

BLOOMINGTON



NEWS LETTER

Tomes

About three years ago, Kenneth Kreuger of Buffalo advanced the idea of a fantasy book club, briefly advertised it, and was swallowed up by the army. A fantasy book store in San Jose, California, refers to itself as the "Readers Service Book Club". Three months ago in New York City the first actual Fantasy Book Club began operations.

Piloted by David Kyle, one-time science fiction writer and writer's agent, the club makes its headquarters at 300 West 67th St. Their first four selections, thru January of this year, embrace four of the biggest fantasy publishers:

- 1: THE CARNELIAN CUBE by L. Sprague de Camp & Fletcher Pratt. (Gnome Press, \$3)
- 2: SKYLARK THREE by Edward E. Smith. (Fantasy Press, \$3).
- 3: WITHOUT SORCERY by Theo. Sturgeon. (Prime Press, \$3).
- 4: SLAVES OF SLEEP by L. Ron Hubbard. (Shasta Publishers, \$3).

Operating on similar principals as other book clubs, the purchase of any two volumes at the regular price brings you a free premium; first two premiums available to members are THE PORCELAIN MAGICIAN by Frank Owen, and George O. Smith's PATTERN FOR CONQUEST, each from Gnome Press. Forthcoming selection is THE 31st OF FEBRUARY, by Nelson Bond. The club also distributes a 1949 fantasy calendar at a buck a throw, featuring artists Edd Cartier & Hannes Bok.

Published every other month for members is the club bulletin, detailing all club books and allied fantasy material. The bulletin buys short stories of 2000 words for \$25 (slanted fantasy-wise), and is conducting a contest to name the paper. Free copies may be had for the asking. The club did not give us a free book for this plug.

Transportation

Year after year without noticeable change a given set of reactions invariably follow every convention. The innumerable reports and diaries and articles and automobile logs are expected and welcomes; as are the breathless pronouncements of first-timers that "it was wonderful and I'll not miss another as long as I live!" These reactions are not only expected, they are demanded for the continuing social and political health of fantasy fandom.

Unnecessary however, but always present (the New Jersey crowd did it last time) are the complaints of the convention-goers who rush off pell-mell to the station, grab the first bus or train in sight, and then spend the following days moaning about the torturous transportation which not only upset their happy moods but left red welts on their fair, pink skins. This type of traveler deserves exactly what he gets: a train which gives him the works before depositing him in the convention city many hundreds of miles away. A railroad timetable is far easier to locate than an elusive magazine or book--and some of us spend months and years hunting the latter.

Thirty minutes with a timetable, it should be pointed out, not only show which trains are fastest, but which are the most comfortable and contain those services calculated to keep you full and reasonably happy for from four to forty-eight hours. Every train in every direction has a number which is printed at the top of the column showing the station stops. In the front of the book is a list of all the cars hauled by the train of that number. Trains which do not mention air-conditioning are the relics to avoid; trains which skip long lists of station-stops are the ones to choose. It is as simple as that, and even the gentleman from Jersey may travel to Cincinnati next year in reasonable comfort by picking up a timetable at the station now.

Next issue we publish a list of fastest trains.



ASSOCIATED FANTASY PUBLISHERS

ARKHAM HOUSE	FANTASY PUB. CO., Inc.	NEWERA PUBLISHERS
AVALON COMPANY	GNOME PRESS	PRIME PRESS
FANTASY PRESS	HADLEY PUB. CO.	SHASTA PUBLISHERS

The Associated Fantasy Publishers sponsored this display booth at the November Book Festival, Museum of Science & Industry, Radio City, New York

(Meyer Photo, NYC)
(courtesy: Shasta)

Hannes Bok painted the backdrop. The Association is the result of an idea advanced at the Toronto convention, and embraces nine publishers.



HALO FOR SATAN -by John Evans
(\$2.50, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1948)

This is a mystery, a good mystery with the sharpest stinger in its tail as you're likely to find anywhere, and is reviewed here because of the fantastic theme of its plot: the search throughout Chicago for an ancient manuscript in the handwriting of Christ.

A bishop puts the detective on the trail of the manuscript, desiring to buy it for his church for 25 million dollars; an infamous gangster also wants it, believing he can buy his way into heaven with the startling document. Author John Evans (who is Howard Browne of Ziff-Davis renown) puts a mighty punch into an off-trail mystery.

