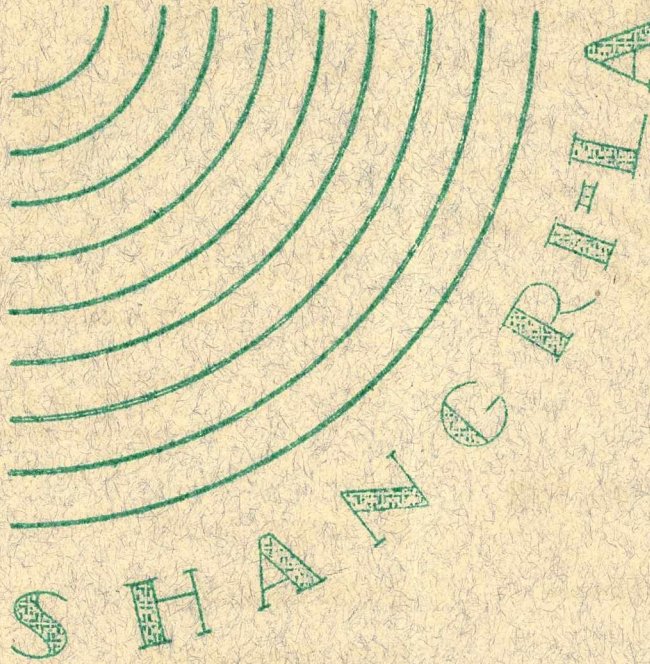


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SHANGRI-LA

vol 1 no 1

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FROM THE VALLEY OF THE BLUE MOON

by T. Bruce Yerke

Well, How would you start? I am posed before a typewriter (truly a formidable object when you can think of nothing to do with it) with which I am expected to fill two pages of Chapter doings! The question is not one of trying to make a little bit fill the two pages, but one quite the opposite, and about three times more difficult. To wit, that of condensing ten or fifteen pages of the Minute Book into the allotted space. And that problem becomes all the more acute when it is taken into consideration that the Minute Book is done in small type. (Well, Mr Yerke, for heaven's sake, stop gabbing and get started!)

OK, OK; don't rush me, buddy!! It all happened at the end of the last decade, when our third-term man, Russ Hodgkins, announced that he was not to be considered in the present Directorial race. Result, we are now graced with the presence of Director Daugherty.

With no reflections on our former director, it is only fair to say that he (Walt) pulled the club out of the rut it was in, and we are now on the way forward to the "good old times" again. The first in a series of startling innovations introduced by our now Fuehrer was the SEW program. (Sew what?) Sew that we can---hey, who let Bradbury in here? SEW means "speaker every week", and we first honored with the presence of Dr Stephen S Myrick, head of the history department at Hollywood High School, who, we are told, omitted the best three hours of his speech. The next speaker was from the North American Aircraft factory, who outlined the various types of modern flying equipment, and possible future developments. On this occasion some really scientifantastic inventions were born. To a stunned audience, Bradbury solved the problem of stratosphere flying. His brain-storm resulted in this: High-flying planes to be equiped with compressed air tanks, so that when rarified atmosphere is reached the pilot simply projects a stream of air in front of the propellers so that they will have something to bite upon! Simple. When our guest had recovered, it was pointed out that a plane's "lift" is obtained through the vacuum which forms above the wings when flying speed is attained.

Our next guest was an old-timer, filling a return engagement, for once before, almost three years ago he gave the chapter a very interesting lecture on rockets. This time there was little more to report, though what news there was, Mr Pheoley, who is a proffesor at LA City College, gave in a very entertaining manner,

Aside from getting speakers, Walt has also seen to it that there has been an average of at least one new face per meeting. So far he has been responsible for three new members, two of whom are members of the fairer sex, Virginia "Jimmy" Laney and Eleanor O'Brien. the third newcomer, Durward Berry, turns out to be a neighbor of Ye Scribe. Jimmy and Eleanor have been appointed to the entertainment committee, and are busy at work planning outings and social activities for the

