

TYNDALLITE

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from Norm Metcalf, P.O. Box 1368, Boulder CO 80306-1368 USA. This is intended for the May 2002 mailing of the *Southern Fandom Press Alliance*. Outside of *SFPA* it is available for trade, a published letter of comment or \$1 US.

Mailing comments page 866

For Your Consideration 12 Feb 2002 –
Jeffrey Copeland

p. [1] Thanks for recommending Charles Stross' "Lobsters", *Asimov's* Jun 2001 and "Troubadours", *Asimov's* Oct-Nov 2001.

To quote you: "Enterprise, *while workmanlike, is still neither inspired nor interesting.*" Amen.

Twygdrasil And Treehouse Gazette
#74 Mar 2002 – Richard
Dengrove

p. 12 You list Jules Verne's *A Journey To the Center of the Earth* as a hollow-Earth story. The closest it comes to that is having gigantic volcanic vents connecting Iceland and Italy. The explorers literally hotfooted it up a volcanic vent as they were blown out.

Hi-tech thrillers and science-fiction aren't mutually exclusive. Quite a few stories have been both. Examples are such as Arthur Train and Robert W. Wood's *The Man Who Rocked the Earth* and its sequel, *The Moon Maker*; numerous stories by Edward E. Smith and John W. Campbell, Jr., etc. But there is a border on either side of the overlap.

It depends upon whether or not the hi-tech is current or extrapolated.

p. 12 As for cave fiction taking on current relevance, I hope that this doesn't extend to the stories by Richard S. Shaver. His notions about deros living in caves under the Earth and having baleful influence upon the surface dwellers are so atrocious that some people enjoy them.

No, the 2,000 year-old astronomical computer tracked stars, not the Sun, and thus calculated latitude. Fortunately it was sufficiently salvageable so as to determine its functionality.

As for whether or not Robur the Conqueror's aircraft was feasible or not I can't tell you. I'm suspicious of the translations in the copies that I have, so I've not read them.

SPIRITUS MUNDI #188 Feb-Mar
2002 – Guy H. Lillian III

pp. [10?-11?] You're quite right that our ancestors were bright and logical people who actually accomplished quite a bit. For part of the story you'd probably enjoy reading Lyon S. de Camp's *The Ancient Engineers*.

p. [11?] At the moment I'll have to forego writing an article on Captain Nemo and the *Nautilus* for *Challenger*. I can't find my copy of Walter J. Miller's edition of *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* so that I can reference what Jules Verne actually said, rather what some people claim he said, or didn't say. Miller's edition seems to be out of print; perhaps Baen Books can do a trade paperback.

As for your question about whether *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* is science-fiction or "...techfic a la Tom Clancy?" the story isn't science-fiction but rather a predecessor of Tom Clancy's fiction.

We agree that *Forbidden Planet* is a movie. It's a science-fictional movie, not science fiction. Apparently you wish to expand the definition of science-fiction past science-fiction so as to include anything related to or derived from science-fiction.

Thanks for saying that *Forbidden Planet* wasn't based on Raymond F. Jones' *This Island Earth*. That's why I qualified it with "supposedly", hearsay isn't always reliable. You say that the latter is inferior to the former. I saw *Forbidden Planet* shortly after its premiere and wasn't enthusiastic about it. I've neither read Jones' book nor seen the movie.

Thanks for specifying that your tribute to Poul W. Anderson that you reprinted in *Challenger* #15 originally appeared in *Nolazine* #12.

p. [19?] You've written an excellent tribute to Rafael A. Lafferty. Putting him ahead of such humorists as Jonathan Swift, Stanton A. Coblentz, Lyon S. de Camp, Henry Kuttner, Robert Bloch and Samuel L. Clemens is indeed high praise.

PETER, PAN & MERRY #42 David Schlosser

p. 1 To quote you:

"I just took a look at my copy of 20,000 Leagues. It does say that the

Nautilus is run by electricity and, as it's produced by chemical reactions (from the elements of sea water), that would qualify it as being battery-powered. I would think that that was well beyond any but a very theoretical proposition in Verne's time however."

Apparently your edition doesn't have Verne's reference to sodium batteries, produced after Volta's. At any rate, Alessandro Volta, professor of physics at the University of Pavia, in 1793 began experimenting with copper and zinc in an acidic solution. He invented modern batteries in 1799-1800. As a reward, in 1801 Napoleon Buonaparte made him a count. A unit of electrical measurement, the volt, is named after him. Earlier batteries were described by Willy Ley in an article "An Electric Battery 2,000 Years Ago", *Astounding Science-Fiction* Mar 1939.

REVENANT #11 Mar 2001 [sic] -
Sheila J. Strickland

p. 4 Science-fiction is a literary means of expressing imaginative ideas. Comic books/graphic novels, movies and plays are other means of expressing these ideas. Unless a movie does nothing but scroll text it can't be science-fiction.

Oblio #139 Feb-Mar 2002 - Gary Brown

pp. 3-7 Thanks for all this material about Raymond D. Bradbury and *Fahrenheit 451*.