DEATH'S DEPUTY -by L. Ron Hubbard
(\$2.50, Fantasy Pub Co., Los Angeles, 1948)

Ablly illustrated by Lou Goldstone, this short novel from Unknown's pages tells what happens to Clayton McLean, whom insurance companies call an "accident prone". In league against his will with someone who is suspiciously akin to the devil, McLean leads a life of misery and safety while all around him die. This is supposed to be a terrible thing. When he takes a wife, his dilemma increases as he expects daily to bring accident or death to her. Hubbard has written better novels, but this is not so poor as to be ignored.

An eye-opening dust jacket surrounds a fair printing and binding job.

MOONFOAM AND SORCERIES -by Stanley Mullen
(\$3, Gorgon Press, Denver, Colorado, 1948)

Privately published, this volume is a delight to the collector of fine editions and fine fantasy. The book is expertly designed and printed, bound in cloth, with a silver and blue jacket by Roy Hunt; Hunt also did the 13 interior illustrations (two of which sprang from the ancient fanzine, *Le Zombie*.) Physically, the book stands head and shoulder above most of the product coming from the fantasy presses today.

Mullen presents 13 tales and 13 poems representing his best work; we personally liked best "Queen Bee," "The Tavern of The Winds," and "All Cats Are Grey at Night." This is recommended for your library.

THE WITCH WOMAN -by James Branch Cabell
(\$2.50, Farrar-Straus Co., New York, 1948)

The Cabell fans in the audience will welcome the appearance of this book, the first of a series of reprints of his works. This one concerns the magic realm of Poictesme; the author has woven together three previously published tales: "Music From Behind the Moon," "The Way of Ecbe," and "The White Robe," with added material to give them cohesion in this 160 paged tome.

These three tales concern a singer who wanders the world, searching out a strange melody; a king who forsook his throne to seek out a witch woman; and an evil werewolf bishop who found himself in heaven.

BOOKS AND WRITERS

The Return of James Branch Cabell

Every so often there appears a book so outstanding that the brief space devoted to its review does the volume an injustice. Such a book is Cabell's *THE WITCH-WOMAN*, reviewed on the opposite page.

Ettarre, the beautiful, devilish witch woman is present in each of the three yarns making up the book; Ettarre was brought back from banishment from behind the moon by a poet who, with the adroit use of a decimal point in the Book of the Norns, rolled back all recorded history for 584 years, incidentally freeing the girl. His story is told in "The Music from Behind the Moon;" it was her music he was seeking and her music which gives the tale its title.

Probably the most pungent yarn in the volume is the third, "The White Robe." The robe is the badge of office of the Abbot of St. Hoprig, who in his youth was a sly and murderous werewolf bent on making love to Ettarre. She would have none of him, and so he informed on her, causing her death. Forthwith the youth entered a monastery and in due time gained his office and a fine reputation. The delicious irony of the story bears bitter fruit upon the death of the kindly Abbot and his departure for the Heaven to which he had converted so many. Ettarre accompanies him on the journey, providing his final temptation.

Only a stranger to Cabell knows not that he writes with a sharp tongue in his cheek and a bittersweet dart to his pen, delighting in underscoring the foibles of man and magician. Farrar-Straus, his publishers, announce this book as the first of a series of reprints to come; this reader is looking forward to the next.

Fantasy Press (Reading, Penna.) have announced their first three titles for 1949 and, parting with their tradition of re-printing in book form only old magazine novels of merit, promise that the 4th title is a new one now being written to order.

The three titles coming soon are: "A Martian Odyssey & Others" by Weinbaum (which will include 12 of his yarns); "Seven Out Of Time" by Zagat (the Argosy serial); and "The Incredible Planet" by Campbell (which has never before been published). Coming in February is the delayed "Skylark of Valeron" by EE Smith, which was on the 1948 schedule. All titles named are \$3 each.

Robert Bloch's psychoanalytic murder novel of last year, *THE SCARF*, has been re-published in a pocket 35¢ edition.

Will you be in Cincinnati Labor Day?

The Labours of Hercules

First Men & Etc. in the Moon

Bringing to a head all the loose talk going on in public prints and public bars about that fantastic idea of sending out a rocket ship to the lunar world, *LIFE* magazine for Jan 17 ran an extensive spread depicting the problems of men and machines on the long journey to the moon. *LIFE* seemed to think conquering space was a matter of inventive ingenuity, powerful fuel, mighty men and a whole flock of dollars.

The dreamers.