DRAW-

Walt Daugherty---

high lama of ye
Shangri-La of
stf fandom---

Russ Hodgkins---

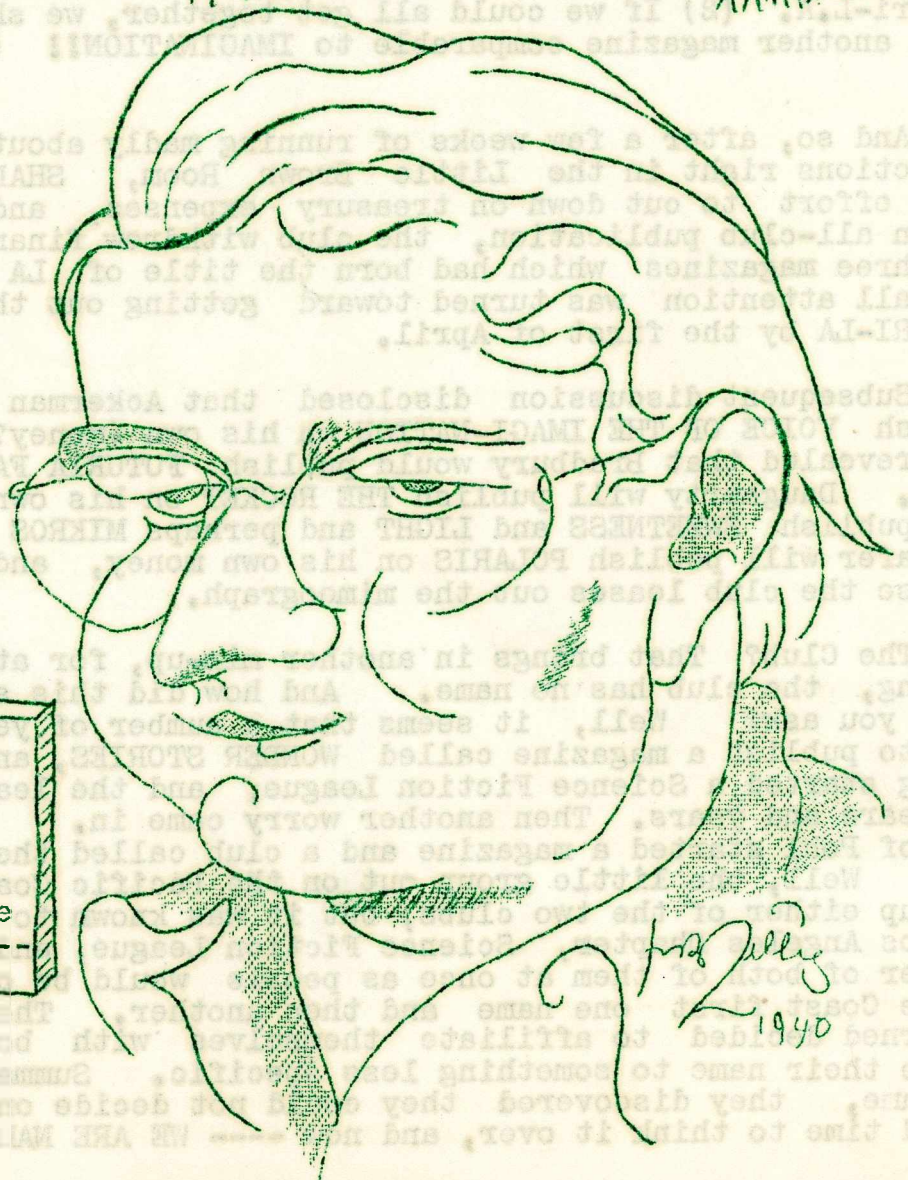
keeper of ye olde
purse-strings---

ING ATTENTION—



---to SHANGRI-LA's innovation in presenting a caricature dep't, as interpreted by Fritz Zillig, noted artist, well known for his work in ESQUIRE (another good mag).

In order to give stfandom an insight into the more humorous side of LA's guys and gals, we begin our series with the officers of the local Society. Following issues will bring you the various LA fan mag editors, honorary members, and all the others affiliated with the group.



T. Bruce Yerke---

scribbler in ye
olde minute
booke and
custodiane of ye
stf librarye---

o o

club, as reported elsewhere in this issue.

Another item which has made this a year to be remembered, is the return of Charles D. Hornig, who is on this side of the hill to edit his two magazines, SCIENCE FICTION and FUTURE FICTION. (Other editors may get free advertising in this section of the magazine by moving to the West Coast to edit their publications.) Charlie has had several guests at the meetings, two of whom are writers and prospective club members.

An item in the "Holy Book" WEIRD TALES, by Mr A, has been responsible for at least seven new attenders, some of whom are from San Francisco. Others drop in from time to time, but this will all end in the fall, for we understand that "Skylark" Smith will be in LA for a visit. Then members will cease dropping in occasionally. They will stay!

Oh, yes, another bit of information, having to do with the means by which you, the reader, are absorbing the printed information. In short, why did SHANGRI-LA come to pass? Reasoning was thus: (1) Various individuals are now publishing a whole flock of magazines in Shangri-L.A. (2) If we could all get together, we should be able to issue another magazine comparable to IMAGINATION!! (3) Well, let's do it.

And so, after a few weeks of running madly about, and equally as mad actions right in the Little Brown Room, SHANGRI-LA was born. In an effort to cut down on treasury expenses, and to clear the way for an all-club publication, the club withdrew financial support from the three magazines which had born the title of LA SFL Publications. Then all attention was turned toward getting out the first issue of SHANGRI-LA by the first of April.

Subsequent discussion disclosed that Ackerman would continue to publish VOICE OF THE IMAGINATION on his own (money?). More discussion revealed that Bradbury would publish FUTURIA FANTASIA on his own money. Daugherty will publish THE ROCKET on his own money. Hodgkins will publish SWEETNESS and LIGHT and perhaps MIKROS on his own money. Freehafer will publish POLARIS on his own money, and we are all happy because the club leases out the mimeograph.

The Club? That brings in another mix-up, for at the time of this writing, the club has no name. And how did this sorry mess come to pass, you ask? Well, it seems that a number of years ago a fellow used to publish a magazine called WONDER STORIES, and a fellow called Hornig started a Science Fiction League, and the league crawled along for years and years. Then another worry came in. A fellow by the name of Pohl started a magazine and a club called the Science Fictioneers. Well, the little group out on the Pacific Coast didn't want to give up either of the two clubs, but it was known to all and sundry as the Los Angeles Chapter, Science Fiction League, and it couldn't be a chapter of both of them at once as people would be calling the Thing of the Coast first one name and then another. Therefore the people concerned decided to affiliate themselves with both clubs, but to change their name to something less specific. Summarily dropping the old name, they discovered they could not decide on a new one, and needed time to think it over, and now ---- WE ARE NAMELESS!

WALT DAUGHERTY'S - - - - - ROUNDUP

FLASH! At the meeting of March 28th a new name was born for the L A group. We are to be known as the SCIENCE FANTASY SOCIETY, with affiliations with the SCIENCE FICTION LEAGUE as Chapter no. 4, and with the SCIENCE FICTIONEERS as Chapter no. 1. This name being selected by a three quarter majority of those present.

