

science fiction

July, 1950

10¢ a copy

NEWS LETTER

Redd Boggs

On Campbell, and others

John W. Campbell, Jr., is the greatest editor in science fiction's history. Street & Smith should replace John W. Campbell as editor of Astounding SCIENCE FICTION. I believe equally each of those statements, and I do not consider them contradictory. No editor has ever given us a greater supply of great stories than Campbell, but then, the same praise could have been given in 1937 to his predecessor, F. Orlin Tremaine. It was Tremaine remember, who first put Astounding ahead of the parade --- Campbell merely kept it there. Tremaine gave us such 'classics' as "Twilight," "Sidewise in Time," "Alas, All Thinking," and "Davy Jones' Ambassador", --- stories the Campbell magazine has occasionally equaled but never surpassed. But by the end of 1937 Astounding had fallen into a rut and it took a new editor to pull it out.

Campbell has piloted aSF thru some gaudy, eventful years--- the fabulous Heinlein era, the vanVogt and Padgett years, and the day of the atomigeddon yarn. But now aSF has fallen into a rut deeper than the one of 1937 and it needs a new editor to give it that fresh slant to save it again.



Campbell has tried hard to provide a new spark. He has discovered or developed such new writers as Poul Anderson, John D. MacDonald, Katherine MacLean, and others, but apparently realizing that even their efforts have not been sufficient to lift the surly gloom that is aSF's prevailing mood, he has resorted to the formula relied on by Sunday supplements-- the Sensation, the Eye-opener. His whimsical attempt at making prophecy come true, the genial hoaxes such as "The Aphrodite Project" followed this formula.

While "project" and its brethern somewhat weakened aSF's reputation, as is indicated by Campbell's frequent assertion that this article or that one is "definitely not a hoax," these attempts were relatively harmless compared to his latest Eye-opener:

(continued on page eight)

FIVE NEW MAGAZINES COMING

Five additional science fiction and fantasy magazines are soon to be added to the horde of worthy (and otherwise) pulps now overflowing the newsstands. And later, unconfirmed reports tell of three others. A new semi-fantasy magazine has appeared in Canada (see Letters to the Editor).

World Editions #1: writer H.L. Gold is now editing for August release a monthly s-f magazine which will appear in digest size, 160pp, priced at 25¢. The title has not yet been released. The publishers are a European concern making their debut in this country. Gold is using book-length novels that are actually book-length, not novelettes palmed off as novels. Magazine will be rounded out with short stories.

World Editions #2: Details most scanty. Literary agents report H.L. Gold is planning a fantasy companion to the above, while Gold says only: "If (#1) is successful, we have large plans which will be put into operation without delay."

Gnome Press #1: The title will not be made known until just before publication. This magazine is being edited by Phil Klass (writer William Tenn), priced at 25¢, with a first issue ready by September. Science-fiction, pulp format but parapulp in slant. Bi-monthly until February 1951.

Nova Publications (England): The first issue of SCIENCE-FANTASY will be published in July as a quarterly science fiction magazine, edited by Walter Gillings. From the same publisher as Ted Carnell's NEW WORLDS, the subscription price to USA will be \$1.50 for five issues. The magazine will include Science - Fantasy Review, the fan magazine from which it sprang, and appear in a digest format similar to Boucher's job.

American Fiction Group: Robert O. Erisman's revived MARVEL SCIENCE STORIES is to reappear in August, with these contents: "Trin" by AJ Burks, "Temptress of the Time" (continued on page seven)

the leading newspaper of the science fiction world

SCIENCE FICTION BOOKSHELF

reviewed by
Jerry Sohl
Mari Beth Wheeler
and The Editor

THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES by Ray Bradbury (Doubleday & Co, 1950, \$2.50)

Of the several above-average books to be reviewed in this issue, Bradbury's tome is easily tops; readers who compile end-of-the-year bests will add this title to THE CONQUEST OF SPACE and THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON.

You will remember some of these tales: those first few expeditions to Mars and the fates they met. One crew was put in an insane asylum, another murdered, a third believed they were in heaven ... but a succession of exploiters finally conquered the weary planet, spelled its doom with chicken pox, and Man reigned supreme---until They decided to go home again, leaving it the worse for Their wear. Altho the book consists of previously published short stories plus new material, all has been skillfully woven together to provide a continuous saga of the conquest of Mars. Several yarns are outstanding: the Negroes who leave their homes for the rocketship; the last Man who discovers the Last Woman, only to flee from her; another Last Man who cannot bear the death of his family and creates them again; the savage, ignorant despoiler who erects the gaudiest hot dog stand on the planet; the old man who sits and rocks contentedly in the middle of a deserted highway, listening to his phone ring every few years ... oh, buy it! -MBW & BT

THE RAT RACE by Jay Franklin
(Fantasy Publishing Co, Inc., 8318 Avalon
Blvd, Los Angeles 3, Cal. 1950. \$3.00).

