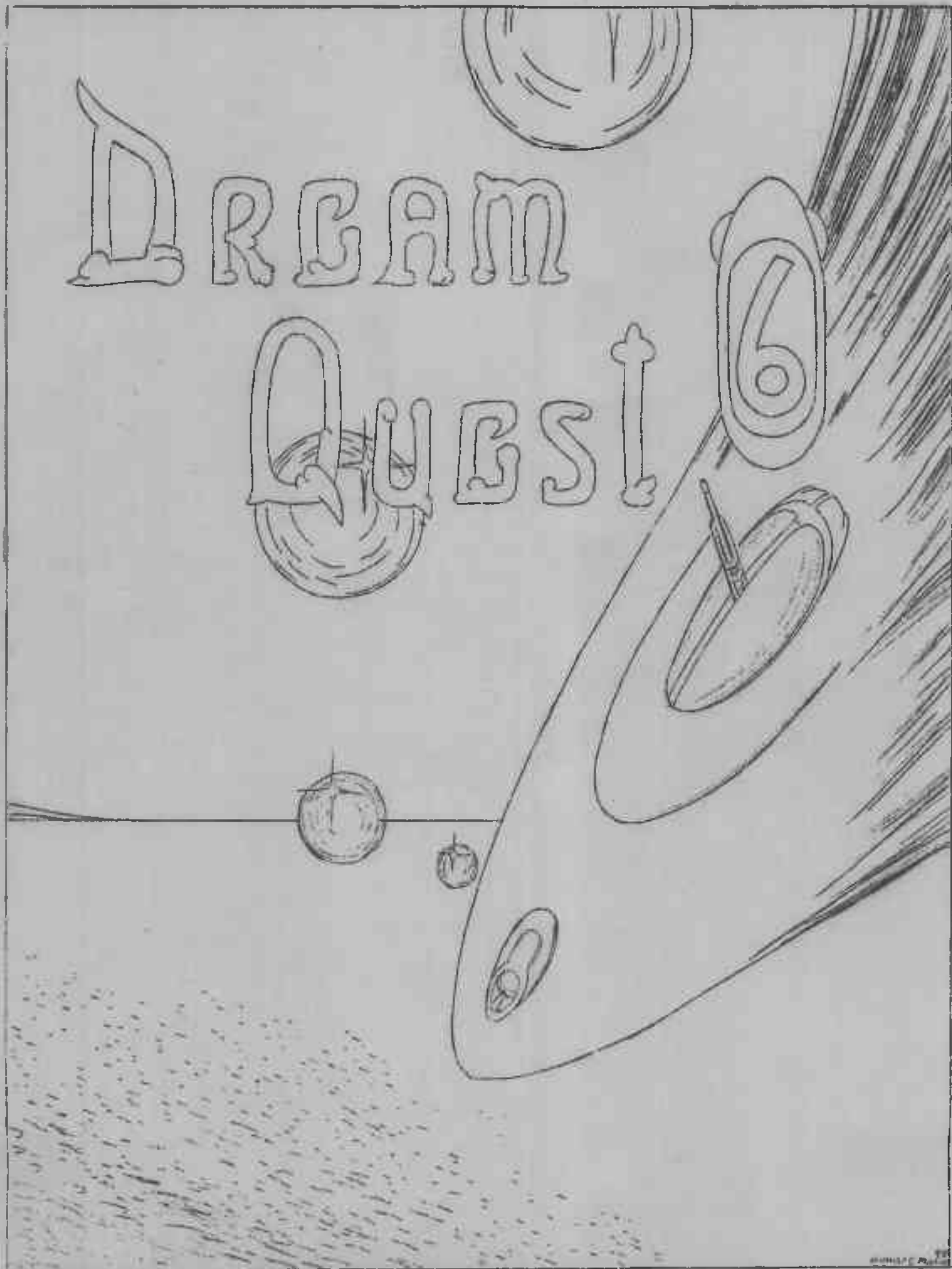


DREAM

QUEST

6



DREAM QUEST

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Don Wilson, Ed.
 Howard Miller,
 Co-Editor and
 Art Director

Francis T. Laney, Redd Boggs, Lloyd Alpaugh Jr., Charles Burbee,
 Joe Kennedy, Alori Dannur, contributing editors; Philip Gray, Arkham
 House editor; John Grossman, William Rotsler, Robert L. Stein, con-
 tributing art editors

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Back Cover by Howard Miller

Interior artwork by Stein, Nelson, Grossman, Rotsler, Don Phillips,
 Howard Miller, Bob Dougherty

DREAM QUEST is an amateur publication for fans of science fiction, fantasy, and weird fiction. It is published irregularly at 495 North Third St., Banning, California. Price: 25¢ per single copy; 5 issues, \$1.00. Trades gladly arranged with other fanzines. We welcome material; the only payment is a free copy of Dream Quest for each accepted unit of material. Opinions expressed by contributors and correspondents are their own, and do not necessarily reflect the views of any of Dream Quest's staff. All letters of comment sent here are subject to publication unless specifically requested otherwise. If a check appears here _____ you had better send some cash if you desire to receive further issues of this publication.

The Gas Jet

Okay, I hate to do it. I hate to raise the price again. But costs have made it necessary. This issue -- effective right now -- DQ's price rises to 25¢, 5 for \$1.00. We hope you think the mag's worth it; we've endeavored to put together an issue that would be worth a quarter. Two bits is high for a fanzine, we realize; but it is hard on the fanzine's publisher if he has to stand the colossal expenses of publication with little return, so the price has to go up, like it or no. The decision as to whether DQ is worth it is up to you. We sincerely hope we've managed to put together a publication that we and you could be proud of. ## Subscriptions received prior to this issue's publication will, of course, be honored at the old rate, and previous subscribers will still get all they paid for.

Don't inquire for back issues, people. There isn't a back issue in the house. DQs #1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are sold out completely. Sorry, but that's the way it is.

More or less in line with the first paragraph above, this issue takes another big step forward from a format standpoint. We're up there with the best in format now, and considering that there are no other mimeoed fanzines now in publication which make full use of the advantages of the mimeo technique, this would seem to be plenty okay. Let us know what you think of the little pics scattered thru this issue, the colored pictures, and the like. Great thanks to Burbee for passing along the Rotsler pictures, plus a lot of other material, on the demise of Shangri-L'Affaires; for obtaining paper in Los Angeles for us; and for general good will as befits a sterling gentleman. Thanks to Len Moffatt for getting us colored inks, to Fran Laney for Tigrina's poem in this issue, to Rog Graham for obtaining stencils in Chicago. Thanks to Con Pederson for some gratis, unasked-for plugs. If I've forgotten someone, sorry; thanks to everybody for swell cooperation and general patience and forbearance.

Oh yes -- I almost forgot to give public thanks to W. E. R. Crawford and his wife, Hildred, for some local positive publicity, in the Banning Live Wire, which they own. W. E. R. has been reading stf longer than ~~EE~~Evans; among other things, he knows Hugo Gernsback and did know Talbot Mundy personally.

And finally, the HPL material promised in the last issue will be postponed indefinitely. If anyone is interested enough to ask why, I'll be glad to let him in on it. The thing smacks too much of personalities to discuss here in public. I will say, however, that Stuard Boland deserves a public apology for the way I manhandled him in the last "Gas Jet".

Don't forget to write your comments!

--Don Wilson

REVERSE THAT EGO-BOO!!

by Francis T. Laney

It is a sad commentary to note that the DQ poll will be emasculated next year, shorn of its "worst fan" classification due to the protests of sundry unnamed individuals. The attitude these persons manifest is just another of the many proofs that for too many fans the microcosmos is not a hobby but a way of life, a way of life in which they can find compensation for their unsatisfactory existences.

What is the purpose of a poll, anyhow? Is it a great drum-thumping exhibition, in which the Dunkelbergers and Coslets can wallow on the floor in the vicarious orgasms brought on by seeing their names in print? Do the takers of polls go through all that work and expense just to help some fuzzhead find a momentary nepenthe? I don't think so.

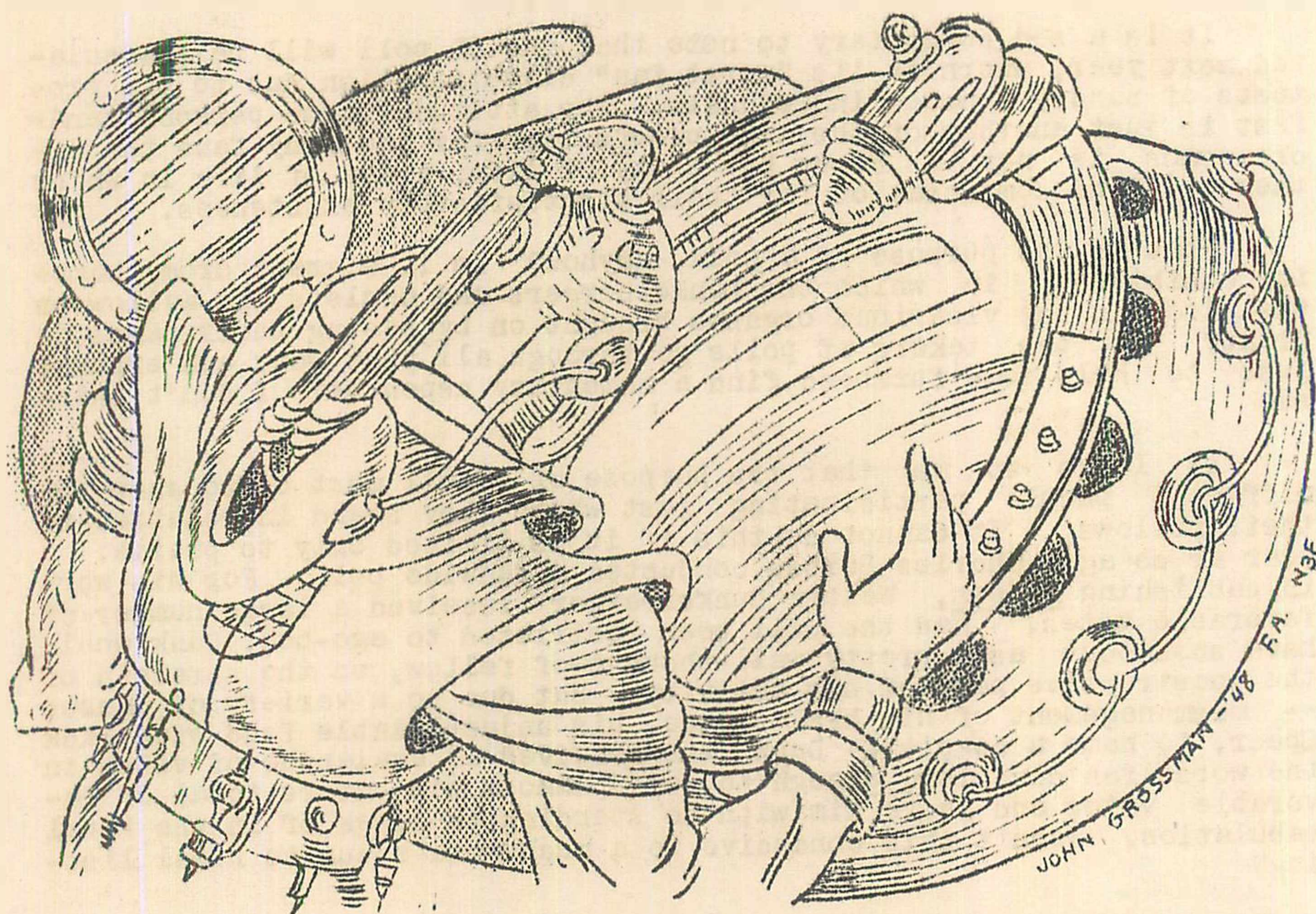
It looks to me that the purpose of a poll must be to show the different people participating just where they stand in relation to their fellows. It cannot do this if it is limited only to praise. A year or so ago, Charles Burbee conducted a fanwide poll. For his work in publishing Fanews, Walter Dunkelberger received a large number of favorable votes. Had the poll been restricted to ego-boo, Dunk would have shone out as a pretty well-thought-of fellow, on the strength of the constructive part of his activity. But due to a variety of causes -- mismanagement of his NFFF office, his unjustifiable feud with Jack Speer, to name a couple -- Dunk also received an avalanche of votes in the worst fan division, enough to erase almost his entire total of favorable votes and leave him with no standing to speak of in the final tabulation. Wasn't this conducive to a much more accurate final listing?

Praise is meaningless unless it is tempered by criticism. For the person who is really trying to put out an interesting and entertaining fanzine, a bunch of votes for worst fanzine will probably do a lot more to guide him than his merely being ignored and thus placing very low on the list. For the person who sincerely means to get along with his fellows, a few "worst" votes should act as a salutatory warning that some of his actions are not much to their liking.

And when we consider how little any fan poll can possibly mean, it seems pretty indefensible to protest against this innovation of the "worst fan" votes, a category which has been added only comparatively recently as polls go. It is the first step toward trying to make the polls somewhat more meaningful.

It would be interesting to read the names of those who protested against this category, and see how many times they have been given votes for "worst" on some poll or another. ###

THE CRATERS



THE CSFS MEETING was scheduled to convene at 8 o'clock in Jimmy Matthews' den, but at 7:45 I arrived at his house to find the whole membership bunched on the front porch, staring quietly toward the east where the moon was rising. Except for some scattered "Hi-ya's" and a "Have a seat for the big show -- here on the bottom step" from Jimmy himself, the group took little note of my arrival. Undismayed, I plunked myself down between Jim and Gil Donovan and tilted my gaze parallel with theirs. I knew what they were watching.

Coming over on the streetcar, I had seen the moon rising pregnantly from the city's haze. It was the kind of a moon we used to have as kids when we ganged up to soap windows and swipe trashcans and push over outhouses -- a real pumpkin orange, saucer-size Hal-

OF THE MOON

BY

REDD BOGGS

* Illustrated by John Grossman:

lowe'en moon that stuck out against the luminous sky like an egg-stain on a tablecloth. There was one difference: this moon had three little lights twinkling sharply in the midst of its serene yellow face. Signals from the Regals expedition!

I turned away from the moon and gazed on the upturned faces around me. Here were the happiest guys in the world, I thought: science fiction fans witnessing their most cherished dream coming true. For history had been made that day, June 19, 1950. Brian Regals' lunar expedition -- flying the first piloted space-rocket, the Asgard -- had "hit" the moon, landing uneventfully and setting up three mighty signal beacons that beamed news of man's conquest of space back toward a thrilled Earth.

Most of the faces surrounding me were smiling or were definitely pleased in expression. I looked over at Clint Martin, CSFS director and famous author of a hundred top-notch yarns of interplanetary travel. I expected to see him looking happier than all the rest. I remembered his novel in an early WSQ called "Lindbergh of Space", which in the past twenty-four hours had become a prophecy fulfilled. But Clint Martin's face was unreadable. Behind his thick glasses which glinted in the moonlight his eyes were hidden, and his mouth was expressionless.

The light signals from the moon twinkled on. Finally Jim got up and said, "There's not much to see. Let's go in and have the meeting. Maybe we oughta cut a disc tonight and record our thoughts on this momentous evening for posterity." He chuckled a little as he said it, but perhaps he was serious.

"Take a note to posterity," said Gil, coming alive. "Posterity -- Gentlemen: We, the loyal members of the Centerville Science Fantasy Society (unincorporated) and of the National Fantasy League (formerly the NFFF), of FAPA and VAPA, and ex-members of the Cosmic Circle, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that we, in close harmony with the rest of united fandom, did in the late 1920's and early 1930's foresee the inevitable event of this momentous June 1950, and we believe that man's glorious conquest of space was in full measure due

to our untiring efforts on behalf of the popularization of science fiction, and more specifically of space opera -- "

Clint Martin coughed loudly, cutting short Gil's monolog, which might otherwise have continued all evening. Perhaps Martin felt that the reference to space opera was a subtle dig at certain of the Martin "classics", but whatever the reason, his throaty cough effectively broke up the gathering there on the porch under the moon. We all took Jimmy's suggestion and filed, chattering again as of old, into the house.

As we found places to drape ourselves around Jim's den, I found myself sitting next to a pile of old, good-condition copies of Clayton Astoundings on one side, and our only femme fan, Polly Parker, on the other. Honestly, I was more interested in the Astoundings, because I didn't have some of them in my collection. But then, I didn't have a girl like Polly in my collection, either. Not one like Polly.

She surprised me by remarking, mostly to me, and that was strange -- usually she shouted her remarks to the world at large: "This is the end of a world." I was leafing through the April 1931 Astounding, wondering if I had time to read Williamson's "The Lake of Light" before the meeting began. "I know what you mean," I spoke the first cliché that came to my tongue, without any "semantic pause". Then I forgot the magazine, and thought of her remark, which sounded rather pretentious and melodramatic. But it was true; it was the end of the old world that was bounded by the stratosphere. Now, like it or not, the people of Earth must accept the whole universe as part of their world. It gave a new, frightening horizon to our silly little narrow thoughts.

"But it's the beginning of a new world," I said suddenly, grasping a new thought. I felt like a van Vogt hero, doing a double-take like that.

"That's not the point," Polly said. "It's the ending of the old world that's important -- to us here."

That stumped me. Usually Polly was full of stereotyped jive talk, and here she was, talking in riddles like a Padgett story. I was relieved to hear Director Clint Martin call the meeting to order.

Clint perched on a cleared spot of Jimmy's well-littered desk, puffing a cigarette in his usual highstrung fashion as he slammed Jim's copy of "R" Is For Rocket on the edge of the desk. When the noise and boisterous conversation had subsided, he tossed the book aside, and mumbled something about dispensing with the minutes of the last meeting and other official business. Everyone blinked at that, for Clint was usually a stickler for parliamentary procedure. But no one made a comment; it was obvious that Clint was up to something. Suddenly, he stuck a finger at Jimmy.

"Jimmy, how did you start reading science fiction?"

