

BLOOMINGTON

NEWS LETTER

SPOTLIGHT

PEOPLE

Knowing the fantasy fan's penchant for assembly and verbosity, one spontaneous and two scheduled Labor Day conferences scattered across the western half of the United States provided the excuses for same this year. Score: Los Angeles 77, Minneapolis 16, Milwaukee 11. Probably the latter city lacked sufficient beer to pull them in.

Los Angeles, advertising it the "First Annual West Coast Scienti-Fantasy Conference," garnered their 77 attendees by promoting AE vanVogt, Ray Bradbury, Clare Winger Harris, Guy Gifford, John Scott Campbell and Robert C. Richardson to the speakers platform; and by making sure E. Mayne Hull, Bryce Walton, Ross Rocklyne, Bill Crawford, and the redoubtable Ackermann were in the audience. Scheduled, but unable to appear, were L. Ron Hubbard, John Taine, Edmond Hamilton, Leigh Brackett, CL Moore, Henry Kuttner and Edgar Rice Burroughs. EE Evans chairmanned the event, Walt Daugherty auctioneered to raise money for hall rent.

Richardson spoke on astronomy, pointing out that his science in the last 20 years had upset many science-fiction 'basic facts' --such as the belief that Venus was wet, or that Jupiter was boiling hot; and he went on to tell of the new 200-inch lens now on Mt. Palomar.

Campbell, of Cal Tech, dwelt on the problems posed by stories of characters who grew to 100-foot giants or dwindled to one-inch grass creepers, showing what such people would be up against from light rays and other energy forms.

Van Vogt, substituting for Hull, gave her speech on the woman's viewpoint of fanning and collecting, followed by a Q-and-A session. Bradbury advocated writers showing the pessimistic rather than the optimistic future, to wake us up; and DW Bratton indexed the present contents of the Fantasy Foundation library. Gifford spoke on fantasy art, Harris on writing.

(continued on last page)

PICTURES

Hanging over your head like a bomb is the much maligned, much feared, and very much misunderstood Bomb; and the average science-fiction fan need not sit back and pat himself on the back under the delusion he knows all about it. He doesn't. Our old friend, Joe Fann, had only one jump on the general public, and that is already lost: the Bomb was old hat to him long before the public dreamed it could exist.

Some of the public however are catching up, as you'll know if you follow "The Saturday Review of Literature." Listed in their 'Film Forum' department are ten films on physics, the Bomb, and the atomic age; these films are available to the public. One of them, "Atomic Physics," was shown at the Toronto convention to a bored audience. This one film, probably the driest of the lot, was a 90 minute definitive history of atomic energy, beginning in 1808.

If next year's convention committee be film-minded, they might look into one or more of the remaining nine films mentioned, particularly the following:

TALE OF TWO CITIES (produced by the war department), the cities being Hiroshima and Nagasaki. THE WAY OF PEACE (filmed in color), which opens with the creation and closes with the end of the world, including along the way scenes of atomic warfare.

Information on same has been forwarded to the convention committee.

As long ago as March of this year a California farm bureau director told his constituents that scientists at California Polytech had developed a new substance called 'rootin' designed as an antidote to radioactivity from those bombs. 'Rootin,' said the director, would be made public by official announcement very soon. That was eight months ago.

We've noticed a great lack of tootin' for rootin.

what's going on

Simon & Schuster, publishers of vVogt's "World of Null-A," are advising readers who purchased the book and mailed in the report card that the volume was an experiment, and that Null-A sales have caused them to plan a series of science-fiction novels to come. They ask for suggestions. Other publishers crying at the lack of business might cast an eye at the S&S 'report card' and follow-up sales letter treatment.

Meanwhile, old Californian vVogt will be happy to know the 'Canadian Author & Bookman' reports he recently deserted Canada because the ban on pulp magazines threatened his eating habit.