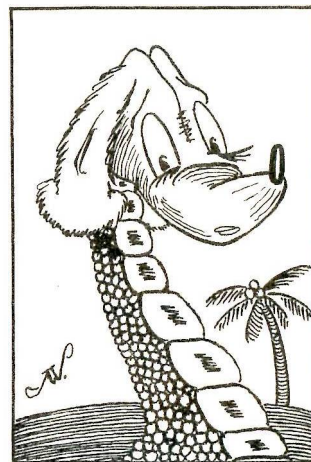
I liked this one altho the dyed-in-the-wool science fan will not; it isn't science-fiction, but an off-trail novel which blends the effect of a thorium bomb with the human comedy---this rat race we live in. The yarn originally appeared in Colliers and carries the traces of slick magazine treatment.

An atomic explosion destroys a man and his ship, wipes them out of existence; but the man recovers consciousness in another's body -- possessing the other's wife, house, business and troubles. Because he knows of the explosion while it is still top secret, the FBI jumps him; having advance notice of FD Roosevelt's death, the Secret Service add their mite to his woes; while his continuous search for the soul of the man he pushed out of the body builds the theme of the book. He finds the evicted soul all right, as does the reader long before him. -BT

SEETEE SHOCK by Will Stewart
(Simon & Schuster, New York. 1950. \$2.50)

The perfect way to introduce a western story reader to science-fiction. Fast moving action-packed drama of the same type as pulp western novels-- with seetee bulls and space ships doubling for hosses, pardner, away up yonder in 2171 A.D.

Nicol Jenkins conquers space, seetee poison, and a cowardly band of seetee rustlers and professional war mongers ---all for the love of Jane. He rescues his friends on Freedonia, completes the Receptor and prevents interplanetary war. -MBW



NEEDLE by Hal Clement
(Doubleday & Co., New York. 1950. \$2.50)

A tense, taut story of the hunted -- and the Hunter -- is told here, another fine s-f novel from Doubleday's presses. It's the convincing story of the Hunter (altho he is a symbiote, a many-celled creature who has to live within the body of another, he become quite human early in the book). The Hunter uses young Robert Kinnaird as his host and together they set out to literally find a needle in a haystack--another symbiote that escaped from the Hunter when a chase thru space ended in a crash on Earth.

Clement's description of the Hunter's processes of dissolving into others is some of the most graphic and vivid writing seen in many a day. The events, obstacles and action is so human you almost lose sight of the fact that it isn't really happening. Clement is a Harvard grad with a B.S. in astronomy and a Master's in education, and is a science teacher. He misses no bets in this smooth flowing, crisis-strewn story of two adaptable metazoons who come from the other side of the stars. -JS

BEYOND TIME & SPACE edited by August Derleth
(Pellegrini & Cudahy, New York, 1950, \$4.50)

The new trend in compiling anthologies is to build the book about a theme or an idea, as witness titles reviewed last issue, and elsewhere in this department. Derleth has gone such anthologists one better and made a compendium of science-fiction thru the ages. I, for one, applaud the idea.

In this 640-paged giant you will find s-f by Plato, Sir Thomas More, Rabelais, Campanella, Bellamy, Bacon, Verne, Swift, Stockton, Kepler, Poe, Lucian, Godwin, Holberg, Wells, Hodgson, and so forth, down to modern day writers as Van Vogt, Keller, Stapledon, Wandrei, Smith, Leiber, Weinbaum, Sturgeon, Bradbury, Long, Heinlein, Hamilton, Padgett, etc. The book is about evenly divided, in that some of the older stories are imaginatively entertaining but the newer ones the more enjoyable because of fresher acquaintance. -BT

(continued on page six)

DOLLAR BOOKS THIS FALL

With science-fiction books selling for from \$2 to \$5 and many an impoverished collector passing them by, waiting hopefully for a 39¢ remaindered copy, the inevitable has arrived to save his purse. Two publishers will offer one-dollar reprints this autumn, and one of them also promising originals at the same low price.

Grosset & Dunlap, the last mentioned, is introducing its line with Henry Kuttner's *FURY*, to be followed by *THE ISLAND OF CAPT. SPARROW* (S. Fowler Wright), *THE WORLD OF -A* (AE van Vogt), and *THE HUMANIDS* (Jack Williamson). Groff Conklin is editing the line, none to be ready before October.

Doubleday, the original publishers who last year brought out both Isaac Asimov's *PEBBLE IN THE SKY* and Hal Clement's *NEEDLE*, are reprinting both titles in September at \$1. The same month, at the same price, comes *BEST SUPERNATURAL STORIES OF HP LOVECRAFT*, edited by August Derleth, from World Publishers.



Groff Conklin is also the editor of a new anthology from Crown Publishers: *THE BIG BOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION*. It includes from 35 to 40 yarns, on sale in August at \$3, and is uniform with his two previous collections published by the same house.

