

COLLECTOR'S BUREAU #1 from Norm Metcalf, P.O. Box 336, Berkeley 1, California, USA. This is the official publication of the Collector's Bureau of the National Fantasy Federation (this information a rider with the Bureau of the National Fantasy Federation (this information Apr 63 TNFF for those of you who don't know (and those who could care less)). And for the benefit of those who index fanzines this is Crudpub #57.

((The following article is reprinted by permission of Robert Silverberg who wishes it clearly understood that this is a period piece. To gratify his wish it is reprinted from Rhodomagnetic Digest, Volume II, Number 5, March, 1951 Cutter # PN 3448, S4R5. Don Franson had the idea for re-reprinting this item (I can recall seeing it reprinted in Etherline and Hocus) to let you-all know what you're in for. So be it.))

## THE PERILS OF COMPLETISM

by  
Bob Silverberg

Completist: n., Lat. In reference to a rare and vanishing species of fan (Homo Superior); often connected with various other forms of insanity at the same time.

As long as there have been sfans there have been completists. As long as there is an attic, there will always be a Coswal.

"Completist" is applied, with a scornful smirk, to the fellow who believes he must have EVERY bit of science fiction issued. This takes various forms. One of the most unusual complete collections is that of Milt Rothman's collection of conventions attended. Other fans have narrowed their field down to collecting all Golden Atom stories, etc. By far the least sane of the lot is the Complete Completist.

This fraternity has numbered, at various times, such luminaries as Jack Darrow, Sam Moskowitz, Forrest J. Ackerman, and 1951's chief offender, Walter Coslet. Not only does this species attempt to collect all prozines ever issued -- from 1923 to date, this totals some 75 titles and 3,000 issues -- but goes in for anything remotely fantastic: such as a 1932 Saturday Evening Post story in which the family maid quotes four lines from Poe's "The Raven". This breed attempts also to corral all issues of all fanzines, dating back to 1930, including some two-thousand titles and just about the same number of issues. Certain wicked fans have been known to turn out one-shots in limited editions just to see a completist over a barrel; other equally nefarious publishers have issued titles solely for the completist trade.

Since fantasy branches widely, the average completist will find himself chasing down prozines, which aren't too hard to obtain for a price; fanzines, which are usually unobtainable for any price; issues of Argosy (this pulp appeared once a week for forty years, averaging twenty fantasy issues a year; this is 800 more on the pile), Bluebook (monthly for thirty years with at least 200 fantasy issues), All-Story, Cavalier, Argosy-All-Story, Popular, Golden Days, British Argosy, and so on.

The list drifts off into dreary immensities when the completist decides to corral also all articles pertaining to fantasy (cf. Coswal's Stefcard, which faithfully records such items); completists have bombarded the stf radio programs for old scripts, but these have not been forthcoming; other completists fill bookshelves with the different reprints of "Mars Is Heaven" and the Bonestell

pix from Conquest of Space.

Then -- oh pity, pity him -- the stf comic completist. These vary.

Some try to keep track of the four or five regular sf comics now published. ... while others wander back along the ageless corridors of time in search of copies of Brick Bradford, Flash Gordon, Buck Rogers and the like plus issues of the various Marvel and Wonder comics put out by the prcmags' companies themselves. (Also include Planet Comics '42 -- '49.)

Triply accursed is the fan who hooks up with a British fan, for the tantalizing offers dangling from Anglo-Saxon dollar-shy paws are rarely turned down. This introduces the completist to a brand-new world -- British fantasy.

This field includes, at the present time, five bona-fide prozines, plus regular editions, in different formats, of American prozines. These reprint editions include: Unknown Worlds, Astounding, Thrilling Wonder, Planet, Amazing, Fantastic Adventures, Startling Stories, Super Science, Fantastic Novels, Weird Tales, Science Fiction Quarterly, Horror Tales, Terror Tales, etc. ad infinitum.

Add to this an endless stream of British paperbacks, mostly John Russell Fearn, and such early items as Scoops, Science Fiction, Fantasy, Tales of Wonder, plus the short-lived 1946 efforts, and the completist has a virgin field awaiting him.

Then he turns to the Canadian field, which consists of Les Crouch -- the same Crouch who threw the horrid appellation of "completist" at Bob Silverberg once. Canadian editions include Science Fiction, Startling Stories, Thrilling Wonder Stories, Super Science, Astonishing, Uncanny and Eerie Tales. These last are three so rare that, as Les Crouch says, "I know many American completists who will sell their souls for copies".

No wonder completists who have these mags are like that... .

Still in the first happy haze of completism, the collector acquires some issues of Short Stories and Golden Fleece containing fantasy. He follows this with a complete file of Fantasy Press blurbs and reprinted Hannes Bok dust jackets.

We now find our happy little completist sitting comfortably in his two-room apartment. On his right side is a ten-foot pile of prozines; by accident his dentures fell just before he put them there; they are now under the Jun 28 issue of Amazing Stories, but he can't think of a way to get them out without disturbing the pile above them.

As a result he has neither smiled nor eaten since dropping them.

Space has reared its ugly head; the completist, unless he has a Coswaline attic, very quickly finds storage a problem. His room is filled with his three--thousand prozines in various states of disrepair; he no longer sleeps on a bed, but instead uses six feet of Palmer Amazings. He finds this a little rougher.