Easter morning found a large majority of the members out for a all day picnic in Griffith Park where they were surrounded by animals seeking autographs and Bradbury in particular. (note: This was supposed to be Bradbury's page.) Hikes and wieners were among the many items which made up a real outing for all. A humorous 3 page detailed account of the day will appear in next issue of THE ROCKET a la T. Bruce Yerke.

Probably one of the most outstanding events planned for the near future is a SCIENCE FICTION BANQUET to be held here in LA, at which we hope to have all local celebrities of Science Fiction, an art exhibit of the countless originals owned by Angelenos, original manuscripts of the same origin, and a display of local fan mags. This will not only serve as an entertainment feature for locals, but will also enable us to entertain numerous guests who may find a new reading field in Wierd and Science Fiction. All plans are in the embryo form at present and many things must be worked out to make this the peak of perfection for the Science Fiction enthusiasts of Southern California.

We believe that we have something unique in the way of fan mag. publication. All of the individual mags are set up by the individuals and prepared for mimeographing. Notification of the fact that the necessary arrangements are in order at the next meeting night, a large majority of the members turn out the following Sunday at the home of Russ Hodgkins and with the supervision of the editor the group cooperatively turns out themag. Work is provided for each as is suitable for them. For an example: 4sJ, Morojo and Freehafer are placed in the front room with typewriters and plenty of stencils. (SSSSSH and a bit of correction fluid). Russ and myself trade off on the Speedoscope while Virginia and Eleanor and others present help with the slip sheeting and separation and thus, by the cooperation a mag is born.

LA forges ahead at full speed with her publications as VOICE OF THE IMAGI-NATION flitting forth on the 14th of April; NOVACIOUS, April 28th. Forry will have his STICKER MAG in the mails within a week, SWEETNESS and LIGHT, of the FAPA, and POLARIS the new entry to FAPA will be ready for publication in early May and last, THE ROCKET will appear in early June (I hope). Polaris and The Rocket are still in need of material, so send it along.

A note to remember when sending in material for SHANGRI-LA please send them set up with 70 characters to the line. If there are more or less than that amount the entire article must be retyped before it can be stenciled...We will appreciate your cooperation.

Well, that about lines up the latest briefs from LA. I'll be back in the next issue with last minute news of the SCIENCE FANTASY SOCIETY.



SEEKER OF

SHANGRI-LA

by MARK
REINSBERG

We were lounging in the basement headquarters of 3156 Cambridge Ave., and doing nothing in particular, at that. There were three of us: Erle Korshak with his odorous pipe and wavy hair, drawing filthy nicotine gas into his cheeks and exuding the smoke in thick clouds; between puffs and gasps; Richard Meyer propped up against the desk, his chair balancing torturously on one leg, discussing the relative merits of California and Florida (it was snowing outside, and the temperature hovered close to zero); and I. It was evening, but not just any evening. It was Fatal Thursday, as we have occasion to call it in retrospection.

Erle's pipe had gone out. Conversation halted, for he was re-loading it. With a practiced flourish, he emptied the contents of a wrinkled package, tapping the bottom until the last fleck of tobacco had fallen into the bowl.

Relations were at once strained. "Listen, Erle", Richard declared, "this is the last time you bring that stench-maker around the lab. So get all the enjoyment you can out of your last load."

"Yeah," I rejoined, "we didn't send for a fumigator when we asked you over."

"Well this happens to be a very rare, exclusive brand," Erle protested, "and I like it." He accented his words with a deep draught of smoke---I must admit the stuff was the strangest smelling weed I'd ever choked on---and sighed contentedly: "You can have your Florida and Los Angeles. Oh, I wish I were in SHANGRI-LA!"

AND THEN IT HAPPENED! Suddenly, Erle gasped violently and leaped to his feet. The action was so unexpected that Meyer lost his balance and came crashing to the floor under the tottering chair.

"Sacred Science!" he shouted, "where am I?" Then he stiffened incredulously, as he seemed to survey the room. The lighted pipe fell forgotten to the floor. His startled gaze rested on me.

"Reinsberg!---but it's impossible! You live in---in Chicago, and only a second ago...I was..." He stopped abruptly and turned stiffly to my friend, Richard. "I don't remember seeing you...who are you?"

"It isn't funny, Korshak," Meyer mocked, "I hope you remember me. I'm your friend, Meyer---remember?---Richard. I live here."

Korshak's eyes widened in amazement. "Can it be? It's too fantastic to believe, and yet here I am. Mark---Richard, something's happened.... I was just about to enter Clifton's Cafeteria on Broadway, where we hold our LASFS meetings, when---when something strange

came over me. And here I am in Chicago! In Erle Korshak's body!!"

His manner was too serious to entertain the idea the whole thing was a hoax. I broke the silence: "I've read about it in science fiction stories, but who would have believed it would occur in fandom?"

"But how?" the erstwhile LA fan demanded, "what was Erle doing that caused this remarkable transposition of personalities?"

Richard outlined the actions of Erle just before the exchange had taken place. The fan from California listened attentively, finally exclaiming, when the story had been told: "I haven't missed a single meeting of the LASFL to date, and I can't break my record now. Got to get back, even if it does mean smoking Erle's pipe...it must've been the tobacco that did it...and even if I don't smoke."

Carefully, the California-fan-by-proxy prepared for the mental return to his real body, sitting in the same chair, relighting the aromatic pipe. All was in readiness.

"Wait!" Richard pleaded, "how come Erle went to Los Angeles when he wished to go to Shangri-La, and---"

"Simple, pal," came the answer as the LA fan puffed deeply on the greasy stem, inhaling the mystic-powered smoke, "Los Angeles IS THE SHANGRI-LA OF FANDOM! And I wish I were there, NOW!"