Another new book house entering the s-f field is the big city's Greenberg: Publisher, who will begin his series this summer with three: *THE HOUSE THAT STOOD STILL* (AE van Vogt), *THE DREAMING JEWELS* (Theo Sturgeon), and *THE GREEN MAN OF GRAYPEC* (Festus Pragnell). All at \$2.50.

Fantasy Press has acquired from Hadley Publishers (now defunct) the book rights to two John Taine novels, *SEEDS OF LIFE* and *THE WHITE LILY*, adding the tomes to their future list. Meanwhile, *TRIPLANETARY* by EE Smith has gone into a second edition with a total of 7000 copies in print. The color of the cover was changed for the new edition.

THE POCKETBOOK BONANZA

Avon's second and third titles in their science novel series, *THE GREEN GIRL* (Jack Williamson) and *INTO PLUTONIAN DEPTHS* (Stanley Coblentz) are already on sale. Another reprint of Merritt's *SEVEN FOOTPRINTS* is due this month. Ralph Milne Farley's *EARTH MAN ON VENUS* ready in July. Also in July, from Signet Books, is George Orwell's best-seller of last year, *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR*. Coming in September are: Max Ehrlich's *THE BIG EYE* from Popular Library, Edmond Hamilton's *THE STAR KINGS* from Signet, H. Rider Haggard's *KING SOLOMAN'S MINES* from Dell, and Curt Siodmak's *DONOVAN'S BRAIN* from Bantam.

H.L. Gold (see page 1) states that his company plans to launch a new series of s-f pocketbooks after the magazines are out.

PEOPLE

Don Day and wife visited the San Francisco area in early May, attending club meetings, spreading convention propaganda, and lining up program speakers; also discovered Jim Kepner & Mel Brown operating a bookstore on Telegraph Hill.

William Austin of the Wolfden Bookshop, (724 Pike St, Seattle 1, Wash.) has begun publication of a "Report Card" listing complete contents of all 1950 s-f magazines, plus a rating of those contents. First two issues were typed; April number is mimeo'd and lists 21 magazines, 3 pocketbooks, four other items, totalling 341 stories.

Judith Merrill & Fred Pohl are expecting a young science-fiction fan in October. Her novel of an atom-bombed city has been retitled *SHADOW ON THE HEARTH*, for June pub.

Don Ford (129 Maple Ave, Sharonville, Ohio) advises that he has been appointed as exclusive American subscription agent for Britain's *NEW WORLDS* and *SCIENCE-FANTASY*.

Kendell Crossen and Forrest Ackerman are editing an anthology for Citadel Press, with the world at the atomic-crossroads as theme.

Groff Conklin discussed his anthology, *SCIENCE FICTION GALAXY*, over New York's WMCA in mid-April. He was a guest on young folks book review program.

Fredric Brown's fannish s-f novel of last year, *WHAT MAD UNIVERSE?*, will be reprinted in both a British edition (Boardman, London) and a 25¢ Bantam pocketbook edition.

Ray Bradbury appeared in New York in early May to publicize his new book; meanwhile reports the following sales: four more yarns to *Esquire*, 1 to *Colliers*, 1 to *McCall* 1 to Britain's *Argosy*, and 3 to Sweden.

Don Fabun has joined the San Francisco *CHRONICLE* as s-f book reviewer. His wife is the guiding spirit of the 'Elves', 'Gnomes', & 'Little Men's Science - fiction Chowder and Marching Society' of Berkeley.

Hannes Bok has peddled 2 covers to Ray Palmer, and has ten pix coming up in Prime Press edition of *THE BLIND SPOT*.

Edith Adams, librarian at New York Public Library's 135th Street branch, arranged science-fiction display there in May, with Bonestell paintings and the leading books.

Arthur C. Clarke's tome, *INTERPLANETARY FLIGHT*, has been published in London by the Museum Press, priced at \$1.25.

Arthur J. Burks mulling the possibility of writing an article on s-f conventions for a slick magazine market, if suitable convention photos can be obtained. Meanwhile, Mack Reynolds considering similar article to same market, on fan magazine and fan publishers.

Want a beautiful Bonestell painting for your den? See advertisement elsewhere in this issue.

THE BIG BLOODSHOT EYE

by Bob
Tucker

Those two hooligans of the fanzine press, F. Towner Laney and S. Charles Burbee, of Los Angeles and environs, have made arrangements to guest-edit a special August edition of Art Rapp's fanzine, SPACEWARP. Rapp must not care a damn what happens to his pet.

"The Conquest of Space" was the name given to an interplanetary show arranged by the Hayden Planetarium in New York City, last April. Hayden hung Bonestell pictures along the corridor walls, set up a travel reservations desk where visitors signed up for spaceship trips to other planets, and put on a three-quarter - hour show in the planetarium. The stunt gained national publicity in the press.