As in any great venture begun in these modern days, three-fourths of the problems of launching a space ship are as hidden beneath the surface of civilization's veneer as the greater mass of an iceberg. Only when you've surmounted the visible obstacle do you discover the mighty bulk beneath. These hidden problems of a lunar voyage must be met before the ship blasts a jet.

The fuel: "Fuel X" must be the most potent force yet known to man, so powerful as to humble all before it, so mighty as to automatically cancel all claims to greatness of any fuel now in existence. Think you that Standard Oil will take this lying down? Or that Phillips 66 will stand idly by, permitting Royal Dutch Shell to blazon into print with a new advertising slogan: "A Ship to Luna---and Shell with it;"? Or Texaco might point out that the Flying Red Horse was the first to reach the moon. Obviously this problem must be dealt with.

Of paramount importance to our future civilization are the men, those gods-to-be, who are selected to make the first, daring voyage. Not only do precious instruments, priceless knowledge, and the probable fortunes of war depend upon their courage and brawn, but many a financial empire as well.

Which of those intrepid explorers were Allen-A shorts? Does the gallant captain eat Grape Nut Flakes for breakfast? Did they pause enroute to refresh with a Coke? And the astrogator--did he not take a sixty second workout with Vitalis? Was it Molle or Burma-Shave they used with their Schick Injectors just before disembarking to meet the lunar ladies? Did the mechanic make repairs with Genuine Ford Parts? And how many of the crew switched to Calvert?

The nation obviously cannot afford to shove these brave young men into space if they suffer throat irritation in their T-Zone; and it is only fair that upon their victorious return, all or none be offered movie contracts to portray Tarzan. Book publishers, when tempting crewmen with fat fees for the stories of their life, should be obliged to observe rank and seniority.

To which union shall these men belong?

CLEARING HOUSE

News of the month is the appearance of the official Toronto Convention Report, an enviable record of undue promptness. Fantasy fandom still awaits the publication of the 1947 "Philcon Memory Book," and the transfer of funds from the 1946 Los Angeles convention to the coffers of the National Fantasy Fan Federation.

The 1948 Torcon Report (obtainable at 50¢ from Ned McKeown, 1398 Mt. Pleasant Road, Toronto, 12, Ont.,) presents in its 60 pages the scripts of all speeches, all entertainment, and all maps and charts displayed at the convention. In addition there are numerous eye-witness reports, post-convention letters, and pretty pictures (the one facing page 26 is nice.)

Married in New York on Thanksgiving: Fred Pohl (former editor of Astonishing and Super Science, now writer and agent), to Judith Merril (Astounding writer, and asst. editor of the two-bit Bantam Books.)

Chairmanned by A.E. Waldo, the 1948 version of the annual Philadelphia Conference garnered 60 people on November 21st, who listened to L. Sprague de Camp expound on time-travel and fourth-dimension themes; and Lester del Ray explore interplanetary "Frontiers," a topic and speech he whipped up 30 minutes before the meet opened.

The usual raffle paid expenses, after which an old silent movie, "The Fall of the House Of Usher" was shown, with musical background provided by Maestro Rothman and his phonograph record orchestra. The maestro encountered difficulty in making the records and the movie end at the same time. In his own words: "Towards the end there was some frantic fanagling to make the climax of the picture and the music arrive together. Finally, after playing the last side of 'Daphnis and Chloe' four times, I got the House of Usher to fall and the record to end within five seconds of each other. What a triumph!"

Venturing into the wilds of California three months ago were Sophia & Stan Mullen, Denver duo who publish the Gorgon (also see Books, next page). Visiting big and little names in Frisco, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Alhambra and South Gate, the Mullens latched onto and bummed meals from almost every fantasy writer and friend on the Coast.

They attended the LASFS Halloween Party, got in a fight with a drunk who mistook Stan for a cop, discussed arrangements for selling his stories to a Mexican science-fiction mag, and bedevilled his agent, Ackerman. (Mullen is in new Planet and Super Science issues.)

Ben Singer (Detroit) and Joe Schaumburger (Brooklyn) now in the army. Our gain is the army's loss.



-by Bruce Berry
courtesy Perri Press

"Fantasy Art Set," an original idea cooked up and served by the Perri Press, Box 5007, Portland, Oregon, consists of ten postcards bearing prize-winning illustrations by ten fantasy artists: Bruce Berry, William Kroll, John Grossman, Ken Brown, Miles Eaton, Con Pederson, Ralph Rayburn Phillips, John Cockcroft, O.G. Estes, and Donald Day. If Perri Press is seriously interested in putting the government out of the postcard business they might give that to this: a special souvenir postal to mail home from the convention, on sale there.