(Perhaps you are wondering just who this fan from the west coast is. Well, we've deleted all references to the actual name of this fan---even though he did tell us who he was. But, just so you can test yourself, and see what kind of a fan detective you are, there are no less than two hints to his/her identity in the story thus far. Do not guess --- give the reasons which led to your conclusion. Who is he/her? Now go on with the story.)

"Hey! Honest, I'm Erle Korshak! Really---" The real EK jumped to his feet. "HEY!"

Everyone was suddenly talking at once. Explanations and questions were lost in a chaos of verbalities. At last the noise ceased, and Erle's story began:

"The minute I gulped that lungful of smoke, I felt giddy-like," he said. "Then when I wished I could go to Shangri-La, it was almost the same as if my mind---yes, I have one---suddenly broke loose from my body and travelled as fast as light. And in the space of a lightning flash, I found myself going into the Little Brown Room."

"'Hello Ackerman,' I heard someone say."

(Editorial Note: Every LASFL member in attendance remembers that night. It is true 4SJ did make a fool of himself by trying to pull some corny gag, to the effect that he was Erle Korshak, a fan from Chicago, a city in the mid-west. We suspect this article strongly. We think it is a weak attempt on the part of the aforementioned LA fan to justify his ill-advised actions on Thursday night last. We think the whole thing is a hoax---a fraud. All concerned are liars, we are sure, and, lest such drivel bore you, we have deleted the remainder.)



TRADE MARKS

WALTER FLEMING



Fan magazines as well as professional magazines are easily recognized by their make-ups, their format, their content. Assuming that you are acquainted with all the professional magazines, and you find a batch with covers missing (and stretch a point to say that nothing inside gave the name of the magazine), it wouldn't be a very hard job to determine the name of each magazine by it's stories, altho of course, one would be helped a lot by the format and type, etc.

And, assuming you cannot read, you may recognize the title lettering on the cover, and immediately know the magazine-----such as the block - comet tail on the old Amazing Stories.

In this same manner one can easily recognize the unofficial "trade-marks" of fan magazines, still keeping in mind the stretched point that the fan cannot read. FANTASY NEWS is at once recognized by the large block lettering across the front page. LE ZOMBIE has made its own particular trade-mark by always filling in the "O" in ZOMBIE with a shade screen. IMAGINATION! (always brought up in fan magazine discussions), with the exception of the first issue, never appeared without the nifty lettered banner extending diagonally across the cover.

AD ASTRA, in its first few issues, created a similar trade-mark with its comet tail. The deceased NEWS-LETTER was well known for that cut of a cossus standing over a metropolis. SCIENCE FICTION FAN wouldn't be itself were it not for the typical Rogers' cover in purple and yellow, with the name of the magazine lettered somewhere on the panel. SPACEWAYS, it would seem, must always appear with a hurtling space-ship on the cover, and the title streaked across the cover in an odd manner. If SCIENTI-SNAPS ever appears not expertly mimeographed, with a single error in spelling, typing or grammar showing up, and not containing at least one misappropriated figure of the girl-of-the-future, someone else than Marconette put the magazine into circulation. If NEW FANDOM (the magazine) ever appears without a cover by Taurasi, I will join!

As for each fan magazine's contents and general make-up, both mechanical and physical, it's almost absurd to go into very deeply: The acme of neatness and beauty of mechanical make-up spell SCIENTI-SNAPS; grammar much worse than mine, atrocious spelling and typing, one single solitary viewpoint on the world spell FANTASY NEWS; extremely bad hectographing, the michelistic outlook could only be the now-gone-but-hardly-forgotten LE VOMBITEUR; the rambling, personal, "slap-happy" debated humor of Tucker makes his LE ZOMBIE; ---

--- while on the opposite end, we have the ambitious young fellow promising everything under the sun including big names, great stories, more pages, snappier illustrations, stupendous articles, faster publication, contests galore, etc., etc., to his circulation of ten.... that is the new fan-editor, bless him!

SCIENCE? FICTION

WALT
by DAUGHERTY

"Let's go over here in the corner where we won't bother anyone, and discuss this matter of just how much science there is in science fiction magazines today."

"Well-1-1, I will, but I'm pretty well satisfied with the amount we have already. If they put in any more I'm afraid they will turn out to be texts instead of mags to be enjoyed," you say with a half-way disgusted look on your face.

"Whoa! Hold your horses. You got me wrong partner. I'm not saying there should be more technical stuff. My point is that the science on which stories are based should be correct, and not a lot of statements of supposed facts which are out-and-out blunders on the part of the authors."

"I see your point. You have a willing listener now. Go ahead, let me hear more."

"O.K. First, let me give you an example of the type of story I'm plugging. Did you read 'Hok Goes To Atlantis'?"

"It was in Amazing a little while ago, wasn't it?"

"Yes, that's the one I mean. How did you like it, and what seemed to be the most outstanding thing in the story?"

"As I remember it was a swell story. It seemed to be convincing enough, and well written, but I can't recall anything outstanding about it."

"I'm afraid you've hit the nail on the head without noticing it. You said it was convincing, didn't you?"

"Yes, but what's that got to do with scientific accuracy?"

"Simply this; the fellow who wrote that story had taken a little time to acquaint himself with the supposed location of Atlantis. He also knew enough of prehistoric man to be able to present a character in a manner that was possible in the period of history about which he was writing."

"That may be so, but both Charlie Hornig and Bob Heinlein have mentioned on various occasions, the fact that most authors who make writing a life's work don't have the time to do a lot of technical research on every story they write."

"That may be true, but it really isn't necessary to do a lot of research on elementary facts. If you were writing an article or story would you come right out and state that black was white, if it was just an incidental point in your story and not a necessary item to your plot?"