One thing about Jimmy -- he's fast on the up-take. "I read a Clint Martin yarn in Wonder Stories for April, 1936," he said promptly, grinning. "Want to know the name of it? It was----"

"That's better forgotten," Martin said, with only a flicker of amusement in his deep eyes. "Gil, how about you -- and the honest truth, if you please."

"I bought the first Startling, read the fanzine column, sent for a sample copy of Fantasy News, sent 'em a news item they never used---"

Clint cut him off, by pointing at me. After I had recited the facts of my introduction to fantasy, Polly Parker was called upon. She told, with some embarrassment, how she had become interested during the Shaver hoax controversy in 1946 -- a confession that brought a strangled laugh from Gil. Martin, however, remained serious, and kept pointing around the room till everyone had told his story.

Clint lit a fresh cigarette. He always smoked in chain fashion. "Let's summarize," he said. "No one was introduced to fantasy by Heinlein's Post stories. Or by Alfred van Vogt's Simon & Schuster books. Or by Campbell's best-seller, Tomorrow's Starry Track, the book he wrote last year after leaving Street & Smith."

"How did you get started, Clint?" someone asked.

"I read a magazine called Science and Invention, edited by some joker named Gernsback. It was quite a few years ago."

"Gawsh," breathed Gil, in mock awe. "He's been a fan longer than Forry Ackerman." He stood up and salaamed deeply.

Martin wasn't amused. "What I'm getting at," he continued seriously, "is that all of us are old-timers in the field. All of us came into fandom through the old pulps we have collected and kept all these years. All of us -- except Polly, who has proved herself a real fan, for all that -- were around during the golden age of fandom, in the mid-1930's and early '40's. In retrospect, that period reveals itself as the peak of the science fiction movement. That sounds strange, perhaps, because science fiction has become a big business since then -- since Hiroshima. But it's true: fandom was at its greatest when a science fiction fan was an oddity, unknown to literary critics and feature writers. Subconsciously, I think, we have known and understood that. In some subtle fashion, we've resented all this publicity and popularization of our favorite literature. All of us were alarmed when the atomic bomb fell -- alarmed, in part, because it was a horrible weapon, but equally because it brought fulfillment of an old science fiction dream. Like all dreamers, we science fiction fans enjoy the dream more than the dream-come-true."

He dragged at his cigarette thoughtfully, not looking at us. "The advent of the A-bomb," he went on, "was bad for science fiction, but the Regals moon expedition is going to be worse. For one thing, the time has come when a large part of the yarns in our tattered collections at home are out of date, made silly and pale. The odds are that Brian Regals and other space-explorers will find wonders and incredible phenomena that will make Weinbaum and Kuttner stories sound like Land of Oz stuff."

Jimmy Matthews interrupted. "Some science fiction has already been out-dated by Regals. How about Asimov's 'Trends'?"

"It's just the beginning," said Clint. "Interplanetaries make up a huge part of science fiction. But that's only the negative side of it. The other side is worse: Science fiction is going to lose its monopoly on interplanetary stuff. Any month now -- I'm surprised it hasn't come already -- you can expect Adventure, Thrilling Love, Redbook, and other such mundane mags to start printing interplanetary stuff. Talk about fantasy becoming popular! The thing is, will this new stuff be real science fiction? Of course, as long as it is speculative, it will have to be classified as such, but it probably won't be of the type the fan enjoys. I'm anticipating space opera twenty times lousier than Planet's lousiest. But as soon as all the planets are reached, this interplanetary stuff will no longer rate as true science fiction."

"We'll still have interstellar epics," suggested Gil. "And time-travel and end-of-the-world stories."

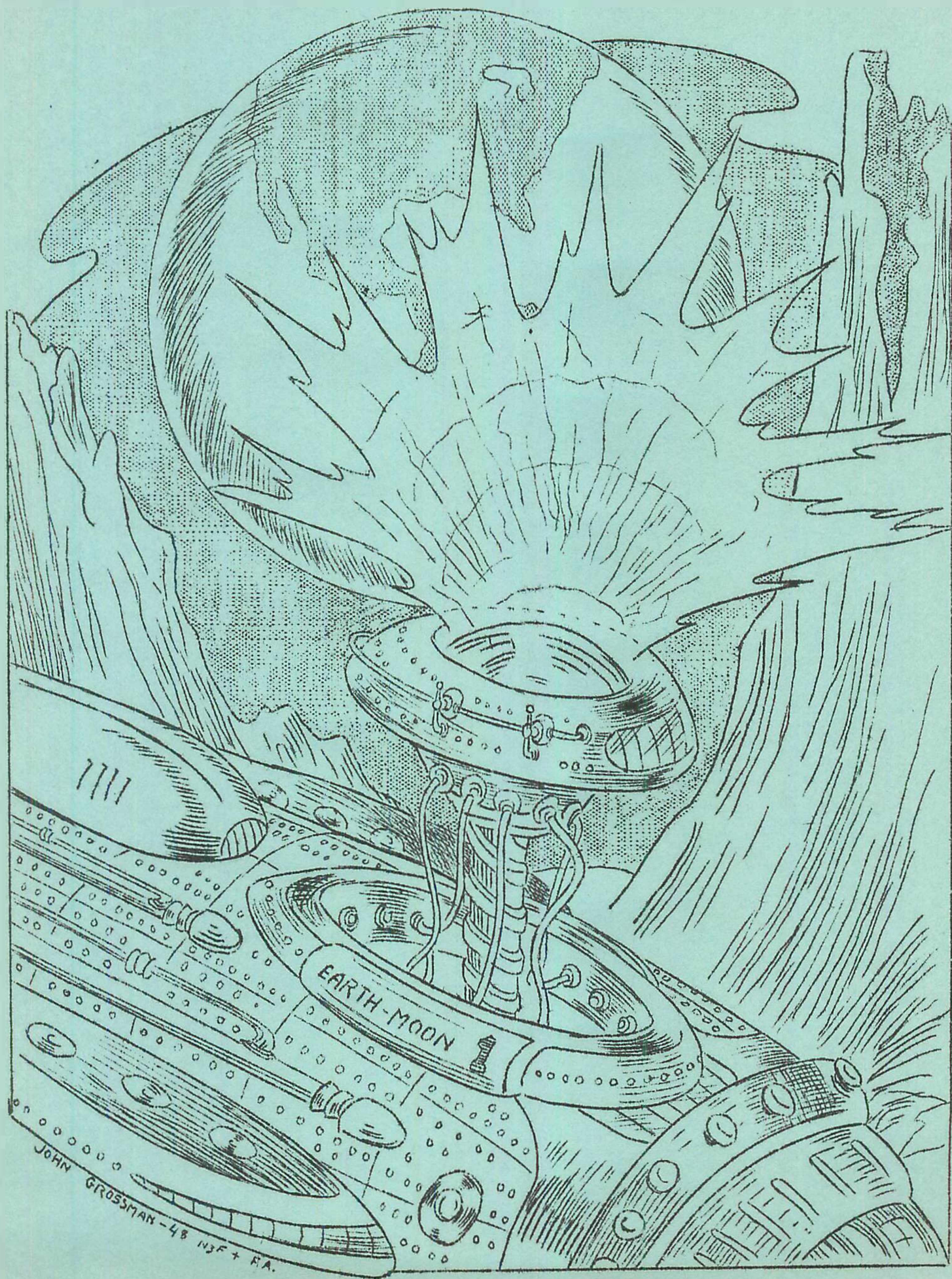
Clint nodded. "For a while, sure. But the danger is that once the other pulps and slicks take up interplanetaries, they will soon branch out to the rest of fantasy. Then all the readers of Love Book's torrid serial, 'Tessie's Travels Through Time', and Good Housekeeping's 'Claudia and David on Venus' will qualify as quasi-science fiction fans. Which 'ain't good'. We old-timers will be submerged by the new fans, who are all goose-bumps about the interplanetary love story or temponautical adventure yarn. Obviously, they will never have the true spirit of we who started reading the stuff when a rocket was a Fourth of July gadget. But no longer will we be avis rara, except in the matter of sentiment toward science fiction. And such sentiment won't set us apart much. The old-time fan is a thing of the past."

"We're anachronisms!" said Gil hollowly.

"What can we do about it, Clint?" asked Jimmy. "How can we fight the trend? Some sort of an all-out effort by fandom...."

Clint shrugged. "We can bow out gracefully," he said sadly.

"Nuts!" shouted someone from the corner. "So what if we're not 'rare birds' any more? We don't care -- we can go on as before, can't we? What's the difference?"



"The difference? A couple of light years!" said Clint, removing the cigarette from his lips. "I've explained all of that. We're anachronisms. We're like the tobacco grains in this butt, which is getting too short to smoke. The butt itself represents all of fandom. The butt's worthless, and similarly fandom is now purposeless; and therefore just as worthless. The CSFS has served its purpose, too. Therefore, like this cigarette that's burned past its time, the club should be extinguished." Viciously, he mashed the smouldering fag in an ashtray.

"In fact," he continued in a calmer voice, "I hereby call for a formal motion to the effect that the CSFS be dissolved immediately."

A dazed surprise took possession of all of us. This was the most unexpected incident in a crazy-dream day. That someone would propose that the club be abolished had never entered our heads, I am certain. I believe that all of us had come to the meeting with a rosy feeling that the old CSFS, in common with all of fandom, was going to be bigger and greater than ever, basking in a vast radiance of ego-boo, newspaper publicity and magazine features.

The stunned quiet was broken almost immediately by Jimmy Matthews' voice: "I move that the CSFS be dissolved." I knew --everyone knew -- that he said it out of loyalty to Clint. Jimmy wasn't kidding, entirely, when he said he became interested in science fiction by reading a Clint Martin yarn. His was a case of hero worship, not the juvenile kind, but hero worship nevertheless. Gil, Jimmy's sidekick, seconded the motion. Numbly, I heard Clint call for a vote.

It was crazy, it was unbelievable. The vote was standing at 8-2 against dissolving the club when Jimmy and Gil voted -- on Clint's side. The trend continued. The votes stood even -- 8 to 8 -- when Polly, our newest member and the last on the list, voted. Calmly, she spoke the decisive "Yes," for disbandment. By the margin of one vote, the Centerville Science Fantasy Society was dissolved on the night of man's conquest of space!

A strange lethargy fell over us. I was thinking, had anyone else proposed breaking up the club, he would have been laughed at. But it was Clint Martin, respected and popular fan and pro, who had brought up the subject, and like puppets we did his bidding. Polly Parker's vote which had decided the issue hadn't surprised me as much as my own vote: I, too, had voted on Clint's side!

Martin broke the silence. "We might as well go home," he said wearily. He looked like a man who needs a drink bad. I shook my head. Like the others, I couldn't figure things out. Events had moved too swiftly.

The meeting broke up quietly, everyone seemingly going his separate way. Usually, after the meeting we all went to the Little

Grand cafe downtown for a soda and some more rag-chewing, but I could see that none of us was in the mood for that tonight. Out on the porch I met Polly again.

"Want a lift?" she demanded. She owns a 1936 Ford that still hangs together by some miraculous means. I started to shrug noncommittally, but she was staring up at the moon -- not looking at me. I said, "Sure, thanks."

"What did you think of the meeting?" she asked, after we had driven along for several minutes.

"I'm still dazed by the suddenness," I told her. "But it was all crazy. Clint's crazy. We were all crazy."

"I noticed you voted on Clint's side. Now you say he's crazy. What gives? -- oh, you don't have to answer. I know. You are all kidding yourselves. You pretend you're glad that Brian Regals hit the moon, but you're not. You hate it like poison."

I protested hotly. Polly paid no attention. "Oh, you'll find out. Remember what Clint said about dreamers liking the dream better than reality. Remember what I said before the meeting? It's the end of a world, you reactionary you! Science fiction fans are willing to peek into the future, but when the future creeps up on you, you start looking back."

"You voted to dissolve the club, too," I snapped at her.

"Uh huh. I'm sick of pretending, play-acting and dreaming about something that's here! Now, I'm going to volunteer for service on the moon."

I slumped deep in my seat. Would Polly, this slim seventeen-year-old, really volunteer to go into space? It sounded fantastic, and I doubted it silently. But, I promised myself bitterly, if she volunteered for any sort of extra-terrestrial service, I would too. No silly girl was going to show me up!

"Take you anywhere in particular?" she asked after a while.

"Oh, just anywhere," I said glumly, still thinking darkly.

She dropped me off at the corner of Sixth and Jordan, and I decided to walk over a block and take the crosstown bus instead of a streetcar the long way around. The high silver moon, flashing constantly like a neon beer sign, followed me all the way, sort of leering over my left shoulder, where I had to twist my head to see it. I didn't want to look at it, but it hung there, silently demanding my attention.

The corner of Seventh and Jordan was brightly lighted, and the moon drew away a little. There was a big sidewalk newsstand there,

a bank of garishly-colored magazines and out-of-town newspapers. My bus wasn't in sight, so I ambled over and began to squint, only half-seeingly, over the pulps. It was force of habit. The news-dealer, whom I knew as Jake, recognized me and came over flourishing a "slick" magazine.

"Here's the latest Science Fiction, sir," he said eagerly. "Come out two days ago, you know."

I had forgotten about it. In the old days I used to case Jake's newsstand a week ahead of time, hoping that the magazine had shown up early.... I looked at Jake, blankly. He looked so damned eager-beaver. What did he want -- a tip for remembering what I had forgotten?

"Well, don't ya want it?" he demanded. He shook the mag at me.

"I want a Teck Amazing, a Wonder Stories Quarterly, Unknown..." I mumbled to myself, helplessly. But I put my hand in my pocket and fished up a dime. I looked the magazine over. It was the third issue of it in the Time-size. I winced anew at the unfamiliar format, all the while insisting to myself, "I like it I like it I like it!" At least, the full-color photographs were an improvement over Kramer and Swenson. I wondered how the hell Schneeman liked being put out of a job by a professional photographer; then I remembered his name was on the masthead as "art editor". What a science fiction fan I was! I knew who had illustrated the first installment of "Skylark Three", but I didn't know who was art editor of the current issue of Street & Smith's Science Fiction!

The stories looked dull. Indirectly, they all reflected the big event of the hour, because everyone had known that within months someone would reach the moon. Aware of the possibility, Editor George O. Smith had picked a bunch of socio-political stuff, set in the remote future. There was also a wacky time-travel paradox by some name I had never heard of, but the first paragraph gave it away as a yarn by Geosmith himself. Hell, I thought, Raoul de Koven was a silly pen-name....

Suddenly, I became aware of a minor bedlam. A news truck was just pulling away from the curb, and Jake and two assistants were already sweating over three huge bundles of newspapers. One fellow was twisting the wire fastenings off, while Jake and the other man were hawking the sheets to a milling crowd of people. "EXTRA" was splashed in red letters across the top of the front page.

After a while, there was a lull and I slid over and caught Jake's eye. "What happened? Did Brian Regals fall down Tycho crater and break his neck?" I asked sarcastically.

Jake laughed, as he handed me a paper. "He ain't nowheres near Tycho orater, sir. He landed near Timocharis crater. It says so right here in his exclusive report, transcribed from light-signal code di-rect from the moon!"

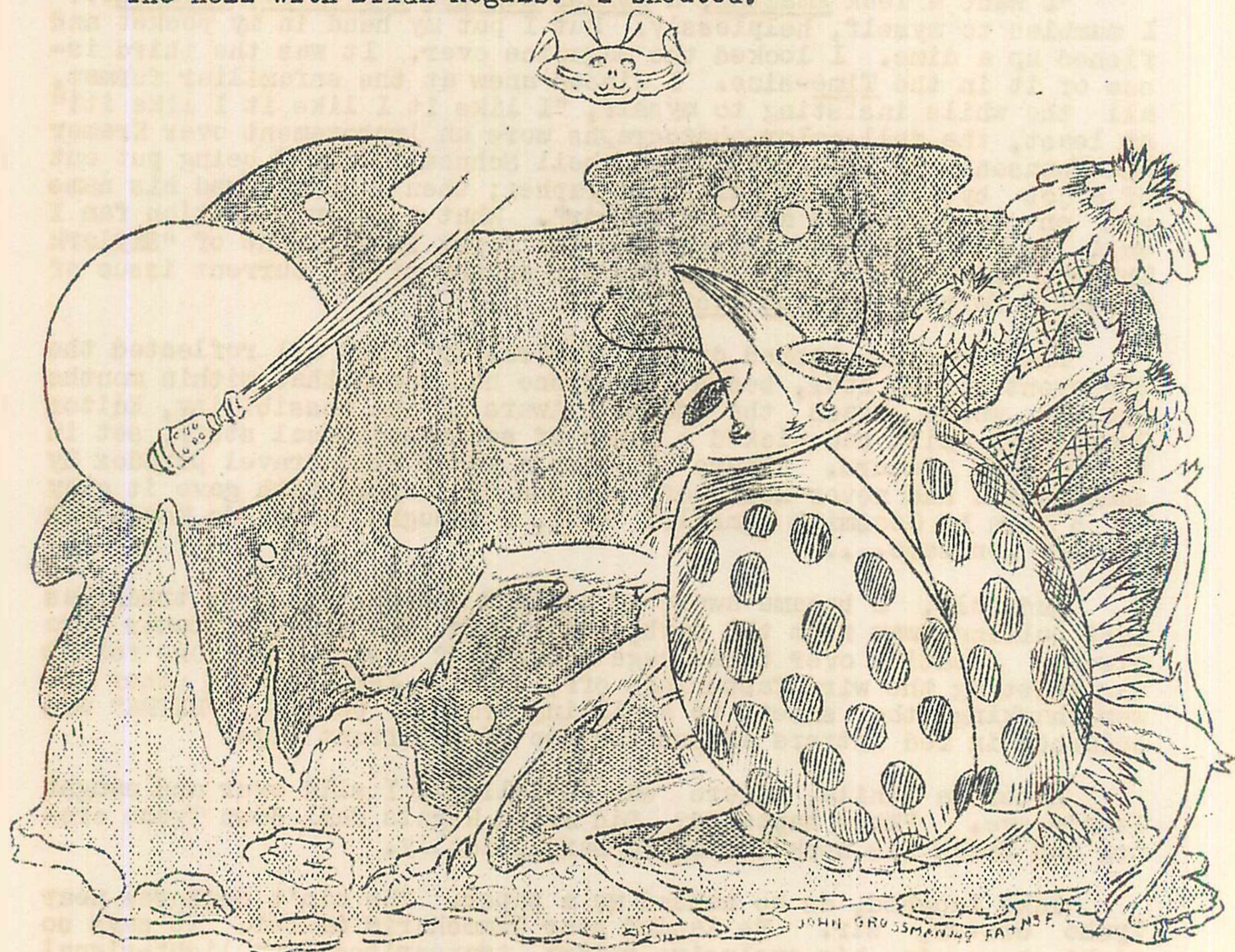
That "Timocharis" came out glibly, although I wasn't sure that he had pronounced it correctly. Even a semi-literate newsdealer was learning all about Earth's remote satellite. It was a hallmark of the new age. Abruptly, I felt hot.