SPACE SHIP TIME SCHEDULE*

Leaving Earth for	Speed 25,000 mph Arrive	Distance from Earth (in miles)
MOON	9½ hours	240,000
VENUS	44 days	26,000,000
MARS	75 days	35,000,000
JUPITER	666 days	390,000,000
SATURN	1333 days	790,000,000

*Cannot be responsible for delays on route caused by meteor showers or other phenomena.

†For complete takeoff preparation including self-blind protection and care of personal equipment, consult "Safety Procedure", Manual S-T, No. 1.

This is to certify that

JOE FANN

Has made a reservation for the first interplanetary tour. Please present at Hayden Planetarium when announcement of flights is made.

Not to be passed up is the "Cinvention Memory Book," the official record of all the happenings at the Cincinnati convention last year. 95 pages in length, \$1 in price, the book reprints all the speeches, business, entertainment and what-have-you that occurred in a running, day by day account. Included are 27 photographs, and the wrong date on the cover. Well worth getting! (Don Ford, 129 Maple ave, Sharonville, Ohio.) British fans wanting same may send \$1 in books.

Milt Rothman of Philadelphia was married on April 22nd to Dorie Weiss, presumably the same city, and thus another good batchelor bit the dust. They are driving to Portland in late August, for the convention. The new Rothman address is 1825 N. Park ave, Philly.

One of our loyal readers, a chap by the name of Lin Carter, takes us to task for not mentioning the name of the hero in Rog Phillips new pocketbook, **WORLDS WITHIN** (see last issue). The hero's name is Lin Carter.

Lloyd Eshbach (PO Box 159, Reading, Pa.) is publishing a catalog containing over 900 s-f and fantasy books, plus a short description of each. And received in the mail of Frank A. Schmid, 9 Columbus Circle, New York 19, was a listing of several hundred books, both s-f, fantasy and weird titles, including pocketbooks and some British magazines.

I think the time is ripe to introduce **SPICY SPACESHIP STORIES**. The field is booming, some suckers will buy anything with a hint of 'science fiction' about it, and sex always sells. A companion mag will quickly follow of course: **FROTHY FANTASY FICTION**.

FORTHCOMING -?- FILMS

Despite the national publicity which the picture **DESTINATION MOON** has been receiving, another and lower-budgeted film will be seen first, because of the slowness involved in processing a film thru the technicolor labs. On the screens this month is **ROCKETSHIP XM**, a 78-minute feature from Lippert Productions and reviewed below. **DESTINATION MOON**, meanwhile, will have a preview showing in New York beginning June 27th, and will be released to the rest of the nation in August.

John W. Campbell's **WHO GOES THERE?** has been purchased by RKO studios for filming. Likewise announced by RKO is the purchase of a British book by Ivor Latchford, **PROFESSOR HAGGE'S PRIVATE PLANET**.

20th Century Fox will film Harry Bates' old classic, **FAREWELL TO THE MASTER**, and as previously mentioned in the fan press, Columbia studios is preparing Max Ehrlich's **THE BIG EYE**. This autumn, two studios will tackle Jules Verne: Lippert is making a feature of **20000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA**, while Columbia is serializing **THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND**.

Forrest Ackerman advises the following story properties are now owned by various studios, some of which may be filmed in the course of time:

When Worlds Collide, Dead Planet, R-U-R, Food of the Gods, War of the Worlds, The Island of Dr Moreau, The Purple Cloud, Fifty Years From Now, Dr Cyclops, Men of Mars, Bandits on the Moon (starring Roy Rogers maybe?), 1965, Tomorrow, Isle of Zonda, War Eagles, and Automaton. Most of these titles have been gathering dust on studio shelves for years and there is no reason to expect they will be dusted off now.

A Danish atomigeddon film, **THE ELEVENTH HOUR**, will be dubbed with English dialog and distributed here by Eagle-Lion films.

THE STORY:

"Rocketship X M"

Bound for the moon, the first manned space ship takes off from a guided-missiles proving ground, but an error in fuel mixture causes it to veer off its course. The crew members, discovering they are nearing Mars, effect a landing and find evidences of a superior but dead civilization that had been destroyed by an atomic blast. The surviving inhabitants, now savages, attack the explorers, killing two and seriously wounding another. Taking off en route back to earth, the ship runs out of fuel, but the crew regains radio communication with the expedition's ground forces. They manage to tell all they have discovered before the ship crashes and all aboard are killed. However, the expedition is considered successful and work begins on a new space ship.

NEW YORK'S SCIENCE FICTION CONFERENCE: has definitely been dated July 1-2-3, at the Henry Hudson Hotel, 353 West 57th st. Co-sponsors of the three-day clambake are the Hydra Club and the Eastern Science Fiction Assn. The first annual "Hugo" award will be made for literary merit in the s-f field. Speakers and guests lined up include Asimov, EE Smith, GO Smith, Sturgeon, Conklin, del Ray, Campbell, Merwin, Gernsback, Pratt, Ley and de Camp. Banquet tickets at \$4.50.