Ray Bradbury's Arkham House anthology, "Dark Carnival," was published in London.

The long awaited DH Keller book, "Sign of the Burning Hart" (correct spelling) is finally available and distribution is proceeding at the hands of Paul Spencer, who tells us the entire edition is sold out.

- Organizations -

In New York on December 26 the Hydra Club offered its first Christmas party at Gramercy Park Hotel, with Lester del Ray as chairman and Fletcher Pratt, William Tenn, Jerome Stanton, Theofore Sturgeon, George O Smith, Milton Rothman, Frederic Brown and others on the scheduled program.

Fall elections: of 300 members in the NFFF, 184 cast ballots to reelect Dale Tarr president, and (1) Rick Sneary (2) Darrell C. Richardson (3) Ray Higgs (4) Art Rapp (5) Ed Cox as Directors. Leslie Hudson of Roseland, Va., appointed Secy-treasurer.

FAPA: 65 members voted in Rick Sneary as president, Charles Burbee as his vice, Redd Boggs as Secy-treasurer, and Fran Laney as editor. None had opposition for office.

Detroit had its "Decon" on Dec. 28-29 for those Michigan-and-environ habitants who felt the urge. Ed Kuss was chairman; no details of meeting were received at press time.

Seventy-five hand picked fans received a few weeks ago the blank forms of the 1948 version of the Dreamland Opinionator Poll; the results of which are to appear soon in FANTASY ANNUAL, a project edited by Boggs and Wilson, published by Ackerman.

The 75 chosen ones were asked to jot down their choices for the ten best prozine stories, and ten fanzines. In addition they were to list the five best (fan) writers, critics, editors, publishers, article writers, humorists, fictioneers, artists, "best fans," & "worst fans;" the five best pro authors, and artists, and five books. Finally, the three best fan events of 1948 and the three best fan clubs.

Boggs was instrumental in choosing the 75 old hands (based on their knowledge of the field), publishing was by Wilson and Miller, financing by the NFFF. FANTASY ANNUAL will be obtainable from Box 6151, Metropolitan Station, Los Angeles.

The revived Super Science Stories came on midwestern stands in early January ... two months after announced date, containing eight yarns, four fannish departments, 14 assorted illustrations, 7 book reviews, and 47 advertisements, not to mention one of the worst jobs of printing extant. Printed in Canada, the magazine was lugged across the border and entered at the Niagara Falls postoffice. Authors represented are Blish, Kuttner, Mullen, Kubilius, Bradbury, Wellman, Cartmill, and "Vaid," a pseudonym.

Roy Lavendar, Cincy Convention committeeman, is planning a special publication to be available only at the convention. This note is not as innocuous as it seems.

Meanwhile, the Cincinnati committee has published its first pre-convention report, listing the initial hundred people who put their signatures on the dotted line as "charter" members; and reviewing the tentative program and plans. Secretary is Don Ford, 129 Maple Ave., Sharonville, Ohio.

A movement afoot within the National Fantasy Fan Federation is to organize a women's auxiliary; if the ladies can prod the male faction to action, their success is assured. Florence Anderson, St. George, Utah, is the prime mover.

Fanzine editors publishing on skimpy budgets received a blow with the New Year when postal rates for this class of mail were increased to 2¢, replacing the old 1½¢ rate. Fanzine editors howling about delays enroute on the delivery of their brain children should affix pre-cancelled stamps to them; this saves several hours (and even a day in some postoffices) because the pre-cancelled stamp travels directly from mail slot to outgoing sack, eliminating the bottleneck of the cancelling machine. Non-essential mail (such as fanzines) have no priority and get the machine when the rest of the load is out of the way.

OUR READERS

This is the third issue of BN-L in its new format and the third time it has become necessary to explain the existence of the paper to our lovely, ignorant readers who persist in misunderstanding our policies.

Despite the name, it is NOT a fantasy newspaper; an organ which publishes every second month cannot hope to be a newspaper. It IS an information sheet on fantasy books and people and events, but mainly books. Scattered among the pages are many items of news value that you may not have already read in Fantasy News or Fantasy Times. But this is not, nor does it hope to be, a spot news sheet. And in connection with this, we thank those kind souls who offered to use their influence to have the Nat'l Fantasy Fan Federation, or the Fantasy Foundation underwrite our publishing costs: the only catch being we were to publish twice a month on a spot-news basis.