"R. S. Richardson would be proud of you, Jake!" I snarled. I crumpled the "Extra" in my hands, and then ripped it across, and again and again. I hurled the tattered, wrinkled sheets into the gutter.

Jake gaped at me. "Don't you want to read about Brian Regals' new theory about how the moon craters were formed? And about the microscopic life he thinks he found?"

I spat on the ripped-up newspaper.

"The hell with Brian Regals!" I shouted.



KELLER:

DOWN-TO-EARTH DREAMER

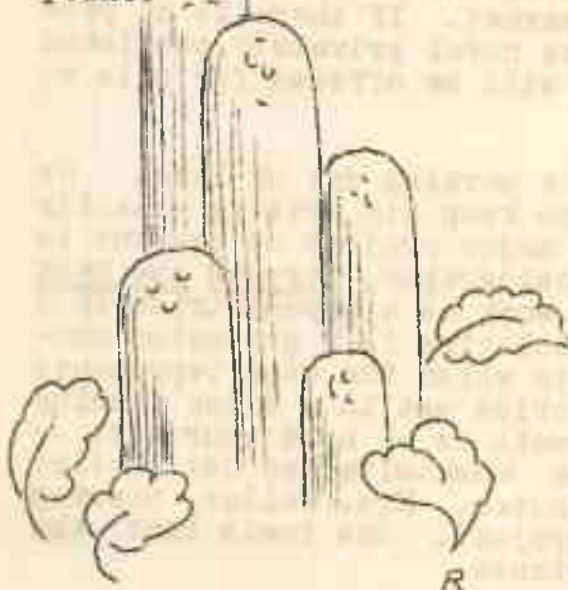
by Joe Kennedy

pics by Rotsler

Man," reflected David H. Keller, "may be compared to a monkey groveling in the mud for ground-nuts. Yet once in a while he will raise his eyes to the horizon -- to look at the stars."

It was the evening of Saturday, April 24th. I was sitting in an easy chair in Underwood, the Kellers' spacious home in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. Within my reach were the complete unpublished works of David H. Keller; in a nearby bookcase were two shelves of manuscripts, neatly bound in quarter-leather volumes. Almost half the wall on the opposite side of the livingroom was lined from floor to ceiling with file-boxes, containing all of Keller's published books and magazine stories.

Mrs. Keller was clearing away the remnants of a mouth-watering roast beef dinner. Yum-Yum, the family pekinese, was dozing in Col. Keller's lap. Smoke ribboning from his cigaret, the white-haired master of Underwood talked on, choosing his words slowly and with care, from time to time elevating his shaggy eyebrows to emphasize a point.



"All my life," he observed, "I have been mainly interested in writing about people. Even in my weird stories, I feel that the true element of horror does not come from the gods beyond---but as in my story, 'A Piece of Linoleum', it is found in actual, everyday life. In writing science-fiction, I have always asked myself: 'If such-and-such a thing happened, what would be its influence upon the human race?' In 'Life Everlasting' when mankind won immortality at the price of sterility; in 'The Metal Doom' when all the metal on Earth disappeared; in 'The Revolt of the Pedestrians' when over-reliance on automobile transportation atrophied the legs of the

drivers -- the story was concerned not with rocket ships and interplanetary monsters, but with the effect of the wondrous happenings on humanity."

This is probably the key to all of David H. Keller's works. I believe it explains why the fantasy field today is witnessing a tremendous renaissance of interest in Kelleryarns. As these lines are being written, Life Everlasting and Other Tales of Science, Fantasy, and Horror is winning an overwhelmingly favorable reception in fandom and among professional critics (the Newark News, top newspaper in this neck of the woods, gave the Moskowitz-edited volume a mild rave review). Under the aegis of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, The Sign of the Burning Hart is on the presses. Two recent SF anthologies, The Best of Science Fiction and Strange Ports of Call, have included Keller selections. Hadley has announced a selection of the Cornwall stories from Weird Tales; The New Collector's Group is taking orders for The Eternal Conflict -- a book of ten hitherto unpublished yarns, including the title novel.

Then there's The Abyss, a novel which Keller began before the war, and recently completed. It was sold to Madle, Pepper, and Agnew at the Philcon and should be appearing in book form before long. About this tale, Col. Keller is reluctant to comment until the book appears. However, he did confide that The Abyss is a "reversion to type" -- a slam-bang action story that packs a powerful wallop. "It's a WILD story!" Keller claims. "Though I have destroyed New York in many horrible ways during the past, in The Abyss I destroy the city in a far more terrible way than ever before." And publisher Bob Madle comments: "It goes down smooth as water!"

Then there is The Homunculus, a 50,000 word novel which Keller considers one of the best science-fantasies he has ever written. Russell Swanson is working on some black-and-white illustrations for the story, and when these are completed, the manuscript together with the pictures will be placed on the market. If there is no prospective publisher, Keller will have the novel privately published in an edition of 100 copies, of which 90 will be offered for sale to fans.

To Col. Keller, every day has been a working day of late. He estimates that he has enough material to keep him writing steadily for the next three years. Perhaps the major project at present is the task of revising his 420-page autobiography, Through the Back Door, which includes an account of his work as a psychiatrist in a hospital for mental abnormals. Also percolating is a projected novel called The Wind Goddess, an allegory in which the wind represents man's destiny. A series of short stories set in a Maine fishing village is also under consideration; as well as -- hold your hat! -- a sequel to Life Everlasting, which Sam Moskowitz and Col. Keller sat down and plotted in about fifteen minutes. Mrs. Keller, however, is very much opposed to this latter project. She feels that the Colonel's other work is of greater importance.

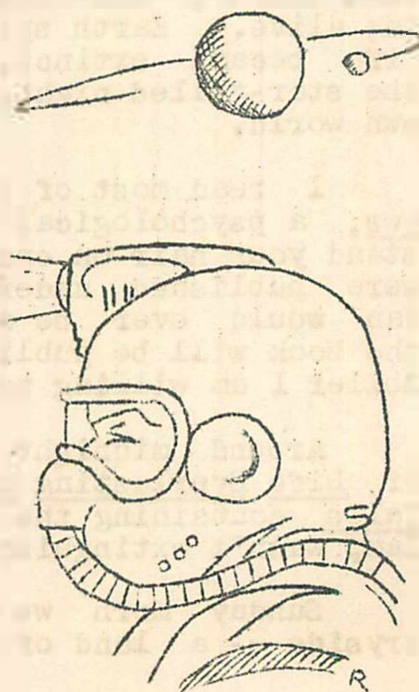
Col. Keller has recently discovered the fascinating but time-consuming field of the fanzines. Langley Searles' Fantasy Commentator has recently run an article analyzing H. P. Lovecraft from a medical point of view, attempting to trace the influence of HPL's psychological make-up upon the tales he wrote. North Carolina fan Andy Lyon has published a special Keller issue of Fanomena, chock full of Kelleryarns and essays, while Gorgon, Fanscient, Canadian Fandom, National Fantasy Fan, Fanomena, and a wad of other fanmags have already flaunted Keller material on their contents pages in recent months. The NFFF has a laureate award for "best fan-turned-professional", but it's my opinion that the worthy organization should hurry up and strike off a medal for the best professional-turned-fan!

As the hand of the clock forged relentlessly into the night, the Kellers retired and left me in the livingroom, to read to my heart's content. So I settled deeper in the easy chair and prepared for a literary feast calculated to intrigue the palate of any wool-dyed stefan. The bookshelves of Underwood are well stocked. In addition to the world's only complete collection of Kelleriana, there are fine editions galore -- The Worm Ouroboros, and copy #1 of a numbered Walter de la Mare limited edition, and a nice assortment of classics, and half a shelf full of James Branch Cabell. But it is with David H. Keller that this article is concerned, so I shall attempt to describe some of the rarities which were subjected to my fevered gaze on that memorable Saturday night.

I saw a bound copy of the first published Keller book -- Songs of a Spanish Lover, which was printed in Alexandria, La., in 1924 in an edition of 50 copies. The poems were written and published under the pseudonym of Henry Cecil. The verse is romantic in subject matter, pleasant but passionless. Col. Keller's personal copy of the book has been illustrated in delicate water colors by one of his mental patients -- a paranoiac lady artist who possessed an exquisite sense of color.

I saw tear-sheets from the fabulously scarce White Owl magazine, which was founded when Keller was a medical student. Several young writers chipped in enough cash to defray the printing costs, wrote the material themselves, personally plugged the magazine at the newsstands. The White Owl endured for five issues. Keller had a story in every one. One of his first fantastic off-trail yarns, "The Winning of the Bride", appeared in the mag. This was a saga of the North, and displayed the influence of Longfellow's romances. Since the magazine's circulation was around 600, chances of running across a copy in a second hand store are very slim, but it's conceivably possible.

I saw bound volumes of short stories, including some fine yarns which have never seen



print. Keller was 48 before he even tried to sell a line. Before he submitted and sold his first story, "The Revolt of the Pedestrians", to Amazing Stories in 1928, he wrote more than five thousand typewritten pages of prose and poetry -- simply for the joy of writing! In some of those bound volumes,



I came across some interesting letters of acceptance and rejection from Farnsworth Wright and Hugo Gernsback. Wright turned down some Keller stories because they were "too beautiful" for Weird Tales: "...Do you realize," Farnsworth Wright commented, "that Lord Dunsany's exquisite gems in The Book of Wonder would not go with our readers, if we should print them in W. T., because of their lack of concreteness and thrill? It is no commentary on their merit as literature. Lovecraft used to write in the Dunsany style, but I was able to use only two short fillers of his in that style: 'The Cats of Ulthar' and 'The White Ship'."

I saw a notebook of juvenilia which fannish eyes have never glimpsed before. This was a series of poems written in 1898-99, and showed again the influence of Longfellow, Tennyson, and others of the ilk. I doubt if Col. Keller would enjoy having them published today, but there are a few amusing parodies, including a chuckle-provoking take-off on "The Charge of the Light Brigade." One poem, composed in October '98, is probably the earliest manifestation of Keller's interest in the bizarre and superscientific. This poem, titled "The End", recounts the story of a traveler from Mars journeying through the galaxy, stopping on Earth "near a mass of pulverized bones", and finding a manuscript written by the last human being alive. Earth spiraled nearer and nearer to the sun, until all life became extinct. The story ends with the Martian gazing into the star-filled night, and realizing that a similar doom awaits his own world.

I read most of the 200-page manuscript for The Deepening Shadows, a psychological novel about abnormality which is guaranteed to stand your hair on end. It is not in the least fantasy, and if it were published under a pen name, I doubt if the most rabid Keller fan would ever be able to guess the identity of the author. That the book will be published seems certain; that it will become a best seller I am willing to take bets on.

Around midnight I drifted upstairs and went to bed with a copy of Life Everlasting and Other Tales and a copy of the 1929 Weird Tales containing the delightful Cornwall yarn, "No Other Man". The lamp wasn't extinguished until after 2 in the morning.

Sunday morn we went for a drive across the Pennsylvania countryside -- a land of rolling hills with an occasional white-painted

house standing out against the clustered trees in the distance. Col. Keller began an absorbing monologue, giving the history of the area. He even pointed out a road which Ben Franklin used to ride on. The Kellers have lived in Monroe County, Pa. ever since the seventeenth-thirties, but the Colonel is the last male of the line. "The rest of the family has gone to seed and women," was the way he put it.

In a cemetery about two centuries old, Keller indicated a weathered tombstone which referred to the grave's occupant as "the bleached-out body of this landsman"; then commented that the poetic spirit was obviously not a new development in his family. We drove on, past stone houses built in colonial times, through tiny villages (there is even a "wide spot in the road" named Kellersville!). I saw much of the territory described in The Devil and the Doctor. From the road Keller pointed out Wolf Hollow, a little dent between two hills, scene of the Taine of San Francisco story, "Wolf Hollow Bubbles". As we headed homeward Col. Keller recounted an incident concerning an ancestor who was accused of witchcraft, and I futilely regretted that it had never been possible for that fervent antiquarian, Howard Phillips Lovecraft, to visit the region. The past is very real to David H. Keller.

Back at Underwood we sat out in the back yard under the trees (that, incidentally, is where "Underwood" gets its name). Out behind the house there's a little cabin which Keller uses as a workshop in the summer time. Inside, I noticed some Frank R. Paul originals -- and a caricature drawn by one of Gernsback's artists, showing Keller decked out in medical white, with a sawed-off leg reposing in a wastebasket in the background.

Keller credits T. O'Connor Sloane with recognizing psychiatry as being a scientific basis for science fiction as well as physics and astronomy. "When I became a psychiatrist," said Keller, "I was more interested in men's minds and souls than in their livers." This attitude was to be reflected in his writing, too. Out of curiosity, I asked him which of his stfantasyarns he believes definitely utilized his experience in psychiatry and medicine. Out came the alphabetical card file, and Keller thumbed through the listing of all his published stories, asking himself "Could this have been written authoritatively by anyone not a doctor?"

Here is the list: A Biological Experiment (Amazing). The Bridle (Weird). The Dead Woman (Fantasy Magazine & Strange Stories). The Eternal Conflict. The Face in the Mirror (in the Moskowitz anthology). The Flying Fool (AS). The Golden Bough (Marvel Tales). The Killer (Gorgon). Heredity (Vortex). Life Everlasting (AS). The Literary Corkscrew (Wonder). The Moon Artist (Stirring Science). The Mother (Fantascience Digest). No More Tomorrows (AS). The Perpetual Honeymoon (Science-Fantasy Correspondent). Pourquoi (this one has been published only in France; it will be in the forthcoming New Collector's Group book, The Eternal Conflict, under the title of "The Question"). The Psychophonic Nurse (AS). Stenographer's Hands (AS Quarterly). The Thought Projector (a pamphlet). Unlocking the Past (AS). Unto Us a Child Is Born (AS and anthology).

Keller has hopes that The Conquerors and The Evening Star, and The Metal Doom, may be resold to one of the semi-pro publishing outfits. In regards to the last-named yarn, I learned that the story apparently made Gernsback jealous! "The Metal Doom", you see, was written for Amazing Stories. Shortly after the tale was completed, Keller happened to describe the plot to David Lasser, who was working for Hugo Gernsback at the time. Lasser requested that the story be submitted to Wonder; but Keller declined, for "The Metal Doom" had been promised to Sloane. But when the boss of Wonder Stories heard about it, he was ostensibly reluctant to allow Amazing to beat him to the punch with such a plot; so quick as well-oiled lightning he made arrangements to translate and reprint a novel from the French, called "The Death of Iron"! The two stories appeared around the same time, but needless to say, the Kelleryarn made the better impression with scientifiction fans.

The hours rushed by, until it was time for my train to leave. I had always considered Keller a master story-teller, and when I heard him read some of his own work aloud, this judgment was reaffirmed. But by the time my weekend visit had come to an end, I was sure I knew why Keller was different from any other science-fiction writer, why his stories of real life seem to possess the essence of reality itself, why his characters unfailingly resemble human beings. For David H. Keller does not merely write about people. The characters in his stories are reflections of himself.



ON SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS



Weary of our dreary world and bored with life, our fancies call us
To imaginary realms. 'Tis then we turn to you for solace,
You, who with artful skill construct us alien worlds in distant spaces,
Transporting us by space ships and by rockets to weird, wondrous places.
New concepts, customs and traditions styled for life on other spheres
Make us question those that we have followed blindly through the years.
Your skillful pens paint future scenes, or glimpses of a bygone age.
Cold words are changed to living entities across a printed page.
What mighty citadels you build with pen and ink your only tools,
Creating havens for the dreamers, making refuges for fools.
Atomic power, robots, rockets, futuristic innovations,
All these fabulous ideas evolved from your imaginations
May be ridiculed and mocked and deemed impossible by some,
And yet they may be fact, not fiction, in progressive years to come.

--TIGRINA

August 5th, 1946.

IN SEARCH OF A HOPE*
by Ken Pitchford

We are the men in quest of a dream,
In search of a star to be guided by,
Looking heavenward for the gleam
Of a vast expanse of starlit sky.
We would build a radiant earth,
Filled with joyousness and mirth,
And we'd find truth as we upward grope--
In quest of a dream, in search of a hope.

We are striving, seeking for
A song to sing with an open heart,
Yearning to see it rise and soar--
Even to the earth's most distant part;
But man with his petty, time-worn scheme
Cannot help us with our dream,
For we'll break chains, and we'll slash rope,
In quest of our star, in search of our hope.

The way is not easy, and we are not strong--
Only a voice in the wilderness.
Yet we will become a mighty throng,
Advancing to find our happiness.
Laughing, we stand at the foot of the road--
Eager to start, we lift our load:
We will go down that path abreast,
Finding at last the dream we quest.

*Dedicated to Dream Quest and its readers.

NO SLEEPING PILLS NEEDED

BY

HARRY WARNER, JR.