"Why no, that would be silly."

"There you are again, that's the point. Some of the routine statements authors use, to give their stories a logical, scientific background are just as absurd as the example I gave you. Yet those statements could be factual without hurting the plot one bit. If anything, facts would help the story."

"I'm beginning to see what you mean now. To simplify your point, you mean that the writer should stop and think of what he's writing instead of throwing in a hairbrained theory."

"That's it exactly."

"Well, I'll tell you, the LA fans are putting out a new publication called SHANGRI-LA. I'll talk it over with the editorial staff and see if we can't bring up the subject in the first issue, and see what the fans in other parts of the country have to say."

I OBJECT! by MOROJO

In the WRITER'S DIGEST for January 1940 appears an article by Jerry K. Westerfield entitled The Sky's No Limit which was read by Russ Hodgkins to LA imagi-natives at the weekly meeting of Jan 25th. Mr Westerfield is a former assistant editor of Amazing Stories & Fantastic Adventures. He is not a "stfan" but his article deals in part with fans. The article was entertaining but of doubtful value as I shall attempt to point out.

Mr Westerfield may know what he's writing about with relation to the magazines with which he was connected but one must keep in mind that his magazines are only 2 among a dozen or more & by no means the most popular with all the active fans. The substance of that part of the article which told of the work of editors & publishers of pro mags & their dealings with pro authors may be accepted only as his experiences & observations with relation to the 2 magazines on which he was employed but not as typical of all the stf mags & their editors & authors.

Now, to show you why I take the first part of the article with my fingers crost, I shall make quotations from the last part of the article & follow them with comments.

1. "Jack Darrow is number one science fiction fan." This may be Mr Westerfield's opinion. At one time Jack Darrow was a most prolific letter-writer but, so far as I am aware, his name has not appeared at the top of the list in any poll taken among fans by fans in the past 4 yrs.

2. "Scientification fans, as they sometimes call themselves." Whether the "a" in "scientifiction" is a typographical error or the way Mr Westerfield spells the word is difficult to determine.

3. "Fan magazines usually consist of mimeographed sheets, running as high as 25 pages of single spaced typewritten copy, and reaching a circulation of around 1,000 copies." O, Mr Westerfield!

4. "Michelists are really old-time Technocrats who have found science fiction fans receptive to their teachings." Russ Hodgkins, fandom's foremost Technocrat, has only recently reported that some of the New York "Michelists" (Term in quotes as it was outlawed at a meeting of the Futurians in New York City, July 4, 1939) have become enthusiastic converts to Technocracy..

5. "Most fans, however, resent the intrusion of the Michelists. And during their first science fiction convention, held in New York last July, the fans refused to let them invade their ranks. As a matter of fact, they literally threw them out." For one thing, it was not the first science fiction convention. And --, only 6 of the "michelists" were excluded--not thrown out--by 2 or 3 members of the self-appointed World Science Fiction Convention Committee. Other futurians ("michelists"), some of the most rabid such as the 2 dressed in futurist costumes, were admitted & even presented as celebrities from the platform. There was a great deal of argument & discontent among those present on account of the exclusion of 6 of the New York futurians.

6. "But the pay-off came when a Coast fan and his lady friend walked in dressed in clothes of the future." Why relegate

ART! I CHOKED

by TED CARNELL

A breath of "Madge" in this manuscript which originally was scheduled, as our Anglicomrades pronounce it, for the First Anniversary issue of IMAGINATION!. Ted recently wrote "I dug out the carbon of 'Art! I Choke!' and found it interesting reading -- did I write that? Sounds too reasonable for me! Seems, too, that an epilogue could be written to it now." So we rooted round and found the original artichoke, decided it seemed digestible as ever, and so we give you this "too reasonable" art-icle. And we'll be looking for that epilog, Ted old Top!

To dwell upon science fiction art work, however lightly, whether verbally amidst the comparative quiet seclusion of one's particular cohorts, or inadvertently in news columns or articles, is usually asking for trouble. In fact, quite as safe as standing upon a quicksand without the aid of an anti-gravity belt (in the ear).

Notwithstanding the flimsiness of the structure I intend to tread upon, with the possibility of suddenly being precipitated into a sea of sharks ready to rend my statements into a thousand fragments---madam, I would walk and talk with thee.

As a pet theme for perpetual warfare, pro mag artists and their work will always be a ready standby when all is quiet on other fronts. Considering the simplicity of an adequate answer to the art controversy, it really is surprising how fiercely opinions rage at various periods. Many fans simply refuse to look the true facts in the face, and utter a lot of blah and fooeey about the merits of their particular idol in comparison to his contemporaries.

Considering the number of belts on the ear and other facial quarters that the artists have received, their heads must be swollen out of all proportion to former normal growth---but not from mere praise.

Dissecting the evergreen favorite (a) Brown vs Wesso, (b) Paul vs The Winner of "a" (or of not running, Dold), (c) Binder and Schneeman vs Flatos and Thompson (a doubles guessing game), and (d) John and Mary (Gray Mare) Rogers vs The Philadelphian Kings of Swing---on a gibbet---the whole thing boils down to just a blasting ray-gun of personal opinion.

In the top class, cover artists who work mainly in colors, there cannot be any possible suggestion of one being better than another. Different, yes! That's where controversy really rages, but, not better. As useless as stating that de Vinci was greater than Van Dyck or Rembrandt. He wasn't---each artist was a top man in his own right. It was his style and rendering (not rending) of a subject which made him unique.

So with our own science fiction men. Brown vs Wesso is by far the most discussed example of art comparison, and by far the easiest to answer!