LETTERS

Moe Diner (Montreal, Canada): "Canadian newsstands are currently being graced by a new pseudo-prozine, called GAY LIFE ("America's most unusual magazine of fantasy and mystery"). It consists principally of ghost and adventure stories, mostly written as tho the authors were trying to get personal rejects from "Snappy Garter Stories". Coy and confessional style, nothing torrid. Has this cultural influence reached below the border?

Forrest Ackerman (Hollywood, Cal.): "In your April Book dept. you editorialize on the horrors of hard-covering pulp serials and expanded novellas, then praise PEBBLE IN THE SKY as 'an original science-fiction novel not written for magazine ink.' This is where you have fallen into the trap of the person who, for instance, pans Padgett and praises O'Donnell, not knowing both are but pseudonyms of Kuttner. PEBBLE was written for forty old magazine ink--Campbell's brand I suspect; for sure I know it was rejected by Merwin.

As an agent very much involved in these matters, let me explain why no original s-f novels are being written by established authors with book publication the primary object: it is simply the economic factor, such enterprises are not yet paying propositions. The magazine sale is the bread and the book sale the gravy. A writer can't write just for gravy, no bread. When s-f book sales skyrocket into 5-figure editions, then original hard-cover appearance could be the big thing, with magazine serialization merely subsidiary. I can't see what difference it makes in the story, except (hot damn!) we're liable to get a few more swear words and sex in the book edition."

Ken Krueger (Buffalo, NY): "Many thanks for the plug in the last issue, however it contained an error not of your doing. The ever - exuberant Mr. Fillinger (a partner) persists in calling "Spacetrails", which we are giving away, as "Spaceways", which we don't have any of. No one has sued us."

UNUSUAL BOOK

**DARK MUSIC
AND OTHER SPECTRAL TALES**
by Jack Snow

The eighteen stories in this volume run the gamut of supernatural fantasy. There is horror, stark terror, mystic adventure and fragile beauty—all the overtones and undertones that go into the weaving of the eerie realms of the imagination.

Illustrated Catalogue, 10¢

HOUSE OF STONE

LUNENBURG 20 MASSACHUSETTS

PRICE
~~\$2.50~~
NOW
\$1.98

BOUCHER IS CONVENTION GUEST

The world's 8th annual science-fiction convention opens Friday evening, September 1 in the American Legion Hall (1139 S.W. 13th ave), Portland, Oregon. Popular magazine editor and book critic Anthony Boucher has been selected as guest of honor and leading speaker.

The conclave annually draws 150 to 200 readers, writers, agents, editors and publishers (mostly fans) for two-to-four day sessions of business, auctions, and foolery. S-F magazines donate original illustrations and cover paintings which are auctioned off to defray expenses; meetings are open to all comers but a \$1 membership charge is asked to cover preliminary convention costs. Don Day is chairman of the event, and Ruth Newbury, treasurer. (Membership fees should be mailed to her at Box 8517, Portland 7, Ore.) A pamphlet explaining the nature of the thing will be sent upon request.

THE OHIO CONFERENCE

On May 20-21, some sixty fans and writers met by invitation at Dr C.L. Barrett's home in Bellefontaine, Ohio, for what may prove to be the first of a series of annual conferences there. Guest speakers at a luncheon were DH Keller and EE Smith, with other short talks by Lloyd Eshbach, Basil Wells, Julius Long, Ray Palmer, Bea Mahaffey, and Bob Tucker.

Keller's humorous discourse was concerned with the plot-germs raised in his cellar and shipped postpaid to struggling authors anywhere in the USA; while Dr. Smith eulogized Keller, tracing his career from 1895 to his first sale in 1928, with a total of 150 stories & 6 books published to date. C.L. Barrett was toastmaster.

Entertainment was of the spontaneous variety, altho Niel DeJack showed color movies of the television broadcast made during the Cincinnati convention last year, and Don Ford played a wire recording of same. Fantasy Press director Lloyd Eshbach said he is now sole owner of the press, has 20 titles under contract for publication, and his future output will be 50/50 new and reprint material. Ray Palmer stated his new magazine, IMAGINATION, will be on sale August 1, and mentioned briefly his affair with flying saucers, telling how Army officials killed a saucer story he expected to run in the Ziff-Davis magazines.

FULL-COLOR PAINTINGS BY BONESTELL!

Now available, suitable for framing, a 20x30 inch reproduction of the beautiful cover-painting found on the Bonestell & Ley rocket book, "The Conquest of Space". The scene is the moon, with a rocket poised for the trip back to Earth, as only Bonestell paints it! The cost is \$2.50 each, postpaid.

Bob Tucker, PO Box 260, Bloomington, Ill.