REMEMBER HOW the boys and girls got their education in Huxley's Brave New World? If my theory about that book is correct, you might as well change the "got" to "get" in the first line above, for I've always contended that the volume is a thinly disguised commentary on today, not tomorrow. The unceasing repetition of the things the children were being taught in Huxley's book isn't too different from the way schools teach by rote and parents teach by unexplained commands in this day and age.

But let's suppose that we won't have any subconscious teaching while the tots are asleep in the future. (Did it ever occur to anyone to wonder what would happen to the children who are afflicted with insomnia?) It's pretty obvious that education, as it works today, is the most enormous waste of time, money, and energy that man has yet devised. In most cases, the schools take the biggest bite out of the city, county, and state tax dollar. The individual spends most of his time there for at least 12 years if he hopes to become a grocery store clerk or a housewife, 16 years if he wants to stand a good chance of finding really interesting employment, 20 to 24 years if he decides to enter one of the really specialized professions like medicine or law. When he finally completes his schooling, whether at high school, college, medical school, postgraduate course, or whatever, what does he know? Quite a bit about one or two subjects in which he is interested, and a vague assembly of facts about a hundred other matters, learned only in order that he might pass examinations and soon to be forgotten.

I think that the future will do something about the schools. Certainly a utopia would change the situation around quite a bit. Let's imagine that future utopia in this country, and let's also presume that nothing has been discovered or invented that will revolutionize all teaching and learning methods. Here are my ideas on how the schools could become more efficient, and how they could better equip the young men and women for the things that they will face in later life.

First of all, and most important of all, is the need for shortening the number of years which the child must spend in school. In ways that I shall come to a little further on, I'm sure that the present-day standard 12-year elementary and high school course could be cut down to ten years. That would permit graduation from high school at the age of 16, an age when almost all girls and the majority of boys

are physically and emotionally almost as mature as they are two years later. It would permit them to go out and get jobs at the age of 16, the restless age, instead of sitting in classrooms throughout their later teens, if they had no desire for higher education. It might help a lot toward solving social problems that are created by financial inability to get married as soon as the boys and girls are physically and emotionally ready.

My educational revolution wouldn't stop there, however. By reducing the elementary and high school time by two years, there would be a lot of money left for expanding tremendously the present skeleton system of junior colleges throughout the country. I'd like to see these junior colleges become a part of the public school system, tuition free, available to all high school graduates who wished further learning in some field. They would offer two year courses in some fields, one-year courses in others. But -- and this is the most important thing of all -- those courses would really be intensive. The student at the junior college who had made up his mind to enter a particular field wouldn't study the course connected with that field and four or five other courses needed to make up credits and useless to his planned vocation. He would study the relevant course or courses and none other. In these days of fast transportation, there is no reason why the junior colleges couldn't be specialized, each of them offering instruction in only two or three subjects, and the residents of one town eligible to go to the junior college in the next town fifteen miles away in case some other type of training was needed.

I think that good planning would make it possible to cram into one or two years of "junior college" everything about a subject that the student would learn in four years at college under the present setup. He wouldn't be worried with a pile of studies in other fields which would have no future usefulness to him. And by going to college in or near his home town, he'd be free of the distractions of the present college life setups. Dartmouth and Yale and dear old Siwash could still exist for the rich and idle, and they could continue to turn out football players with empty heads, just as they do now, without interfering with the really important junior colleges.

In this manner, at eighteen the young man or woman would be out of school unless he planned to make his living in some field wherein lengthy preparation is unavoidable. I don't think that there are many of these fields, and I think that most of them could be studied much better by some form of on-the-job training. A good start has been made by the medical profession; the prospective doctor gets his practical knowledge by working in hospitals and on ambulances for a few years before going into his own practice. Big industries are here to stay, and I think most of them would find that it would pay in the end to set up similar systems of higher education for their new employees.

All the above has been very general and vague, however. Let's look at the revised educational system from the practical side, and see just where and how enough time could be saved to cut down the number of years required for schooling.

Well, two things strike me more than anything else. They are: the fact that children at the most active and energetic age -- from six to ten or twelve -- are forced to undergo almost purely academic studies, and don't get any schooling which enables them to move about and get rid of some of that animal energy; and the fact that there is a huge amount of deadwood in the present day curriculum.

To take the last first, I'd cut out from the elementary and high school grades most of the teaching of history and geography, all the teaching of languages other than English, all mathematics beyond the four fundamental operations with whole numbers, fractions, and decimals; and most of the less important little things that clutter up the school day.

In the time thus saved, I'd double or triple the amount of time now devoted to reading, in order to teach the children to read intelligently and rapidly. I don't think that more than half of the present-day high school graduates can read faster than they can talk, and even fewer can summarize something that they've just read, if unexpectedly called upon to do so.

My school system would have an all-out revolution in the "English literature" department. All the anthologies and annotated editions that are now used would be consigned to some nether region. Good contemporary fiction and essays, written in the last ten years about modern matters, would be substituted for Elizabethan plays and Victorian stories. Matter of fact, I've never seen much point in trying to teach high school students to enjoy Shakespeare from a study of his plays; I think that the time thus spent could be more profitably expended on a study of movie scripts, in an effort to raise the intelligence and appreciation of the present-day motion picture.

As things stand now, "vocational training" doesn't come until the student is nearing the end of high school. My plan would call for something along that line in every grade, beginning as soon as the child entered school. Six-year-old boys and girls both can be taught simple sewing, and I suspect that they could be taught to type as easily as they are taught to write by hand. Textbook teaching would be de-emphasized for the first three or four years of school -- things to do with the hands would be the main thing.

Just how much of this sort of thing could be managed, I don't know. But I don't think it's too much to suppose that every young man and woman at the end of ten years of school should know how to cook simple dishes, make repairs to clothing, type, write both longhand and shorthand, drive an automobile, know how to repair that automobile when something goes wrong that can be easily spotted and fixed, and work with wood and metal with tools. Most of these skills are now picked up outside of school in half-learned and haphazard fashion.

From the academic side of things, I've already mentioned increased emphasis on reading and the desirability of including shorthand, which

is very valuable for taking notes or making lengthy memoranda even if you never have any intention of becoming a stenographer. I'd shove most of the rest of the book learning into the last four years of the ten-year course. Before that, some elementary facts about history and geography could be acquired by choosing the reading matter properly. Enough arithmetic could be taught to enable the children to make change, and no more until they reach their teens. The math that is now spread over the first eight or ten years of school could be digested by a teen-ager in a single year, and it's of no practical value until the teens are reached.

Naturally, I'd like to see a lot more emphasis on a course made up of things that are now spread among civics, history, American government, and three or four other classifications. It would be simply an explanation of how adult life in the United States runs. You'd be surprised how many adult people don't really understand what a bank check really is and how it works, or what kind of Western Union wire to send if they're in an extra hurry or want to save money, or how to read a timetable, or the psychology of getting along with the clerks in a store. This would not be a course in American patriotism, nor an effort to propagandize the values of American life; it would simply be an explanation of how things are, letting the students draw their own conclusions about the situations.

Semantic training, of course, goes into all the science fiction stories. I've always been extremely skeptical about Korzybski's insistence that semantics would be easier to teach if that kind of training were given to the youngsters from the beginning. He might be right, and it would do no harm to try. But regardless of the success of that experiment, the last two or three years of the ten-year course should contain a lot of emphasis on the rather important but often forgotten little facts that what is printed is not necessarily correct; that we live in an unknowable world which we comprehend imperfectly through imperfect senses and that our actions are based on a world which really doesn't exist because we interpret the real one imperfectly, yet those actions have their effect in the real, unknowable world. If every school child in the nation were made to understand those things, I can think of a lot of politicians, newspapers, business firms, philosophers, and rabble rousers that would get the treatment they deserved.

Finally, but perhaps most important of all in the long run -- training in school to enable the students to find things to do in their spare time in the years to come. With two or three exceptions, every one of my friends is bewildered and helpless when confronted with an evening in which the planned activity can't be undertaken. Most of them, if they aren't able to go to a party, a movie, or bowling, resign themselves to complete boredom. Why can't the schools show what pleasure there is to be found in music, in art, in hobbies, even in research? For further information on the menace of spare time, I refer you to any of the "Studs Lonigan" volumes.

IN ARKHAM HOUSE

by Philip Gray

Carnacki, the Ghost-Finder, by William Hope Hodgson; 1947; M&M; \$3.00

The name of William Hope Hodgson will ring through the annals of fantasy as long as lovers of the outre abound. His ability can easily be ranked with such masters as Merritt and Lovecraft; and yet his name was nearly lost in the mists of obscurity. Ironically enough he began writing near the turn of the century, but it was not until Famous Fantastic Mysteries, as a result of H. C. Koenig's long campaign, printed the short masterpiece of sea weirdness, "The Derelict", to be followed by cut versions of the novels "The Ghost Pirates" and "The Boats of the Glen Carrig" that American readers began to take notice of an author who had lived and died long before Lovecraft's brilliant reign.

In the vein of weird-fantasy Hodgson is incomparable; the soaring imagination of his works was never bound by editorial policy; he wrote of the subtle sea and the mysteries of the dread Sargasso, of a benighted future world and a dying universe, of the horror that stalks by midnight.

Carnacki, the Ghost-Finder is the second of two books by Hodgson to be published recently in this country; the first was an omnibus of his four novels bearing the title of the lead novel -- The House on the Borderland. Both were printed by Derleth, the omnibus having the Arkham House imprint and Carnacki the Mycroft & Moran.

Of the nine short stories in this edition, three were discovered after the author's untimely death in the first World War and have never before appeared in book form. They are "The Hog", "The Find", and "The Haunted Jarvee". "The Hog", possibly one of the best in the collection, was the lead story in the January, 1947 issue of Weird Tales; it was the only one of the discovered three previously published here. One other, "The Haunted Jarvee", has appeared in magazine form in England.

To my mind, Carnacki has but one peer in the psycho detective field, and that is Algernon Blackwood's well-remembered John Silence. To those who know the estimable John Silence, this is saying enough.

Hodgson, unfortunately, broke some rules which were unwritten laws even in his day by climaxing some of his supposedly supernatural incidents with purely natural causes, which in turn distinctly savors of Radcliffe and her 'ghosts that weren't ghosts' of the early nineteenth century. Though it may be frowned upon by some, I consider it only fair to disclose to the readers of this review these violators -- horrifying though they are even in their own native elements. In sequence they are: "The Thing Invisible", "The House Among the Laurels"

and "The Find".

It is, perhaps, a blemish on Hodgson's ability and fairness, but not overly so; these stories, with the exception of "The Find", which can be categorized as a Holmesian adventure, all are exceedingly well portrayed and are certain to give the reader his money's worth of chills, for the lurking nemeses are as tangible and dangerous as the foulest monstrosity ever denounced from the nethermost regions.

Were the writer alive today, he might readily account for this, but even he, the romantic dreamer, could little have known of the fame to come out of obscurity; thus the stories must, and can, speak for themselves.

Through the pages of this book moves Carnacki, a strange and whimsical figure about whom we learn very little, yet who is very human in his fear and his courage, who seemingly has no reason for pitting himself against the Unknown except for what help he can render the jeopardized and, most certainly, the thrill of the battle. With the aid of his quaint Electric Pentacle and a thorough knowledge of sorceries and black magic, he challenges the Unguessable in its own stamping grounds.

"The Hog" relates a man's struggle to save his soul from the metaphysical swine-monstrosities, of Carnacki's intervention and his own peril. It is the longest of the nine stories and one of the best.

Next in terror and malignant forces is "The Whistling Room", which begins as just another 'bothered' room, but when Carnacki finds himself deceived by the evil, blackened lips of the whistler, he comes face to face with that against which he has no protection. Hodgson's method of rescuing his hero may be looked at askance; it is one premise too many.

"The House of the Invisible" has two haunters; an impostor ghost, dangerous as he is, meets the real one -- who is deadlier yet. The climax is good enough for me to give it third place. One other story has both a sham and a real ghost, but the title need not be mentioned; the spot of humor it provokes carries it through the test. The titles I have not named are "The Gateway of the Monster" and "The Searcher of the End House".

The cover is by Frank Utpatel, Wisconsin artist, who also illustrated the first Lovecraft book (The Shadow Over Innsmouth), and is a beautiful thing indeed. Format and binding are uniform with other late AH books', having the spine design of the AH novel publications.

THE ARKHAM SAMPLER, Vol. 1 #2; Spring (Apr) 1948; AH; \$1.00

Readers of the first issue will find the second not dissimilar. Unlike most beginning magazines, there are no marked improvements in T. A. S. A sampling of Lovecraft's letters is to be had; Clark Ashton Smith and Leah Bodine Drake with a couple of good poems; an interest-

ing note on HPL is found in Reinhart Kleiner's "A Memoir of Lovecraft"; several tales from Robert Hunt's rare collection of legends are printed under the title of "West Country Legends"; a dubious thing subtitled 'an extravaganza' by Fritz Leiber, "Fantasy on the March", marched through my mind without leaving any definite impression; and oddities entitled "Random Notes" just about complete the miscellaneous contents. Derleth does not talk as much in this issue, but does manage to get in a few passing shots.

Lovecraft's "Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath" continues in its second of four parts; having not the tangible beauty of his other fantasies, sometimes approaching wry, and almost silly, humor, it is nevertheless interesting. Any failings it has can be traced back to the fact that HPL never lived to complete more than the first draft, in which form we see it here.

Two short stories: "A Damsel with a Dulcimer" by Malcolm Ferguson taking up where Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" left off ends in just about the same place, and Stephen Grendon's "The Wind in the Lilacs" is nothing more nor less than another 'they killed me so I'm going to haunt them.'

There is far too much beating around the bush in the book reviews. One comes away not knowing whether he should buy the book in question to read or to burn at the stake. As reviews they seem less such and more personal opinions of the author and sharp-thrusted comments. "With all apologies to my very good friend, Mr. So-and-so, I still think he should drop dead," and that sort of thing. The Sampler wants for better reviews.

In passing, Arkham House at least is not afraid to use plenty of well-placed staples in their magazine bindings, though the wall-paint yellow of this issue's covering is very susceptible to dust.

At this date I tender a prophecy: it would seem that only HPL's almost legendary novel is keeping the magazine above water because of the price; when that finishes, the Sampler will finish unless some other attraction picks up where "Dream Quest" leaves off. Few people, apart from the bibliomaniac (or aficionado, as you choose), will feel like paying a dollar per issue for a few poems, good as they may be, and a couple of short stories which may have literary merits but are too traditive to be very interesting. Derleth is in a position to make something of this magazine; we hope he does.

Above and apart from this quibbling apropos of the magazine itself, I consider it worth having been conceived because of the Lovecraft serial.

Strange Ports of Call, edited by August Derleth; 1948, P&C; \$3.75/85

When Wells and Verne began arguing the best means of flight to the moon (barring from mind the clever hoax of Poe and his colleague) I sometimes wonder if they could possibly have visioned what would

follow. Whether they did or not, it was with them that the scientific novel emerged from the Utopian and Gothic into a field of its own. And years later when Gernsback launched his publications he gave it a name -- science-fiction.

Still and all, no aspiring type of fiction can hold up its head until it has been anthologized, and not until a fairly recent date did any science-fiction anthologies appear on the market (of which I believe Donald A. Wollheim's The Pocket Book of Science-Fiction was the first) so that now the discriminating reader has several good ones to pick from.

Few will dispute that s-f has come a long way from Verne to van Vogt; in Strange Ports of Call August Derleth has gathered many of the best; all are good reading with something a little better than time-worn stock characters moving through them, the type of stories that could stand side by side with Weinbaum's "A Martian Odyssey" or Bennett's "By the Waters of Babylon".

They are not too easily obtainable, only a few having seen print in late years. Some of them, such as Henry Kuttner's "Call Him Demon", which shows children to be something quite different from the cute little types we think we see, do not strike me as being science fiction -- rather as excellent fantasy.

Nelson Bond's "The Cunning of the Beast" comes close to being the lead story in more ways than being first on the contents page; it's about another kind of children, one of the best creation allegories I have seen.

"The Worm" is Keller at his best, a Kelleryarn well worthy of a place between hard covers. The Wandrei brothers, Donald and Howard, are present, each with his own tale, each good. George Allan England's "The Thing from Outside" is among his better works, but Lovecraft's "At the Mountains of Madness" left me cold; it is a must for the Lovecraft admirers, but otherwise it is the same old thing all over again, just longer. Perhaps I have become sated with primal monstrosities and suppressed secrets; anyway, I couldn't enjoy it.

In "The Green Hills of Earth" Robert Heinlein tells the story of a blind Francois Villon of the spaceways. It'll remain in my memory for a long time, and if there is anything wrong with his poetry I can't see it.

Theodore Sturgeon and "Thunder and Roses" impressed me as being the best end-of-the-world in the book; Philip Wylie's "Blunder" and one of Ray Bradbury's Mars series, "The Million Year Picnic", are followups.

Remember Don Wilcox's "The Voyage That Lasted 600 Years"? Well, van Vogt's "Far Centaurus" is a better-written example of the same thing.

From the last issue of Comet is Clifford Simak and Carl Jacobi's "The Street That Wasn't There". For some reason better known to the editor, it is entitled "The Lost Street" in this anthology. With either name it's still a fair yarn.

"Forgotten", by P. Schuyler Miller, concerns a man who has been 'forgotten' by his comrades and left on barren Mars -- not an ideal situation at all.

The master of s-f, H. G. Wells, is present with "The Crystal Egg". Others are: a short satire, "Mars on the Ether", by Lord Dunsany; "Mr. Bauer and the Atoms", by Fritz Leiber Jr.; "John Jones' Dollar", by Harry Stephen Keeler (remember the newspaper item of a short while ago about a man who had deposited a dollar in a bank years ago and it grew into astounding figures with interest? Well, the same happens here, and the interest grows until a descendant is about to inherit the whole known universe!); "Master of the Asteroid", by Clark Ashton Smith; and Frank Belknap Long's "A Guest in the House".