The followers of both artists are as widely dissimilar in their mental outlook on artwork as Summer and Winter, the Poles (up which I

now) and the Equator. The Mech-men, those who root for Wesso (and all Brown a "hack"), are those whose main delight is in "mechanical" pictures; interiors of spaceships or buildings, depicting colossal machinery; scenes from a mechanical Utopia they imagine will exist in the future. Invariably you will find Dold and Paul their second-string favorites.

Brown followers---the Color-Out-of-Space Men---are attracted more by his brilliant paintings of simpler things, more in keeping with their ideas of futuristic scenes, minus mechanicalization advanced to the nth degree. Brown's greatest works are those depicting very little. His two spaceship covers (Astounding, July 1937 and 1938) stand out far greater even than a simple one like the Astounding cover for October 1938.

But, where Howard V. fails sadly is when he endeavors to crash the Mech-men's territory. Even his own admirers criticize heavily here. His Astounding cover for January 1937 is a good example of this.

Wesso is just as hopeless at trying to get "feeling" into scenes not cluttered up with cables, motors, generators and spacesuits---but, there is one happy medium they both level on, yet in totally different ways. That in depicting spaceships in motion.

Briefly then, the solution to the debate is that Brown can paint a picture as a true artist can, providing it does not have too much machinery involved, while Wesso is king of mechanical drawings, but cannot encroach upon the true art side of Brown. What marvellous artwork would evolve from a fused Brown-Wesso personality!

To the majority of fans, it's just a matter of personal opinion and reaction. The reactions may be compared with the following simile. A and B, studying art work, gaze at a seascape depicting white-crested Atlantic waves and banks of cloud---nothing else. A sees the majesty of the turbulent ocean; the angry white crests marching in hurried ranks against a backdrop of billowing, angry clouds---a foe worthy of Man's ingenuity to conquer. B sees just a plain ocean and sky.

Passing on, they stop before a painting of a new building overshadowing a crowded thoroughfare. A sees just another building in an everyday setting, but B sees the beauty of architecture, the graceful tapering lines of columns and arches, glass and metalwork---once a dream in some man's brain, now a reality through other men's achievement.

It's all a matter of personal outlook.

One thing does strike me forcibly (apart from your righteous wrath), and that is that Brown adherents can better appreciate a Wesso drawing, even if they don't like it, than vice versa. You will very seldom hear them term Wesso a hack or punk artist.

Frank R. Paul, the other top cover artist, seems somewhat of an enigma to me when I review his art work. He appears to have those mythical fused Brown-Wesso potentialities, yet falls short of perfec-

tion as a whole on art or mechanical work solely. Yet there can be no mistaking a Paul drawing. One glance at the cover of Marvel Science for November 1938, and all the old memories of his earlier works came flooding back with a rush.

I imagine that all the fans who have been reading "the mixture as prescribed" since the early days, cherish a soft corner for Paul, in dedication to those "good old days". Many wish them back again, forgetting that Time continually marches and even styles of literature change.

Paul has kept in step with the changes, to a certain extent, yet has retained that indefinable something which sets him apart from his contemporaries. Although his forte is mechanical art work, he seems to have been the hardest trier to reach that happy medium between the Mech and Color Men.

When analysing "interiors", yet another stage of art work has to be contemplated. Crayon or ink drawings are apt to be judged in terms of figures and lines, light and shade, rather than upon what the finished product should indicate. Here, I think, Dold reigns supreme---but he's a Mech-man---an able lieutenant in the stronghold of Wesso. His shade and line work hold a rigid sameness over periods of months, and, as with Paul, it is simple to discern a Dold illustration at a glance.

Brown's likeliest henchman is obviously Schneeman, who can depict a really good non-mech scene without falling down too badly on the job, though at the moment he does not seem to have the consistency to develop into a top cover artist.

Going deeper into the widening field on interior artists, the work of Binder, Thompson and Flatos all have vastly different angles of art as comparisons. Individualism comes to the fore in each particular case, especially so with Binder who favors "light" drawings to a noticable degree.

Each one of these has the ability to become a top artist, time and tide permitting, for Fame does not come that easy. However, you must always remember that no matter how good an artist is, some scenes will always be difficult for him to portray. Just the same as an actor who can portray certain roles with ease, yet miff others far easier. That's temperament.

Above all, and a point most fans never realize, art work nearly always deteriorates through the reproduction methods used to prepare it for printing. If you've ever seen any originals, you will understand my meaning. Light and shading on Astounding covers is often missing in the finished reproduction. Strangely enough, Tales of Wonder covers, which are water colors, seem to improve, probably owing to the lack of depth in color make-up.

Did I forget Virgil Finlay? Not intentionally, for Finlay stands entirely alone on a pedestal of his own fashioning, as an artist, but I am dealing with the regular science fiction artists, excluding "weird" fiction.

MEET

"The Earl of Hell"

by
FORREST J
ACKERMAN



Among bibliotiles of fantasy the name Jos Gray Kitchell is well-known for one work wich readers hold in hi regard: "The Earl of Hell". For those of U not familiar with the title I no dout shoud explain at once it is not one of a supernatural theme but a true stf story, dealing as it does with the amazing discovery of "nil-grav".

The bk is reviewed on pg 18.

Curious circumstances led to my locating the author of this story, who is an Angeleño. One day recently the girls in my office were alfabetizing a number of mss submitted to our registry bureau, an auxiliary service of the Academy of Motion Pix Arts & Sciences for wich I work. As I varitypt I vaguely heard them reading authors & titles. Once I stopt Jo when she read "A Trillion Miles Thru Space" & found the author to be an Air City citizen (Dayton/O). Later, I bliev it was Beverly whom I heard say "Jos Gray Kitchell"--whereat I dropt what I was doing (luckily it wasnt counting eggs! --or do U think that's a pretty oval joke?) & said "Say, let me see that one!" The name was identical in spelling, sure enuf; & further the title of the ms registerd was "Roger Hamilton's Discovery", surely a scientificational-sounding one!