We thank these people for their well-meant offers, but decline. We agree with them that there is a need for a faster and more widely-circulated newsheet but still, we decline. BN-L is published as a hobby, in our spare time, at no charge to the readers. We prefer it to remain thusly for the present. The only thing we ask in return for this (and all future) issues is that you drop a postcard acknowledging receipt, and stating if you want more. More dense readers have run afoul this small requirement than there are spots on Jupiter.

News-Letter is circulated among book publishers and associates, authors whose works are reviewed herein, students, fantasy writers, agents and magazine editors, some bookstores, and fans who publish and send us their magazines in exchange..

If you are not in any of the above categories, you may have your copies free providing you send us a postal or letter after each issue, requesting the next. If you do not write, you do not get it. It is difficult to make it any plainer than that; most of our 500 circulation falls in the latter group so wake up and spend a penny. At present we do not accept cash subscriptions; this may come later if News-Letter shows some signs of permanence. Advertising rates are six dollars per page, and down, proportionality. Printed and inked illustrations (see pages 1, 4, 6) can be included; photographs (page 2) cost extra. Do not submit advertisements without obtaining format size in advance; issues are made up on oversize dummies and then boiled down to the size of this page. This allows us nearly 1000 words of text. Anythingelse you want to know?

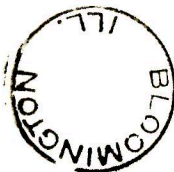
Bob Tucker

SCIENCE FICTION LEAGUE

Rochland, Maine

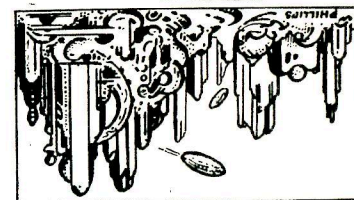
43A Broad st.

Norm Stanley



Seventh World Science Fiction Convention

SEPTEMBER 3-4-5



Box 260 Bloomington, Ill.

No. 8 ** FEBRUARY 1949

BLOOMINGTON NEWS - LETTER

6

FANTASY REVIEW

Vol. II, No. 12 ONE SHILLING DEC. '48—JAN. '49

OLAF STAPLEDON'S vision of INTERPLANETARY MAN

Special Interview with

Edgar Rice Burroughs

**A SOVIET VIEW OF
SCIENCE FICTION**

HOW 'WONDER STORIES' BEGAN

**Mr. Shaver and the
Flying Saucers**

JOHN BEYNON asks:

WHY BLAME WELLS ?

FANTASY BOOK REVIEWS

AMONG THE MAGAZINES

FANTASY FORUM

EXPANSION

The leading fan magazine in England (and perhaps America as well) is Walter Gillings' slick, printed, 32-paged FANTASY REVIEW, whose January cover is reproduced across the page. With this issue, REVIEW almost doubled its size and contents, upped the price to \$1.50 yearly for American and Canadian readers, and continues to appear every other month. It contains 7 articles, 7 book reviews, 3 columns, 6 photographs, and totals nearly 20,000 words.

VISITOR TO BOX 260

within recent weeks was Dick Wilson, former fan and pro editor, writer, bigwig. Wilson, now manager of the Chicago Bureau of TransRadio Press, repaid a visit preparatory to his transfer first to Washington and then New York. Remaining in Chicago as new Bureau manager will be Cyril Kornbluth, another former fantasy writer.

THE LATE FANZINES

worth mentioning do not include all of the 30 or more received in the past three months--and who sent us a copy of "The Psychic World" in which someone named Emhetobah describes a Dr. Cannom getting messages from The Great Beyond ????

Worthwhile are Redd Bogg's SKY HOOK #4 from which we want to reprint "Science Marches on!"; the initial issue of Jim Leary's ALIEN CULTURE is perfect if Harmon w 1 l 1 stop illustrating his articles; and thanks to Lilith Lorraine for DIFFERENT, which is; the first issue of DAWN comes up from Kentucky instead of the Atlantic; Searles is back with the 20th FANTASY COMMENTATOR; and two new ones take to lithography for classy appearance: SCIENTIFANTASY and SCIENCE,**** FANTASY,***AND SCIENCE-FICTION, but why not boil down that name? Gad! Don Day's FAN-SCIENT is tops as usual; FANTASY TIMES just published its 73rd issue; Michigan fanzines like MUTANT and SPACEWARP have a tendency to cram too much on the page.