All in all, a much better anthology than might be expected, particularly as there are none of the repetitious reprints which have graced the pages of Derleth's former anthologies to a great extent. Summed up, and the contents checked against the price, I would recommend it to anyone who likes his science-fiction and fantasy of a better grade than is usually found. There are several glaring omissions in the author line-up since the contents page reads like a Who's Who in fantasy/science-fiction; names like Stanley G. Weinbaum, Don A. Stuart, and others are conspicuous by their absence.

Included with each story are illuminating side notes on the authors; I'd like to see this practice followed more generally. The binding, while about the general run in quality, is pleasing to the eye; but the jacket artist must pass unidentified -- at least by me.

The Traveling Grave and Other Stories, by L. P. Hartley; 1948; AH; \$3.

A superb jacket illustration by Frank Utpatel sets the mood for Hartley's stories; and again we find a collection the reader may settle down with sans the uncomfortable feeling that he may have read half the contents before, since Hartley has appeared in this country only in anthologies, with but four stories -- "A Visitor from Down Under", "The Cotillon", "Feet Foremost", and the title story.

Perhaps I would be called precocious if I said Leslie Hartley is the British Poe, but nevertheless I was strongly reminded of that great figure in American letters more than once while reading the collection. "The Island" might be another "Fall of the House of Usher" and "The Cotillon" has the atmosphere and setting of "The Masque of the Red Death", while "A Change of Ownership" is definitely a William Wilsonish sort of thing that still has me thinking. It speaks well for Hartley that I received a nasty jolt from the latter when I was least expecting it.

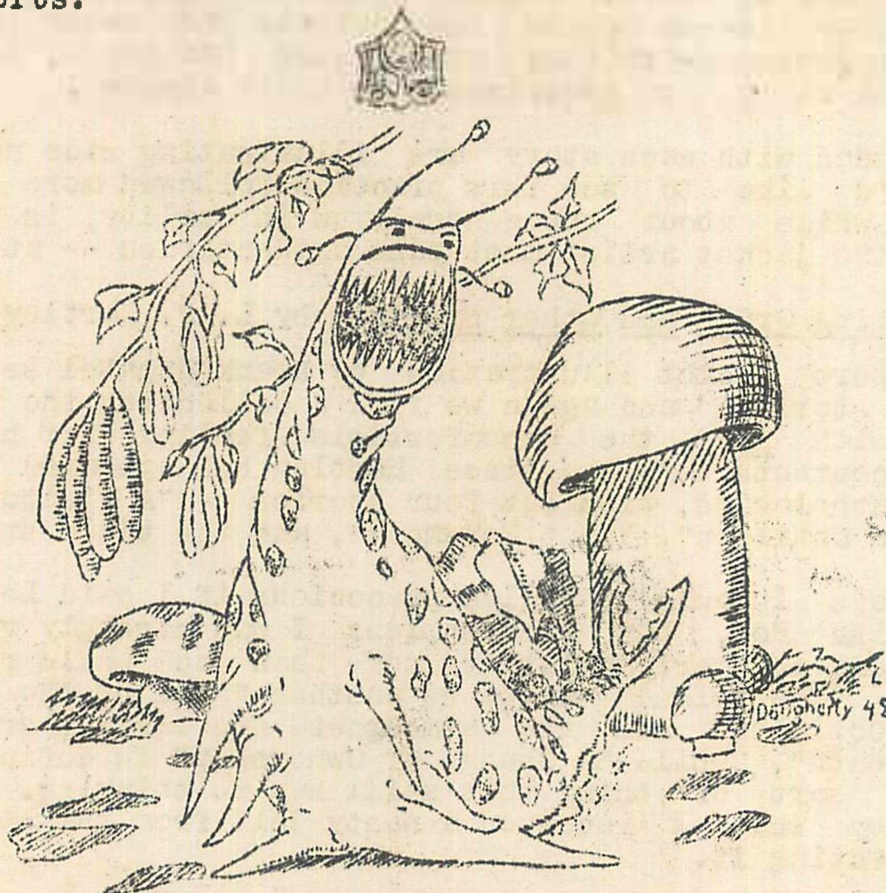
Considering the number of stupid victims-to-be, I wish there were more vengeful ghosts such as the one who caused her targets to be carried out "Feet Foremost".

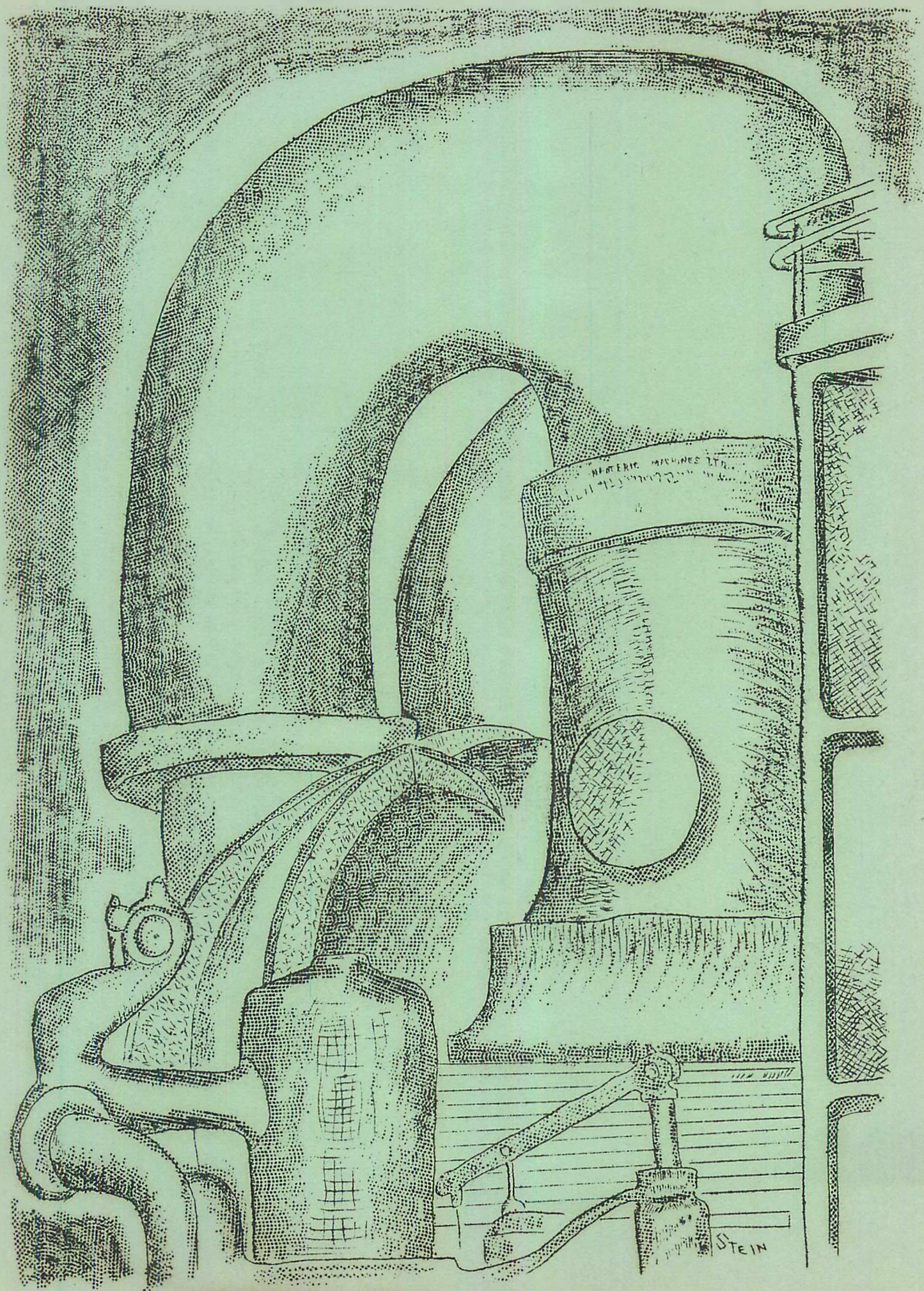
I'm only sorry that Hartley has to be like the majority of his countrymen inasmuch as he, too, tends to be slow and boring in beginning a narrative; other than this, Hartley's collection is just the thing for the person who likes to have his spine chilled.

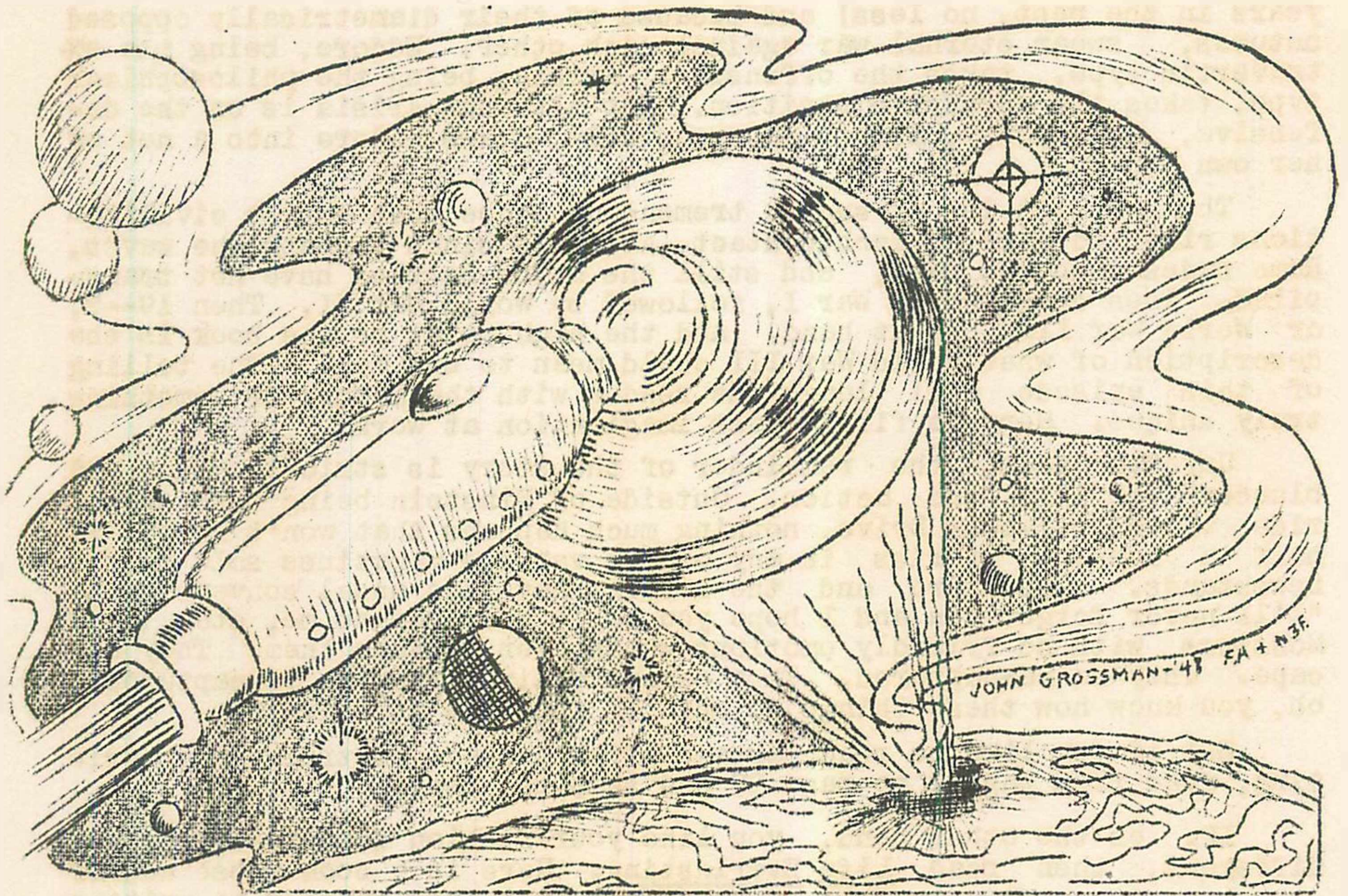
Most of the other stories can be more or less classified as traditional except for three which very much deserve a brief synopsis. "Podolo" gives one the feeling that justice was done without caring to meet the thing which executed said justice; "Conrad and the Dragon" is a fairy tale that children shouldn't be allowed to read; and the title story is about an intended experiment that went awry and just what "The Traveling Grave" was capable of.

The Traveling Grave and Other Stories would be better forgotten by the blood and thunder fan, but to the reader who likes his macabre slanting towards the literary side, it is a must.

In Times to Come: Printers' delays have postponed Wandrei's The Web of Easter Island into July; following at intervals will come Lord Dunsany's The Fourth Book of Jorkens and Clark Ashton Smith's Genius Loci and Other Tales. The first is an original novel; the others will be collected shorts.







MIND WORLDS

ALORI DANNUR

Triplanetary, by E. E. Smith Ph. D. Fantasy Press, \$3.00.

Life Everlasting, by David H. Keller, M. D. The Avalon Co., \$3.50.

The Place of the Lion, by Charles Williams. London, 7/6.

TO THE TRUE FANTASY READER, E. E. Smith's writings need no introduction. They are stories told in the colossal manner of unbounded enthusiasm on one hand and unlimited imagination on the other. Here is the unimaginable velocity, the unbelievable energy, the awe-inspiring scope of what has earned the name of a "space-epic".

Arisia meets Eddore for the first time (some two thousand million

years in the past, no less) and because of their diametrically opposed natures, swear eternal war against each other. Eddore, being the extravertic type, takes the offensive. Arisia, being the philosophical type, takes the defensive position. But although Arisia is on the defensive, she slowly, almost imperceptibly, draws Eddore into a net of her own design.

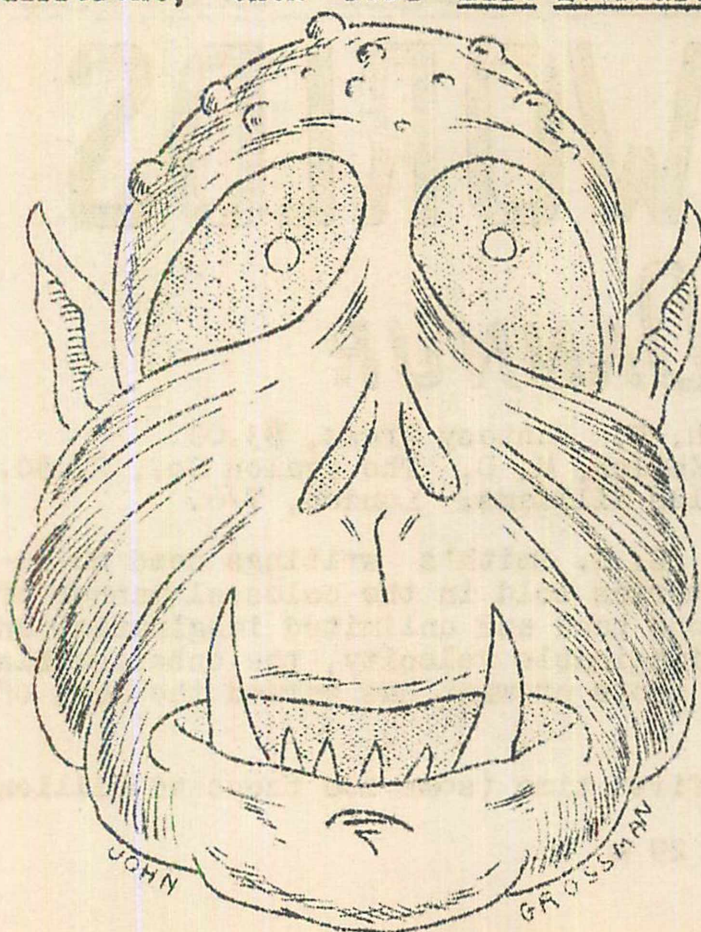
The conflict is of such a tremendous scope that entire civilizations rise and fall at each contact. Atlantis sinks beneath the waves, Rome fades into the past, and still the major battles have not transpired. Then comes World War I, followed by World War II. Then 19--?, or World War III, is at hand. And the high point of the book is the description of what World War III could mean to one man. The telling of this episode will leave the reader with the memory of something truly unique. Here is first class imagination at work!

Unfortunately, the remainder of the story is strictly "thud and blunder" thrills and action. Outside of Einstein being taken for a ride via Inertialess Drive, nothing much happens that won't happen in half a hundred stories in any of the various magazines sold on the newsstands. The hero and the heroine have the usual conversation; "I'll never forget you and I hope you won't ever forget me, etc., etc." Monsters with no friendly emotions whatsoever capture them. They escape. They're re-captured. They escape again. They're re-captured.. oh, you know how these things go on! If you like it, dive in.

But if you like to read passage after passage of truly great writing, read from page 1 to page 97 and skip the rest.

IF, on the other hand, you like your fiction down-to-earth, yet different, then read Life Everlasting. Here is a book whose author

has dedicated himself to writing beautiful prose. If he fails to reach this goal in every story -- and he does in one or two examples in this collection -- it is to be understood that no man can reach the heights without first climbing from the valley. The examples I speak of are "Life Everlasting", the title novel, and "The Cerebral Library", one of the 'Taine of San Francisco' tales reprinted from Amazing Stories of 1931. In both stories, Dr. Keller deals with ideas which need more imaginative description and not so much simplicity of style. The themes of Immortality and five hundred brains in glass jars working for one man are not the type of thing to deal with simply. Or so it seemed to me.



The other stories in the volume, of which there are ten, are all excellent. Some of them, "Unto Us a Child Is Born" being the outstanding example, are too subtle to read and judge immediately. They should be read, put aside, returned to and read again; then, and only then, should they be judged as to their merits. Try it and see if I am not correct.

"The Dead Woman", "A Piece of Linoleum", "Heredity", and "The Face in the Mirror" are the four top stories. All, except "Heredity", are extremely subtle in style but fascinating throughout. "Heredity" is not very subtle in treatment and is far from nice at the end; still I liked it, liked it so much that I urge every reader of the fantastic to read it ... that is, unless you cannot appreciate pure, unadulterated horror. If you cannot, don't read "Heredity".