To top it all...at 1774 on a certn street in the Celluloid City lives one "Jan" Rader, acquaintance of mine; cinemactress of sorts, who was mistaken for Hedy Lamarr in "Lady of the Tropics" & spoke 2 words of Esperanto in the film (Universalanguage dialog by Yours Truly!); eschatologist; & one who has read some stf (mostly Merritt, Moore & Weinbaum--but not a bad beginning, -as U'll agree!) & even attended one the Hollywood meetings of the local imagi-natives. She, as I said, lives at 1774 on a certn st--& JGK on same at 1775!

I foned Kitchell at my first opportunity but was referd by Operator to a number at naboring beach Santa Monica. There they referd me back to the original dialing. Since it was then obvious I coud not reach him by fone to confirm fact he was indeed the stf author I thot, I sought him out personally. The firstime I calld he was out to dinner; the 2d I found the door of his apt. open, so knockt, stept in & askt "Is Mr Kitchell in?"

From down the hall came a woman's voice "Yes; come in."

As I walkt into a pleasantly furnisht living room I was at once disillusiond. No brimstone blasts scorcht my eyebrows--no acrid odor assaild my nostrils--no lost-souls' threnody beat upon my eardrums--no red, horned demon with pitchfork & twitching tail sat satanically on the Throne of Lucifer! Instead, I found a little white-haired lady knitting & her husband sitting nrby in loungeing-

robe, comfortably reading a paper & smoking a cigar...

I put my question pointblank: "Are U by any chance the author of 'The Earl of Hell'?" I askt.

"By no chance I am he" he ansrd.

"Then I bliev I may say I am one of your fans" I replyd.

"Be seated, by all means, young man!" he said; & his wife echoed "Yes, do be seated and let's talk with you."

"Have a cigar?" oferd Kitchell.

"No, reading scientifiction is my only vice" I replyd.

Then I said: "I read your bk about 10 yrs ago, when I was a little boy, in San Francisco. Do U noe your sort of story is regularly featured in magazines? Amongst fellows like myself, who follow them--I've been reading them practicly exclusively for almost 15 yrs--your story is held in hi esteem. Have U written any more?"

"No, I didn't know there were magazines devoted to science-stories" said he. (I withdrew Science Fiction, TWS & Astounding from my briefcase) "I have had other works published, yes; but none like 'The Earl of Hell'. That book got good notices, comparing me with men like Verne and Wells. I was a bit undecided about the title"--"I don't like it very well" interjected his wife--"but the publisher said, 'It's good, it's got guts', so so it stayed. One reviewer said, 'This man has an unholy imagination.' I didn't know whether it was a compliment or not."

Gray Kitchell is a gray-haired gentleman, in his 60s, I shoud say, who may be English from the fact that he is apt to use the expression "Don't you know", altho he does so without the usual British inflection. "Mother" (Mrs Kitchell) calld him Major, & there was some talk of Ordnance work of his. I shoud explain that I did not call on "the Earl of (Kitch)hell" with the idea in mind of interviewing him; took no notes; & about a wk has elapst til the time I write this; so certn unavoidable errors may creep in tho I shall exercise my memory to the best of my ability to keep them at a minimum. At any rate, I apologize to Maj. Kitchell for any mistakes & trust he will correct me on anything in wich I may be rong.

He is credited with the invention of "scientific composite photography". This is the process whereby many pictures are blended to make one--such as synthesizing the theoretically most beautiful woman in the world by combining fotos of Lamarr, Garbo, Dietrich et al. (Say, migosh, I wonder what U'd get if U made a scientificomposite of Moskowitz & Wohlheim, Miske & Shroyer???) By this process Kitchell combined 371 of the world's outstanding conceptions of The Madonna to create what art critics have acclaimed "the most beautiful face in existence."

Kitchell invented a "foto-by-wire" process different from that used today, wich never was patented as the other method apeard simultaneously. Kitchell bliev's anything man can conceive can be accomplisht; but that we do not have original thots, man merely appropriates ideas from the reservoir of the One Mind.

"Roger Hamilton's Discovery", this new story of his, is something suitable for the movies. It is a pituitaryarn; about twins, thought-transference & a method of reading minds--even a f t e r d e a t h t

Nilgrav is the marvelous mystery metal in The Earl of Hell which has the property of weightlessness. Moreover, it can be charged much like a glorified storage battery, and a large piece of the charged metal will strongly attract a smaller portion. An insulator for this force is found, and as a result Nilgrav can be used for power storage, transportation, and (quite logically) for perpetual motion.

The two portions which go together to make up the miracle metal are found in the Andes and on a south-sea isle on the opposite side of the earth. One after another its marvelous properties are found, the astonishing happenings resulting from the experiments earning for the hero the title of "The Earl of Hell". But the villain, a native of Hunovia, is attracted by the military possibilities of Nilgrav, and steals the only half he is able to find. To save the world the hero can do but one thing. He attaches the other, smaller half to a half-ton of TNT, fires it high into the air with a device to destroy the insulation, and lets the attractive power carry the explosive into the lap of the villain. Exit villain--and, alas, Nilgrav and its wonderful properties.

A few errors and some slightly wooden characters mar the story, but, given Nilgrav itself, events follow quite logically, and the book remains supreme as an early example of the antigravity yarn. It certainly has no rival in its class for interesting and daring ideas persuasively developed.

ART! I CHOKE!