The Gnome Press, 421 Claremont Parkway, New York City 57, announces itself as now crowding the publisher's bench; and has hit the Fantasy Book Club with its first two volumes. The Gnoms succeeded Paul O'Connor's "New Collector's Group" (removed to Denver), and under the freshly washed hands of Martin Greenburg and David Kyle, plan a series of limited editions for collectors. Their first book, and the Club selection for August, was "The Carnelian Cube," by past-masters of fantasy, L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt.

To follow in October (and being distributed by the Fantasy Club as a dividend) is a Frank Owen collection of Oriental fantasies, "The Porcelain Magician." Cover for the latter volume is by Frances Dunn, whose pictures are being grabbed up by New York fans. (Sandwiched in between the two above-mentioned books, the Book Club is taking EE Smith's "Skylark Three" as its September selection.)

In re, next year's convention: the Cincinnati steering committee have selected the three Labor Day holidays, and are dickering with the Hotel Metropole there. The tentative plans call for local clubs throughout the country to furnish a part of the entertainment, so as to save the convention committee from making asses of themselves twice. Also under consideration is a separate auction for those who have duplicate books and originals to peddle.

'Tis still raining: in the mail comes a statement from 'Select Science Fiction' of PO Box 4171, St. Petersburg, Florida, that a new science-fiction magazine is aborning. Individuals behind the publication are not named; magazine will be sold by mail only. (quote:) "The editors of Select Science Fiction are interested in new writers! Each month the best manuscript submitted by a subscriber is published in Select Science Fiction plus other stories of the highest entertainment value!" (unquote)

Unmentioned is the price they'll pay for the entertainment.

SSgt Leroy Tackett, wartime marine, has re-enlisted and is again doing business at the old stand. Pearl Harbor is the address.

Eye-opening news of the month is the appearance of the 150-paged Francis Laney "memoirs," priced at a buck & fifty a copy. This giant and startling opus, rivaling in size and scope the Speer Fancyclopedia of prehistoric times, is packed with punchy, prejudiced information seen through Laney eyes. Bodies fall by the wayside and reputations are merrily shredded as our hero tells the tale of his introduction to that unspeakable microcosm, science-fiction fandom. The odyssey begins with his home life in Idaho and follows him to the wicked city of Los Angeles, where he opened his bright blue peepers and saw the light.

This timid observer, reviewing the Laney exploits from afar, cannot help from comparing his misadventures to a man engulfed by demon rum. 'Tis the man's own weakness, but he winds up by blaming the drink, not himself. Eager beavers with money orders clutched in their grimy paws may find Laney hawking copies at 816 Westboro Ave., Alhambra, Calif.

News from abroad by way of 'Fantasy Review', Walt Gilling's British pub: Olaf Stapledon opened the October lecture program of the British Interplanetary Society by discussing ethical and religious problems of space travel, colonization of the planets, and telepathic communication.

New York notes: Doc Lowndes has got himself married; name of the girl unknown. Science-fiction agents are on the lookout for yarns to submit to Popular Pubs, rumored to be preparing an issue of SuperScience Stories ... the magazine was a war casualty you'll remember. The Wollheims were in an auto crash enroute home from Toronto, without injury to themselves. Dave Kyle signed up at Columbia U for a writing course.

The dero mentioned as being at work setting farm fires in Macomb, Ill., (see page 1, last issue,) turned his attention this way and thoroughly sabotaged us before the ink was dry on the September issue. A few days before the mailing date, authorities announced they had discovered the cause: a young girl, irked at grandmother, had skipped about with a match, setting some 200 blazes. The dero was overhead sniggering gleefully as we danced around, suffering from his masterful hotfoot.

Don Day informs that the Portland, Ore. Science-Fantasy Society, publishers of the lithographed, highly-readable 'Fanscient,' plan a separate magazine to handle fiction by the de Courcy's (and others) which is unsuitable to the club mouthpiece.