No review of Life Everlasting would be complete without a discussion of "The Face in the Mirror", the story of a man's struggle within himself to overcome his "other self". In the future years this story will be damned and praised to the stars. I praise it to the stars. If you like realism with a touch of deep understanding of the unsane, don't miss "The Face in the Mirror".

The other stories, "The Boneless Horror", "No More Tomorrows", "The Thing in the Cellar", and "The Thirty and One" are all excellent fiction. All are worthy of hard covers, and all are worthy of being included in Life Everlasting.

The Place of the Lion, an import from England, is the kind of fiction we need more of in the field of fantasy.

It begins in such a normal manner that one is led to believe that nothing abnormal could possibly happen. Then you, the reader, are rudely awakened when an enormous lion appears; particularly when you were expecting a lioness instead! Slowly one incident builds upon another until you think that the limit has been reached. THEN things really begin to happen!

To explain the plot in less than five hundred words would be impossible. To explain it at all would ruin the story for the reader. But this much I will say: It is plotted with an eye for each detail, it weaves the fantasy with a consummate skill born of long experience, and it is worthy of a place in anyone's library, fantasy reader or otherwise. I recommend it unreservedly.

Last minute arrival department: Final Blackout, by L. Ron Hubbard. Hadley Publishing Co., \$3.00. One of the greatest and grimmest novels of science-fiction. Binding fair, dust-jacket excellent. Illustrations so-so. Contents magnificent!

And watch this column for reviews of all the fantasy titles from England and Australia. Some exceptional items are being released periodically and should be in the library of all fans. Next period will feature The Breaking of the Seals by Ashton, and All Hallows Eve by Williams, both exceptional fantasy.



S A T A N I E
by Ken Pitchford



One night I had lain very drowsy,
Nearly letting my thoughts slip
by,
When something rattled the shutter,
Like a soft wind's tiny sigh.

I bolted upright from my bedding
Unfastened the latch to let in
Whatever had pleaded admission
To this smallest of rooms in the
inn.

Silver flooded the bedroom,
And while I blinked in the light,
Into the room from the casement,
Stepped a graceful forest sprite.

"They call me Satanie," she murmured,
Casting a smile at my fear,
And humming some pagan love song,
She changed the smile to a leer.

She started to dance in a fashion
That brought a gasp from my lips,
For the veil that floated around
her
Was but loosely done up at her
hips.

Her glittering eyes were evil,
Her white skin spoke of death,
And her full, drooping lips were
parted,
Emitting a foetid breath.

Her raven black hair flew in tangles
As she whirled herself round the
room;
Her sylph-like body slipped past
me,
Exuding a rare perfume.

Her long supple palms brushed my
forehead,
Her soft bosom swelled on mine,
And with a spell of magic,
She made our hearts entwine.

She touched her hand to my shoulder,
Her smouldering eyes bade me,
"Come!"
And though my soul screamed a
warning,
My mind and my muscles went numb.

So, with the pale moon above us,
The lush, fertile valley below,
We danced in the sylvan twilight
With a madness that seemed to
grow.

Faint, at last, with exertion,
I dropped weakly to the ground,
And when she glided toward me,
My temples began to pound.

There in the dusk of the forest,
She gathered me into her arms,
And pressing her cold, cold lips
to mine,
She bound me with magic charms.

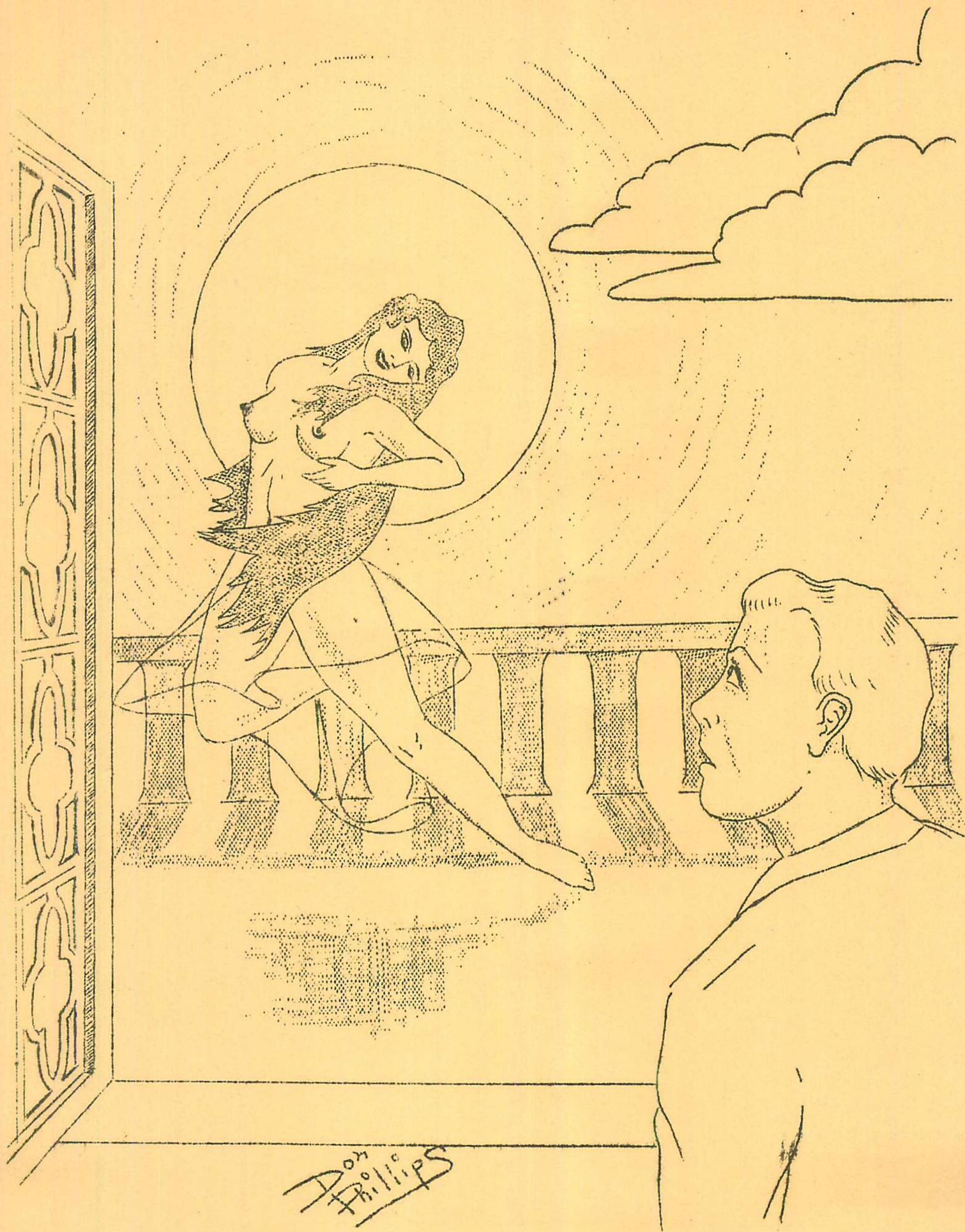


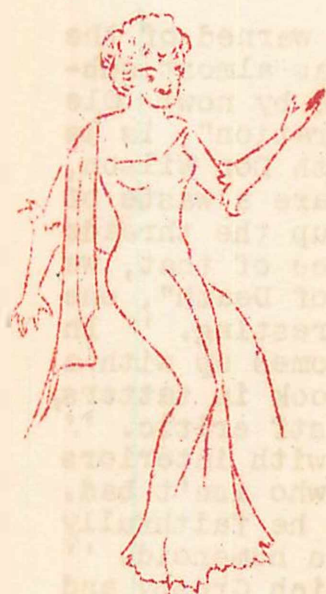
Satanie still dances at midnight
With the same wild abandon of old,
Seeking to lure a new lover
Into the lair of her fold.

For I am but one of the many
That have felt her icy kiss;
And we flee like shadows before
her
While she revels in wicked bliss.

Will man always fall prey to her
witchcraft?
Must he join her cursed band?
And must he wander forever
Lost in her haunted land?

Many men tremble in horror
When the dark of the moon comes
in view,
For remembering the nymph named
Satanie
Strikes fear into them anew.





PRO PHILE

BY

REDD BOGGS



Astounding SCIENCE FICTION, Vol. XLI, No. 1, March 1948. 25¢.

"...And Searching Mind", Jack Williamson's new serial (his first, incidentally, since "One Against the Legion" in 1939), starts out well, introducing a cast of interesting characters and promising plenty of suspense and conflict. With Williamson's penchant for choosing as "hero" an unsympathetic protagonist, one is not surprised to find Dr. Webb Claypool, gnomish, irascible scientist, cast in the lead; however, in this first installment, a lesser character named A. White, Philosopher, steals the spotlight, much as good old Giles Habibula did in the "Legion" yarns. Whether A. White will emerge with the renown of the great Giles, only time will tell. The only criticism we could level at "...And Searching Mind" at this early date would be that it is set too remote in time and too distant in space; there is virtually nothing, except the reader's recollection of "With Folded Hands...", to tie this story to Earth and its future history. ' Outside of the serial, the most welcome item in this issue is L. Sprague de Camp's article, "The Space Suit". Once again his "Richard Farnsworth", intrepid, thick-headed hero, appears as the "bad example" to point up the fallacies of pseudoscientific ideas concerning the deep space pressure-suits, and "Farnsworth's" return is as welcome as his creator's. This is an excellent, informative article. ' There is a second article this time, this one by our old friend Isaac Asimov -- or, as someone once said, the man who is known to the fan world as I, Asimov. It concerns (of all things!) "The Endochronic Properties of Resublimated Thiotimoline". ' Leinster's "West Wind" heads the shorter fiction section. This yarn is an effectively done future-war thing, distinguished mostly for the competent way in which the author handles the lone-hand role of his hero -- a Leinster hallmark, indeed. ' Otherwise, George O. Smith is present with another future-war tale, "The Incredible Invasion" (phew, old title!), which has the usual Geosmith surface cleverness, but when analyzed carefully breaks down into a rather sloppy and inept piece of crud, considerably marred in the main by the naive way in which George O. handles international power politics. Rewritten, this might make a passable yarn, but as it stands --

thumbs down. " Rene (Ron Hubbard) Lafayette should be warned of the dangers of running a series, which from the beginning was almost subterranean, into the ground -- but he should have learned by now! Ole Doc Methuselah's latest exploit, "Her Majesty's Aberration", is as good as the others, but we are beginning to agree with Don Wilson, that having little or no point to them, these yarns are a waste of time. Frankly, we wish Hubbard would go back and pick up the threads of his "Kilkenny Cats" series, but there's little chance of that, we imagine. " Finally, J. Scott Campbell presents "Film of Death", one of those inventions-gone-wrong potboilers. Mildly interesting. " In addition to the whole roster of departments, Willy Ley comes up with a review of Pilgrims Through Space and Time, leaving the book in tatters, to say nothing of Dr. J. O. Bailey's reputation as a stiff critic. " The art department functions in its usual so-so groove, with interiors by Rogers, Cartier, Davis, and a newcomer named Ayers, who isn't bad. Rogers' cover is poor, although we are glad to note that he faithfully followed Timmins' original conception of the pacifistic humanoid. " Anachronistic note: This issue's life has an ad in which Crosby and Hope urge everyone to purchase U. S. Savings Bonds for Christmas.

THRILLING WONDER STORIES, Vol. XXXII, No. 1, April 1948. 20¢.

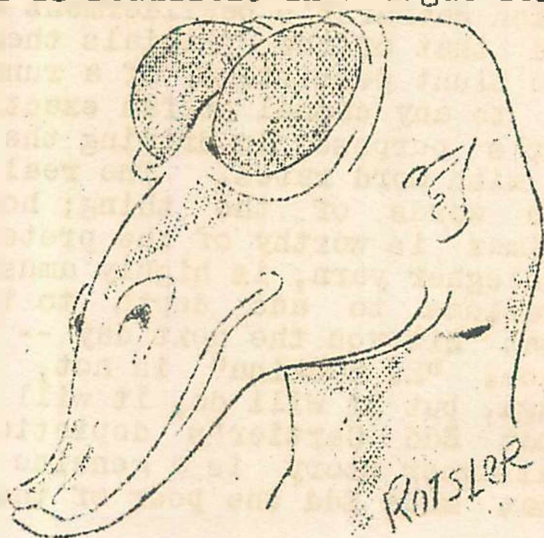
This, the first of TWS' 148-page issues, is paradoxically one of the worst issues in a year or two. One of the story titles characterizes the issue: Dud! Two others describe editor Merwin's predicament -- A Dog's Life, and Pile of Trouble! " Outside of the last two stories mentioned above -- "A Dog's Life" and "Pile of Trouble" -- there isn't enough solid entertainment in this issue to make it worth even the old price of 15¢. Zagat's lead novel, "The Faceless Men" (well-illustrated by Finlay, we should mention en passant), is a dreary thing about the intrepid young scientist who uses scant science and lots of brute force to save the world from an atomic catastrophe. The opening scenes, which depict the taut attention with which atomic piles are checked for dangerous tendencies, are excellent, but the story soon deteriorates and falls into the familiar groove of intrigue and counter-intrigue. " Arthur J. Burks once said in Writer's Digest that he has always been more successful writing yarns about places and things of which he knows nothing from personal experience. His latest, "Thieves of Time", is set in the Amazon country through which globe-trotter Burks has travelled several times. "Thieves of Time" is an unsuccessful story. " "Dad" lives up to its name, but "World of Wul-kens" strikes a slightly cheerier note, being something of an improvement over F. B. Long's usual nebulous monstrosities. Neither is up to TWS' recent standard. " "Gentlemen, the Scavengers!" is a Jacobi yarn involving an interplanetary war, the development of which -- though not the writing -- is remindful of the turgid days of the '30's when Gernsback published "war of the worlds" potboilers every issue. " One of the saddest things we've read recently is the short-short by Matt Lee, "Problem in Astrogation". After reading it the first time, we strained our extra-brain to forget the whole thing, but in the interests of this review we had to skim through it again. We gloom. " The two worthwhile yarns this issue are both shorts; we mentioned them



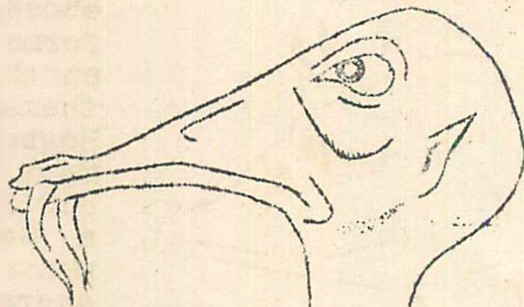
above, twice, and bring them up again for a formal commendation. "Pile of Trouble" is another Kuttner "Whopper" (as the characters themselves would call it) about the hilarious Hogbens, the mutie mountaineers whose lineage must have included "Waldo" of Anson MacDonald's yarn of that name. "A Dog's Life" is a George O. Smith idea-story, which involves mental time-travel to a world in which the average Canine possesses intelligence superior to that of today's scientist. Too bad Campbell wasn't writing the blurbs for the yarn -- he'd have called it a "lovely story". "Dr. Amadeus Rafferty's "Man's Journey to the Stars" should be mentioned, but it is an indescribable thing -- really a gag article, pseudo-serious, illustrated by several cuts that appear to be something out of Edison's Conquest of Mars (they're not, of course). "Speaking of that book, it is favorably reviewed in the book section. Nods of approval go also to Greener Than You Think, Venus Equilateral, and Of Worlds Beyond. Either the books are getting better, or Merwin is mellowing. We are inclined to think it is the latter. It seems, however, that Reviewer Merwin fails to read the books very carefully. In his commentary on the George O. Smith book, he tags Francis Burbank (Channing's predecessor as director of Venus Equilateral) as the double-dyed villain of the whole series and claims that "Channing, in every episode, foils the increasingly villainous Burbank." As we recall, Burbank appears only in the first story, "QRM -- Interplanetary". The real villain of the series is Mark Kingman, and even he doesn't appear till "The Long Way" -- the fifth story of the book! Are you sure you read the book at all, Mr. Merwin?

AMAZING STORIES, Vol. 22, No. 4, April 1948. 25¢.

"I read this issue," he growled defiantly, "because Don asked me to review it. I wish," he added distastefully, "that I hadn't been asked." The only story in the issue deserving more than a perfunctory skim-through is Emmett McDowell's "Wandering Egos" -- which, despite the title, has absolutely nothing to do with fans straggling home from the Torcon. It's based on an interesting idea and the writing is passable. Oddly, the yarn is absorbing, and is realistic in a vague sort of way. Why not read it, and you'll see what we mean? "Archette's "Secret of the Yellow Crystal" is the only other yarn worthy of serious consideration. We rather liked it. "Y'know what "The Monster from Mars" is about? Something new! Flying saucers, no less. "The rest of the magazine is sheer crud, some of it lengthy enough to be criminally time-wasting. Unless you need something to kill time, skip the rest of the issue, and under no circumstances whatsoever read "Drink Like a Fish", the miscarriage of the month. "Artwork this time is poor to passable. R. G. Jones' cover rates one long "Gaaaaa";



it is an atavism, a throwback to 1932. ' ' Rog Graham's "Club House" column is flanked by an ad for The Modern Marriage Manual -- coincidence, perhaps, but it may be a broad hint, with snide overtones, of course, for fans to Grow Up.



FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES, Vol. 9, No. 4, April 1948. 25¢.

Tympani erroneously announced a few months ago that FFM was due to fold sometime this summer. After reading "City of the Dead" in the April issue, one wishes the rumor were true. For "City of the Dead" is undoubtedly the very worst novel FFM has ever printed. Some of the Munseyarns they published in the old days were stilted in dialog and weak in characterization, but none was as musty and incompetently written as this novel. Edison's Conquest of Mars is a literary masterpiece beside "City of the Dead", which must have been disinterred from about the same era. It should have been left to rot between its original dingy covers. ' ' "The Messenger" is typically good Chambers, if less than a classic when compared to "The Yellow Sign" and others. ' ' Lawrence's cover is weirdly effective -- one of the best FFM has featured in some time. Really one that should bring \$25.00 if it were auctioned off at the Torcon. ' ' Finlay's interiors are poor, except for one full-pager depicting the heroine standing beside her tent at night, with the moon obscured by luminous clouds. Old Reliable Virgil isn't living up to his reputation of late. A change in his style back to the heights he gained in 1940-44 is indicated.