Finally, a word in favor of the new men, Schomburg, Fuqua and Krupa, especially the latter two. I noticed a recent plea in a fan mag for the fans to bombard RAP with requests for Paul illustrations. A worthy ambition, yet entirely unnecessary, for Krupa and Fuqua are typical of the new Amazing, and I give RAP his just due for coaching and encouraging these newcomers to fantasy art work along the lines he thinks most suitable for his magazine.

Frankly, my own first reactions to their work were of vast disappointment---but within three issues I had reached the stage where I looked forward to seeing their work again, because I knew it would be different. One gets so used to expecting to find the "usual gang" inside the regular mags, that new artists are apt to get a raw deal---yet, analysed on the "art for art's sake" principle, they do not fall far short of perfection.

To have Paul back as a regular, means trying to attain a glory similar to a past decade---to try out new artists and authors means attempting to reach a new high, probably going higher, without the past glories as a boost. New men, new methods and progress go hand in hand.

Summing this entire article up, I find it the same as you do---just a lot of personal opinion!

LASFS STEPS OUT

by 'Jimmy' Laney

Miss Eleanor O'Brien has been appointed by the LASFS to head an entertainment committee, which will function in the best interests of the club, in selecting week-end and holiday trips, social events and other additions to the extra-curricular life of the Society. To date several suggested field trips are under consideration, among which are visits to the famous La Brea Tar Pits, the caves off Beachwood Drive in Hollywood where "Flash Gordon", "She", and hundreds of western pictures were filmed. Always convenient to visit is the popular Griffith Park Planetarium, as well as the Mt Wilson Observatory, where a cabin is at the disposal of the members for a one-day stay. Already inaugurated are the annual beach parties which will be continued this coming summer. Director Daugherty, whose mother manages a seaside hotel near San Diego, has invited the entire membership to a week-end stay at his mother's place, and April 26th has been tentatively set as the date for this trip.

In the special events department, auctions, a dance and lending libraries have been suggested as being both entertaining and beneficial to the treasury. Auctions have been carried on for some time, and plans for other events are being carried forward. It has long been the custom of the LA fans to hold special meetings on each fifth Thursday of the month, and plans are being made for a most unique affair. As a preview to the Chicon, members are to attend the event attired in fantastic costumes, designed to represent any character of science, fantasy or weird fiction, or motion pictures. Prizes will be awarded to the individuals wearing the most outstanding, clever and original regalia.

The work of this new committee indicates a most promising future for the social life of the LASFS.

I OBJECT

me to the category of "lady friend"? Why emphasize the feminine? Why not say, "Two West Coasters came dressed in clothes of the future."? I may be a friend of another Pacificoaster but I was at the Convention as a fan.

To sum up, the article was well written but rather disappointing as a source of information to me because of the erroneous reports concerning matters with which I, personally, am familiar. I had to consider that if there were errors of which I was aware there might be other errors, & that nothing contained in the article could be accepted as fact but that part which I knew from personal experience to be fact. Therefore,

If I can accept only that which I already know, of what value is the article except as an example of clever writing & the source of a few lafs to me, and a vehicle for gross misinformation to the public in general regarding scientifiiction circles.

FORMULA FOR UTOPIA

by

CHARLIE HORNIG

The people in the city of Los Angeles, and surroundings, are more science fiction conscious than the residents of any other city---American or foreign!

The best proof of this can be shown by the fact that more science fiction magazines are sold here, per capita, than anywhere else. Any science fiction publisher will tell you this.

It is true that the magazines are given a better display on the newsstands here than in most other places. Of course, space is cheaper here than in such cities as New York, and the newsstands are larger. Just last night I passed one stand downtown that had thirteen different fantasy magazines prominently displayed on the best shelf in the shop, spread out with full covers visible---a sight to gladden the heart of any fan!

Some back-number magazine stores in this town have special science fiction departments.. If you hang around one of these places for a short time, chances are you will see several people come in, look over the science fiction division, and perhaps buy a few copies of the issues on hand.

This is the only town I know of where you can walk around and spy science fiction fans on the street. The first time I met Paul Freehafer was when Forrie Ackerman and I ran into him while riding on a bus.

If you read a science fiction magazine in a public place, chances are that some perfect stranger will walk up to you and start a conversation about the subject. This may be due partly to the fact that strangers strike up conversations with strangers in this town more than anywhere else, anyway.

I think that the phenomenal success of science fiction in Los Angeles is due to the general attitude of the southern Californian. He is open to new ideas. He is not fettered by useless conventions. He is earnestly and energetically searching for a better, more Utopian future. He is wide awake and progressive. He leads the nation for open-mindedness. He is tolerant of the other man's opinion. He is not inclined to be conservative.

Of course, the southern Californian being a human being, he sometimes goes to excesses---sometimes he develops schemes and philosophies that are too fantastic to be practical. Sometimes he loses patience and wants to change the whole world overnight. Sometimes his thoughts are too far in the future to be put to any actual use.

But I think that the southern Californian will lead the nation into a happier, more sensible world. He is not afraid of his imagination---he has less prejudice and dogmatism---his convictions are elastic, and he will not support an outmoded idea because it was good enough for his father.

Many crackpot plans have come out of Los Angeles, but I can name

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"Success and Best Wishes"
come

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"Loads of Luck"
from
Larry and Lylda
to SHANGRI-LA

progressive American---Science Fiction, Esperanto, and Technocracy. I would like to see these three fields united for the common good. Science Fiction to stimulate our minds---Esperanto for a logical means of world-communication---and Technocracy for a scientific regulation of industry and society.

With apologies to Ackermanese, why not "Sciesperocracy"?

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The Rocket

Voice of the
Imagi-nation

Novacious

Futura
Fantasia

Sweetness
and
Light

Polaris

Mikros