A new publication scheduled and perhaps in circulation by now is Redd Boggs' "Chronoscope". His news letter, "Tympani," is all done.

A British correspondent, writing for the Canadian fanzine, "Light," states that Ted Carnell of London has booked passage to U.S. for the 1949 convention.

BOOKS AND WRITERS

The Case Of The Lazy Anthologist

Robert Bloch's very good short story, "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper," has appeared in an anthology ---again. This time Mr. Bennett Cerf included it in his pocketbook anthology, and it is about time somebody up and said: thereby hangs a tale.

Aside from the fact that it is a good story (to Bloch's credit), and that each appearance earns money (to Bloch's more abundant life), a weary eye might be cast at every new anthologist who comes along and uses it all over again, ignorant of or ignoring the fact that it has already been in print 10 times and broadcasted four. At present, the story is available in 2 books and 2 pocketbooks in this country alone.

- The Ripper's Bibliography -

Weird Tales (American edition)	1943
Weird Tales (Canadian edition)	43
The Mystery Companion (book)	44
Kate Smith Radio Show	44
The Opener of the Way (book)	45
Molle Mystery Theatre (radio show)	45
Stay Tuned For Terror (radio show)	45
The Mystery Companion (New Zealand ed)	45
Truth & Sportsman (Sydney, Australia)	46
Fireside Book of Suspense Stories	47
Molle Mystery Theatre (repeat)	48
The Mystery Companion (pocketbook)	48
The Unexpected (Bennett Cerf Pb)	48
The Opener of the Way (French ed)	?-48

Bloch informs us that there are two written and three radio versions of the one story. One written version is slower, more wordy than the other (apparently editors fail to see the difference); and the Molle people sabotaged the punch ending by adding an anticlimatic scene. He states that with the exception of August Derleth, no editor or buyer has ever asked him which story, in his opinion, would be best suitable for their purposes. Like this writer, Bloch wonders if anthologists merely borrow from other anthologists to save themselves time, and proceed on the theory that "it must be good or the others wouldn't have used it."

STRANGE PORTS OF CALL - August Derleth (\$ 3.75, Pellegrini & Cudahy, NYC, 1948)

Derleth has at last desisted from the anthologies of fantasy and weird tales he loves so well to produce one in the realm of science - fiction. His selections for this volume range from HG Wells, to HP Lovecraft (as might be expected from Derleth), to Ray Bradbury, and it will be a persnickety reader indeed who finds fault with his choices. Sturgeon, Miller, and vanVogt are included in the contents. Bradbury's "Million Year Picnic" is tops.



-bookplate by Hannes Bok
courtesy Shasta Publishers

FINAL BLACKOUT -by- L. Ron Hubbard (\$3, Hadley Press, Providence, RI, 1948)

First appearing as a magazine novel in 1940, Hubbard's grim story calls the war as it then appeared: Europe dragging the world down with it to total destruction; and a few wandering armies left on the continent, forever cut off from home, living off the land as they drifted north and south across Europe with the seasons.

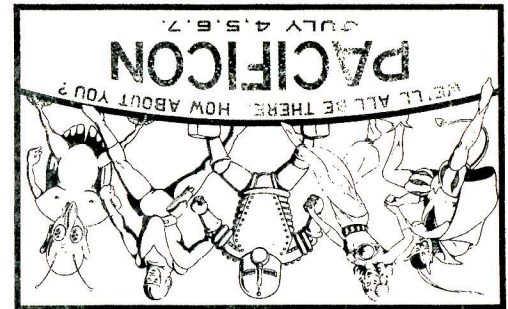
The story concerns a brigade in which the command has come down to a lieutenant and his non-coms, a group of "unkillables" who go on fighting the war on their own, mainly to stay alive. Read as a companion to "The 25th Hour" (by Herbert Best, Random House, 1940,) the twin books make an almost continuous history of the fall of mankind, 20th century.