BOOK REVIEWS

Pratt, de Camp, van Vogt, Leinster, Greenberg, Lieber, Griffith

THE INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER by Fletcher Pratt and L. Sprague de Camp. (Prime Press, Box 2019, Philadelphia, Penna. 1950. \$2.50.)

A worthwhile buy if you are one of the many who treasured UNKNOWN WORLDS in its all too short existence; this book is a skillful blending of two separate novels from 1940 issues of that magazine: The Roaring Trump-het, and The Mathematics of Magic. (Altho credit is also given the April 1941 issue. a third story entitled "The Castle of Iron" which appeared on that date is not included in this book.)

The gambit here is that of a large variety of possible universes, and to travel between them requires nothing more than mental manipulation. So believing, our hero confidently sets off to see the Irish myths--and winds up with the Norsemen fighting gods and giants at Ragnorok. A second trip undertaken later lands him in the world of Spenser's Faerie Queene, and as before he keeps alive by the nimble use of his wits and twentieth-century training. Good. -BT

MASTERS OF TIME by A.E. van Vogt (Fantasy Press, Reading, Penna. 1950. \$3.)

This is one of five van Vogt books being published this year, a record worth noting. This volume includes two yarns, the title story (which originally appeared in Astounding SF in 1942 as "Recruiting Station"), and "The Changeling" ... same magazine, 1944.

"Masters" is a time-travelling yarn in the grand manner: out of the future appear hard-eyed supermen, setting up recruiting stations for warriors of all races, all ages to fight some tremendous war now raging in their tomorrow. "Changeling" deals with a man who is confused about his age, himself, and his present state--but who is kidnapped by amazons at the direction of the president of the United States before he can do any exploring into his past. The van Vogt treatment, as before. Worthwhile. -BT

MURDER MADNESS by Murray Leinster (F.P.C.I., Los Angeles 3, Cal. 1949. \$2.75)

It is frankly beyond me why this book was published; maybe the mystery fans will go for it in lending libraries but there seems to be no other adult future for the volume.

An American secret agent goes to South America to seek out a maniac who wants to enslave the world---and has started with the people down there, using a drug distilled from evil flowers grown for the purpose. -BT

THE ETERNAL CONFLICT and **THE LADY DECIDES** by David H. Keller. (Prime Press, Philadelphia, Penna. 1950. Boxed, at \$3.50 each.)

These two volumes are something special in the art of printing and binding: each was published in a limited edition of 350 signed

and numbered copies, printed on a good rag paper, the deluxe bindings protected by boxing. And they are Keller thru and thru, the quiet, fantasy side of Keller which appeared in THE SIGN OF THE BURNING HART.

The Eternal Conflict could have been entitled The Eternal Woman and that just about summarizes the story, choked with symbolism of the struggle between the sexes. The Lady Decides is more of a personal narrative--the author's fantasy-journey into Spain seeking love, faith, beauty, peace. Adventure-minded readers may pass these by; fantasy lovers will mind much in them. -BT

MEN AGAINST THE STARS edited by Martin Greenberg. (Gnome Press, 421 Claremont Parkway, New York City 57. 1950. \$2.95.)



This collection of stories takes you from man's first attempts to probe the Heavens to a day when dying Earth is nearly forgotten in the march for the more abundant life in distant galaxies. And in between are some moving & exciting space yarns that exploit many ideas and angles.

Three exceptional stories are "Locked Out" by Fyfe (when you leave your ship in space, make certain you have a way back in), "Far Centaurus" by van Vogt (A new twist to the pattern of time and life), "The Plants" by Murray Leinster (don't step on the flowers!). There are 11 stories in all, 10 of them from Astounding, 1 from Startling, each dealing with a different phase of space travel. Familiar names are Asimov, Clement, Padgett, Hubbard, Walton, Hull, etc. -JS

GATHER, DARKNESS! by Fritz Lieber (Pellegrini & Cudahy, New York, 1950. \$2.75)

My apologies to Lieber, but I didn't like this when it appeared in Astounding SF back in 1943, and seven years have not improved the yarn. Primarily, I couldn't quite see it appearing in a science-fiction magazine.

The scene is the Dark Ages of the 24th century, chock full of priests, witches, angels, devils---or at least they call themselves such---lording it over the commoners who are kept in line by "religion". Priests of varying circles of power rule the world, but the witches stage a revolt. -BT

THREE HUNDRED YEARS HENCE by Mary Griffith (Prime Press, Box 2019, Philadelphia. 1950)

Number 2 in a series of reprints of early American Utopian novels, limited to 500 copies. A man of 1835 is buried alive, comes to his senses 300 years later--utopia. -BT



SCIENCE FICTION NEWS LETTER

Edited & published by Bob Tucker
Box 260, Bloomington, Illinois
William Rotsler, staff artist

No. 16 July 1950 10¢

Six-issue subscription for 50¢
Published every second month
Advertisements by arrangement

Outside, Looking In:

The March issue of **WRITER'S DIGEST** published two articles on science fiction, by Robert Heinlein and Mack Reynolds, and ran an unsigned report on the 1949 Cincinnati convention. This last item caused a small flurry among the readers, and increased the contents of the **DIGEST'S** mailbag for the following month.