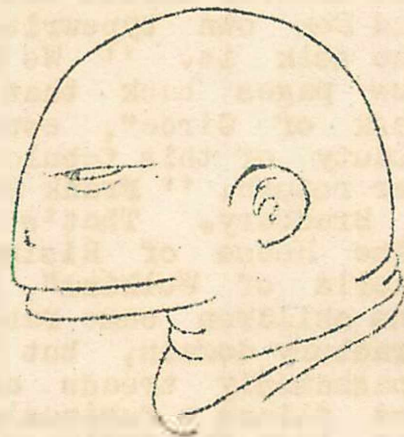
Astounding SCIENCE FICTION, Vol. XLI, No. 2, April 1948. 25¢.

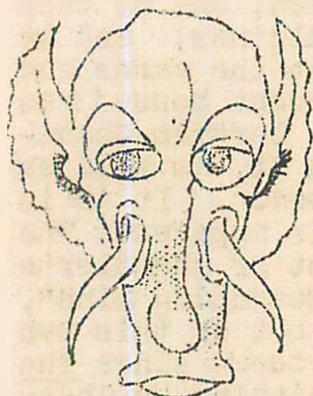
Charles Fort once said (in Lo!, Chapter 16) that this is the shortest story he knew: "He walked around the horses." H. Beam Piper has taken this short-short-short, which chronicles the disappearance of Benjamin Bathurst at Perleberg, Germany, and expanded it into a novelette of 18 pages. Frankly, we like the super-brief version best, for a great slice of Piper's 18 pages is filled with sheer crud in which Bathurst's bewilderment at finding himself in a parallel world-- and that of the officials there who found him -- is reiterated with the blunt persistency of a runaway piledriver. It is clear immediately to any casual stefan exactly what has happened to Sir Ben, and Piper's purpose in driving the point home again and again must be tied up with word rates. The real kick of the yarn is lurking in the last two words of the thing; however, we feel that not even this punchy climax is worthy of the pretentious buildup. ' ' "Ex Machina", the new Gallagher yarn, is highly amusing, but develops enough serious considerations to add depth to the tale, providing an implication or two that hit you the next day -- which probably makes JWCjr. chuckle with glee. "Ex Machina" is not, by any means, the best of the Gallagher saga, but it will do, it will do! ' ' Before we forget it, we might add that Edd Cartier's depiction of Grandpa as an illustration for the Gallagher story is a genuine classic. This is in the wacky tradition that made Edd the peer of the Unknown artists. ' ' "The House Dutiful"

by William Tenn is another of them durn things in the "Crooked House", "Housing Shortage", "This Is the House" tradition; one of this basic plot shows up at least once a year in the Campbellzines, and we grow weary, especially when all the anthologies reprint the yarns and we unsuspectingly peruse them a second time. The present house is as peculiar as any of them, and is funnier than most. ' ' Bertram Chandler's latest, "New Wings", has a touch of "Universe" in it, as well as some of the aspects of Chan Davis' "Journey and the Goal". It is in no sense a plagiarism, of course, but their influence is apparent. The yarn is well done, though, and more effective than most of Chandler's recent offerings. ' ' The Williamson serial, "...And Searching Mind", unreels merrily. If a slam-bang climax doesn't come out of this web of mystery and adventure, it will be the biggest letdown since The Forbidden Garden. ' ' April's cover, an astronomical painting by Chesley Bonestell, is a drab affair from the objective viewpoint, done in dull colors and not presenting the spatter of stars that are usually the attraction of the spatial view, but studied in conjunction with "Man on Mira", which it illustrates, it takes on significance. With that background in mind, it becomes a highly interesting cover. R. S. Richardson's article itself rivals the fiction for interest, being more or less fathomable even to an utterly untechnical dope like us. Astronomical subjects are usually entertaining, and this one is no exception.

FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, Vol. 10, No. 4, April 1948. 25¢.

It seems that Hamling is having difficulty distinguishing between sf and fantasy. This issue contains at least two yarns that belong in Amazing, if they belong anywhere, which is a matter of considerable doubt. Hamling has attempted to justify their presence herein by labeling them "both interplanetary and fantasy", but we'd like to have him tell us exactly what difference there is between Amz interplanetary and FA interplanetary. The two tales in question are "Lair of the Grimalkin" and "Coffin of Life and Death"; one takes place on Venus and the other mostly on Mars. "Lair" is a typical Venusian jungle yarn that with a few revisions would fit in Jungle Stories, but if you don't mind the hackneyed atmosphere, it's a fairly interesting thing, and not badly written. The editorial says the author, G. H. Irwin, wrote "The Vengeance of Martin Brand", a tale we dimly remember, probably from circa 1942. We doubt if "Lair of the Grimalkin" will linger in the subconscious for six years. ' ' "Coffin of Life and Death" is a silly thing; not the silliest part of which is the journey of the hero from Mars to Earth -- through the asteroid belt! Ah, the fantasy element! ' ' Oops, there's a third interplanetary in this issue: "Flight Into Fog" by Lee Francis. This should have been mentioned first; it's the best of the three, although it's too much like regular Planet fare to be thoroughly palatable. ' ' About the only other item of interest is "The Wandering Swordsmen", by William P. McGivern, a yarn that resuscitates the original Three Musketeers of Dumas and inconsiderately dumps them in the middle of America, 1948. We mention the story only because we sort of liked the idea. We didn't like the story. Didn't the Dumas family keep



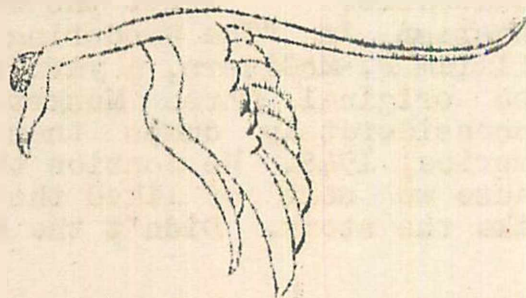


stable of hack-writers that batted out the numerous novels that are credited to their sponsor? Somehow we doubt that McGivern would be able to hold down a typewriter (or a quill) in the Dumas coterie. 'The rest of the fiction is third-rate crud, except for "Who Sups With the Devil", which, embodying all that is stale in the "gangster fantasy" field, is distinctly fifth-rate. 'In the back of the book a fistful of "science" articles bring up such startling statements as "The true stars are faraway suns"; "flying lizards were common during the ice age" (hmm? what ice age?); "bamboo is a grass"; etc. With such a reliable

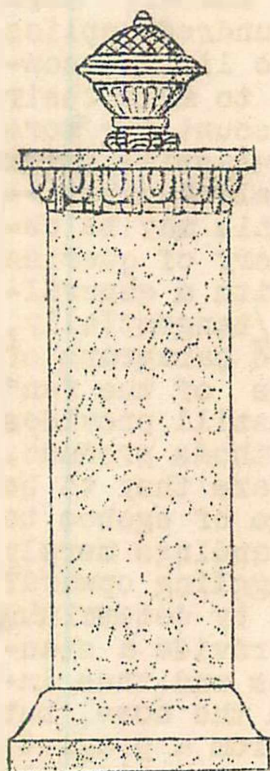
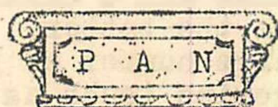
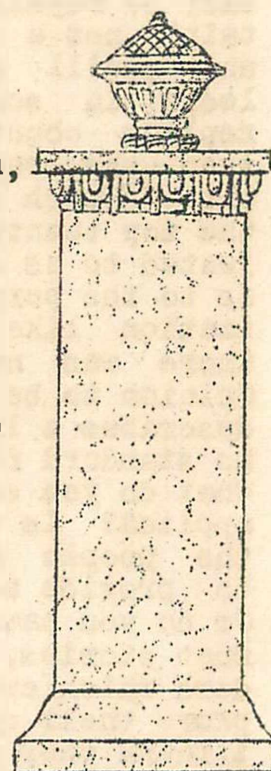
source of scientific information at their finger tips once a month, FA readers should progress to building pocketsize cyclotrons in their attics by next Christmas. 'The artwork is so-so this time, although R. G. Jones' front cover is a creditable job. Bacover features Settle's depiction of a 10-million pound meteor crashing into Crater Mountain, Arizona. Is Crater Mountain the same thing as Meteor Crater? We've always had the impression that the latter was a considerable distance from the mountains. Too, we've heard that the meteor impact has been described in Indian legends, which would make the giant reptiles in the picture a bit anachronistic.

STARTLING STORIES, Vol. 17, No. 2, May 1948. 20¢.

There is not much to say about "The Mask of Circe", except that it is Kuttner in his Merritt facet, and it is pseudo-Merritt doing one of his best writing jobs yet. If you are like us, you become weary sometimes of HanK's plots (or plot), which are infuriating as an elusive dream is -- the effect dim and uncertain, with nothing that is solid or to be taken at its face value. After reading a Kuttner fantasy one is thirsty for the substantiality of a Geosmith he-man excursion into the intricacies of subspace radio. However, the depths of imagination which Kuttner plumbs, the lovely atmosphere where the modern world dissolves like the sun in an October twilight, the delicately beautiful language -- all make a Kuttner yarn of this sort well worth reading, despite the tenuous plots which are intricate for all their mistiness. If "The Mask of Circe" swings into action with a gimmick reminiscent of "The Ship of Ishtar", one is not particularly disappointed, but only quietly satisfied to discover that the key to the Merritt worlds was not lost when Merritt died. As long as Kuttner and Bok own typewriters, the world of A. will be accessible to those who seek it. 'We hereby retract for the moment our statement of a few pages back that Finlay has slipped. His illustrations for "The Mask of Circe", especially the frontispiece epitomizing the pagan beauty of this fabulous adventure, are among his best since his post-war return. 'Frank Belknap Long does a Bradbury. That's the story behind "The House of Rising Winds". In "World of Wulkins", his depiction of the children came rather close to the Bradbury domain, but in this story he unashamedly treads across the border and flings a furiously-clattering typer into the business of telling fantasy from the juvenile angle. This is



a capable job, too; and is F. B. L.'s best story in a Long, Long time. Strictly speaking, perhaps, "The House of Rising Winds" isn't true Bradbury, for while Bradbury speaks of children as being unsane by adult standards, Long has his character remark, "The sanity of childhood can't be shaken." However, there's enough of Bradbury in this one to make it highly enjoyable. "The absence of Zagat from the field these many years hasn't sharpened his writing skill any, and his contributions to aSF and the Merwinzines during the past few years haven't been particularly successful. "No Escape from Destiny" is no exception. "George O. Smith's "Journey" takes van Vogt's "Far Centaurus" and twists it into a neat bit of conjecture about what would happen if the first interstellar expedition took, not the expected 20 years (in suspended animation), but only a few months to make the round-trip to Alpha Centauri. Most entertaining! "Robert Moore Williams' "The Seekers" and Fearn's "After the Atom" are competently done shorts, such as one expects from old-time stf writers, but "The Simple Life", by Ray Cummings -- who if longevity were the thing that counted should be called the Grand Old Man of Stf -- is a surprisingly inconsequential yarn of the St. Clair type. Even with thumbs jerking toward the dero domain, one is inclined to be glad to note that Cummings has subdued his sentimental proclivities in conformance with the current Startling policy. If he keeps improving, he'll be on a par with the other hacks. "Hall of Fame selection is Paul Ernst's "Microscopic Giants", which we rather enjoyed.



For me are the woodlands, peaceful and dim,
 When the dryads dance on the moonlit rim;
 The forest, the wood, and the shady glen,
 Far from the sight and the sound of men.
 When the centaurs dance in the grassy dale
 And nectar we quaff, and spicy ale.
 There we dance 'neath the starry sky...
 There I play when the moon is high...
 There you will find me, if you try...

--Lin Carter



CAVE OF THE WINDS



-ALL ABOUT POLLS-

Starting with the last first, and putting aside the histomap for the mo, a few words about Opinion. As to the unsatisfactoriness of only 37 replies, i wonder what you'd consider the ideal number. Certainly not a case of the more the better. Get several hundred replies and you'll be tapping a large number of people with too little knowledge in some of the categories (such as fan humorist) to make their replies count for much, though statistically they'd count for more than the replies of the half-hundred best-informed. I still think there's much to be said for my idea of polling a small select group -- the top twenty, i believe, was what i took in 1944. This may be objected to as undemocratic, but my reply would be a battery of queries as to the purpose of polls of this sort. Don't answer with a generalization like "to get a cross-section of fan opinion" /tangentially, there was no necessity for the quotemarks in the second paragraph of Opinion to be quasiquotes⁷. "To discover the feelings of the fen" describes a little better what you're going after, but still provides no standard for judging how accurate a sample various methods produce. What do you expect to be done with the results -- how are they to be applied? Is their function discharged in giving a charge of egoboo to the people high up? Is the publication of relative standings merely to provide a goal to energize people lower down in struggling upward? Or do you have an idea that polls establish norms?--that by determining what stories, fanzines, fen, etc, are best-liked, you provide a standard which can be used for comparison of later activities and thus improve their quality. Probably none of these is right on the nose, but i think they suggest the need for a thorogoinq inquiry from a pragmatic standpoint, without which efforts at improvement of the polls will be blundering around in a fog.

Your reference to 1-to-10 scoring as the "old faithful manner" is rather discouraging after years of campaigning against a system wherein one man's firstplace vote counts for as much as ten men's tenth-

place votes. But we have little basis for judging its propriety until we're surer of why the polls are conducted.

Though i didn't, so far as i now recall, get one of the Dreamland Opinionators (maybe i did; an old man's memories get all mixed up), i take it that it was supposed to be limited to the record of 1947. Since many people did vote on stories, ktp, of other years, their listing in the tabulations is proper, but it's customary to indicate those that don't belong, so that the reader will know that the score indicated isn't a true index of the item's popularity.

I notice that when two items are tied for, say, 29th place, you number the next place 30. With Kennedy and others i've argued at some length that the next number should be 31. This doesn't matter so much when you speak in terms of "30th place", but it does lead to inaccurate statements when somebody speaks of being "number ten fan", when there are perhaps a dozen guys ahead of him.

What did "Eliminated" mean as to A J Donnell? ((Omitted))

On several of the categories, it took a little study to figure out how many places were to be voted for. A number in parentheses after the heading would have aided in interpreting the point scores.

Interesting to compare the results of the popularity contest with standing of fan in other questions. Popularity of course isn't a mere summation of a few other things, but i suspect that some of the variance is simply due to the carelessness with which forms are filled out, or slightly differing "sets" of mind in answering different questions. I know that when i vote in a poll, if i inadvertently overlook a story, that i like greatly until i've filled in the top few places, i'll write it in at the point where i thot of it, rather than revise the whole column. This, among other things, inclines me to favor the idea of asking simply for a certain number to be named, but not in any order; or a compromise between that and the quote old faithful manner unquote, such as the 20-to-11 scoring gives. By the way, if anybody could get up the energy to do it, it might be of interest to arrange for two different polls, containing some questions substantially identical, to be conducted at the same time, circulating to approximately the same type of fan. Comparison of the results would give a reliability factor for polls in general, which might be surprisingly low. You can't get such a factor very well by comparing, say, the NFFF laureate awards and the Dreamland Opinionator on similar questions, because part of the disparities might be due to differences in time and type of cross-section. The connection of this with the beginning of this paragraph is that i suspect some of the variance between, say "journalist" standing and popularity is due to unreliability factor. And some, introspecting again, is due to the feeling "I've already named him in the journalist column; i'll give somebody else a boost here."

Interesting comparison of standings for another reason is between Acky's rating as worst fan and his popularity. I feel slighted, by the way, on the former.

Compiling the results on event of 1947 was bound to be a problem, since people will state approximately the same thing several different ways. I think you should have combined the vote on "Fight with Amazing" and "Shaver feud", and perhaps also "Amazing fan column".

That raises the question of suggesting answers. Anything you suggest, of course, would be likely to get an undue number of votes,

but it might be worthwhile to give standardized ways of saying certain things. But more generally on polls, a great hindrance to their accurate reflection of opinion is that the answerer must pull his answers out of the air. Perhaps he'll think of "Children of the Lens" and forget "Aesop", which he liked better, simply because the latest issue of aSF is lying on the table. So also, he may not think of Fan-Tods, which he likes best of any fanzine, until he's gotten down to eighth place where he mentions Synapse, so Fan-Tods gets the #9 spot. It's not practical to list all the stories published in 1948 to pick your answers out of, nor all fanzines. But on a poll not limited to one year, it might well be worthwhile to list the top twenty or fifty that have been mentioned in some other similar poll.

Hurrying on to DQ5: Miller's artwork still fine, and Stein's is good too; but there's some sameness in the former's. Regardless, the back cover is especially good; it seems to have a definite idea, which we can only partly grasp: there's a suggestion of things from Outside coming in.

Suggestions on format? Only one -- widen the margins a little. ((Do the rest of you feel this necessary?)) New title headings very satisfactory; looks like you may have a book of printing styles such as i borrowed from the library while publishing TNFF. The absence of drawings in the headings now increases the desirability of some small ones scattered over the pages to break them up. The inserts are good, but don't entirely meet this need. ((How about the pics in this issue?))

Stein's article praiseworthy, though i shall spend most of my time disagreeing with parts of it or raising questions. Freedom to carry personal weapons sounds like a good thing after you've just read The Weapon Shop, but i wonder how it would be in actuality. A premise of our laws against murder, battery, and assault (which is the mere putting in apprehension of injury) is that the right of the citizen to feel secure in his person is very important; that life would be much more unpleasant if he had not this feeling of security. In view of Bob's true words later on about the increasing inability of many civilians to stand up to a few modernly armed soldiers, i wonder how valuable the right to carry pistols would be. Incidentally, the modern danger is not so much from militia, which term technically includes all able-bodied males, but from professional soldiers cut off from the mass of citizens, a class whom the apostles of our democracy feared and hated.