SINISTER BARRIER by Eric Frank Russell (\$3, Fantasy Press, Reading, Penna., 1948)

Another former and highly successful magazine novel, which opens with a sudden, inexplicable rise in the death rate among world scientists, followed by the blowing-up of a radio station and a photographic laboratory --each as they were about to reveal information to the public. Chas. Fort called the turn when he asked: are we property? Russell elaborates on that chilling theme --that something else is sharing our world with us.

This implication and subsequent happenings make the book a "must" for your fantasy library.

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(Labor Day - continued)

Los Angeles had mailed out letters in an eight-state dragnet, and rented the 1946 convention hall in their effort to attract.

In Milwaukee, Bob Stein's conference pulled 5 from Michigan, 1 from Chicago, and 5 from the city beer made famous. The program, an impromptu affair, included attending an UAPA convention marshmallow roast and viewing the HG Wells double-bill "Man Who Worked Miracles" and "Things to Come". Groundwork for a Christmas bull-session in Detroit and a midwest club completed it.

Meanwhile, the Minneapolis thing just grew; only out-of-towners present were Camden of Chicago; Robinson of Indiana, and this writer who invited himself along. The Twin-city crew went in strongly for baseball, with the "Geeps" winning a double-header from the "Nanks," 28 to 21, and 9 to 8. Robinson pointed out that while he and I hampered the "Nank's" team by our undistinguished playing, the "Geeps" included three girls, making it evenly matched. Full account of the games and the week-end will be found in the MFS Bulletin #7.

Host Ollie Saari introduced the visitors to swimming in the clear water spring-fed lakes around the city, and to the Japanese colony there. Nanks and Geeps alike are queer in that they would rather listen to recordings and "funny" stories than play poker. Also on the agenda was a visit to a night club where the girl friend of Manse Brackney warbled nightly, and loose women sat around waiting to be picked up which they promptly were by loose men. It was an entertaining evening.

You've heard this song before: Unless you be an exchange editor, publisher, publicist, professional deadbeat, or cash customer (rare creatures!), you must write requesting the next issue if you want it.

THE LATE FANZINES worth mentioning: Fans of Frederick Faust (Max Brand plus 21 other names) will be interested in Darrell C. Richardson's giant memoriam and index to his works, now in its 2nd edition: 6 Silver Ave., South Fort Mitchell, Covington, Ky.

The Fanscient (#5), 3435 NE 38th Ave., Portland, Ore., is notable for presenting Thril Ladd, Henry Kuttner, and a DH Kelle r bibliography in one issue. Chronoscope, to date our page 2 item, has just arrived from Redd Boggs, 2215 NE Benjamin, Minneapolis, and an outstanding job it is. Triton #2 and Open Stfire #1 arrove together from Russell Woodman, 505 Washington, Portland, Maine. Printed, entertaining, is First Person Singular from Stan Woolston, 12832 S. West St, Garden Grove, Cal. Con Pederson has decided not to kill If! ifter all; if you're interested, try 705 W. Kelso, Inglewood, Cal.

Collectors wanting a copy of the Labor Day fracas program in Los Angeles may write EE Evans, 628 S. Bixel St., LA 14. And News-Letter exchanges subscriptions with all comers; send yours along or beware the note at bottom of left-hand column.

VISITOR TO BOX 260

within recent weeks: Vernell Coriell, Manito, Ill., just in off the road from a show; Vern played the Wisconsin State Fair, hosted the Milwaukee mob around the showgrounds. He plans to lithograph his Burroughs' Bulletin similar to this eldritch thing you're reading.

The two anonymous characters mentioned here last issue as knocking on my door and running have been identified as Bob Pavlat and Chick Derry, Hyattsville, Md., enroute home from the convention --- the long way.

FINAL FLASH: In re, Super Science Stories item on page two: Popular Pubs announces the magazine will appear in November, at 25¢ a copy, publish bi-monthly, with Joseph Quinn in the editing chair.