air, as do the Teleks. And, having shared in a telekinetic activity, they are Teleks.

As I see it, there is a social thesis implicit in the story. And that is, that social distinctions are comprised of differences in 'roles' and that group belonging consists of participation in activities common to the group. By its emphasis on acts, this view distinguishes itself from the authoritarian attitude which affirms the necessity of group cohesiveness based upon a common 'substance' or intrinsic identity. Vance believes that social differences arise when people, or groups of people, no longer share the same activities. When Shorn participated in Telek activities, he approached nearer to the Teleks; he became, in fact, the bridge between them and the non-Teleks, delivering the Teleks from possible destruction and the common man from probable tyranny.

The new-Teleks lift themselves from the stadium, depart into the afternoon. They are going to confer telekinetic ability upon others and, eventually, upon all mankind.

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