In an adjoining column is the convention report, reprinted in full and with the permission of **WRITER'S DIGEST** editors.

Capsule Report on a Stf Convention

A NEW YORK CITY publisher, thinking of breaking into the stf field with a pulp, asked his partner to attend the 1949 science fiction fan magazine readers convention to see what was what. We were given a carbon of the report he mailed back to the home office, and since no names are mentioned we are showing it to our readers. Here's the report:

"The convention was held at one of the smaller hotels frequented by what we used to call commercial travelers. About 150 fans attended. The hall for their meetings was covered with science fiction magazine illustrations and posters done, in really bad taste with no sense of art form, by artists who probably think Renoir is a planet. Two or three well-known writers in the field attended and were besieged. When they spoke, it was *The Word*. The fans issue a daily paper full of 'jolly' business luncheon type sallies and most of them seem to know each other. A Chicago editor attended and his registration was the banner headline news of the day. No other editor showed up.

"All around was the same sort of slangue talk you hear at a stamp convention. Want to trade a so-and-so from 1922, bound but uncut, for a 1930 copy of so-and-so with only the front cover torn.

"I was asked to a cocktail party. About 40 people came and it was held in a single bedroom and a small parlor. They served crackers out of a Zesta box, straight whiskey, ice and water. No one drank to excess. The men dressed mostly in sport shirts (it was summer) and no ties. They took off their coats. The women wore out-of-fashion clothes. No good figures.

"The next day, all sorts of stf books were sold in the banquet hall. You left your money, made your own change, and took what you wanted.

"The people were middle-class, bad dressers,

not well-educated, no culture, little money. After you got to know them, they were likable, friendly, and very sincere about the whole thing. That's fine, but I'd hate to live with them. They were all a believing sort, uncritical, anxious to please and be pleased; the led, not the leaders. These people lack affectation and there is just none of the phoniness you find at any Eastern literary tea party.

"The fan magazines are without professional editorial sense. The fans know what they like and talk about their likes and dislikes, but you could be misled listening to them as they cannot always analyze what they really want. You can learn tremendously from them, though, if you take your time and hear them out. Probably the N. Y. crowd of editors didn't show because these people write them all the time anyway and the eds know in advance (or think they do) what they have to say. Within the stf field are all sorts of schisms. Give these people color, good typography, fine creative photography (not studio ham stuff) and they'll probably die in an agony of delight.

"As an advertising market, they are nil if this convention means anything. Probably that's why the books are so tasteless. No publisher has the dough to spend on good art as the chief revenue is newsstand sales. One stand in town gives these books a display, the rest bury 'em. Probably a 75 per cent sale is the nuts.

"The newspapers here treat the fans like wayward children. They hesitate to call them for what they are—wondering what their own readers would look like assembled. These fans really enjoy their hobby and they take it seriously, just like the stamp crowd. Only they are much more easy going and open-countenanced because there is no sharpening and palming off of 'duplicates.' The market for old stf books is strictly make-believe. A few items are rare with a few people; the rest is just talk for the fun of talking. They have a wonderful time. Beats embroidery any day."

MAGAZINES: continued

Flow by G Fox, "Overlord of Earth" by Lloyd Eshbach, and shorts by Walker, Chadwick and van Vogt, the latter a reprint from **FPCI'S FANTASY BOOK**.

Literary agents report material is being sought for three other probables, although their editors are not talking. You might watch Wollheim, Erisman and Campbell.

Elsewhere in the magazine world, Boucher & McComas struck pay dirt with their **FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION**. After the July issue, the magazine will be a bi-monthly, with material bought as far ahead as the January '51 number. Editors are seeking more science-fiction and less fantasy.

The November issue of **AMAZING STORIES** is to see the great change. Since returning to the magazine field from Hollywood, Howard Browne has been working with Ziff-Davis on several pet ideas for magazines, and this is one of them. **AMAZING** will be a large size, 144-paged monthly pegged at 35¢, using fiction and articles aimed at both adults and younger readers. Browne's other ambition is a new mystery magazine in the same format.

Not listed as either pocketbook or magazine is Britain's new, 128-page **FUTURISTIC SCIENCE STORIES**, containing 5 poor yarns.

The publication carries no date, sells at 1/6 (30¢) the copy, is published by John Spencer & Co., 24 Shephards Bush Road, London W6. Advertised as forthcoming is another title of similar nature: **WORLDS OF FANTASY**.

Magazine X: Rick Sneary, president of the **NFFF**, states that Ken Crossen (westcoast radio writer and newspaperman) is editing a new science-fiction magazine in Los Angeles. No other details of this projected magazine are known here at press time.