In the closets are the two-thousand fanzines. Since there is no longer any room for clothing in the closets, the completist is very rarely seen on the streets.

In the refrigerator are kept the copies of Marvel Tales for various reasons.



The kitchen contains the eleven-hundred British items; various other foreign publications are usually located in the bathtub, in which the completist has installed shelves. It is not used for bathing any more.

This is another reason why the completist rarely leaves his house.

The wall is lined with original paintings. The floor is lined with clip-pings. The completist is lined with .....

The unfortunate completist, no longer having any storage space, finds shortly that the twenty-six new prozines every month are too much for him. He does not buy Wonder Story Annual, thereby saving valued space. Gradually the floor level rises as it is covered by fanzines.

Since the average ceiling is ten feet high, and since the average completist has an eight-foot pile of fanzines covering his floor, the average completist is usually found lying prone just underneath the ceiling. Some completists have been known to remain in this position for years without stirring -- except to blow dust away.

He wonders vaguely who Heinlein is. The reason for this is that the uppermost fanzine contains an article on Heinlein. He has forgotten who Heinlein is, and the prozine files are eight feet below.

Eventually the whole apartment is filled to the ceiling with prozines and fanzines; the completist solves this in a characteristically fannish manner. Either he crawls to the window and leaps out or he sets fire to the house and remains inside.

Thus I've painted a rocky picture of completism. It's dangerous, expensive, unsanitary, unhealthy, and somewhat insane.

"Am I a completist?" you ask. Hell, yes! Come on in, the water's fine.

the end

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LETTERS TO DON FRANSON DEPT. (These people will definitely receive the next issue. As far as I heard from the membership the only interested persons were Don Franson, Ed Meskys and Ron Plzak. That ought to prove something.) + Ed Bryant.

Stuart S. Hoffman, Box 13, Black Earth, Wisconsin/Fantasy Unlimited, a non--profit organization, Box 13, Black Earth, Wisconsin. Stu Hoffman and Art Brush.

My partner and I plan to reprint some of the old science fiction and fantasy classics that are in the public domain. We are both printers and we plan to publish limited editions (200-250 copies) of deluxe volumes for the serious collector. There will be no charge for work. Only costs to be paper, ink, binding and transportation. Do you have any ideas on what the collectors might like to have printed?

K. Martin Carlson

Would suggest: fanzine listings; checklist of pro mags((already in existence)) reprint of #1 Bonfire ((it's been done)); circularize membership to find out interests of a majority; find out what new members would like to see published.

Don Franson's statement of policy for this outfit:

The N3F is setting up a Collector's Bureau. It will make possible an exchange of information between collectors (of stf and fantasy, not everything) in the club, by publishing a limited-edition bulletin, among other things. Do you have any suggestions for other activities? We invite you to become a member of the Collectors' Bureau, anyway.

Clayton Hamlin:

But a mention, a suggestion rather, about the proposed collectors' department. One thing I can suggest is a simple listing of all the book-sellers, not so much as ads, but just names and addresses, with maybe a line or so telling what they specialize in -- magazines, hard covers, Burroughs and such. It would certainly be mighty useful thing to anyone that buys these things. I certainly hope these plans materialize.

Stan Woolston:

While I'm not a completist, I keep what I get and so think I rate the title of collector in most regards. It's been my claim I'm an accumulator -- but for the sake of things I'll agree to be called a collector. A bulletin is a fine idea. There is one small idea I thought worth putting into effect, and years ago worked out some of the details: a standard form for volunteers who would cover various zines to mark down the contents of the zines as they came in (or of paperbacks, anthologies, etc.) in duplicate, with one copy to be retained and another sent to a publishing member, who would fix checklists at the end of each year (going by date on mags) so an annual checklist could be organized. I see the publishing department is starting an annual checklist (1961, at least, is out); this system wasn't needed apparently. But if set up, and the fan who did the checklist gafiated or eased up on his fanac due to other activities, another member of a group could take over managing the deal.

Of course, there would be need for several forms: one for zines, another for anthologies, etc. N3F had several periods when there were checklists on the agenda -- Redd Boggs did an Astounding Story Key (sic) and let the N3F reproduce it, for example. And there was an extensive project in which sheets of a checklist (with pseudonyms list, etc.) were distributed with TNFF, at one time. (I have quite a few copies of individual sheets but they aren't collected.)

There are a few ideas: perhaps special "collector" round-robins might be formed.

I see Kaymar's section of TNFF mentions Mirage -- "the fantasy fan's magazine." and there are specialty zines for various authors. Perhaps for collectors there could be articles -- on Silverlock, etc.

Author-Story Index for January 1955 to June 1956 is "in stock" --with about a half-dozen copies sold. The dime cost doesn't mean I've a gold mine here, but it does mean I'll be sending money to the N3F Treasurer when I've accumulated more. ((This index can be obtained by sending 10¢ to Stan Woolston, 12832 Westlake Street, Garden Grove, California.))

[Al Lewis here--Norm's typewriter gave out in the middle of stencilling this page, or this bulletin would have been longer. A small caveat concerning the Index above. It is worth the 10¢ asked--it covers Astounding, Amazing, Galaxy, F&SF, Fantastic Universe, etc. It does NOT cover Startling, Thrilling Wonder, Planet or the English mags. The Collector's Bureau is now off and running --what it amounts to is up to the collectors in the club. Let Norm hear from you.]