I wonder if Bob has ever really analyzed the word "rights". According to Hohfeld, there is always correlative with a right on one's part a duty on someone else's part. Apparently the duties creating the rights he speaks of are duties of society, or its instrument the government. "The right to "the wife he wants" raises the question of her right to the husband she wants, or someone else's right to her. " However that be, i wonder if he would accept an amendment to his list of rights to food, housing, etc: The right to earn them. This opens up a question which he blurs over in saying "In return the individual would work along the lines his talents indicate". How does Bob know the individual would? He certainly would if he must otherwise starve, and Bob appears to intend this threat when he says "goods that are obtained free will be obtained with credits that are distributed

for the compulsory work", for he doesn't specify any other means of compelling people to work. But it accords ill with the idea of Utopia (perhaps i'm being unfair in raising objections about what is frankly a Utopia).

I would like to hear a good solution to the aim "Each child will start out with the same opportunities" which doesn't put the children on an assembly-line basis of rearing. As to special training for unusual talent, i wonder if Bob knows how near he is to a heresy against Marxism.

Kef the artist selling his paintings for whatever price people will pay: Would Stein retain copyright protection, or allow anybody who wished to take a color foto of the painting? And how soon could the importance of an inventor's invention be determined, in order to reward him adequately?

As for the syndicalist system of electing delegates, there is room for a query whether a man's economic grouping would in every case be the one in which he felt his chief interests to be. The Wallace party is being organized by delegates from many types of associations, and i'll bet there's a great deal of overlapping among their various memberships. The fancy name for the problem is pluralism.

Song Out of Space uses a style which is generally effective, but i don't believe it contributes anything new stylistically, and certainly it says nothing. Dark Dreamer's chief faults were irregularities of meter and riming so artificial that i lost track of what it was talking about. Rimes should fit in with the thought; the thought should not be changed for the sake of a rime. Your indentation in typing this was curious, by the way. The usual rule is that lines which rime should be indented the same distance. ((It was Pederson's indentation system, not mine.))

Treasure Trove would probably have been a deadly bore but that i got out my new Checklist of Fantastic Literature and checked Ladd's discoveries against it. Interested to note that he stayed at the New Yorker -- a damned aristocrat, by God! His last words bring out clearly a fault that underlies most of his writing. "--but I've written to too great length already, I fear, so I shall just say -- 'That's another story!'" I can't express it all, but one thing wrong is that the grammar is too proper -- "to ... great length" rather than "at", "I fear" carefully set off with commas, "I shall",.. It doesn't sound spontaneous.

Rapp's article not bad at all. Even the footnotes were okay, though the whole at times trembled on the edge of being annoying rather than funny.

Amen to Milty. A couple of minor objections: The difference between science and law on presumptions is not that science accepts nothing till proved whereas law presumes innocence until guilt is proved. It presumes innocence, yes, but the reason is that the issue in law can be and is two-valued, guilty or not guilty, whereas the scientist must face infinite-valued probability. (That phrase rolled off inadvertently. I don't know what it means.) To do the crackpot justice, the mechanism of his reasoning is not the syllogistic series Milty sets forth. It goes more like this: The dilettante is convinced, from the minute his concept bursts upon him, that it is true; this is a unitary phenomenon. Next he discovers that professional

scientists won't accept it. Then by association he remembers other great ideas which the scientists of the past refused to accept for a long time. His idea immediately belongs to that class, and the scientists who won't listen to him are as stupid as those who persecuted Priestley and Galileo.

No comment on the two reviews; reaction neutral.

Tch, two sociological articles in one issue? Stein's was on the credit side, but i can't say much for "One World--Stf Style". Far as i can tell he's reciting stale truisms. Now if he'd come out and told his readers to go join and work with the nearest branch of the Federation of Atomic Scientists, United World Federalists, or Americans for Democratic Action, the article might have earned two pages. But just "think"ing isn't going to accomplish anything.

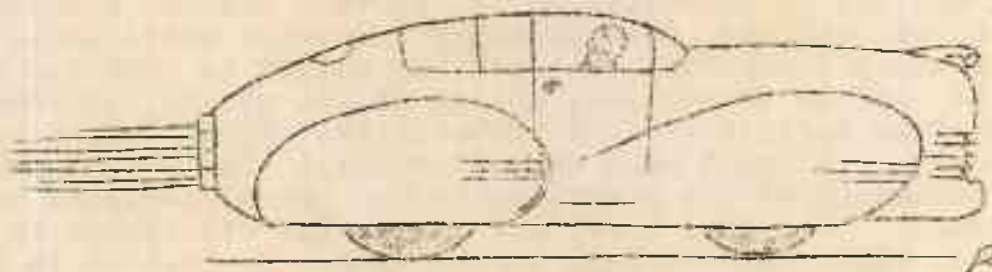
Pro Phile: The belief that general readers can never be made to view stf otherwise than with ridicule seems to be a fond theory of yours, which you've repeated several times without backing it up. Its truth isn't selfevident. ' Seems like i've heard somewhere else the idea "If we assume that our world was created by an alien race -- then who created the aliens?" Perhaps i'm thinking of the De Courcy story in Fanscient. ((Or "By His Bootstraps"?))

The Garroting not bad; not fantasy.

Review of Chaos. I might, if i wanted to, believe in the Immaculate Conception and the Virgin Birth, but i'd find it very difficult to believe that Joshua the Zombie could beget a son without sullyng himself. Come to think of it, i wonder what he was doing between the ages of 12 and 30. ((Come now. You aren't supposed to ask such questions.)) ' I suppose you noticed that the call letters of YHWH are the Hebrew for Jehovah.

Cave of the Winds? I imagine that the Earth's axis has been shifted, to make the polar regions gardens (didn't somebody undertake this once for real estate profits?) in ancient s-f, but the only example i can positively name right now was in Buddy Deering Sunday page some years ago. ' Whose mistake was "enthusiasia"? ((Reed's.))

I'll write Laney direct such comments as i have on the details of the histomap. Minor things, mostly as to technique. Far as i'm concerned, it's good enuf as it stands. A histomap of fandom of a rather different sort might be made, representing by the different bands not clubs, but interests. This would trace, for example, the relative dominance of bibliography and politics in fan journalism and correspondence at different epochs. It would bear a relationship to Laney's histomap somewhat like that of the Histomap of Religion to the original Histomap of nations. --Jack Speer, 4518 16th NE, Seattle 5, Washington.



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-DERLETH SHELLACKED AGAIN-

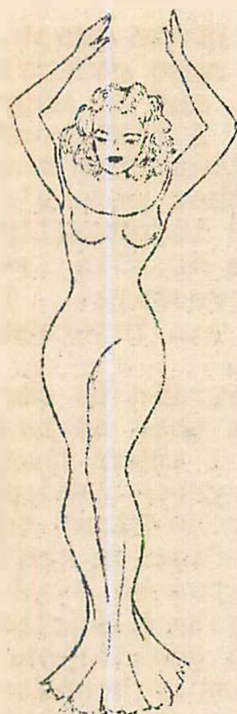
I'm not going to write at very great length about Dream Quest. I will say, though, that you seem to be aiming at the same general goals that I went after when I was publishing Spaceways, and in many respects you're doing a far better job than I ever did. I like your neat and conservative format, the separation of illustrations from the text, the absence of editorializing in the middle of other people's writings, and the general balance between formality and informality that is so hard to hit in a fanzine. Most of the contents of this issue interested me, too. Especially the things about Lovecraft. I don't know why it should be, but the articles about the man interest me much more than his stories.

It is also very good to see some people who aren't afraid to say nasty things about Derleth. I recognize the good work that he has done as a pioneer in the fantasy publishing field. But I think that he's an insufferably egotistical person who really has no great genius in any field, but ability in most of them that he is the very first to mistake for genius. He writes hopelessly hackneyed weird fiction that at first glance sounds something like the writers he imitates so slavishly; he turns out non-fantasy writing by the ton which gets a polite nod from the book reviewers and the cold shoulder from the public; and he publishes anthologies which have a fairly good sale simply because weird fiction sells well in book form today, but you'll notice that the Derleth-prepared books never get the promotion or the favorable reviews of various other good anthologies that have appeared in the last two or three years. As far as Arkham House goes, I'm inclined to prefer to borrow a phrase from Jim Blish and call them bookbinders rather than publishers at the present time. They're preserving between hard covers hundreds of thousands of words of fiction that barely qualified as magazine fiction. People like Carl Jacobi and Frank Belknap Long haven't written more than two or three really good stories in their careers, and reprinting their mediocrities is positively scandalous, when there is so much fine unpublished stuff lying around and so many unpublished novels. --Harry Warner Jr., 303 Bryan Place, Hagerstown, Maryland.

-LOVE THOSE HEADINGS-

The most striking thing about Dream Quest #5 is not the cover, nor even the table of contents. No, your innovation of large, effectively done headings is the first item to task the resources of my thesaurus. They are splendid, glorious, illustrious! In my not so humble opinion, DQ takes another long stride forward with this new heading idea. Your format is now almost above reproach.

On a no less exalted level, your material this trip: Somewhere at, or near, the top ranks Bob's fine Utopia article -- the best item yet to pour out of that decrepit typer of his. His frequent tangents are interesting in themselves -- Stein on the Sullivan Act, Stein on revolutions, Stein on socialized medicine -- and add depth to this discussion. I've only a few comments: first, a minor remark about the right to three square meals a day. I think that in a Utopia, the people would eat four meals a day, which practice I believe has been endorsed by dieticians as more effective in keeping a person at full energy all day than the poorly spaced three meals at present in favor.



Few would quarrel with the Utopian's right to free meals, free housing, free medical attention, and the privilege of having hobbies, all the education he needs and so on, but when it comes to having "the wife he wants, and as many children he wants", the Utopian processes fall into an extremely delicate matter -- the human factor. According to its creator, the Stein Utopia would necessarily prevent the individual from harming society. What happens if the woman one Utopian wants doesn't want to marry at all -- can she be forced to marry? What happens if a Utopian wants six children and the wife is unable to bear more than two? Can she be penalized because of her inability? # Bob spends quite some time bemoaning the fact that the trend toward a Utopia must take place over the centuries. Frankly, I believe a gradual change is desirable, although of course the process will always be too slow. But even if a Utopia could be set up next January 1st (I doubt if it will be!) I do not think that I myself would be very much happier in it than I am in this cruel world. When Bob says that those in high position oppose change, liking things as they are, he doesn't go far enough: very few persons, when you come right down to it, like change. The soldiers of WW II, fighting (according to Gabby Heatter) for a "better world", were dreaming in the foxholes of things as they were prewar. Of course we'd all like more money, but if our Aunt Tilly leaves us a million dollars we won't spend it for different things -- we'll spend it for the same things, only better models and more of them. # Incidentally, the 100% inheritance tax would be a good idea even today, with this proviso: if the deceased left a child

who had not finished his education, sufficient money should be set aside as untaxable to cover, as far as possible, the cost of his schooling.

Laney's Histo-Map of Fandom is quite interesting and essentially accurate, as far as I can judge. # Ladd's background in his "Treasure Trove" article is entertaining, and the thumbnail reviews of the books he discovered in that old bookstore are equally so. I'd like to hear the sequel to this collector's adventure which is mentioned in the last paragraph. # Art's "Soma Fun, Hey Keed?" is a bit unfortunate, I fear. If I remember rightly, someone else beat him to the draw by regaling Merwin with the Soma info in TWS or SS an issue or so ago. More important, this juvenile-sounding article is in no way representative of what Art can do in more serious moods. # Following your use of the author's name in the article "The Stein Utopia", you should have named this Rothman item "Milty Might Be Right", or better, "Milty Is Right". # Elliott's "Lovecraft's Unsung Masterpiece" is good. Only comment I'll make is a protest against his adjectives -- "vastly overdone, wild and feverish" -- describing the "cosmic sweep" of The House on the Borderland. This is the first time I've ever heard Hodgson's admittedly tremendous concepts dismissed as merely "feverish" and "wild". Hodgson leaves this world, but he doesn't do it in the manner of a de Quincey or a Kafka. # Everything else deserves mention. All in all, DQ

#5 was a solidly entertaining mag. It would seem that the question of which is the current #1 fanzine is no longer in doubt. --Redd Boggs, 2215 Benjamin St. NE, Minneapolis 18, Minn.

- "YOU'RE ANOTHER" -

I note your critic, Philip Gray, feels that Derleth, in Arkham Sampler, "looks down on various types of science fiction," and proceeds to tell AWD to look in his own back yard. Seems to me that it's far more constructive to avoid the "you're another" and instead, to look with objectivity at science fiction and see if Derleth might not have something. Granted, he may be cutting it fine; why not even so quit the defensive and look for the good, the sense in AWD's remarks, rather than try to prove he's all wrong? I wrote this to a man who had tried for years to write salable fiction: "You spend hours 'proving' such and such a story in print is a stinker; you never spend a minute asking yourself, 'While it reeks in spots, though tastes may vary, WHAT HAS IT THAT WAS GOOD, AND IT MUST HAVE CONTAINED SOME GOOD, ELSE NO ONE WOULD HAVE BEEN MOVED TO PAY \$500 or \$1000 FOR IT?' You have spent so long seeking the bad in each published story, and so little seeking the good that must be in each, that you still don't know how to make a story of your own good enough to sell." All right: why not look for the good, the justification, in Derleth's criticisms, instead of busting a gut to show he's biased, unreasonable, prejudiced? Derleth, while far from being omniscient, and far from being the universal criterion of literary excellence, still and all is a notable performer of many years' experience. His saying that something stinks does not mean that you should knock your forehead thrice on the temple tiles and intone, "Yea, HE has spoken, and so it is!" and call the board of health. No. But at least sniff a couple times and maybe you'd find it was not 100% Chanel #5, or Shalimar; and science fiction could profit. Yelping "Prejudice!" and "You're another!" is not constructive; it's emotional. If all the editors who have told me how my yarns reeked were laid end to end, they'd reach from here to Banning. I didn't bother to retort, "Why, you stupid bastard, what do you know about literature?" Instead, I asked, "What made him say that? This may not be quite as true and beautiful as I thought." Some editors are oafs, I know. But the automatic reaction, "Any adverse critic is a fiend!", is deadly. And a good bit of the science fiction I've read is such abominable drivel, neither science nor fiction, that an equivalent treatment and equivalent incompetence in any other field could never get into print. A science fiction tale can have merit, and some do have literary merit; not because it is science fiction, but because a competent writer has written with both hands, first and foremost telling a story, and just incidentally diddling around with "science". Good God, man, how many science fiction readers have any more of an actual, working concept of science that is science, than has the average Igorrote? Almost as bad as in the western field! .. Whenever sharp specialization comes in, there is less and less chance of anything resembling "literary merit". And science fiction is, I believe, more mechanized than is fantasy-weird; so, harder to do a living, human yarn which has the humanity to rise above the so-called "science" clutter and be a story. It can be, and it has been done; but not often. --E. Hoffmann Price, 2547 Woodland Place, Redwood City, Calif.

-A RATTLING GASP-

If I called the last DQ "the best of 4 extraordinarily good issues", my reaction to #5 shall be merely a rattling gasp of admiration. The neatness, size, and careful preparation of your April effusion seem almost incredible. I'm beginning to suspect, Wilson, that you are a robot in disguise and know no such thing as mortal fatigue.

Miller seems to be developing a distinctive stencil-scrawling style which I like very much. A fourteen-gun salute to the cover, to the rat-tailed bems opposite page 12, and to the tastefully-lettered headings.

Laney's "Histo-Map of Fandom" proved intriguing; you could have a lot of fun figuring out maps like this on every conceivable field from the history of mushroom-raising in the Dominion of Canada to how you spent last Saturday night, but since the placing of the various topics and the determining of the importance of each seems so highly subjective, I can't see much practical utility in a histo-map of such a diffuse "association" as sf fandom. # This brings back memories of Kepner's "The Social Strata of Fandom" in Toward Tomorrow a couple years ago. Kepner diagramed a sort of caste system for fandom, with literati like Koenig situated 'way up in the clouds, and prozine letter hacks deep down in the mire of untouchability....!

Rapp's bit added a welcome light spot to the heavyweight issue. I too had wondered about the word "Soma" and its use in the classical literature, but hadn't got around to consulting the encyclopedia. Just the other day I came across a religious poem by Whittier or Lowell or somebody entitled "The Brewing of the Soma", too.

"Lovecraft's Unsung Masterpiece": altho Elliott's rave review of "DQouk" makes the yarn sound highly appetizing, I still am not hepped up enuf to spend four bucks to read the story. # Possibly, too, my attitude toward Lovecraft's work is changing. Not long ago, I rated HPL as my favorite fantasy writer, but just last week I tried to read the new Avon pocketbook edition of The Lurking Fear, found "Arthur Jermyn" and "The Unnameable" actually laughable in many spots, and haven't yet been able to wade through the title tale.

Maybe ... someday ... Nuttall will ... write ... a poem without ... all those ... dots .....

Glad to see "Pro-Phile" still with us. Was your editorial revelation in The Gas Jet that you are Gilbert Swenson intentional? ((Not entirely.)) # Someday I shall write an article defending the current Weird Tales. There seems to be a sort of gentleman's agreement among sfans that the magazine's unmentionably awful. While WT's type of material doesn't appeal to me personally, and while I've read a number of the old Wright-edited issues and found most of the tales superior to Weird's presentday run, it seems to me that the mag still has a number of good points -- Bradbury's contributions; the verse; the excellent artwork of Dolgov and Coye(!); and it apparently pleases most of its customers, else 'twould've disappeared from the stands long ago. Any of the 3 yarns from the annish which you name would be deserving of hard-cover presentation. --Joe Kennedy, 84 Baker Ave, Dover, N. J.