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REDD BOGGS: continued

"Dianetics." In publishing this brainstorm by L. Ron Hubbard, Campbell has produced a Sensation by adopting the READER'S DIGEST method-- seeking the verdict of the uninformed public before submitting the work to the psychology experts for the "ruthless criticism and cross-checking that is the very life-blood of science." That a hack writer's "new science," presented full-blown to the world in a two-bit pulp, will revolutionize psychotherapy is as wild a dream as the one entertained by the fanzine editor who advertised an article purporting to reveal solar-origin hypothesis guaranteed to put Laplace in his place and make Buffon a buffoon.

We may expect to see the serialization of Velikovsky's *WORLDS IN COLLISION* in *aSF* before the year is out. To maintain its leadership in the field, *aSF* must cast about for a new editor -- and fast!

* * * *

The prospect of five more prozines coming this summer makes it clear that publishers haven't heard about killing the goose that laid the golden egg. Squelch the rumor, please, that these new magazines are coming merely to provide the anthologists with new material enough to fill 1951's collections. These publishers are out to make money while the boom lasts, and from all indications it can't last long. Already the law of supply and demand is operating to reduce the average quality of science fiction. *STARTLING* and *THRILLING WONDER STORIES*, in particular, show the effect of this trend; their quality is down sharply from the heights attained in 1946-49. The result of having to share the output of their regular writers with such upstarts as *FUTURE FICTION* and *THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION* has only become apparent, however. How soon they hit the nadir represented so far by that masterpiece *OUT OF THIS WORLD ADVENTURES*, the prozine with the Built-in Comic Section, is anybody's guess.

Some of the newcomers probably have come to stay--and welcome to them! *SUPER SCIENCE*, the above-mentioned *MOF&SF*, and *OTHER WORLDS* (if it can overcome the schizophrenic effect resulting from the emergence of Palmer's *Better Side*), and perhaps even Wollheim's *Folly*, if it ever lives down the comics. But the sooner about ten of the s-f magazines fold up, the sooner it will please those of us who like a good yarn but hate to wade thru 1000 pages of crud and comic strips to find ten entertaining pages.

* * * *

The very eminent s-f anthologist--- in fact, "the master of them all" according to Pellegrini & Cudahy advertisements -- August W. Derleth was one of the 29 leading book critics polled by *THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE* concerning their recommendations of current books "especially worthwhile". Our very eminent s-f anthologist chose some

very significant titles. They included (get this, Junior!) Immanuel Velikovsky's *WORLDS IN COLLISION*, hailed by scientists as the best book of its kind since *CHILDREN OF MU*; and Anthony Standen's *SCIENCE IS A SACRED COW*, a book that boosts science almost as fervently as Charles Fort's *LO!*

Of course, it might be possible to be a very eminent science fiction anthologist and still be eminently anti-science.

When a dog bites a man, that's not news; and when Ward Moore or Ken Crossen or Theo Pratt place material with the Ackerman Fantasy Agency, that's only commonsense; but when another agent uses my Agency--that's news: And G. Gordon Dewey has just given me a fine fantasyarn from his auctorial pen, with the promise of more to come!

Some pertinent quotes from recent correspondence: "This is mostly to make a particular point of thanking you again for your magnificent cooperation on our struggles with resuming *MARVEL*. We could not have done it without you, believe me! Not decently."--Robert Erisman..... "Thank you for the manner in which you supplied me with manuscripts. It has made my next issue much better to contemplate."--Curtis Mitchell, *FANTASY FICTION*..... "I've been watching with interest your success as a fantasy fiction literary agent; continuing where I left off several years ago."--Julius Schwartz, the original science fiction agent..... "It is easy for anyone to see that you are now a Success."--Redd Boggs, prominent columnist.

Yes, a success in work I love--who could ask for anything more? Maybe I should advertise, "Authors, stay 'way from my door!" But I wouldn't mind handling scripts for a few more Big Name Authors like VAN VOGT, RAY JONES, BILL TEMPLE and CHAS HARNESSE, and comers like Arthur Cox, Kris Neville, Stan Mullen, Con Pederson, E. Everett Evans, Henderson Starke, Roger Flint Young, etc.

Recent sales include Jones' 30,000 word "Brain of Vengeance" to *Fantastic Advs.*; Evans' "Unusual Model" to *Fantasy Fiction*; Chibbett's "They Worked the Oracle" to *Weird*; Temple's "Sheltering Tree" to *Amazing*; Jackson's "Still Small Voice" to *Avon Fantasy Reader*; Neville's "Heredity" to *Super Science*; Moffatt's "Reaction" to *Ootwa*; Wright's "None Came Back" to *Imagination*; Eshbach's "Overlord of Earth" to *Marvel*; Cox article to Erisman; van Vogt, "Ship of Darkness", Mitchell; etc.....

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