It's interesting that your local library system picked Ray's book for your local literacy program.

p. 3 You mention that 451 degrees Fahrenheit is the temperature at which book paper burns. Ballantine also brought out a limited edition printed on asbestos. I passed on buying one.

Ray is vague about his story "The Exiles" wherein Lyman F. Baum, Edgar A. Poe and Charles Dickens are exiled to Mars, which he says that he wrote "...around 1947 or '48." It appeared in the Win-Spr 1950 issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*.

p. 6 I'm glad to see Ray detailing how he expanded "The Fireman", *Galaxy Science Fiction* Feb 1951 (24,500 words) into *Fahrenheit 451*. His technique of revising it line by line is better than the idea of padding stories with extraneous sequences.

I admire Ray's spirit. He's still the exuberant fan he was at the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society meetings all those decades ago.

p. 22 You say that DC comics sold well in the 1950's by using orange on the covers and gorillas, even though the DC staff didn't understand "why they sold so well". "Anthony Boucher" told me that *F&SF* sold better when it had rocket ships on the cover, even if most (or all) of the stories were fantasies. At the time *Astounding Science-Fiction* had about twice the circulation of *F&SF* so I went home and put the issues face up by months. What I noticed was that John W. Campbell, Jr. was mostly featuring humans in futuristic situations. And the stories mostly delivered what the covers implied, unlike *F&SF*.

TRIVIAL PURSUITS #100 – Janice Gelb

p. 4 Thanks for recommending Evelyn E. Smith's *Miss Melville Regrets*. How does it compare with the rest of the series? I presume that this is the same Evelyn E. Smith who has written delightful science-fiction and fantasy.

AVATAR PRESS V2#20 28 Mar 2002
- Randy B. Cleary

Thanks for reporting on the wedding of Toni Weisskopf and Hank Reinhardt in Social Circle GA. At least we now know another social circle they move in.

GUILTY PLEASURES #23 Mar 2002
- Eve Ackerman

pp. 4-5 Thanks for recommending all books by Robert Crais.

p. 5 Thanks for communicating your enjoyment of *I Dare* by Sharon Lee and other books by her. Since I've read none of her stories I'll have to see what I can find.

As for Richard W. Lynch not being able to again donate blood, let's just hope his Eastern European travels don't take him to Transylvania. There he might make an involuntary donation.

TENNESSEE TRASH #46 Feb-Mar 2002 – Gary R. Robe

pp. 3-6 Thanks for your inside view of running ConCave.

p. 6 As for the North Pole in 2010 convention bid I wonder how many people got the drift.

pp. 10-11 Thanks for your incisive review of Michael Cassutt's *Red Moon*, a fictionalization of the Soviet space program.

pp. 11-12 Thanks for your cautions on Harry Turtledove's *Sentry Peak* and *Marching Through Peachtree*. An alternate Confederacy with sword and sorcery could be done well, so perhaps he'll accept his own challenge.

...a monument that neither government nor time can eradicate...

[no #, nd] – mike weber

p. [7] Someone garbled your anecdote about John W. Campbell, Jr.'s "The Brain Stealers of Mars". It wasn't under a one-shot pseudonym, it was under his own name in the Dec 1936 *Thrilling Wonder Stories*. It was the first story in the Penton & Blake series, which Ace reprinted (hopefully more than less). I haven't read it but it could quite well be a precursor to "Who Goes There?". The latter was in the Aug 1938 *Astounding Science-Fiction* bylined "Don A. Stuart". Campbell used "Stuart" fifteen times in *ASF* and once in *Unknown*. Campbell's one-shot pseudonym was "Karl van Kampen" which was used in the Dec 1934 *Astounding Stories* (plus on some letters arguing about the story).

While I haven't read "Brain Stealers..." the comments I've read made your repeated anecdote plausible that it was a crude precursor to "Who Goes There?".

The portion of your anecdote about Campbell using the two stories as

before and after examples of how authors could improve themselves is quite in character for Campbell.

He began rejecting such authors as Nelson Tremaine, Raymond K. Cummings and Arthur J. Burks because they weren't upgrading their stories. Supposedly Burks submitted "The Elder Gods" but was unable to revise it to Campbell's satisfaction. So Campbell completely rewrote it and published it without credit for Burks.

In Campbell's last years he didn't have the market power that he did in the 1930's and 40's, so a number of authors submitted rejects elsewhere, rather than rewriting them.

You doubt that battery-powered locomotives were in use prior to Jules Verne's writing *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. Apparently the first such operated in 1835, Verne wrote *2LutS* in 1868 and 1869, it was published in 1869 and 1870.

You say that battery locomotives are just coming into use. Prototypes date back to 1835. I don't know when the first commercial models were produced. The Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee and the Illinois Terminal Railroad had battery locomotives operating in the 1920's. A consortium of American Locomotive, General Electric and Ingersoll Rand built New York Central 1525 in 1928. Later GE built battery locomotives for the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western; New York Central; Michigan Central and the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific (which had electrified terminals in Chicago).

Industrial battery locomotives apparently date back to around 1900.